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## Censors of the Mind: Samuel Pepys and the Restoration Licensers

SAMUEL PEPYS STARTED HIS NOW-FAMOUS diary at the beginning of 1660, a crucial year in English history. The previous two decades had witnessed a civil war, the execution of King Charles I, and the creation of a republic and then a Protectorate under Oliver Cromwell; 1660 was a watershed, and it *seemed* at least to mark a boundary, to divide the present from the past. When Charles II was restored to the throne, he shrewdly offered an "Act of Indemnity and Oblivion" to those who had fought against his father, a gesture that one scholar has aptly described as "legislating amnesia." "Oblivion" for Charles meant not only forgetting treasonous crimes, but censoring certain words from the political lexicon, slurs like "malignant" and "roundhead."<sup>1</sup> Keeping the peace meant barring the use of names and epithets that dredged up memories of the late war.

The din of celebration was also calculated to muffle the noise of dissent. At the King's coronation ceremony, the streets were festooned with elaborate scenes, and the fountains spouted wine. The theatres, closed from 1642 to 1660, re-opened with great fanfare. Glozing panegyrics on the newly crowned King came in from all quarters, loyalist and turncoat alike.<sup>2</sup>

But beneath the smooth surface of the restored monarchy, tensions persisted; though dissent was driven underground (by the censors, among others), it proved difficult to contain.<sup>3</sup> A series of uprisings by religious

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<sup>1</sup> John Kenyon, ed. *The Stuart Constitution*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993) 342.

<sup>2</sup> See Gerald MacLean's Introduction to *Culture and Society in the Stuart Restoration* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995).

<sup>3</sup> On the fate of the "body politic" metaphor to 1660, see Derek Hirst, *England in Conflict 1603-1660* (London: Arnold, 1999).

radicals, vestiges of Cromwell's regime, tainted the aura of celebration that surrounded the King's return. On closer inspection, the *annus mirabilis* of 1660 begins to look less like a bulwark against the past, and more like a fluid and permeable boundary. Nowhere is this more evident than in Pepys's diary, which is at once a semi-private chronicle of the 1660s and a palimpsest embracing the present and the recent past. Pepys registers the many tensions of the Restoration settlement in his journal. Indeed, his internal audience includes multiple censors, some of one political persuasion, and some of another; this internal conflict mirrored the state of the English polity. The *Diary* thus affords an unexampled window into early modern psychology, a rich sense of the diarist's inner life and of the forms and pressures of self-censorship. In this paper, I will detail Pepys's inner conflict, a psychodynamic that is political rather than familial; at the same time, I will parse the strategies of concealment that he deploys in his journal, analyzing the subtle ways in which Pepys censors himself even in this most private of literary forms. Finally, I will touch on the journal's public aspect and on the diarist's fantasies of posthumous publication.

On 2 May 1660, just over three weeks before Charles II arrived in London, Pepys observes that the King has offered "an act of Oblivion to all, unless [parliament] shall please to except any."<sup>4</sup> Pepys himself benefited from the Act of Indemnity: present at Charles I's execution, he had declared, "were I to preach upon him, my text should be: 'The memory of the wicked shall rot'" (I, 280). In November of 1660, he ran into an "old Schoolfellow of his," one Mr. Christian, who "did remember that I was a great roundhead when I was a boy"; Pepys was terrified that his schoolmate would recall the words he had uttered upon Charles's beheading (I, 280). The dialectic between memory and forgetting—the memory of the late King, the forgetting and forgiveness of words and actions against him—played itself out in Pepys's journal as in did on the national scene.

On the very same day that he mentions the Act of Indemnity and Oblivion, Pepys notes that parliament "voted that all books whatever that are out against the government of King, Lords, and Commons should be brought into the House and burned" (I, 22). As Roger L'Estrange, the chief censor of the Restoration, remarked, the Act of Oblivion did not apply to books.<sup>5</sup> A year later, we again find Pepys worrying the question of illicit

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<sup>4</sup> *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, vol. I, ed. R.C. Latham and W. Matthews (London: Harper-Collins, 1995) 122. All references in parentheses will be to this edition.

<sup>5</sup> *Considerations and Proposals In Order to the Regulation of the Press. Together with Diverse Instances of Treasonous, and Seditious Pamphlets, Proving the Necessity thereof* (London, Printed by A.C. June 3rd. M.DC.LXIII) 8.

writing. Commenting on the legislative wrangling over the failed Licensing bill of 1661, he observes: "I find the two Houses at a great difference about the Lords challenging their privileges not to have their houses searched; which makes them deny to pass the House of Commons' bill for searching for pamphlets and seditious books" (30 July 1661; II, 144). It is at first glance curious that Pepys should have concerned himself with such legislative minutiae, but the bill was germane to Pepys in at least one important respect: he worried constantly about privacy, secrecy, and enclosure.<sup>6</sup> The Licensing bill, which passed in modified form the following year, allowed government searchers to break into printing houses and private residences and to seize all unlicensed and seditious books. Even unpublished manuscripts were susceptible to charges of treason and seditious libel; considering the strictures on the King to which the diary gives muted voice, Pepys's concern is understandable.

He therefore took several precautions: he wrote his journal in a shorthand code and locked it in his desk drawer; he later stashed the unauthorized 1680 edition of Rochester's poems in the same drawer—it was evidently a cache for "forbidden" books (I, lxxvii and note 1).<sup>7</sup> Pepys learned the shorthand code that he used in the diary from Thomas Shelton's *Tachygraphy* (1641/42); among the virtues of the code that Shelton touted was its utility in foiling "bloudy Inquisitours."<sup>8</sup> He often breaks off his saltier narratives—those on his sexual *liaisons*, for instance—with an "et cetera," an obvious form of self-censorship.

Yet there was a public aspect to the journal as well. Pepys used *lingua franca* to cloak some of his dalliances, but as scholars have noted, his wife was more fluent in the Romance languages than he, so the macaronic language that he deploys in his diary would hardly have served to hide his amours from her. On the one hand he often gives his mistresses cryptic nicknames or refers to them periphrastically; on the other hand he frequently writes the names of important people and books in longhand, without disguise. The first recorded reader of the diary, Peter Leycester, noted as much in 1728:

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<sup>6</sup> See Lawrence Rosenwald, *Emerson and the Art of the Diary* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1988) Introduction, and Stuart Sherman, *Telling Time* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1996) ch. 2, on the seeming comprehensiveness of Pepys's diary which masks its selectivity. Pepys records some legislative business, but not nearly all that transpired.

<sup>7</sup> See also Hammond, "Censorship in the Manuscript Transmission of Restoration Poetry," in *Literature and Censorship, Literature and Censorship*, ed. Nigel Smith (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1993) 61.

<sup>8</sup> Quoted in Elizabeth Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change* (Cambridge UP, 1979) 283.

though he could not understand Pepys's shorthand "method," he remarked to a friend that "the proper names [were writ] in common characters" (I, lvi–lvii, lxxiii). When Pepys had finished writing the diary, he shelved the volumes in a locked book-press, but the volumes themselves were prominently displayed, close to a book of code that unlocked his cipher.

The diary was thus both public and private, in form and content. It was not simply an autobiography—it was a political artefact, containing Pepys's secret image of the King and court. By the same token, the diary had a set of implied readers. In his journal Pepys constructs a relationship with Charles II that goes well beyond their actual one; he figures himself by turns as a loyal subject, a Cavalier after the King's own heart, and as an oppositional writer, an almost Puritan critic of Charles's rule. Pepys's tacit relationship with the King figures prominently in the diary, but it also shapes his prose: Charles, the "pater patriae," gradually became lodged in his conscience as a phantom reader and indeed a censor of the journal; when Pepys criticizes the King, he does so obliquely.

Yet Charles sat side-by-side with a far more stringent internal monitor, a moral censor Pepys had developed under the commonwealth. Pepys harkens back nostalgically to Cromwell and the republic when Charles's regime begins to flounder—notably, during the Second Dutch War—but at other moments he relishes the pleasures that reigned at court, closely-linked pleasures like the theatre and promiscuous sex, which had been outlawed under the Puritans but liberally endorsed by the restored King. Pepys learned the shorthand cipher in which he penned the journal from a textbook published in 1642—significantly, at the outset of England's civil conflict—and the threat of renewed civil war looms large in his diary.<sup>9</sup> The Restoration figures in the journal as alternately miraculous and mundane, blessed dénouement to the revolution and tragicomic reversal.

Other scholars have commented on Pepys's complicated attitude towards Charles. In a brilliant essay on the diarist, James Turner notes that Pepys's tracking of Charles's movements allows him to identify with the King; Turner charts what we might call Pepys's "sceptre envy" in some detail.<sup>10</sup> He observes that Pepys rehearses the same battles between "pleasure" and "business," two terms that crop up again and again in the diary, that he witnessed at the King's Theatre and at court. Pepys's hypocrisy about

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<sup>9</sup> On the cipher, see *Pepysiana*, Supplementary volume to *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, ed. Henry B. Wheatley (1899) 257; *Diary* Vol. 1, l and plate facing.

<sup>10</sup> James Grantham Turner, "Pepys and the Private Parts of Monarchy," in *Culture and Society in the Stuart Restoration* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995).

Charles's behaviour—chiding the King in his journal and then fondling his neighbours' wives—is mirrored in the King's flaunting his sexual escapades and then asking his subjects not to take any notice. Turner maintains, however, that Pepys's attitude towards the King, while sometimes critical, is most often marked by a sympathetic indulgence.

Pepys's first impression of Charles was that he was "a very sober man" (17 May 1660); he was awed by the "splendid court" and by the dignity of monarchy. But barely more than a week later, when the King landed at Dover (25 May), Pepys notes indelicately that the royal dog "shat in the boat, which made us laugh and me think that a King and all that belong to him are but just as others are" (I, 158). Turner reads this comment as in part a sympathetic view of Charles's earthy humanness. I have a somewhat different take on it, however: Pepys's juxtaposition of the King's triumphant return to England with his dog's depositing a turd in the boat has all of the art of mock epic; high is collocated with low at the king's expense. Indeed, the remark is levelling in its implications: in Pepys's brief morality tale, the Great Chain of Being falls unceremoniously to the ground. Most of the Puritan Marvell's political *oeuvre*—indeed most of the anti-court literature compiled in the various *Poems on Affairs of State* volumes—is continuous with this mock-heroic line in Pepys's diary. Pepys was thus the first of the "bedspring and chamber pot" historians: his journal is a "secret history" in all senses of the term.<sup>11</sup> As with many secret histories, censorship forestalled its publication; Pepys did not dare to publish his six-volume journal in Charles's reign, rife as the books were with barbs against the court.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> It is telling that Charles's subjects affixed political graffiti to his bedchamber door and to privy walls at Lincoln's Inn: during the Restoration, the two venues were metonymic extensions of the King's corrupt political body. For an epigram posted on the King's bedroom door, see Harold Love, *Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996) 213 and n. 80; for a satirical lityany "writ in Lincoln's Inn Boguehouse/1672," see *Poems on Affairs of State*, vol. I, ed. George de Forest Lord (New Haven: Yale UP, 1975) 190.

<sup>12</sup> He tells only two people of the diary's existence during the 1660s—one in 1660, the other (Sir William Coventry) in 1669. He regrets having told Coventry: "I am sorry almost that I told him—it not being necessary, nor may be convenient to have it known" (*Diary* Vol. I, 107; Vol. II, 475). While journals seem a wholly private genre, they were often translated into other forms that were intended for publication: the memoirs and autobiographies of Whitelocke, D'Ewes, and Luttrell, for instance, as well as the great stock of secret histories that emerged after the Restoration. Even supposedly "private" journals circulated in manuscript—those of the Short and Long Parliament, for example. "Secret history" (*avant la lettre*) appears to have been one of the models for the *Diary*: Pepys bought and read Sir Anthony Weldon's *The Court and Character of King James ...* (1650) and Sir Anthony Peyton's *The*

Turner and others are quite perceptive on the Cavalier Pepys, the Restoration rake who gluts himself with pleasure, who covets the King's mistress, Lady Castlemaine, and even buys portraits of her to put on his walls. But critics neglect, or at least downplay, that other Pepys who comes across in the diary—the Puritan Pepys. This Pepys—the rigorous bookkeeper, accountant of his money and actions, his Puritan mother's son—had far more complicated feelings about Carolean culture than many critics suggest. The diarist, for instance, repeatedly makes vows not to attend plays and not to drink, but to apply himself to his business instead. It is as if he is re-enacting the civil war by banning both the theatre and the alehouse in his private oaths, thus lining up with the Puritans against Charles.<sup>13</sup>

Indeed, through much of the diary, he shows a good bit of sympathy towards dissenters, who are derided as “fanatics” by the court. His literary tastes are especially revealing. Although he loved Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Faire*, which was often revived in the Restoration, he never cared for the puppet sequence lampooning the Puritans; after one viewing of the play, he observes: “the business of abusing the puritans begins to grow stale, and of no use, they being the people that at last will be found the wisest” (IX, 299; see also II, 174, 212).

He has a similar reaction to Samuel Butler's great mock epic, *Hudibras*. Butler's satiric poem on the Puritans' role in recent history was the King's favourite literary work. The opening lines give a flavour of the whole:

When *civil* Fury first grew high  
 And men fell out they knew not why;  
 When hard words, *Jealousies* and *Fears*,  
 Set Folks together by the ears,  
 And made men fight, like mad or drunk,  
 For Dame *Religion* as for Punk  
 Whose honesty they all durst swear for,  
 Though not a man of them knew wherefore:  
 When *Gospel-trumpeter*, surrounded  
 With long-ear'd rout, to Battel sounded,

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*divine catastrophe of the kingly family of ... the Stuarts* (1652), the latter of which he calls *The Rise and Fall of the Family of the Stewarts* (the two books—illicit after 1660—are bound together in his library): *Diary* Vol. VI, 33, 120. He later purchased *Procopius's Secret History of the Court of the Emperor Justinian* (1674): *Catalogue of the Pepys Library at Magdalene College*, gen'l ed. Robert Latham, Vol. I: Printed Books, Compiled N.A. Smith et al. (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer Ltd, 1978). On the subject of secret history, see Annabel Patterson, *Early Modern Liberalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997) ch. 6.

<sup>13</sup> The Puritans never closed down the alehouses entirely, but they did strictly regulate them.

And Pulpit, Drum Ecclesiastick,  
 Was beat with fist, instead of a stick:  
 Then did Sir *Knight* abandon dwelling,  
 And out he rode a Colonelling.<sup>14</sup>

Even the tetrameter verse form, which deliberately truncates the standard heroic couplet, deflates Puritan pretensions. Charles reputedly carried a copy of *Hudibras* in his pocket; indeed, he gave Butler a patent for the book.<sup>15</sup> For all of the poem's popularity, however, Pepys dismisses the work as "silly"; his estimation of it did not change on multiple readings. Satires on state affairs, secret histories of the Stuarts, and biographies of Cromwell were more to his taste. Though he read—and enjoyed—*L'Ecole des Filles* among other pornographic works, Pepys burned *L'Ecole* as soon as he was done with it, a book-burning worthy of the most stringent Puritan censors (IX, 21–22, 57–59).

As with Pepys's reading habits, so with his work habits. When the Duke of York approves Pepys's appointment as Treasurer of Tangier, he reportedly describes Pepys as "a man whose industry and discretion he would trust as soon as any man's in England" (20 March 1665); the King himself often talks to him of naval matters during the war with the Dutch (see, e.g., 28 April 1665: VI, 61, 91). The royal brothers may have loved their ease, but they relied on the diligence of Pepys and those like him to keep the kingdom running. A Puritan work ethic evidently powered the kingdom behind the scenes.

Pepys therefore not only identifies with Charles, but at times he adopts the role of Justice Overdo or even Zeal-of-the-land Busy, embracing a Puritanical view of the King's all-too-human character. The scepticism about monarchy inherent in Pepys's gibe about the royal spaniel gave way to scathing critiques of the court in the ensuing years. Pepys is in most respects a loyal subject, of course: the industrious clerk does his best to do the King "a service" when he can—streamlining the navy, rooting out corruption (save when he pockets some money for himself)—but when he mentions the King in these entries, it is the king in the abstract; the actual King is another story. Witness the following entry (31 Oct. 1662):

I thank God I have no crosses, but only much business to trouble my mind with. In all other things, as happy a man as any in the world, for the whole world seems to smile upon me; and if my house were done, that I could diligently fallow my business, I would not doubt to do God and the King, and myself, good service. And all I do impute almost wholly to my late temperance, since

<sup>14</sup> Samuel Butler, *Hudibras*, ed. John Wilders (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967).

<sup>15</sup> *Hudibras* lvi.

my making of my vowes against wine and plays, which keeps me most happily and contentfully to my business—which God continue. Public matters are full of discontent—what with the sale of Dunkirke—and my Lady Castlmayne and her faction at Court; though I know not what they would have, more then to debauch the King, whom God preserve from it. (III, 244–45)

Pepys's hope that he will be able to "do the King a service" is repeated so often in the diary that it becomes a rather formulaic refrain; notice that in the second sentence of the above passage the king is wedged between "God" and "myself"—the syntax almost eclipses him. When, however, Pepys looks hard at *the* King, Charles, and does not abstract from him some general and nameless notion of "the king," a far different picture of the monarch emerges; he is debauched and passive. Charles's evil ministers are Pepys's focus here—Castlemaine and her "faction"—but the King has been denuded of his agency because of his submission to women and pleasure.<sup>16</sup> Meanwhile, as Pepys had remarked earlier, "it [has] become a pleasure to me nowadays to fallow my business" (7 Aug. 1662).<sup>17</sup>

The diarist chastises the court more directly and in more damning language as the years progress. Pepys, however, was cautious, and when it comes to the King himself—as opposed to Charles's counsellors and courtiers—he often quotes the strictures of others rather than offering criticisms in proper person; such a ruse lends Pepys a measure of anonymity in his diary. I propose to call such criticism of the King and his government "anonymous criticism," as the strictures that Pepys records in the diary are difficult to pin on Pepys himself; indeed, on many occasions they are hard to attribute to anyone in particular, as the critics whom Pepys quotes remain nameless.

Examples of such anonymous criticism abound in the diary. Early in Charles's reign, for instance, Pepys comments slyly and gingerly on the merry monarch's hedonism: "[Charles is] fallowing his pleasures more than with good advice he would do—at least, to be seen by all the world to do

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<sup>16</sup> John O'Neill makes a similar point in "Samuel Pepys: The War of Will and Pleasure," *Restoration* 19 (Fall 1995): 92–93.

<sup>17</sup> As O'Neill notes, however, it is at the intersection of sexual pleasure and business that Pepys experiences the most acute weakness of will. Indeed, like the King, Pepys adored Castlemaine: he gawks at her at the theatre and at Whitehall, he dreams about her, and he buys prints of her (VI, 191; VII, 393). Pepys's extramarital affairs would have been a capital offence under the commonwealth, though in practice only women were punished with death; in Charles II's London, such affairs were apparently routine. The difference between Charles's and Pepys's handling of their affairs, however, is that the diarist took pains to conceal his—and he tried not let them affect his "business."

so—his dalliance with my Lady Castlemaine being public every day, to his great reproach” (31 December 1662: III, 302). Pepys uses the ancient technique of criticizing the King’s ministers—Charles lacks “good advice”—but he also qualifies his observation that Charles is “fallowing his pleasures” in a complex passive construction: “at least, [the King is] seen by all the world to do so.” Pepys, the syntax suggests, is not so much criticizing the King as remarking on others’ criticisms of him; at the very least, the diarist is hiding himself in an anonymous crowd, “all the world.” The primary *authorship* of the criticism remains in some doubt.

Pepys often spoke with colleagues and friends about Charles’s ill management of the Kingdom. Frequently Pepys not only quotes such critics of the government but names them: the attributions are self-serving, for he commonly ventriloquizes his own criticisms through others, using them as a vehicle. As in the previous example, he employs a strategy of triangulation, giving him the “out” of plausible denial should his journals be discovered and deciphered: *Pepys* did not think that the King was an idle slave to his pleasures; it was Povy, Evelyn, or others, Pepys’s gossiping interlocutors. Even in this most personal of documents, the diarist retains a sort of anonymity in these exchanges.

On rare occasion, Pepys will endorse what someone else says; take the following conversation between him and his patron, the Earl of Sandwich:

And my Lord did whisper to me alone, that things here must break in pieces, nobody minding anything, but every man his own business of profit or pleasure, and the King some little designs of his own; and that certainly the Kingdom could not stand in this condition long—*which I fear and believe is very true* [emphasis added]. (1 Oct. 1665: VI, 248)

Sandwich whispers this to Pepys, Pepys to his diary; but he is usually even more discreet when it comes to the King (if he refers to himself at all). Just a few weeks earlier, he recorded that he ran into Capt. Cocke; the two skipped church to discuss matters of state:

So up to the church, where at the door I find Capt. Cocke in my Lord Brunkers coach, and he came out and walked with me in the churchyard till the church was done. Talking of the ill-government of our Kingdom, nobody setting to heart the business of the Kingdom, but everybody minding their perticular profit or pleasures, the King himself minding nothing but his ease—and so we let things go to wrack. (3 Sept 1665: VI, 210)

The participial phrase that opens the second sentence, “Talking of,” elides the subject: presumably, Cocke and Pepys both chastised the court in their conversation, but Pepys refuses to take full responsibility for what he thinks

on paper, extricating himself from the syntax. Pepys achieves anonymity through a subtle form of self-censorship.<sup>18</sup>

The same phrase, “talking of,” and variants on it appear throughout the diary, to similar effect. At one point Pepys records a lengthy conversation with his friend and fellow-diarist John Evelyn, but from Pepys’s locution, one might imagine that Evelyn did all of the talking:

I took a turn with Mr. Eveling, with whom walked two hours, till almost one of the clock—*talking of* the badness of the Government, where nothing but wickedness, and wicked men and women command the King. That it is not in his nature to gainsay anything that relates to his pleasures. That much of it arises from the sickliness of our Ministers of State, who cannot be about him as the idle companions are, and therefore give way to the young rogues . . . .

(26 April 1667: VIII, 181)

Once again “talking of” omits the subject; the sentence fragments that follow the first sentence merely heighten the ambiguity. Pepys continues in a similar vein for the balance of the entry, attributing the strictures on government to Evelyn alone: “He confirms to me . . . Mr. Eveling tells me . . .” etc. During the Restoration, anonymous polemic was often intentionally attributed either to the wrong party or to but one of the parties responsible; in these passages, Pepys places the responsibility for vilifying the government squarely on Evelyn’s shoulders.<sup>19</sup>

Such anonymous (or semi-anonymous) criticism became particularly common as the tide turned in the Second Dutch War, not only in Pepys’s

<sup>18</sup> As a genre, of course, the diary lent itself to an abbreviated style, and it might be objected that what I have called Pepys’s self-censorship is merely a function of the journal’s form. Pepys often unfolded his narrative in clipped periods: textual demands abridged his writing, as he neatly crammed each day’s entry onto one page of his journal. But although he strove for concision, more often than not he wrote in complete sentences; in fact, he carefully revised his notes on the day’s events before recording them in final form in his diary (*Diary* Vol. I, xliv, xcvi–cvi). The laconic quality of some of his entries was, therefore, a studied stylistic effect, not an accident of the genre in which he was writing. Indeed, it might be argued that Pepys exploited the diary’s abbreviated form as a fitting vehicle for his cryptic narrative.

<sup>19</sup> To give just a few examples: Dryden was the fall guy for Mulgrave’s *Essay on Satire*, though he had only a small hand in the piece. Although Sprat, Butler, and others contributed to *The Rehearsal*, Dryden evidently pinned the whole play on Buckingham, as he later trained his satire on the Duke alone. (Multiple authorship appears to have been relatively common in the Restoration—see John Harold Wilson, *Court Wits of the Restoration* [New York: Octagon Books, 1967].) On a related note, “treasonable lampoons” were often attributed to Rochester—because of his reputation, he made an easy scapegoat (see *The Letters of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester*, ed. Jeremy Treglown [Oxford: Blackwell, 1980] 151–52). Some of the attributions were undoubtedly meant to tar his name: Wilmot had many enemies. See in this connection Rochester’s “Timon,” line 25: “He knew my stile, he swore . . . .”

journal but in a sheaf of anonymous poems on state affairs. Many feared another outbreak of civil strife; others looked back longingly to a time when Europe respected England's military prowess—to Cromwell, the commonwealth, and the Protectorate.<sup>20</sup> The troika of plague, war, and fire seemed scourges on the nation, divine punishment for a corrupt monarch. Even before the Medway disaster, in which the Dutch sailed up the Medway river and carried off the King's best ships, parliament was poised to investigate both the navy's and the crown's mismanagement of the war funds they had allotted. Ashley, a former Cromwellian and Charles's *bête noir* during the Exclusion crisis—he was Dryden's "Achitophel"—spearheaded the parliamentary effort. The naval office came under intense review for its intelligence failures and for its mishandling of money; Pepys, a naval administrator, was right in the middle of it.

Parliament's attitude toward the King at this juncture reminded many of the Long Parliament's aggressive stance toward Charles's father in the 1640s. Upon the two Houses' scrutiny of the crown's dubious fiscal practices, the naval treasurer George Carteret told Pepys that

the King hath lost his power by submitting himself to this way of examining his accounts—and is become but as a private man. He says the King is troubled at it, but they talk an entry shall be made that it is not to be brought into example. That the King must if they do not agree presently, make them a courageous speech; which he says he may do (the City of London being now burned, and himself master of an army) better then any prince before him.<sup>21</sup>

Opening the King's books was to some an encroachment on his prerogative; countering a further decline in regal power would require bellicose rhetoric on Charles's part. Lord Mordant believed that "there would be a civil war" before parliament granted Charles any more money (17 Feb. 1667), and Coventry likened the threatened denial of "Chimney money," the hearth tax, to "cutting the King's throat" (3 April 1667: VIII, 70, 143).

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<sup>20</sup> On the possibility of imminent civil war, see VIII, 70; on the exaltation of Cromwell, see Vol. VIII, 50, 332. In June of 1667, Pepys and Evelyn worry about the Kingdom's collapse and pay grudging homage to Cromwell: "for [aught] we see, the Kingdom is likely to be lost, as well as the reputation of it is, for ever—notwithstanding so much reputation got and preserved by a Rebel that went before him" ("him" here is the King) (VIII, 249). Pepys notes that the courtier Sir Hugh Cholmley predicts "that of necessity this Kingdom will fall back into a commonwealth; and other wise men are of the same mind, this family doing all that silly men can do to make themselves unable to support their Kingdom—minding their lust and their pleasure, and making their government so chargeable, that people do well remember better things were done and better managed and with less charge, under a commonwealth then they have been by a King" (VIII, 378; see also VIII, 390–91, 556).

<sup>21</sup> On parliament's fear of this "new-raised standing army," see VIII, 324, 332, 352, 366.

Around the time of the Pentland Rising, “a rebellion of Covenanters in the Southwest” of Scotland, Lord Ossory was sharply reprimanded for comparing opposition leaders Ashley and Buckingham to Oliver’s henchmen (VII, 376).

The political atmosphere thus encouraged not only prudence but self-censorship and anonymity. Worried about the parliamentary inquiry in the offing, Pepys burned many of his papers.<sup>22</sup> Yet Pepys was clearly nervous about surveillance by both King and parliament: indeed, so conflicted was he that he fretted when his own colleagues spotted him at the theatre, likely because he wanted to maintain his “Puritan” reputation for probity and industry even among servants of the crown. In December of 1666, he attended the King’s Theatre, commenting: “Here I was in pain to be seen, and hid myself; but as God would have it, Sir John Chichly [a naval captain] came and sat just by me.” The day before, he “sat with [his] cloak about [his] face” in the Royal Theatre, thus preserving his anonymity (VII, 401, 399). The playhouses had, it is true, been shut down owing to the plague and the Dutch war, a situation roughly parallel to that of the 1640s and 1650s, so that several of the performances that Pepys attended were illegal; but the only people who spied him were those equally culpable with himself. Even after the theatres were officially reopened, Pepys had qualms about being “caught” at a play: his conscience was legislating backward to the commonwealth, when stage plays were anathema (IX, 144).

A war thus infected Pepys’s political conscience—he was a devout royalist highly critical of the King, a former Roundhead serving in the corrupt royal navy, a guilty Cavalier who disguised himself at the theatre. He was trapped between the past and the present, Oliver’s Puritan republic and the restored monarchy, in part because the past had not been successfully repressed at the Restoration. In the wake of the Dutch war, the past bubbled up violently: Pepys found himself caught between a discontented House of Commons and his flawed master Charles—a throwback to 1641, and a circumstance that made self-censorship essential, a survival skill. On the one hand, Pepys feared that his office books would be pried open by parliament; on the other hand, he feared that his diary might one day be

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<sup>22</sup> “[T]o my chamber all the afternoon and night, looking over and tearing and burning all the unnecessary letters which I have had upon my File for four or five years backward—which I entend to do quite through all my papers, that I may have nothing by me but what is worth keeping, and fit to be seen if I should miscarry” (VII, 402). The word “miscarry” seems to have several meanings in this context.

seized by agents of the crown.<sup>23</sup> His divided loyalties led to a split in his political identity, a civil war in his own psyche.

Secrecy and anonymity provided the only ways out of this dilemma. Pepys was able to “write himself out,” to borrow a line from *The Spectator*, to give vent to his mixed political emotions, while enshrouding himself in several layers of code. Pepys’s vignette about the war veteran John Bellassey may serve as a complex metaphor for the diary itself:

At noon, being invited, I to the Sun behind the Change to dinner to my Lord Bellasses—where a great deal of discourse with him—and some good. Among other at table, he told us a very handsome passage of the King’s sending him his message about holding out the town of Newarke, of which he was then governor for the King. This message he sent in a Slugg bullet, being writ in Cypher and wrapped up in lead and swallowed. The messenger came to my Lord and told him he had a message from the King, but it was yet in his belly; so they did give him some physic, and out it came. (4 Feb. 1665: VI, 30)

Out of a “great deal of discourse” Pepys selects this story. The setting is the civil war, a time when writing was a dangerous activity. Indeed, Charles I himself had already been the victim of involuntary publication: copies of his compromising letters to his wife Henrietta were captured after the decisive battle at Naseby, and although they were written in code, they were deciphered with the key that lay right by them—a situation parallel to that of Pepys’s journal—and published under parliamentary auspices with the title *The King’s Cabinet Opened*. Naturally it would have been dangerous for Pepys to broadcast his various activities (his adulterous trysts, his receipt of bribes) or to air his views on the court in a public forum—especially at flash points during the 1660s when civil war threatened to re-erupt. He pens his thoughts in a private notebook and has recourse to cipher as Charles had; somewhat ironically, he deploys Charles I’s secretive tactics to shield himself from Charles II, among others.

Pepys weathered this storm, and concluded his diary in 1669, at the end of a tumultuous decade in English history and his own household. As he notes in the journal’s final entry, his vision was failing him:

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<sup>23</sup> By July of 1667, Pepys actually wanted the parliament to “fall foul on the faults of the government...for nothing else I fear will save the King and Kingdom.” (VIII, 353). In 1667, he criticizes the King more openly in his journal than he did before, perhaps in anticipation of a change of government (for Pepys’s blunter criticisms, see VIII, 74, 449; on the common prediction that a republic would be re-established, see n. 19, above). In July of 1668, he hedges his bets: “Here was also my old acquaintance Will Swan to see me, who continues a factious fanatic still; and I do use him civilly, in expectation that those fellows may grow great again” (IX, 264).

Thus ends all that I doubt I shall ever be able to do with my own eyes in the keeping of my journal, I being not able to do it any longer, having done so long as to undo my eyes almost every time that I take a pen in my hand;... and therefore resolve from this time forward to have it kept by my [servants] in longhand, and must therefore be contented to set down no more than is fit for them and all the world to know. (IX, 564)

He never kept such a journal, and happily for Pepys, his cabinet was never opened; his diary was never discovered during his lifetime. The common contemporary phrase “paper bullets,” given a literal embodiment in Bellasysse’s story, applies as well to Pepys’s diary. Pamphlets, journals, and secret histories were explosive: they could injure their targets, but they could also backfire. The diary, like Bellasysse’s shell, needed to be withheld until the proper moment.

But the truth will out—Pepys, like the royal messenger who swallowed the bullet, made sure that he was out of danger when it did. Pepys’s ultimate audience for the diary was “Prince Posterity,” to use Swift’s term, as is clear from his will. He left his journal (along with the rest of his books, including the textbook that unlocked the journal’s code) to Magdalene Library at Cambridge; such a bequest was a form of posthumous publication, as someone was bound to come across it over time. Upon his death Pepys renounced at least one aspect of his long-preserved anonymity: in a codicil of 13 May 1703, he directed his nephew to add bookstamps bearing his name in bold capital letters to all the volumes in his library.<sup>24</sup> In the case of the diary, this inscription was not simply a mark of ownership, but a signature.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> I, xli; *Pepysiana* 60–64, 250ff.

<sup>25</sup> After the last entry in his diary, Pepys penned his initials but he did not subscribe his full name: see I, plate facing xlvi. Two bookplates adorn the journal’s interior: one is the “anchor plate” bearing Pepys’s initials; the other is based on the “large portrait” of Pepys done sometime around 1690—it bears the same inscription as the bookstamps (I, xli–xlii; *Pepysiana* 60–64, plate facing 287). It is not known when the plates were affixed to the diary, or by whom.