

SAMUEL PEPYS AND JOHN EVELYN AS RESTORATION VIRTUOSI

(with particular reference to the evidence in  
their diaries)

by

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## STATEMENT OF THESIS

After the civil conflicts of the seventeenth century, England during the Restoration period began to emerge as a modern nation. As Charles II understood, and as James II was to learn at the cost of his throne, absolute monarchy was no longer acceptable to the kingdom. Although Englishmen might henceforth tolerate the trappings of absolutism, the substance was irrevocably gone. This was as true of absolutism in religion as it was in government. It was only a question of time before the demands of Englishmen for freedom in belief and for participation in government would find expression in parliamentary democracy and in religious toleration.

At the same time that England was developing new patterns of government and social behaviour, great events were happening in the cultural life of the nation. Literature and drama broadened their horizons by absorbing continental ideas and by renewing the inspiration bequeathed by native sources. Though the new literature and drama did not soon attain the excellence of their earlier counterparts, they were striking out in new directions. Scientific attitudes, too, were being revolutionized. In 1662, the formal organization of the Royal Society under royal patronage provided a meeting ground for those of inquiring mind. Soon the achievements of such men as Robert Boyle in chemistry and Isaac Newton in mathematics and physics established the framework of modern science. If

art produced no comparable luminaries, architecture had in Christopher Wren only the most outstanding of a number of notable architects. Music, though less spectacular in its development than some of the other arts, soon produced Henry Purcell, whose compositions have rarely been equalled by those of any other English composer.

The seventeenth century did not suffer from that proliferation of knowledge which in our own day has forced men to specialize in a narrow field of inquiry in order to be able to speak authoritatively about anything. A cultivated Englishman of the Restoration could still aspire to a reasonable understanding of all learning. Men like Christopher Wren and Robert Boyle, Isaac Newton and John Dryden, Samuel Pepys and John Evelyn, even men like the King himself in his dilettante way, were what the century called *virtuosi*--in the sense that they had a special interest in and aspired to a knowledge of art and science. Their intellects moved, more or less profoundly, over the entire range of human achievement and endeavour.

This thesis is concerned with Samuel Pepys and John Evelyn. Its particular purpose is to examine their diaries and other relevant sources to discover how each responded to the cultural and social environment of Restoration England, and to establish to what extent they were representative *virtuosi* of their period.



# C O N T E N T S

	Page
STATEMENT OF THESIS	v
I THE SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY VIRTUOSO	1
1. Survey of Scientific background	1
2. Definition of "virtuoso"	2
3. Contemporary attitudes to the virtuosi	7
II THE DIARIES OF PEPYS AND EVELYN IN RELATION TO THEIR LIVES	18
1. Biography of Pepys	18
2. Pepys's Diary	31
3. Biography of Evelyn	36
4. Evelyn's Diary	47
III EVELYN, PEPYS, AND NON-DRAMATIC LITERATURE OF THE RESTORATION PERIOD	56
1. Evelyn's reticence	56
2. Evelyn's literary friends	57
3. Evelyn's literary comments in letters to Pepys	60
4. Evelyn and philosophers	61
5. Evelyn's preferences in books	65
6. Evelyn's attitude to ancient and modern learning	68
7. Evelyn as author	71
8. Pepys's reading	73
9. Pepys's attitude to religion	75
10. Pepys's fondness for history	77
11. Pepys's scientific reading	80
12. Pepys and poetry	83
13. Pepys and the booksellers	88
IV PEPYS, EVELYN, AND THE THEATRE OF THE RESTORATION PERIOD	93
1. Theatres at the Restoration	93
2. Innovations in the Theatre	95
3. French and Spanish influences	98
4. Evelyn and the theatre	101
5. Pepys and the theatre	105

IV continued:

6. Pepys's attitude to Shakespeare	110
7. Pepys's appreciation of Ben Jonson	118
8. Pepys's reaction to Beaumont and Fletcher	120
9. Pepys and the Comedy of Manners	122
10. Pepys's standards of criticism	125
11. Pepys's opinion of Dryden	128
12. Pepys's and Evelyn's theatrical comments contrasted	130
13. Pepys backstage	133

V PEPYS AND EVELYN AND THEIR ATTITUDES TO MUSIC 138

1. Their attitudes contrasted	138
2. Pepys and music	139
3. Pepys as composer	148
4. Pepys and church music	154
5. Evelyn and music	155
6. Foreign musicians in England	155
7. Purcell and seventeenth-century music in England	157

VI PEPYS AND EVELYN IN RELATION TO RESTORATION ART 161

1. Summary of art and architecture in Restoration England	161
2. Evelyn's artistic sensibility	164
3. Evelyn and the mezzotint process	168
4. Evelyn's discovery of Grinling Gibbons	169
5. Evelyn and the Arundel Marbles	171
6. Evelyn as artist	174
7. Portraits of Evelyn	175
8. Pepys and art	177
9. Pepys's art collection	179
10. Pepys's growing discrimination in art	182
11. Portraits of Pepys and his wife	183

VII	EVELYN AND PEPYS IN RELATION TO SCIENTIFIC ACTIVITIES IN RESTORATION ENGLAND	187
	1. Some aspects of the scientific revolution	187
	2. Evelyn and the Royal Society	191
	3. Curiosities	194
	4. Evelyn's interest in science	197
	5. Pepys and science	200
	6. Evelyn and medical investigations	202
	7. Pepys and optics	204
	8. Evelyn and Pepys - officers of the Royal Society	207
	9. Evelyn - original investigator	208
VIII	A SUMMARY OF SOME RESTORATION CULTURAL ATTITUDES AND A CONSIDERATION OF EVELYN AND PEPYS AS RESTORATION VIRTUOSI	210
	1. The intellectual revolution and religion	210
	2. Achievements of the Royal Society	214
	3. Influences on literature in the Restoration period	215
	4. Attitudes of Evelyn and Pepys to the prevailing culture	217
	5. Review of the term "virtuoso"	217
	6. Evelyn and Pepys as virtuosi	218
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	222

## CHAPTER I

### THE SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY VIRTUOSO

The scientific enlightenment had made a considerable impact on England by the beginning of the seventeenth century. Numerous books on science, published late in the sixteenth century in English rather than in Latin as had formerly been the custom, had disseminated new ideas concerning the experimental approach in unlocking the secrets of natural phenomena. In 1598, Gresham College had been established in London through an endowment provided in the will of Sir Thomas Gresham. Significantly, Sir Thomas had stipulated that the control of the college remain in the hands of merchants rather than of clerics, and lectures, to be delivered in English as well as Latin, be applied to practical purposes. As a teaching institution, Gresham College became, under Henry Briggs, first Gresham Professor of Geometry, a centre for the advancement of science as well as for adult education.<sup>1</sup> When, in 1605, Sir Francis Bacon in his Advancement of Learning sought to justify the concept of scientific enquiry philosophically and to propose an experimental procedure, he was supporting an interest that was already widespread.

At the same time that a genuine interest in science was developing in England, numbers of wealthy aristocrats were engaged in

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<sup>1</sup> Christopher Hill, "Science in Seventeenth-century London," The Listener, May 31, 1962, 944.

the fashionable pastime of collecting antiquities and rarities of all kinds--old coins, medals, shells, insects, fossils, precious and semi-precious stones. Few antiquarians, as they were generally called, had any utilitarian purpose in mind, but they had in common a sense of wonder and delight in ancient or unusual things. As a rule, they were not interested in the advancement of knowledge in any systematic way. Their concern was simply to use their wealth and leisure in acquiring things that gave them personal enjoyment and perhaps some social prestige amongst their peers.<sup>2</sup>

When the term "virtuoso" came into English usage, it was first applied to collectors such as these and to connoisseurs of art, especially those who specialized in rare paintings, engravings, and statues.<sup>3</sup> John Evelyn, himself, has sometimes been given the credit for introducing the word into England<sup>4</sup> when he wrote from Paris in his diary entry for March 1, 1644 that "we went thence to visite one Monsieur Perishot, one of the greatest Vertuosas in France for his Collection of Pictures, Achates, Medaills, & Flowers, especialy

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<sup>2</sup>Walter E. Houghton, Jr., "The English Virtuoso in the Seventeenth Century," Journal of the History of Ideas, January, 1942, 57.

<sup>3</sup>Houghton, p. 52

<sup>4</sup>Allen B. Sprague, Tides in English Taste (1619-1800), 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass: 1937), I, 136.

Tulips & Anemonys....."<sup>5</sup> (Evelyn, II, 114). However, Houghton has drawn attention to the fact that Henry Peacham used the term ten years before Evelyn in referring in his Compleat Gentleman to those who collected classical antiquities.<sup>6</sup>

In time, the more serious virtuosi began to systematize their collections and to develop specialties. Some gathered materials and specimens for the advancement of mathematical knowledge, others specialized in devices illustrating mechanical principles, still others classified flora and fauna.<sup>7</sup> Virtuosi of this kind began to make a real contribution to the advancement of knowledge.

In 1645, some of the younger scientists working in the Baconian tradition began to meet together in London, in Samuel Foster's chambers in Gresham College,<sup>8</sup> in order to discourse on "Natural Philosophy" and to enquire into such things, in the words of Dr. John Wallis, as "Physick, Anatomy, Geometry, Astronomy, Navigation, Staticks, Mechanicks, and Natural Experiments."<sup>9</sup> This group formed

<sup>5</sup> John Evelyn, The Diary of John Evelyn, ed. E.S. de Beer, 6 vols. (Oxford, 1955), II, 114. (All further references to Evelyn's Diary in this thesis will relate to this edition of the diary.)

<sup>6</sup> Houghton, p. 52.

<sup>7</sup> Dorothy Stimson, Scientists and Amateurs, A History of the Royal Society, (New York, 1948), 36.

<sup>8</sup> Hill, The Listener, op. cit., p. 945.

<sup>9</sup> Stimson, p. 37.

the nucleus of the "College for the Promoting of Physico-Mathematicall Learning" organized shortly after the Restoration. Perhaps to give more authority to the deliberations of the College, professors of mathematics, medicine, and natural philosophy at Oxford and Cambridge were invited to accept honorary membership.<sup>10</sup> This College adopted the official title of "The Royal Society" on John Evelyn's suggestion in 1661 (Evelyn, III, 306, Dec. 3, 1661) and obtained its charter under the patronage of Charles II on July 15, 1662.

Thereafter, all members of the Royal Society were popularly known as virtuosi. Pepys was using the word in this sense when he wrote that Doctor Clerke, "offers to bring me into the college of virtuosoes."<sup>11</sup> This was no slip of the pen for when Creed became a member of the Royal Society, Pepys remarked that "he is now become one of the virtuosos" (Pepys, IV, 42). A few months before he himself was admitted to membership, Pepys wrote in his diary:

So to the Coffee-house, and there fell in discourse with the Secretary of the Virtuosi of Gresham College, and had very fine discourse with him.

(Pepys, IV, 242.)

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<sup>10</sup> Stimson, p. 51.

<sup>11</sup> Samuel Pepys, The Diary of Samuel Pepys, ed. H.B. Wheatley, 8 vols. (London, 1952), II, 213. (All further references to Pepys's Diary in this thesis will relate to this edition of the diary.)

On two other occasions in the diary, Pepys mentioned "virtuoso" as applied to all members of the Royal Society.

Because all members of the Society were termed "virtuosi" without regard to their qualifications as scientists, the word itself soon fell into disrepute. Sir Henry Lyons has this to say about the society's membership in the early Restoration period:

Moreover, the general name of "virtuosi", which was then in common use, included not only true men of science sincerely anxious for the discovery of truth in every department of nature, but also men of culture and lovers of all manner of "articles of vertu", as well as mere collectors who had a passion for gathering together whatever was ancient, uncommon or odd. The term was first employed in a complimentary sense, but before long, on account of the vagaries of these indiscriminate collectors of "rareties", it acquired a more or less contemptuous meaning.<sup>12</sup>

Some modern historians have added to the confusion by using "virtuoso" in a limited sense. Nussbaum, for instance, has shifted its emphasis by seeming to deny its application to collectors of rareties, antiquarians, or ordinary members of the Royal Society like Pepys and Dryden:

It had with reference to the general field of scientific activity almost the same significance we now give it in the restricted field of musical technique, except that it did not connote

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<sup>12</sup> Henry Lyons, The Royal Society, 1660-1940, (Cambridge, Eng. 1944), 59-60.



specialization. The virtuoso was one who spent much effort and time in observing nature, collecting materials and seeking results that were beyond the range of ordinary experience.<sup>13</sup>

Though Evelyn rarely used "virtuoso," he seems to have thought of it in much the same terms as Nussbaum. He spoke on one occasion of having "din'd with that greate Mathematicia(n) & virtuoso Monsieur Zulecum, Inventor of the Pendule Clock and Phaenomenon of Saturns anulus; he was also elected into our Society...." (Evelyn, III, 276, April 1, 1661). For the purposes of this study, however, the word will be interpreted in its broadest meaning to include all members of the Royal Society and their varied cultural as well as specifically scientific interests.

As Lyons asserted in the quotation above, many of the virtuosi continued to be interested in "curiosities" of all kinds. The term covered a multitude of things from bizarre abnormalities to legitimate objets d'art. Evelyn wrote of a sheep that "had 6 leggs and made use of 5 of them to walke: A Goose that had 4 leggs, two Cropps, & as many Vents" (Evelyn, III, 93, February 13, 1654), but he also wrote of seeing gorgeous Chinese vests, exceedingly sharp Chinese knives, very fine and thin Chinese paper, and Chinese landscapes and portrait paintings, some of them on cloth, (Evelyn, III, 373-374, June 22, 1664).

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<sup>13</sup>Frederick L. Nussbaum, The Triumph of Science and Reason, 1660-1685. (New York, 1953), 8.

In Venice, he recorded that he had seen ancient Roman statues, Latin and Greek medals, as well as petrified walnuts and eggs, and rare precious and semi-precious stones (Evelyn, II, 471, September 26, 1645). Finally, towards the end of his diary, Evelyn spoke of visiting Mr. Pepys at Clapham

...who has there a very noble, & wonderfully well furnished house, especially with all the Indys & Chinese Curiositys, almost anywhere to be mett with ....

(Evelyn, V, 427-428,  
September 23, 1700)

Even philosophical scientists were interested in unusual and rare phenomena. Evelyn noted that at Gresham College "Mr. Boyle produced 2 cleare liquors, which being mingled became a hard stone" (Evelyn, III, 337, October 1, 1662).

These activities, and others like them, when they became known to the uninitiated outside the Royal Society, were a source of amusement and ridicule. Moreover, some experiments which in later years were of the deepest significance to the advancement of knowledge must have seemed odd, to say the least, to the average man in the London streets. They occasionally seemed ridiculous to the King, who was something of a virtuoso himself. Pepys tells us that the King laughed heartily at Boyle's experiments on the weighing of air (Pepys, IV, 27). The experiment of transfusing a sheep's blood into a man, which Pepys recorded (Pepys, VII, 195), was considered ludicrous by

some and impious by others outside the Society.

If numerous scoffers against the virtuosi laughed out of ignorance or because they were idly amused at the wit of the satirists who selected the more bizarre investigations of some virtuosi as the objects of their satire, there were scholars and theologians who had more cogent reasons for their opposition to the work of the Royal Society and its members. Some of these scholars were fighting a rearguard action in defence of Aristotle and his concept that Nature was a dramatic and complete work of art in which all things were determined towards a predicted end.<sup>14</sup> This theory had been brought into harmony with Christianity by St. Thomas Aquinas. As Basil Willey has said:

In this great synthesis theology was supreme, and the "truth" of any proposition thus depended ultimately, not upon its correspondence with any particular "state of affairs", but upon its being consistent with a body of given and of course unquestionable doctrine.<sup>15</sup>

Aristotelianism was still well entrenched in some scholarly circles in Restoration England. In fact, according to Carré,

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<sup>14</sup>A.N. Whitehead, Science and the Modern World, (New York, 1949), 8.

<sup>15</sup>Basil Willey, The Seventeenth Century Background, (New York, n.d.), 22.

defences of Aristotle continued to be published until as late as John Sergeant's The Method to Science in 1696.<sup>16</sup> Partly, the defence took the form of a championing of ancient learning over modern learning,<sup>17</sup> a thesis argued in Sir William Temple's essay on Ancient and Modern Learning (1690) which precipitated the famous "battle of the books" in seventeenth-century England. This argument was based on the theory that the world had matured close to perfection in the golden age of classical learning, and then, like anything organic, had begun to decline. According to this negative and defeatist concept, no advancement could possibly be made upon the achievements of the Ancients. The attempts of the virtuosi to unlock the secrets of Nature represented a direct challenge to this belief. At a more intellectual level, traditional scholars distrusted the substitution of experiments for rational arguments:

The antagonism between the customary and the novel methods of seeking truth cut deep. It was far more than a conflict between the views of revered authorities and the upstart theories of an unorthodox coterie. The new theories were suggesting conceptions of logic and of rational order that to the minds of men steeped in the old learning were immoral as well as fallacious. Reason looked to a hierarchy of qualitative orders, to transcendent ends that precede and

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<sup>16</sup> Meyrick & H. Carre, Phases of Thought in England, (Oxford, 1949), 230.

<sup>17</sup> Stimson, Scientists and Amateurs, 75-76.

determine change. And from these conceptions the new way, as we shall perceive, was turning aside. The protests of the conservatives on behalf of reason were associated also with feelings of disgust at the vulgarity of the new approach to truth. The men of experiment were termed common mechanics. Boyle was obliged to defend his willingness to handle coarse and repulsive materials in pursuing his researches.<sup>18</sup>

Moreover, those whose religious beliefs asserted the sufficiency of divine revelation saw in the activities of the virtuosi a disrespect to God in their presuming to discover secrets about Nature that He had not revealed to man. It was a short step from that assumption to believe that the virtuosi were, if not atheists, influenced by atheistical ideas. To counter that criticism Thomas Sprat, who later became Bishop of Rochester, published his History of the Royal Society in 1667. In the course of explaining the purposes and activities of the Royal Society, Sprat drew attention to the number of bishops and other divines who were members of the Society and argued that what Christianity and the Church needed to save it from the vices of the times was "the practice of moral virtue, the observance of the Laws of Nature, and the contemplation of God's words".<sup>19</sup> His thesis was that religion and science each had its

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<sup>18</sup> Carre, Phases of Thought in England, 231.

<sup>19</sup> Willey, Seventeenth Century Background, 215.

respective sphere and did not conflict.

Other eminent members of the Royal Society likewise countered the atheistical charge, both in their writings and by their deeds. Robert Boyle was anxious to prove that there was no conflict between science and Christianity.<sup>20</sup> He financed the circulation of translations of the Bible in the Orient, and provided in his will for annual lectures to be given in defence of Christianity.<sup>21</sup> When Isaac Newton was not producing the framework of modern mathematics and physics, he was as likely as not undertaking a study of the prophetic books of the Bible.<sup>22</sup>

Nevertheless, antagonism continued against the beliefs and activities of the virtuosi. Evelyn attended the Oxford Encaenia on July 9, 1669, to celebrate the completion of the New Theatre. Several speeches were delivered on the occasion, one of which was by Dr. South:

Then follow'd Dr. South the Universities Orators  
Eloquent Speech upon it; it was very long, &  
not without some malicious & undecent reflect-  
ions on the Royal Society as underminers of the  
University, which was very foolish and untrue,  
as well as unseasonable, (but to let that passe,  
from an ill natured man) the rest was in praise  
of the Arch Bish: and the ingenious Architect:

... (Evelyn, III, 531-532, July 9, 1669)

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<sup>20</sup> Nussbaum, Triumph of Science and Reason, 8.

<sup>21</sup> Lyons, The Royal Society, 58-59.

<sup>22</sup> Nussbaum, 8.

The New Theatre had been made possible by the gift of Dr. Gilbert Sheldon, Archbishop of Canterbury and had been designed by Christopher Wren.

Another denigrator of the Royal Society was Samuel Butler. Though his character of A Virtuoso was not printed until 1759, it contains opinions that he often expressed during the Restoration era. In part, Butler said:

He [a virtuoso] differs from a pedant as things do from words, for he uses the same affectation in his operations and experiments as the other does in language. He is a haberdasher of small arts and sciences, and deals in as many several operations as a baby artificer does in engines. ... He is wonderfully delighted with rarities, and they continue still so to him though he has shown them a thousand times, for every new admirer that gapes upon them sets him a-gaping too.<sup>23</sup>

Later, in the same character, Butler went on:

His want of judgment inclines him naturally to the most extravagant undertakings, like that of making old dogs young, telling how many persons there are in a room by knocking at a door, stopping up words in bottles, &c. He is like his books that contain much knowledge, but know nothing themselves.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>Henry Morley, ed. Character Writings of the Seventeenth Century, (London, 1891), 343.

<sup>24</sup>Morley, Character Writings, 344.

Perhaps the most devastating contemporary criticism of the virtuoso at the popular level occurred in Thomas Shadwell's comedy of that name, which was printed in 1676. That the play was immensely popular in its own day is some measure of Shadwell's accuracy in depicting the common conception of the virtuoso. In the play, Sir Formal Trifle, a friend and admirer of Sir Nicholas Gimcrack, the virtuoso, speaks of his friend to Longvil and Bruce who aspired to flatter the virtuoso in the hope of furthering their respective suits for the hands of his nieces Clarinda and Miranda. Sir Formal says:

... Trust me, he is the finest speculative Gentleman in the whole World, and in his Cogitations the most serene Animal alive: not a Creature so little, but affords him great Curiosities: ...<sup>25</sup>

Because of his own nature as an amorist and coxcomb, Sir Samuel Hearty's comment that "he's an enemy to Wit, as all Vertuoso's are" does little discredit to the scholars or the philosophers. Clarinda and Miranda, however, in their chagrin at being under the governance of Sir Nicholas, speak more in the common idiom of criticisms of the virtuosi when they say of their uncle:

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<sup>25</sup> Thomas Shadwell, "The Virtuoso," in The Complete Works of Thomas Shadwell, ed. Montague Summers, (London, 1927), 111.



Clarinda: A Sot, that has spent 2000£ in Microscopes, to find out the Nature of Eels in Vinegar, Mites in Cheese, and the Blue of Plums, which he has subtilly found out to be living Creatures.

Miranda: One who has broken his brains about the nature of Maggots; who has studi'd these twenty years to find out the several sorts of Spiders, and never cares for understanding Mankind.<sup>26</sup>

The irony is that time has justified the type of activity in which Sir Nicholas was said to have been engaged.

A more extreme parody on the activities of the virtuosi occurs in the account of Sir Nicholas's learning to swim. Longvil and Bruce, who want to see Sir Nicholas, learn from Lady Gimcrack that he is taking swimming lessons in his laboratory:

Lady Gimcrack: He has a Frog in a Bowl of Water, ty'd with a pack-thred by the loins; which pack-thred Sir Nicholas holds in his teeth, lying upon his belly on a Table; and as the Frog strikes, he strikes; and his Swimming-Master stands by, to tell him when he does well or ill.

Longvil: This is the rarest Fop that ever was heard of.

Bruce: Few Virtuoso's can arrive to this pitch, Madam. This is the most curious invention I ever heard of.

Lady Gimcrack: Alas! he has many such; He is a rare Mechanick Philosopher. The

Colledge indeed refus'd him, they envy'd  
him.<sup>27</sup>

Some of the virtuosi probably earned this kind of raillery, not only because their activities actually were outlandish, but because they assumed an air of intellectual superiority in doing them.

There is much talk about blood transfusions in the play. With obvious reference to the experiment which Pepys saw at the Royal Society, Sir Nicholas speaks of transfusing blood from a sheep to a madman. He says that the madman ceased to be mad, became sheepish indeed, bleated, and chewed the cud, grew wool and a tail. On this, Snarl, Sir Nicholas's uncle and an admirer of the old learning, retorts:

In sadness Nephew, I am asham'd of you,  
you will never leave Lying and Quacking  
with your Transfusions and fools-tricks.  
I believe if the blood of an Ass were  
transfused into a Virtuoso, you would  
not know the emittent Ass from the re-  
cipient Philosopher, by the Mass.<sup>28</sup>

When the ribbon weavers attack the home of Sir Nicholas because it was rumoured that he had invented an engine loom to manufacture ribbon,

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<sup>27</sup>Shadwell, "The Virtuoso," 125.

<sup>28</sup>Shadwell, "The Virtuoso," 130.

Sir Nicholas cries out in desperation:

Hear me, Gentlemen, I never invented an Engine in my life; as Gad shall sa'me you do me wrong. I never invented so much as an Engine to pair Cream-cheese with. We Virtuoso's never find out any thing of use, 'tis not our way.<sup>29</sup>

Contemporary criticism of the virtuosi, whether irreverent and ribald like that of Shadwell, or profound and esoteric like that of the scholars, was the outward and visible sign of an informal alliance between the ivory tower of Aristotelianism and religious obscurantism on the one hand, and the market place on the other. Few critics bothered to distinguish between the genuine investigators and experimenters amongst the virtuosi and the eccentrics and dilettanti who constituted their lunatic fringe. Nevertheless, the persistence of the attacks on the virtuosi is a measure of their impact upon the age. It was as though their critics were aware of the vigour of the intellectual revolution they had to combat. In the end, the critics lost and the virtuosi won. Whitehead has said with some regret that since the seventeenth century, the scientific attitude has dominated thought to the virtual exclusion of other tenable philosophies.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Shadwell, "The Virtuoso," 169.

<sup>30</sup> Whitehead, Science and the Modern World, 51-52.

In the main, Evelyn and Pepys preserved a dignified silence towards contemporary attacks on the virtuosi, though we have seen that Evelyn resented the statements of Dr. South at Oxford, and Pepys had little patience with some of the views expressed by Sir George Mackenzie in his book The Virtuoso, or the Stoicke. On the other hand, both diarists often referred sympathetically to the work of their fellow members of the Royal Society. Evelyn, especially, identified himself as one working actively in the general endeavour to advance knowledge and practice. The purpose of this study is to discover to what degree Pepys and Evelyn associated themselves with the significant cultural movements of the Restoration period and to show whether or not they were representative virtuosi in the broad conception of the term.

## CHAPTER II

### THE DIARIES OF PEPYS AND EVELYN IN RELATION TO THEIR LIVES.

Samuel Pepys and John Evelyn both derived from families whose advancement in social and economic importance was evidence of the mobility of English society in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Evelyn, the older of the two, was born at Wotton in Surrey on October 31, 1620, on one of the estates bought by his grandfather who had founded the family fortune by becoming principal manufacturer of gunpowder to Queen Elizabeth. The Pepys family, originally serfs, had achieved considerable prominence in Cambridgeshire and Norfolk by the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. However, Samuel Pepys's father--the younger son of a man who had bought the manor of Impington with his second wife's dowry--had little legacy to his portion and settled in London where he became a tailor. Samuel Pepys was born in the living quarters above his father's tailoring shop on February 23, 1633.

During Samuel's boyhood, the influence of Puritanism in London was approaching its height, especially among the middle classes to which his father belonged. Young Pepys was trained according to the strict Puritan regimen, with emphasis upon the virtues of industry, respectability, orderliness, punctuality, and thrift.<sup>1</sup> Sundays were

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<sup>1</sup> Arthur Bryant, Samuel Pepys: The Man in the Making, (London, 1949), 7, 8.

observed with morning and afternoon attendance at St. Bride's church. The Pepys's home, however, was neither narrowly sectarian nor uncultured. The elder Pepys loved nothing better than to play his old bass viol after the day's work. From him, Samuel obtained the love of music that was his consuming passion throughout life.

When it came time for his formal education to begin, Samuel Pepys was sent to St. Paul's, one of the most puritanical schools in the country. There he gained a thorough grounding in Latin and Greek, becoming, if not an outstanding scholar, at least an accomplished one. True to his training, he sympathized with the cause of parliament during the Civil War. When he witnessed the execution of Charles I on January 30, 1649, he remarked unctuously to his friends that if he were to preach a sermon on the occasion, his text would be, "The memory of the wicked shall rot."<sup>2</sup> When the time came for Samuel Pepys to proceed to university, his father was in severe financial trouble both because trade was bad and because the Merchant Tailors were trying to exclude from the trade those, like the elder Pepys, who were not members of their company. Fortunately, Samuel was granted a scholarship to Trinity Hall, Cambridge. About this time, an acquaintance of his father, John Sadler, was appointed Master of

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<sup>2</sup>Bryant, The Man in the Making, 18.

Magdalene. Through his influence, Pepys transferred to Magdalene and soon was elected a Scholar on the Spendluffe Foundation.<sup>3</sup>

At Cambridge, Samuel was neither as prudent nor as studious as his tutors expected him to be. He was inveterately curious, enjoyed the occasional prank, was once reprimanded before all the Fellows of his college for having been drunk,<sup>4</sup> experimented in love, and even wrote a play, called Love--a--Cheat. Years later, on January 30, 1664, when tidying his papers, Pepys found the old manuscript and destroyed it. He wrote whimsically in his diary on that occasion:

... I tore some old papers; among others, a romance which (under the title "Love a Cheate") I begun ten years ago at Cambridge; and at this time reading it over tonight I liked it very well, and wondered a little at myself at my vein at that time when I wrote it, doubting that I cannot do so well now if I would try.

(Pepys, IV, 25)

Amid all these experiences, Pepys paid due, if not assiduous, attention to his studies, read widely, mastered the classics, and, in October, 1653, graduated with his B.A. degree.

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<sup>3</sup> Bryant, The Man in the Making, 20.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 24

After leaving Cambridge, Pepys had a slim time of it, doing nothing more exciting than working at menial tasks for his father. His lack of prospects did not prevent his marrying Elizabeth, the beautiful fifteen-year-old daughter of Alexander Marchant de St. Michel, a penniless and apparently feckless French Huguenot emigré. Fortunately, because of his connections, Pepy's circumstances soon improved. Edward Montagu, his kinsman by marriage, had advanced rapidly under Cromwell. When, in January, 1656, he was made Joint-Commander with Robert Blake of the Commonwealth fleet, he decided that he needed someone to look after his financial affairs at home. Pepys was selected for the task.<sup>5</sup> He was assiduous in his duties, not failing to cultivate the acquaintance of those with whom his duties brought him into contact. One of these was John Creed, Montagu's secretary. Between the two grew up a strong but curious attachment, punctuated by intense rivalry.

After the death of Oliver Cromwell, Edward Montagu lost his command of the fleet for declaring too soon his support for the royalists. When he prudently retired to the country, he asked Pepys, who by this time had become clerk to George Downing at the Exchequer, to keep him informed of events in London. Pepys was quickly rewarded

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<sup>5</sup> Bryant, The Man in the Making, 31-32.



for his diligence, being appointed secretary to Montagu when his patron was returned to favour and he made General-at-Sea just prior to the Restoration. On May 23, 1660, Pepys was present to kiss the King's hand when Charles II boarded Montagu's flagship at The Hague. Pepys introduced himself at that time to the Duke of York, afterwards recording in his new diary:

I spoke with the Duke of York about business, who called me Pepys by name, and upon my desire did promise me his future favour.

(Pepys, I, 149)

This incident began Pepys's long and loyal association with James. Soon after the Restoration, Pepys, through Montagu's influence, obtained the position of Clerk of the Acts to the Navy at the considerable salary for that day of £350 a year. He now ranked as a Commissioner for the Navy and was responsible for all the navy's accounts and correspondence, including the awarding of contracts.

For the nine years following January 1, 1660, we have a minute record of Pepys's life and career, for it was on that date that he began his famous diary. We know, for instance, that throughout the plague year, 1665, Pepys remained steadfastly at his post in London. He was too busy to worry much for himself, though he sent his family to Woolwich and tabulated the deaths as they increased frighteningly during the summer, and then decreased in

the late autumn and winter. He was not, however, too busy to comment on the desertion of the city:

But, Lord! what a sad time it is to see no boats  
upon the River; and grass grows all up and down  
White Hall court, and nobody but poor wretches  
in the streets.

(Pepys, V, 80)

In October of that year, Pepys was appointed Surveyor-General of the Victualling. He had wanted the post, but he was almost as pleased at William Coventry's recommendation as he was at the £300 annual income:

But, indeed, the terms in which Mr. Coventry  
proposes it for me are the most obliging that  
ever I could expect from any man, and more;  
it saying me to be the fittest man in England,  
and that he is sure, if I will undertake, I  
will perform it....

(Pepys, V, 120-121)

Pepys was no less resourceful and resolute during the Great Fire of London (September, 1666) than he had been in the plague year. Besides recording the chaotic scenes in the most memorable account that we have of the Great Fire, he applied his practical mind to devising ways to stop the flames. He suggested to the King that the only way to save any part of the city was to pull down

houses in the path of the fire. At the King's command, he then carried an order to this effect to the Lord Mayor (Pepys, V, 393-394). But the authorities would not or could not cope with the emergency, so Pepys set about saving his own gold and valuables. He did help to save the Navy Office by persuading his fellow-officers to call up men from the navy yards to demolish houses around the buildings.

The year 1667, which was calamitous for England, threatened to be no less so for Pepys and his fellow-Commissioners of the Navy. On June 10, 1667, the Dutch fleet under de Ruyter had appeared off the Nore in the mouth of the Thames; on the eleventh, the Dutch took Sheerness; on the twelfth, came intelligence that the Dutch had broken through the boom chain that guarded the naval dockyard at Chatham, had burned several ships, and had taken off the "Royal Charles", the pride of the English fleet, as a prize. The English fleet, almost immobilized by lack of funds, could do little, despite Pepys's frantic efforts to hire and man fire-ships.

Faced with a rising tide of antagonism in London against those responsible for the national humiliation, the King, on June 25, decided to convene Parliament. Though Pepys was overjoyed at the news, he foresaw that as a result of the enquiries that would inevitably follow, several officials connected with the navy would suffer. (Pepys, VI, 369).

Characteristically, Pepys began early to prepare against the gathering storm. On July 28, he wrote his letter of resignation from the Victualling Office. Early in October, he planned to get rid of his interest in the privateer "The Flying Greyhound," which he had owned jointly with Sir W. Batten and Sir William Penn. On February 28, 1668, the axe fell. The Commissioners were ordered to appear before the bar of Parliament itself to justify their practice of paying sailors by ticket. To complicate matters, Pepys, Batten, and Penn were accused of having paid off sailors on "The Flying Greyhound" before they paid those in the regular navy. Unfortunately, this accusation was true. (Pepys, VII, 324).

Realizing that the other Officers depended on him, Pepys worked systematically to prepare his defence. After working on his case throughout March 4, 1668, he slept badly that night, though he was comforted in the early morning by his wife's encouragement. She persuaded him that it would be better to resign his office before Parliament dispossessed him of it. The next day, he cooled his heels in Westminster Hall, fortifying his courage with sack and brandy as he awaited the summons of the House. However, when he began speaking at about 12 o'clock, all trepidation and doubt left him. As he afterwards wrote:

... I began our defence most acceptably and

smoothly, and continued at it without any hesitation or losse, but with full scope, and all my reason free about me, as if it had been at my own table, from that time till past three in the afternoon: and so ended, without any interruption from the Speaker; but we withdrew. And there all my Fellow-Officers, and all the world that was within hearing, did congratulate me, and cry up my speech as the best thing they ever heard; and my Fellow-Officers enjoyed in it....

(Pepys, VII, 327)

After that speech there was no more talk of resignation. For days afterwards, Pepys basked in the eulogies of everyone from the King downwards. Sir William Coventry greeted him the next day with, "Good-morrow Mr. Pepys that must be Speaker of the Parliament-House" (Pepys, VII, 328). The King said, "Mr. Pepys, I am very glad of your success yesterday" (Pepys, VII, 328). Mr. G. Montagu called him another Cicero (Pepys, VII, 329). Mr. Vaughan said that he had never heard such a speech in <sup>twenty-six</sup> 26 years in Parliament (Pepys, VII, 329).

The speech marked a turning point in Pepy's career. As a result of it, at the age of thirty-six, he had acquired a new and justified self-confidence and had earned the respect of men of importance throughout the kingdom. Pepys was characteristically canny about his success. On March 13, he prepared to attend

Parliament again, but remarked with self-appraising candour,  
 "... not to make any more speech, which, while my fame is good,  
 I will avoid, for fear of losing it"(Pepys, VII, 336).

Pepys was soon talking of reorganizing the navy under himself. He had his friend and subordinate, William Hewer, to dinner on April 5, and in the course of conversation said, regarding the operations of the office:

... and so much work that is not made the work of any one man, but of all, and so is never done; and that the best way to have it well done, were to have the whole trust in one, as myself, to set whom I pleased to work in the several businesses of the Office, and me to be accountable for the whole....

(Pepys, VII, 366)

By August 16, 1668, Pepys was at work on his "great letter" to the Duke of York regarding the faults of the navy and how to correct them. On August 22, the letter was finished, and, on the following day, after re-reading it with a tube held against his eyes to prevent pain, he took it to the Duke of York. The Duke liked it so well that he decided to present it to the Navy Board himself. One of the crowning satisfactions of Pepys's life came on May 8, 1669, when his bookseller placed in his hands the bound collection of his recommendations for the reform of the navy. On

that occasion, he recorded in his diary:

(This) ... makes me very glad, it being that which shall do me more right many years hence than, perhaps, all I ever did in my life: and therefore I do, both for my own and the King's sake, value it much.

(Pepys, VIII, 299)

Pepys was wrong in one respect. He did not anticipate that his abiding fame would result from the diary in which he recorded those words.

Unfortunately, the diary came to an end in May, 1669. For years, Pepys's eyes had been bothering him. At first he thought his ailment might have been due to his changing his brewer (Pepys, V, 280), but it proved to be no temporary condition. He sought advice from Robert Boyle and Dr. Turberville; tried to conserve his eyes by dictating his letters and memoranda and by having his wife and others read to him; used long paper tube spectacles of the type recommended by Shotgrave of the Royal Society, but to no avail. On May 16, 1669, Pepys petitioned the Duke of York for three or four months' leave of absence to rest his eyes by taking a trip abroad. On May 31, he penned the last pathetic entry in the diary:

And thus ends all that I doubt I shall ever be able to do with my own eyes in the keeping of my Journal, I being not able to do it any longer, having done now so long as to undo my

eyes almost every time that I take a pen in my hand; and therefore, whatever comes of it, I must forbear; and, therefore, resolve, from this time forward, to have it kept by my people in long-hand, and must therefore be contented to set down no more than is fit for them and all the world to know.

(Pepys, VIII, 313)

Though his eyesight improved considerably, Pepys never again undertook a diary of the scope of the one he had reluctantly concluded in 1669. His "Second Diary", written when he accompanied Lord Dartmouth's expedition in 1683 to destroy the British base at Tangier, though penned in shorthand like the earlier diary, rarely has the verve and imaginative perception that distinguished its predecessor.

Pepys returned to the Navy Office after his holiday, but was soon grief-stricken by the death of his wife, Elizabeth, in the autumn of 1669. He never married again, but formed an attachment with Mary Skinner, who, ostensibly his housekeeper, was, as recently discovered evidence has shown, actually his mistress from 1670<sup>6</sup> onwards.

If Pepys did not become the autocrat of the navy as he would

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Samuel Pepys, The Letters and the Second Diary of Samuel Pepys, ed. R.G. Howarth, (London, 1932), p. x.



have liked, he became very nearly that in 1673 when he was made Secretary for the Affairs of the Navy.<sup>7</sup> This was the same year in which, the first of many times, he was elected a Member of Parliament. In 1684, Charles created the office of Secretary of the Admiralty and appointed Pepys to be the first incumbent.<sup>8</sup> Pepys remained Secretary throughout the reign of James II, until dismissed by the Commissioners of the Admiralty on March 9, 1689, after the King's abdication.<sup>9</sup>

In old age, Pepys suffered from a complication of his old ailment of the stone. After the turn of the eighteenth century, he was increasingly confined to the home of his old clerk, William Hewer, at Clapham, where he and Mary Skinner had gone to live. Pepys, chafing at his immobility, wrote pathetically to Evelyn on November 19, 1701:

As much as I am (I bless God!) in perfect present ease here, as to my health, 'tis little less, however, than a very burial to me, as to what of all worldly good I put most price upon, I mean, the few old and learned friends I had flattered myself with the hopes of closing the little residue of my

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<sup>7</sup> Pepys's Diary, Wheatley, I, xxx.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., xxxix.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., xl.

life in the continued enjoyment of, and at the head of them all, the most inestimable Mr. Evelyn. But Providence, that must not be repined at, has thought fit to part us; yet not without a reserve, I trust, of another place of meeting for us, and better, and more lasting, for which God fit us!<sup>10</sup>

Samuel Pepys died on May 26, 1703, and was buried in St. Olave's Church, London, under the monument to his wife. Evelyn recorded the death of Pepys in his own diary, saying in part:

26. This (day) dyed Mr. Sam: Pepys, a very worthy, industrious, & curious person ... universally beloved, Hospitable, Generous, Learned in many things, skill'd in Musick, a very greate Cherisher of Learned men, of whom he had the Conversation.

(Evelyn, V, 537-538, May 26, 1703)

No biography of Pepys, however brief, would be complete without some reference to the style and content of the diary. Besides establishing Pepys's claim to be a virtuoso, the diary recaptures the sounds and smells of Restoration London and faithfully reanimates the gossip of its coffee houses, the vulgarity of its amusements, the hustle of its business, the excitement of its theatres, and the feckless abandon of its court. Its pages mirror the great controversies of the day, particularly regarding religion and the constant struggle

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Pepys, Letters and Second Diary, 334.

between King and Parliament. Though not personally devout-- he confessed that he did not take communion often enough, and prudently decided not to go to church at all when the number of new graves of plague victims began to frighten him. (Pepys, V, 199). Pepys never tired of writing about the cross-currents of religious opinion that kept the kingdom in a continual state of agitation throughout the Restoration.

In an age of poor communications, rumour ran riot through the streets of London, especially concerning such events as the wars with the Dutch. Whenever the navy was involved, so was Pepys. He was often in a sweat of doubt about the progress of battles, about the safety of his mast fleets in storms, about the situation in Tangier, about the omnipresent threat of parliamentary enquiry. He worried persistently about the lack of money to outfit his ships and pay his sailors. All his doubts and fears, fed by ubiquitous rumour, he confided to his diary.

Pepys was devoted to his relatives though he was often irritated by them and, sometimes, was ashamed of them. His diary registers his concern for the welfare of his parents and his solicitude for his brother and sister. It reveals also his arguments with his wife, his contretemps with his maids, his ambiguous relationships with his business associates. He unblushingly records his own quirks

of character--his hypochondria, his pre-occupation with sex, his vanity in clothes, his love for the material things of life. The whole man is laid bare in the diary. He was contradictory, sometimes petulant, sometimes vindictive, occasionally great--as when, a David of the Navy Office, he confronted the Goliath of Parliament--and sometimes petty, as on the occasion when he spent "... an hour making a hole behind my seat in my closet to look into the office.... (Pepys, II, 261).

Pepys's keen eye for significant detail, his genuine interest in people, and his insatiable curiosity gave him the power to recount vividly such catastrophes as the Plague and the Great Fire. He concentrated upon the reactions of individuals, or upon sharply visualized incidents which emphasized the impact of the whole. But it was not only about the great events of his time that Pepys was extraordinarily articulate and perceptive. He was no less able to communicate his own lively awareness of the plays he saw, of the musical evenings he enjoyed, of any of his countless, evanescent experiences which, because they were significant to him, he has been able to make significant for us.

Pepys's style was as rich and various as his interests were universal. His change of pace and subject would have been bewildering had he not possessed an innate ability to effect transitions easily

and with consummate charm. In part of one day, he talked of walking in a park, described the house therein, referred movingly to a little girl heard singing, spoke of Bowyer's youthful looks at forty-one, took coach to London, had dinner with Lord Bruncker, enjoyed a bout of gambling, and, in the end, returned home to practise his musical scale before going to bed (Pepys, V, 82). His sentences tumbled after one another, packed with infinite detail, often graced with a deft turn of phrase. Sometimes venomous, he spoke of Creed as "so devilish a subtle, false rogue" (Pepys, VI, 289) and wrote with a candour that disdained the social niceties. He had no compunction in referring to his rector Mr. Mills as "... a lazy, fat priest" (Pepys, VI, 328), and to Mr. Ensum as "... my sister's sweetheart, being dead: a clowne" (Pepys, VI, 93). Pepys rarely recollected events in tranquillity, but when the pressure of events prevented his writing a daily entry in his diary, his comments lost the tang of immediacy.

Whereas Evelyn's style in his diary was heavily latinized, Pepys usually wrote in vivid Anglo-Saxon, not shrinking from saying that Pett was in a "... very fearful stink" (Pepys, VI, 338) for fear of the Dutch. His style was terse, graphic, pungent, and pithy. Though he apparently did not appreciate the humour implicit in the accounts of many of the intimate circumstances and situations of his

own life, he revealed a sly sense of humour in writing about others, as when he waited upon Lord Arlington, but found him "... not up, being not long since married" (Pepys, V, 339). More often, his amusing juxtaposition of ideas sharply illuminated his own character as when he spoke of his concern at the mortal illness of Sir W. Batten "... partly out of kindness, he being a good neighbour--and partly because of the money he owes me...." (Pepys, VII, 126).

Tanner has suggested that among other things, Pepys's diary may be considered as the private leisure of a supreme egotist creating reminiscences for himself, or as the work of an artist seeking self-expression.<sup>11</sup>

Though Pepys was certainly an egotist and innately an artist, either interpretation probably ascribes too much premeditation to Pepys's intentions. More likely, his diary grew spontaneously out of the nature of the man whose zest for life and boundless energy compelled him to re-create his experiences for his private enjoyment.

There was, indeed, a curious dichotomy between the private and public characters of Pepys. Though he was often immature, querulous,

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J.R. Tanner, Mr. Pepys, An Introduction to the Diary, (London, 1925), xi-xii.

and irritable, he revealed his true stature when under stress--when required to answer to Parliament, or when confronted with some emergency in the Navy Office. By turns coarse and sensitive, selfish and generous, indefatigable and lazy, he was susceptible to gusts of jealousy and suspicion. Nevertheless, he was unquestionably trustworthy and loyal to his office, his patrons, and his King.

Unlike Pepys, John Evelyn had a fitful and somewhat casual education. When he was five, he was sent to live with his maternal grandfather near Lewes. He attended the Free School at Scarborough, but showed little aptitude or inclination for learning (Evelyn, I, 5). He might have been sent to Eton when he was twelve, but being afraid of the reputedly severe discipline there,<sup>12</sup> he remained instead with his grandfather's widow. On holidays spent at home, young Evelyn was much more interested in the farming operations of his father's estate than he was in reading. As a result of his rudimentary schooling, Evelyn was insufficiently prepared for university work when he entered Balliol College, Oxford, as a Fellow Commoner in May, 1637.

Evelyn stayed at Balliol for three years, taking the regular arts course, but leaving without graduating. He then went to the

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W.G. Hiscock, John Evelyn and His Family Circle, (London, 1955, 3.

Middle Temple, ostensibly to study law, but again he took no interest in his studies. He was by now independently wealthy. Not only had he inherited an adequate estate from his mother's father, but, following the death of his own father in 1640, he fell heir to an estate at Lewes and £4,000 in cash (Evelyn, I, 5).

In April, 1641, to gain military experience, Evelyn went to Holland to join an English volunteer company helping the Dutch in the siege against the Spanish at Gennepe. He disliked soldiering, soon left the company, and spent the next four months travelling, studying art and architecture, and buying books and paintings. He visited the famed printing house of Dan Heinsius at Leyden; received a certificate of matriculation from Leyden University; visited churches, monasteries, and Jesuit colleges and inspected palaces that had notable art collections. In Ghent, he met Lord Arundel, the famous art connoisseur, who helped him discipline his interest in art, architecture, and landscaping (Evelyn, I, 5).

Evelyn returned to England in October, 1641, when the conflict between King and Parliament was intensifying. As an ardent royalist, he might have been expected to hasten to join the King, but prudence dictated otherwise. First, his older brother, George, was more in sympathy with Parliament than with the King although his loyalty to the Church of England kept him neutral. What was more important,



the Evelyn estates lay in territory controlled by Parliament, and had John joined the Royalists, the estates might have been forfeited. Evelyn made only a token show of loyalty to the King by serving a day or two at the Battle of Brentford, and, later, by sending a horse to him.<sup>13</sup> However, when Parliament tried to extract an oath of loyalty from him, he decided to go on the Grand Tour. He left England in November, 1643, and did not return until August, 1647.

After staying in Paris until April, 1644, Evelyn went to Orleans, Tours, Lyons, Avignon, and Marseilles. In October, he sailed from Cannes to Genoa and proceeded rapidly through Pisa and Leghorn to Florence. He stayed almost a month in Florence, viewing its illustrious buildings, its paintings, its churches, and its "curiosities". He went by way of Siena to Rome, arriving there on November 4, 1644 and remaining until May 18, 1645.

When in Rome, Evelyn visited monuments associated with pagan antiquity, and saw relics of the early Christian martyrs. He steeped himself in Renaissance art. He saw churches, private palaces, and gardens. From Rome, Evelyn retraced his steps to Florence, crossed over to Bologna and Venice, staying in and around the latter city, aside from a trip to Padua, from June, 1645 until May, 1646. He was

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<sup>13</sup>Evelyn's Diary, de Beer, I, 7.

captivated by the cosmopolitan quality of Venice and by its associations with the east. He seriously planned making a trip to the Holy Land. Instead, he went to Verona, then to Milan. After a harrowing journey through the Simplon Pass, Evelyn reached Geneva in May, 1646.

Evelyn kept an extensive record of everything he saw and did on his journey until he arrived back in Paris in July, 1646. After that, he was so busy courting Mary, the twelve-year-old daughter of Sir Richard Browne, Charles I's Minister at the French court, that he had no time or inclination to write many entries in his diary (Evelyn, II, 535-536, May--June, 1647). Evelyn married Mary on June 27, 1647, but left his child-bride with her parents when he returned to England in September, 1647.

Though Evelyn visited Charles I, who was then a prisoner at Hampton Court, he scrupulously avoided becoming involved in politics. Instead, he spent his time improving the gardens at Wotton and at Sayes Court, his father-in-law's estate on the Thames. Even his horror at the execution of the King, vividly recorded in his diary, did not provoke him into a public outburst. He was rewarded for his prudence in 1652, when the Puritans allowed him to take possession of his father-in-law's confiscated estate. His wife and her mother soon joined him at Sayes Court where his first son, Richard, was born in August.

During the next several years, Evelyn made his home at Sayes Court, improving its garden and planting trees according to a master plan that he had drawn up in 1652.<sup>14</sup>

Following the death of Oliver Cromwell in September, 1658, Evelyn began to work in a modest way for the restoration of Charles II. With considerable courage, he wrote a tract, "An Apology for the Royal Party; written in a letter to a person of the late Council of State," in which he argued that as rebellion had resulted in slavery and anarchy, the only way to restore the situation was to recall Charles II.<sup>15</sup> Although Evelyn was prevented by illness from pursuing the initiative which he had seized, he was well enough to stand joyfully amongst the enthusiastic crowd which welcomed Charles's return to his capital on May 29, 1660.

The decade of the sixties was Evelyn's most prolific literary period,<sup>16</sup> probably because he had to wait longer than he had anticipated for public employment under the new regime. In this respect, Evelyn was like many other royalists who had expected the King on his accession to deprive those who had profited by their allegiance to Cromwell during the interregnum of their acquisitions of property, and

<sup>14</sup> Hiscock, Evelyn and His Family Circle, 28.

<sup>15</sup> Evelyn's Diary, de Beer, I, 13.

<sup>16</sup> Hiscock, Evelyn and His Family Circle, 49.

of their official positions in the kingdom. Eventually, after war had broken out against the Dutch in 1664, the government established a Commission to look after sick and wounded seamen. The King appointed Evelyn one of the four commissioners at a salary of £300 a year.

It was inevitable that in his new position, Evelyn would, sooner or later, meet the Clerk of the Acts, Samuel Pepys. Pepys recorded one of their first meetings when, on September 9, 1665, he said that he, Evelyn, Captain Cocke, and Sir William Doyly had lamented the shortage of money, and the inattention of the King and his ministers to business (Pepys, V, 66-67). Like Pepys, Evelyn stayed at his post in London during the plague year, and no doubt the two men developed a respect for each other at that time. On September 27, 1665, after noting the first substantial decrease in plague deaths, Pepys wrote of a stimulating conversation he had had with Evelyn:

... Back again the same way and had most excellent discourse of Mr. Evelyn touching all manner of learning; wherein I find him a very fine gentleman, and particularly of paynting.

(Pepys, V, 90)

Pepys was obviously flattered by the friendship of one so much his social superior, for his diary from 1665 onwards contains

many references to Evelyn. Evelyn seems to have enjoyed his ascendancy in the relationship. Inclined to be pedantic, he was never so happy as when he could find someone willing to listen to his advice. Nevertheless, Pepys was not uncritical of Evelyn, nor was he, as Clara Marburg has said, "deferential to Evelyn's creative efforts."<sup>17</sup> On November 5, 1665, he visited Evelyn at Sayes Court, after which he wrote in his diary:

... He read to me very much also of his discourse, he hath been many years and now is about, about Guardenage; which will be a most noble and pleasant piece. He read me part of a play or two of his making, very good, but not as he conceits them, I think, to be. ... In fine, a most excellent person he is, and must be allowed a little for a little conceitedness; but he may well be so, being a man so much above others. He read me, though with too much gusto, some little poems of his own, that were not transcendent, yet one or two very pretty epigrams; among others, of a lady looking in at a grate, and being pecked at by an eagle that was there.

(Pepys, V, 128)

There is something irreverent in this appraisal of Evelyn, particularly in the understatement about the poems not being transcendent,

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<sup>17</sup> Clara Marburg, Mr. Pepys and Mr. Evelyn, (Philadelphia, 1935), 50.

and the account of the incongruous adventure between the lady and the eagle.

Evelyn was a success as a commissioner for sick and wounded seamen and soon gained other preferments. In 1666, he was appointed to a Commission to regulate the manufacture of gunpowder in the kingdom (Evelyn, III, 443, July 2, 1666)--a reasonable appointment in view of the family's earlier connection with the business. In the same year, he was appointed one of a small committee to plan repairs to St. Paul's Cathedral.<sup>18</sup> Before anything could be decided about this, St. Paul's and a great part of London were destroyed in the Great Fire which began on September 2. Because Evelyn kept himself aloof from political intrigues, he was not adversely affected by the fall of Clarendon after the disastrous Dutch War of 1667. On the contrary, the new regime of Arlington and Clifford appointed him to the important Council for Foreign Plantations at a salary of £500 a year. Colonies were known as "Plantations" in the seventeenth century; and a large part of the new Council's responsibilities was to regain control of the New England colonies, which, having become largely self-governing during the interregnum, were already showing the independence of spirit which was to lead to the

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<sup>18</sup>

Evelyn's Diary, de Beer, I, 19.

revolution a hundred years later.

During these and subsequent years, Evelyn's public duties by no means exhausted all his energies. He continued to write prolifically, to travel extensively throughout England--visiting libraries, homes, and gardens--to support the Royal Society actively, and to advance an astonishing number of worthy causes.

One of Evelyn's worthy causes concerned the care and development of libraries. At one time, Dr. Tenison, who later became Archbishop of Canterbury, complained to Evelyn that young clergymen of his parish when reproached for frequenting public houses retorted that they would gladly read books if they had any. Dr. Tenison asked Evelyn to solicit Sir Christopher Wren's assistance in designing a public library for St. Martin's parish. Afterwards, Evelyn wrote in his diary:

... & indeede a greate reproach it is, that so great a Citty as Lond: should have never a publique Library becoming it: There ought to be one at S. Paules, the West end of that Church, (if ever finish'd) would be a convenient place.

(Evelyn, IV, 367-368,  
Feb. 13, 1684)

When Evelyn was asked to help plan the Chelsea Hospital for old soldiers, he included a library in his design and recommended certain books for it (Evelyn, IV, 270). When Evelyn was 79, the

great Bishop Stillingfleet of Worcester died, leaving a famous library. Thereupon, Evelyn went into action again:

I went to Lambeth dined with the A:B but my buisnesse was to get him to perswade the K: to purchase the late B: of Worcesters Library, & build a place for his owne Library at St. Jamess (which is too little &c) in the Parke.

(Evelyn, V, 323, April 29, 1699)

Within a few days, the Royal Society had established a committee, with Evelyn a member, to wait upon the Lord Chancellor to persuade him to use his influence with the King to buy the library (Evelyn, V, 324, May 3, 1699). Evelyn and his committee were evidently unsuccessful in their pleas as part of Stillingfleet's library is now in Marsh's Library in Dublin, while his manuscripts are among the Harleian manuscripts in the British Museum (Evelyn, V, 323, n.3, April 29, 1699).

Another enthusiasm of Evelyn's was for the reform of the English language. As early as January 24, 1665, he had been a member of a committee of the Royal Society set up to investigate that possibility (Evelyn, III, 396, Jan. 24, 1665). His ideas about the language were extensively developed in a long letter to Pepys, dated October 4, 1689. He advocated, among other things, an official grammar and an official dictionary of the English language, some authority to accept or reject new words, a study of English idioms



and dialects, a greater variety of punctuation marks, and some direction regarding elegance in style.<sup>19</sup> An execrable speller himself, even by seventeenth-century standards, Evelyn recommended a modification of English spelling rules that had much in common with modern American spelling.<sup>20</sup>

Evelyn remained a staunch royalist even though repelled by the immorality of the court, by Charles's attacks on the freedom of the City of London, and, finally, by the knowledge that the King had died a Roman Catholic.<sup>21</sup> He detested James II's advocacy of the Catholic interest (Evelyn, IV, 599-600, Oct. 1688), but he was too much of a legitimist to be happy at the accession to the throne of William and Mary. In particular, he thought that Queen Mary succeeded her father with unbecoming alacrity and joy (Evelyn, IV, 624-625, Feb. 22, 1689).

Evelyn continued active until an advanced age. In 1692, when he was 72, he was appointed Commissioner of the Irish Revenue, and moved from Sayes Court to London, where he leased a house on Dover Street.<sup>22</sup> After 1699, in which year he fell heir to Wotton

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<sup>19</sup> Pepys, Letters and Second Diary, 207-210.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 207.

<sup>21</sup> Evelyn's Diary, de Beer, I, passim.

<sup>22</sup> Evelyn's Diary, de Beer, I, 34.

on the death of his brother, George, he spent his winters in London and his summers at the ancestral estate. Evelyn's last letter to Pepys, dated from London, January 20, 1703, is an incredible record of his unflagging powers into extreme old age. He wrote of recent improvements that he had made at Wotton, of the progress of his grandson in his studies, and of his delight in reading Clarendon's History of the Rebellion.<sup>23</sup> Evelyn continued chronicling his own activities and the events of his day until February 4, 1706, by which time he was on his death bed. He died at his Dover Street house in London on February 27, 1706.

Evelyn's Diary lacks the immediacy and topicality of Pepys's Diary. The day-to-day entries are usually pedestrian in expression and often short to the point of being cryptic. Nor are they illuminated by the sharp perception of details, or by the flashes of intimate characterization that distinguish Pepys's entries. Moreover, the longer entries in Evelyn have often been re-written and expanded, sometimes by the addition of later recollections of the diarist, sometimes by comments on developments that postdated the original entry, frequently by intrusions of material and opinions derived from such sources as books and newspapers. Nevertheless, the diary is unified by Evelyn's discriminating good taste and by the consistency of his

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<sup>23</sup> Pepys, Letters and Second Diary, 369-372.

point of view over a long lifetime.

In his definitive edition of Evelyn's Diary published in 1955, E.S. de Beer produces evidence to prove that the earliest date for the composition of the present manuscript was 1660.<sup>24</sup> Everything dated prior to that time was copied by Evelyn from his original notes, often with additional comments. In a passage for October 21, 1644, describing Leghorn, Evelyn spoke of the houses being low, and then added in parentheses "... in regard of the Earth-quakes which frequently happen here to their greate terror, as did one during my being in Italy (Evelyn, II, 184, October 21, 1644). Sometimes, the comments added later are even more noticeable. The entry for May 5, 1654, is, in part, as follows:

... I bound my (laquay) Tho: Heath  
Apprentise to a Carpenter, giving  
with him 5 pounds, and new Cloathing:  
he thriv'd very well & became rich:

(Evelyn, III, 95, May 5, 1654)

From such internal evidence, de Beer deduces that the diary did not actually become a contemporary record until about the beginning of 1684, when Evelyn was 64 years old.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Evelyn's Diary, de Beer, I, 71.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 74.

It follows that Evelyn's Diary is not, strictly speaking, a diary at all. Evelyn himself more than once referred to his work as "these memoires." (de Beer, IV, 23, Aug. 18, 1673). For its greater extent, the Diary is more a memoir or a commonplace book than a true Diary. It encompasses his whole life, from his birth in 1620 until just <sup>twenty-four</sup> 24 days before his death in his eighty-sixth year. The work is, therefore, among other things, an autobiography. But it is also a narrative, closely chronicled as to dates, of all the important political and social events of seventeenth-century England as seen through the eyes of a loyal, if sometimes disillusioned, royalist. As a result, it has long been an important reference for English historical research, particularly regarding movements and trends in religion and culture, but not excluding developments in politics and social history.<sup>26</sup>

In addition to these things, Evelyn's Diary is a treasury of biographical material. Scarcely a great man died without Evelyn writing an obituary that usually took the form of a biography. His remarks naturally reflected his own point of view. He was caustic and laconic regarding the death of Oliver Cromwell--"Died that archrebell Oliver Cromwell cal'd Protector" (Evelyn, III, 220,

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<sup>26</sup> Evelyn's Diary, de Beer, I, 107.

Sept. 3, 1658)--but fulsome in his panegyric on Clarendon. Of Charles II, he commented sadly that he was a man greatly endowed whose vices prevented his achieving the promise of his virtues.

The Diary is also a meticulously kept record of a cultivated and intelligent young man's experiences on the Grand Tour in the mid-seventeenth century. Evelyn carefully noted down the palaces, churches, universities, works of art, and "curiosities" that he saw. On reading Bray's edition of the diary, one is impressed with Evelyn's perspicacity and erudition. However, de Beer has disclosed that Evelyn derived many of his descriptions, in whole or in part, directly from contemporary books and manuscripts. He says:

That two descriptions of a monument written about the same time should give much the same information about it does not necessarily imply any relation between them; when, however, there habitually occur in the two, and in them alone, similar expressions, identical renderings of proper names and inscriptions, above all the same false statements, then it is certain that one of them is based on the other. That Evelyn should have drawn on other men's writings so largely was natural. In the seventeenth, as in earlier centuries, originality was valued far less than accuracy in what were intended as objective descriptions. <sup>27</sup>

Evelyn's Diary was a labour of duty rather than of devotion, inspired when he was only ten or eleven years old by his father's

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<sup>27</sup>

Evelyn's Diary, de Beer, I, 85-86.

example.<sup>28</sup> Once the habit had been established, it was perhaps easier, as de Beer suggests, for Evelyn to continue his record than to stop it. In time, his memoirs came to be a record of his spiritual experiences and development, a commentary on God's attitude to him and on his to God, in the manner of the records which many divines of the day enjoined serious Christians to keep.<sup>29</sup>

As he grew older, Evelyn seems to have intended that his Diary should be preserved as a family document, primarily for the instruction of his grandson.<sup>30</sup> To this end, it contained items of family history, observations on people and great events--often expanded by notices copied from newspapers--descriptions of places to visit, analyses of social customs, and disquisitions on moral problems supported by sermon notes. The manuscript was not, apparently, intended to be published, but was to form part of the family heritage.<sup>31</sup>

The style of Evelyn's Diary is usually perfunctory and undistinguished. However, when so inclined, as in describing his journey through the Alps in May, 1646, Evelyn was capable of writing with an intense descriptive power. The record of his harrowing experiences in the Alps, recorded in ten compactly written

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<sup>28</sup> Evelyn's Diary, de Beer, I, 79.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 82-83.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 85.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid. I, 85.

pages in de Beer's edition, contains many such passages as the following:

... Echoing from the rocks & Cavities,  
 & these Waters in some places, breaking  
 in the fall, wett us as if we had pas'd  
 through a mist, so as we could neither  
 see, nor heare one another, but trusting  
 to our honest Mules, jog on our Way: The  
 narrow bridges in some places, made onely  
 by felling huge Fir-Trees & laying them  
 athwart from mountaine to moutaine, over  
 Cataracts of stupendious depth, are very  
 dangerous, & so are the passages & edges  
 made by cutting away the maine rocke:  
 others in steps, & in some places we  
 passe betweene mountaines that have ben  
 broken & falln upon one another, which is  
 very tirrible, & one had neede of a sure  
 foote, & steady head to climb some of  
 these precipices, harbours for the Beares,  
 & Woulv(e)s, who sometimes have assaulted  
 Travellers: ....

(de Beer, II, 509-510, May, 1646)

Especially when he was abroad, Evelyn's entries often resembled notes in a guide book or an art catalogue. Understandably, he recorded the things he wanted to remember. Sometimes, over a considerable period of time, the entries were numerous and prolix; at other times, whole months of events were succinctly recorded within a few pages of the Diary. If, on occasion, Evelyn's comments were tart, as when he spoke of the Countess of Monte Feltre and her sister not sparing

the colour on their faces (Evelyn IV, 336, Sept. 3, 1683), he could at other times be almost poetic in the imaginative felicity of his phrases. He wrote in Italy of the "... fruites blushing yet upon the perpetually greene trees." (Evelyn, II, 339, Feb. 8, 1645). Evelyn seems to have lacked a sense of humour though on rare occasions he achieved a wry phrasing as when he wrote of hearing Pomerid, a new curate:

... a pretty hopefull young man, yet somewhat raw, & newly come from the Colledge, full of latine sentences &c: which in time will weare off....

(Evelyn, IV, 247, May 20, 1681)

Generally speaking, Evelyn's entries were businesslike jottings, not intended to evoke a mood or to recreate an experience, but simply, perhaps, to jog his memory in later recollection.

The Diary, long as it is, does not help us very much to understand Evelyn--except by inference. He was certainly indefatigable, painstaking, conscientious, and systematic. He was resolute when occasion demanded, and loyal in the performance of his duties. He was not an original thinker of consequence, but he had a remarkable ability to ferret out, catalogue, and use information that was not in general currency in the England of his day. He was, like



Pepys, insatiable in his quest for knowledge and inveterately inquisitive. Though it is possible to perceive Evelyn as a list of qualities, it is hard to see him as a complete person. If, in the intimacy of his own mind, he was beset by the frailties, contradictions, and doubts that agitate most men, he carefully kept any evidence from appearing in his diary. Perhaps that denotes his inherent reserve. More likely, as de Beer suggests, he intended his diary for the instruction of his descendants,<sup>32</sup> and consciously designed it so that nothing derogatory to his own character would appear. So far as we are aware, Evelyn was, as David Piper has said, "... a little pale in character, perpetually elusive, virtuous, but perhaps a little too virtuous to be true."<sup>33</sup>

The lives of Samuel Pepys and John Evelyn illustrate the gradual coalescence in post-Restoration England of the diverse and opposing forces which had caused the Civil War and had continued in opposition to one another with little emotional abatement throughout the interregnum. Though both Pepys and Evelyn eschewed the extremes of political and religious opinion, Evelyn was essentially royalist in his beliefs and a supporter of the Church of England as

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<sup>32</sup> Evelyn's Diary, de Beer, I, 85.

David Piper, "John Evelyn and His Diary," The Listener, January 5, 1956, 23.

a state church, while Pepys had been nurtured in the Puritan tradition and in his early years at least supported Parliament in its desire to limit the powers of the King. After the Restoration, men like Evelyn and Pepys found that they had much in common, initially through their desire to see the affairs of state conducted in an efficient manner, but later in their relation to the various cultural movements of the day.

CHAPTER III  
EVELYN, PEPYS, AND NON-DRAMATIC  
LITERATURE OF THE RESTORATION PERIOD

In his life-long diary, Evelyn made very few comments on contemporary literary activity. He did not so much as mention Bunyan, Marvell, Izaak Walton, Otway, or Congreve. His only references to Milton hinted at disgust for his politics. When he employed Edward Phillips as his son's tutor, Evelyn wrote:

This Gent: was Nephew to Milton who writ against Salmasius's Defensio, but not at all infected with his principles, & though brought up by him, yet no way taint(e)d:

Oct.  
(Evelyn, III, 365, Sept. 24, 1663)

A later and final mention recorded only that he had met "Milton, a papist, & bro: to the Milton who wrote for the Regicides..." (Evelyn, IV, 514, June 9, 1686). Evelyn might have been expected to sympathize with the substance if not the style of Hudibras, but he did not speak about Butler or his work. Although he had a long acquaintanceship with Thomas Hobbes, he said little about him except, seemingly, to acquiesce in the sentiments expressed in Dr. Pierce's sermon in which "... he inveighed against the pernicious doctrines of Mr. Hobbs..." (Evelyn, IV, 164, Feb. 2, 1679). He spoke of Vanbrugh and Denham only as architects. He noted that Isaac Newton was

president of the Royal Society, that he had been knighted, and that experiments with his burning glass had been performed at the Royal Society, but not a word about his Principia or any of his other works. Despite the fact that two of Evelyn's particular interests were government and education, his only significant mention of John Locke in his diary was to call him "an excellent learned Gent" when he was sworn in as secretary of the Council of Trade and Plantations (Evelyn, III, 628, Oct. 25, 1672).

Evelyn wrote more frequently, but often disparagingly, of John Dryden whom he knew personally. On at least one occasion Dryden had visited Evelyn at his home (Evelyn, IV, 37, June 27, 1674), and the two were sometimes guests at the same dinner parties, but there was little community of feeling or of interest between the two men. When the poet and his sons were about to be converted to Roman Catholicism, Evelyn wrote contemptuously:

Dryden the famous play-poet & his two sonns, & Mrs. Nelle (Misse to the late ...) were said to go to Masse; & such purchases were no greate losse to the Church.

(Evelyn, IV, 497, Jan. 19, 1686)

Evelyn's only ~~oblique~~ reference to the poetry of Dryden occurred when he commented on January 11, 1694, that he had dined at Mr. Sheldon's "where was Mr. Dryden the Poet, who now intending to

Write no more Plays (intent upon the Translation of Virgil)..."  
(Evelyn, V, 164, Jan. 11, 1694).

Apart from Robert Boyle, Evelyn's friends among writers were those now considered to have been secondary figures of the period. During the Civil War, when the poet Edmund Waller was in exile on the continent for his part in a plot to raise troops for Charles I, Evelyn had travelled at times with him in Italy and France. Later, they served together on the Council of Trade and Plantations, but Evelyn did not record in his diary that Waller was a poet. He was very fond of Abraham Cowley, whom he called, "my excellent & ingenious friend" (Evelyn, III, 355, May 14, 1663), and dedicated the second edition of Kalendarium Hortense to him in 1666. Cowley responded to the dedication with a laudatory poem, "The Garden," but Evelyn made no mention of this or of any other part of Cowley's work, except to say after the poet's death:

... I received the sad newes of Abraham Cowley's death, that incomparable Poet, & Virtuous Man, my very deare friend and greatly deplored &c:

(Evelyn, III, 489-490, Aug. 1, 1667)

Evelyn was, perhaps closer to Jeremy Taylor and Robert Boyle than to any others who might be called literary figures of the day. He was so impressed with Taylor's sermons and religious opinions

that he considered him his spiritual father (Evelyn, III, 149, Mar. 31 sic, 1655). When, however, Taylor showed him the manuscript of his new book on the rule of conscience, Evelyn did not say in his diary what he thought about it. Evelyn was on equally friendly terms with Boyle, so much so that the scientist, in his will, made Evelyn one of the trustees of a fund to provide lectures on Christianity and against atheists. Although Evelyn dedicated his Sculptura to Boyle (Evelyn, III, 325, June 10, 1662) and later received from him a copy of his own Memoirs for the Natural History of Humane Blood, he did not comment in his diary on either the style or the content of Boyle's work.

It is difficult to account for Evelyn's extraordinary reticence about his reading habits. As one of the chief functions of his diary was to act as a source of instruction for his family, Evelyn might have been expected to list the books that educated men should read. At no time does he give his library list, not even when, in 1699, he fell heir to the library of his brother, George (Evelyn, V, 359, Oct. 4, 1699). Nevertheless, we know that he bought numerous books. A typical diary entry made when he was in Amsterdam as a young man speaks of his visiting a bookseller, "... & here I bought divers of the Clasique Authors, Poets & others (Evelyn, II, 104, Feb. 9, 1644). Perhaps Evelyn's reticence was due

to a modesty so complete that he thought no one would be interested in his books--but that does not square with his notorious zeal in acting the mentor to others. Perhaps he was preoccupied with the prodigious amount of reading that must have been necessary, in English as well as foreign books, for the writing of his own works. Perhaps he lacked a critical intelligence and had nothing to say about books of the day, although he was not hesitant in expressing his views in letters to Pepys. Perhaps he thought that contemporary books were so well known that comment from him would be superfluous. More likely he was so representative of the scientific attitude of his times that literature qua literature held a distinctly secondary place among his interests. None of these tentative suppositions, however, is a satisfactory explanation of his failure to include in his Diary any significant literary criticism or even any considerable record of the books he was reading.

Evelyn's letters, in particular those to Pepys, are a much more important index of his reading interests than is the diary. They reveal that Evelyn, like so many of his contemporaries, was intensely interested in sermons and in religious disputation, but was against "enthusiasm" in religion. Unlike Pepys, his sympathies were always with the Established Church. He recommended a tract, Religion and Reason, to Pepys, and mentioned his pleasure at the

publishing of Henry Wharton's edition of the autobiography of William Laud.<sup>1</sup> He had read widely in the works of the early Fathers of the Church and had an extensive knowledge of various translations of the Bible.<sup>2</sup> Whenever opportunity offered, he bought or inspected old and rare versions of the testaments (Evelyn, V, 206, March 10, 1695).

Natural philosophers and rational theologians of the Restoration who, whatever their differing points of view, were concerned to free men's thought from the shackling inhibitions of Scholasticism, drew upon the classical philosophers, particularly the epicureans, for the justification of their position. It was natural that they should do so for the twin traditions of all educated men were those "of pagan antiquity and Latin Christianity"<sup>3</sup> no matter which school of thought they supported. The Scholastics, in the tradition of St. Thomas Aquinas, had lumped together the scientific and metaphysical thinking of Aristotle (Lerner "Aristotle's Politics", p. 17) so as to emphasize what Whitehead has called the "overwhelmingly dramatic" conception of "the Greek view of nature".<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Pepys, Letters and Second Diary, 242.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 249.

<sup>3</sup> Willey, Seventeenth Century Background, 22.

<sup>4</sup> Whitehead, Science and the Modern World, 8.



It [the Greek view of nature] thus conceived nature as articulated in the way of a work of dramatic art, for the exemplification of general ideas converging to an end.<sup>5</sup>

It is immediately obvious that this point of view seemed to pre-suppose a Being that had created the logical order and so sustained the scholastic opinion that

... the "truth" of any proposition thus depended ultimately, not upon its correspondence with any particular "state of affairs" but upon its being consistent with a body of given and unquestionable doctrine.<sup>6</sup>

This position had been under attack throughout the seventeenth century, but during the Restoration the Cambridge Platonists--in particular, Joseph Glanvill--were vehement in their opposition to the effects of this reading of Aristotle and in favour of their own preferences for Democritus and Epicurus who justified the scientific investigation of the secrets of nature.<sup>7</sup> Although it was all very well to praise some of their ideas, the paradox implied for Christians was that both Democritus and Epicurus were

<sup>5</sup> Whitehead, Science and the Modern World, 8.

<sup>6</sup> Willey, Seventeenth Century Background, 22.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 16, 186-188.

also mechanists who elsewhere denied the necessity of a Creator.

Titus Lucretius Carus, the best known Roman apostle of the epicurean philosophy, had set down its tenets in his long poem De Rerum Natura. John Evelyn, as much attracted to Lucretius's praise of the tranquil life as he was to his attitude on science, translated part of the poem into English verse and wrote an introductory essay on Lucretius in 1656. Devout though he was personally known to be, Evelyn had much explaining to do because of Lucretius's denial of a Supreme Being.<sup>8</sup> Jeremy Taylor criticised the essay, although Evelyn, in his preface, had made clear that he did not agree with the Roman's theological speculations, only with some of his "excellent precepts."<sup>9</sup> Evelyn was acutely conscious of the mixed reception his essay had received and later amended his diary entry concerning the essay's publication by adding "[little of the Epicurean Philosophy was known then amongst us:]" (Evelyn, III, 173, May 12, 1656).

Apart from this occasion on which his fondness for the classics embroiled him in controversy, Evelyn often used his classical knowledge to practical effect. When Pepys was about to depart

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<sup>8</sup> Alban Dewes Winspear, trans. The Roman Poet of Science - Lucretius: De Rerum Natura set in English Verse, (New York, 1955), 194 and passim.

<sup>9</sup> George Williamson, Seventeenth Century Contexts, (London, 1960), 165.

with the expedition to liquidate the English colony of Tangier, Evelyn asked for any seeds or kernels of trees growing in the colony. He particularly desired to know if any *Citrus* trees remained of the type to which Cicero had referred, or any cedars which Pliny had mentioned.<sup>10</sup> At another time, Evelyn wrote to Pepys about his reflections on re-reading Aristotle on the divination of dreams, in the course of which he contrasted Aristotle and Hippocrates on the subject.<sup>11</sup> As Evelyn grew older, he became very fond of the stoical philosophy of Epictetus. Epictetus's thought, that man should find happiness within himself, keeping his mind independent of external circumstances, became blended in Evelyn's mind with his Christian beliefs. He was faced with no conflict here, for Epictetus in his Discourses had postulated the inevitability of a Supreme Being. Evelyn wrote to Pepys in 1701:

Let those who have written volumes De Finibus define what it is they would call Hapynesse here which you are not in possession of, abating onely what's extrinsecal to a good and virtuous man; namely, those things Epictetus tells us are not in our owne power to avoyde (of which there are few concern you) and though by a philosophique, much more by Christian fortitude, inabld to sustaine.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Pepys, Letters and Second Diary, 154.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 205-207.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 335-336.

Evelyn was more interested in the classical philosophers and in such historians as Xenophon than he was in the classical poets.

Evelyn's letters to Pepys contain abundant evidence of his interest in historical writing. It is significant that when Pepys proposed to write a definitive history of the English navy, it was to Evelyn that he turned for source material. Evelyn replied that he had read through a "sea and ocean of papers, treaties, declarations, relations, letters, and other pieces" to find what was useful. He had been unable to find his copy of Drake's Journal, but he did send a mass of material including a journal of Sir Martin Frobisher, a volume of Sir Richard Browne's Dispatches, a paper on the Marine Lawes in France, as well as sundry maps and charts of battles.<sup>13</sup> Towards the close of his life, Evelyn enjoyed Clarendon's History of the Rebellion and recommended it to Pepys in a longer critical note than was his custom:

... I cannot but let you know the incredible satisfaction I have taken in reading my late Lord Chancellor's History of the Rebellion, so well, and so unexpectedly well written; the preliminaries, so like that of the noble Polybius, leading us by the courts, avenues, and porches into the fabrick; the style masculine, the characters so just and temperd,

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<sup>13</sup>

Pepys, Letters and Second Diary, 120-123.

without the least ingredient of passion or tincture of revenge, yet with such natural and lively touches as shews his Lordship knew not onely the persons out-side but their very interiors....<sup>14</sup>

His letters reveal the range of Evelyn's reading. He read Trajano Boccolini--probably his satirical work Ragguagli di Parnaso--but whether in the original Italian or in English translation is not known. A rational philosopher in accord with the values of his own day, Evelyn liked Erasmus's Prayse of Follie<sup>15</sup> which was the finest expression of a sixteenth-century humanist's opposition to the mediaeval acceptance of corrupted texts and learning.<sup>16</sup> Among contemporary books, Evelyn liked An Account of Several Late Voyages and Discoveries to the South Seas,<sup>17</sup> a copy of which Pepys had sent him, and praised John Wilkins's book An Essay Towards a Real Character and a Philosophical Language.<sup>18</sup> This book was in keeping with his own views on diction and style which he had earlier communicated to the Royal Society and which had much in common with the ideas of Thomas Sprat and the Restoration period in general. Evelyn deplored the

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<sup>14</sup> Pepys, Letters and Second Diary, 371.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 230.

<sup>16</sup> Albert C. Baugh, ed. A Literary History of England, (New York, 1948), 329.

<sup>17</sup> Pepys, Letters and Second Diary, 241.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 249.

persistence, particularly in Cambridge circles, of the use of words and expressions which "(like false stones) will never shine or be set to any advantage in whatever light they are placed, but embase the rest."<sup>19</sup> He cited John Cleveland's poems as offenders. If, as seems probable, Evelyn was protesting against Cleveland's strained conceits, then his attitude is further confirmation of his sympathy with the prevailing thought of his age.

In consonance with this opinion is Evelyn's enthusiasm for John Locke's An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, which he praised in a letter to Pepys.<sup>20</sup> Locke had summed up the attitudes of the seventeenth century by postulating an acceptable compromise between "traditional beliefs and the new philosophy."<sup>21</sup> He accepted the existence of a God because the order and harmony of the universe--which had been substantiated by the investigations of seventeenth-century science--required the existence of a Supreme Planner.<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, Locke relegated God to his second category of the per-

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<sup>19</sup>Pepys, Letters and Second Diary, 208.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 242.

<sup>21</sup>Willey, Seventeenth Century Background, 283.

<sup>22</sup>Willey, 277.

ception of truth--to that of Demonstration--while the Cambridge Platonists, with their insistence upon the revelatory nature of religious experience, would have placed the proof for God in the first of Locke's categories--that of Intuition. Locke emphasized the necessity of interpreting experiences, even those involving revelation, through reason. In Basil Willey's words, he said

that we must each one of us build up our own being for ourselves out of our own dealings with the universe, not relying upon "common notions" which are said to be from God, but are really the received opinions of country or of party, or the sacrosanct dogmas of tradition. God has not "stamped" any "truths" upon the mind; but he has furnished us with faculties which sufficiently serve for the discovery of all we need to know.<sup>23</sup>

Locke's emphasis on truth and reason had serious implications for poetry. If it did not make the writing of poetry impossible, it did, as Willey has argued, destroy "the union of heart and head, the synthesis of thought and feeling, out of which major poetry seems to be born."<sup>24</sup>

Evelyn's attitude--and Pepys's--to William Wotton's Reflections Upon the Antient and Modern Learning is also important in this connection. This essay, published in 1694, was in answer to Sir

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<sup>23</sup> Willey, 272.

<sup>24</sup> Willey, 288.

William Temple's An Essay Upon the Ancient and Modern Learning that had been published in 1690. The basis of Temple's theme had been established in his first sentence, "Whoever Converses much among the Old Books will be something hard to please among the New...."<sup>25</sup> Ingeniously, but speciously, Temple had argued that no significant gains in knowledge had been made by the Moderns over the Ancients and had deplored that whatever gains had been made had been spoiled by pedantry. He concluded:

... I wish the Vein of Ridiculing all that is serious and good, all Honour and Virtue as well as Learning and Piety, may have no worse effects on any other State: 'Tis the Itch of our Age and Clymat, and has over run both the Court and the Stage, enters a House of Lords and Commons as boldly as a Coffee-House, Debates of Council as well as private Conversation; and I have known in my Life more than one or two Ministers of State that would rather have said a Witty thing than done a Wise one, and made the Company Laugh rather than the Kingdom rejoyce.<sup>26</sup>

Temple's attack on the prevailing cultural attitudes could not be allowed to go unchallenged. Wotton replied, referring to the real advances recently made in scientific thinking.<sup>27</sup> No doubt it was this aspect of his reply that appealed to the old virtuosi John Evelyn and Samuel Pepys. Evelyn wrote to Pepys that he had been

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<sup>25</sup> Temple, Sir William, Sir William Temple's Essays on Ancient & Modern Learning and On Poetry, ed. J.E. Spingarn, (Oxford, 1909), 2.

<sup>26</sup> Temple, 42.

<sup>27</sup> Baugh, A Literary History of England, 859.



visited by Wotton and entertained "with as much delight and satisfaction as an universaly learned, and indeede extra-ordinary person is able to give the most refined tast."<sup>28</sup> Pepys replied in like manner, praising Wotton and his "incomparable discourse."<sup>29</sup>

Though Evelyn called Wotton a "universaly learned" young man, he knew that knowledge was accumulating at such a rate that it would soon be impossible for one man to aspire to know everything. With this train of thought seemingly set in motion by a comment from Pepys that the virtuosi at Oxford were attempting to catalogue all Manuscripts held in England,<sup>30</sup> Evelyn replied that someone should compile a bibliography of essential books. He wrote:

In the meane time, what a benefactor were he that were able and willing to give us such a catalogue of authors as were onely, and absolutely, and fully effectual to the attaining of such a competency of practical, usefull, and speculative knowledge too, as one might hope to benefit by within the ordinarie circles of one's life, without being bewildered and quite out of the way when one should be gotten home. I am still perswaded this were not impossible, and that lesse than an hundred authors, studied in proper method, would go a greate way towards this end.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>Pepys, Letters and Second Diary, 241.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 246.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 247.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., 249.

Evelyn must have been, if the range of his own writings is any indication, almost a universally educated man himself. He translated books from Latin, French, and Greek on a wide variety of subjects that included education, gardening, philosophy, architecture, history, the relations between church and state. He wrote a history of religion, although it was not published until 1840. He wrote about medals and money, navigation and commerce, helmets, engraving, finance, libraries, and the smoke nuisance in London. He was probably the most knowledgeable man in England on gardening and forestry and wrote copiously on these subjects. Evelyn was, in fact, close to being the representative man of his day in the catholicity of his interests, in his zealous application of research to the solution of problems, and in his faith in the faculty of reason.

The only book of Evelyn's that seems out of key with the pattern of his life is The Life of Mrs. Godolphin, not published until 1847. This biography, and the relationship with Mrs. Godolphin out of which it grew, suggest that we know the real Evelyn only superficially. Evelyn had met Mrs. Godolphin when, as Margaret Blagge, she was a lady in waiting at Court. He persuaded her to accept him as her spiritual father and bound her to him with a

rigmarole of mystical religious beliefs and cabalistic signs. His jealousy towards her, however, implies that he saw himself more as her lover than her spiritual father. She escaped Evelyn's influence only by secretly marrying Sidney Godolphin, although Evelyn afterwards asserted in the biography that he had persuaded her to marry.<sup>32</sup>

The biography is as much a study of the relationship between Evelyn and Mrs. Godolphin as it is a true biography. It does not analyze her character; it only eulogizes her virtues. The style is turgid, often stilted, usually pretentious. The best parts are quotations from Margaret Blagge's diary written when she was at Court.<sup>33</sup> Indeed, the book seems to have been written more to quieten Evelyn's conscience than to assuage Godolphin's grief. The biography ends with a memorial poem to Mrs. Godolphin which, however gauche in expression or inexact in metre, somewhat resembles the form of Dryden's "A Song for St. Cecilia's Day". This is one of the few poems which John Evelyn is known to have written.

For thou (deare Soule) to Heavens fledd,  
Hast all the vertues with thee, thither ledd,  
Wee here see thee no more.  
Thou to that bright and glorious place

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<sup>32</sup> John Evelyn, The Life of Mrs. Godolphin, ed. Edward William Harcourt, (London, 1888), 80.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 17-24.

Art runn, hast won the Race:  
     A Crowne of Rayes,  
     And never fadeing Bayes,  
 Such as on Heaven's Parnassus grows,  
     Deck thyne Angelick Brows;  
 A Robe of Righteousness about thee cast.  
 Bathed in Celestiall Bliss, thou there dost tast  
     Pleasures att God's right hand,  
     Pleasures that ever last,  
 And greater then wee here can understand,  
 But are for such as serve him best reserv'd in store.<sup>34</sup>

Unlike Evelyn, Pepys was not reticent about his reading interests. An inveterate reader, he loved all kinds of books. He read at odd moments snatched from a busy life--when walking to Greenwich, or late at night before going to bed. When his eyes became too bothersome, he had his wife or Tom read to him. If there was no particular pattern to his reading or to his book collecting, that was because he, like Evelyn was interested in everything that had ever exercised the mind of man.

We know much more about Pepy's library than we do of Evelyn's. It is still intact, as Pepys directed in his will that following the death of his nephew John Jackson it be bequeathed to one of the great English universities, preferably Cambridge, and in Cambridge, preferably to Magdalene College.<sup>35</sup> There it remains as the "Bibliotheca Pepysiana". Even had Pepys not taken this action, we should have had

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<sup>34</sup> Evelyn, The Life of Mrs. Godolphin, ed. Harcourt, 226-227.

<sup>35</sup> Pepys's Diary, Wheatley, I, xlvii.

sufficient knowledge of his library from the diary alone. Whenever he bought a new book, Pepys recorded the fact in his diary.

Pepys bought and read an astonishing number of books on religion, philosophy, history, economics, politics, and science. He liked and collected biographies. Because of his zeal for the navy, he seized upon every book that he could find having to do with ships or naval affairs. Though he was not especially interested in poetry, he owned volumes of poems by Cowley, Butler, Chaucer, Waller, Mrs. Phillips, and John Dryden. He was sufficiently fluent in Latin, French, and Spanish to be able to read books in those languages. Amongst the Latin authors, he was particularly fond of Cicero and Ovid. His book purchases ran the gamut from the most profound to the risqué. Of one French book he had, he wrote shamefacedly:

... the idle, rogueish book, L'Escholle des Filles; which I have bought in plain binding, avoiding the buying of it better bound, because I resolve, as soon as I have read it, to burn it, that it may not stand in the list of books, nor among them, to disgrace them if it should be found.

(Pepys, VII, 290)

He read it the next day and then burned it. His final comment on it was, "... a lewd book, but what do no wrong once to read for information sake." (Pepys, VII, 291).

Pepys was absorbed in religious controversy but unlike most of his contemporaries, including Evelyn, he was singularly tolerant. As early as May 15, 1660, he wrote about his freedom from serious doctrinal commitment:

... In the afternoon my Lord and I walked together in the coach two hours, talking together upon all sorts of discourse: as religion, wherein he is, I perceive, wholly sceptical, as well as I, saying, that indeed the Protestants as to the Church of Rome are wholly fanatiques....

(Pepys, I, 132)

Pepys had Dr. Usher's Body of Divinity on the interpretation of scripture, and a new concordance of the Bible. He liked "a merry book against the Presbyters called Cabala, extraordinary witty." (Pepys, III, 219). He read Fuller's Church History and countless books of sermons including those of Evelyn's friend Dr. Jeremy Taylor. He owned Fox's Book of Martyrs, and a life of Archbishop Laud by Dr. Heylin, which he thought "a shrewd book, but that which I believe will do the bishops in general no great good, but hurt, it pleads for so much Popish." (Pepys, VIII, 100).

Pepys seems to have had little sympathy for the Presbyterians and nothing but contempt for the Quakers. He mentioned the extraordinary behaviour of a Quaker who went almost naked into

Westminster Hall, calling upon everyone there to repent (Pepys, VII, 41). He said caustically that William Penn the Younger had recently come from Ireland, a Quaker again "or some very melancholy thing" (Pepys, VII, 237). However, Pepys was not reliable in his comments on young Penn because of his hatred of the father who was <sup>also</sup> a fellow Commissioner for the Navy. His splenetic outburst regarding the younger Penn was characteristic:

... he cares for no company, nor comes into any: which is a pleasant thing, after his being abroad so long, and his father such a hypocritical rogue, and at this time an Atheist.

(Pepys, VII, 237)

Pepys did read a "... ridiculous nonsensical book" by William Penn the younger about the Quakers, but thought it "... so full of nothing but nonsense that I was ashamed to read in it" (Pepys, VIII, 114). When, however, he read Penn's book against the Trinity, he considered it so well written that Penn could not possibly have written it himself (Pepys, VIII, 212).

Pepys read arguments both for and against the Catholics. He liked a book by Dr. Stradling on the practices and designs of the papists, (Pepys, III, 93) but he also enjoyed a book commenting favourably on the state of Rome under Alexander VII, who was then

pope. He borrowed the suppressed pamphlet The Catholique's Apology, which, as he said, lamented

... the severity of the Parliament against them, and comparing it with the lenity of other princes to Protestants; giving old and late instances of their loyalty to their princes, whatever is objected against them; and excusing their disquiets in Queen Elizabeth's time, for that it was impossible for them to think her a lawfull Queen, if Queen Mary, who had been owned as such, were so; one being the daughter of the true and the other of a false wife:

(Pepys, VI, 83)

Pepys did not attempt to answer any of the arguments in the pamphlet, commenting only that, "The thing is very well writ indeed." However, within three months, he read a protestant answer to this pamphlet, which pleased him mightily (Pepys, VI, 175).

Pepys, who was at least as interested in history as in religion, read a great variety of books dealing not only with the history of England, but with that of countries as remote from his experience as China. In order to familiarize himself with his responsibilities as a member of the Commission for Tangier, he read a history of Algiers and another of Spain. He also thought Davila's history of Italy, "a most excellent history as ever I read" (Pepys, V, 342). He owned, too, a book he called "Rycaut's late History of the Turkish Policy," which is probably the same



volume now in the Pepsyian library under the title Present State of the Ottoman Empire. He seems to have been interested in this volume mostly because his copy was one of only six "finely bound and truly coloured" (Pepys, VI, 248). He noted with pride that four of the other five volumes were owned by the King, the Duke of York, the Duke of Monmouth, and Lord Arlington. It obviously gave him great pleasure to be one of such a select company.

Most of all, however, Pepys loved to read histories of England. He owned Camden's Britannia, and a little history, probably that entitled History of the Commons Warre of England from 1640 to 1662 (Pepys, III, 149). He also had John Speed's chronicle, The History of Great Britaine under the Conquests of ye Romans, Sacons, Danes, and Normans, which he thought "very fine." He was particularly fond of Speed's comprehensive Historie of Great Britaine, to which he referred whenever he wished to refresh his memory of historical events. On one occasion, he read about the troubles of 1588 on the day before going to the King's playhouse to see a revival of Thomas Heywood's old play about the Spanish Armada, a play which Pepys called, "Queen Elizabeth's Troubles, and the History of Eighty-Eight" (Pepys, VII, 65). Later, after having seen Lord Orrery's new play The Black Prince, Pepys went home to read "the true story, in Speed, of the Black Prince..."

(Pepys, VII, p. 157). Pepys also enjoyed specialized histories like Dugdale's History of the Inns of Court and Sprat's, History of the Royal Society, and thought very highly of Sir Robert Cotton's book, Warrs with Forreign Princes dangerous to our Commonwealth.

Pepys's interest in politics and biography was closely related to his liking for history. At a time when he was under a self-imposed oath not to buy any more books for a time, he charged to the Navy Office Rushworth's Historical Collections and Henry Scobell's Collection of Acts and Ordinances made in the Parliament, 1640-1656 so as to avoid having to pay for them himself. He owned Hooker's Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity which vindicated the Church of England as established under Elizabeth. Because of the pleasure Hooker's work had given him, Pepys valued Izaak Walton's Life of Mr. Richard Hooker. As it was out of print and the bishops would not permit another edition, Pepys paid 24 shillings for a second-hand copy of Hobbes's Leviathan which had cost only 8 shillings new. He also possessed Harrington's Oceana, which proposed a limited democracy in contrast to the absolutism advocated in Leviathan. He liked an anonymous biography of Oliver Cromwell which did honour to the Protector as a soldier and a politician, but he

enjoyed equally well a life of Cardinal Wolsey attributed to George Cavendish. Fuller's History of the Worthies in England was a beloved companion from the date Pepys acquired it in 1662. After buying the book, Pepys wrote, "... and so I sat down reading in it, till it was two o'clock before I thought of the time going ..." (Pepys, II, 175).

Pepys expressed his opinions with a terse and sturdy forthrightness. There was little intellectual or any other kind of snobbery in his character. With rare exceptions, if he did not like a book, he said so categorically. His comment on Sir George Mackenzie's The Virtuoso, or the Stoicke was typical:

... and so home back again all the way reading a little piece I lately bought called "The Virtuoso, or the Stoicke", proposing many things paradoxical to our common opinions, wherein in some places he speaks well, but generally is but a sorry man.

(Pepys, VI, 253)

Pepys's fascination with science and his comments on particular scientific books will be dealt with in a later chapter. It is sufficient to say here that as much before as after he became a member of the Royal Society, he persevered in reading books about the exciting developments in science in Restoration England, even though he got very little out of some of them. He struggled

through Robert Boyle's Experiments and Considerations touching Colours, and his Hydrostatical Paradoxes made out by New Experiments, enjoying them increasingly as he came to understand them better. He bought a copy of the new issue of Boyle's Book of Formes, but did not finish reading it until ten months later, by which time he was glad to have done with it (Pepys, VIII, 202). He bought Microscopicall Observations by Robert Hooke--an associate of Boyle's and one of the earliest experimenters with the microscope--and sat up reading it until two o'clock in the morning, thinking it "the most ingenious book that ever I read in my life" (Pepys, IV, 316).

Pepys's reading covered an extraordinarily broad range of subjects. He read happily in Ogleby's Aesop, owned Guillim's Heraldry, and was fascinated by Scott's The Discoverie of Witchcraft. He cherished an old copy of Lyly's Grammar, the same text which William Lyly, John Colet, and Erasmus had prepared for publication in 1513, and which continued to be published until 1858.<sup>36</sup> Pepys also enjoyed Erasmus's de scribendis epistolis, especially one letter to a courtier which with great difficulty he forebore tearing out of a volume belonging to a friend (Pepys, VI, 141). He liked John Spencer's Book of Prodigys and a satire on the Duke of Albemarle

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<sup>36</sup> Baugh, A Literary History of England, 328.

called The Third Advice to a Paynter. He bought a copy of Montaigne's Essays because it had been commended so highly by Lord Arlington and Lord Blaney. He had Bacon's Novum Organum for the "love of the binding", (Pepys, I, 131), but he was sufficiently in accord with the spirit of his times to admire it for its contents. Few books gave Pepys as lasting pleasure as Bacon's Faber Fortuna, which may have been either his essay On Fortune or a chapter out of The Advancement of Learning, (Pepys, III, 200 and n.2). This book, of which he said, "the oftener I read<sup>[;#]</sup> the more I admire...", (Pepys, III, 200), he read several times during the course of the diary, finally giving it to his brother to translate. He was not satisfied with the translation, saying that "he has done it, but meanely; I am not pleased with it at all, having done it only literally, but without any life at all." (Pepys, VI, 40).

A curious book that Pepys, in common with Evelyn, admired was Dr. John Wilkin's Essay Towards a Real Character and a Philosophical Language. Pepys spoke of its being about the "Universal Language," and later commented on its explanation of Noah's ark:

... where he do give a very good account thereof, shewing how few the number of the several species of beasts and fowls were to be in the arke, and that there was roome enough for them and their food and dung, which do please me mightily and is much beyond what ever I heard of the subject....

(Pepys, VIII, 30)

This quotation brings into focus one of the intellectual difficulties of the seventeenth century. Willey has put the problem this way: the English writers were "committed to the authority of holy writ, but beginning to <sup>be</sup> the 'philosophic' as well, and therefore eager for 'the truth'."<sup>37</sup> One solution was to interpret scripture allegorically,<sup>38</sup> but at the same time, thinkers of the seventeenth century wanted to visualize the world picture. Wilkins was probably trying to visualize the practical problems of life in the ark and then sought to reduce the number of animals to manageable dimensions, conceiving those who did enter the ark as symbols for all animals.

Like Evelyn, Pepys does not seem to have been much interested in poetry. It is true that he often read Cowley's poems - they were very popular during the Restoration - and Mrs. Catherine Phillips's poems, but he never wrote down what he thought of them. Edmund Waller's series of lampoons entitled Advice to a Painter appealed to him despite the fact that they

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<sup>37</sup>

Willey, Seventeenth Century Background, 65.

<sup>38</sup>

Willey, 68.

satirized the handling of the Dutch Wars, for which the navy had been criticized. Somewhat ruefully, Pepys admitted that the satire was "too sharp, and so true," (Pepys, VII. 108).

Although Pepys did not often mention the poetry of Dryden, he was fond of Annus Mirabilis, possibly because he himself had been so close to the events of 1666 that the poem commemorated.

On February 3, 1667, Pepys wrote of Annus Mirabilis:

I am very well pleased this night with  
reading a poem I brought home with me last  
night from Westminster Hall, of Dryden's  
upon the present war; a very good poem.

(Pepys, VI, 148)

However, on the occasion of the presentation of a "Musique-Entertainment" by Dryden, welcoming home the King and Queen after Monmouth's rebellion, Pepys was critical of the poet's rhymes.

Ironically, he accused Dryden of violating one of his own principles of poetic expression. It had, he wrote,

"apparently cost our Poet-Prophet more paine to finde Rhimes  
then Reasons.<sup>39</sup>"

There are only three references to Chaucer in the whole

diary and one of these deals with Pepys's visit to his book-binder to have his volume of Chaucer bound. Nevertheless, we know on Dryden's own authority that Pepys was the inspiration for his version of Chaucer's "The Parson's Tale". On July 14, 1699, Dryden wrote to Pepys:

Padron mio, I remember, last year, when I had the honour of dineing with you, you were pleasd to recommend to me the Character of Chaucer's Good Parson. Any desire of yours is a Command to me; and accordingly I have put it into my English, with such Additions and alterations as I thought fit.<sup>40</sup>

Pepys's gracious reply has the same date:

Sir, you truly have oblig'd mee; and possibly in saying soe, I am more in earnest then you can readily thinke; as verily hoping from this your Copy of one Good Parson, to fancy some amends made mee for the hourly offence I bear with, from the sight of soe many lewd Originalls.<sup>41</sup>

The tone of this correspondence suggests that either Pepys and Dryden were more intimate friends than we have evidence to show or--what is more likely in view of Pepys's formal and mannered reply--that Pepys was a person of such consequence in London at the end of the seventeenth century that Dryden desired his esteem.

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<sup>40</sup> Pepys, Letters and Second Diary, 280.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 281.



Pepys did not like Samuel Butler's Hudibras, which ridiculed the Presbyterians and Independents and satirized many of the current developments in religion, science, and scholarship. Undoubtedly, he disagreed with Butler's burlesque of science. Probably he simply thought Hudibras a bad poem. He had bought the first part on Boxing Day, 1662, after a conversation with Mr. Battersby about the book:

Hither come Mr. Battersby; and we falling into a discourse of a new book of drollery in verse called Hudebras, I would needs go find it out, and met with it at the Temple; cost me 2s.6d. But when I came to read it, it is so silly an abuse of the Presbyter Knight going to the warrs, that I am ashamed of it; and by and by meeting at Mr. Townsend's at dinner, I sold it to him for 18d.

(Pepys, II, 399.)

However, the poem was so popular that Pepys could not resist buying it again on February 6, 1663.

And so to a Bookseller's in the Strand, and there bought Hudibras again, it being certainly some ill humour to be so against that which all the world cries up to be the example of wit; for which I am resolved once again to read him, and see whether I can find it or no.

(Pepys, III, 30)

Pepys still disliked the satire and was mystified at the acclaim it received. His entry of November 28, 1663, on which date he borrowed the second part, bears amusing testimony to his bewilderment. He borrowed it

...to see if it be as good as the first,  
which the world cry so mightily up, though  
it hath not a good liking in me, though I  
had tried by twice or three times reading to  
bring myself to think it witty.

(Pepys, III, 377.)

Then, on December 10, 1663, Pepys bought both parts of Hudibras, confessing at the time that he still could not appreciate the poem. He seemed to derive some support for his own opinion from hearing Sir William Petty argue that Butler was saying in Hudibras what most people wanted to hear, using paradoxes that were accepted as witty by those who were not prepared to examine the argument, (Pepys, IV, 22.). It was not surprising that Pepys and Petty should agree about Hudibras. They, and not the poem, were in the main stream of intellectual development of the century. Finally, on July 19, 1668, Pepys gave a dinner for a group that included Samuel Butler. He enjoyed the conversation of the eminent men he entertained but he did not say that his opinion of Hudibras had changed (Pepys, VIII, 65-65.).

Some of Pepys's interesting comments on books arose out of his relations with booksellers and bookbinders. On October 5, 1666, he met a kinsman of Mr. Kirton, his bookseller, who told him about the losses sustained in the Great Fire:

He do believe there is above £150,000 of books burned; all the great booksellers almost undone; not only these, but their warehouses at their Hall, and under Christchurch, and elsewhere being all burned. A great want thereof there will be of books, especially Latin books and foreign books; and, among others, the Polyglottes and new Bible, which he believes will be presently worth £40 a-piece.

(Pepys, VI, 7)

Pepys frequented the booksellers not only to buy or to browse, but also to learn of forthcoming publications. On August 10, 1667, he learned of several ~~exotting~~ books that were in preparation:

... and then abroad and to the New Exchange, to the booksellers's there, where I hear of several new books coming out--Mr. Spratt's History of the Royal Society, and Mrs. Phillips's poems. Sir John Denham's poems are going to be all printed together; and, among others, some new things; and among them he showed me a copy of verses of his upon Sir John Minnes's going heretofore to Bullogne to eat a pig. Cowley, he tells me, is dead; who, it seems, was a mighty civil, serious

man; which I did not know before. Several good plays are likely to be abroad soon, as Mustapha and Henry the 5th. Here having staid and divertised myself a good while, I home again....

(Pepys, VII, 58-59)

Moreover, the booksellers provided an opportunity, on occasion, for divertisement<sup>3</sup> of a different kind:

... but I 'light and walked to Ducke Lane, and there to the bookseller's at the Bible, whose moher je have a mind to, but elle no erat dentro, but I did there look upon and buy some books, and made way for coming again to the man, which pleases me.

(Pepys, VIII, 61)

Pepys looked after his books well, though one wonders whether he did so ~~more~~ out of respect for the books themselves, or because of the appearance their uniform bindings would give to his study. At any rate, as his financial condition improved, he hastened to have his books rebound. He also had presses made for them, and arranged to have a bookbinder gild their backs so that they would look handsome in the new presses. Soon afterwards, he catalogued all his books.

Pepys's two new presses or bookcases set a curious limitation on his library. Tidy in all things, Pepys was not a disorderly bibliophile whose books spilled out over every piece of furniture around the house. On the contrary, after a visit

to his new booksellers, Martin's, he outlined his resolve about his library:

The truth is, I have bought a great many books lately to a great value; but I think to buy no more till Christmas next, and those that I have will so fill my two presses that I must be forced to give away some to make room for them, it being my design to have no more at any time for my proper library than to fill them.

(Pepys, VII, 258)

We have seen from the kind of reading that Pepys<sup>e</sup> and Evelyn enjoyed and from their attitudes to the literature of their day that they found the prevailing rationalistic atmosphere congenial to their personal inclinations. They took all knowledge to be their province, accepting no limitations prescribed by traditional prejudices. Because of the exploratory nature of their minds, both occasionally came into conflict with, or were misunderstood by, those of more conservative opinion. It has been mentioned that Evelyn's work on Lucretius got him into trouble even with some of his friends. Pepys's inquiring attitude towards religion, his lack of a strong commitment to any doctrine, occasionally earned him criticism for not attending communion enough, or for being, supposedly, sympathetic to the Catholics. Both read primarily for information; they obtained enjoyment from pursuing

knowledge in new as well as ~~in~~ traditional directions. In an age of expanding intellectual horizons, they tried to keep abreast of all developments. Evelyn, who specialized more than Pepys, had in consequence a more profound understanding of such aspects of life as art and architecture, science in general and horticulture in particular. By and large, their reading was in contemporary writing, though both pursued their interests through books written by authors antecedent to their own day. Here, too, however, their emphasis was upon reading for knowledge and not, with the possible exception of their interest in classical authors, for appreciation. They were not much interested in poetry except perhaps as a casual pastime. Although neither expressed any strong intellectual opposition to poetry as such, they seem to have accepted as their own, the attitude of their fellow members in the Royal Society who, as we have seen, eschewed poetry as a means for arriving at truth. Neither was an original philosophical thinker, yet ~~they~~ both were sufficiently intellectual and highly principled not to be swept along with popular prejudices. As members of the Royal Society, they supported the virtuosi against the frequent attacks <sup>levied</sup> ~~levied~~ at scientists and philosophers by traditionalists, by playwrights who pandered to the iconoclastic tendencies evident in some circles of the Court, and by those among

the common people who ridiculed what they did not understand.  
Evelyn and <sup>e</sup>Pepys were, that is to say, typical of the  
sophisticated, enlightened men of their time who, circumscribed  
only by their own limitations of mental and creative ability,  
sought to bring all nature under their scrutiny and  
understanding.

CHAPTER IV  
PEPYS, EVELYN, AND THE THEATRE  
OF THE RESTORATION PERIOD

The English theatre were closed by decree from September 2, 1642, until 1658. During these sixteen years, occasional surreptitious performances were presented, usually in the homes of the rich. In time, "drolls"--farcical scenes derived from old plays--were permitted in taverns and at fairs. However, no organized theatre existed in London until, with the relaxation of regulations towards the end of the Commonwealth, Davenant was allowed to reopen the Cockpit theatre in Drury Lane for the presentation of so called "operas" as The Cruelty of the Spaniards in Peru and The History of Sir Francis Drake.<sup>1</sup>

Soon after the Restoration, two other old playhouses were reopened--the Red Bull, dating from Queen Elizabeth's day, in which Pepys saw Marlowe's Dr. Faustus, and the Salisbury Court in Whitefriars, off Fleet Street. As these old buildings were in disrepair, they were soon replaced by the two theatres licensed in London during the period of Pepys's Diary. Pepys referred to the new

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<sup>1</sup> Cambridge History of English Literature, ed. A.W. Ward and A.R. Waller, Vol. VIII, "The Age of Dryden," (Cambridge, 1952), 118.



theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields--which housed Sir William Davenant's company--as The Opera, or, more commonly, as The Duke's House. He called the new theatre in Drury Lane sometimes The Drury Lane Theatre, sometimes simply The Theatre, occasionally, The Theatre Royal, but most frequently, The King's House.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to the two public theatres, the Court Theatre was established at Whitehall under the direct patronage of the King. Plays there were presented at royal command by actors from the public playhouses. The Court Theatre was the only theatre which produced plays at night.

The only other contemporary theatre in London mentioned by Pepys was the so-called Nursery, where apprentice actors learned their craft. Pepys spoke about going there with his wife and girl, Deb, on February 24, 1668:

...and after dinner, I took them to the Nursery where none of us ever were before; where the house is better and the musique better than we had looked for, and the acting not much worse, because I expected as bad as could be; and I was not much mistaken, for it was so.

(Pepys, VII, 316)

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<sup>2</sup>Sidney Lee, "Pepys and Shakespeare," in Fortnightly Review, January-June, 1906, 106.

The new theatres were not greatly dissimilar in structure from the earlier playhouses. The day after the Theatre Royal was opened on May 7, 1663 in Drury Lane, Pepys was in the audience, and afterwards wrote of it:

... The house is made with extraordinary good contrivance, and yet hath some faults, as the narrowness of the passages in and out of the pitt, and the distance from the stage to the boxes, which I am confident cannot hear; but for all other things it is well, only, above all, the musique being below, and most of it sounding under the very stage, there is no hearing of the bases at all, nor very well of the trebles which must be mended.

(Pepys, III, 108)

Apparently Pepys did not like the innovation of placing the musicians immediately in front of and below the stage, instead of in a side gallery. ~~as had previously been the custom.~~ He made no mention of the apron stage retreating to the proscenium for the very good reason that the stage of the Theatre Royal projected seventeen feet into the pit. Sir Sidney Lee asserts that the apron stage persisted throughout Pepys's lifetime.<sup>3</sup>

When the Theatre Royal was built, the pit was still not covered,

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<sup>3</sup> Lee, "Pepys and Shakespeare," 108.

though the stage was protected by a tiled roof. Pepys complained on January 1, 1664, of the house being thrown into disorder at a performance of Jonson's The Silent Woman, when he and the others in the pit had to rise because of a hail storm that occurred before the play was over (Pepys, IV, 138). Later, the pit was covered by a glazed cupola which did not entirely solve the problem. Pepys wrote on May 1, 1668:

... and then to the King's playhouse, and there saw "The Surprisall"; and a disorder in the pit by its raining in, from the cupola at top, it being a very foul day, and cold....

(Pepys, VIII, 1)

Though scenery had occasionally been used before, both scenery and stage machinery became more elaborate in the Restoration theatre. Pepys generally took these for granted, but he did think it important to mention that on May 7, 1663, the Theatre Royal would begin to "act with scenes" its performance of The Humourous Lieutenant (Pepys, III, 107). In the following year, he chanced to discuss with Tom Killigrew that actor-manager's plans for the new Nursery for players. Killigrew told him that "... we shall have the best scenes and machines, the best musique, and everything as magnificent as is in Christendome..." (Pepys, IV, 193). Pepys was always

interested in unusual effects, and made a point of mentioning in his account of the performance of Hide Parke at the King's House on July 11, 1668, that horses were brought upon the stage (Pepys, VIII, 60).

Theatrical productions were obviously much more carefully staged after the Restoration than they had ever been before. Pepys reported an interesting discussion with Tom Killigrew in 1667, in which Killigrew took most of the credit for the improvements :

... the stage is now by his pains a thousand times better and more glorious than ever heretofore. Now, wax-candles, and many of them; then, not above 3 lbs. of tallow: now, all things civil, no rudeness anywhere; then, as in a bear-garden: then, two or three fiddlers; now, nine or ten of the best: then, nothing but rushes upon the ground, and everything else mean; and now, all otherwise: ...

(Pepys, VI, 162)

It was probably the improved lighting that required the actors and actresses to wear the heavier make-up that Pepys found so distasteful, especially when he had a mind to buss Mrs. Knepp.

Soon after the Restoration, actresses were permitted on the English stage. Pepys, on January 3, 1661, recorded seeing Beggar's Bush at the Theatre Royal, "... the first time", as he said, "that ever I saw women come upon the stage." (Pepys, I, 294). Probably

because of the employment of actresses, and because of the better lighting, costuming became a more particular art. Pepys often commented on the magnificence of the dresses. On one occasion, the King himself gave £500 to his players for robes, but a month later, the production of Cataline was held up because the new costumes had not arrived (Pepys, VII, 221, 260).

Many of these new techniques were copied from the practices of the French theatre. Dramatists catered to the whims of a Court which, in the long years of exile, had become accustomed to continental plays and their method of production. But French influence extended far beyond the mere externals of staging. It transformed the nature of the plays themselves.

Molière's Les Précieuses Ridicules, a satire on Parisian society, had been produced in Paris in the year before the Restoration. It was followed by L'Ecole des Maris in 1661, and by L'Ecole des Femmes in 1662, both of which were light-hearted, ironical satires on the manners of the day. Their influence helped to establish the pattern for the English Comedy of Manners. English tragedy, on the other hand, was influenced by Corneille, and, towards the end of the century, by Racine. Corneille's plays popularized the vogue of the heroic play, rooted in Senecan bombast and rhetoric, to which genre Dryden contributed in such plays as The Conquest of Granada.

After Corneille, English tragedians paid more attention to the three unities of time, place, and action. Nevertheless, this neo-classical emphasis was only in part due to French influence. It was as much a reflection of the renewed interest of the age--that transcended national boundaries-- in the poets, dramatists, and philosophers of ancient Greece and Rome. In fact, the strict French classical tradition never became happily domiciled in England. In disavowing slavish imitation of the French, and in professing his imitation of Shakespeare, Dryden almost apologetically admitted that his All for Love more exactly observed the three unities than perhaps the English Theatre required.<sup>4</sup> Dryden vacillated in his support of French regularity. He thought French plays achieved the beauty of a "statue" without being animated by the "lively imitation of nature" that he thought most desirable in a play.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, he preferred the English tradition of underplots so long as they contributed to the main action, even though he acknowledged that they interfered with the strict concept of unity of action.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Cecil A. Moore, ed. Twelve Famous Plays of the Restoration and Eighteenth Century, (New York, 1933), 97.

<sup>5</sup>John Dryden, "An Essay of Dramatic Poesy," in The Works of John Dryden, ed. George Saintsbury, (London, 1892), XV, 329.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 332-333.

He praised, too, the English habit in tragi-comedies, adopted from the Spanish, of relieving "serious plays with mirth"; and was gratified to notice that Moliere and Thomas Corneille, among other French playwrights, had been imitating some of "the quick turns and graces of the English stage."<sup>7</sup>

These "quick turns and graces", which the English had learned from the Spaniards, denote the source of the second continental influence on Restoration drama. Spanish influence was apparent in English drama at least as early as in the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher. The plots of some seventeen of their plays have been traced to Spanish sources, many of them deriving from Cervantes and Lope de Vega.<sup>8</sup> Among Restoration playwrights, both Shirley and Killigrew were indebted to the Spaniards. Killigrew's The Parson's Wedding owed its plot to Calderon, while Tuke's popular Adventures of Five Hours was a direct adaptation from a Spanish play. Dryden, himself, in The Rival Ladies and An Evening's Love, to mention only two of his plays, depended for his plots upon Spanish sources.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> John Dryden, "An Essay of Dramatic Poesy," in The Works of John Dryden, ed. George Saintsbury, (London, 1892), XV, 330.

<sup>8</sup> CBEL, Vol. VIII, 127.

<sup>9</sup> CBEL, Vol. VIII, 130-131.

Both French and Spanish influences, however, as well as the characteristics deriving from the classic playwrights of Greece and Rome, were modified by native English traditions. The "comprehensive soul" of Shakespeare, the full-bodied lustiness of Beaumont and Fletcher, and the "elaborate writing" of Ben Jonson,<sup>10</sup> were all temperamentally opposed to the classical tradition of a profound analysis upon a narrow theme. Unfortunately, far too many English dramatists of the Restoration period pandered to the immorality of the Court, so that tragedy fell "... to a level of dullness and lubricity never surpassed before or since."<sup>11</sup> Comedy was redeemed from the same fate not by its subject matter, but by its gaiety, its wit, and by its debonair and emotionally detached treatment of licentious themes.

Nevertheless, it is not surprising to find that John Evelyn, old enough to have remembered the theatre of Charles I, was scandalized by the Restoration theatre and rarely attended it. In all his immense Diary, there are only about forty references to his attending the theatre after the Restoration, and on those occasions, he usually went to see one of the old favourites, or one of the more moderate

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<sup>10</sup> John Dryden, "An Essay of Dramatic Poesy," in The Works of John Dryden, ed. George Saintsbury, XV, 344-348.

<sup>11</sup> CBEL, Vol. VIII, 178.



contemporary plays. When he so fell from grace as to attend a performance of a flippant or a lewd play, he recorded the fact with contempt for his own weakness. After having seen Love and Honour, by Sir William Davenant, he commented that, "... I was so idle as to go see a play, cald Love and honor", (Evelyn, III, 303) and left it bleakly at that. Evelyn was a thorough-going conservative in his tastes for drama. On November 26, 1661, he wrote sadly and sarcastically of the reception of a performance of Hamlet: "I saw Hamlet Pr: of Denmark played: but now the old plays begin to disgust this refined age; since his Majestie being so long abroad." (Evelyn, III, 304)

Very rarely did Evelyn commend a modern play, though he liked The Indian Queen, written by Sir Robert Howard in collaboration with John Dryden. Of it, he wrote:

I saw acted the Indian Queene a Tragedie well written, but so beautified with rich Scenes as the like had never ben seene here as happily (except rarely any where else) on a mercenarie Theater:

(Evelyn, III, 368)

Even this entry carried the sting of the word "mercenarie." A more typical comment was that for October 18, 1666, by which time

the dissolute nature of the Restoration stage had become obvious:

This night was acted my Lord Brahals Tragedy cal'd Mustapha before their Majesties &c: at Court: at which I was present, very seldom at any time, going to the publique Theaters, for many reasons, now as they were abused, to an atheisticall liberty, fowle & undecent; Women now (& never 'til now) permitted to appeare & act, which inflaming severall young noble-men & gallants, became their whores, & to some their Wives, wittnesse the Earle of Oxford, Sir R: Howard, Pr: Rupert, the E: of Dorset, & another greater person than any of these, who fell into their snares, to the reproch of their noble families, & ruine of body & Soule: I was invited to see this Tragedie, exceedingly well writ, by my Lord Chamberlain, though in my mind, I did not approve of any such passe time, in a season of such Judgements & Calamitie:

(Evelyn, III, 465-466)

The judgments that worried Evelyn were the plague which, at its worst in 1665, continued into the early months of 1666, and the Great Fire which began September 2, 1666. That God would exact pitiless and stern retribution for misdemeanours was believed literally by many God-fearing men of the day, and in Evelyn's eyes the corporate and individual sins of the Restoration had been more than sufficiently heinous to justify swift vengeance. The "calamitie" in his mind was very likely the continuing and indecisive war with the Dutch. This entry, with its internal

evidence of having been expanded at a later date, contains a veiled reference to the actresses, among these Moll Davis and Nell Gwyn, who at one time or another were mistresses of Charles II.

At no time did the actors and actresses become persons interesting for Evelyn in their own rights. Not for him the back-stage gossip and sub rosa associations with actors and actresses in which Pepys delighted. Evelyn was always the reluctant playgoer, rarely entering into the spirit of a play, never able to suspend his moral judgment. After seeing John Dryden's An Evening's Love of the Mock Astrologer on June 19, 1668, he added to his spare but censorious comment an expression of his strong disapproval of what had happened to the stage:

19. To a new play, with severall of my Relations, The Evening Lover, a foolish plot, & very prophane, so as it afflicted me to see how the stage was degenerated & poluted by the licentious times:

(Evelyn, III, 510-511)

Evelyn's attitude to the Restoration theatre was consistent with that recommended by conduct writers who, earlier in the century had inveighed against a gentleman's going to the theatre because of the scenes of depravation to be witnessed there.<sup>12</sup> Many of the

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Jan de Bruyn, A Study of Seventeenth Century Courtesy and Conduct Literature as a Revelation of the English Gentleman. M.A. thesis, University of London, 1951, 271-272.

Restoration plays exhibited in quintessence the vices to which the conduct writers had objected, the more to be condemned because women now performed on the stage. From another point of view, Evelyn's disenchantment with the theatre was a manifestation of the town and country controversy. Evelyn, the perfect country gentleman, despised the vulgarity of an institution that was peculiarly urban in nature. In this, he could not have differed more greatly from Pepys who delighted in the vigorous if often disreputable action on the stage. The irony implicit in their differing attitudes lay in the fact that while Pepys was Puritan by background and upbringing, Evelyn was Royalist and Anglican.

According to J.R. Tanner, Pepys went to the theatre 351 times during the nine years and five months covered by the Diary. As the London playhouses were closed because of the Plague and the Great Fire for more than twelve months of this time,<sup>13</sup> Pepys must have averaged more than three attendances a month. Actually, Pepys was subject to gusts of theatre-going. He went, for instance on May 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, and 26, 1662. On May 26, he and his wife saw Doctor Faustus at the Red Bull, and he afterwards commented, "...but so wretchedly and poorly done, that we were sick of it, and

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<sup>13</sup> Lee, "Pepys and Shakespeare," 105.

the worse because by a former resolution it is to be the last play we are to see till Michaelmas." (Pepys, II, 230). Thereafter, Pepys held to his resolution, not going to another play until Michaelmas Day, September 29, 1662, when he wrote with relief:

This day my oaths for drinking of wine and going to plays are out, and so I do resolve to take a liberty to-day, and then to fall to them again.

(Pepys, II, 325)

After seeing Midsummer Night's Dream, The Duchess of Malfi, and The Cardinall within four days after Michaelmas, Pepys set himself another vow not to attend the theatre until Christmas. When, however, young Killigrew and others highly recommended Tom Porter's play The Villain, Pepys broke his vow and took his wife to the Duke's House on October 20. He was disappointed in the play, saying:

... whether it was in over-expecting or what, I know not, but I was never less pleased with a play in my life. Though there was good singing and dancing, yet no fancy in the play, but something that made it less contenting was my conscience that I ought not to have gone by my vow, and besides, my business commanded me elsewhere.

(Pepys, II, 346)

The record of his vows, besides being diverting, provides an insight into Pepys's character. Throughout the Diary, there are 55 references to his vows not to attend the theatre. Pepys invariably made his resolutions after seeing a large number of plays in a short space of time. He always greeted the end of a vow--generally on such a day as Michaelmas or Christmas--with joy, followed by another spate of theatre-going.

Pepys had three reasons for making his vows. First and foremost, he realized that the navy 's business suffered if he went to the theatre as often as he was tempted to do. Second, going to the theatre betrayed him into such frivolities as the salacious contemplation of the actresses, or of ladies of the Court, who, usually masked, frequented the theatres. Third, Pepys often begrudged paying the admission prices. On January 6, 1668, he took Mrs. Pierce, her cousin Corbet, Knepp, and little James to the Duke's House to see a performance of The Tempest. Pepys made no comment about the play, only about the cost:

... and the house being full, was forced to carry them to a box, which did cost me 20s, besides oranges, which troubled me, though their company did please me.

(Pepys, VII, 253)

The vows were hedged around with all sorts of curious conditions. Sometimes, Pepys allowed himself to go to the theatre once a month, or, perhaps, once a week. Sometimes, his native thrift helped him to resist temptation. On November 13, 1667, after seeing The Tempest, Pepys made this pledge:

... Thence home, and there to my chamber, and do begin anew to bind myself to keep my old vows, and among the rest not to see a play till Christmas but once in every other week, and have laid aside £10, which is to be lost to the poor if I do. This I hope in God will bind me....

(Pepys, VII, 181-182)

As Pepys went to the theatre only twice again before Christmas, he did not have to pay his forfeits. However, on other occasions, he was not so fortunate. On March 5, 1662, he mentioned his buying at the pewterer's, a "... poore's box to put my forfeits in, upon breach of my late vows." (Pepys, II, 187).

Occasionally, Pepys seems to have ignored his vows. Between August 1, and October 5, 1667, a period of a little over two months, he went to the theatre <sup>twenty-seven</sup> ~~27~~ times despite having said on August 24, "... and my belly now full with plays, that I do intend to bind myself to see no more till Michaelmas." (Pepys, VII, 75) However, his vows restrained him from attending the theatre as often as he

otherwise might have done. There is a wistful reference to his driving by the theatre and seeing the street filled with the coaches of those attending the new play, The Indian Queene, and not being able to attend himself because he was bound by a vow.

When the theatres were closed by the plague, Pepys assuaged his appetite for drama by reading plays, such as The Siege of Rhodes, Pompey the Great, The Mayor of Quinborough, The Rivall Ladys, and Othello. Great was his excitement when he learned on October 25, 1666, that the playhouses were to reopen on the following Monday. On opening day, Pepys went to the new playhouse at Whitehall, the first time, as he says, "... I ever was there, and the first play I have seen since before the great plague." (Pepys, VI, 40). The King and Queen, the Duke and Duchess of York, and all the great ladies of the Court were there, but Pepys was disappointed in the play:

But the play being "Love in a Tub" (By Sir George Etherege) a silly play and though done by the Duke's people, yet having neither Betterton nor his wife, and the whole thing done ill, and being ill also, I had no manner of pleasure in the play. Besides, the House, though very fine, yet bad for the voice, for hearing.

(Pepys, VI, 40)



Pepys attended all kinds of plays, but liked comedies particularly. One of his favourites was Sir Martin Marr-All, adapted by John Dryden from a play by the Duke of Newcastle. Pepys saw its second performance on August 16, 1667, and commented:

It is the most entire piece of mirth, a complete farce from one end to the other, that certainly was ever writ. I never laughed so in all my life. I laughed till my head (ached) all the evening and night with the laughing. The house full, and in all things of mighty content to me.

(Pepys, VII, 65)

<sup>repeatedly</sup> Pepys saw plays that he enjoyed ~~repeatedly~~. Between August, 1667, and the end of the Diary in May, 1669, he saw Sir Martin Marr-All seven times, and believed it "... undoubtedly the best comedy ever was wrote, (Pepys, VIII, 24).

Shakespeare's plays were often revived for the Restoration stage, but they were <sup>sometimes</sup> ~~often~~ modified, never held above criticism, and rarely emulated. An age that valued French neoclassicism and the three unities could not be expected to accept Shakespearean irregularity uncritically. Lisideius in An Essay of Dramatic Poesy, after speaking of the unity of action in French plays, spoke disparagingly of Shakespeare's historical plays as:

...rather so many chronicles of kings, or the business many times of thirty or forty years, cramped into a representation of two hours and a half ... this, instead of making a play delightful, renders it ridiculous ....<sup>14</sup>

Later, he spoke equally scathingly of the English practices of representing armies on the stage by five or so men,<sup>15</sup> and by having men slain in front of the audience. In regard to the latter, he said:

I have observed, that in all our tragedies the audience cannot forbear laughing when the actors are to die; it is the most comic part of the whole play ... dying especially is a thing which none but a Roman gladiator could naturally perform on the stage, when he did not imitate, or represent, but do it; and therefore it is better to omit the representation of it.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> John Dryden, "An Essay of Dramatic Poesy," in The Works of John Dryden, ed. George Saintsbury, XV, 319.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 323.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 324.

Even Dryden, who, as Neander in The Essay of Dramatic Poesy, considered Shakespeare, on balance, to be unequalled, nevertheless, complained about his occasional insipidity, "his comic wit degenerating into clenches, his serious swelling into bombast," and the obsolete quality of his language.<sup>17</sup> Though, as we have seen, Dryden defended Shakespeare's use of underplots, he objected, in the course of developing his argument for the use of rhyme in tragedies, that Shakespeare and his near contemporaries had exhausted the potentialities of blank verse:

Yet give me leave to say thus much, without  
injury to their ashes, that not only we shall  
never equal them, but they could never equal  
themselves, were they to rise and write again....  
There is scarce an humour, a character, or any  
kind of plot, which they have not used. All  
comes sullied or wasted to us ...  
... This way of writing in verse, they have  
only left free to us; our age is arrived to  
a perfection in it, which they never knew;...<sup>18</sup>

When Dryden, the most fair-minded of critics, held these sentiments, it is not to be wondered at that the Restoration considered Shakespeare as something less than sacrosanct, and that some of its playwrights corrupted his scripts.

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<sup>17</sup> John Dryden, "An Essay of Dramatic Poesy," in The Works of John Dryden, ed. George Saintsbury, XV, 319.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 346.

Pepys saw Macbeth ten times, twice during the Christmas season of 1666! He thought it, "... a most excellent play for variety" (Pepys, VI, 110), but the play he saw was not altogether the one written by Shakespeare:

... and thence to the Duke's House, and saw "MacBeth", which, though I saw it lately, yet appears a most excellent play in all respects, but especially in divertisement, though it be a deep tragedy; which is a strange perfection in a tragedy, it being most proper here, and suitable.

(Pepys, VI, 118)

Sir Sidney Lee has said that the Macbeth of Pepys's day was a truncated thing.<sup>19</sup> The version that Pepys saw was probably that of Sir William Davenant, embellished with new devices, dances, and songs, until it had assumed much of the character of an opera. After a later performance, on April 19, 1667, Pepys wrote again of the "divertis<sup>s</sup>ement":

... Here we saw "Macbeth" which, though I have seen it often, yet is it one of the best plays for a stage, and variety of dancing and musique, that ever I saw.

(Pepys, VI, 261)

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Lee, "Pepys and Shakespeare," 113.

Pepys saw The Tempest eight times, and liked it passingly well, but this was another of Shakespeare 's plays that had been "modernized" until it was almost a musical comedy. After a performance on November 13, 1667, Pepys wrote:

... and there saw The Tempest again, which is very pleasant, and full of so good variety that I cannot be more pleased almost in a comedy, only the seamen's part a little too tedious.

(Pepys, VII, 181).

According to Lee, Pepys--who saw <sup>forty-one</sup> ~~41~~ performances of fourteen different plays by Shakespeare--probably saw the other plays in their authentic versions. He was not always impressed. When he first saw Twelfth Night on September 11, 1661, he thought it a new play and, "... took no pleasure in it" (Pepys, II, 95). On January 20, 1669, he still thought it one of the weakest plays he had ever seen on the stage (Pepys, VIII, 193). Pepys was equally caustic about Midsummer Night's Dream, which he saw on September 29, 1662, and wrote:

... which I had never seen before, nor shall ever again, for it is the most insipid ridiculous play that ever I saw in my life. I saw, I confess,

some good dancing and some handsome women,  
which was all my pleasure.

(Pepys, II, 326).

Neither had Pepys any use for Romeo and Juliet. He saw it only once and thought it, "... a play of itself the worst that ever I hear in my life." (Pepys, II, 185). The Taming of the Shrew was briefly dismissed as, "... a silly play and an old one." (Pepys, VII, 172). On one of the three occasions that he saw The Merry Wives of Windsor, he commented, "... the humours of the country gentleman and the French doctor very well done, but the rest very poorly, and Sir J. Falstaffe as bad as any." (Pepys, I, 278). After later productions, he thought the play either "ill done," or mentioned that it had not pleased him at all, adding for emphasis, "... in no part of it." (Pepys, VII, 64).

Pepys seems to have had a higher regard for Shakespeare's historical plays and tragedies. He liked Othello generally, but thought it "a mean thing" besides Sir Samuel Tuke's The Adventures of Five Hours, based on a plot by Calderon. He blew hot and cold over Henry IV, being disappointed in it when he first bought the book and saw the play in December 1660; liking it when he saw it again in June, 1661; enjoying only Falstaff's "What is Honour?" speech

at a performance in November, 1667; and liking it not at all on January 7, 1668.

Pepys enjoyed Hamlet, as much, it seems, for the excellence of Thomas Betterton--the leading actor of the day--in the title role as for the intrinsic merit of the play. On August 24, 1661, Pepys saw Hamlet for the first time, and recorded the event:

... and then straight to the Opera, and there saw "Hamlet, Prince of Denmark", done with scenes very well, but above all, Betterton did the prince's part beyond imagination.

(Pepys, II, 82).

It speaks well for the consistency of Betterton's acting and of Pepys's critical point of view that seven years later, on August 31, 1668, he recorded a remarkably similar tribute to the play and to the performance of his favorite actor:

... and saw "Hamlet" which we have not seen this year before, or more; and mightily pleased with it; but above all, with Betterton, the best part, I believe that ever a man acted.

(Pepys, VIII, 90).

Between November 1 and November 7, 1667, Pepys saw four plays by Shakespeare, The Taming of the Shrew, Henry IV,

Macbeth, and The Tempest. It is interesting to speculate that perhaps the two main theatres were presenting a Shakespearean festival during that week, and that no other plays were being offered in the city. Pepys saw the first two plays at the King's Theatre and the last one at The Duke's, but Macbeth must also have been playing in the latter house as Betterton, who played the title role, belonged to Davenant's company.

Lee ascribes Pepys's lukewarm appreciation of Shakespeare to the fact that he was essentially a man of business who eschewed poetry and works of the imagination. He speaks of Pepys's "... congenital inability of the most inveterate toughness to appreciate dramatic poetry."<sup>20</sup> In support of his argument, Lee mentions that Pepys disliked precisely those plays of Shakespeare--including Midsummer Night's Dream, Twelfth Night, and Romeo and Juliet--in which poetic imagery and romantic passion have the freest rein.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>

Lee, "Pepys and Shakespeare," 112-114.

<sup>21</sup>

Lee, 112.



It may be at least as true to say that styles in drama having changed over the years, Pepys's opinion of Shakespeare's more rhapsodic plays was coloured by the opinion of his contemporaries regarding Shakespeare, and by the reaction of his age to the fanciful and romantic in literature.

The dramatic conventions of the Restoration period being what they were, it is not surprising that Pepys preferred Ben Jonson to other playwrights of the older generation. He saw Bartholomew Fair six times, The Silent Woman, three times, The Alchemist, three times, and Volpone, at least once. His comments were almost uniformly favourable. Of Volpone, he said, "Home to dinner, thence with my wife to the King's house to see "Vulpone", a most excellent play; the best I think I ever saw, and well acted." (Pepys, IV, 309). In 1661, he thought The Alchemist "... a most incomparable play" (Pepys, II, 54), and eight years later, he remarked, "... it is still a good play" (Pepys, VIII, 279), though on this occasion his eyes bothered him greatly, and he lamented that the recent murder of Clun, the actor, had removed him from the part of the doctor. When Pepys first saw The Silent Woman on January 7, 1661, he called

it excellent, but several years later, he was even more eulogistic:

I never was more taken with a play than I am with this "Silent Woman", as old as it is, and as often as I have seen it. There is more wit in it than goes to ten new plays.

(Pepys, VI, 259).

Pepys came nearest to criticism of Jonson in his comments on Bartholomew Fair, though his attitude to it may be more a reflection of his own latent political beliefs than a commentary on the play itself. Pepys first saw Bartholomew Fair--generally considered to be a satire on the Puritans--on June 8, 1661, when he considered it, "... a most admirable play and well acted, but too much prophane and abusive." (Pepys, II, 47). Nevertheless, he saw it three more times in the same year, twice acted with puppets. On August 2, 1664, he considered that it "is as it is acted, the best comedy in the world." (Pepys, IV, 193). On September 4, 1668, when he had become disgusted with the profligacy and fecklessness of the court, he commented:

... it is an excellent play; the more I see it, the more I love the wit of it; only the business of abusing the Puritans

begins to grow stale, and of no use, they  
being the people that, at last, will be  
found the wisest.

(Pepys, VIII, 92).

Plays by Beaumont and Fletcher, frequently produced during the Restoration, obtained a mixed reception from Pepys. When he first saw The Maid's Tragedy, he thought it "too sad and melancholy," (Pepys, II, 33) but after he had seen it four times, he came to consider it a good play. The Knight of the Burning Pestle did not please him at all. He liked The Faithful Shepherdess but with reservations:

Here we saw "The Faithful Shepherdesse",  
a most simple thing, and yet much  
thronged after, and often shown, but it is  
only for the scenes' sake, which is very  
fine indeed and worth seeing.

(Pepys, III, 157).

Always fond of the music incidental to plays, Pepys went to see The Faithful Shepherdess in 1668, expressly to hear the French eunuch sing (Pepys, VIII, 116). However, the play was declining in popularity. When Pepys saw it for his last recorded time, he commented on the attendance:

But Lord! What an empty house, there  
not being, as I could tell the people, so

many as to make up above £10 in the whole house. ... The emptiness of the house took away our pleasure a great deal, though I liked it the better; for that I plainly discern the musick is the better, by how much the house emptier.

(Pepys, VIII, 224).

Pepys saw The Spanish Curate three times in seven years, and though at first he found "no great content" in it, he later thought it a pretty good play. Not so Cupid's Revenge which he saw in 1668. He did not, on the whole, like the play, though he admitted it had something "very good in it." On the other hand, he thought The Custom of the Country a very bad play, and said of it:

... but, of all the plays that ever I did see, the worst - having neither plot, language, nor anything in the earth that is acceptable; only Knipp sings a little song admirably.

(Pepys, VI, 115).

Pepys found Philaster far below his expectations in 1661. However, when he saw it again in 1668, he alluded with wry humour to the time in his boyhood when he had nearly had the chance to play the part of Arethusa himself:

... and so to the King's playhouse, and there saw "Philaster" where it is pretty

to see how I could remember almost all along, ever since I was a boy, Arethusa, the part which I was to have acted at Sir Robert Cooke's; and it was very pleasant to me, but more to think what a ridiculous thing it would have been for me to have acted a beautiful woman.

(Pepys, VIII, 31-32).

Pepys saw John Fletcher's The Storme three times.

When he first saw it on September 25, 1667, he mistakenly thought it a new play. He considered it then, "but so-so," and added, "only there is a most admirable dance at the end, of the ladies, in a military manner, which indeed did please me mightily" (Pepys, VII, 117). Later, he thought it a "mean play" compared with The Tempest which was then being produced at the Duke's House (Pepys, VII, 352).

Pepys judged each play on its own merits as a production. He neither venerated a play because of its age, nor hastened to acclaim one because it was new and popular. If, on the one hand, he disliked the production of Marlowe's Doctor Faustus that he saw at the old Red Bull theatre, and thought John Webster's Duchess of Malfi "a sorry play" (Pepys, VIII, 155), he was equally critical of the new vogue for the Comedy of Manners. On February 6, 1668, Pepys went to see Etherege's new play She Would if She Could acted at the Duke's playhouse. His comment is interesting not only for his opinion

of the play itself, though his criticism is more extensive than usual, but because of the reaction of Etherege to the reception of his play:

... though I was there by two o'clock,  
there was 1000 people put back that  
could not have room in the pit: and I at  
last, because my wife was there, made  
shift to get into the 18d box, and there  
saw; but, Lord! how full was the house  
and how silly the play, there being  
nothing in the world good in it, and few  
people pleased in it.

(Pepys, VII, 287).

Pepys lingered in the pit after the play, looking for his wife:

... among the rest, here was the Duke of  
Buckingham today openly sat in the pit;  
and there I found him with my Lord Buckhurst,  
and Sidly, and Etherige, the poet; the last  
of whom I did hear mightily find fault with  
the actors, that they were out of humour, and  
had not their parts perfect, and that Harris  
did do nothing, nor could so much as sing a  
ketch in it; and so was mightily concerned:  
while all the rest did, through the whole pit,  
blame the play as a silly dull thing, though  
there was something very roguish and witty;  
but the design of the play, and end, mighty  
insipid.

(Pepys, VII, 287).

That Pepys was aware of his lack of sympathy with the new type of play is apparent from his puzzled behaviour over

Thomas Shadwell's The Sullen Lovers; or The Impertinents.

Pepys attended the first performance of this play at the Duke's House on May 2, 1668, saying at the time that it had "... many good humours in it, but the play tedious, and no design at all in it (Pepys, VIII, 2). But the play appeared to be well received, so Pepys went again, but "... with less pleasure than before, it being but a very contemptible play, though there are many little witty expressions in it; and the pit did generally say that of it." (Pepys, VIII, 4). Still Pepys could not understand why his opinion should differ from that of the public generally. The next day he went again:

... I saw "The Impertinents" once more, now three times, and the three only days it hath been acted. And to see the folly how the house do this day cry up the play more than yesterday! and I for that reason like it, I find, the better, too.

(Pepys, VIII, 4).

It was unusual for Pepys to be so bewildered over a play, and unheard of that he should capitulate to the popular opinion.

Often plays that Pepys did not like at first grew upon him with repeated seeing. Such was the case with Davenant's The Man is the Master, which Pepys initially thought had "... not anything extraordinary at all in it" (Pepys, VII, 352), but which he later came to consider "a very

good play." (Pepys, VIII, 6). That was true also of Sir Robert Howard's comedy The Committee, which he first thought "... a merry but indifferent play" (Pepys, III, 155), but later revised his opinion:

Thence Sir W. Pen and I to the King's house, and there saw "The Committee" which I went to with some prejudice, not liking it before, but I do now find it a very good play, and a great deal of good invention in it; but Lacy's part is so well performed that it would set off anything.

(Pepys, VII, 62-63).

Pepys attended so many plays that he developed a formidable standard by which to judge new performances. He wanted design in a play, and invention, and characterization, but above all, good acting. On one occasion, he would not go to the Duke's house to see The Villain because Betterton was not acting, even though others said Smith acted the part just as well (Pepys, VII, 158). Though Pepys liked some of Lord Orrery's plays, particularly Mustapha and Henry V, he soon saw through Orrery's lack of inventiveness. Of Henry V, he said:

... a most noble play, writ by my Lord Orrery; wherein Betterton, Harris, and Ianthe's parts are most incomparably wrote and done, and the whole play the most full of height and raptures of wit and sense, that ever I heard;



having but one incongruity, or what did not please me in it, that is, that King Harry promises to plead for Tudor to their Mistresse, Princess Katherine of France, more than when it comes to it he seems to do; and Tudor refused by her with some kind of indignity, not with a difficulty and honour that it ought to have been done in to him.

(Pepys, IV, 202).

Pepys began to identify the flaw in Orrery's plots when he saw the first performance of the new play The Black Prince on October 19, 1667:

By and by the play begun, and in it nothing particular but a very fine dance for variety of figures, but a little too long. But, as to the contrivance, and all that was witty (which, indeed, was much, and very witty), was almost the same that had been in his two former plays of "Henry the 5th" and "Mustapha", and the same points and turns of wit in both, and in this very same play often repeated, but in excellent language....

(Pepys, VII, 147).

Finally, when he saw Tryphon, he lost patience with Orrery's repetitiveness:

... the house infinite full, but the prologue most silly, and the play, though admirable, yet no pleasure almost in it, because just the very same design, and words, and sense, and plot, as every one of his plays have, any one of which alone would be held admirable, whereas so many of the same design and fancy do but dull one another; and this, I perceive is the sense

of every body else, as well as myself,  
 who therefore showed but little pleasure  
 in it.

(Pepys, VIII, 166).

This sequence of entries about Orrery's plays reveals as well as does any of Pepys's dramatic criticism that he was not a passive spectator at the theatre but an unusually intelligent and discerning analyst of each production. Perhaps that is why Pepys so often withheld final judgment on the worth of a play until after he had seen it several times. Through this process, he grew to like some of James Shirley's plays, including The Traitor, The Cardinal, and Love in a Maze; and continued to hold reservations regarding Davenant's plays, though he liked The Wits and The Siege of Rhodes.

We have seen that Pepys rarely found fault with Ben Jonson's plays. He was almost equally attracted to those of John Dryden. Both Dryden and Jonson satisfied his desire for "design" and "invention." Both were entertainingly satirical. Both modified the classic rules of Aristotle, while retaining much of their substance. Both exhibited a typically English insight into characterization, and both had sufficient sense of humour to recognize the incongruity at the heart of many dramatic situations.

Pepys saw several of Dryden's plays, including The Indian Queen, The Rival Ladies, The Indian Emperor, The Maiden Queen, and An Evening's Love, and he liked them all with the exception of the last named. He thought The Rival Ladies "... a very innocent and most pretty witty play" (Pepys, IV, 194). He saw The Maiden Queene--which was a tragicomedy with a serious main plot relieved by a comic subplot much in the manner of Twelfth Night--no fewer than eight times. When he first saw it, he commented:

... a new play of Dryden's, mightily commended for the regularity of it, and the strain and wit; and the truth is, there is a comical part done by Nell, which is Florimell, that I never can hope ever to see the like done again, by man or woman.

(Pepys, VI, 192).

Later, he said of it, "... Indeed the more I see the more I like, and is an excellent play" (Pepys, VI, 225).

In the meantime, Dryden was evolving the "Heroic" play, written in a declamatory style of dialogue, set in a remote land, and concerned with a successful, virtuous hero and an equally virtuous heroine, against whom were set a series of rival villains and villainesses. The first of Dryden's heroic plays was The Indian Queen which, with its exotic setting in Mexico, was extremely popular with English audiences.

When Pepys first saw the play on February 1, 1664, he thought it "... A most pleasant show, and beyond my expectation; the play good, but spoiled with the ryme, which breaks the sense" (Pepys, IV, 27). It is curious that Pepys should have mentioned the rhyme, because the play, originally conceived by Dryden's brother-in-law Sir Robert Howard had been submitted to the poet for revision, particularly for revision of the verse. Neither the play nor the acting wore well with Pepys. Though he liked it and Anne Marshall's acting in 1664, he dismissed the play without comment after seeing it in 1668, saying only that he was unimpressed with Nan Marshall's acting.

Pepys saw The Indian Emperor, sequel to The Indian Queen, three times in less than a year. At first he was lukewarm towards it, probably because he believed it to be miscast, for he said:

... I find Nell come again, which I am glad of; but most infinitely displeased with her being put to act the Emperour's daughter; which is a great and serious part, which she do most basely. The rest of the play, though pretty good, was not well acted by most of them, methought....

(Pepys, VII, 72)

After his second attendance at the play, Pepys called it "a good play, but not so good as people cry it up, I think, though above

all things Nell's ill speaking of a great part made me mad" (Pepys, VII, 180). When he saw it again on March 28, 1668, he thought it "a very good play indeed" (Pepys, VII, 356).

Pepys did not like Dryden's An Evening's Love, or The Mock Astrologer. His comment is interesting because he saw it on June 20, 1668, the day after Evelyn. Mrs. Pepys and Evelyn had, in fact, been present at the same performance. As Mrs. Pepys had not liked the play, she and her husband decided to go together the next day so that he could judge it for himself. Pepys said afterwards:

... and so she and I alone to the King's House, and there I saw this new play my wife saw yesterday, and do not like it, it being very smutty, and nothing so good as "The Maiden Queen", or "The Indian Emperour" of his making, that I was troubled at it....

(Pepys, VIII, 51)

As we have seen earlier, Evelyn's comment was similar in nature, though his manner of saying it was completely in character with his tendency to generalize from the particular. Where Evelyn saw the play as evidence of the degeneracy of the stage, Pepys was content to compare it with other plays by Dryden.

An Evening's Love was not the only play that Pepys and

Evelyn saw at about the same time. They attended the same performance of Tuke's The Adventure of Five Hours on January 8, 1663.

Pepys wrote afterwards:

Dined at home; and there being the famous new play acted the first time to-day, which is called The Adventures of Five Hours, at the Duke's house, being, they say, made or translated by Colonel Tuke, I did long to see it; and so made my wife to get her ready, though we were forced to send for a smith to break open her trunk, her mayde Jane being gone forth with the keys, and so we went; and though early, were forced to sit almost out of sight, at the end of one of the lower forms, so full was the house. And the play in one word, is the best, for the variety and the most excellent continuance of the plot to the very end, that ever I saw, or think ever shall, and all possible, not only to be done in the time, but in most other respects very admittable, and without one word of ribaldry; and the house, by its frequent plaudits, did show their sufficient approbation.

(Pepys, III, 7-8)

Pepys's racy, visual description, complete with the amusing, irrelevant, but very human reference to the affair of the trunk, is in sharp contrast to Evelyn's comment. Evelyn obviously did not record his impressions immediately after the play, and he was concerned with other matters than the dramatic--with his kinship to

Tuke, with his estimate of the play's earnings:

I went to see Sir. S: Tuke (my kindsmans) Comedy acted at the Dukes Theater, which so universally tooke as it was acted for some weekes every day & twas believed would be worth the Comedians 4 or 5000 pounds: Indeede the plot was incomparable but the language stiffe & formall.

(Evelyn, III, 350)

It is curious that Pepys, with his keen ear for expressive and colloquial speech, did not mention the diction of the play, though Evelyn, with his affinity for the rhetorical, thought it "stiffe and formall."

We have noticed two instances of Pepys's recording that a play had been translated from the French or the Spanish. He made a similar comment about Davenant's new play, The Man is the Master, which he saw on March 26, 1668:

The play is a translation out of French, and the plot Spanish, but not anything extraordinary at all in it, though translated by Sir. W. Davenant, and so I found the King and his company did think meanly of it, though there was here and there something pretty: but most of the mirth was sorry, poor stuffe, of eating of sack posset and slabbering themselves, and mirth fit for clownes; the prologue but poor, and the epilogue little in it but the extraordinariness of it, it being sung by Harris and another in the form of a ballet.

(Pepys, VII, 352-353)

Typically, this entry condenses all sorts of information into a brief compass. It tells of the plot, the reception of the play, the quality of its comedy--which, incidentally tells us something of Pepys's own standards--of the prologue, epilogue, and ballad. More important, perhaps, Pepys is here accepting as a matter of course, the influence of the French and Spanish theatre upon the English stage.

Not only did Pepys revel in the plays themselves, but he loved nothing better than to know what was going on backstage. He liked to visit the actors and actresses all "unready" in their dressing rooms, to touzle willing actresses like Mrs. Knepp, and to worship others, like Nell Gwynn, from afar. On October 5, 1667, he went to the King's House:

... And there going in, met with Knepp, and she tooke us up into the tireing-rooms: and to the women's shift, where Nell was dressing herself, and was all unready, and is very pretty, prettier than I thought. ... but, Lord! to see how they were both painted would make a man mad,...

(Pepys, VII, 127)

On a later occasion, after a production of James Howard's comedy, The English Monsieur, Pepys went to see Knepp in her dressing room. There, and later in the park where he had taken



her for a drive, Pepys was titillated by the gossip of the theatre:

... Here I hear Sr W. Davenant is just now dead; and so who will succeed him in the master-ship of the house is not yet known. The eldest Davenport is, it seems, gone from this house to be kept by somebody; which I am glad of, she being a very bad actor. ... She tells me mighty news, that my Lady Castlemayne is mightily in love with Hart of their house: and he is much with her in private, and she goes to him, and do give him many presents; ...

(Pepys, VII, 370)

Even at the remove of three centuries, Pepys's breathlessness at these diverting disclosures is vividly communicated by his long, tumbling sentences.

On another occasion, for a more austere purpose, the presumptuous Mr. Pepys went out between acts of The Tempest to see Harris, the actor:

... and got him to repeat to me the words of the Echo, while I writ them down, having tried in the play to have wrote them; but when I had done it, having done it without looking upon my paper, I find I could not read the blacklead. But now I have the words clear, and, in going in thither, had the pleasure to see the actors in their several dresses, especially the seamen and monster, which were very droll: so into the play again.

(Pepys, VIII, 12)

It is scarcely to be expected that Harris welcomed being disturbed during his breathing spell between acts by Pepys's request for the words of a song, but Pepys was not a man lightly to be put off. He must have been on exceedingly friendly terms with the actors and to have combined charm with his aggressiveness.

We have now seen that Pepys enjoyed all aspects of the theatre. He was not content to be only a passive member of innumerable audiences but knew the actors, the actor-managers, and the intricacies of theatrical production. Sir Sydney Lee has summarized Pepys's attitude to the stage, though he does not mention Pepys's concern for the structure of plays as distinct from their literary quality:

... No other writer has pictured with the same life-like precision and simplicity the average playgoer's sensations of pleasure or pain. Of the play and its performers, Pepys records exactly what he thinks or feels. He usually takes a more lively interest in the acting and in the scenic and musical accessories than in the drama's literary quality. Subtlety is at any rate absent from his criticism. He is either bored or amused. The piece is either the best or the worst that he ever witnessed. His epithets are of the bluntest and are without modulation. Wiser than more professional dramatic critics, he avoids labouring at reasons for his emphatic judgments.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Lee, "Pepys and Shakespeare," 104.

Unfortunately, when the Diary came to an end in 1669, so also did the source of our information regarding Pepys and the theatre.

During the first decade of the Restoration, Pepys mirrored the attitude of upper and middle class London society to the theatre. Without conscious awareness of why he did so, he preferred, in general, those plays which by their "design" conformed to the principles of structure which his age applauded. He enjoyed comedies, heroic tragedies, and older plays which, like those of Jonson, had been constructed with some attention to the unities. Though his acute intelligence and intellectual honesty would not let him slavishly follow the mode, he was troubled by self-doubt when his views did not coincide with those of the majority. He was happiest when he could enjoy popular plays that performed to overflowing houses, for nothing excited him more than the bond established between the actors and a large and enthusiastic audience. So much was he a man of his time that he rarely had to struggle with his conscience because he dissented from the popular acclaim of a play. In sum, though more keenly perceptive than most, and more articulate than any, he epitomized the average playgoer of the 1660's.

In contrast, John Evelyn was completely out of sympathy

with the Restoration theatre. A conservative countryman, he valued established institutions and moral customs, and had little patience with the laxity and frivolity ushered into the theatre after the Restoration. After all, though Pepys was only thirty-five in 1669, Evelyn was forty-nine, old enough to have had his ways set in the England of Charles I.

## CHAPTER V

### PEPYS AND EVELYN AND THEIR ATTITUDES TO MUSIC

Evelyn and Pepys were, in many ways, complementary to one another. Each had enough in common with the other to inspire attraction, but each had his unique enthusiasms which impressed and fascinated the other. Pepys received his greatest delight from music, perhaps because he was a creative participant in it, not only as a performer on the lute, flageolet, triangle, recorder, harpsichord, and spinet, but also as a composer of songs and as a theorist of some originality. On the other hand, Evelyn's interest in music was conventional, that proper to a cultivated gentleman of the day. He did speak of visiting a church in Rome and of hearing their motettos "sung by Eunuchs, and other rare voices, accompanied with Theorbas, Harpsicors, & Viols; so as we were even ravish'd with the entertainment of that Evening" (Evelyn, II, 233, Nov. 8, 1644), but Evelyn never exuberantly identified himself with the music as did Pepys. We know that he learned to play the lute from Monsieur Mercure "though to small perfection" (Evelyn, II, 535, March 3, 1647). We also know that he learned something about the Theorba from Signor Dominico Bassano, but he was much more interested in Bassano's daughter who could play nine separate instruments as well as compose pieces than he was in his

own proficiency on the instrument (Evelyn, II, 473 circa October, 1645). The fact is that references to music in Evelyn's diary are relatively rare.

Pepys, in contrast, was never so happy as when he was singing with congenial companions, playing on his flageolet in the garden of an evening, arranging songs, organizing his household into an impromptu concert group, or listening to a "boatfull of Spaniards sing," as he returned home on the Thames in the cool of a July evening (Pepys, VII, 12). Pepys often began the day with music and was so consumed by it that he was afraid his attention to business would suffer. In a period of self-imposed abstinence from music, he wrote:

... I played also, which I have not done this long time before upon any instrument, and at last broke up and I to my office a little while, being fearful of being too much taken with musique, for fear of returning to my old dotage thereon, and so neglect my business as I used to do.

(Pepys, III, 41)

Much later, Pepys went to Mrs. Knepp's chamber to hear an Italian music master instruct her in her part in an opera:

... and so to supper and to bed, troubled at nothing, but that these pleasures do hinder me in my business ... but then I do consider that this is all the pleasure I live for in the world, and the greatest I can ever ex-

pect in the best of my life ....

(Pepys, VI, 164)

Early in his Diary, Pepys noted that he was planning to take singing lessons:

This morning came Mr. Goodgroome to me (recommended by Mr. Mage), with whom I agreed presently to give him 20s entrance, which I then did, and 20s a month more to teach me to sing, and so we began, and I hope I have come to something in it.

(Pepys, II, 55)

Thereafter, Pepys practised faithfully. Soon his wife was also taking lessons from Mr. Goodgroome, but she was not an apt pupil. Six years later Pepys was so disappointed with her progress that he berated Mr. Goodgroome for teaching her only three songs in three months (Pepys, VII, 57). A month later, he had to agree to pay her teacher 10s for each new song she learned. Unhappily, Mrs. Pepys did not improve. As early as October 30, 1666, Pepys had complained of her singing:

... her eare is not good, nor I, I confess, have patience enough to teach her, or hear her sing now and then a note out of tune, and am to blame that I cannot bear with that in her which is fit I should do with her as a learner, and one that I desire

much could sing, and so should encourage her.

(Pepys, VI, 41)

Six months later, Pepys again despaired of his wife ever learning to sing. "Poor wretch!" he wrote, "her ear is so bad that it made me angry, till the poor wretch cried to see me so vexed at her..." (Pepys, VI, 191). About this time, Pepys had his wife take lessons on the flageolet. Less than a year later, he was happy to be able to report:

... and there my wife and I part of the night at the flageolet, which she plays now any thing upon almost at first sight and in good time.

... after supper, I to bed, being mightily pleased with my wife's playing so well upon the flageolet, and I am resolved she shall learn to play upon some instrument, for though her eare be bad, yet I see she will attain any thing to be done by her hand.

(Pepys, VII, 103-104)

Pepys was so enthusiastic about music that he delighted to encourage others, especially his servants, to take it up. He was pleased when his boy, Tom, showed a natural aptitude for the lute. The day that Mercer arrived as a servant, he arranged a musical evening at home:



... and there my wife and Mercer and Tom and I sat till eleven at night, singing and fiddling, and a great joy it is to see me master of so much pleasure in my house that it is and will be still, I hope, a constant pleasure to me to be at home. The girle plays pretty well upon the harpsicon, but only ordinary tunes, but hath a good hand; sings a little, but hath a good voyce and eare. My boy, a brave boy, sings finely, and is the most pleasant boy at present, while his ignorant boy's tricks last, that ever I saw.

(Pepys, IV, 224)

So it was on many evenings, sometimes with his household alone, sometimes with friends. One night, Mr. Andrews and Mr. Hill dropped in. They, Tom, and Pepys then sang Ravenscroft's four part psalms--"most admirable musique" (Pepys, IV, 276).

Often the most pleasurable occasions were unplanned. Pepys returned home at nine one night to find Mrs. Pierce, Mrs. Tooker, and Mr. Hill, among others, all dancing. Soon Mr. and Mrs. Coleman arrived:

The dancing ended and to sing, which Mrs. Coleman do very finely, though her voice is decayed as to strength but mighty sweet though soft, and a pleasant jolly woman, and in mighty good humour was to-night. ... But for singing, among other things, we got Mrs. Coleman to sing part of the Opera, though she won't owne that

ever she did get any of it without book in order to the stage; but, above all, her counterfeiting of Captain Cooke's part, in his reproaching his man with cowardice, "Base Slave," &c. she do it most excellently. At it till past midnight, and then broke up and to bed.

(Pepys, V, 124)

Time was forgotten on these impromptu occasions. Sometimes, because of the company, and the entertainment, and the excitement, events got somewhat out of hand. Once Pepys found at Lord Bruncker's a merry company which included Sir J. Minnes, Mr. Boreman, Mrs. Turner and "dear Mrs. Knipp." He was pleased to hear Mrs. Knipp sing "her little Scotch song of 'Barbary Allen'." Against his will, Pepys left for his office, but his blood was up and he had to return:

... and met them coming home in coaches, so I got into the coach where Mrs. Knipp was and got her upon my knees (the coach being full) and played with her breasts and sung, and at last set her at her house and so good night.

(Pepys, V, 175)

Pepys's sensitive, trained ear could not abide anything sung off key. He expected a high standard of performance from those who

came to his place to sing. When Mercer and Gayet brought two gentlemen to his home, his comment scarcely concealed his disgust at the singing of one of them:

... and two gentlemen with them, Mr. Monteith and Pelham, the former a swaggering young handsome gentleman, the latter a sober citizen merchant. Both sing, but the latter with great skill--the other, no skill, but a good voice, and a good basse, but used to sing only tavern tunes; and so I spent all this evening till eleven at night singing with them, till I was tired of them, because of the swaggering fellow with the base, though the girl Mercer did mightily commend him before to me.

(Pepys, VIII, 31)

Pepys let himself go unrestrainedly on such a special occasion as occurred on March 2, 1669, when, with a group of dinner guests, together with some others who arrived, and a musical trio, he spent the evening dancing:

... We fell to dancing, and continued, only with intermission for a good supper, till two in the morning, the musick being Greeting, and another most excellent violin, and theorbo, the best in town. And so with mighty mirth, and pleased with their dancing of jigs afterwards several of them, and, among others, Betty Turner, who did it mighty prettily; and, lastly, W. Batelier's "Blackmore and Blackmore Mad"; and then to a country-dance again, and so broke up with extraordinary

pleasure, as being one of the days and nights of my life spent with the greatest content; and that which I can but hope to repeat again a few times in my whole life.

(Pepys, VIII, 227)

Pepys enjoyed all manner of music and dancing. We have seen that he liked plays in which there were songs and dances. He contrived, too, to attend as many private performances of great musicians as he could. Sometimes, he visited Lord Sandwich's home to hear performers there; at his viall-maker's, he heard the "famous Mr. Stefkins" on the "viall" (Pepys, III, 198); at Mr. Pagett's, he heard Dr. Walgrave, "... who plays the best upon the lute that I ever heard man" (Pepys, IV, 100). Frequently, he went to the Queen's Chapel to hear musical performances there.

In consequence of his own high standards of performance, Pepys was often critical of the music he heard. As a general rule, he seems to have preferred singing rather than instrumental music. On one occasion, having heard an instrumental performance by Mr. Berkenshaw, he wrote:

I must confess, whether it be that I hear it but seldom or that really voice is better, but so it is that I found no pleasure at all in it, and methought two voyces were worth twenty of it.

(Pepys, IV, 200)

Pepys thought that even part-singing approximated instrumental music, and lacked the purity of a few voices singing together. He said as much after singing quartets with Mr. Pelling, Mr. Wellington, and Mr. Piggott:

Here we sung several good things, but I am more and more confirmed that singing with many voices is not singing, but a sort of instrumental musique, the sense of the words being lost by not being heard, and especially as they set them with Fuges of words, one after another, whereas singing properly, I think, should be but one or two voices at most and the counterpoint.

(Pepys, VII, 107)

Pepys rarely liked foreign music. Several times he heard Italians sing, both castrati and women, but their accents were foreign to his ears. As he said when he heard them at Lord Bruncker's:

They sent two harpsichons before; and by and by, after tuning them, they begun; and I confess, very good musique they made; that is, the composition exceeding good, but yet not at all more pleasing to me than what I have heard in English by Mrs. Knipp, Captain Cooke, and others. Nor do I dote on the eunuches; they sing, indeed, pretty high, and have a mellow kind of sound, but yet I have been as well satisfied with several women's voices and men also, as Crispe of the Wardrobe. The women sung

well, but that which distinguishes all is this, that in singing, the words are to be considered, and how they are fitted with notes, and then the common accent of the country is to be known and understood by the hearer, or he will never be a good judge of the vocal musique of another country. So that I was not taken with this at all, neither understanding the first, nor by practice reconciled to the latter, so that their motions, and risings and fallings, though it may be pleasing to an Italian, or one that understands the tongue, yet to me it did not, but do from my heart believe that I could set words in English, and make musique of them more agreeable to any Englishmen's eare (the most judicious) than any Italian musique set for the voice, and performed before the same man, unless he be acquainted with the Italian accent of speech.

(Pepys, VI, 170)

Holding such views, Pepys would scarcely have appreciated the modern practice of usually presenting operas in the language in which they were written. At a later date, after hearing the Italians again at the Queen's Chapel, Pepys expressed his opinion even more clearly:

... but I am convinced more and more, that, as every nation has a particular accent and tone in discourse, so as the tone of one not to agree with or please the other, no more can the fashion of singing to words, for that the better the words are set, the more they take in of the ordinary tone of the country whose language the song speaks, so that a song well-composed by an Englishman must be

better to an Englishman than it can be to  
a stranger, or than if set by a stranger  
in foreign words.

(Pepys, VI, 246)

These opinions of Pepys have been quoted at length because, besides revealing his attitude towards foreign music, they represent a fair example of his musical criticism. As an informed and trained musician, Pepys was confident and explicit in expressing his musical opinions.

Pepys meant it when he said that he could set words in English, "... and make musique of them more agreeable to any Englishmen's eare than any Italian music." As early as January 13, 1662, he had begun taking lessons in musical composition from John Berkenshaw, the well-known Irish musician. Less than a month after that date, he wrote in his Diary: "At night begun to compose songs, and begin with "Gaze not on Swans" (Pepys, II, 175). On February 26, Berkenshaw was with Pepys all morning composing music to "This cursed jealousy, what is it?" (Pepys, II, 184).

Berkenshaw was renowned for having invented a system of composition based upon the application of precise rules. Evelyn commented on the system in a diary entry for August 3, 1664:

This day was a Consort of Excellent Musitians  
especialy one Mr. Berkenshaw that rare ar-

tist, who invented a mathematical way of composure very extraordinary. True as the exact rules of art, but without much harmonie:

(Evelyn, III, 377, Aug.  
3, 1664)

Perhaps it was the criticism implied in the last sentence of Evelyn's entry that caused Pepys to dispute the rules. In any event, on the day following their joint efforts at composition, Berkenshaw and Pepys had a disagreement. Pepys wrote of their quarrel:

The morning came Mr. Berkenshaw to me and in our discourse I, finding that he cries up his rules for most perfect (though I do grant them to be very good, and the best I believe that ever yet were made), and that I could not persuade him to grant wherein they were somewhat lame, we fell to angry words, so that in a pet he flung out of my chamber and I never stopped him, having intended to put him off to-day, whether this had happened or no, because I think I have all the rules that he hath to give.

(Pepys, II, 184)

Pepys continued his studies on his own. On a September Sunday in 1665, he drew a "musique scale," intending to master it for use in all his compositions (Pepys, V, 75). Shortly thereafter, while waiting for his barber, he tried to compose



"a duo of counterpoint" according to Berkenshaw's rules (Pepys, V, 109). By December 6, Pepys had completed his song "Beauty Retire," with words taken from the second part of the Siege of Rhodes. The excerpt reprinted by Wheatley reveals a simple but haunting melodic line in a minor key. Soon, during a musical evening, Mrs. Coleman sang "Beauty Retire" to the delight of Pepys and his friends (Pepys, V, 176). After Pepys had taught the song to Mrs. Knipp, she sang it "most rarely." A very fine song it seems to be," commented the proud composer.

Inspired by the acclaim of his friends, Pepys undertook to compose music for Ben Jonson's song beginning, "It is decreed--nor shall thy fate, O Rome! / Resist my vow, though hills were set on hills" (Pepys, V, 247). While he was working on it, the fame of "Beauty Retire" continued to spread. Pepys noted with gratification:

Captain Downing (who loves and understands musique) would by all means have my song of "Beauty, retire": which Knipp has spread abroad, and he extols it above any thing he ever heard, and, without flattery, I know it is good in its kind.

(Pepys, VI, 53)

It took Pepys seven months to write the music of "It is decreed." He had trouble with the bass. Finally, having met his old acquaint-

ance, Mr. Hingston, the organist, he took him to the Dog Tavern:

... and got him to set me a bass to my  
 "It is decreed", which I think will go  
 well, but he commends the song not know-  
 ing the words, but says the ayre is good,  
 and believes the words are plainly ex-  
 pressed.

(Pepys, VI, 101-102)

On this occasion, Mr. Hingston told Pepys of the plight of the King's musicians who had not been paid for five years. One of them, a famous harpist, had just died of want. At this rate, they agreed, the nation would soon come to ruin (Pepys, VI, 102). The last mention of "It is decreed" in the Diary occurred on March 28, 1668, when Pepys was still working on it. It can only be supposed that its reception was a disappointment to its composer.

About this time, Pepys began to formulate notions of a musical theory of his own. To work out the details, he thought of buying a harpsichon, but finally decided that a small spinet would be just as suitable for his purposes. After discussing musical theory with the well known musician Mr. Banister, Pepys was confirmed in his determination to "make a scheme and theory of musique not yet ever made in the world" (Pepys, VII, 356). In the meantime, he began to practise on a recorder. His purpose

was for:

getting of the scale of musique without book, which I at last see is necessary for a man that would understand musique, as it is now taught to understand, though it be a ridiculous and troublesome way, and I know I shall be able hereafter to show the world a simpler way; but, like the old hypotheses in philosophy, it must be learned, though a man knows a better.

(Pepys, VII, 371)

He was still working on his theory near the end of the Diary. By then, his eyes were bothering him all the time. He went home one evening:

... and made Tom to prick down some little conceits and notions of mine, in musique, which do mightily encourage me to spend some more thoughts about it; for I fancy, upon good reason, that I am in the right way of unfolding the mystery of this matter, better than ever yet.

(Pepys, VIII, 185)

Unfortunately, so far as we know, nothing ever came of the theory. Perhaps the fate of Pepys's musical theory, his relatively short activity in musical composition, his failure to complete his projected history of the navy were all indicative of a fatal flaw in his creative character. He seemed constitutionally incapable of the persistent effort necessary to master the tedious details

required for productive creativity. That may, in part, explain why--except for the short second diary of the Tangier expedition--Pepys never resumed his Diary after 1669 even though his eyesight had improved.

Pepys never lost his love of music. Music for singing and dancing often sent him into ecstasy, it being "the height of what we take pains for and can hope for in this world" (Pepys, VII, 353). Music for the theatre sometimes had a physical effect upon Pepys. When he saw The Virgin Martyr, he said:

... that which did please me beyond any thing in the whole world was the wind-musique when the angel comes down, which is so sweet that it ravish'd me, and indeed, in a word, did wrap up my soul so that it made me really sick, just as I have formerly been when in love with my wife.

(Pepys, VII, 320)

He was interested in all ways of making music. He wrote down his thoughts on hearing Sir Fretcheville Hollis play the bagpipes:

... and did call for his bagpipes, which, with pipes of ebony, tipt with silver, he did play beyond anything of that kind that ever I heard in my life; and with great pains he must have obtained it, but with pains that the instrument do not deserve at all; for, at the best, it is mighty barbarous musick.

(Pepys, VII, 35)

Pepys thought that he knew all the psalms and their music.

However, after attending church on August 9, 1663, he wrote:

This afternoon I was amused at the tune set to the Psalm by the Clerke of the parish, and thought at first that he was out, but I find him to be a good songster, and the parish could sing it very well, and was a good tune. But I wonder that there should be a tune in the Psalms that I never heard of.

(Pepys, III, 228)

Pepys liked the traditional church music, but did not share Evelyn's disgust at the innovations in some churches after the Restoration. The austere standards of the earlier English church music were no longer strictly observed. The formal counterpoint of old masters like William Byrd and Orlando Gibbons degenerated into a loosely structured polyphony. This trend was hastened by the growing custom of employing orchestral accompaniments and interludes in the church service, with consequent polyphonic elaboration. On September 10, 1662, Pepys went to Whitehall chapel where he heard, and apparently accepted "Captain Cookes' new musique," for he wrote:

... This the first day of having vialls and other instruments to play a symphony between every verse of the anthem; but the musique more full than it was last Sunday, and very fine it is.

(Pepys, II, 316)

Evelyn, however, went to church on December 21, 1662, and later wrote of that service:

... one of his Majesties Chaplaines preachd:  
 ... after which, instead of the antient grave  
 and solemn wind musique accompanying the  
Organ was introduced a Consort of 24 violins  
 betweene every pause, after the French fantasti-  
 cal light way, better suiting a Tavern or Play-  
 house than a Church.

(Evelyn, III, 347,  
 Dec. 21, 1662)

After recording his contempt for the innovation, Evelyn added a note of antiquarian interest as to the former practice in church services. "This was the first time of change, & now we no more heard the Cornet, which gave life to the organ, that instrument quite left off in which the English were so skilfull" (Evelyn, III, 347-348).

Evelyn did not share Pepys's lukewarm attitude towards foreign singers. He liked the singing of Signor Pietro Reggio, of the Italian eunuch Cifacco, and of a Frenchman with "an admirable base." Towards the end of his life, he heard a famous young Italian woman singer and commented:

... she performed with such modesty, &  
 grace above all by her skill as there  
 was never any (of many Eunichs & others)  
 did with their Voice, ever anything com-

parable to her ....

(Evelyn, V, 531,  
circa March 6, 1703)

On the whole, Evelyn, in contrast to Pepys, seemed to prefer instrumental music to vocal. In March, 1656, he heard a Lubecker play on the violin and wrote:

This night I was invited by Mr. Rog:  
L'Estrange to heare the incomparable  
Lubicer on the Violin, his variety  
upon a few notes (& plaine ground)  
with that wonderful dexterity, as  
was admirable, & though a very young  
man, yet so perfect & skillfull as  
there was nothing so crossed & per-  
plext, which being by our Artists  
brough(t) to him, which he did not  
at first sight, with ravishing sweete-  
nesse, & improvements, play off, to  
the astonishment of our best Masters:  
... As to my owne particular, I stand  
to this houre amaz'd that God should  
give so greate perfection to so young  
a person:

(Evelyn, III, 167, March 4, 1656)

Evelyn felt a similar admiration for the violinist Nicholao whom he heard in November, 1674. He commented that the "rare lutanist" Dr. Wallgrave was there but that nothing approached the playing of Nicholao. On December 2 of the same year, he attended a concert at the home of Mr. Slingsby:

...heard Signor Francisco on the Harpsichord, esteem'd on(e) of the most excellent masters in Europe on that Instrument: then came Nicholao with his Violin & struck all mute, but Mrs. Knight, who sung incomparably, & doubtlesse has the greatest reach of any English Woman: she had lately ben roming in Italy: & was much improv'd in that quality.

(Evelyn, IV, 49)

The number of references in both Pepys and Evelyn to the appearance in England of foreign, especially Italian, singers and instrumentalists is testimony to the cultural intercourse between Britain and the continent in the years following the Restoration. Italian music seems to have been particularly esteemed. The concerts were generally held in private homes or at Court, under the patronage of royalty or other important personages of the day. This cultural exchange contributed to the flowering of musical performance and composition in England in the late seventeenth century.

Henry Purcell, the outstanding musical genius of his day in England, was born in 1659. During his short life of thirty-six years, he produced music of a quality and a purity that few English composers have surpassed. When he was <sup>eighteen</sup> 18, he was appointed organist of Westminster Abbey; when he was twenty-three, an organist



of the Chapel Royal.<sup>1</sup> He excelled in all kinds of musical composition, in anthems, music for the theatre, sonatas, cantatas, songs, and ballads.<sup>2</sup> Burney says that he "seems to have composed introductory and entracte Music to most of the plays that were brought on the stage during his time."<sup>3</sup> Purcell wrote masques and some of the first opera-like compositions--such as Dido and Aeneas--to be written in England after the Italian manner. His dramatic style and recitative were indebted to French models, but, says Burney,

... there is a latent power and force in his expression of English words, whatever be the subject, that will make an unprejudiced native of this island feel, more than all the elegance, grace, and refinement of modern Music less happily applied, can do. And this pleasure is communicated to us, not by the symmetry or rhythm of modern melody, but by his having fortified, lengthened, and tuned, the true accents of our mother-tongue.<sup>4</sup>

The tragedy for English music in the seventeenth century was that its three greatest composers--Orlando Gibbons, Pelham Humphrey,

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Burney, A General History of Music from the Earliest Ages to the Present Period (1789), ed. Frank Mercer, 2 vols. (New York, 1957), I, 382.

<sup>2</sup> Burney, I, 383.

<sup>3</sup> Burney, I, 389.

<sup>4</sup> Burney, I, 404.

and Henry Purcell--all died young, the oldest being only forty-four at his death.<sup>5</sup>

Purcell's use of the English language would have appealed to Pepys. Unfortunately, by the time the Diary came to an end, Purcell was only ten years old so that we do not know from Pepys's own lips what he thought of the composer. Evelyn's Diary, however, continued throughout and beyond the life span of Purcell. Unaccountably, the only reference to Purcell is of Evelyn's hearing some of his songs at a musical evening at the home of Mr. Pepys:

I dined at Mr. Pepyss, where I heard that rare Voice, Mr. Pate, who was lately come from Italy, reputed the most excellent singer, ever England had: he sang indeede many rare Italian Recitatives, &c: & severall compositions of the last Mr. Purcell, esteemed the best composer of any Englishman hitherto.

(Evelyn, V, 289, May 30, 1698)

This quotation discloses that Pepys retained his interest in music and became a patron both of music and musicians. The evidence suggests, too, that as Pepys grew older, more prosperous, and perhaps more conventional, he became tolerant of Italian singers, even of castrati. On April 19, 1687, Evelyn wrote of

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<sup>5</sup>Burney, I, 405.

attending still another concert at Mr. Pepys's:

I heard the famous Singer the Eunuch Cifacca, esteemed the best in Europe & indeede his holding out & delicate-  
 nesse in extending & loosing a note  
 with what incomparable softnesse, &  
 sweetnesse was admirable: For the  
 rest, I found him a meere wanton, ef-  
 feminate child; very Coy, & prowdly  
 conceited to my apprehension: He  
 touch'd the Harpsichord to his Voice  
 rarely well, & this was before a  
 select number of some particular per-  
 sons whom Mr. Pepys (Secretary of the  
 Admiralty & a greate lover of Musick)  
 invited to his house, where the meeting  
 was, & this obtained by peculiar fav-  
 our & much difficulty of the Singer,  
 who much disdained to shew his talent  
 to any but Princes:

(Evelyn, IV, 547, April  
 19, 1687)

If this is a commentary on Mr. Evelyn--on his prejudices, but also  
 on his considerable sensitivity to good music when he wanted to ex-  
 press himself--it is no less a commentary on Mr. Pepys. He had  
 evidently become a person to conjure with in musical circles in  
 England, but had lost none of his old doggedness in getting what  
 he wanted.

## CHAPTER VI

### PEPYS AND EVELYN IN RELATION TO RESTORATION ART

Art lacked distinction in Restoration England, being conventionalized in style and execution. Writing in the third quarter of the eighteenth century, Horace Walpole was scornful about it, saying that "the restoration of royalty brought back the arts, not taste."<sup>1</sup> He thought that the King had "introduced the fashions of the court of France, without its elegance."<sup>2</sup> When Walpole was about to write his biographies of the more prominent Restoration artists, he said contemptuously:

The pages that follow will present the reader with few memorable names; the number must atone for merit, if that can be thought any atonement.<sup>3</sup>

Walpole thought Sir Peter Lely the best painter of Charles II's reign, though that was not necessarily very high praise for he said only that he was "meritorious, but not admirable."<sup>4</sup> Walpole deplored the custom of painting ladies of the Court as wanton nymphs,<sup>5</sup> and, speaking specifically of Lely, complained that though

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<sup>1</sup> Horace Walpole, Anecdotes of Painting in England, with some Account of the Principal Artists, ed. Ralph N. Wornum, 2 vols. (London, 1876), II, 77.

<sup>2</sup> Walpole, II, 77.

<sup>3</sup> Walpole, II, 78.

<sup>4</sup> Walpole, II, 95.

<sup>5</sup> Walpole, II, 77.

he painted numerous women, he made them all beautiful.<sup>6</sup> Apart from Lely, the outstanding artists of the period were Godfrey Kneller, Samuel Cooper, the miniaturist--whose work was limited in scope--and Grinling Gibbons, the medallist and wood carver, who had been discovered, in the inimitable words of Walpole, by "the beneficent and curious Mr. Evelyn."<sup>7</sup>

The allied discipline of architecture somewhat redeemed the mediocrity of Restoration art, especially through the <sup>work</sup> ~~person~~ of Sir Christopher Wren. Wren was strongly influenced by the work of Inigo Jones who, early in the century, had introduced<sup>8</sup> palladianism to England. Wren designed the rooms of his houses after the manner of Jones, making them cubical, avoiding the use of small panels, and integrating the ceiling with the walls. He was equally influenced by Jones in the plans for his churches. The result was, as Sprague has said, that:

... the very boldness and clarity of the classic forms, the severe columns and massive entablatures, gave these ecclesiastical interiors an air of formality without increasing their solemnity. Thus as the years went by, classicism gradu-

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<sup>6</sup> Walpole, II, 92.

<sup>7</sup> Walpole, II, 169.

<sup>8</sup> Sprague, Tides in English Taste, 25-26.

ally modified the houses and churches of London, and brought them into harmony with the architectural ideals of the Renaissance.<sup>9</sup>

Palladianism prevailed even in those details which were ill-adapted to English conditions. The huge, high houses were inconvenient and cold but "comfort was forgotten in the desire for stateliness."<sup>10</sup> John Evelyn was enthusiastic about the work of Palladio when he saw it in Vicenza when on the Grand Tour (Evelyn, II, 481-482, circa, April-May, 1646), but his critical sensibility was appalled by some of the excesses of palladianism in England. On September 22, 1672, he recorded that he had visited Lord John Berkeley's new house:

... truly [it] is very well built, and has many noble roomes in it, but they are not so Convenient, because it consisting of but one Corps de Logis, there are no Clossets, all are roomes of State. ... note that the Porticos are in imitation of an house described in Paladio, but it happens to be the very worst of his booke, how ever my good friend Mr. Hugh May his Lordships Architect affected it.

(Evelyn, III, 625,  
September 22, 1672)

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<sup>9</sup> Sprague, Tides in English Taste, 41.

<sup>10</sup> Sprague, 67.

John Evelyn helped to popularize the new architecture in England especially by his A Character of England, 1659, and his translation of Chambray's A Parallel of the Antient Architecture with the Modern.<sup>11</sup> After the Great Fire of London, both Evelyn and Wren drew up plans for the reconstruction of the city which incorporated many of Palladio's ideas for wide, straight streets and numbers of open places and squares designed to set off the buildings and churches.<sup>12</sup>

His artist's eye enriched many aspects of Evelyn's life. He designed and laid out his gardens according to his conception of what he wished to achieve artistically. Wherever he travelled, he responded critically to the infinite variety of works of art that interested him. Sometimes, Evelyn simply listed the things he had seen, perhaps with laconic comments. He visited the Count de Liancourt's palace in Paris in March, 1644. After mentioning paintings by Veronese, Michelangelo, Correggio, and Raphael, he continued:

... two drawings of Alberts [Durer] excellent,  
a Magdalen of Leonardo da Vinci, 4 of Paulos,  
a Madona of Titian very rare given him also

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<sup>11</sup> Sprague, Tides in English Taste, 36-37.

<sup>12</sup> Sprague, 165-166.

by our King Charles the first: the Ecce  
homo shut up in a frame or Enchassment  
of Velvet, for the life and accurate  
finishing exceeding all description....

(Evelyn, II, 114, March 1, 1644)

Infrequently, Evelyn wrote fairly extensive descriptions. One  
of these referred to the sculpture at the Medici's palace in  
Rome:

I a second time visited the Medicean  
Palace being neere my Lodging, the more  
exactly to have a view of the noble Col-  
lections that adorne it: especially the  
Bassrelievi & antique frezes, inserted  
about the stone-worke of the house: The  
Saturne of mettall standing in the Por-  
tico is a rare piece; so is the Jupiter  
& Apollo in the Hall, and now we were  
lead above into those romes we could  
not see before; full of incomparable  
Statues & Antiquities, above all, &  
happly preferrable to any in the World  
are the two Wrestlers, for the inextric-  
able mixture with each others armes &  
leggs plainely stupendious.

(Evelyn, II, 286,  
Nov. 29, 1644)

Evelyn sometimes related anecdotes about the artists. One  
was the following incident from the life of Andrea del Sarto:

... We went therefore to see that famous  
Piece of Andrea del Sarto in the Annu(n)ci-  
ata: The storie is that this Painter in a  
time of dirth borrow'd a sack of Corne of



the Religious of that Convent, & being demanded to repay it, wrought it out in this Picture, which represents Joseph sitting on a Sack of Corn & reading to the B: Virgin, a piece infinitely valued:

(Evelyn, II, 411-412,  
May, 1645)

When Evelyn liked a statue or a painting, he would often have it copied by his painter, Carlo. As anything illuminating Bible stories always fascinated him, he had Carlo copy the decorative sculpture on Titus's triumphal arch, particularly that part representing, "... the Arke of the Covenant upon which stands the seaven-branch'd Candlestick, describ'd in Leviticus, as also the two Tables of the Law, all borne upon mens shoulders, by the barrs, as they are describ'd in some of st. Hieroms bibles" (Evelyn, II, 247, Nov. 14, 1644).

By the time Evelyn returned to England in 1649, he had acquired a comprehensive understanding of painting, sculpture, and architecture. He made use of this understanding and expanded it in his travels around his homeland. He observed and described the great English cathedrals as he did those at Salisbury and Gloucester. He examined art collections, and was sensitive, as the following quotation shows, to the artistic surroundings of the places he visited. On one occasion, having seen the Earl of Northumberland's

art collection, he wrote:

I went to see the Ear[l]le of Northumber-  
lands Pictures, whereoff that of the  
Venetian Senators was one of the best of  
Titians, & another of Andrea de Sarta,  
 viz, a Madona, Christ, St. John & an old  
 woman &c: a St. Catharine of Da Vinci,  
 with divers Portraits of V. Dyke, a Nativ-  
 ity of Georgioni: The last of our blessed  
 Kings, & D: of Yorke by Lilly: A rosarie  
 of flo: by the famous Jesuite of Bruxells  
 & severall more: This was in Suffolck house:  
 The new front-towards the Gardens, is tol-  
 lerable, were it not drown'd by a too  
 massie, & cloudy pair of stayers of stone,  
 without any neeate Invention.

(Evelyn, III, 216,  
 June 9, 1658)

But Evelyn was far more than a connoisseur of paintings,  
 sculpture, and architecture. He was interested in even the most  
 esoteric branches of art. He visited Mark Antonio, a renowned  
 artist of enamelling in Calais, who "wrought by the lamp figures  
 in bosse of a large size, even to the life, so as nothing could be  
 better moulded" (Evelyn, III, 52, Jan. 3, 1652). He mentioned  
 being visited by the "fantastical Symons" who embossed so well  
 (Evelyn, III, 85, June 8, 1653). He admired a masterpiece of a  
 door-lock made by a country blacksmith. He visited Barlow, "the  
 famous Paynter of fowle Beasts and Birds" (Evelyn, III, 166-167,

Feb. 16, 1656).

As a patron of art, Evelyn worked indefatigably to extend the knowledge and practice of art forms that he thought had merit. He was the first to describe mezzotinting, or engraving on copper. This process, invented by Von Siegen, had been introduced in England by Prince Rupert with such remarkable success that it became known on the continent as "la manière anglaise." Prince Rupert himself showed Evelyn how to engrave in mezzotint on February 21, 1661. On March 13, after visiting Prince Rupert again, Evelyn wrote:

This after noone his hig(h)nesse Prince Rupert shewed me with his owne hands the new way of Graving call'd Mezzo Tinto, which afterwards I by his permission publish'd in my Historie of Chalcographie, which set so many artists on Worke, that they soone arrived to that perfection it is since come, emulating the tenderest miniature.

(Evelyn, III, 274,  
March 13, 1661)

This quotation is a good example of Evelyn's curious practice of rewriting his Diary entries so that they became a blend of immediate impressions and later reflections. What is more important, it helps to establish Evelyn's status as a virtuoso, as

it refers to the influence of his book Sculptura: Or the History and Art of Chalcography and Engraving in Copper.

Evelyn discovered the great woodcarver Grinling Gibbons and did more than anyone else to make his work well known.

I this day first acquainted his Majestie with that incomparable young man, Gibson, [sic] whom I had lately found in an Obscure place, & that by meere accident, as I was walking neere a poore solitary thatched house in a field in our Parish neere Says-Court: I found him shut in, but looking in- to the Window, I perceiv'd him carving that large Cartoone or Crucifix of Tintorets, a Copy of which I had also my selfe brought from Venice, where the original Painting remains: I asked if I might come in, he opned the doore civilly to me, & I saw him about such a work, as for the curiosity of handling, drawing, & studious exactnesse, I never in my life had seene before in all my travells: I asked why he worked in such an obscure & lonesome place; he told me, it was that he might apply himselfe to his profession without interruption; and wondred not a little how I came to find him out: I asked if he were unwilling to be made knowne to some Greate men; for that I believe it might turne to his profit; he answerd, he was yet but a beginner; but would yet not be sorry to sell of that piece; I asked him the price, he told me 100 pounds. In good earnest the very frame was worth the mony, there being nothing even in nature so tender, & delicate as the flowers & festoones about it, & yet the worke was very strong; ... of this Young Artist, together with my manner of finding him out, I acquainted the King and begged of his Majestie that he would give me leave to

bring him & his Worke to White-hall, for that I would adventure my reputation with his Majestie, that he had never seene any thing approach it, & that he would be exceedingly pleased, & employ him: The King sayd, he would himselfe go see him: This was the first notice his Majestie ever had of Mr. Gibbons.

(Evelyn, III, 567-568,  
Jan. 18, 1671)

Within a few days, Evelyn invited Christopher Wren and Samuel Pepys to dine with him--"two extraordinary ingenious, and knowing persons" as he called them--and then the three of them went to see Gibbons' work (Evelyn, III, 570, Feb. 12, 1671). Soon, Evelyn persuaded Gibbons to take his carving to Whitehall to show the King. On that occasion, Evelyn was very annoyed when the interference of a French maid dissuaded the Queen from buying an example of Gibbons' work. However, Evelyn did succeed in obtaining a promise from Christopher Wren, then the King's surveyor, that he would employ Gibbons in the future.

Largely through Evelyn's persistence in advancing him, Gibbons became master carver in wood for the Crown, and ultimately executed many of the carvings at Windsor, Kensington, and Whitehall. Under Christopher Wren, Gibbons carved the choir stalls in the new St. Paul's Cathedral and did the carving in the chapel at Trinity College, Oxford. Evelyn twice visited Windsor Castle to

see Gibbons' work there. After his second visit, on June 16, 1683, he wrote:

...That which now at Winsore was new & surprizing to me since I was last there, was that incomparable fresca painting in St. Georges Hall, representing the Legend of St. George, & Triumph of the black-Prince, and his reception by Edw: the 3d, the Volto or roofe not totaly finished: Then the Chapell of the Resurrection, where the figure of the Ascention, is in my opinion comparable to any paintings of the most famous Roman Masters: The Last-Supper also over the Altar (I liked exceedingly the Contrivance of the unseene Organs behind the Altar) nor lesse the stupendious, & beyond all description, the incomparable Carving of our Gibbons, who is (without Contraversie) the greatest Master, both for Invention, & rareness of Worke, that the world ever had in any age, nor doubt I at all but he will prove as greate a Master in the statuary Art:

(Evelyn, IV, 316-317,  
June 16, 1683)

Evelyn was responsible for having the Arundel Marbles bestowed upon Oxford University. These marble blocks, with their famous inscriptions on the early history of Greece, had been brought from Greece by Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel, in 1627. In 1667, Evelyn, who appreciated their value and uniqueness, persuaded Henry Howard to give them to the University, and then wrote Ralph Bathurst,

President of Trinity College, Oxford, suggesting that Wren and Obadiah Walker make arrangements for their transportation. In all, the gift consisted of 130 of the approximately 250 stones that comprised the collection originally, the rest having been lost, destroyed, or dispersed (Evelyn, III, 496, n.i., Sept. 19, 1667). After he had made the preliminary arrangements, Evelyn visited Henry Howard on September 19, 1667, and recorded how he found the Marbles, and what he did about them:

These precious Monuments, when I saw miserably neglected, & scattred up & downe about the Gardens & other places of Arundel House, & how exceedingly the corrosive aire of London impaired them, I procured him to bestow on the Universite of Oxford; This he was pleased to grant me, & now gave me the Key of the Gallery, with leave to marke all those stones, Urnes, Altars &c: & whatever I found had Inscriptions on them that were not Status: This I did, & getting them removed & piled together, with those which were incrustrated in the Garden walles, I sent immediately letters to the Vice-Chancellor what I had procured, & that if they esteemed it a service to the University (of which I had been a Member) they should take order for their transportation:

(Evelyn, III, 495-496,  
Sept. 19, 1667)

The gift of the Marbles was announced to Convocation on October 17, and arrangements were made for their transportation. On October 25, four Doctors of Divinity and Law from the University visited Evelyn bringing him the thanks of the Convocation, and a letter mentioning that the gift would be commemorated by an inscription in which Evelyn's name would be prominently recorded. For, as

the letter concluded:

...we are all very sensible of this greate addition of Learning, and Reputation to the Universitie is due as well to your industrious care for the Universitie, and interest with my Lord Howard, as to his great noblesse & generositie of Spirit.

(Evelyn, III, 500,  
Oct. 25, 1667)

At the request of the four doctors, Evelyn then took them to Howard to whom they presented similar expressions of gratitude.

When the time came for the inscription to be prepared, Evelyn "totally declined" to allow his name to appear upon it (Evelyn, III, 500, Oct. 25, 1667). What he had done had been not for personal credit, but solely that the art treasures might be preserved in the best possible place. Once again, Evelyn's attitude was distinguished by the same modesty of temperament that he had displayed in seeking recognition for Grinling Gibbons.

To the end of his days, Evelyn enjoyed the confidence of numerous eminent persons who sought his advice in laying out their grounds and gardens, in building their homes, and in adding to their art collections. On one occasion, Johan van der Does asked him to try to buy some art treasures from the Duke of Norfolk. Evelyn's report of his interview with the Duke has its amusing side



because his mordant comment on the Duke's wife was so uncharacteristic:

... & thence went to visite the Duke of Norfolck, & to know whither he would part with any of his Cartoones & other Drawings of Raphael & the greate masters: He answered me, he would part with & sell any thing for mony, but his wife (the Dutchesse &c) who stood neere him; & I thought with my selfe, That if I were in his condition, it should be the first thing I would be glad to part with:

(Evelyn, IV, 312, May 9,  
1683)

Evelyn's personal collection of paintings must have been considerable, though, surprisingly, he said very little about it in the Diary. He did mention buying several prints and paintings in Holland and Italy, and sending them home to England. Late in life, when he went to live with his brother at Wotton in 1694, he spoke of removing pictures from Sayes Court to Wotton. In spite of his own reticence about his collection, it was sufficiently well known for Lady Gerrard, and Lombard, the famous French engraver, to wish to visit it in 1653. (Evelyn, III, 86, June 21 and 23, 1653).

Evelyn had considerable talent as an artist himself. When he was twenty-nine, he received instruction in perspective drawing

from the "excellent engraver Du Bosse" (Evelyn, II, 568, Dec. 31, 1649). Later, in France and Italy, he did several drawings in "blacklead pen" or "crayon" of landscapes, or as he called them, "prospects." He also made etchings of Vesuvius and other noteworthy landmarks (Evelyn, II, 335, notes 3, 4), and made etchings from his own landscape drawings, including one of his views of the Thames (Evelyn, II, 557, note 3). On one occasion, Evelyn made an exact copy of a stone covered with Egyptian hieroglyphics and sent it to Father Kircher who was then writing his great work entitled Obeliscus Pamphilius. Evelyn was mildly irritated when his design was included in Kircher's book without any acknowledgement (Evelyn, II, 469, circa Aug. 8, 1645). Evelyn also designed the frontispiece of his own Sculptura (Evelyn, III, 325, n.2), and probably that for Sprat's History of the Royal Society (Evelyn, III, 267, n.6).

As was customary among people of substance of his day, Evelyn frequently sat for his portrait. When he was only six, his portrait was done by "one Chanterell, no ill Painter" (Evelyn, II, 7, 1626). Before going abroad in 1641, he had his portrait painted by Henrik van der Borcht and presented it to his sister Jane (Evelyn, II, 29, June 29, 1641). His next considerable portrait was by Robert Walker in 1648--"that excellent Painter" (Evelyn, II, 541, July 1, 1648). Then, in 1650, when he was in Paris, his portrait was done

in copper by the famous French sculptor, Nanteuil (Evelyn, III, 9-10, June 13, 1650). On October 8, 1685, he reported laconically that he had just had his portrait drawn by Kneller (Evelyn, IV, 479, Oct. 8, 1685). Unlike Pepys, who was forever fussing around the artists who painted him, Evelyn seemed to consider sitting for a portrait as a chore to be suffered without enthusiasm. About July 9, 1689, Kneller again did his portrait:

... I sat for my Picture to Mr. Kneller, for Mr. Pepys late Secretary of the Admiralty, holding my Sylva in my right hand: It was upon his long and earnest request; & is plac'd in his Library: nor did Kneller ever paint better & more masterly work.

(Evelyn, IV, 644,  
July 9, 1689)

Evelyn's attitude to all forms of art reflects great credit on himself. Inspired by a consummate sense of what was beautiful, according to his own informed, and for his day, advanced point of view, he did everything he could to raise the general standard of artistic taste in England. He was tireless in giving advice to friends, in helping those native artists who merited support, and in rescuing deserving works of art from desecration or neglect. He strove through his books to make Englishmen aware of the best continental practices in painting, architecture, and artistic garden-

ing. His criticism of the grotesque or otherwise bad in art was vigorously to the point. If he had a fault in relation to his work on art, it was probably that he was, as in most things, everlastingly didactic. Yet he was unusually modest in expecting any recognition for his artistic endeavours.

Pepys's attitude to art--at least the attitude of the Pepys of the Diary--was tentative, conventional, and bourgeois. He bought pictures as much to fill his wall space as for any other detectable reason. He enjoyed looking at paintings, but rarely said much that was useful about them. On June 18, 1662, Pepys was out with Mr.

Pett:

That done he and I walked to Lilly's the painter's, where we saw among other rare things, the Duchess of York, her whole body, sitting in state in a chair, in white sattin, and another of the King, that is not finished; most rare things. ...Thence to Wright's, the painter's: but, Lord! the difference that is between their two works.

(Pepys, II, 244)

The expletive, "but, Lord!" measures the strength of Pepys's preference for Lely, but in no way suggests why. He wrote a similar criticism on March 25, 1667, when he and Mr. Povy saw Lely at work:

... and indeed his pictures are without doubt much beyond Mr. Hales's, I think I may say I am convinced: but a mighty proud man he is, and full of state.

(Pepys, VI, 225)

Pepys was generally tongue-tied when it came to giving any explanation of his opinion, as though he knew what he liked or disliked, but could give no technical reason for his preference. He was taken once to see some pictures of James Huysman:

a picture drawer, a Dutchman, which is said to exceed Lilly, and indeed there is both of the Queenes and Mayds of Honour (particularly Mrs. Stewart's in a buff doublet like a soldier) as good pictures, I think, as ever I saw. The Queene is drawn in one like a shepherdess, in the other like St. Katharin, most like and most admirably. I was mightily pleased with this sight indeed....

(Pepys, IV, 213)

Pepys, who was well aware of his limited knowledge of art, was happy to accompany the artist John Hales to Whitehall in the hope of learning something about the pictures there:

... to spend an houre in the galleries there among the pictures, and we did so to my great satisfaction, he shewing me the difference in the payntings, and when I come more and more to distinguish and observe the workmanship, I do not find so many good things as I thought there was, but yet great difference between the works of some and others; and, while my head and judgment was full of these, I would go back again to his house to see his pictures, and

indeed, though, I think, at first sight some difference do open, yet inconsiderably but that I may judge his to be very good pictures.

(Pepys, V, 252)

By such means, Pepys applied his sturdy common sense to the problem of learning how to discriminate between good pictures and bad.

During the years of the Diary, Pepys began to gather a modest collection of prints, paintings, and engravings. On January 3, 1662, he bought some engravings, presumably from William Faithorne, and then began to worry about the cost (Pepys, II, 154). He liked to have pictures around him but he was loathe to pay for them. On at least one occasion, he schemed to have the King pay for some paintings he wanted, but then immediately felt ashamed of himself and sought to rationalize his behaviour:

... and so to Cornhill to Mr. Cades, and there went into his warehouse to look for a map or two, and there finding great plenty of good pictures, God forgive me! how my mind run upon them, and bought a little one for my wife's closett presently, and concluded presently of buying £10 worth, upon condition he would give me the buying of them. Now it is true I did still within me resolve to make the King one way or other pay for them, though I saved it to him another way, yet I find myself too forward to fix upon the expense, and came

away with a resolution of buying them,  
but do hope that I shall not upon second  
thoughts do it....

(Pepys, III, 366)

Six weeks later, Pepys was still haggling with Cade who he thought had "played the Jacke" with him. He finally set aside £10 or £12 worth of pictures, but was still reluctant to lay out so much money (Pepys, IV, 34).

Pepys later had some of his pictures varnished. One, "a fine Crucifix," was ~~later~~ used by his enemies to substantiate their claim that he was a papist (Pepys, V, 347). Another was the one he termed "my little print of my dear Lady Castlemayne" (Pepys, VI, 291).

Most of Pepys's complaints about the cost of pictures occurred during the early years of the Diary when he was not secure financially. In those years he went more often to see pictures than to buy them. In September, 1662, he spoke of seeing the Duke of Albemarle's collection. In March, 1666, he visited a famous engraver in the Tower, and saw "... some of the finest pieces of work in embossed work, that ever I did see in my life, for fineness and smallness of the images thereon (Pepys, V, 240). A month later, he visited Peter Lely to see the portraits of English admirals in the Dutch War which had been commissioned by the Duke of York. Pepys

naturally enjoyed pictures having to do with the sea, and after viewing the Admirals' portraits, he visited a picture seller and bought, "a print of an old pillar in Rome made for a Naval Triumph, which for the antiquity of the shape of ships, I buy and keepe"(Pepys, V, 256).

Pepys's other interests likewise carried over into his appreciation of art. Soon after recording his purchase of the print depicting the naval triumph, Pepys was enraptured at a tapestry of Mr. Debasty's:

... I saw, in a gold frame, a picture of a fluter playing his flute which, for a good while, I took for a paynting, but at last observed it a piece of tapestry, and is the finest that ever I saw in my life for figures, and good natural colours, and a very fine thing it is indeed.

(Pepys, V, 316)

Pepys early expressed an interest in the work of Samuel Cooper, the miniaturist, but he did not meet him until March 30, 1668. Then, in an entry that reflected the sparkling play of his mind, he said:

.... presently to Mr. Cooper's house, to see some of his work, which is all in little, but so excellent as I do never expect to see the like again. Here I did see Mrs. Stewart's picture as when a young maid,



and now just done before her having the smallpox: and it would make a man weep to see what she was then, and what she is like to be, by people's discourse now. Here I saw my Lord Generall's picture, and my Lord Arlington and Ashly's, and several others; but among the rest one Swinfen, that was Secretary to my Lord Manchester, Lord Chamberlain, with Cooling, done so admirably as I never saw any thing: but the misery was, this fellow died in debt, and never paid Cooper for his picture; ....

(Pepys, VII, 357)

After that, Pepys resolved to have his wife painted by Cooper.

As his wealth increased, Pepys began to think of buying more expensive paintings. In August, 1668, he was on the point of paying £200 for a picture of Henry VIII that he thought--probably mistakenly as subsequent research has shown--had been painted by Holbein. However, the picture was in such bad condition that he finally decided not to buy it (Pepys, VIII, 87). Later, he bought some excellent prints by the famous French painter, Nanteuil (Pepys, VIII, 198).

Pepys became more discriminating in his artistic taste as he grew older. When his wife recommended a painting of Cleopatra by Cole, he commented, "I find it a base copy of a good originall, that vexed me to hear so much commended" (Pepys, VIII, 201). Soon

afterwards, Pepys went to see Streeter, the famous painter of historical scenes, and found

... Dr. Wren, and several Virtuoso's, looking upon the paintings which he is making for the new Theatre at Oxford: and, indeed, they look as if they would be very fine, and the rest think better than those of Rubens in the Banqueting-House at White Hall, but I do not fully think so. But they will certainly be very noble:...

(Pepys, VIII, 203)

As Pepys became more sure of himself in judging art, he acquired as sturdy an independence, as valid a sense of what was good, as he had long displayed in connection with the theatre.

Pepys had his own portrait, or his wife's, painted frequently. In November, 1661, he first sat for Savill. As the portrait progressed, he became dissatisfied because it was not a good likeness (Pepys, II, 139). Within a few days, he had his wife's first portrait done by Savill while all the while he stood by "looking on a pretty lady's picture, whose face did please me extremely" (Pepys, II, 145). In February, 1662, Pepys had his portrait done in miniature by Savill, and this time he was well pleased (Pepys, II, 181). In March, 1665, when John Hales was painting Mrs. Pepys, her husband remarked about the conventionalized background that was a characteristic of portraits

of the day:

... and so to Hales's, to see my wife's picture, which I like mighty well, and there had the pleasure to see how suddenly he draws the Heavens, laying a darke ground and then lightening it when and where he will.

(Pepys, V, 231-232)

Pepys was so pleased with this portrait of his wife that the day he paid Hales for it, he arranged to have his own done. He referred to the price of portraits:

At noon home to dinner and presently with my wife out to Hales's where I am still infinitely pleased with my wife's picture. I paid him £14 for it, and 25s for the frame, and I think it is not a whit too deare for so good a picture. It is not yet quite finished and dry, so as to be fit to bring home yet. This day I begun to sit, and he will make me, I think a very fine picture.

(Pepys, V, 233)

During the next month or so, while the painting was in progress, Pepys worried whether the portrait would be a good likeness or not. He and the artist disagreed over the background. Pepys wrote:

... and I am for putting out the landskip, though he says it is very well done, yet I do judge it will be best without it, and so

it shall be put out, and be made a plain sky like my wife's picture, which will be very noble.

(Pepys, V, 252)

Pepys was unusually perceptive in discerning that, after the manner of portrait painters of the day, the likeness of a portrait was often more evident at the first or second sitting than it was afterwards. In this connection, he wrote:

... though I find again, as I did in Mrs. Pierce's, that a picture may have more of a likeness in the first or second working than it shall have when finished, though this is very well and to my full content, but so it is, and certainly mine was not so like at the first, second, or third sitting as it was afterward.

(Pepys, V, 312)

Though Pepys was satisfied with his own portrait, he thought his criticism was generally true. When, in August, 1668, he went to see the portraits of maids of honour done by Lely for the Duke of York, he commented shortly, "... good, but not like" (Pepys, VIII, 80).

Among its more curious entries on art, Pepys's Diary contains an interesting account of how plaster casts were used to obtain exact likenesses of one's friends. On February 10, 1669, Pepys

set down in detail what happened when he and his wife went to the "plaisterer's" at Charing Cross:

... and there I had my whole face done; but I was vexed first to be forced to daub all my face with pomatum: but it was pretty to feel how soft and easily it is done on the face, and by and by, by degrees, how hard it becomes, that you cannot break it, and sits so close, that you cannot pull it off, and yet so easy, that it is as soft as a pillow, so safe is everything where many parts of the body do bear alike. Thus was the mould made; but when it came off there was little pleasure in it, as it looks in the mould, nor any resemblance whatever there will be in the figure, when I come to see it cast off, which I am to call for a day or two hence, which I shall long to see.

(Pepys, VIII, 210)

Pepys had no such impact upon English taste as had Evelyn, but he had the capacity and interest to become informed and discerning in his appreciation of art. No doubt his close association with Evelyn, Wren, and other men of artistic attainments helped to mature his own awareness of art.

CHAPTER VII  
EVELYN AND PEPYS IN RELATION  
TO SCIENTIFIC ACTIVITIES IN RESTORATION ENGLAND

A.N. Whitehead has called the seventeenth century "The Century of Genius" and has said of it that "It is the one century which consistently, and throughout the whole range of human activities, provided intellectual genius adequate for the greatness of its occasions."<sup>1</sup> Because, however, the new scientists--or natural philosophers as they were then called--were interested in how things happened rather than in why things happened, the scientific revolution throughout the seventeenth century was essentially "an anti-intellectualist movement." "It was the return to the contemplation of brute fact; and it was based on a recoil from the inflexible rationality of medieval thought."<sup>2</sup> That interpretation helps to explain why the scientific movement was opposed so vigorously by those, particularly in the universities, who

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<sup>1</sup> Whitehead, Science and the Modern World, 40.

<sup>2</sup> Whitehead, 9.

remained scholastics throughout the seventeenth century, and why natural philosophers denied that abstract truths could be established through the exercise of the poetic imagination.

Although supporters of the scientific movement rejected scholasticism, they were more indebted to it than they knew:

... the habit of definite exact thought was implanted in the European mind by the long dominance of scholastic logic and scholastic divinity. The habit remained after the philosophy had been repudiated, the priceless habit of looking for an exact point and of sticking to it when found. Galileo owes more to Aristotle than appears on the surface of his Dialogues: he owes to him his clear head and his analytic mind.<sup>3</sup>

Apart from the orderly habits of thought received from scholasticism, the scientific revolution was indebted to the Greeks, and, by reversion, to the scholastics, for the concept of order in nature.<sup>4</sup> This was a concept that the natural philosophers, as Christians, had no immediate difficulty in accepting.

Equally important to the success of scientific inquiry were the developments which had been taking place in mathematics especially since the renaissance. The most significant scientific advances

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<sup>3</sup>Whitehead, Science and the Modern World, 13.

<sup>4</sup>Whitehead, 8.

in the seventeenth century were in the field of physics to which mathematics was a necessary adjunct. As Whitehead has said, "It was an age of great physicists and great philosophers; and the physicists and philosophers were alike mathematicians."<sup>5</sup>

Science became, as it has remained, primarily concerned with quantitative concepts and as such prepared the way for the formulation by the end of the century of Newton's three laws of motion and the law of gravitation.<sup>6</sup> Progress kept pace in the allied field of mathematics, and the century saw not only the origin of modern geometry through the work of Descartes, Desargues, and Pascal, but also the creation of the differential calculus by Newton and Leibniz.<sup>7</sup> Inevitably, perhaps, because of its pre-occupation with matter, science became increasingly mechanistic.<sup>8</sup>

It was this tendency--and the materialism of Hobbes which was a radical expression of it--that the Cambridge Platonists and other theologians of the period felt bound to counteract by emphasizing the reality of the spirit.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Whitehead, 31.

<sup>6</sup> Whitehead, 46.

<sup>7</sup> Whitehead, 56.

<sup>8</sup> Whitehead, Science and the Modern World, 51.

<sup>9</sup> Willey, Seventeenth Century Background, 158.



It is difficult for us now to appreciate the revolutionary nature of the intellectual movement of the seventeenth century. In scale, it was a radically greater change from the scholasticism that preceded it than in our century has been the leap forward from conventional physics to nuclear physics. Principles governing nuclear physics involve not so much a denial of previous thought processes as an extension of them. The renaissance of science, however, rejected the comfortable, secure world that had been accepted for centuries at the same time that it implied, for astute men, disquieting reservations about the world to come. The wonder is not that the new dispensation and its primary instrument in England, the Royal Society, encountered opposition, but that it was so successful both in achieving acceptance of its methods and in placing its opponents permanently on the defensive.

Evelyn and Pepys and the other members of the Royal Society were too close to developments to see the long range implications of science for religion, for philosophy, or for the transformation of society. For them, exciting advances occurred unevenly on an irregularly advancing frontier. We have now to examine how both diarists responded or contributed to the scientific movement of the Restoration.

It will be recalled (page 2) that as early as 1645, a group

of natural philosophers began to meet weekly in Gresham College to discuss scientific subjects. In 1648, when Cromwell appointed the cleric and mathematician John Wilkins to be Warden of Wadham at Oxford, some of the London group moved to Oxford to work under Wilkins's leadership. Most of these men were Commonwealth supporters who had been appointed to Oxford to counteract possible Royalist influence there.<sup>10</sup> In 1654, Robert Boyle joined the group at Oxford, and later wrote of the meetings there of the "Philosophical Society."<sup>11</sup> After the Restoration, the London group was strengthened by the return of some royalists, and by some parliament men who had been deprived of their university appointments by the new regime.

On November 28, 1660, John Evelyn was one of forty virtuosi nominated for membership in a formally constituted scientific society which proposed to keep a record of its proceedings. Evelyn, as early as September 1, 1659, had proposed to his friend Robert Boyle that they together establish a "(Philosophic) Mathematical College" (Evelyn, III, 232, Sept. 1, 1659), and it was by the name "Philosophic Society" that the organization was first known. However,

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<sup>10</sup>Sir Geoffrey Keynes, "The Early Days of the Royal Society," The Listener, July 21, 1960, 87.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 87.

in 1661, in his preface to his translation of Gabriel Naude's Instructions Concerning the Erecting of a Library, Evelyn referred to Lord Clarendon's help in the promotion of "The Royal Society." The name immediately caught on, and it was as "The Royal Society" that the group received its first charter from the King on July 15, 1662.<sup>12</sup> Before the charter had been granted, however, the King had nominated Evelyn to be one of the council of the new society. He was justifiably proud:

I was now chosen (& nominated by his Majestie for one of that Council ) by Suffrage of the rest of the Members, a Fellow of the Philosophic Society, now meeting at Gressham Coll: where was an essembly of divers learned Gent: It being the first meeting since the returne of his Majestie in Lond: but begun some years before at Ocford, & interruptedly here in Lond: during the Rebellion.

(Evelyn, III, 266,  
Jan. 12, 1661)

Evelyn's recognition by the King was undoubtedly a result of his enterprise within the group that comprised the new society. Apart from encouraging the organization of the society and supplying its

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<sup>12</sup>Sir Geoffrey Keynes, "The Early Days of the Royal Society," The Listener, July 21, 1960, 88-89.

name, Evelyn also suggested its Latin motto, "Nullius in Verba,"<sup>13</sup> which, loosely interpreted, means, "Take nothing on trust." In August, 1662, Evelyn noted the granting of the Charter of the Royal Society and stated the purposes of the assembly:

To Lond. our Charter being now passed under the Broad-Seale, constituting us a corporation under the Name of the Royal-Society, for the Improvement of naturall knowledge by Experiment: to Consist of a President, Council, Fellows, Secretaries, Curators, Operators, Printer, Graver & other officers, with power to make laws, purchasse land, have a peculiar Seale & other immunities & privileges &c: as at large appears in our Graunt....

(Evelyn, III, 330,  
Aug. 13, 1662)

From then on, Evelyn referred to the organization as the Royal Society although Pepys more often called it by its colloquial name, Gresham College.

Every branch of human inquiry or conjecture was originally at home in the society and one did not have to be a specialist to belong. Members included chemists and physicists to be sure, but also architects like Sir Christopher Wren, poets like John Dryden, horticulturists like Evelyn, and men like Pepys who, apart from his

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<sup>13</sup>Sir Cyril Hinshelwood, "The Royal Society after 300 Years," The Listener, July 21, 1960, 81.

interest in geography and map-making, had only his insatiable appetite for experiences to justify his membership. Learned men of the day sought universality in knowledge. John Aubrey, for instance, refers to Robert Boyle, one of the ornaments of the society, as "that profound Philosopher, accomplished Humanist, and excellent Divine."<sup>14</sup>

"Science" did not at that time connote the categorized, precise pursuit of a limited field of knowledge as it does today. Indeed, scientific inquiry often leaned in the direction of what we would call the odd, the bizarre, or the freakish. Evelyn was interested in all manner of "curiosities," to use a favorite term of the age. He wrote of a kitten with six ears, eight legs, two lower bodies, and two tails having been born on his bed at Orleans (Evelyn, II, 136, April 20, 1644). He spoke of a woman who was reputed to have had 365 children at one birth; of another who was said to have had 25 husbands. He marvelled at a woman restored to life after having been hanged, and was interested, as was Pepys, in hearing of a woman six feet, two inches high. Sensible man though he was, Evelyn believed in ill omens as manifestations of God's displeasure at human antics, or as portents of retribution. On December 12, 1680, he saw

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<sup>14</sup>John Aubrey, Aubrey's Brief Lives, ed. Oliver Lawson Dick, (Ann Arbor, 1957), 36.

a meteor "resembling the brightnesse of the Moone when under a thin Clow'd", shaped like a sword, with its point seemingly directed towards London (Evelyn, IV, 235, Dec. 12, 1680). Of it, he wrote:

... What this may Portend (for it was very extraordinarie) God onely knows; but such another Phaenomen(on) I remember I saw, which went from North to South, & very much brighter, & larger, but not so Ensiforme in the yeare 1640, about the Triall of the greate Earle of Strafford, praeceding our bloody Rebellion: I pray God avert his Judgements; we have had of late severall Comets, which though I believe appeare from natural Causes, & of themselves operate not, yet I cannot despise them; They may be warnings from God, as they commonly are for-runners of his Annimadversions.

(Evelyn, IV, 235, Dec. 12, 1680)

Such deviations from our conception of science are not unusual in a society in which the area of the unknown so much surpasses that of the known. Inquiry has to begin somewhere. It is probable that centuries succeeding ours will be amused at some of our ideas about space.

That witchcraft existed and was practised was commonly believed in the seventeenth century. Joseph Glanvil, a Cambridge Platonist and a member of the Royal Society, published Philosophical Considerations touching Witches and Witchcraft, in 1666. Pepys, the least

credulous of men, was not taken in. He recorded in his diary:

... and then to read the late printed discourse of witches by a member of Gresham College, and then to bed; the discourse being well writ, in good stile, but methinks not very convincing.

(Pepys, VI, 72)

Evelyn, for all his urbanity, seems to have been more gullible. As late as February 4, 1692, he wrote, without any expression of incredulity, about the news of the prevalence of witches in Salem, Massachusetts:

Unheard of stories of the universal increase of Witches, men women Children devoting themselves to the Devil, in such numbers in New-England, That it threatened the subversion of the Government.

(Evelyn, V, 130, Feb. 4, 1693)

If individual members of the Royal Society were concerned with unusual or grotesque phenomena in nature, the techniques of experimentation and exact observation introduced by the genuine scientists in the Society soon began at least partially to dissipate the assumptions of the ignorant. On July 23, 1668, Evelyn reported the examination at the Royal Society of some "natural Curiosities" discovered in digging the foundations for the new fort at Sheerness.

Some, he said, were similar to curiosities brought from Malta which had been claimed "to have ben Vipers teeth, whereas in truth they are of a Shark: as we found by comparing them to one in our Repository" (Evelyn, III, 511).

Though Evelyn's first concern was for horticulture and allied subjects, he took an active interest in all investigations. As early as January, 1647, he had taken a course in Chemistry at Paris from "the famous Monsieur Le Febure" (Evelyn, II, 534, Feb. 18, 1647) and he continued his studies at home at Sayes Court in 1649. When he was again in Paris in 1651, he went to Monsieur Le Febure to observe his new course in Chemistry. (Evelyn, III, 49, Nov. 20, 1651). During this visit, Evelyn also saw Sir Kenelm Digby. The report that he made of their conversation shows that there was still an aura of alchemy enveloping the study of chemistry. This quotation contains symbols for mercury, gold, and for another substance which according to de Beer has not been identified:

I visited Sir Kenholm Digby with whom I had much discourse of chymical matters. I shew'd him a particular way of extracting oyle of & he gave me a certaine powder with which he affirm'd he had fixed mercury before the late King, which he advised me to try and digest a little better, & gave me a Water, which he said was onely



raine water of the Autumnal equinox exceedingly rectified, very volatile, it had a tast of a strong vitriolique, and smelt like aqua fortis, he intended it for a disolvant of gold, But the truth is, Sir Kenhelme, was an arrant Mountebank.

(Evelyn, III, 48, Nov. 7,  
1651)

De Beer suggests that Evelyn probably added the last sentence in a later transcription of the passage. If so, his action probably testifies to the maturing of his own concept of science through the work of the Royal Society.

Scientists and innovators of the day were frequently unaware of the significance of their discoveries, just as, indeed, scientists are at any time. It is a matter of scale and relativity. Evelyn once recorded an early coke-making process:

...where I saw Sir Jo: Winters new project of Charring Sea-Coale, to burne out the Sulphure & render it Sweete: he did it by burning them in such Earthen-pots, as the glasse-men, mealt their Mettal in, so firing the Coales, without Consuming them, using a barr of Yron in each crucible or Pot, which barr has an hooke at one end, that so the Coales being mealted in a furnace, with other crude sea Coales, under them, may be drawn out of the potte, sticking to the Yron, whence they beate them off in greate halfe exhausted Cinders, which rekindling they make a cleare pleasant Chamber fires with, depriv'd of their Sulphury & Arsenic malignity: what successe it may have time will discover.

(Evelyn, III, July 10, 1656)

Evelyn was always interested in the work of his particular friend Robert Boyle. On September 7, 1660, he went to Chelsea to see Boyle's pneumatic air pump used in experiments with vacuums (Evelyn, III, 255, Sept. 7, 1660). Later, in March, 1661, he again visited Boyle to see his experiments in "weighing the aire," as he said. This experiment was in connection with Boyle's study of air pressure (Evelyn, III, 272-273, n. 4, March 9, 1661). On May 7, 1662, he took Prince Rupert to the Royal Society, where:

... were tried severall experiments in Mr. Boyles Vacuum: a man thrusting in his arme, upon exhaustion of the ayre had his flesh immediatly swelled, so as the bloud was neere breaking the vaines, & unsufferable:

(Evelyn, III, 318, May 7, 1662)

When Robert Boyle died in January, 1692, Evelyn noted the fact in these words:

This last week died that pious admirable Christian, excellent Philosopher, & my worthy Friend Mr. Boyle, a greate losse to the publique, & to all who knew that vertuous person: aged about 65.

(Evelyn, V, 81, Jan. 1, 1692)

This entry and the funeral oration on Boyle by Dr. Burnet--which Evelyn reported at length--give some idea of the breadth of know-

ledge of a great scientist of the seventeenth century. Besides recognizing Boyle's contributions to chemistry and medicine, Dr. Burnet paid tribute to his knowledge of Hebrew and Greek and to his understanding of scripture. Boyle had once, he said, contemplated taking holy orders.

Pepys, too, recognized Boyle's greatness. He mentioned reading his book on hydrostatics:

... which is a most excellent book as ever I read, and I will take much pains to understand him through if I can, the doctrine being very useful.

(Pepys, VI, 338)

With his customary frankness, Pepys acknowledged his ignorance of science, but engagingly avowed his intention to learn. Pepys also mentioned Boyle's hydrometer, his book on the origin of forms and qualities, and his discourse on the scriptures. Boyle's book of colours was an especial favorite of Pepys. On one occasion, he took a boat trip on the Thames:

... all the way reading, and finishing Mr. Boyle's book of Colours, which is so chymical, that I can understand but little of it, but understand enough to see that he is a most excellent man.

(Pepys, VI, 327)

It was probably one of Boyle's experiments that Pepys spoke of on February 15, 1665, the day that he was admitted to membership in the Royal Society:

... But it is a most acceptable thing to hear their discourse, and see their experiements; which were this day upon the nature of fire, and how it goes out in a place where ayre is not free, and sooner out where the ayre is exhausted, which they showed by an engine on purpose.

(Pepys, IV, 331)

Both Pepys and Evelyn, as befitted men associated with the navy, were interested in any research on ship design. Evelyn recorded that Sir William Petty had recommended to the Royal Society that consideration be given to building ships with hinged keels, and to sheathing the hulls of ships with lead (Evelyn, III, 304, Nov. 20, 1661). Evelyn also reported the launching of Petty's famous double-bottomed ship "The Experiment," "... on which were various opinions." (Evelyn, III, 392, Dec. 22, 1664). Unfortunately, several years later in March, 1675, the ship was lost in a savage storm in the Bay of Biscay. Though Petty's design was blamed, Evelyn, as always fair-minded, said that fifteen conventional ships had been lost in the same storm (Evelyn, IV, 58, March 24, 1675). Pepys also discussed Petty's idea and reported

on July 31, 1663 that the prototype had easily won a race between Dublin and Holyhead and return against the best packet boat available (Pepys, III, 217-218). Though the King laughed at Petty's theories, Pepys remarked when "The Experiment" was launched on December 22, 1664 that "... It swims and looks finely, and I believe will do well" (Pepys, IV, 293).

Apropos of research for the navy, it is astonishing to learn from Evelyn that as early as 1661, the Royal Society was experimenting with diving bells. His entry for July 19, 1661 sounds surprisingly modern:

We tried our Diving bell, or Engine in the Water Dock at Deptford, in which our Curator contin<sup>ue</sup>d halfe an houre under water: It was made of Cast lead: let downe with a strong Cable.

(Evelyn, III, 292, July 19, 1661)

One of Evelyn's early enthusiasms had been for medical investigation. In Padua in 1646, he had attended a series of dissections and lectures on anatomy and had obtained some rare "tables" of the veins and arteries. About the same time, he had similar tables prepared of the lungs and liver. They were the first such tables that had been seen in England according to his own account (Evelyn, II,

475-476, circa, Feb. 1646). He lent them to the College of Physicians for use in their lectures on anatomy. Finally, on his birthday, October 31, 1667, he presented his tables to the Royal Society, afterwards noting the fact in his diary as follows:

...made the Royal Society a present of the Tables of Veines, Arteries & Nerves which with greate Curiositie I had caused to be made in Italy, out of the natural humane bodies, by a learned Physit : & the help of Vestlingius professor at Padoa, from where I brought them 1646, for which I received the publique thanks of the Society, & are hanging up in their Repository; with an Inscription....

(Evelyn, III, 501, Oct.31, 1667).

Evelyn made frequent notes of various remedies for ailments, treatments of particular diseases, operations he had seen or heard about, miraculous or strange cures, and the curative or medicinal properties of hot springs and waters, including Epsom waters. It is surprising, however, that for all his interest in medical experimentation, he did not mention as Pepys did, the successful transfusion of blood from one dog to another performed at the Royal Society on November 14, 1666 (Pepys, VI, 60). Pepys also recorded the intention of the Royal Society scientists to transfuse ~~12~~ twelve

ounces of sheep's blood into a man's veins. On November 30, 1667, Pepys saw the man upon whom the experiment had been performed:

... I was pleased to see the person who had his blood taken out. He speaks well, and did this day give the Society a relation thereof in Latin, saying that he finds himself much better since, and as a new man, but he is cracked a little in his head, though he speaks very reasonably, and very well. He had but 20s for his suffering it, and is to have the same again tried upon him: the first sound man that ever had it tried on him in England, and but one that we hear of in France....

(Pepys, VII, 205)

Pepys could scarcely have foreseen the benefits to mankind that would result from these early experiments in blood transfusion.

Probably because of his own eye trouble, Pepys was keenly interested in the science of optics. In July, 1664, he conferred with Mr. Reeves about purchasing a microscope (Pepys, IV, 187). In August, he bought one from Mr. Reeves, being alarmed at the price of £5, 10s, but mollified by Mr. Reeves's assurances that it was the best microscope in England if not in the world. At the same time, Mr. Reeves gave him a scotoscope with which to see objects in the dark (Pepys, IV, 202). Nothing if not

thorough, Pepys then bought a copy of Dr. Power's new book explaining the use of the microscope. In July, 1666, Pepys, having invited Mr. Spong and Mr. Reeves to dinner, spent an enjoyable afternoon with them experimenting with both the microscope and the scotoscope (Pepys, V, 358).

By this time, Mr. Reeves had interested Pepys in telescopes. Though clouds prevented their viewing the heavens on August 7, 1666, they had more success the following night so that Pepys decided to buy a telescope. After driving a characteristically hard bargain, Pepys paid Mr. Reeves £9, 5s for a fine telescope, with a perspective and a magic lantern thrown in (Pepys, V, 385).

The amazing progress of science in Restoration England was due in part to the patronage of the King himself. Charles II even had his own little laboratory, which Pepys visited, where he saw "... a great many chymical glasses and things, but understood none of them" (Pepys, VIII, 189). We have seen that the King sponsored the Royal Society. He also founded the Royal Observatory at Greenwich in 1676. Evelyn said at the time:

... There dined with me Mr. Flamested the learned Astrologer & Mathematician, whom



now his Majestie has established in the  
new Observatorie in Greenewich Park,  
and furnish'd with the choicest  
Instruments....

(Evelyn, IV, 98, Sept.17, 1676)

Several times thereafter, Evelyn visited Mr. Flamsteed,  
once watching the astronomer's observations on the eclipse  
of the sun (Evelyn, IV, 383, July 2, 1684).

By 1667, Gresham College was becoming too small for  
the burgeoning activities of the Royal Society. Pepys note  
that Mr. Harry Howard, later Duke of Norfolk, had donated a  
piece of land for a new college (Pepys, VII, 267). By April,  
1668, the Society was undertaking a subscription among its  
members for a new building. With ill grace, Pepys contributed  
£40, saying:

... but there I was forced to subscribe  
to the building of a College, and did  
give £40; and several others did  
subscribe, some greater and some less  
sums; but several I saw hang off: and I  
doubt it will spoil the Society, for it  
breeds faction and ill-will, and  
becomes burdensome to some that cannot,  
or would not, do it.

(Pepys, VII, 362)

Evelyn, who in February, 1668, had helped to stake out the  
ground for the new building, contributed 50,000 bricks for

the construction (Evelyn, III, 507, April 2, 1668).

Unfortunately, Pepys's forecast of the probable results of the subscription seems to have been accurate. The project was still-born though plans for the building had been drawn up by Christopher Wren and Robert Hooke (Evelyn, III, 505, n.1).

Pepys and Evelyn each retained a life-long enthusiasm for the Royal Society. As Evelyn noted in his diary, Pepys was elected its president in December, 1684 (Evelyn, IV, 396, Dec. 1, 1684). Evelyn, secretary of the Society in 1672, was asked to stand for president in 1682. His account of the occasion was as follows:

...for the Choice of new President; I was exceedingly indangr'd & importuned, to stand this Election, having so many Voices &c : But, by favour of my friends & regard of my remote dwelling, & now frequent Infirmities, I desired their Suffrages for me, might be transferred on Sir John Hoskins....

(Evelyn, IV, 296, Nov.30,1682)

As Hoskins was subsequently elected, we can assume that Evelyn would have been president had he allowed his candidature to stand. Again, in 1690, Evelyn was asked by "21 Voices" to act as president, but once more he declined (Evelyn, V, 39, Dec. 1, 1690). For a third time, in 1693,

Evelyn was nominated for, and declined, the presidency. By that time, he must have been one of the most venerated, and venerable, members of the Society.

Though Evelyn was too catholic in his interests and avocations to have the necessary concentration of purpose, perhaps even the profundity, to be a great scientist, he did contribute to the extension of scientific thought. In a commentary to his translation of Lucretius's De Rerum Natura, he showed how Lucretius's opinions were related to those of the new scientists.<sup>15</sup> (Evelyn, vol. I, 12). His Sculptura on the art of engraving on copper; his Sylva, on forest trees; and his Parallel of Architecture were all presented to the Royal Society, the first named being dedicated to Robert Boyle. Evelyn read several papers before the Society, including one on "Earth and Vegetation" in April 1675, and another on the terrible effects of the winter of 1684. The Society was so impressed with that paper that it ordered it to be printed in the next issue of its periodical publication Philosophical

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<sup>15</sup>  
Evelyn's Diary, de Beer, I, 12.

Transactions. Evelyn was the Society's acknowledged expert on horticulture and silviculture. His contemporary reputation, indeed, was based upon his work in these fields.<sup>16</sup> His series of books on forest trees, fruit trees, and gardening, printed together, enjoyed three editions during his lifetime and two posthumous reprintings.<sup>17</sup> So great was his influence that in 1670, in the dedication to Charles II of the second edition, Evelyn was able to claim that his book had been responsible for the planting of more than two million forest trees in the kingdom.<sup>18</sup> Kalendarium Hortense, the gardening part of the series, later printed separately from the others, alone ran through ten editions while Evelyn was alive.

Pepys made no comparable contribution to scientific knowledge. He did, however, support the scientific movement of the times by acting as an officer and patron of the Royal Society.

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<sup>16</sup> Evelyn's Diary, de Beer, I, 17.

<sup>17</sup> Evelyn's Diary, de Beer, I, 16.

<sup>18</sup> Evelyn's Diary, de Beer, I, 16-17.

CHAPTER VIII  
A SUMMARY OF SOME RESTORATION CULTURAL ATTITUDES  
AND A CONSIDERATION OF EVELYN AND PEPYS AS  
RESTORATION VIRTUOSI

The interest of Pepys and Evelyn in the scientific developments of the Restoration identified them with the intellectual revolution which had been transforming English cultural attitudes since the turn of the seventeenth century. Both diarists accepted unquestioningly the principles and practices of the scientific mode of thought. Neither seems to have been conscious of its deeper implications for other institutions in society.

It may be assumed, for instance, that Evelyn was never worried by the possible effect of scientific thinking on traditional religious beliefs. His own allegiance to the tenets of the Church of England was never in question. He seems to have comfortably accepted Bacon's thesis that there were two truths that existed side by side without the validity of the one affecting the validity of the other--a truth of religion and a truth of science. In this respect, he was one with Robert Boyle, Isaac Newton, and other virtuosi of the Royal Society who were so involved with their investigations and experiments that they had neither time nor inclination to stand aside, as it were, from their movement and to analyze

it philosophically and objectively. Pepys, more responsive than Evelyn to the under-currents of thought and opinion, had, as early as May, 1660, admitted that he was sceptical in religion (Pepys, I, 132)--by which he probably meant that he was not doctrinaire--without any apparent disquiet to his intellectual integrity.

By the Restoration, the majority of articulate theologians had accepted Bacon's concept of the two truths of nature. As a result, religion and not science had been placed on the defensive. The materialistic empiricism of Thomas Hobbes, concerned with causes and effects, proceeding to ascertain truths through the application of reasoning, had the effect of relegating religion to the background without specifically denying it.<sup>1</sup> ~~Leviathan, III.~~ In reaction against this thinking, the Cambridge Platonists adapted the conception of appealing to reason to their own purposes by claiming that the most profound realization of Truth came as a revelation from God. Man placed himself in a position to receive mystical experiences from God--and so to live by reason of the highest order-- by purification and by

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan, ed. Michael Oakeshott, (Oxford, 1957), xx.

exaltation of the spirit.<sup>2</sup> Willey, ~~145-146~~. True prophets like Moses governed their lives through their self-conscious communion with God; lesser prophets--Plato's poets and soothsayers--divined experiences, but were unable to prove their truth or otherwise.<sup>3</sup> Willey, ~~151-152~~. This relegation of poetic experience to a category of lesser truth was one of the Restoration attitudes that affected the character of the literature of the day.

Neither Evelyn nor Pepys seems to have become emotionally involved in the controversy between Hobbes and the Platonists. We have noticed that Pepys read Leviathan without making any critical comment in his diary. Evelyn twice wrote before the Restoration of having visited "Mr. Hobbs the famous Philosopher of Malmesbury" (Evelyn, IIN, 163 )with whom he had long been acquainted, but it was not until February, 1679, that he asserted, apparently with approbation for the sentiments expressed, that he had heard a sermon against the "pernicious doctrines" of Mr. Hobbes (Evelyn, IV, 164).

<sup>2</sup> Willey, Seventeenth Century Background, 145-146.

<sup>3</sup> Willey, 151-152.

Neither diarist had much to say about the Platonists, although Pepys called Henry More's An Antidote Against Atheisme "a pretty book" (Pepys, VI, 123).

Out of the ferment of opinion that continued to agitate the age if it did not agitate Pepys and Evelyn, the scientific attitude emerged as the most significant intellectual driving force of the Restoration. In the Royal Society were men whose genius was equal to the challenge of scientific discovery. Macaulay has listed some of those who unlocked the secrets of nature in this period: Evelyn in horticulture, Sir William Petty in statistics, Boyle in chemistry, Sloane in botany, Edmund Halley in the properties of the atmosphere, John Flamsteed in astronomy, and, above all, Isaac Newton in physics and mathematics.<sup>4</sup> ~~Macaulay, I, 121-122.~~ We have seen (Chapter one) that these virtuosi of the Royal Society were attacked by traditionalists, by the uninformed public, and by those who saw in some of their activities a vehicle for satire. On the whole, however, the virtuosi were more than equal to the attacks. Indeed, they had an influence beyond the expected range of their interests, even affecting

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<sup>4</sup> Thomas Babington Macaulay, The History of England from the Accession of James the Second, 5 vols. (Philadelphia, n.d.), I, 121-122.



the nature of the literature of the period.

Thomas Sprat, in his History of the Royal Society, written to defend the Society against charges of impiety and folly, had this to say about the style expected from the Society's members:

They have ... a constant Resolution, to reject all the amplifications, digressions, and swellings of style; to return back to the primitive purity, and shortness, when men deliver'd so many things, almost in an equal number of words. They have exacted from all their members, a close, naked, natural way of speaking; positive expressions; clear senses; a native easiness: bringing all things as near the Mathematical plainness, as they can.<sup>5</sup>

Admittedly, the attitude of the Royal Society was only one of the influences working against the kind of metaphorical exuberance that had characterized much of the writing and preaching earlier in the century, but it helped to support trends already in evidence. In part, the emphasis on plain statement was a reaction against the predilection of earlier poets, particularly metaphysical poets, for exaggerated conceits,

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<sup>5</sup>

Thomas Sprat, History of the Royal Society, ed. Jackson I. Cope and Harold Whitmore Jones, (London, 1959), 113.

strenuous phrases, and deliberate obscurities. In part, it arose from a distrust of the poetic imagination--frequently denigrated as mere "fancy"--that seemed to accompany the scientific mind. The appeal to reason in poetry found support among the poets themselves. John Dryden, who usually mirrored his age, epitomized the new spirit when he wrote:

Whate'er you write of pleasant or sublime,  
 Always let sense accompany your rhyme.  
 Falsely they seem each other to oppose;  
 Rhyme must be made with Reason's laws to close;  
 .....  
 Love Reason, then, and let whate'er you write  
 Borrow from her its beauty, force, and light.<sup>6</sup>

Though much of the Restoration attitude to literature was caused by developments in England, the influence of French neo-classicism, under the aegis of the restored court, was at least equally strong. The theatre, especially, soon reflected French modes, not only in staging, but also in the type of plays produced. Of the earlier English playwrights, Ben Jonson was honoured because of his attention to the unities. When Dryden, in his Essay of Dramatic Poesy, wished to analyze an English play written in the classical tradition, he selected Jonson's

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John Dryden, "The Art of Poetry", in The Works of John Dryden, ed. George Saintsbury, (London, 1892), XV, 225.

Epicoene, or The Silent Woman, because of its unity of time, place, and action. Jonson was no less revered because of his use of the heroic couplet in poetry. Though he was sometimes guilty, in Dryden's words, of weaving his language "too closely and laboriously," his disciplined control of the couplet was approved by the neo-classicists of the Restoration.

The effect of the joint assault by theologians, natural philosophers, and neo-classicists on the inspirational approach to poetry was to place poetry on the defensive throughout the Restoration period and the eighteenth century. Willey has said:

...although poetry saved its dignity in the next century by becoming satirical and reflective, it remained essentially an embellishment upon a prose fabric.<sup>7</sup>

This judgment would have been acceptable to Evelyn and Pepys. Both had only a nominal interest in poetry. Usually, they read prose, and that for information rather than for delight. In their own writing, with the exception of Evelyn's posthumously printed Life of Mrs. Godolphin, they governed themselves by the precepts of the Royal Society as laid down by Sprat.

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<sup>7</sup>Willey, Seventeenth Century Background, 218.

For the most part, both Evelyn and Pepys were in harmony with the prevailing cultural atmosphere, though each, and particularly Evelyn, held his personal reservations towards some aspects of it. Evelyn despised Restoration drama, resented the changes that occurred in church music, and, more cosmopolitan than Pepys, favoured the Italian Renaissance artists before the mediocre artists who were his contemporaries in England. Pepys preferred the English tradition in music to any other, and deplored, at least during the years of his Diary, the practice of bringing foreign singers to England to sing in their own languages. Outside of that, he was usually in accord with his times.

Before attempting to classify Evelyn and Pepys as Restoration virtuosi, we should review what was meant by the term. It has been said that the virtuoso represented the fusion of two cultural traditions--of the landed gentleman and the scholar.<sup>8</sup> The first so-called virtuosi, the antiquarians and collectors of curiosities, though usually gentlemen of wealth and leisure, were often not scholarly. Their natures did not necessarily change when, after the Restoration, they sometimes joined the new Royal Society and shared the cognomen of virtuoso with all its members.

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<sup>8</sup>Walter E. Houghton, Jr., "The English Virtuoso in the Seventeenth Century," Journal of the History of Ideas, January, 1942, 58.

Houghton has said in "The English Virtuoso in the Seventeenth Century" that there were "... virtuosi and virtuosi--the amateurs or dilettantes, and the 'sincere' inquirers into nature, with or without the Baconian purpose of ultimate use."<sup>9</sup> The dual meaning of the term led to an ambiguity that persists to this day. Houghton has claimed that the genuine scientist of the period should be called a natural philosopher and not a virtuoso.<sup>10</sup> That is a logical distinction to make but not one that the seventeenth century made. Moreover, the placing of individuals in one or other category could not be ~~made~~<sup>done</sup> with any exactitude. In which category, for instance, would Evelyn be placed? Houghton is in no doubt on that question. He called Evelyn "the greatest name in the movement,"<sup>11</sup> but associated him with the gentleman dilettantes. In this he does less than justice to Evelyn. His judgment is true enough of the earlier Evelyn, of the Evelyn of the Grand Tour, but it inadequately describes the Evelyn of the Royal Society.

Evelyn was, indeed, close to being the quintessential virtuoso. His own scientific contribution was not inconsiderable.

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<sup>9</sup>Houghton, 54.

<sup>10</sup>Houghton, 55.

<sup>11</sup>Houghton, 54.

As a specialist in his own right, he wrote voluminously about art and architecture but especially about gardening and tree planting. At Sayes Court and Wotton, he undertook original investigations into the best ways of planting trees and laying out gardens, drawing on the best advice of experts in France and Italy. Through his own experiments and books, Evelyn virtually revolutionized English gardening techniques. Moreover, he had been not only one of the founders of the Royal Society, but the one who gave it its name and its motto.

Pepys, had he been a gentleman, might have fitted, with some discomfort, into the dilettante category of virtuoso. In fact, however, he represented a third element in the classification, that of the rising man of the city, who, caught up in the exciting environment of his times and genuinely interested in the scientific movement, was accepted to membership in the Royal Society when his importance merited it. Too sensible to be associated with the eccentricities of the more extreme virtuosi, Pepys was, on the other hand, not sufficiently well informed to make a personal contribution to science. It is a moot question whether the Pepys of the Diary, even though a member of the Royal Society, could be called a true virtuoso. Yet, if the loose interpretation of the term is accepted, in the sense of applying "to the student of the humanities in

general,"<sup>12</sup> then even the Pepys of the Diary would qualify. Though he exhibited no such virtuosity as Evelyn, he was interested in the arts and in drama. Moreover, he had undertaken some original, if inconclusive, research into musical theory and had written a few songs. John Evelyn evidently considered that both he and Pepys were virtuosi. Writing as early as August 21, 1669, on the eve of Pepys's departure for France, Evelyn said:

There is le College des quatre Langues founded by C. Mazarin, but not yet finish'd, worthy your Enquiry after. And if his Ma<sup>ty</sup> have done any thing for ye Virtuosi (our Emulators) in designing them a Mathematical College, seek after it, & procure to be admitted into their present Assembly, that you may render our Society an Account of their Proceeding.<sup>13</sup>

If there is doubt about the status of the younger Pepys, there is no doubt that the later Pepys was properly a virtuoso. In 1684, Pepys became Secretary of the Admiralty and was elected president of the Royal Society. He had acquired eminence, was a collector himself of some consequence, and was a distinguished patron of the arts.

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<sup>12</sup>Houghton, 52.

<sup>13</sup>Clara Marburg, Mr. Pepys and Mr. Evelyn, (Philadelphia, 1935), 105.

The conclusion is inescapable that John Evelyn was a representative virtuoso of the Restoration period. There is equally no doubt that in the broadest conception of the term, as well as in the eyes of his contemporaries who knew him as president of the Royal Society, Pepys, too, merits the appellation.



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