

ENGLISH REHEARSAL PLAYS

ENGLISH REHEARSAL PLAYS:
THEATRE, POLITICS, AND “THEATRICAL POLITICS”, 1660-1800

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation contributes to Restoration and eighteenth-century studies by advancing the first critical examination of rehearsal plays as a distinct subgenre of dramatic comedy. I examine the development of the genre alongside major changes to production practices and acting techniques during this period to argue that rehearsal plays' burlesque subversions of contemporary drama and dramatic conventions satirically enact problematic political and theatrical successions from the Exclusion Crisis of the 1680s to the representation of Shakespearean tragedies in the 1780s. More than simply plays about other plays, rehearsal plays superimpose critical spectators whose dialectical engagements with the embedded burlesque expose a shift in the relationship between actors, authors, and audiences as the London patent theatres emerge from civic institutions of courtly pastime into civil enterprises of commercial entertainment. This dissertation has two aims. First, I chart adaptations of *The Rehearsal* by George Villiers, 2nd duke of Buckingham through the eighteenth century to show how this satire on Restoration courtiers and court drama is continually readapted into an oppositional satire on contemporary politicians and mock-heroic burlesque of contemporary tragedians. Second, I examine the changing dramatic structure of several eighteenth-century rehearsal plays to show how the genre flourishes in response to a rapid expansion of the theatrical marketplace during this period. Drawing upon a vast archive of playbills, performance reviews, and theatrical ephemera, this study examines some of the most celebrated Restoration and eighteenth-century rehearsal plays, and offers theatre historians an expanded understanding of some major playwrights and performers including Henry Fielding, Catherine Clive, David Garrick, and Richard Brinsley Sheridan.

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———— INTRODUCTION ————

PLAYING FAVOURITES & THE REHEARSAL

“We might well call this short Mock-play of ours
A Posie made of Weeds instead of Flowers”
— “PROLOGUE”, *The Rehearsal* (1672)

Few new plays written during the Restoration and eighteenth century see a second night or a revival, but *The Rehearsal* (1672) remains a seasonal fixture on the London stage.¹ Why? What changes in the performance of the play between the premiere of the dramatic satire on the Restoration stage, and its ongoing revival on the later eighteenth-century stage? *The Rehearsal* is staged roughly three hundred times between December of 1671 and October of 1779. How did theatregoers not tire of the same routines replayed ad nauseam season after season for more than one hundred years? Much scholarship has been devoted to Buckingham’s *Rehearsal*, but no scholar has yet attended to studying the drama as it is adapted over the eighteenth century. This dissertation aims to fill this gap in extant scholarship on Restoration and eighteenth-century drama.

The Rehearsal is a mock-heroic Restoration spectacular authored by perhaps the most spectacular Restoration courtier and wit: George Villiers, 2nd duke of Buckingham (1628-1687). Both admired and admonished as the Restoration court favourite among privy councillors to Charles II, Buckingham was raised at the Stuart and Medici courts where he developed a taste for the arts, and learned to mimic the ministerial manners of

¹ *The Rehearsal, As it was Acted at the Theatre-Royal* (London: Thomas Dring, 1672). See also: *The Rehearsal... The Seventeenth Edition, As Acted at the Theatres Royal* (London: T. Waller, et. al., 1768).

courtiers before him.² *The Rehearsal* is both a dramatic burlesque and a political satire that makes a play out of Buckingham's impersonating wit as he later began to weaponize it by parodying rival court favourites. Ongoing topical adaptation to the reigning political administration and theatrical trends of the day later sustained this play on the eighteenth-century stage, and in this study I consider both a number of rehearsal plays modelled on Buckingham's satire and proper playtext adaptations of his *Rehearsal* from the Cabal ministry of the Restoration through to the North ministry of the American Revolutionary War.

The remarkable longevity of Buckingham's *Rehearsal* and subsequent flourishing of English rehearsal plays on the eighteenth-century stage can be attributed to two factors: an ideological movement of anti-Jacobitism coursing through the body politic in an age of Whig ascendancy, and an aesthetic movement toward a more broadly representative political theatre. As the 'court' and 'country' parties contest the divine right of kings to act on behalf of the nation, so do playwrights and performers contest the nature of directorial authority at the national theatres. These debates become manifest in English rehearsal plays' metatheatrical expressions and burlesque remediations of, much like Buckingham himself, a courtly past caught up in the parliamentary and commercially democratic present. As one eighteenth-century adopter of Buckingham's burlesque framework jokes, "there is a strict Resemblance between the States Political and Theatrical", and this

² Anthony van Dyck, *George Villiers, 2nd Duke of Buckingham, and Lord Francis Villiers*, 1635, Oil on canvas, Queen's Gallery, Windsor Castle, RCIN 404401.

politico-theatrical analogue is drawn through the superimposing of a caricatured theatrical body politic in rehearsal plays' representations of the English playhouses as 'little parliaments' of popular assembly.³

A "rehearsal play" is a play about actors, authors, and audiences. The theatrical experience is itself the subject of these plays, and virtually every age produces them anew. Aristophanes parodies the tragedians of antiquity as a chorus of *Frogs* (405 BCE), and Shakespeare spoofs the strolling players of early modernity through the mechanical craftsmen of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1595/1596). Indeed, the caricatured author within Shakespeare's play, Peter Quince, offers one of the earliest etymological instances of the term "rehearsal" in the English language, but it is on the Restoration and eighteenth-century stage that rehearsal plays begin to both take-on and takeoff a more familiar and modern theatrical experience.⁴ That is to say, in other words, that Restoration and eighteenth-century rehearsal plays show a professional theatre rehearsal in progress from the perspective of a few friends talking over a play not at a Dionysian festival nor court wedding in Athens, but rather at a local London playhouse. Unlike the rehearsal

³ Henry Fielding, *The Historical Register for the Year 1736* (London: J. Roberts, 1737), p. 21. The 'Little Parliament', also referred to as 'the Nominated Assembly', sat in the House of Commons from July to December of 1653, and was the final republican parliamentary assembly of the Commonwealth prior to the Protectorate and Oliver Cromwell's military dictatorship. I adopt the term figuratively here. For a study of this political transition, see: Austin Woolrych, *Commonwealth to Protectorate* (Oxford UP, 1982). For a rich study of theatrical practices and discourses during this transition, see also: Rachel Willie, *Staging the Revolution: Drama, Reinvention and History, 1647-1672* (Manchester UP, 2015).

⁴ "rehearsal, *n.*" in *Oxford English Dictionary*.

plays of antiquity and early modernity, there is no additional plot concerning a descent into the underworld nor a farcical foray into an enchanted forest in Restoration and eighteenth-century rehearsal plays. In *The Rehearsal*—as well as its predecessors and its subsequent adaptations—the play is set entirely within the confines of a modern theatre, and, more often than not, the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane wherein a cast of caricatured theatregoers offer satirical commentary and biting critiques layered over a burlesque play-within-the-play. In Buckingham’s *Rehearsal*, an amateur tragedian named Bayes invites two London theatregoers named Johnson and Smith to a rehearsal of his new tragedy. The play is a patchwork of theatrical clichés and “*Drama Common places*” lifted from a number of other recent plays produced at the Theatre Royal, and, as the actors rehearse Bayes’s play-within-the-play, Johnson and Smith repeatedly question the plot and meaning of the comically nonsensical tragedy.⁵

Rehearsal plays produced in London during the Restoration and eighteenth century superimpose critical spectators to represent the modern theatregoing public and enlightened body politic within the broader fiction of the play. This superimposition of a critical gaze works to produce an alienation effect from the burlesque plays-within-

⁵ *The Rehearsal* (London: Thomas Dring, 1672), p. 3.

rehearsal-plays.⁶ The spectatorial plants frame the embedded burlesque, and a caricatured playwright sits among them directing the rehearsal from the metatheatrical margins of the stage. The actors oscillate in and out of character between entrances and exits while their lines defamiliarize plays and personae familiar to theatregoers to reinforce the illusion of a rehearsal. Just like a self-portrait of the artist in their studio, rehearsal plays project a caricatured image of the theatre at work. What gets hissed and huzzahed in the dialogical marginalia of rehearsal plays in turn forms critical dialectics over the nature of theatrical representation, and these contests for control over the abstraction of meaning from a playtext ultimately culminate in metatheatrical remonstrances of the principal production practices, dramatic conventions, and acting styles of the age. What theatre once was and what theatre now ought to be synthesize in rehearsal plays' farcical remediations of popular drama, and, as the London patent theatres expand from sites of courtly pastime into sociable hotspots of commercial entertainment during the eighteenth century, this neoclassical intermingling of past with present works to self-consciously dramatize and negotiate a variety of problematic sociopolitical continuities in the nature of theatrical representation.

⁶ I use "alienation" here in the theatrical sense of "a dramatic effect whereby an audience remains objective and emotionally distant from the characters or action of a play". See: "alienation, *n.* 1.", "verfremdungseffekt, *n.*", and "defamiliarization, *n.*" in *Oxford English Dictionary*. See also: Viktor Shklovsky, "Art as Device", in *Theory of Prose*, Benjamin Sher, trans. (London: Dalkey Archive, 1990), pp. 1-14; and, *Brecht on Theatre*, Marc Silberman, Steve Giles, Tom Kuhn, eds. (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1964).

Rehearsal plays proliferate during periods of rapid growth and expansion to the theatrical marketplace, and those produced during the 1670s therefore project a theatrical experience that is at a significant remove from those produced during the 1770s. The first Theatre Royal in Drury Lane seats approximately seven hundred courtiers during the Restoration, and quadruples in size to accommodate audiences in excess of three-and-a-half thousand by the late eighteenth century.⁷ The critical gaze embedded within rehearsal plays dilates throughout the period to represent this shift in theatrical bodies politic. When Richard Brinsley Sheridan (1751-1816) adapts the structure of Buckingham's *Rehearsal* into *The Critic: or, A Tragedy Rehearsed* in October of 1779, the critical gaze projected through the drama is not so much that of a duke and his theatregoing friends as it is the playhouse hangers-on of eighteenth-century modernity. Court favourites caricatured in 1671 are later retrofit into consumer favourites and theatrical celebrities of the eighteenth-century stage, and nearly every adaptation of the play is therefore unique to the topical moment and eve of its production: "The Cloaths are old", as one rehearsal playbill runs, "but the Jokes intirely new".⁸ Buckingham's playtext, I am going to argue, serves as a palimpsest that invites further palimpsests through which multiple generations of

⁷ James Van Horn Melton, "From courts to consumers: theater publics", in *The Rise of the Public in Enlightenment Europe* (Cambridge UP, 2001), pp. 160-162.

⁸ Emmett L. Avery, "The Stage Popularity of *The Rehearsal*, 1671-1777", *Research Studies of the State College of Washington*, 7.4 (December 1939): 201-204. See also: Henry Fielding, "PASQUIN. A Dramatick SATYR on the Times", in "Advertisements and Notices", *London Daily Post and General Advertiser*, 24 February 1736, Issue 410, *17th and 18th Century Burney Collection Newspapers*. McMaster University Library. Unless otherwise noted, all eighteenth-century newspaper citations to follow are derived from the *Burney Collections*.

playwrights and performers produce pasquinades at the expense of those that played before them to address issues of both monarchical and theatrical succession.⁹

Bayes, the caricatured author and amateur dramaturge of Buckingham's play-within-the-play, is a coveted role among professional comedians of the period. The name evokes aptronymic associations with an Apollonian crown of laurel bay leaves awarded poet laureates, and the first actor to play the part, John Lacy (c. 1615-1681), is said to have rehearsed with Buckingham in aping the mannerisms of England's first official laureate: John Dryden (1631-1700).¹⁰ Intertextual allusions to Dryden's plays abound in Bayes's play-within-the-play, as some of the very first critics of the satire observed.¹¹ The laureate's reply to the caricature is suggestive of a broader anti-ministerial and anti-court satire, however: "my Betters", Dryden recalls, "were more concern'd than I was in that Satire". There are few if any authors in this period who might be thought the "Betters" of the reigning poet laureate, and Dryden plays along coolly alluding to his patrons at court:

⁹ I use "pasquinades" here to refer to "a lampoon posted in a public place; (later) any circulated or published lampoon or libel". See: "pasquinade, *n.*", in *Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford UP, 2021). See also: "Pasquin, *n.*", as in "the person popularly supposed to be represented by a statue in Rome on which satirical Latin verses were annually posted in the 16th cent.; the statue itself. Hence: an imaginary person to whom anonymous lampoons were ascribed; a composer of lampoons", in *Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford UP, 2021).

¹⁰ Joseph Spence, *Observations, anecdotes, and characters of books and men, collected from conversation*, Vol. 1, James M. Osborn, ed. (Oxford UP, 1966), pp. 275-7. See also: "The Rehearsal", in *Plays, Poems, and Miscellaneous Writings*, Vol. 1, p. 356.

¹¹ "The Key to the Rehearsal", in *The Second Volume of Miscellaneons [sic.] Works, Written by George, Late Duke of Buckingham* (London: Sam Briscoe, 1705), pp. 1-32.

“those Noble Characters of Men of Wit and Pleasure about the Town”.¹² From the outset, Bayes is designed to satirize multiple personae from the Restoration court, and like a poet laureate, he represents an abstracted ideal for playwriting that Buckingham’s satire systematically deconstructs. Dryden’s *Essay* and subsequent *Defence of an Essay of Dramatick Poesie* (1668-1669) champion an Aristotelian conception of playwriting as an “imitation of Nature” and “what is natural”, and he theorizes a new type of courtly “heroic drama” that celebrates the restoration of the Stuart monarchy. Bayes’s play-within-the-play closely adheres to the conventions of Dryden’s heroic drama in order to play them up to farcical extremes.¹³ For every jest at Dryden’s expense in the composition of Bayes, however, there is another at Buckingham’s court rival: Henry Bennet, 1st earl of Arlington (1618-1685). More than any other Restoration courtier, Arlington presents the greatest threat to Buckingham as the Restoration court favourite in the late 1660s, and, as others before me have observed, Bayes’s misdirection of the rehearsal draws many satiric parallels to what Buckingham charged in the House of Commons as Arlington’s misdirection of foreign affairs for his active role in leading the nation into a failed Second Anglo-Dutch War (1665-1667).

¹² “A Discourse concerning the Original and Progress of Satire”, in *Satires of Decimus Junius Juvenalis. Translated into English Verse by Mr. Dryden* (London: Jacob Tonson, 1697), vii.

¹³ *Of Dramatick Poesie, An Essay* (London: H. Herringman, 1668), pp. 11, 53. See also: Preface “To the Reader”, in Robert Howard, *The Great Favourite, or the Duke of Lerma* (London: H. Herringman, 1668), and John Dryden’s “A Defence of an Essay of Dramatique Poesie, Being an Answer to the Preface of The Great Favourite, or the Duke Of Lerma”, in *The Indian Emperour, or the Conquest of Mexico*. 2nd ed. (London: H. Herringman, 1668).

Mocking both his court rivals and the poet laureate, Buckingham projects his own theatrical ideals through Johnson and Smith: the critical spectators of Bayes's play-within-the-play. Their names, like "Bayes", invite aptronymic associations with the court. Although he did not bear the title, the pension afforded Ben 'Jonson' (1572-1637) for his court poetry and masques set the precedent for John Dryden's post as poet laureate during the Restoration.¹⁴ Buckingham censures Dryden from the critical gaze of the poet laureate's predecessor, Jonson, and recasts himself into the laureate tradition as the Ben 'Jo[h]nson' of the Restoration period. Smith, by comparison, who has recently returned to the 'Town' from the 'Country' as the curtain draws, reinforces the underlying republican and proto-Whig politics of the satire as a caricatured embodiment and representative surrogate for Buckingham's 'country party' allies in parliament.¹⁵ *The Rehearsal* projects Buckingham's fantasies of control over the Restoration court, crown, and playhouses during a period during which he was beginning to lose favour to his own "Better" at court, namely: Dryden, Arlington, and Prince Rupert of the Rhine. In their recent introduction to the text, Robert D. Hume and Harold Love stress that "no hit play in London before or since has ever been written by so great a nobleman", and I devote the first chapter of this study to unpacking Buckingham's political and literary allusions in

¹⁴ In early 1616, "in consideracion of the good and acceptable service done and to be done unto" James I, Ben Jonson is awarded an annual "pencion of one hundred markes" [*sic.*], 1 February 1616, Patent Roll, Grants, in National Archives, Kew, PRO C 66/2084 m. xii. See also: Ian Donaldson, "Fame 1613-1616", in *Ben Jonson: A Life* (Oxford UP, 2011), pp. 304-331, and Edmund Kemper Broadus, *The Laureateship: A Study of the Office of Poet Laureate in England* (Oxford UP, 1921).

¹⁵ *The Rehearsal* (1672), p. 1.

The Rehearsal so as to situate the play in the broader context of its first production at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane in 1671.¹⁶ Taking up the work of George McFadden and Margarita Stocker, whose critical inquiries into several forgotten political allusions embedded within the drama lay the groundwork for my analysis of its early statecraft, I show how political satire and literary burlesque are interwoven in *The Rehearsal*, and offer a new reading of the burlesque as an anti-Jacobite and oppositional country party satire set between the Second and Third Anglo-Dutch Wars.¹⁷

The principal aim of this study is to follow *The Rehearsal* in adaptation over the century to follow in order to show how Buckingham's satirical allusions to his own court rivals are later adapted to rivalries of the eighteenth-century stage. In addition to satirizing his enemies at court and in the House of Commons, Buckingham's mock-heroic play-within-the-play builds out a satirical allegory of decidedly nonsensical monarchical successions that directly allude to topical state affairs concerning the Restoration of the Stuart monarchy during this period. The monarch, Charles II, and his brother James, duke of York, are both caricatured in the play-within-the-play as the "Two Kings of Brentford", and so too is their cousin Prince Rupert—third in line for the Restoration succession—as "Prince Pretty-Man". Bayes's mock-heroic farce embedded within *The Rehearsal* is calculated and designed to play as a political farce in light of burgeoning issues of

¹⁶ "The Rehearsal", in *Plays, Poems, and Miscellaneous Writings*, Vol. 1, p. 386.

¹⁷ Margarita Stocker, "Political Allusion in *The Rehearsal*", *Philological Quarterly* 67 (1988): 11-35, and George McFadden, "Political Satire in *The Rehearsal*", *Yearbook of English Studies* 4 (1974): 120-128.

monarchical succession with no legitimate Protestant heir to the crown during this period. As a leading figure among the country party opposition in the House of Commons, Buckingham opposed the Stuart succession of the duke of York, and the oppositional Whig spirit of Buckingham's burlesque is not entirely lost in adaptation over the eighteenth century, but as the Exclusion Crisis fades into distant cultural memory, the embedded satire on monarchical succession shifts into a broader satire on Jacobitism writ large. I am going to show in subsequent chapters of this study how eighteenth-century productions of *The Rehearsal* adapt Buckingham's anti-Jacobite satire on monarchical succession into satires on theatrical succession as a generation of new actors steps into old roles and stock characters at the Theatre Royal. I therefore devote two central chapters of this study to two of the most celebrated performers of the mid-eighteenth century—Catherine “Kitty” Clive (1711-1785) and David Garrick (1717-1779)—to show how subsequent adaptations of *The Rehearsal* embed topical allusions to mid-century playwrights and performers. I consider how both Clive and Garrick construct their own celebrity personae in opposition to their predecessors by caricaturing and deconstructing them in the play.

The second chapter of this dissertation focusses on Henry Fielding (1707-1754) and the Theatrical Licensing Act of 1737. Fielding's rehearsal plays in the 1730s ruffled feathers both on the London stage and at the Hanoverian court of George II, and in this chapter I am going to examine his rehearsal plays that mask topical political satire under the guise of dramatic burlesque in the tradition of Buckingham's *Rehearsal*. Fielding's

rehearsal plays are often cited as precipitating the Licensing Act of 1737 that rendered all new plays produced in and around London subject to the approval of the Lord Chamberlain's Office, and this chapter considers three rehearsal plays produced prior to the Act: *The Author's Farce and The Pleasures of the Town* (1730), *Pasquin* (1736), and *The Historical Register for the Year 1736* (1737). Each of Fielding's burlesques embedded within these rehearsal plays runs amok from a lack of playhouse direction, and allegorizes his own Patriot Whig opposition to the reigning administration of Court Whigs in parliament by paralleling a farce of stage with a farce of government. Building on the first chapter of this study, and in conversation with the scholarship of Peter Lewis, Matthew J. Kinservik, and Thomas Lockwood, I examine Fielding's rehearsal plays as vehicles of political opposition and metatheatrical critique directed at the Drury Lane playhouse manager and reigning poet laureate Colley Cibber (1671-1757), and the Whig prime minister and Hanoverian court favourite Sir Robert Walpole, 1st earl of Orford (1676-1745).¹⁸

Catherine Clive is the third subject of this dissertation. In this chapter I analyze a series of significant early performances by the actor, author, and musical celebrity: Polly in *The Beggar's Opera* (1728), Phillida in *Love in a Riddle* (1729), Dulceda in *Bays's Opera* (1730), and 'Kitty Clive' in *The Harlot's Progress* (1733), *The Coffee-House*

¹⁸ Peter Lewis, *Fielding's Burlesque Drama: Its Place in the Tradition* (Edinburgh UP, 1987), Matthew J. Kinservik, *The Censorship of Satiric Comedy on the Eighteenth-Century London Stage* (Bucknell UP, 2002), and Thomas Lockwood, *Henry Fielding: Plays*, 3 vols. (Oxford UP, 2004-2011). See also: Thomas Lockwood, "Fielding and the Licensing Act", *Huntington Library Quarterly* 50.4 (1987): 379-393.

(1737), and *Sir John Cockle at Court* (1738). The aim of this chapter is to show how rehearsal plays produce commercial-scale simulacra of intimate social immersion among the Theatre Royal actors by writing their celebrity personae into the dramatic fiction of the play. Clive differentiates herself from her predecessors by constructing a celebrity persona. By examining these among other plays with contemporary reviews and criticism, this chapter charts the manufacturing and mediation of Catherine's 'Kitty' Clive persona both onstage and across multiple forms of theatrical ephemera and new media including: portraiture, prints, and porcelain statuettes. I argue that "Kitty" is a fiction constructed and deconstructed by Clive, her supporters, and rivals alike as a commodified commingling of dramatis personae that collectively shapes and informs her celebrity persona. In divorcing Catherine from "Kitty" in this chapter, I show how Clive's new *Rehearsal; or, Bays in Petticoats* (1753) draws upon audiences' familiarity with her established celebrity persona as a vehicle for staging her departure from it as she matured from a minor soubrette to a major soprano in the Drury Lane acting company. This chapter in turn demonstrates how Restoration and eighteenth-century rehearsal plays incorporate celebrity personae into dramatic fictions, engendering a liminal space wherein the boundaries between the fictions of the play and the fictions of the celebrity personae performing it become blurred beyond distinction. Marvin Carlson, Joseph Roach, and Heather McPherson respectively refer to a similar self-conscious doubling of parts and personae as "ghostliness", "the *It*-Effect", and "an illusion of intimacy" constructed by way of a proliferation of art and media associated with the theatrical celebrities of the

period.¹⁹ I build on recent studies of Clive's theatrical celebrity by Berta Joncus and Felicity Nussbaum to show how theatrical ephemera associated with the "Kitty Clive" persona continue to inform our understanding of the actor today.²⁰ Clive adapts Buckingham's *Rehearsal* to seasonal fashions, her own green room rivalries, and playhouse gossip over a period of thirty years, and this chapter offers significant new insights into both the nuances of Clive's satire and the ongoing mediation of her theatrical celebrity.

The fourth chapter of this dissertation considers Clive's manager and co-star David Garrick, his mid-century adaptations of Buckingham's *Rehearsal*, and three of his rehearsal play curtain-raisers and afterpieces. I show how Garrick adapts Buckingham's caricatured tragedian, Bayes, into a mock-heroic representation of his own Georgian contemporaries to become the most rivalled comedian of the century. Garrick acted Bayes during his first theatrical season in the winter of 1742, and, by adapting the caricature into a vehicle of satiric ridicule directed at the reigning players of Shakespearean tragedy, he garnered enough critical attention to secure two competing engagements from both patent theatres in London. In this chapter I return to Garrick's riotous premiere at the Theatre

¹⁹ Marvin Carlson, *The Haunted Stage: The Theatre as Memory Machine* (Michigan UP, 2001), p. 1, Joseph Roach, *It* (Michigan UP, 2007), p. 4 (emphasis mine), and Heather MacPherson, "Preface", in *Art & Celebrity in the Age of Reynolds and Siddons* (Pennsylvania State UP, 2017).

²⁰ Felicity Nussbaum, "The Actress and Performative Property: Catherine Clive", in *Rival Queens: Actresses, Performance, and the Eighteenth-Century British Theater* (Pennsylvania UP, 2011), and Berta Joncus, *Kitty Clive, or The Fair Songster* (Boydell & Brewer, 2019).

Royal in Drury Lane in the role of Bayes, and follow his adaptation of *The Rehearsal* as it changes to take on seasonal fashions, green room rivalries, and celebrity gossip. I then consider three rehearsal plays authored by Garrick in the final decade of his career: *A Peep Behind the Curtain; or, The New Rehearsal* (1767), *The Meeting of the Company; or, Bayes's Art of Acting* (1774), and *A Bundle of Prologues* (1777). The aim of analyzing these works is to show how Garrick's own rehearsal plays function as vehicles of dramatic criticism largely directed toward older declamatory styles of acting rooted in early modern court performance. This particularly bombastic style of acting remained in practice with a number of veteran performers at the Theatres Royal, and their successor in Shakespearean tragedy, Garrick, satirically mimics the style in direct opposition to his own "natural" acting technique. In conversation with scholarship by Leslie Ritchie, Judith Milhous, and Robert D. Hume, I argue that rehearsal plays significantly aid not only in the early development but also the subsequent mediation of Garrick's theatrical celebrity.²¹ His stronghold over the stage, I observe, is both produced and sustained through an internal weaponization of his burlesque mimicry in the part of Bayes from Buckingham's *Rehearsal*.

In the fifth chapter of this study I offer a new reading of *The Critic: or, A Tragedy Rehearsed* (1779) by Richard Brinsley Sheridan (1751-1816). I argue that "Mr. Puff", the

²¹ Leslie Ritchie, *David Garrick and the Mediation of Celebrity* (Cambridge UP, 2019), and Judith Milhous and Robert D. Hume, "'A Bundle of Prologues' (1777): The Unpublished Text of Garrick's Last Rehearsal Play", *Review of English Studies* 58.236 (2007): 482-499.

eponymous critic of Sheridan's rehearsal play, is designed to evoke associations with the late actor-manager Garrick in the wake of his recent death. Building upon the fourth chapter of this study and recent scholarship by both Daniel O'Quinn and David Francis Taylor, this chapter considers how the part of Puff in Sheridan's *Critic* conjures a figurative ghost of the late actor-manager and impresario in order to project a future without him at Drury Lane.²² Sheridan succeeds Garrick in managing Drury Lane, but after his death, Garrick's association with many of the principal roles from the company repertoire, and his proprietorship in the papers printing playbills and puffing their plays presents a major publicity problem for Sheridan. *The Critic* is written to follow Sheridan's first reproduction of *Hamlet* without Garrick in the titular role, and much of the play is recycled in burlesque representation of the abridged tragedy for Puff's play-within-the-play. Like Buckingham's and Fielding's, Sheridan's mock-heroic burlesque also contains an embedded critique of the reigning administration of Prime Minister Frederick North. Sheridan incorporates topical headlines from local papers such as *The Morning Chronicle* and *Public Advertiser* into his rehearsal play in order to satirize ongoing journalistic and dramatic remediations of the American Revolutionary War. In this chapter I observe Sheridan's subsidization of several newspapers in the service of promoting oppositional Whig rebellion, and I argue that Puff represents an abstracted ideal for Sheridan as a

²² Daniel O'Quinn, "'The Body' of David Garrick: Richard Brinsley Sheridan, America, and the Ends of Theatre", in *Entertaining Crisis in the Atlantic Imperium, 1770-1790* (Johns Hopkins UP, 2011), pp. 187-239, and David Francis Taylor, "'Gross Deceptions': Newspapers, Theatre, and the Propaganda War", in *Theatres of Opposition: Empire, Revolution, and Richard Brinsley Sheridan* (Oxford UP, 2012), pp. 33-63.

satirical figure modelled after the celebrity actor-manager who tread the boards of Drury Lane and filled the pages of the local news columns before him.

The broader aim of this dissertation is to examine how Buckingham's burlesque inspires a new subgenre of carnivalesque comedy and theatrical culture jamming on the eighteenth-century stage that others before me have referred to as an abundant albeit ill-defined archive of "rehearsal plays".²³ In his *History of English Drama*, Allardyce Nicoll offers a self-admittedly brief definition of the genre as "satirical plays [that] are cast in the form of a rehearsal", noting that "nearly all show the direct influence of Buckingham", and "a number of these 'rehearsals' rival in actual merit the work of Buckingham".²⁴ In this dissertation I expound upon Nicoll's cursory definition and analysis of the genre. I build upon Dane Farnsworth Smith's two-volume overview of *Plays About the Theatre in England*, Tiffany Stern's history of *Rehearsal from Shakespeare to Sheridan*, and Robert D. Hume and Harold Love's collection of *Plays, Poems, and Miscellaneous Writings Associated With George Villiers, Second Duke of Buckingham* to offer the first extended study of English rehearsal plays produced during the Restoration and eighteenth

²³ I use 'culture jamming' here to refer to the play as a "subversion of advertising and other mass-media output (by parody, alteration, etc.) as a form of protest against consumerism, corporate culture, and the power of media". See: "culture jamming, *n.*", in *Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford UP, 2021).

²⁴ Allardyce Nicoll, "Miscellaneous Forms of Drama", in *A History of English Drama: 1660-1900*, 3rd ed., Vol. 2 (Cambridge UP, 1952), pp. 262-269.

century.²⁵ Drawing upon a vast archive of rehearsal plays, performance reviews, and theatrical ephemera housed across the McMaster University Library, Bodleian Libraries, British Library, and Folger Shakespeare Library, this dissertation offers theatre historians an expanded understanding of several major playwrights and performers including: Henry Fielding, Catherine Clive, David Garrick, and Richard Brinsley Sheridan.

For every hit tragedy there is a farcical burlesque to spoof it on the Restoration and eighteenth-century stage, and there are many more rehearsal plays and adaptations of *The Rehearsal* than those accounted for in the following pages. I have largely restricted the scope of my analysis to canonical authors whose rehearsal plays continue to circulate in print and in performance today. The burlesque structure of Buckingham's *Rehearsal* in many ways sets the stage for the rise of vaudeville in the nineteenth-century and the variety show on both the twentieth and twenty-first century stage and screen. The canned laughter superimposed over Buckingham's Restoration burlesque can still be heard in our own postmodern media and historical moment.²⁶ Let me first begin, however, by taking you backstage with the Whigs.

²⁵ Dane Farnsworth Smith, *Plays About the Theatre in England, from The Rehearsal in 1671 to the Licensing Act in 1737; or, The Self-Conscious Stage and Its Burlesque and Satirical Reflections in the Age of Criticism* (Oxford UP, 1936) and *Plays About the Theatre in England, 1737-1800; or, The Self-Conscious Stage from Foote to Sheridan*, M. L. Lawhon, ed. (Bucknell UP, 1979), Tiffany Stern, "Rehearsal Plays", in *Rehearsal from Shakespeare to Sheridan* (Oxford UP, 2000), pp. 241-245, and *Plays, Poems, and Miscellaneous Writings Associated with George Villiers, Second Duke of Buckingham*, Robert D. Hume and Harold Love, eds., 2 vols. (Oxford UP, 2007).

²⁶ Jim Henson's heckling muppets, Statler and Waldorf, perhaps come to mind as twenty-first-century successors to Buckingham's Johnson and Smith.

———— CHAPTER ONE ————

THE ‘B’ IN CABAL: OR, THE REHEARSAL ON BRIDGES STREET

“Some of their Chiefs were Princes of the Land:
In the first Rank of these did Zimri stand”

— *Absalom and Achitophel. A Poem*, by John Dryden (1681)

“Th’rancrous Favourite’s masquerading Guilt,
Imbitt’ring venom where he’d have it spilt”

— *Poetical Reflections on a Late Poem*, by George Villiers (1681)

The richest man in Restoration London, George Villiers, 2nd duke of Buckingham, distracted himself from political life at court by attending the theatre. In the posthumous *Pictures of George* compiled by Horace Walpole (1717-1797), Buckingham’s agent and ambassador Brian Fairfax (1633-1711) remembers that “a rehearsal should entertain him, when a messenger to summon him to council could not be admitted”.¹ Critics have identified Buckingham’s *Rehearsal* as a high literary satire since its premiere at the Theatre Royal in Bridges Street in early December of 1671. In this chapter I offer an expanded reading of the drama not only as a trenchant literary burlesque, but also a deeply politicized anti-Jacobite satire rooted in competition among Restoration courtiers—namely, Buckingham, John Dryden, the earl of Arlington, Prince Rupert of the Rhine, and the duke of Monmouth—for the title of royal ‘favourite’ at the court of Charles II.²

¹ “Memoirs of the Life of George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham”, in *A Catalogue of the Curious Collection of Pictures of George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham* (London: W. Bathoe, 1758), p. 37.

² Retracing the history of European royal favourites is fraught with sociopolitical complexities, early modern prejudices, and dubious assignments transcending the scope of this study. I use the term here in the most objective sense of “one who stands unduly high in the favour of a prince, etc.; one chosen as an intimate by a superior”. See: “favourite, *n.* 2.”, in *Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford UP, 2021)

The main target of the satire is doubtlessly the reigning poet laureate and historiographer royal John Dryden whose heroic tragedies are relentlessly spoofed throughout the play: *The Indian Emperour, or, The Conquest of Mexico* (1665/67), *Tyrranick Love* (1670), and *The Conquest of Granada* (1670-72) most directly. Dryden is one of a deluge of other Restoration playwrights of heroic tragedy first identified and outlined in *A Key to the Rehearsal* that circulates in reprints of Buckingham's manuscripts and miscellanies in the early eighteenth century, and have long been flagged by scholars and critics of the play.³ The amateur tragedian of Buckingham's mock-heroic play-within-the-play named Bayes, however, has been regarded as a caricature of Dryden to the exclusion of all others since the publication of this *Key* in 1705. I, however, reexamine the case for associations between Dryden and Bayes in *The Rehearsal* and bring to light a number of other particular Restoration court targets embedded within the drama to argue that literary burlesque and political satire are interwoven in *The Rehearsal*. By focussing on the satire of Dryden's person in the play, critics often overlook Buckingham's satiric subversions of monarchical absolutism and Jacobite ideology that the laureate's heroic dramas espouse. In addition to *The Rehearsal* proper, I consider a forgotten dramatic sketch authored much later in Buckingham's career titled *The Rehearsal at Whitehall*. In doing so, I examine the interconnections between the state and stage during this period while proposing a new

³ *Miscellaneous Works, Written by his Grace, George, Late Duke of Buckingham* (London: J. Nutt, 1704), and *The Second Volume of Miscellaneons [sic.] Works, Written by George, Late Duke of Buckingham. Containing A Key to the Rehearsal* (London: Sam Briscoe, 1705).

reading of *The Rehearsal* as a markedly anti-Jacobite, oppositional country party satire set between the Second Anglo-Dutch War (1665-1667) and the Third Anglo-Dutch War (1672-1674).

EARLY COMPOSITION, PERFORMANCE, & RECEPTION RECORDS

Early composition, performance, and reception records of *The Rehearsal*, as the most recent editors of the satire observe, are “sketchy in the extreme”.⁴ We simply do not know what Restoration audiences made of the satire, but what little we might glean prior to the advent of printed theatrical criticism and the rigorous record keeping of later eighteenth-century playhouses suggests that the political satire of Buckingham’s play was not lost on his contemporaries. The first performance is thought to have occurred on the 7th of December in 1671 between Buckingham’s appointments as chancellor of Cambridge and high steward of the University of Oxford, but there are no records to sufficiently corroborate this premiere date.⁵ Before the first playtext edition of *The Rehearsal* published in 1672, the earliest recorded mention of the play appears in John Evelyn’s *Diary* from the 14th of December wherein he notes that he went “to see the *Duke of Buckingham’s* ridiculous farce & Rhapsody called the *Recital*, bouffoning all

⁴ “The Rehearsal”, in *Plays, Poems, and Miscellaneous Writings*, Vol. 1, p. 355.

⁵ In *John Dryden: A Bibliography* (Oxford UP, 1939), p. 193, Hugh MacDonald cites Anthony à Wood’s *Athenæ Oxonienses* (1691-92, 2 vols.) as evidence for a December 7th premiere, but this date first appears without reference in the 4th vol. of Wood’s *Athenæ* later expanded during the nineteenth century into a 4 vol. *New Edition, with Additions, and A Continuation by Philip Bliss* (1813-1820, 4 vols.), p. 209, and it is therefore treated with caution.

Plays yet profane enough”.⁶ The following September, Andrew Marvell (1621-1678), a republican associate of Buckingham, published a polemic satire on parliamentary suppression of nonconforming dissenters titled *The Rehearsal Transpros’d* (1672/73).⁷ Marvell refigures the Archdeacon of Canterbury, Samuel Parker (1640-1688) as Bayes, providing his own burlesque *Animadversions Upon A Late Book, Intituled, A Preface, Shewing What Grounds There Are of Fears and Jealousies of Popery* prefixed earlier that summer to *Bishop Bramhall’s Vindication of Himself and the Episcopal Clergy* (1672).⁸ The “transposition” of Buckingham’s *Rehearsal* to the subject of religious toleration in England by Marvell and the opposition incited a paper war that raged for over a year to follow, but the duke was not forgotten in the crossfire.⁹

⁶ *The Diary of John Evelyn, Vol. 3: Kalendarium, 1650-1672*. Esmond Samuel de Beer, ed. (Oxford UP, 1955), p. 599.

⁷ *The Rehearsal Transpros’d: or, Animadversions upon a Late Book, Intituled, A Preface Shewing What Grounds there are of Fears and Jealousis of Popery. The Second Edition, Corrected* (London, 1672). See also: *The Rehearsall Transpros’d: The Second Part* (London, 1673)

⁸ Samuel Parker, “Preface Shewing What Grounds there are of Fears and Jealousies of Popery”, in *Bishop Bramhall’s Vindication of Himself and the Episcopal Clergy* (London, 1672).

⁹ Henry Stubbe, *Rosemary & Bayes: or, Animadversions Upon a Treatise Called, The Rehearsall Trans-prosed* (London, 1672); *S’too Him Bayes: or, Some Observations Upon the Humour of Writing Rehearsals Transpros’d* (Oxford, England, 1673); Richard Leigh, *The Transposer Rehears’d: or the Fifth Act of Mr. Bayes’s Play* (Oxford, England, 1673); *A Common-Place-Book Out of the Rehearsal Transpros’d* (London, 1673); Edmund Hickeringill, *Gregory, Father-Greybeard, With his Vizard Off: or, News from the Cabal In Some Reflexions Upon a Late Pamphlet Entituled, The Rehearsal Transpros’d* (London, 1673); Samuel Parker, *A Reproof to the Rehearsal Transposed, In A Discourse to its Author* (London, 1673); *An Apology And Advice For Some of the Clergy, Who Suffer Under False and Scandalous Reports. Written on the Occasion of the Second Part of the Rehearsal Transpros’d* (London, 1674).

In the early winter months of 1673 “A Ballad” satirizing both Buckingham and his father, George Villiers, 1st duke of Buckingham (1592-1628), the royal favourite to James I and young Charles I, began to circulate about the local taverns and marketplace. The song offers rich insight into Buckingham’s celebrity, and the early composition and later performance of *The Rehearsal*. After mocking the court intrigues and assassination of Buckingham’s father, the balladeer sets his sight on Buckingham’s

...Farce, which must needs be well done,
For *Troy* was not longer before it was won,
Since ’tis more than 10 years since first ’twas begun:
 *With, [a fa la la la la la la.] &c.*¹⁰

Precisely dating the composition of the satire is as riddled with guesswork as dating the premiere of the play, but that it was drafted and revised for over a decade prior does correspond with some internal evidence. Almost every play satirized in *The Rehearsal* not authored by John Dryden last appeared onstage during the mid-1660s: William Davenant’s *Playhouse To Be Let* (1663), Henry Howard’s *United Kingdoms* (1663), and Thomas Killigrew’s *Pandora* (1664) to name a few.¹¹ The Theatre Royal in Bridges Street remained closed from the summer of 1665 to the autumn of 1666 in an effort to aid in reducing the spread of bubonic plague. John Dryden was still making a name for himself at court and among the theatregoing public of the time, and therefore presented little

¹⁰ “A Ballad”, 1673. Oxford, Bodleian Libraries. MS. Wood 417 (25).

¹¹ For a partial list of plays explicitly spoofed in *The Rehearsal* playtext, see: “Plays Named In This Key”, in “A Key to the Rehearsal or A Critical View of the Authors, and Their Writings”, in *The Second Volume of Miscellaneous Works* (London: Samuel Briscoe, 1705), n. p..

threat to Buckingham. In their preface “To the Reader”, “The Publisher” of the *Key to the Rehearsal* reaffirms this approximated date first observed in the “Ballad”, and further notes that “what was so ready for the Stage, and so near being Acted, at the breaking out of that *Terrible Sickness*, was very different from what you have since seen in Print”. What changed within the play ultimately remains a mystery as no manuscript copy has ever been discovered. All that we do know is that “during this interval, many great Plays came forth, writ in Heroick Rhyme”, and “Mr. *Dryden*, a new *Laureat* appear’d on the Stage, much admir’d, and highly Applauded; which mov’d the Duke to change the name of his Poet from *Bilboa*, to *Bayes*” for the premiere in mid-December of 1671.¹² In addition to approximating a date of composition, the “Ballad” also offers an early clue as to Buckingham’s principal collaborators on *The Rehearsal* playtext:

Yet gathering from Plays, Pimps, and Table Chatt,
With the Help of his own Canonical S—,
And his Family Scribe, Antichristian M—:
With, &c.

Numerous collaborators have been hypothesized and put forth by critics of the play since it first circulated in print, but Buckingham’s “own Canonical S[prat]” and “Family Scribe, Antichristian M[att]” prove the likeliest candidates for collaboration on such a venture.¹³

¹² “A Key to the Rehearsal or A Critical View of the Authors, and Their Writings”, in *The Second Volume of Miscellaneous Works* (London: Samuel Briscoe, 1705), xii.

¹³ Martin Clifford (c. 1624-77), Thomas Sprat (1635-1713), Samuel Butler (1613-80), Edmund Waller (1606-87), and Abraham Cowley (1618-67) are all listed as collaborators in the *Annals of English Drama, 975-1700* (London: Methuen, 1964), p. 168. See also: Judith Milhous and Robert D. Hume, “Attribution Problems in English Drama, 1660-1700”, *Harvard Library Bulletin* 31.1 (Winter 1983): 27-28, and “The Rehearsal”, in *Plays, Poems, and Miscellaneous Writings*, Vol. 1, pp. 337-341.

Thomas Sprat's first biographer observes "the great share it is well known he had in the *Rehearsal*", and further notes that Buckingham was "often heard to say, *That he never thought any of his Compositions perfect, till they had received Mr. Sprat's Approbation*".¹⁴ Martin Clifford and Buckingham both attended Trinity College, Cambridge between 1640 and 1642, and they followed the Stuart court into exile during the first English civil war. Clifford served as Buckingham's secretary upon the Restoration in 1660, and circulated his own defamatory *Notes Upon Mr. Dryden's Poems in Four Letters* dating from 1671 to 1672 censuring Dryden as "*Bayes the Laureat*" of Buckingham's *Rehearsal*.¹⁵ That both Sprat and Clifford collaborated with the author on the composition of his satire before the closure of the theatres is further evinced by "The Session of Poets, to The Tune of Cook Lawrel" (1664). The poem portrays a trial before Apollo "to punish th' Abuses of Wit" of Restoration playwrights, poets, and courtiers vying for "a per'wig of Bays" and "the Laurel". After an arraignment of Sir William Davenant (1606-1668), manager of the Duke of York's Men then at Lincoln's Inn Fields,

Intelligence was brought, the Court being set,
That a Play Tripartite was very near made;
Where malicious *Matt Clifford* and spiritual *S—t*

¹⁴ *Some Account of the Life and Writings of the Right Reverend Father in God, Thomas Sprat* (London: E. Curll, 1715), xiv.

¹⁵ When Clifford's *Notes* were later published posthumously, they were printed alongside *Some Reflections upon the Hind and Panther*, Dryden's longest and most controversial poem (London, 1687). See also: Giovanni Tarantino, "Clifford, Martin (c. 1624-1677), headmaster and author", in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford UP, 2004), and John Dryden, *The Hind and The Panther. A Poem, In Three Parts* (London: Jacob Tonson, 1687).

Were joyn'd with their Duke, a Peer of the Trade.¹⁶

However involved Sprat and Clifford were in the composition of *The Rehearsal* the date remains a matter of speculation, but their collaboration with Buckingham was at best an open secret among contemporaries of the “Tripartite”.¹⁷ To simplify their criticism of Dryden as merely an expression of burgeoning party politics would be reductive and erroneous. The politics of *The Rehearsal* are neither exclusively Whig nor Tory, but reveal a factional feud between Restoration courtiers over who ought best to represent the nation and its history onstage at the Theatres Royal.

DRYDEN'S HEROIC DRAMA & BUCKINGHAM'S MOCK-HEROIC DRAMA

Annabel Patterson has reminded us that “this was the era in which Tory and Whig poets identified themselves by the manner in which they wrote”, and a preliminary consideration of the style of Dryden's heroic drama is therefore required to puzzle out the

¹⁶ *Poems on Affairs of State from the Time of Oliver Cromwell, to the Abdication of K. James the Second* (London, 1697), p. 206, rpt. in *Poems on Affairs of State: Augustan Satirical Verse, 1660-1714*, Vol. 1, George deF. Lord, ed. (Yale UP, 1963), pp. 327-337. See also: Gillian Fansler Brown, “‘The Session of the Poets to the Tune of Cook Lawrel’: Playhouse Evidence for Composition Date of 1664”, *Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Theatre Research* 13.1 (May 1974): 19-26.

¹⁷ Robert D. Hume and Harold Love speculate, for instance, that “two aspects of the 1672 printed text—the fact that its Act/scene headings and a number of stage directions were in Latin, and its repeated use of the ‘inkhorn’ spelling ‘papyr’ for ‘paper’ (cf. papyrus)—suggest that the manuscript may have been prepared by Sprat, who was a formidable classical scholar” in their introduction to “The Rehearsal”, in *Plays, Poems, and Miscellaneous Writings*, Vol. 1, p. 339. See also: Robert D. Hume, “Editing a Nebulous Author: The Case of the Duke of Buckingham”, *The Library: The Transactions of the Bibliographical Society* 4.3 (September 2003): 249-277.

political implications of Buckingham's mock-heroic satire.¹⁸ "The new way of writing" that Bayes's play-within-the-play so farcically exemplifies throughout *The Rehearsal* is Dryden's conception *Of Dramatick Poesie* and "Heroique Playes" first theorized in *An Essay* published in 1668, and later developed further in the prolegomena to his *Conquest of Granada*.¹⁹ Dryden's study *Of Dramatick Poesie* is constructed as a dialogue between himself and three of his contemporaries who, observing the thunderous sounds of the Battle of Lowestoft amid the Second Anglo-Dutch War (1665-67), debate whether or not "the Antients were superior to the Moderns, or the last Age to this of ours" in regard to the dramatic arts.²⁰ Edmond Malone (1741-1812) long ago identified these figures as Dryden himself, Charles Sackville (1643-1706), Robert Howard (1626-1698), and Charles Sedley (1639-1701)—Neander, Eugenius, Crites, and Lisideius, respectively—and, while much ado has since been made of these identifications, Dryden admits that he "chose to hide under these borrowed names, that they may not suffer by so ill a relation as

¹⁸ Annabel Patterson, "Dryden, Marvell, and the Painful Lesson of Laughter", in *John Dryden (1631-1700): His Politics, His Plays, and His Poets* (Delaware UP, 2004), p. 201.

¹⁹ *Of Dramatick Poesie, An Essay* (London: Henry Herringman, 1668), and "Of Heroique Playes. An Essay", in *The Conquest of Granada* (London: Henry Herringman, 1672). See also: Robert Howard, "To The Reader", in *The Great Favourite, Or, The Duke of Lerma* (London: Henry Herringman, 1668), and John Dryden, "A Defence of an Essay of Dramatique Poesie, Being an Answer to the Preface of The Great Favourite, or the Duke of Lerma", in *The Indian Emperour, or The Conquest of Mexico* (London: Henry Herringman, 1668).

²⁰ *Of Dramatick Poesie, An Essay*, p. 7.

I am going to make of their discourse”.²¹ Their conversation ranges widely from Aristotle’s *Poetics* and Horace’s *Ars Poetica* to Shakespeare’s histories, Jonson’s tragedies, and Molière’s comedies as Dryden assays that “Heroick Rhime” and “Epique Poesie” better constitute “a just and lively Image of humane nature, in its Actions, Passions, and traverses of Fortune” than prose or blank verse.²² Referring to Restoration theatregoers as a “hoi polloi” (“οἱ πολλοί”), Dryden—or, Neander—argues that

’Tis no matter what they think; they are sometimes in the right, sometimes in the wong [*sic*]; their judgement is a mere Lottery... of the Populace and the Noblesse, I dare confidently affirm that a great part of the latter sort are already favourable to verse; and that no serious Playes written since the Kings return have been more kindly receiv’d by them, then the Seige of *Rhodes*, the *Mustapha*, the *Indian Queen*, and *Indian Emperour*.

“Populace” be damned, the “King” to which the author is herein referring is of course Dryden’s patron with the King’s Company, Charles II, and the plays thereafter invoked are the works of the Company and poet laureate himself. Dryden, as we will continue to see, is positioning himself as England’s national poet by praising the sovereign. What this self-conscious moment in the dialogue also reveals, then, is an ongoing shift away from the underground fringe drama performed during the Commonwealth at the likes of the

²¹ *Of Dramatick Poesie, An Essay*, p. 2. See also: “An Essay Of Dramatic Poesy”, in *The Critical and Miscellaneous Prose Works of John Dryden*, Vol. 1, Pt. 2, Edmond Malone (London: H. Baldwin and Son, 1800), pp. 33-142, Frank Livingstone Huntley, “On the Persons in Dryden’s Essay of Dramatic Poesy”, *Modern Language Notes* 63.2 (February 1948): 88-95, Stanley Archer, “The Persons in An Essay of Dramatic Poesy”, *Papers on Language and Literature* 2.4 (Fall 1966): 305-14, and Katsuhiko Engetsu, “Dryden and the Modes of Restoration Sociability”, in *The Cambridge Companion to John Dryden*, Steven N. Zwicker, ed. (Cambridge UP, 2004), pp. 181-197.

²² *Of Dramatick Poesie, An Essay*, pp. 66-67.

Red Bull Theatre towards a more politically mobilizing public theatre wherein Dryden and the Tory poets reign supreme. In the broadest of terms, as Annabel Patterson observes: “the high genres of epic and tragedy were signs of commitment to the Stuart Restoration, whereas satire and parody were the vehicles of the Opposition”.²³ Dryden’s theory *Of Dramatick Poesie* reveals itself to be a kind of Stuart court propaganda under the guise of dramatic criticism, and, following a dedication “To His Royal Highness The Duke” of York, later King James II, he expands upon his thesis in a prefatory “Essay” to the 1672 printed edition of his most successful heroic play: *The Conquest of Granada*. Dryden outlines and defines “Heroique Plays” as “an imitation, in little of an Heroick Poem”, and he expresses his indebtedness to William Davenant for having “introduce[d] the examples of moral vertue, writ in verse, and perform’d in *Recitative Musique*” to the stage after “it being forbidden him in the Rebellious times to act Tragedies and Comedies, because they contain’d some matter of Scandal to those good people, who could more easily dispossess their lawful Sovereign than endure a wanton jeast [*sic.*]”.²⁴ Playwriting, Dryden suggests, is in part an affective exercise in advising the “Sovereign”, and indeed, therein lay the chief source of raillery against him in *The Rehearsal*— behind the curtain

²³ Patterson, p. 201.

²⁴ “Of Heroique Playes. An Essay”, in *The Conquest of Granada* (London: Henry Herringman, 1672), n.p..

of state affairs, Buckingham's own influence over Charles, the Cabal Ministry, and body politic had rapidly begun to wane.²⁵

Buckingham's most sustained critique through Bayes in *The Rehearsal* is levelled against Dryden and heroic drama, but certainly not to the exclusion of his other political opponents and rivals in the 1670s. Before assessing the evidence for other political targets embedded within the caricature and burlesque, however, consider the satirical hits upon Dryden. In the prefatory essay to his *Conquest of Granada*, Dryden argues:

warlike Instruments, and even the representations of fighting on the Stage, are no more than necessary to produce the effects of an Heroick Play; that is, to raise the imagination of the Audience, and to perswade [*sic.*] them, for the time, that what they behold on the *Theater* is really perform'd. The Poet is, then, to endeavour an absolute dominion over the minds of the Spectators: for, though our fancy will contribute to its own deceit, yet a Writer ought to help its operation. And that the *Red Bull* has formerly done the same, is no more an Argument against our practice, than it would be for a Physician to forbear an approv'd medicine because a Mountebank has us'd it with success.²⁶

For Dryden, it is the language and rhyming couplets of heroic drama that direct theatregoers' "fancy" first and foremost by arousing theatrical wonder, "imagination", and phantasmagoric immersion within the spectacle. Buckingham's mock-heroic *Rehearsal* inflates this dramaturgical praxis to the point of farcical nonsensicality. The battle scene

²⁵ The 'Cabal' ministry is an acronym that refers to five Privy Councillors to King Charles II who formed a Committee for Foreign Affairs that lasted from approximately 1668 to 1674: [C]lifford, [A]rlington, [B]uckingham, [A]shley, and [L]auderdale. See: "cabal, *n.* 1.", in *Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford UP, 2021).

²⁶ "Of Heroique Playes. An Essay", n.p..

in Bayes's play-within-the-play, for instance, is less of a Jacobean bloodbath than it is a musical duet of sparring song and dance:

BAYES: [...] Pray, Sir, do you ask no more questions. I make 'em, Sir, play the battle in *Recitativo*. And here's the concept. Just at the very same instant that one sings, the other, Sir, recovers you his Sword, and puts himself in a warlike posture: so that you have at once your ear entertain'd with Musick, and good Language; and your eye satisfi'd with the garb, and accoutrements of war...

JOHNSON: But, Mr. *Bayes*, might not we have a little fighting for I love those Plays, where they cut and slash one another, upon the Stage, for a whole hour together.²⁷

When Bayes's players then "*Enter, at several doors*", "*arm'd Cap-a-pea*", Bayes's General and Lieutenant General are described as appearing with "*each of them a Lute in his hand, and his sword drawn*". At surface level, this mock-battle appears to simply spoof Drydenian dramaturgy, but, as the Generals begin to dance, the mock-heroic burlesque becomes markedly politicized. In between their steps, the dancing Generals allude to the First English Civil War, and, albeit more vaguely, the Battles of Brentford and Turnham Green amidst the Edgehill Campaign—the nearest that the Royalist armies had come to taking back London in 1642:

LIEUT. GEN.: Advance, from *Acton*, with the Musquetiers.

GEN.: Draw down the *Chelsey* Curiasiers,

LIEUT. GEN.: The Band you boast of *Chelsey* Curiasiers.

Shall, in my *Putney* Pikes, now meet their Peers.

GEN.: *Chiswickians*, aged, and renown'd in fight,

Joyn with the *Hammersmith* Brigade.

LIEUT. GEN.: You'll find my *Mortlake* Boys will do them right,

Unless by *Fulham* numbers over-laid.

GEN.: Let the left-wing of *Twick'nam* foot advance,

²⁷ *The Rehearsal* (1672), p. 48.

And line that Eastern hedge.
LIEUT. GEN.: The Horse I Rais'd in *Petty-France*
Shall try their chance
And scowr the Medows, over-grown with Sedge.
[...] BAYES: This, now, is not improper, I think, because the Spectators
know all these Towns, and may easily conceive them to be within the
Dominions of the two Kings of *Brentford*.²⁸

Where the poet laureate's heroic tragedies glorify English sovereignty and militancy, Buckingham's mock-heroic and anti-court burlesque satirizes them. Bayes's play-within-the-play turns heroic drama upside down and deconstructs it so to reconstruct a type of Aristophanic peace play wherein the cavalier belligerency of Drydenian heroes and heroines is remade to appear in as positively ridiculous a light as possible. Put simply, dramatic burlesque and political satire are interwoven and reinforcing throughout *The Rehearsal*.

For Buckingham, doubtlessly sensitive to Dryden's political maneuvering in the wake of his own as the royal favourite in decline, the poet laureate's pandering patriotism under the guise of generic innovation is a mercenary matter in the pursuit of literary

²⁸ *The Rehearsal* (1672), pp. 48-49. English Revolution and Civil War historians routinely gloss the Battles of Brentford and Turnham Green as minor skirmishes that follow in the wake of the more significant Battle of Edgehill, and, to date, the only book-length study is Neil Chippendale's *Battle of Brentford: The Hounslow Area in the Civil War* (Leigh-on-Sea, Essex: Partizan Press, 1991). See also: *A True and Perfect Relation of the Barbarous and Cruell Passages of the King's Army, At Old Brainceford, neer London* (London: E. Husbands and J. Frank, 1642), *The Humble Petition of All the Inhabitants of the Town of Old Braintford* (London: Edward Husbands and John Frank, 1642), and Edward Hyde, 1st earl of Clarendon, *The History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England*, Vol. 2 (Oxford, 1703), pp. 56-61.

patronage. Dryden brands himself the Ben Jonson of the Restoration, and observes in the preface to his *Conquest of Granada* that the hero of the drama, Almanzor:

speaks insolently of Sovereign Power: but so do Achilles and Rinaldo; who were Subjects and Soldiers in Agamemnon and Godfrey of Bulloign. He talks extravagantly in his Passion: but, if I would take the pains to quote an hundred passages of Ben. Johnson's Cethegus, I could easily shew you that the Rhodomontades of Almanzor are neither so irrational as his, nor so impossible to be put in execution. for Cethegus threatens to destroy Nature, and to raise a new one out of it: to kill all the Senate for his part of the action; to look Cato dead; and a thousand other things as extravagant he says, but performs not one Action in the play.²⁹

On surface level, Dryden's justification for using "extravagant" language to represent the grim and grotesque realities of a senatorial crusade is to ground heroic drama in a longer tradition of Jacobean stage tragedy, albeit bloodless and thereby suited to modern theatrical sensibilities. On another level, however, the allegorical undercurrents to Dryden's *Conquest*—its politicized allusions to the Restoration of the monarchy in 1660 allegorized through the Spanish conquest of Granada for Catholic Monarchs Ferdinand II of Aragon and Isabella I of Castile in 1492—were not lost on the duke of Buckingham. *The Conquest of Granada* is a celebratory spectacle and ten-act glorification of monarchical succession all too topical in relation to the return of a Stuart monarchy after decades of Civil War. In Bayes's play-within-the-play, Buckingham downplays physical violence while playing up the courtly language of Bayes's militant heroes and heroines who, like the Generals, represent the combative military violence of the drama in poetic verse:

²⁹ "Of Heroique Playes. An Essay", n.p..

DRAWCANSIR: ...I drink, I huff, I strut, look big and stare;

And all this I can do, because I dare. [*Exit.*]

SMITH: I suppose, Mr. Bayes, this is the fierce *Hero* you spoke of.

BAYES: Yes; but this is nothing: you shall see him, in the last Act, win above a dozen battels, one after another, I gad, and as fast as they can possibly be represented... Now, Sir, I'll shew you a Scene indeed; or rather, indeed, the Scene of Scenes. 'Tis an Heroick Scene.

SMITH: And pray, Sir, what is your design in this Scene?

BAYES: Why, Sir, my design is *Roman Cloaths*, guilded Truncheons, forc'd conceipt, smooth Verse, and a Rant: In fine, if this Scene does not take; I gad, I'll write no more.³⁰

Drawcansir serves not only as an embodiment of the declamatory acting style of the age, but also as a satirical inflation of the heroes and heroines of "heroic drama". To "look big and stare" is both to be heard by theatregoers within the rowdy playhouses of Restoration London, but also to signify the military might and masculinity of these characters. After a Jonsonian antemasque wherein "*The two right Kings of Brentford descend in the Clouds, singing in white garments*" and "*step into the Throne*", Bayes's fifth-act battle is performed as a decidedly nonviolent "*battle between foot and great Hobby-horses*" until "*at last, Drawcansir comes in, and kills 'em all on both sides*".³¹ The "hero" of Bayes's play, Drawcansir, then launches into a bombastic and mock-heroic epilogue regarding how

Others may boast a single man to kill:
But I, the bloud of thousands, daily spill.
Let petty Kings the names of Parties know:
Where e'er I come, I slay both friend and foe.
The swiftest Horsmen my swift rage controuls,
And from their Bodies drives their trembling souls.

³⁰ *The Rehearsal* (1672), pp. 38-39.

³¹ *The Rehearsal* (1672), pp. 43, 53.

If they had wings, and to the Gods could flie,
I would pursue, and beat 'em, through the skie:
And make proud *Jove*, with all his Thunder, see.
This single Arm more dreadful is, than he.

BAYES: There's a brave fellow for you now, Sirs. I have read of your *Hector*, your *Achilles*, and a hundred more; but I defie all your Histories, and your Romances too, I gad, to shew me one such Conqueror as this *Drawcansir*.³²

Drawcansir's markedly Cavalier masculinity in Buckingham's play-within-the-play is a mock-heroic inflation of Dryden's nonviolent glorification of the 1660 Restoration, and the equation of Restoration "Kings" with Roman "Gods" reinforce Buckingham's anti-Jacobite satire within the play as the "Parties" led by Drawcansir ultimately overthrow the Two Kings of Brentford at the end of the play. In his preface to the play, Dryden repeatedly cites Ben Jonson as the English dramatist whose courtly tragedies his own "Heroique Plays" are modelled upon and modernizing for a new age:

To those who object my frequent use of Drums and Trumpets; and my representations of Battels, I answer, I introduc'd them not on the English stage, *Shakespear* us'd them frequently: and, though *Jonson* shows no Battel in his *Catiline*, yet you hear from behind the Scenes, the sounding of Trumpets, and the shouts of fighting Armies. But, I add farther; that these warlike Instruments, and, even the representations of fighting on the Stage are no more than necessary to produce the effects of an Heroick Play. That is, to raise the imagination of the Audience, and to perswade them, for the time, that what they behold on the Theater is really perform'd.

For Dryden, the production of heroic drama is a project in revising and elevating the language and poesy of English drama: "the language is become more courtly", he argues,

³² *The Rehearsal* (1672), pp. 53-54.

“and our thoughts are better drest” than those of the Elizabethans and Jacobean.³³ The task of the heroic dramatist, according to Dryden, is to represent the courtly language, elevate, and in turn celebrate the subject matter represented onstage at the Theatres Royal. *The Rehearsal* therefore burlesques Dryden’s heroic tragedies as poorly-writ Jonsonian masques and Whitehall court pageantries of encomium celebrating sovereignty and English military power, the likes of which Buckingham’s father had formerly commissioned and performed during the early reign of James I.³⁴ The political power struggle between the court and country parties during this period thereby takes the form of an aesthetic debate over the nature of theatrical representation in Buckingham’s play. Directly invoking Restoration theatregoers’ memories of Dryden’s two-part *Conquest*, Bayes proclaims that he too has

design’d a Conquest, that cannot possibly, I gad, be acted in less than a whole week: and I’ll speak a bold word, it shall Drum, Trumpet, Shout, and Battel, I gad with any the most warlike Tragedy we have, either ancient or modern.

JOHNSON: I marry, Sir; there you say something.

SMITH: And pray, Sir, how have you order’d this same frolick of yours?

BAYES: Faith, Sir, by the Rule of Romance. For example: they divide their things into three, four, five, six, seven, eight, or as many Tomes as they please: now, I would very fain know, what should hinder me, from doing the same with my things, if I please.

JOHNSON: Nay, if you should be Master of your own works, ’tis very hard.

³³ “Of Heroique Playes. An Essay”, n.p.

³⁴ John H. Astington, “Buckingham’s Patronage and *The Gypsies Metamorphosed*”, *Theatre Survey* 43.2 (November 2002): 133-147.

BAYES: That is my sense. And therefore, Sir, whereas every one makes five Acts to one Play, what do me I, but make five Plays to one Plot: by which means the Auditors have every day a new thing.³⁵

Indeed, since the bulk of criticism in *The Rehearsal* is levelled by Johnson, Buckingham is partly reclaiming himself as the Ben Jonson of the Restoration stage. That allusions to Dryden and his heroic drama abound in the satire simply cannot be denied, yet, because of its association with a ‘laurel’ ‘bay’ leaf crown emblemizing the post of poet ‘laureate’, nearly all of Buckingham’s other satiric targets embedded within the caricature of ‘Bayes’ have been long forgotten and overlooked by critics of the burlesque. Robert D. Hume and Harold Love note that because the play was produced by the King’s Company and “Dryden was not only their principal playwright but a shareholder in the venture”, it is highly implausible that “the managers would have staged *The Rehearsal* if they had thought it would damage the popularity of [Dryden’s] valuable stock plays, let alone drive them off the boards”, and the satire itself “is more likely political than literary”.³⁶ What, then, ought critics to make of all of the obvious hits upon the laureate and his heroic drama? The question of who is ultimately ridiculed in *The Rehearsal*, as this chapter will proceed to demonstrate, requires not only an understanding of popular Restoration drama, but also the author’s politics and place among the Restoration court wits.

³⁵ *The Rehearsal* (1672), pp. 32-33.

³⁶ “The Rehearsal”, in *Plays, Poems, and Miscellaneous Writings*, Vol. 1, p. 347.

BUCKINGHAM'S BURLESQUE POLITICS

Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century critics of *The Rehearsal* almost universally leave Buckingham's political position out of their analyses with only passing references to his libertinism. Indeed it was not until 1974 that any critic attempted to examine Buckingham's "Political Satire in *The Rehearsal*".³⁷ Invoking the 1705 *Key*, George McFadden notes that his study offers "the first instance of political satire that has been detected in *The Rehearsal* in roughly 270 years".³⁸ McFadden considers a significant political allusion to Buckingham's main opponent and rival favourite within the Cabal ministry: the Lord Chamberlain and Secretary of State, Henry Bennet, 1st earl of Arlington. Between the second and third acts of the play, Bayes rehearses his players in a dance, and, in a moment of slapstick comedy, trips over his own feet and breaks his nose:

BAYES: O Lord, O Lord! impossible? why, Gentlemen, if there be any faith in a person that's a Christian, I sate up two whole nights in composing this Air, and apting it for the business: for, if you observe, there are two several Designs in this Tune; it begins swift, and ends slow. Your talk of time, and time; you shall see me do't. Look you now. Here I am dead.

Lyes down flat on his face.

Now mark my Note in *Effaut flat*. Strike up Musick. Now.

As he rises up hastily, he tumbles and falls down again.

Ah, gadsookers, I have broke my nose... A Plague of this damn'd stage, with your nails, and your tenter-hooks, that a man cannot come to teach you to Act, but he must break his nose, and his face, and the divel and all. Pray, Sir, can you help me to a wet piece of brown papyr?³⁹

³⁷ George McFadden, "Political Satire in *The Rehearsal*", *Yearbook of English Studies* 4 (1974): 120-128.

³⁸ McFadden, p. 124.

³⁹ *The Rehearsal* (London: Thomas Doing, 1672), pp. 19-20.

Theatre-goers are invited at this moment in the drama to laugh at not only Bayes's play-within-the-play, but also the playwright himself. Bayes's pretensions of directorial control over his players is slyly suggestive of Arlington's pretensions of political control over the court and crown. That Bayes subsequently "tumbles and falls" while "he rises up hastily" enacts a theatrical figuration of Buckingham's desire for the political "fall" of Arlington as the earl "rises up hastily" and supersedes him in influence at court. Later nineteenth-century critics of *The Rehearsal* identified Bayes's broken nose and "wet piece of brown papyr" patched upon it as an allusion to William Davenant on the shaky and contestable grounds of his contemporaries having elsewhere satirized the manager's snubbed nose.⁴⁰ While Davenant's plays are indeed satirized in *The Rehearsal*, there are no records to suggest he ever broke his nose nor wore a patch over it, whereas Arlington, "probably the most important English politician in the years 1667-72", as McFadden observes, "did wear a black patch on his nose, as anyone may see in his portrait in the National Portrait Gallery".⁴¹ More significantly, Laurence Echard (c. 1670-1730) recounts in his *History of England* that "several persons at Court took the liberty to mimick his Person and Behaviour", and "it became a common Jest for some Courtier to put a black Patch upon his Nose, and strut about" in mockery of Arlington.⁴² Unsurprisingly too, then,

⁴⁰ "Some Account of the Life and Writings of John Dryden", in *The Critical and Miscellaneous Prose Works of John Dryden*, Vol. 1, Pt. 1. Edmond Malone, ed. (London: H. Baldwin and Son, 1800), p. 98.

⁴¹ McFadden, p. 120. See also: Peter Lely, *Henry Bennet, 1st Earl of Arlington*, c. 1665-1670, Oil on canvas, London, National Portrait Gallery, NPG 1853.

⁴² Laurence Echard, *The History of England*, Vol. 3, Pt. 2. (London: Jacob Tonson, 1718), p. 372.

Buckingham caricatures Arlington as having “A pert, dull grin, [and] a black patch ’cross his face” in ridiculing “Advice to a Painter to draw my Lord Arlington, Grand Minister of State” written in August of 1672.⁴³ Where Buckingham had once led the Cabal ministry as the favourite among privy councillors to Charles II throughout the mid-1660s, Arlington, by the early-1670s, had begun to supersede him in power and influence. To completely recount their court intrigues both before and after *The Rehearsal* would be entirely superfluous, but some understanding of their rivalry is important in order to parse Buckingham’s satire on state affairs in *The Rehearsal*.

The heart and soul of the feud between them lay in their shared involvement in the Secret and not-so-Secret Treaties of Dover negotiated between England and France in 1670, one year before the premiere of *The Rehearsal*. While Arlington, a Roman Catholic, had been a principal signatory on the Secret Treaty of Dover that required “an open profession of Catholicism by Charles”, Buckingham was sent to France to unwittingly negotiate a fraudulent treaty with King Louis XIV that effaced the Catholic conversion clause.⁴⁴ Buckingham’s bogus treaty circulated in parliament whereas Arlington’s was kept a ‘Secret’ to avoid backlash from the English public. When and how precisely Buckingham came to be informed of the secret and Arlington’s hand within it remains a

⁴³ Rpt. in John H. Wilson, *A Rake and His Times: George Villiers, 2nd Duke of Buckingham* (London: Frederick Muller, 1954), p. 212, and qtd. in McFadden, p. 122.

⁴⁴ Introduction to “Treaties of Alliance”, in *English Historical Documents: Vol. VI, c. 1660-1714*, David C. Douglas and Andrew Browning, eds. (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 831. See also: Maurice D. Lee, “The Earl of Arlington and the Treaty of Dover”, *Journal of British Studies* 1.1 (November 1961): 58-70, and Ronald Hutton, “The Making of the Secret Treaty of Dover, 1668-1670”, *The Historical Journal* 29.2 (June 1986): 297-318.

speculative matter— perhaps through a fellow minister, or perhaps through a foreign agent. During the spring of 1669, Charles wrote from Whitehall to request that his sister Henrietta Anne (1644-1670), then living in France as duchesse d’Orléans, “write some times to [Buckingham] in general terms that he may not expect that there is farther negotiations than what he knows of”, and, by the summer of 1673, one Whitehall secretary reports that “declineing in his interest at Court... the former grudge between [Buckingham] and the Earle of A. is now broken out againe into a declared enmity”.⁴⁵ In his pioneering study of Buckingham’s political allusions, McFadden insists that “contemporaries applied the whole Bayes characterization to [Arlington], not merely the nose patch”, but this is to misleadingly overlook and indeed mistake the obvious strikes against Dryden and his heroic drama as nonpolitical.⁴⁶ McFadden’s argument that “Bayes, a bookish onlooker upon the world of affairs, directs a cast of actors in a senseless charade of political action” in the same manner that “Arlington, equally an upstart outsider, was pretending to direct affairs in Charles’s court” is compelling, but discusses only one minor albeit significant piece in the broader patchwork of Buckingham’s on the nose caricature of state affairs.⁴⁷ There are indeed other figures beyond Dryden and Arlington embedded within the satire.

⁴⁵ Charles II to Henrietta Anne, 25 April 1669, rpt. by Cyril Hughes Hartmann, in *The King My Brother* (London: William Heinemann, 1954), p. 254, and Robert Yard to Joseph Williamson, 18 July 1673, in *Letters Addressed from London to Sir Joseph Williamson*, Vol. 1, William D. Christie, ed. (London: Camden Society, 1874), p. 119.

⁴⁶ McFadden, p. 122.

⁴⁷ McFadden, p. 123.

Perhaps the most glaringly obvious of Buckingham's political allusions in *The Rehearsal* is to the "Two Kings of Brentford" who are identified as early as 1705 as "Supposed to be the two Brothers, the King and the Duke", Charles II and his brother James, duke of York.⁴⁸ What is not obvious, three-and-a-half centuries later, is why Buckingham should satirize them as having been so effortlessly usurped and restored to the throne of Brentford in the play-within-the-play. Bayes refers to the takeover in his play as

an odd surprise; the whole State's turn'd quite topsy-turvy, without any puther or stir in the whole world, I gad.

JOHNSON: A very silent change of a Government, truly as ever I heard of.

BAYES: It is so. And yet you shall see me bring 'em in again, by and by, in as odd a way every jot.

The Vsurpers march out flourishing their swords. Enter Shirley.

SHIRLEY: Hey ho, hey ho: what a change is here! Hey day, hey day! I know not what to do, nor what to say.⁴⁹

Later, as the "two *Vsurpers steal out of the Throne, and go away*" while the kings "descend in the Clouds" to be restored on the throne of Brentford, Bayes remarks: "Look you now, did not I tell you that this would be as easy a turn as the other".⁵⁰ Such inversions, as Nicholas Jose has noted, are characteristic of Royalist panegyric and political drama composed in the decade to follow the Restoration in 1660. Conservative poets and playwrights, like John Dryden during this chapter of his career, celebrate the return of monarchy to England as a bloodless revolution and reversion of power "shaped

⁴⁸ "The Key to the Rehearsal", in *The Second Volume of Miscellaneons [sic.] Works, Written by George, Late Duke of Buckingham* (London: Sam Briscoe, 1705), p. 2.

⁴⁹ *The Rehearsal* (1672), p. 18.

⁵⁰ *The Rehearsal* (1672), p. 43.

by the notion of a ‘blessed change’ that was at once an inversion of and reversion to what had gone before, a redressing of the overturning of church and state”.⁵¹ That is to say, the revisionist historiography of nonviolence that is often found in panegyric poetry and, to a more restricted extent, theatre and drama produced under the Protectorate and during the Commonwealth period, resurfaces during the Restoration as a form of monarchical adulation. The irony of Bayes’s overthrowing and restoring the Two Kings of Brentford “without any puther or stir” is a satirical exemplification of this poetic continuity between reigns: “the same providential claims and images which had been used for Cromwell”, as Jose observes, “surfaced again in service of Charles”, and “indeed, poets such as Dryden and [Edmund] Waller were able to mine their own Cromwellian works. But one should not be too cynical about this”.⁵² However, having recently stormed out of court and resigned from government after losing command of an expeditionary army to the duke of Monmouth, losing an infant son for whom he had bequeathed the earldom of Coventry, and finding himself persistently hounded by creditors threatening “to tear all his land in pieces” amidst the prorogation of parliament during the summer of 1671, Buckingham had indeed grown “cynical” of the Stuart monarchy’s capacity to rule during the months

⁵¹ Nicholas Jose, *Ideas of the Restoration in English Literature, 1660-71* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1984), p. 23. See also: John Dryden, *Astræa Redux. A Poem on the Happy Restoration & Return of His Sacred Majesty Charles the Second* (London: Henry Herringman, 1660).

⁵² Jose, p. 24.

preceding the premiere of *The Rehearsal*.⁵³ His courtly past was impinging upon his parliamentary future and his position as a leading figure among the burgeoning country party of proto-Whigs in the House of Commons.

PRINCE RUPERT OF THE RHINE & PRINCE PRETTY-MAN IN THE REHEARSAL

Political caricatures abound in *The Rehearsal*, but they are often lost on readers so increasingly removed from Restoration court intrigues. Writing a decade after McFadden, Margarita Stocker offers a more detailed study of “Political Allusion in *The Rehearsal*”, and, as Robert D. Hume and Harold Love lament in their recent edition of the playtext, her systematic analysis of the drama “has attracted virtually no commentary from scholars, who have dismissed it by ignoring it”.⁵⁴ In part, Stocker’s reading of the play as an anti-Jacobite satire rests upon an anachronistic application of the religio-politics of the 1680s Exclusion Crisis and subsequent Monmouth Rebellion to a topical court satire first acted in the 1670s. Much of her evidence, however, would have been easily discernible to Buckingham’s intended audience: the court wits and insiders for whom, as she argues, “the literary burlesque is a very distracting cover for political ideas”.⁵⁵ Citing *The Rehearsal* proper, Fielding’s *Historical Register*, and Sheridan’s *Critic* as examples,

⁵³ Letter from Andrew Marvell “to A Friend in Persia”, 9 August 1671, in *The Poems and Letters of Andrew Marvell*, Vol. 2. 3rd ed. Herschel Maurice Margoliouth, Pierre Legouis, and Elsie Duncan Jones, eds. (Oxford UP, 1971), p. 325. See also: Maurice D. Lee, *The Cabal* (Illinois UP, 1965), pp. 184-185.

⁵⁴ Margarita Stocker, “Political Allusion in *The Rehearsal*”, *Philological Quarterly* 67.1 (Winter 1988). See also: “The Rehearsal”, in *Plays, Poems, and Miscellaneous Writings*, Vol. 1, p. 352.

⁵⁵ Stocker, p. 13.

Hume has elsewhere noted that throughout the period “comedies indulging in serious political satire, personation, or a combination thereof take care to wrap them in a distracting context, often a literary one”.⁵⁶ Because the satire offers such an irreverent critique of the highest persons of state, the drama must by necessity conceal court satire under a cloak of dramatic satire lest it be wholly censored altogether as Buckingham had learned just one year prior with the suppression of his *Country Gentleman* (1669).⁵⁷ What appears on surface level to be a farcical disunity to Bayes’s play-within-the-play is upon closer inspection a calculated mockery of a nation in political disarray. Stocker argues that the burgeoning problems of succession posed by James, duke of York’s Catholicism, and the constitutional crisis incited by his being heir apparent to the throne, inform a significant part of the satire. She is not wrong, and there is indeed an anti-Jacobite undercurrent to the play evidenced through Bayes’s subplot concerning the Two Kings of Brentford. She does, however, misread one particularly significant correlation between the persons of the play and the persons of the Restoration court: the satiric identity of Prince Pretty-Man.

By the 1670s, Charles and Catherine of Braganza had yet to better produce a legitimate heir to the throne, and Charles’s advisors, Buckingham chief among them, put pressure on a reluctant King to divorce the Queen lest the clandestine-Catholic James

⁵⁶ *The Rakish Stage: Studies in English Drama, 1660-1800* (Southern Illinois UP, 1983), p. 32.

⁵⁷ For a study of the censorship of Buckingham’s *Country Gentleman*, see: Robert Howard and George Villiers, *The Country Gentleman: A “Lost” Play and Its Background*, Arthur H. Scouten and Robert D. Hume, eds. (Pennsylvania UP, 1976), pp. 1-39.

succeed them in rule.⁵⁸ James Scott, 1st duke of Monmouth (1649-1685), the eldest albeit illegitimate son of Charles and royal mistress Lucy Walter (c. 1630-1658), would later mobilize a militia of country nobility, attempt to depose the heir-presumptive James, and proclaim himself to be the rightful Protestant “King to succeed Our Royall Father”.⁵⁹ Stocker erroneously suggests that Buckingham anticipates the Monmouth Rebellion through his caricature of Prince Pretty-Man, and “that Pretty-Man refers to the other potential successor to Charles, his handsome but illegitimate son Monmouth” while implying a “dangerous political potential of illegitimate progeny in the light of the Queen’s infertility”.⁶⁰ According to Stocker, Bayes’s subplot concerning the revelation of Pretty-Man’s paternal origins by a fisherman “is a jokey reference to Charles’ fondness for fishing, a hobby which provided a common topic for satirists”, and “recalls Monmouth’s origins”.⁶¹ Even were this to be the case, however mistaken, the political allusion is entirely lost on both Johnson and Smith:

⁵⁸ Letter from Andrew Marvell to William Popple, 21 March 1670, rpt. in *The Poems and Letters of Andrew Marvell*, Vol. 2 (Oxford UP, 1971), pp. 313-316.

⁵⁹ James Scott, 1st duke of Monmouth, “To our Trusty and Well-beloved Cozin and Councillor Christopher, Lord Duke of Albemarle”, 21 June 1685, British Library, Add. MS. 19399, fo. 140. See also: Estelle Frances Ward, *Christopher Monck, Duke of Albemarle* (London: John Murray, 1915), p. 203, and Christopher L. Scott, *The Maligned Militia: The West Country Militia of the Monmouth Rebellion, 1685* (London: Routledge, 2015), p. 70.

⁶⁰ Stocker, pp. 25-26.

⁶¹ Stocker, p. 25-26. See also: “Flatfoot the Gudgeon Taker”, in *Poems on Affairs of State: Augustan Satirical Verse, 1660-1714*, Vol. 2, Elias F. Mengel, Jr., ed. (Yale UP, 1965), pp. 189-191, and Christina Hole, *English Sports and Pastimes* (London: B.T. Batsford, 1968), p. 20.

JOHNSON: A Devil, this is worst of all. Pray, Mr. *Bayes*, what's the meaning of this Scene?

BAYES: O, cry you mercie, Sir: I purtest I had forgot to tell you. Why, Sir, you must know, that, long before the beginning of this Play, this Prince was taken by a Fisherman.

SMITH: How, Sir, taken Prisoner?

BAYES: Taken Prisoner! O Lord, what a question's there! did ever any man ask such a question? Taken Prisoner! Godsookers, he has put the Plot quite out of my head, with this damn'd question. What was I going to say?

JOHNSON: Nay, the Lord knows: I cannot imagine.

BAYES: Stay, let me see; taken: O 'tis true. Why, Sir, as I was going to say, his Highness here, the Prince, was taken in a Cradle by a Fisherman, and brought up as his Child. [...]

JOHNSON: But, Mr. *Bayes* is not that some disparagement to a Prince, to pass for a Fishermans Son? Have a care of that, I pray.

BAYES: No, no, no; not at all; for 'tis but for a while: I shall fetch him off again, presently, you shall see [...]

PRETTY-MAN: What Oracle this darkness can evince?

Sometimes a Fishers Son, sometimes a Prince.

It is a secret, great as is the world;

In which, I, like the soul, am toss'd and hurl'd.

The blackest Ink of Fate, sure, was my Lot.

And, when she writ my name, she made a blot. [Exit.]

BAYES: There's a blust'ring verse for you now.

SMITH: Yes, Sir; but pray, why is he so mightily troubled to find he is not a Fishermans Son?

BAYES: Phoo! that is not because he has a mind to be his Son, but for fear he should be thought to be nobodies Son at all.⁶²

By all accounts an “extraordinarily handsome” young man, Monmouth proved “the darling of his Father” and “a favourite of the people” prior to his beheading for treason in the summer of 1685, but we should be wary of Stocker’s claim that Buckingham’s caricature foreshadows “what future events would confirm”.⁶³ Bayes’s description of the

⁶² *The Rehearsal* (1672), pp. 26-27.

⁶³ *The Diary of John Evelyn, Vol. 4: Kalendarium, 1673-1689*. Esmond Samuel de Beer, ed. (Oxford UP, 1955), pp. 455-457. See also: Stocker, p. 26.

disparaged prince's prehistory "before the beginning of this Play", and characterization of Pretty-Man in subsequent scenes is suggestive of another political caricature altogether. Pretty-Man is not a caricature of Monmouth, as Stocker suggests, but rather Buckingham's parliamentary rival, King Charles's cousin, and Cavalier Civil War veteran: Prince Rupert of the Rhine, duke of Cumberland (1619-1682).⁶⁴

Although allied as leaders of the parliamentary opposition and burgeoning country Whig party, Buckingham and Rupert disagreed on matters of religious toleration and monarchical absolutism. Broadly speaking, where Buckingham championed religious toleration but resisted the king's divine right to exercise absolute control over the kingdom, Rupert resisted toleration for religious nonconformists while championing the royal prerogative. In her study of his admittedly rather paradoxical political position, Leslie Chree O'Malley explains that Prince Rupert "was no party hack", "his first duty was to his master, the king, to whom he was related by blood", and he sought "to draw the monarch away from wrong counsels and counsellors", but "saw himself as a free agent"

⁶⁴ A fashionable, "Pretty" man indeed, my readers on this side of the pond may recognize Prince Rupert as founding governor of the Hudson's Bay Company whose namesake continues to mark the colonial geography of Canada today. For a detailed study of the monopoly's archives during this period, see: Deidre Simmons, "The First Fifty Years, 1670-1720", in *Keepers of the Record: The History of the Hudson's Bay Company Archives* (McGill-Queens UP, 2007), pp. 13-42. See also: *Gathering Places: Aboriginal and Fur Trade Histories*, Carolyn Podruchny and Laura Peers, eds. (British Columbia UP, 2010), and Jennifer S. H. Brown, *An Ethnohistorian in Rupert's Land: Unfinished Conversations* (Athabasca UP, 2017).

who “chose to serve as a link between the two hostile groups, court and country”.⁶⁵ The two ministers share a storied past among the Stuart court and parliamentary opposition, but before considering the motivation for Buckingham’s caricature, let us first examine correlations between Prince Pretty-Man and Prince Rupert.

Bayes explains to Johnson in the aforementioned passage that “long before” the quasi-historical setting of his play, Prince Pretty-Man “was taken in a Cradle by a Fisherman, and brought up as his Child”. There are two complimentary allusions that are embedded within Bayes’s explanation. First, and perhaps most prominently, Pretty-Man’s origins as having been “taken in a Cradle” are designed to recall the figure of Moses who is laid in “an ark of bulrushes... by the river’s brink” and subsequently drawn “out of the water” to be taken in by Pharaoh’s daughter in the Book of Exodus.⁶⁶ Less prominent but significant in relation to this allusion, however, is an embedded allusion to Prince Rupert, the son of the Winter King and Queen—Frederick V of the Palatine (1596-1632) and Elizabeth Stuart (1596-1662). Rupert, according to Cavalier legend, was almost forgotten as the court hastily fled Prague in 1620 until a “chamberlain flung the prince into the last carriage just as it dashed away”.⁶⁷ While in exile, his father died attempting to regain the

⁶⁵ Leslie Chree O’Malley, “The Whig Prince: Prince Rupert and the Court vs. Country Factions During the Reign of Charles II”, *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 8.4 (Winter 1976): 333-350.

⁶⁶ Exod. 2:1-10.

⁶⁷ The source of this rather dubious anecdote is an unidentified “Captain Pyne” who served under Rupert on a voyage to the West Indies, see: Eliot Wharburton, *Memoirs of Prince Rupert and The Cavaliers*, Vol. 1 (London: R. Bentley, 1849), p. 38. See also: Charles Spencer, *Prince Rupert: The Last Cavalier* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2007), p. 14.

Palatine and Bohemia, and Rupert was invited to live under the protection of his uncle King Charles I whom he fought alongside during the Civil War.⁶⁸ Charles I, like Charles II, and to follow Stocker's logic, harboured a lifelong passion for fishing, and he both proposed and incorporated a Society of the Fishery of Great Britain and Ireland in 1632 to preserve the dwindling populations of local small fry that fed his people.⁶⁹ In Bayes's play-within-the-play, then, Prince Pretty-Man's paternal origins and his mawkish lament of being "Sometimes a Fishers Son, Sometimes a Prince" evokes not necessarily the duke of Monmouth, but rather Prince Rupert, and indeed the discovery that the Prince is not in fact the child of Bayes's Fisherman at all in the play-within-the-play further reinforces this caricature. The caricatured identity of Pretty-Man need not be singular nor exclusive, to be sure. Buckingham's caricatured Prince raises issues of kinship, political legitimacy, and religious toleration in England more broadly, but the correspondence between Prince Pretty-Man and Prince Rupert does not end with the Fisherman subplot. Consider the earlier exchange between Prince Pretty-Man and "*his Taylor*" Tom Thimble as Bayes returns from patching his broken nose. Bayes preemptively grants to Johnson and Smith that "it is not very necessary to the Plot", but reassures the spectators that it is "full of Drollery as ever it can hold: 'tis like an Orange stuck with Cloves":

⁶⁸ For a detailed study of the relationship between King Charles and Prince Rupert in this period, see: Charles Petrie, "Uncle and Nephew", in *King Charles, Prince Rupert, and the Civil War* (London: Routledge, 2020), pp. 1-25.

⁶⁹ For a detailed study of Charles's personal hand and involvement in the Society of the Fishery, see: Pauline Gregg, "The King's Great Business", in *King Charles I* (California UP, 1984), pp. 230-243.

THIMBLE: However, if my wife sits but cross-leg'd, as I do, there will be no great danger: not half so much as when I trusted you for your Coronation-suit.

BAYES: Very good, i'faith.

PRETTY-MAN: Why, the times then liv'd upon trust; it was the fashion. You would not be out of time, at such a time as that, sure: A Taylor, you know, must never be out of fashion.

BAYES: Right.

THIMBLE: I'm sure, Sir, I made your cloath in the Court-fashion, for you never paid me yet.

BAYES: There's a bob for the Court.

PRETTY-MAN: Why, *Tom*, thou art a sharp rogue when thou art angry, I see: thou pay'st me now, methinks.

THIMBLE: I, Sir, in your own coyn: you give me nothing but words.

BAYES: Admirable, before gad.

PRETTY-MAN: Well, *Tom*, I hope shortly I shall have another coin for thee; for now the Wars come on, I shall grow to be a man of mettal.

BAYES: O, you did not do that half enough. [...]

THIMBLE: That's the way to be stamp'd your self, Sir. I shall see you come home, like an Angel for the Kings-evil, with a hole bor'd through you.⁷⁰

Thimble's reference to Pretty-Man's "Coronation-suit" alludes to Rupert's parents' reign as King and Queen of Bohemia, but his want of "coyn" also alludes to their impoverishment while living in exile in The Hague. Charles Spencer has noted in his most recent biography of the Prince that the family was "living hand to mouth, selling family valuables to fund their lives", and "it became a family joke that they frequently dined on pearls and diamonds, since pawned jewelry underwrote the domestic budget".⁷¹ While studying at Leyden during this period, Prince Rupert committed to becoming a soldier. Although he had developed a taste for both natural philosophy and scientific experimentation, "his chief delight was in military discipline", and "at the age of fourteen

⁷⁰ *The Rehearsal* (1672), pp. 20-22.

⁷¹ Spencer, p. 19.

he was judged worthy of commanding a regiment”.⁷² Buckingham invokes Rupert’s early interest and service in the Dutch and English military during the Thirty Years’ War and the simultaneous English Civil War through Pretty-Man’s claim that “now the Wars come on, I shall grow to be a man of mettal”.⁷³ Indeed it was during the First English Civil War that Buckingham first met Rupert. Buckingham and his younger brother Francis, then fifteen and fourteen years of age themselves, studied and served in the Royalist cavalry commanded by Rupert, taking part in his Siege of Lichfield in the spring of 1643, and leaving their mother Katherine Villiers, duchess of Buckingham (1603-1649) furious “for tempting her sons into such danger”.⁷⁴ On the rise to be one of the most notorious Cavaliers of the age, Rupert is that same year alleged to have begun an affair with Buckingham’s sister Mary Stewart, duchess of Richmond and Lennox (1622-1685).⁷⁵ These early encounters and familial animosities between Buckingham and Rupert at court would come to shape their rivalry during the Restoration, and inform Buckingham’s caricature of Prince Pretty-Man in *The Rehearsal*.

⁷² Wharburton, p. 44. For a concise history of Prince Rupert’s early military career, see: Spencer, “Boy Soldier”, in *Prince Rupert*, pp. 27-33.

⁷³ loc. cit.

⁷⁴ Fairfax, *Pictures of George*, pp. 25-26.

⁷⁵ However romantically involved Rupert and “Moll” became is a subject of conjecture riddled in the all too often misleading disinformation of Civil War propaganda. For some intriguing textual evidence of the affair, see: “To Phylocles, Inviting Him to Friendship”, *Female Poems on Several Occasions* (London: William Downing, 1679), pp. 85-86, rpt. with a modern critical introduction in *Ephelia*, Maureen E. Mulvihill, ed. (London: Routledge, 2003), xi-xiii.

Not only was Rupert the closest living relative of Charles II after the duke of York, and thus third in line for the Stuart succession, but he was also appointed to the Privy Council and Foreign Affairs Committee alongside Buckingham where, according to diarist Samuel Pepys (1633-1703), he is supposed to have done “nothing but swear and laugh” despite his rising to command the Royal Navy amid the ongoing Anglo-Dutch Wars.⁷⁶ Although they were allied in the formation of the parliamentary opposition, Rupert and Buckingham were divided in the growing party factionalism incited by the burgeoning Exclusion Crisis, and shared a rivalry at court that occasionally devolved into petty squabbles. Indeed, Pepys recounts one instance in the years preceding Buckingham’s *Rehearsal* that is particularly revealing of their mutual animosity, factional divide, and jockeying position next to the King’s ear: “now Buckingham does rule all”, Pepys reflects,

and the other day, in the King’s journey he is now on, at Bagshot, and that way, he caused Prince Rupert’s horses to be turned out of an inne, and caused his own to be kept there, which the Prince complained of to the King, and the Duke of York seconded the complaint; but the King did overrule it for Buckingham, by which there are high displeasures among them; and Buckingham and Arlington rule all.⁷⁷

Buckingham’s caricature of the Yorkist Prince Rupert as Prince Pretty-Man underscore the anti-Jacobite politics of the satire to be sure, but it just might reveal something even more significant for theatre historians. O’Malley notes in her analysis of Rupert’s political

⁷⁶ “3 June 1664”, in *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, Henry B. Wheatley, ed., Vol. 4 (London: George Bell and Sons, 1904), pp. 149-150.

⁷⁷ “9 September 1668”, in *Diary of Samuel Pepys*, Vol. 8, p. 101.

career that “the Whig Prince” viewed himself as a centrist mediator between court and country parties who could “gain [Charles II’s] ear as they hunted together, performed charades at court, attended the theatre, or watched demonstrations by the Royal Society”.⁷⁸ It was also here at the Bridges Street Theatre in the late 1660s that Prince Rupert met and developed an affection for the final love of his life, one of the first professional actresses to play on the English stage, and a frequent performer in John Dryden’s drama: Margaret “Peg” Hughes (c. 1645-1719).⁷⁹

Margaret Hughes was skilled in both comic and tragic roles. She played the parts of Theodosia in Dryden’s “very smutty” comedy of *An Evening’s Love; or, The Mock Astrologer* in June of 1668 and the lead role of St. Catherine of Alexandria in his heroic tragedy of *Tyrannick Love, or The Royal Martyr* in June of 1669.⁸⁰ The story goes that, during this same period, Prince Rupert had “found charms” in Hughes, and bid

⁷⁸ O’Malley, p. 350.

⁷⁹ For a concise history of Margaret Hughes’s theatrical career, and an analysis of contemporary claims to her being the professional English actress, see: “Hughes, Margaret”, in *A Biographical Dictionary of Actors, Actresses, Musicians, Dancers, Managers and Other Stage Personnel in London, 1660-1800*, Vol. 8, Philip H. Highfill, Kalman A. Burnim, and Edward A. Langhans, eds. (Southern Illinois UP, 1975), pp. 24-27. For a study of the relationship between Hughes and Rupert, see also: Spencer, “The Happiest Old Cur in the Nation”, in *Prince Rupert*, pp. 309-321.

⁸⁰ “20 June 1668”, in *Diary of Samuel Pepys*, Vol. 8, p. 51. See also: John Downes, *Roscius Anglicanus, or An Historical Review of the Stage* (London, 1708), pp. 7-8, and *The London Stage, 1660-1800: A Calendar of Plays, Entertainments & Afterpieces Together with Casts, Box-Receipts and Contemporary Comment, Compiled from the Playbills, Newspapers and Theatrical Diaries of the Period*, Pt. 1, Vol. 1, William Van Lennep, ed. (Southern Illinois UP, 1960), p. 138.

farewel all *Mathematical Instruments* and *Speculations*: Nothing was now in Request with him but fine Cloaths, *sweet Powder* and *Essences*, for the *impertinent Gipsy* had a mind to be attack'd in Form: and proudly resisting *Money* in order to sell her Favours at a dearer Rate afterwards, she caus'd the *poor Prince* to act a Part so *unnatural*, that he was not like himself.

Rupert, then much Hughes's senior, attempts to fashion himself into a more "Pretty Man" so as to entice the actress that he desired to become mistress, and his affected effort to woo her is alleged to have been a source of much court raillery over the following years.⁸¹ Buckingham frequented the playhouse on Bridges Street, always kept one ear to the ground, and spared no opportunity to ridicule court rivals who could impede upon his power at court and in parliament. In addition to his early military career, Prince Rupert's relationship with Hughes is also satirized in Bayes's play-within-the-play through the contest between Pretty-Man and Volscius over their respective romances with Cloris and Parthenope:

VOLSCIUS: Were all Gods joyn'd, they could not hope to mend
My better choice: for fair *Parthenope*,
Gods would, themselves, un-god themselves to see.

BAYES: Now the Rant's a coming.

PRETTY-MAN: Durst any of the Gods be so uncivil,
I'd make that God subscribe himself a Devil.

BAYES: Ah, Godsookers, that's well writ!

VOLSCIUS: Could'st thou that God from Heav'n to Earth translate,
He could not fear to want a Heav'nly State.
Parthenope, on Earth, can Heav'n create.

PRETTY-MAN: *Cloris* does Heav'n it self so far excel,
She can transcend the joys of Heav'n in Hell.

⁸¹ Anthony Hamilton, *Memoirs of the Life of Count de Grammont: Containing, in Particular, the Amorous Intrigues of the Court of England in the Reign of King Charles II*, Abel Boyer, trans. (London: J. Round, 1714), p. 294. See also: Spencer, pp. 317-318.

BAYES: There's a bold flight for you now! 'Sdeath, I have lost my peruke. Well, Gentlemen, this is that I never yet saw any one could write, but my self. Here's true spirit and flame all through, I gad.⁸²

On a surface level, and as charted since the publication of *A Key to the Rehearsal*, this particularly jejune exchange between Pretty-Man and Volscius offers a burlesque subversion of several lines from John Dryden's *Tyrranick Love Martyr* spoken by the Roman Emperor Maximinus and his subordinate officer Placidius.⁸³ Buckingham deflates Dryden's recent heroic tragedy not only by parodying his verse, but also by transplanting the drama from the Roman Empire to the Restoration court. *Tyrranick Love* relates the Christian legend of Saint Catherine of Alexandria (c. 287-305) who rebuked the advances and proposals of Emperor Maximinus, and for which she was subsequently martyred.⁸⁴ Because Margaret Hughes had recently performed the part of Saint Catherine in Dryden's tragedy, and because Rupert is satirized as Pretty-Man in Buckingham's burlesque, the satirical subversion of Maximinus's lines from *Tyrranick Love* during this moment in

⁸² *The Rehearsal* (1672), pp. 40-41.

⁸³ For a line-by-line comparison of these passages as they appear in Dryden's heroic tragedy, see: "The Key to the Rehearsal", in *The Second Volume of Miscellaneons [sic.] Works*, pp. 24-25. See also: John Dryden, *Tyrranick Love, or The Royal Martyr* (London: H. Herringman, 1670), pp. 7-9, 19.

⁸⁴ Restoration Queen Catherine of Braganza had recently been portrayed as Saint Catherine in a portrait by the court artist Jacob Huysmans, *Catherine of Braganza*, c. 1664-1670, Oil on canvas, RCIN 405880. The extensive body of hagiographical literature associated with Saint Catherine of Alexandria is much beyond the scope of this study. For some account of European developments over previous centuries, see: Christine Walsh, "The Introduction of the Cult of St. Katherine into England", in *The Cult of St. Katherine of Alexandria in Early Medieval Europe* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007), pp. 97-142, and Katherine J. Lewis, *The Cult of St. Katherine of Alexandria in Late Medieval England* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2000).

Bayes's play-within-the-play reinforces the caricature of Rupert by drawing his failed attempts to secure an engagement with Hughes analogous to Maximinus's failure to secure an engagement with Saint Catherine. In all likelihood, then, given her repertoire within the playing company and "proud resistance" to Rupert's efforts to woo her during this period, it would be no stretch of the imagination to argue that Hughes was privy to the joke, and cast to play the part of Prince Pretty-Man's object of desire within the play, Cloris, to reinforce the satire. Beyond John Lacy's long-charted performance as Bayes at the premiere of *The Rehearsal*, the relationship between Hughes and Rupert at this moment provides us with the first probable indication of how Buckingham's drama was initially cast on Bridges Street in December of 1671.

"THE REHEARSAL AT WHITEHALL"

Occasioned though it may be by personal enmity, court rivalry, and political and military favouritism, Buckingham's mock-heroic *Rehearsal* amounts to an oppositional anti-Jacobite satire set both between the Second and Third Anglo-Dutch Wars abroad and ahead of the Monmouth Rebellion at home. Although fragmented and only circulated in manuscript among friends and political allies during Buckingham's lifetime, there is a short sketch contained within his posthumously printed miscellanies that has heretofore gone unnoticed by critics of *The Rehearsal*. The sketch offers significant insights into the political satire underscoring much of Buckingham's *Rehearsal* proper, and printed as *The Battle: or, The Rehearsal at White-Hall* in 1704 with a more revealing title of *The Battle*

of *Sedgemoor: Rehearst at White Hall* in reprints as early as 1707.⁸⁵ There are only three characters in the sketch: a Lord, a Lady, and a General, and the entirety of the dialogue is set in “*A Drawing Room in Whitehall*”. As Johnson and Smith sportively goad and mock Bayes throughout *The Rehearsal*, so do the Lord and Lady goad and mock a bombastic tale of military heroism related by the General from the “Battle of Sedgemoor”— the final confrontation between the rebels and royalists during the Monmouth Rebellion in July of 1685:

LADY: Did you ever hear of such a thing as this Battle, as they call it?

LORD: Not I, I'll be sworn, nor no Man else I think.

LADY: Every body says, that as the Business was order'd, it was a thousand to one that all the *King's* Forces had been cut off.

LORD: Yes, that is most certain; but that I am most delighted with is, to see the infinite Satisfaction the General takes in explaining to every one he meets with, all the Particulars of his Foolery.

LADY: O! here he is a coming; for God sake let us make him tell it us again.

LORD: Pray do, Madam.⁸⁶

Beyond the title of the sketch, this moment in the satire directly alludes to the strength of Monmouth's volunteer troops that outnumbered the “*King's* forces” by a large number at

⁸⁵ *Miscellaneous Works* (London: J. Nutt, 1704), p. 15, and *The Miscellaneous Works of His Grace George, Late Duke of Buckingham* (London: Samuel Briscoe, 1707), p. 15. This sketch is rpt. as “The French Generall” in the most recently published collection of *Plays, Poems, and Miscellaneous Writings*, Vol. 2, pp. 109-119.

⁸⁶ *The Miscellaneous Works* (London: Samuel Briscoe, 1707), pp. 15-16. See also: Peter Earle, *Monmouth's Rebels: The Road to Sedgemoor, 1685* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1977), and Robin Clifton, *The Last Popular Rebellion: The Western Rising of 1685* (New York: St. Martin's, 1984).

the Battle of Sedgmoor.⁸⁷ Although Margarita Stocker has rather misleadingly argued that Buckingham satirizes the duke of Monmouth's military ascendancy in the Second Anglo-Dutch War of the mid-1660s in *The Rehearsal*, he does satirize the military ascendancy of Louis de Duras, 2nd earl of Feversham (1641-1709) amidst the Monmouth Rebellion of the mid-1680s later in *The Rehearsal at Whitehall*. The sketch was not written for production on the stage but rather for Buckingham's own satirical impersonation of Feversham among friends, and the cloak of literary satire is therefore jettisoned in favour of pointed ridicule of the earl. Indeed, the identification of Buckingham's General as Feversham is recorded in print in eighteenth-century editorial notes and commentary on the sketch. Thomas Evans (1742-1784), the 1775 editor of the collected *Works* of Buckingham, fingers Feversham and explains in a preliminary footnote to the sketch that James II had ordered a "march against Monmouth, under the command of the Earl of Feversham, an honest, brave, and good-natured Nobleman; but he conducted matters so ill, that every step he made was like to prove fatal to the King's service".⁸⁸ Buckingham's references to "*Breechwater*" (or, Bridgwater), "*Bristol*", and "*de Brooka de Gutter*" wherein Monmouth's vanguard first met and became outflanked by a royalist patrol

⁸⁷ Monmouth's rebel militia is thought to have consisted of approximately four thousand volunteers, and the royalist force approximately three thousand troops, see: *Plays, Poems, and Miscellaneous Writings*, Vol. 2, p. 111.

⁸⁸ "The Battle of Sedgmoor", in *The Works of His Grace George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham. Containing His Plays and Miscellanies in Prose and Verse, with Explanatory Notes, and Memoirs of the Author* (London: T. Evans, 1775), p. 119.

positioned across the rhyne-flooded moors of Somerset openly evince the satire on Feversham and the Monmouth rebels:

GENERAL: [...] so Madama me have Intelligensa dat de Rebel go to *Breechwater*; me say to my Mena, Marsh you Rogua; so me Marsha over de greata Fielda, begar, de brava Contra were dey killa de Hare vid de Dogua, and de Patrich vid de Hawka, begar, de brave Sport in de Varld.

LORD: Well my Lord, and what then?

GENERAL: Begar me marsh very well vid de Drome and de Trumpetta, de Drombela and de great Noisa begar; Au how you call de brave Fellow au de fine Cappa turn ope vid de great Poucha o’de side?

LORD: Who the Granadier?

LORD [GENERAL]: Ay begar, de Granadere vid de Hoboya, begar, de fine Musick in de Varld. [...]

LORD: I suppose my Lord that your Lordship was posted in a very strong place.

GENERAL: O’ begarra very strong, vid de great River between me and de Rebella, calla, *de Brooka de Gutter*.⁸⁹

The accent affected by the General in the sketch is designed in satiric personation of Feversham’s broken English. Feversham was born of French nobility, and did not arrive in England until 1663 whereupon he entered the royal household as an attendant upon James, then duke of York. When James later succeeded Charles II upon his death in 1685, Feversham entered his Privy Council.⁹⁰ The story goes that, as Monmouth and the rebels advanced toward the royalist patrol army on the eve of the Battle of Sedgemoor, Feversham “seemed to be under no apprehension, but was a-bed without any care or

⁸⁹ *The Miscellaneous Works* (London: Samuel Briscoe, 1707), pp. 17-18.

⁹⁰ Stuart Handley, “Duras, Louis, second earl of Feversham (1641-1709), soldier and diplomat”, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

order” in a neighbouring village.⁹¹ Buckingham accordingly satirizes the earl and, by extension, King James II as leaders entirely inept to oversee the security of the nation:

GENERAL: [...] begar me go vid de Horsa an de Gentlemen Officera to one very good Villash, where, begar, be very good Quartera, very good Meta, very good Drinka, and very good Bedda.

LADY: But pray my Lord, why did you not stay with the Foot?

GENERAL: Beggarra Madama, because dere be great Differentia between de Gentlemen-Officera, and de Rogue de Sogiera; begarra, de Rogua de Sogiera lye upon de Grounda; but begar, de Gentleman-Officer go to Bedda.

LADY: But, my Lord, tho’ by your Favour, you wou’d have been more secure, if you had been together.

GENERAL: Begarra, Madama, you no understan de Art Militair.

LORD: Well, my Lord, how it was done is no real matter; but, God be prais’d, it seems they are beaten.

GENERAL: Beata! Ay, begar, dey be very well beata: Begar, me beata dem, an me killa dem, like de Rogua.

LADY: You beat ’em! How cou’d you beat ’em, when you were not there?

GENERAL: Begar, Madamma, but they were beata by my Ordera.

LADY: How by your Order?

GENERAL: Why, begar, Madama, before me go to Bedda, me make to dem one very good Speecha.⁹²

The chest-beating speech that the caricatured Feversham recounts for both the Lord and the Lady proves as bombastic as the mock-heroic epilogue roared by Drawcansir in *The Rehearsal*, and similarly serves to satirically exemplify the military pomp and theatrical ceremony that Buckingham so cynically derides in the heroic drama of the late-1660s:

LORD: Ay pray, my Lord, let us hear: What is it you said to them?

GENERAL: Begar, my Lore, me come to dem vid de great Golda Scarfa, begar very fine, vid a new Perewigga begar very handsom, and a brave

⁹¹ Gilbert Burnet, *Bishop Burnet’s History of His Own Time*, Vol. 3 (London: The Company of Booksellers, 1725), p. 1100.

⁹² *The Miscellaneous Works* (London: Samuel Briscoe, 1707), pp. 19-20.

Beaver Hatta; begar me Coka de Hata, an look to dem as big as de Divel: Vid all de Gentleman Officiera behinda me, an begar all very fina. So de Sogiera give de great Shouta an cry, God bless our Generalla, God bless your Excellansa; an all dose tinga dat sho de respect an de lova to de Person 'o de Qualite. So me say to dem, harka, you Rogue de Sogiera, me be your Generalla; me be a kin to my Cousin the Marshal Turena, de great General in de Varld; begar he sho me all de Trick 'o de Warra, an all de Poleteca; begar me talla you derefore one tinga: Beggara, if you stir from de camp, you rogua de Sogiera, begarra me hanga you by de Law Martialla; an marka you me one ting more, when de Rebella coma, shoota de Musqueta, shoot de great Gonn, make de great Noisa, an begar when de Rebel Runna, killa de Rogua vid de Pike in de Back, & de Bullet in de Narsa.⁹³

What is more, just as both Johnson and Smith walk out on Bayes's rehearsal at the conclusion of Drawcansir's bombastic epilogue, leaving the caricatured tragedian to bid "farewel to this Stage for ever, I gad", so too do the Lord and the Lady walk out on the General at the conclusion of his bombastic speech, leaving the caricatured commander to remark that "de *Englishman* laff at me. Odsoona dey be de straingia Natioon in de Varld".⁹⁴ Structurally and thematically, then, both *The Rehearsal* and *The Rehearsal at Whitehall* are analogous, and the latter offers scholars and critics a significant indication of Buckingham's long forgotten political posturing within the former. To date, we have only just begun to understand his disaffected albeit astute analysis and critique of Restoration government embed within the *The Rehearsal*.

The infamously bad reputation that follows Buckingham as a debauched libertine and overprivileged scoundrel is largely founded upon the political agitprop and anecdotal

⁹³ *The Miscellaneous Works* (London: Samuel Briscoe, 1707), pp. 20-21.

⁹⁴ *The Rehearsal* (1672), pp. 51-52; *The Miscellaneous Works* (London: Samuel Briscoe, 1707), p. 21.

histories coloured by his rivals that were continued into the court of James II on the passing of his closest childhood friend and lifelong patron Charles II in 1685. To permit caricatures of Buckingham to guide our understanding of his person, like Dryden's portrait of the "Blest Madman" Zimri in *Absalom and Achitophel*, would be just as irresponsible and reductive as to permit Prince Pretty-Man to guide our understanding of Prince Rupert.⁹⁵ These are satirically distorting caricatures rooted in factional strife and the ruthless everyday business of Restoration court politics. Poised on the thresholds of celebrity from birth, Buckingham's fall from grace as the favourite and righthand of the Merry Monarch, and subsequently as head of the opposition, was perhaps inevitable. Upon the ascension of James II, he retired to the countryside far north from the courtly glamour of his Cliveden mansion in town, and returned to writing on his own favourite subject: religious toleration.⁹⁶ The disgraced favourite left no heir to the title once forged by his father at the court of James I, and it would therefore be laid to rest with him at Westminster Abbey in June of 1687. As we will see throughout the chapters to follow, however, *The Rehearsal* would soon prove to be his greatest gift and legacy to the English nation.

⁹⁵ *Absalom and Achitophel. A Poem*, 2nd ed. (London: Jacob Tonson, 1681), p. 21.

⁹⁶ *A Short Discourse Upon the Reasonableness of Men's Having A Religion, or Worship of God* (London: John Leake, 1685). See also: *The Duke of Buckingham His Grace's Letter, To the Unknown Author of A Paper, Entitled A Short Answer to His Grace the Duke of Buckingham's Paper, Concerning Religion, Toleration, and Liberty of Conscience* (London: John Leake, 1685).

“THE REHEARSAL” AFTER BUCKINGHAM

The Rehearsal and its underlying satirical politick outlive Buckingham by over a century. How often the play was acted prior to the routine insertion of playbills in London’s daily newspapers is unclear and clouded by hearsay. Some indication of the continued popularity of the drama in performance during the Restoration can be evinced through the five new playtext editions printed before the turn of the century, and the spurious charge issued by Historiographer Royal Thomas Rymer (c. 1643-1713) in 1693 declaring “we want a law for Acting the *Rehearsal* once a week”.⁹⁷ Indeed, the satire proved to be one of the most reprinted plays of the period, and by the early eighteenth century Bayes had become a stock character at the new Theatre Royal in Drury Lane animated by some of their most celebrated comedians: Richard Estcourt (1668-1712) and Colley Cibber (1671-1757).⁹⁸ By then the satirical targets embedded in Buckingham’s play were either deceased or a distant memory, however: the Anglo-Dutch Wars were

⁹⁷ *A Short View of Tragedy* (London: Richard Baldwin, 1693), p. 158. See also: *The Rehearsal*, 2nd ed. (London: Thomas Dring, 1673); *The Rehearsal*, 3rd ed. (London: Thomas Dring, 1675); *The Rehearsal*, 4th ed. (London: R[ichard] Bentley and S. Magnes, 1683); *The Rehearsal*, 5th ed. (London: Thomas Dring, 1687); *The Rehearsal*, 6th ed. (London: T[homas] Dring, 1692).

⁹⁸ Robert D. Hume and Harold Love offer a “rough index” of the popularity of the satire through equation with printed editions of other box office hits like Dryden’s *Marriage a-la-Mode* (1673), Wycherley’s *Country-Wife* (1675), and Etherege’s *Man of Mode* (1676) in “The Rehearsal”, in *Plays, Poems, and Miscellaneous Writings*, Vol. 1, pp. 386-387. For accessible albeit incomplete lists of revivals, see also: Dane Farnsworth Smith, “Revivals of *The Rehearsal*”, in *Plays About the Theatre in England* (Oxford UP, 1936), pp. 259-263, and Emmett L. Avery, “The Stage Popularity of *The Rehearsal*, 1671-1777”, *Research Studies* 7.4 (December 1939): 201-204.

momentarily over, and heroic drama was being superseded by a new vogue in town for foreign-language opera.⁹⁹

What sustains *The Rehearsal* throughout the century to follow is the addition of topical new materials satirizing contemporary affairs of both the stage and state such as rise of English opera, birth of the celebrity actors, and the American Revolutionary War. Estcourt, for instance, incorporates a short operetta—*Prunella: An Interlude Perform'd in the Rehearsal*—satirizing the local brouhaha around the premiere of Neapolitan mezzo-soprano Nicolò Grimaldi (1673-1732) in London in 1708.¹⁰⁰ Cibber similarly alleges to have interpolated ad-lib allusions to new plays when “the Part of *Bays* fell to [his] share”, and he notes that “there had always been allow'd such ludicrous Liberties of Observation, upon any thing new, or remarkable, in the state of the Stage, as Mr. *Bays* might think proper to take”.¹⁰¹ Charles Gildon (c. 1665-1724), perhaps unsurprisingly, capitalizes on the continuing popularity of the drama with his printing of *A New Rehearsal, or Bays the Younger* in 1714: an “Examen” on incoming poet laureate Nicholas Rowe (1674-1718) in the form of a dialogue between a Mr. Freeman, Mr. Truewit, and Mr. Bays set inside the

⁹⁹ Allardyce Nicoll, *History of English Drama: 1660-1900*, Vol. 2, pp. 225-236.

¹⁰⁰ *Prunella: An Interlude Perform'd in the Rehearsal* (London: Bernard Lintett, 1708). See also: Joseph R. Roach, “Cavaliere Nicolini: London's First Opera Star”, *Theatre Journal* 28.2 (1976): 189-205.

¹⁰¹ Cibber recounts an instance from one *Rehearsal* revival in January of 1717 wherein he “had a fling” at John Gay, Alexander Pope, and John Arbuthnot's *Three Hours After Marriage* (1717) by alluding to the satire “instead of what my Part directed me to say” as “the two Kings of *Brentford* came from the Clouds into the Throne again”, but no record of said allusion appears until twenty-five years later in his own retaliatory *Letter from Mr. Cibber, to Mr. Pope* (London, 1742), p. 8.

Rose Tavern neighbouring Drury Lane.¹⁰² Shortly thereafter, too, Thomas D'Urfey (1653-1723) pens a sequel to Buckingham's satire called *The Two Queens of Brentford: or, Bayes No Poetaster* wherein the two Kings of Brentford are replaced by "Two Queens" that caricature the mistresses of George I: Melusine von der Schulenburg (1667-1743) and Sophia Charlotte von Kielmansegg (1675-1725). Printed albeit never acted, D'Urfey's sequel is explicitly oppositional, and satirizes the mistresses' alleged hands in the South Sea Bubble and recent stock market crash that well-nigh bankrupt the whole of English government.¹⁰³

Indeed, Whigs and Tories alike lifted wholesale from Buckingham's *Rehearsal* during the early eighteenth century to satirically lay waste to their ideological opponents and enemies in the press through political periodicals like *The Rehearsal* by Jacobite propagandist and High Church Tory Charles Leslie (1650-1722) from August of 1704 through March of 1709, *The Rehearsal Rehears'd, in A Dialogue Between Bayes and Johnson* from September to November of 1706, and *The Rehearsal Revived, by Agitator*

¹⁰² *A New Rehearsal, or Bays the Younger* (London: J. Roberts, 1714). See also: Henry Benjamin Wheatley, "Rose Tavern (The)", *London Past and Present*, Vol. 3 (Cambridge UP, 2011), pp. 170-172.

¹⁰³ "The Two Queens of Brentford: or, Bayes No Poetaster", in *New Opera's* (London: William Chetwood, 1721). This is not the place to recount the economic fiasco of the South Sea Bubble, nor the virulent misogyny of caricatured Hanoverian court mistresses. For a study of the market crash, see: Helen J. Paul, *The South Sea Bubble: An Economic History of its Origins and Consequences* (London: Routledge, 2011). For studies of Schulenburg and Kielmansegg, see: Matthew Kilburn, "Schulenburg, (Ehrengard) Melusine von der", and "Kielmansegg, Sophia Charlotte von [formerly Countess Sophia Charlotte von Platen und Hallermund]", in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

Maximus, an Antediluvian from September to November of 1709.¹⁰⁴ In the daily cacophony of unlicensed political news media during this period, what today we might call ‘fake news’, Johnson and Smith’s attempt to follow the plot of Bayes’s play-within-the-play offers an extended metaphor for following the daily plot of state affairs, and one young troublemaker named Henry Fielding (1707-1754) would soon find in Buckingham’s play a satirical formula to turn the English state and stage completely upside down.

¹⁰⁴ Leslie’s *Rehearsal* is collected in full in his *View of the Times, Their Principles and Practices*, 4 vols. (London: Booksellers of London and Westminster, 1708-1709), and all nine instalments of *The Rehearsal Rehears’d* (London: B[enjamin] Bragge, 1706) are collated in the Bradshaw Collection of Irish Books at Cambridge University Library, Hib.3.740.2. I have yet to discover any surviving copies of *The Rehearsal Revived*. For an account of the authorship, publication, and suppression of this periodical, see: Henry L. Snyder, “The Reports of a Press Spy for Robert Harley: New Bibliographical Data for the Reign of Queen Anne”, *The Library* S5-XXII.4 (December 1967): 326-345, and John McTague, “*The New Atlantis* Arrests: A Reassessment”, *The Library* 15.4 (December 2014): 439-446. See also: “Political Tracts: Note rel. to ‘A General Postscript’ and ‘The Rehearsal Revived’: 1709”, in *Letters, depositions, lists, reports, etc., relating to Sunderland’s jurisdiction as Secretary of State*, British Library, MS 61609, ff. 61-62b.

———— CHAPTER TWO ————

LUCKLESS AT OLD DRURY: OR, THE REHEARSAL AT THE LITTLE THEATRE

“This *Drawcansir* in Wit... who to make his Poetical Fame immortal, like another *Erostratus*, set Fire to his Stage, by writing up to an Act of Parliament to demolish it”

— *An Apology for the Life of Colley Cibber* by Colley Cibber (1740)

“The little theatre in the Haymarket, then known by the name of F——g’s scandal-shop”

— *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless*, by Eliza Haywood (1751)

By the 1730s, the sustained popularity of Buckingham’s *Rehearsal* had spawned an entire subgenre of dramatic comedy. Allardyce Nicoll offers a brief summary of the genre toward the end of the second volume of his *History of English Drama, 1660-1900*, and he notes that “nearly all show the direct influence of Buckingham’s famous work of Restoration times”, yet no scholar has since troubled to further expound upon his self-admittedly curtailed findings.¹ I expatiate upon Nicoll’s abbreviated definition of rehearsal plays as dramatic satires “cast in the form of a rehearsal”, and consider their underlying oppositional frameworks of social, political and proto-feminist critique.² This chapter examines three significant rehearsal plays mounted by Henry Fielding at the Little Haymarket Theatre: *The Author’s Farce and the Pleasures of the Town* (1730), *Pasquin* and its afterpiece sequel *Tumble-Down Dick: or, Phaeton in the Suds* (1736), and *The Historical Register for the Year 1736* and its afterpiece sequel *Eurydice Hiss’d* (1737). Extending the argument of the chapter above, I show how Fielding adapts Buckingham’s

¹ This should perhaps not come as too much of a surprise given that the study of these plays demands an intimate familiarity with not only the rehearsal play, but also the plays from which they are derived.

² Allardyce Nicoll, “Miscellaneous Forms of Drama”, in *A History of English Drama*, Vol. 2, pp. 262-269.

Rehearsal into oppositional Whig satires directed at the reigning poet laureate Colley Cibber, and Hanoverian minister-favourite and de facto ‘prime Minister’ Robert Walpole, 1st earl of Orford (1676-1745).³

FIELDING’S FIRST REHEARSAL PLAY: “THE AUTHOR’S FARCE”

Fielding’s many rehearsal plays all satirically critique the reigning politicians and popular dramatic genres of the mid-1730s. Broadly speaking, his stage career begins with a rejection. Although his first play, *Love In Several Masques* (1728), saw moderate success at Drury Lane amidst the unprecedented run of *The Beggar’s Opera* across town that year, the twenty-one year old playwright would not be invited back to the Theatre Royal for some time. Fielding’s next two plays, *The Temple Beau* (1730) and “a few loose Scenes” from what he would later expand into a full rehearsal play titled *Don Quixote in England* (1734), failed to impress the managers: Robert Wilkes (1665-1732) and Colley Cibber.⁴ Indeed, as Martin and Ruthe Battestin note, that the celebrity comic and leading manager Cibber “should condescend even to hear a comedy by an unknown playwright

³ The development and official establishment of the title of ‘Prime Minister’ is a history beyond the scope of this dissertation. Like ‘the favourite’, the title was only ever applied unofficially and derisively to Walpole. For the most concise and recent account of this history, see: Dick Leonard, “The Road to the Prime Ministership”, in *British Prime Ministers from Walpole to Salisbury: The 18th and 19th Centuries* (London: Routledge, 2020), pp. 1-4.

⁴ Henry Fielding, “Preface”, in *Don Quixote in England* (London: J. Watts, 1734), n.p.. For the composition and production history of both plays, see: Thomas Lockwood, “The Temple Beau”, in *Henry Fielding: Plays*, Vol. 1 (Oxford UP, 2004), pp. 99-107, and “Don Quixote in England”, in *Henry Fielding: Plays*, Vol. 3 (Oxford UP, 2011), pp. 1-18.

scarcely out of school” is remarkable.⁵ The process through which the comedy came to be rehearsed at Drury Lane left a scarring impression on Fielding, however. In *The Laureate* (1740), one of Fielding’s contemporaries records a picture of the read-through procedures then in place at the theatre:

The Author of a new Piece was instructed to pay his Compliments severally to the Managers, who, with much Unwillingness, were prevail’d upon to appoint some leisure Day for the Reading of it... not one in Twenty being ever able to gain this Point... *The Court sitting, Chancellor Cibber*... nodded to the Author to open his Manuscript... if he found any Thing new in it, in which he conceived he cou’d particularly shine as an Actor, he would lay down his Pipe... and cry, *By G—d there is something in this: I do not know but it may do; but I will play such a Part*... and very hastily maimed what he pretended to mend: But to all this the Author must submit, or he wou’d find his Work postponed to another Season.⁶

One actor with the company some years later, Thomas Davies (c. 1713-1785), similarly recounts that Cibber took “a particular delight to mortify young authors”, and “his practice of giving back their plays he wantonly called *the choking of singing birds*”.⁷ Whatever “maiming” Cibber took to Fielding’s *Masques*, for which he took the part of “Rattle”, we can only speculate, but his first comedy was advertised as “now in Rehearsal” as early as the 13th of January, and thus saw over a month of preparation and no doubt emendation prior to the premiere on the 16th of February— approximately two

⁵ Henry Fielding: *A Life* (London: Routledge, 1989), p. 59.

⁶ *The Laureate: or, The Right Side of Colley Cibber* (London: J. Roberts, 1740), pp. 95-96.

⁷ Thomas Davies, *Memoirs of the Life of David Garrick*, Vol. 1, 2nd ed. (London, 1780) pp. 210-211.

weeks longer than most new plays produced during Cibber's tenure.⁸ These early experiences with the company at Drury Lane, however, would come to inform and provide the satirical foundation for his first box office hit: *The Author's Farce and the Pleasures of the Town*.

Much like Buckingham, Fielding's dramatic output and creative energy flourished far less on the right side of the crown than among the opposition. The majority of his drama saw greater success in the then unregulated playhouses of eighteenth-century London than they ever would at the Theatre Royal. Revenue from *Love in Several Masques* failed to repay production costs, and this loss in returns in part accounts for Cibber's rejections of his subsequent two pitches.⁹ Fielding was never one to be dissuaded, however, and he brought his next play to the theatre that he would one day come to manage: the Little Theatre in the Haymarket. *The Author's Farce* premiered on the 30th of March in 1730, and it proved to be Fielding's first commercial success on the London stage.¹⁰ The play, like Buckingham's *Rehearsal*, concerns the effort of one

⁸ "News", *London Evening Post*, 13 January 1728, Issue 15. See also: Lockwood, "Love in Several Masques", in *Henry Fielding: Plays*, Vol. 1, p. 8, and "Rehearsals", in *The London Stage, 1660-1800*, Pt. 2, Vol. 1, Emmett L. Avery, ed. (Southern Illinois UP, 1960), clviii-clvi.

⁹ Battestin, *Life*, p. 77.

¹⁰ Fielding's *Farce* coincidentally premieres on the same night as *Bays's Opera* (1730) by Gabriel Odingsells across town at Drury Lane, see: "The 'Kitty' in Clive", below. Fielding's drama is later revised with contemporary allusions for a six-night revival at Drury Lane in January of 1734, and reprinted with a misleading advertisement of being "greatly Alter'd by the Author" (London: John Watts, 1750). These revisions are wholly inconsequential to the plot, and for this dissertation I quote from Fielding's original playtext (London: J. Roberts, 1730). For a detailed account of this print and production history, see: Lockwood, "The Author's Farce", in *Plays*, Vol. 1, pp. 186-219.

dramatist to have his new play, a puppet show, staged at the Theatre Royal. Buckingham's Bayes is recast as an impoverished playwright named Harry Luckless, and autobiographical parallels with 'Harry' Fielding's own want of gold and poor luck as a novice playwright during this period have been observed by critics of the play since the late nineteenth century.¹¹ Indeed, among some two-thousand theatregoers that went to see Fielding's new *Farce*, John Perceval, 1st earl of Egmont (1683-1748) notes in his diary that it is "a ridicule on poets, and several of their works", and that "the author is one of the sixteen children of Mr. [Lieutenant General Edmund] Fielding, and in a very low condition of purse".¹² In addition to himself, Fielding also interpolates caricatures of his most recent critics, the Drury Lane manager and recently appointed poet laureate Cibber and his partner Wilkes, in the form of Marplay and Sparkish respectively. After a table-read of his new play, the two caricatured managers and Luckless begin to quarrel over Marplay's proposed revisions to the play:

LUCKLESS: Monstrous! Sir, I must ask your Pardon, I cannot consent to such an Alteration. It is downright Nonsense.

MARPLAY: [*Rising from the Table.*] Sir, it will not do— and so I wou'd not have you think any more of it.

SPARKISH: No, no, no. It will not do.

LUCKLESS: What Faults do you find?

MARPLAY: Sir, there is nothing in it that pleases me, so I am sure there is nothing in it that will please the Town.

¹¹ The first on record to make the equation is Austin Dobson who observes that Luckless "under thin disguises no doubt depicts much which was within the writer's experience" in his biography of *Fielding*, *English Men of Letters* (London: Macmillan, 1883), p. 15.

¹² 24 April 1730, in *Manuscripts of the Earl of Egmont: Diary of Viscount Percival, Afterwards First Earl of Egmont*, Vol. 1 (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1920), p. 97. See also: Lockwood, *Plays*, Vol. 1, p. 204.

SPARKISH: There is nothing in it that will please the Town.

Fielding lifts verbatim from the aforementioned and notorious cry of Cibber that “*it may do*”, and he puts these same words into the mouth of Marplay during this self-deprecating moment within his play. What is more, Fielding chucks his recent rejections from Drury Lane up to his “low condition of purse” as a novice playwright striving to make a name for himself in London. The drama then shifts in a scene change to Tom King’s Coffee House, an establishment immortalized as a notorious front for the sex trade by Fielding’s friend and contemporary William Hogarth (1697-1764), and both Drury Lane managers are found to be conversing about Luckless’s new play:

MARPLAY: ...Come—*Sparkish*, will you go to *Toms*!

LUCKLESS: Fare ye well, Gentlemen: may another Play do you more service.

[SCENE II. Marplay, Sparkish.]

MARPLAY: Ha, ha, ha!

SPARKISH: What dost think of the Play?

MARPLAY: It may be a very good one, for ought I know; but I know the Author has no Interest.

SPARKISH: Give me Interest, and rat the Play.—

MARPLAY: Rather rat the Play which has no Interest. Interest sways as much in the Theatre as at Court.

Some sixty years after the premiere of *The Rehearsal*, Fielding satirically rebukes the same type of theatrical “Interest” of the “Court” in Cibber’s theatre management practices that Buckingham rebukes in the heroic drama of Dryden. Indeed as the dialogue continues, Marplay and Sparkish turn their attention from Luckless’s play toward financial matters and a solicitation of patronage from the crown:

SPARKISH: But pray, Mr. *Marplay*, what was the Reason of that extraordinary Demand of yours upon the Office?

MARPLAY: Truly, Sir, it was for the Good of the Office.— Some of it was given to Puffs, to cry up our new Plays— And one half Guinea to Mr. *Scribler* for a Panegyric Essay in the News-Paper, with some other such Services.¹³

Cibber's recent appointment as laureate was taken by most as a product of political sponsorship by his personal friend in high "Office", Robert Walpole, then minister-favourite to George II. Marplay's remark concerning a "Panegyric" in the newspapers alludes to his well-charted bribery of not only the Theatres Royal, but also the press whom he frequently solicited to print pro-government propaganda.¹⁴ Anti-Walpole satire, of course, was by no stretch the provenance of Fielding alone. Gay's *Beggar's Opera* two-years prior, which to a lesser extent adopts the metatheatrical structure of a rehearsal play, caricatures the Walpole administration as a kleptocracy of balladeering thieves.¹⁵ In *The Author's Farce*, Fielding's first adaptation of Buckingham's *Rehearsal* set the

¹³ *The Author's Farce; and the Pleasures of the Town* (London: J. Roberts, 1730), pp. 17-18. See also: "King's Coffee-house, Covent Garden Market", *London Past and Present*, Vol. 2, p. 343, and William Hogarth, *A Harlot's Progress*, 1732, Engraving with etching, Queen's Gallery, Buckingham Palace, RCIN 811512.

¹⁴ While true that Cibber was a friend of Robert Walpole and floated in aristocratic Whig circles, his appointment to the laureateship is considered in far less partisan and more nuanced terms by Elaine M. McGirr in her *Partial Histories: A Reappraisal of Colley Cibber* (London: Macmillan, 2016). See also: Tone Sundt Urstad, *Sir Robert Walpole's Poets: The Use of Literature as Pro-Government Propaganda, 1721-1742* (Delaware UP, 1999).

¹⁵ Anti-Walpole satire in *The Beggar's Opera* has been observed since the premiere of the play, and hardly necessitates recounting for the purposes of this dissertation. For a concise summary of Gay's hits on Walpole and his administration, see: Hal Gladfelder, Introduction to *The Beggar's Opera and Polly* (Oxford UP, 2013), xx-xxii.

oppositional tone for a number of subsequent rehearsal plays that would parallel a farce of stage with a farce of government.

In the same way that Buckingham's play did not strike an end to heroic drama so much as capitalize upon the craze, neither did Fielding's *Farce* strike an end to the popular dramatic genres of the early eighteenth century. Buckingham's problem with heroic drama is rooted in the celebration of a court for which he was increasingly becoming disenchanted and personally disaffected, so what is Fielding's problem with opera and pantomime? Part of Fielding's satire is founded upon his disenchantment and rejections from the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane which drive him to new heights as a comic playwright just as Buckingham's disenchantment and rejections at the Restoration court had once spurred him to write *The Rehearsal*. Like Buckingham's proto-Whig, country party politics underlying *The Rehearsal*, however, Fielding's satire on French and Italian dramatic genres such as pantomime and opera is informed by his own pro-country and Patriot Whig politics. Fielding, like Bayes and Luckless, necessarily turns his pen to writing "Nonsense", or, in other words, popular dramatic genres that are sure to capitalize on the dramatic "pleasures" of the eighteenth-century theatregoing public. Where Bayes's play satirizes heroic drama, Luckless's puppet show satirizes an ongoing vogue for figures like "Monsieur Pantomime" and "Signior Opera", then both standard fare at the Theatres Royal. Fielding's puppets are represented as sailing down the River Styx en route to the underworld with the likes of Don Tragedio, Mrs. Novel, Sir Farcical Comic, and the Queen of Nonsense who ultimately appoints Opera to be her lover before the

puppet show is abruptly cut short by Murdertext, a caricatured Puritan-objector to the playhouses carrying a warrant for the author's arrest. To recount Luckless's puppet show and Fielding's allegory within it any further would be to miss the point entirely—the point is to enact and equate the “Court of Nonsense” with the popular dramatic and literary genres of the early eighteenth century. Fielding therefore builds upon the satirical framework afforded him by Buckingham's *Rehearsal*. Where Bayes is shuffled offstage in order to “set up Bills for another Play” at the conclusion of *The Rehearsal*, Fielding carries the satire one step further by conflating the two formerly distinct worlds of Luckless and his puppet show in a miraculous revelation of his being found heir apparent at the court of Nonsense.¹⁶ That Fielding is attempting to rewrite *The Rehearsal* for a new age is made explicit during this moment in the drama as the character of Punch arrives to explain that:

PUNCH: If his Majesty of *Bantam* will give me leave, I can make a Discovery which will be to his Satisfaction. You have chose for a Wife, *Henrietta*, Princess of *Old Brentford*.

OMNES: How!

PUNCH: When the King of Old Brentford was expell'd by the King of the New, the Queen flew away with her little Daughter, then about two Years old, and was never heard of since. But I sufficiently recollect the Phiz of my Mother, and thus I ask her Blessing.

MONEYWOOD: Oh, my Son!

HARRIOT: Oh, my Brother!

PUNCH: Oh, my Sister!

MONEYWOOD: I am sorry, in this Pickle, to remember who I am. But alas! too true is all you've said: Tho' I have been reduced to let Lodgings, I was the Queen of *Brentford*, and this, tho' a Player, is a King's Son.¹⁷

¹⁶ *The Rehearsal* (1672), p. 54.

¹⁷ *The Author's Farce*, pp. 58-59.

Fielding is invoking not only the plot concerning the Two Kings of Brentford in Buckingham's *Rehearsal*, but also the political allegory that it drew with the Restoration court by naming Luckless's new queen Princess Henrietta, the beloved sister and the aforementioned confidant of Charles II during negotiations of the Secret Treaty of Dover. Fielding's allusion to *The Rehearsal* and Stuart court in *The Author's Farce* offers significant indication of the political resonances that Buckingham's satire continued to hold throughout the eighteenth century. Self-deprecating though it may be—"the very Bays of his own Farce", as Dryden once said of Buckingham—by the close of Luckless's play-within-the-play, Fielding's autobiographical surrogate within the drama is transubstantiated from Grub Street rags to Stuart royalty.¹⁸

Both satirists turn the popular genres of the day against their leading authors, and indeed their personal rivals. Fielding, to be sure, satirizes the generic conventions of heroic drama in an afterpiece titled *Tom Thumb* later added to *The Author's Farce* in late April of 1730, but by the mid-1730s it is not so much eighteenth-century heroic dramatists as the likes of Signior Opera and Harlequin who routinely haunt Fielding's Little Theatre.

FIELDING'S 'DRAMATIC SATIRE ON THE TIMES': "PASQUIN"

By the mid-1730s, Fielding had become London's prime minister of farce and the rehearsal play genre, and began to oversee management of the Little Theatre from which

¹⁸ *Satires of Decimus Junius Juvenalis*, vii.

he had achieved his theatrical celebrity. His most productive and arguably creative season would be that of 1736 and 1737 wherein he mounted his most politically charged anti-ministerial and oppositional-Whig satires: *Pasquin* and *The Historical Register for the Year 1736*. In *Pasquin* and its burlesque afterpiece sequel, *Tumble-Down Dick*, Fielding finds in the stock figures of the harlequinade an extended metaphor for an anti-ministerial and “*Dramatick Satire on the Times*”.¹⁹ The title of the play is derived from an early modern Italian genre of Menippean satire—the ‘pasquinade’, ‘pasquil’, or ‘pasquinata’—in reference to makeshift billboards of satiric poems and songs airing anti-governmental grievances inscribed around the public statues of sixteenth-century Rome during election seasons.²⁰ Indeed, much of Fielding’s *Pasquin* lampoons the election of state officials in early eighteenth-century London. Although it is built principally upon the framework of Buckingham’s satire, *Pasquin* expands upon the genre by incorporating not one but two plays-within-the-play: “*A Comedy call’d The Election; And a Tragedy call’d The Life and Death of Common Sense*”. The “Original Hint”, as Fielding notes in his mock-dedication to the afterpiece, came from a short-lived rehearsal play produced at Lincoln’s Inn Fields in 1731 titled *The Contrast* by the Hoadly brothers, Benjamin (1706-1757) and John (1711-1776), which was suppressed after three nights at the behest of their troubled

¹⁹ *Pasquin. A Dramatick Satire on the Times: Being the Rehearsal of Two Plays, viz. A Comedy call’d The Election; And a Tragedy call’d The Life and Death of Common Sense* (London: John Watts, 1736), n.p.

²⁰ The anonymity and temporality of these posters renders their study rather problematic. For a concise account of their history, see: Peter Partner, *Renaissance Rome, 1500-1559: A Portrait of a Society* (California UP, 1976), pp. 202-204.

father, the clergyman Benjamin Hoadly, then Bishop of Winchester (1676-1761).²¹ Fielding, as it happens, was one of the playwrights satirized in the Hoadlys' rehearsal play, and one anecdote often recounted by critics of *The Rehearsal* alleges that Buckingham "took incredible pains in teaching [John] Lacy, the original performer of Bayes, to speak some passages of that part" in imitation of "Dryden's dress, and manner, and usual expressions".²² Dryden, as the story goes, "was fond of wearing black velvet", and according to the Hoadlys, Fielding "was a never failing Attendant on the[ir] Rehearsals", so "To the Astonishment of his Friends, he one Morning appear'd there, though in the Month of May, in a compleat Suit of *Black Velvet*... *Swearing*, (as he too frequently did,) *that They should not dress their Comedy Poet like Him*".²³ Much like the Hoadlys' *Contrast*, Fielding's five-act rehearsal play begins with an induction akin to

²¹ The brothers' rehearsal play was never printed, but a manuscript copy was discovered in 2004 by Harry Johnstone, and it is now archived at the Bodleian Library. The complete title of the rehearsal play is "The CONTRAST, A Tragi-comical Rehearsal of Two Modern Plays, Match upon Match, or No Match at all; and The Tragedy of Epaminondas", and a preface notes that: "The general Turn and Design of The Contrast is a Satire, something in the Manner of the Duke of Buckingham's Rehearsal", MS. Eng. d. 3625, fol. vii. See also: Henry Fielding, *Tumble-Down Dick: or, Phaeton in the Suds* (London, J. Watts, 1736), p. 3, H. Diack Johnstone, "Four Lost Plays Recovered: 'The Contrast' and Other Dramatic Works of John Hoadly (1711-1776)", *Review of English Studies* 57.231 (Sep. 2006): 487-506, and Frederick G. Ribble, "Fielding, the Hoadlys, and the Composition of *Pasquin*", *Studies in Philology*, 106 (Spring 2009): 235-261.

²² I quote here from Malone's "Account of the Life and Writings of John Dryden", in *The Critical and Miscellaneous Prose Works of John Dryden*, Vol. 1, Pt. 1, p. 98, but for the rich transmission history of this anecdote, see: Robert D. Hume and Harold Love, "The Rehearsal", in *Plays, Poems, and Miscellaneous Writings*, Vol. 1, pp. 355-356.

²³ Thomas Davies, *Dramatic Micellanies* [sic.], Vol. 3 (London, 1783-1784), p. 289, and Hoadly, in Preface to "The Contrast", qtd. by Ribble, p. 242.

Buckingham's *Rehearsal*, but with two playwrights, a tragedian named Fustian and a comedian named Trapwit, sharing the lead role of caricatured author:

1st PLAYER: When does the Rehearsal begin?

2nd PLAYER: I suppose we shall hardly Rehearse the Comedy this Morning; for the Author was Arrested as he was going home from *King's Coffee-house*; and, as I heard, it was for upwards of Four Pound: I suppose he will hardly get Bail [...]

1st PLAYER: Oh! here comes our Tragedy-Poet.

[*Enter Fustian*]

FUSTIAN: Gentlemen, your Servant; Ladies, yours. I should have been here sooner, but have been obliged, at their own Request, to wait upon some half-dozen Persons of the first Quality with Tickets: Upon my Soul I have been chid for putting off my Play so long: I hope you are all quite Perfect; for the Town will positively stay for it no longer. I think I may very well put upon the Bills, *At the Particular Desire of several Ladies of Quality*, the first Night.²⁴

Like Bayes, Fustian is introduced with a caricatured self-confidence to his playwriting. The insertion of puffs advertising drama as being produced upon the "*Particular Desire*" of unnamed persons "*of Quality*" was common practice on the playbills of this period, and Fielding elsewhere protests that such headlines are simply "Designed to allure Persons to the House, who go thither more for the sake of the Company than of the Play", and "hath very little Signification".²⁵ Like the Restoration Theatres Royal, the playhouses of early eighteenth-century London are as much a place to see as to be seen. While the reasons for Trapwit's arrest are ultimately unspecified, it is his anti-ministerial satire and comedy that the players rehearse first, and, like *The Rehearsal*, the running joke of

²⁴ *Pasquin*, pp. 1-2.

²⁵ "Juvenalis Satyra Sexta", in *Miscellanies*, Vol. 1, Henry Knight Miller, ed. (Oxford UP, 1972), p. 93.

Fielding's new double-bill rehearsal play is the players' seeming incompetence in rehearsal. Nothing runs according to Trapwit's script, and the players simply cannot satisfy the playwrights' demands amidst ongoing interruption and criticism:

TRAPWIT: [...] Now pray no more Interruption; for this Scene is one continual Joke, and if you open your Lips in it, you will break the Thread of the Jest [...] You, Mr. that Act my Lord, Bribe a little more openly if you please, or the Audience will lose that Joke, and it's one of the strongest in my whole Play [...]

FUSTIAN: Is there nothing but Bribery in this Play of yours, Mr. *Trapwit*?

TRAPWIT: Sir, this Play is an exact Representation of Nature; I hope the Audience will date the Time of Action before the Bill of Bribery and Corruption took Place; and then I believe it may go down; but now, Mr. *Fustian*, I shall shew you the Art of a Writer [...]

MAYOR: Come, here's a Round to my Lord, and Colonel's Health; a *Place* and a *Promise*, I say; they may talk of the Pride of Courtiers, but I am sure I never had a civiller Squeeze by the Hand in my Life.

TRAPWIT: Ay, you have squeeze'd that out pretty well; but shew the Gold at those Words, Sir, if you please...

FUSTIAN: Ha, ha, ha! upon my Word the Courtiers have topt their Part; the Actor has out-done the Author; this Bribing with an empty Hand is quite in the Character of a Courtier.²⁶

Precisely four decades earlier, in 1696, "An Act for Preventing Charge and Expense in Elections of Members to Serve in Parliament" circulated the House of Commons, and received royal assent forbidding the allowance of "money, meat, drink, provision, present, reward, or entertainment... for the use, advantage, benefit, employment, profit, or preferment of any such person or persons" running for office, but the bill proved ineffectual at forestalling the corruption of elections.²⁷ In 1729, a new bill had been

²⁶ *Pasquin*, pp. 7-9.

²⁷ "Anno 7 Gulielmi III. Cap. 4", rpt. in *A Collection of the Statutes Now in Force Relative to Elections Down to the Present Time* (London: Richard Troward, 1790), pp. 43-45.

introduced “for the more effectual preventing Bribery and Corruption, in the Elections of Members to serve in Parliament” requiring an oath to be sworn by candidates, but this too was regularly flouted.²⁸ Trapwit invokes the Bill of Bribery and Corruption in his play-within-the-play called “The Election”, and, as Peter Lewis has noted, Fielding is “alluding specifically to the recent one in 1734”, one of the largest elections to date and wherein Walpole’s ministerial Whig administration secured a widely contested majority despite the withdrawal and controversy of his recently proposed increase on excise taxes.²⁹

As the players’ rehearsal of Trapwit’s play-within-play proceeds, Fielding layers oppositional allusion upon oppositional allusion to the corruption of Walpole and the Ministerial Whigs. When the Mayor’s wife and daughter—Mrs. and Miss Mayoress—thereafter enter on the scene, however, he also begins to intermingle political satire with dramatic satire on the popular theatrical genres and local entertainments of the day:

MRS. MAYORESS: Oh, my Lord! mention not those dear *Ridotto’s* to me, who have been confined these twelve long Months in the Country; where we have had no Entertainment, but a Set of hideous, strolling Players; nor have I seen any one human Creature, till your Lordship came to Town; Heaven send us a controverted Election, then I shall go to that dear delightful Place once more.

²⁸ “Anno 2 Georgii II. Cap. 24”, rpt. in *A Collection of the Statutes Now in Force Relative to Elections Down to the Present Time*, pp. 108-115. For one topical instance of such an offence, see: “News”, *London Evening Post*, 28 February 1736, Issue 1293.

²⁹ *Fielding’s Burlesque Drama*, p. 151. See also: Paul Langford, *The Excise Crisis: Society and Politics in the Age of Walpole* (Oxford UP, 1975), and Chris Cook and John Stevenson, *A History of British Elections Since 1689* (London: Routledge, 2014) pp. 27-28, 33.

MISS: Yes, Mama, and then we shall see *Faribelly*, the strangest Man-Woman that they say is with child; and the fine Pictures of *Merlin's Cave* at the Play-Houses; and the Rope-Dancing, and the Tumbling.

FUSTIAN: By Miss's Taste I believe she has been bred up under a Woman of Quality too [...]

TRAPWIT: — Come, enter the Mayor drunk.

[Enter Mayor]

MAYOR: Liberty and Property, and no Excise, Wife.

MRS. MAYORESS: Ah! filthy Beast, come not near me [...]

MISS: I hope you won't vote for a nasty stinking Tory, Papa.

MAYOR: What a-pox! Are you for the Courtiers too?³⁰

In addition to Mrs. Mayoress's objections to "a controverted Election", her daughter Miss's desire to go see "*Faribelly*" in London is an allusion to famed Italian castrato Carlo Mario Michelangelo Nicola Broschi (1705-1782) known simply, as today, as Farinelli. Miss's mispronunciation of his name, however, is loaded with topicality. Fielding is punning on London's fascination with Farinelli's supposedly being "with child".³¹ Indeed, in a letter to Jonathan Swift (1667-1745) from April of 1736, bluestocking artist Mary Delany (1700-1788) reports that she "went out of Town last Autumn, [and] the reigning madness was Farinelli; I find it now turned on *Pasquin*, a dramatic satire on the times. It has had almost as long a run as the *Beggar's Opera*".³² Fielding's rehearsal play ran for thirty-nine nights straight between March and April that year, and later continued for another twenty-one nights through May, just two nights shy

³⁰ *Pasquin*, pp. 14-16.

³¹ For one extant example of this unquestionably false albeit widespread rumour, see: *An Epistle to John James H[e]dd[e]g[e]r, Esq; On the Report of Signior F[ar]r[i]n[e]lli's being with Child* (London: E. Hill, 1736).

³² 22 April 1736, in *The Autobiography and Correspondence of Mary Granville, Mrs. Delany*, Vol. 1, Augusta Hall, ed. (London: Richard Bentley, 1861), pp. 553-556.

of rivalling the sixty-two consecutive performances of Gay's *Opera*. Nearly every line of *Pasquin* is brimming with topical allusions to the theatre and politics of the 1730s, and Miss's allusion to "Merlin's Cave" similarly offers an allusion to contemporary productions of Henry Purcell (1659-1695) and Dryden's patriotic opera *King Arthur* which was advertised on playbills as containing "an Exact Representation of Merlin's Cave, as in the Royal Gardens at Richmond".³³ Where Trapwit and Fustian's incessant interruptions and questioning of the plots of Fielding's plays-within-the-play confused the theatregoing public, much like the *Key to the Rehearsal* printed by Samuel Briscoe in 1705, an anonymously-authored and now lost *Key to Pasquin* is advertised as being set to be published "In a few Days" following the premiere.³⁴ Many of Fielding's embedded allusions to popular theatrical genres and local entertainments in London during the 1730s need not be pinpointed with such honing precision, however. The broader aim and design of *Pasquin* is to satirize contemporary drama, and the Theatres Royal in particular, as fairgrounds of sideshow entertainments. As the rehearsal shifts from Trapwit's "Election" to Fustian's new tragedy, Fielding figuratively dramatizes "The Death of Common Sense" live onstage. During Fielding's extended mock-heroic allegory, much akin to Luckless's *Pleasures of the Town*, Harlequin arrives at the military camp of the Queen of Ignorance

³³ "Advertisements and Notices", *London Daily Post and General Advertiser*, 17 December 1735, Issue 351. See also: Peter Lewis, "Three Notes on Fielding's Plays", *Notes and Queries* 21.7 (1974): 253-255, and Judith Colton, "Merlin's Cave and Queen Caroline: Garden Art as Political Propaganda", *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 10.1 (1976): 1-20.

³⁴ "Advertisements and Notices", *London Evening Post*, 13 March 1736, Issue 1299.

stationed outside the Theatre Royal in Covent Garden to explain that he comes in peace as
an

HARLEQUIN: Ambassador from the two Theatres,
Who both congratulate you on your Arrival;
And to convince you with what hearty Meaning
They sue for your Alliance, they have sent
Their choicest Treasures here as Hostages,
To be detain'd 'till you are well convinc'd,
They're not less Foes to *Common-Sense* than you [...]

QUEEN IGNORANCE: Read the Catalogue.

HARLEQUIN: [*Reads.*] A Tall Man, and a tall Woman, hired at a vast Price.
Two Dogs that walk on their hind Legs only, and personate human
Creatures so well, they might be mistaken for them. A human Creature that
personates a Dog so well, that he might almost be taken for one. Two
Human Cats. A most curious Set of Puppies. A Pair of Pidgeons. A Set of
Rope-Dancers and Tumblers from *Sadler's-Wells*.³⁵

Many if not all of the “Catalogue” entries listed by Harlequin are direct references to contemporary showings across town at the Theatres Royal. The “Tall Man”, for instance, refers to a seven-foot tall Dutch entertainer named Daniel Mynheer Cajanus (1704-1749) who acted the part of Gargantua in a pantomime production of *Cupid and Psyche* at Drury Lane between February and March of 1734 to which “the Town” both “with Wonder beheld” and “flock'd” to see that season.³⁶ The “human Creature that personates a Dog so well, that he might be taken for one” refers to the Theatre Royal manager John Rich (1692-1761) who fashioned himself into a Dalmatian for his pantomime productions of

³⁵ *Pasquin*, pp. 54-55.

³⁶ For contemporary accounts of Cajanus's performance, see: “Modern Taste”, February 1734, *The Gentleman's Magazine: and Historical Chronicle*, Vol. 4 (London: F. Jefferies, 1734), p. 92, and *An Apology for the Life of Mr. T— C—, Comedian* (London: J. Mechell, 1740), pp. 103-104.

Perseus and Andromeda at Covent Garden.³⁷ Both Miss's taste for early eighteenth-century pop culture and Harlequin's "Catalogue" of metropolitan theatrical "Treasures" are invoked to call attention to a generalized decay in popular taste and the capitalization of the Theatres Royal on such sideshow entertainments. Fielding is reluctant to treat the Little Theatre like his old fair booth at Bartholomew Fair, but also mindful of pantomime's increasing popularity with theatregoers. While Drury Lane and Covent Garden were bringing the outdoor theatre of the London fairs to life indoors, Fielding takes the walls of his Little Theatre down entirely by pushing popular drama to its metatheatrical limits through the rehearsal play format. Like Buckingham's *Rehearsal* and the heroic drama vogue of the 1680s, *Pasquin* hardly engendered an end to the opera and pantomime vogue of the 1730s so much as it opportunistically capitalized upon it.

Fielding added *Tumble-Down Dick* to his playbill on April 29th for the fortieth-night run of *Pasquin*, but his "*Dramatick Entertainment of Walking, in Serious and Foolish Characters*" is much more of a cumulative act appended to the mainpiece. Although printed and performed as distinct works, Fielding's afterpiece carries forward the same characters and drama from his mainpiece, and similarly adopts the form of a rehearsal play. Like Johnson and Smith, the tragedian Fustian reappears onstage alongside a critic named Sneer-well to observe the rehearsal of a new pantomime authored by Mr.

³⁷ For another visual representation of John Rich in his Dalmatian costume, see: William Hogarth, *Rich's Glory or his Triumphant Entry into Covent-Garden*, 1732, Etching, British Museum, 1868,0808.3549. For more on Fielding's allusions, see also: Lockwood, *Henry Fielding: Plays*, Vol. 3, p. 304.

Machine. Fielding's innovation upon Buckingham's *Rehearsal* in the afterpiece is to satirically represent the conventional double billing of a five act mainpiece alongside a farcical afterpiece at the Theatres Royal:

PROMPTER: Mr. *Fustian*, I hope the Tragedy is over, for Mr. *Machine* is just come, and we must practise the Entertainment.

FUSTIAN: Sir, my Tragedy is done; but you need not be in such Haste about your Entertainment, for you will not want it this Season.

PROMPTER: That, Sir, I don't know; but we dare not disoblige Mr. *Machine*, for fear he should go to the other House.

SNEERWELL: Dear *Fustian*, do let us stay and see the Practice.

FUSTIAN: And can you bear, after such a luscious Meal of Tragedy as you have had, to put away the Taste with such an insipid Desert?

SNEERWELL: It will divert me a different way.— I can admire the Sublime which I have seen in the Tragedy, and laugh at the Ridiculous which I expect in the Entertainment.³⁸

Mr. Machine's embedded pantomime, as others before me have observed, is a burlesque sendup of *The Fall of Phaeton* by Theatre Royal treasurer William Pritchard (1707-1763) which proved an instant success over the winter prior.³⁹ Fielding, as Thomas Lockwood observes in his recent introduction to the afterpiece, "copied and smeared his target work here with a murderously close hand".⁴⁰ The precision with which Pritchard's "New Dramatic Masque" is burlesqued in the play also leads Peter Lewis to conclude that of all Fielding's burlesque drama "*Tumble-Down Dick* is the one that most closely corresponds to *The Rehearsal*" as a satire on the "principal exponent" of a particular dramatic genre:

³⁸ *Tumble-Down Dick*, pp. 1-2.

³⁹ *The Fall of Phaeton* (London: R. Turbot, 1736).

⁴⁰ *Henry Fielding: Plays*, Vol. 3, p. 319.

pantomime and the new Covent Garden, Theatre Royal manager John Rich.⁴¹ Fielding's problem is not necessarily with pantomime itself, for he is clearly quite skilled at writing it, but rather with the foreign troupes of tumblers and opera singers flooding into the marketplace during this period.

In addition to being a "murderous" dramatic satire, however, Fielding's afterpiece contains an underlying political equation of Walpole's Whig administration to a troupe of tumbling trickster figures. The title of Fielding's afterpiece is an allusion to the slapstick 'tumbling' so characteristic of pantomime, and an oblique conflation of both William Pritchard and John Rich's names, 'Dick', and, as Lewis notes: "the more obvious but slightly longer and less alliterative 'Tumble Down Richard' would have been a rather cumbersome title".⁴² What Peter Lewis overlooks in his analysis, however, is Fielding's glaring allusion to the derisive sobriquet bestowed upon Richard Cromwell (1626-1712) during his fall from political power as Lord Protector in 1659: 'Tumbledown Dick'.⁴³ Fielding is at once invoking the pantomimic tumbling of Rich at Covent Garden, and drawing a multi-layered political analogy to the bygone rule of the Cromwell family and post-Restoration reversion of the Protectorate. To wholly recount Fielding's burlesque of *The Fall of Phaeton* would be redundant, but his satirical representation of the Whig minister-favourite Walpole in the play is indeed significant. Within the final air of the

⁴¹ *Fielding's Burlesque Drama*, p. 179. See also: "Advertisements and Notices", *London Daily Post and General Advertiser*, 28 February 1736, Issue 414.

⁴² *Fielding's Burlesque Drama*, p. 166.

⁴³ For the history and origins of this sobriquet, see: William West, "Tumble-Down Dick", *Tavern Anecdotes and Sayings*, Charles Hindley, ed. (Cambridge UP, 2011), pp. 383-394.

mock-pantomime he hits upon a caricature of the prime minister that he would soon flesh out in further detail:

*You wonder, perhaps at the Tricks of the Stage,
Or that Pantomime Miracles take with the Age;
But if you examine Court, Country, and Town,
There's nothing but Harlequin-Feats will go down.*

Derry down, &c [...]

*At Court, 'tis hard to confine him as Air,
Like a troublesome Spirit, he's here, and he's there;
All Shapes and Disguises at Pleasure puts on,
And defies all the Nation to conjure him down.*

Derry down, &c.⁴⁴

Harlequin, of course, is the principal trickster figure in pantomimic drama, and becomes a caricatured surrogate through which Fielding is able to make oppositional commentary upon Walpole and his ministerial Whig administration throughout the 1730s. As an oppositional Patriot Whig playwright, Fielding's satire on popular dramatic genres like pantomime becomes a politicized expression of theatrical dissent.

Where Buckingham had carefully encoded political satire under a veil of literary satire in *The Rehearsal*, Fielding had started to become a touch too explicit in his political censuring of Walpole and the ministerial Whigs. John O'Brien notes in his study of early eighteenth-century pantomime that Fielding's rehearsal plays present "a case in the phenomenology of spectatorship", and force audiences "to adopt a critical relation to the

⁴⁴ *Tumble-Down Dick*, pp. 18-19.

performance”.⁴⁵ Whereas Buckingham had embedded his own critical position through the sardonic critiques of Johnson and Smith, Fielding does so through Fustian:

FUSTIAN: Sir, I suppose you intend this as a Joke; but I can't see why a Player of our own Country, and in our own Language, should not deserve Five Hundred, sooner than a sawcy *Italian* Singer Twelve.

MACHINE: Five Hundred a Year, Sir! Why, Sir, for a little more Money I'll get you one of the best *Harlequins* in *France*; and you'll see the Managers are of my Opinion.⁴⁶

The “critical relation” that Fielding enforces upon his audience is decidedly partisan, and reflects his Patriot Whig politics hostile to Walpole’s foreign policy of reluctance to engage in war and sustain peaceful relations between England, France, and Spain over the colonies in North America. By the first publication of the *Biographia Dramatica* in 1764, the drama was remembered exclusively for its “very severe satirical Reflections on the Ministry”, and “the Occasion of a Bill being brought in to the House of Commons for limiting the Number of Playhouses, and restraining the Liberty of the Stage”.⁴⁷ Walpole was by now onto Fielding and his troupe of oppositional satirists at the Little Theatre, and his ongoing caricature of the minister-favourite is often regarded as having set the stage for the most censoring theatrical bill of the century.

⁴⁵ *Harlequin Britain: Pantomime and Entertainment, 1690-1760* (Johns Hopkins UP, 2004), pp. 198-199.

⁴⁶ *Tumble-Down Dick*, p. 18.

⁴⁷ David Erskine Baker, “Pasquin”, in *The Companion to the Play-House: or, An Historical Account of All the Dramatic Writers (and their Works) that have appeared in Great Britain and Ireland*, Vol. 1 (London: T. Becket, et. al., 1764), n.p.

FIELDING'S "HISTORICAL REGISTER" & THE LICENSING ACT OF 1737

In the spring of 1737, Fielding mounted his final rehearsal play and afterpiece at the Little Theatre: *The Historical Register for the Year 1736* and *Eurydice Hiss'd*. The title of Fielding's mainpiece is lifted verbatim from a periodical of the same name that ran from 1716 through 1738, and offered "*An Impartial Relation of all Transactions, Foreign and Domestick: With A Chronological Diary of all the Remarkable Occurrences, viz. Births, Marriages, Deaths, Removals, Promotions, &c*".⁴⁸ Fielding's satire, however, is anything but "*Impartial*". The caricatured playwright of his play-within-the-play—another surrogate for Fielding himself—is aptly named Medley, and, much like *The Historical Register* itself, the satire is composed of a medley of disparate scenes strung together in the form of a rehearsal:

1st PLAYER: Mr. *Emphasis*, good-morrow, you are early at the Rehearsal this Morning.

EMPHASIS: Why, faith, *Jack*, our Beer and Beer sat but ill on my Stomach, so I got up to try if I could not walk it off.

1st PLAYER: I wish I had any thing in my Stomach to walk off; if Matters do not go better with us shortly, my Teeth will forget their Office.

2nd PLAYER: These are poor Times, indeed, not like the Days of *Pasquin* [...] Who have we here?

1st PLAYER: Some Gentlemen, I suppose, come to hear the Rehearsal.

[*Enter Sowrwit and Lord Dapper*]

DAPPER: Pray, Gentlemen, don't you rehearse the *Historical Register* this Morning?

1st PLAYER: Sir, we expect the Author every Minute.

SOWRWIT: What is this *Historical Register*, is it a Tragedy or a Comedy?

1st PLAYER: Upon my Word, Sir, I can't tell.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ *The Historical Register*, Vol. 22 (London: J. Meeres, 1737), Archives and Research Collections, McMaster University Library, B 12039.

⁴⁹ *The Historical Register for the Year 1736*, pp. 1-2.

Supplanting Johnson and Smith from Buckingham's *Rehearsal* stand Sowwit and Lord Dapper, and their dialogue between the various scenes of Medley's play-within-the-play provide a critical lens through which Fielding filters his numerous embedded satires. As Thomas Lockwood has noted in his most recent introduction to the text, Fielding "can be seen cultivating the form almost to a vanishing point, where all that remains is the backstage frame and characters".⁵⁰ There is little to no cohesion between the scenes of Medley's play, and this is in part the overarching burlesque on contemporary drama writ large, but, more significantly, it allows Fielding to cast his satiric web of burlesque and caricatured personation wider than ever before.

Numerous subjects of Fielding's former rehearsal plays are again subjected to his ridicule in *The Historical Register*, namely: Cibber and Walpole.⁵¹ At the beginning of the satire, Medley recites an "Ode to the New Year" as a prologue to his play-within-the-play, and the ode is fashioned in satiric representation of Cibber's occasional odes sung at the

⁵⁰ *Plays*, Vol. 3, p. 363.

⁵¹ Scholars have combed and catalogued Fielding's satiric allusions within the play since the twentieth century, and many need not be recounted for the purpose of this dissertation. For detailed exhumations of topical allusion in the play, see: Charles W. Nichols, "Social Satire in Fielding's *Pasquin* and *Historical Register*", *Philological Quarterly* 3 (January 1924): 309-317, Peter Lewis, "*Eurydice*, *The Historical Register for the Year 1736*, and *Eurydice Hiss'd*", in *Fielding's Burlesque Drama* (Edinburgh UP, 1987), pp. 181-202, and Robert D. Hume, "Impresario at the Little Haymarket, 1736-1737", in *Henry Fielding and the London Theatre, 1728-1737* (Oxford UP, 1988), pp. 200-260.

Hanoverian court.⁵² Like Buckingham's mockery of Stuart panegyrics, the mock-ode in Fielding's rehearsal play ridicules Georgian panegyrics as vacuous flattery. Medley's ode is comically jejune, and—although not a direct burlesque of any one particular poem insofar as extant printed records indicate—captures the puerility of the genre by way of orbital regularity: “*The Sun shall rise, / All in the Skies; / The Moon shall go, / All down below*”.⁵³ In a later scene of Medley's play-within-the-play satirizing the aforementioned “Session of Poets” regularly anthologized in eighteenth-century collections of Restoration court poetry, Fielding continues his satire on Cibber by caricaturing the poet laureate not as Bayes, but as “Mr. *Ground-Ivy*”:

GROUND-IVY: What are you doing here?

APOLLO: I am casting the Parts in the Tragedy of King *John*.

GROUND-IVY: Then you are casting the Parts in a Tragedy that won't do.

APOLLO: How, Sir! Was it not written by *Shakespear*, and was not *Shakespear* one of the greatest Genius's that ever lived?

GROUND-IVY: No, Sir, *Shakespear* was a pretty Fellow, and said some things which only want a little of my licking to do well enough; King *John*, as now writ, will not do—But a Word in your Ear, I will make him do.

APOLLO: How?

⁵² The composition of such odes was a routine assignment and duty for the poet laureate by the 1690s when Thomas Shadwell (1642-1692) delivered his *Ode on the Anniversary of the King's Birth* (London: James Knapton, 1690) and *Votum Perenne: A Poem to the King on New-Years-Day* (London: Samuel Crouch, 1692), but even Ben Jonson remarked of himself as the first unofficial poet laureate that he was “A kind of Christmas engine: one that is used, at least once a year, for a trifling instrument of wit” in *Neptune's Triumph* (London, 1624). For an example of Cibber's odes, see cf.: *An Ode to His Majesty, for the New-Year, 1730/31* (London: John Watts, 1731).

⁵³ *The Historical Register for the Year 1736*, p. 6.

GROUND-IVY: By Alteration, Sir, it was a Maxim of mine, when I was at the Head of Theatrical Affairs, that no Play, tho' ever so good, would do without Alteration.⁵⁴

Fielding's compound of allusions to Cibber embedded in this episode of Medley's play-within-the-play is more intricately woven than the entirety of the play, and indeed worth unpacking in detail. First, whereas the typical iconography of the poet laureate was, as noted above, a crown wreath of laurel bay leaves worn as an Apollonian symbol of glory, Fielding's substitution of ground ivy (or, 'creeping charlie' as it is sometimes named) debases the high court iconography with a low ground cover plant traditionally used both to preserve English ale and as a gastrointestinal treatment administered by early modern herbalists.⁵⁵ Second, Cibber's familiar rehearsal cry of "*that won't do*" resurfaces in Ivy's plea to Apollo to recast King John in his production of Shakespeare's history. Thirdly, the former Drury Lane manager's "alterations" to new plays to better suit his own acting style, and notorious self-casting in leading roles, is caricatured almost to a point of pathos. Poor Cibber never suffered such glaring mockery as he did in Fielding's *Historical Register*.

Fielding's caricatured personation of the poet laureate is but one of several within the play, and his caricature of Walpole is just as vicious and cruel. Taking up where he left off at the end of *Tumble-Down Dick*, Fielding once again represents the prime minister as a corrupt Harlequin figure named Quidam. Like all of the characters' names in the play,

⁵⁴ *The Historical Register for the Year 1736*, p. 26.

⁵⁵ John Gerarde, "Of Ground Iuie, or Alehoofe", in *The Herball or Generall Historie of Plantes*, 2nd ed. (London: John Norton, 1597), pp. 705-707.

‘Quidam’ is an aptronym and a triple entendre derived from the common slang of a ‘quid’ in reference to a guinea, the Latinate ‘*quid pro quo*’ in reference to a person who accepts bribes, and of course the profane imprecation, ‘damn’.⁵⁶ Throughout the many critical interruptions made by Sowrwit and Dapper during Medley’s play-within-the-play, the caricatured playwright continuously reminds them that “when my Politicks come to a Farce, they very naturally lead me to the Play-House”, and there is “a strict Resemblance between the States Political and Theatrical”.⁵⁷ It is not, however, until the final scene of his play-within-the-play that theatrical burlesque and political satire are yoked together. In his final scene—highly reminiscent of Aristophanes’ anti-war satire, *Peace* (c. 421 BC)—Quidam enters into a discussion with four drunk “Patriot” merchants who are discovered debating the virtues of war and peace for their country. The merchants all agree that while war constitutes an “Evil”, it would ultimately serve to the benefit of their trade:

3rd PATRIOT: That we are sure enough, that no body will deny.

[*Enter Quidam*]

QUIDAM: Yes, Sir, I deny it. [*All start.*] Nay, Gentlemen, let me not disturb you, I beg you all sit down, I am come to drink a Glass with you—Can *Corsica* be poor while there is this in it? [*Lays a Purse on the Table.*] Nay, be not afraid of it, Gentlemen, it is honest Gold I assure you; you are a set of poor Dogs, you agree, I say you are not, for this is all yours, there, [*Pours it on the Table.*] take it among you.

1st PATRIOT: And what are we to do for it?

QUIDAM: Only say you are rich, that’s all.

OMNES: Oh, if that be all! [*They snatch up the Money [...]*]

⁵⁶ “quid, *n.* 2.”, “quid pro quo, *B. n.* 1.”, and “damn, *v.*”, in *Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford UP, 2021).

⁵⁷ *The Historical Register for the Year 1736*, pp. 4, 21.

QUIDAM: Then you are all honest Fellows, and here is to your Healths, and since the Bottle is out, hang Sorrow, cast away Care, e'en take a Dance, and I will play you a Tune on the Fiddle.

OMNES: Agreed.

1st PATRIOT: Strike up when you will, we are ready to attend your Motions.

[*Dance here; Quidam dances out, and they all dance after him.*

MEDLEY: Perhaps there may be something intended by this Dance which you don't take.

SOWRWIT: Ay, what prithe?

MEDLEY: Sir, every one of these Patriots have a Hole in their Pockets, as Mr. *Quidam* the Fiddler there knows, so that he intends to make them dance till all the Money is fall'n through, which he will pick up again, and so not lose one Half-penny by his Generosity; so far from it, that he will get his Wine for nothing, and the poor People, alas! out of their own Pockets, pay the whole Reckoning. This, Sir, I think is a very pretty Pantomime Trick, and an ingenious Burlesque on all the Fourberies which the great *Lun* has exhibited in all his Entertainments.⁵⁸

Under the stage name of “Lun”, the Theatre Royal manager John Rich acted a new type of silent Harlequin specializing in theatrical spectacle like tumbling, dancing, and magic, but as John O'Brien has observed, “the joke cuts more deeply”, and “the analogy of Walpole to Rich and thence to the role of Harlequin in which he starred mocks Walpole as both greedy in the manner of a theatre manager and also as cunning in the manner of a Harlequin himself, able to cheat others out of their money by using their own gullibility against them”.⁵⁹ The caricature cuts even deeper than a generalized equation of Walpole with Harlequin, however. By the late-1730s, Walpole's stronghold over court and country

⁵⁸ *The Historical Register for the Year 1736*, pp. 31-32.

⁵⁹ *Harlequin Britain*, p. 183. For a history of the evolution of Harlequin as a character in this period, see also: Matthew R. Wilson, “Speechless Spectacles: Commedia Pantomime in France, England, and the Americas During the Eighteenth and Nineteenth centuries”, in *The Routledge Companion to Commedia dell'Arte*, Judith Chaffee and Olly Crick, eds. (New York: Routledge, 2015), pp. 355-363.

was waning, and his motto of foreign policy, *'peace at any price'*, was rapidly becoming a contentious issue in parliament as tensions escalated between Britain and Spain over trade in the West Indies. The Treaty of Seville (signed by both countries in 1729) had put an end to British trade with the Spanish colonies in North America, but it also permitted Spain the right to onboard and rummage through British vessels suspected of smuggling and piracy to ensure compliance. Spanish coastguards' enforcement of the policy in the Caribbean often led to property damage and losses of life, at least as it was being reported back home. Thus, an increasing number of British merchants—or, "Patriots", as Fielding calls them—petitioned parliament to take action and incite a war on Spain with relishing support from the opposition Whigs.⁶⁰ In the final scene to Medley's play-within-the-play, Fielding can therefore be seen as mobilizing the merchant classes in attendance at his Little Theatre to action, and fanning the flames of political discontent against Walpole's foreign policy of inaction. On one hand, Walpole's political strategy of maintaining peace with Spain would have in all probability steered the nation away from a needless war over

⁶⁰ Parliamentary pressure reached a threshold two years later when Walpole's attempts to maintain *'peace at any price'* in the Treaty of Pardo insulted British merchants. Walpole's *'price'* proved a meagre £95,000 in reparations from Spain, and, on the heels of a widely-circulated report made by Cpt. Robert Jenkins that Spanish coastguards boarded his ship and cut off his ear, the prime minister acquiesced to his Cabinet and issued a declaration of war in October of 1739. For a history of the War of Jenkins' Ear, see: Jean O. McLachlan, *Trade and Peace with Old Spain, 1667-1750* (Cambridge UP, 1940), and Adrian Finucane, *The Temptations of Trade: Britain, Spain, and the Struggle for Empire* (Pennsylvania UP, 2016). See also: Dick Leonard, "'All these men have their price': Robert Walpole, First Earl of Orford", in *British Prime Ministers from Walpole to Salisbury: The 18th and 19th Centuries* (London: Routledge, 2020), pp. 7-22.

commercial assets, but, for Fielding and the “Patriots” on the other hand, military inaction was interpreted as a humiliation to the English abroad.

In his afterpiece, Fielding carries forward the same cast from his mainpiece rehearsal play to another rehearsal play, albeit one fashioned in burlesque representation of his own prior drama, *Eurydice*, which had been hissed off the stage after one night earlier in February of that same year.⁶¹ Like *Tumble-Down Dick*, the afterpiece serves as a cumulative sixth-act to *The Historical Register* wherein the critics Sowrwit and Lord Dapper linger to see the rehearsal of another play called *The Damnation of Eurydice* by a playwright named Spatter. Indeed, as Peter Lewis observes in his study of Fielding’s drama: “all rehearsal plays are plays about plays, but *Eurydice Hiss’d* goes one better, being a play about a play about a play”.⁶² Much of the afterpiece, as critics before me and since the premiere have noted, equates the damning of Fielding’s *Eurydice* with the popular damning and parliamentary retraction of Walpole’s aforementioned Excise Bill.⁶³ The aim of *Eurydice Hiss’d* is ultimately to add insult unto injury in Fielding’s decidedly

⁶¹ *Eurydice* was later reprinted in Fielding’s *Miscellanies* with a burlesque subheading of “As it was d-mned at the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane”, Vol. 2 (London: A. Millar, 1743). For a detailed close-reading of Fielding’s burlesque rendition of his own play, see: Lewis, *Fielding’s Burlesque Drama*, pp. 181-201.

⁶² Lewis, *Fielding’s Burlesque Drama*, p. 193.

⁶³ An anonymous “Adventurer in Politicks”, for instance, notes that “*Eurydice Hiss’d*, very impudently compares *Government to a Farce*, and carries the Allegory throughout”, in a full front page review of Fielding’s *Historical Register* in the *Daily Gazeteer*, 7 May 1737, Issue 582. For Fielding’s tongue-in-cheek reply to the review, see his “Dedication to the Public”, in *The Historical Register*, n.p. See also: Charles Woods, “Notes on Three of Fielding’s Plays”, *PMLA* 52.2 (June 1937): 359-373, and Thomas Cleary, *Henry Fielding: Political Writer* (Wilfrid Laurier UP, 1984), pp. 102-106.

self-deprecating representation of the minister-favourite as the author of a political farce of failed tax legislation.

Fielding is routinely scapegoated as the oppositional satirist whose rehearsal plays occasion the parliamentary passing and royal assent of the Theatrical Licensing Act of 1737, and many of his detractors contributed their voice toward his being mythologized as such to date. In his autobiography, most notably, Cibber equates Fielding to the mock-heroic conqueror of Brentford from Buckingham's *Rehearsal*, Drawcansir, and notes that he "set Fire to his Stage by writing up to an Act of Parliament" prohibiting the production of new plays without approval from the offices of the Lord Chamberlain and Examiner of Plays.⁶⁴ The Licensing Act served to censure plays that spoke ill of the Walpole ministry and Hanoverian court, but, more significantly, it acted as a means to restore the monopoly of the Theatres Royal over the theatrical marketplace during a period of rapid growth and expansion in London. Walpole had formerly attempted to secure "A Bill for Restraining the Number of Houses for Playing of Interludes, and for the better Regulating Common Players of Interludes" in 1735, but the bill was rebuffed after months of formal petition by

⁶⁴ *An Apology for the Life of Mr. Colley Cibber, Comedian, and Late Patentee of the Theatre-Royal* (London: John Watts, 1740), p. 164. For a history of the Licensing Act, and its dubious attribution to Fielding and his plays, see: Vincent J. Liesenfeld, *The Licensing Act of 1737* (Wisconsin UP, 1984), pp. 92-122. See also: Thomas Lockwood, "Fielding and the Licensing Act", *Huntington Library Quarterly* 50.4 (Autumn 1987): 379-393, and Matthew J. Kinservik, "Fielding and the Politics of Satire, 1728-1737", in *Disciplining Satire: The Censorship of Satiric Comedy on the Eighteenth-Century London Stage* (Bucknell UP, 2002), pp. 55-94.

a growing body of prospectively disenfranchised actors and managers alike.⁶⁵ However irked Walpole may have been by Fielding's oppositional satires at the Little Theatre, that the Act should silence and bookend his managerial and playwriting career by the spring of 1737 was but a fortunate byproduct of a design to regulate the market. Fielding's hostility toward the invasion of sideshow genres like puppet shows and pantomime at the London Theatres Royal, represented throughout his early career as a popular decay in English taste and a political "death of common sense", complicate his position within the broader discourse of the Act. In the end, Fielding got precisely what he wanted at the cost of his own stage and livelihood: he had won the aesthetic battle, but lost the political war.

Upon the implementation of Walpole's Licensing Act on the 24th of June in 1737, Fielding turned his attention from dramatic to prose fiction. He wrote what some scholars consider to be the earliest experiments in the novel form, and he contributed widely to the oppositional news press of the mid-eighteenth century.⁶⁶ To better provide for his family, he took to practicing law, and worked to become one of London's leading magistrates. At his home and courthouse on Bow Street, Fielding also began to publish a mock-literary

⁶⁵ For a history of the Bill, and its parliamentary debate and petition, see: Liesenfield, pp. 23-59.

⁶⁶ For significant claims of Fielding's contribution to the novel form, see: Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding* (California UP, 1957) and Michael McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel, 1600-1740* (Johns Hopkins UP, 1987). For scholarly editions of Fielding's oppositional journalism, see: *The True Patriot and Related Writings*, W. B. Coley, ed (Oxford UP, 1987), *The Covent-Garden Journal and A Plan of the Universal Register-Office*, Bertrand A. Goldgar, ed. (Oxford UP, 1988), and *Contributions to the Champion and Related Writings*, W. B. Coley, ed. (Oxford UP, 2003).

and oppositional Whig newspaper titled *The Covent-Garden Journal* wherein he continued to wage war on corruption and social injustice in London from the inside. In a playful nod to his celebrity and theatrical politics, Fielding signed-off the paper under a pseudonym that conjoined the names of two conquerors, one ancient and one modern, and designated himself: SIR ALEXANDER DRAWCANSIR.

———— CHAPTER THREE ————

THE KITTY IN CLIVE: OR, THE REHEARSAL AT CLIVEDEN

“Favourite as you at present are with the Audience, you would be much more so, were they acquainted with your private Character... it would have given you the Reputation of the greatest Heroine of the Age”

— “An Epistle to Mrs. Clive”, by Henry Fielding (1733)

Henry Fielding wrote five operatic vehicles for the mid-century musical celebrity and ballad opera comedienne Catherine “Kitty” Clive (1711-1785): Chloe in *The Lottery* (1732), Dorcas in *The Mock Doctor* (1732), Lettice in *The Intriguing Chambermaid* (1734), and Lucy in both *The Virgin Unmask’d* (1735) and *Miss Lucy in Town* (1742). In December of 1748, after performing the part of Lettice in a revival of Fielding’s *Intriguing Chambermaid*, Clive retired to her flat on nearby Great Queen Street to write to her friend Horace Walpole, son of the prime minister, regarding his Strawberry Hill House. At the height of her musical celebrity, the soprano, comedian, and highest earning actor among His Majesty’s Servants to George II admits to Walpole that “th’o I am now representing women of quality and Coblers wives &c &c to Crowded houeses, and flattering applause; the Charecture I am most desierous to act well is; a good sort of Countrey gentlewoman at twickenham”.¹ Clive’s cottage along the banks of the Thames “facing the meadows across which [Walpole] so often walked to pay her a visit” provided a welcome respite from the everyday circus of her musical celebrity in the city.² Together

¹ Letter “From Mrs. Clive” to Horace Walpole, 3 December 1748, rpt. in *Horace Walpole’s Correspondence*, Vol. 40, W. S. Lewis, ed. (Yale UP, 1980), p. 61.

² Percy Hetherington Fitzgerald, *The Life of Mrs. Catherine Clive: With an Account of Her Adventures on and Off the Stage, a Round of Her Characters, Together with Her Correspondence* (London: A. Reader, 1888), p. 84.

the friends shared “little supper- and card-parties”, and afternoon strolls “down the green lane which had been cut for her use [...] and which it was humorously proposed to call Drury Lane”. Their neighbouring microcosms of courtly highlife in the provincial lowlands—“‘Clive-den,’ as Walpole was wont to style it” after the duke of Buckingham’s mansion—is where Catherine Clive oft retired to rehearse her longest-running “Charecture” in eighteenth-century English popular culture: “Kitty”, the “Countrey gentlewoman” of Drury Lane fame and fortune.³

Clive cultivated a celebrity persona offstage across multiple forms of eighteenth-century media—portraits, prints, and porcelain statuettes—that shadowed her onstage in performance throughout much of her career. In this chapter I am going to show how Clive’s poorly received performance in the role of Bayes in Buckingham’s *Rehearsal* and subsequent adaptation of the satire enact a self-conscious doubling of part and persona that is sustained by theatregoers’ preexisting perceptions and predisposition toward her celebrity persona as an English diva. Clive’s adaptation—referred to hereafter by its subtitle *Bays in Petticoats* (1750)—reimagines Bayes as Mrs. Hazard, a caricature of Clive’s celebrity persona that constructs what Felicity Nussbaum refers to as a metonymic “interiority effect” with the actor herself.⁴ *Bays in Petticoats* concerns a playwright named Mrs. Hazard whose new play is rehearsed at Drury Lane, and becomes a subject of

³ Edward Dutton Cook, *Hours with the Players*, Vol. 1 (London: Chatto and Windus, 1881), pp. 250-251.

⁴ *Rival Queens: Actresses, Performance, and the Eighteenth-Century British Theater* (Pennsylvania UP, 2010), p. 20.

laughter and ridicule among her peers admitted to the titular “Rehearsal”. Without the leading cast member for whom the drama is conceived—a popular comedian named ‘Mrs. Clive’—the playwright Mrs. Hazard has to resort to rehearsing Clive’s parts for the actress herself. The fictional Mrs. Clive never appears in the play, and is only referred to by the other characters in the play. Because Catherine Clive acts the part of Mrs. Hazard in *Bays in Petticoats*, the real Mrs. Clive effectively steps in to perform the part of Mrs. Clive for Hazard’s play-within-the-play, and self-consciously enacts a caricatured representation of her own person.

In recent years, much scholarly attention has been devoted to theorizing celebrity and its relation to public “intimacy”.⁵ In her study on *Art and Celebrity in the Age of Reynolds and Siddons*, Heather McPherson observes “an illusion of intimacy” constructed through the casting of eighteenth-century celebrity persona in moulds that often reflected “their most brilliant parts” in the English repertoire, and in this chapter I am going to show how mid-eighteenth-century adaptations of *The Rehearsal* reproduce this same “interiority effect” and “illusion of intimacy” by figuring celebrity personae into the dramatic fiction of the play.⁶ The metatheatrical framing of a scripted rehearsal afforded actors an opportunity to perform caricatures of their own celebrity personae by engendering a liminal theatrical space between the fictions of the play and the fictions of

⁵ For a notable example of contemporary interest in this topic within eighteenth-century studies, see: *Intimacy and Celebrity in Eighteenth-Century Literary Culture: Public Interiors*, Emrys D. Jones and Victoria Joule, eds. (Palgrave, 2018).

⁶ “Prologue” (Pennsylvania UP, 2017), p. 1.

the actors' private lives. Clive's ongoing adaptation of *The Rehearsal*, I observe, manufactures an eighteenth-century simulacrum of the "intimate" sociopolitical networks between actors, playwrights, and theatregoers that had formerly characterized the Restoration stage. Plays produced during the Restoration, as Joseph Roach has noted in his study on the origins of theatrical celebrity, "sometimes touted the feature-by-feature attributes of the actresses playing the heroines" as "persona and personality oscillated between foreground and background", and "both prologues and epilogues alluded leeringly to their sex-lives offstage".⁷ What *Bays in Petticoats* reproduces for later eighteenth-century audiences is a similar sense of "intimacy" with the celebrity persona of Clive by enacting a caricatured representation of her private life offstage. Mid-eighteenth-century theatregoers in turn attended both the opera and playhouses not to see the likes of Venus, Polly, or Dalila, but Kitty herself in the flesh. Clive cultivated her persona of a chaste and innocent "country Gentlewoman" through the media to resist stigmatizing associations between actresses and sex-workers. Of course she was nothing of the sort, and in this chapter I examine Clive's self-conscious commodification of her own theatrical celebrity through mid-eighteenth-century media as a feminist reclamation of sociopolitical power and agency.

Over the chapter to follow, I am going to examine how metatheatrical byproducts of Clive's celebrity persona engender synthetic experiences of social proximity toward her private life behind the curtain, and establish an afterimage of the actor's "Charecture"

⁷ *It* (Michigan UP, 2007), p. 16.

in the popular imagination. Marvin Carlson has referred to this phenomenon as “ghosting” in his study of *The Haunted Stage* when he observes how popular actors become typecast, ‘haunted’, and “entrapped by the memories of the public, so that each new appearance requires a renegotiation with those memories”.⁸ Clive self-consciously conjures and negotiates these same theatrical “memories” in her self-representative caricature of Mrs. Hazard in *Bays in Petticoats*, affecting a commercial-scale simulation of the same anti-theatrical prejudice toward her own celebrity persona that Buckingham harboured toward Dryden’s heroic drama. In her recent biography, Berta Joncus identifies *Bays in Petticoats* as the actor’s “farewell to serious vocal music and her embrace of self-parody”.⁹ What this chapter aims to reveal is how Clive’s metonymic synthesis of her celebrity persona with “self-parodying” caricature is accomplished through the metatheatrical framework of a rehearsal play, and furthermore, how the ongoing construction and mediation of Clive’s celebrity persona continues to inform our biographical understanding of the actor today.

Whereas Restoration and early eighteenth-century rehearsal plays by the likes of Buckingham and Fielding take on a decidedly political tone and stance toward matters of monarchical succession and issues of parliamentary party politics, mid-century rehearsal plays represent a much different body politic and theatregoing public. Broadly speaking, by the 1740s, the English public sphere had more or less supplanted the court and crown

⁸ *The Haunted Stage: The Theatre as Memory Machine* (Michigan UP, 2001), p. 9.

⁹ *Kitty Clive, or The Fair Songster*, p. 407.

as the principal patrons and consumers of theatrical entertainment in London. Mid-century rehearsal plays like Clive's *Bays in Petticoats* are therefore leveraged as a means for talking back not so much to the court, but rather to the bourgeois theatregoing public upon whom actors and actresses increasingly came to rely for their continued patronage on the London stage. In this chapter I examine a number of early performances by Clive, and focus on several rehearsal plays adapted from Buckingham's satire that feature the actor in the caricatured celebrity persona of Kitty in order to show how she skillfully manipulated the court of public opinion to the advantage of her own theatrical celebrity. In doing so, I reveal how mid-century rehearsal plays are designed to metatheatrically mediate the offstage identities of theatrical personae, and, in Catherine Clive's case, differentiate herself from theatrical predecessors, and thus how rehearsal plays' earlier preoccupation with matters of royal succession are adapted to issues of theatrical succession on the mid-century stage by substituting Restoration kings and courtiers with eighteenth-century celebrity actors and actresses.

ENTER MISS RAFTER: A CINDERELLA STORY

To understand who put the "Kitty" in Clive and to whom she was considered a "Hazard", we first need to examine her rise to theatrical celebrity. The story told by early biographers goes that "Kitty Rafter, being one day *washing the steps of the house*, and singing, the windows of the club room open" across Church Row where she then resided, was "instantly crowded by the company" of local thespians who frequented Bell Tavern

“who were all enchanted with her natural grace”.¹⁰ Charles Lee Lewes (1740-1803) argues that “this circumstance alone led her to the stage”, but, by her own account, Clive “was about twelve Years old” when both she and “Miss Johnson” (later, Mrs. Cibber), “used to tag after the celebrated Mr. Wilks (her own Words) wherever they saw him in the streets, and gape at him as a wonder”. The Drury Lane prompter William Chetwood argues that he and Johnson’s husband-to-be, Theophilus Cibber (1703-1758), “we all at that Time living together in one House... recommended her to the *Laureat*” and the playhouse manager Colley Cibber, and, “the Moment he heard her sing, put her down in the List of Performers”.¹¹ Both Lewes and Chetwood dubiously attempt to mythologize themselves as having had some hand in procuring Clive from the streets and everyday domestic servitude, but, more significantly, their anecdotal accounts of her youth take on a dramatic structure and characterization similar to that of the pastoral ballad operas for which the actor was so renowned. Clive’s biography takes on the shape of a Cinderella story: a rags-to-riches tale of a low country maidservant turned high queen of the London stage who steps into the preformed characters and caricatures of the Theatres Royal repertoires, and *Bays in Petticoats* marks the strike of midnight when Clive’s enchanting spell over the theatregoing public—her voice—begins to break.

¹⁰ Charles Lee Lewes, *Memoirs of Charles Lee Lewes, Comedian. Containing Anecdotes, Historical and Biographical, of the English and Scottish Stages, During a Period of Forty Years*, Vol. 2 (London: Richard Phillips, 1805), p. 196.

¹¹ William Chetwood, *A General History of the Stage* (London: W. Owen, 1749), p. 127.

Ballad opera, as noted in the preceding chapter, flourished on the London stage during the 1730s and 1740s following the success of John Gay's 1728 *Beggar's Opera*, and these short plays intermingle spoken dialogue with popular song and dance. They typically render narratives of upward social mobility as comically fraught and tumultuous for an increasingly bourgeois pool of theatregoers, and cumulatively form an entire eighteenth-century genre, as others before me have observed, founded upon both an aesthetic subversion of and xenophobic (or, "patriotic") protest toward a mid-century vogue for foreign-language opera on the London stage.¹² Clive is supposed to have made her début at Drury Lane that same year in the breeches role of a servant-page named Ismenes for a revival of Nathaniel Lee's *Mithridates, King of Pontus* (1685) alongside both Jane Cibber and Robert Wilks.¹³ Neither Clive nor the part of Ismenes are listed on Drury Lane's playbill for the sole April 13th production that season, but according to the prompter, Chetwood, "she performed with extraordinary Applause [*sic.*]"¹⁴ Her first season with the company commenced later that year on the 12th of October when she played Bianca in *Othello* (1604), followed by thirty-four nights as Minerva in *Perseus and Andromeda* (1728), Dorinda in *The Incharned Island* (1670), and Honoria in *Love Makes A Man* (1701) to name but a few. Her performance as Phillida at the riotous

¹² Michael Burden, "Opera in the London Theatres", in *The Cambridge Companion to British Theatre, 1730-1830*, Jane Moody and Daniel O'Quinn, eds. (Cambridge UP, 2007), pp. 205-218. See also: Berta Joncus, "Ballad Opera: Commercial Song in Enlightenment Garb", in *The Oxford Handbook of the British Musical*, Robert Gordon and Olaf Jubin, eds. (Oxford UP, 2016), pp. 31-64.

¹³ *Mithridates, King of Pontus, A Tragedy* (London: Rich[ard] Wellington, 1702).

¹⁴ Chetwood, p. 127.

premiere of Colley Cibber's pastoral *Love In A Riddle* on the 7th of January marks the beginning of then seventeen-year-old Raftor's cultural metamorphosis into "Kitty Clive", the "Countrey gentlewoman" according to her admirers and early biographers alike.

Clive's early rise to theatrical celebrity was neither smooth nor steady. *Love In A Riddle* was "vilely damn'd and hooted" that night, Cibber remembers in his autobiography. He refers to the ballad opera as a "stupid" "attempt" at "something of the same Kind, upon a quite different Foundation, that of recommending Virtue, and Innocence" over "the most vulgar Vice, and Wickedness" as Gay exposed in his *Beggar's Opera*. The riot in the pit of Drury Lane that night was occasioned by Cibber's supposed involvement in the censorship of Gay's sequel, *Polly* (1729), submitted to the Lord Chamberlain's office for approval on the 7th of December, exactly one-month prior to the premiere of *Love In A Riddle*. The rumour—or, the "involuntary compliment", as the author recounts it—went "that, to make way for the Success of my own Play, I had privately found means, or made Interest, that the Second Part of the *Beggars Opera*, might be suppressed".¹⁵ Beyond the anecdotal, however, there is little evidence to corroborate any definitive assertions regarding the logic behind the duke of Grafton's ultimate suppression of *Polly*, although it likely has less to do with Cibber and *Love In A Riddle* than Gay's subversive representation of Walpole as a local highwayman turned

¹⁵ Cibber, *Apology*, pp. 142-143.

West Indies pirate.¹⁶ Raftor, waiting for her second act cue to enter before “the Hydra-headed Multitude”, looked on to Chetwood observing from the prompters box below, and, as he recounts it, “when Miss *Raftor* came on in the Part of *Phillida*, the monstrous Roar subsided”. She appeared before the “Multitude” that night to sing Air IV, “*What Woman could do, I have try’d to be free*” in the garb of a shepherdess woefully torn between two suitors, and Chetwood remembers “a Person in the Stage-Box next to my Post called out to his Companion in the following elegant Stile— ‘Zounds, *Tom!* take Care; or this charming little Devil will save all’”.¹⁷ *Phillida* is a common name in early modern pastoral poems and plays that is etymologically derived from the Greek genitive *Phyllis* meaning “foliage”, and both the name and character remained associated with the actor throughout her career.¹⁸ On the following evening, however, the rioting parties continued their disruption of Cibber’s ballad opera, and he sauntered onstage to promise “that after this Night, it should never be acted agen”.¹⁹ *Love In A Riddle* was hissed into obscurity after two rowdy productions, but Raftor and the character of *Phillida* were not as soon to be forgot. Cibber cut two acts of dialogue and adapted the musical numbers into *Damon and Phillida* (1729), a one-act afterpiece vehicle for Raftor’s vocal talents that she

¹⁶ Patricia Meyer Spacks argues that “the early history of *Polly* is more interesting than the play itself” in “The Beggar’s Triumph”, in *John Gay’s The Beggar’s Opera*. Harold Bloom, ed. (New York: Chelsea House, 1988), p. 57.

¹⁷ Chetwood, p. 128.

¹⁸ “*Phillida*”, in *The Shakespeare Name and Place Dictionary*. J. Madison Davis, ed. (London: Routledge, 2012), p. 382.

¹⁹ Cibber, *Apology*, p. 144.

performed regularly for the next twenty years before the self-conscious deconstruction of her own musical celebrity.

Catherine Raftor played in nearly every ballad opera produced at Drury Lane over the course of the genre's two decades of popularity on the eighteenth-century stage, and Colley Cibber's play inspired her first portrait "in the Character of Phillida" (*fig. 1*). The mezzotint is erroneously attributed to Dutch artist Godfried Schalcken but modelled after his 1685 oil painting of a *Couple d'amoureux un forêt*. The print represents "Miss Raftor" in a loose-strung caftan crowning a hapless suitor with a laurel wreath while turning to fix her gaze back upon the spectator, and an epigram beneath the engraving markets the actor as a "native Beauty clad without disguise" while inviting the spectator to "taste the Joys, which she alone can bring". Prints and portraits modelled after Dutch paintings, as Berta Joncus observes, "enjoyed decent sales", and the anonymous printer of Clive's first portrait appears to have "simply squeezed Miss Raftor's name and the epigram into the bottom margin of an existing plate". The pastoral iconography of the print, however, effectively served to concretize Raftor's popular identification and biographical association with the part of an idyllic shepherdess or "Countrey gentlewoman", and her vocal talent is herein ascribed to being a "Nymph with charms by *Nature* blest". Joncus observes that "for one shilling, a devotee could acquire a kind of talisman that simulated both physical proximity to and knowledge of a favourite player", and, like the anecdotal fictions of Clive's biography, the "knowledge" transmitted through the actor's first



Fig. 1: *Miss Raftor (1711-1785) in the Character of Phillida* (c. 1729). Mezzotint, 32.1x25.1cm. Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection. B1974.12.432

portrait manufactures an image of her as an embodied sum of the pastoral parts for which she came to be renowned at Drury Lane.²⁰

The following March in 1730, Raftor played the part of Dulceda in a short-lived adaptation of Buckingham's *Rehearsal* called *Bays's Opera* by Gabriel Odingsells. Like Fielding's *Author's Farce*, Odingsells's adaptation burlesques popular genres on the London stage through allegorical representations of figures like Tragedo, Pantomime, and Farcia waging civil war over "the Empire of Wit". Raftor is listed as "Cantato's *Daughter, in Love with Tragedo*", and the part fit her burgeoning metatheatrical image as an actor aspiring to roles in high tragedy, albeit distinguished through her work in musical comedy. Sentimental tragedy dominated the London playbills that season, but "by then the managers had discovered that she was no tragedienne, though she herself had not", and Raftor's resistance toward being typecast as a musical comedienne is embedded in Dulceda's star-crossed romance with Tragedo.²¹ Cantato, "Usurper of the Empire", is first "*discover'd on a Couch*" airing his discontent toward the reigning "Government of Wit", and their failure to protect the Empire from "Pretender to the Throne", Lord Pantomime: "Did I redeem them from the cruel Fetters of Sense, which the tyranny of my Predecessor *Trageda* impos'd", he wonders aloud as Baffoon enters "*in a hurry*" to interrupt his song "*Alexis shunn'd, &c*". James Oates (*d.* 1751), Fielding's regular booth partner at the local

²⁰ Berta Joncus, "'A Likeness Where None Was To Be Found': Imagining Kitty Clive (1711-1785)", *Music in Art* 34.1/2 (Spring-Fall, 2009) pp. 92-94.

²¹ "Clive, Catherine", in *A Biographical Dictionary of Actors*, Vol. 3, p. 343.

summer fairs, acted Baffoon that night, rushing onto the stage to explain to Cantato that Lord Pantomime plans to “storm the Palace of Wit”:

CANTATO: What is the mighty Power he boasts, that he dares brave me thus?

BAFFOON: The chosen Forces of the *British* Nation— The Conjurers, Dancing-Masters, Ballad-Singers, Courtiers, City Train-bands, and Black-Guards; besides several Troops of Daemons for Pioneers.

Raftor, waiting backstage for her cue, observed Oates and Roberts perform “*A Country Dance*” before both settling back onto the couch to “clap up a Match between” “*Prisoner Tragedo*” and “*Daughter Dulceda*” so as to ensure their “joint Forces might yet stem the Torrent” of Lord Pantomime’s pending invasion. As Oates exits “to consult the means of our present Defence”, Raftor enters to declare her “Fatal reverse of Fortune!” and ask the audience “where are now those Crowds of Admirers who us’d to besiege my Person, and stifle my Senses with borrow’d Essences and Oratory”. Raftor, after but two seasons with the company, upon entry invokes not only popular recognition of the actor behind *Dulceda*, but theatregoers’ memories of her singing “borrow’d” folk tunes in ballad operas before “Crowds of Admirers” earlier in the season. In Odingsells’s *Opera*, Raftor therefore plays an allegorical representation of the ballad opera genre for which she was increasingly becoming known to audiences, and her subsequent elopement with *Tragedo* acts as an allegorical critique of dramatic weddings between music and modern tragedy on the London stage in turn.

Raftor appeared onstage less in her second season than she had in her first season. Although her early typecasting as a musical comedienne garnered numerous leading roles

in ballad operas, she was rarely cast in the Drury Lane company's more coveted tragic roles as a result. Most of these repertoire parts were already associated with more established players within the company like Anne Oldfield (1683-1730). Metatheatrically embedded within Dulceda's first aria, "*I'm to be let for Life*", however, are topical allusions to both Raftor's recent engagement with and aspirations toward a higher position at Drury Lane. After berating Baffoon, Dulceda sings a travestic ballad monodically wondering:

*Shall a Wretch who pin'd for Quarters,
Dare to rival Stars and Garters?
Haste, dear Beaux, attend my Call,
Save my Pride, from such a Fall,
And from a Slave so rude!*

Oh, my *Tragedo*! Thou only can'st atone my loss, and hone my Thoughts
to Harmony.²²

Early eighteenth-century actors and actresses were routinely associated with prostitutes after the introduction of the first women players on the Restoration stage and subsequent rise to theatrical celebrity of Stuart courtiers like the self-proclaimed "Protestant Whore" Eleanore Gwynne.²³ Dulceda's first aria in *Bays's Opera* makes the same equation,

²² Gabriel Odingsells, *Bays's opera. As it is acted at the Theatre-Royal, by His Majesty's Servants* (London: J. Roberts, 1730), pp. 6-9.

²³ Gwynne is regarded as such in eighteenth-century discourse regarding her rivalry with the French Catholic duchess of Portsmouth, Louise de K rouaille, and the epithet is supposedly of her own styling. An anecdote recounted in Philibert de Gramont's 1713 *M moires... Contenant particulierement l'Histoire Amoureuse de la Cour d'Angleterre, sous le Regne de Charles II* suggests that in 1681 she was mobbed in Oxford after being mistaken for K rouaille, emerging from her coach to pronounce: "Pray, good people, be civil; I am the *Protestant whore*", see: Alison Conway, "The Invention of the Protestant Whore", in *The Protestant Whore: Courtesan Narrative and Religious Controversy in England, 1680-1750* (Toronto UP, 2010), pp. 17-49.

travestically representing Raftor as an actress looking “to be let”, “pining for Quarters” at the Theatres Royal, and “daring to rival” the “Stars and Garters” of the reigning playhouse tragediennes. The allegorical satire underlying Odingsell’s play-within-the-play is founded upon audiences’ recognition of Raftor becoming entrapped within a celebrity star-circuit first established during the Restoration. When Tragedo and Dulceda later embrace one another in secrecy, Raftor turns to the audience to allude to her burgeoning celebrity as she self-consciously declares that she is “compell’d to quit my Virgin Coyness, and own you the Centre of my Joys”.²⁴ The elopement and eventual imprisonment of Tragedo and Dulceda under Lord Pantomime represent Odingsell’s censoring of popular drama, the joke therein being that both genres have ultimately been compromised through aesthetic miscegenation. Bays, performed by Theophilus Cibber that night, spares no opportunity to remind the audience of his rehearsal about the marriage’s deeper allegorical significance:

BAYS: Here, Ladies, you have the new-marry’d Couple brought out like Bear-Garden Monsters, to be shown, in order to be baited.

AIR XXXIII

DULCEDA: *Virtue, warming Love’s Embraces,*

TRAGEDO: *With chaste Raptures, fond Caresses,*

BOTH: *How compleat are Hymen’s Joys?*

DULCEDA: *Mutual Passion ever growing,*

TRAGEDO: *Tender Accents ever flowing,*

Point my Song,

DULCEDA: *And tune my Voice...* O my dear Lord! I tremble for our Fates...

²⁴ Odingsells, pp. 15-16.

TRAGEDO: ...since our Dooms lye hid among the Secrets of Fate, who knows, we may yet live to be the Wonder and Delight of future Generations.²⁵

The role of Tragedo was played by Colley and Catherine Cibber's seventeen-year-old daughter Charlotte Charke (1713-1760), who often played Damon to Raftor's Phillida in later productions of Cibber's one-act afterpiece. Their punning duet in Odingsells's *Opera* invites the audience to gaze and reflect upon the actors' supposed virginity and sexuality in the same way that Restoration plays often alluded to the private lives and affairs of the actors performing onstage. By asking Charke to "tune her Voice" to tragedy, Raftor conflates her own character and persona as a vocal performer of burlesque ballad operas with the character and persona of Dulceda. Her last aria that night reinforces the identification. Dulceda is discovered as being driven to madness over the loss of Tragedo who phantasmagorically reappears before her at the "*handsome Apartment*" of Harlequin, "*Chief Minister to Pantomime*", and Raftor cries out with tragicomic pathos:

Hark, hark! I hear his charming Voice! How art thou there, my Love? Stay, stay! I'll mount on a Lark and meet thee in a Dog-Star.

AIR XLV. "Come follow, follow me."

*How swift we cleave the Sky,
My tuneful Bird and I;
And on the Wing
How sweetly sing,
While thy Strains we vie.*²⁶

Although she had the voice and talent for roles in high tragedy and opera, Raftor was more often than not cast in low comedies and pantomimes. For Bays, Dulceda's song is

²⁵ Odingsells, pp. 46-47.

²⁶ Odingsells, p. 62.

supposed to illustrate “the ridiculous Extravagance of Sounds, when they are not inspir’d by Sense”, but underlying this surface-level burlesque are allusions encoded into Raftor’s performance of the song as a celebrated vocal performer. “*Come follow, follow me*” is less of a jab at her musical celebrity than it is an attempt to satirically ostracize Bays who fails to register the metatheatrical topicality of the performance. Because by the spring of 1730 Raftor was already a recognizable figure among Cibber’s company, Dulceda’s final aria in turn elicits from the audience a sense of clubbable intimacy among the Drury Lane company that eludes Bays. Colley Cibber retired Odingsells’s *Opera* after three productions between the 30th of March and the 1st of April, but the rehearsal structure of the play allowed Raftor to claim ballad opera as her own while at the same time fostering the development of her metatheatrical image and nascent celebrity persona within the company.

Raftor was on the verge of theatrical celebrity and now in competition with more well-established actors and actresses, but, in order to rise to the top of the company, she would have to jettison “her Virgin Coyness”. When Anne Oldfield suddenly passed away on the 23rd of October in 1730, Catherine Raftor gradually assumed her seat as resident comedienne at Drury Lane. A number of repertoire parts associated with Oldfield were bequeathed to Raftor over the course of the following decade like Aurelia in *The Twin Rivals* (1703) in 1734, Biddy from *The Tender Husband* (1703) in 1736, Mrs. Lovett from *The Man of Mode* (1676) in 1737, and Millimant in *The Way of the World* (1700) in 1740. Jocus has charted the extent to which portraits and prints of the actor produced during

the 1730s “echoed” portraits and prints of Oldfield produced during the 1720s, and argues that “we can recognize the degree to which [Clive’s] image was constructed” while observing her “agency within this process”.²⁷ A pamphlet advertising *An Epistle from Mrs. Oldfield, in the Shades* later published in 1743 satirizes the transition at Drury Lane, referring to Clive as “that *Sing-Song* Girl there” while wondering “what Figure the *Cobler’s Wife* would make in an *Indiana*, a *Jane Shore*, or any other of those great Parts, in which an *Oldfield* once shined, with all the *Paraphernalia of a Lady of Quality*?”. The Oldfield enthusiast notes that “in every high Character [Oldfield] represented, did she not seem the almost Identical Person”, admitting “Mrs C**** has Merit, very great Merit” but “what is her Merit, when compared and put in the Scale, with that of many her Predecessors”.²⁸ Clive of course differed from Oldfield through her balladeer “sing-song” work at Drury Lane, but the anonymous pamphleteer’s conflation of both comediennes with their respective parts in the repertoire is significant. Because Clive early and often earned applause for playing the part of a pastoral maidservant onstage—like her performance of Nell, the “cobler’s wife” in Charles Coffey and Theophilus Cibber’s ballad opera *The Devil To Pay; or The Wives Metamorphos’d* (1731)—she came to be identified as such offstage too, and this presented a performative challenge for the actor when she began to appear instead as “a *Lady of Quality*” in Oldfield’s former roles. The

²⁷ “‘A Likeness Where None Was to be Found’: Imagining Kitty Clive (1711-1785)”, p. 104.

²⁸ *Theatrical correspondence in death. An epistle from Mrs. Oldfield, in the shades, to Mrs. Br—ceg—dle, upon earth: Containing, a dialogue between the most eminent players in the shades, upon the late stage desertion.* (London: Jacob Robinson, 1743). pp. 2-3.

premiere of Coffey and Cibber's *Devil To Pay* on the 6th of August in 1731, however, marked a turning point in the manufacturing of Clive's celebrity persona as she once again played the part of an "innocent Country Girl", but, on this particular evening, one farcically "metamorphos'd" into a refined "Lady" over the course of the play.²⁹

MANUFACTURING THE 'KITTY' IN CLIVE

With Anne Oldfield out of the picture, Raftor increasingly took to breaking free from the moulds and shadows cast for her by her predecessors, rivals, and critics, and began to define herself anew for the theatregoing public and press. Alongside familiar favourites like Phillida, she added Phillis from Steele's *Conscious Lovers* (1722) to her repertoire, thereby further reinforcing her ongoing biographical association with the part of a pastoral maidservant over the course of thirty-six seasons, but she also began to appear on stage in the character of more witty and refined "Country gentlewomen", typically with the aptronymic nickname: 'Kitty'. She premiered "an *Oxford Jilt*" named Kitty in *The Humours of Oxford* by James Miller on the 9th of January in 1730 alongside Oldfield, then in her final season, who acted the part of "*Clarinda, a Lady of Fortune*". While rehearsing for the role of Polly in *The Beggar's Opera*, Clive also played Kitty in four productions of Gay's earlier experimental rehearsal play and "*Tragi-Comi-Pastoral Farce*" *The What D'Ye Call It* (1715) between August and November of 1731. Although Gay's play preceded her by over a decade, the part called for a "Steward's daughter, alias

²⁹ Charles Coffey and Theophilus Cibber, *The Devil to Pay: or, the Wives Metamorphos'd* (London: J. Watts, 1731).

Kitty Carrot” living in the country to feature prominently within a burlesque pastoral play-within-the-play that required the actor to sing several tragicomic ballads. Raftor fit the bill, and through the play-within-the-play she invoked popular recognition of her celebrity persona in order to metatheatrically stage her own promotion and departure from it within the company:

KITTY: Dear happy Fields, farewell; ye Flocks, and you
Sweet Meadows, glitt’ring with the pearly Dew:
And thou, my Rake, Companion of my Cares,
Giv’n by my Mother in my younger Years...
Farewel, farewell; for all thy Task is o’er,
Kitty shall want thy Service now no more.

[*Flings away the Rake*

Chorus of Sighs and Groans.

Ah— O!— Sure never was the like before...

KITTY: You, *Bess*, still reap with *Harry* by your Side;
You, *Jenny*, shall next *Sunday* be a Bride:
But I forlorn!— This Ballad shews my Care;

[*Gives Susan a Ballad.*

Take this sad Ballad, which I bought at Fair:
Susan can sing— do you the burthen bear.³⁰

Whoever played *Bess*, *Jenny*, and *Susan* to Raftor’s *Kitty* in these productions remains uncertain since the cast of more minor roles in Gay’s play-within-the-play are left unlisted on all four summer playbills, but they were presumably acted by three other younger female players within Cibber’s company. By gifting *Susan* “*a Ballad*”, and thus her “burthen bear”, Raftor self-consciously enacts her transcendence of minor ballad opera roles into a higher position among the company at Drury Lane. The following summer on

³⁰ John Gay, *The What D’Ye Call It: A Tragi-Comi-Pastoral Farce*. (London: Bernard Lintott, 1715), pp. 31-32.

the 11th of July in 1732, she debuted in the coveted role of Polly in Gay's *Beggar's Opera*, garnering universal applause and moving one critic to reflect that "Miss Raftor is without a Superior, if we except the foremost Voices in the *Italian Operas*".³¹ British singers did not receive the same formal training as those trained elsewhere in Europe, and few were therefore able to perform the complex vocal roles written into Italian opera. As an actor renowned for her voice, twenty-one-year-old Raftor then began rivalling not only other actresses, but more established Italian opera divas singing in London too. One anecdote later printed in Tate Wilkinson's *Memoirs* suggests Raftor's greatest rival after Oldfield during this liminal moment in her musical career proved to be the soprano and first woman to manage an English opera house Regina Mingotti, whom the actor counts among "a set of Italian squalling devils who come over to England to get our bread from us", and derides as "a parcel of Italian bitches".³² Like Fielding's Patriot politics, Raftor's vilification of the Nepalese Mingotti reveals a xenophobia toward foreign performers as intruders upon the London stage and its cultivation as a site of national identity. An increase in dramatic exposure that summer and over the decade to follow resulted in a corresponding increase in metatheatrical press coverage for Raftor that significantly subverted what the English theatregoing public perceived as her private character backstage.

³¹ *The Comedian, or Philosophical Enquirer*, No. 7 (October 1732), Thomas Cooke, ed. (London: J. Roberts, 1732-1733), p. 40.

³² Tate Wilkinson, *Memoirs of His Own Life, by Tate Wilkinson, Patentee of the Theatres-Royal, York & Hull*, Vol. 2 (London: Wilson, Spence, and Mawman, 1790). p. 29.

Internal conflicts between management and the company of players at Drury Lane briefly disrupted Clive's advancement over the following year as Theophilus Cibber spearheaded what is today regarded as the Actors Rebellion of 1733. Cibber rented his shares in the playhouse from his father, and the actor-manager notoriously clashed with colleagues and co-shareholders John Ellys and John Highmore, and, when the *Daily Post* reported on the 27th of March that Colley Cibber had sold his shares to Highmore, Theophilus and his supporters responded with an open *Letter from Theophilus Cibber, Comedian, to John Highmore, Esq.* publicly declaring his "Birthright" to the Drury Lane, Theatre Royal.³³ Two factions emerged amidst the feud: team Cibber and team Highmore. Cibber led his hangers-on and most of the acting company to the Little Theatre in the Haymarket where they continued to play and cut into Highmore's profits, but Raftor and a handful of the company continued to act at Drury Lane in their stead. A pamphlet satirizing the affair called *The Theatric Squabble; or, The P—ntees* began circulating later in July that depicts Raftor as

*A pleasing Actress, but a Green-Room Scold;
Puff'd with Success, she triumphs over all,
Snarls in the Scene-Room, Curses in the Hall:
She's as Learning, Judgment, Wit, and Manners too:
Ay and good Sense, —if what she say's be true.
Her Virtue too, the purest of the Age,
She'll scarcely be a Whore— upon the Stage:
Yet she that rails 'gainst vicious Talk so strong,*

³³ Theophilus Cibber, *A Letter from Theophilus Cibber, Comedian, to John Highmore, Esq.* (London: 1733), p. 2. See also: "News", *Daily Post*, 27 March 1733, Issue 4221.

*Makes no Objection to a Bawdy Song.*³⁴

Raftor's private character is increasingly manufactured by way of popular discourse, debate, and gossip around the Actors Rebellion during this period. Eighteenth-century theatregoers craved sexual scandal and boundary crossing, but Raftor instead maintained an image of her own life behind the curtain as one of "*Virtue*". Indeed, resisting scandal and transgression plays a significant role in the early manufacturing of Clive's theatrical celebrity. Although "*she'll scarcely be a Whore*" onstage, she flaunts "*Wit, and Manners*" through the characters she plays, and offstage remains "the purest of the Age". The pamphlet constructs a contradiction between Clive's personae and her private character amidst the Rebellion that significantly departs from her early celebrity persona. She was not without her champions, however. Another anonymous pamphlet "Occasioned" by the *Squabble*—and most likely written by Henry Fielding—more flatteringly depicts Raftor as an emblem of the London stage and the undisputed queen of English comic drama after Oldfield:

R—r, whose Merit might support a Stage,
And lull the most malicious Critic's Rage.
In every Part, with pleasure, I can trace,
Judgment, and Humour, join'd with every Grace.
On her soft Notes, dissolv'd in Pleasure, dwell;
Charm'd with the sprightly Innocence of *Nell*.
Others may court, but she commands Applause;
And all become the Patrons of her Cause.
Scorning to copy meanly, sh'as out-done
Where *Oldfield*, late in greatest Splendor shone.

³⁴ *The Theatric Squabble: or, The P—ntees. A satire* (London: A. Dodd 1733), Folger Shakespeare Library, fo. 180199.

Such are the Parts she acts— in private Life,
The pious Daughter, and the faithful Wife.
R—r, by whom the Muses live, may claim
A Muse with Justice, to assert her Fame.³⁵

The panegyric constructs an image of Raftor as a new type of “Innocent” courtesan in the manner of a “sprightly” ‘Nell’ Gwynne. Yet, while Raftor’s power grew behind-the-scenes, her celebrity became a subject of debate, critical censure, and misogynist misrepresentation in the press. “Miss Raftor”, as the *Squabble* laments, was nobody’s “Whore”, but contrary to her admirers’ subsequent publicity campaign to “acquaint the audience” with the virtues of her “private Life”, Raftor instead began to forgo her musical celebrity as the “sprightly innocent” maidservant of English ballad opera and forged a new name and identity for herself: Catherine “Kitty” Clive.

Raftor married a barrister named George Clive amidst the 1733 Rebellion, and when she returned to the stage at the beginning of the new theatrical season on the 1st of October in 1733 she appeared for the first time as “Mrs Clive” on Drury Lane’s playbills. One of her first performances that autumn was the role of Kitty in a dramatic adaptation of William Hogarth’s aforementioned painting series *The Harlot’s Progress*, written by begrudged former actor-manager Theophilus Cibber and subtitled *The Ridotto al’Fresco*

³⁵ *The Theatre Turned Upside Down: or, The Mutineers. A Dialogue Occasioned by a Pamphlet Called, The Theatric Squabble* (London: A. Dodd, 1733). Although Fielding did not attach his name to the pamphlet, he published *An Epistle To Mrs. Clive* in his *Intriguing Chambermaid* the following year that replicates much of the language: “acting in real Life the Part of *the best Wife, the best Daughter, the best Sister, and the best Friend... if Honour, Good-nature, Gratitude, and good Sense, join’d with the most entertaining Humour, wherever they are found, are Titles to publick Esteem, I think you may be sure of it [emphasis mine]”* (London: J. Watts, 1734), p. 7.

(1733). The play is performed as a set of pantomimed vignettes that each represent a different painting from Hogarth's series with the drama transposed from Cheapside to Drury Lane. Although Clive appeared as pastoral characters named Kitty before in *The Humours of Oxford* and *The What D'Ye Call It*, "Kitty" signifies the actor herself when she first appears in Cibber's afterpiece. *The Harlot's Progress* at Drury Lane begins with an overture while "the Curtain rises" on "an Inn; The Bawd, the Country Girl, the *Debauchee* and the Pimp, all rang'd as they are in *the first Print*" just as the character of "Harlequin appears at the Window, and seeing the Country Girl, jumps down, and gets into a Trunk which belongs to her" (5). Cibber's "Country Girl" is revealed to be "Miss Kitty", who "has just taken into high Keeping. (This Scene is taken from *the Second Print*)", and "discovered lolling upon a *Settée*, attended by her Maid and Black-Boy, admiring the Grandeur of which she is possess'd". Wrapped in silk and muslin from the Royal wardrobe, Kitty rises from the velveteen fainting couch to sing an air on the epicurean "Pleasures" of her newfound wealth and prosperity:

*Who wou'd not a Mistress be,
Kept in Splendor thus like me?
Deckt in golden rich Array,
Sparkling at each Ball and Play!
Gaily toying,
Sweets enjoying
Foreign to that thing a Wife,
Flirting, flaunting,
Jilting, jaunting,
Oh the Charming happy Life!*

Cibber's afterpiece allegorically dramatizes Clive's engagement with the company at Drury Lane as the solicitation of Miss Kitty by the character of Harlequin. Rather than sing the virtues of her recent marriage to George Clive or play into theatregoers' mounting interest in her private life, Clive flips the script by conceding to the fiction of her biographical origins as a "Country Girl" in the vein of Hogarth's Moll Hackabout while at the same time enacting a caricature of herself as a modern theatregoing "Mistress". When Harlequin "creeps from under her Toilet, in the Habit of a *Cadet*", Clive "appears Coy at first, but at length yields" to his advances while teasing in song:

AIR V. *Lad's a Dunce.*
Thus finely set out,
I'll make such a Rout,
And top all the Rantipole Girls of the Town;
With Glances so bright,
Lords and Dukes I'll delight,
And make all the Rakes with their Ready come down...
Each Cully shall think he's my only Gallant,
With such Supplies
To Grandeur I'll rise,
And revel in Pleasure, in Plenty and Ease,
While in the dark,
A favourite Spark,
I'll keep at my Call to enjoy what I please.

Her song evokes stereotypical associations between the stage and sex-trade in order to simulate for eighteenth-century audiences the intimate relationship between actors, courtiers, "Lords and Dukes", and "all the Rantipole Girls of the Town" at the Theatres Royal after the introduction of women players during the Restoration of the Stuart monarchy in 1660. Indeed, actresses' physical and vocal charms were perceived to be

'available' for public consumption, but although Clive has the power to make "*Each Cully*" believe "*he's my only Gallant*", her growing power and influence behind the curtain afforded her a heightened self-possession whereupon she could give or withhold pleasure from her audience. Clive both affects and comically subverts critical fixation on her sexual subjectivity. As the scene shifts to "a poor Apartment in *Drury-Lane*", however, "(This is taken from the Third Print) *Kitty* is discover'd sitting disconsolate by the Bed-side, drinking of Tea, attended by *Bess Brindle* (a Runner to the Ladies of Pleasure)" after losing the patronage of her wealthiest "Cully" for being found a "*Saucy Jade*" of "*the Drury trade*" and in bed with Harlequin. As her "favourite spark" "Harlequin jumps in at the Window; she seems overjoy'd to see him", allegorically pantomiming her affinity with low comedy at the playhouse, but, "just as they are going to sit down to drink Tea, they hear a Noise", and "Harlequin looks thro' the Key-hole" to discover "the Justice, Constable, Watch, &c." at their doorstep. He "jumps into a Punch-Bowl that stands upon a Table" to evade capture, but *Kitty* and her "Runner" are led offstage by the Constable. The "Scene changes to the Street" as "A melancholy Tune is play'd, while several Ladies of Pleasure (alias *unfortunate Women*) are led cross the Stage as going to *Bridewell*" alongside "*Kitty* and her Maid, the Bawd, &c", but, the moment they are to be flogged, "the Blocks all vanish, and in their stead appear" the stock innamorato of commedia dell'arte: "Harlequin, Scaramouch, *Pierrot*, and *Mezetin* [*sic.*]". As *Kitty* and Harlequin meet hand-in-hand, "each takes out his Lady to dance", signifying "they'll go to the *Ridotto al'Fresco*" which is described as a "Scene taken from the place

at *Vaux-Hall*” with “several Glass Lustres” onstage to represent the popular pleasure gardens.³⁶ The final dramatic allusion to Vauxhall is significant in that the south bank estate then served as not only a high society site to socialize, but, as music historian John Hawkins later described it, “the house being converted into a tavern, or place of entertainment, was much frequented by the votaries of pleasure” and “Mr. [Jonathan] Tyers opened it with an advertisement of a *Ridotto al Fresco*”.³⁷ *The Harlot’s Progress* therefore ends in a metatheatrical simulation of the more intimate musical masquerades and domestic “places of entertainment” that increasingly cut into commercial profits at Drury Lane, and operated as notorious meeting grounds for prostitutes.

Clive drew crowds to the Theatre Royal by constructing a brand name and metatheatrical image that reinforced popular illusions of intimacy with her private life and character behind the scenes, and by the mid-1730s she was enough of a theatrical celebrity to appear *in propria persona*. Indeed, her marriage to George Clive amidst the 1733 Actor’s Rebellion, as Joncus has argued, was a rouse “born of mutual need”, and the two “never actually married, but instead colluded in a fiction born of mutual need”.³⁸ By constructing a fiction of betrothal, Clive both maintained her economic independence and

³⁶ Theophilus Cibber, *The Harlot’s Progress; or, The Ridotto Al’Fresco: A Grotesque Pantomime Entertainment* (London: 1733), pp. 8-12.

³⁷ *A General History of the Science and Practice of Music*, Vol. 4 (London: T. Payne, 1776), pp. 352-353. For a detailed history of Vauxhall Gardens, see also: Warwick Wroth and Arthur Edgar Wroth, “Vauxhall Gardens”, in *The London Pleasure Gardens of the Eighteenth Century* (London: Macmillan, 1896), pp. 283-326.

³⁸ For a detailed analysis of the supposed marriage between George and Catherine Clive, see: “The Enigma of George Clive”, *Kitty Clive, or The Fair Songster*, pp. 153-157.

reinforced popular perceptions of her private character as the “faithful wife” of an English barrister. She opened with prologues, closed with epilogues, played her own caricature in plays about plays, and, as Felicity Nussbaum observes, “she jockeyed what she had named as herself (by appearing in her own person) and at the same time disowned it (by claiming not to be herself when in character)”.³⁹ The fictional feud with Susannah Cibber over the role of Polly in Gay’s *Beggar’s Opera* over the following year exemplifies the extent to which Clive leveraged preexisting perceptions of her celebrity persona and private character to further her own advancement within the company. She appeared to play victim in the press to what she described as “a Design form’d against me, to deprive me by degrees of every Part in which I have had the Happiness to appear with any Reputation” in an article inserted in the *London Daily Post* on the 19th of November in 1736, and, as Berta Joncus notes: “Clive and those writing in her support got away with what was, in part, a media hoax”.⁴⁰ The running feud between the two “Rival Ladies”, as they were depicted both in the press and later onstage, served as running advertisement

³⁹ Nussbaum, p. 160.

⁴⁰ “‘In Wit Superior, as in Fighting’: Kitty Clive and the Conquest of a Rival Queen”, *Huntington Library Quarterly* 74.1 (March 2011): 23-42. See also: “News”, *London Daily Post and General Advertiser*, 19 March 1736, Issue 641.

for a revival of *The Beggar's Opera* at Drury Lane.⁴¹ Nussbaum traces the origins of the eighteenth-century 'Rival Queens' stereotype back to Nathaniel Lee's 1677 tragedy *The Rival Queens, or the Death of Alexander the Great* to chart a metatheatrical overlaying of popular actresses with the characters of Roxana and Statira in later productions of the play at Drury Lane, but by the time Clive is fashioned into a representative Queen, the contest between Polly and Lucy for Macheath in Gay's *Opera* had long supplanted the contest between Roxana and Statira for Alexander in Lee's *Rival Queens* in the eighteenth-century popular imagination.⁴² The *Daily Journal* ran a follow-up column called "The Occasional Prompter" suggesting that "the whole Dispute" between Clive and Cibber was grounded in an argument over "*the true Character of Polly*", advertising Clive as the proper player for the part while inadvertently complimenting Cibber's pathos all the same. One pseudonymous contributor, Aequus, argues that Cibber is too "soft and pathetick" for the part.⁴³ The casting of Polly as Gay intended, a "Prompter" then adds, calls instead for "an exquisite Jilt" like Kitty.⁴⁴ Published verses dedicated "To Mrs.

⁴¹ Such contests between "Rival Queens" were standard fare in the theatrical news media of the eighteenth century. Among the most infamous of these rivalries, as Charles Burney recalls in his *General History of Music*, was that between Faustina Bordoni (1697-1781) and Francesca Cuzzoni (1696-1778) "who in the opera of *Alessandro* began to kindle the flames of discord among the frequenters of the opera and patrons of the arts", and "which increased to a more violent degree of enmity than even the theological and political parties of high church and low, or Whig and Tory, which then raged in this country", Vol. 4 (London, 1789), p. 309.

⁴² The term "Queen" possesses affirmative and derogatory denotations of both power and disreputability at this historical moment, see: "quean, *n.*" in *Oxford English Dictionary*.

⁴³ "News", *Daily Journal*, 6 December 1736, Issue 5861.

⁴⁴ "News", *Daily Journal*, 10 December 1736, Issue 5865.

Clive, on the ungenerous Treatment she has lately met with” and “on the present Contest between the Two Rival Ladies” culminated in a lengthy publicity campaign on Clive’s right to play Polly.⁴⁵ Lincoln’s Inn Fields also capitalized on the feud by dramatizing it as *The Beggar’s Pantomime, or the Contending Colombines* (1736), depicting Clive as Madame Squall and Cibber as Madame Squeak. Indeed, the shape of the drama was continually readapted to the shape of the feud as it played out in the columns of the *Daily Journal* and other local papers over the holidays that year. The playhouse manager, Henry Woodward (1714-1777), summarizes his new pantomime in a mock-heroic prologue to the third and final printed edition of the play:

*Cibber, the Syren of the Stage,
A Vow to Heav’n did make,
Full Twenty Nights in Polly’s Part,
She’d make the Play-house shake.
When as these Tidings came to Clive,
Fierce Amazonian Dame;
Who is it thus, in Rage she cries,
Dares rob me of my Claim...
With that she to the Green-Room flew,
Where Cibber meek she found;
And sure if Friends had not been by,
She had fell’d her to the Ground.*

Woodward’s finale then represents figures from Drury Lane as gingerbread-men whose dramatic wares are allegorically satirized as sweet albeit unhealthy holiday confections. As topical as the drama must have appeared to the audience, however, the author recognized a deeper current of deception underlying all of the brouhaha instigated

⁴⁵ “News”, *Daily Journal*, 14 December 1736, Issue 5868. See also: “News”, *Daily Journal*, 18 December 1736, Issue 5872.

through the press. The “Prompter” in the play observes that the “Design of all this Quarrel” is “to make themselves more considerable”, and “all this Bustle is like that of two Prize-fighters, who, in order to draw the Curiosity of the Town, sit lovingly down in an Alehouse, to club the Penning of the Challenges”.⁴⁶ All of the theatrical press coverage and dramatic adaptations of the supposed feud only served to further publicize the revival of Gay’s ballad opera, and, by the time the play was finally mounted on the 31st of December in 1736, the anticipation over who would appear onstage to play Polly had reached a climax. Clive, rehearsed in both Polly and Lucy, walked onto the stage first to address the audience in propria persona. The *London Evening Post* reports “the House being full by Four”, and “a prodigious uproar, with Clapping, Hissing, Catcalls &c” when Clive first appeared onstage, and “address’d herself to the House, saying Gentlemen, I am very sorry it should be thought I have in any Manner been the Occassion of the least Disturbance; and then cry’d in so moving a Manner, that even Butchers wept... she behaving in so humble a Manner, the House approv’d of her Behaviour by a general Clap”.⁴⁷ “Even Butchers” whom for all metaphoric intents and purposes probably bore little to no relation to the actress outside the Theatre Royal are herein described as having “wept” at the sense of intimacy with which Clive addressed them from the stage. Without appearing to do so, Clive leveraged popular support for her musical celebrity by

⁴⁶ Henry Woodward, *The beggar’s pantomime; or, The contending Colombines: With new songs, and several alterations and additions*, 3rd ed. (London: C. Corbett, 1736), pp. 7-8, 21.

⁴⁷ “News”, *London Evening Post*, 1 January 1737, Issue 1424.

manufacturing a celebrity persona offstage that shadowed her onstage and in performance at Drury Lane.

Clive appeared again in the character of Miss Kitty Clive the following year in 1737 for an adaptation of Buckingham's *Rehearsal* written by James Miller called *The Coffee-House*. Miller transposes the green room drama at the Theatre Royal in Buckingham's play to a coffeehouse masquerading as a bawdyhouse run by Mrs. Notable and her daughter Kitty that is frequented by the likes of Theophilus Cibber, played by himself, and Bays performed by Charles Macklin (1690-1797). The afterpiece opens with two gentlemen, Hartley and Gaywood, gossiping about Clive. When Hartley explains that he is "going to meet some Company at the Coffee-House", Gaywood jokes that the "Company" he intends to meet is simply just Clive herself:

GAYWOOD: Ay, ay, I know your Company! *Kitty* is the only One you want to see there. Art thou snivelling after that puny Girl yet? For shame! a young Fellow of thy Sense and Spirit to be in Love!

HARTLY: In Love or not you must own, my dear Captain, she's a delightful Girl. The Mother too has wisely kept her pretty much shut up, and prevented her from any Freedoms with the young Fellows that come there: This indeed has given her a little Awkwardness in her Behaviour; but no matter for that, the Hussy has natural Wit and Spirit enough, and a little good Conversation will polish her manners.

Clive's characterization during Miller's induction draws on the actor's early typecasting in the role of pastoral maidservants like Phillis and Dulceda, and the figurative association between "*Kitty*" and Clive is further reinforced by what Hartley describes as her "natural Wit and Spirit". Miller's afterpiece then subverts Clive's theatrical celebrity, however, in a manner similar to that of *The Harlot's Progress* one year earlier by

representing the actress as an aspiring bawd. As the scene shifts to “a Coffee-Room”, Bays is discovered at a “Table leaning on his Hand” and unable to focus on the composition of his new tragedy. He cries out that it is “impossible to write four Lines here in quiet; I have the finest Thoughts in the World continually drove out o’ my Head by People’s impertinent Chattering: When I am at home I can’t be easy for a Pack of rascally Duns, and when I flee here to avoid ‘em I am interrupted in this manner”.⁴⁸ He is soon preoccupied by the arrival and entrance in propria persona of Theophilus Cibber, however, to whom he obsequiously begins fawning:

CIBBER: Hey! Boy, some Coffee here.— O Mr. Bays, your most obedient.

— Widow, how dost do?

BOOSWELL: [*Waking, and yawning aloud.*] Yaw!

CIBBER: Ahah! old Sinner, how goes it? What drowsy already, Squire?

BAYS: Sir, will you hear my new Tragedy read?

BOOSWELL: Yaw! I have slept long enough already, Sir.

BAYS: [*Shaking his Head.*] A Brute, a sad Brute!

Miller’s running jest in *The Coffee-House* is that Bays’s recitation of his tragedy is repeatedly interrupted not by the playwright’s own critical and explanatory interjections, but by Theophilus Cibber’s constant distraction with drinking and sociability. The play in turn manufactures a dramatic simulation of private, intimate social immersion within and among the company at the Drury Lane for eighteenth-century audiences. Just as Bays fawns over Cibber, so too does Cibber fawn over Kitty:

BAYS: ...But, dear Mr. *Cibber*, will you hear my Tragedy?— Pray let us begin.— *Dramatis Personae. Men.*—

⁴⁸ James Miller, *The Coffee-House: A Dramatick Piece* (London: J. Watts, 1737), pp. 2-4.

CIBBER: Yes, Sir.— But where's little Kitty to-night, my dear Widow? Pr'ythee let's have a little Chat with her, woo't?

WIDOW: These Men are all bewitch'd sure; nothing but *Kitty, Kitty, Kitty*.

CIBBER: Thou art an unconscionable Woman, Widow. Consider, my Dear, you have had your Run a long while, 'tis time for thy Posterity to come into Play now. Come, come, call my little Whipster: Here, *Kitty!* Where art thee?⁴⁹

Clive is first introduced, characterized, and indeed sexualized as a domesticated kitten through other characters' conversation in the play. Before the actress appears onstage, then, her celebrity herein metatheatrically allegorized as her desirability among rakish patrons of the coffeehouse is already predetermined and established for the audience. "*Kitty*", is the talk of the town, as Mrs. Notable observes, and when she enters she is found laughing at Cibber for wearing the Company wardrobe and part of his Lucio costume from the evening mainpiece, Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* (1604), out to the simulated coffeehouse thereafter:

KITTY: Your humble Servant, Sir; Mother told me indeed that you was gone to new-dress, Ha, ha, ha! and truly a tempting Figure you make.

CIBBER: Ha, ha, ha! Why yes, Madam, and I had the Honour of being his *Valet de Chambre*.⁵⁰

Miller's afterpiece then stages a contest between not rival queens but rival beaux, Mr. Hartly and Mr. Harpie, who both compete for Kitty's affection. Miller's subversion thus works to showcase Clive as an independent and self-governing celebrity player within Cibber's company. Mrs. Notable, played by Charles Macklin's wife "Mrs. [Ann] Grace [Purvor]" (d. 1758), tries to wed Kitty to Harpie, an allusion to Clive's musical celebrity

⁴⁹ *The Coffee-House*, pp. 10-13.

⁵⁰ *The Coffee-House*, p. 18.

at Drury Lane.⁵¹ She resists the union, however, preferring instead to become a “Notable”-like bawd by establishing her own coffeehouse with the help of Mr. Hartly. Richard Winstone (1699-1787) and Charles Macklin as Gaywood and Bays then return to the coffeehouse to find Kitty aping the work of Mrs. Notable behind the bar:

KITTY: I am glad she has left the Coffee-Room to me a little; by the Stars! I'll get into the Bar. [*Gets into the Bar.*] Lah! how pure it is to sit here, and have all the fine Gentlemen crowding about one, one saying This, and another saying That; one doing one pretty Thing, and another another pretty Thing; Lah! I don't wonder Mother loves it; I wish some of 'em wou'd come in now, with all my Soul... Make some fresh Coffee, d'ye hear me, Booby; and a Pot of the fine Tea with the hard Name, that Mother keeps for her own drinking; for, by the Stars, I'll have the best of every thing!

BOY: You shall, Mrs. *Kitty*.

KITTY: Mrs. *Kitty*! I assure you, Mr. Freedom.— And why not Madam, Saucebox? O Here comes somebody...

GAYWOOD: Ahah! what, my dear *Kitty* in the Bar? This is a Miracle indeed! I must give you Joy of this, *Kitty*. [*Kisses her.*]

KITTY: Thank ye, Sir. [*Curtsy'ing low.*]

GAYWOOD: Come, *Bays*; what, a Poet and sheepish!

BAYS: Madam, permit me to taste the Odours of those Celestial Lips. [*Kissing her.*] Not all the Flowers in the *Thessalian* Fields, nor *India*'s spicy Gales, can vie with 'em in Fragrance.

GAYWOOD: Poetically perform'd in troth, little *Bays*.⁵²

The Coffee-House renders players from the Drury Lane acting company like Theophilus Cibber and Catherine “Kitty” Clive as part of its dramatic fiction, and Winstone and Macklin’s flirting in turn manufactures an image of Clive as a type of muse to aspiring tragedians like Bays whose poetic paean, however ridiculous, comically plagiarizes the

⁵¹ “Macklin, Mrs Charles the first, Ann, née Grace Purvor” in *A Biographical Dictionary of Actors*, Vol. 10, pp. 27-31.

⁵² Miller, *The Coffee-House*, pp. 27-28.

same pastoral imagery long associated with the actor and her repertoire. The afterpiece therefore dramatizes what Clive's early biographers like Lewes and Chetwood would later relate as her discovery in a coffeehouse near Church Row, and, like *The Harlot's Progress*, the play in turn simulates an intimate social exchange between Clive and other figures from the eighteenth-century Theatre Royal. By replicating the interior of a coffeehouse, Drury Lane becomes a site of vicarious social immersion among the actors onstage, and, as the playhouse itself increasingly expands to accommodate larger audiences over the course of the eighteenth century, the commercial audience's sense of intimacy with the company onstage increasingly relies on the manufacturing and metatheatrical mediation of an identity offstage. For Clive, Kitty is not so much an authentic identity as a character and caricature projected unto the actor by her admirers and critics which she subsequently nurtures and plays to her advancement in turn.

Eighteenth-century actors and actresses mediated their offstage identities through prologues and epilogues by appearing onstage only partly costumed to address the audience in propria persona.⁵³ After playing Miss Kitty in another rags-to-riches ballad opera titled *Sir John Cockle at Court* by Robert Dodsley the following February in 1738, Clive appeared before the audience to deliver an epilogue half-dressed in the "fine Cloaths" of a maidservant turned high-society courtier. The play, first staged as an

⁵³ For a detailed study of the nuances of prologues and epilogues during this period, see: Mary E. Knapp, *Prologues and Epilogues of the Eighteenth Century* (Yale UP, 1961). See also: Diana Solomon, *Prologues and Epilogues of Restoration Theater: Gender and Comedy, Performance and Print* (Delaware UP, 2013).

afterpiece to Thomas Otway's *Venice Preserv'd* (1682) at Drury Lane, is framed as a story related by Sir John Cockle, acted by *Coffee-House* author James Miller, and spoken to "the King", played by Theophilus Cibber, and his courtiers regarding a Miss Kitty. Miller seeks Cibber's council on how to bar his "Daughter *Kate*" from wedding an "extravagant Knight" from the city instead of "her first Lover, the honest Farmer", aptronymically stylized as "Greenwood", a "young Gentleman of the Country".⁵⁴ Dodsley's characterization of Miss Kitty draws upon Clive's association with pastoral ballad opera, but because she came to assert her own agency as an actor within the company, so too was she simultaneously represented as just another royal mistress or green room tyrant by those who wrote for and about her. Consider the songs within *Sir Cockle at Court*, for example. Clive sings the story of Kitty's rise to fame and fortune:

*Tho' Born in a Country town,
The Beauties of London unknown,
My Heart is as tender,
My Waste is as slender,
My Skin is as white,
My Eyes are as bright
As the best of them all,
That twinkle or sparkle at Court, or at Ball.*⁵⁵

Clive was the daughter of an Irishman named William Rafter (n.d.), a bankrupt officer from the French army who served under Louis XIV, and the details of her national background as an Irishwoman are continually effaced in the ongoing construction and

⁵⁴ Robert Dodsley, *Sir John Cockle at Court. Being the sequel of the King and the Miller of Mansfield. A Dramatick Tale* (London: R. Dodsley, 1738), pp. 7-8.

⁵⁵ *Sir John Cockle at Court*, p. 17.

deconstruction of her celebrity on the London stage.⁵⁶ The more Clive came to serve as a representative of English culture through drama, the more important it became for the actress to conceal her Irish heritage. Playing a young woman “*Born in a Country town*” in turn, and rather ironically, worked to obscure her Irish identity from the audience. By referring to her “slender waist” and “bright eyes”, Clive metatheatrically concedes to her own typecast body while weaponizing it for use at Cibber’s court. Embedded beneath the surface of the afterpiece is an allegorical dramatization of her transition from a minor player to celebrated wit among the company at Drury Lane. Kitty and her lady-in-waiting Mrs. Starch, played by “Miss [Henrietta Maria] Tollett” (1709-1780), are then discovered shopping in London for clothes to wear to “*the King’s*” court while the characters allude to Clive’s celebrity as a performer of ballad opera at Drury Lane through a series of puns on stately courtliness:

MISS KITTY: ...What do you think it is that makes a fine Lady?

MRS. STARCH: Why, Madam, a fine Person, fine Wit, fine Airs, and fine Cloaths.

MISS KITTY: Well, you have told me already that I’m very handsome, you know, so that’s one Thing; but, as for Wit, what’s that? I don’t know what that is, Mrs. *Starch*.

MRS. STARCH: O, Madam, Wit is, as one may say, the— the— being very witty; that is— comical, as it were; doing something to make every-body laugh.

MISS KITTY: O, is that all; nay, then I can be as witty as any body, for I am very comical. Well, but what’s the next? Fine Airs, O let me alone for fine

⁵⁶ The first printed record of Clive’s paternal origins insofar as I have been able to retrace appears in Chetwood’s *History of the Stage*, p. 126. For another, if not derivative account, see also: Letter “To the Editor of the Covent-Garden Magazine”, in the April issue of *The Covent-Garden Magazine; or, Amorous Repository*, Vol. 3 (London: G. Allen, 1774), pp. 124-125.

Airs, I have Airs enough, if I can but get Lovers to practice 'em upon. And then, fine Cloaths, why, these are very fine Cloaths, I think, don't you think so, Mrs. *Starch*?

MRS. STARCH: Yes, Madam.⁵⁷

Like Nell in Coffey's *Devil to Pay* seven years earlier, Kitty forges a new identity as "a fine Lady" in Dodsley's afterpiece, and, by repeating the same story of upward social mobility onstage from country to court, Clive's ascension within the acting company at Drury Lane is mirrored not only by the playwrights crafting dramatic vehicles for her onstage, but by her biographers, admirers, and critics reflecting on her performances too.

CROSSDRESSING CLIVE FOR BUCKINGHAM'S "REHEARSAL"

Only one woman before Clive had donned breeches to perform the part of Bayes in *The Rehearsal*: Susanna Verbruggen (1667-1703).⁵⁸ The caricatured tragedian in early eighteenth-century adaptations of Buckingham's satire was predominantly reserved for the reigning playhouse wits like, as noted above, John Lacy, Richard Estcourt, and Colley Cibber, and, as detailed further below, Theophilus Cibber and David Garrick, whose celebrity personae audiences readily distinguished masked beneath the caricature. Because playbills advertising dramatis personae sparsely appear in print before the turn of the century, the precise date of Verbruggen's performance remains conjectural. In his autobiography, however, Colley Cibber provides an anecdotal clue to the timing when he

⁵⁷ *Sir John Cockle at Court*, p. 18. See also: "Crisp, Mrs Samuel, Henrietta Maria, née Tollett", in *A Biographical Dictionary of Actors*, Vol. 4, pp. 47-49.

⁵⁸ "Verbruggen, Mrs John Baptista, Susanna, née Percival, formerly Mrs William Mountfort", in *A Biographical Dictionary of Actors*, Vol. 15, pp. 136-140.

remembers how “people were so fond of seeing her a Man, that when the Part of *Bays* in the *Rehearsal* had for some time lain dormant, she was desired to take it up”.⁵⁹ After an initial two-night run at the first Drury Lane theatre on Bridges Street in 1671 with John Lacy playing Bayes, followed by a two-night revival in December of 1674, Buckingham’s *Rehearsal* is “lain dormant” for a period of twelve years until it is once again mounted in the spring of 1686 before “The King & Queene”, James II and Maria di Modena.⁶⁰ The prolonged hiatus suggests Lacy, a comic favourite of the late Charles II, was principally associated with the part of the caricatured tragedian from Buckingham’s burlesque, and his death in 1681 therefore left it open to another seasoned mimic within the company. Cibber remembers Verbruggen as a “naturally pleasant Mimick”, and, because “she had the Skill to make that Talent useful to the Stage”, she in turn became the first actor to crossdress in order to play Bayes in *The Rehearsal*.⁶¹

When the *Daily Advertiser* teased a forthcoming adaptation of Buckingham’s burlesque with Clive cast to play Bayes, Verbruggen’s performance over half a century prior was invoked as a comparison. On Thursday the 19th of April in 1743, the *Advertiser* intimates that “we hear Mrs. Clive, by Desire, and in Imitation of the late celebrated Mrs.

⁵⁹ Cibber, *Apology*, p. 99.

⁶⁰ A warrant of £15 issued to the United Company at the Theatre Royal for “The King & Queene & a Box for ye Maydes of honor at ye Rehearsall” on the 6th of May in 1686 is archived in the Lord Chamberlain’s Department of the National Archives, Kew, PRO LC 5/16, p. 125. James and Maria contributed £20 to mounting “Hamlett at Whitehall” one week prior, and by comparison. For detailed “Lists of Plays Performed Before Royalty” during the Restoration, see: “Appendix B: Documents Illustrative of the History of the Stage” in Nicoll, *History of English Drama*, Vol. 1, pp. 343-385.

⁶¹ Cibber, *Apology*, p. 99.

Verbruggen, who perform'd the Part of Bayes in the Rehearsal, is to appear in that Character at the Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane".⁶² This critical identification between Clive and Verbruggen, like earlier Clive-Oldfield identifications, further reinforced her celebrity, earning power, and position among the Drury Lane acting company, and offers a preemptive suggestion of their approach to acting the part. The same "Mimickry" that Verbruggen is remembered to have revitalized in Bayes upon Lacy's passing, Clive is later advertised as "Imitating" in the spring of 1743. Indeed, in an anonymous "Essay on the Theatres: Or, The Art of Acting" *Found in the Late Earl Of Oxford's Library*, Clive is designated a modern, eighteenth-century successor to Verbruggen's comic legacy on the Restoration stage. Referring to Verbruggen by her first maiden name, Mountfort, the critic wonders how

In the last Age gay *Mountford* charm'd the Town
With Comic Art peculiarly her own:
Shall not our *Clive* as just an Honour claim,
Who fix'd on inborn excellence her fame?
Our sires to *Mountford* great Encomiums raise,
Shall we not *Clive* with equal ardour praise?
We great *Originals* must *both* allow,
For all that *Mountford* cou'd be, *Clive* is now.

In their editorial footnote to this stanza, the editors—Samuel Johnson (1709-1784) and William Oldys (1696-1761)—wonder "how great her Excellence must have been" and "may be imagined from her acting *Bayes* in the *Rehearsal*, with a Judgment and Vivacity

⁶² "News", *Daily Advertiser*, 19 April 1743, Issue 3822.

equal to any who had ever performed it”.⁶³ By referring to the actor as “her Excellence”, Johnson and Oldys draw upon the language and stereotype of theatrical ‘rival queens’. The subjects of Verbruggen’s burlesque “Mimickry” remain obscured by limited critical discourse contemporary with her performance, but the panegyrist’s emphasis on her “Originality” and both Johnson and Oldys’s speculation surrounding her critical “Judgment” suggests the actor did more than simply imitate Lacy’s imitations in breeches, incorporating her own topical imitations into the prototypical caricature as a method of staging critique toward contemporaries within the United Company then practicing at Dorset Gardens.⁶⁴

The subjects of Clive’s burlesque mimicry in her 1743 revival of *The Rehearsal*, on the other hand, are promoted weeks in advance through the running columns of the *Daily Advertiser* and *Daily Post*. Four days following the brief intimation of Clive acting Bayes, the *Daily Advertiser* issued another puff proclaiming the performance to be “*At the Desire of several Ladies of Quality*”, and “*For the Benefit of*” her brother “*Mr. RAFTOR at the Theatre Royal in Drury-Lane, on Friday the 6th of May next*”. Clive’s brother

⁶³ *The Harleian Miscellany: Or, A Collection of Scarce, Curious, and Entertaining Pamphlets and Tracts, as Well in Manuscript as in Print, Found in the late Earl of Oxford’s Library. Interspersed with Historical, Political, and Critical Notes*, Vol. 5, Samuel Johnson and William Oldys, eds. (London: T. Osborne: 1745), p. 546.

⁶⁴ The United Company merged both the King’s Company and the Duke’s Company in November of 1682, but because Drury Lane remained closed in the wake of Charles II’s death and sociopolitical upheaval of the Exclusion Crisis between February of 1685 and January of 1688, Verbruggen’s revival was likely staged at Dorset Gardens. For a history of the company merger, see: Judith Milhous, “Theatre Companies and Regulation” in *The Cambridge History of British Theatre*, Vol. 2, Joseph Donahue, ed. (Cambridge UP, 2004), pp. 108-125.

James, who shadowed his younger sister in a variety of minor roles throughout the 1740s, sold “Tickets and Places to be had” from “the Corner of Tavistock-Street, over-against the Bedford-Head Tavern”, a popular establishment to eat, drink, and gamble in Covent Garden, and, in anticipation of a crowded house: “Three Rows of the Pit will be rail’d in to the Boxes, and Servants allow’d to keep Places there, and on the Stage”. The advertisement also includes a preliminary list of the principal cast to perform alongside the first actor to crossdress to play Bayes in over half of a century.⁶⁵ The *London Daily Post and General Advertiser* followed-up with a notice issued on the 5th of May declaring “tomorrow (by Desire) will be presented The REHEARSAL. The Part of Bayes (by Desire) by Mrs. Clive”.⁶⁶ On the morning of the production, the *Post* issued a final notice detailing “The rest of the Characters to be perform’d by” the same supporting cast that played alongside David Garrick, principal subject of Clive’s mimicry and the two chapters to follow in this dissertation. The cast includes “Mr. [Charles] Macklin, Mr. [William] Havard, Mr. [Richard] Yates, Mr. [Charles] Blakes, Mr. [John] Arthur, Mr. [Robert] Turbutt, Mr. [Richard] Neale, Mr. Morgan, Mr. [Richard] Winstone, Mr. [Henry]

⁶⁵ Dennis Delane (c. 1707-1750) and William Mills (1701-1750) were cast to play Smith and Johnson, and “The Vocal Parts” were to be sung by Clive’s costars John Beard (c. 1716-1791) and Thomas Lowe (c. 1719-1783) from George Frideric Handel’s oratorio *Samson* which had premiered at the Covent Garden, Theatre Royal earlier that winter, and her brother Mr. James Raftor (d. 1790), see: “Advertisements and Notices”, *Daily Advertiser*, 23 April 1743, Issue 3826. See also: “Raftor, James”, in *A Biographical Dictionary of Actors*, Vol. 12, pp. 248-249, and Winton Dean, “Samson”, in *Handel’s Dramatic Oratorios and Masques* (Oxford UP, 1959), pp. 326-365.

⁶⁶ “Advertisements and Notices”, *London Daily Post and General Advertiser*, 5 May 1743, Issue 2694.

Green, Mr. Wright, Mr. [E.] Woodburn, Mr. [James] Gray, Mr. [Francis] Leigh, Mrs. [Mary Woodman] Ridout, Mrs. [Francis Shireburn] Cross, Miss [Sybila] Minors, [and] Miss [Christiana] Wright". The playbill also puffs an "Additional Reinforcement of Mr. Bayes's new-rai's'd Troops" set to appear that evening. These "Troops" perform in Bayes's play-within-the-play which the playbill ultimately divorces from the metatheatrical rehearsal framework of the play, and lists as "Entertainments between the Acts" instead. Distinguishing the play from the play-within-the-play fosters a deeper sense of intimacy with the cast by positioning the audience as critical participants alongside Delane and Mills who both study and censure Clive's rehearsal as Smith and Johnson from, presumably, a set-piece box among them.

Clive's *Rehearsal* began "exactly at Six o'Clock", and extra tickets left unsold by her brother were, as always, sold by the housekeeper "Hobson at the Stage-Door".⁶⁷ She appeared onstage as Bayes shortly after Delane and Mills, but, according to the only recorded account of her performance that evening, a handwritten note scribbled on a playbill in a posthumously collated *Collection of Engravings, Manuscripts, and Playbills* associated with David Garrick: "she did it most wretchedly", and "it was believed she would not have gone through the part".⁶⁸ The morning playbill insert from the *London*

⁶⁷ "Advertisements and Notices", *London Daily Post and General Advertiser*, 6 May 1743, Issue 2665.

⁶⁸ *David Garrick, A Collection of Engravings, Manuscripts, Playbills*, James Winston, comp., c. 1830, Folger Shakespeare Library, W.b.481. See also: *The Plays of David Garrick*, Vol. 5, Harry William Pedicord and Fredrick Louis Bergmann, eds. (Southern Illinois UP, 1982), p. 304, and *The London Stage, 1660-1800*, Pt. 3, Vol. 2, Arthur H. Scouten, ed. (Southern Illinois UP, 1961), pp. 1055-1056.

Daily Post, however, offers a number of significant details regarding the nuances of Clive's adaptation. After the rehearsal of Bayes's prologue spoken by Thunder and Lightning, Clive directs the actors to "begin the Play", but because "Mr. *Ivory* is not come yet" and still "two doors off", Delane, Mills, and Clive exit to "take a pipe of Tobacco" as the first "Reinforcement of Mr. Bayes's new-rai's'd Troops" begins with what is advertised on the *Daily Post* playbill as "Singing by Mr. Beard".⁶⁹ In early productions of *The Rehearsal*, "Mr. *Ivory*" made topical reference to the Restoration actor Abraham Ivory (*d.* 1680), but in Clive's *Rehearsal* over half of a century removed from the topical Restoration satire, the allusion instead mockingly connotes the contemporary tenor housed "two doors off" at the Covent Garden opera house: John Beard, English rival to the Italian castrati working on the London stage.⁷⁰ Delane, Mills, and Clive then reenter to commence rehearsal after Beard's musical induction, and she proceeds to dance "A Serious Ballet by [Monsieur] Desse, and Mrs. [Elizabeth] Walter" (1725-1747). In attempting to dance to the number, however, Clive of course trips and breaks her nose in a highly stylized moment of physical comedy initially designed to establish Buckingham's satire on Arlington. The "Additional Reinforcement" of "Singing by Mr. [Thomas] Lowe" followed by "Miss [Mary] Edwards", later billed as Mrs. Mozeen (1724-1773), during the third and fourth acts of the drama evince some indication of the actors cast to play Prince

⁶⁹ "Advertisements and Notices", *London Daily Post and General Advertiser*, 6 May 1743. See also: *The Rehearsal: As it now Acted at the Theatre-Royal. The Thirteenth Edition* (London: W. Feales, et. al., 1735), p. 20.

⁷⁰ "Ivory, Abraham", in *A Biographical Dictionary of Actors*, Vol. 8, p. 107.

Volscius and Pallas Athena in Bayes's play-within-the-play.⁷¹ During the fifth act of the play, Clive turns to Mills to confirm that he has "heard, I suppose, that your Eclipse of the Moon, is nothing else, but an interposition of the Earth, between the Sun and Moon".⁷² The final dance of a personified Sun, Moon, and Earth in Bayes's staged eclipse is advertised on the *London Daily Post* playbill as "A Tyrolean Dance by Signor Boromeo, Signora Costanza, and others" who subsequently follow the dancers into the mock-heroic battle "*fought between foot and great Hobby-horses. At last, Drawcansir comes in, and kills 'em all on both sides. All this while the Battel is fighting, [Clive] is telling them when to shout, and shouts with 'em*".⁷³ In productions of Buckingham's *Rehearsal* staged in the early 1740s, Bayes's final battle was made topical by adapting the mock-heroic satire to the Jacobite uprisings of the period. Robert Walpole was pushed out of the House in February of 1742 by a united band of both Tories and Patriot Whigs, and—much like the aforementioned Monmouth Rebellion—as Charles III (or, 'Bonnie Prince Charlie', 'the Young Pretender', or 'Perkin', 1720-1788) plot to reinstate the Stuarts' divine right to the throne, mustering support in the north, Buckingham's caricatured playhouse-pretender Bayes and his ragtag band of "new-rais'd Troops" played as satiric Jacobite propaganda

⁷¹ "Advertisements and Notices", *London Daily Post and General Advertiser*, 6 May 1743. See also: "Mozeen, Mrs Thomas, Mary, née Edwards", in *A Biographical Dictionary of Actors*, Vol. 10, pp. 370-372.

⁷² *The Rehearsal*, 13th ed. (1735), p. 72.

⁷³ "Advertisements and Notices", *London Daily Post and General Advertiser*, 6 May 1743, Issue 2665. See also: *The Rehearsal*, 13th ed. (1735), p. 74.

at Drury Lane.⁷⁴ A comic broadside issued two years after Clive's *Rehearsal* in 1745—"The Year of Charles' and the 'Forty-five Rebellion"—depicts "A NEW MUSTER OF BAYS'S TROOPS" as the Drury Lane acting company and their principal associations within the company repertoire: "M[i]lls with a Trumpet... M[acklin] in the Character of Shylock... Mrs. W[offingto]n in Boys Cloaths, with a knapsack following the Camp... [and] D[ela]ne in the Character of Othello". Underneath the caricature there is a poem set "To the Tune of SALLY in our Alley" that explains:

Ye Rebels all, you're quite undone,
For boldly now we'll face ye...
And *Bayes*, as sure as you are born,
Shall make you all to quiver.
Should *Perkin* dare too far t'advance
With his wild *Highland* Laddies
He'll wish himself with Dad in *France*,
Or 'mongst *Italian* Abbies. (fig. 2)

Buckingham's burlesque of Stuart patriotism in Restoration heroic drama, then, is adapted to satirize later eighteenth-century Jacobitism, representing Bayes's "new rais'd Troops" as a mock-heroic cast of modern figures from the eighteenth-century theatre community. In addition to the continued political topicality of *The Rehearsal*, however, the print also assumes readers' intimate familiarity and continued association between stock characters

⁷⁴ The extensive history of eighteenth-century Jacobitism is beyond the immediate scope of this dissertation. For detailed histories of the Jacobite rebellions during this period, see: Paul Kleber Monod, *Jacobitism and the English People, 1688-1788* (Cambridge UP, 1993), Jonathan D. Oates, *The Jacobite Campaigns: The British State at War* (London: Routledge, 2015), and Daniel Szechi, *The Jacobites: Britain and Europe, 1688-1788*, 2nd ed. (Manchester UP, 2019). For a rich account of theatrical responses to the 1745 Jacobite Rebellions, see also: Elaine M. McGirr, "Heroic Farce: The 1745 Jacobite Rebellion", in *Heroic Mode and Political Crisis, 1660-1745* (Delaware UP, 2009), pp. 167-204.



Fig. 2. "MUSTER of BAYS's Troops, A NEW." (London, 1745). Engraving, 31.5x22.8cm. British Cartoon Prints Collection. Library of Congress, Washington, DC. LC-DIG-ds-08059

like Shylock and Othello with specific actors characterized through the roles like Macklin and Delane.

Clive stepped in to play Bayes amidst a series of *Rehearsal* adaptations in the early-1740s put on by both Theophilus Cibber and David Garrick. The two thespian rivals used Bayes as a vehicle to ridicule one another much to the delight of theatregoers, and, when the more recent celebrity Garrick turned his burlesque apery onto the son of the poet laureate, Cibber sought revenge by casting Clive to play Bayes in order to send up Garrick in return. Clive's weaponized position within the rivalry during this period is later captured by an anonymous critic in the *General Advertiser* who, in a letter "To Mr. G—ck on the Talk of the TOWN", reflects on Garrick's retirement from the part, and notes:

'Twas prudent tho' to drop his *Bayes*,
And (*entre nous*) old *Cibber* says.
He hopes he'll give up *Richard* [...]
And *Kitty Clive** be Bayes.

In a footnote to the letter, the *Advertiser* reminds their readers that "This Lady has been so good already to shew herself in that Character".⁷⁵ Clive and Garrick remained collegial long after the production, and indeed throughout the remainder of their contemporary careers on the stage. She became a founding member of his troupe at Drury Lane when he later took over the theatre in April of 1747. Her sendup of the actor in May of 1743 was motivated by the jealousy of her former manager, but her wry derision of his comic pretensions through Bayes also set the subsequent tone and power dynamic for their

⁷⁵ "Arts and Culture", *General Advertiser*, 2 June 1749, Issue 5556.

managerial relationship. In his *Memoirs*, Tate Wilkinson, a rival manager of the Theatre Royal in York with whom Garrick held a longstanding grudge, refers to “Dame Clive” as “Mrs. Bayes” before observing that “though our monarch Garrick used to be lordly and managerial over great and small, yet Dame Clive (like the Welch) was never subdued—indeed the great man dreaded her”.⁷⁶ Garrick’s earliest biographer records an incident wherein the manager “sent Mr. Hopkins, the prompter, to her, to know whether she was in earnest in her intention of leaving the stage” toward the end of her career, but “to such a messenger Mrs. Clive disdained to give an answer”, so he “and Mrs. Clive met” and, when Garrick “asked how much she was worth; she replied briskly, as much as himself”. Davies suggests that Garrick met his match in Clive when he observes “the comic abilities of this actress have not been excelled, or indeed scarce equalled, by any performer, male or female, these fifty years”. While the *Daily Post* invokes Susanna Verbruggen in their advertisement for Clive’s *Rehearsal*, Davies compares her instead to the Restoration comedian James Nokes (*d.* 1696): “for Clive had such a stock of comic force about her, that she, like Nokes, had little more to do than to perfect herself in the words of a part, and to leave the rest to nature”, and Garrick “seems to have studiously avoided a struggle for victory with her, which, I believe, she attributed to his dread of her getting the better of him”. Clive “would have died upon the spot, rather than have yielded the field of battle to any body”, Davies remembers.⁷⁷ Eighteenth-century dramatic critics’

⁷⁶ Wilkinson, *Memoirs*, Vol. 3, p. 40.

⁷⁷ Davies, *Memoirs of the life of David Garrick*, Vol. 2, 2nd ed., pp. 184-192.

fixation on “nature” and the “natural-style” of celebrity actors like both Clive and Garrick reflects their physical suitability for roles initially written as dramatic vehicles for a small cast of Restoration actors. In comic roles, that same “nature” often also refers to an actor’s unsuitability for the part too, but in both cases the critical impulse is to read an actors’ *dramatis personae* against their celebrity *personae*. Because the stock characters of Restoration comedy, like Bayes in *The Rehearsal*, long outlive the smaller cast of actors from whom they were initially derived as burlesque caricatures, the celebrity *personae* of later eighteenth-century actors are in turn read against the celebrity *personae* of those Restoration actors who performed the parts before them. The spectre of the Restoration, in other words, looms large over the eighteenth-century stage, and just as the problem of monarchical succession haunted the Restoration court, so does theatrical succession haunt the players of eighteenth-century theatre and drama at Drury Lane.

By acting Bayes in Buckingham’s *Rehearsal*, Clive both pacified Cibber’s jealous rivalry through her sendup of Garrick and in turn reasserted her own celebrity at the head of the acting company. Drury Lane’s ticket prices were increased by a shilling during the 1740s as the theatre expanded to accommodate both an increasingly diverse community of theatregoers, and an ongoing rise in salaries commanded by celebrated actors like “Kitty” Clive and David Garrick.⁷⁸ Internal disputes over actors’ and managers’ wages over the following summer in 1743 ultimately led to another Actors’ Rebellion and paper war that incited the publication of Clive’s first pamphlet called *The Case of Mrs. Clive*,

⁷⁸ Nussbaum, p. 53.

Submitted to the Publick (1744) wherein she ridicules both Charles Fleetwood and Christopher Rich, the managers of the Theatres Royal, for having “thought it was in their Power to reduce the Incomes of those Performers, who could not live independent of their Profession”, and believing “that they have the same Right to discharge an Actor that a Master has to turn away a Servant”.⁷⁹ Clive carried forward through her *Case* what she began in her campaign to play Polly, soliciting popular support from the reading public toward her position: “That no Actor or Actress shall be depriv’d of a Part in which they have been well receiv’d until they are render’d incapable of performing it either by Age or Sickness”.⁸⁰ Nussbaum observes that her “struggle throughout her career reflected a historic shift from the shared interests within a theatre company to an individual actor’s stake in fashioning a lucrative career based on personality”, and “she competed with Garrick and with other actors as a playwright, as a businesswoman, and as a celebrity”.⁸¹ The problem with Clive’s acting Bayes is not that the adaptation failed to entice nor entertain, but that she wound up on the wrong side of theatrical history by offending Garrick’s legion of admirers.⁸² Evermore determined to crush from within the patriarchal misogyny of the company she found herself among and play the part of the critic on her

⁷⁹ Catherine Clive, *The Case of Mrs. Clive, Submitted to the Publick* (London: B. Dod, 1744), pp. 8, 17-8.

⁸⁰ “News”, *London Daily Post and General Advertiser*, 19 November 1736, Issue 641.

⁸¹ Nussbaum, p. 188.

⁸² For a study of Garrick’s popularity in the role of Bayes, see: “Garrick’s Hundred Nights in Bayes” below.

own terms, Clive junked Buckingham, Cibber, and Garrick's playtext to rewrite *The Rehearsal* for herself.

"THE REHEARSAL: OR, BAYS IN PETTICOATS"

Bays in Petticoats was first staged as an afterpiece to Clive and Garrick's last *Hamlet* of the season on the 15th of March in 1749. The *General Advertiser* reports on Friday, the 24th of February that year that "a new Farce call'd The Rehearsal, or Bayes in Petticoats, will be performed with the Tragedy of Hamlet, at the Theatre-Royal in Drury Lane, on Mrs. Clive's Benefit Night", and the following Monday issued a playbill advertising "The Part of Hamlet by Mr. GARRICK" and the part of "Ophelia by Mrs. CLIVE".⁸³ The "Principal Parts" of Clive's afterpiece are listed beneath a final notice later issued one day ahead of the premiere: "Mr. [Henry] Woodward", most likely played the part of Witling—drawing upon the audience's predisposition toward their green room antagonism as old as his aforementioned holiday *Pantomime* of her rivalry with Susanna Cibber over the part of Polly at Lincoln's Inn Fields in 1736—with additional support from "Mr. [John] Beard, Mr. Simpson, Mr. [Richard] Cross, Mrs. [Elizabeth] Bennet, Miss Cole, and Miss [Elizabeth] Norris".⁸⁴ Woodward, as Berta Joncus observes, "was practised in the art of Clive-bashing", satirizing *Bays in Petticoats* in his own *Lick at the Town* exactly two years later on the 15th of March of 1751, and the part of Witling in

⁸³ "News", *General Advertiser*, 24 February, 1749, Issue 4473, and "Advertisements and Notices", *General Advertiser*, 27 February 1749, Issue 4475.

⁸⁴ "Advertisements and Notices", *General Advertiser*, 14 March, 1749, Issue 4487.

Clive's afterpiece is recycled from the parts of Smith and Johnson in Buckingham's *Rehearsal*.⁸⁵ Clive and Woodward were together cast in china by the Pow Porcelain Company as Mr. and Mrs. Riot, the Fine Gentleman and Lady of Garrick's mythological satire on contemporary theatre, *Lethe; or, Aesop in the Shades* (1749), forming the first English porcelain statuettes to represent celebrity actors from the Theatres Royal (*fig. 3*). Their rivalry is significant in its evocation of the extent to which Clive penetrated a domain principally dominated by her male counterparts as the author and star of an afterpiece staged for her own benefit. Davies remembers during a performance of *The Taming of the Shrew* adapted by Garrick on the 21st of January in 1756 that "in one of his mad fits, when the new-married couple were at supper, Woodward stuck a fork, it is said, in Mrs. Clive's finger", but before later accounts of physical violence between them, both drew upon the popular perception of their rivalry for their own benefit plays: Woodward as Witling in *Bays in Petticoats* in 1749, and Clive in propria persona in *A Lick at the Town* two years following in 1751.⁸⁶ In both afterpieces, the latter unpublished, they both play critics of one another's play-within-the-play:

CLIVE: And this is the Author of the new Farce... ha! ha! ha! — You may judge of his Works by his Clothes. — take him away, Cross — the Audience have seen enough of him I believe [...]

AUTHOR: But yet you play'd in your own Farce, Madam.

CLIVE: Flesh and Blood can't bear this — in spite of Nature I must exert myself a little — how dare you have the Impudence, sirrah, to compare your Composition with mine? Is *Bays in Petticoats* to be soiled by your

⁸⁵ Joncus, *Kitty Clive, or The Fair Songster*, p. 404.

⁸⁶ Davies, *Memoirs of the life of David Garrick*, Vol. 1, 2nd ed., p. 276.



Fig 3. “Kitty Clive as the Fine Lady,” and “Henry Woodward as the Fine Gentleman,” Bow Porcelain Factory, *c.* 1750. Soft-paste porcelain. Department of European Sculpture and Decorative Arts, Metropolitan Museum of Art. 64.101.691, and 64.101.690.

dirty Fingers, or Dirtier Tongue? — I'd have you to know, Wretch, that
there is not such a Farce in the Language.
AUTHOR: Nor in any Language, I believe.⁸⁷

While not objectively cast on the initial playbill to act the part of Witling for Clive's *Rehearsal* benefit in March of 1749, then, the nature of their comic rivalry in the popular imagination both before and after the production offers compelling evidence as to how she initially cast the burlesque. Cross appears in propria persona in both afterpieces as Drury Lane's prompter and principal stagehand, and, when Clive later revives the play "With alterations and an additional scene", Woodward is indeed listed as playing Witling in the prompter's records and diaries.⁸⁸ The "Persons" of the afterpiece as they appear in the 1753 playtext edition of *Bays in Petticoats* confirm Woodward continued to act the part over subsequent productions of the afterpiece, to be sure.⁸⁹

Both Clive and Woodward act the parts of Hazard and Witling over fourteen productions of *Bays in Petticoats* between 1749 and 1762. After first being staged as an afterpiece to *Hamlet* for Clive's benefit—which "Went off well" according to Cross, yielding £60 in charges and £240 in receipts for the actor—the play is revived as an afterpiece to a variety of mainpieces, including William Wycherley's *The Country Wife*

⁸⁷ Henry Woodward, *A lick at the town* [manuscript], San Marino, California, Huntington Library, John Larpent Plays, LA 92. Garrick submitted a manuscript copy of Woodward's prelude for licensing on March 6th, 1751, and the drama premiered ten days later at Drury Lane "for Woodward's benefit".

⁸⁸ Richard Cross and William Hopkins, *Diaries of Drury Lane Theater performances kept by Richard Cross and William Hopkins* [manuscript], Vol. 2, Folger Shakespeare Library, W.a.104 (2).

⁸⁹ Catherine Clive, *The Rehearsal: or, Bays in Petticoats* (London: R. Dodsley, 1753), Archives and Research Collections, McMaster University Library, DIS B033 E08, p. 4.

(1675) with Clive unsurprisingly cast in the titular role.⁹⁰ Clive's later revival with "alterations and an additional scene" is the first and only adaptation printed in 1753. Clive notes in her "ADVERTISEMENT" to the playtext that "This little Piece was written above three Years since, and acted for my Benefit.— The last Scene was an Addition the Year after... I had at first no Design of printing it; and do it now at the Request of my Friends".⁹¹ Printing a playtext ascribed to her own name, Clive counted herself among not only the first women to play upon the London stage, but one of the first to write for it too.

Clive accomplished what many of her contemporaries strove to accomplish: she wrote a starring vehicle for Kitty Clive. Because, like all rehearsal plays, the performative nuances of each burlesque are particular to the topical moment of their production, Clive's 1753 *Bays in Petticoats* playtext is ultimately a palimpsest upon which she concedes to "adding" over successive performances. When the *Public Advertiser* first teases Clive's penultimate adaptation, for example, the playbill advertises "The REHEARSAL; or, BAYES in PETTICOATS" accompanied by Clive's "Alterations, and an additional Scene. In which will be introduced the Part of an Italian Burletta".⁹² In her final two revivals of 1762, as Joncus has noted, Clive's "satiric butt was probably the

⁹⁰ Cross and Hopkins, *Diaries of Drury Lane Theater performances*, Folger, W.a.104 (2). See also: *The London Stage, 1660-1800*, Pt. 4, Vol. 1, George Winchester Stone Jr., ed. (Southern Illinois UP, 1962), pp. 182, 187, 194, 242-244, 252, 359, 362, 369, 388, 481, 924, 936

⁹¹ Clive, *Bays in Petticoats*, p. 3.

⁹² "Advertisements and Notices", *Public Advertiser*, 27 February 1762, Issue 8524.

singer and impresario Colomba Mattei, whose troupe briefly revitalized Italian burletta in London from 1760 to 1763”, although the targets of her satire shifted,

one argument is common to all versions of Clive’s *Rehearsal*: that men abuse and silence women... We see men turn women into sexual objects; men use women either for sex or to increase their fortune; men deny that women are capable of intelligence; men bar female players from advancement on merit and promote pretty talentless girls.⁹³

In the unpublished “New Epilogue” delivered on March 19th of 1751, first recovered by Mary E. Knapp among a collection of manuscripts associated with Garrick, Clive reappears onstage not in the character of Mrs. Hazard, but as herself to assay the protofeminist designs of her afterpiece.⁹⁴ There are two surviving copies of the manuscript epilogue, and, as Matthew Kinservik notes, both “are nearly identical, with only minor differences in spelling”, and, much more significantly, “neither is in Garrick’s hand”.⁹⁵ Clive’s hand, however, is the subject of the epilogue, and she challenges the audience to reflect upon the very burlesque foundations of the satire itself:

A woman write! Hey-day! cry one and all!
No wonder truly, Bedlam, is too small...
But pray, Sirs, why must we not write, nor think?
Have we not Heads and hands, and Pen and Ink?
Can you boast more, that are so wondrous wise?
Have Women then no weapons but their Eyes?
Were we, like you, to let our Genius loose

⁹³ *Kitty Clive, or The Fair Songster*, pp. 403-5.

⁹⁴ “Epilogue by [David Garrick?] to The rehearsal, or, Bayes in petticoats” [manuscript], Folger Shakespeare Library, Y.d.122, fol. 33. See also: Mary E. Knapp, *A Checklist of Verse by David Garrick* (Virginia UP, 1955), p. 49.

⁹⁵ Matthew Kinservik, “Garrick’s Unpublished Epilogue for Catherine Clive’s ‘The Rehearsal: or, Bays in Petticoats’ (1750)”, *Études anglaises* 49.3 (Summer 1996): 322.

We'd top your wit, and Match you for abuse...
In wit, in pleasure we surpass your Spirit—
In what then lies your vast superior Merit—
In All our Sex's Name, Commission'd I,
You Braggadocio Tyrant Men defye;
Name but your Arms, the time & place— we'll meet you,
Fight us but fair, & on my Life we'll beat you.⁹⁶

Underpinning the self-deprecating satire of *Bays in Petticoats* is a militant call to arms for other women to follow Clive in not just acting upon but writing for the London stage. Clive realigns the war on contemporary playwriting that Buckingham's *Rehearsal* wages with a battle between the sexes for equal footing on the stage. That Clive should dare to write her own benefit night performance, claim her own subjectivity, and break the moulds formerly cast for her by the men of Drury Lane and the theatregoing public more broadly is what worries Gatty and Tom in the opening induction to the afterpiece. Clive adapts Smith and Johnson from *The Rehearsal* into a young lady-in-waiting named Gatty and a neglected spouse named Tom. As the play opens, both are discovered in the middle of a conversation regarding Mrs. Hazard's authorship of a farce:

GATTY: She really was once a sweet-temper'd Woman; but now I can't speak, or stir, but she flies at me, and says I have flurried her out of one of the finest Thoughts!— Hang her! I wish her Farce may be hiss'd off the Stage.

TOM: [...] I fancy this Farce of her's is horrid Stuff: for I observe, all her Visitors she reads it to (which is indeed every body that comes to the House) whisper as they come down Stairs, and laugh ready to kill themselves.

GATTY: Yes, but that's at her Assurance. Why, do you know 'tis none of her own? a Gentleman only lent it her to read; he has been ill a great while at *Bath*; so she has taken the Advantage of that, made some little

⁹⁶ "Epilogue" [manuscript], Folger, Y.d.122, fol. 33.

Alterations, had it set to Music, and has introduc'd it to the Stage as a Performance of her own.⁹⁷

The topicality of Clive's *Rehearsal* as it is later represented in print in 1753 significantly informs the joke riddled into Tom and Gatty's opening dialogue. In March of 1750, Garrick briefly retired to Bath in a bout of illness, so the play to which Gatty refers as being "lent" to Mrs. Hazard, who in turn makes "some little Alterations" and has "it set to Music", is a self-deprecating allusion to Clive's initial breeches performance in the role of Bayes in light of Garrick's absence and popular association with the part in the mid-century repertoire.⁹⁸ Thus, by adapting *The Rehearsal* into her own benefit play, Clive can be counted among the first professional playwrights for the London stage.

Hazard is Clive's titular "Bays" in petticoats, and a caricatured representation of the playwright herself. The name is a pun that plays upon the economic gamble of Clive's adapting Buckingham's *Rehearsal* again after her initial blunder while acting the part of Bayes and her green room reputation as a formidable diva. The proceeds of "Benefit Night" performances supplemented eighteenth-century actors' salaries, and they were typically contracted once per year between actors and managers after the Restoration. The benefit system largely devolved into a commercial test of actors' ability to populate a

⁹⁷ Clive, *Bays in Petticoats*, pp. 6-7.

⁹⁸ Peter Thomson has suggested that "the stomach disorder that took him to Bath in March 1750 may have been the first grumbling of the kidney stones that plagued his last years", and he was revealed to have only been born with a single kidney postmortem, see: "Garrick, David (1717-1779), actor and playwright", in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. See also: Leslie Ritchie, "A Short History of Negative Publicity", in *David Garrick*, pp. 117-160. For more on Garrick's adaptation of Buckingham's *Rehearsal*, see "Garrick's Hundred Nights in Bayes" below.

playhouse throughout the eighteenth century however, incentivizing managers to not only outsource their actors' wages but cut into salaries should an actor's benefit fail to garner a return commensurate with their yearly salary.⁹⁹ Eight of the fourteen productions of Clive's *Bays in Petticoats* were given for her and her brother's benefit, and this is why the *General Advertiser* playbill first identifies "Tickets to be had and Places taken at Mrs. Clive's in Great Queen-street" for the premiere in March of 1749.¹⁰⁰ Because the afterpiece is composed for Clive's own benefit, the name Hazard evokes the commercial gamble that she is taking by producing her own play for the occasion. In the opening scene of the afterpiece, Clive's apartment on Great Queen Street forms the backdrop to her entrance as she is discovered in the character of "Hazard" ringing for Tom and Gatty:

MRS. HAZARD: Why, what is the Meaning I must ring for an Hour, and none of ye will come near me, ye Animals... Come, get the Things to dress me instantaneously. (Tom with Tea and Coffee. She repeats Recitative, Oh Corydon, &c.) You, Tom, I'm at home to no human Being this Morning but Mr. *Witling*. I've promis'd to carry him to the *Rehearsal* with me (Repeats Recitative, Gatty waiting with her Cap.)

GATTY: Madam, will you please to have your Cap on?

MRS. HAZARD: No! you Ideot; how durst you interrupt me, when you saw me so engag'd? As I am a Critic, this Creature will distract me!— Give me my Bottle of Salts.—She has ruin'd one of the finest Conclusions.—O *Cor.*—Lord! I can't sing a Note.— What are you doing?

GATTY: Lord, Madam, I can't find them!

⁹⁹ For an economic study of 'benefit night' performances during this period, see: Kathryn Lowerre, "Risks and Rewards: Benefits and Their Financial Impact on Actors, Authors, Singers, and Other Musicians in London", in *Music and the Benefit Performance in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, Matthew Gardner and Alison DeSimone, eds. (Cambridge UP, 2019), pp. 23-38.

¹⁰⁰ "Advertisements and Notices", *General Advertiser*, 27 February 1749, Issue 4475.

MRS. HAZARD: Here's a provoking Devil! sees 'em in my Hand, and wou'd not tell me of it! Get out of my Sight. (*Repeats Recitative*) Why, where are you going? am I to dress myself?¹⁰¹

The vanity in Bayes from Buckingham's *Rehearsal* is adapted to burlesque the vanity with which Clive herself was often represented and perceived to operate backstage and in the green rooms of the Theatres Royal, and she provides a rapid succession of textual allusions to her own musical celebrity. The song Mrs. Hazard is rehearsing, "O *Corydon*", conjures the same pastoral imagery long associated with Clive, and is modelled on a recent interlude titled *Corydon and Miranda* by William Boyce (1711-1779) who also composed the music for Clive's afterpiece.¹⁰² The capitalization and italicization of "the *Rehearsal*" also suggests a self-deprecatingly pronounced vocal stress on the objectified title of Clive's adaptation. Woodward is then introduced in the character of Witling, a fop and dear friend of Mrs. Hazard who relates the latest criticisms from Miss Giggle and Frank Surly regarding her playwriting:

WITLING: [...] I believe Mrs. *Hazard* can write a very pretty Play, for she has a great deal of Wit and Humour.— Wit and Humour! says he, why there is not ten Women in the Creation that have Sense enough to write consistent...

MRS. HAZARD: A Bear! a Brute! let me hear no more of him...

WITLING: Nay, why shou'd you be so ill-natured to me? I'm sure I took your Part. Why, says I, *Frank*, how can you be such a Fool to quarrel with her? I wish she liked me half so well, as I'm sure she does you; she should write, and be hang'd if she wou'd for any thing I car'd; for let them do what they will with her Performance, they can't damn her eight hundred a Year.

¹⁰¹ Clive, *The Rehearsal: or, Bays in Petticoats*, pp. 7-8.

¹⁰² William Boyce, "Corydon and Miranda, a pastoral interlude" [manuscript], Bodleian Libraries, MS. Mus. c. 3. fol. 44.

MRS. HAZARD: You said so, did you?

WITLING: I said so!— No; Lord, Child!— How cou'd you think I cou'd say such a thing. No, no, to be sure it was said by somebody in the Company. But upon Honour I don't know who.

MRS. HAZARD: What a Wretch is this?— But he is to carry a Party for me the first Night; so I must not quarrel with him. [*Aside.*]

Surly's attitude toward women dramatists like Hazard calls attention to the stakes of Clive's playwriting, and the institutional misogyny she stood to expose through the afterpiece. Hazard's frustration with Witling's homosocial reluctance to reprove Surly is worsened by her dependence on his "Party" filling seats at the premiere of her play-within-the-play. The benefit system, as noted above, placed significant pressure on actors to see a financial return upon their benefit night in order to ensure a renewal of their contract and salary within the company, and often resulted in a house full of plants, patrons, and "parties" like the one "carried" by Witling to "the first Night" of Hazard's play.

Most of the comedy underlying *Bays in Petticoats* is derived from a topical familiarity with the other actors, playwrights, and managers with whom Clive worked and associated around the Drury Lane and Covent Garden Theatres Royal, and, by adapting Buckingham's Bayses into Hazard, she took satirical aim at her own pre-manufactured celebrity persona in order to redefine herself on her own terms. Woodward turns to Clive, for example, to ask when her new play premieres, and the two spare no opportunity to send up Garrick and his recent rivalry with actor Spranger Barry (1719-1777) over the

part of Romeo that incited a twelve-night “Battle of the Romeos” between the two patent theatres in 1750:

MRS. HAZARD: Why some time next Week; this is to be the last Rehearsal: and the Managers have promis'd they shall all be dress'd that we may see exactly what Effect it will have... Lord, what pity 'tis the great Tragedy Actors can't sing! I'm about a new Thing, which I shall call a Burletto, which I take from some Incidents in *Don Quixote*, that I believe will be as high Humour, as was ever brought upon the Stage. But then I shall want Actors; oh! if that dear *Garrick* cou'd but sing, what a *Don Quixote* he'd make!

WITLING: Don't you think *Barry* wou'd be a better! he's so tall you know, and so finely made for't. If I was to advise, I wou'd carry that to *Covent-Garden*.

MRS. HAZARD: *Covent-Garden!* Lord, I wou'dn't think of it, it stands in such a bad Air.

WITLING: Bad Air!

MRS. HAZARD: Ay; the Actors can't play there above three Days a Week. They have more need of a Physician, than a Poet, at that House.¹⁰³

The succession of topical allusions in Hazard and Witling's dialogue—Drury Lane's 1752 revival of Henry Fielding's ballad opera *Don Quixote in England* (1734), the manager Garrick's rivalry with Spranger Barry who reneged to Covent Garden, and John Rich's rival “House”—is suggestive of an intimate association between the theatregoing public and the personages of both companies.¹⁰⁴ Because “persona and personality oscillated between foreground and background” on the Restoration stage, as Roach observes, the

¹⁰³ Clive, *Bays in Petticoats*, pp. 10-13. See also: Leslie Ritchie, “Pox on Both Your Houses: The Battle of the Romeos”, *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 27.3-4 (Spring-Summer 2015): 373-93.

¹⁰⁴ Fielding's *Don Quixote in England* from 1734 saw a brief revival at Drury Lane in the spring of 1752. For a list of playbills, see: *The London Stage, 1660-1800*, Pt. 4, Vol. 1, pp. 304-312. See also: John Bull, “Barry, Spranger”, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

construction of a theatrical identity and celebrity persona continued to be foregrounded and mediated through actors' dramatic personae on the eighteenth-century stage.¹⁰⁵ Kitty, Clive's theatrical identity and persona, is both a dramatic fiction constructed by the boys club at the Theatres Royal, and itself an aptronym reflecting her comic celebrity and wit in burlesque ballad opera. Where Buckingham's Bayes was drawn from topical allusions to the Restoration court and heroic tragedians, then, Mrs. Hazard is drawn from caricatured allusions to Clive's own celebrity persona. Woodward continues to ask Clive about the impending premiere and cast of characters in her new play during the afterpiece, and, by playing the part of Hazard, Clive is able to simultaneously embody the caricatured persona of surly diva Kitty Clive, and divorce herself from it in order to reclaim and assert authorial control over the narrative surrounding her theatrical identity and celebrity persona:

WITLING: Pray how many Characters have you in this thing?

MRS. HAZARD: Why I have but three; for as I was observing, there's so few of them that can sing: nay I have but two indeed that are rational, for I have made one of them mad.

WITLING: And who is to act that, pray?

MRS. HAZARD: Why Mrs. *Clive* to be sure; tho I wish she don't spoil it; for she's so conceited, and insolent, that she won't let me teach it her. You must know when I told her I had a Part for her in a Performance of mine, in the prettiest manner I was able, (for one must be civil to these sort of People when one wants them) says she, Indeed, Madam, I must see the whole Piece, for I shall take no Part in a new thing, without chusing that which I think I can act best. I have been a great Sufferer already, by the Manager's not doing Justice to my Genius; but I hope I shall next Year convince the Town, what fine Judgment they have: for I intend to play a capital Tragedy Part for my own Benefit.

¹⁰⁵ Roach, *It*, p. 16.

WITLING: And what did you say to her, pray?

MRS. HAZARD: Say to her! why do you think I wou'd venture to expostulate with her?— No, I desir'd Mr. Garrick wou'd take her in hand; so he order'd her the Part of the Mad-woman directly.¹⁰⁶

The self-deprecating satire underlying Hazard's casting of Clive to play a "Mad-woman", Clive's reluctance to take the part, and subsequent interjection of "the Manager", Garrick, is all the more satirical when understood in light of *Bays in Petticoats* initial billing as an afterpiece to Garrick and Clive's mainpiece production of *Hamlet* where she played the "capital Tragedy Part" of Ophelia "for my own Benefit" in March of 1749. More significant, however, is Clive's self-conscious doubling of "persona and personality" through Mrs. Hazard in this moment, because by leaning into popular perceptions and caricatured misrepresentations of her private life and character as both a spitfire diva and vainglorious green room critic, Clive licenses herself to become one for the afterpiece.

Garrick submitted Clive's manuscript of *Bays in Petticoats* to the Lord Chamberlain's office for official licensing on the 5th of March the following year in 1750, and his notice to the examiners Charles FitzRoy, 2nd duke of Grafton (1683-1757), William Chetwynd (1731-1765), and Edward Capell (1713-1781) identifies the handwritten playtext as an afterpiece written "for Mrs. Clive's Benefit; included, The New Scene in Mrs. Clive's Farce".¹⁰⁷ Clive's addition of "the New Scene" refers to Hazard's second-act play-within-the-play which Clive continually altered and adapted as

¹⁰⁶ Clive, *The Rehearsal: or, Bays in Petticoats*, pp. 14-15.

¹⁰⁷ Catherine Clive, "A Farce [*The Rehearsal; or, Bays in Petticoats*]" [manuscript], San Marino, California, Huntington Library, John Larpent Plays, LA 86.

a vehicle to burlesque specific performers whose seasonal celebrity threatened to encroach upon her own. By referring to Mrs. Hazard's play-within-the-play as "a Burletto", as Joncus notes, "Clive took aim at the visiting artists who had introduced it to London" two years earlier in the autumn of 1748: the Italian troupe of Giovanni Francesco Crosa (1700-1771) that included the renowned opera buffa performers Filippo Laschi (1739-1789) and Pietro Pertici (1731-c.1760) and the castrato Gaetano Guadagni (1728-1792).¹⁰⁸ The *General Advertiser* of November 1st that year advertises the visiting troupe's production of *La commedia in commedia* (1738) by Rinaldo di Capua (1705-1780) "AT the KING'S THEATRE in the HAY-MARKET" as "a Burletta or Comic Opera", and "the first of this Species of Musick Drama ever exhibited in England".¹⁰⁹ At the end of Clive's first act in *Bays in Petticoats*, Hazard and Witling are met by a young woman, Miss, who solicits their patronage with the managers of the Theatres Royal, and Hazard refers to the vogue for Italian opera on the London stage as she coaches Miss in singing:

MISS: [...] I'll sing *Powerful Guardians of all Nature*: I've brought it with me.

MRS. HAZARD: Pray, let's hear its. (*Miss sings.*) Oh fie! Miss! that will never do; you speak your Words as plain as a Parish-Girl; the Audience will never endure you in this kind of Singing, if they understand what you say: you must give your Words the *Italian Accent*, Child.— Come, you shall hear me. (*Mrs. Hazard sings in the Italian manner.*) There, Miss,

¹⁰⁸ Joncus, *Kitty Clive, or The Fair Songster*, p. 381. See also: Richard G. King and Saskia Willaert, "Giovanni Francesco Crosa and the First Italian Comic Operas in London, Brussels and Amsterdam, 1748-50", *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 118.2 (1993): 246-275.

¹⁰⁹ "Advertisements and Notices", *General Advertiser*, 1 November 1748, Issue 4374.

that's the Taste of singing now.— But I must beg you wou'd excuse me at present; I'm going to the Play-house, and will certainly speak to the Managers about you; for I dare believe you'll make a prodigious Figure upon the Stage.¹¹⁰

“Pow’rful Guardians of all Nature” is an air sung in George Frideric Handel’s oratorio *Alexander Balus* that premiered at Covent Garden on the 23rd of March in 1748, almost precisely one-year prior to *Bays in Petticoats* at Drury Lane. The air was originally sung by Italian mezzo-soprano Caterina Galli (c.1723-1804), a famed player of breeches roles among Clive’s musical rivals. The words to the air are left out of the printed playtext edition of Clive’s afterpiece, but the directions within Clive’s dialogue indicate that the air was sung by both Miss and Hazard with burlesque inversions underscoring the original music:

*Pow’rful Guardians of all Nature,
O Preserve my beauteous Love;
Keep from Insult the dear Creature. —
Virtue sure hath Charms to move.*¹¹¹

By ridiculing Galli through the Italian soprano’s own air, Clive reassert her musical celebrity and range of vocal mastery. Joncus theorizes that “Hazard’s ‘Italian Accent’ will have combined Italian-accented English with Clive’s own musical elaborations, likely during the melismatic turns sprinkled throughout ‘Pow’rful Guardians’”.¹¹² The words to the air themselves, however, are also made ironic by the context through which they are performed in the afterpiece. When Mrs. Hazard first asks Miss if she is “qualified” for the

¹¹⁰ Clive, *Bays in Petticoats*, pp. 19.

¹¹¹ Thomas Morell, *Alexander Balus. An oratorio* (London, 1748), p. 19.

¹¹² Joncus, *Kitty Clive, or The Fair Songster*, p. 386.

stage, Miss says that she has “very good Friends”, and when Hazard asks if Miss has “a good Voice”, Miss admits she “can’t say I have much Voice”, so when Hazard finally confirms “to be sure then you are a Mistress”, Clive’s pun on the word “Mistress” invokes popular eighteenth-century associations between prostitution and acting on the London stage. The “Pow’rful Guardians” of Handel’s air are comically deflated as the patrons of the two Theatres Royal with Miss being their “beauteous Love” whose “Virtue” is “Preserved” as a commercial asset to “Charm” and “move” audiences. Clive is calling out the patriarchal perversions of casting practices first developed on the Restoration stage wherein the boundaries between actor and courtier still remained broadly ill-defined, and counting herself among the “Pow’rful Guardians” as the author of her own dramatic vehicle in the form of Mrs. Hazard. Put simply and in other words, then, Clive shows that she was “Mistress” to nobody but herself in this final scene of the first act to *Bays in Petticoats*.

In March of 1753 Clive adapted the afterpiece to follow *The Mourning Bride* by William Congreve (1670-1729) wherein she also played the tragic part of Queen Zara to Garrick’s Osmyn for the mainpiece, and this production with the addition of Clive’s “New Scene” is the adaptation reproduced in print that same year. Zara had been associated with Susannah Cibber since she first played the part of the queen to wide acclaim in an adaptation of Voltaire’s 1732 *Zayre* by Aaron Hill (1685-1750) that ran for fourteen nights

at Drury Lane between the 12th and 27th of January in 1736.¹¹³ Clive, as Joncus suggests, “played Zara parodically and, by deflating a fictional she-queen, took aim against a live one”: her oldest rival, Susannah Cibber.¹¹⁴ The “New Scene” to which Garrick had earlier alluded on Clive’s manuscript submitted through the Lord Chamberlain’s office in March of 1750 includes a fleshed out play-within-the-play that is directed by Hazard during the second act of the afterpiece. Mrs. Hazard’s play-within-the-play is another burlesque inversion: a musical interlude and pastoral called *Corydon and Miranda* composed by William Boyce in the 1740s, and printed for the first time within Clive’s 1753 playtext.¹¹⁵ The songs are intermingled with a critical interjection by Mrs. Hazard who directs the players of the brief second act rehearsal. As the drama shifts to Drury Lane, Mrs. Hazard and Witling are discovered waiting on “Mrs. Clive” with a set of recognizable figures from the Theatre Royal who appear in propria persona:

MRS. HAZARD: But pray, Mr. *Cross*, get every body ready; is the Music come?

MR. CROSS: Yes, Madam, the Music has been here this half Hour, and every body but Mrs. *Clive*; and, I dare say, she’ll not be long, for she’s very punctual; Mr. *Beard* and Miss *Thomas* are gone to dress...

[*Enter a* SERVANT

¹¹³ For a list of playbills, see: *The London Stage, 1660-1800*, Pt. 3, Vol. 1 pp. 543-546. See also: Aaron Hill, *The Tragedy of Zara. As it is Acted at the Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane* (London: J. Watts, 1736), Voltaire, *Zayre, Tragedie. Representée a Paris Aux mois d’Aoust, Novembre & Décembre 1732* (Paris: Jean-Baptiste Bauche, 1733), and Christine Gerrard, “Hill, Voltaire, and Prince Frederick, 1733-1738”, in *Aaron Hill: The Muses’ Projector, 1685-1750* (Oxford UP, 2003), pp. 172-193.

¹¹⁴ Joncus, *Kitty Clive, or The Fair Songster*, p. 399.

¹¹⁵ Robert J. Bruce, “William Boyce: Some Manuscript Recoveries”, *Music & Letters* 55.4 (October 1974): 437-443.

SERVANT: Mr. *Cross*, there's a Person wants to speak to you.

[*Exit Mr. Cross*

MRS. HAZARD: Well, I'll swear these poor Players have a very slavish Life; I wonder how they are able to go through it!

[*Enter Mr. CROSS.*

MR. CROSS: Madam, Mrs. *Clive* has sent word, that she can't possibly wait on you this Morning, as she's obliged to go to some Ladies about her Benefit. But you may depend on her being very perfect, and ready to perform it whenever you please.

"Mrs. *Clive*" is only ever mentioned by the characters of the play, and, by fashioning herself as Mrs. Hazard instead, the author divorces herself from her own musical celebrity in order to critique it as a dramatic persona separate from her own. Through the self-deprecating erasure of that musical celebrity, however, came the liberation of authoring her own self, subjectivity, and in a very Kitty sort of way: her own self-drawn caricature in the form of Mrs. Hazard. As the rehearsal of the play-within-the-play threatens to fall apart without Mrs. *Clive*, the author herself steps in to act the part:

MRS. HAZARD: Mr. *Cross*, what did you say? I can't believe what I have heard! Mrs. *Clive* send me word she can't come to my *Rehearsal*, and is gone to Ladies about her Benefit! Sir, she shall have no Benefit. Mr. *Witling*, did you ever hear of a Parallel to this Insolence? Give me my Copy, Sir; give me my Copy. I'll make Mrs. *Clive* repent treating me in this manner...

WITLING: Nay; but, my dear *Hazard*, don't you put yourself into such a Passion, can't you rehearse her Part yourself? I dare say you'll do it better than she can?

MR. CROSS: Why, Madam, if you wou'd be so good, as the Musicians are here, and the other Characters dress'd, it would be very obliging: and if you please to put on Mrs. *Clive's*, her Dresser is here to attend, as she expected her, and I believe it will fit you exactly, as you're much of her Size...

WITLING: Oh, my dear *Hazard!* put it on; put it on. Oh Lord! let me see you in a Play-house Dress.

MRS. HAZARD: Well, let me die, but I have a great mind;— for I had set my Heart upon seeing the poor Thing rehears'd in its proper Dresses.— Well, *Witling*, shall I?— I think I will. Do you go into the Green Room and drink some Chocolate, I'll flip on the Things in a Minute. No; hang it, I won't take the Trouble; I'll rehearse as I am.¹¹⁶

The rest of the performers in the play-within-the-play then enter to commence rehearsal without “Mrs. *Clive*”, and “Mrs. Hazard” in her stead, and the lyrics to Boyce’s pastoral, as noted above, are reproduced for the 1753 playtext edition for the first time.¹¹⁷ On paper and in print Clive’s burlesque tonal inversions of Boyce’s musical interlude become lost, however. Her deadpan delivery in the character of both Mrs. Hazard and Marcella, as Joncus has so thoroughly outlined in her study of the music in the afterpiece, was an ideal “platform for Clive’s self-representation... [William Boyce’s] score, by virtue of its sensuality and innovative procedures, empowered her to shine as a first soprano”.¹¹⁸ Unlike Bayes’s play-within-the-play, Mrs. Hazard’s play-within-the-play is interrupted but once by the author herself, who repeats the solo recitative sung by Miranda as the players begin to rehearse:

MIRANDA, *Sola*.

RECITATIVE.

*It must be so— my Shepherd ne'er shall prove
A Renegado from the Faith of Love.
Nor shall Marcella tear him from my Arms,
Even tho' her Wealth be boundless as her Charms.*

¹¹⁶ *Bays in Petticoats*, pp. 23-25.

¹¹⁷ Catherine Clive and William Boyce, “The Rehearsal, or Bays in Petticoats” [manuscript], Bodleian Libraries, MS. Mus. c. 3, ff. 44-69.

¹¹⁸ Joncus, *Kitty Clive, or The Fair Songster*, p. 398.

MRS. HAZARD: That's pretty well, Madam, but I think you sing it too much; you should consider *Recitative* should be spoken as plain as possible; or else you'll lose the Expression.— I'll shew you what I mean.— No, no, go on now with Symphony for the Song.¹¹⁹

On the stage during this moment in the afterpiece, Clive is dressed in the character of Marcella, who is being played by the character Mrs. Hazard, who is playing the character in lieu of herself: “Mrs. Clive”. The ridicule of *The Rehearsal* is redirected in *Bays in Petticoats* from the staging of a play-within-the-play to the critical condescension faced by women playwrights like Hazard, and, by association, Clive. Just as Marcella, Hazard, and Clive reach the dramatic climax of their first air in the play-within-the-play, Clive's stage directions call for “*A Noise without*” to interrupt the number, and Miss Giggle, Sir Albany Odelove, Miss Sidle, and Miss Dawdle to spill onto the stage. Sir Albany Odelove, who is listed on the 1753 playtext as being played by “Mr. [Edward or ‘Ned’] Shuter (1728-1776), is introduced to Mrs. Hazard by Miss Giggle, and he immediately tests the author's notoriously short patience:

SIR ALBANY: [...] Therefore, I hope you have had the Advice of your Male Acquaintance, who will take some Care of your Diction, and see that you have observed that great Beauty, neglected by most Dramatic Authors, of Time and Place.

WITLING: Oh Sir *Albany*, I'll answer she has taken care of Time and Place; for it will begin about half an Hour after Eight; and be acted at *Drury-Lane* Theatre.— Ha, ha, ha, there's Time and Place for you.¹²⁰

When Witling explains to Odelove that Hazard's play is to be staged “half an Hour after Eight” at “*Drury-Lane*”, the topicality of the adaptation is updated to the moment of its

¹¹⁹ Clive, *Bays in Petticoats*, p. 26.

¹²⁰ Clive, *Bays in Petticoats*, p. 39.

production as an afterpiece following the six-o'clock mainpiece, and *Bays in Petticoats*, like *The Rehearsal*, ends with the author renouncing the theatre. Clive, however, was only just beginning.

Now in her forties, with the prospect of a waning voice, Clive's adaptation of Buckingham's *Rehearsal* served as a means of staging a farewell to the many songs, roles, and ballad operas that once made her the talk of the town. Kitty Clive enjoyed another twenty years of success playing in non-musical comedies on the London stage. Although contemporary dramatists, her biographers, critics, and admirers all constructed an identity for Clive that reflected the pastoral characters that she played onstage, the actor herself ultimately had the last laugh by forging an identity uniquely her own. Clive retired to Twickenham with Walpole in 1769 as a very rich "Country gentlewoman" indeed. She passed away on the 6th of December in 1785, spending her later years writing, gardening, entertaining friends, and teaching the art of performance to a number of students and protégées. Among the plays, essays, newspaper clippings, and porcelains that Clive left to posterity, perhaps one letter to her student Jane Pope (1744-1818) best characterizes her retirement to the countryside: "I set out after Breakfast and walk five miles up and down till I am tired", she explains to her theatrical successor: "I call it going to Rehearsal".¹²¹

¹²¹ Letter from Catherine Clive, 24 March 1774 [manuscript], in *Collection of Letters to Jane Pope, 1769-85*, Folger Shakespeare Library, W.b.73.

———— CHAPTER FOUR ————

GARRICK'S HUNDRED NIGHTS IN BAYES:
OR, THE REHEARSAL AT GOODMAN'S FIELDS

“’Tis certainly very difficult to pronounce which part Mr. Garrick is greatest in... but if I might freely speak my opinion, I should, without hesitation, prefer him in Bayes”
— *The Universal Museum* (March, 1762)

David Garrick acted Bayes in Buckingham's *Rehearsal* more than any other actor throughout the Restoration and eighteenth century. Indeed, eighteenth-century popularity of Buckingham's satire is largely a product of Garrick's extemporaneous reinventions of the part as a vehicle for derision of his fellow players. Garrick's performed allusions to his contemporaries are as innumerable as they are ephemeral over successive production of *The Rehearsal* during this period, and shift with the tides of theatrical celebrity in London. Garrick's shapeshifting variety in burlesque representation of contemporaries continues to attract theatregoers some seventy-years removed from Buckingham's topical Restoration satire season after season at the Georgian Theatre Royal.¹ Performance reviews, green room gossip, and correspondence around his adaptation of Bayes are left uncharted in reprints of *The Rehearsal*, however, and such ephemeral accounts reveal an ongoing reformation of Buckingham's caricature from Restoration heroic dramatist to Shakespearean tragedian fashioned in satirical representation of those with whom Garrick directly competed for parts and applause from the theatregoing public. Such accounts

¹ William Pedicord and Fredrick Louis Bergmann argue that unscripted “imitations were brought into the play particularly where Bayes is instructing the actors in how to play their parts”, in their “Commentary and Notes” to Garrick's acting copy of *The Rehearsal*, rpt. in *The Plays of David Garrick*, Vol. 5 (Southern Illinois UP, 1982), p. 313.

collectively chronicle his burlesque representations across nearly one hundred performances of *The Rehearsal* between 1742 and his retirement in 1776, and provide otherwise forgotten paratextual evidence regarding eighteenth-century adaptations of Buckingham's play.

This chapter has two aims. First, I consider these anecdotes, performance reviews, and correspondence to show how Buckingham's play is adapted to satirize the eighteenth-century theatrical community, and played a major role in establishing Garrick's theatrical celebrity. Second, I examine three of Garrick's rehearsal plays authored toward the end of his career—*A Peep Behind the Curtain* (1767), *The Meeting of the Company; or, Bayes's Art of Acting* (1774), and *A Bundle of Prologues* (1777)—to argue that both Bayes and the structure of Buckingham's rehearsal play provide the actor-manager with a template through which he both theorizes and assays a new “natural” method of acting in contradistinction to the declamatory acting styles of his peers and predecessors on the London stage.

GARRICK'S BURLESQUE MIMICRY

Garrick's performed allusions to his contemporaries are ephemeral and difficult to reconstruct with any degree of certainty, but they are widely recounted in anecdotal histories of the eighteenth-century stage. When playing the part of Bayes, Garrick exposed what early biographer Arthur Murphy (1727-1805) calls “the fashionable errors of the time”, and these “errors” are the declamatory acting styles of his contemporaries

inasmuch as they are Restoration heroic dramatists and panegyrists.² In the 1740s, the part of Bayes was principally played by Theophilus Cibber and his father Colley Cibber at Drury Lane. After Colley Cibber's run of "upwards of forty Nights in one season", Garrick assumed the role across town at Goodman's Fields on the 3rd of February in 1742 during his premiere season on the London stage with the acting company of Henry Giffard (1694-1772).³ Persuaded by Giffard that he might match the Cibbers' success in Bayes, Garrick reluctantly agreed to take on the role. The Cibbers, like those who acted Bayes before them, "seemed to sneer at the folly of Bayes *with* the audience", and "by their action told the spectators that they felt all the ridicule of the part", but Garrick played deadpan, and he instead "appeared quite ignorant of the joke", as Thomas Davies remembers it: "the audience laughed loudly *at* him... They were in jest; he was in earnest".⁴ Davies furthermore recalls the Cibbers introducing many "novelties, with some fresh jokes upon the actors" to their adaptations of Buckingham's *Rehearsal*, and, by Murphy's account, Garrick thereafter wholly "seized the opportunity to make the *Rehearsal* a keen and powerful criticism on the absurd stile of acting that prevailed on the stage" through imitation of his contemporaries at the Theatres Royal.⁵ For mid-century critics and theatregoers, "the difference between Garrick and his immediate predecessors was very conspicuous", but reprints of Buckingham's playtext in this period show no

² Arthur Murphy, *The Life of David Garrick*, Vol. 1 (London: J. Wright, 1801), p. 56.

³ "Characters performed by David Garrick, Esq. at the Theatre in Goodman's Fields" [manuscript], Beinecke Library, Yale University, OSB MSS 125.

⁴ Davies, *Micellanies*, Vol. 3, p. 304.

⁵ Davies, *Micellanies*, Vol. 3, p. 303, and Murphy, *Life*, Vol. 1, p. 53.

remnant of Garrick's ad libbed allusions, and fail to account for the evolution of the satire during this period.⁶ Garrick's admirers, on the other hand, recount his imitations in their anecdotal histories of Buckingham's Restoration burlesque as it was later performed at both Goodman's Fields and Drury Lane.

By mocking and mimicking his contemporaries—or, “his Betters”, to lift a phrase—Garrick differentiated himself from those who had played the part of Bayes before him. For his initial adaptation, Murphy remembers, Garrick “selected some of the most eminent performers of his time, and, by his wonderful powers of mimicry, was able to assume the air, the manner, and the deportment of each in his turn”, the “strutting, mouthing, and bellowing” of actors like Dennis Delane (*d.* 1750), Sacheverel Hale (*d.* 1746), Roger Bridgwater (1694-1754), William Mills (1701-1750), Lacy Ryan (1694-1760), and even the Goodman's Fields actor-manager Giffard. Delane “was tall and comely; had a clear and strong voice, but was a mere declaimer” in his approach to acting, so Garrick “began with him: he retired to the upper part of the stage, and drawing his left arm across his breast, rested his right elbow on it, raising a finger to his nose, and then came forward in a stately gait, nodding his head” in imitation of Delane, parroting

⁶ Davies, *Micellanies*, Vol. 3, pp. 303-304.

his lines “in the exact tone of Delane”.⁷ Hale is similarly described as having “a tall and handsome figure, with an extensive melodious voice” fit for an opera house, so Garrick “chose a speech suited to the occasion, and, in a soft plaintive accent, without any thing like real feeling, *vox et præterea nihil*”, delivered Bayes’s lines in “exact representation of Mr. Hale”.⁸ In 1733, Bridgwater was satirized as a Drury Lane tragedian of particularly sonorous bombast in the aforementioned pamphlet titled *The Theatric Squabble*:

*Hark! a loud Noise a palls the list’ning Ears!
All think it Thunder; — Br[i]d[g]wa[te]r appears.*⁹

Mills is similarly mocked elsewhere for the “Inanity of his Voice”, and Murphy describes Ryan, a popular Shakespearean actor, as having a “croaking drawling accent” that “gave an unnatural sound to his elocution”, so Garrick of course “thought him a subject for animadversion” and “in a tremulous raven tone of voice” delivered “a true imitation of his manner” while acting Bayes in *The Rehearsal*.¹⁰ Garrick was not tall in stature, nor was

⁷ Murphy, *Life*, Vol. 1, pp. 52-56. Wilkinson also notes in his *Memoirs* that “the peculiarities of Mr. Delane, an actor of the first rank, were so severely pointed out by Mr. Garrick, in the character of Bayes, that it is said to have actually occasioned Mr. Delane’s flying to the bottle”, Vol. 1, p. 83, and in an open *Letter to David Garrick*, David Williams (1738-1816) goes so far as to suggest that it “had such an effect on the mind of poor *Delane* (a man by many degrees your superior in birth, education, fortune and character) that it absolutely occasioned his death” (London: S. Bladon, 1772), p. 11. See also: “Delane, Dennis”, in *A Biographical Dictionary of Actors*, Vol. 4, pp. 286-290.

⁸ Murphy, *Life*, Vol. 1, p. 54. See also: “Hale, Sacheverel”, in *A Biographical Dictionary of Actors*, Vol. 7, pp. 19-20.

⁹ *The Theatric Squabble: or, The P—ntees*, Folger, fo. 180199. See also: “Bridgwater, Roger”, in *A Biographical Dictionary of Actors*, Vol. 2, pp. 334-336.

¹⁰ *An Apology for the Life of Mr. T— C—, Comedian*, p. 140. See also: Murphy, *Life*, Vol. 1, p. 55.

his voice particularly loud, but, as Davies recalls, “he represented their voice and manner so perfectly, that the theatre echoed with repeated shouts of applause” at the his mock-heroic personations. In Bayes, Garrick “drew after him the inhabitants of the most polite parts of the town” to Goodman’s Fields, and, as Davies puffs: “the coaches of the nobility filled up the space from Temple-Bar to Whitechapel”. The theatre was apparently “full of the splendour of St. James’s and Grosvenor-square” on account of Garrick’s adaptation, and “the variety of his exhibitions” attracted “those who had seen and been delighted with the most admired of the old actors”.¹¹ Bayes, Murphy reiterates, “made way for his own just and correct idea of dramatic imitation”, and it made Garrick the talk of every green room in London.¹² Indeed, in a letter to his wary brother Peter, Garrick proudly reports that “instead of clapping Me they huzza, w^{ch} is very uncommon approbation, & tho The Town has been quite tir’d out with y^e Play at y^e Other End of y^e Town Yet I have y^e Great Satisfaction to See crowded Audiences to It Every Night”.¹³ Garrick’s mimetic prowess took centre stage in *The Rehearsal*, and his new adaptation of Buckingham’s caricatured tragedian saw seven consecutive performances during a season wherein the Cibbers had already acted Bayes at both Theatres Royal.

Not everybody at Goodman’s Fields found Garrick’s impressions funny, however, and after an initial run of seven nights, Garrick’s *Rehearsal* was postponed “on account of

¹¹ Davies, *Memoirs of the Life of David Garrick*, 3rd ed., Vol. 1, pp. 47-48.

¹² Murphy, *Life*, Vol. 1, p. 56.

¹³ Letter from David Garrick “to Peter Garrick”, 6 February 1742, rpt. in *The Letters of David Garrick*, David M. Little, George M. Kahrl, and Phoebe deK. Wilson, eds., Vol. 1 (Harvard UP, 1963), pp. 37-38.

the sudden indisposition of a principal performer”. The story often recounted by Garrick’s biographers goes that because he was at first reluctant to personate and take off his more established colleagues, he “made a proposal to Giffard, the manager of the theatre in Goodman’s-fields, to permit him to begin with him”. Before he managed the theatre, Giffard had tread the boards at a number of other playhouses in London and Dublin, and “supposing that Garrick would only just glance at him to countenance his mimickry of the others, consented” to the personation. During rehearsal one morning, however, Garrick is supposed to have “hit him off so truly, and made him so completely ridiculous”, “that Giffard, in a rage, sent him a challenge; which Garrick accepted”, and “they met the next morning, when the latter was wounded in the sword-arm”. After a hiatus of two weeks, Garrick’s *Rehearsal* played again at Goodman’s Fields with “imitations of most of the principal actors; but Giffard was totally omitted”.¹⁴ Biographers tend to retell and in the same breath dismiss this anecdotal account of Garrick’s first season as green room gossip, but Giffard was not the only subject of his burlesque to have their feathers ruffled by the performance. Davies remembers “several of the players enjoyed the jest very highly till it became their own case”.¹⁵ Theophilus Cibber, perhaps unsurprisingly, refers to Garrick’s personations as “artful Spleen”, and laments that *The Rehearsal* is “no longer consider’d as a witty Satyr on the Foibles, and Faults, of Authors, and a Reproof of the Town for

¹⁴ William Cooke, “Garrick. (An original Anecdote)”, in *Memoirs of Samuel Foote*, Vol. 2 (London: Richard Phillips, 1805), pp. 168-169. See also: Percy Fitzgerald, *The Life of David Garrick* (London: Tinsley Brothers, 1868), Vol. 1, pp. 108-109, and Ian McIntyre, *Garrick* (London: Penguin, 1999), p. 47.

¹⁵ Davies, *Memoirs*, 3rd. ed., Vol. 1, p. 47.

their False Taste of the Drama”, but “a Motley of Buffoonery, to explode the Actors”. Garrick, Cibber protests, “cruelly turn’d the whole Artillery of his Mockery against their natural Defects, or such Particularities of Voice, which did not misbecome them, nor met with Reproof ‘till his Vice of taking off, as it was call’d, became the foolish fashion”.¹⁶ Indeed, Garrick’s “unjustifiable method of depreciating” his contemporaries “by pointing out their peculiarities, he continued two or three years”—Davies suggests—before he “dropped it as an unfair and cruel practice”, but performance records and Garrick’s own correspondence broadly suggest otherwise.¹⁷

As word of the actor spread, managers who had formerly rejected him at Covent Garden and Drury Lane began to bid for the actor’s patronage, and both Theatres Royal pushed to foreclose upon Henry Giffard’s unlicensed playhouse in Whitechapel in order to expedite the accrual of Garrick’s celebrity and capitalize upon his burgeoning fame and popularity with audiences. In late January of 1742, the same month as his aforementioned first performance in Bayes, Garrick reported to his brother that although “Lord Essex has sent word” of a prospective engagement “next Season” with John Rich at Covent Garden, he already “fixt my Mind upon Drury Lane; tho ’tis quite a Secret”.¹⁸ Charles Fleetwood (*d.* 1747) who managed the Drury Lane playhouse with Colley Cibber later offered Garrick “£500 Guinea & a Clear Benefit or Part of y^e Management” to join their company

¹⁶ Theophilus Cibber, *Two Dissertations on the Theatres* (London, 1756), p. 44.

¹⁷ Davies, *Memoirs*, Vol. 1, 3rd ed., p. 47.

¹⁸ Letter from David Garrick “to Peter Garrick”, 30 January 1742, rpt. in *Letters*, Vol. 1, pp. 35-36.

at Drury Lane. He accepted, and joked that he “can’t be resolv’d w^t I shall do till y^e Season is finish’d”.¹⁹ In late May, two days after “the last Time of the Company’s performing” *Richard III* at Goodman’s Fields, Garrick made his riotous premiere at Drury Lane, dethroning Theophilus Cibber to play Bayes in his popular adaptation of Buckingham’s *Rehearsal* for his first performance at the Theatre Royal.²⁰ His timing, however, could not have been worse. Charles Macklin (1690-1797) served as both an actor and actors’ manager alongside James Quin (1693-1766) with the company at Drury Lane, and disagreed with Fleetwood over his decision to hire Garrick. Macklin’s ongoing disputes with playhouse management led to both his resignation and an actors’ strike within the company.²¹ When Garrick was soon after announced to be appearing as Bayes for his debut at Drury Lane, thereby signifying his allegiance to Fleetwood and the theatre management, Macklin and his troupe plotted a playhouse riot against them. Davies recounts the evening in his *Life*, noting that Fleetwood’s “associates were distributed in great plenty in the pit and galleries, armed with sticks and bludgeons, with positive orders from their commanding officer to check the zeal of Macklin’s friends by the weightiest arguments in their power”.²² As the boxes of Drury Lane flooded with theatregoers and

¹⁹ Letter from David Garrick “to Peter Garrick”, 19 April 1742, rpt. in *Letters*, Vol. 1, pp. 38-39.

²⁰ For playbills of Garrick’s last performance at Goodman’s Fields, and first performance at Drury Lane, see: *The London Stage, 1660-1800*, Pt. 3, Vol. 2, p. 996.

²¹ For a detailed history of the actor’s strike that year, see: Norman S. Poser, “The actors’ strike”, in *The Birth of Modern Theatre: Rivalry, Riots, and Romance in the Age of Garrick* (London: Routledge, 2018), pp. 33-39.

²² Davies, *Memoirs*, 2nd ed., Vol. 1, p, 76.

Macklin's allies, Garrick prepared to act Bayes in "a shabby old-fashioned coat, that had formerly been very fine; a little hat, a large flowing brown wig, high-topt shoes with red heels, a mourning sword, scarlet stockings, and cut-fingered gloves" from the royal wardrobe.²³ At six o'clock, "when the curtain drew up, the playhouse shewed more like a bear-garden than a theatre-royal. The sea in a storm", according to Davies, "seemed not more terrible and boisterous than the loud and various noises which issued from the pit, galleries, and boxes".²⁴ The play continued unabated, but "as soon as Mr. Garrick entered, he bowed very low several times, and, with the most submissive action, entreated to be heard". Macklin's party was not to be pacified, however, and Garrick "was saluted with loud hisses, and continual cries of 'Off! off! off!'" while "Peas were thrown upon the stage, to render walking on it insecure and dangerous".²⁵ Garrick continued to act Bayes in Buckingham's *Rehearsal* at Drury Lane after his tumultuous premiere, but temporarily retired his gallery of impressions until he found himself on steadier footing within the company.

Garrick thereafter played Bayes in Buckingham's burlesque more than any of his predecessors or successors— approximately ninety times from his premiere at Goodman's

²³ Davies, *Micellanies*, Vol. 3, pp. 179-180.

²⁴ Davies, *Memoirs*, 2nd ed., Vol. 1, p. 76.

²⁵ Davies, *Memoirs*, 2nd ed., Vol. 1, pp. 76-77.

Fields in 1742 to his retirement from Drury Lane in 1774.²⁶ He played the caricature as an instrument of metatheatrical critique toward those playwrights who, like Restoration heroic dramatists, “thought the art of dramatic poetry consisted in strokes of surprise and thundering versification”, and added to the satire by personating “the players of his day” whom “he saw were equally mistaken”.²⁷ At dinner with the tragic actor Sarah Siddons (1755-1831) in September of 1783, Samuel Johnson recalls his former pupil in Shakespearean studies “was no declaimer”, and that “there was not one of his own scene shifters who could not have spoken ‘to be or not to be,’ better than he did”.²⁸ Garrick charges “the majority of actors” as having “confine[d] their notions, talking and acquirements, to the theatre only, as the parrot to his cage” in his correspondence with the Bath actor John Henderson (1747-1785).²⁹ In his only *Essay on Acting*, a short pamphlet printed in 1744 “during his preparation” for “representing Macbeth”, Garrick argues that tragic and comic players alike ought to “be very conversant with human nature” in order to “discover the workings of spirit”.³⁰ According to Davies, the *Essay* was printed in order “to blunt” criticism of an approach to playing the part “essentially different from that of

²⁶ In addition to playing Bayes in Buckingham’s *Rehearsal*, Garrick interpolated the part into his own rehearsal play titled *The Meeting of the Company; or, Bayes’s Art of Acting*, see below. See also: David Winchester Stone, Jr. and George M. Kahrl, *David Garrick: A Critical Biography* (Southern Illinois UP, 1979), pp. 477-480.

²⁷ Murphy, *Life*, Vol. 1, p. 52.

²⁸ James Boswell, *The Life of Samuel Johnson*, Vol. 2 (London: Henry Baldwin, 1791), p. 468.

²⁹ Letter from “Mr. Garrick to Mr. Henderson”, 5 January 1773, rpt. in *Private Correspondence*, Vol. 1, pp. 509-510.

³⁰ David Garrick, *An Essay on Acting* (London: W. Bickerton, 1744).

all the actors who had played it for twenty or thirty years before”.³¹ Regularly playing Bayes in *The Rehearsal* served as a dramatic exercise in staging criticism of his peers’ declamatory approach to their craft rooted in performance methods of court drama and masquerade predating the advent of eighteenth-century stage technology and refined acoustics.³²

Garrick is among the first celebrity actors as we might recognize them today in the modern tabloid press and on social media. In her recent study, Leslie Ritchie has considered “the nearly inconceivable level of cultural power” generated by Garrick’s “entrepreneurial manufacture”.³³ As an actor and manager holding shares in major papers like the *St. James’s Chronicle*, *Public Advertiser*, and *Morning Post*, Garrick exercised extraordinary control over his own representation within the theatrical press, and “it was entirely possible”, Ritchie notes, for mid-century theatregoers “to see a play which Garrick had written or adapted, featuring a prologue or epilogue written by Garrick, in which Garrick himself was acting. That playgoer had likely been enticed to go to the play by an advertisement, puff or review written by Garrick, placed in a newspaper partly owned by Garrick”.³⁴ Barbara Hodgdon has also observed that “no actor before him had been so written of and—predating fan discourse—written to”, and throughout Garrick’s

³¹ Davies, *Memoirs*, 2nd ed., Vol. 1, p. 163.

³² For a detailed study of innovations in stagecraft on the mid-eighteenth-century London stage, see: Allardyce Nicoll, *The Garrick Stage: Theatres and Audience in the Eighteenth Century*, Sybil Rosenfeld, ed. (Manchester UP, 1980).

³³ Ritchie, *David Garrick*, pp. 1-2.

³⁴ Ritchie, *David Garrick*, p. 2.

private correspondence he represents himself as a new type of proto-method actor skilled in both comedy and tragedy at once at home in Richard III as in Bayes.³⁵ In one of his most famous portraits, for example, Joshua Reynolds (1723-1792) represents Garrick caught between the Greek muses Melpomene and Thalia, or “Comedy” and “Tragedy”, and this same tragicomic iconography followed him throughout his career and to his memorial in the Poets’ Corner of Westminster Abbey.³⁶ Garrick built a brand name for himself as an actor of “infinite variety” that was as much ingrained in the private persona of his correspondence as in his dramatic repertoire.³⁷ His letters to and from the theatregoing public suggest that from his first season at Goodman’s Fields, Buckingham’s mock-heroic Restoration tragedy, and the part of Bayes particularly, provided him with a script through which he regularly dramatized his own protean changeability while also disparaging that of his rivals on the London stage.

Garrick’s proliferous correspondence sheds a wealth of light into the local gossip concerning his performance of Bayes. As early as January of 1742, on the eve of his first

³⁵ Barbara Hodgdon, “Shakespearean stars: stagings of desire”, in *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare and Popular Culture*, Robert Shaughnessy, ed. (Cambridge UP, 2007), p. 49.

³⁶ Joshua Reynolds, *David Garrick Between Tragedy and Comedy*, 1761, Oil on canvas, Waddesdon Manor, Buckinghamshire, 102.1995. See also: Philippe Audinet after Thomas Stothard, *Monument in memory of David Garrick*, 1797, Engraving, RCIN 661472, David Mannings, “Reynolds, Garrick, and the Choice of Hercules”, *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 17.3 (Spring 1984): 259-283, and Katy Barrett, “‘An Argument in Paint’: Reynolds and Garrick between Tragedy and Comedy”, *Visual Culture in Britain* 13.3 (November 2012): 283-302.

³⁷ For a study of Garrick’s celebrity persona, see: Leslie Ritchie, “Advertising and Brand Garrick: ‘Infinite Variety’”, in *David Garrick*, pp. 72-116.

adaptation, the clergyman Joseph Smith (1697-1781) writes to the actor to say that “you are not made for tragedy only: the Sock becomes you as much as the buskin”.³⁸ Indeed, news of Garrick’s uncanny ability to play in both tragic and comic roles in equal measure swiftly spread beyond London, and, in 1746, Gilbert Walmsley (1680-1751) reports from Bath:

I must not forget to tell you what Lord Chesterfield says of you. He says you are not only the best tragedian in the world, but the best, he believes, that ever was in the world; but he does not like your comedy, and particularly objects to your playing Bayes, which he says is a serious, solemn character, &c. and that you mistake it.³⁹

Chesterfield worries that Garrick may spoil his talents on Buckingham’s play, and soon find himself another subject of the satire. Curiously, however, it is this very metonymy between Garrick and Bayes that leads another fan to reflect that “Old Cibber used to do it with great applause; and indeed, as he, according to custom, did *himself*, and his own character often falling in with that of Bayes, he had merit. But were he to do it at present as well as ever, the town would readily discern how far he fell short of that perfection they now so justly admire”.⁴⁰ What attracts early playgoers and critics to Garrick’s adaptation is his conflation of Bayes with his own theatrical celebrity as not a well-established but an amateur tragedian striving to make a name for himself at Goodman’s

³⁸ Letter from Joseph Smith to David Garrick, 25 January 1742, rpt. in *Letters*, Vol. 1, p. 35.

³⁹ Letter from “Gilbert Walmsley to Mr. Garrick”, 3 November 1746, rpt. in *The Private Correspondence of David Garrick with the Most Celebrated Persons of His Time*, James Boaden, ed. Vol. 1 (Cambridge UP, 2013), pp. 44-45.

⁴⁰ Letter “To Mr. Garrick”, n.d., rpt. in *Private Correspondence*, Vol. 1, pp. 28-29.

Fields. Like Bayes, then, Garrick's celebrity is built upon a personating plagiary of his contemporaries. As the cleric Thomas Newton (1704-1782) notes of Garrick's initial adaptation in February of 1742: "I think you exceed old Cibber in many things, and fall short of him in nothing: and your imitations of the actors are inimitable".⁴¹ Despite a reservation to make sport of his peers, Bayes proved as significant a role as his rendition of *Richard III* in bringing the actor to the attention of his more established colleagues and theatregoing public, and one that he routinely readapted to consolidate his celebrity late into his career.⁴² In his final years onstage, Garrick was still receiving the same adoration for his personating satire in Bayes. In 1771, the Quaker Reverend Samuel Nottingham (1716-1787) wrote to the actor to confess: "I always burn to be present at such wonderful exertions of wit and laughter, horror and ambition", and "if, therefore, you can tell me but two days beforehand, when either Bayes or Macbeth shall adorn the stage, I am not afraid to whisper in your ear that I will come and see you; at the same time that I would conceal from my grave brethren of the church this perhaps unpardonable instance of being in love

⁴¹ Letter from "Rev. T[homas] Newton to Mr. Garrick", 17 February 1742, rpt. in *Private Correspondence*, Vol. 1, p. 6.

⁴² Garrick made his debut at Goodman's Fields in the role of Richard III a month prior to appearing as Bayes in *The Rehearsal*, see: "Characters performed by David Garrick, Esq. at the Theatre in Goodman's Fields" [manuscript], Beinecke, OSB MSS 125. He was also commemorated in the role by William Hogarth, *David Garrick as Richard III*, 1745, Oil on canvas, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, WAG 634. See also: Julia H. Fawcett, "The Celebrity Emerges as the Deformed King: Richard III, the King of the Dunces, and the Overexpression of Englishness", in *Spectacular Disappearances: Celebrity and Privacy, 1696-1801* (Michigan UP, 2016), pp. 23-60.

with nature and with you”.⁴³ A young Frances Burney (1752-1840) also saw Garrick act the part the following year during her first trip to London, and she gleefully records in her diary that:

We saw Garrick, the inimitable Garrick, in Bayes!— O, he was great beyond measure [...] I was almost in convulsions with excess of laughter, which he kept me in from the moment he entered to the end of the play— never in my life did I see any thing so entertaining, so ridiculous, so humorous, so absurd! Sue and I have talked of nothing else— and we have laughed almost as much at the recollection as at the representation.⁴⁴

While Burney just falls short of identifying which actors Garrick lampooned that spring late in his career, her diary does suggest that he continued to interpolate extemporaneous impressions within the play long after his first season, as Davies suggests in his *Memoirs*. Garrick’s “representation” of Bayes is “inimitable” precisely because, by spoofing his peers and colleagues, the actor forestalls criticism of his own craft while at the same time critiquing that of his rivals and contemporaries. As late as March of 1762, *The Universal Museum* notes that a significant “humour lies in [Garrick] *taking off* the other actors.— When Yates speaks a little latin falsly, he says, ‘*and you Mr. Yates, you that was bred an attorney, not to speak it right!*’ Blakes, who acts Prince Pretty-man comes on with his usual gait, and Bayes Mimicks him, saying, ‘*Now enter Mr. Blakes - not Prince Pretty-*

⁴³ Letter from “Rev. S[amuel] Nott[ingham] to Mr. Garrick”, 17 November 1771, rpt. in *Private Correspondence*, Vol. 1, pp. 442-443.

⁴⁴ 2 April 1772, rpt. in *The Early Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney, 1768-1773*, Lars E. Troide, ed. Vol. 1 (McGill-Queens UP, 1988), p. 200.

man".⁴⁵ Richard Yates (1706-1796), a celebrated comic who routinely played the part of Gentleman Usher in eighteenth-century productions of Buckingham's *Rehearsal*, had also appeared in his first season on the London stage in the parts of Lord Place and Law in Fielding's *Pasquin*. Garrick's extemporaneous interpolation of Yates's being "bred an attorney" in all likelihood followed the Usher's expressions of concern in being overheard plotting the usurpation of Brentford with the Physician in *The Rehearsal*:

GENTLEMAN-USHER: The grand question is, whether they heard us whisper? which I divide thus: into when they heard, what they heard, and whether they heard or no.

JOHNSON: Most admirably divided, I swear.

GENTLEMAN-USHER: As to the when; you say just now: so that is answer'd. Then, for what; why, what answers it self: for what could they hear, but what we talk'd of? So that, naturally, and of Necessity, we come to the last Question, *videlicet*, Whether they heard or no?⁴⁶

Just how precisely Yates mangled the elocution or mispronounced "*videlicet*" we can only speculate. Charles Blakes (*d.* 1763) also excelled in comic roles, but frequently tried his hand at tragic parts like Cassio in *Othello*, Malcom in *Macbeth*, and Norfolk in *Richard III* with little success.⁴⁷ Garrick kept his ear to the ground, and would have been sensitive

⁴⁵ *The Universal Museum; or, Gentleman's & Ladies Polite Magazine of History, Politicks, and Literature for 1762*, Vol. 1, No. 3, Arthur Young and John Seally, eds. (London, 1762), p. 170.

⁴⁶ *The Rehearsal... The Sixteenth Edition. As it was acted on Monday, September 14, 1761, By Command and before Their Majesties The King and Queen and Most of the Royal Family* (London: G. Hitch and L. Hawes, et. al., 1761), p. 22.

⁴⁷ In their entry for Blakes in *A Biographical Dictionary of Actors*, Philip H. Highfill, Jr., Kalman A. Burnim, and Edward A. Langhans note that the actor "played occasionally in tragedy, but he was not very effective when he had the buskin on", and, moreover, "his appearance and temperament destined him to wear the sock", Vol. 2, p. 150.

to Blakes's presumptuousness and critical reproving in such parts. He thus teases the actor when Bayes harkens for Pretty-Man behind the curtain:

BAYES: So now enter Prince *Prettyman* in a Rage. Where the Devil is he? Why, *Prettyman*? Why, when, I say? O fie, fie, fie, fie! all's marr'd I vow to gad, quite marr'd.

[*Enter Prettyman*]

Phoo, pox; you are come too late, Sir, now you may go out again if you please. I vow to gad, Mr.—a— I would not give a Button for my Play, now you have done this.

PRETTY-MAN: What Sir!

BAYES: What, Sir, 'slife, Sir, you should have come out in Choler, rouze upon the Stage, just as the other went off. Must a Man be eternally telling you of these Things?⁴⁸

Garrick, as the *Universal Museum* critic observes, mocks Blakes for “his usual gait” at this moment in the play, and, in all likelihood, at the precise moment that Bayes derisively parrots back “What, Sir” to Pretty-Man. That Garrick should interpolate such burlesque personations in *The Rehearsal* extemporaneously is perhaps true on some accounts, but in his final season on the London stage, in a letter to Thomas Francklin (1721-1784), the actor also apologizes for having “forgot to answer your lady’s card”, and confesses to the King’s Chaplain that “I was so employed about Mr. Bayes yesterday”.⁴⁹ Garrick’s mimicry may have appeared extemporaneous to theatregoers, but he evidently studied and plotted their interpolation long in advance. For all of the trouble that acting Bayes supposedly brought him, the role played an indispensable part in solidifying his popular acclaim, and the caricature also provided a palimpsestic prototype upon which the actor

⁴⁸ *The Rehearsal*, 16th ed., pp. 31-32.

⁴⁹ Letter from “Mr. Garrick to Dr. T[homas] Francklin”, 27 March 1774, rpt. in *Private Correspondence*, Vol. 1, p. 616.

relentlessly demonstrated his mimetic prowess in opposition to those with whom he was in direct competition for work. In the process, the cries of his detractors became drowned out by those of his admirers.

GARRICK'S REHEARSAL PLAYS & PRACTICES

“The rehearsal” represented in Buckingham’s play satirizes a specific form of pre-production practice wherein a very small audience would occasionally be admitted to a playhouse during the early afternoon hours for a late preview of a new play to offer their critiques. The question of how the Theatres Royal companies ought best to prepare a play for performance, as Tiffany Stern has so thoroughly chronicled in her study of rehearsal practices during this period, was only beginning to emerge with the rise and influx of rival acting companies in London. Broadly speaking, celebrity actors with the two patent companies memorized their lines and cues in private, and resurfaced opening night to recite them before the theatregoing public with little if any concern for the wider cohesion and reception of the play beyond their own performance—author be damned. If an actor was new to the company they received a few days of private instruction per week in song and dance in accordance with the Lord Chamberlain’s 1718 “Regulations for ye Directors of ye Playhouse”, but the regulations only required the company “directors wth salaries to be present at all Rehearsalls, & to see y^t y^e young people are taught to dance & sing three times a week”.⁵⁰ As Allardyce Nicoll has observed, “except for the preparation of

⁵⁰ “Regulations for ye Directors of ye Playhouse” [manuscript], National Archives, Kew, PRO LC 7/3, rpt. by Nicoll, in *History of English Drama*, Vol. 2, pp. 279-280.

pantomimes which depended upon concerted action and accurate timing, rehearsals were very perfunctory affairs and certainly there was no single person in the theatre who even vaguely resembled the modern director or producer”.⁵¹ One critic writing as late as 1775 complains that

everyone acquainted with modern rehearsals, must know how loosely, and how much under the par of their abilities the generality of performers go through their parts [...] It is a saying almost in every body’s mouth on the first night of a new, or revived play [...] “That when the performers are more *practised* they will do better.” [...] what makes the blunders of a first night, is not so much the want of memory, as of that *mutual play of action* which is necessary to give grace, and wholeness to the scene. Performers too frequently looking on this as a mere thing of course, neglect it at rehearsals [...] Being *studied* in one another’s action, and manner, particularly in love scenes, &c. where a more intimate connection is necessary.⁵²

By 1747, Garrick had taken over managing Drury Lane from Wilkes and Cibber, and his own playwriting later flourished in the rehearsal play genre precisely because he insisted upon his company rehearsing their parts together in “*mutual play of action*” during an age wherein extensive group rehearsals were at best infrequent and irregular for new plays, and practically nonexistent for stock plays.⁵³ Garrick, like Bayes, sought to establish himself as a new type of managerial proto-director, but even toward the end of his career, rehearsals continued to be treated as a largely perfunctory process by established actors.

⁵¹ Nicoll, *Garrick Stage*, p. 157.

⁵² William Cooke, *The Elements of Dramatic Criticism* (London: G. Kearsly, 1775), pp. 195-196.

⁵³ For a study of the varying rehearsal practices between different companies during this period, see: Tiffany Stern, “Rehearsal in Betterton’s Theatre”, and “Rehearsal in Cibber’s Theatre”, in *Rehearsal from Shakespeare to Sheridan*, pp. 124-239.

In a letter to Susanna Cibber from 1760, Garrick explains that Arthur Murphy's new comedy *The Way to Keep Him* "will require four or five regular Rehearsals at least, and tho *You* may be able to appear with two, Yet I am afraid the rest of the Dramatic Personae will be perplex'd and disjointed if they have not the advantage of your Character to Rehearse with them".⁵⁴ Garrick, like Buckingham before him, spoofs later eighteenth-century rehearsal processes in his own rehearsal plays: *A Peep Behind the Curtain: or, The New Rehearsal* (1767), *The Meeting of the Company; or, Bayes's Art of Acting* (1774), and *A Bundle of Prologues* (1777).

Garrick's two-act afterpiece titled *A Peep Behind the Curtain* adopts the form of a rehearsal preview of a play-within-the-play written by an amateur tragedian named Glib who serves as a modern substitute for Bayes. Glib's play-within-the-play, a short second-act satire on theatrical renditions of the Orpheus and Eurydice myth titled "The Burletta of Orpheus", is framed by a subplot concerning a 'New' Johnson and Smith—Wilson and Mervin—attending the rehearsal preview as a pretence to court a young woman named Miss Fuzz into an elopement:

MERVIN (*Reads.*): *I shall be with my Papa and Mama to see a Rehearsal at Drury-lane Playhouse on Tuesday morning [...] If I don't see you then, I don't know when I shall see you, for we return to the country next week.*

WILSON: Well, what think you?

MERVIN: O she'll run away with you most certainly.

WILSON: I must not lose time then (*looking at his watch.*) I must go and take my stand, that the Deer may not escape me.

⁵⁴ Letter from David Garrick "to Susannah Cibber", 24 January 1760, rpt. in *Letters*, Vol. 1, pp. 321-322.

MERVIN: And I'll go and take mine [...] But how will you get admittance into Drury lane Theatre?

WILSON: I was very near being disappointed there, for unluckily the acting Manager, who scarce reach'd to my third button, cock'd up his head in my face, and said I was much too tall for a Hero.⁵⁵

Garrick's *New Rehearsal*, like Clive's *Bays in Petticoats*, is richly self-deprecating, and much of the comedy relies upon theatregoers' predisposed familiarity with the Drury Lane acting company. Whereas the actor-manager had formerly targeted the declamatory acting styles of his Shakespearean contemporaries through Bayes in Buckingham's *Rehearsal*, in his *New Rehearsal* the satire is turned back inward and directly pointed toward the author. The "acting Manager" to which Wilson refers in this opening exchange is Garrick himself, who was often satirized for his shortness of stature in comparison with other tragedians of the day.⁵⁶ *A Peep Behind the Curtain* subverts London gossip around Garrick's theatrical celebrity, and repurposes it as comic fodder for the purpose of his own burlesque. Garrick lampoons himself not only as manager of the Drury Lane theatre, but as a playwright too:

AUTHOR [GLIB]: I make Orpheus see in my hell all sorts of people, of all degrees, and occupations, ay, and of both sexes—that's not very unnatural, I believe—there shall be very good company too, I assure you; *high life*

⁵⁵ David Garrick, *A Peep Behind the Curtain; or, The New Rehearsal* (London: T. Becket and P. A. De Honda, 1767), p. 4.

⁵⁶ By his most recent biographer's estimate, Garrick stood "probably not much more than 5'3", see: McIntyre, *Garrick*, p. 127. In his *Essay on Acting*, Garrick refers to himself as a "little fashionable Actor" and "Puppet Heroe", p. 2, and Samuel Foote refers to the actor as embodying "a dried Elves-Skin", in his *Treatise on the Passions* (London: C. Corbet, 1747), p. 14. For a detailed study of his 'Shortness Considered', see also: Ritchie, *David Garrick*, pp. 118-124.

below stairs, as I call it, ha, ha, ha! you take me—a double edge—no boys play—rip and tear—the times require it—fortè—fortissimè.⁵⁷

The part of Garrick's caricatured Author, Glib, was played by his student, Thomas King (1730-1805), but theatregoers would have no doubt recognized the caricature as a sendup of the playwright himself through reference to his earlier play, *High Life Below Stairs*.⁵⁸ Catherine Clive, perhaps unsurprisingly, plays the part of a country gentlewoman and the mother of Miss Fuzz, Lady Fuzz, and attends the rehearsal preview at Drury Lane only to be disappointed that much of the stage effects planned for Glib's play-within-the-play will not in fact be rehearsed at all. Like her own *Bays in Petticoats*, the caricature enacts a self-conscious doubling of Clive's part with her celebrity persona:

AUTHOR: Ladies, you can't possibly have any thunder and lightning this morning; one of the planks of the Thunder-Trunk started the other night, and had not Jupiter stepp'd aside to drink a pot of porter, he had been knock'd o'the head with his own thunder-bolt.

LADY FUZ: Well, let us go into the Green Room then, and see the actors and actresses—Is Clive there?—I should be glad of all things to see that woman off the stage.

AUTHOR: She never attends here, but when she is wanted.

⁵⁷ *A Peep Behind the Curtain*, p. 15.

⁵⁸ This may incite some confusion as *High Life Below Stairs* was later revealed to be the work of James Townley (1714-1778) by a "Thos. Clare" in "Mr. Townley, *Author of 'High Life Below Stairs'*", 30 April 1801, *The Gentleman's Magazine: and Historical Chronicle*, Vol. 71 (London: Nichols and Son, 1801), p. 389. The farce was oft regarded as the work of Garrick by his contemporaries on account of an 'ADVERTISEMENT' prefacing the first ten editions of the playtext noting the author "was unwilling to be known", and "happy in recommending the Performance, by the Assistance of a friend, to the Care and Judgment of Mr. Garrick" (London: J. Newbery, et. al. 1759), and, by the 1790s, the farce was being sold as "WRITTEN BY *DAVID GARRICK, ESQ*" (London: J. Jarvis, 1793).

LADY FUZ: Bless me! If I was an actress, I should never be a moment out of the Play-house [...] I wish I could have seen Clive! I think her a droll creature——nobody has half so good an opinion of her as I have.⁵⁹

The more established actors and actresses of Glib's play-within-the-play like Clive show no interest in rehearsing their parts with the rest of the cast at the rehearsal preview. What is more, however, the "Prompter, Hopkins", a caricature of the actual prompter himself, the aforementioned William Hopkins, complains to the playhouse Patent, yet another allusion and caricatured surrogate for Garrick, that the very idea of rehearsing Glib's play-within-the-play is an unusual and "extraordinary thing, indeed, to rehearse only one act of a performance, and with dresses and decorations, as if it were really before an Audience".⁶⁰ With the exception of Wilson and Miss's final discovery of having slipped away from the rehearsal preview to elope, the entirety of Garrick's second act is devoted to a burlesque rendition of Italian opera tropes recycled in the form of Glib's "Burletta". Like Fielding's rehearsal plays, Garrick's first rehearsal play targets the Italian opera vogue as it persists throughout the latter half of the eighteenth century and across the street at Covent Garden. Indeed, as the most recent editors of Garrick's *Peep Behind the Curtain* observe, "Garrick was able to give his audience a satiric display of stage business... and an acting company with unusual customs".⁶¹ These "unusual customs" are the burgeoning rehearsal practices that the actor-manager would stress throughout his tenure at the playhouse, and put on full satirical display in the drama. Perhaps

⁵⁹ *A Peep Behind the Curtain*, pp. 22-23.

⁶⁰ *A Peep Behind the Curtain*, pp. 10-11.

⁶¹ "Commentary and Notes", *Plays*, Vol. 2, p. 330.

significantly, moreover, this “*New Rehearsal*” was the only new play to be produced at Drury Lane over the course of the entire season. How long Garrick’s first rehearsal play was itself rehearsed prior to opening night we can only speculate.⁶²

While continuing to burlesque his contemporaries in adaptations of Buckingham’s *Rehearsal*, Garrick also penned a short sequel to the play wherein he continued to turn the satire inward and upon his own group rehearsal practices at Drury Lane. Even toward the end of his career, Bayes is quoted alongside Richard III, Hamlet, and King Lear as one of the actor-manager’s most renowned roles. Between Christmas and the New Year of 1771, John Hoadly (1711-1776) wrote to Garrick to say that

I rejoice to hear you are so well from Mr. Stanley, who tells me that you resolve to play your great parts this winter. Hamlet, I hear was as good as ever you played; and report says you are reviving Bayes, with some additional scene of your own. An hardy undertaking, my good friend! The fooleries of farce in the Rehearsal are now long established by custom; and any thing that may be added, to be of a piece, must be very foolishly farcical indeed; and then will not be received if known, because low—though nothing else at the same time will put with it. This is only my private opinion’— yours has been so constantly applauded by the public, that I shall not be surprised at your success.⁶³

⁶² An amusing anecdote recounted in Sainsbury’s 1824 *Dictionary of Musicians* suggests that Garrick solicited François-Hippolyte Barthélemon (1741-1808) to compose the music to *A Peep Behind the Curtain* around the time of his arrival in London “in the year 1675”, and later “rewarded Barthélemon with the sum of *forty guineas* instead of fifty, which he had originally promised him, alleging, as an excuse, that the *dancing cows* had cost him so much money, that he really could not afford to pay him any more”, Vol. 1 (Cambridge UP, 2009), p. 61. The first record of the play that I have uncovered is an advertisement on the eve of its premiere as an afterpiece to Lillo’s *London Merchant* on the 23rd of October in 1767, see: “Advertisements and Notices”, *Public Advertiser*, 22 October 1767, Issue 10289.

⁶³ Letter from “Dr. J[ohn] Hoadly to Mr. Garrick”, 29 December 1771, rpt. in *Private Correspondence*, Vol. 1, pp. 448-449.

Garrick's "additional scene" cited by Hoadly was ultimately broadened into its own drama titled *The Meeting of the Company; or, Bayes Art of Acting*.⁶⁴ In a letter to the Lord Chamberlain's office requesting license to produce the drama, Garrick explains that his enclosed "little piece"—should it meet with "approbation"—will be "perform'd at the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane 5 Sept 1774", the opening night of his final season on the London stage.⁶⁵ Garrick's sequel never circulated in print outside of manuscript, but was performed at the Drury Lane playhouse eleven times that season between September and October. The actor replied to Hoadly's letter noting that:

Y^r Intelligence about a New Scene in y^e Rehearsal is not exact— I had an intention of introducing my *Art of Acting* into y^r play, which I must have mentioned to You Some time or another: I suppose y^e Manager has objections to Bayes's piece, the Poet to induce y^e Manager to Accept it, promises, if he will perform it, to make his Actors (the bad ones) equal to y^e best by a certain receipt he was master of, & had discover'd by long Study [...] Bayes then gives them his Art of Acting— which will shew all y^e false manners of acting Tragedy & Comedy, w^{ch} I have collected in about 30 or 40 comical Verses—but I shall keep it for an Interlude—it will be too much for Me wth Bayes.⁶⁶

In the sequel, Garrick extends Buckingham's oppositional burlesque beyond the terrain of Restoration authorship, and repositions modern actors and actresses as promoters of poor

⁶⁴ David Garrick, *The Meeting of the Company; or, Bayes's Art of Acting* [manuscript], 1774, San Marino, California, Huntington Library, John Larpent Plays, LA 378. See also: David Garrick, "The Meeting of the Company; or, Bayes's Art of Acting", in *The Plays of David Garrick*, Vol. 2, pp. 238-250.

⁶⁵ Garrick's letter to the Lord Chamberlain is archived alongside the manuscript playtext in the Huntington Larpent Collection, loc. cit..

⁶⁶ Letter from David Garrick "To the Reverend Doctor John Hoadly", 4 January 1772, rpt. in *Letters*, Vol. 2, pp. 782-783.

taste and “false manners” in eighteenth-century theatrical production by dramatizing the thesis extended in his 1744 *Essay on Acting*. Although written as an interlude, the drama later appeared as a prelude for its premiere on the 17th of September, and, because Garrick felt it “too much for Me wth Bayes”, he recast his student Thomas King in the part.

The opening of *The Meeting of the Company* is written to show off Garrick’s interior renovations to the Drury Lane playhouse that had begun in 1774 in order to commemorate the centenary of the theatre, and, as noted in his stage directions: “the curtain rises and discovers the stage full of different people at work, painters, gilders, carpenters, etc., singers singing, dancers dancing, actors and actresses saluting each other, and all seem busy”. Under Garrick’s direction in the 1770s, it is the labouring technical staff who are represented as the principal authors of dramatic production:

PHILL: We shall never be ready if you don’t give up the stage to us. Lower the clouds there, Rag, and bid Jack Trundle sweep out the thunder-trunk. We had very slovenly storms last season. Mr. Hopkins, did you ever see such a litter and hear such a noise?

PROMPTER: Yes, very often. Indeed Ladies and Gentlemen, you must practice your singing and dancing elsewhere, or we shan’t ever be ready.⁶⁷

The makings of modern theatre, Garrick suggests, are the makings of modern dramatic spectacle, machinery, and scenography, and these labours belong principally to the technical staff at Drury Lane. In framing his satire as a play in pre-production, Garrick’s

⁶⁷ Garrick, *Plays*, Vol. 2, p. 238. For a concise and illustrated history of both interior and exterior renovations to Drury Lane during this period, see: Nicoll, “Robert Adam’s Drury Lane, 1775”, in *The Garrick Stage*, pp. 44-47.

erasure of theatregoers from the playhouse offers the audience an “illusion of intimacy” and another satirically-refracted “peep behind the curtain” at many of the lead actors and actresses in Garrick’s company who again appear in propria persona throughout the rehearsal play:

PARSONS: [...] Miss Platt, the managers desire you will be ready in this part by tomorrow night. ’Tis very short and very easy study.

MISS PLATT: I have been harassed all the summer and now I must sit up all night to study this dab of a thing. Managers never consider the wear and tear of a constitution.

[*Exit peevishly*]

PARSONS: Now the old work begins. Jingle jangle from September to June.⁶⁸

Parsons is a caricatured representation of the actor and scene painter William Parsons (1736-1795), and Miss Platt is a caricatured representation of the popular actress S. J. Platt (1743-1800) who frequented Drury Lane and the Little Haymarket theatre.⁶⁹ Garrick, having served as manager of the company for over two decades by 1774, needed only to reach backstage in order to find new comic fodder for his sequel to Buckingham’s burlesque. A new market for printed theatrical criticism is also subject to satire in the drama when Patent, another direct allusion to Garrick’s own managerial position within the company, cries:

PATENT: [...] What a pity it is [the “performers”] should grow cold and cloudy with the winter. Mr. Parsons, your servant. Tom Weston, your hand. All in spirits, I hope, and ready to take the field.

⁶⁸ Garrick, *Plays*, Vol. 2, p. 239.

⁶⁹ For biographies of both Parsons and Platt, see: “Parsons, William”, in *A Biographical Dictionary of Actors*, Vol. 11, pp. 218-227, and “Platt, Mrs. S. J.”, in Vol. 12, pp. 30-31.

PARSONS: The army catches spirit from the general. I rejoice to see you so well. We were damp'd by the newspapers.

PATENT: Ay, ay, they killed me one day and revived me the next. Newspaper life, like real life, is chequered, a mixture of good and evil. What they took away yesterday they'll give again tomorrow, sometimes dead, sometimes alive. Now praise, now blame, make holes and darn 'em again, can anything be more impartial?

Toward the end of his career, and, as noted above, Garrick owned shares in the papers that printed playbills and criticism of his plays. What is more, however, like “Bayes’ new-Raised Troops” in mid-century productions of Buckingham’s *Rehearsal*, Garrick is self-deprecatingly mocking his own position as the manager of a theatre sponsored by the state and court of George III. Drury Lane is regarded in the metaphorical language of a battlefield by Patent and Parsons, and the actors and actresses mockingly referred to as an “army” of propagandizing troops serving under the “general” David Garrick.

The Meeting of the Company dramatizes Garrick’s philosophy of “natural” acting outlined in his 1744 *Essay*. As the play proceeds backstage, a dialogue between the comedian Thomas “Weston” (1737-1776) and an unspecified “Tragedy Actor” of the old declamatory school of acting functions as a means for Garrick to assay his critique of modern acting in much the same vein as Buckingham’s critique of Restoration heroic drama:

WESTON: I can set my arms so, take two strides, roar as well as the best of you, and look like an owl.

TRAGEDY ACTOR (*with contempt*): Is there nothing else requisite to form a tragedian?

WESTON: O, yes, the periwig maker to make me a bush, a tailor a hoop petticoat, a carpenter a truncheon, a shoemaker high heels and cork soles. And as for strange faces and strange noises I can make them myself.⁷⁰

Weston's description of the tragedian par excellence is also significant in its departure from Buckingham's caricatured tragedian donning the black velvet cloak of John Dryden, however. For Garrick, the modern tragedian is represented as primarily concerned with onstage appearances over the studied delivery of their lines. What remains a source of frustration for the mid-century satirist are the "strange faces and strange noises" that his contemporaries enact in their antiquated attempts to elicit emotion from modern audiences. Garrick's theory of acting, as outlined in his *Essay* and dramatized throughout *The Meeting*, may seem quite obvious to us today, but the idea that actors might interpret a character's emotions and motivations with a "*Scientifical*" methodology rather than simply embody their "humours" and "passions" was radical and indeed new to the eighteenth-century stage.⁷¹ Buckingham's caricatured tragedian, Bayes, provides the actor-manager with a prototypical representation of the older school of playwrights and actors increasingly at odds with Garrick's theory of acting. Where Bayes privileges the courtly language of his play in Buckingham's burlesque, the Bayes in Garrick's sequel is

⁷⁰ Garrick, *Plays*, Vol. 2, pp. 240-241.

⁷¹ Garrick, *Essay*, pp. 4-5. For a study of this broader shift away from classical and early modern acting techniques rooted in theories of humoral pathology toward Stanislavskian systems of psychological realism, naturalism, and method acting, see: Joseph Roach, *The Player's Passion: Studies in the Science of Acting* (Michigan UP, 1985), and David Wiles, *The Players' Advice to Hamlet: The Rhetorical Acting Method from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment* (Cambridge UP, 2020). See also: Tiffany Stern, "Rehearsal in Garrick's Theatre—and Later", in *Rehearsal from Shakespeare to Sheridan*, pp. 240-290.

concerned with his actors' playing-up and exaggerating the humours and passions that such courtly poesy is designed to evoke. Indeed, he is made into a laughing stock behind the curtain from the moment he appears onstage in Garrick's play:

BAYES: A word with you, Mr. Patent. As I came through the hall, there were some of your actors to whom I gave a very proper salute (careless indeed, but civil), to which they made little or no return.

PATENT: Indeed.

BAYES: One in particular, dressed in red, with a cocked hat, black beard, and a cane dangling upon his wrist, looked full in my face and laughed at me.

PATENT: It was Tom King. I am sure he meant nothing.

BAYES: I know very well. I don't expect meaning from them, but submission and civility. Your players appear to me rather more conceited than they were.

Garrick's joke during Bayes and Patent's preliminary exchange turns on the audience's recognition of Tom King and Garrick as the players before them, enacting a self-conscious doubling of both the actors and their parts. The main difference between the Restoration Theatre Royal and Garrick's eighteenth-century Theatre Royal is apparent even to Bayes who becomes confused by the actors' lack of "submission and civility" to the dramatist. The playhouse is no longer represented as a site wherein courtiers dramatize panegyric celebrations of the Stuart monarchy. Instead, it is recognizably a site of commercial entertainment wherein the pretensions of such courtly ambitions are mocked and ridiculed. Through Bayes's subsequent instruction of the acting company, *The Meeting of the Company* culminates in a burlesque treatise on how not to act in a tragic role for the contemporary stage. The subtitle of the drama, *Bayes's Art of Acting*, is derived from the caricatured playwright's instruction manual that he brings with him to

rehearsal at Drury Lane, and puffs as “the only way to break through and soften that strong, rocky, knotty, crusty matter which nature has (as I may say) enveloped you with. I shall convince the world”. Garrick’s own natural onstage delivery is comically subverted by Bayes as a school of acting antithetical to the representation of modern drama, and he simultaneously assays his own theory of acting, in turn, through the caricatured negative of Bayes’s *Art*:

BAYES: “To heighten terror—be it wrong or right,
Be black your coat, your handkerchief be white,
Thus pull your hair to add to your distress.
What your face cannot, let your wig express [...]
Your author’s words, lengthen ’em or lop ’em,
Stretch ’em in tragic scenes, in comic chop ’em.
On tragic rack first stretch the word and tear,
Crack nerves, burst brains, rivet me despa-a-re”
Crack nerves, burst brains. *There’s a tear for you.* Rivet me despa-a-a-air
and there’s a stretch for you. Mind and mark all your r’s too, or you won’t
outstep the modesty of nature.
“Cr’rck—bur’rst—ner’rves—brain—rivet despa-a-a-air”
I’ll make a word of two syllables two and twenty, if I please. I shall reach
their hearts one way or another.

Bayes is satirically represented as clinging to an antiquated conception of Drury Lane as a site for the theatrical celebration of monarchy. Sentimental tragic pathos and “naturalism” are regarded as a form of bourgeois “modesty” to the caricatured playwright, and indeed, as he assures both Weston and Parsons shortly thereafter during the rehearsal: “I’ll make great men of you”.⁷² Garrick’s *Meeting*, then, builds upon Buckingham’s *Rehearsal* not by burlesquing any particular play or playwright, but rather through broadly casting its

⁷² Garrick, *Plays*, Vol. 2, p. 243-248.

satiric net upon the lingering effects of court drama on the increasingly commercial public playhouses of eighteenth-century London.

A BUNDLE OF PROLOGUES & “DAVID CALL’D THE LITTLE”

Garrick came out of retirement in 1777 to once again offer his talents to the Drury Lane company in the composition of his last rehearsal play: *A Bundle of Prologues*. The playtext never circulated in print, but Judith Milhous and Robert D. Hume have recently published a critical reconstruction of the drama from a surviving manuscript in the Folger Library, noting that the “scribal copy [is] emended in at least three hands [and] several of the additions and revisions are in Garrick’s handwriting”.⁷³ The *Prologues* rehearsed in the play-within-the-play are filled with topical allusions to much of the company at Drury Lane who appear as caricatures of their own celebrity personae to court the theatregoing public for subscriptions and benefactions to Drury Lane’s Theatrical Fund established in support of ill or retiring actors, actresses, and their families.⁷⁴ In February of 1776, the charity was brought before the House of Commons “to bring in a Bill for the better securing of a Fund”, “together with a Dwelling House, situate in *Drury Lane*, [to be] let at

⁷³ David Garrick, et. al., “An entertainment of dialogue and singing among the old and infirm actors and actresses... designed to be performed at the Fund Benefit” [manuscript], 28 April 1777, Folger Shakespeare Library, MS W.b.461. See also: Judith Milhous and Robert D. Hume, “*A Bundle of Prologues* (1777): The Unpublished Text of Garrick’s Last Rehearsal Play”, *Review of English Studies* 58.236 (September 2007): 482-499.

⁷⁴ The Drury Lane Theatrical Fund continues to support performers and staff today under the Charity Commission for England and Wales, Reg. No. 209046. For more information, see: drurylanefund.com. To donate, please see also: charitycommission.gov.uk.

the Yearly Rate of £50”.⁷⁵ The parliamentary petition for a “Bill” ultimately led to “An Act for the Better Securing a Fund”, and, throughout the decade prior to his retirement in 1776, as Davies notes, Garrick’s “donations of one kind or another... gained for this beneficial institution a capital of near £4,500”.⁷⁶ Whereas the rehearsal play genre had long served to consolidate Garrick’s stronghold over the stage by way of denigrating his contemporaries, then, his final rehearsal play served to do just the opposite by way of encouraging actors’ financial support in retirement from the theatregoing public.

The rehearsal play takes place within a Drury Lane “Dwelling House” “*where the suppos’d Pensioners of The Theatrical Fund are sitting with a Table & Bowl before them*”. Truncheon, a tragedian and “President” of the “Pensioners Club” played by John Bannister (1760-1836), commences the rehearsal with a toast to the Club: “We have done with our Profession & are old enough to have worn out our Hypocrisy”, he addresses the table, “and therefore let us take our Liquor freely, & with it remember our kind Benefactors”. The original cast intended to be sitting around the table is outlined at the head of the manuscript, and a revised cast with Thomas Davies as an understudy for Joseph Vernon (1738-1782) are listed in a review published the following morning in the

⁷⁵ 13 February 1776, “Anno 16 Georgii III Regis, 1776”, rpt. in *Journals of the House of Commons*, Vol. 35 (London: His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1803), p. 554.

⁷⁶ Davies, *Memoirs*, Vol. 2, 2nd ed., p. 321. Milhous and Hume note that the present day sum of Garrick’s contributions “cannot be computed with any precision”, but approximate an extraordinary “total somewhere between £900,000 and £1,350,000”, p. 498. See also: *The Fund, for The Relief of Indignant Persons Belonging to His Majesty’s Company of Comedians of the Theatre Royal Drury-Lane. Established, Endowed, and Incorporated, By that Great Master of his Art, David Garrick, Esq. 1777* (London: Lowndes and Hobbs, 1813).

Public Advertiser: “Mr [Thomas] and Mrs [Susannah Yarrow] Davies, Mr [John] Moody, Mr [William] Parsons, Mrs [Mary] Bradshaw, and several other performers, habited as veterans”. Garrick’s play is designed to make benefactors of the theatregoing public, and this is in part accomplished through yet another metatheatrical erasure of the audience, fostering in the construction of an “illusion of intimacy” between the spectators and the caricatured private lives of the performers:

TRUNCHEON: In a few days our Benefit Play for the continuing these Comforts unto us, will be Exhibited— It is therefore thought proper that at that time we should shew both our Wit & Gratitude to our noble & generous Benefactors then assembled [...] You, my Brothers & Sisters therefore, who are prepar’d with a Grateful Address, must now Rehearse your parts— We will suppose this great Room the Playhouse [...] the fine China in those Glass Cases, shall represent the Ladies— those Roman figures in the Tapisstry shall stand for the Gentlemen in the Pit & Boxes & Hogarth’s Prints of the good & bad Prentice we will suppose the upper Gallery.⁷⁷

The metatheatrical reversal and substitution of the pensioners’ green room for the Drury Lane stage also works to wheedle and cajole audiences into opening up their purses and donating to the new Fund: the “Ladies” flattered as “fine China”, “Gentlemen” inflated into “Roman figures”, and “upper gallery” footmen rendered into Hogarthian “Prentices”.⁷⁸ Indeed, as in all rehearsal plays, the audience themselves become planted

⁷⁷ “*A Bundle of Prologues (1777)*”, pp. 487-488. See also: “Advertisements and Notices”, *Public Advertiser*, 30 April 1777, Issue 13274.

⁷⁸ William Hogarth’s twelve-part series of engravings titled *Industry and Idleness (1747)* depict the socioeconomic rise of an ‘Industrious Prentice’, and the descent into criminality of an ‘Idle Prentice’. For a detailed study of the series of engravings, see: Ronald Paulson, “The Simplicity of Hogarth’s Industry and Idleness”, *ELH* 41.3 (Autumn 1974): 291-320.

props in the broader makeup of the satire. *A Bundle of Prologues* “is a fine example of the ‘peep behind the curtain’ rehearsal playlets of which Garrick had made something of a specialty”, as Milhous and Hume note in their reconstruction of the drama, but it is also a significant departure from those that came before it in that the satire is not weaponized as a vehicle for burlesque ridicule of rival players’ bombastic acting styles, the theatregoing public’s taste for opera, nor the rehearsal practices that Garrick long enforced.⁷⁹ Rather, the *Prologues* make self-deprecating and patronizing sport of the company’s more minor players as a means of celebrating their contributions to the repertoire upon retirement. As the pensioners proceed to rehearse their *Prologues* before a mock-audience, the satire is turned not outward upon theatrical celebrities like Garrick and Clive, but inward upon the more minor albeit significant roles that their supporting cast played in a variety of popular eighteenth-century English drama:

TRUNCHEON: Now begin Mr Mildby— and make your Reverence & speak as well, as if you had the first audience, in the World before you.

MILDBY: *[goes forward]*

I was a Play’r of small Renown,
Not much applauded by the Town,
I got but little by the Week
And therefore little had to Speak [...]

In Richard thus— “*Moreton my Lord is fled*”

Then in Macbeth— “*The Queen my Lord is dead*”

But what did most my Pow’rs awaken—

“*My Liege the Duke of Buckingham is taken*”

A Line & half was oft my due,
They seldom trusted me with two [...]

TRUNCHEON: *[comes forward]*

Stand by!

⁷⁹ “*A Bundle of Prologues* (1777)”, p. 483.

I trod this Stage—tho' now my fire is cool'd,
When David call'd the Little—Liv'd and Rul'd;
I fought abreast with him, & mighty Barry,
In Bloody Field of Richard and Fifth Harry [...]
No year roll'd by, but I was deep in Treason,
I fifty times was murder'd in one Season;
To Kill, or to be kill'd with Joy I flew,
For Every drop of Blood was Spilt for *you*.⁸⁰

Garrick's adaptations of histories and tragedies like *Richard III*, *Macbeth*, and the Henriad contributed significantly to the canonization of Shakespeare as Britain's national poet, but the supporting cast working alongside his person are all too often forgotten by audiences amidst the stupefying awe and tantalizing wonder incited by theatregoers' own proximity to his celebrity.⁸¹ Who cares about Catesby in *Richard III* or Seyton from *Macbeth* when the Machiavellian king, "David call'd the Little", stands before them? The *Bundle of Prologues* that Garrick writes for his supporting cast of minor players at once reasserts his dominion over the Theatre Royal, and invites audiences to repay their debts to those who played alongside him by contributing to the Theatrical Fund.

When Garrick passed away in January of 1779, he was given a state funeral for the likes of English royalty that enacted a public spectacle and celebration of political and managerial succession at Drury Lane. Some fifty-thousand theatregoers flocked to the townhouse of Eva Marie Veigel (1724-1822) at No. 5, Adelphi Terrace on the morning of

⁸⁰ "A *Bundle of Prologues* (1777)", pp. 489-493.

⁸¹ For detailed studies of the revival and canonization of Shakespeare's works during this period, see: Michael Dobson, *The Making of the National Poet: Shakespeare, Adaptation, and Authorship, 1660-1769* (Oxford UP, 1992), and Michael Caines, *Shakespeare and the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford UP, 2013). See also: *Shakespeare in the Eighteenth Century*, Fiona Ritchie and Peter Sabor, eds. (Cambridge UP, 2012).

February 1st for one last glimpse at the bodily remains of her late husband.⁸² Invitations sent to friends and family were designed with a winged cherub laying a wreath of bays over a draped urn, and read: “The Executers of David Garrick Esq^r request the honor of your Company [...] to attend his Funeral to Westminster Abbey”.⁸³ When the public discovered “they could not gain admittance” without invitation, they “became so troublesome, that an Officer’s guard was obliged to be sent for from the Savoy, which with great difficulty prevented their committing some acts of outrage” on the terrace along the icy Thames.⁸⁴ Frosted windowpanes advertising “*Places to be let to see the procession of Mr. Garrick’s funeral*” mapped the body’s final movements through the Strand, Charring Cross, and down Whitehall toward Westminster.⁸⁵ The slow procession to Poets’ Corner is reported in detail by the London press as “one of the most grand (considered as an instance of solemn pomp) that has lately been seen in this kingdom”, comprising “thirty mourning coaches, followed by twice the number of gentlemen’s carriages”.⁸⁶ The actor’s body, interred in a coffin “covered with crimson velvet” and a “State Lid of black Ostrich Feathers”, travelled before clergymen, statesmen, representatives from the Theatres Royal, and Dr. Samuel Johnson’s Literary Club at St. James’s.⁸⁷ There were by

⁸² “News”, *London Chronicle*, 30 January - 2 February 1779, Issue 3458.

⁸³ “Private invitation to David Garrick’s funeral”, 1779. Engraving, Garrick Collections, Herefordshire Museum. 1992-24/37.

⁸⁴ “News”, *London Chronicle*, 30 January - 2 February 1779, Issue 3458.

⁸⁵ “News”, *Morning Chronicle*, 1 February 1779, Issue 3027.

⁸⁶ “News”, *Morning Chronicle*, 2 February 1779, Issue 3028.

⁸⁷ “News”, *Morning Chronicle*, 1 February 1779, Issue 3027.

all accounts “more people present in the windows, and on the tops of houses, in the streets and the avenues of the Abbey, than were ever remembered to have been collected since the coronation” of George III, and from a carriage drawn by “horses loaded with mournful plumes”, Richard Brinsley Sheridan looked outward unto the theatrical empire he was set to inherit from the late actor.⁸⁸

Eighteenth-century theatre historians have recently begun to consider the extent to which Garrick exercised an extraordinary amount of control over his representation in the press, and this chapter offers an additional “peep behind the curtain” unto how the actor-manager used Buckingham’s *Rehearsal*, the rehearsal play genre, and London stage itself to mediate his theatrical celebrity. Rather ironically, to be sure, Garrick’s hundred nights in Bayes remind us just how significant his acting in comedy proved towards establishing himself as the ‘King’ of eighteenth-century tragedy.

⁸⁸ *Morning Chronicle*, 2 February 1779. For a study of Garrick’s funeral, see: McIntyre, *Garrick*, pp. 607-614. See also: Daniel O’Quinn, “‘The Body’ of David Garrick: Richard Brinsley Sheridan, America, and the Ends of Theatre”, in *Entertaining Crisis in the Atlantic Imperium, 1770-1790* (Johns Hopkins UP, 2011), pp. 186-240.

———— CHAPTER FIVE ————

SHERIDAN’S HAUNTED HOUSE: OR, THE REHEARSAL AT DRURY LANE

“WHEN fav’rite bodies sleep within their graves,
They say, their souls are still attendant slaves;
They hang and dwell with pleasure round the tomb,
Nor care to leave the old corporeal room.
So Garrick’s soul frequents his house of fame,
And haunts the place where he obtain’d his name”

— “*On Seeing Mr. GARRICK every night at the Theatre*”, by David Garrick (1776)

Garrick’s funeral was arranged by Sheridan as a lavish public spectacle, and some, like Horace Walpole, saw “the pomp” as “perfectly ridiculous”.¹ Nevertheless, the daily papers were filled with tributes to the late actor-manager for weeks and months to follow, and his theatrical celebrity would not soon be forgot.² Be it monarchical or theatrical—in one way or the other, and sometimes both—every rehearsal play is about problems and crises of succession. In this chapter I offer a new reading of Sheridan’s adaptation of *The Rehearsal* titled *The Critic: or, A Tragedy Rehearsed* that premiered on All Hallows’ Eve

¹ Letter “To Lady Ossory”, 1 February 1779, rpt. in *Horace Walpole’s Correspondence*, Vol. 33, p. 86. Walpole protests in this same letter that “he hated Mrs Clive till she quitted the stage, and then cried her up to the skies”, and that “His Bayes was no less entertaining — but it was a garret-keeper-bard— Old Cibber preserved the solemn coxcomb; and was the caricature of a great poet, as the part was designed to be”, p. 88.

² For some examples of tributes to Garrick, see: “*To the Memory of David Garrick*”, in “Arts and Culture”, *St. James’s Chronicle or the British Evening Post*, 18-20 February 1779, Issue 2799, “*Sweet bard, matchless Garrick*”, in “Business”, *Morning Chronicle*, 4 March 1779, Issue 3054, and “*Elegy on the Death of Mr. Garrick*”, in “Arts and Culture”, *London Chronicle*, 6-9 March 1779, Issue 3473. See also: “Garrick death mask with eyes inserted”, 4 April 1779, Mezzotint, Folger Shakespeare Library, ART G241.61.

in 1779 at Drury Lane as an afterpiece to *Hamlet*.³ I examine the topicality of the play in relation to the death of Garrick ten months earlier to argue that the titular Critic of the “Tragedy Rehearsed”, Mr. Puff, is designed to conjure memories of the actor-manager, his career-long association with Bayes, and eighteenth-century newspaper ‘puffery’ more broadly. The task before Sheridan would be to carry forward English drama without him —“*the king is dead, long live the king*”, to lift a phrase—but the persistence of Garrick’s theatrical celebrity poses a publicity problem for his managerial successor. As Daniel O’Quinn has already noted, “*Hamlet* without Garrick was a tedious affair”, “a *Hamlet* without Hamlet, as it were”, and he reads Sheridan’s *Critic* as a burlesque subversion of the Shakespearean tragedy that plays before it.⁴ Building on both O’Quinn’s argument and recent work by Leslie Ritchie on Garrick’s proprietary exploitation of eighteenth-century theatrical news media, I show how Sheridan adapts the actor-manager’s art of self-promotion to the promotion of his own oppositional Whig politics at the Theatre Royal while at the same time adapting Buckingham’s mock-heroic satire on the theatrical politics of the Anglo-Dutch Wars to a mock-heroic satire on the theatrical politics of the American Revolutionary War.

³ For a detailed study of the rather complex religio-political and cultural practices of All Saints’ Eve following the Protestant Reformation, see: Nicholas Rogers, “Festive Rights: Halloween in the British Isles”, in *Halloween: From Pagan Ritual to Party Night* (Oxford UP, 2002), pp. 22-49.

⁴ O’Quinn, *Entertaining Crisis*, p. 237. For a detailed and line-by-line study of Garrick’s adaptation of *Hamlet*, see: George Winchester Stone, Jr., “Garrick’s Long Lost Alteration of *Hamlet*”, *PMLA* 49.3 (September 1934): 890-921. See also: Jeffery Lawson Lawrence Johnson, “Sweeping Up Shakespeare’s ‘Rubbish’: Garrick’s Condensation of Acts IV and V of *Hamlet*”, *Eighteenth-Century Life* 8.3 (Spring 1983): 14-25.

SHERIDAN'S PUBLICITY PROBLEM

Garrick, as noted in the preceding chapter, held proprietary shares in a number of London newspapers like the *St. James's Chronicle*, *Public Advertiser*, and *Morning Post*, and, as Leslie Ritchie has thoroughly chronicled, he regularly manipulated the press to the advantage of his own theatrical celebrity and that of his company at Drury Lane.⁵ In his *Letter to David Garrick, Esq. On His Conduct as Principal Manager and Actor at Drury-Lane*, David Williams, the founder of the Royal Literary Fund, publicly exposes the actor-manager as “a proprietor in several papers, and upon such terms with the proprietors of others, that they must not disoblige you”.⁶ In a second edition of the *Letter* published six years later, Williams further divulges that he “hath always had considerable shares in the property, and very great influence in the management, of the PUBLIC ADVERTISER, the GAZETTEER, the MORNING POST, and the ST. JAMES’S CHRONICLE”.⁷ Yet, as Ritchie asserts, what is perhaps more interesting about Garrick’s monopolization of London’s news media is that he regularly profited from the sale of advertisements of his own Drury Lane playbills in these same papers. The *Public Advertiser*, printed by Henry Woodfall (1713-1769) and his son Henry Sampson Woodfall (1739-1805), proudly declares on New Year’s Day of 1765 that “To prevent any Mistakes in future advertising the Plays and

⁵ For a detailed study of Garrick’s hand in these among several other eighteenth-century newspapers, see: Ritchie, “Garrick’s Involvement in the Mediascape”, in *David Garrick*, pp. 44-71.

⁶ Williams, *A Letter to David Garrick*, p. 4.

⁷ Williams, *A Letter to David Garrick*, 2nd ed. (London: J. Williams and G. Corrall, 1778), p. 4.

Entertainments of Drury Lane Theatre, the Managers think it proper to declare, that the Play-bills are inserted, by their Direction, in this Paper ONLY”: Ritchie clarifies, “in the calendar year of 1756 alone, Garrick’s name appears over 300 times in the *Public Advertiser*, usually in advertisements for which the paper paid Drury Lane”.⁸ Garrick’s involvement in the Woodfalls’ *Advertiser* runs deeper than his stake as a shareholder alone, however.

In succeeding Garrick as playhouse manager, Sheridan also succeeded Garrick as the company publicist. The Woodfalls, as noted above, were a family of industrious printers, and the two sons of the master of the Stationers’ Company—Henry Sampson and his brother William Woodfall (1745-1803)—knew Garrick long before they knew Sheridan. They travelled in London’s literary circles from an early age, and, before being sent away to school at Twickenham, Henry is supposed to have been rewarded a crown by Alexander Pope at the age of five for his recitation “with much fluency” of Homer. According to John Nichols, he was “highly respected for his good humour and social qualities”, and he is remembered to have “lived much in intimacy with Garrick... and other wits of his day, by whose labour the *Public Advertiser* rose to a very high reputation, as the depository of literary humour, criticism, and information”. William Woodfall worked alongside his elder brother as a printer and editor of the *Public Advertiser* in Paternoster Row printing, and was regarded as ‘Memory Woodfall’ for his

⁸ “Advertisements and Notices”, *Public Advertiser*, 1 January 1765, Issue 9410. See also: Ritchie, *David Garrick*, p. 48.

“uncommonly retentive” memory when reporting on parliamentary procedures: “without taking a note” and “without the use of an amanuensis to ease his labour”, he was “known to write sixteen columns after having sat in a crowded gallery for as many hours without an interval of rest”.⁹ In *The Critic*, Sheridan alludes to William Woodfall’s parliamentary reporting when he notes that a certain newspaper ‘puff’ “has a wonderful memory for parliamentary debates, and will often give the whole speech of a favoured member with the most flattering accuracy”.¹⁰ Like both his father and brother, William Woodfall was “devoted to the *belles lettres*; and, as such, was the intimate friend of Garrick... and all the other members of the old Literary School, of which he was one of the very few remaining disciples”.¹¹ Because London newspapers largely summarized parliamentary proceedings in the form of “a very short sketch of the Debate”, William Woodfall “attained the highest degree of celebrity” for both “the fidelity of his report” and “the quantity and rapidity of his execution”.¹² He founded *The Morning Chronicle* in 1769, serving as both printer and editor of the Whig-slanted digest for two decades before selling the newspaper to the Whig journalist and court reporter James Perry (1756-1821). Alongside his “morning chronicle” of political and parliamentary debates from the night prior, William penned a number of performance reviews, and these columns represent some of the earliest performance reviews directed at specific actors and actresses playing

⁹ Nichols, *Literary Anecdotes*, Vol. 1, pp. 301-303.

¹⁰ Richard Brinsley Sheridan, *The Critic; or, A Tragedy Rehearsed* (London: T. Becket, 1781), p. 44.

¹¹ Nichols, *Literary Anecdotes*, Vol. 1, p. 304.

¹² Nichols, *Literary Anecdotes*, Vol. 1, p. 303.

upon the London stage. Williams was such a regular attender of the theatre that he is alleged “never to have missed the first performance of a new piece for at least forty years; and the publick had so good an opinion of his taste, that his criticisms were decisive of the fall or fortune of both the piece and the performer”.¹³ Garrick learned to capitalize upon the Woodfall brothers’ influence much to the advantage of his acting company’s celebrity.

Garrick contributed a variety of columns to the Woodfalls’ newspapers under the anonymity of editorial pen names such as “The Whisperer” and “The Mouse in the Green Room”. “The Whisperer” ran for only one month from December of 1778 until Garrick’s death in January of 1779, but, as Ritchie observes: “Woodfall kept the secret of [his] authorship”, and “neither his biographers nor the editors of his correspondence” ever seems to have picked up on it.¹⁴ Catherine Clive, unsurprisingly, was not so easily duped, and identifies Garrick as “The Mouse in the Green Room” in a letter to the actor-manager signed by her own pen name: Pivy. Clive concedes to “read[ing] the mouse in the green room”, but adds: “I knew its face the moment I saw it, *a pretty little black ey’d fellow*; it is admirably done”.¹⁵ “THE MOUSE” claims a dubious fondness for Garrick, and, perhaps

¹³ Nichols, *Literary Anecdotes*, Vol. 1, pp. 303-304.

¹⁴ Ritchie, *David Garrick*, p. 206.

¹⁵ Letter from Catherine Clive to David Garrick, “The Jubilee Volume (a Scrapbook)”, in *A collection of illustrations... relating principally to the Shakespeare Jubilee of 1769, and in particular to David Garrick's part therein*, n.d., British Library, C.61.e.2, and qtd. by Ritchie, *David Garrick*, p. 62.

most pointedly, writes a poem “On seeing Mr. GARRICK every night at the Theatre”.¹⁶ Clive writes patronizingly of Garrick throughout their correspondence, but others who suspected his hand behind *The Morning Chronicle* column censure the actor-manager as a self-interested “rat”, and William Woodfall as his cheese-mongering “benefactor”. In a letter “To the PRINTER” signed by a “Mus kin Puss-kin” printed on the 1st of October in 1775, one critic fingers Garrick as the author of “The Mouse in the Green Room”, and charges Woodfall with an “impartial” bias and political neutrality toward the manager of Drury Lane: “I have got your little curled nibbler at last by the tail! [...] What, must we hear of nothing— but the little Manager fuming here, bouncing there, and put to his tramps every where? [...] You must confess, Mr. Woodfall [...] that I have not a bad guess at your mouse”. Woodfall all but concedes to the charges in his reply beneath the letter, and jokingly “declares that he is above either seeding or hiring any underlings of any theatre”, unless “his Majesty of Drury Lane, or their dignities of Covent-Garden should put him under the bar of their empire”.¹⁷ Garrick did precisely that in the service of his theatrical celebrity.¹⁸

¹⁶ “News”, *Morning Chronicle*, 1 October, 1776, Issue 2298.

¹⁷ “News”, *Morning Chronicle*, 12 December, 1775, Issue 2046.

¹⁸ The friendship and collegiality between Garrick and William Woodfall has historically been read as irregular for Woodfall’s involvement in advertising William Kenrick’s *Love in the Suds, a town eclogue: being the lamentation of Roscius* (London: J. Wheble, 1772) depicting Garrick and Irish librettist Isaac Bickerstaffe as lovers, but Garrick wrote to the publisher and joked that “when I am less taken Notice of, it will be y^e best hint for Me to retire”, 16 November 1773, rpt. in *Private Correspondence*, Vol. 1, pp. 584-585. See also: “News”, *Morning Chronicle*, 9 July 1772, Issue 976. For a detailed study of the Garrick-Kenrick-Woodfall paper war, see: Ritchie, *David Garrick*, pp. 136-150.

Garrick's death therefore presented Sheridan with a publicity problem: who would continue to market Drury Lane in the newspapers with such regularity? Sheridan's letters evince ties with the Woodfall family dating back to when he was still a student in London and Bath, but he did not exercise the same influence over their papers as a shareholder. In October of 1769, for example, while still studying in London, Sheridan penned a satirical "Letter to the Printer of the Public Advertiser" in sarcastic support of then Prime Minister Augustus FitzRoy, 3rd duke of Grafton (1735-1811), and jokes about how in

News paper Productions: People just see a Parcel of misleading Words, without considering their Propriety or Foundation, and they pay that Compliment to Mr. Woodfall's Taste, to suppose that there must be some Truth in whatever he admits to a Place in his Paper, without making Allowances for the Necessity he is under sometimes to oblige Blockheads, that he may seem impartial.¹⁹

Sheridan here has his tongue in his cheek while writing of the Woodfalls' desire to simply appear "impartial"—like Garrick, he too would go on to use their friendship and influence to bolster his own burgeoning social celebrity. His courtship of Elizabeth Ann Linley (1754-1792), a renowned singer in Bath, was popular gossip in the papers over the next few years, and the affair exemplifies Sheridan's ties to the Woodfall family of printers. Linley sought refuge in Sheridan and his sisters after an unwanted proposal from Captain Thomas Matthews (1741-1820), a married socialite in Bath. Linley plotted to retire from both social life and her musical career over the incident, and set out to join a

¹⁹ Letter from Richard Brinsley Sheridan "to the Printer of the Public Advertiser", rpt. in *The Letters of Richard Brinsley Sheridan*, Vol. 1, Cecil Price, ed. (Oxford UP, 1966), pp. 6-12.

convent in France. Sheridan served as her escort. In March of 1772, they set sail from London to Dunkirk where Sheridan's sister reports her brother "was more explicit with Miss Linley as to his views in accompanying her to France. He told her that he could not be content to leave her in a convent unless she consented to a previous marriage"—his own—"which had all along been the object of his hopes".²⁰ Linley, as the story goes, "preferred him to any person", and "was not difficult to persuade", so the couple arranged to elope in Calais.²¹ Their plans were swiftly interrupted, however, by Linley's father—composer Thomas Linley (1733-1795)—who trailed their convoy at sea, and ordered his daughter back to Bath to resume singing. When Sheridan returned to London, he fought two duels with Thomas Mathews for calling him "a L[iar] and a treacherous S[coundrel]" in the *Bath Chronicle* of April 8th.²² Sheridan "resolved to answer it immediately, but first told his friend Woodfall to publish it in his paper, in order that the public might see the charge and the refutation. Woodfall followed his directions, circulated the sandal through

²⁰ The source of this account, as noted above, is Sheridan's sister: Anglo-Irish diarist Ann Elizabeth "Betsy" Sheridan Le Fanu (1758-1837). I quote here from William Frasier Rae's *Sheridan: A Biography*, Vol. 1 (London: Richard Bentley and Son, 1896), p. 167 in lieu of her manuscript journals. Thomas Moore (1779-1852) also reproduces this account with more "eloquent" revisions to her wording in *Memoirs*, Vol. 1 (London: Longman, et. al., 1825), p. 67. See also: Ann Elizabeth Sheridan, *Betsy Sheridan's Journal: Letters from Sheridan's Sister, 1784-1786 and 1788-1790*, William Le Fanu, ed. (Oxford UP, 1986).

²¹ Rae, *Sheridan*, p. 168.

²² The *Burney Collection Newspapers* incomplete run of the *Bath Chronicle* precludes all issues printed before 1784. Matthews's accusations in the paper, however, are reproduced later in a July issue of Charles Dickens's *All the Year Round*, Vol. 38. (London: Chapman and Hall, 1886), pp. 544-545.

his columns, but never could induce Sheridan to write the promised exposure”.²³ Early editors of Sheridan’s collected *Works*, George Gabriel Sigmond (b. 1794) and Leigh Hunt (1784-1859), note in their prefatory “Life” that “he had requested Woodfall to print, in the ‘Morning Advertiser,’ the articles that reflected upon his own conduct, promising to send his refutation; unfortunately, his request was complied with, and the statements of his opponents were more largely promulgated”, but regardless, like Garrick before him, Sheridan “became the theme of conversation and of curiosity”, and “his first step in life led to notoriety, and in the minds of many to reputation, which he fortunately was capable of maintaining” throughout his career as a playwright, manager, and oppositional Whig member of parliament with a little help from his friends and allies: the Woodfall family.²⁴

Lucyle Werkmeister has charted Sheridan’s gradual accumulation of proprietary shares in a number of Whig-slanted digests throughout the late eighteenth century, and, as David Francis Taylor has more recently noted: “taking up the role of press manager for the Whigs soon after he entered parliament [in 1780], Sheridan thereafter facilitated and administered Whig subsidization, and thus editorial control, of a number of London’s daily newspapers” including the *London Courant*, *General Advertiser*, and *Morning*

²³ Review of *The Dramatic Works of the Right Honourable Richard Brinsley Sheridan*, by Leigh Hunt, *The North American Review* 66.138 (January 1848): 80. For Woodfall’s printed circulation of the ‘scandal’ at the behest of Sheridan, see also: “News”, *Morning Chronicle*, 8 July 1772, Issue 975.

²⁴ George Gabriel Sigmond, “Life of the Right Honourable Richard Brinsley Sheridan”, in *The Dramatic Works of the Right Honourable Richard Brinsley Sheridan*, Leigh Hunt, ed. (London: Henry G. Behn, 1848), p. 38.

Post.²⁵ He was “known as much for his press management as his theatre management”, and “as much for his paragraphing as his playwriting” in radical opposition to ministerial foreign policy during the American Revolutionary War. Sheridan’s growing shares in anti-ministerial news outlets of this period therefore “made him the paymaster of many of the most prominent journalists”, including the author of *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* (1793), William Godwin (1756-1836). The oppositional Whig press—Sheridan and the two Woodfall brothers leaders among it—combat Tory loyalist newspeak and propaganda regarding the Revolutionary War efforts abroad in papers like the *Morning Post* with their own Whiggish-newspeak in papers like the *Public Advertiser*. In her *History of the London Gazette, 1665-1965*, Phyllis Margaret Handover charts a significant increase during this period in expenditures of state capital put toward “pay[ing] for favourable publicity and to buy off unfavourable, and it became part of the duties of many senior public servants to do their share of ‘managing’ the Press by arranging for the supply of paragraphs” that favoured the ministry while censoring those in opposition to it.²⁶ Sheridan led the opposition, so to speak. He paints the pro-ministerial press as a propaganda “engine” propelling state corruption forward when he later champions the “liberty of the press” in an oft-quoted albeit widely misinterpreted speech regarding a

²⁵ David Francis Taylor, “‘Gross Deceptions’: Newspapers, Theatre, and the Propaganda War”, in *Theatres of Opposition: Empire, Revolution, and Richard Brinsley Sheridan* (Oxford UP, 2021), p. 49. For a detailed study of Sheridan’s involvement in the press, see: Lucyle Werkmeister, *The London Daily Press, 1772-1792* (Nebraska UP, 1963).

²⁶ Phyllis Margaret Handover, *A History of the London Gazette, 1665-1965* (London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1965), p. 58.

“Standing Order for the Exclusion of Strangers” in the House of Commons from February 6th of 1810:

Give me, said Mr. Sheridan, but the liberty of the press, and I will give the minister a venal House of Peers— I will give him a corrupt and servile House of Commons— I will give him the full swing of patronage of office — I will give him the whole host of ministerial influence [...] to purchase up submission and overawe resistance; and yet, armed with the liberty of the press, I will go forth to meet him undismayed; I will attack the mighty fabric he has reared with that mightier engine. I will shake down corruption from its height, and bury it beneath the ruins of those abuses it was meant to shelter (Hear! Hear!).²⁷

Sheridan’s speech, engraved in the marbled foyer of the *Chicago Tribune*, has long been read as nonpartisan espousal of journalistic freedom and integrity. His own oppositional stronghold over the Whig press during the print wars of the 1780s is often conveniently forgotten, however. He too exercised the full “swing of patronage and office”, but he did it from across the floor in the service of the Whig opposition.

Sheridan’s signature appears beneath an undated advertisement for Drury Lane addressed to Henry Sampson Woodfall for insertion in the *Public Advertiser*, suggesting that he succeeded Garrick as not only playhouse manager, but as playhouse publicist. The handwritten puff now archived at the British Library is written in the same character and language that Mr. Puff uses to exemplify a theatrical advertisement in *The Critic*:

The manager has got it up in his usual style of *liberality*; the performers highly merit the thanks of the author, the manager and the public. The performers were all at home in their respective parts. Mr. Henderson was

²⁷ “Mr. Sheridan’s Motion respecting the Standing Order for the Exclusion of Strangers”, 6 February 1810, rpt. in *The Parliamentary Debates: From the Year 1803 to the Present Time*, William Cobbett, ed., Vol. 15 (London: Longman, et. al., 1812), p. 341.

great beyond description, and if possible excelled his usual excellence. Miss Young and Charles Lewis shone with incomparable lustre, and received from a most *crowded and brilliant audience, repeated bursts of applause* [emphasis mine].²⁸

When Thomas King appears onstage in the role of Mr. Puff during the first act of *The Critic*, he offers Dangle and Sneer a similar theatrical puff that one might happen upon in the Woodfall papers over breakfast. “Mr Dodd”, he reads aloud while presumably turning to James William Dodd (1740-1796) onstage in the character of Mr. Dangle, “was astonishingly great in the character of Sir Harry! That universal and judicious actor Mr Palmer”, he continues, turning his focus to John Palmer (1744-1798) in the role of Sneer, but “it is not in the power of language to do justice to Mr King”, he rallies bashfully, turning his focus upon both a literal and figurative crowd of Drury Lane theatregoers:

he more than merited those *repeated bursts of applause* which he drew from a most *brilliant and judicious audience!* [...] In short, we are at a loss which to admire most—the unrivalled genius of the author, the great attention and *liberality* of the managers, the wonderful abilities of the painter, or the incredible exertions of all the performers [emphasis mine].²⁹

Although it provides compelling evidence of Sheridan’s theatrical puffery through the Woodfalls, the *Public Advertiser* promotion is exceptional for its signed identification of his authorship within their papers, and we can only speculate the full extent of his involvement in the routine drafting of marketing copy for the Drury Lane playhouse.

Sheridan would, however, later benefit from the Woodfall brothers’ political journalism

²⁸ “Sheridan Papers: miscellaneous correspondence and political papers, chiefly notes for speeches, of Richard Brinsley Sheridan (b. 1751, d. 1816) and his family, together with miscellaneous literary notes” [manuscript], British Library, Add MS 58277, fo. 161.

²⁹ Sheridan, *Critic*, p. 40.

during his career as a Member of Parliament, suggesting a prolonged alliance between the Whigs. The Woodfalls transcribed and reported Sheridan's notoriously meandering speeches in the House of Commons for their newspapers, and, as Daniel Pulteney (1749-1811), sitting for the Borough of Bramber, later observes in 1787, he rarely spoke "one half the nonsense Mr. [William] Woodfall has made him say" and "is so connected with all these reporters as Manager, and [ex-]Secretary to the Treasury and author, that they are always determined to make him *pointed*, as they call it, in reply, and when they do not understand what he says, they give him any abuse of their own".³⁰ All of the license that the Woodfalls took in their parliamentary transcriptions worked to the benefit of both Sheridan and his growing faction within the Whig party. Indeed, the brothers can hardly be said to be "impartial" when we begin to probe into their social network, as Pulteney jests, but, by the late 1780s, Sheridan hardly required their patronage with the press.

THEATRE, POLITICS, & "THEATRICAL POLITICS"

What primarily distinguishes Sheridan's *Critic* from Buckingham's *Rehearsal* is the induction. Where Buckingham's play begins with two gentlemen strolling the streets of London, *The Critic* opens to a breakfasting room of a middling-class husband and wife: Mr. Dangle and Mrs. Dangle. Like Johnson and Smith, the couple are first

³⁰ Letter from "Daniel Pulteneu to the Duke [of Rutland]", 19 March 1787, rpt. in *The Manuscripts of His Grace the Duke of Rutland*, Vol. 3 (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1894), pp. 378-379

discovered in conversation regarding contemporary theatre and drama. While the London stage is described in terms of a diverting “pastime” for Buckingham’s two gentlemen, Mr. Dangle regards it as a “mirror of nature” providing “the Abstract and brief Chronicles of the Time”.³¹ When James William Dodd first appears onstage alongside the Drury Lane company queen dowager Elizabeth Hopkins (1731-1801) in the character of Mrs. Dangle, the couple are found “at Breakfast and reading Newspapers”.³² Whereas in *The Rehearsal* Buckingham had represented the theatregoing public in the form of courtly gentlemen, Sheridan’s adaptation represents the theatregoing public as the middling sorts with enough disposable income to finance the odd ticket to Drury Lane. Despite ongoing reports of sociopolitical revolutions abroad and an impending naval invasion through the English Channel at home, Mr. Dangle is only concerned with the latest theatrical news and intelligence. As the curtain draws, Dodd is seated next to Hopkins reading the headlines from the latest London papers:

MR. DANGLE: “Brutus to Lord North.”— “Letter the second on the STATE OF THE ARMY.”— Pshaw! “To the first L—dash D of the A—dash Y.”— “Genuine Extract of a letter from ST KITT’S.”— “COXHEATH INTELLIGENCE.” [...] Pshaw! Nothing but about the fleet and the nation! — And I hate all politics but theatrical politics.— Where’s the MORNING CHRONICLE? ³³

³¹ Sheridan, *Critic*, p. 13. See also: *The Rehearsal* (1672), p. 2.

³² Sheridan, *Critic*, p. 1. Sheridan’s original ‘Dramatis Personae’ lists “Mrs. Hopkins” as playing the part of Mrs. Dangle, and while it is entirely possible that the part was played by one of Elizabeth Hopkins daughters in the company, a more probable casting choice is their mother who appeared as Gertrude in *Hamlet* during the mainpiece that evening. See: “Hopkins, Mrs William, Elizabeth, née Barton”, in *A Biographical Dictionary of Actors*, Vol. 7, pp. 410-413.

³³ Sheridan, *Critic*, p. 1.

Hopkins, glancing upward from her broadsheet, looks to Dodd and wryly replies, “Yes, that’s your gazette”, before disinterestedly carrying-on with her breakfast rituals. Sheridan is chronicling the morning run of newspaper headlines contemporaneous with his play’s premiere. *The Critic* begins, as O’Quinn notes, by presenting “a catalogue of ineffectual leadership, poor management, ministerial conspiracy, elite dissipation, [and] political factionalism” disguised as headlines.³⁴ Brutus is a pseudonym of an anonymous Whig pamphleteer who routinely made sport of Tory Prime Minister Frederick North, 2nd earl of Guilford (1732-1792) in *The Public Advertiser* from 1769 through 1771, and the name was later used to sign-off a letter to the editor on the 6th of September in 1779 satirizing the “military discipline” and “formidable Appearance of the Volunteers” comprising the local militias in Westminster and Middlesex raised to combat a Franco-Spanish invasion through the Channel during the American Revolutionary War.³⁵ As House leader, Prime Minister to George III, and head of the Tories, Lord North often found himself subject to critical censure by Whig propagandists of the 1770s— Sheridan chief among them. From the 13th of March to the 2nd of June preceding the play’s premiere, Sheridan had vilified Lord North in a bi-weekly pamphlet addressed “To the Freeholders of England” and “To the Officers of British Navy” that he called *The Englishman*. The prominent Whig

³⁴ O’Quinn, *Entertaining Crisis*, p. 225

³⁵ “News”, *Public Advertiser*, 6 September 1779, Issue 14013. For a detailed study of the conflict with France and Spain in the English Channel, see: Alfred Temple Patterson, *The Other Armada: The Franco-Spanish Attempt to Invade Britain in 1779* (Manchester UP, 1960).

politicians and vocal opponents of George III Charles James Fox (1749-1806) and James Townsend (1737-1787) also contributed to Sheridan's print campaign against the heads of state that spring.³⁶

Their first tract takes aim at John Montagu, 4th earl of Sandwich and First Lord of the Admiralty (1718-1792) in the North administration— “first L dash D of the A dash Y”, as Mr. Dangle later pauses to parse for a moment. Sandwich campaigned in parliament for a concentration of the naval fleets at home to combat an impending French invasion, and his policy would reduce the number of ships sent abroad to fight in the American War of Independence. In 1778, France had declared war on Britain in support of the American rebels, but, when Spain later entered the conflict alongside the French in the English Channel, Sandwich's plan backfired. The Royal Navy was outnumbered. Both Sandwich and Commander-in-Chief over the Channel Fleet, Sir Charles Hardy (1714-1780), were in turn satirized as ineffectual leaders in the press. Sheridan characterizes it as “an unlucky business, wretchedly conceived, and miserably ill calculated to obtain its object” in the first issue of his pro-Country Whig pamphlet, and he “appeal[s] to the understandings of the middling class of people: who”, they argue, “have ever had, and ever will have, in times of actual peril, a deciding voice for the removal,

³⁶ All seventeen issues of *The Englishman* are accessible through the *Burney Newspapers Collection*. John Roach suggests that Sheridan's contributions to the Whig journal “were rewarded with the appointment of Under Secretary to Mr. Fox, then Secretary of State for the Foreign Department” in his *Memoirs of the Life and Death of the Right Honourable R. B. Sheridan* (London: W. Hone, 1816), p. 7.

and exemplary punishment of incapable or unprincipled ministers”.³⁷ These allusions to British naval incompetence are what Mr. Dangle happens upon in *The Craftsman or Say’s Weekly Journal* as he recites the recent newspaper headlines over breakfast.³⁸ The journal issued a “Genuine Extract of a letter from ST KITT’S” on the morning of the play’s premiere, and similar publicized correspondence were everyday reading in the papers since at least the summertime when French fleets began to make significant territorial gains in the West Indies. The Royal Navy retreated to Liamuiga (later, Saint Christopher Island or ‘Saint Kitts’) to repair and regroup as a result of the loss, and Southern England sprouted military encampments along prospective invasion routes in light of the continued conflict. Reports on the latest “COXHEATH INTELLIGENCE” that Mr. Dangle skims with a “*Pshaw*” frequently circulated northward from the countryside to the capital. These navy bootcamps featured spectacular training drills that worked as flag-waving advertisements for British military might, and they attracted local tourists from the city and nearby resort towns. They were so popular and cut so deeply into Drury Lane’s profits that Sheridan satirized the phenomenon a year prior in his 1778 play called *The Camp*.

With “nothing but news about the fleet and the nation” to divert him at breakfast, Mr. Dangle reaches for *The Morning Chronicle*— the self-touted “lead as a theatrical reviewer”.³⁹ Sheridan would later go on to write for the *Morning Chronicle* in the 1790s

³⁷ “News”, *Englishman*, 13 March 1779, Issue 1.

³⁸ “News”, *Craftsman or Say’s Weekly Journal*, 30 October 1779, Issue 1040.

³⁹ “News”, *Morning Chronicle*, 5 November, 1777, Issue 2640.

when James Perry hired him to pen radical Whiggish tracts on parliamentary reform amid the French Revolution.⁴⁰ The significance of Mr. Dangle directly invoking the *Chronicle* by name in the opening lines of *The Critic*, however, has more to do with both Sheridan and Garrick's relationship with the aforementioned founding editor and principal dramatic critic of the paper: William Woodfall. In the spring of 1779, but months before the play's premiere, Woodfall printed "THE REPLIES OF ADMIRAL KEPPEL, TO THE CHARGES *against him*" before a court martial in Portsmouth regarding the Royal Navy's humiliation at the First Battle of Ushant on the 27th of July.⁴¹ Commander-in-Chief over the Channel Fleet, Admiral August Keppel, 1st Viscount Keppel (1725-1786), had shifted blame unto commanding officer Sir Hugh Palliser (1723-1796) for mismanaging the British convoy, and accused the subordinate Admiral of conspiring with his parliamentary rival, "first Lord of the Admiralty", Lord Sandwich, to undermine and see to the failure of their operation.⁴² Before the breakout of the Anglo-French War that summer, Keppel and Sandwich fought over the cost of copper-bottoming the hulls of their vessels to ward off barnacle and shipworm infestation. Keppel argued coppering "gave additional strength to the navy",

⁴⁰ The anonymity of his journalism kept authorities at bay, but Sheridan openly and often supported the right to revolution in France in his parliamentary speeches. Perry, however, was tried with seditious libel on more than one occasion, and convicted to a three-month sentence at Newgate Prison in 1798. For a detailed study of Perry's tenure at *The Morning Chronicle*, see: Ivon Asquith, "Advertising and the Press in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries: James Perry and the *Morning Chronicle*, 1790-1821", *The Historical Journal* 18.4 (December 1975): 703-724.

⁴¹ "News", *Morning Chronicle*, 2 February 1779, Issue 3028.

⁴² N. A. M. Rodger, "Montagu, John, fourth earl of Sandwich", in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

and “reproached Lord Sandwich with having refused to sheath only a few ships with copper at his request, when he had since ordered the whole navy to be sheathed”.⁴³ The paper war dramatized in Dangle’s recitation of the morning headlines played out between excluded opposition-Whig-supporters of Keppel and pro-ministerial-supporters of Palliser and Sandwich.⁴⁴ Both accused the other of treason, and both sides were later acquitted of all charges at the court martial in Portsmouth. Sheridan, Fox, and their Whig ally Edmund Burke (1729-1797) travelled to the docks to witness Keppel’s denunciatory “REPLIES” “TO THE CHARGES *against him*” printed by Woodfall in *The Morning Chronicle* next to a column charting Garrick’s funeral procession through London, and, as Daniel J. Ennis points out: “the only casualty of this French invasion, it turns out, was David Garrick”.⁴⁵ The Woodfalls, however, later liked to tout that they were “*fin*ed by the House of Lords; *confined* by the House of Commons: *fin*ed and *confined* by the Court of King’s Bench; and *indicted* at the Old Bailey” to serve a year sentence at Newgate Prison over published support for Keppel in the papers.⁴⁶

⁴³ “Parliamentary History” [March], in *The London Magazine: or, Gentleman’s Monthly Intelligencer*, Vol. 50 (London: R. Baldwin, 1781), p. 112.

⁴⁴ For a concise study of the Keppel-Palliser affair, see: J. H. Broomfield, “The Keppel-Palliser Affair, 1778-1779”, *The Mariner’s Mirror* 47.3 (1961): 195-207. See also: Julia Banister, “The Making of Military Celebrity: The Trials of Admirals Augustus Keppel and Hugh Palliser, 1778-1779”, in *Masculinity, Militarism, and Eighteenth-Century Culture, 1669-1815* (Cambridge UP, 2018), pp. 151-184, and Sarah Kinkel, “The Authoritarian Navy and the Crisis of Empire”, in *Disciplining the Empire: Politics, Governance, and the Rise of the British Navy* (Harvard UP, 2018), pp. 155-190.

⁴⁵ Daniel J. Ennis, “Invasion of the Afterpieces: Richard Brinsley Sheridan and Frederick Pilon, 1778-79” in *Prologues, Epilogues, Curtain-raisers, and Afterpieces*, p. 217.

⁴⁶ Nichols, *Literary Anecdotes*, Vol. 1, p. 301.

Sheridan's induction to *The Critic* thus dramatizes the Franco-Spanish invasion hysteria running through London incited by ongoing newspaper reports of foreign naval fleets in the English Channel. After glossing the headlines and distracting himself from "all politics but theatrical politics" by way of *The Morning Chronicle*, Mr. Dangle is arraigned by Mrs. Dangle for his inaction and indifference to the ongoing crisis. Looking upward from her presumably pro-ministerial paper, Elizabeth Hopkins raises a brow to Thomas King across the breakfast table preoccupying himself with one of the Woodfall papers. Distressed over the pro-ministerial reports working to muster popular support for the navy, Mrs. Dangle's paranoia plays out through her pert denunciation of Mr. Dangle's absorption in English theatre:

MRS. DANGLE: [...] And what is worse than all, now that the Manager has monopolized the Opera-House, haven't we the Signors and Signoras calling here, sliding their smooth semibreves, and gargling glib divisions in their outlandish throats—with foreign emissaries and French spies, for aught I know, disguised like fiddlers and figure dancers!

MR. DANGLE: Mercy! Mrs Dangle!

MRS. DANGLE: And to employ yourself so idly at such an alarming crisis as this too—when, if you had the least spirit, you would have been at the head of one of the Westminster associations, or trailing a volunteer pike in the Artillery Ground. But you—o' my conscience, I believe if the French were landed to-morrow, your first inquiry would be, whether they had brought a theatrical troupe with them.⁴⁷

Sheridan writes himself into *The Critic* when Mrs. Dangle at this moment refers to the "Manager's" recent "monopolization" of "the Opera-House". In addition to managing Drury Lane, Sheridan had partnered with Thomas 'Jupiter' Harris (*d.* 1820)—stage-

⁴⁷ Sheridan, *Critic*, p. 5.

manager of adjacent Covent Garden “Opera House”—to purchase the King’s Theatre in the Haymarket where Handel regularly played.⁴⁸ In 1778, a year before the premiere of *The Critic*, Sheridan and Harris sought and failed to license the King’s Theatre as a third patent theatre. Because the city’s patent playhouses were the only two theatres in the city permitted to stage spoken-word English drama, French and Italian operas were routinely performed at King’s. Sheridan and Harris leased the theatre for £22,000, and, according to *The Morning Chronicle*, “at a considerable expence, almost entirely new built the audience part of the house, and made a great variety of alterations... decorated with two figures painted by Gainsborough, which are remarkably picturesque and beautiful”.⁴⁹ The ‘two figures’ painted in white on each side of the curtain by celebrated portrait artist Thomas Gainsborough (1727-1788) represent the Greek muses of Music and Dance, Euterpe and Terpsichore, and, according to *The Morning Post*, Robert Adam (1728-1792) was commissioned to design a proscenium frame rivalling the Covers Garden, Theatre Royal design by Giovanni Battista Cipriani (1727-1785).⁵⁰ Harris, however, left the

⁴⁸ The ‘King’s Theatre in the Haymarket’ was first designed and established by Sir John Vanbrugh in 1705 as the ‘Queen’s Theatre’ for Queen Anne, renamed the ‘King’s Theatre’ in 1714 upon the ascension of King George I, and again renamed ‘Her Majesty’s Theatre’ in 1837 upon the ascension of Queen Victoria. For a detailed history of the opera house, see: Daniel Nalbach, *The King’s Theatre, 1704-1867: London’s First Italian Opera House* (London: Society for Theatre Research, 1972). See also: Warren Oakley, *Thomas ‘Jupiter’ Harris: Spinning Dark Intrigue at Covent Garden Theatre, 1767-1820* (Manchester UP, 2018).

⁴⁹ “Arts and Culture”, *Morning Chronicle*, 25 November 1778, Issue 2969.

⁵⁰ “Arts and Culture”, *The Morning Post*, 30 November 1778, Issue 1909. For a detailed history of Sheridan and Harris’s redesigning of the theatre’s interior, see: “The Haymarket Opera House” in *Survey of London*, Vols. 29-30, F. H. W. Sheppard, ed. (London: London City Council, 1960), pp. 223-250.

entirety of his shares to Sheridan after an unsuccessful first season, and, in May of 1780, Sheridan resigned “the entire controul of the money matters” to William Taylor (c. 1753-1825), a former assistant to Harris at Covent Garden.⁵¹ The friendship and financial partnering between the two playhouse managers is significant because it reveals Sheridan working behind the curtain to capitalize upon the reigning vogue for Italian opera—the “signors and signoras”, “fiddlers and figure dancers” whom Mrs. Dangle suspects are foreign spies. Harris, it is worth observing, opened the Covent Garden theatre on the 14th of September in 1767, his first season as playhouse proprietor with George Coleman (1732-1794), with a production of *The Rehearsal* serving as his vehicle to reintroduce the acting company to theatregoers after the summer recess. Like all adaptations of the Restoration burlesque on the later eighteenth-century stage, Harris’s *Rehearsal* provided a meta-critical framework through which popular dramatic genres are critically scrutinized under the microscopes of English thespians like Johnson and Smith, and the acting company afforded a liminal window through which to play caricatures of their own celebrity personae.

Sheridan adapts a similar meta-critical framework in *The Critic* as Mr. and Mrs. Dangle are entertained by “the smooth semibreves and gargling glib divisions” of their houseguests in waiting during the play’s opening scene. Mr. Dangle reminds Mrs. Dangle

⁵¹ Letter from Richard Brinsley Sheridan to Peter Crawford, May 1780, rpt. in Robert Bray O’Reilly, *An Authentic Narrative of the Principal Circumstances Relating to the Opera-House in the Hay-Market* (London: J. Desmond, et. al. 1791), p. 9-11.

that she is “no loser by” his love of the theatre, and afforded “all the advantages” of his superficial ties to it:

MR. DANGLE: Mightn't you, last winter, have had the reading of the new Pantomime a fortnight previous to its performance? And doesn't Mr. Fosbrook let you take places for a play before it is advertis'd, and set you down for a Box for every new piece through the season? And didn't my friend, Mr. Smatter, dedicate his last Farce to you at my particular request, Mrs. Dangle?

MRS. DANGLE: Yes; but wasn't the Farce damn'd, Mr. Dangle? And to be sure it is extremely unpleasant to have one's house made the motley rendezvous of all the lackeys of literature!— The very high change of trading authors and jobbing critics!— Yes, my drawing-room is an absolute register-office for candidate actors, and poets without character; — then to be continually alarmed with Misses and Ma'ams piping histeric changes on JULIETS and DORINDAS, POLLYS and OPHELIAS; and the very furniture trembling at the probationary starts and unprovok'd rants of would-be RICHARDS and HAMLETS!⁵²

The “Mr. Fosbrook” that Sheridan invokes through Mr. Dangle in this passage would have been a familiar figure to theatregoers in attendance at the premiere of Sheridan's play. He is Thomas Fosbrook (*d.* 1830), Drury Lane's bookkeeper during the managerial tenures of both Garrick and Sheridan.⁵³ More significant, however, are the character-types that Mrs. Dangle references to make her case. That the Dangles' “drawing-room” serves as a meeting grounds for would-be Shakespearean actors and actresses points to a Drury Lane repertoire grounded in Shakespearean tragedy, and, as Daniel O'Quinn notes, “having established the autonomy of the commercial theatrical system” in the decades

⁵² Sheridan, *Critic*, pp. 4-5.

⁵³ Fosbrook, as Michael Corder observes in his editorial notes to the most recent edition of Sheridan's playtext, would stand just offstage at Drury Lane “count[ing] the spectators to ensure that ticket receipts tallied with the numbers present”, see: “The Critic”, in *The School for Scandal and Other Plays* (Oxford UP, 2008), p. 410.

before Sheridan's *Critic*, "Garrick and others falling within his sphere of influence attempted to legitimate the theatre as a site of national identity by remediating Shakespeare for a new age". The project of rejuvenating Shakespearean tragedy, however, came to an impasse following Garrick's death in January of 1779, and, as an afterpiece, *The Critic* self-consciously addresses this through its burlesque sendup of the evening's mainpiece: a production of Garrick's adaptation of *Hamlet* without the actor-manager whose name had for decades been associated with the leading role on Drury Lane playbills. James Morwood has thoroughly charted Sheridan's burlesque inversions of *Hamlet* in Mr. Puff's play-within-the-play, but the point is that in the wake of Garrick's passing "theatre's place in the propagation of national fantasy was interrupted", and "this interruption coincided with the identity crisis prompted by American decolonization".⁵⁴ What reads like the everyday domestic squabbling of Mr. and Mrs. Dangle in the opening scene of *The Critic* in effect plays like a dialectical critique of Sheridan's political and theatrical moment during the autumn of 1779.

The first act of *The Critic* is set entirely within the Dangles' household which acts as a type of rehearsal space for Sheridan's first of two plays-within-the-play. Mr. and Mrs. Dangle are interrupted from their breakfast by a series of houseguests. The first guest is Mr. Sneer played by John Palmer who earlier acted the part of the Ghost of King Hamlet

⁵⁴ Daniel O'Quinn, "Knowledge Transmission: Theatrical Intelligence and the Intelligence of the Theatre", in *A Cultural History of Theatre*, Vol. 4, Mechele Leon, ed. (London: Bloomsbury, 2019), pp. 221-223.

in Sheridan's mainpiece.⁵⁵ Sneer is a friend of Mr. Dangle in the business of theatrical criticism, and together the two serve as eighteenth-century foils to Buckingham's Johnson and Smith. When a domestic servant returns to the Dangles' foyer to fetch and welcome him, Mr. and Mrs. Dangle swiftly shift gears and get into character to entertain their morning guests:

DANGLE: Plague on't, now we must appear loving and affectionate, or Sneer will hitch us into a story.

MRS. DANGLE: With all my heart; you can't be more ridiculous than you are.

DANGLE: You are enough to provoke—

[*Enter MR. SNEER*]

MR. DANGLE: Hah! my dear Sneer, I am vastly glad to see you. My dear, here's Mr Sneer.

MRS. DANGLE: Good morning to you, sir.

MR. DANGLE: Mrs Dangle and I have been diverting ourselves with the papers.— Pray, Sneer, won't you go to Drury-lane theatre the first night of Puff's tragedy?

Sneer proceeds to solicit Mr. Dangle's influence and "power with the managers" at Drury Lane regarding "a genteel comedy" that he touts to have been "written by a person of consequence" before the Dangles are again interrupted by another visiting houseguest: Sir Fretful Plagiary acted by William Parsons.⁵⁶ Fretful has long been read as a caricature of the tragedian Richard Cumberland (1732-1811) with whom Sheridan often sparred wits. That Sheridan had Cumberland in mind when he sat to draw the caricature of Plagiary has been noted since the premiere of the play. One critic writing for *The Lady's Magazine* of

⁵⁵ John Palmer was among the most celebrated Shakespearean players and comedians of his day. For a study of his illustrious acting career, see: "Palmer, John", in *A Biographical Dictionary of Actors*, Vol. 11, pp. 161-177.

⁵⁶ Sheridan, *Critic*, pp. 3-8.

November 1779, for instance, refers to it as “one of the most harsh and severe caricatures that has been attempted since the days of Aristophanes, of which a celebrated sentimental writer is evidently the object; a great part of what is said by his representative being literally taken from his usual conversation”.⁵⁷ Sheridan’s second act play-within-the-play is also a burlesque sendup of the sort of patriotic tragedies and theatrical spectacles that Cumberland staged during the American War of Independence, but, like Buckingham’s caricature of John Dryden in *The Rehearsal*, Sheridan’s caricature is pointed and personal during the opening dialogue in the Dangles’ breakfasting room. Sheridan supposedly admitted to drawing the caricature in reference to Cumberland decades later in 1814, but “he did not, however, intend that Parsons should dress after Cumberland, which that actor did”, just as Lacy is supposed to have fashioned himself in the black velvet habits of John Dryden a century prior.⁵⁸ After ridiculing Cumberland through burlesque personation and quoted criticism of his dramatic works from the latest newspapers, the party is once again interrupted by the domestic servant who announces the arrival of “an Italian gentleman, with a French interpreter, and three young ladies, and a dozen musicians”.⁵⁹ The stage is then set for Sheridan’s first play-within-the-play.

⁵⁷ *The Lady’s Magazine; or, Entertaining Companion for the Fair Sex*, Vol. 10 (London: G. Robinson, 1779), p. 588.

⁵⁸ The source of this confession is rooted in an anecdote recounted in the published diary of John Cam Hobhouse, 1st Baron Broughton (1786-1869): “Talking of Cumberland, he said that he had drawn the character of Sir Fretful Plagiary partly from that writer, and he quoted several passages intended to apply to him”, see: *Recollections of A Long Life*, Vol. 1, Charlotte Hobhouse Carleton, ed. (London: John Murray, 1909), p. 138.

⁵⁹ Sheridan, *Critic*, p. 25.

Few critics address Sheridan's operatic interlude in the play wherein Mrs. Dangle is discovered in a one-sided conversation with "the signors and signoras" at the outset of the play's second scene: Signor Pasticcio Ritornello, Three Daughters of Signor Pasticcio Ritornello, and an interpreter whose English translations she does not understand. When Mr. Dangle and Mr. Sneer accompany her, Mr. Dangle declares: "Egad, I think the interpreter is the hardest to be understood of the two".⁶⁰ Drawing on the familiar cry of Buckingham's Bayes—"Igad!"—Sheridan builds on the rehearsal play burlesques of his predecessors by satirizing the eighteenth-century vogue for foreign-language opera, and, as John Loftis has noted, the brief rehearsal staged in the Dangles' drawing room "draws from his recent experience as part owner of the King's Theatre" and opera house in the Haymarket.⁶¹ Pasticcio was first played by Carlo Antonio Delpini (*d.* 1828), an Italian pantomimist hired at Drury Lane by Garrick in 1774, and the Ritornello daughters were played by the sopranos Ann Field (*d.* 1789) and Harriet Abrams (*c.* 1760-1825) in early performances of *The Critic*. Their song and Sheridan's first rehearsal play-within-the-play are entirely omitted from the printed playtext, but they were sold separately as their own operatic work even sooner than the play itself circulated in print. For a single shilling, theatregoers could recite *The SONG and DUET Sung by Sigr. Delpini, Miss Field, and Miss Abrams, in the Entertainment of the CRITIC* in the comfort of their own drawing rooms.⁶²

⁶⁰ Sheridan, *Critic*, p. 31.

⁶¹ John Loftis, "The Theatre-Manager and *The Critic*", in *Sheridan and the Drama of Georgian England* (Oxford UP, 1976), p. 104.

⁶² Richard Brinsley Sheridan, *The Song and Duet Sung by Sigr. Delpini, Miss Field, and Miss Abrams, in the Entertainment of the Critic* (London: S. A. and P. Thompson, 1779).

Fashioned as a travelling Italian troupe, Delpini, Field, and Abrams sing their operatic ditties in French and Italian before Mr. Dangle “*beating out of time*” to the tune:

Flat’rer why dost thou deceive me?
Why betray my constant love?
Why with sighs and well feign’d Sorrow
Hast thou sworn thy faith to prove?
False betrayer, thou base deceiver,
Every grief I owe to thee.⁶³

Critics, like Loftis, who do address Sheridan’s first rehearsal play-within-the-play have tended to overlook these short songs as trifling satires simply capitalizing upon the opera vogue without considering the lyrics’ broader correlation to his second play-within-the-play and burlesque subversion of Garrick’s adaptation of *Hamlet*. Indeed, like Mr. Sneer and Sir Fretful Plagiary before them, the foreign troupe arrive at the Dangles’ house in the hope of soliciting Mr. Dangle’s recommendation and “power” with the managers at Drury Lane. Although not an explicit burlesque, the song is highly reminiscent and subverting of the themes of feigned love and deception from the evening’s mainpiece. Part of the joke that Sheridan is attempting to relate is that even English tragedy par excellence is being subsumed by eighteenth-century theatregoers’ tastes for song, dance, and spectacle. It is

⁶³ The Italian lyrics as they appear in the *Song and Duet* read: “Lusinghiero m’ingannasti / Mi tradisti O Dio per che / Tu piangesti e sospirasti / Tu giurasti fede ame / Traditore ingannatore / Tutto il male vien da te”, and the English translation above is quoted from “The Critic”, in *The Dramatic Works of Richard Brinsley Sheridan*, Vol. 2, Cecil Price, ed. (Oxford UP, 1973), pp. 484-485. There has been some debate regarding the originality of the Italian song, see: Alfred Lowenberg, “The Songs in ‘The Critic’”, in *Times Literary Supplement* (28 March 1942), p. 168. See also: Frederick Atkinson, “Favourite Duetto in the Critic”, in *The Banquet of Thalia* (York: Wilson, Spence and Mawman, 1792), p. 35.

not enough to simply act *Hamlet*, but it must be adapted to the reigning taste and genre conventions that are sure to fill the pit and gallery at Drury Lane in lieu of the company's hottest commodity and favourite tragedian—Garrick. Critics have identified the *what* behind Sheridan's first rehearsal play-within-the-play, for it is in part a general burlesque on foreign-language opera, but they have failed to consider both the *why* and *how* this burlesque connects to the broader satiric subversion of the Shakespearean mainpiece that plays before it.

MR. GARRICK & MR. PUFF: A HAUNTOLOGY

The first act of *The Critic* ends in the same manner as it began: with an embedded critique of contemporary journalism. Before leaving to attend the rehearsal at Drury Lane, Mr. Dangle and Mr. Sneer are introduced to the playwright: Mr. Puff. Unlike Bayes, Sheridan's caricatured tragedian reveals himself to be a hack publicist in addition to a dramatist. Like Mr. Dangle's recitation of the morning headlines over breakfast, Puff provides drafted examples of not only the latest theatrical gossip but his own "political memorandums" supposed to be printed the following day:

MR. PUFF: To take PAUL JONES, and get the INDIAMEN out of the SHANNON—reinforce BYRON—compel the DUTCH to—so!—I must do that in the evening papers, or reserve it for the Morning Herald, for I know that I have undertaken tomorrow, besides, to establish the unanimity of the fleet in the Public Advertiser, and to shoot CHARLES FOX in the Morning Post,— So, egad, I haven't a moment to lose.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ Sheridan, *Critic*, p. 46.

There is an underlying significance and implied critique to the specific papers and stories that Puff is drafting in these final lines of the play's first act, but unpacking Sheridan's satire requires an intimate understanding of each newspaper's political persuasion. Daniel O'Quinn notes that "Puff is about to go and invent stories about the navy for papers from the opposite sides of the political spectrum" by writing one article on the supposed unity of the admiralty for the Whig-slanted *Public Advertiser* run by the Woodfalls, and another column trashing Sheridan's colleague in print and the House of Commons, Charles James Fox, for the pro-ministerial *Morning Post*. Puff, as O'Quinn observes, "is working both sides of the issue on opposite sides of the press in order to stir controversy regarding the Ministry's management of the war, not because he is concerned with the fate of the nation, but because factional controversy sells papers".⁶⁵ Parallels between Puff and Bayes, as I will show, become markedly clear later in *The Critic*, but it is the tragedian's preliminary descriptions of his work in advertising that first intimate a caricatured sendup of Garrick. Sneer asks Puff "what first put [him] on" to advertising, for instance, and his reply presumes an intimate knowledge of Garrick's involvement in the local newspapers and ongoing publicity of Drury Lane:

⁶⁵ O'Quinn, *Entertaining Crisis*, p. 226-227. There is, as far as I have been able to discern, no record of a *Morning Herald* printed before November 1st of 1780, and Sheridan's allusion to the paper was in all likelihood added sometime later between the premiere of the play in 1779 and the first printing of the play in 1781. Mr. Puff's allusions to the 'Father of the American Navy' John Paul Jones (1747-1792), and the British Vice-Admiral John Byron (1723-1786) in the River Shannon suggest that the *Herald* was part of the pro-ministerial and pro-war media engine during this period.

MR. PUFF: Egad, sir—sheer necessity—the proper parent of an art so nearly allied to invention: you must know, Mr Sneer, that from the first time I tried my hand at an advertisement, my success was such, that for some time after, I led a most extraordinary life indeed!

MR. SNEER: How, pray?

MR. PUFF: Sir, I supported myself two years entirely by my misfortunes.

MR. SNEER: By your misfortunes!

MR. PUFF: Yes, sir, assisted by long sickness, and other occasional disorders; and a very comfortable living I had of it [...] I was twice burnt out, and lost my little all, both times! I lived upon those fires a month. I soon after was confined by a most excruciating disorder, and lost the use of my limbs! That told very well, for I had the case strongly attested, and went about to collect the subscriptions myself!⁶⁶

Leslie Ritchie notes that “updates on the precarious state of Garrick’s health were given out regularly, not just to excuse cancellations, but preventively, to explain why he would not be featured on the playbill”, and “there is scarcely a year in which the public is not notified” through the local papers “of its disappointment at not being able to view the actor” on some occasion.⁶⁷ So prolific was Garrick in the art of the publicized sick-note that Charles Burney (1726-1814) curated a scrapbook of puff pieces drawn to excuse the actor from his work, and one particularly noteworthy example cut from the Woodfalls’ *Public Advertiser* in February of 1771 reports: “Mr. Garrick intended to have appeared in the Character of Bayes this Week, but going out too soon, has relapsed again; and tho’ he is at present much better, it is feared he will not be able to perform any Character for

⁶⁶ Sheridan, *Critic*, p. 35-37.

⁶⁷ Ritchie, *David Garrick*, pp. 125-126.

some Time”.⁶⁸ What these continual reports on the state of Garrick’s health serve to accomplish, Ritchie observes, are “immediate advertising ends” for the actor and his theatre.⁶⁹ By limiting the supply of public access to his body onstage, Garrick increased a public demand for it simultaneously.

Garrick’s puffery as a subject of dramatic satire predates Sheridan’s caricature by decades, however. The actor-manager first appeared “in the Character of an Auctioneer” to deliver a prologue to Samuel Foote’s *Taste* on the 11th of January 1752 at Drury Lane. Bowing before theatregoers in a powdered wig with his tricorne cap against his breast, he introduced himself as Peter Puff: “*A Briton born, and bred an Auctioneer*” (fig. 4). What the actor-manager self-deprecatingly quotes for auction “Before this Court” of playgoers is the Theatre Royal itself. His jingoistic rhetoric brands the stage as a site of English cultural production increasingly influenced by foreign drama, and, to open theatregoers’ purses, argues that to exercise good “Taste” is to instead patronize plays “made at home” at the Drury Lane playhouse:

*I never yet sold Goods of foreign Growth;
Ne’er sent Commissions out to Greece or Rome;
My best antiquities are made at home.
I’ve Romans, Greeks, Italians, near at hand,
True Britons all— and living the Strand.
I ne’er for Trinckets rack my Pericranium,
They furnish out my Room from Herculaneum.
But hush —————*

⁶⁸ “News”, *Public Advertiser*, 18 February 1771, Issue 11304. See also: “Burney Papers, Vol. II, III. Lists by Burney of portraits and engravings of David Garrick or relating to his life and career; late 18th cent.”, 2 vols., British Library, Add MS 71707-71708.

⁶⁹ Ritchie, *David Garrick*, p. 128.

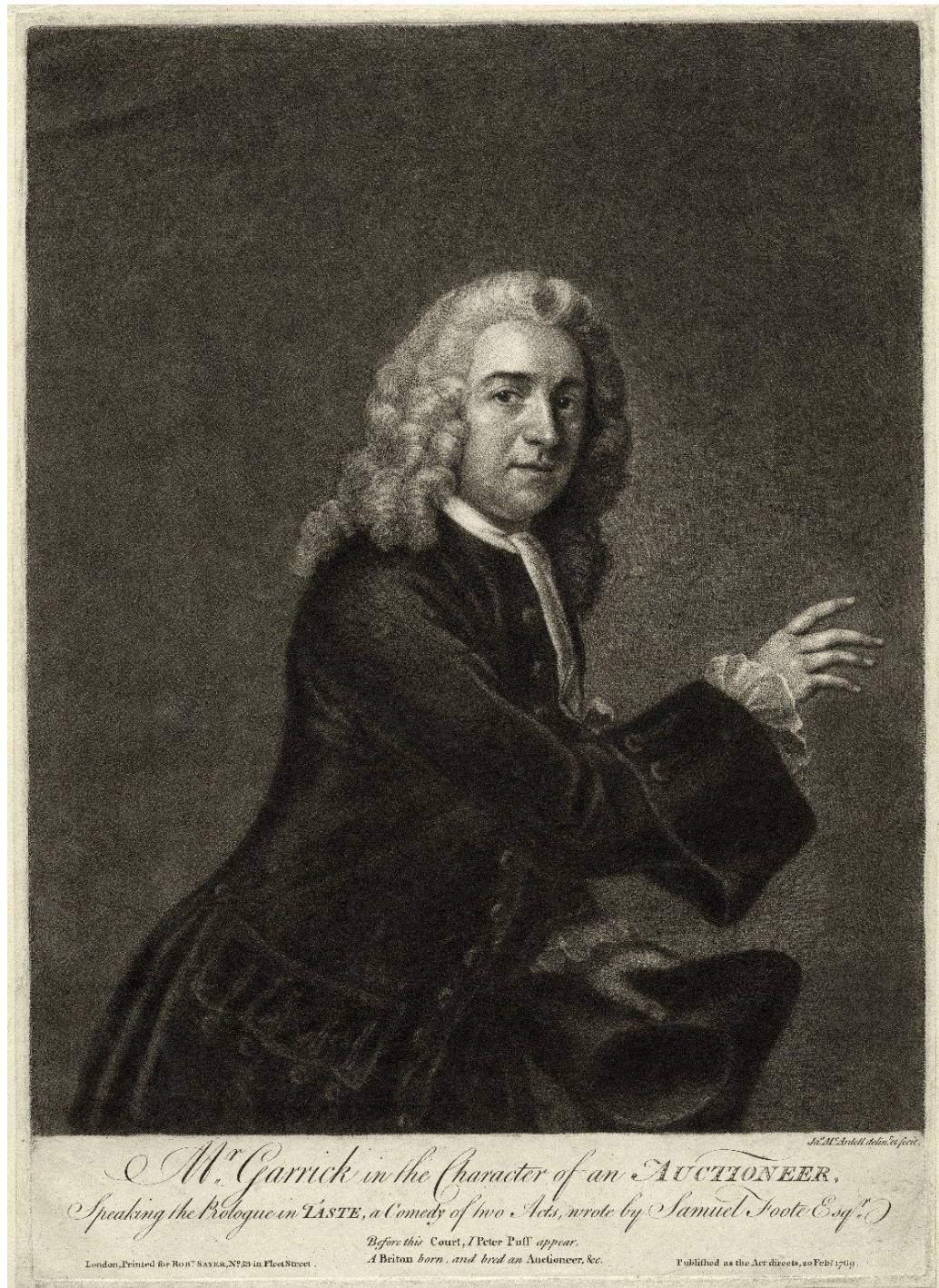


Fig. 4. James McArdell, *Mr. Garrick in the Character of an Auctioneer* (London: Robert Sayer, 1769). Mezzotint, Folger Shakespeare Library. Garrickiana Maggs, no. 176.

*Should it be known that English are employ'd,
Our Manufacture is at once destroy'd;
No matter what our countrymen deserve,
They'll thrive as Antients, but as Moderns starve—
If we should fall— to you it will be owing;
Farewell to Arts— they're going, going, going;
The fatal Hammer's in your hand, oh Town!*⁷⁰

Long before Sheridan drew his caricature of Mr. Puff, then, Garrick was performing self-deprecating caricatures as an auctioneering businessman of domestic theatrical products. Indeed, part of his legacy as manager of the theatre is founded upon his entrepreneurial success in attracting prospective shareholders to Drury Lane, thereby increasing revenue to finance aforementioned renovations, and, in turn, attracting even more business to the playhouse. While relating the nature of his publicity work to Dangle and Sneer, Mr. Puff explains that

MR. PUFF: Even the auctioneers now,—the auctioneers, I say, tho' the rogues have lately got some credit for their language— not an article of the merit their's [...] 'Twas I first taught them to crowd their advertisements with panegyric superlatives, each epithet rising above the other— like the Bidders in their own Auction-rooms! From ME they learn'd to enlay their phraseology with variegated chips of exotic metaphor: by ME too their inventive faculties were called forth.— Yes, sir, by ME they were instructed to clothe ideal walls with gratuitous fruits—to insinuate obsequious rivulets into visionary groves—to teach courteous shrubs to nod their approbation of the grateful soil! ⁷¹

⁷⁰ Samuel Foote, "Prologue. Written by Mr. Garrick, And spoken by him in the Character of an Auctioneer", in *Taste. A Comedy of Two Acts* (London: R. Francklin, 1752), n.p.

⁷¹ Sheridan, *Critic*, pp. 34-35.

Cecil Price has argued that Puff's "ridicule of the language of auctioneers was pointed at Robert Langford, who had made an effort to gain some financial control at Drury Lane".⁷² His emphasis on natural imagery in this passage is also markedly suggestive of the vocabulary surrounding Garrick's school of acting, his renovations to the Drury Lane playhouse interior, and his collaboration with Romantic landscape painter and playhouse set designer Philip James de Loutherbourg (1740-1812) during the 1770s too, however.⁷³

Puff invokes the set designer directly while offering Dangle and Sneer an example of what he calls the "puff direct", and bombastically declares that "as to the scenery, the miraculous power of Mr De Loutherbourg's pencil are universally acknowledged!" whilst affecting his own voice as a critic in the papers.⁷⁴ Garrick and Loutherbourg collaborated together on a variety of musical entertainments at both Drury Lane and Covent Garden, and, as Daniel J. Ennis has noted, they "discovered and exploited an audience demand for ships on the stage" together during the American Revolutionary War. In October of 1773 at Drury Lane, for instance, Garrick collaborated with Loutherbourg on a revival of *Alfred*, an operatic masque by Thomas Arne (1710-1778) concerning Alfred the Great's conquest over Viking invaders first staged in August of 1740 to commemorate George I's ascension to the throne. Their 1773 revival, as Ennis adds, "connected the great ninth-century king to Britain's latter-day naval supremacy" in much the same way that Mr.

⁷² Price, "The Critic", in *Dramatic Works*, Vol. 2, p. 471.

⁷³ For a detailed study of Loutherbourg's set designs, see: Christopher Baugh, "Philippe de Loutherbourg: Technology-Driven Entertainment and Spectacle in the Late Eighteenth Century", *Huntington Library Quarterly* 70.2 (June 2007): 251-268.

⁷⁴ Sheridan, *Critic*, p. 40.

Puff's play-within-the-play called *The Spanish Armada* attempts to parallel the Anglo-Spanish War of 1585 with the Anglo-Spanish War of 1779.⁷⁵ Sheridan, as Garrick's successor, had ready access to the *Alfred* set-pieces collected in the theatre's basement storage wing for Puff's play-within-the-play, but he commissioned several new designs from Loutherboung for the occasion. These backdrops are now lost, but they are, perhaps unsurprisingly, *The Morning Chronicle* critic's favourite part of the play, signing-off their review of opening night noting the "Charming scenery! well said Loutherboung! Tilbury Fort— sea fight— puppet shew on a larger scale".⁷⁶ *The London Evening Post* also praised Loutherboung's new designs in their review, noting "the deception of the sea was very strong, and the perspective of the ships, together with the mode of their sailing, truly picturesque. This great painter, in all his scenic productions, seems to bring nature to our view, instead of painting views after nature".⁷⁷ The watercolored cardboard sets and naval automata of these topical productions—"A view of the Thames", "Gravesend from Tilbury Fort", and "The Governor's tent in a grove", to name but a few from the play—were largely burnt later in the fire at Drury Lane in 1809, but Loutherboung's depiction of the *Defeat of the Spanish Armada, 8 August 1588* offers compelling visual clues as to how

⁷⁵ Daniel J. Ennis, "Naumachia and the Structure of *The Critic*", in *Richard Brinsley Sheridan: The Impresario in Political and Cultural Context*, Jack E. DeRochi and Daniel J. Ennis, eds. (Bucknell UP, 2013), p. 150.

⁷⁶ "Arts and Culture", *Morning Chronicle*, 1 November 1779, Issue 3261. In their review, the anonymous critic also refers to Sheridan's play as a "bad imitation" of Buckingham's *Rehearsal* and Fielding's *Pasquin*.

⁷⁷ "Arts and Culture", *London Evening Post*, 30 October - 2 November 1779, Issue 8981.

he likely represented these scenes (*fig. 5*).⁷⁸ One critic writing for the *Morning Post* all but confirms a marked semblance to the set-designer's later painting when they describe his depiction of a confrontation "between the British fleet and the Spanish Armada, wherein after a great part of the latter are destroyed by fireships, the former appear triumphantly pursuing them to martial music playing *Britannia rules the Waves*" in Mr. Puff's play-within-the-play.⁷⁹ Like Mr. Puff's play-within-the-play, *The Spanish Armada*, Garrick and Louthembourg's 1773 revival of *Alfred* had also ended on a patriotic high note with the singing of Arne's "Rule Britannia".⁸⁰ Louthembourg's continued patronage at the Drury Lane theatre under Sheridan's direction was widely celebrated in the press, but he too had his critics. One of the most amusing critical responses to *The Critic* is targeted at Louthembourg's sets. A letter "To Mr. SHERIDAN" by an anonymous "HAH!" printed in the *St. James's Chronicle* on the 11th of November in 1779 argues "that Part of your

⁷⁸ One amusing and oft-recounted anecdote of the fire at Drury Lane that first appears in Moore's *Memoirs* suggests that "On the night of the 24th of February, while the House of Commons was occupied with [...] the Conduct of the War in Spain, and Mr. Sheridan was in attendance [...] the House was suddenly illuminated by a blaze of light [...] and, it was ascertained that the Theatre of Drury Lane was on fire [...] He then left the House", and, "as he sat at the Piazza Coffee-House, during the fire, taking some refreshments, a friend of his having remarked on the philosophic calmness with which he bore his misfortune, Sheridan answered, 'A man may surely be allowed to take a glass of wine *by his own fire-side*'", Vol. 2, p. 368. See also: "Drury-Lane Theatre Destroyed by Fire", *Morning Post*, 25 February 1809, Issue 11881, *19th Century British Library Newspapers*.

⁷⁹ "News", *Morning Post*, 1 November 1779, Issue 2199.

⁸⁰ Sheridan, *Critic*, p. 98. See also: David Mallet, *Alfred: A Masque. As it is now revived at the Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane* (London: T. Cadell, et. al., 1773), p. 65, and David Mallet, James Thomson, and Thomas Arne, *The Songs, Chorusses, &c. In The Masque of Alfred* (London: T. Becket, 1773), pp. 21-23.



Fig. 5: *Defeat of the Spanish Armada, 8 August 1588*, by Philip James de Louthembourg (1796). Oil on canvas, 214.6x278.1cm. Greenwich Hospital Collection, National Maritime Museum. BHC0264.

Satire, which (in *The Critick*) is levelled against *Stage-Trick*, *Situation*, and *Pantomime*, is well directed: but how came you to omit that *great Comedy Situation*, in which a Screen is the principal *Person on the Stage*?”⁸¹ What “HAH!” seems to refer to in this particular review of the play is the Eidophusikon: a small mechanical theatre invented by Garrick and Louthembourg that was advertised as “Imitations of Natural Phenomena, Represented by Moving Pictures”, and became a popular attraction in Leicester Square two-years later in February of 1781.⁸²

As the curtain closes on Dangle, Sneer, and Puff for Louthembourg’s set-designs to be positioned, Thomas King announces that the caricatured critics will next “meet in the green room” before exiting from the side of the stage. The staging of Sheridan’s second and third acts to the three-act burlesque is worth considering. When we next meet Dangle, Sneer, and Puff, Sheridan’s stage directions position them “*as before the curtain*” which was typically drawn above the proscenium after a play’s prologue and not lowered again

⁸¹ “Arts and Culture”, *St. James’s Chronicle or the British Evening Post*, 11-13 November 1779, Issue 2913.

⁸² The term ‘*Eidophusikon*’ is a three-word portmanteau of ‘*eidolon*’ (phantom or ghost), ‘*phusis*’ (nature), and ‘*eikon*’ (image or semblance). Lighting effects operated by mirrors and pulleys accompanied by harpsichord sound effects worked to create an illusion of the rising sun, moon, and shifting weather set against Louthembourg’s painted backdrops. For a study of these ‘moving pictures’, see: Ann Bermingham, “Technologies of Illusion: De Louthembourg’s *Eidophusikon* in Eighteenth-Century London”, *Art History* 39.2 (April 2016): 376-399.

until the play's end throughout this period.⁸³ Sheridan's dropping of the curtain between acts serves two purposes: providing the Drury Lane technical staff with enough time to set up Louthembourg's extravagant spectacle, but also establishing an illusion of intimacy between the audience and Sheridan's caricatured critics. Positioned "*before the curtain*", Dangle, Sneer, and Puff are rendered spectators of the rehearsal on the same plane as theatregoers at Drury Lane. Distinctions between the stage and audience become blurred by the caricatures taking a place among the audience "*before*" the stage, and add a layer of metatheatricality to the drama that reinforces the burlesque by establishing a type of critical lens through which Puff's patriotic play-within-the-play is subjected to censure. Puff, Dangle, and Sneer are first discovered in a conversation regarding Shakespeare as Sheridan's second act begins, and the comic synecdoche between the evening's mainpiece and afterpiece is made explicit when Puff launches into a defence of the Elizabethan and Jacobean playwright:

MR. PUFF: No, no, Sir; what Shakespeare says of ACTORS may be better applied to the purpose of PLAYS; *they* ought to be 'the abstract and brief chronicles of the times'. Therefore when history, and particularly the history of our own country, furnishes any thing like a case in point, to the time in which an author writes, if he knows his own interest, he will take

⁸³ Sheridan, *Critic*, pp. 46-47. Indeed, that drapes did not fall to conceal scene and act changes during this period is what incites Smith to ask Bayes in *The Rehearsal*: "how shall all these dead men go off? for I see none alive to help 'em", to which he sourly replies; "Go off! why, as they came on; upon their legs: how should they go off? Why, do you think the people do not know they are dead?" (1672), p. 51. For a concise history of the conventions and practices around drop scenes in the late eighteenth century, see: Nicoll, *History of English Drama*, Vol. 3, pp. 31-34.

advantage of it; so, Sir, I call my tragedy The SPANISH ARMADA; and have laid the scene before TILBURY FORT.⁸⁴

In much the same way that Hamlet's "Mousetrap" from the evening's mainpiece works to burlesque the conventions of Jacobean revenge tragedy, so does Puff's *Spanish Armada* play as a type of burlesque travesty on modern political drama. Significantly, Puff sets the play before Tilbury Fort: an artillery fort along the Thames first constructed in the reign of Henry VIII, and reinforced during both the Spanish Armada of 1588 and Anglo-Dutch Wars as a means of protecting the capital from naval raids.⁸⁵ It was at this fort in August of 1588 that Queen Elizabeth roused her troops to combat the invading "Spanish Armada" in an oft-cited speech to her army: "I am come amongst you, as you see [...] in the midst and heat of the battle, to live and die amongst you all [...] and think foul scorn that Parma or Spain, or any prince of Europe, should dare to invade the borders of my realm [...] I myself will be your general, judge, and rewarder".⁸⁶ Indeed, like Johnson's sensitivity to Bayes's representation of the Restoration court in *The Rehearsal*, Sneer presses Mr. Puff on the political undertones to the drama, and he asks: "No scandal about Queen Elizabeth, I hope?".⁸⁷ Sheridan's rehearsal play burlesque on the problems of succession is at once political and theatrical. In June of 1779, George III attempted to rouse the House of Lords

⁸⁴ Sheridan, *Critic*, p. 47.

⁸⁵ The development of Tilbury Fort between the sixteenth and eighteenth century is much beyond the immediate scope of this dissertation. For a detailed history of reinforcements, see: Andrew D. Saunders, *Tilbury Fort: Essex*, 2nd ed. (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1977). See also: Paul Pattison, *Tilbury Fort* (London: English Heritage, 2004).

⁸⁶ "Elizabeth's Tilbury speech" [manuscript], British Library, Harley 6798, fol. 87.

⁸⁷ Sheridan, *Critic*, p. 48.

against the threat of another Spanish Armada through the English Channel, and wrote that “it was the vigour of mind shown by Queen Elizabeth and her subjects [...] that saved this island when attacked by the Spaniards” in 1588.⁸⁸ Sheridan is thus satirizing the modern equation of George III and impending Franco-Spanish Armada of 1779 with the Armada of 1588 and Queen Elizabeth’s speech at Tilbury Fort on one hand, and simultaneously satirizing theatrical remediations of the Armada on the other. During the summer season that year, Sadler’s Wells staged a theatrical spectacle titled *The Prophecy, or Elizabeth at Tilbury* that served to “contribute to the enlivening the spirits, and to stimulating the zeal of those on whom the defence of this country rests, in the present hour of difficulty” by recreating the destruction of Spanish fleets with modern theatrical pyrotechnics.⁸⁹ Puff’s play-within-the-play is designed in burlesque representation of Garrick’s Shakespearean mainpiece, as well as patriotic spectacles like *Alfred* and *The Prophecy* that were increasingly at odds with Sheridan’s oppositional Whig politics during the American Revolutionary War.

A number of critics have already observed the congruencies between *Hamlet* and Puff’s play-within-the-play, but they are worth recounting to evince Puff’s relation to Garrick—the player most commonly associated with the title roles in both *Hamlet* and

⁸⁸ Qtd. by Herbert Butterfield, in *George III, Lord North, and the People, 1779-80* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1968), p. 51.

⁸⁹ For a detailed review of the Sadler’s Wells spectacle and reprints of the patriotic songs therein, see: “News”, *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser*, 11 August 1779, Issue 15755. See also: Robert W. Jones, *Literature, Gender and Politics in Britain During the War for America, 1770-1785* (Cambridge UP, 2011), pp. 186-194.

The Rehearsal from whence *The Critic* is derived. Daniel O'Quinn has noted that "speeches from Shakespeare's masterpiece as well as props and costumes from that evening's production of the play make their way into Puff's *The Spanish Armada*".⁹⁰ James Morwood has also observed that "Puff's tragedy contains an apposite parody of the all-too-obvious nature of the *Hamlet* exposition. The tendency of *The Critic*, however, is to replay episodes from *Hamlet* in good-natured variations".⁹¹ After discussing the nature of Shakespearean tragedy, the curtain finally rises on Puff's play-within-the-play. Like the two guards on duty at Elsinore castle in the opening scene of Shakespeare's tragedy, so too does Puff's play-within-the-play open with "*Two Sentinels discovered asleep*" before Louthembourg's watercolour representation of

DANGLE: Tilbury Fort! Very fine indeed!

PUFF: Now, what do you think I open with?

SNEER: Faith, I can't guess.

PUFF: A clock. Hark!—(*clock strikes*). I open with a clock striking to beget an awful attention in the audience.⁹²

Just as Bernardo announces that "'tis now struck twelve" before instructing Francisco to "get thee to Bed" in *Hamlet*, so too does Puff's *Spanish Armada* begin with the strike of a clock.⁹³

⁹⁰ O'Quinn, *Entertaining Crisis*, p. 222.

⁹¹ James Morwood, "The Best of its Kind: *The Critic*", in *The Life and Works of Richard Brinsley Sheridan* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1985), p. 100.

⁹² Sheridan, *Critic*, p. 51.

⁹³ I quote here from the same edition from which Garrick derived his alterations: *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark: A Tragedy* (London: J. and P. Knapton, et. al., 1747), p. 3. Garrick's promptbook and acting copy with handwritten notes is archived at the Folger Shakespeare Library, PROMPT Ham. 16.

The characters and setting of *Hamlet* are not the only subject of burlesque featured within Puff's play, however. The part of Tilburnia in was first played by Clive's aforementioned student Jane Pope who, no doubt drawing from her tutor's *Bays in Petticoats*, used the occasion to personate rival actors in English tragedy like Sophia Baddeley (1745-1846) who appeared as Ophelia earlier that evening. The *Morning Post* reports on the day after the premiere of "Miss Pope's imitation of a well-known tragedy heroine in one of her *mad movements*" when Tilburnia is first introduced during Puff's play-within-the-play.⁹⁴ Like Ophelia's distribution of flowers to Laertes, King Claudius, and Queen Gertrude in *Hamlet*, so does Tilburnia comically saunter onstage lamenting how

TILBURNIA: But O to me, no joy can they afford!

Nor rose, nor wall-flow'r, nor smart gillyflower,

Nor polyanthus mean, nor dapper daizy,

Nor William sweet, nor marjoram— nor lark,

Linnet, nor all the finches of the grove!

MR. PUFF: Your white handkerchief, madam—

TILBURNIA: I thought, Sir, I wasn't to use that 'till, 'heart-rending woe'.

MR. PUFF: O yes, madam—at 'the finches of the grove,' if you please.

TILBURNIA: "Nor lark,

Linnet, nor all thee finches of the grove! [*Weeps*.

MR. PUFF: Vastly well, madam!

MR. DANGLE: Vastly well indeed!⁹⁵

For Puff and Dangle, it is not the metaphorically loaded assignation of particular flowers but rather the weeping pathos of the actress that proves most affecting and significant to the meaning of the drama. Whereas Ophelia's distribution of flowers is loaded with

⁹⁴ "News", *Morning Post*, 1 November 1779, Issue 2199.

⁹⁵ Sheridan, *Critic*, p. 66. See also: *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark* (London, 1747), p. 73.

symbolic undercurrents relating to the character traits of her brother and the usurping King and Queen of Denmark, Tilburnia's burlesque remediation of this episode from Garrick's *Hamlet* is entirely void of any meaning or significance but to satirize the enterprise of staging the Shakespearean tragedy without the principal star of Drury Lane. According to the *General Evening Post* of the same day, John Bannister particularly "amused the audience at the expense of [William] 'Gentleman' Smith's mannerisms as Richard III" in the role of Don Ferolo Whiskerando.⁹⁶ Pope and Bannister, according to the Woodfalls' *Morning Chronicle* review of the performance, and just like Garrick before them in the role of Bayes, personate a variety of "modern heroes and heroines of tragedy" during Puff's play-within-the-play.⁹⁷ Even the same white satin dress initially used for Baddeley's performance of Ophelia that evening reappears onstage during Sheridan's afterpiece:

MR. PUFF: Yes, Sir— now she comes in stark mad in white satin.

SNEER: Why in white satin?

MR. PUFF: O Lord, Sir—when a heroine goes mad, she always goes into white satin— don't she, Dangle?

MR. DANGLE: Always— it's a rule.

MR. PUFF: Yes— here it is— (*looking at the book*). 'Enter Tilburina stark mad in white satin, and her confidant stark mad in white linen'⁹⁸

Puff's reassurance from Dangle in the white dress trope satirically links Sheridan's *Critic* with the mainpiece and Garrick's truncated adaptation of *Hamlet* in particular.

⁹⁶ "Arts and Culture", *General Evening Post*, 2 November 1779, Issue 7150.

⁹⁷ "Arts and Culture", *Morning Chronicle*, 1 November 1779, Issue. 3261.

⁹⁸ Sheridan, *Critic*, p. 95.

Because Garrick is considered the authority on the play by the likes of Drury Lane theatregoers such as Dangle, his *Hamlet* provides the “rule” that Puff subsequently adopts for the purposes of his own tragedy. In their review of the production, *The Morning Chronicle* complains that “those who were desirous of being present at the first performance of Mr. Sheridan’s *Critic* were under the necessity of patiently hearing *Hamlet, altered by Garrick*, which (the present state of the stage considered) is beyond dispute the dullest of all dull tragedies”.⁹⁹ Benjamin Victor (*d.* 1778), the former poet laureate of Ireland and Drury Lane treasurer, wrote to Tate Wilkinson to explain that Garrick’s alterations to the drama were “far from universally liked; nay they are greatly disliked by the million, who love Shakespeare with all his glorious absurdities, and will not suffer a bold intruder to cut him up”.¹⁰⁰ In a letter from Garrick to Suzanne Curchod (1737-1794), the actor-manager charts his emendations to the tragedy rather succinctly:

the copy of the play you have got from the bookseller will mislead you without some direction from me— the first act which is very long in the original is by me divided into two acts— the third act, as I act it, is the second in the original— the third in the original is the fourth in mine, and ends with the famous scene between Hamlet and his mother— and the fifth act in my alteration consists of the fourth and fifth of the original with some alterations, and the omission of some scenes, particularly the Gravediggers.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ “Arts and Culture”, *Morning Chronicle*, 1 November 1779, Issue. 3261.

¹⁰⁰ Letter from Benjamin Victor “To Tate Wilkinson”, n.d., rpt. in Wilkinson, *Memoirs*, Vol. 4, pp. 260-261.

¹⁰¹ Letter from David Garrick “to Suzanne [Churchod] Necker”, 26 April 1776, rpt. in *Letters*, Vol. 3, p. 1095.

Significantly, then, the action of Garrick's *Hamlet* is foreshortened in favour of the dulcet tones of his own soliloquizing in the same way that Sheridan's burlesque emphasizes the directorial interjections of Puff in *The Critic*. Sheridan is self-consciously alluding to his own adaptation of Garrick's *Hamlet* without Garrick to burlesque the evening mainpiece, and, indeed, resurrecting him from Poet's Corner in the form of Puff who watches the mangled rehearsal of the drama while attempting to direct the other actors through rehearsal onstage.

During the final moments of Sheridan's afterpiece amidst the grand spectacle of Puff's naval battle, there is a final allusion to the passing of Garrick earlier that year that might easily be overlooked without careful consideration of his profound theatrical celebrity during this moment. As an actor dressed to allegorically embody the River Thames enters to rehearse the naval battle set to Arne's "Rule Britannia", Sneer asks Puff about the curious "gentlemen in green" attending on him:

MR. PUFF: Those? Those are his banks.

SNEER: His banks?

MR. PUFF: Yes, one crowned with alders, and the other with a villa! You take the allusions? But hey! What the plague! [*To Thames*] You have got both your banks on one side. [*To one of the Attendants*] Here, sir, come round. Ever while you live, Thames, go between your banks.

To "take the allusions" here, as Puff suggests, demands a topographical understanding of London in the late eighteenth century. On one side of the Thames were forests of alder coppices that supplied the gunpowder mills in Chilworth, Surrey, but the other side of the river was lined with cottages, estates, and more significantly: Garrick's Villa and Temple

to Shakespeare. Sheridan is effectively poking fun at the late Garrick's literary fame and fortune.

Sheridan's topical allusions to contemporary personages are products of the play's moment, and even high society London socialites like Horace Walpole found themselves scratching their heads over the satire: "*The Critic*", Walpole laments, "was not so new as I expected; and then my being ill versed in modern dramas, most of the allusions must have escaped me. Does not half the merit of *The Rehearsal* depend on the notes?"¹⁰² The *London Evening Post* echoes Walpole's sentiment in their review of opening night, noting that *The Critic* was written for "those deep in the knowledge of Green room anecdote, and the private character of authors and theatrical dangles".¹⁰³ Significantly, neither Walpole nor the *Post* seems to connect the satire to Sheridan's oppositional politics and conflicting position as manager of the Theatre Royal. Sheridan, like Buckingham before him, spoofs the state stage as a site of nation building during a moment of political crisis, but it is not the heroic drama of the court favourite; rather, the Shakespearian drama of the public and commercial favourite that Sheridan uses as his vehicle of burlesque ridicule in 1779. Indeed, the ghost of Garrick continues to haunt London today: his portraits on display at the National Galleries, his porcelain likeness encased at the British Museum, and his namesake in neon illuminating Covent Garden. Sheridan's *Critic* thereafter supplants *The Rehearsal* on the London stage, and continues to be adapted to "the private characters" of

¹⁰² Letter from Horace Walpole "to Lady Ossory", 13 January 1780, rpt. in *Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, Vol. 33, p. 159.

¹⁰³ "Arts and Culture", *London Evening Post*, 30 October - 2 November 1779, Issue 8981.

contemporary Shakespearean actors today. Laurence Olivier (1907-1989), perhaps most notably, a notorious editorial mangler of *Hamlet* himself, played the part of Puff with the Old Vic company in 1945, and Ian McKellen (b. 1939) brought the caricatured tragedian to life once again in London, Paris, and Chicago from 1985 through 1986 in what critics referred to as both a “tragical-historical-hysterical pageant”, and “the funniest thing the National Theatre has ever done”.¹⁰⁴ In a recent production staged for both the American and International Societies for Eighteenth-Century Studies, Sheridan’s green room satire was redirected upon the scholarly community and contemporary critics of his drama up to and including (igad!) the author of this dissertation.¹⁰⁵ Of course, in the spirit of the play, and to be sure: ‘*my Betters were more concerned than I was in that Satire*’. From its first production on Bridges Street during the Restoration to its adaptation into *The Critic* on the late eighteenth-century stage and beyond, Buckingham’s *Rehearsal* remains a vehicle for local political satire and theatrical burlesque.

Modern folklorists regard Drury Lane as the most haunted theatre in London, and the curious spectre of a ‘Man in Grey’ fashioned like an eighteenth-century gentleman in

¹⁰⁴ Broadway actor Julie Harris (1925-2013) later reflected: “I used to watch Sir Laurence when he played Mr. Puff in *The Critic*”, and “it’s worthwhile living for and striving for that perfection”, qtd. by Robert Cohen, *Acting Power* (London: Routledge, 2013), p. 146. For a comparative study of Garrick and Olivier, see also: David R. Maberry, “The Impact of the Acting of David Garrick and Sir Laurence Olivier: A Comparative Analysis”, M.A. Thesis (North Texas State University, 1968). For critical reviews of McKellen’s Puff, see: Dan Sullivan, “London Theatres Take On The Critics”, *Los Angeles Times*, 9 November 1985, and John Peter, “The Play’s The Thing”, *The Sunday Times*, 15 September 1985.

¹⁰⁵ For more information on this production of *The Critic*, see: Andrew Black, “The R/18 Collective: Performing Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Theatre in the Age of Covid”, *BSECS Criticks*, 20 March 2021, www.bsecs.org.uk.

a tricorne cap, powdered wig, and riding cloak is frequently reported to appear around the playhouse during the early daytime hours.¹⁰⁶ The ghost of Garrick might still be thought to dwell within the playhouse today, but certainly so within Sheridan's haunted house for his Halloween production of *Hamlet* in 1779. In his rehearsal play afterpiece authored for the occasion, Sheridan's caricatured representation of the late actor-manager as Mr. Puff self-consciously satirizes the theatrical marketplace and business bequeathed unto him by his predecessor: a state-enterprise of mutually reinforcing theatre, politics, and "theatrical politics". For Sheridan, an oppositional Whig parliamentarian, the management of Drury Lane provides a political platform upon which to subvert rather than reinforce English nationalism during the American Revolutionary War, and, in comically targeting Garrick's theatrical legacy, Sheridan satirizes the Theatre Royal as a site of English nation building. Ultimately, by attending to Sheridan's satirical subversion of the same theatrical publicity practices that his predecessor once exercised in the service of his own theatrical celebrity, 'the Critic' proves to be Richard Brinsley Sheridan.

¹⁰⁶ The legend of the 'Man in Grey' is perhaps best recounted by the theatre historian and former playhouse publicist Walter James MacQueen-Pope in his *Pillars of Drury Lane* (London: Hutchinson, 1955), pp. 160-163. See also: "ghosts" and "man in grey", in *The Methuen Drama Dictionary of the Theatre*, Jonathan Law, ed. (London: Methuen, 2011), pp. 206, 315.

———— CONCLUSION ————

THE AFTERLIFE OF THE REHEARSAL

“Wherefore, for ours, and for the Kingdoms peace,
May this prodigious way of writing cease”
— “EPILOGUE”, *The Rehearsal* (1672)

How, in the end, might we define a “rehearsal play” to build on Allardyce Nicoll’s cursory definition of the genre? A rehearsal play is, of course, a play “cast in the form of a rehearsal” as Nicoll notes in his *History of English Drama*, and indeed a play about actors, authors, and audiences as noted in the introduction to this study, but in addition to being burlesque plays about other plays and the theatre itself, rehearsal plays are about sociocultural transitions and transformations. It is certainly not by coincidence that this genre should flourish during the Restoration and eighteenth century to reflect a shifting sociopolitical makeup of the body politic and theatrical marketplace. By fashioning kings and queens out of commercial celebrities, and courtiers and critics out of the theatregoing public, the proliferation of rehearsal plays reflects an ongoing triumph and primacy of parliamentary and commercial democracy over the court and crown during this period. At the end of the day, we might safely imagine the recently deceased Restoration courtier and oppositional parliamentarian George Villiers smiling down from the clouds somewhere over Brentford and Philadelphia upon the revolutionary settlements of 1688 and 1776.

Superficially, Buckingham’s play-within-the-play is a poorly written Restoration tragedy that burlesques the generic conventions of heroic drama, and it would be quite

erroneous to deny that *The Rehearsal* is fundamentally a dramatic satire. However, if we look closer at the play in light of Buckingham's rather contradictory albeit radical political position as a courtier of the highest caliber and leading figure among the parliamentary opposition at a key moment of constitutional crisis, a politicizing *raison d'être* begins to shine through the veil of literary burlesque. Buckingham's satire of heroic drama is not simply an attack on the theatre, but a methodical critique of monarchical absolutism writ large. The farcical disunity of Bayes's play-within-the-play is deliberate, and projects a portrait of the nation in political disarray. Dryden's panegyric celebration of the court through heroic drama is simply the vehicle through which Buckingham explores the resonances between Restoration theatre and politics. For eighteenth-century actors like Clive and Garrick, Buckingham's mock-heroic celebration of the Stuart court is adapted into burlesque celebrations of English theatrical celebrity.

What begins in December of 1671 as an anti-court satire on Restoration favourites rooted in parliamentary resistance to issues of monarchical succession is adapted over the following century to issues of theatrical celebrity and succession in the acting companies of the Theatres Royal. The nascent anti-Jacobite politics of *The Rehearsal* are adapted to subsequent uprisings during the period, most prominently evinced by the addition—or, “REINFORCEMENT”—of “A NEW MUSTER OF BAYS'S TROOPS” satirizing Charles Edward Stuart and James Francis Edward Stuart's 1745 Rebellion and claim to the British throne. Buckingham's mock-heroic satire on Drydenian dramaturgy is also adapted to the popular genres and actors of the eighteenth-century stage, however. The rehearsal plays of

Henry Fielding adapt the burlesque framework of Buckingham's mock-heroic satire on Dryden, Arlington, Rupert, and Monmouth into both mock-operatic and pantomimic satires on the reigning poet laureate, Colley Cibber, and minister-favourite, Robert Walpole, but Clive and Garrick—two of the most celebrated actors of the period—also adapt Buckingham's satire into topical burlesques directed at playhouse rivals and predecessors. For Clive, Buckingham's *Rehearsal* provides a satirical framework through which to mediate and self-fashion her own celebrity persona. As an actor and musician in a league of her own, Buckingham's play becomes a vehicle through which she stages a departure from her typecast image as Kitty, a minor soubrette in English ballad opera, and self-conscious reformation into Mrs. Hazard, a celebrity soprano and English diva. For Garrick, *The Rehearsal* is a vehicle for staging criticism of his contemporaries and self-consciously departing from their approaches to acting. For both actors, the play is retrofitted to construct a celebrity persona and theatrical identity by metatheatrically deconstructing those of their predecessors. Indeed, Garrick acted Bayes more than any other actor, and his death in turn presented Sheridan with a succession problem: not only was Drury Lane without the most celebrated performer of Bayes, but a significant number of leading roles in Shakespearean tragedies. In order to mitigate theatregoers' inevitable disappointment with these plays, Sheridan refigures Bayes into Mr. Puff, a caricatured representation of his late managerial predecessor. Sheridan in turn satirizes Drury Lane as a site of English nation building that stands in direct opposition to his own oppositional Whig politics during the American Revolutionary War.

Each chapter of this dissertation offers new insights into the adaptational nuances of Buckingham's *Rehearsal* as it is recycled, reimagined, and repurposed throughout the eighteenth century. The first chapter of this study builds upon scholarship regarding the underlying political framework of the play to read Buckingham's satire as a decidedly anti-court and proto-Whig, country party satire, and reveals a significant new political allusion to Prince Rupert of the Rhine embedded in the play in the form of Prince Pretty-Man. Because of Rupert's burgeoning relationship with the actress Margaret Hughes at the moment of the play's premiere, among other topical allusions to her performances in Dryden's heroic drama, we may safely deduce that the object of the Prince's affections in Bayes's heroic tragedy—Cloris—was performed by Hughes to reinforce the caricature. Beyond the initial casting of John Lacy as Bayes, this particular political allusion to Rupert offers the first significant clue and indication as to how Buckingham's play was initially cast at the Theatre Royal in Bridges Street. The politico-theatrical analogue of Buckingham's *Rehearsal* is later adopted by Henry Fielding into a number of rehearsal plays that push the court politics of Buckingham's Restoration satire into the realm of modern Patriot Whig politics, satirizing the Court Whigs and Walpole executive's foreign policy of inaction (or, '*No Peace Without Spain*') amidst an escalation in tensions and ongoing conflict with Spain over foreign trade in the Caribbean colonies abroad. Scholars and historians have long combed Fielding's journalism to pinpoint his rather complicated sociopolitical positionality amidst a fracturing of the Whig Party during this period, but in this chapter I demonstrate how he often also used the stage to promote oppositional-Whig

dissent among the British labouring and merchant classes. In the third chapter of this study, I bring to light a number of long forgotten rehearsal plays starring Catherine Clive to show how the proliferation of the genre blurs distinctions between dramatic and tabloid fictions, and, in doing so, I show how the manufacturing and metatheatrical mediation of Clive's celebrity persona, Kitty, continues to inform our contemporary biographical understanding of the actor today. This chapter also provides a substantial contribution to our contemporary understanding of Catherine Clive as one of the first women to work as a professional playwright on the London stage by examining her prologue contributions to the theatre and adaptations of Buckingham's satire. I then consider and examine David Garrick's career-long adaptation of Bayes and *The Rehearsal* to show how Buckingham's play and rehearsal play genre more broadly contributed far more significantly toward his rise to theatrical celebrity than scholars have heretofore acknowledged. Not only did Garrick make his debut at Drury Lane in the guise of Buckingham's mock-tragedian, but he also persistently adapted the Bayes caricature as a means of both further consolidating his celebrity and promoting his new school of "natural" acting methods through to his retirement from the stage altogether. In the final chapter of this dissertation, I reconcile the occasionally disparate threads of theatrical and political satire in eighteenth-century rehearsal plays to show how Sheridan negotiates and weaves the two together in *The Critic; or, A Tragedy Rehearsed*. I provide a wealth of new insights into his simultaneous use of both the stage and printed periodicals once owned by his predecessor to promote his oppositional Whig agenda in parliament amid the American Revolutionary War.

This study has largely attended to canonical playwrights and performers, but there are many more rehearsal plays that remain unaccounted for in these pages. Some of the rehearsal plays that literary scholars and theatre historians may consider moving forward include: *The Play-House To Be Let* (1663), *The Female Wits: or, The Triumvirate of Poets at Rehearsal* (1696), *The Play is the Plot* (1718), *A Rehearsal of Kings: or, The Projecting Gingerbread-Baker* (1737), *Britons, Strike Home: or, The Sailor's Rehearsal* (1739), *Lethe Rehears'd* (1749), and *The Critic Anticipated or, The Humours of the Green Room* (1779). William Davenant's *Play-House To Be Let* is a burlesque pastiche first staged at Lincoln's Inn Fields in the summer of 1663, and significantly influenced Buckingham's *Rehearsal* less than a decade later when the theatres reopened after an extended period of plague-related closures. In their introduction to Buckingham's *Rehearsal*, Hume and Love rightfully speculate in passing that "the Buckingham circle was unquestionably familiar" with Davenant's play, but just how much the coterie drew from his satire has yet to be examined.¹⁰⁷ Many of the interwoven burlesques embedded within the play broach subject-matter that is only later taken up in subsequent eighteenth-century adaptations of *The Rehearsal* such as foreign-language opera, Shakespearean tragedy, and colonial wars between England and Spain. We do not know whose quill is behind the anonymously-authored *Female Wits* written in 1696 and printed in 1704. This rehearsal play is a satire aimed at celebrity women dramatists Mary Pix (1666-1709), Delarivier Manley (c. 1670-1724), and Catherine Trotter (1679-1749). Laurie Finke has published an analysis of

¹⁰⁷ "The Rehearsal", in *Plays, Poems, and Miscellaneous Writings*, p. 341.

the drama's satirical targets, and ever since then the play has served as a springboard onto broader examinations of women writers and performers on the late seventeenth-century stage.¹⁰⁸ These are important scholastic endeavours of feminist recovery, and that *The Female Wits* was not printed until approximately a decade following its premiere suggests a prolonged stage popularity. There is certainly more to be recovered from this particular satire as a seventeenth-century predecessor to Catherine Clive's *Bays in Petticoats*. In *Britons, Strike Home*, a rehearsal play written by a "Mr. Edward Phillips" set upon a merchant ship stationed somewhere over the North Atlantic Ocean, Clive plays the role of a seafaring performer named Miss Kitty cast to act the part of Donna Americana in a burlesque play-within-the-play.¹⁰⁹ The rehearsal play has attracted no scholarly attention whatsoever, and offers a rich example of both the genre's sustained politics of Patriot Whig opposition, and Catherine Clive as a living embodiment of that rebellious spirit in the mid-century playhouses. *Lethe Rehears'd* (1749) is, in all probability, written by David Garrick as an early puff piece for his own play of the same name praising both "*The Beauties and Blemishes of that Performance*".¹¹⁰ In addition to these less studied

¹⁰⁸ Laurie A. Finke, "The Satire of Women Writers in 'The Female Wits'", *Restoration: Studies in English Culture, 1660-1700* 8.2 (Fall 1984): 64-71. See also: Lisa A. Freeman, *Character's Theater: Genre and Identity on the English Stage* (Pennsylvania UP, 2002), pp. 68-70, and Claudine van Hensbergen, "The Female Wits: Gender, Satire, and Drama", in *The Oxford Handbook of Eighteenth-Century Satire*, Paddy Bullard, ed. (Oxford UP, 2019), pp. 74-90.

¹⁰⁹ Edward Phillips, *Britons, Strike Home: or, The Sailor's Rehearsal* (London: J. Watts, 1739).

¹¹⁰ *Lethe Rehears'd: or, A Critical Discussion of the Beauties and Blemishes of that Performance* (London: J. Roberts, 1749).

plays, there are a number of less known actors whose performances as Bayes in short-lived revivals and adaptations of *The Rehearsal* are worth considering in much greater detail. These include the performances of Joseph Haines (*d.* 1701), Samuel Foote (1720-1777), and Richard Suett (1755-1805), among a number of other actors referred to only in passing throughout this study such as Susanna Verbruggen, Richard Estcourt, and Colley and Theophilus Cibber. We have only just begun to scratch the surface of rehearsal plays' extraordinary popularity among Restoration and eighteenth-century actors, authors, and audiences. This dissertation invites us to further consider their import and place in the English dramatic canon.

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