

THE CAVALIER MODE IN RESTORATION  
DRAMA, 1661-1676

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A Thesis

Presented to

the Graduate Faculty of the Department of English  
University of Houston

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts

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by  
Betty Jane Proctor  
August, 1974



## FOREWORD

I wish to thank the members of my committee for their help in seeing this thesis to completion. I appreciate the helpful suggestions and comments provided by Dr. Judkins and Dr. Collins, who took time out from a busy summer schedule to read my work. To Dr. Wright, of course, goes my deepest appreciation, not only because he suggested the topic and aided substantially in every stage of the writing process, but because his consistent support and warm humor kept me going in the past year of study.



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In seventeenth-century England, the Cavaliers became increasingly disillusioned with the harsh realities of an ever-changing world. After the Restoration in 1660, a return to pre-Commonwealth conditions was not possible--the Cavaliers could not forget years in exile, the loss of estates, and the beheading of Charles I. Pre-Restoration concepts of honor and idealism, to which the Cavaliers had been exposed at the court of Henrietta Maria, became for many empty and meaningless. To the Cavaliers, nothing remained sacred in a world of hypocrisy, pettiness, and deceit.

By approaching the drama of the Cavaliers as an indicator of the contemporary milieu, the intrinsic merit of these works can be viewed in a clearer perspective. Davenant, Killigrew, Tuke, Buckingham, Sedley, and Etherege, Cavalier playwrights of the early Restoration, reduce Carolinean attitudes of honor and chivalry to hedonism. Marriage, politics, and religion are among the institutions ridiculed by these Cavaliers. The Puritans and middle class are consistently targets of ridicule for their rigidity, piety, and subversiveness. Davenant and Killigrew, who write in a pre-Commonwealth mode, anticipate Restoration drama in their thematic motifs. Tuke, in his *Spanish intrigue*, Buckingham, in his



burlesque, and Sedley, in his comedy, present more sophisticated plays which ridicule heroic ideals. The most artful of the Cavalier plays are by Etherege, who expresses the amorality and skepticism of this unsettled era, as well as man's desire for freedom, individuality, and naturalness, when faced with the constrictions of society.



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## I. THE CAVALIER SPIRIT

The seventeenth century was an age of transition from the Middle Ages to the modern world. Scientific and intellectual advances made by such men as Descartes, Newton, and Locke led to the realization that the world was very different from what it had seemed. In the New World, which symbolized a new era in the development of civilization, European nations struggled for dominance, in exploration, conquest, colonization, and commerce. Great cities of Europe, such as London and Paris, were the setting for the emergence of a strong commercial and capitalistic class, the upper elements of townspeople known as the bourgeoisie. The lifestyle of the aristocracy was more grandly cultivated than ever before, as a high value was set on patronage of the arts, courtly manners, elaborate clothing, and elegant speech. Such grandeur was especially suited to an age of high monarchy, or royal absolutism, of which the greatest exemplar was France under the rule of Louis XIV. In England, the mounting claims of royalty met with opposition, as the representative bodies of government, increasingly middle class in composition, asserted their rights. Linked indistinguishably with political problems were religious differences, as wars were precipitated by the insistence of dissenters for



freedom from the intolerance of government-established religious institutions.

In England, at the lavish court of Charles I and Henrietta Maria (1625-1647), the courtiers exemplified, to some degree, romantic ideals of honor, the last vestiges of chivalry as expressed through préciosité. Henrietta Maria, who was French, was a prime civilizing instigator at court, introducing Platonic ideals to the less refined English aristocrats. A direct contrast to the courtiers were the middle-class Puritans, who were despised for their opposition to the king and their sombre attitudes toward life. Charles I, who was in constant need of money in order to maintain his luxurious lifestyle and to quash uprisings in Scotland and Ireland, was never granted adequate revenues by the Puritan-controlled Parliament. Convinced of his divine right to rule and insistent on imposing the Anglican faith on his dissenting subjects, Charles I refused to recognize his need for Parliamentary support until too late. The king's conflict with Parliament over power, religion, and money led to war, as neither side would compromise. Events occurring as early as 1629 foreshadowed the conflict to come, as the dismissal of Parliament only served to create enemies for the king. As late as 1637, when Charles desperately needed the help of Parliament in putting down the rebellion in Scotland, he naively refused to deal realistically with



the legislative body, insisting once more on his right to govern as he saw fit, answerable only to God. Thus, in 1642, the "Cavaliers," or Royalists, went off to fight for the king, expecting to defeat the "Roundheads" of Oliver Cromwell in a blaze of glory. However, the next seven years saw the Cavalier quest for the fulfillment of romance, honor, and adventure end in disillusionment and disaster; not only were the Cavalier armies defeated in the field and many Royalists forced into exile, but the king himself was executed in 1649.

As a direct product of the age, the literature of the court of Charles I reflects the social and political milieu of the age. The temper of the cultured society at court led the way for the drama, as plays were written by fashionable gentry for the enjoyment of the court. Not entirely professional, the plays written by courtiers were largely decorous, ornate, rhetorical, and sentimental--such productions suited the taste of Henrietta Maria, who enjoyed romance and the précieuse.<sup>1</sup> With the usurpation of the stage by the court, the writing of plays was a task no longer for middle-class dramatists of the public theatre, as a taste was acquired for plays and masques in the social milieu of the court, produced with beautiful scenery and costume.<sup>2</sup> Polite dramatists such as

<sup>1</sup>Alfred Harbage, Cavalier Drama (1936; rpt. New York: Russell & Russell, 1964), p. 28.

<sup>2</sup>Harbage, p. 24.



Carlell, Montague, and Suckling wrote idealistic plays which helped to civilize the court. Beautiful and virtuous women were wooed and won by valiant and magnanimous men in early Cavalier plays, which were used primarily as a vehicle to exemplify faddish notions about etiquette and emotions.<sup>3</sup> Through préciosité, emotions were refined and Platonic love was exploited. Such plays reflected life only in their loquaciousness; a marked feminism and an absence of ribaldry characterized the plays.<sup>4</sup> Characters became personified theories of honor, presented in monologues, long debates, rant, and bombast.

Such idealistic literature, in reflecting the polite society at the court, does not necessarily signify sincerity on the part of the writers themselves. If one examines the writings of Thomas Carew (c. 1595-1640), one of the leading Cavalier poets, one can see that Carew is an advocate of a sensuous hedonism, resulting from his cynical view of the nature of man in conflict with society. In poems such as "A Divine Mistress," "To A. L.: Persuasions to Love," and "A Rapture," the Cavalier disillusionment with idealism and honor is presented. Hypocrisy in honor is presented in the strongest terms in "A Rapture," as it is suggested that the vulgar, middle-class women do not have the strength and greatness of

<sup>3</sup>Harbage, p. 31.

<sup>4</sup>Harbage, p. 38.



the court ladies who are able to overcome the false impositions of society:

The giant, Honour, that keeps cowards out,  
Is but a masquer, and the servile rout  
Of baser subjects only bend in vain  
To the vast idol; whilst the nobler train  
Of valiant lovers daily sail between  
The huge Colosse's legs.<sup>5</sup>

"The Second Rapture" presents lust as the only happiness in life, an expression of a cynical, rakish Cavalier:

Give me a wench about thirteen,  
Already voted to the queen  
Of lust and lovers; whose soft hair,  
Fann'd with the breath of gentle air,  
O'erspreads her shoulders like a tent,  
And is her veil and ornament;  
Whose tender touch will make the blood  
Wild in the aged and the good;

(ll. 7-14)

This passion is the ultimate expression of man in his egoistic, predatory state, exhibiting a pervasive skepticism. Carew's love poetry exhibits a fundamental disbelief in ideals of honor and virtue, as advocated by the court. Contrivances of society, such as préciosité and Platonic love, placed prohibitions on an individual and were artificial, when measured against the realities of social, political, and religious strife in the world--all resulting in disappointment.

What was restored in 1660 was not only the monarchy, in

<sup>5</sup>Thomas Carew, "A Rapture," in Minor Poets of the Seventeenth Century, ed. R. G. Howarth (1931; rpt. New York: Everyman's Library, 1966), p. 103, ll. 3-8. The later reference to "A Second Rapture" is from this edition.



the person of Charles II, but also the Church of England and the Parliament. Everything, legally, was supposed to be as it had been in the 1640's. However, a reversion to pre-Commonwealth conditions was not easy to achieve. The Cavaliers, who had fought in the great rebellion, witnessed defeat, and the killing of a king, had undergone imprisonment, lost their estates, or had been forced to flee the country. Such hardships, suffered in the name of honor and romance, resulted in natural feelings of disillusionment and disappointment with a world of hypocrisy. Ideals expressed in Sidney's Arcadia and D'Urfé's Astrée seemed grossly unrealistic to Restoration Cavaliers. Following the example set by Charles II, the court became known for its amorality, luxury, and intrigue. Completely lost was the original meaning of "Cavalier." With the Restoration, came departures from Caroline ideals. To the Cavaliers in the 1660's, involvement in matters of religion or politics was deemed slightly vulgar. Charles II was more interested in his own pleasure and thought best not to provoke Parliament to extremes, perhaps remembering the fate of his father. The élite tended to regard the middle class with contempt and scorn. Cherishing the independence and piety of dissent, the Puritanical middle-class Londoners were scandalized by the lewd affairs of courtiers, who merely regarded bourgeois wives and daughters as fair game. The frugal, social-climbing tradesman was often



the subject of satire on the part of the upper class. The lively Elizabethan repartée, with its serious intellectual intent, was reduced to an enunciation of commonplaces by aristocratic wits. The Renaissance idea of a well-rounded gentleman, as expressed in Castiglione's The Book of the Courtier, was enlarged to include rakish men of fashion, who relied upon a refined, careless elegance.

The Interregnum, during which the theatres were closed, created a gap in dramatic development that could not be easily closed. Attitudes of cynicism toward the hypocritical world were mirrored in the plays of the early Restoration, which for the most part exalt the fashionable manners of the beau monde. Throughout many comedies may be seen a typical Cavalier attitude of cynicism and indifference toward politics, religion, and the middle class. The Cavalier drama of the first years of the reign of Charles II was derivative in tone from those written by courtiers in the circle of Henrietta Maria as well as from the writers of scintillant love lyrics.<sup>6</sup> Restoration writers such as Etherege, Sedley, and Buckingham followed the lead of earlier writers, though making modifications to suit their own social milieu. The carpe diem philosophy, as expressed in the literature of the earlier seventeenth century, became enlarged to include indifference toward life and lack

<sup>6</sup>Harbage, p. 238.



of faith in humanity, as institutions of family, church, and state were subject to constant satire and abuse.<sup>7</sup> In a world consumed with hypocrisy, a philosophical naturalism was promulgated in the plays, viewing love between the sexes as mere physical appetite, and the traditions of marriage and courtly love as man's artificial contrivances to make misery seem less painful.<sup>8</sup>

Cavalier plays of the early Restoration illustrate the reduction of Carolinean attitudes of honor and chivalry to the hedonism and cynicism of the early Restoration. Davenant's plays profess a link between the Carolinean and Restoration stage, reacting against the idealism of the earlier era. Davenant had been a prominent writer in the court circle of Henrietta Maria.<sup>9</sup> In the Restoration, he was given a patent to manage a theatre by Charles II, where he revived and wrote plays for the aristocratic audience. Somewhat of a coxcomb in his youth, Davenant was regarded as a chivalrous Royalist soldier in the days of the war. His plays mirror typical Cavalier attitudes, as satire upon the common multitudes, the Puritans in particular, was an important dramatic element.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup>Dale Underwood, Etherege and the Seventeenth-Century Comedy of Manners (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1957), p. 13.

<sup>8</sup>Underwood, p. 14.

<sup>9</sup>Alfred Harbage, Sir William Davenant, Poet Venturer, 1606-1668 (1935; rpt. Ann Arbor: Univ. Microfilms, 1964), p. 43.

<sup>10</sup>Harbage, Davenant, p. 51.



The Playhouse to be Let (1663), a dramatic harlequin compounded of Commonwealth entertainments and homespun farce, ridicules the middle class, the French, professional writers, idealistic plays, honor, and pomposity. The fifth act, an Antony and Cleopatra playlet, is true burlesque, in which tragic figures are pushed from their pedestals, showing the author's cynicism. The Wits, written in 1634 and revived in 1661, has a rakish hero, Young Pallatine, a character type to be seen in later Restoration plays. Indifference toward war and politics is advocated; fanaticism in religion is ridiculed. To live by one's wits and take money from women is the philosophy of the hero. The Man's the Master (1668) was the first play written by Davenant to meet the requirements of the Restoration audience. This play, which resembles Spanish dramatic literature, mocks the seriousness of love and honor, in the rivalry of Don Lewis and Don John for the hand of Isabella. Thus, these three plays by Davenant mirror the dramatic taste of his audiences, and possess conventions of both early and late Cavalier plays.<sup>11</sup>

Thomas Killigrew was a co-monopolist of the London stage, along with Davenant. Killigrew, an active Royalist, wit, and favorite of the king, supposedly had a colorful personality and was quite a rake.<sup>12</sup> As a young man, he moved in the circle of

<sup>11</sup>Harbage, Davenant, p. 165.

<sup>12</sup>Alfred Harbage, Thomas Killigrew, Cavalier Dramatist, 1612-1683 (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1930), p. 1.



Henrietta Maria, where he lived a life of luxury and indulgence. Primarily, Killigrew was a courtier; he turned to authorship sporadically and as a dilettante.<sup>13</sup> The Parson's Wedding (1664) is a rebellion against courtly Platonic love, to which the author was strongly exposed as a youth. This play is coarser in tone than that of his earlier compositions while under the influence of Henrietta Maria--certainly The Parson's Wedding was not written to please the queen, as it was a reaction against the artificialities of the court.<sup>14</sup> The realistic treatment and attention to characterization in the play is suggestive of the Restoration comedy of manners. Ridiculed in the play are the military, country life, religious agitators, hypocrisy in women and moral strictures, and political reform, as the bawdy side of polite society is presented. No sympathy is extended to the Parson, Wanton, or Love-all--these and other characters are treated almost cruelly by Killigrew. Men, according to Killigrew, are not so concerned with ballets, billet-doux, and the conventions of Platonic love, but are more crude in the propositioning of women. Life, to a Cavalier such as Killigrew, is animalistic, with no honor or virtue, as people yield to base desires--in such a society there is no faith to be held in people or institutions. Such

<sup>13</sup>Harbage, Killigrew, p. 8.

<sup>14</sup>Harbage, Killigrew, p. 71.



values are seen in later comedies of the Restoration, beginning with those of Etherege.

Sir Samuel Tuke was in the Royalist army, and went into exile with the Stuarts during the Commonwealth. After the Restoration, Tuke, a courtier, became a favorite of Charles II. It was from Charles that Tuke received the suggestion to write a play based on one of Calderón's plots. This play, The Adventures of Five Hours (1663), was the first Restoration translation of a Spanish play, and was recognized as an exemplar of neo-classic canon, showing the traits of the "heroic play."<sup>15</sup> Half-humorous excitement is evident in the play, which is comic and serious by turns. The play is so hurried that passions are not fully represented. Passionate, cape-and-sword scenes must naturally seem absurd to the cynical, aristocratic audiences.<sup>16</sup> At face value, one might think that The Adventures of Five Hours has a highly moral plot, and is concerned with the maintenance of honor and the search for true love in a licentious age. Indeed, such is not the case, as such lofty ideals are expressed in this play as to be farcical.

The Rehearsal (1671), written chiefly by George Villiers,

<sup>15</sup>Allison Gaw, "Tuke's Adventures of Five Hours in Relation to the 'Spanish Plot' and to John Dryden," Studies in English Drama (Baltimore: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1917), p. 23.

<sup>16</sup>John Loftis, The Spanish Plays of Neoclassical England (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1973), p. 75.



2nd Duke of Buckingham, a notorious rake, is a burlesque of the pompous heroic plays of Dryden and other professional dramatists.<sup>17</sup> Buckingham was the best friend of Charles II, and is said to have corrupted the king. A wit and a rogue, Buckingham excelled in soldiering, gambling, playwrighting, wenching, and pimping--he was very "well-rounded." He spent money excessively, was lavishly dressed, and extremely handsome. At court, Buckingham was quite a mocker and a railleur, as grave, dignified men were a subject for jokes to him.<sup>18</sup> Living by a carpe diem philosophy, Buckingham was one of the most cynical, corrupt rakes of his age.<sup>19</sup> The Rehearsal is a fine example of the values of a Cavalier in that it parodied over seventeen heroic plays, exemplified by empty rhetoric. A ragout of riotous nonsense, the lines parodied in the play would be known by every person in the audience--such a burlesque could serve only to prove Buckingham's wit to Charles II.<sup>20</sup> Certainly, Buckingham must have had great fun in proving that nothing makes sense as in the true "heroic" sense, by his use of bellowing rant, horseplay and slapstick, and silly debates

<sup>17</sup>John Harold Wilson, A Rake and His Times: George Villiers, 2nd Duke of Buckingham (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Young, 1954), p. 198.

<sup>18</sup>Wilson, p. 13.

<sup>19</sup>Wilson, p. 50.

<sup>20</sup>Wilson, p. 201.



on love and honor.<sup>21</sup> The object of the most ridicule is obviously the poet Bayes (John Dryden), who contends that only he can write. Wit, says Buckingham, had sunk to a low level of artificiality, in an already hypocritical world.

Sir Charles Sedley spent his youth in exile with the royal family in France during the years of the Commonwealth. A rich man of fashion, Sedley enjoyed all the pleasure which the vices of the time afforded. In 1660, Sedley became a member of the king's inner clique, famous for its debauchery and frivolous escapades.<sup>22</sup> Sedley is best remembered for the activities he engaged in, while a young aristocratic hoodlum in London, though he is also known for his interest in literature. The Mulberry Garden (1668) was written during the height of Sedley's notoriety as a dissolute, libertinistic Cavalier, and reflects the lifestyle and attitudes of the author and his fashionable clique. An antipathy toward the Roundheads is expressed, as the free-thinking Cavaliers represent the author's viewpoint. The re-establishment of the monarchical state is a cause for celebration for the characters of the play. Idealism is mocked by Sedley and his characters, as the Commonwealth ideals and the nobility of man are held in contempt. There is

<sup>21</sup>Wilson, p. 202.

<sup>22</sup>Vivian de Sola Pinto, Sir Charles Sedley, 1639-1701, A Study in the Life and Literature of the Restoration (London: Constable, 1927), p. 54.



an incongruous mixture of comic and serious scenes, effecting a lampoon of the "heroic" plays.<sup>23</sup> The Mulberry Garden is the type of a play to come from a gifted, inexperienced playwright.<sup>24</sup> It is the expression of the worldly society of the Cavaliers, to be perfected in Congreve's The Way of the World.

Sir George Etherege was known in the early days of the Restoration as a wit, rake, and man about town. A true Cavalier, Etherege was gifted as a dramatist, writing three plays that were to influence virtually all of Restoration comedy. His life was composed of the fashionable, easy negligence of manners and modes which results from an undercurrent of cynicism toward life. These attitudes, which prevailed with the gay and voluptuous Cavalier world, are pictured in The Comical Revenge; or, Love in a Tub (1664), which has a mixture of comic and heroic scenes, as one finds in The Mulberry Garden. Sir Frederick Frollick expresses Cavalier attitudes of cynicism toward women and ideals of honor in life; a model for later Restoration rakes, he follows his own basic desires. A return to pre-Commonwealth conditions is realized to be both an impossibility and a farce. She Wou'd if She Cou'd (1668) ridicules the hypocrisies of the world. Women, such as Lady Cockwood, are seen as typically false. The country bumpkins are

<sup>23</sup>Pinto, p. 252.

<sup>24</sup>Pinto, p. 249.



ridiculed for their shallowness and naïveté in a world of adventure and intrigue. The institutions of marriage and religion are referred to with doubt and scorn by the characters. The London bourgeoisie was mistrusted, satirized, and regarded as a threat to the easy-going pleasures of the Cavaliers. Mankind's follies are delineated in The Man of Mode; or, Sir Fopling Flutter (1676). Dorimant, Etherege's worldly hero, expresses cynical opinions of honor in love, and finds the institution of marriage hypocritical. The middle class is a subject of ridicule for men of fashion such as Dorimant and Medley, who resented the tradesmen's aspirations to gentility. An authentic picture of Etherege's world is advanced in this play, the best of the trilogy, as elegant ladies and gentlemen, with their bawdy manners and loose morals, strive for wit and fashion, losing sight of their naturalness all the while. Artificiality is denounced by Etherege, in favor of candor, naturalism, and freedom from social inhibitions in an imperfect society.

The following chapters will demonstrate in detail the elements of Cavalier plays of the early Restoration which reflect the social and historical milieu. The primary focus will be on the Cavalier viewpoints toward honor, love and marriage, the middle class, politics, and religion, as life is reflected in its disillusioning, momentary state. The playwrights of the Restoration react against earlier Cavalier attitudes of idealism and honor. The plays of Davenant and



Killigrew, less sophisticated than later Restoration plays, are of primary importance for their rejection of pre-Commonwealth ideals of honor, as cynicism is expressed. Tuke and Buckingham ridicule the courtier plays of the Caroline stage for their absurdities. The plays of Sedley and Etherege are important as they presage the Restoration comedy of manners. In all these Cavalier plays, pre-Commonwealth conditions are shown to be unrealistic and farcical, as skepticism is expressed toward the institutions of society. In the ways of the world, the instinctive life of man is one of aggression and egoistic self-satisfaction.<sup>25</sup> The desire of the Cavaliers for individuality, freedom, pleasure, and naturalness reflects more than just the seventeenth-century milieu of revolutionary changes, leaving the world different from before.

<sup>25</sup>Underwood, p. 73.



## II. THE PLAYS OF DAVENANT AND KILLIGREW

From the autumn of 1642 until the Restoration of Charles II in 1660, the theatres were officially closed. Though a few plays were offered during the Interregnum, the theatre, as a whole, suffered at the hands of the Puritans. After the Restoration, comedy was to take shape from diverse elements, influenced little by pre-Commonwealth modes. The Cavalier theatre managers Sir William Davenant and Thomas Killigrew, sensing the taste of the cynical and amoral court, recognized that idealistic romanticism was "out" in comedy. Courtiers themselves, the royal patentees understood personally the skeptical attitude toward life, the revulsion against Puritanism, and the ridicule of the wealthy citizens of London expressed by aristocrats. New plays written during the early years of the Restoration exhibit the replacement of the element of idealism by a cynical and frequently explicit denial or disregard of moral values. Davenant, in The Playhouse to be Let (1663), The Wits (1661), and The Man's the Master (1668), and Killigrew, in The Parson's Wedding (1664), reflect the changed dramatic mode, as influenced by the unblushing, hard, and amoral court, and are instrumental in creating a comic effect approximating manners comedy, to be developed more fully by later Cavalier



playwrights.

#### A. Sir William Davenant, a Cavalier and His Works

Sir William Davenant (1606-1668), the son of a tavern-keeper, claimed in his later life to be Shakespeare's illegitimate son.<sup>1</sup> As a youth, Davenant served the Duchess of Richmond and became well-acquainted with persons of influence at court, where he was known by some as a coxcomb, for his vanity. Like many of those in the court circle, Davenant did not escape the French disease, which disfigured his nose. After gaining favor as a poet and dramatist, Davenant was made poet laureate in 1638, to succeed to an office vacant since Ben Jonson's death. Active as a Royalist during the Civil War, Davenant was knighted in 1643, after the siege of Gloucester. With the court he withdrew to France after the defeat of the royal army, where he became close to the wits in exile. In 1650, Davenant sailed for America on a royal mission, but was captured and imprisoned in the Tower, until he was freed in 1654. During the next six years, Davenant devoted himself to quasi-legitimate dramatic productions. After the Restoration, Davenant was instrumental in reviving and revising old plays, as well as writing new ones. The Playhouse to be Let, The Wits, and The Man's the Master are three of the most

<sup>1</sup>Harbage, Davenant, p. 7. All information about Davenant's life cited comes from Harbage's standard biography.



important comedies of Davenant's. Davenant was very much a man of his times, as a poet, adventurer, wit, courtier, and businessman. In his plays are reflected the taste in dramatic fare among his contemporaries, as well as his own satiric thrusts against the follies and injustices of his time. Davenant wrote to please the audiences of his day and had a great desire for fame; though laughed at for his unfortunate physiognomy, he was respected as a poet and dramatist.

Davenant's only original comedy written during the Restoration, The Playhouse to be Let (1663), pictures a London playhouse in disuse during the long vacation. The playhouse keeper, the tirewoman, and one actor, the only occupants, are receiving applications for the use of the building. In the first act, the characters discuss the London public entertainment; succeeding acts are dress rehearsals by poets who want to let the house. A French company presents Sganarelle ou le Cocu Imaginaire, actually an adaptation of Molière's farce, written by Davenant in perseveringly broken English. A music master and a dancing master present companies in Davenant's two short Commonwealth pieces, The History of Sir Francis Drake and The Cruelty of the Spaniards in Peru. Finally, a group of strolling actors performs a burlesque playlet featuring the principals in the Antony and Cleopatra intrigue. Typical Cavalier attitudes of cynicism toward honor and idealism,



middle-class poets and Puritans, institutions of church and state, and hypocritical, egoistic man are presented by Davenant, as he mocks heroic ideals through absurdly exaggerated rhetoric and sentiment overblown to ridiculous proportions. Davenant must be given credit for introducing burlesque to the Restoration stage, and for occupying an important place in the tradition of this literary mode in England. It is ironic that Davenant introduced to the restored stage the comic type which Buckingham was to use so effectively in The Rehearsal, to lampoon him and other dramatists.

The first act of The Playhouse to be Let is a prologue for the succeeding disjointed pieces. In picturing a playhouse in disuse, satiric thrusts are made toward the idealism of the former age, the Puritans, and the middle class. A primary rule in the theatre is to adapt to novelty in the mode of plays.

Poet: Your old great images of  
Love and honour are esteem'd but by some  
Antiquaries now. You should set up with that  
Which is more new.<sup>2</sup>

The idealism of the former age is to be replaced by realism, presenting "the actions of the heroes, / Which are the chiefest themes of tragedy, / In verse burlesque" (I, p. 29). To cure

<sup>2</sup>Sir William Davenant, The Playhouse to be Let, in The Dramatic Works of Sir William Davenant, eds. J. Maidment and W. H. Logan, IV (London: H. Sotheran, 1873), I, p. 28. All subsequent references to individual works of Davenant are from this edition and will be cited parenthetically in the text.



the wrongs within London, the mock-heroic mode is offered to the Player:

Poet: If I agree with you in finding your  
Disease, it is some sign that I may know  
Your remedy; which is the travestie,  
I mean burlesque, or, more t'explain my self,  
Would say, the mock-heroique must be it  
Which draws the pleasant hither i' th' vacation  
(I, p. 30)

The "vacation" is a reference to the closing of the theatres during the summer. Middle-class poets are satirized for their vulgarity; the Housekeeper notes that "All the dry old fools of Bartholomew fair / Are come to hire our house / . . . You'd think Lincoln's-Inn-Field a forest of wild apes" (I, p. 24). Poets, who "look lean and empty" (I, p. 27), think only they have wit:

Poet: D'you set up of your selves, and  
                  profess wit  
Without help of your authors? Take heed, sirs!  
You'll get few customers.

(I. p. 28)

Antagonistic toward the authors, the actors think "they want breeding, which is the chief cause / That all their plays miscarry" (I, p. 33). Nevertheless, the rehearsals to follow must be judged for their wit--a Monsieur with his farce, a musician with the heroic adventures of Sir Francis Drake, a dancing-master with a highly moral production, and the poet's presentation of the Antony-Cleopatra story in mock-burlesque.

A French-inspired farce is presented in Act II, which



ridicules the concern for honor in love and marriage. Gorgibus wishes his daughter, Celie, who loves Lelie, to marry the rich M. Valere. Torn between her duty to her father and her love for Lelie, Celie draws forth Lelie's picture and faints in a most sentimental scene. As Sganarelle is trying to revive her, his wife sees him place his hand on her heart and becomes jealous:

Wife: Ah! vat I see, a damoselle in de armes  
Of myn usband? I will goe doone. He betray me,  
Ende I will surprise de villaine husband.  
(II, p. 35)

Ironically, as she picks up a picture of Lelie, Sganarelle's wife is suspected falsely by the one she has accused:

Sganarelle: Vat does see consider vit so  
mush attention?  
Dis picture speaks no good ting to myn honeur;  
I feel de littel horne on mi bro.  
(II, p. 36)

Complications arise as Lelie arrives and thinks Sganarelle has married Celie; both men are concerned only about their own pride, instead of the villainous honor. As Sganarelle tells Celie about Lelie's supposed indiscretions with his wife, his true feelings about honor appear:

Madam, I ave great disposition to cry.  
Sganarelle is rob of his honeur, but  
Figa for honeur, I be rob of myn reputation  
Vit de nabeurs.

(II, p. 41)

Sganarelle, coward that he is, is certainly no romantic idealist, as he is content to remain a cuckold, rather than die in



obtaining revenge:

De cuckol-maker may be muche valiant,  
 And lay de baston on de back as he doe lay de  
 Horn on mi head. He may kill me;  
 'Tis better to ave de horn den no life.  
 If my wife has done injure, let her grieve:  
 Vy soud I cry dat doe no rong?

(II, p. 42)

As the farce ends, with the servants clearing up all the mistaken impressions, Sganarelle remarks to his wife that they should "tink our selve onest peuple" (II, p. 46), forgetting the mistrust. Clearly, the characters of this production are all fools; there are too many asides and little wit. Later in the Restoration, more sophistication intrigues will be seen in such plays as Etherege's She Wou'd if She Cou'd and Sedley's The Mulberry Garden.

The History of Sir Francis Drake is presented in Act III, in rhymed couplets. Historically inaccurate, this representation of Drake suggests that he, and not Balboa, first sighted the Pacific Ocean. In this glorification of the English, the sailors and explorers exhibit ridiculously noble speeches, interspersed with dances, intimating the hilarity of idealism and romance when carried to such artificial extremes:

Boatswain: A sail! A sail!

Drake junior: 'Tis English built, or else  
 my sight does fail.

Boatswain: (within) Oho! Oho! another  
 ship I spy,

And, by their course, both to this harbour ply.

Drake junior: She low'rs her main-sail.  
 Hark! the wind does rise!



Boatswain: (within) She now bears in, and  
 she does tow a prize!  
 (III, p. 51)

For a boatswain, the use of such exclamatory phrases seems ridiculous and out of character. After a dance, performed to a rustic air, Captain Rouse is welcomed by Drake senior:

Welcome to land, my brother of the sea!  
 From childhood rockt by winds and waves like me.  
 Who never canst a danger dread,  
 Since still in dang'rous tempests bred.  
 Yet still art safe and calm within thy breast,  
 As lovers who in shady coverts rest.  
 Thy fame about the world does make her flight,  
 And flies as swiftly as the wings of light.  
 (III, p. 52)

Such a highly artful and proper speech is not the typical way in which one sea captain greets another. The mission of the English is to aid the Symérons, slaves brought to Peru by the Spaniards, and capture Spanish gold--even this is idealized:

King (of the Symérons): Instruct me how my  
 Symérons and I  
 May help thee to afflict the enemy.  
Drake senior: Afford me guides to lead my bold  
 Victorious sea-men to their gold:  
 For nothing can afflict them more,  
 Than to deprive them of that store  
 With which from hence they furnisht are  
 T'afflict the peaceful world with war.  
 (III, pp. 57-58)

Drake is treated as a great, noble liberator by the Symérons, who dance for joy upon his arrival. Pedro, a former Spanish slave, is among the first to praise Drake, and the English nation:

thou of all the Britons art the first  
 That boldly durst



This western world invade;  
 And as thou now art made  
 The first to whom that ocean will be shown,  
 So to thy Isle thou first shalt make it known.  
 (III, p. 64)

In the search for honor and adventure, characters such as Drake are a bit over-zealous:

~~Long yet ere night~~  
 I shall in fight  
 Their stormy courage prove:  
 Each seaman hath his mermaid too,  
 And by instinct must love,  
 Though he were never taught to woo.  
 (III, p. 69)

The playlet ends with the English and Peruvians in perfect amity, and the English praised for their heroism, strength, and nobility. Of course, in real life, nothing is this perfect; one can imagine in the audience Cavaliers such as Buckingham and Sedley, riotous as they were, laughing at such ideas.

The advent of the "bearded people" brings ruin to the Incas in The Cruelty of the Spaniards in Peru, a masque produced by the dancing-master, presented in Act IV of The Playhouse to be Let. A feathered priest describes conditions in the New World when it was governed by nature, then the destruction that comes when the Spaniards conquer the Indians. Nationalism is advocated once more, as the English are thought to be the hope of the Peruvians. The last Inca, in marrying an inferior beauty, placed his own love above the duty to his subjects:

Priest of the Sun: How fatal did our Inca's



passion prove,  
 Whilst long made subject to a foreign love?  
 Poor lovers, who from Empire's arts are free,  
 By Nature may entirely guided be,

. . .

But nations are concern'd when monarchs woo.  
 And though our Inca by no law was tied  
 To love but one, yet could he not divide  
 His public Empire as his private bed:

In thrones each is to whole dominion bred.  
 (IV, pp. 83-84)

This subject is utilized in later heroic dramas and is important for its political implications. There are inherent dangers in monarchy, as civil wars may be caused. In England, for example, the civil war might have been averted, had Charles I been more politically wise and concerned with the pacification of Parliament. Ambition, a possible danger, can have disastrous results, since

Ambition's monstrous stomach does encrease  
 By eating, and it fears to starve, unless  
 It still may feed, and all it sees devour.  
 Ambition is not tir'd with toil, nor cloy'd  
 with pow'r.

(IV, p. 84)

Possibly, Davenant could have written this portion of the play with the Puritan tastes in mind, as this playlet was presented in the last years of the Commonwealth. However, specific references to Charles I are not recognizable; the Incan Empire enters into civil war because of the ambition of a younger brother for the throne. Nevertheless, the horror of any civil war is suggested. Man, in his proud, egoistic, predatory state, is capable of the most cruel aberrations. The Priest of the



Sun, in arguing the cruelty of the Spaniards, points out the capabilities of man to break the laws of nature:

If man from sov'reign reason does derive  
O'er beasts a high prerogative,  
Why does he so himself behave,  
That beasts appear to be  
More rational than he,  
Who has deserv'd to be their slave?  
(IV, pp. 89-90)

Thus, the actions of men are not performed out of necessity, but are done to fulfill vain egos in the search for power: "Men for dominion, art's chief vanity, / Contrive to make men die;" (IV, p. 90). The playlet ends on a nationalistic note, as the English subvert the Spanish; as human beings, however, the English are as capable of hypocrisy as the Spanish, whose bad side only is shown.

Tragic figures are burlesqued in Act V, the Tragedie Travestie, as the frailties of the primaries in the Antony-Cleopatra story is shown. Language is an important feature of this playlet in rhymed couplets, as a comic effect is achieved. The description of the figures by the Eunuch and Nimphidius suggests less than noble qualities:

Nimphidius: There Tony is our Cleopatra  
leading;  
Her eyes look blue; pray heav'n she be not  
breeding!  
Eunuch: There's Caesar too, and Ptolemy  
behind him.  
Proud princock-Caesar hardly seems to mind  
him.  
(V, p. 96)



Antony and Cleopatra quarrel, speaking to each other in a less than loving manner, in contrast to the traditional image of the pair:

Antony: Where a place does not itch I  
seldom rub ye,  
Nay, you are strait blub'ring if I but snub  
ye.  
If Caesar's blood be up blade will not spare  
ye,  
Egypt will then be in a fine quandary.  
Cleopatra: I'll not be scar'd, though he  
look ne'er so hideous,  
He may go snick-up if he hates Nimphidius.

. . .

Antony: Chuck, I have done! I see you'll  
wear the breeches.  
(V, pp. 97-98)

One does not have an image of Caesar as a coxcomb who drinks heavily, either:

Ptolemy: Most puissant plund'rer! know  
the short and long is,  
That all who know thee find thy breath so  
strong is,  
As merely with a word it quells the mighty,  
And stuns them past the cure of aqua-vitae.  
(V, p. 98)

All the characters are placed in the seventeenth-century setting, of course, as Cleopatra is referred to as "Goodman Ptolemy's daughter" (V, p. 100), Caesar and his cronies are "spending like roysters" and "drinking beer-glasses super naculum" (V, p. 101), and all of Antony's money "is squandered with girls" (V, p. 102). The act ends with Antony and Caesar going to the ale-house, like typical Cavaliers in London.

The Playhouse to be Let was not revived after 1663; a



postiche of Commonwealth pieces, with an introductory first act added to form a five-act play, Davenant's farcical and home-spun comedy, except for the concluding act, did not find much favor with Restoration audiences.<sup>3</sup> Honor and idealism receive satiric thrusts through inflated language and excessive sentimentality. Love is recognized for elements that are less than ideal through the descriptions of Celie, the last Inca, and Antony and Cleopatra. Middle class poets and Puritans are satirized in the first act for their lack of savoir faire. Throughout the play, Davenant displays the faults of mankind through the use of an idealistic mode so exaggerated as to prove farcical. In concluding the play with debasing such august historical figures as Antony, Cleopatra, and Caesar, Davenant exhibits that man's nature is pervasively flawed and hypocritical; there are no absolute truths or ideals to be held up in society, as nothing is as noble as it seems at first glance. The thematic material did endure from this play, flawed though it is.

Written in 1634 and revived in 1661, The Wits enjoyed greater popularity than any of Davenant's plays.<sup>4</sup> First acted for a public audience in 1661, this play records the authentic London scene through sparkling dialogue and witty repartée. A

<sup>3</sup> Harbage, Davenant, p. 218.

<sup>4</sup> Harbage, Davenant, p. 209.



great deal of horseplay is involved in gulling two old country knights, Sir Morglay Thwack and Elder Pallatine, who have come to London to live by their wits, at the expense of feminine virtue. Young Pallatine, who is in serious financial straits because of his older brother's neglect, is in love with the virtuous Lucy, whose chastity is doubted by her old aunt. With the aid of the crafty Lady Ample, who seeks revenge on her guardian, Sir Tyrant Thrift, Young Pallatine and Lucy subject the country knights to a series of farcical misadventures until they are forced to accede. In the end, Young Pallatine marries Lucy, and Lady Ample weds the magnanimous Elder Pallatine, who has been reformed into an honorable, humble lover. Reflected in The Wits are Cavalier attitudes toward honor, women, marriage, the city, the country, and the middle class.

To a Cavalier, honor is a villain which interferes with the pleasures of life:

Young Pallatine: Nothing but honour could  
    seduce thee, Pert!  
 Honour! which is the hope of the youthful,  
 And the old soldier's wealth, a jealousy  
 To the noble, and myst'ry to the wise.  
    (I, i, pp. 121-22)

Idealism plays a small part in the life of a rake, living by his wits:

Lucy: Thou dost out-drink the youth of  
    Norway at  
 Their marriage feasts, out-swear a puny gamester  
 When his first misfortune rages out quarrel,  
 One that rides post, and is stopt by a cart:



Thy walking hours are later in the night  
 Than those which drawers, traitors, or constables  
 Themselves do keep: for watchmen know thee better  
 Than their lanthorn. And here's your surgeon's  
 bill:

Your kind thrift, I thank you, hath sent it me  
 To pay

(I, i, pp. 125-26)

Lucy, who represents the beau idéal in town gallants' sweet-hearts, is virtuous, yet generously tolerant of her suitor's licentiousness. Elder Pallatine hopes to ensnare such ladies, as he plans to live by his wits:

These smooth rags,  
 These jewels too, that seem to smile ere they  
 Betray, are certain silly snares, in which  
 You lady-wits, and their wise compeers-male,  
 May chance be caught.

(I, ii, p. 131)

Having leased all their lands in the country for pious uses, Elder Pallatine and Sir Morglay Thwack must make their living by giving pleasure and charm to ladies:

Sir Morglay: . . . if we woo, we'll be  
 at charge  
 For looks; or if we marry, make a jointure.  
 Entail land on woman! entail a back,  
 And so much else of man, as nature did  
 Provide for the first wife.

(I, ii, p. 135)

Dependent on this theory is the opinion shared by the two country knights that women are not virtuous, as a whole, and that honor is hypocritical:

A widow, you'll say, is a wise, solemn, wary  
 Creature. Though she hath liv'd to th' cunning  
 Of dispatch, clos'd up nine husbands' eyes,  
 And have the wealth of all their testaments,



In one month, sir,  
I will waste her to her first wedding-smock,  
Her single ring, bodkin, and velvet muff.  
(I, ii, p. 135)

Marriage is to be despised, by men who seek only to gratify their own pleasure-seeking egos:

Elder Pallatine: You shall maintain us;  
a community,  
The subtle have decreed of late: you shall  
Endow us with your bodies and your goods;  
Yet use no manacles, call'd dull matrimony,  
To oblige affection against wise nature,  
Where it is lost, perhaps, through a disparity  
Of years, or justly through distaste of crimes,

But if you'll [a woman] needs marry,  
Expect not a single turf for a jointure;  
Not so much land as will allow a grasshopper  
A salad.

(II, i, p. 148)

In order to protect themselves, ladies such as Lucy and Lady Ample must live by their wits. Revenge is sought against such rakes as Young Pallatine and lecherous old fools such as Elder Pallatine and Sir Morglay Thwack:

Lady Ample: Know, Luce, this is no  
hospital for fools!  
My bed is yours, but on condition, Luce,  
That you redeem the credit of your sex;  
That you begin to tempt, and when the snare  
Hath caught the fowl, you plume him till you  
get  
More feathers than you lost to Pallatine.

(II, i, p. 141)

Thus, men and women in The Wits seek ascendancy over each other, as love intrigues are turned into battles. Sir Morglay expresses the lecherous, egoistic viewpoint, similarly to that







The constable comes close to the truth in mistaking the Elder Pallatine for a lewd, monstrous he-bawd; he is such a vile old lecher, that much laughter is provoked by this bit of satire, brought about by men of the town such as Young Pallatine, Meager,



and Pert. Young Pallatine maintains the ascendancy in wit over his elder brother throughout the play, and brings him and Sir Morglay to "perceive what an / Immense large ass . . . You are to be seduc'd to such vain stratagems" (V, ii, p. 211). Elder Pallatine, a "profound fop" (V, ii, p. 211), learns through his experiences not to marry a country girl, who would "talk / Of painful child-birth, servants' wages, and Their husband's good complexion, and his leg" (V, iii, p. 223).

The Cavaliers regarded the middle class with contempt and scorn. This attitude is reflected in Davenant's farcical representation of the constable, Snore, and his crew in The Wits. As Mrs. Snore points out, her husband takes care "of bawds / And whores; shew him but a whore at this time / O' night" (III, i, p. 162). She further delineates the life of a constable and his wife:

. . . a woman had  
 As good marry a colestaff as a constable,  
 If he must nothing but search and search, follow  
 His whores and bawds all day, and never comfort  
 His wife at night.

(III, i, p. 163)

Snore, whose name is appropriate, cannot quarrel with his wife, without invoking allusions to his office of "grandeur" in the king's service: "Keep the peace, wife; keep the peace!" (III, i, p. 163). Led by his wife and Mrs. Queasy, Snore cannot discern a real bawd when he sees one, and says that Elder Pallatine is "truly, as proper a bawd, as a woman / Would



desire to use" (III, i, p. 165). Foolish though he is, Snore is not half so foolish as his wife and Mrs. Queasy, who fight with each other like alley cats. Mrs. Queasy is stingy and impatient, and wants the bawd arrested for four years' rent that is unpaid, and for "three bed ticks and a brass pot" (III, i, p. 165). Mrs. Queasy and Mrs. Snore cast aspersions on each other's honor without hesitation:

Mrs. Queasy: . . . scurvy fleak! 'tis not  
for naught  
You boil eggs in your gruel: and your man Samp-  
son  
Owes my son-in-law, the surgeon, ten groats . . .  
Mrs. Snore: I defy thee.  
Remember thy first calling; thou set'st up  
With a peck of damsons and a new sieve; . . .  
she took my silver thimble  
To pawn, when I was a maid; I paid her  
A penny a month use.  
Mrs. Queasy: A maid! yes, sure;  
By that token, goody Tongue, the midwife,  
Had a dozen napkins o' your mother's best  
Diaper, to keep silence

(III, i, pp. 163-64)

A chief concern for the cits is money; yet, when the Elder Pallatine discovers that his diamond hatband is missing, Mrs. Snore rejoins indignantly: "Do you suspect my husband? / He hath no need o' your stones, I praise Heaven!" (III, i, p. 166). Elder Pallatine cannot be blamed for his angry statement, considering his position:

A plague upon your courteous midnight leaders!  
Good silly saints, they are dividing now,  
And ministering, no doubt, unto the poor.  
(III, i, pp. 166-67)



After all, it is unusual for two women to accompany a constable in the discharging of his duty. Of course, that is indicative only of the self-righteousness and stinginess of the middle-class women. Throughout the play, both Mrs. Queasy and Mrs. Snore are on the defensive about their honor:

Mrs. Snore: . . . your daughter Mall,  
 . . . dined with me thrice!  
 When my child's best yellow stockings were  
 missing,  
 And a new pewter porringer, marked with P. L.  
Snore: Ay! for Elizabeth Snore.

. . .

Mrs. Queasy: Why, did my daughter steal  
 your goods?

Mrs. Snore: You hear me say nothing.  
 (IV, ii, pp. 200-201)

Such ignorance is farcical and ridiculous to sophisticated Cavaliers, who disapprove strongly of middle-class pretensions to a higher place in society. The constable and his crew are reminiscent of Shakespeare's rustics in A Midsummer Night's Dream, as they are clownishly stupid and are put to use by the more clever characters of the plot, such as Young Pallatine.

Achieving popularity with the court audience during the reign of Charles I in 1634, The Wits was enjoyed by cynical Restoration Cavaliers in the 1660's, as well. The world of fashionable aristocrats is depicted by Davenant, in their struggles for love and money. Farce is an important part of the play, as a vehicle for criticizing man's follies. Honor and idealism are ignored, as man seeks pleasure, power, and



fulfillment of desires in the world. Women exhibit strength and nobility, in compelling man's reform from a rakish lifestyle. Cavaliers are tolerant of licentious manners, realizing that perfection of corrupt, hypocritical man is impossible. Lack of wit and sophistication are perhaps the only universal sins to Cavaliers. The country is full of horrors, as social life there is boring and uneventful, and the residents are unsophisticated. The citizens of London are ridiculed by the Cavaliers for trying to overstep the limits of their class and conducting themselves in a vulgar, petty manner.

First acted in 1668 at Lincoln's Inn Fields, The Man's the Master is the last play written by Davenant. Davenant's play is based on Paul Scarron's Jodelet, ou le maître Valet, itself a derivative of Francisco de Rojas Zorilla's Donde hay agravios no hay celos--the French play is the intermediary between the Spanish and English versions.<sup>5</sup> This Spanish intrigue is concerned with the adventures of Don John, who exchanges identities with his valet, Jodelet, so that he may better reconnoitre the household of Don Ferdinand, which contains Isabella, his prospective fiancée, and Don Lewis, the man who wounded his brother and wronged his sister Lucilla. The comical aspects of the role reversal develop, as one is reminded of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza. For the most part,

<sup>5</sup>Loftis, p. 92.



Davenant retains Scarron's characters, though several original scenes are added which feature the adventures of the servants downstairs; there is evidence that Rojas' play was consulted as well by Davenant.<sup>6</sup> Intrigue plays, such as The Man's the Master, about family-proud Spaniards ready to make use of cape-and-sword, were in vogue while the Cavaliers were in exile during the Commonwealth. Cavaliers are portrayed in this play as they are and as they should be. The conflict between love and duty reveals the absurdity of excessive passion and sentimentality. As men of action, the Cavaliers have a great deal to strive for, as not all men are exempt from affectation, foolishness, and lack of courage. Those Cavaliers most concerned about their honor often appear to be "sword-happy." It must be remembered that The Man's the Master is a comedy; such Cavaliers as the Duke of Buckingham and Sir Charles Sedley in the audience would not have taken this play seriously.

The lack of sense displayed by lovers is almost farcical to cynical Cavaliers. Don John, as the play begins, is deeply "in love" with Isabella, whom he has never seen. When he learns that Jodelet has substituted his own picture for that of the master, Don John is most upset: "Canst thou live, or I either, after I have heard this?" (I, i, p. 17). Equally unrealistic is the picture of Lucilla, Don John's sister,

<sup>6</sup>Loftis, p. 95.



begging for the aid of Don Ferdinand in finding her lost lover: "Sir! let me embrace your knees, and not rise from mine till I obtain that succour which I hope you will afford me" (II, i, p. 27). Don Ferdinand's remark that "This style is somewhat romantic" (II, i, p. 27), is something of an understatement. He goes on to make statements that ridicule the follies of passionate love:

A thousand curses take that devil love!  
it embroils us all . . . .  
Sure all lovers were born in April: they  
never mention sun-shine without a shower after  
it. This may teach me to marry my daughter to  
some gentleman whom she does not love.  
(II, i, p. 28)

Romantic conventions, stemming from préciosité, are outlined for Don Lewis, who aspires to the hand of Isabella:

Bettris: . . . Write her poetical letters, and be sure not to leave out her lilies nor her roses; you must weep, sigh, and pull off your periwig, that you may tear your own hair: tell her you'll cut your own throat, or at least that you know an easy way to hang your self.

(III, i, p. 44)

Don Lewis, however, wants none of that sentiment: "Concerning that, Bettris, you may safely pass your word for me" (III, i, p. 44). On the contrary, Isabella is quite given to sentimental outbursts. The following speech, in which she laments loving the "man" (really Don John) and being loved by the foolish "Don John" (actually Jodelet), is a bit overdone:

O heaven! to what a brute am I condemn'd?



Was not my aversion a sufficient torment without giving me a new affliction by another passion? Was't not enough to be unhappy by the address of the master, but I must love his man? . . . A third evil is join'd to th' other two. Don Lewis, whom I hate, loves me. At once I hate, and fear, and am in love. O, who can deliver me from this entangled destiny?

(III, i, pp. 45-46)

Such a soliloquy could appear only as melodramatic and humorous on stage. An idealistic portrayal of love could only seem amusing to a sophisticated Cavalier audience, involved in the real world and fully aware of its hypocrisies.

Jodelet, the ever-hungry, foolish valet of Don John, parodies the Cavalier gentleman, though unknowingly, in his portrayal of Don John. He enters, as Isabella's suitor, "all over powder'd and perfum'd," seeming a "merry and innocent man" (II, i, p. 31). In the place of his master, Jodelet moves amongst the people of Don Ferdinand's household with such assurance, that one would think he had always been the master. However, Jodelet is not the brave, valiant man of honor that Don John is; instead, he is a coxcomb and a fool, "one of those subtle spies who peeps through the key-hole when the door is open" (II, i, p. 36). His coarseness is not to be seen in Don John, but is certainly observable in other Cavaliers of the age:

Jodelet: May not a man see a snip of her face? I pray, lady of my lips, blink on me a little with one eye. Don Ferdinand, let somebody bring her near me! or at least shew me her



hand, or her arm, or a little of her leg.  
(II, i, p. 37)

Such ill-breeding one would expect of a Sir Fopling Flutter, or a witty rake such as Dorimant when in the presence of a lady of ill repute. All such fools as Jodelet are never cognizant of the real reasons for their being laughed at: "They laugh! I shall be loth to marry in so foolish a kindred as have no more wit than to laugh at me" (II, i, p. 38). Vanity, it seems, is always an attribute of those who have no reasons for which to be vain. Jodelet's coarseness is further accentuated by Bettriss's description of his vulgar gluttony:

He dined, and did eat till his doublet grew so  
narrow that 'twas dangerous to sit near him;  
for his buttons flew about like a volley of shot,  
and after dinner he retired to a dirty entry,  
where he slept on a bench and snor'd in concert,  
like three fat carriers in one bed.  
(III, i, p. 43)

In love, Jodelet is made quite a fool of, as he begins to think that Isabella actually cares for him. Her "passionate" speech ridicules him, and he is unaware that she is referring to his "man," Don John:

I love that which is yours, and love it much.  
In seeing it I altogether see  
The object of my love, and then I burn and  
tremble,  
Burn with desire, and tremble with my fear.  
You cause at once my joy and sorrow too;  
(III, i, p. 49)

The ultimate criticism of Jodelet is made by Bettriss, who calls him a "country-lover" who is "gone into town to learn civility.



He needs not stay long, for he may be taught it in the street by every mule he meets" (III, i, p. 55). A coward, Jodelet can even be insulted, or told such startling news as that of Don Lewis having killed his brother, and he tosses it off lightly:

Don Lewis de Rochas? why that's your nephew.  
Sir, you must know I reverence all men of your  
name.

. . .

Any man of the family of the Rochas is so considerable to me that I will lay my head at his feet. And particularly, as for Don Lewis, if you please, I am very well pleas'd to love him.  
(IV, i, p. 80)

Considering Jodelet's lower class origin, his foolish portrayal of Don John serves only to illustrate the results of climbing from one station in life to a higher one.

To contrast, Don John is devoted to the maintenance of his family honor, and is no coward. Upon the discovery of his sister, Lucilla, and of the knowledge that Don Lewis wounded his brother, Don John sets up a duel, in order to obtain revenge for the wrongs suffered by members of his family. Having a jealous nature, Don John undergoes much grief, in his position as a "valet," as he tries to learn all he can of his misfortunes. A "man of action," Don John resolves to kill Don Lewis, to preserve his honor. Don Lewis and Stephano are less valiant, and cause one to think that Don John is "sword-happy":

Don Lewis: . . . I would thou wert valiant.



Stephano: So would not I. I'm content to have no holes in my skin rather than pay a surgeon to sew 'em up.

Don Lewis: Well, however, I would thou hadst courage.

Stephano: Then I should be an ass in spite of my understanding, and fight for fame, the fool's mistress.

(IV, i, p. 74)

Closeted in the same room, the preliminary round to the "duel" to take place between Don Lewis and Jodelet in the fifth act comes off like slapstick. Don John's entrance from an alcove is quite dramatic; as he reveals his true identity, Don Lewis is awed: "Are you the true Don John, renown'd for valour, and yet strive, with softning pity, to allay that courage against which your honour does contest?" (V, i, p. 96). In the episode to follow, Don Ferdinand cannot decide whether to be loyal to his nephew or son-in-law. Don John, similarly, cannot fight in a duel that divides uncle and nephew, saying that his "honor will not suffer" sharing "in such advantages" (V, i, p. 98). The parley continues, and the duel never takes place; Jodelet claims to be the reason: "My master taught Don Lewis discretion and I taught it him. 'Twas ever said of Don Jodelet, that he did much incline to peace" (V, i, p. 98). Of course, the humorous repercussions of a fight that does not occur, particularly when instigated by a valiant, hot-headed Cavalier such as Don John, are obvious.

In The Man's the Master, a translation of a Spanish intrigue, Davenant depicts the world of the Cavaliers, full of



follies, hypocrisy, and aspirations to the ideal. Realistically, the Cavaliers were not as noble as Don John, though such a brave, heroic gentleman could represent the Cavaliers as they should be. Though of the servant class, Jodelet displays many of the characteristics displayed by Restoration Cavaliers, of the witless variety. It must be remembered that few of the élite were true wits. The honor-conscious Spaniards, as depicted in this play, caused problems for themselves, in being so righteous. Cavaliers generally recognized that such troubles are self-created, and to be avoided, as man is as happy pursuing the basic desires of his own nature, instead of submitting to the rules of society.

B. Thomas Killigrew and The Parson's Wedding (1664)

Thomas Killigrew (1612-1683), was a courtier according to his natural talents and family traditions.<sup>7</sup> As a young man, he moved in the circle of Henrietta Maria and was recognized as a courtly poet. During the years of the Commonwealth, Killigrew was in exile with the royal family in France, where he lived as a rake, litterateur, wit, and favorite of Charles II. A roistering Cavalier, Killigrew continued to be known for his colorful personality, licentious behavior, and dramatic

<sup>7</sup>Harbage, Killigrew, p. 38. All information about Killigrew's life cited comes from Harbage's standard biography.



skill after the Restoration. A co-monopolist of the London stage with Davenant, Killigrew managed the King's Players, at the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane. Though Killigrew is known primarily as a courtier and secondarily as a dramatist, illuminating flashes of genius can be seen in his work. His disregard for established conventions, shared by many Cavaliers, allowed him to write the ribald comedy The Parson's Wedding, first performed in 1664, of which Henrietta Maria would never have approved for its rebellion against courtly Platonic love. Known as a caustic wit, Killigrew wrote The Parson's Wedding to debase the frailties of hypocritical man as he, a Cavalier and man of fashion, saw them.

The Parson's Wedding, an early forerunner of the comedy of manners play, exhibits a shocking contrast to Killigrew's earlier plays of idealistic emphasis.<sup>8</sup> Written sometime before the outbreak of the Civil War, The Parson's Wedding portrays London life and its pleasures during the reign of Charles I.<sup>9</sup> Not performed until 1664, this play foreshadows the comedy of the Restoration, from which it is in many respects indistinguishable, for its vulgarity, cynicism, and amorality. As the play begins, Captain Buff marries off his old mistress, Wanton, to a most unpius clergyman to satisfy an old grievance. Wanton

<sup>8</sup> Harbage, Killigrew, p. 177.

<sup>9</sup> Harbage, Killigrew, p. 178.



connives at the plot of the Captain and his crew to utterly disgrace the Parson by placing a bawd in his bed and "charging" him with adultery. Lady Love-all, a rich, foolish lady with amorous propensities, is taken advantage of because adventurous young gallants find her gifts appealing. Hoping to win Ned Wild, Love-all is mistaken and duped by the Captain. In another plot line, Lady Wild, a rich widow, and the charming Mistress Pleasant are wooed by two dull country gentlemen, Constant and Sadd, who rival the wits Careless and Wild. Mistress Pleasant and Lady Wild engage in a battle for ascendancy over Wild and Careless. The gallants, roistering Cavaliers as they are, contrive a plot to compromise the ladies at the Parson's house, thereby inducing them to matrimony in order to save their reputations. The emphasis in The Parson's Wedding is on the frailties and foibles of the characters. Considerable satire is directed against human weaknesses in general and contemporary English institutions in particular. Reacting against the courtly cult of Platonic love, Killigrew apparently condones sexual laxity and sees women to be most dishonorable, as a whole. The point of view is that of a Cavalier in times of social and political unrest. Passages in the play enumerate those things which displease a Cavalier; hence, the military, country life, Parliament and political reform, dissenting clergymen and religious agitators, and



creditors, are attacked.

The opinion expressed in the play about women is not one of reverence. Captain Buff, in particular, sees nothing honorable in women:

(to Wanton) I should hate thee if I could call thee mine, for I loath all Women within my knowledge, and 'tis six to four if I knew thy sign I'de come there no more; A strange Mistress makes every night a-new, and these are your pleasing sins; I had as live be good, as sin by course.<sup>10</sup>

Having no intentions of marrying, the Captain is interested only in the sport afforded in the company of women, and wants no responsibilities toward them. The Parson's wife, the courtesan Wanton, is tolerated in such a society in which all women are not chaste:

Wild: Now is the Parson's Wife so contemptible?

Careless: No, but I'me so full of that resolution to dislike the sex, that I will allow none honest, none handsome; I tell thee, we must beat down the price with our selves, court none of 'em, but let their Maiden-heads and their Faces lie upon their hands, till they're weary of the commodity, then they'll haunt us to find proper Chapmen to deal for their ware.

(II, v, p. 94)

Women were thus thought to be nothing if without honor. The observations on the subject expressed by Wanton are of interest:

<sup>10</sup> Thomas Killigrew, The Parson's Wedding, in Comedies and Tragedies Written by Thomas Killigrew (1664; rpt. New York: Benjamin Blom, 1967), I, i, p. 72. All subsequent references to The Parson's Wedding are from this edition and will be cited parenthetically in the text.



Take wise Men from Cuckolds, and fools to make them; for your wise Man draws eyes and suspicion with his visit, and begets jealous thoughts in the Husband, that his Wife may be overcome with his parts; when the fool is welcome to both, pleaseth both, laughs with the one, and lies with the other, and all without suspicion; I tell thee, a fool that has money is the Man.

(II, iii, p. 92)

Wanton is quite aware of woman's power over man, as "Empire? 'tis all our aim; and I'll put my ranting Roger in a Cage but I'll tame him; he loves already, which is an excellent Ring in a fools nose" (II, iii, p. 93). Held up in this play as an "ideal" courtesan, if there is such an ideal, Wanton is the type of character to destroy one's belief in Platonic love. The Captain explains how he came to be such a rake, stemming from his childhood:

A pox upon my Nurse, she frighted me so when I was young with stories of the Devil, I was almost fourteen ere I could prevail with Reasons to unbind my Reason, it was so slav'd to Faith and Conscience; she made me believe Wine was an evil spirit, and Fornication was like the Whore of Babylon, a fine face, but a Dragon under her Pety-coats; and that made me have a mind to peep under all I met since.

(II, vii, p. 103)

The Captain expresses here the revulsion against idealism, Platonism, and righteousness. He does not think it is a sin to lie with various women--if that were the case, he would be "the wicked'st man in the company" (II, vii, p. 103). In keeping a wench, the Captain feels he can be true to his own conscience and his desires:



. . . for when I am weary of her, my un-  
constancy is term'd vertue, and I shall be said  
to turn to grace. Beware of women, for better  
for worse; for our wicked nature, when her sport  
is lawful, cloyes straight; therefore, rather  
then Marry keep a Wench

(II, vii, p. 103)

Thus, to be in fashion, a man need only release himself from all his inhibitions imposed by society and lie with as many women as possible. As for marriage, the Captain aptly says that he hopes "there's none of us believes there has any Marriages been made in Heaven, since Adam" (II, vii, p. 104). With such animalistic men lurking about, who had to prove their masculinity with scores of women, it is no wonder that woman's chastity was always in doubt in the times of the Cavaliers. Love and honor were thought of as ideals not to be found in the world of the beau monde, except in the example of Charles I and Henrietta Maria: "'tis such an example to see a King and Queen good, Husband and Wife, that to be kind will grow out of fashion" (II, vii, p. 105).

The Parson criticizes the military in Act I, directing his satire at the Captain:

thou Son of a thousand Fathers, all poor  
Souldiers, Rogues, that ought mischiefs, no  
Midwives for their Birth;

(I, i, p. 75)

The Parson calls him "my Captain of a tame band," "Captain of a Gally Foyst," and quite "a piece," whose "Drum and borrowed scarf shall not prevail" (I, i, p. 75). For revenge, the



Parson plans to preach against him, and other soldiers, who

so swarm about the Town, and are so destructive to Trade and all Civil Government, that the State has declared, No person shall keep above two Colonels and four Captains, (of what Trade soever) in his Family;

(I, i, p. 76)

It is rather ironic that the Parson calls the Captain "but the sign of a Souldier" (I, i, p. 76), when he himself is less than a devoted clergyman, as the Captain so easily recognizes. The Captain enters the play in a choleric mood, telling Wanton the faults of the Parson:

He stunk so of Poverty, Ale, and Bawdry.  
So poor and despicable, when I relieved him,  
he could not avow his calling, for want of a  
Cassock, but stood at Corners of Streets, and  
whisper'd Gentlemen in the Ear, as they pass'd,  
and so deliver'd his Wants like a Message  
which being done, the Rogue vanished . . . The  
ingenuity of the Rascal, his Wit being snuft  
by want, burnt cleer then, and furnish'd him  
with a bawdy Jest or two, to take the Company

(I, i, p. 71)

To the Captain, the Parson is "fitter to have been Judas, then Judas was for his treachery" (I, i, p. 73). He intends to "make a Ballad shall tell how like a faithful disciple you follow'd your poor Whore, till her Martyrdom in the Suburbs" (I, i, p. 73). Such scandalous activity was often laid at the hands of the clergy by Cavaliers. The most amusing thing the Captain says to the Parson is indicative of the esteem placed on clerics:

Take her (Wanton), I'll warrant her a



breeder, I'll prophecy she shall lie with thy  
 whole Congregation, and bring an Heir to thy  
 Parish, one that thou maist enclose the Common  
 by his Title, and recover it by Common Law.  
 (I, i, p. 75)

One can imagine members of the merry gang of Charles II, such as Buckingham, Rochester, Sedley, and Etherege, being absolutely delighted by such ideas presented on the stage.

Country life, always depicted as terrible by the Cavaliers, shares the same fate in The Parson's Wedding. Jolly, a courtier, is not quite reconciled to his country estate, or the pleasure there:

Pleasure? what is't call'd? walking or  
 hawking, or shooting at Butts?

. . .

When, at a Tuesday-meeting the Country  
 comes in to a march at two shillings Rubbers,  
 where they conclude at dinner what shall be  
 done this Parliament, railing against the Court  
 and Pope, after the old Elizabeth-way of preach-  
 ing, till they are drunk with zeal; and then  
 the old Knight of the Shire from the boards end,  
 in his Coronation breeches, view clinches with  
 a silenc'd Minister, a Rogue that rail'd against  
 the Reformation meerly to be eas'd of the trouble  
 of preaching.

(I, iii, pp. 80-81)

Jolly does not want to be known as a country gentleman, unless "you can perswade London to stand in the Country; to Hide Park, or so, I may venture upon your Lady-fair dayes, when the Filly Foales of fifteen come kicking in" (I, iii, p. 82). The country is represented here as the haven for dunces, old-fashioned zealots, and vulgar manners. Constant and Sadd, two country



gentlemen come to London, are certainly dull-witted, when compared to Wild and Careless.

References are made, in The Parson's Wedding, to Parliament's pious zeal, its close committees, and actions to enforce its own biased decrees. The following speech seems to arise out of the conditions which held during the early months of the Long Parliament: "Marry, they are wise, and foresaw the Parliament, and were resolv'd their Monopolies should be no grievance to the People" (III, ii, p. 112). The subject of monopolies had been broached by the Short Parliament.<sup>11</sup> As Wanton wishes Parliament to pass a law, great fun is poked at the zealots:

Now, in this Age of zeal and Ignorance,  
would I have you four, in old cloathes, and  
demure looks, present a Petition to both Houses,  
and say, you are Men touched in Conscience for  
your share in that wickedness which is known  
to their worships by the pleasure of Adultery,  
and desire it may be death, and that a Law may  
be pass'd to that purpose; . . . the sweet sin  
secur'd by such a Law; None would lose an Occa-  
sion, nor churlishly oppose kind Nature, nor  
refuse to listen to her summons

(IV, i, p. 123)

The amusing point is that such a Puritanical Parliament might have passed such a law. Even prayers have been made dull by Parliament:

Widow Wild: Faith, Niece (Pleasant),  
this Parliament has so destroy'd 'em, and the

<sup>11</sup>Harbage, Killigrew, p. 179.



Platonick Humour, that 'tis uncertain whether we shall get one or no; your leading Members in the lower House have so cow'd to Ladies, that they have no leisure to breed any of late; Their whole endeavours are spent now in feasting, and winning close Committeemen, a rugged kind of sullen Fellows, with implacable stomachs and hard hearts, that make the gay things court and observe them, as much as the foolish lovers use to do;

(V, ii, p. 140)

The Members of Parliament are certainly unattractive, particularly since they seem to enjoy destroying the courtier modes one by one; throughout the reigns of Charles I and II, the over-righteous, prudish legislators were despised.

Creditors, a source of plague to Cavaliers who liked to live in a grand style, were often the subject of ridicule. The tailor, who has come to the Devil tavern to get payment from Jolly, does not get a welcome reception: "thou art damn'd; go, go home, and throw thy self into thine own Hell, it is the next way to the other" (III, v, p. 113). Wild and Careless resolve to be revenged on him for dunning a courtier while in a tavern, and give him a vessel of sack to drink. Jolly tells Careless and Wild that "I have bid him any time this twelve months but send his wife, and I'll pay her, and the Rogue replies, no body shall lie with his wife but himself" (III, v, p. 113). Jolly is saved as the Taylor becomes quite drunk. His attempt to collect or arrest Jolly is farcical, as he is made quite a fool of. Crop also seeks payment from the rowdy drinkers, and



is ridiculed for his prudishness in not pledging their healths:

Crop: 'Tis Idolatry; Do, martyr me, I  
will not kneel, nor joyn in sin with the wicked.

Jolly: Either kneel, or I'll tear thy  
Cloak, which by the age and looks, may be that  
which was writ for in the time of the Primitive  
Church.

(III, v, p. 115)

Jolly reminds Crop of all the favors he has done for him:  
"ushering your wife, and Mistress Ugly her daughter, to Plays  
and Masques at Court . . . when Spider your daughter laid  
about with her breath, the Devil would not have sat neer her"  
(III, v, p. 115). As Crop notes, Jolly is quite a hypocrite,  
as he "did not borrow my money with this language" (III, v,  
p. 115). Crop is paid by being kicked out of the room, liter-  
ally, by Jolly, Careless, and Wild. Members of the middle  
class such as Crop and Taylor were a source of irritation and  
jesting to Cavaliers.

Killigrew's The Parson's Wedding shows that a cult advo-  
cating riotous, amoral behavior grew out of the same courtly  
circle that nourished the insane notions of préciosité, which  
Killigrew experienced at court. The hypocrisy and frailty of  
woman, as well as false and inconsistent moral strictures are  
exposed. All of London, in this play, is engaged in adultery  
and wenching. With no honor or chastity in life, people yield  
to their most crude desires, and express no faith in people or  
institutions. Love is regarded only as a fleeting emotion,



though actually "lust" would be a better word, since once it dies, the relationship disintegrates. In this bawdy presentation of polite society, mankind's hypocrisies are delineated, whether in people or the organizations that have been created by them. Ridiculed in particular, are the military, the church, and the state, existing in such a corrupt society that could "idealize" a courtesan.

Thus, in the plays of Davenant and Killigrew, a link is provided between the ideas of love and honor of the Carolinean stage, and the attitudes of cynicism, licentiousness, and disillusionment of the Restoration stage. Davenant, a courtier with strong ties to the professional theatre, mocks heroic ideals through exaggerated rhetoric and overblown sentiment in The Playhouse to be Let. Davenant's play is composed of disjointed Commonwealth pieces and introduces burlesque to the stage, to be more fully developed in The Rehearsal. The middle class and the Puritans are commonly satirized in Davenant's plays, as in the later works of the Restoration. The Wits features the kind of lively wit and intrigue to be developed to a finer art in plays such as The Man of Mode. In particular, are delineated typical Cavalier attitudes of disillusionment toward honor, women, the city, the country, and the middle class. Honor is exaggerated to ridiculous proportions in The Man's the Master, as Platonic ideals are satirized in a



hypocritical world. This idea is developed in The Rehearsal, The Adventures of Five Hours, and The Mulberry Garden, as well as in later comedies of manners.

Similarly, Thomas Killigrew, a courtier and serious dramatist, was antagonistic toward the ideas of préciosité advocated at the court of Charles I and Henrietta Maria. A Cavalier known for his licentiousness, wit, and disregard for established conventions, Killigrew anticipated the bawdiness and disillusionment of the Restoration comedy of manners in The Parson's Wedding, which rebels against the ideas of courtly love. Written before the Civil War, this play gives credence to the theory that all members of the court were not in accord with notions of chivalry and honor. Most important in The Parson's Wedding is its expression of cynicism toward honor, the clergy, the military, the government, the country, and the middle class. Reality, to Killigrew, lies in the gratification of the inner desires of the individual, regardless of society's dictums on moral behavior. Plays by dilettantes such as Tuke, Buckingham, and Sedley share the disillusionment in the world of Davenant and Killigrew, in which heroic seriousness is lampooned, along with the institutions of society.



### III. THE PLAYS OF TUKE, BUCKINGHAM, AND SEDLEY

The Cavaliers of the early Restoration formed a closely-knit, aristocratic society, following the lead of Charles II in upholding an unholy trinity of wine, women, and song. The court club of idle pleasure of the 1660's and 70's, in touch with the culture of the street and tavern, felt bound by no ethical values.<sup>1</sup> Rebelling against all seriousness, the true Cavalier abhorred enforced morality and felt no reverence toward God or man in a nation rent in political and religious struggles.<sup>2</sup> Puritans, noblemen of the former age, Anglican parsons, and "virtuous" women were denounced for their hypocritical insistence on righteous honor, as Cavaliers reasoned that no human being is capable of fidelity to ideals of honor.<sup>3</sup> Cavaliers were not merely cynical debauchees and dashing rakes, but a unique group of wits, notable by the creative art of the last English courtly civilization.<sup>4</sup> As writers, the Cavaliers

<sup>1</sup>John Harold Wilson, The Court Wits of the Restoration (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1948), p. 16.

<sup>2</sup>Vivian de Sola Pinto, Restoration Carnival: Five Courtier Poets: Rochester, Dorset, Sedley, Etherege, and Sheffield (London: Folio Society, 1954), p. 11.

<sup>3</sup>Pinto, Restoration Carnival, p. 13.

<sup>4</sup>Pinto, Restoration Carnival, p. 248.



felt a kinship with the natural easiness of Herrick, Carew, and Lovelace; sexual passion, for instance, is treated in a rational manner. The heroic play, with its vexed love affairs against a background of war and intrigue, was viewed comically and satirically for its extravagance of speech and action by many Cavaliers.<sup>5</sup> Littérateurs such as Tuke, Buckingham, and Sedley, belonging to the Cavalier court circle of Charles II, were known as active Royalists and men of intellect, reacting against hypocrisy in the world through plays written to increase their prestige as wits. As writers, Tuke, Buckingham, and Sedley differed from Davenant and Killigrew in as much as they were dilettantes. In The Adventures of Five Hours (1663), Tuke presents a Spanish intrigue concerned with the maintenance of honor in a licentious age, contrasting Cavaliers as they are and as they should be. Buckingham, possibly the most notorious rake of his times, parodies the stiff, formal, idealistic plays of Davenant, Killigrew, and Dryden in The Rehearsal (1671), a play which ridicules the typical conflict between love and honor. Sir Charles Sedley, whose reputation for wickedness and profanity was widespread, reflects the Cavalier antipathy toward Puritans and ideals of honor in The Mulberry Garden (1668), an expression of a worldly society which mocks the earlier courtier plays of idealism. The Adventures of Five Hours, The

<sup>5</sup>Harbage, Cavalier Drama, p. 52.



Rehearsal, and The Mulberry Garden are important for their ridicule of the absurdities of the Carolinean drama, as well as for their foreshadowing of the Restoration comedy of manners.

A. Sir Samuel Tuke and The Adventures of Five Hours (1663)

Sir Samuel Tuke (d. 1674) was the third son of George Tuke of Frayling, Essex.<sup>6</sup> Of his early years, little information is available. It is known, however, that he entered Gray's Inn in 1635. When the Civil War broke out, Tuke entered the Royalist army, where he was to fight at Lincoln, Marston Moor, and in Wales. Eager for promotion to the rank of major-general, Tuke left the army upon the disappointment of his ambition. Once the Cromwellian regime was installed, Tuke went into exile with the Stuarts. He attempted to attach himself to the Duke of York, and was recommended by Henrietta Maria to be the Duke's secretary. After the Restoration in 1660, Tuke became the favorite of Charles II, and was sent on missions of diplomacy to the French court. For his services, he was knighted and made a baronet in 1663. One of the first members of the

<sup>6</sup>Dictionary of National Biography, eds. Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee, XIX (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1950), p. 1226. All information cited about Tuke's life is derived from the DNB, as there is no standard biography on Tuke.



Royal Society, Tuke was known to be a Cavalier of honor and integrity, given to eloquent discourses, and thought to be a bit conceited by his contemporaries. As an author, Tuke is best known for his comedy The Adventures of Five Hours (1663), which exalts the theme of love and honor to exaggerated proportions. Suggested by Charles II, this adaptation of a Spanish plot is based on a play by Don Antonio Coello y Ochoa, an imitator of Calderón.

The Adventures of Five Hours is important as the first Restoration adaptation of a Spanish play, and for its exemplification of the unities of time, place, and action.<sup>7</sup> The characters are involved in conflicts between love and honor; heroic sentiments are expressed in rhymed couplets. To the ladies Porcia and Camilla, the virtuous sisters of Don Henrique and Don Carlos, love and marriage is viewed with an idealistic, romantic concept. Contracted marriages, as the one arranged by Don Henrique between Don Antonio and Porcia, are thought to be undesirable. Don Octavio, in love with Porcia, is unacceptable as a possible brother-in-law to Don Henrique, for his reputation as a Cavalier. Therefore, Porcia must choose between her love for Don Octavio and her duty to abide by her brother's choice in Don Antonio. Matters are further complicated, as Don Antonio mistakes Camilla for Porcia, becoming

<sup>7</sup>Gaw, p. 23.



infatuated with his "fiancée." Flora and Diego, servants to Porcia and Don Octavio, aid their masters to see each other. Antonio and Octavio, good friends, are in conflict when they discover they both love "Porcia"; however, the mistaken identity is soon explained. Don Henrique, who is always concerned for the family honor, is in a state of confusion, until he discovers the error in identities. As the play ends, Porcia and Camilla are given in marriage to the men they truly love. The play, in fulfilling all the action within five hours, is so hurried that passions are not fully represented. To a typical Restoration audience, accustomed to a world of iniquities, such lofty ideals and honor-conscious Cavaliers probably appeared unrealistic and ridiculous. Tuke expresses cynicism toward the nobility of women, Platonic love, and honor, and ridicules the merchant class in The Adventures of Five Hours.

In a profligate age, women are subject to temptations which threaten their honor. Tuke, in The Adventures of Five Hours, depicts the woes which beset men and women who try to maintain honor in the world. Don Henrique, of choleric temperament, feels the responsibility for his sister's good conduct, until her marriage, is a difficult task:

. . . young Maids are so expos'd  
 To the Invasions of audacious men,  
 And to the Malice of their envious Sex;  
 You [Don Carlos] must confess the Confines  
                     of their Fame  
 Are never safe, till guarded by a Husband;



'Tis true, discreet Relations ought to use  
 Preventions of all kinds; but dear Carlos,  
 The Blemish once receiv'd, no Wash is good  
 For Stains of Honour, but th' Offenders Blood.<sup>8</sup>

To an exacting Spanish nobleman such as Don Henrique, a lady is worth nothing if without her honor, and must, if necessary, be kept under lock and key. With this in mind, Camilla, recounting her near escape from ravishment to Porcia, melodramatically illustrates the idea that death would be better than loss of honor:

. . . I  
 The Dagger pointing to my Breast, cry'd out,  
 Villain, keep off, for if thou do'st persist,  
 I'll be my self both Sacrifice and Priest.  
 I boldly now defie thy Lust and Hate;  
 She that dares Choose to die, may Brave her  
 Fate.

(I, pp. 20-21)

It was not thought, in the Restoration, that women could control their passionate desires. To amoral Cavaliers, however, the concern over a woman's chastity should not be carried to ridiculous extremes. Honor, when emphasized and idealized above all things in the world, can be pretentious and, indeed, one of the many hypocritical aspects of rational human behavior:

Porcia: My own Life I value not Octavio

<sup>8</sup>Sir Samuel Tuke, The Adventures of Five Hours, ed. B. van Thal (London: Holden, 1927), I, p. 11. All subsequent references to The Adventures of Five Hours are from this edition and will be cited parenthetically in the text.



When yours, my Better life, such hazard runs;  
 But O my Honor! O my Innocence!  
 Expos'd to Scandal; there's my deepest sense.  
 (IV, p. 75)

Porcia, concerned about what others will think of her honor, expresses a duality in her own nature. If she were of the proper point of view, she would want to maintain her honor for the sake of doing what she thinks is right. To the Cavaliers, this concern for preserving the restrictions of society, giving little consideration to the reasons behind a philosophical point of view, was abhorred. The double standard always placed ladies in a difficult, if not contradictory, position. No matter which avenue she chooses in life, a woman is more subject to the rules of society than man is, regardless of her own basic desires:

Camilla: You Ladies, whil'st unmarried,  
                   tread on snares,  
 Married, y'are cumber'd with Domestick Cares.  
Porcia: If handsome, y'are by Fools and  
                   Fame attack'd;  
 If ugly, then, by your own  
 Envy rack'd.  
Flora: We, by unthrifty Parents forc'd  
                   to serve,  
 When, fed are Slaves; and when w'are free,  
                   we starve.  
Carlos: Which put together, we must  
                   needs confess,  
 This World is not the Scene of Happiness.  
                   (V, p. 132)

A woman's lot, therefore, is never a happy one in such a world of contradictions, temptations, and restrictions.

The expression of honor by the Spanish gentlemen of this



play is so exaggerated as to be absurd. Don Henrique, extremely jealous of his family's honor, is unreasonable and idealistic.

In a calm mood, he himself sees that

Th' unhappy Men of Fire, without th' aids  
Of mighty Reason, or Almighty Grace,  
Are all our lives contending for in vain:  
'Tis evident, that Solid Happiness,  
Is founded on the Conquest of our Passions;  
But since they are the Favorites of Sense,  
Self-love bribes Reason still, in their defence;  
Thus in a Calm I reason; but when crost,  
The Pilot quits the Helm, and I am tost.  
(I, pp. 9-10)

To Don Henrique, a man of honor, his sister's possible loss of virtue is a cause for panic and vengeful action. Though he has cared for Porcia since their parents' deaths, he will not tolerate any stain on the family honor:

I will besiege the House; if they refuse  
To render; I'll reduce that Theatre  
Of my shame to Ashes; and make their Fort  
Both theirs, and its own Sepulchre; There are  
Such Charms in Vengeance, that I do not wonder,  
It is reserv'd for him, who form'd the Thunder.  
(III, p. 61)

To a Restoration audience, such concern for honor is to be ridiculed for over-righteousness. Don Henrique seems too sword-happy, in the preservation of his honor. As Don Carlos points out to Don Henrique, "Honor is Justice, rightly understood; / Your Idol Honor's onely heat of Blood" (III, p. 62). The Cavaliers despised the notion that, as Don Henrique points out, "Honor's Opinion, which rules all the World" (III, p. 62),



since (Don Carlos) "Opinion . . . onely governs fools; / Reason the Wise, and truly Valiant rules" (III, p. 62). Though the Restoration felt that the concern for the maintenance of honor should not be carried to extremes, a total disregard for it could be just as undesirable. The following passage is after the discovery that Porcia is not missing, after all:

Carlos: I would to Heaven we had not  
found her there.

Henrique: What's that you say, Don  
Carlos?

My Sister there!

. . .

My Sister? that's good i'faith; ha, ha, ha.

Carlos: Why do you laugh? Is the dis-  
honour of

Our Family become a Laughing Matter?

This is a worse Extream, me-thinks, than  
t'other.

(V, p. 105)

Cavaliers advocate the kind of honor which is not a mere outward countenance; virtue must reign supremely in all moral realms of the conscience, if it is to reign at all.

As ridiculous to Cavaliers as exaggerated notions of honor, are ideas of love carried to noble extremes. Platonic love is cynically opposed by realists who understand the futility of such false contrivances of society:

If the Platonicks who would prove  
Souls without Bodies love,  
Had, with respect, well understood  
The Passion's i'the Blood,  
Th' had suffer'd Bodies to have had their part,  
And seated Love i'th' Heart.

(I, p. 34)







Beyond the Rules of Conduct, and receiv'd  
 So many Wounds, that I with faintness fell.  
 (II, pp. 45-46)

Chivalric love ends, usually, in a fight, in any case, a romantic approach to love is impossible to maintain, as the court of Henrietta Maria would have supposed:

Diego: If it ends not in Fighting I'll  
           be hang'd;  
 It is the Method of their dear Romances,  
 And Persons of their Ranck make love by Book.  
 Curse on th'Inventor of that damn'd devise  
 Of Painting words, and speaking to our Eyes!  
 (II, p. 49)

Love and suffering were thought to go hand in hand by Cavaliers, who saw that traditions of courtly love did not realistically include the physical side of the human condition. The foolishness of the lovers Antonio and Camilla, Octavio and Porcia could only be met with smiles and laughter by a Restoration audience aware of the absurdity of such dying sentiment.

The merchant class is satirized in this play, as well as the Dutch, a nation of traders. Pictured as "a Nation of Walking Tuns" (I, p. 25), the Dutch are laughed at for drinking liquor made of barley, the grain fed to mules. In getting money, "they have a thriving Mystery; / They Cheat their Neighb'ring Princes of their Trade, / And then they buy their Subjects for their Soldiers" (I, p. 26). The herring trade is an example of Dutch ingenuity:

Geraldo: Herrings! why what a Devil do  
           they grow  
 In their Countrey?



Ernesto: No faith, they fish 'em on the  
 English Coast,  
 And fetch their Salt from France, then they  
 pickle 'em,  
 And sell 'em all o'r the World.  
Geraldo: 'Slife these Rascals live by  
 Cookery.

(I, p. 26)

In an age of the rise of the middle class, the activities of merchants and traders were thought to be vulgar by the Cavaliers. The Dutch were equally despised by Cavaliers, influenced by the aristocratic manners at the court of Charles II, a Stuart with French sympathies and tastes.

The Adventures of Five Hours, a Spanish plot par excellence, achieved critical and popular success in its day.<sup>9</sup> Despite Dryden's attacks on Tuke in the prologue and epilogue of The Wild Gallant and in the Essay of Dramatic Poesy, Dryden was influenced by Tuke, and came to make the Spanish strain in the Restoration drama worth studying.<sup>10</sup> As a result of the time scheme of five hours, verisimilitude is lost, giving rise to comic complications and reversals.<sup>11</sup> At face value, The Adventures of Five Hours apparently has a highly moral plot concerned with the maintenance of honor in a licentious age; however, a closer look discovers the absurdity presented in

<sup>9</sup>Loftis, p. 71.

<sup>10</sup>Gaw, p. 16; and Loftis, p. 2.

<sup>11</sup>Loftis, p. 73.



romance and the excitement of the cape-and-sword intrigues. These intrigue plays about family-proud Spaniards by Davenant and Tuke are a point of origin for the fully developed comedy of manners by Etherege, which treat love intrigues in a much different manner.

B. George Villiers, 2nd Duke of Buckingham,  
and The Rehearsal (1671)

George Villiers, Second Duke of Buckingham (1628-1687), was born in London to the first duke, a favorite of two kings, and Lady Katherine Manners.<sup>12</sup> Though a second son, Buckingham inherited the greatest title and estate in England, after the death of his elder brother. Also, the second duke was to inherit his father's favored position at court, as Charles I assumed the absent paternal guidance. Thus, the duke was taught by the same tutors and governors as the royal children. Later, he was sent to Trinity College, Cambridge, where he received a master's degree in 1642. In the ensuing Civil War, Buckingham served under Prince Rupert for a short while. The family estate was sequestered by the Roundheads, then returned in 1647, and taken once more in 1648. After that date, the duke went into exile with Charles II in France. By 1651, he was made

<sup>12</sup>Wilson, A Rake and His Times, p. 4. All information cited about Buckingham's life is derived from Wilson's biography, which is standard.



the commander-in-chief of the Royalist forces in Scotland. Marrying the daughter of Lord Fairfax, a Parliamentary general, in 1656, Buckingham was under house arrest; breaking his parole, he was sent to the Tower in 1659. After the Restoration in 1660, he received his estate once more, making him one of the wealthiest men in England. One of the favorites of Charles II, the duke was often on uneasy terms as a result of his many political intrigues, one of which landed him in the Tower for a short time in 1667. At court, Buckingham was known as a witty, cynical, licentious, pleasure-seeking, adventurous Cavalier. Famous for his debauchery, he was thoroughly vain, instable, unreliable, and corrupt--it is said that Charles II was corrupted by the example of his intimate, Buckingham. However, he was not without serious interests. The duke was one of the earliest members of the Royal Society, was interested in alchemy, skilled in the violin, and was at the forefront of the political scene in England during his lifetime. As a littérateur, the duke was associated with Waller, Sedley, Rochester, and Etherege. In accordance with the tastes of the time, Buckingham could turn out both Platonic and obscene poetry to his many mistresses and liaisons. A cynic, living his life by the carpe diem philosophy, Buckingham was particularly gifted as a satirist. To prove his wit to Charles II, he, along with Samuel Butler, Martin Clifford, Dr. Sprat, and others, wrote



The Rehearsal (1671), to poke fun at the empty rhetoric of the heroic play. John Dryden, one of the principle targets of the burlesque, obtained revenge in Absalom and Achitophel, by describing the vices of the duke, in the role of Zimri, a biblical character with villainous traits:

A man so various, that he seem'd to be  
 Not one, but all Mankinds Epitome.  
 Stiff in Opinions, always in the wrong;  
 Was every thing by starts, and nothing long;  
 But, in the course of one revolving Moon,  
 Was Chymist, Fidler, States-Man, and Buffoon:  
 Then all for Women, Painting, Rhiming, Drinking;  
 Besides ten thousand freaks that dy'd in think-  
                   ing.  
 With something New to wish, or to enjoy!  
 Rayling and praising were his usual Theams;  
 And both (to shew his Judgment) in Extreame:  
 So over Violent, or over Civil,  
 That every man, with him, was God or Devil.  
 In squandring Wealth was his peculiar Art:  
 Nothing went unrewarded, but Desert.  
 Begger'd by Fools, whom still he found too late:  
 He had his Jest, and they had his Estate.<sup>13</sup>

Buckingham was amoral, lecherous, and totally without scruple, as Dryden so aptly illustrates. If the story is true, that Buckingham took Dryden to see a production of The Rehearsal as his guest, one can sympathize with Dryden's reaction to being parodied as Bayes, played by the comedian John Lacy, who had been taught to act, dress, and talk like Dryden by the duke.

Written first to satirize Davenant, Killigrew, Stapylton,

<sup>13</sup>John Dryden, Absalom and Achitophel, in Eighteenth-Century English Literature, ed. Geoffrey Tillotson, Paul Fussell, Jr., and Marshall Waingrow (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1969), ll. 545-62.



and Sir Robert Howard, The Rehearsal eventually levelled its satire against the author of The Conquest of Granada. A most entertaining attack on the grand manner of heroic drama in plot, characters, and bombastic speech, The Rehearsal mocked Dryden in the character of Bayes, and his hero Almanzor (from The Conquest of Granada) in the character of Drawcansir. Many of Dryden's heroic couplets are directly travestied. The mockery of Buckingham was directed toward the high seriousness in which heroic drama was created and in which it was responded to by playgoers. Not only were certain elements of the heroic drama burlesqued, such as its improbability, bombast, and unnatural, self-aggrandizing heroes, but playwrights and playwriting were mocked in general. In the themes and techniques of this play, the influence of Davenant's burlesque, The Playhouse to be Let, is called to mind. In The Rehearsal, Smith, a country wit, and his friend Johnson, a city wit, attend the rehearsal of Bayes' new play, which does not go smoothly. Bayes is represented as a foolish, conceited writer, always insistent on perfection in a less than perfect play. The heroic couplet is ridiculed for its artificiality, for its inappropriate appearance in the forms of conceits and similes, and for its leading to plays with plots that have no meaning. As Bayes defends and explicates his play, in consequence to the challenging questions posed by Smith and Johnson, he only



points out his own inability to write and the foolishness and absurdity of his arguments.

Buckingham, in The Rehearsal, advocates and justifies Cavalier attitudes in vogue at the time. The middle class is berated by the hedonistic Johnson:

I love to please myself as much, and to trouble others as little as I can: and therefore do naturally avoid the company of those solemn fops who, being incapable of reason, and insensible of wit and pleasure, are always looking grave, and troubling one another, in hopes to be thought men of business.<sup>14</sup>

Indeed, all seriousness is admonished as part of a lack of wit; dull persons in an audience appreciate the new form of play: (Johnson) "'tis fighting, loving, sleeping, rhyming, dying, dancing, singing, crying; and everything but thinking and sense" (I, i, 50-52). A professional playwright, such as Bayes, is abhorred by members of the aristocracy both for promulgating plays that scorn to imitate nature and for taking money for their productions, which a gentleman is not supposed to do. Bayes's admission of his "rule of transversion" (I, i, 109), a euphemism for plagiarism, places him in the vulgar, witless class.

<sup>14</sup>George Villiers, 2nd Duke of Buckingham, The Rehearsal, in British Dramatists from Dryden to Sheridan, ed. George H. Nettleton, Arthur E. Case, and George Winchester Stone, 2nd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1969), I, i, 14-20. All subsequent references to The Rehearsal are from this edition, and will be cited parenthetically in the text.



I take a book in my hand, either at home or elsewhere, for that's all one--if there be any wit in't, as there is no book but has some, I transverse it: that is, if it be prose, put it into verse (but that takes up some time), and if it be verse, put it into prose.

(I, i, 115-20)

Similarly, at the coffee-house, Bayes copies down witty remarks, and then declares himself to be quite "inventive."

Bayes does not make much sense in describing his play, in the true "heroic" sense:

. . . the chief hinge of this play, upon which the whole plot moves and turns, and that causes the variety of all the several accidents, which, you know, are the things in nature that make up the grand refinement of a play, is that I suppose two kings to be of the same place

(I, ii, 94-99)

. . . there does arise several disputes, turmoils, heart-burnings, and all that. In fine, you'll apprehend it better when you see it.

(I, ii, 118-21)

Unaware of the quality of his "wit," Bayes lampoons the critics for their attacks on him: "let a man write never so well, there are, now-a-days, a sort of persons they call critics, that, 'y gad, have no more wit in them than so many hobby-horses" (I, ii, 185-88). Indeed, only Bayes could appreciate his own allusion to love:

So boar and sow, when any storm is nigh,  
Snuff up, and smell it gath'ring in the sky;  
Boar beckons sow to trot in chestnut groves,  
And there consummate their unfinished loves:  
Pensive, in mud, they wallow all alone,  
And snort and gruntle to each other's moan.

(I, ii, 245-50)



This passage parodies the heroic love expressed by Dryden in The Conquest of Granada, II. Bayes is quite conceited as an author, despising Jonson and Beaumont, and considering himself to be superior to Suckling. In justifying this, he mentions his method of writing:

I make use of stewed prunes only; but when  
I have a grand design in hand, I ever take physic,  
and let blood, for, when you would have pure swift-  
ness of thought and fiery flights of fancy, you  
must have a care of the pensive part. In fine,  
you must purge the belly.

(II, i, 129-34)

Such must have been his method in writing the following exchange between the two kings of Brentford:

1st King: Did you observe their whisper,  
brother king?

2nd King: I did; and heard besides a grave  
bird sing  
That they intend, sweetheart, to play us pranks.

(II, ii, 6-8)

Smith correctly assesses that "'Sdeath, this would make a man spew" (II, ii, 11).

Prince Pretty-man is made to fall asleep while making love to his mistress, Cloris, in Bayes's play. "His spirits exhale with the heat of his passion, and all that, and--swop! falls asleep" (II, iii, 12-14). On awaking, the prince says "It is resolved" (II, iii, 37), and Bayes does not clarify what has been resolved. Little meaning is revealed in the play or in Bayes's description of a witty scene, in which one can



see 'em come in upon one another snip snap,  
hit for hit, as fast as can be. First one speaks,  
then presently t'other's upon him slap, with a  
new repartee; then he is at him again, dash!  
with a new conceit, and so eternally, eternally,  
'y gad, till they go quite off the stage

(III, i, 12-17)

Johnson comments memorably: "Mean? why, he never meant anything in's life. What dost talk of meaning for?" (III, i, 20-21). Bayes blames any lack of understanding on the part of the witless audience:

this is the bane of all us writers: let  
us soar but never so little above the common  
pitch, 'y gad, all's spoiled; for the vulgar  
never understand it. They can never conceive  
you, sir, the excellency of these things.

(III, i, 82-86)

Tom Thimble's song, on the death of Armida, is fitting, according to Bayes. Smith, however, thinks "there is no great occasion for it" (III, i, 129):

In swords, pikes, and bullets, 'tis safer to be  
Than in a strong castle, remoted from thee:  
My death's bruise pray think you gave me, though  
a fall  
Did give it me more, from the top of a wall;  
For then, if the moat on her mud would first lay,  
And after, before you my body convey,  
The blue on my breast when you happen to see,  
You'll say, with a sigh, there's a true-blue for  
me.

(III, i, 116-23)

This song is hardly an expression of Tom Thimble's supposing that Armida, his wife, died accidentally for love of him. Equally inappropriate to any mention of love is Volscius's falling in love while pulling on his boots:



My legs, the emblem of my various thought,  
 Show to what sad distraction I am brought.  
 Sometimes with stubborn honor, like this boot,  
 My mind is guarded, and resolved to do't:  
 Sometimes again, that very mind, by love  
 Disarmed, like this other leg does prove.  
 Shall I to Honor or to Love give way?  
 'Go on,' cries Honor; tender Love says, 'Nay,'  
 Honor aloud commands, 'Pluck both boots on';  
 But softer Love does whisper, 'Put on none.'  
 What shall I do?

(III, v, 93-103)

This combat between love and honor parodies that in Davenant's Love and Honor (1649), which was familiar to Restoration audiences. After such quotations, it is immensely funny that Bayes says of his writing: "what care I for money? I write for reputation" (III, v, 183-84).

The attempt Bayes makes to be original is amusing, particularly as he plans to "make a male person to be in love with a female" (IV, i, 64-65). As he has ordered it to be so, Bayes has a difficult time deciding which of the pair is to suffer, as all lovers in the heroic scheme of things must. Lardella, one of the lovers, is dead, with a copy of verses pinned to her coffin, composed just before the end; Bayes has her make love to King Physician like a humble-bee:

Since death my earthly part will thus remove,  
 I'll come a humble-bee to your chaste love.  
 With silent wings I'll follow you, dear couz;  
 Or else, before you, in the sun-beams buzz.  
 And when to melancholy groves you come,  
 An airy ghost, you'll know me by my hum;  
 For sound, being air, a ghost does well become.  
 (IV, i, 163-69)



Analogous to Platonic love, this speech is sufficient for a dead person, "for being divested of her terrestrial part, and all that, she is only capable of these little, pretty, amorous designs that are innocent, and yet passionate" (IV, i, 192-95). In the heroic scene to follow, Bayes's "design is gilded truncheons, forced conceit, smooth verse, and a rant" (IV, i, 292-93), as he makes Prince Pretty-man and Prince Volscius fall out for not loving the same woman. Smith makes an understatement in saying "But where's the sense of it?" (IV, ii, 79-80).

In the same vein, Bayes has an entire battle on stage between two generals only, both playing lutes, and without swords. With the "battle" raging, in recitativo, only an eclipse can stop it:

Lieutenant-General: What midnight darkness does invade the day,  
And snatch the victor from his conquered prey?  
Is the Sun weary of his bloody sight,  
And winks upon us with his eye of light?  
'Tis an eclipse. This was unkind, O Moon,  
To clap between me and the Sun so soon.  
(V, i, 259-65)

As all plays must have a dance, Bayes makes the earth, sun, and moon come on the stage: "the earth must be sometimes between the sun and the moon, and the moon between the earth and sun; and there you have both your eclipses, by demonstration" (V, i, 299-302). One wonders what the play has degenerated to, as the earth and moon converse:

Earth: Who calls Terra Firma, pray?



Luna: Luna that ne'er shines by day.  
Earth: What means Luna in a veil?  
Luna: Luna means to show her tail.  
 (V, i, 311-14)

After the eclipse, another battle occurs, and Drawcansir kills everyone. Drawcansir parodies Almanzor in Dryden's The Conquest of Granada:

Others may boast a single man to kill;  
 But I the blood of thousands daily spill.  
 Let petty kings the names of parties know:  
 Where'er I come, I slay both friend and foe.  
 The swiftest horsemen my swift rage controls,  
 And from their bodies drives their trembling  
       souls.  
 If they had wings and to the gods could fly,  
 I would pursue, and beat 'em through the sky:  
 And make proud Jove, with all his thunder, see  
 This single arm more dreadful is than he.  
 (V, i, 338-47)

In this one brave man, Bayes defies "all your histories, and your romances" (V, i, 350-51). All the dead men (actors), having disappeared, Bayes decides to be revenged and sell his play to the other house, after lampooning both the players and the town.

Thus, in The Rehearsal, not only does the Duke of Buckingham ridicule the heroic plays and the level of artificiality to which wit had sunk, but the foolishness of the "rising" middle class, as well. Dryden, as an exemplar of professionalism, is lampooned in a grandiose manner. Through Bayes, Dryden is accused of poor writing, consisting of rhyme and no reason. Professional writers, such as Dryden, were scorned



for accepting money, and for aspiring to the upper class; indeed, Dryden thought of himself as a wit. Obviously, Buckingham did not agree. Bayes is thus affected, as an individual, and as an author; Buckingham is quick to point out, however, that as he has no wit, he is a part of the vulgar masses. Buckingham ridicules audiences at heroic plays for accepting such false idealism, which he carries to the level of the ridiculous in The Rehearsal. Love and honor are particularly made fun of in the Platonic sense, as the rant and speeches of plays such as The Conquest of Granada had gone too far away from reality for a cynical Cavalier such as Buckingham. The Rehearsal owes much of its thematic motifs and technique to its forerunner, Davenant's The Playhouse to be Let.

#### C. Sir Charles Sedley and The Mulberry Garden (1668)

Sir Charles Sedley (c. 1639-1701) was born in London, a few months after the death of his father, Sir John Sedley.<sup>15</sup> At a very early age, Sedley inherited a vast amount of wealth, as the family estate at Kent was quite extensive. The Civil War disrupted the youth of Sedley. On one occasion, Lady Elizabeth Sedley, his mother, was imprisoned by the Roundheads. Later, the family escaped to asylum in France. As a youth,

<sup>15</sup>Vivian de Sola Pinto, Sir Charles Sedley, p. 22. All information in the text about Sedley's life is derived from Pinto's biography, which is standard.



Sedley used his riches for personal pleasure, and was notorious as a rake, resulting perhaps from an absence of paternal guidance and control. In 1656, Sedley spent a year at Oxford, but could not sacrifice the excitement offered in London, where he lived as a man of fashion, enjoying all the pleasure which the vices of the time afforded. In 1660, after the Restoration of Charles II to the throne of England, Sedley became a member of the king's inner clique, famous for its debauchery and frivolous escapades. Sedley is probably best remembered for leading the notorious debauch at Oxford Kate's in 1663, during which Sedley delivered a drunken and vulgar speech to the crowd below the tavern's balcony, for which he was pelted with stones and sent to jail. To a fashionable gentleman-rake, all such episodes were regarded as mere trifles, as vices which terminated in a brash excitement were deemed attractive and very chic. Though an aristocratic hoodlum, Sedley was also a capable man of letters, known for his similes in speaking. Along with Rochester, Etherege, and Buckingham, Sedley was known for frequent bawdy outbursts during the "sentimental gush" of heroic plays--a typical reaction of the wits against idealism on the stage. The Mulberry Garden, performed in 1668 by the King's Men in Drury Lane, is a lampoon of heroic tragedy, abhorred by the Cavaliers, and an expression of the adventurous, wild times Sedley lived in.



The product of a libertinistic Cavalier, The Mulberry Garden (1668) expresses an antipathy toward the Roundheads, whose Commonwealth collapsed in 1660 with the ascension of Charles II to the throne. Sedley advocates the Cavalier viewpoint, exposing the ideals and characteristics of the Puritans for their hypocrisies and follies. Two plots, one serious and one comic, comprise the love intrigue. Althea and Diana, the daughters of the Roundhead Sir Samuel Forecast, love the Cavaliers Eugenio and Philander, who have been forbidden to them by their father, the staunch advocate of the "Good Old Cause." Naturally, such basic desires for two young, beautiful women cannot be so easily stemmed. Sir Samuel Forecast has added to his daughters' woe, always expressed by Sedley in heroic couplets, by promising Althea to Horatio. In the comic plot, Victoria and Olivia, the daughters of Sir John Everyyoung, a free-thinking Cavalier, do not live the sheltered lives of their cousins, Althea and Diana. Modish and Estridge, foppish pretenders to wit, pursue Victoria and Olivia. However, Victoria loves Horatio, and her sister Olivia loves Jack Wildish, the rakish, skeptical, witty hero of the play. Sir Samuel Forecast, who is introduced to the Widow Brightstone by Wildish, is the subject of much laughter, as he is provoked by the licentious Sir John Everyyoung, who finds the transformation of Sir Samuel into a ladies' man the source of



infinite amusement. The re-establishment of the monarchical state is a cause of celebration for the characters, with the exception of Sir Samuel, who foolishly finds himself in a difficult position. As the Cavaliers triumph, the lovers in the comedy are all united according to their own desires. Since the Commonwealth ideals and the nobility of man are held in contempt, idealism is mocked by Sedley and his characters. Love is treated lightly in discourses preceding the heroic couplet scenes, which render them somewhat awkward and ineffective. No doubt, Sedley views the heroic scenes as too artificial for their elevated idealism; therefore, they are held up to ridicule for their absence of naturalness and realism. The comic scenes, which evidence a sparkling, lively wit, are held to be closer to the quintessence of reality, arousing much mirth to an aristocratic audience.

Cavaliers and their manners are of central importance in The Mulberry Garden. Libertinism, to be sure, is one of the major points in the code of 'ethics.' Wildish, according to the values of the times, finds love to be an obstruction to the pursuit of pleasure:

. . . I never let the disease run on so far. I always took it in time, and then a bottle of wine or two and a she-friend is an approved remedy. There are men in the world though, who in that distemper prescribe some serious employment, continual exercise, spare diet, and the like. But they are philosophers, and in my opinion make the remedy worse than



the disease.<sup>16</sup>

Any suppression of man's basic desires is not to be tolerated. Sir John Everyyoung, a middle-aged spark, is of this opinion. His daughters, Victoria and Olivia, "see plays, balls and take their innocent diversion as the custom of the country and their age requires" (I, i, 3-5). Enjoyment is the key to life, as Sir John Everyyoung observes that "why an old man should not desire to be young I see no reason" (I, i, 15-16).

Sir Samuel Forecast, on the contrary, maintains that "youth may well be allowed to be stark mad when they see age so extravagant" (I, i, 7-8) and is embarrassed that Sir John Everyyoung is "powdered and trimmed like an old player to act a young prince" (I, i, 19-20). Concerning his nieces, Sir Samuel tells their father he has been too foolishly liberal with them:

As you have bred 'em you may e'ne keep  
'em to yourself and save their portions. I  
believe nobody will be very fond of a Hyde  
Park filly for a wife, nor an old boy that  
looks like a pedlar's pack for a father-in-  
law! But now I think on't you are such a  
spark they'd lose their reputations with you--  
if they had any!

(I, i, 30-34)

Althea and Diana, Sir Samuel's daughters, lead very sheltered

<sup>16</sup>Sir Charles Sedley, The Mulberry Garden, in Restoration Comedies, ed. Dennis Davison (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1970), I, ii, 75-80. All subsequent references to The Mulberry Garden are from this edition, and will be cited parenthetically in the text.



lives. As Sir Samuel is an advocate of Puritan Republicanism, Althea is to marry Horatio and forget Eugenio, while Diana is to "quit all correspondence with Philander. They are both dangerous persons. . . . These young wenches, Mr. Wildish, have less forecast than pigeons" (II, i, 28-30). Althea expresses the free Cavalier spirit in arguing that "the happiness of life lies not in wealth, in title, or in show, but in the mind, which is not to be forced" (II, i, 37-38). Thus, Sedley establishes a reason for the failure of the Commonwealth--people cannot exist without experiencing life at its fullest; any attempts to protect against the evils in life only serve to frustrate the inner peace necessary in enduring trials and tribulations in the world.

When Sir Samuel Forecast appears, not in his usual black Citizen's garb, but frizzed, laced, perfumed, and powdered, he is a natural target for ridicule, since he has completely contradicted himself. Olivia describes him to her father as

the greatest spark in London; dressed so  
like you that if his condition required it I  
should think, sir, he were going to a scrivener  
to personate you for a good sum

(III, ii, 126-28)

Sir John Everyoung takes advantage of the circumstances and has him cudgeled for having affronted a lady; of course, Sir Forecast is beaten in Sir John Everyoung's name, as the audience enjoys the results of the mistaken identity.



To Cavaliers such as Eugenio and Philander, sanctuary is not available in the house of Sir Samuel Forecast: "My house their sanctuary! I had rather it should be their grave. Since they made the state their enemy, I have been so too" (IV, ii, 10-11). However, the mirth begins as Sir Samuel, who is prudently loyal to the state, is arrested for harboring a traitor, Eugenio, who has been taken to the Tower. The panic expressed by Sir Samuel is humorous, to the Cavalier point of view:

Forecast: You brought him with you for ought I know--I ne'er saw his face. I answered an officer, and two soldiers that came to search for him even now, and as I thought, gave 'em satisfaction.

Officer: Sir, this won't satisfy. The receiver is as bad as the thief. I have found a traitor in your house, and you shall answer for it.

Forecast: Eugenio, you are an honest gentleman, pray speak. Did I know anything of your being here?

Eugenio: Not in the least, sir: but my word, I fear, will do you little service.

(IV, ii, 148-57)

It is noteworthy that Sir Samuel Forecast calls for Eugenio's assistance to save himself, though Eugenio is a Cavalier. However, with the possibility of the Restoration of Charles II and the Cavaliers, Sir Samuel might not be in such a bad position, ironically:

Wildish: Come, bear up, sir; if there come a turn, you'll be a great man.

Forecast: I shall be hanged on that side, and to speak my own conscience, I have deserved it.

Wildish: No, to lie in prison for concealing



Cavaliers will be a great merit. And let me tell you, as a friend, there's likely to be a turn suddenly.

(IV, ii, 162-66)

Fool that he is, Sir Samuel is too much of a prig; therefore, it is ironic that his imprisonment comes at the correct moment:

Everyyoung: 'Slight! I hope you had more wit: this is the happiest accident that ever befell mortal, for an old notorious Roundhead to be taken for a Cavalier at this time! Why, I never thought it had been in you; this was a stratagem might have become Machiavelli himself

(V, iii, 28-30)

All Cavaliers are immediately to have their liberty.

(V, iii, 33-34)

It is no wonder that Sir John Everyyoung was elated by the Cavalier triumph and astounded at the myopic remarks of his brother. The Cavaliers are depicted as being more realistic than the foolish Roundheads.

Thus, with Sir Samuel Forecast depicted as a bumbling idiot, the Cavaliers are advanced as realistic in their worldliness, fully recognizing the lack of nobility in man. The Commonwealth had operated on a premise that man, in his striving for perfection in life, could attain a greater knowledge of truth and goodness. By denying themselves the rights to experience pleasures and to expand natural desires, the Roundheads sought to improve society at its core. However, as Sedley illustrates through Sir Samuel Forecast, a suppression of certain social amenities is unnatural and artificial.



Therefore, the Cavaliers express wisdom in a policy of pragmatism which allows greater freedoms in the daily social affairs of men.

With the precedent provided by courtiers such as Davenant and Killigrew in writing plays, dilettantes such as Tuke, Buckingham, and Sedley wrote dramatic pieces which reflected their aristocratic life style and points of view. Tuke, in The Adventures of Five Hours, develops the reaction against the artificialities of honor and idealism, seen earlier in Davenant's The Man's the Master; here chivalric love is carried to comic extremes. Continuing the themes of Davenant and Killigrew, Tuke also criticizes the self-righteous and ambitious middle class. In The Rehearsal, Buckingham makes use of the burlesque form introduced in The Playhouse to be Let, to satirize playwrights, Dryden in particular, and heroic plays, especially for their ludicrous speeches and pompous heroes. One of the most cynical of all Cavaliers, Buckingham found plays such as Davenant's The Siege of Rhodes and Dryden's The Conquest of Granada to be witless and unrealistic in their presentation of nobility and idealism in man. Sedley, in The Mulberry Garden, reacts against the heroic tradition in drama by presenting the real world of the hedonistic Cavaliers, though in a more witty style than that employed by Davenant, in The Wits, and Killigrew, in The Parson's Wedding. Expressing



a Cavalier viewpoint, The Mulberry Garden displays an antipathy toward the Roundheads, for their unnatural piety and enforcement of repressions of the Cavaliers during the Commonwealth. As in the plays of Davenant, Killigrew, Tuke, and Buckingham, Sedley's play examines heroic love and finds it to be unrealistic. Sedley sees the Cavaliers as natural and wise, in their acceptance of man as he is in an amoral world. In Etherege, wit is sharpened to a finer tone; the Cavaliers are admired for their worldliness, ridiculed for their hypocrisies, and praised in freeing themselves from social inhibitions. Etherege is the finest achievement of the Cavalier spirit.



#### IV. ETHEREGE AND THE CULMINATION OF THE CAVALIER MODE

In the early comedies of manners plays of the 1660's, realistic intrigues, set in London, exhibit a somewhat skeptical attitude toward life, which becomes a series of whimsical debaucheries for the beau monde. Restoration comedy, an anatomy of life as the Cavaliers saw it, discusses the institutions of society, the reality of love between the sexes, and the desire for freedom from restraint as a reasonable goal in a hypocritical world.<sup>1</sup> Sir George Etherege, a true Cavalier concerned with the idea of nonchalance toward serious matters, was famous for his gaming, drinking, and debauching of women. In The Comical Revenge; or, Love in a Tub (1664), She Wou'd if She Cou'd (1668), and The Man of Mode; or, Sir Fopling Flutter (1676), Etherege delineates the fashionable, easy negligence of manners and modes resulting from an undercurrent of cynicism toward life that prevailed in the voluptuous Cavalier world.

##### A. Sir George Etherege and His Works

Sir George Etherege (c. 1635-1691) came of a genteel

<sup>1</sup>Underwood, p. 14.



family of Berkshire.<sup>2</sup> Little is known about him until 1664, which marks the production of his first play, The Comical Revenge; or, Love in a Tub. Thereafter, Etherege became known as a man about town who occasionally wrote a witty comedy, and was seen in the company of such Cavalier rakes and wits as Buckingham, Rochester, and Sedley. As a true Cavalier, Etherege was more concerned with the pleasures of being a fine gentleman, than with becoming a man of letters. Though gifted as a dramatist, Etherege certainly adhered to Sir Fopling's idea that writing is "a Mechanick part of Witt," and that "a Gentleman should never go beyond a Song or a Billet" (The Man of Mode: IV, i, 245-46). In March of 1687, in a letter to John Dryden, Etherege defended his own reputation of idleness against an admission of the same in earlier correspondence from Dryden:

You know I am no flatterer & therefore will excuse me when I tell you, I cannot endure you shou'd arrogate a thing to yourself you have not the least pretence to. . . . You have noe share in that noble Laziness of the minde, which all I write make out my just title to; but as for that of the body, I can let you come in for a snack without any jealousy.

(Introduction, p. xiv)

Thus, the tendency to be idle, which infected many courtiers

<sup>2</sup>Sir George Etherege, The Dramatic Works of Sir George Etherege, ed. H. F. B. Brett-Smith, II (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1927), I, Introduction, p. xi. All biographical information about Etherege comes from this introduction. All subsequent references to the plays of Etherege are from this edition, and will be cited parenthetically in the text.



during the Restoration, was a famed arrogation to Etherege. However, Etherege's literary laziness was superseded by his loyalty toward the Stuarts. After 1668, he embarked on an intermittent career as a diplomat, serving for three years as secretary to the Ambassador in Constantinople, then as the envoy of James II to the Diet at Ratisbon (1685-1689). Though not a professional diplomat, he was by no means inept, and was knighted in 1680 in reward for the duties he performed. The only problem Etherege incurred was in his absence from the gaiety of London. Etherege's liaison with an actress at Ratisbon, not to mention his gaming and drinking, did not leave a favorable impression for the stern members of the Diet. Of course, Etherege felt that the affairs of his private life should not affect his professional duties; it is unfortunate that this notion did not meet with universal acceptance in the seventeenth century. To Etherege the only sins were drunkenness in men and reservedness in ladies. In the relationship between the sexes, Etherege desired the equal footing that results, in part, from lively conversation and an ever-present play of wit. It was obvious to him that women were available at a price--for some, it was marriage; but that could be reduced sometimes. Of course, Etherege had had an unfortunate experience in his dealing with women, in that he was jilted. When he did commit matrimony, it was to marry a fortune.



Thus, as a result of his own experiences, it seems that Etherege had a rather pessimistic view of the value of human nature. He was disappointed in the fact that the naturalness which he realistically expected in people was often covered by a pretense to innocence. Toward the end of his life, additional disappointment was incurred in the loss of his pension, as William and Mary came to the throne in 1689. In retrospect, Etherege's life was composed of the fashionable, easy negligence of manners and modes which results from an undercurrent of cynicism toward life. These attitudes, which prevailed with the amoral Cavalier world, are pictured in Etherege's comedies The Comical Revenge; or, Love in a Tub, She Wou'd if She Cou'd, and The Man of Mode; or, Sir Fopling Flutter.

The Comical Revenge; or, Love in a Tub, a plot not fully conscious of its Restoration destiny, features four plots and groups of characters. The serious plot is an imbroglio of love vs. honor which has affinities with earlier Cavalier drama, as love is treated as a pure, beautiful state leading to the altar. In rhyme, this aspect of the play deals with the loves of Graciana and Aurelia, the daughters of Lord Bevil. Each of the other plots opposes heroic conventions, particularly that of Sir Frederick Frollick and the Widow Rich. Sir Frederick, the honnête homme of the seventeenth



century, is a comic hero with a lack of enthusiasm, resulting from his revolt from the formalities of a society that is not what it seems.<sup>3</sup> Sir Nicholas Cully, the old, half-witted Cromwellian knight, is the foil of Sir Frederick, come to London to participate in the adventures of the beau monde, and ending up being gulled by the sharpers Wheadle and Palmer, in a plot which recalls the knaves and dupes of the Elizabethan stage. An entertaining, farcical interlude is provided in the discomfiture of the servant Dufoy in the tub scenes, a result of his attempt to play the part of a libertine gallant. Dufoy and Sir Nicholas are lesser imitations of Sir Frederick Frollick, and point out the follies of mankind. Throughout the play, comic scenes are in prose, whereas serious scenes are in rhymed couplets. An ease and truth of dialogue is in evidence by the characters, who express the contemporary values of fashionable London.

Attitudes reflecting the Cavalier values are expressed by Etherege in The Comical Revenge. Of course, for a gentleman, a chief delight lies in a merry escapade. For the preceding night's disturbance, Sir Frederick is upbraided by Jenny, the maid to Mrs. Grace:

Maid: You have made such an Uproar amongst the Neighbours, we must be forc'd to change our Lodging.

<sup>3</sup>Underwood, p. 47.



Sir Frederick: And thou art come to tell me whither;--Kind heart!--

Maid: I'll see you a little better manner'd first. Because we would not let you in at that unseasonable hour, you and your rude ranting Companions hoop'd and hollow'd like Mad-men, and roar'd out in the streets, 'A whore, a whore, a whore.'

(I, ii, 72-80)

Sir Frederick, as a gentleman, has an attitude of carelessness toward a harmless little debauch. Of the drunkenness encountered in the same escapade, he expresses the same nonchalance:

I am of opinion that drunkenness is not so damnable a sin to me as 'tis to many; Sorrow and Repentance are sure to be my first Work the next morning: 'Slid, I have known some so lucky at this recreation, that, whereas 'tis familiar to forget what we do in drink, have even lost the memory, after sleep, of being drunk: Now do I feel more qualms than a young woman in breeding.

(I, ii, 21-27)

Drinking, to be sure, enhances the sport of an evening of raising hell amongst friends; however, one should be sober enough to be conscious of all the festivities. There is no idealism present, obviously; men are mere mortals whose only joys in life are in seeking pleasure.

The attributes of women are but mortal, as Sir Frederick expresses: "Women, like Juglers Tricks, appear Miracles to the Ignorant; but in themselves th' are meer cheats" (I, ii, 179-81). Though they may pretend to be virtuous, women are all innately sensual, whether they be gentlewomen or prostitutes. Society, it seems, impugns all the inhibiting factors.



Thus, in their relationships with men, ladies have no choice but to play games and contrive deceitful plots:

Sir Frederick: Some Women, like Fishes, despise the Bait, or else suspect it, whil'st still it's bobbing at their mouths; but subtilly wav'd by the Angler's hand, greedily hang themselves upon the hook. There are many so critically wise, they'l suffer none to deceive them but themselves.

(I, ii, 207-11)

In all dealings between the sexes, love is regarded as a crime; lust is recognized realistically as being a genuine and essential ingredient in all humans, which is not to be obscured.

Sir Frederick, in his conversation with the Widow Rich, delineates the Cavalier attitude toward love:

Sir Frederick: How now, my Lord? /Beaufort/ so grave a countenance in the presence of your Mistress? /Graciana/ Widow, what wou'd you give your eyes had power to make me such another melancholly Gentleman?

Widow: I have seen e'ne as merry a man as your self, Sir Frederick, brought to stand with folded arms, and with a tristful look tell a mournful tale to a Lady.

Sir Frederick: The Devil owes some men a shame; the Coach is ready; Widow, I know you are ambitious to be seen in my Company.

(II, ii, 100-109)

In marriage, love is relatively unimportant; however, a fortune is necessary, and a title desirable. To be sure, men can be fettered only after a woman has shown her colors, else a Cavalier such as Sir Frederick would not consider Mrs. Rich, even with her fortune. His proposal is typically unromantic:

Sir Frederick: Ho, Widow! the noise of these Nuptials brought you hither; I perceive



your mouth waters.

Widow: Were I in a longing condition I should be apt enough to put my self upon you, Sir.

Sir Frederick: Nay, I know th' art spiteful, and would'st fain marry me in revenge; but so long as I have these Guardian Angels about me, I defie thee and all thy Charms  
(V, v, 42-48)

Sir Frederick: . . . if I shou'd be good natur'd now, and consent to give thee a Title to thy own Wealth again, you wou'd be stubborn, and not esteem the favour, Widow.  
(V, v, 60-63)

The fact that many relationships end in marriage must not be misconstrued as an indicator of moral intent on the part of Cavaliers. On the contrary, to commit matrimony signified an end to one intrigue and the beginning of another, as infidelity presented a different twist to the continuing game.

Thus, Etherege's presentation of man, as a noble creature, is not very optimistic in The Comical Revenge. The world is comprised of petty squabbles and intrigues, as people follow their instincts. "On what small accidents depends our Fate, / Whilst Chance, not prudence, make us fortunate" (V, v, 157-58). Like the characters in this comedy, the Cavaliers of the Restoration resorted to living an existence in which one intrigue leads to another, while emotions such as love, kindness, humility, and honesty are left unexperienced and seemingly unattainable.

She Wou'd if She Cou'd (1668) renounces the artificiality



of the heroic couplets, the farce, and the town bawds that are present in The Comical Revenge. The plot structure is in the form of episodic intrigues, as a contrast between liberty and restraint is presented.<sup>4</sup> Dramatic irony sets up some very amusing moments as the rake Courtall cuckolds his friend, the old country knight Sir Oliver Cockwood, who is concerned only with social status and misinterprets the criteria for a man of fashion--believing himself to be one of the beau monde. Ariana, sly and pretty, and Gatty, wild and witty, the relatives of Sir Oliver, are entertained by Courtall and his cohort in mischief, Freeman. Meanwhile, the two country bumpkins, Sir Oliver Cockwood and Sir Joslin Jolley, who both fancy themselves to be wits, indulge in wild excursions, which must be kept a secret from Lady Cockwood, the archetypal aging beauty. Throughout the comedy, the ease and wit of the conversation is delightfully charming. The reality of this play for the idle rich is exact, as the characters move from the eating house, to the playhouse, and from there to the mulberry garden, with the emphasis on having a swingingly merry time. Honor, marriage, and religion are slighted by an upper class which feels its superiority over others in society. The country bumpkins are not inaccurate in interpreting the London excitement as consisting of wild adventure, wine, and intrigues with

<sup>4</sup>Holland, p. 29.



the opposite sex.

In She Wou'd if She Cou'd, the imitative country bumpkins are represented as ambitious of merely attaining the level of shallowness which is inherent in the lives and activities of the Cavaliers. A whirl of excitement was the quintessential objective, leaving the question of morality either ignored or to be dealt with at a future date. Sir Oliver Cockwood longed for the city, and tells he had "e'ne grown a Sot for want of Gentleman-like recreations" (I, i, 81-82), since

. . . if a man do but rap out an Oath, the people start as if a Gun went off; and if one chance but to couple himself with his Neighbours Daughter, without the help of the Parson of the Parish, and leave a little testimony of his kindness behind him, there is presently such an uproar, for Drunkenness, 'tis true, it may be us'd without scandal, but the Drink is so abominable, that a man would forbear it, for fear of being made out of love with the vice.

(I, i, 82-91)

A distinction is to be made between a city and country Cavalier. In spite of all his attempts to become diffused into the elite society of London, Sir Oliver is clearly identifiable as a country fool, as a result of his boorishness. True Cavalier gentlemen did not have to boast of their exploits, for the salacious events were either commonly known or logically assumed.

For a young gentlewoman, the relishing of the "good things of the world" had to be a secret, for the sake of propriety.



Gatty and Ariana, newly-arrived from the country, are not demure in their private conversations:

Gatty: . . . how I envy that Sex! well! we cannot plague 'em enough when we have it in our power for those priviledges which custom has allow'd 'em above us.

Ariana: The truth is, they can run and ramble here, and there, and every where, and we poor Fools rather think the better of 'em.

Gatty: From one Play-house, to the other Play-house, and if they like neither the Play nor the Women, they seldom stay any longer than the combing of their Perriwigs, or a whisper or two with a Friend; and then they cock their Caps, and out they strut again.

Ariana: But whatsoever we do, prithee now let us resolve to be mighty honest.

(I, ii, 151-63)

Honor, or at least the appearance of it, was expected in a lady. Despite propensities toward engaging in wild affairs, ladies were cognizant of their need for security, which resided in marriage. Freedom was undoubtedly relinquished by the double standard, resulting in coy deceptions on the part of the female of the species:

Courtall: Fy, fy, put off these scandals to all good Faces.

Gatty: For your reputations sake we shall keep 'em on: 'slike we should be taken for your Relations, if we durst shew our Faces with you thus publickly.

Ariana: And what a shame that would be to a couple of young Gallants: methinks you should blush to think on't.

Courtall: These were pretty toys, invented, first, meerly for the good of us poor Lovers to deceive the jealous, and to blind the malicious; but the proper use is so wickedly perverted, that it makes all honest men hate the fashion mortally.

Freeman: A good Face is as seldom cover'd



with a Vizard-Mask, as a good Hat with an oyl'd Case; and yet on my Conscience, you are both Handsome.

Courtall: Do but remove 'em a little, to satisfie a foolish Scruple.

Ariana: This is just punishment you have brought upon your selves, by that unpardonable Sin of talking.

Gatty: You can only brag now of your acquaintance with a Farendon Gown, and a piece of black Velvet.

(II, i, 109-27)

It may be inferred that if Ariana and Gatty were devout in the maintenance of their virtue, they would not flirt with rakes such as Courtall and Freeman, whose names sum up their character with accuracy. Lady Cockwood, whose physical equipment is not of the best, misunderstands the world, seeing only the appearance of vice.<sup>5</sup> Though securely married, she insists upon the sustenance of her honor, despite the fact that she continues to arrange secret assignations with Courtall:

Lady Cockwood: If Sir Oliver be in that indecent condition you speak of, to morrow he will be very submissive, as it is meet for so great a misdemeanor; then can I, feigning a desperate discontent, take my own freedom without the least suspicion.

Courtall: This is very luckily and obligingly thought on, Madam.

Lady Cockwood: Now if you will be pleas'd to make an assignation, Sir.

Courtall: To morrow about ten a clock in the Lower walk on the New Exchange, out of which we can quickly pop into my Coach.

Lady Cockwood: But I am still so pester'd with my Woman, I dare not go without her; on my

<sup>5</sup>Underwood, p. 64.



conscience she's very sincere, but it is not good to trust our Reputations too much to the frailty of a Servant.

(II, ii, 64-79)

Lady Cockwood, however, does not follow through with her plans, because, as she so aptly states, "My over-tenderness of my honour, has blasted all my hopes of happiness" (III, i, 170-71). Thus, Lady Cockwood engages in a gross hypocrisy, as does her husband, and lacks refinement in her lack of pretense.

Marriage is not depicted as a sacred institution in this comedy. Certainly, the state of affairs with the Cockwoods was not blessed. According to Sir Oliver, a married man is often

. . . oblig'd to kiss, and fawn, and toy,  
lye fooling an hour or two, when a man had  
rather, if it were not for the disgrace sake,  
stand all the while in the Pillory paulted with  
Rotten Eggs and Oranges

(I, i, 120-24)

"The inconvenience of keeping regular hours" and "that damn'd fiend Jealousie" (I, i, 126-27) add additional problems. Lady Cockwood, tired of her husband and his excessive drinking, was relatively undisturbed about the fight between Courtall and Sir Oliver: "I did not think he had been so desperate in his Drink; if they had kill'd one another, I had then been reveng'd, and freed from all my fears" (V, i, 1-3). It is no wonder that matrimony was referred to as having been "committed," for it was a dull, desperate condition.



The church was another institution regarded with suspicion by Cavaliers, in view of the power struggles arising between prelates and politicians since the days of Henry VIII. Piety of clergymen was always in doubt:

Sir Oliver: Well, a pox on this tying man and woman, for better, for worse! upon my conscience it was but a Trick that the Clergy might have a feeling in the Cause.

Courtall: I do not conceive it to be much for their profit, Sir Oliver, for I dare lay a good wager let 'em but allow Christian liberty, and they shall get ten times more by Christnings, than they are likely to lose by Marriages.

Sir Oliver: Faith thou hast hit it right, Ned; and now thou talk'st of Christian Liberty, prithee let us dine together to day, and be swingingly merry, but with all secrecy.

(I, i, 136-47)

The Cavaliers, in referring to repentance and prayer, imposed secularized connotations. Gatty expresses this meaning clearly in her reply to Ariana's demure chatter: "speak but one grave word more, and it shall be my daily Prayers thou may'st have a jealous Husband" (I, ii, 130-32). The bitter tears and prayers expressed by Sir Oliver, while wearing his penitential suit, are for the humor of Lady Cockwood, not the deity. A true conversion to religion would spoil merriment; thus, any mention of matters pertaining to faith is pointedly omitted by Cavaliers.

Members of the middle class, who tended toward Puritanism, were regarded with contempt and ridicule by the fashionable aristocracy. The London citizens, who cherished their piety



and independence, were satirized by the upper class:

Freeman: Courtall, what the Devil's the matter with thee? I have observ'd thee prying up and down the Walks like a Citizen's Wife that has dropt her Holy-day Pockethandkercher.

(IV, ii, 51-53)

Indeed, no respect was afforded the hard-working people of the town, as Ariana identifies in Courtall and Freeman:

Wo be to the Daughter or Wife of some Merchant-Taylor, or poor Feltmaker now; for you seldom row to Fox-hall without some such plot against the City

(IV, ii, 192-94)

Earlier, Freeman had referred to the reputations of citizens as being "paultry" (II, ii, 212). Though Courtall is a true Cavalier, with an attitude of moral laxity, he has no empathetic feelings toward a scrupulous merchant: "I know there are some wary Merchants, who never trust their business to a Factor" (I, i, 24-25). Similarly, Rake-hell envisions his surgeon as being concerned only with the materialistic rewards of his services:

. . . my Courage has almost run me out of a comfortable Annuity. When I liv'd first about this Town, I agreed with a Surgeon for twenty pounds a Quarter to cure me of all Knocks, Bruises, and green Wounds I shou'd receive, and in one half year the poor Fellow beg'd me to be releas'd of his bargain, and swore I wou'd undo him else in Lint and Balsom.

(IV, ii, 20-26)

This is also the braggadocio of the rake, though it does shed some light on the contempt with which the Cavaliers held the



London bourgeoisie, in their aspirance to riches and a higher position.

The primary intent of Etherege in She Wou'd if She Cou'd was to amuse an aristocratic audience. In his satire of marriage, the clergy, and the middle class, Etherege's objective was not to correct the faults of society. By the elaboration of commonly assumed Cavalier beliefs concerning the faults of the social structure, the London theatre-goers had something at which to laugh. In the depiction of the foolishness of man, as inherent in the clumsy façades of the country bumpkins, the result could only be hilarious, since the Cavaliers in attendance at the playhouse certainly would not identify with such clownish dullards. Woven out of a nonchalant, risqué wit, the love intrigues in the comedy provoke boundless enjoyment, as they were in imitation of actual adventures at court. In such Restoration plays, a great number of scenes were devoted to the relationship between the sexes, which indicates the popularity of such scenes.

The Man of Mode; or, Sir Fopling Flutter (1676) depicts nature in a state of degeneration. Unification is basic to the plot, as the progress of the rake Dorimant in his amours is followed. Through the succession of episodic scenes, heroism is illustrated in Dorimant, an archetypal courtier during the reign of Charles II. Harriet, the witty coquette,



is Dorimant's match, unlike the raging Mrs. Loveit or the easy Bellinda. Sir Fopling Flutter, who was certain of his exquisite quality, is presented as a gentleman manqué. An admirable piece of emptiness, Sir Fopling misses the genteel pattern of a gallant on every point, completely unaware that he is a witless fop, as Dorimant proves. Throughout the play, genuine emotion is avoided, as flexible, empty dialogue depicts the satirical vignettes of polite society. To be sure, in a world of licentious manners and loose morals, no solutions are offered to the faults of society.

The Renaissance idea of a well-rounded gentleman, as expressed in Castiglione's The Book of the Courtier, was enlarged by Etherege and other Cavaliers to include rakish men of fashion, such as Dorimant, in The Man of Mode, who relied upon a refined, careless elegance. To Cavaliers, a gentleman should

. . . dress well, Dance well, Fence well,  
have a genius for Love Letters, an agreeable  
voice for a Chamber, be very Amorous, something  
discreet, but not over Constant

(I, i, 391-94)

Additionally, a gentleman should be of great employment, as Dorimant, who has "more Mistresses now depending than the most eminent Lawyer in England has Causes" (II, i, 122-23). However, affectation should not characterize a man of fashion, as Dorimant points out concerning Sir Fopling Flutter:

Young Bellair: He thinks himself the  
Pattern of modern Gallantry.



Dorimant: He is indeed the pattern of modern Foppery.

Medley: He was Yesterday at the Play, with a pair of Gloves up to his Elbows, and a Periwig more exactly curl'd then a Ladies head newly dress'd for a Ball.

Bellinda: What a pretty Lisp he has!

Dorimant: Ho, that he affects in imitation of the people of Quality of France.

Medley: His head stands for the most part on one side, and his looks are more languishing than a Ladys when she loll's at stretch in her Coach, or leans her head carelessly against the side of a Box i' the Playhouse.

Dorimant: He is a person indeed of great acquir'd Follies.

(I, i, 369-81)

Dorimant is correct in assessing the false value of fashion, in regard to Sir Fopling: "Tis a thing no less necessary to confirm the Reputation of your Wit, than a Duel will be to satisfie the Town of your Courage" (III, ii, 236-38).

Dorimant expresses his own cynical opinion of honor in love. Emilia, a virtuous young woman, is considered by Dorimant to be a possible conquest after her marriage to Young Bellair:

Medley: Emilia, give her her due, has the best reputation of any young Woman about the Town . . .

Dorimant: She's a discreet Maid, and I believe nothing can corrupt her but a Husband. . . I have known many Women make a difficulty of losing a Maidenhead, who have afterwards made none of making a Cuckold.

(I, i, 439-40, 444-45, 447-49)

Virtue is thought to be a façade by Dorimant, who sees women and the institution of marriage as hypocritical. In his



quarrels with Mrs. Loveit, whom he is casting off as his mistress, Dorimant expostulates the comic realities of an ideal, or constant love:

Dorimant: Constancy at my years! 'tis not a Vertue in season, you might as well expect the Fruit the Autumn ripens i'the Spring.

. . .

Love gilds us over, and makes us show fine things to one another for a time, but soon the Gold wears off, and then again the native brass appears.

Mrs. Loveit: Think on your Oaths, your Vows and Protestations, perjur'd Man!

Dorimant: I made 'em when I was in love.

Mrs. Loveit: And therefore ought they not to bind? Oh Impious!

Dorimant: What we swear at such a time may be a certain proof of a present passion, but to say truth, in Love there is no security to be given for the future.

(II, ii, 191-93, 208-18)

Dorimant, who has a complete lack of faith in mankind and the worth of true love, is not to be trusted in relationships with women, since love for him means dissembling for personal gain.

Dorimant's numerous sexual intrigues in The Man of Mode express a search for pleasure resulting from "a Hobbesian aggressiveness, competitiveness, and drive for power and glory."<sup>6</sup> As a result of Dorimant's cynical attitudes toward his fellow man, he seeks only to gratify his selfish nature by maintaining precedence over others. In the quarrel with Mrs. Loveit, which is arranged early in the play, the audience

<sup>6</sup>Underwood, p. 73.



is prepared for malice, as the hero explains that "next to the coming to a good understanding with a new Mistress, I love a quarrel with an old one" (I, i, 200-202). It is ironic that Dorimant accuses Mrs. Loveit of having an affair with "a senseless Caper, a Tawdry French Riband, and a Formal Cravat" (II, ii, 246-47) such as Sir Fopling Flutter, when he is affected as well. As Harriet so aptly recognizes, Dorimant's sexual vanity is so extreme as to be amusing:

I do not go begging the mens as you do the  
Ladies Good liking, with a sly softness in your  
looks, and a gentle slowness in your bows, as  
you pass by 'em--as thus, Sir--  
(III, iii, 102-105)

A presentation of falseness in Dorimant is obvious to others, as his civility contrasts his villainy, with Bellinda noting that he is "strangely ill-natur'd" and "a man of no principles" (III, ii, 29, 31). His feelings for Harriet must be doubted--Dorimant does not believe in humanity nor in passionate love at all; therefore, his wish for Harriet, because of her beauty, wit, and money, expresses only the possibility of a challenge in another conquest. Harriet, aware of Dorimant's reputation, expresses her realization of the possibility insincerity of his speeches to her: "In men who have been long harden'd in Sin, we have reason to mistrust the first signs of repentance" (V, ii, 138-39). Thus, man is viewed in this instance as an egoistic, predatory creature, with no loyalty toward the rest



of mankind, and with lust--not love--as the reality behind passion. The sexual aggressiveness seen in Dorimant is a result of his frustration in a society that imposes restrictions on man's natural desires.

The Cavaliers, in a world of hypocrisy, were justifiably disillusioned with life, in its momentary state. Since institutions of authority did not merit their respect, epicureanism provided escape from the world's iniquities. In their delightful conversation with the Shoemaker, Medley and Dorimant accurately describe the wickedness of the genteel, resulting from the emptiness of life:

Medley: I advise you like a Friend, reform your Life, you have brought the envy of the World upon you, by living above your self. Whoring and Swearing are Vices too gentile for a Shoemaker.

Shoemaker: 'Zbud, I think you men of quality will grow as unreasonable as the Women; you wou'd ingross the sins o'the Nation; poor Folks can no sooner be wicked, but th' are rail'd at by their Betters.

Dorimant: Sirrah, I'll have you stand i' the Pillory for this Libel.

Shoemaker: Some of you deserve it, I'm sure; there are so many of 'em, that our Journey-men now adays instead of harmless Ballads, sing nothing but your damn'd Lampoons.

(I, i, 266-78)

The middle class, as well as the aristocracy, is ridiculed here. The vices of the upper class must be guarded against by the members of the bourgeoisie, who must remember their position on the social scale. Money, however, creates



upheavals in the social system, as the nouveau riche begins to appear out of the middle class. Thus, journeymen, aspiring to gentility, "sing nothing but damn'd Lampoons."

In The Man of Mode, Sir Fopling Flutter is the chief attraction, despite his follies. As John Dryden states, in the Epilogue (p. 288), to tell a fop from a wit is difficult:

Something of man must be expos'd to View,  
That Gallants, it may more resemble you:  
Sir Fopling is a Fool so nicely writ,  
The Ladies wou'd mistake him for a Wit  
And, when he sings, talks lowd, and cocks;  
                    wou'd cry,  
I vow methinks he's pretty company.  
  (11. 5-10)

An authentic picture of the aristocratic world is advanced by Etherege, in which ladies and gentlemen, with their bawdy manners and loose morals, strive for the accoutrements of wit and fashion, losing sight of their naturalness all the while. Aristocrats, such as Etherege, accepted the vicissitudes of life, which included the malice, affectation, and villainy in the character of man. Even the ideal gentleman in the play is viewed cynically as a hypocrite, as he is despised for the vanity that is so obvious in Sir Fopling Flutter. The ideality of heroic love is disagreed with by Dorimant, because of the hypocrisy, deceit, and pettiness of humanity, which is controlled by the restrictions of society and decorum. Hope for honor in the world must therefore be replaced by a wish for individuality, freedom, pleasure, and naturalness.



Thus, Sir George Etherege, whose plays approach the comedy of manners, employed a relaxed, objective attitude toward his works, signifying a typical Cavalier detachment from emotion. A rake and wit, Etherege depicts the licentious world he knew so well in The Comical Revenge, She Wou'd if She Cou'd, and The Man of Mode. The characters themselves display a nonchalance toward life and an interest only in their personal intrigues. Artificiality, though a real factor throughout the affairs of Etherege's characterizations, is denounced by those professing wit, in favor of candor. Honesty is shown to be a mere contrivance of society, to limit the freedom of mankind, with hypocrisy as the result. Man's instincts are shown to be basically aggressive and egoistically self-satisfying; therefore, frustrations build up as the entire structure of culture has been designed to place prohibitions on him. The desire for freedom from social inhibitions is expressed in Etherege's comedies, as it could conceivably create a higher sense of enjoyment than common in the Restoration. In this regard, Etherege is not in disagreement with the twentieth-century viewpoint.

#### B. Conclusion

Thus, by approaching the drama of the Cavaliers as an indicator of the contemporary milieu, the intrinsic merit of



these works can be viewed in a clear perspective. Direct products of their age, the Cavaliers reacted to the literary concepts of honor and idealism, a reaction resulting sumarily from an increasing disillusionment with an ever-changing world. Préciosité and Platonic love, contrivances of the court of Charles I, were no longer tolerated by Cavaliers steeped in the world's harshness. Dramatic pieces of the pre-Commonwealth era which dealt with such matters were largely scorned by Cavaliers in the early Restoration; disillusioned by the Civil War and its aftermath, these Cavaliers chose to be interested primarily in an egoistic gratification of their own desires.

In plays of the early Restoration, Carolinean attitudes of honor and chivalry are reduced to hedonism and cynicism by Cavalier writers and men of fashion. Davenant's plays react against idealism, satirize the common multitudes, and ridicule hypocrisy in man and his institutions. The Playhouse to be Let mocks the sentiment and theatricality of heroic drama through the burlesque form. The Wits foreshadows the intrigue play of the later Restoration. The Man's the Master ridicules chivalric ideals. Thomas Killigrew's The Parson's Wedding rebels against ideals of courtly love, in his presentation of bawdy manners. The Parson's Wedding is a typically Cavalier expression of disillusionment toward the clergy, the military, the government, and the middle class. To both



Davenant and Killigrew, heroic seriousness is outmoded for its unrealistic neglect of man's natural desires.

Plays by dilettantes such as Tuke, Buckingham, and Sedley share the cynical point of view expressed by Davenant and Killigrew. Reacting against the heroic play, Tuke presents, in The Adventures of Five Hours, passionate scenes that must have seemed absurd to aristocratic audiences. The Rehearsal is an eloquent parody of the idealism and empty rhetoric of contemporary plays. Buckingham ridicules his notion of witless, artificial plays and playwrights. Sedley's The Mulberry Garden is an expression of the free-thinking Cavaliers, famous for their licentious manners. Idealism and the Roundheads are mocked to achieve a humorous effect. These works by Tuke, Buckingham, and Sedley are important for their foreshadowing of the social mode in later Restoration comedy.

The best of the early comedies of the Restoration are by Sir George Etherege, a Cavalier famed for his fashionable, rakish manners. In The Comical Revenge, Etherege opposes heroic conventions of the former age and presents Sir Frederick Frollick as a comic, rake-hero. This play is of interest for its merry escapades, but does not represent the Etheregean art at its heights. She Wou'd if She Cou'd presents the reality of life for the idle rich, ridiculing honor, marriage, religion, the middle class, and country fools. This depiction



of man's follies on stage makes use of nonchalant, risqué wit. Etherege achieves excellence as a playwright in The Man of Mode. Dorimant, as a hero, contrasts Sir Fopling Flutter, a witless fop. Though Dorimant is not free from affectation, he is a model for later rake-heroes such as Congreve's Mirabell. Sir Fopling, an admirable piece of emptiness, is renamed Sir Novelty Fashion by Colley Cibber in Love's Last Shift. Most important in The Man of Mode is its depiction of the Cavalier antipathy toward false ideals of honor, love, and virtue. Etherege insists that man must remain cognizant of his own follies and live to please his own desires, independent of society.

Therefore, Cavalier plays written by Davenant, Killigrew, Tuke, Buckingham, Sedley, and Etherege reflect the milieu of the early Restoration. Cavalier plays react against the formality of honor and idealism in love, marriage, politics, and religion. Puritans and the middle class are despised for their rigidity, piety, and attempted disruption of the Cavalier world. Davenant and Killigrew provide a link between the pre-Commonwealth drama and the Restoration. Tuke, Buckingham, and Sedley continue to ridicule heroic ideals, as they move toward more sophisticated plays. Etherege's comedies are the most artful of this group, expressing most delightfully the skepticism of the fun-loving Cavaliers. The seventeenth century, as these plays exhibit, was an era of change and



disillusionment. Cavaliers reflect their times in their desire for individuality, freedom, and naturalness in the world.



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