

**The political is personal:
the attack on Shadwell in *Sir Barnaby Whigg***

María José MORA
University of Seville

ABSTRACT

The paper discusses the importance of personal satire in the Restoration plays of the Exclusion Crisis (1679-82), focusing on Thomas Durfey's *Sir Barnaby Whigg* (1681). Although the caricature of the poet Thomas Shadwell in the figure of Sir Barnaby has been generally recognized, recent discussions of the play have tended to downplay its resonance and emphasize instead more general aspects of the political satire on the Whig party. However, the political element in this comedy is not central to the plot; it is introduced mainly through a secondary character, whose main function in the play seems to be only to mock a rival poet who had made no secret of his commitment to the Whig cause. Since *Sir Barnaby Whigg* was produced soon after the defeat of the Exclusionists, the attack on Shadwell seems almost an afterthought, an addition designed to increase topical interest – on the wake of the controversy provoked by *The Lancashire Witches* – and to arouse partisan support for the play.

On the wake of the anti-Catholic paranoia triggered by the Popish Plot (1678), England went through a period of acute political crisis: in 1679, the faction that around this time came to be called the Whigs introduced the first of three successive bills to exclude the Catholic Duke of York from the succession; but the King manoeuvred to frustrate their aims, drawing on the support of the so-called Tories and resorting to his prerogative to prorogue or dissolve Parliament.¹ But political controversy was not restricted to parliamentary debate: it extended to the streets and popular meeting places, like clubs and coffee-houses. The theatres also engaged actively in the political strife. Plays like Bancroft's *The Tragedy of Sertorius* (1679), Settle's *The Female Prelate* (1680) or Shadwell's *The Lancashire Witches* (1681) attacked Popery and

¹ For a concise account of the Exclusion Crisis, see for instance Harris (1993: 80-116).

endorsed Whig ideals. Tory poets retaliated with works that denounced rebellion and exalted loyalty, like Tate's *The Loyal General* (1679) and *The History of King Richard the Second* (1681/82), Whitaker's *The Conspiracy* (1680), or Durfey's *The Royalist* (1682); once the Exclusionists were defeated in 1681, the Whigs were mercilessly ridiculed in plays like Behn's *The Roundheads* (1682) or Crowne's *City Politiques* (1683).

One of the first comedies to make comic capital of the Whigs was Thomas Durfey's *Sir Barnaby Whigg*, produced by the King's Company in October 1681. The play presents several love intrigues against a background of plots and conspiracies which provides the occasion for abundant mockery on the Whigs and, more particularly, a caricature of Thomas Shadwell in the title-character: Sir Barnaby, a member like Shadwell of the Whig Green Ribbon Club, is presented at the beginning as a loud-mouthed radical rebel,² but at the first sign of danger he turns his coat and betrays all his former friends. Although the identification between Sir Barnaby and Shadwell is generally recognized, studies of the theatrical production of the Exclusion years – Roper (1989), Owen (1993, 1996) – have downplayed the importance of personal satire in the plays, arguing that such “particularist approach” obscures the political significance of the themes and tropes used by the poets and “refuses to acknowledge the bigger picture of dramatic and political shifts” (Owen 1996: 27). In this line, Susan Owen reads *Sir Barnaby Whigg* as “a partisan play, a Tory satire on the Whigs” in which there are “some specific jibes at Shadwell” (1996: 194). But the weight of these “specific jibes” needs to be reassessed: the celebration of Tory triumph and ridiculing of the Whigs are not – as they are in Durfey's subsequent comedy, *The Royalist* (1682) – part of the fabric of the work; in *Sir Barnaby*, the whole substance of the political satire revolves upon an element that is largely extraneous to the plot: the caricature of the rival poet.

It is true that the characterization of Sir Barnaby borrows elements frequently used in anti-Whig propaganda, which is not

² The Green Ribbon Club had begun meeting c.1675 at the King's Head Tavern at Chancery Lane End. The Club was thought to be responsible for the Exclusionist periodical *A Weekly Pacquet of Advice from Rome* and for the distribution of Whig propaganda throughout the country. It also collaborated in the organization of the pope-burning processions held on the anniversary of the accession of Queen Elizabeth (17 November). See Harris (1993: 84-85).

surprising if we bear in mind that Shadwell was one of the playwrights more closely associated with the Whig cause. Thus, Sir Barnaby is defined in the *Dramatis personae* as “a Phanatical Rascal, one of Oliver’s Knights; one that always pretends to fear a change of Government yet does his best to cause one.”³ Besides indicating the author’s contempt for the character (identified as a “rascal”), the description draws on the common partisan trope of presenting the Whigs as the re-incarnation of the Roundheads, and associating them, therefore, with the ghost of the Civil War and the puritan republic; it also presents their professions of loyalism – their defence of English law and liberty – as hypocritical, identifying them with the spirit of sedition. This portrait comes to life as soon as Sir Barnaby makes his first appearance on stage. He speaks with nostalgia of “the blessed year of 48” (11) and resorts to puritan rhetoric as he refuses to kneel and bare his head to drink the king’s health: “Not I Sir, you must spare me: I never kneel (not I) but to pray ... Sir, we never uncover, ‘tis not our method; we never use any Ceremony” (11). His anti-monarchical stance renders him a traitor in the eyes of the other characters:

SIR BARNABY: ... I knew your Father long ago, Mr. Wilding; he was always a free, generous soul indeed – but (betwixt you and I) would not be rul’d: he would still be on the wrong side: Come, come, he lov’d the King too well; had he not lov’d the King, he had been a brave fellow.

BENEDICK: Otherwise called a Rascal. (9)

Yet, Sir Barnaby identifies the Whig cause with the true national spirit, and speaks of his party as the only guarantors of property and freedom: “I can tell you, that if our soul-saving Party do not settle the Nation, I say ‘twill crack, ‘twill unhinge – whip, you’re gon, old Antichrist will have your Lands and Bodies, and the Devil your souls” (10).

Besides these commonplaces, other features are added to turn Sir Barnaby into the prototypical Whig of Tory partisan writing. Thus, a central element in this characterization is the

³ Other characters within the play corroborate this description of Sir Barnaby. See, for instance, the first references to him in act 1:

BENEDICK: Whigg is his name? Oh, I believe I know him, a huge fat fellow, one of Oliver’s Knights.

WILDING: The same, and the most busie, seditious Coxcomb alive. (9)

allusion to the greed of the Whigs. In the first act of the play Wilding points to the Whig claim that “theirs is the Church-Militant,” but observes that in fact “Money is both their God and King” (9); Sir Barnaby himself confirms this view of the Whigs as he says that his soul is “always in the heart of the City – in Lombard street” (10), the street where goldsmiths and money-lenders had their shops. Indeed, later on in the play he appears willing to change his religion for money;⁴ in order to marry a rich Turkish heiress, he agrees to turn Catholic first, and even Muslim in the end:

SIR BARNABY: ... Well, well, since it can't be help't, I'll turn Turk, man, Jew, Moor, Graecian, any thing: Pox on't, I'll not lose a lady and such a sum for the sake of any Religion under the Sun, by Mahomet, not I.

SWIFT: But does not your Conscience prick you a little?

SIR BARNABY: Not a jot, faith. Why, you old fool, our Conscience is our Interest always, and I have not been a rebel so long sure to have any squeamish fits at these years. (50)

Sir Barnaby, moreover, associates himself with the corrupt practices and the manipulation of the London crowds attributed to the Whigs:⁵

I'll go presently and corrupt my Men; some with bribes, some with promises and fair words, others with preferments: Then sow Sedition 'mongst the Mobile, win 'em with Pots of Ale, and Peny

⁴ The allusion to the change of religion may indeed be a personal jibe at Shadwell. A few months after the performance of this play Shadwell was accused in a Tory pamphlet of being a “Papist” and having been married by a “Popish priest.” His reply appeared in a Whig publication, *The Impartial Protestant Mercury* (Jan. 24-27, 1682); Shadwell reportedly denied the accusation, though he admitted having leaned “toward Popery for about eight Months (19 or 20 Years since).” See Borgman (1969: 55-56).

⁵ On the active involvement of the London crowds in the political strife of these years, see Harris 1987, esp. 156-88. Although both Whigs and Tories attempted to enlist the support of the common people, the staunchly Protestant sympathies of the City made pro-Whig demonstrations much more conspicuous. Tory propaganda therefore accused the Whigs of courting the “rabble” and instigating rebellion (Owen 1996: 149-56), and anti-Whig plays often make this point; see, for instance, Lord Lambert’s song in Behn’s *The Roundheads* (4.3.97-112), the Preface to Durfey’s *The Royalist* (1682), or the discovery of the “Tory” plot in Crowne’s *City Politiques* (4.1.287-343).

Loafs, to commit Ryots, Murders; there's your Policy! I'll do't I say. (50)

Whig paranoia, their chronic fear of plots and French invasions, is also introduced in the caricature; thus Sir Barnaby is outraged to discover that his nephew, Sir Walter, has no weapons in the house to use in their own defence:

SIR BARNABY: A careless Villain – he shall not own the blood of the Whiggs that neglects his Countrey thus: – ne'r a Musquet a Rogue – in this Popish Age too, and but one Sword, nay, and in a family of sixteen People uprising and downlying – a Dog – a Rascal – but one Sword? ... A Son of a Whore, ne'r a Dagger neither, nor a Case-knife sharp at end – nor nothing – not so much as a Pen-knife? (10)

Greed, corruption, and cowardice are presented as the visible marks of a total lack of principles. One of the gallants makes the point, as he says that Sir Barnaby will “in all turns of State change his Opinion as easily as his Coat, and is ever zealous in Voting for that party that is most Powerful” (9). This impression is soon confirmed. For all his ranting, Sir Barnaby is quick to defect from the Whig cause as soon as he believes there is real danger (3.2); he not only changes sides, but turns in all his former friends:

WILDING: ... The green Ribbon Club I find is now dispers'd: pray, where's your late friend and brother Sir Miles Mutinous?

SIR BARNABY: Where? In Newgate.

BENEDICK: How! Newgate! Who has Impeach't him?

SIR BARNABY: I, I myself, man: Impeach't him! and more than that, intend to hang him the next Sessions.

BENEDICK: A fine, friendly, Christian-like Act, in troth.

SIR BARNABY: Ay, Gad – friend or father in such a case: up they go to save my own neck: I don't love hanging, for my part – others may. (40-41).

But if these points may be common in anti-Whig satire, there are other prominent traits in the characterization of Sir Barnaby that are aimed particularly at Shadwell. Most conspicuous of them all is, obviously, the character's physical size. Sir Barnaby is described in the play as “a big fat fellow” (9) and he refers to himself as “a Portly, Jolly, Fat man; a man of Faith and Belly” (11). References to Shadwell's corpulence were a staple element in

satirical attacks against him; they would pursue him even after his death, as in the mock-epitaph written by Tom Brown: "Heav'n, if it please, may take his loyal Heart/ As for the rest, sweet devil, fetch a Cart" (Borgman 1969: 99). These allusions often went together with jibes at the poet's over-eating and, especially, drinking. Dryden, for instance, develops this image in the portrait of Shadwell as Og in the second part of *Absalom and Achitophel* (1682):

Now stop your noses Readers, all and some,
For here's a tun of Midnight-work to come,
Og from a Treason Tavern rowling home.
Round as a Globe, and Liquor'd ev'ry chink,
Goodly and Great he Sayls behind his Link;
With all this Bulk there's nothing lost in Og
For ev'ry inch that is not Fool is Rogue.⁶

(Swedenberg & Dearing 1972: 75)

Durfey also makes the connection in this play; as Sir Barnaby expresses his dismay that astrologers have predicted a famine, Benedick observes: "This Epicure I see never considers anything further than the pleasures of eating and drinking" (11). He reintroduces the topic in the second act, when Wilding speaks with contempt of Sir Barnaby as "swoln and bloated" (19); this time Durfey exploits the comic potential of this character trait, as Sir Barnaby takes offence and emphatically denies what his physical presence on stage makes obvious: "I bloated! what, because – I am plump, plump, a man of kidney or so – I bloated" (19). Durfey insists again in act 5, as Sir Barnaby is accused of indulging in the sins of the flesh: "You are full of sin, Son, Fat, fat; very fat"; he replies indignantly: "Portly, portly, like the Ancient British Race, a Vessel of choice Wares, a Man of Kidney" (49).

Sir Barnaby also incorporates prominent features associated with Shadwell's professional activity. He is presented by

⁶ Dryden plays the same note in his *Vindication of the Duke of Guise* (1683): "Og may write against the King if he pleases, so long as he Drinks for him, and his Writings will never do the Government so much harm, as his Drinking does it good: for true Subjects will not be much perverted by his Libels; but the Wine Duties rise considerably by his Claret ..." He adds a mocking reference to the poet's fall at a popular tavern, The Old Devil: "he broke no Ribbs, because the hardness of the Stairs cou'd reach no Bones; and for my part, I do not wonder how he came to fall, for I have always known him heavy; the Miracle is, how he got up again" (Dearing & Roper 1992: 329-30).

Wilding as “an audacious and impudent libeller” (19), alluding to Shadwell’s work as a pamphleteer for the Whig cause.⁷ Like Shadwell, he takes pride in his musical skills: “This fellow values himself extremely by playing on the Musick” (10), a comment which seems especially sarcastic coming from the pen of a master of song-writing such as Durfey.⁸ More notoriously, Sir Barnaby is made to play a song that ridicules his theatrical production:

Farewell my Lov’d Science, my former delight,
Moliere is quite rifled, then how should I write?
My fancy’s grown sleepy, my quibbling is done;
And design or invention, alas! I have none.
But still let the Town never doubt my condition;
Though I fall a damn’d Poet, I’ll mount a Musician.

II

I got Fame by filching from Poems and Plays,
But my Fidling and Drinking has lost me the Bays;
Like a Fury I rail’d, like a Satyr I writ,
Thersites my Humour, and Fleckno my Wit.
But to make some amends for my snarling and lashing,
I divert all the Town with my Thrumming and Thrashing. (28)

For all its brevity, the song is a thorough bashing of Shadwell as a poet. Durfey clearly makes comic capital of Dryden’s infamous lampoon on Shadwell, as he portrays Sir Barnaby as an incompetent playwright and associates him with Flecknoe.⁹ He alludes mockingly to Shadwell’s claim to musical talent and to his most successful comedy, *The Virtuoso* (1676), which took the rise of

⁷ On the prominence acquired by Shadwell as Whig pamphleteer in the early 1680s, see Borgman (1969: 55).

⁸ Both Shadwell and Durfey attached great importance to the use of songs and music in their plays, but Durfey’s popularity in this field was unsurpassed. The *Dictionary of National Biography* alludes to an often quoted anecdote that “Charles II had leaned familiarly on his shoulder, holding a corner of the same sheet of music from which Durfey was singing the burlesque song, ‘Remember, ye Whigs, what was formerly done.’” See also McVeagh (2000: 5) and Wheatley (2001: 344).

⁹ *MacFlecknoe* was not published until October 1682, yet the poem had been written ca. 1678 and had circulated in manuscript (Swedenberg & Dearing 1972: 299-300).

the new experimental science as its central theme.¹⁰ He also accuses him of plagiarizing, a jibe which was common in disputes among poets; the allusion to Molière in this case must have hit home, since Shadwell had lifted scenes or whole plots from him in several of his early comedies – *The Sullen Lovers* (1668), *The Hypocrite* (1669) *The Miser* (1672) – and had taken pains in the Dedications of these plays to defend himself from similar charges of merely copying from the French poet.¹¹ But the element that Durfey seems to ridicule most pointedly is Shadwell's identification with the Jonsonian model of instructional satire: the comedy of humours. Thus, Shadwell's avowed purpose of exposing the vices of the time is transformed by Durfey into "snarling and lashing" and railing "like a Fury"; most pointedly, his role as a satirist is presented, with a vengeance, as his "humour" – that is, the "bias of the mind" (to use Shadwell's own words) that makes a character a coxcomb.¹² To round off the caricature, this satirical humour is identified with the character of Thersites, the clownish and quarrelsome troublemaker in *The Iliad* who is taken to task by Odysseus for his insolence in abusing the Greek leaders.

The relish with which Durfey heaps ridicule on Shadwell's poetic agenda clearly smacks of more than political rivalry. Indeed, as Derek Hughes (1996) has pointed out, Durfey may have had some scores to settle with Shadwell, who had pilloried him and his dramatic production in *A True Widow* (1678). Shadwell had introduced in this play the character of Young Maggot, described as "an Inns of Court-Man, who neglects his Law, and runs mad after Wit, pretending much to Love, and both in spite of Nature, since

¹⁰ There are other jibes at the expense of this play. Sir Barnaby occasionally incorporates by-words characteristic of Sir Samuel Hearty in *The Virtuoso*, such as "pish", "whip" or "tace". Sir Walter also introduces a comic echo of this play as he threatens to kill Townly, telling him to prepare himself "to be dissected, anatomized like a Chichester Cock-Lobster, or so" (23). On the dissection of the Chichester cock-lobster, see *The Virtuoso* 1.1.118-19, 1.1. 247-48 and 2.2.283 (Prieto-Pablos *et al.* 1997).

¹¹ Shadwell replied to accusations of plagiarizing Molière in the dedications to *The Sullen Lovers* and *The Miser*. *The Hypocrite* apparently did not succeed on stage and was never published.

¹² In the epilogue to *The Humorists* (1671) Shadwell defined Humour as follows: "A Humor is the Byas of the Mind, / By which with violence 'tis one way inclin'd: / It makes our Actions lean on one side still, / And in all Changes that way bends the will" (Summers 1927 1: 254). Shadwell defended the use of humours in comedy in the dedications to most of his plays, beginning with *The Sullen Lovers*, and *The Humorists*.

his Face makes him unfit for one, and his Brains for the other" (Summers 3: 287). Hughes contends that this "obsessive poetaster" is a caricature of Durfey, "being similarly ugly, and having similarly deserted law for the pursuit of poetry" (1996: 221); he also observes that act 4 of *A True Widow* is set in the playhouse, where the characters watch a sex comedy which is "a malicious parody" of Durfey's immensely successful *A Fond Husband* (1677).¹³

Although Hughes is in good measure right, his observations can be further refined. The attack on Durfey is clear but his identification of Young Maggot with Durfey is debatable: Young Maggot does not present himself as the author of the play the characters attend in act 4, but as the poet's patron; the play, he says, is "one Prickett's, Poet Prickett" (3: 334).¹⁴ Interestingly enough, "Poet Prickett" is a nickname that was also associated with Durfey a few years later in a pamphlet criticizing his comedy *The Marriage-Hater Match'd* (1692).¹⁵ As for the fragmentary play-within-the-play, it is clearly a parody of the sex comedy which was in vogue in the 1670s. Although Shadwell may be aiming at several works in this parody, the action does resemble Durfey's *A Fond Husband* in some crucial details: there are two lovers competing for the favours of a married woman, a husband who attempts to surprise his wife in the act, and a farcical episode in which a lover hides under a table and is discovered as the table is accidentally overturned. The table-episode is especially significant; Shadwell uses it not only to ridicule Durfey's play – making not one, but two

¹³ Contemporary sources agree on the success of *A Fond Husband*. Langbaine refers to this play as "one of [Durfey's] best Comedies," and notes that it had been "frequently acted with good Applause" (1691: 180). Downes observes that the play "took extraordinarily well" (1928: 36), and Steele recorded that the comedy "was honoured with the presence of King Charles the Second three of its first five nights" (*The Guardian*, 15 June 1713).

¹⁴ It is true, however, that total coincidence is not necessary to make the caricature work. Shadwell's title-character in *The Virtuoso* does not fully correspond to Robert Hooke; for one thing, Hooke was a prominent member of the Royal Society, whereas we are told in the play that Sir Nicholas was refused admission. Yet Hooke clearly saw himself personated in the comedy and, more significantly, felt that everyone in the audience identified him with Sir Nicholas. See Prieto-Pablos *et al* (1997: xxxii-xxxiv).

¹⁵ *Poeta infamis, or, A poet not worth hanging: being a dialogue between Lysander Valentine, and poet Prickett* (1692). The title page attributes the authorship to Charles Gildon, but this is questionable. Gildon had written a long commendatory letter which was published together with the play.

lovers hide under the table – but also to highlight his contempt for Durfey’s conception of comedy. In the prologue to *A Fond Husband*, Durfey had defended the preeminence of plot and design over wit and conversation:

If Plot and Bus’ness Comical and New,
Could please the Criticks that sit here to view,
The Poet might have thought this Play would do.
But in this Age Design no praise can get:
You cry it Conversation wants, and Wit;
As if the Obvious Rules of Comedy,
Were only dull Grimace and Repartée.
Such, Sirs, have been your Darlings prov’d of late:
The Author therefore careless of his Fate, –
And knowing Wit a Chattle hardly got,
Has ventur’d his whole Stock upon a Plot. (1-11)

Shadwell obviously had these lines in mind as he wrote the Dedication of *A True Widow*. He is clearly pointing to Durfey when he refers to “the little Poetasters of the fourth rate” who hold “that Wit signifies nothing in a Comedy; but the putting out of Candles, kicking down of Tables, falling over Joynt-stools, impossible accidents, and unnatural mistakes, (which they most absurdly call Plot) are the poor things they rely upon” (Summers 1927 3: 284).¹⁶

There is a tradition about Durfey that holds that he was slow to take offence. The *Dictionary of National Biography*, for instance, claims that “he was utterly devoid of malice, his satirical spirit was mirthful and never revengeful” and points out that when bitterly lampooned by Tom Brown in 1689, he “made no angry rejoinder but took the abuse as a joke.” In a recent study of the poet, John McVeagh concurs: “Durfey took such abuse in his stride”

¹⁶ Christopher Wheatley finds in Shadwell and Durfey “little personal animus against each other.” His conclusion is based on what he sees as “Shadwell’s awareness that Durfey was beneath him, not merely in rank and achievement, but in terms of dramatic subjects. Shadwell wrote comedy, and Durfey frequently wrote the lowest subcategory of comedy, farce” (2001: 344). But such awareness must have made the success of inferior dramatic forms all the more galling: *A True Widow* failed; *A Fond Husband* remained a favourite.

(2000: 14).¹⁷ Yet, before he produced the caricature of Shadwell in *Sir Barnaby Whigg*, he had already singled out this poet among more prominent Whigs in the satire *The Progress of Honesty* (1681), and would do so again in *Scandalum Magnatum; Or, Potapski's Case* (1682), in which political argument is clearly not foremost:

But amongst all the Factious scribling Fools,
Shad-I's the worst, an unform'd shapeless thing,
That Nature never thought worth finishing;
But from Creation's secret Store-house kickt,
Into the World a wallowing Cub unlickt.
Nature no Form has given, nor Heaven no Grace,
The Man must needs be in a blessed Case. (21)

The repeated attacks, together with the fact that in *Sir Barnaby* he not only ridicules Shadwell's allegiance to a political faction, but also his personal appearance and his work as a playwright, suggest that there is more than politics at stake.

In the caricature of Shadwell as Sir Barnaby there is, undoubtedly, an element of opportunism. The character has no place in the action, but it was sure to play up to the partisan feelings of the audience – especially since this comedy was among the first to be produced after the Tories began to recover the ascendancy in 1681. The prologue makes clear that the author expected – and invited – a confrontation in the playhouse: “That he shall know both Parties, now he Glories;/ By Hisses th' Whiggs, and by their Claps the Tories” (33-34); indeed, as he points out in the Dedication, the confrontation took place, but the Whig party that tried to hiss the comedy could not prevail over the Tories that applauded it:

[This play] had the Honour to please one party; and I am only glad, that the St. Georges of Eighty-one got a Victory over the old hissing Dragons of Forty-two; 'tis a good Omen, and I hope

¹⁷ McVeagh (2000: 14) quotes Dufey's Preface to his comedy *Love for Money* (1691): “If I were now half flusted with Drinking, and design'd to be malicious, as some of my back Friends were the first day this Play was Acted, I could make as ridiculous a description of their Behaviour in the Pit as my Comick Characters make of others upon the Stage; but prejudice taking no effect, and I owning my self sober, resolve to desist from any Acts of Hostility in that kind.”

portends future successes, though some fat Whiggs of Sir Barnaby's tribe made all the interest they could to cry it down.

By introducing the caricature in the play, Durfey also capitalizes on the scandal provoked by Shadwell's *The Lancashire Witches*, staged only a couple of months before.¹⁸ He certainly makes the connection between both plays clear: Sir Barnaby's family is associated with Lancashire – his nephew, Sir Walter, is described in the *Dramatis personae* as “an Opinionated Fool and Cuckold: A Lancashire-Knight.” If Shadwell used his play to defend Whig ideals and attacked both the Anglican Church (in the character of the chaplain Smirk), and the Catholic (in Teague o'Divelly, the Irish priest), Durfey ridicules his rival's stance most effectively as he makes Sir Barnaby recant on stage. The scene in which the actor impersonating Shadwell appears dressed as an officer and singing a Tory song (2.1), and the one in which he embraces the Catholic faith, declaring his affection for the Pope and learning to pray with his beads (5.1) are clearly aimed at inflaming the audience: they must have been received with extreme indignation by one faction, with great glee by the other. Durfey could not have chosen a better strategy to make his comedy the talk of the town.

Political issues are certainly relevant in *Sir Barnaby Whigg*, and the play clearly occupies an important place in the partisan controversy sweeping the theatres during the Exclusion Crisis. But Durfey's resort to anti-Whig satire in this play owes much to other motivations. It is clearly the move of a poet that knew how to swim with the tide, and seized the occasion to manipulate partisan feeling and try to draw crowds to the playhouse – a plan that must have been warmly endorsed by the King's company, which was sorely beset by debts.¹⁹ But it also provided a perfect occasion for Durfey to settle his quarrel with Shadwell, turning the tables on him with a malicious caricature no one could fail to recognize.

¹⁸ *The London Stage* (Van Lennep 1965) gives September 1681 as a tentative date for *The Lancashire Witches*. Owen ventures a slightly earlier “spring/early summer [1681]” (she actually writes 1680, but this is clearly an error, since she includes the play among those performed in the season 1680-81, that is, from autumn 1680 to summer 1681; see Owen 1996: 305).

¹⁹ On the financial difficulties and the internal division within the King's company during this period, see Wilson (1964: 65-81).

References

- Behn, A. 1996 (1682): *The Roundheads. The Works of Aphra Behn*. Vol.6. Ed. J. Todd. London: Pickering.
- Borgman, A.S. 1969: *Thomas Shadwell: His Life and Comedies*. New York: Blom.
- Crowne, J. 1967 (1683): *City Politiques*. Ed. J. Harold Wilson. London: Edward Arnold.
- Dearing, V.A. and Roper, A. (eds.) 1992: *The Works of John Dryden*. Vol. 14. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Dictionary of National Biography on CD-ROM* 1995: Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Downes, J. 1928 (1708): *Roscius Anglicanus*. Ed. M. Summers. London: Fortune Press.
- Durfey, T. 1677: *A Fond Husband; or, The Plotting Sisters*. London.
- _____. 1691: *Love for Money; or, The Boarding School*. London.
- _____. 1682: *The Royalist*. London.
- _____. 1682: *Scandalum Magnatum; or, Potapski's Case: A Satyr against Polish Oppresion*. London.
- _____. 1681: *Sir Barnaby Whigg; or, No Wit Like a Woman's*. London.
- Harris, T. 1987: *London Crowds in the Reign of Charles II: Propaganda and Politics from the Restoration until the Exclusion Crisis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- _____. 1993: *Politics under the Later Stuarts: Party Conflict in a Divided Society, 1600-1715*. Harlow: Longman.
- Hughes, D. 1996: *English Drama, 1660-1700*. Oxford: Clarendon.
- Langbaine, G. 1691: *An Account of the English Dramatic Poets*. London.
- McVeagh, J. 2000: *Thomas Durfey and Restoration Drama: The Work of a Forgotten Writer*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Owen, S. J. 1993: "Interpreting the Politics of Restoration Drama." *The Seventeenth Century* 8: 67-97.
- _____. 1996: *Restoration Theatre and Crisis*. Oxford: Clarendon.
- Prieto-Pablos, J.A. et al. (eds.) 1997: *Thomas Shadwell: The Virtuoso*. Sevilla: Publicaciones de la Universidad de Sevilla.
- Roper, A. 1989: "Drawing Parallels and Making Applications in Restoration Literature." *Politics as Reflected in Literature*. Ed. R. Ashcraft. Los Angeles: William Andrews Clark Memorial Library. 29-65.
- Summers, M. (ed.) 1927: *The Complete Works of Thomas Shadwell*. London: Fortune Press.
- Swedenberg, H.T. and V.A. Dearing (eds.) 1972: *The Works of John Dryden*. Vol. 2. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Van Lennep J. (ed.) 1965: *The London Stage: 1660-1700*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Wilson, J. H. 1964: *Mr. Goodman, the Player*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Wheatley, C.J. 2001: "'Who Vices Dare Explode': Thomas Shadwell, Thomas Durfey and Didactic Drama of the Restoration." Ed. S. Owen. *A Companion to Restoration Drama*. Oxford: Blackwell. 340-54.