The Formation, Establishment, and Application of the Political Ode in Seventeenth-Century England

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1. Introduction

The seventeenth century in England is regarded now as a shockingly violent, religiously fractured, politically turbulent, and culturally dynamic period. The role and development of literature spanning the reigns of James I and Anne, naturally, clearly reflect these conditions, and form a rich field for examining the relationship between politics and literature in general. The Classical panegyric ode, disseminated and imitated throughout Europe during the Renaissance, was transformed in England around 1600, becoming the verse-form of choice to reflect and influence the politics of national, monarchical, ideological, religious, and personal issues until its demise around 1700.

This essay will examine the classical roots of the ode, its transmission northwards during the Renaissance, the adaptations it underwent once imported into England, and how it was deployed as a vessel for political intervention throughout the century. Naturally, moments of great change and political uncertainty – a monarch's death, a revolution, a counter-revolution, a foreign coup – are when politics come even more to the fore. These four moments of fundamental change form the framework of the overview, and by examining some representative odes from these four key periods of political change across the century, and linking those texts to the particular issues of the moment, this essay illustrates how the ode-form, once established, quickly became a standard vessel for this kind of poetic, opinion-driven expression.

The ode-form, thus pressed into political service, developed recognisable and relatively predictable features during the first half of the century. This established 'classical,' mid-century form – adjusted, adapted and reshaped by Cowley, chiefly, but wholly retentive of the 'spirit' of the Classical poets – was then employed throughout the Restoration until the relative stability of the Glorious Revolution rendered it less necessary. In fact – so recognisable and entrenched had it become by then – the form itself was even undermined by one of its most prominent exponents, reflecting a general depoliticization towards the turn of the eighteenth century.

The ode, as a verse form, has an ancient pedigree, and boasts some of the most venerated poets of antiquity as its progenitors. How it came to be revived in mainland Europe during the Renaissance, how it was adopted in England and adapted to the language, which of its formal and thematic features were preserved and

which discarded, what different types of ode prevailed, and – particularly – to what purpose it was employed in the seventeenth century are the purpose of this study.

In broad terms, the ode took some time to settle as a species of poetry in England, but once it had taken root it was often employed in a variety of ways to reflect and address contemporary ideological and political concerns. Fundamental social and economic issues such as the establishment of a national identity, the perceived need for colonial expansion, questions of doctrinal dispute, the matters of absolutism and divine right, monarchy and republic, dynastic succession, and other such overarching, as well as more personal concerns, form the chief material for the political odes of the period.

Towards the end of the Restoration, but particularly after the 1688 Glorious Revolution, when the constitutional arrangement increasingly settled into the basic shape it nominally retains even today, the ode-form within ruling and literary circles became less a vehicle of personal ideological and political expression, and more a vehicle for performative, formulaic verse-production, often in toadyish service of a stable and relatively untroubled royal establishment, comprising unsubtly fawning texts whose chief purpose was to mechanically fulfil an obligatory expectation. It seems that the less that was at stake in political terms, the less critical the desire for political intervention, as it were, and the ode form lost much of its ideological loading. By the end of the Augustan era, it would be the Romantic spirit many decades later that would foster another mini-Renaissance for the ode-form.

2. The Classical Roots and Englishing of the Ode form

The ode stems from the time of the earliest classical theatre as an integrated episode within Greek theatrical productions, where the chorus would comment on a particular event, character, or god/goddess, and outline to the audience the relevance and importance of what they had just witnessed. It was presented with a regulated choreography, and in a lyrical text style, differentiating it from the dialogue and physical interaction of the characters.

Despite the variety of form mentioned above, the species 'Ode' does have deep roots both in terms of strictly prescribed structure and types of subject stretching back to classical times. The Greek poets Sappho (c. 630 – c. 570 BCE) and Pindar (c. 518 – c. 438 BCE), and the Roman poet Horace (65 BCE – 8 CE) established the three principal types, and of these Pindar's, and to a lesser extent Horace's, seem to have had the greatest influence when the form was reintroduced to Europe in the Early Modern period.

Beyond the theatre, the only (probably) complete surviving ode by Sappho is characterised by a series of four-line stanzas, and follows the classic Greek tripartite form of an introductory invocation to a god, followed by a description or narration of the issue at hand, and ending with a plea for help.[1] While this Sapphic form – either of textual stanzaic structure or of material, architectural content – certainly retained some presence over the centuries, the Sapphic style *per se* seems to have exerted the least influence on the Renaissance ode. The Pindaric and Horatian styles – encompassing both elegiac intent and textual treatment – were followed more than the actual verse-form itself. Purpose seems to have won out over form in general throughout the seventeenth century.

The ode was thus from its origin a textual event apart, removed from its context, contemplative, and on a more abstract level, and this special characteristic has endured in one form or another, over the following centuries. When a poem is titled an 'ode', the reader expects to encounter this sort of text-type. As Sandro Jung summarises: "Writers of odes aspire to sublimity while appropriating the genre to various occasions, both public-political-celebratory and private-pastoral, and to functions ranging from promoting

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[1] See "Sappho" and "Lyric poetry" in The Oxford Companion to Classical Literature. Ed. Howatson, M. C.. : Oxford University Press, 2011. Oxford Reference.

religious views to conjuring up realms of the imagination" (510). The conscious application of this approach in the political sphere in seventeenth-century England is the focus of this essay.

Odes written throughout the seventeenth-century shared some general, common features: they maintained the lofty textual character of the Classical models; they focussed on a mixture of praise and respectful advice; they reached to Classical literature, the Bible and Christian thinking for associative analogy; they often mention an divine 'muse' as inspiration; they emphasised the role verse can play in lending immortality to their subjects; and they very often include more or less veiled references to patronage, such an essential, and existential, concern for Early Modern writers coming to terms with changing literary conditions.

Horace

Before examining more closely the role of Pindar – the most influential of the ancient poets in the transmission of the ode concept in the Early Modern period – it is worth acknowledging the influence the odes of Horace exerted on the odes of renaissance writers.[2] Horace wrote over 100 'odes' on an extremely wide range of subjects. There is no real unity of form or purpose across this oeuvre, except that the poems share a much-praised inventiveness of style, often include a sharply satirical or ironic aspect, often consider great subjects in a humorous way, and seem to deliberately transgress literary and social conventions of acceptability of content – many later scholars commented on the unsuitability of some of his subject-matter.

Horace was, however, much admired during the centuries preceding the Renaissance, and served as a model for many writers, largely due to the brilliance of his wit and his creative use of analogy. Many of his 'odes' are not really odes in the sense of praising someone or something, although most do certainly contemplate important themes, and draw the appropriate lessons from them. The formal device of *invocation-narration-plea* outlined above is largely absent. He was a great admirer of Hellenic poetry, and attempted to transform the Greek, largely hexametric, metre into Latin syntactic structures. Horace's influence on literature, in any case, has been more one of style and content, than of regulated form.

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[2] See "Horace" And "Odes" in The Oxford Companion to Classical Literature. Ed. Howatson, M. C.. : Oxford University Press, 2011. Oxford Reference.

Horace lived during the age of Augustus in Rome – the decades straddling the pre- and post-Christian eras – and his themes are largely drawn from the political and moral life of that time. It is this real-time, current-affairs, philosophical and salutary aspect, with its descriptions of, and musings on, the motivations and failings – particularly those of the powerful – of the time that lend the Horatian odes the chief characteristic distinguishing them from the more formulaic styles of Sappho and Pindar.

Rather than appealing to gods or muses, and addressing a personal or general problem, Horace often considers actual people living real lives, and this necessarily lends his verse an ambiguity that suitably reflects political considerations, and personal activities. It is this balanced, purposeful approach – praise where deserved, but criticism where warranted – that distinguishes the Horatian model from the Pindaric, particularly. Both poets served as inspiration to writers during and after the Renaissance, but in different ways. In Early Modern and Restoration England, it is the Pindaric style that was most aspired to, and deserves more preparatory analysis.

Pindar

In the first of her two comprehensive studies of Pindar and his influence on Early-Modern literature, *Pindar and the Renaissance Hymn-Ode: 1450-1700* (2001), Stella Revard outlines how it is "a curious literary and intellectual phenomenon" that "Pindar and his odes should command the attention that they received in Europe over the next three hundred or so years," because, "unlike Homer and some of the other Greek writers whose names had survived while their works were unavailable to the Western world, Pindar and his works had been virtually forgotten" (1). Enthusiasm for Pindar spread quickly from Italy to France, where Ronsard (1524-85), particularly, "began to write … odes in French in imitation of his epinician odes" (1). Epinician odes are those written in praise of the victors at important athletic competitions, or occasionally of military victories.[3]

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[3] Victoria Moul's *A Literary History of Latin & English Poetry: Bilingual Verse Culture in Early Modern England*, as well as her 'Jonson, Horace and the Classical Tradition' also gives a comprehensive overview of the establishment of the form, its roots in the classical traditions, and the particular forms it took in England. Chapters 4 and 5 of the former work are particularly relevant. She places more weight on Horace's influence on the ode, expressly tempering Revard's more heavily Pindar-based views.

Pindar's odes, compared to those of Horace, are more predictable in both their subject matter and their form. Almost always in praise of sporting or military success, they contain no irreverent humour or mundane politics. Pindar's odes are wholly positive, although also instructional, and garner their poetic strength from the vaunted power of simile and description he employs. As Horace had, some Italian renaissance poets had tried to shoehorn Pindar's Greek rhythms – where hexameters dominate – into Latin, and although "some Renaissance poets took up the challenge to imitate in Latin and in the vernacular Pindar's verse patterns and metric … Many other poets … made no attempt to duplicate Pindar's verse forms" (Revard 4).

Nevertheless, as late as 1706, William Congreve (1670-1729) was railing against the unmetrical poetry calling itself 'Pindaric', where no attempt had been made to mirror Pindar's rhythms – an essential litmus-test in Congreve's view. "The so-called Pindaric ode had become so popular in England by the end of the seventeenth century" continues Revard, "that critics began to query whether what was being produced under the name 'Pindaric' was a true imitation of the ancient poet … Congreve was quick to excoriate as caricatures 'these late Pindariques,' [setting] forth a metrical test for determining what is a Pindaric ode." Congreve prefaced an ode of his own to Anne with a 'Discourse on the Pindarique Ode' in which he "condemns [them] … as 'monstrous and distorted' likenesses and insists that true Pindaric imitation demands absolute metrical regularity" (5).

Revard views this as prescriptive pedantry: "Metrical adaptation is always necessary when a vernacular poet imitates a classical poet and his classical meters … Hence it was necessary for would-be imitators of odes to find metrical equivalents of Pindar's lyric measures. Poets necessarily were constrained to find and use the meters best suited for their Latin and vernacular lyrical odes" (6-7).

In any case, it is not the metrics of the ancient odes that caused them to become the focus of study and imitation, and an important model for poetry in Early-Modern England. Samuel Cobb defends his own use of the word 'pindaric' in a 1709 ode, as Revard relates in the second of her detailed monographs, *Politics, Poetics, and the Pindaric Ode: 1450-1700*:

> …whether you will call the following Lines a Pindaric Ode, or Irregular Stanza's, gives me no Disturbance; … the *Strophe, Antistrophe,* &c. will never bear in English, and it would shew a strange Debauchery … as may be witnessed by the servile Imitations of the Dactyles and Spondees used by Sir *P. Sidney.* (Cobb, quoted by Revard 2009, 190)

It is the original purpose of the ode – to praise, glorify and generally 'sing up' its subject – that seems to have captivated Renaissance Europe, and especially seventeenth-century England, more than the technical and structural considerations.

The subject of the ode, in contrast to Pindar, could by this time be someone other than only victorious kings or military leaders. Revard explains that "neither on the continent nor in England did Pindaric ode serve simply to celebrate the military feats of princes and their generals. It became, instead, the most elaborate medium for encomiastic praise of both kings and commoners" (Revard 2009, *xii*).

English poets adopted this approach, and applied the muse-inspired, celebratory address to their own ends – ends that shifted drastically as the century progressed. The form even became known by its own epithet: either the French 'Pindarique,' (both adjective and noun) or the anglicised 'Pindarick,' (both adjective and noun) which seems to gradually shed its direct formal and metrical connection to Pindar, but retain the fundamental features of addressing a subject, and praising it, in lofty, lyrical language, preferably with a little divine inspiration.

Pindar and the Renaissance poet

Revard explains that Pindar grabbed renaissance poets' attention for many reasons other than his metrical rigour. Firstly, for what he represented as a poet *per se*:

> Pindar had a reputation … [as a] 'sacred' poet. He therefore assumed a prominent place in the cult of the 'inspired' poet that was so popular in the Renaissance. Renaissance poets were quick to adopt him … [and] with their literary hymn-odes to emulate the Pindaric style … [He was] a major lyric poet … who often seemed to speak to and for the modern Christian poet. (Revard 2001, 3)

The key element here is the factor of divine spiritual inspiration, although the Classical muse must be often substituted by the Christian Holy Spirit, or heavenly voice of some other sort. It was Pindar who "even more than Vergil and Homer, seemed a model for the serious religious poet" (Revard 2001, 7).

Another central factor that seems to have appealed to the renaissance poets was Pindar's positive instructional illustration:

> Pindar's poetry spoke not just to religious poets but to the ambitious poets who served the ruling classes of Renaissance Europe … Pindar's epinician odes were composed for an aristocratic audience. They … addressed the patrons who sponsored those athletes and events. Renaissance poets were not slow to understand how they could adapt such odes to honour their own patrons. (Revard 2001, 7)

Patronage was indeed an existential question for poets in renaissance England, and the ode form proved a

useful vehicle for expressing hope and gratitude for financial and political support across the decades:

> Pindar showed them how lyric poetry could also be fitted to a heroic and a practical purpose. The
> elevated ode could do in the lyric mode what Renaissance epic and romance were attempting in other
> genres. [The] Pindaric ode served as a model for the new kind of lyric composition … [which] flattered
> Renaissance rulers eager to be compared with these gods and heroes. (Revard 2001, 7)

The ode would prove a popular vessel over the following centuries for this sort of flattering comparison with

ancient and mythic deity, nobility, and fame.

Less cynically, perhaps, Pindar was seen as a model of the considered, disciplined, virtuous citizen.

His exhortations to the Greek ruling class and their offspring

> … defined what was necessary for humanity to attain true nobility in the political, social, and moral
> spheres (Revard 3) … The odes frequently taught lessons about the civic responsibilities of aristocratic
> young men and their patrons. Drawing exempla … from the heroic adventures of a shared mythic past,
> the odes looked closely at the role played by aristocrats and rulers and virtuous men in their society. (7)

This self-reflective searching for what is good, right, and necessary in both general and personal terms is a

core feature of Humanism (particularly Stoicism),[4] and the fuel of much literary endeavour throughout the

early-modern period. A felicitous combination of these two aspects – praise and moral considerations –

perfectly suited the Renaissance poet's remit: "Following Pindar, poets could make poetry ostensibly

composed to praise king, nobility, or friends transcend its occasion and convey not just formal praise, but

serious intellectual, moral, and religious import" (Revard 8). Pindar struck a chord on several levels with poets

of the era.

Finally, perhaps the most important aspect concerning Pindar's influence is his style. Universally

lauded for the brilliance of his composition, according to Revard, poets throughout history

> were astonished by Pindar's poetic innovations: his daring use of figure, his sudden transitions, his
> torrential outpouring of eloquence, and his inventive use of the digressive myth. … His lofty
> imagination, which facilitated the instantaneous lift from the mundane to the sublime, was the hallmark
> of his style in antiquity and the quality that the Renaissance both revered and sought to duplicate ...
> (Revard 2001, 7)

Pindar's text is widely admired for being high-flown and rhetorical, rich in imagery, and inventive in mythical

and allegorical comparison, and it is this poetic and textual aspect that also seems to have spoken so clearly to

the Renaissance poets. This is the Pindar 'spirit' which runs as a continuous thread throughout the century.

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[4] See Rivers, chapters 4 and 9 for illumination of these two important Early-Modern themes.

Revard summarises her overview of the rehabilitation of Pindar and the deep and widespread effect his odes had on the emerging poets of the English Renaissance in five ways:

> [The] Pindaric ode [redefined] occasional and epideictic and religious poetry … Pindar … [reinforced] the heroic 'I' of [the] ode … [and] the Christian poet's notion of the inspired bard. Pindar's views … inspired the Renaissance's quest for a new heroic society … provided examples for … [the] treatment of classical stories … [and] taught emergent Renaissance poets lessons in the art of poetry. (8)

These five factors explain why the ode-form, and Pindar's examples in particular, came to be seen by early Renaissance poets and scholars as the ideal combinatory vessel for poets, and especially English poets, as they wrote their verse in the particularly turbulent world of Early-Modern England. It is for all these reasons that the English ode-form became the chief vehicle for not only elegiac, but also ideological, religious, and political expression particularly throughout the seventeenth century.

The Englishing of the Pindaric Ode

With the 1485 victory of the forces supporting Henry Tudor that effectively ended the Wars of the Roses, England was suddenly more unified than it previously had been, and its sovereign's settled dominion reached much further. Ireland and Wales were broadly subdued, and the long process of combining the Scottish with the English crowns, begun in 1503, was given new impetus. The country felt a need to establish a national identity, present itself to the world as a great power, and join the race for distant colonial riches. As Berensmeyer describes it, "history becomes such a pressing concern because the English urgently need to define themselves and their nation in a period of rapid transformations" (Berensmeyer, 5). Renaissance England was keen to learn from history in order to make their own.

A central element of a country that wants to make history is a national identity; a central element of that identity must be a relatively standardised language; and a central element of that language, if it is to compete with other world languages, is the development of a corpus of quality writing in the vernacular. Middle English had been being transformed into Early Modern English during the previous century, and there was a pressing need for literature – although "it is important to note that the modern category of 'literature' as imaginative writing or *belles lettres* had not been established yet, so there is much fluidity and flexibility in the concept of 'literature' in the English Renaissance" (Berensmeyer, 8-9).

One of the chief influences on literature in the Renaissance was, naturally, the Classical sources, which had been being transmitted, studied, translated, and emulated throughout Europe and into England for centuries. Humanism had spread northwards from Italy and replaced the late-Medieval scholastic educational methods. As Berensmeyer outlines, "the humanist method of education favours classical learning, frequently turning to examples from Greek and Roman mythology or history to illustrate the virtues needed by rulers and administrators; it strongly promotes the active study of classical rhetoric" (Berensmeyer, 8). Respected exemplars were considered a very good place to start when beginning the formation of a new, national canon.

Just as Rhetorics, and the study of the ancient languages, were staple fare for the humanist scholars, who were chiefly the sons of aristocrats and the well-to-do,

> literary composition … grows almost naturally out of … the reading of Latin and (more rarely) Greek poetry and historiography. Being trained in such models helps writers of all kinds, from historians to poets and dramatists, because it provides them with a shared set of basic techniques and stories, giving rise to new works based on familiar models and ideals. (Berensmeyer, 8)

One of these basic techniques was the elegiac poetic form of the ode, which, as with other literary forms, drew on the vast warehouse of histories, events, lessons, gods, heroes and characters from the ancient mythologies, epics, and histories.

This study material was not, however, simply translated and aped. It formed a basis to be transferred into a new literary language. Citing both translation scholar Itamar Even-Zohar and Robert Cummins, Berensmeyer explains that "through the foreign works, features … are introduced into the home literature which did not exist there before." These new features can include a 'new (poetic) language, or compositional patterns and techniques. [Even-Zohar]' … '[and t]here is perhaps no period in English literary history in which the strictly literary impact of translation is greater. [Cummins]'" (Berensmeyer, 55-6) Important from the very beginning of the form's transplanting into English, is the role of Pindar's 'spirit' – the energy, strength and fantasy of his text – that is the driving influence, rather than the arithmetic and proportion of meter and shape.

The students and amateurs of literature were combining a solid basis of material and approaches, with the needs of the new national language. To take a single, basic, structural level as example, English had become by then an almost exclusively analytical, preposition-rich language, compared with the synthetic,

inflection-rich language of Latin. "English Renaissance literature, thus, is characterised by an admiration of classical tradition as well as a love of innovation and experiment" (Berensmeyer, 14).

The Classical sources, and their European versions and adaptations, were an important fuel for a growing literature, being created in a new way: "Seen together, these classical and continental translations spur the rapid and unmatched growth of English literature during the Renaissance" (Berensmeyer, 2). Similarly, according to Rebecca M. Rush, in her *The Fetters of Rhyme: Liberty and Poetic Form in Early Modern England*,

> The most frequently celebrated, translated, and imitated poets during this period were the Greek and Roman lyric poets: Pindar, Anacreon, Horace, and Martial. Seventeenth-century volumes of poetry were dominated by genres that had been considered minor modes in sixteenth-century poetic hierarchies: elegies, songs, hymns, epigrams, and odes (129).

Michael Drayton (1563-1631) "was clearly conscious of the fact that the ode in particular and the lyric mode in general were comparatively foreign to his English audience" (Rush, 129), and he must have felt that the time was ripe for publication of a collection of this kind of poetry. And, although "the actual influence of Drayton's [1606] volume ['Poems Lyrick and Pastorall'] is unclear, the 'Lyrick kinde' did in fact enjoy an astonishingly rapid revival in the early seventeenth century, and by the 1640s the ode had become an essential component of any distinguished collection of verse" (Rush, 129-30).

But it is not just the content and form of this new field of literature that was developing and inventing itself: the purposes to which it is applied is just as essential a characteristic. National identity, national history, national projects and struggles, and a vision for a national future are central, defining features of much of the writing of the time, something which is, naturally, also reflected in verse – Edmund Spenser's *The Fairy Queen* being perhaps the best-known early example of this. Berensmeyer summarises the notion, suggesting that this

> union of the global and the local, the imperial and the provincial, the intimate and the political may be a key to understanding the thematic scope and the cognitive functions of English Renaissance literature … offer[ing] new ways of reflecting and shaping a world that is expanding both externally, in the reach of global exploration, and internally, in the world-making activities of minds and texts. (8)

By the time the Pindaric ode form had found its way, chiefly via France, into English literature, and established a lasting place for itself, it was swiftly recognised as a form eminently suited to these overarching, national-historical subjects. Deep history (both recorded and fanciful), justification of the current political situation, a way of seeing the country and its place in the world, lessons for those who will play significant

roles in forming the future – in short, a vision of self and state – all these themes are very well suited to

Pindaric form and language.

3. From Tudor to Stuart

Michael Drayton: Succession, Patronage, National Prosperity, Colonial Expansion

There were several fundamental issues to be addressed when James became King of England and Scotland on Elizabeth's death in 1603: the unification of the Scottish and English crowns; the legitimisation of James as bloodline monarch after all the political and religious intrigue and bloodshed surrounding the succession; the establishment of an ancient, prophetic basis to James's accession as (in practical terms) monarch of all Britain; the pressing matter of the religious and economic power of Catholic maritime competitor Spain; and the serious establishment of economic colonies as a projection of England's nationhood and global ambitions, among others.[5]

We see all these issues addressed in three odes produced within the first three years of James's reign by Michael Drayton. On a more personal level, Drayton had long enjoyed favour at Elizabeth's court, and these three 'Odes' – among the earliest to be entitled such in English – would have been part of an attempt to maintain that favour within the new court circles of James. As with the other odes discussed at pivotal moments, Drayton's odes come at a moment of particular stress, and reflect specific concerns of the transition from Elizabeth to James. His themes include some of those important threads that would reappear in many odes across the century: patronage for writers, connected to the service they could perform in ensuring the subject's lasting fame, and, naturally, the early forays into the application of the Pindaric form and spirit in dealing with, and commenting on, political change.

Succession and Patronage

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[5] For an overview of the political, cultural and literary conditions surrounding the accession of James I, see the section: "The Early Seventeenth Century 1603-1660" in Greenblatt, Steven (ed.) *The Norton Anthology of English Literature. Volume B, the Sixteenth Century and the Early Seventeenth Century*. Tenth ed., W.W. Norton & Company, 2018.

The first is a 1603 work, "To the Maiestie of King James A gratulatorie poem," written soon after Elizabeth's death, and so at James's accession, but before his coronation, and his first entrance into London the following year. It opens by mentioning his muse, but instead of calling upon it to inspire him, the poet, the muse itself has been inspired by James's becoming king: "THE hopefull raigne of a most happy King, / Loe thus excites our early Muse to sing, / Of her own strength which boldly thus presumes, / That's yet Vnimpt with any borowed plumes" (1-4) ["yet Unimpt" means 'as yet not implanted', in the sense that the poet is not basing his inspiration on others' previous work.] The muse is inspired to sing "of her own strength" – the strength of inspirational verse.

This is Drayton's first pitch for favour, and the poem is dotted with further instances. Drayton insists that his voice has been steadfast in favour of James all the while: "When stirs, & tumults haue been hot'st & proudest, / The noble Muse hath song the stern'st & lowdest; / And know great Prince, that Muse thy glory sings, / (What ere detraction snarle) was made for Kings" (19-22). James should understand that a proper king should support a proper, muse-inspired voice, i.e., the poet himself.

Amongst this overwhelming joy, Drayton does not neglect to remember that there was certainly much factionalism preceding James's ascent, and seems to express delight that that's now all in the past. He is grateful for "A Counsailes wisdome, and their graue fore-sight … Whose well-prepared pollicie, and care, / For theyr indoubted Soueraigne so prepare" (5-9), and notes that this council, amidst their grief for Elizabeth's death, "Frustrate" those with evil designs, "And euen for griefe downe sincking in a swound / Beats her snak'd head against the verdant ground" (15-16). The factional strife is over, clearly.

A few lines later, Drayton makes the point that when all the celebration has died down, and even when all the cheering supporters are dead, his verse will live on through time:

> The trumpets clangor, & the peoples cry,
> Not like the Muse can strike the burnish'd skie …
> The tedious tumults, and the boystrous throng,
> That presse to view thee as thou com'st along,
> The praise I giue thee shall thy welcome keepe,
> When all these rude crowds in the dust shal sleepe,
> And when applause and shouts are hush'd & still
> Then shal my smooth verse chant thee cleer & shril. (25-36)

The suggestion is that patronage would prove a good investment in immortality.

The importance of how text could cement a sort of written longevity was a recurring aspect of odes right from the early establishment of the form. The subjects of the text – and their descendants – would benefit in the long run, and poets were keen to emphasize their role in this process, as William Fitzgerald explains, "one of the most frequently encountered commonplaces of encomiastic poetry is that the man of action depends on the poet to prevent his achievement from sinking into oblivion, or, in more positive terms, that the poet gives a form of immortality to the object of his praise" (110). This theme – surety of a personal heritage through verse – is one that can be traced to varying degrees right across the century.

In case James were to forget this point as the ode progresses, Drayton repeats it towards the end: "Renowned Prince, when all these tumults cease, / Euen in the calme, and Musick of thy peace, / If in thy grace thou deigne to fauour vs, / And to the Muses be propitious, / Caesar himselfe, Roomes glorious wits among, / Was not so highly, nor diuinely sung" (166-171). Here, not only is it literary immortality that beckons, but James's heritage in verse will exceed that of the praise even the great Ancients received from the great classical poets themselves.

Angling for favour and financial support complete, Drayton moves on to the substance of his ode: ancient justification, sure lineage, historical destiny, even biblical connections, and a profitable reign. But first, even Nature herself is in favour of his accession, it seems: "As by a strong vnfailing Augury, / That as the fruitfull, and ful-bosom'd Spring, / So shall thy raigne be rich and flourishing…" (44-6). The fact that his reign began in March, the beginning of Spring, portends a great blossoming for the land, not least in terms of wealth. There is even a subtle suggestion, it would seem, connecting James with Christ's resurrection: "Which in consent doth happily accord / With the yeere kept to the incarnate Word" (39-40). This could usefully be read as 'the timing of your accession neatly matches Easter-time, as the church-year is arranged."

An old British prophecy foretold a Scottish King, Drayton continues, and though fools denied it, it has come to pass, and James is thus a modern manifestation of an Albion-wide king, crowned on the Stone of Scone, and unifying the two ancient kingdoms at long last:

> An ancient Prophet long agoe fore-told …
> Where it was found, be crown'd vpon that stone.
> Two famous Kingdoms seperate thus long,
> Within one Iland, and that speake one tongue …
> Neuer before vnited vntill now …
> Thy blessed birth hath happily effected.
> That Scotch and English without difference be … (143-157)

The unification of England and Scotland under one crown is now complete, as long prophesied. James can rest assured in the legendary importance of his position in history.

More ancient still, legend had it that the Stone of Scone was somehow the same stone upon which Jacob – 'Jacob' is 'James' in English, of course – Father of the Tribes of Israel himself, had rested his head, further bolstering James's historical place: "That stone reseru'd in England many a day, / On which great Iacob his graue head did lay, / Recorded to be that stone whereon Ia-cob slept. / And saw descending Angels whilst he slept" (36-39). James's direct, if symbolic, link with heaven is also established, it seems.

Another task of this ode is to make absolutely certain that James represents not a breach with the Tudor line – he was a Stuart – but a continuation of the same, inheriting all the kudos that line, through Henrys VII and VIII and Elizabeth herself, enjoyed. He was her cousin-twice-removed, and although she had reluctantly had his mother executed to head off any Catholic threat to the crown, he would also have to be firmly linked with this line to stave off any doubts regarding his own legitimacy.

Drayton expends more than 50 lines of bizarre and tortuous verse on tracing the complicated lines of intermarriage, remarriage, death, and birth that tie James in various ways to the line of Tudors stretching back to beyond his own Stuart mother. It serves as an unpoetic logbook of heredity inserted, as it were, between a beginning and an end that are much more in a style expected of a paean. A few examples will suffice to demonstrate this very strange passage:

> That to thy Grandsire Henry I may bring thee, …
> Fourth Edwards daughter, whose predest'nate bed
> Did thus conioyne the White-rose, and the Red: …
> Strongly to linck him with King Iames the fourth,
> Maried the Scotch Queene on the other side …
> This Brittaine hope, Iames our vndoubted King,
> In true succesion, as the first of other
> Of Henries line by Father, and by Mother. (75-125)

It is a great deal of very poor catalogue-verse, but Drayton must have thought it necessary to make it perfectly clear that *he* understood that James was definitely the right choice for the throne, for reasons of more recent lineage on top of all the other historical, legendary, and biblical justifications.

Having set James's legitimacy in stone, Drayton moves to outlining what boons his reign will bring to the nation, newly united, and on the verge of great national and international economic advance. The

productive increase that peace and unification will bring are coupled to colonial expansion – more of which will appear in another ode written two years later, discussed below.

The crown is "for euer setled in thy line;" the realm stretches "From Cornwall now past Calidons proude strength (31)" and from the seas to the east and west; "most fertile" Ireland has been "Brought in subiection to thy glorious hand" (36-7); and even "Saturne to thee his soueraignty resignes, / Op'ning the lock'd way to the wealthy mines" (40-41) James will even open up "The North-west passage that thou might'st disco-uer / Vnto the Indies, where that treasure lies / Whose plenty might ten other worlds suffice" (45-7); and, finally, both "Neptune and Ioue together doe conspire," to surrender their trident and lightning bolts to James, thus giving him "the kayes to keepe, / Of the profound immeasurable deepe" (48-51).

This geographical and mythical passage contains all the expectations of a new and forward-looking nation: the court and religious/political factionalism is over; all the British isles, including Ireland, will work in harmony; Saturn, god of wealth and abundance, will cede his power to new, rich, Britain; James might even find the long-sought-for Northwest passage to facilitate easier and quicker navigation to Asia; and, very importantly, Drayton foresees dominion over the oceans, so essential to keeping other colonialist competitors at bay. The passage serves as a virtual to-do list for any budding colonial powers.

The ode ends on a note of humble and sound advice to James, echoing the educational and improving aspect of Pindar's odes: appoint to your court and advisers only those with virtue at heart, not the flatterers and intellectually weak. Drayton must have hoped that he had shown himself one of the former:

> But from thy Court (O Worthy) banish quite
> The foole, the Pandar, [ie both panderer and pimp] and the Parasite,
> And call thy selfe most happy (then be bold)
> When worthie places, worthi'st men doe hold …
> Set louely vertue euer in thy view,
> And loue them most, that most doe her pursue,
> So shalt thou ad renowne vnto thy state,
> A King most great, most wise, most fortunate. (178-187)

If James is wise enough to surround himself with educated, honourable, virtuous, well-meaning types – just like the poet himself, as it happens! – his reign would be most likely to be a success.

National Prosperity

James was crowned later that year and presented himself for the first time to the capital the following year, 1604. Drayton again seizes this opportunity to write a welcoming ode, at the request of the Goldsmiths' guild: "A pæan triumphall Composed for the Societie of the Goldsmiths of London: congratulating his Highnes magnificent entring the citie. To the Maiestie of the King."

This ode begins by making a similar point to that seen in the 1603 ode, i.e., that his "elaborate song" (4) cannot compete with the clamour of the assembled multitudes, and ends with the same explanation, again underlining the importance of poetry to a king's historical reputation:

> No power lends immortalitie to men,
> Like the hie spirit of an industrious pen,
> Which stems times tumults with a full-spread saile,
> When proud reard piles and monuments doe faile,
> And in their cinders when great Courts doe lie,
> That shall confront and iustle [jostle] with the skie:
> Liue euer mightie, happely, and long,
> Liuing admir'd, and dead be highly song. (187-195)

Here is another plea to take poetry seriously (preferably with patronage) to ensure a good name after death.

He takes time in the body of the ode to again remind us of James's noble heritage, this time reaching back to 1066: "Eu'ry rare vertue of each famous King / Since Norman Williams happie conquering: / Where might be seene in his fresh blooming hopes, / Henry the fifth leading his warlike troupes, / When the proud French fell on that conquered land" (59-63). The last reference is to the battle of Agincourt, one of the great moments of English military pride abroad, and the list continues right up to Elizabeth again.

The chief subject, however, of the poem is gold, naturally enough, and Drayton links the noblest of metals literally, as the solid representative of national wealth, to gold as symbol for virtue, shining in the darkness and incorruptible. First, the real worldly value of gold as a measure of a nation's stable wealth: "Natiue our loue as needfull is our trade, / By which no kingdome euer was decaide" (98-99); "Sound-Bullion is our subiect, whose sure rate / Scal'd by his selfeworth, such the Goldsmiths state, / Which peace and happie gouernment doth nourish, / And with a kingdome doth both fade and florish. / Natures perfection, that great wonder Gold" (104-108). Gold "nourishes … peace and happy government," and so must be essential to the nation. Not cheap baubles, or riotous excess, (100-103), but good solid bullion is needed, with thanks to the goldsmiths' work.

Drayton also describes gold as a simile for virtue and honour: "Conscience like Gold which Hell

cannot intice, / Nor winne from weake man by his auarice: / Which if infus'd such vertue doth impart, / As

doth conforme and rectifie the hart" (150-3). The link is made throughout the poem between actual wealth and

virtue: without a settled and thriving economy that affords good and exemplary government, it will be

impossible to maintain the crowd's support. It is in another ode that Drayton outlines what is necessary for

that economic progress beyond Britain's shores: the establishment and defence of colonies.

Colonial Expansion

Two years later, in December of 1606, a voyage set sail for Virginia, and Drayton took this

opportunity to write an ode not in praise of James, or virtue, or wealth, but in praise of an expedition – one

freighted with great hopes of economic, maritime, and colonial advancement, titled "To the Virginian

Voyage." The need for continued global economic expansion, and the associated military and maritime force

necessary to establish and maintain English dominance had been being pursued, with varying success, for

decades.

One of the chief architects of this policy, in confessional, political, military, and economic terms, was

Richard Hakluyt, who wrote *A Particuler Discourse Concerninge the Greate Necessitie and Manifolde*

Comodyties that are Like to Growe to this Realme of Englande by the Westerne Discoveries Lately Attempted,

usually known as the *Discourse Concerning Western Planting* (1584). Presented privately to Elizabeth, it

represents an overarching political and organisational tract formed as a basis for colonial expansion in general,

but to America in particular. It is a large and detailed document, but the contents page alone, which

summarises its 21 chapters, is sufficient to give an idea of the purpose of the whole publication, as it features

by name in Drayton's ode, and clearly lies at the foundation of the content of the poem. Drayton, while at

court under Elizabeth, must have seen the work, as must many of his readers – his reference to Hakluyt, but

not the work itself, suggests it was well-known amongst his readership.

Hakluyt's document touches on various fundamental elements, and justifications, of the whole

colonialist project. His chapters address, among other matters, the spreading of the "gospell of Christe," the

impoverishment of trade "especially in all the kinge of Spaine his Domynions," his expectation that "this

westerne voyadge will yelde unto us all the commodities of Europe, Affrica, and Asia … [and] be a great bridle to the Indies of the kinge of Spaine," and "That hereby the Revenewes and customes of her Majestie bothe outwardes and inwardes shall mightely be inlarged … That this action will be greately for the increase, mayneteynaunce and safetie of our Navye, and especially of greate shippinge which is the strengthe of our Realme;" the necessity of "spedie plantinge in divers fitt places … That by these Colonies the Northwest passage to Cathaio and China may easely quickly and perfectly be searched oute;" and, finally, "That the Queene of Englande title to all the west Indies … is more lawfull and righte then the Spaniardes" (Hakluyt, 4-7).[6]

In summary, this is a blueprint for the basis, and benefits, of English colonialism at that time: proselytising, anti-Catholic, anti-Spain, naval domination, protection of trade, delivering huge wealth for the country and crown. Drayton explicitly mentions Hakluyt towards the end of his poem, knowing that all who read his name would know of the work to which he was referring. He exhorts the voyagers to study Hakluyt's text, as if it were the ship's manual for the expedition: "Thy voyages attend, / Industrious Hakluyt, / Whose reading shall enflame / Men to seek fame" (67-70).

This is an essential pointer to the political, propagandistic purpose the ode, as David McInnis, in his "The Golden Man and the Golden Age: The Relationship of English Poets and the New World Reconsidered" (2007) notes:

> Whilst the celebratory title of the ode … suggests Drayton's support of the New World ventures, it is elsewhere in the poem that we find the greatest hints of a propagandistic undercurrent … Most significantly, his explicit allusion to Richard Hakluyt … implicates Drayton in this programme of … retain[ing] financial backing for the exploration journeys … (section II: Drayton)

Hakluyt's express motivation – the self-conscious and deliberate planning of naval and economic domination and conquest – is not, however, the theme of Drayton's ode: Drayton's aim is to couch the whole project in terms of honour, fame, and the civilising extension of glorious Englishness. The ode contains nothing of religion, or Spain, or "lawful and right" royal title to far-off lands, and very little of military and naval might, invasion, and subjection of faraway peoples. It is all about noble intentions, and the re-creation of lost paradise, and the re-establishment of the classical Golden Age:

> You brave Heroique Minds,

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[6] These pages comprise both the facsimile of Hakluyt's MS and a typeset transcription.

> Worthy your countries name,
> That honour still pursue,
> …
>   Virginia,
> Earth's onely Paradise.
> …
> To whose, the golden Age
> Still Natures lawes doth give,
> …
> And in Regions farre
> Such Heroes bring yee foorth,
> As those from whom We came,
> And plant Our name,
> Under that Starre
> Not knowne unto our North. (1-3, 23-4, 37-8, 55-60)

This ode, then, by referring to classical notions of the Golden Age, to the biblical notions of Paradise,[7] to the plan of establishing a new England, literally, on foreign shores, and peopling it with such "Heroique noble Minds" pursuing "honour" is a conscious public-relations exercise in ideological spin. It is a moral, spiritual, and ancestral apologia for what was, in reality, well-considered, conscious, economic and military expansionism.

Colonialism was, naturally, both an economic and political necessity, but as with all such designs, they need their propagandist and marketing aspects to be furnished as well. For those involved who must have known what such an adventure really entailed, as well as for those who might have yet been ignorant of such things, Drayton gives a pleasing, exciting, inspiring gloss to the entire adventure beyond just this single voyage. The purpose to which he has devoted this ode is a deeply political and ideological one: the clothing of naked colonialist ambition in the noble vestment of an honourable, civilising mission – the mission that would exercise and serve the country and monarch so well over the next four decades.

In these three odes, Drayton has successively addressed succession, issues of economy and virtue, and the central project of colonial expansion. They represent early examples of the form – still settling into a recognisable shape and tone – being put to use in service of political ends. As was often the case, part of that political is the personal.

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[7] For a discussion of the importance of these two themes to Renaissance poets, see Rivers, chapter 1.

4. From Monarchy to Republic

Andrew Marvell: Crown and Commonwealth

The greatest single political upheaval during the seventeenth century was that which comprised the civil war (1642-51), the regicide of Charles I (1649), and the establishment of the world's first Commonwealth (1649-1660), with Oliver Cromwell as its leader, the Lord Protector. The key matters of dispute, most with ancient historical roots, were: the balance of political and military power between the crown, supported by the landed aristocracy, and parliament, more representative of the trading and yeoman classes; the relationship between royal revenue and taxation; religious freedom, including non-conformist movements; extension of the electoral franchise to a lower level of property ownership; and the concerns many held regarding the role and influence of the Catholic and high-Anglican church in public and political affairs.

These highly-charged decades brought forth much writing of all varieties, and the ode-form was naturally among them. The struggle was represented personally by the figureheads of Charles I and Cromwell towards the end, and odes were written praising these men by their literary supporters. The current debates, as well as the nature and role of the individuals involved, are addressed in these odes, and there is naturally a great deal of politics present.

The establishment of the Commonwealth was finally sealed by forces directly under Cromwell's command in Ireland – a victory that was well won, but at a terrible cost to the overwhelmingly Catholic Irish population. There has been much debate over the role of Cromwell in the huge loss of life and displacement in Ireland, and for many it tarnishes an otherwise relatively honourable and very successful role within the wider struggle. One of his and the Protectorate's strongest (though not earliest) supporters, was the poet and parliamentarian Andrew Marvell (1621-78), who would serve Cromwell as Latin assistant to John Milton in what was effectively the communication department for foreign affairs.[8]

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[8] Edward Holberton describes the literary and performative expectations of foreign diplomacy throughout the era, and Marvell's particular facility in writing pleasingly and convincingly for diplomatic purposes in 'Marvell and Diplomacy', in Martin Dzelzainis, and Edward Holberton (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Andrew Marvell* (2019). Nigel Smith, in 'Lyric and the English Revolution' in *The Lyric Poem: Formations and Transformations*, suggests that "Marvell's meticulous ear caught echoes from the poetically virtuous cavalier poets, including Carew, Cartwright, Sandys, and Waller, in order to build a Protectoral literature, with a refined prosodic

Marvell was very close to Cromwell in political and personal terms and would have known him very well indeed. He wrote three important odes to him: one on his return from the Irish campaign in 1650; one commemorating the first year of the Protectorate government under his leadership in 1654; and another at his death in 1658. Each of these odes, but particularly the second one, contains political elements that help illustrate what Marvell, along with many others, inevitably, must have thought particularly central to the entire project, as well as focussing on Cromwell's role within it.[9]

These three odes address three different periods of the Interregnum. The first focusses on the role of Cromwell as an individual, inspiring military and political leader; the second very directly on the early success and promise of the entire Republican project; and the third an apparently deeply felt personal tribute and uncertain look to the post-Republican future. The manner of expression varies across all three to serve these various ends.

In Support of Cromwell as Political and Military Leader

Marvell's "Horatian Ode Upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland" is the most well-known of odes from this period, and has elicited a great deal of academic study regarding the poet's position on Cromwell's leadership. The word "Horatian" was only added to the title later, as Revard points out:

> The classical models for [the ode] are … multiple. The ode was not designated "Horatian" until its publication in the posthumous 1681 volume. Further, it is not clear whether the term "Horatian" refers to its military subject, to its style, to its stanzaic pattern … or perhaps even to a specific ode of Horace's that it is meant to imitate. (Revard 2009, 101-2)[10]

Important here is that "Horatian" is not Marvell's own title, and was only added well after the Restoration, when Cromwell's reputation had already been thoroughly destroyed. Perhaps it was an attempt to lend a further gloss of ambiguity to the text, further highlighting the sympathetic tone of the central description of

competence but one that was also in tune with Puritan ideals" (84). His essay is a detailed examination of how lyrical methods were put to protectorate use.

[9] In Chapter 9 of *Texts and Readers in the Age of Marvell* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019), 'The European Marvell', Nigel Smith's paints vivid description of Marvell's travels and contacts all over Europe.

[10] She continues with another possible reason for the word's addition: "Moreover, in Augustus's triumph over the hordes of the East, Horace obliquely recalls Hieron's successful containment of the Carthaginians and the Etruscans. Horace and Pindar stand side by side in Marvell's ode, poetic partners … Indeed, the association of the two poets was inevitable once Renaissance poets had identified Pindar as a model for Horace's odes to Caesar" (102).

Charles I's execution, and introducing the suggestion that Horace was generally less one-sided in his praise than Pindar.

There are a few passages in the poem that directly address some political aspects. First is a broadly historical and ideological underpinning: "Though Justice against Fate complain, / And plead the ancient Rights in vain: / But those do hold or break / As men are strong or weak" (37-40). If "Justice" represents the old, inherited laws of the feudal aristocracy, then "Fate" seems necessary and unavoidable progress despite and beyond those laws. The second couplet underlines that notion that "the law" is in any case a set of rules that are either followed or broken by actual people, and are themselves subject to change. This is an express, conscious, progressive stance, and illustrates the depth of ideological and historical awareness of the entire project, and certainly by Marvell himself.

A few lines further, Cromwell's political acuity is praised: "And Hampton shows what part / He had of wiser art; / Where, twining subtle fears with hope, / He wove a net of such a scope / That Charles himself might chase / To Carisbrook's narrow case " (47-52) Charles had been successively cornered by a combination of military defeat and political pressure, until his capture and imprisonment in Carisbrook House on the Isle of Wight. Not just the military power, but the "wiser art" and "twining [of] subtle fears with hope" describe Cromwell's political skill in assuring Charles's defeat.

Very significant are lines 84-91, which describe how Cromwell functions once power is assured: "How fit he is to sway / That can so well obey! / He to the Commons' feet presents / A kingdom for his first year's rents: / And, what he may, forbears / His fame to make it theirs: / And has his sword and spoils ungirt, / To lay them at the Public's skirt." Marvell efficiently describes in four couplets several elements of Cromwell's approach to leadership here: democracy – Cromwell is so persuasive a leader precisely because he will and does follow parliament's orders; eschewing of personal wealth and power – he presents the total military subjugation of the kingdoms to parliament; humility – he takes no personal glory in the success of the project, but assigns that to parliament as well; and military subjection – he lays the New Model Army, personally formed and led by himself, and so instrumental in achieving and maintaining the military victory over the Cavalier forces, at the feet of parliament and the public good. This is a very clear statement of Marvell's support for these components of the political project, and of Cromwell's *modus operandi* in general.

Marvell was a relatively late convert to the republican cause, and seems to have still felt some latent respect for Charles, at least for the way that he had conducted himself on the scaffold. The central section of the ode addresses this, and serves as a balancing pivot between the opening and closing sections, both supporting Cromwell. The section ends abruptly, however, with an affirmation of the necessity of the regicide, and that that was the moment when the new political world was born: "This was that memorable hour / Which first assured the forced pow'r" (65-6). Marvell acknowledges here the necessity of decapitating any future resistance.

The poem ends with another trio of couplets urging Cromwell to remain steadfast in ensuring that the new power arrangement is not brought down by its enemies, either domestic or international: "And for the last effect / Still keep thy sword erect: / Besides the force it has to fright / The spirits of the shady night, / The same arts that did gain / A pow'r must it maintain" (116-121). Marvell is encouraging Cromwell to combine the symbolic force of his drawn sword with the political "arts" mentioned earlier. It is advice to remain vigilant politically, as well as militarily, which is itself an extension of the political.

In Support of the Commonwealth Project

Marvell's second ode, "The First Anniversary Of The Government Under O.C.', is much longer and more flamboyant in its classical and Christian imagery, displays a much more Pindaric textual loftiness, and devotes many lines to the effect the Commonwealth is having on England's international relations – unsurprising given his function. Fully 50 lines of the second half of the poem are written in the form of related, quoted words or thoughts of overseas kings and potentates, as they express their concern at the political developments and possible consequences.

Although Marvell's Horation ode is by far the most celebrated and studied of the political works, this later ode more clearly and directly represents a political positioning – although not with Marvell's name attached at first – as Nicholas von Maltzahn, in his "Marvell, Writer and Politician, 1621–1678" contribution to *The Oxford Handbook of Andrew Marvell*, puts it:

> [The ode] appeared early in 1655, just after the anniversary of Cromwell's elevation as Protector, and declared its semi-official status as Cromwellian propaganda in its handsome format, as printed by the

government printer, with the work anonymous though credited to Marvell as useful property in the Stationers' Catalogue. (13)

It is as though the poem is deliberately published to promote Cromwell and the young government as "semi-official propaganda', and so is particularly important to examine closely.[11]

The ode opens with Cromwell's relation to time, compared with previous rulers': " 'Tis he the force of scatter'd Time contracts, / And in one Year the Work of Ages acts: / While heavy Monarchs make a wide Return…" (13-15). The sense here is that the republican project is telescoping time and hurrying historical progress along with great vigour, building the new England without lazy delay, and accomplishing things much faster than would have been possible within the old monarchical system. It is the modern, unfettered way of active, public politics.

The old leaders are weak, cowardly and vengeful: "They fight by Others, but in Person wrong, / And only are against their Subjects strong." Their main aim is to keep their subjects in fear: "Their other Wars seem but a feign'd contest, / This Common Enemy is still opprest; / If Conquerors, on them they turn their might; / If Conquered, on them they wreak their Spight." Moreover, they shun God's work: "They neither build the Temple in their dayes, / Nor Matter for succeeding Founders raise; / Nor Sacred Prophecies consult within, / Much less themselves to perfect them begin" (27-36). Here we see the essential religious component of the republican program: only they will do God's work properly on Earth, not impious monarchs (and certainly not the Catholic ones).

Marvell next spends some 50 lines comparing Cromwell with classical Amphion, whose music directed the stones of Thebes to build the city all by themselves. The comparison goes further, too: Thebes had seven gates, as did London at this time. Cromwell's music, though, is the political project, and his architecture is that of the nature of the political institutions: "Such was that wondrous Order and Consent, / When Cromwell tun'd the ruling Instrument; / Then our Amphion issues out and sings … The Commonwealth then first together came, / And each one enter'd in the willing Frame" (69-77).

Cromwell has himself called the Commonwealth into being, and all political actors have their say: "The crossest Spirits here do take their part … And they, whose Nature leads them to divide, /

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[11] Paul Seaward examines Marvell's role within the various parliaments of which he was a member in his 'Marvell and Parliament' contribution to *The Oxford Handbook of Andrew Marvell* (2019).

Uphold, this one, and that the other Side" (89-92). Essential to the success of the project in Marvell's eyes is the inclusion of all opinions, left and right, conformist or nonconformist, enthusiastic or grudging.

It is the very debate itself, the energy of discussion and resolution, that lends the construction its strength. It is the democratic frame itself that is "willing', and proving itself by actively welcoming the "resistance of opposed Minds," as a "Fabrick as with Arches stronger binds, / Which on the Basis of a Senate free, / Knit by the Roofs Protecting weight agree" (95-98).

Another crucial task of the Commonwealth was dealing with England's overseas territories, and – more crucial still for the young republic's survival – other states, especially the Netherlands and the Spanish/French/Catholic threat: Cromwell "Pursues the Monster thorough every Throne: / Which shrinking to her Roman Den impure, / Gnashes her Goary teeth" (128-130). The profligacy and indulgence of Catholic and Catholic-friendly monarchs, as the Stuart brothers Charles and James were *in spe*, had been a defining, perpetual issue for the country as a whole since the reformation, and served as important fuel for confessional, political and military resistance.

What Marvell must have witnessed first hand, though, was the fear that the example alone of the civil war, the regicide, the abolition of the monarchy, and the apparent success of the early years of the republic instilled in monarchs across the channel. Revolutions must be nipped in the bud if possible, or at least dealt with carefully, lest they inspire others to follow their lead: "While by his Beams observing Princes steer, / And wisely court the Influence they fear" (103-4); "But mad with reason, so miscall'd, of State / They know them not, and what they know not, hate" (111-2). Naturally, royal houses simply can not tolerate the republic and what it represents, but are unsure of how best to proceed – something which Marvell seems to revel in.

Marvell spends many lines of verse on supposed 'reported' speech of foreign potentates, relating their words and thoughts, as it were, within the texture of the poem, in a lively and colourful manner, as though we are listening in on the political fears and jealousies of those countries still languishing under monarchical rule. The productive energy and dynamism of the new relatively centralised state and its (military) economy is worrying issue for competing potentates. If it were not for Cromwell and his ability to invigorate and unite the population, compared to our vain sloth, we might have yet captured England for ourselves, they seem to moan: "Yet rig a Navy while we dress us late; / And ere we Dine, rase and rebuild our State. / What Oaken Forrests, and what golden Mines! / What Mints of Men, what Union of Designes!" (321-4); "The Nation had

been ours, but his one Soul / Moves the great Bulk, and animates the whole" (349-50). They, too, seem to acknowledge that Cromwell's work as leader is central to the developments, and that he personally, as representative of the new system, is a very dangerous adversary, in both military and political terms.

Similarly, the abolition of hereditary rule is another feature of the republic that worries monarchs deeply, as it undermines the whole notion of divine right of kings, and born-to-rule offspring: "He seems a King by long Succession born, / And yet the same to be a King does scorn. / Abroad a King he seems, and something more, / At Home a Subject on the equal Floor. / O could I once him with our Title see, / So should I hope yet he might Dye as wee" (357-362). They complain here, in Marvell's imagination, of Cromwell's modesty and humility, and his insistence on *not* being king, to promote himself as a (notional) equal citizen. But, again, it is the precedent it sets that worries them even more deeply: if only he would become a king, even briefly, he would then die as we do; but this *idea* could outlast us all, the *concept* of the abolition of birth-succession could prove itself immortal.

Moving back to England, one very telling passage speaks of the internal frictions within the parliament, the leadership group of 'Grandees' around Cromwell, and the army. Some regarded Cromwell as a dictator-figure despite all the democratic and inclusive measures. In a more organised fashion, the Levellers, active in all layers of society including the army itself, were a more radical and democratising political current throughout the 1650s. Their demands included even deeper enfranchisement, legal reform, and broader religious tolerance.[12]

Marvell succinctly addresses both these tendencies in four concise and punchy lines: "'Tis not a Freedome, that where All command; / Nor Tyranny, where One does them withstand: / But who of both the Bounders [boundaries] knows to lay / Him as their Father must the State obey" (249-252). Here we see Marvell's own centralist factional position most clearly of all: Populism is not liberty; centralised democracy is necessary and is not despotism; and the person who knows best how to limit yet include these wings of opinion is in the best position to govern in the interests of all.

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[12] Rachel Foxley discusses this influential faction within the revolutionary movement in her 'The Levellers: John Lilburne, Richard Overton, and William Walwyn', in Laura Lunger Knoppers (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Literature and the English Revolution* (2012; online edn, Oxford Academic, 28 Jan. 2013).

Marvell ends with a summary of why political activity is essential in itself for progress: "And as the Angel of our Commonweal, / Troubling the Waters, yearly mak'st them Heal" (371-2). It is his way of saying no broken eggs, no omelette: even if there be dispute, internal and international opposition, resentment etc, it is all worth it. The political process must take its course, for without it, no advance or improvement can be achieved. The ode as a whole thoroughly lays out Marvell's opinions, and expresses his strong support for Cromwell and the renewing project he represents.

The Centrality of Faith, Military Renewal, and Doomed Succession

Marvell's "Ode upon the Death of O. C." is, unsurprisingly given its theme, a more modest and sombre poem infused with a genuine love and respect. It dwells on Cromwell's close relationship with his daughter Eliza who had died only months previously; describes him in terms of a force of nature and a mighty oak-tree; briefly compares him favourably with two ancient British kings as well as both David and Gideon, two biblical warriors; reminds us of past and recent military victories, particularly over the Dutch; and praises his tireless self-sacrifice in service of the country.

Regarding this third ode, von Maltzahn explains that "new political questions were raised by the death of Cromwell, in whose funeral train Marvell walked with Milton and Dryden among Cromwellian office-holders; the death elicited from him his fullest elegy, if that then withheld from publication, even as he embraced Richard Cromwell's succession" (14). The verse does appear personal and heartfelt, amongst all the political allusions and imagery, although the final lines suggest that Marvell more *addressed* the succession than *embraced* it.[13]

There are three passages that can be seen as directly political, dealing with the role of faith in war, the military-organisational heritage he leaves behind, and the question of the succession to his son Richard. As seen in the previous ode, the role of religion in general, and which confession particularly, was extremely important as a basis and justification for military action all through Europe during these decades. The New

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[13] Alex Garganigo traces some interesting potential literary sources and heritage to the poem in Chapter 11, 'Marvell's personal elegy? Rewriting Shakespeare in A Poem upon the Death of O. C.' in *Texts and Readers in the Age of Marvell* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019).

Model Army had been founded on puritan and dissenting grounds in opposition to the established church, and an active, non-Anglican Protestantism was seen within its ranks as the chief cause worth fighting for.

Marvell credits Cromwell with being the first to organise a military force on this basis, encouraging its soldiers to fight bravely in God's cause against false faiths: "He first put arms into Religion's hand, / And timorous Conscience unto Courage manned: / The soldier taught that inward mail to wear, / And fearing God how they should nothing fear" (180-3). "Timorous conscience," a modest but pure and genuine faith was armed; God would ensure that the soldiers' swords will be irresistible; and swift success was the result, with opposing armies sent fleeing and cities invaded by the power of faith itself. Cromwell is here painted as a man moved by strength of his own belief to fight for that belief, and one who encouraged many others to do likewise, enjoying great success because of it.

Just as important is the heritage this revolutionary military outfit will have, as a fighting force independent of individual or dynastic interests, and leave an inspiring legacy for future generations: "Thee, many ages hence in martial verse / Shall the English soldier, ere he charge, rehearse, / Singing of thee, inflame themselves to fight, / And with the name of Cromwell, armies fright" (287-280). Just as with the fear of kings in the previous ode that the example of non-succession will live on beyond the actors themselves, so this post-feudal military organisation poses a lasting, historic threat to landed privilege.

Lastly, the question of who could succeed Cromwell was a difficult one, as he cast such a great political shadow. The Protectorate was riven with factional infighting by 1658, had become unstable, and the ground was laid for its demise and the Restoration, engineered among others by General Monck, who subdued what was left of the parliament, and prepared the political conditions for Charles's return and restoration as Charles II. Immediately after Cromwell's death, however, his son Richard was seen as the least bad stopgap solution. Richards accession to his father's position was ineffective and short-lived: only months later, the Commonwealth had died along with its architect Oliver Cromwell.

Marvell had no choice, however, whatever he thought of Richard personally, than to mention him by name and praise him somehow. He chooses in the ode to close with a comparison of Richard as a promise of better times, as with Noah, in the form of a gentle rainbow, counterposed to his father's image as a mighty force of nature: "Cease now our griefs, calm peace succeeds a war, / Rainbows to storms, Richard to Oliver. / Tempt not his clemency to try his power, / He threats no deluge, yet foretells a shower" (321-4).

Perhaps Marvell, seeing the writing on the wall, could not load Richard with expectations that would surely prove impossible to fulfil. Richard represents no "threat" – those days were definitely over by now. And yet the republican experiment had shown great promise, had enjoyed some great successes, and prepared many seismic political developments from which future, perhaps distant, generations would surely benefit.

Ironically enough, there were many voices that saw that promised rainbow arrive in the form of Charles, who returned in 1660 to assume the crown, and wind back many, but by no means all, of the political and religious gains Cromwell and his supporters had achieved. The Restoration of the hereditary monarchy had finally arrived. Very many celebratory and welcoming odes were penned, of course, for this event, which lent itself so naturally, even providentially, to Pindaric flights of praise and thanks.

Marvell has employed in these three odes a very different textual style, demonstrating the flexibility of the form in terms both of purpose and language: in the first, the verse is as panegyrically energetic as the way its subject is painted, and this is perhaps his most 'classic' application of the form; the second is a remarkably polemical tract, listing features of the current government in a nakedly propagandistic manner; and the final ode is a more sober, contemplative expression of a personal and ideological relationship. Marvell's three odes display how the form has become a tool able to be variously employed according to the poet's intentions.

5. The Restoration

Needless to say, the reversion from radical commonwealth experiment to established hereditary monarchy was another major political turning point for the entire country. Poets, too, had to navigate this moment of extreme danger and friction, and the ode-form is applied once again for several of the purposes Drayton had used it six decades earlier: justifying and cementing a transition of power; supporting the new ruler in person; and attempting to re-establish patronage within the new arrangement. Cowley had supported a restoration all along, while Dryden had to cautiously change his colours during the shift. The ode was the form chosen by these two writers to express their steadfast – or refound! – support of the Stuarts, and their desire to help through literary cum propagandistic means.

Abraham Cowley on Justification and Legitimisation

Abraham Cowley, Revard tells us,

> is usually called the father of the Pindaric ode in English … For the rest of the seventeenth century and well into the next the chosen form of the Pindaric ode was the Cowleian ode … So pervasive was Cowley's influence that the Pindaric revolution in England would appear to have been the result of one man's rediscovery of and imitation of Pindar. (Revard 2009, *xii-xiii*)

Having translated some of Pindar's odes into English (and including in them some of his own subtle political messages as well), Cowley knew well what Pindar's style and form entailed. Cowley moves beyond his earlier direct adaptations of Pindar, and turns the form into a vessel useful for the contemporary needs: not military victories or athletic success, but in praise of a political event – the Restoration and all it represented. The ode has become a vehicle for *general* political purposes, beyond the person of its titular subject. The ode, in Cowley's hands, becomes a directly ideological literary framework, and it would continue to be this for the next decades.

When it comes to composing his own odes, however, Cowley eschews their strict architecture, as Revard explains: "In the 'Preface' to Pindarique Odes… Cowley offers an apology for his metrical choice, arguing that 'looseness' in meter and style, rather than exact rendering, best fits the spirit of Pindar … Both Aphra Behn and John Dryden took up the Cowleian model" (Revard 2009, *xii,* footnote 3). It is the "spirit" of Pindar – his goal, imagery, digressive episodes, and rich language – that motivates Cowley. The whole

Restoration period from 1660-1688, and afterwards, was one of constant literary praise for the monarch, and the pindaric ode, based on Cowley's model, was firmly entrenched as its most suitable vehicle. As Revard makes clear, "the political pindaric was on its way to eclipsing all other forms of occasional poetry"(152).

It seems certain that Cowley was an unwavering supporter of Charles throughout the whole turbulent war and republic, and he served the Stuarts in various capacities abroad during the exile years. Having secured the tolerance of the government, he returned to England nevertheless in 1656, probably as ears and eyes for Charles. This put him in a precarious position, clearly, as

> earlier in his career, Cowley had written odes that directly lauded Charles I … In 1656, however, Cromwell and not Charles II held power in England ... After the Restoration, Cowley would claim that he never wavered in allegiance to the Stuarts, even during the period of Cromwell's protectorate when he had returned to England seeking amnesty… (Revard 2009, 125)

He never wrote anything for Cromwell or the protectorate, and the "Ode upon the Blessed Restoration and Returne of His Sacred Majestie, Charls the Second" makes it very clear, if that were even necessary, whose side he was on from that moment.

Cowley first takes the reader in this ode right back to Eden, with Cromwell in the role of the serpent, naturally: "Shall we again (good Heaven!) that blessed Pair behold, / Which the abused People fondly sold / For the bright Fruit of the Forbidden Tree, / By seeking all like gods to be?" (36-9). The forbidden fruit in this case is the desire of the people "all like gods to be" – something reserved, naturally, for those ordained by God to be his vicar on Earth. And this was not even the people's genuine desire – which Cowley suggests was the Stuart monarchy all along, of course – but the result of them having been "abused" by the republicans. "Fond" here is in the archaic sense of 'silly, naïve' – a point reinforced in later lines: "No frantick Common-wealths or Tyrannies, / No Cheats, and Perjuries, and Lies, / No Nets of human Policies" (198-204).

Turning to religious policy, Cowley reminds the reader of one of Hercules's tasks – to clean the Augean stables – and he suggests that England's churches have been equally defiled by the Puritan and other dissenters' religious views. He hopes that Religion itself will purify them: "Will ever fair Religion appear / In these deformed Ruines? will she clear / Th'Aug'an Stables of her Churches here?" (48-50). Religious freedom was a central element of the anti-Royalist and anti-established-church sentiment of the republican movement, and Cowley here is supporting the re-establishment of the Anglican church as an essential part of the Restoration.

The court established in 1649 to try Charles I for treason was called the 'High Court of Justice', and John Bradshaw was its president. Cowley suggests here that Justice itself has been so outraged by the trial and execution, that it may never return: "Will Justice hazard to be seen / Where a High Court of Justice e're has been? / Will not the Tragique Scene, / And Bradshaw's bloody Ghost affright her there, / Her who should never fear? / Then may White-hall for Charls his Seat be fit / If Justice shall endure at Westminster to sit" (51-57). If Justice deigns to return to England, then Charles will be reinstated as the only just outcome.

Not only has the Protectorate fallen, but the people have turned against Cromwell so firmly that his name has become a swearword, Cowley claims: "That Name of Cromwell, which does freshly still / The Curses of so many sufferers fill" (60-1). These lines must be intended to reassure Charles that there is little remaining support for Cromwell, and that he has little latent opposition to fear.

The republican years as a whole are portrayed as the worst of possible worlds, something which God could have justifiably sent to England as punishment for their regicidal wickedness: "If Famine, Sword, and Plague should here establisht see, / (God's great Triumvirate of Desolation) / To scourge and to destroy the sinfull Nation / Justly might Heav'n Protectors such as those, / And such Committees for their Safety'impose, / Upon a Land which scarcely Better Chose" (104-9). With the pun on Protectors – both ironic saviours, but also Cromwell himself – and the sarcastic reference to the "Committees" that usurped Charles's more legitimate power, Cowley asserts that England would have deserved it, if God had sent destruction on the land, for such political folly.

Cowley once more affirms his support for monarchy by succession, the divine right of kings, and their proximity to saintly divinity: "For all the glories of the Earth / Ought to be'entail'd by right of Birth, / And all Heaven's blessings to come down / Upon his Race, to whom alone was given / The double Royalty of Earth and Heaven, / Who crown'd the Kingly with the Martyr's Crown" (170-5). Charles's right to rule both by birth and by divine anointment is further supported by his father's "martyrdom," which makes his kingship even more godly.

The role of parliament before and after the restoration are next addressed:

And ill should We deserve this happy day,
If no acknowledgments we pay
To you, great Patriots, of the Two
Most truly Other Houses now,
Who have redeem'd from hatred and from shame

> A Parliament's once venerable name.
> And now the Title of a House restore
> To that, which was but slaughter-house before. (440-445)

The two houses are the two houses of parliament, "most truly other" as they are now pro-Stuart, that have thus regained the "venerable" name of parliament, compared to the "slaughter-house" of the interregnum. Cowley is not suggesting that parliaments are in themselves inherently wicked – they had been established, after all, early in the thirteenth century – but that they should serve the king, not oppose him unduly, something which Charles would have been pleased to hear.

Moreover, Cowley feels that Charles himself should become the eternal law-giving institution, foreseeing that "The gratefull Nation will with joy consent, / That in this sense you should be said, / (Though yet the Name sounds with some dread) / To be the Long, the Endlesse Parliament," even though the very word 'parliament' (in the republican sense) was still regarded with fear and loathing. Charles and his line should wield the power in parliament from now on: " 'Twould be the richliest furnish'd House (no doubt) / If your Heads always stood within, and the Rump-heads without" (455-460).

There are two puns here to end the poem: the "long" parliament – so called because it had the sole right to dissolve itself – refers generally to the parliament (or various parliamentary combinations) that sat between 1640 and 1660, and used here to express the wish that Charles himself would reign for a long time; and "rump," which refers to two specific pre-restoration parliamentary configurations, known as 'Rump' Parliaments which sat from 1648-53, and then again from 1659-60. They originally contained exclusively parliamentarians left over after the membership had been forcibly reduced to include only those in favour of trying Charles I for treason. But the word 'rump' also means, of course, the hindmost part of a beast, so characterising the anti-royalists as thinking with their rears.

Revard explains that Cowley's

Pindaric ode on the returning Charles II had made its impact, and, in the latter part of the seventeenth century and well into the eighteenth, royal returns and military victories brought forth odes celebrating Charles II, James II, and another conqueror, who was to cross the perilous channel and assume the throne – William III. (Revard 2009, 152)

The next generation of poets serving in this manner, whom Revard describes as

the leading pindarists of the era, Aphra Behn and John Dryden, assumed the mantle from Cowley, whom they both admired and freely imitated. Like him, they were staunch supporters of the Stuart monarchs,

who addressed effusive compliments to Charles II, but also defended his brother James's right to succeed him. (Revard 2009 154)

It is these two poets whose work would positively close the Restoration, and negatively address the Glorious Revolution, which brought with it an end to the dominance of high Anglicanism *cum* Catholicism, undermine the principle of hereditary succession, and further strengthen an elected parliament in curbing the powers of the monarch – the three most central, defining aspects of Stuartism.

John Dryden on Charles's Reign and James's Suitability

Charles's death, naturally, brought forth an outpouring of funereal poetry. By this stage, the utility of the ode for a wide range of occasions and events was well established, and the form had begun to demonstrate a settled predictability. This can be clearly seen in those written for both Oliver Cromwell and Charles: "Curiously enough, the poems for Charles's death resemble those composed for his predecessor's funeral. In both cases the eulogists were called upon to defend a ruler who had fallen into disfavor and to assure the right of a successor who had uncertain popular support" (Revard 2009, 159). Just as Richard was seen as weak and unsuited to assume the mantle of his father, so was James, the Duke of York, deeply mistrusted as a Catholic, and was viewed as a profligate and vain philanderer.

Furthermore, "the odes that come forth in 1684 to mourn the death of Charles II are still more politically resonant, for they reflect both the nation's grief over the death of the monarch and its anxiety over the Catholic succession" (Revard 2009, 159). Dryden addresses these twinned aspects in the now familiar manner of drawing both Classical and biblical parallels for both men.

An elegiac ode had become the preferred vehicle thanks in part to Cowley's success with the form: "The Cowleian pindaric with its excesses and enthusiastic approach serves Cowley's poetic heirs well as they both veil and reveal their propagandistic ends … The episodic divisions of the Cowleian ode are exploited to highlight different facets of Charles's past achievements and to look forward to James's future reign" (Revard 159).

Dryden employs exactly this technique in his threnody for Charles: "What Cowley described as Pindar's 'lawless' sublime would seem to authorize the extravagant lament for Charles and fulsome praise for James" (Revard 159). The threnodic ode is a tool to review, give thanks for, and celebrate the deceased's life

and work, as well as to cement and look forward to the sure benefits of the reign of a successor as yet only narrowly supported and unproven.

Although Dryden came from a landowning family with royalist connections, he happily served – unlike Cowley – in Cromwell's government, and his first significant poem, "Heroic Stanzas on the Death of Oliver Cromwell," is full of praise for the man's work and character. After the Restoration, he again swapped allegiances, becoming a staunch royalist once more, also writing welcoming pindaric odes at the Restoration. Despite the twists in his political position over the decades, he did refuse to abandon the Stuarts and pledge allegiance to William and Mary, and was dismissed from the post of Poet Laureate for it.

His "Threnodia Augustalis: A Funeral-Pindarique Poem Sacred to the Happy Memory OF King CHARLES II" of early 1685 reinforces the view of Charles, as well as both his father and grandfather, that kings were appointed by God – a tradition he had expressly derided in the Cromwell stanzas – and therefore had a 'divine right' to rule, preferably as unencumbered as possible by parliaments, laws, and financial restraints. Charles is "God's Image, God's Anointed lay" (II: 28), and was therefore justly returned to power at the Restoration, no matter the interruption of the interregnum. This applies equally, naturally, to James, who Dryden describes as "His Pious Brother, sure the best / Who ever bore that Name" (II: 1-2). "Pious" he may well have been, but his affection for the Catholic faith was definitely not popular in England, a point which Dryden, of course, fails to mention.

The re-establishment of the monarchy is praised for "all those Joys thy Restauration brought, / For all the Miracles it wrought, / For all the healing Balm thy Mercy pour'd / Into the Nations bleeding Wound" (X: 1-4). Important here is the "healing mercy," the relatively restrained vengeance Charles wreaked on his erstwhile political opponents.

Although the notion of freedom – religious, and political – had been a central plank of the republican project, Dryden turns this around, and invests it in the person of Charles himself, having survived the years of exile: "For Freedom, still maintain'd alive, / Freedom which in no other Land will thrive, / Freedom an English Subject's sole Prerogative, / Without whose Charms ev'n Peace wou'd be / But a dull quiet Slavery" (X: 8-12). Ironic here is that an unelected monarch, keen on unchecked power, is represented by Dryden as freedom personified, at the same time as it is the "sole prerogative" of his "subjects."

Having dealt with divine right, Dryden moves briefly on to the thorny question of the succession (dealt with further later in the poem), by dealing with it first as a neutral principle, and loading the Stuart line with (dubious) historical pedigree – "Succession, of a long Descent, / Which Chastly in the Chanells ran, / And from our Demi-gods began, / Equal almost to Time in its extent" (X: 20-23) – stretching right back to the earliest recorded classical history. The point is that the line is *so* ancient, it has become unassailable.

Next, Dryden presents Charles's exile as particularly dangerous for Charles personally. Naturally, his wellbeing was not without threat, but only by getting "Through Hazzards numberless and great" has Charles "deriv'd this mighty Blessing down…" (X: 24-5). The restoration did not just fall into his lap thanks to domestic political turbulence and a power vacuum, is the suggestion, but was hard-earned.

Charles was bravely steadfast in his patient belief that he would be restored at last, and let nothing undermine his self-belief, Dryden tells us: "Not Faction, when it shook thy Regal Seat, / Not Senates, insolently loud, / (Those Ecchoes of a thoughtless Croud,) / Not Foreign or Domestick Treachery, / Could warp thy Soul to their Unjust Decree" (X: 27-31). "Faction," "Senates" and "Treachery" were the causes that led to the Republic; not popular political movements, according to Dryden, but a misled and unthinking populace, who have now regained their senses.

Dryden seems to also take an opportunity to make a pitch for James's future support, asking himself "What wonder if the kindly beams he shed / Reviv'd the drooping Arts again" (XII: 2-3). Although directed at the memory of Charles, who certainly oversaw a great flourishing of culture in general, it could be read as a sly suggestion to James to continue this wise policy of supporting, i.e. funding, the arts.

Charles is next presented as a goodly landsman, tending the fields of the English economy: "The Royal Husbandman appear'd, / And Plough'd, and Sow'd, and Till'd, / The Thorns he rooted out, the Rubbish clear'd, / And Blest th' obedient Field. / When, straight, a double Harvest rose" (XII: 11-15). The "thorns" and "rubbish" here would be those figures that stood in the way of the economic revival and stable political situation, i.e., the stubborn and troublesome remnants of the republican movement.

Dryden now protests that "We never lost faith in you: / Our Patron once, our Guardian Angel now. / Thou Fabius of a sinking State, / Who didst by wise delays, divert our Fate" (XIII: 24-26), and "When Faction like a Tempest rose … / Then, Art to Rage thou didst oppose" (XIII: 28-30). Dryden naturally includes himself among the "we" that kept the faith, and the suggestion here is that Charles's long exile was not the

product of political and military necessity, but of "wise delays," keeping his powder dry, as it were. Fabius was the founder of Rome itself, and the association places Charles as the founder of a renewed London at the dawn of a similarly great age.

Having dealt with Charles's death and reign, Dryden turns again to the second object of the piece, James. He presents him as one who will regain British naval dominion, which had recently again been challenged and curtailed by the Dutch: "Behold ev'n to remoter Shores / A Conquering Navy proudly spread; / … Th' asserted Ocean rears his reverend Head; / To View and Recognize his ancient Lord again: / And, with a willing hand, restores / The Fasces of the Main" (XVIII: 20-27). The "fasces" was a Roman symbol of judicial authority, and although it may seem an odd note with which to close a funeral ode, it demonstrates the abiding, central importance to the country of maritime military and commercial domination, and would have been understood as a key task for the incoming monarch, one in which Dryden here professes to have full confidence.

This long ode contains all the political elements that needed to be addressed, but were also politically expedient for Dryden himself, presented in a wholly Cowleian frame and manner. It is a clear example not only of Dryden's facility with his Classical subject matter, but also of using text in such a way as to tick all the ideological boxes, as it were, at the same time as presenting himself in as favourable a manner as possible to the incoming power. The political is married here with the personal, and Dryden – as Behn would even more clearly – demonstrates the power of the ode to perform that double task.

6. From Hereditary High-Church to Foreign Protestant Ruler

Aphra Behn on Succession, Stability, and Honour

Aphra Behn (1640-89), having chiefly written poetry in her early years, was forced by looming penury towards the London theatre scene, where she became a prolific and successful playwright throughout the Restoration, and the first female writer to live chiefly from her work. In her latter years, as the theatres' finances became increasingly straitened, her work centred on translation and prose. She continued to write odes, however, replete with political intent.

Always outspoken, individual, exploratory and daring in her writing and in the subjects she chose, she led a turbulent life in the critical years surrounding the collapse of the Commonwealth, and the fact of the Restoration itself. She had close connections at Charles II's court, was politically outspoken and active, and held firm beliefs regarding monarchy, dynasty, and religion. It is the strength with which she adheres to these ideological and doctrinal fundamentals which moves her to write three final odes – and demonstratively *not* write a fourth – within months of her own death.

The final years of Charles II's reign, and all of James's brief incumbency, were widely characterized as riven with moral and political degeneracy – something that can have only further fuelled the move towards the revolutionary constitutional, political and confessional shifts that reached their peak in 1688 with the 'Glorious Revolution,' and instalment on the throne of Protestant William III in tandem with his Catholic wife Mary, James II's daughter.

Mary represented the Stuarts, while William represented the new, modern, protestant, commercial forces on both sides of the channel. When Anne, Mary's sister (thus also a Stuart, naturally), became queen, the governing framework had become so entrenched that she was unable – if she had even wanted to – to make any turn back towards the Stuart style of sovereignty. Behn, naturally, was on the Stuart side, and was caught up in the new political battle between parliamentary parties, i.e., that between the pro-Catholic/Anglican and pro-Stuart Tories, and the more firmly Protestant and pro-William Whigs. Her odes would express this conflict from a personal-political viewpoint, one that included deeply-held opinions on monarchy, religion, political honour and personal integrity.

Yet, as her late political poems, published in that same year, demonstrate, Behn was unrepentant in her hopeful support for James and his children, despite the ideological battle raging around her – which she must have known was to destroy the basis for much of her personal moral code. *Oroonoko,* her harrowing tale of a West African king belittled and murdered in England's colonies, published in that very year, can be seen as Behn's outpouring of anger and disillusion. The novella reflects the violent collision of its author's unconventional religious views, her unfaltering support for the Stuart dynasty in particular, and hereditary monarchy in general, as well as her elevated sense of the primacy of honour with the comprehensive defeat that the upheaval of 1688 must have represented for these convictions.[14]

As Melinda Zook puts it in the introduction to her examination of Behn's political poetry,

> The battle over the country's political and religious future pitted the old republicans, the first Whigs, and Protestant nonconformists against Tories, High Anglicans, and Catholics. … [Behn's] politics … congealed around an imagined world of aristocratic ideals ... [and she was] a staunch defender of the Stuart monarchy to the bitter end. (46-48)

Within this "imagined … aristocratic" political framework, Behn also seems to have held remarkably unconventional religious views. Towards the end of her "An Essay on Translation and Translated Verse', she rails:

> We live in an Age, wherein many believe nothing contained in that Holy Book, others turn it into Ridicule: Some use it only for Mischief, and as … Ground for Rebellion: Some keep close to the literal Sence; and others give the Word of God only that Meaning and Sence that pleases their own Humours, or suits best their present Purpose and Interest. (Behn 1700, 81)

One influential contributing source for these convictions could very well have been Pierre Bayle, a radical, free-thinking, perhaps even atheist, Huguenot exile in The Low Countries (Pacheco, "Christianity and Honor', 259-265). Behn and Bayle may well have met each other while she was on a spying mission in The Low Countries on behalf of Charles in the mid-1660s. Bayle held views on religion suspiciously similar to those professed by Behn, as published anonymously in his *Pensées Diverses* of 1682.

Even if Behn really was as much a 'free-thinker' in religious terms as Bayle, and however much of an "Anglican latitudinarian" (Zook 48) she may have been, she still "[thought] it [was] the Duty of all good Christians to acquiesce in the Opinions and Decrees of the Church of Christ, in whom dwells the Spirit of

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[14] An interesting aside is to be found in Christine Gerard's contribution to the *Oxford Handbook of British Poetry, 1600-1800*: "Many women poets of the late Stuart era, such as Aphra Behn, Ann Finch, Katherine Philips, and Jane Barker, were royalist or Stuart sympathizers. Interesting debates have arisen over why so many women poets express a passionate attachment to conservative political ideologies and advocate a Tory ideology of divinely ordered subordination" (286).

God, which enlightens us to Matters of Religion and Faith" (Behn "Histories" 81). One unifying church, although broad, was a central necessity in her view.

As Pacheco explains in her 2013 essay '"Little Religion" but "Admirable Morals": Christianity and Honor in Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko*" (paraphrasing Sarah Ellenzweig), "genteel free thinkers in early modern England tended to endorse this positive view of the church out of a belief that the fear of God promulgated by Christianity was an essential anchor of social order " (256). It must have been very distressing for Behn, a vocal supporter of an established, Anglican – or even Catholic? (see Pacheco, "Royalism and Honor" 500) – church, that it should have been, but was not in Behn's eyes, unwavering in its support of the monarchy during James's brief reign.

Yet, despite what must have been crushing personal and professional disappointment at the events of 1688, Behn herself still offers a set of Pindaric, propagandistic, congratulatory poems to James and his wife Mary of Modena. To the dismay of Protestants, Mary was pregnant, and the birth of a son would again raise the possibility of a Catholic heir to the throne. Three separate poems rejoice in this prospect: one on the expectation, and another on the birth of their son James Francis Edward in June of 1688; and a third is a welcome ode to Mary Stuart, James's daughter, on her arrival as queen in England.

While clearly angling for the patronage she had largely failed to secure during her career (Zook 56-7), these poems profess Behn's insistence, or desperate faith (although she must surely have felt that the tide had by now irrevocably turned) that the Stuart dynasty was not yet completely finished, and that all might be repaired once a Stuart were back on the throne. The verses reveal how fervently she hoped for a Stuart revival, and what the ideal substance of that revival should be, in terms of exemplary religion and honour:

> If Gods we may with Humane Things compare,
> (For Gods and Kings ally'd most nearly are) …
> This glorious PROSPECT, like the sacred Law,
> Stints factious Crouds, and keeps the World in awe;
> Breaks their consulted Measures, and o'erthrows
> All the Designs aspiring STATES propose. (Behn 1688, image 3)[15]

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[15] Due to there being two sets of p1, p2 etc in the above monograph, I have referred in the text to the 'image' of the online pdf file to avoid confusion.

Here Behn restates the natural and desired closeness of Kings to God, draws a parallel with scripture, and sees the soon-to-be-born James as the pacifier and uniting force of all the warring political factions in the country. She expects that he "On all shall scatter Plenty, Joy and Peace, / Unite the World, and make Dissention cease. / … Who for a stubborn Nation's Glory toil, / And court her to be Great against her Will. / … Behold, with Joy three prostrate Nations come: / … Now join their Int'rests, and no more dispute, / With sawcy Murmurs, who is *Absolute*" (Behn, 1688, image 5). In these lines, despite their subjects' palpable unwillingness, the glorious unification of the kingdoms is foreseen, and the italicized final "*Absolute*" clearly harks back to the notion of absolute rule claimed by James's father and grandfather.

Further still, continuing a trope that runs through so many of the century's odes, the future king will further extend Britain's power throughout the world. Foreign states are "Inrag'd to hear a PRINCE OF WALES is Born: / Whose BROWS his Boasted Laurels shall Adorn. / Whose Angel FACE already does express / His Foreign CONQUESTS, and Domestick PEACE" (Behn, 1688, image 9). Once more, stability at home is linked with military and economic expansion abroad.

If the royal babe were to prove unable (as he certainly did) to accomplish all this, perhaps his older sister, although only half the incoming sovereign pair, would suffice. In her welcome ode to Mary Stuart, Behn sees a secondary saviour, retaining all the majesty of her father:

> Maria with the Sun has equal Force,
> No Opposition stops her Glorious Course …
> All Hail Illustrious Daughter of a King,
> Shining without, and Glorious all within …
> But if the Monarch in your Looks we find,
> Behold him yet more glorious in your Mind;
> 'Tis there His God-like Attributes we see. (Behn 1689, 3-5)

We read here of James II's "God-like attributes", and, elsewhere in the verse, of his "Sweetness … Mercy … and True Piety" – in the sense of remaining true to one's moral code of honourable Christianity. Behn clearly very much admired James, despite his awful reputation (Zook, 55).

Behn's 'Meta-Ode' on Principled Resistance and Personal Integrity

Yet if patronage were her primary aim, where was Behn's welcome ode for the incoming King? In early 1689, Reverend Gilbert Burnet, a leading adviser to William, visited Behn, asking her to produce a poem

in support of the new constitutional arrangement (Zook, 60). "Behn may have been flattered by Burnet's request, but she did not comply. She would not hail the so-called 'Protestant Deliverer', William III, or sanction revolution" (61). Burnet must have thought an ode from Behn could make some kind of difference, that it would have been a significant gesture. This seems to clearly reflect that the ode form had become not only serviceable, and willingly employed, for political expression, but that its influence led – at least in this case – to an active, express request, even an *expectation*, that this weapon in the factional dispute was required and should be depolyed.

It is very telling that Behn *did* make the effort of writing three extensive Pindaric odes – two to the incoming heir to the throne, and one to his Catholic mother – but *expressly refused* to write one for the incumbent sovereign, at the risk of spoiling her chances of patronage, despite her critical financial situation. It seems she, like Burnet, firmly believed in the power of the published Pindaric ode to make a difference, possibly even help turn the political tide. But she would absolutely not – even if it meant undermining her own financial prospects – compose an ode to a Protestant, foreign, invasive, king – even when directly requested by someone very close indeed to that power.

Instead, she turns the tables on Burnet himself, by publishing an ode that focusses its political fire on him as one of the chief architects of the coup that installed William and Mary on the joint throne. This hilarious mock pindaric should be read throughout as ironic, biting, and sarcastic personal and political criticism of the whole political project, and especially Burnet's role within it, both past and future.

Revard devotes four pages to this important ode in her 2009 volume, recognizing it as an indicator of the influence Behn might bring to the cause:

> Behn's acceptance of Mary's right did not necessarily mean acceptance of William's. Dr. Burnet, the man who had been most instrumental in organizing the Glorious Revolution of 1688, had been urging Behn to write an ode in honor of the House of Nassau, thus bringing one of the strongest supporters of the Stuart cause over to the other side… (171)

This strongly suggests, again, that the role an ode from the hand of a respected, or even feared, writer such as Behn really could have an impact on the level of political support and legitimacy the entire William project could enjoy. This one poem distils the inherent political purpose to which the ode-form was now being pressed: not only the larger politics of regime change and allegiances, but also interpersonal, combative, identity politics between two radically opposed, representative literary figures.

This ode displays all the features expected of a pindaric ode by now so well established: the muse, both classical and biblical references and parallels, high-flown imagery, praise, fame, etc. The entire work must be read in an ironic voice, as it is deliberately written in clear hyperbole to leave the reader with the diametrically opposed understanding that the text on the surface suggests. Burnet is false, he is sneaky and manoeuvring, he is a bad poet, but will sing up William anyway himself, and lie, and excuse him in the process.

Behn opens with a mention of the Roman method of peer election, which she sees as inferior to hereditary succession, naturally, while feigning delight in Burnet's request: "The Victor was not half so Pleas'd and Vain, / As I, when given the Honour of your Choice, / And Preference had in that one single Voice" (1: 4-6). The "single voice" she prefers is not only Burnet's request, but also that of a single monarch, not an "elected" usurper.

She over-praises Burnet's mind, as if it were a conduit of command from on high, in this case William: "The Inspiring Mind Illustrious, Rich, and Great; / A Mind that can inform your wond'rous Pen / In all that's Perfect and Sublime: … / It carries a Commanding Force, like that of Writ Divine" (1: 10-15). Read in the opposite sense: Burnet is not only stupid, but a bad writer as well.

Behn poses the very request itself in terms of an attempted rape, in ideological terms, anyway: "Against my Will, you Conquer and Perswade. / Your Language soft as Love, betrays the Heart, / And at each Period fixes a Resistless Dart, / While the fond Listner, like a Maid undone / In vain essays her Freedom to Regain" (2: 4-8). But she is able to resist this assault on her political steadfastness, expressing at the same time her disappointment with the turn of events: "The fine Ideas in her Soul remain, / And Please, and Charm, even while they Grieve and Pain" (2: 10-11). The "grie[f] and pain" are those of thwarted political expectations, while the ideological foundations themselves remain "pleas[ing] and charm[ing].'

Although Behn had already published on a wide variety of subjects, including weighty religious and political tracts, she feigns to be merely a poet of simple love-poems, and presents herself as incapable of accepting such a demanding task: "Till now, my careless Muse no higher strove / T'inlarge her Glory, and extend her Wings; / … To Sing of Shepherds, and their humble Love; But never durst, like *Cowly*, tune her Strings, / To sing of Heroes and of Kings" (3: 7-12). It pains her to be so unworthy: "What must I suffer when I cannot pay… / And make my stubborn Muse your Just Commands obey… / But Loyalty Commands with

Pious Force" (4: 3-8). Although it is her weak muse that ostensibly prevents her, her "loyalty" is of course, in reality, to the Stuarts.

We are reminded that William, despite all the generalised celebration accompanying the coup, is illegitimate in Behn's eyes, and she laments her lonely fate, sidelined by the upheaval, comparing it with that of Cassandra: "Thus while the Chosen Seed / possess the Promis'd Land, / I like the Excluded Prophet stand, / But am forbid by Fates Decree / To share the Triumph of the joyful Victory" (4: 19-22). "Chosen Seed" refers directly back to the Bible (and possibly even *Paradise Lost*), contrasting the 'choice' of the people with God's own choice – the version Behn clearly prefers.

Behn turns to accusing Burnet of having manoeuvred and 'spun' William and the political change with his writing: "Oh Strange effect of a Seraphick Quill! / That can by unperceptable degrees / Change every Notion, every Principle / To any Form, its Great Dictator please" (5: 5-8). Burnet's quill is again "seraphic," as though serving a celestial power, and has used it for propaganda to turn parliamentary and public opinion in favour of William, the "Great Dictator.'

The exchange of power was not even won honourably, Behn continues, comparing the coup with the Greeks' sneaky ploy of the Trojan Horse. It was "Wisdom and Counsel which alone prevail'd. / Not all their Numbers the Fam'd Town could win, / 'Twas Nobler Stratagem that let the Conquerour in" (5: 18-20). Not a hard-won military victory, but "nobler" – i.e., weak and grubby – "stratagem" has been necessary to successfully bring William to the throne.

Behn explains that even her penurious situation could not bring her to write against her convictions: "Tho' I the Wond'rous Change deplore, / That makes me Useless and Forlorn, / Yet I the great Design adore, / Tho' Ruin'd in the Universal Turn. / Nor can my Indigence and Lost Repose, / Those Meager Furies that surround me close, / Convert my Sense and Reason more / To this Unpresidented Enterprise" (6: 1-8). She refuses potential financial gain in order to maintain her honour, thoroughly in keeping with her own previous literary projection of the virtue necessary for noble leadership.

The first and last lines of this passage are deliberately misleading. At first sight, the "Wond'rous Change" she "deplores" seems the whole William project itself, but it soon becomes clear that it is actually her straitened circumstances. Her dire financial situation is not enough to change her mind and write against her will for money: they are insufficient to "convert" her to the "Unprecedented Enterprise," which reads at

first glance as the entire political change, but is actually the process of writing Burnet's proposed ode. She makes it abundantly clear with this trick of misleading the reader that she is deeply opposed to Burnet's whole political "Enterprise.'

Revard reminds us that "Behn is fully aware that the poets of the winning side write the history, be they Homers or Vergils or merely Dr. Burnets. She leaves us one last ironic gesture by her fulsome praise of Burnet as William's fitting encomiast" (176). Behn closes by once again heaping underserved praise on Burnet, and leaving the task of writing to his superior talent, acknowledging:

> that a Man so Great, so Learn'd, so Wise,
> The Brave Atchievement Owns and nobly Justifies …
> Whose Conduct has so well the Nation serv'd,
> 'Tis you that to Posterity shall give
> This Ages Wonders, and its History.
> And Great *NASSAU* shall in your Annals live …
> Your Pen shall more Immortalize his Name,
> Than even his Own Renown'd and Celebrated Fame. (6: 9-18)

Not only is Burnet better suited to the task, but he will write about William even more positively than the great man's own fame can demonstrate – meaning that he will positively 'spin' William's reputation, naturally. The whole passage must be read in the opposite sense: Burnet is not "Great … Learn'd, … [or] Wise," and the "Atchievement" cannot be "nobly" justified.

All the ingredients are present or mentioned in her poetic reply of refusal: a reference and link to the Classical period, to fame, and to great leaders of the distant past; fulsome praise for the addressee of the verse; a confirmation of the power written words can have to bestow immortality on subject and author; a word of respect for Cowley, acknowledged as the author of the form in its classical, mid-century form; references to a muse; and a smattering of Biblical and Christian references; and all this presented through hyperbolic language and digressive passages.

Behn sums up the form's function neatly in this work: she is expressing – in this case through mockery – her personal feelings about the verse's subject (i.e. Burnet himself), her political beliefs and attitude to the current events of state, and her own moral and philosophical position in the question, all in the form of what might be described an *anti*-ode, an ode that performs its work by deliberately distorting and reversing what the ode proper had become. Careful contemporary readers would surely have recognized her

intention in the work, and been left in no doubt as to what she really felt about Burnet, and the entire William project.

It is perhaps fitting that the final ode examined here is an ode *about* an ode, and about ode-writing – a meta-ode, as it were. Behn, one of the most prolific and prominent writers of the age, reveals here what purpose the Pindaric ode had served over the previous decades: it had become the default vehicle for poetical political expression, especially at times of great friction and crisis.

7. Conclusion

This essay has unavoidably been an extremely selective bird's-eye view, as it were, of a dozen representative seventeenth-century English politically motivated odes. To give some perspective: there were over 200 printed odes devoted to Charles II's Restoration alone, among many more hundreds more or less directly addressing other political subjects right across the century's other decades – not to mention those that remain unpublished.

The choice of exemplars was made first on the basis of illuminating particularly politically-loaded moments: the delicate transition from Elizabeth to James; the turbulent Interregnum; the Restoration itself; and the upheaval surrounding the Glorious Revolution. Within this framework, one single writer was selected (for the Restoration, two for particular reasons). This offered the optimum conditions for comparing odes from only one author applied with different purposes and addressing different issues, to illustrate as clearly as possible how the odes fulfilled the writer's intentions by minimalizing the number of influencing variables.

Michael Drayton's two odes for James, and one for the Virginian voyage, demonstrate how the relatively new form was applied in support of a smooth change of monarch, a prosperous reign, and an expansionist expedition so necessary to secure and promote England on the world stage. Drayton was one of the earliest to apply the Pindaric spirit, with its lofty verse praising and advising its recipient, and its allegorical digressions and Classical and Christian references, with a clear political loading. His veiled appeal for patronage was a theme that would resurface throughout the whole century.

Andrew Marvell's three odes in support of the Republic and Cromwell in particular, are the most directly propagandistic of all the odes considered. The civil war, regicide and Interregnum were the events that most violently shook the country during the whole century, and Cromwell's new revolutionary government demanded clear and well-written support on paper – for both domestic and international consumption. Marvell himself was uniquely placed as a diplomatic functionary working very closely with Cromwell and the other Grandees, as well as Milton, another great supporter of the Commonwealth project. He described and defended in ode form the entire undertaking, and its leader particularly, from its early years right through to Cromwell's death and the end of the Protectorate.

The beginning of the Restoration saw Abraham Cowley finally establish the mid-century 'classical' type of encomiastic ode in his work praising Charles's patience and wisdom in exile, and looking forward to the huge benefits his reinstallation would bring the country. Cowley's work, first on translating Pindar, but then imitating more his 'spirit' than his metrics and form, laid down the basic model for the ode for the succeeding decades. John Dryden followed this lead at Charles's death in his eulogistic threnody, full of his illustrative classicisms, while also writing in support of James's incoming reign.

Aphra Behn's odes, devoted to what was left of the Stuart regime, are some of the last examples of the openly political ode in its post-Cowleian mode. Her poems, full of strongly felt personal opinions on the nature of royalty, honour, and religion, were written when the country was dividing itself into the two firmly opposed camps of Tories and Whigs. She could not bring herself to support the incoming William, instead writing a biting ode in defence of not abusing, in her view, the form itself, or selling her support for the 'wrong' side. It is a demonstration of the power the ode had garnered, as well as the swansong of the form put to seriously factional use.

The entire seventeenth century in England was riven with political instability, whether concerning the death or accession of a monarch, or the confessional-political, or economic-political, or military-political, or international-political, or even the personal-political. These themes constantly overlapped, and there were also many alternative literary outlets beyond learned verse for less stylised political expression – the mid-century pamphlet culture, for example. And by no means were odes exclusively political in nature: many other panegyric, quasi-ode, and lyrical forms – the 'country house' genre, for instance – were employed in encomiastic praise verse without any obvious political loading.

But once the continental imitations of the Classical form, purpose and stylistic elements had been sufficiently Englished – while retaining the 'spirit' and dynamism of the Classical models, the ode soon proved its special utility in expressing national desire, propagandising revolutionary projects, justifying religious leanings, welcoming regime change, mourning public deaths, railing against political opponents, or simply airing one's personal convictions. Until the political situation in England became comparatively settled and stable towards the end of the century, the lyrical-verse, panegyric ode-form was the vehicle of choice for a broad range of poets, reflecting a broad range of political purposes throughout the seventeenth century.

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