

Intoxicated Reasons, Rational Feelings: Rethinking the Early Modern English Public Sphere

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Abstract: This article examines early modern English public houses and related period miscellany—broadsheet ballads, conduct books, and songs—to more closely investigate the discourses and performances of drinking culture. Drinking culture, I argue, not only had a significant role in shaping the Restoration’s civic culture of political participation and the emerging early modern public sphere, but also positioned emotions of pleasure and melancholy as social and political objects of care and cultivation. While the politics of pub culture and intoxication have been well documented by historians and literary scholars of early modern England and eighteenth-century America, much of this discussion has not yet been incorporated into political assessments of the public sphere and its history. Reinserting emotion and intoxication into the emergence of the public sphere helps to flesh out the history of feeling and social ritual in civic engagement.

Our sorrows in sack shall lie steeping,
And we’ll drink till our eyes do run over;
And prove it by reason
That it can be no treason
To drink and to sing
A mournival of healths to our new-crown’d King.

—Alexander Brome, “The New Courtier” (1648)

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The effect of the wine does but remove dissimulation, and take from them the sight of the deformity of their passions. For, I believe, the most sober men, when they walk alone without care and employment of the mind, would be unwilling the vanity and extravagance of their thoughts at that time should be publicly seen, which is a confession that passions unguided are for the most part mere madness.

— Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (1651)

Introduction

Epitomized by Jürgen Habermas's description of the English coffeehouses of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, a popular version of the public sphere intertwines urbane civility with sober deliberation.¹ "The reason Habermas thought that the Georgian coffee houses of London were so important to the 'project of modernity,'" James Nicholls notes, "is precisely because they were centres of *rational* debate. They were not, by definition, centres of drunken debate. And this is exactly how the coffee-drinkers of their day liked to present themselves: they drank coffee because, while mildly stimulating, it was not intoxicating; it was what Francis Bacon had once called a '*wakeful* and civil drink.'"² Indeed, as John Durham Peters comments, Habermas's conception of the "constitutional state... reveals itself to the public's gaze through organs of sober publicity... which are supposed to nourish the public sphere and make intelligent discussion possible."³ Reason is associated, in these accounts, with the "sober" alertness generated by caffeine and also with a correspondingly abstemious and temperate emotional outlook. Thus, a familiar set of associations proliferate where the early modern public sphere is, on the one hand, associated with calm, moderation, and reflection, and, on the other hand, opposed to "vulgar opinion" and unregulated feeling.⁴

As I will suggest in this essay, the modern tendency to associate reason with sobriety in the emergence of the public sphere is often paired with a historical narrative that glosses over the variety of "public houses" which flourished in

¹Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989), 42–44, 57–59. See also Brian Cowan, "The Rise of the Coffeehouse Reconsidered," *Historical Journal* 47, no. 1 (2004): 24; Cowan, *The Social Life of Coffee* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005).

²James Quan Nicholls, *The Politics of Alcohol* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), 53. Italics in the original.

³John Durham Peters, *Courting the Abyss: Free Speech and the Liberal Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 138. See also Alan McKee, *The Public Sphere: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 24.

⁴Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, 66, 90.

early modern England.⁵ These included not simply coffeehouses but also inns, alehouses, and taverns. In structural terms, public house operations and the licensing practices associated with them strongly influenced the development of the later Georgian coffeehouses approvingly referenced by Habermas.⁶ Tavern owners, brewers, and tiplers filed petitions, made claims, and negotiated with a range of local and national authorities to determine the scope of the alehouses, to provide provisions and services to patrons, and to determine and make regulations for the origins and effects of crime.

Even more importantly, these public houses had a significant role in shaping the Restoration's civic culture of political participation. Alehouses, taverns, and inns were infamously spaces of political association reflective of broader national political dynamics (Cavalier/Roundhead, Whig/Tory). Most notably, during the English Revolution, drink and alehouse culture were pivotal to the debates between Royalists and Parliamentary propagandists.⁷ Alehouses, for example, were not just places of opposition and disorder; they were communities where, as Ethan Shagan notes, "topics such as taxation, the royal succession, ecclesiastical policy, and the very nature of the relationship between crown and church were the subject of heated debate."⁸ To be sure, early modern drinkers were often subject to condemnation and criticism and they were lambasted for their loss of reason, language, and autonomy. Nonetheless, there was also a serious and sizeable defense of drinking culture, which was seen as pivotal to the socialization and political participation of citizens. No less significant, these more intoxicated "publics" also reveal emotional dimensions of *reason* in terms quite different from those initially suggested by Habermas.⁹

⁵While Habermas nominally mentions public houses in his account of the emergence of the public sphere, he does not elaborate upon their function and importance, nor does he clarify their formative influence on coffeehouses, salons, and *Tischgesellschaften*, which take pride of place in his narrative.

⁶Judith Hunter, "English Inns, Taverns, Alehouses, and Brandy Shops: The Legislative Framework, 1495–1797," in *The World of the Tavern: Public Houses in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Beat A. Kümin and B. Ann Tlusty (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2002), 65–82. See also Sidney Webb and Beatrice Webb, *The History of Liquor Licensing in England* (London: Longmans, Green, 1903).

⁷Andy Wood, *Riot, Rebellion, and Popular Politics in Early Modern England* (Houndsmills, UK: Palgrave, 2002), 132–33, 172.

⁸Ethan H. Shagan, *Popular Politics and the English Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 58.

⁹Habermas is aware of the role of emotion in the dynamics of the lifeworld and in more recent work he acknowledges reason's complex relationship to emotion, particularly in the realm of religion. As Habermas explains, "religious utterances belong to a kind of category of discourse in which you do not just move within a worldview or within a cognitive interpretation of a domain of human life, but you are speaking out, as I said, from an *experience* that is tied up with your membership in a community"

In what follows, I examine early modern English public houses and related period miscellany—broadside ballads, conduct books, and songs—to more closely examine the political discourses and performances of drinking culture. The “economy and culture of intoxicants,” the historian Phil Withington explains, were “embedded in the everyday lives and experiences of different sorts of people” in the seventeenth century and the consumption of alcohol was a “legitimate—indeed valorized and artful aspect—of their social identity.”¹⁰ According to the O.E.D., intoxication in this period was understood as a way “to inebriate” — which variously meant to “stupefy, render unconscious or delirious, to madden or deprive of the ordinary use of the senses or reason, with a drug or alcoholic liquor.” Such stupefaction thus ranged from sleep to the excitation or exhilaration of senses “beyond self-control” as “unsteady or delirious in mind or feelings.”¹¹ Substances such as alcohol and tobacco were thus understood not as themselves inherently intoxicative, but rather capable of facilitating a state of intoxication *as a consequence* of the “manner, quantity, and context in which they were consumed and the person’s intellectual, emotional, and physical condition at the moment of consumption.”¹² Training in drink therefore mattered. Drinking rituals involved the cultivation and sharing of intoxicated sentiments and feelings. These were seen as critical features of *becoming* a “cultivated human being” and also of *exercising* rational “faculties” in a climate of profound political change.

In treating intoxication and drinking culture as significant elements in the early modern English public sphere, this essay looks, in part, to contribute to a genealogical perspective that examines what has often been “disavowed” by Enlightenment narratives.¹³ As George Marcus notes, one outcome of the modern commitment to Habermas’s conception of deliberative rationality is that we have become accustomed to the notion that “the search for justice must rest on reason, and since reason is presumed to require the absence of

(Jürgen Habermas, in *The Power of Religion in the Public Sphere*, ed. Judith Butler, Eduardo Mendietta, and Jonathan VanAntwerpen [New York: Columbia University Press, 2011], 115). At the same time, in Habermas’s account, the terms of “experience” are rendered in largely abstract and formal terms and do not address the impact of gesture, feeling, and sentiment in the experiences of creating and sustaining membership.

¹⁰Phil Withington, “Intoxicants and Society in Early Modern England,” *Historical Journal* 54, no. 3 (2011): 637, 631.

¹¹*Oxford English Dictionary Online*, 2nd ed., s.v. “intoxicate,” accessed May 2015, <http://www.oed.com/>.

¹²Withington, “Intoxicants and Society,” 636.

¹³Michel Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, ed. D. F. Bouchard and trans. Sherry Simon (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977), 146.

its longtime antagonist, emotion, then a discussion of justice need not engage emotion except to demand its exclusion... Reason is commonly portrayed as a fragile force for progress, justice, and greater democracy, which requires protection against the intrusive and destructive impulse of emotion."¹⁴ Certainly, emotions have been of substantial interest to contemporary political theorists—and much work has been done on the relationship between reason and emotion throughout the history of political thought.¹⁵ Still, many who look to privilege a more participatory, radical, and emotive politics tend to affirm the Whiggish and largely progressive terms of Habermas's narrative of rationality, where emerging European, and especially English, Enlightenment discourses are viewed as restraints on emotions and sentiments of excess.¹⁶ As a consequence, even critics who aim to undo Habermas's idealization of liberal rationality and sobriety do not fully attend to the emotive dimensions of reason in the early modern public sphere.

Early modern intoxication culture offers some important examples that open up new ways to think about the reason-emotion field. Drinking was not simply consolation for loss in civil war or a rebellious outburst against the king; it produced what we might characterize as a form of *affective political reason*, in which collective capacities of political discretion, understanding, and action were stimulated by states of intoxication, most particularly in drinking, toasting, and singing. When political reason is tracked in these "performative enactments," it appears—not as abstract and disembodied faculties—but rather as *multiple forces and intensities* mobilized by citizens who

¹⁴George Marcus, *The Sentimental Citizen: Emotion in Democratic Politics* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002), 6–7.

¹⁵See, for only a sampling, Rebecca Kingston and Leonard Ferry, eds., *Bringing the Passions Back In: The Emotions in Political Philosophy* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008); Jon Elster, *Strong Feelings: Emotion, Addiction, and Human Behavior* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999); Cheryl A. Hall, *The Trouble with Passion: Political Theory beyond the Reign of Reason* (New York: Routledge, 2005); Sharon Krause, *Civil Passions: Moral Sentiment and Democratic Deliberation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008); Davide Panagia, *The Political Life of Sensation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009); Christina Tarnopolsky, *Prudes, Pervers, and Tyrants: Plato's "Gorgias" and the Politics of Shame* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010); Judith Shklar, "The Liberalism of Fear," in *Liberalism and the Moral Life*, ed. Nancy Rosenblum (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 21–38.

¹⁶For example, Craig Calhoun, ed., *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992); Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics* (New York: Zone Books, 2005); *After Habermas: New Perspectives on the Public Sphere*, ed. N. Crossley and Michael Roberts (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004); Iris Marion Young, *Inclusion and Democracy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), chaps. 4 and 5; Seyla Benhabib, ed., *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), esp. part 1. On the overly rigid divide between reason and emotion, see Brian Barry, *Justice as Impartiality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

commingle theatricality, performance, and gesture in their practice of political power.¹⁷

These “enactments” allow us to revise Habermas’s conception of the public sphere and reason from *within*, enabling us to see some of the more emotive and affective dimensions of the public sphere in its emergence.¹⁸ What is at stake in such a recasting? In part, with these examples, we can begin to recharacterize the historical trajectory/genealogy of the public sphere and its relationship to emotion and social practice. While pub culture and intoxication have been well documented by historians and literary scholars of early modern England and eighteenth-century America, much of this discussion has yet to be incorporated into political assessments of the mainstream public sphere and its history. Reinserting emotion and intoxication into the emergence of the public sphere helps to flesh out the history of feeling and social ritual in civic engagement. In particular, in the early modern English public sphere, we can see more clearly the importance of emotion and intoxication in the formation of political groups and parties.¹⁹

¹⁷See Iain Mackenzie and Robert Porter, “Dramatization as Method in Political Theory,” *Contemporary Political Theory* 10, no. 4 (2011): 494.

¹⁸The historiography on Habermas is enormous and a number of important assessments in the past twenty years have sought to refine Habermas’s thinking on early modern England. See Steven Pincus, “Coffee Politicians Does Create: Coffeehouses and Restoration Political Culture,” *Journal of Modern History* 67, no. 4 (1995): 807–34; David Zaret, *Origins of Democratic Culture: Printing, Petitions, and the Public Sphere in Early-Modern England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); Cowan, *The Social Life of Coffee*; David Norbrook, “Women, the Republic of Letters, and the Public Sphere in the Mid-Seventeenth Century,” *Criticism* 46, no. 2 (2004): 223–40.

¹⁹Central examples include Nicholls, *The Politics of Alcohol*; James Nicholls and Susan J. Owen, eds., *A Babel of Bottles: Drink, Drinkers, and Drinking Places in Literature* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2000); Adam Smyth, ed., *A Pleasing Sinne: Drink and Conviviality in Seventeenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2004); Joshua Scodel, *Excess and the Mean in Early Modern Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002); George Evans Light, “Drunken Politics: Alcohol, Alehouses, and Theater in England, 1555–1700” (PhD diss., Stanford University, 1994); Keith Wrightson, “Alehouses, Order, and Reformation in Rural England, 1595–1660,” in Stephen and Eileen Yeo, *Popular Culture and Class Conflict, 1590–1914* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1981), 1–27; Peter Clark, “The Alehouse and the Alternative Society,” in *Puritans and Revolutionaries: Essays in Seventeenth-Century History Presented to Christopher Hill*, ed. D. Pennington and K. Thomas (Oxford: Clarendon, 1978), 47–72; A. Shepard, “‘Swil-bills and Tos-pots’: Drink Culture and Male Bonding in Early Modern England,” in *Love, Friendship and Faith in Europe, 1300–1800*, ed. Laura Gowing, Michael Hunter, and Miri Rubin (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Bernard S. Capp, “Gender and the Culture of the English Alehouse in Late Stuart England,” *COLLEGIUM: Studies across Disciplines in the Humanities and Social Sciences* 2 (2007): 103–27; S. Earnshaw, *The Pub in Literature* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000); Peter Thompson, *Rum Punch and*

Just as critically, a historicized approach allows us to *dramatize* affect, emotion, and political practice via a more expansive conception of the past. Deleuze's conception of "dramatization as method" emphasizes looking to the "conditions that give concepts," such as reason, "their quality and their force."²⁰ By turning to atypical texts such as ballads, oaths, and songs, we move beyond the traditional and canonical boundaries of the discipline to see reason in a more contextual and theatrical way, attending to its mobilization as it is "presented to an audience" with performative and gestural dimensions.²¹ Through this vantage point, we can see how emotion and intoxication play a significant role not only for the dissident and disenfranchised but also for the mainstream and elite. Today, emotion is often seen as the antagonist of political reason and many movements (such as Occupy Wall Street), which embrace festivity, forms of intoxication, and theatrical displays of collective feeling, are frequently dismissed as less than fully rational and legitimate. Establishing the more central role of emotion and intoxication at the emergence of the public sphere helps (1) to bring greater attention to the role of emotion and affect in mainstream and elite early modern English politics and rationality; (2) to develop an alternative genealogy for the public sphere; (3) to draw out potential lines of connection between the mainstream public sphere and more emotive and theatrical counterpublics. These are some of the "fugitive possibilities" of the past, to paraphrase William Connolly, and they allow us to look at the present from a different vantage point, focusing attention to overlooked sensibilities and practices that facilitate—for better or for worse—relationships of civic culture and belonging.²²

Public Houses and Licensed Governance

Habermas originally envisioned the rise of the public sphere in England and France as characterized by "forces endeavoring to influence the decisions of state authority" which appealed "to the critical public in order to legitimate demands before this new forum."²³ This was a period of time—initiated in the seventeenth century and fully actualized by the turn of the eighteenth century in England and France—in which public opinion was not "mere

Revolution: Taverngoing and Public Life in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998).

²⁰On Deleuze's conception of dramatization, see MacKenzie and Porter, "Dramatization as Method," 484.

²¹Gilles Deleuze, "The Method of Dramatisation," *Bulletin de la Société française de Philosophie* 62 (1967): 107.

²²William E. Connolly, *A World of Becoming* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 4.

²³Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, 57.

opinion" or "deceptive mere appearance" but rather "collective mores and customs" expressed in an "informal web of folkways whose indirect social control was more effective than the moral censure under threat of ecclesiastical or governmental sanctions."²⁴ For Habermas, the metropolitan coffeehouse exemplified this refinement of "mere opinion."²⁵ The town was, Habermas explains, "the life center of civil society not only economically; in cultural-political contrast to the court, it designated especially an early public sphere in the world of letters whose institutions were the coffee houses, the salons, and the *Tischgesellschaften* (table societies)."²⁶ In addition to its "equality of status," the public established by the coffeehouses was notable in its attention to domains of "common concern," which previously had been the preserve of church and state authorities.²⁷ The circulation of printed texts (newspapers, periodicals, journals, and other products of the press) played a central role in allowing this sphere to detach itself from the intimacies of home. The issues discussed became "general," Habermas explains, "not merely in their significance, but also in their accessibility: everyone had to *be able* to participate."²⁸

Such discourse, according to the familiar Habermasian narrative, was intended to place matters for discussion in a sober and rational way among equals. As the historian Brian Cowan comments, coffeehouses were places "for like-minded scholars to congregate, to read, as well as to learn from and to debate with each other" and "generally understood as places 'too civil for a debauched humour.'"²⁹ "Right reason," he notes, "and not social rank, was supposed to determine who won and who lost in debate."³⁰ To be sure, coffeehouse discussions could be lively and animated. As Habermas himself points out, governmental proclamations in the 1670s described coffeehouses as "seedbeds of political unrest," "endeavouring to create and nourish an universal jealousy and dissatisfaction in the minds of all His Majesties good subjects."³¹ Nonetheless, by and large, Habermas tends to skim over these strong emotions of jealousy, dissatisfaction, and

²⁴Ibid., 91.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Ibid., 30.

²⁷Ibid., 36.

²⁸Ibid., 37. Original emphasis.

²⁹Cowan, *Social Life of Coffee*, 91, 105. Indeed, as Cowan notes (40–46), coffee had the reputation for reversing the effects of intoxication (and it also possessed a reputation as an antiaphrodisiac as well).

³⁰Ibid., 149.

³¹Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, 59. Moreover, as Steven Pincus points out, Habermas's narrative does not fully describe the shift in coffeehouse culture: the mid-seventeenth century coffeehouses were considerably more radical and politically fraught than their eighteenth-century Georgian counterparts which were more self-consciously civilized *and* civilizing (Pincus, "Coffee Politicians Does Create," 807–34).

agitation. Instead, he focuses the bulk of his attention to the rational-critical function of the coffeehouse as a “little senate,” where “earnest” and “critical attention” has been “conspicuously cleansed” of “unreliability” and members employ “tact benefitting equals” to allow “a political consciousness developed in the public sphere of civil society which, in opposition to absolute sovereignty, articulated the concept of and demand for general and abstract laws and which ultimately came to assert itself (i.e., public opinion) as the only legitimate source of this law.”³²

The most significant absence in Habermas’s account is the broader context and history of public houses in England, which presaged and heavily influenced later Georgian coffeehouse operations and culture. “Coffeehouses were regulated,” Cowan explains, “through the same system of licensing used for public houses that specialized in the sale of alcoholic drinks, such as alehouses and taverns.”³³ Addressing the history and operations of public houses in more detail allows us to understand not only the complicated conceptions of sobriety and intoxication in the period, but also the ways in which these contributed to affective, bodily, and performative practices of politics.

Alehouse, tavern, and other drinking cultures flourished in the first half of the seventeenth century. Especially in the period between 1600 and 1660, drink had a highly charged status in England. During the late sixteenth century, the rural poor in England often turned to ale making to supplement their incomes in depressed economic circumstances and the number of alehouses expanded enormously by the seventeenth century.³⁴ Beer consumption, in the hundred years after 1541, rose from 2.7 million to 5 million, and beer eclipsed ale as the metropolitan staple of choice.³⁵ There was vigorous debate in print and from the pulpit between the 1600s and 1630s on the social disorder caused by the rise in the number of alehouses.³⁶ For some, indeed, drunkenness was not just a matter of criminal mischief or disorder; it was often treated as the most heinous of possible sins. In 1604 James I called “drunkenness” the “root of all evils,” while in 1622 the minister Samuel Ward claimed that drunkenness was “‘all sinnes’ because it fostered them all.”³⁷ By the middle of the seventeenth century, as literary scholar

³²Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, 36, 90–92, 54–55.

³³Cowan, *Social Life of Coffee*, 184. Also see Hunter, “English Inns.”

³⁴Peter Clark, *The English Alehouse: A Social History, 1200–1830* (London: Longman, 1983), 20–25; also Clark, “The Alehouse and the Alternative Society,” 53–57.

³⁵Smyth, *A Pleasing Sinne*, xviii–ix. Beer and ale making enterprises created public spaces that stimulated political discussion and activities, and, according to a 1630s report, there were 30,000 alehouses in England and Wales.

³⁶See, for example, Thomas Heywood, *Philocothonista, or the Drunkard, Opened, Dissected, and Anatomized* (London: Robert Raworth, 1635); Thomas Thompson, *A Diet for a Drunkard* (London: Richard Bankworth, 1612); William Prynne, *Healthes: Sicknesses; or, A compendious and briefe Discourse...* (London, 1628).

³⁷Scodel, *Excess and the Mean*, 200.

Joshua Scodel notes, "Puritan attacks on drunkenness and Parliamentary policy in the 1640s and 1650s responded to this fear, which was increased by concerns about the alehouse as a meeting place both for radical separatist groups preaching antinomian freedom (as well as the joys of alcohol and tobacco) and for rebellious Royalist sympathizers."³⁸ Even though alehouses, by the end of the seventeenth century, garnered a more respectable status, they were still, especially in the cities, often seen "as 'receptacles of sots, and the scum of the Earth' and tavern clubs were all too often mere 'suck-bottle Assemblies' bearing a closer resemblance to gatherings of 'swill-belly'd wine-porters, than a formal body of... reputable members.'"³⁹

Nonetheless, despite the vigor of seventeenth-century antialehouse rhetoric, the alehouse was—and remained for the first half of the seventeenth century—a central space for community and culture. While alehouses were associated with some theft and prostitution, their association with serious crime was overstated both by Puritans and elites.⁴⁰ But what they *did* often provide, according to historian Peter Clark, was the very basic needs of the destitute, which included providing credit, mail, lodging, and entertainment.⁴¹ In addition, the church had lost some of its position as the "hub of communal life as the result of concerted action by godly ministers and Puritan justices," and the alehouse provided an important alternative forum for communal activity—hosting games and entertainment and serving as a local site for christenings, weddings, churchings, and elaborate toasting rituals.⁴²

Most of all, in this period, the alehouse was "the single most important locale where people engaged in political discussion," as Tim Harris and others have noted.⁴³ It frequently served as a site of oppositional speech, or "alebench talk," on "the principles of succession," "administration of justice," loyalty, and obedience. Some of this "talk" took the form of railing and debating on issues of theology. Others took the form of "seditious outbursts," as historian Mark Hailwood notes in his examination of court records: "In 1641 one Thomas Stafford was indicted for speaking seditious words at an alehouse in the Yorkshire village of Youlthorpe, where he was accused of declaring Charles I 'fitter to be hanged than to be a Kinge' and 'the Kinge and Queene was at masse together.'"⁴⁴ In other cases, frustrations

³⁸Ibid., 218.

³⁹Nichols, *The Politics of Alcohol*, 53.

⁴⁰Clark, "The Alehouse and the Alternative Society," 57.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Kümin and Tlusty, *The World of the Tavern*, 7.

⁴³Tim Harris, "Understanding Popular Politics in Restoration Britain," in *A Nation Transformed: England After the Restoration*, ed. Alan Houston and Steven Pincus (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 141.

⁴⁴Mark Hailwood, *Alehouses and Good Fellowship in Early Modern England* (Martlesham: Boydell and Brewer, 2014), 66–67.

were cast in more rebellious tones as laborers complained of how “rich men” starved the poor and fantasized of the day when “poore men woll speke one day.”⁴⁵ Unlike the ideal highlighted by Habermas, these were not protected spaces of calm and measured deliberation, where a variety of perspectives could be freely expressed and engaged through reflective discussion. Instead, “alebench talk” was both more emotive and more judgmental in its intoxicated outbursts, complaints, and criticisms.

At the same time, the alehouses were also not simply places of fractious discontent. “Alebench talk” illustrated the central political place of the public house in England’s “unacknowledged republic.”⁴⁶ Although nearly half of alehouses in the late sixteenth century were unlicensed, by the middle of the seventeenth century a majority operated under license and with the toleration, permission, and regulation of landowners, elites, and police.⁴⁷ The forms of political association and sociability facilitated not only by alehouses but also by taverns, inns, and drinking societies were an influential feature of both urban and rural politics and they set the groundwork for the later emergence of coffeehouse culture.⁴⁸ Much of the earlier historical literature on alehouses described them as alternatives (as in the late sixteenth century and early seventeenth century) or exceptions to elite political and social institutions (middle to late seventeenth century).⁴⁹ However, as a number of recent studies have shown, the alehouse was intimately connected to the “emerging” coffeehouse in important ways. Throughout the mid-seventeenth century, there was a strong structural and affective connection between the alehouse and the coffeehouse—a state of affairs that expands and revises the popular characterization of the coffeehouse as a place of sober deliberation. Namely, the bourgeois coffee house, Beat

⁴⁵Wood, *Riot, Rebellion, and Popular Politics*, 90–94.

⁴⁶See Shagan, *Popular Politics*, 58; Mark Goldie, “The Unacknowledged Republic: Officeholding in Early Modern England,” in *The Politics of the Excluded, c. 1500–1850*, ed. Tim Harris (Houndmills, UK: Palgrave, 2001), 178–79.

⁴⁷Clark, “The Alehouse and the Alternative Society,” 70; Smyth, *A Pleasing Sinne*, xx; Steve Hindle, *The State and Social Change in Early Modern England, 1550–1640* (New York: St. Martin’s, 2000), 20.

⁴⁸In using the language of an “emerging” public sphere, I acknowledge the risk of “proleptic reconstruction.” See, for criticism, Conal Condren, “Public, Private, and the Idea of the ‘Public Sphere’ in Early-Modern England,” *Intellectual History Review* 19, no. 1 (2009): 15. My use of the term “emerging” signals a protean state rather than a progressive movement toward a formal public sphere. In that sense, it is closer to Connolly’s sense of “becoming” as a “fugitive possibility” where there are “reverberations back and forth between past and present, with each folding into the other and both surging toward the future, that make all the difference to life” (Connolly, *A World of Becoming*, 4).

⁴⁹Clark treats the alehouse as an alternative society and as a refuge from effects of large-scale economic change. Wrightson focuses on the growing importance of the alehouse as an antielite center for communal relations.

Kümin explains, was built on the foundation laid by “traditional” drinking establishments.⁵⁰ Most critically, alehouses and inns were a central part of the semiautonomous and self-governing political cultures of the period, where magistrates and local office holders had a critical role in the “practical day-to-day regulation of the coffeehouse” and other public houses in their jurisdictions.⁵¹

Even though various Acts and Proclamations (i.e., the 1606 “Act for repressing the odious and loathsome sin of drunkenness”; the 1604 “Act to restrain the inordinate Haunting and Tipling of Inns, Alehouses, and other Victualling Houses”; the Royal Proclamation of 1619) were passed to set up a proto-national regulatory framework for public houses in the early seventeenth century, alehouse regulation and licensing were still largely localized and “bottom-up” in operation.⁵² Surprising perhaps to more modern sensibilities, the governance of taverns, alehouses, and inns was part of nuanced practices of *character* in which personal attributes of “discretion,” “honesty,” “judgment,” “decorum,” and “moderation” were expressed in the procedures and practices of local governance. As part of the “unacknowledged republic,” “governance,” Mark Goldie clarifies, “was not something done from on high to the passive recipients of authority, but something actively engaged in by the lesser agents of government; and every citizen was in some measure a lesser agent of government.”⁵³ For example, alehouses and other public houses participated in the discursively dynamic and interactive political processes of the city commonwealths that flourished in the period after 1620.⁵⁴ These were multiform and local *civic cultures*. Shaped in part by the Aristotelian sense of rule by the meritorious and “best” rather than by blood and inheritance, they embraced some elements of the idealized moderation and civility in the Restoration revival of civic humanism. Alehouse licenses were granted or revoked by local county magistracies, and, as Mark

⁵⁰Beat Kümin, *Drinking Matters: Public Houses and Social Exchange in Early Modern Central Europe* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 50–74.

⁵¹Cowan, “The Coffeehouse Reconsidered,” 26. As Cowan explains, “the survival of the coffeehouses in the later seventeenth century depended as much on the ability of coffeehouse-keepers to present themselves to their sovereign as well as to their fellow citizens as law-abiding, respectable, and legally enfranchised members of the body politic.”

⁵²Nicholls, *Politics of Alcohol*, 5–6; Hunter, “English Inns,” 65.

⁵³Goldie, “The Unacknowledged Republic,” 155.

⁵⁴Withington, “Public Discourse, Corporate Citizenship, and State Formation in Early Modern England,” *American Historical Review* 112, no. 4 (2007): 1026. “Successful government required at once a persuasive center and participatory locales—or, as historians have shown, male heads of household from the middle and upper echelons of particular communities willing to take on the increasing burdens and responsibilities of public office for social rather than bureaucratic reasons.”

Hailwood aptly notes, these justices were often heavily petitioned by both supporters and opponents who identified themselves not just as “inhabitants” of their community but as “men of best quality,” or “the better sort,” equipped to speak on behalf of the collective body about the risks or benefits posed by the presence of alehouses in local communities.⁵⁵ Brewers, tiplers, supporters, and opponents saw themselves as local officeholders concerned with providing provisions and services for their constituents, determining regulations dealing with the origins and effects of crime, and conducting trade.⁵⁶

As Phil Withington notes, “civic licensing” in the public houses “served as the primary means of civic governance.”⁵⁷ More specifically, tavern and alehouse keepers negotiated pub licenses, regulated tavern operations, and managed company operations by using precedent and arguments that relied on the Restoration’s civic humanist conceptions of rights and liberties.⁵⁸ These responsibilities were part of a broader early modern understanding in which participation in community was understood as a matter of *office*. “An office,” Conal Condren explains, “was an identifiable and discriminate constellation of responsibilities and subordinate rights, or liberties asserted to be necessary for their fulfillment, manifested in a persona and regarded as in some way socially necessary or acceptable. ... It affirmed a social being analogous to human corporeal identity of flesh, fluids, bones, and humours.”⁵⁹ Office was multifaceted and performative: it required responsiveness to a variety of constituents—superiors, peers, subordinates. As tasks of membership practiced by middle-class and upper-class citizens, these were not part of a static assemblage of rights and privileges, but

⁵⁵Hailwood, *Alehouses and Good Fellowship*, 30–31.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, 33–35; James Brown, “Alehouse Licensing and State Formation in Early Modern England,” in *Intoxicants and Society: Problematic Pleasures of Drugs and Alcohol*, ed. Jonathan Herring, Ciaran Regan, Darin Weinberg, and Phil Withington (Houndmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 120. One of the most prominent modes of negotiating the scope of the alehouse was through petitions. Some of these petitions sought to limit the presence of alehouses, while others offered defenses of public houses. In most cases, petitioners couched their arguments in terms of public good and community needs. Take, for example, petitioners in Glastonbury in 1635, who argued that, as “men of the best qualetie,” they were “much prejudiced and decayed” by the “multitude of Alehowses” (Somerset, *Quarter Sessions, Records, II*, 248).

⁵⁷Phil Withington, “Intoxicants and the Early Modern City,” in *Remaking English Society*, ed. Steve Hindle, Alexandra Shepard, and John Walter (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2013), 157.

⁵⁸See especially Patrick Collinson, *De Republica Anglorum; or, History with the Politics Put Back: Inaugural Lecture, Delivered 9 November 1989* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 19.

⁵⁹Conal Condren, *Argument and Authority in Early Modern England: The Presupposition of Oaths and Offices* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 29.

rather processes of “talking and acting” in which the “discreet,” “better,” “able,” and “honest” members of the community were expected to assemble, advise, and act according to their “wisdoms” and “discretions.”⁶⁰ Even though tiplers and brewers often did not have a formal company to regulate the trade, they were nonetheless under significant pressure to employ their discretion to produce “sureties for good behaviour, making tiplers as obligated to neighbours, friends, and kin who provided them with credit as they were to the civic magistracy.”⁶¹

What is at stake in this fleshing out of office is not simply renewed attention to the public house as a significant space for governance but also a distinctive articulation of the processes of participation. The early modern rhetoric of licensed privilege expands conventional conceptions of the public sphere, allowing political theorists to see some of the ways in which office holding and civic values were at work in the protocommunities of the various public houses of early modern England. Indeed, these protocommunities possessed some of the features of “self-created” society, as in Jason Frank’s suggestive phrase: they were spaces that fostered dissent and disagreement and, although they were nominally authorized by national authority, they were also made up of people who persistently fulfilled, negotiated, *and* challenged governmental power.⁶² The “discretion” needed to attend to the interests of constituents required a persistent evaluation and reassessment of the forms of “talking” and “acting” needed for “better” and “best” performance. As we will see next, *feeling*, in the form of affect and emotion, played a critical role in the sensitivity and capacity of subjects to “talk” and “act”—to reason—with others.

Alternative Societies and the Emotional Politics of Drink

Traditionally, early modern drinking and intoxication have been described as panaceas for the poor and plebeian, those left behind by the forces of civility.⁶³ Even when theorists look to recuperate the alehouse as a site of political resistance, they still view it as a dissident site opposed to the mainstream: a central place where “control, surveillance, and repression of the dominant are least

⁶⁰Withington, “Public Discourse, Corporate Citizenship,” 1026, 1027–28.

⁶¹Withington, “Intoxicants and the Early Modern City,” 157. See also Steve Hindle, “The Keeping of the Public Peace,” in *The Experience of Authority in Early Modern England*, ed. Paul Griffiths, Adam Fox, and Steve Hindle (London: Macmillan, 1996), 218–19.

⁶²Jason Frank, *Constituent Moments: Enacting the People in Postrevolutionary America* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 129.

⁶³Clark, *The English Alehouse*; David Courtwright, *Forces of Habit: Drugs and the Making of the Modern World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001).

able to reach."⁶⁴ In James C. Scott's account of the alehouse, for instance, subordinates in societies with a profoundly unequal distribution of power rarely risk an open challenge to elite hegemony, reserving their criticism for expression in situations that were free from the usual constraints of power—"sequestered social sites." These are "locations in which the unspoken riposte, stifled anger, and bitten tongues created by relations of domination find a vehement, full-throated expression"—what Scott evocatively describes as the "hidden transcript of power relations."⁶⁵ By contrast, I will argue here that intoxication also served a more mainstream and, at times, even elite role in shaping early modern political culture. In particular, taverns and alehouses traversed distinctions of plebian and bourgeois and they hosted a gestural and performative political discourse of healths, ballads, and songs in which (1) feelings of wit and pleasure were seen as crucial elements in shaping political attachments and identities, and (2) a form of affective political reason emerged as relevant to the claims of "self-created" societies.

Notably, in the early seventeenth century, taverns hosted drinking societies that debated politics, created poetry, and exercised the creative imagination.⁶⁶ Members of the Inns of Court met at the Mitre and Mermaid taverns in the 1610s and 1620s and formed a "*convivium philosophicum*," which was, in Michelle O'Callaghan's fitting description, "a self-conscious revival of the Roman convivium. By combining *convivia* and *amicitia*, the convivium cultivated an idealised space of social equality in which social boundaries could be relaxed, permitting liberties of speech and the enjoyment of pleasure, although not to the extent that conviviality degenerated into the incivilities of drunkenness."⁶⁷ In these spaces, civil conversation was created not merely by setting aside a space for deliberation, *pace* Habermas; such dialogue was more messily and more affectively established through "rituals of social intimacy

⁶⁴James Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), 120. On Scott and early modern English popular politics, see also Andy Wood, *Riot, Rebellion, and Popular Politics, 67–98*; Wood, *The 1549 Rebellions and the Making of Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Wood, *The Memory of the People: Custom and Popular Senses of the Past in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

⁶⁵Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, 120–21, 20. Among historians, a distinction is often made between the subversive rebellion of the alehouse and the more middlebrow and elite tavern. Andy Wood, Adam Fox, and John Walter, for example, support Scott's position and also agree that alehouses sponsored seditious muttering against social superiors.

⁶⁶Michelle O'Callaghan, *The English Wits: Literature and Sociability in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); O'Callaghan, "Tavern Societies, the Inns of Court, and the Culture of Conviviality in Early 17th Century England," in *A Pleasing Sinne*, 37–51. See also Peter Clark, *British Clubs and Societies, 1580–1800: The Origins of an Associational World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

⁶⁷O'Callaghan, "Tavern Societies," 39.

and identification," which included the practice of various arts of expression, creativity in the form of poetry and wit, and special rituals of drinking.⁶⁸

As Hobbes's remark in the epigraph reminds us, early modern England had an ambivalent stance on intoxication and the heightened form of consciousness associated with it. Intoxication was seen as the facilitator of unruly passions but also, at times, as necessary to access the emotional and affective states needed for reason and political engagement. By contrast, to be sober did not mean simply to abstain from drink, as in our more modern conception. Rather, according to period understandings, sobriety reflected a particular relationship toward *enthusiasm*, or more specifically, unregulated and reactive beliefs. Particularly in the fifteenth and sixteenth century, to be sober referred to appeasement and pacification, freedom from harshness or violence, as well as to the moderation and quieting of one's feelings by "the exercise of self-control."⁶⁹

Most importantly, intoxication and sociability were deeply intertwined. Taverns were seen as valuable spaces for the dramatization of social interaction because they were, like other drinking houses, "indispensable social agencies": "places where people met to trade news, to discuss business and politics and to be sociable, taking pleasure in company and performing social rituals that contributed to a sense of belonging within a community."⁷⁰ As David Zaret explains, "inns and taverns were nodal points for dissemination of news and political discussion."⁷¹ Less regulated than alehouses, taverns such as the Mermaid and the Mitre were also self-consciously elite spaces, in which private rooms were set aside for the meeting of drinking societies, such as "the right Worshipfull Fraternitie of Sireniacal Gentlemen."⁷² But while these drinking associations occupied a private room, they were still nestled within a largely public arena and available for public entry. Moreover, as O'Callaghan notes, "the *convivium* enabled the creation of communities organized by horizontal relationships, epitomized by friendship, rather than the vertical hierarchies of status and rank."⁷³

Thus, while the drinking societies of early seventeenth-century London were styled as elite and urbane by participants and in period literature, they were also not entirely exclusive or based in fixed membership, but

⁶⁸Ibid. See also John Timbs, *Clubs and Club Life in London: From the 17th Century to the Present Time* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1872; repr. 1967).

⁶⁹The O.E.D. references J. Hartcliffe, *Treat Virtues* 73 (1691): "They thought, their Counsels might want Vigour, when they were sober, as well as Caution, when they had drank." For a related emphasis on the civic dimensions of enthusiasm in early America, see Jason Frank, "'Besides Our Selves': An Essay on Enthusiastic Politics and Civil Subjectivity," *Public Culture* 17, no. 3 (2005): 371–92.

⁷⁰O'Callaghan, "Tavern Societies," 37.

⁷¹Zaret, *Origins of Democratic Culture*, 105.

⁷²O'Callaghan, *The English Wits*, 1.

⁷³Ibid., 72.

instead established through “well-confirmed habits of formal socializing among a wide section of friends and associates in the West End of early seventeenth-century London.”⁷⁴ Drinking ritual lent process and stylistic form to the core of these “well-confirmed habits” of socialization. Expression—and creation—of affection was fostered through drinking *healths* and *pledges*, which sought to forge close social bonds and group solidarity in “reciprocal salutation, joining of hands, sociable and familiar conversation.”⁷⁵ As one of Pepy’s well-known ballads enjoined:

Here’s a health to all good fellowes,
that intend with me to joyne,
At the Taverne, or the Ale-house,
and will freely spend their quoyne.
But for such as hate strong liquor,
are not for my company,
O it makes my wits the quicker,
when I taste it thorowly.
Wherefore should we live in sorrow,
since we may imbrace true joy?⁷⁶

The giving of toasts and healths, along with other practices of revelry, such as verbal dueling, were all part of a complex habitus of stylized and self-conscious debauchery. As Pepys notes above, not only is drinking a prerequisite for a self-created social group of “all good fellowes,” it is also needed to sharpen the “wit” and opens up the possibility for embracing “true joy.”⁷⁷

Here, intoxication was seen not as an exception to rationality, but instead as pivotal to the exercise of a “complex collective and convivial identity” which helped to “establish the foundation of the early modern public political sphere.”⁷⁸ “A group of companions,” Rebecca Lemon explains, “would pledge to the health of one another, as well as to absent friends, loved ones, or superiors, often while kneeling or doffing a cap. Each drinker would pledge in turn. Obligated to respond, the pledger’s companions would raise their drinks and either drain their glasses in unison or pass around a healthing bowl from which everyone would take a gulp.”⁷⁹ In fact, “these early tavern societies,” O’Callaghan further observes, “can be seen as early types of

⁷⁴Ibid., 71.

⁷⁵Ibid. See also, on the English practice of drinking healths, *The Works of Voltaire: A Philosophical Dictionary*, trans. William Fleming (Akron, OH: Werner, 1904), 170.

⁷⁶Pepys, “Roaring Dick of Dover; or, The Joviall Good Fellow of Kent” (1632), English Broadside Ballad Archive (UCSB), <http://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/ballad/20204/xml>, accessed April 2015.

⁷⁷Ibid.

⁷⁸O’Callaghan, *The English Wits*, 4–5.

⁷⁹Rebecca Lemon, “Compulsory Conviviality in Early Modern England,” *English Literary Renaissance* 43, no. 3 (2013): 381–414.

political clubs. They were vital spaces in which merchants, lawyers, parliamentarians, courtiers and men of letters could hold conversations on a range of issues.⁸⁰ In that way, this convivial state can also be viewed as an important component of the forms of office holding and civic governance discussed in the previous section, where the cultivation of discretion and the recognition of the activities of office needed the *mobilization of both body and mind* to “good fellowship,” camaraderie, and social belonging. Drinking and socializing were not just forms of entertainment or mere frivolity, but rather were conceived of as ways of attending to the needs and interests of others. Such fulfillment of “persona,” Condren notes, cannot be met with mere participation in a role by an autonomous and emotionally detached subject; rather, it involves “a field or range of responsibilities to others and to the office itself, and ideally, the *persona* needed to manifest a certain mix of virtues, capacities and technical skills of varying specificity to those ends.”⁸¹

What did this entail? As we saw before, *persona* included responsibilities to and for patrons, as well as practices and skills of governance and civic participation. But there was also an emotive component to *persona* as well. Specifically, the pursuit and embrace of pleasure was central to convivial engagement. Wine, in particular, was strongly connected with one of the central pleasurable virtues of Restoration civic culture, namely, *wit*. Taverns were transformed into “a feast-place of the gods” not by food or wine but by “energeia of wit,” which, in taverns such as the Mermaid, intensified “pleasure into poetic rapture.”⁸² Intoxication by wine was seen as key to the pursuit of wit because it freed the mind and tongue to stimulate liberty of speech and it also enabled an *epicurean expansion of reason*, in order to explore states of pleasure. This wit was not mere humor or even sarcasm. Rather, as noted by Hobbes, it was part of the “virtues intellectual,” which engaged various “abilities of the mind” and “go commonly under the name of a ‘good wit,’ though the same word ‘wit’ be used also to distinguish one certain ability from the rest.”⁸³ In particular, in Hobbes’s estimation, wit operated *dialectically* to negotiate between two capacities, *fancy* and *discretion*. *Fancy* referred to the “succession of men’s thoughts,” the apprehension of like and unlike, and the observation of “what they serve for” or “how they serve to such a purpose.” *Discretion*, in

⁸⁰O’Callaghan, *The English Wits*, 4.

⁸¹Condren, “Idea of the ‘Public Sphere,’” 21.

⁸²O’Callaghan, *The English Wits*, 69.

⁸³Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Mark Goldie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), chap. 8, 57–58. O’Callaghan also makes this point in her argument on English wit, as does Withington in his discussion of society and company. A number of contemporary treatments of Hobbes’s materialism share a similar interpretation. See, for example, James Martel, *Subverting Leviathan: Reading Thomas Hobbes as a Radical Democrat* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007); Samantha Frost, *Lessons from a Materialist Thinker: Hobbesian Reflections on Ethics and Politics* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008).

contrast, required “distinguishing, and discerning, and judging between thing and thing... particularly in matter of conversation and business; wherein times, places, and persons are to be discerned.” For drinkers, Hobbes noted, “the effect of the wine, does but remove dissimulation; and take from them the sight of the deformity of their passions.” Thus, in his account in the *Leviathan*, “the most sober men, when they walk alone without care and employment of mind, would be unwilling the vanity and Extravagance of their thoughts at that time should be publically seen.” Intoxication enabled a crucial lifting of inhibition, which allowed not only the faster and more lively apprehension of phenomena but also importantly the ability to better discern “times, places, and persons.”⁸⁴

Intoxication thus can *release* the body and the mind to pursue a kind of enlarged freedom, what Hobbes describes as removing “dissimulation,” in order to access a kind of guided passion, “which is a confession that passions *unguided* are for the most part mere madness.”⁸⁵ This is what we might consider a form of *affective political reason*, in which capacities of discretion, understanding, and action were stimulated by states of intoxication. While it would be easy to dismiss convivial revelry as simply the frivolous pursuit of pleasure in drinking healths and playful toasting, the convivium was more robustly social and political: it modeled an alternative community in which one exercised a “speculative liberty” guided by the tension between inhibition and apprehension, what O’Callaghan describes as “opposite physical and ethical states.”⁸⁶ This liberty “required the participant to maintain a state halfway between sobriety and drunkenness; a moderate pleasure that did not descend into the riotous excesses of the barbarians, but was not restricted by the dull gravity of the sober.”⁸⁷ Too much drink rendered men mad, Hobbes observed, “some of them raging, others loving, others laughing, all extravagantly, but according to their several domineering passions.” As a result, socialization was necessary to regulate intoxication. As Hobbes cautioned, “without steadiness and direction to some end a great fancy is one kind of madness.”⁸⁸ Properly regulated, intoxication stimulates camaraderie and fraternal bonds among interlocutors and it also loosens inhibitions to enlarge the rational faculty to discern, understand, and engage alternative ideas, conceptions, and understandings.

These features help complicate Habermas’s familiar conception of the public sphere and they heighten both the emotional and political features of early modern drinking culture. In part, convivial drinking culture can be conceptualized in Habermas’s terms as an “emerging” public sphere in

⁸⁴Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 57–58.

⁸⁵*Ibid.*, 57, my emphasis.

⁸⁶O’Callaghan, *The English Wits*, 64.

⁸⁷*Ibid.*, 74.

⁸⁸Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 57–58.

which an “institutional facilitator”—the public house—provides a spatial arena, “an interstitial” space “between private relationships and the state” in which numerous participants are welcome.⁸⁹ Owing to its largely elite membership, what emerges there is only incompletely public, although the convivium does provide some measure of shared social support in which “interlocutors” engage each other freely as equals within a protected space. Yet, drinking culture did not provide a neutral and uncontested space for political expression and critical engagement. Instead, intoxication offered the possibility of *guided stimulus* for the exercise of an affective political reason which could be used to discern an enlarged set of possibilities, to banter and converse more freely, and to engage in shared camaraderie.

As we will see next, tavern ballads and songs in the latter half of the seventeenth century illustrate how intoxication involved not only wit but also melancholy. Moreover, ballads and songs illustrated the emergence of a shared understanding of legitimacy and dissent characterized by specific forms of feeling.⁹⁰

Performing Politics, Picaresque Publics

Despite Puritan and Whig efforts to turn proclamations against intoxication into performances of political power, criticized drinkers, of both the lower and upper classes, often responded by embracing—not denying—drink, and in doing so, sought to validate passionate and affective dimensions of politics. The politicization of intoxication took on an even more pronounced character by midcentury, which witnessed the greater polarization of the middle and upperclasses in tavern culture, and here, unlike the convivium, feelings of both pleasure *and* melancholy predominated. In particular, Royalist poems, songs, and ballads in taverns and inns in the interregnum years capitalized on the class differences between beer/ale and wine drinkers to launch political attacks.⁹¹ Songs and ballads that defended Cavalier intoxication focused on their conviviality, wit, and boldness. Type of drink mattered. Wine was used “both to Quicken the Wit, and enliven the

⁸⁹See Jürgen Habermas, “Further Reflections on the Public Sphere,” in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. Craig Calhoun (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992), 421–40.

⁹⁰Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, 65–124, and Frank, *Constituent Moments*.

⁹¹Angela McShane Jones, “Roaring Royalists and Ranting Brewers: The Politicisation of Drink and Drunkenness in Political Broadside Ballads from 1640 to 1689,” in *A Pleasing Sinne*, 74. See also McShane, “Material Culture and ‘Political Drinking’ in Seventeenth-Century England,” *Past and Present*, supplement 9 (2014): 247–76. “The imagery of ‘popular’ ale and beer and wine as the natural drink of an elite, was an ideal vehicle with which to express dissatisfaction with government by the lower classes and the exile of the rightful king whose rights were bound up with the Cavaliers’ own... . This imagery was further augmented in ballads by the linking of Cromwell and his government with the brewing trade.”

blood.”⁹² By contrast, ale drinking was associated with Cromwell and the commonwealthsmen, and Royalist balladeers associated ale with a range of attributes, some of which were contradictory: ale “makes our spirits muddy” and was evidence for the Roundheads’ “base behavior” and dullness and dreary sentiment. However, in other moments, ale also posed the risk of fostering rebellious, seditious, and “anarchic” behavior.⁹³ As Marika Koblusek explains: “In his account of the destruction of Norwich Cathedral during the Civil Wars, Bishop Joseph Hall lamented the sacrilegious behavior of the soldiers who had turned the church into an ‘Ale-house,’ ‘drinking and tobacconing... freely.’ Getting them drunk was the only way to make parliamentary soldiers fight and ‘to pour out their blood in the act of rebellion,’ the royalist newspaper *Mercurius Aulicus* scorned.”⁹⁴ Angela McShane Jones further notes, “The interregnum years were a time when the morale of the royalists was inevitably low. Defeated in battle; the King dead; deprived of their estates through sequestration (a theme consistently brought up in ballads during the period); their ‘natural’ position in society was gone and they had been replaced by socially inferior commonwealth men. Cavaliers feared that the king of their hearts, Charles II, would never be able to return.”⁹⁵ Drink was seen as a balm that soothed, drove away melancholy, and lifted the spirits.⁹⁶ During the Interregnum, when Cromwell had “the upper hand politically,” Cavaliers employed their affection for wine and camaraderie to bolster and soothe their spirits in a period of defeat.⁹⁷

Ballads possessed an especially striking status as both discourse and performance. In both alehouses and taverns, political broadside ballads were cheaply and widely distributed, pasted or pinned to walls and posts in alehouses and taverns. Often printed on single sheets, with a popular tune title and a woodcut illustration, they were sold by “hawkers” who also sang them aloud, in the street or in alehouses and taverns. Single prints usually cost either a half or full penny, roughly the same as ale or a loaf of bread. Composed by drinkers or “pot poets,” largely for the purposes of earning drink money, ballads were part of the commercial dimensions of tavern business.⁹⁸ In addition, because they were also “informally” distributed through performance and song, ballads were easily accessible to a large audience that included not only Cavalier elites, but also lower-class artisans, husbandsmen, maids, and apprentices, allowing those who either did not

⁹²McShane Jones, “Roaring Royalists,” 75.

⁹³Ibid.

⁹⁴Koblusek, “Wine for Comfort: Drinking and the Royalist Exile Experience,” in *A Pleasing Sinne*, 57.

⁹⁵McShane Jones, “Roaring Royalists,” 73.

⁹⁶Ibid., 71. See also C. H. Firth, “The Royalists under the Protectorate,” *English Historical Review* 52, no. 208 (1937): 634–48.

⁹⁷McShane Jones, “Roaring Royalists,” 75.

⁹⁸Ibid. 71–73.

want or could not afford to purchase the ballad prints to participate in political performance.⁹⁹ This slippage from material to performance made ballads a particularly slippery form to regulate because—with their propensity for oral transmission—they quickly left the realm of text and thus print censorship.¹⁰⁰

Ballads politicized drunkenness and made it clear that drink served a political purpose in driving away melancholy after political defeat (Royalists in the interregnum or criticisms of laborers by elite Puritans). Yet ballads did more than offer a medium for lodging criticism; they provided the terms by which the *performance of politics* would take place. In particular, ballads were used to coordinate social and political behavior, bringing together actors in rituals of song and collective practice. As Natascha Würzbach notes, ballads were not abstract representations of drinking rituals and practices; they were integral to practice in both content and material. Ballads *on the subject of sociable drinking* were in fact intended to be performed *in the context of sociable drinking*; they were passed around and shared by patrons singing over a jug of wine or a growler of ale.¹⁰¹ Indeed, the broadside ballad, often decorated with woodcut images of tavern patrons engaged in song, also provided visual direction on its performance. As Patricia Fumerton comments, when the ballad broadside sheet was pasted on the walls, it served as “the poor man’s oil painting” which surrounded patrons not just with the medium for performance but also public self-images.¹⁰²

We might think of these drinking ballads as staging “dramatization,” to borrow Deleuze’s phrase. “They are,” Deleuze notes, “dynamisms, dynamic spatio-temporal determinations, pre-qualitative and pre-extensive, taking ‘place’ in intensive systems in which differences in depth are distributed.”¹⁰³ Deleuze’s insight helps us to parse the ballad as functioning in myriad ways—as a performance that operates at the level of the individual and the group, as a script for political action, as a starting point for a burgeoning political identity. For example, one of the most popular ballads of the period, Alexander Brome’s “The New Courtier,” highlights the centrality of intoxication as a feature of Cavalier identity *and* as part of the process for responding to political defeat.¹⁰⁴ In “The New Courtier” (cited above in this article’s opening epigraph), drinking is described in affective and corporeal excess, as “eyes” “run

⁹⁹Ibid.

¹⁰⁰Ibid.

¹⁰¹Natascha Würzbach, *The Rise of the English Street Ballad, 1550–1650* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 98.

¹⁰²Patricia Fumerton, “Not Home: Alehouses, Ballads, and the Vagrant Husband in Early Modern England,” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 32, no. 3 (2002): 499.

¹⁰³Gilles Deleuze, “The Method of Dramatisation,” *Bulletin de la Société française de Philosophie*, no. 62 (1967): 107.

¹⁰⁴Alexander Brome, *Songs and other poems* (London, 1668).

over" and "sad souls" are drenched in "big-bellied bowls" when a personified "goblet" is crowned. The ballad evokes the disorder of a monarchy upended, but the excessive drinking also lodges a refusal to succumb to defeat: "Let the giddy-brain'd times turn round" because "our monarchy thus will recover." In a period of occupation and monarchical disorder, "steeping" "sorrows in sack" is a kind of perverted "reason" in which drinking and singing are political actions that satirically recharacterize the conventional celebrations of a newly crowned king into a "mournival of healths." Indeed, here, proving "it by reason" is itself a multifaceted performance—not just of drinking and singing but also of holding on to the specter of a "new crown'd King," despite Cromwell's current reign. This is a form of *reason* that is *affective* in its sensitivity to feeling and it operates to link different individuals in a shared rationale in its *political* ambitions to respond to injury. Moreover, as the ballad conveys, political opposition mounts with "each successive drink":

Thus as each health passes
We'll triple the glasses,
And hold it no sin
To be loyal and drink in defence of our King.

The song goes on to mourn the loss of possession caused by the Puritan confiscation of estates and it identifies the experience of imprisonment under Puritan rule. Yet the focus in much of the song is as much on melancholy as on refusal to succumb to fear. "Pox on this grief, hang wealth, let's sing / Shall kill our selves for fear of death?" The repeated calls to sing and to hope are all efforts to stir political animation in the face of defeat. When situated in the context of the tavern with its circulating broadsheets and collective singing, the ballad can be thought of both as *performances* of political identity and *acts* of political assembly. Drink is not the balm that soothes and enables a mournful withdrawal from politics. Instead, sorrow stimulates the *capacity* to drink and to sing and, in the course of intoxicated drinking and singing, creates political alliance and emphasizes political opposition.

In that way, there is something akin to the dynamics of melodrama at work in these drinking ballads. As Elisabeth Anker evocatively notes, melodrama designates political actors in Manichean terms as either "victims" or "evil Others" and it treats the experience of suffering as a moral mark of virtue.¹⁰⁵ This marshaling of melodramatic affect helps to create a more clearly drawn map of right and wrong which enables those who "are overwhelmed by forces outside their control" to find a way to move forward and put "an experience of powerlessness into a comprehensible, narrative

¹⁰⁵ Elisabeth Anker, *Orgies of Feeling: Melodrama and the Politics of Feeling* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 32.

form."¹⁰⁶ Melodramas, Anker suggests, "display gestural language and spectacles of unjust victimization that can cultivate heightened affective experiences of distress, terror, sorrow and pity, and anticipation."¹⁰⁷ But, at the same time, it is precisely in making a more theatrical spectacle of political injury that this moral economy of good and evil becomes homogenizing, conveniently absolving "victims" of responsibility and rendering "illegible" certain causes and effects of political violence.¹⁰⁸ To be sure, in historical terms, ballads are not in the same genre as melodramas and they are part of very different theatrical traditions. Yet, especially in its attention to heightened feeling and the formation of political identity, Anker's assessment provides some useful prompts for better attending to the affective logic at work in drinking songs.

In particular, the dynamics of melodrama can help us to diagnose some of the features of political frustration and suffering at work in another popular ballad of the period, Brome's *The Royalist*:

Come pass about the bowl to me,
A health to our distressed King;
Though we're in hold let cups go free,
Birds in a cage may freely sing,
The ground does tippie healths afar
When storms to fall, and shall not we?
A sorrow dares not show its face
When we are ships, and sack's the sea.¹⁰⁹

Here, melancholy is again registered in the "sorrow" that "dares not show its face" as well as in the feeling of imprisonment as if "birds in a cage." However, drinking here does not solely focus on an apathetic misery. The experience of intoxication allows Brome to gesture toward acts of freedom that can come in the midst of political frustration. This includes letting "cups go free" and singing "freely," as well as the collective act of coming together in a "health."

The health was an especially significant shared political act. In a period in which administering politico-religious oaths to the general public had "sensitized large swathes of the population to their religious and legal significance," the loyal-health, as McShane Jones notes, became "an exclusive ritual that could be used to challenge the political or religious loyalties of strangers or neighbours gathered in a public place."¹¹⁰ Both the Protectorate and Charles II had issued bans against loyal-healths and many ordinary people risked not drinking healths precisely because of the civic and religious

¹⁰⁶Ibid., 35.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., 34.

¹⁰⁸Ibid.

¹⁰⁹In Brome, *Songs and other poems*.

¹¹⁰McShane Jones, "Material Culture and 'Political Drinking,'" 261–62.

weight of such oaths. Nonetheless, despite its at times illegal status, for much of the public the “loyal health” still remained a pivotal political practice. It was a public act of political consolidation in a context of insecurity and it helped to ground both Cavalier and Jacobite political identities as it was also later to prove critical to the Whigs and Tories in “demonstrating, determining, and even inculcating affection and allegiance.”¹¹¹

Notably, with the Restoration, an intoxicated “pleasurable liberty” returned, arguably in an even more vigorous and combative culture of drink.¹¹² As Scodel explains, “The celebrations that began on May Day (May 1) 1660, when Parliament invited Charles II to return as king, and continued with his entry into London on May 29 included fountains running with wine, a prodigious number of healths to the king, and symbolic expulsions of the killjoy ‘saints.’”¹¹³ In fact, in this period, refusal to engage in convivial drinking became, at times, a questionable trait—evidence of a possible longing for a return to the Protectorate. In addition, Tory drinking songs were composed in the late 1670s and early 1680s in which Tory group drunkenness was contrasted with Whig sober and “rebellious sullenness.” For example, in the ballad “Merry Boys of Christmas”: “these hypocritick knaves / denounced our harmlesse joys / and silenc’d all the loyall staves / chorus’d by roaring boys.”¹¹⁴ Whigs were now cast as the “coffee house crew,” as McShane Jones explains; they were “doubly damned either as miserable misers who would not buy or enjoy a drink, or as the worst kind of drinkers, who did not drink to be merry or in good company but to be drunk and cause trouble.”¹¹⁵ Moreover, nondrinkers—and especially nonparticipants in toasting and drinking healths—were labeled traitors by both Whigs and Torys. During the Popish Plot and Exclusion crises, gangs of both Whig and Tory apprentices stopped coaches and passers-by to demand money for healths and they attacked pub signs and taverns.¹¹⁶ Indeed, even if coffeehouses were self-consciously positioned as places of measured sobriety in theory, in practice they were often as rowdy as the taverns they replaced.¹¹⁷ Coffeehouses are

¹¹¹Ibid., 250.

¹¹²Nicholls, *The Politics of Alcohol*, 28–29.

¹¹³Scodel, *Excess and the Mean*, 245–46. To be sure, even excess had its limits. Contemporary accounts noted, for example, that celebration could veer into the grotesque. According to Scodel, “Samuel Pepys found the celebratory healths ‘too much,’ causing him and his companions to vomit. In August 1660 Charles II himself issued a proclamation condemning those who gave ‘no other evidence of their affection for us but in Drinking Our health.’”

¹¹⁴McShane Jones, “Roaring Royalists,” 78.

¹¹⁵Ibid., 77.

¹¹⁶Tim Harris, *London Crowds in the Reign of Charles II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987). See also Harris, editor’s introduction to *Popular Culture in England, c. 1500–1850* (London: Macmillan, 1995), 6–8.

¹¹⁷Cowan, *Social Life of Coffee*, 104–6.

“alehouses,” Daniel Defoe would later remark, “only they think that the name coffeehouse gives a better air.”¹¹⁸

These are features of politics and political life often difficult to see from the vantage point of more canonical treatises or philosophical essays. As Andrew Murphy suggests, an increased sensitivity to issues of genre, social life, and conflict enables us to develop a more grounded understanding of the generation of political theory in the mundane spaces of everyday political life. “These are part of the exercise of (and resistance to) political power,” Murphy clarifies.¹¹⁹ By reading atypical texts such as broadside ballads, songs, poems, and conduct books of early modern English drinking culture for “gesture” and “action,” rather than “principle” or “tenet,” we can see that intoxicated forms of pleasure and melancholy were used dynamically to describe political positions and to spur political assemblies.¹²⁰ Rather than a more formal conception of “right reason” which is exercised impartially to deliberate upon action or to petition for change, the *affective political reason* stimulated by intoxication mobilizes feelings and affects to generate action and response in the face of defeat. This version of reason takes place not in institutions and through more formal processes of deliberation, but rather in a shared understanding of legitimacy and dissent performed through song, gesture, and displays of affect.

For Whigs and Tories during Charles II’s reign, ballads, songs, toasts, and pamphlets not only helped to consolidate mainstream and elite political identities but also increasingly pushed politics “out of doors.” As the historian Tim Harris notes, while Tories may have “condemned the rabble-rousing techniques of the Whigs” and the “dim-sighted” perspectives of the “multitude,” they nonetheless increasingly sought to craft a counterdiscourse to the Whigs in ballads, songs, broadsides, and “publick demonstrations,” all in an effort to better manage public opinion.¹²¹ This was a vernacular and contested politics that was unlike the theatrical displays of Elizabeth and the remote Charles I. Despite Charles II’s initial desire to end “political disputation out-of-doors,” it “proved impossible to silence the press, clamp down on public political debate, or stop those out-of-doors from expressing their political dissatisfaction with government policy.”¹²² Moreover, unlike the

¹¹⁸Daniel Defoe, *A Tour thro’ the Whole Island of Great Britain* (1724–26), vol. 1 (New York: Penguin, 1971), “Shrewsbury”: “I found there the most coffee houses around the Town Hall that ever I saw in any town, but when you come into them they are but ale houses, only they think that the name coffee house gives a better air.”

¹¹⁹Andrew R. Murphy, “Trial Transcript as Political Theory: Principles and Performance in the Penn-Mead Case,” *Political Theory* 41, no. 6 (2013): 800–802.

¹²⁰*Ibid.* As Murphy explains, these nonconventional political texts “all... share an experiential element, in which political theory maintains a constant present outside the bounds of canonical treatises and traditional venues.”

¹²¹Tim Harris, “The Battle for the Allegiance of the Common People,” in *Politics of the Excluded*, 210, 208.

¹²²*Ibid.*, 202–3.

deliberative forms of debate and reflection discussed by Habermas, these political practices and exchanges were considerably more unruly and raucous—performed in a loyal-health, exercised in an intoxicated discussion, sung in an overripe lament. Conspicuously, Restoration symposiastic poets freely associated drunkenness with liberty and resistance to the established order, as in Abraham Cowley's 1660 ode which associated loyalty to the king with drunken excess.¹²³ By the late 1670s and early 1680s, the earlier political distinctions established between ale and wine drinkers gave way to a "politicization of drunkenness," where "Whigs and Tories now attacked each other in terms of their consumption of drink, using established ballad-drinking discourses."¹²⁴

The intoxicated excesses, affects, and rituals of the alehouse, tavern, and pub expand our conception of the early modern public sphere, rendering it in more dynamic, embodied, and affective terms. In contrast to more familiar narratives which situate drink as the "narcotic" for the poor, a sign of their desire to be anesthetized against the strains of contemporary life, it is clear from the examples that we have seen thus far that intoxication—and the forms of outburst, complaint, drama, and song that shaped practices of drinking—proliferated across distinctions of plebeian and bourgeois, royalist and parliamentarian, Whig and Tory. These are all groups that practice a form of "insurgent politics," to borrow Frank's perceptive phrase, which employs "noise, theater, declamation, testimony, and protest" not simply to "gain attention" but to constitute themselves as self-created societies.¹²⁵

In these exchanges, emotion, drama, and ritual possess an abiding influence within the emergence of the public sphere as the body and its feelings take center stage. In part, we might characterize these acts as part of a political theory in the vernacular, where gesture and song reveal reason as "performative" enactment—a common sensibility created through physical rituals and shared affective practices that mobilize political action. Reason, as we have seen, was shaped by somatic registers of feeling and sociability to a far greater extent than recognized by Habermas, even if it also tends, in certain cases, toward moralizing discourses of good and evil that were not particularly attentive to either political reflection or accountability. Additionally, these intoxicated "self-created" societies complicate the Enlightenment narrative offered by Habermas by offering up an alternative genealogy of the public sphere, one which more strongly emphasizes the role of affect, shared social ritual, and passionate feeling. Michel Foucault describes genealogy as a process of tracking the *remainders of reason*—the errors, the accidents,

¹²³Scodel, *Excess and the Mean*, 246. See also *The Collected Works of Abraham Cowley*, ed. Thomas O. Calhoun, Laurence Heyworth, and Allan Pritchard, 2 vols. (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1993).

¹²⁴McShane Jones, "Roaring Royalists," 77.

¹²⁵Frank, *Constituent Moments*, 130–31.

and the deviations from what is commonly narrated as reason's progressive development. In Foucault's characterization, "to follow the complex course of descent is to maintain passing events in their proper dispersion; it is to identify the accidents, the minute deviations—or conversely, the complete reversals—the errors, the false appraisals, and the faulty calculations that gave birth to those things that continue to exist and have value for us; it is to discover that truth or being does not lie at the root of what we know and what we are, but the exteriority of accidents."¹²⁶

Tracing this history allows us to temper the oft-told progressive narrative of reason's dispassionate rise, as it also enables us to begin to cobble together an alternative conception of the public sphere and its affective rituals. For example, after the seventeenth century, there continued to be various examples of intoxicated sociability, as Stella Achilleos writes in her study of the Anacreontic Society, an eighteenth-century gentlemen's club that took *Anacreontea* (a collection of Greek lyrics that celebrated the pleasures of love and wine) as its inspiration. The Anacreontics appropriated the "symposium as a topos of polite sociability," and they also instituted rules for intoxication.¹²⁷ In this context, drink was still seen to have the "power to suspend life's care and grief" and arouse "the sacred madness" of the soul, but it was now also perceived as a more moderated indulgence that needed to be managed conscientiously to better promote conviviality and companionship.¹²⁸ Meanwhile, across the Atlantic, a culture of drinking and intoxication also played a significant role in politics. Tavern sociability, as the historian Peter Thompson argues, played a significant part in the political discourse of Philadelphians in the pre-Revolutionary period.¹²⁹ Through drink and conversation, the creation of "notional and temporary equality" was attempted as "heavy drinking, toasting, and singing reduced, or elevated, rich and poor participants to a common moral place."¹³⁰ These Philadelphia taverns were not alternatives to mainstream culture, but rather ubiquitous and easily accessible. Yet, as Thompson notes, they were also not uncontroversial:

¹²⁶Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," 146.

¹²⁷Achilleos, "The Anacreontea and a Tradition of Refined Male Sociability," in *A Pleasing Sinne*, 23; see also Achilleos, "The Anacreontic and the Growth of Sociability in Early Modern England," *Appositions: Studies in Renaissance/Early Modern Literature and Culture* 1 (2008), <http://appositions.blogspot.com>, accessed May 2015.

¹²⁸Achilleos, "The Anacreontea and a Tradition," 33. Ben Jonson's eighteenth-century "sons"—Richard Browe, Thomas Nabbes, Thomas Killigrew, Sir William Davenant, William Cartwright, and William Cavendish, among others—also argued that moderate drinking was an essential element for the preservation of spirit of mirthfulness and fellowship in the symposium and they were inspired by Jonson's *Leges Convivales* (*Rules of Conviviality*) to invite and fashion a "refined form of madness." See also Hugh Maclean, ed., *Ben Jonson and the Cavalier Poets* (New York: Norton, 1974).

¹²⁹Thompson, *Rum Punch and Revolution*, 156.

¹³⁰*Ibid.*

there were “perpetual political struggles over management of taverns” and these made the tavern a locus of social and political contestation. These were, in many ways, agonistic spaces—performative and unpredictable, where “abstract personal characteristics, such as wit, gentility, or honesty lay in the eyes and ears of the beholder.”¹³¹ The tavern was thus a site for display and observation in which individuals revealed themselves in gesture and action, cutting across various modern sedimentations of public and private, performance and politics.¹³²

This speculative genealogy of an intoxicated public sphere also allows us to look at contemporary politics from a different vantage point, positioning affective politics not as an exception or challenge to the public sphere but as a more persistent feature in its operations. Intoxication here serves as an unexpected connecting thread that links the mainstream public sphere and various dissident counterpublics. The Occupy Wall Street movement offers a ripe example for consideration. The mainstream press has often critiqued the presence of alcohol and drugs in the Occupy encampments as evidence of the movement’s frivolousness and its overall political and social failure.¹³³ Theorists and scholars have also seemed to avoid the issue of intoxication in the Occupy movement, casting little attention to the drug use and drinking at work in the reclamation of public space and the dramatic actions of protestors. But the context of the early modern public sphere allows us to interpret intoxication in a different way—less as a failure of politics than as part of a range of practices which shape *affective political reason*. The sharing of food, music, and drink has been described as part of the counterpublic “lifeworld” established by protestors, where people can “meet, build trust and develop

¹³¹Ibid., 115.

¹³²Ibid., 157. With changing economic conditions in the eighteenth century, Philadelphians increasingly applied ever more judgmental descriptions of drunkenness as a moral failing. By mid-eighteenth century, elites displayed increasing impatience with taverns and there was a growing sense that the tavern was an inappropriate and even pernicious setting for political discussion and action. But laborers and artisans continued to assert their right to speak to religious and political issues in taverns without deferring to social or political authority (ibid., 143).

¹³³Drugs and intoxication have been a popular pretext for dismissing the Occupy movement. See, for example, Jed Bickman, “Does Occupy Wall Street Have a Drug Problem?,” *The Fix*, Oct. 23, 2011, <http://www.thefix.com/content/does-occupy-wall-street-have-drug-problem/>, accessed June 2015; Lila Shapiro, “Occupy Wall Street Protesters Wrestle with Growing Security Concerns,” *Huffington Post*, Nov. 1, 2011, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/11/01/occupy-wall-street-security_n_1069597.html, accessed June 2015; Sarah Jaffe, “From Party to Standoff at Times Square: Occupy Wall Street Spreads,” *AlterNet*, October 16, 2011, http://www.alternet.org/newsandviews/article/680943/from_party_to_standoff_at_times_square%3A_occupy_wall_street_spreads, accessed June 2015; Jeffrey Juris, “Reflections on Occupy Everywhere: Social Media, Public Space, and Emerging Logics of Aggregation,” *American Ethnologist* 39, no. 2 (2012): 259–79.

shared goals and strategies.”¹³⁴ However, singing, eating, and drinking also have more than a functionalist role. Such practices and rituals help to “facilitate sociability among friends and encounters with strangers,” as Margaret Kohn explains, and, in their emotive and affective dimensions, they also help to make protestors “visible” in “polemical scenes... where the conflict between opposing interests is made visible and subject to dispute.”¹³⁵ Intoxication helps to highlight the affective dimensions of these “performative enactments” in which political reason is mobilized by citizens who draw on theatricality, performance, and gesture in their practice of political power. Intoxication also calls on the mainstream public sphere to more fully acknowledge its affective, unruly, and ritualistic roots.¹³⁶

Conclusion

In examining key features in the early modern English culture of drink, we explored some of the “disavowed” dimensions of the Enlightenment where the rise of the public sphere typically associated with deliberation was shaped not by sobriety and dispassionate rationality but instead by emotion, affect, and intoxication. Intoxication provided ritual to help foster and order camaraderie and fraternal belonging. For Royalist balladeers and English symposiastic poets, for instance, the embrace of intoxication was self-consciously excessive and sentimental, calling dramatic attention to the body and its senses. As described in their works, intoxication helped to release hedonic and fraternal passions, which were interwoven with the expression of political joys, fears, and losses. Moreover, while public houses and drinking associations were not strictly “collegia” or “corporations” authorized by charter or letters patent, they nonetheless possessed a number of qualities commonly associated with semiautonomous political bodies—providing shelter and resources, stimulating community, taking on and executing responsibilities, and enabling expression.¹³⁷ For example, tavern spaces offered shelter and services to populations made vulnerable by economic dispossession, while festivities and toasts facilitated by alehouse and wine culture stimulated passions and emotions that encouraged camaraderie and

¹³⁴Rebecca Schein, “Whose Occupation? Homelessness and the Politics of Park Encampments,” *Social Movement Studies* 11, no. 3–4 (2012): 335–41.

¹³⁵Margaret Kohn, “Privatization and Protest: Occupy Wall Street, Occupy Toronto, and the Occupation of Public Space in a Democracy,” *Perspectives on Politics* 11, no. 1 (2013): 99–110.

¹³⁶MacKenzie and Porter, “Dramatization as Method,” 494.

¹³⁷On chartered political societies, see Philip J. Stern, *The Company-State: Corporate Sovereignty and the Early Modern Foundations of the British Empire in India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

expression of political, economic, and social grievances, albeit in radically different ways.

Yet, while intoxication facilitated civic culture and voluntary and purposeful association not only in seventeenth-century England but also in the drinking societies of Georgian London and the tavern debates of eighteenth-century Philadelphia, these practices were not consistently inclusive or equitable, nor did they always convert passionate feeling into nonviolent discourse and action. Although intoxication could spur political action and strengthen community, it also at times operated to hold political accountability and critique at bay, sometimes relegating such concerns to the private sphere, and, at others, even withdrawing into moralizing and Manichean tendencies. For example, in the drinking societies at the Mermaid and Mitre, intoxicated relations were often hemmed in by class insularity and exclusion. Moreover, little attention was focused on more morally fraught questions of liability. One only need think of the rites and rituals of fraternities and the bacchanalian excesses of Wall Street to conjure up similarly insular latemodern counterparts to the early modern English tavern.¹³⁸

Undoing the familiar image of a sober and dispassionate Enlightenment public sphere requires not simply affirming alternative or counter understandings of emotion and performance in civic culture and political identity today but also recognizing some of the emotive and affective features of the public sphere in its emergence. Such work tempers the progressive narrative of reason's sober rise by resisting the projection of liberal assumptions about dispassionate rationality to both the present and the past. It calls into question the forms of disavowal used to banish a more emotive and affective history to the margins. It buttresses the complaints of radical democratic theorists and critics of the public sphere who argue that dispassionate reason is an insufficient foundation for political action. To note these features is not to endorse or validate intoxication as an enduring normative good, but rather to take seriously both the possibilities and the limits of emotion, affect, and performance in the public sphere.

¹³⁸On fraternities, see Alan DeSantis, *Inside Greek U.: Fraternities, Sororities, and the Pursuit of Pleasure, Power, and Prestige* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2007); Hank Nuwer, *Wrongs of Passage: Fraternities, Sororities, Hazing, and Binge Drinking* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999). On Wall Street, see Kate Kelly, *The Secret Club That Runs the World: Inside the Fraternity of Commodity Traders* (New York: Portfolio/Penguin, 2014); Kevin Roose, *Young Money: Inside the Hidden World of Wall Street's Post-Crash Recruits* (New York: Grand Central, 2014).