



Samuel Pepys and Corruption

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Picking up a theme that runs through David Hayton's work, this article examines corruption in the later Stuart period through a case study of Samuel Pepys. The latter's diary can be read alongside the public record of parliamentary inquiries and vilification in the press, allowing us a rare opportunity to study corruption simultaneously through the eyes of a perpetrator and his critics. Pepys reveals ambiguities in how corruption was defined and defended. At the same time as he criticized corruption in others, he took bribes and extorted favours but either lied about them when confronted, or excused them as lawful gifts from friends and those grateful for his services, arguing that his acceptance of them never worked against the king's interest. His critics, on the other hand, queried the compatibility of his private advantage and the public interest, and depicted him as greedy, hypocritical and unjust. Pepys thus illustrates contested notions of corrupt behaviour. The attack on Pepys also shows the political motives behind campaigns against corruption: the libel published against him was part of the murky world of popish plot intrigue, with clear overtones of both catholic and sexual misdemeanour. Popery and lust were associated with corrupt behaviour. Pepys's story was part of a larger one about long-term shifts in the nature of officeholding, state formation, the public interest, patronage and the culture of gift-giving that needs further exploration.

Keywords: Samuel Pepys; corruption; bribes; public interest; private interest; state formation; gift-giving; patronage; navy; restoration; popery; lust

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Corruption is a theme which runs across David Hayton's work. His contributions to *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons, 1690–1715*, and especially his survey of 'constituencies and elections', frequently highlight the corrupt practices deployed at later Stuart polls.¹ His *Past & Present* article on moral reform and country politics was even more concerned with the issue of corruption. In it, he made the case for a correlation between Country and moral reforms: 'Both legislative programmes were essentially crusades against corruption: on the one hand the corruption of moral standards in society, on the other the corruption of political institutions.' Moreover, David offered an explanation for the neglect of this link: 'Over-emphasis on the influence of the classical republican tradition has obscured the fact that most M.P.s, many of them relatively unsophisticated country squires, seem to have understood the concept of corruption – and indeed diagnosed all major disorders in the body politic – in narrow,

¹ *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons, 1690–1715*, ed. Eveline Cruickshanks, Stuart Handley and D.W. Hayton (5 vols, Cambridge, 2002), i, 36–261.

simplistic terms, as failures of personal morality.² Although this article does not see issues of personal morality as either narrow or simplistic, it does seek to build on this central insight about the broad definition of corruption by examining different conceptions of corruption in the later Stuart period. It uses a case study of Samuel Pepys in order to point to important ambiguities in how contemporaries defined corrupt behaviour, as well as how they defended, exposed and attacked it. This article is also a foretaste of a longer project, since I plan to address such questions in a more systematic way and over a much longer time frame, in a study of pre-modern corruption, from reformation to reform. At the moment we lack such an overview. Although we have many excellent case studies of particular moments or scandals or types of corruption, there has not yet been a systematic attempt to synthesise such material and make the links across it.³

Because we have both the private Pepys of the diary and the public record of Pepys as controversial naval administrator, we are able to recover, to a degree that is often difficult to achieve with other subjects of scandal, both a private and public perspective

² David Hayton, 'Moral Reform and Country Politics in the Late Seventeenth-Century House of Commons', *Past & Present*, No. 128 (1990), 48–91.

³ Joel Hurstfield, *Freedom, Corruption and Government in Elizabethan England* (Harvard, 1973); Linda Levy Peck, *Court Patronage and Corruption in Early Stuart England* (1990); Pauline Croft, 'Patronage and Corruption, Parliament and Liberty in Seventeenth-Century England', *Historical Journal*, xxxvi (1993), 415–21; Alan Stewart, 'Bribery, Buggery, and the Fall of Lord Chancellor Bacon', in *Rhetoric and Law in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Victoria Kahn and Lorna Hutson (New Haven, 2001); Nieves Matthews, *Francis Bacon: The History of a Character Assassination* (New Haven, 1996); David Hebb, 'Profiting from Misfortune: Corruption and the Admiralty under the Early Stuarts', in *Politics, Religion and Popularity in Early Stuart England*, ed. Tom Cogswell, Richard Cust and Peter Lake (Cambridge, 2002); John Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment* (Princeton, NJ, 1971); John Pocock, *Virtue, History and Commerce* (Cambridge, 1985); Anna Clark, *Scandal: The Sexual Politics of the British Constitution* (Princeton, NJ, 2005); Howard Tomlinson, 'Place and Profit: An Examination of the Ordnance Office, 1660–1714', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser., xxv (1975), 55–75; Faramerz Dabhoiwala, 'Sex and the Societies for Moral Reform, 1688–1800', *Journal of British Studies*, xlv (2007), 290–319; Mark Knights, 'Parliament, Print and Corruption in Later Stuart Britain', *Parliamentary History*, xxvi (2007), 49–61; Wilfred Prest, 'Judicial Corruption in Early Modern England', *Past & Present*, No. 133 (1991), 67–95; Clayton Roberts, 'Party and Patronage in Later Stuart England', in *England's Rise to Greatness 1660–1763*, ed. Stephen Baxter (Berkeley, CA, 1983); Aaron Graham, 'Partisan Politics and the British Fiscal-Military State, 1689–1713', University of Oxford PhD, 2011; Thomas Home, 'Politics in a Corrupt Society: William Arnall's Defense of Robert Walpole', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, xli (1980), 601–14; Carol Howard, 'Wollstonecraft's Thoughts on Slavery and Corruption', *The Eighteenth Century*, xlv (2004), 61–109; Isaac Kramnick, 'Corruption in Eighteenth Century English and American Political Discourse', in *Virtue, Corruption and Self Interest: Political Values in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Richard K. Matthews (Bethlehem, PA, 1994); John Noonan, *Bribes* (New York, 1984); Nicholas Dirks, *The Scandal of Empire: India and the Creation of Imperial Britain* (Boston, MA, 2006); Philip Stern, 'Corporate Virtue: The Language of Empire in Early Modern British Asia', *Renaissance Studies*, xxvi (2012), 510–30; Andrew Fitzmaurice, 'American Corruption', in *The Monarchical Republic of Early Modern England*, ed. John F. McDermid (Farnham, 2007); Brian Smith, 'Edmund Burke, The Warren Hastings Trial and the Moral Dimension of Corruption', *Polity*, xl (2008), 70–94; Eckhart Hellmuth, 'Why Does Corruption Matter? Reforms and Reform Movements in Britain and Germany in the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, c (1999), 5–24; P. Lawson and J. Phillips, "'Our Execrable Banditti": Perceptions of Nabobs in Mid-Eighteenth Century Britain', *Albion*, xvi (1984), 225–41; Philip Harling, *The Waning of "Old Corruption": The Politics of Economical Reform in Britain, 1779–1846* (Cambridge, 1996); Philip Harling, 'Rethinking Old Corruption', *Past & Present*, No. 147 (1995), 127–58; William D. Rubinstein, 'The End of "Old Corruption" in Britain 1780–1860', *Past & Present*, No. 101 (1983), 55–86; Gerald Aylmer, 'From Office-Holding to Civil Service: The Genesis of Modern Bureaucracy', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser., xxx (1980), 91–108; *Corrupt Histories*, ed. Emmanuel Kreike and William Chester Jordan (Rochester, NY, 2004). For a comparative analysis see Jean-Claude Waquet, *Corruption: Ethics and Power in Florence 1600–1770*, trans. Linda McCall (Cambridge, 1991); Patricia Bonomi, *The Lord Combury Scandal: The Politics of Reputation in British America* (1998).

on corruption. Pepys's simultaneous condemnation of corrupt behaviour in others and his justification or legitimisation of his own corrupt behaviour sheds interesting light on how corruption was defined and, in particular, on the uncertain boundaries between presents or gifts and bribery, and the similarly blurred boundaries of public and private interests. Pepys developed interesting ideas about the need to provide private incentives in order to maximise efficiency that was in the king's interest and hence to develop a notion that private and public interests could be made to coincide. The public revelation of his profiteering also highlights the role of print in exposing and defining corrupt behaviour and the ways in which the charge of corruption was used as a political weapon against rivals and enemies. Moreover, Pepys's sexual indiscretions also highlight, as David Hayton sought to do, the link between sexual immorality and other forms of immoral conduct in office, and hence the extent to which personal failings were necessarily related to public ones. Finally, Pepys raises the issue of whether attention paid to corrupt individuals might mask more systematic corruption and how far Pepys's corrupt behaviour was symptomatic of a climate of corruption induced by the growing reaches of the state and its capacity to raise money.

Historians have generally been kind to Samuel Pepys, who, because of the extraordinary richness of his diary, has generally been hailed as something of a lovable rogue, whose foibles humanise him and can be forgiven because of his tireless work to reform the navy. Pepys has a reputation as reformer, not someone who himself needed reform. Arthur Bryant's subtitle of the third volume of his biographical trilogy, 'The Saviour of the Navy', is a view accepted by his most recent biographer, Claire Tomalin: 'Pepys is regarded as one of the most important naval administrators in England's history'.⁴ Latham and Matthews, despite having outlined the ways in which he profited from his office, nevertheless suggest, apparently without irony, that Pepys 'mastered the useful art of receiving gifts without becoming corrupt'.⁵ Amidst the admiration there have, nevertheless, been some more discordant voices. Henry Roseveare's short entry on Pepys's finances in the *Companion* to Latham and Matthew's edition of the diary concludes that Pepys's income was composed of 'fees, perquisites, gratuities and down-right bribes'.⁶ But it is really only the American legal scholar, John Noonan, in his massive survey of bribery from ancient Egypt to the modern day, who has considered Pepys's corruption in any depth. Noonan devotes a chapter to showing how Pepys's diary, 'rich as it is in many other aspects, is also the confession of a grafter'.⁷ Noonan expertly highlights some of the 'complexity' of Pepys's consciousness about his actions. This will be explored further here and linked to some greater contextual discussion than Noonan was able to achieve in a work that covers 4,000 years.

As Noonan points out: 'the man who began his career as a clerk in 1660 with 25 pounds liquid capital . . . became a man possessing over 7,000 pounds by the end of 1667', an increase of almost 30,000%.⁸ Since his official salary was £350, this wealth

⁴ Arthur Bryant, *Pepys: Saviour of the Navy* (Cambridge, 1938); Claire Tomalin, *Samuel Pepys. The Unequalled Self* (2002), p. xxxvi.

⁵ *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, ed. Robert Latham and William Matthews (10 vols, 1970–6), i, pp. cxxiii–iv.

⁶ *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, ed. Latham and Matthews, x, 131, 133.

⁷ Noonan, *Bribes*, 387.

⁸ Noonan, *Bribes*, 385.

could only have come from unofficial sources. Pepys's diary reveals that he secured a number of payments, gifts and favours as a result of the office he held: animals, clothing, food, furniture, silverware, cash and sex. The money came from suppliers to the navy who wished to secure a contract; those who wished to secure a post; and those for whom Pepys could get bills paid or accounts settled. Pepys had a particularly close relationship with Sir William Warren, who supplied the navy with masts and used bribes to sweeten his deals: he sent Pepys gloves and a 'fair State-dish of Silver and cup with my armes ready-cut upon them';⁹ and then another pair of gloves 'wrapped up in paper' so that the '40 pieces in good gold' were not visible.¹⁰ In September 1664, Warren brought Pepys £100 'in a bag', secretly handed over in a tavern when the two men were alone.¹¹ Pepys records how he made even more out of the Tangier victuallers. About the time when Warren handed him the bag of money, Pepys also received £105 from a group of merchants tendering for the contract; and the money kept flowing from that deal 'for my particular share of the profits'.¹² Pepys's own testimony thus shows the extent of his corruption. It also chronicles Pepys's sense of sheer excitement at receiving these bribes. When the 40 pieces of gold fell out of the gloves, Pepys records, it 'did so cheer my heart that I could eat no victuals almost for dinner for joy'.¹³ When he received a gift of two flacons 'with a merry heart, I looked up on them' and they made 'a fine sight and better than ever I did hope to see of my own'.¹⁴ Similarly he was 'not a little proud' when he rode 'a very pretty Mare' he had been given.¹⁵

The diary is thus useful for revealing what was normally kept hidden: the routine ways in which an official salary could be enlarged. But it is even more useful for showing Pepys's contradictory and ambiguous attitude to bribery and corruption. A paradox stands out: Pepys seemed to have a very clear idea of what corruption was, but increasingly justified, even to himself, the money he was making on the side. This paradox, not unique to Pepys, is worth exploring further.

At precisely the time when he was receiving his bribes, Pepys wrote entries about 'abuses' in the navy office and used the word 'corruption' to describe them.¹⁶ Thus he was deeply aware of what he called 'Sir W[illiam] Batten's corruption and underhand dealing';¹⁷ and noted in a condemnatory manner: 'that hardly anybody goes to sea or hath anything done by Sir W Batten but it comes with a bribe'.¹⁸ Indeed, he perceived that 'the corruptions of the Navy are of so many kinds that it is endless to look after them – especially while such a one as Sir W Batten discourages every man that is

⁹ I have used *The Diary of Samuel Pepys MA, FRS*, ed. Henry Wheatley (10 vols, 1893–9) [hereafter cited as *Diary*, with date of entry], since it is the basis for an online edition (at <http://www.pepysdiary.com/>) that is readily accessible. The text is reasonably reliable when compared with *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, ed. Latham and Matthews, though the latter's notes are superior. *Diary*, 2 Oct. 1663.

¹⁰ *Diary*, 2 Feb. 1664.

¹¹ *Diary*, 16 Sept. 1664.

¹² *Diary*, 4 Feb. 1667.

¹³ *Diary*, 2 Feb. 1664.

¹⁴ *Diary*, 21 July, 9 Sept. 1664.

¹⁵ *Diary*, 5 Aug. 1664.

¹⁶ The word 'corruption' had many meanings but its religious, moral and medical ones were supplemented, as here, by a notion of malpractice in office.

¹⁷ *Diary*, 13 June 1664.

¹⁸ *Diary*, 27 June 1663. On 15 Nov. 1665 he called him a 'lazy, corrupt, doating rogue'.

honest'.¹⁹ In 1668, MP Matthew Wren talked to Pepys 'of the corruption of the Court, and how unfit it is for ingenious men, and himself particularly, to live in it, where a man cannot live but he must spend, and cannot get suitably, without breach of his honour'.²⁰ Pepys also seemed shocked by Richard Cooling, the earl of Arlington's secretary, who boasted that 'his horse was a bribe, and his boots a bribe and told us he was made up of bribes and that he makes every sort of tradesman to bribe him; and invited me home to his house to taste of his bribe-wine. I never heard so much vanity from a man in my life.'²¹ Pepys also thought it 'a very odd thing' that his patron, the earl of Sandwich, profited from the Tangier contract to the tune of £1,500.²² Pepys certainly had a concept of corrupt behaviour and condemned it where he found it.

Moreover, Pepys records his own uneasiness about accepting bribes and the lengths he went to keep them hidden for fear of how he might be made to answer for them. In 1663, on receiving one of his first bribes, he did not open the package in which the money was contained until he returned home: 'and there I broke it open, not looking into it till all the money was out, that I might say I saw no money in the paper if ever I should be questioned about it'.²³ Pepys was sensitive to the possibility of being questioned about corrupt activity and took careful precautions to avoid being ensnared. He was, thus, annoyed when his wife acknowledged receipt of a 'neat silver watch' from a potential client, presumably since it meant that witnesses could be questioned; no wonder that Pepys resolved 'to do the man a kindness'.²⁴ Even his own diary entries were part of his attempt to cover his tracks. He carefully recorded that although he accepted 50 pieces of gold from Warren in 1667: 'I never did to this day demand any thing of him', and refused the money twice before finally accepting it; Warren promised him more if Pepys would get his bills paid, prompting Pepys to declare that he would 'do my utmost for nothing to do him that justice' – but all this was for show: Pepys confessed that he wrote in his diary 'at large for my justification if anything of this should be hereafter enquired after'.²⁵

This fear of discovery was not fanciful and his awareness of corruption was no doubt heightened by several parliamentary investigations and prosecutions. In 1663, an attempt was made to impeach Charles II's chief minister, the earl of Clarendon, on charges of having been 'bribed' to make a disadvantageous peace with the Dutch.²⁶ In 1666, Pepys was put 'into a great pain' by a 'wild motion made in the House of Lords by the Duke of Buckingham for all men that had cheated the King to be declared traitors and felons, and that my Lord Sandwich was named'.²⁷ And, in 1668, Pepys even had to justify his own actions to the commissioners of accounts, prompting him to 'prepare' those summoned to be interrogated 'about what presents I had from them, that they may not

¹⁹ *Diary*, 17 June 1664; cf. 22 May 1664.

²⁰ *Diary*, 27 Sept. 1668.

²¹ *Diary*, 30 July 1667.

²² *Diary*, 27 Dec. 1667.

²³ *Diary*, 3 Apr. 1663.

²⁴ *Diary*, 17 Apr. 1665.

²⁵ *Diary*, 25 Nov. 1667.

²⁶ *Diary*, 10 July 1663.

²⁷ *Diary*, 5 Oct. 1666.

publish them'.²⁸ Pepys and his colleagues were accused of having 'corruptly preferred and postponed payments' and he resolved 'to declare plainly, and, once for all, the truth of the whole, and what my profit hath been'.²⁹ Yet in the winter of 1669–70, Pepys was, again, called to account, this time to the Brooke House commissioners, and responded by protesting that he never did 'directly or indirectly . . . demand or express any expectation of fee, gratuity or reward from any person for any service' and deliberately underestimated the amount he was now worth by £6,000.³⁰ Pepys's diary shows that he understood what a bribe was, expressed his shock at the bribes taken by others, was uneasy that his own conduct might be discovered and sought to cover his tracks through outright denials of culpability.

Despite these clear signs that he knew what constituted corrupt behaviour and the risks involved in being caught, Pepys increasingly justified, even to himself, the money he was making on the side. He had a number of strategies for doing this. One was to think of, and describe, the bribes as gifts, presents, compliments, acknowledgements, kindnesses and loans. Thus Pepys refers to 'a very noble present' and, a year later, 'a good present' given to him.³¹ The language of presents was mirrored by one of 'kindnesses' being properly recognized, or 'obligations' being required.³² This was the language of friendship. Talking with Warren about a mutually-beneficial contract, Pepys noted that he had 'a prospect of just advantage by his friendship'.³³ Indeed, Pepys described Warren as 'the best friend I have ever had in this office'.³⁴ By deploying such terms, Pepys could accommodate his actions within ambiguous, but accepted, notions of how friends behaved to one another. Even the anglican divine, Jeremy Taylor's popular advice about friendship, first published in 1657 and reprinted three times before 1671, urged that one friend was not to refuse the 'kindnesses' of another nor despise 'the impropriety of them. . . . A gift (saith Solomon) fastneth friendships . . . so must the love of friends sometimes be refreshed with material and low Caresses; lest by striving to be *too divine* it becomes *less humane*: It must be allowed its share of *both*'.³⁵ Even when he does not use the language of friendship, Pepys carefully distinguished between a bribe and a civil acknowledgement for services rendered. Thus, when being offered £200 for help in securing a patent, he declared: 'that as I would not by anything be bribed to be unjust in my proceedings, so I was not so squeamish as not to take people's

²⁸ *Diary*, 2 Mar. 1668. The examinations of 1668–70 are explored in C.S. Knighton, *Pepys and the Navy* (Stroud, 2003), ch. 5.

²⁹ *Diary*, 11 Feb. 1668. See also Anchitell Grey, *Debates of the House of Commons* (10 vols, 1769), 15 Feb. 1668 [accessible online via British History Online, at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk>].

³⁰ *The Letters of Samuel Pepys: 1656–1703*, ed. Guy De la Bédoyère (2006), 80–1: Pepys to the Brooke House commissioners, 6 Jan. 1670; Noonan, *Bribes*, 380. For a fuller defence of the accusations of corruption, see the journal Pepys made of his interactions with the Brooke House, published in *Pepys's Later Diaries*, ed. C.S. Knighton (Stroud, 2004), 12–40. This records the moment when, having challenged the commissioners to produce a single ticket that showed a fraudulent payment to himself, they promptly did so.

³¹ *Diary*, 10 Feb. 1663; 2 Mar. 1664.

³² *Diary*, 12 Feb., 18 July 1664.

³³ *Diary*, 17 Oct. 1664.

³⁴ *Diary*, 5 Dec. 1664.

³⁵ Jeremy Taylor, *A Discourse of the Nature, Offices, and Measures of Friendship with Rules of Conducting it* (1657), 100–1.

acknowledgement where I have the good fortune by my pains to do them good and just offices'.³⁶ This lack of squeamishness diminished further over time.

As the last quotation suggests, reward for 'good and just offices' for others became a way of legitimising self-interest, especially if the greater good was that of the king as well as of the client. Thus, although Pepys accepted money from one contractor, he noted that: 'there is not the least word or deed I have yet been guilty of in his behalf but what I am sure hath been to the King's advantage and profit of the service, nor ever will I'.³⁷ Pepys insisted that the king's interest always came above his own and, indeed, that the public good was actually being furthered through the sweetened deals he struck. Thus, when Warren came to repay a 'kindness', Pepys notes that: 'I must also remember [it] was a service to the King'.³⁸ When he was offered a bribe to go against the public interest, he contemplated returning it: 'I [went] to the office and there had a difference with Sir W. Batten about Mr. Bowyer's tarr, which I am resolved to cross, though he sent me last night, as a bribe, a barrel of sturgeon, which, it may be, I shall send back, for I will not have the King abused so abominably in the price of what we buy, by Sir W. Batten's corruption and underhand dealing'.³⁹

Moreover, Pepys argues, his actions always fell within the law. When negotiating a share of the profits from one contract, he calls this 'lawfull profit'.⁴⁰ Even when faced with parliamentary scrutiny of the £500 'profit' he had made on prize goods, he still thought that: 'there is nothing of crime can be laid to my charge'.⁴¹ The 'lawful' nature of such bribes derived in no small measure from their customary nature and ubiquity, in turn a reflection of the low pay of many state offices. Right at the start of his career Pepys's patron, Sandwich, had told him: 'that it was not the salary of any place that did make a man rich, but the opportunities of getting money while he is in the place';⁴² and Sir William Warren told Pepys that 'everybody must live by their places'.⁴³ The system in which Pepys found himself operating was, thus, built around a tacit acceptance that an office was a means to an end as well as an end in itself. And it was a system in which others lacked the knowledge to expose abuse of office or even to fully understand how the system could be abused. In 1663, Pepys drew up a contract for £3,000 worth of masts and noted: 'good God, to see what a man might do were I a knave – the whole business, from beginning to the end, being done by me out of the office'.⁴⁴

The strategies adopted in the diary to legitimise his bribe-taking were the same as those that Pepys used in public when cornered. He made an appeal to a notion of bribes as voluntary gifts, fair rewards for services rendered, of always working in the king's and the public's interest when, in 1670, Pepys explicitly and publicly denied the bribes that

³⁶ *Diary*, 12 Dec. 1663.

³⁷ *Diary*, 5 Jan. 1664.

³⁸ *Diary*, 25 Nov. 1667 – also noting that: 'I never did to this day demand any thing of him'.

³⁹ *Diary*, 13 June 1663.

⁴⁰ *Diary*, 5 Mar. 1663.

⁴¹ *Diary*, 3 Feb. 1668.

⁴² *Diary*, 16 Aug. 1660 and he later learned that Lord Sandwich had received £1,500 on one contract (27 Dec. 1667).

⁴³ *Diary*, 2 Aug. 1664.

⁴⁴ *Diary*, 10 Sept. 1663.

his own diary reveals that he took. He affirmed his 'diligence' and 'integrity to my master and fair dealing towards those whom his service hath led me to have to do with'. Indeed, he protested: 'from the first hour of my serving his Majesty in this employment I did never to this day directly or indirectly demand or express any expectation of fee, gratuity or reward from any person for any service therein by me done or to be done them . . . no gratuity, though voluntarily offered, hath ever met with my acceptance where I found not the affair to which it did relate accompanied with the doing right or advantage to his Majesty'. He had been so solicitous of the public interest that he '[fou]nd not my estate at this day bettered by one thousand pounds' since his admission to office. He was ready 'to justify the same not only by oath but by a double retribution of every penny or pennyworth of advantage I shall be found to have received'. Pepys thus pleaded that he placed public over private interest: 'no concernments relating to my private fortune, pleasure or health did at any time (even under the terror of the Plague itself) divide me one day and night from my attendance on the business of the place', which had cost him his good eyesight.⁴⁵

In his earlier speech to MPs, Pepys had also defended what seemed corrupt by pleading necessity, utility, custom and humanity. The system of paying sailors by tickets was both useful and necessary, he explained, when there was 'not ready money' to pay them; 'nor can that be called irregular that never was regular'; and although he admitted that the practice 'may be extremely abused if not well looked to', he argued that the 'irregularity' in the order in which sailors were paid was due to the 'discretion' exercised in the sailors' favour: the navy office was 'not to be condemned if the pitiful necessity of some have been relieved before others out of the strict order'. Pepys denied 'any indirect or partial paying by tickets, but only where mere necessity did compel them'.⁴⁶ Administrative irregularity was thus inevitable because of the irregularity of government finance to pay sailors and was actually in the sailors' interest.

Moreover, Pepys was convinced that incentives of private profit improved the public service. In 1666, he wrote a paper for Sir William Coventry about victualling, in which he set down the maxim that 'my work is likeliest to be best done by him whose profit is increased by the well doing of it without increase of charge to me that employs him'.⁴⁷ Greasing the machine, he claimed, actually improved its efficiency: pursers would have an incentive to keep their ships at sea for longer if by doing so they stood to gain, and this, in turn, would give them 'a plain and un beholden subsistence and thereby be delivered from the necessity of studying new and practising old artifices'.⁴⁸ The conspiracies of embezzlement and fraud practised by pursers and commanders would, Pepys was convinced, stop. As things currently stood, he suggested, 'it is not the purser's corruption but necessity must be thought able to tempt him to such unthrifty ways of profit'⁴⁹ – but change the system to increase the private profit and the public would be better served not least because the motives for corruption would be removed. This

⁴⁵ *Letters of Samuel Pepys*, ed. De la Bédoyère, 80–2.

⁴⁶ *The Diary of John Milward, Esq. Member of Parliament for Derbyshire September 1666 to May 1668*, ed. C. Robbins (1938), 207–9.

⁴⁷ *The Further Correspondence of Samuel Pepys 1662–1679*, ed. J.R. Tanner (1928), 93–111, quotation at 105.

⁴⁸ *Further Correspondence of Samuel Pepys*, ed. Tanner, 109.

⁴⁹ *Further Correspondence of Samuel Pepys*, ed. Tanner, 98.

philosophy also seems to capture Pepys's attitude to his own profits, which he consistently argued were not only compatible with, but actually furthered, the king's interest.

Pepys thus argued, both to himself and to those who questioned him, that the bribes he accepted were lawful, freely-given gifts, that either justly rewarded his effort or furthered the king's interest, and even made it more humane for those employed at the sharp end. If Pepys's defence was right, then corruption could, at worst, be the inevitable outcome of not paying state officials adequately, or, at best, actually beneficial to the state. The trouble with this interpretation is, first, that Pepys had to lie to legitimise his behaviour and, second, that a very different construction could be, and was, put on Pepys's actions by his critics. Far from working in the public interest, Pepys was accused of pursuing his private interest; instead of 'friendship', Pepys was depicted as abusing social relationships for profit; and where Pepys saw self-restraint and legality, others saw rapaciousness and illegality. The ambiguity inherent in Pepys's own views about corruption show that different and clashing definitions of corruption also existed in the public sphere.

2

Pepys was the subject, in 1679, of a parliamentary enquiry that landed him in the Tower and of a vitriolic pamphlet. Both are instructive about public attitudes to corruption.

That Pepys became a victim of the Popish Plot is well known.⁵⁰ One of the witnesses, William Bedloe, alleged that Samuel Atkins, one of Pepys's servants, was present at the murder of Sir Edmund Berry Godfrey, whose death in suspicious circumstances triggered the anti-popish alarm.⁵¹ Pepys may have been the intended target of the accusation, saved by the fact that he had a cast-iron alibi, since he was away from London on the night in question. Nevertheless, pressure on Pepys persisted. A parliamentary enquiry investigating the 'miscarriages of the navy' heard information, orchestrated by the colourful intriguer, Colonel Scott, that Pepys was a traitor and popishly inclined.⁵² The evidence against Pepys was provided by his former butler, John James, who harboured a grudge after his dismissal for having been caught in bed with his master's housekeeper.⁵³ James told MPs that the Pepys household included a 'jesuit', the Portuguese musician, Morelli, who participated in catholic masses in Somerset House; that the two men sang psalms together; and that Pepys commended catholics 'for their constancy in Religion'.⁵⁴ Pepys was ordered to be arrested, despite his vehement protest that he was 'as good a son of the Church of England as any man' and hence 'far from

⁵⁰ James Long and Ben Long, *The Plot against Pepys: Detection and Intrigue in Seventeenth Century London* (2007).

⁵¹ For Atkins, see John H. Wilson, *The Ordeal of Mr Pepys's Clerk* (Columbus, OH, 1972).

⁵² On 25 Oct. 1668, his wife revealed that she was a catholic.

⁵³ Pepys told MPs that James had the 'ill luck to fall into an amour with my house-keeper, and, as fortune was, Morello overheard their intrigues, and caught them together at an unseasonable time of the night. It was Sunday, three o'clock in the morning (the better day the better deed.) I turned him away, and he was never in my House since; but I had cause of suspicion that James came within my House at a window, and robbed me': Grey, *Debates*, 20 May 1679.

⁵⁴ Grey, *Debates*, 20 May 1679. For a fuller list of the accusations made by James see his testimony at Bodl., MS Rawlinson, A 173, ff. 178-9.

suspicion of Popery'.⁵⁵ As Sir Francis Rolle sarcastically noted, Pepys 'has been very unfortunate in his Servants; one accused to be in the Plot (*Atkins* his Secretary!) another, his best maid, found in bed with his Butler! another accused to be a *Jesuit!* very unfortunate!'⁵⁶

The chair of the parliamentary enquiry, Sir William Harbord, also noted that this was not the first time that Pepys's protestantism had been questioned. In 1673 Pepys became MP for Castle Rising, one of the notoriously corrupt pocket boroughs that had only about 30 voters (amongst whom Pepys spent over £600) and where, during the Restoration, the catholic, Henry Howard, had a strong influence because the family held the lordship of the manor.⁵⁷ Indeed, a letter of recommendation from Howard was the subject of a complaint to the Commons and, in February 1674, during the subsequent investigation, Pepys's religion became the focus of parliamentary attention. Rumours that he had an altar and a crucifix in his house, and even that he had said protestantism 'came out of *Henry* the eighth's codpiece', were repeated in the Commons, forcing him to give a speech defending himself 'as a good Protestant and a good Churchman, and the best sort of Protestant'.⁵⁸ He declared that he had assiduously attended church; taken communion; qualified himself according to the Test Act; and had ensured that there were no catholic chaplains on any navy ship. He protested that he 'had not been once in his life at Mass', a lie according to the testimony of his own diary where, on 19 May 1661, he records hearing not one but two masses at York House, the Spanish ambassador's residence, and that was clearly not the first occasion he had done so, nor the last.⁵⁹ The affair finally blew over when the charges against him could not be fully substantiated, but clearly suspicions lingered.⁶⁰

Popery played a significant role in early modern ideas about corruption. Anti-popery drew a good deal of its force in the 16th and earlier 17th centuries from an association between the corruption of the true word of God and the corruption of money. That correlation was repeated in the accusations made against Pepys. In parliament, the catholic duke of York's control of the navy translated into fiscal mismanagement. As Sir Francis Winnington put it, £600,000 had been granted for the building of ships and Pepys had told MPs that 'they would be built in a year'; but 'there was 600,000*l.* gone, for they got the money and prorogued the Parliament'.⁶¹ This was symptomatic of a more general alliance between fiscal corruption and the favouring of popery. Lord Treasurer Danby, Winnington said, had 'exhausted the Treasure of the Crown, by acquiring a great estate to himself, &c. and endeavoured to stifle the discovery of the Plot, when it was just coming to light'. Danby and popery rose together. Also Danby had systematically attempted to use state money to bribe MPs to become supporters of

⁵⁵ Grey, *Debates*, 14 Apr. 1679.

⁵⁶ Grey, *Debates*, 20 May 1679.

⁵⁷ *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons, 1660–1690*, ed. B.D. Henning (3 vols, 1983) [hereafter cited as *HPC, 1660–90*], i, 323–4.

⁵⁸ Grey, *Debates*, 10, 16 Feb. 1674.

⁵⁹ See also, *Diary*, 10 May 1663.

⁶⁰ For an excellent discussion of Pepys's religious beliefs, see Kate Loveman, 'Samuel Pepys and "Discourses touching Religion" under James II', *English Historical Review*, cxxvii (2012), 46–82.

⁶¹ Grey, *Debates*, 22 Mar. 1679.

the Court.⁶² Two days after Pepys was interrogated in parliament about his religion, MPs investigated the abuse of secret service money which had been paid to 27 of their colleagues.⁶³ An intrinsic part of ‘popery and arbitrary government’ was, thus, the mispending of state resources to subvert parliament.

The association of popery and corruption was also made in a two-part pamphlet, *A Hue and Cry after P and H.*, which had *Plain Truth, or a Private Discourse between P. and H.* appended to it.⁶⁴ The tract satirised Pepys and his friend, Will Hewer, accusing both of favouring catholics ‘so far as to promote them to be Captains, or Lieutenants, or Mid-Ship-Men extraordinary’ and ridiculed Pepys for his ostentatiously-painted coach, imagining that it was decorated with ‘your Jesuite M[orelli] Playing upon his Lute, and Singing a Holy Song’.⁶⁵ The tract’s charge of popery followed immediately on from a damning indictment of the two men’s corrupt behaviour, demanding that they:

refund all the money they have unjustly taken for Permissions & Protections, to their Merchants or Owners of all such Ships as were fitted out for the last Imbargo. And also give satisfaction for your extraordinary Gain made to your selves in buying of Timber, for Building the New Ships of war. P & H you must also Refund those before-hand Guinies or Broadpieces; and also the Jars of Oyl, and Boxes of Chocolett and Chests of Greek Wines, and Chests of Syracuse Wines, and Pots of Anchovies and Quarter-Casks of old Malago, and Butts of Sherry & Westphalia hams & Bolonia Sauceges & Barrels of Pickel’d Oysters and Jars of Ollives, and Jars of Tent, & Parmosant Cheeses, & Chests of Florence Wine and Boxes of Orange Flower Water; And all those dry’d Cods and Lings, and Hogsheads of Claret, White-Wines, Champaynes, and Dozens of Syder: And also all those Mocos, Parrotts and Parakeets, Virginia Nightingales and Turtledoves, and those Fatt Turkeys and Pigs, and all those Turkish Sheep, Barberrry Horses, and Lyons, Tygers, and Beares; and all those fine Spanish Matts. All which were received from Sea-Captains, Consuls, Lieutenants, Masters, Boatswains, Gunners, Carpenters and Pursers; or from their Wives or Sons or Daughters; Or from Some of the Officers in the Dock Yards; as Master Ship-Wrights, Master of Attendance, or Clerk of the Cheques, and Storekeepsr &c And more especially those great Lumps taken of Sir D G Victualler.⁶⁶

This rich, almost lyrical, passage, cataloguing the sumptuous goods becoming available during the Restoration, publicly exposed the bribes and inducements privately recorded in the diary.

Indeed, the tract played on the public unveiling of the private. It thus promised ‘plain truth’ by publishing an allegedly ‘private discourse’ between Pepys and Hewer, using the dialogue format to reveal their secret calculations about moneymaking. The pamphlet

⁶² For Pepys’s support of this, see *HPC*, 1660–90, iii, 226: in the face of the discipline of opposition forces, ‘we must be sure to bribe voices enough’.

⁶³ Grey, *Debates*, 23 May 1679.

⁶⁴ The Early English Books Online copy has *Plain Truth* first, but it is paginated first at p. 5, with *A Hue and Cry*, paginated at pp. 1–4. The pamphlet as a whole will be referred to as *A Hue and Cry* because of the continuous pagination.

⁶⁵ *A Hue and Cry*, 3.

⁶⁶ *A Hue and Cry*, 1–2. The reference at the end is probably to Sir Denis Gauden, a navy victualler. I am grateful to Kate Loveman for spotting this.

makes an extended play on how Hewer and Pepys had sought to keep their corruption away from the public gaze. Hewer reveals that he would only bring commissions to be signed for which he already had received money, ironically so that 'it is impossible, that ever [Pepys] should be brought in question' for them and Hewer promised to keep both men 'clear enough, let the World pry never so close into our business' – yet the tract itself publicly catalogues and exposes that hidden corruption.⁶⁷ Similarly, the two men discuss extorting money for promotions within the navy service, which Pepys declares is 'very discreetly done, and it is impossible that ever it shou'd be discover'd so', yet the tract does very clearly 'discover' their corruption.⁶⁸ The two men had come 'within the Reach of the Printing Press' which, the tract declares, 'squeezes you both very hard, with Matter of Truth'.⁶⁹

The tract thus puts forward a very different view of the 'friendly favours' and lawful 'gratifications' referred to in the diary, and of the notion that a culture of venality in office justified rapacity in all. Pepys and Hewer are depicted as conspiring how best to rake off money from the preparations for war against France: 'we ought to think of getting as much as we can, in our Impleys, as well as others in the like have done . . . And what will the World say, if we do not? That we are all Fools.' But the justification that they were simply doing what everyone else did was here delegitimised, for their corrupt behaviour is shown as a cruel twisting of proper social relationships and far from victimless: the men had committed a 'great Robbery' by extorting money from cripples and maimed sailors who had been 'squeezed so cruelly' and 'forc'd to stand a whole day in Snow and Rain, in the Corners of the Streets, and beg for it'.⁷⁰ Moreover, the discrepancy between Pepys's public persona and his private corruption exposed him to be a hypocrite: the mock painting described in the tract as embellishing Pepys's ostentatious carriage showed cripples receiving 'his Charity' which was, in reality, never given.

The pamphlet further publicly exposed Pepys and Hewer's private corruption and their victims through allegations that they used their office to abuse women.⁷¹ Pepys and Hewer were said to have extorted gifts and money from 'wives' and 'daughters' as well as their menfolk. And the tract ended with a mock 'hue and cry' (significantly in a larger font) referring to 'a Lady in Lincolns-Inn-Fields, or to a Lady at her Country House in Chelsey; or to another at her House near the Exchequer; or to two Merchants Daughters in London; they being well known to these Two Persons; especially P[epys]'.⁷² These women may well be more of those wronged by extortions of money along the lines of the abused woman discussed in the tract's previous paragraph;⁷³ but there is also a clear hint of sexual impropriety. Pepys's long-time but unmarried

⁶⁷ *A Hue and Cry*, 6.

⁶⁸ *A Hue and Cry*, 7.

⁶⁹ *A Hue and Cry*, 2. For print as a means of correcting victualling abuses see Knights, 'Parliament, Print and Corruption'.

⁷⁰ *A Hue and Cry*, 2, 7.

⁷¹ *A Hue and Cry*, 3.

⁷² *A Hue and Cry*, 4. Cf. C.S. Knighton's observation 'that he was never denounced for immorality by his political opponents'; ODNB (entry on Samuel Pepys).

⁷³ That paragraph refers to John Walbanke, clerk to the navy and another of Pepys's friends: Bodl., MS Rawlinson, A 173. ff. 180–3: ms tract.

companion, Mary Skinner, who was 'well known' to Pepys in more senses than one, was the daughter of a merchant and may well be one of the women being referred to.⁷⁴ The diary, of course, provides evidence that Pepys did seek sex by advancing husbands to better positions in the navy. Pepys received and, indeed, aggressively pursued sexual favours in return for his patronage. The diary records, for example, how he deliberately sought out the 'pretty' and 'virtuous modest' wife of a carpenter, Bagwell. Initially he resolved to help the man without offering any 'courtship' to her (she is never given a first name in the diary), but he found that impossible: he began first with caresses and found 'her every day more and more coming with good words and promises of getting her husband a place'. Then, having dined at Bagwell's home, 'je tentais a faire ce que je voudrais et contre sa force je le faisais biens que passe a mon contentment'. Pepys kept his side of the bargain and furthered Bagwell's career; as a further reward 'en fin j'avais ma volont d'elle'.⁷⁵

The printed insinuations about Pepys's behaviour towards women could have been the response to allegations made by him about the immorality of his former butler, John James. James and Pepys were trying to smear each other's reputation and creditworthiness.⁷⁶ It is significant that Pepys tried to counter the corruption charges against him by claiming that James had himself received money to lay false charges and to write the printed tract.⁷⁷ We can discover a good deal about the tract's genesis as a result of Pepys's characteristically methodical attempt to get to the bottom of the affair. James had been prompted to write the mock dialogue by Colonel Roderick Mansell (himself the intended victim of the Meal Tub Plot, which was to have planted incriminating evidence of a presbyterian plot) and received payment for it.⁷⁸ As James explained, Mansell wanted to publish another piece 'drawne by way of Narrative of Proceedings betweene me and Mr Pepys & the usages I had from him' but James had refused to let it be printed. So the *Hue and Cry* section of the published tract was written (depending

⁷⁴ Mary's 'steady friendship and Assistances' for the last 33 years of Pepys's life was rewarded in his will with a bequest of £200 per annum: James H. Hanford, 'Pepys and the Skinner Family', *Review of English Studies*, vii (1931), 257–70.

⁷⁵ Diary, 9, 17 July, 7 Aug. 1663; 31 May, 20 Oct., 20 Dec. 1664; 23 Jan., 20 Feb. 1665; 1 July 1666; 1 Feb., 4 Mar. 1667. The passages translate as 'I tried to do what I would with her and, against her struggles, did it well although not to my contentment'; 'at last I had my way'.

⁷⁶ In the period of the diary we see something similar when James Carkesse was removed as a clerk in the navy office in 1666 for corrupt irregularities, but got himself reappointed: he went on to accuse Pepys and his colleagues of paying a privateer in their ownership rather than the sailors of a royal navy ship: *Letters of Samuel Pepys*, ed. De la Bédoyère, 79.

⁷⁷ Bodl., MS Rawlinson, A 173, ff. 178–9: testimony of John James; A 175, ff. 210–14: information of Felix Donlius about James receiving money; ff. 215–17: declaration of John James. James admitted receiving about £12 from Harbord but also the promise of preferment. Further details are to be found in the journal Pepys kept about his dealings with James, published in *Pepys's Later Diaries*, ed. Knighton, 82–117, which make it clear that Harbord extracted a confession from James denying that he had bribed him to accuse Pepys. Long and Long, *Plot against Pepys*. See also Peter Hinds, 'The Horrid Popish Plot': Roger L'Estrange and the Circulation of Political Discourse in Late Seventeenth-Century London (Oxford, 2010). The tract is considered by Arthur Bryant but James's allegations are described as 'rather puerile': Arthur Bryant, *Samuel Pepys: The Years of Peril* (1967), 212.

⁷⁸ Bodl., MS Rawlinson, A 175, ff. 215–17: declaration by John James, as he lay sick and dying. The copy of the dialogue written by James, retrieved from Francis Smith who 'corrected it', is at Bodl., MS Rawlinson, A 173, ff. 180–3. James's declaration also makes clear that he received 20s. for the pamphlet from the dissenting bookseller and publisher, Benjamin Harris.

on which version of the story Pepys chose to believe) either by Mansell or by 'Narrative' Smith or by Felix Donlius (also known as Lewes).⁷⁹

Such details are important because they suggest larger political motives behind the accusations of corruption against Pepys. According to Alexander Harris, a messenger of the admiralty who had temporarily fallen out with Pepys (he suspected the latter of blocking payments to him), Colonel Mansell was 'ye Principll Enemy of Mr Pepys, a Person very intimate with and employ'd by ye Earle of Shaftesbury and ye greatest Stickler in the carrying on of this Business'.⁸⁰ As the duke of York's creature, Pepys was damned by association and so naturally became a target for those in the house of commons seeking to attack James, who included Sir William Harbord and Shaftesbury.⁸¹ Moreover, although the earl's biographer largely discounts allegations that Shaftesbury had himself accepted bribes,⁸² it seems likely that Pepys knew that he did: his diary records him admiring 'how prettily this cunning Lord can be partial and dissemble it in this case, being privy to the bribe he is to receive'.⁸³ The two men, it seems, had both been accepting backhanders from the same man, but neither let on. Whether Shaftesbury feared that Pepys had proof against him or, more probably, disliked Pepys because of his closeness to the duke of York, it is no surprise to find Shaftesbury deliberately smearing Pepys over the allegations of popery in 1674 (he was the named source of the rumours against Pepys) or that Pepys was convinced that Shaftesbury was behind much of the attack in 1679. Allegations of corruption, therefore, were intensely political.

3

What, then, does a case study of Pepys tell us about the culture of corruption in the later Stuart period or about pre-modern corruption more generally?

One important theme is the ambiguity, capaciousness and contested nature of the definition of corruption.⁸⁴ Pepys could at once both condemn others for corruption and engage in it himself by redefining what was corrupt, so that the bribes he took became, for him at least, lawful rewards or friendly gifts for favours and exertion, and were never done at the expense of the crown's interests. Indeed, he could even construct a case in which irregularities had virtue, usefully and humanely meeting the necessities of a system that was otherwise incapable of ensuring regular payments to sailors. Pepys constructed a notion of himself as a man of integrity and even that his rise in fortunes was a

⁷⁹ Bodl., MS Rawlinson, A 175, ff. 215–7; ff. 220–1: the testimony of the cleric Adam Littleton; A 179, f. 48: Felix Donlius to Hewer, 6 Feb. 1688.

⁸⁰ Bodl., MS Rawlinson, A 175, f. 224: information of Alex Harris, 24 Mar. 1679[/80]; *Pepys's Later Diaries*, ed. Knighton, 104.

⁸¹ James claimed that he had been given money by Harbord when he had sent him the 'libel' about Pepys and Hewer: *Pepys's Later Diaries*, ed. Knighton, 102.

⁸² K.H.D. Hailey, *The First Earl of Shaftesbury* (1968), 154–6.

⁸³ *Diary*, 23 Sept. 1667.

⁸⁴ For a helpful discussion see Mark Philp, 'Defining Political Corruption', *Political Studies*, xlv (1997), 436–62 – which discusses Pepys at p. 443.

reflection of God's providence.⁸⁵ Yet the public attacks on Pepys constructed a very different picture which turned Pepys's defence on its head: accepting bribes was rapacious and wrong, and it did harm because it preyed on those, including the vulnerable and weak, who needed his help.⁸⁶ In this reading, Pepys deserved a 'hue and cry' after him.

Pepys, thus, helps us to construct two concurrent, but rival, interpretations of officeholding. One recognized offices as poorly paid, administering an emerging 'fiscal-military state' that was full of inefficiency and which, therefore, needed the enterprise of men who could deliver core services and make them more efficient even if that meant incentivising them through deals that promoted their private interest.⁸⁷ This interpretation of office saw gifts and rewards as voluntary marks of friendship or lawful and just acknowledgements of services not only rendered but done with special speed, care or assistance. And it recognized that such gifts were everyday practice, without which an officeholder would remain relatively poor, and that they could be beneficial to the state: private profit yielded public benefit. The alternative construction stressed vice rather than virtue, viewing such behaviour as immoral and illegitimate, hypocritical and full of pride and greed; the acceptance of bribes signified a lack of justice, integrity and honesty. Such corruption involved a comprehensive immorality that encompassed religious belief, sexual behaviour and a wide range of vices.⁸⁸ This second construction also stressed the need to expose what remained hidden and secretive; and for friendship to be based on more than mutual self-gratification. Finally, it depicted the scheming intelligence of the officeholder as very far from being harnessed to the interests of the public or even the state: private profit was self-serving vice.

A number of things flow from this duality. First, corruption lay in the eye of the beholder and was something that others did rather than oneself; but, because the allegation was an emotive one that impugned public spiritedness, it could also be used as part of a political game to delegitimise an opponent or rival. The accusation of corruption was often one intrinsically about hypocrisy: a private vice masquerading as a public benefit needed to be exposed and punished. Second, corruption explored the boundaries of friendship, and the relationship between patron and client. Pepys used the language of friendship for the man who offered him most bribes, Sir William Warren, and the friendship between Pepys and Hewer was symbolised in the printed dialogue between them when they pause to 'hugg and kiss one another';⁸⁹ but these could be

⁸⁵ Noonan, *Bribes*, 377. Later in his career Pepys even sought to expose and correct, through a series of printed pamphlets, what he saw as mismanagement, unaccounted outgoings and 'self-interest' at Christ's Hospital: *Mr. Pepys to the President and Governours of Christ-Hospital upon the present state of the said hospital* (1698), paper V. For a discussion of the tracts, see Kate Loveman, 'Pepys in Print, 1660–1703', Oxford Handbooks Online (forthcoming), and I am grateful to her for drawing these tracts to my attention.

⁸⁶ Bryant, *Years of Peril*, 213.

⁸⁷ For the development of the fiscal-military state see John Brewer, *The Sinews of Power: War, Money and the English State, 1688–1783* (1989).

⁸⁸ Pepys himself used corruption in a number of different but compatible ways. Thus, as well as castigating the corruption of Batten and the court, he used the verb 'corrupt' to mean leading astray: one maid endeavoured 'to corrupt our cook maid' (Diary, 9 Apr. 1663), and he was annoyed at his servant 'Will's corrupting the maids with his idle talke and carriage' (Diary, 31 Oct. 1663).

⁸⁹ *A Hue and Cry*, 6.

characterised as self-interested friendships in which legitimate gift-giving or service between friends was abused. We need to know much more about such uncertain boundaries, how contemporaries sought to negotiate them, how they were viewed and how they changed over time.⁹⁰ Aaron Graham has recently argued that such informal networks, rather than an emerging bureaucracy, were intrinsic to the emergence of the fiscal-military state because they supplied the necessary trust needed to raise capital and because they were the more effective in delivering services. ‘Corruption’, if it merits that term, might thus have been a price worth paying.⁹¹ But whilst it is true that credit was built on personal networks, we also need to factor public perceptions of exploitative corrupt behaviour into this calculation and the significant cost of lost trust in the structures of politics.⁹²

Such public mistrust was not new. In the late 16th and early 17th centuries, as Linda Levy Peck has shown, an increasing anxiety about corruption pervaded the political and literary discourse and the cause was, in part, structural: ‘Early Stuart England was governed by a personal monarchy which ruled through a patrimonial bureaucracy organised within a hierarchical society structured by patron-client relationships.’⁹³ Such relationships were often monetarised. One text, written in the 16th century but translated and published during the time Pepys was writing his diary, argued for a deeply-instrumental view of the patron-client relationship. Giovanni della Casa’s *The arts of grandeur and submission, or, A discourse concerning the behaviour of great men towards their inferiours, and of inferiour personages towards men of greater quality* (1665) claimed that clients approached patrons ‘principally, or only’ from motives of ‘either profit, or pleasure’ not from ‘True and Ideated Friendship’ of virtuous persons.⁹⁴ Since ‘Riches and Power’ were the principal motives for the relationship, virtues that might be prized elsewhere were out of place: ‘that modesty which becomes a *Virgin* in a *Cloyster*, is criminall in a *Curtesan*’.⁹⁵ ‘Utility’ was thus the proper bond:

Thus it is manifest, that in these kindes of associations, such onely are comprehended as are *different in power and riches*: and the *bonds* of them are not a *particular* affection and *love* each have for others, but *utility*. From whence also it is concluded (which was before asserted) that they are *much mistaken*, who think that this sort of friendship hath *any affinity* with, or ought to be managed according to the principles of *true and exact friendship*.⁹⁶

⁹⁰ For literature on friendship and gift-giving, see Illana Ben Amos, *The Culture of Giving in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2008); *The Culture of the Gift in Eighteenth Century England*, ed. Cynthia Klekar and Linda Zionowski (Basingstoke, 2009); Felicity Heal, ‘Food Gifts, The Household and the Politics of Exchange in Early Modern England’, *Past & Present*, No. 199 (2008), 41–70; Sarah Haggarty, *Blake’s Gifts: Poetry and the Politics of Exchange* (Cambridge, 2010). For patronage, see Peck, *Court Patronage*.

⁹¹ Graham, ‘Partisan Politics and the British Fiscal-Military State’, *passim*.

⁹² For a helpful discussion of the social and cultural manufacture of credit, see Craig Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation: The Culture of Credit and Social Relations in Early Modern England* (New York, 1998).

⁹³ Peck, *Court Patronage*, 4.

⁹⁴ Giovanni della Casa, *The Arts of Grandeur* (1665), 6, trans. Henry Stubbe.

⁹⁵ Della Casa, *Arts of Grandeur*, 12–13.

⁹⁶ Della Casa, *Arts of Grandeur*, 14.

Clients should not ‘perplex themselves with *scruples* out of *Divinity, Morallity, or Politicks*’.⁹⁷ Thus, although della Casa believed that a client ought not to be enslaved by his patron, for the latter ‘The *world* is but a *great market*, in which every thing is *sold*’.⁹⁸ The publication of such works in the early Restoration, together with Pepys’s behaviour, suggests that such views were not uncommon. Gerald Aylmer suggested long ago that early modern officeholding was seen ‘as a private right or interest, rather than as a public service’. Aylmer even quotes a tract of 1702 which, significantly in light of the previous discussion, depicts a dialogue over naval mismanagement in which ‘Fudg’, an Admiralty official, deflects talk of private interest by referring to ‘the King’s interest’.⁹⁹ Yet Aylmer also sensed that the pressure of war in the later Stuart period was putting significant pressure on what constituted private and public interests, a tension that was to play out for much of the 18th century.

Charting the shift of attitudes to public and private interests, friendship, gift-giving and patronage requires a broad chronological treatment, stretching into the early 19th century, and an attempt to relate state formation to ideas and practices of officeholding.¹⁰⁰ Such a survey would also need to examine the *rise* of ‘old corruption’ – the term given to the system of parasites who fed off the state through sinecures, pensions, rewards, government contracts and so on, and, in turn, filled parliament, as Pepys did, by buying corrupt boroughs or unduly influencing elections with money, bribes and lavish entertainments – as well as its decline. As the study of Pepys suggests, and as David Hayton’s work also urges, we might challenge the association of ‘old corruption’ with the long regime of Robert Walpole and ‘whig oligarchy’ after 1715.¹⁰¹ Such an interpretation obscures larger trends that pre-date Walpole’s premiership and ignores ways in which Walpole reflected, as well as caused, cultural shifts.

⁹⁷ Della Casa, *Arts of Grandeur*, 49.

⁹⁸ Della Casa, *Arts of Grandeur*, 17.

⁹⁹ Aylmer, ‘From Office-Holding to Civil Service’, 92–4. The tract is *The Present Condition of the English Navy Set Forth in a Dialogue* (1702), and the discussion of public and private interests occurs at pp. 3–4.

¹⁰⁰ Harling, *Waning of ‘Old Corruption’*; Philip Harling, ‘Parliament, the State, and “Old Corruption”’: Conceptualising Reform, c.1790–1832’, in *Rethinking the Age of Reform*, ed. A. Burns and J. Innes (Cambridge, 2003); Harling, ‘Rethinking Old Corruption’, 127–58; Rubinstein, ‘The End of “Old Corruption” in Britain’, 55–86.

¹⁰¹ Roberts, ‘Party and Patronage’, 185–212.