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Introduction

Catie Gill

Theatre and Culture in Early Modern England 1650–1737: From Leviathan to Licensing Act brings together research on the period that is coming to be known as the ‘long Restoration’: 1650–1737.¹ This volume begins with Hobbes’s *Leviathan* (1651) and ends with the 1737 Licensing Act because each was, in its own way, to have a major impact on literature.

Hobbes’s wide-ranging influence can be seen in terms of his political theory, specifically when it is echoed in the dramatic tragedies produced during the Stuart period, especially those that give consideration to the social contract. Hobbes’s contract is the basis of what would now be seen as possessive individualism: *Leviathan* maintains that a private citizen, recognizing that he is beholden to a ruler or king to govern on his behalf, knowingly for the greater good, curbs his own desire for power. This contract between sovereign and subject is secure only so long as the self-interested citizen can see the benefits of submitting himself to the control of another, however. Hobbes’s position is that absolute power exists only in order to avoid a state of constant war (which Hobbes thinks is a law of nature) and resulting anarchy, and de facto monarchism emerges as the best guarantor of order.² Hence Hobbes’s utility for dramatists: plot lines, like politics, will move forward as a result of conflict, either to resolution or to disintegration as those seeking power spar for dominance with those happy to contract. Some writers (such as Davenant and Dryden) explicitly engaged with Hobbesian ideas, whereas others might implicitly echo these political theories or even challenge them (*Leviathan* had many detractors).³ Many of the writers discussed in this volume would have been familiar with Hobbes.⁴ As the two-party system of Whigs and Tories began to emerge in the late seventeenth century, and as John Locke’s

¹ The term ‘long Restoration’ was coined at a conference at Loughborough University (15–16 September 2004), where the papers in this volume were first delivered. See also, *Prose of the Long Restoration (1650–1737)*, ed. Elaine Hobby, a special edition of *Prose Studies* (29/1 [2007]).

² Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. J.C.A. Gaskin (Oxford, 1998), p. 235 (Ch. 31).

³ See for instance Richard Kroll, ‘William Davenant and John Dryden’, in *A Companion to Restoration Drama*, ed. Susan J. Owen (Oxford, 2001), pp. 311–25; and Susan J. Owen, *Perspectives on Restoration Drama* (Manchester, 1988), pp. 9–41.

⁴ On Hobbes’s influence, see essays in this volume by Warren Chernaik and Paddy Lyons. For Dryden and Hobbes see for instance Richard Kroll, ‘Instituting Empiricism: Hobbes’s *Leviathan* and Dryden’s *Marriage a la Mode*’, in *Cultural Readings of Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Theatre*, eds J. Douglas Canfield and Deborah C. Payne

1 theories of equality became more relevant to intellectuals than Hobbes's principles, 1
 2 the drama changed accordingly, which is one of the contentions of this book.⁵ 2
 3 The details of how the Licensing Act (1737) came into being should be recounted 3
 4 in order to contextualize the focus on censorship in a number of the essays.⁶ During 4
 5 the Restoration period, the Master of the Revels arbitrated the works set before the 5
 6 theatre-going public; he could cut plays or scenes, for example, but primarily he was 6
 7 seen as the overseer of the theatre houses' programmes. What this meant was that 7
 8 outside the periods of political instability (the Popish Plot, for instance), dramatists 8
 9 actually had relatively wide licence and would be thought unlucky to have their works 9
 10 censured. For instance, N.W. Bawcutt's study of Sir Henry Herbert, Master of the 10
 11 Revels under James and Charles I, who returned to office following the Restoration, 11
 12 indicates that the personal convictions of the office holder were an influencing 12
 13 factor, making the scrupulousness, or lack of it, in regard to ordering changes, an 13
 14 expression of how Sir Henry was moved by the plays before him.⁷ Clearly, such 14
 15 a play-by-play approach could be carefully maintained, but it can nevertheless be 15
 16 argued that the Master stood for something more arbitrary and less schematic than 16
 17 the later law: Restoration censorship was not 'predictable or tidy'.⁸ 17

18 By contrast, the Licensing Act introduces a much more systematic approach to 18
 19 censorship; it codifies the state's control over drama, enshrining it in statute law. 19
 20 It ensured that theatre be performed only in licensed houses, required scripts to be 20
 21 submitted to the Lord Chamberlain for his approval, and could impose financial 21
 22 and even penal sentences on those whose work defied the terms of the Act. This 22
 23 law was to remain in place until 1968, giving it, in Vincent J. Liesenfeld's words 23
 24 'next to the laws protecting copyright ... the most profound influence on English 24
 25 literature of any official measure in the last three centuries'.⁹ The Act declares: 25

26
 27 every person who shall ... act, represent or perform ... shall not have any 27
 28 legal settlement ... without authority by virtue of letters patent from His 28
 29 Majesty, his heirs, successors or predecessors, or without licence from the Lord 29
 30 Chamberlain.¹⁰ 30
 31
 32
 33

34 (Athens, 1995), pp. 39–66. For Davenant see *Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century*, 34
 35 ed. J.E. Spingarn, (3 vols, Oxford, 1908), vol. 2, pp. 1–53. 35

36 ⁵ See the essay by María José Mora and Manuel J. Gómez-Lara (Ch. 9). 36

37 ⁶ See for instance the essays in this volume by Sandra Clark (Ch. 4), Warren Chernaik 37
 38 (Ch. 5), and María José Mora and Manuel J. Gómez-Lara (Ch. 9). 38

39 ⁷ *The Control and Censorship of Caroline Drama: The Records of Sir Henry Herbert,* 39
 40 *Master of the Revels 1623–73*, ed. N.W. Bawcutt (Oxford, 2003). 40

41 ⁸ Matthew J. Kinservik, 'Theatrical Regulation during the Restoration Period', in 41
 42 *A Companion to Restoration Drama*, ed. S. Owen, pp. 36–53 (quotation on p. 50). 42

43 ⁹ Vincent J. Liesenfeld, *The Licensing Act of 1737* (Madison, 1984); quotation on p. 3. 43

44 ¹⁰ *Theatre in Europe: A Documentary History. Restoration and Georgian England, 1660–* 44
 1788, ed. David Thomas and others, (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 207–10 (quotation on p. 208).

1 State censorship, to be sure, is only one way in which control is exercised; also
 2 implicated are the self-regulatory actions of playwrights who sense the general
 3 mood of the times and accommodate their works so as to evade likely criticism.¹¹
 4 But the Licensing Act was an important marker of stage history precisely because
 5 it formalized the state's interest in controlling drama. The time frame 1650–1737
 6 therefore charts a period of artistic and political change which is reflected in the
 7 microcosmic world of the stage.

10 Repertoire and Genre

11 'The constitution of a man's body is in continual mutation', Hobbes observed,
 12 and this restless motion might describe the situation in early Restoration theatre
 13 (from 1660–1678), when various different stages of dramatic development can be
 14 observed.¹² Two theatrical companies existed in the early 1660s (the King's and the
 15 Duke's), and they often swelled their repertoire with adaptations, reinterpreting plays
 16 written for the stage up to 80 years before. George Digby's *Elvira* (1664), analyzed
 17 in this volume by Jorge Braga Riera in Chapter 6, is such an example. *Elvira* is an
 18 adaptation of a Spanish intrigue play and, as Braga Riera demonstrates, cross-cultural
 19 fertilization produced not only Digby's tale of mistaken identity but also many other
 20 works of Anglo-Spanish fiction. It does not fall into the generic category that most
 21 predominated during the 1660s (that is, the tragicomedy), and yet intrigue comedy
 22 shared with tragicomedy a concern with matters of honour and sexual morality.

23 The works of English Renaissance dramatists were also significant: their plays
 24 made good reading when the playhouses were closed, and later they were adapted,
 25 appropriated, and 'improved' to suit Restoration tastes.¹³ In addition to the Spanish
 26 influence, the repertoire of the two theatre houses consisted of plays by writers
 27 such as Shakespeare and Jonson, as well as a host of more minor early seventeenth-
 28 century dramatists. However, perhaps most popular of all, owing to the tragicomic
 29 turn to the writing, were plays from the Beaumont and Fletcher canon; of 105
 30 revivals of older plays, 28 belonged to this group.¹⁴ The significance of adaptations
 31 of Beaumont and Fletcher's work is recognized in two articles in *Theatre and*
 32 *Culture*. In the first (Chapter 4), Sandra Clark traces the development of Beaumont
 33 and Fletcher's *The Maid's Tragedy* and Fletcher's *Valentinian* from their originals

35 _____
 36 ¹¹ See for instance Michael Cordner, 'Playwright Versus Priest: Profanity and the wit
 37 of Restoration Comedy', in *The Cambridge Companion to English Restoration Theatre*, ed.
 38 Deborah Payne Fiske (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 209–25; and Matthew Kinservik, 'Censorship
 39 and Generic Change: The Case of Satire on the Early Eighteenth Century London Stage',
 40 *Philological Quarterly*, 78/3 (1999): 259–82.

41 ¹² Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 35 (Ch. 6).

42 ¹³ See Paulina Kewes, *Authorship and Appropriation: Writing for the Stage in*
 43 *England, 1660–1710* (Oxford, 1998).

44 ¹⁴ Sandra Clark, 'Shakespeare and Other Adaptations', in *A Companion to Restoration*
 44 *Drama*, ed. S. Owen, p. 284.

1 into the adapted texts written during the reign of Charles II: Edmund Waller’s *The* 1
 2 *Maid’s Tragedy Alter’d* (published in 1690 but written earlier) and *Lucina’s Rape,* 2
 3 *or The Tragedy of Valentinian,* which received its first recorded staging in 1684 3
 4 and was adapted by John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, and keyed into the political 4
 5 currents of the time. Each focuses on the troubled monarchy. Clark demonstrates 5
 6 how Waller and Rochester modified the original Renaissance plays, endorsing 6
 7 or challenging the central association of kingship with lust and tyranny that 7
 8 emerged in Beaumont and Fletcher’s works. In a companion essay (Chapter 5), 8
 9 Warren Chernaik surveys political theatre of the 1680s, including the work of 9
 10 Waller and Rochester but also exploring texts by Otway and Lee. Shocking for its 10
 11 explicit portrayal of absolutism, Lee’s *Lucius Junius Brutus* (1680) emphasizes, 11
 12 in Susan J. Owen’s view, ‘that royalism equals rape’.¹⁵ Warren Chernaik similarly 12
 13 charts the subversive, counter-monarchical strain of 1680s drama, proving that the 13
 14 ‘priapic absolute monarch’ was subject to repeated criticism.¹⁶ 14
 15 15
 16 16

17 Sexual Politics 17

18 These plays by Digby, Waller, and Rochester, discussed in Chapters 4, 5, and 6 of 18
 19 this volume, illuminate another element: drama’s recurrent interest in the plight of 19
 20 women. Each play contains a woman whose sexual identity has been maligned: 20
 21 the defence of female honour in the face of threat (to her chastity, to her reputation, 21
 22 and even to her life) is pivotal in the plays analyzed here by Braga Riera, Clark, 22
 23 and Chernaik. These works begin to justify observations on the centrality of 23
 24 gender issues in late seventeenth-century playwriting. As Katherine M. Quinsey 24
 25 has argued, ‘Restoration drama is overwhelmingly concerned with questions of 25
 26 gender identity ... to a degree and a depth not seen in a comparably popular form 26
 27 of entertainment before or since’.¹⁷ Whether it is ‘false Evadne’ or Elvira’s apparent 27
 28 ‘unfaithfulness’ which is the subject of male speculation or Lucina’s desire to die 28
 29 rather than bear the humiliation of rape, these male-authored works take us into 29
 30 the arena of sexual, as well as national, politics.¹⁸ 30
 31 31

32 *Theatre and Culture* initially sets the scene for articles on gender in Chapters 32
 33 7, 8, and 9 through a survey chapter offering detailed cultural analysis across 33
 34 the period 1664–1735. Jacqueline Pearson’s essay (Chapter 2) analyzes the way 34
 35 that masculinity was represented by exploring the significance of books and 35
 36 reading. Her study takes into account the changing approach to reading, and hence 36
 37 masculinity – from the early plays where Hobbes, Lucretius, and Epicureanism 37
 38 38

39 ¹⁵ Owen, *Perspectives on Restoration Drama*, p. 92. 39

40 ¹⁶ See Chernaik below, p. 93. 40

41 ¹⁷ Katherine M. Quinsey (ed.), *Broken Boundaries: Women and Feminism in Restoration* 41
 42 *Drama* (Lexington, 1996), p. 1. 42

43 ¹⁸ Edward Waller, *The Maid’s Tragedy Altered* (1690), p. 38; Digby, Elvira, II; p. 17; John 43
 44 Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, *Valentinian: A Tragedy* (1685), IV, 3; p. 52. See Jean Marsden, *Fatal* 44
 44 *Desire: Women, Sexuality, and the English Stage, 1660–1700* (Ithaca and London, 2006). 44

1 were the vogue, to the assumption that bookishness, though not an intrinsic 1
 2 character fault, could be a weakness if it was not coupled with action. The negative 2
 3 depiction of learning, for instance, is conveyed in Shadwell's *The Virtuoso* (1676) 3
 4 and Behn's *The Emperor of the Moon* (1687). Both plays ridicule the characters 4
 5 who possess too little common sense to perceive what is truly happening in the 5
 6 world around them, despite, and even because of, their scholarly endeavours.¹⁹ 6
 7 By contrast, reading in the eighteenth century became a corollary of politeness 7
 8 and therefore a signifier of gentlemanly behaviour.²⁰ Pearson's study, by taking 8
 9 account of plays written over the course of 60 years, explores the changeability of 9
 10 attitudes to maleness and relates this to social changes in the economic structure 10
 11 of society over the course of the long Restoration. 11

12 For the first time in literary history, significant numbers of women wrote for the 12
 13 stage: these artists figured their varied concerns in works produced within the period 13
 14 1642 to 1737, and Jacqueline Pearson has estimated that in this period 'thirty women 14
 15 wrote at least 123 plays'.²¹ The early practitioners, such as Elizabeth Polwhele and 15
 16 Frances Boothby, achieved only limited success.²² Aphra Behn, though she was a 16
 17 trailblazer, wrote in relative isolation; a model of professional acumen and literary 17
 18 talent during nearly 30 years as a dramatist, she nevertheless recognized that she was 18
 19 treated differently from her male peers, though she was arguably just as successful as 19
 20 them. Behn knew that she needed to defend herself from censure to protect her role 20
 21 as an artist. The male domination of the literary marketplace is evident, for instance, 21
 22 in her preface to *The Lucky Chance* (1686), where a double standard is exposed. 22
 23 Male critics, Behn argues, can get away with vulgarity and bawdiness; yet the least 23
 24 implication of indecency from a woman would be objectionable: 'such masculine 24
 25 strokes in me, must not be allowed'.²³ There is hypocrisy here, she is saying. 25

26 Jane Milling's essay (Chapter 7), 'The Female Wits: Women Writers at 26
 27 Work', explores how women fared in the literary marketplace at the end of the 27
 28 seventeenth century. The 1690s was a period of unprecedented prominence for 28
 29 women; however, to produce 'masculine strokes', as Behn had called the act of 29
 30 writing, was a risk. Jane Milling's essay demonstrates that popularity brought the 30
 31

32 ¹⁹ In *The Virtuoso*, the mockery is directed at Sir Nicholas Gimcrack, in *The Emperor* 32
 33 *of the Moon*, at Doctor Baliardo: see Thomas Shadwell, *The Virtuoso*, ed. Juan A. Prieto- 33
 34 Pablos (Camus Sevilla, 1997); Aphra Behn, *The Emperor of the Moon*, ed. Jane Spencer in 34
 35 *The Rover and Other Plays* (Oxford, 1998). 35

36 ²⁰ Philip Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society, Britain 1660–1800* (Harlow, 36
 37 Essex, 2001), pp. 32–6, 169–72; see also Karen Harvey, 'The History of Masculinity, circa 37
 38 1650–1800', *Journal of British Studies*, 44/2 (2005): 296–312. 38

39 ²¹ Jacqueline Pearson, *The Prostituted Muse: Images of Women and Women Dramatists* 39
 40 *1642–1737* (New York, 1988), p. 20. 40

41 ²² See, for instance, Marguerite Corporaal, 'Love, Death and Resurrection in 41
 42 Tragicomedies by Seventeenth Century English Women Dramatists,' *Early Modern Literary* 42
 43 *Studies*, 12/1 (2006): 1–24 <<http://extra.shu.ac.uk/emls/12-1/corprtag.htm>>. 43

44 ²³ Aphra Behn, 'The Lucky Chance,' ed. J. Spencer in *The Rover and Other Plays*, 44
 Preface, l. 85 (p. 190).

1 female dramatist public censure, as double standards were applied to women such 1
 2 as Delarivier Manley and Mary Pix. Manley's *The Royal Mischief* (1696) attracted 2
 3 particular condemnation and necessitated a prefatory defence from its writer. 3
 4 The play was also derided in the pseudonymous satirical play *The Female Wits* 4
 5 (1697), which is the main subject of Milling's essay. In this mocking depiction of 5
 6 the female writer, the central figure stands in for Manley, specifically ridiculing 6
 7 her supposed presumptuousness. The Manley figure is depicted speaking in 7
 8 hyperbolic language that spills over into her art; the 'warmth' of her heroic tragedy 8
 9 is derided.²⁴ Women had quite a prominent place in the theatrical market place 9
 10 after 1695, when the United Company (formed in 1682 from a merger of the 10
 11 King's and Duke's companies) broke up, ending its manager's monopoly control 11
 12 over the London stage. Hence it is possible to argue, as Milling does here, that 12
 13 *The Female Wits* establishes women's *presence* in the public sphere of theatre, 13
 14 even whilst it attempts to expose the apparent pretensions of women. Parody, after 14
 15 all, grudgingly recognizes the impact of the writing it seeks to mock. 15

16 When George Farquhar wrote that 'the Ladies safe may smile' at his play 16
 17 *The Constant Couple* (1699), he was suggesting that in eschewing smuttiness he 17
 18 had written a play eminently suitable for female consumption.²⁵ In fact, as Derek 18
 19 Hughes has pointed out, Farquhar was 'ready enough to portray male sexuality with 19
 20 rough humour'; but more important than the voracity of Farquhar's statement, for 20
 21 our current purposes, is the assumption that women made up a significant portion 21
 22 of the Restoration audience and therefore needed to be addressed.²⁶ In the second 22
 23 of our essays on women, "'Jilting Jades"?' Perceptions of Female Playgoers in 23
 24 the Restoration, 1660–1700', Fiona Ritchie surveys prologues and epilogues 24
 25 from new plays written between 1660 and 1700, developing the work of David 25
 26 Roberts. Like Jane Milling, her research explores writerly reactions to the literary 26
 27 marketplace. Analysis of later-seventeenth-century London audiences shows they 27
 28 were drawn from perhaps 5 to 7 percent of the population, which meant that the 28
 29 crowd was neither an elite coterie nor a popular majority.²⁷ As well as attracting 29
 30 the established gentry, theatre appealed to women (as Fiona Ritchie's article makes 30
 31 clear) and, particularly by the end of the century, also to industrious individuals 31
 32 from the middling ranks of society. The bourgeoisification of theatre, which is 32
 33 held as a truism in literary criticism, is evidenced for instance in the preface to 33
 34 Nicholas Rowe's *The Fair Penitent* (1703). He specifically champions drama of a 34
 35 'humbler theme' than was customary, since he maintains that stories about 'kings 35
 36 36

37
 38 ²⁴ 'W.M.', *The Female Wits* (London, 1704); Manley herself refers to the 'warmth' 38
 39 – or passion – of the tragedy in 'To the Reader', *The Royal Mischief* (1696), sig. A3r. See 39
 40 also, Marsden, *Fatal Desire: Women, Sexuality, and the English Stage*. 40

41 ²⁵ Cited by Fiona Ritchie, below (p. 141); see 'Prologue by a Friend', in George 41
 42 Farquhar, *The Constant Couple* (London, 1700), sig. A3v. 42

43 ²⁶ Derek Hughes, *English Drama 1660–1700* (Oxford, 1999), p. 408. 43

44 ²⁷ Aparna Dharwadker, 'Restoration Drama and Social Class', in *A Companion to* 44
Restoration Drama, ed. S. Owen, pp. 140–60. (see especially p. 145).

1 and empires' are 'far remote'.²⁸ Instead, Rowe evoked pathos through depicting the
 2 spectacle of a suffering female, in the newly established genre of 'she-tragedy'.²⁹ 2
 3 Restoration theatre, then, aimed to satisfy a diverse audience, one in search of
 4 variety, and some plays and playwrights specifically appealed to women. 4

5 In addition to these essays analyzing women's relationship to theatre, this
 6 collection also addresses the changing depiction of masculinity during the long
 7 Restoration. In Chapter 9, 'Revolution and the Moral Reform of the Stage',
 8 María José Mora and Manuel J. Gómez-Lara chart the rake's progress in the
 9 years following the coronation of William and Mary. They chiefly focus on the
 10 philandering libertine featured in Durfey's *The Marriage Hater Matched* (1692);
 11 Sir Philip, the rake, is finally married to the woman whom he earlier took as a
 12 mistress. The conventions of Restoration theatre demanded that the rake be
 13 hitched to an appropriate mate by the conclusion of a play – this rule prevailed
 14 from the Stuart Restoration through to the reign of William and Mary, and beyond.
 15 However, rakes from earlier in the century, specifically from the 1670s, are usually
 16 granted more levity than Durfey's Sir Philip. Their reform might consist of airy
 17 assurances that in the future they will no longer either chase after every available
 18 woman or resort to the bottle. For instance, Dorimant, the archetypal rake from
 19 Etherege's *The Man of Mode* (1676), ends the play with his future secure: marrying
 20 a fortune to repair his estate, he gives up the liberty of his 'soul' to Harriet whilst
 21 seemingly lining up other women to divert him from the rigours of matrimony.³⁰ 21
 22 By the 1690s, reform tended to be given far greater voice. Typical in this respect is
 23 Colley Cibber's *Love's Last Shift* (1695). The rake, Loveless, is a penniless libertine
 24 who has left his wife to wander the continent to indulge his taste for 'variety'.³¹ 24
 25 In the course of the play, he returns to his wife a chastened man, 'confounded' with
 26 his guilt, having been 'rouz'd' from what he calls the 'deep lethargy of vice'.³² 26
 27 Sententious speeches abound in this rendition of the rake's reform, and penitence is
 28 much more conscientious. The significance of the rake in both Durfey and Cibber,
 29 then, is at once literary and cultural. His treatment is illustrative of a sterner moral
 30 purpose inflecting the drama and, arguably, the nation. 30
 31
 32
 33
 34

35 ²⁸ Nicholas Rowe, *The Fair Penitent*, ed. J. Douglas Canfield in *The Broadview*
 36 *Anthology of Restoration and Early Eighteenth-Century Drama* (Peterborough, 2002),
 37 Prologue, ll. 15, 1, 10. 37

38 ²⁹ See for example Pilar Cuder-Domínguez, 'Reason Versus Passion: Catherine
 39 Trotter's Deployment of the Historical Tragedy', in *The Female Wits: Women and Gender*
 40 *in Restoration Literature and Culture*, eds Pilar Cuder-Domínguez, Zenón Luis-Martínez,
 41 and Juan A. Prieto-Pablos (Huelva, 2006). 41

42 ³⁰ George Etherege, *The Man of Mode*, ed. John Barnard (London, 1995), V, 2, 258, 374. 42

43 ³¹ Colley Cibber, *Love's Last Shift*, in *The Dramatic Works of Colley Cibber* (5 vols,
 44 AMS Press, 1966), vol. 1, I; p. 22. 44

44 ³² Cibber, *Love's Last Shift*, V; pp. 86, 87. 44

1 Literary and Cultural History of the Coffee-house 1

2
3 Another survey essay in this collection (Chapter 3) analyzes the depiction of the
4 coffee-house – that place which in the eighteenth century became associated with
5 the political and learned interests of its clientele.³³ One of the plays discussed,
6 *Tarugo's Wiles* (1668), illuminates the way in which coffee-houses encouraged
7 their male clients to read current affairs: free access to gazettes and newsbooks
8 was part of the shop's attraction.³⁴ Known for their appeal to wits and writers,
9 even from the earliest beginnings, coffee-houses hence establish another angle to
10 the learned culture depicted elsewhere, in the article by Jacqueline Pearson, which
11 is the sociable element of reading. In addition, therefore, to establishing how
12 seventeenth-century writers responded to the coffee-house, Prieto-Pablos's study
13 also begins to sketch the development of the emerging public sphere. However,
14 the coffee-house was also the subject of derision, as, for instance, the comment in
15 *The Female Wits* that this liquor dries up the body's 'humours'.³⁵ Prieto-Pablos's
16 essay is also a valuable resource for scholars because it lists all significant
17 references to coffee-houses during the late seventeenth century (1660–1700). 17

19 Master–Servant Relations 19

20
21 The first essay in this collection (Chapter 1), Paddy Lyons's 'What Do the Servants
22 Know?' explores the hierarchies of power that become visible when assessing the
23 dramatic conventions pertaining to master–servant relations. As G. Lawrence has
24 maintained, 'the speeches and actions of servants contribute much to the true-to-life
25 vitality evident on Restoration comic stages'.³⁶ But more than that, the depiction
26 of servitude is evidence of how, for instance, desire is constructed in texts that
27 see marriage as a financial contract. In Richard Steele's *The Conscious Lovers*
28 (1722) marriage is coldly discussed in financial terms by the play's patriarchs as
29 they attempt to secure a match between old and new money.³⁷ Meanwhile, explicit
30 recognition of the commodification of desire emerges as Phillis (a maid) discusses
31 how servants barter 'favours' with their lovers. Addressing her mistress, Phillis
32 explains, 'we servants, we poor people that have nothing but our persons to bestow
33 or treat for are forced to deal and bargain by way of sample' (III, 149–51). The
34 'sample' is her kiss. The extent to which servants participate in the marriage market
35 is, then, apt evidence of how socially determined these plays are in terms of class
36 and gender norms. Dharwadker believes that servants in their actions and speech
37

38
39 ³³ Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society*, pp. 37–8; Aytoun Ellis, *The Penny*
40 *Universities: A History of the Coffee-Houses* (London, 1956), pp. 58–70.

41 ³⁴ See below, pp. 51–74. 40

42 ³⁵ 'W.M.', *The Female Wits*, I; p. 17. 41

43 ³⁶ G. Lawrence (ed.), *Restoration Plays* (London, 1992), p. xii. 42

44 ³⁷ Richard Steele, *The Conscious Lovers*, ed. Canfield in *The Broadview Anthology of*
Restoration and Early Eighteenth-Century Drama, I, 2. 44

1 ‘parody ... the life of gentility’, whilst Lyons shows that the interdependence of 1
 2 masters and servants makes the lower-class characters knowing combatants in the 2
 3 field of love – often, it seems, rejecting the institution of marriage.³⁸ 3
 4 4

5 **Conclusion** 5

6 **Conclusion** 6
 7 Whilst accepting that ‘almost any statement about progression tends to be rash’, 7
 8 some summation is surely necessary.³⁹ The dilemma, perhaps, of Restoration 8
 9 texts is how accommodation can be struck between the individual’s desire for 9
 10 freedom and their need to conform to established social convention.⁴⁰ The rakish 10
 11 wit who earlier in the period followed Hobbes’s precept that desire is insatiable 11
 12 had, by the mid-eighteenth century, largely given way to the man of sense who 12
 13 recognized marriage to be a good business proposition. Libertinism ‘embodies a 13
 14 dream of human freedom, recognized from the outset as both infinitely desirable 14
 15 and as unattainable’, as Warren Chernaik observes.⁴¹ However, these ideals were 15
 16 both ‘unattainable’ and short-lived. The emergence of a bourgeois audience in 16
 17 the later seventeenth and early eighteenth century stimulated a new emphasis on 17
 18 moral order or reformation; these theatre-goers were seeking different kinds of 18
 19 entertainment to their bawdy predecessors. 19
 20

21 Cumulatively, therefore, these essays are indicative both of the shifts in 21
 22 literary taste throughout the period 1650–1737 and also the many social changes 22
 23 that occurred between the publication of Hobbes’s polemic and the passing of the 23
 24 Licensing Act. Through its broad-ranging analysis of 80 years of theatrical and 24
 25 cultural history, this collection establishes drama’s protean ability to move with 25
 26 the times: reformation of the rake and the bourgeoisification of drama are only two 26
 27 of the changes that occurred. In the course of the long Restoration, we have seen 27
 28 that dramatists found their voices in a competitive and demanding marketplace 28
 29 favouring novelty and wit. The dramatic genres were as varied as any other period 29
 30 in theatre history, the topicality as persistent as, to quote Wycherley’s Dorilant, the 30
 31 dramatists ‘follow their copy, the age’.⁴² 31
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36 ³⁸ Dharwadker, ‘Restoration Drama and Social Class’, in *A Companion to Restoration* 36
 37 *Drama*, ed. Owen, p. 150. 37

38 ³⁹ Robert D. Hume, *The Development of English Drama in the Late Seventeenth* 38
 39 *Century* (Oxford, 1976), p. 14. See also the challenges to his view of so-called sentimental 39
 40 comedy by David Roberts in *The Ladies: Female Patronage of Restoration Drama 1660–* 40
 41 *1700* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 127–65. 41

42 ⁴⁰ Derek Hughes makes this point in *English Drama*, p. 423. 42

43 ⁴¹ Warren Chernaik, *Sexual Freedom in Restoration Literature* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 1. 43

44 ⁴² William Wycherley, *The Country Wife*, ed. Gamini Salgado in *Three Restoration* 44
Comedies (London, 1968), III, 2; p. 192.