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THE PLAYER CHARACTER ON THE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY LONDON STAGE

by

JUDITH WARNER FISHER 

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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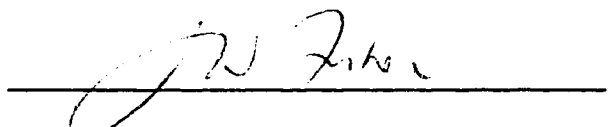

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ABSTRACT

The eighteenth century is a period renowned for its players rather than its plays. In this study, I present the eighteenth-century playwrights' view of the performer by focussing on the player characters in the drama, either as representations of real actors and actresses, or as fictional creations. My purpose is to make a case for the theatrical rather than the literary quality of the century's "declining" drama.

In four chapters I explore the various relationships between the participants in the presentation of stage production, as they are revealed in the texts. In the first chapter I look at the precarious relationship between the players and their writers, including discussions between the two about the value or commercial viability of the writers' work, as well as its credibility. In the second chapter I examine the relationships between players and various kinds of managers who, in varying degrees, governed the actors' ability to work. In the third, I look at the places in which the players performed the drama; and in the fourth, I survey the various theoretical, practical, technical, and aesthetic components involved in the professional player's business and art, processes which culminate in the performance of a text before an audience.

What emerges is a distinct hierarchical structure of

responsibility and power, with theatre patrons at the top and players at the bottom. The dramatic portraits of the players provide valuable information about performance skills and theatrical conventions. The players are represented generally in a stereo-typical way. The playwrights do not champion the need to improve the actors' social or legal status, and they even perpetuate the "loose" reputation with which the actresses were stigmatized in the previous century. The dramatists do offer insights into the century's theoretical discourse regarding the nature of performance, and they demonstrate in their implicit criticism of the tastes of the drama's patrons that these self-proclaimed arbiters of theatrical matters were also responsible for what was produced.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I should like to thank the Huntington Library, San Marino, California for permission to reproduce sections of the plays from the Larpent Collection, and for providing copies of several of the manuscripts.

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ABBREVIATIONS

I use the following abbreviations in my text and bibliography:

BL	British Library
LS	The London Stage
Three Centuries	This microcard edition of Three Centuries of English and American Plays, published by the Readex Corporation contains nearly all the plays printed in English before 1800, and many of the Larpent Collection.

INTRODUCTION

> It is peculiar to dramatic writing, that the dispositions and tempers of the characters are not described but represented . . . 'tis this characteristic manner of the author which the player is above all other things to study. . . . (J. Hill, The Actor 1755, 13)

The actors' profession, Boswell tells us, "was anciently held sometimes as contemptible, and sometimes as odious" (On the Profession of a Player 1). I originally undertook this study of the profession and its players, as they appear in the plays written in England in the eighteenth century, to discover why, in a period known for its dearth of good drama, the theatre should have produced so many players whose work was neither contemptible nor odious. Allardyce Nicoll suggests that the actors' abilities, if not their profession, were held in high regard:

> It has been said again and again, by those who have more or less tentatively touched upon this period of our drama, that the eighteenth century was an age, not of the author, but of the actor; and this statement, as a general proposition, may be regarded as fundamentally true. (A History of Early Eighteenth Century Drama 39)

Even though the period has now been more than "tentatively touched upon," Nicoll's proposition still remains standard. Shearer West, in her recent study of the player, entitled The Image of the Actor, states that "the second half of the 18th [sic] century was known for only a few outstanding plays: it was not the age of the dramatist, but of the actor" (1). An anonymous author, writing in Town and Country Magazine in April, 1772, offers a complementary portrait of the English stage player that supports these arguments for the English player's prowess:

> The actors in general are decent, sensible and masters of the different parts they represent. Some of both sexes are excellent both in tragedy and comedy; one or two are admired as prodigies in the art of acting. (qtd. in LS 4.1: ccxi)

There were many hundreds more who supported these prodigies and excellent actors and actresses in London, as well as many who were or became "stars" in the provincial theatres. There were also those who travelled the country in search of any venue where they could ply their trade.

The plays which form the primary material for this study were selected because of their references to players, or their inclusion of player characters in the dramatis personae.[1] I intend to examine them with the sole focus placed on the player characters, either as representations of real actors and actresses, or as fictional creations. I shall not attempt to make a case for the literary quality of this eighteenth-century drama, particularly when there was "the firm conviction expressed throughout the age that drama was in decline" (Smith and Lawhon 211). Nor is my aim to present a social study of the eighteenth-century player; this has been ably done as part of previous studies.[2] I shall refer to the many biographies, pamphlets, and essays, along with other documents that have been written *about*, as well as *by*, the many prominent players who trod the boards of the London stages. I am, however, more interested in what has not yet been adequately explored: the view of the player as represented by those who were producing the "declining" drama of the eighteenth-century--the playwrights.

Some of the dramatists were professional artists with extensive experience, some were amateurs with dubious talent. They worked alongside the actual players, suffering with them the "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune," to say nothing of the managers' and audiences' wrath and caprice. Unlike most playwrights today, they often had particular players in mind when they wrote, creating roles specifically for them; but they all used, sometimes mercilessly, those on whom they relied to perform their work.

I have chosen the years between 1737 and 1779 as the central period for the study. These encompassing dates represent two theatrical mileposts in the century: the beginning of serious government censorship of the drama and the end of an era, marked by the death of David Garrick, one of the greatest players in theatre history. However, I have not confined the study to plays written during this core period. I include all pertinent dramatic material written and produced during the century, in order to present a more complete representation of the player character.

From the outset I recognize the danger of using works of fiction as documentary evidence in an attempt to discover historical facts. Even other source material, as West points out, "should no longer be considered as 'truth' or mere historical documentation" (5), because of the "critical and theoretical canons" created during the period which "formulated and perpetuated certain assumptions about actors and acting" (4). The playwrights' assumptions, embedded in their texts, would have not only depended upon but also helped to create the canons to which West refers. Most of

the drama included in twentieth-century commentary and criticism was written primarily for performance. The eighteenth-century theatre was not subsidized, and its profits therefore relied on its popularity with audiences. As Ronald W. Vince warns, in Neoclassical Theatre: A Historiographical Handbook, theatre historians are often charged with confusing commercial and artistic success, because they "are concerned with the theatre as an institution dependent upon resources which, in some societies and in some ages, must be gotten by persuading patron or public to provide them" (10). In such a context it is difficult to discern, as Vince puts it, "which choices artists have thrust upon them, and which they choose for the sake of their art" (10). I shall consider my own experience as a theatre practitioner in any evaluation I make of the artists' choices, the player characters' skills, or the playwrights' written products, which might bear little resemblance to the text actually performed (Vince 12).[3] In cases where the texts either failed to achieve a theatrical production, or were never intended for performance, I shall look for what the dramatists' sub-texts might reveal.

There is no simple method I can employ for the detailed task of examining the player character. Obviously methods that look at the nature of performance are appropriate for my enquiry. They do, of course, have their limitations, as does any method used to analyze what cannot be fully captured in writing. Andre Helbo et al indicate part of the problem in the revised translation of Approaching Theatre:

> This type of study finds its inspiration in the work of theatre practitioners themselves and for this reason may be unduly constrained by the metaphysical presuppositions inherent in notions such as the eighteenth-century codes of emotion and the performance conventions derived from them. . . . (1)

Historical and interpretative methods are particularly useful, even if constraining, for material which shows practitioners dealing with the many conventions derived from the codes, and trying to make them work. The eighteenth century was a period in which society saw itself through a process of signs and images, more often than not reflected in theatrical performance. A more recent theoretical discourse concerns the audience as receivers of the theatrical event. Susan Bennett, in her book Theatre Audiences, acknowledges the breakthrough the semioticians have made in performance theory, but complains that they have tended to neglect the audience. As the player is the central focus of my study, I shall refer to the audience only when its collaboration with the player and the playwright is integral to a fuller

understanding of the cultural frame shared by all parties. An accurate interpretation (or, at least, as exact as possible) of the signs offered by the playwrights in their texts is needed because, as Bennett says, "Cultural assumptions affect performances, and performances rewrite cultural assumptions" (2).

In the eighteenth century, as Samuel Johnson tells us, "The Drama's Laws the Drama's Patrons give," and the players who "live to please, must [also] please to live."[4] The audience's desires and expectations had to be met for the drama to succeed; it is, perhaps, this connection between what the audience wanted and what the dramatists and players gave them that has created the disparity between the actual value of eighteenth-century English drama and our recognition of its worth. My aim is to demonstrate that, although the eighteenth-century drama may consist of only a few dramatic masterpieces, it also contains more than a few *theatrical* works of art. The drama in this study was written for a theatre whose participants were concerned more with their own society (on and off the stage) and the nature of performance, more with reflection of the present than with preservation for the future.

One of the most exciting aspects of dealing with material written for the stage is that, even with current productions, we can never be exactly sure who is, or was, responsible for what particular element of the final production, because so many people and factors combine to create it. We can make informed guesses, relying on first- and second-hand information and existing documentary evidence, but only those involved (and sometimes not even they) can be sure how the final product evolved. We cannot even assume that most playwrights want their work produced. Many of the eighteenth-century plays and dialogues appear to have been written for publication rather than production, and therefore do not warrant a place in stage history. But I have included them, because I believe they offer valuable information about the role of the player in the theatrical event. On the other hand, I have excluded the many prologues and epilogues, as they were normally spoken as monologues, and relationships are my primary interest.[5] I have also excluded plays about spouters, because these characters show no inclination to become professional actors, even though they use the drama for their material. The occasional amateur performer creeps into the study, but only when the plays in which such characters appear make reference to the professional theatre.

I have divided my study into four chapters, headed "The Player's Playwrights," "The Player's Managers," "The Player's

Theatres," and "The Player's Art." Chapter 1 explores the precarious relationship between the players and their playwrights, and looks at discussions between the two about the value or credibility of the writers' work, for the commercial viablity or success of which the star performers were often held responsible. Chapter 2 examines an equally precarious relationship between the players and various kinds of managers (including actor-managers, acting managers, and playwright-managers), with particular attention paid to the hierarchical structure (which included the playwrights) within the theatre. Chapter 3 looks at the places in which the players performed the drama. Chapter 4 surveys the various theoretical, practical, technical, and aesthetic components involved in the profession's business and art, processes which culminate in the performance of a text before an audience, the eighteenth-century actors' kindest and severest critic.

The texts used as my primary material for each chapter are listed in the Appendix, "The Player's Plays." Although I do not make specific references to all the plays in the four chapters, a complete list of those consulted can be found in the first section of the bibliography. I cite acts and scenes, or page numbers when scenes are not numbered or designated. Unfortunately, not all the pieces have such divisions, or even page numbers, to which I can refer, because many are extant only in manuscript form. When I cannot offer a more precise citation, I have indicated the manuscript source. The dates of the plays refer either to their first theatrical productions or, in the case of non-performed plays, their publications. Occasionally, in the body of the text, I include the dates of the plays with their titles, in order to identify their place on the time-line of the century's theatrical history. Many of the notes following each chapter are lengthy, but I believe that their information supports and enhances what Paul Ranger calls the "genuine theatrical viability" of the Georgian texts ("I was Present" 18).

NOTES

[1] I use the word "play" as a general term throughout to cover all generic species of dramatic text, and "players" interchangeably with the collective term "actors," meaning both male and female; but when a reference is made to an individual female player, I often use a more gender specific term. I have also confined the study primarily to the theatre in London, because during the period London was the centre of the English theatrical world.

[2] See, for instance, Cecil Price's Theatre in the Age of Garrick, Allardyce Nicoll's The Garrick Stage, Richard Findlater's The Player Queens, Sybil Rosenfeld's Strolling Players and Drama in the Provinces 1660-1765, Dane Farnsworth Smith's Plays about the Theatre in England, 1671-1737 and with M. L. Lawhon Plays about the Theatre in England, 1737-1800, as well as Shearer West's "verbal and visual representation" of the player in The Image of the Actor. These studies, along with the invaluable work done by editors Emmet L. Avery, Arthur H. Scouten, George Winchester Stone Jr., and Charles Beecher Hogan for The London Stage and Philip Highfill, Kalman A. Burnim, and Edward Langhans for the Biographical Dictionary, provide a comprehensive view of eighteenth-century actors and actresses and their work in theatre.

[3] See Shirley Strum Kenny"s "The Publication of Plays" (Hume, London Theatre World 309-36), in which she details the difficulties involved in trying to ascertain what happened in performance from a published text because of the business of publication during this period.

[4] Samuel Johnson's prologue, written for David Garrick on the occasion of his first season as manager of Drury Lane in 1747.

[5] See Mary E. Knapp's book for a complete study of the prologues and epilogues of the period.

CHAPTER 1

THE PLAYER'S PLAYWRIGHTS

What is a Player, pray, without his Task!
You're but the Factors of the Poet's wit--
(Mecaenas in The Author's Triumph)

Ever since the dramatist Thespis became an actor, the relationship between the "Poet" and the "Factors" of his wit has been central to any examination of theatre history. James C. Burge, in Lines of Business, sets the precedence for the eighteenth-century actor:

> He learned the traditional business or by-play, the line readings which had been handed down from playwright to actor and from actor to actor, and even the appropriate manner in which it was to be costumed. Everything about a given performance, therefore, emanated from the playwright. (39)

However, for those plays which had long been out of the repertory, the players would have had to base their performances on their own understanding of what was appropriate for the playwright's text. William Cooke, in his Elements of Dramatic Criticism (published in 1775), does not belabour his point, "as it need not be insisted on here, how intimately the business of the poet, the actor, should be connected, and how much it depends on the abilities of the latter, to give persuasion and eclat to the former" (vi). Eighteenth-century audiences undoubtedly perpetuated the pre-eminence of certain performers:[1]

> The eighteenth-century playgoer went to see Quin as Falstaff, or Garrick as Lear. The evening was judged by the star's performance, and the tendency of the actor to repeat his great roles, fairly regularly, before provincial audiences, supported by indifferent companies, further emphasized his importance. (Appleton 53)

However, the playwrights of the period might themselves be partly to blame for their general lack of estimable reputation because of the way they portray themselves and their work in their satires and burlesques.

The plays in which the two practitioners appear together (which I shall henceforth call the writer plays) indicate that players and, to some extent, managers found themselves having to submit their professional integrity to the work and direction of untalented amateurs. We know that professional

playwrights who were also actors (such as David Garrick and Samuel Foote), or who had managerial expertise (such as Henry Fielding), stage-managed and instructed those involved in the production of their plays. Tate Wilkinson, however, suggests that most actors were not equally proficient in the writer's craft:

> I grieve to note, (Colley Cibber excepted) we cannot boast one actor as a sterling capital writer of plays, by any means equal to those written by gentlemen quite unaccustomed to the stage professionally. . . . And it is remarkable, that Mr. Garrick, with his great knowledge of the art, (certainly beyond any other actor) yet made but a very middle-rate figure as an author. (1: 15)

Appleton, in his account of Charles Macklin's preparation for Macbeth for the 1773-74 season at Covent Garden, elucidates the century's position with regard to directors, although the term and role of the director, as we now know it, had not yet been established:

> His concern was not, however, confined to his own part. In a manner quite uncharacteristic of the eighteenth-century actor, he considered as well the problems of sets, costumes, and music, and began jotting down notes for the forthcoming production. In attempting to impose upon it a conceptual unity, he anticipated the function of the director in the modern theatre, and the pained reactions of managers, actors, and backstage crew indicate how novel was this supervision. (171)

John Loftis suggests that the "drama may tell us more about the habits of thought of its authors--and those of the audiences on whose favor they depended--than about the world that provided its subject" ("Political and Social Thought" 253). The plays obviously do not tell the whole story about the involvement of playwrights in production;[2] but through the authors' element of self-mockery, we learn at least something about the players, who are not on this occasion the butt of the playwrights' satire. They generally appear to be rational, commonsense people who consistently perform their duties on stage, and who offer sound advice to the best of their ability to those apparently most in need of it. The texts demonstrate that these players are used by their creators to deride not only the material they have to perform, but its perpetrators as well.

Most professional players are concerned with the quality and integrity of their work. Actors are more likely to respect a well-written text and its author because the

rewards for the energy expended in bringing their roles to life are more worthwhile. But the playwrights create situations in which their actors have little respect for their authors. Perhaps they were trying to curry favour with the players by showing them to be more judicious than writers, in both their professional and personal capacities.

PLAYWRIGHTS VERSUS PLAYERS

An harmonious working relationship, especially between interdependent parties, requires, or at least benefits from, mutual respect. In the writer plays, the players and playwrights tolerate each other, a situation which appears to be grounded in their unequal status. Mrs Hazard, Catherine (Kitty) Clive's playwright character in Bays in Petticoats, says of actors, "one must be civil to these sort of People when one wants them. . ." (1.1).[3] Playwrights who were not civil had to suffer the consequences, as Hugh Kelly discovered. In his publication of Thespis he attacked Mrs Clive, Mrs Dancer, and Mr Moody. But he realized, when he took his play, False Delicacy, to David Garrick, that he should have had more respect for them. As Thomas Davies reports:

> When the play was ready for rehearsal, [Kelly] consulted Mr. Garrick about distributing the parts: he now, to his great regret, found his error in making so free with those persons whose assistance was absolutely necessary to him, and without whose consent his play could not be acted. (Memoirs 2: 136)

Apparently Garrick reconciled the author and Mrs Dancer, but Moody refused to take a role, and Kelly was too afraid of Mrs Clive to approach her on the subject.

Playwright characters find it hard to disguise their feelings of superiority towards "these sort of People." In Fielding's The Historical Register, Ground Ivy considers himself unequalled, both as a player and an author.[4] Fielding makes it clear that we are not meant to take this character seriously as a playwright; his immoderate manner of speaking belies what he says. Ground Ivy feels that Shakespeare's King John should be altered, because the character of Faulconbridge is too effeminate. He suggests that the part should be cut, and the lines given to Constance, "who is so much properer to speak them." When the Prompter hints that Shakespeare's text should be left alone, as his work is more popular with audiences than Ground Ivy's, the player/playwright pompously replies:

> Damn-me. I'll write to the town and desire them to be civil, and that in so modest a manner that an army of Cossacks shall be melted: I'll tell them that no actors are equal to me, and no authors ever were superior. . . . (3.1)

Although the two professions are inseparable in this character, Fielding's main concern appears to focus on Ground Ivy's ability, or rather inability, as a playwright. Colley Cibber is portrayed with as little sympathy when he appears as a named player character in De Breval's The Confederates. After an embarrassing opening night, Cibber tells Pope and Arbuthnot, both author characters, that he will not perform their play a second night:

> In twice Ten Years that I the Stage have trod,
> I've worn a Thousand Habits wond'rous odd;
> Still, Proteus-like, in some New Form appear'd,
> But never in my life was yet so jeer'd. (Scene 3)

Neither Pope nor Arbuthnot argues that Cibber's excellent reputation as an actor relieves him of blame for the play's failure. But Pope toys with Cibber's desire to be recognized as a serious writer, because he needs the player's talents for his own piece to succeed.[5] He promises to help Cibber translate and adapt Le Cid for the stage, and Lintott offers to help publish the result, if, in return, Cibber will perform their play again. The actor agrees; but, after he has left, Pope declares he will not fulfill his part of the bargain. He even mocks Cibber for his trust. Unlike the ambiguous distinctions in Ground Ivy's dual role, the reliable competence of Cibber, the actor, is never in doubt. But because both characters share delusions of grandeur as playwrights, they are made to appear justly ridiculed.

Fielding and De Breval are highly critical of their players' aspirations to become dramatists. The main contention in Garrick in the Shades, which was printed anonymously in 1779, is that Garrick was neither the great writer nor the great adapter of Shakespeare's works that he professed to be. The actor/manager's overt personal desire for financial and social success is also criticized by both players and playwrights in the piece (namely Quin, Foote and, indirectly, Shakespeare and Jonson), but their final judgment against him focusses on his work as a writer. Like Fielding and De Breval, this anonymous author does not presume to criticize the famous actor's reputation, but the playwright characters generally make it clear that players, though necessary, are inferior.

Fielding introduces in his prelude Eurydice Hiss'd a character stamped with his own experience: the playwright/manager Pillage. He echoes De Breval's Pope in

his belief that players are merely to be used for a writer's convenience. Fielding offers a portrait which does nothing to alter the convention set up in the plays, that playwrights are superior to players, and therefore do not need to show them respect. Pillage's managerial position probably has some bearing on his treatment of the players, but Fielding demonstrates that the question of whether Pillage makes promises as a manager or as a playwright is irrelevant; from either point of view, he uses the players for his own benefit. Pillage does, however, use both roles when he treats the actors as poor dependents. He is civil to those who are compliant and agree to do what he wants, but he has no time for those who cause the slightest problem. He promises to find them parts, and they, in return, must applaud loudly at the opening performance of his farce. He shows how hollow these promises are when one player admits that he cannot comply with the playwright's request:

> **PILLAGE.** I don't desire any of you to clap unless when you hear a hiss -- let that be your cue for clapping.
> **ALL.** We'll observe.
> **5 ACTOR.** But, sir, I have not money enough to get into the house.
> **PILLAGE.** I cannot disburse it.
> **5 ACTOR.** But I hope you will remember your promises, sir.
> **PILLAGE.** Some other time; you see I am busy--
> (300)

Even though Fielding's manager and authors are not very attractive characters, he treats them with more sympathy than he does his actors.[6]

In Tragedy A-La-Mode, one of the versions of the second act of The Diversions of the Morning, Foote goes to great lengths to demean the players' status in comparison with that of the playwright.[7] Foote himself portrayed the author Fustian, who has contrived to produce his play without actors, using cardboard cutouts in their stead. A note in the preface acknowledges that "When this piece was first acted by Mr. Foote, with PASTEBOARD FIGURES, it entirely failed in the effect; but with PERFORMERS, accoutred ridiculously pompous, and in fierce whiskered high tragedy, the effect those dumb actors had assisted my Imitations, and received unbounded applause" (Wilkinson, The Wandering Patentee 1: 286). Whether the failure was due to the actor Foote's inability to vitalize the production without other live players, or to Fustian's idea for using pasteboard figures, is not clear. Most of the playwrights seem to subordinate their colleagues' status to highlight the theatrical and social differences between them; and yet their

playwright characters' judgment and knowledge, with regard to all play-house matters, are obviously inferior to those of the player characters.

PLAYERS FOR PLAYWRIGHTS

Regardless of whether they respect each other, actors are the playwrights' spokespersons.[8] The eighteenth-century dramatists often used players, of both sexes, to speak on their behalf directly to the audience in a prologue, or introduction, before the performance of their piece.

The strolling player character, Sylvester Daggerwood, considers appeals to the audience to be some of the finest moments for an actor in theatre: "Oh an apology is everything, it makes many a twenty shilling actor bold in London" (No Play this Night!). As I mentioned earlier, I am not dealing with the usual kind of prologue, but rather with several prologue-type introductions that were written as small plays or dialogues, in which the characters of a playwright and one or more players discuss or refer to the play about to be presented. They are worth more than a cursory glance because of what they tell us about the relationship between the participants.

These introductions are nothing like the apology described by Sylvester Daggerwood. The writers' attempts to bring their drama to the stage are often thwarted, or at least criticized, by the players, who claim to know better what the audience will consider acceptable entertainment. The authors usually brag about the superior quality of their work, while the actors' reaction to such immodest declarations suggests that neither the writers nor their works are to be taken seriously. Jean B. Kern says, "by means of the actors' lines and their actions, the author can make clear to his audience his satiric intention" (10). We can only imagine the action, but the tone of the dialogue signals the satire or burlesque to follow. Included in this group are the introductions to John Gay's The Beggar's Opera, Henry Fielding's The Welsh Opera and Don Quixote in England, and the anonymous Humours of the Court, which were all written prior to 1737. Those of the central period are the introductions to James Miller's An Hospital for Fools, Leonard MacNally's The Apotheosis of Punch, and the anonymous Music Alamode; the epilogue to The German Hotel appeared later in the century. The infrequency with which this device was employed suggests that it was not very popular. The kind of relationship that is established between the characters and the audience might explain why these pieces had limited

success.

By using their playwright characters as the target for the players' criticism, the playwrights could satirize the taste of their audience without directly giving offence. All the introductions, apart from that to The Beggar's Opera, seem to encompass the general opinion that the playwright character's work is ill-written, in poor taste, and will be damned by "the town." The purpose of such disparagement might have been to solicit the audience's sympathy for the piece, whatever its quality, but judging by the number of performances each achieved, it seldom worked. The Beggar's Opera was an exception. Some playwrights use the ballad opera form developed by Gay, although their player and playwright characters do not reappear. Perhaps they wanted to associate their work with Gay's, in an attempt to win similar audience approbation.

Along with lines and actions, the players are given the inferior quality of the playwright characters' work with which to justify their criticism. In Fielding's introduction to The Welsh Opera, the Player makes fun of the writer Scriblerus and his work. "Upon my word, Mr Scriblerus," says the Player, "you write plays (or something like plays) faster than we can act them, or the town damn them" (lines 1-3). Impervious to all insults, and in ridiculous fashion, Scriblerus readily justifies his work:

> **PLAYER.** I wish, sir, you had kept within the rules of probability in your plot, if I may call it so.
> **SCRIBLERUS.** It is the business of a poet to surprise his audience, especially a writer of operas. The discovery, sir, should be as no one could understand how it could be brought about, before it is made.
> **PLAYER.** No, I defy them to understand yours after it is made.
> **SCRIBLERUS.** Well, but I have a witch to solve all that. I know some authors who have made as strange discoveries without any witch at all. (lines 16-25)

The Player then highlights the absurdities of Scriblerus's dramatic devices when he suggests that a conjuror is really needed to explain the "deus ex machina." The introduction to Humours of the Court, advertised as "A New Ballad Opera . . . as it was intended to have been Performed at one of the Theatres," is not as explicit about its playwright character's work. We are given no hints in the dialogue between the Poet and the Player for prejudging the quality of the performance to follow. The Player's advice to the Poet--that he should have "seconds" in the pit with clubs so that

no one will dare to hiss his play--is not a reliable clue, because we cannot assume that the Player has already read it. He is obviously on his way to the green room for a first reading; he says to the Poet, "come, I'll go in and give out the Parts, and then we shall see how it will do on a Rehearsal" (Introduction). In Music Alamode, subtitled Bays in Chromatics, the Player's ironic deference to the composer Dr Crotchet leaves us in no doubt as to what he thinks of the good Doctor's abilities:

> **PLAYER.** But I hope, Sir, you will pardon me if I say, I am in doubt for the success of your Peice [sic].
> **DOCTOR.** Sir!--
> **PLAYER.** I say, Sir, I doubt whether it will please the town.
> **DOCTOR.** Ha, ha, ha!-- There's the Case now -- For want of being a judge of these things, you think the Town as ignorant as yourself. No, no, my Friend, they begin to know better; I have open'd their Eyes; they know my Merits, they know my Merits: Besides, Sir, they don't dare use me. I'll, if they do, upon my Soul, I'll never compose again, so that's what they are afraid of.
> **PLAYER.** Well, Sir, I submit to your better judgement; to be sure you know best. (Scene 1)

Had this piece ever been staged, the audience might have found themselves in a dilemma. The Doctor dares them to refuse to support a composition which the Player has indicated is sure not to please; if they do so, they align themselves with the Player's judgment, which the Doctor has indicated is inferior to their own. But no *discerning* audience would be taken in by the braggart composer, or miss the irony in the Player's response. In this way, the author not only differentiates between those patrons with good taste and those without, but also acknowledges that the player character's judgment is superior in matters concerning what will or will not please the taste of the town.

The introduction to Gay's The Beggar's Opera does not follow quite the same pattern. The Player, while not applauding the Beggar-poet's merit in particular, does suggest that some poets might actually have talent. The Beggar also resists categorization with other playwright characters in that he appears, in his present impecunious condition, to be the Player's inferior. But neither he nor the Player takes advantage of this reversal of fortune. He tells the poet that, "As we live by the Muses, 'tis but gratitude in us to encourage poetical merit wherever we find it" (Introduction), regardless of appearance. The Muses, according to the Player, "pay no distinction to dress," because appearance is not a true indicator of a man's

ability.[9] Rather than praising the improbabilities and inconsistencies of the operas of popular taste, this poet apologises for *not* imitating them: "I hope I may be forgiven, that I have not made my opera throughout unnatural, like those in vogue" (Introduction). Gay's satire does not appear to be aimed at the drama itself until the end of the play, for neither character intimates in the introduction that the town might damn the Beggar's opera and force a change of ending. The outcome, however, confirms what other plays of the period hint at: the players have an avid desire to please the audience at any cost.

The playwrights do, of course, give the characters their voice, and the actors their lines. There is no indication in the texts, or in performance records, that any of the scenes in question were improvised. The players are thus empowered to speak, although how their gestures and facial expressions might have coloured their words is left to speculation. Disagreements that playwrights and players had with their managers are well documented;[10] evidence regarding the working relationship between writers and performers, however, is scarce.[11] One such entry, in William Hopkins's Diary for 24 December 1763, indicates that the degree of professionalism between playwrights and players depended on the situation and the individuals involved:

> This day was dedicated for rehearsing the new Pantomime call'd the Rites of Hecate. In our practices we found such a total want of business and incidents to carry on the story from one scene to another, were oblig'd to call the good natur'd Mr Colman to our aid, as we could get no assistance from the author Mr Love, who seems not to have the least Genius in contriving anything of that kind. The whole day spent till eleven o'clock at night . . . and everybody threw in their mite, and made it as well as the short time would allow. (qtd. in LS 4.1: xxiv)

Whether it was the players or the managers who turned to the established playwright Mr Colman for assistance with Mr Love's inadequate text, it was collaboration among artists that created the final product. The players obviously had no compunction about helping one playwright doctor another's script for the sake of the production; a fact which suggests that, although they had little respect for either Love or his work, they were ultimately dependent upon a playwright's expertise. But the choices of character type the playwrights offer of themselves give us a limited view of their relationship with the actors. We tend to see only inept, inexperienced amateur playwrights working with capable, experienced professional players. Hopkins's diary entry

confirms that playwrights such as Love existed, but so did playwrights such as Colman.

Players did not always wait for playwrights to write material for them. Many turned authors themselves, most of them writing afterpieces for their benefit nights. Philip K. Jason states that such a procedure gave the player an opportunity to "attempt to achieve some status as an author and increase his night's profits by offering something new, over which he had complete authority" ("The Afterpiece" 3). The notion that players did not have "complete authority," unless they had also authored the work being produced, conforms to the evidence supplied by the plays: the players were dependent on a playwright in the production of a new work, and on some other kind of director in that of a revival. However, as Jason says, "the playwright was then, as now, at the mercy of the manager and the actors for the effect his play made on the stage," a factor which, he suggests, "contributed to the placement of afterpiece writing in hands of theatrical professionals" ("The Afterpiece" 9). The players' dependency on the playwrights, either for texts or direction, weakens the standard argument about their elevated status being responsible for the declined state of the drama. Furthermore, if we take into consideration the players who wanted to be so self-reliant that they wrote their own plays, often as starring vehicles for themselves, the issue of dependency becomes more complex. Authors were at the mercy of the players on stage for their texts' full effect on the audience; if they had written a satire, they were even more dependent upon their performances to point up its targets (Kern 10), especially those which had to be hidden in the reading text in order to pass the censorial scrutiny of the Lord Chamberlain.

Complete authority and tailor-made roles are plausible reasons for actors to write their own plays. Jason suggests alternative rewards as incentives for other playwrights to write roles for particular players. They might have seen recompense in terms of assistance in the promotion of their piece by the performer's management, guarantee of success because of the player's fame, as well as financial gain--not by ensuring an author's benefit for the afterpiece, but by improving the chances of a benefit for one of their main-pieces ("The Afterpiece" 2-4). But as players were bound by their articles to perform the roles designated by the managers, the favour they could bestow on playwrights might very well be limited. Thomas Dutton, editor of the Dramatic Censor, advised playwrights in 1800 that this kind of dependence was unreliable and short-sighted:

> But we would beg leave to ask these writers, what will become of their comedies when they no longer

> have a Lewis to enliven and invigorate their flights and exaggerations? . . . this shows the absurdity, except with a view to immediate gain, of writing plays by an inverted process; i.e. of writing parts for particular actors, instead of leaving it to the actor to suit himself to the part. (2: 237-38, qtd. in LS 5.1: clxxiii)

The short life of plays written for the attributes of specific players proves Dutton correct. The actors could not be held responsible for the quality of the dramatists' performance, only for their own, albeit the material is a key element in what the players can achieve on stage.

PLAYERS VERSUS PLAYWRIGHTS

We have seen that not every relationship between playwright and player, fictional or real, is bonded by mutual respect. Actors must frequently perform material they neither like nor admire, because they are under contract to do so. This kind of situation was no less encumbering for the eighteenth-century players, and the playwrights often turn it to their own advantage in their portraits. The player characters are forced to resort to the expedient of refusing to play the roles assigned to them.

Burge tells us, "as early as 1675, the rules and regulations of the King's Company had prohibited an actor from declining a part if the company thought him suited to it" (44).[12] But it appears that, regardless of the possible forfeits a player might incur for refusing to perform an assigned role, the practice persisted. Robert D. Hume suggests that by the 1720s a double standard existed: "Except for the most senior people, actors were not allowed to refuse parts, or were fined for doing so" (Fielding and the London Theatre 21). The managers obviously had trouble getting the senior actors to obey the rules. Mrs Jordan's articles with the patentees of Drury Lane, dated 1785, include an item to the effect that the manager may subtract from her "weekly payments" all forfeits due for "her neglect, refusal or inability to attend, accept of study, practise, rehearse or publicly perform in the said theatre" (reproduced in Thomas 238-40). Mrs Jordan's reputation for professionalism suggests that such articles were not drawn up because of any specific breach on her part, but rather that they were a matter of course. The inclusion of "Clause XXI," in the contractual rules for a provincial touring company, dated c.1778, indicates that the practice was also common in the provinces: "That if any performer refuses any part or parts allotted to them by the managers, which may be deemed

necessary to carry on the business to the best advantage, to forfeit ten shillings" (reproduced in Thomas 240-45). At the end of the century, actors were objecting not to the inclusion of such clauses in their articles, but to the amount of the fines. In Holman's pamphlet of 1800, A Statement of the Differences Subsisting Between the Proprietors and Performers of the Theatre-Royal, Covent-Garden, the players object to the increase in forfeit for refusing a role from five to thirty pounds because, they say, their inability or unwillingness to pay such a sum gives managers "the power of . . . making the First Actors in the theatre submit to the work of the lowest" (reproduced in Burge 79). Roles were obviously related to the hierarchical status among company members. Any refusal to play a role might, therefore, have been a tactic, employed by the players against what they perceived to be a managerial attempt to undermine their positions in the company's ranks, rather than a criticism against a particular playwright's work (although the size and quality of a role must have been important factors).

Player characters often refuse to play roles they consider too "low" or too small for their talents, and, regardless of their seniority, they seem oblivious to the consequences of their action. They are more concerned about the appropriateness of the role than about any possible fine. This evidence conflicts with that found in other documents, which tends to point to anxiety over finances as a professional concern for the players. Kitty Clive, for instance, remonstrated in a letter to Garrick in 1765 about being fined:

> I had my money last year stopped at the beginning of the season for not coming to rehearse two parts that I could repeat in my sleep, and which must have cost me two guineas, besides the 'pleasure' of coming to town. (qtd. in Lawrence 55)

The playwrights hide other concerns, which might affect the viability of their product in a commercial market, behind the constant barrage of their players' declarations about unsuitable roles.

In Bays in Petticoats, Kitty Clive is able to criticize the audience upon whom she relied as player and playwright. Naming herself as the actress who does not appear for Mrs Hazard's rehearsal, Clive's player has the audacity to want to read the whole of the amateur playwright's script before she agrees to perform it! Her request appears both understandable and laudable. However, Clive proceeds to reduce what points her absent player character might have scored by hinting that the famous comedienne's desire to play

tragedy is absurd.[13] Most modern performers would find nothing strange in an actress's desire to play a part in which she might not ordinarily be cast, but the eighteenth-century audiences were accustomed to seeing their favourites in certain types of roles. They would probably have scoffed at the idea of an actress who usually played comic roles (many of them lower-class maids) wanting to play a tragic heroine.[14] The theatre audiences, who watched the afterpiece in the seasons of 1750-55 and again in 1762, would have seen Kitty Clive herself in the character of the pompous, arrogant female author:

> **MRS HAZARD.** . . . 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.
> **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. (1.1)

Clive's deliberate self-mockery, in both areas of her expertise, guarantees the audience's laughter, while she simultaneously criticizes them for agreeing with Mrs Hazard. In the guise of her amateur playwright, she is able to satirize not only the business of typecasting, but also the taste of the town, without running the risk of being damned for it.

A year later, Henry Woodward, famous (as an actor) for his comic characters and (as a playwright) for his pantomimes, attempted a similar afterpiece for his benefit, entitled A Lick at the Town (1751). He seemed, however, to rely on his player and audience characters' criticism of his playwright's work, rather than a demonstration of it, to carry the piece, which did not survive more than one performance. Author is brought on stage, "a little in Liquor indeed," to explain to the patrons why the performance of his play has not begun. He insists that he is "not in a fit Dress, or Condition" to appear on stage, and lays all the blame on the actors' refusal to play, even though "several Persons of Quality . . . all say 'tis a mighty pretty Performance." The players, many of them named and performed by their real counterparts, do not hesitate to come and give their reasons, when asked by the prompter Cross (also played by himself):

> **RAFTOR.** With all my Heart, Sir.

MISS PITT. I'm not afraid, Mr. Cross.
RASWELL. No Author shall direct me, Sir.
SHUTER. I'll play none of your Parts.
COSTELLO. Nor I be bully'd by an Author, Sir.
ALL. Nor I, -- nor I. (Larpent MS #92)

Several of the players' excuses for not performing include their unwillingness to play small or low parts, but the reason offered by Shuter supports the theory that the audience's expectations, of seeing certain players in a particular kind of role, had to be met to ensure a play's success:

SHUTER. I don't dislike my Part, Sir -- I am only afraid I have not Capacity for it.
AUTHOR. You talk like a Modest Man, Mr. Shuter -- the Part to be sure is an Excellent Part.
SHUTER. Yes, Sir, a very excellent Part, and very interesting, but as there is not the least Bit of Wit or Humour in it, the Audience will never bear it from me -- I can only make Faces, Sir.
(Larpent MS #92))

Mrs Clive then enters and hurls abuse at the Author, especially when he insults her own afterpiece:

CLIVE. I won't speak a Line, Sir, nor ever will play [such] . . . low contemptible stuff.
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 soild [sic] by your dirty Fingers, or Dirtier Tongue? (Larpent MS #92)

The patrons probably enjoyed the actress's abusive tirade at Author, Woodward's fictional representation of himself, because of the known animosity between the two players (Davies Memoirs 1: 276). After she storms off, several Townspeople come on stage and continue the abuse. Author finally escapes their wrath under cover of a fight with Bailiffs, and Cross tries to appease the Townspeople by offering them Woodward for the epilogue. Woodward appears at the end of the play, and the Townspeople seem pleased to see him; but the epilogue, which "was Lik'd" (Cross, qtd. in LS 4.1: 242), was actually spoken by Garrick. The player characters are spared, by their own efforts, from having to perform what Mrs Clive describes as a "heap of the most dull, gross, personal abuse that was ever rak'd together by the lowest, scribbling Scavenger of 'em all" (Larpent MS #92). Woodward's playwright is an unsympathetic character; but the audience were not given an opportunity to view his work,

which might have had a bearing on why they did not care for the piece, in spite of its star-studded cast.[15] Its failure proves that the actors' abilities alone could not always rescue a lame play.

The established convention, that once the actors have the playwright's script and are committed to a role the rehearsals go forward, is not contested in the plays. Player characters, particularly actresses, often complain about their roles, and several excuse themselves from rehearsal or performance because of "illness" (see Pasquin, The Rival Theatres, The Minor, Tragedy-A-La-Mode, and The Author on the Wheel), but only in Woodward's piece and The Stage Mutineers, do they actually refuse to perform. If actors cannot extricate themselves, the playwrights suggest that their only other recourse is to alter their parts. Even modern scripts are altered in performance--not always with a playwright's permission--in spite of copyright protection, so it is not hard to imagine that liberties would have been taken with the texts in the eighteenth century. The Copyright Act of Queen Anne (1710) gave authors the sole right to sell their copyright to either a theatre or a publisher, but the author relinquished his rights, once sold, to the purchaser. Even the "amendment to the act which established a copyright term of fourteen years, after which 'the sole Right of Printing or Disposing of Copies shall return to the Authors thereof . . .'" (Jason, "The Afterpiece" 9), would not have protected the work once it was no longer the author's property. The playwright could only hope that the players, and managers or actor-managers who directed the players, would honour his script. In London, the playwright could be on hand to defend his work during rehearsals of a new play, but most productions in the provinces would have been beyond his control. Charles Macklin's many Chancery suits and letters reveal that he took action against those who pirated his work (Appleton 122-24). The actor-author wrote the following letter to Tate Wilkinson, when he produced one of Macklin's plays without permission:

> . . . if you will consult any gentleman at the Bar he will inform you that it is an illegal [act] . . . and a more offensive invasion of property than you perhaps may imagine, as the pirating Booksellers of Edinborough proved two days ago in Westminster Hall, when the court of the King's Bench finally determined the writings of an author to be his inherent and perpetual right. (qtd. in Appleton 123)

The amount of alteration done in performance is, of course, difficult to determine but, as Sheridan's The Critic amply illustrates, alteration or "pruning" of text was another

source of friction between the playwright and player characters. Puff, however, seems to be the only one to suffer the humiliation and frustration of seeing his work "hacked" to pieces. Philip K. Jason asserts that the "frequent references to the actors' cuts remind us not only of the power of the actor on the eighteenth century [sic] London stage, but also of the contrasting realities of a script and a production" (54). He underscores the audience's difficulty in trying to ascertain exactly what belongs to whom:

> Puff may restore every word in the printed version of his play, but the essence of the dramatic experience depends upon our being witness to a performance. And Sheridan makes us realize that even here we may be confronted not with the perfect fulfillment of a conception, but rather with the product of many cross-purposes, compromises, and jealousies. (54-55)

Without accurate knowledge of the text being performed, even those present at a performance cannot know the extent to which a text is honoured. Eye-witness accounts do not generally yield any clues in the matter. Though we can assume that actors, if they forget their lines, might create new dialogue, the example in The Critic, of their deliberately altering their written roles, is singular. Sheridan, however, takes pains to show that the player characters do nothing without permission. He has the Under Prompter remind Puff that he gave them "leave to cut out or omit whatever they found heavy or unnecessary to the plot" (2.1). The prompter's warning, that "[the players] have taken very liberal advantage of [Puff's] indulgence" (2.1), restricts the conflict to playwright versus players. Sheridan's use of the word "indulgence" offers a subtle hint that players were not usually given such freedom with an author's text.

C. B. Hogan declares that "leading actors were allowed to do exactly as they pleased" with their roles (LS 5.1: cliv). He supports this statement with an excerpt from the Morning Chronicle of 6 September 1777: "It is usual for the actor of a principal character to regulate the part, and those which have connection with it" (qtd. in LS 5.1: cliv). In his Reminiscences, William Macready tells us that "actors directed their own scenes" (1: 145). We know from their correspondence that Garrick and Kitty Clive spent time coaching younger or new players in roles they had played, and, from other accounts, that Macklin spent many years of his long career teaching students and professionals how to play particular roles. Each of these players thereby secured a place in future theatrical performances for his or her own

particular interpretation of a role. The legendary occasion of Macklin's first performance as Shylock in 1741 throws light on a leading actor's regulation of a part, and reveals how innovation leads to convention. Macklin's interpretation was so radically different from the usual comic character established by those who had preceded him in the role, that he dared not reveal it during rehearsals. Only on the opening night did the audience, and his fellow performers, discover the significant changes he had made both in characterization and costume. For the performance to have continued to its highly acclaimed conclusion, rather than collapsing in total confusion, the players must have been able to follow a prescribed script and blocking, while instantly accommodating Macklin's innovative interpretation.

However, while theatre history might grant leading players freedom to interpret their roles, Sheridan's Puff does not. He attempts to direct, and correct, the principals' gestures and actions. As such areas of expertise are usually considered more the domain of the actor than the playwright, it is understandable that the principal performers are put out by his intrusions. A later play, The Author on the Wheel, gives credence to the idea that the "indulgence" granted Puff's players to alter his text was not standard practice. The player characters are gathered in the green room, waiting for the manager to arrive in order to give them the alterations for that night's performance. In Sheridan's play, the player characters have not only made all their own alterations, and rehearsed them, but also given them to the prompter without the playwright's or manager's approval. Puff's reaction to a cut in the lovers' scene shows the different priorities in the work of the playwright and the actor. Puff is loath to lose any of the words he has written, but the players consider the action and expression of passion are more important than the quality or quantity of dialogue. Tilburina and Whiskerandos are in the middle of their parting scene when Puff interrupts them:

> **PUFF.** Hey day! here's a cut! -- What, are all the mutual protestations out?
> **TILBURINA.** Now, pray Sir, don't interrupt us just here, you ruin our feelings.
> **PUFF.** Your feelings! -- but zounds, my feelings, ma'am!
> **SNEER.** No; pray don't interrupt them. (2.2)

The effectiveness of the players' performance on the audience in the theatre is crucial to the players' welfare; the playwright, on the other hand, has an alternative way of reaching a paying public--through publication. Totally frustrated by the players, Puff vows to use this latter recourse: "performers must do as they please, but upon my soul, I'll print it every word" (2.2).

In most of the plays the actors honour the texts, good and bad alike. The Critic is an exception, but Sheridan relied heavily on his performers; they were known to perform first acts of his plays even as he was writing the last.[16] The plays also tend to reveal that players have better judgment than authors, particularly in matters concerning the viability of the latter's property, and they are not afraid to declare their opinions. In his Apology, Colley Cibber answers those playwrights who, when they feel snubbed by a player's judgment of their work, declare:

> Gentlemen were not to be so treated! the Stage was like to be finely govern'd, when Actors pretended to be judges of Authors, &c. But dear Gentlemen! if they were good Actors, why not? How should they have been able to act, or rise to any Excellence, if you suppos'd them not to feel, or understand what you offer'd them? (319)

Puff allows his players use of "the pruning knife" because, he says, "they are in general very good judges" (2.2). However, in The Critic, the players' judgment leads them to use "the axe" rather than "the pruning knife." Here the audience has the evidence of what remains of Puff's opus; they could not fail to miss Sheridan's satire against what Richard Bevis calls "the more absurd and bombastic conventions of English tragedy," with its "passing hits at sentimental comedy" (227), nor disagree with the players' judgment about the need to edit as much of Puff's text as possible.

Lindesius Jones, in his play The Authors, uses a well-known text to demonstrate how absurd some actors' alterations can be. Maggot, a failed author, asks the Player, a professional actor, to help him prepare for a career on the stage. He has chosen the role of Othello to study, but intends to alter the manner of Desdemona's death, from suffocation to stabbing. The Player quotes Othello's lines--"Yet I'll not shed her blood/ Nor scar that whiter skin of hers than snow"--to prove to Maggot that "Shakespear ne're did mean the man so bloody" (2.2). Maggot, however, has decided that his judgment is superior:

> No more on't,-- talk no more:-- vanity aside, the world will allow me judgment in the matter -- I wont yield to the author himself in the meaning. Shakespear was but a player -- I a scholar --
>
> (2.2)

The alteration of Shakespeare's texts was, of course, commonplace in the eighteenth century.[17] Jones, in this case, makes it clear that those who are "but" players are more judicious than his self-proclaimed scholar.

A play's potential success often depends on the actual author's ability to entertain an audience with the fictional playwright's inadequate material. In the introductory "Green Room" scene of James Miller's An Hospital for Fools, the Actress suggests to the Poet what commercial ingredients are necessary for his work to succeed:

> **ACTRESS.** . . . there's no laughing in it. . . . Why, Sir, d'ye think to divert an Audience with your Sentences and your Distichs? Do People come to the Play-house for Edification? or to learn their Catechism of you Poets? (Introduction)

But the Poet believes that his more serious piece will be "well receiv'd by the Town," because "Taste and good Sense" will prevail. The Actress insists that a high moral tone, and a plot without a wedding in it, will certainly be damned. It is difficult to decide which of the two characters is to be admired more. The Actress's judgment is certainly biased; she tells the Poet that if her part had not been "a merrier Part than the rest of your Fools," she would have refused it. Although she is far from satisfied with her role, she takes comfort in the belief that the audience will prevent her from having to perform it: "I am not to appear until the thing's almost half over, and by that time I believe I shall have no occasion to appear at all" (Introduction). The Actor agrees with her prediction of the play's reception; he expects to "be pelted off the Stage." There is no record of the players having been pelted during a performance of Miller's play, but the noise from the audience certainly prevented it from being heard, and it lasted only two performances (LS 3.2: 802). Eighteenth-century audiences were certainly known to have prevented the completion of performances, but not necessarily because a work contained "no laughing in it." The Actress is not alone in her judgment of an audience's unwillingness to sit through less than diverting material. Buskin, the player character in the anonymous play The Author on the Wheel, has no faith in the viability of Vainwit's play; however he misjudges the audience when he decides not to learn the last act of his part. He is convinced that they will stop the play during the performance, but they wait until it is over before they damn it. Vainwit does not believe his play needs altering, although he agrees to hear the players' opinions. The manager, Drama, proposes that he keep his authorship secret, so that he "will then hear ingenuously [the players'] sentiments on [the play's] merits, or demerits" (Scene 1). Not surprisingly Vainwit refuses to accept the players' adverse criticism of his work, but the practitioners, pleading danger from flying fruit, refuse to perform it again. Thus the players are spared further suffering and Vainwit, acknowledging authorship, leaves the theatre, text in hand. Because the play had already failed to please an audience one night, and both manager and players agree that

no amount of alterations can prevent it from being damned a second, the actors' judgment of Vainwit's work appears to be sound. But there is no reason given for why the manager has to comply with the playwright's obstinacy "in persisting to have it play'd again" (Scene 1), or why he accepts Vainwit's play for production in the first place. The players, except for Buskin, did their job: they learned all their lines and, in spite of obvious reservations, performed the ill-written piece in front of an audience. However, Drama appears to relinquish his responsibility; he is reliant upon the players' refusal to perform again in order to be rid of both the unsuccessful play and its author. The Author on the Wheel was given only a single performance at Drury Lane in April of 1785, but that does not tell us, unfortunately, whether the audience disliked the play, or the performance, or both.

PLAYERS UNDER PLAYWRIGHTS

We know that the playwrights usually conducted the first readings of their new plays, while the managers looked after revivals (Cooke, Macklin 402). Benjamin Victor suggests that "the rehearsals went on under the eye of a person who had ability to instruct, and power to encourage and advise, those of industry and merit, and to forfeit and discharge the negligent and worthless" (2: 5). With Fielding or Foote at the helm of the Haymarket, Garrick or Sheridan at Drury Lane, it is intriguing to find that the ability of the instructors seems sorely lacking. Such evidence surfaces in the plays written, between 1736 and 1779, featuring a rehearsal which has passed the first reading stage, conducted by a playwright. These are Pasquin (1736), The Historical Register (1737), Taste (1747), Bays in Petticoats (1750), The Minor (1760), A Peep Behind the Curtain (1767), The Meeting of the Company (1774), The Critick Anticipated (1779), and The Critic (1779). But the contemporary popularity of several of these rehearsal plays declares a quality of work not found in that of the preceptor characters.

The tradition of the rehearsal play began in the late seventeenth century with the Duke of Buckingham's The Rehearsal, which proved to be very popular throughout the eighteenth century, until Sheridan's The Critic supplanted it. Both Buckingham's The Rehearsal and the anonymous The Female Wits (1697) set up conventions for the ways in which subsequent rehearsal plays were structured and the pretentious playwright characters, male and female, were ridiculed. These conventions, as we shall see, were generally employed by the eighteenth-century dramatists using the rehearsal-play format. The two early plays aimed their

satire at particular authors and their work; the targets were Dryden in The Rehearsal and Mrs Manley in The Female Wits). An amalgam of the pretentious playwright characters that were created (Bayes and Marsilia) became the standard character type for all rehearsal plays thereafter. They are given complete control over the rehearsal: they coach the actors on delivery of lines and gestures, they talk to the prompter and scenemen, they even examine properties and set pieces, constantly interrupting the rehearsal with their desire to be involved in every aspect of production and to discuss their play with their invited guests. The latter also need to have the author's incomprehensible script explained. Clark acknowledges that these playwright characters are given an unusually free hand with the direction of their pieces. One reason, she suggests, for not "presenting the company managers as characters would be the employees' reticence to cast their bosses as comic characters" (328). Both Bayes and Marsilia are finally deserted by actors and auditors and they storm off, threatening the company and taking their scripts with them. The early rehearsal plays parody the work of their targeted playwrights, using lines from their plays and structures that contravene reason and logic. The plays-within-plays are burlesques of the heroic dramatic genre; they exaggerate the passion of the characters, the plot requirement of grand battle scenes, the elevated rhetorical language, the elaborate stage effects, songs and dances, all for comic effect. But, as George Winchester Stone points out, "the mockery of Buckingham could not laugh the genre from the stage," because "[t]he values and manner of heroic drama were too well rooted in the expectations of the audience to allow it to fade. . ." (Introduction to The Rehearsal 39). Perhaps the audiences' familiarity with the conventions of the late seventeenth-century rehearsal play also restricted the amount or degree of experimentation they would accept from the eighteenth-century dramatists using the form.

The satire of The Rehearsal and The Female Wits was not limited to playwrights and their work. Players also came under fire. Betterton was ridiculed in Buckingham's play for continuing to perform roles for which he was considered too old, and The Female Wits created the opportunity for younger actors to mimic the familiar mannerisms of the more established players. The convention begun in these plays of presenting players as themselves gave later dramatists the opportunity to use named players, who performed either a resemblance of themselves, according to audience expectation, or a parody of themselves, with which to divert the audience and highlight the playwrights' satiric intent. The role of Buckingham's playwright, Bayes, was used by many eighteenth-century actors, including Theophilus Cibber, Thomas King, Edward Shuter, and Samuel Foote; it was also one of Garrick's

many successes and he continued to develop it during his career.[18] The name Bayes became synonymous with the character of the egotistical amateur playwright, who believes that his writing and his knowledge of theatre are superior to those of any player. Garrick used the name Bayes for his author in The Meeting of the Company, as did Kitty Clive in the subtitle of her afterpiece Bays in Petticoats.[19] Both of them must have wanted to ensure that their audience would immediately recognize and expect a certain type of character.

In most of these rehearsal plays, the production of the playwright's piece is in its final pre-performance stage. This allows for the players to gather in costume, awaiting the arrival of the playwright. Although their discipline and knowledge of play-house matters are superior to any shown by the writers, it is usually the latter who take charge. The authors occasionally arrive with guests, who might also appear without invitation. Historical sources are not clear on whether dress or, indeed, any rehearsals were commonly open to invited patrons. Arthur H. Scouten states that managers of opera would hold previews traditionally at noon but that "Such public rehearsals were rare occasions at the theatres. . ." (LS 3.1: clxxx). One such rarity must have been Theophilus Cibber's production of Romeo and Juliet, which was so far advanced that he invited guests to a performance a week before the play opened on 4 September 1744 (LS 3.1: clxxx). The business of satisfying an audience is paramount in the rehearsal plays; this could be one of the reasons for having the player characters in costume. The device of having an invited audience serves the added purpose of allowing the playwright-director character to perform in as demonstrative a fashion as the players. The presence of the on-stage audience also offers a diversionary, sympathetic element to the conflicts which often arise between the instructor and his actors. Such discord is often due to the fact that the playwrights, regardless of their competence, involve themselves in all aspects of the rehearsal--the players' delivery and gestures, the costumes, the scenery, and the music--usually for the benefit of the visitors who accompany them.

Rehearsal plays, which often require a fine distinction to be drawn between various qualities and performance of text, rely heavily on their performers. The playwrights' conviction that so fine a distinction could be made by the actors, without compromising the text, was possibly strengthened by the fact that several of them were well-versed in the art of theatre. It is standard practice during rehearsals, other than in the final "dress," for the actors to be stopped to allow for corrections or improvements to be made. Even though most of the plays-within-plays are at a

late stage, it is necessary for the piece being rehearsed to be interrupted occasionally, and in some cases frequently, so that the satirical intention of the real playwright is not lost on the audience. These interruptions also add to the cumulative evidence suggesting that a player's performance could rise above the subject matter being performed, to such a degree that the inferior quality of the material would be overlooked.

While the player characters generally attempt to perform more than adequately on these occasions, it would be misleading to suggest that they never cause problems, though these moments appear to have been created as sources for satire against the playwright characters rather than as criticism of the actors. Fielding gives no indication in Pasquin whether his writers, Fustian and Trapwit, are amateur or professional; but they serve as good examples of the preceptive playwright character, because of the frustrations and problems the players make them suffer. These recalcitrant performers fail to appear for rehearsal, they refuse to play assigned roles, and they are late or not ready for entrances.

The rehearsal of Fustian's tragedy has to be deferred when one of the actors fails to arrive. As Trapwit's comedy is the first play to be rehearsed, the players and the prompter offer Fustian advice about how he should proceed:

> **PROMPTER.** Mr. Fustian, we must defer the rehearsal of your tragedy, for the gentleman who plays the first ghost is not yet up; and when he is, he has got such a churchyard cough, he will not be heard to the middle of the pit.
> **1 PLAYER.** I wish you could cut the ghost out, sir; for I am terribly afraid he'll be damned if you don't.
> **FUSTIAN.** Cut him out, sir! He is one of the most considerable persons in the play.
> **PROMPTER.** Then, sir, you must give the part to somebody else; for the present is so lame he can hardly walk the stage.
> **FUSTIAN.** Then he shall be carried; for no man in England can act a ghost like him: sir, he was born a ghost; he was made for the part, and the part writ for him. (1.1)

Fustian suffers the consequence of having written a role for a particular actor, who is not entirely reliable. Trapwit's rehearsal is also held up for a moment when one of the actors refuses to act the role given to him. Unlike Fustian, when told he is a man short, the comedy playwright immediately asks for a replacement; he is lucky to find a young actor, eager and willing to do the job:

TRAPWIT. Pray, Mr. Prompter, who shall we have to act the part?
1 PLAYER. Sir, I liked the part so well, that I have studied it in hope of some time playing it.
TRAPWIT. You are an exceeding pretty young fellow, and I am very glad of the exchange. (1.1)

Both playwright characters' problems continue, however, with actors stepping "aside on some business," or making wrong entrances, or just not being ready. At each hiatus, Fustian and Trapwit go to the green room; an intermission between acts conveniently covers their departure.

In the same way that he employs the players' absence for the act-drop device, Fielding uses his playwrights to interrupt the proceedings. They continually talk to each other rather than attending to the business of the rehearsal. The players cannot be blamed for awaiting their directors' pleasure in the green room, where at least it was warm. As for the mistaken entrances, the early arrival of the Queen of Common Sense as a ghost is explicable. Fustian rehearses the complex battle scene three times, and then engages in conversation with the critic Sneerwell. When he finally turns his attention to the stage, he sees the ghost rising:

FUSTIAN. . . . Oons, and the devil, madam: what's the meaning of this? You have left out a scene; was ever such an absurdity, as for your ghost to appear before you are killed!
GHOST. I ask pardon, sir, in the hurry of the battle I forgot to come and kill myself. (5.1)

Fustian has given her such an incredibly fast costume and make-up change, it is understandable that she would be concentrating on the technical rather than the performance aspects of her role.

The evidence of the text implies that Fielding does not blame his players in the same way that Fustian does. They might cause a problem or a hiatus in the action, but only when a change in focus is required for Fustian or Trapwit. In general, they try to perform as well as they can for the sake of the production, regardless of the inattentiveness of the playwrights and the poor quality of their material. They apologize even when their actions are not altogether their fault, as in the case when the actress playing the Ghost of Common Sense misses a scene. Her admission of error merely emphasizes the absurdity of Fustian's play. Although no excuses can be made for players who refuse parts and do not attend rehearsals, the performers usually take instruction well.

Several playwrights use absence of players to reflect

their entertainment's theatrical quality, and to keep named performers' reputations intact. We have seen how, in Kitty Clive's Bays in Petticoats, Mrs Clive fails to appear for her rehearsal in the role of Marcella in Mrs Hazard's play, upon which the amateur female playwright accepts the suggestion that she perform the role herself. The irony of this situation, and the metatheatrical layering it creates, would have been most clear in the original production with Kitty Clive in Mrs Hazard's role. David Garrick uses an actor's absence at rehearsal in the same way in A Peep Behind the Curtain. Glib, the playwright character, ever eager to please his invited guests, Lady Fuz and Sir Toby, agrees to play the part given to the actor Thomas King, when he does not appear. Glib was played originally by King; so the named player's ability and reliability could not be called into question by the audience in 1767. Samuel Foote, in his play The Minor, uses the same device to show off his own particular talents. As he is not willing to disappoint the stage audience present at his rehearsal, he agrees to play the part which was to have been performed by one of the actresses.[20] A female role was a more than suitable vehicle for Foote's talents for mimicry and disguise.

The fact that the playwrights of these particular plays were also performers is not irrelevant. They use the non-appearance of players not to question their professionalism, but to divert their audiences with their playwright characters' attempts to deal with the problems such absences create. At the same time, they give either themselves or, in Garrick's case, another star player the opportunity to perform the vacated role. Thus they demonstrate their own versatility while showing the egotistical nature of the playwright characters, who assume they can perform as well as they think they can write. The fact that Foote's and Clive's plays, and Garrick's to a lesser extent, did not remain in the theatrical repertory for more than a few seasons suggests that their continued success was hampered by their lack of the visual presence of the original players. The popularity of Fielding's work is not reliant on a particular player being in the cast, and he shows what happens to Fustian when he writes especially for the ghost player with the "churchyard cough." The interruptions created by this player's absence and the other ghost's mistake give Fielding a chance, from both a playwright's and a manager's point of view, to explore and comment on the nature of the entertainments, as well as the rehearsal process itself.

As I have mentioned, in the matter of taking direction, the player characters appear to be conscientious and willing to do as they are told. Even when the playwrights question an actor's understanding or competence, as De Breval does in

his characterization of Cibber, they usually take care, however subtly, to confirm his or her acting abilities. A case in point is Fielding's Pasquin, in which several of the players appear not to be able to remember blocking. Trapwit remonstrates with them: "But, gentlemen, what are you doing? How often shall I tell you that the moment the candidates are gone out you are to retire to the table, and drink and look wise" (1.1). Only a few minutes earlier, however, the player in the role of Lord Place had argued that he could not "possibly do [the bribing business] better at the table," and so Trapwit had changed the blocking;[21] he brought the actors from the table, "forward to the front of the stage" (1.1). Trapwit then converses with Fustian, ignoring the players, until eventually he notices them standing on stage, presumably doing nothing. Such idleness demonstrates one of the difficulties any director encounters even with a group of accomplished players, but in this instance the cast might have been waiting for Trapwit to make more changes. They should not, therefore, be held solely responsible for not continuing with the original staging.

The playwright characters in other rehearsal plays are no more competent or qualified to direct than Trapwit or Fustian; their production as well as their written work is evidently being satirized. Fielding also uses his player characters to emphasize his own feelings about the current vogue in drama. The actors, in the opening scene of The Historical Register, bemoan their impoverished condition, which Fielding suggests has been brought about by the lack of good drama:

> **2 PLAYER.** These are poor times, indeed, not like the days of Pasquin.
> **1 PLAYER.** Ah! name 'em not! those were glorious days indeed, the days of beef and punch; my friends, when come there such again?
> **2 PLAYER.** Who knows what this new author may produce? Faith I like my part very well.
> **1 PLAYER.** Nay, if variety will please the town, I am sure there is enough of it; but I could wish, methinks, the satire had been a little stronger, a little plainer.
> **2 PLAYER.** Now I think it is plain enough.
> **1 PLAYER.** Hum! Ay, it is intelligible; but I would have it downright; 'gad, I fancy I could write a thing to succeed myself.
> **2 PLAYER.** Ay; pry'thee, what subject wouldst thou write on?
> **1 PLAYER.** Why no subject at all, sir; but I would have a humming deal of satire, and I would repeat in every page, that courtiers are cheats and don't pay their debts, that lawyers are rogues,

physicians blockheads, soldiers cowards, and ministers--
2 PLAYER. What, what, sir?
1 PLAYER. Nay, I'll only name 'em, that's enough to set the audience a hooting.
2 PLAYER. Zounds, sir, here is wit enough for a whole play in one speech.
1 PLAYER. For one play! why, sir, it's all I have extracted out of above a dozen. (1.1)

Fielding's device of using his playwright's incompetence in textual and practical matters is also employed by other authors, partly to disguise their digs at the taste of the town, but more importantly to show the professionalism of their players. When Sourwit and Lord Dapper arrive in the first act of The Historical Register they find two players waiting for the playwright. In their exchange with the visitors, the players draw attention to the incomprehensibility of Medley's script:

LORD DAPPER. Pray, gentlemen, don't you rehearse the Historical Register this morning?
1 PLAYER. Sir, we expect the author every minute.
LORD DAPPER. What is this Historical Register? is it a tragedy, or a comedy?
1 PLAYER. Upon my word, sir, I can't tell.
SOURWIT. Then I suppose you have no part in it?
1 PLAYER. Yes, sir, I have several; but -- O, here is the author himself, I suppose he can tell, sir.
SOURWIT. Faith, sir, that's more than I suppose. (1.1)

When Medley does arrive he appears, at first, to be in control of the rehearsal. He makes the actors repeat their lines on his instruction, which they do without complaint, until the time comes for the actresses to appear, which they do not. In the first scene of the second act, the actresses ask Medley to stop interrupting them while they rehearse their scene, which Dapper and Sourwit do not understand anyway because it is written, as Medley explains, as an "allegory." Fielding gives us more evidence for the absurdity of Medley's direction when Sourwit takes note of an actor's positioning and gesture:

SOURWIT. Why do you suffer that actor to stand laughing behind the scenes, and interrupt your rehearsal?
MEDLEY. O, sir, he ought to be there, he's a laughing in his sleeve at the patriots; he's a very considerable character--and has much to do by and by.
SOURWIT. Methinks the audience should know that,

> or perhaps they may mistake him as I did, and hiss him.
> **MEDLEY.** If they should, he is a pure impudent fellow, and can stand the hisses of them all; I chose him particularly for the part--Go on, Patriots. (3.1)

Without a word of protest from the "impudent fellow" or the "Patriots," the actors continue with the scene. Medley shows no concern for either the clarity of his direction or the welfare of his actors.

Mrs Hazard in Clive's Bays in Petticoats, as we have seen, is exasperated that Mrs Clive will neither submit to her direction nor come to rehearsal. The other named players, Miss Thomas and Beard, suffer in silence as Mrs Hazard qualifies her initial compliments on their acting:

> Enter PERFORMERS dress'd.
>
> **MRS HAZARD.** Miss Thomas, your Servant. Upon my Word, I am extremely happy to have you in my Performance; you'll do amazing well. Only I must beg you'd throw in as much Spirit as you can, without overdoing it; for that same Thing the Players call Spirit, they sometimes turn into Rant and Noise. Oh, Mr. Beard! your most Obedient. Sir, I shall be vastly oblig'd to you, I am sure; do you know that you sing better than any of 'em? But I hope you'd consider the Part you are to act with Marcella, is to be done with great Scorn: therefore, as you have such a smiling, good-humour'd Face, I beg you'll endeavour to smother as many of your Dimples as you can in that Scene with her. (Act 2)

Not one to be easily satisfied, Mrs Hazard also criticizes the actress's performance in her operetta. "That's pretty well, Madam," she tells Miss Thomas, "but I think you sing it too much; you should consider Recitative shou'd be spoken as plain as possible; or else you'll lose the Expression." Clive is able to use her colleague's reputation to ridicule her playwright character at this point and guarantee her audience's laughter, because the actual performers of Miranda and Corydon, in Mrs Hazard's self-proclaimed "poor thing," were renowned primarily for their singing.[22]

The reviewers' consensus for Sheridan's The Critic in 1779 was that he did not attempt anything new in his use of the rehearsal format to present Puff's play. But, as The Public Advertiser pointed out, "with what Novelty and Ingenuity the striking Faults of our present Compositions in this Line are here satirized" (1 Nov. 1779). In the

introduction to his edition of the play, Cecil Price notes how the players in the original production used their roles in the rehearsal play to satirize mannerisms of fellow performers. This technique had, of course, been used in earlier rehearsal plays. Buckingham's The Rehearsal, for instance, had "always been used as a Vehicle to convey witty remarks on the failings of the performers through the part of Mr. Bayes" (newspaper cutting of 1777, qtd. in Price, Works of RBS 472). Price concedes that there is no way of knowing whether the players' mockery was made "with Sheridan's connivance or without it" (Works of RBS 473), but the topicality and effectiveness of the imitations undoubtedly added to the play's entertainment value. "Miss Pope's imitation of a well-known tragedy heroine in one of her mad movements, and Mr. Bannister's representation of the flounder-like death of as celebrated a tragedy hero, were very striking traits, and universally applauded," writes the reviewer in the Morning Post of 1 November 1779. Price records similar praise from the General Evening Post of 30 October-2 November 1779: "Miss Pope, as Tilburina, took off Mrs. Crawford, and Bannister, as Whiskerandos, amused the audience at the expense of 'Gentleman' Smith's mannerisms as Richard III" (qtd. in Works of RBS 473).

Even without such contemporary allusions, the rehearsal of Puff's tragedy is still highly entertaining and interesting because of what it tells us about eighteenth-century theatre, its playwrights, players, and productions. During Act 2 of The Critic, Puff busily tells his invited audience, Sneer and Dangle, what his play means, and he interrupts the players in so doing. The actors wait patiently during these moments, then continue their performances on Puff's command. On the rare occasions when the players do come out of character and question Puff, they usually only require clarification about their blocking, or stage movements. At the end of their first scene, the players stop to point out a directorial oversight:

> [**EARL OF LEICESTER** to **PUFF.**] But, Sir, you hav'nt settled how we are to get off here.
> **PUFF.** You could not go off kneeling, could you?
> [**SIR WALTER** to **PUFF.**] O no, Sir! impossible!
> **PUFF.** It would have a good effect efaith, if you could! exeunt praying!-- Yes, and would vary the established mode of springing off with a glance at the pit.
> **SNEER.** O never mind, so as you get them off, I'll answer for it the audience wont care how.
> **PUFF.** Well then, repeat the last line standing, and go off the old way. (2.2)

Puff's suggestion is as ridiculous as the conventional

"springing off with a glance at the pit."[23] Sheridan uses the players' deference to Puff's instructions to satirize accepted stage custom and his foolish playwright. James Boaden explains that after the alterations to Covent Garden in the 1790s, "There was no springing off with the established glance at the pit, and projected right arm. The actor was obliged to edge away in his retreat towards the far distant wings, with somewhat of the tedium, but not all the awkwardness, which is observed in the exits at the Italian Opera" (Memoirs of Mrs. Siddons 1: 276). Puff, however, is not concerned with every aspect of his production. He focusses on the work of the principal players rather than the requirements of subordinate players. When the actress playing the confidant asks Puff how she is supposed to exit, he erupts in a display of impatient fury. Admittedly her request is ill-timed, so his behaviour is somewhat understandable; she interrupts his altercation with his leading players about their exit:

> **PUFF.** S'death and fury!--Gadslife! Sir! Madam! if you go out without the parting look, you might as well dance out--Here, here!
> **CONFIDANT.** But pray Sir, how am I to get off here?
> **PUFF.** You, pshaw! what the devil signifies how you get off! edge away at the top, or where you will--[Pushes the confidant off.] Now ma'am you see--
> **TILBURINA.** We understand you Sir. (2.2)

It is unclear whether Puff is prevented from demonstrating how he wants the exit to be performed, but its consequent execution is obviously successful as it elicits an "O charming!" from Dangle and a "'tis pretty well I believe" from Puff.

Sheridan, who leaves little to chance in his text, also makes fun of those playwrights who leave all expression of meaning to the player's facial and gesticular ability. Puff is totally reliant on the performance of the actor playing Burleigh, who has been given a minimum of actions to convey the meaning of this "principal" character's unspoken dialogue. The player's stage directions are to go "slowly to a chair and sit," then to come "forward, shake his head and exit" (3.1), all of which he does and none of which the on-stage audience understands:

> **SNEER.** He is very perfect indeed--Now, pray what did he mean by that?
> **PUFF.** You don't take it?
> **SNEER.** No; I don't upon my soul.
> **PUFF.** Why, by that shake of the head, he gave you to understand that even tho' they had more justice

> in their cause and wisdom in their measures--yet, if there was not a greater spirit shown on the part of the people--the country would at last fall a sacrifice to the hostile ambition of the Spanish monarchy.
> **SNEER.** The devil!--did he mean all that by shaking his head?
> **PUFF.** Every word of it--If he shook his head as I taught him.
> **DANGLE.** Ah! there certainly is a vast deal to be done on the stage by dumb shew, and expression of face, and a judicious author knows how much he may trust to it. (3.1)

Dangle's comment is of course ironic, identifying the impossible demands made of the player by Puff's "text." Moody, who played Burleigh in the original production, was one of the leading members of Sheridan's Drury Lane company at the time. Such nonsensical casting was obviously done for theatrical effect. Sheridan might not have been as willing as other playwrights to allow players unchecked freedom with his text, but he was not averse to using the reputations of the actors cast as player characters in his production to heighten the satire against the abilities of his playwright character.

Had Garrick not written A Peep Behind the Curtain twelve years prior to Sheridan's The Critic, his treatment of the playwright character, Glib, might have qualified him as a target for the other's satire. Garrick writes only general stage directions, rather than set dialogue and specific movements, for the sequence in which Glib's entertainment is rehearsed before an invited audience:

> During the Burletta, Glib, the author, goes out and comes in several times upon the stage and speaks occasionally to the performers, as his fancy prompts him, in order to enliven the action and give a proper comic spirit to the performance. (Act 2)

Here is an unusual case in which a principal player is given written licence by the playwright to improvise during a performance. As Garrick's correspondence contains no explanation on this point, I propose the following: Garrick had absolute faith in the actor playing Glib (Thomas King performed the role in the original production), or he anticipated that the play would endure no longer than his ability to control its stage productions, or he was not interested in safeguarding his text against the performances of subsequent actors in the role. Whatever the actual reason, Garrick's lack of specificity confirms the spontaneous expertise that performers required for these

kinds of roles, and the idea that playwrights could not absolutely control the players in performance.

Garrick's Bayes in The Meeting of the Company is also an exception to the usual playwright character; he intends not to direct his own play but to take his preceptor role very seriously, and teach the players how to act! His presumption is typical of such amateurish authors, and is treated with scorn and derision by the players. But there is underlying irony in the players' attitude, because of certain reasons behind the play's creation. In a letter to the Rev. John Hoadly, dated [January] 4, 1772, Garrick responds to a rumour about a new scene he intends to insert in Buckingham's The Rehearsal, in which Bayes "gives them his Art of Acting--which will shew all ye false manner of acting Tragedy & Comedy, wch 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. . ." (Letters 782). Garrick's interlude obviously succeeded, for Hopkins remarks in his Diary in 1774 that it was "full of fine Satyr, and a most excellent Lesson to all Performers" (qtd. in Little and Kahrl 783). The piece confirms the idea that eighteenth-century players were type-cast according to their abilities. Using Weston, one of the named players in his text, as his spokesperson, Garrick appears to scoff at the idea that the status quo, which confined most actors to a particular genre of playing, should be changed. Bayes's excessive claim that he "will not only make the worst [player] equal to the best, but the tragedians, comedians, and vice verso," is made fun of by Weston and Parsons:

> **WESTON.** Vice versy? What's that, pray?
> **BAYES.** That is, I will make the comedians tragedians.
> **WESTON.** That's good new, Parsons, that vice versy.
> **PARSONS.** Who knows but you and I may play Brutus and Cassius. (244)

At the end of the prelude, Bayes is deserted by the players; they finally refuse, after performing ridiculous antics under his instruction, to do any more. Actors and actresses performing, or being cast against their tragic or comic type--here again the "little man" Garrick was an exception--must have happened rarely, because the incongruity of such a proposition appears to have guaranteed laughter from the audience.

The assumed superior status of the playwright characters leads them to believe that they are more capable than the performers in all aspects of theatrical production. The evidence in the plays, however, suggests otherwise.[24] Yet the

players do not use their numerical superiority to combat the ineffectual leadership of the playwrights; rather, they work individually. When they do refer to each other, we are alerted to a ridiculous moment or idea, as in The Critic when the actors have no exit blocked, or in The Meeting of the Company when Parsons refers to the notion that he and Weston (both renowned comedians) might play Brutus and Cassius. As Hogan points out, "Individual interpretation has of course always existed in the theatre, and always will exist. In the eighteenth century, however, it existed independently of everything else" (LS 5.1: cliv).[25]

PLAYERS AND PLAYWRIGHTS VERSUS AUDIENCE

What might be the playwrights' reasons for demonstrating so much ineptitude on the part of their playwright characters? I am certain that the plays were not written solely to commend the "Factors" at the expense of the manufacturers of "wit," although, in effect, this is one of the results. I suggest that the playwrights' intention was primarily commercial. In a period when theatre had to survive without state subsidies, relying totally on its subscribers, such a proposition is fairly obvious. What is interesting, however, is the extent to which playwrights make fun of themselves, thus indirectly celebrating the players. This suggests two things: the playwrights wanted to satirize inferior as well as outmoded dramatic material, and criticize those audiences who accepted and supported such drama. The rehearsal mode enabled them to stand aloof from the witless products of their fictional playwrights while retaining the pleasures of the theatre itself. Their success is born out by the enduring popularity of many of the texts. Those plays which were too subversive to be produced, such as Garrick in the Shades and The Critick Anticipated, remain untried. Those plays which were too topical, such as The Stage Mutineers, Bays in Petticoats, and The Meeting of the Company, survived only a few seasons. And others, such as A Lick at the Town and The Coffee House, had only one or two performances. But those plays which contain their satirical intent on many levels and in general terms, such as The Critic and The Beggar's Opera, continue to suit the taste of all kinds of audience, and have become an integral part of literary and theatre history in the twentieth century.

Commercial necessity dictates that players and playwrights must submit to the general taste and temper of their audiences. Johnson's aphorism about the drama's laws suggests that even the playwright characters' ridiculous compositions must somehow please real patrons. The fictive

playwrights are, however, more concerned with their self-image and their plays' success than with their audience's pleasure. The player characters, on the other hand, are more realistic and "live to please." The textual evidence substantiates the obvious claim that the players' livelihood is more dependent on the immediate approval of the drama's patrons than that of the playwrights, because players have to perform in person at a designated time before an audience. The playwrights can delegate the performance of their fictive selves to the players, and also sell their work in published form to individuals over a period of time.

The player characters' concern about audience satisfaction leads them to worry about the content of the drama and the timing of its performance. The players in the Introductions to Fielding's Don Quixote in England and James Miller's An Hospital for Fools are the ones who report that the audience is impatient for the play to begin. Fielding's Player anxiously tells the Poet and Manager that "the audience make such a noise with their canes, that if we don't begin immediately, they will beat the house down before the play begins." Ironically, in Miller's play, the Actor's line about the audience "pounding ready to bring the House down" was not heard at Drury Lane in November, 1739, because "the Noise of these First-Night Gentlemen was so great" (LS 3.2: 802). Miller's Poet does not agree with the absurdities the Actress and Actor tell him he must employ in his comedy, if it is to please or satisfy the audience. He believes that "People of Taste and good Sense need not be always kept on the Grin to be diverted," but the Actress warns him that he will not "be suffer'd, with Impunity, to satirize all Mankind thus, and shew no Respect to Rank or Profession" (Introduction). Her criticism that the playwright character's work does not have sufficient depth to satisfy a variety of tastes is proven historically correct. In the performance of Miller's piece "the Actors went thro' it, and the spectators might see their mouths wag, and that was all" (LS 3.2: 802); the "town," because of its feeling towards the author, refused to listen to either satire or compliment.[26] At the end of The Beggar's Opera, Gay's author is forced to change the resolution of his piece, "no matter how absurdly things are brought about." As the Player explains, "All this we must do, to comply with the taste of the town" (3.16). The success of the original production possibly owes as much to the theatre's geographical location at Lincoln's Inn Fields as to Gay's use of the ballad opera form. He could divert the thrust of his direct criticism of the town's taste and satirize the vogue for Italian opera, in the knowledge that most of his patrons were neither regular fans of the opera nor in a financial position to become subscribers. Other player characters who are solicitous about pleasing

their audience include those in The Author on the Wheel. Buskin gives Vainwit the players' reason for refusing to perform a piece their patrons have damned: "as Actors are Candidates for the favour of the Public and supported by their liberality they should never utter a sentiment which may give offence to a party or an individual" (Scene 2). This last play also indicates the kind of ignominy players suffer. They must bear the brunt of audience dissatisfaction in performance and the pain of seeing themselves maligned in print afterwards. Vainwit vows to "give Critiques on their acting in all the News papers . . . sign myself an impartial Critic and poison 'em in the opinion of the Public" (Scene 1). The writer plays confirm that the players had reason to be wary of displeasing not only their public but also their playwrights.

The triad of public, playwright, and player was certainly not a balanced one. The public's demands often outweighed the desires of both playwrights and players. Samuel Foote, appearing as himself in the Introduction to his play The Minor, refuses to submit to the stage audience's demands. He tells Canker and Smart that he will not satirize players by imitating them, "Because," he explains, "by rendering them ridiculous in their profession, you, at the same time, injure their pockets." In reality, however, Foote was less rigid in his commitment to the players' reputations. Cross comments on what happened during a performance of The Diversions of the Morning at Drury Lane on 27 October 1758:

> As Mr Sparks & others complain'd of Mr Wilkinson for taking them off, it [Diversions of the Morning] was intended to be omitted this Night, But the Audience call'd so violently for it, that we were oblig'd to let him Do it--he took off Foote & Sheridan, & wou'd have left out Sparks but [the] audience wou'd not be satisfied without it--when they first call'd Mr Foote went forward & said some of the performers had complain'd it was to be omitted; as for being taken off himself he had no Objection to it, as he was always glad to contribute to their Entertainm[en]t &c. (qtd. in LS 4.2: 690)

The audience's taste spared neither the playwright's nor the players' feelings. The players were forced to submit to the audience's demands and the playwright was powerless to help them.

I have discussed the fictional material at length because it supplies us with details of the rehearsal and performance process unavailable elsewhere. The straitened portrait of the playwright character warns a reader that the relationship presented between the actors and authors should

not be taken entirely at face value. But the successful productions of many of the writer plays suggest that the eighteenth-century spectator recognized and applauded the effectiveness of the playwrights' satire because of the accuracy of the relationship depicted. As it appears in the plays, this relationship is not so much concerned with the final performance of the players' and playwrights' work in front of a paying audience, as it is with the demands the participants make on each other. In general, the playwrights want the players to be subservient to their direction, to speak their lines as they are written, to accept specified roles, to take the blame for any failure, and to show the "brilliance" of their compositions to their guests in rehearsal. The players would like the playwrights to write leading roles of superior status for them, not to write material that triggers an audience's desire to pelt them on stage, to give them non-intrusive guidance in rehearsal, and to accept their judgment regarding what will please the audience.

As the success of a dramatic piece was dependent upon satisfying the popular and somewhat dubious taste of their homogeneous theatrical audience, the playwrights must also have presented what the public wanted to see enacted between the other members of their triad. Secondary evidence, however, shows us that a lack of mutual respect and occasional animosity between player and playwright was not always the case. The playwrights of the more successful plays simultaneously pander to and harshly criticize the "taste of the town," softening, with satire and self-mockery, their thrusts against the body on whom they are theatrically dependent. Because the playwrights are, for the most part, occupied in getting their message across without suffering the "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune," the players are granted a certain amount of impunity. They are endowed with a louder voice and seen in a more favourable light by their patrons than is usual in the other plays in which they appear. As a result, we are presented with portraits of thoroughly professional players who are bound by contract to play roles (which they do to the best of their ability) in sub-standard drama. The authentic as well as fabricated reasons given by the players for refusing to perform lack credibility because they appear so excessive and ridiculous. As these refusals form the main component of what little of the players' conduct *is* targeted by the playwrights' satire, such conduct is hardly detrimental to the players' overall reputation. The playwrights also show that the actors' alterations to the fictive writers' texts do little to change the initial inadequacy of that work; rather they emphasize the principal intent of the satire. The players' worst kinds of excesses are excused in the plays, while the playwrights are held responsible for nearly all the deficiences in the

drama and its theatrical production.

It would, of course, be foolish to dismiss all documentary evidence that suggests a contrasting point of view as the grumblings of discontented playwrights. The actual applause which greeted the lesson directed at players in Garrick's The Meeting of the Company indicates that some people thought that better acting was needed quite as much as better writing. However, the traditional historical view diverges from the textual evidence regarding the playwrights' direct involvement in the original productions of their work.[27] The writer plays offer insight into the possible extent of this involvement, particularly in the areas of direction and alteration, and its repercussive effect on the players.

The varying degrees of characterization are also significant. The playwright characters are all of a similar type, but the player characters cover a much broader spectrum of their profession; so it is impossible to state with certainty which players, if any, can be counted as objects of the playwrights' satire. The visual effect of and frequent references to the players being "dressed" for the rehearsals make it somewhat easier to recognize their various character types: either by their costume, or, in the case of named players, by their own identity. Such semiotic distinction between the roles of playwright and player is an added indication that the main intent of the playwrights' satire was against the lowest kind of their own profession.

One further point raised by the characterization of players and playwrights, but not overtly addressed, is the difference between the sexes in their respective professions. Female and male players are treated for the most part equally, but there is a distinction in the treatment of male and female playwrights. Only two female playwrights are depicted: Phoebe Clinket in Three Hours After Marriage (1717) and Mrs Hazard in Bays in Petticoats (1750). Both ladies appear more eccentric in their habits (manners and costume) than their male counterparts. They are consumed with their work to the extent of total disregard of both relationships with friends or acquaintances and their appearance. Phoebe Clinket parades daily in a state of ink-stained undress, and is duly put down by the professional actors whom she employs to read her play in her own home. Mrs Hazard has such fun mocking an inexperienced actress, who comes to her house, that she has no time to change into her outdoor dress to go to the theatre for the rehearsal. She then refuses to take the time to change into the absent Mrs Clive's costumes when she assumes her role. While the players of her piece, who are present and ready in costume, perform their duties, in

spite of heated interruptions by Mrs Hazard's uninvited audience of acquaintances, the playwright is not so able to perform hers. She loses control of her temper, and breaks off the rehearsal. Isobel Grundy suggests that while Mrs Hazard "is allowed to make some telling retorts to sexist criticism," Clive's ironic references to herself in the play also open up "the possibility of playing her farce as a caricature of a caricature" (N.B. 21, "Sarah Gardner" 24). Though all the playwright characters, male and female, are the object of their playwrights' satire, none of the male characters suffers what I interpret as the added disadvantage of being presented in a state of undress.[28] The textual evidence of Clive's play does not admit, unfortunately, whether the visual effect of costume was intended as a symbolic or an ironic retort to the criticisms raised against female writers, as well as against herself as a player.

What the plays that deal with the relationship between playwright and player offer is a body of evidence that enriches our existing knowledge of the process of theatrical performance in the eighteenth century. The various elements of this relationship, particularly the references to rehearsals, not evaluated by historians to date, will serve as a useful "sounding board" in my analysis of the playwrights' handling of other aspects of the player's theatrical life.

NOTES

[1] Allardyce Nicoll, Harry Pedicord, James Lynch, and Dane Farnsworth Smith are four modern scholars who see actors, not authors, as the central figures of the century. Several German visitors to the theatre of the eighteenth century lament the loss of great performers because, with them, the appeal of the plays in which they starred was also lost (Kelly, German Visitors to English Theaters 70).

[2] Robert D. Hume, in his book Henry Fielding and the London Theatre 1728-1737, assumes that in the early part of the eighteenth century "the author was involved in blocking, choice of scenery, explanation of characters to actors, gestures, and instruction in delivery of lines [while] the actual conduct of the public performance" was the prompter's responsibility (22).

[3] The attitudes of the playwrights to "these sorts of People"--the players--reflected the difference in status between the two professions (cf. Managers). To avoid any confusion between Kitty Clive's The Rehearsal and that of George Villiers, the Duke of Buckingham, I shall refer to Mrs Clive's play throughout as Bays in Petticoats.

[4] Ground Ivy is Fielding's satirical portrait of Colley Cibber, the poet laureate and actor/playwright/manager. Dane F. Smith offers an example of Colley Cibber's dealings with actors. He explains that Colley Cibber had brought "an atrocious mutilation of Shakespeare's King John" to be rehearsed by the Drury Lane company in 1736. According to Thomas Davies,

> Cibber's adaptation was received with such ill grace by the actors at Drury Lane who were assigned to perform it, that he finally picked up 'the play from the prompter's desk', stuffed it in his pocket, and walked out,--the result being that the projected production came to an abrupt but spectacular end. (qtd. in Plays about the Theatre in England 1671-1737, 222)

[5] Tate Wilkinson believed Colley Cibber to be one actor who could write plays well (see Writers 8), but Cibber was renowned for writing comedies.

[6] Hume suggests that Fielding's need to find performance venues for his own plays possibly had a bearing on why he sided with the patentees, not with the senior actors, during the 1733 actors' rebellion, and why he

eventually became the manager of his own company in 1736 (Fielding and the London Theatre 168-69, 200-203).

[7] According to Smith and Lawhon, there is no extant text of the first act of The Diversions of the Morning (21). Wilkinson in The Wandering Patentee tells us that Tragedy A-La-Mode, "being the Second Act of Mr. Foote's Diversions of the Morning" was "Acted [in] 1763, at the Hay-Market Theatre . . . and substituted in lieu of the Former Second Act in his Farce called TEA, [which was] Acted by Mr. Foote and Mr. Wilkinson, in Drury-lane Theatre, 1758-59" (I: 285).

[8] Foote's use of pasteboard figures instead of players was an unsuccessful exception to the rule. But, as the "N.B." from the printed version of Tragedy A-La-Mode reveals, the audience's pleasure was elicited not by what the players said but by their excessive costuming and posturing (see Writers 11).

[9] Fifty years later the beggar-poet's appearance retains its significance when Young Psalter, in The Critic Anticipated (1779), reminds the actors playing "Gentlemen Poets, to dress very shabbily."

[10] The correspondence of two of the most famous managers of Drury Lane document their relationships with actors and authors; see Little and Kahrl for Garrick's Letters, and Price for Sheridan's Letters.

[11] Davies offers an example of an author directing an actress in his account of Arthur Murphy coaching Mrs Yates for a role in his Orphan of China, which Garrick did not initially want to produce. Garrick had already given Mrs Yates a reading for the part, at which time she, according to Davies, had pretended not to know the part. When, at Murphy's insistence, Garrick auditioned her again, after she had been "constantly attended" by Murphy, the manager was apparently "quite transported" (Davies, Memoirs 1: 219-21). Bertram Joseph records Aaron Hill's advice to an actress on how to breathe, sigh, and speak with a sigh so that she "will perceive a touching sensibility in the sound of [her] words. . ." (83).

[12] "Articles of agreement for the better regulating their Majesties' Servants, the comedians of the Theatre Royal," dated 9 December 1675, state: "2. That neither man or woman shall refuse any part the Company shall think fit for. Subpoena, a week's wages." Forfeits could also be incurred for disposing of parts, neglecting rehearsals, wearing costumes outside the theatre, not giving 3 months' notice to quit, and for taking "anything relating to the stage . . .

without the consent of the Company" (PRO: LC 5/141, 307. Reproduced in Thomas, Restoration and Georgian England 37-8).

[13] For more details on the business of players performing roles out of their usual line of parts, see "The Player's Art."

[14] Benjamin Victor, who is unreserved in his praise for Kitty Clive as a comedian, offers, as an example of her power, her portrayal of Portia, "which she certainly did not perform as the Author intended it--but which could not be resisted, and gave high Entertainment to those Critics, who frankly acknowledged, they were misled by the Talents of the Actress" (3: 145). Although I must acknowledge, in the face of such contemporary criticism, that Mrs Clive might not have been effectively able to play tragedy or even, as Victor suggests, "higher Characters in Comedy" (3: 143), it is tantalizing to think about how she performed Portia opposite Charles Macklin's innovative Shylock.

[15] The audience's disapproval of the production seems to have been based on Woodward's characterization of the Townspeople because Macklin hastened to assure the public that his afterpiece, Covent Garden Theatre, was nothing like Woodward's. An "N.B." to the announcement of the "New Dramatic Satire," written by Macklin for his benefit, reads: "As several of the Town have prejudged the Pit and Boxes and Galleries acting their own parts themselves for their diversion, to be of the same species of the Lick at the Town last year; and that it can mean only the ordinary Approbation or Disapprobation of the Audience, Signor Pasquin thinks it incumbent on himself to assure the Publick that all those conjectures are groundless. . ." (qtd in LS 4.1: 305). Pasquin is named in the subtitle of the piece as the "Censor of Great Britain."

[16] See "The Player's Managers" (77).

[17] Garrick was one of the practitioners much criticized as well as praised for his alterations of Shakespeare's works, and when his character arrives in Elysium in the anonymous "Farce: Never Offered to the Managers of the Theatres-Royal," entitled Garrick in the Shades (1779), both the characters of Shakespeare and Ben Jonson receive him coolly. Such a reception is, according to the character of Holland, due to the belief that Garrick "freely borrow'd'st from [Shakespeare's] lib'ral store" merely to enrich himself. Garrick is accused of creating his Shakespeare Jubilee as "a mean device/ To gull the people -- and to arm thy well-fill'd purse." While the character of Garrick admits that the accusation is true, Garrick himself not only went to a great

deal of trouble and expense but also showed judgment in mounting the production; it was extremely popular and generally considered one of his greatest successes.

[18] If what Garrick says in his letter to his brother, Peter, dated February 6, 174[2], is true, we must credit him with renewing interest in the play: "I have ye Greatest Success immaginable [sic] in ye Part of Bayes . . . & tho The Town has been quite tir'd out with ye Play at ye Other End of ye Town Yet I have ye Great Satisfaction to See crowded Audiences to It Every Night" (Letters 37). See also Milhous and Hume, "David Garrick and Box Office Receipts at Drury Lane in 1742-43" for an account of the play's enormous success with Garrick as Bayes during that season (332-33).

[19] Kitty Clive obviously modelled her play after the anonymous rehearsal play The Female Wits (produced at Drury Lane in 1697, published in 1704). Mrs Hazard is very like Marsilia, who conducts the rehearsal of her own play and refers to Bays when she complains, "my brother Bay's has scarce left a pretty name for his successors" (3.1).

[20] The cast is not listed for the first performance at the Haymarket on Saturday 28 July 1760, but the 1760 edition of the play lists "Induction by Foote - Foote; Smart - Smith; Canker - Misdale; Pearce - Pearce" (LS 4, 2:801), so we might assume Foote plays the role he says he will.

[21] Lord Place was played in the original production by the actress Charlotte Charke, who was renowned for her breeches roles.

[22] Beard played himself and Corydon in ten of the afterpiece's twelve performances between 1750 and 1762. Miss Norris played Miranda, and I assume would have been referred to by name, in the first six. Miss Thomas took over the role of Miranda (she is mentioned by name in the published version of 1753) on March 22, 1753, and performed until the last production when Miss Pope is advertised in the cast list (LS 4.1: 182, 187, 194, 242, 243, 252, 359, 362, 369, 388, 481; 4.2: 924). In The Female Wits, according to Constance Clark, "[t]he entire company seems to have been involved in the comedy" (297). Clark explains that most of the players were parodying "characters equivalent to the roles they would likely have been cast in. One instance of deliberate miscasting for ironic effect was the short comic, Mr. Penkethman, in the counterpart [Amorous] of the role played by the tall and heroic, if aging, Mr. Betterton" (297).

[23] Burnim quotes Robert Baker's description of Garrick's way of leaving the stage--"tripping off the stage with a

bridled head and an affected alertness" (Remarks on the English Language, 2nd edition, London 1779, xviii)--and adds that "his actors copied" him (David Garrick, Director, 55). Boaden in his Memoirs of Mrs. Siddons mentions how "English performers spring off with a glance at the pit, or use rhymed couplets to carry them off with effect" (1: 287-88).

[24] Smith and Lawhon, in the chapter on "Author as Character" in Plays about the Theatre in England 1737-1800, suggest that eighteenth-century playwrights recognized the fact that the quality of drama was declining and used the author character to criticize its deterioration. Their subjects might be "a would-be poet or a wrongly rejected, good playwright" but their approach was always satire, general or particular (158). Smith and Lawhon conclude that the playwrights did not recognize that the topicality of their works contributed to the decline (211).

[25] The issue of how much individual interpretation of a text is acceptable or advisable is still a vexing one, not least of all to the creators of the texts. I look at the business of the player's individual work on text in the chapter on the player's art.

[26] Allardyce Nicoll suggests that the anger some members of the audience had felt about certain scenes in Miller's play The Coffee House (1737), which they believed "reflected on a pet coffee-house of their own," was reignited when they discovered the coffee house chosen by the engraver for the frontispiece of the published version of Miller's play was *their* coffee-house. After the publication, productions of Miller's plays suffered. Both Art and Nature (1738) and An Hospital for Fools (1739) were damned by his opponents (Early Eighteenth-Century Drama 13).

[27] Hume's assumption (see Note 2) about the playwrights' involvement for the early part of the century appears to hold true throughout the century in varying degrees, as shown in the rehearsal plays (see Writers 26+). By the 1770s, the standard practice seems to have been for the senior players to direct themselves, and for the authors to conduct the first readings. But in Author on the Wheel (1785), the playwright Vainwit was apparently not involved at all with the production because the actors do not know him.

[28] By "undress" I mean a costume that is inappropriate for the occasion. Marsilia in The Female Wits is revealed in a similar state of undress.

CHAPTER 2

THE PLAYER'S MANAGERS

> And if my manager had said in the green room that 'twas necessary to walk head downwards, or exit sucking my thumbs, it shou'd have been done.
> (No Play this Night!)

Not every player was as obliging or as obedient as the stroller Sylvester Daggerwood in the anonymous prelude of 1797, No Play this Night!. Documentary evidence suggests that the relationship between players and their managers was often strained. In 1662 Davenant and Killigrew were granted patents by Charles II, to replace the warrants that gave them licence to operate their theatrical companies (Thomas 16). Since that time, the power of the managers over the players had gradually increased. The encroachment into management of business men with no previous theatrical expertise, as well as the "reigns" of several actor-managers (David Garrick's [1747-1776] being one of the longest and most significant), fuelled many of the changes in the relationship between managers and players. By the middle of the century's second decade the London players' financial position had also changed: they were no longer sharers in their companies, but had become salaried workers bound by their articles to the company's ultimate authority--the manager. These professional players, who had at least a modicum of protection as His or Her Majesty's servants until the early seventeenth century, found themselves, after the Restoration, increasingly at the mercy of the public in general and their managers in particular. There was a constant imbalance between their social, legal, and theatrical status. As Kristina Straub says, "Their [the players'] profession does not carry with it a stable concept of class standing, and even apologists for players evince some confusion about how to place their subjects. Do they rank among artisans, decayed gentles, upper-level servants, or the bourgeoisie?" (158). During the eighteenth century, strolling players in the provinces sometimes retained shares in their travelling companies; but legal and financial restraints, as well as the increasing number of permanent theatre companies, which were being established in the larger cities along similar lines to those in London, gradually forced the strollers to become more dependent upon those who could afford to set up a touring company or circuit. The London players, particularly those with "star" status, were able to retain a certain independence, even though they often felt threatened by their managers and were driven, on occasion, to outright rebellion.

The contemporary consensus about eighteenth-century managers is depicted in Ann Holbrook's memoirs: "the Manager," she says, "enjoys an absolute monarchy among his subjects" (32).

This chapter examines what the playwrights tell us about the complexity of the players'--and, indirectly, their own--relationship with these "monarchs." The managers were sometimes owners or patentees of the theatres, sometimes the players' fellow actors, and sometimes their playwrights; but, in the drama, they always occupy the upper echelon in the theatrical hierarchy, subservient only to the whims of their public. What these texts (the manager plays) offer, unlike other evidence, is an opportunity to see representations of the back-stage "goings on" between players and managers on stage. The playwrights must have found the idea of attracting audiences, who delighted in gossip about theatrical celebrities, an incentive for writing pieces containing players and managers; there were certainly more written touching on this particular relationship than on the other areas covered in this study. They might also have had biases against those who controlled the theatrical production of their work, and have enjoyed criticizing the managers in their printed texts or watching the players confront them in performance on those occasions when the texts were granted production.

The characters in the plays that were staged were undoubtedly brought to life in a way that we can now only imagine; yet it is apparent that the actual actors must have been willing to do more for their managers, their playwrights, and their fellow players than most of the texts would lead us to believe. It is interesting that for an age in which the player is so often said to have had the power the plays frequently reveal the reverse. We also find confirmation of what has been assessed from other contemporary sources, that some players can be extremely aggressive in their dealings with their managers, in spite of an assumption that they were generally powerless against managerial demands. The player/manager relationship is presented as one of continual complaints, one side against the other. From the managers' point of view, the players are often late or absent from rehearsals, they refuse to play the parts assigned to them or they quarrel over casting, they are insolent, and their salaries are too high. From the players' point of view, the managers expect too much of them, they never consider merit in casting, they never pay enough, especially for costumes, and their cartels make it difficult for actors to work.

PLAYERS' LEGAL STATUS

The laws regarding the player's status did not change radically during the eighteenth century.[1] The Elizabethan Act of 1572, which classed common players among rogues, vagabonds and sturdy beggars, was restated in Act 12th Queen Anne in 1713 and again in Act 10th George II. The latter bill, the Licensing Act of 1737, was, according to the Daily Post of 23 May of that year,

> ordered into Parliament for suppressing the great Number of Play-Houses or Players of Interludes, so justly complained of, and for the future no Persons shall presume to Act any Play, &c. without first obtaining a License from the Lord Chamberlain of his Majesty's Houshold for the Time being, any Persons acting without such Licence to be deemed Vagrants and Punished as such, according to the Act of the 12th of Queen Anne. (qtd. in Liesenfeld 125)

The Act took effect on 24 June 1737.

The players most exposed to the vagaries of the law were the strollers. In Plays about the Theatre 1737-1800, D. F. Smith and M. L. Lawhon suggest that it was almost a requirement that plays about strollers should mention the risk of arrest (141); and of the twelve plays in the century that present a strolling player character, seven do. These are Bullock's The Per-juror (1717), De Breval's The Strolers (1723), Murphy's The Apprentice (1756), Oldmixon's Apollo turn'd Stroller (1787), and O'Keeffe's A Beggar on Horseback (1785), Wild Oats (1791), and The Eleventh of June (1798). The other plays depicting a stroller character are Colman the Younger's New Hay at the Old Market (1795) and his subsequent one-act Sylvester Daggerwood (1796), No Play This Night! (1797), Tag in Tribulation (1799), Fiddlestick's End (1799), and Wetherburn's The Stroller (1799).

These particular plays confirm the historical viewpoint that almost any eighteenth-century occupation carried a higher status than that of the strolling player. While the London players at the top of their profession fought for and gradually won more acceptable positions in society, the "theatrical polloi remained inconsiderable persons with a minimum of civil rights. This is a fact we should not forget in assessing the place of the eighteenth-century theater in its society" (Milhous and Hume, "Drury Lane Actors' Rebellion of 1743" 77). The strolling players continued throughout the century to be associated with rogues, vagabonds and beggars, especially those strollers who fell into the hands of ruthless provincial managers. As George Parker explains,

some managers were no better than kidnappers of "sons and daughters who have offended their parents" (xi-xii), keeping "the despicable people in rags, till they cannot fly for shame" (xii). But these same abducted players, who are "no less . . . an eye-sore to the Public, than a scandal to the profession of Actor," should not be confused, Parker declares, with those who did *not* take up the profession by default, those in whom, "to arrive at excellence, the gentleman, the scholar, and the man of genius, must combine" (xii). The playwrights, however, did nothing to erase the stigma attached to those professionals who eked out a living touring the provinces; in fact, they perpetuated it. Several of them suggest that those who became strollers walked a moral as well as a legal tightrope, that they risked imprisonment and social degradation by pursuing the life of an actor, and that, by association, they threatened the reputations of their friends and family.

In general terms what the playwrights propose is clear: acting is acceptable to family and associates only at the amateur level. In Murphy's The Apprentice (the only play about strollers in the central period), Dick Wingate is so infatuated by the idea of being an actor that he runs away and joins a company of strollers, who are, unfortunately, "taken up by the Magistrate, and committed as Vagabonds, to Jail" (Act 1). One of his father's friends manages to send Dick home; but the experience does not deter him from pursuing his love for acting. He continues as an amateur and spouter.

Most of the plays about strolling players were written decades after the passing of the Licensing Act, but the attitude towards the professional strollers had not changed. O'Keeffe's farce The Eleventh of June deals with the career of Sylvester Daggerwood, a character created by George Colman the Younger. In O'Keeffe's piece, Daggerwood's father was dishonoured when Sylvester ran away with a "Tragedy Queen" and turned stroller. Old Daggerwood lays an "anonymous" complaint before the Justice to have Sylvester and his company of family members banished from Dunstable as "Strolling Vagrants"; when the old man enters, however, he is recognized. He weakens at the sight of his grandchildren, and allows Sylvester to return home with him. But only after Sylvester agrees to become a button-maker. In order to regain his father's respect, Sylvester is forced to renounce his chosen profession.

The playwrights' stroller characters are usually somewhat eccentric and pathetic, traits that would encourage an audience's laughter at their antics and misfortunes. One particular stroller, however, fits none of the usual categories. He is heroic, full of pathos, sensitive, and

extremely good at his craft; he is Rover, in O'Keeffe's Wild Oats. Rover pursues his career with a degree of ambition. He realizes that there is little chance of advancement in the provinces and therefore resolves to go to London. However, after O'Keeffe has led us into thinking that the stroller's profession is, for once, not being used to indicate its usual inept and immoral qualities, we discover at the end of the play that Rover is of genteel birth. His new-found status allows him to give up acting and marry the lady whom he loves but dared not hope for. O'Keeffe's portrait eventually confirms the standard eighteenth-century view that strolling players can neither gain nor retain acceptable social status while they continue in the profession.

The Licensing Act, while traditionally understood to have wreaked havoc in the drama of the period, appears, in the plays, to have brought neither more hardship nor relief to the life of the strolling players. The Act, Highfill tells us, "was never able to stem the tide of country theatricals. . ." ("Performers and Performing" 156); and the strollers' dependency on the good will of a patron is as evident in the drama at the end of the century as it is at the beginning. The strollers had always been legally bound to seek permission or be granted a licence to perform. Without such licence from a local granting body, they could be prosecuted. Even with a licence, they were subject to social prejudices, which often led to legal action against them.[2] Charlotte Charke relates her own experience of "being sent to G--- Jail, for being an Actor; which, to do most Strolling-Players Justice, they ought not to have the Laws enforced against them on that Score. . ." (274). The playwrights tend to celebrate the kindness and compassion of the "gentlemen" who successfully defend players, rather than suggest that society should not condemn players in the first place merely because of their profession. It is obvious that the playwrights would want to flatter those in authority who had the means to license and promote their work; but I find it ironic that, by selfishly pandering to the licensers and audiences, the playwrights hampered those whom they needed most to animate their characters on stage.

In Oldmixon's Apollo turn'd Stroller, Apollo is turned out of Olympus for bad behaviour. On his arrival on earth, he joins a troupe of strolling players. Their work is obviously the most suitable employment for the divine misdemeanant. These players, however, are in danger of being evicted from their "theatre" (the local barn) by its owner Midas, because of complaints that their presence is adversely affecting the young girls in the town. Apollo prevents the strollers' eviction, for which deed he is rewarded by being allowed to return to Olympus. In Tag in Tribulation, the

stroller Tag is pursued by bailiffs after he fails in his attempt to marry Squire Pickle's sister, thus losing the fortune he had hoped to acquire. During the action of the play, Tag's position as a stroller renders him powerless to stop Little Pickle playing tricks on everyone at Tag's expense. Only after Little Pickle has confessed to being the real mischief-maker does the Justice allow Tag to perform at his house, so that he can pay his debts. In the "musical afterpiece" Fiddlestick's End, a company of strolling players is mistaken by local authorities for a band of outlaws. The magistrate Sir Minor Semibreve, who happens to be an amateur composer, rescues them because, prior to their apprehension, the players were on their way to a "bespeak" performance of Sir Minor's opera (Smith and Lawhon 141; Note 46, 265). In each of these plays the strollers are eventually allowed to perform, but their release from the constraints of the law is temporary and in no way alters their low social and occupational status.

The Licensing Act remained unchanged until 1843; but the increasing number of buildings constructed specifically as theatres, and the growing public interest in the theatre during the eighteenth century, gradually eased the legal and social lot of the provincial players lucky or astute enough to live and work in the cities. Cecil Price attributes the fact that, between 1768 and 1799, seven royal patents were granted theatres outside London to the "increased influence and social prestige" of the players (Theatre in the Age of Garrick 181). However, both the first-hand accounts of actual players,[3] and the fictional accounts of the plays, continue to illustrate the debasing and demoralizing hazards that beset the travelling troupes. Two playwrights, writing early and late in the century, call for visual as well as spoken demonstration of the precariousness of the strolling life. De Breval's The Strolers (1723) is cut from his full-length work The Play is the Plot (1717). In the one-act piece, Spangle, one of the strolling player characters, explains his company's farcical appearance to their benefactor Carbine. The players' wagon overturned, he tells Carbine, so "we have been forc'd to make bold with some of our Theatrical Furniture" (10). The strollers have an excuse for their appearance; nonetheless, they look absurd. They cannot travel far because their horse is lame; nor would they want to for fear of highwaymen:

> **SPANGLE.** Suppose they should make bold with our Exchequer, and Wardrobe, behind some convenient Hedge--wou'd it not be a most doleful Catastrophe?
> **BUSKIN.** Vile Beggary, and Ruin would ensue. (9)

As long as they have their theatrical possessions and a cart in which to carry them, the strollers manage to avoid being

classed as vagrants and beggars, thereby at liberty to eke out a living. The leader of the troupe saved from prosecution by Sir Minor in Fiddlestick's End (1799) relates how his company suffered a "break-down," which forced them to journey on foot through mud and slush (25-26), hence their bedraggled appearance. Although Fiddlestick's End was never produced, the effect created by the strollers' appearance in both plays highlights the texts' theatricality. While the popularity of the later plays of O'Keeffe and Colman the Younger suggests that the conventional portrait of the stroller--particularly that of Sylvester Daggerwood--was what the audience wanted to see, Smith and Lawhon point out that Frederick Reynolds's Management (1799), the last play about provincial players to be produced in the century, deals "with the affairs of a provincial playhouse" rather than those of players (145). The one-act version of Colman's play, re-titled Sylvester Daggerwood (1796), shows Sylvester not in action in the provinces but in discussion with a playwright in the London house of a theatre manager, whom they are both waiting to see. By the turn of the century, the company depicted in Thomas Sheridan's The Strolling Company (manuscript dated 1802) is made up of professional urban players, who make use of every opportunity to rehearse while on tour. The evidence offered by the playwrights suggests that Cecil Price's claim for the amelioration of the players' social position, regarding their influence and prestige (see above 55), does not hold true for provincial players in general. The improved status of the provincial theatres, however, attracted many of London's star players in the latter part of the century.

The professional players who worked in the London theatres had always been in a more favourable legal situation than those who worked in the provinces, even though they were bound by the same laws.[4] In the 1744 reprint of James Wright's Historia Histrionica (first published in 1699), entitled Dialogue on Plays and Players,[5] two gentlemen, Trueman and Lovewit, discuss the distinction between strollers and London players in relation to the laws pertaining to them. Lovewit has been told that "stage-plays are inconsistent with the laws of this kingdom, and players made rogues by statute." Trueman replies that the 1572 Act, "stat. 39 Eliz. cap. 4. (which was made for the suppressing of rogues, vagabonds, and sturdy beggars)" was not intended "wholly to suppress" plays and all players (xxxv). Lovewit insists that "this privilege [found in Elizabeth's Act] of authorizing or licensing, is taken away by the stat. Jac.I. ch.7. S.1. and therefore all of [the players] . . . are expressly brought under the aforesaid penalty, without distinction" (xxxvi). Trueman's name, along with the conventional differentiation between the reputation of London

players and that of strollers, suggests that his response to Lovewit's interpretation of the legal status of all players represents the majority voice of late seventeenth-century society:

> If he means all players, without distinction, 'tis a great mistake. For the force of the queen's statute extends only to wandring players, and not to such as are the king's [sic] or queen's servants, and establish'd in settled houses, by royal authority. On such, the ill character of vagrant players (or as they are now called, strollers) can cast no more aspersion, than the wandring proctors, in the same statute mentioned on those of Doctors-Commons. (xxxvi)

The fact that these words were reprinted without comment in 1744 suggests that the same view prevailed in the mid-eighteenth century. But, as Straub points out, "For players who worked or tried to work in London, the vagabond classification reinforced the patentees' control over the working conditions of the players" (159).

Only two playwrights make direct reference to the danger of imprisonment for London players: Henry Fielding in Pasquin (1736) satirizes the legal attempts to imprison householding players as vagrants,[6] and Lindesius Jones in The Authors (1755) demonstrates the law's discrimination against actors. The player character in Pasquin, who is to play the character "Law" in the rehearsal of Fustian's tragedy, is absent when his cue comes because "going without the play-house passage [he] was taken up by a Lord Chief-justice's warrant. . ." (4.1). The actor manages to arrive in time to prevent Fustian giving his part to someone else. In Jones's piece, as we have seen, the failed author Maggot asks the Player to help him become an actor by coaching him in the role of Othello. When the Maid enters, she believes Maggot is actually killing the Player, who at the time is reading the part of Desdemona, and she runs for the constable crying "Murder." When the "law" arrives, he immediately seizes the Player because Maggot is now lying in a "dead" faint. The Player is sent to Newgate without being allowed to speak in his own defence. Even when Maggot discovers that the Player has been unjustly incarcerated, he makes no attempt to get the victim released. The Player's plight might be attributed to Maggot's callousness or Jones's commentary on the dangers facing players who did not belong to one of the theatre companies.

While eighteenth-century society in general might have spared the city players some of the stigma attached to their strolling 'country cousins,' the managers who held the royal

patents, the authority for theatrical presentations, were not so merciful. Management tyranny, which brought about the London actors' secessions of 1733 and 1743, is well recorded in both literary and theatrical documents.[7] Suffice it to say that managers could, and did, invoke the law against players. But, even though several charges of vagrancy were brought against them, none of the London actors was found guilty. The law allowed theatre managers to continue their harrassment of the players, who had no means of combating management injustices in 1743 other than by appeals to the Lord Chamberlain, which failed, and thereafter to the public. Theophilus Cibber's representation of the players involved in the 1733 secession as "victims of legal oppression," possibly helped win public support for their case against the manager Highmore. The reasons for the players' rebellion in 1743, however, were overshadowed by the resulting paper war between two of the most famous members of the players' group--David Garrick and Charles Macklin, and the manager Fleetwood's arguments about what he called their inflated salaries. Even though Fleetwood, who "at the time of the 1743 actors' rebellion . . . seemed virtually invulnerable" (Milhous and Hume, "The Drury Lane Actors' Rebellion" 74), was responsible for the terms of the players' return to Drury Lane, Macklin blamed Garrick. Kitty Clive, another of the rebellious players, excuses her public appeal in The Case of Mrs. Clive Submitted to the Public (published in 1744), on the grounds that she had no other way of seeking redress for the injustices done to her by the managers of both patent theatres after the secession. She suggests that domestic servants are less restricted under the law than players in the pursuit of their occupation:

> It is pretended by the management that they have the same right to discharge an actor that a master has to turn away a servant, than which nothing can be more false and absurd: for when a master dismisses a servant there are many thousands besides to apply to, but when managers dismiss an actor, where are they to apply to? It is unlawful to act anywhere but with them. (qtd. in Fitzgerald, Life of Mrs Clive 37)

"Mr. Neither-side," in the 1743 pamphlet "An Impartial Examen of the Present Contests between the Town and Manager," agrees that players do not even have the status given a servant. He calls for the Licensing Act to be repealed:

> The Actors are a People from the highest to the Lowest . . . the most to be pitied of his Majesty's Subjects; because the last Theatrical Act of Parliament has made them the only Slaves in the Nation: All other Degrees of People have Liberty to try to get a Livlihood [sic] in the

> Profession they were bred to; and I hope from the ill use of Power the two Theatrical Managers have made, to see this ensuing Sessions that Act repealed. , . . (qtd. in Nicholson 83)

As the players no longer had shares in the companies in which they performed, and were dependent upon the good-will of the managers who, in turn, were mainly interested in running their theatres profitably, it is not surprising to find conflict between the two parties.

Only the anonymous ballad opera The Stage Mutineers (performed not surprisingly at *Covent Garden* in 1733) directly addresses the managerial problems which led to the players' secession from Drury Lane. Even here the players are belittled by the author's characterization. Theophilus Cibber is represented as Pistol, a flamboyant comic character. He is the leader of the rebellious company, which includes Mrs Haughty, Mrs Squeamish, and Miss Lovemode. The rebels eventually persuade Hero Truncheon and Miss Prudley Crotchet to join them in their revolt against the managers, who want to reduce their wages. After the managers barricade the theatre, the players are forced to withdraw. But, although the managers have won, they are without a company. Pistol and the others eventually return to the theatre and agree to sing the author Crambo's final song, "Begging we will go." No play containing player characters, written or produced, makes reference to the 1743 revolt by the actors, even though their main reasons for quitting their manager were similar to that professed a decade earlier. They wanted what had been illegally withheld from them--their salary, and they also wanted to be free to set up a third company. I posit two possible reasons for the absence of player characters in any drama on this subject: either playwrights felt that those involved had too much celebrity status and might object to being used as characters, or they believed that the substance of the players' arguments had already been well covered--and perhaps even overstated--in the medium we now refer to as the press. Milhous's point that "Garrick's management was the last to preserve the actors' interest paramount (though always within the limits of fiscal responsibility)" ("Company Management" 33-4) hints at the indelibility of the effect that this tussle with management, so early in his career, must have had on this player. Milhous and [illegible]e also point out that, "[a]lthough Garrick was a benevolent despot, his unlikely accession to power did not solve the problems highlighted by the failed actors' rebellion" ("The Drury Lane Actors' Rebellion of 1743" 76).

The managers of the London patent theatres, early and late in the century, not only created financial problems for the performers, but also limited their professional and

personal liberty by threatening or setting up cartels, which prevented the players from leaving one manager and going to work for the other. Such restrictions gave rise to fervent publication by all parties involved in the disputes, and often by those who were not. The plays which focus on the management cartels tend to sympathize with the players, and I shall deal with them in detail in the "Balance of Power" section, later in this chapter.

PLAYERS AND MANAGERS

The relationship between player and manager is well documented in the eighteenth century, notably in Garrick's letters. The central management figure in the plays between 1737 and 1779 is the actor-manager, who is shown, for the most part, to be extremely powerful. In view of Garrick's reputation, it is not surprising to find that nearly all these characters bear some resemblance to him; however, the external evidence does not always agree with either these fictional characterizations or the relationships seen in the plays, nor is it so richly informed by the dynamics of the acting profession. Nevertheless I touch on it here in order to place the fictive participants in a historical context.

While arrears in salary were a major factor in the actors' secession of 1743, that particular event highlights another of the problems between players and managers arising from the Licensing Act of 1737: the limitations associated with there being only two patent theatres. Possibly the threat of a management cartel, similar to that agreed to by the patentees Steele at Drury Lane and Rich at Lincoln's Inn Fields in 1722, and already supported by the Licensing Act of 1737, forced Garrick to lead the players' departure from Drury Lane.[8] In The Case of Mrs. Clive Submitted to the Public, Kitty Clive outlines her interpretation of what led to the secession, along with other complaints she had against the managers of both houses; these include the salaries which had not been paid, the verbal agreements which were not adhered to, the proposed cartel, the reduced terms offered at Drury Lane after the secession, and the unconventional way in which she was dismissed from Covent Garden. She explains to the public the conditions of the relationship that existed between players and managers prior to 1743:

> They [the players] were quite helpless, as only two theatres were authorised, and the managers, connected together, complained of the actors' salaries being too great, and accordingly a false account was published of them in the daily paper . . . whether the expense of the theatre was too

> high or otherwise, it was not the refusal of the actors to submit to a reduction that drove them to secede, but the tyranny of the two managers. (qtd. in Fitzgerald, Life of Mrs Clive 35)

Garrick agreed to return to Drury Lane for the sake of the poorer players who had left with him, and Fleetwood agreed to pay him his arrears (Little and Kahrl 43). Macklin, however, was not re-hired, and Mrs Clive refused to return to Drury Lane on the reduced terms offered. The players' rebellion had not freed them from the tyranny of managers. When James Lacy took over the management from Fleetwood, Garrick agreed to continue working at Drury Lane under his then current articles, but only if Lacy paid him his arrears. When they were not paid, he considered his articles broken. The many complaints in the plays levelled by managers against players echo Lacy's complaints against Garrick: actors break their articles to play with another company, do not perform as often as agreed, refuse to play, or demand too much money. Garrick could produce documentary evidence--"ye Conditions of my Articles"--to prove either that Lacy's objections were unfounded in his case, or that there were mitigating circumstances for his actions (Letters 58-61). Garrick must have felt most keenly the instances when, later in his career, he had similar problems with his own company of players.[9]

In the plays, it is the female player characters who create the most commotion. Kitty Clive's reputation as one of Garrick's most troublesome leading ladies is softened by the fact that she was also one of his most loyal friends. In his Life of Mrs Clive, Fitzgerald quotes her letter of 1774, in which she praises the accomplishments of his leadership as actor-manager:

> Wonderful Sir. -- Who have been for thirty years contradicting an old established proverb, 'you cannot make bricks without straw;' but you have done what is infinitely more difficult, for you have made actors and actresses without genius, that is you have made them pass for such, which has answered your end, though it has given you infinite trouble. (105)

One category of Garrick's troubles was the non-appearance of players at rehearsal, a problem with which the playwrights also had to deal. As was noted in the previous chapter, Kitty Clive was one of those who complained when she was fined by Garrick for such negligence, because she felt she did not need to rehearse parts that she knew well (see Playwrights 18). On another occasion Garrick tells Mrs Cibber: "the Comedy 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 Dramatis Personae will be perplex'd and disjointed if they have not the advantage of your Character to Rehearse with them. . ." (Letters 321). From the evidence in his letters, it appears that Mrs Abington caused Garrick more trouble than anyone else. Even Mrs Abington's biographer, "The Editor of the 'Life of Quin,'" states that "[i]n the early part of the year 1774, we find indications of that irritability of disposition and inclination to give trouble to her employers, which afterwards displayed itself so conspicuously, and sometimes thoroughly exhausted Garrick's patience" (56). In her letter of June 14, 1774, she complains that "I have not been permitted to speak one comic line in any new Piece these six years past-- and Indeed Miss Pope is in possession of all the comic characters in Every class without Exception, while my Rolle has been confined to Melancholy walking gentlewomen only" (Little and Kahrl 943). Garrick replies:

> What still complaining, my dear Madm, of my Injustice? Still seeking redress by producing a Catalogue of Grievances? for Heaven's sake let ye poor Manager have some respite from his many labours, & enjoy a few unmurmuring Weeks in the Summer; the Month of September will be soon here, & then it will be as Natural for you to find fault with him, as for Him to find fault with You. . . . (Letters 942)

According to the manager, Mrs Abington's faults included sending her parts back, complaining of fatigue when she had played no more than twice a week, saying she was indisposed when in fact she was well, and requiring a full day's notice--in spite of the suddenness of a fellow performer's indisposition--to play a character she had played many times before (987-88, 990-91). Mrs Abington, of course, always had an excuse, writing to Garrick often in such a conciliatory way that, if we did not have both sides of their correspondence, as well as other evidence of her behaviour, we might be tempted to think that her critics had misjudged her. When Garrick responds to her request for a particular part in a new play by Murphy, he refers to his having sent her The Duel, so that she might consider the role of Maria, and her having "sent both the part and book back, with incivility" (Life of Mrs Abington 74). The actress replies the same evening:

> Your letter is very cross, and such a one as I had no apprehension I should provoke by what I intended as a respectful application for your favour and protection. . . . When you recommended that part to me, Mr. Hopkins gave me the play, and desired I would return it in the morning; it was then late at night. I gave it a hasty reading,

> and returned it accordingly, telling him I could not see much in the part; however, I would play it if Mr. Garrick desired or insisted upon it. The part was never sent me; the charge, therefore, of my sending it back with incivility to you, must certainly have arisen from some misinformation.
> (Life 75)

In March 1776, she informed Garrick that she was quitting the stage, and asked him to perform for her benefit. He agreed, and endorsed the letter containing her request: "The Above is a true Copy of the letter examin'd Word by Word of that worst of bad Women Mrs Abington to ask my Playing for her Benefit & Why--" (Letters 1080). She did not actually quit the stage until 1782. But no matter how much his "bad Women" infuriated and frustrated him, Garrick appeared never to lose respect for their acting abilities. While his charges against Mrs Clive and Mrs Abington support the playwrights' suggestion that the women more often than the men failed to perform because of sickness, or some other indisposition, the actors with whom Garrick corresponded were not without similar faults or complaints.

In 1763, Thomas Davies lamented that he had to leave the stage because of Garrick's "warmth of temper," adding that others were also obliged "to retire to another Stage" for the same reason (Little and Kahrl 385). Garrick does not hide his feelings about the actor in his reply: "the Actors of consequence who have left Me have all wish'd to return to me, I hope that will never be Your Case for your sake as my own --" (Letters 384). This display of emotion is unusual in Garrick's responses to his actors' frequently unreasonable complaints. When Spranger Barry, for instance, grumbled about the forfeits to his salary, Garrick points out that Barry and his wife often refused to play, to the detriment of the manager, the theatre, and the audience; thus, he concludes, considering the number of times they actually performed, they were very well paid (668-69, 735). Garrick's letters also document some absurd complaints. William Smith whined not only about his "terms, & Employment," even though the terms were more than he had ever received before (996), but also about the plays performed without him, though he was on leave from the theatre (1044)! Smith also refused to perform in Garrick's Jubilee procession because, he believed, it would be "an injury to [his] Importance" (1058). Garrick received many other complaints from actors about salaries, roles, and spousal injustices, as well as many requests from actors wanting employment at Drury Lane, even after they had rejected previous offers or quit in order to work elsewhere.[10] In all his correspondence with the players Garrick appears to balance his understanding of their concerns with those of the manager; but the standards by which he measures both player's

and manager's capabilities and reponsibilities are high, because they are his own. Garrick's letter to Richard Brinsley Sheridan, after he had retired from Drury Lane, explaining that it was not his intention to upset Thomas Sheridan when he attended rehearsals of Mahomet, in order to help the actor John Bannister in the part of Zaphna, shows that he wanted to be judged fairly himself:

> pray assure Your Father, that I meant not to interfere in his department; I imagin'd (foolishly indeed) that my attending Bannister's rehearsal of the part I once play'd, & wch yr Father never saw, might have assisted ye Cause, without giving ye least offence-- I love my Ease too well, to be thought an Interloper, & I should not have been impertinent enough to have attended any Rehearsal, had not You Sir in a very particular manner desir'd me--
>
> however upon no Consideration will I Ever interfere again in this business . . . You must not imagine that I write this in a pet, let me assure You upon my honour that I am in perfect peace with You all. . . . (1251)

Garrick and Richard Sheridan had either forgotten or not known that Thomas had also played Zaphna, with great success, at Smock Alley.[11] Although it is dangerous to accept Garrick's letters as sole and indisputable evidence of the 'real' player/manager relationship, they do quash many of the criticisms brought against his character in the plays.

While many players complained of the treatment they received at the hands of John Rich at Covent Garden,[12] Rich is not characterized in the player/manager category of the plays of this period. My conjecture is that the playwrights did not consider Rich celebrated enough to be a popular character with the audiences (in spite of his performances as Lun), or they knew he would not play himself on stage, or they did not see him as a competitor worthy of their satire, because he was not a playwright himself. After Garrick's retirement in 1776, the managements of the Sheridans at Drury Lane and Harris at Covent Garden suffered not only from falling attendance figures but also from bad press. A poem entitled "On the visible Alteration in the Players of Drury Lane, since Mr. Garrick resigned the Management," published in the Morning Chronicle, December 31, 1778, further suggests that the performances of many of the players had deteriorated under the guidance of Thomas Sheridan:

> O Drury, how fallen! by Yates now bereft
> What lifeless, insipid successors are left!
> Younge's present instructor, who lately has taught her
> He made her as flat and as dead as ditchwater.

> Ev'n Henderson's Richard, so pleasing before,
> Which charm'd us at Coleman's, now charms us no more.
> (qtd. in Sheldon 292)

Both Henderson and Miss Younge left Drury Lane at the end of the 1778-79 season and crossed the street to appear at Covent Garden. The coalition, set up by the managers of the two houses in 1778, did not prevent the principal performers from working, but lack of discipline and responsible leadership must have given the players an independence of which they took advantage. On many occasions they refused either to rehearse or to perform; it is, therefore, no wonder that the standard of performance was judged to have deteriorated.[13]

In the provinces the relationship between players and managers appears to have been very much as John O'Keeffe presents it in his plays. Contemporary evidence of the strollers' lives is not least available in the many accounts written by the players themselves. While not all such accounts are reliable, shaped as they are by the same creative myths as the plays, such material can be considered, as Ronald W. Vince suggests, "as evidence of the mythology of the theatre [and] as 'real' in its own way as the historian's documented 'facts'" (39). The players' material accords with the playwrights' to offer several salient "facts": the success of a travelling company was dependent more on the stamina of both managers and players than on their merit, there was always a shortage of funds, the players tended to move frequently between companies, and provincial managers hired players with greater speed than those in London, probably due to the players' constant mobility. William Templeton, in his account of his life as a stroller, records how he travelled to towns where he heard companies were playing. Although he never received money enough to save for periods of unemployment (his wages ranged from 11 to 15 shillings a week), he was rarely turned away by the managers of these provincial touring companies. The managers he describes are very like the Sylvester Daggerwoods and the Barnavags found in the plays, and the actors, unless they are also family members, never stay long with one particular company.

Charlotte Charke's experience suggests that the roles could be reversed. She finds herself, at one point in her strolling career, the "Prime Minister" of a company of strollers due to the sudden departure of the former manager and his wife. The actors, who have between them "One Scene and a Curtain," manage to reach the next town where they "were then left to proceed upon fresh Credit, and contract the strongest Friendship [they] could with each believing Landlord" (207). In her Narrative, Charke displays a low opinion of strollers, players and managers alike. She refers

to the "impertinent power of Travelling-Managers" (267-68), calls the life of a stroller "contemptible," and advises all aspirants that the profession is best left to those who are brought up in it (187-88). She was perhaps bitter about the direction in which her career had gone; she had, after all, started in London with her father, Colley Cibber.

Provincial players and strollers usually aspired to end up in the theatrical centre. Templeton attempted to gain employment in London. In his story, he refers to the slow hiring process of the London theatres. His experience resembles that of Horace in O'Keeffe's A Beggar on Horseback, and offers an insight into the dangers that Rover is warned about in Wild Oats. Templeton arrives in London with a letter of recommendation which he gives to the manager of Drury Lane. He is told to return in a week to allow the manager time to talk to the proprietors. When he returns, he is informed that he will be given a night on which to perform, and told to call back in "a week or ten days" (3: 35). The actor is continually put off in this way until all his money is spent. He finally persuades the manager to allow him to play a subordinate character--Laertes in Hamlet--so that he can show his ability. His performance, however, receives mixed reviews and, as the manager's vague promises of work are never fulfilled, Templeton, by now deeply in debt, is forced to flee London (3: 50). Some of the real experiences recorded in these written histories seem even more fantastic than the fictive ones presented in the plays of O'Keeffe and others. Their similarity, however, must have struck those who read the former and saw the latter brought to life on the London stage.

PLAYERS AS MANAGERS

Theatre history depicts periods of relative calm in the relationship between players and managers during the periods when the theatre managers were also actors: Drury Lane (1710-1733) under the triumvirate of Cibber, Wilks, and Doggett, who was later replaced by Booth, under pressure from the Lord Chamberlain;[14] Drury Lane (1747-1779) under David Garrick; and Lincoln's Inn Fields (1714-1732) and Covent Garden (1732-1761) under John Rich. I say 'relative' calm because we must take into account the management cartel of the 1720s, which "was duly signed and sealed, and evidently remained in effect until about 1730" (Milhous and Hume, "The London Theatre Cartel of the 1720s" 21), as well as the two upheavals at either end of the triumvirate's tenure at Drury Lane: the silencing of Christopher Rich in 1709, an order which "prevent[ed] the junior actors from earning a living over the

summer" (Milhous and Hume, "The Silencing of Drury Lane in 1709" 436); and the 1733 rebellion led by Theophilus Cibber against Highmore, who had purchased Booth's share of the management in 1732 (Thomas 28-9). What the manager plays reveal, however, is that the actor-managers' role does not always ease the tension between them and their players.

There are two plays--neither of which was produced--which deal particularly with the problems of a manager who has previously made a name for himself as an actor. Both actor-manager characters are thinly disguised characterizations of Garrick. One appears in the The Theatrical Manager (printed in 1751 "for T. Lownds"), and the other in A Dialogue in the Green Room upon a Disturbance in the Pit (published anonymously in two parts in 1763). These plays suggest, in ways that are different from, but more direct than those recorded elsewhere, that the manager who is also an actor suffers from a tension between the two roles. This inner tension is connected to the struggle between the controlling administrative and profit-seeking power of the manager and the inspirational creative power of the actor, who is ultimately subservient to both management and audience. General theatre history makes no note of the difficulties facing actor-managers because of such tension. Indeed, Boaden suggests that the combination of roles has benefits for both players and playwrights:

> The manager, who is not an actor, will seldom go into the minutiae of the business, and if he delegate the task to one who *is*, the command is often resisted or sullenly obeyed. I have weighed the detriment to both AUTHOR and ACTOR, from the whole power of a theatre being in the hands of a man who may be *both*; I consider the many prejudices he may form, and *one* preference that he must entertain;--but in my opinion so much is gained by the unity in his operations, and the steady pressure of his interest, that I should insure to a theatre so managed, on the whole, the best dramatic pieces and the best instructed performers. (Memoirs of Mrs Siddons 1: 74-5)

The plays offer an insight into what must have been an ongoing struggle for those managers who were constantly in the public eye as actors, even though the authors are critical of the particular manager(s) portrayed.

In The Theatrical Manager, Vaticide is the actor most in fashion with the London audiences. But he is not satisfied with his elevated status as the stage's favourite; he wants to be a manager, with all the power he supposes that position brings with it. He resents being called to a rehearsal (which suggests that either he does not like attending

rehearsals or he objects to being subservient to a manager whose job it is to schedule rehearsals), and rails against the way the theatre manager Aeschylus signs himself as "Your humble servant" in his request for Vaticide's presence:

> Why, what a fawning hypocritical Conclusion is this? What Pains has this Man taken to disguise his wilful Superiority. . . . Ambition urges me to resist, but Interest presses me to obey; and as Humility will be a Means of acquiring Power, therefore I will submit. (3)

We are given no hint in Aeschylus's note that he is a power-hungry hypocrite. He appears to be an extremely considerate manager who is requesting a player's attendance at rehearsal the following day, as the player now seems to be completely recovered from a long illness. If there is any hypocrisy apparent, it is in Vaticide's dealings with the managers of both theatres:

> **VATICIDE.** Thus far my Expectations are answered; the one I have baffled by my external civility, that he believes me the very standard of Constancy, and is so infatuated by my courteous Behaviour, that he thinks me as secure on my verbal Agreement, as if I was chained down by Articles.-- But he will too soon be made sensible of his Error, and find it is an easy Matter to slip the Collar of an honourable Assurance.-- And for the other, he is quite the Modern Gentleman and easily imposed upon; for his Intellects are so eclipsed by his brilliant Notions of public Appearances, that only tickle his Vanity, and he is your Slave for ever. (14)

This particular player seems to have all the qualities necessary to make himself a manager in the mold prescribed by himself.

The reference to Garrick, who left Rich at Covent Garden and became Lacy's partner at Drury Lane in 1747, is clear when Vaticide becomes a manager in partnership with the "Modern Gentleman" and leaves Aeschylus's service. Vaticide admits the ease with which he assumes the powerful position of manager, but in so doing he reveals the difference in status between managers and players, and the strain such a disparity creates for an actor-manager:

> Methinks the Robes of Superiority sit much easier than the base Fetters of servile Oppression.-- Yet the Thought of what I was, hangs heavy upon my Spirits. (31)

The performer in Vaticide obviously has not been completely subsumed by the more powerful manager, as he continues to see

roles in terms of costumes and properties.

The actor-manager not only has to deal with the tensions naturally inherent in a master/servant relationship but also with those created by the competition between peers. Vaticide is a perfect example of this dichotomy. Another player called Spouter applies for an interview with the actor-manager. Prior to his meeting with Spouter, Vaticide thinks it will be easy to deal with a player. If he cannot read (which would be unusual), he muses, "then I shall have him entirely under my own Government, and teach him as I think most prudent"; and, if he appears good enough to be "a Rival in [the] Profession" (which, he admits, might prove "very injurious"), then he has the power to keep him out of his theatre. After his meeting with Spouter, Vaticide is "struck insensible with Admiration, to behold Insolence reign triumphant in an Actor,-- a Dependant" (57). Because Spouter does not come crawling to the manager when summoned, but presents himself with all the self-confidence of a gentleman, Vaticide immediately suspects his motives. Spouter's behaviour shows us an alternative code of conduct, one which increases our respect for the player and decreases it for the actor-manager:

> **VATICIDE.** Pray, Sir, what may be your Expectations, from this Superabundancy of fine speeches, [what] do you intend to impose on me?
> **SPOUTER.** Impose on you!-- What, does your Conscience reflect Dishonour upon yourself? dost thou suspect me from thy own mean Designs?-- No, Sir, the Indulgence of the Town has inspired me with Vanity to abhor Deceit, and set me above the Scandal of a Manager. (56-7)

Spouter manages to retain his dignity even though Vaticide has power over his livelihood. Spouter is not without ambition, but he uses irony rather than deceit in his relationship with the new manager. Vaticide is made to realize that his position does not automatically bring respect with its power. "I found," he says after Spouter's departure, "contrary to my deluded Expectations, a Title but no Distinction; and instead of being a Sovereign over my Dependants, I was myself liable to the repeated Insults of these royal Representatives" (57-8). We do not suppose for one moment that Vaticide will become any player's "humble servant," but the play offers an interesting insight into the problems facing both player and manager when the two roles are combined.

The other piece, A Dialogue in the Green Room upon a Disturbance in the Pit, is obviously based on the half-price riots at Drury Lane and Covent Garden in 1763 and the ensuing paper-war regarding one Fitzpatrick, who was held responsible

for initiating the riots. The piece is divided into two separate one-act plays, with the suggestion that the second play is a "continuation" of the first, only separated by an elapse of time. In the first play, or part, the Manager is required by the audience to appear before them, but he is afraid to do so. While he has never shirked his duty as an actor, he appears unwilling to fulfill his duties as a manager. He persuades the Coadjutor from the other house to face the audience in his stead. The actor-manager here depicted appears more concerned about his acting career than his managerial one, for he tells the Coadjutor not to threaten the audience with his withdrawal from the stage, because, he admits, "I shall make but a foolish figure next year, when I break my promise" (17). In the second piece, the continuation entitled "Night the Second," it becomes obvious that the Manager will have to face the angry mob in order to save his theatre from destruction. The fact that this particular manager does not include players' salaries in his list of increased costs, when he offers his rationale for the need to raise ticket prices, could be seen as an indirect compliment to the care Garrick took of his players' interests (by not publicly involving them), or his financial interests (by not increasing the players' income):

> Must I at last give up this great object,-- No full price but for new pantomimes;-- and they're such damned expensive things, that a man gets nothing by them! -- Suppose I reason the case with them, and, with my usual address, soften them into compliance. -- Suppose I tell them,-- They shall have it their own way just as they please; but then represent to them the expence of a new, or a revived piece, dresses, decorations, scenery. . . . (27)

Vaticide, who was astonished at Spouter's insolence, intimates that as an actor he was never impudent, only compliant. The Dialogue's Manager also declares that he was never knowingly impudent, but acknowledges his need for a certain effrontery in his present unpleasant predicament. "Impudence for once assist me," he pleads, "I never before implor'd your aid!" (28). Confident in his acting ability, he rehearses his speech before going on stage:

> I'm going-- where's my handkerchief!-- hum-- hum-- How shall I begin?-- "Ladies and Gentlemen"-- no; that won't do-- "With the greatest submission, I intreat you to give me a candid and impartial hearing"-- that's too fulsome.-- I have it ---- (goes on). (29)

When the Manager reappears, however, we discover that he has given in to all the audience's demands! It is left to the Coadjutor to work with the Cashier to ensure that the printed

version of the Manager's acquiescence will not be as binding on him as articles are on a player. But, even though the Manager has appeased the audience's wrath for the moment, the actor still has to perform for them. He admits to finding his dual role a liability in this case. "This affair has quite disconcerted me," he tells his supporters in the green room, "I don't know a word of my part;-- but I must go on" (32).

The author of A Dialogue in the Green Room reveals a distinct tension in the balance of power not only between the player and the manager, who is the same person, but also between the manager and the audience. It is impossible to tell whether it is the actor or the manager who yields to the audience's demands. Both this piece and The Theatrical Manager demonstrate the actor-manager's need for some kind of separation between his administrative and performance duties. Vaticide lies in order to escape the onerous task of disappointing a former friend, who approaches him for work. He tells the prospective actor that only the "Modern Gentleman" (Vaticide's managerial partner) has the power to help. Neither manager in these two pieces proves capable when faced with demands requiring managerial diplomacy; both relieve themselves of their responsibility and adopt the player's role of administrative innocence.

It is not surprising, considering the strong resemblance between Garrick and these portraits of the actor-manager, that neither piece was produced. Garrick took care and pride in his duties as manager of Drury Lane. These playwrights suggest that in moments of crisis the concerns of the actor take precedence over the duties of the manager. However, while the standard historical view of the eighteenth-century theatre manager rarely takes note of the subtle differences in type (other than biographical details or personality traits of actual managers), A Dialogue in the Green Room and The Theatrical Manager are unusual in the fact that they do. These two pieces might not have been produced because of their inherent criticisms of Garrick's managerial intentions; but other scathing pieces, such as Woodward's A Lick at the Town, in which named players actually performed the playwrights' derogatory characterizations of them, were given at least one performance. Perhaps it was concomitantly Garrick's public reputation as an actor of enormous and varied ability that made him a ready target for dramatists' satire, and his position as a theatre manager that created an insurmountable barrier to stage production of such work.

In his Life of Hamlet, with Alterations, which was published in 1772, Arthur Murphy satirizes both Garrick's alterations of Shakespeare and his powerful position as Drury Lane's manager. The play helps us form an image of Garrick's

managerial relationship with the players in his company, and with the playwrights who submitted work. It also confirms that his relationship with Murphy was often stormy.[15] In spite of the number of new works Garrick produced during his tenure of Drury Lane, there were many he chose not to produce. As player and playwright, he knew what pleased the audiences and, as manager of a commercial enterprise, he needed to attract a paying audience to his theatre. Much has been written concerning Garrick's alterations of Shakespeare, including Vaticide's reference in The Theatrical Manager: "Miss in her Teens, and the Lying Valet, will succeed as well under my Directions, as the Works of immortal Shakespear [sic]. -- I have . . . saved many a poor Bard from sharing the destructive Fate of their worthless Predecessors" (44). George Winchester Stone's article "Garrick's Long Lost Alteration of Hamlet" serves as a response to Murphy's Life of Hamlet. In it, Stone demonstrates that Garrick restored many of Shakespeare's lines, including Hamlet's advice to the players. Murphy's characterization of Garrick cannot, therefore, be accepted at face value. In the play, Garrick is referred to by his menials--represented by the prompter Hopkins and Johnson--in terms usually reserved for royalty; and he shows extreme self-confidence in all the business of theatre. Johnson and Hopkins meet on stage at the change of the watch:

HOPKINS. Well, good night, my friend
But hark, a word; are all the places let
For the next night of Hamlet?
JOHNSON. How should I
Resolve your question? 'Tis the Manager
Settles that matter: it is he that lets
The boxes for those nights; it makes our King
Of greater pith and moment. Lords and ladies
All send their cards to him; he plays those parts,
Not for the public, but his private friends.
HOPKINS. Johnson, that's right: our Monarch is so great,
It now befits him to select his audience.
JOHNSON. But this must not transpire: 'tis ours, you know,
Still to deceive the town, and make 'em think
The boxes are with equity disposed. (Act 1)

The "Monarch" is represented as being no better than Vaticide in his trickery and deceit; a parallel emerges between these two characters even though the plays were written twenty-one years apart. Murphy, however, does not offer us another player character, such as Spouter, with whom we can compare his actor-manager. He uses Garrick himself, when he and Johnson meet, to confirm the portrait painted by Hopkins and Johnson, and the issue of the notorious "alterations":

GARRICK. Well! The play's over, Johnson.
JOHNSON. Sir, it is.
GARRICK. What for to-morrow night did they give out?
JOHNSON. The Fashionable Lover.
GARRICK. And they all
Went off contented: did they not?
JOHNSON. To me
It seem'd so.
GARRICK. Ha!-- that's well-- and so they think
The Fashionable Lover, which I once
So cherish'd in my bosom, but now say
Deals nought but sentiment; 'tis that they think
We mean to act.
JOHNSON. That is their present expectation, Sir.
GARRICK. Came any round to you for places?
JOHNSON. None:
There's not a single being wants a place.
GARRICK. If we had let them know that I play Hamlet
To-morrow night, then the whole crowd had rush'd
To you for places, urging loud demands;
And then the friends to whom I've given my word,
Had all been disappointed. When they see,
At nine to-morrow, Hamlet is the play,
With those fam'd alterations I have made,
Servants will come in crowds: do you prepare
The book, and fill it as this paper marks. . . .
(Act 2)

The emphasis on "those fam'd alterations" is original; there is, therefore, no mistaking Murphy's point. His playwright-actor-manager controls the theatre, the actors, the audience, and the texts.

These plays are not, of course, the only criticisms of Garrick as an actor-manager. In A Letter to Mr. Garrick, "on His having purchased a Patent for Drury-Lane Play-House" (London 1747), Garrick is accused of wanting the patent "merely through Vanity of a shadowy Authority over your Fellow-Comedians" (7). Vaticide wanted his patent for the same reason. However, the anguish that Garrick suffered on account of his "Fellow-Comedians," after the unsuccessful secession in 1743, convinced him that the only way to help them, and the acting profession, was to become a manager (Stone and Kahrl 62-4). Another correspondent, in A Letter to Mr. G--k, Relative to His treble Capacity of Manager, Actor, and Author (1749), reminds Garrick of the responsibilities and liabilities connected to his position at Drury Lane:

> Now, you, as Manager, Actor and Author, have a good deal of the Education (as I may call it) of the Vulgar in your Hands; therefore I think every Man has a Right to draw his Pen against you, when

> he sees you misapply the Power that is plac'd in you, for your Countrymens Service. (6)

Garrick used his power to surround himself with the best available talent, unlike Vaticide in The Theatrical Manager, the 'monarch' in Murphy's play, or the four 'gentlemen' in The Managers, all of whom want either inferior actors or their favourites in their companies. In his letter to William Pritchard (11 July 1747), Garrick writes,

> I shall Engage the best Compy in England if I can & think it ye Interest of the best Actors to be together; I shall to the best of my Ability, do Justice to All, & I hope Mr Prichard & his Friends will be the last to impeach my Conduct, or be uneasy that I should follow the bent of my Judgmt in my future Management of ye Stage. . . . (Letters 89)

The historical analysis of Garrick's management of the stage supports his own pledge. To the best of his ability, he did "do Justice to All," including the disgruntled playwrights who wrote so scathingly of his supposed injustices to them.

I say "supposed," because Garrick's management was somewhat unusual with respect to the amount of new work produced. In a letter entitled D-ry L-ne P-yh-se Broke Open (London 1748), the anonymous author complains that now "G--k . . . is become Patentee . . . he will cram down our Throats the old damn'd Plays, damnably acted, without giving himself the Trouble of reviving others, or acting himself" (5). Garrick apparently took great pains not to misuse the power that his combined position gave him. He expresses his policy with respect to the playwrights' control of their own work in a letter to Mrs Abington, who had pleaded with him not to give a particular part in one of Murphy's plays to Mrs Barry because, she said, the author had promised it her:

> That I may hear no more of this or that part in Mr. Murphy's play, I now again tell you, that every author, since my management, distributed his parts as he thinks will be of most service to his interest, nor have I ever interfered, or will interfere, unless I perceive that they would propose something contrary to common sense. (qtd. in Life of Mrs Abington 74)

Dougald MacMillan suggests that Garrick "knew almost everybody in his London," and, because of his many friendships, was inundated with the work of "amateur playwrights, friends and relatives of the nobility" with whom he was acquainted ("David Garrick, Manager" 632). Naturally, many of these rejected playwrights would have been disappointed, and some of them turned to pamphlets and novels

to ridicule him (MacMillan, "David Garrick, Manager" 637). Garrick would undoubtedly have used his knowledge as a performer when he made decisions about the plays submitted to him. Perhaps, as MacMillan suggests, his focus was too narrow: "in passing judgment upon plays submitted to him for performance at Drury Lane, he seems to have accepted or rejected solely on the basis of the actability of the play at his theatre" ("David Garrick as Critic" 82). Murphy's Garrick seems not to feel any tension between the player and his other roles. His main concern that there is never enough time in the winter season to reap the rewards of his popularity, is exacerbated by Samuel Foote's being granted a licence to produce plays at the Haymarket during the summer months. At the end of the visit of Shakespeare's Ghost, "Drury's King" swears to "wipe away all trivial modern bards" from the "Prompter's list" (Act 3) to make way for his own adaptations.

During his management, Garrick actually accepted more than 162 new plays for production and rejected some 83 (Stone and Kahrl 126). While this figure reveals the relatively small number of new plays offered, it does show that Garrick produced two-thirds of them. Boaden lauds the efforts Garrick made to produce good drama:

> It was often supposed that this great actor was cold as to contemporary writers. But their productions do not convict him of bad taste; on the contrary, they demonstrate his judgment to have been all but infallible. . . . To yield to a rage for incessant novelty is to insure the destruction of the Drama, by inviting everything that is unnatural in interest, and loose and trashy in language.
>
> Fortunately for Mr. Garrick, the revivals of our own stock of sterling plays, aided by his wonderful talent, kept up a steady attraction to his theatre, sufficient for his fame and his profit. (Memoirs of Mrs Siddons 1: 8-9)

Garrick played constantly, large and small parts, aiding new and revived drama with "his wonderful talent," throughout his tenure of the patent. A 1763 pamphlet, entitled "An Appeal to the Public in Behalf of the Manager," supports Garrick against authors who rush into print or cause disturbances in the theatre when their criticisms are merely "founded in personal pique and private revenge" (3). The unknown author also attacks the content of A Dialogue in the Green Room on behalf of the manager and players concerned:

> That this Dialogue is the pure effect of fiction, I believe the most sanguine of the author's friends will not pretend to deny; but though he

> might have indulged his fancy, at the price of common sense, with such pretty chit chat, he should not, if he had had the least regard to truth and honesty, set down such passages for facts, as would prejudice the town against the manager, and particular actors, only for the sake of indulging his imagination, or gratifying his spleen. (22)

The play form employed for the publication of A Dialogue might have helped persuade its readers to believe its content; hence, the necessity for the defensive "Appeal . . . in Behalf of the Manager." Anything said or done by those so closely associated with the theatre might seem more plausible in a *play*, because the context for their dialogue and actions is more appropriate. If this were the intention of the author of A Dialogue, then the pamphlet's allegations against such "fiction" indicate that the choice of presentation achieved partial success. Garrick would naturally have had supporters and detractors because of the power of his position; however, as the manager of a commercial venture it was his job to fill the houses, and as a "star" player it was his responsibility to give the audiences the quality of performance they had come to expect. This dual role was far from being an easy one. Whatever the writers of The Theatrical Manager and A Dialogue in the Green Room might have set out to achieve, the result, in both cases, is a detailed theatrical rendering which defines the strenuous stress involved when both positions in the player/manager relationship devolve upon one person.

PLAYERS VERSUS MANAGERS

Similarly implicit in the drama is the strain between those characters who hold the positions separately. What is not recorded in other sources, such as theatre history surveys (which are generally non-committal, or even silent, about the relationship between managers and players), is as eloquent as what is revealed in the drama. The nature of the relationship in the manager plays seems to be equivalently determined by the types of manager with whom the players have dealings. I distinguish them as acting managers, business managers, playwright managers, and provincial managers (male and female), although there are obvious overlaps between these types.

What the playwrights make abundantly clear is that player characters rarely respect their managers, whatever their distinction. The players always feel that the managers' demands are unreasonable, especially in the

business of learning lines. In David Garrick's The Meeting of the Company, the prompter Parsons hands the actress Miss Platt a script, telling her, "the managers desire you will be ready in this part by tomorrow night. 'Tis very short and very easy study." She replies:

> **MISS PLATT.** I have been harrassed 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. (239)

With the constant changing of a theatre's repertory such an occurrence would be an accepted part of the business of being an actor. Sarah Siddons, for instance, remembers how she settled down one night, "when all the domestic cares and business of the day were over," to learn Lady Macbeth for the first time, in order to appear in it the following evening:

> As the character is very short, I thought I should soon accomplish it. Being then only twenty years of age, I believed, as many other do believe, that little more was necessary than to get the words into my head, for the necessity of discrimination, and the development of character, at that time of my life, had scarcely entered into my imagination. (qtd in Fitzgerald, The Kembles 1: 32-3)

But when she read the assassination scene, she was so horrified by it that she put off learning her lines until the next morning; as a consequence, she reports, "so little did I know of my part . . . that my shame and confusion cured me of procrastinating my business for the remainder of my life" (qtd in Fitzgerald, The Kembles 1: 32-3). She does not comment on what penalty the manager imposed for her tardiness, if any. Siddons, along with her brother John Philip Kemble, had a reputation for learning lines quickly. Appleton suggests their ability was perfected during their experience as provincial players. On one occasion, he recounts, they performed the first four acts of Sheridan's Pizarro (1799) while "the author labored over the fifth," confident that they could learn it during the intermission (14). Even though they were stars, they were subservient to Sheridan, because he was their manager as well as their playwright at the time.

Secondary evidence suggests that a relatively harmonious working relationship between the players and those who ran the companies was more the norm than the exception, in spite of the "jingle jangle" between them.[16] The relationship depicted by the playwrights, however, appears to lean more towards substantiating Miss Platt's complaint, mainly because

what the managers demand of their company members rarely seems to take into consideration the "wear and tear" of a player's "constitution." Such a managerial stance agrees perfectly with Vaticide's ideas about the power of the manager's role. Even Garrick's The Meeting of the Company and the anonymous The Author's Triumph, plays in which each manager has a more than cordial relationship with his players, do not hint at what would have been impossible--any kind of equality in the respective positions. Hopkins, as we have already noted, wrote in his diary that it was "an Excellent lesson to all performers" (qtd. in LS 4.3: 1833); he does not include managers in the learning process. The degree of managerial power was apparently contingent on the manager's category. At the upper end of the power continuum we find the London business managers (they are usually also the proprietors of the theatres) and, at the lower end, the acting managers.

The playwrights tend to substantiate the idea that the acting manager's position was not as prestigious or as powerful as that of actor-manager. The latter might also be a patentee, a position that allowed him to delegate responsibilities to the former, his employee. The acting manager was also caught between the main combatants in the struggle for power and respect, and this made him vulnerable to attack from both sides. Several famous actors, including Charles Macklin, Thomas King, and John Philip Kemble, held the position at some point during their long careers. As Charles Beecher Hogan points out, the acting manager's duties, as explained by King in a letter written to the public in September 1788, comprise those we might associate today with a business manager or administrator:

> I was to bring before the publick eye, in the best manner I could, such pieces and performers as should be approved by the proprietors. I was to negotiate between party and party in forming engagements; to be generally ready to answer the publick on any complaint, disturbance, &c., during the time of performance; to make, subject to the controul [sic] of the Patentees, the best arrangements I could as to the order of presenting the plays in use; and to instruct such young or other performers, as might be likely to derive advantage from a knowledge, which partiality was pleased to allow I had acquired, by many years' observation and considerable practice. (qtd. in LS 5.1: cliii)

The acting managers were in the unenviable position of dealing with the players on a managerial level, without the benefit of supreme authority, while simultaneously performing with them on a collegial level. In The Critick Anticipated

(1779) by R. B. S. Esq., the acting manager Lispall finds that he is called upon to perform for absent players, in addition to his other duties. Alone in the green room, he moans, "If any actor is p-x-d, arrested, or drunk, and can't play his part, Tom Lispall must go on -- Prologues, Chorus's, and set Speeches, all by Lispall; and yet I am no more respected for my Labours than if I only played Twice a season!" (1.1). While most documents acknowledge and proffer respect to those actors in the position who were or became famous, they do not record or mention the many subordinates who, like Lispall, must have laboured in a similar capacity without recognition for their extra responsibilities.

Managers who were also theatre proprietors were, in that capacity, virtually unassailable, except by the public on whom they relied for their business's commercial success, and the Lord Chamberlain, as Steele and Rich found to their cost in the early part of the century.[17] In The Managers (1768), the anonymous author illustrates not only such managers' egotistical use of power over their players, but also their necessary subservience to their audiences. We see two of four managers of the same theatre (representing Colman, Powell, Harris, and Rutherford) make a casting decision, not because of an actor's ability to play the role, but merely because of each manager's desire to be obeyed. In one scene, the actors, Mr Popper and Mr Bates, are arguing about which one of them will perform the role of Major Oakly that night; they both claim to have the authority of two of the managers to play it. Coley, one of the managers, enters and settles the matter:

> **COLEY.** I am the Sovereign of this Kingdom. I wield the Scepter, and he who disobeys my commands, shall be banished from these Territories -- Bates shall be MAJOR OAKLY, and if you dare express the least Discontent upon the Occasion, by Heavens I'll make him a Colonel.
> **POPPER.** I must submit. (1.2)

Later, another manager, Towel, comes across Mr Phizgig and Mr Niggle arguing over who should have the vacated role of the King of Brentford:

> **TOWEL.** Silence, ye abject Wretches, hear your Emperor -- Henceforward there shall be but one King of Brentford. The State that has more than one King, can never be well governed; of this we have a recent Instance: therefore I'll have but one King of Brentford, and I desire that Proclamation may be made of these my Orders and Determinations. (1.3)

When the four managers--the "Sovereigns" and "Emperors" of

their state--realize that they are arguing amongst themselves in front of the audience, they promptly stop. They must respect the public, "from whom," says Towel, "we have received so many favours, and without whose future Favours, we must shortly sink into what we were" (1.3). Not one of the four is willing to lose or resign his position as manager, even if it means sharing the power.

The playwrights' attitude to the third kind of manager is similar to that revealed in their characterizations of writers: they are willing to depict themselves in the least sympathetic light. They have ample reason for doing so in the case of their playwright-manager characters because, as Sheridan's position in relation to Mrs Siddons and Kemble disclosed, this managerial position was the most powerful in the theatrical hierarchy. They, and the actor-managers, dictate each season's casting of new plays, which they also select, as well as revivals of old plays. In Fielding's The Author's Farce, it is clear that the playwright-managers control the repertoire. Marplay Junior asks his father what he thinks of a submitted new play, and he replies, "It may be a very good one, for aught I know: but I am resolved since the town will not receive any of mine, they shall have none from any other. I'll keep them to their old diet" (2.2). To us, who have become used to the more recent convention of directors and administrators running theatres, the manager's job description seems in order, and there will always be those who, like the Marplays, abuse its power. But theatre history supports the idea that the players had the right to take issue with managerial intervention concerning the possession of parts.[18] Young players also had problems acquiring parts, especially in the London and provincial city theatres where many members of a company would remain for most of their careers, jealously guarding their line of parts.[19] The playwrights do not refer directly to possession of parts nor use the system as a topic in the player/manager relationship, but nor do they suggest that players have any rights regarding casting. The player characters are subject to forfeits and managerial castigation if they refuse to accept a role. Casting, as Burge succinctly states, depended on seniority, succession, precedence in performing, and "possession of parts" (51). An anonymous article in the Gentleman's Magazine, April 1766, describes conditions at Drury Lane in the early part of the century:

> At this time of day [about 1718], seniority of date was considered with as much jealousy in the green-room, as in the army or navy; and an actor that should at once have rushed upon the town, with all the powers of a Betterton or a Booth, in a capital character, would have been looked upon by his competitors for fame as little better than

> a usurper of talent and applause. Besides the manager considered acting as a mere mechanical acquisition, that nothing but time could procure; and therefore, everyone in his company was to serve his apprenticeship before he attempted being even a journeyman actor. (qtd. in Burge 52)

At about the same time this article was published, John Palmer was lucky and persistent enough to acquire several major parts: "Not only had the departure [through retirement and death] of the elder Palmer, Powell, and Holland left a windfall of roles, but young Jack Palmer at 25 was a veritable Bottom, eager to apply the quick study which all his family apparently possessed and to try every part across the spectrum" (Highfill et al, Biographical Dictionary 11: 165).

Several playwright-managers, such as David Garrick in London and Thomas Sheridan in Dublin, were also actor-managers. The combination of all three positions was extremely formidable for the players in their companies, but, as Woodwards's A Lick at the Town implies, not altogether immune from attack. In the play, Author suggests to Mrs Clive that her play Bays in Petticoats is no better than his own offering. She is so incensed by the disparagement of her own playwriting abilities that she lashes out at those of the manager. Her attack is tempered, however, with a performer's caution:

> Nay, since I am provok'd, I'll venture to say [and] swear the Managers Farces themselves are contemptible t[illegible] -- I own, Gentlemen, I am indiscreet to [illegible]is -- but as my Benefit for this Season is [illegible], I have Time before the next to make it up with the Incomparable Author of those Pieces. (Larpent MS #92)

Woodward's piece had its first and only performance on 16 March 1751, so Mrs Clive's comments about her benefit are founded in fact. (Her own farce Bays in Petticoats had had its fourth performance for her benefit only four days earlier.) The "Incomparable Author" is undoubtedly Garrick; but even though he was empowered, as Mrs Clive's and Woodward's manager, to inflict severe punishment, I have found no record of any recriminations against the players for this performance. The fear of the threatening power of this particular actor-playwright-manager is not only established but mostly substantiated by the theatrical texts themselves.

Provincial managers were similar to the London managers in the fact that they held the senior position in theatrical or strolling companies. Tate Wilkinson, himself a player and manager, declares, however, that those in that position were

commonly used and abused by their players:

> For be it known to all men, that frequently when an actor's wife or the lady's husband is sick, their friends are instantly informed, whether dropsy, consumption or miscarriage, it is all owing to the unprecedented barbarity of the manager. I do not relate this as peculiar to myself, but to managers in general. . . . (The Wandering Patentee 1: 57)

The playwright of A Green Room Scene, prefixed to Philoctetes in Lemnos (1795), indicates that such "use and abuse" was not one-sided. The manager who takes the actor Peter Anvill's animal roles from him, leaving him to play only human ones, considers such action demotion. Having to share the stage with animals is a traditional player's complaint, but Anvill's predicament is rare. Parker's two portraits of opulent provincial managers, in his View of Society and Manners, demonstrate that differences in the character of managers and their relationships, particularly with players, were seated in the individual rather than in the position. Parker describes the first manager as "dressed in a blue and gold-laced coat and waist-coat, a pair of red breeches, a silver-laced hat, and black stockings," while the members of his company "were in a deplorable pickle, ragged and emaciated" (1: 46-7). After being asked to "pay down two shillings for [his] footing" (1: 48), Parker is shown the "Play-house; a horrid wreck of a barn, with a few bits of candle stuck in clay to light the dismal hole" (1: 49). The other manager, Mr. Whitely, was "the proprietor of most of the Theatres in the North of England," and famous for his wealth (1: 66):

> This opulence was not raised from oppression or ruin; nor was his liberality to his Performers at all decreased by the frequent deceits he had experienced: he had a hand open at all times to the wants of his Company in a period of bad business, and he was ever ready to patronize needy merit, and raise depressed genius. (1: 67)

The managers in the plays tend neither to care for, nor to share with their players; and, when they do care, they have relatively little to share.

A few provincial managers, such as Charlotte Charke and Sarah Baker, were women; but we do not come across a female manager in the plays until 1785, in O'Keeffe's A Beggar on Horseback. Mrs Mummery is "a great manageress of three or four country play-houses," who has come to London to audition players for her companies. She is also the only female manager portrayed. There is little evidence to deny the notion drawn from the plays, as well as from memoirs (such as

those of Charke), that female managers, good or bad, were uncommon.[20] Mrs Mummery is one of a rare breed. She is also special in that she appears to have more consideration for players in auditions than the male London manager in the same play. He keeps young Horace waiting for over half an hour, and then advises him (after barely three lines of his audition speech) "to go into the country for a few summers. . ." (484).

O'Keefe's London manager appears to be imitating the practice of his real counterparts. Because they were ultimately responsible for a production's success, they were keen for young players and novices to gain experience in the provinces, whenever possible, before they assayed their talents on the London stage. Sarah Siddons's disastrous début with Garrick at Drury Lane, just before he retired, was swiftly followed by twelve years in the provinces before her triumphant return under Sheridan's management. The provincial managers, of course, were also keen to retain the services of players who were either experienced or exceptionally talented. In another of O'Keeffe's plays, Wild Oats (1791), Lamp, a country manager, offers to engage the stroller Rover for twelve shillings a week, and advises him against going to London because, he says, "a London Theatre is the worst place in the world for a young performer, a very dangerous ground" (2.3). The dangers of the big city seemed to diminish, however, when players considered the opportunity for making more money. Whatever considerations the country managers might have had for the well-being of the players, the playwrights make it clear that money is the prime consideration for both. In No Play this Night (1797), Sylvester Daggerwood is an actor-manager who employs all the members of his family to cut company costs. Mist, the manager in Frederick Reynolds's Management (1799), refuses to employ London players for his company because they cost too much; in their stead, he either uses the popular Harlequin at "twelve shillings a week" or performs himself.

The playwrights' rendering of the combative relationship between managers and players, whether in London or the provinces, underscores the adversaries' points of view, and highlights one in particular: the economics of their different occupations. In the drama, managers view players in terms of outgoing costs and, normally, vice versa; but there are occasions (to which history attests) when the players see managers as blockages in their flow of income.

HIERARCHY

The playwrights declare that players are the servants of the audience. The eighteenth-century audiences also saw themselves as masters of the players. The author of A Dialogue in the Green-Room upon a Disturbance in the Pit (1763) states the case in his preface:

> Whatever notions modern performers may have imbibed by inflated applause and profuse recompense, actors are neither more or less than the servants of the public. (vii)

Anxious to see the star players perform, people even fought amongst themselves in their efforts to gain admittance to a crowded house; but, once inside the theatre, the public assumed control.

In the last chapter, we saw how the playwrights do not hesitate to laud the beneficence of their patron characters, who are usually provincial gentry or aristocracy giving patronage to strollers. Their approval, however, is tinged with reservation about the apparently selfless intent of the patrons' charitable acts, because their "charity" tends to reap some kind of reward. Apollo, in Apollo turn'd Stroller, is reinstated in Olympus; Lady Amaranth, in Wild Oats, is able to marry Rover (after his true lineage as a lord's son is discovered); and Carbine, in The Strolers, gloats over his successful scheming, when Sir Barnaby's daughter elopes under cover of the players' performance of a "very pretty Tragedy of one Act" (13), for which Carbine paid them twenty guineas. Carbine appears to take his patronage seriously when he intervenes on the players' behalf; but his ulterior motive is to frustrate Sir Barnaby's threats of revenge against them: "I take 'em under my Protection, and will bring 'em off harmless in spite of your Teeth Sir" (24).

Everyone who was associated with the theatre in some kind of working capacity, including managers, was considered subservient to the drama's patrons. Because the managers held the top position in the theatrical hierarchy, they considered themselves to be masters of their employees, even though they were also servants of the public. Powel, in Tit for Tat, regards his position as Deputy Treasurer as that of a "valuable sl-ve" (qtd. in LS 4.1: 126). George Stayley says in his "real History," The Life and Opinions of an Actor: "A Manager is a great man; as much above common performers, they say, as a master mechanick is superior to his journeymen" (1: 186). Chetwood goes further when, in The General History of the Stage, he states that the manager's judgment in matters of acting proficiency was superior to that of certain players. The remedy, he says, for an actor's poor skill in voice, passions, and gestures lay "in the Hands

of the Manager . . . [A]s [the players] do not always judge candidly for themselves, it is requisite they should have one of unbyass'd and superior Knowledge to judge for them" (33-34). Managers who were not performers usually retained a higher social as well as theatrical status. And the manager who came to his position unadulterated by any professional thespian connections had the highest status of all.

Ironically, the most powerful players in the hierarchy, the actor-managers or acting managers, were possibly those least protected by their patrons. The playwrights' depiction of them as being especially vulnerable accords with documentary evidence. In his account of Thomas Sheridan's management of the Smock Alley Theatre in Dublin in 1746, Benjamin Victor suggests that player, manager, and audience member had difficulty on occasion accepting either the level or the responsiblity of their allotted status. Victor relates how a disorderly male audience member accosted the actress Miss Bellamy and followed her backstage as far as her dressing room. Sheridan (then actor-manager) stopped him from following her further. Apparently, he told the man, "I am as good a Gentleman as you are" (1: 98). This remark so incensed the patron that he raised a supportive party against the "scoundrel Player," preventing Sheridan from performing by shouting him down every time he came on stage. In response to this group's behaviour, another member of the audience, "a CITIZEN, then well known for his Struggles for Liberty in the City" (1: 113), observed that the "Actors . . . were the Servants of the Audience, and under their Protection during that Performance, and he looked upon every Insult or Interruption given to them in the Discharge of their Duty, as offered to the Audience" (1: 114). The citizen's argument carried the majority vote, and the actor was allowed to continue. Perhaps the playwright of <u>The Critick Anticipated</u> used Sheridan's "I am . . . a gentleman" remark as reference, when he characterized him as Old Psalter, who is allowed to regain his status as a gentleman once he retires from acting.[21]

Two playwrights, who were also actresses, mention ways in which the managers ensured that the players' theatrical status remained inferior. In <u>The Art of Management</u> (1735) by Charlotte Charke, the player characters are either fired, as in the case of Mrs Tragic (played in the original production by Mrs Charke herself), or kept subservient by low wages. When an actress arrives from the "other house," where she could not come to a salary agreement, the manager Brainless refuses to hire her. He tells her, "we are resolved to bring all our five Pounders down to Twenty Shillings, for I don't think any Actress worth more" (25); yet he is willing to pay two Merry Andrews three pounds a week each. Charke uses her

own experience for her play; she was fired from the Drury Lane company "on the grounds of immorality" by the manager Fleetwood, whom she characterizes with Charles Macklin as the managers Brainless and Bloodbolt (Cotton 174). Kitty Clive's character in Bays in Petticoats, as we have seen, is forced to take a role she has not read, just because the amateur playwright desired the manager to "take her in hand" (1.1).

Both playwrights doubtless had a personal interest in their characters' arguments about a player's inferior theatrical status, because of their position as players. Certainly their non-dramatic writing supports their claims. Kitty Clive was at the centre of the 1736 newspaper coverage when she lost the role of Polly in The Beggar's Opera to Susannah Cibber. Her letter in the London Daily Post of 19 November 1736 justifies her position in refusing what she saw as a demotion to Lucy, citing "a receiv'd Maxim in the Theatre, *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*" (italics in original). She adds that "if Mr. Fletewood thinks fit to new-cast the Beggar's Opera, to give Polly from me to Mrs. Cibber, and force me into that of Lucy . . . I cannot, without incurring the Penalty of my Articles, refuse to acquiesce, and must therefore abide by it" (qtd. in Milhous & Hume Document Register #4025). Thirty-two years later, the playwright of The Managers shows how the actor Popper is forced to submit, in like manner, to the manager Coley, when he is told to surrender the part of Major Oakly to fellow actor Bates or "be banished from these Territories" (8). Charlotte Charke admits in her Narrative that she departed precipitously from the theatre, "without the least Patience or Consideration" (62), after a disagreement with the manager over parts. She was "provoked to write a Farce" (The Art of Management) partly to make Fleetwood look ridiculous, "because he broke his Word with [her]" (62), and partly because "busy Medlars . . . thought it worth while, by villainous Falshoods, to blow the Spark of Fire between Mr. Fletewood and myself into a barbarous Blaze" (62). However ill she thought Fleetwood had used her, she "used [her]self much worse in the Main by leaving him" (62). Regardless of how they perceived their own status, all players were legally and theatrically bound by their agreements with their managers. We might have fewer players' protestations to the public as documentary evidence if the managers had felt themselves equally bound to the players' articles, and paid them the salaries to which they had agreed.

Players, in general, did not share theatrical status with managers or playwrights, or even, laterally, with each other. They were, as "Mr. Neither-side" says in the pamphlet "An Impartial Examen," "a people from the highest to the

Lowest." The top-salaried London players appear to have been at the highest end of the scale, with the poorly-paid strollers who were not fixed with any particular company at the lowest.[22] Thomas Holcroft, who was a strolling player during the last half of the eighteenth century, describes the theatrical hierarchy within a strolling company:

> A company of travelling comedians is a small kingdom of which the manager is the monarch. Their code of laws seems to have existed with few material variations since the days of Shakespeare, who is, with great reason, the god of their idolatry. The person who is rich enough to furnish a wardrobe and scenes, commences manager and has his privileges accordingly . . . four 'dead shares' in payment for the use of his dresses and scenes. (Life of Thomas Holcroft 1: 288)

We have seen that those managers who are "rich enough" are not always willing to give players their due remuneration; they are apparently even less willing to pay what appears to be a substantial difference between what a London player expects and what a stroller might receive. As the strollers and provincial companies usually used dramatic material that had first been produced in London, the majority of playwrights would have had little compunction about criticizing provincial managers, on whom they were less or not at all dependent. Mist, in Frederick Reynolds' Management (1799), prefers to hire Harlequin because he is cheaper than a London player: "only twelve shillings a week, and fare of slow waggon -- whereas these London gentlemen, with their ten pounds a night and post chaises and four . . ." (14). Sylvester Daggerwood, the stroller in George Colman the Younger's New Hay at the Old Market (1795), tells Fustian of his life in the Dunstable company, "where I have eight shillings a week, four bits of candle, one wife, three shirts, and nine children" (Scene 1).[23] If his list of possessions is indicative of his priorities, this stroller's pecuniary situation is uppermost in his mind.

The lack of any horizontal structure in the assiduous hierarchy of players can be more particularly defined. In the patent theatres in the provinces even senior acting members were lowered in status when a visiting player from London joined their company. John Jackson in A History of the Scottish Stage, published in 1793, records how such an arrival upsets the casting of plays at the Theatre Royal in Edinburgh:

> For these ten years it has been declared and an avowed rule of this Theatre, that when a performer of supposed superior merit makes his appearance, those in his line are to give way; a general

> alteration in the cast of characters consequently takes place, according to the situation of the company; and however an individual performer may be displeased at the change, his feelings must necessarily yield to the accommodation of the whole. (qtd. in Burge 88)

Jackson's use of the word "supposed" in reference to the "superior merit" of the visiting player suggests that not everyone in the provincial theatre circuit thought the players from London deserved their elevated status. While the playwrights make no direct connection between status, salary, and merit in their plays, eighteenth century society appears to have endorsed the maxim that salary denoted merit, or that the higher-paid London players were better at their craft than the lower-paid country players. William Templeton, in The Strolling Player, puts it to the test on his arrival in London: "I anxiously looked for that pre-eminence which is thought to distinguish the town from the country performers; but saw it only in a few. . ." (3: 37). Naturally, Templeton's findings are biased because of his own status, but his eagerness to discover whether the London players were better actors than the lowly strollers is evidence that a perceived merit differential existed.

The playwrights suggest that the higher the players' theatrical status, the more regard was taken of their feelings and the more privileges they were allowed. One such privilege allows named player characters to defy or argue with the amateur playwrights without fear of retribution from audience or manager. In Garrick's The Meeting of the Company, Weston, the celebrated comedian, is left to compete with Bayes after all the other players, including Parsons and Hurst, have capered off according to Bayes' instructions. Bayes tells Weston to "mind and caper in again." Weston returns but refuses to caper, infuriating Bayes:

> **BAYES.** You won't caper anymore? But I'll make you caper, and to some tune. Where's the manager?
> **WESTON.** You had better keep your passion for your next tragedy. It is thrown away upon me. I'll caper no more, I tell you. (249)

When Bayes retorts that he will appeal to the public, Weston follows suit. Weston mimics Bayes, turns his arguments against him, and eventually walks out, leaving the audience with this warning: "if you will not drive such a little blockhead [Bayes] from the stage, you will not have a single author of merit to write for you" (250). Bayes's final curse against the players and the theatre ends the piece, so Weston is not seen to be punished for his behaviour. The freedom that named players take with playwrights of Bayes's quality seems to be one of the few perquisites their celebrated

status allows them.[24]

The playwrights demonstrate a range of reactions when playwrights and managers have to deal with subordinate players. Such variety offers a wealth of information about the players' company status, as well as an array of possible performance interpretations. We have seen how Sheridan's Puff responds to the supporting actress in the role of the Confidant, when she asks how to get off at the end of her scene: "You, pshaw! what the devil signifies how you get off! Edge away at the top, or where you will -- [Pushes the confidant off.] Now ma'am," he continues, immediately turning his attention to the leading lady (The Critic 2.2). In Fielding's Pasquin, the newly-cast player dares not "go into the Green-room" because, he explains, "my salary is not high enough: I shall be forfeited if I go in there" (1.1). In Foote's Tragedy A-La-Mode, the Prompter tells Project that the actress Mrs Storm "begs to be excus'd" from playing on the "Monday after . . . for as she intends to be sick that day, it will be dangerous to come out of doors" (Wilkinson, Wandering Patentee 1: 287). Project's response is to punish the players at the lower end of the salary scale. He tells the Prompter to "post an order in the Green-Room, that no person under three pounds a week, shall presume to be sick upon any account for the future" (Wilkinson 1: 288).[25] The 1758 second act of Foote's The Diversions of the Morning contains a scene in which the manager Puzzle instructs the players in the "rules for the proper expression of the passions" (Wilkinson 4: 244). At one point, Puzzle gives the instruction, "Drop your jaw a little lower. -- [One of the players extends his mouth very wide.] -- Zounds!" exclaims Puzzle, "I must raise that man's salary to stop his mouth" (Wilkinson 4: 244). Perhaps a better-paid actor would not need to pull faces to gain attention; or perhaps he would simply feel more relaxed. Whatever the reason behind Puzzle's remark, it offers further evidence of a connection between salary and merit. While a player's reputation might have had some bearing on his or her salary, the combination of reputation and size of role (which we now use to negotiate an actor's pay above scale) was not as great a consideration in the eighteenth century as the amount of work demanded; indeed, there was neither a basic salary scale nor a players' association to negotiate one for them.[26] The established hierarchy between players was often as inequitable as that between them and their managers.

The social stigma attached to the profession, although it touched managers as well, separated them from players, regardless of the class into which they were born, and players from most members of the general public.[27] The playwrights' presentation of the master/servant relationships

was upheld rather than challenged by the public. One writer goes so far as to declare, in The Players Scourge (1757), that "Play-actors are the most profligate wretches, and the vilest vermine, that hell ever vomited out. . ." (qtd. in Highfill, "Performers and Performing" 144). But the players also had their advocates. The author of an essay in the Grubstreet Journal proposes "that actors be put on a footing in Reputation with all other Professors of the liberal Arts; so that even an unsuccessful Attempt to please upon the Stage, shall not in the least disqualify any Person for any genteel Employment; no, not for the Gown" (qtd. in Wilson 155). Eighteenth-century playwrights, however, are more prudent than writers of historical surveys; they reveal that their society's reaction to the player's inferior social status was not a question of general condition but of individual degree.

In James Miller's The Coffee House (1738), the gentleman, Puzzle, hears that the writer, Bays, is expecting the actor, (Theophilus) Cibber, to come and listen to his new tragedy in the Widow's coffee-room. Puzzle's response reminds us of earlier Puritan attitudes to the player's social status:

> Sir, I beg you'll give me leave. I hope you don't think I'll be in a Room with a common Player of Interludes. I keep no such profane Company. Here's for my Dish of coffee.-- Unless, Widow, you forbid those Players your House, I shall be forc'd to forsake it. (Scene 2)

We have seen the conditions for the restoration of Old Psalter's status as gentleman in The Critick Anticipated (1779). And, even though Lady Amaranth, in Wild Oats (1791), is willing to give Rover her patronage, she still considers him to be a "profane stage player" (24), that is, until the moment his social status supersedes his theatrical one. Throughout the century, it seems, people who became players found themselves in some degree socially disgraced, no matter what their origins. O'Keeffe also shows that it is necessary for gentlemen-strollers (by which I mean those who are born gentlemen and turn player for other than financial reasons) to renounce their professional acting careers in order to be reinstated as acceptable members of their families. Horace in A Beggar on Horseback and Harry in Wild Oats differ from their fellow strollers, because they do not take the profession seriously, unlike the family of Barnavags in the former play who have no resources other than their talent. Harry, who joined "the players" when he left the sea, is willing to "throw off the player" because he regrets having upset his father, Sir George Thunder: "'twas bad of me to give the gay old fellow any cause of uneasiness" (12). Horace, on the other hand, is angered by his Uncle Codger's

attitude to what Horace considers was a frolick--he disguised himself as Mr Tinsel and played "Captain Plume in the barn." He uses the profession to retaliate against Codger, when he declares, "by heavens I'll go on the stage and disgrace your family -- I'll turn player" (437).

The players' profession was comparable to other occupations that were situated at the lower end of the eighteenth-century social scale. Their status was similar to that of artisans or journeymen or even, in some cases, agricultural labourers.[28] They might have played lords and ladies, even kings and queens, on stage, but they were not accepted as such in society, not even when, as some playwrights suggest, they showed characteristics associated with a higher station in life. Sir John Hill, in his revised version of The Actor, refuses to grant Garrick, who reached the pinnacle of theatrical and financial success as an actor-manager, a social status above that of player: "[he] is not at all truly the gentleman upon the stage," because "the players are copiers of nature, and we have few originals" (1755, 71). The unusual gentility with which O'Keeffe endows Rover, in Wild Oats, is eventually clarified with the revelation of his birthright. Harry says of him: "In this forlorn stroller, I have discovered qualities that honour human nature, and accomplishments that might grace a prince" (12). If Rover did not initially meet an audience's expectation, because he is not the Sylvester Daggerwood stroller type, his status as Harry's half-brother would have satisfied them. The author of The Sentimental Spouter (1774) finds fault even with Shakespeare's characterization of Hamlet: "His directions given to a player, in the stile [sic] of an adept in the profession, seem to be not all in the character of a prince" (57-8). He adds, "It were to be wished, that Mr. Garrick, who, by his judicious alteration of Romeo and Juliet, the Gamesters, &c. shews himself to be a perfect master of what regards the dramatic construction of a fable, would take this piece in hand. . ." (58). During an age in which external signs served as indicators of reality, playwrights who mixed degrees of status in their characters could expect their audiences to charge them with indecorous characterization.

The playwrights imply that the public reputation of the players was affected by the status of the roles they performed; managers were obviously not in that danger. They also suggest that a player's private character could be in jeopardy for the same reason. Such affectation is what Truncheon is accused of when, in The Stage Mutineers, he refuses to join with Comic and the other mutineers:

> **COMIC.** Truncheon, Pox on him, does he stand out still; I suppose he has been so long an imaginary

> Man of Honour, that he thinks he must be so now in Reality. (Scene 1)

Garrick, responding to criticism of his financial and acting success, uses his social as well as theatrical status to make fun of his reputation in A Peep Behind the Curtain. Two stage sweepers bemoan the fact that the managers are always in a hurry and insist on everyone else hurrying too:

> **FIRST WOMAN.** . . . the housekeeper is grown a little purse-proud. He thinks himself a great actor, forsooth, since he played the Scotch fellow and the fat cook in Queen Mab.
> **SECOND WOMAN.** The Quality spoils him too. Why, woman, he talks to them for the world as if he was a Lord. (Scene 2)

Even though several celebrated players, including Weston, Bannister, and Kitty Clive, made their reputations performing comic lower-class roles, very few player characters take pride in playing anyone with a low social status. It is impossible to know for certain whether the playwrights, who satirize players who refuse a role because of its status, were directly pandering to their audiences or indirectly censuring the players. George Winchester Stone, in his introduction to She Stoops to Conquer, refers to the fact that several players refused their roles in Goldsmith's play because they thought they were too "low" (755).

The playwrights' suggestion that actors' roles could affect their reputation appears to be substantiated by the players themselves. Other evidence suggests that the player's own character could also affect his or her roles. John Hill is convinced that a man can play any character on a scale from high to low, but not the reverse:

> A man who is honest, may act a villain; or one who has the principles of the gentleman about him, may play the peasant or the servant, because this is only condescending to something that is worse than himself, or below himself, but to act an hero requires his rising to something greater: This is not in their power, unless nature have done something towards it . . . it is impossible that he who is of a mean, timid, or grovelling disposition, should ever represent a great character justly. (The Actor 1755, 94)

Fifteen years earlier, Colley Cibber declared that "the private Character of an Actor, will always, more or less, affect his Publick Performance" (Apology 138). The many references to casting in the memoirs, letters, and pleas made to the public by eighteenth-century players document the importance of roles to a player's status; but, as James C.

Burge points out in Lines of Business: "Until mid-century, there is absolutely no evidence that an actor might stipulate for parts or the right to parts." He goes on to say that after "mid-century, there is little evidence to suggest that such stipulation had become a common practice" (84). Burge then refers to the articles of Susannah Cibber and George Anne Bellamy, in which choice of roles was stipulated, as "corroborative evidence to suggest it might have been more commonplace" (84) than existing documentation indicates. I have already mentioned Kitty Clive's protest against being "demoted" to the role of Lucy in The Beggar's Opera, which also indicates that holding parts already performed was a commonplace expectation of the players. Players and playwrights appear to agree about the harm done to players' reputations if they relinquish roles they have already performed.

The eighteenth-century players' reputation, however, was based not solely on the roles they performed, but also on their behaviour and appearance. William Templeton records the receptions given him on his arrival in two different towns. In the first town, he says, "I was welcomed in almost every house with open arms," but "here [in the next town] I was received with a reserve that strongly bordered on suspicion" (2: 56). Templeton's theory, regarding the disparity between the reactions of each town to the players, embodies the townspeople's familiarity with and attitude to the players' legal status, and their reliance on signs to denote a person's character:

> I accounted for it thus -- At the first place the theatre had been of long establishment, and the performers being known, were hailed as old acquaintances, but here the stage was entirely new, and our company being all strangers, and many of them cutting a most woeful appearance, were looked upon only as a superior kind of beggars, that required some watching. (2: 56-7)

Colley Cibber, in his advice to players to acquire reputations based on merit and exemplary behaviour, suggests that, even if social acceptability is a possible reward, upward mobility for the profession is not:

> That, if he excels on the Stage, and is irreproachable in his Personal Morals, and Behaviour, his Profession is so far from being an Impediment, that it will be oftner a just Reason for his being receiv'd among People of condition with Favour. (Apology 52)

But an advertisement for recruits in the London Chronicle, 12-15 October 1765, indicates that an applicant's reputation and appearance were more important than his or her merit:

> Wanted, for a respectable Company of Comedians, several ACTORS and ACTRESSES, of character and address, who can make a genteel appearance in life. The greater encouragement will be given to persons of merit, and the preference to those who are well studied. (qtd in Price, Theatre in the Age of Garrick 177)

In the drama, the playwrights satirize those players who have inflated ideas about their status and abilities, who care more about appearances. The managers, on the other hand, are more concerned with the players' behaviour. Patent, in The Meeting of the Company, offers the following advice to those players who fear damaging criticism in the newspapers:

> If the fools of our profession would have more sensibility upon the stage and less off it, they might strut their hour without fretting. Let 'em never play the fool but when they ought to do it, be as fine gentlemen as they can in their business and never assume the character out of it, and the newspapers won't hurt 'em. . . . (240)

But it is the player Weston who teaches Bayes how to deal with his fellow players. This comic actor appears to have a firm grasp of the reality of his situation. Bayes gathers the actors around him to begin his lecture entitled Bayes's Art of Acting; or, The Worst Equal to the Best:

> **BAYES.** Silence, I beseech you. Who among you is the least fit to be either the hero in a tragedy or fine gentleman in a comedy? Let him come forward. To show the force of my art, I will begin with him first. Not a soul of 'em will stir.
> **WESTON.** Mr. Bayes, put it the other way and ask who is most fit for a hero and fine gentleman and try the effect of it.
> **BAYES.** Thank you. Any gentleman, I say, that is most fit for the character of a hero or fine gentleman may begin the experiment. (They all come forward.)
> **WESTON.** I told you so, Mr. Bayes. All heroes and fine gentlemen. Now, gentlemen, you may go back again, for I'll be the man. I'm not ashamed to own that I am the least fit. (244)

Many actresses, like the actors in Garrick's play, also consider themselves fit only for roles of superior status. Mrs Squeamish in The Stage Mutineers refuses to play the part offered her because it "is so naughty filthy a Part." The Prompter tries to reassure her:

> **PROMPTER.** I have known you, Madam, play a Part

> not much different, as to its real character -- What else is your Cleopatra, Roxana, or Jane-Shore?
> **SQUEAMISH.** Ay, but they were characters in high life; and one wou'd appear in a character in high life, which one wou'd not care to do in low.
> **PLAYER.** Just so it is in the world; People seem to think the Greatness of their character will conceal their private Blemishes.
> **SQUEAMISH.** People who are great have not their Blemishes appear so odious. -- In short, I love a high Life Character, Mr. Prompter, so well, that I positively will not play this. (Scene 1)

When the managers threaten Mrs Squeamish with her articles to make her play the role, she is furious: "Insupportable! Make me Sir? -- I'm ill Sir, I'm indispos'd, and not able Sir, and, and, now I hope you are answer'd" (Scene 1). Whereupon she exits "in a Passion." Another actress, in the introduction to Samuel Foote's The Minor, draws an even finer line between what is and what is not acceptable in a role. The Prompter tells Foote that "Mrs. O-Shochnesy has return'd the part of the bawd; she says she is a gentlewoman, and it would be a reflection on her family to do any such thing . . . If it had been only a whore, says she, I should not have minded it; because no lady need be asham'd of doing that" (10). The author of The Critick Anticipated suggests that it is those players who leave vanity behind, when they leave the theatre building, who are most respected in society:

> Though there is a Vanity required from you on the Stage, without which it would be impossible you should add Grace and Spirit to your characters, either in your Action or Delivery (as, without that Stage Confidence, it would be merely Sermonizing); yet those Men of Sense, who are most respected of the Profession, always leave so disgusting a companion behind them with their quitting the Theatres. (Preface ix)

It appears that the players' theatrical status is based on salary and geographical location, but their reputation is formed by a correlation between their on-stage ability to perform characters of any type, and their off-stage ability to appear nothing like those characters.

It is commonly acknowledged that the players' position in society as well as their working conditions had improved by the end of the century, a situation which owed much to David Garrick's behaviour and popularity on and off stage. As Kahrl and Stone remark in their biography: "During Garrick's lifetime, thanks largely to the success and qualities in his professional and private life, the social

status of the theatrical community improved. . ." (625).[29] The playwrights do not overlook the debt the profession owed "little Davy." In Leonard MacNally's Critic upon Critic (1788), the players are afraid of a management conspiracy against their profession, but Tickler tells them not to fear:

> Our good old friend, the father of the stage, has settled that point -- He stood forth at his own expence, and procured for managers, and players, the privileges of other British subjects, by establishing for them a legal permanent property in the exercise of their profession. (3.1)

The establishment of the theatrical fund gave players the prospect of greater security which, in turn, allowed them a slightly more favourable social status.[30] The playwrights suggest, however, that the degree of amelioration in the players' social and theatrical status was slight.

In the early part of the century, Colley Cibber, commenting on the insulting behaviour of the audiences, declares that "While these sort of real Distresses, on the Stage, are so unavoidable, it is no wonder that young People of Sense (though of low Fortune) should be so rarely found, to supply a Succession of good Actors" (Apology 50). By mid-century, "good Actors" had other "Distresses" with which to contend. The audience's desire for more spectacular entertainments forced the players into competition with rope dancers, Harlequins, and performing animals. This deplorable state of affairs continued throughout the remainder of the century, and was satirized in A Green Room Scene (1795). The actor Peter Anvill is fired for falling down on stage while playing an Elephant. After pleading with his manager, Paramount, his dismissal is reduced to "a temporary degradation"; he is deprived, as we have seen, of his "cast of characters." The manager tells him his new role is to "deliver messages with the best grace you can, upon your hind legs" until such time as "you may so far retrieve your character, as to be reinstated in your dignities, and become a very good lion or bear" (12). George Stayley warns managers that "they are apt to grow giddy with the height" of their position, and "it is not to be wondered at if, booted and spurred [by "flattering sycophants"] they mistake [the performer] for a horse" (Life and Opinions 1: 187).

Actresses also suffered indignities, although the playwrights suggest that the female players' attitudes to their professional status did alter somewhat during the century. In John Dennis's A Plot and No Plot (first performed in 1697), Su Frowzy, performing at the Curtain, admits to being a bawd, but she is proud of her calling. Her response to a derogatory remark from the audience contains a

list of some of the proficiencies required for her profession, skills which could equally apply to the profession of player:

> But does that senseless Puppy know what extraordinary qualities are requir'd to compleat what he is pleas'd to style Bawd? What Parts? What Education? What Discipline? What Observation? What? -- oh a thousand things more than I can think of at present! (Scene 1)

We have seen how Mrs Squeamish in The Stage Mutineers (1733) and Mrs O'Shochnesy in The Minor (1760) refuse to play the part of a bawd. Actresses, however, continued to be plagued by their early acquired reputation, warranted or not, of being 'loose' women (see Straub, Chapter 5 "The Construction of Actresses' Femininity"). William Templeton records how his wife's success on stage, later in the century, was met by the uncalled-for amorous attention of two "bucks," one of whom he had occasion to reprove:

> I observed, that I was far from feeling any offence at his mistake; but rejoiced in the lesson it had afforded him, by which he had learnt, that the votaries of the stage, and virtue, were by no means incompatible. (2: 29)

Even by the end of the century, not all patrons honoured the profession, and theatrical celebrity brought with it no automatic respect for the actor's person.

The increased number of patented theatres throughout the country not only offered the strolling or provincial players more opportunity to practise their profession in improved theatrical conditions, but also gave them a status more comparable with that of London players. One drawback was that more players from the town toured through the provinces and, although working conditions and opportunities had slightly improved during the century, the theatrical hierarchy had not changed. Nor, in spite of some individuals' successes, had the profession yet achieved the social status to which it aspired.

BALANCE OF POWER

The hierarchy, as we have seen, created constant contention in the relationships between managers, players, and their patrons. Any variation, such as the increased power of managers, the vociferous declamations of audiences, or the increased celebrity status of certain players, did not radically change its structure. That is not to say, however, that the relationships were static. The playtexts are

valuable sources of informative commentary, as the playwrights track the see-saw struggle for power between the managers and their players.

The legal constraints under which the profession laboured favoured the managers throughout the century. In the 1740s players could not lawfully act anywhere but with the managers who held a patent or, in some instances, a licence from the Lord Chamberlain. The players who put their signature to The Case of His Majesty's Company of Comedians, &c. in the mid-1730s were afraid that the Bill to restrain the number of playhouses would create a cartel, similar to the one organized during the previous decade between Cibber, Wilks, and Booth at Drury Lane and Rich at Covent Garden (Liesenfeld 172-74). On 2 November 1730, the Lord Chamberlain commanded the managers "not to admit, or receive any Actor, Actress, singer or Dancer into one Company from the other, that have, or has been in the pay or service of either Company without special leave" from him (LC 5/160: 138, qtd. in Milhous and Hume, Document Register #3526). The players were free of such cartels, until the management of Sheridan at Drury Lane and Harris at Covent Garden in 1778, but their places of work were still limited because of the Licensing Act of 1737. Kitty Clive's expostulations to the public in 1743 document the difficulties performers encountered when managements chose not to employ them.[31] Peg Woffington was a member of the Drury Lane company when Garrick began his regime as manager in 1747. Partly because of the break-up of their personal relationship two years earlier and partly because of the enmity between her and three other leading ladies in the company--Kitty Clive, Susannah Cibber, and Hannah Pritchard--Woffington decided to leave after one season. She was hired by Rich at Covent Garden in 1748 (after a brief sojourn in Paris), but when Mrs Cibber joined Rich's company in 1750, Peg had no choice but to return to Dublin (Findlater 84-8). Although Woffington's reasons for changing companies might be regarded as purely personal, her movements show how limited the sources of employment were for players, even celebrated ones, and how reliant they all were on a good working relationship with fellow players and managers alike.

Two plays, at either end of the central period do show, however, that it was possible for players and their managers to have an amicable, if not equitable, relationship. The Manager in the anonymous The Author's Triumph (1737) and Patent in Garrick's The Meeting of the Company (1774) are greeted in a friendly manner by the players of their respective companies, and conversation is not totally dominated by the managers. In the earlier play, the Manager meets his company in a tavern where the players have "Cards

and Dice and Wine before 'em":

> **MANAGER.** So, Lads! -- Hard at it, I see.
> **FIRST PLAYER.** Ay, my Liege, we love to act in Character -- our Business is to Play --
> **MANAGER.** My good Lord Cardinal, leave off your punning.
> **SECOND PLAYER.** Ay, and let's drink -- Here's to our no-no-noble selves. (Scene [1]. "A Tavern")

Two players side with the Manager in his gibes against another two somewhat drunk actors, but they all join together in the Manager's toast: "Success to Farce and Beggary to our Rivals." They agree that poets are useless and that farces are best because, they believe, they can all write them. The Manager subsequently turns down a play presented to him by the author, Dramatick, because it is not a farce. The actual playwright of the piece, however, seems to be more interested in teaching managers their place than in making a case for conviviality between employers and employees. Mecaenas, the author's patron, firmly reminds the Manager of the inferiority of his position, in the theatrical hierarchy, to that of Dramatick. Managers, Mecaenas warns, are in danger of misusing their power: "Your command makes you forget yourselves, and treat Gentlemen, as if they were Players" (Scene [1]). Players, Mecaenas asserts, can be insulted, laughed at, and ignored, merely because of their occupation, and regardless of their individual social class. The manager in the Garrick play thinks otherwise: he suggests that players should behave like gentlemen. But the way in which Garrick presents the character of Weston affirms the players' inequitable situation. Weston tells his fellow player, Parsons, that he uses his personal weakness--his drinking--to score points against those in authority:

> **WESTON.** I live soberly when I am ill in order to get well. And when I am well, I live a little pleasantly to get ill again. There would be no variety without it.
> **PARSONS.** None of your variety for me.
> **WESTON.** Besides, <u>there's a pleasure in being ill which none but actors know</u>.
> **PARSONS.** I don't understand you.
> **WESTON.** It vexes a manager and pays him in kind. I love to pay my debts when I am able. . . .
> (240)

The manager Patent's advice to his players, about how to handle the "chequered" accounts and adverse comments they read about themselves in the newspapers (see above, 94), has intimations of the kind of message an actor-manager in Garrick's position might want to deliver to both ill-behaved players and slanderous critics. Weston's response to Patent is excessively familiar, almost confrontational:

> We'll do our best, General. Good pay and well paid is the nerves of war. Had I the salary of a General, I could command an army as well as the best. (240-41)

Patent is conveniently spared the task of remonstrating when another player character, one Tragic Actor (later identified as Hurst), responds:

> **TRAGIC ACTOR.** With submission, Mr. Weston, what did you mean by saying you could command an army?
> **WESTON.** I meant to say that I could play tragedy as well as the best of you.
> **ALL.** Ha, ha, ha!
> **PATENT.** Well said, Tom. Ha, ha ha! (241)

What might have become an explosive moment between player and manager is defused by Weston's joke against himself. But it is obvious that the players' ammunition lacks the power of the manager's arsenal; their most effective tactics are either retreat or indirect harrassment.

After the Licensing Act of 1737, the player characters are more rebellious and argumentative than they were in earlier plays. This change might have had something to do with the decrease in the number of work-places, which resulted in fewer job opportunities for professional actors and a severely reduced market for the playwrights' merchandise. In the early drama, the managers are mainly concerned with finding ways to lower their players' salaries, while the players concentrate their efforts on finding excuses not to perform for the managers. By 1779, the year of Garrick's death, the player characters are using silence as a way of dealing with those in authority. The playwright of <u>The Critick Anticipated</u> proposes that the change in management at Drury Lane did not change the player/manager relationship; the actors were still "servants," and their employers still wielded the power. The acting manager Lispall is subservient to both Old and Young Psalter (designated in the Dramatis Personae as "Mr. T. Sh-d-n" and "Mr. Br-dl-y Sh-d-n"). The casting and rehearsing of the play are done by the Psalters with Tallow-fat ("Mr. H-r-is"), the manager of the other house, in attendance. Lispall is at least given the chance to soliloquize about the lack of respect he receives, while the other players are grouped together as taciturnly obedient subordinates. It becomes increasingly obvious in the plays, however, that silence is one of the most effective measures the player characters have at their disposal for retaining some dignity in their profession. Old Psalter interrupts the rehearsal of a scene to give the actor playing Dactyl direction:

> Mr. Dactyl, pray, in reading that paragraph, accent emphatically <u>Bum</u>, that the audience may

> feel the jest; and pray avoid that nasal twang you have acquired.-- Why don't you attend my Lectures upon oratory and Elocution? (25)

The actor does not respond but continues with his speech, presumably avoiding his "nasal twang" as Old Psalter does not interrupt him again. This actor is one of the many who appears to do what he is bid without verbal response. Unfortunately, because this piece was never staged, there are no reviews to tell us how much facial and bodily gesture the actual player might have employed in performance.

Because the managers controlled their places of work and their sources of income, the players were given little room for negotiation. Towards the end of the century, actors' concerns about salary pervade the plays. In George Colman the Elder's The Manager in Distress (1780), the player characters are still bound by the agreements made between the patentees of the winter theatres, Covent Garden and Drury Lane, which deny them permission to play for the manager of the Haymarket. Four actresses, uncharacteristically out of play-house dress, make an appearance only to inform the playwright-manager, Dapperwit, that they will not perform; they have "other employment." As one actress tells him, profits are better in the "schools of eloquence," and the trouble much less. The second actress agrees with her: "To be sure; for on the stage we are expected to be ripe in our parts, or to encounter censure and disapprobation; one might as well sing at Sadlers Wells, or ride upon three horses at Astley's" (13). The plays that show managers willing to pay Merry Andrews and animals more than actors confirm her statement. Also, the members of the audience who appear in Colman's play are totally unsympathetic towards the players. Some of them tell the manager that he does not need these particular players, for there are "hundreds of able bodied actors, besides those in the hundreds of Drury" (20); or, they suggest, he could use "paste board figures," which are preferable to live actors and a good substitute for "delinquent performers" (21). In spite of the actresses' desertion, however, it transpires that the members of the company (the leading players Palmer, Bannister, Edwin, Miss Farren, and Mrs Webb named among them) are, in fact, all "drest, sitting ready for the call in the Green Room" (22). This manager is spared embarrassment and financial hardship; but his averted "distress" alerts us to the possibility that the balance of power between managers and players could tip in either's favour.

The playwrights of two other later plays, The Critick Anticipated and Coalition, a Farce (both published in 1779), criticize the managers of the patent theatres on behalf of the players. Their player characters have very little power

against the managers of their respective companies, let alone against a combination from both patented theatres. In The Critick Anticipated, during the casting of roles, Young Psalter suggests that "B-f-dn will do for Dactyl" in his production, but Tallowfat tells him that "He belongs to my House -- he shan't play here" (24). "Very well," Young Psalter concurs. The author of Coalition, a Farce uses Thomas and R. B. Sheridan, as well as Harris, in a derogatory way as the Brainsleys, Senior and Junior, and Harras. These three have devised a plan to supply players from their two companies to support another company in Dublin. The players are not to be given a choice about going to Ireland. As Harras says, "No matter what they say, they can do nothing. We need only persevere, and they must comply, stroll, or starve. I am determined never to engage any performer who refuses your terms; and I expect you will reject every performer who refuses what I offer. . ." (16). Brainsley Senior sees the project as the perfect opportunity for him to continue performing his most celebrated roles. He tells Tickler how such "a theatrical campaign" would be supported:

> **BRAINSLEY SEN.** Just as they support campaigns in America,-- by drafts. The performers in Dublin were to have been discarded, men, women, and children. The theatre to be supplied by detachments from London, and now and then I would have poped [sic] over myself to give them Essex, Lord Townley, and Sir Charles Easy.
> **TICKLER.** You mean Father Townley, and Sir Charles Stiff. (aside.) . . .
> **BRAINSLEY SEN.** And would with the assistance of my Art of Speaking, and Essay on Elocution, have tended much to the improvement of the English language in that country. (28-9)

Even though the dramatists' tone in these plays reveals their sympathy for the actors, the player/manager relationship certainly does not favour them.

Harsh criticism of managers often appeared in the press and in plays that were never produced; neither Garrick, nor Sheridan, nor Colman was spared. Yet the plays are rarely derogatory about the acting of actor-managers, or the drama of playwright-managers. An anonymous play, Precious Relics; or the Tragedy of Vortigern Rehearsed, written in 1796 and later attributed to Wally Chamberlaine Oulton (Smith and Lawhon 118), reduces the celebrated status of acting-manager John Philip Kemble, by portraying him in an undignified role, while simultaneously criticizing William Henry Ireland's play Vortigern. Oulton's piece is ambiguous in its advertising; the title's qualification, "As performed at the Theatre-Royal, Drury-Lane," might refer to either play. Precious Relics was never produced. Ireland's forgery of an

they care about or consider themselves part of the theatrical profession. The playwrights show that the respectability, so sought after by the players in their theatrical relationship with the managers, as well as in their social status, is as elusive as ever for the majority of them. (Garrick managed to achieve it, to a certain extent, in his dual role as player and manager.) The playwrights were obviously not willing to admit in the work which they produced for the public, written or performed, that the players might have gained even a little ground in their continual battle for higher social recognition, and they would have wanted to flatter the audience by showing that players were their inferiors. The playwrights tell us, even if the historians do not, that the players always had the scales tipped against them by managers, audiences and playwrights alike in their struggle for a balance in power.

The plays examined in this chapter have, for the most part, faded from view. Many of them were never intended for the stage, many never passed the scrutiny of the managers to reach the players, and very few of those that were produced in the eighteenth century (to little or great acclaim) are currently performed. But from their literary residue, with the additional corroboration of non-dramatic evidence, a more dynamic image of what the daily backstage working relationship between the players and their managers must have been like emerges.

NOTES

[1] For a full account of the player's legal status in the eighteenth century, see Watson Nicholson's The Struggle for a Free Stage in London, Allardyce Nicoll's A History of Early Eighteenth-Century Drama 1700-1750 and Late Eighteenth-Century Drama 1750-1800, L. W. Conolly's The Censorship of English Drama 1737-1824, and Vincent J. Liesenfeld's The Licensing Act of 1737.

[2] See Sybil Rosenfeld's Strolling Players and Drama in the Provinces 1660-1765 for a thorough account of the life of strollers.

[3] Such records include William Templeton's The Strolling Player (1802), Charlotte Charke's Narrative (1755), and Edward Cape Everard's Memoirs of an Unfortunate Son of Thespis (1818). A comprehensive bibliography of published accounts by players can be found in Restoration and Georgian England, 1660-1788, edited by David Thomas.

[4] The players who worked in the booths of the London fairs were not as favoured under the law as the players who worked in the theatres, although in several cases they were the same performers. See Sybil Rosenfeld's Theatre of the London Fairs in the Eighteenth Century for an account of the laws and hardships under which these professional players worked.

[5] I would like to thank John Orrell not only for this information but for the other numerous instances when he willingly shared his own research with me.

[6] Fielding satirizes the events that followed the players' 1733 secession led by Theophilus Cibber. After Cibber set up a company in the Little Theatre, Haymarket, with players who had seceeded from Highmore's Drury Lane company, the manager decided to attack the group on the grounds that it had no legal status. Charges of vagrancy were brought against John Mills from the Haymarket and Henry Gifford from Goodman's Fields. Highmore's attempt failed on a legal technicality. Later, however, the actor John Harper of the Haymarket was arrested and committed to Bridewell. The public support raised by Theophilus Cibber might have influenced the court hearing which resulted in Harper's release (Loftis, Politics of Drama 101). See also Hume Henry Fielding and the London Theatre.

[7] See Note 8 (below) and Works Consulted for a list of such documents.

[8] See Fitzgerald's The Life of Mrs. Catherine Clive (30-4). Other accounts of the 1743 secession can be found in Stone & Kahrl's David Garrick, A Critical Biography (62-5); Fitzgerald's A New History of the English Stage (II: 130-34); Cooke's Memoirs of Charles Macklin (133-36); The London Stage (3.1: xciii-xcv); and Milhous and Hume, "The Drury Lane Actors' Rebellion of 1743" and "The London Theatre Cartel of the 1720s."

[9] For the manager Garrick's complaints about his players' conduct, see his Letters (Eds. Little and Kahrl). The following examples are arranged in categorical order, and the numbers refer to the letters:
Players quarrelling over salaries: #410 (to James Love), #507 and #630 (to Spranger Barry), #713-14 (to Thomas and Mrs King), #921 (to Brereton).
Players refusing to perform: #563 (to Spranger Barry about Mrs Barry), #653 (to Samuel Foote about Mrs Baddeley), #884 (to Miss Younge), #893 (to Mrs Abington), #949 (to Richard Yates about Mrs Yates), #969 (to William Smith), #1222 (to Mrs Abington).
Players being indisposed: #890, #893, #894 (to Mrs Abington), #949 (to Richard Yates about Mrs Yates).
Casting problems: #488 (to Mrs Clive), #637 (to Miss Younge), #714 (to Thomas King), #847 and #865 (to Mrs Abington), #938 (to Miss Pope), #949 (to Yates), #956 (to William Siddons), #957 (to Mrs Yates).
Players quitting: #897 (to William Smith), #918 (to Miss Pope) [see #938 on her wanting to be re-hired], #943 (to Samuel Cautherly), #990 (to Mrs Abington), #1323 (to the Performers of Drury Lane about his own quitting).

[10] Other actors' complaints, referred to in Garrick's Letters, include those he received from James Love (#351), Samuel Cautherly (#803 and #943), William Brereton (#930), and Richard Yates (#949).

[11] For a full account of the relationship between the Sheridan father and son, see Sheldon's Sheridan of Smock Alley (284-301).

[12] See particularly Kitty Clive's Case . . . Submitted to the Public in Fitzgerald's Life of Mrs Clive (34-9) and Tyranny Triumphant! and Liberty Lost, "Remarks on the Famous Cartel" (London 1743).

[13] See Fitzgerald's account in A New History of the English Stage (317-19).

[14] Apparently ". . . in the season of 1713-14, when the Lord Chamberlain forced the Drury Lane managers to take Barton Booth in as a partner[,] Thomas Doggett thereupon stormed out and sued Robert Wilks and Colley Cibber, his erstwhile fellow triumvirs" (Milhous and Hume, "Memos to the Treasurer at Drury Lane" 17).

[15] For Garrick's correspondence with Murphy, see Little and Kahrl, Letters, particularly #434, #490, #491, #609, #615, #679, #735-737. Other letters from Garrick to playwrights about their work can be found in the Forster Collection, several of which are quoted in MacMillan's "David Garrick, Manager" (635-36); also in James Boaden's edited collection The Private Correspondence of David Garrick with the most Celebrated Persons of his Time (London, 1831); and several quoted in MacMillan's "David Garrick as Critic" (75-81).

[16] There are, of course, references to personal injustices, as well as to the most aggravating conflicts, such as the cartels set up by the managers and the actors' rebellions against their managers during the century which, along with the Licensing Act of 1737, affected the profession as a whole, giving rise to public as well as private outcry.

[17] See Milhous and Hume, "The Silencing of Drury Lane in 1709" and "The London Theatre Cartel of the 1720s" 24; also Thomas 26-28.

[18] That between Kitty Clive and Susannah Cibber regarding the role of Polly in The Beggar's Opera is one of the most well-known examples of a player's dispute over possession of parts. Mrs Clive's comments are recorded later in this chapter; see also Burge (81, 84) and Holbrook (32).

[19] David Garrick's entry into Drury Lane was relatively easy because the "actor closest to Garrick's 'line' was William Milward, who conveniently died in February 1742" (Milhous and Hume, "David Garrick and Box Office Receipts at Drury Lane" 337).

[20] See Charlotte Charke's A Narrative of the life of Mrs Charlotte Charke (1755), and articles by Norma Hodgson and J. S. Bratton on Sarah Baker, who was a very successful proprietor of a theatrical circuit in Kent.

[21] See also Straub 154.

[22] Compare, at one end, David Garrick, whose will listed valuable real estate holdings, an extensive library, investments, and legacies amounting to nearly £50,000 (Stone

and Kahrl, David Garrick 674-77), with the lowly stroller at the other, whose property amounted to nothing but the rags on his back (Oliver Goldsmith, "The Adventures of a Strolling Player"). For a discussion of players' salary scales, see Milhous and Hume "John Rich's Covent Garden Account Books for 1735-36."

[23] The many memoirs and accounts of the strolling player's life give detailed accounts of how much a stroller could make, from 3d. a share for one or more performances to as much as 18s. a week. Sybil Rosenfeld gives a list of the main primary source materials in Strolling Players and Drama in the Provinces 1660-1765 (11-12); see "Works Consulted" for other sources. For accounts of the salaries paid to London players, see the Introductions (Volume 1) to The London Stage Parts 3, 4, and 5. The Historical Chronicle, November 1743, compares Wilkes's and Mrs Oldfield's salaries of 1708-9 to those of Garrick, Mrs Woffington, and Mrs Clive in 1743. Several players objected to the account and, in the same paper, published a new account comparing 1729 with 1743 as, according to the contributor, 1708-9 was a bad year for the theatres (Theatrical Register 1743-45, The Burney Collection in the British Library); see also Milhous and Hume, "The Drury Lane Actors' Rebellion of 1743" 66-75.

[24] Bayes, the playwright, meets player characters in James Miller's The Coffee House (originally performed by Charles Macklin in 1738) and in David Garrick's The Meeting of the Company (originally performed by Thomas King in 1774). Kitty Clive used the name for the title of her play The Rehearsal; or, Bayes in Petticoats even though her playwright was called Mrs Hazard (originally played by Mrs Clive in 1750). As we can see, these amateur playwright characters were not cast without due consideration; they were played by three of the most reputable performers of the eighteenth century.

[25] See Milhous and Hume, "The Silencing of Drury Lane in 1709" 432-34, for an account of the punitive measures taken against those with lower wages, that is, Rich's tax on the benefits for all players (£40 house expenses), plus 1/3 or 1/4 of takings for those players earning less than £4 per week.

[26] Judith Milhous suggests that reputation was not the only factor. Comedians, for instance, had fewer lines than tragedians and this could affect their work load and, consequently, their salary scale (correspondence, 1 December 1995).

[27] For a brief account of players' class backgrounds, see Highfill, "Performers and Performing," in Hume, London Theatre World 147-50.

[28] See the first chapter of J. H. Plumb's England in the Eighteenth Century for an account of the social scale of period.

[29] For an account of the players' continual struggle to gain social acceptance for their profession, a struggle which was also dependent on the gender of the player, see Straub 10-16, 30, 37, and 152-161.

[30] See H. B. Baker (119) and Everard (32) on Garrick's involvement with the theatrical fund.

[31] For a full account of the players' rebellion, see Milhous and Hume "The Drury Lane Actors' Rebellion of 1743."

CHAPTER 3

THE PLAYER'S THEATRES

> **Mrs Hazard.** Well, Witling, how do you like the Play-house in a Morning?
> **Witling.** Why, I think 'tis like a fine Lady: it looks best by Candle-light.
> (Bays in Petticoats Act 2)

Witling's comment probably expresses the sentiment of many eighteenth-century theatre-goers. Sylas Neville, for instance, thought that the playhouse in Norwich in 1772 was "certainly a very odd thing when seen by day, with its strange machinery behind the scenes & under the stage. . ." (176). Samuel Johnson was not one to be taken in by a candlelit illusion. In his Preface to The Plays of William Shakespeare, he states: "The truth is, that the spectators are always in their senses, and know, from the first act to the last, that the stage is only a stage, and that the players are only players" (1073). William Angus also points out that the playgoer "knew the players too well, in their private lives, to regard the action presented to him on the stage as occurring in a world of its own, detached and distinct from his world in the auditorium" (137).

My argument thus far, that the eighteenth-century theatres seemed to belong least of all to the players, makes the title of this chapter rather ironic. The playwrights who use theatre as their mise en scène tend to confirm the irony. As there were few London theatres, most of the eighteenth-century playwrights would have had a clear visual image of both the players and the spaces for which their work was intended. Even those who wrote only for publication would probably also have been theatre-goers. Some of them published their work because of an unsuccessful production; they often blamed the players for a failure, rarely the theatrical space. The playwrights focus less on the architecture or the technical equipment of the theatres, and more on the territorial rights of those who use the various areas. The value of the plays consulted in this chapter (the theatre plays) lies not in the sparse information they provide about the appearance of the buildings from the theatre-goers' point of view, but in what they reveal about their operation from the professional practitioners' point of view.

The two most popular plays to be set in a theatre were produced at either end of the central time period: Fielding's

The Historical Register (1737) and Sheridan's The Critic (1779). Unlike Sheridan's play, in which the playhouse setting does not appear until the second act, Fielding's is set entirely on the stage of the Haymarket Theatre. It was obviously appropriate for what became known as rehearsal plays to be set on a stage, because the audience's position in the auditorium would not have interfered with the illusion of a rehearsal. They could compare the actual performers' ability with that of the player characters, and their own critical faculty with that of the on-stage audience. The playwrights could use the visitor characters not only to comment on their authors, their work, the actors, and the rehearsal process, but also to criticize members of the actual audience. Most playwrights, therefore, set the action of their rehearsal plays on the stage; these include The Mad-House (1737), Bays in Petticoats (1750), The Snake in the Grass (1760), Music Alamode (1764), A Peep Behind the Curtain (1767), and The Meeting of the Company (1774). The Critick Anticipated (1779) is also a rehearsal play, but its setting is a green room, as is that of A Dialogue in the Green-Room (1763). George Colman the Elder sets his prelude New Brooms! (1776) in a "Playhouse Passage." The other plays use both green room and stage as settings in which playwrights, players, and patrons can appropriately meet.

The dramatists seem to be particularly interested in the subject of territorial hierarchy. Each area of the theatre had a conventional use for a particular group of people: the stage for players, playwrights, and technicians to perform and rehearse; the green room for players and playwrights to read plays, wait for calls, and practise roles; the dressing rooms for players and their dressers to prepare for a performance. The playwrights, however, often use such conventions in unexpected ways, alerting us to a sub-text. One of the main points the playwrights make is that the actors, particularly those characters that are named, need to meet the audience's expectations of their work if the plays are to succeed. This is not surprising, because their as well as the players' reputations depended on the audience's approval.

Costume, particularly in the rehearsal plays, helps signal the way in which the playwrights are utilizing the various theatre spaces. The player characters, who are rehearsing with an author, usually appear in the costumes for their roles in his or her play. We are often told that the players are "dress'd." Even in A Peep Behind the Curtain, in which only one act is to be rehearsed, the Prompter draws attention to the fact that the players are in costume: "'Tis a very extraordinary thing, indeed, to rehearse only one act of a performance, and with dress and decorations as if it were really before an audience" (1.2). The consistency with

which this costume device is employed probably relates to people's reliance in the eighteenth-century on outward appearance as a sign of character.[1] Kitty Clive uses costume in Bays in Petticoats to demonstrate how it pertains to character; she would also have made her audience more aware of her own performance as Mrs Hazard, when she agrees to change into the "absent" Mrs Clive's costume. "I'll slip on the things in a Minute" (Act 2), she tells Witling, the "things" being what Mrs Clive was to wear as the character Marcella in Mrs Hazard's piece. She eventually decides not to "take the Trouble; I'll rehearse as I am" (Act 2). She is, at this point, not only inappropriately dressed for the role, but also, as Clive jokingly suggests to her audience, incapable of performing it.

Many patrons would know, some intimately, about what went on behind the scenes. The plays confirm what documentary evidence tells us: many spectators felt no compunction about wandering around the theatre and visiting the players whenever they wanted, regardless of what might be happening on stage at the time. These patrons' peregrinations obviously served a dramaturgical purpose and might have been more conventional than real, but they were actually somewhat curtailed when, in 1762, Garrick banned audience members from sitting on the stage during performances. In the more rarified theatrical atmosphere of the twentieth century, theatre patrons are usually treated to glimpses backstage only via guided tours organized by management personnel. Eighteenth-century playwrights were not normally employed by theatre management, but they are useful guides because of the lively subjective way in which they provide many significant details about the players in their workplaces.

THE BUILDINGS

The playwrights rarely describe a theatre's structure or the mise en scène in detail, probably because their practitioner's eye, which was used to looking at the inside of a theatre, tended to see only the unfamiliar. They substitute their lack of descriptive material about the theatres' interiors with details about the practical concerns of production. Those that pertain to costume and the technical ability required by the actors to project their voices into the large auditoriums built at the end of the century, stand out.

In 1737, Fielding satirizes not the players' but the audience's vanity in The Historical Register, when Lord

Dapper tells Sourwit that he thinks the Haymarket is "a very bad house":

> **SOURWIT.** It is not indeed so large as the others, but I think one hears better in it.
> **LORD DAPPER.** Pox of hearing, one can't see -- one's self I mean; here are no looking glasses. I love Lincoln's Inn Fields for that reason better than any house in town. (1.1)

The "looking glasses" are not mentioned in The Mad-House, which was also "now acting at the Theatre-Royal in Lincoln's-Inn-Fields" in 1737, but they were, apparently, well-received when they were installed. The Daily Journal, 27 September 1725, states that "The Gilding, Painting Scenes and Columns of Pier Glass, rais'd for the better illuminating the Stage and other Parts of the House, gave a general Surprize and Satisfaction to the Spectators"; and Thomas Davies explains how the stage of Lincoln's Inn Fields was more extended than that of Drury Lane, and was finely decorated with "looking glasses" on both sides (Dramatic Miscellanies 1: 139). The players, in those plays performed at Lincoln's Inn Fields, do not tell us what they thought of them.

Most of the significant structural changes were made to the theatres before 1737 and after 1779, but we would be mistaken if we assumed that the players in the earlier or later texts would be more vociferous about the appearance of their surroundings. Although it lies outside the scope of my study, the Duke of Buckingham's seventeeth-century play, The Rehearsal, is worth mentioning, because it was the forerunner of the rehearsal plays under examination. (It was also performed regularly in theatres other than the one in which it appeared originally until the late 1770s, when, as I mentioned earlier, Sheridan's The Critic superseded it in popularity.) From The Rehearsal we learn something of the condition of the stage at Drury Lane before the changes of 1674, although Bayes's complaint, when he falls while trying to show the actors playing soldiers how to dance, must be qualified by noting that the players do not defend the state of the boards they tread:

> A plague of this damned stage, with your nails and your tenter-hooks, that a gentleman can't come to teach you to act but he must break his nose, and his face, and the devil and all. (2.5)

The reticent player characters do not complain about dancing on grooved stages, from which we might surmise that the dances were staged below the first groove. Nor do they tell us whether the grooves were filled in when the acting area was moved four feet further upstage in 1696. In fact, no player character mentions any of the stage alterations in the

Wren-designed Drury Lane theatre.[2]

Colley Cibber, in his Apology, refers to the "hollow Reverberations of one Word upon another" in Vanbrugh's "stately Theatre in the Hay-Market," a stateliness which, he felt, hindered the "articulate Sounds of a speaking Voice" (173). The actors in the later plays express great concern about the acoustics of their larger theatres; but none makes particular reference to Robert Adam's extensive reconstructions to Drury Lane in 1775, or those of Henry Holland to Covent Garden and Drury Lane in the 1790s. Only two playwrights--George Colman the Younger and James Cobb--mention the renovations to the theatres at all. The larger theatres must have affected the performance conditions for players; for instance, as Shearer West points out, the early images of Kemble as the dignified, noble, and static tragedian are belied by those later in the century. Referring to such images, with accompanying criticisms of Kemble's ranting and "running too much about the stage" (qtd. in West 76), West concludes that "the evidence suggests that Kemble's style changed at some stage during his career, most likely in the 1790s, and convincing arguments have been made for the fact that the new larger stages at both Drury Lane and Covent Garden were partly responsible for this transformation" (76-77).

While Henry Holland's new theatre was being built on the Drury Lane site between 1791 and 1794, the Theatre Royal company played in the King's Theatre, as well as in the Little Theatre in the Haymarket (Smith and Lawhon 192). The King's Theatre was Vanbrugh's opera house, to which Colley Cibber referred and which was originally known as the Queen's Theatre (Thomas 55). The company's move inspired Colman the Younger's and Cobb's preludes, which comment on the differences between the two Haymarket theatres and the old Drury Lane one. Colman's Poor Old Hay-Market (1792) was produced at the Little, and Cobb's Poor Old Drury! (1791) was performed at the King's Theatre. They are both set on their respective stages and comment on the size of the house. By the winter season of 1792-93, all the Drury Lane players would have known these theatres well, because, as the King's produced operas and ballets on Tuesdays and Saturdays, the acting company was obliged to perform across the street in the Little on those days (LS 5.3: 1474-75). The player characters in Poor Old Hay-Market are mostly interested in fine-tuning their performances to the smaller size of the Little, while those in Poor Old Drury! are worried about being heard in the large King's Theatre. Many of the leading performers played themselves in these pieces, but only Palmer in Poor Old Drury! seems to show any concern for the plight of Wrighten, the prompter, who has the responsibility of

making sure all the sets and properties from Drury Lane are conveyed and set up safely in their interim home. The playwrights clearly define the demarcation between what the players felt responsible for--the peak working condition of their voices--and what others were responsible for--the working condition of the stage and other production elements.

The Drury Lane company opened in its new theatre on 12 March 1794. Colman the Younger's New Hay at the Old Market opened in June of the following year. This prelude compares the immense size of the new Drury Lane with the more intimate Haymarket theatre, in which it is set. The audience probably would have agreed with the reaction of a cleaning lady character to Drury Lane's size, when she says that the actors on the stage cannot now be seen clearly from the gallery. The actors' feelings were obviously similar; Bannister declares on his entrance:

> . . . . well here we are in the old little shop again! Gad I feel like a giant, here, in Lilliput, after the huge Brobdignag [sic] boards of old Drury. (Scene 2)

Although Bannister says "old Drury," he would be referring to the new theatre (with its capacity of approximately 3,600). Covent Garden is not used as a setting, either before or after it was rebuilt in 1792. Not everyone, as we have seen, thought the facilities of "new Drury" were an improvement. In his Wandering Patentee (1795), Tate Wilkinson bemoans the lack of attention given to the areas behind the scenes:

> For all the elegancies before the curtain, I could not perceive the stage department, as to green-room, dressing-rooms, &c. were nearly so convenient, or even so comfortable as those of the Old Drury Lane. (4: 161)

Wilkinson's is the perennial cry of those who work backstage; and his observation confirms my point about the theatrical hierarchy favouring the patrons at every level. Considering how anxious the players are about being seen and heard, we should not be surprised that the playwrights, who are able to use the presence of actual players to emphasize their points, refer to the size rather than the appearance of the new theatre. Such "elegancies before the curtain" cannot, after all, assist the ultimate quality of the players' performance.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Tate Wilkinson's perception of the inequality in the auditorium and back-stage areas touches on the disparity in status between audience and player, as well as that between

players. Access to a green room, as we saw for the young actor in Fielding's Pasquin (see Managers 89), might be restricted for some players, but the playwrights make it clear that visitors are at liberty to enter, talk to the actors and actresses, and obtain refreshment. Wilkinson refers to dressing rooms as being convenient and comfortable areas for those behind the scenes; yet they were also a source of irritation for managers and players, possibly due to the increased symbolic meaning these rooms acquired over the century. None of the playwrights use them as a setting.

Dressing rooms, and the perquisites or negotiated articles that went with them such as personal dressers, coal (if the room had a fire-place) and candles, became a measure of a player's status within the company's ranks. George Colman, in his defence of his management of Covent Garden entitled A True State of the Differences subsisting between the Proprietors of Covent-Garden Theatre (1768), comments on the Miss Lessingham affair, which included the issue of the allocation of dressing-rooms. Harris had wanted Miss Lessingham to play Imogen in Cymbeline, but Colman had already cast Miss Ward. Colman then gave the part to Mrs Yates when she joined the company. Colman explains that he had left "the care of dressing-rooms, ward-robe, &c." to Mr and Mrs Powell, which resulted in Miss Lessingham's complaint that she had been "assigned a dressing-room up stairs" (19). The other managers, Harris and Rutherford, apparently managed to make matters worse, because when "the management of Mrs Lessingham's dressing-room was taken into consideration by Mr. Harris, his friend Mr. Rutherford took upon him to promise a separate dressing-room for Mrs. Bellamy. Mr. and Mrs. Powell remonstrated concerning the great want of room behind the scenes to no purpose" (20). To be given an individual dressing room was to be given a higher status in a company. Sheridan made notes in his Memorandum Book (possibly dated September 1777) on the subject of dressing rooms at Drury Lane:

> The Number of Performers being reduced--the Number of Rooms and Dressers ought to be reduced also. On representing this to [the Housekeeper] Kirk (whose province it is) he said they had been exceedingly distressed last Year, by our taking away the two Rooms for Mr. Giles and that he had been obliged to let People dress in his own Room:--I have this Year taken away another Room adjoining to the property Room, which it is hoped has made that department convenient.
> There are 20 Dressing Rooms (besides the shifting Room) a Dresser is allotted to each. . . .
> (Price, Letters 1: 111)

Cecil Price's editorial note informs us that Drury Lane

theatre had 48 actors, 37 actresses, 18 adult and 2 child dancers in the company during that season. The "shifting Room" was used "for group dressing (and may have been the Wardrobe)" (Milhous, correspondence 1 December 1995). A separate dressing room even without a dresser would have been a perquisite under such conditions, although no player who was allotted his or her own dressing room would have been denied a dresser.

The playwrights, with one exception, do not refer to these rooms. Tom Friendly, the author in Baker's The Mad-House, mentions *the* dressing room as if there were only one. After he has distributed the parts among the players, Friendly tells them to go "to the Dressing-room all, and be ready against the Curtain draws" (9). William Templeton, the strolling player, confirms such definition when he describes how, on arrival at a theatre the day of a performance, the first thing he did was to go to "the" dressing room and either be given or have to find a costume for his role (2: 12, 3: 48). In his Memoirs of George Frederick Cooke, William Dunlop also describes conditions for strollers, in a make-shift dressing room in an inn:

> We dressed, male and female, in one room; the dressing room was at the audience end of the house, and we had to pass through them to reach the stage, which was no higher than the floor, the whole being a large room in a public house.
> (qtd. in F. T. Wood, "Strolling Actors" 42)

William Hogarth's image of the "Actresses in a Barn" reveals an even grimmer picture. Some of the dressing rooms in the London theatres, however cramped, were at least heated.[3] There are many references in contemporary documents, such as bills, memorandums, and correspondence between players and their managers, to the condition and quality of dressing rooms;[4] but the player characters, who are intensely vocal on most matters that bring them, purposely or accidently, into conflict with their managers, are remarkably silent on the subject. Perhaps the playwrights deliberately omitted references to them either out of respect for the players' desire to retain some degree of privacy in their workplace, or because their size and visual aspect were too varied; a dressing room as the mise en scène would not have offered an audience a frame of reference as common as the stage or green room. Although the players' dressing rooms were obviously accessible to dressers, fellow players, managers, the occasional author, or visitor from the audience, as well as other members of the theatre staff, by not using them as settings, the playwrights manage to keep them out of public view.

On the other hand, the playwrights reveal that in a theatre's green room the practitioners were as much at the mercy of their public as they were on the stage. O'Keeffe in his Recollections, states that at the end of the century, Drury Lane had its green room "on the opposite side to the royal" box, while that of Covent Garden was "in a similar situation" to that of Crow Street where the entrance to the Viceroy's box "was close to the green-room" so that "the men of fashion used to walk into the green-room, and about and among the actors. . ." (289). The main features of the green room include its positioning in a theatre's design and its use as an area for receiving, meeting, and waiting.[5] Its easy access to and from the stage was a necessary requirement because it was where the players were given their calls during performances and rehearsals.[6] The origin of the word "green room" is unknown, although several theories have been put forward. The most common, if not the most satisfactory, is that found in The Oxford Companion to the Theatre: "It seems probable that the Green Room was so called simply because it was hung or painted in green" (339). The first known reference to the green room appeared in Shadwell's A True Widow, first performed in the 1678-79 season (Oxford Companion 339). W. J. Lawrence purports that the "designation and the place it indicates failed to come into existence together" (152), that the terms "green room" and "scene room" were interchangeable as descriptions of the location until the end of the seventeenth century (154-56). Green seemed to be a theatre colour, with its "green Cloth" on the benches in the "Amphitheatre" (Misson, Memoirs and Observations in his Travels over England qtd. in Leacroft 91), the stage's green baize curtain, and the green carpet laid for death scenes (Odell 402, 413). Even in the 1960s actors still referred to the stage itself as "the green" (and censorship as the Lord Chamberlain's "blue pencil"). The room's appellation, however, gives no indication of its function, unlike the names of nearly all the other areas in the theatre. Dumont, in his plan for Covent Garden, labels the green rooms "Foyer" and "Nouveau Foyer plus commode" (Leacroft 106). Perhaps the many and various uses of the green room, since its emergence, precluded a more practical name.

The green room in the eighteenth century was usually reserved during the day for players, to discuss and rehearse their scenes, their songs, or their dances.[7] When Pistol stops the actress Miss Crotchet in The Stage-Mutineers, she tells him that she is trying to escape from "the confus'd miscellaneous Noise of the Green Room":

> . . . where stern Cato is pouring out Oaths, and Roxana Scraps of Tragedy; where contending Gods are turn'd Bullies, and rival Goddesses into

> Scolds; where Caesar is disputing with Capt. Mackheath, and Cleopatra with Jenny Diver. (16)

This reference to Covent Garden's green room suggests that it was a noisy vibrant place, full of performers in character and costume. As Miss Crotchet describes characters from many different plays, the performers are obviously not rehearsing together for one particular production, but all separately working on their individual roles. Other plays indicate that managers and playwrights conducted rehearsals or readings there in the day-time.

But any player who was in the green room would apparently have to be ready to meet with his or her public at any time, day or night. Even the plays written after 1762 (when Garrick limited the audience's access to behind the scenes) show no radical changes in the way visitors to rehearsals seize an opportunity to meet with the players or to get warm in the green room. Fielding's Lord Dapper, in The Historical Register, considers himself something of a critic because of the use he makes of the space. He tells Sourwit:

> as I am one half of the play in the Green-room talking to the actresses, and the other half in the boxes talking to the women of quality, I have an opportunity of seeing something of the play, and perhaps may be as good a judge as another. (1.1)

While not every member of the audience might have concurred with Lord Dapper's opinion about the requirements for adjudication, Lady Fuz in Garrick's A Peep Behind the Curtain agrees that seeing the players in the green room is a comparatively amusing pastime. When she comes to Drury Lane to watch a rehearsal, she wants the manager to entertain her "with thunder and lightning. And let us see his traps and his whims and harlequin pantomimes" (1.2), she instructs. She wants primarily to see the magic of the theatre: its spectacle and effects. Unfortunately, due to a technical problem, such entertainment is unavailable; so Lady Fuz suggests that she and the other visitors "go into the Green Room then, and see the actors and actresses." (1.2). Garrick guarantees an extra chuckle from his audience when he gives Kitty Clive (in the role of Lady Fuz) the line, "Is Clive there? I should be glad of all things to see that woman off the stage" (1.2). Meeting with players in the green room appears to be of secondary importance to Lady Fuz, as it is for Dapper, Sourwit, and the playwright Medley in The Historical Register. They adjourn to the green room when the actresses fail to appear for rehearsal, because it is "pleasanter than upon this cold stage" (1.1).

Not only is it warmer in the green room than on the unheated stage, but refreshments are available. In Kitty Clive's Bays in Petticoats, when Mrs Hazard decides to assume the role of Marcella, she tells Witling: "Do you go into the Green Room and drink some chocolate . . ." (Act 2), while she gets ready. Poor Witling, however, never gets a chance to drink anything because he is detained by the immediate arrival of other visitors. In Pasquin, the playwrights Fustian and Trapwit, who have been left alone on stage at the end of the first act's rehearsal, head for the green room in search of players and a "dish of tea" (1.1). Later, at the end of Act 4, when it is discovered that a player has "stepped aside on some business," Trapwit, who has been asked to wait for him, has an immediate solution for the imposed delay in his rehearsal: "Come, Fustian, you and I will step into the Green-room, and chat with the actresses meanwhile" (2.1).

The playwrights' image of the green room as the place where authors and visitors socialize with players (particularly actresses), while waiting for the business of a rehearsal on stage to continue, makes us aware that players were just as likely to have their work interrupted off-stage, as we have already seen happen to them on-stage. The besieged players, especially those characterized in the plays written between 1737 and 1779, appear to be powerless to prevent such intrusions or to speak out against them. However, three plays (one early and two late) offer slight variations to the usual portrait of the reticent, subservient player in the green room: De Breval's The Confederates (1717), Charles Stuart's Damnation or the Playhouse hissing hot (1781), and the anonymous, but aptly named The Green Room (1783).

In the second scene of The Confederates, we encounter a very sombre atmosphere in the green room of Drury Lane after an unsuccessful first night. We might expect players to be upset by their public's disapprobation of their efforts, but De Breval suggests that these players are more mercenary than sensitive. In the scene, the playwright John Gay comes to discover what it will take to persuade Mrs Oldfield and Mrs Bicknel to continue to perform in his play Three Hours after Marriage, which has been roundly damned by the audience. Mrs Oldfield hears him coming and refuses to stay and talk to him. Any other visitor might have been welcome, but she is so upset, having been "Mock'd by Spectators, and by Poets crost" (Scene 2), that she cannot face him. Mrs Bicknel remains to inform Gay that they refuse to perform again, unless they are well paid with "guineas" (Scene 2).

Few performers were paid proportionally to the amount of indignity they bore as members of the acting profession, but

what Charles Stuart reveals is that players could not even rely on their fellow thespians to provide them with support in their communal meeting place. In the green-room scene in Damnation we discover several player characters, including one who is not in that evening's performance of Drama's new work. This particular actor has come to warn Drama of his play's impending damnation. He can guarantee its failure, he tells us in an aside, because *he* has no role in it! Infuriatingly, he turns up again in the final scene to gloat after the play has, indeed, failed. Although his presence in the green room confirms Lady Fuz's declaration--"If I was an actress I should never be a moment out of the playhouse" (A Peep Behind the Curtain 1.2)--it is clear that this actor hovers not merely because he loves his profession. While the motives of Stuart's player character appear unduly selfish, the players' constant servitude to managers and public must have been extremely stressful, even though in such a hierarchical society, such conditions would have been expected by the players.

The named players in The Green Room also have to deal with actors who are not awaiting their calls, with the result that they do not have time to prepare for their performance. Bannister Junior, Wilson, and Edwin are entertained in the green room by a French actor who plays Cardinal Wolsey, translating the French as he goes along, and a "red hot Irish Strolling Player," who attempts a rendering of Cato but muddles the lines with those of Hamlet. Bannister can give neither these nor his own imminent performance his full attention because he is nervous for his sister, who is about to make her début. As Wilson and Edwin try to calm Bannister with comments about how generous the Haymarket audience has always been to their family, the bell rings for the play to begin (Larpent MS #635). This anonymous playwright confirms what we have already discovered: the green room area is as full of distractions as the auditorium of a crowded theatre.

ON STAGE

The stage-set rehearsal plays were more popular than those set in the green room. Aware of the audience's penchant for spectacle, the playwrights could offer the numerous changes of scenery, with painted cloths, traps, and sound effects, which Lady Fuz desires. They take care, however, to spare their player characters the onerous task of dealing with matters which had little to do with their own craft. It is the cleaning women, the carpenters, and the visitors who refer to the managers' "traps," "whims," and "pantomimes." Yet the player characters' complete reticence about all things "spectacular" helps create a self-serving

image of performers who had, above all else, to concentrate on their own technical skills.

Not that the player characters are completely impervious to what goes on around them, but their tendency is not to become involved in the technical business of the stage. Palmer refers to Wrighten's problems with scenery and props in Poor Old Drury!, but does little to help him. In Precious Relics, a technical mishap sends Sir Mark, a visitor to the rehearsal, down through a stage trap meant for the ghost's entrance. The character of John Philip Kemble is so amused by the sight of Sir Mark's sudden disappearance into the "damn'd, dark, damp dungeon" (2.5), that he runs "into the green room to laugh" (2.5). When Sheridan's players cut a large scene from Puff's play in The Critic, they have apparently given little thought to the inherent difficulties for the scene shifters; it is left to the Under Prompter to inform Puff that it is impossible to go to the Park scene immediately after the Tilburina and Whiskerandos love scene because, "the carpenters say, that unless there is some business put in here before the drop, they shan't have time to clear away the fort, or sink Gravesend and the river" (2.2). But the players are still acutely aware of what affects their performances. Puff also bemoans the fact that the scene changers have to appear on stage during performances, thus breaking the theatrical illusion: ". . . it is always awkward in a tragedy, to have you fellows coming in in your playhouse liveries to remove things--I wish that could be managed better" (3.1). Sheridan makes no suggestions about how scene changes might be better accomplished; until further technological advances were made in the nineteenth century, all playwrights were stymied within the limitations of what was mechanically and physically possible.

The playwrights, however, could use the players themselves to demonstrate problems which directly related to acting in a particular theatre space. The audience's ability to recognize signs, and their pleasure in being able to do so, were obviously important, since so many playwrights refer to the business of satisfying their patrons' expectations. In several of the theatre plays which are set on a stage, particularly those in which actual players appeared as themselves, the dramatists use the known attributes of certain players to call attention to problems in the acoustics or sight-lines in the enlarged auditoriums. In Cobb's Poor Old Drury!, the character of actor William Parsons (played by himself in September 1791) protests that henceforth he will only play tragic roles, not the comic ones for which he was famous; because, he explains, only tragedians and singers could possibly be heard in such a

large theatre.[8] When Wrighten informs Parsons that he can expect no lady to play tragedy with him, Parsons retorts that Miss Pope concurs with his opinion about the acoustical problems of the house. On cue, Miss Pope enters with a speaking trumpet.[9] The playwright's use of this prop, in the hands of an actress known well for her loud voice, visually emphasizes the vocal demands forced on the players. An observer situated in the gallery tells Parsons that he can hear the actor from where he is sitting, whereupon Palmer tries to convince Parsons that such an observation proves that they will be heard "without ranting and blank verse" (13). Parsons, however, remains unconvinced:

> No Proof at all, Sir -- now the Theatre's empty -- bless you it will be quite a different thing the first night, when the house is crammed full, lights blazing, doors banging, Pit squeezing, and instead of those empty Benches all the best Judges in Town throng'd there, those monstrous Rows of Boxes full of Beauty and Fashion; the Orchestra staring you out of countenance -- then that damned Critick now taking away your breath. . . . (13)

Parson's description conjures a vivid picture of what it must have been like for a player to stand on the stage facing the auditorium with all its distractions, and indicates that most players knew how to use their voices, as well as what happened to the quality of their vocal projection, in varied acoustical circumstances.

Not all leading players were willing, apparently, to give the audience exactly what they expected. Sarah Siddons is singled out by the writer of an article in the Oracle, dated 27 September 1796, for choosing not to raise her voice so that it carried to the back of the immense auditoriums in the renovated theatres. The criticism of her choice, which set her at "a disadvantage [in] that she is not everywhere heard," is mitigated by her reason for it: "To be so she would strain her voice unnaturally. She does not choose to make the sacrifice, and preserves her excellence with the near, whatever she may lose to the remote" (qtd in LS 5.1: xliv). In his implicit criticism of the audience's behaviour, Cobb acknowledges the skill required of his players, including Palmer, Parsons, R. Palmer, Wrighten, Alfred, and presumably Miss Pope, "all in their own persons" (London Chronicle, qtd in LS 5.2: 1393). The obvious irony in Parsons' declaration, that the auditorium is empty save for the one observer, must have delighted the spectators who had squeezed into the pit to watch the play, especially when they heard themselves called "all the best Judges in Town."

In Poor Old Hay-Market, Colman uses Parsons's decision

to whisper to reverse the point about the problems facing players when they move between theatres. An observer in the auditorium this time yells at Parsons to shout, as "we can't hear a word you say from the back of the Pit" (16). The theatre critic for the Morning Herald apparently enjoyed this actor's performance. On 16 June 1792, he writes: "Parsons was highly entertaining in affecting to speak in an undertone scarcely audible, that the feebleness of his voice might correspond with the smallness of the House, compared with the enormous Theatre over the way; and his broken, unintelligible mode of announcing the Performance to the Audience as a specimen, was truly whimsical" (qtd. in LS 5.2: 1463). In the same play the character of Webb, another well-known Drury Lane company member, declares that he prefers playing in the smaller theatre, for the quality of the view the audience have of him, and he has of them: "I shall once more shew my Shapes -- once more be distinctly view'd by a candid and discerning Publick!" (21).

The playwrights' frequent use of visitors to rehearsals and the presence of observers suggests that, in spite of the audience's pleasure being of paramount importance to the players during a *performance*, the presence of an outsider at a *rehearsal* could perturb them. In both Poor Old Haymarket and Poor Old Drury! Parsons is angry when he discovers an uninvited member of the public in the theatre. In the latter play, as Palmer and Parsons are wondering how the stranger could have entered the building, Wrighten doubts that such an intrusion could have happened in "Poor Old Drury" (12). Garrick's A Peep Behind the Curtain of 1767 indicates otherwise; the character of the young lover Wilson (played originally by Palmer), who disguises himself as a strolling player to gain access to his beloved Miss Fuz (played by Miss Pope), has no trouble obtaining entry to the theatre. "I got the liberty of the scenes by desiring to rehearse Hamlet next week" (1.1), he tells his friend Mervin. The visitors who arrive during Mrs Hazard's rehearsal in Kitty Clive's Bays in Petticoats also gain entry behind the scenes, in spite of Mrs Hazard's express command to Mr Cross, the prompter, that she be "denied to every body" (Act 2). The players in these mid-century plays do not comment on the matter of strangers wandering into rehearsals; but in Colman's prelude, Wrighten believes that Parsons should apologize for his outburst against a member of the public, even though the latter was the intruder. The playwrights clearly indicate that their player characters are allowed little privacy inside the theatre. Though written for comic effect, Mrs Hazard's words resound with what must have been the sentiments of a great many players: "Well, I'll swear these poor Players have a very slavish Life; I wonder how they are able to go through it!" (Act 2).

Most of the playwrights confirm the conventional uses and users of the theatrical spaces. We are occasionally surprised by players who speak from "front of house," but we would expect them, as audience characters, to be in the auditorium. Because playwrights place such a strong emphasis on the image of the ready-dressed players, when they do not appear "in costume" we are alerted to a departure from dramatic custom. The anonymous authors of two plays--The Critick Anticipated (1779) and A Dialogue in the Green-Room (1763)--propose that costume can be used as a signifier in the relationship between those who work in and those who attend the theatre, and that the unconventional use of a green room setting draws attention to what one author considers is, and the other thinks should be the limited power of actors.

The player characters in The Critick Anticipated meet, as convention stipulates, in the green room to be given their parts. We then discover they are to rehearse with the manager, but they are not "dress'd" as their play-within-a-play characters. This deviation from the norm, established by setting rehearsal plays on the stage with players in costume, suggests we should be looking for something out of the ordinary. The play clearly deals with territoriality within the theatre complex. The author, in his preface, urges actors to join together and fight the tyrannical and powerful oppression of the managers. We know that the playwright normally conducted the first reading of his or her work, but here Young Psalter (the playwright-manager characterization of R. B. Sheridan) wields his power when he misuses the green room for a full company rehearsal.[10] In spite of the author's prefatory call to arms, the player characters either lack the courage to stir against the manager or have the good sense not to. What results is a dichotomy between what is called for and what actually happens; the preface hints at what the players should do, but the play shows them behaving in the normal, expected way.

In the Preface to A Dialogue in the Green-Room, the anonymous author also has stern words for players. He, or maybe she, tells us that players think too highly of themselves; they must remember that they are "neither more or [sic] less than the servants of the public" (vii). Thomas Davies in his Memoirs of the Life of David Garrick debates the validity of the audience's claims on the occasion of the price riots in 1763:

> The confederates [in the audience] chose a very odd, or rather improper, time to enforce the doctrine of submission to their authority, on the benefit night of the writer, who had altered the play of Shakespeare's Two Gentlemen of Verona, at

> a time when the full charges were never disputed. (2: 2-3)

While no members of the audience appear in this piece, their proximity to the players' green room allows their presence to be keenly felt. This particular audience is enraged because of the increase in ticket prices; those in the pit are threatening to tear the theatre apart if the actor-manager does not appear on stage to give them satisfaction. Together in the green room are the Manager, the Coadjutor from the other house, Sir Charles Easy, Lord Fop and several other characters, such as Falstaff and Brazen. It appears at first as if the titled characters are audience members who have gathered in support of the manager, "the modern Roscius," but when, later in the play, Lord Fop aligns himself with the players, we realize that they are all actors in character costume, assuming the false airs and graces of which the author accuses them in his preface. Lord Fop, irate at the audience's demands, asks: "Is this the way to treat gentlememen [sic]? Gad's curse if we were strollers at Bartholomew fair, they cou'd but [sic] behave in this manner" (19). At no time is there direct confrontation between the rowdy pit and "Roscius," but the references to the sounds emanating from the auditorium remind us of how close it is. On the second night, as the Manager prepares for the performance, he is perturbed by what he hears: "Is that six o'clock that strikes? -- Why don't they get ready for the prologue. They begin to be noisy already; -- wou'd this night were over" (28). At first the author seems to give preference to the actor-manager's point of view, since no irate audience characters are introduced into the green room to defend theirs. Nevertheless, as we have seen, the outcome affirms the subordination of the Manager to the audience; after being forced to appear before his public, he returns to the green room, having agreed to the pit's terms.

The author of the Dialogue does allow the manager characters to air their grievances in a coherent and sympathetic manner when, in the relative safety of the green room, they address some of the practical issues concerning theatrical production, including costs and a manager's legal rights with respect to his theatrical property. The Manager observes that the audience "seem to lay a great stress upon the advance of the price from four to five shillings for the Boxes, and so on, from the time of Booth and Wilks, without ever considering the increase of money since then, and of the value and price of every thing" (9). The Coadjutor complains of the lack of justice against riotous audiences:

> If a fellow picks my pocket of a handkerchief, I may transport him; if a rogue takes a shilling from me upon the highway, I may hang him; but here, if I am injured to the amount of threescore,

> or a hundred pounds, there's no relief, I must sit quietly down with the loss;--not only that, but I must fawn and court these very perturbators of the peace not to do so again; and, perhaps, must be obliged to comply with the terms they shall chuse to propose, before they will agree to it. (30)

The absurd link between petty thieves and theatre patrons alerts us to a familiar sub-text: the question of status. The Manager and Coadjutor feel they have the right to complain about their treatment at the hands of the public, because their status is higher than that of any player. The contradiction set up by the Manager's dual role is satisfactorily resolved by place and appearance. Off-stage, in the green room, the manager is allowed to complain about the harsh economics of running a theatre; but on-stage, costumed as an actor, he is forced to surrender to his auditors' demands.

Both authors uphold the position they state in their prefaces and show in their plays: actors have less power than managers, and both groups have less than the audience, even behind the scenes. The costs of the increased spectacle that the patrons in their highest position of authority enjoyed, eventually had to be paid for by those in the lowest. The players' earnings from their benefit performances were henceforth greatly reduced. They were simply told that "the present managers of Drury lane and Covent-garden [sic], from the prodigious increase of expenditure on various occasions, are obliged to charge their actors, for a benefit play, 100 l. [£100]" (Davies, Memoirs 2: 4).[11]

The dramatists proffer an excuse for their players' apparent lack of concern about either their dressing-room areas or the theatre buildings in general. They are too busy worrying about their roles and their technique to have time to admire or criticize their surroundings, except when physical changes to their playing space affect these concerns. They appear oblivious to whether the seats in the auditorium are covered in green or red, or whether their mise en scène is appropriate. But their attitude to their work, revealed most clearly in their remarkable ability to adapt to the size of the different theatres, suggests that the playwrights themselves had some knowledge of the acting skills required, and a certain deference to the best of the profession. Even so, the dramatists plainly affirm the irony of this chapter's title. The players' relationship with their place of work is one that requires them to accommodate and attend to others. The building itself might be a sanctuary for those in the profession, but it is not a peaceful one. Behind the scenes or on stage the conventional hierarchies prevail. The players must submit to the demands

of their public, their playwrights, their managers, and even their peers.

NOTES

[1] We still use clothes and appearance, although they are not always reliable, as indicators of a person's character as well as occupation. In the eighteenth century clothes also denoted a person's rank. Further discussion and source material on the nature of costume signs can be found in the next chapter on the player's art.

[2] For details of the changes made by Rich to Drury Lane in 1696, see Colley Cibber's An Apology for the Life of Mr. Colley Cibber Written by Himself, ed. B. R. S. Fone (1968), 224-25; and Leacroft, The Development of the English Playhouse 89-99. A full explanation of the changes made to both Drury Lane and Covent Garden is given in the Survey of London, vol. 35 (London, 1970).

[3] See the Maintenance bill for Drury Lane, dated 19 November, 1715, which states "£1 for a month's keeping the watch dog and for items purchased for Mrs Porter's dressing room: tongs, shovel, poker, and fender. . . ." According to other maintenance bills, work was also done to the dressing rooms of Mrs Mountfort, Mrs Bicknell and Mrs Santlow during that same month (Milhous and Hume, Document Register 2: #2600, #2601, #2602). George Winchester Stone suggests that Covent Garden's twenty-three chimneys indicate twice as many fireplaces: "Grates and some stores seem to have been located in the dressing rooms, in the Green Room, and in certain practice rooms" (LS 4.1: xxxiv). As of 1783, all the dressing rooms of the King's Theatre, Haymarket were heated (John Orrell, private correspondence, 22 November 1995); see also Orrell, "The Lincoln's Inn Fields Playhouse in 1731" 152.

[4] See documents reproduced in Milhous and Hume's Document Register and Thomas's Restoration and Georgian England, Garrick's correspondence, and the autobiographies of provincial and London players listed in "Works Consulted."

[5] George Winchester Stone (LS 4.1: xxxiv); Charles Beecher Hogan (LS 5.1: clviii).

[6] Richard Leacroft in The Development of the English Playhouse offers reconstructions of the three major theatres in London: Drury Lane, Covent Garden, and the Haymarket. The green room in the 1674 plan of Drury Lane is at stage left (95), and he supports the theory that it was easily accessible from the auditorium (98). The reconstruction of Drury Lane in 1775 shows the old and new green rooms at the

upstage left side with dressing rooms stage right (122-23). The plan by Dumont of Edward Shepherd's Covent Garden (1731-32) shows the green room on stage right (106), but as the green room, according to The Survey of London, was on the west wall and Bow Street on the east (87), the plan, as Leacroft states, "was incorrectly reproduced by Dumont reversed top to bottom" (329; Thomas 81). Leacroft's reconstruction of Covent Garden shows two green rooms on stage right, one next to the entry to the King's box (108). Neither Leacroft's reconstructions of the Queen's Theatre, Haymarket for 1704-5 and 1707-8 (100, 105) nor Dumont's reversed plan (published in 1774) of the King's Theatre, "la Salle de l'Opéra de Londres" (Thomas 77) show a green room. Fielding refers to one for the major players in Pasquin (1.1), which was performed at the Little Theatre in the Haymarket (see frontispiece illustration, Thomas 112). See also Milhous and Hume, "James Lewis's Plans for an Opera House" for an account of a new theatre design which was never constructed. Sheridan chose to renovate his theatre instead.

[7] See C. B. Hogan (LS 5.1: xlvi-xlviii); William Templeton's account of a provincial green room (The Strolling Player 2: 116); Thomas Davies's account of Drury Lane prior to 1740 in his Dramatic Miscellanies, dated 1783-84 (qtd. in Lawrence 156), and George Vandenhoff's description of the first green room at Covent Garden in An Actor's Notebook, dated 1865 ((qtd. in Lawrence 162).

[8] The remarks of Parsons's character seem to support the suggestion that players of comedy performed in a more natural way than players of tragedy. Evidence of the different acting techniques can be found in the chapter on the player's art.

[9] Goede in his Stranger in England mentions how disgusted he was by the noisy theatre audiences, even in the smaller theatres in the Haymarket: "This is intolerable to a foreigner, who stands close to the stage; especially when such an actress as Miss Pope appears in the character of a talkative woman. Her lungs, indeed, might be a match for all the ladies of the Hall[es] at Paris" (qtd. in LS 5.1: cvii).

[10] William Powell apparently kept a record of every rehearsal during Drury Lane's 1794 season, in which he asserts that rehearsals were always in the morning, starting at 10 a.m. and that as many as four plays might rehearse at hourly intervals. Rehearsals, he says, normally took place on the stage and, therefore, could not be held in the afternoon. Powell does mention one occasion when two rehearsals took place in the theatre at the same time: Tit for Tat had its run-through for a performance the same

evening on the stage while The Gamester was rehearsed in the green room for a performance scheduled for the following night. Both rehearsals began at 10 a.m. (LS 5.1: cxlvi).

[11] In the 1740s, benefit expenses ranged in a scale directly reversed to that of the theatrical hierarchy: from £60+ for the lower players to nothing for the stars (LS 3.1: cxiii). On the question of the introduction of house expenses by Christopher Rich--his "indulto"--in the early 1700s, see Milhous and Hume, "The Silencing of Drury Lane in 1709" 432-33; on the "constant charge" for benefits in the 1740s, see Milhous and Hume, "David Garrick and Box Office Receipts at Drury Lane in 1742-43" 330.

CHAPTER 4

THE PLAYER'S ART

> **BARTHOLOMEW WOOD.** . . . . a good Assurance was the only Requisite to make a good Player. (George Stayley The Court of Nassau)

As Bartholomew Wood eventually discovers, theatre actors require more than just "a good Assurance"; they also require an artistry that includes a sound technique, and an acute business sense for on- and off-stage matters. Eighteenth-century players certainly needed these skills with which to survive the harsh conditions of the acting profession. The players' "business of the night," as Clara in Leonard MacNally's Critic upon Critic calls it (53), was a culmination of a process that included (as it still does) auditions, casting, rehearsals, make-up and costumes, as well as contractual negotiations for salary, billing, and benefits. Extant copies of players' articles or agreements with theatre managers are, unfortunately, rare. But several players, in their various correspondence and publications, hint at what the creative process was like, and what requirements were necessary to produce "a good Player."[1] To be more than "good," however, players required genius, the "fire" and "spirit" that distinguishes great artists.[2] Garrick describes, in a letter to Helfrich Peter Sturz, dated 3 January 1769, what he perceived was the "great difference between a great Genius, and a good Actor":

> The first will always realize the feelings of his Character, and be transported beyond himself, while the other, with great powers, and good sense, will give great pleasure to an Audience. . . . (Letters 635)

In their portraits of the player characters, the dramatists tantalize us with glimpses of the "great powers, and good sense" with which the players entertained their audiences.

The distinction I have made between the business and creative areas of the process leading to performance loosely parallels the different concerns a player would have off and on stage. Auditions and negotiation of articles, including salaries and benefits, along with casting, costume and make-up, comprise the main part of the section entitled "Business Process"; the techniques (practical and theoretical) required to develop character and individual interpretation of a role

form the main elements of the section "Creative Process." Rehearsal procedures do not fit more easily into either section, because, while most early rehearsals took place off stage or in private study, the final ones, before the initial performance in front of a paying public, as we have seen, usually happened on stage. I have therefore divided my discussion on this part of the process. Those matters that have less to do with developing a role, such as scheduling and attendance, I include at the end of the business section; the more artistic aspects, such as the players' technique and approach to characterization, I look at under the creative process. In the final section, simply entitled "The Performance," I examine what the playwrights tell us about the players' use of improvisation and stage business and their awareness of the audience.

THE BUSINESS PROCESS

In order to obtain a job with a theatre company, a player either had to audition for the manager or be recommended, usually by a reliable scout. The audition process has always been a demeaning one. Players have to perform for people who often know less about the business than they do, who have the power to offer or deny them work, who are more concerned with self-interests, and who tend to look upon players as mere tools, rather than as human beings. It is no wonder that the audition scenes, especially as most plays were originally produced in London, rarely show the London professionals undergoing such an ordeal. The playwrights probably shied away from biting both hands that fed them (the managers on one side and the players on the other); or maybe they felt that there were no points to be scored off the performers with whom they shared the indignities of the audition process. What ego-bruising there is in the audition scenes appears tempered by the playwrights' choice of victim. The participants are usually indomitable managers interviewing comical country strollers or amateurs, who get their just deserts for their visions of grandeur. In the plays that were not produced, we do find a few London player characters; but these tend to use the audition procedure to their advantage, thus managing to retain a certain degree of dignity.

The playwrights concur with most evidence on the subject of attaining work. It appeared relatively easy for a provincial player to join a company of strollers; in London, however, job-seekers had difficulty getting not only an engagement, but even, in some cases, an interview with the managers of the patented theatres. The story of Peg Woffington's numerous attempts to gain entrance to John Rich

for a first interview is legendary: "Fitzgerald Molloy, in The Romance of the Irish Stage, states that Peg went to Rich's house nineteen times before the doorkeeper, impressed at last by her persistence, took her name up to his master, and she was admitted" (Dunbar 51). Before Garrick retired he was visited by many young hopefuls, among them Sarah Kemble (later to become Sarah Siddons):

> She privately informed him who she was, and solicited first his judgment, and secondly, hi: protection. The reader is to be informed, that in all the charms of her youth, Miss Kemble repeated some of the speeches of Jane Shore before him--he knows too by what an eye the music of her speech was heralded--Mr. Garrick seemed highly pleased with her utterance and her deportment; wondered how she had got rid of the old song, the provincial Ti-tum-ti; told her how his engagements stood with the established heroines Yates and Younge, admitted her merits, regretted that he could do nothing for her--and wished her--a good morning. (Boaden, Memoirs 1: 22)

This story of Mrs Siddons's first encounter with the great London manager reveals Garrick's disdain for the strolling players' incapacity to deliver lines naturally.[3] Boaden also indicates that Garrick was not the only manager to treat players curtly at auditions: "The expressions used at these interviews appear to be a prescriptive formulary, suited equally to Garrick or Rich, Colman or Harris; and the candidate is only obliged by the complaisance which led the manager to lose so many minutes of his most valuable time" (Memoirs 1: 22-3).

Sylvester Daggerwood, Colman the Younger's stroller in New Hay at the Old Market, comes from his company in Dunstable to see the London manager. We have seen how, along with the author Fustian, he is kept waiting in the ante-chamber of the Manager's house. When a servant finally deigns to tell them that the Manager has left, Fustian storms out; but Daggerwood's demeanour is more humble, as he addresses the servant:

> Young man, you know me, I shall come to the old arm chair again, to-morrow, but must go to Dunstable the day after, for a week, to finish my engagement. Wish for an interview.-- inclination to tread the London boards, and so on. You remember my name--Mr Sylvester Daggerwood: whose benefit is fix'd for the eleventh of June, by particular desire of several persons of distinction. (Scene 1)

Poor Sylvester never does get to see the Manager. The naive Daggerwood character became so popular that the first scene of this play was frequently performed as Sylvester Daggerwood (1796), with the renowned comic actor Bannister Junior in the title role, and John O'Keeffe entitled his play about "The Daggerwoods at Dunstable" The Eleventh of June (1798), the date of Sylvester's benefit.

Those player characters who do gain access to a London manager are often used, like Daggerwood, for comic effect. But the harsher the auditioners' treatment, the more likely it is that the auditionees are would-be actors or amateurs. The arrogant Vaticide, in The Theatrical Manager, takes pleasure in turning away "a humpt-back Fellow," a former waiter who has aspirations to join his "Royal company of Comedians" as a player of "genteel comedy":

> **VATICIDE.** I love your Spirit, and am charmed with your Looks.
> **BOY.** I did not doubt that in the least, Sir.
> **VATICIDE.** You are the most proper Man, and every way qualified--
> **BOY.** Ay, that's no News.
> **VATICIDE.** For the business of a Drawer.
> **BOY.** Sir?
> **VATICIDE.** Therefore go home . . . be a Waiter still. . . . (54)

A similar scene is recorded in Memoirs of Sylvester Daggerwood,[4] when Sylvester is given a trial by Macklin. At the end of the audition, Macklin tells Sylvester to "go home and follow your father's advice.-- You'll be damn'ed if you mount any stage but a coach or a mountebank's" (qtd. in Wood 28). In Kitty Clive's Bays in Petticoats, the audition scene appears to serve two purposes: first, to show the ridiculous presumption of those amateurs who assume they can perform with neither talent nor experience; and, second, to give the author, who starred in the original production, an opportunity to sing.[5] The interview takes place in Act 1 between the playwright, Mrs Hazard, and the young hopeful, Miss, who has a "Fancy, Mame, to come and Sing upon the Stage." When asked if she is qualified, Miss replies, "O yes, Mame; I have very good Friends" (1.1). The humour that is sharply highlighted by the undeniable truth of such "necessary" qualifications for a performer still works. As Mrs Clive wrote it for her own benefit, she would have been assured of a sympathetic audience; Cross noted that, indeed, it "[w]ent off well" (qtd. in LS 4.1: 182). Miss favours Mrs Hazard and her companion, Witling, with a song, which Mrs Hazard interrupts so that she can sing it herself--to show Miss how it should be done.

The characters set up as the victims in the audition process are often marked by the way they speak, or their elocution. It is typical for strollers to discourse using lines from roles they have performed, or for amateur hopefuls to overpronounce words. Most London professionals are not dependent on lines from written texts, and the speech rhythms of the professional player Spouter in The Theatrical Manager suggest that he speaks normally (albeit in a flattering and somewhat flamboyant way). In spite of his amateur nomenclature, Spouter appears experienced, as well as undaunted by the manager's newly acquired power and superior tone. While the London player is not as immodest as the Boy who precedes him, he defies the normal power structure between actor and manager. When Vaticide asks Spouter what he intends to impose on him with his "Superabundancy of fine speeches," Spouter ironically echoes Vaticide's own vain impudence:

> **SPOUTER.** Impose upon you! -- What, does your Conscience reflect Dishonour upon yourself? dost thou suspect me from thy own mean Designs? -- No, Sir, the Indulgence of the Town has inspired me with Vanity to abhor Deceit, and set me above the Scandal of a Manager. (57)

While the player's self-assurance in this situation has a touch of fantasy about it, the manager's reaction appears real enough. Vaticide counsels Spouter "to preserve your Lungs for an Embellishment to your Performance" (57). He is eventually so infuriated by the player that he brings the interview to an abrupt end. This London player, however, retains the upper hand while he is on stage, unlike the inexperienced Boy and the stroller Sylvester. Spouter also manages to extract from the manager an agreement to continue negotiations, with Vaticide's added proviso that it be done "by Pen, Ink and Paper, but no more personal conferences" (57).

Plays in which real actors and actresses play themselves seemed to be popular with eighteenth-century audiences, except when those players performed in an uncharacteristic fashion. The character of Vaticide is perhaps too shaped by the playwright's personal bias regarding Garrick to be entirely successful, even in manuscript form. Had it been produced, the audience's approval (a factor always affecting management decisions about what was staged) might have been withheld from such a harsh portrait of one of their favourites. The author of Poor Covent Garden obviously intended to have Mrs Mattocks, William Thomas Lewis, John Quick, and John Johnstone perform their own characters, but the prelude was never produced. In their roles, the author develops the particular lines of business for which these players were best known, and sets up an audition as the ideal

situation for them to exhibit their specialities. The depiction of the actress Mrs Mattocks is an exception to the mostly favourable displays of players' talents. At the beginning of the piece she appears lacking in self-confidence. She is afraid that she will not remember the lines of the epilogue, and thereby lose favour with the public. When she re-appears at the end of the play, she still fears she is "very imperfect," and asks Lewis to prompt her. There is no epilogue, but the publication ends with the note that "It was intended by the author to conclude this piece with an Address to the audience, to be spoken by Mrs. Mattocks. FINIS" (16). This portrayal of the actress, who was famous for her epilogues, as well as the number of roles she managed to commit to memory, might be one of the reasons why the play never reached the stage.[6]

Poor Covent Garden burlesques the audition process. If the parody has any truth in it, the experience at that theatre in the 1790s must have been a harrowing one for all "candidates." At the beginning of the play, Lewis receives a letter from a Mr Spleen who "pretends to be a great critic," so the actor devises an audition scene to test his critical faculties:

> **LEWIS.** . . . the property-man will supply us with masques to conceal ourselves -- let us then pretend to be theatrical candidates for Poor Covent Garden. -- Johnstone, you shall be judge, as it were, of our abilities, a supposed friend of the manager's for that purpose. (5)

As Lewis explains, "this project will serve to make a trial of the house (which is the intent of our meeting) and also for Mr. Spleen's superior judgment" (5). The actors masquerade as characters from John O'Keeffe's Wild Oats, which had the first of many subsequent performances at Covent Garden in April, 1791, with Lewis and Quick in the roles they now use for Spleen's benefit.[7] Lewis disguises himself as Rover and Quick as Sir George Thunder; Johnstone, renowned for his portrayals of Irish characters, pretends to be the manager's Irish friend, who is conducting the auditions in his stead. Lewis typically answers all questions put to him with Shakespearean quotations. Spleen thinks his performance is "a horrid imitation of Lewis," and wishes "he was dismiss'd with all my heart" (9-10). Quick's self-impersonation fares no better, because Spleen declares, "That fellow's imitating Quick--now Quick never spoke so loud in all his life" (14). The joke is obviously set up for an audience because, earlier, they would have heard Quick express his fear about not being heard in the newly enlarged theatre. A proviso made for the presence of patrons suggests that the piece was intended for production; soon after the

actors' entrance, Lewis comments that "the house too is filling apace--a splendid appearance upon my word" (6). Johnstone also finally gets a chance to strut his stuff when he sings an Irish song, brought by an author for the "real" Johnstone.

We know that many of the audition scenes were written as vehicles for leading players. Bannister Junior, for instance, made a name for himself in adaptations of plays by both Colmans; Sylvester Daggerwood comes from New Hay at the Old Market, and The Young Actor from An Occasional Prelude. Audition scenes were also used to showcase new talent. Colman the Elder wrote An Occasional Prelude for the opening of Covent Garden Theatre in September of 1772. In it, he introduces Miss Barsanti, in the role of an aspiring actress who is seeking a career in the theatre. Her audition for the manager is treated more seriously than is usual with this kind of scene; but its entertainment value is obvious in the incredible versatility the young lady demonstrates.[8] She begins by imitating another actress's performance in the title role of the tragedy Jane Shore, "last winter . . . for one night only--for the benefit of a family in distress" (a role and gesture for which Mrs Siddons was celebrated); she criticizes Italian and English performers of opera, before singing herself in the style of both the opera and ballad-opera; she then proceeds to recite from "Arthur's round table," and, finally, performs a scene between a lady and her son in the "Scotch" dialect. Her ability is rewarded: the Manager hires her.

In contrast to the London experience, John O'Keeffe's A Beggar on Horseback suggests that the business of auditions could be almost painless. While several plays and actors' memoirs refute the image of the manager of a country circuit as drawn by O'Keeffe,[9] his Mrs Mummery appears to be fair, considerate, and solicitous. If she is somewhat blind to the supposed applicant's abilities, she cannot be blamed. Codger really *is* the character she thinks he is playing.

The audition scenes were an entertaining way of allowing the public access to a more private part of the profession, while conveniently sustaining the players' "servant" status. However, the techniques employed by the playwrights often buffer the performers against excessive vulnerability: the actual players might be distanced from the characters they perform (as with those who play the country strollers or amateurs), or they are offered an opportunity to show their strengths (as with Miss Barsanti and Mrs Clive), or they can use the process for their own motives (as with the disguised Lewis, Quick, and Johnstone, when they test both the theatre and its critic). Nevertheless, the infrequent appearance of

a London professional in the most straightforward of audition scenes suggests that the named players might have been unwilling to show themselves in the demeaning process of auditioning for work, or that the playwrights saw no value in portraying them in that way.

Once a player had been offered a job, the next step in the process was the business of negotiating terms of employment. As is the case with artists' contracts today, the players were bound by their articles. At the end of the century the Morning Chronicle (18 July 1799) carried a piece informing players about the "Necessity for Articles":

> Theatre Royal, Drury Lane. The performers are requested to observe that no Person will be considered as engaged at this Theatre, but by Written Article, to be signed previous to the 15th of August next. By order of the Proprietors. Wm. Powell, prompter. (qtd. in LS 5.1: xcix; Burge 77)

Terms might have differed for various individuals,[10] but the main areas of business subscribed to by most players probably adhered to those documented in Cecil Price's "An 18th [sic] Century Theatrical Agreement." The printed sheet, headed "Articles to be observed by the Members of Messrs. Austin and Whitlock's Company of Comedians," was apparently in use for a decade after 1780. Ten of the thirty-one clauses in the agreement concern benefit nights, some deal with the conduct of rehearsals and performances, others with the question of fines if rules were broken, and the last with the company's economy. Several of Garrick's letters attest to the existence of similar clauses in the articles of the London professionals, although the disagreements between the manager and members of his company indicate that some players felt bound only when the articles were in their favour.[11] Colley Cibber tells us that, in 1695, the patentees paid the actors "half in good Words, and half in ready Mony," and that by 1708, benefits were verbally written into the "Actors' Agreements" (218). Burge adds that "Cibber's description of the terms of each actor's articles being placed in the theatre pay-book appears to have held good until the 1780s. The items were salary, the terms of the benefit, and the dates of the duration of the season (or seasons)" (84). Stone and Kahrl proffer eight hypothetical points comprising the standard content of articles drawn up between the London managers and their performers, although "articles seemed more in the vein of letters, with one copy for the recipient, and one to be filed presumably in the business office of the theatre" (David Garrick 740). The points cover length of contract, salary, roles, frequency of performing, accountability (including the "manager's bond" and the

player's "obligation not to play at competing theatres in the kingdom during the season"), benefit nights, rank (that is, a player's "proper slot in the salary scale"), and renewal. Not itemized in the agreement were "sick leave and temporary leave with pay," attendance at rehearsals (although non-attendance incurred forfeits), and release from the articles (David Garrick 740; see also LS 4.1: xxiii).

Price remarks that the agreement of Austin and Whitlock's Company of Comedians "shows a business-like spirit, all too rare in those days, among strolling players" (31). The only business Sylvester Daggerwood understands in No Play This Night! (1797) is that "the show must go on." His players "may complain, but not to the manager: they may be ill, but the public must not see it!" (Scene 3). When an actress is indisposed and cannot play Roxanne, Sylvester tells his male servant, who "never spoke a line on the boards in [his] life," that he will have to perform in her place (Scene 1). He takes care of the company's finances in a similar carefree fashion. He proudly tells his friend Wentworth, to whom he owes money, that "We pay in paper; its [sic] one of our ways, and means when properties are borrowed, the loan is provided for a double admission to pit, gall [sic], or box" (Scene 3). When Mrs Mummery, in A Beggar on Horseback, offers Codger articles to sign, she explains what his performance duties will entail: "You agree to act in all tragedies, comedies, operas, farces, preludes, interludes, prologues, epilogues, mimes, and pantomimes." The sardonic humour in the breath-taking variety of genres on her list would surely have delighted the players as much as the patrons, because it so aptly describes what the players, for the most part, would be expected to perform.

There are many references in secondary documentation to actors' benefits, forfeits, and conduct in rehearsals (when they attend), but only slight evidence in the plays regarding any monetary concerns. Perhaps the dramatists were influenced by the fact that players rarely publicized information about the exact amount of their remuneration. For the "stars," disclosure of their negotiated salaries might have lost them public sympathy, particularly in their appeals against management injustices, as possibly happened in 1743 when Fleetwood advertised the salaries of his rebellious leading players. Since one-third of the clauses in Price's example of a theatrical agreement deal with benefits, it is worth looking at them in greater detail.

By 1737 the benefit system was a fundamental and necessary portion of the eighteenth-century player's income.[12] Men's and women's days in the theatre are mentioned as early as 1668 by Samuel Pepys but, as a system, benefits were

started "as a special managerial concession to an exceptional leading lady, Mrs Barry, about the year 1686" (Troubridge 17). In an attempt to stop the practice in about 1710, the Lord Chamberlain, in his "Regulations for the Directors of the Playhouse," ordered "That no benefit plays be allowd [sic], nor tickets given to any person" (L.C. 7/3, qtd. in Nicoll, Early Eighteenth Century Drama 279). By 1800, the disadvantages of the benefit system to the player must have outweighed the advantages, including the prospect of a lump-sum payment. In A Statement of the differences subsisting between the proprietors and performers of the Theatre-Royal, Covent-Garden, the performers list the "industry" required to "canvass every friend and acquaintance" as a tiring and expensive hazard to their health (qtd. in Troubridge 12). During the century, contentious players and managers wrangled not so much over the issue of whether the system was flawed, but over dates, expenses, and percentages. Players' benefits would have been of little importance to playwrights in general because they would receive nothing extra.[13] But we might expect to find them mentioned in the work written by performers. However, of the five players whose work contained player characters, written between 1737 and 1779, only two mention benefits or financial matters: Kitty Clive in Bays in Petticoats and David Garrick in A Peep Behind the Curtain.[14]

As with many plays, if they outlive the performers and the contemporary events that gave them life, these two by Clive and Garrick lose much of their immediacy and potency for lack of the original performers. Both plays require Kitty Clive in the cast to exphasize the joke being made about benefits. We have seen that in Bays in Petticoats, Clive has herself send a note begging to be excused from rehearsal, because she is busy soliciting subscriptions for her benefit. Nobody in the audience would have expected Mrs Clive to appear *in propria persona* at that moment, because they could all see that she was busy--performing the role of Mrs Hazard. The more Mrs Hazard protests about Kitty Clive's abominable behaviour the more the audience must have shared the actress's joke. As Richard Frushell says, "Mrs. Clive's scrupulousness about such things [rehearsals] as well as her putting the welfare of her profession before personal desires or even creature comforts, was well-known to her audiences" (56). Garrick uses a similar technique with Kitty Clive in the role of Lady Fuz in A Peep Behind the Curtain. In return for being shown around the theatre by Johnston, she says to the actor: "Remember my box the first night. And don't forget Clive's benefit" (Act 2). The "running gag" effect of Mrs Clive's concern for her benefit works, even though Garrick uses it seventeen years later, because the public would have been aware of her feelings on the subject. We

have seen her references to the reduced terms offered her at Drury Lane, and her dissatisfaction with her benefits at Covent Garden, in the letter she published when she found herself "disengaged" from both theatres after the 1743 secession (Fitzgerald, Life of Mrs Clive 34-6). It would also have been well-known to the audience that she had a "penchant for having her benefit during that time in March which *she* dictated to Garrick and Lacy" (Frushell 51). She was obviously prepared to allow her concerns about players' benefits, once she had made them public, to be exaggerated for comic and self-satirical effect. It was, after all, an economical and immediate way of advertising them.

One of the main advantages of benefits for players, stressed in all accounts of the system, was that they could play the kinds of roles in which they would not normally be cast. The player's performance could showcase his or her talents, possibly leading to offers of a more extensive line of parts. Kitty Clive has a chance to be innovative, to show both managers and audiences her ability as a playwright and her versatility as an actress. She obviously recognized the opportunity because she has Mrs Hazard mention the actress's intention "to play a capital Tragedy Part for [her] own Benefit" (Scene 1). This play *is* for her own benefit, and yet she writes for herself a role that would in every way meet her audience's expectations. In Thomas Davies's account of her limitations, we find a clue to the reason why she might want to play tragedy, as well as to her rationale for not doing so. He writes,

> But the whole empire of laughter, large as it is, was too confined to satisfy the ambition of a Clive; this daughter of mirth aspired to what nature had denied her; she wished to shine in those parts of high life where elegance of form and graceful deportment give dignity to the female character. (2: 189-90)

With self-mockery, she moderates the cause of her inability to play roles of "high life," and subtly transfers the focus from a question of her natural talent and physique to an apparent imposition of limitations on her playing style by a demanding and conservative audience.[15]

Casting of roles was one of the most explosive issues of the player's business. While the actors tend to accept whatever they are offered, the actresses balk at roles which they consider inferior either in status or size. It is possible that the actresses' fussiness over parts is exaggerated in the plays because most of the playwrights were male, but Garrick's correspondence with the leading ladies of his company substantiates the vexations related to casting,

for both sides. Mrs Abington frequently wrote to her manager on this issue. In her letter of 20 January 1774 she uses her limited acting style as an excuse for resigning a role:

> Mrs. Abington sends the part of Letitia in "The Choleric Man" to Mr. Hopkins, in order to his receiving Mr. Garrick's commands as to the person he is pleased to give it in study to for the next representation of the play. Mr. Cumberland has obligingly given his consent to her resigning of the part, and Mrs. Abington flatters herself that Mr. Garrick will have the goodness and complaisance to relieve her from a character so little calculated to her very confined style of acting. (qtd. in Life of Mrs Abington 56)

The letter she wrote to Garrick, one "Wednesday morning, 1774," illustrates the strain players must have felt, torn between their desire to have their own way and their need to be conciliatory, although Mrs Abington's style might be considered merely manipulative:

> Indeed, Sir, I could not play Violante to-morrow if my happiness in the next world depended upon it, but if you order me, I will look it over, and be perfect as soon as possible.
> (qtd. in The Life of Mrs. Abington 57)

The tone, if not the words, is certainly reminiscent of that found in the dialogue of several female player characters. In another letter, dated 14 July 1775, she enquires about several parts, but attaches no name to them; Garrick endorsed it, "Mrs. Abington about Pope's parts" (Life of Mrs Abington 72; see Managers 62). In a business where players held onto their roles for as long as possible, often past an appropriate age, it is understandable that they would solicit managers for parts likely to be given up because of retirement, sickness, or death. Garrick's letters, however, show that disagreements over roles, as well as salaries, forfeits, and playing demands, were not limited to those he had with the actresses.[16]

Yet, even the actor-author Garrick perpetuates the actresses' reputation for being difficult in his own play A Peep behind the Curtain. However, Patent's typical complaint against female players in general is balanced by the Prompter's references to the individual actors, who are included among "half a dozen" grievants:

> **PATENT.** And the old story, actress [sic] quarrelling about parts. There's not one of 'em but thinks herself young enough for any part, and not a young one but thinks herself capable of any part. But their betters quarrel about what they

> are not fit for. So our ladies have at least great precedents for their folly.
> **PROMPTER.** The young fellow from Edinburgh won't accept of the second Lord. He desires to have the first.
> **PATENT.** I don't doubt it. Well, well, if the author can make him speak English, I have no objection.
> **PROMPTER.** Mr Rantly is indisposed and can't play tomorrow.
> **PATENT.** Well, well, let his lungs rest a little. They want it, I'm sure. . . . (1.2)

Patent excuses the men for creating the kinds of problems for which we have regularly seen the women chastised. The portrait of the actress as a fussy trouble-maker, regardless of rank, seems to be the one that audiences had come to expect.[17] In Woodward's prelude A Lick at the Town, it might appear that the actor Raftor is as snobbish as the actresses. He refuses to play because, he tells the Author,

> I don't like my Part, Sir. -- whenever I appear upon the Stage I am generally taken particular Notice of by the Audience;-- I have us'd 'em to expect something from me, and so, sir, as I have acquired some Reputation, I don't care to lose it by appearing in a low Part. (Larpent MS #92)

Raftor proclaims he has "more Sense and less Passion than these Ladies," and suggests that the Author "shou'd give such trifling Parts as these to . . . under Actors" (Larpent MS #92). The irony behind his declarations would have been noticed by a contemporary audience, because the real Raftor, Kitty Clive's brother, was recognized as a "low comedian, of abilities sufficient to carry off tertiary parts" (Highfill et al, Biographical Dictionary 12: 248).

Woodward, however, is careful not to establish a common male characteristic. He contrasts Raftor with actors who offer sensible reasons for turning down their roles. Taswell "can stand A Hiss, or a Catcall" but he does not "like Apples and Oranges," and he thinks he will face "a Storm of 'em . . . from the Nature of [his] Part" in Author's play (Larpent MS #92). Shuter, on the other hand, agrees that his part is "a very excellent Part, and very interesting, but as there is not the least Bit of Wit or Humour in it, the Audience will never bear it from me--I can only make Faces, Sir" (Larpent MS #92). Shuter is perhaps being over-modest, but his remark does substantiate the proposition that the audience expected performers playing themselves to reveal the characteristics associated with their usual roles.

Such expectations seem to have been geared towards a

player's line of parts. Because Garrick is so often singled out for his versatility, we are led to believe that only he could play a variety of characters, that the lines for other players were based more on personality than ability. It is not, of course, surprising to find a proclivity towards type-casting in a repertory system where rehearsals were few and changes in fare were many. Indeed, type-casting is as prevalent today as it was then. There seem to be several possible reasons for the trend: the shortsightedness of those connected with the initial process of hiring, the unwillingness of spectators to accept one player in a wide range of characters, or the incapacity of the profession's majority. The fact that many eighteenth-century playwrights made use of particular players' performance characteristics, as well as range of roles, suggests that the players were type-cast a great deal, although not as much as Francis Gentleman would have liked. In 1770, he wrote that,

> in an established winter-theatre, it used, and ought to be the rule, to have every distinct cast of playing supplied by persons who kept uniformly in that tract; now we find the hero of to-night, often more properly to-morrow night, performing a character of no consequence. . . . (453)

The most persistent "tract" for the actress, and one the public was likely to confuse with the performer herself, was that of the fickle or promiscuous woman.[18] The Actress in Christopher Bullock's The Per-juror (1717) has to fend off the sexual advances of the Justice. He professes, "my Bowels yearn for thee, to think of thy wicked profession"; then he eagerly sends her to his Drawing-Room, with the ironically considerate excuse that he will "examine her by [him] self," so as not to "expose her before the Crowd" (2[2]). When she repulses him, he admits that he "lusts"; yet she is still powerless against him because, as he informs her, if she says anything he will "forswear" it. His account, he is assured, will be believed, because "from [the actresses'] characters the World would believe it Malice" on her part (2[5]). As long as the profession of actress was considered "wicked," the stigma attached to it would continually besmear the women's private as well as public reputations.[19]

Even the later plays do not greatly help the actress establish acceptibility for her profession in society. The female player characters who refuse to play roles because they are "low" are portrayed satirically. We recall the "gentlewoman" Mrs O'Shochnesy, in Foote's The Minor, who makes a fine distinction between the role of "bawd," which she refuses, and "whore," which she would not mind playing (see Managers 95), and Mrs Squeamish in The Stage Mutineers, whose reputation for covering up her own bad "Actions" under

a pretty "Masque" precedes her entrance; for her, a "naughty" character is acceptable only in those with high social status. These playwrights are obviously not crusading on behalf of the actresses to help alter society's attitude towards them; nor is the author of The Managers (1768), nor Garrick in his one-act "Dramatic Entertainment" A Christmas Tale (1773), because, in these plays, female player characters knowingly use their sexuality to forward their own interests.

Tycho, in Garrick's play, is a squire who has been set to guard imprisoned Evil Spirits. He appears ill at ease when one of them, an Actress, approaches him:

> **ACTRESS.** Turn your eyes this way, beautiful Sir, and look upon me with an eye of pity.
> **TYCHO.** O, the females have found me out at last! What are you, a bon Jesuit?
> **ACTRESS.** I was an actress some months ago.
> **TYCHO.** An actress? What spirit's that?
> **ACTRESS.** A spirit to entertain the public. But quitting that for private practice--
> **TYCHO.** As you like private practice, I wish you joy of your situation.
> **ACTRESS.** If you would permit me to come forth and approach you, I would amuse you with my history.
> **TYCHO.** Many thanks, fair lady. But as I know nothing of acting, we are both much better as we are. . . . (Part 2, Scene 1)

The speed with which Tycho interrupts the Actress suggests that, while he might need the profession of "actress" explained to him, he knows immediately what "private practice" is. She is not given a chance to "come forth" and tell her story, because Tycho (possibly fearing that her past profession is similar to her present) prefers to keep her at a distance. The Actress, however, is not the only Evil Spirit Garrick imprisons. When Tycho hears singing, he asks the Actress if there are "singers and musicians" among them, to which she replies: "O yes, and dancers, actors, authors and managers too." Garrick exploits the Actress's humiliating position, but he also acknowledges that all thespians are "incarcerated" by their professional affiliation.

In the "comedy," The Managers, published in 1768 when the dispute over which actress should play Imogen in the Covent Garden production of Cymbeline was at its height,[20] the female player, Lessy (obviously Miss Lessingham), uses her intimate relationship with the manager, Pot-Ash, to acquire the roles she wants:

> **POT-ASH.** Believe me, my dearest Lessy, you shall

immediately be put into Possession of all the characters you mention. As you are ever willing to oblige me in every Particular, it would be the Height of Ingratitude in me to refuse you any Thing.

LESSY. I think I am at least as good a Figure as Mrs. Bates, and as capable of playing IMOGEN -- I believe you are sensible, that my Appearance in Man's clothes will not be to my Disadvantage -- my Limbs will bear to be exposed, as you can testify; for you have already seen me without Petticoats.

POT-ASH. True, my Dear, and you were always pleasing, always charming: my Ambition shall be to make you happy. Damn the Town! what signifies the Town to me! If I am but so happy as to please you I am satisfied, as I shall therein please myself.

LESSY. But what will little Sampson say?

POT-ASH. Am I to be govern'd by him? Is he to be my Ruler, my Director? I'll oppose him in every particular,-- merely for the sake of opposition. A little, dirty--

LESSY. Excuse me, my dear Pot-ash, as I have but just Time to dress before the curtain will draw up-- your's -- At nine o'Clock you may command me.

(1.1)

Lessy interrupts Pot-Ash as soon as her mission is accomplished. Managers have never been fond of displaying the "casting-couch" method of casting on stage, and no exception was made with this play. But the author makes it clear that Pot-ash's casting decision is influenced by the way the actress manipulates both his desire for her and his rivalry with his fellow manager.

In general, the contradictions set up in the female player characters serve only to make them appear capricious. The actresses' social vulnerability must have been a factor in their decisions, because they would, after all, incur a fine for refusing a role (Milhous, "Company Management" 28). Their reasons for declining certain parts therefore seem plausible, even, occasionally, laudable; yet they are still characterized as silly or irresponsible. The actresses in Woodward's A Lick at the Town and Fielding's Pasquin complain that their parts are too small; Clara, in Critic upon Critic, is "determined never to play the nun again" because she is "tired of the character" (3.1); and Mrs Exit, in The Author on the Wheel, hopes that "the character she endeavour'd to sustain last night being of so gross and indecent a nature . . . may be very well spar'd" (Scene 2). Miss Lovemode's protestation, in The Stage Mutineers, that her character is "so ill dress'd -- [she] shou'd be asham'd to appear in it" (Scene 1), brings us to another contentious issue, one that

the dramatists exploit because of its visual application.

The business of costume was particularly important for the actresses in the eighteenth century and often led to bitter disputes.[21] One of the most fascinating points about costuming that surfaces in the plays, and which I have not come across in other sources, is the one touched on earlier: the player characters are required to be "dress'd" for all rehearsals as if for a performance (see Theatres 111). Such a requirement is understandable for dress rehearsals, but many of them are the first held after the parts have been distributed. The playwrights make the point so often, in what they give their manager, prompter, and player characters to say, as to suggest that the practice was unusual, and therefore needed to be explained for an audience's benefit. The disappointment voiced by Mrs Hazard, when she is told that Mrs Clive cannot attend rehearsal, suggests why players were required to appear in their character costumes: "I had set my Heart upon seeing the poor thing rehears'd in its *proper* Dresses" (Bays in Petticoats Act 2, my italics).[22]

Early in the century, Steele informs us that "each [member of society] by some particular in their dress shew to what class they belong" (qtd. in Cunnington 22). Anne Buck agrees: "The view that dress expressed status in society was an unchallenged commonplace of the eighteenth century" (13). Buck inventories the various complexities revealed in the period's dress, pointing out that fashion between 1730 and 1770 remained relatively unchanged; the major changes in dress occurred between 1770 and 1800 (10):

> There are variations according to country, or regions within a country; the natural division of age and sex; the wearer's place or function in society, through status, occupation, or way of life; the ritual occasions of life; work and leisure; and, however limited, personal choice. (9)

Richard Sennett further explains the "function" of dress in society:

> The kind of labour performed could be read from the peculiar clothes adopted by each trade, as could the status of a laborer in his craft by glancing at certain ribbons and buttons he wore. In the middle ranks of society, barristers, accountants, and merchants each wore distinctive decorations, wigs, or ribbons. The upper ranks of society appeared on the street in costumes which not merely set them apart from the lower orders but dominated the street. . . . Whether people were in fact what they wore was less important

> than their desire to wear something recognizable in order to be someone on the street. (65, 67)

Even though there was little done before the next century to dress all the performers in a production authentically according to time and place, the business of costuming was not least a major financial consideration. Sennett advocates that, visually and verbally, there was a bridge between the stage and the street, and that the theatre offers "a correlation between belief in the persona of the actor and belief in conventions" (37). Thus the eighteenth-century stage offered "a common code of believability" (38), which members of the public could use to communicate with strangers, as well as with each other. The use of appropriate rather than authentic costumes would, therefore, be necessary in order to retain the affinity between what Sennett distinguishes as "stage costume" and "street dress" (38).

The evidence offered by the playwrights is obviously not as clear as the visual representations of performers by the painters of the period;[23] but it does give us some idea of how conventional and easily recognizable costumes were used to identify and comment on the characters of player and playwright, and their work. We saw how Miss Lovemode in The Stage Mutineers refused to play her part because the character was "so ill dress'd." Her objection about the inappropriateness of the costume, however, is personal not professional: "I hope, Sir, I am not to appear in these cloaths--they have been out o'Fashion this week, and I wou'd no more appear in an old Fashion Gown on the stage than I wou'd off it" (Scene 1). There is no direction informing us that she is holding, rather than wearing "these cloaths," so we may assume that the actress playing the role is indicating what she is actually wearing on stage. If so, the playwright illustrates, simultaneously, both kinds of character: the one Miss Lovemode has been asked to play and the one she is. Also embedded in the moment is an allusion to the convention of dressing characters in appropriate costume, and the ensuing frustration with those players who refuse to do so. In The Author on the Wheel, the references to costume offer an amusing insight into the players' real fear of being pelted. As we have seen, the actors are called to receive and rehearse cuts for Vainwit's damned play. On arrival in the green room, they begin to exchange stories about their previous night's experiences; this leads to a discussion about the fruit thrown by the audience, and the consequent embarrassment of one of the actresses:

> **SOCK.** . . . some pleasant gentleman upstairs, not satisfied with what she was saying threw a Windsor pear with such vehemence against her head-dress,

> that it unfortunately gave way and expos'd her bald pate and a few hairs of a side ha! ha! (all laugh)
> **THESPIS.** The Gods saluted me with a few apples and oranges, but having a large wig on they did me no other damage than making the powder fly about.
> (Scene 2)

The tall head-dresses worn by the actresses on top of their wigs were an obvious liability.

Fielding uses theatrical conventions in make-up as well as costume to make fun of his characters, and to ensure that the audience recognized his characterizations. In Pasquin, he refers to the flour used for making-up ghosts to reveal the absurdities in Fustian's tragedy, and to satirize the kind of plays being produced at Drury Lane. The tragedy-poet is determined to have the first ghost appear, even though the player has "such a churchyard cough, he will not be heard to the middle of the pit" (1.1). But when the poor actor does emerge, he is not floured. The Barber who was to have done the make-up has apparently "gone to Drury Lane play-house to shave the Sultan in the new entertainment." My earlier point about the actress, who plays the Queen of Common-Sense, having a legitimate excuse for missing a scene because of her quick change, is made plausible when we discover her accomplishment. After Fustian has remonstrated with her, he says, almost apologetically, "Well, let me wipe the flour off your face then; and now if you please rehearse the scene. . ." (5.1). Either the Barber returned, this female player is competent enough to put on her own make-up, or somebody else did it for her. Her whitened face would, of course, guarantee the audience's recognition of her ghostly role.

In The Critic, Sheridan uses costume to denote the status of both the roles in Puff's play and the actresses who are performing them. When the heroine Tilburina and the Confidant enter, both supposedly mad, they are dressed in what Puff, using his own text as his authority, declares are the conventional costumes for madness:

> **PUFF.** Yes, Sir--now she comes in stark mad in white satin.
> **SNEER.** Why in white satin?
> **PUFF.** O Lord, Sir--when a heroine goes mad, she always goes into white satin--don't she, Dangle?
> **DANGLE.** Always--it's a rule.
> **PUFF.** Yes--here it is--[looking at the book.] 'Enter Tiburina stark mad in white satin, and her confidant stark mad in white linen.'
> [Enter TILBURINA and CONFIDANT mad, according to custom.]

> **SNEER.** But what the deuce, is the confidant to be mad too?
> **PUFF.** To be sure she is, the confidant is always to do whatever her mistress does; weep when she weeps, smile when she smiles, go mad when she goes mad. -- Now madam confidant -- but -- keep your madness in the back ground, if you please. (3.1)

Puff's treatment of the supporting actress emphasizes what the material of her costume has already indicated: her status is inferior to that of the leading lady. A contemporary review of Sheridan's "Dramatic Piece" confirms that the conventional costumes of tragedy were exaggerated; moreover, that the costumes themselves created a style of dialogue which spoke to the audience. The Morning Chronicle of November 4, 1779, states that "[t]here is a vast deal of wit in the length of Miss Pope's train [as Tilburina]; and . . . the enormous ruffs of Raleigh and his companions contain some excellent repartees and bon-mots" (qtd. in Price, Dramatic Works 475).[24] These exaggerations were obviously deliberate, for the play was advertised "With New Scenes, Dresses, and Decorations. The Scenery designed by DeLoutherbourg and executed under his direction" (qtd. in LS 5.1: 292).

Kitty Clive uses the money-saving device of not requiring costume changes for her characters in Bays in Petticoats not only to reveal the failings of her dilettante playwright, but also to highlight differences between street clothes and stage costume. Before we see Mrs Hazard we are given an indication of her social class by the number of servants she has, so that when Witling describes her attire as "a horrid Dress" and asks her if it is her "Rehearsal Habiliment" (1.1), we are alerted to her occupational rather than her social status. The clothes that Witling considers "horrid" might be an ideal costume for her to wear to rehearsal because, according to Young Psalter in The Critic Anticipated, "Gentlemen [or, in this case, gentlewoman] poets" should dress "very shabbily" (24). Clive is, of course, also showing her own willingness as an actress to dress appropriately for her role, even if it does mean she has to wear something "horrid." We have already seen that Mrs Hazard does not change into the Marcella costume, in spite of Witling's eagerness to see her "in a Play-house Dress" (Act 2).

Even though provincial audiences often lacked the sophistication of those in London, costume as a sign of status was just as important to them. Francis Gentleman tells the story about a "rustic" member of the audience watching Garrick perform Archer in The Beaux Stratagem. Apparently he refused to believe that Garrick was playing the role because, as he said, "a great man would never wear

livery; however, in the last act, where Archer was dressed like a gay and blooming bride-groom, he readily admitted the truth" (Dramatic Censor 2: 476). In No Play this Night!, the stroller Sylvester Daggerwood declares that when he became manager of his present company the actors' "distress vanished," as they "cast the ragged tatters of their old garments, to put on the more comfortable attire of [his] wardrobe" (Scene 3). Had the play been licensed and performed, an audience would have expected to see the player characters in "comfortable" rather than tattered costumes. Sennett suggests that such a distinction in costume would be important for mid-century audiences, because "they demanded a sharp discontinuity between the two realms [stage and street] when stage characters were those of the lower orders of society; these wretches people turned a blind eye toward in the city; they wanted to be equally blind in the theater" (71).

Such blindness would not always be possible in the provincial theatres, where the status and apparel of the players were often not "[a]bove the level of degrading poverty, [at which] the street clothing of all ranks was usable almost intact as stage costume" (Sennett 71). Charlotte Charke substantiates the existence of such poverty in provincial companies when she refers to the lack of costumes among "the most deplorable Set of Non-Performers at Bradford that ever wrecked the Heart of Tragedy, or committed Violence on the Ears of the Groundlings"; apparently, she records, "there was not a Wig and a Half throughout the whole Company; and, I believe, there was not above two Men that could boast of more than an equal Quantity of Shirts" (259). And yet costume, as a sign of their own and their characters' status, obviously mattered to the strollers. Templeton briefly describes how costumes were distributed, when he recounts what happened on his and his wife's arrival at a provincial theatre for a performance of Romeo and Juliet, after only two days' rehearsal:

> I directly, amidst her hopes and fears, led her to the ladies' dressing-room, and then hastened to my own. The properties for the first performers were very respectable, but for the subordinate ones, most despicable. I chose an appropriate dress, and having my hair put in order, or rather, out of order, for the lovelorn youth, was soon equipped.
>
> (2: 12)

Parker, in A View of Society and Manners, explains how his fellow actors dressed themselves as appropriately as they could from their meagre stock, in some cases for more than one role in an evening's entertainment:

> From the smallness of the Company, which consisted

> only of five Men, Lady Townley doubled the part of John Moody in the first scene of the Lady; and her change to the servant was effected by a horseman's coat being drawn over her female habit, and a wig and flapped hat over her head-dress. . . . (165)

Gabble, in A Green Room Scene, also cuts a "woeful appearance" in his "meagre and ragged" costume. The rags, however, are not in this instance indicators of his position as prompter, but of his pecuniary state, since his services have not been required by the animals, the new stars of the theatre's entertainments! Except when playwrights want to make a point about the spectacle of the strollers' appearance in the costumes they wear for performances, as in The Strolers, they offer remarkably few instances of their generic costume. Perhaps their motives had not so much to do with their reluctance to advertise the strollers' paucity of stock, as with their presumption that the London players would refuse to wear shabby costumes.

Because apparel could signify status, occupation, and condition, both on the stage and in the street, the business of costume, for players and playwrights alike, had less to do with authenticity and more to do with appropriateness. It is hardly remarkable that playwrights tend not to describe what must have been obvious to those watching the players on stage; they reserve their descriptions of what their characters are wearing for when they want to draw attention to their unconventional use of such visual images. Such instances often vivify the performers on the stage for us, and are highlighted by the playwrights' employment of the rehearsal device, which sets up a conventional mise en scène that clearly demonstrates that reforms were necessary.

Every person working in the theatre was in some way involved in the process of rehearsals. Garrick is reputed to have improved the system (LS 4.1: xciv), especially with regard to the amount of time allotted to a new play, and the commitment and discipline of the players. As Davies records: "Punctuality in attendance at rehearsals was exacted and complied with, and as much due attendance paid to the business of the scene as during the time of acting a play" (Memoirs 1: 111). However, the plays written during the period of Garrick's management of Drury Lane (1747-1776) do not reveal a significant difference in the player characters' attitude to rehearsals from that shown in the earlier or later drama. The players are characterized as being inveterately lax in the matter of punctuality and attendance.

The excuses the player characters submit give us some idea of what managers, as well as other players, had to deal with in the business of rehearsals. Appleton tells us that

Macklin and Garrick agreed on "the necessity to regularize rehearsals":

> Actors, compelled by the repertory system to know scores of parts, generally relied on conventional attitudes, gestures, and tones to carry them through a performance and felt little enthusiasm for this discipline. Sometimes they were absent from rehearsals. Often they arrived late, stumbled through their lines and drifted away. (160)

The playwrights reveal a consistent history of rehearsal infractions. In Pasquin (1736), the authors are forced to interrupt the rehearsal because one actor, who has a cough, has not arrived and another, after stepping outside for a moment, has been arrested; in The Historical Register (1737), the actresses are practising their dancing and cannot attend the author's rehearsal; in Bays in Petticoats (1750), the actress excuses herself from rehearsal because she is busy collecting subscriptions; in The Hodge Podge (1781), the players care little about punctuality because, as the prompter points out, the rehearsal is only for a benefit; in The Author on the Wheel (1785), one of the actresses cannot attend because she has a cold; and in Poor Old Haymarket (1792), the prompter's ironic greeting to the actresses--"Ladies your Servant. --What you are come to Rehearsal this Morning" (12)--indicates that their appearance, at least before noon, is unusual.

Most playwrights would have us believe that the players are usually at fault when rehearsals cannot go forward, but some offer examples of players who are punctual, even keen to begin rehearsals. In Pasquin several players gather on the stage, waiting for the comedy and tragedy poets to arrive. One actor is particularly anxious to get started because, he says, "I have a long part in both, and it's past ten o-clock" (1.1). The arrival of the actor Mr Emphasis in The Historical Register is early enough to be remarked upon by another player. But it is indigestion, rather than keenness for work, that brings him to the theatre before his usual time: "Why, faith, Jack, our beer and beef sat but ill on my stomach, so I got up to try if I could not walk it off" (1.1). In Bays in Petticoats the musicians arrive half an hour before the players, but they "are gone to dress" by "after Ten," long before Mrs Hazard finally arrives for the rehearsal, following the fashion of her predecessor Marsilia in The Female Wits. It is even later in the morning when Vainwit, in The Author on the Wheel, arrives at the theatre to meet the manager Drama, who suggests that they proceed immediately to the green room, as "'tis past eleven [and] the Actors are waiting for [him]" (Scene 1).

Ten o'clock in the morning was apparently the regular starting time for most rehearsals, whether they were called by management or players. Hopkins gives an example of the latter case in the entry dated 12 October 1769, in his Memorandum Book:

> A renearsal of As You Like It was call'd by Mrs Barry's desire at ten. She sent word to have the Rehearsal put off for half an hour. The performers staid for her till past eleven, but she not coming they went away. (qtd. in LS 4.1: xcv)

We are not told if these Drury Lane players left because they had other rehearsals to attend, which would have been Edward Cape Everard's excuse. He records in his Memoirs how busy an eighteenth-century actor's day might be from ten o'clock on:

> The porter, or call-man, used to come to my lodgings of a morning, and, knocking at my door, this little dialogue used to pass:- "Mr Everard!" -- "Well, James." -- "At ten o'clock, if you please, to As You Like It." -- "Very well." -- "At eleven, in the Green Room to the reading the New Play." --"Very well." -- "At twelve, to Much ado about Nothing,-- Mr Garrick will be there." -- "Very well!" -- "At one, in the practising room below, Mr Grimaldi's dances in the Tempest." -- "Very well, James!" -- "At two, on the stage, Mr Slingsby's dance, the Savage Hunters." -- "Very well, that's quite enough!" -- "At half-past two, Signior Dagueville's Double Festival." -- "Well, well, get along!" -- "At three o'clock, Mr Atkin's Sailor's Revels." -- "Bless you, get along!" "At half-past three, Signior Galli's practice of" -- I, out of patience, "'Sdeath, don't bother me any more; I'll be there from ten in the morning 'till twelve at night. (40)

Everard's schedule, though doubtless exaggerated, also tells us that the rehearsal on stage was of paramount importance. Only the actresses in Fielding's The Historical Register excuse themselves for not appearing on stage because of other rehearsals elsewhere in the building; for them, practising their dancing is obviously more important, or more fun, than rehearsing the play. Everard's satirical claim about the limited length of rehearsal time given to any one item is in sharp contrast with Appleton's account of Macklin's rehearsals for Macbeth, during the Covent Garden season of 1773-74: "Rehearsals began, as usual, at ten, but continued until the unconscionable hour of three in the afternoon--far longer than ordinarily" (175).

Scheduled company rehearsals on stage were usually devoted to technical matters involving scenes and machines,

and delivery of lines. Interpretation of each role was left to the performers to do on their own, or, in the case of newcomers, with the assistance of another player's instruction.[25] William Cooke, in his Memoirs of Charles Macklin, quotes Benjamin Victor's account of how rehearsals were conducted during the time of the triumvirate at Drury Lane:

> If a new play . . . was coming on, the first three readings fell to the share of the Author: if a revived play, it fell to the share of the Manager, who was the principal performer in it. The readings over, there followed a limited number of rehearsals with their parts in the players [sic] hands; after which, a distant morning was appointed for every person in the play to appear perfect, because the rehearsals only then begin to be of use to the Actor. When he is quite perfect in the words and cues, he can then be instructed, and practise his proper entrées, emphasis, attitudes, and exits. (402)

Insufficient rehearsals do not appear to have prevented a performance.

Samuel Foote intimates that the scheduling of plays for performance depended very much on the players and their availability. In Tragedy A-La-Mode (the second act of Diversions of the Morning), the Prompter tells Project, the manager, that "We had better do Romeo, to-morrow, Sir; for Juliet expects soon to lie-in. She is, indeed, already so big, that we can scarce get her up to the balcony." We have already heard that Mrs Storm, "will most certainly play on Friday; but Monday after she begs to be excus'd; -- for as she intends to be sick that day, it will be dangerous to come out of doors" (Wilkinson 1: 287). Sheridan complains, in a letter to William Adam in 1796, about the difficulties of scheduling for one of his leading ladies, because of her many pregnancies: ". . . when Mrs Jordan's *time comes* to play according to the Letter of her article she will be unfit to perform anything worth her salary" (Letters 2: 52). Sarah Siddons, like Dorothy Jordan, frequently performed during the last months of pregnancy, and Anne Oldfield had a midwife backstage during Cato, in which she played Cato's virgin daughter (Highfill et al, Biographical Dictionary 11: 109). Prompter is at least given warning of impending absenteeism; players often sent excuses when it was too late to change the advertised play. The author of No Play This Night! illustrates the difficulties players might encounter when their colleagues fail to appear. Sylvester Daggerwood relates how, unexpectedly, he had to play more than one character during a performance, the consequences of which he

discovered too late. Rather than explain how he managed to fight with himself in a duel scene, he demonstrates his performance, with what would presumably have been hilarious results had the play ever been produced. Problems of finding enough players for performances must have been common for strolling companies. According to a British Library manuscript, there were six "Members of a Commonwealth Company Who Left Mr. Jones at Cardigan May the 8th. 1741" (Add. MS 33488 f21b). These four men and two women performed, among other plays, The Beaux Stratagem and The Spanish Fryar. By May 16, a Mr Cushing had left the company, and "Mr Hurrel and his wife Left the Companie June the 14th. 1741" (f27a). The entries continue to list performances of the two plays mentioned until July 15 (f32b). More than doubling of roles would have been necessary when the company was finally reduced to Charles Morison, his wife Mary, and James Holliss.

THE CREATIVE PROCESS

Many of the critics who professed a theory of acting in the eighteenth century were not players, and some of them were not even theatrical practitioners of any kind; nevertheless, their approaches to the art of performance are mainly prescriptive.[26] Charles Gray explains this is partially due to the fact that "the actor's business . . . was to follow the tradition" that had come down from Shakespeare's day (23). Players new to a role, says Davies, often had to fight the prejudice of the audience, whose conservatism led them to prefer those interpretations that had been established by previous holders of that same role (Memoirs 1: 39). But many eighteenth-century players did not follow tradition, and their rivalry "for popular approval" led to more descriptive "theoretical explanations and defenses of the different styles" of acting (Gray 23).[27] We can use both the prescriptive and descriptive theories to ascertain how much the playwrights understood about acting techniques, and how they used their knowledge in the portraits of the players. In this way, it might be possible to determine the nature of the eighteenth-century player's art as it is embedded in the texts.

There was general agreement among theorists that a player's minimum requirements for the stage were a "voice, figure, and expressive action" (John Hill 1755, 11). But in order "to improve and render [these natural abilities] useful," the player must also have "judgment" and observe the rules (Hill 1755, 11). The lists of rules put forward by the various critics and theorists are remarkably similar. They concern the display of passions (including an inventory of

those required), the use of voice and gesture, and the vocal and physical differences required for playing tragedy and comedy. They establish a code of conventions that must have been prevalent on the stage at the time; it is this code, along with the many illustrations of theatrical scenes and players, which serves as the basis for modern scholarship on the art of acting in the eighteenth century.[28] In The Actor; or, Guide to the Stage (published in 1821 as a "re-arrangement of Mr. Aaron Hill's celebrated Essay upon the Histrionic Art"), we are told that the "mechanical rules submitted by Mr. Hill . . . are offered for consultation rather than practice, and must be considered more as tests of perfect action, than as methods to obtain it" (25-6). In "The Art and Duty of an Actor," Charles Macklin offers more practical advice: "the actor must take especial care not to mould and suit the character to his looks, tones, gestures and manners," rather "he must suit his looks, tones, gestures, and manners to the character" (qtd. in Cole 122). The Sentimental Spouter's instruction is less about technique; the actor is told that his "chief endeavour should be to enter in such a manner into the spirit of the part as to forget, in a great measure, that he is acting" (182). The rehearsal plays provide examples of the results of all the advice and the teaching, in a practical and appropriate context. The playwrights suggest that the London professional players, for the most part, followed the recommendations; the strollers were less successful.

One particular aspect of the actors' conduct recurs. Most of them wait patiently and calmly whenever a playwright who is directing the rehearsal talks to his or her visitors; they are then able to pick up the dialogue from where they were interrupted, and continue in character without hesitation.[29] Whenever the player characters are directly addressed or given a note to which they respond, we might assume that they speak as themselves. But the degree of change or difference in character between their rehearsal-play role and their main-play role could, of course, only fully be revealed by the actors in performance. Because the players were originating their roles in the texts under examination, we can assume, however, that they were under no constraints to interpret their characters according to tradition. Thus, what the audience saw on opening night would have been each player's ultimate selection of the interpretative choices explored during the creative process. The texts offer clues about what the players might have selected to distinguish between their main and inner play characters, as well as what alternatives they might have considered as they entered "into the spirit of" their parts.

In 1775, William Cooke declared what many actors still

know to be true: that comedy is harder to play than tragedy. He explains,

> The tragedian has little to do but to reflect upon his own thoughts, and draw from his heart those sentiments which will certainly make their way to the hearts of others; whilst the comedian must take many forms, and change himself, like a second Proteus, almost into as many persons as he undertakes to divert. (Dramatic Criticism 161)

Although nearly all the plays being discussed belong to the comic genre, not all the players were renowned comedians. But the playwrights offer little assistance in their texts. Boaden reports that stage directions on how to play characters were not regularly available:

> Such hints are few even among our early writers. When, therefore, the great actor has fully imbibed the poet's design, he then reverts to the stores of his own observation, and accidents in real life become lessons, which enable him to throw the truth of imitation upon the character which is under his study. . . . Such studies are absolutely essential to the actor, for whom the closet alone will do little. Without this actual experience of life, he will certainly be unfaithful to the poet, and deliver his text in the usual style of meagre declamation. (Memoirs of Mrs Siddons 2: 178-79)

Sheridan, as we have seen, is one playwright who offers useful, but subtle assistance with interpretation.

The text of The Critic marks differences between the characters the actresses play in Puff's play and those they have as players. These distinctions reveal some of the interpretations the eighteenth-century players might have chosen for performance. When the actress playing the role of Puff's romantic heroine, Tilburina, is interrupted by Puff reminding her to use her handkerchief, she is given various choices for the delivery of her response, which appears to cut into Puff's line. For instance, she might use a submissive, irate, or merely polite tone, as if she were excusing her mistake, or reminding the playwright of a direction, previously given but obviously forgotten. The lines lend themselves to any of these interpretative choices:

> **TILBURINA.** . . . nor lark,
> Linnet, nor all the finches of the grove!
> **PUFF.** Your white handkerchief madam--
> **TILBURINA.** I thought, Sir, I wasn't to use that 'till, 'heart rending woe.'
> **PUFF.** O yes madam--at 'the finches of the grove,'

if you please.
TILBURINA. Nor lark,
Linnet, nor all the finches of the grove!
[Weeps.
PUFF. Vastly well madam! (2.2)

She continues, with no textual indication that she takes any notice of the compliments paid her by Puff, Dangle, or Sneer. Later in the scene, however, Sheridan makes her feelings more clear. She has cut many of Puff's lines and refuses to relent at his protestations, placating him with a matter-of-fact "it will connect very well"; but when Puff comments on her acting, her response is more abrupt:

> **PUFF.** O dear ma'am, you must start a great deal more than that; consider you had just determined in favour of duty--when in a moment the sound of his voice revives your passion,--overthrows your resolution, destroys your obedience.--If you don't express all that in your start--you do nothing at all.
> **TILBURINA.** Well, we'll try again! (2.2)

The exact extent to which Tilburina is enraged by Puff is not stipulated in the text, but the inclusion of "Well" before "we'll" necessitates, in the sounding of two similar words with their respective short and long 'e' vowels, that she be precise and emphatic in her articulation, regardless of the helpful exclamatory punctuation. Jane Pope, who originally played the role, was an actress whom Fitzgerald called "[t]he paragon of chambermaids; the pert, sly, jocose abigail of modern comedy" (History of English Stage 2: 298); and one who was known for her loud voice (see note 9, Theatres 130). I imagine that she would have parodied the manner of the tragic actresses of the day and brought all the weight of Tilburina's tragic hauteur down on the hapless poet.

Patent, in Garrick's The Meeting of the Company, suggests that when an actor subordinates his own person to that of the character he is performing, problems may arise. Bayes remarks to Patent that the players appear "rather more conceited than they were." Patent's explanation for their behaviour touches on the idea of a player's inability to return to his or her own character after playing an appealing role:

> **PATENT.** The matter is this, Mr. Bayes, being just returned from the country, where they play kings and heroes, and they can't be lowered immediately. In a few days, by good discipline and waking them from their dreams of royalty, they'll be very civil again and very good subjects.
> **BAYES.** Poor fellows. Their weak heads are easily turned. (243)

Patent's droll explanation is obviously for poor Bayes's benefit, but, because we know how Garrick felt about the importance of discipline among the players in his company, from his own correspondence and the comments of his contemporaries,[30] we might assume there to be some truth in the manager's observation. We know that Garrick intended the main subject of his satire to be Bayes's lesson, his "Art of Acting," which was to "shew all ye false manner of acting Tragedy & Comedy" (Letters 782); but perhaps recognition of the damaging influence of "their dreams of royalty" might also have been part of the players' "Excellent Lesson." Bayes asks those players who are "the least fit to be either the hero in a tragedy or fine gentleman in a comedy" to step forward. Nobody moves; however, when the question is reversed, all except Weston advance. Such dreams of grandeur were evidently inappropriate for members of the acting profession and therefore risible. And yet Garrick himself took great pains to become a "fine gentleman," not in comedy, but in real life.[31] It is difficult to determine how many targets Garrick is aiming at with his satire, because of his close affiliation with the roles of player, playwright, and manager.

Weston was famous for his "low comedy" roles, and known to have "caused [Garrick] frequent vexation" (Highfill et al, Biographical Dictionary 16: 7). Garrick, undoubtedly, uses the antics of his character "Weston" to satirize Bayes; but he is, perhaps, also using the audience's knowledge of Weston to type-cast the actor in a recognizable comic role, so that they can laugh both with and at him. Boaden tells us that if Weston and fellow "humourists" Edwin or Liston, were given "the ghost of a character, they invested its thinness in corporeal substance: . . . an outline of figure was all that was wanting to their art; they infused into it the richness of their own comic imagination in aid of irresistible features, and completed the work designed by another hand" (Memoirs of Mrs Siddons 2:105). The actor might have taken "especial care," deliberately "to mould and suit the character to his looks, tones, gestures and manners," against Macklin's advice, nevertheless using great skill to give a credible rather than a self-parodying performance. On the other hand, because he was playing himself, he might have entered "into the spirit" of the part, thereby appearing as if he were not "acting." James Boaden's recollections of Weston as Abel Drugger hint at which alternative the actor would have selected:

> But Weston was the thing itself . . . it might be almost questioned whether it were *acting* at all; since the man excited precisely the same feeling *in* his profession, and out of it. (Memoirs of Mrs. Siddons 1: 50-51)

Garrick appears to have required Weston to subordinate his own character to that of his role; but, if Patent and Boaden are correct, the actor had a firm grasp on his art and reality.

Because the plays in which the practitioners appear are usually satires, burlesques, comedies, or farces, we might expect a staged discussion of the rules of acting to be based on exaggeration rather than perfection of the player's art. Garrick uses his "Weston" to make fun of the bombastic style of acting demonstrated by Bayes in his lesson to the players, and manifest in the character called simply "Tragedy Actor." The renowned tragedian Hurst originally played this role, but he is only occasionally mentioned by name in the text. The fact that the comedians, Weston and Parsons, are designated and referred to by name throughout, implies that it was more important for those actors to play themselves than for Hurst to play the tragedian. In the dispute scene between Weston and the Tragedy Actor, the audience is given clear signals for the satire: one was Weston himself and another was what must have been the conventional code of acting principles. Weston declares he "could play tragedy as well as the best" of them:

> **TRAGEDY ACTOR.** Don't imagine, Sir, because you can make an audience laugh in Jerry Sneak, Dr. Last, etc., that you can speak heroic verse and touch the passions. (struts about.)
> **WESTON.** Why not? 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 perriwig 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. (241)

When Patent interrupts, telling them not to "quarrel about nothing," the Tragedy Actor is furious. Patent then says to him, "Dear Mr. Hurst, don't put on a tragedy face to me." The tone of this scene serves as a prelude to the ridiculous method proposed by Bayes, when he instructs the tragedy players on how to "extort applause" from an audience:

> Distort yourselves -- now rage, now start, now pause.
> Beat breast, roll eyes, stretch nose, up brows, down jaws.
> Then strut, stride, stare, goggle, bounce and bawl,
> And when you're out of breath, pant, drag and drawl.
> (247)

Weston's image of the tragedian's acting is mild by comparison! Garrick distinguishes between the light-hearted fun the comedian has at the tragedian's expense and the ludicrous intensity of the amateur playwright's instruction. A lesson in good acting is obviously needed, for players and playwrights alike.

The character of Theophilus Cibber, in James Miller's The Coffee-House, believes that actors often face the danger of becoming the characters they play, but warns against judging actual players' characters by the roles they perform. Cibber played "Cibber, a Comedian," on the opening night, which was damned, but not necessarily because of his performance; as we have seen, some Templars were upset because they believed the setting "reflected on a pet coffee-house of their own" (Nicoll, Early Eighteenth-Century Drama 13). In the play, Cibber (perhaps with a degree of realism and sincerity that the performer playing himself might bring to the written words) relates how an actor can be caught in a vicious circle when he mimics a character too well. Not only does he eventually become the character off-stage as well as on, but the only roles he is offered are similar in type to the character he has become:

> **GAYWOOD.** . . . Why, 'tis your Business, you know, to represent the World.
> **CIBBER.** Yes, and I am very sorry 'tis so; for as People who mock others that squint, come to squint themselves at last; so the Follies we mimick on the stage are apt to become real Habits to us. For my own Part, now, I off the Stage as well as on sometimes play the Fop, and sometimes the Fool; am sometimes sober, and sometimes drunk; now and then have a Scantling of Wit, but seldom or never a Grain of Common-Sense -- or if I had I'm sure it must be all my own.
> **HART.** Why so?
> **CIBBER.** Because few of our modern Authors are able to furnish me with any.
> **GAYWOOD.** Thou art a merry Fellow, Cibber.
> **CIBBER.** And what's the worse on't, the world generally judge of us too from the Characters we play. I'm sure I wish our Poets were hang'd for giving me always such scurvy Parts. (Scene 2)

Cibber, renowned for his portrayal of the character of Pistol, disguises himself as a drunk to further the plot in Miller's play. Here is evidence which suggests that the characters, and performances of players named as themselves were likely to be well suited to the patrons' expectations. It also suggests that the development of the players' art was given less consideration than their audience appeal, which was frequently influenced by their appearance.

In Bays in Petticoats, when Mrs Hazard offers advice to the players before the rehearsal, Clive uses the reputations and characteristics of the named players cast in her piece for an added touch of humour in the scene:[32]

> **MRS HAZARD.** Miss Thomas, your Servant. Upon my Word, I am extremely happy to have you in my Performance; you'll do amazing well. Only I must beg you'd throw in as much Spirit as you can, without overdoing it; for that same Thing the Players call Spirit, they sometimes turn into Rant and Noise. Oh, Mr. Beard! your most Obedient. Sir, I shall be vastly oblig'd to you, I am sure; do you know that you sing better than any of 'em? But I hope you'd consider the Part you are to act with Marcella, is to be done with great Scorn: therefore, as you have such a smiling, good-humour'd Face, I beg you'll endeavour to smother as many of your Dimples as you can in that Scene with her. (Act 2)

"Scorn," the 1821 handbook The Actor, or Guide to the Stage tells us, "is negligent Anger," and "this expression will be gained most effectually by a seeming unsinewy slackness of muscles" (14)--quite a task for an actor with dimples!

More serious discussion of the player's technique does not occur in the plays until later in the century, when the actors enact their trepidations about the size of the newly enlarged London theatres. But even those concerns focus not so much on the development of a player's artistic ability as on his or her ability to please an audience. Because of the increasing number of available accounts written about the actor's art after 1750, the audiences were probably as well informed as some of the playwrights, many of whom obviously knew enough about acting techniques to use them profitably to enhance their plays' popularity.

Judgment and discernment are major factors in theoretical discussions. The best player, we are told, is the one who shows both qualities, and the most judicious and discerning player is the one who appears most natural. As John Hill says, "the consummate artifice of the performer is to conceal the art by which she [nature] is assisted" (1755, 6). Good players work hard at their art, developing the necessary skills and technique to please the audience; great players, "the best, most pleasing" players, however, "receive and establish nature as the ground-work of all; but they raise upon this basis a structure, in which art has the most considerable share" (J. Hill 1755, 6). It seems sadly ironic that the strollers, who constantly and most naturally live their parts, even using their characters' lines as their own

off stage, are criticized for their conspicuous and exaggerated artifice on stage. The words Garrick uses to criticize strollers in a letter to his brother Peter, dated 1762, echo twelve years later in The Meeting of the Company, in Bayes's instructions (see above, 162):

> I don't know how it is, but the Strollers are a hundred years behind hand -- We in Town are Endeavouring to bring the Sock & Buskin down to Nature, but they still keep to their Strutting, bouncing & mouthing. . . . (Letters 367)

We have already seen what the stroller Templeton thought of the London professionals' supposed "pre-eminence" (3: 37). The differences of opinion, in Garrick's and Templeton's observations on the art of the London versus the provincial players, warn of the dangers of making or accepting sweeping generalizations regarding the eighteenth-century player's art. Sarah Siddons, for instance, came from a family of strollers. The bias against strollers, stated unequivocally by Garrick, did not diminish in the last half of the century. Playwrights continued to show strollers ranting and strutting. As Samuel Foote says in his own person, in his play The Minor, when he admonishes an Actor for his acting style, "Sir, this will never do, you must get rid of your high notes, and country cant. Oh, 'tis the true stroling--" (Introduction).

The playwrights rarely distinguish between good and bad strolling players, although O'Keeffe offers Rover in Wild Oats as an exception. Rover is not altogether free of the stroller's habit of quoting as he talks, but he is aware that art can appear unnatural and inappropriate. When Gammon refuses to shelter him from "A Storm of Rain," farmer Banks comes to his rescue. Rover promptly kneels down in the rain and curses Gammon in spouter fashion, but he soon realizes how ridiculous he must appear, breaks off, and leaves with Banks. Rover is admired for his "qualities that honour human nature, and accomplishments that might grace a prince," as well as for "his gaiety -- then so devilish pleasant in his quotations, which, on the moment, he dashes in a parody, so whimsically apposite to every occasion as it offers" (1.2). While he is "certainly a very good Actor" and better than most strollers, according to the country manager Lamp, who is eager to employ him, nobody calls him "great." He is easily recognized as an actor by Sim, the simplest of country folk, who is fooled neither by Rover's skill nor his costume. Seeing him, Sim exclaims, "gadzooks, he be one of the Play! acted Tom Fool in King Larry at Lymington t'other night -- I thought I knowed the face, thof [sic] he had a straw cap and a blanket about'n" (2.2). O'Keeffe ends the play before the performance of the private theatricals (for which Rover and his group of amateurs have been preparing), so our only

personal observation of his histrionic ability is his impromptu display in the rain. Even though some contemporary accounts of real actors suggest that a stroller or provincial player could be a "great" player,[33] the evidence offered by the playwrights does nothing to alter their reputation for "country cant." The playwrights promulgate the eighteenth-century stroller's image on the London stage as a figure of fun, rather than as a serious artist.

With so little time given to rehearsals, and with such exacting demands made on the player to say the poet's words and not improvise, a major part of the players' art relied on their ability to learn lines, quickly and perfectly. John Hill tells us that "A free spirit and a great discernment are very necessary to the player, but memory more than all" (1755, 251). Garrick's plea to his brother, George, in a letter dated "Sunday [February 8, 1767]," to send him the prompt script of The Jealous Wife, so that he could study his role in preparation for a "bespoke" performance for the monarch, shows his desperation. The play was performed on Thursday, February 12, 1767, with Garrick as Oakly:

> I am very much flabbergasted that my good King will see me in Oakly . . . but I can't do without the book, ye Stage book, I have forgot it all, & am very uneasy indeed . . . this damn'd Oakly is a Crust for Me indeed, I wish it don't prove too hard for my teeth, & rub my Gums. pray let me have it as soon as possible, the part I mean . . . I must be a[t] London (which I'm sorry for) on Tuesday to run over my Scenes on Wednesday Morning-- I have not play'd Oakly these three Years-- Sick-- Sick-- Sick-- & Mrs P[ritchar]d will make me Sicker-- great Bubbies, Noddling head, & no teeth-- O Sick-- Sick-- Spew --
>
> Johnston is an Irishman-- blunder-- blunder-- could I hope that Mr Ramus would get ye Jealous Wife put off-- but that's impossible I must do it, I'd give 5 Guineas to have the Prompter's Book now. . . . (Letters 556-57)

Even the playwrights do not make their player characters exclaim with quite the agony Garrick displays here. Templeton tells us that he, and his wife Caroline, were given new parts after one night's performance, to be ready for the next evening. Caroline had learnt half the part before going to bed, and completed it the following day by noon (2: 29). Mrs Siddons tended to learn her roles quickly without procrastination, especially after her experience with Lady Macbeth, which she also studied the night before her first performance.[34] John Palmer, in spite of Garrick's doubts that he could learn a role overnight for a benefit performance in

The Country Girl when "Gentleman" Palmer went sick, "went through it as perfectly as if he had performed in the play a hundred times" (Highfill et al, Biographical Dictionary 11: 165).

Although player characters occasionally complain about the amount of work involved in learning a new part, they appear very calm at the prospect of perfecting a role within a very short period. In The Meeting of the Company, we have seen how Parsons gives Miss Platt a new part to study as soon as she enters the theatre at the beginning of a new winter season (see Managers 77). The stage direction states that the actress exits "peevishly," but no hints are given in the text that she will not be ready the following night. In Baker's The Mad House, when Tom Friendly distributes the parts among the players, he tells Harlequin that he is not needed for this play and Pistol that he will not be required until later. The other actors are sent off to "be ready against the Curtain draws" (9). The rehearsal follows, but no mention is made of the players holding their scripts, or lengths, so we may assume that they already know their lines. The player characters in the later plays are equally adept. In New Hay at the Old Market, Bannister Junior, after playing Sylvester Daggerwood in the first scene, enters at the end of the second as himself, and is given a song by the Prompter to hum over "before we go into the Green-Room" for a rehearsal. The chorus come onstage to assist him, and they all give a full performance of the song. I am not suggesting, of course, that the real players had never actually rehearsed the song in this play, or the material in any of the others, prior to a first performance, but it is likely that their rehearsal time was minimal. In The Critick Anticipated the actors rehearse immediately upon being given their parts, and, although they read their lines, at the end of the second scene the manager goes off to prepare the bills for the next day's performance. Similarly, in MacNally's play Critic upon Critic, when Tickler asks Miss Crotchet, who has just completed reworking a song, "But can the performer be perfect in this song against night?" Miss Crotchet's response is reassuring--"O lud with great ease" (23). Only the character of Mrs Mattocks, in Poor Covent Garden, declares that she is "tolerably" perfect in her lines for the epilogue (see above, 137).

Theorists, we have seen, consider that one of the artistic duties of the player is to be, to use a modern term, "dead letter perfect." The playwrights, however, concurring with such evidence as is provided by Templeton and Garrick, indicate that speed was of primary importance. While most playwrights would rather their dialogue was spoken as written, players with technical expertise, and the confidence of having studied the nature of the character and the

scenario of the action, could give a convincing performance even without speaking the playwright's exact words, although they would not always be congratulated for doing so. If an eighteenth-century player had not studied the lines at all, of course, then expertise could not save him or her from punishment at the hands either of the manager or of the audience. The theorists were mostly concerned with the player's art of perfecting lines; they apparently left the issue of the consequences of a player's failure in this area to the theatre's most intimate critics, the patrons.

Rehearsals can be one of the most rewarding creative periods for an actor in the modern theatre. But we are given more rehearsal time than they had in the eighteenth-century.[35] The audiences, however, apparently had a fascination for seeing this part of the player's process, and the many rehearsal plays of the period gave them a colourful image of what went on behind the scenes. We have noted that the players' lines would be learned, with appropriate expressions and gestures fully worked out, before they came together for a company rehearsal. It was important, as the theorists point out, that the players present the voice, figure, and expression of passion appropriate to their respective roles. As evidence for the theory that players' gestures were set and repeated, Ranger offers Tate Wilkinson's description of "Mrs Rivers's stance whilst she made an apology to her audience": "She stood with arm uplifted like the Grecian Daughter in the last act" (qtd. in "I was Present" 20). This "Georgian practice," which included "bold registration, combined with a stock attitude, [also] made evident to the audience the workings of the human heart" (Ranger, "I was Present" 20). Rehearsals with other actors were not used for exploring these emotions but for practising what was almost finished work. One of the results of such a system was that a player's reputation tended to rest on his or her individual performance. Sir Joshua Reynolds' "A Conversation Piece" records Samuel Johnson's opinion on this subject:

> . . . it is amazing that any one should be so ignorant as to think that an actor will risk his reputation by depending on the feelings that shall be excited in the presence of two hundred people, on the repetition of certain words which he has repeated two hundred times before in what actors call their study -- No, sir, Garrick left nothing to chance, every gesture, every expression of countenance and variation of voice, was settled in his closet before he set foot upon the stage.
>
> (qtd. in Duerr 248)

Private study without assistance,[36] lack of company rehearsals, the performance practice of "pointing," and noisy

demanding audiences could not have been conducive to the kind of smooth, cohesive company-driven productions we expect today. Mrs Siddons's critics scathingly referred to her "pointing," moments when she held a pose in frozen animation for effect before galvanizing into action, as her "claptraps," because of the applause they elicited (Manvell 129). From our point of view the eighteenth-century players' milieu must have required their constant awareness of the audience and incredible confidence in their own artistic abilities. One anonymous playwright, however, reveals a nervousness and insecurity in the leading players that compares with Garrick's desperate plea for his script.

The Hodge Podge; or, A Receipt to Make a Benefit! shows the actor Palmer feeling extremely uneasy about being asked to give an impromptu performance of one of his roles, in just one scene rather than the whole play. It was performed twice, for the benefits of Miss Hartly and John Palmer, at the Haymarket Theatre. The scene is appropriately a rehearsal for a benefit, for which all the players, except Palmer, arrive late. While waiting for the others, Palmer asks a playwright, Grubstreet, for suggestions of what to put forward for his own benefit. Grubstreet suggests a "Collection of Snaps and Fragments," an idea which he tries out when the other players finally appear. Each member of the company, in his or her own person, performs a "Snap" or a "Fragment" of work for which they are well-known. When it comes to Palmer's turn, Grubstreet suggests that he do his "poisoning Scene in the Suicide." Palmer is astonished: "By itself? I can't--it wou'd be too ridiculous, it's impossible" (Larpent MS #569). The "Late Manager," Grubstreet reminds him, could perform "Fragments" from his repertoire of characters at a moment's notice.[37] We might wonder whether this particular player lacks the confidence, or the inability to perform impromptu. But the audience in 1781 would know that the actor's declaration was ironic, because they were watching "Plausible Jack" Palmer (the name by which he was known to distinguish him from "Gentleman" John Palmer). As Highfill et al explain, Palmer was renowned for such "hodge podge"s:

> In August [1796], Dibdin and Waldon's How Do You Do? reported that "Palmer has hit on a new plan of entertainments, which we should think must be pleasing to all parties." He was to present Shakespeare's "best writings on Cruelty, Avarice, Punishment, Vanity, &c. &c." The writers were referring to a concoction characteristic of Palmer, The School of Shakespeare; or, Humours and Passions, "Given in a regular representation of several of his most capital scenes."
>
> (Biographical Dictionary 11: 171)

The "Snaps," as well as Palmer's qualms, are a device used by the playwright to present the performers' best known, well-executed and, possibly, most favourite selections for the benefit of their colleagues.

THE PERFORMANCE

The performance of a play is the culmination of the process. The main purpose behind all the business and creative work involved in the player's art is to bring a role to life in front of an audience. The best of the rehearsal plays endure, partly because we realize that we are being allowed into backstage "secrets." The implicit, or even explicit, references made by characters to their real selves are, of course, lost on a modern audience, unless such references were brought up to date, changing the eighteenth-century players' names to those of actors currently performing. This would only work, of course, if the actors were known for particular types of roles. When Sheridan's Puff and Garrick's Bayes criticize Thomas King's acting, we miss the "in-joke" that contemporary audiences would have enjoyed, watching King performing those roles. In spite of their participatory function in the performance, the patrons could be highly critical.

The severity of the criticism uttered by those in the auditorium could not be answered in similar fashion by those on stage; the players' status put them at a distinct disadvantage. Entrenched in the law was the audience's right to hiss a play and a player if either displeased (Hughes 29; LS 5.1: cxcix). As the audiences flexed their muscles in their growing role as critics during the century, this "mob," as Wilson calls them, "became the supporter and the destroyer of the actor" (90). While secondary sources often refer to the disruptiveness of an audience's behaviour, in the drama on the player's art the playwrights do not venture so far.[38] In these plays, many a visitor interrupts a rehearsal without consideration for those performing, but they usually appreciate what they see. The few references to unrest front of house are made in passing, often by player characters who have had to perform poor or unacceptable material; in this way, the playwrights give just cause for the audience's professed reaction, and absolve the players of blame.

Audiences were not averse, however, to venting their displeasure with players who provided cause. For instance, they used a system called "settling" with players who required extensive prompting. The audience would show their disapproval by making such a noise that the players could not

hear the prompter, and that would "settle" them. They also used "the kneel-and-apologize command" (Straub 169), when they thought a player needed to be put in his or her place. Templeton learned first-hand what the consequences were for not studying his lines. He entered for one performance, he remembers, "without knowing half my part. At almost every sentence I was obliged to attend the prompter. . . . The audience lost their patience, and cried out 'shame, shame!'" (1: 218). The manager took away his next role, upon which "a contemptible part was sent to [him], with the desire that [he] would make [him]self perfect in it" (1: 219). We noted earlier how Buskin, in The Author on the Wheel, "did not study [his] part in the last act, for [he] was convinc'd the audience would never hear it out" (Scene 2). It is no wonder that Vainwit accuses the actors of not performing "with their accustom'd excellence" (Scene 2). The playwright compliments the players' and patrons' judgment against Vainwit's work, although it was the actors who were pelted with fruit. We do not discover whether the audience also settled Buskin for not knowing his full part.

A performance of a play not only requires that players know their lines, speak them clearly, wear their "playhouse dresses," and stand in the correct position, but that all these things be accompanied by appropriate gestures and stage business, or by-play. Charles Beecher Hogan comments that "most actors created a good or bad impression as regards the total effect of their acting only when they were speaking" (LS 5.1: cxi). The fact that this state of affairs must have been more the rule than the exception is suggested by the praise given the great players of the period for their ability to continue acting in character even when they were not speaking.[39] Byplay in performance was, nevertheless, a necessary part of a player's characterization. An interesting note on the subject appears in the text of The Author's Triumph, affixed to a stage direction for the character of Tatter, which reads that he "Pulls out a Needle and Thread and offers to mend it [a hole in the other character's stocking], pricks him, and Dramatick kicks." The author's note states:

> This was to be done, or let alone, at the Discretion of the humourous Mr. Pinkethman, who was to have acted the Part of Tatter, and whose facetious Way of playing low Things often creates very great Delight. . . . (Scene, "A Tavern")

William Pinkethman was often praised for his "buffoonery" in the Tatler and Spectator (Highfill et al, Biographical Dictionary 11: 327). For a performance of Three Hours after Marriage, his character Underplot dressed as a crocodile to outplay Cibber, whose character was costumed as an Egyptian

mummy in one of the scenes. His by-play included so much slap-stick that "the scene was strung out for half an hour, to the delight of the audience" (Highfill et al, Biographical Dictionary 11: 328). Pinkethman the Younger, also a comedian, is not named in the cast of characters for The Author's Triumph. In the preface to the published play, the anonymous author blames the failure of his piece on the "Incapacity of the Players" and the "slovenly and irregular Rehearsals." Presumably the "humourous" Pinkethman did not perform, and the actor who did was one of those who, in Hogan's words, "created a . . . bad impression."

The term "improvisation" was often used interchangeably in the eighteenth century with "ad lib," which in a modern theatrical glossary means to make up text or words in performance. When players improvise, they are usually acting in character without the benefit of script, in other words, they are creating both the dialogue *and* the actions. Eighteenth-century theorists frowned upon the players who improvised on stage, changing, adapting or adding to the playwright's words just to please themselves or the audience. John Hill in The Actor commends players who add appropriate gestures, but he calls the practice of adding to or altering a poet's words "abominable" (1755, 31). Oliver Goldsmith agrees:

> Though it would be inexcusable in a comedian to add any thing of his own to the Poet's dialogue, yet as to action he is entirely at liberty. By this he may shew the fertility of his genius, the poignancy of his humour, and the exactness of his judgment. . . . (The Bee, qtd. in West 172)

George Stayley, the actor, reports an occasion on which he was fined five pounds for altering material in Samuel Foote's Author. Stayley admits it was "a fault," but "not the fault of Mr. Stayley alone; there not being a performance in a whole season, I believe, in which there is not something or other introduced by the actor" (The Life and Opinion of an Actor 1: 182, 184).[40] Sylas Neville remembers seeing a performance of The Beggar's Opera in 1767, during which "Shuter raised vast applause by adding after Trapes had said 'done under the Surgeon's hand' 'Oh dreadful and in such weather too!'" (22). It is Shuter's improvisation in a performance of Buckingham's The Rehearsal that is used as an example of acceptable, moderate alteration of an author's text:

> In that instance Mr. Shuter, as well as every former Bays, took the same liberty, and changed nothing extraordinary for such services. But the usual extempore pleasantries of the actor in this

> character, are very different in point of quantity, not to say quality, from those written additions which they are pleased to call the insertion of a few lines. . . . (A True State of the Differences 41)

Instances in which stage directions for improvisation are written into the texts, such as for Pinkethman in The Author's Triumph and for Glib in Garrick's A Peep Behind the Curtain, are rare. The proliferation of evidence on this subject suggests that the actors needed no such written instructions; and when something went amiss on stage in a performance, an actor needed to be able to improvise. In several of the plays, however, the authors suggest that performers had to be ready to improvise fully-developed characters, on demand, off stage--an interesting hypothesis from those in the business of writing lines of dialogue for the actors. In Miller's The Coffee House, the first of the plays written and produced after the Licensing Act of 1737, Gaywood and Hartly ask the actor Cibber (played by Theophilus as himself) to assist them in a plot to help the penniless Hartly win Mrs Notable's daughter, Miss Kitty (played by Kitty Clive), while, at the same time, spiting Harpie, her mother's chosen suitor. Cibber offers a display of his talents and mimics a politician, a "Man of Condition and Taste," and a "solemn Doctor of Physick." The conspirators decide they want him to play a drunkard. Cibber, as we have seen, makes use of his experience in the role of Pistol, and gives a successful performance: Hartly wins Kitty, money from her mother, and Harpie's agreement to relinquish his claim. Harpie is mortified that he finds himself outwitted by a "Playhouse Puppy" (Scene 2). The public's assumption that a player could produce a full character performance with little or no preparation points out not only the technical and emotional requirements demanded of the players, but also the often adverse conditions under which they were expected to perfect their art.

It is tempting to suggest that it was Miller's sympathy for the player's position, and understanding of the work involved, which led him to employ Cibber's best-known character type for the actor's "improvisation" in The Coffee House. But the number of playwrights who remark on the necessity of players to be ready at any time to perform, in or out of a playhouse situation, and who use the roles, or facsimiles of them, for which particular players were famous, suggests that the audience's recognition of character was more important than either easing the players' lot or challenging them artistically. John Philip Kemble altered Massinger's The Roman Actor for the "Benefit for Mrs Kemble, being the last Time of her Appearing on the Stage" (qtd. in LS 5.3: 1861); in it he played Paris, who must perform on

Caesar's command. Mimick, in Farewel Folly, plays various parts for Townley for fifty guineas; Buskin, Truncheon, and Spangle are ready to perform at Carbine's request in The Strolers; in Pasquin, the young player, who has prepared another actor's role because he wanted to, is given the opportunity to take over because he already knows the part; we have already heard Lispall, in The Critick Anticipated, moan that he must always be prepared to replace absent actors at any time; and Lewis, Johnstone, and Quick improvise on their best known roles for the critic Spleen.

Central to the player's art is the need for constant awareness of and interaction with the audience, two qualities which make live theatre so rewarding for all participants. By the mid-eighteenth century, Michael Baker suggests that the players' relationship with their patrons was no longer "the sort of selective patronage from the nobility which other artists were granted" (31):

> Alone among artists, the actor was now obliged to present his work to a mass audience, which paid for his services directly and in cash; his livelihood and his success or failure became dependent upon the immediate reactions of this audience. (31)

In what became an extremely competitive arena, a player's success meant pleasing an often capricious and occasionally hostile public.[41] When they were not able to do so, not all players, as several playwrights suggest, felt they were to blame for an audience's displeasure. Mrs Oldfield, in The Confederates, has been "Hiss'd and insulted" by the audience, but she considers the playwright equally to blame for "this Night's Disgrace" (Scene 2).

The eighteenth-century theatre was a tough economic business. Managers could not afford to provide new "scenes and dresses" for every production. As the productions of new plays were occasional rather than regular, the managers relied on and the audience expected to see play revivals, with scenery and costumes from stock. The players' role in theatrical production relied as heavily on the business of their appearance as it did on the artistry of their performance. The playwrights' new texts, on which managers spent their money, and players their energy, suggest that those elements of the player's art which did not directly involve the audience, such as salary negotiations, auditions, and rehearsals (except as a mise-en-scène device), were secondary concerns not only for the player characters, but also for the authors. The players' close contact with their patrons made them sensitive to their demands, and for this reason their primary concerns, as stipulated in the plays,

are those that give their audiences most pleasure: their costumes, roles, and ability. The mark of a player's greatness during most of the century can be summed up in the words of the theorist John Hill: "That playing which appears natural, because it is divested of all pomp and ceremony, is the greatest that is possible; but natural as this appears, it is the result of perfect art" (1755, 259).

NOTES

[1] See Actors on Acting (Eds. Toby Cole and Helen Chinoy) for extracts from Charles Macklin's "The Art and Duty of an Actor (121-22), "An Essay on Acting" (attributed to David Garrick, 133-35), two letters by Kitty Clive (138-39), and Sarah Siddons's "Remarks on the Character of Lady Macbeth" (142-45); John O'Keeffe's Recollections of his Life; Charles Macklin's Diary (Appleton 153); Edward Cape Everard's Memoirs of an Unfortunate Son of Thespis; Henry Siddons's Practical Illustrations of Rhetorical Gesture and Action; as well as several of Garrick's letters (Letters, #345 to William Powell, #731 to John Henderson, etc.). See Thomas (Chapter 11) for examples of reviewers' commentary on various performances.

[2] "Fire" and "spirit" are the words used by John Hill to distinguish various types of player: "Indeed it is that [fire] which particularly characterizes the great from the subordinate player: for decency alone is required, in most cases, in the latter; but in the former, who represents characters of dignity and eminence, always fire" (The Actor 1755, 159). The current debate about whether what an actor does should be called craft, skill or art was not an issue in the eighteenth century.

[3] Boaden, in Memoirs of Mrs Siddons, also describes the conditions under which a provincial player could be hired by a London manager:

> I would not question the knowledge of the art in those who ably profess it; but the only unfailing approach to a London manager is a high provincial reputation, aided here by a death in his company, which leaves a chasm, or a dispute with a performer so important as to require a check.
> (1: 22-3)

[4] Frederick T. Wood cites The Memoirs of Sylvester Daggerwood, Comedian, Collected by Peter Panglos Esq., LL.D & A.S.S., with the date 1806; Arnott and Robinson list the title as Memoirs of Sylvester Daggerwood, Comedian, &c. Collected by Peter Panglos Esq., and the date as 1807 (ETL #2664).

[5] Although in many respects the anonymous The Female Wits (1697) served as a model for Clive's play, there is no audition scene in the earlier piece. The professional actresses, Mrs Cross and Mrs Lucas, are given the opportunity, however, to perform an impromptu song and dance.

(The Life of Mrs Abington 21). See also Milhous and Hume, "The Theatrical Politics at Drury Lane" 412-13, and Straub, particularly Chapter 5.

[18] The conduct of many eighteenth-century actresses in their private lives was, undoubtedly, impeccable, and their personal characters untarnished. The actresses' professional reputation, however, did not radically improve during the century, possibly because of the press attention given to the more celebrated affairs; see, for instance, Mrs Jordan's Profession, in which Tomalin outlines the problems created in the actress's professional life because of her liaison with the Duke of Clarence. Members of the male nobility were not in the habit of marrying their actress mistresses, although there were several exceptions: Lavinia Fenton (Gay's original Polly) married the Duke of Bolton when the Duchess died, and Elizabeth Farren married the Earl of Derby after the death of the Countess. The case of Elizabeth Chudleigh, who married the Duke of Kingston while she was secretly married to the Earl of Bristol, is satirized in Samuel Foote's A Trip to Calais (Highfill, "Performers and Performing" 146-47). See, also, the account given by William Templeton of his wife's encounter with her "gentlemen" admirers (The Strolling Player, 2: 29).

[19] See Straub, Chapter 5: "The Construction of Actresses' Femininity," for her discussion of the private "domestic" versus the public "prostitute" (89-108).

[20] For details on the dispute and the actresses involved (Miss Ward, Miss Lessingham, and Mrs Yates), see particularly A Narrative on the Rise and Progress of the Disputes subsisting between the Patentees of Covent-Garden Theatre (16-20), The Conduct of the Four Managers of Covent Garden Theatre (25), and A True State of the Differences subsisting between the Proprietors of Covent-Garden Theatre (19-34), all of which were published in London in 1768.

[21] See particularly the memoirs and biographies of George Anne Bellamy and Peg Woffington. For detailed references to stage costumes of the period, see Raymond J. Pentzell's "Garrick's Costuming" and Lily B. Campbell's "Costuming on the English Stage 1660-1823." For the eighteenth century in general, see C. Willett and Phillis Cunnington's Handbook of English Costume.

[22] Mrs Hazard in Clive's play again echoes Marsilia in The Female Wits. Mrs Cross, Mrs Lucas, Mr Johnson, and Mr Pinkethman prepare themselves for Marsilia's rehearsal at the playhouse:

CROSS. Good morrow, Mrs Lucas. Why, what's the

> whim that we must be all dressed at rehearsal as if we played?
> **LUCAS.** 'Tis by the desire of Madam Maggot, the poetess, I suppose. (1.2)

[23] For a comprehensive study of the visual documentation of the eighteenth-century player, see Shearer West's The Image of the Actor.

[24] Pentzell mentions the Tudor dress with ruff, doublet and hose being used for serious drama, particularly King John and Garrick's Richard III; George Anne Bellamy, in her Apology, mentions playing Lady Macbeth in white satin, presumably for the mad scene (4: 465); Odell mentions the pages carrying the trains of Queens in Shakespeare - From Betterton to Irving (1: 412).

[25] William Templeton, in his account of how he "experienced much attention from those performers who were to be [his] partners of the scene," during his rehearsal of Laertes for his début in a London theatre, offers information that suggests other members of an established company were occasionally willing to rehearse together to perfect both their own and a new actor's role. His colleagues had obviously played their roles before, and the "gentleman who played Hamlet" gave him "advice in respect to the conduct of the situation, and with the utmost good-nature repeated the fencing scene with [him] four or five times" (3: 47). See Everard (81-82), for his account of his individual study prior to being given help by Garrick. It was more usual for players to help each other with their roles than for a full rehearsal to be called, unless it was for a new play.

[26] Contemporary analyses of the art of playing include Aaron Hill's essays in The Prompter (1734-36), John Hill's The Actor (1750, revised 1755), The Sentimental Spouter (1774), The Theatrical Speaker (1807), The Thespian Preceptor (1811), and The Actor, or Guide to the Stage (1821), which is a "re-arrangement of Mr. Aaron Hill's celebrated Essay upon the Histrionic Art." Memoirs, biographies, as well as many recent critical works on the eighteenth-century players also contain material relevant to the theory and practice of the art of playing. Titles of these works can be found in the "Works Consulted."

[27] The most famous accounts of David Garrick's acting are those of Georg Christoph Lichtenberg, but other German visitors also left accounts of performances they had seen (see Kelly's German Visitors to English Theaters in the Eighteenth Century). Francis Gentleman in his Dramatic Censor, Aaron Hill in The Prompter, and the many periodical

writers are among those who provide reviews of eighteenth-century productions with commentaries on the performers. Colley Cibber's Apology, Thomas Davies's Miscellanies, Thomas Wilkinson's Memoirs, George Anne Bellamy's Apology and David Garrick's letters are only a few of the many players' personal records.

[28] See Alan Downer's "Nature to Advantage Dressed," George Taylor's "The Just Delineation of the Passions," Lily B. Campbell's "The Rise of a Theory of Stage Presentation in England During the Eighteenth Century," Alan T. McKenzie's "The Countenance You Show Me," and Dene Barnett's The Art of Gesture. Barnett brings together extensive European as well as English sources in his study of the basic techniques of eighteenth-century acting, revealing that "the 18th century art of gesture used a vocabulary of basic gestures, each with an individual meaning known to all in advance" (The Art of Gesture 7), and that this vocabulary was common to all performers and spectators regardless of the differences in language. Alan Hughes in the three parts of his "Art and Eighteenth-Century Acting Style" outlines the differences in what he defines as the Baroque, Rococo, and Neo-classic styles of playing.

[29] One example of actors who stand "gaping," not knowing what to do when the playwright interrupts their scene, can be found in James Ralph's early play The Fashionable Lady (performed at Goodman's Fields in 1730).

[30] See, for example, Thomas Davies, Memoirs of the Life of David Garrick (London 1808) 1: 148-49.

[31] While Davies in his Memoirs suggests that Garrick "merited and commanded equality" (2: 272), West says that such a suggestion "is belied by comments from that very aristocracy" (17). Several gentlemen, including Johnson and Walpole, among whose ranks Garrick wanted to be numbered, refused to admit him to their class (17-18); see also Woods, Garrick Claims the Stage 19-22. West continues: "As with many other members of the increasingly powerful middle class, Garrick's assumption of gentility was perceived by many as emulation, rather than a reflection of his actual status" (17). West sees Garrick's patronage of the fine arts, particularly paintings of himself, his family and estate, as additional confirmation of his desire to be considered a gentleman because, she explains, "Conversation pieces such as these were very popular, particularly among members of the landed nobility and gentry, and Garrick's patronage of this genre suggests that he began to view himself as similarly representative of the gentlemanly class" (29-30).

[32] John Beard, for instance, was the "most celebrated English singer of mid-century," who had "pleasantly genteel manners and [a] gentlemanly and handsome appearance" (Highfill et al, Biographical Dictionary 1:400, 402). Miss Thomas possibly "made her first stage appearance on 1 March 1753 singing Laura in The Chaplet," appearing three weeks later as Miranda in Bays in Petticoats; she was reported by Rendle to be a "singer of great promise and expectation," who ". . . appeared in public only as a concert performer. . ." (Biographical Dictionary 14:407). Kitty Clive printed her play in 1753, three years after its original production for her benefit.

[33] See, for example, Boaden's biographies of the Kemble family: Memoirs of the Life of John Philip Kemble Esq and Memoirs of Mrs. Siddons; William Templeton's account of the merits of Mr Sterling (Vol 1); and George Stayley's Life and Opinions of an Actor.

[34] For a more complete account of Mrs Siddons learning the role of Lady Macbeth, see "The Player's Managers" (77); for her "Remarks on the Character of Lady Macbeth," see Cole (142-45).

[35] For the amount of time taken for rehearsals in the 1730s, see Cooke's Memoirs of Charles Macklin (402). The London Daily Post and General Advertiser records that Giffard rehearsed at Goodman's Fields in 1735 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. (LS 3.1: clxxix). Garrick, of course, was known for conducting "regular, long, carefully managed, and compulsory" rehearsals (LS 4.1: xxiii). As William Hopkins records in his Diary on "24 Dec 1763: This day was dedicated for rehearsing the new Pantomime call'd the Rites of Hecate. . . . The whole day spent till eleven o'clock at night" because the play needed more than a little work (qtd. in LS 4.1: xxiv). Presumably there was no performance for those players that Christmas Eve. For information on rehearsals in 1770s, see LS 5.1: cxlvi.

[36] The *leading* actors were expected to work on their parts in private study and without assistance. As the Morning Chronicle, September 6, 1777 states: "It is usual for the actor of a principal character to regulate the part, and those which have connection with it" (qtd. in LS 5.1: cliv). King remarked that newcomers "were taught how to act, and also taught the fundamentals of certain characters" (qtd. in LS 5.1: cliv). The notes and letters of leading players mention their instruction of young performers; see, for example, Garrick's Letters, Davies's Memoirs of David Garrick, Everard's Memoirs, and Fitzgerald's Life of Mrs Catherine Clive.

[37] In Actors on Acting, Cole and Chinoy cite examples of Garrick's ability to "act" out of the context of production: "Grimm, who saw him in Paris, reported that Garrick entertained a group of people by letting his face run through the whole gamut of passions without personal emotion" (132); Diderot in his Paradox of Acting describes how Garrick "will put his head between folding doors, and in the course of five or six seconds his expression will change successively. . ." (qtd. in Cole 168). These expressions included delight, pleasure, tranquility, surprise, sorrow, astonishment, fright, horror, and despair.

[38] For specific instances of audiences' disruptive behaviour see Neville (27, 120-21); Davies, on the price riots (Memoirs of David Garrick 2: 2-6); Appleton (40); Chetwood (43); Nicoll (The Garrick Stage 87-91 and Early Eighteenth-Century 12-13); Langhans, on the Chinese Festival riots (Kenny, 144); Wilson (31); Pedicord ("The Changing Audience" 248-50); and for an account of the audience's reaction on the occasion when R. Palmer and Miss Collett, standing in for J. Palmer and Miss Farren, could not read the one manuscript between them, see LS (5.1: lxxvii). For more general information on audience behaviour, see LS (3.1: clxviii-clxxv; 4.1: clxxxiv-cxcviii; 5.1: cxcv-cxcix); Hughes's The Drama's Patrons and Pedicord's The Theatrical Public.

[39] There are many examples of Garrick's ability to remain in character when not speaking (see, for instance, LS 4.1: ccii, Joseph 131). Boaden's account of the different but equally admirable abilities of Mrs Siddons and John Philip Kemble also provides evidence for the eighteenth-century debate about whether a player *becomes* or *acts* a character:

> When Mrs. Siddons quitted her dressing-room, I believe she left there the last thought about herself. Never did I see her eye wander from the business of the scene--no recognizance of the most noble of her friends exchanged the character for the individual. In this duty her brother would frequently fail; and he seemed to take a delight in shewing how absolute a mastery he possessed--that he could make a sign and sometimes speak to a friend near him, and yet seem to carry on the action and the look of the character. (2: 289-90)

There were celebrity performers who failed even to seem to remain in character: Mrs Barry was apparently inattentive except when speaking (LS 5.1: cxi), and Mrs Cibber curtseyed to spectators and admirers during a performance of Hamlet (Joseph 130); Joseph also offers examples of lesser players'

inability to stay in character (130).

[40] Stayley then proceeds to tattle about Mr Sparks, Mrs Bellamy, and Mrs Abington. There are too many stories to reproduce them here; for ones I found particularly amusing, see Charke's reminiscence about playing a "breeches-clad" Archer in a "bespoke" performance (Narrative 204-05); Appleton's tale about "a group of strollers, playing Hamlet in a barn" (15); and Henry Barton Baker's anecdote about two "corpulent" actresses, Mrs Clive and Mrs Pritchard (230-31).

[41] For a complete account of the audience as critics, see Dane F. Smith's The Critics in the Audience of the London Theatres from Buckingham to Sheridan. Leo Hughes's The Drama's Patrons and H. W. Pedicord's The Theatrical Public in the Time of Garrick are still the most thorough accounts of eighteenth-century audiences. See also, note 38 above.

CONCLUSION

> Why, Sir, d'ye think to divert an Audience with your sentences and your Distichs? Do People come to the Play-house for Edification? or to learn their Catechism of you Poets? . . . Psha! Make but People laugh and you do your Business.
> (James Miller, Introduction An Hospital for Fools)

Most of the plays examined have failed to find their way into the theatrical repertoire, let alone dramatic literary history. Some of them were, however, popular in their own time. What they lacked in literary quality they made up in a more limited theatrical appeal. The plays in this study were deliberately chosen for their specific focus on players; they cannot therefore serve as the basis for any general statements about the waning of dramatists' and waxing of players' work during the eighteenth century. I embarked on this study, as I said at the beginning, because I wondered why the actor had been singled out from fellow thespians to carry the reputation of the period. Armed with the resources of current scholars' work, contemporary theorists' accounts of theatrical codes and conventions, and my own knowledge of the acting process, I set out to discover what such self-conscious drama might reveal about the players, their work, and their relationships with other participants in the eighteenth-century theatre.

The theatre was a purely commercial venture; the patentees and owners relied on their product's appeal and their patrons' satisfaction. In their efforts to achieve some degree of popularity in this competitive arena, many dramatists joined the ranks of the gossip writers, giving information on the theatrical celebrities of the day, not merely by allusions but by containing them as characters in their texts. For the rehearsal plays, the writers became reliant on the players as subject material, as well as performers. The actors might also have sought an alliance with the dramatists, performing material that was not necessarily flattering, to try and guarantee themselves roles in what became, after 1737, a shrinking job market.

The plays examined reveal complicated and fascinating relationships between the players' skills and status, their patrons' taste, and the changing face of management. Allardyce Nicoll argues that it was the eminent performers' ability to "pass off on an audience poor and trivial works [which] led towards the fabrication of a mass of dull and uninteresting tragedies, comedies and farces" (History of

Early Eighteenth Century Drama 39-40). The better the players became at their craft, the less the playwrights seemed, or needed, to work at theirs. If the "taste of the town" was, as the dramatists suggest, the highest arbiter to which they and the players could appeal, then the audience carried much of the responsibility for what was produced. The plays offer clear evidence of their authors' adverse criticism of contemporary audiences' taste in drama. However, the immediacy and ephemeral nature of a live performance would to some extent protect the authors from such a charge; undiscerning spectators of a rehearsal play might recognize only the most superficial of the levels created by its metatheatrical content, thereby disguising the playwrights' deeper caustic intent. Occasionally, the dramatists corroborate other documentary evidence that blames players--especially strollers--for reducing the efficacy of the poet's work in performance because of their lack of concentration or skill. But, more often, the playwrights seem unwilling to support such an outright condemnation of all players. Most knew very well how much they needed the people who performed their work.

The various forms, or sub-genres, in which the dramatists chose to present the players, being or working as themselves, are mainly comic. The comedian who had the ability, as Goldsmith says, to "shew the fertility of his genius," was also responsible for revealing what the playwrights could not in their texts. Goldsmith explains:

> we scarce see a coxcomb or a fool in common life, that has not some peculiar oddity in his action. These peculiarities it is not in the power of words to represent, and depend solely upon the actor. (The Bee, qtd. in West 172)

Many of the performers who appeared as themselves were known for their prowess in comedy. As dramatis personae, the players are often represented by comic character players, who sometimes turn out to be the heroes and heroines of a piece; the various types of manager are, for the most part, cast as the villains; the amateur playwrights are usually the buffoons; and the patrons are, as they were, commentators and critics.

We have seen that the popularity of many of the plays depended on the dramatists' ability to render accurate, codified characterizations of actual players or player types. A brief overview of the types either created or copied by the playwrights, will remind us that the codes were set for the stereo-typical rather than the individual performer. The most easily recognizable character is that of the conventional strolling player. The strollers, unlike many who must have travelled *incognito* around the country, are

always identified as provincial players because of their bombastic acting style, or their use of quotations in conversation, or their "tum-ti" verse-speaking. Perhaps Garrick's aversion to the typical provincial actor influenced the fact that no stroller characters, with the exception of Dick Wingate in The Apprentice, appeared in any new play between 1737 and 1779. With comic actors like Macklin, Weston, Theophilus Cibber, Parsons, and King available, the reason for the strollers' absence during this period cannot be said to rest with the players. The conventional commendable attributes of the professional actors include their readiness to perform at any time, their faculty for learning lines quickly, their ability to take direction and withstand interruptions during rehearsal, and their patience when they are kept waiting. The playwrights also seem to enjoy revealing the more troublesome qualities of players, particularly those which they gave more often to women than men, thus helping to shape the stereotypical view of the actresses of the period. The female players regularly take exception to, refuse to play, or return their roles, and they either appear late or send excuses for not attending rehearsals. In only a handful of plays are male players as guilty of such infractions of their articles.

The playwrights regularly satirize London actresses. Yet, on the rare occasions when they introduce them, they are not as unkind to the female strollers. Acting failed to become a totally respectable profession. But the female players we meet in the drama make only passing reference to the reputed sordid, naughty elements of their profession in their complaints about playing "low" or "bawdy" roles. Their grievances allow the dramatists to touch satirically on the glamour that is also attached to actresses, including the sexual titillation involved in their performance of breeches roles and the leadership in fashion several of them assumed.

In the dramatic portraits of the players, named ones in particular, we are given a unique opportunity to imagine what the real actors' performances might have been like. We know that the player characters offer an image of their actual counterparts; what we do not know is how much it might be distorted by the playwright, or was by the actors themselves in performance. Theorists, such as John Hill, praise those players who could *become* their characters, thereby offering a "natural" performance. The success of many of the rehearsal plays suggests, however, that the audience wanted to see the players *acting* rather than *being*; they could then use the performers' demonstration of their acting skills in the plays-within-the-plays, as a measure by which to judge their real technical ability. Diderot includes the writers with the performers in his discussion of the paradox inherent in the nature of performance:

> Great poets, great actors, and perhaps in general all the great imitators of nature . . . are the least sensitive of beings . . . they are too engaged in observing, in recognizing, and imitating, to be vitally affected within . . . all his [the actor's] talent consists not in feeling, as you imagine, but in rendering so scrupulously the external signs of feeling, that you are taken in. (qtd. in Barish 279)

Sennett suggests that those who were or might have been "taken in" were also engaged in a form of performance. What appeared to be a natural display of emotion "was not a Dionysian release," because "[a]t the same time these audiences were involved, they were in control. They were objective and highly critical of the actors and actresses inducing them to weep" (75). The patrons' control, not only during performances, is extremely apparent in the plays.

Those who have recorded their praise of Garrick, renowned as the greatest natural player of the period, make it clear that nature without the assistance of his artistic skill would not have rendered the necessary propriety in his performances. Georg Christoph Lichtenberg writes of him:

> When he turns to someone with a bow, it is not merely that the head, the shoulders, the feet and arms, are engaged in that exercise, but that each member helps with great propriety to produce the demeanour most pleasing and appropriate to the occasion. . . . (qtd. in Revels History 6: 98)

Jean Georges Noverre, himself a great performer of dance, says of Garrick:

> A faithful worshipper of nature, he knew the value of selection, he preserved that sense of propriety which the stage requires even in the parts least susceptible of grace and charm. (qtd. in Revels History 6: 98)

It appeared not to matter about how much "larger than life" the players' performances were as long as everything they did was appropriate and gave pleasure. In the same way that a "play created reality through its conventions" (Sennett 79), the performers used their own codes of movement, gesture, and expression to do likewise. The evidence provided by those watching and working in theatre suggests that, if players considered propriety as a measure for their art, the audiences were more likely to regard their performances as natural, or "exact" imitations of reality. The player-characters' representation of their art is assisted in the plays because it is seen in a most appropriate mise en scène--the theatre. But it also had to be exact, because an

inaccurate travesty of the theatrical context would not be acceptable: real audiences and players knew that world too well to accept a picture of it that lacked "propriety."

The special value of this body of evidence concerns the accuracy of the picture. As documents, the plays provide information about various aspects of the theatre of the period, but we cannot accept this fictive evidence as straightforward fact. The playwrights offer us, particularly in the rehearsal plays, a fiction which, if it succeeded in performance, indicates that the patrons, who would not be gulled by fabrications that were basically unnatural or untrue, were pleased with and convinced by the appropriate "reality" the artists had produced. So, the various player types created by the playwrights (particularly those of the actresses and the strollers), began with elements of truth and were repeated and reinvented according to theatrical convention: Bayes and Phoebe Clinket became Puff and Mrs Hazard; the Marplays became the Brainsleys; Buskin and Spangle became Sylvester Daggerwood; Miss Squeamish and Miss Lovemode became several unidentified Actresses; and throughout the century leading players "became" themselves. The stereotypes proved so popular with audiences that playwrights were bound to repeat them, and the performers must have influenced the types as they corroborated at each stage of their reconstruction.

Shearer West asserts that the "personal appearance and manner of actors became identified with the character they were performing," to such a degree, particularly with the more famous actors, that "recurring images of the same actor in different roles" could be used as "a shorthand formula for indicating the character type" (West 140). We have noticed how those plays that offered named players in an uncharacteristic or unusual manner, such as Woodward's A Lick at the Town, rarely survived more than a few performances, if, indeed, they were produced at all. Similar plays that were popular, such as Garrick's The Meeting of the Company, have rarely survived the period during which the real performers recreated their roles. Other plays in which certain players performed roles that were ideally suited to their line of parts, such as Colman the Younger's New Hay at the Old Market, O'Keeffe's The Beggar on Horseback and Wild Oats, and Garrick's A Peep Behind the Curtain, were also popular at the time, but have suffered with the loss of their originators. The topical content of many of the plays in this study has also been a factor in their disappearance from the theatrical repertoire.

Most of the playwrights show us not how well they write, although several of the pieces do, of course, have literary merit, but how well they know the theatre *and* those who

performed their plays for them. They show us, with acute understanding and in an entertaining way, all the various facets of the players' theatrical life: its toil, its hardships, its disappointments, its conflicts, its hopes, and its joys. The enormous vitality of the texts is most evident when we see the characters in action, William Parsons's performance of his apology, for instance, in Colman the Younger's Poor Old Haymarket, or Mrs Mummery's demonstration of her knowledge of her company's repertoire in O'Keeffe's Beggar on Horseback. Even when we read what the character of Garrick says, as he prepares to make his entrance in A Dialogue in the Green Room (a piece that was never staged), we hear echoes of Garrick's own words in his letters.

In Poor Old Haymarket, Colman gets to the heart of the century's theoretical discussion about whether a player genuinely feels the role he is playing. Parsons, with the air of a practitioner so experienced that he does not need to articulate fully what he wants to get across to the audience, reveals that players are often insincere in their protestations. Colman vivifies the player in such a way that, even at a distance of two hundred years, we can see and hear the skill that Parsons must have used to portray himself; at the same time the dramatist comments on the problems the actors encountered working in the enlarged winter theatres, and those the managers faced with performers who claimed to be indisposed. Parsons, who has been projecting loudly all winter at Drury Lane, has decided to speak softly at the summer theatre. The change in rhythm at the end of his speech suggests that only his actual address to the audience would have been whispered, highlighting Colman's point about the contrast in size between the theatres:

> **WRIGHTEN.** And when a Play is given out or an Apology to be made you think the Audience, in such under tones, wou'd understand it.
> **PARSONS.** Perfectly. I'll give you a Specimen and then I'll go into the Green Room. We'll suppose now the House to be full--all cramm'd. Beauty--fashion--Criticks--Lobby Bobbys--&c &c. The Play to be put off. I come forward--a great Winter Actor in a Little Theatre. I look solemn. The house as silent you may hear a Pin drop. All impatient for what Parsons is to say. I bow--a damn'd genteel insinuating bow, in my way--then begin. "Ladies and Gentlemen"--extremely Sorry to--&c.--suddenly taken--Impossible to--beg leave to substi--the--hope for--and usual indulgency.
> (12)

In Beggar on Horseback O'Keeffe elucidates part of the theatrical code pertaining to appearance. Mrs Mummery's

encounter with Codger, who she thinks is auditioning for her company, interprets and satirizes both managers' and players' dependence on properties to identify character. Her stock, or "case," contains elements of the spectacle her audiences wanted, and expected. The performers were similarly reliant on their "bag of tricks," or technique, which included the ability to learn as well as retain a large number of roles:

> **MRS M.** Let's have a speech -- Come, the mad scene in Lear -- here's his garland -- (*takes a garland of artificial floweres from the case, and throws it over Codger's shoulders*) Come, "Pull off my boots--hard--harder."
> **CODGER.** I never pull'd off a lady's boots in my life.
> **MRS M.** Well, Macbeth -- here a truncheon. (*takes a truncheon from the case, and puts it in his hand*) "Blow wind, burst rack, at least we'll die with harness on our back."
> **CODGER.** And pray Ma'am, what am I to do with this piece of stick?
> **MRS M.** Ay, yu're all for comedy I see -- "First the quip modest -- next the reply churlish."
> **CODGER.** By the Lord, Madam--
> **MRS M.** Oh you're going to the clown in Twelfth Night -- Well, let's have a speech of that -- oh, stay, here's the clown's cap -- (*takes a cap from the case, and puts it on Codger's head*). . . .
>
> (2.4)

The speed with which Mrs Mummery switches from one role to another, pausing only briefly to find the requisite prop or costume accessory, demonstrates the agility of her mind and that which she expects in her players.

Perhaps it is fitting that some final words about the players, should come from a playwright, even more appropriately a playwright-character, the ghost of Ben Jonson, who appears in Garrick in the Shades, written in 1779, the year of Garrick's death:

> Frail and imperfect is the actor's fame--
> He lives but to the age, that sees him act.
>
> (Act 2)

The excitement of live theatre lies in this very fact. We can turn to the words of characters created by the author's pen, and to the images of famous players illuminated by the artist's brush, but they are static and lifeless. What is different about the dialogue of the player characters is that, because they speak and perform theatrically inside their texts, they come alive in a way that other characters of the period do not. The playwrights, whatever their purpose in using actors as dramatis personae, have given us

moving, speaking images, however "frail and imperfect," that enrich our knowledge of a particularly vibrant theatrical age.

Eye-witness accounts can tell us what the acting techniques of the age and of particular players' might have been like; they even, occasionally, offer certain line readings, as well as the general effect of many productions. If we use such references, in conjunction with what is available in these texts, we can better understand the theatrical codes and conventions of the period. Reading the plays, listening to the rhythm and tone of the lines, keeping in mind all we know from other sources, including the look of the scenery and costumes, we have the opportunity to become a participatory audience. We can get as close as is possible to the eminent and not so eminent players, who were in the "business" of diverting not edifying their audiences. The playwrights were describing, even as they satirized, the manner in which the stars of the theatre acquired their reputations. Standing alongside the professionals, we can glimpse what it must have been like for them to look out into the auditorium at the drama's patrons. The players might have had little control over their profession, its social status, its regular and irregular playing spaces, its theatrical hierarchy, even its art, but these few plays demonstrate that the eighteenth century was an age of the author *and* the actor, and both were dependent on the audience.

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APPENDIX

THE PLAYER'S PLAYS

The plays listed here are those on which I based the findings in my study. As I refer to a different set of plays in each chapter, I have listed them under their separate chapter headings in order to identify them more clearly. These lists are divided into three sections: 1) those plays written before 1737, 2) those written during the central period, and 3) those written after 1779. For each section, I note the total number of new pieces containing player characters that were written.

The sum of the totals is not an accurate accounting, because many of the plays cross over the boundaries I have distinguished for the subject matter of each chapter.[1] I list the plays which overlap under all their pertinent chapters. Each play's initial listing comprises its full title, together with authorship, production details, and italicized cross-references to an abbreviation of its title under other chapter headings.

The plays that had successful productions are marked with an asterisk after their titles,[2] and the parenthetical information includes the date, location, and number of performances each play achieved during its first season (extracted from The London Stage).[3]

CHAPTER 1: THE PLAYER'S PLAYWRIGHTS

1700-1736

9 new pieces written; 7 produced

The Beggar's Opera* (29 January 1728, LIF: 56; HAY: 23) by John Gay

The Confederates (1717) by John Durant de Breval, pseud. Joseph Gay *[cf. Managers, Theatres]*

Don Quixote in England, A Comedy* [Introduction] (5 April 1734, HAY: 9) by Henry Fielding *[cf. Managers]*

The Fashionable Lady; or Harlequin's Opera. In the Manner of a Rehearsal* (2 April 1730, GF: 13) by James Ralph *[cf. Theatres, Art]*

The Humours of the Court or, Modern Gallantry. A New Ballad Opera [Introduction] (1732)

Pasquin, a Dramatic Satire on the Times* (5 March 1736, HAY: 64) by Henry Fielding *[cf. Managers, Theatres, Art]*

The Stage Mutineers: or, a Play-house to be Lett. A Tragi-Comi-Farcical Ballad Opera* (27 July 1733, CG: 13) attributed to Edward Phillips *[cf. Managers, Theatres, Art]*

Three Hours after Marriage (16 January 1717, DL: 2) by John Gay, Alexander Pope, and John Arbuthnot *[cf. Managers, Art]*

The Welsh Opera* (22 April 1731, HAY: 10) by Henry Fielding

1737 - 1779

19 new pieces written; 12 produced

The Apotheosis of Punch: A Satirical Masque [Introduction] (1779) by Leonard MacNally

The Authors: A Dramatic Satyr (1755) by Lindesius Jones *[cf. Managers]*

The Author's Triumph: or The Manager Manag'd. A Farce (14 April 1737, LIF: 1) *[cf. Managers]*

The Coffee House. A Dramatick Piece (26 January 1738, DL: 1) by James Miller *[cf. Managers, Art]*

The Critic; or, a Tragedy Rehearsed* (30 October 1779, DL: 48) by Richard Brinsley Sheridan *[cf. Theatres, Art]*

The Critick Anticipated; or, The Humours of the Green Room: A Farce (1779) by R. B. S., Esq. &c., pseud. *[cf. Managers, Theatres, Art]*

The Diversions of the Morning; or, A Dish of Chocolate* (22 April 1747, HAY: 28) by Samuel Foote *[cf. Art]*

Eurydice Hiss'd; or, A Word to the Wise* (13 April 1737, HAY: 20) by Henry Fielding

Garrick in the Shades; or, A Peep into Elysium. A Farce: Never offered to the Managers of the Theatres-Royal (1779) *[cf. Managers, Art]*

The Historical Register for the Year 1736* (21 March 1737, HAY: 36) by Henry Fielding *[cf. Managers, Theatres, Art]*

An Hospital for Fools. A Dramatic Fable [Introduction] (15 November 1739, DL: 2) by James Miller

A Lick at the Town. "A Dramatic Performance." A Prelude (16 March 1751, DL: 1) by Henry Woodward *[cf. Managers]*

Life of Hamlet, with Alterations. A Tragedy, in three Acts (1772) by Arthur Murphy *[cf. Managers]*

The Meeting of the Company; or Bayes's Art of Acting* (17 September 1774, DL: 11) by David Garrick *[cf. Managers, Theatres, Art]*

Music Alamode, or Bays in Chromatics: A Burlesque Entertainment (1764) *[cf. Managers, Theatres, Art]*

News from Parnassus. An Introductory Piece (23 September 1776, CG: 4) by Arthur Murphy *[cf. Art]*

A Peep Behind the Curtain; or, The New Rehearsal* (23 October 1767, DL: 25) by David Garrick *[cf. Managers, Theatres, Art]*

The Rehearsal; or, Bays in Petticoats. A Comedy in Two Acts (15 March 1750, DL: 3) by Catherine (Kitty) Clive *[listed hereafter as Bays in Petticoats, cf. Managers, Theatres, Art]*

The Snake in the Grass. A Dramatic Entertainment, of a new Species; Being Neither Tragedy, Comedy, Pantomime, Farce, Ballad, nor Opera (1760) by Aaron Hill *[cf. Theatres]*

Tragedy A-La-Mode (6 July 1763, HAY: 1) [Act 2 of The Diversions of the Morning] by Samuel Foote *[cf. Managers]*

1780-1799

8 new pieces written; 6 produced

The Author on the Wheel, or a Piece cut in the Green Room (18 April 1785, DL: 1) *[cf. Managers, Art]*

Damnation or the Playhouse hissing hot. A Dramatic Piece in One Act (29 August 1781, HAY: 1) by Charles Stuart *[cf. Theatres]*

The German Hotel; a Comedy* [Epilogue] (11 November 1790, CG: 11) by Thomas Holcroft *[cf. Art]*

The Hodge Podge or A Receipt for a Benefit (28 August 1781, HAY: 2) *[cf. Managers, Theatres, Art]*

The Manager in Distress. A Prelude* (30 May 1780, HAY: 25) by George Colman the Elder *[cf. Managers, Theatres]*

Mrs Doggrell in her Altitudes; (Or,) Strange Effects of a West India Ramble (22 April 1795, HAY: 1) attributed to Sarah Gardner *[cf. Art]*

Philoctetes in Lemnos. A Drama in Three Acts. To which is Prefixed, A Green Room Scene (1795) by Oxoniensis *[cf. Managers, Art]*

Precious Relics; or the Tragedy of Vortigern Rehearsed. A Dramatic Piece in Two Acts (1796) attributed to Wally Chamberlaine Oulton *[cf. Managers, Theatres, Art]*

CHAPTER 2: THE PLAYER'S MANAGERS

1700-1736

7 new pieces written; 7 produced

The Art of Management; or, Tragedy Expell'd (24 September 1735, York Buildings: 4) by Charlotte Charke *[cf. Art]*

The Author's Farce, with a Puppet Show, called The Pleasures of the Town* (30 March 1729, HAY: 46) by Henry Fielding

The Confederates (1717) by John Durant de Breval *[cf. Playwrights, Theatres]*

Don Quixote in England* (5 April 1734, HAY: 9) by Henry Fielding *[cf. Playwrights]*

Pasquin* (5 March 1736, HAY: 64) by Henry Fielding *[cf. Playwrights, Theatres, Art]*

The Per-juror (12 December 1717, LIF: 7) by Christopher Bullock *[cf. Art]*

The Stage Mutineers* (27 July 1733, CG: 13) attributed to Edward Phillips *[cf. Playwrights, Theatres, Art]*

The Strolers. A Farce (16 July 1723, DL: 3) by John Durant de Breval [cut from The Play is the Plot, 1717]

Three Hours after Marriage (16 January 1717, DL: 2) by Gay, Pope, and Arbuthnot *[cf. Playwrights, Art]*

1737 - 1779

22 new pieces written; 12 produced

The Apprentice. A Farce, in Two Acts* (2 January 1756, DL: 14) by Arthur Murphy

The Authors (1755) Lindesius Jones *[cf. Playwrights]*

The Author's Triumph (14 April 1737, LIF: 1) *[cf. Playwrights]*

Bays in Petticoats (15 March 1750, DL: 3) by Kitty Clive *[cf. Playwrights, Theatres, Art]*

A Christmas Tale. A New Dramatic Entertainment* (27 December 1773, DL: 17) by David Garrick

Coalition, A Farce; Founded on Facts, And lately Performed, with the Approbation, and under the joint Inspection of the Managers, of the Theatres-Royal (1779)

The Coffee House (26 January 1738, DL: 1) by James Miller *[cf. Playwrights, Art]*

The Critick Anticipated (1779) by R. B. S., Esq. &c., pseud. *[cf. Playwrights, Theatres, Art]*

A Dialogue in the Green Room, upon a Disturbance in the Pit (1763) *[cf. Theatres]*

A Dialogue on Plays and Players (1744) [Reprinted from Historia Histrionica; an Historical Account of the English Stage, Shewing the ancient Use, Improvement, and Perfection of Dramatick Representations, in this Nation. In a Dialogue of Plays and Players by James Wright (1699)]

Garrick in the Shades (1779) *[cf. Playwrights, Art]*

The Historical Register* (21 March 1737, HAY: 36) by Henry Fielding *[cf. Playwrights, Theatres, Art]*

A Lick at the Town (16 March 1751, DL: 1) by Henry Woodward *[cf. Playwrights]*

Life of Hamlet, with Alterations (1772) by Arthur Murphy *[cf. Playwrights]*

The Managers; A Comedy (1768) *[cf. Art]*

The Meeting of the Company* (17 September 1774, DL: 11) by David Garrick *[cf. Playwrights, Theatres, Art]*

The Minor, a Comedy* (28 July 1760, HAY: 35) by Samuel Foote *[cf. Art]*

Music Alamode (1764) *[cf. Playwrights, Theatres, Art]*

A Peep Behind the Curtain* (23 October 1767, DL: 25) by David Garrick *[cf. Playwrights, Theatres, Art]*

The Rival Theatres: or, a Play-House to be let. A Farce. To which is added, The Chocolate-Makers: or, Mimickry Exposed. An Interlude (1759) by George Stayley *[cf. Theatres]*

The Theatrical Manager: a Dramatic Satire (1751) *[cf. Art]*

Tragedy A-La-Mode (6 July 1763, HAY: 1) by Samuel Foote *[cf. Playwrights]*

1780-1799

18 new pieces written; 10 produced

Apollo turn'd Stroller; or, Thereby hangs a Tale. A Musical Pasticcio. In Two Parts (1787) by John Oldmixon *[cf. Theatres]*

The Author on the Wheel (18 April 1785, DL: 1) *[cf. Playwrights, Art]*

A Beggar on Horseback* (16 June 1785, HAY: 10) by John O'Keeffe *[cf. Art]*

Critic upon Critic: a Dramatic Medley (1788) by Leonard MacNally *[cf. Theatres, Art]*

The Critick; or, A Tragedy Rehearsed. A Literary Catchpenny ... Prelude to a Dramatic After-Piece by R. B. Sheridan, Esq. (1780)

The Eleventh of June; or The Daggerwoods at Dunstable. Being a Continuation of the Dramatic Interlude called Sylvester Daggerwood (5 June 1798, DL: 3) by John O'Keeffe

Fiddlestick's End; or, It's All A Farce (1799)

The Hodge Podge (28 August 1781, HAY: 2) *[cf. Playwrights, Theatres, Art]*

Management. A Comedy, in Five Acts* (31 October 1799, CG: 27) by Frederick Reynolds

The Manager in Distress* (30 May 1780, HAY: 25) by George Colman the Elder *[cf. Playwrights, Theatres]*

New Hay at the Old Market; An Occasional Drama* (9 June 1795, HAY: 32) by George Colman the Younger *[cf. Theatres, Art]*

No Play This Night! or Sylvester Daggerwoods 2nd Appearance. A prelude in one act (1797) *[cf. Art]*

Philoctetes in Lemnos . . . Green Room Scene (1795) by Oxoniensis *[cf. Playwrights, Art]*

Poor Old Haymarket; or, Two Sides of the Gutter (15 June 1792, HAY: 8) by George Colman the Younger *[cf. Theatres, Art]*

Precious Relics (1796) attributed to Wally Chamberlaine Oulton *[cf. Playwrights, Theatres, Art]*

The Stroller or All in the Dark, in Five Acts (1799) by William Wetherburn

Sylvester Daggerwood* (13 April 1796, DL: 1; July 7, HAY: 10) [one-act from New Hay at the Old Market] by George Colman the Younger

Tag in Tribulation or The Benefit Night. An Interlude in one Act (7 May 1799, CG: 1) by Thomas J. Dibdin

Wild Oats, or the Strolling Gentlemen. A Comedy in Five Acts* (16 April 1791, CG: 13) by John O'Keeffe

CHAPTER 3: THE PLAYER'S THEATRES

1700-1736

4 new pieces written; 3 produced

The Confederates (1717) by John Durant de Breval *[cf. Playwrights, Managers]*

The Fashionable Lady* (2 April 1730, GF: 13) by James Ralph *[cf. Playwrights, Art]*

Pasquin* (5 March 1736, HAY: 64) by Henry Fielding *[cf. Playwrights, Managers, Art]*

The Stage Mutineers* (27 July 1733, CG: 13) attributed to Edward Phillips *[cf. Playwrights, Managers, Art]*

1737 - 1779

11 new pieces written; 7 produced

Bays in Petticoats (15 March 1750, DL: 3) by Kitty Clive *[cf. Playwrights, Managers, Art]*

The Critic* (30 October 1779, DL: 48) by Richard Brinsley Sheridan *[cf. Playwrights, Art]*

The Critick Anticipated (1779) by R. B. S., Esq. &c., pseud. *[cf. Playwrights, Managers, Art]*

A Dialogue in the Green Room (1763) *[cf. Managers]*

The Historical Register* (21 March 1737, HAY: 36) by Henry Fielding *[cf. Playwrights, Managers, Art]*

The Mad-House (full title: Rehearsal of a New Ballad-Opera burlesqu'd, call'd The Mad House. After the manner of Pasquin (22 April 1737, LIF: 2) attributed to Richard Baker *[cf. Art]*

The Meeting of the Company* (17 September 1774, DL: 11) by David Garrick *[cf. Playwrights, Managers, Art]*

Music Alamode (1764) *[cf. Playwrights, Managers, Art]*

New Brooms! An Occasional Prelude (21 September 1776, DL: 8) by George Colman the Elder

A Peep Behind the Curtain* (23 October 1767, DL: 25) by David Garrick *[cf. Playwrights, Managers, Art]*

The Rival Theatres (1759) by George Stayley *[cf. Managers]*

The Snake in the Grass (1760) by Aaron Hill *[cf. Playwrights]*

1780-1799

12 new pieces written; 9 produced

Apollo Turn'd Stroller (1787) by John Oldmixon *[cf. Managers]*

Critic upon Critic (1788) by Leonard MacNally *[cf. Managers, Art]*

Damnation (29 August 1781, HAY: 1) by Charles Stuart *[cf. Playwrights]*

The Green Room (27 August 1783, HAY: 1) *[cf. Art]*

The Hodge Podge (28 August 1781, HAY: 2) *[cf. Playwrights, Managers, Art]*

The Manager in Distress* (30 May 1780, HAY: 25) by George Colman the Elder *[cf. Playwrights, Managers]*

New Hay at the Old Market* (9 June 1795, HAY: 32) by George Colman the Younger *[cf. Managers, Art]*

A Nosegay of Weeds. A Musical Piece in One Act (6 June 1798, DL: 1) by John O'Keeffe *[cf. Art]*

A Peep into Elysium; or, Foote, Weston, and Shuter in the Shades. Interlude (10 August 1784, HAY: 5) attributed to Richard Wilson

Poor Covent Garden! or, a Scene Rehearsed; an Occasional Prelude, Intended for the opening of the New Theatre Royal, Covent-Garden, this season (1792) *[cf. Art]*

Poor Old Drury, a Prelude* (22 September 1791, DL: 16) attributed to James Cobb *[cf. Art]*

Poor Old Haymarket (15 June 1792, HAY: 8) by George Colman the Younger *[cf. Managers, Art]*

Precious Relics (1796) attributed to Wally Chamberlaine Oulton *[cf. Playwrights, Managers, Art]*

CHAPTER 4: THE PLAYER'S ART

1700-1736

7 new pieces written; 7 produced

The Art of Management (24 September 1735, York Bldgs: 4) by Charlotte Charke *[cf. Managers]*

Farewel Folly: or, The Younger the Wiser. A Comedy (18 January 1705, DL: 3) by Pierre Motteux

The Fashionable Lady* (2 April 1730, GF: 13) by James Ralph *[cf. Playwrights, Theatres]*

Pasquin* (5 March 1736, HAY: 64) by Henry Fielding *[cf. Playwrights, Managers, Theatres]*

The Per-juror (12 December 1717, LIF: 7) by Christopher Bullock *[cf. Managers]*

The Stage Mutineers* (27 July 1733, CG: 13) attributed to Edward Phillips *[cf. Playwrights, Managers, Theatres]*

Three Hours After Marriage (16 January 1717, DL: 2) by Gay, Pope, and Arbuthnot *[cf. Playwrights, Managers]*

1737-1779

18 new pieces written; 12 produced

Bays in Petticoats (15 March 1750, DL: 3) by Kitty Clive *[cf. Playwrights, Managers, Theatres]*

The Coffee House (26 January 1738, DL: 1) by James Miller *[cf. Playwrights, Managers]*

The Court of Nassau; or, The Trial of Hum-bug (1753) by George Stayley

The Critic* (30 October 1779, DL: 48) by Richard Brinsley Sheridan *[cf. Playwrights, Theatres]*

The Critick Anticipated (1779) by R. B. S., Esq. &c., pseud. *[cf. Playwrights, Managers, Theatres]*

The Diversions of the Morning* (22 April 1747, HAY: 28) by Samuel Foote *[cf. Playwrights]*

Garrick in the Shades (1779) *[cf. Playwrights, Managers]*

The Historical Register* (21 March 1737, HAY: 36) by Henry Fielding *[cf. Playwrights, Managers, Theatres]*

The Mad House (22 April 1737, LIF: 2) attributed to Richard Baker *[cf. Theatres]*

The Managers (1768) *[cf. Managers]*

The Meeting of the Company* (17 September 1774, DL: 11) by David Garrick *[cf. Playwrights, Managers, Theatres]*

The Minor* (28 July 1760, HAY: 35) by Samuel Foote *[cf. Managers]*

A Modern Character, Introduc'd In the Scenes of Vanbrugh's Aesop ([1751], HAY: 1 private performance) by F. Stamper

Music Alamode (1764) *[cf. Playwrights, Managers, Theatres]*

News from Parnassus (23 September 1776, CG: 4) by Arthur Murphy *[cf. Playwrights]*

An Occasional Prelude for the Opening of Covent Garden* (21 September 1772, CG: 20) by George Colman the Elder

A Peep Behind the Curtain* (23 October 1767, DL: 25) by David Garrick *[cf. Playwrights, Managers, Theatres]*

The Theatrical Manager (1751) *[cf. Managers]*

1780-1799

16 new pieces written; 11 produced

The Author on the Wheel (18 April 1785, DL: 1) *[cf. Playwrights, Managers]*

A Beggar on Horseback* (16 June 1785, HAY: 10) by John O'Keeffe *[cf. Managers]*

Critic upon Critic (1788) by Leonard MacNally *[cf. Managers, Theatres]*

The German Hotel* (11 November 1790, CG: 11) by Thomas Holcroft *[cf. Playwrights]*

The Green Room (27 August 1783, HAY: 1) *[cf. Theatres]*

The Hodge Podge (28 August 1781, HAY: 2) *[cf. Playwrights, Managers, Theatres]*

Mrs Doggrell in Her Altitudes (22 April 1795, HAY: 1) attributed to Sarah Gardner *[cf. Playwrights]*

New Hay at the Old Market* (9 June 1795, HAY: 32) by George Colman the Younger *[cf. Managers, Theatres]*

No Play this Night! (1797) *[cf. Managers]*

A Nosegay of Weeds (6 June 1798, DL: 1) by John O'Keeffe *[cf. Theatres]*

Philoctetes in Lemnos . . . Green Room Scene (1795) by Oxoniensis *[cf. Playwrights, Managers]*

Poor Covent Garden! (1792) *[cf. Theatres]*

Poor Old Drury* (22 September 1791, DL: 16) attributed to James Cobb *[cf. Theatres]*

Poor Old Haymarket (15 June 1792, HAY: 8) by George Colman the Younger *[cf. Managers, Theatres]*

Precious Relics (1796) attributed to Wally Chamberlaine Oulton *[cf. Playwrights, Managers, Theatres]*

The Young Actor (8 May 1780, DL: 1; 17 August, HAY: 1) by George Colman the Elder (adapted from An Occasional Prelude)

NOTES

[1] For the single complete list of titles, please see the "Plays" section of the Bibliography.

[2] Throughout my study I rate a play's success in production by its achievement of nine or more performances in one season. I have chosen nine performances as the starting point for a successful run because, until the 1790s, the playwrights were paid for their pieces by benefits on the third, sixth, and ninth performance (LS 3.1: cxi). A third benefit payment for a play would probably net the playwright more money than that paid for publication of the work, because profits would be higher for a theatre performance (LS 5.1: clxxxix). Towards the end of the eighteenth century the custom arose to pay dramatists a stated sum for the first nine nights. According to an agreement between Charles Dibdin and Harris at Covent Garden, Dibdin was to be paid, for mainpieces, "a third of the first nine nights and for afterpieces a sixth of the first six nights" (LS 5.1: cxciii). Frederick Reynolds's earnings, as per an agreement he had with Covent Garden dated October 1794, were £300 for the the first nine nights and £100 on the twentieth and fortieth performances, in whatever season they occurred (LS 5.1: cxciv).

[3] The theatres are abbreviated as follows: DL = Drury Lane; CG = Covent Garden; HAY = Little Theatre, Haymarket; LIF = Lincoln's Inn Fields; and GF = Goodman Fields.