

A Thesis Submitted for the
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**Thomas Killigrew and Carolean Stage Rivalry in London,
1660-1682**

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Abstract

This thesis has two aims: to make an original contribution to knowledge by demonstrating the importance of theatrical rivalry to the development of drama in the Carolean period (the reign of Charles II), and to re-evaluate the managerial career of Thomas Killigrew (1612-1683). This is the first detailed survey of the circumstances in which the King's Company and the Duke's Company competed and an analysis of the troupes' devices of plotting and counter-plotting during their twenty-two years of stage rivalry from 1660 to 1682. As well as charting the stage rivalry between the two companies, my dissertation argues that Killigrew was a competent but unscrupulous and devious playhouse-manager. A close analysis of his managerial career will show how Thomas Killigrew was the central figure in the Carolean stage rivalry in London and how he helped to shape the future of English theatre.

The survey starts from Killigrew's beginnings as the manager of the King's Company from 1660 and concludes in 1682 when the King's Company was effectively taken over by its rival, the Duke's Company, to make one United Company, thus ending the span of theatrical competition in the Carolean period. Each chapter is divided in accordance with the beginning and end of significant events of rivalry and are organised chronologically at different phases of the competition.

The first chapter provides the historical background of the establishment of the patent grants and the gradual consolidation of the monopoly over dramatic entertainment in London. In charting the initial stages of the development of the King's Company and the Duke's Company from 1660 to 1663, this chapter argues that it was largely due to Thomas Killigrew's underhandedness that the King's Company began the competition in an advantageous position. The second chapter focuses on the theatrical competition from 1663 to 1668. Until 1663 both companies were busy consolidating their duopoly and the competition between the two managers ended abruptly with William Davenant's death in 1668. In the survey of the Killigrew-Davenant rivalry, this chapter's overall aim is to argue for narrowing of the wide chasm often described between the managerial skills of the two managers. Chapter three explores the period from when Mary Davenant, Thomas Betterton and Henry Harris took over the management of the Duke's Company to the burning of the King's Company's playhouse in 1672. It argues that the competition in this period was evenly matched. This chapter also revises the perceived style of management adopted by both Betterton and Killigrew. The chapter argues that Betterton was perhaps less involved in the

most audacious project of the Duke's Company during these years: the building of three theatres including the Dorset Garden Theatre. In the case of the latter, this chapter argues that Killigrew continually took risks at other people's expense and was little concerned with the well being of his staff and shareholders as long as the company gained notoriety and retained its success. The penultimate chapter of the dissertation covers the time span from the Bridges Street Theatre's fire to the ousting of Killigrew as the manager by his own son, Charles Killigrew. It argues that this was the crucial period in which the Duke's Company began clearly to surpass its rival. This chapter qualifies the orthodox view that the King's Company simply lost its battle against the Duke's Company by demonstrating that the two companies also had to contend with a large number of foreign troupes and the rising popularity of music concerts. The final chapter explores the period from when Charles Killigrew took over the management of the King's Company to the amalgamation of the two acting troupes in 1682. It demonstrates the negative effects of the political turbulence of the Popish Plot and the Exclusion Crisis on both the troupes' plays and players. The chapter also argues that Charles Killigrew was not as charismatic or manipulative as his father, and that he greatly contributed to the demise of the King's Company.

In conclusion, this is strictly a study of theatre history that looks at the importance of management and company rivalry to the development of Carolean drama. At its peak in the 1670s, the Carolean period produced on average twenty new plays per season. The highly competitive nature of the rivalry between the King's Company and the Duke's Company and how the respective managements responded to the success or the failure of the other theatre is the background against which one must read the plays of the Carolean period. Thomas Killigrew, whose managerial career spanned the longest in the Carolean years, was an influential figure in the period and whose innovations and difficulties as a manager had a direct effect not only on theatre history but also on the dramatic traditions of the seventeenth century. (788 words)

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Notes and Queries, 62.2 (2015), 263-65; part of chapter 5 has also appeared as “An Unpublished Document Relating to the Restoration Actor, Michael Mohun”, in *Notes and Queries*, 62.2 (2015), 265-66.

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Abbreviations

Add. MS	Additional Manuscript
<i>BDA</i>	Philip H. Highfill, Jr., et al., <i>A Biographical Dictionary of Actors, Actresses, Musicians, Dancers, Managers, and Other Stage Personnel in London, 1660-1800</i> , 16 vols (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1973-93)
BL	The British Library, London
C	Chancery Lawsuit Records
<i>CSPD</i>	<i>Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series</i> , ed. M.A.E. Green (London, 1875-86)
Danchin	<i>The Prologues and Epilogues of the Restoration 1660-1700</i> , ed. Pierre Danchin, 7 vols (Nancy: Publications de l'Université de Nancy, 1981-84)
Downes	John Downes, <i>Roscius Anglicanus, or an Historical Review of the Stage</i> (London, 1708), eds., Judith Milhous and Robert D. Hume (London: Society of Theatre Research, 1987)
Harbage	Alfred Harbage, <i>Thomas Killigrew, Cavalier Dramatist, 1612-83</i> (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1930)
HMC	Reports of the Historical Manuscripts Commission (1870-)
Hotson	Leslie Hotson, <i>The Commonwealth and Restoration Stage</i> (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1928)
Langbaine	Gerard Langbaine, <i>An Account of the English Dramatick Poets</i> (Oxford, 1691)
LC	Lord Chamberlain's Papers, British Library
<i>London Stage</i>	<i>The London Stage, 1660-1800</i> , Part 1: 1660-1700, ed. William Van Lennep, with a Critical Introduction by Emmett L. Avery and Arthur H. Scouten (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1965)
Milhous, <i>Betterton</i>	Judith Milhous, <i>Thomas Betterton and the Management of Lincoln's Inn Fields, 1695-1708</i> (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1979)
Pepys	Samuel Pepys, <i>The Diary of Samuel Pepys</i> , eds. Robert Latham and William Matthews, 11 vols (London: G. Bell, 1970-83)

PRO	The Public Record Office (London)
<i>Register</i>	Judith Milhous and Robert D. Hume eds. <i>A Register of English Theatrical Documents 1660-1737</i> , 2 vols (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1991)
SP	State Papers, National Archives, London

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A Note on the Text

In quotations, style follows the sources cited hence the inconsistencies in spelling and capitalisation. The availability of *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* and *Early English Books Online* means that, in most cases, first editions are used for play citations. When there are no page numbers, the relevant EEBO or ECCO image number is given as, for instance, “EEBO 24”.

Introduction

This thesis has two aims: to make an original contribution to knowledge by demonstrating the importance of theatrical rivalry to the development of drama in the Carolean period and to re-evaluate the managerial career of Thomas Killigrew, the patentee of the King's Company, and, for a time, the Master of the Revels.¹ This is the first detailed and diachronic survey of the circumstances in which the King's Company and the Duke's Company – the original patent theatre companies in London – competed and an analysis of the troupes' devices of plotting and counter-plotting during their twenty-two years of stage rivalry from 1660 to 1682. The innovations that they implemented during the period, such as the introduction of actresses and changeable scenery, had repercussions far beyond the two decades of theatrical practice as they were to alter the future of English drama.² This is also the first book-length project that focuses on Thomas Killigrew's career as a theatre manager. As well as charting the stage rivalry between the two companies, my dissertation argues that Killigrew was a competent but unscrupulous and devious playhouse-manager. A close analysis of his managerial career will show how Thomas Killigrew was the central figure in the Carolean stage rivalry in London and how he helped to shape the future of English theatre.

¹ This thesis adopts the term Carolean to indicate what Robert D. Hume describes as both the period and drama of the reign of Charles II (1660-1685): "I [Hume] prefer to avoid it [the term Restoration] most of the time, and so have adopted the variant *Carolean*...Certainly drama in the time of Charles II is quite as distinctive as that now dubbed Elizabethan, Jacobean, Caroline, or Georgian". Hume went on to explain that "Restoration drama proper is basically Carolean drama; the distinctive productions of the late 1660s and the 1670s are on the wane by the end of the seventies, and the political upheaval of the Popish Plot scare, followed by Charles's death, spells an end to a brief but glorious era". See Hume, *The Development of English Drama in the Late Seventeenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 6n; p. 6. Hereafter *Development*.

² Alfred Harbage has suggested that there was no sharp break in the tradition of drama post-1660 and that Carolean drama was simply a continuation of the Caroline tradition. Robert D. Hume has effectively challenged this argument. For the former see, Alfred Harbage, *Cavalier Drama: an Historical and Critical Supplement to the Study of the Elizabethan and Restoration Stage* (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1936), p. 255; for the latter see Hume, *Development* pp. 6-7.

Biography

Before examining Thomas Killigrew's managerial experience, however, it is important to review his past. An understanding of Killigrew's life up until the time when he was nominated the King's Company's patentee provides crucial insights into the man and the type of theatre manager he was to become.

Born in London on 7 February 1612, Thomas Killigrew was the fourth son of Sir Robert Killigrew and Mary Woodhouse. Sir Robert Killigrew, according to the biographer Alfred Harbage, was "a shrewd businessman" as well as a "politic courtier" with a scrupulous eye for detail. He was a remarkably inventive man, who, as a Member of Parliament "represented the County of Cornwall in 1625 and six different Cornish boroughs between 1601 and 1629". He was also made protonotary of Chancery for life, ambassador to the United Provinces, governor of Pendennis Castle, and vice-chamberlain to Queen Henrietta Maria. On top of all the appointments, his business portfolio boasted a diversity which would shame Thomas Killigrew's own: "[Sir Robert Killigrew] had vessels sailing under letters of marquee, was a charter member of the New River Company, was draining the fens of Lincolnshire, and was lessee of the rights to farm the seals of the King's Bench and Common Pleas".³ Sir Robert Killigrew moreover had a voracious appetite for the arts, an interest shared by his wife, Mary Woodhouse. Thomas Killigrew's mother came from an impressive literary heritage, as she was the granddaughter of the literary Cooke sisters as well as the niece of Francis Bacon. Personal details about Mary Woodhouse are mostly lost except that it is recorded that soon after the death of Sir Robert Killigrew in 1633, she married to Sir Thomas Stafford, a gentleman usher to Queen Henrietta Maria. One contemporary who knew her well described Mary Woodhouse as "a cunning old woman...who had been herself too much and too long

³ Harbage, *Thomas Killigrew*, pp. 19-21.

versed in amours”.⁴

For all their resourcefulness and their wide circle of influential acquaintances, however, the Killigrews were “never more than minor figures about the court” and were widely regarded as “parvenus”. As a member of the Killigrew clan, Thomas Killigrew would have enjoyed “little family prestige”. Even financially, Killigrew would not have been considered “well off”. As the younger son of a large family, Thomas Killigrew’s father had bequeathed him 100 acres of reclaimed lands in Lincolnshire of “questionable value”, and the only time he received money through family legacy was in 1622 when his grandmother left him £5.⁵ Harbage notes that to “have had three older brothers must have seemed nothing short of calamitous to Thomas Killigrew”, especially as he began to realise “that his father’s position at Hansworth [the family home] was midway between that of a proprietor and that of a caretaker”.⁶

Little is known about Thomas Killigrew’s earliest years but it is probable that he suffered from neglect.⁷ His father was busy trying to build up a position for his family, and his mother was busy looking after her many children. Thomas Killigrew clearly harboured ill feelings towards his indifferent mother. Isaac Marcombes, Robert Boyle’s French tutor, who met Killigrew in Paris and Geneva between 1639 and 1641, wrote of him as one “that speakes ill of his o[w]ne Mother...having always his mouthe full of whoores and such discourses”.⁸

Thomas Killigrew struggled to distinguish himself among a family of high achievers. His brothers Henry Killigrew and William Killigrew both followed in the footsteps of their father

⁴ Mary Rich, Countess of Warwick, *Autobiography of Mary Countess of Warwick*, ed. T. C. Crocker (London, 1848), p. 9.

⁵ Harbage, *Thomas Killigrew*, pp. 51-52.

⁶ Harbage, *Thomas Killigrew*, p. 41.

⁷ Harbage, *Thomas Killigrew*, p. 44.

⁸ Cited in Clare Howard, *English Travellers of the Renaissance* (London: John Lane, 1914), pp. 163-66; and J. W. Stoye, “The Whereabouts of Thomas Killigrew, 1639-1641”, *Review of English Studies*, 25 (1949), pp. 245-48.

– who matriculated from Christ Church College, Oxford – by enrolling at Christ Church College and St John’s College, Oxford, respectively.⁹ Unlike his brothers, Thomas Killigrew “lived his life...comparatively undereducated”.¹⁰ Killigrew himself admitted to being “the illiterate Courtier” who can “scarce read, nay, not his own hand”.¹¹ His erratic handwriting and spelling have led some scholars to deduce that he probably suffered from dyslexia.¹² This may also account for the fact that he was still having difficulty in speaking Italian even after having spent nearly a year in the country as a youth and later, in 1650, for about two years as a diplomat.¹³ Some of his contemporaries were quick to point out Killigrew’s seeming lack of intelligence. The poet John Denham quipped that “Had Cowley ne’re spoke, Killigrew ne’re writ, / Combin’d in one, they’d made a matchless wit”.¹⁴ In addition to being thought of as a fool, it is likely that he was also physically handicapped. Harbage relates an anecdote in which one of the Killigrew boys was dismissed from Prince Charles’s service

⁹ Sir William Killigrew was the elder brother to Thomas Killigrew. After the Restoration he was made the Vice-Chamberlain to the Queen and a Member for Parliament for Richmond in Yorkshire from 1664 to 1679. He was the author of four plays: *Ormasdes, or Love and Friendship*, *Pandora, or the Converts*, *Selindra*, and *The Siege of Urbin*. For a detailed study of William Killigrew’s life and works, see J. P. Vander Motten, *Sir William Killigrew: His Life and Dramatic Works* (Gent: Rijksuniversiteit te Gent, 1980). Dr Henry Killigrew was the younger brother of Thomas Killigrew and became chaplain and almoner to the Duke of York, and master of the Savoy after the Restoration. Henry Killigrew penned *The Conspiracy*, which was printed in 1638 and then in 1653 with its new title, *Pallantus and Eudora*. He also became the father of the famous poet, Anne Killigrew.

¹⁰ Harbage, *Thomas Killigrew*, p. 44. Anthony Wood, *Athenae Oxonienses*, ed. Philip Bliss, 4 vols (London: Johnson Reprint Society, 1967), iv, p. 692, wrote that Thomas Killigrew “was not educated at any university (and therefore wanted some learning to poise his excellent natural parts)”; Henry Bennet, later made Arlington, wondered how Killigrew’s “Parts / Gained this perfection without Bookes, or Art”; and William Cartwright stated that he lacked “what diverts some Men from sense, / Those two mysterious things, Greeke and Pretence”. Cited in David Roberts, “Thomas Killigrew, Theatre Manager”, in Philip Major, ed., *Thomas Killigrew and the Seventeenth Century English Stage* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 14n. Hereafter Roberts, “Thomas Killigrew, Theatre Manager”.

¹¹ *The Parson’s Wedding*, in Thomas Killigrew, *Comedies and Tragedies* (London, 1664), p. 154.

¹² J. P. Vander Motten and Katrien Daemen-de Gelder, “New Evidence about the Restoration Scenekeeper James Triggs?”, *Theatre Notebook*, 59.1 (2005), p. 19.

¹³ Harbage, *Thomas Killigrew*, p. 48.

¹⁴ Cited in *BDA*, ix, p. 8.

because the latter had taken a dislike to the boy's "crooked legs". While the name of the boy is not given, Harbage surmises that it was probably Thomas Killigrew.¹⁵ Despite the factual uncertainty that surrounds the event, a recent study has suggested that he may have been bow-legged.¹⁶ As if to compensate for his seemingly mental and physical limitations and, perhaps, in a desperate attempt to seek much desired attention, Killigrew according to Richard Flecknoe, "talkt madly, *dash, dash*, and never car'd how he bespatter'd others, or defil'd himself, sparing neither his own, nor others shames".¹⁷

The effect of all this was that Thomas Killigrew's own family treated him as an outcast; a black sheep in the otherwise respectable flock. J. P. Vander Motten argues that Killigrew's background presents a "neat illustration" of the governing conditions for those who adopt the artifices of "self-fashioning" later in life. Killigrew did not inherit a title or hierarchical status, his early education had been rather incidental and, most importantly, he was not cared for by his parents.¹⁸

What Thomas Killigrew did inherit from his parents were his father's savvy nature and his mother's charm and narcissistic tendencies. John Denham, despite mocking his writing, knew that Killigrew did not lack cunning, as he warned that those "who says [Killigrew] was not / A man of much Plot, / May repent that false Accusation".¹⁹ As for narcissism, Vander Motten, who closely studied the portraits of Killigrew, conclusively noted: "If anything, [the

¹⁵ Harbage, *Thomas Killigrew*, p. 51.

¹⁶ See my "Was Thomas Killigrew a Cripple? New Evidence in an Unpublished Letter from Thomas Killigrew to the Duke of Ormonde", *Notes and Queries*, 61.3 (2014), pp. 388-91.

¹⁷ Richard Flecknoe, *Life of Tomaso The Wanderer; An Epitome* (London, 1667), p. 6.

¹⁸ Self-fashioning is a term coined by Stephen Greenblatt which is used to describe the process of constructing one's image and public persona. See *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980; repr. 2005). J. P. Vander Motten, "Recycling the Exile: *Thomaso*, *The Rover* and the Critics", in Philip Major, ed., *Thomas Killigrew and the Seventeenth Century English Stage* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), p. 142.

¹⁹ "On Mr Tho. Killigrew's Return from his Embassie from Venice, and Mr. William Murray's from Scotland", in John Denham, *The Poetical Works of Sir John Denham*, ed. Theodore Howard Banks (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1969), pp. 111-12.

portraits] prove that Killigrew was never averse to having his vanity tickled, to put it mildly”.²⁰ Samuel Pepys, the diarist, having dined with Killigrew on 30 July 1667 complained, “I never heard so much vanity from a man in my life; so, being now weary of him, we parted”.²¹ Alongside his narcissism there was unmistakable charm.²² Anthony Wood noted how Killigrew “was much respected by all” especially by “poor cavaliers, that had suffer’d for his majesty’s cause”.²³ Killigrew knew exactly whom to please and how: Pepys recorded that Killigrew was “a merry droll” and “a gentleman of great esteem with the King”.²⁴ Killigrew’s considerable charm was not a contradictory feature of his personality, but part and parcel of his manipulative nature. Added to this potentially toxic mixture was his heightened sense of self-preservation. In Killigrew’s thinly-disguised autobiographical work, *Thomaso or the Wanderer*, he described the effects of such a childhood on his personality: “thrown from his Cradle...naked and unthought of by his Parent and Friends, and what was cruelty then, is happiness now; for being bred with the wolf he grew wise enough to thrive in the forest”.²⁵

Upon leaving his family home in Hansworth, Killigrew went on to hold various appointments from being a page of honour to Charles I, to Charles II’s diplomat at the

²⁰ Vander Motten, “Recycling the Exile”, p. 148. Killigrew presumably knew the impact of portraits as devices of self-fashioning as he had been on a Grand Tour of Europe with Sir Walter Montagu in the 1630s, during which he helped purchase paintings for the king. See John Stoye, *English Travellers Abroad 1604-1667* (New Haven-London: Yale University Press, 1989), p. 159.

²¹ Pepys, viii, p. 369. Likewise, the tenth stanza of *The Session of the Poets* (1668) condemned Killigrew’s vanity by describing Apollo refusing him a laurel crown: “Tom Killigrew boldly came up to the bar, Thinking his gibing would get him the bays, / But Apollo was angry and bid him beware / That he caught him no more a-printing his plays”. See *Poems on Affairs of State: Augustan Satirical Verse, 1660-1714*, ed. George de Forest Lord, 7 vols (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), i, p. 329.

²² Harbage writes, “His [Killigrew] charm must have been considerable”. See Harbage, *Thomas Killigrew*, p. 69.

²³ Wood, *Athenae Oxonienses*, iv, pp. 692-93.

²⁴ Pepys, i, p. 157.

²⁵ *Thomaso or the Wanderer* in Thomas Killigrew, *Comedies and Tragedies* (London, 1664), p. 321.

court-in-exile, to a soldier of fortune, and even, at one moment, to the court jester. When Killigrew had started his career as a page of honour in the early 1630s, he had supplemented his income of £100 a year by becoming a “court-vulture”. The job of a court-vulture involved petitioning the king either in cash or in confiscated properties from those deemed as enemies of the king and state. Harbage writes that “the whole practice was a vicious one, converting young gentlemen into civil spies – sometimes in league with professional bearers of false witness”.²⁶ Killigrew was, by all accounts, successful in this “sharp practice” as he was able to confiscate the estates of two Catholics, Francis Lockwood and Francis Smith – the latter was by then aged eighty. Harbage excused Killigrew’s cruelty by adding that “[Killigrew] was simply following the lead of his fellow courtiers”.²⁷ But at least one of his contemporaries believed that Killigrew “had a better place in Court, then he deserved”, and that he was “a perpetual Libel in the Court of others” and like “a dark Cloud obscuring all the rest...the Court wou’d shine far brighter if he [Killigrew] were but away”.²⁸

In court, Killigrew also managed to ingratiate himself with Queen Henrietta Maria. No doubt the Queen was familiar with the Killigrew name – his father and stepfather were both part of her coterie – but Thomas Killigrew was keen to make an impression of his own and probably wrote his first play, *The Prisoners*, a romantic tragic-comedy, for her. His bid for royal favour was presumably successful as Her Majesty’s Servants performed his play at the Phoenix, Drury Lane in 1636. Killigrew continued to write plays and by the late 1630s he had composed, in whole or in part, his next two tragic-comedies, *Claricilla* and *The Princesse*.

It was during Killigrew’s activities as one of the Queen’s playwriting-courtiers that he

²⁶ Harbage, *Thomas Killigrew*, p. 53. This was Killigrew’s early education in the art of spying as according to Sir Thomas Burnet “*Tom Killigrew, King Charles’s Jester, used to go into the City to bring the King Intelligence*”. See Thomas Burnet, *A letter to the people, to be left for them at the booksellers; with a word or two of the Bandbox Plot* (London, 1712), p. 14.

²⁷ Harbage, *Thomas Killigrew*, p. 53.

²⁸ Flecknoe, *Life of Tomaso the Wanderer*, pp. 6-7.

first met the maid of honor to Henrietta Maria and his wife to be – Cecilia Crofts.²⁹ The daughter of Sir John Crofts and his wife, she was of good family but as the tenth child, she was no heiress. On 29 June 1636 the couple were married at the Queen’s house and on 9 April 1637 their son Henry Killigrew was born. The marriage, though happy, was short-lived; Cecilia Crofts died on 1 January 1638. Killigrew is shown mourning for her in Van Dyke’s painting in 1638, *Thomas Killigrew and (?) William, Lord Crofts*, in which Killigrew is posed with his head supported by his hand – a posture traditionally associated with melancholy (Figure 1). In the double-portrait Killigrew is wearing his wife’s wedding-ring on his left wrist attached by a black band; attached to his other sleeve is a small silver cross inscribed with her intertwined initials. Killigrew’s distracted grief, as portrayed by Van Dyke, was very real. Harbage writes that “Thomas Killigrew began to go the pace after his wife died” and consequently “a certain coarsening of his nature seems to have taken place”.³⁰

The next few years saw the development of Killigrew’s lascivious and seamy side. He wrote his most famous comedy, *The Parson’s Wedding*, between 1639 and 1641. The bawdy tone of the comedy was in marked contrast to his three previous pieces and the play’s darker perspective on issues such as sex and marriage may have been induced by the tragic loss of his wife. It was also around this time that a satirical print by Wenceslaus Hollar was circulated in which Killigrew appears slumped over a table with his head supported by his hand – much like his pose for Van Dyke – wearing a gown lined with the faces of women with whom he had slept. The satirical verses below the picture have Killigrew shamelessly confessing to ruining his health and squandering his fortune through his lechery while listing his conquests: “Some Lovelie Faire, some black, and some are browne, / Some Wives, some Maidens, some rich and others poore / Some old, some young, yet everie one a whore”

²⁹ Harbage, *Thomas Killigrew*, pp. 56-58.

³⁰ Harbage, *Thomas Killigrew*, p. 70.

(Figure 2). Killigrew's activities during these years of whoring led to "indiscreet writing and talking, and – impecuniosity".³¹

The English Civil War (1642-1651) saw the execution of Charles I and the banishment of his son Charles II along with the defeated royalists. Killigrew laments this period in the foreword to his folio of plays as the beginning of his "Twenty Years Banishment".³² The description, however, could not have been further from the truth. Aside from the fact that he was probably away from England not for twenty but closer to seventeen years – Killigrew had been so hounded by his creditors during this time that the "war and exile were the saving of him".³³

Killigrew's appointment as Charles's Resident in Venice from 1650 to 1652, in which his primary goal was to raise much needed cash for his Prince, saw him engaging in a similar string of deceptions and lies. In *A Brief Relation of some Affaires and Transactions*, the correspondent from Rome reported on the arrival of Charles's new Resident. He described Killigrew as "a great Noble man of England, who calls himself an Earle, his name is Thomaso Killegrew, he professeth himself a Roman Catholique, is lodged at St. Marks palace, where he is sumptuously entertained by the Venetian Ambassadour".³⁴ Killigrew's stint as a diplomat was ignominiously cut short when he was accused of allowing the men of his livery the use of his residence for smuggling. This was not the first time Killigrew had been warned by the Venetian authorities. The Doge had earlier instructed him:

³¹ Harbage, *Thomas Killigrew*, p. 74.

³² See To the Reader to Killigrew's *Comedies and Tragedies* (London, 1664); EEBO 2.

³³ Harbage, *Thomas Killigrew*, p. 75.

³⁴ *A Brief Relation of some Affairs and Transactions...from Tuesday, January the 29. to Tuesday February the 5. 1649* (London, 1649-50), p. 281; cited in Vander Motten, "Recycling the Exile", p. 148. In a letter to an unknown friend, Killigrew criticised the idolatrous practices of the Catholic Church and its position on transubstantiation. For more information on the religious views of Killigrew, see J. P. Vander Motten, "'The Saucy Zeal of Layman': The Religious Views of Thomas Killigrew", *Lias*, 20 (2002), pp. 81-110.

As the complaints of the magistrates multiply concerning the continuation in his house of the abuse of smuggling, to the prejudice of our subjects and customs; and as [Killigrew] has not chosen to heed the warnings received from the state on several occasions, the Senate has resolved to dismiss him, and accordingly that he shall depart speedily.

Killigrew's immediate response was to feign ignorance. Secretary Ciera recounts Killigrew's reaction upon receiving the above instructions: "[Killigrew] expressed great astonishment and he indicated by gesture a total ignorance of the affair. He told me he would come to the Collegio to vindicate his innocence".³⁵ Despite emphatically – if not melodramatically – denying the substantive charge, Killigrew later admitted to having done “a little slaughtering to gain a living”.³⁶ Even Harbage could not repudiate the fact that Killigrew “exaggerated both the extent of his ignorance and the degree of his horror for the crime”.³⁷

Philip Major has argued that the dismissal was a mere pretext for the Venetians to please the Parliamentarians by spurning a royalist Resident.³⁸ However true this may be, at such a critical juncture for Charles II, it was self-serving of Killigrew to take advantage of his residence by repeatedly using it as “an asylum for prohibited goods as well as for outlaws and rogues”.³⁹ Clarendon understood the extent to which Killigrew had jeopardised Charles II's reputation for his own selfish gain. Clarendon wrote that Killigrew did “nothing to the honour of his master but was at last compelled to leave the republic for his vicious behaviour, of which the Venetian ambassador complained to the king when he came afterwards to Paris”.⁴⁰

³⁵ Rawdon Brown, ed., *Calendar of State Papers and manuscripts, relating to English affairs, existing in the archives and collections of Venice, and in other libraries of northern Italy* (London: Longman, 1864-1947), [1647-52], pp. 189-90. Hereafter cited as *CSPV*.

³⁶ *CSPV*, [1647-52], p. 247.

³⁷ Harbage, *Thomas Killigrew*, p. 95.

³⁸ Major, “Introduction: ‘A Man of Much Plot’”, in Philip Major, ed. *Thomas Killigrew and the Seventeenth Century English Stage* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), p. 5.

³⁹ *CSPV*, [1647-52], p. 250.

⁴⁰ Hyde, Edward, first Earl of Clarendon, *The History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England begun in the Year 1641*, ed. W. D. Macray, 6 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1888, repr. 1969), v, pp.

After Venice, Killigrew stayed at the Hague, where he enjoyed the protection of Elizabeth, the Queen of Bohemia. It was due to Elizabeth's mediation with her nephew, Charles II, and in turn, his interceding with Willem Frederik of Nassau-Dietz, stadholder of Friesland, that Killigrew was appointed captain in the service of the states general.⁴¹ According to Richard Flecknoe, Killigrew became a Captain instead of a soldier "to scape fighting". Killigrew's military career was summed up by the same interlocutor as the officer who now and then brought "a Convoy of Wenches to the Camp", an activity that gained him the "Title of Pimp-Master General of the Army".⁴² Killigrew would later use the same tactic as theatre manager, hiring prostitutes to satisfy his disgruntled actors.⁴³

At any rate, it is highly unlikely that Killigrew was chosen to be captain for his "courage and experience in matters of war", but rather because both Charles II and the stadholder liked and therefore looked out for Killigrew's interests.⁴⁴ The very kindness and protection offered by Charles II and the stadholder are what makes Killigrew's subsequent action in 1658 so detestable. Killigrew had been accompanying Charles II on his "semi-secret" tour of the United Provinces from early September, during which he visited the Frisian stadholder. A month or so later, on 18 October, Sir George Downing, who was then serving Oliver Cromwell, reported that he had "an account from one Killigrew of his bed-chamber" concerning Charles II's complete itinerary and the company he kept.⁴⁵ If Killigrew did

86-87.

⁴¹ J. P. Vander Motten, "Killigrew, Thomas (1612-1683)", *ODNB*, online edn, Jan. 2008.

⁴² Flecknoe, *Life of Tomaso the Wanderer*, pp. 7-8.

⁴³ Pepys, ix, p. 425.

⁴⁴ Both Charles II and the stadholder, for instance, protected Killigrew from the request of John Milton, serving as Latin secretary to Cromwell, who pleaded with the Frisian paymasters on 27 February 1659, not to allow him to escape outstanding debts in England. See J. P. Vander Motten, "Killigrew, Thomas (1612-1683)", *ODNB*, online edn, Jan. 2008.

⁴⁵ See Vander Motten, "Thomas Killigrew's 'Lost Years', 1655-1660", *Neophilologus*, 82 (1998), pp. 320-25. Vander Motten described Thomas Killigrew "as restless a schemer as ever". He further writes, "Killigrew cannot have failed to perceive the true nature of his communication. Secretly supplying a full

indeed supply this information to Downing, he was not merely hedging his bets but, worse, backstabbing his own king.

It was also at the Hague that Killigrew met his second wife, Charlotte van Hesse-Piershil, the daughter of Johan van Hesse of Holland, and keeper of the sweet coffers to Catherine of Braganza. The couple were married on 28 January 1655 and within a year their first son, Charles Killigrew, was born. Charles Killigrew, who was to play a pivotal role in ending his father's career as theatre manager, soon had two younger brothers. In fact Thomas Killigrew stands out as one of only a few royalists who started a family during exile, rather than trying to support an existing one, and was the only cavalier author to have used his experience as a courtier in exile as material for his writing. As Vander Motten notes:

the circumstances surrounding this Anglo-Dutch match suggest that [Killigrew] possessed the unique ability, at the nodal point of personal, familial and political interests, to turn to his own advantage Charles II's entente cordiale with the Frisian stadholder.⁴⁶

While it may seem unfair to describe Killigrew's contracting a marriage to a wealthy Dutch heiress as purely opportunistic, it is significant that years later, Charlotte and her children were to be excluded from his will and Killigrew requested to be buried next to his first wife, Cecilia Crofts, upon his death. The woebegone Charlotte petitioned the king for relief after Killigrew's death, arguing that she had given "a considerable fortune to her husband" but because "his affections were withdrawn from her...he has left her and her two youngest sons in a very necessitous condition".⁴⁷

account of the King's itinerary and of the company he kept would have constituted a form of treason. Nor can he have been unaware of the potential consequences of such an act: Henry Manning, a royalist working as an agent for Cromwell's government, had been caught and shot as recently as 1655".

⁴⁶ Vander Motten, "Recycling the Exile", pp. 133-34.

⁴⁷ *CSPD*, [January to June 1683], p. 220. This was in contrast to how Killigrew treated his first son Henry Killigrew – the son of Cecilia Crofts – a notorious rake and groom of the bedchamber to the king. Henry Killigrew, known as "lying Harry", was famous for his antics. He was banished from Court for saying that Barbara Palmer, 1st Duchess of Cleveland, Countess of Castlemaine, the most famous of

Publicly, Killigrew earned notoriety as the King's fool or jester.⁴⁸ According to Pepys, Killigrew who "hath a fee out of the Wardrobe for cap and bells", held the sole privilege of being allowed to "revile or jeere any body", even "the greatest person, without offence".⁴⁹ This privilege even extended to affronting the king. Killigrew is quoted as abusing Charles II to his face accusing him of being the one who "spends his time in imploying his lips and his prick about the Court, and has no other imployment".⁵⁰ John Wilmot, 2nd Earl of Rochester, was once so offended by the "mirth and raillery" of the playhouse manager that "he did give Tom Killigrew a box on the ear in the King's presence".⁵¹ Flecknoe, who was similarly incensed by the jester, wrote with considerable spite that Killigrew was "born to discredit all the professions he was of; the Traveller, Courtier, Soldier, Writer, and the Buffoon".⁵²

Stage Rivalry

On 29 May 1660, Charles II reclaimed the throne and made his triumphant entry into London. Killigrew was among the returning royalists on board the flagship *Royal Charles*, where he entertained the king with a jocular ditty, "which he sang to Charles II till tears of

Charles II's mistresses, had been a "little lecherous girl". For other misdeeds see *BDA*, ix, pp. 5-7. Pepys on 30 May 1668 wrote that Henry Killigrew's "mad bawdy talk made [Pepys's] heart ake". The diarist was in fact so scared of Henry Killigrew that when he went to a puppet show in Moorfield on 1 September 1666 he felt "horribly frightened to see Young Killigrew come in with a great many more young sparks" so the Pepyses hid themselves "so as we think they did not see us". See Pepys, ix, p. 218; vii, p. 267. While Harbage blames Henry Killigrew for spoiling Thomas Killigrew's reputation "since it is largely owing to his actions that his father's name has been one of such ill repute down to our own day", I would argue that Thomas Killigrew favoured his son precisely because of their similarities. See Harbage, *Thomas Killigrew*, p. 108. Not only did Thomas Killigrew, soon after setting up his troupe in July 1662, grant Henry an allowance of £4 a week from company profits, he also left the largest part of his estate and the arrears on his pension to Henry Killigrew. Henry Killigrew later sold his stipend to Thomas Porter who in turn sold it for £600 to Sir John Sayer and his wife. See Hotson, p. 256.

⁴⁸ See Martin W. Walsh, "Killigrew's Cap and Bells", *Theatre Notebook*, 38 (1984), pp. 99-105.

⁴⁹ Pepys, ix, pp. 66-67.

⁵⁰ Pepys, vii, p. 400.

⁵¹ Pepys, ix, p. 451.

⁵² Flecknoe, *Life of Tomaso the Wanderer*, p. 3.

laughter ran down the merry monarch's cheeks".⁵³ Killigrew's closeness to the king during the years of exile paid off when he was appointed, along with Sir William Davenant, to shared control of the London public theatres.

It is unclear how Charles II envisaged the relationship working between the two theatres. However, it appears that the patent duopoly represented a reward for service and loyalty by the two courtiers during Charles's exile at a time when he was often in need of money and friends. In addition to rewarding loyal courtiers, by limiting professional theatres to two and by operating them under the direct patronage of the king and the Duke of York, Charles II hoped to maximize official control and thus minimize the threat to the state from non-loyalists. As Susan Owen suggests, "the Restoration of the theatres together with the king was to be a symbol of the rejection of the 'puritan' regime of the interregnum".⁵⁴ Charles II, therefore, presumably saw the two theatres working alongside each other for the greater purpose of pro-Stuart propaganda much like "a public relations team advertising the restored monarchy".⁵⁵ Perhaps Charles II was too concerned with the political dimension of the stage and overlooked the fact that running a theatre was also a business venture. With less than 30,000 theatre-goers in London the two managers had to compete in order to make their businesses profitable.⁵⁶ The two companies and their respective managers, therefore, had to walk a tightrope between cooperation and contest: they were united in their mission to serve the monarchy's interests but they were also serious business rivals.

Shirley Strum Kenny used the term "theatrical warfare" when considering the rivalry

⁵³ Pepys, i, p. 157.

⁵⁴ Susan Owen, *Restoration Theatre and Crisis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 11.

⁵⁵ Nancy Klein Maguire, *Regicide and Restoration: English Tragicomedy, 1660-1671* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 85.

⁵⁶ For a full study of Restoration audience, see Allan Richard Botica, "Audience, Playhouse and Play in Restoration Theatre, 1660-1710", unpublished DPhil thesis (Oxford University, 1985), p. 35.

between theatre companies during the Restoration.⁵⁷ But she was specifically referring to the rivalry between Christopher Rich and Thomas Betterton from 1695 to 1710. The intense enmity between the two managers undoubtedly deepened the intensity of the rivalry so that the competition between those two men at that time period possibly warrants the term “warfare”.⁵⁸ No such deep-seated hatred seems to have affected the Killigrew-Davenant rivalry. Even though Killigrew belonged to a continental faction of poets – that included Sir John Denham and William Crofts – who were all “dire foes” of Davenant’s *Gondibert*, their shared past of loyalism undoubtedly overshadowed such literary spats.⁵⁹ In terms of the rivalry between Killigrew and Davenant, therefore, the term “warfare” may be considered too strong.

Indeed on occasions Killigrew and Davenant seemed capable of working together. For instance, they clearly had a shared interest in maintaining their duopoly. David Roberts writes that “they did not flinch from using their duopoly to suppress unofficial competition”.⁶⁰ This is no more apparent than when Killigrew and Davenant conspired together to bribe George Jolly out of his patent. There are also instances of when Killigrew and Davenant seemed united in their artistic vision: they began the season of 1660 by setting up a company together and the two men supervised a joint nursery for young actors.⁶¹

However, to characterize their relationship as genial would also be inaccurate. The two

⁵⁷ See Shirley Strum Kenny, “Theatrical Warfare 1695-1710”, *Theatre Notebook*, 27 (1973), pp. 130-45.

⁵⁸ Judith Milhous’s *Thomas Betterton and the Management of Lincoln’s Inn Fields, 1695-1708* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1979) gives the best account of the rivalry between Rich and Betterton.

⁵⁹ See Vander Motten, “Recycling the Exile”, p. 141.

⁶⁰ David Roberts, *Restoration Plays and Players: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 29.

⁶¹ Tiffany Stern suggests the fact that the two men ran a joint nursery means that there was “compatibility of Davenant’s and Killigrew’s ideas about the preparation and performance of plays”. See Tiffany Stern, *Rehearsal from Shakespeare to Sheridan* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), p. 128.

managers were not above sabotaging each other's chances of success. Davenant, for instance, lured Thomas Betterton from the King's Company. Killigrew, on the other hand, mounted Davenant's plays at his theatre.⁶² There is no evidence to suggest that Killigrew was consulted over Betterton or that Davenant authorized the production of his plays by Killigrew. In fact, soon after Davenant lured Betterton from Killigrew's troupe, an order was issued by the Lord Chamberlain forbidding one troupe from hiring personnel from the other troupe.⁶³ As for Killigrew mounting Davenant's plays, this was never again repeated which suggests that Davenant put a stop to this practice. Even when the two managers showed signs of working together it never seemed to last: the setting up of a joint company fell apart within months and the Nursery did not last because the Duke's Company set up its own independent acting school.

Defining the relationship between the patent troupes is difficult as it was regularly in a state of flux. What sort of relationship the two companies had depended heavily on the respective managers' personalities and by events surrounding the rivalry. This is partly why theatre historians have adopted contradictory terms when describing the competition between the two Carolean troupes. Robert D. Hume has described the two companies fighting "epic battles" while David Roberts has characterized the competition as being "friendly".⁶⁴ The truth is probably somewhere between the two opposing views. The two companies were not averse to working together if it benefitted both troupes but the relationship was not genial

⁶² Killigrew's troupe mounted Davenant's play, *The Unfortunate Lovers*, on 19 November 1660. On 12 December 1660 the Lord Chamberlain declared that Davenant is allowed "to represent by the Actors under his Command all the playes written by himself formerly". See PRO LC5/137, p. 343.

⁶³ Milhous writes "Betterton was definitely a member of the King's Company in October 1660; by the fifth of November he was a signatory to the Duke's Company's sharers' agreement; on 12 December the Lord Chamberlain forbade the transfer of actors from one company to the other". See Milhous, *Betterton*, p. 8.

⁶⁴ Robert D. Hume, 'Theatre History, 1660-1800: Aims, Materials, Methodology', in *Players, Playwrights, Playhouses, Investigating Performance 1660-1800*, ed. Michael Cordner and Peter Holland (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 19; Roberts, "Thomas Killigrew, Theatre Manager", p. 64.

enough to sustain any serious working partnership.

Scholarly investigation into the interaction between the Carolean companies has been singularly meagre. The *London Stage* is a magnificent resource for theatre historians and is indispensable in helping re-create a sense of the circumstances in which the companies operated. While it is true that the *London Stage* does have season introductions it is also true that it does not fully interpret the data.⁶⁵ John Genest's ten-volume calendar is a predecessor of the *London Stage*, which contained similar information but did not report the primary sources as thoroughly.⁶⁶ Experienced scholars such as Allardyce Nicoll, Leslie Hotson, Montague Summers, and J. H. Wilson all present exemplary documented studies of each company but give little sense of the cut and thrust between the troupes.⁶⁷ *The Revels History of Drama* provides a condensed history – of only four pages – again without analysis.⁶⁸

Studies in theatrical competition do exist, but they have focussed on later conflicts. Shirley Strum Kenny's article in 1973 was the first to capitalise on theatrical rivalry, but it

⁶⁵ *The London Stage, 1660-1800*, Part 1: 1660-1700, ed. William Van Lennep, with a Critical Introduction by Emmett L. Avery and Arthur H. Scouten (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1965).

⁶⁶ John Genest, *Some Account of the English Stage from the Restoration in 1660- to 1830*, 10 vols (Bath, 1832).

⁶⁷ Leslie Hotson, *The Commonwealth and Restoration Stage* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1928); Allardyce Nicoll, *A History of the Restoration Drama 1660-1700*, 4th edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952); Montague Summers, *The Restoration Theatre* (London: K. Paul, Trench, Trubner & co. 1934); Summers, *The Playhouse of Pepys* (London: K. Paul, Trench, Trubner & co. 1935); J. H. Wilson, *Mr Goodman, the Player* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1964). Hotson's work in particular is a definitive study on the suppression of small companies.

⁶⁸ John Loftis et al eds., *The Revels History of Drama in English, Volume 5: 1660-1750* (London: Methuen, 1976), pp. 119-22. The same can be said of more recent studies such as David Thomas and Arnold Hare's *Restoration and Georgian England, 1660-1788* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), the first volume of the series called *Theatre in Europe: A Documentary History*, which provide extensive annotations on key theatrical documents of the period both in and outside of London; and William J. Burling's work which crucially documented what was happening outside of the formal theatrical season in London in *Summer Theatre in London, 1661-1820, and the Rise of the Haymarket Theatre* (Madison, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2000).

focuses solely on the period after 1695.⁶⁹ The vying between the Carolean troupes is discussed only briefly as a preamble in Judith Milhous's *Thomas Betterton and the Management of Lincoln's Inn Fields, 1695-1708*.⁷⁰ Kathryn Lowerre's monograph, *Music and Musicians on the London Stage, 1695-1705*, traces the impact of theatrical competition specifically on the use of music after Henry Purcell's death in 1695, but does not extend this to consider drama.⁷¹ *The Stage's Glory* partly deals with theatrical competition, but only when John Rich was theatre manager.⁷² Brian Corman's monograph, *Genre and Generic Change in English Comedy, 1660-1710*, similarly deals with the territory but as Robert D. Hume wrote, a comprehensive story of the rivalry between the Carolean companies has "never yet been seriously told".⁷³

The lack of studies in Carolean theatrical competition perhaps explains why recent scholarship in Restoration drama continues to neglect and underestimate its influence. Instead studies have tended to focus on external factors such as socio-political contexts. The effects of politics on Restoration drama have received ample attention by scholars which include works such as: Paula R. Backscheider's *Spectacular Politics*, Susan Staves's *Players' Sceptres*, Derek Hughes's *Dryden's Heroic Plays*, Susan J. Owen's *Restoration Theatre and Crisis*, and Nancy Klein Maguire's *Regicide and Restoration*.⁷⁴ Other scholars have focussed

⁶⁹ Shirley Strum Kenny, "Theatrical Warfare 1695-1710", *Theatre Notebook*, 27 (1973), pp. 130-45.

⁷⁰ Milhous, *Betterton*, pp. 4-37.

⁷¹ Kathryn Lowerre, *Music and Musicians on the London Stage, 1695-1705* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009). Music and dance in Restoration Theatre are expertly dealt with in Curtis Price's monograph, *Henry Purcell and the London Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

⁷² Berta Joncus and Jeremy Barlow eds. *"The Stage's Glory": John Rich, 1692-1761* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2011).

⁷³ Here Hume does diminish the contribution he made in his own *Development*. Robert D. Hume, "Theatre History, 1660-1800", p. 19.

⁷⁴ Paula R. Backscheider, *Spectacular Politics: Theatrical Power and Mass Culture in Early Modern England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993); Susan Staves, *Players' Sceptres: Fictions of Authority in the Restoration* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1979); Derek Hughes, *Dryden's Heroic Plays* (London: Macmillan, 1981); Susan J. Owen, *Restoration Theatre and Crisis* (Oxford:

on sociological factors that influenced the drama of the period. Mark Dawson's *Gentility and the Comic Theatre of Late Stuart London*, for instance, approaches Restoration drama in the context of class and class anxiety.⁷⁵ Katherine M. Quinsey's edited volume, *Broken Boundaries: Women and Feminism in Restoration Drama*, examines the plays of the period with a feminist perspective.⁷⁶ Cultural context characterized the work of J. Douglas Canfield and Deborah C. Payne's *Cultural Readings of Restoration and Eighteenth-Century English Theatre* and Catie Gill's edited volume of collected essays, *Theatre and Culture in Early Modern England, 1650-1737*.⁷⁷ While changes in drama are, often, and quite rightly ascribed to external influences (political, social or cultural), the development of Carolean drama cannot be adequately explained without a detailed history of the competition.

My thesis also adds crucially to the understanding of production circumstances surrounding Carolean drama. Plays in the period have often been discussed in various different context of theatrical practice. Jocelyn Powell, for instance, focuses on the technologies of performance in her monograph, *Restoration Theatre Production*.⁷⁸ Peter Holland's pioneering book, *The Ornament of Action*, demonstrate how acting styles and scenery influence the interpretation of Restoration plays.⁷⁹ Judith Milhous and Robert D.

Clarendon Press, 1996); Nancy Klein Maguire, *Regicide and Restoration: English Tragicomedy, 1660-1671* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

⁷⁵ Mark S. Dawson, *Gentility and the Comic Theatre of Late Stuart London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

⁷⁶ Katherine M. Quinsey, ed. *Broken Boundaries: Women & Feminism in Restoration Drama* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1996).

⁷⁷ J. Douglas Canfield and Deborah C. Payne eds., *Cultural Readings of Restoration and Eighteenth-Century English Theatre* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1995); Catie Gill ed. *Theatre and Culture in Early Modern England, 1650-1737: from Leviathan to Licensing Act* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010). Other cultural studies include Cynthia Wall's *The Literary and Cultural Spaces of Restoration London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), which looks at the geographical context for the plays in the period.

⁷⁸ Jocelyn Powell, *Restoration Theatre Production* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984).

⁷⁹ Peter Holland, *The Ornament of Action: Text and Performance in Restoration Comedy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

Hume's *Producible Interpretation: Eight English Plays, 1675-1707* follow up on Holland's work by showing how the study of casting dramatically changes our understanding of plays.⁸⁰ Elizabeth Howe's book, *The First English Actresses*, broadens the scope by considering the effect of the first professional female players and playwrights on the Restoration stage.⁸¹ Tiffany Stern's *Rehearsal from Shakespeare to Sheridan* is the authoritative study on the rehearsal process during the period.⁸² These invaluable works therefore have contributed to the understanding of the physical production conditions that influence drama such as the use of technologies, acting styles, and rehearsals. This study seeks to contribute to the above mentioned body of work by adding another facet to the production circumstances of the Carolean period by providing a close survey of the competition between the two patent companies.⁸³

Theatre Manager

Tiffany Stern writes that "because of the complex nature of the different companies in existence during the Restoration, the role of managers is hard to pin down".⁸⁴ This is not entirely true. The patent grants awarded to both Thomas Killigrew and Sir William Davenant provide the clearest indication as to the theatre manager's roles and responsibilities during the period under review. Judith Milhous has supplied an exemplary summary of Davenant's

⁸⁰ Judith Milhous and Robert D. Hume, *Producible Interpretation: Eight English Plays, 1675-1707* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1985).

⁸¹ Elizabeth Howe, *The First English Actresses: Women and Drama 1660-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992). Joseph R. Roach's *The Players' Passion: Studies in the Science of Acting* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1985), in turn, places the technicality of performance in the context of scientific and rhetorical theory of the period.

⁸² See Stern, *Rehearsal*. Chapter 4 of her work is particularly concerned with the rehearsal process of the period pertaining to this thesis.

⁸³ As I have mentioned before, although studies on competition do exist but this thesis is the first to cover the production circumstances during the Carolean period.

⁸⁴ Stern, *Rehearsal*, p. 176.

patent – that is “substantively identical” with the Killigrew patent – and condensed it to the following 10 points, which is worth repeating here.⁸⁵

1) Davenant can build a theatre anywhere he pleases “within our Cities of London and Westminster or the Suburbs thereof”. 2) “Davenant his heires or Assignes” have the right to present “Tragedies Comedies Playes Opera’s musick Scenes and all other entertainments of the stage whatsoever”. 3) Davenant has the right “to Acte Playes and entertaynments of the Stage of all sorts peaceable and quietly without the impeachment or impediment of any person or persons”. 4) Davenant can charge patrons “such sune or sumes...as shalbee thought reasonable by him” 5) “The said Company shalbee under the sole Government and authoritie of the said Sir William Davenant...And all scandalous and mutinous persons shall from tyme to tyme be ejected and disabled from playing in the said Theatre”. 6) The “onely the said Company erected and set up...by the said Sir William Davenant...and other Company erected...by Thomas Killigrew Esq...shall from henceforth Acte or represent...entertainments of the Stage”. 7) To “preserve Amity...betwixt the said Companies and that the one may not encroach upon the other by any indirect means we will and Command that no Acter or other person...ejected by the said Sir William Davenant and Thomas Killigrew or either of them or deserting his Company shalbe received by the Governor or any of the said other Company”. 8) The patentees are responsible for suppressing offensive material: “And forasmuch as many Playes formerly acted do conteyn several profane obscene and scurrilous passages...for the preventing of these abuses...we do hereby strictly Command and enjoyne that from henceforth noe new Playes shalbee acted...conteyning any passages offensive to pietye and good manners nor any old or revived play conteyning any such passages...until the same shalbee Corrected and purged by the said masters or Governors of the said respective Companies”. 9) Because in the past “the women

⁸⁵ Milhous, *Betterton*, pp. 5-7.

partes...have been Acted by men in the habits of women att which some have taken Offence”, the king grants that “all the women’s partes to bee Acted in either of the said two Companies for the time to come may be performed by women”. 10) The patent then finally states that what is stipulated in the patent shall “be in all Things Good and Effectual in the Law, according to the true Intent and Meaning of the same”.⁸⁶

According to the patent, therefore, the responsibility or the role of the manager was all-encompassing and included everything from hiring and retaining theatrical personnel to enforcing company discipline, setting the ticket prices, making repertory choices, dealing with company finances and shares, improving stage technology and building playhouses. The patent, in other words, demonstrates the manager’s legal, financial and artistic authority over their companies.

While the role of the theatre manager is well-defined in the patent, to what extent the manager made use of his or her powers is an entirely different question and an altogether more nebulous issue. For instance, managers could choose to either exercise his or her authority over the company or delegate their responsibilities to their employees. Lady Mary Davenant, for example, chose to delegate the artistic direction of the Duke’s Company to two of her leading actor-shareholders, Thomas Betterton and Henry Harris, after the death of her husband.⁸⁷ The patent, moreover, does not guarantee a manager’s effectiveness in carrying out the roles and responsibilities that are stipulated. One of the biggest objections to the Cibber-Wilks-Doggett triumvirate in the early eighteenth-century was that they “took no Care to breed up young Actors”.⁸⁸ Indeed whether a theatre manager was successfully involved in

⁸⁶ See PRO C66/3009.

⁸⁷ Thomas Killigrew, in the same manner, briefly delegated his authority to his leading actor-shareholders in 1663 but could just as easily and justifiably take his authority back, as he did soon afterwards.

⁸⁸ Colley Cibber, *An Apology for the Life of Mr Colley Cibber*, ed. R. W. Lowe, 2 vols (London, 1889), ii, p. 302. The triumvirate consisted of Colley Cibber, Robert Wilks, and Thomas Doggett.

the daily running of the company is a matter of debate and argument, hence the various studies dedicated to theatre managers and their often conflicting conclusions.⁸⁹

The important point remains, however, that if the manager wished to impose his or her authority, as stipulated by the patent, then he was legally permitted to do so. The power that was invested in the manager through the patent was in fact so clearly stipulated that there was always the potential for tyranny as the lawyer turned theatre manager Christopher Rich knew all too well.

Thomas Killigrew's biggest achievements are all within the remit of the roles and responsibilities of the theatre manager. As theatre manager of the King's Company, he had the longest association with a single acting troupe of the period. Killigrew was adept at hiring and retaining the best playwrights especially at the beginning of the competition. Robert D. Hume writes: "Sir Robert Howard was one of the major sharers in the King's Company, and all three Howards favoured Killigrew with their work...more important yet, their brother-in-law Dryden contracted himself to the King's Company. The Duke's Company never discovered so certain a meal ticket".⁹⁰ Killigrew also introduced major performers such as Nell Gwyn to the stage, and possibly tutored them as well. Killigrew's productions of some of the best-known works by John Dryden and William Wycherley continue to "define the peaks of comic and tragic achievement in the period".⁹¹ Moreover, Killigrew exerted a lasting influence on English drama through the establishment of the first Theatre Royal, in Drury Lane.

Despite having a powerful effect on the development of drama, theatre managers have historically received short shrift from scholars when compared with the attention that

⁸⁹ A case in point is the conflicting views on Thomas Betterton's managerial skills as seen in Shirley Strum Kenny's article and Milhous's *Betterton*.

⁹⁰ Hume, *Development*, p. 247.

⁹¹ Roberts, "Thomas Killigrew, Theatre Manager", p. 64.

Carolean dramatists have enjoyed.⁹² James A. Winn's extraordinary work *John Dryden and His World* is of paramount importance in biographical studies of the period.⁹³ Other playwrights such as George Etherege, William Wycherley and Thomas Otway have all received individual critical attention in such works as Dale Underwood's *Etherege and the Seventeenth-Century Comedy of Manners*, Rose A. Zimbardo's *Wycherley's Drama: A Link in the Development of English Satire*, and Jessica Munns's, *Restoration Politics and Drama: The Plays of Thomas Otway, 1675-1683*.⁹⁴

The lack of scholarly interest is especially true in the case of Thomas Killigrew. Until recently Killigrew's management had seldom been much discussed and, on the rare occasions when critics referred to Killigrew's managerial career they had been mostly dismissive. The only full-length biography on Thomas Killigrew was by Alfred Harbage and was published nearly a century ago, but his study did not consider Killigrew's career as a theatre manager. William T. Reich's edition of *Claricilla* in 1980 is the most recent publication of any of Killigrew's plays and its introduction focuses on his playwriting, not his managerial career.⁹⁵ Theatre historians such as Arthur Nethercot and Mary Edmond have concentrated solely on the achievements of the Duke's Company's manager, Sir William Davenant.⁹⁶ Vander

⁹² Theatre managers of later periods have received more attention than their Restoration counterparts. As mentioned above, John Rich's career has been the subject of Berta Joncus and Jeremy Barlow's collected essays in 2011. David Garrick was also the subject of a recent study by Jean Benedetti's *David Garrick and the Birth of Modern Theatre* (London: Methuen, 2001); and Aaron Hill received a fresh dose of attention in Christine Gerrard's biography, *Aaron Hill: The Muses' Projector, 1685-1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

⁹³ James A. Winn, *John Dryden and His World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987).

⁹⁴ Dale Underwood, *Etherege and the Seventeenth-Century Comedy of Manners* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957); Rose A. Zimbardo, *Wycherley's Drama: A Link in the Development of English Satire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965); Jessica Munns, *Restoration Politics and Drama: The Plays of Thomas Otway, 1675-1683* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1995).

⁹⁵ Thomas Killigrew, *Claricilla*, by Thomas Killigrew, ed. William T. Reich (New York: Garland, 1980).

⁹⁶ Arthur H. Nethercot, *Sir William D'Avenant: Poet Laureate and Playwright-Manager* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1938); Mary Edmond, *Rare Sir William Davenant: Poet Laureate*,

Motten wrote that Killigrew “had insufficient practical sense of the theatre to compete successfully with Davenant”.⁹⁷ Peter Thomson contrasted the two managers, Killigrew and Davenant, by characterizing Killigrew as “an amateur and Davenant a professional”.⁹⁸ Montague Summers wrote that “in theatrical history Davenant was a far greater and more important figure than Killigrew”.⁹⁹ Derek Hughes has similarly labelled Killigrew as a “doodling amateur”.¹⁰⁰ Allardyce Nicoll wrote Killigrew was “hopeless as a manager”.¹⁰¹ Davenant’s protégé Thomas Betterton has also received greater attention by critics such as Judith Milhous and David Roberts. The latter wrote the most recent biography on the actor-manager and the former on Betterton’s managerial career.¹⁰² Milhous’s influential work *Thomas Betterton* aimed at defending Betterton’s career as a theatre manager from critics such as Robert Gould and Shirley Strum Kenny.¹⁰³ It is not surprising therefore that Killigrew – Betterton’s early rival – should bear the brunt of her attack for his apparent failures.

The reasons for Killigrew’s enduring status as a “strangely elusive figure” may be due to several factors. Philip Major, for instance, has argued that it is because of the imbalance within the historiography of seventeenth-century British studies that has thus far been overwhelmingly in favour of parliamentarians and revolutionaries.¹⁰⁴ Killigrew’s reputation,

Playwright, Civil War General, Restoration Theatre Manager (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987).

⁹⁷ J. P. Vander Moten, “Killigrew, Thomas (1612-1683)”, *ODNB*, online edn, Jan. 2008.

⁹⁸ Peter Thomson, *The Cambridge Introduction to English Theatre, 1660-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 9.

⁹⁹ Summers, *Playhouse of Pepys*, p. 4.

¹⁰⁰ Derek Hughes, *English Drama, 1660-1700* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), p. 2.

¹⁰¹ Nicoll, *History*, p. 323.

¹⁰² David Roberts, *Thomas Betterton: The Greatest Actor of the Restoration Stage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Milhous, *Betterton*.

¹⁰³ Robert Gould, *Poems Chiefly Consisting of Satyrs and Satirical Epistles* (London, 1689).

¹⁰⁴ Major, “Introduction”, pp. 1-2.

however unfair, as an unprincipled cavalier and court hanger-on has made him unfashionable in the eyes of modern scholarship. Another reason for the comparative dearth of critical works on the subject may be because Killigrew had been solely blamed for the mismanagement and the eventual collapse of the King's Company. Killigrew thus became a scapegoat for theatre historians on whom a narrative of decline – both in terms of competence and ethics of theatrical practice – could conveniently be attached.

The pendulum, however, has begun to swing the other way for Killigrew. Among other recent studies, in 2013 a new volume of collected essays – as part of Ashgate's New Perspective series – was compiled to mark the quatercentenary of the birth of Thomas Killigrew.¹⁰⁵ *Thomas Killigrew and the Seventeenth-Century English Stage* was the first book on Killigrew since the publication of Harbage's biography in 1930. The two works share a common objective of rehabilitating the reputation of Thomas Killigrew as a shallow and morally reprehensible cavalier.¹⁰⁶ The editor of the volume, Philip Major, for instance, repeatedly asks his readers to "extend a shared sympathy" for Killigrew despite his apparent offences.¹⁰⁷ Contributors to the volume such as Geoffrey Smith went so far as to say that Killigrew was not "ambitious" and was "free of the qualities of cynicism and viciousness".¹⁰⁸ David Roberts, in one of the essays in the volume, reassesses the charge that Killigrew was purely a mercenary playhouse manager. In tune with the exculpatory nature of the volume, Roberts endeavours to redeem some of Killigrew's devious managerial tactics by comparing

¹⁰⁵ For other recent studies on Killigrew see my "Thomas Killigrew's Early Managerial Career: Carolean Stage Rivalry in London, 1663-1668", *Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Theatre Research*, 27.2 (2012), pp. 13-33.

¹⁰⁶ Despite Major's assertions, as the editor of the volume, that the purpose of the new study is "to unsettle the neat categorizations we have come accustomed to" about Killigrew, the book nevertheless – much like Harbage's work – is exonerative in nature.

¹⁰⁷ Major, "Introduction", p. 6.

¹⁰⁸ Geoffrey Smith, "'A Gentleman of Great Esteem with the King': The Restoration Roles and Reputations of Thomas Killigrew", in Philip Major, ed. *Thomas Killigrew and the Seventeenth Century English Stage* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), p. 174.

these “to the by no means consistently principled behaviour of his rivals” and by arguing that Killigrew was simply more reactive in managerial style than his competitors.¹⁰⁹

My thesis challenges the predominant assertion that Thomas Killigrew was an incompetent manager but it also differs critically from the most recent revisionist study on Killigrew by arguing that his effectiveness as a theatre manager was partly due to his unprincipled nature. In other words the very same qualities, or rather the vices, that scholars of Killigrew such as Harbage and Major have shied away from I would argue were the tools which helped him to be successful as a theatre manager. Rather than eschewing or justifying the manipulative and sinister side of Killigrew, this work relishes – and even celebrates – his devilish nature.¹¹⁰

Organisation of the Thesis

This account starts from Killigrew’s beginnings as the manager of the King’s Company from 1660 and concludes in 1682 when the King’s Company was effectively taken over by its rival, the Duke’s Company, to make one United Company, thus ending the span of theatrical competition in the Carolean period. Each chapter is divided in accordance with the beginning and end of significant events of rivalry and are organised chronologically at different phases of the competition, encompassing the span of twenty-two years in five chapters. The thesis adopts a chronological perspective because it shows the important influence of the day-to-day running of the theatres on the development of Carolean drama and because it best demonstrates the wider circumstantial contexts in which Killigrew had to operate as a theatre manager. This, however, means that there are certain thematic repetitions

¹⁰⁹ Roberts, “Thomas Killigrew, Theatre Manager”, p. 65.

¹¹⁰ Killigrew’s first contact with the theatre, after all, was as the devil. Sir John Mennes told Pepys over dinner in 1662 that the young Thomas Killigrew “would go to the Red Bull, and when the man cried to the boys, ‘who will go and be a devil, and he shall see the play for nothing?’ then would he go in, and be a devil upon the stage”. See Pepys, iii, pp. 243-44.

throughout the chapters (such as the position of actresses, the arrival of foreign players, and the use of music), but whenever they occur I have attempted to link them with previous chapters so the reader gets a sense of development for each of the themes. The dissertation is also unapologetically historical in its approach. It is a work of theatre history and not literary studies and as such, its primary aim – much like Milhous’s work on Thomas Betterton – is to recount the events surrounding the production of plays rather than a study of the plays themselves.¹¹¹

With any work of theatre history, as Robert D. Hume – a renowned Restoration and 18th century theatre historian – writes: “what can be usefully investigated...necessarily depends on the evidence that can be found”.¹¹² I have broadly categorized the various types of evidence available during this period into three types: performance records, audience reaction and finance. This is to help clarify the different types of evidence available and how I have used them in this thesis.

Allan Richard Botica writes that “the years from 1660 to 1710, a period that may loosely be called the Restoration, are far richer in resources for the theatre historian than any earlier times”.¹¹³ While this may be so, Botica understates the dearth of evidence prior to 1705 – especially in the case of performance records. Robert D. Hume’s recent statistical study of theatre performance records in London indicates that of the estimated 14,067 total performances from 1660 to 1700 “we have title and exact date for just 949 (6.7%)” and can

¹¹¹ In discussion of these plays, I often defer to dramatic studies of Robert D. Hume and Derek Hughes. When analysing the genres of Carolean drama it is also important to mention the following works: J. Douglas Canfield’s volumes on Restoration tragedy and comedy, *Heroes and States* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2000) and *Tricksters and Estates* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1979); Laura Brown’s *English Dramatic Form, 1660-1760* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981); and Brian Corman’s *Genre and Generic Change in English Comedy, 1660-1710* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993).

¹¹² Hume, “Theatre History, 1660-1800”, p. 13.

¹¹³ Botica, p. viii.

further only “infer about 1502 additional performances (another 10.7%)”.¹¹⁴ This means that we have no information on 82.6% of all the performances that took place over those 40 years. In spite of this lack of information, *The London Stage, 1660-1800* is a magnificent resource for the theatre historian. Not only does it provide an accurate calendar of what each theatre was mounting on any day but it also includes cast lists, music details, information on concerts, quotations from gazettes, and – albeit in snippets – reports from the audience. The *London Stage* is unquestionably an indispensable reference book but it is also worth keeping in mind its limitations.¹¹⁵

Contemporary diaries and letters are perhaps the most used resources for discovering audience reaction. The best recorded visits to the London theatres were made by the diarist Samuel Pepys. He attended over 360 performances from 1660 to 1669, which is an average of 45 visits a year. John Evelyn recorded his visits to the London playhouses between 1660 and 1675 during which time he saw 32 plays. Robert Hooke, scientist and Fellow of the Royal Society, saw 9 plays over six years. Allan Botica’s unpublished thesis on the Restoration audience has arguably made the fullest use of these primary sources. His use of these resources enabled him to examine the patterns and size of audiences during this period.¹¹⁶

Diaries and letters, however, are not without problems for the researcher. Even though John Evelyn saw 32 plays, he saw as many plays in the first five years as he did in all the

¹¹⁴ Robert D. Hume, “Theatre Performance Records in London, 1660-1705”, *Review of English Studies*, 67 (2016), p. 468.

¹¹⁵ The other inimitable reference work is Highfill-Burnim-Langhans’ *Biographical Dictionary of Actors*.

¹¹⁶ For other studies on Restoration audience see, Emmet L. Avery, “The Restoration Audience”, *Philological Quarterly*, 45 (1966), pp. 54-61; Harold Love, “The Myth of the Restoration Audience”, *Komos*, 1 (1968), pp. 49-56; David Roberts, *The Ladies: Female Patronage of Restoration Drama 1660-1700* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989); Fiona Ritchie, “‘Jilting Jades’? Perceptions of Female Playgoers in the Restoration, 1660-1700”, in *Theatre and Culture in Early Modern England, 1650-1737: from Leviathan to Licensing Act*, ed. Catie Gill (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), pp. 131-44.

years that followed.¹¹⁷ Nell Gwyn saw over 50 performances over a period of 26 months but has left no comments on the plays themselves.¹¹⁸ Pepys, on the other hand, has left extensive comments on productions but they are not always helpful. Consider Pepys's reaction to the play, *The Villain*, in which he radically changed his opinion from "I was never less pleased with a play in my life" to "very good and pleasant and yet a true and allowable Tragedy".¹¹⁹ David Roberts also notes the contradictory picture of the King's Company's success as recorded in Pepys's diary. On the day after the diarist wrote that he was "ill satisfied" with Killigrew's troupe, he saw *Volpone* there, which he found "a most excellent play; the best I think I ever saw, and well acted".¹²⁰ Other problems arise when one attempts to deduce factual information from diaries. For instance, Pepys's diaries have been used to show what sort of people attended the theatre in the 1660s but the results are necessarily skewed because he names famous people or those in his own circle of acquaintance.¹²¹

In order to augment the evidence for audience reaction this thesis also makes extensive use of prologues and epilogues. In particular it is indebted to Pierre Danchin's *The Prologues and Epilogues of the Restoration 1660-1700* which contains largely untapped materials on the details of audience reaction and theatrical competition.¹²² Allan Botica writes that: "Restoration dramatists and actors drew attention to their spectators to an unprecedented degree".¹²³ Indeed the proportion of new plays, in which either the prologue or the epilogue or both, makes a direct reference to the audience rose from 48% in the period 1558-1642 to

¹¹⁷ Botica, p. 145.

¹¹⁸ William Van Lennep, "Nell Gwynn's at the King's Expense", *Harvard Library Bulletin*, 4 (1950), pp. 405-8.

¹¹⁹ Pepys, iii, p. 230, 20 October 1662; iv, p. 2, 1 January 1663.

¹²⁰ See Roberts, "Thomas Killigrew, Theatre Manager", p. 77.

¹²¹ See Emmett L. Avery, "The Restoration Audience", *Philological Quarterly*, 45 (1966), pp. 54-61.

¹²² Pierre Danchin ed. *The Prologues and Epilogues of the Restoration 1660-1700*, 7 vols (Nancy: Publications de l'Université de Nancy, 1981-84).

¹²³ Botica, p. 25.

90% after 1660.¹²⁴ Prologues and epilogues, of which about 1000 have survived, are regularly used by scholars. For instance, Botica used them to deduce the strategy of acting companies: “prologues and epilogues from 1672, when many of London’s young playgoers were involved in the wars against the Dutch, show the playhouses seeking alternative support from the city to compensate for their lost audience”.¹²⁵ Of course, like other types of evidence, they are not always reliable. Prologues and epilogues, for example, sometimes offer contradictory statements about audience size: the prologue to *A Very Good Wife* reports of “ten Scribblers in a Row” in the pit at Drury Lane but the prologue to *The Volunteers* tells of twenty spectators in a row. Such problems notwithstanding prologues and epilogues are useful documents, if treated with caution.

Robert D. Hume writes that “reception study in this realm will always suffer from serious limitations in available evidence”.¹²⁶ This thesis has therefore made a thorough use of both diaries and prologues and epilogues but has treated them as cautiously as possible. Wherever it is feasible this thesis has brought in other evidence to corroborate a statement in a diary or prologues and epilogues with documentation such as financial records.

Financial information during this period has survived somewhat more than other forms of evidence. Company finances, where known, are useful tools in order to find out the success or failures of plays as well as the general health of the acting troupes. There are obvious limitations however. For instance, Hume writes “no daily account books survive prior to 1724-25” and “essentially no daily receipts are known prior to 1714 and individual salaries are rarely known until well into the eighteenth century”.¹²⁷ Judith Milhous, who specialises in company finances during this period, writes “we possess annoyingly little information

¹²⁴ Autrey Nell Wiley, *Rare Prologues and Epilogues 1642-1700* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1940), pp. xvii-xviii.

¹²⁵ Botica, p. 84.

¹²⁶ Hume, “Theatre History, 1660-1800”, p. 29.

¹²⁷ Hume, “Theatre History, 1660-1800”, p. 26.

about the finances of the Restoration theatre companies”.¹²⁸ Despite these obstacles, scholars have discovered over 200 relevant Chancery and Exchequer lawsuits many of which relate to specific financial issues and provide detailed information about costs. Robert D. Hume and Judith Milhous have collected these documents in their two-volume work, *A Register of English Theatrical Documents 1660-1737*, which is “still too little consulted” by theatre historians.¹²⁹ Specific studies on theatre finances are also used in this thesis such as Leslie Hotson’s *The Commonwealth and Restoration Stage* and Milhous’s “The Duke’s Company’s Profits, 1675-1677”.¹³⁰

As shown, the amount of available evidence during the period under review is seriously limited.¹³¹ This thesis has thus attempted to draw its information from as diverse a range of documents as possible ranging from state papers, court cases, financial documents, gazettes, diaries, and tracts, to plays, prologues and epilogues, prefaces, biographies and letters. But even when there is evidence, drawing conclusions from such evidence is far from simple. This thesis, therefore, like any theatre history of the Carolean period is necessarily going to be both selective and speculative.

The first chapter provides the historical background of the establishment of the patent grants and the gradual consolidation of the monopoly over dramatic entertainment in London.

¹²⁸ Milhous, “The Duke’s Company’s Profits, 1675-1677”, *Theatre Notebook*, 32 (1978), p. 76.

¹²⁹ Roberts, *Restoration Plays and Players*, p. 239.

¹³⁰ With the exception of Milhous’s article, “The Duke’s Company’s Profits, 1675-1677”, her various works on theatre finances have primarily focused on period after 1682 precisely because there is more material. See, for instance, “United Company Finances, 1682-1692”, *Theatre Research International*, 7 (1981), pp. 37-53; Milhous and Robert D. Hume, “Profits at Drury Lane, 1713-1716”, *Theatre Research International*, 14 (1989), pp. 241-55; and “The Economics of Theatrical Dance in Eighteenth-Century London”, *Theatre Journal*, 55 (2003), pp. 481-508.

¹³¹ Other types of evidence which could not be included in the three categories face similar problems: Hume writes that our knowledge of theatre building in the period is “radically conjectural”; the “extant promptbooks give us painfully little help in reconstructing production concepts and performance practices”; as for scenery “we can only guess at what most [of them] looked like”. See Hume, “Theatre History, 1660-1800”, p. 14.

In plotting the initial stages of the development of the King's Company and the Duke's Company from 1660 to 1663, this chapter argues that it was largely due to Killigrew's underhandedness that the King's Company began the competition in an advantageous position. It demonstrates that gaining control over theatrical entertainment in London was not an easy feat and that both Killigrew and Davenant had to contend with numerous interested parties such as Henry Herbert and George Jolly. This chapter demonstrates that, in order to get ahead, Killigrew manipulated the situation skilfully by pitting his adversaries against one another.

The second chapter focuses on the theatrical competition from 1663 to 1668. Until 1663 both companies were busy consolidating their duopoly and the competition between the two managers ended with Davenant's death in 1668. It was during this period that the two men competed for theatregoers in earnest. Scholars such as Judith Milhous and David Roberts have seen the rivalry between the two men as "friendly" and as "genial rivals" respectively.¹³² This chapter argues that the competition was more heated than previously thought as the two men fought tooth and claw for competitive advantage. For instance, I speculate that Killigrew brought disorder to the Duke's Company as he attempted to lure Henry Harris to his troupe. I also argue for narrowing the yawning gap often described between the managerial skills of Killigrew and Davenant. This chapter demonstrates that Killigrew cracked down on internal dissention within his own company; was innovative in times of crises such as when the Great Plague and the Great Fire (1665-66) hit London; and more hands-on in the day-to-day business of running the theatre than has hitherto been recognised.

Chapter three explores the period from when Mary Davenant, Thomas Betterton and Henry Harris took over the management of the Duke's Company to the burning of the King's

¹³² Milhous, *Betterton*, p. 21; Roberts, *Restoration Plays and Players*, p. 29.

Company's playhouse in 1672. It will argue that the competition in this period was evenly matched and that there were a comparable number of repertory successes and failures for both companies. Except for the occasional jabs directed against each other, the two companies mostly kept to themselves. This chapter revises the perceived style of management adopted by both Betterton and Killigrew. In the case of the former, it suggests that Betterton was more concerned with modest successes and keeping a low profile. The chapter argues that Betterton was perhaps less involved in the most audacious project of the Duke's Company during these years: the building of three theatres including the Dorset Garden Theatre. In the case of the latter, this chapter argues that Killigrew continually took risks at other people's expense and was little concerned with the well being of his staff and shareholders as long as the company gained notoriety and retained its success.

The penultimate chapter of the dissertation covers the time frame from the Bridges Street Theatre's fatal fire to the ousting of Killigrew as the manager by his own son, Charles Killigrew. This chapter argues that this was the crucial period in which the Duke's Company began to clearly surpass its rival. This chapter qualifies the traditional view that the King's Company simply lost its battle against the Duke's Company by demonstrating that the two companies also had to contend with a large number of foreign troupes and the rising popularity of music concerts. The chapter also demonstrates how Killigrew began to show his true colours as tensions between the two companies rose to a crescendo. Killigrew not only resorted shamelessly to mud-slinging and maligning his rival but worse, he took advantage of his new authority as the Master of the Revels to cut off George Jolly and his family's livelihood – contrary to his promise – and also manipulated and betrayed his own son, Charles Killigrew.

The final chapter will explore the period from when Charles Killigrew took over the management of the King's Company to the amalgamation of the two acting troupes in 1682.

It demonstrates the effects of political turbulence on both the company's plays and players. The Popish Plot (1678-1681) fuelled the popularity of anti-papist plays such as *Caesar Borgia* and *The Female Prelate* while the Exclusion Crisis (1679-1681) and the consequent partisan politics directly affected the productions, as the London stage became one of the key public arenas for political commentary. Politics of another kind also pervaded the King's troupe as Charles Killigrew, who had hoped to outdo his father, failed disastrously to run the business and suffered an aggressive takeover by the Duke's Company. This chapter firstly argues that Charles Killigrew was more innocent and artless than previously thought and secondly, that it was precisely Charles Killigrew's naïveté that brought about the troupe's eventual downfall. The brief conclusion that follows gives a summary of the thesis and its contribution to studies in Restoration theatre.

Chapter 1

“Two Houses”:

Establishing the Duopoly, 1660-1663

This chapter will cover the timeframe from the formation of the acting troupes in 1660 to the building of the Theatre Royal in Bridges Street for the King’s Company in 1663. These years represent the period from the time the two patent companies came into existence and gradually consolidated their theatrical entertainment duopoly in London. The process was by no means an easy one for the respective managers of these companies. In order to get ahead, Thomas Killigrew and William Davenant were forced to navigate their way through a complicated web of interested parties such as Henry Herbert the Master of the Revels and George Jolly, an actor-manager, whom Leslie Hotson called “a dangerous rival” of the two patentees.¹³³ Immediately after the restoration of the monarchy and the reinstating of the theatres there was a scramble for power and influence. This chapter will show that, at this time, Thomas Killigrew underhandedly paved the way for the King’s Company to begin the competition against the Duke’s Company in an advantageous position.

Before Charles II ascended the throne in May 1660, three fledgling acting troupes were already operational in London. First, there was the Rhodes Company that performed at the Cockpit in Drury Lane, named after John Rhodes, the second-hand bookseller and former wardrobe keeper of the Blackfriars Company. John Downes, the prompter at the Duke’s

¹³³ Leslie Hotson, “George Jolly, Actor-Manager: New Light on the Restoration Stage”, *Studies in Philology*, 20.4 (1923), p. 422. On George Jolly see also: Bernard M. Wagner, “George Jolly at Norwich”, *The Review of English Studies*, 6.24 (1930), pp. 449-52; Harry R. Hoppe, “George Jolly at Bruges, 1648”, *The Review of English Studies*, 5.19 (1954), pp. 265-68.

Company, records that:

In the Year 1659 [i.e. 1659-1660], General Monk, Marching then his Army out of Scotland to London...Mr Rhodes a Bookseller...getting a License from the then Governing State, fitted up a House then for Acting call'd the Cock-Pit in Drury Lane, and in a short time Completed his Company.¹³⁴

Shortly afterwards two other companies were set up. An acting troupe run by Michael Mohun performed at the Red Bull Theatre while William Beeston had formed a third company at the Salisbury Court Theatre.¹³⁵

After the coronation, Thomas Killigrew and William Davenant colluded together and persuaded the young king to reform the state of theatres in England and to grant them an exclusive “Priviledge” to be the masters of the only two acting companies in London.¹³⁶

¹³⁴ Downes, p. 43. By October 1660 Rhodes did not have an acting troupe but he still held the title to the Cockpit playhouse and seems to have gained income by renting the playhouse out. Herbert, who was unhappy with this arrangement, issued an order on 8 October 1660 to Rhodes “to attende mee concerning your Playhouse called the Cockpitt...And to bring with you such Authority As you have for Errecting of the said house Into a Playhouse”. Rhodes, annoyed by Herbert, replied curtly “That the Kinge did authorize Him”. See BL Add. MS 19,256, fol. 50 (*Register*, no. 32). On 2 January 1664, Rhodes was granted to “Stage Playes Maskes & Showes” by Herbert throughout the country except “the Cytyes of London & Westminster” LC5/138, p. 387 (*Register*, no. 265). What happened to Rhodes after being given the license is unknown.

¹³⁵ For a detailed account, see John Freehafer, “The Formation of the London Patent Companies in 1660”, *Theatre Notebook*, 20 (1965), pp. 6-30. See also, Gunnar Sorelius, “The Early History of the Restoration Theatre: Some Problems Reconsidered”, *Theatre Notebook*, 33 (1979), pp. 52-61. William Beeston, theatre-manager and actor, was the son of the highly successful theatre manager, Christopher Beeston and described himself as being “bred up in the art of stage playing”. William, alongside his father, ran the Cockpit Theatre in Drury Lane and founded a new company mainly of young players known as the “Beeston’s Boys”, in which actors such as Theophilus Bird and Michael Mohun were members. Andrew Gurr writes that “the younger Beeston proved rather less adroit than his father in managing company affairs”. In May 1640 Beeston was charged for mounting an unlicensed play, which cost him his managerial role. The Master of the Revels then appointed William Davenant as the new “governor”. During the years of closure, Beeston remained active by training a new company of boy actors and attempting to buy empty theatres. At the Restoration, Beeston ran plays at the Salisbury Court Theatre until the playhouse burned down in 1666. Subsequently, he became a member of the King’s Company along with his son, George Beeston. See Andrew Gurr, “Beeston [Hutchinson], William (1610/11?-1682)”, *ODNB*, online edn, Jan. 2008.

¹³⁶ Martin Harrison, *The Language of Theatre* (New York: Routledge, 1998), p. 190. This was the kernel of what was to become the original patent grants that were established and remained active until the

From then on, the two patentees and Henry Herbert, the Master of the Revels, began jockeying for control of the existing acting companies.

On 13 October 1660, Herbert sent a letter to Mohun's troupe stating that a complaint had been issued by "Mr. Killigrew and Sir William Davenant, concerning the unusuall and unreasonable rates taken at your playhouse doores". In the letter, Herbert took the opportunity to enforce his authority by ordering Mohun to "bringe or sende to me all such old plaies as you doe intend to act at your said playhouse, that they may be reformed of prophanes and ribaldry, at your peril. Given at the office of the Revells". The players' response, by petitioning the king, gives insight as to what was really going on. Mohun, in his letter, reveals that it was Killigrew who had specifically issued the complaint against them and who "supprest us". Mohun's troupe, which was getting constantly intimidated and bullied by Killigrew, was offered protection "against Mr. Kilegrew and all [his] powers" by Herbert for a fee. It is unknown whether Herbert just wanted the fees and was not seriously concerned with protecting Mohun but for whatever reason, the players complained that Herbert was "not able to performe" his promise.¹³⁷

Killigrew's tactic of harassing and tormenting the troupe worked, for Mohun soon capitulated. Although Killigrew and Davenant were given permission to set up their own companies, they began the season of 1660 by collaborating and forming a company together.¹³⁸ Perhaps, at first, the two managers felt safer huddling up together rather than going it alone.¹³⁹ This is not surprising given the fact that even before they were awarded

passing of the Act for regulating theatres in 1843.

¹³⁷ Henry Herbert, *The Dramatic Records of Sir Henry Herbert*, ed. Joseph Quincy Adams (New Haven: Yale University Press), pp. 93-96.

¹³⁸ For details of the brief time in which Killigrew and Davenant formed a company together, see Hotson, pp. 204-5.

¹³⁹ Not everyone welcomed the theatres reopening as in the case of "diverse private souldiers" who, on 28 August 1660, "forsibly Enter into the Theatres and Playhouses in and about the Citty of London to the Disturbance of the Gentlemen and others there present...without the Consent of the Owners or

their patents, Herbert began protesting that the patents infringed his right legal rights.¹⁴⁰ This marriage of the managers was more of a marriage of convenience than a genuine partnership for only a month later on 5 November 1660, Killigrew split from Davenant to establish his own troupe known as the King's Company.

Killigrew recruited largely from Mohun's old troupe which was made up of not only experienced actors but also former royalist soldiers. Killigrew may have felt that by recruiting old soldiers, he would be able to bring a sense of camaraderie to the troupe with him as their captain – just like his experience in Maastricht. Michael Mohun himself had trained as a boy actor in Queen Henrietta Maria's company before joining the Beeston's Boys in 1636. Mohun may have already been an important actor by then because he was fifth on the list of Cockpit players who were granted tickets of privilege on 10 August 1639.¹⁴¹ Mohun joined

Doorkeepers", see BL Egerton MS 2542, fols. 405-406. One John Rogers, possibly seeing a lucrative business opportunity and wrangling for a royal favour, petitioned Herbert for "a share out of the Profitts" of the theatres in return for him "undertaking to Supres all Riotts, Tumults, or Molestations" that may arise both in and outside of the playhouses. For Rogers's petitions and the response he received from Herbert see, BL Add. MS 19,256, fol. 46 (*Register*, no. 14), BL Add. MS 19,256, fol. 46v (*Register*, no. 17). Thomas Killigrew was happy enough to agree to make John Rogers guard all public playhouses – it is difficult to tell whether this was because Killigrew felt his playhouse needed protecting as the danger and the violence that surrounded theatres continued long after 1660 (the performers were constantly harassed on the stage and in dressing rooms) or because Killigrew did not want to ruffle the feathers of Herbert and Charles II, or perhaps a combination of both these factors. A note from Killigrew to Secretary Nicholas reads: "The Business of Mr John Rogers (the bearer hereof) I desire you will expedite as soone as possibly you can, I being fully satisfied therewith and hereby giving my full Consent thereto, it being noe damage unto mee". See BL Egerton MS 2537, fols. 273, 275 (*Register*, no. 25).

¹⁴⁰ BL Add. MS 19,256, fol. 61 (*Register*, no. 20). Herbert was also busy asserting his authority in Maidstone. The mayor of Maidstone and Herbert exchanged heated letters, each arguing over their respective rights. On 6 October 1660 Henry Herbert wrote to the mayor: "The Bearer Jacob Brewer & his company are Authorized to exercise what is conteyned in my License Upon the Conditions therein mentioned" and orders the mayor "to give him leave to exercise according to his warrant That legall proceedings may be avoided". Two days later the mayor wrote back arguing that Herbert's licensing powers only extended to "within the verge of his Majestie's courte, wherever it shall be". On 9 October Herbert forcefully wrote that he had the power to license dramatic entertainments "in all his Majestie's dominions and liberties in England". See respectively, BL Add. MS 37,157, fol. 64 (*Register*, nos 31, 33, 34).

¹⁴¹ Gerald E. Bentley, *The Jacobean and Caroline Stage* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1941-68), pp. 331-32.

the royalist forces when the war broke out and served in Flanders as a major, which became the basis of his sobriquet after the Restoration as “Major Mohun”. Charles II was very fond of the actor. Mohun seemed to have been the lead performer in an entertainment presented by Newcastle at Antwerp for Prince Charles, soon to return to England as Charles II:

The King was brought in with music, and all being placed, Major Mohun, the player, in a black satin robe and garland of bays, made a speech in verse of his lordship’s own poetry, complimenting the King in his highest hyperbole...Then they danced again 2 hours more, and Major Mohun ended all with another speech, prophesying his Majesty’s re-establishment.¹⁴²

By 1659-60 Mohun was back in London performing and managing the troupe at the Red Bull, before being forced to join Killigrew.

Similar to Mohun, Charles Hart was also experienced in the art of acting. James Wright in *Historia Histrionica* wrote of Hart as being “bred up...at the Blackfriars and Acted Women’s Parts, Hart was [Richard] Robinson’s Boy or Apprentice: He Acted the Dutchess in the Tragedy of the Cardinal, which was the first Part that gave him Reputation”.¹⁴³ Hart also fought in the civil war as a Lieutenant of Horse under Sir Thomas Dallison, in Prince Rupert’s regiment. After the war Hart resumed acting at the Cockpit for a time.

Michael Mohun and Charles Hart, with their similar backgrounds and experience on the stage, were to become the two principal actors of the King’s Company. The problem, however, was that they not only shared matching talent but they also shared over-sized egos which would see them clash over time.

In addition to the two main leads, Killigrew added John Lacy the comic genius and dancer from Beeston’s old troupe who had served in the civil war as lieutenant and quartermaster to the Lord Gerard, later Earl of Macclesfield.¹⁴⁴ Robert Shatterell was also

¹⁴² See *BDA*, x, p. 272.

¹⁴³ James Wright, *Historia Histrionica* (London, 1699), p. 3.

¹⁴⁴ See *BDA*, ix, p. 98.

recruited who most likely trained under Beeston at the Cockpit before the closure of theatres. Like Hart, when the war broke out, he was enlisted in Prince Rupert's regiment and probably acted on the Continent for the exiled Prince Charles. Nicholas Burt was also with the Beeston's Boys before enlisting in the army with Hart and Shatterell under Sir Thomas Dallison in Prince Rupert's regiment. He was a member of a company headed by Mohun after the war before being hired by Killigrew.

Those who did not serve in the military included the actor Walter Clun. He had trained with Hart at the Blackfriars and although nothing is known of what he did in the Commonwealth years, he resurfaced after the civil war and joined the troupe at the Red Bull as early as 1659. He was important enough to be one of the signers of an agreement with Herbert on 14 August 1660. Killigrew also recruited from Rhodes' Company, the young and clever mimic, Edward Kynaston.¹⁴⁵ Downes wrote of the latter as being "a Compleat Female Stage Beauty", so much so "that it has since been Disputable among the Judicious, whether any Woman that succeeded him so Sensibly touch'd the Audience as he".¹⁴⁶ As for actresses, Killigrew enlisted, amongst others, Rebecca Marshall, Anne Marshall, Mrs Corey, Mrs Eastland, Mrs Hughes, Mrs Knepp, Mrs Uphill, and Mrs Weaver.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁵ Other actors included William Cartwright, the son of the Elizabethan actor of the same name. Before the interregnum he performed at Norwich and at the theatre in Salisbury Court. During the Commonwealth he continued for while to act surreptitiously at the Cockpit but then became a bookseller at Turnstile Alley before becoming a player again at the Restoration. See *BDA*, iii, pp. 89-93. William Wintershall according to James Wright, acted with Cartwright in Salisbury Court probably with Queen Henrietta's men. See Wright, *Historia Histrionica*, p. 3. He seemed to have specialised in playing older respectable parts such as kings and knights in the King's Company. Downes noted that "Mr Wintersel, was good in Tragedy, as well as in Comedy". See Downes, p. 42. Edward Shatterell probably acted before the closing of the theatres in 1642 and may have performed in the Prince of Wales's troupe thereafter. On 17 May 1659 he was accused of illegally "maintaining of Stage playes and enterludes att the Redd Bull" before becoming a part of the King's Company. See *BDA*, xiii, p. 287.

¹⁴⁶ Downes, p. 46.

¹⁴⁷ The full list of sworn servants of the King's Company can be seen in LC 3/73, fols. 100v-101, 113 (*Register*, no. 24). The actresses, unlike Davenant's actresses, were employed as hirelings (like their male counterpart) whose wages were paid out of the gross receipts.

Killigrew was partly able to cherry-pick the best and most experienced actors in the land to join him by tempting them with a generous portion of acting shares. Of the 12¾ shares in total, 2 belonged to Killigrew himself; 1¼ shares each were given to Mohun, Hart, and Lacy; others such as William Wintershall, William Cartwright, Walter Clun and Theophilus Bird had 1 share each.¹⁴⁸ Thus, Killigrew had less than a one-sixth interest in the profits of his company but he probably thought the sacrifice worthwhile. The recruitment of experienced actors was also important for another reason. To be able to start rehearsing without delay it would be necessary for the new theatres to have a stock of plays that they could choose from to form their repertoire. No explicit agreement about the division of the older English repertory between the two new companies survives. The most likely reason for this is that it was common practice for the actors in Caroline troupes to claim ownership of play manuscripts.¹⁴⁹ This explains why Killigrew's troupe retained the rights to most of the old plays while Davenant started off with almost none.¹⁵⁰ Killigrew must have been aware that with the most of the old actors he would also be acquiring most of the old repertory.

This left his rival Davenant with the remnants of the Rhodes's Men. As John Freehafer points out, although "it is usually said that Davenant had second choice of the London actors" in fact, "it is more likely that he had third choice".¹⁵¹ There is no knowing how Davenant felt about this. It is possible that he preferred to recruit young malleable actors who previously

¹⁴⁸ 2 shares were unassigned by the agreement of 10 January 1662 but 1¼ shares would later be given to John Dryden in a special agreement. See Hotson, p. 244.

¹⁴⁹ Milhous writes that "Killigrew's veteran actors had performed in various Caroline troupes, and they laid claim to most of the pre-existing repertory on that ground...One of the mysteries of the Restoration theatre is the lack of explicit testimony about the division of the older English drama and the nature of the companies' rights in plays. At least initially, actors may have felt that even new plays belonged to them". See Milhous, *Betterton*, p. 17.

¹⁵⁰ Milhous writes that "Davenant apparently had rights to only two plays known to have been in the repertory of Rhodes's troupe (*The Changeling* and *The Bondman*), and even they may have been the subject of dispute". See Milhous, *Betterton*, p. 16.

¹⁵¹ Freehafer, "The Formation of the London Patent Companies in 1660", pp. 25-26.

had experience in respectable but small businesses (as toy-makers, weavers, and booksellers) – foreseeing how difficult the more experienced soldier turned actors might be – or perhaps he had no option but to concede what most considered the best actors to Killigrew because he was not willing to relinquish his shares in his company to them as much as Killigrew had been prepared to do. Either way, Davenant presumably felt secure in the knowledge that he had more professional theatrical experience than his rival, Killigrew.

Davenant was born in 1606. His father, John Davenant, was a merchant-vintner and ran a successful tavern in Oxford, with his wife Jane or Jannet Davenant. Davenant's mother was famously beautiful and "of a good wit and conversation" and Davenant's father was "a very grave and discreet citizen" who was respected enough by his peers to become elected mayor of Oxford in 1621.¹⁵² He was also "an admirer and lover of plays and playmakers, especially Shakespeare".¹⁵³ John Aubrey recorded how Shakespeare used to stay at Davenant's establishment on his annual visits to Stratford as a friend. The poet and the hostess were reputed to be so close that William Davenant was even thought to be the illegitimate child of the bard – Davenant was apparently happy to be "thought his [Shakespeare's] Son".¹⁵⁴

As a budding playwright Davenant's first play, *The Cruel Brother, A Tragedy*, was mounted by the King's Men in Blackfriars. He continued to write and publish plays such as *The Wits, Love and Honour*, and *The Platonic Lovers*. During the civil war, after his release from the Tower, he mounted works in Rutland House and put on what is generally regarded as the first English opera, *The First Day's Entertainment*. Davenant had always longed to run a troupe and had succeeded in March 1639 in securing a warrant from Charles I to build a playhouse but the time was unfortunately unpropitious and the project came to nothing.

¹⁵² Aubrey, *Brief Lives*, ed. A. Clark, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1898), i, p. 204.

¹⁵³ Wood, *Athenae Oxonienses*, iii, pp. 802-11. Wood notes that John Davenant was "of a melancholic disposition, and was seldom or never seen to laugh". Perhaps William Davenant inherited, in part, his father's serious temperament.

¹⁵⁴ Aubrey, *Brief Lives*, i, p. 204.

Twenty-one years later in 1660, Davenant was offered a second chance to fulfil his dream of becoming a theatre manager.

Davenant's style in managing his company was strongly influenced by his family's background in trade and the Duke's Company was run like an orderly family business with Davenant clearly at the helm. Davenant's arrangement of shares in his company, compared with that of Killigrew's arrangement, is revealing of his business-oriented mind-set. An agreement signed on 5 November 1660 between Davenant and his players shows that the players and Davenant agreed that they would act at the old Salisbury Court Theatre until Davenant could provide for a better playhouse. Until then there would be 14 shares of which four would be assigned to Davenant. Once the new theatre was ready, there were to be 15 shares out of which 10 shares would go to Davenant and the remaining 5 shares to be shared and divided among the players. Davenant was partly able to hold on to the lion's share because his actors were young and inexperienced for the most part and because they had no other alternative. Milhous wrote "what the sharer's agreement really makes plain...is just how totally dominant Davenant was in the company...Davenant was the Boss".¹⁵⁵

While Milhous accounted for Davenant's success as a theatre manager through his qualities of strong leadership, David Roberts suggests that his success also stemmed from the fact that he and his actors were from a similar background and therefore their shared trade ethos glued the company together.¹⁵⁶ Indeed Thomas Betterton who was to become the Duke's Company's leading actor and Davenant's protégé came from a similar middle-class trading background. His maternal grandfather, Thomas Flowerdew, was a vintner and Betterton himself was a bookseller's boy before becoming an actor.¹⁵⁷ Before the establishment of the Duke's Company, Betterton had also worked alongside Edward

¹⁵⁵ Milhous, *Betterton*, p. 10.

¹⁵⁶ For detailed information on Davenant's players see Roberts, *Thomas Betterton*, pp. 75-77.

¹⁵⁷ For an authoritative biography on Betterton, see Roberts, *Thomas Betterton*.

Kynaston as one of Rhodes's Men. When the theatres officially reopened during the Restoration, Betterton was, like Kynaston, recruited as an actor by Killigrew and became a member of the King's Company in October 1660. This is not to say that Killigrew first spotted Betterton. There is evidence that Davenant came across Betterton in 1659 and possibly as early as 1651, which may partly help explain why Betterton soon changed sides and started working for the Duke's Company instead.¹⁵⁸ It was probably not a difficult choice for Betterton to make, even without the prior acquaintance with Davenant however. If he had stayed with Killigrew's troupe he would not only have been a lowly hireling but would also have had to give way to actors such as Hart and Mohun for leading parts. In the Duke's Company, he was immediately made a sharer as well as a leading actor of the troupe.¹⁵⁹ A month after Betterton's move, the Lord Chamberlain forbade the transfer of actors from one company to the other – this was probably the result of Killigrew's complaint at losing one of his most promising employees to Davenant.¹⁶⁰

For Davenant the recruitment of young Betterton meant not only that he acquired the important services of a leading man but also Betterton's personal qualities meant that he became a much-needed reliable right hand man as well. The value of Betterton grew when Davenant hired another leading actor in the shape of the volatile Henry Harris who joined the company in 1661. Betterton was the opposite of Harris in terms of temperament and his personality was probably more akin to Davenant himself. Betterton was summed up perfectly by Pepys who called him "a very sober, serious man, and studious and humble".¹⁶¹ Harris, on the other hand, was difficult to handle. He was less like a bourgeois professional and more of

¹⁵⁸ Roberts, *Thomas Betterton*, pp. 49-50.

¹⁵⁹ On 5 November 1660, Davenant wrote the articles of agreement with his actor-shareholders. In this new agreement, Betterton jumped from the bottom of the list to the first position (ahead of actors such as Robert and James Nokes, Cave Underhill, and Thomas Sheppey).

¹⁶⁰ LC 5/137, pp. 343-344 (*Register*, no. 50).

¹⁶¹ Pepys, iii, p. 233.

a typical Restoration libertine – moving effortlessly in important circles.¹⁶² Harris oozed superior knowledge and irresistible charm. Pepys recalled being impressed by the player who had “a very curious and understanding person in all, pictures and other things – and a man of fine conversation”.¹⁶³ It was little wonder that Harris should be friends with the likes of Thomas Killigrew’s mischief-maker son, Henry Killigrew. Pepys recorded on 30 May 1668 when he went to “the New Exchange” and met Harris who in turn “fell into company of Harry Killigrew, a rogue” who was “newly come back from France but still in disgrace at our Court”.¹⁶⁴ Poaching Betterton from Killigrew gave Davenant a reliable and responsible second in command.

Davenant also began by recruiting eight actresses: Hester Davenport, Moll Davis, Mary Saunderson, Jane Long, Anne Gibbs, and three others.¹⁶⁵ Not a lot is known about them but they were young, attractive and educated enough to be able to read. Davenant and his wife housed Davenport, Davis, Saunderson and Long under their own roof adjoining the Lincoln’s Inn Fields Theatre. This was undoubtedly to protect them and to deter them from suddenly leaving the company to get married to an admirer from the audience. But, as will be seen later, not everyone could be nor wanted to be protected. Furthermore, rather than treating an actress like a male hireling – as Killigrew had done – Davenant paid them from his own share money. While scholars have tended to see Davenant as a benevolent father figure, his management style also suggests a personality that could also be somewhat strict and stubborn.¹⁶⁶

Equipped with most of the veteran actors and the classic repertory, Killigrew was first out

¹⁶² Harris, for instance, even occupied quarters at court. For the contrast between Betterton and Harris, see Roberts, *Thomas Betterton*, pp. 83-87.

¹⁶³ Pepys, viii, p. 29.

¹⁶⁴ Pepys, ix, p. 213.

¹⁶⁵ The three other actresses (Holden, Jennings and Norris) are only known by their surnames.

¹⁶⁶ Milhous sees this as an example of Davenant’s “paternalistic way”. Milhous, *Betterton*, p. 10. The arrangement of paying actresses from the proprietor’s own pocket was dropped after Davenant’s death as the Duke’s Company adopted Killigrew’s method of paying actresses as hirelings.

of the gate. For the King's Company this meant, in practical terms, three months of performances unchallenged by any serious competition, as the Duke's Company only started to mount plays on 29 January 1661.¹⁶⁷ These three months proved to be a valuable period to showcase the King's Company's best offerings to the London public and to get a clear upper hand over its rival.

Within days after opening at the Red Bull, the King's Company moved to Gibbon's Tennis Court in Vere Street to the delight of Samuel Pepys who saw a performance of John Fletcher's *The Beggar's Bush* on 20 November in "the finest play-house, I believe, that ever was in England". It was in the same production that Pepys saw for the first time, "one Moone [Mohun], who is said to be the best actor in the world, lately come over with the King".¹⁶⁸

Killigrew's troupe also introduced the first female actress on the professional stage in England. The prologue to the production of *Othello* mounted on 8 December 1660 jokingly declared its novelty:

I Come, unknown to any of the rest
To tell you the news, I saw the Lady drest;
The Woman playes to day, mistake me not,
No Man in Gown, or Page in Petty-Coat;
...
For (to speak the truth) men act, that are between
Forty and fifty, Wenches of fifteen;
With bone so large, and nerve so incompilant,
When you call Desdemona, enter Giant.¹⁶⁹

Actresses were soon employed for other parts. Pepys again saw John Fletcher's *The Beggar's Bush* on 3 January 1661 but this time he noted how for the first time he "saw Women come upon the stage".¹⁷⁰ Not all performances by actresses were successful as they lacked

¹⁶⁷ It is possible that the Duke's Company began performing by 15 November but the existing records show that the rivalry between the two companies did not begin until early 1661. See *London Stage*, p. 24; see also *BDA*, ix, p. 11.

¹⁶⁸ Pepys, i, p. 297.

¹⁶⁹ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, i, p. 55.

¹⁷⁰ Pepys, ii, p. 5.

experience, for on 8 January when Pepys saw the performance of *The Widow* by Thomas Middleton, he commented that it was a “good play, but wronged by the womens being much to seek in their parts”.¹⁷¹ Perhaps this was at least partly why Edward Kynaston was still able to retain the female parts for a little while longer.¹⁷² On 7 January the King’s Company produced *The Silent Woman* by Ben Jonson in which Kynaston played three parts including the role of a woman whom Pepys judged as “clearly the prettiest woman in the whole house” on top of being “the handsomest man in the house”.¹⁷³ The King’s Company must have been doing well financially by the time the Duke’s Company opened its doors because Londoners were tired with the actors’ vanity, “who are indeed grown very proud and rich”.¹⁷⁴

Even before the Duke’s Company started up, however, another playhouse-manager George Jolly was authorized to “erect one Company” notwithstanding the former grants made to Killigrew and Davenant.¹⁷⁵ Jolly was an influential actor-manager. During the civil war he led a group of strolling players – some English, and later some German – through the Continent. Leslie Hotson praised Jolly as “the last of the great English strolling players who exercised...a powerful influence upon the German drama”.¹⁷⁶ Jolly’s players even performed in front of the exiled Charles at the Frankfurt Fair in 1655 and no doubt made a favourable

¹⁷¹ Pepys, ii, p. 8.

¹⁷² Kynaston’s last female role was as Evadne in Beaumont and Fletcher’s *The Maid’s Tragedy* with the King’s Company in 1661. Part of Kynaston’s appeal to the London public was his ambiguous sexuality as Colley Cibber recalled how “the Ladies of Quality prided themselves in taking him with them in the Coaches to Hyde-Park in his Theatrical Habit, after the Play”. See Cibber, *Apology*, i, pp. 120-21.

¹⁷³ Pepys, ii, p. 7.

¹⁷⁴ Pepys, ii, p. 41. The King’s Company actors had enough funds to build three houses adjoining the theatre. “Michael Mohun, Robert Shotterel, Walter Clunne, William Wintershall, and William Cartwright, 10 June 1663 leased to Margaret Nephway widow...for £24 [rent per annum] all the newbuilt messuage, being the middle house for 3 houses lately built by the parties of the 1st part, in St. Martin’s in the Fields, on the south East side of a way or passage leading from a street or lane called Drury Lane alias ffortescue Lane to the Theatre Royall for 21 years”. See C10 82/82; cited in Hotson, p. 249.

¹⁷⁵ SP 29/24, no. 37 (*Register*, no. 51). Jolly is granted a license to build a theatre “for the Representation of Tragedies, Comedies, Plaies, Operas, Farces and all other entertainments of that nature”.

¹⁷⁶ Hotson, “George Jolly, Actor-Manager: New Light on the Restoration Stage”, p. 422.

impression on the future king. When Jolly was granted the licence to present plays five years later on 24 December 1660, he most likely entered into an arrangement with William Beeston in which Jolly would become the leader of the troupe and pay Beeston for the use of the Cockpit. Jolly's troupe thus became the third and final company of actors licensed in London. This must have been a shock to Killigrew and Davenant who had carefully arranged matters so that they would have exclusive rights to entertain the theatre-goers of London. Instead, they found that their share in the market had shrunk to one third each with the arrival of a further player in the game.

As Davenant began readying his troupe, he was granted a warrant by the Lord Chamberlain on 12 December 1660, to present eleven plays on top of *The Bondman* and *The Changeling*, including nine of Shakespeare's works such as *Hamlet*, *King Lear* and *Macbeth*.¹⁷⁷ The warrant also importantly gave Davenant permission to mount plays he had written. To have the exclusive right to perform his own plays must have been a relief as only about a month before on 19 November 1660 Killigrew had mounted Davenant's *The Unfortunate Lovers*.¹⁷⁸

So it was on 29 January 1661 the Duke's Company finally opened for business with a production of John Fletcher and William Rowley's *The Maid in the Mill* at the Salisbury Court Theatre. The play, incidentally, was one of the eleven that was recently granted to the Duke's Company. Pepys saw the performance with "little expectation from so poor beginnings" but was surprised to see it "acted to my great content".¹⁷⁹ The Duke's Company enjoyed almost instant success. On 2 March 1661, Pepys went to the King's Company but

¹⁷⁷ P.R.O. LC 5/137, p. 343 (*Register*, no. 50).

¹⁷⁸ See *London Stage*, p. 20; The Lord Chamberlain went on to say that the transfer of actors between the two companies without the joint agreement between Killigrew and Davenant is forbidden and that Davenant is granted liberty "dureinge the space of two Months after the date hereof" for his actors to perform six plays (*The Mad Lover*, *The Maid in the Mill*, *The Spanish Curate*, *The Loyal Subject*, *Rule a Wife*, and *Pericles*) which had been in Rhodes's repertory. See Milhous, *Betterton*, p. 16.

¹⁷⁹ Pepys, ii, p. 25.

“found so few people (which is strange, and the reason I did not know)”.¹⁸⁰ He discovered the reason soon enough when he went to see the Duke’s Company’s production of Thomas Heywood’s *The Queen’s Mask* on the same day and found the playhouse “as full as could be”.¹⁸¹ No doubt startled by its rival’s success, the hitherto complacent King’s Company countered by mounting the same play, *The Queen’s Mask*, on 11 March. The Duke’s Company riposted by yet again repeating its production of the same play on 25 March. Indeed, throughout March and into May, we find the two companies going head-to-head with each other with productions such as *The Maid in the Mill* and *The Bondman*. This practice, however, did not last long as the two managers probably realised that it was not doing either of them any good. This was especially true for the King’s Company as Killigrew may have perceived he was on a losing streak. Pepys certainly found the King’s Company’s production of *The Queen’s Mask* somewhat lacking, “which I do not like...so well as their acting in Salisbury Court [the Duke’s Company]”.¹⁸² Thomas Betterton, the emerging star actor of the Duke’s Company, may have had something to do with their success as his performances in plays such as *The Bondman* were attracting the attention of theatre-goers. Pepys, for example, noted that he was “more and more pleased with Batterton’s action”.¹⁸³

As the two managers competed by offering an ever-higher standard of performances and productions, George Jolly’s troupe was getting left behind. Pepys recorded his first visit to the Red Bull Theatre where Jolly’s troupe was temporarily performing. As Pepys made his way around the theatre “led by a seaman that knew me”, he noted his experience as he went:

up the tireing-room, where strange the confusion and disorder that there is among them in fitting themselves; especially here, where the clothes are very poore and the actors but common fellows. At last into the pitt, where I think there was not above

¹⁸⁰ Pepys, ii, p. 48.

¹⁸¹ Pepys, ii, p. 48.

¹⁸² Pepys, ii, p. 52.

¹⁸³ Pepys, ii, p. 56.

ten more than myself, and not 100 in the whole house – and the play (which is called *All's lost by Lust*) poorly done – and with so much disorder; among others, that in the Musique-room, the boy that was to sing a song not singing it right, his master fell about his eares and beat him so, that it put the whole house in an uprore.¹⁸⁴

The disarray and the unprofessionalism of the troupe evidently damaged its ability to attract audiences. As the competition began to spark between Killigrew and Davenant it was clear that Jolly's troupe was out of its depth and soon a group of players called the Red Bull company – most likely Jolly's troupe – fled to Oxford and began a series of performances outside of London.¹⁸⁵ Killigrew and Davenant would later take advantage of Jolly's failing venture and conspire together to bribe Jolly out of his patent.

Davenant, in the meantime, was planning something special for the summer. On 28 June 1661 the Duke's Company opened its new Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre and produced Davenant's revamped *The Siege of Rhodes*. Davenant had been swiftly selling the shares of his company prior to this production, most likely to fund the expenses required for the new playhouse as well as the new production.¹⁸⁶ The pressure on Davenant's finances was alluded to by John Downes who recorded how the play “having new Scenes and Decoration...the first that were Introduc'd in England” and the prologue to *The Siege of*

¹⁸⁴ Pepys, ii, p. 58.

¹⁸⁵ See *London Stage*, p. 30. For a discussion of which actors these were, see Sybil Rosenfeld, “Some Notes on the Players in Oxford, 1661-1713”, *Review of English Studies*, 14 (1943), p. 366.

¹⁸⁶ Davenant sold his shares in Lincoln's Inn Fields on 7 March 1661 and 18 March. On 7 March Davenant sold one whole share (out of fifteen) to Sir William Russell in return for £600 on the condition that Russell does not bear any responsibility for “the charge of habbits and scaenes for the two first representations and of fitting and preparing of the said theatre [LIF]”. On the same day, Davenant also sold half a share to Richard Alchorne. Alchorne swiftly sold off a quarter of his half share to Phineas Cheston on 20 March. On 18 March Davenant sold another half a share which was in trust to Sir William Russell for the widow of Endimion Porter. See respectively, BL Add. Charter 9296 (*Register*, no. 66); C7/575/62 (*Register*, no. 67); Folger Z.c.22(43) (*Register*, no. 69); C10/184/2 and C8/604/6 (*Register*, no. 68). Over the years, Davenant actually sold 7.7 shares. Milhous has calculated that the price realised per share seems to have been between £600 to £800, and by selling more than half his interest in the company he was able to receive about £5000. See Milhous, *Betterton*, p. 11.

Rhodes stresses the lack of money in the company's chests.¹⁸⁷ The investment in stage screens and shutters which moved across the stage behind the proscenium arch to provide the audience with a variety of scene changes, however, was worthwhile as the play "continu'd Acting 12 Days without Interruption with great Applause".¹⁸⁸ The show was so successful that Charles II stepped into a public theatre for the first time to watch it. Perhaps less significantly, this production also changed the career path of Downes, who started off as a player but became a prompter instead after this production because he caught "sight of that August presence" which gave him such stage fright that it "spoil'd me for an Actor".¹⁸⁹ The spectacular success of Davenant's *The Siege of Rhodes* was enough to empty the seats at the King's Company again. On 4 July Pepys went to see Killigrew's own *Claracilla* mounted by the King's Company and noted: "strange to see this house, that used to be so thronged, now empty since the Opera begun".¹⁹⁰

It was during this period that the two leading companies began to form a niche for themselves. Pepys uses the word "Opera" to refer to the production of *The Siege of Rhodes* but from around this time he uses the same word to refer to the Duke's Company as a whole. For instance, Pepys writes on 23 August how he took his wife "to the Opera, and shewed her *The Witts* (which I had seen already twice)"; and on the next day he went "straight to the Opera, and there saw *Hamlet Prince of Denmarke*, done with Scenes very well".¹⁹¹ Both plays, incidentally, boasted changeable scenes and achieved great success. At the same time, Pepys began to dub the King's Company, "the Theatre". On 23 July, for example, Pepys went "to the Theatre" to see John Suckling's *Brenoralt* and similarly on 25 July saw Richard

¹⁸⁷ See Downes, p. 51; Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, i, p. 67.

¹⁸⁸ Downes, p. 51.

¹⁸⁹ Downes, p. 73; see also W. J. Lawrence, *Old Theatre Days and Ways* (London: Harrap, 1935), pp. 144-45.

¹⁹⁰ Pepys, ii, p. 132.

¹⁹¹ Pepys, ii, p. 160, p. 161.

Brome's *The Jovial Crew* at "the Theatre".¹⁹² The nicknames of "Opera" and "Theatre" were used by theatre-goers such as Pepys to distinguish the types of productions that the two companies offered – the Duke's Company's plays featured more music and spectacular scenery and the King's Company, in turn, was known for its more dramatic offerings. This distinction between the two companies had been established at an early stage in their competition but as will be seen, this neat categorisation was to become less defined as the rivalry ensued.¹⁹³

However, the orthodox view, that Killigrew was too complacent to produce new plays in these years because he could rely on the classic repertory acquired from the Caroline period needs to be qualified.¹⁹⁴ It is important to remember that while a surprising amount of theatrical activity went on during the 1650s, a significant number of Londoners such as Pepys had either never seen or had not seen for many years what was considered to be the classic English repertory.¹⁹⁵ Pepys, for instance, writes on 7 January 1661 about the production of Jonson's *The Silent Woman* by the King's Company: "The first time that ever I did see it and it is an excellent play".¹⁹⁶ As late as November 1661 the King's Company was mounting old plays that Pepys had never seen before such as Beaumont and Fletcher's *Philaster*.¹⁹⁷ This applied not only to Pepys. When he took Mr Moore to see Beaumont and Fletcher's *The*

¹⁹² Pepys, ii, p. 139, p. 141.

¹⁹³ See Pepys, viii, p. 56, when Killigrew boasts to Pepys about his operatic ambitions. The anecdote is discussed in chapter two of this thesis.

¹⁹⁴ Milhous writes that "Basically Killigrew was inclined to rely on his extensive repertory of pre-Commonwealth dramas. He mounted plenty of new plays, but only because he was forced to do so". See Milhous, *Betterton*, p. 15.

¹⁹⁵ See Dale B. J. Randall, *Winter Fruit: English Drama, 1642-1660* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1995).

¹⁹⁶ Pepys, ii, p. 7.

¹⁹⁷ The diarist commented, "I never saw before, but found it far short of my expectations". Pepys, ii, p. 216.

Scornful Lady it was “the first play that ever he [Moore] saw”.¹⁹⁸ John Evelyn remarked that he went to the Bridges Street Theatre “After divers yeares, that I had [not] seene any Play”.¹⁹⁹ Thus there was a large pool of people, if not the majority of the spectators, who were unfamiliar with the pre-commonwealth plays. Moreover, it made good business sense for Killigrew to capitalise on the stock of old plays that he had so skilfully snatched from his rival. Killigrew’s troupe consisted of experienced players who presumably already knew their parts and were better attuned to the pre-Restoration plays. Killigrew, then, should not be seen as a manager who was simply rehashing old plays but rather introducing the forgotten canon of English dramaturgy to the London public anew.

One of the advantages of having experienced players and the well-practised repertory was the speed at which they could mount plays.²⁰⁰ The performance record, as shown in the *London Stage*, demonstrates that the King’s Company mounted one play after another throughout these theatrical seasons while the Duke’s Company took significantly longer to mount each production.²⁰¹ The gap between performances by the Duke’s Company was made longer by Davenant’s increasingly heated disputes with Henry Herbert.

Herbert lodged a complaint at the beginning of the theatrical season of 1661/2 that Davenant was “prohibiting divers persons from takeing their Authority from the plaintiff...for Publishing [i.e. public performances] of shewes”.²⁰² He further accused the

¹⁹⁸ Pepys, ii, p. 6.

¹⁹⁹ John Evelyn, *The Diary of John Evelyn*, ed. E. S. De Beer, 6 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955), iii, p. 268. Hereafter Evelyn, *Diary*.

²⁰⁰ Davenant’s experiments with his repertory and the rapid succession of new plays he produced indicated his desperation to find a winning formula (as shown in chapter three). By contrast, Killigrew did not go to the trouble of mounting new plays but instead presented old ones that were easier to mount with actors who knew their parts and required less rehearsal.

²⁰¹ In October 1661, for instance, the King’s Company mounted six different productions while the Duke’s Company mounted one. See *London Stage*, pp. 40-41.

²⁰² BL Add. MS 19,256, fol. 101 (*Register*, no. 91), printed in *The Dramatic Records of Sir Henry Herbert*, pp. 102-104.

manager of operating an unlicensed playhouse and refusing to pay licensing fees for plays. It seems that Herbert wanted his piece of the pie from Davenant's highly lucrative productions – such as *The Siege of Rhodes*, *The Wits* and *Hamlet* – but the manager was staunchly refusing to give way. A peremptory order was issued on 9 September “to forbear to act any more playes or showes”.²⁰³ Allardyce Nicoll assumed that this order was for the King's Company but the order was directed at the “Actors at the new Theatre”.²⁰⁴ The Duke's Company's Lincoln's Inn Fields was the newer theatre and Davenant's temporary move to the old Salisbury Court Theatre on the same day to produce John Ford's *Tis Pity She's a Whore* strongly suggests that Davenant was trying to find a loophole in the order.²⁰⁵

Financial success also raised unwanted ghosts from the past. On 15 July George Black and others complained to Davenant that they had contributed money in 1655/6 to set up a theatre company but had received no profits. Davenant was able to avoid giving details about the finances of the Duke's Company and was presumably able to resolve this situation by convincing his creditors that the new company was an entirely different operation.²⁰⁶ Similarly for the King's Company, Walter Clun and Charles Hart were sued by the widow of Robert Conway who had financed their company in 1648, and who now claimed a share in the profits of their present company. The Chancery suit on 8 November was intended to block the action.²⁰⁷ The two troupes therefore constantly had to fend off creditors who were attempting to feed off the budding companies.

After 11 September 1661 Davenant's company did not perform for over a month, which again allowed Killigrew to have full monopoly during that time. No new plays were produced but Killigrew crucially began experimenting with his repertory. When the King's Company

²⁰³ LC 5/184, fol. 127v (*Register*, no. 94).

²⁰⁴ Nicoll, *History*, p. 298.

²⁰⁵ See *London Stage*, p. 39.

²⁰⁶ C10/99/21 (*Register*, no. 81).

²⁰⁷ C10/62/8 (*Register*, no. 103).

produced Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair* Pepys was astounded as the play included a puppet-show, which "being so satyricall against puritanisme...which is strange they should already dare to do it, and the King to countenance it".²⁰⁸ To a certain extent, these politically daring productions characterised the Killigrew troupe's future repertory. For instance, it is telling that the only play that was gagged by the Lord Chamberlain during these years was the King's Company's production of John Wilson's *The Cheats* in 1663, for which Killigrew was ordered "that ye New Play...be no more presented till it be reviewed by Sir Jo. Denham & Mr Walker".²⁰⁹ Similarly, on 28 October 1661 Pepys recorded the first instance on the English stage in which he saw an actress come "on the Stage in man's clothes" in the King's Company's production of *Argalus and Parthenia*.²¹⁰ The titillating factor of this novel device obviously worked on Pepys who summed up the experience as: "the best legs that ever I saw; and I was very well pleased with it".²¹¹ In the following years Killigrew went on to exploit the sexual allure of actresses and to develop productions in which actresses became the central component of certain plays.

After a month of silence, the Duke's Company opened with Davenant's *Love and Honour* on 21 October 1661. Davenant was able to enlist the help of the royal family as Downes noted that the play was "Richly Cloath'd; The King giving Mr Betterton his Coronation Suit;...the Duke of York giving Mr Harris his". Downes also remarked that the production enjoyed a great run and got "the Company great Gain and Estimation from the Town".²¹²

²⁰⁸ Pepys, ii, p. 174. The introduction of a puppet-show in the middle of the play also importantly foreshadowed the beginning of entr'actes that were to become popular.

²⁰⁹ SP 44/10, pp. 54-56 (*Register*, no. 195).

²¹⁰ Pepys, ii, p. 203.

²¹¹ Pepys, ii, p. 203. Davenant was to copy this device later in his production of Robert Stapylton's *The Slighted Maid* on 23 February 1663 where Pepys saw "the little girl [most likely Moll Davis] dance in boy's apparel, she having very fine legs; only, bends in the hams as I perceive all women do". See Pepys, iv, p. 56.

²¹² Downes, p. 52.

Pepys raved that the play was “so good that it has been acted but three times and I have seen them all, and all in this week”.²¹³

The King’s Company attempted to counter the success of Davenant’s own play with one of Killigrew’s. Pitting the head of one troupe against the other caused a stir of excitement. Pepys went “to the Theatre” to see the production of *The Princesse* on 29 November to find “it was so full that we could hardly get any room”. The excitement was, however, short lived as the diarist “found the play to be a poor thing; and so I perceive everybody else do”.²¹⁴

While it is true that Killigrew’s plays did not hit the right note with the Restoration audiences in the same way that Davenant’s works had done, scholars have overlooked the greater level of expectation that was placed on the King’s Company during this time. Killigrew’s production of his own play, for instance, *The Princesse*, had “great expectation” by the London audience.²¹⁵ In fact, from the very beginning Pepys mentions his greater expectations of the King’s Company. On 31 December 1660 he notes he was disappointed by the King’s Company’s production of Shakespeare’s *Henry the Fourth* due to “my expectation being too great”.²¹⁶ Again, on 31 January 1661 when he saw the King’s Company’s production of *Argalus and Parthenia*, he thought “it is good, though wronged by my over-great expectations”.²¹⁷ This can be compared to Pepys’s reaction to the Duke’s Company’s production of *The Maid in the Mill* where he had “little expectations”.²¹⁸ Pepys was not alone in placing higher hopes on the King’s Company’s productions. As an anonymous poet put it after the failure of *The Princesse* at “his Majestys Theatre / Where one

²¹³ Pepys, ii, p. 201.

²¹⁴ Pepys, ii, p. 223.

²¹⁵ Pepys, ii, p. 223.

²¹⁶ Pepys, i, p. 325.

²¹⁷ Pepys, ii, p. 27.

²¹⁸ Pepys, ii, p. 25.

would imagine Playes should be better”.²¹⁹ In other words, the Duke’s Company’s productions were more likely to impress the audience because there was little expectation to begin with, whereas the King’s Company suffered from the audience placing too much expectation on the troupe’s productions because the troupe was directly patronised by the king. It was therefore not a reflection on Killigrew’s abilities but something quite out of his control.

Davenant followed up the success of his own *Love and Honour* with a production of Abraham Cowley’s *The Cutter of Coleman Street* on 16 December 1661. The Duke’s Company, it seems, followed in Killigrew’s footsteps by mocking the puritans. The piece was a revision of his earlier effort *The Guardian*, which had been acted in Cambridge in 1641. Although the play was aimed at the puritans, it backfired when it aroused indignation among some Royalists who did not take lightly to the portrayal of the drunken Cavalier, Colonel Jolly.²²⁰ Cowley was forced to defend himself in the preface to his first edition against “something of a Faction” which claimed that the author was disloyal.²²¹ Gerard Langbaine, a biographer and critic, noted how “This Play met with some Opposition, at its Representation under this new Name, from some who envied the Authors unshaken Loyalty to the Prince, and the Royal Cause, in the worst of Times”.²²² Yet a satire on puritans was popular enough

²¹⁹ BM Add. Mss. 34217, fol. 31 b; cited in Hotson, p. 246; and *London Stage*, p. 43.

²²⁰ See George Henry Nettleton, *English Drama of the Restoration and Eighteenth Century, 1642-1780* (New York: Sentry Press, 1932), pp. 36-37. Prior to anti-puritan plays in the public theatres, the pent up forces of Cavalier resentment against Cromwell and his supporters had found outlet in privately performed plays. These included such plays as *Craftie Cromwell* (1648), *The Second Part of Crafty Cromwell* (1648), *The Famous Tragedie of King Charles I* (1649), John Tatham’s (fl. 1632-1664) *The Rump, or the Mirrour of the Late Times* (1659-60), the anonymous *Cromwell’s Conspiracy* (1660); and *Hell’s Higher Court of Justice; or, The Triall of The Three Politick Ghosts, Viz. Oliver Cromwell, King of Sweden, and Cardinal Mazarine* (1661). See also Paulina Kewes, “Dryden’s Theatre and the Passions of Politics”, *The Cambridge Companion to John Dryden* ed. Steven N. Zwicker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 142

²²¹ Preface to *The Cutter of Coleman Street* (London, 1663), A2.

²²² Langbaine, p. 81.

for the company to charge double the usual price and still “perform’d a whole Week with a full Audience”.²²³

It was immediately after the success of *The Cutter of Coleman Street* that the King’s Company began its process of building a new theatre in a bid to compete with Davenant’s more spectacle-oriented plays. On 20 December 1661 the ground lease was signed for the Bridges Street Theatre and later the 36 building shares were divided amongst the company members. Thomas Killigrew and Sir Robert Howard were each in possession of 9 shares while the actors, such as Hart, Mohun and Clun, received 2 shares each. The actors agreed to perform only at Bridges Street and to pay £3.10s per acting day in rent – this was no doubt to safeguard Killigrew’s actors from fleeing as in the case of Betterton.²²⁴ More importantly, this agreement by which actors rented their theatre from a holding company “was to become the standard”.²²⁵ Indeed the Duke’s Company, which did not have such a clear agreement about the use of its theatre, was to copy Killigrew’s arrangement in the future.

Killigrew also shared the same number of shares with Howard. This was presumably because he was aware of Howard’s value not only as a financial investor but also more importantly as a valuable playwright and scene designer. Killigrew, much like the case with distributing the acting-shares, is again seen to be flexible enough to compromise his own financial benefit for the good of the troupe.²²⁶ This surely undermines Milhous’s statement that “Killigrew’s motives seem to have been largely mercenary throughout: he saw the

²²³ See Downes, p. 57. Pepys commented on 16 December 1661: “it [The Cutter of Coleman Street] being the first time, the pay was doubled; and so to save money, my wife and I went up into the gallery and there sat and saw very well; and a very good play it is”. See Pepys, ii, p. 234.

²²⁴ BL Add. MS 20,726, fol. 1v (*Register*, no. 112); see also, BL Add. MS 20,726, fols. 1v-2r (*Register*, no. 118); BL Add. MS 20,726, fols. 2r-3v (*Register*, no. 119).

²²⁵ Milhous, *Betterton*, p. 12.

²²⁶ A prior instance in which Killigrew’s flexibility in share dealings can be seen in how he only claimed two shares out of more than twelve (which were distributed among eight actors). This was in sharp contrast to Davenant who claimed two thirds of the Duke’s Company’s shares.

theatre as a way to make money”.²²⁷ The new theatre was indeed an expensive undertaking and although the initial costs may have been estimated to be £1,500, the actual total cost involved in building the theatre was closer to £2,500.²²⁸ On March 1662 Thomas Rugg was impressed by the construction site of “A very large play house”, the foundation of which was “laid in this month, in the back side of Bridges Street in Covent Garden”.²²⁹

The two companies were enjoying considerable success with the Duke’s Company producing a hit once every couple of months and the King’s Company also playing to large audiences as well as getting its much-anticipated new theatre ready. Conversely, George Jolly’s company faced difficulties in scraping together a living. On 28 October William Beeston issued a complaint concerning the rental of Salisbury Court Theatre and on 13 November Jolly and his company were ordered by the Lord Chamberlain not to act until “the difference and matter between Mr Beeston yourself and your Company bee heard and determined”.²³⁰ The issue was solved on 26 November when the Lord Chamberlain ordered Jolly to pay Beeston 30 shillings every day which included rights to dressing rooms and rehearsal space “as formerly allowed Sir William Davenants Players”.²³¹ Jolly’s players evidently struggled on afterwards. When Pepys saw their production of *Doctor Faustus* by Christopher Marlowe on 26 May 1662 he commented as it being “so wretchedly and poorly done, that we were sick of it”.²³²

It was not all plain sailing for the two prominent acting troupes either as both companies suffered from personnel problems around this time. An actress, Mrs Weaver complained that

²²⁷ Milhous, *Betterton*, p. 4.

²²⁸ See *Register*, no. 114; H. J. Oliver, “The Building of the Theatre Royal in Bridges St.: Some Details of Finance”, *Notes and Queries*, 217 (1972), pp. 464-466.

²²⁹ BL Add. MS 10,117, fol. 15v (*Register*, no. 126).

²³⁰ LC 5/184, fol. 33v (*Register*, no. 99); LC 5/137, p. 333 (*Register*, no. 104).

²³¹ LC 5/184, fol. 36 (*Register*, no. 105).

²³² Pepys, iii, p. 93.

the King's Company had apparently discharged her and turned her out of the theatre without cause. When questioned by the authorities as to what had happened, Sir Robert Howard replied that the claims made by the actress are "exactly false" and that Mrs Weaver had "three weeks agoe and above of her owne accord brought in all her parts and warn'd the Company that after such A day which is expir'd shee would not act noe more".²³³ The reason for her leaving became obvious "since shee has appeard big with Child". It turned out that her marriage with James Weaver was a sham. When the news got out, the reputation of the company was compromised and Howard recorded that "many women of quality have protested they will never come to the house to see A woman actinge all parts of vertue in such A Shamefull Condition".²³⁴ The Duke's Company suffered a similar problem when Davenant lost one of his prize actresses, Hester Davenport, to the Earl of Oxford who tricked her into an invalid marriage. She later successfully appealed to Charles II for a financial settlement for herself and for her son but Davenport's early and unexpected retirement from the stage must have worried Davenant. He had originally cast her in the villainous role of the Persian princess, Roxalana.²³⁵ Davenport's performance of Roxalana became so crucial to the success of *The Siege of Rhodes* that Pepys believed that "the loss of Roxalana [Davenport] would spoil the house".²³⁶ Even when Davenant found actresses such as Moll Davis and Mrs Saunderson to replace Davenport, theatre-goers such as Pepys still found the

²³³ SP 29/109, no. 16 (*Register*, no. 163). A detailed account of Elizabeth Weaver is given in J. H. Wilson, *All the King's Ladies: Actresses of the Restoration* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), p. 143.

²³⁴ The reply by Sir Robert Howard is printed in full by H. J. Oliver, *Sir Robert Howard (1626-1698): A Critical Biography* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1963), pp. 123-24.

²³⁵ For a detailed study of Roxalana, see Anne K. Kaler, *Roxalana: The Picara: From Hera to Fantasy Heroine* (Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1991). Kaler writes: "What is important is that the name 'Roxana' or its variants had become so established as a name connected with the theatre and with villainy that the very name 'Roxana' became a stereotype as a villainess", p. 180.

²³⁶ Pepys, iii, p. 32.

productions “not so well done as when Roxalana was there [the Duke’s Company]”.²³⁷

Pregnant actresses were not the only personnel problems Davenant faced during this time. John Ogilby, the Master of the Revels in Ireland – who had in 1660 successfully petitioned to retain his position when Davenant was considered to replace him – had enticed John Richards, a player, from Davenant’s company to the theatre in Dublin.²³⁸ As if this was not enough, Richards was probably ordered by Ogilby to “draw away others to accompany him thither”. On 6 August 1662 Davenant was able to obtain an order which required Ogilby “to cause the said Richards to returne with all expedition to his former Employment, and forbear to draw away, or entertaine any of the sayd Company of Players, belonging to the sayd Sir William Davenant”.²³⁹

It was perhaps no coincidence that Davenant faced trouble from not only one Master of the Revels but also the other. It may have seemed to Davenant that his skirmishes with Herbert were coming to an end at the beginning of 1662 but the animosity between the two men only escalated. In January both Davenant and Killigrew requested the king to order an examination concerning a suit brought by Herbert, which accused the two managers of not having paid Herbert’s fees between 8 and 16 October 1660.²⁴⁰ In May, the two managers won their day in court and they were awarded £25 with costs.

In the same month, however, Herbert began an onslaught of complaints against the Duke’s Company. He made a formal complaint stating that:

the said [Duke’s] players doe refuse to pay the said ffees
[licensing fees] and profitts formerly payd and lie to the said
office and have totally withdrawne the payment of them to Sir

²³⁷ Pepys, iii, p. 86. Mrs Saunderson acted Cleora in *The Bondman*; and Moll David was most likely the “little girl” whom Pepys mentioned seeing on stage on 18 February 1662.

²³⁸ Davenant was granted the post of Master of the Revels in Ireland and a theatrical monopoly in Dublin on 26 November 1660 but Ogilby petitioned to retain his position and the grant to Davenant was revoked in March 1661. See SP 63/304, no. 171 (*Register*, no. 47); SP 63/307, no. 201 (*Register*, no. 71).

²³⁹ SP 29/58, no. 15.I (*Register*, no. 148).

²⁴⁰ C.P. 40/2753, rot. 1190 (*Register*, no. 122).

Henry Herbert's damage of five thousand pounds.²⁴¹

Herbert then lodged a formal complaint against Betterton, apparently as representative of Davenant's actors, for performing without authorization and that they "did Act divers stage Playes as well new Playes as revived Playes to witt 10 new playes and 100 revived Playes".²⁴² Davenant became clearly frustrated by what he thought was the abuse of power by Herbert and the unclear nature of how far the jurisdiction of the Master of the Revels extended. The manager hence asked the king to appoint referees to determine "the just authoritie of the Master of the Revells, that so his Fees (if any be due to him) may be made certaine to prevent extorsion".²⁴³

All this time Killigrew remained silent – this was because he had made a private deal with Herbert behind closed doors. Killigrew agreed to pay 40 shillings for the licensing of new plays and 20 shillings for revived plays. He further agreed to pay costs won by Herbert in a Court of Common Pleas case against Mohun and to pay a further £50 as a show of good will. More importantly, however, the two men agreed that Killigrew would not assist or aid Davenant or his troupe in any way. In return, Herbert agreed never to interfere with Killigrew's troupe and furthermore to defend it against legal challenges.²⁴⁴ This move epitomises Killigrew's scheming character. He was never averse to making compromises and clandestine deals under the table as long as it helped his company. Killigrew was quick to realise that Herbert was clearly not giving up his claim and so made peace with him and at the same time, he covertly undermined his main rival and competitor. As a result, the King's Company was left to its own devices and performed without interruptions.

In hindsight it may be argued that Davenant refused to cave into Herbert's demands

²⁴¹ BL Add. MS 19,256, fol. 72 (*Register*, no. 133).

²⁴² BL Add. MS 19,256, fol. 104 (*Register*, no. 134); BL Add. MS 19,256, fols. 67-68 (*Register*, no. 135).

²⁴³ BL Add. MS 19,256, fol. 74 (*Register*, no. 137).

²⁴⁴ See BL Add. MS 19,256, fol. 66 (*Register*, no. 139).

because he did not want to compromise his principles or he thought it would jeopardise his long-term financial interest, but it is important to remember that Davenant's stubbornness led to a bitter battle (that culminated in violence) between the Duke's Company and Henry Herbert. Davenant's stubbornness in dealing with Herbert, as David Roberts has written, might have easily "put at risk their [the Duke's Company] very existence; for lesser crimes might theatres be closed".²⁴⁵ Indeed Davenant's intractable personality and his inflexible managerial style would later contribute to one of the largest disruptions within the troupe, the rift between Davenant and Harris.

The King's Company was doing very well during this time except for occasional hiccups. Gerard Langbaine noted that the King's Company's production of James Shirley's *Love in a Maze, or The Changes* "has been received with Success in our Time...with general Applause".²⁴⁶ Pepys found their production of John Fletcher's *The Little Thief, or The Night Walker*, on 19 May, "well done".²⁴⁷ Particular actors had come into their own during this time as well. On 21 May Pepys recorded that the play *The French Dancing Master* "pleased us very well" but most of all found "[John] Lacy's part, the Dancing Maister, the best in the world".²⁴⁸ The next day Pepys found "Lacy's part of a Country fellow" in Shirley's *Love in a Maze* done "to admiration".²⁴⁹

On the other hand, the stress of litigation seems to have put a damper on the quality of performances by the Duke's Company. Productions from March 1662 to September of that year – despite their small number – are peppered with negative reactions. On 1 March 1662 Pepys saw the production of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* mounted by the Duke's Company and thought that it was "the worst acted that ever I saw these people do...for they

²⁴⁵ Roberts, "Thomas Killigrew, Theatre Manager", p. 71.

²⁴⁶ Langbaine, p. 477.

²⁴⁷ Pepys, iii, p. 86.

²⁴⁸ Pepys, iii, p. 88.

²⁴⁹ Pepys, iii, p. 88.

were all of them out more or less”.²⁵⁰ Pepys’s criticism is corroborated by Downes’s account of the production in which an actress “enter’d in a Hurry, Crying, O my Dear Count!” but “She Inadvertently left out, O, in the pronunciation of the Word”.²⁵¹ Similarly on 23 May, Pepys commented that Henry Glapthorne’s play, *Wit in a Constable*, was “so silly a play I never saw I think in my life”.²⁵² This was harsh criticism considering that Pepys tended to favour the Duke’s Company because it included his favourite actor, Betterton.²⁵³

By the summer of 1662, the gloves were off and the dispute between Davenant and Herbert finally erupted on 4 July when actors from the Duke’s Company, including Thomas Betterton, Henry Harris, and Samuel Sandford amongst others ganged up on and violently assaulted Herbert’s messenger, Edward Thomas. The actors not only “beat and maltreated” him but also held him “prisoner” for about two hours. The twelve players later confessed to the charge and were fined “three shillings and four pence” each.²⁵⁴ The last we hear of the prolonged altercation between Herbert and Davenant came a week after the assault on 11 July when Herbert provided a list of his demands including licensing fees to all acting companies in London. This was presumably the result of a meeting with the authorities, Clarendon and Edward Earl of Manchester, who clearly thought the problem had gone on for long enough.²⁵⁵

The new theatrical season began auspiciously for the Duke’s Company. On 30 September 1662 the troupe scored a hit with John Webster’s *The Duchess of Malfy* which according to

²⁵⁰ Pepys, iii, p. 39.

²⁵¹ Downes, p. 53.

²⁵² Pepys, iii, p. 90.

²⁵³ It is improbable that the Pepyses did not favour the Duke’s Company. Pepys’s wife was so fond of Betterton that she even named her dog after him. See Pepys, *Shorthand Letters of Samuel Pepys*, ed. Edwin Chappell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1933), p. 22. The Duke’s Company also later hired Pepys’s maid, Winifred Gosnell, to the surprise of the diarist who saw her perform on 28 May 1663: “And so to the Duke’s House...Who should come upon the Stage but Gosnell...But she becomes the stage very well”. See Pepys, iv, p. 162.

²⁵⁴ *Register*, no. 144.

²⁵⁵ *Register*, no. 146; see also Herbert, *The Dramatic Records of Sir Henry Herbert*, pp. 120-123.

Downes was “so exceeding Excellently Acted in all Parts” that it “fill’d the House 8 Days Successively, it proving one of the Best of Stock Tragedies”.²⁵⁶ Soon afterwards on 18 October the Duke’s Company had another successful production – Thomas Porter’s new play, *The Villain*. It outdid the run of *The Duchess of Malfy* to the surprise of Downes who wrote that the play “had success extremely beyond the Company’s Expectation...It Succeeded 10 Days with a full House, to the last”.²⁵⁷ Pepys went to see it a grand total of six times.²⁵⁸ Even Killigrew’s son, Henry Killigrew, “did...commend *The Villaine*”.²⁵⁹ It was revived in December 1662 and again in January 1663 and remained a popular choice until the end of the century.

Whatever the merits of the play, its success was partly brought about by Samuel Sandford’s peerless performance in the title role. Langbaine recalls how he had seen the play “at the Duke’s Theatre with great applause: the part of Malignii being incomparably play’d by Mr. Sandford”.²⁶⁰ Sandford, who began his career as an actor some time in 1661, quickly made his mark as London’s favourite actor of villains. Even Charles II openly confessed that Sandford is “the best Villain in the World”.²⁶¹ Indeed “only Sandford, in his special way”, seemed “capable of rivalling Betterton for the audience’s reaction”.²⁶² After making his mark as an actor of villains in the first villain tragedy on the Restoration stage in October 1662, Sandford went on to help bring about the rise and the popularity of the bloody genre in the

²⁵⁶ Downes, p. 58.

²⁵⁷ Downes, p. 54.

²⁵⁸ Pepys, iii, pp. 229-30, p. 294; iv, pp. 1-2.

²⁵⁹ Pepys, iii, p. 229.

²⁶⁰ Langbaine, p. 407.

²⁶¹ Anthony Aston, *A Brief Supplement to Colley Cibber, Esq; His Lives of the Late Famous Actors and Actresses* (London, 1747), reprinted in *An Apology for the Life of Colley Cibber*, ed. R. W. Lowe, 2 vols (London, 1889), ii, p. 306.

²⁶² See *The Works by John Dryden*, ed. H. D. Swedenberg, et al., 20 vols (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1956-2002), xiii, p. 446.

1670s.²⁶³

The King's Company countered this popular tragedy with a new political comedy by Sir Robert Howard, *The Committee; Or, The Faithful Irishman*. Howard made use of Lacy's growing popularity and comic talents by casting him as the Irish-footman. John Evelyn, who saw the performance at court, dubbed Lacy as "a very Satyrus or Roscius".²⁶⁴

The Duke's Company was quick to respond with a comedy of its own on 8 January 1663: Samuel Tuke's *The Adventures of Five Hours*. This was a play developed from a Spanish source, which Charles II first recommended to Tuke to be adapted into English. The king's recommendation struck a chord with the London public. Pepys described the Spanish comedy "in one word, is the best, for the variety and the most excellent continuance of the plot to the very end, that ever I saw or think ever shall".²⁶⁵ Evelyn similarly noted how the play "so universally tooke as it was acted for some weeks every day, & twas believed would be worth the Comedians 4 or 5000 pounds".²⁶⁶ While the profit of the production was most likely exaggerated, according to Downes, the play nevertheless "took Successively" an unprecedented "13 Days together, no other Play intervening" – it even dwarfed the success of the Duke's Company's two previous big hits: *The Duchess of Malfy* and *The Villain*.²⁶⁷

The prologue to the play boasted of the newness of the production: "The English Stage ne'r had so New a Play; / The Dress, the Author, and the Scenes are New". The prologue also stressed the play's Spanish origin as the debutant wrote: "This Forein Plot...Should suffer

²⁶³ See my "Samuel Sandford and Colley Cibber: Two Players' Acting Techniques and the Rise and Fall of Restoration Villain Tragedy on the London Stage from the 1670s to the 1730s", *Theatre Notebook*, 68.3 (2014), pp. 136-52. For other related studies, see Robert H. Ross Jr., "Samuel Sandford: Villain from Necessity", *PMLA*, 76 (1961), pp. 367-72; J. P. Vander Motten, "Iago at Lincoln's Inn Fields: Thomas Porter's 'The Villain' on the Early Restoration Stage", *SEL*, 24 (1984), pp. 415-28; Anne Hermanson, *The Horror Plays of the English Restoration* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014).

²⁶⁴ Evelyn, *Diary*, iii, p. 345.

²⁶⁵ Pepys, iv, p. 8.

²⁶⁶ Evelyn, *Diary*, iii, p. 350.

²⁶⁷ Downes, p. 54.

Shipwreck in your Narrow Seas, / You'll give your Modern Poet his Writ of Ease, / For by th' Example of the King of Spain, / He resolves ne'r to trouble you again".²⁶⁸

As *The Adventures of Five Hours* dominated the stage all the way through January, the King's Company responded to the play's success in February with John Dryden's first play, a comedy, *The Wild Gallant*. The similarity between the two plays extended beyond the fact that both were comedies, written by new playwrights. They both adopted for their prologues and epilogues performance based pieces rather than employing formal speeches. Dryden's prologue, for instance, was a conversation by two astrologers. This was a clear indication of an evolution in the development of prologues and epilogues from those of earlier times.

The prologue of *The Wild Gallant*, moreover, makes clear that the play was a riposte to the Duke's Company's recent success with a play adapted from a Spanish original. It emphasised the play's Englishness at a time when the English stage is "indanger'd by a Spanish Plot...supply'd with all the wealth of *Spain*: / This Play is *English*, and the growth your own; / As such it yields to *English* Plays alone".²⁶⁹ Not only was Dryden's play more patriotic than Tuke's piece but it was also more complex. Pepys, who saw the performance on 23 February, commented "that from the beginning to the end, I could not, nor can at this time, tell certainly which was the wild gallant".²⁷⁰ This was in contrast to Tuke's adaptation which stressed the plainness of the play's style in the epilogue to the play: "Is is easie as a Proclamation, / As if the Play were pen'd for th' whole Nation. / ...There's not one Line, but may be understood".²⁷¹ This difference may have been brought about partly by the two companies' contrasting choice of target audience. The Duke's Company seems to have begun attracting the citizen demographic. When Pepys saw *The Siege of Rhodes* on 27 December he

²⁶⁸ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, i, p. 143.

²⁶⁹ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, i, p. 156.

²⁷⁰ Pepys, iv, p. 56.

²⁷¹ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, i, p. 145.

complained snobbishly that the theatre “was full of Citizens, there hardly being a gentleman or woman in the house”.²⁷² On the other hand, Dryden confessed in his preface to *The Wild Gallant* that it did not enjoy the same success with the town, as it did at court.²⁷³ The differences between the two companies as exemplified here, became more developed and were to divide them further in the years to come.

Considering the widening fissures between the two companies and their managers during this time, it is remarkable how both Killigrew and Davenant were able to come together to draw up a solution for dealing with their lesser yet irritating third competitor, George Jolly. Killigrew and Davenant conspired to bribe Jolly out of his patent. An agreement was penned on 30 December 1662 between Jolly, Killigrew and Davenant by which it was agreed that Killigrew and Davenant would rent Jolly’s license from him for £4 a week “during his natural life”.²⁷⁴ Two days after signing the agreement, Jolly was authorized by Herbert “to raise a company of Stage players or less to act Comedies &c throughout England with exception onely to the Citities of London and Westm: and the suburbs of each respective city”.²⁷⁵ Charles II, moreover, reinforced Herbert’s grant with instructions on 29 January “to all Mayors, Sheriffs, Justices of the peace, Bayliffs, Constables, and hear boroughs” to assist and protect Jolly in exercising his profession.²⁷⁶ I would suggest that Jolly, who was most likely tired of his unprofitable venture in London, wanted to get back to what he did best: running a touring troupe. The agreement gave him the additional advantage of avoiding letting his license lay dormant for the period and instead rent it out for profit. This plan would have worked to Jolly’s best possible advantage had Killigrew and Davenant not outmanoeuvred him.

²⁷² Pepys, iii, p. 295.

²⁷³ Preface to Dryden’s *The Wild Gallant* (London, 1669), A2.

²⁷⁴ BL Add. Charter 9297 (*Register*, no. 179).

²⁷⁵ SP 44/48, pp. 6a-7 (*Register*, no. 183).

²⁷⁶ SP 44/9, pp. 247-50 (*Register*, no. 188).

Being now in possession of Jolly's patent and Jolly himself having left London, Killigrew and Davenant seized their opportunity to speak to Charles II. They convinced the king that they had bought Jolly's patent outright, which would give them permission to erect another playhouse in London in addition to the ones they already had. The king agreed to the petition, a new license was drafted, and Jolly's patent was given up to them. With Davenant having finally received his formal patent with the Great Seal on 15 January 1663 authorizing him to operate a theatre, the two men – Killigrew and Davenant – were now officially, the sole patentees of theatre companies in England as well as having the duopoly over theatrical activities in London.²⁷⁷

The patentees used the third license to set up a Nursery in Hatton Garden, which was used as a training ground for amateur actors and actresses. The two companies then recruited the most successful players from the Nursery. Since neither manager could run the Nursery on a day-to-day basis and because they did not want Jolly to do so, they appointed Colonel William Legge to work effectively as the nominal head of the company while Killigrew and Davenant in reality supervised and controlled the company.²⁷⁸ The appointment of Legge suggests that it was Killigrew who was primarily involved with the establishment of the Nursery. Legge was not only a military man but also a Groom of the King's Bedchamber and a close associate of Killigrew's during the Interregnum.²⁷⁹

After leaving the capital in early January 1663, Jolly came back to London presumably around March 1664 by which time his patent had already been secured by the two managers.

²⁷⁷ For Davenant's patent, see C66/3009, no. 3 (*Register*, no. 186). An undated draft of an order to revoke the license to Jolly was granted on 24 December 1660. See SP 29/77, no. 39 (*Register*, no. 224).

²⁷⁸ SP 44/15, pp. 117-19 (*Register*, no. 223). The warrant to Killigrew and Davenant "to erect another Playhouse in London or Westminster...for ye instructing of Boyes & Girles in ye Art of Acting...in the nature of a nursery, for ye accomodation & fitting ye said two Companyes allready erected". The warrant goes on to state specifically that as a condition of this grant Jolly's authorization "to govern a distinct Company of Players...by agreement betwixt him, & ye said Thomas Killegrew & Sir William Davenant is to cease". For a further discussion of this grant, see Hotson, pp. 182-85.

²⁷⁹ See Smith, "A Gentleman of Great Esteem with the King", p. 156, p. 174.

Jolly, in a third person narrative, recounts what happened when he tried unknowingly to perform in London as formerly: “after he [Jolly] had raised a Company by Vertue of that warrant Mr Killigrew goes to my Lord Chamberlain and gets a warrant forr the said George Jolly to Lay him by the Heeles if he durst Proceed any ffurther”.²⁸⁰ Having found out what had happened while he was away performing in the provinces, Jolly threatened to uncover Killigrew and Davenant’s underhanded dealings to the king. The long and short of it was that the battle ended in a compromise. Jolly was to accept that he had lost his patent, while Killigrew and Davenant hired Jolly as their deputy in running the Nursery instead. Jolly’s young troupe were to have two-thirds of the income of the house and if Killigrew and Davenant should replace him, Jolly was to receive 6s 8d for each day the Nursery presented plays.

Although Hotson condemns both Killigrew and Davenant on “the charge of dishonest dealing”, he reserves his ire in particular for Killigrew whom he suspects was the primary culprit. Hotson, for instance, states that the line in the new patent which declared that George Jolly had made no use of the warrant was a lie “inserted probably by Killigrew”.²⁸¹ It is true that it was Killigrew who asked the Lord Chamberlain to stop Jolly from performing after his return to London and it is characteristic of Killigrew to end a confrontation with a compromise. Furthermore it was Killigrew who in 1673 would sound the death-knell for Jolly.

In the meantime, as the anticipation of the new theatre grew, Killigrew signed an agreement with Mary Meggs, a former prostitute who would later come to be known as “Orange Moll”. Killigrew gave her the rights to sell “orringes lemons fruit Sweetmeats”, with other female helpers, for thirty-nine years at a rent of 6s 8d per acting day at Drury Lane. As

²⁸⁰ B.M. Add. MS. 34, 729, fols. pp. 124-25 (*Register*, no. 850); cited in Hotson, p. 184.

²⁸¹ Hotson, “George Jolly, Actor-Manager: New Light on the Restoration Stage”, p. 438.

part of the agreement she was also obliged to pay an initiation fee of £100.²⁸²

Killigrew unveiled his new theatre in Bridges Street Theatre on 7 May 1663 with a production of John Fletcher's *The Humorous Lieutenant*. Downes recorded the immense success of the play as it "was Acted Twelve Days Successively" – only one day less than, *The Adventures of Five Hours*, the Duke's Company's most popular comedy to date.²⁸³

Pepys who visited the new theatre a day after it opened, confessed that "the house is made with extraordinary good contrivance". The diarist nevertheless had his misgivings as he found fault with the "narrowness of the passages in and out of the pit" and with the protracted "distance from the stage to the boxes". Pepys felt sure that those in the boxes "cannot hear". The new theatre also introduced for the first time in English theatre the orchestra pit, which Pepys found inconvenient and grumbled: "the Musique being below, and most of it sounding under the very stage, there is no hearing of the bases at all".²⁸⁴ Despite Pepys's reservations, it certainly seems to have sufficiently impressed the king who "passes his time twice or thrice a week at his Theatre Royal, newly built with artistic scenes and machines all designed by Sir Robert Howard, judged here to be the greatest master of perspective in Europe".²⁸⁵ The introduction of new scenes brought in spectators. Pepys noted that the production of *The Faithful Shepherdess* was "much thronged after, and often shown, but it is only for the scenes' sake, which is very fine indeed, and worth seeing".²⁸⁶ With the excitement of the new theatre, the popularity of the King's Company's productions seemed to show no signs of abating: on 28 May Pepys was refused entry at "the Royall Theatre" because the theatre was

²⁸² C7/161/32 (*Register*, no. 192). Pepys on 6 February 1663 commented, "looked upon the outside of the new theatre, now a-building in Covent Garden, which will be very fine". Pepys, iv, pp. 34-35.

²⁸³ Downes, p. 9.

²⁸⁴ Pepys, iv, p. 128.

²⁸⁵ BL Add MS 27,962 Q, fols. 320-321r (*Register*, no. 206).

²⁸⁶ Pepys, iv, p. 182.

“so full” that “we could have no room”.²⁸⁷

This was hardly surprising as the new theatre in Bridges Street was hailed as “the real beginning of a regularised world of the theatre”, marking “the emergence of Drama from the barn, the inn-yard...the small, ill-equipped playhouses, into the dignity of proper equipment and public resort”.²⁸⁸ Indeed Killigrew’s new playhouse was the first in a long line of theatres to be known as the Theatre Royal and the first purpose built theatre of the Restoration period.

This chapter has carefully traced theatrical activity from 1660 to 1663. These years saw the gradual establishment of Thomas Killigrew and William Davenant’s duopoly over theatrical entertainment in London. Gaining exclusive control over the capital’s theatrical activities was more difficult than has often been presumed and it demanded both business acuity and dexterous diplomacy from the managers to survive.

I have argued that Killigrew thrived in this precarious environment. I demonstrated how Killigrew was the more aggressive of the two in stamping out competition as he coerced members of the Michael Mohun troupe until they became amalgamated into the King’s Company – therefore most likely forcing his rival, Davenant, to settle for the third choice of London actors as John Freehafer has suggested. He also, as a consequence, seized control of most of the pre-Commonwealth repertory which allowed his acting troupe to be the first official theatre to re-open after the Restoration. Subsequently, Killigrew achieved a number of impressive firsts in English theatre history such as the introduction of professional

²⁸⁷ Pepys, iv, p. 162.

²⁸⁸ Richard W. Bevis, *English Drama: Restoration and Eighteenth Century 1660-1789* (London: Longman, 1988), p. 33.

actresses, the first official patent granted by Charles II for his troupe, and the construction of the first Theatre Royal.

Killigrew's ambition was matched by his tact. It is important to remember that Henry Herbert and Thomas Killigrew were locked in a heated power struggle from the very beginning, so much so, that the actors petitioned the king on 13 October 1660 that they "may not bee molested in their calling" through collateral damage.²⁸⁹ It speaks volumes of the man that Killigrew should set aside old animosities and make a secret pact with Herbert at the very moment when Davenant's troupe was becoming too successful for comfort. The line between tact and deviousness became even more blurred when it came to his treatment of George Jolly. While both Killigrew and Davenant were responsible for conspiring to bribe Jolly out of his patent, Killigrew was probably more involved in the plot, as Leslie Hotson suggests. This chapter deviates from Hotson's view, however, in arguing that Jolly was a significant threat to the two managers. It is clear that Jolly's troupe struggled to keep up with the two companies. From Pepys's diaries and reports of financial troubles with William Beeston, money problems forced Jolly to leave London and lead a group of strolling players around England. The revoking of Jolly's patent – however underhanded the process – finally gave the two managers absolute control of the theatres in London.

These three years also indicated how the two companies were going to develop in the future. By this time theatre-goers such as Pepys had already dubbed the two companies "the Theatre" and "the Opera", respectively. These terms implied that the King's Company produced more dramatic pieces while the Duke's Company specialised in operatic productions. As the competition ensues, however, it becomes at times difficult to categorise these two companies according to these clear definitions. Questions such as whether the two companies were more English or foreign oriented in their tastes or whether they were catering

²⁸⁹ *Register*, no. 35. The whereabouts of the original MS is not known but it is printed in *The Dramatic Records of Sir Henry Herbert*, pp. 93-94.

to certain demographics are discussed further in the following chapter, as Killigrew and Davenant's rivalry begins to heat up.

Chapter 2

“All Stratagems are allow’d betwixt Enemies”:

Heated Competition, 1663-1668

Until 1663 both troupes were busy consolidating their duopoly and the death of Davenant in 1668 ended the competition and concluded the period of rivalry between the two managers.²⁹⁰ Theatre historians have hitherto assumed that compared with his counterpart Sir William Davenant, Thomas Killigrew was at best an absentee manager and at worst a fumbling nuisance.²⁹¹ Touted as the “Father of English Opera”, Davenant is also credited with revolutionising the English stage.²⁹² Yet a close comprehensive study of the competition between Davenant and Killigrew yields a different narrative. This chapter argues that critics have exaggerated William Davenant’s reputation as the entrepreneurial manager just as much as they have tarnished the reputation of Killigrew’s managerial career by representing him as a backward and foolish patentee. This chapter demonstrates that Thomas Killigrew did not play second fiddle to Davenant but was an influential theatrical impresario in his own right.

For William Davenant the theatrical season of 1663 began with a crisis. Samuel Pepys reported on 22 July that Henry Harris – a player – had apparently grown “very proud and demanded” more money than “anybody else”. Davenant staunchly refused his request, “with other things, Sir W Davenant would not give him”. This may have been a tactical move by

²⁹⁰ Hume, *Development*, p. 238.

²⁹¹ Milhous, for instance, writes “Killigrew made no attempt to manage his company on a day-to-day basis”. See Milhous, *Betterton*, p. 12. Summers also wrote, “Careless Tom Killigrew...let the reins of government almost entirely slip out of his hands”. See Summers, *Playhouse of Pepys*, p. 4.

²⁹² Cited in Milhous, *Betterton*, p. 24.

Davenant who did not want other players to imitate Harris and start demanding more. At any rate, no one else seemed to have had enough courage to follow Harris's lead. Undoubtedly the rebuff stung the actor's pride and he responded by swearing that "he would never act there any more, in expectation of being received in the other House". Indeed, rumour had it that Harris was receiving "a stipend from the [King's] house privately".²⁹³

I speculate that Thomas Killigrew was most likely behind the scenes fuelling the disturbance. David Roberts makes clear that there were plenty of reasons why Harris was dissatisfied with his lot at the Duke's Company without interference from Killigrew.²⁹⁴ But if the rumours were correct and Harris was not only receiving a stipend secretly from the King's Company but also Killigrew had offered him a place at his company, then that surely emboldened Harris enough to take action as he did. Furthermore if Harris had been receiving a stipend from the King's Company, it would most likely have come from Killigrew himself (or at the very least he would have been informed of the secret stipend). Moreover, it is unlikely that the leading actors in the King's Company would have wanted Harris. Hart and Mohun were constantly vying for the spotlight and surely could do without another leading actor in the mix. Much like the case with Herbert, bribery was often Killigrew's tactic of getting his own way and no doubt his former employment as a spy served him well in finding disaffected actors within the rival company and influencing them to defect.²⁹⁵ It is instructive to see why he chose to tempt Harris and not Thomas Betterton. Betterton had already switched sides and was not likely to be tempted back especially as he showed no signs of wavering loyalty to Davenant whereas Harris was constantly angling for new and better

²⁹³ Pepys, iv, p. 239.

²⁹⁴ See chapter 7 of Roberts, *Thomas Betterton*.

²⁹⁵ See Mary Ann O'Donnell, "Aphra Behn: The Documentary Record", in *The Cambridge Companion to Aphra Behn*, ed. Derek Hughes and Janet Todd (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 6.

deals.²⁹⁶ Killigrew also knew that it was Harris, and not Betterton, who was on everyone's lips with "the King and every body else crying him up so high".²⁹⁷ Harris was also an accomplished singer and painter. When Winifred Gosnell, Pepys's former maid turned actress, for example, "fell out of the Key, so that the Musique could not play to her afterwards, and so did Harris also go out of the tune to agree with her".²⁹⁸ Also as spectacular scenery was becoming increasingly important, Harris possessed indispensable expertise as a painter – the position, incidentally, he was originally hired to fill.²⁹⁹ Killigrew must have known that, by enticing Harris, he would severely handicap the Duke's Company's chances of success. Davenant even told Pepys that Harris leaving will be "a great loss to the house".³⁰⁰ But Davenant perilously stuck to his decision and was only saved from his own stubbornness by his patron, the Duke of York, who had enough sense to intervene and persuade Harris "to come again to Sir W. Davenant upon his [Harris's] terms that he

²⁹⁶ In 1665 Harris petitioned for the post of chief engraver of seals, the position of which had become vacant after the death of Thomas Simon. Although he was refused the first time Harris tried again five years later and was granted the office. The lucrative post granted him £50 annually plus a profit on every seal cut by Harris. He was also sworn in as Yeoman of the Revels, a position that he held until at least 1704. The job, which may have been a sinecure, entailed stage management and instructing duties for court entertainments. On 16 March 1665, for instance, Harris was employed to advise "concerninge the Convenient Makinge the Attyreing roome in the New Theatre in Whitehall and that you [Harris] see that all things be fitt and Convenient". See LC 5/138, p. 425 (*Register*, no. 311). With his new position therefore he was not only able to expand on his aristocratic connections but was able to earn an additional 6d a day plus £15 per year for rent and £13 6s 8d for board wages and attendance. Part of the reason why Harris was always on the lookout for positions was because he was constantly cash-strapped. His wife – probably Anne Sears – drained his cash by stacking up debts and by suing him for maintenance. See, for instance, LC 5/189, fol. 91v (*Register*, no. 732); LC 5/190, fol. 134 (*Register*, no. 956); LC 5/190, fol. 174 (*Register*, no. 1009); LC 5/190, fol. 181v (*Register*, no. 1026); LC 5/191, fol. 50v (*Register*, no. 1092); LC5/191, fol. 58 (*Register*, no. 1098).

²⁹⁷ Pepys, iv, p. 239.

²⁹⁸ Pepys, v, p. 267. Harris also sang in front of Pepys "his Irish song— the strangest in itself, and the prettiest sung by him, that ever I heard". Harris also sang with Samuel Sandford the epilogue to *The Man's the Master* "in the form of a ballad". See Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, i, pp. 277-81.

²⁹⁹ See BL Add. Charter 9295, Davenant's agreement document of 5 November 1660 as seen in Thomas and Hare, *Restoration and Georgian England*, p. 34.

³⁰⁰ Pepys, iv, p. 239.

demanded”.³⁰¹

Soon after Harris’s return, Davenant used his production of Shakespeare’s *Henry VIII*, as a commercial opportunity to exploit the public quarrel by casting Betterton as the King and Harris as Wolsey. If Davenant felt bettered by Harris, he was not about to let it affect the troupe and the play was one of many, which served to bring Harris peacefully back into the fold.³⁰² The play also served as a direct challenge to Killigrew and his company for causing so much angst. By the personal “Order of Sir William Davenant” the play “was all new Cloath’d in proper Habits” with “new Scenes”. Not only were there new costumes and scenery, but also the play was well-rehearsed. For his part in particular Betterton was “Instructed in it by Sir William, who had it from Old Mr. Lowen”.³⁰³ It was perceptive of Downes to stress how Davenant had consciously taught Betterton in the style of John Lowin – a preeminent actor of the old King’s Men. Perhaps this was a deliberate effort on the part of Davenant to compete with the acting style of Killigrew’s players who carried on the “pre-war traditions of performance”.³⁰⁴

Killigrew immediately responded to Davenant’s production by mounting *The Indian Queen*. The play was written as a collaboration between Sir Robert Howard and his brother in law, John Dryden. Killigrew’s eagerness to outdo Davenant can be seen in that he not only employed his best playwrights but also issued “A warrant to the Master of the Great Wardrobe” on January 1664 to “deliver to Thomas Killigrew Esqr to the value of forty pounds in silks”.³⁰⁵ His aim was not only to match Davenant’s challenge but also to surpass his production both in substance and pomp. Killigrew’s strategy evidently worked. Pepys

³⁰¹ Pepys, iv, p. 347.

³⁰² See Roberts, *Thomas Betterton*, pp. 92-96.

³⁰³ Downes, p. 55.

³⁰⁴ Michael Dobson, “Adaptations and Revivals” in *The Cambridge Companion to English Restoration Theatre* ed. Deborah Payne Fisk (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 44.

³⁰⁵ LC 5/138, p. 15 (*Register*, no. 268).

observed “the street full of coaches” outside the playhouse, as word of mouth circulated that it “exceeds Henry the Eighth”.³⁰⁶ John Evelyn praised it as “well written” and “so beautified with rich Scenes as the like had never ben seene...on a mercenarie Theatre”.³⁰⁷ The success of *The Indian Queen* was such that even after George Etherege’s premier of *The Comical Revenge* Pepys still recorded the Duke’s “house was very empty, by reason of a new play at the other house”.³⁰⁸

Davenant’s creativity was seriously strained as he competed against Killigrew. Most likely the financial constraints forced him to reuse old costumes in *Pompey the Great* as “they acted in English habits” so that Caesar was “hiss’d off ye stage”.³⁰⁹ Davenant’s reproduction of *The Unfortunate Lovers* was not received any better, as according to Pepys, “I was not much pleased with it”.³¹⁰ Learning from his *Pompey* experience, Davenant was careful to equip his actors with authentic clothing in an adaptation of Pierre Corneille’s *Heraclius* and at the raising up of the curtain the performers were found conspicuously “standing in their fixed and different postures in their Roman habits”.³¹¹ But to the great consternation of the translator, Lodowick Carlell, the play was rejected “that very day” it appeared on stage.³¹² Astonishingly Davenant, by putting an abrupt stop to the production, had squandered the company funds for just one performance. It is possible that he was betting on the success of his next production, *The German Princess*. The play centres on the real life tribulations of the imposter, Mary Moders Carleton, who after being indicted for bigamy leaves for the continent and comes back to London posing as a German princess. She is once

³⁰⁶ Pepys, v, pp. 28-29.

³⁰⁷ Evelyn, *Diary*, iii, pp. 368-69.

³⁰⁸ Pepys, v, p. 77.

³⁰⁹ Cited in *London Stage*, p. 74.

³¹⁰ Pepys, v, p. 77.

³¹¹ Pepys, v, pp. 78-79.

³¹² Lodowick Carlell trans., *Heraclius* (London, 1664), A3.

more charged with bigamy and dragged to the Old Bailey for trial. The court case and her subsequent victory caused a sensation among the London public. Davenant attempted to cash in on the scandal by casting Mary Carleton as herself in *The German Princess*. Davenant's idea, however, backfired to the embarrassment of the company. Pepys, who saw the performance on 15 April 1664, wrote that although the play was "acted by the woman herself" there "never was any thing...worse performed".³¹³ In any event, by the time Davenant tried to capitalise on the scandal it seemed to have been too late as the play did not run a second night and did not make it into print.³¹⁴ For Davenant to rely on such a short-term strategy indicates that he was becoming increasingly desperate.

While the Duke's players, led by Davenant, were frantically experimenting with new plays to combat its rival, the King's Company mostly mounted pre-1660 drama. The stock plays were reliable assets as they brought steady profit and also took less time to prepare. Indeed most complaints about under-rehearsed performances were made about new plays.³¹⁵ A case in point is Pepys's complaint about the Duke's players in July 1664, when he noted that "for want of practice, they had many of them forgot their parts".³¹⁶ No such comments were made about the King's players during this time.

On 2 August 1664, however, Killigrew's company was jolted out of its complacency when Walter Clun was "set upon and murdered", which deprived the company of "one of their best actors".³¹⁷ Shortly after Clun's death, Edward Kynaston was appointed to a whole

³¹³ Pepys, v, p. 124.

³¹⁴ Mary Jo Kietzman, *The Self-fashioning of an Early Modern Englishwoman: Mary Carleton's Lives* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), p. 141. For more information on Mary Carleton see also Mihoko Suzuki, *Mary Carleton* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006).

³¹⁵ Stern, *Rehearsal*, p. 144.

³¹⁶ Pepys, v, p. 224.

³¹⁷ Pepys, v, p. 232.

share in the company, most likely taking possession of the deceased Clun's share.³¹⁸ Around the same time, a dispute arose between Killigrew and his three leading players, Charles Hart, Michael Mohun and John Lacy concerning a share in the company left over by the death of another actor, Theophilus Bird.

Leslie Hotson has reconstructed the events pertaining to the share problem during the period 1663 to 1664. Killigrew had briefly appointed the leading players, Charles Hart, Michael Mohun and John Lacy to direct the company sometime during 1663. The three players, assuming authority as co-managers of the company, unilaterally divided and gave themselves three-fourths of one acting share. The share was presumably forcibly taken from some of the minor actors who were then turned into hirelings. Such an arrangement caused dissension in the ranks because the rest of the company saw it as a fraudulent manoeuvre and protested to Killigrew – who immediately withdrew the delegated authority of the triumvirate and returned the share back to the company. When Theophilus Bird died soon afterwards, Killigrew claimed the dead share as his own. This again outraged the company and the players complained to Charles II. Hotson therefore concluded from the two cases, that first of all, Killigrew was an absentee manager as he “failed for a time to direct the company” and secondly that Killigrew, as the irresponsible patentee, was accountable for the subsequent internal dissension.³¹⁹

Hotson's claims have hitherto gone uncontested and it is important to re-examine his conclusions, drawn from the Lord Chamberlain's report. It is therefore worth quoting the report at length:

Wee have heard Mr. Killigrew concerning the complaints made against him by the Company in exercising a power beyond your Majesty's Graunt...And wee do find that he hath so far from abusing this power, that he hath made very little use of it

³¹⁸ Hotson, p. 244.

³¹⁹ Hotson, pp. 244-45.

hitherto: Only in giving Letters of Attorney to Moone [Mohun], Hart, and Lacy, to be superintendants over the rest, who by virtue of that power have taken in one share, three quarters of which they have enjoyed these ten months, and imposed on the Company 200l. p. ann. For two hired men; so that having upon complaint of the rest of the Company recalled that Letter of Attorney, and given up three quarters of the share to the Company, which saves them the 200l. p. ann, all, that he pretends to, is only the share of Bird, who is dead, by which the Company are gainers; for had the Letter of Attorney continued, the Company had not only lost the profit of that share, but this also. For by his [Killigrew] power they [the triumvirate] that took the other share would have enjoyed this; The unreasonableness of their exceptions is, they have profited these twelve months by that same power, which now they dispute; which if he can give, he may certainly enjoy.³²⁰

What Hotson had thought of as a share debacle was in fact only of secondary importance. It was primarily about company politics. It is first important to note that the triumvirate, specifically, spearheaded the complaint against their patentee. Interestingly the triumvirate, furthermore, did not complain that Killigrew was an absentee manager but rather that he was a tyrant. Here, two separate points need to be addressed about Killigrew's delegation of power to the triumvirate. Firstly, the fact that Killigrew had entrusted the direction of the company to players who had experience not only of performing in Commonwealth theatres but also of managing theatrical activities can hardly be regarded as recklessness on Killigrew's part.³²¹ Secondly, the three players were presumably keen to take on their new roles, as there were no complaints regarding the arrangement. The way the triumvirate formulated the complaint, therefore, would only make sense if they wanted to oust Killigrew from a position of power. What the triumvirate really wanted, it seems, was to retain for themselves the temporary authority that they had gained from Killigrew. Shares in the company, after all, not only meant more money but also more power. Killigrew probably

³²⁰ Cited in George Chalmers, *An Apology for the Believers of the Shakespeare Papers* (London, 1797), pp. 529-30.

³²¹ The troupe at the Red Bull was under Michael Mohun's management. See *BDA*, x, p. 272.

feared another threat of takeover, took Bird's share for himself, for as the report says, the triumvirate most likely would have taken possession of Bird's share also. The seemingly innocent protest by the triumvirate about Killigrew taking the share was, then, in fact their sinister strategy to drive out Killigrew. Killigrew was therefore not the instigator of trouble but a victim of a plot. The problem of the internal politics of the King's Company was eventually resolved when the king declared that:

Killigrew's patent gives him the sole government of the company, with full power to admit or dismiss such players as he thinks proper...They [the actors] are therefore to yield to him the full benefit of the said share, or in case of mutiny, submit to such penalties as he is empowered to enforce".³²²

Yet the incident nevertheless clearly illustrated the mounting tension between Killigrew and the veteran players. Indeed this was to be one of the earliest signs of the recurring problem between the troupe's manager and the veteran players within the King's Company.

Back at the Duke's Company, Davenant's experiment in mounting new plays finally paid off when he produced Roger Boyle's play, *The History of Henry the Fifth*. The play was a hit as it ran for ten consecutive days. Its popularity partly derived from its being "Splendidly Cloath'd" with costumes that had been worn in the royal coronation a few years before.³²³

Killigrew must have been devastated in view of the fact that Charles II had, just over a year before, commissioned a different play of Boyle's, *The Generall*, to be staged by the King's Company.³²⁴ Had *The Generall* been staged promptly, it would have been the first rhymed heroic play ever performed. *The Generall*, produced approximately a month later by the King's Company, was less successful than its counterpart as the play ran for exactly half the number of performances. Judith Milhous has viewed this as an example of Killigrew's

³²² CSPD, [1663-1664], p. 121.

³²³ Downes, p. 61.

³²⁴ Maguire, *Regicide and Restoration*, p. 62.

flagrant “foot-dragging”.³²⁵

Yet Milhous too hastily condemns Killigrew, as his decision not to mount Boyle’s play most likely had a political dimension. During the civil war, Boyle had been a personal favorite of Cromwell and had served the Protectorate as a member of the cabinet council until Cromwell’s death in 1658, when he turned royalist. Written around 1661, *The Generall* overtly served as Boyle’s means of excusing his misplaced loyalty during the war as well as a way of ingratiating himself with the new regime.³²⁶ Despite displaying questionable loyalty to Prince Charles during his exile, Killigrew probably could not stand such a brazen turncoat. It was perhaps only out of expediency therefore that Killigrew finally mounted *The Generall* to combat his rival’s popular production. Nor was the failure of the play, as Milhous implies, caused by Killigrew’s delay. The primary reason for the failure of the play was the players’ disappointing performance. The success of Davenant’s production of Boyle’s *Henry V* clearly hinged on the Duke’s Company’s three star-players.³²⁷ In sharp contrast to Davenant’s three leading players, the triumvirate of the King’s Company were most likely still angry with Killigrew and unwilling to cooperate with him.³²⁸ After all, the King’s Company’s costumes surpassed those of the Duke’s Company to such a degree that Pepys found the incongruity of bad performance and lavish pomp baffling: the play being “so poorly acted, though in finer clothes, is strange”.³²⁹ No wonder Pepys was “ill satisfied with the present actings of the [King’s] House” and preferred “the other House before this infinitely”.³³⁰

Despite his disgruntled triumvirate, however, Killigrew gained the upper hand over

³²⁵ Milhous, *Betterton*, p. 22.

³²⁶ John Cronin, “A Play Supposedly Fitter for the Fire than the Stage: The Fiction of Roger Boyle, First Earl of Orrery and the Re-casting of History”, in *Restoration Ireland: Always Settling and Never Settled* ed. Coleman A. Dennehy (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), p. 76.

³²⁷ Roberts, *Thomas Betterton*, p. 96.

³²⁸ LC 5/186, fol. 56 (*Register*, no. 312).

³²⁹ Pepys, v, p. 282.

³³⁰ Pepys, vi, p. 9.

Davenant when he produced Richard Rhodes's *Flora's Vagaries*. Pepys applauded the play, especially because it featured "the most ingenious performance of the young jade Flora".³³¹ The actress who played Flora and had caught his eye was Nell Gwyn, who quickly became the King's Company's prima donna and arguably the most famous Restoration actress.³³² Born in London, Pepys said she "was brought up in a bawdy house to fill strong waters to the guests" before working as an orange girl under Orange Moll.³³³ Within a year and a half Gwyn began treading the boards. Traditionally Gwyn is said to have been introduced to the stage by either Robert Duncan or Charles Hart, the leading actor in the King's Company and later her lover.³³⁴ The Gwyn family, however, may have been first noticed by those close to the King's Company in 1663 when a Rose Gwyn – possibly Nell Gwyn's sister – petitioned Henry Killigrew, Thomas Killigrew's son, to expedite her release from Newgate gaol.³³⁵ The petition provides the crucial link between the Gwyns and the King's Company as it was not long afterwards that Nell Gwyn started working for Thomas Killigrew.

It was no coincidence that Downes, who gave a description of the Duke's rival production of *The Rivals*, focussed on "chiefly Celia [Moll Davis]" who sang a rendition of the song called "My Lodging It Is on the Cold Ground" so "Charmingly, that no long after" Charles II "Rais'd her...to a Bed Royal".³³⁶ Mary "Moll" Davis was the equivalent of Gwyn in the

³³¹ Pepys, v, p. 236.

³³² Nell Gwyn has probably received more attention from biographers than any Restoration theatrical personality. Her life was not only a constant source of poems, ballads and satires when she was alive but after her death in 1687, her life became instantly immortalized by such works as *Memoirs of the Life of Eleanor Gwinn* (1752), Peter Cunningham's *The Story of Nell Gwyn* (1852), Cecil Chesterton's *Nell Gwyn* (1912), Noel Williams's *Rival Sultanas* (1915), Melville's *Nell Gwyn* (1923), Arthur Irwin Dament's *Nell Gwynne* (1924), Bax's *Pretty Witty Nell* (1932), John Harold Wilson's *Nell Gwyn* (1952), Bryan Bevan's *Nell Gwyn* (1969), Roy MacGregor-Hastie's *Nell Gwyn* (1987), Derek Parker's *Nell Gwyn* (2000), and Charles Beauclerk's *Nell Gwyn* (Pan Macmillan, 2005). See *BDA*, vi, pp. 469-70.

³³³ Pepys, viii, p. 503.

³³⁴ See *BDA*, vi, p. 458.

³³⁵ *CSPD*, [1663-1664], p. 390, p. 393.

³³⁶ Downes, p. 55.

Duke's Company and the theatre-goers soon started making comparisons between the two.

Pepys, for one, noted after seeing *The English Princess*:

little Mis Davis did dance a Jigg after the end of the play...and, the truth is, there is no comparison between Nell's [Nell Gwyn's] dancing the other day at the King's house...and this, this being infinitely beyond the other.³³⁷

The competition between the two actresses was beginning to heat up during this period as the two managers used the rival leading ladies to fight the battle between the companies. In Killigrew's production of James Howard's *All Mistaken*, Nell Gwyn was asked to sing an unmistakable parody of one of Moll's songs. And although Nell Gwyn was hired later than Moll Davis, she rapidly overtook her rival in fame. Soon it was Moll Davis who had to imitate her rival at the King's Company in roles such as Gatty in Etherege's *She Would If She Could* as Nell Gwyn had taken the lead in the new, popular genre of the gay couple.³³⁸

Indeed James Howard's *All Mistaken* importantly formed the basis for what was to be the new genre of the gay couple in Restoration drama and the playwright clearly took advantage of the presence of both Charles Hart and Nell Gwyn at the King's Company. Their public love affair coupled with the stage personas of the two performers fuelled the popularity of the genre. Gwyn's personality no doubt informed the roles that playwrights wrote for her. She

³³⁷ Pepys, viii, p. 101.

³³⁸ Elizabeth Howe explains the typical gay couple play as consisting "of a pair of lively, witty lovers whose love contains an element of antagonism – each desires the other but is wary of commitment. The male, who is generally a rakish gallant, dislikes the notion of marriage because it entails a loss of freedom; the lady appears to distrust marriage for the same reason, but is usually using her apparent dislike of the commitment to keep her lover at bay until she is sure that his motives are honest. This mutual antagonism is expressed through a battle of wits and repartee by which they test one another's affection". Howe goes on to say that what is most "remarkable about the gay couple's success in the Restoration is that it stemmed directly from the talent and popularity of a single actress, Nell Gwyn". See Howe, *The First English Actresses*, pp. 66-67. Peter Holland has called the gay couple genre "the most distinctive new contribution to comedy of the 1660s, the first new change in the comic form in the Restoration". See Holland, *The Ornament of Action*, p. 82. See also, John Harrington Smith, *The Gay Couple in Restoration Comedy* (Cambridge MA.: Harvard University Press, 1948). J. H. Smith's work has since been criticised for not having considered the impact of actors in the development of the genre. See Robert D. Hume, "Theatre History, 1660-1800", p. 21.

was witty, lively, bold and revelled in upsetting polite conventions.³³⁹ Killigrew, who introduced Nell Gwyn onto the stage, played a major part, albeit indirectly, in the development of the genre.

It was probably not coincidental that as Davis's popularity began to wane and Gwyn's began to rise around 1668, it was reported that "the King did send several times for Nelly".³⁴⁰ Gwyn's sexual relationship with the king, as Geoffrey Smith notes, "must have involved the knowledge, if not the approval, of her employer, Killigrew".³⁴¹

Killigrew's personal taste directly affected the development of the drama of the time. In a heated struggle with Davenant, he exploited the popularity of actresses by taking the sensational step of casting only women in a production of his own play *The Parson's Wedding* in October 1664. Killigrew's view, as written in the play, was that "any thing that breeds mirth is welcome" – and, for him, mirth and libertinism were linked concepts: as he has one of his character in his play, *The Princesse*, say, "They are the prettiest kind of commodities, these women...there is nothing like 'em".³⁴² Peter Luellin was evidently shocked when he informed Pepys, "what a bawdy loose play... acted by nothing but women at the King's house". The diarist, on the contrary, was markedly pleased with how the orthodoxy was being challenged by Killigrew, for he wrote, "I am glad of it".³⁴³ The all-female productions were obviously a success as they capitalised on the audience's

³³⁹ Sir Francis Fane heard that because Nell Gwyn thought the Duchess of Cleveland, a former mistress of the king, was a little cool towards her, Gwyn "clapt her on the shoulder, and saide she perceaved that persons of one trade loved not one another"; and on a different occasion Nell Gwyn being called a whore by Mrs Kirk, Gwyn replied that "had another done soe shee had not greeved soe much, but to bee called soe by an old notorious whore even before whoreing was in fashion, that afflicted her". See S. M. Wynne, "Gwyn, Eleanor (1651?–1687)", *ODNB*, online edn, Jan. 2008.

³⁴⁰ Pepys, ix, p. 19.

³⁴¹ Smith, "A Gentleman of Great Esteem with the King", p. 166.

³⁴² See *The Parson's Wedding*, p. 98; *The Princesse in Comedies and Tragedies* (London, 1664), p. 6.

³⁴³ Pepys, v, p. 294.

partiality for voyeurism.³⁴⁴ Killigrew seemed to have planned for a revival of his *Thomaso* the following month also only to be cast with actresses.³⁴⁵ While the production did not seem to have been mounted – the reasons for which are not clear – Killigrew would repeat the same tactic in the early 1670s for an entirely different reason.

As seen in the revolutionary production of *The Parson's Wedding*, Killigrew was heavily and meticulously involved in his productions. This becomes more apparent when one looks at Killigrew's own copy of the 1664 folio of his plays.³⁴⁶ Almost all the plays are annotated in Killigrew's own hand and only two plays – *The Princesse* and *The Prisoner* – are left unmarked. Killigrew's attention to detail when preparing for staging plays can be seen in his note to Miss Hancock, the King's Company copyist, when he orders:

pray write both theis partes of Cissillia and Clorinda intiere as
they ar in this booke in no parts for they are short anufe with
out cutting being in all but 92 sides in the hoell and the first
part but 49 sides and the seconde but 43 sides.

Moreover, his play *Claricilla*, had undergone major editing and was subjected to cuts of about 250 lines with a significant number of stage directions being added to the final act of the play.³⁴⁷ Although the 1664 folio is the only surviving piece of evidence that clearly shows Killigrew was meticulous in his productions of his own plays, it is likely that he showed the same kind of attentiveness to other productions that were mounted by the King's

³⁴⁴ For Restoration audience and voyeurism, see Howe, *The First English Actresses*; Jean I. Marsden, "Rape, Voyeurism, and the Restoration Stage", in Katherine M. Quinsey, ed., *Broken Boundaries: Women and Feminism in Restoration Drama*, pp. 185-200; Deborah C. Payne, "Reified Object or Emergent Professional? Retheorizing the Restoration Actress", in J. Douglas Canfield and Deborah C. Payne, eds. *Cultural Readings of Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Theatre*, pp. 1-13.

³⁴⁵ For the female cast of *Thomaso*, see *London Stage*, p. 84; see also Howe, *The First English Actresses*, p. 58.

³⁴⁶ Killigrew's own copy of the 1664 folio is kept in the libraries of Worcester College, Oxford. See Worcester College, Oxford, K. 450, also reprinted in *Register*, no. 370.

³⁴⁷ For a fuller analysis of Killigrew's editing his folio, see Colin Visser, "The Killigrew Folio: Private Playhouses and the Restoration Stage", *Theatre Survey*, 19 (1978), pp. 119-38; Albert Wertheim, "Production Notes for Three Plays by Thomas Killigrew", *Theatre Survey*, 10.2 (1969), pp. 105-13.

Company. Indeed Killigrew's detailed folio markings sit ill with the common perception of him being an inattentive manager.

By the spring the two companies clashed for the last time before the twin disasters of the Great Plague and the Great Fire of London. Both troupes mounted new productions of heroic plays: Killigrew mounted Dryden's *The Indian Emperor* and Davenant followed with Boyle's *Mustapha*. As the title indicates, Dryden's play was the sequel to *The Indian Queen*. The play thus opportunistically recovered some of the money spent on costumes and scenery as the prologue engagingly admitted: "The Scenes are old, the Habits are the same, / We wore last year".³⁴⁸ Yet not everything was sparingly done. On 16 March 1665 new Indian gowns were specifically ordered by Killigrew to be made for the violinists.³⁴⁹ Killigrew had good reason for focusing his attention on the musicians. It had been only three months before, in December, that he had been granted permission by Charles II to have members of the Royal Musick attend whenever he "shall desire them".³⁵⁰ Indeed John Banister, who had since July 1663 been made the leader of the King's band, had been heavily involved in theatrical music ever since Killigrew had introduced into England the idea of placing musicians in front of the stage.³⁵¹ As for Davenant's rival production, accounts vary as to the success of the play. Downes, in his customary manner, praised it.³⁵² Pepys, on the other hand, was "not contented with it at all" and was more pleased with the fact that "pretty witty Nell at the King's house, and the younger Marshall sat next to us".³⁵³

The stage rivalry, however, was terminated when the bubonic plague forced both theatres to close for 18 months. The death toll in London, at the worst point, recorded a staggering

³⁴⁸ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, i, p. 213.

³⁴⁹ LC 5/138 p. 46 (*Register*, no. 315).

³⁵⁰ LC 5/138 p. 429 (*Register*, no. 299).

³⁵¹ See Peter Walls, "Banister, John (1624/5–1679)", *ODNB*, online edn, Jan. 2008.

³⁵² Downes, p. 58.

³⁵³ Pepys, vi, p. 73.

7,165 deaths from the plague in the week ending in 19 September.³⁵⁴ London quickly became deserted as the plague spread – in early July it was estimated that thirty thousand Londoners left the city. Henrietta Maria left for France; Charles II's wife Catherine of Braganza left with her ladies to Tunbridge; the Royal Society retreated to Epsom; and Dryden left for the Wiltshire estate. As for what happened to the actors, the records are silent. They may have similarly left London or stayed in town but remained indoors, venturing out as little as possible. Apart from Robert Nokes, who mysteriously disappeared after the calamity, there is no record of theatrical personnel vanishing or dying in 1665 and the theatres seemed to have narrowly escaped the plague. For those who stayed, London became a ghost town: “no ratling Coaches, no prancing Horses, no calling in Customers, nor offering Wares; no London cries sounding in the ears”.³⁵⁵

Once the plague had abated Killigrew began renovating his theatre. On 19 March 1666 Pepys walked to the King's playhouse and found it “all in dirt, they being altering of the stage to make it wider”.³⁵⁶ Perhaps it was during this renovation that the Theatre Royal installed machines capable of lifting and lowering players. In the 1667 reproduction of *The Humorous Lieutenant* Pepys was impressed by the spirit in the play that grows “very Tall and then sinks again to nothing”; similarly in the production of *The Virgin Martyre*, the diarist saw “the angel” come down.³⁵⁷ Indeed Killigrew's theatre in Bridges Street from its construction in 1663 presented more productions in need of spectacular effects than the Duke's Company at least up until the 1670s.³⁵⁸

³⁵⁴ See Jenny Uglow, *A Gambling Man: Charles II and the Restoration 1660-1670* (London: Faber and Faber, 2009), p. 334.

³⁵⁵ Thomas Vincent, *God's Terrible Voice in the City* (London, 1667), p. 36.

³⁵⁶ Pepys, vii, pp. 76-77.

³⁵⁷ Pepys, viii, p. 27; ix, p. 94.

³⁵⁸ Dawn Lewcock, *Sir William Davenant, the Court Masque, and the English Seventeenth-Century Scenic Stage, c.1605-c.1700* (Amherst, N.Y.: Cambria, 2008), pp. 147-48.

Theatrical evidence strongly suggests that Davenant's troupe struggled to get back on its feet immediately after the plague. Etherege's revival of *The Comical Revenge* on October 1666 was to Pepys' mind "a silly play"; "having neither Betterton nor his wife" Pepys found the "whole thing done ill [and] no manner of pleasure in the play".³⁵⁹ Another of the Duke's Company's productions was, he said, "indifferently done".³⁶⁰ In the new production of *Henry V* the audience had to wait for "above an hour for the players (the King and all waiting, which was absurd)".³⁶¹ The Duke's Players also suffered, he believed, from lack of discipline. On September 1667 Pepys went to see the Duke's production of *Mustapha* but found "Betterton and Harris could not contain from laughing in the midst of a most serious part, from the ridiculous mistake of one of the men upon the stage – which I did not like".³⁶² In the following production Pepys was furious for they "so spoil it with their laughing and being all of them out" that he "was ashamed of it and resolve[d] not to come hither again a good while".³⁶³

In contrast to the Duke's Company's actors, Killigrew's troupe impressed the London theatregoers as his actresses gained even greater celebrity and prominence. In December 1666 Pepys saw *The Maid's Tragedy* by Beaumont and Fletcher in the Theatre Royal. It was "the first play I have seen in either house since before the plague" and he thought it "well acted, especially by the younger Marshall".³⁶⁴ Within the same month he was back again in the King's theatre to see both James Howard's *The English Monsieur* and *The Scornful Lady* by Beaumont and Fletcher. Of the former he thought "the women do very well; but above all, little Nelly" and of the latter, despite the setback of the parts being "not so well done as used

³⁵⁹ Pepys, vii, p. 347.

³⁶⁰ Pepys, vii, p. 421.

³⁶¹ Pepys, vii, p. 424.

³⁶² Pepys, viii, p. 421.

³⁶³ Pepys, viii, p. 422.

³⁶⁴ Pepys, vii, p. 399.

to be, by the old actors”, he was nevertheless pleased with Mrs Corey who acted “most excellently” and by Knepp who played her part “very well”.³⁶⁵ He was content overall “with the [King’s] House more than ever I expected”, due to “the women doing better...and very fine women”.³⁶⁶

One indication of the rising popularity of the King’s Company’s actresses occurred when Rebecca Marshall lodged a complaint against Sir Hugh Middleton to the Lord Chamberlain. The knight of the realm, who was humiliatingly “taxed” by the actress for “some ill language he had cast out against the women actors of that house”, later, as retribution, hired an agent to attack her “on her way home from the playhouse” and “clapt a Turd upon her face and haire”.³⁶⁷ While critics such as J. H. Wilson and Rosamund Gilder have seen this anecdote as an example of the vulnerability of actresses during the Restoration period, it is possible to interpret Marshall’s actions as indicative of the newly empowered status of actresses – especially those who were in the King’s Company.³⁶⁸ Marshall had after all boasted in the tiring rooms of the playhouse that she had “a gracious promise from his Maty [Majesty] that shee should not be injured”.³⁶⁹

Song and dance became a major focus of competition after 1666. On February 1667 Killigrew reproduced Fletcher’s *The Chances* in which Knepp sang “very properly” and “admirably”.³⁷⁰ In the production of *The Black Prince* the King’s playhouse was “infinitely full” as the players impressed the audience with “a very fine dance for variety of figures”.³⁷¹

³⁶⁵ Pepys, vii, p. 422.

³⁶⁶ Pepys, vii, p. 422, p. 401.

³⁶⁷ SP 29/191, no. 31 (*Register*, no. 368).

³⁶⁸ Kirsten Pullen, *Actresses and Whores: On Stage and in Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 27. See Wilson, *All the King’s Ladies* and Rosamund Gilder’s *Enter the Actress: The First Women in Theatre* (London: Harrap, 1931).

³⁶⁹ Cited in Wilson, *All the King’s Ladies*, p. 27.

³⁷⁰ Pepys, viii, p. 46.

³⁷¹ Pepys, viii, p. 487.

Pepys was once forced by the King's Company's actresses to "stay in a box to see the dancing preparatory" for the next day's reproduction of John Sucking's *The Goblins*.³⁷² Theatregoers came to admire the divertissement more than the plays. Nell Gwyn's part in Dryden's *Secret Love* demonstrated how playwrights were beholden to the actresses for their success. George Villiers, Second Duke of Buckingham, derisively wrote in his epilogue to *The Chances*:

Of new prais'd Poets, having often seen
Some of his Fellows, who have writ before,
When Nel had danc'd her Jig, steal to the Door,
Hear the Pit clap, and with conceit of that
Swell, and believe themselves Lord Knows what.³⁷³

The heated contest between the two companies, however, resulted in actresses soon needing to do more. Cross-dressing became a major attraction as it usually offered the audience a titillating sight of actresses' legs. In March 1667 Pepys was impressed when in *Secret Love*, Gwyn came "in like a young gallant" that it made him "admire her" all the more.³⁷⁴ Davenant replied within a week with John Caryl's *The English Princess* in which Pepys found "nothing eminent in it" with the crucial exception of "Miss Davis" who "did dance a Jigg after the end of the play", and pleased the whole audience by dancing in "boy's clothes".³⁷⁵ It was imperative for both troupes to respond as quickly as possible to their rival's entr'actes. For example, when the Duke's Company mounted *Love Trick* on 5 August 1667 in which Davis danced "in a shepherd's clothes", the King's Company immediately riposted on 17 August by having Knepp "dance among the milkmaids" in the production of

³⁷² Pepys, viii, p. 27.

³⁷³ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, i, p. 225.

³⁷⁴ Pepys, viii, p. 91.

³⁷⁵ Pepys, viii, p. 101. Davis's solo performance after the end of the play was also designed as a form of advertisement for she was primarily "there telling the next day's play" – a popular publicity stunt devised in the Carolean period which continued to be used until the mid-nineteenth century. See Mary Edmond, *Rare Sir William Davenant*, p. 189.

The actresses' dizzying success on stage also attracted attention off stage. Nell Gwyn was snatched away by Lord Buckhurst, later the Earl of Dorset, on July 1667 "from the King's house" who "lies with her, and gives her 100/ a year, so as she hath sent for her parts to the house, and will act no more".³⁷⁷ Only a day after Pepys heard of Gwyn leaving the stage for Buckhurst the nosy diarist then went to the King's Head in Epsom to hear that: "my Lord Buckhurst and Nelly are lodged at the next house, and Sir Charles Sidly with them: and keep a merry house. Poor girl! I pity her; but more the loss of her at the King's [play]house".³⁷⁸ If the King's Company felt the loss of Gwyn, it did not last long. More than a month later Pepys heard through the gossipy Orange Moll that "Nell is already left by my Lord Buckhurst...and [Charles] Hart, her greatest admirer, now hates her...but she is come to the House".³⁷⁹

Popular actresses were more liable to leave the profession suddenly than their male counterparts, which may have been the reason why Killigrew decided to recruit Joseph Haines from the Hatton Garden Nursery. Haines was a singer and an exceptional dancer capable of stealing the limelight on stage, as he did in the production of *The Spanish Gypsies* when Pepys was amazed by the "great variety of dances, and those most excellently done, especially one part by one Hanes [Haines], only lately come thither from the Nursery".³⁸⁰ Killigrew, obsessed by foreign entertainment, may also have hired Haines on the grounds of his extensive experience in learning about opera productions on the continent.³⁸¹

Indeed, foreign singers increasingly gained attention during the theatrical season of

³⁷⁶ Pepys, viii, p. 375, p. 388.

³⁷⁷ Pepys, viii, p. 334.

³⁷⁸ Pepys, viii, p. 337.

³⁷⁹ Pepys, viii, p. 402.

³⁸⁰ Pepys, ix, p. 107.

³⁸¹ Tobyas Thomas, *The Life of the Late Comedian, Jo Hayns Containing, His Comical Exploits and Adventures, both at Home and Abroad* (London, 1701), pp. 5-9.

1667/8. From early on in the competition Killigrew had had plans to recruit foreign entertainers. When Pepys chanced to sit by the manager at the King's playhouse in 1664 Killigrew told him that he intended to build a separate playhouse in Moorfields where he would produce "four operas...in the year, to act six weeks at a time...and to that end hath sent for voices and painters and other persons from Italy".³⁸²

Insufficient funds, however, put a premature end to what Killigrew hoped would be an opera-breeding facility where Italian singers would be the mainstay of the new company.³⁸³ While Milhous criticises Killigrew for empty "boasts of grandiose plans", his plans at least foreshadowed the success of Dorset Garden Theatre.³⁸⁴ Undeterred by financial hindrance, however, Killigrew told Pepys on February 1667 of how:

he hath gone several times, eight or ten times, he tells me, hence to Rome to hear good musique...That he hath ever endeavoured in the late King's time, and in this, to introduce good musique, but he never could do it...That he hath gathered our Italians from several Courts in Christendome, to come to make a concert for the King, which he do give 200*l.* a-year a-piece to: but badly paid, and do come in the room of keeping four ridiculous gundilows [gondolas], he having got, the King to put them away, and lay out money this way; and indeed I do commend him for it, for I think it is a very noble undertaking.³⁸⁵

Pepys also recorded a "petit musicale" by the "Italian Signor Baptista" at the house of the polymath and first president of the Royal Society, William Brouncker. During the evening, Baptista "did sing one of the acts" that he had had "composed...in Italian for the Opera",

³⁸² Pepys, v, p. 230.

³⁸³ Killigrew's interest in Italian singers was probably the result of his own taste but Charles II was also similarly eager for Italian opera. Charles II, for instance, had, as early as 22 October 1660, granted a license to build a theatre for Italian musicians headed by Giulio Gentileschi. They were to have the sole right to the representation of musical works in London for five years. Nothing came of this project but had this become a reality, the theatrical life in London would have been completely different. See SP 29/19, no. 16 (*Register*, no. 38).

³⁸⁴ Milhous, *Betterton*, p. 15.

³⁸⁵ Pepys, viii, p. 56.

which as Pepys reported “T. Killigrew do intend to have up”. Later they visited “Mrs Knipp’s chamber, where this Italian is to teach her to sing her part...and there she did sing an Italian song or two very fine”.³⁸⁶ Undoubtedly Knepp’s convincing imitation of singing in the Italian manner was partly the reason why Killigrew decided to “give her 30*l.* a-year more”.³⁸⁷ On 16 February the diarist was back again in Brouncker’s house where Killigrew brought a company of Italian musicians, “that is to say, Signor Vincentio, who is the master-composer, and six more, whereof two eunuchs, so tall, that Sir T. Harvey said well that he believes they do grow large by being gelt as our oxen do”. Killigrew was so enamoured with the abnormally tall eunuchs that he praised them as “above all things in the world”.³⁸⁸

Davenant clearly felt constrained to respond in kind to Killigrew’s foreign entertainers. However, he adopted a nationalistic strategy that was less expensive and extravagant. While Killigrew not only employed foreign stars but also mounted plays set in distant lands with foreign protagonists such as *The Indian Queen*, *The Indian Emperor* and *Secret Love*, Davenant clearly deviated from the King’s Company’s strategy by producing plays set in England with native heroes. The prologue to *Henry V* states, “with Forraign Tales so fill’d your Ears, / As if our Poets were all Foreigners, / This Author begs you’ll lend but two hours, / To entertain toy with your Ancestours”.³⁸⁹ The prologue to the Duke’s Company’s production of *The English Princess*, again in contrast to the foreign sovereigns in which rival company deals in, goes:

You must to day your Appetite prepare
For a plain English Treat of homely Fare;
We neither *Bisque*, nor *Olliàs* shall advance
From Spanish Novel, or from French Romance;
Nor shall we charm your Ears, or feast your Eyes

³⁸⁶ Pepys, viii, pp. 54-57.

³⁸⁷ Pepys, viii, p. 55.

³⁸⁸ Pepys, viii, pp. 64-66.

³⁸⁹ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, i, p. 222.

With Turkey-Works, or Indian Rarities.³⁹⁰

Davenant's strategy was timely. In July 1667 Pepys implied that the theatres had been closed during June and early July due to aggravated naval encounters with the Dutch.³⁹¹ With the decisive Dutch victory in the Second Anglo-Dutch War (4 March 1665 – 31 July 1667), the King's Company's reliance on foreign entertainment was suddenly less fashionable. Pepys noted after seeing the King's reproduction of *Brenoralt* that the foreign tune did not impress him as much as "a good English tune".³⁹² The King's Company quickly, albeit temporarily, retraced its steps in August of the same year by reprising old productions of English themed plays such as *The Country Captain*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and *The Troubles of Queen Elizabeth*.

While it has often been pointed out that the Restoration prologues and epilogues were tailored to the personality of the players, it has seldom been noted that they also reflected the managers' personalities, which in turn reflected company policy.³⁹³ Killigrew's fame as the king's jester, and the unique privilege attached to the post, no doubt influenced the company to cash in on his notoriety by employing abusive prologues. As the second prologue to the King's Company's production of *Secret Love* shows:

The most compendious method is to rail:
Which you so like, you think your selves ill us'd
When in smart Prologues you are not abus'd.
A civil Prologue is approv'd by no man;
You hate it as you do a Civil woman.³⁹⁴

Allan Botica has suggested that abusive prologues and epilogues are not necessarily designed to insult the audience but rather to identify them: "much as they seemed to mock, their rhetorical function was to acknowledge the several balanced sections of the audience and to

³⁹⁰ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, i, p. 231.

³⁹¹ Pepys, viii, p. 348.

³⁹² Pepys, viii, p. 384.

³⁹³ Howe, *The First English Actresses*, p. 92.

³⁹⁴ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, i, p. 228.

play them off one against the other, thereby assuring all spectators of their right to be noticed”.³⁹⁵ Botica may be right in arguing that some seemingly abusive prologues and epilogues were a kind of a courtesy to acknowledge members of the audience but it was clear that certain members of the audience were not always best pleased with such attention. In April 1667 Killigrew produced Edward Howard’s *The Change of Crowns* in which, after the end of the play, Lacy, Killigrew’s chief comedian, came on stage and began abusing “the Court with all the imaginable wit and plainness about selling of places, and doing everything for money”.³⁹⁶ After the performance, Charles II “was so angry with the liberty taken” by the King’s players to “abuse him to his face, that he commanded they should act no more”.³⁹⁷ Killigrew’s troupe had by this time clearly earned the reputation of being a brazen troupe – much like the patentee himself – so that when the “whole house” was silenced sometime during April 1667 “the gentry seem to rejoice much at it, the house being become too insolent”.³⁹⁸

The king’s sanctions against the house, however, did not discourage Killigrew’s troupe from employing their newly found popular device. In Robert Howard’s *The Great Favourite* the epilogue reproached Charles II about his mistresses. Indeed the subject of reproach was topical, and particularly resonant for theatre-goers, as Pepys was informed by Knepp how “Mis Davis is for certain going away from the Duke’s house, the King being in love with her”.³⁹⁹ The epilogue was so disrespectful that Pepys was troubled that “it should be interrupted” but to his great relief, “it ended all well”.⁴⁰⁰

While it may seem that these satires were evidence of Killigrew’s poor judgement it was

³⁹⁵ Botica, p. 115.

³⁹⁶ Pepys, viii, pp. 167-68.

³⁹⁷ Pepys, viii, p. 168.

³⁹⁸ Pepys, viii, p. 173.

³⁹⁹ Pepys, ix, p. 19.

⁴⁰⁰ Pepys, ix, p. 81.

extremely difficult to read Charles II's mind at the best of times as he was famous for not showing his emotions.⁴⁰¹ Indeed as David Roberts suggests it may have been part of Killigrew's calculation that "the king would in fact relish seeing particular members of his court find themselves on the wrong end of an actor's or playwright's sense of humour".⁴⁰² After all, Killigrew who had spent time with his king in exile and had been given the post as his jester perhaps could legitimately claim that he knew best what Charles II found amusing.

In an effort to counter the vogue for abusive prologues the Duke's Company began to use their prologues and epilogues to flatter the audience. Davenant made a quip against Killigrew's troupe in the epilogue to *The Man's the Master*:

Since now those Poets get the Vogue
Who still, with a bold Epilogue,
Dare rattle Spectators and cry 'em down,
...
First, loving kind friends, who come from the Citty,
You never think any Play can be witty
But that in which Courtiers shrewdly are jeer'd.⁴⁰³

It was clear that if Killigrew's policy was to insult his audience, Davenant's policy was to please and flatter his theatre-goers instead. The prologue to William Cavendish's *The Humorous Lovers*, the title of which echoed the King's Company's popular reproduction of *The Humorous Lieutenant*, went so far as to include the manager himself thanking the audience: "Sir William Davenante, thanks you for his part / And Loves your Company, with all his Heart".⁴⁰⁴ Although the imploring prologue did nothing for Pepys who found the play "the most silly thing that ever came upon a stage" and was "sick to see it", it serves as a clear indication that the managers were personally responsible for how the company projected

⁴⁰¹ Jenny Uglow writes that "the king's most frustrating characteristic was that he was impossible to judge at all". Bishop Burnet wrote of King Charles as having "the greatest art of concealing himself of any man alive, so that those about him cannot tell, when he is ill or well pleased". Cited in Uglow, *A Gambling Man*, pp. 5-7.

⁴⁰² Roberts, *Killigrew*, p. 81.

⁴⁰³ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, i, p. 279.

⁴⁰⁴ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, i, p. 234.

itself – in the Duke’s Company’s case it was to be through flattery.⁴⁰⁵

The difference in company policy directly affected the types of audience in the two theatres. The Duke’s Company continued to rely heavily on the appeal to the citizen class as Davenant’s productions clearly catered to them. In September 1667 Pepys believed that Davenant’s production of Cooke’s *Tu Quoque* “will please the citizens”.⁴⁰⁶ In January 1668 Pepys again remarked when seeing their production of *Martin Marall* that there was such “a mighty company of citizens, prentices and others” that he does not “remember that I saw so many by half of the ordinary prentices and mean people in the pit”.⁴⁰⁷

While Davenant’s troupe pandered to the more bourgeois and less intellectual theatre-goers, Killigrew’s company was patronised by the elite. Everything from Killigrew’s strategy of abusing the king and his court to his reliance on foreign entertainers indicate that his house performed largely to the better-educated, literary elite.⁴⁰⁸ It is no coincidence that while Pepys noticed the overwhelming presence of citizens in the Duke’s Company he also remarked in September 1667 that the King’s playhouse was “very full of gallants”.⁴⁰⁹ Yet highbrow audience members were more difficult to please. As the prologue to *The Tragedy of Hero and Leander* performed in 1667 attested: “He’s scarce esteem’d a Gallant, in our dayes, / who has not Hector’d two or three new Plays”.⁴¹⁰

Indeed a look at Figure 1 of Botica’s dissertation, which calculates the receipts of payments made by the crown to the two companies from 1660 to 1682, reveals that the

⁴⁰⁵ Pepys, viii, p. 137.

⁴⁰⁶ Pepys, viii, p. 435.

⁴⁰⁷ Pepys, ix, p. 2.

⁴⁰⁸ The productions that mock members of the court as well as the king presuppose that the audience are in the know and therefore they most likely belong to the upper echelons of society.

⁴⁰⁹ Pepys, viii, p. 437.

⁴¹⁰ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, i, p. 253.

King's Company received far more money from the king than the Duke's Company.⁴¹¹ What was more problematic for Killigrew than the fury of offended courtiers was the drastic decline in the royal payments for playgoing after 1676. As Botica writes, "the drop in royal attendance and royal receipts that took place in 1677 represented more than a simple loss of income. It meant the loss of a lucrative, influential and formerly reliable market".⁴¹² In other words, it was a sound strategy to mount courtly drama as long as the members of the court came to public playhouses but the real test was whether the King's Company could successfully and swiftly adapt to the loss of its main clientele in the long term.

The partiality that the managers showed to different types of audience influenced the development of drama. In October 1667 Davenant produced *Tarugo's Wiles* in which the introduction of the play and the epilogue stressed the vogue for farce and dance. The epilogue interestingly even talks of animals on stage: "And for his Friends above in the exalted Stalls, he [the playwright] expects the best from them, since he has complemented them with a Monky and a Jigg".⁴¹³ This is possibly the earliest reference to an animal on the Carolean stage. Davenant also took advantage of the increasing popularity of fairs in London. Pepys once took his wife "to the fayre, and showed her the Munkeys dancing on the ropes".⁴¹⁴ Davenant's choice of using circus animals on stage supports the case that the Duke's Company was furthering its tactic of lowbrow mass-marketing. The provision of accessible entertainment was clearly working when Pepys went to the Duke's playhouse and found it "so full" that "we could not get in, and so to the King's House".⁴¹⁵

The Duke's Company's strategy may have been partly influenced by the playhouse's location. Lincoln's Inn Fields, it seems, was famed for puppet plays and mountebank shows.

⁴¹¹ Botica, p. 175.

⁴¹² Botica, p. 178.

⁴¹³ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, i, p. 262.

⁴¹⁴ Pepys, iv, p. 298.

⁴¹⁵ Pepys, viii, p. 463.

An undated petition, probably written around January 1664, was signed by numerous residents in the area to protest against one Thomas Newton. Newton was using his property at the Lincoln's Inn Fields "for Puppet playes, dancing on ye ropes, Mountebanks, & other like uses". His shows were so popular that "multitudes of loose & disorderlie people are daylie drawne together", creating a public nuisance.⁴¹⁶ An order was issued on 19 April 1664 to prohibit shows at Lincoln's Inn Fields. The order read: "The tyme is Expired wherein leave was granted To dance upon the Roapes & shew puppet playes & dumb shewes in Lyncolnes Inn fields" and that the "howses & stages that are erected there" are to be pulled down.⁴¹⁷ Davenant may have instigated the order. After all, Newton was taking business away from Davenant's playhouse and it might explain why Davenant chose to incorporate elements in his productions that would entice those that Newton catered for.

The King's Company, which had mounted more serious tragedies during this period, seems to have tried to secure some of the audience members who would naturally be inclined to support the Duke's Company, by mocking itself. In the epilogue to the play, *The Great Favourite*, Gwyn spoke:

We have been all ill us'd, by this days Poet.
'Tis our joint Cause; I know you in your hearts
Hate serious Plays, as I do serious Parts,
To trouble us with Thoughts and State-designs,
A melancholy Plot ty'd with strong Lines,
I had not the least Part to day you see,
Troth, he has neither writ for you, nor me.⁴¹⁸

Indeed the epilogue may also have been an attempt to exploit Gwyn's infamous reputation as a poor actress of serious parts. Pepys complained of how Gwyn, an outstanding comedienne, had been miscast for serious roles: "how ill she do any serious part".⁴¹⁹

⁴¹⁶ SP 29/91, no. 94 (*Register*, no. 264).

⁴¹⁷ LC 5/185, fol. 148v (*Register*, no. 280).

⁴¹⁸ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, i, p. 273.

⁴¹⁹ Pepys, viii, p. 594.

Miscasting, however, was the least of the King's Company's problems. The players' unprofessionalism gravely harmed the company's reputation. On 7 December 1667 Pepys recorded how the King's House is at present and "hath for some days been silenced upon some difference [between] Hart and Moone [Mohun]".⁴²⁰ The conflict between the two members of the old guard probably lasted for about a month as the Lord Chamberlain issued an order later in December, perhaps prompted by Killigrew, for Mohun's salary to be withheld for "the tyme that he was absent from playeing".⁴²¹ Actresses did not help to alleviate the situation. Killigrew complained to Pepys that Knepp, though talented, being indolent "wont take pains enough" to practice her parts.⁴²² Nell Gwyn and Beck Marshall, the King's Company's prize actresses, fell out and called each other whores.⁴²³ When Killigrew started planning a revival of *Catiline*, in the same month, in which he coaxed from the king "500*l* for robes, there being, as they say, to be sixteen scarlet robes", Pepys reported that "all agree that it cannot be well done at that house", regardless of the expensive props Killigrew had procured, "there not being good actors".⁴²⁴ Bickering veteran players were difficult to deal with at the best of times but now Killigrew not only had to keep his players in check but also faced a serious challenge from his rival.

The competition reached its final climax between Killigrew and Davenant when they fought over John Dryden. Killigrew's most successful playwright, Dryden, had been lured away from him by Davenant to collaborate on *Sir Martin Marall*. It remains unclear as to why Davenant waited until this moment to try and lure Dryden. It may have been that Davenant needed a playwright of Dryden's stature to compete against his rival because Betterton, his star player, was beginning to show signs of the serious sickness, which was to

⁴²⁰ Pepys, viii, p. 569.

⁴²¹ LC 5/138, p. 411 (*Register*, no. 409).

⁴²² Pepys, viii, p. 430.

⁴²³ Pepys, viii, p. 503.

⁴²⁴ Pepys, viii, p. 575.

affect him so badly that he was eventually unable to perform for a period of eight months. It may also have been that Davenant, seeing that the veteran players of Killigrew's troupe were causing mayhem at the other house, opportunistically decided to deliver a deathblow to his competitor. Either way, it was a stroke of genius. The production was an immense success and "got the Company more Money than [any] preceding Comedy".⁴²⁵ Pepys went to see the production eight times and he raved that he had "never laughed so in all my life. I laughed till my head [ached] all the evening and night with laughing".⁴²⁶ The King's playhouse inevitably suffered. Pepys heard Nell cursing "for having so few people in the pit...the other house carrying away all the people at the new play". The diarist was not surprised as the Duke's Company "is said, now-a-days, to have generally most company, as being better players".⁴²⁷

In September 1667 Killigrew's troupe responded by reviving Fletcher and Massinger's *The Sea Voyage* in an adaptation called *The Storm*. The new production was so popular that the house was "infinitely full" with "the King and all the Court almost there". The play ended with "an admirable dance...of the ladies, in a military manner".⁴²⁸ Pepys was so enthralled that he had to take his wife from the Duke's playhouse to "shew her yesterday's new play, which I like as I did yesterday, the principal thing extraordinary being the dance".⁴²⁹

The Duke's Company was obviously hurt by its rival's success and in November 1667 it replied with *The Tempest*. The play was an enormous success with "The house mighty full".⁴³⁰ Fighting fire with fire, the Duke's Company included a dance in its next production too. Pepys was particularly enthralled by the "Seamans dance" – as opposed to the King's

⁴²⁵ Downes, p. 63.

⁴²⁶ Pepys, viii, p. 387.

⁴²⁷ Pepys, viii, pp. 463-64.

⁴²⁸ Pepys, viii, p. 450.

⁴²⁹ Pepys, viii, p. 451.

⁴³⁰ Pepys, viii, p. 521.

Company's production which contained dancing ladies – "which I have much desired to be perfect in, and have made my self so".⁴³¹ Undoubtedly to Killigrew's even greater chagrin, Davenant had again succeeded in getting Dryden to cooperate with him on the adaptation. To add insult to injury, the prologue of the play openly jeered at the King's Company's production:

The Storm which vanish'd on the Neighb'ring shore,
Was taught by *Shakespeare's* Tempest first to roar.
That innocence and beauty which did smile
In *Fletcher*, grew on this *Enchanted Isle*.
But *Shakespeare's* Magick could not copy'd be,
Within that Circle none durst walk but he.⁴³²

The antagonistic tone of the prologue may have been the result of Dryden's quarrel with his brother in law Sir Robert Howard, who was a major shareholder and playwright at the King's Company. As a result of this, his shift in allegiance might well have become permanent – had Killigrew not made him an offer he was unable to refuse.

Killigrew gave Dryden a formal agreement whereby he would write three plays per annum exclusively for the King's Company, in return for the proceeds from one and a quarter shares of the company profit. This unprecedented manoeuvre is indicative of Killigrew's discernment of the value of Dryden. Had Dryden crossed over to the Duke's Company for good, it would have been an irreparable blow to the King's Company and would have undoubtedly led to the company's dissolution. Killigrew, however, managed to procure the loyalty of his best playwright and save the King's Company in one move. The theatrical competition between the two managers came to a close shortly after the tug of war over Dryden.

On 7 April Pepys heard that "Sir W Davenant is just now dead". He was 62 years old. His funeral took place two days after his death. Pepys, who saw "Davenant's corps carried out

⁴³¹ Pepys, ix, p. 48.

⁴³² Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, i, p. 267.

toward Westminster” jotted down that there “were many coaches, and six horses and many hackneys, that made it look, methought, as if it were the burial of a poor poett”.⁴³³ If Pepys was shocked at the meagre funeral, others noticed that a laurel was missing from his coffin. John Aubrey, who similarly attended the funeral, wrote: “me thought it had been proper that a laurel should have been sett on his coffin – which was not donne”.⁴³⁴ Anthony Wood also noticed that the funeral took place “without any lawrel upon his coffin”. Perhaps the one consolation was that “On a paving stone of marble is writt in the imitation of ye [one] on Ben: Johnson, *o, rare Sr Will: Davenant*”.⁴³⁵ Indeed Richard Flecknoe, the bitter enemy of Killigrew, summed up Davenant’s achievements:

Now Davenant’s dead the stage will mourn
And all to barbarism turn;
Since he it was, this later age
Who chiefly civiliz’d the stage.
Great was his wit, his fancy great
As e’er was any poet’s yet;
And more advantage none’er made
O’th’wit and fancy which he had.
Not only Daedalus art he knew
But even Prometheus’s too;
And living machines made of men
As well as dead ones, for the scene.⁴³⁶

If Davenant was not always appreciated as a poet, he could at least look back on having started two interlinked families: his biological family and his theatrical family. Pepys noted that Davenant “seemed to have many children by five or six in the first mourning coach, all boys”.⁴³⁷ These Davenant boys probably included Charles Davenant and Alexander Davenant who were to play a major role in the splitting up of the United Company nearly two

⁴³³ Pepys, ix, pp. 156-58.

⁴³⁴ John Aubrey, *Brief Lives*, i, p. 209.

⁴³⁵ For details see Edmond, *Rare Sir William Davenant*, p. 203.

⁴³⁶ Richard Flecknoe, *Sir William D’Avenant’s Voyage to the Other World* (London, 1668), pp. 6-7; cited in Hotson, p. 223.

⁴³⁷ Pepys, ix, p. 158.

decades later. Davenant's funeral was also attended, as Downes noted, by "Our whole [Duke's] Company" from when "His [Davenant's] body was carried in a Herse from the Play-house to Westminster abbey".⁴³⁸

The heated rivalry between the two theatre managers heavily influenced the types of plays produced by both companies. The direction of theatrical representation in these years was towards spectacular costumes, music and scenery. Therefore it is unsurprising to find that the most popular genre in tragedy was the bombastic heroic type, with plays by Boyle and Dryden. For comedy, the introduction of marketable actresses by the theatre managers initiated the gay couple genre in Restoration drama while the popularity of light entertainment in fairs induced the development of farce on stage. This period also saw the increasing emphasis on *divertissement* and *entr'actes* and the employment of prologues and epilogues as competitive devices by the two managers.

This chapter also challenges the prevalent belief that Killigrew was an incapable manager compared with his rival Davenant. Killigrew initiated many of the changes in drama both on and off the stage. Far from being an absentee manager, this chapter has demonstrated the following: Killigrew was innovative in times of crises such as when the Great Plague and the Great Fire hit London; showed him to be scrupulous in preparing productions by looking into his re-working of *Thomaso*; he often used his favour with the king to gain the necessary props for plays to succeed; his ability to spot talent by hiring and retaining exceptional players and playwrights such as Gwyn and Dryden; and the chapter also reinterpreted the biggest share-debacle within the King's Company during its early years by analysing primary documents and demonstrating that Killigrew was effective in cracking down on internal

⁴³⁸ Downes, p. 66.

dissention within the company.

Moreover, Killigrew seemed to have gained approval as the “master” of music while Davenant’s reputation for judging music or theatrical production actually was often judged less favourably.⁴³⁹ Indeed, as Pepys once heard Captain Cooke say, who by the diarist’s own admission, “sings and composes so well” that “he was fain to direct Sir W. Davenant in the breaking of his verses into such and such lengths, according as would be fit for musick”. Even Dr Clerke, who Pepys respected as a trustworthy judge of talent, found fault with Davenant’s choice of plays and concluded that “Sir W Davenant is no good judge of a dramattick poem”.⁴⁴⁰

With Davenant’s death, however, the fate of the Duke’s Company now rested on the newly formed management team made up of actor-managers, Thomas Betterton and Henry Harris, and Davenant’s widow Lady Mary Davenant.

⁴³⁹ Pepys, viii, p. 430.

⁴⁴⁰ Pepys, viii, p. 59.

Chapter 3

“In the Hands and Management of the Players”:

Thomas Killigrew versus the New Co-Managers, 1668-1672

Thomas Betterton with his co-managers, Henry Harris and Mary Davenant, took over the reins of the management of the Duke’s Company after William Davenant’s death in 1668. The fire at the King’s playhouse in 1672 left Thomas Killigrew’s troupe badly affected, which effectively ended the period of competition whereby both companies stood on an equal footing.

Judith Milhous has seen the period from 1668 as nothing more than the beginning of the King’s Company’s “ludicrous” decline. She suggests that, “Betterton and his co-managers were given little competition”.⁴⁴¹ Robert D. Hume has correspondingly noted that “the King’s Company does not actually die until 1682, but competition and innovation had long since been stifled”.⁴⁴² This chapter argues for a drastic re-evaluation of the usual interpretation that the King’s Company began to fall apart during these years. It demonstrates that the competition during this period between the two companies was quiet but not uneventful, with the two companies having equal levels of success.

In terms of management, a close survey of the competition reveals that Betterton was, during these years, a more careful and conservative manager than he is portrayed by Judith Milhous.⁴⁴³ Conversely this chapter suggests that Killigrew was more reptilian than proposed recently in David Roberts’s depiction of Killigrew.

⁴⁴¹ Milhous, *Betterton*, p. 31.

⁴⁴² Hume, *Development*, p. 269.

⁴⁴³ Milhous praises Betterton’s early managerial career and suggests that Davenant taught his young protégé to be innovative and “might be said to have passed on to Betterton the motto ‘Think BIG’”. See Milhous, *Betterton*, p. 25.

The death of Sir William Davenant in 1668 robbed the Duke's Company of a reliable leader and of a centralised authority figure. Samuel Pepys reported with some anxiety, "who will succeed in the mastership of that House is not yet known".⁴⁴⁴ Lady Mary Davenant, Davenant's widow, claimed in 1677 that she had "exercised the sole Government" of the company.⁴⁴⁵ Yet modern scholars disagree on the exact role she played in the Duke's Company and the extent to which she was involved in the day-to-day running of the troupe. Jacqueline Pearson argued that Mary Davenant was "a working manager"; Gilli Bush-Bailey suggested that Mary Davenant not only "held the purse-strings" but was also a "theatrical entrepreneur"; Milhous, on the other hand, wrote that the widower was "no theatre manager" and that the running of the company was left to Betterton and Harris.⁴⁴⁶ More recently, David Roberts has argued that while Lady Davenant may have held financial control, she delegated the artistic direction of the company to its chief players, Thomas Betterton and Henry Harris.⁴⁴⁷ While Lady Davenant may have left the artistic direction to the two actors, she was nevertheless a cunning businesswoman and played an influential role over the business side of the Duke's Company.⁴⁴⁸

⁴⁴⁴ Pepys, ix, p. 156.

⁴⁴⁵ C8/299/134 and C24/1144/1 (*Register*, no. 780). The Chancery Lawsuits are discussed in further detail in Hotson, pp. 227-28.

⁴⁴⁶ Jacqueline Pearson, *The Prostituted Muse: Images of Women and Women Dramatists 1642-1737* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1988), p. 32; Gilli Bush-Bailey, *Treading the Bawds: Actresses and Playwrights on the Late-Stuart Stage* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), p. 29; Milhous, *Betterton*, p. 27.

⁴⁴⁷ Roberts, *Thomas Betterton*, p. 103.

⁴⁴⁸ Lady Davenant, for instance, used a ruse to prevent her stepsons, including Thomas Cross, and possibly other claimants from getting hold of any part of the estate left by her husband. She was able to keep the 3.3 shares intact and held tight control over the Duke's Company as patentee. See Hotson, pp. 226-27. Lady Davenant also insisted on being paid for the fruit concessions on 1 November 1683: "the United Company agreed to pay Dame Mary Davenant 5s for each performance at Drury Lane for eighteen

Whatever the exact arrangement may have been between the co-managers, the uncertain division of power within the company early on in their stewardship clearly compromised the troupe's discipline. It was not long before the members of the Duke's Company became restless about the new regime: on 9 December 1669 a warrant was issued to apprehend the actors Samuel Sandford and Matthew Medbourne for having "beene refractory & disorderly contrary to the Rules of their house".⁴⁴⁹ Only a few days afterwards, Thomas Creek, yet another employee of the Duke's Company, was arrested.⁴⁵⁰ By January 1670 the actor Medbourne was back again causing trouble: this time with a claim against Henry Harris and Thomas Betterton.⁴⁵¹ On 26 April 1670 the Duke's Company's comedian, Jeremiah Lisle, was apprehended because he "hath absented himself from his duty & otherwise Misbehaved himself".⁴⁵² Jeremiah was not the only one malingering as both Adams and Allenson of the Duke's Company were soon after taken into custody "for absenting themselves from ye Dukes house Theatre".⁴⁵³ Disciplinary problems undoubtedly encumbered both companies, yet Judith Milhous understates the Duke's Company's situation during this period when she claimed that such troubles were "more typical" of the King's Company.⁴⁵⁴

Is it likely that Betterton and Harris were stricter masters than Davenant and were more determined to apply the rules than he was? In fact, Davenant was well known to be a strict and stubborn master. Milhous clearly states that he was the "Boss".⁴⁵⁵ He forbade his actresses from living outside the playhouse; he was intractable when dealing with Henry

years, since she lost her income on the Dorset Garden fruit concession when that theatre was dark after the union of 1682". See *Register*, no. 1218.

⁴⁴⁹ LC5/187, fol. 187 (*Register*, no. 532).

⁴⁵⁰ LC5.187, fol. 190v (*Register*, no. 535).

⁴⁵¹ LC5/187, fol. 195v (*Register*, no. 539).

⁴⁵² LC5/188, fol. 3v (*Register*, no. 554).

⁴⁵³ LC5/188, fol. 36v (*Register*, no. 570).

⁴⁵⁴ Milhous, *Betterton*, p. 30.

⁴⁵⁵ Milhous, *Betterton*, p. 10.

Herbert; and he refused to accept the demands of Henry Harris. None of these instances give the impression that he was loose when it came to company discipline. Surely, it is more likely that the company discipline relaxed when two young actors took over the running of the company.

In any event, it was at the expense of the King's Company that the new co-managers of the Duke's Company secured their first success: Thomas Shadwell's *The Sullen Lovers*. Shadwell firmly established himself as the Duke's Company's new star writer not only by his triumphant debut but also by mocking the rival company's veteran playwright, Sir Robert Howard. The play, performed for twelve days, quickly became the talk of the town as Londoners began to realise that the character Sir Positive At-All was a satire about Howard. Pepys, who went to see the play three times, noted: "how this play of Sir Positive At-All, in abuse of Sir Robert Howard, do take, all the Duke's [Company] and every body's talk being of that".⁴⁵⁶ One of those who apparently relished gossiping about Howard was the Duke of York, the patron of the Duke's Company, who openly circulated "several other stories of him".⁴⁵⁷ The Duke of York may have particularly enjoyed the satire against Howard. During this time the playwright was beginning to side more and more with a group of passionate anti-Yorkist courtiers, such as Buckingham.⁴⁵⁸

Shadwell, however, was concerned with politics of a different kind. In the preface to *The Sullen Lovers* he made clear that he was attacking experienced authors, such as Sir Robert Howard and John Dryden, who specialised in writing "wild Romantick Tales, wherein they strain Love and Honour to that ridiculous Height, that it becomes Burlesque".⁴⁵⁹ Sir Robert Howard and John Dryden not only wrote heroic plays representative of the age but they were

⁴⁵⁶ Pepys, ix, p. 190.

⁴⁵⁷ Pepys, ix, p. 191.

⁴⁵⁸ Winn, *John Dryden*, p. 180.

⁴⁵⁹ Preface to Shadwell's *The Sullen Lovers* (London, 1668), A2.

also the King's Company's most treasured playwrights – Dryden in particular had just signed a contract to write exclusively for the King's Company.⁴⁶⁰ Indeed bombastic heroic plays were the King's Company's forte and therefore an attack on heroic plays implied an attack on the King's Company itself.⁴⁶¹

Killigrew took a gamble by producing two new comedies immediately after Shadwell's play. The King's Company first produced Sir Charles Sedley's *The Mulberry Garden*. Sedley was a "reputed a wit" but it was his first play and the preparation for the production seemed to have been rushed.⁴⁶² Only ten days before Pepys saw its premiere, he took the coach to the actress Mary Knepp's lodgings and listened to a song the composer John Banister "hath set in Sir Charles Sidley's play for her".⁴⁶³ Knepp had to master the song there and then.⁴⁶⁴ The premiere drew a crowd and the playhouse was "infinitely full" with many people "come in, by private ways, into the pit".⁴⁶⁵ Charles II was in the audience but, perhaps due to the production's being hastily put together, seemed disappointed with the play. The king did not seem to "laugh, nor [be] pleased [with] the whole play from the beginning to the end".⁴⁶⁶ Pepys, who saw the play twice, believed it was so bad that he had "not been less pleased at a new play in my life".⁴⁶⁷ The King's Company followed with John Dryden's new play, *An Evening's Love*. It was more successful than Sedley's play and ran for nine days. While it is

⁴⁶⁰ *Register*, no. 444.

⁴⁶¹ Hume, "Theatre History, 1660-1800", p. 22.

⁴⁶² Pepys, ix, p. 203.

⁴⁶³ Pepys, ix, p. 189.

⁴⁶⁴ Pepys condescendingly wrote: "it being but slight, silly, short ayre, she learnt it presently", but it was Pepys who during the same evening turned to Banister to "prick me down the notes of the Echo in The Tempest" which he had already heard numerous times and could not remember days later. See Pepys, ix, p. 189, p. 195. Plays in the Restoration period usually took about a month to rehearse. See Stern, *Rehearsal*, p. 145.

⁴⁶⁵ Pepys, ix, p. 203.

⁴⁶⁶ Pepys, ix, p. 203.

⁴⁶⁷ Pepys, ix, p. 203.

impossible to prove exactly whose idea it was to write the comedy, Dryden may have been strong-armed by Killigrew into writing the play. It is suggestive of Killigrew's influence how Pepys found the play unworthy of Dryden: "very smutty, and nothing so good as *The Maiden Queen* or *The Indian Emperor*, of his [Dryden's] making, that I was troubled at it".⁴⁶⁸ Dryden even complained in the prologue about how he was forced to write for the company: "Yet the ungrateful drudgery must last, / And he [playwright] is bound, as civil Husbands do, / To strain himself... / To write in pain, and counterfeit a Bliss".⁴⁶⁹ Charles II attended the production. It was, however, disliked by diarists such as John Evelyn who wrote with apparent disgust: "a foolish plot, & very prophane, so as it afflicted me to see how the stage was degenerated & polluted by the licentious times".⁴⁷⁰ The King's Company, led by Killigrew, was trying to go out of its way to respond to Shadwell's implied criticism by demonstrating that the old troupe could pull off genres apart from heroic plays.

Having taken a risk in staging new comedies – with varied results – Killigrew turned to reviving a past favourite, John Lacy's *The Old Troop*. It was a shrewd move by Killigrew to reproduce a play written by the King's Company's chief comedian. Lacy was by now not only touted as the greatest comedian of his day but also became the favourite comic of Charles II.⁴⁷¹ Pepys who went to the King's Company's playhouse "to see the first day of Lacy's Monsieur Raggu, now new-acted" observed the presence of "the King and Court all there". The comedy was an apparent success. Pepys related its being "mighty merry" and

⁴⁶⁸ Pepys, ix, p. 247.

⁴⁶⁹ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, i, p. 85.

⁴⁷⁰ Evelyn, *Diary*, iii, pp. 510-11.

⁴⁷¹ Antonia Fraser, *King Charles II* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1979), p. 387. Langbaine commented on Lacy's acting abilities by praising him as "A Comedian whose Abilities in Action were sufficiently known to all that frequented the King's Theatre...He was so well approv'd of by King Charles the Second, an undeniable Judge in Dramatick Arts, that he caus'd his Picture to be drawn, in three several Figures in the same Table. viz. That of Teague in the *Committee*, Mr Scruple in *The Cheats*, and M. Galliard, in *The Variety*". See Langbaine, p. 317.

how there was “good deal of true wit in it, more than in the common sort of plays”.⁴⁷² The successful revival of the play entitled *The Old Troop* could not have been more fitting especially for an old troupe that has been cast aside by its younger counterpart as being irrelevant.

The two competing theatres were not only divided between the old and the new but also by whether they were actor or actress-oriented. Here I would suggest that Gilli Bush-Bailey and Jacqueline Pearson overstate the presence of women in the Duke’s Company as a close look at the troupe during this period reveals that it was heavily male dominated.⁴⁷³ Thomas Betterton was the face of the company. In July 1668, after a bout of illness, Thomas Betterton returned to the stage. When Pepys heard the news from Henry Harris, he immediately took his “wife and company to the house to see Henry the Fifth” and was “glad to see Betterton”.⁴⁷⁴ Similarly when he saw *Hamlet*, he was “mightily pleased with it but above all, with Batterton [*sic*], the best part, I believe, that ever man acted”.⁴⁷⁵ If Betterton was the star player who enthralled the audiences on-stage, then it was Harris’s socialising that brought important friends to the theatre off-stage.⁴⁷⁶ In April 1668 when Pepys “stepped up to Harris’ dressing room...there I observed much company come to him, and the Witts, to talk, after the play is done and to assign meetings”.⁴⁷⁷ Perhaps the importance of his own status went to Harris’s head because on 7 May 1669 when Silas Taylor offered a manuscript of a play, Harris curtly responded by saying that “he would judge by one Act whether it were good or no”. The offended Taylor immediately “then took it [the play] to the other company”.⁴⁷⁸ The

⁴⁷² Pepys, ix, pp. 270-71.

⁴⁷³ Bush-Bailey, *Treading the Bawds*, p. 29; Pearson, *The Prostituted Muse*, p. 32.

⁴⁷⁴ Pepys ix, pp. 256-57.

⁴⁷⁵ Pepys ix, p. 296.

⁴⁷⁶ See Roberts, *Thomas Betterton*, p. 104.

⁴⁷⁷ Pepys, ix, p. 178.

⁴⁷⁸ Pepys, ix, pp. 546-47.

Duke's Company's leading comedians were also male. In Roger Boyle's play, *Typhone*, Edward Angel and James Nokes, whom John Dryden described as the "best Comedians of the Age", were so famous that in the prologue to the production, they played themselves.⁴⁷⁹ In the male dominated Duke's Company actresses seemed less prominent.⁴⁸⁰

By contrast, Killigrew's company had a significant female presence. This was hardly surprising as the old veteran male actors were continuously disappointing the audiences. Pepys, who saw *Othello* in an upper box of the King's playhouse noted, "Mohun, which did a little surprise me, not acting Iago's part by so much as Clun used to; nor another Hart's, which was Cassio's; nor, indeed, Burt doing the Moor's so well as I once thought he did".⁴⁸¹ In the production of Richard Brome's *The Jovial Crew* the old actors yet again disappointed the audience – or at least Pepys – who condemned: "ill acted to what it was heretofore, in Clun's time".⁴⁸² The King's Company's production of *The Heiress* nearly flopped as George Beeston took over the part of Edward Kynaston.⁴⁸³ Pepys records: "his [Kynaston's] part is done by Beeston, who is fain to read it out of a book all the while, and thereby spoils the part, and almost the play, it being one of the best parts in it". Beeston was so insistent on reading the part that in one scene "Beeston come in with others, supposing it to be dark, and yet he is forced to read his part by the light of the candles".⁴⁸⁴ In an attempt to keep the actors toeing the line, Killigrew even had to hire a playhouse where "at 20s a week" because until he did

⁴⁷⁹ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, ii, p. 381.

⁴⁸⁰ In May 1668 Pepys heard that Mrs Davis, the leading actress in the Duke's Company, is "quite gone from the house". In July 1668 Pepys went to a production of *The Slighted Maid* in the Duke's Company and saw Winifred Gosnell, a recent replacement for Davis, but found her "very homely, and", he added, she "sings meanly". See Pepys, ix, p. 219, p. 268.

⁴⁸¹ Pepys, ix, p. 438.

⁴⁸² Pepys, ix, pp. 411-12.

⁴⁸³ It is unclear whether the Beeston here refers to George Beeston or his father William. For a detailed study of when George Beeston entered the King's Company, see my "When Did George Beeston Join the King's Company? New Information in an Unpublished Letter", *Theatre Notebook*, 68.2 (2014), pp. 66-68.

⁴⁸⁴ Pepys, ix, p. 436.

so he could not get them to concentrate on the running of the “business”.⁴⁸⁵

Fortunately, the actresses seem to have picked up the slack and brought the customers into the theatre for both on and off-stage entertainment. On stage, Knepp’s singing saved the production of *The Heiress*, which was so well sung “as to make the whole house clap her” and Pepys reported how “the world talks” of Anne Marshall’s “excellence” in her performance of *The Indian Queen*.⁴⁸⁶ Killigrew in an unprecedented move, also launched a “women’s day” at the King’s Company.⁴⁸⁷ Knepp’s maid reminded Pepys “that the women’s day at the playhouse is to-day, and that therefore I must be there, to increase their profit...the King and Court there; the house, for the women’s sake, mighty full”.⁴⁸⁸ Off stage, Pepys went to ogle at “Beck Marshall” who “come dressed ... looks mighty fine, and pretty, and noble: and also Nell in her boy’s clothes, mighty pretty”.⁴⁸⁹ It was not only the diarist who went backstage as Pepys also observed: “how many men do hover about them [actresses] as soon as they come off the stage”.⁴⁹⁰

The actresses’ arrogance, noted by Pepys, probably stemmed from their immense popularity and importance. Rebecca Marshall’s haughtiness might have caused Mary Meggs, the “Orange Moll”, to be arrested on 5 November 1669 “for abuseing Mrs Rebecca Marshall”, who was known to be imperious.⁴⁹¹ Even new actresses to the company such as Pegg

⁴⁸⁵ Pepys, ix, p. 425.

⁴⁸⁶ Pepys, ix, p. 436, p. 250.

⁴⁸⁷ The actresses’ benefit day. “During the ten years of Pepys’ *Diary* the theatres occasionally permitted the women of the house a yearly performance of their own profit...Although evidence for the women’s benefit is scanty, it may have been related to several performances in which women only acted, a custom also prevailing in the first decade of the eighteenth century. Nevertheless, this type of benefit lost favour when individuals secured personal benefits, perhaps because of difficulty in distributing the profits from a multiple benefit equitably”. See *London Stage*, p. lxxix.

⁴⁸⁸ Pepys, ix, p. 320, p. 322.

⁴⁸⁹ Pepys, ix, p. 189.

⁴⁹⁰ Pepys, ix, p. 189.

⁴⁹¹ LC 5/187, fol. 174v (*Register*, no. 527); see also Wilson, *All the King’s Ladies*, p. 27. An anonymous *Lampoon* (c. 1678) called Marshall, “Proud Curtizen Marshall”. Cited in *BDA*, x, p. 108.

Hughes were not lacking in confidence: “a mighty pretty woman...but is not, modest”.⁴⁹² This was hardly surprising when ardent fans of Killigrew’s female performers were ready to kill for them, as Lady Chaworth reported on 20 June 1670: “One of the K[ing’s] servants hath killed Mr Hues, Peg Hues’ brother...upon a dispute whether Mis Nelly [Gwyn] or she was the handsomer”.⁴⁹³

It was little wonder then that Killigrew’s company set the trend for prologues and epilogues spoken by actresses. In the King’s Company’s production of Ben Jonson’s *Catiline’s Conspiracy* Nell Gwyn spoke both the prologue and the epilogue. This was obviously a novelty since the prologue began: “A Woman’s Prologue! This is vent’rous News”.⁴⁹⁴ Rebecca Marshall became so good at delivering epilogues that she was able to counterbalance Pepys’ disapproval of James Shirley’s *Hyde Park*: “it is but a very moderate play, only an excellent epilogue spoke by Beck Marshall”.⁴⁹⁵ Indeed, the device of using women as speakers became so popular as to influence court performances. On 6 April 1670 the King’s Company’s play *The Faithful Shepherdess* was acted at court by “Lady Mary, daughter of the Duke of York, and many young ladies”.⁴⁹⁶ Lady Mary Mordant spoke the epilogue before the court.⁴⁹⁷

Whether the acting troupes were actor or actress oriented mattered especially given that the theatres seem to have been increasingly aware of the influence of women in their audiences. We can evince this from the sheer number of prologues and epilogues that directly address them and pander them.⁴⁹⁸ Killigrew’s company was quick to capitalise on the

⁴⁹² Pepys, ix, p. 189.

⁴⁹³ HMC, *Rutland Papers*, ii, 17 (*Register*, no. 561).

⁴⁹⁴ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, i, p. 310.

⁴⁹⁵ Pepys, ix, p. 260.

⁴⁹⁶ Cited in *London Stage*, p. 169.

⁴⁹⁷ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, ii, p. 366.

⁴⁹⁸ For a detailed study of women in Restoration theatre see Roberts, *The Ladies*.

authority of the new clientele. In the prologue to the King's Company's production of *The Mulberry Garden*, Charles Sedley implored the women in the theatre to save him from censure: "He hopes the Ladies at small faults will wink".⁴⁹⁹ Gwyn in her prologue to *Catiline's Conspiracy* clearly acknowledges the importance of the female audience when she says, "Slight not this Female Summons; Phoebus-rayes, / To Crown his Poets, turn'd our Sex to Bayes. / And Ladies sure you'l vote for us entire".⁵⁰⁰ In August 1669 the King's Company produced Frances Boothby's *Marcelia*. As the first woman playwright to have produced an original play in London, Boothby writes in the prologue: "I'm hither come, but what d'ye think to say? / A Womans Pen presents you with a Play: / ... But still she hopes the Ladies out of Pride / And Honor, will not quit their sexes side".⁵⁰¹ Even the most masculine of Restoration genres seemed to cater to the feminine taste. *The Conquest of Granada* was praised by Mrs Evelyn, who after seeing the heroic drama, wrote that "the most refined romance I ever read is not to compare with it".⁵⁰²

Significantly, this period saw the mounting of the first two original productions by female authors in London. One of whom – Aphra Behn – was to become the first female British writer to earn a living from writing for the stage.⁵⁰³ The combination of theatrical rivalry and the sizeable presence and influence of women in the audience during the Carolean period aided the emergence of the professionalization of female authorship. James Van Horn Melton writes that by the 1695-1696 theatrical season, one-third of all the new plays mounted on the

⁴⁹⁹ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, i, p. 285.

⁵⁰⁰ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, i, pp. 310-11.

⁵⁰¹ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, i, pp. 327-28.

⁵⁰² Mrs Evelyn's letter to Mr Bohun is cited in *London Stage*, p. 177.

⁵⁰³ For a definitive biography of Aphra Behn, see Janet Todd, *The Secret Life of Aphra Behn* (London: André Deutsch, 1996). See also, Maureen Duffy, *The Passionate Shepherdess* (Methuen, 1989) and Angeline Goreau, *Reconstructing Aphra* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980). For critical studies on Behn see, Janet Todd ed., *Aphra Behn Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), Derek Hughes, *The Theatre of Aphra Behn* (Palgrave, 2001) and Ros Ballaster, "Aphra Behn" in David Womersley ed., *A Companion to Literature from Milton to Blake* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000).

London stage were written by women.⁵⁰⁴

With the rising predominance of women in the theatres as playwrights and patrons, it must have helped the King's Company's renown to have none other than Lady Castlemaine, the most notorious mistress of the king, fall "mightily in love with [Charles] Hart". Knepp informed Pepys on April 1668 that the King's troupe's leading actor "is much with her [Castlemaine] in private, and she goes to him, and do give him many presents". It later transpired that it was the King's Company's leading actress, Rebecca Marshall, who was "the means of bringing them together" – perhaps a case of shrewd match-making for the troupe.⁵⁰⁵

For the Duke's Company such matchmaking precipitated some overheated moments both at court and at the playhouse. When Moll Davis, the most popular actress at the Duke's Company, performed at court on 31 May 1668 and danced "her jig, the Queene would not stay to see it, which people do think it was out of displeasure at being the king's whore, that she could not bear it".⁵⁰⁶ Similarly when Pepys went to the Duke's playhouse for a production of *Macbeth*, he saw Davis "in the box over the King's and my lady Castlemayne". Castlemaine, who later saw the actress above her, "looked like fire".⁵⁰⁷

Playing with fire, however, never seemed to bother Killigrew's conscience even if it meant endangering his actors. The King's Company began to take their well-known strategy of antagonising their clientele to another level by producing biting satires about their aristocratic audiences. They revived Ben Jonson's *Catiline's Conspiracy* on December 1668. The production was clearly well planned with actors "most fine in clothes; and a fine scene of

⁵⁰⁴ While this assertion needs to be read within the context that the year indicated was a thin year for new plays and that the trend had been bumpy to that point, it still remains an impressive statistic. See James Van Horn Melton, *The Rise of the Public in Enlightenment Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 148.

⁵⁰⁵ Pepys, ix, p. 156.

⁵⁰⁶ Pepys, ix, p. 219.

⁵⁰⁷ Pepys, ix, p. 398.

the Senate, and of a fight”.⁵⁰⁸ Doll Common’s imitation of Lady Harvey was therefore also probably planned in advance, although the extent to which it incited court quarrels may not have been anticipated. Pepys reported:

[Sir W. Coventry] told me of the great factions at Court at this day...it is about my Lady Harvey’s being offended at Doll Common’s [Katherine Corey] acting of Sempronia, to imitate her: for which she got my Lord Chamberlain, her kinsman, to imprison Doll: when my Lady Castlemayne made the King to release her, and to order her to act again, worse than ever, the other day, where the King himself was: and since it was acted again, and my Lady Harvy provided people to hiss her and fling oranges at her.⁵⁰⁹

A month later, the King’s Company’s actor Edward Kynaston who acted a part in *The Heiress* “in abuse to Sir Charles Sedley”, was “beaten with sticks, by two or three that assaulted him, so as he is mightily bruised, and forced to keep his bed”.⁵¹⁰ Kynaston was unable to act until 9 February due to the injury. Although Sedley denied having any involvement in the attack, there was little doubt in anybody’s mind as to who had ordered the assault: even the king was “very angry with Sir Charles Sedley”.⁵¹¹

In the same month a play by Sir Robert Howard called *The Country Gentleman* was mounted by the King’s Company “wherein tis said that the Earl of Clarendon, Sir William Coventry and some other Courtiers are plainly impersonated, but especially Sir William”.⁵¹² While Howard was presumed to be the primary writer, it was the Duke of Buckingham who wrote the part of the play that subsequently ignited a major scandal. John Nicholas, a close observer of the scandal, wrote to his father:

We have had much discourse about a Challenge & a Duell...occasioned by a new Play made by Sir Robert Howard

⁵⁰⁸ Pepys, ix, p. 395.

⁵⁰⁹ Pepys, ix, p. 415.

⁵¹⁰ Pepys, ix, p. 435.

⁵¹¹ Pepys, ix, p. 436.

⁵¹² Cited in *London Stage*, p. 157.

called the Country Gentleman in which the Duke of Bucks hath incerted a part to personate Sir William Coventry.⁵¹³

Sir William Coventry was soon arrested for challenging Buckingham to a duel and sent to the Tower.

Killigrew, in all these instances, attempted to distance himself from the deeds themselves but, as David Roberts suggests, Coventry “believed he had identified [in Killigrew] the real villain” working behind the scenes.⁵¹⁴ Coventry recounted to Pepys how he had told

Tom Killigrew that he should tell his actors, whoever they were, that did offer anything like representing him, that he would not complain to my Lord Chamberlain, which was too weak, nor get him beaten, as Charles Sidley is said to do, but that he would cause his nose to be cut.⁵¹⁵

Even though Killigrew seems firmly to have believed that there is no such thing as bad publicity, his discovery as the real culprit and the consequent threat of physical punishment seems to have deterred him from pursuing such tactics thereafter. Uncontroversial, safe plays followed soon after including Dryden’s *An Evening’s Love*, Killigrew’s *Claricilla*, Beaumont and Fletcher’s *The Coxcomb* and Ben Jonson’s *The Alchymist*.⁵¹⁶

In the meantime, the Duke’s Company went about its business by producing unremarkable and non-controversial plays. On 18 January 1669 the Duke’s Company produced William Davenant’s *The Wits* which Pepys described as “a medley of things, but some similes mighty good, though ill mixed”; two days later the Duke’s Company put on Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night* which the diarist thought was “one of the weakest plays that ever I saw on stage”; on 27 January the company revived Samuel Tuke’s *The Adventures of Five Hours* which Pepys reported as “not been acted a good while before, but once, and is a

⁵¹³ BL Egerton MS 2539, fols. 327v-328 (*Register*, no. 487).

⁵¹⁴ Roberts, “Thomas Killigrew, Theatre Manager”, p. 80.

⁵¹⁵ Pepys, ix, pp. 471-72.

⁵¹⁶ Roberts, “Thomas Killigrew, Theatre Manager”, p. 81.

most excellent play”.⁵¹⁷ Pepys then saw Fletcher’s *Mad Lover* about which he wrote, “only Betterton’s part still pleases me”; on 20 February the Duke’s Company revived James Shirley’s *The Grateful Servant* which Pepys thought was “a pretty good play, and which I have forgot that ever I did see”.⁵¹⁸

The Duke’s Company did, however, make a breakthrough on 25 February 1669 and successfully stole the King’s Company’s thunder by producing *The Royal Shepherdess*. John Downes later listed several plays “All which Expir’d the third Day” except for the “Royal Shepherdess, which liv’d six”.⁵¹⁹ Pepys described in his diary how the Duke’s playhouse “was infinite full; where, by and by the King and Court comes, it being a new play, or an old one new vamp[ed], by Shadwell”.⁵²⁰ While the diarist found the Duke’s production disappointing – “the silliest for words and design, and everything, that ever I saw in my whole life” – the rest of London seemed to rejoice in Shadwell’s adaptation.⁵²¹ The Duke’s Company’s production impressed the London theatre-goers with “a good martial dance of pikemen, where Harris and another do handle their pikes in a dance to admiration”.⁵²²

The King’s Company’s revival of *The Faithful Shepherdess* the following day suffered badly. Pepys was astonished at entering the King’s playhouse to find:

an empty house, there not being, as I could tell the people, so many as to make up above £10 in the whole house! The being of a new play at the other house, I suppose, being the cause, though it be so silly a play that I wonder how there should be enough people to go thither two days together, and not leave more to fill this house.⁵²³

⁵¹⁷ Pepys, ix, p. 419, p. 421, p. 429.

⁵¹⁸ Pepys, ix, p. 453, p. 454.

⁵¹⁹ Downes, p. 68.

⁵²⁰ Pepys, ix, p. 458.

⁵²¹ Pepys, ix, pp. 458-59.

⁵²² Pepys, ix, p. 459.

⁵²³ Pepys, ix, p. 459.

However Killigrew's troupe, in turn, outdid the Duke's Company's production of *Guzman* when it produced Thomas Heywood's *Psyche*. According to Shadwell, Orrery wrote *Guzman* "trying what he could do in comedy, since his heroique plays could do no more wonders".⁵²⁴ Even Harris considered the play a "mean thing" as Pepys reported: "Harris, who hath no part in it [the play], did come to me, and told me in discourse that he was glad of it, it being a play that will not take".⁵²⁵ It was also probably *Guzman* that the author of *The Travels of Cosmo the Third* was talking about when he wrote: "went to the comedy at the Duke of York's theatre, where the music and dancing, after the English manner, were less pleasing than the operas performed by the comedians".⁵²⁶

The King's Company's comedy, *Psyche*, by contrast, was a great success. As the writer of *The Travels of Cosmo the Third* reflected on the "ballet set on foot" by the King's players:

A well arranged ballet, regulated by the sounds of various instruments, with new and fanciful dances after the English manner, in which different actions were counterfeited, the performers passing gracefully from one to another...This spectacle was highly agreeable to his highness from its novelty and ingenuity; and all parts of it were likewise equally praised by the ladies and gentlemen, who crouded in great numbers to the theatre, to fill the boxes, with which it is entirely surrounded, and the pit, and to enjoy the performance, which was protracted to a late hour of the night.⁵²⁷

The Duke's Company attempted to recover from their failed production of *Guzman* by mounting a sequel to the comedy. On 14 December 1669 the Duke's players performed Orrery's *Mr Anthony* to the great disappointment of the company. John Boyle, the fifth Earl of Orrery, wrote some fifty years after the premiere, "the sequel of *Guzman* was after Lord Orrery's Death brought upon the Stage, but being disrelish'd by the Audience appear'd only

⁵²⁴ Pepys, ix, p. 522.

⁵²⁵ Pepys, ix, p. 522.

⁵²⁶ Lorenzo Magalotti, *The Travels of Cosmo the Third, Grand Duke of Tuscany, Through England during the reign of King Charles the Second* (London, 1821), p. 194; cited in *London Stage*, p. 160.

⁵²⁷ Cited in *London Stage*, p. 162.

one Night. The Author had not supervis'd and corrected It sufficiently before he died".⁵²⁸ If John Boyle's private notes are correct, this performance was most likely the premiere and the only day on which the play was performed.

Both companies subsequently enjoyed equally successful runs at the end of the 1669 season. Pepys found the King's Company's production of *The Island Princess* on 23 April "pleases me better and better every time" and on the following day reported that the King's Company's *The General* was "a good play, that pleases me well".⁵²⁹ Pepys similarly noted the King's players' performance of *The Spanish Curate* by Beaumont and Fletcher as "a pretty good play".⁵³⁰ The Duke's Company scored a hit with Betterton's revamping of John Webster's *The Roman Virgin* on May 1669. Downes recorded how all the parts were "Exactly perform'd" and how "it lasted successively 8 Days, and [was] very frequently Acted afterwards".⁵³¹ In June both companies mounted hits. The Duke's Company's production of Shadwell's translation of *The Hypocrite* was acted "six days".⁵³² The King's Company, meanwhile, mounted Dryden's *Tyrannic Love* which ran for a phenomenal 14 days. Charles II wrote on 24 June to his sister, Princess Henriette-Anne: "I am just now going to a new play [i.e. *Tyrannic Love*] that I heare very much commended".⁵³³

The immense success of *Tyrannic Love* came with a hefty price tag for Issac Fuller, the scene-painter. The King's Company refused to pay the painter the sum he had been promised because of delays he had caused.⁵³⁴ Fuller then sued the company by providing witnesses to corroborate the fact that he had worked better and faster than any painter in England and that

⁵²⁸ Roger Boyle, *The Dramatic Works of Roger Boyle, Earl of Orrery*, ed. William Clark, 2 vols (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1937), ii, p. 950.

⁵²⁹ Pepys, ix, p. 532, p. 533.

⁵³⁰ Pepys, ix, p. 556.

⁵³¹ Downes, p. 66.

⁵³² Cited in *London Stage*, p. 162.

⁵³³ Cited in Cyril Hughes Hartmann, *Charles II and Madame* (London: W. Heinemann, 1934), p. 259.

⁵³⁴ LC5/187, fol. 204 (*Register*, no. 542).

his work gave “great content to the Spectators that came to see the said Play”. Killigrew who had lodged the complaint, along with Hart and Mohun, had “some few days after finishing thereof gave [Fuller] thanks...And told him that he [Fuller]...had very well pleased his Majesty and the whole house”. This was characteristic of Killigrew who could smile and compliment those who he was about to betray.⁵³⁵ The King’s Company lost its battle, however, as Fuller was eventually awarded £335 10s in damages.⁵³⁶

Not everyone was so lucky. On 11 August 1670 the King’s Company actor Theophilus Bird the Younger was arrested for “abuseing Mr Thomas Killegrew [*sic*] with reproachfull Language”.⁵³⁷ This may well have been because Killigrew unilaterally disposed of his father’s dead share in the King’s Company as his own.⁵³⁸ Theophilus Bird the Younger, who had been bequeathed his father’s rights in the plays and playbooks, may have tried to reclaim his father’s share from Killigrew.⁵³⁹ There is, however, no record of him having succeeded. This is another instance in which Killigrew is shown to be a ruthless manager to his employees whose devious behaviour looks forward to the likes of the infamous Christopher Rich.⁵⁴⁰

In the 1660s French comedies in particular came to the fore, especially with the popularity of Moliere’s plays.⁵⁴¹ This was in part due to Charles II’s own predilection for French theatre and drama cultivated during his exile in France. The popularity of French

⁵³⁵ Killigrew once advised Charles II to “carry an outward appearance of civility” to those who are “disagreeable to you”. See Wood, *Athenae Oxonienses*, iv, p. 693.

⁵³⁶ For a detailed account of the Fuller suit, see Hotson, pp. 250-53.

⁵³⁷ LC5/188, fol. 35 (*Register*, no. 569).

⁵³⁸ Hotson, pp. 244-45.

⁵³⁹ *BDA*, ii, p. 135.

⁵⁴⁰ Christopher Rich was to become known as the “Lewis *Le Grand*” of Restoration theatre. See Thomas Coke, Vice Chamberlain Coke’s Theatrical Papers, 1706-1715, ed. Judith Milhous and Robert D. Hume (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1982), pp. 11-13.

⁵⁴¹ Between 1660 and 1671 around 35 foreign plays were adapted or translated into English, of which over 20 were French. See Maguire, *Regicide and Restoration*, p. 54.

influenced plays soon re-emerged perhaps due to the result of competition from the popular French players then performing in London. The Lord Chamberlain pledged on 26 October 1669 that “ye French Comoedians haue liberty to Act and Play And that noe Persons pr[e]sume to molest or disturbe them in their Acting & playing”.⁵⁴²

The Duke’s Company produced John Caryl’s *Sir Salomon* which, being a mixture of Moliere’s *L’Ecole des Femmes* and *L’Ecole des Maris*, the epilogue openly declared that if the production “Does hit your Pallats, you must thank Molliere: / Molliere, the famous Shakespeare of this Age, / Both when he Writes, and when he treads the Stage”.⁵⁴³ Downes testified to the popularity of French-influenced plays when he reported of the production that “it took [successive run of] 12 Days together”.⁵⁴⁴ The King’s Company soon afterwards mounted Matthew Medbourne’s adaptation of Moliere’s *Tartuffe*. Medbourne in the dedication wrote proudly, “I here present your Honour with the Master-Piece of Moliere’s Productions, or rather that of all French Comedy”.⁵⁴⁵

Soon enough, however, this French competition began to harm the Duke’s Company’s business. The Duke’s players took to bantering with the London audiences for their wayward tastes. In their production of the tragicomedy *The Women’s Conquest* the Duke’s players joshed: “now y’are pleased with Wits low frippery, / Admitting Farce, the trifling mode of France”.⁵⁴⁶ As a indication of the popularity of French players, Downes also recorded the occasion when Nokes, at a court performance in Dover, ridiculed the French by imitating their fashion: “upon his first Entrance on the Stage...the French look’d very Shaggrin, to see themselves Ap’d by such a Buffoon”.⁵⁴⁷

⁵⁴² LC5/12 (*Register*, no. 525).

⁵⁴³ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, ii, p. 365.

⁵⁴⁴ Downes, p. 65.

⁵⁴⁵ Medbourn trans., *Tartuffe* (London, 1670), A3, r.

⁵⁴⁶ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, ii, p. 359.

⁵⁴⁷ Downes, p. 64.

Instead of mocking the French, however, the Duke's Company soon began to appeal to the female audience, as the King's Company had done before. Thomas Betterton presumably won over the women in the theatre when he mounted his own play, *The Woman Made a Justice*, in which Downes recorded "Mrs. Long Acting the Justice so Charmingly" that she "well pleased the Audience": the play, meanwhile, "continu'd Acting 14 Days together".⁵⁴⁸ The Duke's Company also produced Edward Howard's *The Women's Conquest* – a play with a highly suggestive title for a troupe attempting to lure the female audience to its side. On 20 September 1670 the Duke's Company produced its first original work by a female playwright, – over a year after the King's Company mounted Frances Boothby's *Marcellia*. The performance of Aphra Behn's first play, *The Forc'd Marriage*, was attended by the king and was according to Downes, "a good play and lasted six Days".⁵⁴⁹ Behn in the prologue claims that a woman writing a play is a novelty and suggests that every female "I'th' upper Box, Pit, Galleries" is a spy to hold men "in wanton Complement; / That...you may not censure what she's writ".⁵⁵⁰ The epilogue to the Duke's Company's production of *The Six Days Adventure*, spoken by Nokes, even went so far as to say: "Our women govern here [the Duke's Company] – as well as there [the King's Company]".⁵⁵¹

The early 1670s also saw the two companies undergo a craze for Ben Jonson. In March 1670 the King's Company's production of Ben Jonson's *Every Man in His Humour* was noted for its epilogue, which was spoken by an actor impersonating Ben Jonson's ghost. It was clearly a great success. In response, not only did the Duke's players mockingly refer to Jonson's ghost in the prologue to Samuel Tuke's *The Adventures of Five Hours* but they immediately copied the device. The second prologue to *The Women's Conquest* began with

⁵⁴⁸ Downes, p. 65.

⁵⁴⁹ Downes, p. 72.

⁵⁵⁰ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, ii, p. 377.

⁵⁵¹ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, ii, p. 402.

“noise with Thunder and Lightening” at which point “Ben Jonson personated rises from below” to deliver his speech.⁵⁵² The third prologue to the production even claimed to be original in using Jonson’s ghost: “You see what little Arts w’are fain to try, / To give a Prologue some variety.../ But why Great Johnson’s Ghost should thus appear, / As if to hector Wits, and Criticks here, / Who (if the Devil were Poet) would not fear?”.⁵⁵³

Nell Gwyn’s famous hat and belt also became the centre of attention. The prologue to the Duke’s players’ production of Behn’s *The Amorous Prince* disparages Gwyn’s popular ploy by asking: “Who swear they’d rather hear a smutty jest / Spoken by Nokes or Angel, then a Scene / Of the admir’d and well-penn’d Cataline [a production by the King’s Company]; / Who love the Comick Hat, the Jig and Dance”.⁵⁵⁴ Similarly in the epilogue to the Duke’s Company’s *The Six Days Adventure* Nokes alludes to the prologue with “a Hat and Belt”.⁵⁵⁵ Gwyn joked in the prologue to the King’s Company’s production of *The Conquest of Granada* by wearing a broad-brimmed hat and waste-belt: “This jeast was first of t’other houses making... / This is that hat whose very sight did win yee. / To laugh and clap, as though the Devil were in yee.../ The brims still grew with every Play they writ; / And grew so large, they cover’d all the wit”. Gwyn not only claimed that the broad hat and belt were the devices of the Duke’s Company first; she also hints at the Duke’s Company’s desperation in attracting theatre-goers to their playhouse: “What dullness do these Mungrill-wits confess / When all their hope is acting of a dress! / Thus two, the best Comedians of the Age [Angel and Nokes] / Must be worn out, with being blocks o’th’ Stage”.⁵⁵⁶ The hat and belt exchange

⁵⁵² Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, ii, p. 358.

⁵⁵³ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, ii, p. 360.

⁵⁵⁴ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, ii, p. 395.

⁵⁵⁵ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, ii, p. 402.

⁵⁵⁶ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, ii, p. 381. This was to be one of the last performances by Gwyn who, having become the mistress of Charles II by 1669, was pregnant with his child. Although she did not act after February 1671, she regularly attended the theatre as an audience member – at one point she made at least 55 visits to the theatre over a two-year period. Her son was called Charles and was

between the two companies is an instance in which both parties seem to be taking part in innocent banter than a serious clash.

Nevertheless it seems that the Duke's Company's strategy of copying and ridiculing its rival troupe – however harmless – was still a sign that it was struggling. Perhaps the time and the effort (not to mention the financial burden) it took to plan the new theatre in Dorset Garden affected the productions during this time. The company mounted a string of unsuccessful plays at the latter end of the season 1670-1671. It mounted Shadwell's *The Humourists* on 10 December 1670, which, as the preface explains, “came upon the Stage with all the disadvantages imaginable”; even the players were “extreamly imperfect”.⁵⁵⁷ The preface to *The Six Days Adventure* similarly alludes to the unsuccessful reception of the performance partly due to the “disturbance of the Actors in the Representation of the Play” which, in turn, also disturbed “the audience in the hearing of it, who could not with any quiet give their attention to the Action”.⁵⁵⁸ John Crowne blamed the unsuccessful reception of his play on the type of audience in the theatre: “[the play] had the misfortune to be brought into the world in a time [when]...the most illustrious Judges (I mean the Court) were absent, and this unhappy poem left to the mercy of a common Audience”.⁵⁵⁹ The Duke's players similarly complained in the prologue to *The Town-Shifts* that the gallants had “grown so severe, / Plays in the Post are damn'd, before you hear”.⁵⁶⁰

The King's Company, on the other hand, fared well during this time and mounted notable new productions. John Dryden's defining two-part heroic drama, *The Conquest of Granada*,

created a Baron of Headington and Earl of Burford (both in Oxfordshire, which might have something to do with where Nell Gwyn came from). He was also made Duke of St Albans in 1684; and died at Bath in 1726. Charles had a brother, James, but he died in Paris in September 1680, aged nine. For further details see Parker, *Nell Gwyn*.

⁵⁵⁷ Preface to Shadwell's *The Humourists* (London, 1671), A3 r. v.

⁵⁵⁸ Preface to Edward Howard's *The Six Days Adventure* (London, 1671), A3 r. v.

⁵⁵⁹ Dedication to John Crowne's *Juliana* (London, 1671), A4, r. v.

⁵⁶⁰ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, ii, p. 405.

was produced in December 1670 with great success. According to the *London Stage*, the production was still playing two months after it had premiered until mid-February 1671.⁵⁶¹ John Evelyn praised the “famous Play” with “very glorious scenes & perspectives”.⁵⁶² The King’s Company also snapped up William Wycherley’s *Love in a Wood* as he made his debut on the London stage in March 1671.

In the meantime the Duke’s Company was busy completing its new playhouse in Dorset Garden. The company came upon a site for the new theatre through the Earl of Dorset, one of the generous patrons to the Restoration theatre – who had infamously lured Gwyn away from the stage – and who supported playwrights such as Dryden and Wycherley. The troupe agreed on a site with Dorset’s agent which was located at “the south end of Dorset Garden, at the top of Dorset Stairs, and therefore accessible from the river as well as down Dorset Street, leading south from Fleet Street”.⁵⁶³ This was certainly an improvement from their old location in Lincoln’s Inn Fields where narrow streets along Portugal Row made it difficult to access the theatre by carriage, a primary means of transportation for the higher class of clients.

The new building, as engraved by William Dolle in 1673, was traditionally said to be the work of Christopher Wren but the recent consensus among scholars points to Robert Hooke as the more likely candidate with Grinling Gibbons having decorated the “capitals, cornices and eagles”.⁵⁶⁴ Hotson wrote that the theatre “fronting the river” with “its ornamental façade was surmounted by the arms of its patron (until 1685 James, Duke of York) and the statues of Melpomene and Thalia”.⁵⁶⁵ The upper stories of the front of the theatre were used for two apartments or as they were known, “houses”. Both Betterton and Harris had free

⁵⁶¹ See *London Stage*, pp. 177-80.

⁵⁶² Evelyn, *Diary*, iii, pp. 569-70.

⁵⁶³ Roberts, *Thomas Betterton*, p. 114.

⁵⁶⁴ See Horace Walpole, *Anecdotes of Painting in England*, 4 vols (London, 1786), iii, p. 150.

⁵⁶⁵ Hotson, p. 233.

accommodation at the theatre. Harris sublet his accommodation to another shareholder but Betterton “by his nearness and diligence...hath several times preserved the Playhouse from being burnt”.⁵⁶⁶

Aside from a tendency to catch fire, a rumour had circulated during the first month of its completion that the Duke’s playhouse suffered from structural problems. Wren, who had been appointed to the post of Chief Architect to the Crown in 1669, was soon ordered to inspect the playhouse “for his Majesty’s safety” since “information hath beene given that there is a defect in a Wall”.⁵⁶⁷ The Duke’s players were temporarily forced to return to their old theatre in Lincoln’s Inn Fields.⁵⁶⁸ The considerable cost of the theatre and of its machinery added to their predicament. While Charles Gildon conceded that the Duke’s Company had built “a much more magnificent Theatre in Dorset Gardens” than its rival, he nevertheless claimed, “for all the Machines and Decorations the skill of those times could afford”, the Duke’s strategy of constructing an extravagant playhouse proved “less effectual than they’d hoped”.⁵⁶⁹

The new theatre opened on 9 November 1671 with the production of John Dryden’s *Sir Martin Marall*. The prologue clearly outlined the reason for building a new playhouse. It used the metaphor of a prostitute who must adorn herself afresh in order to remain appealing to her weary clientele: “If Wit had still the Charm of being New: / Had not enjoyment dull’d your appetite, / She in her homely dress wou’d yet delight; / Such stately Theatres we need not raise”.⁵⁷⁰

⁵⁶⁶ See the deposition in Chancery suit C24/1144 of 17 October 1691 (*Register*, no. 1401).

⁵⁶⁷ PRO LC 5/14; cited in Milhous, *Betterton*, p. 43.

⁵⁶⁸ See *London Stage*, p. 190.

⁵⁶⁹ Charles Gildon, *The Life of Mr. Thomas Betterton* (London, 1710), p. 8. Similarly, James Wright wrote in 1699 that “the Addition of curious Machines by Mr. Betterton at the new theatre in Dorset Garden’ was at ‘the great expense and continual charge of the players. This much impaired their profit over what it was before...I have been informed (by one of them)”. See Wright, *Historia Histrionica*, p. 11.

⁵⁷⁰ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, ii, p. 440.

Here, two points as to how the Dorset Garden Theatre came about need revisiting. Scholars such as Judith Milhous and David Roberts have often treated the building of the Dorset Garden Theatre as one single project organised by the co-managers of the Duke's Company.⁵⁷¹ A close look at the Duke's Company's business dealings during these years, however, offers a different interpretation. Milhous has also suggested that the creation of the new theatre owed much to Betterton's innovative strategy: "it fulfilled...the ability to mount the lavish scenic spectacles Betterton favoured".⁵⁷² I would argue, however, that Betterton was, of the co-managers, perhaps the least involved in the project.

It seems that the Duke's Company had been planning to expand its business exponentially from around 1670 and that despite its being the most elaborate playhouse, the building of the Dorset Garden Theatre was just one of the company's projects. On 29 June 1670 the Duke's Company seems to have begun erecting a playhouse in Oxford: the Mayor of Oxford was instructed by the City Council to take proceedings against those who "should endeavour to disturb his royal highnesse of the Duke of Yorke's servants or their workemen in building their play-house".⁵⁷³ Two months later, on 12 August 1670, an agreement on the ground lease had been officially signed for the Dorset Garden Theatre in London. Furthermore, on 19 October 1671, the residents of St Giles in London presented a petition against the Duke's Company's plans to erect yet another playhouse in Barbican which, they claimed, would cause "great evill & inconveniency" and therefore to "use all Lawfull meanes & indeavours to prevent & hinder the erecting of the said Playhouse".⁵⁷⁴ This was the new site for the Nursery, which became, despite the protestations by the Mayor of London and the Secretary

⁵⁷¹ Milhous, *Betterton*, p. 29; Roberts, *Thomas Betterton*, pp. 113-16.

⁵⁷² Milhous, *Betterton*, p. 29, p. 43.

⁵⁷³ See *Register*, no. 564. This would have made good business sense for the Duke's Company as they had been performing in Oxford around this time. See *London Stage*, p. 170.

⁵⁷⁴ Repertories, Court of Aldermen, 76 (1670-71), fols. 293v-294 (*Register*, no. 646); cited in Hotson, p. 190.

of State, the longest lived of Nursery theatres.⁵⁷⁵ Indeed had the construction of all these theatres succeeded the Duke's Company would have had under its wing three new theatres in England by 1671. The building of the Dorset Garden Theatre should therefore be seen as a part of a much bigger plan by the Duke's Company's new co-managers to expand their business radically.

It was Mary Davenant, moreover, who seems to have taken over the reins in all of these transactions. The records concerning the Oxford playhouse mention no names at all, but existing documents about the other two theatres give insights into who was in charge of these new developments. The parishioners of St Giles in London were in no doubt about who instigated the project in Barbican and who was in control: "the Lady Davenant is in hand to erect a Playhouse in Barbican within the said parish...the Citty Doth order that a copy of the peticon [*sic*] bee sent to the Lady Davenant". When the agreements concerning the Dorset Garden Theatre had been drawn up it was not Betterton but Henry Harris who signed the lease.⁵⁷⁶ As Hotson relates, Harris then reassigned the lease so that the "Actors in the said Theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields might act in the said intended Theatre", to Nicholas Davenant and Thomas Crosse, "in trust for the said Lady Davenant".⁵⁷⁷ While Thomas Betterton doubtless played an important part in the artistic direction of the Duke's Company, his contribution to the major expansion of the business was minimal and his involvement in it seems to have been strictly peripheral compared with that of Lady Davenant.⁵⁷⁸

⁵⁷⁵ See for more details, Hotson, pp. 190-91. Williamson, the Secretary of State, wrote to Charles II on 23 November: "The Nursery in London. Pull down that and coffee houses, and nothing can be more to the establishment of the government. The City government is too lax already". *CSPD*, [Jan to Nov, 1671], p. 581.

⁵⁷⁶ C5/284/40 (*Register*, no. 571).

⁵⁷⁷ Hotson, pp. 299-30.

⁵⁷⁸ Milhous uses an unsubstantiated anecdote that Betterton went to France to study the latest machines for the Dorset Garden theatre as evidence of Betterton's involvement. See Milhous, *Betterton*, p. 43. It is of course possible that Betterton did not sign the lease because he was abroad. Theatre historians, however, have never been able to prove this nor have come to an agreement on when exactly he went, if at

Even when one looks at the structure of share holdings, it was Henry Harris who seems to have been more committed to the project than Betterton. One share cost £450 and Harris bought two and three-quarter shares at a cost of more than £1,200 while Betterton bought only a half-share for £102 10s and promised the rest from future revenue.⁵⁷⁹ Even with the knowledge that Harris, on occasions, liked to splash out, it is noteworthy that he brought to the project (financially) ten times the amount that of Betterton. Moreover Betterton was later accused of loaning company money and charging 20 per cent interest on the repayments, in order to pay for his part of the investment – a damning charge he did not deny.⁵⁸⁰ Although one might argue that Betterton was exceptionally careful and shrewd in the way that he invested in Dorset Garden Theatre it could also be argued that Betterton's actions were not those of a man who wholeheartedly believed in the project.

Despite the opulence of the Duke's Company's new theatre, however, the new playhouse did not dramatically increase the size of audience as might have been expected by the new co-managers.⁵⁸¹ Dryden's *Sir Martin Marall*, according to Downes, modestly "continu'd Acting 3 Days together". The Duke's players' next production of George Etherege's *The Comical Revenge* fared no better as it was only "perform'd 2 Days together". The premiere of *The History of Charles the VIII of France* was according to Downes "all new Cloath'd, yet

all. For further details see, Robert Lowe, *Thomas Betterton* (London, 1891), p. 113; Roberts, *Thomas Betterton*, p. 114.

⁵⁷⁹ See Roberts, *Thomas Betterton*, p. 115.

⁵⁸⁰ LC 7/3, reprinted in Nicoll, *History*, p. 335.

⁵⁸¹ For a detailed study of the design of the Dorset Garden theatre and the highly controversial debate on who designed it, see Robert D. Hume, "The Nature of the Dorset Garden Theatre", *Theatre Notebook*, 36 (1982), pp. 99-109; Edward A. Langhans, "A Conjectural Reconstruction of the Dorset Garden Theatre", *Theatre Survey*, 13 (1972), pp. 74-93; Robert D. Hume, "The Dorset Garden Theatre: A Review of Facts and Problems", *Theatre Notebook*, 33 (1979), pp. 4-17; Richard Leacroft, *The Development of the English Playhouse* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973); Diana de Marly, "The Architect of Dorset Garden Theatre", *Theatre Notebook*, 29 (1975), pp. 119-24.

lasted but 6 Days together”.⁵⁸²

What seems to have given the Duke’s Company more of an advantage than the decor was – as mentioned before – the playhouse’s location. The new theatre was closer to the city than the Duke’s Company’s old theatre in Lincoln’s Inn Fields. The epilogue of *The History of Charles the VIII* insists on the importance of the city audience termed as “men of Trade”.⁵⁸³ The prologue claims that the playwright wrote in rhyme to please “City wives.../ and all the sober Audience of the Town”.⁵⁸⁴ The King’s Company clearly felt that they were too far away from their city spectators: “Our City Friends, so far will hardly roam, / They can take up with pleasures nearer home”.⁵⁸⁵

The King’s Company resorted to teasing the Duke’s Company for its new theatre. In the prologue to *Marriage a la Mode* the King’s players mocked the superficial charm of the Duke’s new theatre. Charles Hart declaimed: “We’l follow the new Mode, which they [the Duke’s Company] begin, / And treat them with a Room and Couch within: / For that’s one way (how ere the Play falls short), / To oblige the Town, the City and the Court”.⁵⁸⁶ In the prologue to *Herod the Great* the King’s players also condemned the audience for incessantly looking for novelty: “without daily new ones [plays] you are cloy’d, / ... In Wit, as Love, you daily gape for new”.⁵⁸⁷

The King’s Company returned to what it did best when it produced *The Rehearsal* on 7 December 1671. Written mainly by George Villiers, the 2nd Duke of Buckingham, the play was originally created in 1664 but its performance was stopped because of the plague. When the play was revised after 1667 the hero was renamed Bayes as a clear satire on the poet

⁵⁸² Downes, pp. 68-69.

⁵⁸³ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, ii, p. 443.

⁵⁸⁴ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, ii, p. 443.

⁵⁸⁵ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, ii, p. 446.

⁵⁸⁶ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, ii, p. 447.

⁵⁸⁷ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, ii, p. 456.

laureate John Dryden. While Tiffany Stern has demonstrated how Bayes, the parody author, could be based on people besides John Dryden such as Robert Howard, William Davenant and Robert Stapylton, Stern also writes that Bayes was an obvious parody of Dryden and furthermore “additions were made to heighten the Dryden parody, as the difference between the first Quarto (1672) and the third (1675) makes clear”.⁵⁸⁸

The 1671 performance was a great success with John Lacy meticulously performing the part of Bayes in imitation of Dryden. Buckingham seems to capitalise on Lacy’s talent as a dancer and dancing master by having Bayes comically demonstrate the conflict of honour and love – the main theme of heroic plays – through the use of his feet:

My legs, the emblem of my various thought,
Show to what distraction I am brought.
Sometimes with stubborn honour, like this boot,
My mind is guarded, and resolved, to do’t:
Sometimes again, that very mind, by love
Disarmed, like this other leg does prove.
Shall I honour or to love give way?
Go on, cries honour; tender love says nay:
Honour aloud commands, out both boots on;
What shall I do? What conduct shall I find
To lead me through the twilight of my mind?
For as bright day with black approach of night
Contending, makes a doubtful puzzling light;
So does my honour and my love together
Puzzle me so, for I can resolve for neither.
*Goes out hopping with one boot on, and the other off.*⁵⁸⁹

As David Roberts writes, “the clumsy actor is a metaphor for the hapless writer struggling in the twilight of his mind with stale metaphors and rigidly binary thought, marching out to the thumping beat of his lines”.⁵⁹⁰ A ballad produced shortly afterwards referred to his performance: “the Dances were very well Writ, / And the Tune and the Time by Haynes as well Hit, / And Littlewood’s [John Littlewood] Motion and Dress had much Wit: / But

⁵⁸⁸ Stern, *Rehearsal*, p. 129. For a full discussion on this topic see pp. 128-31.

⁵⁸⁹ Buckingham, *The Rehearsal* (London, 1671), 30 (III.v.81-104).

⁵⁹⁰ Roberts, *Restoration Plays and Players*, p. 157.

when...Poet John Bayes did appeare, / Tis known to more than half were there, / The greatest part was his [Bayes] own Character".⁵⁹¹ This evaluation of the play is particularly important as the ballad demonstrated that while the play had all the elements of an entertaining show, such as dance and costume, the central focus of the production was on old-fashioned satire.

It is particularly interesting to find that in January 1672, just a month after *The Rehearsal*, the King's Company mounted Thomas Shadwell's adaptation of Moliere's *The Miser*. As Robert D. Hume has pointed out, this was the first and the only play that Shadwell wrote for the King's Company. Why such a vocal protestor against the King's Company should temporarily join them remains a mystery. Hume suggests that Killigrew hurriedly suborned Shadwell to produce a counter-attraction to Edward Ravenscroft's Moliere pastiche.⁵⁹² While Hume does convincingly place the anomaly of Shadwell's *The Miser* within the context of theatrical rivalry, his theory nevertheless poses some problems. It is important to note that the first known performance of Ravenscroft's *The Citizen Turned Gentleman* was in July 1672 – six months after the production of Shadwell's *The Miser*. It was also Ravenscroft's debutant play and no one knew, including Killigrew, whether the play was going to be a success or not.

It is likely that *The Rehearsal* paved the way for Killigrew to try and lure Shadwell over to the King's Company. Shadwell's *The Miser* was presumably something akin to a trial-run. Indeed it cannot be coincidental that the most vociferous critic of the heroic dramas wrote a play for his rival company just a month after the King's Company had produced a satire on Dryden and his heroic plays. Could it have been Killigrew's strategy to alienate one playwright in order to ingratiate himself with another? Dryden had, after all, betrayed the King's Company by contributing to the success of the Duke's Company ever since he had

⁵⁹¹ Cited in *London Stage*, p. 191.

⁵⁹² Hume, *Development*, p. 295.

collaborated with Davenant in the mid-1660s. One tradition even has it that Dryden was forced to sit in a box and watch the premiere of *The Rehearsal*.⁵⁹³ Killigrew could freely insult Dryden and his heroic plays in the knowledge that Dryden was contracted to write solely for him. As stipulated by the patent, managers were responsible for repertory decisions and such a scheme would have been entirely in character with the wily Killigrew: it would not have been the first time he had attempted to lure his rivals' prize employee into his company. Killigrew could have caused serious damage to his rivals if he had succeeded in stealing the Duke's Company's star playwright as well as retaining the poet laureate in his company. Shadwell might well have kept on writing for the King's Company had not Killigrew's troupe suffered an unforeseen catastrophe in February 1672.

The rivalry between the two troupes came to a sudden halt when the King's Company's playhouse burned to the ground. The Bulstrode Papers recorded the event as follows: "About 8 happened a sad and violent fire, which begun in the King's Theatre...severall were hurt and killed, amongst which was Mr. Bell, one of the actors in that house".⁵⁹⁴ The fire also burned all the King's Company's stock of scenery and costumes. The fire spread rapidly to the adjoining houses and to stop it from spreading further, the fire-fighters had to start blowing up the nearby houses with gunpowder. The result was about a loss of fifty or sixty houses, the combined value of which was about £20,000.⁵⁹⁵ As if to add insult to injury, Killigrew's troupe not only had to abandon their playhouse but were forced to move into the Duke's Company's old playhouse. It was an ironic twist of fate that it was Killigrew's theatre, which had embraced the tactic of playing with fire that was in the end, destroyed by a real fire.

⁵⁹³ Winn, *John Dryden*, p. 229.

⁵⁹⁴ Richard Bulstrode, *The Bulstrode Papers* (London, 1897), p. 217; cited in *London Stage*, p. 192.

⁵⁹⁵ Hotson, p. 253.

The theatrical rivalry from 1668 to 1672 saw the two companies operate independently without too many overt collisions or threats against each other. The Duke's Company's new co-managers were getting to grips with leading an acting troupe, while the King's Company led by Killigrew progressed in a similar vein as before. The avoidance of direct confrontation did not mean a let up in innovative devices. In fact these years saw a number of unique innovations such as: the depiction of the ghosts of Ben Jonson; diverting clothing; prologues and epilogues spoken by young actresses; and the employment of first professional female playwrights. Moreover, the tussle for female patronage between the two theatres saw an increase in the number of plays which flattered and elevated women with highly suggestive titles such as *The Women's Conquest* and *The Woman Made a Justice*.

The difference in managerial style between the new co-managers and Killigrew can also be understood from how the two troupes performed during these years. Thomas Betterton, Milhous' consummate innovator, appears to have been more concerned with modest consistent successes than thinking big. Not only did the Duke's Company often follow the trend created by its rival but Betterton's players also kept a much lower profile than those of the opposing company. The biggest risk the Duke's Company had taken – planning to build three new playhouses during 1670-1671, including the Dorset Garden Theatre – seems to have been mostly initiated and managed by Lady Davenant, rather than Betterton. Thomas Killigrew, on the other hand, took risks with his company and his players by mounting politically sensitive plays. Killigrew seemed satisfied to continue with his high-risk strategy, despite Edward Kynaston being beaten and Doll Common being imprisoned, so long as it got the company fame and financial advantage. In financial matters, Killigrew never let his conscience get the better of him, even if he had, as this chapter has shown, to deny Fuller his due or refuse Bird the Younger any concessions. Killigrew could also stoop to betraying his best playwright, John Dryden, and discarding what had been the King's Company's staple

genre – the heroic drama – in a gamble to gain his rivals' stalwart playwright, Thomas Shadwell.

The disastrous fire that destroyed the King's Company's playhouse combined with the Duke's Company's unveiling of the new Dorset Garden Theatre signalled the beginning of the end for Killigrew's troupe. It would take all of Killigrew's cunning and trickery to ensure that his troupe survived the next phase of the competition.

Chapter 4

“We were your Fav’rites”: Turning of the Tables, 1672-1677

These years represent the turning point during which the Duke’s Company gained a clear competitive ascendancy over its rival, the King’s Company.⁵⁹⁶ Thomas Killigrew’s company not only suffered the tragic fate of a fire which destroyed their own playhouse but were also forced to seek refuge in the Duke’s abandoned playhouse in Lincoln’s Inn Fields while the previous occupants were proudly performing in their brand new venue, the Dorset Garden Theatre.

Scholars have often scoffed at the King’s Company’s decline and Thomas Killigrew is inevitably the principal object of scorn. Milhous, for instance, states that: “the history of the King’s Company in the seventies is an object lesson in how not to operate a theatre company”.⁵⁹⁷ She also writes that “Killigrew’s interest in managing the theatre was greatly reduced” during these years and blames the weakening of the company on “incompetent management”.⁵⁹⁸

Traditionally, it has been viewed that the King’s Company simply lost its battle against its rival the Duke’s Company. This chapter closely traces the competition from 1672 to 1677 and demonstrates that the situation was more complex as both companies were forced to contend with an unprecedented number of foreign acting troupes as well as the rapidly growing popularity of musical concerts in London. Under adverse conditions, this chapter

⁵⁹⁶ Financial records from 1675-77 have fortunately survived and have been extensively analysed by Milhous in her article, “The Duke’s Company’s Profits, 1675-1677”. This chapter will be making frequent use of her article to judge the success of each company.

⁵⁹⁷ Milhous, *Betterton*, p. 31.

⁵⁹⁸ Milhous, *Betterton*, p. 32, p. 35.

argues that Thomas Killigrew unveiled his true colours as someone who would stop at nothing to save his own company.

On 26 February 1672, after the fire, the King's Company mounted its first production at Lincoln's Inn Fields, the Duke's Company's old theatre. The play, appropriately enough, was John Fletcher's *Wit Without Money*. The prologue, written by the in-house playwright, John Dryden, was presented in a tragic manner as "The Curtaine being drawne up all the Actors were discover'd on the stage in Melancholick postures". Michael Mohun, as a senior actor, then "advancing before the rest" spoke the prologue "addressing himself chiefly to ye King".⁵⁹⁹ It was a clever ploy by the company to appeal to Charles II's benevolence, not only as the monarch but also as the patron of the troupe. Charles II, less than a month before, had promised to contribute two thousand pounds for the rebuilding of the Theatre Royal.⁶⁰⁰ The pleading evidently worked. Ten days later the Lord Chamberlain ordered that Mohun, Hart and Kynaston annually receive various articles of clothing including, one periwig, two caravats, three pairs of stockings, and three hats amongst other items, "at the charge of ye Master & Company of His Majesty's Comedians".⁶⁰¹

Not everyone was so sympathetic to the King's Company's plight. The epilogue to Thomas Shipman's *Henry the Third of France* saw the King's players' trying to extinguish a different kind of fire. Rumours were bandied about that the players themselves might have deliberately caused the fire since it was "first kindled in our lowest Room". Some even believed it to be a kind of a just punishment that "Plays and Play-house perish by a blaze" because of "those gaudy Scenes, that spoil good Plays". While the King's players conceded

⁵⁹⁹ Cited in Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, ii, p. 464.

⁶⁰⁰ BL Add. MS 27,962, T277 (*Register*, no. 673).

⁶⁰¹ LC5/140, p. 5.

that scenery “compos’d of Oyl and porous Firr” may have spread the fire, they did not miss the opportunity to take a swipe at their rival company. They pointed out that if the fire was a just comeuppance for ostentatious productions it should have been the Duke’s Company that suffered this fate by rights: “why for this should we forsaken be? / It was our House, alas!”. The epilogue, however, ends on a consoling note as the players try to cajole the audience to return to their house: “Faith let us both amend / If you, Gallants and Ladies sometimes range / Fro’ th’ other House, it will not seem strange”. It was indeed clear that they had lost their status as London’s leading acting company as the actors lamented: “We were your Fav’rites; and none before / Lost that preferment”.⁶⁰²

With the misfortunes that befell the King’s Company, there was talk of the two companies uniting. Milhous suggests that the King’s players were “so woebegone” that in John Dryden’s epilogue to his *Secret Love*, revived in June or July 1672, the actresses of the company were in favour of merging the two companies.⁶⁰³ She quotes the epilogue as follows:

Here we presume, our [actresses] Legs are no ill sight,
And they will give you no ill Dreams at night:
In Dreames both Sexes, may their passions ease,
You make us then as civill as you please.
This would prevent the houses joining too,
At which we are as much displeas’d as you.

Milhous, however, crucially does not quote the three lines that follow: “For all our Women most devoutly swear, / Each would be rather a poor Actress here, / Then to be made a Mamamouchi there [Duke’s Company]”.⁶⁰⁴ It turns out that the actresses as well as the theatre-goers were, if anything, decidedly against the merger – the King’s players even rebuffed such a deal, with an added mocking reference to the Duke’s Company’s recent

⁶⁰² Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, ii, pp. 469-70.

⁶⁰³ Milhous, *Betterton*, pp. 31-32.

⁶⁰⁴ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, ii, p. 491.

success, *Mamamouchi*.

This was a bold statement considering that the Duke's Company's production *Mamamouchi, or The Citizen Turn'd Gentleman* written by Edward Ravenscroft was an enormous hit. Downes recorded that "it continu'd Acting 9 Days with a full House; upon the Sixth the House being very full". The secret to the success seemed to have been James Nokes's performance, which pleased the "King and Court...above all plays".⁶⁰⁵

The King's Company's actresses were involved in a series of all-female productions during the summer of 1672. The new prologue and the epilogue to *Secret Love* were printed as part of a pamphlet entitled the *Covent Garden Drollery, or A colection [sic] of all the choice songs, poems, prologues and epilogues, (sung and spoken at courts and theatres) never in print before*.⁶⁰⁶ Among the compilation are the prologue and epilogue spoken by Marshall in the all-female revival of *Philaster* by Beaumont and Fletcher in June 1672. In addition to *Secret Love* and *Philaster*, Thomas Killigrew's *The Parson's Wedding* was revived with an all-female cast in June or July 1672. Also a prologue by Dryden survives for an unknown play, probably composed around the same time, written "for the Women, when they Acted at the Old Theatre Lincolns-Inn-Fields".⁶⁰⁷ Similarly, an "Epilogue by a Woman", printed by Thomas Duffett, the King's Company's playwright, strongly suggests yet another production which was acted by women only.⁶⁰⁸

If we place the prologue of Killigrew's *The Parson's Wedding* within the context of the King's Company's performance history, the reasons for mounting a string of all-female

⁶⁰⁵ Downes, p. 70.

⁶⁰⁶ For details see Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, ii, p. 489.

⁶⁰⁷ Dryden, *Miscellany Poems* (London, 1684), pp. 285-86; cited in Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, ii, p. 495.

⁶⁰⁸ Duffett, *New Poems* (London, 1676), pp. 87-89; cited in Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, ii, p. 487.

productions become clearer.⁶⁰⁹ It is worth quoting the prologue at length here:

After so many sad complaints to us,
The painful labouring Women of this house
We with our Poet have prevail'd again,
To give us our Revenge upon the men.
...
'Twas not our crime, the house so long lay still;
When e'er we play not, 'tis against our will.
We could have acted, could but they have joyn'd,
...
And now they quarrel, when they cannot play.
'Twas somewhat better when they did agree,
'Twas old but 'twas a willing company.⁶¹⁰

The prologue importantly alludes to “the house” having to “so long lay still”. Indeed, the King’s Company was not operating for a considerable time before the production of *The Parson’s Wedding*. The performance calendar, as recorded in the *London Stage*, shows that the only recorded production in May 1672 was the one performance of *The History of Charles the Eighth of France* by the Duke’s Company.⁶¹¹ The extreme dearth of performances in May 1672 means that the King’s Company could easily have been closed for about four weeks prior to opening its doors again in June to a series of all-female

⁶⁰⁹ In the most recent essay to date on the all-female productions of Thomas Killigrew’s *The Parson’s Wedding*, Victoria Bancroft locates unequivocally the year and the production in which the prologue to the play was spoken: “In the Prologue to the first performance in October 1664, Rebecca Marshall, in the leading role of the Captain, delivers a rebuke to the male actors”. The matter of determining as to which production of *The Parson’s Wedding* the prologue and epilogue belonged to, however, is more complex than Bancroft suggests; and it is far from certain whether they did indeed belonged to the 1664 production. Victoria Bancroft, “Tradition and Innovation in *The Parson’s Wedding*”, Philip Major ed. *Thomas Killigrew and the Seventeen-Century English Stage* (Farnham, 2013), p. 47. Lori Leigh similarly assumes that the prologue belonged to the production in 1664. See Lori Leigh, *Shakespeare and the Embodied Heroine* (Basingstoke, 2014), p. 85. The earliest reference to the prologue and the epilogue of the play was made by Gerard Langbaine in 1691 when he suggested: “This play was reviv’d at the Old Theatre, in little Lincoln’s Inn fields, and acted all by Women, a new Prologue and Epilogue being spoken by Mrs Marshall [Rebecca] in Man’s Cloaths”; Langbaine, p. 313. Pierre Danchin argues, nearly a century later, that while there is “a possibility that these [prologue and epilogue] may belong to an earlier occasion [i.e. 1664]”, the likelihood of them belonging to the production of 1672, “is much more likely”; Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, ii, p. 497.

⁶¹⁰ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, ii, p. 497.

⁶¹¹ See *London Stage*, p. 194.

performances. The prologue, moreover, provides a reason for the closure as it not only clearly implies that the male actors were responsible for having the playhouse “lay still” for so long – a reference to the prolonged absence of plays mounted – but reveals that now that they are banished from the stage: “they quarrel when they cannot play”. Killigrew himself was central to the whole plan of mounting all-female productions one after another. Dubbed as “our Poet”, in the prologue to *The Parson’s Wedding*, he explicitly endorses his actresses and almost gleefully allows them to exact “Revenge” upon his male actors. Killigrew not only depicts the male actors as lazy, quarrelsome, and petty but also suggests there was repeated opposition on the part of the male actors to the female players going onstage and stealing the limelight — “When e’er we play not, ’tis against our will”.

The epilogue, moreover, intriguingly defends itself from the criticism of an all-female cast not necessarily from an audience’s point of view but rather from that of male actors:

We have this day, expell’d our Men the Stage.
 ...
 No, t’would not take: the tender Lady’s hearts
 Would then their former charity give o’er:
 The Madams in disguise would steal no more
 To th’ young Actors Chambers in mask’d Faces,
 ...
 Nor can we Act their Parts: Alas! too soon
 You’d find the cheat in th’ empty Pantaloon.
 Well; though we are not Women’s-Mens, at least
 We hope to have you Gallants constant Guests;
 ...
 We’ll build up a new Theatre to gain you,
 And turn this to a House to entertain you.⁶¹²

The main thrust of the criticism against the all-female casting in the epilogue is that the audience figures would fall because women in the audience would be ill satisfied with male characters being played by women on stage. Even if the actresses could hypothetically play the parts of men on stage, the female audience would still find the “cheat in th’ empty

⁶¹² Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, ii, p. 498.

Pantaloon”. The running of the theatre, however, is hardly the audience’s business and even if the actresses cannot satisfy the “Madams” they would always be able to have “Gallants” as “constant Guests” who could “fill our house each day”. The epilogue therefore was composed as a pre-emptive defence against possible criticism of the all-female casting from the jealous male actors in the company.

More importantly, however, the epilogue worked as a palpable threat. Killigrew warned his actors that he could turn the existing theatre into a brothel while Killigrew and his actresses would depart to create a new female tradition of play-making in a purpose built theatre elsewhere. The threat was more than seemingly farcical, as Killigrew was after all one of the only two patentees who had the right to build a new theatre in London. The suggestion that Killigrew and his actresses should leave to “build up a new Theatre / And turn this [theatre] to a House to entertain you”, demeaned not only the actors’ stage charisma and its power to draw audiences but also insulted their professional status – they were effectively told to turn into gigolos instead. As if to further emasculate the actors Killigrew had his lead actress Rebecca Marshall berate the male players, both in the prologue as well as in the epilogue, in her role as the Captain.

If, as David Roberts argues, the Duke’s Company was a company of shopkeepers, then the King’s Company was a company of soldiers.⁶¹³ Killigrew himself possessed military experience from his time in the Maastricht garrison as captain of a company of soldiers. The triumvirate also had extensive military experience. Charles Hart was a lieutenant of horse in Prince Rupert’s regiment, Michael Mohun was a devoted royalist and fought in major English military operations until 1649 and John Lacy served as a lieutenant and quartermaster under Colonel Charles Gerard. Therefore the casting of Marshall as the Captain was not simply a matter of casting an actress for a part. Much as in the way Killigrew had delegated his

⁶¹³ The Duke’s Company “was that proverbially English phenomenon, a company of shopkeepers”. See Roberts, *Thomas Betterton*, p. 77.

authority previously to the triumvirate, Killigrew was now suggestively passing on his role as captain of the troupe to a female player.

The string of all-female productions was not mounted because as Milhous suggests they were “the best competitive expedient they could think of”, but rather because the male actors in the King’s Company were refusing to work.⁶¹⁴ Far from being rash with his actors Killigrew had in fact, meticulously thought through the whole enterprise, especially in the use of the prologue and epilogue, and demonstrated impressive skill in summoning gender and sexual politics to humiliate his unruly male actors.

Furthermore, the policy of reviving plays to be acted only by women not only strongly attracted Londoners by appealing to their “breeches parts”, but also capitalized on the King’s Company’s strategy of re-fashioning old plays with as little added expense as possible. The epilogue to the revival of Middleton’s *The Widow* best described the King’s Company’s plan: “we [the King’s Company] bring more old then new /...now we so much cunning understand / To loose but little, and to starve your [audience] hand, / We butter not, but take the safest way”.⁶¹⁵

While the King’s Company revived old plays, the Duke’s Company did the opposite. The prologue to *Mamamouchi* complains of the audience’s fickle taste: “Gallants you’re so unconstant grown of late, / That Plays and Mistrisses have the same fate; / For both with you grow quickly out of date”.⁶¹⁶ Rather than relying on re-fashioning old plays the Duke’s players quickly mounted new plays one after another to see whether they could score a hit. According to Downes, both of Henry Payne’s plays *The Fatal Jealousie* and *The Morning Ramble* mounted in 1672 were “very well acted” but nevertheless “after their first run, were

⁶¹⁴ Milhous, *Betterton*, p. 31.

⁶¹⁵ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, ii, p. 511.

⁶¹⁶ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, ii, p. 500.

laid aside, to make Room for others”.⁶¹⁷ Playwrights such as Payne were expected to produce plays rapidly even at the expense of quality, as he complained in the prologue to *The Morning Ramble*: “’Twas nine days work: but truly there might be / As good a Play just spoke Extempore”.⁶¹⁸ The tactic paid off and Thomas Shadwell’s new play, *Epsom Wells*, was a success for the Duke’s Company. Downes noted: “Admirably Acted, produc’d great Profit for the Company”.⁶¹⁹

The King’s Company’s most noted new production during this time was John Dryden’s *The Assignation; or, Love in a Nunnery*. While the play was, as Langbaine noted, “Damn’d on the Stage”, it nevertheless seemed to have worked as a catalyst for a barrage of pamphlets both in support of and against the playwright.⁶²⁰ Richard Leigh, the minor Restoration poet and the author of *The Transposer Rehears’d*, began the blistering attack on Dryden by writing *The Censure of the Rota. On Mr Driden’s Conquest of Granada*. A succession of pamphlets soon followed such as *The Friendly Vindication of Mr Dryden From the Censure of the Rota*, which despite its title, was a similar attack on the playwright’s ability as a writer with extensive analysis of passages quoted from his plays. Others more sincerely defended the poet, such as Charles Blount, who anonymously denounced the “Spiteful” critics, comparing them to “old crabbed-fac’d Maids” who “wish there were no such things as Beauty and Husbands, because they have none”.⁶²¹

But perhaps no one had more reason than Edward Ravenscroft to relish taking part in Dryden-bashing. Dryden, after all, mocked Ravenscroft and his *Mamonouchi* in no uncertain

⁶¹⁷ Downes, p. 72.

⁶¹⁸ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, ii, p. 517.

⁶¹⁹ Downes, p. 70.

⁶²⁰ Langbaine, p. 154.

⁶²¹ Charles Blount, *Mr Dryden Vindicated* (London, 1673), p. 10. Others included the anonymous admirer of Dryden who also came to the defence of the author with *A Description of the Academy of Athenian Virtuosi*.

terms in the prologue to his *Assignment*:

You must have Mammonouchi, such a Fop
As would appear a Monster in a Shop;
Hee'l fill your Pit and Boxes to the brim,
Where, Ram'd in Crowds, you see your selves in him.
Sure there's some spell our Poet never knew,
In hullibabilah de, and Chu, chu, chu.
But Marabarah sahem most did touch you,
That is: Oh how we love the Mamanouchi!
Grimace and habit sent you pleas'd away;
You damn'd the Poet, and cried up the Play.⁶²²

The prologue to Ravenscroft's *The Careless Lovers* is as violent an attack on Dryden as any but Ravenscroft distances himself from the pamphleteers by writing in the Epistle to the Reader: "lest by the ensuing Prologue, thou should'st think Me one of that Envious Tribe; know it was Written in Requitall to the Prologue before the Assignment and not without Provocation".⁶²³ Despite Ravenscroft's attestations of writing the prologue before the *Assignment*, however, the prologue to Ravenscroft's *The Careless Lovers* suspiciously reads like a direct response to it:

They that observe the Humours of the Stage,
Find Fools and Heroes best do please this Age,
But both grown so extravagant, I scarce
Can tell, if Fool or Hero makes the Better Farce:
As for Example, take our Mamamouchi,
And then Almansor, that so much did touch ye;
...
And yet you would not like the Cerenade,
Nay, and you Damn'd his Nunns in Masquerade.⁶²⁴

Ravenscroft's use of Dryden's specific phrase "touch ye" and the mentioning of the damned "Nunns" indicates the mocking reference to the recent failure of *The Assignment*.

The King's Company's financial plight was made far worse by the presence of the French

⁶²² According to J. H. Wilson, "the country bumpkins and the empty-headed fops in the pit loved it [Mamouchi] and loved to quote its nonsense phrases, 'Hullibabilah da,' 'Marabarah sahem,' and 'Chu, chu, chu'." See Wilson, *Mr Goodman*, p. 16. Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, ii, p. 513.

⁶²³ The Epistle to the Reader in Ravenscroft's *The Careless Lovers* (London, 1673), A3.

⁶²⁴ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, ii, pp. 529-30.

troupes in London. Perhaps the presence of foreign players may not have had such an egregious impact on the King's Company if the attendance of playgoers had not dropped from 1672 to 1676 so that that the number of individual spectators was around 27,000 people.⁶²⁵ Dryden spoke of the popularity of the French company in the prologue to Lodowick Carlell's revival of *Arviragus and Philicia* when he wrote: "With sickly Actors and an old House too, / We're matched with Glorious Theatres and New...If all these ills could not undo us quite, / A Brisk French Troop is grown your [audience's] dear delight".⁶²⁶ The innovation of coloured play-bills by the French company clearly helped bring in the English audience, as the King's Company contemptuously referred to the "broad bloody Bills" which "call you [audience] each day".⁶²⁷ Presumably another set of new French comedians arrived in London during the winter of 1672 as the Lord Chamberlain ordered that:

There being some good arriv'd from France belonging to a Company of French Comedians who are come over into England, his Majesty has bin pleas'd to signifye his pleasure unto mee, that all such Cloathes, Vestments, Scenes, & other Ornaments, necessities & Materialls...should be permitted to be imported free & without paying any duty or Custome.⁶²⁸

Thomas Duffett, the company rottweiler recently hired by Killigrew, mocked the audience for falling for French troupes in the epilogue to his debut play, *The Spanish Rogue*:

When Wit, and Native Beauty found Success,
Without a daz'ling Scene, or gaudy Dress,
Then Playes were good, and wholesom your Amour;
But when these downright Blessings pleas'd no more,

⁶²⁵ Compare these figures with the period from 1660 to 1676, when the companies were thriving, on average some "180,000-200,000 playgoers paid for admission annually" which means that somewhere between "27,000 and 57,000 individual spectators attended each year, or between 5% and 11% of the total population of London". See Botica, p. 157.

⁶²⁶ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, ii, pp. 506-7.

⁶²⁷ Coloured play-bills were in popular use in France during this time. See Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, ii, p. 507.

⁶²⁸ PRO 30/32/48, p. 213 (*Register*, no. 743).

Poets, from France, fetch'd new Intrigue, and Plot,
Kind Women, new French Words, and Fashions got:
And finding all French Tricks so much did please,
'T oblige ye more, They got ev'n their Disease.⁶²⁹

To make matters worse, Toberio Fiorelli and his company had arrived on 21 April 1673. Their arrival caused a frenzy of excitement as E. Cholmeney wrote to Lady Harvey on April: "Pray tell Sir Edward that I now want him to go to the new play for the Italian comedian Scarramouch is come, which are things I know hee delights in not a little".⁶³⁰ Robert Hooke saw "Scaramuches at york house", with dignitaries such as the king, the Duke of York and the Duke of Ormonde.⁶³¹ John Evelyn also soon after saw "the Italian Comedie act at the Court this afternoone".⁶³²

Their stay in London was enough to make Thomas Killigrew seek refuge for his company in Oxford. The epilogue to the University of Oxford, written by Dryden and spoken by Hart, describes the brief visits made by the French and the Italian companies and their success in London:

A French Troop first swept all things in its way,
But those Hot monsieurs were too quick to stay;
Yet, to our Cost in that short time, we find
They left their Itch of Novelty behind.
Th' Italian Merry-Andrews took their place,
And quite Debauch'd the Stage with lewd Grimace;
Instead of Wit, and Humours, your Delight,
Was there to see two Hobby-horses Fight,
Stout Scaramoucha with Rush Lance rode in,
And ran a Tilt at Centaure Arlequin.⁶³³

All this could not have come at a worse time for Thomas Killigrew. On being promoted to the position of the Master of the Revels, succeeding Henry Herbert on 1 May 1673,

⁶²⁹ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues* ii, p. 527.

⁶³⁰ HMC, 14th Report, Appendix, Part ii [1894], p. 337; cited in *London Stage*, p. 205.

⁶³¹ Hooke, *The Diary of Robert Hooke*, eds. H. W. Robinson and Walter Adams (London, 1935), p. 42.

⁶³² Evelyn, *Diary*, iv, p. 12.

⁶³³ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, ii, p. 549.

Killigrew had to mortgage his shares in the King's Company to secure a loan from Sir Lawrence Debusty and another from James Magnes.⁶³⁴ With Debusty, Killigrew used his nine shares as a collateral for the loan of £950, and with Magnes, Killigrew used no less than his patent to secure the sum of £1600. Killigrew probably never intended to repay the loan in full because later in 1675, Killigrew would get himself into another agreement with three men, Richard Tucker, Thomas Smith and Richard Kent, without telling them about the agreement he had made formerly with Debusty and Magnes.⁶³⁵ It is not difficult to imagine where the money disappeared. The King's Company not only lost its playhouse in the fire but its scenery and costumes. As a deterrent against such an accident again, the company resolved to erect a scene-house in Vinegar Yard. The articles of agreement signed on 20 March 1673 show that the funds required for the scenehouse, scenery and costumes were raised by the members of the company in proportion to their shares. Single sharers paid £160 each which totalled to around £2040.⁶³⁶ The timing of the loans also coincided with the King's Company's petition to Charles II for financial assistance with the rebuilding of the Theatre Royal. The petition stated that the company had "extended their Creditts to the utmost...for furnishing themselves with Cloathes" and are "become very much in debt".⁶³⁷

The pitiful state of the King's Company was in stark contrast to the fortunes of Fiorelli's troupe. When the Italian comedians were leaving they were showered with gifts and payments from the English court. A total of £52 was paid for the building of the Italian stage, and further orders for a medal and gold chain for Scaramouch and Harlequin were issued as well as four medals and chains for other members of the company. According to a letter to Sir

⁶³⁴ C7/331/29 (*Register*, nos 786, 788).

⁶³⁵ It seems that Killigrew took pleasure in not paying back loans. Marcombes said that Killigrew would often brag about "getting mony [money] from this or ye other merchant without any good intention to pay". Howard, *English Travellers*, pp. 163-66.

⁶³⁶ The details of the agreement about the scenehouse can be seen in C6/221/48 (*Register*, no. 831).

⁶³⁷ SP 29/183, no. 72 (*Register*, no. 803).

Joseph Williamson suggests that the medal for Scaramouch was probably worth around £50.⁶³⁸ Considering that the average daily profit for the King's Company from 1675-1677 was approximately £5, this was a handsome gift indeed.⁶³⁹ As if this was not generous enough, Charles II ordered a further "Twenty Ounces of White plate" be prepared and delivered to Scaramouchi as a parting gift.⁶⁴⁰

The Duke's Company quickly followed the trend and imitated its continental counterparts by mounting spectacles and deploying the best theatrical rigging equipment available in its Dorset Garden Theatre. Their success is illustrated by the King's players' objection to machines in the epilogue, spoken in Oxford, referring to the Duke's Company's revamping of *Macbeth* mounted on February 1673:

Those wicked Engines call'd Machines are come.
Thunder and Lightening now for Wit are Play'd.
...
Witchcraft reigns there [London], and raises to Renown
Macbeth, the Simon Magus of the Town.⁶⁴¹

Buoyed by such success, the Duke's Company began to plan for an even bigger extravaganza. On 22 August 1673 James Vernon noted in a letter that the "Duke's house was preparing an Opera and great Machines. They will have dansers out of France, and St Andre comes over with them".⁶⁴²

While they were busy preparing for their "Opera", the Duke's Company produced Elkanah Settle's *The Empress of Morocco* on 3 July 1673. Mounted twice at Whitehall during

⁶³⁸ See *Letters Addressed from London to Sir Joseph Williamson*, ed. W. D. Christie, 2 vols (London: Camden Society, 1874), ii, p. 16.

⁶³⁹ Figures based on Judith Milhous's article, "The Duke's Company's Profits, 1675-1677", pp. 76-87.

⁶⁴⁰ PRO 30/32/49, p. 26 (*Register*, no. 800); LC 5/140, p. 328 (*Register*, no. 797); LC 5/140, p. 329 (*Register*, no. 801).

⁶⁴¹ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, ii, p. 549.

⁶⁴² SP 29/336, no. 273 (*Register*, no. 794). St Andre (fl. 1671-1696) was a well-known choreographer and dancing master for the English stage. For further information on St Andre see *BDA*, vol 13, p. 171.

March 1673, the play proved an immense hit both at the court and in the city. The piece was so extravagantly produced and so popular with audiences that it was, as John Dennis wrote, “Acted for a Month together”. Best of all, the play made history twice over when it was published and sold at the unprecedented price of two shillings, whilst also being the first printed play to be illustrated with engravings.⁶⁴³

Killigrew must have been furious as the play was originally intended for his troupe at the Theatre Royal. As Settle wrote, “in the height of Mr Hart’s Health and Excellence, I flatter’d my self with the assurance of wonderful success from the performance of so able a company”. However, the Duke’s Company, which had mounted Settle’s first play *Cambyses* in 1671, complained to their patron, the Duke of York, that the playwright was contractually bound to offer his plays to them first. Despite the fact that Settle was sworn in as “one of the poetts in His Maties Theatre Royal”, the Duke managed to procure the play for his own servants.⁶⁴⁴

Such productions, however, were enormously expensive and the Duke’s Company struggled to balance their books. William Cartwright, a leading actor and an occasional playwright in the King’s Company, in his epilogue to *The Ordinary* gleefully told their audience: “While our rich Landlords [the Duke’s Company] may great Feasts prepare; / But their Revenue now is almost spent”.⁶⁴⁵ The Duke’s Company’s emphasis on large-scale productions meant that they had less time and money to spend on other plays. Samuel Pordage, for instance, did not hide his annoyance with the “damn’d House” which produced his play “in as damn’d a Dress”.⁶⁴⁶

In fact, shortly after the foreign troupes had left London both the companies seemed to

⁶⁴³ John Dennis, *The Critical Works*, ed. E.N. Hooker, 2 vols (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1939-43) ii, p. 118.

⁶⁴⁴ Settle later confessed to having harboured “malignant resentment” against the Duke thereafter. Nine years later the playwright libelled the Duke of York in a political pamphlet, *The Character of a Popish Successor*. Cited in Wilson, *Mr Goodman*, pp. 20-21.

⁶⁴⁵ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, ii, p. 534.

⁶⁴⁶ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, ii, p. 551.

have negotiated a momentary truce. A prologue to an unknown play during this time, possibly acted at the Nursery, told the audience: “wars between the first rate houses cease, / For want of new supplies compel’d to peace”.⁶⁴⁷ The lack of new plays may account for both the troupes’ reliance on using what might be termed “reserve” plays. Pordage’s *Herod and Mariamne*, mounted by the Duke’s Company, was written “a dozen years ago...And ne’er launcht out till now”.⁶⁴⁸ The King’s Company followed with John Wright’s translation of *Thyestes* in which the playwright wrote how “The following Tragedy was writ many Years since, though Corrected and rendered into something a more Fashionable Garb than its first Dress”.⁶⁴⁹

It was not long, however, before the two companies were back on the offensive. The King’s Company struck first with Thomas Duffett’s burlesque of Settle’s *The Empress of Morocco* – the King’s Company was evidently still annoyed at its rival’s dirty trick in stealing the original play from them. Mounted on December 1673 it was produced under the same title as the original and parodied not only Settle’s play but also the Duke’s Company’s production of *Macbeth*, whereby the witches were replaced by infamous bawds and courtesans of London. As a further attack, another of the King’s Company’s in-house playwrights, Dryden – who had previously been on the receiving end of an attack from pamphleteers – now spearheaded a blistering attack on Settle with two other playwrights, Thomas Shadwell and John Crowne, in a pamphlet published in January 1674, entitled the *Notes and Observations on the Empress of Morocco*.⁶⁵⁰

The King’s Company, if only briefly, regained its competitiveness on 26 March 1674

⁶⁴⁷ Duffett, *New Poems* (1676), pp. 80-82; cited in Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, ii, p. 552.

⁶⁴⁸ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, ii, p. 551.

⁶⁴⁹ See *Thyestes A Tragedy, Translated out of Seneca* (London, 1674), A3.

⁶⁵⁰ See *Notes and Observations on the Empress of Morocco* (London, 1674). In the same month, Settle responded to his detractors in *Notes and Observations on the Empress of Morocco Revised* (London: William Cademan, 1674).

when it opened its doors at the new playhouse in Drury Lane – they were finally able to leave the Duke’s Company’s old theatre. The new Drury Lane theatre was less decorative and had cost less than half the price of the rival theatre at 4000 pounds.⁶⁵¹ Designed by Wren, the King’s playhouse on the other hand, although less impressive, was considered more durable than the Duke’s Company’s new theatre. It is telling that, after the union of the two companies in 1682, the United Company players chose mostly to perform in the Drury Lane theatre rather than in the Dorset Garden playhouse.⁶⁵²

The first production in the re-built Theatre Royal, John Fletcher’s *The Beggar’s Bush*, followed the usual method of employing the prologue and epilogue as pity inducing rhetorical devices, portraying their company as the underdog in unfair competition with its rival:

A Plain Built House after so long a stay,
Will send you half unsatisfy’d away;
When, fal’n from your expected Pomp, you find
A bare convenience only is design’d.
...
They [Duke’s Players] who are by Your Favours wealthy made,
With mighty Sums may carry on the Trade:
We [King’s Players], broken Banquers, half destroy’d by Fire,
With our small Stock to humble Roofs retire,
Pity our Loss, while you their Pomp admire.

It went on to compare the Duke’s Company to a bullying tyrant, who “like th’ Ambitious Monarchs of the Age, / They give the Law to our Provincial Stage: / Great Neighbours enviously promote Excess, / While they impose their Splendour on the less”. It also hinted at how the Duke’s Company sold out the English stage by adopting French fashion: “French Machines have ne’r done England good...Tis to be fear’d / That as a Fire the former House o’erthrew, / Machines and Tempests will destroy the new”. By contrast, the King’s Company may “be justly proud” as “Our Royal Master [Charles II] will’d it be should be so, / What

⁶⁵¹ Wilson, *Mr. Goodman*, p. 31.

⁶⁵² See *London Stage*, pp. xxi-xlvi.

e'er He's pleas'd to own, can need no show". The epilogue also advertised the fact that the King's Company's new house was located in a safer and more convenient place than its rival's, whereby "Our House relieves the Ladies from the frights / Of ill pav'd Streets, and long dark Winter Nights". It then further mocked the Duke's Company's famed portraits of poets in their Dorset Garden Theatre: "Though in their House the Poets Heads appear, / We hope we may presume their Wits are here".⁶⁵³

The Duke's Company hit back hard. On 30 April 1674 the Duke's players mounted *The Tempest* newly revamped by Shadwell. Downes described the details of the new production and the success with which it was met:

made into an Opera by Mr Shadwell, having all New in it; as Scenes, Machines; particularly, one Scene Painted with Myriads of Ariel Spirits; and another flying away...all things perform'd in it so Admirably well, that not any succeeding Opera got more Money.⁶⁵⁴

The prologue and epilogue to the operatic piece were direct responses to the King's Company's previous charge. The Duke's players accused the King's players of being miserly: "like those reverend men [the King's players] we might have spard' / And never for our Benefactors car'd". The Duke's Company further accused the King's players of being old and fraudulent: "One Day, we may decrepid grow, & wise...Wee'l save our money, & Cry out wee'r poore". As if these jeers were not bad enough, the Duke's players then took the sole credit for theatrical innovation and delivered one of the most scathing attacks on its rival:

Without the good old Playes we did advance,
And, all ye stages Ornament enhance:
To splendid things they [King's] follow us, but late:
They ne're invent, but they can imitate:
Had we not, for your pleasure found new wayes,
You still had rusty Arras had, & thredbare playes;
Nor scenes, nor Weomen, had they had their will,
But some, with grizl'd Beards, had acted Weomen still

⁶⁵³ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, ii, pp. 580-83.

⁶⁵⁴ Downes, pp. 73-74.

...
Envyng our Splendid house, & prosp'rous playes,
They scoff at us, & Libell the high wayes.

Productions of this scale, the Duke's players argued, with "Vast expence" necessarily needed "double charges" – a repost to the King's players' accusation of its rival's over-charging. As for producing too many French influenced plays, the Duke's players answered that it was only doing it for the pleasure of its audience: "for your pleasures traffic'd into ffrance, / From thence new Arts to please you, we have sought, / We have Machines to some perfection brought, / And above 30 Warbling Voyces gott".⁶⁵⁵

Operatic pieces were in vogue during this time. While the King's Company may have mocked the Duke's Company for imitating the French, the newly built Theatre Royal was soon afterwards used to stage Pierre Perrin's opera, *Ariadne*. The opera was performed by the Royal Academy of Music in French. Scholars have assumed that the King's Company mounted the piece but, in fact, there is no evidence of the King's players being involved in the production – not to mention the fact that mounting such an extravagant piece would also go against their business strategy of putting on cheap productions.⁶⁵⁶ Killigrew, however, had obviously managed to negotiate more than just renting the playhouse to the Royal Academy of Music, because in early May the Lord Chamberlain ordered "Mr Pecurr, Mr Temps, Mr Shenan and Mr D' Muraile ffrrench Dancers of the late opera" to fulfil their agreement to work for Killigrew at Drury Lane.⁶⁵⁷

Louis Grabu put the opera to music. Nothing much is known about Grabu's early life except that he was probably born in Catalonia despite having always been treated as a Frenchman in England. He had a mixed reception when it came to his musical talents, which

⁶⁵⁵ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, ii, pp. 593-96.

⁶⁵⁶ Milhous writes that the "King's Company tried to 'answer' by mounting an opera, Pierre Perrin's *Ariadne*", *Betterton*, p. 35; but Danchin writes, "there is no evidence that the King's Company took part", *Prologues and Epilogues*, ii, p. 585.

⁶⁵⁷ LC 5/190, fol. 84 (*Register*, no. 841).

makes his rapid advancement somewhat surprising. Pelham Humfrey gave his opinions about the Frenchman to Pepys on 15 November 1667 in which he said that Grabu “understands nothing nor can play on any instrument and so cannot compose”.⁶⁵⁸ Pepys was indecisive when it came to judging Grabu’s musical talents. After having heard an English song by the composer he “was never so little pleased with a consort of music in my life – the manner of setting of words and repeating them out of order”. However, he had to admit that “the instrumental music he had brought by practice to play very just”.⁶⁵⁹ Certainly, *Ariadne* was not a success although whether this had anything with the quality of the music is impossible to tell as the music does not survive.⁶⁶⁰

On 12 November 1666, Grabu replaced Banister as the head of the band of 24 violins and had further leapfrogged Banister in replacing Nicholas Lanier as Master of the King’s Music. Pepys recorded Banister’s reaction to the election of Grabu: “the King’s viallin Bannister, is mad that the King hath a Frenchman come to the chief of some part of the King’s musique, at which the Duke of York made great mirth”.⁶⁶¹ Anthony Wood similarly reported Banister’s irritation when he was dismissed by retorting within earshot of Charles II that “he had better have the English”.⁶⁶² While the cause of Banister’s dismissal was primarily due to his manipulation of the finances of the band, his sour attitude and jealousy probably did not bode well for his career. But by the 1670s Banister had written the music for a number of plays at both houses. His friendship with Pepys increased his contacts with theatre people and he was

⁶⁵⁸ Pepys, viii, p. 530.

⁶⁵⁹ Pepys, viii, p. 458.

⁶⁶⁰ Grabu went on to contribute to various productions such as Shadwell’s *Timon of Athens* (Duke’s Company, 1678); Lee’s *Mithridates* (King’s Company, 1678); Dryden and Lee’s *Oedipus* (Duke’s Company, 1678); Rochester’s *Valentinian* (United Company, 1684); and Dryden’s opera *Albion and Albanus* (United Company, 1685).

⁶⁶¹ Pepys, viii, p. 73.

⁶⁶² Bodl. Oxf., MS Wood D19 (4); cited in Peter Walls, “Banister, John (1624/5–1679)”, *ODNB*, online edn, Jan. 2008.

well-known enough as a composer to embark on his own path independent of court and of playhouses.⁶⁶³

Banister started giving public concerts from 1673 onwards which proved to be immensely popular. Roger North later wrote that Banister's concerts were the reason for the burgeoning interest in music in London:

How and by what stepps Musick shot up in to such request, as to croud out from the stage even comedy itself...is worth inquiring after...The first attempt was low: a project of old Banister...he opened an obscure room in a publick house in White fryars, filled it with tables and seats, and made a side box with curtains for the musick. 1s. a piece, call for what you please, pay the reckoning, and Welcome gentlemen.⁶⁶⁴

These concerts, advertised in notices in such papers as the *London Gazette*, usually took place in Banister's house in Whitefriars, nicknamed the "Musick School".⁶⁶⁵ Here both vocal and instrumental musical performances were staged with "new Musick" at the beginning of every month. Banister was one of the earliest advocates for new composers and the fact that he named his concerts, "School", implies that he may well have also taught music at the venue. These concerts lasted over a long period and until Banister's death in 1679, he regularly performed at these concerts.

Other concerts followed in the footsteps of Banister such as those at Mrs Sligsby's, where to the joy of John Evelyn:

[I] heard Signor Francisco on the Harpsichord, esteem'd on[e] of the most excellent masters in Europe on that Instrument: then came Nicholao [Matteis] with his Violin & struck all mute,

⁶⁶³ Banister, for instance, wrote the music for the following productions: *The Man's the Master* (26 March 1668 at the Duke's Company), *The Royal Shepherdess* (25 March 1669 at the Duke's Company), *The Conquest of Granada* (December 1670 at the King's Company), *Juliana* (June 1671 at the King's Company), *The Adventures of Five Hours* (1670-71 at the King's Company), and *The Gentleman Dancing Master* (6 February 1672 at the Duke's Company). See *BDA*, i, p. 251.

⁶⁶⁴ Roger North, *Roger North on Music: being a Selection from his Essays Written during the years c. 1695-1728*, ed. J. H. Wilson (London: Novello, 1959), pp. 302-303.

⁶⁶⁵ *London Gazette*, no. 742, 26-30 December 1672; cited in *London Stage*, p. 202.

but Mrs Knight, who sung incomparably, & doubtless has the greatest reach of any English Woman; she had lately been roaming in Italy: & was much improv'd in that quality: Then was other Musique, & this Consort was at Mrs Sligsbys...my worthy friend, & great a lover of musique.⁶⁶⁶

For those not in the upper echelons of polite society, there were musical concerts organised in local London taverns such as the one advertised on the *London Gazette*:

A Rare Concert of four Trumpets Marine, never heard before in England. If any Persons desire to come and hear it, they may repair to the Fleece Tavern near St James's, about two of the clock in the Afternoon every day...the best places are one shilling, the other six pence.⁶⁶⁷

The popularity of musical concerts was enough to harm the business of the King's Company. In a revival of Ben Jonson's *Volpone* the prologue complained that if Jonson could see the current situation, "how would he fret, & Rage, / To see the Musick-room outvy the Stage". The change in the status of music was clearly drastic as the King's players observed how, "Musick, which was by Intervals design'd / To ease the weary'd Actors voice & mind, / You to the Play judiciously prefer, / Tis now the bus'ness of the Theatre".⁶⁶⁸

The Duke's Company prospered as its operatic productions seemed to be entirely in tune with what the city craved. *The Tempest* had been acted so regularly and with such continued success during the summer of 1674 that the Duke's players were summoned by the king to entertain him and his court at Windsor for the better part of the season.

While the Duke's players "fled" to Windsor with Charles II during the long vacation, the King's Company stayed in London. The epilogue to a lost play, *The Armenian Queen*, probably produced by the King's players during this time spitefully stated:

Alas, what hope does there remain to us,
When y'have already shut up t'other house;
Yet we this Visitation-time stay here,

⁶⁶⁶ Evelyn, *Diary*, iv, p. 49.

⁶⁶⁷ *London Gazette*, no. 961, 1-4 Feb. 1675/5; cited in *London Stage*, p. 228.

⁶⁶⁸ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, ii, pp. 696-97.

When raging censure reigns and wit grows dear,
In hope to gain your custom all the year
...
They [Duke's] to the Country strole with painted ware,
Where mighty sums of precious time they share.⁶⁶⁹

The King's Company later escaped to Oxford but found little to console them according to Humphrey Prideaux: "The players parted from us with small gains not having gained so much after all things payed to make a dividend of £10 to the chief sharers". The University was glad to see the back of the players who, undoubtedly angered by such a pittance, went "about Town in the night breakeing of windows and committing many other unpardonable rudeness".⁶⁷⁰

Killigrew, in the meantime, was busy working behind closed doors. He was able to make a deal with the singers who were employed by the Duke's Company for *The Tempest* to also perform at Drury Lane. As a result, during the summer, singers such as Turner and Hart remained in London during the week, going down to Windsor only on weekends. It was probably no coincidence that on the same day an order was issued to the theatres that they were not to entice performers away from each other – this time it was probably the Duke's co-managers who were behind the order.⁶⁷¹

Killigrew also took advantage of his new authority as the Master of the Revels to refuse to let George Jolly's troupe perform or to pay Jolly any stipend, contrary to the promise made in 1667. This move was so heartless even by Killigrew's standards that it spurred Lady Davenant to protest at the injustice. Jolly recorded Killigrew's injustices against him resulting in the ruin of his small family:

My Lady Davenant has wrott in the behalfe of the said George
Jolly 3 or 4 Letters pleading his Cause, and Condemning the

⁶⁶⁹ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, ii, p. 619.

⁶⁷⁰ Humphrey Prideaux, *Letters of Humphrey Prideaux*, ed. Edward Maunde Thompson (London: Camden Society, 1875), p. 5.

⁶⁷¹ See LC 5/15, pp. 2-3 (*Register*, nos 842, 843).

unjust Crueltyes of Mr Killegrew who will not suffer him to Play even at this Time when both the theatres Lye still, which were so ffarr ffrom mollifyiing his Nature, that he said Mr Killegrew has declard, his Designs are utterly to Ruine the said George Jolly – And which is worst of all Mr Killegrew has Inform'd his Majesty many untruths of the said George Jolly, hoping thereby to Cloak his owne Injustice, and Incurr the displeasure of his Sacred Majesty uppon the said George Jolly.⁶⁷²

Killigrew's callousness partly derived from the financial difficulties his company faced – a few months later, Killigrew claimed that an argument over financial matters between him and the actors became so heated that the company money was “Violently taken” from him by the players.⁶⁷³ There is, however, no denying that Killigrew was responsible for the destitution of George Jolly and his family.

Tiffany Stern has viewed the discontinuation of the nursery system as “hardly surprising for the concept of dividing novice performers from established professionals was flawed”. Stern argues that since the professional theatres also trained their young actors, “the existence of nurseries themselves in London was unnecessary”.⁶⁷⁴ While Stern's argument is convincing, it is also important to note that modern drama school had its antecedent in the Restoration “Nursery”.⁶⁷⁵ It is worthy of note that the Nursery was also an important institution on its own right. It had produced notable players such as Joseph Haines and was probably the first training ground for actresses such as Anne Bracegirdle. There is no knowing when the Nursery closed down but since its undignified inception which was hatched primarily by Killigrew, this shadowy institution which defied orders of closure from

⁶⁷² B.M.Add. MS. 34, 729, fols. pp. 124-25 (*Register*, no. 850); cited in Hotson, p. 184.

⁶⁷³ LC 5/141, p. 100 (*Register*, no. 889).

⁶⁷⁴ See Stern, *Rehearsal*, pp. 160-61. For an institution that was unnecessary, however, the Restoration period saw the establishment of at least three known nurseries. The first one was called “the Nursery” which was established in 1662 at Hatton Garden. By 1671 when the Nursery probably closed down there were two other schools: Barbican Nursery and the Bun Hill Nursery.

⁶⁷⁵ Nicoll, *A History of Late Nineteenth Century Drama, 1850-1900*, 2 vols (Cambridge, 1946), i, p. 63.

the authorities such as the Mayor of London and the Secretary of State, as well as being a pawn between the two patentees, had an important impact on the London stage than perhaps hitherto recognised.

The new theatrical season of 1674 began inauspiciously for the King's Company. With its depleted coffers it attempted to piggyback on the success of *The Tempest* by setting Duffett to work on a parody of it. Much like his previous effort with *The Empress of Morocco*, this new piece entitled *The Mock Tempest* was designed solely, as Langbaine put it, to "draw the Town from the Duke's Company".⁶⁷⁶

The timing for a satire on large-scale shows, however, was unfortunate. As if to confirm their rival's accusation of the King's players' being out of step with the times, the court was preparing for its performance of *Calisto*. The scale and the cost of the court production was noted by John Evelyn, who at the rehearsal on 22 December 1674 observed: "my friend Mrs Bragg, had about her neere £20,000 worth of Jewells, of which one she lost, borrowed at the Countess of Suffolk, worth about £80, which the Duke made good".⁶⁷⁷ Two months later, after "innumerable Rehearsals", *Calisto* was finally mounted with great success. Langbaine wrote how it was "frequently presented there [at court] by Persons of great Quality...and the Songs between the Acts".⁶⁷⁸

Despite the production of *Calisto* featuring actors from both patent troupes, there is little doubt that the Duke's Company provided more people and was the more involved of the two. It is important to note that *Calisto* was an amateur production that included Lady Mary and Lady Anne, the daughters of the Duke of York, the patron of the Duke's Company, in the cast. Judith Milhous writes that "several members of the Duke's Company were involved" in the

⁶⁷⁶ Langbaine, p. 177.

⁶⁷⁷ Evelyn, *Diary*, iv, p. 51.

⁶⁷⁸ Langbaine, p. 92.

court production.⁶⁷⁹ What Milhous neglected to mention was how much the Bettertons were involved in the production. *Biographica Britannica* in fact claims that “Mr Betterton instructed the noble Actors, and supplied the part of Prompter, and Mrs Betterton gave lessons to the young Princesses”. Mrs Betterton was so talented as an instructor that years later, Queen Anne presented her with a pension of £100 per year apparently as a token of gratitude.⁶⁸⁰ Moreover, John Crowne – playwright to the Duke’s Company – not only wrote the piece but was also intimately involved in the rehearsals and re-writing.⁶⁸¹

The Duke’s Company did not lose the opportunity to forge further an affinity between itself and the court, with its production of Shadwell’s *Psyche*. The epilogue to the new opera stressed the similarity between *Psyche* and *Calisto*: “Poor Players have this day that Splendor shown, / Which yet but by Great Monarchs has been done”. If the epilogue aimed to show the Duke’s Company’s association with the court, it also worked as a pre-emptive strike against the King’s Company. The Duke’s epilogue also foretold and attacked the King’s Company’s strategy – “we know / Already th’ utmost they [the King’s Company] intend to do” – and went on to criticise their parodies by describing them as “below contempt, / Drolls which so course [*sic*], so dull, so bawdy are, / The dirty Rout would damn ’em in a Fair”. Indeed the changing status of the two companies can be observed in the patronising tone the Duke’s Company used against its rival: “all the fame you give ’em we allow, / To their best Plays, and their best Actors too”. The Duke’s players’ vindictiveness against the King’s parodies, however, perhaps betrays an annoyance at its rival for successfully feeding off their extravagant operatic productions, while the Duke’s Company had all the “expense to bear”.

⁶⁷⁹ Judith Milhous, “The Multimedia Spectacular on the Restoration Stage” in *British Theatre and the Other Arts 1660-1800*, ed. Shirley Strum Kenny (Washington, DC: Folger Books, 1984), p. 47.

⁶⁸⁰ *Biographia Britannica: or, The Lives of the most eminent persons in Great Britain and Ireland*, 6 vols (London, 1747-66), II, p. 772. For detailed information on Bettertons’ experience in tutoring, see Roberts, “Thomas Betterton, Private Tutor”, *Notes and Queries* 54 (2007), pp. 56-57.

⁶⁸¹ See James William Johnson, *A Profane Wit: The Life of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2004), p. 213.

Psyche was indeed an expensive investment as the players confessed, “We have stak’d all we have”.⁶⁸²

The money, according to Downes, went into “new Scenes, new Machines, new Cloathes”, which in total amounted to around £800.⁶⁸³ The Duke’s Company pulled out all the stops by not only employing English talent such as the scene-painter Stephenson and the composer Matthew Locke but also hiring foreign specialists to help the company put on the show such as the composer Draghi and the famous French choreographer St Andre. Orchestrating all of this was Thomas Betterton, as the playwright acknowledged in the preface, “In those things that concern the Ornament or Decoration of the Play, the great Industry and care of Mr Betterton ought to be remember’d, at whose desire I wrote upon this Subject”.⁶⁸⁴

Not everyone in the Duke’s Company appreciated Betterton’s ambitious gambit. Elkanah Settle, for instance, claimed he often overheard the actors “cursing at their oversight in laying out so much on so disliked a play...and that for the future they expect the *Tempest*, which cost not one Third of *Psyche*, will be in request when the other is forgotten”.⁶⁸⁵ The players may have had good reason to grumble. Downes admitted that while the opera proved “Benefitful to the Company; yet the *Tempest* got them more Money”.⁶⁸⁶ Indeed the company takings for the production reflect the disappointment felt by the company. The records show that *Psyche* made approximately half the dividend compared with their production of *Circe* two years later – the only other show comparable to *Psyche* in terms of costs.⁶⁸⁷ Every penny counted especially with its rival snapping at their heels.

The King’s Company wasted no time in retaliating against the insults hurled at them in

⁶⁸² Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, ii, p. 651.

⁶⁸³ Downes, p. 75.

⁶⁸⁴ Preface to Shadwell’s *Psyche* (London, 1675); EEBO 6.

⁶⁸⁵ Preface to Settle’s *Ibrahim the Illustrious Bassa* (London, 1676); cited in *London Stage*, p. 230.

⁶⁸⁶ Downes, p. 75.

⁶⁸⁷ Milhous, “The Duke’s Company’s Profits, 1675-1677”, pp. 80-81.

Psyche. In the epilogue to Francis Fane's *Love in the Dark*, the King's players specifically targeted the actors of the Duke's Company, showing that the Duke's players' demeaning remark on the King's "best Actors" had obviously hit a nerve. The epilogue not only abused the Duke's actors for being "awkward" and "False taught", but also went on to challenge them:

Yet these are they, who durst expose the Age
Of the great Wonder of our English Stage
Whom Nature seem'd to form your delight,
...Let them the Traytor or Volpone try,
Could they----
Rage like Cethegus, or like Cassius die,
They ne'er had sent to Paris for such Fancies,
As Monster's heads, and Merry Andrew's Dances.

The King's players thus defended Michael Mohun, described here as the "Wonder of our English Stage", and further accused their rivals of attempting to cover up their lack of skills as classical actors by employing cheap gimmicks from Paris. The point of the epilogue was to show that the King's Company may have become the weaker troupe compared with its rival but it was still a force to be reckoned with; they were, in other words, "Wither'd perhaps, not perish'd".⁶⁸⁸ What is surprising, however, is that the epilogue went so far as to alienate the court by slamming the performance of *Calisto* – "Now to Machines, and a dull Mask you run", Haines complained to the audience.

But perhaps this was to be expected of the troupe that went on to produce Wycherley's *The Country Wife*. The play was not only produced soon after *Calisto* but might also be described as a kind of burlesque with its tone being the exact opposite of the court production. While *Calisto* was an earnest celebration of chastity with the daughters of aristocrats being the central performers, *The Country Wife* by contrast is loaded with sexual innuendos and has as its protagonist the predatory rake, aptly named, Horner. As if to confirm that the two productions were connected, *The Country Wife* was chastised by a group of court maids of

⁶⁸⁸ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, ii, pp. 661-62.

honour who were often engaged in court entertainments and possibly involved in the production of *Calisto*.⁶⁸⁹

As predicted by the Duke's players, the King's Company did subsequently produce a parody, *Psyche Debauched* by Duffett. The production was successful enough to have several runs. Among the audience was Robert Hooke who commented on seeing "Psyche Grand foppery".⁶⁹⁰ The prologue to the production was clearly an answer to the *Psyche* epilogue as it even mocks the rhetoric of the latter by imitating it. Compare, for instance, the line in the epilogue of *Psyche*, "Whilst our rich Neighbours mock us for't, we know / Already th'utmost they intend to do", with the line in *Psyche Debauched*: "Let our Rich Neighbours mock our Farce: we know / (Already th' utmost) of their Puppet-show".⁶⁹¹ It also attacks the overpricing of tickets by the Duke's Company – a ticket to see *Psyche* may have cost as much as three times the average – and in turn mocks the audience for falling for such a trick: "Let 'em restore your TTreble prices too, / To see how strangely still they bubble you, / It makes me blush; and that I seldom do".⁶⁹²

In fact, both companies used various tricks of the trade to score points against their rival. The Duke's Company, for instance, accused the King's players of a "long Practis's Cheat" of posting unusually large advertisements. On one particular occasion the "Huge Large Sheet" advertised the beauty of Joseph Haines in the character of Miss-Non-Fair.⁶⁹³ The more covert tactic employed by the King's Company during this time was its use of organised factions against its rival's plays. Elkanah Settle complained of "that Whispering Wryfaced Gand, that's got in / Yon Corner, as if they were a Plotting / Against the Play" during the

⁶⁸⁹ See Roberts, *Restoration Plays and Players*, p. 171.

⁶⁹⁰ Hooke, *The Diary*, p. 177.

⁶⁹¹ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, ii, p. 651, p. 675.

⁶⁹² Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, ii, p. 676.

⁶⁹³ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, ii, p. 679.

production of his *The Conquest of China*.⁶⁹⁴ Shadwell also objected to the practice of organised factions against plays in the epilogue to *The Libertine*: “Gainst little Players you great factions raise, / Make Solemn Leagues and Cov’nants against Plays”.⁶⁹⁵

However, these little spats paled into insignificance when both companies faced more dangerous competition in the summer of 1675. On 20 June the Bulstrode papers announced that Fiorelli’s troupe was back in London again.⁶⁹⁶ This time, however, they were not only allowed to perform in Whitehall but shockingly were also permitted to charge admission. Andrew Marvell soon saw “all Sorts of People flocking thither [Whitehall], and paying their Mony as at a common Playhouse; nay even a twelve-penny Gallery is builded for the convenience of his Majesty’s poorer Subjects”.⁶⁹⁷ Such was the Scaramouch’s popularity that it was ominously predicted that it would “half break both our houses”.⁶⁹⁸

The two companies immediately felt the impact of Scaramouch. The new prologue written by Duffett to the King’s Company’s production of Ben Jonson’s *Every Man Out of His Humour* expressed the King’s players’ exasperation at the competition from Fiorelli but also at the audiences who attended these foreign performances even though they had no idea of what the Italian performers were saying: “So fast from Plays approv’d and Actors known, / To drolloing, strolling Royal Troop you run /...Y’are pleas’d to laugh because---you know not why.../ And by their motions judg the Farces Wit”. The epilogue suggests that the foreign competition hit the Duke’s Company just as much: “How crossly and how kindly things do

⁶⁹⁴ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, ii, p. 665.

⁶⁹⁵ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, ii, p. 669.

⁶⁹⁶ Bulstrode, *The Bulstrode Papers*, p. 302.

⁶⁹⁷ Andrew Marvell, *The Poems and Letters of Andrew Marvell*, ed. H. M. Margoliouth, rev. Pierre Legouis, with E. E. Duncan-Jones, 3rd edn., 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), ii, p. 342.

⁶⁹⁸ Bulstrode, *The Bulstrode Papers*, p. 302. Botica writes that “the King’s summer flirtations with foreign players had always posed a threat to the London companies. However, the situation worsened...when companies of French and Italian comedians arrived to play before royalty...From that date [c.1675-1677] until Charles’ death in 1685, the London companies seldom managed more than a single court performance annually between them.” See p. 179, n. 115.

go! / Though foreign troop does very pow'rful grow, / King Justice beats down our domestic foe [the Duke's Company]".⁶⁹⁹

This may account for the succession of pessimistic prologues by the Duke's players during this period. The prologue to *Piso's Conspiracy* – a new version of *Nero* – explains why the company chose to mount a heroic tragedy, having “tryed all Arts, / From a Sir Martin, to a Man of Parts, And all won't do”.⁷⁰⁰ The prologue to Otway's *Alcibiades* similarly cried: “Though we alas! To oblige ye have done most, / And brought ye pleasures at our own sad cost: / Yet all our best endeavours have been lost”. The Duke's players blamed its empty theatre on Scaramouch – the “false flatt'rin Minion of the Court”.⁷⁰¹

Hard times led to anxiety and dissent in the King's Company. As Dryden put it in his prologue to *Aureng-Zebe*, the troupe was “ruin'd with expensive War” and as the ranks began to disintegrate, it was every man for himself.⁷⁰² To prevent the company from falling into complete anarchy, Thomas Killigrew enforced regulations on his actors on 9 December 1675. The articles afford a glimpse of what was happening behind the scenes in the company. The actors were ordered not to wear costumes outside of the playhouse, not to miss rehearsals, not to refuse a part without forfeiting a week's wages, and perhaps most importantly, not to “presse” upon “the shareing Table” on payday.⁷⁰³ Even though all the articles were agreed upon by Killigrew and his actors and had further been approved by Charles II himself, it took less than two months before the theatre was forced to close its doors. It transpired that the actors had “left off actinge” because of “private differences and disagreements between themselves”. When the actors ignored the order of the Lord Chamberlain to resume acting,

⁶⁹⁹ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, ii, pp. 671-73.

⁷⁰⁰ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, ii, p. 680.

⁷⁰¹ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, ii, p. 685. The Duke's Company's dividends are at one of their lowest points during this time. See Milhous, “The Duke's Company's Profits, 1675-1677”, pp. 80-81.

⁷⁰² Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, ii, p. 689.

⁷⁰³ LC 5/141, p. 307, p. 308 (*Register*, nos 949, 950).

arrest warrants swiftly followed. On 24 February 1676 warrants were issued to apprehend actors, including Mohun, Lacy, and Kynaston “to answer such things as shalbe objected against them”.⁷⁰⁴ Killigrew’s control over his senior actors was clearly slipping away around this time.

The closing of one theatre meant better business for the other. The Duke’s Company’s dividends show a significant increase in February 1676 compared to the previous month and made a further recovery thereafter.⁷⁰⁵ Productions such as John Crowne’s *The Country Wit* specifically and openly targeted its audience – the city.⁷⁰⁶ The importance of the city audience and the Duke’s Company’s sensitivity to their needs can be observed in an anecdote by the playwright, John Smith, who presumably went to the Duke’s Company to sell his play, *Cytherea*. In the dedication to the unacted play he recalled how the Duke’s managers were “unwilling” to mount the play because “it was not writ in so plain familiar words as the taking of Comedies of the Time, which did hit the present humours of the City better than mine”. Neither did the play, the author was told, conform to the stereotype the city men had of those who lived in Yorkshire, as “I make some persons in the Play speak higher language than may rationally be expected from Northern Men and Women”.⁷⁰⁷

Other new plays flowed in such as Settle’s *Ibrahim* and George Etherege’s *The Man of Mode*. For the former, perhaps to counter the organised factions of the King’s players, Settle made sure that “The Pit is fill’d with Friends” who spend their time “making Proselytes to th’ Play”, which makes this play possibly the first of its kind to admit openly to a coterie-managed success.⁷⁰⁸ The latter, according to Downes, “got a great deal of Money”.⁷⁰⁹

⁷⁰⁴ See LC 5/141, p. 358 (*Register*, no. 962); LC 5/190, fol. 139v (*Register*, no. 964).

⁷⁰⁵ Milhous, “The Duke’s Company’s Profits, 1675-1677”, pp. 76-88.

⁷⁰⁶ In Crowne’s epilogues he asserts that he “writ [the play] for Wits of London Bridge and Wapping”. See Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, ii, pp. 692-94.

⁷⁰⁷ John Smith, *Cytherea, or, The Enamouring Girdle* (London, 1677), A2 r.v.

⁷⁰⁸ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, ii, p. 703.

It was little wonder *The Man of Mode* made so much money as the Marquis Cattaneo wrote to the Duke of Modena how the entire court went three or four times to see the play.⁷¹⁰ Indeed John Dennis reported how “all the World was charm’d with Dorimont”.⁷¹¹

In such circumstances it was probably not difficult for the Duke’s Company to persuade some of the King’s players to work for them temporarily. For when, during the lull between in-house squabbles, the King’s Company produced Nathaniel Lee’s *Gloriana*, the epilogue, spoken by Haines, suggested that he had been working for the other company: “They told me at t’other House y’had left us quite”. The King’s players were having such difficulty in getting spectators that they claimed that they were even forced to go out of the theatre to perform in the cold: “This Winter.../ We’ve Play’d and Play’d ourselves e’en out of doors”.⁷¹² While this may have been intended as a facetious remark rather than a factual statement there was little doubt that the King’s Company was suffering.

The Duke’s Company on the other hand, by producing Shadwell’s *The Virtuoso*, was on the crest of a wave. The play made no bones about the fact that it was capitalising on the success of *The Man of Mode*: “You come with such an eager Appetite / To a late Play [*The Man of Mode*], which have so great delight”.⁷¹³ If the latter was a “Representation of the Persons of Condition...both in Court and Town”, then *The Virtuoso* was seen as a satirical representation of the Royal Society and its members such as Robert Hooke.⁷¹⁴ The embarrassed Hooke complained in his diary that the audience very well knew that “Sir Nicholas Gimcrack, F.R.S.” was a satire on him: “Damned dogs...People almost pointed”, he

⁷⁰⁹ Downes, p. 77.

⁷¹⁰ Martin Haile, *Queen Mary of Modena* (London, 1905), p. 60.

⁷¹¹ See Dennis, *The Critical Works*, ii, p. 248; cited in *London Stage*, p. 243.

⁷¹² Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, ii, pp. 700-701.

⁷¹³ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, ii, p. 710.

⁷¹⁴ Dennis, *The Critical Works*, ii, p. 248.

grumbled.⁷¹⁵

They found success not only in comedy but also in tragedy. Thomas Otway's *Don Carlos* was so successful that, according to Downes, "it lasted successively 10 Days" and "got more Money than any preceding Modern Tragedy".⁷¹⁶ It largely owed its success to the highly timely nature of the play – it coincided with the Duke of York's public renunciation of the Anglican faith. Otway's unwavering loyalty to the Duke's Company was matched only by his commitment to the Duke of York to whom the play was dedicated. Otway presented James in the best possible light by portraying him as Carlos in the play, the victim of his tyrannical father, Philip II of Spain, who forcibly marries his son's fiancé. If Carlos is James then Philip II seemingly resembles Charles II – a ruler whose chief concern is to satisfy his sexual appetite. Carlos who is banished, as David Roberts writes, represents "the destitution that exile would bring for James and for his Church".⁷¹⁷ Despite Otway's attempt to tone down the grim ending of the original source by having Philip II and Carlos reconcile at the end of the play, it was nevertheless an enormous political risk for Otway to not only support such a controversial figure as James but also to celebrate the next Catholic King of England by portraying the last one in a very bad light. Otway's risk paid off, however, as the play was more successful than his other works such as *Venice Preserv'd* or the *Orphan*.⁷¹⁸

One other overlooked reason for such popularity may have been due to the device of having epilogues spoken by very young girls. The epilogue "Spoken by a Girl" pleaded with the audience for the playwright, who "told me there was pity in my face, / And therefore sent me here to make his peace". The epilogue then takes on a decidedly sexual tone when she

⁷¹⁵ Cited in Tita Chico, "Gimcrack's Legacy: Sex, Wealth, and the Theatre of Experimental Philosophy", *Comparative Drama*, 42.1 (2008), p. 31.

⁷¹⁶ Downes, p. 76.

⁷¹⁷ Roberts, *Restoration Plays and Players*, p. 78.

⁷¹⁸ *Don Carlos* is the immediate cause of a £59 dividend as seen in Milhous's article, "The Duke's Company's Profits, 1675-1677", p. 80.

says:

He'l write for me, he swears by all above,
When I am bigg enough to be in love.
Now won't you be good natur'd, ye fine men?
Indeed I'le grow as fast as e'er I can
...
Think on't, when that time comes; you do not know,
But I may grow in love with some of you.⁷¹⁹

The child-actress was obviously popular enough to warrant a second outing, this time in Behn's revenge tragedy *Abdelazer* produced on 3 July 1676. The epilogue was "spoken by little Mis. Ariell" who announced that "With late success [*Don Carlos*] being blest, I'm come agen". It takes on a similar lascivious tone as she directs her attention to men in the audience:

You see what kindness can do, Gentlemen,
Which when once shown, our Sex cannot refrain
...
Your Kindness, Gallants, I shall soon repay
...
Since then I'm grown at least an Inch in height,
And shall e'er long be full-blown for delight.

The Duke's Company had, in fact, previously used an adolescent girl "of Sixteen" as "bait" to "Trap" the audience.⁷²⁰ The popularity of this ploy and its re-adoption during the summer of 1676 suggests that they were catering to a more male-dominated audience.

While audiences flocked to the Duke's Company in droves, the King's Company – by this time only intermittently operating – found that it could only entice unwanted spectators. Thomas Durfey explained in his prologue to *The Siege of Memphis* that even though "some tender hearted Females come" and "bring good faces" to the theatre, they try to cheat the players by bringing fake money. Their dilemma consequently is that "such as doe pay / Bring naughty money, such as do not, stay".⁷²¹

At a time when most other playwrights were contracted to one company or the other,

⁷¹⁹ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, ii, pp. 714-15.

⁷²⁰ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, ii, pp. 716-18.

⁷²¹ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, ii, pp. 721-22.

Durfey, as a freelance playwright, was an exception to the rule.⁷²² He was, therefore, able to swap sides and freely write for both companies. Durfey's flexibility worked to his advantage, as soon after the King's Company produced his debutant play, *The Siege of Memphis*, he was commissioned to write *Madam Fickle* for the Duke's Company. The play was so liked by Charles II that he "was pleas'd to descend so far, as to give it a particular Applause".⁷²³ Two weeks later the King's Company responded by mounting yet another work by Durfey called *The Fool Turn'd Critick*, which did not enjoy the success of his previous play.

Indeed by November 1676 the King's Company was slowly getting back on its feet and in the following month, it was able to procure Wycherley's *The Plain Dealer*, which by the "loud approbation" of those such as Rochester, Duke of Buckingham, Earl of Dorset, and John Denham was given a "sudden and a lasting reputation".⁷²⁴ In early January 1677 the King's Company even had strength enough to clash thematically with its rival as both companies mounted plays adapted from Racine's *Bérénice*. The Duke's Company began by producing Thomas Otway's *Titus and Berenice* while the King's Company countered with John Crowne's two-part play, *The Destruction of Jerusalem*.

The two plays demonstrate an explicit French-English clash between the two playwrights. Jessica Munns writes that John Crowne used "*Bérénice* as one strand in the more typical multi-layered plot-structure of English drama", while Thomas Otway not only kept close to the original text but also "kept to Racine's single plot".⁷²⁵ The two playwrights also differed in their appreciation towards their French counterparts. Otway, for instance, included his adaptation of Moliere's farce, *Les Fourberies de Scapin*, at the end of his *Titus and Berenice*

⁷²² Hume, *Development*, p. 301.

⁷²³ Dedication to Durfey's *Madam Fickle* (London, 1677); EEBO 3.

⁷²⁴ Dennis, *The Critical Works*, ii, p. 277. It is no coincidence that the Duke's Company's profits are very low in the same month that *The Plain Dealer* was mounted. See Milhous, "The Duke's Company's Profits, 1675-1677", p. 82.

⁷²⁵ Jessica Munns, "Thomas Otway's *Titus and Berenice* and Racine's *Bérénice*", *Restoration: Studies in English Literary Culture, 1660-1700*, 7 (1983), p. 58.

so that he actually presented “the town with a double-bill of fashionable French drama”.⁷²⁶ Whereas Crowne, who despite having borrowed from Racine twice, denied any debt to the French author and referred contemptuously to Otway’s translation: “Some Persons accused me of stealing the parts of Titus and Berenice from the French play written by Mr Racine...a gentleman [Otway] having lately translated the play, and exposed it to publick view on the Stage, has saved me that labour, and vindicated me better than myself”.⁷²⁷ Both plays were presumably popular enough as Lady Chatsworth wrote to Lord Roos: “Theire is two niewe plays which are much commended – the siege of Jerusalem by the Emperour Vespasien, and his son Titus’s love with Berenice”.⁷²⁸

In this head-to-head competition, the King’s Company saw an opportunity to shame the Duke’s Company. Consequently the King’s Company put “a vast expence in Scenes and Cloathes”, the result of which was a visually striking scene of “the Temple burning, filled with Jews lamenting”. If Durfey took advantage of his status as a freelance writer, then John Crowne suffered because of his contract. Crowne had been a poet for the Duke’s Company for some years and that while the exact terms of his contract with the Duke’s Company are unclear he was probably paid about 40 shillings a week plus the profits from the third day of his plays. The Duke’s Company quietly watched and waited to pounce as the King’s Company revelled in this “wild and unaccountable Success”.⁷²⁹ When the time came – after the King’s Company had spent vast amounts of money on the production and when it was too late to withdraw the play – the Duke’s Company put in a claim for the sum of £112 from the

⁷²⁶ Munns, “Thomas Otway’s *Titus and Berenice* and Racine’s *Bérénice*”, p. 58. Otway only mentions Racine once in his preface to *Don Carlos* in which he acknowledges his debt to the French author. See *The Complete Works of Thomas Otway*, ed. Montague Summers (Bloomsbury, 1926), i, p. 76.

⁷²⁷ John Crowne, *The Dramatic Works of John Crowne*, ed. James Maidment and W. H. Logan, 4 vols (Edinburgh, 1873-74), ii, p. 238. Crowne most likely penned the anonymous translation of *Andromache* despite him disclaiming the authorship in the printed edition of the play in 1675.

⁷²⁸ HMC, Rutland MSS., 1889, ii, p. 36; cited in *London Stage*, p. 254.

⁷²⁹ Cited in Wilson, *Mr Goodman*, pp. 50-51.

King's Company and for Crowne to pay out of his own pocket £40.⁷³⁰

This strategy may have been the idea of William Smith a former lawyer, newly turned co-manager at the Duke's Company. From 1677 William Smith effectively replaced Henry Harris and became the co-manager of the company with Thomas Betterton. Harris, who still lived in the playhouse in 1678, may not have entirely given up his duties in the Duke's Company but had most certainly relinquished most of his managerial roles to Smith by this time. Smith was a leading actor of the troupe by the 1670s and held one and a half shares in the company. He was hot tempered but "notably handsome and athletic" so that even when he killed a man in 1666, every body felt sorry for Smith.⁷³¹ As Knepp recounted to Pepys, Smith "being a good actor, and, they say, a good man" and that "the ladies of the Court do much bemoan him".⁷³² Smith seemed to have, quite literally, got away with murder, or at least there is no record of him having suffered any consequences. He was back at the Duke's Company acting the part of Sir William Stanley in *The English Princess* on 7 March 1667.⁷³³ Perhaps Smith's popularity at court, his attachment to the Duke of York, and the fact that he was a barrister at Gray's Inn before he became an actor in 1661 helped him secure his freedom.

The King's Company was also undergoing a change in management. On 23 January 1677 Charles Killigrew – Thomas Killigrew's son – sued him and the trustees to acquire the patent. According to Charles Killigrew's testimony, the King's Company's profits in the previous couple of years "did fall much short of expectation and did daily decrease". The principal actors, Charles Killigrew continued, therefore "did get very little profit by their Acting" to

⁷³⁰ James M. Osborn, *John Dryden: Some Biographical Facts and Problems*, rev. ed. (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1965), pp. 200-207; cited in Milhous, "The Duke's Company's Profits, 1675-1677", p. 85.

⁷³¹ Summers, *Playhouse of Pepys*, p. 159.

⁷³² Pepys, vii, p. 369.

⁷³³ See *London Stage*, p. 104.

such an extent that they “did each of them at several times in the year 1675 give notice in writing” to Thomas Killigrew and threatened “to give over and desist from acting”.⁷³⁴

Killigrew’s response to this situation was to enter into yet another financial agreement to raise money for a short-term solution. On 22 March 1676 Richard Kent paid off Killigrew’s loan from Debussy in return for the nine building shares and on the same day Kent’s trustees, Richard Tucker and Thomas Smith, paid off his debt from Magnes, so that they now believed that they had procured for Kent the ownership of the King’s Company. Killigrew had thus pawned not only his building shares but also his patent and interest in the acting shares by this time. What Kent and others did not know was that Killigrew had other plans for his patent. Alarmed at the prospect of losing the building shares – which he had secretly mortgaged – as well as the company’s most seasoned actors, Thomas Killigrew feared the worst and predicted that the “House would be Destroy’d”.⁷³⁵

Thomas Killigrew thus charged his son with the unenviable task of mediating between himself and the veteran actors. Specifically, Charles Killigrew’s mission was to persuade the actors to not only stay on in the company but also to enter into new agreements wherein their proceeds “might be more moderate and more practicable considering the abatement of profits”. To give Charles Killigrew enough of an incentive to undertake the task, Thomas Killigrew promised him “all [Thomas Killigrew’s] right, Claim and Power in and to the Governing, Ordering, and regulating” of the King’s Company “and all profits, privileges, and powers relating thereunto”, with the proviso that Charles Killigrew would bring the disgruntled players back into the fold.

Having agreed to these terms, Charles Killigrew went about trying to persuade the actors. According to Clayton, he proposed the following:

⁷³⁴ Cited in Hotson, p. 258.

⁷³⁵ Hotson’s work meticulously covers the details of Killigrew’s financial dealings. For the location of the quotation see Hotson, p. 259, n. 41.

to advance a hundred pound to the said Mr Hart and sixty pound to [Kynaston]...(he [Charles Killigrew] finding them to be most unwilling to lessen the said allowance of two hundred pounds) in Case they would persuade and procure the rest of the Company...telling them [the rest of the actors] that two hundred pounds was a great deal too much...and that they [Hart and Kynaston] for their parts would willingly consent thereto; and thereupon the whole Company agreed to do the like being altogether Ignorant of the underhand dealings of [Kynaston] and the said Mr Hart, and of the reward they were to have for the said service.

Charles Killigrew successfully managed to get the actors back but was betrayed by his own father when Thomas Killigrew characteristically went back on his word.⁷³⁶

Leslie Hotson has viewed the financial transaction between Charles Killigrew and the actors as “clandestine bribes” and condemned the former for his “sharp practice”.⁷³⁷ Hotson’s influential denunciation of the young Killigrew, however, may be in need of some modification. In 1677 Charles Killigrew would have been only about twenty years old and would have had very limited experience and knowledge of the players involved.⁷³⁸ It is highly unlikely that Charles Killigrew initiated the negotiation without prior advice from his father, Thomas Killigrew – after all bribery was the latter’s style. It is similarly improbable that Charles Hart and Edward Kynaston did not goad the young messenger into offering a deal under the table. As will be seen in the next chapter, the two senior actors possessed a knack for making illicit arrangements. The whole incident, in fact, is more telling of Thomas Killigrew’s unscrupulous ways than it is of Charles Killigrew’s character. Thomas Killigrew often manipulated others to achieve his own goals; this was, after all, not the first time he had sent a representative to deal with difficult situations.⁷³⁹ If Charles Killigrew was sufficiently

⁷³⁶ See Hotson, pp. 259-61.

⁷³⁷ Hotson, p. 260.

⁷³⁸ Charles Killigrew was a gentleman of the King’s privy chamber in 1670 – aged only fifteen – and continued in that office until the reign of William and Mary in the 1690s.

⁷³⁹ After the performance of *The Change of Crowns* which angered the king so much that he commanded that the King’s Company should act no more, Michael Mohun was, in all probability, sent by

politically adept to handle negotiations with the hard-nosed senior actors without Thomas Killigrew's support and advice as Hotson and Milhous claim, then why was he so easily duped by his own father? Indeed if anything, the incident surely testifies to Charles Killigrew's naïveté, as he foolishly believed that his father would honour his promise.

What Thomas Killigrew perhaps underestimated was the depth of Charles Killigrew's indignation at his father's open betrayal. The heated dispute between father and son was so disruptive that the Lord Chamberlain temporarily gave Charles Hart the sole direction of the King's Company. By February 1677, Charles Killigrew's successful chancery suit against his father, gave him the dual roles of manager of the King's Company and Master of the Revels.⁷⁴⁰

These years saw the Duke's Company gain a clear ascendancy over the King's Company. The repertory survey shows a distinctive rise in the popularity of operatic productions. The Duke's Company took full advantage of the Dorset Garden Theatre's capacity to mount spectacles by producing such shows as *The Tempest*, *The Empress of Morocco* and *Psyche*.

The surge in large-scale productions, in turn, was mirrored by a rise in burlesques by the King's Company such as *The Mock Tempest* and *Psyche Debauch'd*. Standard accounts such as Milhous's *Betterton* and Hume's *Development* give the impression that the King's Company was helpless to answer the challenging standard set by the Duke's Company and could only rouse itself to mount parodies. This chapter suggests that these productions were not simply knee-jerk reactions to its rival but were part of Killigrew's strategy. Time and time again, the King's Company explicitly state that they are not going to be tempted into

Killigrew to Charles II to mollify him. As Knepp told Pepys, Mohun "went and got leave for them to act again". See Pepys, viii, pp. 168-69.

⁷⁴⁰ LC 5/141, p. 539, p. 541 (*Register*, nos 997, 998).

outdoing its rival with big shows but would mount economical productions instead. This not only made financial sense but also was in line with the underlying feeling that the company had grown disillusioned with the recent fad for large-scale shows.

But the theatrical competition in these years was not simply restricted to the rivalry between the King's Company and the Duke's Company. This period saw an unprecedented rise in the number of foreign troupes. Their popularity was such that the Italian players were permitted to perform at court and, to the horror of some Londoners such as John Evelyn, to demand that audiences pay admission charges as well. On top of the foreign performers, the two companies had to contend with the popularity of music concerts as well as court performances. Scholars have thus far downplayed the influence of these other rival forces that arguably played a vital role in destabilising both companies, especially the King's Company.

The chapter also demonstrates how Killigrew began to show his true colours as tensions between the two companies rose to a climax. Killigrew got himself into deeper financial mire by agreeing to riskier and dubious deals with the likes of Richard Kent; Killigrew also revealed his merciless side as he not only resorted shamelessly to mud-slinging and maligning his rival but worse, he took advantage of his new authority as the Master of the Revels to cut off George Jolly and his family's livelihood – contrary to his promise and in spite of protestations from Lady Davenant; and also manipulated and betrayed his own son, Charles Killigrew.

The King's Company's poor business led to the bubbling over of long held grievances between the leading actors and their manager. Despite Killigrew's clever gamble to get his actors to cooperate by employing his son to mediate between them, Thomas Killigrew's winning streak was at an end. Killigrew had broken his promise one too many times and his son deposed him. His sixteen-year tenure as the Master of the King's Company was over. Killigrew's lack of remorse is evident as it took a long and bitter litigation process for

Charles Killigrew to be begrudgingly given the authority as the new manager of the King's Company.

Little did Charles Killigrew know that he was about to experience, first hand, how challenging it is to manage a group of difficult actors while also having to compete with the rival company.

Chapter 5

“Y’are welcome to the downfal of the Stage”:

Charles Killigrew and the Demise of the King’s Company, 1677-1682

Politics pervaded both on stage and off stage during this period. Off stage, the Popish Plot and the Exclusion Crisis gripped the English public in anti-Catholic hysteria. Titus Oates’s fabrication of a Catholic conspiracy to murder Charles II and the subsequent Exclusion bill, which sought to exclude the Catholic Duke of York, James, from the throne, deeply affected the development of English drama. On stage, not only did the two theatres mount increasingly political productions but also the individual lives of theatrical personnel were to change dramatically. To make matters worse, the King’s Company suffered from internal political turmoil, which eventually led to the merger and acquisition of the company by its rival troupe, the Duke’s Company.

There has been little scholarly attention given to the management of the King’s Company under the direction of Thomas Killigrew’s son, Charles Killigrew, during the five-year period from 1677 to 1682. Scholars have often suggested that Charles Killigrew was not responsible for the demise of the company as the troupe was already disintegrating by 1677, when he won the control of the company from his father in a bitter court battle. Judith Milhous, for instance, writes that Charles Killigrew “was only trying to make the best of the inevitable”.⁷⁴¹ Scholars have also come to believe that Charles Killigrew, like his father, was deceitful and manipulative. David Roberts called Charles Killigrew “devious” and R. O. Bucholz emphasised “his [Charles Killigrew’s] capacity for sharp practice towards both fellow shareholders and actors”.⁷⁴²

⁷⁴¹ Milhous, *Betterton*, p. 38.

⁷⁴² Roberts, *Thomas Betterton*, p. 137; R. O. Bucholz, ‘Killigrew, Charles (1655–1724/5)’, *ODNB*,

This chapter argues first that Charles Killigrew was more naïve and artless than scholars have thus far suggested. Secondly, I argue that he was less competent than his father as manager of the King's Company. Far from being inculpable for the troupe's demise, Charles Killigrew, in fact, greatly contributed to its collapse through his divisive managerial decisions.

The Duke's Company took full advantage of its rival's internal troubles. In his production of *Scaramouch* on 5 May 1677, Edward Ravenscroft suggests that the Duke's Company had stolen a march on the King's Company by mounting *The Cheat of Scapin* towards the end of 1676 season. In the prologue to *Scaramouch* he ranted: "Very unfortunate this Play has bin; / A slippery trick was play'd us by *Scapin*. / Whilst here our Actors made a long delay, / When some were idle, others run away, / The City House comes out with half our Play".⁷⁴³ Aphra Behn in her play *The Rover*, similarly, was accused of having plagiarised Thomas Killigrew's play *Thomaso* immediately after Thomas Killigrew was removed from a position of influence. She attempted to defend herself by acknowledging that Angelica – the female protagonist in the play – was "the only stoln Object".⁷⁴⁴

By this time, the King's troupe had given the Duke's Company the derogatory nickname "City House". This was a means of targeting the Duke's players' blatant effort to seduce the middle-class audience away from the King's Company. The Duke's Company's productions constantly refer to the men and women from the city. For instance, the prologue to the Duke's Company's production of *The Debauchee* by Aphra Behn is spoken by Tom Salesware, a

online edn, Jan. 2008.

⁷⁴³ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, iii, p. 37.

⁷⁴⁴ See the Post-script to Behn's *The Rover* (London, 1677); EEBO 45.

tradesman of the city, and is addressed to “the Saleswares of the middle Gallery”.⁷⁴⁵ The Duke’s player’s production of *The Counterfeit Bridegroom* similarly speaks to an audience largely composed of “Trading Gentlemen” and appeals to the fair nature of “th’ honest Tradesmen” to save them “from the snarling Criticks”.⁷⁴⁶ The epilogue to the play unequivocally sides with those from the city: “Here is no Satire on a Marry’d life, / Nor damn’d Lampoon upon the City-Wife; / No Cheats discover’d of the Man of Trade”.⁷⁴⁷

The King’s Company criticised the Duke’s players’ heavy investments into new machines, elaborate scenery and costumes as a constant ploy to entice the city clientele into the theatre. John Leanerd, writing for the King’s Company, berates “this Age, where Wit consists only in gawdy Cloathes” and “dam’d dull Machines”.⁷⁴⁸ John Crowne, in his epilogue to *The Destruction of Jerusalem Part I*, openly criticises the other company’s dependence on “great Machines... to make the Actors flye” and their reliance “On Ropes instead of Raptures”. In the King’s Company, “These Tricks...will never hit”, Crowne insists, as “Our Company is for the old way of Wit”.⁷⁴⁹

Charles Killigrew’s troupe’s claim on tradition and good taste was partly genuinely felt but it was also a competitive device bequeathed from his father. Financial straits made it more difficult for the King’s Company to mount extravagant productions.⁷⁵⁰ Leanerd, for instance, writes of his *The Country Innocence* being produced in “the homely dress”.⁷⁵¹ Charles Killigrew certainly seemed to have been trying to curb the company expenditures. On

⁷⁴⁵ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, iii, p. 17.

⁷⁴⁶ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, iii, pp. 70-72.

⁷⁴⁷ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, iii, p. 72.

⁷⁴⁸ Dedication to Leanerd’s *The Country Innocence* (London, 1677); EEBO 3.

⁷⁴⁹ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, iii, p. 7.

⁷⁵⁰ Individual theatrical personnel in the King’s Company suffered from financial troubles. On 20 March 1677 Joseph Bowles, for instance, issued a complaint against Hart, Mohun, Cartwright and Kynaston “for rent and possession of a Celler...due 4 years”. See LC 5/190, fol. 170v (*Register*, no. 1000).

⁷⁵¹ Dedication to Leanerd’s *The Country Innocence* (London, 1677); EEBO 3.

8 May 1677 a part of his “Majesties Band of Violins” petitioned the Lord Chamberlain against Charles Killigrew’s dismissing them from the playhouse orchestra.⁷⁵² Killigrew was also letting go of his minor players such as John Wiltshire who, being released from his obligations to the Theatre Royal, was then free “to dispose himself at the Duke’s Theatre or any other place”.⁷⁵³

The difference between the two companies could not have been starker. On 12 May 1677, the Duke’s players mounted Charles Davenant’s *Circe*. The prologue celebrated the debutant author of the play, the son and heir of Sir William Davenant, then aged only nineteen. The show, an opera-like tragedy, was so extravagant in its production that the price of seats in the pit was raised to “Five Shillings” – double the usual charge.⁷⁵⁴ In sharp contrast to Charles Killigrew sacking his musicians and actors to stay afloat financially, Charles Davenant was not sparing any money on his spectacle, which particularly boasted of its “Musick”, composed by Banister.

As if to make matters worse for Charles Killigrew, on 30 July 1677, the King’s players petitioned for self-government of the company.⁷⁵⁵ Charles Hart, the probable leader of the senior actors, may have instigated the usurpation. He had been hankering for power from the early 1660s and had been intermittently governing the company, most recently during the legal squabble between the Killigrews. Considering Charles Killigrew’s youth, inexperience and unconsolidated hold on power in the company, Hart perhaps believed he had spotted an opportune moment to seize control for good. Whatever we may hazard of Hart’s inner thoughts, the actors were granted the right by Charles II of “Governing themselves” on

⁷⁵² LC 5/190, fol. 173v (Register, no. 1006).

⁷⁵³ LC 5/143, p. 399 (Register, no. 1089).

⁷⁵⁴ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, iii, p. 40. Along with the production of *Psyche*, it was the most expensive show mounted by the company in the period from 1674 to 1677. *Circe* immediately provided the Duke’s Company with £100 worth of dividend. See Milhous, “The Duke’s Company’s Profits, 1675-1677”, pp. 80-82.

⁷⁵⁵ LC 5/142, p. 98 (Register, no. 1019).

condition that they pay Killigrew his shares. Charles Killigrew was first betrayed by his own father, and now he was betrayed by those in the company whom he had helped.

Undoubtedly angered by the plot, Charles Killigrew in turn began colluding with the younger actors – the hirelings of the King’s Company – and some building investors to oust the senior actor-sharers or master-players, later to be known as “the Old Men”, from their position of power. The young hirelings such as Philip Griffin and Cardell Goodman had nothing to lose and everything to gain from the new agreement. Goodman told Colley Cibber that he and Griffin were so poor during this period that they economized by “lying together in the same Bed” and by having just “one whole Shirt between them”.⁷⁵⁶ The hirelings were also frustrated by the lack of opportunities to advance in the company as Hart and Mohun, in particular, often jealously guarded the best parts for themselves.⁷⁵⁷ Charles Killigrew promised the likes of Goodman promotion to the ranks of “Master partners or sharers”, if they signed the new deal.⁷⁵⁸ In an attempt to keep things within the family, he also brought his half-brother Henry Killigrew into the company and made him one of the master partners – he was to later regret this decision. On 28 September 1677 the agreement was signed and sealed.

In the meantime, both companies suffered from gallants seducing their best actresses. The epilogue to Nathaniel Lee’s *The Rival Queens* complains in no uncertain terms that “what does more provoke the Actors rage, / Is, that our Women who adorn each Play / Bred at our cost, become at length your [men of the pit] Prey”.⁷⁵⁹ The practice of stealing actresses had become so rampant in the King’s Company that the players resorted to threatening the young sparks in the audience: “Pray leave these poaching tricks...E’re we take out our Letters of

⁷⁵⁶ Cibber, *Apology*, ii, p. 63.

⁷⁵⁷ See *BDA*, vi, p. 369.

⁷⁵⁸ The deal stipulated that the actors agree not to perform elsewhere and to pay the rent of £5 14s per acting day. See Hotson, p. 262.

⁷⁵⁹ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, iii, p. 25.

Reprize” and start employing “a Tribe of chopping Boys” instead of actresses.⁷⁶⁰ The Duke’s Company was similarly afflicted by the problem as the epilogue of *The French Conjuror*, advertised as “The Womens Play”, – presumably acted by women only – protested: “No sooner comes a Beauty here in play, / But strait your Coach and six takes her away. / And you who cull the Flock, should be so kinde / To comfort the forlorn you leave behinde”.⁷⁶¹

The King’s Company, however, was even more plagued by the capricious temperament of the audience. The prologue to John Leanerd’s *The Rambling Justice* sums up the King’s players frustration as it asked its audience: “Will nothing take in these Ill-natur’d times? / Neither low Farce nor great Heroick Rhimes?”.⁷⁶² Edward Ravenscroft in his play, *King Edgar and Alfreda*, reminisced how “Nothing pleas’d” the audience in the past “but Rymes, / From Four to Seven we [playwrights] daily rung the Chymes: / Long did you hear, and long the sound did please, / But now...Y’re surfeited, and Verse grows a Disease”. Ravenscroft capitulated to the demands of the theatre-goers as he advertised how his play has “no Rant, no Rapture, nor high flight”.⁷⁶³ Even John Dryden, the doyen of heroic dramas, renounced his former style, as a player spoke in the prologue to *All for Love*: “He [Dryden] fights this day unarm’d; without his Rhyme.../ His Heroe...scarce rants at all”.⁷⁶⁴ The King’s troupe, which had prided itself in producing bombastic heroic dramas, was forced to change its tack in the face of the changing taste of its audience. Indeed the King’s Company was fast losing its pull over its audience to the Duke’s Company, as the prologue to William Chamberlayne’s *Wits Led by the Nose* lamented, “You [audience] think new Plays, such as can please the Age, / Are not the work of this, but t’other Stage [the Duke’s Company]”.⁷⁶⁵

⁷⁶⁰ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, iii, p. 26.

⁷⁶¹ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, iii, p. 34.

⁷⁶² Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, iii, p. 97.

⁷⁶³ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, iii, pp. 76-77.

⁷⁶⁴ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, iii, pp. 83-84.

⁷⁶⁵ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, iii, p. 54.

If the King's Company was struggling to keep up with the changing taste of its audience, the Duke's Company similarly had to shift its attitude towards the French. The prologue to the Duke's Company's production, *Tunbridge Wells*, demonstrates the profound influence of French theatre on the London stage: "since th' invasion of the foreign Scene...and thundering Machine...There's not a Player but is turned a scout, / And every Scribbler send his Envoys out / To fetch from Paris...Fantastick fopperies to please at home".⁷⁶⁶ The Duke's Company's managers also recognised the large financial benefit of emulating their continental counterpart, as the prologue continues: "For 'tis no mode to profit by the ear. / Your [audience] souls (we know) are seated in your Eies, / An Actress in a Cloud's a strange surprize, / And you ne'er paid treble prizes to be wise".⁷⁶⁷ The French troupe had a very influential following. Henri Forneron reported that as soon as the Duchess of Portsmouth recovered from her illness she "dragged herself to her Sedan chair, to be carried to the French play". Charles II was also a devotee as the same interlocutor reported how "Charles attended all their representations" during their short stay in London.⁷⁶⁸

The French troupe in London, however, presented the Duke's Company with tough competition. The epilogue of Thomas Porter's *The French Conjuror*, for example, spoken by Anthony Leigh in the character of "Monsieur" is a clear attempt to strike at the French troupes: "Damn d'English Acteur, English Teatre, / Dere's no such ting as Wit nor Acting dere. / De Wit, de Sense, de Fame, and de Renown, / Be in de French Troop at toder end o' Town".⁷⁶⁹ During 1678 the Duke's Company's stance towards the French took a definitive turn against them. Following the Franco-Dutch War, Louis XIV, the self-proclaimed "Sun

⁷⁶⁶ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, iii, pp. 100-101.

⁷⁶⁷ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, iii, p. 101.

⁷⁶⁸ Henri Forneron, *Louise de Kerouaille, Duchess of Portsmouth, 1649-1734* (London, 1887), pp. 197-98.

⁷⁶⁹ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, iii, p. 35.

King”, was at the height of his powers. Much of the anti-French sentiments expressed in the Duke’s Company’s productions reflected the general suspicion harboured by the English against the aggressive French military presence. In the epilogue to *The Man-Hater* Thomas Shadwell wrote: “Their [French] Ships or Plays o’er ours shall ne’er advance, / For our Third Rates shall match the First of France”.⁷⁷⁰

The thought of war weighed heavily on the shoulders of the King’s troupe but it was not so much the impending war with France that worried them, but a civil war within the King’s Company. The seeds of deep division between the old guard and the younger actors of the company had been sown as early as June 1677. In the King’s Company’s production of John Banks’ *The Rival Kings* the younger actors gleefully crowed in the epilogue: “the great Dons of our House...would fain have had the Play from us, / But frankly and generously our Author stakes / His Purse and credit rather for our sakes”.⁷⁷¹ Perhaps the debutant playwright, knowing “how hard it is...for a young Writer to please this delicate Age”, sympathised with the plight of the young players.⁷⁷² The situation gradually worsened with time. In March 1678 Joseph Haines in *The Man of Newmarket* complained that “two twenty Wits...caball’d against us” – presumably referring to the group led by Charles Killigrew.⁷⁷³ Again, in the prologue to *Trick for Trick* Haines opined the desperate state of the King’s Company avowing he would move to the Continent and transform himself from “Comedian Haines” to “a man of Sword” for “is it not better farr, / To live abroad when other Nations Jarr”, he argued, “Then ’mongst our selves to make a Civil Warr?”.⁷⁷⁴ The domestic conflict within the King’s Company badly affected the everyday business of running the theatre, as Haines described how “To day we Play Great Kings, strutt, bounce and fly, / But e’re next Morn the

⁷⁷⁰ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, iii, p. 89.

⁷⁷¹ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, iii, p. 59.

⁷⁷² Dedication to Banks’s *The Rival Kings* (London, 1677), A3.

⁷⁷³ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, iii, p. 104.

⁷⁷⁴ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, iii, pp. 110-11.

Shop's shut up".⁷⁷⁵

With the King's Company being frequently closed, the Duke's Company should have enjoyed its status as the only legitimate operational theatre in London but in reality the Duke's Company was not without its problems. The key to survival was attracting large numbers of customers to the theatre but the increasingly middle-class audiences of the Duke's Company brought a priggish sense of morality with them. John Dryden's *The Kind Keeper; or, Mr Limberham* was mounted by the Duke's Company on 11 March 1678 with little success. Dryden referred to the "extreme indelicacy of this play" and it was banned after only appearing on stage three times.⁷⁷⁶ The Duke's Company's production of Thomas Otway's *Friendship in Fashion* apparently learnt its lesson from Dryden's play as the prologue informed the audience, "there's no Bawdy" in the play, "Not so much as one well-meaning hint". Otway further claimed that "'twas written every word...on strictest Vigils and on Fasting Days".⁷⁷⁷ It was little wonder that with such a sarcastic tone that the play should flop. The Duke's Company continued to try to appease the straitlaced theatregoers by mounting John Leanerd's *The Counterfeits* which advertised itself as a "harmless Comedy" and censured those who preferred "mean durty Ribaldry".⁷⁷⁸ John Banks, writing for the Duke's Company, resorted to using an actress to win over the audience in his epilogue to *The Destruction of Troy*: "The Author is to beg your kindness now; / He therefore chose me out the Task to do: / For Women are best skill'd in wheadling you".⁷⁷⁹ The desperate state of the Duke's Company is reflected in Dryden's words to Shadwell's

⁷⁷⁵ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, iii, p. 110.

⁷⁷⁶ See dedication to Dryden's *The Kind Keeper* (London, 1680), A2. Langbaine reports that "In this Play, (which I take to be the best Comedy of his) he so much expos'd the keeping part of the Town, that the Play was stopt, when it had but thrice appear'd on the Stage", p. 164.

⁷⁷⁷ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, iii, p. 121.

⁷⁷⁸ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, iii, p. 124.

⁷⁷⁹ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, iii, p. 144.

audience in his *A True Widow*: “Y’are welcome to the downfal of the Stage”.⁷⁸⁰

Over at the King’s Company things went from bad to worse. It was beset by financial ruin and upheaval. The company was in fact teetering on the brink of bankruptcy as unsettled debts flooded in: on 8 August 1677, Mohun and other leading players were ordered to pay a debt to the scene painters, Aggas and Towers, “for worke done in ye Theatre Royall”; the following November a similar order concerned payment of debt to Robert Baden for “habitts and other necessities”.⁷⁸¹ Baden was becoming impatient and he started taking the law into his own hands – on 16 January 1678 the Lord Chamberlain had to “require Mr Baden” not to “arrest or molest ye said Comedians”; on 5 April 1678 Thomas Jolly petitioned a debt payment of £54 against Mohun and others “for makeing cloathes for ye us of ye Company”.⁷⁸² Charles Killigrew could not keep his unruly half-brother in line either as the partnership between the brothers fell apart. In one of the court-cases involving the mortgaging of company stock, Henry Killigrew even turned against his brother.⁷⁸³ Henry Killigrew, who had fallen out with his brother further colluded with William Wintersell to ransack the theatre. Kynaston later described the event saying that:

[Wintersell] living in a house which Joined the said Playhouse and had a door into the same, did...by contrivance and agreement with Henry Killigrew let the said Henry Killigrew through the said Door into the said Playhouse; who thereupon by and with the said assistance of the said William Wintersell possessed himself of all the said Clothes, apparel, and books; the doing whereof very much contributed to and forwarded the dissolution of the said Company.⁷⁸⁴

⁷⁸⁰ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, iii, p. 117.

⁷⁸¹ LC 5/190, fol. 180v (*Register*, no. 1022); LC 5/191, fol. 3v (*Register*, no. 1032).

⁷⁸² LC 5/191, fol. 7v (*Register*, no. 1040); LC 5/191, fol. 13v (*Register*, no. 1049).

⁷⁸³ When James Gray sued Charles Killigrew for not paying his expenses for coming back from Scotland and for secretly mortgaging the company stock Henry Killigrew made a separate answer to Gray in which he substantially agreed with Gray and showed his hostility to his brother. See Hotson, p. 263.

⁷⁸⁴ Cited in *BDA*, xvi, p. 193. This incident was recorded in a Chancery suit of 1696 by the actor Edward Kynaston against Henry Killigrew and Wintersell’s executor, William Clayton. It is not known exactly when this event occurred but Wintersell had died by 1679 and the internal dissention within the

The financial situation had become so dire by April 1678 that actors such as Michael Mohun, Nicholas Burt and Robert Shatterell also resorted to pawning and selling costumes and properties belonging to the theatre. The actors were afterwards required by the Lord Chamberlain to provide a “Bond of five hundred pounds unto Charles Killigrew...to returne the stock of Clothes and Sceanes belonging to ye Royall Theatre intire at ye End of three yeares”.⁷⁸⁵ Mohun and the other actors were later to exact their revenge on Charles Killigrew.

Killigrew seems to have taken back the leadership during this time but his return to power did not help stabilize the company. In August 1678 the King’s Company’s leading playwright John Dryden, foreseeing the company’s imminent bankruptcy, broke his contract with the King’s Players and defected to the rival troupe. A copy of a draft headed by the name of Charles Killigrew survives in which he and the rest of the company complained to the Lord Chamberlain about the playwright breaking his contract and further, of having given *Oedipus* to the Duke’s Company – a play by Dryden and Nathaniel Lee. To crown it all, Dryden even tried to take his friend and collaborator, Lee, with him. Killigrew and others in the King’s Company protested they were “the onely Poets remaining to us”.⁷⁸⁶ The Duke’s Company only managed to recruit Dryden to begin with, but Lee would soon follow.

There were other personnel changes in the Duke’s Company as the Popish Plot began to take hold of London. Catholic persecution dramatically affected the life of the player and playwright, Matthew Medbourne. As one of the original actors who joined the Duke’s Company from its inception, the Catholic actor made his first recorded appearance on stage

King’s Company began in earnest around 1678 so I would argue that it took place somewhere around 1677 or 1678.

⁷⁸⁵ LC 5/143, p. 69 (*Register*, no. 1051).

⁷⁸⁶ Unlocated MS. For the published facsimile see Osborn, *John Dryden*, pp. 200-207. See also, *Register*, no. 1059.

on 30 September 1662.⁷⁸⁷ During his acting career, Medbourne often played secondary roles and seemed to have been, by most accounts, a mediocre performer. John Genest, the English clergyman and theatre historian, described Medbourne as “a respectable second or third rate actor”.⁷⁸⁸ David Roberts has more recently written that his roles reflected “modest acting ability”.⁷⁸⁹ It was clear that Medbourne’s forte lay in his writing rather than his acting.⁷⁹⁰ The epilogue to Ben Jonson’s *Every Man in His Humour* referred to Medbourne as “Mr. Matthew, our domestic Wit”. Medbourne was a prolific playwright who apparently wrote ten plays in total, only two having survived into posterity.⁷⁹¹ Both works, *Saint Cecily or the Converted Twins* and Medbourne’s rendition of Moliere’s *Tartuffe*, are replete with religious overtones and dedicated to prominent Catholics.⁷⁹²

One piece Medbourne wrote, in particular, got him into trouble. Among the papers in the Bromley Davenport Muniments held at the John Rylands Library in Manchester University is a recently discovered manuscript tract by Medbourne entitled, *The Old Commoner: Showing what Authority the House of Commons had in Former Times*.⁷⁹³ The surviving manuscript constitutes only a part of a much bigger treatise and the whole tract would have been made up of five large parts, as described:

The author discourses upon these 5 heads or paragraphs. 1. That the House of Commons had a very obscure birth 2. That the HC [the House of Commons] anciently meddled not with matters of peace and war, and was never more than a

⁷⁸⁷ BDA, x, p. 164.

⁷⁸⁸ Genest, *Some Account*, i, p. 256.

⁷⁸⁹ Roberts, *Thomas Betterton*, p. 122.

⁷⁹⁰ Davies writes that Medbourne “rendered himself acceptable by his learning and accomplishments”. See Thomas Davies, *Dramatic Miscellanies: Consisting of Critical Observations on Several Plays of Shakespeare*, 3 vols (London, 1785), ii, p. 63.

⁷⁹¹ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, ii, p. 355.

⁷⁹² Roberts, *Thomas Betterton*, p. 122.

⁷⁹³ BDM/III.8/ii. For further details see my “The Old Commoner: Matthew Medbourne’s Tract of 1673”, in *Notes and Queries*, 62.2 (2015), pp. 263-65.

consenter 3. That the HC has not just power in Ecclesiastical matters. 4. That the HC was often curbd [*sic*] by Q. Elizabeth 5. Kings of England have raised money, imposed and levied taxes, neither were they ever legally compelled but directed only.

The manuscript in question comprises solely of the third part, namely, “That the HC [House of Commons] has no just power in ecclesiastical matters”. As for the content, a short transcription should suffice for the purpose of this chapter. It reads as follows:

There to vindicate the church (almost all whose sacred and ancient Rites are now sacrilegiously and impiously trampled under foot) might be written large and just discourse concerning the Antiquity and authority of the clergy’s council or synod provincial which may be found no less ancient than the year of Christ 686 as Bede testifies 500 years before anybody dreamt of a parliament...From 686 to this day, saith Sir Robert Cotton, there is successive records of the clergy’s convocation & conversations, less interrupted than of parliament. The House of Commons not being trusted with the most inferior parts of Religion or Oath, it is not reasonable to think ancient policy of our nation would permit them to meddle with matters determinable in general councils.

It is possible that this tract, maligning the House of Commons, got Medbourne arrested for treason. Indeed the *Cobbett’s Complete Collection of State Trials and Proceedings* records a deponent listing “Matthew Medburn, a player in the Duke’s theatre” as being one of those who vilified “the House of Commons, and go about the city of London to incense the people against them and...deliver this treasonable position; That the Commons assembled in parliament are the devil’s representatives and not the nation’s”.⁷⁹⁴ Titus Oates himself was behind Medbourne’s trial and incarceration. J. P. Kenyon wrote that Oates “was often in the company of Matthew Medbourne” and they together frequented “a low club in Fullers’ Rents” which was a particular haunt of Catholics and “may have had other specialized

⁷⁹⁴ *Cobbett’s Complete Collection of State Trials and Proceedings for High Treason and other Crimes and Misdemeanours from the Earliest Period to the Present Time* ed. Thomas B. Howell and others, 34 vols (London: R. Bagshaw, 1809-28), vi (1816), p. 1455.

attractions”, suggesting that Medbourne may have been a closet homosexual.⁷⁹⁵ Oates later incriminated the Catholics that frequented the club in Fullers’ Rents including his old friend, Matthew Medbourne. On 3 February 1679 Sir J. Williamson noted: “Mr. Oates. Philipps in Blackfriars at the Wonder tavern. – Swears that Medbourne’s wife, in presence of another woman, offered in her husband’s name to make him a man for ever, if he could invalidate Oates’ testimony”. A few days later Williamson again wrote: “Philipps swears a certain woman brought to him by Mrs. Medbourne offered him money to swear that Oates offered him money to bring witnesses against Medburne”.⁷⁹⁶ Despite Mrs. Medbourne’s best efforts to save her husband from imprisonment, he was incarcerated on 26 November 1678 and thereafter died in Newgate.

Similarly, in the King’s Company, Michael Mohun’s woes mounted when on 19 May 1678 he was assessed for poll tax in Whitehall by the commissioners for the City of Westminster and was consequently charged 5 shillings in total. The assessment of Mohun for poll tax, unearthed recently for the first time, reads as follows:

By the Commissioners for the City of Westminster, and Liberties thereof, for Assessing His MAJESTY’s Servants, and all other Persons Residing within his MAJESTY’s Houses. We whose Names are hereunto subscribed, Commissioners for the City of Westminster, and the Liberties thereof, appointed by Virtue of an Act of Parliament made in the Twenty Ninth Year of His Majesty’s Reign that now is, Entitled, An Act for raising Money by a Poll, and otherwise, to enable his Majesty to enter into an Actual War against the French King, and for prohibiting several French Commodities; Do hereby Certifie, That Michael Mohun of the King & Queen’s Majesties Revels at the Theatre Royall was according to the said Act, Assessed in His Majesty’s House of Whitehall, for his poll 1s and for his Fee 4s. Witness our Hands and Seals, this nineteenth day of May, in the Thirtieth Year of His Majesty’s Reign, 1678.⁷⁹⁷

⁷⁹⁵ J. P. Kenyon, *The Popish Plot* (Harmondsworth, 1974), p. 55.

⁷⁹⁶ *CSPD*, [1679-80], p. 69.

⁷⁹⁷ Birmingham Archdiocesan Archives [BAA], R948. For further details, see my “An Unpublished

The King's Company's near insolvency as well as Mohun's desperate attempt to loot the troupe's goods in the previous month, suggest that the poll tax demand for a modest 5 shillings would have been a blow to the actor. The imposition of the tax, however, was made considerably worse for the Catholic actor because the purpose of it was to raise money for a war against the Catholic king of France. Mohun must have keenly felt the rising tide of anti-Catholicism in London during this time and perhaps saw in the poll tax a portent of what was to follow. It was only six months after being assessed that Mohun wrote a pleading letter to one of the secretaries of state, Joseph Williamson, to exempt him from the order "to banish all popeish recusants 10 miles from ye Cyty". For, if he was expelled from London, Mohun argued, "ye Play-house [the King's Company] must of necessity lye still".⁷⁹⁸

Indeed the Popish Plot and the national political turmoil that was to follow only made business more difficult for both playhouses. The threat of a Catholic plot to kill Charles II was so palpable that the playhouse ushers were ordered "to search under his Majesty's Seate in ye Theatre" every night to "see if there bee anything dangerous".⁷⁹⁹ The King's Company blamed the failure of its productions on political troubles as the epilogue to John Crowne's *The Ambitious Statesman* lamented, "The Pope ha's set his foot in ev'ry thing: / His Priests and Poets have conspir'd our fall, / Priests by bad plots, Poets by none at all".⁸⁰⁰ The King's Company became so desperate that Ravenscroft even was "forc'd" to write for them.⁸⁰¹

The rival troupe, however, was hardly doing any better. The Duke's Company's production of Nathaniel Lee's *Caesar Borgia, Son of Pope Alexander the Sixth* is an overtly anti-Roman play. In case the implications of the play were not clear enough, the author wrote

Document Relating to the Restoration Actor, Michael Mohun", in *Notes and Queries*, 62.2 (2015), pp. 265-66.

⁷⁹⁸ SP 29/408, no. 64 (*Register*, no. 1068).

⁷⁹⁹ LC 5/143, p. 194 (*Register*, no. 1066).

⁸⁰⁰ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, iii, p. 151.

⁸⁰¹ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, iii, p. 146.

the epilogue as a violent indictment of priests and monks who “come here disguis’d...to spy upon the Nation”.⁸⁰² The prologue to John Crowne’s *The Misery of Civil War*, performed by the Duke’s players in February 1680, opined “Religious Broyles to such a height are grown / All the sweet sound of Poetry they drown”.⁸⁰³ In the prologue to Aphra Behn’s *The Feigned Curtizans* Mrs Curren exclaimed: “The devil take this plotting Age, / ’Thas ruin’d all our Plots upon the Stage”.⁸⁰⁴ The epilogue was spoken by Smith – as one of the Duke’s Company’s co-managers – who wailed: “So hard the Times are, and so thin the Town, / Though but one Playhouse [the Duke’s Company], that must too lie down”.⁸⁰⁵

The audience’s obsession with political news crippled the theatre business. Dryden’s prologue to Lee’s *Caesar Borgia* scorned his audience: “News is your Food, and you enough provide, / Both for your selves and all the World beside”.⁸⁰⁶ It was also obvious to Shadwell that news, above all, dominated the minds of his wits. As Shadwell wrote in his prologue to *The Woman Captain*: “For News he now walks gravely up and down, / And every Fop’s a Politician grown / ...What News! Ha’ ye been at Westminster to day? / How move the French? What do the great Ones say?”.⁸⁰⁷

It seems that for a significant period after March 1677, the Duke’s Company was again the only operational theatre in London. The productions mounted in these years unsurprisingly engaged with the emerging political division between the Tories and the Whigs. In September 1679 the Duke’s Company produced Aphra Behn’s *The Young King*. The play was mounted in the midst of the Exclusion Crisis during which the Duke of York

⁸⁰² Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, iii, p. 172.

⁸⁰³ Crowne later complained that his play was suppressed because of its influence of “Popish Courts”. See Crowne, “To the Right Honourable William, Earl of Devonshire”, *The English Frier: or, The Town Sparks* (London, 1690), p. 4. For the prologue, see Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, iii, p. 213.

⁸⁰⁴ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, iii, p. 153.

⁸⁰⁵ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, iii, p. 154.

⁸⁰⁶ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, iii, p. 171.

⁸⁰⁷ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, iii, p. 192.

was sent abroad by Charles II under political pressure from the Whigs. Behn's staunch Loyalist attitude can be evinced not only from the thinly veiled title of the play but also by the metaphor in the epilogue of the "humble Swain" where "his Birthright here enjoys", and the insistence of his right to range "his native Fields".⁸⁰⁸ John Whitaker's *The Conspiracy*, mounted in March 1680 by the Duke's troupe, was similarly Loyalist in its attitude. It renounced those who sided with the Whigs or those who "petitioned" or questioned the right of kings.⁸⁰⁹

As political tempers ran high in the playhouses, episodes of violence started to break out. John Dryden was, for instance, assaulted in Rose Alley on 18 December 1679. Lewis Maidwell in his prologue to the ironically entitled *The Loving Enemies* referred to the attack: "Who dares be witty now, and with just rage, / Disturb the vice, and follies of the Age? / ...Else Rose-streets Ambuscade shall break your head...Twill be self-preservation to be dull, / It cracks the credit but preserves the skull".⁸¹⁰ The Duke's Company's anti-Whig production of *Fools have Fortune or Luck's All* in February 1680 have led Judith Milhous and Robert D. Hume to wonder whether the play did not lead to the disorder caused by Whig "Gentlemen in their Cupps" who upon entering into the pit began "flinging Links at the Actors, and using several reproachfull speeches".⁸¹¹ The "Ryotters" continued violence and disturbance forced the Duke's Company to close for some time in February.

It is conceivable that Charles Killigrew, whose political sympathies most likely lay with

⁸⁰⁸ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, iii, p. 198.

⁸⁰⁹ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, iii, pp. 230-32.

⁸¹⁰ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, iii, pp. 216-17.

⁸¹¹ See *Register*, no. 1100. See also Judith Milhous and Robert D. Hume, "The Prologue and Epilogue for 'Fools Have Fortune; or, Luck's All'", *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 43.4 (1980), pp. 313-21. A letter written by the Dowager Countess of Sunderland to Henry Sidney refers to the same incident as she wrote: "You must needs hear of the abominable disorders...in the playhouses – throwing candles and links – calling my Lord Sunderland traitor...the Duke [of York], rascal". See R. W. Blencowe, *Diary of the Times of Charles the Second by the Honourable Henry Sidney* (London, 1843), i, p. 237.

the Whigs, may have influenced the repertory choices of the King's Company.⁸¹² The King's Company's surviving repertory list, however, does not seem to demonstrate such political bias. It is more likely that he showed discretion in such matters because he was now master of the King's Company and as such he could scarcely be openly a Whig. Also the King's Company was in desperate straits and he probably had enough to worry about other than promoting his own political views.

Therefore it was probably coincidental that, when in March 1680 the King's Company was intermittently performing again, the most successful production by the King's troupe happened to be Elkanah Settle's anti-Papist play, telling the story of Pope Joan, entitled *The Female Prelate*. The play was so popular that it emptied the rival playhouse despite the efforts of the papist, "the Duchesse of Portsmouth", who "to disoblige Mr Settle the Poet carried all the Court with her to the Dukes house".⁸¹³ Thomas Otway, writing for the Duke's Company, complained in his prologue to *The Soldiers Fortune* of the unfaithful audience who flocked to the King's Company to see Settle's popular play: "With grief we see you [the audience] ravish from our Arms, / ... And we [the Duke's Company] believ'd your treach'rous Hearts as true.../ But a more pow'rful Saint [Pope Joan] enjoys ye now / Fraught with sweet sins and absolutions too".⁸¹⁴

The King's Company's internal troubles, however, put an end to further successful productions. Charles Killigrew was hoisted by his own petard when he was reported by his actors to the Lord Chamberlain for selling properties belonging to the theatre – presumably to save the company from going deeper into the red.⁸¹⁵ Killigrew was not only ordered to stop

⁸¹² Charles Killigrew, for example, was dismissed from the queen dowager's household for "show[ing] a zeal for this government" (CSP dom., 1697, 287) and he also failed to be elected to parliament when he fought against two Tories in 1701. See Bucholz's entry in ODNB.

⁸¹³ Newdigate Newsletter, 3 June 1680; cited in *London Stage*, p. 287.

⁸¹⁴ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, iii, p. 236.

⁸¹⁵ When Charles Killigrew was confronted with Gray's complaint in 1682 about selling of the stock,

peddling stage props but was also ordered to “take an inventory of the same and deliver a copy” to none other than Michael Mohun.

The company’s financial constraints no doubt goaded the younger actors such as James Gray, Cardell Goodman, and Thomas Clarke to break away from the King’s Company and work for Thomas St Serfe in Edinburgh. The prologue to John Crowne’s *Thyestes*, produced in March 1680, was spoken by a player who described how the young men of the company “Have learnt the Old mens cursed trick, to Break. / Some went to Scotland; they had cunning Plots / Who went to sell the English wit to Scots”.⁸¹⁶ A lawsuit testimony claimed, probably with some exaggeration, that the defection harmed the King’s Company so much that “no plays or Interludes could well be shown or Represented...for want of the said Players”.⁸¹⁷

The “young men” came back to London in February 1680 and by 30 July Charles Killigrew had yet again drawn up a new agreement for the players and sharers in the company.⁸¹⁸ The agreement made it abundantly clear to those who signed it that they were to perform only in the Theatre Royal and solely under the direction of Charles Killigrew. The true significance of the agreement, however, did not lay in those who signed it but rather in those who did not – notably the names of Charles Hart and Michael Mohun were absent from the agreement.⁸¹⁹ Hotson has attributed the absence of their signatures to the actors being ill but the new contract expressly safeguards those who are “Disabled from Acting by Sickness or other infirmity”, although the incapacitated must be “Examined and Allowed to be so by

he answered “that there being a great Debt due ...to several Tradesmen for Wares Delivered” and he being one of “the only persons Interested and who had the power so to do”, consequently sold “Scenes, habits, Stock of Plays, and other materials” to Sayer, Sheppey, and Morley for £300. See Hotson, p. 263.

⁸¹⁶ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, iii, pp. 227-28.

⁸¹⁷ Cited in Hotson, p. 263.

⁸¹⁸ Gray claimed in 1682 that Charles Killigrew importuned him to come back, offering to pay his travel expenses. Charles denied such allegations. See Hotson, pp. 262-63.

⁸¹⁹ The names of Wintershall and Burt were also missing as the former had died in July 1679 and the latter had retired by that time.

the said Charles Killigrew”.⁸²⁰ I would suggest that the absence of the senior actors’ signatures from the contract is the result of the acrimonious relationship between the two parties and that the new agreement was an attempt by Charles Killigrew to sever further the influence of the “Old Men” from the company. Elkanah Settle’s complaint in the dedication to *Fatal Love*, produced in September 1680, is revealing in that he writes how his play was “perform’d by the feeble Fragment of a Company” and laments the fact that “the Theatre royal was once all Harmony...But when this hapless Play came forth, its sweetest Pipes [Hart and Mohun] were stopt”.⁸²¹

The lack of success in London compelled the King’s Company to leave for Oxford. The undisciplined nature of the King’s Company was clearly well-known to the authorities of Oxford University. Both, the Chancellor, James Butler, the first Duke of Ormonde, and the Vice-Chancellor, Timothy Halton, resisted the King’s players’ request to perform in Oxford during the summer of 1680. Halton objected that the actors “usually carry hence 500 to 600 pounds to the utter undoing of severall respectable persons [students]”.⁸²² Charles Killigrew must have been embarrassed to have to implore the Lord Chamberlain to write to the Vice-Chancellor asking for permission to be given only to the King’s Company, “they Needing such Extraordinary Encouragement to repaire them for some Misfortune lately befallen them”.⁸²³ Having had a cold reception from the Vice-Chancellor, Charles Killigrew then had to fall back on the King’s “solemn recommendation”.⁸²⁴ After a considerable amount of negotiation and begging, the King’s Company was finally allowed to perform during July. However, the “prologue to the University of Oxford” testified to the troupe’s turbulent state, drawing a parallel between the recent decamping of the company’s young

⁸²⁰ Cited in Hotson, p. 265.

⁸²¹ Dedication to Settle’s *Fatal Love* (London, 1680), A2.

⁸²² See Rosenfeld, “Some Notes on the Players in Oxford”, pp. 369-70; cited in *Register*, no. 1110.

⁸²³ LC 5/143, p. 506 (*Register*, no. 1109).

⁸²⁴ See *Register*, no. 1111.

actors and the real Scottish rebellion of the same month: “Discord, and Plots which have undone our Age, / With the same ruine, have overwhelm’d the Stage. / Our House has suffer’d in the common Woe, / We have been troubled with Scotch Rebels too”.⁸²⁵

The beginning of the new theatrical season in London saw the Duke’s Company mounting hits. Thomas Betterton and his co-managers were evidently profiting from having purloined the two big hitters from their rival troupe. John Dryden’s *The Spanish Fryar* was so popular that Londoners thronged the streets. Anne Montague wrote to Lady Hatton: “I never see[n] the towne fuller, for I was to see the new play, The Spanish Fryar, and there was all the world”.⁸²⁶ Dryden attested to the financial gain and the well-trained players of his new employers, the Duke’s Company, in his dedication to the play when he wrote: “What Credit it [the play] has gained upon the Stage, I value no further than in reference to my Profit, and the satisfaction I had in seeing it represented with all the justness and gracefulness of Action”.⁸²⁷ Downes similarly praised the production of Nathaniel Lee’s *Theodosius; or the Forced Love* in which “All the Parts in’t being perfectly perform’d, with several Entertainments of Singing; Compos’d by the Famous Master Mr Henry Purcell (being the first he e’er Compos’d for the stage)”.⁸²⁸ Lee, in his dedication to the play, seconded Downes’s evaluation of the production and wrote: “The Reputation that this Play received on the Stage...was more than I could well hope from so Censorious an Age”.⁸²⁹

Censoring the stage became common practice in these years when political tensions rose to such a degree that the authorities became sensitive to productions that were considered anti-monarchical. Although Lee had scored a success for the Duke’s Company with *Theodosius*, his next play *Lucius Junius Brutus* was a disappointment. While the play was

⁸²⁵ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, iii, p. 239.

⁸²⁶ Cited in *London Stage*, p. 292.

⁸²⁷ Dedication to Dryden’s *The Spanish Fryar* (London, 1681); EEBO, 4.

⁸²⁸ Downes, p. 80.

⁸²⁹ Dedication to Lee’s *Theodosius* (London, 1680), A2.

successful enough to warrant three-days of acting, it was stopped by the Lord Chamberlain for its “very Scandalous Expressions & Reflections upon ye Government” and the Duke’s Company was further ordered not to act it again until it had been “Examined & Corrected”. Charles II was apparently so offended by the production that the Newdigate Newsletters reported he was even considering “to take away yr patent”.⁸³⁰

Indeed it is difficult to imagine what the co-managers of the Duke’s Company were thinking by putting on a play that appeared to advocate republicanism at a time of extreme political volatility. Modern scholarship contests the idea that Lee was staging his play in accordance with a political agenda. Critics such as David Womersley argue that the play instead was more of a “dispassionate inspection of a Whig moment in history”.⁸³¹ However, it is not difficult to see why Charles II should take it so personally. The play included threatening passages for the monarchy, such as this, where Vinditius, Brutus’s collaborator, addresses the crowd of plebeians:

Sirs, I am a true Commonswealths-man, and do not naturally love kings though they be good; for why should any one man have more power than the people? Has he more guts, or more brains than the people? What can he do for the people, that the people can’t do for themselves?.⁸³²

David Roberts insightfully suggests that the fact that James Nokes, the company clown, portrayed Vinditius gives the impression that far from the play being a piece of Whig propaganda it was in fact satirical of “Whiggish anti-Catholic frenzy”.⁸³³ Indeed it may have been a surprise for Betterton (who incidentally played Brutus) and his co-managers that the Lord Chamberlain should stop the play. After all, it was probably the first play to be banned during the Popish Plot crisis. Another more likely interpretation is that the co-managers were

⁸³⁰ LC 5/144, p. 28 (*Register*, no. 1117); *Register*, no. 1123.

⁸³¹ David Womersley, ed. *Restoration Drama: An Anthology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), p. 430.

⁸³² Lee, *Lucius Junius Brutus*, 24 (II.i.403-4).

⁸³³ Roberts, *Restoration Plays and Players*, pp. 24-25.

over-confident of their status as the more successful acting troupe that they deliberately mounted a piece that might catch the attention of the censor. Regardless of the rationale, the production of *Lucius Junius Brutus* at such a critical political climate betrays a momentary lapse of sound judgement by the co-managers.

But the real test of a successful acting troupe was whether it could learn from its mistakes. Indeed the two companies reacted very differently to the same problem of aggressive censorship. Following Behn's *The Second Part of the Rover*, the prologue of which showed the playwright's Tory leanings, the Duke's Company produced Nahum Tate's adaptation of *King Lear* in March 1681. Tate's adaptation crucially changed the ending of the original play by not only having Cordelia and Edgar happily marry at the end of the production but also by restoring Lear to his rightful throne. Edgar who declares at the end, "truth and virtue shall at last succeed", encapsulates the overtly Tory and pro-monarchical tone of the play. Tate understated the popularity of the play when he wrote in the dedication, "I was wackt [*sic*] with no small Fears for so bold a Change, till I found it well receiv'd by my Audience".⁸³⁴ The adaptation was in fact so popular that it went on to replace Shakespeare's version as late as 1838.⁸³⁵ By contrast, The King's Company's reaction against censorship was laughable. The King's Company's productions of Nahum Tate's *The Sicilian Usurper*, produced in the same month as *Lucius Junius Brutus*, was similarly banned.⁸³⁶ After *The Sicilian Usurper* was closed down, the King's troupe simply mounted the same production under the guise of a new title, *King Richard the Second*, until "the Cheate being found out it was forbid acting againe".⁸³⁷

Perhaps it was the best the King's Company could muster, especially considering that the

⁸³⁴ Tate, *King Lear* (London, 1681), p. 67; see dedication to the same play, EEBO 3.

⁸³⁵ Don-John Douglas, *Marketing the Bard: Shakespeare in Performance and Print, 1660-1740* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2006), p. 10.

⁸³⁶ LC 5/144, p. 29 (*Register*, no. 1118).

⁸³⁷ See *Register*, no. 1121.

troupe was making hardly any money on its productions. For some months, beginning in February 1681, the company receipts were often under £10 per night. On 11 May 1681 William Morley – the treasurer of the King’s Company – reported how the receipts fell from £10 to £3 14s 6d. At the end of the month the troupe’s profits further fell to £3 2s.⁸³⁸

Such meagre proceeds were taking a toll on the King’s Company’s productions. Nahum Tate, for instance, complained in his dedication to *The Sicilian Usurper* that “For the two Days” in which the play was performed “the Change of the Scene, Names of Persons, &c. was a great Disadvantage: many things were render’d obscure and incoherent”; and that even though Tate intended his characters to be Sicilians, they “might as well have made ’em Inhabitants of the Isle of Pines”.⁸³⁹ The epilogue to John Banks’ *The Unhappy Favourite* eloquently described the troupe’s financial plight and how the company was forced to close down frequently because of it: “We Act by Fits and Starts, like drowning Men, / But just Peep up, and then Drop down again...Not Lott’ry Cavaliers are half so poor, / Nor Broken Cits, not a Vacation Whore”.⁸⁴⁰

Financial constraints may also have affected the King’s Company’s choice of authors. In mid-March 1681 the King’s Company mounted *Tamerlane the Great* written by Charles Saunders. The production was noted for the extreme youth of the poet, as the epilogue boasted of the “Beardless Author” and the fact that “he’s the first Boy-Poet of our Age”.⁸⁴¹ The play, according to the young Cambridge student, was “Writ only for my divertissement at Vacant Hours, or Recreation after severer Studies”.⁸⁴² Similarly on 4 February 1682 the King’s Company produced Thomas Southerne’s *The Loyal Brother*. The epilogue to the play also advertised the playwright’s youth: “A Virgin Poet was serv’d up to day, / Who till this

⁸³⁸ For details, see Hotson, pp. 266-67.

⁸³⁹ See dedication to Tate’s *The Sicilian Usurper* (London, 1691); EEBO 5.

⁸⁴⁰ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, iii, p. 298.

⁸⁴¹ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, iii, p. 284.

⁸⁴² See Preface to Charles Saunders’s *Tamerlane the Great* (London, 1681); EEBO 2.

hour, ne're cackled for a Play".⁸⁴³ The boy-poets indicate the King's Company's lack of success in getting more mature and prominent playwrights to write for them. There would have been very little incentive for experienced playwrights to write for the King's Company with its paucity of audience numbers and the unstable nature of the company. It is telling that when Southerne approached Dryden for a prologue to go with his play – presumably *The Loyal Brother* – expecting it to cost four guineas, Dryden told him that "he must have six guineas for it; which young man [said Dryden] is out of no disrespect to you, but the Players [the King's Company] have had my goods too cheap".⁸⁴⁴

The financial decline inevitably led to agitation within the company and further disintegration. The shareholders of the King's Company were clamouring about not receiving their shares on Drury Lane. The depositions of the company sharers to Charles Killigrew reveal how the troupe not only had had great difficulty in paying its daily rent of £5 14s but also was not even making enough to cover normal operational costs from the previous winter or spring.⁸⁴⁵

The die was cast on 14 October 1681 when Charles Hart and Edward Kynaston signed a secret pact with the Duke's Company's co-managers. Thomas Betterton, William Smith, and Charles Davenant designed to sabotage any hope of survival for the King's Company. The two actors were given 5s for each day the Duke's Company performed with the proviso that they did not act for the King's Company. They were also to make over their rights to the King's Company's "Plays, Books, Cloathes, and Scenes"; hand over their share of the King's Company's profits; free themselves from any obligations to the King's Company and join the Duke's Company; try to promote a merger between the two companies and, if necessary, take

⁸⁴³ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, iii, p. 364.

⁸⁴⁴ See Thomas Southerne, *The Works of Thomas Southerne*, ed. Robert Jordan and Harold Love, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), i, p. 14; cited in *Register*, no. 1144.

⁸⁴⁵ C24/1058/53 (*Register*, no. 1133).

Charles Killigrew to court.⁸⁴⁶ The Duke's Company's managers – seeing the King's Company at its most vulnerable – were going in for the kill. Charles Killigrew had not helped matters by encouraging segregation and pursuing a strategy of division by drawing up new agreements, which undoubtedly left the older actors feeling angry and unwanted.

It is not difficult to imagine why Hart and Kynaston jumped ship considering the unprofitable state of the theatre. Even the younger actors of the King's Company – however facetiously – contemplated quitting the stage. In the epilogue to Lee's *Mithridates* Cardell Goodman complained of the desperate situation of the theatre business. He declared, "Pox on this Play-house, tis an old tir'd Jade". He considers quitting the stage to become a "Witness of the Plot" but realises "That's overstockt, there's nothing to be got", before hitting upon the idea of popular fairs: "Have you not seen the Dancing of the Rope? ...A Damsel does to the Ladders Top advance / And with two heavy Buckets drags a Dance; / The Yawning Crowd pearch't up to see the sight, / And slav'r'd at the Mouth for vast Delight".⁸⁴⁷

The Duke's Company used the popularity of the fairs fully to its advantage. Despite Shadwell ostensibly condemning the audience for placing the same value on "Poets" as they do "Juglers" and "Ropedancers", he unashamedly courts the same audience in his production of *The Lancashire Witches*, "a kind of Opera", by trowelling it with "several Machines of Flyings for the Witches" as well as "other Diverting Contrivances".⁸⁴⁸

In the printed edition of *The Lancashire Witches* in 1682 Shadwell, who was a Whig playwright, described how a "great opposition was design'd against the play" but since "I [Shadwell] had so numerous an assembly of the best sort of men...that they quash'd all the vain attempts of my Enemies, the Inconsiderable Party of Hissers yielded, and the Play lived

⁸⁴⁶ See *Register*, no. 1134.

⁸⁴⁷ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, iii, pp. 325-27.

⁸⁴⁸ Downes, p. 80.

in spite of them”.⁸⁴⁹

Shadwell’s experience was typical as political partisanship underscored and affected nearly every production in both companies towards the end of 1681. Indeed the political divide in the auditorium was so conspicuous that the playwright even knew the difference between “both Parties...By Hisses th’ Whiggs, and by their Claps the Tories”.⁸⁵⁰ Thomas Durfey’s *Sir Barnaby Whigg*, for instance, produced by the King’s Company in October 1681, was an overtly “partisan play”.⁸⁵¹ The main satirical target was the rival poet himself – Shadwell. He was portrayed in the shape of the offensive caricature, Sir Barnaby Whigg. The violence of loyalist animosity towards the Whigs is evident as Durfey confesses how he “broke” the head of a Whig supporter and threatens those who still “disobey” that they will “be hang’d for this one day”.⁸⁵² Aphra Behn’s *The Roundheads, or the Good Old Cause* was one of the most vindictive anti-Whig productions. The prologue was spoken by none other than the ghost of John Hewson, one of the most infamous regicides, through whose words Behn voiced her denunciations of the Whigs. The ghost of Hewson ascends from hell “drest as a Cobler” and delivers the prologue:

Look back on our success in Forty One,
Was even braver Villaines carried on
Or new ones now more hopefully begun.
And shall our unsucess our merit lose
And make us quit the Glory of our Cause?
No! Hire new Villains, Rogues without remorse
And let no Law nor Conscience stop your course.
Let Politicians order the Confusion
And let the Saints pay Pious Contribution.
Pay those that Rail, and those that can delude
With scribbling Nonsense the Loose Multitude.⁸⁵³

⁸⁴⁹ Shadwell’s preface described how the play was “licenc’d...at first with little alteration”, until “Alarm” caused it to be censored. See *The Lancashire’s Witches* (London, 1682), A2.

⁸⁵⁰ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, iii, p. 335.

⁸⁵¹ Owen, *Restoration Theatre and Crisis*, p. 194.

⁸⁵² Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, iii, p. 336.

⁸⁵³ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, iii, pp. 345-47.

The prologue, reinforced by the title of the play, draws a parallel between the civil war and the Exclusion Crisis, and portrays the Whigs as no different from the regicides. The types of plays performed and the prologues spoken in those plays – such as *The Round Heads*, *Sir Barnaby Whigg*, and *The London Cuckolds* – demonstrate the radical change in the tone of such pieces from previous productions as aggressive loyalist reaction set in during this period.

The rabid Tory or loyalist reaction did not last long, however, before playwrights and players in both companies were beginning to get weary of their productions being subjected to, what Danchin called, “the follies of this Plotting Age”.⁸⁵⁴ While productions on the whole continued to take a Tory stand, the rhetoric of the prologues and the epilogues became palpably less combative. Even Behn, one of the most avid Tory supporters, wrote a jocular prologue for her production of *The False Count* in which she pretends that she has become converted to the Whig cause.⁸⁵⁵ Elkanah Settle – a Whig playwright – similarly echoed Behn’s prologue when he wrote: “Should a Whig-Poet Write a Tory-Play? / ...Poets, we all know, can Change, like you”.⁸⁵⁶ The ease at which Behn and Settle could ostensibly change their minds was intended to be comical but it also suggested, perhaps unwittingly, the interchangeability between the two parties. This idea is further developed in the King’s Company’s production of Thomas Southerne’s *The Loyal Brother*, the epilogue of which deplores the existence of two parties: “In one poor Isle, why shou’d two Factions be? / Small difference in your Vices I can see”.⁸⁵⁷

Non-partisan plays began to resurface towards the beginning of 1682. The epilogue to

⁸⁵⁴ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, iii, p. 334.

⁸⁵⁵ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, iii, pp. 339-40.

⁸⁵⁶ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, iii, pp. 383-84.

⁸⁵⁷ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, iii, p. 365.

Behn's lost play, *Like Father, Like Son*, produced in March 1682, declared "Nor Whigg, nor Tory here can take Offence" with the play as "It Libels neither Patriot, Peer or Prince".⁸⁵⁸ John Banks's prologue to his play *Vertue Betray'd* despises the current habit of playwrights who writes plays with a political agenda. The prologue, spoken by a player, even chastises the audience for dividing the nation:

He brings before your eyes a modern Story,
Yet meddles not with either Whig or Tory.
Was't not enough (vain men, of either side)
Two Roses once the Nation did divide?
But it must be in danger now agen,
Betwixt the Scarlet, and Green Ribbon men?⁸⁵⁹

In the midst of political strife, both theatres promoted peace and reconciliation, the culmination of which saw the Duke of York returning from Scotland to make his appearance at the Duke's Company's theatre on 21 April 1682. With political stability came rejuvenation of theatrical activity. Nahum Tate, in his epilogue to *The Ingratitude of a Common-Wealth*, implied that there was better attendance than before: "Methinks this Company's a blessed Sight, / And shews the Realm's disorder coming Right".⁸⁶⁰

For the first time in a long time the two companies competed with non-partisan productions. Their main bait was the foreign dignitaries who visited London during this period. The result of the competition was clear with the Duke's Company's productions being attended at least twice as often as the King's Company's productions.⁸⁶¹ The Duke's Company impressed the Moroccan ambassador with shows such as *Psyche* and *The Tempest*. The *Impartial Protestant Mercury*, for instance, reported how *Psyche*, "a Play of

⁸⁵⁸ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, iii, p. 380.

⁸⁵⁹ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, iii, p. 388.

⁸⁶⁰ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, iii, p. 351.

⁸⁶¹ The number of times foreign dignitaries were recorded as visiting the Duke's Company's productions amounted to seven times while the number of times they visited the King's Company was only three times from January to July 1682. See *London Stage*.

extraordinary splendour”, left the ambassador “extreamly [*sic*] pleas’d”.⁸⁶² Similarly, on 1 February it was reported that “this day his Excellency the Ambassador of Morocco was present at the Duke’s Theatre, where the *Tempest* was acted with which his Excellency seem’d extreamly pleased”.⁸⁶³ To counter its rival, the King’s Company could only resort to its old tactic of mounting Duffett’s *The Mock Tempest*.⁸⁶⁴

While the nation was in a state of reconciliation, the fissure between the old and the young players finally erupted in the King’s Company. On 21 March 1682 “there happened a difference between the Senior and Young men belonging to the King’s playhouse”, which, as *Newdigate Newsletters* reported, “grew to such a height that they all drew their swords which occasioned the wounding of severall”.⁸⁶⁵ Despite Charles Killigrew’s best efforts to reassert his authority, the division was beyond repair and not long after the fracas on 4 May 1682, an initial agreement was made between the Duke’s Company and the King’s Company to merge the two troupes.⁸⁶⁶

Charles Killigrew initially entered into the agreement himself, without consulting the rest of the company, and agreed to dissolve the company and to deliver the King’s Company’s

⁸⁶² *Impartial Protestant Mercury*, 20-24 Jan. 1681/2; cited in *London Stage*, p. 304.

⁸⁶³ *Loyal Protestant*, 2 Feb. 1681/2; cited in *London Stage*, p. 305.

⁸⁶⁴ No doubt Duffett would have produced more burlesques of the Duke’s Company’s productions had he not been imprisoned for a forgery charge. Milhous, *Betterton*, p. 37.

⁸⁶⁵ See *Register*, no. 1147.

⁸⁶⁶ It is unclear who initiated the deal but William Smith made a statement as to how the union came to be. In the statement, Smith records that there were “many differences rising amongst them [the King’s Company], And [Charles Killigrew] being Sensible...That it would be Impossible or extremely difficult for him to compose the said Differences, and by Such acting of same Company or Such of them as were or might be prevailed to act...to raise sufficient clear Moneys to pay the Debts owing upon the Account of the same Playhouse, and to buy Clothes and other things necessary for his said Company to act there again; And the said [Killigrew] being in great despondency of making any advantage Suitable to the charge of their future acting...and Observing that by the Management and methods of matters at the said Theatre called the Duke’s Theatre the profits arising out of and by the same had in a reasonable measure Answered the Expectations of the persons concerned therein, He...applied himself not only to the said Charles Davenant but likewise to Thomas Betterton”. Cited in Hotson, p. 270.

whole stock of plays and the theatre to its rival. Killigrew, however, did not legally have the right to do this as he only had a claim to one fourth of the building shares and to one of the $6\frac{3}{4}$ acting shares. The consequences of which meant that he would have to fight it out in court for the next several years. This does not seem like the action of a wily operator as suggested by R. O. Bucholz. Rather it is more likely that, Killigrew, who had by this time learned the harsh lessons of betrayal from his father and from his actors, was not about to let this opportunity go by. This was his last desperate attempt at getting something out of the theatrical patent that he had fought so hard to win. Why should he be a stickler for rules and regulations when others in the company were clearly not? Cardell Goodman was buying costumes in Killigrew's name; Philip Griffin was dining on money belonging to the company; and Hart and Kynaston had already signed a secret deal with the Duke's Company.⁸⁶⁷

By simply being Thomas Killigrew's son and heir to the patent, he was able to negotiate for himself 15 percent of the United Company's profits as well as becoming the nominal head of the new company along with Charles Davenant. Moreover, out of its twenty shares, the new company also gave Killigrew three – after some legal dispute – of which one and a half shares were for compensating Killigrew for assuming the debts (£500) of the King's Company when he dissolved it. The other half of his three shares were meant as compensation for having to lose his patent rights, which were now “joyned and united” with the Duke's Company “as one and soe for ever continued”.⁸⁶⁸ Considering that the United Company share was worth around £600 in the mid-1680s, Charles Killigrew had been handsomely compensated for closing down his company and probably provided him with a better income than he had ever received as the manager of the King's Company.

⁸⁶⁷ See Wilson, *Mr Goodman*, p. 71; and PRO C7/133/82.

⁸⁶⁸ Add. MS 20,726 (*Register*, no. 1151).

The process of organising the union of the two companies took approximately six months in which time the interested parties had to iron out the details of the merger. Charles Killigrew, for instance, negotiated a deal with Charles Davenant over what to do with the Drury Lane Theatre. It was agreed that Davenant would get a nineteen-year lease for a house rent of £3 per acting day and that the company would pay the ground rent. Milhous writes that Killigrew protected not only himself but he also protected “the interests of his fellow investors, by insisting that the Drury Lane rent be paid every acting day, even if the performance occurred at Dorset Garden” – another instance in which Charles Killigrew’s actions are not congruent with the view that he was all in it for himself as he clearly went out of his way to help others.⁸⁶⁹ Davenant, in turn, got out of the deal an additional use of a theatre – which as noted before, was more attuned to performing plays – as well as preventing any possible dissenting actors or building shareholders from performing at the venue.⁸⁷⁰

The very first production by the United Company was mounted in the Drury Lane theatre on 16 November 1682. The prologue, spoken by the ex-managers of the Duke’s Company and now the co-managers of the new United Company, Thomas Betterton and William Smith, told the audience in no uncertain terms that the union was more the result of an aggressive take-over (as it drew a parallel of colonizing North America with colonizing the Theatre Royal) and attributes the fall of the King’s Company to the development of factions within the troupe, comparable to that of the Whigs and Tories in the nation. The prologue, written by Dryden, is worth quoting at length:

Whats this, you’ll say to Us and our Vocation?

⁸⁶⁹ Milhous, *Betterton*, p. 40.

⁸⁷⁰ Charles Davenant was far-sighted enough to know that this was obviously a very real threat. In 1689 Henry Killigrew attempted to set up a second company by asking the new monarchs, William and Mary for their permission. Similarly in November 1693 Doggett, Bowen and other actors also tried to break away from the United Company when Alexander Davenant fled abroad.

Onely thus much, that we have left our Station [Dorset Garden]
And made this Theatre [Theatre Royal] our new Plantation.
The Factious Natives [the King's troupe] never cou'd agree;
But aiming, as they call'd it, to be Free,
Those Play-house Whiggs set up for Property.
Some say they no Obedience paid of late;
But wou'd new Fears and Jealousies create;
Till topsy-turvy they had turn'd the State.⁸⁷¹

Even though it is difficult to determine whom exactly Dryden meant by the “Play-house Whiggs” in the King’s Company, he was probably referring to the young upstart players led by Charles Killigrew. The prominent old men of the company, such as Hart, Mohun, and Lacy were after all proven loyalists who had fought for the king in the civil war. The reference to “no Obedience paid of late” most likely referred to the young players who had recently absconded to Scotland and “new Fears and Jealousies create” may have been a reference to Charles Killigrew’s use of secret agreements to “Free” the company from its old members. It is important to note that Dryden was not only the first in-house playwright for the King’s Company (right up until 1679), but had also worked on the King’s Company’s productions thereafter, which gave him an intimate knowledge of what was going on within the troupe. The prologue is therefore an eloquent indictment of the young players, and above all their leader, Charles Killigrew, for the dissention within the King’s Company and its consequent downfall.

The final chapter explored the time span from when Charles Killigrew took over the management of the King’s Company to the amalgamation of the two acting troupes. The period saw a further increase in the influence of the city audience. Catering to their middle-class tastes by the Duke’s Company, in particular, resulted in the rise of harmless

⁸⁷¹ Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues*, iv, pp. 428-29.

comedies in these years – which may have set a precedent for the Collier Controversy that was to follow at the turn of the century – and may have influenced the decline in heroic plays, which dealt with the high and the mighty.⁸⁷²

The single most important influence on theatrical productions during this period was the religious and political divisions that racked the nation. The Popish Plot scare fuelled the popularity of anti-papist plays such as Nathaniel Lee's *Caesar Borgia* and Elkanah Settle's *The Female Prelate*. The Exclusion Crisis and the consequent partisan politics that resulted from it was directly reflected in the productions, as the London stage became one of the key public places of political commentary. Plays with a Tory bias in productions such as Aphra Behn's *The Roundheads*, Edward Ravenscroft's *The London Cuckolds*, and Thomas Durfey's *The Royalist*, dominated the theatres, especially those of the Duke's Company.

This chapter, however, also records the attempt by both theatres – perhaps more so by the King's Company – to promote peace and reconciliation between the two parties. The result of which was the rise in non-partisan writing towards the end of the period. Nevertheless, political turmoil in the nation had a paralysing effect on the theatres. Peter Thomson somewhat downplayed the effects of the “political hurricane” when he wrote: “Drama can thrive on turmoil, and the Catholic Duke's own company of players rode out the storm with only the occasional casualty”.⁸⁷³ I would suggest rather that both companies suffered greatly because the twin disasters of the Popish Plot and the Exclusion Crisis not only affected individual theatrical personnel such as Matthew Medbourne and Michael Mohun but, as can be evinced from the tone of the prologues and epilogues, the business of both companies was

⁸⁷² See Jeremy Collier, *A Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage* (London, 1698); Yuji Kaneko, *The Restoration Stage Controversy*, 6 vols (London: Routledge Thoemmes, 1996); Joseph Wood Krutch, *Comedy and Conscience after the Restoration* (New York, 1924); and Michael Corder, “Playwright versus Priest: Profanity and the Wit of Restoration Comedy”, in Payne Fiske, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to English Restoration Theatre*, pp. 209-25.

⁸⁷³ Thomson, *The Cambridge Introduction*, p. 17.

severely damaged – not just in terms of lower profits but also by the increasing number of violent episodes in the theatres.

The combination of adverse external circumstances and bad management finally forced one company in particular to break down. The little that has been written about Charles Killigrew and his management of the King's Company has elicited numerous suggestions by scholars of the similarities between him and his father, Thomas Killigrew. Through a close analysis of the younger Killigrew's managerial career, however, this chapter has suggested that there is not only a difference in their personalities but also a stark contrast in the managerial style of the two men.

Charles Killigrew was altogether a different character from the devious and manipulative Thomas Killigrew. Charles Killigrew's managerial style suggests he was a person who was more naive and bookish – Dryden was grateful for a volume of “German authors” which “my Ingenious friend Mr Charles Killigrew once lent me”.⁸⁷⁴ His innocence, added to his youth, was repeatedly demonstrated when he was betrayed not only by his father but also by the senior actors who shamelessly took advantage of his un-worldliness.⁸⁷⁵ His preference for dealing in contracts and numbers (he kept the company afloat by letting go of minor personnel and selling company goods) attested to his lack of skill in verbal communication. He moreover had the tendency to rely on the Lord Chamberlain and use official lines of command when faced with a problem rather than dealing directly with his own employees – a tell-tale sign, perhaps, of Charles Killigrew's lack of confidence as a leader.

Indeed Charles Killigrew's lack of charisma and limited experience were reflected in the fact that it took less than six months for the older actors to revolt after the young Killigrew

⁸⁷⁴ Dedication to Dryden trans., *The Satires of Decimus Junius Juvenalis* (London, 1702), liv.

⁸⁷⁵ Perhaps it was a reflection of his innocence when he embraced Jeremy Collier's attempts at theatrical reform as Master of the Revels. Colley Cibber complained of Charles Killigrew that he “assisted this Reformation with a more zealous Severity than ever”. See Cibber, *Apology*, i, pp. 275-76.

took over the management of the King's Company. He similarly could not even keep his younger actors from deserting to Scotland. In theory it made sense for Charles Killigrew to try and sever the old troublesome actors from the company by using secret agreements with the younger actors. In practice, however, actors such as Charles Hart, Michael Mohun and Edward Kynaston, were so important to the troupe that their segregation from the company only made the troupe weaker by fostering a sense of envy and suspicion. It is worth noting that Thomas Killigrew was adamant about keeping the older actors within the company. It was apparent that Charles Killigrew did not have the commanding presence nor the political astuteness to bind the troupe together.

While it is undeniable that Charles Killigrew did not inherit the most disciplined of acting troupes from his father, it is also true that it was under his watch that the King's Company eventually faltered. The numerical record alone demonstrates the difference between the two men: Thomas Killigrew holds the title as having the longest association between a manager and a single company of the period with an impressive sixteen-year tenure, while Charles Killigrew served as manager for a mere five years. Charles Killigrew was not only a naive and less skilled manager than his father but he also greatly contributed to the demise of the King's Company.

Conclusion

Charles Killigrew was Thomas Killigrew's son and heir but he was no protégé. Thomas Killigrew's managerial style instead looked forward to the likes of Christopher Rich. Originally a lawyer from Somerset, Rich shared with Killigrew a natural cunning and a keen sense of opportunism. The similarity between the two managers is remarkable: they both defrauded their employees and shareholders in the patent and the building; they were both "adept at all the delaying tactics the law allowed"; they had a constant stream of complaints against them during their tenure; they often retracted their promises and agreements; they were both indifferent to their employees' well being; and they even shared a similar taste in Italian opera.⁸⁷⁶ Colley Cibber, who was to become one of the leading actors of Rich's company, left a vivid description of Rich's managerial style in the following passage which might as well be describing Killigrew:

A man of great cunning...he was as sly a Tyrant as was ever at the Head of a Theatre; for he gave the Actors more Liberty and fewer Days Pay than any of his Predecessors; He would laugh with them over a Bottle, and bite them in their Bargains; He kept them poor, that they might not be able to rebel, and sometimes merry, that they might not think of it.⁸⁷⁷

Indeed it was as if Rich had studied the lessons of Killigrew's career as theatre manager and had fine-tuned them. It is little wonder that Milhous, a vocal critic of Killigrew, should also be equally censorious about Rich.⁸⁷⁸ But just as Killigrew's managerial career is undergoing revision, scholars are now reconsidering Rich's hitherto overwhelmingly negative reputation.⁸⁷⁹ Rich's rise as a theatre manager, however, would have to wait a little over a

⁸⁷⁶ Judith Milhous, "Rich, Christopher (bap. 1647, d. 1714)", *ODNB*, online edn, Jan. 2008.

⁸⁷⁷ Cibber, *Apology*, i, p. 252.

⁸⁷⁸ See Milhous, *Betterton*, p. 51. Milhous called Rich managerial style: "tyrannical" and "pinchpenny".

⁸⁷⁹ Roberts, *Restoration Plays and Players*, pp. 99-102.

decade after the union.

Towards the end of his life, Thomas Killigrew had two portraits painted of himself. The first painting was by an anonymous artist in the 1670s in which Killigrew fashioned himself as a pilgrim of St James (Figure 3).⁸⁸⁰ The second and last portrait of Killigrew was painted some time in the 1680s by Jan van der Vaart in which Killigrew is depicted as St Paul (Figure 4). In these portraits Killigrew is not depicted as ruthless and opportunistic but as pious and reflective. By portraying himself as a martyr and a saint, was Killigrew being truly penitent or was he fashioning himself for posterity as the wronged party? As Philip Major asked in the introduction to *Thomas Killigrew*, “who is the ‘real’ Thomas Killigrew?”⁸⁸¹

While this thesis does not aim to answer in its entirety who Thomas Killigrew was as a man, it does go some way to answer what he was like as a theatre manager. This thesis has portrayed an alternative picture from Judith Milhous’s indifferent and incompetent manager but has also differed from David Roberts’s image of a more sympathetic patentee. Through a comprehensive analysis of Thomas Killigrew’s career as a theatre manager, I have argued that Killigrew was – even by the standards of his contemporaries – particularly devious and manipulative. As I further suggest, Killigrew’s successes as theatre manager were principally due to his unscrupulous nature.

Having come late to the profession as a playhouse manager, at the age of forty-eight, Killigrew made up for his lack of experience in professional theatre by bringing to the job his natural sense of pragmatism and a set of skills acquired from his various court appointments as a page, playwright, diplomat, army officer, and jester. Despite his propensity for

⁸⁸⁰ This was not the first time Killigrew dressed up as a pilgrim. Killigrew once, as a joke, “went to pay his majesty a visit in his private apartments, habited like a pilgrim who was bent on a long journey”. When the king asked the meaning of his appearance and where he was going, Killigrew replied: “To hell...to fetch back Oliver Cromwell that he may take some care of the affairs of England; for his successor taketh none at all”. See Wood, *Athenae Oxonienses*, iv, p. 693.

⁸⁸¹ Major, “Introduction”, p. 6.

grandiosity and boastfulness, Killigrew, as a theatre manager, liked to do most of his work behind the scenes – an approach that scholars have often mistaken for indifference. In reality, he was intimately involved in the day-to-day running of the theatre from company productions to politics – even to an extent that his actors found him overbearing and tyrannical. Killigrew was not a man who relished confrontation, however, as his keen sense of self-preservation often meant that when faced with a genuine threat he would avoid a direct clash but find other ways to achieve his ends. This form of cowardice often translated in practical terms to making compromises, or worse, backstabbing. He did take risks but only at other people's expense, whether it was his actors or shareholders, and he did not flinch from making hard personnel decisions if it meant ensuring his company's survival. Until the very last, Killigrew used his cunning and charm to hold on to his powers as the patentee. However much Killigrew may have wanted to be seen as a martyr, this thesis has shown him to be a Machiavellian.

This is not to say that Killigrew did not make mistakes as a theatre manager. He is often guilty of manipulating his funds and overstepping his mark but his major setbacks as theatre manager were often the result of external circumstances beyond his control. The deaths of the King's Company's prominent players such as Walter Clun and the burning of the Bridges Street Theatre can only be described as bad luck. Killigrew's leading actors were constantly bickering and were impossible to manage. Milhous stated that the problematic actors "simply did not want to work for Thomas Killigrew", but the truth of the matter is that they did not want to work under anyone.⁸⁸² They certainly did not want to work under Charles Killigrew and even if they became co-managers of the company, the in-house rivalry between the senior actors meant that they would never agree. The fact that the quarrel between Charles Hart and Michael Mohun had closed the theatre a number of times and that their brief

⁸⁸² Milhous, *Betterton*, p. 33.

co-management of the company with John Lacy in 1663 ended by nearly tearing the troupe apart, suggests that they were beyond anybody's control.⁸⁸³ Combined with these unfortunate episodes was Killigrew's life-long association with royal patronage. One might argue that his background in court and his actors' strong link with royal service meant that there was a greater demand for Killigrew to balance aristocratic patronage with commercial success in running his theatre than Davenant, let alone Thomas Betterton, both of whose roots lay more in the commercial arena than at the court. If Killigrew sometimes failed to adapt sufficiently and quickly enough to changing times and new audiences, such as the growing middle-class, this may have been due to the nature of his company being more embedded in elite culture (or at least commonly perceived that way) than its rival.

In conclusion, this thesis is strictly a study of theatre history that looks at the importance of management and company rivalry to the development of Carolean drama. It has closely traced the course of theatrical competition between the managers of the King's Company and the Duke's Company in five phases: the initial success of the King's Company; the heated competition between Killigrew and Davenant; the period of stalemate; the turning of the tide for the Duke's Company; and the eventual downfall of the King's Company. Throughout the chronological survey I have challenged established perceptions by theatre historians of the conditions pertaining in each company, the nature of the competition, as well as on the characters and actions of individuals that contributed to the Carolean stage rivalry. In doing so, this thesis has made extensive use of the *London Stage*, which as Hume writes, "contains an implicit story of competition and innovation for every season" and "puts under our noses a vivid story of ongoing competition, sometimes fierce, even destructive competition".⁸⁸⁴

Changes in drama are often attributed to political, social and cultural events with good

⁸⁸³ Pepys, viii, p. 569.

⁸⁸⁴ Hume, "Theatre History, 1660-1800", pp. 18-19.

reason but without a close study of the circumstances in which plays were mounted on stage, there is limited sense of the practical factors which affect the development of drama. Indeed the highly competitive rivalry between the King's Company and the Duke's Company and how the respective management responded to the success or the failure of the other theatre is the background against which one must read the plays of the Carolean period.

Thomas Killigrew, whose managerial career spanned the longest in the Carolean years, was an influential figure of the period whose pioneering theatrical practices and struggles as a theatre manager – in which capacity his authority extended from the daily business of running the troupe to the artistic direction of the company – had a direct effect not only on theatre history but also on the dramatic traditions of the seventeenth century.



Figure 1. Sir Anthony Van Dyck, *Thomas Killigrew and William, Lord Crofts* (1638)
Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2016



Figure 2. Wenceslaus Hollar, *Thomas Killigrew (?)*.
© Trustees of the British Museum



Figure 3. Anon., Thomas Killigrew. © Trustees of the British Museum



Figure 4. Jan van der Vaart, after William Lessing, *Thomas Killigrew*.
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