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Chapter 1: What was Restored in 1660?

In 1644, the poet and polemicist John Milton wrote of how he saw in his 'mind a noble and puissant Nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks'. The civil war had opened up opportunities for England to awaken and fulfil God’s purpose. Milton would later write defending the execution of Charles I, asserting the legitimacy of an act which removed the country from the bondage of tyranny. But in 1660, the hopes which had been raised to dizzying heights in 1644 lay broken, and Milton did not seek to conceal his contempt for most of the English people. Overtaken by a 'deluge of...epidemic madness' they threatened to bring England to 'a precipice of destruction'. Even the few for whom he retained any hope seemed to be 'chusing them a captain back for Egypt'. He wrote these words in a pamphlet designed to propose a remedy, to halt a process which his own imagery suggested was inexorable. He failed. The captain he feared, Charles II, was restored to the thrones of England, Scotland, and Ireland soon after he published.

As Milton recognised few others would interpret these events as he did. Some did express their discontent, albeit rather less elegantly. On 1 May 1660, for example, one Thomas Blacklocke in the Red Lyon Inn, Southwark exclaimed that 'if ever the Kinge come into England, He shold come in a Wheel-Barrow, and his Breach shold be stucke full of Nettles'. However, the very fact that a record of such statements now exists was normally the result of somebody loyal to the Crown being offended enough to report the speaker. For most the Restoration was a joyous occasion, monarchy the natural government of Britain and Ireland. The diarist John Evelyn like Milton viewed the situation through the lens provided by biblical history. But whereas Milton saw England being returned to bondage, Evelyn wrote that
WHAT WAS RESTORED IN 1660?

it was the Lords doing, et mirabile in oculis nostris: for such a Restoration was never seen in the mention of any history, ancient or modern, since the return of the Babylonian Captivity, nor so joyful a day, & so bright, ever seen in this nation: this happening when to expect or effect it, was past all humane policy.4

Charles and his advisers, showing an awareness of the importance of public opinion which would continue throughout his reign, capitalised on the mood of celebration. Charles triumphantly entered London on 29 May 1660. His return had been postponed in order for it to coincide with his 30th birthday, which was to be metaphorically linked with his kingdoms being born again.5 As an Act for a Perpetual Anniversary Thanksgiving on the nine and twentieth date of May recorded this was: 'the most memorable Birth day not only of his Majesty both as a man and Prince but likewise as an actual King, and of this and other His Majesties Kingdomes all in a great measure borne and raised from the dead on this most joyful day'.6 Charles’s way into the capital was paved with flowers, tapestries adorned the streets, and the fountains flowed with wine.7 What Milton regarded as a return to slavery was thus for many other observers a return from a period so dark that it could be likened to death itself.

But when they awoke, bleary-eyed and hungover, on 30 May, Londoners might well have asked themselves what exactly they had been celebrating. The return of the king, certainly, but on what terms? What was restored in 1660? The answer to this question has two parts. First, and most obviously, an analysis of the political settlement as it was worked out between king and parliament in the early 1660s is required. But secondly a more conceptually sophisticated examination of why, despite the ways in which this settlement was relatively favourable to the monarchy, Charles II’s politics remained unsettled is necessary. This unsettled state was dramatically shaped by the impact of the Revolution. We trace this impact in three key areas – print and popular politics, constitutional debate, and religion. The themes introduced here are expanded upon in the chapters that follow and provide our book’s unifying argument.

Restoration

In constitutional terms England was to be returned to a point reached in 1641.8 This meant that the legislation passed in the early, heady days of the Long Parliament – where those who would become Parliamentarians and
Royalists, Roundheads and Cavaliers, still often spoke with one voice on central issues – remained on the statute book. Charles I, albeit unwillingly, had given his assent to these measures which asserted that in theory no future king could rule with the admixture of blinkered authoritarianism and unchecked innovation which he had demonstrated from 1629–40. The fiscal expedients of the personal rule, based on a novel interpretation of age-old rights, all remained abolished. The prerogative courts of High Commission and Star Chamber which had convicted and brutally punished the puritan ‘martyrs’ Henry Burton, John Bastwick, and William Prynne were not resuscitated. The only key piece of legislation dating from this time which was substantially altered was the Triennial Act. The Cavalier Parliament’s Act (passed in 1664) retained the Long Parliament’s requirement that a parliament be called every three years but, unlike the earlier Act, it did not set out any mechanisms by which parliament could be called should the king fail in this duty.

The Restoration thus represented a moment of belated triumph for those who in 1640 and 1641 had wanted to clarify the boundaries of kingly power but who had not sought to capitalise on the king’s weakness in order to drive forward further reformation. But it was also, ostensibly at least, a triumph for the monarchy. None of the more radical legislation of the years of civil war and interregnum was kept on the statute books. Parliament finally resolved what Clarendon called the ‘great bone of contention during the late ware’ in passing measures which placed the militia under Charles’s sole control. In addition, virtually all of the armed force on which power in the interregnum had rested was disbanded, and Charles was to be allowed a standing army with the important proviso that he had to pay for it. The financial settlement, it is true, did not solve the problems of chronic underfunding to which early modern English monarchs had been subject. It was adjudged in September 1660 that government required £1,200,000 a year, and without its previous fiscal rights and given the inadequacy of income from land and customs, alternative funding had to be decided upon. The possibility of a land tax was discussed, but the first attempt at a solution which was pleasing to both the Crown and parliament – which, with much of its membership drawn from the gentry, had landed interests at its heart – was found in the grant of an excise on alcoholic beverages. When this failed to meet the necessary amount, a Hearth Tax was voted in 1662. Even then these measures did not at first provide the requisite amount for government, and the king was forced to rely on parliament for extra grants. But while this financial settlement set some limitations on monarchical power, if only because of the
initial inadequacy of its provisions, it put Charles in no worse a position than his predecessors. Also, by relying on the excise rather than a land tax, it ironically created a system that would ultimately provide the Crown with a strong economic foundation from which to withstand the challenges of the late 1670s and early 1680s.

Thus at first the answer to what was restored in 1660 seems to be a relatively simple one: virtually everything that did not seem to the nobility and gentry represented in parliament to be related to Caroline arbitrary rule. It was to be as if the civil war and interregnum had never happened. The legislation that enshrined this, the Act of Indemnity and Oblivion, was passed in August 1660. The act declared that everybody – with some named exceptions – who had been involved in ‘all and all manner of treasons, misprisons of treasons, murthers, felonies, offences, crimes, contempts and misdemeanours’ in the name of the Royalist or Parliamentarian cause between 1 January 1638 and 24 June 1660 would be granted pardon and indemnity. The act also attempted to force the nation to participate in an act of collective amnesia, and to obviate the languages of political conflict that had developed. Any of those labels that had denoted different sides in the civil war were declared anathema, removed from the political lexicon of England. In a speech to parliament of September 1660, Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, Lord Chancellor and, apart from the king, the leading figure in politics from 1660–7 spoke with anger of those who sought to keep the memory of the civil wars alive in their labelling of others. He extended his opprobrium to those guilty of thought-crimes, who brewed evil thoughts within them, occasionally allowing their minds’ construction to be shown on their faces. Charles himself hath given us a noble and princely example, by opening and stretching His arms to all who are worthy to be His Subjects, worthy to be thought English men, by extending His heart with a pious and a grateful joy to finde all His Subjects at once in His arms, and himself in theirs: and shall we fold our arms towards one another, and contract our hearts with Envy and Malice to each other, by any sharp memory of what hath been unneighbourly or unkindely done heretofore? What is this but to rebel against the Person of the King, against the excellent Example and Verture of the King, against the known Law of the Land, this blessed Act of Oblivion?

Remembering was figured as rebellion. In conjunction the legal fiction that Charles II’s reign had commenced immediately after his father’s
execution in 1649 was set down, and the statutes of his reign are still numbered as if he had ruled from that moment. England had no longer been without a monarch for 11 years.

And yet, unsurprisingly, minds were not wiped blank. Indeed, some of the actions of the Restoration government were actually in conflict with any sustained attempt to erase the past. A number of individuals were excepted from the Act of Indemnity and Oblivion and 13 who had signed Charles I’s death warrant, or who had played a leading role in his trial, were executed at Charing-Cross. In the horrifying Grand Guignol theatre of an early modern execution for treason, the gathered crowds witnessed the hanging, disembowelling, and quartering of these men. Their senses were assailed: Evelyn who ‘saw not their execution’ nonetheless described how he ‘met their quarters mangld & cutt & reaking as they were brought from the Gallows in baskets on the hurdle’, whilst the inhabitants of Charing-Cross petitioned the king asking that there should be no further executions there because ‘the stench of their burnt bowels had so putrified the air’. The heads of the traitors were displayed prominently, their dead gazes cast over London reminding its inhabitants of the past in all too obvious a form. Even more strikingly than this, the phrase ‘digging up the past’ was literalised in a particularly grotesque way when it was ordered that the bodies of Oliver Cromwell, Henry Ireton, and John Bradshaw should be exhumed. In an act of symbolic revenge they were hanged, dressed in their winding sheets, on the anniversary of the regicide 30 January 1661. Their heads were then put on spikes outside Westminster Hall. For almost 20 years Oliver Cromwell’s head looked down upon London. Oblivion? Hardly. The chief statesman of the 11 years that officially did not exist was ever present during the 20 years in which all Londoners were meant to forget that he had ever been alive. But it was, of course, not only the actions of the Restoration government that kept the past at the forefront of people’s minds. The interregnum was unforgettable. The past indelibly affected the present: the major political issues; the political languages used; and the political and religious decisions taken; all of these things bore the marks of the experiences that had preceded 1660. Just as Cromwell’s head watched over Restoration London, so the Restoration as a period was watched over by the ghosts of the civil war and interregnum, and they were ghosts who refused to lie down.

This is key to understanding why, despite the apparent strength bestowed upon the restored monarchy by the settlement, the period remained turbulent. The Restoration was fundamentally affected by the English Revolution. The concept of the English Revolution is a
controversial one, but its use is appropriate here. While the arguments supported by the teleological underpinnings of Whiggism and Marxism crumbled in the face of the detailed archival researches of revisionist historians, recently the notion of an English Revolution has been rescued from obsolescence partly because it has been redefined. The English Revolution is now seen less as a social and economic event and more as a cultural and intellectual process. As the erstwhile president of the United States, John Adams, had commented upon a very different revolution: ‘What do we mean by the Revolution? The war? That was no part of the Revolution; it was only an effect and consequence of it. The Revolution was in the minds of the people’. The English Revolution too was in the minds of the people. We turn now to its impact.

The Impact of Revolution I: Print and Popular Politicisation

It was inevitable that the experience of civil war would catalyse the development of popular politicisation. Irrespective of the reasons why men initially chose sides (or chose not to choose sides), as the war progressed they came to think more about what their role in the polity entailed and to what kind of polity they wished to return. This is most obviously true of the members of the New Model Army – who had the weight of arms to transfer their thoughts into action – but it is also true of the neutralist Clubmen beloved of revisionist scholars. The war was also one fought in words. Indeed, it had been heralded in words, and ideological division in politics out-of-doors both before and during the war had been driven in part by the written word. This was related to an event which is emblematic of the concept of cultural revolution. The abolition of the Courts of Star Chamber and High Commission in 1641 had profound consequences. Censorship, the application of which relied on these courts, collapsed, and the numbers of printed works, already rising rapidly, soared. Figure 1 demonstrates this explosion in striking graphical form (Figure 1).

From 1588–97 on average 260 books were published per year. In 1641, 2042 were published and in 1642, this figure had risen to 4038. From 260 to 2042 in less than half a century; an almost eightfold increase. Vast numbers of these works were polemical and political and responded to the contemporary crises (one remarkable statistic is that of the 1500 pamphlets produced between 1641 and the outbreak of civil war in August 1642, one in six was concerned with the Irish rebellion). Print had been enshrined as an immediate medium, a mechanism for the fast and public
expression of variant political and religious views. Charles II had to contend with this fact when he was restored, and he recognised the potency of print. On 19 May 1662, he gave his assent to *An Act for preventing the frequent Abuses in printing seditious treasonable and unlicensed Bookes and Pamphlets and for regulating of Printing and Printing Presses*. The wording of the Act left no doubt as to the rationale behind it. The ‘well-government and regulating of Printers and Printing Presses’ was a ‘matter of Publique care and of great concernment’. This was particularly because ‘by the general licentiousnes of the late times many evil disposed persons’ had ‘been encouraged to print and sell heretical schismatical blasphemous seditious and treasonable Bookes Pamphlets and Papers’. They continued to do this ‘to the high dishonour of Almighity God the endangering the peace of these Kingdomes and raising a disaffection to His most Excellent Majesty and His Government’. Charles was keen to show that his own interests cohered with those of parliament. He made explicit the link not just between the possibility of future turmoil and the freedom of the press, but also what he saw as the link between past events and this freedom:

Mr Secretary Morice acquaints the House, from his Majesty, That, next to the Bill for settling the Forces of the kingdom, his Majesty held, that the Bill, now depending, for regulating the Press, and to prevent

the Printing of libellous and seditious Books, did most conduce to the
securing the Peace of the Kingdom; the exorbitant liberty of the Press
having been a great Occasion of the late Rebellion in the kingdom, and
the Schisms in the Church...\(^{24}\)

This is a remarkable statement. The armed forces and the printing press
were the most important issues for Charles to have settled. The metaphor
often used of printed material in this period, ‘paper bullets’, seems to
have been real enough in Charles’s mind. But as another cursory look at
the graph shows it proved impossible to restore pre-1641 levels of control
over the printed word. The lid had been taken off and it was impossible to
force it back on. Through many different expedients dissenting religious
and political voices found ways to be heard, and in the years of the Exclu-
sion Crisis they were helped by the fact that the Licensing Act lapsed, and
the emergent Whigs were in no hurry to reapply it. Thus the restored
world of Charles II was one in which the printed word was used to fuel a
growing public forum for political debate. This is not to claim that print
was the only motor driving the development of politics out of doors, and
we will examine others in more detail in Chapter 7. But it is to emph-
sise, contrary to several recent attempts to diminish the significance of
print, that 1641 and the years after witnessed a profound change in the
use and reception of the printed medium and that this was something
which Charles II had to contend with, knew he had to contend with, and
at various points in his reign failed to contend with.

The Impact of Revolution II: Constitutional Debate

The second complex legacy of the English Revolution was constitutional.\(^{25}\)
The reality of the situation was that the overwhelming popularity of the
Restoration hid a morass of tensions. These tensions were inherent in the
forces which had coalesced in the crisis year of 1659.\(^{26}\) As England threat-
ened to slide into anarchy, ideologically disparate groups co-operated
tactically to bring about stability. For some this meant the return of monar-
chy from the start, whilst others came to believe this as events unfolded.
Presbyterians and Anglican royalists found a common cause in the fight
against radical sectarianism, and, in a move with more than a touch of
historical irony, members of the army that had played the central role
in bringing about the execution of Charles I were now fundamental in
restoring his son.\(^{27}\) The taciturn general George Monck led troops from
Scotland, crossing the Tweed in January 1660, and ensured the return of members ‘purged’ in 1648 to parliament in February. Originally sphinx-like in revealing his intentions, Monck came to recognise that the logic of his actions pointed to a Stuart restoration, and he set about ensuring that he would profit from that eventuality. The Convention Parliament assembled in April, and its make up gives an indication of the different constitutional perspectives prevalent among those who would oversee the initial stages of the Restoration. It included those members whose intransigent insistence on treating with the impossible Charles I had led directly to Pride’s Purge – men like Denzil Holles and Sir Harbottle Grimston, who were dubbed the ‘Presbyterian knot’. But whilst these men’s actions had been reprehensible to an army that by late 1648 thought of Charles I as a man of blood (the ‘capitall and grand Author of our troubles’ who needed to ‘be speedily brought to justice for the treason, blood and mischief, he is therein guilty of’), they had a firm sense of the fetters which should be put upon the monarch. Their view of monarchy, as we have seen, did not win out in the Restoration settlement, but it illustrates nicely the opinions that some continued to hold towards the institution of monarchy. And these were opinions that could easily lead to conflict.

The potential for conflict that pertained despite the relative unanimity with which Charles was welcomed back was a symptom of the failure during the civil war and interregnum to resolve key constitutional questions, and the way in which the experience, and subsequent memory, of those years had sharpened those questions. The events that most starkly raised questions about the position of the monarch, and which were burnt on to English memories were those of the king’s trial and the regicide of 30 January 1649. This demonstration that kings could be brought to account for their actions had a somewhat counter-intuitive impact on Restoration politics: it could be used as a way of bolstering monarchical power. A cult of Charles king and martyr thrived. Those who were critical of the Crown could quickly be branded with the label of potential regicides. During the Exclusion Crisis – when, following revelations of a popish plot, attempts were made in consecutive parliaments to remove the Catholic James, Duke of York from the succession – those who sought to limit the backlash against both the present and future monarch recalled the regicide as the ultimate example of what had happened last time certain MPs had become too sure of their own importance. As one pamphleteer who tried to rebut such tactics complained:
WHAT WAS RESTORED IN 1660?

These are the men who exclaim against our Parliaments proceedings, in relation to the Plot, as too violent, calling these Times by no other Name but that of 40 or 41. when to amuse as well his Sacred Majesty as his good People, they again threaten us with another 48.52

Also, as this quotation reveals, references were not simply made to 1648 (for those living in early modern England the year was taken to start on 25 March, so they would have thought of Charles as having been executed on 30 January 1648); the years preceding the outbreak of civil war could be used similarly to smear those who acted in an oppositional way. Indeed, the cry that ‘41 would come again was perhaps the most commonplace of the claims made. So quotidian was its use by loyalists that it became the subject of satire. So it was that the vitriolic, loyalist polemicist Roger L’Estrange could be portrayed as a dog simply and bestially barking out the slogan ‘Forty One’ in the 1681 print The Time-Servers. As both this print and the pamphlet quoted above demonstrate polemic based on recalling the 1640s was sufficiently damaging for its targets to try to tackle it head-on. They attempted to emphasise the scaremongering tactics of their opponents. But such attempts to render these attacks impotent through satire could only be partially effective, and it remains the case that in the emerging Restoration war of words these two powerful linguistic weapons were in the armoury of the monarchy.

Nonetheless, whilst the fears of a return to civil war permeated political discourse in a way which could strengthen the monarchy, other elements of Restoration political discourse which had been profoundly shaped by the 1640s and 1650s were loci of controversy. In particular the relationship of monarchical authority to the law, one of the cruxes in the events which had led to war, was a contested area. This was in part at least because the idea that the king was the fountain of justice, and central to a constitution which safeguarded the fundamental legal rights of the subject, was at some level shared across political divides. This is best illustrated through an analysis of some of the grounds on which the return of the monarch was legitimated. The central figure is again Clarendon, for whose political thought the law provided a lodestar.53 The interregnum had been illegal – its constitutional forms had provided no safeguards to the English subject. In this line of thinking, Oliver Cromwell as Lord Protector had been granted a position which, despite resting on England’s first written constitution, was essentially meaningless within the only constitution that mattered – the ancient constitution.54 The law, so the argument went, did not
recognise the title, and impose obligations upon its holder, because the law ran in the name of the king. As such, Cromwell could rule in a more arbitrary, unbounded way than any king. The Restoration returned England to a recognisable legal situation. In May 1661, Clarendon praised the fact that 'we have our King again, and our Laws again, and Parliaments again'. He placed great weight on those who were required to ensure that the king’s justice was implemented — informing Serjeant Thomas Twisden at his swearing-in as a judge that their conduct should lead to 'such reverence of the laws, and such an estimation of the persons who justly execute those laws, that they may look upon those who could pervert the laws at home, as enemies of the same magnitude, as those who would invade the country from abroad'. Clarendon’s thinking was echoed from pulpits across the land. George Morley, Bishop of Worcester and dean of the chapel royal said in his sermon at the coronation on 23 April 1661:

For a Despotical Monarch governs his Subjects as a Master doth his Servants, arbitrarily according to his own will and pleasure, whether it be Right or Wrong; But a Political Monarch governs his Subjects as a Father doth his Children, by Equal and Just Lawes, made with their own consent to them, The former is the Government of the Turk and Muscovite, the later is, or ought to be the Government of all Christain Kings; I am sure it is of Ours...

In printed panegyrics too, various authors sought to assert Charles’s lawful authority. Charles Cotton wrote:

And it may be worthy your Majesties Princely consideration, and best thanks to Almighty God, that your way was laid open by your peoples love, and not forced by your own just Vengeance, that your Throne is established in the Judgements, and supported by the voluntary and united Strength of your People, fixt and riveted to the Centre of your Laws, not floating in Blood, nor raised upon heaps of Ruine, but built upon its true and ancient Foundation...

Thomas Fuller attempted to make the point in verse. Having drawn a comparison with Edward the Confessor, Fuller proceeded to make the lessons for Charles clear:

The COMMON LAW to him the English owe,  
On whom a better gift You will bestow:
That which He made by You shall be made good,
That Prince and Peoples rights both understood,
Both may be Bankt in their respective station;
Which done, no fear of future Inundation.⁴⁰

In these examples, it is possible to discern the different inflections which the legal-constitutionalist discourse could be given, and to identify the spaces which it opened up for debate. Tensions arose over the question of defining the king’s precise position in the polity, and because his legitimacy was based on his role within the law the question remained to be asked of him, as of his father before him: what should be done if the king ruled in an illegal, arbitrary manner? The political situation thus retained some of those tensions that had partially caused and been present throughout the civil war and interregnum, but the catalyst for the fracturing of these tensions was not simply constitutional, it was religious. And in order to understand this, it is necessary to turn to the final legacy of the Revolution: the growth of myriad religious groups during the civil wars and interregnum.

The Impact of Revolution III: Religion

As part of the revisionist enterprise, it became fashionable to downplay the significance of the experiences of these groups. As the researches of John Morrill and Judith Malby, among others, have shown, the majority of English men and women adhered to a popular religion which remained predominantly based on an understanding of the Church of England that was neither puritan nor wedded to the controversial forms of Archbishop Laud, but was instead organised around the rhythms of the prayer book and the liturgical year.⁴¹ This proved resilient in the face of the various attempts made during the mid-century to establish a different kind of religious settlement.⁴² But outside of this tenacious prayer book Protestantism, a torrent of other religious ideas was flowing. The membership of some groups grew, whilst others, most famously the Quakers, trace their origins to the interregnum. Presbyterians, Independents, Particular Baptists, General Baptists, Quakers, Muggletonians, Grindletonians, Diggers, and Ranters all formed part of the religious landscape of England.⁴³ Some groups did not survive the interregnum (and some have argued that at least one never existed at all) but others did.⁴⁴ Whilst dissenters were never to make up a large proportion of the English population (around
6.2 per cent by the early eighteenth century), this fact belies their ultimate importance. When Charles II returned, the religious composition of England had dramatically changed – as recent commentators and some at the time stressed the religious upheavals of the interregnum might be seen as a ‘second Reformation’, ultimately more important than the sixteenth century in forming England’s religious complexion. The question was raised of what sort of church would be restored. Charles, in the Declaration he issued from Breda before he returned, seemed to offer a glimpse of hope to those who would not welcome the return of a restrictive Church of England: ‘we do declare a liberty to tender consciences, and that no man shall be disquieted or called in question for differences of opinion in matter of religion, which do not disturb the peace of the kingdom’. Furthermore, it seemed in the debates over the church that occurred between 1660 and 1662 that the largest group, the Presbyterians, were to be comprehended within the Church of England. But these hopes were soon dashed. In May 1662, Charles gave his assent to the Act of Uniformity. The terms of this Act were unacceptable to many of the clergy and ensured that by the end of August 1662 around 2000 men had been ejected from their posts. A series of astringent acts were passed that sought to fetter dissent. But the religious legacy of the revolution was such that these groups had too many adherents, who were too committed, for them to collapse in the face of persecution. Instead, the problem raised by the existence of large-scale dissent became one of the key political issues of the day that would arguably be instrumental in the formation of parties.

Conclusion

The three themes outlined above run throughout our book. We are concerned to show both the ways in which the Restoration period differed from previous periods, but also to show that the period only makes sense within the context of the seventeenth century as a whole. In doing this, we are indebted to one of the most significant historians of the period, at the same time as subtly departing from him. Jonathan Scott has argued that post-Restoration developments ‘are almost xerox copies of events, structures and issues of the early Stuart period’ and that ‘The Restoration…succeeded too well, for it restored not only the structures of early Stuart government, but subsequently its fears, divisions and crises.’ Scott’s provocative phrasing precludes too much in the way of change to
be compatible with the thesis we have set out (and indeed Scott’s powerful defence of the concept of the English Revolution sits uneasily with his own argument). However, behind his over-excitable language rests an important perception: the seventeenth century as a whole was wracked with fears of popery and arbitrary government, and attempts to assuage these fears lay at the heart of that tumultuous century’s successive crises. If our book is provided with thematic coherence by the three issues discussed in this chapter, its conceptual coherence is to be found in our analysis of the significance of this discourse. As we will see Andrew Marvell’s sentiment that ‘There has now for divers Years, a design been carried on, to change the Lawful Government of England into an Absolute Tyranny, and to convert the established Protestant Religion into down-right Popery’ was widely felt. However, the fact that many would have disagreed with what he meant by these words illuminates how debate over the location of the threat of popery and arbitrary government was at the centre of the political conflicts we analyse.

In answer to the question of what was restored in 1660 we need to be clear, as Scott is, that the issues which had driven the country to war remained unresolved. But we also need to be clear that the political world of Charles II was fundamentally different from that of his father; and that the attempts to resolve the political and religious issues would be carried out in this new world. That the English revolution never happened was, and remains, the stuff of Royalist dreams; that it did happen was to forge the shape of Charles’s living nightmares.
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