Introduction: from Republic to Restoration

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From Republic to Restoration brings together the work of historians, literary scholars, cultural and music historians with a shared interest in the crossing of the common period boundary of 1660. While recent, more inclusive studies of the seventeenth century have dislodged 1660 as a rigid historiographical divide, relatively few critics have examined the continuum of Republic to Restoration, investigating the features of the Restoration in the context of the legacies, traumas and achievements of the Republic. On one level, such a historiographical treatment of the seventeenth century may be seen as an acceptance of the political discourse which accompanied the return of kingship in 1660, mirroring the Restoration’s repudiation or casting into oblivion the entire social order preceding it. Charles II dated his reign from 1649 and ignored the so-called Interregnum in his regnal years calculation. But, as C. V. Wedgwood argued over half a century ago, ‘the problems and achievements of the Restoration epoch, including Parliament, the Church, social or economic history, literature, the arts and the sciences have their beginnings in the earlier period’. Historians and scholars of theatre, drama and the arts who end or begin their work at the Restoration can obscure continuities between the first and second halves of the seventeenth century. As chapters in this volume illustrate, reconstruction of the old order did not mend the political, religious and cultural divisions that had opened up during the civil wars. Nor did the political experiments and the artistic and scientific achievements of the 1650s fail to leave an imprint on the rest of the century. While there might have been an understandable reluctance to lay claim to the legacies of the Republic, at various moments in the Restoration there was a resurfacing of ideologies and genres formulated during the previous decades. The genesis of the political parties which emerged near the end of Charles’s reign lay in the 1650s and cannot be understood fully without attending to the presbyterian and republican debates of that era.
In studies of the literature and culture of the mid-seventeenth century (with the arguable exception of drama and theatre studies, which frequently end in 1642 and begin at 1660) dating is often subsumed under the term ‘early modern’, a fluid period definition which can include Tudor, Stuart and Commonwealth literature. Nevertheless, mid-seventeenth-century writers are often inserted into specific period traditions, such as ‘Civil War’ or ‘Restoration’, which can raise distorting questions. Is John Milton a poet and prose writer of the Republic or a poet whose great literary works were stimulated by the Restoration? Is William Davenant the laureate of the Caroline court, the chief dramatist of a reinvented theatre of the 1650s or the theatre manager and Restoration adapter of Shakespeare? Is Margaret Cavendish the royalist poet and dramatist in exile during the 1650s or the first female philosopher and only female participant in the early activities of the Royal Society? Is Andrew Marvell a puritan lyric poet of the 1650s and panegyrist of Cromwell or a post-Restoration satirist? Is Hobbes’s philosophy primarily shaped by civil war and the establishment of the Protectorate or by the chasms that he saw opening up in the Restoration settlement? Answers to these questions have to accommodate the fragmented experience of writers as the trajectories of their careers were driven by the tumultuous political reversals of the mid-seventeenth century and involved negotiations and renegotiations with changing regimes. The chapters in this volume pay attention to the work of seventeenth-century poets, dramatists and prose writers, religious and secular, whose careers, spanning the Republic and the Restoration, were shaped equally by ideas, events and experiences on either side of the political and ideological divide.

In establishing links between periods often regarded as discrete, thus initiating new period conversations, From Republic to Restoration takes a transdisciplinary approach, undertaken in the firm belief that by drawing on diverse expertise a more nuanced and variegated perspective on the culture of the mid- to late seventeenth century will emerge. In practice, with the expansion – or disregard – of the literary canon and with both literary scholars and historians working on Milton, Hobbes, Cavendish and Nedham, for example, the seventeenth century has been for some time hospitable to interdisciplinarity. This volume aims to take literary and historical approaches a step further, moving beyond the familiar measures of Church and State to take into account wider questions of social and cultural influence. The effects of the national predicament are evident in all areas of life: religion, science, language, politics, drama, memoirs, diaries and social relations. The juxtaposition of discussion on religious dissent, prophecy, memoirs and historical writing, theatre, art and music, for example, enables a fuller image of an age than could possibly emerge from a more narrowly focused, or, indeed, a single-authored approach. Employing
a range of sources, contributors capture the voices of authors such as Hobbes, Milton, Marvell and Pepys as well as those – such as dissenters, plotters against the regime and women prophetesses – that lie deeper in the archives. Listening to such contesting voices self-evidently offers insight into how the causes and effects of the Civil War, Republic and Restoration were perceived by different people and at different times. But, more than that, hearing the voices of both the victorious and the defeated, those in the political ascendency and those exiled or marginalised, challenges any notion of a monolithic cultural formation, illustrating instead ideological and cultural heterogeneity in the periods under examination. Republican rhetoric, for example, was appropriated for royalist panegyric, while absolutist theories were used in support of the Cromwellian Protectorate. As Amanda Capern observes, female religious writers – such as Mary Pope, Elizabeth Warren and Elizabeth Poole – could use prophetic providential ideas to defend the King. Opera, which was associated with European courtly culture, was performed in a hybrid form during the Commonwealth. A belief in providentialism bridged parties and factions during the civil wars, the establishment of the Commonwealth and its demise. The Restoration court was criticised not only by the ‘godly’ party, but by royalists disillusioned by displays of excessive luxury and conspicuous consumption, believing, along with dissenters, that the Plague and Fire were a judgement on a profane nation.  

How to define the 1650s has long divided historians, who have variously described the period from 1649 to 1660 as a Commonwealth, a Republic, a Protectorate and Republic, or simply as the Interregnum. The purpose of this volume is not to force uniformity of interpretation; accordingly, contributors, in line with the diverse opinions of the seventeenth-century men and women under discussion, have employed constitutional terms appropriate to their perception and their subjects’ perceptions of events. The problem of definition was present and divided the winning side in the Civil War, from the time a ‘free commonwealth’ was declared in 1649. Inherently, radical Protestants were constitutionally anti-formalist. In this volume, Blair Worden comments on the Presbyterians’ lack of a theoretical basis to their constitutional objectives, both in 1649 and 1660.  

Glenn Burgess demonstrates the period’s flexible use of the term ‘commonwealth’ and points out that the Engagement, the loyalty oath imposed on the Council of State in February 1649, referred to ‘the future in way of a Republic’, whereas the Engagement that was required of all adult men in early 1650 avoided defining the Commonwealth in terms of a republic. Looking back in 1660, the victors employed various obfuscations to avoid giving the Commonwealth regime any definition other than dismissive pejoratives: ‘tyranny’, ‘Oliver’s time’, ‘the late horrid rebellion’. If the non-monarchical state was denied
the name of state it could, in theory, be more easily forgotten. Among
the defeated, naturally, the kingless age represented a lost ‘godly com-
monwealth’ which now had to be redefined. In Milton’s Paradise Regained
(1671), discussed by Warren Chernaik in this volume, Satan’s worldly pres-
entation of monarchy is refuted by Jesus and replaced with the idea of a
kingdom within. Such a view touches on the fierce, spiritual consolation
offered by another republican, Henry Vane, in his appeal to the ‘invisible
church’, imprisoned in the Babylon of Restoration England. The idea that
God could be worshipped essentially anywhere was powerfully articulated
by the Quaker, Margaret Fell, who was persecuted and imprisoned at the
Restoration. As Amanda Capern points out, this vision placed Quakers
and, potentially, all noncomformists in a sacralised domestic space beyond
the reach of the temporal monarch.

This volume has adopted in its title the term ‘Republic’ to define the
decade between the execution of Charles I and the restoration of his son.
In one sense, this is a useful shorthand for the different regimes – Republic,
first Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell, second Protectorate of Richard
Cromwell, Republic – variously constituted during the decade. However,
‘Republic’ with its derivation from ‘respublica’, commonwealth, registers
the extraordinary innovation in the state constitution following the regi-
cide. One critique of the term ‘interregnum’ is that it seems to make an
assumption that monarchy was the natural order and that a period with-
out one was an exception, a gap in the true and significant progression
of affairs. This is how supporters of the King may have seen things in
1660, but earlier, the situation looked very different. After the regicide,
Marchamont Nedham was convinced that ‘the corruption of the old form’
of monarchy had given way to a commonwealth ‘setled in a way visible
and most Substantiall, before all the world’. Besides, ‘seldom was there a
case in history where kings were readmitted after they had been expelled’.
Commenting on his return to London in 1652, John Evelyn writes ‘there
being now so little appearance of any change for the better, all being entirely
in the rebels’ hands … I was advised to reside in it, and compound with the
soldiers’. Compounding and negotiating with the republican regime in the
1650s, or accommodating to its strictures, seemed the only viable course for
those who wanted to resume work, business and family life after the Civil
War. In England’s Culture Wars, his study of the implementation, resist-
ance and evasion of reform in the 1650s, Bernard Capp concludes that the
great majority of the gentry and clergy had come to terms with the regime
established under Cromwell and that it is by no means impossible that the
nation would have grown to accept it. This is neatly illustrated by the case
of William Cooke, a Gloucestershire cavalier, who adjusted so thoroughly
to living under the Protectorate that he commissioned a statue of Cromwell
as Hercules.¹¹ In a different register, the prophetic providential works of Eleanor Davies following the regicide imagine, as Amanda Capern shows, the ushering in of a new Christian republic and a conviction that there will be no Charles II. In religious works by women, kingdoms are destroyed and the power of temporal kings lost forever in the wake of God’s wrath.

Even at the cusp of the Restoration, there was a belief among those who had come of age with the Commonwealth that monarchy had been consigned to the past. John Aubrey took part in the debates at James Harrington’s Rota Club, where the principles of republican government were debated and rotation of government by balloting was advocated as the best way forward. Aubrey commented in 1659 that ‘the doctrine was very taking’ for ‘as to human foresight there was no possibility of the king’s return’.¹² As Blair Worden observes in his chapter in this volume, before ushering in the Restoration regime, General Monck employed the language of the republican Harrington to support the view that a return to monarchy would reduce the nation to ruin. Further, Worden demonstrates just how uncertain was the presbyterian support for the Restoration in early 1660, with some inclining more to a republic than to a limited form of monarchy.

**Memory and oblivion**

The year 1660 presented the nation with an opportunity to revive memories of the regicide, mourn and officially promote the sacrificial image of the dead King. In her discussion of the rewriting of the pamphlet play, *The Famous Tragedie of Charles I* (1649), as *Cromwell’s Conspiracy* (1660), Marissa Nicosia traces the shift from the embattled royalism of 1649 to the tenuous yet revitalised royalism of 1660 exemplified in these two texts. Yet, while the tragicomedy *Cromwell’s Conspiracy* celebrates the triumph of the royal cause towards which *The Famous Tragedie* can only gesture, it was the latter, with its commemoration of Charles the martyr, that was not only reprinted in 1660, but persisted in print from the late seventeenth to the eighteenth century. As part of the process of naturalising the Restoration, the martyr image of Charles was used in the services of his son. The service of commemoration on 30 January included a sermon carrying the message of the inherent sinfulness of rebellion and republic; in 1664 the commemorative service closed with a prayer that the King inherit the martyr’s virtues, with the supplication that those virtues should not be put to the same cruel test as his father’s.¹³ Alongside such acts of commemoration, the restored regime staged public acts of retribution. Pepys witnessed the hanging, drawing and quartering at Charing Cross of the first of the regicides,
Major-General Harrison, and records the people’s ‘great shouts of joy’ at being shown his head and heart, apparently finding some personal satisfaction that, after watching the King’s beheading, he had witnessed ‘the first blood shed in revenge’. Thousands of people who, according to John Evelyn, had witnessed the regicides ‘in all their pride’ were spectators of the exhumation of their corpses on 30 January 1661. Lest the deaths of the regicides promote another cult of martyrology, the King promoted a swift counter-offensive in the publication of Rebels no Saints, recounting the deaths of Harrison, Carew and others, not ‘to insult their miseries’ but to ‘undeceive … light judgments’: the regicides’ ‘simulata sanctitas’ was ‘duplex Iniquitas’.

As memories of the regicide were naturally divided, so were responses to the punishment of the regicides, although dismay could hardly be published. In exile in Geneva, Edmund Ludlow after reading ‘in the Gazet’ of the executions witnessed by Pepys records that ‘the shedding the blood of those eminent servants of the Lord’ was demonstrative tyranny, a tragic act done ‘to gratify Nero’ – an indictment of the King that Ludlow’s late-seventeenth-century editor chose to omit.

Although it was sanctioning acts of commemoration and retribution, the restored regime also promoted active forgetting – an erasing of memories of the Republic. As is evident in royal declarations and acts, there was a will – initially, at least – to heal a divided nation. The Restoration reconstruction of the institutional fabric of the old order – Church and State – was accompanied by acts calling for oblivion and erasure. Charles II’s Declaration of Breda of April 1660 ordained that ‘all notes of discord, separation and difference of parties [are] to be utterly abolished among all our subjects’. Promising liberty of conscience, with an eye to toleration for Catholics, the Declaration of Breda sought to conciliate and prevent nonconformist resistance to the Restoration. In an address to both houses on 13 September 1660 Edward Hyde, as Lord Chancellor, urged his audience to follow the King’s example and ‘learn this excellent art of forgetfulness’ to avoid the reanimation of divisions. Exempting the regicides, the Restoration ‘indemnity and oblivion act’ offered a general pardon: all seeds of future discords were to be buried by erasing ‘remembrance’ of the conflicts of the previous twenty years.

Such orders for active forgetting had limited effect in practice. As the chapters in this volume illustrate variously, religious division could not be erased or easily dealt with through acts of oblivion. Martin Dzelzains examines the episcopal restoration and the power wielded by the aggressive Anglicanism of the Oxford neo-Laudians with their insular brand of Protestant episcopalianism. Alan Marshall points out that few MPs shared the King’s desire for mild toleration and, following the rising in January 1661 of Thomas Venner and the Fifth Monarchists, exaggerated fears about
nonconformists were to lead to the Act of Uniformity (followed by the Conventicle Act and the Five Mile Act). David Bagchi considers the reintroduction of the Book of Common Prayer in 1662 which led to the ejection of one fifth of Church of England clergy who refused to accept it, creating a situation in which the national Church was no longer the Church of the whole nation. Puritanism, which had occupied a beleaguered position in the Church of England before the wars, was at the Restoration fractured into dissent.²¹

There is, of course, a difference between public and individual memory: public memory may be designed to collect individual memory or to override it; individual memory, in turn, is shaped by identity and allegiance. As part of a crowd of spectators at the execution of the regicides, Pepys apparently shared a sense of retribution, identifying with the cause of Charles the martyr. On another occasion, his memory of the regicide was more fraught. Dining, on 1 November 1660, with several country gentlemen including an old school fellow, a Mr Christmas, Pepys records that Christmas had remembered that Pepys had been a ‘great roundhead’ when he was a boy, and was fearful that Christmas would recall his response to the regicide: ‘I was much afeared that he would have remembered the words that I said the day that the King was beheaded (that were I to preach upon him, my text should be: “The memory of the wicked shall rot”).’²² To his certain relief, Pepys learns that Christmas left the school too soon to hear his pronouncement. Pepys’s remembrance of his reaction to the regicide and his chosen text entrusted to his diary in 1660, at a time when very different kinds of commemorative texts were in force, and his discovery that his words would not be remembered and made public are symptomatic of the anxiety attached to memory, often resulting in pragmatic reconstructions and, indeed, willed oblivion.

At both national and local levels, individuals had pasts to disown and remake. For some there was professional continuity. The printer, Edward Husbands, for example, printer to the House of Commons during the civil wars, whose work included the printing of the official declaration after the regicide that forbade the naming of a successor, retained a position as a printer of official documents, including The Grand Memorandum.²³ In the Church, some ministers, like John Gauden, appointed Bishop of Exeter at the Restoration, had begun their ministries during the 1650s.²⁴ While it would be a mistake to see panegyric as a display of inherent disposition, nevertheless poets negotiated the regimes and without seeming compunction demonstrated changed allegiance. Within the space of a year, John Dryden had published ‘Heroique Stanzas, Consecrated to the Glorious Memory of his most Serene and Renowned Highnesse Oliver, late Protector of this Common-wealth’ and ‘Astraea Redux’ celebrating
the King’s restoration. In my chapter in this volume, I examine the promotion of theatre by William Davenant and Richard Flecknoe during the Republic and their later attempts to obscure it. In his dedication to the Earl of Clarendon of the 1662 revised edition of the 1656 *The Siege of Rhodes*, for example, William Davenant ignores the reformed drama performed during the Protectorate. Davenant’s appeal to Clarendon as a patron of the drama sits uneasily alongside his correspondence with Cromwell’s ambassador and Commissioner of the Seal, Bulstrode Whitelocke, and the Cromwellian Secretary of State, John Thurloe, in the 1650s in which he sets out the case for his theatrical revival, explicitly in support of protectorate politics.

Contemporaries across the political spectrum revived memories of the civil wars, deliberating in memoirs, histories, pamphlets and prefaces over the causes and course of the civil wars and the part they had played in events. Unsurprisingly, memoirs of parliamentarians and republicans – Thomas Fairfax, Lucy Hutchinson, Edmund Ludlow, for example – were to remain unpublished until later in the century. Lucy Hutchinson’s memoir of her husband, Colonel John Hutchinson, undertaken, so she says, from the personal motive of preserving the memory for his children of the Colonel’s ‘holy, virtuous, honourable life’, was begun after his death in 1664, but first published in 1806 and republished throughout the century. Episodes in Lucy Hutchinson’s version of her husband’s life have come under scrutiny, constituting a case study of historical memory and its partial reconstruction under pressure of events. Notably, attention has been focused on circumstances leading to John Hutchinson’s pardon. According to Ludlow, Hutchinson was included in the act of indemnity because ‘he had got the king’s pardon before his coming over, and had joyned with Monke in his treachery’. According to his wife’s memoir, following a letter of abject repentance sent to the Speaker of the House of Commons, Hutchinson’s life was spared. Further, Lucy Hutchinson affirms that it was she who wrote the letter in an effort to bring her husband within the terms of the Indemnity Act. The truth and – if she was not directly responsible for writing the letter – her possible motive for reconstructing events have been the subject of speculative debate. Did she intervene, against his principled resolve, to save him, or did she deliberately downplay his role in securing indemnity for the regicide in order to save his honourable reputation and bring his position closer to her own republicanism? Whether husband or wife was responsible for the letter, it was effective in removing Hutchinson’s name from the list of those who had subscribed to the regicide, his signature passing into ‘legal oblivion’. The incident in the memoir is particularly fascinating in revealing not only the negotiations of one family with republican sympathies at the transition from Republic to monarchy but the partiality and selectivity of memory evident in acts
of elision: little attention is paid to the letter or to the political compro-
mise needed to effect John Hutchinson’s pardon. In contrast, as an observer
of the Restoration, the republican Lucy Hutchinson makes no attempt to
temper or conceal her reaction to the servile political temporising that
accompanied the King’s return:

Indeed it was a wonder in that day to see the mutability of some, and the
hypocrisy of others, and the servile flattery of all. Monk, like his better genius,
conducted him, and was adored like one that had brought all the glory and
felicity of mankind home with this prince.

The officers of the army had made themselves as fine as the courtiers, and all
hoped in this change to change their condition, and disowned all things they
before had advised. Every ballad singer sang up and down the streets ribald
rhymes, made in reproach of the late commonwealth, and of all those worthies
that therein endeavoured the people’s freedom and happiness.  

Even allowing for the partiality of memory, and within the security of a
family memoir, Lucy Hutchinson offers a counter-voice to the hyperbole
which surrounded the Restoration and a memory not subject to acts of
oblivion.

In part, memoirs were constructed as acts of exoneration. Thomas
Fairfax makes this explicit in his memoir of the Civil War, claiming that he
will ‘truly set down’ the grounds for his actions ‘during that unhappy war’. The second part – ‘Short memorials of some things to be cleared during
my command in the army’ – is indicative of a need to record if not to pub-
lish his version of his role in the Civil War. Eventually published by his
cousin, Brian Fairfax, in 1699, the intentions of Fairfax’s memoir were to
reiterate that he had been ‘sincerely opposed’ to the execution of the King
(a view opposed in Lucy Hutchinson’s memoir of her husband, Colonel
Hutchinson),  that he had never been motivated by personal ambition
and, more specifically, to vindicate his decision to execute Sir George Lisle
and Sir Charles Lucas after the siege of Colchester. According to him, the
latter were ‘mere soldiers of fortune’ and, as such, in ordering their execu-
tion, he had done nothing that did not accord with his commission and
the trust reposed in him. Fairfax’s great misfortune, according to the dedi-
cation of Brian Fairfax to the current Lord Fairfax, ‘was to be engaged in
the unhappy wars whereof he desired no other Memorial than the Act of
Oblivion’. Fairfax’s exoneration of his role in the deaths of Lisle and Lucas
is an explicit move to counter royalist mythology that had accrued around
the siege of Colchester evident in an ostentatious act of commemoration
on 7 June 1661 when Lisle and Lucas were given a funeral and burial in
Colchester. Further, as Marissa Nicosia demonstrates, in the revival of
the play The Famous Tragedie of Charles I there is an explicit call for Lisle
and Lucas to be remembered as well as their royal master. This drama
anticipates a history that will validate the loyal acts of Lisle and Lucas. At the same time, it memorialises Fairfax’s role, but not in the way he would have wanted.

Debate on the origins of the Civil War, as illustrated in John Selden’s *Table-Talk*, went back to the 1650s. Selden, as Martin Dzelzainis observes in this volume, had decisively laid the blame on ‘incendiaries of the state’, the servants of the Crown, the judges and the lawyers. Margaret Cavendish, as Amanda Capern points out, argued that liberty had led tradespeople to strangle the body politic and destroy religion, law and civil society. Royalist and republican memoirs alike were shaped by matters of allegiance and identity and preoccupied with whom to blame for the civil wars. For some, a primary cause of the Great Rebellion was a puritan rebellion. Paul Seaward demonstrates that Thomas Hobbes and Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon – despite their very different philosophical and political ideas – share common ground in describing the effects of clerical intervention in political affairs during the 1630s. In *Behemoth* – Hobbes’s dialogue of events in England from the beginning of the Scottish Revolution in 1637 to the Restoration of 1660 – and what became Clarendon’s *History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England*, there is agreement that the civil wars could not have occurred without the preaching of factious and schismatical clergymen who stirred up the lower orders. Events of 1640 to 1660 came to be seen as driven by powerful clerical ideologues of a specifically puritanical cast of mind. While republican memoirs were concerned with the past, personal exoneration and setting the record straight, royalist accounts of the civil wars and Commonwealth reflect covertly on the present and betray anxieties about the future. Seaward argues that Hobbes and Clarendon, both writing in 1668 of the civil wars and rebellion and, coincidently, in exile in France, reveal fault lines in the constitutional and religious politics of the Restoration then beginning to open up. In *Behemoth*, Hobbes seized the moment, implicitly offering to the King an entire reduction of the civil and ecclesiastic State to the royal will, a view which would have been anathema to Clarendon, whose position was that religious practices are made acceptable through counsel, deliberation and in accordance with local custom and tradition.

Thomas Sprat’s *History of the Royal Society*, composed in 1663–67, follows the pattern of royalist memoirs in so far as its history of experimental science is written not only from the perspective of the Restoration but from specific moments in the Restoration. In his chapter in this volume, Ted McCormick examines the continuation of Baconian science from the Commonwealth to the early years of the Royal Society, epitomised in the person of William Petty, one of the Surveyors in Ireland for Parliament in the 1650s, and considers Sprat’s very partial account of the Commonwealth
legacy. McCormick identifies tensions between Sprat’s various references to the advancement of natural knowledge during the Commonwealth, which he attributes to Sprat’s changing views of the public role of science in the early years of the Restoration. Initially, as illustrated in Part I of Sprat’s *History*, written before the calamities of the Plague and the Fire and widening divisions over religious toleration and Indulgence, Sprat had intimated a relatively constructive approach to the upheavals of the 1640s and 1650s. Holding up the reign of Augustus as the model for the Restoration, commenting that it was in the latter’s peaceful reign that Rome’s ‘perfect historians appeared’, Sprat advocated that an activity for a modern academy for language might be the compilation of a history of the civil wars. In Part III of *The History*, however, composed in different circumstances, after the fall of Clarendon, when Charles was seeking greater toleration of dissent, Sprat ignores the achievement of organised science during the Commonwealth, instead emphasising experimental philosophy’s independence of civil matters, a balm for a divided nation. In failing to mention the work of Samuel Hartlib – Milton’s friend and pensioner of Cromwell – and his circle, which included Thomas Petty, a future member of the Royal Society, Sprat practised his own art of oblivion.

**Censorship reconstructed**

The call to expunge ‘remembrance’ of the conflicts of the previous twenty years was underpinned by the imposition of censorship, reconstructed to suppress republican and dissenting books and pamphlets. In favouring such a policy, the King appeared to be following advice offered in a letter by William Cavendish, first Duke of Newcastle, on the eve of the Restoration, urging him to assert authority over sermons, political disputations and publications of the realm. A royal proclamation of 13 August 1660 called in Milton’s *Eikonoklastes*, which was written in response to *Eikon Basilike*, attributed to Charles I. Along with Milton’s pamphlet ‘Pro Populo Anglicano Defensio’ of 1650, *Eikonoklastes* was condemned on the grounds that subjects might be corrupted ‘with such wicked and traitrous principles’. Chief magistrates, vice-chancellors and Justices of the Peace were ordered to seize the works, and to hand them to sheriffs in order that they could be burnt at Assizes by ‘the hand of the Common Hangman’. Two years after the Restoration, institutional censorship was restored, with the 1662 Printing Act restricting presses and requiring books and pamphlets to be registered and licensed. The following year, in August 1663, Roger L’Estrange, who had argued in *Toleration Discussed* that the link between societal disintegration and an unlicensed press had been proved in
the events of the 1640s, was appointed as Surveyor of the Press and, at the same time, granted a monopoly on publishing news. L’Estrange accompanied his bid for the post of press controller – ‘Considerations and Proposals in Order to the Regulation of the Press’ – with a list of ‘treasonous and seditious pamphlets’ to be suppressed, including Milton’s *Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, Richard Baxter’s *A Holy Commonwealth* and Marchamont Nedham’s *The Case of the Common-Wealth of England Stated*. L’Estrange’s operation of censorship immediate to the Restoration was naturally orientated towards the past rather than the present. It was to be accompanied by the publication of ‘news’, which, as Christina Carlson demonstrates in her chapter, served as extraordinarily effective propaganda during the Popish Plot and succession crisis. In a series of pamphlets and political prints, *An Account of the Growth of Knavery* (1678), *The History of the Plot* (1679) and, notably, *The Committee* (1680), L’Estrange rewrote the history of the civil wars, projecting Catholic loyalism in opposition to religious dissent and drawing a parallel between the current controversy over the succession of the Catholic Duke of York and that of 1641.

As several chapters in the volume illustrate, Restoration censorship could be subjected to competing authorities and prerogatives indicative of institutional tensions. Martin Dzelzainis describes how Marvell’s satire, *The Rehearsal Transprośd*, depicting events of the 1620s and 1630s as driven by clerical ideologues, notably Laud, was allowed by L’Estrange – subject to some censorship – but only after the King had intervened. Hobbes’s *Behemoth*, however, suffered a different outcome after submission to the King. According to John Aubrey, Charles liked it, but was not prepared to intervene to enable publication because he knew in this case that the bishops would not allow it. It was only after the lapse of the Licensing Act in 1679 that *Behemoth* was printed, in an unauthorised text, with the safeguard of a dedication to the Earl of Arlington. As with censorship in any historical period, the censorship revived at the Restoration induced writers to practise self-censorship and artful circumventions in critiques of State and Church. The poetry and prose of Andrew Marvell offers a particularly salient example. *An Account of the Growth of Popery and Arbitrary Government in England* (1677), in which Marvell presents the attempt to strengthen press controls as evidence of the ‘growth of popery’, was published anonymously without imprint, the title page recording only the date and Amsterdam as the spurious place of publication. Dzelzainis describes how in *The Rehearsal Transprośd*, instead of attacking directly the neo-Laudians for their opposition to Indulgence, Marvell does so indirectly through satire of deceased bishops and clergy – John Bramhall, John Cosin, Peter Heylyn and
Herbert Thorndike – and an exposure of Laud himself. In his chapter on Marvell’s ‘The Character of Holland’, Keith McDonald comments that throughout his career Marvell displays a reluctance to release his works to the press. Of the triptych of Cromwell poems composed during the 1650s only *The First Anniversary of the Government under His Highness the Lord Protector* was printed, and that unsigned, in January 1655. From the premise that Marvell seems to have tightly controlled manuscript and print publication of his poetry and prose, McDonald interprets the composition, revision and publication of ‘The Character of Holland’ across the Republic/Restoration divide. The satirical poem on Dutch manners, composed in and around 1653, following an English naval victory over the Dutch at Portland, was first printed anonymously in London and York at the outbreak of the Second Anglo-Dutch War in 1665 with a tribute to the Duke of York grafted on to it. In analysing the relationship of the poem with its changing contexts and considering Marvell’s possible involvement with the process of its publication, McDonald illuminates how the publication of this specific text was carefully controlled and – probably with Marvell’s interventions – recast to speak to different occasions.

In the theatre, censorship was the responsibility of the Master of the Revels, Thomas Killigrew, manager of one of the two London theatre companies, the King’s Company, and, for the early years of the Restoration, theatre was mostly self-regulatory. This was to change when – with the crises of the Popish Plot and succession – drama was brought into the political arena. Playwrights aligned their plays with faction and party and, for the first time in the Restoration, oppositional drama reached the stage and – with the lapse of the Licensing Act – circulated in print. Nathaniel Lee’s *Lucius Junius Brutus* was allowed by Killigrew as Master of the Revels, but suppressed by the higher authority of the Lord Chamberlain, Henry Bennet, the Earl of Arlington, on the grounds that it contained ‘scandalous expressions and reflections upon the government’. Lisanna Calvi questions the conventional Whig reading of the play as a traditional tale of republican heroism, arguing that it is Brutus (rather like Milton’s Satan, we could say) who takes over the power and interest of kingship. Such ironies and ambivalence of interpretation may well have escaped Arlington as Lord Chamberlain. To invite suppression in the midst of the Exclusion Crisis, it was presumably enough that in its depiction of the deposition of the Roman monarchy following a successful rebellion, inspired by republican rhetoric, the play was raising the spectres of 1641 and 1649.
Continuity and change

Thomas Carlyle’s quaint metaphor for the silent movement of history – ‘our clock strikes when there is a change from hour to hour; but no hammer in the Horloge of Time peals through the universe when there is a change from Era to Era’ – is not entirely apt for the Restoration. Bells did peal, bonfires were lit and contemporaries seemed in no doubt that – whether for good or ill – they were ushering in a new era. The King returned to London amid triumphs and shows and much rhetorical hyperbole, although feelings and attitudes may have been less jubilant in England’s boroughs and cities. Following a decade of republican and protectorate rule the unpredictable actions of General Monck were to precipitate what Blair Worden describes as a revolution. For some royalists this revolution signified simply the circularity of history, a view expressed by Interlocutor B in his penultimate statement at the end of the fourth and final dialogue of Behemoth:

Howsoever, I must confess that this Parliament has done all that a Parliament can doe for the securing of our peace; which I think also would be enough if Preachers would take heede of instilling evil principles into their Auditory. I have seen in this revolution a circular motion, of the Soveraigne Power through two Usurpers Father and Son, from the late King to this his Son. For (leaving out the power of the Councell of Officers, which was but temporary, and no otherwise owned by them but in trust) it moved from King Charles the first to the long Parliament, from thence to the Rump, from the Rump to Oliver Cromwell, and then back again from Richard Cromwell to the Rump, thence to the Long Parliament, and thence to King Charles the second, where long may it remaine.

From the political-theoretical position of Hobbes’s speaker, the revolution is integrated into the restitution and resumption of royal supremacy: ‘the circular motion of Soveraigne power’. What the interpretation manifestly leaves out, of course, are the fundamental changes to the political, religious and social landscape brought about through the experience of civil war, regicide and Republic. The act of regicide meant that sovereignty could hardly be the same again, nor could the nation expect to pick up where it had left off in 1641.

In religion, the years of the Protectorate had witnessed a degree of liberty, according to one early modern historian, in practice remarkable in early modern Europe. The failure to graft the idea of the gathered church – including Independent and Baptist congregations – onto a wider ecclesiastical system meant there was no legally enforceable organisation for clergy or their congregations beyond the parish. Baptists and Quakers had relative freedom to preach, congregate and evangelise while many among the royalist clergy chose to conform. Traditionalists, of course, mourned...
the loss of liturgy, prayer and ritual and resented the abolition of festivals and holidays. Aspects of the old Church of England did remain: as David Bagchi points out, the Authorized Version of the Bible remained in use throughout the Commonwealth. The *Book of Common Prayer*, however, was banned by Parliament in 1645 and replaced by *The Directory for the Public Worship of God*, a handbook for clergy on a Continental Protestant model. As Bagchi observes, it proved easier to eradicate the Prayer Book from churches than it did from people’s affections. Clandestine prayer-book services took place, but, as Bagchi illustrates, at some risk of intimidation and arrest. The religious settlement negotiated at the Restoration was based on a conspicuously narrower interest than the political settlement.  

Alan Marshall comments that post-1660, Protestant dissent shared a role once reserved for papists and, in his chapter on the local and national response to alleged plots in the North-East, illustrates how religious dissent had become associated with sedition. Marshall quotes the regime’s chief agent of propaganda, Roger L’Estrange, who proclaimed that the ‘Tolerated party’ was ‘a sanctuary for all the seditious persons in the kingdom’. The penal legislation of the 1660s, enforcing uniformity of worship and forbidding the gathering of more than five in any congregation or conventicles, resulted in a high number of nonconformists leaving the Church, including Richard Baxter, who had been chaplain to the parliamentary army and was for a brief period a chaplain to Charles II. With the passing of the Act of Uniformity he was forced to give up the position, retire to the country and live ‘out of the world’. The *Book of Common Prayer* continued to be controversial. Its imposition in 1637 on Presbyterian Scotland had first ignited a rebellion which was to spread to England. Its re-establishment in the Uniformity Act of 1662 was one of the most divisive acts in the reconstruction of the Church, although Bagchi cautions against hasty interpretation of what nonconformists referred to as the ‘Great Ejection’, commenting that the imposition of any fixed liturgy, as opposed to a directory of worship, would have alienated Presbyterians and Independents.

Even shorn of some of the more alienating and controversial aspects of Laudism, the re-established Church could not command anywhere near universal loyalty. This was especially apparent in the regions. In his examination of the abortive ‘Northern Rebellion’ of 1663, Marshall illustrates the deep roots of nonconformity, particularly among Baptist congregations, in pockets of the North-East and the resistance of nonconformists to persecution by the established Church of Durham and Yorkshire.

The years of civil war and republican experiment had led to a ferment of political and religious ideas articulated in an expanded public sphere of popular print culture, lay preaching, widening participation in sectarian debate and, consequently, changes in public language. As Amanda Capern
observes, the republican decade generated an enormous outpouring of religious works – of different confessions – by women, projecting in some cases a feminine godly republic. Several chapters in this volume demonstrate the linguistic instability, mutability and appropriation concomitant with political change. A rhetoric of tradition and conservation, of terms such as free-born, liberty of the subject and commonwealth, was ready to be co-opted by both sides, while a rhetoric associated with tyranny, treason, popery, slavery and bondage, arbitrariness and rebellion remained to be distributed among opponents. Blair Worden comments that the theme running through popular demands and parliamentary negotiations in 1659/60 was for a ‘free parliament’ and in this way the Puritan upheaval, having begun as a struggle for the liberties of the subject, ended where it began. But the ownership of those terms had shifted away from the Puritans. Appeals to liberty in the 1640s had come from those opposed to the King; in 1659 it was royalists, as the excluded and oppressed political class of the Republic, who co-opted the language of freeborn Englishmen. In examining the changes to the term ‘commonwealth’ from its early uses to its royalist application in the later seventeenth century, Glenn Burgess shows how the regicide increased the repertoire and range of republican and commonwealth political arguments in English political thought. Republican, commonwealth principles insinuated themselves in 1660 into monarchy, persuading some that notions of a free commonwealth were not incompatible with monarchy. Edmund Peirce in Englands Monarchy Asserted, for example, argued that the Restoration marked the return of a real commonwealth, while the staunch royalist James Arderne, later Dean of Chester and defender of James II, in The Kingdom of England the Best Commonwealth argued that the King’s prerogative was compatible with the Liberty of the Subject. But in 1678, Marvell reinvested commonwealth with its radical potential, stating, tactically – perhaps ironically – ‘that to alter our Monarchy into a Commonwealth were Treason; so by the same Fundamental Rule, the Crime is no less, to make that Monarchy Absolute’.

Tory propaganda promulgated during the tumultuous years of the Popish Plot and succession crisis, examined by Christina Carlson, redefined the terms of political engagement. Again orchestrated by Roger L’Estrange, Tory politicians redeployed Whig arguments against ‘popery’, promoting their own brand of popery, by which commonwealth men, as advocates of resistance to tyranny, were akin to Jesuits with their principles of dethroning Protestant monarchs. Accordingly, ‘popery’ was present not only among those who called themselves papists, but also among ‘Whigs’, with their presbyterian roots, who intended to revive the Commonwealth. Lucius Junius Brutus, performed, as Lisanna Calvi observes, in the same month as the Earl of Shaftesbury was attacking in Parliament the hateful
popish inclinations of the court, taps into the current instability of political rhetoric. In Brutus’s exhortations Calvi notes a borrowing from the revolutionary vocabulary of James Harrington, Milton and Nedham and interprets Brutus’s language as resonant of the classical republicanism of the 1650s. Brutus assumes – as did Milton – that royal power is based upon an original covenant between the people and a worthy individual who, ‘for the eminence of his wisdom’ may be ‘call’d a King’. And, yet, Calvi argues, the play calls into question this assumption of republican rhetoric when Brutus ‘takes over “the Power and Interest of Kingship” and foists his own will on his associates, his friends, his sons’. The ambivalence and irony that Calvi finds in Brutus’s exploitation of republican argument is suggestive of how men once in position of power might move away from professed principles; at the same time, the apparent contradiction between Brutus’s speech and action demonstrates how in politically volatile moments language and its uses become highly unstable, mutable and subject to appropriation.

For republicans like John Milton royalist appropriation of the language of ‘free born Englishmen’ could only be seen as a dreadful perversion of earlier calls to liberty. As Warren Chernaik observes, Milton makes a last-ditch attempt in The Readie and Easie Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth, written at the cusp of the Restoration, to stop the people’s voluntary embracing of servitude, ‘to adore and be slaves of a single person’, extinguishing the hopes aroused by an interval of freedom. In his resonant phrase in the peroration, Milton expresses the hope that while the people seem to be choosing ‘a captain back for Egypt’, there may still be time for them to ‘consider whither they are rushing’. Chernaik examines the Restoration poems, Paradise Lost, Samson Agonistes and Paradise Regained as works coloured by the experience of defeat. Loss of liberty, the crushing of hope and the temptations that face those who seek to serve God in a hostile and unjust society are arguments which resonate across these late works. Further, Chernaik identifies Milton’s preoccupation with a people’s failure to live up to the responsibilities of ‘strenuous liberty’, preferring the ease of bondage and, thus, enabling tyrants to thrive. Yet, as Chernaik observes, the conclusion of Samson Agonistes, in which Samson destroys the carousing Philistines, could be interpreted as a fantasy of revenge on the part of those excluded from power, and, as such, remains highly unsettling.

In The Readie and Easie Way, Milton’s alarm at the prospect of a returning monarchy was epitomised in the absolutism of Louis XIV and his crew of servile courtiers seeking their own advancement and not the public good. Milton’s fears were not entirely exaggerated, for the court, as the centre of restored ‘sovereign power’, was reconstructed, as Laura Knoppers illustrates in her chapter in this volume, not by recourse to the rarefied court culture of Charles I, or by what had happened in republican England, but
by what was happening in Grand Siècle France. Knoppers comments that much of the luxury and splendour of the French court was unattainable in Restoration England: Charles was not in a position to emulate Louis XIV’s grand architecture or his theatre of war, but he could import French painters to depict his mistresses in splendid dress and luxurious surroundings as part of a broader cultural programme. In discussing the portraiture of the King and that of the royal mistresses, Knoppers observes that luxury was a conscious mode of representing monarchical power rather than a reaction to Puritanism or a reflection on the personality and moral laxness of the King (although this was how it came to be seen). Charles’s French Catholic mistress, Louise-Renée de Kéroualle, the Duchess of Portsmouth, was kept in sumptuous apartments and her portraiture modelled on the Marquise de Montespan, Louis XIV’s politically powerful mistress. Such French-style luxury could not but feed into a general fear or opprobrium that the regime was far too close to ‘popery’ and had predilections towards French absolutism, ‘arbitrary government’, and what Marvell denounced as the introduction of ‘French slavery’. Knoppers’s chapter demonstrates how a regime which had been popular in principle became rapidly unpopular in practice, court luxury and French influence being deplored as much by loyalists, who witnessed it, as by exiled republicans and dissenters who could only imagine it.

The illustrations that accompany the chapters of Knoppers and Carlson potently convey how the restored monarchy wished to be perceived and how it came to be perceived by its critics. The baroque splendour of Henri Gascar’s portrait of Charles II depicts him in sumptuous coronation robes with full regalia and in a pose reminiscent of portraits of the absolutist Louis XIV. As Knoppers comments, Gascar portrays Charles as a powerful Renaissance monarch, no humble servant of the Commonwealth. The iconography of *A Ra-ree Show* (1681), a satirical cartoon by the Protestant joiner, Stephen College, depicts a Janus-faced King as a ‘ra-ree’ showman, with a pack on his back from which peeps out Parliament. Gascar’s career in England had ended by the time College’s cartoon was published, but not before the French artist had been substantially rewarded for his sumptuous court paintings. College’s cartoon, on the other hand, exposing the King’s duplicitous and shifty policies, led to College being branded a traitor and to his execution.

The French influence on Charles’s court also figures in Bryan White’s chapter on opera and musical entertainment at the Restoration. White detects some continuity with the Caroline court, commenting that Charles II did share some of his father’s taste for dancing and masque, but sees in the King’s sporadic promotion of musical theatre and opera a failed attempt to model his court on French lines. Musicians were
imported from France and the marriage of the co-religionists James, Duke of York and Mary of Modena, for example, was celebrated with a ballet in French and *Ariane*, an opera published in French and English. In examining these productions, White shows how ambitions of bringing opera to the English theatre were bound to be disappointed. The King was unable or unwilling to subsidise opera on the public stage and the allegorical, panegyrical and propagandist nature of court musical theatre meant that it was hardly likely to be commercially viable if transferred to the London theatres. In comparing the musical culture of the two courts, White points out that in France the operas of Lully were potent representations of the power and taste of Louis XIV and substantially subsidised by him. Charles supported musical-theatrical works, but sought subsidy from the two theatre companies and here there was an evident clash of propagandist and commercial interests. France had a Royal Academy of Music, while petitions to establish a similar institution in England met with no success. White concludes his chapter with a discussion of *Albion and Albanius*, an opera with a libretto by Dryden, composed as an extravagant panegyric to Charles and James, Duke of York, and comments that the emphasis on royal propaganda far eclipsed any contemporary French opera. Employing familiar allegorical figures, *Albion and Albanius* looks back at the King's reign from the rejoicing at the Restoration to the troubles of the Popish Plot and Exclusion Crisis to the King's providential deliverance from the Rye House Plot. As Stuart propaganda, *Albion and Albanius* may have been 'an assertion of triumph', but, as White illustrates, as a test of the potential of royal patronage to support an English equivalent of French opera it was a complete failure.

In the social sphere, however, as the chapters demonstrate variously, court propaganda was highly effective in staving off the political crises generated by the Popish Plot and subsequent attempt to change the succession. Eighteen years after the return of the King, Charles II faced opposition similar to that which destroyed his father. The Exclusion Bill, introduced by the Whigs — heirs to commonwealth Presbyterians — called into question the essence of monarchical rule based on dynastic right. That there was no circular motion of history was in part due to the mobilisation of the very anxieties that there might be. Parallels with 1641 were explicitly and sometimes hysterically drawn. In replying to Marvell's attack on popery and arbitrary government, L'Estrange reminded his readers that such spectres were 'likewise the Pretext and the very Foundation of the Rebellion in 41'. There is 'a strange Fatality in the number Forty', claimed one pamphlet writer in 1681, before continuing with a dire warning of what that fatality might be:
It is now near forty years, since the late horrid and unnatural Rebellion began, wherein our Royal Sovereign was murdered by the barbarous hand of usurping Common-wealth Protestants; and let them look to it, and assure themselves, if they break out into Tumults, Sedition, or Rebellion, his prophetick Threatening will fall upon them.55

In 1678–81, Stuart propaganda was highly effective in ensuring that there was no circular motion of commonwealth or republican power and in delaying another revolution. There is a degree of irony in the fact that a regime which began with calls to cast into oblivion memories of past conflicts at a later moment of crisis worked so assiduously to evoke and harness those memories for its own security.

**Notes**


5 See also Scott, *England’s Troubles*, p. 35.

6 See Henry Vane, *An Epistle General, to the Mystical Body of Christ on Earth, the Church Universal in Babylon, who are Pilgrims and Strangers on the Earth, Desiring and Seeking after the Heavenly Country* (London, 1662), p. 2 and p. 35.


9 Evelyn, *Diary*, 1, 273–74.

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15 Evelyn, Diary, 1, 340–41.


19 See ‘His Majesties Most Gracious Speech, Together with the Lord Chancellors, to the Two Houses of Parliament, on Thursday the 13 of September, 1660’, p. 12.

20 12 Car. II c. 11.


22 Pepys, Diary, 1, 280.


25 See Three Poems upon the Death of his late Highnesse Oliver Lord Protector of England, Scotland and Ireland (London 1659); the other contributors were Edmund Waller and Thomas Sprat; John Dryden, Astraea Redux: A Poem on the Happy Restoration and Return of his Sacred Majesty Charles the Second (London, 1660).

26 John Toland was instrumental in the publication after 1689 of republican writing from the 1650s, see Justin Champion, Republican Learning: John Toland and the Crisis of Christian Culture, 1666–1722 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003).


29 Ludlow, A Voyage from the Watch Tower, p. 175.


31 Hutchinson, Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson, pp. 402–03.


33 See Hutchinson, Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson, p. 133, and also Ludlow’s version, A Voyage from the Watch Tower, p. 125.

34 Fairfax, Short Memorialis, p. 123.

Richard Tuck discusses Selden’s long career, bridging the Jacobean period and Commonwealth, and his constitutional opposition to the King for breaching the legal rights of the subject, see Tuck, ‘‘“The Ancient Law of Freedom”: John Selden and the Civil War’, in Reactions to the English Civil War, ed. by John Morrill (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1982), pp. 137–61.


See Janet Clare, ‘“All run now into Politicks”: Theatre Censorship during the Exclusion Crisis, 1679–81’ in Writing and Censorship in Britain, ed. by Paul Hyland and Neil Sammells (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 46–56.


Baxter, Reliquiae Baxterianae, p. 441.


Roger L’Estrange, An Account of the Growth of Knavery, under the Pretended Fears of Arbitrary Government and Papery. With a Parallel between the Reformers of 1677, and those of 1641, in their Methods and Designs, p. 8.

[John Nalson], The True Protestants Appeal to the City and the Countrey (1681), Alr.