

Abstract

Within the last decade, there has been a renewed level of interest in civil war general, writer and theatre proprietor, Sir William Davenant (1606-1668). The field of sensory studies has also flourished in recent years and, over the past two to three decades especially, research into royalism and royalist literature has produced numerous extensive studies. However, scholarship dealing with royalism only provides vague allusions to the place of the senses and sensuality within royalism and royalist literature. Davenant's work is striking in that it engages both overtly and more subtly with the relationship between the senses, sensuality, royalist identities, and the values accommodated by royalist ideologies. This thesis offers a thorough re-evaluation of Davenant's writing in relation to the senses, contributing towards a better understanding of the way in which royalists conceptualise their own sensory experiences, and those of others. In turn, this is vital in understanding royalism as a whole and the way in which such concepts contribute towards its varied nature and accommodating ideologies. It also enables a deeper appreciation of the impact of Davenant's own forms of royalism upon his literary output. My approach builds upon the critical field of sensory studies by considering the way in which royalist identities may influence writers' approaches to the sensory experience during the seventeenth century.

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Sir William Davenant, the Senses, and Royalism in
the Seventeenth Century

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Sir William Davenant, the Senses, and Royalism in the Seventeenth Century: An Introduction

Intro.1

During the 1650s, Wiltshire-born royalist poet Lady Hester Pulter wrote of the disfigured writer, civil war general, and future theatre proprietor, Sir William Davenant (1606-1668), that, without his nose, he was ‘like Cheapside without a Cross’.¹ This simile can be found in her satirical but sympathetic poem, ‘To Sir W^m D: Upon the Unspeakable Loss of the Most Conspicuous and Chief Ornament of his Frontispiece’, which discusses what Davenant’s nose, partly lost to syphilis over twenty years earlier, had come to signify. Pulter’s reference to Cheapside’s missing cross refers to a particularly famous episode in parliament’s history of iconoclasm, and compares Davenant to a missing landmark which nevertheless endures in the collective memories of royalists; he becomes a ‘shared reference point’.² Davenant’s ruined nose was an integral part of the identity ascribed to him by his peers and it operated as an unavoidable marker of his promiscuous lifestyle.³ This type of lifestyle was one associated with a stereotypical, ‘cavalier’ royalist, and the identities of royalists such as these continue to preoccupy modern scholarship. Such royalists have been, and still are, heavily associated with ‘triviality and sensuality’, which is ‘admired’ or ‘censured’ by scholars depending upon their own moral or political viewpoints.⁴ However, scholarship dealing with royalism only ever provides

¹ Philip Bordinat and Sophia B. Blydes, *Sir William Davenant* (Boston: Twayne, 1981); Mary Edmond, *Rare Sir William Davenant: Poet Laureate, Playwright, Civil War General, Restoration Theatre Manager* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987); Mark Robson, *Pulter [née Ley], Lady Hester*, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* [online, accessed 23 February 2018]; Hester Pulter, *Poems Breathed Forth by the Noble Hadassas* in Jill Seal Millman and Gillian Wright (eds.), *Early Modern Women’s Manuscript Poetry* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), pp. 121-2. See also Marcus Nevitt, ‘The Insults of Defeat: Royalist Responses to Sir William Davenant’s *Gondibert* (1651)’, *The Seventeenth Century*, 24.2 (2009), 287-204 (pp. 287-288).

² Marcus Nevitt, ‘The Insults of Defeat: Royalist Responses to Sir William Davenant’s *Gondibert* (1651)’, pp. 287-288.

³ Marcus Nevitt, ‘Davenant, William’ in *The Encyclopedia of English Renaissance Literature* ed. by Garrett A. Sullivan, Jr. and Alan Stewart, 3 vols (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), I pp. 249-254 (p. 250).

⁴ Nicholas McDowell, ‘Towards redefinition of Cavalier Poetics’, *The Seventeenth Century*, 32.4 (2017), 413-431 (p. 414).

vague allusions to the place of sensuality and the senses within royalism and royalist literature. Yet, because the decadent sensuality of the swaggering ‘cavalier’ is so important in underpinning this stereotype, I argue that a better understanding of the way in which royalists conceptualise their own sensory experiences, and those of others, is vital in understanding royalism as a whole and the way in which this contributes to its varied nature and accommodating ideologies. Davenant’s work engages both overtly and more subtly with the relationship between the senses, sensuality, royalist identities, and the values accommodated by royalist ideologies. A comprehensive evaluation of the treatment of the senses within Davenant’s writing allows us to better understand the place of the senses and sensuality within royalist literature and royalism more broadly, while enabling a deeper appreciation of the impact of his own forms of royalism upon his literary output. Furthermore, my approach builds upon the critical field of sensory studies by considering the way in which royalist identities may influence writers’ approaches to the sensory experience during the seventeenth century. It is necessary prior to this to be familiar with contemporary concepts within society surrounding the human senses before it is possible to fully evaluate Davenant’s own personal approach to such matters. First, however, in order to show how this thesis moves forward literary criticism focussing on Davenant, it is necessary to consider the prevailing arguments which feature in previous Davenant studies.

Until fairly recently, literary critics have rather neglected Davenant, but, during the last five years in particular, interest in Davenant has flourished.⁵ Philip Bordinat and Sophia

⁵ Such work includes Philip Cornell, ‘Hobbes and Davenant: Poetry as Civil Science’ in *The Poetic Enlightenment: Poetry and Human Science, 1650-1820*, ed. by Tom Jones and Rowan Boyson (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2013), pp. 63-74; Elizabeth Maddock Dillon, ‘Coloniality, Performance, Translation: The Embodied Public Sphere in Early America’ in *Transatlantic Traffic and (Mis) Translations*, ed. by Robin Peel, Daniel Maudtin Street and Susan Cassillo (Durham, NH: University of New Hampshire Press, 2013), pp. 177-196; Cory DiPietro, ‘Seeing Places: *The Tempest* and the Baroque Spectacle of the Restoration Theatre’, *Shakespeare*, 9.2 (2013), 168-186; Anne Greenfield, ‘D’Avenant’s Lady Macduff: Ideal Femininity and Subversive Politics’, *Restoration*, 37.1 (2013) 39-60; Misty Krueger, ‘From Davenant to Duffet: Staging Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* during the English Restoration’ in *Shakespeare in Performance*, ed. by Eric C. Brown and Estelle Rivier (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), pp. 24-27; John Shanahan, ‘The Dryden-Davenant *Tempest*, Wonder Production, and the State of Natural Philosophy in 1667’, *Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation*, 54.1 (2013), 91-118; Lisanna Calui, ‘“Suppos’d to be Rais’d by Magick” or *The Tempest* “Made Fit”’ in *Revisiting The Tempest: The Capacity to Signify* ed. by Silvia Bigliazzi, Lisanna Calui and Ewan Fernie (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. 151-170; Brandon Chua, ‘The Purposes of Playing on the Post Civil War Stage: The Politics of Affection in William Davenant’s Dramatic Theory’, *Exemplaria: A Journal of Theory in Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 26.1 (2014), 39-57; ‘No Woman is an Island: Female Roles in Dryden and Davenant’s *The Tempest*, or *The Enchanted Island* and Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*’ in Lori Leigh, *Shakespeare and the Embodied Heroine: Staging Female Characters in the Late Plays and Early Adaptations* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Claire Jowitt ‘“To Sleep, perchance to Dream”: The Politics of Travel in the 1630s’, *Yearbook of English Studies*, 44 (2014), 249-264; Niall Allsopp, ‘“Let

B. Blaydes write that ‘to know Davenant is to know much of the seventeenth century’, but not only does Davenant’s work reflect a diverse range of contemporary literary genres, it also shapes their development.⁶ His writing was highly varied and his life similarly colourful, including time at the household of Fulke Greville, a successful military career, appointment as Ben Jonson’s successor to the role of poet laureate, a knighthood, time spent in prison and in exile on the continent, and managing a Restoration playhouse. Davenant was also married three times, contracted syphilis during his first marriage and nearly lost his life to the disease in 1630, but recovered and lived for another thirty-six years.⁷ Even so, the more substantial pieces of research into his writing are few and far between and almost all are from the twentieth century. In 1935, Alfred Harbage’s work, *Sir William Davenant: Poet Venturer, 1606-1668*, was published, and Harbage states that ‘the present writer admires Davenant’.⁸ Harbage refers to Davenant as ‘the most conspicuous of the Cavalier poets’, which is a highly reductive way of describing him, though this is softened a little by Harbage’s insistence that:

[...] Davenant, albeit he may sometimes have been weak in both the spirit and the flesh, was not a licentious cad, nor a conceited time-server. He was a quixote - courageous, loyal, sincere, rather naive, but withal shrewd and resourceful. His literary works are not a vast heap of dust and dead artistic issues. Shallowness characterises them certainly, and we find here neither the sublimity of great poetry nor the depth of great emotions, but they retain to this day a measure of color, charm, and vitality.⁹

None our Lombard Author Rudely Blame for’s Righteous Paine”: An Annotated Copy of Sir William Davenant’s *Gondibert*, *Library: The Transactions of the Bibliographical Society*, 16.1 (2015), 25-40; Huw Griffiths, ‘Adopting Same-Sex Friendship: Fletcher and Shakespeare’s *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, and Davenant’s *The Rivals*’, *Shakespeare*, 11.1 (2015), 20-29; Judy H. Park, ‘The Limits of Empire in Davenant’s *The Siege of Rhodes*’, *Mediterranean Studies*, 24.1 (2016), 47-76; Matthew Chapman, *Anti-black racism in early modern English drama: the other “other”* (New York and London: Routledge, 2017); Caitlin McHugh, ‘The Afterlives of Shakespeare’s Tragedies’ (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Minnesota, 2017). Work which is not necessarily as recent but focuses heavily on Davenant includes Kevin Sharpe, *Criticism and Compliment: The Politics of Literature in the England of Charles I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), Martin Butler, *The Stuart Court Masque and Political Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), Rebecca A. Bailey, *Staging the old faith: Queen Henrietta Maria and the theatre of Caroline England, 1625-1642* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), John Stubbs, *Reprobates: The Cavaliers of the English Civil War* (London: Penguin, 2011), Rachel Willie, *Staging the Revolution: Drama, Reinvention and History, 1647-72* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015).

⁶ Philip Bordinat and Sophia B. Blaydes, *Sir William Davenant*, p.11.

⁷ Mary Edmond, *Rare Sir William Davenant: Poet Laureate, Playwright, Civil War General, Restoration Theatre Manager*, p. 44; Marcus Nevitt, ‘The Insults of Defeat: Royalist Responses to Sir William Davenant’s *Gondibert* (1651)’, p. 288.

⁸ Alfred Harbage, *Sir William Davenant: Poet Venturer, 1606-1668* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1935), p. 5.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

While Harbage is keen to make clear that Davenant's works are the engaging, 'charm [ing]' writings of a 'courageous', 'loyal' individual, his study is preoccupied with the colourful biographical details of Davenant's life, treating him as something of a curiosity. Yet his remarks about Davenant being 'weak' in the 'flesh', if not a 'licentious cad' suggest an awareness of the importance of the sensory experience and sensuality both within Davenant's own life and work and within royalism more widely; Harbage understands the prevalence of the archetype of a libertine royalist who is sexually promiscuous, immoral and untrustworthy, which I shall discuss in greater detail a little later on. In this way, Harbage is ahead of his time in his willingness to not necessarily simplistically endorse royalist stereotypes. Instead, he recognises to some degree the nuanced nature of Davenant's work, even if he is keen to point out that his writings are also characterised by some level of 'shallowness'.

Only a few years after Harbage's book in 1938, Arthur H. Nethercot's study, *Sir William D'avenant: Poet Laureate and Playwright Manager*, was printed, and subsequently feels it must quickly justify its appearance so soon after another major study, informing the reader that most of the material it required was gathered prior to the publication of Harbage's biography. Nethercot states that:

The justification for producing a second study lies partly in my desire to place more stress on the narrative and biographical features of the life of this extraordinary, amusing, though largely forgotten poet laureate of England, and to see him mainly as a man of the theater, diverted temporarily from his real love by the turbulence of the time in which he lived, but never letting his success in court or war drive his passionate ambition from his mind - to give England a theater surpassing anything else to be found in Europe.¹⁰

Nethercot's research differs from that of Harbage in that its focus is on Davenant's plays and stagecraft, but it is still primarily preoccupied with the biographical minutiae of Davenant's life. Furthermore, one of Nethercot's main areas of interest is the murder supposedly committed by Davenant in 1633, and the text argues that this act 'makes necessary a thorough reinterpretation of [Davenant's] mental condition and writings during this important period.'¹¹ However, Davenant's killing of Thomas Warren was later proven false, although there was an absence of evidence for the course of events proposed

¹⁰ Arthur H. Nethercot, *Sir William D'Avenant: Poet Laureate and Playwright-Manager* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938), p. 1.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. v.

by Nethercot anyway.¹² Nethercot also wishes to bring to light new details about Davenant's family tree and the Chancery suit in which he became involved.¹³ However interesting these components of Davenant's life may be, they do not offer much in terms of illuminating the more subtle nuances of his literary output, although in many ways this is to be expected from a time before close-reading became as integral to literary criticism as it is today.

Howard S. Collins produces a study which is far more thorough in its literary analysis, entitled *The Comedy of Sir William Davenant* (1967) which discusses the elements of comedy in Davenant's dramatic works, including that his tragedies. Collins begins by writing that he wishes 'to make a study of Sir William Davenant's dramaturgic treatment of the Comic Spirit'.¹⁴ In elaborating upon this, Collins states:

I propose to reveal him as a creator of various forms of dramatic comedy, of humors, satire, manners and even burlesque, which, incidentally, Davenant introduced to the Restoration stage, thereby establishing a theatrical mode of continuing interest. [...] [he] employed a not inconsiderable talent to portray the types of comedy that were then favoured, and thus aided in transporting the valued traditions of one age of comedy across the gap of two decades into a period of significantly more brilliant comedy.¹⁵

Collins's study finds intriguing common ground in Davenant's generically diverse body of works, but its focus on genre and the establishing of its frameworks can be limiting when applied to the more nuanced nature of Davenant's work.

Giving appropriate weighting to close textual analysis and consideration of genre and also including relevant biographical information, Bordinat and Blaydes produced a compact but useful book on Davenant's life and works as part of Twayne's English Authors Series, which is simply entitled *Sir William Davenant* (1981). For Bordinat and Blaydes, Davenant does not merely passively reflect the literary movements and events of the seventeenth century, but was a pro-active figure who 'had something important to say to the audience of his times' and 'sought not only to entertain but also to instruct', using 'decorous language for didactic ideas'.¹⁶ This places Davenant's own complex, evolving ideas at the forefront of the text, rather than the genres in which he worked, or the historical moment during which he existed, however important these may be to research

¹² Mary Edmond, *Rare Sir William Davenant: Poet Laureate, Playwright, Civil War General, Restoration Theatre Manager*, pp. 48-9.

¹³ Arthur H. Nethercot, *Sir William D'Avenant: Poet Laureate and Playwright-Manager*, p. v.

¹⁴ Howard S. Collins, *The Comedy of Sir William Davenant* (The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1967), p. 7.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

¹⁶ Philip Bordinat and Sophia B. Blaydes, *Sir William Davenant*, p. 11; p. 154.

concerned with Davenant, especially to studies which aim to be as comprehensive as this one. Consequently, more room is opened up for consideration of both Davenant's royalism, but, unfortunately, this is not quite realised and is undermined by Bordinat and Blaydes describing Davenant as a 'spokesperson rather than an individual' when he became more comfortably enmeshed in the workings of the court during the 1630s.¹⁷ Davenant may have appeared to create masques to please his courtly audience, but this did not prevent him articulating his own ideas regarding sensory pleasure and moderation, and this was also not always done in a covert manner. Ultimately, however, this text is indicative of considerable progress in terms of the approach to modern research on Davenant.

A longer, more detailed biographical study on Davenant was published slightly later in the same decade by Mary Edmond, who entitled her text *Rare Sir William Davenant: Poet Laureate, Playwright, Civil War General, Restoration Theatre Manager* (1987). Edmond offers a reassessment of Davenant's oeuvre, while also reviewing 'his important civil war service as royalist general and gun-runner' and emphasises Davenant's innovatory nature in relation to his 1650s work, which had to negotiate the challenging legal landscape, and in terms of his establishment of a theatrical monopoly after the Restoration.¹⁸ This book bristles with detail but, in places, could be enhanced by more thorough textual analysis, especially of Davenant's earlier or lesser-known pieces. Once more, Davenant's connections with Shakespeare, literary or otherwise, are treated as integral to his own value within literary criticism; Edmond writes that 'many links are discovered with [Davenant's] reputed godfather, Shakespeare, whose works he was largely responsible for re-introducing to the theatregoing public after the interregnum.'¹⁹ However, by placing importance upon what Davenant does for research on Shakespeare adaptations, no space is left for consideration of Davenant's reworking of such texts to articulate his approach to Shakespearean sensuality and treatment of the senses during the revolutionary decades and after the Restoration.

In her 2008 book, Dawn Lewcock focuses especially on the visual sense, even if this is not always overt. *Sir William Davenant, the Court Masque and the English Seventeenth-Century Scenic Stage, c1605-c1700* adopts a new methodology compared to previous Davenant studies; it is rooted in practical theatre, which 'uses dramaturgical and

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 154.

¹⁸ Mary Edmond, *Rare Sir William Davenant: Poet Laureate, Playwright, Civil War General, Restoration Theatre Manager*, back cover.

¹⁹ Ibid.

scenographical analyses of selected plays and masques' in order to ascertain the way in which the staging of painted settings was achieved from the early years of the seventeenth century to its close. Lewcock's work organises itself by way of a chronological argument which concludes that the 'developments towards verisimilitude' in the plays of the scenic stage and the shifts in theatrical convention which occurred in performances by the Duke's Company, were partly due to Davenant's use of features of masque staging, particularly the 'sliding shutters in a theatre with forestage'.²⁰ In contrast, Lewcock suggests, the development of 'operatic spectacle', which evolved in parallel to the above, was in part a response to the use of the techniques behind the spectacular transformation scenes of the masques, which were used by the King's Company. Lewcock also states that her analyses of stage action are 'undertaken from the point of view of someone faced with preparing a practical production of the play in the theatrical circumstances presumed to have been prevailing at the time.' It is noted that this approach requires literary and cultural analysis of the texts examined.²¹ Owing to its innovative methodology, Lewcock's study offers an entirely fresh perspective on Davenant's work and operates as a comprehensive guide to Davenant's theatrical innovation. Even though it pulls to some degree 'against known theatre history', it simultaneously complements previous work, such as that by Edmond, allowing researchers to build a comprehensive picture of Davenant's stagecraft. Lewcock argues that Davenant was involved in the practical elements of staging from the very start and that 'although painted scenery as such would undoubtedly have appeared on the public stage after 1660, it would not have been the same way, for Davenant made particular positive contributions which brought about certain changes in both the presentation and reception of plays which would not have happened as they did without his work and influence'.²² Lewcock is keen to shine light on areas of Davenant's work that have previously been ignored, and her text provides the most thorough example of a twenty-first-century guide to Davenant.

The most recent book-length work on Davenant was published in 2013, and is unusual in that its main concern is the issue of Davenant's paternity. Simon Andrew Stirling's text *Shakespeare's Bastard: The Life of Sir William Davenant*, builds upon his previous work *Who Killed William Shakespeare? The Murderer, The Motive, The Means* (2013), and claims that 'the most compelling question about Davenant [is] - was he, as he

²⁰ Dawn Lewcock, *Sir William Davenant, the Court Masque, and the Seventeenth-Century Scenic Stage, c1605-c1700* (Amherst: Cambria Press, 2008), pp. ix.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. ix-xx.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 2.

apparently claimed to have been, the illegitimate son of Shakespeare?'.²³ This is a myth which has been convincingly dismantled by Davenant scholars.²⁴ Stirling's biography then, does not bring anything new to the table, and is primarily concerned with the biographical details of Davenant's life and what Shakespeare's works may reveal about his supposed son.

Overall, the Davenant studies I have discussed are to some degree limited by the prevailing arguments they put forward, where Davenant is noteworthy due to his colourful biography and the generic variation and innovative nature of his work, which both responded to and influenced the literary fashions of his day. These texts still offer a great deal to the field, and without them further research into Davenant would not be possible, but treatment of Davenant must move beyond recognising his role as an adaptable innovator if the literary value of his work is to be better understood. The above texts are major Davenant studies, but his royalist politics, which ultimately shaped his life and work, are largely decoupled from his writing. Instead, the research is more interested in suggesting that Davenant's output is mostly concerned with the demands of genre and, in particular, generic innovation. My work argues that Davenant's mode of royalism is articulated in his texts, and that this is done so through his approach to the human senses and the sensory experience. Consequently, before it is possible to contemplate this further, the way in which seventeenth-century individuals are likely to have conceptualised the senses must be considered.

Intro.2: The Senses in the Seventeenth Century

The approaches of the early modern era to the senses were heavily influenced by the Aristotelian tradition of the five senses, where the senses are ranked with sight ostensibly at the head of the hierarchy, since Aristotle writes 'sight is superior in purity to touch, and hearing and smell to taste'.²⁵ However, Aristotle also wavers elsewhere and appears keen

²³ Simon Andrew Stirling, *Shakespeare's Bastard: The Life of Sir William Davenant* (Stroud: The History Press, 2016), p. 8.

²⁴ Marcus Nevitt, 'Davenant, William' in *The Encyclopaedia of English Renaissance Literature*, p. 249.

²⁵ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, Electronic Edition, Bollingen Series LXXI, Book I, 1175b24-1176a3. See also Constance Classen, *Worlds of Sense: Exploring the Senses in History and Across Cultures* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), p. 2; Simon Smith, Jackie Watson and Amy Kenny, 'Introduction' in *The Senses in Early Modern England* ed. by Simon Smith, Jackie Watson and Amy Kenny (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2015), pp. 1-18 (p. 6); Mark M. Smith, *Sensory History* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2007), p. 28.

to present hearing as equally valuable, stating: ‘sight is *per se* more valuable so far as the needs of life are concerned, but from the point of view of thought and accidentally, hearing is the more important’ and that hearing has ‘the greatest share in the development of intelligence’.²⁶ Nevertheless, even if hearing is ranked atop the sensual hierarchy, for Aristotle, the sense of sight also remains in pole position. Aristotle also sought to align the senses with the elements, although he suggests this was not straightforward for many of his contemporaries, claiming that ‘present-day investigators attempt to reduce [the senses] to the ultimate elements of all bodies; but, since the senses are five, they have a difficulty in reducing them to the four elements, and the fifth causes them anxious consideration’.²⁷ In his *On The Heavens*, Aristotle does in fact write of a fifth element, ‘aether’, where the realms of the gods can be found.²⁸ This is not mentioned in his discussion of the elements above, but Aristotle does not struggle, in the way of the peers he mentions, to categorise the senses. He writes ‘it is clear we should ascribe the eye’s power of sight to water and the capacity of perceiving sounds to air and the sense of smell to fire’, because the eyes ‘derive their composition from the brain, the coldest and most watery of the bodily members’. Smell involves taking in an odour and since ‘odour is a smoke-like fume’, and ‘smoke-like fumes originate from fire’, the ‘organ of smell is appropriately located in the regions around the brain, as the substrate of that which is cold is potentially hot’. In order to solve the problem of there being fewer elements than senses, Aristotle rolls taste and touch together into the same category, where taste functions as a sub-branch of touch. As ‘the sense of touch is connected with earth; and taste is a species of touch’ Aristotle claims that because of this both senses are ‘closely connected to the heart, which has qualities contrary to those of the brain and is the warmest of the members’.²⁹

Aristotle’s work was also based around the supposed reliability of the senses and the belief that a person ‘can exercise his knowledge when he wishes, but his sensation does not depend upon himself - a sensible object must be there’. Aristotle’s *De Anima* also states that ‘each sense has one kind of object which it discerns, and never errs in reporting that what is before it is colour or sound (though it may err as to what it is that is

²⁶ Aristotle, *De Sensu and De Memoria*, trans. and ed. by Ross, G.R.T., (New York: Arno Press, 1973), pp. 45-47.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

²⁸ Aristotle, *On the Heavens* in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, Electronic Edition, Bollingen Series LXXI, *On the Heavens*, Book I, 270b1-270b25.

²⁹ Aristotle, *De Sensu and De Memoria*, p. 53.

coloured or where that is, or what it is that is sounding or where that is)'.³⁰ For Aristotle, the veracity of the senses was something which could not generally be questioned and, according to him, the senses were able to absorb the essence of an object without its physical substance; he writes that a 'sense', has 'the power of receiving into itself the sensible forms of things without the matter'. In order to illustrate this point further, he suggests that 'this must be conceived of as taking place in the way in which a piece of wax takes on the impress of a signet-ring without the iron or gold', and such a comparison attributes a high level of accuracy to the sensory interpretation of the world.³¹ For Aristotle, 'truth about nature' could only come from an understanding of the four elements as gathered via 'observation of their behaviour as manifested to human sensory experience', or 'intuitive knowledge of the world'. Thus, Aristotelian principles dictate that the senses provide 'unmediated access to truth about [the world]' and are therefore incapable of deception.³²

Although Aristotle's idea of the five senses was a prevalent part of sensory culture during the seventeenth century, the 'external' senses, as the five senses were known, were seen to exist alongside three 'internal senses' as originally dictated by the medieval doctrine of Thomas Aquinas.³³ Aquinas writes in his *Summa Theologica* of both the external and internal senses being 'preliminary to the intellect' and as part of the soul, but operating through the body. According to Aquinas, the soul itself is split into three parts: the vegetative soul, linked to basic needs; the rational soul, which is specific to humankind and its ability to reason; and the sensitive soul, home of the senses. The external senses do the work of perception, while the internal senses receive sensations, allowing them to access the rational soul. Much like Aristotle, although less ambiguously, Aquinas exalts sight as the highest of the external senses, describing it as being 'the most perfect, and the most spiritual'. As far as his three internal senses are concerned, they are made up of common sense, which receives 'sensible forms', imagination, 'which is as it were a storehouse of forms received through the senses' and, finally, memory, which deals with 'intentions which are not received through the senses' Aquinas compares the

³⁰ Aristotle, *De Anima*, trans. by Smith, J.A., in *The Works of Aristotle Translated into English* ed. by W.D. Ross, 6 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1931), III, II.5, 417b, 20-25, II.6, 418a, 15.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 4.24a, 15-25; Stuart Clark, *Vanities of the Eye: Vision in Early Modern European Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 14-15.

³² Mary Thomas Crane, *Losing Touch with Nature: Literature and the New Science in Sixteenth-Century England* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2014) pp. 4-5; p. 158.

³³ Aurélie Griffin, 'Love melancholy and the senses in Mary Wroth's works' in *The Senses in Early Modern England 1558-1660* ed. by Simon Smith, Jackie Watson and Amy Kenny (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015), pp. 149-150.

‘intentions’ humans receive with a sheep running from a wolf, not because of its appearance, but because it recognises it as a ‘natural enemy’.³⁴ Through Aquinas and his influence on the West during the Renaissance, we can begin to imagine the complex nature of the sensory culture of the period inhabited by Davenant, his contemporaries and their audiences.

René Descartes famously made a very significant contribution to philosophy and to the seventeenth century understanding of the senses with the 1637 publication of his *Discourse on the Method for Rightly Directing One’s Reason and Searching for Truth in the Sciences*, in a volume alongside three scientific texts, entitled *Optics*, *Geometry* and *Meteorology*.³⁵ His *Discourse on Method* acknowledges, that ‘our senses sometimes deceive us’, in stark contrast to Aristotle’s theorising, and that ‘there are [humans] whose reasoning is mistaken’. Not only this, but the ‘very same ideas’ people have when they are awake may also pervade their sleep in the form of dreams, and consequently, the writer convinces himself all the thoughts cluttering his mind are no more ‘certain’ than the ‘illusions’ of his dreams. Yet Descartes concludes that, even if everything else is false, he, thinking, must be something, giving rise to his hypothesis ‘*I think, therefore I am*’; Descartes writes subsequently that ‘this *me* - that is, the soul by which I am what I am - is completely distinct from the body; and is even easier to know than is the body; even if the body were not, the soul would not cease to be all that it is’.³⁶ Despite the importance of Descartes’s thinking, it is far too simplistic to simply assume that, for early modern individuals, the mind and body were conjoined prior to Descartes, and separated in his wake.³⁷ Furthermore, to claim that Descartes is the father of radical ‘Cartesian dualism’ is misleading; he also wrote of the way in which a lute player has ‘a part of his memory in his hands’.³⁸ Descartes has more to say on the unreliability of the senses in the *Optics*, where he states ‘it is the mind which senses, not the body’, since when the mind is preoccupied by an ‘ecstasy’ or ‘deep contemplation’, the body will remain without sensation, despite being in contact with a number of objects. In addition, Descartes writes:

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ See René Descartes, *Discourse on Method, Optics, Geometry and Meteorology*, trans. by Paul J. Olscamp (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2001). Olscamp discusses his desire to preserve the original layout and order of Descartes’s work, p. vii-viii.

³⁶ Ibid., pp. 27-28. Olscamp’s italics.

³⁷ Charis Charalampous, *Rethinking the Mind-Body Relationship in Early Modern Literature, Philosophy and Medicine: The Renaissance of the Body* (New York and London: Routledge, 2016), p. 1.

³⁸ Herman Roodenburg, ‘Introduction: Entering the Sensory Worlds of the Renaissance’ in *A Cultural History of the Senses in the Renaissance* ed. by Herman Roodenburg (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2014), pp. 1-8 (pp. 1-2).

we know that it is not properly because the mind is in the parts serving as organs to the exterior senses that it experiences sensation, but because it is in the brain [...] for we observe injuries and illnesses attacking only the brain, which impede all the senses generally, although the rest of the body does not cease to be animated because of this.³⁹

Descartes is keen to emphasise the importance of the brain in sensing, and the way in which it may distort the sensory experience if it not functioning in an ideal fashion. He also writes of the role of the body's nerves in informing the way in which humans sense:

[...] we know that it is through the medium of nerves that impressions which objects cause in the external members are transmitted to the mind in the brain: for we observe various accidents which, injuring only some nerve, destroy sensation in all parts of the body where this nerve sends its branches, without diminishing it anywhere else.⁴⁰

The *Discourse on the Method* emphasises the fallibility of the senses, their vulnerability to improper function, and encouraged a re-evaluation of society's treatment of the external world based on the supposed reliability of the senses.

Also a highly important figure in seventeenth-century philosophy, and in this case a personal friend of Davenant's, Thomas Hobbes writes famously of the state of war, where 'during the time men live without a common Power to keep them all in awe, they are in that condition which is called Warre; and such a warre, is of every man, against every man.'⁴¹ *Leviathan* (1651) suggests this is remedied through the correct application of a commonwealth, where humans agree to defer decision-making to a supreme power, 'to submit their Wills, every one to his Will, and their Judgements, to his Judgement'.⁴² *Leviathan's* argument that human nature necessitates utmost obedience to a sovereign power was shocking for some of Hobbes's readers, both in its treatment of absolutist rule and its approach to the Christian faith.⁴³ However, its treatment of the senses is invaluable in illuminating the way in which the sensory experience was being conceptualised at this point in the seventeenth century. Hobbes devotes a chapter to the senses in Part I of *Leviathan*, 'Of Man', which was entitled 'Of Sense', where he discusses the manner in which humans interpret their environment through the senses:

³⁹ René Descartes, *Discourse on Method, Optics, Geometry and Metereology*, p. 87.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Catherine Wilson, *Epicureanism at the Origins of Modernity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2008), p. 31; Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* ed. by Richard Tuck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p. 88.

⁴² Ibid., p.65

⁴³ Richard Tuck, 'Introduction' in Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* ed. by Richard Tuck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. ix-xlv (p. ix).

there is no conception in a mans mind, which hath not at first, totally, or by parts, been begotten upon the organs of Sense. The rest are derived from that originall. [...] The cause of Sense, is the Externall Body, or Object, which presseth the organ proper to each Sense, either immediatly, as in the Taste and Touch; or mediately, as in Seeing, Hearing, and Smelling: which pressure, by the mediation of Nerves, and other strings, and membranes of the body, continued inwards to the Brain and Heart, causeth there a resistance, or counter-pressure, or endeavour of the heart, to deliver it self: which endeavour because *Outward*, seemeth to be matter without. And this *seeming*, or *fancy*, is that which men call *Sense*; and consisteth, as to the Eye, in a *Light*, or *Colour figured*; to the Eare, in a *Sound*; to the Nostrill, in an *Odour*; to the Tongue and Palat, in a *Savour*; and to the rest of the body, in *Heat, Cold, Hardnesse, Softnesse*, and such other qualities, as we discern by *Feeling*. All which qualities called *Sensible*, are in the object that causeth them, but so many several motions of the matter, by which it presseth our organs diversely. Neither in us that are pressed, are they any thing else, but divers motions [...] Sense in all cases, is nothing els but originall fancy, caused [...] by the pressure, that is, by the motion, of externall things upon our Eyes, Eares, and other organs thereunto ordained. [...] whatsoever [...] we conceive, has been perceived first by sense, either all or once, or by parts; a man can have no thought, representing any thing, not subject to sense.⁴⁴

For Hobbes, the formation of all ideas generated by the mind stems ultimately from information gathered by the senses, as dictated by the world outside of the internal workings of the mind and body, by ‘Object[s]’ which press upon the different senses. This information is then relayed via ‘nerves’ and ‘membranes of the body’ to ‘the Brain and the Heart’, which suggests that Hobbes is speaking more specifically of the mind and the emotions. The text’s main argument in the above is that first, humans can have ‘no thought’ that escapes the influence of the senses, and second that all that is perceived by ‘sense’ is a product of the outside world, caused by ‘divers motions’, in opposition to Descartes’s suggestion that the senses were an unreliable source from which to gather knowledge and that the existence of external bodies outside of the mind could be doubted. Instead, Hobbes is emphatic in his assertion that all understanding is rooted in what ‘has been perceived first by sense’, whether this is in a fragmentary, incomplete fashion or otherwise. This is just one example of the lack of consensus in the period regarding sensory understanding, as that which can be recognised as a more modern approach to senses, seen in Descartes, for instance, was forced to co-exist with theories rooted in ancient ideas.⁴⁵

Davenant, then, had to navigate a diverse and often conflicting set of religious, social, political and philosophical ideas which existed in constant tension with one

⁴⁴ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, pp. 13-14; pp. 23-24.

⁴⁵ Marcus Nordlund, *The Dark Lantern: A Historical Study of Sight in Shakespeare, Webster and Middleton* (Gothenburg: University of Gothenburg, 1999), p. viii.

another, and these shaped the ways in which society, including Davenant, conceptualised the sensory experience. Throughout his career, however, Davenant displays a strong interest in a considered engagement with the senses and a moderate approach to the pleasures they have the ability to provide. I begin the thesis by exploring how he copes with conflicting theories, scientific and philosophical, regarding the process of seeing and how this relates to his work on the stage during the 1620s and 1630s. As I will discuss in more detail, Davenant wrote in the aftermath of Kepler's theory of the retinal image, and around the time of Descartes's *Optics* text, which moved Kepler's ideas beyond the biology of the eye to the way in which the mind interpreted the information it received. Not only this, but the England inhabited by Davenant followed an education system heavily reliant on inaccurate Aristotelian theories of vision, and, since the Protestant Reformation, was a country which encouraged a profound cultural distrust of the visual.⁴⁶ Davenant himself is believed to have converted from the Church of England to Catholicism, but this was not until the 1640s or 1650s and may have been triggered by his close relationship with the Catholic queen, Henrietta Maria.⁴⁷

During his early career, it is not possible to ascertain Davenant's exact views concerning the various discourses above which surrounded the visual process and experience, but we do know that in his writing he looks to decouple moralising overtones from the act of seeing, which suggests that Davenant may have been unconvinced by certain cultural, especially religious, discourses framing the visual process as somehow inherently sinful. In his masque-writing of the 1630s, Davenant must deal with a sensory landscape influenced by the cult of Neoplatonic love at court and the masque genre itself, where extravagant performances relied heavily on the visual impact of their spectacular staging and the aural nature of the music and song which was central to masque productions. Henrietta Maria's Neoplatonic love encouraged an engagement with the senses in order to appreciate beauty in a cerebral fashion, but distances itself firmly from the place of sensuality within human sexuality and its physical expression. While Davenant engages fully with the demands of the

⁴⁶ Stuart Clark, *Vanities of the Eye: Vision in Early Modern European Culture*, p. 14; Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1994), p. 13.

⁴⁷ Mary Edmond, *Rare Sir William Davenant*, p. 88; Alfred Harbage, *Sir William Davenant, Poet Venturer 1606-1668*, p. 104; Rebecca A. Bailey, *Staging the old faith: Queen Henrietta Maria and the theatre of Caroline England, 1625-1642*, pp. 136-137.

masque genre in terms of the almost overwhelming sensory stimulus they provide, he is less convinced by Neoplatonic love. Considering his prominent position at court working for the Queen, Davenant could only criticise the love cult to a certain extent, but it is nevertheless clear that he does not wish to endorse this particular approach to the sensory experience.

Later on, during the 1650s, Davenant must navigate very different political circumstances, but the senses, and especially ideas regarding how he may shape the sensory experience and behaviour of his audience, remain at the forefront of his work. Thomas Hobbes's aforementioned discussion of the senses in *Leviathan* is a hugely important part of the sensory culture in which Davenant exists at this point in his career, as is the seventeenth-century revival of Epicureanism. Natural philosopher and physician Walter Charleton wrote his own translation of Epicurus's *Morals* which was published in 1656. In this text, Epicurus does much to promote a moderate lifestyle and a careful, cerebral engagement with the senses. While there is no way of knowing how closely Davenant engaged with the work of Epicurus, his approach to sensory enjoyment is strikingly similar, and since Hobbes became a friend and mentor of Davenant's during their shared time in exile, it seems likely that Davenant would be familiar with his later work. Whether or not Davenant personally subscribed to Hobbes's theory of how the senses operated can only really be speculated upon, however. As Davenant moves into the later stages of his career during the Restoration, he is required to respond to the role of the actress on the professional stage and how her engagement with her character's sensory experience as part of the play world could shift associations with the woman onstage, away from sexual vulnerability and availability. Since Davenant pioneered the use of the actress through his 1650s work, he is clearly supportive of women playing female roles, but his desire to emphasise their propensity for virtue via their engagement with the senses suggests Davenant is, to some extent, uncomfortable with the way in which the actress has quickly become associated with what was viewed as a morally problematic form of sexual sensuality. Throughout his writing career, Davenant is forced to negotiate such problems or tensions within contemporary discourses which consider the sensory experience, and modern scholarship on the senses through history considers such issues. David Howes and Constance Classen write that 'the task of sensory anthropology is to describe and analyse the practices and meanings that are constitutive of the life of the senses in

particular societies’, which leads me to consider the current state of research in this field.⁴⁸

Intro.3: Sensory Studies

In 2009, Holly Dugan wrote that ‘sensory history is a burgeoning field’.⁴⁹ Prior to this, in 2006, David Howes wrote of the contemporary ‘revolution’ in ‘the study of senses’ and, in 2012, alongside Michael Bull, that ‘the sensual revolution in the humanities, social sciences and arts is flourishing’.⁵⁰ Howes writes that scholarship on the senses is no longer ‘the preserve of psychologists and neurobiologists’ and has more recently been ‘based on the premise that [sensory perception] is a social construction, which is in turn supported by the growing body of research showing that the senses are lived and understood differently in different cultures and historical periods’.⁵¹ The notion that the senses are conceptualised by individuals and communities according to time and place is expressed in seminal works within the field, such as Constance Classen’s *Worlds of Sense: Exploring the Senses in History and Across Cultures* (1993), where Classen states at the start of her work that ‘by undertaking this sensory journey through time and space we will come to understand the ways in which the senses are ordered by and underpin cultures’.⁵² The text’s conclusion reminds its reader that ‘sensory values not only frame a culture’s experience, they express its ideals, its hopes and its fears’.⁵³ Bruce R. Smith writes, specifically in relation to early modern sound, that ‘the physical facts of time and space become the psychological experience of time and space’ and that ‘knowledge and intentions are shaped by culture’.⁵⁴ As editor of *Empire of the Senses: The Sensual Culture Reader* (2005), Howes states that sense perception ‘has a history and a politics

⁴⁸ David Howes and Constance Classen, *Ways of Sensing: Understanding the Senses in Society* (London and New York: Routledge, 2014), p. 11.

⁴⁹ Holly Dugan, ‘Shakespeare and the Senses’, *Literature Compass*, 6.3 (2009), 723-740 (p. 723). Mark M. Smith writes similarly that he is working within a ‘burgeoning area of scholarly inquiry’ in *Sensory History*, p. 2.

⁵⁰ David Howes, ‘Chartering the Sensual Revolution’, *The Senses and Society*, 1.1 (2006), 113-128 (p. 114); Michael Bull and David Howes, ‘Editorial: The Expanding Field of Sensory Studies’, *The Senses and Society*, 11.1 (2016), 1-2 (p. 2).

⁵¹ David Howes, ‘Chartering the Sensual Revolution’, p. 113.

⁵² Constance Classen, *Worlds of Sense: Exploring the Senses in History and Across Cultures*, p. 7.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 136

⁵⁴ Bruce R. Smith, *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England: Attending to the O-Factor* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), p. 8.

that can only be comprehended within its cultural setting'.⁵⁵ Sensory scholarship is very clear on the strength of the relationship between sense perception and its historical, cultural and social context, and this is why I would suggest that, in order to fully understand Davenant's brand of royalism, it is necessary to interrogate Davenant's emphasis on the sensory experience in his writing.

The nexus point where context and sense-perception meet forms the foundations of research into the sensory experience, and scholars are also keen to work within 'a "democracy of the senses" [which] means that no sense is privileged in relation to its counterparts' and consequently there has been an explosion of research across the different senses, driven mainly, but not exclusively, by Berg with their Sensory Formations series, their Sensory Studies series and their journal, *The Senses and Society*. *The Auditory Culture Reader* also states that 'it is difficult to separate out our senses' and *Empire of the Senses* discusses the need for 'intersensoriality', which is 'the multi-directional interaction of the senses and of sensory ideologies, whether considered in relation to a society, an individual, or a work'.⁵⁶ For Howes, the best analogy for the senses is that of a knot, which is 'a useful notion for enucleating both the complicated (imbricated or twisted) nature of everyday perception and the embodied "compacity" of the senses'.⁵⁷ Thus, not only are the senses shaped by time and culture, but must be understood as part of the entire set of senses to which each sense belongs. For this reason, I also consider Davenant's approach to the senses as a closely linked set of means of perceiving the world, which operate simultaneously and in relation to one another. Davenant considers all of the senses in relation to sexuality, and also in relation to the experience of pleasure.

Researchers also emphasise the importance of recognising that an individual's sensory perception does not occur within a lonely void, but that it is 'a shared social phenomenon' and even though 'significant individual variations may exist within society', it is important to remember that 'such individual ways of sensing are always elaborated within the context of communal sensory orders'.⁵⁸ Even so, it is vital to avoid

⁵⁵ David Howes, 'Introduction: Empires of the Senses' in *Empire of the Senses: The Sensual Culture Reader* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2005) ed. by David Howes, pp. 1-17 (p. 5).

⁵⁶ Michael Bull and Les Back, 'Introduction: Into Sound' in *The Auditory Culture Reader* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2003), pp. 1-24 (p. 3) and David Howes, 'Introduction: Empires of the Senses' in *Empire of the Senses: The Sensual Culture Reader*, p. 9.

⁵⁷ David Howes, 'Introduction: Empires of the Senses' in *Empire of the Senses: The Sensual Culture Reader*, p. 9.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 5

any ‘overarching truth[s] about human experience’ and to instead be mindful of the ways in which ‘individual bodies sense specific phenomena, transforming both the body and the object being sensed’.⁵⁹ For a relatively new field, sensory studies has quickly become nuanced and self-aware.

Despite its newness, sensory studies also has much to offer to the study of the arts within the early modern period. Elizabeth D. Harvey’s *Sensible Flesh: On Touch in Early Modern Culture* (2003) deals with only one sense, but I would suggest its observations about the era are applicable to research encompassing any of the senses. Elizabeth D. Harvey writes of the way in which the early modern era is a ‘pivotal juncture’ in the construction of the sense of touch, arguing that this point in history is particularly significant for research into tactility because ‘we can witness [...] the nascent stages of a consolidation of beliefs about the body’s relation to knowledge, sexuality and reproduction, artistic creativity, and “contact” with other worlds, both divine and newly discovered geographical realms’.⁶⁰ These ‘nascent stages’ are equally important in regards to, for example, sight and smell. The importance of the early modern period in the history of the senses, and the desire to understand its conceptualising of the sensory experience in order to better appreciate the rich and diverse art (often specifically literature) it produced, has been recognised by major publications released within the last decade. These include *Knowing Shakespeare: Senses, Embodiment and Cognition* (2010) edited by Lowell Gallagher and Shankar Raman; *Shakespearean Sensations: Experiencing Literature in Early Modern England* (2013) edited by Katharine A. Craik and Tanya Pollard; *A Cultural History of the Senses in the Renaissance* (2014) edited by Herman Roodenburg; *The Senses in Early Modern England, 1558-1660* (2015) edited by Simon Smith, Jackie Watson and Amy Kenny, and *The Five Senses in Medieval and Early Modern England* (2016) edited by Annette Kern-Stähler, Beatrix Busse, and Wietse de Boer.

Knowing Shakespeare explores Shakespeare’s treatment of the senses in texts including *Cymbeline* and *Hamlet*, with a focus on embodiment and cognitive understanding in relation to the sensory experience. Gallagher and Raman suggest that critics need to ‘reassemble the body by starting with the senses and the forms of cognition, experience and discernment they make available’. By doing so, they write that

⁵⁹ Holly Dugan, ‘Shakespeare and the Senses’, p. 727.

⁶⁰ Elizabeth D. Harvey, ‘Introduction: The “Sense of all Senses”’ in *Sensible Flesh: On Touch in Early Modern Culture* ed. by Elizabeth D. Harvey (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), pp. 1-21 (p. 2).

we will then be able to ‘assign the Cartesian understanding of the body its proper place’ and gain a better grasp of the various modes of experience and cognition than that suggested by the dualism of Descartes.⁶¹ Focusing similarly on Shakespeare, but with more attention given to the emotional elements of the sensory experience, *Shakespearean Sensations* is concerned with the ‘interface between bodies and emotions’ during the early modern period, and remarks on ‘the recent “affective turn” in so many disciplines’. It suggests that ‘the attention to embodiment in current conversations about affect makes the early modern period, with its assumptions about the intrinsically material and physiological nature of emotion, an especially rich site for exploring the nature of affect’.⁶² While this may be the case, Craik and Pollard note that previous literary criticism has focused mainly on how texts represent the body and emotions. Instead, *Shakespearean Sensations* seeks to illuminate the ‘reciprocity’ between texts, the body and the self. The text reminds its reader that literary texts are sought out ‘in large part for the intensity of feeling that they produce: the involuntary flush, pang, or shiver’, and since sensation drives the consumption of texts, ignoring such sensations severely limits critical ability to understand ‘early modern conceptions of literature and its purpose’. Furthermore, by failing to acknowledge the relationship between sensory experiences and literature, Craik and Pollard argue that criticism is unable to recognise the ‘historical specificities’ of early modern vocabulary for describing individuals’ experience of literary texts, and the ways in which such accounts challenge assumptions about ‘what literature is and does’.⁶³ In order to further explore how the relationship between literature and sensation was conceptualised, the volume’s contributors combine ‘sensitivity to literary and theatrical form with insights drawn from early modern philosophical and medical thought’, looking mostly at Shakespeare but without limiting discussion to him alone.⁶⁴

Published four years after *Knowing Shakespeare, A Cultural History of the Senses in the Renaissance* reminds us that, as I discussed above, assigning ‘radical dualism’ to

⁶¹ Lowell Gallager and Shankar Raman, ‘Introduction’ in *Knowing Shakespeare: Senses, Embodiment and Cognition* ed. by Lowell Gallager and Shankar Raman (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 1-20 (p.3).

⁶² Katherine A. Craik and Tanya Pollard, ‘Introduction: Imagining audiences’ in *Shakespearean Sensations: Experiencing Literature in Early Modern England* ed. by Katherine A. Craik and Tanya Pollard (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 1-25 (pp. 2-4).

⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 4; p. 23.

Descartes is ‘misleading’.⁶⁵ In a similar vein to *Shakespearean Sensations*, Roodenburg also writes of the need to consider ‘not only the senses but also [...] the emotions’ in order to appreciate ‘how people in the Renaissance lived and sensed’. The text is part of a series which offers a panoramic view of sensory culture across six different eras, ranging from antiquity to the dawn of the twenty-first century.⁶⁶ This particular volume considers major historical shifts such as, for example the ‘increasing societal impact of court and urban cultures’, the Reformation and Counter Reformation, and technological advances. These are considered alongside critical approaches such as those which state that ‘all our acts of sensation (and they change all the time) inform both our bodies and the environment (both people and objects) that our bodies sense’, or those which suggest how pictures impact upon the viewer’s ‘sense of sight, touch and hearing’.⁶⁷ The text’s aim is not just to show ‘*what* people may have sensed’ but ‘*how* they may have sensed [and] how their acts of sensation informed both their bodies and the objects being sensed’.⁶⁸

In a similar fashion *The Senses in Early Modern England* articulates excellently the pertinence of sensory studies to literary criticism, and to other art forms. It insists that, although the sensory experience of early modern individuals and societies cannot be recreated, diverse, contemporary forms of art are ‘often highly suggestive about the senses’ and preserve ‘examinations of the senses, representations of sensory encounters, and even accounts of the sensory experiences that articulated everyday life for early modern subjects.’ The text claims that this demonstrates a ‘relationship of mutual elucidation’ between such work and culture more widely. Consequently, a better idea of how the senses were conceptualised not only enables a better understanding of these creative outputs, but the ideas expressed about the sensory experience can illuminate early modern thinking on the senses.⁶⁹ Thus, while my own explorations of Davenant’s treatment of the senses are hugely valuable in understanding his work, they also contribute to the much wider field of sensory studies within the early modern era, and in turn to the even broader scholarship of the senses more generally. The field continues to evolve and flourish, and as this particular text states ‘scholars and critics of early modern

⁶⁵ Herman Roodenburg, ‘Introduction: Entering the Sensory Worlds of the Renaissance’, in *A Cultural History of the Senses in the Renaissance* ed. by Herman Roodenburg (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2014), pp. 1-17 (p. 2).

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. x.

⁶⁷ Herman Roodenburg, ‘Introduction: Entering the Sensory Worlds of the Renaissance’, in *A Cultural History of the Senses in the Renaissance*, p. 4; pp. 16-17.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

⁶⁹ Simon Smith, Jackie Watson and Amy Kenny, ‘Introduction’ in *The Senses in Early Modern England*, pp. 1-16 (p. 1).

literature and culture are turning their attention from the fashioning of the body to its processes, and what this study provides is a way of assessing how those processes, in particular sense perception, affected, mediated and influenced the reception of art, literature and theatre in this period.⁷⁰

The Five Senses in Medieval and Early Modern England has a similar remit and was published only a year later, focusing solely upon the senses in relation to the literature of the day, considering the history of the senses, changing attitudes to the senses and the ‘“interplay between the sensorium and conceptual categories in their social and cultural embeddedness”’.⁷¹ The text’s Introduction informs its reader that it focuses only on English literature, language and wider culture, and that by examining these across both the medieval and early modern periods the text ‘provide[s] a diachronic investigation of the functions and development of sense perception in a given spatial context.’ It ‘uncover[s] and spotlight[s] breaks and continuities in the understanding of and engagement with the five senses of medieval and early modern English writers’.⁷² The text unites many of the ideas pursued by previous sensory scholarship, as suggested by the methodology it follows, as below:

The focus is on the authors’ development of sense perception, sensory experience and their use of sensory metaphors as a way of addressing and articulating the social, cultural, political and religious issues of their time. Another emphasis of this volume is on reading and the theatre as multi-sensory experiences, an emphasis which reflects the increasing scholarly interest in recapturing and reconstructing past sensescapes.⁷³

My own study bears considerable similarity in its approach, especially in terms of considering Davenant’s development and understanding of the sensory experience and his use of sensory metaphors to consider contemporary issues. For Davenant, exploring how seventeenth-century individuals conceptualise the senses and the way in which the sensory experience informs approaches to morality, pleasure, and sexuality enables a re-evaluation of royalist ideologies. My particular focus is on how Davenant articulates his politics via his conceptualisation of the sensory experience during his writing career which happens to align with an important period in history. It spanned the revolutionary

⁷⁰ Farah Karim-Cooper, ‘Afterword’ in *The Senses in Early Modern England*, pp. 217-219 (p. 218).

⁷¹ Richard Newhauser quoted by Annette Kern-Stähler and Kathrin Scheuchzer, ‘Introduction’ in *The Five Senses in Medieval and Early Modern England* ed. by Annette Kern-Stähler, Beatrix Busse and Wietse de Boer (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2016), pp. 1-17 (p. 2).

⁷² Annette Kern-Stähler and Kathrin Scheuchzer, ‘Introduction’ in *The Five Senses in Medieval and Early Modern England*, p. 2.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

decades, including the Interregnum, an unprecedented event, and the Restoration. Davenant provides some insight into what may happen to an individual's conceptualising of the sensory experience during a specific socially and politically turbulent era, in this case the civil wars, which has been given little attention by more general studies in sensory scholarship, where the focus is more broad and considers the early modern period as a whole. In terms of research within the field that focuses on the early modern period, this has so far only become more specific, in terms of time period, in studies which are devoted to the work of Shakespeare. Given the latter's literary and wider cultural significance and the fact that the field of sensory studies is still new, perhaps this is unsurprising. This thesis, however, focuses on the ways in which Davenant's understanding of, and attitudes towards, the senses allow him to carve out an identity which at once enables him to align himself with fellow royalists but also to create a space for his own, nuanced royalism.

Intro.4: Royalism

The creation of a suitable definition of what royalism is or who a royalist was has been a source of struggle for historians and literary critics alike, but the flourishing of research in the field during the past thirty years or so has advanced understanding hugely.⁷⁴ Jerome de Groot's 2004 text *Royalist Identities* provides the following definition(s):

The meanings of 'Royalist', in my construction of the term, are the loose affiliation of those who supported the King and who condemned his enemies. They were first and foremost monarchists, before any ambiguity of internal debate regarding the relationship with the

⁷⁴ These important studies include: Ronald Hutton, *The Royalist War Effort, 1642-1646* (London: Longman, 1982); Michael Mendle, *Dangerous Positions: The Estates of the Realm and the Making of the Answer to the XIX Propositions* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1985); Lois Potter, *Secret Rites and Secret Writing: Royalist Literature 1641-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); David L. Smith, *Constitutional Royalism and the Search for Settlement* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Timothy Raylor, *Cavaliers, Clubs and Literary Culture: Sir John Mennes, James Smith and the Order of the Fancy* (Newark and London: University of Delaware and Associated University Presses, 1994); James Loxley, *Royalism and Poetry in the English Civil Wars: The Drawn Sword* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997); Geoffrey Smith, *The Cavaliers in Exile, 1640-1660* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Hero Chalmers, *Royalist Women Writers, 1650-1689* (Oxford and New York: Clarendon Press/Oxford University Press, 2004); Jerome de Groot, *Royalist Identities* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); Jason McElligot and David L. Smith (eds.), *Royalists and Royalism during the English Civil Wars* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Syrithe Pugh, *Herrick, Fanshawe and the Politics of Intertextuality: Classical Literature and Seventeenth-Century Royalism* (Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate, 2010); the aforementioned John Stubbs, *Reprobates: The Cavaliers of the English Civil War*, and Andrew Hopper, *Turncoats and Renegades: Changing Sides during the English Civil Wars* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

parliament. ‘Royalism’ is not a monolithic structure, however, and it teemed with debate and faction.⁷⁵

The above recognises the varied nature of royalists and royalism, while also offering a starting point free of ambiguity, where all royalists can be defined, to varying degrees and in different ways, as approving of the monarch and sharing the same foes. The common ground shared by royalists may only go as far as this, though, and this is also acknowledged by Jason McElligott and David L. Smith. They have written on royalism throughout the civil wars, and also dedicated an edited collection to focussing specifically upon Interregnum royalism, which does excellent work in recovering the royalist experience of this era, and is entitled *Royalists and Royalism during the Interregnum* (2010).⁷⁶ It is in their 2007 work, *Royalists and Royalism During the English Civil Wars*, however, where McElligott and Smith present their own useful articulation of how one might seek to define a royalist:

the only acceptable definition of a royalist is this: somebody who, by thought or deed, identified himself or herself as a royalist and was accepted as such by other individuals who defined themselves as royalist. These royalists could (and did) hold a wide variety of political or theological opinions but they were united by a concern to see the Stuarts return to power on their own terms or, failing that, the best possible terms available. [...] Royalism [was not] a static, fixed and unchanging entity. It was an allegiance in the process of constant adaptation in response to changing contexts and circumstances, and it looks different depending on whether we are examining the formation of the royalist party in the early 1640s, the period of actual war-fighting, or the complex series of negotiations which took place after the surrender of the king to the Scots in 1646.⁷⁷

This definition is helpful because it simultaneously recognises the overarching themes of royalism while urging readers to bear in mind its ability to accommodate a broad spectrum of ideas and individuals, whose self-validation also came through their mutual recognition of one another. It also states that royalism is a shifting entity which responds to changes in the cultural and political landscape; McElligott and Smith note that during the Interregnum, royalists and royalism operate in a manner distinct from their behaviours

⁷⁵ Jerome de Groot, *Royalist Identities*, p. 2.

⁷⁶ Other studies which pay particular attention to the Interregnum include Paul H. Hardacre, *The Royalists During the Puritan Revolution* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1956); David Underdown, *Royalist Conspiracy in England, 1649-1660* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960), and the aforementioned *Cavaliers in Exile*.

⁷⁷ Jason McElligott and David L. Smith, ‘Introduction: rethinking royalists and royalism’ in *Royalists and Royalism during the English Civil Wars* ed. by Jason McElligott and David L. Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 1-15 (pp. 12-13; p. 8).

outside of this period, and as such the questions researchers may wish to ask will differ.⁷⁸ They also deal with the problems of conceptualising royalism using convenient dichotomies such as ‘absolutist’ versus ‘constitutionalist’, where royalist individuals supported either the absolute power of the king or the sharing of power between king and parliament, or terms such as ‘royalist’ and ‘loyalist’ where those on one side of the political spectrum are simplistically divided into those who revere monarchical office and authority and those who feel a sense of personal allegiance to the king.⁷⁹ A definition such as that presented above encourages an understanding of royalism as a heterogeneous and potentially highly accommodating set of ideologies.

Barbara Donagan describes royalism as consisting of many varieties and emphasises the need to consider the ‘“middle”’, who may have ‘initially put peace and quiet above principle and hoped to evade choice between sides’ and the factors which contributed to such people becoming more partisan. Donagan also notes the need to remember the existence of the ‘convergences’ between ‘royalists and parliamentarians’ which ‘survived and helped to ameliorate the strains imposed by the killing, destruction, expropriation, violent polemic and disillusion of the Civil War’.⁸⁰ Donagan writes that many soldiers of the era could ‘only notionally be called either “royalist” or “parliamentarian”’ and the loyalty of such men to ‘individual officers or to company or regiment was often stronger than that to the cause’.⁸¹ During the Interregnum, it is also worth noting that a lapse in the loyalties of formerly zealous royalist people ‘may mean that it is necessary, even if only for parts of the decade, to consider some people as *royalish* or *loyalish* rather than *Royalist* or *Loyalist*’.⁸² This recognition of the slippery nature of royalism is vital in fully comprehending the output of writers such as Davenant, and in their work on Interregnum royalism, McElligott and Smith write that ‘much further research is [...] needed on the extent to which Royalists were willing and able to reach

⁷⁸ Jason McElligott and David L. Smith, ‘Introduction: rethinking royalists and royalism during the Interregnum’ in *Royalists and royalism during the Interregnum* ed. by Jason McElligott and David L. Smith (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2010), pp. 1-17 (pp. 8-9).

⁷⁹ Jason McElligott and David L. Smith, ‘Introduction: rethinking royalists and royalism’ in *Royalists and Royalism during the English Civil Wars*, p. 13.

⁸⁰ Barbara Donagan, ‘Varieties of Royalism’ in *Royalists and Royalism during the English Civil Wars*, pp. 66-88 (p. 66).

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 80

⁸² Jason McElligott and David L. Smith, ‘Introduction: rethinking royalists and royalism during the Interregnum’ in *Royalists and royalism during the Interregnum*, p. 10.

some kind of accommodation with republican regimes'; this thesis highlights Davenant's position as an excellent example of such accommodation.⁸³

According to de Groot's definition, Davenant is undoubtedly a royalist man and while part of the household of Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke, he began his military career, fighting for the monarch under Buckingham at the Ile de Rhé during the summer of 1627 and possibly under the Earl of Lindsay a year later.⁸⁴ Davenant also fought in the Bishops Wars during 1639 and 1640. From 1642-3, he served as Lieutenant General of Ordnance under William Cavendish, the earl of Newcastle, during which time most of the north of England was successfully subdued. In September of 1643, Davenant received his knighthood and then returned to continental Europe to continue raising money and gathering munitions on behalf of Queen Henrietta Maria. Davenant fought in England again during the middle of 1644, and then spent the rest of 1644 and all of 1645 'conveying munitions sent by the Queen through the parliamentary blockade to the royalist forces in the west'. Edmond writes that this dangerous endeavour has been 'much undervalued'.⁸⁵ Davenant's relationship with the Queen stretched further back than the loyalty he demonstrated through his gunrunning, however, as shown by the 1630s masques he produced under her patronage. After Greville's death in 1628, Davenant moved to the Middle Temple and lodged with Edward Hyde, who would become lord chancellor in 1658 and play a role in rebuilding the monarchy.⁸⁶ Davenant also met Endymion Porter, confidant of the king and his wife Olivia, a favourite of the queen, as well as Henry Jermyn.⁸⁷ It was at this point in his life that Davenant began to build ties with the royal household.

One of the most striking ways Davenant demonstrated his loyalty to Charles I was via his part in the failed army plot in the spring of 1641 alongside figures such as Henry Jermyn and John Suckling to take control of the Tower of London, free the monarch's chief councillor and friend Thomas Wentworth, the Earl of Strafford, and replace the 'ailing commander' in the north, the earl of Northumberland, with the earl of Newcastle.⁸⁸ Having done this, the plotters planned to then move the army south to London. Davenant

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁸⁴ Mary Edmond, *Rare Sir William Davenant*, p. 34.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

⁸⁶ Sophia Blaydes and Paul Bordinat, *Sir William Davenant*, p. 14, Paul Seaward, 'Hyde, Edward', *ODNB*.

⁸⁷ Sophia Blaydes and Paul Bordinat, *Sir William Davenant*, p. 14.

⁸⁸ Malcom Smuts, 'The Court and the emergence of a royalist party', *Royalists and Royalism during the English Civil Wars*, pp. 43-65 (p. 58; p. 62); Mary Edmond, *Rare Sir William Davenant*, p. 87, Ronald G. Asch, 'Wentworth, Thomas, first earl of Strafford', *ODNB*.

⁸⁸ Sophia Blaydes and Paul Bordinat, *Sir William Davenant*, p. 14

and his peers were part of one of two groups with different objectives. The other group, which included Henry Percy, former army colonel and then MP, alongside officers not closely linked to the Court, ‘disclaimed any intention of using illegal violence’ and instead stated their desire to defend the rights of the king, while ‘asserting the grievances of the soldiery’.⁸⁹ Davenant’s role in what was not only a royalist conspiracy, but a violent one, demonstrates his strength of feeling towards the upholding of the monarchy. It is possible to distinguish Davenant not only from the more peaceable royalists mentioned above, but from those who were especially keen to seek some kind of allegiance with those who were, ostensibly, their enemies. One example of this is royalist John Denham’s friendship with the Earl of Pembroke, also his patron, and a man who became a member of Cromwell’s Council of State; Geoffrey Smith describes this as an ‘insurance policy’.⁹⁰ Denham’s congenial relations with other members meant he is now recognised as someone who would ‘fraternize with the enemy’.⁹¹ Davenant’s attempts at accommodation did not stretch quite this far.

Davenant’s literary career, did however, flourish under the Interregnum regime and it was during this time that Davenant produced his most famous work, the unfinished epic poem, *Gondibert*. He was also imprisoned by the authorities, but despite his reputation as a loyal supporter of King Charles, his life was spared, quite possibly due to the intervention of his friend and politician Bulstrode Whitelocke. Slightly later in the decade, Davenant writes to secretary of state, John Thurloe, asking to spend time in France and complete any task required of him, which looks like an offer of intelligence-gathering amongst exiled royalists.⁹² Davenant wrote to the new government and also proposed the staging of his own dramatic entertainments apparently for the purpose of providing moral education for the populace and preventing disquiet. Furthermore, he was permitted to stage his own opera, an anomaly against a backdrop of strict theatre legislation. During the Restoration, Davenant became part of a theatrical monopoly opposite Thomas Killigrew, and managed his own theatre. Throughout his career, Davenant was preoccupied by ideas surrounding moderation, compromise and the middle

⁸⁹ Malcom Smuts, ‘The Court and the emergence of a royalist party’, *Royalists and Royalism during the English Civil Wars*, p.62; George A. Drake, ‘Percy, Algernon, tenth earl of Northumberland’, *ODNB*

⁹⁰ John Stubbs, ‘Denham as Cavalier’ in *Sir John Denham (1614/15-1669) Reassessed* ed. by Philip Major (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), pp. 12-30 (p .23).

⁹¹ Brendon O Hehir quoted in Philip Major, ‘Introduction’ in *Sir John Denham (1614/15-1669) Reassessed* ed. by Philip Major (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), pp. 1-11 (p .5).

⁹² Marcus Nevitt, ‘Restoration Theatre and Interrgenum Royalism: The Cavalier Rivalry of John Denham and William Davenant’ in *Sir John Denham (1614/15-1669) Reassessed* ed. by Philip Major (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), pp. 52-74 (p .59).

ground, and ultimately flourished under both the Interregnum regime and the restored monarch. This was in part due to the elasticity of his royalism, which, while unwilling to compromise with Parliamentary views, is keen to challenge aspects of royalism throughout his work, as I will show, and is only too happy to repackage Hobbesian ideas for the new regime during the Interregnum.

Integral to Davenant's own form of royalism is the ability of the senses to elicit pleasure, and the idea of pleasure as part of a royalist framework is well-established within literary criticism. Earl Miner's important, but now rather dated 1971 work, *The Cavalier Mode from Jonson to Cotton*, discusses the relationship between pleasure and a royalist or 'cavalier' way of life, writing:

The foremost Cavalier ideal expressed in poetry is what we may call the good life [...] This ideal reflects many things: a conservative outlook, a response to social threat, classical recollections, love of a very English way of life, and a new blending of old ideas. [...] In itself, Cavalier poetry reveals a consistent urge to define and explore the features of what constituted human happiness, and of which kind of man was good.⁹³

For Miner, a key facet of the royalist sensibility was pleasure, but his argument is overly simplistic and homogenous in its approach to royalists and royalism. It is also a prime example of the vague approach of literary criticism to the senses and sensuality within royalism, where the 'good life' of the Cavalier is gestured towards but there is no further elaboration. James Loxley describes Miner's focus on 'golden moments' as indicative of a 'determination to sever a resolutely literary cavalierism both from the business of contention and a more broadly imagined history'.⁹⁴ Miner paints a very idyllic picture of the place of pleasure within the royalist mindset and that of non-royalists, even if he insists 'there is no need to sentimentalize the Cavaliers'.⁹⁵ For supporters of Parliament, such royalist individuals 'embodied' a 'terrifying rapacity', and to 'militant' opponents such men were 'degenerate'. They seem to be 'bred up on Continental trifles and polluted with popery', much like the supposed 'disreputable likes of Suckling and syphilis-scarred Davenant – prodigals and playboys'.⁹⁶ Nicholas McDowell writes that, although writer John Stubbs recognises that the stereotype of the libertine cavalier royalist originated in

⁹³ Earl Miner, *The Cavalier Mode from Jonson to Cotton* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971) p. 44.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 306; James Loxley, *Royalism and Poetry in the English Civil Wars: The Drawn Sword*, p. 2.

⁹⁵ James Loxley, *Royalism and Poetry in the English Civil Wars: The Drawn Sword*, p.1; Earl Miner, *The Cavalier Mode from Jonson to Cotton*, p. 63.

⁹⁶ James Loxley, *Royalism and Poetry in the English Civil Wars: The Drawn Sword*, p.1. See also John Stubbs, *Reprobates*, p. 6. Stubbs writes that 'cavalier' was a term of abuse in the early 1640s.

Parliamentarian abuse, and was later appropriated by Sir Walter Scott and Robert Browning for use in a more positive context, Stubbs is in fact capitalising on the reputation of certain royalists as possessing a depraved kind of sensuality through his choice of title: *Reprobates: The Cavaliers of the English Civil War*.⁹⁷ An important element of this stereotype was the notion that such men were entirely hedonistic in their search for pleasure, and that a considerable component of this involved engaging with their senses in a fashion which privileged promiscuous sexuality. It is necessary to consider the place of sexuality within types of royalism, since sexual behaviour is an important part of the human sensory experience in the context of Davenant's work. Discussion of the sexual mores within royalist communities is also the closest literary critics and historians come to considering how royalists considered their sensual experiences.

Timothy Raylor writes of the Order of the Fancy, a fraternity whose membership was made up of budding royalist wits very likely including Davenant, that one member, Edward viscount Conway, 'was addicted to pleasure: to exotic food and drink, to fine clothes, and to the fine arts'.⁹⁸ Raylor also writes of the 'hard drinking' within such clubs and their 'riotous practices', which falls neatly in line with the stereotype of royalist men as indulgent, fashionable individuals with a keen interest in contributing to and acting as guardians of literary culture and the arts more generally.⁹⁹ Yet in keeping with recognising the plurality of royalists and their various royalisms, it is vital to note that this approach to pleasure was not the only one pursued by royalists such as Davenant, or necessarily pursued at all. Geoffrey Smith writes of the correspondence of royalist exiles during the revolutionary decades that:

references to sexual immorality and debauchery, in any but the most general terms, are much harder to find. Accounts of the problems of maintaining wives and families in exile, of the misery of separation of married couples, of long-awaited reunions and unhappy partings, are much more common.¹⁰⁰

Thus, it is evident that copious amounts of casual sex were certainly not necessarily normal for royalist individuals. Jerome de Groot states that in fact 'royalism presented a sexual orthodoxy of compulsory heterosexuality within a fixed family unit [...]. Sexual

⁹⁷ Nicholas McDowell, 'Towards redefinition of Cavalier Poetics', (p. 414).

⁹⁸ Timothy Raylor, *Cavaliers, Clubs and Literary Culture*, p. 95.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 98.

¹⁰⁰ Geoffrey Smith, *The Cavaliers in Exile, 1640-1660*, p. 128.

identity was tied to models of the family and to anthropocentric notions of the wholeness of the body within society.¹⁰¹ Admittedly, Davenant's contracting of syphilis as a married man cannot be disputed, but it is lazy to assume that his behaviour perfectly, or even roughly, aligned with the subtexts of his literary output.¹⁰² A thorough understanding of the place of sexuality within royalism at this point in time is important not least because the war 'compromises and destabilizes definitions of the early modern subject, and therefore is a key nexus point for the study of the construction of sexual [...] identity'.¹⁰³ More significantly, it allows us to fully understand royalist approaches to sexuality within royalists' lives. An understanding of the relationship of sexuality with the texts royalists produced is essential in order to recognise how they conceptualised the human sensory experience in general terms, and in relation to sex and its place in their own value systems.

Ultimately, the senses are given little time by most research on royalism, which if anything, generally treats the human sensory experience very vaguely, if it discusses it at all. My work contributes towards research into royalism by showing that knowledge of the way in which royalists such as Davenant conceptualise their own sensory experiences, and those of others, enables a more nuanced appreciation of their own type of royalism.

Intro.5: Davenant's Work

Davenant's work is important since it is indicative of the complex, highly nuanced relationship between the sensory experience and royalism during the revolutionary decades and into the Restoration. His texts explore contemporary conceptual understanding of the senses and display a preference for moral, moderate living and sensory moderation. This thesis shows that Davenant's output demonstrates the accommodating nature of his royalism through its reimagining of the senses in relation to royalist, courtly and wider societal beliefs regarding morality, sexuality, physical and

¹⁰¹ Jerome de Groot, *Royalist Identities*, p. 118; p. 125.

¹⁰² Marcus Nevitt, 'The Insults of Defeat: Royalist Responses to Sir William Davenant's *Gondibert* (1651)', p. 288. Brendon O Hehi, *Harmony from Discords: A Life of Sir John Denham* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968) is a biography of one of Davenant's contemporaries, who, the text suggests, lived a life often characterised by strikingly different experiences and episodes, who felt one thing but behaved in a manner which suggested otherwise.

¹⁰³ Jerome de Groot, *Royalist Identities*, p. 125.

intellectual pleasure, and the roles of women and, specifically, actresses. I explore how Davenant challenges existing frameworks in his writing by adopting an approach which incorporates values from across the political spectrum and displays a pragmatic moral stance which aims to elicit wide appeal amongst his audiences. My work in turn furthers critical understanding of the rich plurality of royalism and the place of the senses within royalism, while also illuminating sensory scholarship by considering the ways in which royalist identities may influence approaches to the sensory experience. As researchers increasingly begin to understand the benefits of interdisciplinarity, I would suggest research into royalism benefits from a closer engagement with sensory studies, even if it is still underpinned by more traditional literary and historical approaches.

This thesis examines Davenant's stage work, his most famous text which takes the form of an epic poem, and some of his prose. My rationale for avoiding most of his poetry is because it is his performances, his writing which discusses his stage work, or that which is inspired by the structure of a play which devotes much of its attention to the senses and how these can be conceptualised. My first chapter examines Davenant's plays of the 1620s and 1630s, with a focus on his revenge tragedies *Albovine* (1626) and *The Cruell Brother* (1627). Through an analysis of these plays and others, it is possible to illustrate the way in which his theatre reimagines the acts of seeing and being seen, as processes which can both either harness power or invite vulnerability, and are as able to demonstrate morality as they are to indicate a capacity for sin. Davenant looks to free the visual process both from its associations with sin and a decadent kind of sensuality which would later underpin royalist stereotypes. In the following chapter, I move on to examining Davenant's masques of the 1630s and just after, including *The Temple of Love* (1635) and *Salmacida Spolia* (1640), where he must negotiate the foibles of the Neoplatonic love cult which pervaded court culture during this decade. Davenant carves out his own space away from this, while simultaneously rejecting the hostile approach towards Neoplatonic love which existed in a certain type of hyper-masculine royalism. He is critical of both the former but also of unchecked sensuality and carnal indulgence, aligning himself more closely, at least in his writing, with the sexual orthodoxy I refer to above rather than the 'playboy' stereotype recognised by Stubbs. My third chapter considers Davenant's Interregnum work, especially his epic poem *Gondibert* (1650/1), the political tract *A Proposition for Advancement of Moralitie* (1654) and the first part of *The Siege of Rhodes* (1656), which manages to simultaneously cater both to royalists of varying colours and to the current governmental regime. This is achieved through an

exploration of pleasure as that which can be elicited through a measured engagement with the senses, in contrast to the hedonistic pleasure-seeking of groups such as the Order of the Fancy. The sensory experience is, for Davenant and many others, an integral facet of royalist pleasure, but he seeks to reframe such pleasure. Finally, I look at Davenant's Restoration plays, including his adaptations, *The Law Against Lovers* (1662) based upon *Measure for Measure*, and his reimagining of *The Tempest* (1667). These texts re-evaluate the role of the actress, already generally seen as a highly sensual and sexualised immoral woman. Instead, Davenant promotes women on stage by narrowing the space between the actress and the female character she adopted, through demonstrating the virtue of his female characters via their engagement with the senses and the way in which they shape the sensory experiences of those around them. Davenant frees the actress from a sphere in which her value is measured wholly in relation to her sexuality by placing emphasis on her actions in addition to her chastity. From a traditional royalist perspective, chaste women were important due to royalism's aforementioned privileging of the family unit, and in addition to their commitment to their husband and offspring, were expected to be passive and obedient.¹⁰⁴ Davenant's female characters of the 1660s are chaste and virtuous, but not necessarily passive, as demonstrated by figures such as Ianthe, or Miranda and Dorinda. Once more, Davenant's royalism is shown to be elastic and nuanced, and continues to be so as he navigates the shifting political landscape of the Restoration.

In examining the work of Davenant and its interest in sensory moderation, this work is able to advance Davenant studies in providing a new approach to his texts and subsequently allowing a re-evaluation of the type of royalist he was and the kind of idiosyncratic royalism he sought to embrace. Through this, I am in turn able to contribute towards research on the plurality of royalism at this point in history and how it engaged with concepts of the human senses, of sensuality, and of sensuality in relation to sexuality. Finally, my research fits into the flourishing scholarship on literature and the senses in the early modern period, and therefore into sensory studies more broadly.

¹⁰⁴ Jerome de Groot, *Royalist Identities*, p. 118; p. 129.

Chapter 1: Seeing and Being Seen in Davenant's Early Work

1.1: Seeing in the Seventeenth Century

GALEOTTO Thou, once the health, art poyson now to sight,
'Tis wholsomer to looke upon the Basiliske [...]

Unfortunate Lovers,

(II.I)¹

Upon the discovery of a friend's betrayal in Davenant's tragedy *The Unfortunate Lovers* (1643), the Prince of Verona reprimands his favourite, Galeotto, by exclaiming that he would rather gaze upon the deadly serpent of classical myth, that killed if simultaneously seeing and being seen by its victim, than look upon his friend. In more general terms, seeing involves an element of risk firstly because it involves interpretation, and secondly, because there are times when we do not see without being seen.² The power attributed to the anatomy of nature in the exchange above however is vast; the eye alone can dictate its own destruction of others and of itself.³ This bestowing of such power upon the eye is rooted in ancient extramission theory, which 'maintained that seeing was the result of rays being emitted from the eyes and falling upon an object in the outside world'.⁴ It is necessary to consider ancient theories of vision, as well as those pioneered during the early seventeenth century, because such conceptualisations of the visual process were current when Davenant was writing, and impacted upon his own portrayal of seeing and being seen. It is difficult to ascertain exactly the theories of vision to which Davenant himself may have subscribed, but an understanding of the scientific and cultural contexts of his work suggests the kinds of ideas to which he may have been exposed and allows us to consider how these may have impacted upon his plays. Davenant also had to navigate the

¹ William Davenant, *The Unfortunate Lovers* (London: R.H., 1643), sig. C2^v.

² Barry Sandywell, *Dictionary of Visual Discourse* (Farnham and Burlington, U.S.: Ashgate, 2011), p. 529. See also pp. 526-528.

³ Sergei Lobanov-Rostovsky, 'Taming the Basilisk' in *The Body in Parts: Fantasies of Corporeality in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by David Hillman and Carla Mazzio (New York and London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 194-217 (p. 196).

⁴ Jackie Watson, '“Dove-like looks” and “serpents eyes”: staging visual clues and early modern aspiration' in *The Senses in Early Modern England, 1558-1660*, ed. by Simon Smith, Jackie Watson and Amy Kenny (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015), pp. 39-54 (p. 39).

iconoclastic climate of the day, but pulls against ideas that seeing could be inherently sinful.

The first theory of vision to consider which was still to some degree current during Davenant's lifetime was the aforementioned extramission theory. This, and the theory of intraocular fire, were ideas explored by Plato (427 BCE - 347 BCE), although the ancestry of Plato's theory of vision is not easily determined.⁵ Plato, an influential figure in terms of early modern thought and education, believed that the eye projected fire which then coalesced with daylight to enable the eye to see the objects upon which its gaze fell, stating:

They [the gods] contrived that such fire as was not for burning but for providing a gentle light should become a body, proper to each day. Now the pure fire inside us, cousin to that fire, they made to flow through the eyes: so they made the eyes – the eye as a whole but its middle in particular – close-textured, smooth and dense, to enable them to keep out all the other, coarser stuff, and let that kind of fire pass through pure by itself. Now whenever daylight surrounds the visual stream, like makes contact with like and coalesces with it to make up a single homogenous body aligned with the direction of the eyes. This happens whenever the internal fire strikes and presses against an external object it has connected with. And because this body of fire has become uniform throughout and thus uniformly affected, it transmits the motions of whatever it comes in contact with as well as of whatever comes in contact with it, to and through the whole body until they reach the soul. This brings about the sensation we call 'seeing'.⁶

Plato suggested the above in his text *Timaeus*, one of his later works, the bulk of which involved the man of its title, a dramatic invention of Plato's, giving a long speech on the world's creation which includes discussion of human perception.⁷ Although the above passage puts forward an argument for extramission theory, its focus is on how the object is seen through the coalescing of daylight and the fiery rays which emanate from the eye.⁸ This coalescence acts as a 'material intermediary' between the eye and the object upon which it looks.⁹ Plato's description of rays being sent out from the eye demonstrates his belief in extramission theory, but there is also a motion coming from the object, albeit one which meets with daylight and does not itself enter the eye. This is suggested by Plato's claim that the object sends out 'motions' of the object in which it has come into contact,

⁵ John M. Cooper, 'Introduction' in *Plato, Complete Works*, ed. by John M. Cooper (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1997), p. viii; David C. Lindberg, *Theories of Vision from Al-Kindi to Kepler* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago, 1976), pp. 3-5.

⁶ Plato, *Timaeus*, trans. by Donald J. Zeyl in *Plato, Complete Works* ed. by John M. Cooper (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1997), pp. 1224-1291 (p. 1248). See also David C. Lindberg, *Theories of Vision from Al-Kindi to Kepler*, p. 5.

⁷ Plato, *Timaeus*, p. 1224.

⁸ David C. Lindberg, *Theories of Vision from Al-Kindi to Kepler*, p. 5.

⁹ *Ibid.*

and Plato elaborates on this in the *Theaetetus*, published shortly after the mathematician, Theaetetus, died in 369 BCE.¹⁰ The *Theaetetus* has become the key document in the division of philosophy now termed epistemology, and depicts Socrates exploring and then refuting the theories of his peers, most notably Theaetetus. Plato's discussion of the intermediary existing between the eye and the object upon which it gazes, and that enables us to see, is articulated through Socrates, who suggests:

motions arrive in the intervening space [between the eye and the object it sees], sight from the side of the eye and whiteness from the side of that which cooperates in the production of the color. The eye is filled with sight; at that moment it sees, and becomes not indeed sight, but a seeing eye; while its partner in the process of producing color is filled with whiteness, and becomes not whiteness but white, a white stick or stone or whatever it is that happens to be colored this sort of color.¹¹

The above emphasises the importance of the physical 'intervening space' in the process of seeing; it is not the coalescence of the intraocular fire with the emanation sent out by a visible object which enables the eye to see, but instead it is the meeting of the emanation from the visible object with the body already created by the mixing of the rays sent out by the eye and daylight.¹² Plato explains further on the process involved in the perception of colour in the *Timaeus*:

[the] remaining kind of perception is one that includes a vast number of variations within it [...] we call these variations colors. Color is a flame which flows forth from bodies of all sorts, with its parts proportional to our sight so as to produce perception. [...] the parts that move from [...] other objects and impinge on the ray of sight are in some cases smaller, in others larger than, and in still other cases equal in size to, the parts of the ray of sight itself. Those that are equal are imperceptible, and these we naturally call *transparent*. Those that are larger contract the ray of sight while those that are smaller, on the other hand, dilate it [...] So, *black* and *white*, it turns out, are properties of contraction and dilation [...]¹³

In this section of the text, Plato describes how the motions he has discussed previously consist of 'parts' of various sizes, which lead to different motions, such as 'contraction' and consequently result in the perception of different colours.¹⁴ On occasion, Davenant overtly engages with the kind of extramission theory proposed by Plato, which is demonstrative of its cultural power even during the seventeenth century.

¹⁰ Ibid.; Plato, *Theaetetus*, trans. by M. J. Levett, rev. by Myles Burnyeat in *Plato, Complete Works* ed. by John M. Cooper (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1997), pp. 157-234 (p. 157).

¹¹ Plato, *Theaetetus*, p. 174.

¹² David C. Lindberg, *Theories of Vision from Al-Kindi to Kepler*, p. 6.

¹³ Plato, *Theaetetus*, p. 1269.

¹⁴ David C. Lindberg, *Theories of Vision from Al-Kindi to Kepler*, p. 6.

As valuable as Plato's theories are, they represent only fragments of thinking in works devoted mainly to other topics, and there is no 'full and systematic discussion of vision' prior to the writings of Aristotle (384-322 BCE).¹⁵ Aristotle's approach to sight 'was deeply embedded in [the] [...] textbooks, commentaries, syllabuses, examinations, disputations [...] that made up the normal, constant construction, iteration, and exchange of routine knowledge' during the early modern era, and he will have been a prominent figure in Davenant's own schooling.¹⁶ Thus, Aristotelian theory became fundamental to contemporary society's understanding of the process of seeing and the way in which it shapes the visual experience. Aristotle's treatment of sight is not only more thorough than Plato's approach, but differs considerably.¹⁷ Unlike Plato, Aristotle does not view light as a kind of fire, or any sort of 'corpuscular emanation' and firmly rejects extramission theory.¹⁸ He finds the idea 'that sight is effected by means of something which issues from the eye' to be 'wholly absurd' and writes instead of the importance of the medium which exists between the eye and the object upon which it gazes.¹⁹ In *De Anima*, Aristotle states that the 'necessity of a medium' is made apparent if one considers that 'if what has colour' is put into direct contact with the eye, it cannot be seen. The colour of the object upon which the eye looks 'sets in movement', not the eye itself, but air, or other 'transparent' medium between the eye and that it sees. This in turn sets the eye in motion, demonstrating, for Aristotle, that seeing 'cannot be affected by the seen colour itself' but is 'affected by what comes between' the eye and its object.²⁰ Since this 'transparent' medium is so important to Aristotle's concept of sight, the way in which he defines transparency must be considered; he writes that the transparent owes its 'visibility' to something else. Air and water, for example, are transparent because they both contain a 'certain substance', and this substance is light. Light is defined by Aristotle as 'the presence of fire or something resembling fire in what is transparent' and exists whenever that which has the potential to be transparent is 'excited into actuality' by the influence of such fire or similar.²¹ If a transparent medium being excited to transparency is what

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Stuart Clark, *Vanities of the Eye: Vision in Early Modern European Culture*, p. 14.

¹⁷ David C. Lindberg, *Theories of Vision from Al-Kindi to Kepler*, p. 6.

¹⁸ Ibid. See also Aristotle, *Meteorologica*, trans. by E.W. Webster in *The Works of Aristotle Translated into English* ed. by W.D. Ross, 6 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1931), III, Book II.7, 418b.

¹⁹ Aristotle, *De Sensu and De Memoria*, trans. and ed. by G.R.T. Ross (New York: Arno Press, 1973), p. 51, 438a. See also David C. Lindberg, *Theories of Vision from Al-Kindi to Kepler*, pp. 6-7.

²⁰ Aristotle, *De Anima*, trans. by J.A. Smith in *The Works of Aristotle Translated into English* ed. by W.D. Ross, 6 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1931), III, II.7, 419b.

²¹ Ibid., 418b.

constitutes light, then this leads to a consideration of the way in which Aristotle defined colour. For Aristotle, colour has the capacity to alter that which is transparent; he writes ‘every colour has in it the power to set in movement what is actually transparent [...] that is why it is not visible except with the help of light; it is only in light that the colour of a thing is seen’.²² The transparent medium Aristotle discusses is first excited to actuality by luminous matter and its motions are then further altered by the colour of objects in contact with the medium. As Aristotle writes, the motions of light ‘set in movement’ the transparent medium and this medium, ‘extending continuously from the object of the organ, sets the latter in movement’.²³ According to Aristotle, the eye’s interior consists mainly of water, precisely because water is transparent and this enables the eye to be receptive to light, and subsequently, to colour.²⁴ Although Plato and Aristotle’s theories of vision were different, they both considered the importance of motions being sent out from the visible object, and, consequently, this preoccupation with such movement in the process of seeing was also prevalent during the early modern era.

The theories of medieval philosopher and Franciscan friar Roger Bacon (c.1214-c.1292) were underpinned by such work on motions, and he lectured on Aristotelian thought in Paris for several years.²⁵ Bacon maps Aristotle’s work onto his own thinking, while also incorporating that of other key figures in the development of optical science such as Alhazan and Robert Grosseteste, and writes of objects emitting their own ‘species’ in his own *De multiplicatione specierum*. He provides an example of this by describing the light rays sent out by the sun, stating ‘the *lumen* of the sun in the air is the species of the solar *lux* in the body of the sun; and *lumen* [...] sufficiently visible to us [...] is the species of the *lux* of a star’. Bacon believes that ‘species is similar in essence and definition to the thing generating it’ and that the object ‘sends forth a species into the matter of the recipient, so that, through the species first produced, it can bring forth out of the potentiality of the matter [of the recipient] the complete effect that it intends.’²⁶ The term ‘species’ derives from the Greek *spec*, which can be translated as ‘what a thing looks like’, and for Bacon, the species emitted by all objects visible to the eye involves a

²² Ibid.

²³ David C. Lindberg, *Theories of Vision from Al-Kindi to Kepler*, p. 8.; Aristotle, *De Anima*, II.7 10-15.

²⁴ David C. Lindberg, *Theories of Vision from Al-Kindi to Kepler*, pp. 8-9; Aristotle, *De Anima*, II 438b, 5-20.

²⁵ David C. Lindberg, *Theories of Vision from Al-Kindi to Kepler*, pp. 107-108.

²⁶ Roger Bacon, *Philosophy of Nature: A Critical Edition with English Translation, Introduction and Notes*, of *De multiplicatione specierum* and *De speculis comburentibus* trans. and ed. by David C. Lindburg (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), pp. 3-7.

process of multiplication which is entirely continuous in its journey from the object or ‘agent’ to the brain; even beyond the optical nerves, the Baconian theory suggests the species continues its multiplication, through the body and into the brain. Davenant evokes the theory of species at a key moment of horror in one of his tragedies, in order to emphasise the vulnerability of one of his female characters who is thoroughly disturbed by that she sees. Ultimately, the theory of species contends that the external world is as it appears and contains the qualities which humans perceive to exist, and still held sway into the early modern era.²⁷

By the fourteenth century, intromission theory was generally treated preferably by optical science, but extramission theory was not completely displaced, since while science offered growing evidence for ‘the eye as a passive receptor’, the ‘stubborn persistence of the Platonic theory of an active, penetrating eye suggests its ideological power’.²⁸ Later, by the sixteenth century, intromission theory had become dominant.²⁹ In 1604, a hugely significant period for optics arrived with the theories of astronomer and mathematician Johannes Kepler (1571-1630), who pioneered the theory of the retinal image and consequently firmly undid the claims made by extramission theory.³⁰ Kepler knew of previous attempts to depict the eye as a *camera obscura*, a concept based on the notion that rays of light which enter through a pinhole or small ‘aperture’ on the wall of a dark room will produce an inverted and reversed image on the far wall.³¹ The idea of the *camera obscura* was first explored by Leonardo da Vinci, and the first published reference to the *camera obscura* was made in 1521 by Cesare Cesariano.³² Kepler furthered optical science by establishing the laws of refraction, which govern how light rays are transmitted through the cornea, humours and lenses of the eye onto the retinal wall at the back of the eye. Much like the *camera obscura* experiment, the image is reversed and inverted. Kepler’s theory revolutionised approaches to the eye, but was ultimately the culmination of centuries of theorising.³³ It was also easy for his discovery to be (mis) understood as evidence for sight providing an objective view of the world, but

²⁷ Stuart Clark, *Vanities of the Eye: Vision in Early Modern European Culture*, p. 17.

²⁸ Sergei Lobanov-Rostovsky, ‘Taming the Basilisk’, p. 199.

²⁹ Stuart Clark, *Vanities of the Eye: Vision in Early Modern European Culture*, p. 17.

³⁰ David C. Lindberg, *Theories of Vision from Al-Kindi to Kepler*, pp. 185-186.

³¹ Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought*, p. 65; Marcus Nordlund, *The Dark Lantern: A Historical Study of Sight in Shakespeare, Webster and Middleton*, p. 70.

³² Marcus Nordlund, *The Dark Lantern: A Historical Study of Sight in Shakespeare, Webster and Middleton*, p. 71.

³³ *Ibid.*

in reality it enabled him and wider society to consider the fallibility of the eye. The eye has its own aperture, and will therefore face the potential errors of any aperture in existence, as Kepler himself suggested.³⁴ To provide an example of such inaccuracy, he cites the differences between calculation and observation in his field of astronomy, where discrepancies are caused by the methods of observation, which were the *camera obscura* and its natural equivalent, the eye.³⁵ Kepler did not pursue the visual process beyond the eye's sensing of light, and even today the 'physiological cum psychological processes which "read" [the image]' are still not entirely understood. Similarly, the 'binocular or stereoscopic integration' of information from the eyes into a one-dimensional image is not clear.³⁶ Davenant was born two years after Kepler pioneered his theory of the retinal image and by the time he reached adulthood, Kepler's work on intromission theory had been around for some time. While there is no way of knowing if Davenant was familiar with Kepler's theory or otherwise, intromission theory had been dominant long before Kepler's confirmation of its existence. Davenant alludes to intromission theory in his writing which suggests he had absorbed some level of understanding regarding the former.

Post-Kepler, Descartes advanced early modern understanding of the visual process further with his scientific text entitled *Optics*, which was part of the aforementioned *Discourse on the Method for Rightly Directing One's Reason and Searching for Truth in the Sciences*. The key difference between Kepler's theorising of 1604 and Descartes's 1637 text is that Kepler focused solely upon the image at the back of the eye and did not suggest how this translated into the conscious experience of seeing, yet this is exactly what Descartes is keen to explore, though he is very much aware of Kepler's legacy.³⁷ It is unsurprising, then, that Descartes is quick to reject the still-pervasive medieval theories regarding 'species', writing in *Optics* that his readers' minds 'will be delivered from all those small images flitting through the air, called *intentional species*, which worry the imagination of Philosophers so much'.³⁸ Similarly, Descartes also states that 'those who are only half informed in Optics allow themselves to be persuaded of many things which are impossible', suggesting the theory of species and its popularity across the centuries

³⁴ Ibid., p. 74.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought*, pp. 7-8.

³⁷ See also Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought*, p. 72. Descartes is aware of Kepler's legacy, and includes a diagram of light rays coming into the eye; see René Descartes, *Discourse on Method, Optics, Geometry and Metereology*, p. 92.

³⁸ René Descartes, *Discourse on Method, Optics, Geometry and Metereology*, p. 68.

simply spring from ignorance.³⁹ Descartes implies that even Kepler fell short in his investigation into the eye, writing ‘it is necessary to beware of assuming that in order to sense, the mind needs to perceive certain images transmitted by the objects to the brain’, and therefore suggesting that Kepler was wrong to be content with the inverted, reversed image focused on the retina. In doing this, Kepler failed to explain how a person is able to see upright, when the eye receives upside-down, back-to-front images.⁴⁰

Descartes insists that many things can stimulate thought, not just images but ‘for example, signs and words, which do not in any way resemble the things which they signify’ and that ‘there are no images that must resemble in every respect the objects they represent - for otherwise there would be no distinction between the object and its image - but that it is sufficient for them to resemble the objects in but a few ways’.⁴¹ For Descartes, sight is not simply a passive act, but requires the work of the mind, and he uses art or ‘engravings’ to emphasise his point, stating that even on a ‘completely flat surface’, such work can effectively resemble objects of different and diverse appearances, since ‘following the rules of perspective, circles are often better represented by ovals rather than by other circles; and squares by diamonds rather than by other squares; and so for all other shapes’.⁴² In the way in which an artist interprets their surroundings in order to adequately represent them in their chosen medium, Descartes writes of how the images created by the mind are the product of a similar process of understanding ‘signs’ which do not perfectly recreate the external world.⁴³

Even with the above, Descartes does not reveal an overt opinion of the veracity of the visual process, and how this should be approached, but a little later on in the *Optics*, however, he is keen to suggest a ‘positive link’ between what is sensed by the eye and the images created by the mind, through his evocation of the pineal gland. Modern science acknowledges that the pineal gland is a small part of the brain responsible for endocrine function, circadian rhythms and the regulation of sexual development. Descartes, however, wrote that this ‘small gland’ could ‘sometimes’ enable ‘the picture’ in the mind to pass from it ‘through the arteries of a pregnant women, right to some specific member of the infant which she carries in her womb, and there forms these birthmarks which

³⁹ Ibid., p. 147.

⁴⁰ Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought*, p. 75.

⁴¹ René Descartes, *Discourse on Method, Optics, Geometry and Metereology*, pp. 89-90.

⁴² Ibid., p. 90.

⁴³ See also Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought*, p. 76.

cause learned men to marvel so'.⁴⁴ In this, Descartes displays a desire to trust the process of seeing as not only highly accurate, but powerful in its ability to physically mark a human being prior to delivery by its mother. Descartes actually presents a far more convincing argument for sight as potentially untrustworthy in his *Meteorology*. For Kepler, all the characteristics perceived by an individual were part of the visual object itself, and were then transmitted to the retina, but Descartes argues that colour and light are simply part of the eye's apparatus. He writes that, if it is the case that the sensation of light is caused by the 'movement' of something which touches our eyes, then the various movements of this 'must cause different sensations in us' and shows that 'we do not find any variations through experience, in the sensations we have of them, other than that of colors.' Thus, it is impossible to assume that the images the mind 'sees' line up exactly with external reality.⁴⁵ Unlike colour and light, however, for Descartes, size, shape, distance and location are both part of the senses and part of the mind. Descartes's separation of the perception of light and colour, and the perception of the other factors listed above, can be compared roughly to the modern scientific approach where the rods of the eye see contours and patterns, whereas the cones allow sensitivity to brightness and colour.⁴⁶ In order to show that size, shape, distance and location are 'seen' by both the eye and the mind, Descartes compares the way in which humans experience touch, describing a blind man navigating his way around his environment. The man holds 'the two sticks *AE*, *CE*, of whose length I am assuming that he is ignorant, and knowing only the interval which is between his two hands *A* and *C*, and the size of the angles *ACE*, *CAE*', he can 'as if by a natural geometry' know the 'location of the point *E*'. Descartes uses this example to suggest that the mental process of 'geometrical triangulation' which enables the blind man to feel distance with his sticks is also present in the visual experience constructed by a sound mind.⁴⁷ This is made explicit in his claim that 'when our two eyes, *RST* and *rst*, are turned toward *X*, the length of the line *Ss* and the size of the two *XSs* and *XsS* enable us to know the location of the point *X*'.⁴⁸ According to Descartes, as demonstrated particularly by his phrase 'natural geometry', humans are not usually inaccurate in their

⁴⁴ Ibid., pp. 76-77; *OED* 'pineal', adj. and n.; Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought*, p. 77; René Descartes, *Discourse on Method, Optics, Geometry and Meteorology*, p. 100.

⁴⁵ René Descartes, *Discourse on Method, Optics, Geometry and Meteorology*, p. 338; pp. 335-345; Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought*, p. 77.

⁴⁶ Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought*, p. 77.

⁴⁷ René Descartes, *Discourse on Method, Optics, Geometry and Meteorology*, p. 106; Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought*, p. 78.

⁴⁸ René Descartes, *Discourse on Method, Optics, Geometry and Meteorology*, p. 106

perception of size, shape, distance and location because the human race has an innate and subconscious capacity to understand the reality of the geometry of the external world, although greater distances may cause the observer more problems.⁴⁹ As Descartes has previously stated, it is the mind which ‘sees’, not the eye, and is enabled via ‘the intervention of the brain’, so if an individual’s perception is inaccurate, it is due to the brain failing to function correctly. Descartes writes that sometimes ‘certain vapors’ are responsible for ‘disturbing’ the brain, which explains dreams and the hallucinations of ‘madmen’.⁵⁰ Also, if the ‘nerves’ are ‘constrained’ it can cause objects to appear in a different position to that of reality; Descartes provides the example of looking at the fingers of the hand while pressing on one of the eyes, and also writes of the effect of looking through coloured glass or suffering from jaundice.⁵¹ The rest of the *Optics* is devoted to Descartes’s discussion of the ‘perfecting of vision’ and the telescope.⁵²

Descartes, and his predecessor, Kepler, were integral in shaping theories of vision during the seventeenth century, most importantly in relation to the supposed reliability of the eye. It must be remembered, though, that even Kepler’s theory did not change society’s view of the visual process overnight, and such scientific work had to co-exist with, for example, religious writings. Alongside philosophical ideas and emergent science, Davenant also wrote against the backdrop of society’s religious views regarding vision.

1.2: The Eye, Religion, and Theatre

While figures such as Kepler and Descartes pushed Western society’s understanding of sight forward in leaps and bounds, the period also cultivated a profound culture of distrust in relation to the visual, which was set in motion by the Protestant Reformation and its ‘antiocular subcurrent of religious thought’.⁵³ Sight became seemingly inseparably interwoven with sin, and it is this relationship which Davenant seeks to interrogate. Figures such as Calvin had previously sought to ‘re-landscape totally the visual experience of the Christian and empty his or her world of its collective repositories of

49 Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought*, p.78; René Descartes, *Discourse on Method, Optics, Geometry and Meteorology*, pp. 110-111.

50 René Descartes, *Discourse on Method, Optics, Geometry and Meteorology*, p. 108.

51 Ibid., pp. 108-110.

52 Ibid., pp. 114.

53 Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought*, p. 13.

immanence'.⁵⁴ Saint Augustine (354-430 CE) was one Church Father who had 'pervasive authority' within the religious culture of the seventeenth century, appealing not only to Catholics but to Reformers and humanists, and writes convincingly of the dangers of sight.⁵⁵ In his *Confessions* (c.397-400 CE), Augustine writes of 'the lust of the eyes', stating that he is at once drawn to the visual experience but recognises its role in tempting humans towards immorality:⁵⁶

My eyes love the diverse forms of beauty, brilliant and pleasing colours. Let these things not take possession of my soul; let God possess it [...] for they affect me in all the waking hours of every day, nor do I find any respite from them such as I do sometimes find in silence from all the voices of a song. For light, the queen of colours [...] works its way into me with such power that if it is suddenly withdrawn, I desire it with great longing; and if it is absent too long, it saddens my mind.⁵⁷

For Augustine, the experiencing of seeing inspires awe, in its 'beauty' and 'brilliant, pleasing colours', but it is also worryingly relentless, since he can find no 'respite' from it in the way in which he can find serenity through an aural experience. The power of the visual is emphasised in his suggestion that light 'works its way into' him with such ferocity that he is bereft upon its withdrawal.

During the early modern period, anti-visual thought was also interwoven with the anti-theatre discourse of the era and Christopher B. Balme writes 'between 1570 and 1642, roughly seventy years of Elizabethan, Jacobean and Caroline theatrical activity were marked by ongoing discursive opposition'.⁵⁸ The bringing together of anti-visual sentiment with anti-theatre discourse can be seen in the work of Elizabethan anti-stage writers such as Stephen Gosson and Philip Stubbes. In his *Plays Confuted* of 1582, Gosson writes that, in addition to the 'Poetrie' and 'musicke' that 'the Diuell' has 'brought in', he has provided 'for the eye' the 'beautie of the houses, and the Stages'.⁵⁹ When Gosson mentions song and music, he does not write of the ears, but when alluding to the visual aspects of theatre, he writes of the organ allied with sight, which emphasises

⁵⁴ Michael Camille, *The Gothic Idol: Ideology and Image-Making in Medieval Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 346-347.

⁵⁵ John F Matthews, 'Augustine, St, Aurelius Augustinus' in *Oxford Classical Dictionary*; Stuart Clark, *Vanities of the Eye: Vision in Early Modern European Culture*, pp. 23-24; Henri Marrou, *St Augustine and His Influence Through the Ages* (New York: Harper/London: Longmans, 1957), pp. 164-166. The latter is referred to by Mary T. Clark in *Augustine of Hippo* (London and New York: Continuum, 1994), p. 130.

⁵⁶ Augustine, *Confessions: Books I-XIII* trans by F. J. Sheed, (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1993), p. 200.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 198-199.

⁵⁸ Christopher B. Balme, *The Theatrical Public Sphere* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 76.

⁵⁹ Stephen Gosson, *Plays Confuted* (London: Thomas Gosson, 1582), sig. E1^r.

his prejudice towards the process of seeing. A year later, *The Anatomie of Abuses* by Phillip Stubbes was published. The text's preface to the reader insists 'For such is our grosse and dull nature, that what thing we see opposite our eyes, do pearce further, and printe deeper in our hearts and minds, than that thing, which is hard onely with the earees'.⁶⁰ Stubbes presents the eye as particularly vulnerable to that which may invite sin, suggesting that of all the senses, it is the most open to immoral influence. The debate surrounding the anti-visual was later reinvigorated by Laud becoming Archbishop in 1633. He maintained a close working relationship with Charles I. The former was keen to see the state and church working in tandem, and 'the essence of his ecclesiastical policy was to oversee a strengthening of the powers of the church which would as a consequence reinforce ties of deference within society, as well as providing the crown with enhanced support independent of parliament.'⁶¹ Laud's main targets were 'puritan nonconformists' and he sought to impose conformity in ceremony by reforming both the 'neglected' forms of outward worship and the similarly neglected churches used by congregations. He sought to do this via the use of 'more decorous forms of church decoration and worship', and thus the visual elements of faith are once again at the forefront of visual culture as a whole.⁶² Theatre is a highly visual medium and could not escape the impact of fluctuating political, religious and societal attitudes towards the acts of seeing and being seen.

Contemporary concern regarding the power of sight is expressed overtly and strikingly by multiple theological texts published during the early decades of the seventeenth century. In his *Workes*, the Puritan clergyman Richard Greenham included a chapter entitled 'Of the government of the Eyes', where vision has its place even in original sin.⁶³ Greenham writes:

if the eye be darke, a general darknesse commeth over the whole bodie. The beginning of this is to be seene, Genesis in the talke between the Serpent and the woman. She seeth the tree to be faire and beautifull, the eye had offended, before the apple went downe her throat.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ Philip Stubbes, *The Anatomie of Abuses* (London: Richard Jones, 1583), sig. A6^r. See also Margot Heinemann, *Puritanism and Theatre: Thomas Middleton and Opposition Drama under the Early Stuarts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp. 28-29.

⁶¹ Anthony Milton, 'Laud, William', *ODNB*.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ Stuart Clark, *Vanities of the Eye: Vision in Early Modern European Culture*, p. 24-5.

⁶⁴ Richard Greenham, *The Workes of the Reverend And Faithfull Sevant of Iesus Christ, Richard Greenham, Minister and Preacher of the Word of God* (London: Printed for William Welby, 1612), sig. Nnn2^v. Previous collections of Greenham's works had been published, but the final and most well-organised version was printed in 1612. See Eric Josef Carlson, 'Greenham, Richard', *ODNB*.

Greenham echoes a passage from Luke 11: 34, where ‘The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, then is thy whole bodie light: but if thine eye be euil, then thy bodie is darke’.⁶⁵ Similarly for Greenham, if the eye is corrupted, the entire body is lost to sin, suggesting that this particular human sense possesses great power, but also suggesting that the process of seeing puts an individual in a position of immense vulnerability. Davenant also uses the act of seeing to illustrate the vulnerability of his characters, both by evoking the basilisk myth and otherwise, but without connotations of immorality on their behalf. Greenham’s text places seeing at the root of the Fall, where, even prior to ingesting the forbidden apple, Eve has sinned by contemplating its tempting beauty, as her eye has ‘offended’ even before she has committed her crime. Greenham’s use of this term frames the process of seeing in such a way that it becomes even more sinister and hazardous than the regrettable actions it can inspire.

The eye is described as ‘most forcible to sinne’ of all the senses, with Greenham insisting that ‘it is dangerous to heare, but tenne times more dangerous to see’, emphasising the distrust felt by some within society towards the visual realm in comparison with the engagement of other senses. Greenham does urge, however, that all senses must be disciplined accordingly, stating the need to:

watch on all sides, where assault is made on all sides. And for as much as we stand in the midst to be assaulted with principalities, and not only with spirituall wickednesses, but also with wordly wickedness in every sense, and power of the minde, we ought to defend all ports [...] for we know that in a citie if one gate be open, it is as good that all be open. For at one gate it may be taken. So that all the senses ought to be kept, but especially the eye [...]⁶⁶

The text frames the human body as a city under attack, where its senses are compared to ‘ports’ or ‘gates’, its weakest points which need to be watched with the utmost care, consequently suggesting that the moral dilemmas and temptations to sin are so overwhelming for individuals that it is as if they are constantly under siege. As above, in Greenham’s philosophy, if one sense is compromised by evil, all of the body is lost, and so every person must ‘defend all ports’, yet even though all senses must be ‘kept’, Greenham emphasises the need to ‘especially’ monitor the eye. He argues that ‘the heart’ is responsible for much of ‘the wickednesse of these days’ but that the eye is integral in its immorality, to the extent that ‘the eyes ought to weepe, because of the evil which they

⁶⁵ Luke 11. 34 (Geneva version).

⁶⁶ Richard Greenham, *The Workes of the Reverend And Faithfull Sevant of Iesus Christ, Richard Greenham, Minister and Preacher of the Word of God*, sig. Nnn2^v.

conuey vnto the heart'.⁶⁷ The misery conveyed by the tears expelled by the eyes in times of distress works to signify their inherently sinful nature, which in turn poisons the heart.

Another figure preoccupied with weeping was the Calvinist preacher Sampson Price, whose admonition, *The Clearing of the Saints Sight*, was published in 1617 and insists that God will eventually 'wipe away teares from all faces'.⁶⁸ Price believes those destined to meet with God after their lives are ended will have their eyes redeemed, since, in removing these tears 'God will free all the elect from all miseries'.⁶⁹ In agreement with Greenham, Price echoes Luke, writing, 'I must say as Christ doth, *If their eye be evill, their whole body shall bee full of darknesse*'.⁷⁰ The text charges human vision with a plethora of ills, stating:

The eyes of many are full of *malice*, grieving at the good of others; of *gluttonie*, stretching whithersoever they looke, eyes of *pride* and superstition, beholding the Sunne when it shineth, and the Moone walking in brightnesse; eyes of *idolatrie*, to look vpon images, and after these to goe a whoring: so that *nothing is created more wicked then an eye, therefore it weepeth on every occasion*.⁷¹

The plosive sounds formed by Price's accusation that the eyes are maliciously 'grieving at the good of others' and are full of 'gluttonie' emphasises the condemnatory tone of his words. His most ferocious criticism of the eye in the above paragraph is to be found in his brief discussion of idolatry. This may seem unremarkable in terms of its anti-Catholicism, but the dubious act of revering pictures or idols, as opposed to God alone, has instead become simply about 'look[ing] vpon images', as if the very act of seeing is itself sinful, and not only this, but that those who do such looking then proceed to 'goe a whoring', further compounding the visual experience as one inseparably interwoven with immoral behaviour. According to Price, seeing is such a burden to humankind that it is vital his listeners and later, his readers, remember that '*Blinde men* may bee and often are necessary to the Church and Common-wealth, and therefore a God hath made way for them, and forbidden a *stumbling blocke* to bee put before them.'⁷² Blind individuals are framed by Price as highly valuable members of society, useful to organised religion and

⁶⁷ Greenham, sig. Nnn2^v.

⁶⁸ Sampson Price, *The Clearing of the Saints Sight*, (London: Printed for Iohn Barnes, 1617), sig. B3^v. See also Marcus Nordlund, *The Dark Lantern: A Historical Study of Sight in Shakespeare, Webster and Middleton*, pp. 109-110.

⁶⁹ Sampson Price, *The Clearing of the Saints Sight*, sig. E2^r.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, sig. F4^r.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² *Ibid.*, sig. F2^r.

to the state, who are favoured over the seeing by God and therefore have the evils of vision removed from their existence. Davenant's plays feature blindfolds but the loss of characters' sight precedes either their death or at the very least, the strong possibility of death occurring. Thus, instead of blindness, albeit temporary blindness, being indicative of God's favour, it instead becomes ominous.

While Price muses briefly on the seemingly advantageous state of being blind, another text provides the most comprehensive condemnation of human vision in 'sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English, if not European, thought'.⁷³ First published in 1608 and making its way through multiple editions over the years that followed, George Hakewill's *The Vanitie of the Eie* is a virulent attack on the eye written by a fiercely anti-Catholic Calvinist clergyman.⁷⁴ This piece was originally written to comfort a gentlewoman who had lost her sight and contains thirty-one chapters, consisting of twenty-seven which discuss the various failings of the eye, three which explain the 'priviledges' of the blind, and one devoted to the text's conclusion.⁷⁵ Much like Greenham (whom Hakewill himself recommends), Hakewill situates original sin as stemming from the shortcomings of the eye, writing 'Now for originall sin [...] we finde the first occasion of it to have been the fairnesse of the apple apprehended by the womans eie, and the punishment first inflicted on it to have been the opening of the eies'.⁷⁶ Eve's gazing upon and admiring the fruit and its 'fairnesse' constitutes sin in itself, since Hakewill describes it as being the 'first occasion' of such behaviour, occurring prior to the actual eating of the apple. The act of seeing is not only sinful, but Adam and Eve's understanding of their sin is described as 'the opening of the eies', where the ability to see becomes a grave sentence in addition to underpinning immorality.

The text discusses, though, that the eye is not only dangerous because of its ability to invite sin, but because it is deeply untrustworthy, owing to the multitude of ways in which it is able to deceive individuals. Hakewill covers this very thoroughly, insisting:

delusion of the sight [may be brought about] by the subtiltie of the diuel, by the charmes of sorcerers by the spells and exorcismes of coniuers, by the legerdemaine of Iuglers, by the knauery of Priests and Friars, by the nimblenesse of tumblers, and rope-walkers, by the sleights of false and cunning marchants, by the smooth deportment and behaviour of Hypocrits, by the stratagemes of generals, by the gidinesse of the braine, by the distemper

⁷³ Stuart Clark, *Vanities of the Eye: Vision in Early Modern European Culture*, p. 25.

⁷⁴ Marcus Nordlund, *The Dark Lantern: A Historical Study of Sight in Shakespeare, Webster and Middleton*, pp. 107-108; Stuart Clark, *Vanities of the Eye: Vision in Early Modern European Culture*, pp. 25-30; p. 38; P.E. McCullough, 'Hakewill, George', *ODNB*.

⁷⁵ George Hakewill, *The Vanitie of the Eie* (Oxford: Printed by Ioseph Barnes, 1608), sig. A1^r.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, sig. B8^v; *Ibid.*, C1^r.

of phrensies, and lastly by the violent passions of feare and melancholy; besides a thousand prety conclusions drawne out of the bowels of natural Philosophy, and the mathematicks; by the burning of certaine mixt powders, oiles, & liquors: By the casting of false lights, by the reflexion of glasses, and the like [...] ⁷⁷

The text is comprehensive in the attention it pays to the multiple and diverse realms occupied by the visual experience, its discussion and attempts to understand the seeing process. Hakewill writes of ‘the charmes of sorcerers’, the ‘exorcismes of coniuers’ and the supposed ‘knauery of Priests and Friars’, quickly linking deception with pagan and/or Catholic ritual, rather than anything which could persist within his own Calvinist doctrine, perhaps apart from the devil’s ‘subtiltie’. Seemingly benign entertainment is also to be suspected, since the ‘nimblenesse of tumblers’ and that of ‘rope-walkers’ is evidence of the duplicitous eye in action, as tricky as the ‘Hypocrits’ who beguile with their ‘smooth deportment’. Hakewill’s work also encourages its audience to beware those courting their custom, as they are in fact ‘false and cunning marchants’, and to question war with its generals’ ‘stratagemes’, because our eyes are highly likely to be presenting us with something other than the truth. Finally, Hakewill recognises that our own bodies and minds may rebel with ‘gidinesse’, ‘phrensies’ and ‘violent passions of feare and melancholy’, which can distort what the eye apparently witnesses. After Hakewill has listed the ways in which sight can provide false information, he moves rapidly onto a rejection of scientific thinking which attempts to improve contemporary understanding of the workings of the eye and the visual experience as a whole, sneering over the ‘thousand prety conclusions’ to spring from ‘natural Philosophy’, and ‘the casting of false lights’ or similar in the name of scientific or philosophical endeavour. Hakewill’s text is so determinedly anti-visual that it must condemn any expression of interest in the value of the sense of seeing. Furthermore, Hakewill states:

wee shal easily discover [the eye] to be an immediat instrument, not only of wantonnes, but of gluttony, covetousnes, theft, idolatry, ieaalousie, pride, *contempt*, curiosity, envy, witchcraft, & in a maner of the whole rebellion, & apostasie, as well of the body, as the minde. ⁷⁸

The eye is compared to an instrument, vulnerable and ideal for the employment of the numerous sins every individual must desperately seek to avoid, at least according to Hakewill; his listing of these ills creates a cumulative effect where the weight of the

⁷⁷ Ibid., sig. C6^r-C6^v.

⁷⁸ Ibid., sig. A8^v.

potential for sin feels overwhelming for the reader, who will then easily be persuaded of the simplistic, convenient fact that the eye is to blame for the myriad temptations humans face. Hakewill is also keen to highlight the powers of the sight as able to malignly infiltrate both the ‘body’ and the ‘minde’, inflicting ‘apostasie’ upon not only humankind’s physical anatomy, but also their souls.

When focusing specifically upon pride, as a sin easily taken in by the eye, Hakewill claims that pride:

in nothing shewes itself more, then in the pompe and magnificence of maskes, pageants, triumphes, monuments, theaters, amphitheaters: I speake not against their lawfull vse, but of their abuse: when they tie the eie in such maner vnto them, as they withdrawe the minde from the contemplation of [...] glorie.⁷⁹

Thus, Hakewill’s anti-theatre discourse emerges from out of his anti-Catholic, anti-visual rhetoric, where the theatrical sphere, be it public or private, courtly or more open to the ordinary individual, is home to ‘pompe and magnificence’, suggesting that the theatrical space offers only empty, artificial platitudes. For Hakewill, the world of acting only serves to demonstrate the human tendency to revel in an inflated sense of self-worth and superiority, to such an extent that it distracts the ‘minde’ from its ‘contemplation’ of ‘glorie’. It is not quite clear whether Hakewill is referring to the spectators of performances alone, and I would suggest that he may also be including actors in his evaluation here. If so, he presents a convincing argument regarding the evils of the theatre, since it is dangerous not only for those watching others, but for those in performance roles. This section of Hakewill’s text is also ambiguous in its denigration of acting spaces alongside its suggestion that they are acceptable provided their ‘vse’ is ‘lawfull’ and not tending towards ‘abuse’, which looks as if he is prepared to make some sort of concession, but he does not elaborate to provide more specific details of what this may involve. Clark suggests that it is possible Hakewill’s work simply acts as a warning of how the eye may behave if it is not governed correctly by Calvinism, and therefore that it is not an inherently evil sense.⁸⁰

Hakewill’s ambiguity is, however, illustrative of the muddled cultural landscape of the era, which was cluttered with conflicting religious, social, political and philosophical ideas constantly pulling against each other. Even Kepler’s ‘death blow’ to

⁷⁹ Ibid., sig. C13^v.

⁸⁰ Stuart Clark, *Vanities of the Eye: Vision in Early Modern European Culture*, p. 27.

extramission theory in 1604 did not do away with it completely, and a recent study suggested that even at the end of the twentieth century, many children and some adults were mistakenly beholden to the idea of extramission. Although such a notion apparently declines between childhood and adulthood, ‘extramission beliefs are highly resistant to many experimental interventions designed to alter them’.⁸¹ Marcus Nordlund states that ‘an account of visual theory in this period must acknowledge this confused and muddled state of affairs, as a modern conception of sight was gradually doing away with traditional theories’.⁸² In his plays of the era, Davenant’s texts consider the tensions between the differing concepts of sight. This chapter will consider the ways in which Davenant’s theatre reimagines the acts of seeing and being seen, by examining his plays, *Albovine* (never acted), *The Cruell Brother* (licensed 12 January 1627), *The Siege* (probably licensed as *The Colonell* 22 July 1629), *The Just Italian* (licensed 2 October 1629), *The Unfortunate Lovers* (licensed 16 April 1638), *The Fair Favourite* (licensed 17 November 1638), *The Distresses* (protected for King’s Company by the Lord Chamberlain, 7 August 1641, although likely to be the same play as *The Spanish Lovers*, which was licensed 30 November 1639).⁸³ For Davenant, the seeing processes can both either be indicative of power or of vulnerability, and also constitute acts where individuals may demonstrate their morality as readily as their supposed capacity for sin. For Davenant, sight is not inherently steeped in sinful behaviour and his measured treatment of the visual experience of his characters operates to liberate the sensory experience from an inflexible, sometimes moralising framework, enabling it to escape connotations of popery or the type of decadent sensuality which would come to be associated with royalism and ‘cavaliers’.

1.3: Plays Written Before 1630

Davenant’s first play, *Albovine*, remained unacted, and like his most famous work, *Gondibert*, his epic poem in the format of a work for the stage, it was set in Lombardy, its

⁸¹ Gerald A. Winer and Jane E. Cottrell, ‘Does Anything Leave the Eye When We See? Extramission Beliefs of Children and Adults’, *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 5.5 (1996) 137-142 (p. 138).

⁸² Marcus Nordlund, *The Dark Lantern: A Historical Study of Sight in Shakespeare, Webster and Middleton*, p. viii.

⁸³ Gerald Eades Bentley, *The Jacobean and Caroline Stage: Dramatic Companies and Players*, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1941), I, pp. 118-119.; Mary Edmond, *Rare Sir William Davenant*, p. 40.

title character the ‘King of the Lombards’.⁸⁴ *Albovine* was printed in quarto in 1629 and may have been written at a similar time to its successor, *The Cruell Brother*, a slightly less bloody, but still gruesome, revenge tragedy.⁸⁵ Davenant’s output at this time favours complex plots and this is the case with *Albovine*, which unfolds against the backdrop of a corrupt royal court. *Albovine* has newly conquered Verona and marries his enemy’s daughter, Rhodalinda, later drunkenly serving her wine in her father’s skull, inspiring her to take revenge for his cruelty. She refuses to sleep with her new husband and instead lusts for Paradine, a captive soldier, luring him to her bed so she can then force him to aid her in murdering *Albovine*. Paradine falsely believes his wife, Valdaura, is unchaste. Meanwhile, captured statesman Hermegild, desiring Valdaura, seeks to persuade her to poison Paradine. The latter then proceeds to stab and kill Valdaura, then Rhodalinda, followed by *Albovine* and finally Hermegild. Paradine is eventually disarmed at the text’s close, but only so he is alive to confess to his crimes. *Albovine* is overtly preoccupied with the power of the visual image, as evidenced by the organisation of its characters and props upon the stage, such as *Albovine*’s presentation of Rhodalinda’s father’s skull via a courtier described by the stage direction ‘*Enter Cunymond with a Skull, made into a drinking-Bowle*’, and its presentation of characters dead in chairs, revealed by the opening of a curtain; the stage directions state: ‘*Albovine, Rhodalinda, Valdaura, dead in Chaires*’.⁸⁶ Nevertheless, its exploration of the visual is altogether more subtle than this may suggest, demonstrating the way in which Davenant’s plays operate to reimagine seeing and being seen as highly idiosyncratic processes which are multi-faceted and often morally complex.

When ageing captain Grimold speaks to his friend Gondibert, another Captain, of the love between Rhodalinda and her husband *Albovine*, he insists that Rhodalinda captivates *Albovine*’s desire to the extent that he has become her ‘Prisoner’ and that she ‘makes him guilty of/Idolatry’, suggesting that he is so overwhelmed by her that he has become submissive, and that the devotion Rhodalinda inspires in *Albovine* can be compared to religious worship. Yet, Grimold’s use of the term ‘Idolatry’ situates their love in a particularly sinister light, where *Albovine*’s desire for his beloved can be likened to idolatry, with all its powerful connotations of Catholicism and iconoclasm. Thus, the

⁸⁴ Edmond suggests it remained unacted due to bold allusions to James I and Charles I. See Mary Edmond, *Rare Sir William Davenant*, p. 39.

⁸⁵ Mary Edmond, *Rare Sir William Davenant*, p. 36.

⁸⁶ William Davenant, *The Tragedy of Albovine, King of the Lombards* (London: Printed for R.M., 1629), sig. D2^v; sig. M3^r.

relationship between these two characters is not being described as a positive force, but as a deeply unequal one, where Albovine is forced from a true engagement with love, in much the way that Catholicism could easily have been perceived as inferior to a ‘true’ Protestant faith. Albovine, despite his misguided cruelty, is one of the text’s more sympathetic characters, and his vision has been corrupted by his female counterpart, who will go on to plot his death. His eyes now fruitlessly idolise a manipulative woman. Davenant is not suggesting that sight is inherently problematic, but by seeing, desiring and then marrying Rhodalinda, Albovine’s sight has been at the core of his vulnerability and will ultimately lead to his downfall. This also signals to the reader that Albovine is easily corrupted, and this is compounded by his later treatment of his new bride. The reader, or audience member had this play been performed, does not know that Albovine will die as a result of his moral failings by the play’s end, but since this is a tragedy they will be aware that such an outcome is highly likely. The use of the term ‘Idolatry’ at the very least problematises the marriage of Albovine and Rhodalinda at this early stage of the text. It is also preceded by the word ‘guilty’, foreshadowing the far more troubling acts for which Albovine will be responsible later in the play. Paradine later remarks that Rhodalinda is ‘dearer to [Albovine’s] eyes then light’, suggesting that her value to him is so great that it has eclipsed the requirements necessary for the senses to operate; the act of seeing requires at least some light, however minimal, to be absorbed into the eye. In this instance, sight is said to have been disregarded in favour of a greater love. While the text is not necessarily advocating the heightened morality which was associated with blindness by some contemporary figures, such as Sampson Price, this does evoke the idea that without sight, humankind can better devote itself to worshipping God, as expressed in Hakewill’s *Vanities of the Eie*, or in this case Albovine can better adore Rhodalinda.

As Albovine presents the skull of his wife’s father to Rhodalinda, she exclaims in distress ‘my eies shrink within my brow!’, as if her emotional distress is so powerful it may inspire a physical change, where her eyes, so repelled by all they see, may disappear into her own skull.⁸⁷ Rather than focusing on the grotesque presentation of the inanimate object before her, Davenant’s character instead vocalises her shock through the evocation of an abnormal seeing process, where the eyes and body become deformed. Davenant emphasises Rhodalinda’s vulnerability, since she is not only treated as an object to be idolised by her husband, but is now a woman distressed by the mere process of seeing.

⁸⁷ Ibid., sig. D3^r.

Also present at the banquet in this scene is Valdaura, who cries ‘the object doth so/ Penetrate, that when I winke, I spie it/ Through my Lids’.⁸⁸ This moment in the play evokes the aforementioned Baconian theory that the likeness sent out by all objects involves a process of multiplication which reaches through the body right into the brain of the viewer. In this case, the likeness or species projected by the skull is so powerful it seeps through Valdaura’s eyelids. Valdaura is vulnerable here, but unlike the plotting Rhodalinda she is a virtuous and chaste woman, yet her experience of seeing is much the same in this instance; both women become victims of Albovine’s cruelty, even if this is a more disturbing episode for the former given her familial relation to the dead man. Davenant’s women are not marked as virtuous or otherwise through their consumption of the visual. The only difference here is that Valdaura’s experience of seeing overtly alludes to an understanding of sight becoming less valued in the years, and decades, following Kepler’s comprehensive unravelling of extramission theory. The above shows how Davenant’s theatre is interested in engaging with how individuals conceptualise the process of seeing, and this is also demonstrated through the character of Paradine. The text examines how Paradine conceptualises vision in his evaluation of Valdaura’s virtue, where before committing to marriage, he states ‘in thy faire brow, there’s such a Legend writ/Of timorous chastitie, that it doth blinde/ Th’adulterous Eye’.⁸⁹ Valdaura’s physical beauty demonstrates her status as a maid to Paradine and not only this, but her ‘timorous chastitie’ is so steadfast that in her role as his wife, it will prevent her being unfaithful in its capacity to ‘blinde’ the ‘adulterous Eye’. The eye, and vision becomes a means for good, where Valdaura’s outward appearance is not only proof of her virtue, but will stop others desiring to involve her in their adultery. Yet Davenant simultaneously equates looking, and seeing, with adultery, suggesting that to merely glance upon a man or woman other than one’s husband or wife becomes an act of infidelity, and that, if Valdaura were not so virtuous, she could easily provoke a man to adultery. The text presents the eye as simultaneously both a vehicle for good and one which acts as a gateway to immorality.

Davenant explores far more disturbing characters in his following play, the revenge tragedy *The Cruell Brother*. Davenant’s young female character, Corsa, falls in love with Lucio, the master of her brother, Foreste, much to Foreste’s bitter disapproval. Corsa is later raped by the Duke of Sienna, and then murdered by her sibling in an

⁸⁸ Ibid., sig. D3^r.

⁸⁹ Ibid., sig. C1^r.

attempt to regain familial honour, Davenant's narrative dictating that she pays a high price for a slightly unorthodox choice. Lucio is also dead by the play's close, which occurs because Foreste mistakenly believes that Lucio has stabbed the Duke, and consequently murders Lucio. As the men slowly expire upon the ground, they grant one another forgiveness. Lucio's life is ended, but, unlike Corsa, he has been granted some form of redemption. On two occasions during the play, Davenant chooses to veil Corsa the first occasion being very shortly after she accepts Lucio's marriage proposal. Overwhelmed by happiness, she weeps, and is veiled by Lucio:

It is a folly in my Eies.
 I know not why they weepe: vnlesse they weepe
 Because they now have lost their libertie;
 Heeretofore each man, which chance presented,
 Was to them a lawfull object: but now,
 They are to looke on none but you.

LUCIO Marke then the bondage I impose on mine,
 My poore eies have no object, but your face:
 Of which I will deprive them thus – *Covers her face with her white Vaile.*
 Shroude thee in thy vestall ornaments.
 Creepe, creepe, my glorious Sunne, behind a cloud.
 For els my eies, will surfeit with delight.
 I never felt true joy till now [...]
 (II.I)⁹⁰

The political register of the play's language as part of an emotionally intimate moment between two characters is very striking; Corsa's eyes no longer possess their 'libertie' and Lucio will impose 'bondage' on his own. As their marriage involves the creation of a union formally recognised by the law of the state, the partnership is as political as it is personal, but emphasising this would not be particularly remarkable. However, the text seeks to politicise the eyesight of these individuals and it is only by deciding to marry that they now face being deprived of the agency with which it is associated by Davenant. The text seeks to highlight the relationship between human senses such as sight and their role both in empowering but also hindering people, should they be lost or not functioning as desired. This is evident in Corsa's mild concern over her overt display of very positive emotion; she insists that her tears are because of 'a folly in [her] Eies', which she cannot be blamed for as she 'know[s] not why they weepe'. Corsa is already allowing herself to 'weepe'; the production of many successive tears blurs the vision, resulting in obscured sight prior to the marriage itself and to her veiling moments later. In sharp contrast,

⁹⁰ William Davenant, *The Cruell Brother* (London, A.M., 1630), sig. D2^r.

Lucio's lack of eyesight is simply an imagined state envisaged by his rhetoric. Yet, while Corsa's eyes have 'lost' their freedom, Lucio actively rejects his own autonomy, insisting 'marke then the bondage *I* impose on my mine'.⁹¹ Corsa is subject to external forces affecting her senses, while Lucio commands his own metaphorical limiting of the sight. Thus, even before the overt manipulation of her vision through veiling, Corsa lacks the same level of agency possessed by her partner. Therefore, Corsa playfully mourning her loss of 'libertie' is altogether rather different to Lucio's verbal pledge to deny himself the aesthetics of other women, and for now, his wife-to-be. The visual experience of each character is highly indicative of the agency they possess, not only in their relationship, but in the play world as a whole; Corsa is extremely vulnerable, whereas Lucio decides the fate of the title character, Foreste, even if this also results in his own death.

This scene takes a particularly bizarre turn with Lucio's veiling of his fiancée; he is not content with Corsa's metaphorical sensory loss, but acts to make this material. The only detail Davenant provides in his stage directions, other than the fact that this garment will cover Corsa's face (as opposed to just her head and hair), is that the veil is 'white'. Thus, lacking information concerning the fabric of the headwear, it is difficult to gauge the degree to which the veil would impede firstly Corsa's ability to see, and secondly, the extent to which her face can be seen by others. However, even if the veil worn by Corsa is very sheer, her sight and the ability of others to see her, including both those on stage and in the audience, would be compromised, albeit only slightly. Regardless of the degree of sensory restriction taking place, it is still occurring; the text is still manipulating Corsa's visual experience due to her position as a transgressive woman.

As Lucio places the veil over Corsa, he tells her 'shroude thee in thy vestal ornaments'. He is covering Corsa's face instead of her veiling herself, and this use of an imperative instructing Corsa to be responsible for her own covering means Lucio becomes complicit in, rather than fully responsible for, his partner's sensory restriction. Paradoxically, however, this results in the whole interaction appearing even more sinister, as Corsa is forced to appear at least partly accountable for her own present and future suffering. The soft sibilant sounds of Lucio's words encourage a steadier articulation of dialogue, encouraging Davenant's audience to pay especially close attention to word usage and choice at this point in the play. Lucio's use of the word 'shroude' is evocative of ritualistic funereal attire, in addition to foreshadowing Corsa's murder later in the text

⁹¹ My italics.

when she is killed by her brother, Foreste, and is also veiled. When veiled by Lucio, Corsa is not in danger, but, if left unveiled, she is depicted as harmful to her fiancé. She is compared to a star, as Lucio refers to her as the ‘glorious Sunne’. Labelling such as this may seem to endow his betrothed with a certain power, but she is ultimately condemned to being hidden ‘behind a cloud’. The three lines which describe Lucio’s hiding from the ‘Sunne’ for the sake of his ‘eies’ requires an understanding of intromission theory, where the eye is a passive receptor of light, but Lucio’s rejection of the sun’s rays finding their way into his eyes hints at an uneasiness toward the eye’s passivity as a mere receptacle for light rays.

The use of ‘creepe, creepe [...] behind a cloud’ most likely operates as an embedded stage direction, where the actor playing Lucio must gradually lower the veil over Corsa, so that her face slowly but surely is lost, at least partly, from his and the audience’s view underneath her attire. For her, Lucio and the rest of the play world is gradually obscured. The term ‘creepe’ has animalistic connotations, partly due to its usage in the King James Bible. The *OED* glosses the verb as ‘to move with the body prone and close to the ground, as a short-legged reptile, an insect, a quadruped moving stealthily, a human being on hands and feet, or in a crouching posture’.⁹² Genesis 2:26 would have been a particularly memorable biblical passage for Davenant’s audience:

And God said: Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.⁹³

Thus, that which ‘creeps’ is categorised as non-human, and inferior to humankind, which is especially pertinent to Lucio’s sinister treatment of Corsa as simply an entity which must be hidden for his own benefit. His slow movement to conceal Corsa’s face is troubling in that it is lacking in elegance or care and therefore incongruous with an individual’s treatment of his new fiancé. Corsa is also denied a verbal response, or that of any kind, until nine lines after her veiling takes place, and when she does speak it is to assert that ‘Modesty’ would prevent her boasting of her elation, if this was not already prevented by her inability to express her newfound happiness through language. She claims ‘t’were not in the power of breath, to make / My ioy so knowne, as it is felt’.⁹⁴ Much like Lucio, Corsa is overwhelmed by ‘joy’. Yet the text’s omission of the pronoun

⁹² *OED* ‘creep’, v., 1.

⁹³ Genesis 2:26, King James Bible.

⁹⁴ William Davenant, *The Cruell Brother*, D2^r.

‘my’ in relation to Corsa’s ‘power of breath’, suggests that the expression of her (feminine) happiness in the midst of Lucio’s veiling is not only beyond her capabilities, but beyond those of any person. Individual expression, and especially that of a young woman, is cast as unimportant and incapable of challenging patriarchal power structures.

The apparently equally joyful Lucio cannot cope with the ‘delight’ caused by Corsa’s appearance, exclaiming ‘I never felt true joy till now’, but, significantly, this statement is made after he has veiled his beloved; ‘true joy’ can only be reached once he has fully asserted his control over Corsa by controlling her sense of sight, and once the text has begun its manipulation of a character who threatens societal stability by marrying a man above her station. In addition to this, Lucio’s desire to hide from the sun, which maintains life on earth, suggests a privileging of the ordering principles of the state above that of nature, or religion if the Sun is deemed to be God’s creation. The overwhelming influence of societal hierarchy is most in evidence in the second occasion upon which Corsa is veiled, and when she is also killed by Foreste, her sibling. Foreste is deeply unhappy with Corsa’s upcoming marriage to his master, Lucio, and murders his sister in order to win back familial honour. The patriarchal family as a microcosm for the state was a common early modern analogy, and the premeditated disposal of a transgressive individual who undermines the status of her family mirrors the punishment meted out by the state to those who threaten its own stability.⁹⁵ However, this only occurs after her sensory experience is altered according to the desires of her assailant. Foreste binds his sister to a chair, orders that she veil herself and cuts her wrists:

FORESTE [...] Come, sit thee downe. – Or if ye meane to pray,
Kneele, and be nimble in deuotion.
Thou art to dye.
CORSA My Noble Brother!
Doe not fright my sufferance: vse me kindly
With your tongue and lookes: I am already
Reconcil’d to Heauen [...]

[...]

CORSA Sir, speake no more, but vse me as you please:
I will obay in all.
FORESTE Come, stretch downe your Arme: and permit this Scarfe
To fasten it to th’Chaire. Then vaile your Eies.
We must not trust a Woman’s valour so –
CORSA Oh, oh, oh.
FORESTE The torture’s past. Thy wrist vaynes are cut, Heere

⁹⁵ Jerome de Groot, *Royalist Identities*, p. 127.

In this Bason bleed: till drynesse make them curl
 Like Lute-strings in the fire –
 CORSA Commend me to my dearest Lord. I am
 His humble sacrifice.
 (IV.I)⁹⁶

Corsa's brother insists that she is seated and bound to a chair with a 'scarfe', resulting in her being entirely incapable of escape, but also allows the text to create striking visual imagery for its audience. Davenant's deployment of chairs at the moment of death is prominent in *Albovine*, which repeatedly relies upon images of characters slumped dead in chairs.⁹⁷ Such restriction is not merely a practical measure to prevent victims fleeing from their assailants but signifies a need for control, where the text limits individual expression through bodily movement, which the captor retains. Foreste is able to move as he pleases, and since he is standing, looms above his sibling, demonstrating his superior power in the most literal manner. Corsa's vulnerability, and her position as a sympathetic character, is emphasised through her desperate and naively optimistic pleading as she attempts to placate Foreste, referring to him as her 'Noble Brother' and hoping that she is 'reconcil'd to Heaven'. She also draws attention to herself as that which is seen, begging 'vse me kindly with your looks', as if Foreste's gaze alone may bid her harm, like some sort of basilisk. Upon accepting her fate after her wrists have been cut, Corsa renders herself a 'sacrifice', because in order for the societal status quo to be returned, her life is forfeit.⁹⁸

Although Corsa's transgression and consequent nature as a threat to social hierarchy mean she must die, the text nevertheless indulges itself in the joys of the feminine aesthetic. Foreste is clearly preoccupied by the apparently pleasing appearance of a mutilated woman; Corsa's role is now as a body and fodder for visual consumption and, grotesquely perhaps, pleasure. She resembles a 'Rose' in its final days, suggesting that while her splendour is fading as she bleeds to death, it is certainly not lost completely. The dialogue indicates that Foreste is holding a 'bason' into which she will 'bleed', and her veins have become akin to burning 'lute strings', as if her bodily components existed to provide joy for its own sake, in the form of music, and as such her body is not just pleasing to the eye, but is compared to that which delights the ear. Foreste also longs to

⁹⁶ William Davenant, *The Cruell Brother*, sig. H4^v-I1^r.

⁹⁷ William Davenant, *The Tragedy of Albovine, King of the Lombards*, sig. K2^v; sig. M3^r.

⁹⁸ Davenant's play is reminiscent of *The Duchess of Malfy*, where Ferdinand insists he will 'purge' the 'infected blood' of his sister, the Duchess. See John Webster, *The Duchess of Malfy* (London: Nicholas Okes, 1623), sig. E4^r-E4^v.

part Corsa's 'defil'd' blood from that which is untainted, presumably the beauty he is admiring as his sister slowly dies. Her value was in her virginity and beauty, and since the former has been vilely taken, Foreste can only admire the latter, but is determined to do so even as she takes her final breaths. The text focuses on the sensory experience of the villain to demonstrate the triumph of his power over the vulnerable Corsa.

During this scene, Foreste commands Corsa to 'vaile [her] Eies' and although the play fails to specify whether Corsa completes this action, she is under duress and because the dialogue does not suggest otherwise, I believe it is acceptable to assume this is the case. Davenant provides even less information on the 'veil' used in this scene than that deployed earlier in the text. Since it does not feature in the stage directions here, we cannot even be sure that it is a veil; it could be a scarf or scrap of material, but what is significant is that this object is described as being used as a veil. It is not labelled as such in a silent stage direction to be read only by those producing the play, but it is integrated into a character's dialogue to be heard by Davenant's audience. The text is therefore able to evoke the connotations surrounding the word itself. Since it is impossible to know much of the nature of the 'veil' employed to cover Corsa's eyes, it is possible she is unable to see anything, and, if this is the case, a troubling progression from a semi-sheer veil to an opaque one has been made alongside her lessening agency. As she becomes more susceptible to harm, her visual experience is further restricted. Foreste is able to assert his power to the highest degree over a woman who has gradually been deprived of autonomy, first through marriage and then through rape.

In the moments before Corsa finally expires she contemplates how she may be remembered, and by way of reply, Foreste speaks of astrology:

CORSA Will not my Lord be mercifull; to me,
 And to my memory. *riseth vp.*
 FORES. Sit still. I bring no negative reply.
 Thy worth shall shine in such a Character:
 That being dead; he needs must woee thy Ghost.
 CORSA And will Posterity consent, that I
 Abide in List; with those of modest fame?
 FORES. That Astrologer; who spys thee first
 Within a Starre: must not finde thee billeted
 Neere to *Venus*. Such error in his Act;
 Would make me Wreath his Body into Cords.
 And with prolix strength draw the dull Caytiffe,
 Through his slender Optick.
 (V.I)⁹⁹

⁹⁹William Davenant, *The Cruell Brother*, sig. II^v.

This passage demonstrates the text's preoccupation with seeing and being seen; an astrologer should not find Corsa close to Venus, the planet and Roman love goddess, or the 'Caytiffe' shall have to be 'drawn' through his own telescope as a reprimand for his mistake. The 'optic' is slender, as if it possesses some level of feminine allure, much like Corsa herself, and like Corsa, can only be appreciated in this way now it must face destruction, along with the nameless astrologer himself. This apparent desire to destroy the paraphernalia of emergent science, and new ideas surrounding seeing, is indicative of a wish to be more than passive, as the human eye is in its reception of light. In killing Corsa, Foreste is no longer an inactive witness to societal transgression, but has behaved, in the most extreme fashion, to remedy the situation. If Corsa was not deemed a threatening figure, the text would have either spared her, or have assigned her a rather different death (since this is a tragedy, a large headcount including many of the principal characters is only to be expected). For Davenant then, the sensory experience emphasises Corsa's fragility, in contrast to the cruelty of her cruel brother, Foreste.

Davenant's following play maintained an interest in sight, and was licensed on 22 July, 1629, under the title of *The Colonell*. It is not known what happened to this text, but it is presumed that the play entitled *The Siege* in the 1673 folio of his works is simply a revised version of this particular text.¹⁰⁰ This tragicomedy is set against the backdrop of a revolt in Pisa, where the Duke of Tuscany seeks to remedy the situation through his talented soldier, Florello, but soon, the city is under siege. The governor of Pisa, Foscari, has a daughter who Florello seeks to marry, and it is his desire for Bertolina which leaves his loyalties divided between the army to which he belongs and his love for the former. Eventually, he abandons his fellow soldiers to save Bertolina, but his dishonoured reputation drives her away. The pair only marry when Florello returns to her having conquered Pisa. When Bertolina sends Florello away after he abandons his post as a soldier holding Pisa under siege, he is distraught and tells her he wished he knew of her true nature '[...]when first [his] unhappy eyes' admired her, as they would have 'steer'd another way, / Or got some other Star to sail by'.¹⁰¹ Florello articulates his regret at having fallen in love with Bertolina by lamenting his first visual experience of her and by having his character remember this moment, Davenant's text emphasises the primacy of sight in

¹⁰⁰ Mary Edmond, *Rare Sir William Davenant*, p. 40.

¹⁰¹ William Davenant, *The Works of Sir William Davenant Knight* (London: Henry Herringman, 1673), sig. Kkkk2^v.

shaping experiences and human understanding of events, without a moral overtone; Florello's affection for Bertolina is framed in a morally neutral fashion. Towards the end of the play, when Florello fears he may face death, he states 'Here be the Adders that convert to Marble, / The inconsiderate gazer.'¹⁰² Again, Davenant evokes the myth of the basilisk, in order to show Florello reconciling himself with the possibility of losing his life. Florello's suggestion that his senses have led him astray emphasises the role played by vision in human understanding of the external world, and its power; the basilisk kills through a shared visual experience occurring between it and its victim.

Davenant continues to consider the role of seeing in revenge in his tragedy *The Just Italian*. Its resemblance to *The Cruell Brother* is clear, since it too features a couple unequal in social class, an unmerciful male sibling, and its plot is similarly driven by the need for vengeance. The wealthy Alteza, whose dowry was 'vaste', banishes her husband, Altamont, from the marital bed as he has little money, and his attempts to win her back with gifts fail when she learns the presents have been acquired with her own assets. Altamont changes tack by parading a young woman, who is actually his sister, Scoperta, in front of Alteza, falsely toting her as his newly acquired concubine. The Italian adjective 'Scoperta' translates as 'discovered' or 'uncovered', Davenant's choice of name for this vulnerable character indicative of the importance assigned by the text to her unveiling during the play. Alteza retaliates by finding a new lover of her own, in the form of Sciolto, a young, virile Florentine supposedly popular with courtly women. Despite his efforts, Sciolto is also rejected by Alteza, and he then falls in love with Scoperta. By this point, Alteza has had a change of heart and wishes to be with Sciolto. Altamont condemns the love between Sciolto and Scoperta, and insists they must both die. Their capture and death is not straightforward however, and they face Altamont's friend, Meruolle, (Altamont is believed dead at this point) blindfolded by mutes as seen below:

MERUOLLE Behold the Throne, your Lord commanded me
 Prepare: and here you must be pleas'd to sit. -----
 ALTEZA Can this aduancement ought refer to your
 Delight, or to my Lords last Testament?
 MERUOLLE Justice hath laid her sword within your reach:
 And you have power to sheath it so; that where
 You execute, you may a murder doe,
 Or sacrifice. Bring the delinquents in.

*Enter Sciolto, Scoperta, at severall doors, each led in, bound
 And hoodwinkd by two Mutes.*

¹⁰² Ibid., LIII^r.

ALTEZA Sciolto and Scoperta still alive?

[...]

MERUOLLE [...] Let them

Inioy their eyes; that they may know their Iudge.

The Mutes unmuffle 'em.

SCOPERTA Hah, Sciolto!

SCIOLTO Scoperta, O my Girle!

(V.I)¹⁰³

This moment of the play involves both Scoperta and her male counterpart Sciolto being deprived of sight. The text describes them as ‘hoodwink’d’ and the *OED* glosses ‘hoodwink’, in verb form, as meaning ‘to cover the eyes with a hood or other covering so as to prevent vision; to blindfold’ and the adjective ‘hoodwinked’ as ‘blindfolded, blinded’, in literal and figurative use. Both entries indicate that such usage was in existence during the time Davenant produced *The Just Italian*.¹⁰⁴ Consequently, I would argue that it is very likely that Scoperta and Sciolto have had blindfolds placed over their eyes. *The Just Italian* differs from *The Cruell Brother* immediately here in its need to manipulate the seeing of both male and female characters, treating them with a level of equality, albeit one of condemnation, which Davenant’s previous play is lacking. It appears, however, that both have aided in the further breakdown of an already precarious marriage, so each character has contributed towards undermining the resilience of a religious union and a state institution. Since both characters are also ‘bound’, they are entirely incapable of escape and unable to channel the expression of feelings or desires through bodily movement, much like Corsa shortly before her murder. Much like her they are transgressive, and transgressive enough to operate as figures potentially threatening to order. Meruolle describes them as ‘delinquents’ which had connotations of criminality even then; the *OED* defines the term as meaning ‘failing in, or neglectful of, a duty or obligation; defaulting; faulty; more generally, guilty of a misdeed or offence’ and this can be seen in Shakespeare’s usage of the term in *Macbeth* the 1623 First Folio, as Lenox thinks on the murder of King Duncan, supposedly at the hands of his sons:

LENOX [...] How Mostrous it was in Nature,

¹⁰³ William Davenant, *The Just Italian* (London: Thomas Harper, 1630), sig. I1^v - I2^r.

¹⁰⁴ *OED* ‘hoodwink’, v., 1. *OED* ‘hoodwinked’, adj.

For Malcolme and Donalbain, to kill
 Their Royal Father; horrid Fact! how did
 It grieve Macbeth, did he not straight
 In Pious rage the two Delinquents kill,
 That were the slaves of Drunkenness and Sleep.
 Was not that Nobly done?

(III.VI)¹⁰⁵

Those believed to be Duncan's killers are described as 'delinquents'; the actions of Scoperta and Sciolto are far removed from murder, but the same term is employed by Davenant's text.

Another striking term the text employs in the above is 'sacrifice', as Meruolle informs Alteza that the fate of the couple about to be brought before her is entirely within her control. *The Cruell Brother* has Corsa describe herself as a 'sacrifice', and in much the same way, it seems for the society of this particular play world to be stable once more it must be purged of its transgressors, and part of this process demands sensory deprivation involving the eyesight. This limiting of vision also minimises individual agency, and highlights the vulnerability of those who have flouted societal rules of accepted behaviour. Yet because *The Just Italian* is a tragicomedy, the lives of Scoperta and Sciolto are spared; slightly later in the play, as two masked and mute men are about to execute both characters, they reveal themselves as the believed dead Altamont and his friend Meruolle:

ALTEZA [...] Release this pious Lady and
 Performe your execution vpon me -----

*One o'th' Mutes pulls of his Uizard & discoveres
 Himselpe to be Altamont.*

ALTAMONT Away you dreadfull Ministers of death.
 The Lawrell Sprigge, the Mirtle nicely wreath'd
 In Coronets, my Loue deserves; for she
 Is growne too good for Earth -----

ALTEZA My Alatomont -----

She sinkes.

*Meruolle unmuffles, and unbindes Sciolto, and Scoperta, who
 straight embrace each other.*

(V.I)¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ William Shakespeare, *Comedies, Histories and Tragedies* (London: Isaac Iaggard, 1623), sig. mm6^r.

¹⁰⁶ William Davenant, *The Just Italian*, sig. I4^r.

The most significant element of the above is Davenant's stage directions indicating that the captors here are not only mute, but also masked, for one of them, who transpires to be Altamont, 'pulls of his Uizard'. A vizard is defined by the *OED* as simply 'a mask' or 'a mask used to protect the face or eyes'.¹⁰⁷ Davenant's primary interest is in blindfolding or veiling supposedly transgressive individuals, as opposed to their assailants, and the masking of Scoperta and Sciolto's captors occurs since it affects what is seen (or not seen) by the victims, and also, by the audience. We are given little detail on the type of masks used, so it is difficult to ascertain the extent to which the mutes' faces would be obscured from their victims. Scoperta and Sciolto are mostly blindfolded themselves, but there is a brief amount of time when they are not, but the mutes are still masked. Thus, the couple face a cumulative denial of visual experience which also functions to emphasise their lack of agency. Yet, instead of their lives being forfeit, Sciolto and Scoperta instead face a traumatizing ordeal during which they fully expect to die. This, instead of death itself, is their punishment for social transgression, and Davenant's sensory manipulation operates in much the same fashion.

It is also important for dramatic purposes, causing surprise and delight in Davenant's audience, who will witness the spectacular, simultaneous removal of masks by Altamont and Meruolle as part of this clever plot twist.

The tragicomedy concludes with Altamont being reconciled with Alteza, and Sciolto asks Altamont's permission to marry Scoperta, which is granted. The subplot, consisting of Altamont's soldier brother Florello competing with the foppish Dandelo for Alteza's sister, Charintha, also ends happily, as the destitute combatant marries the woman he desires. *The Just Italian* ends happily, but the narrowly averted breakdown of the marriage at the heart of the play appears to seriously jeopardise the lives of two other adults, and the humiliation and fear Sciolto and Scoperta suffer by being deprived of sight suggests the vulnerability of those who play a part in disrupting social harmony. Yet, the play avoids being overly didactic in the forgiveness and celebration with which it chooses to end.

1.4: Plays 1637-1642

¹⁰⁷ *OED* 'vizard' *n.* and *adj.*, 1, 1c.

The 1630s was Davenant's most productive decade, but he does not return to his re-imagining of sight until 1638, with his play *The Unfortunate Lovers*, which was presented by the King's Company on 23rd April, 31st May and 30th September of that year.¹⁰⁸ Much like his earlier plays, it is a revenge tragedy with a complex plot unfolding against an Italian backdrop. Altophil is ready to marry Arthiopa after his return from battle, yet the Prince of Verona's favourite, Galeotto, wants to marry his daughter, Armaranta, to Altophil instead. Galeotto accuses Arthiopa of working as a prostitute, despite this being entirely false, and Altophil is determined to marry her nevertheless. Meanwhile, Ascoli, Prince of Verona, sees Arthiopa and desires her immediately. He then proposes a marriage between Altophil and Armaranta, but the former refuses and is subsequently imprisoned. Galeotto is expelled from Verona for his misleading accusations against Arthiopa, and then returns to conquer Verona alongside Heildebrand, King of Lombardy. The King then rapes Arthiopa and Altophil kills Galeotto, triggering the suicide of his daughter Armaranta. Altophil then fights with Heildebrand, and both men are killed. Arthiopa dies of her grief, and only the Prince, Ascoli, remains to restore the state to order.¹⁰⁹ When conversing with Armaranta at the beginning of the play regarding the possibility of her marrying Altophil instead of Arthiopa, Ascoli remarks of Altophil that 'his judgement seldome harbours neere his eyes,/ If he can looke on so much natural beauty, and/ Not wish to make it his'.¹¹⁰ This suggests that, for the character of Altophil, his visual experience and not only his desire, but his moral judgement, are not necessarily intertwined; the text implies that seeing and morality can be decoupled, or at least, not tightly joined and able to influence one another with ease.

The Fair Favourite, a tragicomedy performed at court by the King's Company on 20th November and 11th December 1638, also focuses on the place of seeing and being seen within romantic relationships and in relation to desire.¹¹¹ In contrast to its predecessor, however, the plot of *The Fair Favourite* is straightforward; the King of a Neapolitan court believes his 'fair favourite' Eumenia to be have been dead for the last

¹⁰⁸ Gerard Bentley, *The Jacobean and Caroline Stage*, pp. 119. During the 1630s and into the early 1640s, Davenant's dramatic career also saw him produce the comedies *The Witts*, which was first presented at court 28 January 1634, and published in 1636, and *News from Plymouth*, which was licensed 1 August 1635 and published as part of *The Works*. See Gerard Bentley, p. 119. The latter was originally written for a holiday audience at the Globe, and both act as pre-cursors to Restoration comedy. See also Bordinat and Blaydes, *Sir William Davenant*, pp. 43-49. Davenant does not demonstrate his preoccupation with the senses in either of these texts.

¹⁰⁹ Bordinat and Blaydes provide a good summary of this complex plot. See Philip Bordinat and Sophia B. Blaydes, *Sir William Davenant*, pp. 54-55.

¹¹⁰ William Davenant, *The Unfortunate Lovers*, sig. B2^r.

¹¹¹ Bentley, *The Jacobean and Caroline Stage*, pp. 119.

two years, after having been falsely informed by his advisors who are driven by political motives. He then learns she is in fact alive, and refuses to sleep with his current wife, the Queen. He pursues Eumenia, but both the women of this play are paragons of virtue and refuse to bow to his desires, eventually becoming friends. Eumenia marries a friend of her brother, while the King gradually grows to love the Queen.

Eumenia defends her rejection of the King's advances, insisting that 'Honor's a rich,/ A glorious upper Vestment, which we wear/ To please the lookers on; as well as to Delight our selves.'¹¹² Honour is an abstract concept, and for Emilia to convince the King of hers, she must evoke the visual and emphasise the importance and pleasure of the seeing process. The character does this by inviting the King to imagine honour as a 'glorious upper Vestment', comparing it to the beauty and enjoyment he may find in an elaborate, luxurious piece of attire worn by himself or other members of the royal household, for example. Emilia suggests that such an item of clothing will not only 'delight' its wearer, but that its purpose is also to 'please' the 'lookers on', implying that the sensory experience of any individual is as important as that of their contemporaries; seeing becomes as valuable as being seen. This demonstrates the value of maintaining honour not only for oneself, but as a moral duty to others, and Emilia is perhaps also attempting to prick the King's conscience and encourage him to behave as an honourable husband who will not betray his wife. Also, by suggesting that honour may be a concept which can be made visual, Emilia implies that the sense of sight can function as an aid in enabling individuals to recognise it; the text incorporates vision as an ally in understanding and maintaining honour. The King, however, is unconvinced by Emilia's pleas and insists 'Sustain that love, whose diet is thy looks;/ If banish'd from thy sight, 'twould starve for/Want of nourishment.'¹¹³ He gains pleasure not only on his joy at seeing her, but on the knowledge that he shapes Emilia's own experience of seeing, in that she sees him, and his comparison with the sustenance provided by food frames his desire as more akin to a basic human need, alongside water. For this character, the trappings of the visual have become potentially destructive and morally corrupting, as they tempt him to consider committing adultery. Fearing her husband has betrayed her, the Queen reprimands Emilia and sadly laments 'Yet I wish I ne'er had seen his face, / Or my affection could pursue it less,' showing the depth of her love for her partner.¹¹⁴ The

¹¹² William Davenant, *The Works of Sir William Davenant Knight*, sig. Mmmm4^r.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., Nnnn1^v.

Queen's regret is expressed through this comment on the first occasion: it is assumed, that she saw her future husband's face, and suggests that once she had seen him, her feelings of love began to develop. For an audience, her devotion is admirable, and the implication that the King can inspire such love aids in him remaining a sympathetic character, despite his pursuit of Emilia. By allowing the Queen to ponder the effect of an instance of seeing long past, the text illustrates the vulnerability of even a powerful royal figure to the influence of the visual.

Davenant considers the distress visual beauty may provoke once more in the appropriately titled play, *The Distresses*, which was protected for the King's Company by the Lord Chamberlain, and is believed to be the same play as one entitled *The Spanish Lovers*, which was licensed on 30th November 1639.¹¹⁵ The main character, Claramante, is responsible for the 'distresses' which occur due to her beauty and, when a group of young men vying for her attention are singing under her window, her brother Balthazar is wounded fighting with these potential suitors. A man named Dorando comes to his rescue, only to be wounded himself by Claramante's other brother, Leonte, described in the *dramatis personae* as a 'hot-spirited gentleman'.¹¹⁶ Leonte challenges Oregmon, one of the men under Claramante's window. Unknown to Dorando, Oregmon is his brother, from whom he has been separated since childhood. The men both desire Claramante, and fight in an attempt to win her love. Dorando and Oregmon's father, Basilonte, then arrives and identifies his sons to one another so the play can end happily. The parted brothers are reunited, and Basilonte insists that as Oregmon is the elder brother, he has the right to choose his wife before his sibling. Thus, Claramante and Oregmon are married. The subplot involves Androlio, a young man frightened of committing, who actually ends up wedding Amiana, daughter of Basilonte.

When hovering beneath Claramante's window, Dorando insists that he has previously been 'conquer'd' by her 'eyes', which, yet again, sees Davenant evoke the basilisk myth, suggesting that power underpins Claramante's virtuous beauty.¹¹⁷ It also emphasises to the text's audience that Dorando has been captivated by Claramante's visual appearance, particularly her eyes. In this line, Davenant unites the seeing power of the eye with its aesthetic appeal when seen by the eyes of the others. While Claramante's eyes are allied with those of the powerful basilisk, like the basilisk she is involved in an

¹¹⁵ Gerald Bentley, *The Jacobean and Caroline Stage*, pp. 118-119.

¹¹⁶ William Davenant, *The Distresses* in *The Works*, sig. Eeee1^v.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, sig. Eeee2^t.

unspoken dialogue between two parties, which involves each person seeing another and being seen. Unlike the basilisk scenario, however, Claramante's gaze is not fatal, and it is Dorando, pursuing the woman he desires, who appears to have the upper hand in terms of power, even if it is he who claims he has been 'conquer'd'; this metaphorical submission to Claramante is one of pleasure and anticipation. In order to protect his sister from such admiration, Leonte addresses Claramante with '[...] since your Beauty doth disorder Men,/ Keep it within, lock up your looks'.¹¹⁸ His sibling's currency lies in the way in which she is seen, and, because her 'Beauty' causes such 'disorder' in men, she must 'lock' her 'looks' away. Instead of being urged to 'keep' herself locked up, it is her appearance which must be kept safe, suggesting that much of her value lies in her beauty, rather than in other aspects of self. This could also suggest that her virtue and morality is so admirable that it manifests in her beauty, but Leonte is concerned that such virtue is fragile and must be protected.

Ultimately, through Davenant's reimagining of the acts of seeing and being seen, his theatre considers the way in which the visual experience of individuals can play a role in demonstrating their morality in much the same way it may advertise their capacity for sin. For Davenant, sight and the delights it may bring are not necessarily rooted in sinful behaviour or decadent sensuality. Instead, sight can accommodate and be an important part of a wide variety of sensory experiences and approaches to morality and behaviour. Davenant liberates seeing and being seen from the confines of the hedonistic sensuality, as well as from the moralising frameworks of certain circles of contemporary society, negotiating a far more accommodating, flexible approach to the sensory experience.

¹¹⁸ Ibid, sig. Eeee2^r.

Chapter 2: ‘Little pastime upon Earth without Bodies’: Platonic Love and the Sensory Experience in the Masque

2.1: The Masque and the Body

In July of 1606, the year of Davenant’s birth, Sir John Harington observed the spectacular alcohol-fuelled degeneration of a performance staged for King James and his brother-in-law, King Christian of Denmark, by the Earl of Salisbury at his Hertfordshire home, detailing events in a letter. The masque was based upon the biblical narrative of 1 Kings 10, where the Queen of Sheba visits King Solomon after hearing of his wisdom, and seeks to test his knowledge with a series of questions. Solomon astonishes the Queen by answering all she asks, and in return she bestows upon him lavish gifts, so that ‘he exceeded all the Kings of the earth in both riches and wisdom’.¹ Consequently, ‘all the world sought to see Solomon, to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart’.² The use of this text flattered James by comparing him to Solomon, a wise, peaceful ruler, but the event itself was disastrous and Harington captures wonderfully the chaos that ensued, writing:

The Lady who did play the Queens part, did carry most precious gifts to both their Majesties; but, forgetting the steppes arising to the canopy, overset her caskets into his Danish Majesties lap [...] The entertainment and show went forward, and most of the presenters went backward, or fell down; wine did so occupy their upper chambers. [...] Hope did assay to speak, but wine renderd her endeavours so feeble that she withdrew [...] Faith [...] left the court in a staggering condition [...] Hope and Faith [...] were both sick and spewing in the lower hall. [...] Victory [...] presented a rich sword to the King and [she] did endeavour to make suit to the King. [...] Peace [...] much contrary to her semblance, most rudely made war with her olive branch [...] I neer did see such lack of good order, discretion, and sobriety as I have now done. [...] I see no man, or woman either, that can now command himself or herself. I wish I was at home: *O rus, quando te adspiciam?* [...]³

¹ 1 Kings 10 :23 (Geneva version).

² Ibid.

³ John Harington, *Nugae antiquae*, 3 vols (London: T. Cadell and L. Bull, 1792), II, pp. 127-131. See also Martin Butler for further discussion of the masque in Martin Butler, *The Stuart Court Masque and Political Culture*, pp. 125- 128. Butler also suggests that the events Harington discusses are simply imagined, but even if this is the case, his attitudes towards bodily expression and experience are indicative of societal and political desires to police the body (and, by association, its senses). ‘O rus, quando te adspiciam?’ is a line found in Horace’s *Satires* and translates as ‘O countryside, when shall I behold you?’

Harington describes the women he witnesses as being unable to speak or stand, and incapable of refraining from vomiting or violence; he is clearly troubled by this and wishing he was 'at home'. The female players are 'staggering', embodying disorder in their inability to exercise control over their own movement. Harington's women are also 'spewing', symbolic not only of the body as a site of chaos, but also highlighting its constant struggle to contain itself and its excesses, and its potential to corrupt or contaminate others, in this case through the inappropriate and abnormal expulsion of bodily fluids. The use of the phrase 'good order' shifts Harington's register to being more overtly political, indicating a desire to reform the bodies he is forced to behold, and his longing to see the countryside again, conveyed in his allusion to Horace, is evocative of associations between the court and its contrasting immoral excess, in this case expressed through the chaotic female body. While he may write of 'wine' taking hold of the actors' 'upper chambers', suggesting their minds are muddled by insobriety, it is the unregulated bodies Harington must witness that are for him the most concerning. Bodily expression and the sensory experience are closely interwoven, and this masque is a prime example of the body as an inherently out of control entity which requires careful policing. Martin Butler writes that 'a superfluity of women, all lacking bodily discipline, is cause and effect of Jacobean dissipation', yet while this may be the case, it is the moral undertone framing Harington's disgust in relation to the body which is key for my purposes.⁴

Significantly, although Harington states that actors of both sexes are severely inebriated, his primary concern is clearly the intoxication of the female performers. In his letter, he only mentions unacceptable male behaviour twice, the first occurring when he writes 'His Majesty then got up and would dance with the Queen of Sheba, but he fell down and humbled himself before her' and the second as he states that James 'did not accept' the sword Victory offered him and 'put it by with his hand'. The successful regulation of female behaviour is seen as far more important than that of male masquers and audience members for societal order to be upheld. While the Danish King's behaviour is embarrassing and a consequence of drink, James's anxiety regarding a drunken woman haphazardly waving a sword in his face is hardly unreasonable.

⁴ Martin Butler, *The Stuart Court Masque and Political Culture*, p. 127.

There is no record of the masque text itself, and no source other than Harington's letter which discusses it, and even the identity of his addressee, 'Mr Secretary Barlow', cannot be ascertained. The events of this visit to England by the King of Denmark are well documented, so the lack of information on this performance is something of an anomaly. Martin Butler suggests, therefore, that this masque is entirely fictitious, created by a Harington frustrated at his inability to gain James's favour.⁵ However, Harington's letter is important as, by illustrating the horror inspired by such a flagrant disregard for order and bodily decorum, even if this is an imagined scenario, it emphasises the masque's obsession with order. In considering how the masque is defined, one of its key facets is its 'celebratory' nature (and this embraced harmony and peacetime). The masque was a private entertainment which communicated to its spectators in a manner distinct from that of dramatic public theatre; its primary topic was its audience and it included them in the performance itself. Masques became increasingly extravagant in their scenery and involved music, song and dancing, generally concluded by a dance involving the masquers and their spectators, 'so that what the audience began by watching they ended by becoming'.⁶ By concluding in this way, the masque further emphasised peace and harmony as attainable and as a source of pleasure. It is, however, important to note that, despite their fascination with order, masques do not straightforwardly replicate 'royal ideology' and they also do not simply buttress 'factional powerplay', as noted by James Knowles.⁷ The antimasque, a later evolutionary component of the genre, operates as a contained space for temporary disorder to flourish, although Martin Butler argues that this is not always effectively contained; thus, it is important to be wary of categorising the masque as a 'bleak reconceptualism of a totalitarian early modern culture'.⁸ Kevin Sharpe also argues that 'the most extravagant praise could accommodate and incorporate some of the sharpest criticism'.⁹ Nevertheless, whether real or imagined, scripted or spontaneous, the violent breach of propriety occurring in the masque Harington witnessed is not representative of the seventeenth-century masque genre, in either its Jacobean or Caroline guise. The scenes depicted by Harington are an extreme example of (female) bodily excess but, importantly, they reveal an intense anxiety around the need to control the

⁵ Ibid., p. 126.

⁶ Stephen Orgel, 'The Case for Comus', *Representations*, 81.1 (2003), 31-45 (p. 31).

⁷ James Knowles, *Politics and Political Culture in the Court Masque* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p. 1.

⁸ Martin Butler, *The Stuart Court Masque and Political Culture*, pp. 32-33; James Knowles, *Politics and Political Culture in the Court Masque*, p. 2.

⁹ Kevin Sharpe, *Criticism and Compliment: The Politics of Literature in the England of Charles I*, p. 293.

body, especially in its feminine form. This anxiety continued into the Caroline period, heightened, rather than dissolved by the values of chastity promoted by Henrietta Maria at court. Davenant's work responds to the approach to the senses taken by the Queen's love cult, and so it is important to be aware of the nuances of the latter. He must also operate within the framework of the masque genre, which was underpinned by spectacular performances geared towards a pleasurable sensory experience heavily reliant on impressive visual and musical elements. The masque also changed over time, becoming increasingly expensive and elaborate in its episodic nature.

Davenant's rakish reputation is not one likely to be associated with an interest in the Queen's Platonic love cult, which was shunned by a certain type of 'cavalier' royalist embracing an archetypal promiscuity. However, we must be wary of oversimplifying even these seemingly more misogynistic corners of royalist thinking. Timothy Raylor remarks upon the 'intemperate drinking and the debauched conduct' of the royalist fraternity the Order of the Fancy, and, as I have mentioned, Davenant himself was a 'probable member'.¹⁰ Raylor also comments upon the 'element of reaction' in the meetings of a 'cavalier drinking circle' attended by James Smith, another member of the Order of the Fancy, 'against the Platonic affectations of the queen's circle'.¹¹ The ballad 'The Gallants of the Times. Supposed to be made by Mr William Murrey of His Majesties Bed-chamber', which Raylor cites as evidence for the existence of this particular drinking circle, problematizes simplistic treatments of royalist ideology, as seen in the following extract:

Tis pleasure to drink among these men
For they have witt and valour good store,
They can all handle a sword and a pen
Can court a lady and tickle a whore,
And in the middle of all their wine,
Discourse of Plato and Aretine.¹²

At first glance, there does not appear to be anything out of the ordinary whatsoever about this celebration of drinking royalist men. The text endorses the familiar royalist

¹⁰ Timothy Raylor, *Cavaliers, Clubs and Literary Culture: Sir John Mennes, James Smith and the Order of the Fancy*, p. 98; p. 105.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 66; p. 105.

¹² Timothy Raylor, *Cavaliers, Clubs and Literary Culture: Sir John Mennes, James Smith and the Order of the Fancy*, p. 66; pp. 218-219. Raylor writes that the volume, *Wit Restor'd* (1658), which includes the ballad from which the above extract is taken, was entered on the Stationers' Register 8th July 1658, but the date of its appearance is unknown. Raylor notes that it is advertised in *Naps Upon Parnassus*, which was for sale by October 1658. See Thomas Flatman, *Naps Upon Parnassus* (London: N. Brook, 1658), sig. H2^v.

stereotypes of such individuals as possessing both military and literary prowess, being ardent enough in their sexual pleasure-seeking that they can and are willing to pursue women at all points on the social spectrum, and as intellectually sharp and admirably heroic. Raylor writes that this ballad seeks to ‘marry courtly refinement and contemplation to sexuality’; a statement such as this suggests ‘refinement’ and sexual desire are opposites, but for figures such as Davenant they were deeply interwoven. The text above does not situate the pornography of Pietro Aretino in a sphere separate to the musings of Plato. The writers are being pored over simultaneously in the midst of a drinking session, united in this verse by the conjunction ‘and’ as if they are of the same value in the pleasure - and the pleasure in homosocial bonding is ultimately at the core of what is being celebrated here, as emphasised by the ballad’s first line - they provide. Similarly, Davenant’s own brand of royalism allows room in romantic relationships for a sexuality as much engaged with the mind as it is pleasurable sensuality, whereas the Neoplatonism so pervasive within court culture was driven by the former, and the senses were never permitted to function as simply a route to pleasure. In his work, Davenant rejects many of the hedonistic elements of ‘cavalier’ royalism in favour of a more measured approach to pleasure. It is therefore important to recognise Davenant’s approach to Neoplatonism as potentially subversive and representative of his own idiosyncratic form of royalism.

Davenant explores the problems of Platonic love throughout his masque productions, his first venture into masque writing being *The Temple of Love* (1635, Banqueting House) which was followed by *The Triumphs of the Prince d’Amour* (1636, Middle Temple), *Britannia Triumphans* (1638, Masquing Room), *Luminalia* (1638, Masquing Room) and *Salmacida Spolia* (1640, Masquing Room).¹³ In addition to his masques, Davenant produced two plays during this decade, *Love and Honour* (1634), and *The Platonick Lovers* (1636), which act as pre-cursors to the masques in that they begin to develop Davenant’s approach to Platonic love, articulated in greater depth in his masques.¹⁴ Davenant’s masques demonstrate the equal value of the sensory experience and cerebral engagement, but must carefully negotiate the values of Platonic love which heavily influence their courtly audiences. Consequently, Davenant carves out his own space away from the Neoplatonic love cult, while simultaneously rejecting the hostile approach towards the latter which existed in a certain type of hyper-masculine royalism,

¹³ Martin Butler, pp. 74-76.

¹⁴ Gerald Bentley, *The Jacobean and Caroline Stage: Dramatic Companies and Players*, p. 119.

helped a little in achieving the latter by the confines of the masque genre. Davenant's desire to endorse a 'middle ground' between the apparent extremes of Neoplatonism and unchecked sensuality shows that he is keen to challenge both positions, but also to offer an alternative which embraces the sexual elements of sensuality as being of the same importance as the more cerebral engagement with beauty promoted by the Neoplatonic love cult. His masque work of this period demonstrates the accommodating nature of Davenant's royalism as he is willing to consider two very different royalist attitudes towards sensuality and then offer a compromise. His refining of the masque also operates far more effectively than Milton's better known attempts via *Comus* to reform the genre, since unlike Milton, Davenant carefully negotiates an appealing centre ground between Platonic love and morally dubious, supposedly royalist ideology. The result is that Davenant's texts, in their moderate approach, remain highly palatable to his audiences. This chapter will begin by considering the approaches to love Davenant had to consider in Caroline court culture, followed by an evaluation of the influence of the earlier Jonsonian masque form which set in motion themes developed later by writers such as Davenant. I will then move onto discussing the direction taken by the Caroline masque as it became more elaborate in its scenery and fond of multiple antimasques, developments which were embraced and pioneered by Davenant. Finally, I will analyse the work of Davenant himself, which makes its own significant contribution to the masque genre and its treatment of Platonic love and the sensory experience.

2.2: Love at the Caroline Court

Sarah Hutton writes of the seventeenth century as the 'golden age of English vernacular Platonic philosophy', but the recovering of Plato's works and Platonic thought more widely began during the Italian Renaissance; one of the most prominent figures to translate Plato into Latin was Marsilio Ficino who translated the thirty-six dialogues which constitute the Thrasyllan canon (1484). This particular translation was still current well over three centuries later, and in addition to his translations, Ficino provided commentary on Platonic texts which brought Plato, forms of Neoplatonism and Christianity into an engaging dialogue. Furthermore, for a secular audience, Ficino's commentary on Plato's *Symposium* (1469), which puts forward Plato's philosophy on love, was highly influential. Ficino's ideas were widely disseminated and Platonic love was explored in texts such as Baldasar Castiglione's *The Courtier*, most familiar to

English readers in its Latin guise *De curiali sive aulico libri quatuor* (1571), as opposed to Thomas Hoby's text, *The Courtyer* (1561), which is more famous in the modern day.¹⁵

Neoplatonism and its approach to Platonic love is a hugely important element of the masque genre, its philosophy inspired by the *Symposium* by Plato (427-347 BCE), which presents its reader with a series of speeches praising love.¹⁶ These speeches are given during a symposium, a convivial gathering underpinned by the consumption and mutual enjoyment of alcohol. In this sense, there is a straightforward similarity between Platonic (as opposed to Neoplatonic) approaches and some royalist narratives; homosocial bonding, wit and drinking are prized and highly prominent. It seems likely that this would contribute towards Davenant's predilection towards a purer kind of Platonism than that which he was forced to navigate at court, even if he also feels that there is a strong misogynistic undercurrent of royalism in which he has no interest. For Plato's text, love is necessary in order for a person to fully comprehend virtue, the highest form of beauty. This type of love requires an individual to shift from experiencing carnal desires to spiritual longing and ultimately, possession of knowledge. Kevin Sharpe writes 'in the *Symposium*, Plato depicted the attainment of love [...] as an ascent from a sensual appreciation of earthly beauty to a knowledge of the true form of beauty [...] Such a love brings man to the realisation of his highest self – to virtue and self-regulation'.¹⁷ This ascension, described by Socrates in the *Symposium*, is known as the 'ladder of love'.¹⁸ Ruby Blondell divides the ladder of love into eight stages, the first involving the appreciation and love of 'one body', and the final stage allowing a man (and Plato's focus is on the male sex) to 'give birth [...] to true things [...] [to be] [as] immortal as far as any mortal can be'.¹⁹ Socrates talks of love and the desire felt by both animals and humans to reproduce, partly as a desire to remain, in some small way, immortal. He suggests that a man can sail closer to immortality through 'giving birth' to the truest form of beauty and that primitive, instinctive desires then fall by the wayside. Despite the Neoplatonic insistence that Platonic love should utilise the senses to appreciate beauty, and the divine,

¹⁵ Sarah Hutton, 'Introduction to the Renaissance and seventeenth century' in *Platonism and the English Imagination* ed. by Anna Baldwin and Sarah Hutton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 67-75 (p. 69, p. 72).

¹⁶ Plato, *Symposium* trans. by Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff in *Plato, Complete Works* ed. by John M. Cooper (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1997), p. viii.

¹⁷ Kevin Sharpe, *Criticism and Compliment: The Politics of Literature in the England of Charles I*, p. 23.

¹⁸ Ruby Blondell, 'Where is Socrates on the "Ladder of Love"?' in *Plato's Symposium: Issues in Interpretation and Reception* ed. by James Lesher, Debra Nails and Frisbee Sheffield (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 2006), pp. 147-178 (p. 150, p. 152).

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 154.

in the most cerebral fashion possible, the *Symposium* is far more complex. Sensuality and sexual desire is an integral rung on the ladder of love; a man must first indulge the senses if he is to later reach a state of ultimate knowledge of true beauty. Socrates states that ‘a lover who goes about this matter [climbing the ladder of love] correctly must begin in his youth to devote himself to beautiful bodies [...] he must become a lover of all beautiful bodies’.²⁰ Despite this, the approach of seventeenth-century Platonic love was to determinedly distance itself from the sensual, and its part in human sexuality.

Henrietta Maria’s Platonic love cult was heavily promoted amongst court circles, and its ideology and promotion became deeply interwoven with the masque genre. Much has been made of Henrietta Maria’s need to craft her own brand of Neoplatonism according to how it might have resonated with her own Catholic faith, as discussed by Erica Veevers and Karen Britland.²¹ Even so, it is difficult to ascertain exactly how seriously the concept of Platonic love was taken both by the Queen herself and by the court as a whole, and I would suggest this is also something of which Davenant himself is not entirely sure. Henrietta Maria’s interest in Platonic love originated in the Paris salons, where:

[...] assemblies were generally led by outstanding women [...] and were dominated by feminine tastes [...] They existed for the sake of conversation, which was regarded as an art; learning and knowledge were valued [...] The salons brought together men and women who had a common interest in social diversion and rational discussion. Relations between the sexes were governed by an ideal of *honnête amitié*, founded on mutual respect, from which passion was excluded. Sexual attraction [...] was firmly governed by a rigid code of courtship. [...] *Précieux* groups [...] do not grow out of a surfeit of peace or an over-refined society [...] they tend to appear at times and in places where established values and ‘civilised’ standards are under threat. They are generally characterised by a desire to improve manners and refine the arts, and they are governed, at least in their inception, by strict codes of moral conduct.²²

Honnête amitié was one phase of ‘preciosite’, the ‘set of manners and literary tastes’ that had developed in France during the opening years of the seventeenth century, though it should be noted that the term was not in use until the middle of the century. It was derived from the Devout Humanism taught by St. Francois de Sales, and was ‘a standard

²⁰ Plato, *Symposium* trans. by Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff in *Plato, Complete Works*, pp. 457-505 (p. 492).

²¹ Karen Britland, *Drama at the Courts of Queen Henrietta Maria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 141-49; Erica Veevers, *Images of Love and Religion: Queen Henrietta and Court Entertainments* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 77-109; pp. 150-209.

²² Erica Veevers, *Images of Love and Religion: Queen Henrietta and Court Entertainments*, p. 13.

of virtuous yet civilised behaviour advocated for men, and particularly for women.²³ It was also given a good deal of currency in France by Honoré d'Urfé's text *L'Astrée*, and later in England in 1620 in its translated guise as the first volume of *Astrea*.²⁴ A pastoral romance, this tells the tale of a shepherd, Celadon, and his beloved, beautiful shepherdess Astrea. Her jealousy drives Celadon to leap into a river, after which he is found and cared for by nymphs of the forest, since he is presumed dead by his loved ones. Two of the nymphs fall in love with Celadon but at the volume's close he is still pining for Astrea. The narrative is driven by virtuous forms of love and the characters themselves, endorsing Platonic ideals, as when Silvander states, 'they which love the body onely, must enclose all their loves of the body in the same tombe where it is shut up; but they that beyond this, love the spirit'.²⁵ This imagines bodily desire as highly ephemeral; it perishes as soon as the desired person expires, but affection which is 'beyond' carnal feeling is forever enduring. However, this particular statement does not condemn physical desire *per se*; it is discussing those who long for the physical 'onely', so avoids explicit condemnation of physical union. One of d'Urfé's shepherds is described by the text as 'so farre from all Love, that among [those who knew him], hee was always called the unsensible', where his disinterest is suggested to be both unwise but also symbolic of a detachment from the human senses.²⁶ *Astrea* is ultimately an endorsement of Platonic ideals, but their rejection of sensuality was problematic for many, including Davenant. It becomes a more prevalent theme in masquing culture during the Caroline era, but first we must consider the earlier masques of the Stuart period.

2.3: Stuart Masque Culture

Ben Jonson was a central figure in establishing and further developing the masque genre, his masque-writing career stretching from 1603 to 1634. The function of the masque was the promotion of harmony, and the way in which the masque harnessed the sensory experience of its audience was central to this aim. Its celebratory nature, where its

²³ Ibid., p. 21. Also quoted in Karen Britland, *Drama at the Courts of Queen Henrietta Maria*, p. 10.

²⁴ The first volume of D'Urfé's text 'appeared in 1607, the second in 1610, the third in 1619, and the fourth was published posthumously in 1627'. See Louise K. Horowitz, 'Pastoral Parenting: L'Astrée', *Studies in the History of Art*, 36 (1992) 128-135 (p. 130).

²⁵ Honoré d'Urfé, *The History of Astrea, The First Part* (London: N. Okes for Iohn Pyper, 1620), sig. Ff4v-Ggr.

²⁶ Ibid., sig. Dd1^v.

audience consisted of courtiers and the monarchs themselves, meant that its costly, beautiful sets were appropriate in appealing to the kind of pleasure and harmony desired by the highest echelons of society. The song and music of the masque was important not only in adding to the extravagant, celebratory tone of the masque, but in facilitating the dances which concluded masques and included the audience as well as the performers. The audience ended up becoming part of the performance they had just witnessed, and as such, the aural effects of the masque also worked to promote peace and happiness. Davenant's masques, as well as being innovatory, also responded to the prevailing climate within masque culture. As Jonson helped establish the genre, it is important to consider his work in terms of how it impacted upon the masque culture with which Davenant himself was later involved, and how this influenced Davenant's treatment of the senses within his masques. Since his Jonson's masque-writing career was lengthy and productive, I have chosen to examine masques from different stages spanning these decades.

Jonson's well-known early masque *The Masque of Blackness* (1605, Banqueting House) pre-dates English Neoplatonism and the subsequent shifts to reimagine or move away from such a philosophy, but it demonstrates that the masque, for all its grounding in courtly etiquette, was capable of pursuing a certain kind of cautious transgression.²⁷ Queen Anne insisted upon a performance which would enable her along with her ladies to appear as black Ethiopian women. Butler writes of the 'disparaging remarks' concerning the disguises of the women, and of the 'distaste' expressed by Sir Dudley Carleton concerning the danger of kissing the Queen's hand when she was covered in dark cosmetics that could have transferred to one's lips.²⁸ Barbara Ravelhofer states that ultimately, a scandal occurred due to the combination of the women's make-up and bared arms, and the fact that Queen Anne was wearing both a mask and had a painted face.²⁹ Thus, Jonson had to negotiate this desire regarding character as tactfully as possible, and crafted a masque which sought to quell anxiety surrounding the identity of and relationship between England, Wales and Scotland through a 'miraculous discovery of the British name'.³⁰ The father of the women in the masque informs Jonson's audience that they envy a paler sort of beauty and live with 'blacke dispaire', as if the colour of their

²⁷ Martin Butler, *The Stuart Court Masque and Political Culture*, p. 361

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 110; p. 115.

²⁹ Barbara Ravelhofer, *The Early Stuart Masque: Dance, Costume and Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 173; p. 175.

³⁰ Martin Butler, *The Stuart Court Masque and Political Culture*, pp. 110-111.

skin reflects their inner misery, in much the same way the women of the later Platonic love cult possess a beauty indicative of their inner virtue. Niger states that they have visited three other countries in search of a way to transform their skin but to no avail. The goddess Ethiopia appears to the women of the masque to tell them that it is in Britain where they can bid farewell to their dark skin. Notably though, the masque concludes without the women losing their deep colouring; importantly, early masques such as this were focused upon the quest narrative, as opposed to conflict and its resolution.³¹ The actual performance of magical transformations also became more acceptable in future years. Thus, at the time of its staging, the audience is unlikely to have felt that the text lacked an adequate coda.³² Butler writes:

As Ethiopians who longed to be British and British ladies wearing opulent dress but estranged in their looks, the masquers were suspended between categories, neither exactly black nor white but uncomfortably hybridised. In mixing black with white [...] *The Masque of Blackness* staged a ritual which evoked anxieties about boundaries and the likelihood of contamination; fears about a regression to barbarism were projected onto outsiders, but aroused as well as assuaged. By bringing the normal and the estranged into alarming proximity, it risked the pollution of purer forms.³³

Jonson unites ‘normal’ in the form of a white, British complexion, with the ‘estranged’ black skin of Ethiopia, but it was not unusual for masques to be transgressive or even slightly shocking.

At the forefront of Jonson’s mind was his desire to privilege his dialogue above all else. Years later, by 1631, Jonson feared that the masque was in danger of becoming nothing more than spectacle, and this may have caused problems with Inigo Jones, the former believing that poetry underpinned a masque’s meaning and that its costumes and scenery were entirely superficial. Jones believed the opposite, and their disagreement regarding the masque as either drama or simply spectacle drove the men apart. Jonson’s bitterness towards his ex-collaborator was such that it even inspired vitriolic poetry.³⁴ In the 1630s, Davenant would instead work with Jones, as part of a relationship which was far more harmonious. In 1605, instead of being immersed in an established seventeenth-century masque genre, Jonson and Jones were still looking to craft performances that

³¹ Ibid., p. 31.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid., p. 115.

³⁴ Vaughan Hart, *Inigo Jones: The Architect of Kings* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2011), p. 5; Martin Butler, *The Stuart Court Masque and Political Culture*, p.3; Ian Donaldson, *Ben Jonson: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 423; David Norbrook, *Poetry and Politics in the English Renaissance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 234.

differed markedly from those of Elizabeth I's reign. Although the use of halls and raised stages was not new, 'houses and machines' were previously either wheeled onto stage when required or simply left to exist simultaneously as texts shifted from scene to scene. For this masque, Jones placed his settings behind a proscenium arch and arranged them 'within the scene of perspective', enabling a careful manipulation of the audience's visual experience which had not been done beforehand.³⁵

As the masque genre continued to develop, thirteen years later Jonson's *Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue* (1618, Enfield and Theobalds, and the Banqueting House) marked the momentous occasion of Prince Charles's first appearance as chief masquer, and as the title suggests, attempts to liberate pleasure and virtue from their sites as diametrically opposed states of being.³⁶ This masque's interest in indulgence and restraint, excess and discipline was particularly apt since the previous year had seen debt at an unprecedented level, but James I's spending had been lavish all the same.³⁷ The masque's topicality did not result in appeal however, although it won a favourable account from Orazio Bursino, chaplain to the Venetian Embassy, who described it as having been 'prepared with extraordinary care and elegance'; this works to demonstrate the differences between English masque-writing and that on the continent, where 'changeable scenery' and 'perspective settings' were being used more readily but could still be a little confusing for Jonson's audience. It is possible this was also the case for spectators witnessing earlier works including *The Masque of Blackness*.³⁸

Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue features Hercules, who must choose between Virtue and Pleasure, at least in Xenophon's narrative, but Jonson allows his masquers to 'walk with Pleasure', as long as they refuse to 'dwell'.³⁹ The masque's use of the term 'walk' suggests that temporarily embracing certain joys need not be detrimental since it is part of an individual's journey through life, but fully inhabiting a lifestyle of pleasure is to be avoided. Thus, the masque makes room for misrule via revellers and pygmies, but features a 'hill of knowledge' and the people of the playworld are led by 'Daedalus the wise'.⁴⁰ The masque ends with the masquers returning to this hill after previously

³⁵ Erica Veevers, *Images of Love and Religion: Queen Henrietta Maria and Court Entertainments*, p. 155.

³⁶ Martin Butler, *The Stuart Court Masque and Political Culture*, p. 365.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 231.

³⁸ Stephen Orgel and Roy Strong, *Inigo Jones: The Theatre of the Stuart Court*, 2 vols (London: Sotheby Parke Bernet and Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973), I, p. 23.

³⁹ Ben Jonson, *Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue* in Ben Jonson, *The Workes of Benjamin Jonson* (London, Printed for S.N., 1641), sig. E3^r.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, sig. E1^v; sig. E2^f.

descending from it earlier in the performance.⁴¹ Jonson brings knowledge and pleasure shoulder to shoulder; rather than presenting the latter as wholly dangerous, he is more concerned with the value of restraint and moderation in relation to the sensory experience.⁴² There is an obvious similarity with Davenant, then, but the latter's work differs considerably in that he had to negotiate the principles propounded by the Platonic love cult. Jonson's masque is interested in the virtues of pleasure, but even more than this it is preoccupied by its discipline. Comus is a Bacchic figure, described as the 'god of the belly', a walking celebration of excessive consumption, but he is thoroughly denounced by Hercules who sneers at his 'vicious hospitality'.⁴³ This phrase is oxymoronic, operating to expose the sinister underlying nature of hospitality as a potentially corrupting force. By chastising Comus, the masque successfully condemns wasteful, decadent pleasures, even if this is slightly tempered by such an assertion being made through the masque genre itself which was underpinned by its interest in extravagant display.⁴⁴

Such extravagant performances would return, but after the death of King James in March of 1625, court festival almost disappeared, with masques being staged only sporadically in the early years of Charles I's reign.⁴⁵ However, at the beginning of the new decade, the masque reinvented itself as a 'triumph', where Charles could parade his loyal court in their roles as masquers and where its chief aim was to declare the king the ultimate leader.⁴⁶ Ben Jonson writes in *Love's Triumph Through Callipolis* (1631, Banqueting House) of masques as 'the donatives of great princes to their people', and Thomas Carew's Latin epigraph to *Coelum Britannicum* (1633) translates as 'I have no skill to write, but Caesar has commanded me; well, I will have it'.⁴⁷ Thus, the monarch is emphasised as both the 'sponsor' and 'originator' of the masque, and his communication with his audience operates in one direction only, as part of a presentation given by him, as opposed to one which he must witness as a spectator. Caroline masques were keen to

⁴¹ Ibid., sig. E2^r.

⁴² Martin Butler, *The Stuart Court Masque and Political Culture*, p. 231.

⁴³ Ben Jonson, *Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue*, sig. D4^v.

⁴⁴ Martin Butler, *The Stuart Court Masque and Political Culture*, p. 235

⁴⁵ See Martin Butler's calendar of masques 1603-1641 in Martin Butler, *The Stuart Court Masque and Political Culture*, pp. 358-376.

⁴⁶ Jenny Wormald, 'James VI and I', *ODNB*; Martin Butler, *The Stuart Court Masque and Political Culture*, p. 275; p. 287. Caroline masques which refer to 'triumph' in their titles include: *Love's Triumph Through Callipolis*, *Albion's Triumph*, *The Triumph of Peace* and Davenant's *The Triumphs of the Prince d'Amour* and *Britannia Triumphans*. See Martin Butler, *The Stuart Court Masque and Political Culture*, p. 287.

⁴⁷ Ben Jonson, *Love's Triumph Through Callipolis*, (London: Printed by I.N. for Thomas Walkley, 1630), sig. A2^r; Thomas Carew, *Coelum Britannicum* (London: Printed for Thomas Walkey, 1633), sig. A1^r. Quoted in Martin Butler, *The Stuart Court Masque and Political Culture*, p. 288.

acclaim the king, and were largely devoid of event.⁴⁸ The structure of the masque also shifted to one which embraced multiple, sometimes lengthy episodes, and numerous antimasques could feature in any one text, culminating in the twenty which were included in Davenant's *Salmacida Spolia* (1640).⁴⁹ Caroline masques were also not only prodigiously more expensive than their Jacobean predecessors, but more elaborate, greater in number, and their dramatic speech more prominent, even if they did end in the usual neat, harmonious manner.⁵⁰

Both of Jonson's masques of this era have been neglected by critics, but alongside *Chloridia* (22 February 1631, Banqueting House), *Love's Triumph Through Callipolis* (9 January 1631, Banqueting House), is one of the first Caroline masques to have survived and one that constituted a 'seminal event' in its contribution towards shaping the Caroline masque form.⁵¹ Additionally, and again much like *Chloridia*, its importance in crafting the Caroline masque's approach to Henrietta Maria's cult of Platonic love cannot be underestimated. *Love's Triumph* was performed prominently at Whitehall, rather than at Somerset House, carving out a central space for the queen and her consort within the culture of theatrical display.⁵² Butler writes of the way in which the text melded together 'imperial power, erotic possession, and British exceptionalism', and that this introduction of new themes resulted in a move away from Jacobean norms, and was central to the development of the Caroline masque.⁵³ I would suggest that Davenant was influenced by both of the masques above in terms of theme, but is far more sceptical in his approach to seventeenth-century Platonic love. *Love's Triumph* focuses upon the relationship between Henrietta Maria's role as Beauty and Charles as Love, and the sensual, sexually promiscuous lovers who have infiltrated the edges of the city of Callipolis, a settlement of goodness and virtuous beauty. The text features little in the way of action, other than the re-establishment of harmony by the summoning of fifteen Neoplatonic lovers, who are directed by Amphitrite, Euclia and Euphemus. The masque begins with the argument, declared by Euphemus, who states that 'certaine Sectaries, or deprau'd Louers' have 'crept' into the 'skirtes of Callipolis'.⁵⁴ The masque's audience will immediately

⁴⁸ Martin Butler, *The Stuart Court Masque and Political Culture*, pp. 287-288.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 287.

⁵⁰ Lewalski, Barbara, K., 'Milton's *Comus* and the Politics of Masquing' in *The Politics of the Stuart Court Masque* ed. by David Bevington and Peter Holbrook (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 296-320 (p. 296).

⁵¹ Martin Butler, *The Stuart Court Masque and Political Culture*, p. 289; p. 371.

⁵² Karen Britland, *Drama at the Courts of Queen Henrietta Maria*, p. 60.

⁵³ Martin Butler, *The Stuart Court Masque and Political Culture*, p. 289.

⁵⁴ Ben Jonson, *Love's Triumph Through Callipolis*, sig. A2^v.

understand that these individuals do not endorse the Platonic love cult so favoured by the queen, or even the chaste love of the royal marriage, since they are ‘deprau’d’. The situating of these lovers on the ‘skirtes’ of the city emphasises the issue as one which is not internal but precipitated by an external threat; the city is one of purity which has now been contaminated by ‘Sectaries’, a term suggesting zealousness on behalf of those who perpetrate such depravity.

The concern regarding the problematic nature of those inhabiting the edges of the city in the play was echoed in contemporary reality by Charles’s attempts to encourage the nobility to repopulate their country estates and renew traditional methods of government.⁵⁵ At this time, control of London was an important political issue and Charles sought to limit further building and created specifications to be followed for any new construction, policed through searches and prosecutions by Star Chamber. Charles included the suburbs in his new legislation in 1626, bringing ‘labourers, aliens and vagrants’ under his jurisdiction.⁵⁶ Jonson, then, sought to incorporate political and social anxiety into his treatment of seventeenth-century Platonic love. Henrietta Maria’s version of Platonic love is treated as morally preferable to other forms since the invaders of Callipolis ‘neyther knew the name, or nature of love rightly’, and thus, the masque suggests that Platonic love possesses the power to aid in societal reform and the maintaining of order.⁵⁷ Further emphasising Callipolis’s problems as driven by perpetrators outside of the settlement, the invading lovers are described as having ‘confus’d affections’ and the antimasquers consequently represent ‘the foure prime European nations’.⁵⁸ Their desire is not only irrational, but is presented as distinctly foreign; at court, there was a distinct ambivalence felt towards Europe after the ending of a five year war with Spain, and all overseas ambassadors were refused invitations to *Love’s Triumph*. The new form of Platonic love is portrayed as an endeavour to be protected from malign influence, as Callipolis needs to be protected from the depraved lovers, and as Charles wanted to protect London from individuals whom he felt could incite disorder.

Jonson further condemns the new residents of the text’s city as a ‘sensuall schoole/ Of lust’, who are ‘Meere cattell, and not men’, highlighting the sensuality of the non-Platonic lovers who must be removed from Callipolis and condemning it with the

⁵⁵ Karen Britland, *Drama at the Courts of Queen Henrietta Maria*, p. 67.

⁵⁶ Martin Butler, *The Stuart Court Masque and Political Culture*, p. 291.

⁵⁷ Ben Jonson, *Love’s Triumph Through Callipolis*, sig. A2^v.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

term ‘lust’, which demonstrates the immorality the text associates with such people.⁵⁹ The masque describes these individuals as being without ‘loves’ who instead exist as ‘slaves to sense’, setting up a dichotomy consisting of cerebral, Neoplatonic lovers and those who enjoy mere carnal interactions with other humans, devoid of love.⁶⁰ There is no middle ground here, other than that which exists between Charles and Henrietta Maria in the form of their chaste marriage, since the ‘noble appetite’ is more than acceptable.⁶¹ Other forms of relationship between those other than the monarchs, which may involve love, sensuality, and sexuality, are simply not recognised. The singing Euphemus states that ‘love is the right affection of the minde’, shrinking the horizons of desire into an interest of a cerebral nature only, and one which is simply, ‘right’.⁶² However, Butler writes of the importance of sensuality and virility within the masque in its evocation of the myth of Theseus and the minotaur, where Charles is cast as the heroic Theseus, who must remove the depraved lovers from ‘the labyrinth of love’ which is Callipolis.⁶³ Veevers discusses the evocation of sensuality within the description of religious ritual, and it is this ‘ceremony of purification’ which leads to the meeting of the king and queen, representing Love and Beauty.⁶⁴ These gestures towards a positive treatment of the human senses are undermined, though, by the text’s more overt endorsement of the queen’s new love cult, in contrast to Davenant’s more critical approach later in the decade.

Love’s Triumph was followed by the Shrovetide production, *Chloridia*, performed at Whitehall, the queen’s counterpart to Charles’s earlier masque, and the final project involving both Ben Jonson and Inigo Jones, which gave rise to their infamous quarrel and enabled Davenant’s contribution to future masques.⁶⁵ Much like the other half of this masque pairing, *Chloridia* played an integral part in shaping the Caroline masque genre. Jonson bases his text on Ovid’s myth, with the queen representing Chloris, who brings together the opposing powers of the earth and of heaven by causing the earth to reside in a delightful, perpetual spring, and she is forever associated with this vernal period in nature’s calendar. The antimasques feature Jealousy, Disdain, Fear and Dissimulation,

⁵⁹ Ibid., sig. A4^r.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid., sig. A3^r.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Martin Butler, *The Stuart Court Masque and Political Culture*, p. 293; Ben Jonson, *Love’s Triumph Through Callipolis*, sig. A4^r.

⁶⁴ Erica Veevers, *Images of Love and Religion: Queen Henrietta and Court Entertainments*, p. 175.

⁶⁵ Martin Butler, *The Stuart Court Masque and Political Culture*, p. 372; Karen Britland, *Drama at the Courts of Queen Henrietta Maria*, p. 74.

whom Cupid has brought back from hell in order to ‘trouble the Gods’.⁶⁶ A storm takes place, which is then quelled by Juno, and Chloris is once again safe in her beautiful bower. Karen Britland writes of how the text ‘provides a striking example of the emergent royal iconography that presented Charles and Henrietta Maria’s union as chaste, fecund and beneficial for the nation’.⁶⁷ The masque is less overt in its interest in Platonic love than its predecessor, *Love’s Triumph*, but it is keen to avoid focusing upon sensuality and to emphasise the queen in her role as Chloris as not simply chaste, but as virginal, showing her in settings emblematic of the Virgin Mary.⁶⁸ Chloris is associated with ‘garlands, and all sorts of fragrant flowers’ and ‘bowre[s]’.⁶⁹ These settings are not unique to the queen, but formed part of existing imagery used upon the stage to present female virtue.⁷⁰ By portraying Henrietta Maria’s role in this way, she was made beautiful, but entirely unthreatening to her husband’s role as king, since Chloris’s function is mainly to reprimand ‘that rebel child, Cupid’.⁷¹ Furthermore, the masque signalled its commitment and approval of her contemporary form of Platonic love, which embraced a lifestyle of celibacy for its followers. As the first of the queen’s masques, Jonson’s work demonstrated the fashion in which a space could be carved out for the queen, to express ‘a political position that was potentially different from the king’, but perhaps more significantly in this case, it gave her the opportunity to further explore and promote her version of Platonic love.⁷² As Davenant’s masques were also patronised by the queen, they too were ostensibly produced under a similar remit, although Davenant had rather different ideas about Neoplatonic love than the queen herself, as shown by his work.

Demonstrating the influence of Henrietta Maria’s sponsorship and her feminocentric Platonic love cult, a masque of the following year was a landmark in theatre history since it used performers whose genders matched those of their characters. On 14 February 1632 Aurelian Townshend’s *Tempe Restored*, a collaboration with Inigo Jones, was performed in the Banqueting House at Whitehall. Prior to this, all masques had involved cross-dressing, and women would only dance silently in the main masque narrative. In the antimasques, female roles would be spoken by boys or male

⁶⁶ Ben Jonson, *Chloridia* (London: Printed for Thomas Walkley, 1630), sig. B1^v.

⁶⁷ Karen Britland, *Drama at the Courts of Queen Henrietta Maria*, p. 74.

⁶⁸ Erica Veevers, *Images of Love and Religion: Queen Henrietta and Court Entertainments*, pp. 126-127.

⁶⁹ Ben Jonson, *Chloridia*, sig. B2^v.

⁷⁰ Erica Veevers, *Images of Love and Religion: Queen Henrietta and Court Entertainments*, p. 122.

⁷¹ Martin Butler, *The Stuart Court Masque and Political Culture*, p. 145.

⁷² Karen Britland, *Drama at the Courts of Queen Henrietta Maria*, p. 88.

professionals.⁷³ It was also significant in its naming of women other than the chief female masquers; ‘Madam Coniacke’ is named as Circe and ‘Mistress Shepherd’ as Harmony.⁷⁴ The masque begins with a young man, played by Thomas Killigrew, who has been turned into a lion, escaping the clutches of Circe, who is associated with sensuality and its baser elements. Circe pursues her prey but is unable to regain him, and she then initiates a series of anti-masques, including ‘Indians, and Barbarians, who naturally are bestiall, and others which are voluntaries, and but halfe transformed into beastes’.⁷⁵ Following this, Harmony and her ‘Beams and Influences of Constellations’ take to the stage to announce the arrival of ‘Divine Beautie’, played by Henrietta Maria.⁷⁶ It is her task to reform the masque’s excesses and promote a true form of love, where Cupid is ‘never blind’. Love then, in the realms of Neoplatonism, represents a higher form than that embraced by those outside its influence, where Cupid is ordinarily blind. This is notable even in its slightly topsy-turvy nature; it seems a little bizarre that the Cupid of Platonic love should be so reliant on his ability to indulge his sense of vision, given that the Platonic love cult was so opposed to any kind of reliance on or pleasure being taken in the sensory experience, at least not simply for the sake of such pleasure.

Unexpectedly however, the masque does not close with the queen’s purging of the masque world, but allows Circe to return to the stage, who after being briefly attacked, voluntarily surrenders her powers to the royal couple. Townshend’s text is anything but straightforward, then, and is striking in its unwillingness to cast the senses as wholly or inherently problematic; Inigo Jones, responsible for the allegory, writes in the printed text that Circe, symbolic of primitive sensuality, ‘figures desire in general, the which hath power on all living Creatures, and being mixt of the Divine and Sensible, hath divers effects, Leading some to Vertue, and others to Vice’.⁷⁷ For this masque, senses are as equally able to corrupt as they are to lead individuals to live virtuously, echoing Davenant’s earlier approach to human vision. Jones also states that Circe is of ‘extraordinary Beauty’, lays claim to a ‘sweetnesse’ of ‘voyce’ and consequently ‘shewes that desire is moved either by sight or hearing, to loue Vertue, or the contrary’.⁷⁸ Her appealing outward appearance and mellifluous voice do not reflect inner goodness, and

⁷³ Martin Butler, *The Stuart Court Masque and Political Culture*, p. 372; pp. 156-7.

⁷⁴ Aurelian Townshend, *Tempe Restored* (London: Printed by A.M. for Robert Allet and George Bakek 1632), sig. A4v; sig. A5v.

⁷⁵ Aurelian Townshend, *Tempe Restored*, sig. A5r.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, sig. B2r; sig. B2v.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, sig. C2r.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

she claims that in terms of charming her targets, it is ‘consent that makes the perfect slave’.⁷⁹ Butler suggests that such consent would only result due to ‘intellectual shortcomings’, but this willing acceptance of succumbing to desire is more fruitfully viewed if we consider the power of the sensory experience in engaging and persuading the mind.⁸⁰ The text endorses the influence of the senses in persuading humankind to pursue morally sound or sinful lives.

Jones’s allegory also claims furthermore that ‘desire cannot be moved without appearance of Beauty, either true or false’.⁸¹ Here Jones questions the validity of beauty, implying that it is not always to be trusted, but that it never fails to have an effect upon an individual’s desire. The allegory is muddled, however, in that the man who flees from Circe’s affections is described as ‘at last by the power of reason persuaded to flye from those sensuall desires, which had formerly corrupted his Iudgement’, suggesting that ‘reason’ is superior in its reach than the sensory, and that the senses can easily cloud one’s rational thought. It is also stated that ‘sensuall desire makes men loose their Vertue and Valour’; losing valour suggests a level of emasculation, though this sort of claim would have been levelled by some royalists at the Platonic love cult. In what sounds very much like an endorsement of Neoplatonism, the masque’s allegory also insists ‘making men onely a mind vsing the body and affections as instruments; which being his true perfection, brings him to all the happinesse which can bee inioyed here below’.⁸² The embracing of the ‘mind’ alone is not just advertised as a route to virtue here either, but as a road to abundant ‘happinesse’. *Tempe Restored* then, is certainly ambiguous in its approach to the value of sensory experience, but this may well have been part of its strategy to express a certain disdain for Platonic love while simultaneously managing to satisfy its sponsor and the varying opinions of its audience. In its wariness of seventeenth-century Platonic love, it is similar to Davenant’s texts, although somewhat less overt. Sharpe writes that the theme of *Tempe Restored* is ‘love’s triumph over desire’, but this is destabilised, and perilously so, by the King and Queen’s reliance on Circe voluntarily sacrificing her influence. *Tempe Restored*, and its appearance so close to Davenant’s own masque-writing career are vital to consider as part of this discussion due to its foregrounding of the tensions between the mind and reason, and the senses and ‘base’ types of desire.

⁷⁹ Ibid. sig. A4r.

⁸⁰ Martin Butler, *The Stuart Court Masque and Political Culture*, p. 159.

⁸¹ Aurelian Townshend, *Tempe Restored*, sig. C2r.

⁸² Ibid., sig. C2^r-C3^r.

Another masque very much preoccupied with sensuality and Neoplatonism, even more so than *Tempe Restored*, is Thomas Carew's *Coelum Britannicum*. This was first performed at Whitehall on 18 February 1634, at the Banqueting House, and was quite probably the most elaborate masque of all, famous for the spectacular scene in which a large mountain appears to grow out of the ground and benefitting from some of Inigo Jones's most striking designs.⁸³ Like many Caroline masques, little actually happens in Carew's text, other than Charles arriving and being acclaimed.⁸⁴ The masque functions as a celebration of the chaste but procreative and pleasurable nature of Charles and Henrietta Maria's marriage; it does not condemn sensual desire and enjoyment, but avoids condemning Platonic love. It achieves this by instead heaping praise upon the Caroline marriage by casting it as an ideal so perfect that even Jove seeks to reform the ways of the gods of Olympus based upon this very model. Momus, a god banished from the heavens, is quick to ridicule Jove's reforms, quite obviously similar to the real-life changes made by Charles, and takes delight in listing the sexual transgressions of the gods, amused by the fact that now, for instance 'the gods must keepe no Pages, nor Groomes of their Chamber under the age of 25': their sexual appetite for attractive youths can flourish no longer.⁸⁵ Momus also claims 'Venus hath confest all her adulteries, and is received to grace by her husband', where this is not only problematic because a female god has strayed from her marriage partner, but that he lets such a humiliation pass and accepts his wife into the fold once again.⁸⁶ Despite its promotion of chaste love, this masque spends considerable energy upon more hedonistic and 'deviant' expressions of sexuality. Even when considering love in marriage, the portmanteau 'Carlomaria', a blending of the royal couple's names, is emblazoned over a godly bedroom door, emphasising the inseparable and exclusive nature of the monarchs in all manners, but placing especial emphasis on their sexual monogamy. Thus, there is a distinct undermining of the new form of Platonic love, yet the play is able to do this since it is made thoroughly agreeable by its hyperbolic endorsement of the Caroline matrimonial union. This careful undermining of Platonic love may have influenced Davenant, showing him that there was room to do more than just endorse the queen's views. The Carlomaria motif is dangerous however, in that it echoes Plato's own discussion of early humans as hermaphrodites. Similarly, Charles and

⁸³ Martin Butler, *The Stuart Court Masque and Political Culture*, p. 310; p. 317; p. 373; Thomas Carew, *Coelum Britannicum*, sig. E1^v.

⁸⁴ Martin Butler, *The Stuart Court Masque and Political Culture*, p. 287.

⁸⁵ Thomas Carew, *Coelum Britannicum*, sig. B4^v.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

Henrietta Maria are like two halves of the ideal whole, although this risks the King's emasculation and could imply that the effeminising impact of the Platonic love cult is too readily accepted by the monarch.⁸⁷

Importantly though for Carew, the stability of the nation is rooted not simply in the intellectual understanding shared by the king and queen, but in their sexual compatibility, and not just in terms of their ability to produce offspring. The pair are able to indulge their senses and sexuality without the threat of sin or guilt, since they reside in Edenic 'Hesperian bowers, whose faire trees beare/ Rich golden fruit' reflective of their own fertility, but 'yet no Dragon neare' to reinforce the idea that such pleasure is neither threatening nor morally dangerous.⁸⁸ Yet, despite this glorifying of chastity, Carew himself played the mocking Momus, whose remarks can verge on scandalous; he asserts that Jove's reforms, and by association those of Charles, are 'too strict to be observed long', as if more severe levels of restraint can only survive on a temporary basis.⁸⁹ The only kind of discipline Carew presents in a truly positive light is the strictly exclusive nature of the king and queen's marriage and Charles's ability to focus his desires solely upon his beautiful wife. The text sees a certain kind of sensuality as absolutely integral in maintaining state peace and success. Carew's text is interested in the joys of sensuality, but it does not seek to promote the intellect's part in sensual enjoyment. Its interest in sensuality may have functioned to show Davenant that this was an acceptable theme, if dealt with carefully. Thus, of the masques I have discussed so far, *Coelum Britannicum* is the most forthright in its wariness of Platonic love, although its spectacular scenery may have aided in the overall effect of obscuring its harsher criticisms and to its advantage, given its more subversive criticism of state rule and court culture. This is not to say that the play is definitively more spectacle than it is poetry; its main masquers are preceded by over one thousand lines of dialogue, so such an argument is hardly convincing.

Being a very different type of performance to those have I discussed, Milton's *A Masque presented at Ludlow Castle* is important to consider alongside the masques above and Davenant's work for a number of reasons, one of these being its unusual setting. The masque was not performed at Whitehall, but was staged in the great hall of Ludlow Castle on the Welsh border on 29 September 1634, for the Earl of Bridgewater. This contributed to the text's capacity for subverting established masque conventions, as it was to a large

⁸⁷ Martin Butler, *The Stuart Court Masque and Political Culture*, p. 155.

⁸⁸ Thomas Carew, *Coelum Britannicum*, sig. E2^v.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, sig. B4^v.

extent free from the semiotics of the environment belonging to metropolitan court culture. Masques at Whitehall involved large swathes of the aristocracy, but here the performance is far more family-orientated and three of its four primary actors are children.⁹⁰ *Comus*, as it came to be known in the eighteenth century, flaunts masque convention, but this does not mean that its contribution to the genre is of lesser value; it is illuminating in its response to and reshaping of the genre, and most significantly for my purposes, its treatment of Neoplatonic ideals and sensory pleasure. This masque is also intriguing in its rejection of a type of visual spectacle that reached its height in the Caroline era, where masques were both considerably more expensive and more elaborate than their Jacobean counterparts.⁹¹ Instead, Milton assigns his characters lengthier dialogue than previously seen, and the dances are performed only after the resolution of conflict, causing *Comus* to appear to be a mixture of play and masque.⁹² Nevertheless, Milton clearly saw his work as belonging to the masque genre, given the use of the term in its original title, and it fits neatly into the broad definition of ‘masque’ discussed earlier. Stephen Orgel describes *Comus* as ‘a very scaled down version of the form’, but it is more accurate to see it as a reimagining of the masque rather than a depleted version of one.⁹³

Comus begins with two brothers and their sibling, the Lady, lost journeying through the forest, and soon the two males stray from the latter as they search for food. The Lady is left unaccompanied and vulnerable to the predatory behaviour of Comus, disguised as a shepherd, who, despite being Milton’s villain, is appealingly young and ‘elegant’, so much so he is able to convince the Lady to follow him.⁹⁴ She is then captured, surrounded by his animal-headed followers and stuck fast by his magical powers to a chair. While the Lady has been abandoned, her brothers encounter the Attendant Spirit who warns them of the dangerous Comus. The Attendant Spirit is, much like his villainous counterpart, also clothed in shepherd’s apparel, suggesting that outward appearance can offer no indicator of an individual’s worth, rather unlike Neoplatonic ideas of outer beauty reflecting inner virtue.⁹⁵ Furthermore, even though Milton’s Lady is beautiful, she is not immune to the wily charisma of Comus. As the brothers remain lost, Comus plies the Lady with powerful rhetoric but she responds with her own powerful verbal argument. However, this, combined with the attempts of her brothers, is not

⁹⁰ Stephen Orgel, ‘The Case for Comus’, pp. 1-2.

⁹¹ Barbara, K. Lewalski, ‘Milton’s Comus and the Politics of Masquing’, p. 296.

⁹² Martin Butler, *The Stuart Court Masque and Political Culture*, p. 354.

⁹³ Stephen Orgel, ‘The Case for Comus’, p. 1.

⁹⁴ Martin Butler, *The Stuart Court Masque and Political Culture*, p. 232.

⁹⁵ Stephen Orgel, ‘The Case for Comus’, p. 4.

enough to save her; she is eventually released by the magic of Sabrina, a chaste nymph, summoned by the Attendant Spirit. Ultimately, the Lady is freed due to her virtuous chastity, but Milton's choice to provide her with agency, in the form of her ability to present a reasonable argument, allows him to place value upon her intellect working in conjunction with her sexual and sensual restraint. She insists 'thou canst not touch the freedome of my mynde/ with all thy charms, although this corporall rind/ thou hast immanacl'd'.⁹⁶ The text is keen to emphasise the sacred sphere of the individual's cognitive world, but also acknowledges the need to be aware of the material body; the Lady's mind may be able to elude harm but she must strive to protect her now vulnerable bodily form. In this way, the masque places equal value upon the mind and the experience of the material body, as Davenant does when navigating the theme of Platonic love.

In addition to being given a large amount of persuasive, articulate dialogue, the Lady of *Comus* does not simply cling helplessly to chastity and, instead, defends her position with a philosophy operating as an alternative to Comus's relentless pleasure-seeking. She insists 'that w^{ch} is not good, is not delitious / to a wel-govern'd and wise appetite', condemning the overt consumption of the traditional masque form and of aristocratic culture more broadly.⁹⁷ The text advocates maintaining an 'appetite', but pursuing one which thrives on moderation. Certainly, the importance of maintaining chastity was not lost on the Bridgewater family; the Earl of Bridgewater's sister, Anne Stanley Brydges, 2nd Countess of Castlehaven, had been married to the 2nd Earl of Castlehaven, who stood trial and was beheaded in 1631 as the central figure in what became a notorious series of criminal sex cases, which included his involvement in the rape of his own wife. The Earl and one of his servants faced two accusations of sodomy, and both the Earl of Castlehaven and the Countess's footman were accused of rape. The footman was believed to have committed the act itself, but the Earl was said to have provided assistance. As such, both men were legally equally culpable, and in the end all three men were found guilty of their crimes and executed, although as explored by Cynthia B. Herrup's study, it is impossible to know definitively whether they committed the crimes for which they were charged. Importantly, the trial raised many questions

⁹⁶ *A Maske, the Bridgewater manuscript (BMS)* transcribed in *John Milton, A Maske: The Earlier Versions* ed. by S.E. Sprott (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1973) p. 137. There are five versions of Milton's play available to us but I quote from the BMS as it probably bears most similarity to the performance itself. See p. 17. See also Bonnie Lander Johnson's comparison of different versions in *Chastity in Early Stuart Literature and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 138-171, especially pp. 154-155.

⁹⁷ *A Maske, the Bridgewater manuscript (BMS)*, p. 141.

surrounding societal, familial and patriarchal governance, causing Milton's exploration of sensory restraint to appear particularly apt.⁹⁸

Comus strays into more unusual territory however, not with its attitude to a disciplined appetite, but with its presentation of a woman, the Lady, capable of independent thought and expression. Furthermore, women indulging in lengthy speeches was unusual and a breach of masque decorum, even if it had been done before in masques such as *Tempe Restored*. Alice Egerton was only fifteen, which makes her lengthy dialogue all the more surprising.⁹⁹ Milton's masque was also staged in the wake of William Prynne's *Histrion-mastix* (1633) and its railing against not simply acting, but women on the stage. Shortly after the production of Walter Montague's masque, *The Shepherd's Paradise*, which was performed during the Christmas season of 1632/3 and featured Henrietta Maria, Prynne's text was published condemning actresses as 'notorious whores'. He was found guilty of sedition and had his ears 'lightly cropped'.¹⁰⁰ More significant than this though, was that 'Cavalier' writers and a particular kind of royalist had certain ideas about what it was women were for, and thinking did not play any part in these notions. Milton is determined to the royalist thinking pervading aristocratic echelons of society and court culture.

2.4: Davenant's Masquing Career

Shortly before Davenant began his masquing career, and while it was in its early days, he produced two plays which act as pre-cursors to his masques in that they explore similar themes, although not necessarily in the same depth. *Love and Honour* was licensed 20 November 1634 and *The Platonick Lovers* was licensed 16 November 1635, and both were performed at Blackfriars.¹⁰¹ The former is a tragicomedy, its young women models of virtue not dissimilar to the Neoplatonic ideal endorsed by Henrietta Maria, but it is in *The Platonick Lovers* where Davenant's interest in the value of both the bodily, sensory

⁹⁸ See Cynthia B. Herrup, *A House in Gross Disorder: Sex, Law and the 2nd Earl of Castlehaven* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 2; p. 3; p. 12; pp. 94-5; p. 216.

⁹⁹ Karen Britland, *Drama at the Courts of Queen Henrietta Maria*, p. 96; Martin Butler, *The Stuart Court Masque and Political Culture*, p. 354.

¹⁰⁰ Karen Britland, *Drama at the Courts of Queen Henrietta Maria*, pp. 111-113; Erica Veevers, *Images of Love and Religion: Queen Henrietta Maria and court entertainments*, p. 28, William Lamont, 'Prynne, William', *ODNB*.

¹⁰¹ Gerald Eades Bentley, *The Jacobean and Caroline Stage: Dramatic Companies and Players*, pp. 119.

experience and intellectual pleasures begins to reveal itself. Billed as a tragicomedy and set in Sicily, *The Platonick Lovers* examines the behaviour of two courting couples where one couple, Theander and Eurithea, attempt to embrace Neoplatonic love, and the other pair, Phylomont and Ariola, wish to develop a physical relationship. The sexuality of two other characters is also explored, and includes that of Fredeline, who seeks sexual gratification through intercourse with Eurithea after she is married, and Gridonell, a ‘young soldier’ who has been kept from having any contact with women and as a result is aroused by the mere sight of any female human.¹⁰² Theander is tricked into consuming an elixir to make him highly amorous, and the play concludes with both pairs of characters getting wed with the intention of consummating their marriages. While this is a typical comic ending, it does not bode at all well for the Caroline ideals of Neoplatonism. For Davenant, this kind of love is neither suited to humankind nor is it pleasurable, and he jokes in the text’s epilogue that ‘since not these two long houres amongst you all/Hee can find one will prove Platonicall’.¹⁰³ The play’s conclusion suggests that the Neoplatonic ideal is not compatible with the behaviour of most men and women, and that sensuality in its sexual form must be combined with companionship as part of married life.¹⁰⁴

Theander and Eurithea are described as lovers of a ‘pure/ Celestiall kind, such as some stile Platonicall:/ (A new Court Epethite scarce understood)’, where Davenant manages to appear to simultaneously praise the purity of their love, as it is so virtuous it is ‘Celestiall’, and be wryly mocking; by suggesting the couple’s love subscribes to an obscure but fashionable ‘court epethite’ it is undermined, and not only this, but the speaker is Fredeline, whose aim is to seduce Eurithea after she becomes part of a celibacy-based marriage.¹⁰⁵ Fredeline says that ‘all they wooe’ is the ‘Spirit, Face,/ And heart’, and this statement is made derisory in its use of the word ‘all’, since it suggests the admiration of the spirit, face and heart is worth very little if it exists without sexual intercourse.¹⁰⁶ This can be contrasted with Frederline’s account of Phylomont and Ariola’s relationship, which is described as involving what ‘Libertines call Lust’, but what ‘peacefull Politicks’ and ‘cold Divines’ refer to as ‘Matrimony’.¹⁰⁷ Davenant reframes the physical aspects of love between this couple as more valuable than the ‘Lust’ which Neoplatonism may dismiss it as being, as it is instead a conventional, acceptable

¹⁰² William Davenant, *The Platonick Lovers* (London: Printed for Richard Meigham, 1936), sig. A3^v.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, sig. L1^v; Philip Bordinat and Sophia B. Blaydes, *Sir William Davenant*, pp. 52-53.

¹⁰⁴ Philip Bordinat and Sophia B. Blaydes, *Sir William Davenant*, p. 53.

¹⁰⁵ William Davenant, *The Platonick Lovers*, sig. B4^r.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, sig. B4^v.

form of 'Matrimony'. Its endorsement at the hands of 'peacefull Politicks' and 'cold Divines' reminds the text's audience that this particular relationship is anything but radical, and embraces the chaste, but not wholly restrictive lifestyle lived by most married couples. Sensual pleasure within marriage is presented sympathetically, without the ridicule of the description given to Eurithea and Theander.¹⁰⁸

The extreme opposite of these characters is the aforementioned Gridonell, whose father, Sciolto, sent him away to a camp for 'thirteene years' and '[...]gave / A strange direction to his Governor,/ That he should never learne to Write, nor Reade, / Nor ever see a Woman'.¹⁰⁹ Gridonell's outrageous behaviour around women, though comical, is a direct result of his being deprived of a moderate engagement with the sensory experience and his sensuality, the text suggesting that a restrictive approach to sensory engagement can be highly inadvisable. For Gridonell, the very presence of women is now so overwhelming for him that he remarks 'I wonder th'enemy/ Doe never bring their wives against our Campe,/ To give us battaile, sure we should all yield', which is indicative of his almost uncontrollable desire.¹¹⁰ Sciolto claims of his son that 'hee'll not/ Be able to beget an Heire'.¹¹¹ A parallel is drawn between the courtly Platonic lovers and the effects of Gridonell's bizarre childhood, where neither are capable of producing offspring to continue their family line and inherit their estates. Harbage writes of Davenant's 'common-sense approach' towards Platonic love, and it is this pragmatism which aids in the manifestation of Davenant's praise of sensory moderation wherever possible.¹¹² The suspicion with which he treats Platonic love is also present in his first masque venture.

Davenant's earliest masque, *The Temple of Love*, performed four times in February of 1635, can most obviously be read as Catholic allegory, where Platonic love acts as a vehicle for Catholicism, and mists obscure the site of 'true' faith, the Temple of Chaste Love.¹¹³ The masque begins with Indamora, played by Henrietta Maria, and the Queen of Narsinga being asked to re-establish the temple in Britain, which has been shrouded in fog to prevent its misuse by practitioners of magic. A group of young men have travelled looking for the temple, but it is only revealed to them once they have resisted temptations placed in their way; the temple then appears from out of the mists. Butler writes of this as having wider application in terms of rendering Charles's

¹⁰⁸ Mary Edmond, *Rare Sir William Davenant*, p. 58.

¹⁰⁹ William Davenant, *The Platonick Lovers*, sig. B2^r.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, sig. C4^r.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² Arthur H. Nethercot, *Sir William D'Avenant: Poet Laureate and Playwright Manager*, p. 129.

¹¹³ Kevin Sharpe, *Criticism and Compliment: The Politics of Literature in the England of Charles I*, p. 244.

government as correcting past error and removing mists to reveal calm, but for Davenant the combined spectacle and narrative quality of the masque form enables an exploration of the dialogue between the human mind and the senses.¹¹⁴ *The Temple of Love* has been referred to as disdainful, or at best ambivalent, in its treatment of Platonic love, even if this is not so overt to displease the Queen or stop the masque being staged on multiple occasions.¹¹⁵ However, Davenant's approach is more nuanced than this in his desire to emphasise the importance of uniting bodily sensuality and the mind, rather than simply expressing a certain scepticism towards a form of love that lacks physical expressions of sexuality. Thus, even when the masque depicts an apparent triumph of Platonic or 'chaste' love, through the coming together of the allegorical characters Sunesis, symbolising 'Understanding' and Thelema, representative of 'Free Will' whose 'thoughts and actions' will be 'pure', Davenant's language is highly sensual. He writes:

SUNESIS Come melt thy soule in mine; that when unite,
We may become one virtuous appetite.

THELEMA First breath thine into me, thine is the part
More heavenly, and doth more adorne the heart.¹¹⁶

Although the couple speak of a uniting of souls, the terms by which this meeting of minds is framed strongly evokes the physicality of a sexual union. Thelema insists that Sunesis 'breath' his 'soule' 'into' her body and he that they share the same 'appetite' for love, albeit 'virtuous'. The use of the word 'appetite' is striking in that it is not only suggestive of sexual desire, but of hunger, another component within bodily semantics. Certainly at this point in the text Davenant is not just wryly giving his chaste characters sexually charged lines for purposes of amusement, but is keen to demonstrate the value of simultaneously uniting sensual pleasure and a full engagement with the intellect.

Although Indamora and her admirers are preoccupied with their own cerebral qualities and those of others, but neglect their bodily impulses, their physical beauty is retained, since one of the masque's poets comments 'they discover Summer in their looks'.¹¹⁷ Although this may appear to suggest that the women of the Platonic love cult are particularly beautiful (and Davenant could hardly imply otherwise), it also operates as

¹¹⁴ Martin Butler, *The Stuart Court Masque and Political Culture*, pp. 334-335.

¹¹⁵ Kevin Sharpe in *Criticism and Compliment: The Politics of Literature in the England of Charles I* writes that 'the tone of [Davenant's] speech is sardonic, only half-serious and suggestive', p. 246, and that his 'sceptical tone cannot be denied and is not confined to the antimasque', p. 247.

¹¹⁶ William Davenant, *The Temple of Love* (London: Printed for Thomas Walkley, 1634), sig. C4^v-D1^r.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, sig. B2^r.

a way for the text to demonstrate that, regardless of their intellectual persuasions, the female characters, and the actresses by which they are played, (for whom Davenant provides a space) cannot completely escape their own sensuality in its sexual form. Through the words of one his characters, Davenant can appreciate the attractive physical attributes of the women performing and through the phrase above makes his audience implicit in this admiration of their beauty. Again, this looks like a simple wish to undermine Platonic love, but there is more going on here. Even if these individuals do not want to be admired in this way, according to Davenant's philosophy they have little choice; sensuality for him is not only something which should be embraced, but is difficult to neglect entirely. The text's equating of beauty with one of the four seasons also conveniently interweaves female sensuality and the male admiration of it with the natural world, implying that a rejection of this through an adoption of Platonic love constitutes an attempt to defy the laws of nature – this seems like rather a bold claim, but somehow Davenant gets away with it. For Davenant, the sensual pleasures of the female form are supposed to be enjoyed, and not just by the male gaze, but by the women themselves, since it is 'they', rather than 'we' (i.e. the audience) who find 'Summer' in their appearances. Davenant is suggesting that the women themselves are still aware of their own beauty and sensuality, but have chosen to keep it at arm's length.

The ramifications of this abandonment of sensuality are revealed as Davenant writes further on the Queene of Narsinga and her cult:

[They] Still carry frozen Winter in their blood.
 They raise strange doctrines, and new sects of Love:
 Which must not wooe or court the Person, but
 The Mind; and practise generation not
 Of Bodies but of Soules.¹¹⁸

The followers of Platonic love have 'frozen Winter' coursing through their veins, with its connotations of decay and death but also stasis. Davenant suggests that the cult has an inherent inability to evolve or even to persist for any length of time in its current guise, since he believes humans require sensuality, yet Platonic love refutes this in favour of a commitment to and endorsement of the mind only. Additionally, Davenant's evocation of the coldest time of the year is made more severe through his use of 'frozen' to suggest the harshest weather conditions. Yet Karen Britland writes:

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

The winter of 1634/5 was so cold one could drive across the Thames in a coach. Many of the images of sterility and freezing in the masque can, therefore, be related to this seasonal peculiarity, and are less a reference to the writer's dislike of neo-Platonism than a clever use of a topical event.¹¹⁹

The severity of the contemporaneous winter may well have caused Davenant to feel particularly compelled to include meteorological references. However, such terminology has less to do with an interest in being topical, than it does with unpicking the problematic nature of Platonic love versus a more measured acceptance of the joys of both the mind and the senses working harmoniously to enhance one another. Davenant's situating of 'Winter' in the 'blood' of these women also draws attention to the materiality of the body; it is a constant presence inhabited by the intellect which is part of the sensory experience. This mention of 'blood' also emphasises the mortality of the masque's women, and that the Neoplatonic ideology being extolled cannot circumvent their physical fragility as living creatures. That their 'blood' can still carry that which is 'frozen' demonstrates Davenant's interest in the body as a powerful force which is capable of interacting with the mind even if this is challenging. The text's suspicion of Platonic love is particularly evident here, where its early adopters are said to be promoting 'strange' philosophy and 'sects' of adoration; it is impossible to ignore the negative connotations of these terms, and the words 'sect' or 'sects' are employed by the text three times to refer to those adopting the philosophy of Platonic love. Though Davenant writes of the need for the 'Mind' to be won, it is the responsibility of this new type of Love to 'wooe or court' it accordingly, and, as such, the text uses language associated with the processes of contemporary non-Platonic relationships, with their undertones of sexual desire. Once again, the mind and sensuality are being interwoven rather than separated from one another.

A mere five lines after the passage above, one of Davenant's characters insists 'there will be/ Little pastime upon Earth without Bodies./Your Spirit's a cold Companion at midnight.'¹²⁰ The reference to having a 'companion' at 'midnight' sounds, again, as if Davenant is making a wry joke about the tedium of Platonic love and desire without a certain level of sensual (and sexual) pleasure, but this moment also emphasises the importance of the body in everyday life through all the other means of 'pastime' it enables humans to pursue. The end-stopped line slows the actor's speech and emphasises

¹¹⁹ Karen Britland, *Drama at the Courts of Queen Henrietta Maria*, p. 255.

¹²⁰ William Davenant, *The Temple of Love*, sig. B2^r.

the displeasure the text conveys regarding an existence where sensuality is neglected; a soul in perpetual dialogue with its senses is the best kind in Davenant's view. While Kevin Sharpe is accurate in his recognition of Davenant's ambivalence towards chaste love, which he suggests is shown through his evocation of sterility in his descriptions of its followers, I would argue that, ultimately, Davenant does this in order to illustrate the dangers of privileging the mind over the body.¹²¹ Britland is also unconvinced by the supposed evocations of sterility in the masque, but instead suggests that 'read in the context of Charles's domestic reforms, [it] is a festive occasion which, through mild satire, softens the severity of the monarch's policies and showcases a standard of moderate behaviour more acceptable in its courtly audience'.¹²² Although there is undoubtedly a strong element of Davenant pandering to his courtly audience, his 'satire' is chained to his primary concern of the issues surrounding the supposed superiority of the mind to the body as proclaimed by Platonic love.

In its final song, *The Temple of Love* celebrates the fecundity of the royal marriage in text recited by Aminateros or 'Chast Love' herself:

*Softly as fruitfull showres I fall,
And th' undiscerned increase I bring,
Is of more precious worth than all
A plenteous Summer payes a Spring.*

*The benfit it doth impart,
Will not the barren earth improve,
But fructifie each barren heart,
And give eternall growth to Love.*¹²³

The King and Queen, in producing offspring, have provided a 'fruitfull' union as a model partnership; their relationship is celebrated as an ideal and it is one which is 'plenteous' and can 'fructifie', the suggestion being that a truly virtuous relationship allows space for physical expressions of love. Davenant is not advocating an overindulgence in the physical elements of human sexuality, but emphasises that within marriage there is a space for the bringing together of intellectual and carnal desire. This endorsing of a state-sanctioned institution that operates partly as a means of controlling the populace is hardly surprising coming from Davenant. Not content with simply celebrating the monarchical

¹²¹ Kevin Sharpe, *Criticism and Compliment: The Politics of Literature in the England of Charles I*, p. 24; Karen Britland, *Drama at the Courts of Queen Henrietta Maria*, p. 142.

¹²² Karen Britland, *Drama at the Courts of Queen Henrietta Maria*, p. 142.

¹²³ William Davenant, *The Temple of Love*, sig. D1^v.

marriage at the masque's close, Davenant writes of its opposite as an ideology of 'barren earth' and 'barren heart[s]', emphasising the seemingly unnatural nature of Platonic love by comparing it to land so infertile it cannot bear crops, in addition to highlighting the unloving temperament he feels the cult promotes. Yet the royal marriage can remedy this, as it can 'fructifie each barren heart', illustrating the potential transformative power of the human body should this need to be utilised.

Davenant's second masque, *The Triumphs of the Prince d'Amour*, continues with this careful interrogation of the problematic nature of Platonic love, but has received far less critical attention than Davenant's other masques, both from important masque studies and from Davenant biographers.¹²⁴ It is not clear why this is the case, but if it is due to a perceived lack of literary value or scant 'plot', then this may be due to Davenant himself having only 'three days' to write the masque.¹²⁵ He was commissioned to contribute towards the production shortly after the arrival of the King's teenage nephews Charles and Rupert, the Palatine princes, for their entertainment, and the performance was intended to be part of the Christmas festivities at court. This was disrupted by the birth of Princess Elizabeth on 28 December, causing the staging of *The Triumphs* to be postponed until 24 February, and Davenant did not have the opportunity to revise his work, writing apologetically of this in his note to the reader mentioning 'the inconvenience' of the 'hast' in which the text was assembled.¹²⁶ This particular masque is unusual in that its scenery was not designed by Inigo Jones, but by James Corsellis.¹²⁷ Like *The Temple of Love* though, the masque pleased Henrietta Maria, at least according to the account of Sir Henry Herbert.¹²⁸ It involved the Knights of St John meeting and being influenced by the Priests of Mars, Venus and then Apollo, with the action broken up by antimasques. Davenant's mockery of Platonic love is more overt here, but articulated with enough humour to enable it to remain acceptable and simultaneously able to celebrate the sensual pleasures of the body. He writes in one of the masque's songs:

¹²⁴ There is no mention of the masque in *The Court Masque* ed. by David Lindley (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), for example. There is some discussion of the text in Martin Butler, *The Stuart Court Masque and Political Culture*, pp. 46-7; p. 57; p. 287; p. 288; pp. 321-6; p. 329; p. 350; p. 374; p. 384 and limited consideration in Mary Edmond, *Rare Sir William Davenant*, pp. 61-2; pp. 123-4.

¹²⁵ Philip Bordinat and Sophia B. Blydes, *Sir William Davenant*, p. 65.

¹²⁶ William Davenant, *The Triumphs of the Prince D'Amour* (London: Printed by Augustine Mathewes for Richard Meighen, 1635), sig. A3^r.

¹²⁷ Dawn Lewcock, *Sir William Davenant, the Court Masque, and the English Seventeenth-Century Scenic Stage, c1605-c1700*, p. 52.

¹²⁸ Mary Edmond, *Rare Sir William Davenant*, p. 62.

(3)
*And when your Ladies falsly coy
 Shall timerous appeare,
 Believe, they would faine enjoy
 What they pretend to fear.*

(4)
*Breath then each others breath, and kisse
 Your soules to union:
 And whilst they enjoy this blisse
 Your bodies too, are one.¹²⁹*

The earlier verse mischievously states that women such as those seen to embrace the Platonic love cult are actually far more inclined towards sensual pleasures than they would dare admit, as they only ‘appeare’ to be ‘timerous’ and instead ‘enjoy’ that which they pretend to fear, Davenant’s continuous use of enjambment, demonstrating that the ease with which women can enjoy their physicality is as straightforward as running one line into another. Furthermore, this overflowing of enjoyment suggests that such sensuality is in fact, barely contained. In order to emphasise the equal value of the mind and the sensory experience as enjoyed by the body, Davenant writes of the ‘blisse’ experienced as two souls unite and employs enjambment in the same manner once again. The phrase ‘breathe then each others breath’ as part of bringing together the souls is strikingly reminiscent of Thelma’s request in *The Temple of Love* that Suensis ‘breath thine [soul] into me’. Once again, the pleasurable aspects of sensuality are being highlighted but, in this instance, the body is not merely evoked but explicitly mentioned, since the masque states ‘Your bodies too, are one’. This acts as a riposte to Platonic love, but its playful tone makes it palatable for the Queen and her ilk.

In his second antimasque, Davenant cleverly satirises male lovers of different nationalities in their pursuit of women who appear hopelessly out of reach, but strikingly he is keen to provide most of them with some level of agency in the form of their sensory experience, specifically that of the visual. His ‘jealous Italian’ is said to be ‘fixing his eyes on another Mistresse’; a ‘giddy Fantasticke French Lover’ is ‘gazing’ at the ‘windore’ of ‘some beauty’; a ‘dull Dutch Lover’ is described as ‘gazing upwards’, albeit in despair. In contrast, Davenant’s ‘furious debaush’d English lover’ is desperate to the point of wanting to ‘breake [...] windowes’ to ‘gaine a looke from his Lady’; he is effeminised since he lacks the agency of counterparts who may look easily upon the object of their affectations, let alone the power of the ‘grave formall Spanish Lover’ who

¹²⁹ William Davenant, *The Triumphs of the Prince D’Amour*, sig. C1^v.

is watched ‘addressing himself to some Courtizan’.¹³⁰ Not only is the Englishman of the antimasque unable to shape his own visual experience, but wants to be looked upon, rather than doing the looking himself. It seems as if here Davenant is passing comment on the effects of Platonic love at the English court, where the deployment and enjoyment of the male senses is stifled in an emasculating fashion. This is another way in which Davenant can suggest the perils of privileging the mind above the sensual experience.

Davenant continues with his theme of Platonic love as problematic in the Twelfth Night masque *Britannia Triumphans*, the first of his remaining masques staged in the temporary masquing room erected by Inigo Jones in the courtyard at Whitehall, due to concerns surrounding the possibility of Rubens’s newly painted canvases of the Banqueting Hall being damaged by the smoke from masque lighting. This is also mentioned in the printed masque.¹³¹ The canvases had actually been completed in Antwerp by 1634 but were delayed by a year due to problems with export and import dues; Rubens’s fee was then not paid until he received two instalments in 1637 and 1638, in addition to a gold chain. The majority of the temporary building required was constructed from wood (oak, deal and fir), but was spacious, measuring one hundred and twelve feet in length, fifty-seven feet in width and fifty-nine feet in height. Thus, it was actually larger than the Banqueting Hall, which measured one hundred and ten feet long and fifty-five feet in width and height.¹³² The King’s masque was staged on 17 January and focuses upon ‘Britanocles, the glory of the Westerne world’ who has purged the seas with his ‘wisdome, valour, and pietie’ of ‘pyrats’ and ‘reduc’d the land [...] to a reall knowledge of all good Arts and Sciences’.¹³³ The year of Davenant’s masque the issue of the ship-money tax, supposedly to reduce the number of pirates, would have aided in the audience’s recognition of Britanocles as resembling their king; Davenant’s inclusion of his capacity for reforming knowledge also operates as a concession to Henrietta Maria and her privileging of knowledge and the intellect. Britanocles commands the character Fame to inform Britain’s people of his arrival so the rejoicing may begin. The first scene is a prospect of London, used to represent Britain in its entirety, and Action and Imposture begin to debate the merits of ‘Truth’ versus ‘humane appetites’.¹³⁴ This debate

¹³⁰ Ibid., C1^r.

¹³¹ William Davenant, *Britannia Triumphans* (London: Printed by John Haviland for Thomas Walkley, 1637), sig. A2^r

¹³² Philip Bordinat and Sophia B. Blydes, *Sir William Davenant*; pp. 66-68; Mary Edmond, *Rare Sir William Davenant*, pp. 64-65.

¹³³ William Davenant, *Britannia Triumphans*, sig. A2^v.

¹³⁴ Ibid., sig. A3^v; sig. A4^v.

is then followed by two antimasques, the first presenting masquers representing figures who have, in the past, brought about chaos: ‘Cade’; ‘Kett’; ‘Jack Straw’ and ‘their followers’.¹³⁵ The second antimasque is a ‘mock romanza’ which seems to be leading towards a fight between its knight and its giant; this is however thwarted by a dance, Davenant demonstrating both the pleasurable and civilising power of the body; harmony cannot be left to the mind and rhetoric alone. The remainder of the masque is punctuated by the arrival of Fame, and then, at its climax, Britanocles himself.

Although Davenant’s *Luminalia* and his *Salmacida Spolia* are two of the last Stuart masques, it is important that they are not examined in a retrospective manner in light of the civil wars which were to follow.¹³⁶ The former was the Queen’s Shrove Tuesday response to the King’s *Britannica Triumphans* and is ostensibly very keen to promote Neoplatonism, although Karen Britland discusses this as ‘a vehicle for and a cover of a hidden religious meaning’, in the form of Henrietta Maria’s Catholicism. However, Davenant’s primary interest in this masque is in staging a spectacular visual contest between light and darkness; the overwhelming sensory experience to which his audience is exposed overshadows much of this particular text’s rather thin narrative, but not necessarily to its disadvantage. This is the closest Davenant comes to producing a work where spectacle usurps poetry, and also an instance of his name failing to appear on the printed text; the Stationers’ Register connects the two but in print only Inigo Jones is acknowledged.¹³⁷ The masque’s argument sets out its loose plot, explaining that the muses have been forced out of Greece by ‘fierce Thratians’, and out of Italy by ‘barbarous Goths’.¹³⁸ Consequently, their priests have had no choice but to exist in disguise or dwell in caves. Eventually, however, they are taken into ‘protection’ by the ‘monarchy’, and thus ‘this happy Island [becomes] a patterne to all Nations’.¹³⁹ With its riffing of the masque as the embodiment and model of all that is harmonious, Davenant’s text is able to situate itself carefully within the genre, but, as with his earlier masques, he is keen to move away from the all-pervasive theme of Platonic love.

The masque begins with a dark night time scene, with a river illuminated by the moon’s reflection in its waters, and is followed by a number of scenes set at night, after

¹³⁵ William Davenant, *Britannica Triumphans*, sig. ???

¹³⁶ Karen Britland, *Drama at the Courts of Queen Henrietta Maria*, p. 168.

¹³⁷ William Davenant, *Luminalia* (London: Printed by John Haviland for Thomas Walkley, 1637) sig. A1^r; Philip Bordinat and Sophia B. Blaydes, *Sir William Davenant*, p. 66; Mary Edmond, *Rare Sir William Davenant*, p. 68.

¹³⁸ William Davenant, *Luminalia*, sig. A1^r.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, sig. A1^v.

which day breaks and later on the Queen appears in a ‘Glory’ of light ‘Rayes’; she is the ‘Queen of Brightnesse’.¹⁴⁰ While I would not dispute the suggestions that here the Queen is quite clearly enlightening an isle steeped in darkness with her own Catholic faith, Davenant’s choice to make this masque so heavily reliant on its spectacular manipulation of the visual is significant. When Platonic love is so keen to emphasise a detachment from the pleasures of the sensory, Davenant’s approach is indicative of his interest in heightened sensory experiences and how these may exert influence over his audiences. This is all part of Davenant’s wider focus on pleasure, albeit of a different kind to that bolstering ‘cavalier’ hedonism; he writes of his ‘high and hearty invention, [that] might give a variety of Scenes, strange aparitions, Songs, Musick and dancing of severall kinds; from whence doth the true pleasure peculiar to our English masques’.¹⁴¹ Here Davenant is keen to emphasise the varied nature of the text, which seeks to harness multiple senses, with its different ‘scenes’, its musical elements and its diverse ‘dancing’, which at the masque’s close would have also involved its spectators. Davenant unshackles sensory pleasure from some of its associations either with sin, or, as perceived by Jonson, inferiority to the power and value of the language used in performance. The former describes his work as an ‘invention consisting of darkness and light’, situating the masque solely in the realms of the visual.¹⁴² A significant proportion of the masque takes place at night, which would have required careful staging. English masques tended to be performed inside and illuminated with torches and candles, but, ‘the less light there is, the more you see on stage’.¹⁴³ When lights were focused carefully on parts of the stage, audience members were far less likely to be distracted in any way by the rest of the auditorium in which they were sitting. In darkness, one dimly illuminated object upon the masquing stage would draw far more attention than that in a space flooded with light. At court, flickering lights could also be manufactured with the use of coloured water or oiled paper and polished metal. Inigo Jones experimented with ‘moving, indirect, and coloured illumination’.¹⁴⁴ The scenery of *Luminalia* was also crafted of materials to reflect and scatter limited light sources, such as the silver statues which were positioned underneath ‘lighted lamps’.¹⁴⁵ Ultimately, the minimal lighting would also function to heighten other

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., sig. C1^v.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., sig. A1^r.

¹⁴² William Davenant, *Luminalia*, A1^v.

¹⁴³ Barbara Ravelhofer, *The Early Stuart Masque: Dance, Costume and Music*, p. 162.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ William Davenant, *Luminalia*, sig. A2^r; Barbara Ravelhofer, *The Early Stuart Masque: Dance, Costume and Music*, p. 163.

senses, since if struggling to see, it is likely that audience members would also listen more acutely, consciously or otherwise.

In an attempt to understand why the ‘Sunne’ has yet to emerge in Davenant’s text, Hesperus questions Aurora, who responds by explaining that ‘her brother the Sunne hath for the time given up his charge of lightning this Hemisphere to a terristriall Beautie, in whom intellectuall and corporeal brightnesse are joyn’d’.¹⁴⁶ While this appears to celebrate the virtuous Queen, describing her as both highly intelligent and beautiful, Davenant’s highlighting of both her wit and her physicality places emphasis upon the importance of uniting the mind with the sensory experience in a manner shunned by Platonic love in favour of subordinating the senses as a route to other things. Further to this, Davenant’s fixation with the dichotomy of light and dark is not only present in his plot, but seeps into his dialogue, as above, in the use of the term ‘brightnesse’, but also in Hesperus’s comment upon the Sunne’s avoidance of the northern hemisphere and the Queen herself. Hesperus states that ‘in her lookes he’le least of danger finde, / She darkens those with beauties of her mind’.¹⁴⁷ The Sunne need not be wary of the power of her beauty, since it is cast into shadow by, or made dark when compared with, the light of her chaste mind. However, Davenant’s use of the word ‘darkens’ not only suggests that any ‘danger’ is effectively quelled, but that the mind of a follower of Platonic love is able to harness a sinister type of influence over their material self and by implication potentially that belonging to others.

Davenant’s concerns are once again evident, though not overtly so, in *Salmacida Spolia*, his final masque and one which was unique in that both Charles and Henrietta Maria led the dancers.¹⁴⁸ By involving the King and Queen in this way, the text’s display of harmony is almost overwhelming, but the masque was nevertheless less adulatory than Davenant’s previous efforts. It was the last to be witnessed in England, performed in January 1640, though it is likely to also have been shown in February, and after the rather flimsy writing of *Luminalia*, *Salmacida Spolia* is more substantial in its expression, through its dialogue of the value of both the mind and the senses working together in harmonious equilibrium. Its title refers to the waters produced by the fountain at Salmacis, located in the Ancient Greek region of Caria. In Greek legend, such water was rumoured to have had civilising powers over a group of barbarians, preventing violence and

¹⁴⁶ William Davenant, *Luminalia*, sig. B3^r.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, B4^r.

¹⁴⁸ Martin Butler, *The Stuart Court Masque and Political Culture*, p. 342.

ensuring peace. These men had originally been driven out of Halicarnassus, but had returned. A tavern keeper gave them waters from the fountain and, after consuming these, the barbarians were no longer dangerous. The spoils of Salmacis were those of a victory garnered by persuasion as opposed to the bloodiness of war.¹⁴⁹ Davenant's implicit suggestion is that Charles has both the wisdom and the power to placate his subjects and avoid disenchantment or threats to future peacetime.¹⁵⁰ He opens the performance unusually with an antimasque, a 'storme' brought about by the fury, Discord, who 'having already put most of the world into disorder, endeavours to disturbe these parts'.¹⁵¹ This implies that Discord harbours great power, since the character is able to plunge the majority of civilisation into chaos. It also manages to simultaneously intimate that Charles is a ruler adept at maintaining tranquillity in his nation, since it has remained peaceful while large swathes of the globe have not, while also hinting that Charles's state is deeply fragile and his power waning. Yet the harmonising masque world allows calm skies to prevail, and the characters the Good Genius of Britain and Concord emerge onto the stage, having been lowered onto it in a chariot which has broken out of the Heavens above. The scene is both beautiful and serene, but the dialogue is shot through with anxiety, for instance when Concord insists that it is the King's 'fate' that he must 'rule in adverse times'.¹⁵² This scene was followed by Henrietta Maria and her ladies appearing out of a large cloud as it lowered and performing a dance including the King, with the masque being concluded by a finale involving more descending clouds containing masquers and musicians. The dialogue is now emphatic in its belief that the monarchy can hold on to its harmonious rule, insisting 'All that are harsh, all that are rude,/ Are by your harmony subdu'd' in a comforting couplet.¹⁵³ As usual, the text is overt in its display of harmony, but its more subtle suggestion that all is not well is destabilising.

Alongside this ominous undercurrent of the narrative, Davenant also manages to push against the genre's lingering interest in Platonic love, with his insistence that sensuality should not be disregarded in favour of intellectual connection between individuals, but that the two share equal value and should work alongside one another. The fourth song insists that all learn '*by his Eyes [to] advance his Heart,/ And through his*

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 343.

¹⁵⁰ Philip Bordinat and Sophia B. Blaydes, *Sir William Davenant*, p. 69; Mary Edmond, *Rare Sir William Davenant*, p. 80; Dawn Lewcock, *Sir William Davenant, the Court Masque, and the English Seventeenth-Century Scenic Stage, c1605-c1700*, p. 60.

¹⁵¹ William Davenant, *Salmacida Spolia* (London: Printed for T.H. for Thomas Walkley, 1639), sig. B1^r.

¹⁵² Ibid., sig. C1^r.

¹⁵³ Ibid., sig. D3^v.

Opticke learne to love!'.¹⁵⁴ Once more, Davenant is keen to pull against the ideals of Neoplatonism, by subtly interweaving the power of the senses with that of romantic desire. For Davenant, it is the senses which unlock the human capacity for love; the 'Eyes' must 'advance' the 'Heart', and the process of seeing teaches humans to feel such affection – individuals 'learne' through sight. In contrast, Platonic love would be highly uneasy in giving such credit to the human senses. Davenant is however, very adept at weaving his own ideas into the fabric of those which would have been far more palatable to followers of the Queen's love cult. During the fourth song, he discusses the notion that a woman's virtue is reflected in her (generally beautiful) appearance, writing 'All those who can her virtue doubt,/Her Minde, will in her face advise,/For through the Casements of her Eyes, /Her Soule is ever looking out'.¹⁵⁵ Davenant's final song, predictably perhaps, delights at the servility his monarchs can inspire in their subjects, but insists this must be a compliance fully comprehended and understood by the mind, stating '[...] yet so into obedience wrought, /As if not forc'd to do it, but taught.'¹⁵⁶ In this moment then, we see a brief marrying of Platonic love's preoccupation with considered independent thought and the beginnings of Davenant's own philosophy on managing the populace. Yet this reads rather differently when the lines by which it is directly followed are considered; the following two-line verse states 'Live still, the pleasure of our sight;/ Both our examples and delight.'¹⁵⁷ Suddenly the text's priority is holding onto not only the visual experience, but the 'pleasure' which it is able to elicit. Through this interest in both pleasure and pleasing his audience, Davenant is able to repeatedly present performances that delight his patrons and other spectators, but simultaneously carefully unpick the foundations of a pervasive love cult in favour of a new and more palatable set of beliefs.

Davenant's masques are unique in that they do not simply disregard both seventeenth-century Neoplatonic love due to its supposed effeminacy and a very different, sexually hedonistic form of royalism, but because they seek to embrace a truer form of Platonism which makes room for the happy co-existence of the intellect and the sensory pleasures of the material body. Neoplatonism, in contrast, presents a distortion of Platonic values for the benefit of its own political, moral and religious agenda in the form of seeking to maintain state order, police female sexuality, and promote Henrietta Maria's Catholicism. Davenant ostensibly indulges such demands, but simultaneously negotiates a

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., sig. D2^v.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., sig. D3^v.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

space between the restrictive didacticism of Neoplatonic love and the problematic nature of an anxious, hostile and hyper-masculine type of ‘cavalier’ royalism. This willingness to move away from existing royalist positions, whether they seem overly restrictive or too keen to celebrate sensuality in the form of unchecked sexual pleasures, and instead offer a compromise which straddles the middle ground between the two positions, is illustrative of the elasticity of Davenant’s royalism. It would be easy to assume that Davenant would simply be keen to dismiss Neoplatonism as effeminate nonsense, with his ruined nose as an unavoidable marker of his promiscuous lifestyle.¹⁵⁸ However, this is far too simplistic, since instead he offers a considered, palatable alternative to the limiting ideology or hedonistic pleasure of his contemporaries at court and beyond. Davenant’s approach to the masque and its form of Platonic love is significant in that it seeks to reshape the genre through its progressive treatment of human sensuality and in doing so, demonstrates the accommodating politics of the writer himself.

¹⁵⁸ Marcus Nevitt, ‘Davenant, William’ in *The Encyclopedia of English Renaissance Literature*, p.250.

Chapter 3: Moderating Pleasure in the 1650s

3.1: Pleasure and the Senses

While Davenant's 1630s output focuses upon forging a compromise between two existing royalist positions regarding the sexual elements of human sensuality, his 1650s work is underpinned by the relationship between the human sensory experience and pleasure. Davenant's earlier masques look to endorse expressions of sensuality which are palatable for his courtly audiences through rejecting constant sexual self-denial, but they also avoid advocating unmoderated sensual hedonism. Similarly, during the Interregnum, Davenant is interested in occupying a middle ground by carefully marshalling pleasure away from the extremes of indulgence or overzealous self-discipline, while acknowledging the ambiguity of the term 'pleasure' and the problematic nature of its definition within royalist frameworks and at a more general cultural and societal level. Through an examination of Davenant's treatment of pleasure and the sensory experience, I will show how Davenant's royalism is able to accommodate a kind of pleasure acceptable not only to many royalists, but to the republican regime. The concepts of pleasure in the seventeenth century were shaped by various political, religious, philosophical and cultural ideologies, which operate as a backdrop to Davenant's 1650s work and his approach to the pleasure gleaned by the human sensory experience. I will begin this chapter by discussing the approaches to pleasure adopted by the monarchy, religion and, most significantly, the contemporary revival of Epicureanism. These must be considered since they are indicative of the attitudes to pleasure which persisted within the society Davenant inhabited, and an awareness of such views makes it possible to understand not only Davenant's influences, but how his treatment of sensory pleasure may have been received by his various audiences, which included the state itself, in the form of the republican regime.

At the beginning of the century, James I issued his *Basilikon Doron* (limited publication 1599, republished 1603), which detailed his favouring of traditional customs in bringing pleasure to the people and maintaining a content society. In 1617, after being given a petition by locals in Lancashire who were concerned by the behaviour of

magistrates trying to stop the playing of sports on Sundays, James licensed the playing of such sports on Sundays with his own declaration. The following year, the Declaration of Sports was published nationally.¹ The so-called *Book of Sports* did not call for mandatory ‘Sunday and holiday pastimes’, but it did insist upon the allowance of activities such as archery and Morris dancing. For James, the traditional customs of England were a means by which he could assert his power as ruler, and any undermining of such recreational pastimes threatened his prerogative.² In this way, certain kinds of pleasure were not only legitimised by the state, but actively encouraged. In 1633, Charles I overturned an order by magistrates in Somerset banning ‘traditional Sunday revels’, and then reissued his predecessor’s *Book of Sports*. James I was aware of how unpopular his Declaration was with puritans and other Protestants, and chose not to enforce it (though he did not revoke it either), but Charles was determined that his would be enforced and that it would also ‘be read in parish churches throughout England’.³ This ensured that the text brought widespread ‘resentment and opposition’, and not just among Puritans.⁴ The document consists of only seventeen pages, but uses the term ‘pleasure’ numerous times, though only in phrases such as ‘we did publish our pleasure’ or ‘our pleasure therefore is, that the Lawes of our Kingdom [...]’.⁵ This does however, help focus the reader’s mind on the importance of joyful recreation.

Although the *Book of Sports* controversy is closely associated with Puritan discontent, it must be noted that Puritanism did not jettison pleasure wholesale. Belden C. Lane writes:

far from being simply a dour people of stern moral exactitude, the Puritans were motivated most deeply by a passion for personal intimacy with God, the *unio mystica*, a vision of God transfixing their hearts and minds with a beauty they could not withstand.⁶

¹ Jenny Wormald, ‘James VI and I’, *ODNB*; Alistair Dougall, *The Devil’s Book: Charles I, the Book of Sports and Puritanism in Tudor and Early Stuart England* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2011), p. 1; Stanley Rypins, ‘The Printing of Basilikon Doron, 1603’, *The Papers of the Biographical Society of America*, 64.4 (1970), 393-417 (p. 393).

² Leah S. Marcus, *The Politics of Mirth: Jonson, Herrick, Milton, Marvell, and the defense of old holiday pastimes* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1986), pp. 3-4.

³ Alistair Dougall, *The Devil’s Book: Charles I, the Book of Sports and Puritanism in Tudor and Early Stuart England*, p. 1.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 1; p. 103; p. 126.

⁵ Charles I, *The Kings Maiesties Declaration to his Subjects, Concerning lawfull Sports to bee Vsed* (London: Robert Barker, 1633), sig. A4^r; sig. B2^v; sig. B3^r; sig. B3^v; sig. C1^r; sig. C1^v; sig. C2^r.

⁶ Belden C. Lane, ‘Two Schools of Desire: Nature and Marriage in Seventeenth-Century Puritanism’, *Church History*, 69.2 (2000), 372-402 (p. 373).

Owing to this 'longing', Lane argues that seventeenth-century Puritans were preoccupied with 'two schools of desire': 'nature mysticism' and 'the mystery of conjugal love'; the natural world brought delight as it was the work of God, and marriage did so as a deeply spiritual union.⁷ Furthermore, the Puritan 'appropriation of desire' was based on Augustine scripture, where reading was strongly connected to the body and the sensory experience.⁸ Thus, Puritan desire put 'increased emphasis on sensation and feeling generally as a ground of moral knowledge and action'. Consequently, the two spheres of desire, nature and marriage, were sources of intense pleasure for some Puritans, but also reveal that some Puritans of the era were keen to juxtapose the sensory experience and individual pleasure. Lane suggests that, in Puritan devotional literature, 'nature imagery' and 'erotic language' overlap to summon 'human beings along with the rest of the natural world to a common longing for God'.⁹ This demonstrates the importance of the delight taken in nature and certain expressions of sexuality to at least some followers of the Puritan faith, and therefore its privileging of certain types of pleasure. For some Puritan ministers in New England, pleasures such as 'eating' or 'relaxing pastimes' practised in 'moderation' were seen to benefit their congregations, but 'gluttony, idleness and lust' was sinful, as was the case in much Christian teaching, as they were the results of pleasure operating as nothing more than an end in itself.¹⁰ This is not to say an approval of pleasure in moderation is exclusive to Puritanism, and much like 'royalism', 'Puritanism' cannot be treated as a term denoting a homogenous set of beliefs. The above does however provide an indication of how 'pleasure' may have been conceived by certain members of contemporary society. For the society in which Davenant lived, pleasure, and more importantly, its moderation, was of concern to both the state and the Church; expressions of sexuality for instance, pleasurable or otherwise, had to be regulated. Joshua Scodel writes:

Up through the middle ages, Christian attitudes toward sexuality combined an ascetic repugnance toward sinful carnality with a Christian version of the pagan ethical forces on moderating bodily pleasures. The former celebrated celibacy as the purest state; the latter fostered restrained, temperate sexuality between married couples. With the Protestant Reformation, celibacy was unseated as an ideal and the promotion of moderate conjugal love intensified. [...] Temperate sexual relations between married partners were the mean

⁷ Ibid., p. 374.

⁸ Ibid., p. 377.

⁹ Ibid., p. 375.

¹⁰ Bruce C. Daniels, 'Did the Puritans Have Fun? Leisure, Recreation and the Concept of Pleasure in Early New England', *Journal of American Studies*, 12.1 (1991), 7-22 (p. 12).

between a sin-producing abstinence and sinful fornication. [...] While celebrating conjugal affection, ministers warned against excessive desires and feelings.¹¹

Moderation in terms of sexual desire and expression was vaunted as a morally superior approach, where ‘fornication’ is problematic but abstinence and, presumably, its Catholic connotations, are equally worrisome. The boundaries of pleasure are carefully policed in order to ensure they only inhabit an appropriate middle ground.

The necessity of pleasure, but also of its moderation, is clearly apparent in the revival of Epicureanism during the seventeenth century, and an influential figure in this revival was Pierre Gassendi, who sought to combine his Christian values with his approach to Epicureanism. Gassendi was admired by members of the English Royal Society, including Walter Charleton, an important figure in the dissemination of Epicurean thinking in relation to natural and moral philosophy.¹² Charleton published *Physiologia Epicuro-Gassendo-Charltoniana* (1654) which functioned as a ‘translation and paraphrase’ of Gassendi’s own attempts to revive the natural philosophy of Epicurus and his followers and, in 1656, he produced a translation of Epicurus’s *Morals*, ‘Collected Partly out of his owne Greek text in Diogenes Laertius, And Partly out of the Rhapsodies of Marcvs Antoninvs, Plvtarch, Cicero & Seneca’.¹³ Alongside this, Charleton included, prior to the main text, his own ‘Apologie for Epicurus, As to the three Capitall Crimes whereof he is accused’. Charleton defines these as Epicurus’s belief in the mortality of the soul, that humankind should not be obliged to ‘honour, revere and worship’ God, and that suicide in calamitous situations can be heroic.¹⁴ The text describes pleasure as a key facet of happiness, insisting that, ultimately ‘Felicity is rooted in Pleasure’; Epicurus states ‘Felicity cannot be understood, unlesse it be conceived to be a certain state wherein a man may live most sweetly, most pleasantly, i.e. in the greatest Pleasure, of which his Nature is capable’.¹⁵ The linking of ‘pleasure’ with true happiness in this fashion allows the term to be freed from its problematic, negative connotations, since it is framed simply as part of a mode of existence which promotes wellbeing. Furthermore, the text’s inclusion of living

¹¹ Joshua Scodel, ‘The Pleasures of Restraint: The Mean of Coyness in Cavalier Poetry’, *Criticism*, 38.2 (1996), 239-279 (p. 239).

¹² John Henry, ‘Charleton, Walter’ *ODNB*; Catherine Wilson, *Epicureanism at the Origins of Modernity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 2-3; p. 144.

¹³ John Henry, ‘Charleton, Walter’ in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*; Catherine Wilson, *Epicureanism at the Origins of Modernity* p. 144; Walter Charleton, *Epicurus’s Morals* (London: Printed by W. Wilson, for Henry Herringman, 1656), sig. A1^r.

¹⁴ Walter Charleton, *Epicurus’s Morals*, sig. A5^r.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, sig. D1^r; sig. C2^v.

within the limits of ‘Nature’ situates ‘pleasure’ as part of the natural world, which has a positive inflection when seen by the seventeenth-century reader as something created by God (although this does not necessarily align with the views of Epicurus).

Pleasure is also firmly situated by the text in opposition to pain and as integral to the sensory experience:

there is nothing, which doth more please, more delight, is more amiable, more desirable than Pleasure; and on the contrary, nothing that doth more incommode, more offend, is more to be abhorred and avoided, than pain [...] Pleasure is to be desired, and pain to be avoided; [and] the sense alone doth evidently demonstrate it, no lesse than it doth that Fire is hot, that snow is white, that Hony is sweet: and sufficient it is for us onely to observe it. For, if when we have taken away from man all his senses, the Remainder must be nothing [...]¹⁶

By using multiple clauses to emphasise the joy which can be brought by pleasure, which will ‘please’, ‘delight’ and is ‘amiable’ and ‘desirable’, and the harm that can be generated by pain, which can ‘incommode’, ‘offend’ and is to be both ‘abhorred’ and ‘avoided’, the text suggests that all experience is governed by this dichotomy, and therefore that there is a straightforward choice to be made between these opposites. Thus, it is difficult for the reader to view the shunning of pleasure as a viable approach to his or her life. In addition to this, the significance of pleasure is demonstrated by its supposed place within the human sensory landscape; in the same way that the senses inform an individual that their environment may feel, look or taste a certain way, they also suggest pleasure is necessary due to the delight it elicits in humans through their sensory experience of the world.

The above situates pleasure very much in the realms of the body, but does so without negative inflection, and elsewhere in the text, equal value is assigned to the serenity and wellbeing of both the body and the mind. Charleton translates Epicurus as stating the importance of not being ‘pained in Body, nor perturbed in Mind’.¹⁷ This is rearticulated slightly later in the text, where it is suggested that the ‘chiefest Felicity doth consist [...] to have the Mind free from perturbation, and the Body free from Pain’, where the peace of each is central to contentment, since both must be in an optimum state of pleasure for happiness to be achieved.¹⁸ Elsewhere, the text insists ‘Pleasure, wherein Felicity doth consist, is the Indolency of the Body and the

¹⁶ Ibid., sig. C3^r; sig. D1^v. ‘Desiderable’ is a synonym for ‘desirable’, now obsolete. *OED* ‘desiderable’, *adj.*

¹⁷ Walter Charleton, *Epicurus’s Morals*, sig. D4^r.

¹⁸ Ibid., sig. E2^v.

Tranquillity of the Mind'. It is aware of this 'indolency' being interpreted by its reader as a form of idleness, stating:

There are those who say that this pleasure of Indolency, is like the condition of a sleeping man, and fit only for *Slothfull* and *Unactive* spirits. But, these consider not, that this Indolent constitution is so far from being a meer Torpor, or sluggishness, as that it is the only state, wherein we can perform all the actions of life vigorously and cheerfully.¹⁹

Instead, this way of being is an optimum manner of existence, at least in terms of experiencing life in the most fulfilling and joyful fashion, so is not a mere 'torpor', rather the height of efficiency according to Epicurus. Similarly, *Morals* is keen to separate 'pleasure' from vice or 'luxury':

when we say; that Pleasure in the Generall is the end of a happy life, or the Chiefest Good; we are very far from understanding those Pleasures, which are so much admired, courted and pursued by men wallowing in Luxury [...] For, it is not perpetuall Feastings and Drinkings; it is not the love of, and Familiarity with beautifull boyes and women; it is not the Delicacies of rare Fishes, sweet meats, rich Wines, nor any other Dainties of the Table, that can make a Happy life: But, it is Reason, with Sobriety, and consequently a serene Mind.²⁰

Thus, the Epicurean approach to pleasure can be characterised by its desire to maintain happiness in a manner which is carefully considered, rather than one which simply results in reckless self-abandon, and instead 'Reason' and 'Sobriety' are required to produce a 'serene', and therefore content, mind. The *Morals* does much to promote moderation, stating that 'usually very great pains follow and overtake such, who know not to follow Pleasure with Reason and Moderation'.²¹ This encourages restraint and a careful, cerebral engagement, as suggested by the word 'Reason', with pleasure being the sensory force Epicurus describes. Later, the text elaborates on the advantage of pursuing a life of moderation:

Concerning Temperance, this is first to be observed, that it is not to be affected and pursued for its own sake, but for the Pleasure it brings with it, that is, because it adfers peace to a mans mind, and pleasantly affects it with a certain Concord.²²

¹⁹ Walter Charleton, *Epicurus's Morals*, sig. E2^r.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, sig. D4^r.

²¹ *Ibid.*, sig. C3^v.

²² *Ibid.*, sig. K2^r.

Here, practising self-discipline just to demonstrate the ability to do so, or ‘for its own sake’ is presented as without value, and, instead, a lifestyle of moderation should be adopted to calm the mind, and presumably enable an individual to experience the desired state of felicity, which is the main thrust of the argument put forward by the *Morals*. Davenant’s career-long interest in sensory moderation and pleasure which avoids hedonism has much in common with Charleton’s view, and this is particularly apparent in the former’s *Interregnum* work.

Charleton’s translation of Epicurus provides an important example of the way in which ideas surrounding pleasure, and the senses, were articulated during the 1650s. Charleton was also an admirer of Thomas Hobbes, who moved in the same circles as Davenant during their periods of exile in France during the 1640s, becoming a friend and mentor, and the former also discussed both pleasure and the human senses in *Leviathan* (1651). In the Introduction, I explained how Hobbes wrote of motions in relation to how the senses operate. In Chapter VI, ‘Of the Interior Beginnings of Voluntary Motions; commonly called the Passions, and the Speeches by which they are expressed’, Hobbes also writes explicitly on the relationship between sensory processing and how pleasure is experienced:

when the action [of an external object] is continued from the Eyes, Eares, and other organs to the Heart; the reall effect there is nothing but Motion, or Endeavour; which consisteth in Appetite, or Aversion, to, or from the object moving. But the appearance, or sense of that motion, is that wee either call DELIGHT, or TROUBLE OF MIND. [...] *Pleasure* [...] (or *Delight*.) is the apparence, or sense of Good; and *Molestation* or *Displeasure*, the apparence, or sense of Evill. And consequently all Appetite, Desire, and Love, is accompanied with some Delight more or lesse; and all Hatred, and Aversion, with more or less Displeasure and Offence. [...] Of Pleasures, or Delights, some arise from the sense of an object Present; And those may be called *Pleasures of Sense* [...].²³

Hobbes argues that the impact of receiving information from the senses as caused by an ‘external object’, is the generation of a desire for or repugnance towards the object pressing upon the relevant sense ‘organ’. When ‘Good’ is recognised by the senses, feelings of pleasure or ‘Delight’ are triggered in the individual, and such joys are ‘Pleasures of Sense’. Therefore, for Hobbes, pleasurable feeling is deeply interwoven not only with how we experience the world via the senses, but with morality, since it is the senses which enable individuals to differentiate between ‘Good’ and ‘Evill’ depending upon the response different objects produce within themselves.

²³ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 40.

Davenant inhabited a cultural landscape often preoccupied with the careful controlling of pleasure in search of a perfect equilibrium, where, ideally, pleasure, in all its forms, is consistently morally edifying, neither lacking nor excessive. For Davenant, pleasure was also deeply interwoven with different forms of royalism, including a hyper-masculine version which his earlier work of the 1630s seeks to avoid. This is not to say that Davenant wishes to separate royalism and pleasure, even if he is wary of a royalist pleasure rooted in hedonistic sexual exploits, at least in his work, if not necessarily in his lifestyle. Many royalist frameworks privilege pleasure, whether this is gained through promiscuous sexual conduct or through activities ostensibly less morally problematic, such as literary production. The texts produced by Davenant during the 1650s are hugely varied in their form and include the unfinished epic poem *Gondibert* and its prefatory material (published 1650 and 1651 but also written during the previous decade); the prose piece *A Proposition for Advancement of Morality* (1653); *The First Days Entertainment at Rutland House* (1656), an episodic medley of performances; a letter to the Council of State (1656); and the opera *The Siege of Rhodes* (1656). This chapter will show how these texts examine the sensory experience as an integral facet of royalist pleasure, but where delight is elicited through a careful, measured engagement with the human senses. Davenant locates a kind of pleasure acceptable both to a wide range of royalists, and to the Interregnum regime. His reimagining of sensory pleasure during this decade, especially his repackaging of Hobbesian ideas for the new government, offers a superb example of the elasticity of Davenant's royalism in its ability to accommodate ideas and concepts which would resonate with those across the political spectrum.

Davenant also produced the plays, *The Cruelty of the Spaniards of Peru* and *The History of Sir Francis Drake* (both 1658); the former is more a 'propaganda documentary' than a play, an episodic text which features the people of Peru being tortured by the Spanish after they invade, and these indigenous individuals then being rescued by the heroic English. *The History of Sir Francis Drake* considers Drake's 1572 voyage, during which he successfully captured Nombre de Dios, located in what is now Panama. Davenant's play presents an idealised version of historical events, and I would argue that because both of these texts focus upon representing the English in as good a light as possible, Davenant puts his interest in the senses to one side. Nevertheless, most of his 1650s output was dominated by sensory themes.²⁴

²⁴ Philip Bordinat and Sophia B. Blaydes, *Sir William Davenant*, pp. 119-123.

3.2: *Gondibert* and Staging Didactic Performance in the Interregnum

To the great amusement of friends and critics, Davenant chose to publish his *Preface* to his major work, *Gondibert*, alongside Thomas Hobbes's *Answer*, months before the publication of the poem proper in 1651. *Gondibert* itself was supposed to consist of five books to mirror the five acts of a play, but when it appeared, it only in fact consisted of three, two of which were published in 1651, and the third was published posthumously in 1685.²⁵ In early May of 1650, Davenant set sail from Jersey (after leaving Paris in January) for North America to take up his new role as Lieutenant-Governor of Maryland, taking over from parliamentary sympathiser Lord Baltimore, a position probably made available to Davenant through the connections of Henrietta Maria.²⁶ Unfortunately however, Davenant, a known royalist enemy of the new Commonwealth regime, was captured by a parliamentary frigate in the Channel and imprisoned in Cowes Castle, on the Isle of Wight, and on the ninth of July Davenant would face trial along with five others. He was clearly in considerable danger as he was transferred to the Tower of London, where he remained, still working on *Gondibert*, for at least a year, until he was released in 1652.²⁷ Despite being an infamous royalist, Davenant's life was spared after parliament held multiple votes to determine his fate.²⁸ Edmond suggests that upon his final release in 1652, Davenant's friend and politician under Cromwell, Bulstrode Whitelocke, who would become Lord Whitelocke in 1657, must have spoken on his friend's behalf, since Davenant wrote him an 'effusive' letter of thanks two days after his release was ordered.²⁹ This event in itself is suggestive of Davenant's appeal across the political spectrum, though Whitelocke himself was not simply a republican, but favoured a 'mixed monarchy' at least when asked of his opinion by Cromwell at the start of the 1650's.³⁰ I would suggest that a combination of Davenant's imprisonment and his far-fetched notion to combine the most desirable elements of literature in one work are responsible for *Gondibert*'s incomplete nature.

²⁵ David F. Gladish, *Sir William Davenant's Gondibert* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. ix. Davenant explains the poem's structure in William Davenant, *The Preface to Gondibert: An Heroick Poem* (Paris: Matthiev Gvillemot, 1650), sig. Ciiij^v.

²⁶ Philip Bordinat and Sophia B. Blaydes, *Sir William Davenant*, p. 22.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 22; James R. Jacob and Timothy Raylor, 'Opera and obedience: Thomas Hobbes and A Proposition for Advancement of Moralitie by Sir William Davenant', *The Seventeenth Century*, 6.2 (1991) 205-250 (p. 206).

²⁸ Marcus Nevitt, *Insults of Defeat*, p. 291.

²⁹ Ruth Spalding, 'Whitelocke, Bulstrode', *ODNB*, Mary Edmond; *Rare Sir William Davenant*, p. 119.

³⁰ Ruth Spalding, 'Whitelocke, Bulstrode', *ODNB*.

Davenant's *Preface* provides a compendium of rules for the writing of what he terms the 'Heroick Poem' and presents such literature as perfect for assisting in the enforcement of state power, through its presentation of the moral and political values which should be embraced by the educated populace. Davenant provides examples of other poets, such as Homer, who have proved useful to the state in this way, and later writes in the conclusion to his paratext that:

having taken measure (though hastily) of the extent of those great Proessions that in Government contribute to the necessities, ease and lawfull pleasures of Men; and finding Poesie is usefull now, as the Antients found it towards perfection and happinesse; I will, Sir, [...] cheerfully proceed.³¹

The text is interested in how government provides not just for the more quotidian requirements of citizens, the 'necessities', but for the 'lawfull pleasures', and, thus, it is apparent that for Davenant, pleasure is an integral part of human existence. He also unites delight with the moral and political excellence he seeks to promote through his poetry, remarking upon how helpful 'the Antients found it towards perfection and happinesse', this interest in joy emphasised by Davenant's assertion that he will not simply 'proceed' with his project of an epic poem, but will do so 'cheerfully'. The text's interest in reforming individuals via poetry as an aid to the state recognises pleasure as a necessary part of a moral, law-abiding, but also happy life, and presumably a more content citizen less inclined towards seditious behaviour.

The discussion of pleasure in the prefatory material is also framed by the supposed role of the poet; much of Davenant's *Preface* and Hobbes's *Answer* is concerned with the restrictions which may or may not be imposed by disciplinary roots. Davenant is comfortable with incorporating philosophical 'authority' into his didacticism, alongside explorations of practical pastimes, such as hunting, where he looks to display his knowledge of the discourse surrounding such activities by weaving it into his own narrative. Hobbes, in contrast, would prefer the poet's sphere of ability to be rather more limited.³² Davenant refers to these disciplinary tensions when he writes of Lucan:

[he] chose to write the greatest actions that ever were allow'd to be true [but] did not observe that such an enterprize rather beseem'd an Historian then a Poet: for wise Poets

³¹ William Davenant, *The Preface to Gondibert: An Heroick Poem*, sig. Hvij^r.

³² Timothy Raylor, 'Hobbes, Davenant and Disciplinary Tensions the Preface to *Gondibert*', in *Collaboration and Interdisciplinarity in the Republic of Letters: Essays in Honour of Richard G. Maber*, ed. by Paul Scott (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2010), pp. 59-72 (p. 5; pp. 65-66).

think it more worthy to seek out truth in the passions, then to record the truth of actions [...] Painters are no more than Historians, when they draw eminent persons [...] but when by assembling divers figures in a larger volume, they draw passions (though they terme it but Story) then they increase in dignity and become Poets. [...] I have been thus hard to call him to account for the choyce of his Argument, not merely as it was Story, but because the actions he recorded were so eminent, and so neere his time, that he could not assist Truth, with such ornaments as Poets, for usefull pleasure, have allow'd her; least the feigned complexion might render the true suspected [...]³³

For Davenant, the roles of 'Poets', 'Historians' and 'Painters' may all overlap one another, but that of the poet is superior, since through putting together a 'volume' of written work, it is possible to ascend to possess the 'dignity' of the poet. Yet, Davenant's probable admiration of Lucan, who, like him, rejected the supernatural in favour of considering human agency alone in his epic poem *Pharsalia*, and Davenant's own interest in incorporating other disciplines into his own pedagogy and writing, suggest that he values this interdisciplinarity. Most significantly, it suggests that Davenant sees it as useful in eliciting pleasure, since he writes that those individuals, of any discipline, who compile poetry, can potentially 'draw passions'. As discussed by Hobbes in *Leviathan*, such passions are provoked by the information garnered by the senses. Consequently, by drawing passions through his poetry, Davenant is reliant on the senses in enabling him to elicit pleasure in the reader, and therefore to influence him or her in the manner most befitting to the state's wishes. In the above, Davenant endorses Lucan's interest in 'truth', but suggests that the reason he does not use the 'ornaments' of poetry is because these could have been seen to undermine the factual element of his work, even if, according to Davenant, such 'ornaments' can provide 'usefull pleasure'. By juxtaposing these two words, Davenant celebrates pleasure as a state of being which advances the individual, and one which has the capacity to have a purpose all of its own.

Slightly later in his *Preface*, Davenant's frustration regarding the restrictions placed upon both poets and historians is clearly apparent:

[I wish to avoid] the improper examinations, [of those] who know not the requisites of a Poem, nor how much pleasure they lose (and even the pleasures of Heroick Poesie are not unprofitable) who take away the liberty of a Poet, and fetter his feet in the shackles of an Historian: For why should a Poet doubt in Story to mend the intrigues of Fortune by more delightfull conveyances of probable fictions, because austere Historians have enter'd into bond to truth?³⁴

³³ William Davenant, *The Preface to Gondibert: An Heroick Poem*, sig. Aiii^v- sig. Aiiij^v.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, sig. B4^v- sig. B5^f.

Davenant writes of ‘pleasure’ being lost when subject-specific conventions are rigorously enforced, and that these boundaries deprive poets such as himself of ‘liberty’; the use of this term alongside ‘fetter’ and ‘shackles’ sees the text articulate its concerns through the semantics of capture and imprisonment, reminding the reader of the changing nature of freedom and liberty during the revolutionary decades and under the new Cromwellian regime. Davenant’s suggestion that ‘Historians’ who shun the poetry he wishes to promote are ‘austere’ is indicative of his uneasiness towards rigid disciplinary frameworks. Davenant is only interested in being confined on his own terms, since while his description of what should constitute an epic poem is prescriptive, it is he who is shaping these rules. In a moment of false modesty, it seems, Davenant insists ‘even the pleasures of Heroick Poesie are not unprofitable’, as if to emphasise that the delight provided by even his own, new way of composing epic has value, although the term ‘unprofitable’ makes this sound rather materialistic, as opposed to such pleasures having a more spiritual value.

Davenant talks more explicitly of how the delight of his readers can aid in preventing disquiet among society elsewhere in the *Preface*, since ‘Pleasure and Mysterie’ are ‘two Ingredients which never fail’d to worke upon the People’.³⁵ Pleasure is given value, not only as important for the wellbeing and morality of the individual, but more cynically as a tool for manipulating the populace in a fashion deemed acceptable by its government. Furthermore, in this context, Davenant is discussing ‘Pleasure’ and ‘Mysterie’ as facets of ‘Religion’ created by ‘the elder Poets’ who were also priests, and who ‘fed the world with supernaturall tales’.³⁶ Although with *Gondibert*, Davenant actively avoids a narrative reliant on the supernatural, this linking of ‘pleasure’ with ‘religion’ further legitimises the former as a force for good. Instead of embracing the realm of the supernatural, Davenant writes of the need ‘to make great actions credible’ since this ‘is the principall Art of the Poet’ and ‘incredulity (when things are not represented in proportion) doth much allay the relish of his pity, hope, joy, and other Passions’.³⁷ Davenant’s stance on the role of the poet is very similar to that presented by Aristotle’s *Poetics*, which states that ‘the function of the poet is not to say what *has*

³⁵ Ibid., sig. A6^v.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid., sig. B5^v.

happened, but to say the kind of thing that *would* happen, i.e. what is possible in accordance with probability or necessity'.³⁸ Aristotle writes that this is important since 'what is possible is plausible', and for Davenant, portraying honourable behaviour in a fashion that enables his reader to see it as possible, and a viable solution to challenges he or she may face, is a vital element of his role as a poet.³⁹ Furthermore, if 'great actions' are not presented in this way, the pleasure experienced by Davenant's audience is curtailed, suggesting a link between truth and the provision of pleasure. Thus, for all that Davenant rails against presenting 'truth' and truth alone, he too pays careful attention to how convincing his own narrative appears. Davenant wants to elicit a moderate type of pleasure via a careful engagement with the senses, and with *Gondibert* he presents a narrative which is also moderate in its approach to the epic or 'Heroick' poem, keen to explore admirable behaviour but without the presence of the fantastical.

As part of Davenant's interest in the world as it is experienced by his reader, rather than the supernatural, towards the end of his *Preface*, he brings state governance into dialogue with pleasure, nature and the sensory experience:

Others may object that Poesie on our Stage, or the Heroick in Musick (for so the latter was anciently us'd) is prejudicial to a State; as begetting Levity, and giving the people too great a diversion by pleasure and mirth. [...] For that supream Power which expects a firm obedience in those, who are not us'd to rejoycing, but live sadly, as if they were still preparing for the funeral of Peace, hath little skill in contriving the lastingness of Government, which is the principal work of Art; And less hath that Power consider'd Nature; as if such new austeritie did seem to tax, even her, for want of gravity, in bringing in the Spring so merrily with a musical variety of Birds [...]⁴⁰

Davenant is aware that 'pleasure' can be problematic for others, including the state itself, as suggested by the reference to 'Poesie on our Stage' and that, to some, it is threatening, due to its power to beget 'Levity' in the populace. Yet the text is emphatic in its insistence that, if the people are deprived of pleasure, the state is only hindering its own rule; any 'Power' who expects to be revered by those who 'live sadly' lacks the 'skill' to maintain lasting rule. Davenant now reiterates the importance of his work, but instead of arguing that it is key in providing a type of pleasure conducive to societal harmony, he simply states that the stability and longevity of government is 'the principal work of Art'. Not only this, but Davenant has shifted from dealing very specifically with the role of 'Poesie' to the function of 'Art', this being a far broader term which could also cover

³⁸ Aristotle, *Poetics*, trans. by Malcom Heath (London: Penguin, 1996), p. 16.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, sig. G8^r- sig. H1^r.

dramatic stage performance. Davenant's reference to 'Birds', with their 'merrily' conducted 'musical' song in 'Spring' further buttresses his thesis that pleasure is a necessary and useful part of human, and animal, existence. Delight is ingrained in the natural landscape, so, according to Davenant, it should therefore also be part of the order dictated by humans. Ultimately, the *Preface* demonstrates Davenant's interest in the benefits of pleasure enjoyed in moderation, as experienced through the human senses, and such enjoyment can be seen as beneficial, since it is conducive to state order and a peaceful, content society.

In his *Answer* to Davenant, Hobbes claims:

the delight of the Epique Poeme consist not in Mirth, but admiration. Mirth and laughter is proper to Comedy and Satyre. Great persons that have their minds employed on great designes, have not leasure enough to laugh, and are pleased with the contemplation of their owne power and vertues, so as they need not the infirmities and vices of other men to recommend themselves to their owne favour by comparison, as all men do when they laugh.⁴¹

Hobbes's answer reveals discrepancies between his view of how disciplinary frameworks should operate and that of Davenant, but he is in agreement with the latter that the epic poem Davenant proposes should be solely focused upon the 'manners of men'.⁴² However, Hobbes's approach to pleasure is more ambiguous and it is not clear quite how closely it aligns with that of Davenant. In the above, Hobbes writes of 'Mirth', not 'pleasure' of course, but at the close of his *Preface*, Davenant discusses 'pleasure and mirth' as one and the same in relation to their potential, in the eyes of some, for promoting 'levity' and, by association, misrule. Hobbes suggests that 'Mirth' and 'laughter' are at least to some degree lacking in moral value, since they involve ridiculing the inadequacies or failings of other individuals in order to bolster one's own moral value. Those whose thoughts are focussed 'on great designes' are instead able to recognise 'their owne power and vertues'; by describing those who lack 'Mirth' in this way, Hobbes not only makes clear his view on generic demands as well as disciplinary boundaries, but labels a certain type of pleasure, and one which involves 'laughter', for a weaker sort of man (or woman) who is incapable of masterminding elaborate 'designes' and who is idle enough to have the 'leasure' to 'laugh'. Davenant, in contrast, embraces pleasure in broader terms, as suggested by his endorsing of 'rejoycing' amongst the populace. Hobbes is not

⁴¹ Ibid., sig. K5^r.

⁴² Ibid., sig. H2^v.

condemning pleasure, but is looking to restrict or frame it in a certain way which is not identical to that of Davenant. In the poem itself, Davenant's ideas are based on a simultaneously wide-ranging but clearly-defined type of pleasure, in that it must involve a considered engagement with the senses, which privileges moderation. This is demonstrated in the poem proper, too.

Regarding the main body of *Gondibert* itself, Davenant's intention to employ a five-act structure to enable the text to mirror drama and its generic position as a 'Heroick Poem' allows it to resemble the heroic plays of the Restoration far more than the classical epic. It showcases seventeenth-century poetic technique whilst conveying Davenant's own approach to contemporary philosophy and his interest in moral pedagogy. The dramatic act structure he describes in the *Preface* maps onto *Gondibert* well and allows the reader to imagine what the poem may have resembled had it ever reached its finished form; the first 'act' is the 'genereall preparative' which ends with a 'promise of design'; the second finishes all the characters and concludes with a hint of 'that design' previously promised; the third unleashes the start of the subplot or 'lesser intrigues' and finishes 'with an ample turn of the main design', and expectation of a new'; the fourth involves a 'turn' to the subplot and a 'counterturne to the main designe', and finally, the fifth act presents an 'intire diversion' of the plots, before reaching a coda that provides 'an easy untying of those particular knots' and leaves 'such satisfaction of probabilities with the Spectator, as may perswade him that neither Fortune in the fate of the Persons, nor the Writer in the Representment, have been unnaturall or exhorbitant'.⁴³

The poem opens with the Lombard king, Aribert, announcing his retirement as king and that he will pass the throne and his daughter, Rhodalind, over to the man most deserving of her affections. Gondibert defeats his rival, Oswald, in the fight for Rhodalind, but complications occur later when he falls in love with a country maiden, Birtha. Thus, Davenant deals with the conflict between love and honour; Gondibert's feelings for Birtha threaten his ambition and future political and military career. Gondibert's wish to marry Birtha and abandon his commitment to both the crown and Rhodalind contrasts sharply with the warring of ambitions usually found in an 'epic'; both Aribert and Gondibert want to avoid the throne. Meanwhile, the characters of Hubert, Hermegild and Gartha are plotting to do away with Gondibert so they are able to take over, oblivious to the fact that the latter now has very little interest in being crowned ruler. At the close of

⁴³ Ibid., sig. C5^r- sig. C5^v.

the third book, Gondibert's marriage to Rhodalind, not Birtha, is imminent, and the latter plans to follow them to Verona. Gondibert's lieutenant is about to have his marriage undermined by Hermegild and Gartha. Other men are pursuing the affections of Birtha and there is a plot to raze Verona to the ground.⁴⁴

When *Gondibert* introduces the character of Birtha to its reader, in Canto VII of the Second Book, Davenant returns to uniting pleasure with the sensory experience against the backdrop of the natural world. Birtha has always inhabited the countryside, and, in her life, the passing years are marked by the collecting of nature's seasonal bounty, since 'In spring, she gather'd Blossoms for the Still, /In Autumn, Berries; and in Sommer, Flowres.' Birtha, then, leads an existence which co-operates entirely with the rhythm of nature, the caesura slicing into these lines after the mention of the seasons emphasising their centrality in Birtha's annual routine. She is a vision of 'incessant busyness', suggesting an admirable work ethic, and at dusk, 'Evening shuts her Eyes'; her senses and behaviour are dictated by the activity of nature, to the extent that she becomes a passive, but welcoming recipient of its desires. Davenant writes that these eyes 'ne'r saw Courts' and that 'She never had in busy Cities bin' so 'Not seeing punishment, could guesse no Sin;/And Sin not seeing, ne'r had use of tears'. The words 'seeing' and 'saw' place Birtha's lack of experience firmly within the realms of the sensory. Since she has not witnessed the crimes or moral failings of other humans through her own capacity to see, she is free from the pain caused by such actions, and their punishments. Instead, her life is one governed by the natural world, which appears to protect her from vice. Davenant writes of Birtha living amongst nature: 'And as kinde Nature with calm diligence/ Her own free virtue silently imploys, /Whilst she, unheard, does rip'ning growth dispense,/ So were her vertues busie without noise'. The natural world and Birtha work in tandem, their gentle natures reflecting one another. Nature is 'kinde' and possesses 'calm diligence' working 'silently', while Birtha is 'busie' but 'without noise'.⁴⁵ Although Davenant's consideration of the senses is very much at the forefront of this section of the poem, the text is more interested in a lack of sensory experience than intense sensory stimuli. The reader is informed about what it is Birtha has not seen, and that she exists in a quiet world, and does not generate much, if any, of her own noise as she lives and maintains her harmonious relationship with nature. Birtha's unobtrusive, gentle behaviour hints at a

⁴⁴ See also David F. Gladish, *Sir William Davenant's Gondibert*, pp. xx-xxiii.

⁴⁵ William Davenant, *Gondibert: An Heroick Poem* (London: Printed by Tho. Newcomb for John Holden, 1651), sig. Oo4^r- sig. Oo4^v.

moderate, moral way of life, but more significantly here Davenant is suggesting that there are rewards to be had if humans engage with their senses in a considered fashion; too much sensory stimuli can be distracting and prevent pleasurable engagement with the environments in which humans exist. Since Birtha is free from ‘busy cities’, her senses are not overwhelmed and she is able to appreciate and benefit from nature.

Davenant is interested in minimising sensory stimulus elsewhere in *Gondibert*, demonstrated as he writes of war in Canto IV of the First Book:

But vain, though wond’rous, seems the short event
Of what with pomp and Noise we long prepare:
One hour of battail oft that force hath spent,
Which Kings whole lives have gather’d for war.⁴⁶

Battle is ultimately ‘short’ and the ‘pomp and Noise’ generated through its preparation is given a distinctly negative inflection. The ceremonial elements of war, its ‘pomp’, are not glorified here, but made futile, as time wasted for merely ‘one hour of battail’. The second, third and fourth lines of the above also lack any caesura, so read far more quickly than the first line, mirroring the fleeting nature of the conflict Davenant describes. In contrast, the caesura of the opening line causes the reader to linger over the seemingly ‘wond’rous’ nature of war, but this only emphasises how quickly the following lines are read. Davenant tells the reader how ‘Kings whole lives have gather’d for War’, causing the short-lived period of combat to seem especially vain and bleak. Thus, the auditory stimuli here is framed as damaging towards the senses, and therefore requiring moderation if any of the pleasure to be gained in honourable fighting is to be retained.

A little later in the poem, Davenant describes ‘Noise’ as ‘the Enemy of useful Thought’ which has led his characters ‘to more mistakes then blindness’.⁴⁷ Again, the poem finds ‘noise’, with its connotations of unpleasant levels of unwanted, unpleasant sound problematic, to the extent which it prevents ‘useful’ thinking. Davenant suggests that, at times, we need minimal sensory stimulus in order for our minds to operate correctly in the optimum manner, but also in order for things to be pleasurable. It is important to note, however, that *Gondibert* is not uniform in its applauding of silence or quiet, as illustrated in its description of Birtha witnessing her maids mourning the dead Astragon:

⁴⁶ Ibid., sig. T5^v.

⁴⁷ Ibid., sig. Aa3^r.

But now she finds their Musick turn'd to care;
 Their looks allay'd, like beautie over-worn;
 Silent and sad as with'ring Fav'rites are,
 Who for their sick indulgent Monarch mourn.⁴⁸

In this instance, the lack of sound is worrying, even if it is the absence of pleasing 'Musick' rather than discordant 'noise'. However, this music has turned to 'care', and the women in question are 'silent and sad', suggesting that, alongside these missing melodies, is a lack of pleasure. Furthermore, their 'looks' have suffered and, by causing his reader to consider the appearance of these people, the text also makes the reader's imagined sensory experience uncomfortable. Davenant explores the need for moderating the senses, and therefore the pleasure they garner, very early on in *Gondibert*, as he writes of his central character:

For though the Duke taught rigid Discipline,
 He let them beauty thus at distance know;
 As Priests discover some especial Shrine,
 Which none must touch, yet all may to it bow.⁴⁹

Although Gondibert teaches his soldiers self-restraint and strict obedience, he is not an unforgiving leader, since he allows them to see 'beauty' and thus, for the reader, he is both admirable and sympathetic. Gondibert values moderation in behaviour, but also pleasure in beauty, and the emphasis is placed upon the sensory through Davenant's comparison of this action with 'Priests' discovering an awe-inspiring 'Shrine', which they must treat with reverence but cannot 'Touch'. This consequently implies that pleasure can be enjoyed even when the sensory experience is moderated or restricted. The poem's main character is presented as an individual endeavouring to lead a lifestyle which involves pleasure, but of the variety which is produced by a careful engagement with the sensorium. Davenant's verse begins with the plosives of 'Duke and Discipline' but as it is revealed that delight can be brought through appreciation involving sensory engagement, but not an overwhelming of the senses, the text uses the softer, fricative sounds of the third line. Davenant's description of sensory engagement where some level of pleasure is permitted (here touch is denied, but visual appreciation acceptable) is complemented by the gentle sound of these fricatives. This preoccupation with the pleasure the senses may

⁴⁸ Ibid., sig. Rr1^r.

⁴⁹ Ibid., sig. O3^v.

bring, but only if this is in a moderate form, is also evident in the work which followed *Gondibert*, and which put Davenant's flourishing theatrical pedagogy to a practical use.

James R. Jacob and Timothy Raylor suggest that between Davenant's release from the Tower in 1652, and his arrest for debt in the early part of 1654, he drafted his tract *A Proposition for Advancement of Moralitie*, and may also have organised a group of investors, in addition to a company of players, musicians and a set designer to enable the performances of the work he describes in his text. Jacob and Raylor also state that it is likely that Davenant had made contact with John Webb, the architect and set designer, with whom he had worked during the 1630s.⁵⁰ *A Proposition for Advancement of Moralitie* was given to the Council of State and printed anonymously towards the close of 1653, although it is dated 1654. The manuscript copy is lost, but its synopsis survives in a hand resembling that of Davenant.⁵¹ His tract seeks permission for the creation of a government-approved 'school of morality', the purpose of which will be to educate the masses using enchanting but morally educative musical entertainments, which will 'not onely divert the people from disorder, but by degrees enamour them with consideration of the conveniences and protections of Government'.⁵² Thus, Davenant is not simply presenting a solution to the problem of discontented citizens liable to rebel, but is interested in promoting what the government can offer a co-operative citizen and therefore creating a distaste for disquiet. According to Davenant, a consequence of teaching society in this fashion is the perpetual quiet of the people, having been persuaded into co-operation by the performances put on for their benefit. The text was considered significant enough by the government to be referred to intelligencer and policy reviewer Samuel Hartlib, who also writes of Davenant's preparations for a performance in 1656, although he was clearly not concerned by his 'Moral Representations' enough to remember the writer's forename, mistakenly referring to Davenant as 'Sir John'.⁵³ However, a government agent reported on *The First Days Entertainment at Rutland House* in June of 1656, suggesting that Davenant's ideas had prompted some level of interest or concern.⁵⁴ James R. Jacob and Timothy Raylor propose that *A Proposition*

⁵⁰ James R. Jacob and Timothy Raylor, 'Opera and obedience: Thomas Hobbes and *A Proposition for Advancement of Moralitie* by Sir William Davenant', p. 207.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 206.

⁵² William Davenant, *A Proposition for Advancement of Moralitie* (London, 1654), sig. A8^r.

⁵³ Samuel Hartlib quoted in James R. Jacob and Timothy Raylor, 'Opera and obedience: Thomas Hobbes and *A Proposition for Advancement of Moralitie* by Sir William Davenant', p. 235.

⁵⁴ James R. Jacob and Timothy Raylor, 'Opera and obedience: Thomas Hobbes and *A Proposition for Advancement of Moralitie* by Sir William Davenant', p. 208.

offers an ‘early, perhaps unique, exercise in practical Hobbism’ and I suggest that it is this interweaving of Davenant’s interpretation of Hobbes’s beliefs that enables his exploration of the sensory experience as a sphere which can accommodate different conceptualisations of pleasure.⁵⁵ It is possible that Davenant was also influenced, albeit to much lesser degree, by Latin Secretary Milton, who had previously opposed the abolition of the theatres and suggested a scheme of entertainment similar to that articulated by Davenant, and also by William Cavendish, part of Davenant’s circle of exiles in Paris and a believer in the importance of recreational activities such as plays to keep the people from rebellion. However, unlike the argument put forward by Davenant, such entertainment would be merely a diversion rather than an attempt at moral reform.⁵⁶ Davenant’s awareness of the direction of the discourse of his peers further illustrates his ability to engage with, and rework, the various ideologies with which he came into contact.⁵⁷

The Proposition is ostensibly concerned with persuading the populace to behave, and also operates as a ploy enabling Davenant to justify the staging of his work as part of the Interregnum landscape. It is, however, also very much preoccupied with the eliciting of audience pleasure, via performances geared towards affecting a heightened sensory experience. Davenant is particularly emphatic about the delights of music, to the extent where it can remove the weariness and tedium caused by hard labour, since Amphion’s ‘Harp’ made ‘pleasant their toyles who built up the walls of *Thebes*’, even if he did himself also employ magic to aid in the wall’s creation.⁵⁸ The use of the word ‘pleasant’ suggests that harmonious sound can soothe the common people and Davenant’s classical reference frames his idea as reassuringly familiar rather than innovative or cynically entrepreneurial. Davenant also writes of the beautiful music created by Orpheus, which had a ‘civilizing’ effect upon his ‘rude people’. Since Orpheus also perished at the hands of those immune to his music, Davenant’s insistence that it, and the subsequent pleasure it provides, can only be of great use to the contemporary government resonates particularly powerfully at this moment in the text. In an especially persuasive turn of phrase, the text states that ‘*Musick* hath so strong Sympathy with good minds, that (as *Plato* saies) he cannot be virtuous that love it not’.⁵⁹ This sentence focuses upon the virtue-imbuing

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 205.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 218.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 208.

⁵⁸ William Davenant, *A Proposition for Advancement of Moraltie*, sig. A8^v.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

properties of music, allowing Davenant's proposed performance-based school of morality to appear noble and useful, as opposed to a potential site for cultivating hedonistic, rebellious citizens. However, the text's focus upon pleasure and royalism is still evident in its reference to Plato, whose philosophy was adapted by the Neoplatonic love cult at Henrietta Maria's court, a movement in which Davenant was fully engaged and inspired by, even if he was not wholly supportive of it. A reference such as this is part of Davenant's positioning of pleasure as a sphere in which some royalist ideas may persist, potentially even with the full endorsement of the state, provided his proposals be deemed necessary by the regime. For Davenant, then, pleasure is not wholly defined by supposed royalist ideals such as an inherent appreciation of the value of the arts and of culture, but is understood to potentially have room for such ideals, alongside others. Davenant's form of royalism is content to accept a version of pleasure which is far more wide-reaching, demonstrating his willingness to embrace a kind of pleasure which overlaps with multiple political positions, and not simply a certain strain of royalism.

Davenant is clearly painfully aware of why his ideas may be received less than favourably, since he explicitly addresses any concern his reader may have that the proposed performances will involve the masses experiencing 'too great a diversion of pleasure'.⁶⁰ He insists:

I reply, that whosoever in Government endeavours to make the people serious and grave (which are attributes that may become the peoples Representatives, but not the people) doth practice a new way to enlarge the State, by making every Subject a States-Man; and he that meanes to govern so sadly (as it were without any Musick in his Dominion) must lay but light burdens on his Subjects [...] that Supream Power which expects a firme obedience in those who are not us'd to rejoycing but live mournfully, as if they were still preparing for the funerall of peace, hath err'd in contriving the lastingnesse of Government, which is the principall work of Art [...]⁶¹

This passage is also to be found in *The Preface to Gondibert*, and Davenant's wish to recycle his earlier material in *A Proposition* is indicative of a shift from putting forward a theory of how performance may educate the populace, to a desire to put theory into practice.⁶² Davenant articulates what is essentially the same concern three times over in the above; by making the populace 'serious and grave' the authorities force upon them a behaviour which does not suit; if one wishes to rule 'sadly' he must not demand much of

⁶⁰ Ibid., sig. B4^v.

⁶¹ Ibid., sig. B4^v- sig. B5^v.

⁶² See William Davenant, *The Preface to Gondibert: An Heroick Poem*, sig. Hj^r.

his 'Subjects', and if a ruler expects those beneath him or her to 'live mournfully', then they have failed to understand the best method to maintain the 'lastingness of Government.' The use of the term 'mournfully' suggests that individuals denied pleasure exist in an emotionally fraught state, consumed by unhappiness and unable to contribute to society in a pro-active manner. Davenant even compares this to awaiting 'the funeral of peace', suggesting pleasure and a quiet state are so deeply interwoven that, to deny citizens the former, can only result in a conflict so severe that harmony meets a permanent end. For Davenant, pleasure oils the machinery of a successful state, and should be encouraged rather than suppressed, even if this is through the carefully constructed dramatic entertainments with which he hopes to aid the regime by providing. The text refrains from suggesting the government should consider a less 'serious and grave' approach to rule, since this 'become[s] the peoples Representatives'. Thus, pleasure is not necessarily to be embraced by all, although this could be interpreted as part of Davenant's deliberate anti-populism, the message being that pleasure is for the masses, if we want them to co-operate, and not for those who are powerful and/or move in the higher echelons of society. Yet this is exactly as the text hopes to appear if it is to gain approval, since Davenant himself is probably not an individual interested in denying himself or anyone else pleasure.

Although Davenant is ostensibly making a strong case for the music's ability to quiet the populace, this is underpinned by its role in providing pleasure, and Davenant makes this endorsing of pleasure far more palatable for the regime, by constantly emphasising his supposed interest in subduing the very individuals he is seeking to please. This is not to say that the anti-populism presented by Davenant here is insincere, but it is made especially sharp by the writer's desire to emphasise the potential benefits of his dramatic output for the state.

Early in the year of 1656, secretary to the Council of State, John Thurloe, received an undated, unsigned letter discussing the economic benefits of public dramatic performances in London if they were allowed to go ahead, and the ways in which they would benefit its populace. The text is entitled, in a different hand to its main body, 'Some Observations concerning the People of this Nation', suggesting that at least one reader felt that the writer's primary interest is the wellbeing of his fellow citizens, as opposed to the financial profit of staging such entertainments, despite the emphasis placed upon this in the letter itself. The missive has since been attributed to Davenant, and not simply because the hand used is similar to his own writing; the letter states an

intention to produce a performance which sounds exactly like Davenant's 1658 production *The Cruelty of the Spaniards in Peru*, claiming 'the first arguments may consist of the Spaniards' barbarous conquests in the West Indies and of their severall cruelties there exercis'd upon the subjects of this nation'. The text also refers to 'morall representations', a phrase used by Davenant to describe his output in *The First Days Entertainment at Rutland House* (1656).⁶³ Most significantly, the letter has much in common with Davenant's earlier reflection extolling the virtues of dramatic performance, *A Proposition for Advancement of Moralitie*, and its accompanying synopsis. There is also a close similarity between the written script of Davenant's letter to Thurloe and his summary of *A Proposition for Advancement of Moralitie*.⁶⁴ In a remarkably similar vein, the 1656 text is ultimately requesting that its writer be allowed to stage performances, not just because they will benefit the economy, but because they possess the ability, according to Davenant, to quell any latent discontent on behalf of the masses; he writes:

[...] pleasant assemblies [are needed] not only in times of peace [...] but allsoe in seasons of hazard, because States should never seeme dejected, nor the People be permitted to be sad. [...] The People of England [are] naturally inclin'd to that melancholy that breeds sedition.⁶⁵

The text is clear in its belief that the people should not be 'permitted' to be sad – their wellbeing is the state's responsibility. Davenant is keen to emphasise the value of dramatic performance as beneficial, and not simply to distract the population from seditious behaviour during a politically volatile period, but as necessary even in peacetime, although in this instance he provides no elaboration. Yet the language he uses means that the masses appear as if they may break into misrule at any moment, in the absence of his civilising performances, since they are 'naturally' predisposed to sedition. Davenant also insists that his 'morall representations' will be 'without obscenenesse, profanenesse, and scandal', which is indicative of the extent to which he was aware that his proposal for performances was not one which would be easily swallowed.⁶⁶ Davenant then draws upon history to add weight to his argument that the populace requires certain

⁶³ William Davenant, 'Some observations concerning the people of this nation', in C.H. Firth, 'Sir William Davenant and the Revival of the Drama during the Protectorate', *The English Historical Review*, 18.70 (1903), 319-321 (p. 321).

⁶⁴ James R. Jacob and Timothy Raylor, 'Opera and obedience: Thomas Hobbes and *A Proposition for Advancement of Moralitie* by Sir William Davenant', pp. 249-250.

⁶⁵ William Davenant, 'Some observations concerning the people of this nation', in C.H. Firth, 'Sir William Davenant and the Revival of the Drama during the Protectorate', p. 320.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 321.

entertainments, writing ‘the People were this way guided to assist their owne interests by the Athenians and Romans; the one laying aside a third part of the publique revenue for representations to divert them’. By emphasising the fact that his ideas surrounding performance are not new, Davenant seeks out a form of reassuring legitimacy.

Later on in 1656, Davenant was moving towards the reality he describes in his previous texts, and chose to stage a performance which presented an argument for a genre with which he was much enamoured, opera, entitled *The First Days Entertainment At Rutland-House, By Declamations and Musick: after the manner of the Ancients*. This entertainment, staged in a rather cramped space at Davenant’s own home, lasted an hour and a half, being first performed on 23rd May and for ten days afterwards.⁶⁷ *The First Days Entertainment* was not a play, and Davenant describes it in his prologue as being a ‘publique entertainment by Moral Representations’, but a piece which involved a number of speakers. It is split into two main sections, the first being a debate between ‘Diogenes the Cynick and Aristophanes the Poet’, the second revolving around a discussion between a ‘Parisian’ and a ‘Londoner’.⁶⁸ The first half of the text provides an especially good example of Davenant continuing to explore the relationship between the human senses and the experience of pleasure, since the audience is presented with arguments both for and against ‘moral representations’ on a public stage, via Aristophanes and Diogenes respectively.

Diogenes tells Davenant’s spectators of ‘the pleasure of Musick’ which is, according to him ‘a deceitful Art, whose operations lead to the evil of extrems, making the Melancholy to become mad, and the merry to grow fantastical.’⁶⁹ This argument may seem ridiculous, and this is part of what makes it so entertaining for an audience, but it articulates concepts which were not without root in contemporary society, especially considering the place of music within theatre productions. For Diogenes, ‘Musick’ has no purpose, since those who are unhappy it only drives to insanity, and those who are already content will also lose their powers of reason and become ‘fantastical’. Davenant’s choice of word is revealing here, since, while Davenant is no endorser of Diogenes’ views on pleasure, his views on the fantastic and its place (or lack of place) in literature were made clear in the *Preface to Gondibert*. More importantly, by framing its supposed attack on music in this fashion, the text only serves to suggest and further emphasise its primary

⁶⁷ Philip Bordinat and Sophia B. Blaydes, *Sir William Davenant*, p. 110.

⁶⁸ William Davenant, *The First Days Entertainment at Rutland House* (London: Printed by J.M. for H. Herringman, 1656), sig. D3^v.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.* sig. B4^r.

function as a method to engage the senses in order to elicit pleasure. Davenant even uses the term ‘pleasure’ and also manages to criticise the ‘evil of extremes’, which is especially pertinent given his wide-ranging interest in pursuing moderation. Additionally, although those watching the performance are told that music is a ‘deceitful Art’, they have paid to attend a staging billed as doing its work via ‘Declamations and Musick’, and which opens with a ‘Flourish of Musick’.⁷⁰ Diogenes goes on to suggest that ‘Our Cities ancient stamp, the *Owl* (which bears no part in the merry Quires of the Woods) denotes the Wisdom, not the mirth of Athens’; as in the prefatory material to *Gondibert*, ‘mirth’ is sometimes referred to with derision, as representative of all that stands opposed to ‘wisdom’. This reference to the owl also evokes the musical since the tawny owl, a common species found across Europe and the variety with which Davenant’s audience would be familiar, or at least familiar with its call, has a very distinctive sound. Diogenes also states that it does not partake in ‘the merry Quires of the Woods’ alongside the diurnal birds, but this only reminds the audience of the beauty of nature in the form of ‘merry’ birdsong. Yet again, Davenant carves out a space for nature as a sphere in which moderate sensory pleasures can fruitfully be experienced, even if this view is not shared by the character articulating the above. Later on, Aristophanes offers a counter-argument to Diogenes’s treatment of music, claiming instead that:

Musick doth not heighten Melancholy into Madness, but rather unites and recollects a broken and scatter’d minde; giving it sudden strength to resist the evils it hath long and strongly bred. Neither doth it make the merry seem fantastical, but only to such as are enviously sad at the pleasure of others.⁷¹

The function of music is framed as having a cerebral benefit, since it can remedy a ‘broken and scatter’d minde’, suggesting that the pleasure gained from a pleasant auditory experience promotes an admirable type of thinking and equally admirable thoughts. In addition to this, music provides the mind with ‘strength’ to fight against ‘evils’, an appealing notion not only for the individual, but in considerations of wider societal behaviour in relation to state rule, which we know is a theme with which Davenant was very much preoccupied. Aristophanes rebukes the assertion that those who are already happy abandon rational thought when exposed to music, instead insisting that this could

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid., sig. C7^v.

only possibly appear to be the case to an individual envious of delight in others, and envy is easily presented by the text as an unappealing behaviour.

Earlier in the text, Aristophanes insists:

Diogenes is implacably offended at Recreation [...] he [...] perhaps imagines that the Creation hath provided too much room; that the Air is too spacious for Birds, the Woods for Beasts, and the Seas for Fish; especially, if their various motion in enjoying their large Elements contribute to what he esteems vain idleness, Recreation. This discontented Cynick would [...] turn all learning into melancholy Magick. He is [...] offended at Mirth, as if he would accuse even nature her self to want gravity, for bringing in the Spring so merrily with the Musick of birds.⁷²

In this part of the text, Davenant's uniting of nature and pleasure is especially overt and enables Aristophanes to successfully undermine Diogenes rejection of pleasure generated through 'Mirth' or 'Musick'. Diogenes's thesis is made ridiculous by Aristophanes's claim that he even rails against not only nature, but the natural world as God's 'Creation', as if mere animals take too much pleasure in practicing their natural behaviours within their normal habitat, where the 'Air', 'Woods' or 'Seas' are simply 'too spacious'. The inhabiting of these 'large Elements' is, for Diogenes, a form of 'vain idleness' called 'Recreation'. By condemning the mechanisms of the natural environment, Diogenes is shown to be damning a type of pleasure deeply engrained in godly creation, causing the character himself to appear unnatural or at odds with the world around him; Davenant gives pleasure legitimacy, in this text and elsewhere, by rooting it in nature. The reference to birds welcoming Spring is taken almost exactly from *The Preface to Gondibert*, reflecting the persistence of Davenant's ideas on pleasure and the senses. The line in Davenant's earlier text reads 'And lesse hath that Power consider'd Nature; as if such new austerity did seem to tax, even her, for want of gravity, in bringing in the Spring so merrily with a muscull variety of Birds.'⁷³ Aristophanes' reference to his opponent's interest in 'melancholy Magick' is also another indicator of Davenant's disdain towards the supernatural, another theme tackled in *Gondibert*, and he juxtaposes it with an absence of pleasure, since it is 'melancholy'. Instead of finding pleasure in the fantastic, this play situates it not only in the sounds of nature, but in its visual beauty, since:

we learn it there where there is no sin; for Nature, who cannot err, ordain'd the patterns, even in the various and gaudy ornaments of Birds and Flowers; or if excelling ornament

⁷² Ibid., sig. C1^v-sig. C2^v.

⁷³ William Davenant, *The Preface to Gondibert*, sig. Hj^r-Hj^v.

offend him, why looks he upward to the Stars; since of the greatest part of their infinite number, it is hard to finde any other use then that of beautifying and adorning the world?⁷⁴

‘Birds’ and ‘Flowers’ are given ‘ornaments’, and ‘Nature’, which ‘cannot err’. Thus, the text proposes that the pleasure given to humans by aesthetically pleasing flora and fauna via our sensory processes cannot be a mistake, or lead to sin, since nature cannot be mistaken. Even the ‘Stars’ possess beauty, and by referring to the celestial in this way Davenant shows that the beauty of nature is all around and restricted to the environment inhabited by humans. His focus on nature and pleasure lessens in Davenant’s later work, but does not disappear completely. However, his return to stage work does require a slightly different approach.

3.3: Opera

During the 1650s only Davenant was allowed to ‘mount and print new forms of theatrical entertainment’.⁷⁵ In 1642, the theatres had been temporarily closed due to such entertainment being perceived as unseemly while the country faced such troubled times, and this occurred again in October 1647 and was made a permanent measure in February 1648.⁷⁶ Davenant continued his 1650s work with his opera, *The Siege of Rhodes*, which was also important in that it marked a change in the locations where performances were being staged: the text was staged in the Cockpit theatre of Drury Lane, not at Rutland House.⁷⁷ Davenant gets around the theatre ban with his use of words, since *The Siege of Rhodes* describes itself as a ‘Representation’.⁷⁸ *The Siege of Rhodes*, or at least its first part, was performed and first printed in 1656 and also entered into the Stationers’ Register during the same year.⁷⁹ Janet Clare writes of there being a second edition which appeared in the same year, ‘printed in part from the same setting of type, but with additional paratextual material containing names of musicians’.⁸⁰ Rachel Willie notes that

⁷⁴ Ibid., sig. C3^v.

⁷⁵ Rachel Willie, *Staging the Revolution: Drama, Reinvention and History, 1647-72*, p. 118.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 5.

⁷⁷ Philip Bordinat and Sophia B. Blaydes, *Sir William Davenant*, p. 113; Rachel Willie, *Staging the Revolution: Drama, Reinvention and History, 1647-72*, p. 118.

⁷⁸ William Davenant, *The Siege of Rhodes* (London: Printed by J.M. for Henry Herringman 1656), sig. A1^r. Philip Bordinat and Sophia B. Blaydes, *Sir William Davenant*, p. 113.

⁷⁹ Rachel Willie, *Staging the Revolution: Drama, Reinvention and History, 1647-72*, p. 118.

⁸⁰ Janet Clare, *Drama of the English Republic, 1649-60* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2002), p. 191.

there was a re-printing in 1658 which included minor revisions, and Susan Wiseman that ‘a second quarto of the first part was printed in 1659 with a new piece of staging’.⁸¹ The second part of *The Siege of Rhodes* was entered into the Stationers’ Register on 30 May 1659 (part of this date in Willie) and the text was performed again in 1661, at the Duke’s playhouse, alternating for eleven days with Part II.⁸² The second part of *The Siege of Rhodes* did not make its way into print until 1663, alongside an enlarged version of Part I, and complete with a dedication to the royalist Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon. Then, in 1670, both parts were reprinted together, along with the dedication to Hyde, posthumously.⁸³ Unfortunately, no 1659 version of the text survives, which might lead one to the assumption that the second part of the opera was not performed until after Charles II’s ascension to the throne, even if it was written and licensed beforehand. Rachel Willie argues that, even so, there are sections of both the 1650s version of the drama and in the later altered version of the first part which court royalist ideology.⁸⁴ Susan Wiseman writes ‘if the 1659 performance of the second part was substantially different from the 1661 performance recorded in the 1663 edition, and it seems possible that it was (particularly in view of the addition of the character of Roxolana to the 1661 performance), we have no record of it.’⁸⁵ It is impossible to be sure of exactly what was in the 1659 version; for the purposes of this chapter, I have decided to focus upon the 1656 edition, and, in the following chapter, I discuss the enlarged 1661 version of Part I and Part II.

The plot of *The Siege of Rhodes* is not as complicated as its publication history, although this becomes more complex in its revised versions and, in common with his earlier work of the decade, Davenant is interested in the moderation of pleasure through a certain kind of engagement with the sensory experience. Davenant’s drama is inspired by factual events concerning the last of the sieges of Rhodes by Turkish soldiers in 1522, led by Solyman the Magnificent, and these conflicts were well-known by Davenant’s seventeenth-century audience. The city was under siege for six months, and those defending it included six hundred Knights of St John. The sources used by Davenant are very likely to have been *Mustapha*, written by Fulke Greville, Davenant’s former patron,

⁸¹ Susan Wiseman, *Drama and Politics in the English Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 151.

⁸² Philip Bordinat and Sophia B. Blaydes, *Sir William Davenant*, p. 126.

⁸³ Rachel Willie, *Staging the Revolution: Drama, Reinvention and History, 1647-72*, p. 118; Susan Wiseman, *Drama and Politics in the English Civil War*, pp. 151-152.

⁸⁴ Rachel Willie, *Staging the Revolution: Drama, Reinvention and History, 1647-72*, p. 121f.

⁸⁵ Susan Wiseman, *Drama and Politics in the English Civil War*, p. 151.

and Richard Knolles's *The General Historie of the Turkes*, which went through five editions from 1603 to 1638, and provides information on the resistance to the Turks initiated by Phillippe Villiers, Grand Master of the international Knights Hospitallers, before the people of Rhodes were forced to surrender.⁸⁶

Unsurprisingly perhaps, Davenant emphasises the strength and courage of those who fought to protect Rhodes, as these included English soldiers, and in his play, includes his hero Alphonso. On the surface, *The Siege of Rhodes* looks like it will simply present a predictable opposition between virtuous Christian men and untrustworthy Muslim Turks, but this is not the narrative Davenant chooses to follow. Instead, Solyman is presented far more sympathetically than an audience may have expected, and Alphonso, the Christian man and 'Cicilian Duke', is provoked into jealousy through Solyman's own admirable behaviour. Part I, in its 1656 incarnation, begins with the first stage of the battle at Rhodes, and the audience is introduced to Alphonso, who chooses to stay, fighting, rather than returning to Sicily, and Ianthe, his new wife. The situation grows dire for the people of Rhodes, but the battle continues, with Solyman becoming frustrated at the lack of progress made by his army. It is at this point that Solyman meets Ianthe, who has travelled to Rhodes to be with Alphonso. Solyman is deeply impressed by Ianthe's virtue in her unwillingness to remove her veil for anyone but her new husband and keeps her safe from harm in his prison camp. He resolves to rescue Ianthe and Alphonso, but the latter is determined to fight on regardless; Alphonso's unfounded jealousy is driven by the two days and nights his wife has spent in Solyman's camp, which causes the former to be deeply suspicious of any desire to protect him and his betrothed, and he later confesses this to Ianthe. In a final battle at the end of the play, she is wounded but eventually reunited with a heroic Alphonso. The enlarged version of Part I differs in that it adds the character of Roxolana, Solyman's wife, who is envious of Ianthe's virtuous nature and, through this, angers her husband. Philip Bordinat and Sophia B. Blaydes suggest that she 'reveal[s] Solyman's flaws of anger, susceptibility to lust, and disloyalty to his religion', which dilutes his admirable behaviour as framed by the 1658 version of Part I.⁸⁷

The most important scene of *The Siege of Rhodes*, in relation to Davenant's approach to sensory pleasure and his belief that it should be moderated to be kept within certain parameters, is the moment where Ianthe first meets Solyman, and is asked to

⁸⁶ Philip Bordinat and Sophia B. Blaydes, *Sir William Davenant*, p. 115; Janet Clare, *Drama of the English Republic, 1649-60*, p. 181.

⁸⁷ Philip Bordinat and Sophia B. Blaydes, *Sir William Davenant*, p. 127.

remove her veil, but refuses to do so. She is introduced by the character Mustapha as ‘Ianthe, the Cicilian Flower/Sweeter than Buds unfolded in a Shower’ and through this metaphor she is made part of the pleasure inherent in the natural world which Davenant has explored elsewhere. These lines evoke the olfactory, suggesting Ianthe is sweeter than the sweetest, newly unfurled flower buds. While this appears to be high praise, it is problematic because it situates sensory pleasure at one end of a spectrum of extremes; Ianthe’s sweetness is almost intoxicating. However, this is moderated by her virtuous behaviour in shielding her face with its veil from both Solyman and from the text’s audience. While her sweetness is so great it is anything but moderate (even if this does serve to emphasise her moral virtue), the visual beauty of her face cannot be enjoyed by anyone in her presence. Mustapha is keen to educate his master on Ianthe’s honourable qualities, informing him that ‘though this bashful Lady then did wear/Her Face still vail’d, her valour did appear:/ She urged their courage when they boldly Fought;/ And many shun’d the dangers, which she sought’.⁸⁸ Although Ianthe chooses to keep herself veiled and therefore hide her beauty, which Solymon may have used as an indicator of her morality, this is nevertheless apparent in the courage evident in her approach to the dangerous situation in Rhodes. Alphonso’s wife is described as ‘bashful’, implying that she is a modest, demure woman and her ‘Valour’ is framed to emphasise that which is seen, since Davenant writes of how it ‘appear[s]’. The implication is that, if Ianthe were not veiled, the combination of her valour, sweetness, virtue and beauty would overwhelm the senses, and curtail the pleasure Solymon gains through the brief time during which he is exposed to her. Instead, by keeping Ianthe veiled in a scene where she is received positively, treated well and promised safety, Davenant embraces the need for the sensory experience to be one of moderation, where pleasure is carefully controlled. Ianthe’s veiling scene forms a stark contrast to that of Corsa’s in *The Cruell Brother*, whose veiling signals the beginning of her downfall and eventual death. For Ianthe, however, her meeting with Solymon brings her much closer to reunion with her husband. Solymon is also enlightened by the events of this scene, praising the actions of, in essence, an enemy, as he exclaims ‘O wond’rous vertue of a Christian Wife’. That is not to say that at this point Solymon has reached a position where he respects fully Ianthe’s position, since he bids her still to ‘unvail!’. Ianthe responds by informing him of her veil that ‘[...] no Monarch but my Lord has right;/ Nor will it yield to Treaty or Might:/ here Heaven’s

⁸⁸ William Davenant, *The Siege of Rhodes*, sig. C2^r.

great Law defends him from surprise:/ This Curtain only opens to his eyes.’⁸⁹ Ianthe speaks of her moral strength and the guidance of her faith, where the only entity other than herself who can exert influence over it is God, since it ‘only opens to his eyes’, and not to persuasion in the form of a ‘Treaty’ or force as ‘Might’. The reference to eyes serves to further highlight the role of her veil in allowing this scene to be one which endorses pleasure, but only as part of a certain engagement with the senses which celebrates moderation. A little later, Solymon is entirely convinced of Ianthe’s wish to remain veiled and praises her as a ‘great example of a Christian Wife.’ and releases her to the safety of the prison camp. Ianthe embodies pleasure in a moderate guise, and her virtue enables Davenant’s argument to gain ground in a convincing fashion. He becomes increasingly interested in portrayals of virtue into the Restoration period, where his work becomes more generically similar, to some extent.

Davenant’s 1650s output, though, is highly varied in terms of genre, and his interest in the moderation of pleasure through a considered engagement with the sensory experience does wane towards the decade’s close, but it is nevertheless explored thoroughly by his Interregnum output when viewed as a whole. This chapter demonstrates how these texts examine the sensory experience as an integral facet of pleasure, but where this is elicited through a measured engagement with the human sensorium. In the same way that Davenant, in his masques, seeks to endorse a palatable approach to human sensuality, where the mind and body are given equal status, in his 1650s work he celebrates the way in which the senses can harness pleasure in a moderate form. Davenant’s embracing of nature’s place in sensory pleasure is not dissimilar to a type of Puritan ideal, but he is also clearly influenced by both Hobbes and Epicurus. His reworking of Hobbesian theory to persuade the Interregnum government of the value of his dramatic entertainments is a particularly excellent example of Davenant’s ability to reframe sensory pleasure in such a way that it resonates beyond his fellow royalists. This, alongside Davenant’s treatment of the sensory experience throughout the 1650s, demonstrates the accommodating nature of his own royalism.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

Chapter 4: Sensuality, Virtue, and the Restoration Actress

4.1: Theatre at the Restoration

During the Interregnum, Davenant is interested in the delight elicited by a careful, moderate engagement with the senses, and his Restoration work also explores the relationship between the sensory experience and morality, endeavouring to liberate sensuality from the confines of the hedonistic behaviour which underpinned a royalist stereotype. Davenant also inhabited a London where royalism was continuing to change. After having promised a tolerant approach and desire for conciliation in his Declaration of Breda, Charles II arrived in the city on 29 May 1660 to mass celebrations, but also to a royalism which was to remain very much divided, and where factional conflicts persisted. There was a scramble for jobs and favours from the King, but in the distribution of positions of office, and the return of estates, while some royalists were lucky, many were disappointed. Not only this, but while some royalists followed the King's advice and stressed their moderate views in public statements, others were more interested in revenge as far as those who had supported the Commonwealth regime were concerned. Divisions also existed between those who had fought during the civil wars and those who were new to royalism in the late 1650s.¹ Davenant had to negotiate a shifting political landscape, which, while not as turbulent as the revolutionary decades, was not without discontent. Nevertheless, in the eight years before his death in 1668, his theatrical career flourished.² During this time, Davenant was also able to continue to follow his interest in moral education, the sensory experience and the stage, against the backdrop of constantly evolving types of royalism. This chapter will examine how Davenant's approach to the actress and the sensory experience demonstrates the elasticity of his own royalism at this point in his literary career. I will begin by discussing the establishment of Davenant and Killigrew's theatre monopoly. Davenant was given rights to certain plays under the condition that they be free from anything which could be considered obscene or in any way morally problematic, and this influenced his approach to the sensory experience

¹ David Underdown, *Royalist Conspiracy in England: 1649-1660*, pp. 314-325.

² Mary Edmond, *Rare Sir William Davenant*, pp. 202-203; Philip Bordinat and Sophia B. Blaydes, *Sir William Davenant*, pp. 32-33.

within his work of the decade. For this reason, we must consider this legislation, which shaped the performances he produced. I will then discuss the introduction of the actress on the professional stage, as Davenant considers the senses through the role of the women new to the stage during the Restoration.

At the time of Charles II's arrival in England, there were three, if not more, independent companies of players acting in the capital. There was a young company at the Cockpit, who were mostly new to the stage and managed by John Rhodes; a more experienced and older company whose manager was Michael Mohun occupying the Red Bull, and a company at Salisbury Court under William Beeston. Master of the Revels, Sir Henry Herbert was keen to enforce as much legislation upon these companies as possible.³ Meanwhile, Davenant discussed with Thomas Killigrew the possibility of creating a theatrical monopoly, established by a royal grant, involving their selection of the best actors currently working in the existing companies, and which would also insist upon the suppression of all potential rival theatre companies. Killigrew and Davenant did not have a particularly close friendship, and unlike the latter, Killigrew had been appointed a Groom of the Bedchamber in Charles II's household, and was far closer to the King.⁴ Davenant had been in possession of his own theatre warrant, granted by Charles I, since 1639, but this had remained unused. On 9 July 1660, Killigrew's influence with the new monarch enabled him to secure an order for a royal warrant.⁵ This gave him similar rights to those stated in Davenant's 1639 document, most importantly the right to put together a company and use a theatre, provided his company and Davenant's are the only '2 Companies [...] to be erected'.⁶ The text insists that 'there shall be noe more places of representacons or Companies of actors or representacons of Scenes in the Citties of London or Westminster' and declares 'all other Company or Companies to be sylenced and surprest', getting rid of any competition in the way both men desired.⁷

Davenant was not happy with his own, much older patent, and ten days after Killigrew secured his order, Davenant drafted another order which incorporated his own

³ Leslie Hotson, *The Commonwealth and Restoration Stage* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1928), p. 198; Emmett L. Avery and Arthur H. Scouten, 'Introduction' in *The London Stage: Part I, 1660-1800* ed. by William Van Lennep, 5 vols (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1965), I, pp. xxi-clxxv (p. xxxiii).

⁴ Leslie Hotson, *The Commonwealth and Restoration Stage*, p. 198; Mary Edmond, *Rare Sir William Davenant*, p. 142.

⁵ Mary Edmond, *Rare Sir William Davenant*, p. 142.

⁶ Leslie Hotson, *The Commonwealth and Restoration Stage*, p. 199; p. 400.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 400.

rights and Killigrew's into one document. It states that their 'Companyes' are to 'be under the jurisdiction, government and authoritie of the sayed Thomas Killigrew and Sir William Davenant', indicating Davenant's desire for as much theatrical freedom as he could possibly be allowed.⁸ In the same vein as Killigrew's order for a company, this text forbids any kind of performance not involving the two companies specified by the document, stating that all other companies should 'be absolutely suppressed'.⁹ The text is dated 19 July 1660, and just over a month later, on 20 August, an order insisting that the actors at the Red Bull, Salisbury Court, the Cockpit and other theatres are suppressed by city officials is calendared in the State Papers. At first glance, this appears to be an order from Charles II, but it is in Davenant's handwriting, bears no official signature and is not found in the Entry Books, which document such orders. Such facts strongly suggest that it is not an order compiled by the King, but instead the order Davenant hoped the monarch would write in response to the requests from himself and Killigrew.¹⁰ Davenant's warrant not only insists that the activities of the other companies at work in London be brought promptly to a halt, but that their performances contain 'much prophaneness, scurrility, obsceneness, and other abuses tending to the great Scandall of Religion, corruption of Manners, and ill example of our loving subjects'.¹¹ Such suggestions may look like a cynical attempt on Davenant's behalf to rid the theatrical landscape of its competition, but Davenant's earlier texts, such as his masques of the 1630s and many of his 1650s texts, demonstrate an interest in the power of the dramatic to instruct, reform and inspire certain modes of behaviour and morality.

On 21 August, the warrant Davenant sought with his 19 July order, which would establish the monopoly he proposed, was passed by the privy signet. It illustrates the new government's eagerness to restrict theatrical entertainments to those which conformed to their own notions of what was morally acceptable, and the similarities between this document and the order Davenant hoped Charles II would write are apparent. The warrant granting the monopoly comments upon the 'prophanation' and 'scurrility' which it insists is currently to be found in performances in and around London, demonstrating the state's

⁸ Ibid., pp. 199-200.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 201.

¹¹ Ibid. See also Marcus Nevitt, 'Restoration Theatre and Interrgenum Royalism: The Cavalier Rivalry of John Denham and William Davenant' in *Sir John Denham (1614/15-1669)*, p. 63. Although, with the monopoly, other theatres were prohibited, Charles II issued a grant to Giulio Gentileschi, who had performed for him in exile in Germany in 1655, to perform Italian opera. Nothing was ever performed under this license. See Leslie Hotson, *The Commonwealth and Restoration Stage*, p. 177.

desire to enforce censorship allied with concern regarding the morality of its populace, which it views as vulnerable to the corrupting influence of many stage entertainments. Such work is described as ‘very scandalous’ and ‘offensive’, implying that it is shocking, morally problematic and distasteful, and that its main purpose seems to be in encouraging the ‘debauching of the manners of such as are present at them’ and demonstrating ‘extraordinary licentiousness’.¹² The text is unequivocal in its views on the ostensibly damaging nature of dramatic performance. Yet it also recognises the potential of such performances to educate their audiences, stating that if ‘well managed’ such plays could ‘serve as morall instructions in humane life’, such language being strikingly reminiscent of Davenant’s own *Interregnum* texts on didactic stage entertainments.¹³ The text continues to voice its fears regarding the ‘evill’ present in plays, but it is confident that this can be dealt with, not simply by creating new plays, but by rewriting those that already exist; it encourages Davenant and Killigrew to censor existing texts to make them appropriate for a reformed stage.¹⁴ After such work has been performed, the document suggests, such plays will become ‘innocent and harmlesse divertissement for many of our subjects’ and because of this, the warrant states that for this reason it is not ‘necessary totally to surpresse the use of theaters’.¹⁵ At the end of the document, the text is particularly repetitive in its articulation of the need for plays which are morally edifying for their spectators, stating that Davenant and Killigrew ‘doe not at any time hereafter cause to be acted or represented any play, enterlude, or opera, containing any matter of prophanation, scurrility or obscenity’.¹⁶ Not only did this grant establish a monopoly, but it also infringed upon the powers of Sir Henry Herbert, as the Master of Revels. Censorship was his domain and one of his main sources of revenue, but this clause shifts much of this power onto Davenant and Killigrew.¹⁷ The text contains multiple references to the profane or profanity, and ends by charging both men ‘to peruse all playes that have been formerly written and to expunge all prohanesse and scurrility the same, before they be represented or acted’.¹⁸ Through this legislation, the warrant places a not inconsiderable amount of responsibility, restraint and pressure upon the activities of both

¹² Edmund Malone, *Historical account of the rise and progress of the English Stage, and of the economy and usages of the ancient theatres in England* (London: Printed by J.J. Tourneisen, 1800), p. 313.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 312.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 312.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 312.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 313.

¹⁷ Leslie Hotson, *The Commonwealth and Restoration Stage*, p. 200.

¹⁸ Edmund Malone, *Historical account of the rise and progress of the English Stage, and of the economy and usages of the ancient theatres in England*, p. 114.

Davenant and Killigrew, but Davenant uses this opportunity to further explore and develop his approach to the relationship between the sensory experience and the stage.

On 12 December 1660, Davenant gained exclusive rights to various plays, which he was required to make 'fitt' for the Restoration stage, ensuring they were suitably appropriate for an audience under the terms of the new monopoly.¹⁹ These texts included his own works, Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, *Measure for Measure*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Twelfth Night*, *Henry VIII*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, and *The Life of King Henry the Eighth*, in addition to Webster's *Duchess of Malfi* and Denham's *The Sophy*. The warrant also enabled Davenant to retain rights to six other plays for just two more months: *The Mad Lover*, *The Loyal Subject*, *Rule a Wife and Have a Wife*, *The Maid in the Mill*, *The Spanish Curate*, *The Loyal Subject* and *Pericles*.²⁰ Considering how few plays are listed here, it is possible to see how badly served Davenant was by the creation of his monopoly with Killigrew. Unfortunately a similar warrant for Killigrew is now non-extant, but the wording of Davenant's warrant suggests a similar one had been drawn up previously for his counterpart.²¹ Perhaps in part due to the few plays with which he was forced to work, Davenant's approach to certain elements of Restoration theatre was particularly innovative. However, criticism is becoming aware that it tends to rely upon certain lines of argument, noting for instance that there is 'now [a] familiar suggestion that some of the arresting novelties of Restoration theatre, such as the introduction of the actress, the proscenium stage, and moveable scenery [...] owed much to the inventiveness of Davenant's masque-like Protectoral operas.'²² Instead, this chapter explores Davenant's reimagining of the actress's role and purpose on the stage, primarily through his reworking of Shakespeare's texts.

4.2: The Actress in the 1660s

One of the most significant and well-known shifts in theatre performance post-Restoration was the introduction of the professional female actress in the autumn of 1660 by Killigrew's King's Company during a production of *Othello*. The date of the actress's

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 313; Allardyce Nicoll, *A History of English Drama, 1660-1900: Volume 1, Restoration Drama 1660-1700*, 6 vols (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1952), I, p. 352.

²⁰ William Van Lennep, 'The Theatrical Seasons, 1659-1700' in *The London Stage: Part I, 1660-1800* ed. by William Van Lennep, 5 vols (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1965), I, pp. 5-532, p. 22.

²¹ Allardyce Nicoll, *A History of English Drama, 1660-1900*, p. 303.

²² Marcus Nevitt, 'Restoration Theatre and Interregnum Royalism: The Cavalier Rivalry of John Denham and William Davenant' in *Sir John Denham (1614/15-1669) Reassessed*, p. 53.

appearance as Desdemona is not known but is generally assumed to be in December and that her advent was signalled by Thomas Jordan's prologue, composed to act as her introduction, informing the audience that the role would be played by an actress.²³ There was a shortage of boy actors to play female characters at the start of the Restoration era, but this was not why women were introduced to the stage, and, to begin with, male actors continued to play female characters in addition to actresses.²⁴ More actors could have been trained in time, so while the lack of boy actors may have contributed towards such a transition, it does not explain why women were suddenly seen as important enough to place upon the stage alongside their male counterparts.²⁵ Howe writes of shifting attitudes towards the value of each sex and their differences, where woman were not defined only as being inferior to men, but as indispensable in their own way.²⁶ This allied itself with a change in the thinking of those inhabiting the highest echelons of society. The 1630s and 1660s saw support for actresses come from the court in both instances, but there was a very different relationship between the court and public theatre in each of these periods. In the 1630s, women were permitted to act in the private space of the court masque, as demonstrated by writers such as Davenant himself, but not in more public spaces and during this time, theatre at court and other theatres in the capital, whether public or private, were very much separate. Even the private theatres outside the court, which were mainly occupied by the gentry, consisted of a socially broader audience than that of the Restoration theatres, and the private theatres would have been far less accepting of a woman on the stage.²⁷ In 1656, Davenant's *The Siege of Rhodes* cast Catherine Coleman as Ianthe, but this was offset by her being the wife of Ned Coleman, who played Alphonso, and that she was appearing in a semi-public setting.²⁸ *The Siege of Rhodes* was also unusual in that it marked a change in the locations where performances were being staged; the text was staged in the Cockpit theatre of Drury Lane, not at Rutland House. Then, only a little later in the 1660s, actresses were welcomed onto the public stage; during the Interregnum, members of the court were exposed to actresses while in exile on the Continent and the Restoration theatre was more of a court milieu than the mixed

²³ Elizabeth Howe, *The First English Actresses: Women and drama 1660-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 19.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 20; p. 25.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 22. Howe provides an example to illustrate such attitudes, where French actresses appeared at Blackfriars in 1629 to outraged spectators, but were welcomed at court, pp. 22-23.

²⁸ Mary Edmond, *Rare Sir William Davenant*, pp. 127-128.

theatre audiences of previous decades. Even if such spectators were not solely members of the aristocracy, they allied themselves with the court and its interests, as part of this new coterie theatre.²⁹

In 1660, Killigrew recruited at least four actresses, while Davenant took on six actresses in the form of ‘Hester Davenport, Mary Saunderson, Jane Long, Anne Gibbs, Mrs Jennings and Mrs Norris’ and, by the middle of 1661, women playing female characters were well-established on the English stage.³⁰ It is not possible to offer precise answers regarding the backgrounds of such actresses, and the requirements for their employment were ‘modest’, involving ‘some measure of good looks, the ability to read and memorize lines, some small skill at singing and dancing, and the simple willingness to venture forth in an untried profession’. Since actresses were desperately needed early on during the Restoration period, the standard was not high.³¹ It is impossible to be sure that actresses were even providing their employers with their real names, as many sought to hide their family origins. There are names which are not to be found in the *dramatis personae* of printed versions of plays but are listed in theatrical records.³² Upper class women certainly did not become actresses, but lower class women generally lacked the ‘education and refinement’ needed to enter the profession, meaning that the pool from which actresses emerged was a fairly small one.³³ John Harold Wilson provides examples such as the Marshall sisters, offspring of ‘an out-of-place preacher’, Anne Gibbs, whose father was a ‘notary’, and the orphan Elizabeth Barry, ‘said to have been brought up by Lady Davenant [Davenant’s wife] in the odor of grease paint’.³⁴ Such women then found that, even though they may have participated extensively in the life of their theatre company, and were being paid more than if they had become a waiting woman, they were still very much inferior to their male counterparts, who outnumbered them and received higher rates of pay.³⁵

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 24. The agreement Davenant reached with the younger men from Rhodes’s company on 5 November details the finances required for Davenant to maintain ‘the actresses of the company’, as reproduced by Leslie Hotson, *The Commonwealth and Restoration Stage*, p. 207.

³¹ John Harold Wilson, *All the King’s Ladies: Actresses of the Restoration* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958), pp. 8-9; p. 11.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 11.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 10; Elizabeth Howe, *The First English Actresses: Women and drama 1660-1700*, pp. 26-27.

The importance of the actress however was bolstered in 1662, when women playing female parts was enshrined in law, through a patent issued to Thomas Killigrew.³⁶ Yet, although women were apparently legitimised and validated through such a statute, this did not mean that their acting careers were unproblematic, and this was alluded to even in the *Othello* prologue, where Jordan implies that an actress's morals should be treated with at least some suspicion, writing: 'Tis possible a vertuous woman may/ Abhor all sorts of looseness, and yet play;/ Play on the Stage, where all eyes are upon her,/ Shall we count that a crime France calls an honour?'³⁷ Jordan suggests that the nature of the acting profession meant that actresses are comparable to other women with apparently loose morals, and soon enough, society assumed that, as far as women were concerned, dubious sexual behaviour and acting were inseparable.³⁸ Such associations were not helped by the frightening vulnerability of female actors at this point in history, since male audience members were free to disappear offstage and watch actresses dressing, making it impossible for the women to avoid sexual advances. Regulations against such behaviour achieved nothing, and 25 February 1664 saw new legislation established, stating that only those belonging to and employed by a theatre company could enter their dressing room.³⁹

Over a decade later, in 1675, this was apparently still a problem, as revealed by an agreement drawn up by Killigrew and the Lord Chamberlain, after the former struggled to control his company, being convinced, for example, that members of the troupe were appropriating monies which he himself was due. This agreement included instructions for preventing spectators finding their way backstage.⁴⁰ It states:

To avoyd the future inconveniency of strangers frequent Egresse and regresse when a play is done in ye House, it is thought fitt that some one or two be appoynted to stand at the Tying house Dore till the House is discharged the persons appoynted are David Middleton and Brittain.⁴¹

³⁶ Elizabeth Howe, *The First English Actresses: Women and drama 1660-1700*, p. 27.

³⁷ Thomas Jordan, *A Royal Arbor of Loyal Poesie* (London: Printed by R.W., 1663), sig. C3^f-C3^v. Also quoted in Elizabeth Howe, *The First English Actresses: Women and drama 1660-1700*, p. 32 and Jean I. Marsden, *Fatal Desire: Women, Sexuality and the English Stage, 1660-1720* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2006), p. 2.

³⁸ Elizabeth Howe, *The First English Actresses: Women and drama 1660-1700*, p. 32.

³⁹ John Harold Wilson, *All the King's Ladies: Actresses of the Restoration*, p. 28; Elizabeth Howe, *The First English Actresses: Women and drama 1660-1700*, p. 33.

⁴⁰ Allardyce Nicoll, *A History of English Drama, 1660-1900*, p. 323.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 324. Also quoted in Elizabeth Howe, *The First English Actresses: Women and drama 1660-1700*, p. 33.

There is no evidence however, that public behaviour changed due to attempts to prevent theatregoers exploring backstage. Prologues from plays such as William Wycherley's *The Country Wife* (performed in January 1675, though it may have premiered earlier) encouraged men to enjoy their actresses in more ways than one, insisting: 'We set no Guards upon our Tying-Room,/But when with flying Colours, there you come;/ We patiently you see, give up to you,/ Our Poets, Virgins, nay our Matrons too.'⁴² This prologue, spoken by Hart, who plays the rakish Horner, is concerned not only with pleasing the audience's appetite for entertaining plays via the talents of 'Poets', but in satisfying their desire to be close to the 'Virgins' or even 'Matrons' dressing backstage. The epilogue to Thomas Shadwell's *The Libertine* (first performed June 1675) informs its audience 'you shall appear behind our Scenes, [...] / Some of our Women shall be kind to you, /And promise free ingress and egress too'; it could not be any clearer in its positioning of women as objects to be enjoyed by those who attended a performance, where they exist to satisfy desire in a pro-active fashion, since they will be 'kind' and 'promise' sexual favours.⁴³

The vulnerability of the actress, then, had become a socially acceptable by-product of her role at the theatre. For instance, in the late 1660s, Pepys documents a visit to the dressing rooms with his wife, having previously visited, and doing so again later on.⁴⁴ Elizabeth Howe writes:

of the eighty or so actresses we know by name on the Restoration stage between 1660 and 1689, apparently about a mere one-quarter of this number led what were considered to be respectable lives. These, like Mary Betterton or Elinor Leigh, were usually married to fellow actors who could presumably protect them to some degree from harassment at the theatre. The remainder, whether they sustained a stage career for a substantial period, or merely trod the boards until a suitable keeper presented himself, were all seen as some form of kept woman.⁴⁵

Thus, while becoming an actress was no route to any sort of wealth, and significant social recognition highly unlikely, for some women who lacked a dowry, the theatre could offer an eventual way into marriage, or, far more likely, into being financially supported by a

⁴² Kate Bennett, 'Wycherley, William', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* [online, accessed 11 Sept 2017]; William Wycherley, *The Country Wife* (London: Printed for Thomas Dring, 1675), sig. A2^r.

⁴³ Thomas Shadwell, *The Libertine* (London: Printed by T.N. for Henry Herringman, 1697), sig. M4^r. Shadwell is also quoted in Elizabeth Howe, *The First English Actresses: Women and drama 1660-1700*, p. 34.

⁴⁴ John Harold Wilson, *All the King's Ladies: Actresses of the Restoration*, pp. 23-25.

⁴⁵ Elizabeth Howe, *The First English Actresses: Women and drama 1660-1700*, pp. 33-34.

man as his mistress.⁴⁶ Wilson writes of ‘foolish virgins’ who succumbed to ‘lecherous gentlemen’ and ‘paid the usual penalty of folly’, and of how ‘wise [women] teased their admirers into some kind of settlement’.⁴⁷ While many women must have been tricked into losing their virginity, some women succeeded in procuring monetary gains and preferment, such as Elizabeth Barry, mistress of the Earl of Rochester, and most famously, Nell Gwyn and Moll Davis, the latter part of the Duke’s Company in the early years of the Restoration, kept by Charles II himself.⁴⁸

Considering the actress’s good looks, her vulnerability to harassment, and the perception of her profession as potentially a step to being a wife or mistress, it is unsurprising that ‘whether or not she exploited it off stage, the actress’s sexuality – her potential availability to men – became the central feature of her professional identity as a player’.⁴⁹ This belief was so pervasive that it was even applicable to women who had private lives viewed as ‘exemplary’, such as Anne Bracegirdle, since their sexual behaviour was more interesting to their prospective audiences than their acting ability.⁵⁰ For the theatre companies, the sexual availability of their actresses was a selling point.⁵¹ However, Jean I. Marsden writes ‘sexual titillation was certainly nothing new to the English stage - it is a staple of much Jacobean tragedy – but titillation focused on the spectacle of an actual female body was a new development’.⁵² Instead of writing female parts for boys masquerading as the opposite sex, Davenant was one of the first theatre proprietors and playwrights who now had to negotiate a new theatrical landscape where women walked the stage, and, for Davenant, this was bound up with morality, sensuality and the senses.

Davenant’s approach to themes of virtue in his own plays and his adaptations of Shakespeare suggest that he was acutely aware of the problems surrounding the production of plays offering some level of moral instruction, which preoccupied Davenant both before and during the Restoration period, and which also featured real women in their gender-appropriate roles. During this final stage of his career, Davenant was as prolific as ever, producing once more *The Siege of Rhodes Part I* (28 June 1661),

⁴⁶ John Harold Wilson, *All the King’s Ladies: Actresses of the Restoration*, p. 11.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 14; Olive Baldwin and Thelma Wilson, ‘Davis [married name Paisible], Mary [Moll]’ in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* [online, accessed 12 Sept 2017].

⁴⁹ Elizabeth Howe, *The First English Actresses: Women and drama 1660-1700*, p. 34.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

⁵² Jean I. Marsden, *Fatal Desire: Women, Sexuality and the English Stage, 1660-1720*, p. 3.

its sequel, *The Siege of Rhodes Part II* (29 June 1661), *Measure for Measure* adaptation *The Law Against Lovers* (15 February 1662), episodic play *The Playhouse to be Let* (exact date unknown but performed during August 1663), an adaptation of *The Two Noble Kinsmen* entitled *The Rivals* (date of first performance unknown, but was staged 10 September 1664), a reworking of *Macbeth* (5 November 1664), a new version of *The Tempest* (7 November 1667) and farcical comedy *The Man's The Master* (26 March 1668). During the 1660s, Davenant also staged heavily abridged versions of *Hamlet* (24 August, 1661) and *Twelfth Night* (11 September, 1661), a *Henry VIII* (22 December 1663), which featured changeable scenery and new costumes, and a now lost *Romeo and Juliet* (1 March 1662).⁵³ Davenant was allocated more Shakespeare plays on 20 August 1668, in the form of *Timon of Athens*, *Troilus and Cressida*, and all three parts of *Henry VI*, but these were not performed until after the decade had reached its close.⁵⁴ Since the texts on which I focus in this chapter are mainly adaptations, it is important to bear in mind the complex and potentially problematic nature of the term 'adaptation'. This can have multiple meanings and many connotations, both positive and negative, although scholarly explorations are not necessarily concerned with what constitutes a 'good' or 'bad' adaptation of an 'original' text.⁵⁵ For the purposes of this chapter, I find one of Linda Hutcheon's definitions of 'adaptation' particularly helpful, where adaptation constitutes 'an acknowledged transposition of a recognisable other work', although Davenant's work is also a 'creative' act of 'appropriation'.⁵⁶

Through the texts I examine, Davenant continues to reveal his career-long interest in the relationship between ethical behaviour, types of sensory engagement and varying attitudes towards the sensory experience. During this period of his literary career, Davenant was forced to negotiate the confines of his patent which restricted his theatrical output, yet this did not prevent him exploring his chosen themes. Davenant is primarily concerned with female sexual morality, demonstrating the virtue of his female characters both through their own engagement with the senses and the way in which they shape the

⁵³ William Van Lennep, 'The Theatrical Seasons, 1659-1700' in *The London Stage: Part I, 1660-1800*, p. 29; p. 47; p. 67; p. 83; p. 85; p. 123; p. 132; p. 32; pp. 39-40; p. 48. Dates in brackets indicate date of first performance. All plays were staged at Lincoln's Inn Fields. The performance dates of the Shakespeare adaptations are also listed by Don-John Dugas, *Marketing the Bard: Shakespeare in Performance and Print 1660-1740* (Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 2006), pp.13-15. See also p. 32; p. 33; p. 36.

⁵⁴ William Van Lennep, 'The Theatrical Seasons, 1659-1700' in *The London Stage: Part I, 1660-1800*, p.140; Don-John Dugas, *Marketing the Bard: Shakespeare in Performance and Print*, p. 28; pp. 15-16.

⁵⁵ Julie Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), pp. 21-22.

⁵⁶ Linda Hutcheon with Siobhan O'Flynn, *A Theory of Adaptation*, 2nd edn (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), pp. 8-9.

sensory experience of others. Davenant explores, for example, self-imposed methods of sensory restriction as evidence of virtue, the ability of the virtuous woman to reform the morally ambiguous via her appeal to the sensory experience, and the comparisons with other forms of sensory pleasure elicited by virtuous female characters. Through this, Davenant re-evaluates the role of the actress, where, instead of being emblematic of sexual promiscuity, availability and desirability, she becomes a positive moral role model for her audience.

From a traditional and mainstream royalist perspective, women were expected to be ‘passive examples of obedience and constrained behaviour’, who were ‘virtuous, demure [and] sexually pure’.⁵⁷ Jerome de Groot writes that the sexual behaviour royalists viewed as acceptable was underpinned by a ‘simple polarized relationship’, where actions were essentially either allowed or forbidden, and that sexual identity was linked to the hierarchical structure of the family and ‘to anthropocentric notions of the wholeness of the body within society’.⁵⁸ Royalists held Parliamentarians accountable for challenging gender roles and blurring the boundaries of such identities.⁵⁹ Yet, de Groot argues, the civil wars were able to undermine the royalist desire to enforce their own kind of sexual identity since the conflict ‘compromises and destabilizes definitions of the early modern subject’.⁶⁰ This destabilisation of meaning, triggered by the trauma of civil war, meant that the ‘fundamental slippage’ present in the construction of gender identities had come to the fore, and as such, royalists struggled to contain and categorise women.⁶¹ Consequently, women became ‘objects of suspicion’ who were at once ‘strangely powerful’.⁶² Thus, while the traditional discourses of masculinity created by royalism and the culture at court during the 1630s was supported throughout the civil wars, they were also at times undermined.⁶³ Davenant, writing in the Restoration, operates in the aftermath of this anxiety, and presents female characters who are not necessarily demure and passive, but who also display a strong propensity for virtue and morally admirable behaviour. By creating characters who combine elements of the demure, virtuous ideal of a royalist woman with more outgoing traits, Davenant’s royalism shows itself to be

⁵⁷ Jerome de Groot, *Royalist Identities*, p. 118; p. 129.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 125.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 123.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 125.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 129-130.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 129.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 130

accommodating in terms of the type of woman it presents to its audience as worthy of emulation.

By reimagining the actress, Davenant fulfils the obligations of his patent to banish immorality from the stage whilst also creating a space where such women can to some extent escape the negative sexual overtones interwoven with their profession. Although the ‘virtue’ of the female characters these women play is overtly bound up with their sexual morality, Davenant is equally concerned with their other behaviour, and whether this is honourable or otherwise, and consequently indicative, of their moral state. Thus, Davenant’s texts also operate to free the actress from a sphere in which her value is measured wholly in relation to her sexuality. Howe writes of the way in which the relentless emphasis on the actress’s sexuality diffused any threat to patriarchal structures by having a woman appear on stage, performing as various characters.⁶⁴ While Davenant’s approach to women is borne from his veneration, in his work at least, of chaste and moral behaviour and not proto-feminism, he is keen to separate the actress from her associations with hedonistic promiscuity, and begins by using one of his Interregnum texts as a starting point.

Davenant’s first venture on the Restoration stage was a continuation of his Interregnum opera, *The Siege of Rhodes* (1656), which has a confusing publication history, as stated in the previous chapter. In 1661, *The Siege of Rhodes Part II* was staged at the same time as *Part I* on alternate nights over the course of eleven days at Lincoln’s Inn Fields.⁶⁵ The date of the first performance is not certain, but Pepys saw the play on 2 July, and states that 2 July was the fourth day of its run. Since the two parts were performed alternately, it is probable that 28 June 1660 was when the play premiered, and that this was also the day of the opening of new Duke’s Company theatre at Lincoln’s Inn Fields.⁶⁶ As far as the 1661 plot of the first part of *The Siege of Rhodes* is concerned, Davenant chose to expand the role of the virtuous Ianthé and introduce a foil to her character in the form of Roxolana, who is not simply the evil counterpart to a good woman, but displays moral ambiguity. As Davenant now had more than one actress at his

⁶⁴ Elizabeth Howe, *The First English Actresses: Women and drama 1660-1700*, p. 36.

⁶⁵ Susan Wiseman, *Drama and Politics in the English Civil War*, pp. 151-152; Philip Bordinat and Sophia B. Blaydes, *Sir William Davenant*, p. 126.

⁶⁶ William Van Lennep, ‘The Theatrical Seasons, 1659-1700’ in *The London Stage: Part I, 1660-1800*, p. 29; Mary Edmond, *Rare Sir William Davenant*, p. 159.

disposal, it was easy for him to add another woman's role to the text, casting Hester Davenport as Roxolana.⁶⁷

In addition to the introduction of Roxolana's character, Ianthe's role is enlarged and she now appears earlier on in the play, during the first act, where she enters the stage carrying caskets of jewellery, together with two attendants. She hopes to swap the jewellery for weapons she can send to husband Alphonso in Rhodes, and by introducing the play's fair and virtuous female character to the audience alongside stunning jewellery to be traded for weapons, Ianthe is immediately allied with the qualities of beauty, but also those of honour and moral fortitude. She insists the 'Saphyrs' and 'Di'monds' must be turned to 'more current gold', showing that she will not be seduced by the visual appeal of glistening jewels, and instead of being beholden to the delights of the sensory experience, is more concerned with the practical use of such objects to fight for a noble cause.⁶⁸ One of her attendant women, Melosile, asks 'Will you convert to Instruments of War/ To things which to our Sex so dreadfull are,/ Which terrour add to Death's detested face,/ These Ornaments which should your Beauty grace?', emphasising the unusual choice being made by Ianthe.⁶⁹ These lines also highlight Ianthe's status as a woman, who should find 'Instruments of War' 'dreadfull', and also her 'Beauty', which her waiting woman suggests should be graced by the jewels of the caskets they are carrying. These lines also imagine witnessing the 'detested face' of 'Death', contrasting a deeply unpleasant and imaginary visual experience with that witnessed in reality by the play's audience of Ianthe's virtuous beauty, and the beauty of the jewellery she would like to have melted down for weaponry. In the second line of her first piece of dialogue, Ianthe asks 'Can I have Love, and not discover fear?', immediately demonstrating her desire for, and tendency towards, love, but also her ability to feel fear, but nevertheless show strength in going to the aid of her husband.⁷⁰ At the close of this scene, Ianthe also exclaims that 'For Love and I must be/ Preserv'd (Alphonso!)', leaving Davenant's spectators in no doubt regarding her motives; Ianthe thinks little of 'ambitious War' but is devoted to her husband, and her disregard for objects of wealth with great visual appeal is employed to demonstrate her honourable nature.⁷¹

⁶⁷ Mary Edmond, *Rare Sir William Davenant*, p. 159; Philip Bordinat and Sophia B. Blaydes, *Sir William Davenant*, p. 126.

⁶⁸ William Davenant, *The Siege of Rhodes: The First and Second Part* (London: Printed for Henry Herringman, 1663), sig. B1^r.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, sig. A4^v.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, sig. A4^v.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, sig. B1^r.

Part II of *The Siege of Rhodes* focuses on the siege of the city of Rhodes itself, rather than the attack on the settlement which Solymon hopes will guarantee him victory in the first part. Now, the Knights of St John must either continue until the conflict claims their lives or lose their honour in surrender. In a last desperate attempt, they send Ianthe to beg Solyman to have mercy on Rhodes. Once more, he behaves admirably towards her, insisting that a decision cannot be made quickly and placing her in a tent within his camp which she must share with his jealous wife, Roxolana. Meanwhile, the Knights of St John believe she has been seduced and continue to fight. Roxolana schemes to harm Ianthe, but is eventually placated by the former's virtue. Alphonso saves his wife, despite his fear that she has betrayed him, and accepts that those defending Rhodes have been defeated. Continually impressed by Ianthe's virtue, as originally established in the first part of the play, Solymon releases Alphonso and his wife, who have become prisoners as a consequence of the former's victory over Rhodes.⁷²

When Solymon receives Ianthe in Act III, ready to plead for the people of Rhodes, he tells her 'From with'ring Rhodes you fresher Beauty bring,/And sweeter than the bosom of the Spring', immediately comparing Ianthe's appearance to that which is 'sweeter' than 'Spring'.⁷³ The virtue suggested by her visual appeal, her 'Beauty', is compared to a 'sweet' and therefore pleasant olfactory or even gustatory experience, where the scents and tastes of all that spring brings are evoked. For Solyman, she is a marked contrast to the place for which she petitions, one which is 'with'ring' like a dying plant.⁷⁴ Ianthe hopes Solymon will 'quickly grant' her request that he take pity on Rhodes, but he insists she be patient and tells her 'If you would wither'd seem restrain your Tears./ The morning Dew makes Roses blow/And sweeter smell and fresher show.'⁷⁵ In the language employed by Solymon, the miserable Ianthe, after a night's sleep, is likened to an increasingly attractive bloom, its fragrance and appearance revived by the new day and its droplets of dew. Ianthe's virtue is such that she embodies a type of perfection achieved by the human cultivation of the natural world. In his honourable treatment of her, Solymon also enhances the virtuous qualities with which she is has already been bestowed thus far, as Davenant's virtuous female character and moral example to his audience. Like a rose, Ianthe's best qualities can be enhanced depending upon how she is treated, and at the play's close, Solymon admits that his placing of her in Roxolana's tent

⁷² Philip Bordinat and Sophia B. Blaydes, *Sir William Davenant*, p. 127.

⁷³ William Davenant, *The Siege of Rhodes: The First and Second Part*, sig. D4^v.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, sig. D4^v.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, sig. E1^v.

was so he could be sure he had her ‘virtue try’d.’⁷⁶ As he orders Ianthe be taken away, Solymon insists that the outcome of the two women sharing accommodation will be a ‘Riddle both to Honour and to Love’, emphasising the key themes with which Davenant is preoccupied in this play, and for him, virtue is densely interwoven with the latter.⁷⁷ This is emphasised by the opening of the following scene, where an admiral muses on ‘Ianthes virtue’ and Alphonso’s ‘Jealousie’ at any presumed betrayal.⁷⁸ Alphonso enters a little later, and speaks of how Ianthe does not know ‘guilt’ so can know no ‘fear’ at the hands of Solyman, and further into their conversation, the Admiral insists that ‘Ianthes power will now prevail’, the implication being that her virtue and honour will keep her safe from any sinister advances on the part of Solyman.

Moving away from the discussions of Alphonso and his men, part of the way through the Fourth Act, the play has Ianthe ‘sleeping on a Couch’ and, at the other end, Roxolana, seated, holding ‘a naked Ponyard’, and beside her, the ‘eunuch bassa’, Haly.⁷⁹ Consumed by jealousy, Solymon’s wife is considering murdering her new tent companion, much to the dismay of Haly, who insists Roxolana must bear in mind Ianthe’s ‘Virtue’ before she commit to ‘darken all her Light’, especially when Ianthe could otherwise ‘unblemisht shine’.⁸⁰ Once more, Ianthe’s virtuous nature is described in relation to its sensory appeal, where it is comparable to ‘Light’ and light with considerable power, since through killing her, Roxolana would put out ‘all’ of it, suggesting a high level of abundance and intensity. By stating that Ianthe may ‘unblemisht shine’, Haly’s words imagine her as a source of benevolent light without flaw. Before deciding to spare Ianthe, Roxolana remarks upon the sleeping character’s ‘innocence’, and upon her waking, admit her ‘Envy’ is turned to ‘Shame’.⁸¹ Thus, the power of Ianthe’s virtue has not only saved her life, but reformed the deeply jealous Roxolana.

4.3: Shakespeare Adaptations

Davenant’s first reimagining of Shakespeare was his own version of comedy *Measure for Measure* (originally performed in 1604), entitled *The Law Against Lovers* (1662), which

⁷⁶ Ibid., sig. I2^v.

⁷⁷ Ibid., sig. E1^v.

⁷⁸ Ibid., sig. E2^r.

⁷⁹ Ibid., sig. E4^r; sig. A4^r.

⁸⁰ Ibid., sig. E4^v.

⁸¹ Ibid., sig. E5^r.

also appropriated the Beatrice and Benedick duo and their verbal sparring from *Much Ado About Nothing*, which was first staged at the end of the sixteenth century.⁸² Davenant uses these characters to replace the bawdy humour of Mistress Overdone, who owns a brothel at which some of the characters in the play converse. Davenant's play, whose title recalls the Act of Parliament in 1650 making adultery a crime punishable by death, is heavily based on Shakespeare's text, even if he modifies its humour, alters lines to aid clarity and removes language which could be viewed as obscene.⁸³ However, the change most relevant for my purposes is that, in *The Law Against Lovers*, Angelo is no longer keen to seduce Isabella, but instead simply looks to test her virtue, rather than engage in sex, as part of his method to 'chuse a wife'.⁸⁴ Isabella passes this test successfully and, at the play's close, the pair are married. It may be that Davenant was inspired to rework the character of Angelo in this manner due to a moment in *Measure for Measure*, where the Duke speaks of Angelo having made 'an assay of [Isabella's] virtue', even though his aim is ultimately to engage in something far more sinister.⁸⁵

Isabella shows her virtue in the face of Angelo's attempts at seduction, and in more general terms through her sensory restraint; her ambition to become a nun, and resist exploring her sensuality through sexual union only helps frame her already apparently virtuous morality. In Davenant's text, when Angelo suggests Isabella 'yield the treasures of [her] youth' to save Claudio's life, her response demonstrates the high value she ascribes to her virtue, since she insists:

As much for my poor brother, as for Isabell.
Th' impression of Sharp whips I gladly would
As Rubies wear, and strip my self
Even for a Grave, as for a Bed, e're I
Would yield my honour up to shame.
(II.IV)⁸⁶

⁸² William Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure* in *The Norton Shakespeare* ed. by Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Jean E. Howard, and Katharine Eisaman Maus (New York and London: W.W Norton and Company, 2008), pp. 2039-2108 (p. 2039). *The Norton Shakespeare* is based on the texts used in the *Oxford Shakespeare*, first published in 1988.

⁸³ Barbara Murray, *Restoration Shakespeare: Viewing the Voice* (Madison, London and Cranbury: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press and Associated University Presses in conjunction with MHRA, 2001), p. 43. According to Murray, the act was not actually invoked after the Restoration. See Murray, p. 43.

⁸⁴ William Davenant, *The Law Against Lovers* in William Davenant, *The Works of Sir William Davenant Knight*, sig. Rr3^f.

⁸⁵ William Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, III.I.

⁸⁶ William Davenant, *The Law Against Lovers*, sig. Oo3^f. This is very similar, but not identical, to the dialogue in Shakespeare's text. See William Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, p. II. IV.XCIX-CIV.

Given that her brother is about to be executed, Isabella's words are highly insensitive, but this only serves to illustrate her distress at the prospect of her virtue being threatened, how keen she is to assert its value, and her disbelief that those around her do not necessarily share her philosophy that death (hers or Claudio's) be preferable. Davenant's focus on the morality of his female character is also evident in his choice to substitute Shakespeare's use of the word 'body' with 'honour' in the final line of the above, shifting the focus to the loss of moral virtue rather than the defilement of a young woman's body through a coercive sex act. Isabella is not without concern for Claudio, referring to him as her 'poor' sibling, but the language she uses to describe the suffering she would willingly endure to preserve her honour is far more visceral; she would tolerate 'Sharp whips' and 'strip' her person 'even for a Grave'. These impassioned words illustrate that Isabella's virtue is beyond doubt, and her commitment to preserving her honour admirable. Even so, this moment in the text should not be oversimplified, as her alarming description of suffering in the face of Angelo's advances is made more disturbing by the titillating images Isabella presents. She speaks not only of her nudity, but of herself wearing 'Rubies', the text placing a beautiful, virginal woman adorned with attractive jewellery into the same sphere as bloody violence against her person. By simultaneously evoking the pain caused by such punishment and the visual beauty of precious stones themselves and of them draped around Isabella, both Shakespeare's and Davenant's texts, in this instance, suggest that the character finds discipline, manifested in a wider sense by the restriction she imposes on her sexual behaviour and consequently, her sensory experience, alluring and exciting.⁸⁷ This is in evidence once more when she speaks to the incarcerated Claudio of her distress at her predicament, since she tells him: 'Tis worse than close restraint, and painful too/ Beyond all tortures which afflict the body;/ For 'tis a Rack invented for the mind'.⁸⁸ Although Isabella is discussing the horrors of 'restraint', it appears to also preoccupy and overwhelm her, since she speaks of torture which affects both the 'body' and the 'mind'. On this occasion, Davenant has completely changed Shakespeare's lines for Isabella. Responding to Claudio's suggestion that instead of death, Angelo's proposition involves Claudio's mental punishment of living his entire life, wherever he chooses to wander, in the knowledge that his sister has sacrificed her virginity to save him, the lines read: '[...] perpetual durance; a restraint,/ Though all the

⁸⁷ See also Katharine Eisaman Maus, *Measure for Measure* introduction in *The Norton Shakespeare*, pp. 2039-2046 (p. 2044).

⁸⁸ William Davenant, *The Law Against Lovers*, sig. Pp2^v.

world's vastity you had,/ To a determined scope'.⁸⁹ These lines focus on Claudio's understanding of the situation, as do Shakespeare's lines, but Davenant has chosen to use language which allows him to further emphasise Isabella's distress and interest in restriction and necessary suffering.

It is not only Isabella who is titillated by ideas of restriction, since Angelo admits, at least to himself, that his desire for her stems from her commitment to sexual virtue. Before suggesting that she offer her virginity to him in exchange for her brother's life, Angelo, in short soliloquy, confesses:

From all, but from thy virtue maid!
I love her virtue. But, temptation! O!
Thou false and cunning guide! who in disguise
Of Virtues shape lead'st us through Heaven to Hell.
No vitious Beauty could with practis'd Art
Subdue, like Virgin-innocence, my heart.
(II.I)⁹⁰

Here, Angelo responds to Isabella's farewell blessing that 'The Angels still preserve you'. More than anything, Angelo is drawn to Isabella's 'virtue', even if he suggests that such a desirable woman must actually be 'temptation' presenting itself merely in 'Virtues shape'. He speaks of her 'virtuous Beauty' and the 'Virgin-innocence' he does in fact realise Isabella possesses, and it is this that he finds so appealing and exciting. The passage above can be found in both the Davenant and Shakespeare texts after Isabella and Angelo have arranged to meet to discuss Claudio's fate, but once Isabella has exited the stage. In Shakespeare's text, Angelo is assigned a longer speech, further emphasising his attraction to her virtue, lamenting 'Dost thou desire her foully for those things/That make her good?'.⁹¹ Angelo's desire is prompted not only by Isabella's sexual virtue, but her moral rigour.

In Shakespeare's text, Angelo is revealed as a cruel seducer of women, whereas in Davenant's play he functions to affirm Isabella's virtue by testing her resolve. Thus, by portraying Angelo in *The Law Against Lovers* as excited by a certain level of sensory and moral restraint much like the object of his affections, Davenant is emphatic in his presentation of both the religious Isabella, and the ultimately well-meaning Angelo as morally admirable characters who marry at the play's close. Their conscientious approach

⁸⁹ William Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, III.I.LXV-LXVIII.

⁹⁰ William Davenant, *The Law Against Lovers*, sig. Oo1^r.

⁹¹ William Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, II.II.CLXXVIII-CLXXIX

to their own moral codes has resulted in union and contributed towards the, admittedly fragile, social harmony of the play world. Shakespeare's Angelo, however, is only made to appear more sinister in his obsession with Isabella's virtue and in pursuing his own 'austere' existence; his interest in sensory restraint can only be something he favours because he is aroused by the idea, rather than as an indication of his honourable morals. Davenant may prefer sensory moderation, as opposed to restriction, himself, as suggested by his 1650s output. Thus, he presents his audience with Isabella's excessive approach, since it demonstrates the problematic nature of extreme sensory restraint, as it causes her distress and risks her brother's life. More importantly though, Davenant uses her sensory restraint to signal her virtue, which is then rewarded in her marriage to, the actually rather benign, Angelo.

Davenant moves away from presenting virtue in a manner which may or may not be titillating, and is more straightforwardly didactic in his next adaptation, this time of *Macbeth*. There has been some debate concerning the date of its first staging by Davenant, but it seems sensible to suggest that this occurred in 1664.⁹² The changes Davenant made to Shakespeare's text were substantial, to such an extent that Mary Edmond advises 'Davenant's production in 1664 [...] should be judged as versions of, or variations on the theme of, *Macbeth*', which is also in keeping with my approach to the possible definitions of the term 'adaptation'.⁹³ Harbage writes that 'abstract and lyrical passages, those most figurative and imaginative, in a word most Shakespearean, were recast, abbreviated, or completely excised'.⁹⁴ Nevertheless, Bordinat and Blaydes state that, 'until Garrick's return of the play to Shakespeare in 1744, Davenant's version was Shakespeare's *Macbeth* to most actors and spectators'.⁹⁵ The most noticeable change Davenant makes to this play is his large expansion of the role of Lady Macduff as a morally admirable female character, demonstrating Davenant's eagerness to explore the virtuous woman onstage during this period of his career. Lady Macduff operates as a foil to the manipulative Lady

⁹² Philip Bordinat and Sophia B. Blaydes, *Sir William Davenant*, p. 140. It has been suggested that *Macbeth* was performed at the end of 1663, but this would have meant that Davenant was staging *Macbeth* in addition to *Henry VIII*, and he would not have been able to stage two spectacular performances at once. Pepys also did not see *Macbeth* until November 1664, and it seems very unlikely that he would have waited nearly a year before seeing such a popular production. The possibility that it was staged at the end of 1663 seems to have stemmed from a misunderstanding regarding some rough notes made by Sir Henry Herbert. See Mary Edmond, *Rare Sir William Davenant*, p. 190.

⁹³ Mary Edmond, *Rare Sir William Davenant*, p. 191.

⁹⁴ Alfred Harbage, *Sir William Davenant, Poet Venturer: 1606-1668*, p. 263. Harbage is quoted in Philip Bordinat and Sophia B. Blaydes, *Sir William Davenant*, p. 143.

⁹⁵ Philip Bordinat and Sophia B. Blaydes, *Sir William Davenant*, p. 140.

Macbeth; Davenant puts together a simple dichotomy, rather than making the characters slightly more ambiguous in the way of Shakespeare.⁹⁶

Throughout the play, Davenant's Lady Macduff is striking in her tendency to offer up profound comments on the behaviour of the human race, and while Davenant's interest in the relationship between virtue and the senses is less pronounced in this particular play, it is not entirely absent. One of Lady Macduff's most didactic musings concerns humankind's approach to the glamour of war:

The world mistakes the glories gain'd in war,
Thinking their Lustre true: alas, they are
But Comets, Vapours! by some men exhal'd
From others bloud, and kindl'd in the Region
Of popular applause, in which they live
A-while; then vanish: and the very breath
Which first inflam'd them, blows them out again.
(I.I)⁹⁷

For this character, the 'glories' gained by war shine with a false 'lustre'. She likens battle to material objects which catch the light in an attractive manner, thus comparing human vulnerability to the temptation of aesthetically pleasing objects and to the land, honour and other desirables which may be gathered up as a result of war. By suggesting that, instead, these glories, are like 'Comets', the text frames them as ultimately unattainable even while they are mystifying and beautiful, in the way that faraway comets may appear bright and visually striking in the night sky. Lady Macduff's short speech is, more generally, concerned with the bodily as well as, more narrowly, the sensory, and these elements work to reinforce and emphasise one another. The play is not preoccupied with Lady Macduff's sexual morality, but the expansion of her role enables her to act as a didactic figure of moral virtue, who also interrogates the problematic nature of ambition later in the play.⁹⁸ Through the character's role as moral spokeswoman though, Davenant recognises that his audience will likely assume that Lady Macduff is a chaste and modest woman, especially in juxtaposition to the uncomplicatedly villainous Lady Macbeth.

Davenant's next adaptation is not as overtly didactic, but its interest in the virtuous actress remains, and demonstrates the nuances of Davenant's methods in imagining the actress as a symbol of morality. He chose to stage Shakespeare's *The Two*

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 41; p. 43.

⁹⁷ William Davenant, *Macbeth* (London: Printed for P. Chetwin, 1674), sig. B1^v.

⁹⁸ Ibid., sig. D4^v.

Noble Kinsmen, which dates from somewhere between February 1613 and October 1614, and entitled his work *The Rivals* (1664).⁹⁹ The Shakespearean text was altered to a great degree by Davenant, who used very similar lines to those found in his own version of *Macbeth*, cut multiple scenes, added his own, revised lines, moved the setting to Arcadia and altered all the names of the play's characters.¹⁰⁰ The story also unfolds over a shorter time span than that of the early seventeenth-century text, and details the actions of the two brothers of the title, Theocles (Shakespeare's Arcite) and Philander (Palamon), who fight for the affections of Heraclia, Davenant's model of female virtue in this particular play.¹⁰¹ On the brothers' first sighting of the beautiful female character, they articulate their feelings of being overwhelmed by her appearance:

She is divine and now the Sun draws low,
Comes to revive the drooping flowers, and make
Them (like her self) Immortal, by the beams
Proceeding from her Eyes.

[II.1]¹⁰²

Yet, even though the above response is triggered by the prominent visual beauty of Heraclia, Philander's expression of wonder evokes the senses in a more complete fashion, suggesting that her virtue is tangible in the comparisons it elicits, in this case, with the natural world. Davenant's linking of virtue with the beauty of nature is not new, and can be seen in characters such as *Gondibert's* young maid and rural inhabitant, Birtha, discussed in the previous chapter. Here, however, Heraclia is a material body on the stage, and the use of the actress during the Restoration period enabled female sexuality to be expressed not only in discourse, but to be used as spectacle.¹⁰³ The above lines do not exist in Shakespeare's play. Instead, Davenant is keen to begin this key section of the play by focussing upon the sensory experience; Heraclia is a replacement for the Sun as it 'draws low', suggesting the warmth of her virtuous nature is enough to revive the 'drooping flowers'.¹⁰⁴ The reference to flora is also evocative of the pleasant fragrance produced by many flowers in a garden such as that in which Heraclia and her maid are

⁹⁹ Textual Note on *The Two Noble Kinsmen* in *The Norton Shakespeare*, pp. 3203-3286 (p. 3211); Mary Edmond, *Rare Sir William Davenant*, p.188.

¹⁰⁰ See also Christopher Spencer, 'Macbeth and Davenant's *The Rivals*', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 20.2 (1969), pp. 225-229.

¹⁰¹ Philip Bordinat and Sophia B. Blaydes, *Sir William Davenant*, p. 41.

¹⁰² William Davenant, *The Rivals* (London: Printed for William Cademan, 1668), sig. C4^r.

¹⁰³ Jean I. Marsden, *Fatal Desire: Women, Sexuality and the English Stage, 1660-1720*, p. 3.

¹⁰⁴ William Davenant, *The Rivals*, sig. C4^r.

walking. Philander also imagines Heraclia as emitting ‘beams’ from her eyes, in the way the Sun emits rays.¹⁰⁵ This may be a common trope of Renaissance love poetry, but it also evokes extramission theory, as discussed in my first chapter, bestowing on the character a level of agency she cannot possibly possess. Thus, she is virtuous but not necessarily passive, since she does not absorb light into her eyes as is scientifically correct, but instead is presented as powerful enough to emit beams to fall upon other entities. Similarly, Philander suggests that she is ‘Immortal’ and through this emission of light, can transform wilting plants into those which share such a quality.¹⁰⁶ The use of the term ‘immortal’ also implies that Heraclia’s virtue will guarantee her everlasting life in heaven, and the caesura which follows the word allows the actress to linger upon it for longer, emphasising this as an imagined possibility. Philander’s musings are swiftly followed by Heraclia’s own discussion with her maid of the rose as emblematic of maidenhood. She describes the rose as blowing ‘modestly’ in the wind, and possessing ‘a complexion’ consisting of ‘smiles and blushes’.¹⁰⁷ These lines are very similar to those employed by Shakespeare, but Philander’s earlier lines give them more potency if emphasising Heraclia’s virtue as something best understood through comparing her to the visual pleasure elicited by the natural world. Davenant then, situates Heraclia as ‘emblematic of virtue’, in the same way as Ianthe of *The Siege of Rhodes* and Isabella of *The Law Against Lovers*.¹⁰⁸ He does this by presenting her virtue as closely linked to her own sensory experience and that of others. She engages with nature and frames virtue in these terms.

Davenant’s next venture, an adaptation of *The Tempest* written with John Dryden, involved the removal of many of the characters, but also the creation of new ones, which functioned to mirror and emphasise the virtuous behaviour, or otherwise, of their counterparts. Davenant creates a sister for Miranda in the form of Dorinda, in addition to Hippolito, raised by Prospero and a companion for Ferdinand, who is in love with Dorinda. Davenant also creates Sycorax, a sister for the much maligned Caliban. Dorinda is as naïve as her sister, having also never laid eyes upon a man other than her father Prospero, or Caliban. Hippolito has never seen a woman, and seems to lust after all with which he comes into contact. The Davenant text keeps the key elements of Shakespeare’s story, such as the storm and the shipwreck upon a mysterious island, but according to one

¹⁰⁵ William Davenant, *The Rivals*, sig. C4^r.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Philip Bordinat and Sophia B. Blydes, *Sir William Davenant*, p. 139.

estimate, it retains only thirty-one percent of Shakespeare's work.¹⁰⁹ The play is, however, lacking in the same harmony in which Shakespeare's *The Tempest* revels, possibly because the Restoration era, instead, had to process the fundamental disorder and disruption created by the civil wars.¹¹⁰ Davenant's presentation of virtue here is not as overt as in his other texts of the decade, but his interest in the virtuous woman is certainly not absent, and the familiar language and tropes of his previous plays come to the fore once again.

The play's prologue informs its audience that the text will use the actress in a novel fashion, stating 'one of our Women [is] to present a boy'.¹¹¹ This male character is Hippolito, and he is played by Jane Long, one of the most long-standing members of the Duke's Company, who was to become a specialist in breeches roles, also starring in James Shirley's *The Grateful Servant* which was performed c. 1667, and later in leading roles as other male characters.¹¹² When Hippolito first sees Dorinda after being instructed to avoid women by Prospero, Davenant uses the moment to fill the former's language with metaphors suggestive of Dorinda's sexual and, by association, moral, virtue, as, seeing her, the young man exclaims:

What thing is that? Sure 'tis some Infant of the Sun dres'd in his Fathers gayest Beams, and comes to play with Birds: my sight is daz'd, and yet I find I'm loth to shut my Eyes.
I must go nearer it ---- but stay a while;
May it not be that beauteous murderer, Woman,
Which I was charg'd to shun? Speak, what art thou?
Thou shining Vision!

(II.I)¹¹³

Hippolito is 'daz'd' by the appearance of Dorinda but is 'loth' to 'shut' his eyes, as if he cannot control her impact upon his senses. She is likened to an 'Infant' of the 'Sun', simultaneously demonstrating her innocence and vulnerability, as she is like a very young child, yet also possesses power as the offspring of a large celestial being. She is clothed in the 'gayest Beams', as if her benign disposition is of such benevolence that it emits its own warm rays of light, and she brings pleasure to nature, since she 'comes to play with Birds'. Davenant's imagery is idyllic and Hippolito's reaction suggests not only that he is

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 145.

¹¹⁰ Elizabeth Howe, *The First English Actresses: Women and drama 1660-1700*, p. 63.

¹¹¹ William Davenant, *The Tempest* (London: Printed for J.M. for Henry Herringman, 1670), sig. A4^r.

¹¹² William Van Lennep, 'The Theatrical Seasons, 1659-1700' in *The London Stage: Part I, 1660-1800*, p.123; Elizabeth Howe, *The First English Actresses: Women and drama 1660-1700*, p. 75.

¹¹³ William Davenant, *The Tempest*, sig. E3^r.

to fall in love with Dorinda, but that her virtue is so apparent that it can only be compared to the sensory power and influence of the natural world. The juxtaposition of the beauties of nature with female virtue is already a favourite trope of Davenant's by this point, as demonstrated by other work during this period and from earlier in his writing life.

When being informed by Prospero of the supposed dangers of women, Hippolito lists the visual delights of nature as a benchmark which he suggests women cannot match; he speaks of the impossibility of women as 'fairer than the Plumes of Swan', more pleasing than 'Peacocks Feathers', or the 'gloss' seen on the 'necks of Doves', or a 'Rainbow'.¹¹⁴ Yet while Hippolito's language may be fitting to describe the virtuous beauty of Prospero's daughters, Prospero's description of women, however humorous it is supposed to be, claims women are 'dangerous and fair'.¹¹⁵ His description of female individuals incorporates the senses as a marker of that which should be feared, and not necessarily as indicative of a woman's gentle, respectable morality and virtue, articulating that Hippolito should:

Imagine something between young men and Angels:
 Fatally beauteous and with killing Eyes,
 Their voices charm beyond the Nightingales,
 They are all enchantment, those who once behold 'em,
 Are made their slaves for ever.

(II.I)¹¹⁶

Through this dialogue, Prospero does not simply provide a description of beautiful, virtuous young women akin to his own daughters, but describes women as seductive and deeply untrustworthy, with their 'killing Eyes', fatal beauty and voices like birdsong. Now, their engagement with the senses of those around them becomes morally ambiguous and threatening, rather than working to affirm their virtuous nature. Their voices may be full of 'charm', their behaviour concerned with 'enchantment', but this is all a ruse designed to make unfortunate menfolk their 'slaves' for eternity. However, the above does also give the women it describes agency, as, like Hippolito lending Dorinda the power of a large star, Prospero highlights the power of women, virtuous or otherwise, with their 'killing eyes', evoking the myth of the basilisk. Prospero also describes women as not so far removed from 'Angels', which could operate to evoke notions of virtue, but

¹¹⁴ Ibid., sig. D5^v.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., sig. D5^v.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., sig. D5^r-D5^v.

not necessarily, since angels also may be malevolent, as in Revelations 9:11 of the King James Bible.

Prospero continues on much the same theme when Hippolito insists he will close his eyes and be immune to the charms of women, claiming:

'Tis in vain, for when your eyes are shut,
 They through the lids will shine, and pierce your soul;
 Absent, they will be present to you.
 They'll haunt you in your very sleep.
 (II.I)¹¹⁷

The kind of woman Prospero describes has become thoroughly sinister, with her ability to 'pierce' a man's soul and 'haunt' him in his sleep, even if there is the implication here that women are so dangerous because they are so pleasingly captivating in the engagement of their own senses, such as their 'killing Eyes', and the senses of others through their nightingale-like voices. The ability of these women to remain visible through a man's eyelids is oddly reminiscent of Davenant's revenge tragedy *Albovine*, when Rhodalinda is distressed by the sight of her father's skull. In *The Tempest*, suddenly, the appealing appearance of female characters can no longer necessarily be accepted as evidence of their virtue, and neither can the other sensory pleasures they provide. This fits with *The Tempest's* ambivalent approach to its female characters and the women it puts onstage; Davenant is beginning to move away from the didacticism of his earlier plays, and instead focuses more closely on the comedic elements generated through his treatment of his characters, such as Long's breeches role as Hippolito. Even though Long is playing a male character, she is nevertheless an actress walking the stage, and, because of this, her character is at once a man uneducated in the ways of women, but also a woman who grows more curious and lustful as the play continues. Her real gender and position as a sexually available actress causes Hippolito to appear more amorous and promiscuous than he would if played by a man. Although Davenant's female characters played by actresses demonstrate moral virtue, this man played by a woman is only further sexualised through this breeches role.

Elizabeth Howe, however, suggests that the Restoration actress interferes with Davenant's attempts to present good examples of female virtue, writing that:

¹¹⁷ Ibid., sig. D5^v.

[...] played by an actress whom the audience perceived as sexually experienced and available, Miranda's purity and ignorance of the male sex became a huge suggestive joke, her naiveté merely an opportunity for innuendo [...] [she is given] an equally naïve sister, Dorinda, in order to increase the possibilities for such innuendo – the two discuss the strange creature, man, and display a comically smutty ignorance of the facts of life.¹¹⁸

The actresses most likely to have played Miranda and Dorinda were Mrs Jennings and Anne Gibbs Shadwell (she was now married to dramatist Thomas Shadwell), who had also both been with Davenant's company since its inception.¹¹⁹ The latter is described in a satire as being so lacking in virtue that 'none was a greater Whore'.¹²⁰ Such humour risks undermining Davenant's reimagining of the woman on stage as one capable of leading a morally admirable life, but the audience's reaction to this portrayal of the women also says much about contemporary ideas regarding the type of woman who worked as an actress at this point in time. Davenant's use of humour does not suggest that he is not interested in female virtue, but it does risk making such virtue titillating. This moment is perhaps indicative of Davenant's slow decline of interest in presenting the actress as a virtuous woman slowly fading, as he becomes more interested in comedy, and specifically the farce genre.

Combining Shakespeare adaptation with farce, John Lacy's adaptation of *The Taming of the Shrew* (written c. 1592), *Sauny the Scott*, was staged in 1667. This was produced by Killigrew's King's Men on 9 April who, prior to this point, had not put on any reworked Shakespeare. Perhaps the popularity of Davenant's plays provided the impetus they needed to do so. The Duke's Company were integral in returning the multiple Shakespeare plays they adapted to popularity post-Restoration (even if audiences were not always aware of the play's author, as above), but the decision of the King's Company to stage *Sauny the Scott* shows at least some interest in Shakespeare, even if it was mainly as a vehicle for their star comedy performer, Lacy himself, who played Sauny. The play was hugely popular throughout the seventeenth century and kept Shakespeare's play off the stage until the middle of the eighteenth century.¹²¹ *The Taming of the Shrew* has three interwoven plots, the key strand involving the gradual taming of the 'shrew', Kate, by her husband Petruccio. Lacy's text follows Shakespeare's fairly closely, but the fifth act is significantly altered, where it ratchets up its endorsement of farce. Davenant

¹¹⁸ Elizabeth Howe, *The First English Actresses: Women and drama 1660-1700*, p. 63.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 198.

¹²⁰ John Harold Wilson, *All the King's Ladies: Actresses of the Restoration*, p. 187.

¹²¹ William Shakespeare, *The Taming of the Shrew* in *The Norton Shakespeare*, pp. 159-228 (p.159); Don- John Dugas, *Marketing the Bard: Shakespeare in Performance and Print 1660-1740*, p. 14; pp. 42-43; Barbara Murray, *Restoration Shakespeare: Viewing the Voice*, p. 68.

demonstrates his interest in farce early on in the 1660s, when he produces *The Playhouse to be Let* (1663), a medley of performances, but also a translation of French farce, and which also includes a rerun of his 1650s texts *The Cruelty of the Spaniards in Peru* and *The History of Sir Francis Drake*. Davenant returns to farce later in the decade with *The Man's The Master* (1668), the final play before his death the same year. Heavily influenced by French farce, much of the English farce which emerged on the stage after the monarchy's return in 1660 is heavily influenced by the work of Jean-Baptiste Poquelin, aka Molière, whose farcical play *Sganarelle (The Imaginary Cuckold)* was translated into English in 1663.¹²² Davenant's farce plays, especially the latter are far less concerned with female virtue compared to the conventions of the farce genre, so for this reason I focus on Davenant's other Restoration output, chiefly his Shakespeare adaptations.

During the early years of the Restoration, Davenant was forced to negotiate the restrictions of his patent which impacted upon his theatrical output, yet this did not prevent him exploring his chosen themes and the limited texts available for him to work with may have provided the catalyst for doing so. Furthermore, by reimagining the actress, Davenant not only fulfils the obligations of his patent to promote moral living, but creates a space for his female players where they can escape the burden of the actress's reputation and sole value as sexually desirable, promiscuous and available to the point of extreme vulnerability. He demonstrates that pleasurable sensory experiences are elicited by and operate as evidence of virtuous women, decoupling the acting profession and sexual hedonism, both on the behalf of male theatregoers and the actresses themselves. Davenant was producing his work in the aftermath of the revolutionary decades, when royalist codes of sexual behaviour and ideas about female identity had been challenged and undermined by the trauma of civil war. His depictions of women who are virtuous, outgoing and at times, outspoken in upholding their morality, combine the royalist ideal of a passive, demure woman with a new approach where female characters are given more agency. Thus, through his treatment of the senses in his Restoration output, Davenant demonstrates the accommodating nature of his royalism which is willing to reframe the role of the actress and reconsider the identities of royalist women in contemporary society.

¹²² Albert Bermel, *Farce: A History from Aristophanes to Woody Allen*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982), pp. 95-6.

Conclusion

Davenant's writing explores the connections between the sensory experience, royalist identities, and the values which can be accommodated by royalist ideologies. This thesis re-examines the work of Davenant in relation to his treatment of the senses, contributing towards and uniting three different fields of research, these being literary criticism dealing with Davenant, sensory studies, and work on royalists and royalism during the revolutionary decades. My main argument brings together these fields, but this thesis also makes a separate contribution to each area. First, for our understanding of Davenant to broaden, it shows that research focusing upon him must move beyond recognising his role as simply an adaptable innovator of his day. Not only this, but his royalism, which impacted directly on his work, is too readily decoupled from his writing. My work argues that Davenant's royalist values are articulated in his texts, and that this is done through his exploration of the human senses and the sensory experience. When considering the discipline of sensory studies, Davenant's work operates to provide an example of what may happen to an individual's conceptualising of the sensory experience during a specific socially and politically turbulent time, and their subsequent literary output. Thus far, sensory scholarship has tended to look at the early modern period as a whole, rather than concentrating on narrower time periods, such as the decades involving the unprecedented events of the civil wars. Finally, my work adds to research on royalism by demonstrating that a better understanding of the way in which royalists such as Davenant conceptualise their own sensory experiences, and those of others, enables a more nuanced appreciation of an individual's own royalism.

From his early revenge tragedy through to his Restoration stage work, I have examined the way in which Davenant's texts explore contemporary conceptual understanding of the senses and display a preference for moral, moderate living and moderation in indulgence of the senses. Davenant's output demonstrates the accommodating nature of his royalism through its treatment of the senses in relation to royalist, courtly and wider societal beliefs regarding morality, sexuality, physical and intellectual pleasure, and the roles of the actress. This is achieved through his challenging of existing frameworks, via the adoption of an approach which combines values from across the political spectrum and presents a pragmatic moral stance which looks to elicit wide appeal amongst his audiences. My work in turn furthers critical understanding of the

multiple shades of royalism which exist, and the place of the senses within royalism. An understanding of the way in which Davenant's work engages with the sensory experience not only contributes to the flourishing field of sensory studies, but provides a prime example of the way in which approaches to the senses and sensuality can operate as integral components of royalist literature and royalism more broadly. In being aware of the need to pay more attention to the nuances of the treatment of the senses within royalist literature of all kinds, literary criticism will be able to continue to re-evaluate the plurality of royalists, royalisms and royalist writing.

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