CHAPTER 2

The Economics of Scarcity and Prestige
Performance Practices and Repertories

Even by the harsh standards of Restoration satire, Richard Flecknoe's *Sr William D'avenant's Voyage to the Other World* (1668) gives pause.[1] Consigning your living enemies to an imaginative hell, as Dante does to Filippo Argenti in *The Inferno* (1320) is one thing; condemning the newly departed to the same is quite another. *Sr William D'avenant's Voyage* revels in what typically would be mourned – the recent death of an accomplished theatre manager, playwright, and poet. Such was Flecknoe's rage at the avariciousness of the theatre, however, that no one in his imaginary Elysium keens for William Davenant: "Not a Poet would afford him so much as an Elegie; whether because he sought to make a Monopoly of the Art, or strove to become Rich in spight of Minerva."[2] The "Officers of Parnassus" entrusted with stamping Davenant's "Passport" to the underworld scoff at his claim to be "an Heroick Poet" and "a Dramatick too," especially since he "onely studied to get Money."[3] By deploying in "Pluto's Court" the same tactics he used with Charles II, Davenant once again achieves theatrical success.[4] He regales Pluto and Proserpina with "Jeasts and Stories," complies with their whimsies, and hand-feeds them delicate morsels.[5] So pleased are the monarchs with this obsequiousness that they "joyn'd him in Patent with Momus, and made him Superintendent of all their Sports and Recreations," a clear allusion to the theatrical duopoly Davenant and Killigrew acquired in 1660.[6] The recipient once again of a royal patent, the deceased theatre manager finds himself "in as good Condition as he was before."[7]

[1] Although Flecknoe's name does not appear on the title page, he signed the postscript addressed "To the Actors of the Theatre in Lincolns-Inn-Fields," [Richard Flecknoe], *Sr William D'avenant's Voyage to the Other World* (London, 1668), 15.
[2] [Flecknoe], *Sr William D'avenant's Voyage*, 5.
[3] [Flecknoe], 7.
[4] [Flecknoe], 11b.
[5] [Flecknoe], 11b.
[6] [Flecknoe], 11b–13.
[7] [Flecknoe], 13.

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While Flecknoe's satire is perhaps more revelatory of own sullen inconsequence than Davenant's noteworthy career, its resentment is not unjustified. As Chapter 1 chronicles, in their relentless pursuit of a theatrical duopoly, Davenant and Killigrew used networks of access to elbow aside rival petitioners and ensure their future dominion over the marketplace. Like all monopolists, they turned to engineered scarcity on the assumption that attenuation would drive up demand for their product. Others initially shared their optimism. Quickly, outside investors stepped forward to purchase shares in the playhouse buildings and theatre companies. Sir Robert Howard in 1662 bought nine of the thirty-six shares divided amongst eleven parties for the Bridges Street theatre building.[8] Between his shares and Killigrew's, they owned half of the building. Howard was hardly a business naïf. Like Killigrew, he rapidly procured after the Restoration a dizzying array of lucrative offices and grants, including the clerk of the patents in chancery – a clear indication of his belief in the profitability of monopolistic enterprises.[9] Company shares, however, were generally held in-house. As Chapter 1 details, the Killigrew clan had long used kinship ties to expand their wealth and influence, and these assets were kept close to home. Howard was an exception to this rule – he would go on to write plays for the King's Company and briefly serve as their scene designer – and his rapid political ascent made him a valuable ally. Far more typical was the decision Killigrew made in 1663 when he put his nine shares in the King's Company in trust to Sir John Sayer, who had married his widowed sister-in-law, a legal decision reaffirmed in 1670.[10] By contrast, Davenant, always eager to leverage business relationships, began selling off part of his ten company shares in March 1661 to "buy Apparell Habitts & p*ro*pertys Machins & other decora*ti*ons."[11] Over the next two decades, Davenant's former shares in the Duke's Company would change hands frequently – and oftentimes confusingly. By the late 1680s, shareholders were embroiled in lawsuits over what little profit remained.[12]

In addition to generating wealth and attracting investors, an economic model predicated on planned scarcity was essential to creating the luxurious theatre envisioned by both managers. Targeted were urban elites

[8] *Register*, 1: 28–29.
[9] J. P. Vander Motten, "Howard, Sir Robert (1626–1698), Playwright and Politician," in *ODNB*.
[10] *Register*, 1: 49.
[11] Hotson, *The Commonwealth and Restoration Stage*, 220.
[12] For a comprehensive overview of Davenant's shares, see Hotson, *The Commonwealth and Restoration Stage*, 219–34.

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rather than the "bear-garden" audiences of yore derided by Killigrew in a conversation with Samuel Pepys.[13] Accordingly, various changes to company practices, such as later performance times and higher ticket prices, discouraged attendance by the common spectators for whom Davenant had already shown contempt back in the 1630s. And, finally, only the crown in the early modern period could bestow monopolies; thus, the letters patent publicized the new contractual relationship forged between the restored monarch and the commercial stage – yet another strategy for rebranding the theatre as an elite enterprise. As often happens, however, prior experiences and memories slithered into the present, squeezing current realities until they molded to long-standing desires. So eager were Killigrew and Davenant for the duopoly as a site of deferred potential that they did not fully grasp its potential shortcomings. Monopolies on necessities usually succeed: people cannot do without coal and bread and will grudgingly pay inflated prices. Established brands can also benefit from planned scarcity. By contrast, the acting companies needed to curate demand for what had effectively become a new – and quite expensive – entertainment product. Few were the citizens remaining who had ever seen a live performance; even fewer were those who could afford post-Restoration ticket prices. A succession of company managers nonetheless instituted repertory and company practices that ignored post-1660 marketplace and demographic realities. Chased instead were scarcity and exclusivity.

Theatre histories that attribute change solely to ideology or box office competition occlude the contingencies, memories, and emotions that also shape outcomes. In reviving commercial theatre, the grantees turned to what they remembered from the 1620s and '30s: an economic model that, at least prior to the Interregnum, promised wealth and prestige. Memories, of course, are selective; we remember some events and forget (or repress) others. They are also fundamental to our relational sense of self. In other words, we remember within social contexts, and the socially interactive nature of those recollections shores up our present subjectivity, helping us to become the selves we seek to be. More ominously, memories can prove so chromatic that the urgencies of the present moment fade by comparison.[14] Certainly, the duopoly hypostatized the elite selves that Killigrew and Davenant had been creating for twenty-five years. Perhaps

[13] Pepys, *Diary*, 8:55.

[14] For an excellent summary of both subjectivist and sociocultural theories of memory, see Geoffrey Cubitt, *History and Memory* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2007), 67–75.

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inevitably, aggrandizement and pride – incidental emotions defined as "dispositional or situational sources objectively unrelated to the task at hand" – informed managerial decision-making as much as did the logic of the box office.[15]

Scarcity: The Promise and the Reality

Like all monopolists, Killigrew and Davenant engineered scarcity to make their product rare and therefore more desirable. They also gambled that consumers would be sufficiently hungry for commercial theatre – especially after the lifting of an eighteen-year Parliamentary ban – to pay dearly for sumptuous shows in tiny, jewel-like playhouses. Consequently, both managers hiked ticket prices while radically downsizing seating capacity from what it had been prior to the Civil War. To put the magnitude of this reduction in perspective, we might recall that early modern London playhouses tendered 8,000–10,000 seats daily in 1600, enough to accommodate 3–5 percent of the city's inhabitants.[16] At least five playhouses operated until the closure of the theatres in 1642, which in turn suggests that demand remained constant throughout the period. By contrast, the two Restoration patent companies slashed seating by over 90 percent even though London had more than doubled its population since the turn of the century. Edward A. Langhans estimates that in the early years of the Restoration the Theatre Royal in Bridges Street and Lincoln's Inn Fields accommodated roughly 400 spectators each, for a total of 800 seats.[17] If one accepts the usual estimate of 400,000 Londoners in 1660, then seating was available on any given afternoon for only 0.2 or one-fifth of 1 percent of the population. In the 1670s, after new playhouses were built, seating doubled to 820 in Dorset Garden and perhaps to 700–800 in Drury Lane: a total of 1,500–1,600 seats that might accommodate 0.5 percent of urban dwellers.[18]

[15] Scott Rick and George Loewenstein, "The Role of Emotion in Economic Behavior," in *Handbook of Emotions*, ed. Michael Lewis, Jeannette M. Haviland-Jones, and Lisa Feldman Barrett, 3rd ed., (New York: Guilford Press, 2010), 138.

[16] Ann Jennalie Cook, *The Privileged Playgoers of Shakespeare's London, 1576–1642* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), 176.

[17] Edward A. Langhans, "The Theatres," in *London Theatre World*, ed. Hume, 39.

[18] Robert D. Hume, "The Dorset Garden Theatre: A Review of Facts and Problems," *Theatre Notebook* 33, no. 1 (1979): 12–13. Hume cautiously accepts earlier estimations of 800–1,000 seats at Drury Lane, but Mark A. Radice thinks the playhouse served 700–800 spectators. See Mark A. Radice, "Theater Architecture at the Time of Purcell and Its Influence on His 'Dramatic Operas,'" *Musical Quarterly* 74, no. 1 (1990): 111.

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Despite this radical reduction in seating capacity, planned scarcity did not work box office magic.[19] Contemporaries noted the puzzling gap between a burgeoning post-Restoration population and shrinking audiences, especially when compared to earlier in the century: "the Town was then, perhaps, not much more than half so Populous as now, yet then the Prices were small (there being no Scenes) and better order kept among the Company that came; which made very good People think a Play an Innocent Diversion for an idle Hour or two."[20] By contrast, despite the addition of "Scenes and Machines … the present Plays with all that shew, can hardly draw an Audience."[21] Extant receipts testify to lackluster attendance, especially at the troubled King's Company. A performance of John Dryden's *All for Love* (1677) at Drury Lane on December 12, 1677, drew 36 people to the boxes, 117 to the pit, and 96 to the galleries, thus attracting a total of 249 spectators to a house that usually seated 800. Two weeks later, Nathaniel Lee's *The Rival Queens* (1677) fared somewhat better, drawing 513. While box office receipts do not exist for the Duke's Company, testimony from Davenant's stepson, Thomas Cross, suggests that attendance was strong enough to generate decent returns for shareholders – at least prior to the move to Dorset Garden in 1671. In a lawsuit, he claimed that investors received "Twenty Five Shillings per week, and some time after [Sir William's] decease was by the said Company advanced to Thirty shillings."[22] If the Duke's Company performed the usual thirty-three weeks out of the year, those weekly amounts would tally to £82–90 annually: a seemingly handsome yield of 11 to 16 percent.[23] Several caveats, however,

[19] My analysis departs sharply from the figures devised by Alan Richard Botica in his much-cited dissertation "Audience, Playhouse and Play in Restoration Theatre, 1660–1710" (PhD diss., Oxford University, 1986). Botica creates a chart for the "Mean Rate of Attendance" that concludes playgoers made between 3.5 and 6.7 visits a year, a calculation based on patterns of attendance by Pepys, Edward Browne, Baron Ashburnham, John Evelyn, and Robert Hooke, all of whom were moneyed, privileged urban elites (157). By averaging the 180,000–200,000 visits that were supposedly made to the playhouses between 1660 and 1676, Botica concludes that between "5% and 11% of the total population of London" attended the playhouses annually (157). There are several problems with these figures. First, we have no way of knowing how many seats were actually sold over this sixteen-year period. Second, even if one were to accept Botica's figure of 27,000 visits annually – which I think unduly generous – most, according to his own calculations, would have been made by "frequent" or "regular" attendees. The curtailment of cheap seating suggests the playhouses indeed catered to the few who could afford repeat visits to the playhouses, but, aside from Pepys, none of the privileged playgoers he mentions attended on more than a handful of occasions. And, finally, Botica's robust figures do not square with the few box office receipts we possess or with the poor valuation of company shares.

[20] Wright, *Historia Histrionica*, 5.

[21] Wright, 6.

[22] Hotson, *The Commonwealth and Restoration Stage*, 223.

[23] Hotson, 219.

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complicate Cross's figures. First, an investor receiving 25s. weekly would need eight to ten years to break even if his share had been purchased at the going rate of £600 to £800.[24] Second, for fifteen shareholders to collect 25–30s. each on a weekly basis, the Duke's Company had to make a yearly profit of £1,230–1,350, but that figure is well below potential yield. Robert D. Hume says gross receipts in the original Vere Street and Lincoln's Inn Fields theatres totaled £50 nightly for a *full* house at a single performance, which tallies to £9,900 per annum.[25] Debited from gross receipts were house charges at £25 day and payments for the poet's benefit performance. If ten new plays annually survived to the third performance – a generous estimate – and dramatists packed the house with friends and supporters, the poet's benefit would add £300 to outlays.[26] In principle, operating expenses of £5,250 debited from £9,900 in gross receipts should have left investors with £4,650 or fifteen shares worth £400 each. These amounts, however, assume full houses. The £3,300 to £3,420 gap between the figures given in Cross's testimony and seating potential suggests that Lincoln's Inn Fields was two-thirds full at best.

The valuation of company shares over the seventeenth century also reveals a decline in attendance after 1660. According to an extant lawsuit from 1612, investors in the Red Bull Company could expect £80 per share; a Queen Anne's Company share was valued similarly.[27] Taking inflation into account, a Restoration investor in 1671 would at minimum need to realize between £95 and £126 per share to earn an equivalent amount.[28] The contrast to the original King's Company is even more pronounced. One share in 1634 yielded £180. If inflation is factored in, that share would be worth £227 in 1671: more than four times the £50 average a Restoration investor could expect.[29] Effectively, Restoration shareholders earned less than one-quarter of the profits realized by investors prior to the Civil War. After 1672, Dorset Garden playhouse was, according to Hume, "usually more than half empty," and operating expenses further undercut profitability.[30] In *Historia Histrionica,* the speaker Lovewit relates an anecdote he heard from a former

[24] *Register* 1: 18, 20.
[25] Robert D. Hume, "The Economics of Culture in London, 1660–1740," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 69, no. 4 (2006): 501.
[26] Hume, "The Economics of Culture in London, 1660–1740," 500.
[27] Gurr, *The Shakespearean Stage, 1574–1642*, 72.
[28] £95 represents the "real price" of goods and services whereas £126 indicates the "economic share" (i.e., the worth of a particular commodity divided by GDP or a share of total output). See MeasuringWorth.com.
[29] Gurr, 87.
[30] Hume, "The Dorset Garden Theatre": 12.

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member of the Duke's Company, that the "curious Machines by Mr. *Betterton* at the New *Theater* in *Dorset-Garden* [added] to the great Expence and continual Charge of the Players," which "impair'd their Profit o'er what it was before."[31] In addition to the cost of financing "curious Machines," the Duke's Company "well into 1675 … was repaying the £6,000 the sharers had had to borrow to meet the under-estimated £9,000 cost of building Dorset Garden."[32] Debt repayment came out of individual shares, which might have left investors with as little as £26–28 annually for several years.[33] By the late 1670s, outside investors no longer purchased shares with the same avidity they had shown at the outset of the Restoration.[34] Slowly disappearing was the earlier confidence in the profitability of a duopoly.

Smash hits and temporary closures occasioned brief periods of economic resuscitation. When internal dissension caused the King's Company to shut down for several days in February 1676, the Duke's Company dividends briefly spiked.[35] Even so, the temporary shuttering of one company did not necessarily produce a full house for their competition. During another closure of the King's Company, the epilogue to Behn's comedy *The Feign'd Curtizans* (1679), which was produced at the rival house, lamented that "[s]o hard the Times are, and so thin the Town, / Though but one Playhouse, that must too lie down."[36] The creation of the United Company – the sole entity operating in London for thirteen years – drove single shares upwards to £126 for its inaugural 1682–83 season.[37] Within a year, they fell back to £50–60, as attendance waned once again. Three years later, the epilogue to John Crowne's *Sir Courtly Nice* complained that "Poor Plays as fast as Women now decay, / They're seldom car'd for after the first day."[38] The epilogue to Behn's farce *The Emperor of the Moon*

[31] Wright, *Historia Histrionica*, 11.
[32] Judith Milhous, "The Duke's Company Profits, 1674–1677," *Theatre Notebook* 32 (1978): 84.
[33] Milhous, "The Duke's Company Profits, 1674–1677," 84. Milhous points out that these numbers might only represent half of the usual theatrical season; if that is indeed the case, then sharers would have collected between £52 and £56 annually.
[34] The only sales transactions that occurred between 1682 and 1690 were between Charles and Alexander Davenant, who were brothers. Once the latter secured his shares, he turned around and sold his right in the patent along with two shares to Thomas Skipworth, who would form a managerial partnership with Christopher Rich. Tellingly, outside investors lost interest in purchasing shares after 1678. See *Register*, 1: 264–65.
[35] Milhous, "The Duke's Company Profits, 1674–1677," 82.
[36] Aphra Behn, *The Works of Aphra Behn*, ed. Janet Todd, 7 vols. (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1992–96), 5:159.
[37] Judith Milhous and Robert D. Hume, "New Documents about the London Theatre 1685–1711," *Harvard Library Bulletin* 36, no. 3 (1988): 265.
[38] Crowne, *Sir Courtly Nice*, A4r.

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states that conditions were so bad by 1687 that not one playwright was "left [who] will write for thin third day."[39] For a brief period after the theatres opened in October 1660, curiosity about the newly restored theatre did indeed draw audiences and pack playhouses. In the ensuing weeks, there were "playes much in request and great resort to them," according to Thomas Rugg.[40]

Pepys may have marveled at the full house at the premiere of *Argalus and Parthenia* on January 31, 1661, but just four weeks later he saw how the opening of *The Queenes Maske* at Salisbury Court emptied the competition at the Vere Street Theatre, "where I find so few people (which is strange, and the reason I did not know) that I went out again."[41] On July 4, 1661, he attended Killigrew's *Claracilla* but thought it was "strange to see this house, that use to be so thronged, now empty since the opera begun – and so will continue for a while I believe."[42] At the outset of the Restoration thus began a pattern that would continue until both companies amalgamated into one entity in 1682: premieres filling one house while emptying the other. On March 7, 1664, Pepys noted how a revival of Davenant's *The Unfortunate Lover* was "very empty, by reason of a new play at the other house."[43] Pepys accompanied his wife to the Duke's Company on February 18, 1667, "expecting a new play."[44] Upon learning it had been canceled, they "stayed not no more then other people" and reluctantly decamped to the King's Company.[45] Later that year, he records how Nell Gwyn, one of the stars at the King's Company, "cursed for having so few people in the pit … the other House carrying away all the people at the new play."[46] This phenomenon is even more startling given that Lincoln's Inn Fields and Drury Lane in the early 1660s *jointly* accommodated roughly 800–820 spectators. If a premiere at one company decimated the box office at the other, then it stands to reason that no more than 400–500 people were attending with any regularity.

Nevertheless, so profound was psychic investment in scarcity that even the plague of 1665 and the Great Fire of 1666 – enormous disasters, by any estimation – were reconstrued as possible inducements to profit. The resulting long closures might create the pent-up demand that social engineering could not as easily accomplish. A manuscript prologue for the reopening

[39] Behn, *Works*, 7:206.
[40] *LS*, 19.
[41] Pepys, *Diary*, 2:48.
[42] Pepys, 132.
[43] Pepys, *Diary*, 5:77.
[44] Pepys, *Diary*, 8:71.
[45] Pepys, 71.
[46] Pepys, 463–64.

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of the King's Company Bridges Street playhouse on 29 November 1666 encapsulates their hope that

> After so long a fast, methinks, you all
> Will hungrily on what we offer fall;
> The welcome hearty though the cheer be small.
>
> For though before the late too long distress,
> You shunned our house as if you liked it less,
> You'll now return with double eagerness.[47]

The expectation that a prolonged "fast" from theatrical fare would "redouble eagerness" did not come to fruition. Some ten weeks later, on February 12, 1667, Killigrew complained to Pepys "how the Audience at his House is not above half so much as it used to be before the late fire."[48] If anything, the cataclysms of the mid-1660s appear to have lessened demand as people understandably put their efforts and their income into rebuilding the 13,200 households destroyed by the Great Fire.[49]

Novelty might attract the curious to the opening of a playhouse or to a premiere, but it does not build a long-term culture of playgoing. The use of planned scarcity to drive up ticket prices, thereby creating the aura of exclusivity, was another precarious business tactic: need differs from desire. In the wake of the Great Fire, citizens clearly required shelter and thus paid inflated prices for what little housing remained in the capital.[50] By contrast, desire must be created for high-end superfluities such as commercial drama, especially in a culture that had not seen licensed theatre for nearly two decades. Given life spans in the seventeenth century, few audience members from the 1620s and '30s were still alive after the Restoration, and with that generation perished the memory and habit of regular attendance.[51] Six months after the reopening of the theatres in October 1660, so desperate was Pepys for a firsthand account of live performance before the Interregnum that he sat drinking in an alehouse one afternoon with a shoemaker, one Mr. Wotton, who related "a great many stories of comedies which he had formerly seen acted and the names of the

[47] Danchin, *The Prologues and Epilogues of the Restoration*, part 1, vol. 1, 220.
[48] Pepys, *Diary*, 8:55.
[49] Stephen Porter, *The Great Fire of London* (Stroud, UK: Sutton, 1996), 70.
[50] Porter, *The Great Fire of London*, 79–80.
[51] In the period between 1640 and 1660, 35–40 percent of Londoners died before the age of fifty. The median age at death was 44.5 years, making it likely that a twenty- or thirty-year-old spectator in 1630 would no longer be alive after the Restoration. These figures derive from the genealogical material collected in Boyd's Index of London Citizens, reproduced in Peter Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class: Business, Society, and Family Life in London, 1660–1730* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 309–10.

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principal actors and gave me a very good account of it."[52] Revealingly, no one in Pepys's immediate circle of family and friends could do the same. It was precisely that loss of collective memory and cultural practice that was at odds with an economic model predicated on scarcity and prestige.

Play Publication: The Strategy of Economic Saturation

If few people remained from the 1620s and 1630s who had seen a live show, those that came of age in the 1640s and 1650s experienced theatre through the medium of print. The ban on live performance during the Interregnum coincided with an uptick in play publication, many of which were reprints of pre-Commonwealth titles. The publication of plays flourished under Cromwell, according to Louis B. Wright, "and many a citizen who found it impossible or inexpedient to witness a play, saw in his mind's eye the doings of royal courts as described in the printed works of dramatists."[53] So culturally ingrained by the Restoration was the reading of plays that Francis Kirkman published in 1661 an unprecedented sales catalogue of 685 plays to meet anticipated demand.[54] While Kirkman did not have the problem faced by the acting companies – how to jumpstart interest in what effectively was a new product – the catalogue suggests a desire to sustain the Commonwealth appetite for printed plays. Rather than resorting to scarcity, Kirkman devised an alternate economic strategy: widespread availability. Not only did he partner with other booksellers but he also used distribution centers throughout London. Kirkman's plays could be found at shops in Cornhill, well east to the playhouses; in St. Clement's, just to the northeast; at St. Paul's Cathedral, located in the heart of the City; and in Chancery Lane, just two blocks from where the King's Company would site two successive playhouses, the first on Bridges Street and the second in Drury Lane.[55] He also by the end of the 1660s appears to have inaugurated a book lending program as another strategy for widespread marketplace penetration. The advertisement inserted at the end of *Psittacorum Regio* (1669) informs readers that at Kirkman's shop in Bishopsgate "you may be furnished with all the Plays that were as yet

[52] Pepys, *Diary*, 1:59.

[53] Louis B. Wright, "The Reading of Plays during the Puritan Revolution," *Huntington Library Bulletin,* no. 6 (1934): 74. For a more recent account of play reading during the Interregnum, see Randall, *Winter Fruit*, 1–15.

[54] Francis Kirkman, *A True, perfect, and exact Catalogue of all the Comedies, Tragedies, Tragi-Comedies, Pastorals, Masques and Interludes, that were ever yet printed and published, till this present year 1661* (London, 1661).

[55] Kirkman, *A True, perfect, and exact Catalogue*, A2r.

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Printed, and all sorts of Histories and Romances, which you may buy or have lent to you to read on reasonable Consideration."[56] Bishopsgate ward was especially varied socioeconomically: it contained mansions, churches, coaching inns, and Bethlehem Hospital for the mad, as well as a poor house that was erected after 1649.[57] The location of Kirkman's shop, not to mention his innovative lending program, targeted a diverse clientele ranging from the wealthy to the poor, from locals to travelers, and, on Sundays, from churchgoers to hospital visitors. It was also the neighborhood James Burbage had selected for The Theatre, the predecessor to the Globe, an association Kirkman's bookshop further capitalized upon. Ongoing demand for play quartos throughout the Restoration attracted publishers such as Henry Herringman, Thomas Dring, William Crook, James and Mary Magnes, Richard Bentley, William Cademan, Langley Curtis, and, later in the period, Jacob Tonson, all of whom clearly regarded printed drama as a lucrative specialization.

Publishers had the additional advantage of not being unduly affected by religious and social attitudes that still plagued the acting companies. Puritan divines had railed against the playhouses since they first opened in the 1570s. They were, however, more nuanced in regard to published drama.[58] Phillip Stubbes's *The Anatomie of Abuses* (1583) inveighs against performance, dancing, and gaming but sanctions the reading of "some kind of playes, tragedies and enterluds."[59] These can be "very honest and commendable exercises … which containe matter (such they may be) both of doctrine, erudition, good example and wholesome instruction."[60] With the exception of extremists, such as William Prynne, most divines acknowledged the potential edification to be gleaned from reading serious drama, an outlook that persisted well into the Restoration.[61] The

[56] See Joseph Hall, *Psittacorum Regio. The Land of Parrots: Or, The She-lands* (London, 1669), M3r. As is often the case with advertisements, they do not appear in every extant copy of the text. The copy of *Psittacorum Regio* owned by the Bodleian Library contains the advertisement, whereas the Huntington Library copy does not.

[57] James Campbell, "Bishopsgate Street," in *Map of Early Modern London*, ed. Janelle Jenstad, Victoria: University of Victoria, updated September 20, 2020, https://mapoflondon.uvic.ca.

[58] Jonas Barish's *The Antitheatrical Prejudice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981) remains the seminal study of anti-theatrical attitudes in the West. See especially Chapter 4, "Puritans and Proteans", Chapter 5, "Jonson and the Loathèd Stage", and Chapter 6, "Puritanism, Popery, and Parade," all of which survey prevailing religious sentiments against the theatre during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

[59] Phillip Stubbes, *The Anatomie of Abuses* (London, 1583), 5v.

[60] Stubbes, *The Anatomie of Abuses*, 5v–6r.

[61] Prynne's mad tome *Histrio-Mastix: The Players Scourge, or, Actors Tragœdie* (London, 1633) rants against plays and players for over 1,000 pages. He was twice pilloried, fined £5,000, and physically mutilated for his anti-theatrical sentiments.

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predestinarian Calvinist Jean Gailhard admits (albeit grudgingly) that "a good use may be made of Plays," although he warns that "the life of Actors and Actrices … will hinder any good effect, and destroy what good dispositions might happen to be in them."[62] Conduct books agreed the drama could be put to "good use." William Ramesey lists "Ben. Johnson, Shakespear … Beaumont and Fletcher, Dryden, and what other Playes from time to time you find best Penn'd" as models for refinement.[63] In his *Letter of Advice to a Young Gentleman at University*, Francis Brokesby recommends the "more polite parts of Learning … Such is Poetry, especially Heroic and Dramatic. And indeed this latter, I mean the Tragic, may at the same time teach us while it delights us."[64] Neither Ramesey nor Brokesby, however, includes playgoing amongst his prescriptions for the acquisition of gentility.

That many people after 1660 continued to regard the playhouses as fleshpots of iniquity stands to reason given the quiet persistence of Calvinist beliefs, as well as the emergence of new denominations, such as Quakerism, that also opposed playgoing. William Penn's *No Cross, No Crown* (1669) advertises on the title page its intention to provide readers with "several Sober Reasons" for refraining from the "*Recreations* of the Times."[65] He especially targets the theatre as the "one divertion that's more pernitious" than all other "recreations."[66] Penn will not even allow for classical tragedy, an extreme stance that set him apart from Calvinists like Gailhard. The early modern understanding of sense perception further buttressed religious misgivings about the stage. Information and sensations gathered visually were thought to be far more powerful – and potentially dangerous – than those gleaned aurally, a notion that hearkens back to Horace's *Ars Poetica*.[67] Reading was considered even less efficacious than listening, a notion upheld by divines and actors alike. In his autobiography, Colley

[62] J[ean] Gailhard, *The Compleat Gentleman: or Directions For the Education of Youth* (London, 1678), 94.
[63] [William Ramesey], *The Gentlemans Companion: or, a Character of True Nobility and Gentility* (London, 1672), 129.
[64] Francis Brokesby, *A Letter of Advice to a Young Gentleman at the University. To which are subjoined, Directions for Young Students* (London, 1701), 7.
[65] William Penn, *No Cross, No Crown: Or Several Sober Reasons against* Hat-Honour, Titular-Respects, You *to a single Person, with the* Apparel *and* Recreations *of the Times* (London, 1669), A1r.
[66] Penn, *No Cross, No Crown*, 46.
[67] "Less vividly is the mind stirred by what finds entrance through the ears than by what is brought before the trusty eyes, and what the spectator can see for himself" ('*Segnius irritant animos demissa per aurem quam quae sunt oculis subiecta fidelibus et quae ipse sibi tradit spectator*'). See Horace, *Satires, Epistles, and Ars Poetica*, trans. H. Rushton Fairclough, vol. 194, The Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926; revised and reprinted, 1929), 464–65. Page references are to the 1929 edition.

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Cibber quotes approvingly from the anti-theatrical theologian Jeremy Collier, who states that "[r]eading is but Hearing at secondhand; now Hearing, at best, is a more languide Conveyance, than Sight."[68] Both sight and hearing "are in conjunction" during live performance, a powerful sensory union further strengthened by "[t]he Life of the Actor," which "fortifies the Object, and awakens the Mind to take hold of it."[69] As a result, theatre's "[i]njuries … [are] ten times more severe, and formidable" than the abuse meted out in published satires and render "the Stage … in need of a great deal of Discipline and Restraint.[70] Because the reading of plays is less efficacious phenomenologically, published drama does not require equivalent oversight. These persistent religious attitudes, along with a citizenry habituated to reading plays, clearly did not work to the advantage of the patent companies. Pricey, limited seating and inhospitable repertory practices would further erode spectatorship.

Seating and Exclusivity

The quest for exclusivity not only diminished available seating but also shaped distribution and pricing. Of the 820 seats available in Dorset Garden Theatre, at least half were in the pit at 2s. 6d. and there were 140 in the boxes at 4s. Effectively, two-thirds of the auditorium was set aside for those wealthy enough to expend significant discretionary income. Moreover, expensive seating was engineered to produce the lion's share of profit; as Robert D. Hume points out, "you may fill your second gallery at 1s. per head, but if the pit and boxes are sparsely populated you will have a very bad night."[71] Spectators on a budget could opt for one of the 140 seats in the middle gallery at 1s. 6d., a still not inconsiderable sum, or one of the remaining 140 seats in the upper gallery at 1s.[72] By contrast, the pre-Commonwealth stage offered poor spectators more seating at a fraction of the cost. The Globe, which we now know accommodated over 3,000 people, could hold 800 standing spectators in the yard at 1d. and another 1,000 in the lower gallery at 2d. Better sight lines in the upper galleries cost 3d. and the room all of 6d. Seating in the Globe was the mirror opposite of the Restoration playhouses, with two-thirds of capacity aimed at spectators

[68] Cibber, *An Apology for the Life of Colley Cibber*, 157.
[69] Cibber, 157.
[70] Cibber, 157.
[71] Hume, "The Economics of Culture in London, 1660–1740," 497.
[72] I have derived the figures about the distribution of seating in Dorset Garden from Hume, "Dorset Garden Theatre": 12–13.

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of modest means. Moreover, the most expensive ticket in the Globe cost *half* the price of the cheapest seat in Drury Lane or Dorset Garden.

Seating in the Restoration playhouses emulated not only the intimacy of Parisian playhouses but also the exclusivity of the upmarket, roofed buildings of the Jacobean and Caroline periods. These small playhouses represent the first attempt at purveying commercial theatre to moneyed spectators. Whereas the Globe targeted a range of customers across the social spectrum, inclining toward those of modest means, a private house like Blackfriars "hived off the more aristocratic patrons and created a coterie theatre for those able and inclined to pay more, leaving the public houses, like the Fortune and the Red Bull, to provide popular theatre for a 'down-market' clientele."[73] Everyone sat, as there was no standing room for groundlings in these roofed buildings. Spectators paid far more for their seats than did the heterogeneous audience at the large, open-air amphitheatres. By the 1630s, a seat in the top gallery of a Jacobean private playhouse cost 1s. (increased from 6d. in 1608), as did the middle and lower gallery. Boxes went for 2s. 6d. The early Restoration playhouses were even smaller than their Jacobean and Caroline roofed predecessors by a good 100 seats or more, a reduction that justified higher prices.[74] Retained was the 1s. price for an upper gallery seat; however, other sections of the auditorium skyrocketed: the middle and lower galleries now cost 1s. 6d., the pit 2s. 6d., while boxes nearly doubled to 4s.[75] These price jumps were in the playhouses' most prestigious areas, the boxes and the pit, further evidence of the belief that exclusivity would attract affluent spectators willing to pay for expensive tickets.

Indeed, so keen were Killigrew and Davenant to bring in well-heeled playgoers that they brazenly did the very thing they leveled against a rival: charging spectators well in excess of the old Blackfriars rates. In October 1660, prior to the suppression of other acting companies, Davenant and Killigrew complained to the king about "the unusual and unreasonable rates" levied by Michael Mohun's company at the Cockpit. As a result, Henry Herbert was ordered to direct Mohun "to take from the persons

[73] Keith Sturgess, *Jacobean Private Theatre* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987), 13.

[74] In recent years, estimates of the seating in Blackfriars have scaled down. Melissa Aaron guesses "approximately 500, or an eighth that of the Globe," while John H. Astington puts the figure at "five to six hundred people." See Melissa Aaron, "Theatre as Business," in *The Oxford Handbook of Shakespeare*, ed. Arthur F. Kinney (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 424; John H. Astington, "Why the Theatres Changed," in *Moving Shakespeare Indoors: Performance and Repertoire in the Jacobean Playhouse*, ed. Andrew Gurr and Farah Karim-Cooper (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 27.

[75] *LS*, lxx–lxxi.

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of qualitie and others as dayly frequent yo[r]. Play:house, Such usuall and accustomed rates only as were formerly taken at the Black-fryers, by the late Company of Acto[rs] there & noe more."[76] Once the duopoly was secured and their rivals eliminated, Killigrew and Davenant not only resorted to similarly exorbitant pricing but also went Mohun one better in doubling prices for premieres and multimedia spectaculars.[77] Protected by the terms of their patents, which forbade challenges to their authority, Killigrew and Davenant could indeed impose "unusual and unreasonable rates" on playgoers, but their decision to do so made spectatorship unaffordable for most Londoners.

Time Is Money

In their quest to emulate upmarket Parisian theatres, both patent companies eschewed several English repertory practices, despite their proven success. Among these was the abandonment of traditional curtain times. French companies began their shows between 3:30 and 4:00 p.m. By the 1680s, curtain times were even later: 5:00 p.m. and then, by the close of the century, 6:00 p.m.[78] By contrast, prior to the closure of the playhouses in 1642, plays in London began between 1:30 and 2:00 p.m., an earlier slot that permitted shopkeepers and artisans to take a long, midday break and then return to work.[79] Davenant was already inclining toward a continental model when he staged his musical "medleys" in the 1650s. *The Cruelty of the Spaniards in Peru* advertises a daily representation "At Three after noone punctually."[80] Shortly after the Restoration, both companies quickly shifted to the 3:30 p.m. slot typical of the Parisian stage. The prologue to Dryden's early 1663 comedy *The Wild Gallant* features an astrologer announcing an impending performance at "half an hour after

[76] Bawcutt, *The Control and Censorship of Caroline Drama*, 234–35.

[77] *LS*, lxx.

[78] Oscar G. Brockett and Franklin J. Hildy, *History of the Theatre*, 8th ed. (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1999), 228.

[79] Andrew Gurr maintains that performances in the Shakespearean period began no later than 2:00 p.m. and ran for only two hours because of rapid delivery, lack of scene changes, and shorter scripts of 2,500–2,900 lines (161). Michael J. Hirrel has challenged this view, arguing that by the mid-1590s, "London performances typically began between 3:30 and 4:00 and ended between 7:30 and 8:00, lasting almost four hours" (Michael J. Hirrel, "Duration of Performances and Lengths of Plays: How Shall We Beguile the Lazy Time?" *Shakespeare Quarterly* 61, no. 2 (2010): 162). Hirrel's theory, while provocative, does not explain the gradual shift to later curtain times over the course of the seventeenth century, especially as management slowly realized that earlier starts conflicted with work schedules. For a spirited rebuttal of Hirrel's argument, see Lukas Erne, *Shakespeare as Literary Dramatist*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 14–17.

[80] Davenant, *Cruelty of the Spaniards*, A1r.

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three after noon."[81] The introduction to Flecknoe's 1667 comedy similarly invokes a 3:30 p.m. curtain: *Damoiselles a la Mode* features an actor bustling off the stage in preparation for the performance since "'tis past three o'th Clock, and the Play's ready to begin."[82] Over the remainder of the period, curtain times gradually moved later: to 4:00 p.m. in the 1680s, to 5:00 p.m. in the 1690s, and then to 6:00–6:30 p.m. by the early eighteenth century.[83] As with pricing, later curtain times targeted more affluent playgoers. Few were the spectators who could afford to close up shop for the entire afternoon *and* pay inflated ticket prices.

This is not to replicate the hoary generalization about Restoration audiences being comprised solely of courtiers, a commonplace long put to rest.[84] Allan Richard Botica documents the mix of professions and classes that attended the playhouses, especially prior to 1676.[85] Servants and apprentices, for instance, enjoyed playhouse outings courtesy of their masters. Pepys's diary reveals that Mary Mercer, his wife's companion, accompanied them to performances on twenty-four occasions. All of these visits, however, depended on the largesse of her employers: not once did Mercer pay for her own ticket. Pepys's diary is revelatory in another respect. On December 27, 1662, Pepys sniffed about "the company at the house today, which was full of Citizens, there hardly being a gentleman or woman in the house."[86] He would complain about the same again five days later. His most acid attack on the "ordinary prentices and mean people in the pit at 2s.–6d. apiece" occurred several years later, on January 1, 1668.[87] Although these entries are sometimes construed as evidence that citizens regularly attended the playhouses, only thrice in nine years does Pepys record their presence – and all of these occurred on holidays.[88] Twice he sees citizens at

[81] Dryden, *Works*, 8:4.
[82] Richard Flecknoe, *The Damoiselles a la Mode* (London, 1667), a1r.
[83] Montague Summers mentions a playbill reproduced by Eleanor Boswell that advertises a performance for *A King and No King* to be presented at the Theatre Royal on February 22, 1687, "Beginning Exact[ly a]t Four of the Clock" (see Summers, *Restoration Theatre*, 8). The entries in James Brydges's diary indicate that by the turn of the century, shows began even later. On March 11, 1700, he notes that "about 6," his brother, Henry, "set me down at y- Playhouse in Lincolns inn fields, where I met M^{r} Coke, M^{r} Hammond, & Sir Godfrey Coply: about 8: I came home" (*LS,* 1:526).
[84] See Emmett L. Avery, "The Restoration Audience," *Philological Quarterly* 45, no. 1 (1966): 54–64; and Harold Love, "Who Were the Restoration Audience?," *Yearbook of English Studies* 10 (1980): 21–44.
[85] See Botica, "Audience, Playhouse and Play."
[86] Pepys, *Diary*, 3:295.
[87] Pepys, *Diary*, 9:2.
[88] Peter Holland, *The Ornament of Action: Text and Performance in Restoration Comedy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 13–15.

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Davenant's theatre on January 1, one of the seventeen principal holy days in the Anglican calendar that sanctioned a break from everyday life.[89] And the "mean people" attending on December 27 were enjoying one of the Twelve Days of Christmas – the extended holiday period marked by the cessation of work, the enjoyment of small luxuries, and the exchange of gifts.[90] These were working stiffs treating themselves to a holiday outing; moreover, the disappearance of "gentlemen and women" on these occasions suggests the exceptional nature of a playhouse packed with citizens.

"Privileged" does not denote a playhouse brimming over with court wits but, rather, urban elites sufficiently comfortable to forgo work for an afternoon and pay hefty ticket prices. As always, the rich could absorb increased costs; they also had the leisure time denied to laborers and the "middling sort." As Ann Jennalie Cook points out, even earlier in the century, afternoon performances invariably favored privileged playgoers.[91] The 2:00 p.m. performance slot preferred by the pre-Commonwealth companies, according to the dramatist and pamphleteer Thomas Nashe, accommodated "men that are their owne masters (as Gentlemen of the Court, the Innes of the Courte, and the number of Captaines and Souldiers about London) [who] do wholy bestow themselues vpon pleasure."[92] The shift after the Restoration to a curtain time of 3:30 p.m. made attendance especially difficult for the "Merchants, Tradesmen, Factors, and Brokers, and the Servants of Merchants and Tradesmen" who met in the enclosed courtyard of the exchanges in the morning and again in the afternoon.[93] This particular demographic had the means to attend the playhouses, but the overlap between "Exchange time" and curtain time forced merchants to choose between pleasure and profit.

Not surprisingly, paratexts decry the scarcity in the audience of the "man of business" as opposed to the "young brisk men" with time on their hands. A prologue written for a 1673 revival of William Cartwright's play *The Ordinary* (1635) suggests that expecting the business community to attend the playhouses was an exercise in futility: "we seldom do implore, or hope

[89] January 1 commemorates the Circumcision and Naming of Jesus Christ. See the prayer service in *The Book of Common-Prayer, and Administration of the Sacraments, and other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church, According to the Use of the Church of England* (London, 1662), B8r.

[90] Ronald Hutton, *Stations of the Sun: A History of the Ritual Year in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 22–23.

[91] Cook, *Privileged Playgoers*, 198.

[92] Thomas Nashe, "Pierce Penilesse His Supplication to the Divell," in *The Works of Thomas Nashe*, ed. R. B. McKerrow (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1910), 1:212, quoted in Cook, *Privileged Playgoers*, 172.

[93] Natasha Glaisyer, *The Culture of Commerce in England, 1660–1720* (Woodbridge, UK: Royal Historical Society and Boydell Press, 2006), 28.

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for aid" from "you grave men of bus'ness and trade / Who were for industry, not pleasure made."[94] As Botica documents, largely in attendance was a "youth culture" of unemployed younger sons from the gentry and minor aristocracy, especially in the first two decades of the Restoration.[95] As for citizens, they sometimes showed up at Dorset Garden in the 1670s to see spectacle-heavy shows, much to the chagrin of the rival King's Company. A prologue Dryden wrote in 1672 for "the Women, when they Acted at the Old THEATRE in LINCOLNS-INN-FIELDS," delineates between the different demographics attending during this decade. At the King's Company, which had returned to Lincoln's Inn Fields in the wake of the conflagration of the Bridges Street Theatre, "we expect the *Lovers, Braves,* and *Wits,*" whereas Dorset Garden, that "Gaudy House with Scenes, will serve for Citts."[96] Sir Francis Fane echoes that same distinction in the epilogue to *Love in the Dark* (1675). The "merry Citizen's in Love" with dramatic operas such as Shadwell's *Psyche,* which had premiered earlier in the year at Dorset Garden, but "Men of Wit, find one another" at Drury Lane.[97] By 1681, even flying descents and elaborate machinery no longer drew citizens to Dorset Garden, who were now in coffeehouses debating political imbroglios such as the Popish Plot and the Exclusion Crisis. As the epilogue to Shadwell's *The Lancashire Witches* (1682) lamented, the "City neither like us nor our Wit."[98]

A late afternoon curtain also conflicted with Parliamentary session times, which in turn made it difficult for politicians to attend the theatre with any regularity. On November 2, 1667, Pepys noticed the "[play]house [was] full of Parliament-men, it being holiday with them," a comment that discloses the exceptional nature of their presence at the theatre.[99] Parliament adjourned that fall from October 31 to November 3, and it was only during that four-day recess that MPs had the opportunity to see *Henry IV, Part 1*, which was playing at the Theatre Royal. Later curtain times even forced an inveterate theatre-goer such as Pepys to decide between business and pleasure. On July 23, 1661, he made the rounds of the Naval Office in the morning; subsequently he went to Westminster to catch up on the latest news. By the afternoon, finding himself in a mood "unfit for business," Pepys "went to the Theatre and saw Breneralt," an old

[94] Danchin, *The Prologues and Epilogues of the Restoration*, 2:532.
[95] Botica, "Audience, Playhouse and Play," 63–65.
[96] [John Dryden], *Miscellany Poems* (London, 1684), 286.
[97] Sir Francis Fane, *Love in the Dark, or The Man of Bus'ness* (London, 1671), 96.
[98] Thomas Shadwell, *The Lancashire-Witches, and Tegue o Divelly the Irish-Priest* (London, 1682), 76,
[99] Pepys, *Diary*, 8:516.

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tragicomedy by Sir John Suckling that had been dusted off by the King's Company.[100] That telling phrase, "unfit for business," reveals the options before Pepys: returning to the Naval Office for more work despite feeling "unfit" or catching a performance at the Theatre Royal. He could not do both.

By 1664, Pepys sharply curtailed his trips to the theatre to remake himself as a "man of business," so inimical was theatrical spectatorship to his professional aspirations.[101] Prior to this resolution, he frequently spent his afternoons and early evenings on leisure, first enjoying the large noontime meal typical of the period and then heading over to the playhouse. After sitting for at least three hours through a performance, Pepys would then go to a tavern with friends. If the king attended or the play was unusually long, then he would spend far more than his usual six hours on theatrical pleasure. On September 7, 1661, Pepys did not return home until 9:00 p.m., on account of "the King's coming" and "the length of the play."[102] Performed that afternoon was a revival of *Bartholomew Fair*, which like most of Jonson's comedies, exceeded Caroline averages of 2,900 lines.[103] If the induction is retained and no cuts are made, the unredacted original runs to nearly 4,300 lines.[104] Restoration playwrights often followed Jonson's penchant for hefty scripts. Southerne's *Oronooko* (perf. 1695; pub., 1696) spans 3,192 lines, Thomas Shadwell's *Epsom-Wells* (1673) 3,360 lines, Sir George Etherege's *The Man of Mode* 3,744 lines, William Wycherley's *The Plain Dealer* (1676) 4,416 lines, and John Vanbrugh's *The Relapse; or, Virtue in Danger* (1697) a whopping 4,452 lines. Even if the play was shorter – Dryden, Otway, Behn, Lee, Crowne, and Durfey generally observed 2,700–2,900-line averages – the addition of prologues, epilogues, and occasional music required from spectators an expenditure of at least three hours.

Largely ignored by management were English citizens newly flush with income from recent economic diversification. This untapped pool of spectators needed curtain times and performance lengths more conducive to

[100] Pepys, *Diary*, 2:139. The original title is *Brennoralt, or The Discontented Colonel* (1646).

[101] For a more detailed account of how Pepys's playgoing habits changed over the 1660s in relation to his professional aspirations, see Deborah C. Payne, "Theatrical Spectatorship in Pepys's Diary," *Review of English Studies*, n.s. 66, no. 273 (2015): 87–105.

[102] Pepys, *Diary*, 2:174.

[103] Pepys, *Diary*, 2:174. In the 1590s, plays averaged only 2,500 lines, a number that gradually increased over the seventeenth century. See Gurr, 218–19.

[104] In the preface to *The Dutch Lover* (1673), Aphra Behn mentions that Jonson's *The Alchemist* (1610) took "almost three hours." See Behn, *Works*, 5:162. Given that it is nearly ten pages longer than *Bartholomew Fair* (1614), one assumes cuts were made. Otherwise, playing time would have been upwards of four hours.

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their work schedules if they were to be lured into the playhouses. London over the course of the seventeenth century went from having a narrow economic base largely revolving around cloth-making to one centered on newly capitalized industries "based on refining or finishing colonial produce, industries devoted to import substitutions like glassmaking or metalworking or those catering to the new consumers of luxury commodities such as joined furniture, coaches, clocks and printed matter."[105] The distributive trades, along with shopkeepers, agents, warehousemen, and wholesalers, increased exponentially, as did the numbers of merchants, going from 1,000 earlier in the century to over 3,000 by the Restoration.[106] Accompanying this growth in business were the professions, especially "an immense expansion in the volume of legal business in the Westminster courts," which in turn necessitated more barristers and attorneys.[107] In principle, this uptick in moneyed citizens and professionals should have resulted in more spectators after the Restoration, not fewer, given their level of disposable income.

Not until Christopher Rich, a businessman and lawyer, took over management of the United Company in 1693 did the theatres finally move "toward a six to six-thirty curtain call" in an attempt to lure this neglected segment of the population back to the playhouses.[108] An advertisement in the *Post Boy* for December 5–7, 1700, indicates the transition to a later playing time may have taken longer than suggested in *The London Stage*. The advertisement notifies readers that the Drury Lane Theatre "finding the Inconveniency to the Gentry of Playing so late at Night, are resolved to continue, beginning their Plays exactly at the Hour of Five every Day, as exprest in their Bills."[109] That wording reveals a new eagerness to accommodate "the Gentry," a social category that included the professions in addition to gentlemen, wealthy landowners, and financiers. Shifting curtain time from 6:00 p.m. back to 5:00 p.m. not only prevented performances from overlapping with business but also guaranteed that spectators returned home by 9:00 p.m. at the latest. Later curtain times after 1700 affected the composition of the audience. John Dennis noted an increased presence of "younger Brothers, Gentlemen born, who have been kept at

[105] Jeremy Boulton, "London 1540–1700," in *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, ed. Peter Clark, vol. 2, *1540–1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 326.
[106] Richard Grassby, *The Business Community of Seventeenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 56.
[107] Boulton, "London 1540–1700," 326.
[108] *LS*, 1:lxx.
[109] Judith Milhous and Robert D. Hume, comps. and eds., *The London Stage, 1660–1800: A New Version of* Part 2, 1700–1729, fasc. 1: *1700–1707*, Folger Shakespeare Library, 130f, 13.

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home, by reason of the pressure of the Taxes" and businessmen "who made their Fortunes in the late War." He blamed both of these groups for a decline in taste, as well as those "who from a state of obscurity, and perhaps of misery, have risen to a condition of distinction and plenty." Foreigners lacking facility in English, who wanted nothing but "Sound and Show," are also mentioned.[110] In a fit of xenophobia and class prejudice, Dennis may have despaired of early eighteenth-century audiences, but later curtain times would indeed by the end of the century draw in the demographic ignored earlier in the Restoration.

Unintended Outcomes I: Repetition and Satiety

In their quest for exclusivity, the Restoration acting companies emulated not only Parisian curtain times but also repertory practices. These too would produce unanticipated outcomes. Parisian companies played only twenty-five to twenty-eight plays annually, a total that usually included three premieres with "a significant proportion of the repertory consist[ing] of older works."[111] By English standards, this repertory was small indeed, but the paucity of available playing space in Paris forced companies to share theatres, thereby limiting their offerings. The Italian Players and Molière's troupe, for instance, jointly occupied the Petit-Bourbon for several years. The companies alternated their weekly performances between *jours extraordinaires* (Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday) and *jours ordinaires* (Tuesday, Friday, and Sunday).[112] As a result, French companies acted on three or, at most, four days a week, a pattern that resulted in between eighty and a hundred performances annually of a modestly sized repertory. They also performed new plays intensively. Racine's first tragedy, *La Thébaïde* (1664), ran for fourteen days: an "encouraging" but by no means extraordinary showing for a new playwright, according to John Lough.[113] To offset the repetition occasioned by a long run, companies varied the bill, changing up the second play or ballet that normally

[110] John Dennis, *The Critical Works of John Dennis*, ed. Edward Niles Hooker, vol. 1, *1692–1711* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press, 1939), 293.

[111] Jan Clarke, "The Material Conditions of Molière's Stage," in *The Cambridge Companion to Molière*, ed. David Bradby and Andrew Calder (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 32. The total repertory comprised of old and new works in Moliére's company went from twenty-eight plays in the 1660–61 season to only twelve in the 1669–70 season. Clarke points out that the decline was largely due to Molière building the repertory almost exclusively around his own plays by the early 1670s, a practice not shared by the other Parisian companies (30).

[112] Clarke, "Molière's Stage," 32.

[113] John Lough, *Seventeenth-Century French Drama: The Background* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 36.

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accompanied a new work. Additionally, they rotated old plays on a weekly basis from Friday to Tuesday, a custom Jan Clarke calls "weekly rep."[114] The abbreviated calendar and varied programs thus offset the repetition that was to characterize Restoration performances.

Early modern English acting companies, tethered to a six-day performance schedule, had expressly avoided long runs and a repetitive repertory to offer the variety that would lure repeat visitors to the playhouses. Henslowe's *Diary* for September 1594 shows fifteen different titles over a twenty-seven-day performance schedule, a "pace, though rigorous, [that] is normal," according to Roslyn L. Knutson.[115] English companies in less than two months played the same number of titles that a French company would perform annually. In general, an English play, whether old or new, would be "performed eight to twelve times over four to six months," thereby ensuring that the same title would show up in playbills no more than twice a month.[116] By the 1620s, audiences opted more for familiar titles than the novelty of new plays, but they still wanted variety. Companies increasingly turned to old plays as "the reliable winners, the mainstays," whereas "new plays were the trial offerings, valuable chiefly for their potential to become part of the repertory."[117] The companies thus had on hand a substantial repertory that guaranteed spectators a wide variety of genres and dramatists spanning nearly half-a century of commercial fare.

So powerful was the desire for the exclusivity associated with the French stage that both Restoration companies spurned the traditional practice of offering spectators at least fifteen different titles in a given month. Mapped onto the English standard of a six-day-a-week performance calendar was the French custom of running new shows for as long as possible.[118] Restoration companies, however, gave twice as many performances as their French counterparts, between 170 and 200 shows annually.[119] Additionally, unlike the Parisian companies, neither the King's nor the Duke's Company was forced to share a theatre. If anything, after the collapse of the King's

[114] Clarke, "Molière's Stage," 32.

[115] Roslyn L. Knutson, "The Repertory," in *A New History of Early English Drama*, ed. John D. Cox and David Scott Kastan (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 465.

[116] Knutson, "The Repertory," 468.

[117] James J. Marino, "Adult Playing Companies, 1613–1625," in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern Theatre*, ed. Richard Dutton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 93.

[118] English companies shortened their performance calendar during Lent and Holy Week, when playing was banned altogether. The theatres were also shuttered for royal funerals and mandated observances, such as the Fast for the martyrdom of Charles I held every January 30, but the six-day performance week was normative for non-holiday periods.

[119] Robert D. Hume, "Theatre Performance Records in London, 1660–1705," *Review of English Studies* 67, no. 280 (2016): 472.

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Company in 1682, the United Company had a surfeit of space and therefore no reason to limit performances to alternating days of the week in the French manner. From the outset, Restoration companies ran a popular show for as many six-day performance weeks as possible. The Duke's Company played their smash hit, *The Adventures of Five Hours*, from January 8 through the 22nd, an unbroken run of two weeks.[120] The wildly popular redaction of *The Tempest* by Dryden and Davenant played from November 7 to November 14, 1667, and then reappeared again on the 26th.[121] These performances offered spectators a mainstage show, brief curtain tunes, and perhaps a concluding song or dance. Utterly lacking were the second short plays, ballets, and lengthy musical presentations that allowed French companies to change up their daily bills, thereby assuaging audience fatigue. Not until the early eighteenth century would English bills include an afterpiece.[122]

Restoration acting companies after 1660 followed Gallic practice in offering fewer titles and longer runs but without the abbreviated performance calendar and varied bills that might relieve audience boredom. As a result, the performance calendar looks startlingly repetitive compared to the Shakespearean and French stages. Robert D. Hume rightly warns about the incomplete nature of records for this period, but *The London Stage*, Part 1, provides several fleeting glimpses into the Restoration repertory.[123] November 1674, a fairly well-documented month, shows both companies offering spectators a choice of only four to six titles, a third of the variety that pre-Commonwealth audiences enjoyed.[124] The 1661–62 season, one of the most thoroughly documented we have, shows a slight increase over those numbers.[125] The King's Company rotated eight different titles through the month of December, perhaps to take advantage of the holidays. For the remainder of the season, they offered six to seven plays each month, with revivals of Fletcher's and Killigrew's own plays

[120] *LS*, 60–61.
[121] *LS*, 123–24.
[122] For an overview of the emergence of the afterpiece on the eighteenth-century stage, see the introduction to Daniel James Ennis and Judith Bailey Slagle's collection of essays, *Prologues, Epilogues, Curtain-Raisers, and Afterpieces: The Rest of the Eighteenth-Century London Stage* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2007), 23–25.
[123] Of the 14,067 performances that were most likely given between 1660 and 1700, we have "title and exact date for just 949" (6.7 percent). See Hume, "Theatre Performance Records," 468. Hume also points out that nearly 80 percent of our performance data derives from just five sources: Pepys's diary; bills for royal attendance; records from Sir Henry Herbert, the Master of the Revels; Nell Gwyn's playgoing accounts; and Lady Morley's correspondence (468).
[124] *LS*, 223–25.
[125] *LS*, 30–52.

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featuring heavily in the repertory. Mapping the long runs typical of French repertory onto a six-day-a-week English performance calendar begat the repetition at odds with the "briskly dear Variety" spectators wanted.[126]

Lack of choice could exasperate even a theatrical enthusiast like Pepys, although it was sometimes leavened by his passion for a particular play or performer. Pepys's affection for *Sir Martin Mar-all* (1667) – which he saw ten times – is well known, as is his adoration of Thomas Betterton, the star actor for the Duke's Company. He considered Betterton "the best actor in the world" and saw his Hamlet three times.[127] When nothing else was on offer, Pepys sometimes grudgingly paid for repeat visits to lackluster shows. On September 28, 1664, Pepys saw the King's Company production of Orrery's *The General*, which he thought was especially weak compared to his earlier effort that same year, *Henry V*.[128] Nonetheless, Pepys returns for another viewing less than a week later, on October 4, suffering through a play "which is so dull and so ill acted, that I think it is the worst I ever saw or heard in all my days."[129] That fall, the only other option at the same company was Killigrew's resurrection of a play he had written during the Interregnum, *The Parson's Wedding* (1664), which Pepys refused to see. The Duke's Company offered Davenant's *The Rivals* (1668), an adaptation of the Fletcher/Shakespearean collaboration, *The Two Noble Kinsmen* (1634). It being "no excellent play", he did not return to see it a second time.[130] Even if one assumes the presence of several other titles that never made it into performance records, the choices for Pepys were paltry at best.

Colley Cibber understood how "frequent Repetitions" of plays even when performed by "the best Actors in the World … must have grown tedious and tasteless to the Spectator."[131] He points out that the 1660 court order giving Davenant the right to perform his own plays and several other pre-Commonwealth titles ensured that "the Stage was supply'd with a greater variety of Plays, than could possibly have been shewn, had both Companies been employ'd at the same time, upon the same Play."[132] The resulting principle of performance rights prevented for thirty-five years the redundancy that would have resulted from dueling productions of *Hamlet*

[126] Behn, *Works*, 7:219.
[127] Pepys, *Diary*, 2:207.
[128] Pepys, *Diary*, 5:282.
[129] Pepys, 288.
[130] Pepys, 267.
[131] Cibber, *An Apology for the Life of Colley Cibber*, 56.
[132] Cibber, 56.

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or *Venice Preserv'd*.[133] Even so, the court order did not mitigate the problem of plays grown "tedious and tasteless" from their frequent appearance in the repertory. After 1700, when businessmen, not courtiers, managed the companies, they sought "to give repetition an air of freshness" by changing up rotations, playing an old title only once in an entire season or, at most, twice during a given month.[134] The 1703–04 Drury Lane season, for which the records are virtually complete, shows a striking return to robust Elizabethan-style programming. In October, the company rotated nineteen different titles through the month-long repertory. Although records are less thorough for Lincoln's Inn Fields, they, too, appear to have embraced variety, if only to keep up with Drury Lane. In February 1704, the company performed between seventeen and twenty different titles over one month. Musical elements also expanded after 1700: yet another ploy to attract spectators back into the theatres. Rather than the short first and second music that played just before the curtain came up on a Restoration performance, the early eighteenth-century stage included three specially composed instrumental pieces. After 1700, longer musical pieces replaced the "brief and sometimes all but indistinguishable" act tunes that had covered scenic transitions.[135] Additionally, bills now included an afterpiece, which could be anything from a pantomime to a short opera. Various forms of *entr'acte* entertainments, including songs, dances, and even acrobatics, further varied the nightly bill. Gone were the unbroken, five-act performances of the Restoration, punctuated only by incidental music.

Unintended Outcomes II: Old Plays

If Cibber worried that a repetitive repertory might drive away potential spectators, Behn fretted that frequent revivals of pre-Commonwealth titles would do the same. "Old Plays … cloy'd" spectatorial appetites,

[133] According to Milhous and Hume, performance rights established by the Lord Chamberlain's orders of the early 1660s were flagrantly ignored by the "actor-cooperative company [that] opened at Lincoln's Inn Fields in the spring of 1695." The breakaway company headed by Betterton, Elizabeth Barry, and Anne Bracegirdle staged whatever play they wanted without intervention from the Earl of Dorset, by then, Lord Chamberlain. The merging of the two troupes into the United Company in 1682 – which made performance rights moot – may have produced this "thoroughly chaotic and confusing situation." See Judith Milhous and Robert D. Hume, *The Publication of Plays in London, 1660–1800: Playwrights, Publishers, and the Market* (London: British Library, 2015), 47.

[134] Emmett L. Avery, ed., "Introduction," *The London Stage, 1660–1800*, part 2: *1700–1729*, 2 vols. (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1960), cxii.

[135] Shirley Strum Kenny, "Theatre, Related Arts, and the Profit Motive: An Overview," in *British Theatre and the Other Arts, 1660–1800*, ed. Shirley Strum Kenny (Washington, DC: Folger Books, 1984), 24.

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which in turn diminished box office returns.[136] By contrast, as *The Country Gentleman's Vade Mecum* observed, "every body that has any Inclination for the *Play-house,* is willing to gratify his Itch with a Novelty."[137] Behn and the other playwrights who decried the Restoration penchant for revivals were fighting a deeply engrained practice. When the theatres reopened after 1660, the only playwrights remaining from the pre-Commonwealth stage were Killigrew, Davenant, and James Shirley, and it would take nearly a decade to develop a new generation of writers. To fill that gap, both companies turned to earlier hits from the old King's Company repertory, thereby establishing a pattern of revivals that would continue until the end of the century. In the 1675–76 season, thirteen new plays premiered, but forty-one productions were revivals of old plays: sixteen written after 1660 and twenty-five written before 1640.[138] After the merger decimated competition, even fewer new works were produced, as the actor–playwright, George Powell, noted: "upon the uniting of the two Theatres … the reviveing of the old stock of Plays, so ingrost the study of the House, that the Poets lay dorment; and a new Play cou'd hardly get admittance, amongst the more previous pieces of Antiquity, that then waited to walk the Stage."[139] The fall season of 1685 confirms Powell's observation insofar as not one new play was produced. Instead, three prewar scripts appeared (Beaumont and Fletcher's *A King and No King* [1611]; Fletcher's *Rule a Wife and Have a Wife* [1624]; and Shakespeare's *Othello* [1604]) and five early Restoration plays (Etherege's *The Man of Mode* [1676]; Behn's *The Rover* [1677]; Otway's *The Soldier's Fortune* [1681]; and Crowne's *Sir Courtly Nice* and *The City Politiques* [1683]). Of these, only *Sir Courtly Nice* was recent, having premiered the previous spring.

The lack of dramaturgical innovation between 1682 and 1695 discloses ongoing belief in the efficaciousness of scarcity. With only one company operating, surely audiences would happily accept whatever was on offer – except they did not. Behn was especially astute in understanding how "old Plays" were like a "dull Wife … To whom you have been marry'd tedious years."[140] Contemporaries echo her insight that erotic and theatrical desire alike require the *frisson* of novelty. One wag remarked sarcastically that gallants attending the theatre "can support the

[136] Behn, *Works*, 7:219.
[137] *The Country Gentleman's* Vade Mecum: *or His Companion for the Town* (London, 1699).
[138] Michael Dobson, "Adaptations and Revivals," in *The Cambridge Companion to English Restoration Theatre,* ed. Deborah Payne Fisk (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 41.
[139] George Powell, *The Treacherous Brothers* (London, 1690), A3r.
[140] Behn, *Works*, 7:206.

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repetition of an old Play, if they can but make Love to a new Beauty."[141] Old wares dulled not only audience appetites but also aesthetic appreciation. Revealingly, even a keen playgoer like Pepys reacted irritably to unredacted pre-Commonwealth plays: he judged them far more harshly than new scripts, including several titles by Shakespeare now considered canonical. He liked the acting in *Twelfth Night* but considered it "but a silly play and not relating at all to the name or day."[142] Pepys thought even less of *The Taming of the Shrew,* which he lambasted as a "silly play" and – tellingly – an "old one."[143] And, notoriously, he condemned *Romeo and Juliet* as "the worst [play] that ever I heard in my life."[144] The only Shakespeare plays that Pepys returned to see on multiple occasions either featured a company star, such as Betterton in the role of Hamlet, or were heavily revised. He loved the singing, dancing witches and special effects in Davenant's multi-media production of *Macbeth,* which he considered "a most excellent play for variety."[145] He also liked *The Tempest,* which had also been heavily adapted by Davenant and Dryden: it too was "full of so good variety."[146]

Pepys's dislike of unredacted, "old" plays extended to other Elizabethan and Jacobean playwrights; indeed, the older a script, the more likely it was to earn his disapprobation. Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* (1592?) was dismissed outright as a "bad play."[147] He thought Thomas Heywood's patriotic potboiler *Queen Elizabeth's Troubles, and the History of Eighty-Eight* (1605) "the most ridiculous that sure ever came upon stage."[148] He condemned John Webster's *The White Devil* (1612) as "a very poor play."[149] A second viewing four days later further acidulated that initial impression: it "pleased" him "worse then it did the other day."[150] He waved away John Fletcher and Philip Massinger's *The Spanish Curate* (1622), which gave him "no great content."[151] Even old scripts that were well produced dissatisfied Pepys. He was "pretty merry at the mimique tricks of Trinkilo" in a revival of Thomas Tomkis's *Albumazar* (1615) on February 22 but did "not see any

[141] *Remarques on the Humours and Conversations of the Town* (London, 1673), 103.
[142] Pepys, *Diary*, 4:6.
[143] Pepys, *Diary*, 8:516.
[144] Pepys, *Diary*, 3:39.
[145] Pepys, *Diary*, 5:314; 7:423.
[146] Pepys, *Diary*, 8:527.
[147] Pepys, *Diary*, 9:90.
[148] Pepys, *Diary*, 8:388. Pepys appears to have been referring to Heywood's two-part play, *If you know not me, You know no bodie: Or The troubles of Queene Elizabeth* (1605).
[149] Pepys, *Diary*, 2:190.
[150] Pepys, 191.
[151] Pepys, 54.

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thing extraordinary" in this "old play."[152] Pepys had the same reaction five days later at Thomas Dekker and Philip Massinger's *The Virgin Martyr* (1622). He liked Rebecca ("Becky") Marshall's acting but dismissed the script: "Not that the play is worth much."[153] Out of the eighty-odd performances Pepys saw in 1668 – a heavy playgoing year – forty-eight were written before the Civil War. He disliked twenty-two of them intensely, nearly half. Mary Evelyn shared Pepys's exasperation with old scripts. In a letter written to "Mr Terryll" (i.e., Tyrrell) on February 10, 1669, she reported: "There has not been any new lately revived and reformed, as Catiline, well set out with clothes and scenes."[154] Two months after Mary Evelyn deplored the lack of novelty, Pepys abandoned the theatre for his growing interest in music and book collecting.[155] Other spectators would follow suit: by the 1680s, London could barely support one company.

As the following chapter explores, audiences hankered after more than new plays. Spectators also wanted to see the breathtaking scenic and special effects promised by the exquisite new baroque playhouses. Long gone were the open-air amphitheatres of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century; in their stead were new theatres that rivalled anything the continent had on offer. To satisfy audiences eager to see the latest and the best, the companies incurred costs so crushing that even Thomas Betterton, long a proponent of the new technologies, would abandon the dazzling improvement he had inaugurated in 1671 at Dorset Garden.

[152] Pepys, *Diary*, 9:85.
[153] Pepys, 94.
[154] *LS*, 155.
[155] For a detailed analysis of how Pepys's playgoing changed over the 1660s, see Payne, "Theatrical Spectatorship in Pepys's Diary," 87–105.

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