Concepts of Creativity in Seventeenth-Century England

Edited by
Rebecca Herissone and Alan Howard

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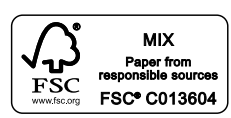

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Preface

This book has its origins in an interdisciplinary conference of the same name, held at the University of Manchester in September 2008 as part of a four-year research project entitled 'Musical Creativity in Restoration England', which was funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council in the UK. The conference brought together a group of seventeenth-century specialists including those working in cultural studies, print culture, the history of ideas, and of course historians of art, architecture, theatre, literature and music, to explore how we can seek to understand what it meant to be creative in the early modern period in England. The symposium revealed the wide variety of approaches to studying creativity being taken by scholars and research students across the humanities, and led to exciting and fruitful cross-fertilization of ideas between its participants, resulting in discussions that in some cases have led to long-lasting research collaborations.

This book presents a selection of twelve essays that were developed from the twenty papers given at the conference. In selecting this group, the editors have sought to include a representative sample of the research that was presented, while also aiming to ensure that the collection is accessible to a genuinely interdisciplinary readership. While music examples are used in some of the chapters, these are kept to a minimum, and are supported by audio samples available at www.alc.manchester.ac.uk/subjects/music/research/projects/musicalcreativity. Rather than grouping the chapters by discipline or period, the editors have followed the organization of the conference in identifying common conceptual threads running through the essays. Some of these build on established lines of enquiry – such as the thorny issue of the significance of the author in the seventeenth century, the importance of *imitatio* and the role of improvisation in the performing arts – while others open up unexpected connections – for example to travel and visual-spatial representation. In emphasizing these themes, the collection highlights significant shifts that occurred in the conceptualization of creativity during the seventeenth century, which led in the eighteenth century towards an understanding of what it means to be creative that is much closer to that of modern times. These transformations are explored in the introductory chapter, which seeks to situate the book's case studies within their broader context by providing an exposition of the intellectual foundations on which the seventeenth-century perception of 'creativity' and artistic production were based, and outlining the many ways in which these concepts were challenged during the period by both practical and epistemological developments.

The editors would like to acknowledge the support of the Arts and Humanities Research Council in funding the research project and of the *Music & Letters* Awards in providing funds towards the costs of the conference. They would also like to thank Michael Middeke and Megan Milan of Boydell & Brewer for their patience and encouragement during the preparation of this volume.

Rebecca Herissone and Alan Howard
February 2013

Introduction

Rebecca Herissone

The term 'creativity' did not come into common usage in the English language until towards the end of the nineteenth century, which makes it a potentially odd candidate for inclusion in the title of a book that focuses on the long seventeenth century.[1] Yet the *concept* of creativity as we would understand it today – 'the faculty of being creative; ability or power to create'[2] – can be traced back to the earliest humanity, and there is, of course, abundant evidence of what we would regard uncontroversially as creative activities that took place in early modern England. The fact that the seventeenth-century men and women who participated in such creativity would not have described these activities in the way we would do today is, in essence, the subject of this book: the essays in this collection seek to explore through specific case studies a wide range of ideas, beliefs and approaches to creativity that existed in seventeenth-century England, and to place them in the context of the prevailing intellectual, social and cultural trends of the period. In doing so, the book draws into focus the profound changes that were emerging in the understanding of human creativity in early modern society, transformations that would eventually lead to the development of a more recognizably modern conception of the notion of creativity.

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the earliest reference to 'creativity' did in fact occur in the seventeenth century, in George Lawson's 1659 publication *Theo-Politica: Or, A Body of Divinity*. But the manner in which Lawson employed the word places it in an entirely traditional context for the time: 'in Creation', he wrote, 'we have God and his Creativity (as *Occam* and *Bacon* expresse it) and the thing created'.[3] What Lawson was expressing here was a conception of creativity associated uniquely with the divine; it had no connection to human activity. Reflected in

[1] The *Oxford English Dictionary* lists as its earliest nineteenth-century reference Adolphus William Ward's *History of English Dramatic Literature*, 2 vols (London: Macmillan, 1875), vol. 1, 506, where Ward described (appropriately enough within the current context) '[t]he spontaneous flow' of Shakespeare's 'poetic creativity'. One earlier reference is given, as discussed below and cited in n. 3. On the history of definitions of creativity, see also John Hope Mason, *The Value of Creativity: The Origins and Emergence of a Modern Belief* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 7–11, and Rob Pope, *Creativity: Theory, History, Practice* (London: Routledge, 2005), 30–1.

[2] 'Creativity', in *Oxford English Dictionary*, at www.oed.com. See also Linda Austern's chapter in this volume, p. 283.

[3] George Lawson, *Theo-Politica: Or, A Body of Divinity, Containing the Rules of the Special Government of God, According to which, He Orders the Immortal and Intellectual Creatures, Angels, and Men, to their Final and Eternal Estate* (London, 1659), 39.

a wide range of creation myths, it formed the basis of the Judaeo-Christian understanding of the world, meaning that in medieval writings within this tradition only God was ever referred to as 'creator', a belief that continued to be asserted by many authors throughout the seventeenth century, even while perspectives on creativity were changing radically.[4] What distinguished God as creator from man – who might discover, make or produce, but did not create – was the notion that creation entailed introducing entirely new things into the world 'from nothing' (*ex nihilo*).[5]

Within this Judaeo-Christian belief system, human actions that might be perceived as creative or innovative tended to be portrayed in an entirely negative light, often associated with sin and disobedience and leading to the breakdown of the order that had been established by God's creation – the biblical story of the Fall in Chapter 3 of Genesis being typical in this respect.[6] At the time of the Renaissance this underlying hostility towards human creativity came into conflict with the approaches taken in the classical Greek and Roman writings that were being revived, since here the potential of humans to create and invent was regarded in a much more positive light. According to Mason, it was in the work of the influential neo-Platonist Marsilio Ficino that this tension came to the fore, because his focus on Plotinus's thought led him to emphasize 'the extent to which the divine part in humans replicated the original Intellect [i.e., the Creator] not only in being able to know truth and be good, but also in being creative'.[7] Ficino saw human creativity as imitating divine creativity by virtue of the fact that human souls contain the perfection of God, but he also wrote of a kind of divine possession, or *furor*, through which an affected individual could transcend the normal human condition and thereby channel divine creativity directly. Both these types of human creativity thus came about through dependence on the divine, but they nevertheless accorded humans with the capacity to be genuinely creative.[8]

By the sixteenth century we see the emergence of the notion that humans might be *independently* creative: while their works were still at this stage being compared to divine creation, they were no longer perceived as emanating directly from the Creator. At first this idea derived from the neo-Platonic association of *furor* with poetry, which led poets to be singled out from other artists as genuine creators of something 'out of nothing'. Thus in 1561 Giulio Cesare Scaligero stated that,

> while they [the other arts] … represent things just as they are, in some sense like a speaking picture, the poet depicts quite another sort of nature, and a variety of fortunes; in fact, by so doing, he transforms himself almost into a second deity. Of those things which the Maker of all framed, the other sciences

[4] Pope, *Creativity: Theory, History, Practice*, 37.

[5] This was as distinct from 'procreation', by which new life is produced from within the body; see Mason, *The Value of Creativity*, 7–8. Mason notes that Jerome chose the verb 'to create' in his translation of the Bible because '[w]hat in Latin differentiated *creare* from *facere* (to make) was the sense of bringing something into the world which did not previously exist'; ibid., 7. See also Linda Austern's chapter in this book, pp. 283–4.

[6] Mason, *The Value of Creativity*, 28–30.

[7] Ibid., 44.

[8] Ibid., 46 and 49. See also Amanda Eubanks Winkler's chapter in this volume, pp. 257–60.

> are, as it were, overseers; but since poetry fashions images of those things which are not, as well as images more beautiful than life of those things which are, it seems unlike other literary forms, such as history, which confine themselves to actual events, and rather to be another god, and to create.[9]

But eleven years earlier Giorgio Vasari, in his famous book *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori e architettori*, had already demonstrated that the idea of humans achieving an independent God-like status as creators was being applied across the arts more broadly, when he wrote:

> I think that anyone who will take the trouble to consider the matter carefully will arrive at the same conclusion as I have, that art owes its origin to Nature herself, that this beautiful creation the world supplied the first model, while the original teacher was that divine intelligence which has not only made us superior to the other animals, but like God Himself, if I may venture to say it.[10]

This association of human invention with genuinely novel creation was at odds with the prevailing Aristotelian concept that art was produced purely through imitating nature, but this was not the only aspect of Aristotle's theories that began to be challenged in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Reviving philosophical texts by other classical writers resulted, for example, in the eventual rejection of the idea followed by Aristotle that the world was composed of the four elements of earth, air, fire and water, in favour of the Epicurean theory of atomism, in which matter was conceived as a combination of indivisible atoms and empty void.[11] Copernicus's model of heliocentrism led, via Galileo Galilei and Kepler, to the rejection of geocentrism and Aristotle's belief that the astrological bodies were constructed from crystalline spheres.[12] And the Aristotelian theory that bodies can be heavy or light and that each moves downwards or upwards to its natural place accordingly was replaced by Galileo's demonstration that all bodies fall at the same rate, and thence to Newton's law of universal gravitation.[13] In each of these cases, the challenge to Aristotelianism came primarily from the adoption of what is now referred to as the scientific method – a set of procedures based on the testing of hypotheses through systematic observation and experiment – particularly in the work of Galileo Galilei,

[9] Giulio Cesare Scaligero, *Poetices libri septem* (1561), trans. in Frederick Morgan Padelford, *Select Translations from Scaliger's Poetics*, Yale Studies in English, 26 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1905), 7–8; referred to in Mason, *The Value of Creativity*, 249, n. 139, and 48, where similar ideas expressed earlier by Ficino's associate Cristoforo Landino are cited.

[10] Giorgio Vasari, *The Lives of the Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*, trans. Allen Banks Hinds, ed. William Gaunt, 4 vols (London: Dent, and New York: Dutton, 1963; first published London: Dent, 1927), vol. 1, 5.

[11] Edward Grant, *Much Ado About Nothing: Theories of Space and Vacuum from the Middle Ages to the Scientific Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 182–3.

[12] Richard S. Westfall, *The Construction of Modern Science: Mechanisms and Mechanics*, The Cambridge History of Science Series (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 3–19.

[13] Ibid., 19–24

which provided empirical contradictions of so much that was inherent in Aristotle's theories.

From the perspective of creativity, the significance of these major shifts in understanding was twofold: first, they were brought about by new and innovative human ideas that challenged and tested the accepted views of the world that had been established by ancient authorities such as Aristotle; and, second, they were enabled by experiments carried out using genuinely original human inventions like the telescope. As Mason points out, there were parallels in the field of exploration, since Columbus's discovery of the New World – enabled by the invention of new navigational devices – destroyed the worldly boundaries on which the ancient teachings had been based. Similarly, in medicine William Harvey's discovery of the circulation of the blood and the heart's function as a pump transformed the foundations of medical science – until then based on the teachings of Galen, who thought that blood was created in the liver and that the venous and arterial systems operated separately.[14] Such discoveries, writes Mason,

> took people beyond earlier limits and undermined the insistence on limits which had been previously so strong. … The map of the world began to be filled with new detail; the closed cosmos gave way to an infinite universe. As with space, so with time. The rejection of authority based on the past came to be accompanied by an awareness of ever-increasing possibilities, now and in the future.[15]

The changes to human understanding of the world that were brought about by these innovations thus did not merely result in the discarding of theories attributed to specific authoritative figures: they caused the whole idea of the authority of our predecessors to be challenged. This shift ultimately had direct implications for the principles of invention taught to poets, artists and musicians, because these too were founded in the Renaissance on classical methods – in this case centred on the five rhetorical divisions to be used in creating an oration, as outlined by Cicero – which entailed invention based on the imitation and emulation of works by admired authors.[16] Adopted primarily via Desiderius Erasmus's influential *De ratione studii* of 1511, the principles of *imitatio* and *emulatio* were practised through the study and collection of authoritative material, which was then used as a source for invention, using techniques such as glossing, commentary and rewriting, the ultimate aim being to improve on and surpass the model.[17]

Such principles were fundamental not only to literary invention, but also within

[14] Mason, *The Value of Creativity*, 60 and 62; on Harvey see Allen G. Debus, *Man and Nature in the Renaissance*, Cambridge History of Science Series (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 54–73.

[15] Mason, *The Value of Creativity*, 60.

[16] Peter Mack, 'Humanist Rhetoric and Dialectic', in Jill Kray (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Humanism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 82–99 at 82–3; and Thomas M. Conley, *Rhetoric in the European Tradition* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1994; originally published New York: Longman, 1990), 109–50.

[17] P. Mack, 'Humanist Rhetoric', 91–2.

the fields of art and architecture – where *imitatio* signified both the Aristotelian imitation of nature and the imitation of existing models – and in music.[18] Thus in 1568 Vasari praised Raphael for 'studying the labours of both the ancients and the modern masters', and then selecting 'the best from each', and commented further that 'out of his garner [he] enriched the art of painting with that absolute perfection which the figures of Apelles and Zeuxis anciently possessed, and even more, if I may say so';[19] in 1636 the music theorist Charles Butler advised '[H]ee that affecteth a perfection in this rare faculti, and the honour of a good Composer, let him … heedfully examin, observ, and imitate the Artificial works of the best Authors';[20] and as late as 1668 John Dryden could remark that 'to imitate the Antients well, much labour and long study is required', while complaining 'which pains … our Poets would want incouragement to take, if yet they had ability to go through with it'.[21] While Butler's and Dryden's comments might imply that these methods were primarily pedagogical tools, it is clear that they in fact underpinned professional invention in all fields in this period. They explain, for example, why in Shakespeare's day play texts were usually created through free adaptation of existing stories, and why direct models can similarly be identified for seventeenth-century art and musical works – for example Anthony Van Dyck's 'Amarilli and Mirtillo', which draws on figures he had copied from Titian's 'Bacchanal of the Andrians',[22] or Henry Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, which draws heavily on John Blow's *Venus and Adonis*.

The principle of invention through imitation and emulation of models continued to be practised throughout the seventeenth century, but already in 1605 Francis Bacon had begun to question the authority of the ancients, when he asked in his dedication to the second book of *The Advancement of Learning* 'why should a fewe receiued Authors stand vp like *Hercules Columnes*, beyond which, there should be no sayling or discouering …?'[23] This notion was developed much further and more explicitly by Descartes in his quest to construct his philosophical understanding from first foundations, rather than following the accepted teachings of past authorities, as he explained at the beginning of his *Meditations on First Philosophy* in 1641:

> Some years ago I was struck by the large number of falsehoods that I had accepted as true in my childhood, and by the highly doubtful nature of the

[18] For a discussion of the controversy surrounding the use of the term *imitatio* when applied to musical invention of the Renaissance, see Rebecca Herissone, *Musical Creativity in Restoration England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 7–11.

[19] Vasari, *The Lives of the Painters*, vol. 2, 153.

[20] Charles Butler, *The Principles of Musik, in Singing and Setting: VVith the Two-fold Use therof* (London, 1636), 92. As is well known, Butler used his own unique orthographical system in this book. In transcribing his writings here I have removed his idiosyncratic use of a stylized 'd' for 'th' and superscript 'e' when silent, but spellings are otherwise original.

[21] John Dryden, *Of Dramatick Poesie, an Essay* (London, 1668), 10.

[22] Both images are reproduced in Maria H. Loh, 'New and Improved: Repetition as Originality in Italian Baroque Practice and Theory', *The Art Bulletin*, 86 (2004), 477–504 at 482; see also ibid. 478–80.

[23] Francis Bacon, *The Tvvoo Bookes of Francis Bacon. Of the Proficience and Aduancement of Learning, diuine and humane* (London, 1605), sig. Aa1v.

> whole edifice that I had subsequently based on them. I realized that it was necessary, once in the course of my life, to demolish everything completely and start again right from the foundations if I wanted to establish anything at all in the sciences that was stable and likely to last.[24]

While Descartes was not here expressly rejecting the principles of *imitatio*, the process he was describing, in which all prior assumptions were theoretically to be questioned, necessarily entailed movement away from the emulation of authoritative models towards the investment of authority in the reasoning individual, which at the time amounted to the rejection of the entire intellectual and educational tradition to which *imitatio* belonged.[25] In literary circles probably the strongest expression of the same rejection occurred in the Quarrel of the Ancients and Moderns, which raged in France from the late 1680s into the early eighteenth century, and in England mainly during the 1690s. The argument centred on questioning the continuing authority of the ancients, with those on the traditionalist side arguing that they could not be surpassed, while the progressivists contended that they had been superseded by the moderns and were not equal to the modern age. Implicit in this once again was a tension between the two notions of creativity, emanating on the one hand from imitation of the ancients and on the other from the original invention of the writers of the present time.[26]

The excitement of discovery and innovation that came with the scientific revolution provides one explanation for the rejection of *imitatio* as the principle for invention in the early modern period, but there were also changes to the practical circumstances in which writers, artists and musicians worked during the course of the seventeenth century in England that had a significant impact on their approaches to creativity. In early seventeenth-century England drama, art and music were predominantly produced through collaborative invention rather than through individual endeavour. Playwrights like Massinger and Fletcher worked in partnerships that meant that the role of each individual was not differentiated, while players freely incorporated revisions into their submitted material so that the 'handwritten copy often became unrecognizable following innumerable alterations by the company and its freelance writers'.[27] As is well known, successful artists and sculptors like Rubens and Bernini operated workshops, which meant that considerable portions

[24] René Descartes, *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, trans. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff and Dugald Murdoch, 2 vols (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), vol. 2, 12. Originally published as *Meditationes de Prima Philosophiae* (Paris, 1641).

[25] See Daniel Garber, *Descartes Embodied: Reading Cartesian Philosophy through Cartesian Science* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 278–81.

[26] See Joseph M. Levine, *The Battle of the Books: History and Literature in the Augustan Age* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991).

[27] Timothy Murray, 'From Foul Sheets to Legitimate Model: Antitheater, Text, Ben Jonson', *New Literary History*, 14 (1983), 641–64 at 646. See also Jeffrey Masten, 'Playwrighting: Authorship and Collaboration', in John D. Cox and David Scott Kastan (eds), *A New History of Early English Drama* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 357–82.

of works attributed to them were in fact completed by anonymous assistants.[28] In some contexts – particularly in the creation of dramatic music – musicians worked in a similarly collaborative environment, in which provision of new compositional material was undertaken by multiple individuals, some responsible for vocal music and others for instrumental dance music, with different people also undertaking the initial task of 'making' the pieces on the one hand (which meant composing a two-part outline of the music) and 'setting' it for the instruments to be used in the production on the other.[29] The lack of importance placed on the individual was partly due to the fact that these craftsmen were either salaried employees of institutions like the church, playing companies or the royal court, or they worked to order for their patrons. Although there were some exceptions, there was little sense in which their status as creators was exalted or celebrated; indeed, musicians and playwrights were often employed primarily as performers rather than as creators.[30]

For a variety of reasons, this situation began to be transformed during the seventeenth century. In the theatre, for example, a new emphasis on individual creation developed primarily as a consequence of structural and institutional changes that occurred at the Restoration. It was now very rare for playwrights to be salaried members of a theatre company: instead, they derived most of their income from the proceeds of the third night's performance.[31] This meant that collaboration became detrimental to their income and declined rapidly, except among aristocratic authors who did not seek to make a living from their writing.[32] During the Commonwealth ban on public performances the practice of printing play texts had become important, resulting in plays gaining a new literary status that they retained at the Restoration once the theatres were re-opened. Playwrights were now able to sell their scripts to publishers, and these printed playbooks contributed to the playwrights' growing prominence in the public domain, something that is demonstrated by the shift in booksellers' catalogues of the 1680s and '90s to categorization by author, not by play title, together with a greater emphasis placed on accuracy of attribution.[33] In sum, English playwrights' activities became commercialized, and they took on the mantle of entrepreneurs. While traditional forms of employment lasted longer for artists

[28] See Larry Shiner, *The Invention of Art: A Cultural History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 58–62.

[29] See Herissone, *Musical Creativity in Restoration England*, 58–9; and Peter Walls, *Music in the English Courtly Masque, 1604–1640*, Oxford Monographs on Music (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996), 33.

[30] This was particularly true of cathedral church musicians, since responsibility for writing music was usually given to those employed as organists; there were no official church composers until the post of Composer for the Chapel Royal was created in March 1700 and given to John Blow. See Herissone, *Musical Creativity in Restoration England*, 61.

[31] Paulina Kewes, *Authorship and Appropriation: Writing for the Stage in England, 1660–1710*, Oxford English Monographs (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998), 17–19. Dryden was, however, contracted to the King's Company until 1678, being required to produce three plays each year. This paragraph reproduces parts of Herissone, *Musical Creativity in Restoration England*, 50–1 and 52.

[32] Kewes, *Authorship and Appropriation*, 134 and 30.

[33] Ibid., 96–104.

and musicians, evidence of a developing open market for art can be detected in the emergence by the 1620s in the Netherlands of artwork produced for sale in galleries and weekly markets, although the equivalent in England developed rather later.[34] In music growing commercialization is reflected not only in the activities of musicians working in the Restoration theatre, but also in the invention of the public concert in London in the 1670s, the flourishing of private music lessons and the establishment of music printing as a commercial operation.[35]

In these contexts composers, playwrights and artists sought to make money directly from their activities, which meant that both originality and the assertion of authorship became increasingly important to them. One example of this emerging trend occurs in a self-publication of 1682 by the virtuoso violinist Nicola Matteis, which was an English version of his treatise *The False Consonances of Musick*, first produced in his native Italy in 1680. In the Introduction he complained that

> A certain Lutenist has had ye confidence to call himselfe ye Author of this Book when ye truth of it is that I presented a Copy of it to a Person of Condition which was Transported by my self to the French Lute[.] [H]ow this Lutenist came by the Copy of it I know not, but he has got it & has ye face to entitle himself to ye Composition.[36]

Matteis clearly felt the need to draw attention to his plagiarizer in order to try to demonstrate his ownership of the contents of the book, which he presumably thought was a necessary step to give his publication authority. More significantly, Kewes has linked this new commercial authorial identity to a range of evidence that suggests playwrights in the latter half of the seventeenth century were beginning to move away from imitation-based creativity in which pre-existing stories were adapted, and that those who practised close appropriation of other authors' materials started to be condemned as plagiarizers. Many felt an increasing need publicly to identify their sources and to justify their treatment of them, typically in the prefatory material to published play texts; recognition of a source text by theatre-goers often led to negative comments; and there were open accusations of theft, sometimes (as in the case of Shadwell and Settle) between playwrights themselves.[37] Shadwell, for example, began his preface to *The Libertine* of 1676 by explaining that he had merely used a common tale as his source and was therefore not reliant on a model:

[34] See Linda Levy Peck, 'Building, Buying and Collecting in London', in Lena Cowen Orlin (ed.), *Material London, ca. 1600*, New Cultural Studies (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 268–89 at 280.

[35] However, music-publishing activities in seventeenth-century England were very different in character from the publication of play texts, largely due to the highly specialized nature of music printing, its expense and its very restricted market. I explore these issues in detail in *Musical Creativity in Restoration England*, 53–6 and in 'Playford, Purcell, and the Functions of Music Publishing in Restoration England', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 63 (2010), 243–90.

[36] Nicola Matteis, *The False Consonances of Music. Facsimile Edition from Glasgow Euing Music Collection B.e.20*, ed. James Tyler (Monaco: Editions Chanterelles, 1980), sig. a3v.

[37] Kewes, *Authorship and Appropriation*, 32–95. The contents of this paragraph are taken from Herissone, *Musical Creativity in Restoration England*, 51–2.

> The story from which I took the hint of this Play, is famous all over *Spain*, *Italy*, and *France*: It was first put into a *Spanish* Play (as I have been told) the *Spaniards* having a Tradition (which they believe) of such a vicious *Spaniard*, as is represented in this Play. From them the *Italian* Comedians took it, and from them the *French* took it, and four several *French* Plays were made upon the Story.
>
> The Character of the *Libertine*, and consequently those of his Friends, are borrow'd; but all the Plot, till the latter end of the Fourth Act, is new: And all the rest is very much varied from any thing which has been done upon the Subject.
>
> I hope the Readers will excuse the Irregularities of the Play, when they consider, that the Extravagance of the Subject forced me to it: And I had rather try new ways to please, than to write it on the same Road, as too many do.[38]

But Settle nevertheless replied by referring to Shadwell in the preface to his own *Ibrahim the Illustrious Bassa* of 1677 as: 'the ingenious Translator of three French Plays that calls himself the *Author* of the *Libertine*'.[39] There is a degree of petty professional rivalry in these retorts, but the substantial body of evidence presented by Kewes indicates that there was a genuine tension growing in the latter half of the seventeenth century between the well-established literary culture of transformation and translation on the one hand, and ideas about the importance of originality on the other. This tension did not present itself in the fields of music and art at such an early date, but during the eighteenth century the increasingly market-led nature of creativity brought a new significance to the qualities of originality and individuality across all three disciplines.

The profound changes that occurred in perception of human creativity during the long seventeenth century, which I have sketched above, thus grew from a host of factors. They included significant transformations in theological and philosophical thought; the scientific revolution and the major human discoveries that underpin the early modern era; the eventual rejection of the principle that creation should come about through the imitation and emulation of authoritative models; the decline of patronage and the growth of commercialism in the production of artworks; and the movement away from collaborative to individual approaches to invention. The essays in this book set out to explore aspects of all these contributing factors through a series of case studies. While they do not, and could not, aim to be comprehensive, care is taken throughout to place in context what the particular examples and incidents they portray tell us about concepts of creativity in England in this period more generally.

The contributions are correspondingly divided into six pairs of essays, each focusing on one thematic area. The first of these, 'Creating to Order: Patronage and

[38] Thomas Shadwell, *The Libertine: A Tragedy* (London, 1676), sig. A4, partly quoted also in Kewes, *Authorship and Appropriation*, 51–2.

[39] Quoted in Kewes, *Authorship and Appropriation*, 52. Settle reserved his main criticism for Shadwell's *Psyche*, which was roundly condemned for its reliance on Quinault's original text.

the Creative Act', investigates the impact of traditional modes of employment in seventeenth-century England on creative endeavours across the fields of art, architecture, drama, literature and music. Andrew R. Walkling begins by assessing how the political ambitions of Charles II shaped creativity at his court, first through his direct importation of French styles of music, theatre and portraiture from the court of Louis XIV, and then in the 1680s via new forms of cultural production that sought to advance Charles's absolutist agenda in a manner that was less derivative and more specifically designed for the English context, thus embodying novelty of concept as well as content. The theme is then further explored by James A. Winn, as he challenges the tendency to denigrate the artistic quality of cultural materials produced to order for a patron's occasional use by identifying ways in which the personal creativity of the poet, artist or composer is expressed within these public forms as well as in more private domains, even if this creativity takes subtle, hidden forms that cannot easily be detected today.

The second pair of essays, grouped under the title 'Creative Identity and the Role of Print Media', forms a contrast to the opening pair's concentration on traditional patronage-based creativity by focusing on the impact of early modern print technology on the identity of the creator in seventeenth-century England. Kirsten Gibson's essay takes as its point of departure the rhetorical prefatory material in a set of single-author self-publications produced around the turn of the seventeenth century, which was used not only by the musicians themselves, but also by publishers and others involved in print production, to fashion the figure of the composer in these publications, and to assert his intellectual ownership of his creations. In Chapter4, Stephanie Carter conversely considers the creative role of the editor-publisher John Playford in preparing his anthologies of instrumental music for publication in the latter half of the century, a process that frequently involved suppressing authorial identity altogether and that serves to highlight the silent creative contribution such figures could make to musical compositions in this period.

The section 'Mapping Knowledge: The Visual Representation of Ideas' continues the theme of assessing the impact of new technologies by investigating how new theories and ideas that developed during the early modern period are reflected in the way in which creativity was perceived and described. Raphael Hallett connects three separate threads – new philosophical theories about creative space derived from the Epicurean concept of void, innovations in the visual presentation of material in printed texts on logic, grammar and rhetoric, and the emergence of physical sites for scientific experimentation – in order to explore interdisciplinary similarities in the ways in which creative space was conceptualized in the period. In Chapter 6 Anne Hultzsch uses a detailed analysis of John Evelyn's description of Genoa to argue that Evelyn's travel writing is less a work of literature than it is an attempt to record knowledge, just as a scientific account produced by the Royal Society would have done in this period. Thus the writer aimed at comprehensiveness rather than originality, and treated his chosen location as an object for close description, seen from multiple perspectives, as through a scientific lens.

Chapters 7 and 8 examine two aspects of early modern attitudes towards authorial identity. Marina Daiman's essay uses the output and business transactions of Peter Paul Rubens early in the period to contrast the apparently accepted and recog-

nized practices of producing replica copies of artworks, and of recycling themes and motives in multiple artworks, with a very different attitude towards authorship. Although, as mentioned above, it is well known that Rubens operated a sophisticated workshop employing a large number of assistants, correspondence from his aristocratic clients reveals that they placed great significance on his autography, suggesting that the identity of the artist was growing in importance in this period even while figures like Rubens struggled to gain recognition for painting as a liberal art rather than as a craft. Stephen Rose investigates a similar emphasis on authorship from a century later, in assessing the famous plagiarism case brought against the composer Giovanni Bononcini, who claimed as his own a madrigal that subsequently proved to be by the Venetian composer Antonio Lotti.

While these two chapters suggest a growing appreciation of individual authorship, Chapters 9 and 10, grouped under the heading 'Imitation and Arrangement', instead explore more flexible and collaborative approaches to creativity. John Cunningham uses the large repertory of two-part instrumental music produced in England during the seventeenth century to investigate creative interactions between professional and amateur musicians. Such two-part pieces were created as compositional outlines for use by professional musicians in a number of contexts: here they could be rearranged – perhaps by the composer, but usually by other musicians – through the insertion of inner parts added to suit the performing forces and situation. But the same outlines were also the primary means by which the music was disseminated to amateurs, since they transmitted all the essential information about the piece, and allowed for flexible realization of the music – including through the addition of inner parts and ornamentation – thus showing similar approaches to the collaborative rearrangement of instrumental music in the period among both amateurs and professionals. In Freyja Cox Jensen's chapter the theme of arrangement is investigated through a consideration of the way in which the character of the Roman politician Cato the Younger was moulded in seventeenth-century writings, ranging from commonplace books to print publications, emphasizing in particular how such reinterpretation reflects the complexity of the relationship between creativity and perceptions of history in the early modern period.

The final pair of chapters focuses on the creative role that performers played in realizing the musical compositions they sang and played. In Chapter 11 Amanda Eubanks Winkler considers the specific partnership between the composer John Eccles and the soprano Anne Bracegirdle in order to illuminate not only how Eccles's compositional style was moulded by the qualities and specialities of the singer for whom he was writing, but also the way in which such stage performers were regarded at the time as creative because of the individuality they brought to their interpretations of the music they performed. Linda Austern's chapter, meanwhile, examines notions of group creativity that were particular to the masculine domain of the tavern in the period through the little-studied repertory of the catch. Given that the full effect of a catch's text was often hidden by the printed notation, it was only when the catch was realized in performance that its true meaning might be revealed, and it was through this means that masculine identities were created and developed.

The notion of creativity that emerges from these studies is one that is at first deceptively familiar, yet often fundamentally at odds with modern ideas of what it means

to bring into being an artistic or intellectual product (in all the senses implied by that word). Seventeenth-century poets, architects, playwrights, painters and musicians placed increasing emphasis on notions of artistic autonomy, yet expended much or even most of their creative energies on works that were profoundly shaped by the political and ritual contexts within which they were commissioned and executed; they promoted the status of the individual author as original creator, yet followed traditional, collaborative working methods, and often freely appropriated materials from their own and others' works; they increasingly sought to establish notions of fixity in textual content, yet entertained and even required modes of performance, in the theatre and in music especially, which emphasized the skill and taste of the executor not only in delivering, but also in ornamenting, elaborating upon and even augmenting the text in question. Furthermore, the seventeenth century was a time in which new patrons, audiences and customers were continually emerging, among whom attitudes towards these same ideas varied no less than among the artistic creators themselves.

The resulting tensions contribute greatly to the enduring fascination of this period of our history, whose multi-faceted and subtly shaded approaches to artistic creation we are really only just beginning to understand. The essays in this volume offer a modest contribution to the development of that understanding, and perhaps above all demonstrate the potential rewards of an approach that brings together sources and methods from across multiple disciplines, with the ultimate aim of illuminating concepts of creativity in seventeenth-century England.

CREATING TO ORDER:
PATRONAGE AND THE CREATIVE ACT

1

'Big with New Events and some Unheard Success': Absolutism and Creativity at the Restoration Court

Andrew R. Walkling

The slow but persistent emergence of a 'cultural turn' in early modern British historiography over the past several decades has opened up new opportunities for exploration of the political landscape from the perspective of cultural products and production. Through the work of such scholars as Malcolm Smuts, Linda Levy Peck, Annabel Patterson, Steven Zwicker, Peter Lake and the late Kevin Sharpe, the gulf between historians and students of the creative and performing arts, and between their respective methodologies and objects of study, has narrowed considerably. Historians are now more able than ever before to assess cultural evidence alongside more traditional empirical sources, while the same developing interconnections have allowed scholars of literature, music and art to bring greater sophistication to their consideration and evaluation of historical context. The benefits of this conjunction are multifarious, extending beyond the mere generation of cross-disciplinary and collaborative thinking among what were previously separate academic spheres. The amalgamation of historical and cultural analysis has also opened up novel ways of viewing and understanding early modern society's complex relationships with politics in the realms of ideas, imagery and performance. This, in turn, has allowed for the emergence of revisionist perspectives on the fundamental political motivations and rationales of the era. The classic instance is, of course, the Jacobean and Caroline court masque: long denigrated as an extravagant frivolity indulged in by an out-of-touch courtly elite, the masque has latterly come to be understood as an intensely discursive political space, a vital forum for the playing out of monarchical aspirations and of noble competition for precedence and favour. Far from constituting a ruinous memorial to the political and intellectual shortcomings of the early Stuart regime, the masque functioned as a principal site of creativity, establishing an enduring legacy of expressive refinement and artistic splendour whose influence can be discerned not only in later theatrical conventions, but also in such diverse 'cultural' areas as poetry and rhetoric, music, dance, architecture, mechanical technology, painting and design, fashion, conduct and deportment, political theory, philosophy, classicism, religion and mythology, and even science.

Our growing recognition of the rich vein of creativity tapped into by the masque and its courtly sponsors and participants has enhanced our comprehension of the diverse modes of political expression that existed in early modern society, helping to reveal important trends in seventeenth-century politics that earlier scholars had overlooked. These patterns had remained undetected previously because their cultural manifestations did not fit prevailing historiographical models, and hence

failed to emerge through the scholarly lens as pertinent markers of political intent and practice. Such is the case with the phenomenon of royal 'absolutism' in the reign of Charles II. Historians have long debated whether such a notion – the hallmark of French political and administrative practice under Louis XIV, which was exported to a number of other European states – even existed in Restoration England and, if it did, when and under what circumstances it manifested itself.[1] Whereas traditional accounts of Restoration political history relied upon a 'Whig' teleology that focused primarily on events leading to the longer-term establishment of constitutional monarchy in Britain, recent years have seen the emergence of a counter-narrative in which Charles II is revealed as harbouring absolutist aspirations, seeking at various stages in his reign to marginalize political opponents by fundamentally altering England's constitutional balance in favour of a more court-centred and royalist system of government. Armed with this new perspective on the political events of the reign – a perspective that shifts the focus of attention away from the ambivalent political environment of the 1660s and the acute constitutional crises of the late 1670s and late 1680s – it is possible not simply to see the emergence of an absolutist trajectory in the intervening periods, but to understand this development as falling into two distinct chronological phases. The first began around 1673, coinciding with the revelation of the Roman Catholicism of Charles II's brother and heir James, Duke of York, but had subsided by 1678, under pressure initially from parliamentary demands for war against France and subsequently from the stunning revelations of the Popish Plot in the summer of that year. The resulting 'Exclusion Crisis' (sometimes also referred to as the 'Restoration Crisis') forced the court into a defensive posture, no longer striving to advance an absolutist agenda, but rather struggling just to survive politically and to avoid a renewal of civil war. However, with Charles's gradual defeat of his opponents, first in the parliamentary arena in early 1681 and subsequently in the localities and London by 1683, came a renewed wave of court-centred activity aimed at promoting and solidifying an absolutist system. This second phase reflected the crown's success in achieving, to an extraordinary degree, much of what it had originally sought a decade earlier: freedom from parliamentary interference in policy-making and in the choice of royal ministers; the division and subsequent political and legal suppression of organized opposition; the retrenchment of corporate and urban autonomy throughout the country; and at least a measure of fiscal stability.

While it is true that this revisionist conceptualization of Restoration politics can still be articulated within the more restrictive 'empirical' terms of traditional British historiography,[2] a culturally informed view offers the best way to achieve a comprehensive perspective on what was, undeniably, a court-driven agenda. Such an

[1] See John Miller, 'The Potential for "Absolutism" in Later Stuart England', *History*, 69 (1984), 187–207; Nicholas Henshall, *The Myth of Absolutism: Change and Continuity in Early Modern European Monarchy* (London: Longman, 1992); and Steven Pincus, *1688: The First Modern Revolution*, The Lewis Walpole Series in Eighteenth-Century Culture and History (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009).

[2] See for example Grant Tapsell, *The Personal Rule of Charles II, 1681–85*, Studies in Early Modern Cultural, Political and Social History, 5 (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2007).

approach poses significant challenges: whereas the confluence of politics and court culture in the early seventeenth century was clearly articulated, and is thus readily subject to identification, categorization and analysis, the deployment of cultural production at the Restoration court was a more complex and fragmented process. It reflects both the more slippery nature of the cultural forms themselves and the court's uncertain and fluctuating engagement with the political conditions that could give relevance to such forms. Despite these obstacles, scholarly explorations of the cultural aspects of Restoration politics have begun to appear over the last decade or so,[3] and a more informed picture of late seventeenth-century English absolutism is gradually coming into focus.

With this development comes the need to gain a fuller understanding of the creative process: not only what kinds of cultural materials were deployed in the service of the English court during the seventeenth century, but also how those products came into existence and why they took the forms they did. This is, of course, a major task, whose results will only emerge over time out of the efforts of many scholars. Yet the exploration of creativity undertaken by Rebecca Herissone, Alan Howard and the contributors to the present volume represents an important first step, laying out ideas and approaches upon which future studies may build. To that end, my own chapter seeks to provide a starting point for the further consideration of cultural production and the creative process at the Restoration court, offering a possible roadmap – necessarily preliminary and contingent – for future enquiries into the nature of absolutist-inspired cultural production in the 1670s and 1680s. My hope is that, by investigating ways in which the Restoration court's cultural output changed over time, and by seeking to consider why and how those changes took place, we may not only gain a clearer picture of the workings of Restoration absolutism, but perhaps also acquire new insights into the cultural products themselves.

1673–78: French Appropriation

The latter part of 1673 and the first few months of 1674 can be regarded as a watershed in the history of Restoration cultural production. Political historians have long been cognizant of the great shift in what we might call 'public' events during 1673: the passage of the 'Test Act' in March, prohibiting Roman Catholics from holding public or court office; the open acknowledgement in the late spring by James, Duke of York (Charles II's brother and heir apparent) that he had converted to the Roman faith; the collapse of the 'Cabal' ministry and the appointment of Thomas Osborne, Earl of Danby, as Lord Treasurer in July; and James's proxy marriage to the Italian

[3] See, for example, Eveline Cruickshanks (ed.), *The Stuart Courts* (Stroud: Sutton, 2000); T. R. Langley, *Image Government: Monarchical Metamorphoses in English Literature and Art, 1649–1702*, Medieval and Renaissance Literary Studies (Cambridge: James Clarke, and Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2001); Brian Weiser, *Charles II and the Politics of Access* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2003); Anna Keay, *The Magnificent Monarch: Charles II and the Ceremonies of Power* (London: Continuum, 2008); and Matthew Jenkinson, *Culture and Politics at the Court of Charles II, 1660–1685*, Studies in Early Modern Cultural, Political and Social History, 9 (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2010).

princess Maria Beatrice d'Este of Modena in late September. All of these developments highlighted the increasing estrangement between the crown and parliament, not only over the problem of religion, but also over the larger issue of what Andrew Marvell, among others, famously labelled 'arbitrary government'.[4] Indeed, following an unruly session in early 1674, parliament was held in abeyance for nearly fourteen months; another, even longer prorogation would begin in November 1675. But this was not the court's only line of attack in its efforts to enhance both the reality and the trappings of royal authority. The arrival of Maria Beatrice on 20 November from Italy via France, where Louis XIV had granted her a status equal to that of his own consort,[5] appears to be associated with an intensification of cultural contact between the two courts. These interactions included the migration to London of a number of musicians and dancers, all of whom seem to have arrived in late 1673 or early 1674: a group of four French wind players, who are credited with introducing the French recorder and hautboy to England;[6] several French dancers, including Jean Favier, Guillaume-Louis Pecour and Adrien Merger de Saint-André; a collection of singers, possibly including the celebrated bass Pierre Beaupuis;[7] and the composer Robert Cambert, co-inventor of French opera, who had recently been displaced in Paris through the machinations of Jean-Baptiste Lully.[8]

The appearance of so many prominent and skilled exponents of French musical and theatrical styles exerted a profound influence on the English court's deployment of theatre as a vehicle for propaganda. Charles II was famously a lover of drama and his attendance at the public theatres in London is amply documented. The court, however, could not be described as a centre of theatrical innovation during the first dozen years of Charles's reign: although some fancy balls and amateur dramatic productions, and even one cobbled-together masque, were mounted at various times, we can find no evidence of full-blown allegorical theatre prior to 1673. By the end of that year, however, the Restoration court was seemingly awash with elaborate French and French-inspired entertainments. Several pieces were presented or in rehearsal in the weeks leading up to Christmas, including a court ballet with music by Cambert, *Ballet et Musique pour le Divertissement du Roy de la Grande Bretagne*,

4 See [Andrew Marvell], *An Account of the Growth of Popery, and Arbitrary Government in England* ('Amsterdam' [i.e. London?], 1677).

5 Louis's special treatment of Maria Beatrice is recorded in Allen B. Hinds (ed.), *Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts, Relating to English Affairs Existing in the Archives and Collections of Venice, and in Other Libraries of Northern Italy. Vol. 38, 1673–1675* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1940), 134.

6 See David Lasocki, 'Professional Recorder Playing in England, 1500–1740, II: 1640–1740', *Early Music*, 10 (1982), 182–91; and Lasocki, 'The French Hautboy in England, 1673–1730', *Early Music*, 16 (1988), 339–58.

7 The dancers and singers will be discussed in greater detail in my forthcoming book *Masque and Opera in Restoration England*; information on Favier can also be found in Rebecca Harris-Warrick and Carol G. Marsh, *Musical Theatre at the Court of Louis XIV: Le Mariage de la Grosse Cathos*, Cambridge Musical Texts and Monographs (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 21–9.

8 André Tessier, 'Robert Cambert à Londres', *La Revue musicale*, 9 (1927–28), 101–22.

which was performed sometime during the latter half of January 1674.[9] Although it is otherwise an unexceptional pastoral, *Ballet et Musique* opens with a brief allegorical prologue addressed to Charles as a triumphant maritime potentate, 'who reigns over the empire of the waves' and 'from whom the unfortunate can hope for all and must fear nothing'.[10] A far grander entertainment followed a couple of months later: Cambert's full-blown opera *Ariane, ou le Mariage de Bacchus*, which had its premiere in late March.[11] Although *Ariane* appears to have been rehearsed at Whitehall Palace, the finished production was deliberately made available to the London theatre-going public: it was presented at the newly reconstructed Drury Lane Theatre, which I suspect the court was able to commandeer in return for Charles II's generous financial contribution towards its rebuilding following a devastating fire in January 1672.[12] Moreover, patrons at the theatre were able to buy either a programme libretto of the French text or a loosely translated rhyming English version that provided some gist of what was being sung on stage. *Ariane* had originated at the French court as part of Cambert's collaboration with the librettist Pierre Perrin, but the London version included a new prologue, again lauding Charles II for his great exploits and 'Wholsom' domestic policies – and both versions of the libretto featured a handsome frontispiece engraving depicting a scene from the prologue in progress.[13]

Ballet et Musique and in particular *Ariane* provided a model for subsequent court theatrical productions of the 1670s, including the extravagant masque *Calisto*, performed in February and April 1675, and the 'opera' *Rare en Tout*, which was presented on Charles II's birthday in 1677 under the aegis of the expatriate philosopher and *bon vivant* the Sieur de Saint-Évremond.[14] Like their predecessors, both of these works begin with encomiastic allegorical prologues modelled on those seen at the court of *le roi soleil*. Even *Calisto*, which was performed in English and featured young courtiers in the lead roles, can be shown to be heavily indebted to French forms, in particular *comédie-* and *tragédie-ballet*, and it contains one of the earliest

[9] John Buttrey, 'New Light on Robert Cambert in London, and his *Ballet et Musique*', *Early Music*, 23 (1995), 198–220.

[10] 'qui Regnés dans l'Empire de l'Onde' and 'de qui les Mal-heureux / Peuvent tout esperer, & ne doivent, rien craindre'; [Sébastien Brémond], *Ballet et Musique pour le Divertissement du Roy de la Grande Bretagne* ([London], 1674), sig. A2r–v; italics reversed.

[11] Pierre Danchin, 'The Foundation of the Royal Academy of Music in 1674 and Pierre Perrin's *Ariane*', *Theatre Survey*, 25 (1984), 55–67.

[12] See the discussion forthcoming in Walkling, *Masque and Opera in Restoration England*.

[13] For an exploration of the work's somewhat complicated genesis, see Christina Bashford, 'Perrin and Cambert's *Ariane, ou le Mariage de Bacchus* Re-Examined', *Music & Letters*, 72 (1991), 1–26.

[14] Paris, Archives des Affaires Étrangères, Angleterre 123, fols 266v–67r and 123B, fol. 136v (both quoted in Charles de Marguetel de Saint-Denis, Sieur de Saint-Évremond, *Lettres [de] Saint-Évremond*, ed. René Ternois, Société des textes français modernes, 2 vols (Paris: Marcel Didier, 1967–68), vol. 2, 194 n. 3).