

WARRIORS, PARTNERS, ENTHUSIASTS: A TRANSNATIONAL VIEW OF THE
PERFORMANCE OF GENDER IN THE LONG EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

by

SETH WILSON

(Under the Direction of MARLA CARLSON)

ABSTRACT

This study examines the effects of two concurrent cultural developments on British attitudes towards gender during the long eighteenth century: the introduction and popularization of actresses to the British public stage and the ongoing British colonial project. The goal is to demonstrate how theatrical performance shaped changing social attitudes towards women in light of the country's encounters with non-European peoples in the Americas. I am specifically concerned with performance and the interplay between the fictional personae of the characters and the offstage reputations of the performers bringing them to life. I use a framework that I have termed "hauntography" to illustrate how the fictional content of plays interacts with the performers' identities and the broader cultural and political context to produce meaning. I read performances from the late seventeenth century through the beginning of the eighteenth century staged at sites around the Atlantic holdings of the British empire to show that theatre participated in a negotiation around women's role in society that ultimately resulted in a repressive enclosure of women to domestic rather than public space.

INDEX WORDS: British Theatre, Long Eighteenth Century Theatre, Gender, Performance, British Actresses, Colonialism, Indigenous Peoples, British Empire, Atlantic World, French Revolution, Henry Purcell, Thomas Betterton, John Dryden, *The Indian Queen*, Thomas Southerne, *Oroonoko*, Jane Rogers, Frances Knight, Laetitia Cross, Aphra Behn, *The Widow Ranter*, Anne Bracegirdle, Elizabeth Currer, George Farquhar, *The Recruiting Officer*, Annapolis-Royal, *The Humours of the Army*, Charles Shadwell, Margaret “Peg” Woffington, Catherine “Kitty” Clive, Prologues and Epilogues, “The Female Volunteer,” Charlotte Corday, Richard Brinsley Sheridan, *Pizarro*, Sarah Siddons, *The Female Enthusiast*, Sarah Pogson Smith.

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DEDICATION

For Stephanie, my favorite actress of all.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

One of the most transformative changes in the history of Anglophone theatre was the introduction of actresses to public stages after the restoration of the Stuart monarchy in 1660. In addition to the impact of female performers on the art of the drama, acting offered a professional career to women from lower- and middle-class backgrounds that could allow them to achieve both fame and economic independence. Over the course of the long eighteenth century, female performers became an established part of theatrical culture and eventually won acceptance and, in some cases, respect. This dissertation reads the impact those women had on larger societal attitudes towards gender alongside Britain's colonial projects, international entanglements, and the emergent celebrity culture that prized the offstage lives of actresses.

As women were becoming a fixture on the public stage, the scientific and medical conception of sex also underwent a transformation across the long eighteenth century. Over the course of the eighteenth century, medical science came to regard the male and female reproductive systems as biologically distinct; increasingly, western culture embraced a "two-sex model" in which women were regarded as innately inferior due to their physical biology. The first generations of English actresses, then, plied their trade against a landscape that was evolving and in constant flux. Therefore, I argue that they exerted a profound effect on the ongoing debates about women, gender, and the role of women in public.

Concurrently, over the course of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, England (and later Great Britain) established itself as a major colonial power in the Atlantic world. The

nation's expansionist ambitions led to increasing encounters with non-European peoples and the concurrent development of a modern racial ideology. In the period, "race" had a different meaning from its current one. Though today skin color is the primary constitutive element of racial identity, the English initially used a range of factors to evaluate the race of non-English peoples. Many of these were social practices, compared against European behaviors to determine the level of a given society's "civility," meaning how civilized they were presumed to be. The closer to European customs a people exhibited, the more civilized they were considered to be. One key constituent in this ideological framework was the extent to which indigenous peoples maintained a clear separation of the genders. The English believed that skin color was changeable and susceptible to manipulation, but gender was presumed to be far more naturally static.¹ A primary element of British self-conception was that the nation was marked by an inherently masculine culture. In fact, one of the reasons the British disdained France was their belief that French men's interest in fashion evinced a corruption of gender roles.²

As a result, British culture had a complex relationship with gender over the century. The introduction of women to public stages opened new avenues for their economic and cultural advancement independent of men. At the same time, the preservation of gender differences became a part of a larger strategy to articulate the supremacy of the British people. The present study explores that tension as it was articulated through theatrical performance. British theatre in the long eighteenth century offered women the opportunity to achieve material success while its fictional content sought to reify women's inferiority to men as a cornerstone of the nation's identity.

The analytical framework I employ here draws on multiple theoretical discourses. As my primary concern is the way that gender is constructed and performed, feminist theory is a core

part of my analysis. Judith Butler has sketched an argument for gender as a performative behavior instead of an expressive one. Behaviors that have a gendered component do not express any innate qualities, but are learned and reinforced through social action: “Consider gender, for instance, as a *corporeal style*, an ‘act,’ as it were, which is both intentional and performative, where ‘performative’ itself carries the double-meaning of ‘dramatic’ and ‘non-referential.’”³ She argues that gender consists in performative behaviors and does not express any essential reality of the sexes.⁴ Following this thinking, I use the term “sex” here to denote a biological distinction and the term “gender” to denote a social/cultural one.

Butler’s theory informs my reading of the materials of my study as the eighteenth century was a pivotal moment in the conception of gender in Western thought. Thomas Laqueur made this point in his landmark work on the history of gender, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud*. Prior to this time, gender difference was regarded through a “one-sex model” derived from Aristotelian philosophy and Galenic medicine. Women and men were thought to have the same biological structures, though the female was a less developed, immature version of the male. Women were thought to be more animalistic, more subject to extreme passions, less capable of reason, and in need of more external means of control. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, men and women were regarded as biologically discrete in the two-sex model.⁵

Further work has illustrated that gender ideology in the century wasn’t a linear progression towards the two-sex model; rather, women’s social roles and the broader biological conception of gender changed fitfully over the period.⁶ In particular, Dror Wahrman has delineated what he terms a “short eighteenth century” based on a marked difference in cultural attitudes towards gender that emerged around 1780. Before this turning point, culture allowed for

gender manipulation and play in ways that were closed off by the end of the century.⁷ During the long eighteenth century, with the introduction of the actress to English stages, performance became a venue to debate and articulate what the corporeal style that Butler describes should look like in a British context

In this way, the English actress became what Teresa de Lauretis has termed a technology of gender. According to de Lauretis,

(1) Gender is (a) representation—which is not to say it does not have concrete or real implications, both social and subjective, for the material life of individuals.

On the contrary,

(2) The representation of gender *is* its construction—and in the simplest sense it can be said that all of Western Art and high culture is the engraving of the history of that construction.⁸

De Lauretis further notes that even deconstructive representations of gender ultimately serve in its construction. Representational practices around gender are a means by which its real-world effects can be made manifest. By playing women enmeshed in the colonial project, English actresses were employed as active agents in the cultural construction of an ideal British femininity.

At the same time, the performers' offstage lives exerted a powerful force on the audience conception of the drama. According to Joseph Roach, celebrities exist in the popular imagination with a "body cinematic" and a "body natural," similar to the dualistic nature of the monarch in the period. While the performer exists as a flesh-and-blood human, her celebrity exists apart from her physical self, fixed and unchanging. These two constructions are inextricably linked in the minds of the public.⁹ The linkage between the performer's physical body and

celebrity/performative identity allows for seepage between her offstage life and the drama.

Audiences could read an actress's character in a play through the lens of her well-known public persona.

To examine how these performances made meaning beyond the stage, I draw on the analytical methods outlined by Robert Hume in *Reconstructing Contexts: The Aims and Principles of Archeo-Historicism*. Hume argues that his method “comprises *both* the reconstruction of context and the interpretation of texts within the context thus assembled.”¹⁰ Using Hume's principles, I read each of the objects of my study alongside contemporaneous historical matters and attitudes toward gender and the colonial enterprise.

My analysis also relies on multiple discourses within eighteenth-century theatre and performance studies, specifically Elizabeth Maddock Dillon's theory of intimate distance and Roach's ideas about surrogation and orature. By putting these three ideas into conversation with one another, I aim to illustrate how the ways in which audiences interact with performances have ramifications on society outside of theatrical culture. Intimate distance, Dillon says, is the process by which European colonials in the Americas sought to differentiate themselves from their indigenous neighbors by stressing their cultural linkages to the colonizer. Thus, colonists lived proximally close but culturally distant from the Native populations.¹¹ Performances in the metropole could also articulate this cultural distance at the same time that they allowed audiences the opportunity to imaginatively experience the far away Americas.

Roach's notions of surrogation and his specifically performance-oriented use of orature make clear how performance as a category impacts broader cultural trends. Surrogation “continues as actual or perceived vacancies occur in the network of relations that constitute the social fabric,” when remaining members of a society seek to fill the vacancy.¹² Roach notes that

the essence of surrogation is incomplete replication. Because the surrogate almost never reproduces the predecessor in an exact, complete way, the process rarely succeeds in a perfect reproduction. The surrogate either falls short of or exceeds the previous iteration in practice. Therefore, though the surrogational process aims for continuity, the reality is a series of ruptures that leads to change over time. Performance participates in surrogational practices largely through orature, which Roach invokes in his work as the linkage of literary and oral traditions through performance.¹³ The surrogational nature of performance means that it's a process that impacts culture, shaping it over successive generations of incomplete replications.

Finally, Diana Taylor advances the concept of a performance studies-oriented application of hauntology. She argues that performance makes clear “that which is always already there: the ghosts, the tropes, the scenarios that structure our individual and collective life.”¹⁴ In short, a performance event illustrates the social world in which it happens for the spectator, illuminating cultural values and ideas. If surrogation is the process by which performance participates in cultural evolution over time, then hauntology articulates the structure of a culture at any given moment. In doing so, the viewer can come to understand her position in the larger world outside of the performance.

Through these analytic categories, we can see how performance acts as a shaping agent in culture. Audiences see themselves and their cultural values onstage, but these theories also suggest that performance participates in constituting mainstream culture beyond the borders of the performative act. While an audience sees themselves reflected onstage, they also interact with that performance and negotiate new social identities and categories. These theories interact in a process that I call “hauntography.” If hauntology makes culture intelligible to a spectator, then hauntography is the process by which performance actively shapes a subject's position

within the culture. Women in Britain sought to fill a perceived vacancy in society, and the nascent actress profession was an avenue for them to do so. Simultaneously, most British citizens could not experience colonial events for themselves; instead, they could only interact with performed re-enactments of the nation's quest for imperial power. Thus, based on the interaction of the audience with the theoretical values outlined above, I position performance as not just revelatory of social structures, but an active agent in their construction.

Chapter Outline

"Chapter Two: Warrior Women" explores the permeability of gender roles in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries by examining how English theatre in the late seventeenth century used indigenous femininity to articulate the importance of women maintaining their traditional roles. Thanks to the libertine court of Charles II and the introduction of actresses to the public stage, strictures on women's roles in public might have potentially been relaxed. Additionally, contact with indigenous peoples in the New World suggested new possibilities for the organization of society. At times, women might even be rewarded and celebrated for taking on masculine, active roles. Performance became a key site for the negotiation of changing gender roles in the late seventeenth century.

I take as my objects of study in this chapter three plays that prominently feature Amerindian characters: the operatic remount of John Dryden's *The Indian Queen* staged by Thomas Betterton in 1695 with music by Henry Purcell, Thomas Southerne's stage adaptation of Aphra Behn's novel *Oroonoko*, also first put on in 1695, and Aphra Behn's final play, *The Widow Ranter*, set in the Virginia colony and first performed in 1689. Each of these productions staged an exoticized version of the colonial world to allow viewers to imaginatively experience foreign lands. Despite their extravagant depiction of the Americas, the ideological message of

these plays was resolutely concerned with English customs. They all stressed that gender difference was an intrinsically English value that established the supremacy of the colonizer. Though English women might engage in some playful flouting of gender convention, they never truly threatened to upend the social order. Further, in each case, the identities of the women onstage and their well-known personae provided extra-theatrical information critical to the audience's reception of the ideological message.

In "Chapter Three: Partners in Empire," I turn my attention to performances that engaged with and employed the British military as a way of establishing gender difference. My driving question is how the military, which allowed Britain to project power around the world, became a site for the construction of gender ideology. Although the army was an overwhelmingly masculine space, women accompanied it on deployment as camp followers, launderesses, nurses, prostitutes, and in some extreme cases, even disguised themselves as men and served as soldiers. Although its primary mission was officially restricted to men, the army also had cultural importance beyond its warfighting. Particularly when deployed abroad, the army was charged as much with exporting English culture as conducting military operations. In the first part of the chapter, I examine a garrison production of *The Recruiting Officer* put on by the soldiers of the garrison at Annapolis-Royal, Nova Scotia in 1733. I then look at performances by the actresses Peg Woffington and Kitty Clive in London that engaged with military themes. The pieces, along with the reaction they elicited, revealed a simultaneous fascination with gender play and resistance to female usurpation of supposedly masculine duties. Ultimately, the chapter concludes that, both at home and abroad, the army was used as a vehicle for solidifying cultural attitudes towards gender.

“Chapter Four: Female Enthusiasts” looks at three case studies from the end of the eighteenth century that trace a variety of transnational interactions. In this chapter, I look at the systematic exclusion of women from the masculine, political sphere. In the late seventeenth century, European peoples used the maintenance of a clear delineation between the genders as a yardstick for evaluating a culture’s level of development. By the early nineteenth century, that metric manifested itself as a cultural desire to limit women to the domestic sphere. These case studies show non-English societies thrown into chaos as a result of women’s participation in political affairs.

First, I consider the public execution of Marat’s assassin Charlotte Corday as a performance event whereby women were excluded from negotiating the future of the French government. I put this event in dialogue with Richard Brinsley Sheridan’s late-career romantic drama *Pizarro* (1799). An adaptation of German playwright August von Kotzebue’s *Spanier in Peru*, Sheridan’s play is superficially about the Spanish conquest of Peru. Underneath the surface story about European expansion into the new world, however, Sheridan addresses British anxieties about a potential French invasion of the home islands. I argue that Sheridan more directly contraposes British femininity against French: while France must execute female assassins, Britain can use the public discourse of theatre to contain women into a tightly circumscribed range of domestic duties. Siddons’ performance as Elvira served a function similar to the execution of Charlotte Corday, and thereby proclaimed the supremacy of British society to both non-European and French cultures. Finally, I analyze a play by the obscure English-American writer Sarah Pogson Smith about Corday entitled *The Female Enthusiast: A Tragedy in Five Acts*. Pogson Smith characterizes Corday as a romantic figure forced to act

because of the failure of French civilization to sequester women to the domestic sphere. In each of these cases, women's participation in public affairs is a sign of a troubled, disordered society.

Literature Review

Joseph Roach's *Cities of the Dead* (1996) is the bedrock of circum-Atlantic performance studies, establishing a triangular formation of "memory, performance, and substitution" that forms the crux of the circum-Atlantic relation.¹⁵ Another foundational text on Atlantic studies is Paul Gilroy's *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (1993) which defines a "black Atlantic" that was forged by the circulation of diasporic Africans around the Atlantic Ocean and combines African, American, British, and Caribbean traits to forge a circum-oceanic cultural network. Heidi Hutner's *Colonial Women: Race and Culture in Stuart Drama* (2001) details the way that English drama uses romantic encounters between native women and Englishmen to function as a metaphor for the relationship between the colonizer and its new world possessions. Daniel O'Quinn's *Entertaining Crisis in the Atlantic Imperium: 1770-1790* (2011) deals with British theatrical and para-theatrical events that depicted the American Revolution, including garrison performances. O'Quinn also advances an argument about the role theatre played in forming opinions about the Indian imperial holdings of the British in *Staging Governance: Theatrical Imperialism in London 1770-1800* (2005). Jason Shaffer takes up similar questions in *Performing Patriotism: National Identity in the Colonial American Theatre* (2007), which examines why plays that celebrated British nationalism thrived in the American colony in the run-up to the Revolution. Susan Dwyer Amussen's *Caribbean Exchanges: Slavery and the Transformation of English Society 1640-1700* (2007) looks at how the slave trade was not just an exchange of bodies around the Atlantic, but also of cultural expression. *The Red Atlantic: American Indigenes and the Making of the Modern World, 1000-1927* (2014) by Jace

Weaver is a recent study that traces the flow of indigenous peoples around the Atlantic Ocean. Elizabeth Maddock Dillon's *New World Drama: The Performative Commons in the Atlantic World, 1649-1849* (2014) discusses the Atlantic world as a "performative commons" wherein European colonial powers and their New World holdings negotiate ideological, political, and racial questions. Additionally, an edited volume entitled *Atlantic Worlds in the Long Eighteenth Century: Seduction and Sentiment* (2012) collects essays that stake out Atlantic studies as a discrete field. *The Island Race: Englishness, Empire, and Gender in the Eighteenth Century* (2002) by Kathleen Wilson looks at Britain's empire building activities and their relationship to gender in both the Pacific and Atlantic worlds. Finally, recent dissertations on circum-Atlantic performance include *Bodyscripts: Mami Wata, Diaspora, and Circum-Atlantic Performance* by Elyan Jeanine Hill of UCLA (2013), *(Re)creating Social Life Out of Social Death: Cross-Cultural Alliances in the Circum-Atlantic, 1760—1815* (2012) by Jeffrey Charles Gagnon of UCSD, *New World Courtship: Transatlantic Fiction and the Female American* by Melissa Marie Adams of Indiana University (2009), *Initiating Acts: The Role of Rupture in the Formation of North American Cultural Identities* by Venus Opal Reese of Stanford University (2002), and *Arrant beggars: Staging the Atlantic lumpenproletariat, 1777 to 1852* (2005) by Peter Patrick Reed of Florida State University.

Foundational studies on British theatre of the long eighteenth century by Allardyce Nicoll and Montague Summers have been replaced over the last half-century by numerous valuable works. Peter Holland's *The Ornament of Action: Text and Performance in Restoration Comedy* (1979) considers plays as both literary and performance objects, as well as a thorough unpacking of the practical business of acting in the late seventeenth century. Holland also recently co-edited, with Michael Cordner, a volume of essays on various topics related to British theatre in

the eighteenth century called *Players, Playwrights, Playhouses: Investigating Performance 1660-1800* (2007). J.L. Styan's *Restoration Comedy in Performance* (1986) traces a line similar to Holland's work. Robert Hume, perhaps the pre-eminent scholar of the Restoration and long eighteenth century, charts the changes in the literary drama in *The Development of English Drama in the Late Seventeenth Century* (1976). He also edited an invaluable volume, *The London Theatre World: 1660-1800* (1980) that compiles twelve essays on a variety of textual and historical matters pertaining to theatre as both an aesthetic and practical enterprise. Additionally, Hume co-authored *Producible Interpretation: Eight English Plays, 1675-1707* (1985) with Judith Milhous wherein the two authors outline a framework for reading and evaluating Restoration plays that privileges performance as a factor in interpretation. Three major studies focus on audience in the era: *The Theatrical Public in the Time of Garrick* (1966) by Henry William Pedicord, *The Drama's Patrons: A Study of the Eighteenth-Century London Audience* (1971) by Leo Hughes, and *The Ladies: Female Patronage of Restoration Drama, 1660-1700* (1989) by David Roberts.

More recent studies in the field have refined this foundational work. Derek Hughes wrote *English Drama: 1660-1700* (1996), an important survey of the dramatic literature of the period. *Character's Theatre: Genre and Identity on the Eighteenth-Century English Stage* (2001) by Lisa A. Freeman, argues that the theatre was, unlike the novel, more concerned with genre than deepening the interiority of the audience. *Prologues and Epilogues of Restoration Theatre: Gender and Comedy, Performance and Print* (2013) by Diana Solomon provides a systematic analysis of its titular subjects through the lens of gender and generic studies. Tim Keenan's *Restoration Staging: 1660-74* (2016) looks at conventions of staging and theatrical practice in the early part of the period. *Theatres of Feeling: Affect, Performance, and the Eighteenth-*

Century Stage (2019) by Jean Marsden explores the role of the British theatre in fomenting moral formation through the stimulation of emotional response in the audience. Recent dissertations on the area include Anthony Brano's *Acting Oblivion: The Politics of Memory, Forgetting, and Forgiveness on the Restoration Stage, 1660–1685* (2015) at Fordham University and Kalissa Hendrickson's *Affecting Objects; or, the Drama of Foreign Products in English Comedy, 1660–1800* (2015) at Arizona State University.

There are two major surveys of the advent of the English actress: Elizabeth Howe's *The First English Actresses* (1993) and Sandra Richards' *The Rise of the English Actress* (1993). Both studies consider the possibilities opened by the introduction of women to the English public stage. Similarly, Kristina Straub's *Sexual Suspects: Eighteenth-Century Players and Sexual Ideology* (1992) takes public speculation about the lives of actors as a site for the negotiation of broader gender roles. The volume *Curtain Calls: British and American Women and the Theatre 1660-1820* (1991), edited by Mary Anne Schofield and Cecilia Macheski, highlights women who participated in theatre in the Anglophone world, though its focus is more on literature than performance. More recently, Felicity Nussbaum's *Rival Queens: Actresses, Performance, and Eighteenth-Century British Theatre* (2010) explores actresses as public models for British womanhood. Laura Engel's volume *Fashioning Celebrity: Eighteenth-Century British Actresses and Strategies for Image Making* (2011) focuses on the ways in which actresses constructed their public personae in the period. Krysten Pullen's *Actresses and Whores: On Stage and In Society* (2005) and Gilli Bush-Bailey's *Treading the Bawds: Actresses and Playwrights on the Late-Stuart Stage* (2006) both offer feminist revisions of the history of the English actress. In *Fatal Desire: Women, Sexuality, and the English Stage, 1660-1720* (2006), Jean Marsden studies representations of violence and sexuality onstage, specifically as they impacted women, and the

development of the genre of she-tragedy. Fiona Ritchie's *Women and Shakespeare in the Eighteenth Century* (2017) is, as the title suggests, a study of the influence of women and Shakespeare on the larger theatrical culture of the period. *A Race of Female Patriots: Women and Public Spirit on the British Stage, 1688-1745* (2012) by Brett Wilson examines the role women in the theatre played on the formation of a British national identity in the first half of the long eighteenth century. Chandrava Chakravarty's *Gendering the Nation: Identity Politics and the English Comic Theatre of the Long Eighteenth Century* (2013) examines the role of theatre as a site for developing gendered ideas of the British nation. Finally, recent dissertations on the subject include *Gender in Its Parts: Eighteenth-Century Female Cross-Dressers, Prosthetic Gender & Sapphic Possibility* (2013) by Ursula Klein of SUNY-Stony Brook, and Heidi L. Castle-Smith's *'I should go near to say he lies with her, yet she's a maid.' From virgins to whores, actresses and portraits, 1660—1737* (2008) from the University of Maryland, and a dissertation by Loring Pfeiffer at the University of Pittsburgh entitled *Bodies and Selves: Women Playwrights and Subjectivity on the Restoration and Early Eighteenth-Century Stage* (2015).

In the above studies of circum-Atlantic performance and empire on British stages, issues of gender get only a cursory treatment. Those texts that do take gender studies as their focus are primarily concerned with its performance and development within one nation. In this period, however, gender formation is a truly transnational process. The encounters that Britain had in the Atlantic world, both with indigenous peoples from the Americas and her colonial rivals, exerted a powerful influence on the development of the national identity and the role that women were expected to play in that construction. Over the course of the long eighteenth century, as we shall see, that role became increasingly limited to a domestic, non-political one.

CHAPTER 2

WOMEN WARRIORS

*Behold the strutting Amazonian Whore,
She stands in Guard with her right Foot before:
Her Coats Tuck'd up; and all her Motions just,
She stamps, and then Cries at every thrust:
But laugh to see her tyr'd with many a bout,
Call for the Pot, and like a Man Piss out.*

—John Dryden, *Juvenal: Satyr VI*

The late seventeenth century in England saw the potential for revolutionary changes to society. By the time of the Glorious Revolution in 1688, the global colonial project allowed for an emerging mercantile economy with unprecedented opportunities for economic mobility. Additionally, contact with indigenous peoples in the Americas suggested new possibilities for the organization of society, including appropriate behaviors for women. Although the English enjoyed the influx of goods and wealth from across the Atlantic, they were concerned that foreign influence might corrupt their traditional values.¹⁶ Around the same time, the first generation of English actresses were achieving fame and fortune in a nascent public, professional career. The advent of the English actress exerted similar pressure on the social order, offering women from lower- and middle-class backgrounds a path, however tenuous, to wealth and independence.¹⁷ Performance therefore became a key site for negotiating changing gender norms in the late seventeenth century. This chapter examines how theatrical performances used

indigenous female characters, embodied onstage by white Englishwomen, to shape attitudes about gender in the metropole. Specifically, I shall discuss the performances of Henry Purcell's operatic adaptation of John Dryden's *The Indian Queen*, Thomas Southerne's stage version of *Oroonoko*, and Aphra Behn's *The Widow Ranter*. The first two plays were quite successful, and *The Widow Ranter*, while not itself successful, helped launch the career of Anne Bracegirdle, who would go on to become one of the most successful actresses of her generation. As such, all circulated prominently in the culture of the late seventeenth century.

I argue that the presence of exoticized, foreign characters was primarily intended to construct English femininity in contrast to the New World Amazons. In each example I discuss, a woman engaged in behavior that deviated from the tightly prescribed domestic role traditionally accorded to women. Non-English characters were distinguished through costume pieces like feathers, but female performers lacked any other visual demarcations of their foreignness. Although a male actor might appear in blackface, that distinguishing characteristic was not available to actresses. Absent such visual markers of Otherness, female characters of different ethnicities were separated from one another by narrative elements. In each case, the performance was driven by a dichotomy between two female characters, one of whom survives and one of whom dies. The survivor, even when she took on masculine behaviors and clothing during the play, ultimately re-inserted herself into patriarchal society by marrying. By contrast, the woman who failed to revert to male control was destroyed. Thematically, these plays all demonstrate the importance of maintaining rigid gender roles to preserving the English national character.

Cultural differences between England and the New World were used to underscore the importance of women maintaining their traditional position in society. Karen Ordahl Kupperman

has demonstrated that although the English enjoyed the material wealth that the colonial enterprise provided, they were also concerned about foreign culture infiltrating and corrupting their society and upending the established order. In the early stages of the colonial encounter, one of the primary markers by which the English judged the civilization of indigenous peoples was the degree to which they recognized and enforced gender difference. The more a society distinguished men from women, the more civilized they were presumed to be.¹⁸ On the London stage, these plays showed indigenous women who engaged in masculinized behaviors to solidify the line between harmless gender play and the dangerous usurpation of male identity and prerogative. By maintaining their traditional place in the order, English women could prevent the decline of their society and so establishing and enforcing gender difference was a key symbolic element of civil society.

According to Kupperman, “whereas experienced observers wrote about the American Indians as if the attributes we subsume under the category of race were manipulable and constructed, they and commentators in England constantly expressed concern about maintenance of other categorical boundaries,” gender chief among them, as it was considered more naturally concrete.¹⁹ In fact, one of the reasons that the English looked down on the French was because their perceived obsession with fashion, and particularly with men wearing frills, was taken as a sign of collapsing gender roles and corruption. Skin color was far less determinant of race than clear class and gender hierarchies. Therefore, while plays might visually distinguish Amerindian Amazons via costume elements like headdresses, the more animating difference was in the plays’ narrative content, which served to inculcate traditional behavioral standards for English women.

The epigraph to this chapter, taken from John Dryden’s translation of Juvenal’s sixth satyr, makes light of the anxieties surrounding women not conforming to prescribed gender

roles. Amidst a longer section on the martial prowess of the Amazons and their unfeminine qualities, Dryden includes a scatological joke about a woman urinating while standing like a man. While the Restoration is often caricatured as a time of freewheeling libertinism, it was not without its anxieties about sex and gender. Dryden's body humor, grafted onto the Amazonian images drawn from Juvenal, illustrates misgivings about women deviating too far from their prescribed social role. Amazons played a large symbolic role in gender discourse of the late seventeenth century. In *Ends of Empire: Women and Ideology in Early Eighteenth-Century Literature*, Laura Brown examines the history of the Amazon trope in European culture. Amazon society, with a gender hierarchy that inverted patriarchy, had been an image of disorder since antiquity. Traditionally depicted as existing just outside the known world, Amazonian cultures recur in literature about exploration. Christopher Columbus, Walter Raleigh, and Hernan Cortes all described encounters with Amazons in the New World; generally, these American Amazons are said to be a warlike society guarding vast reserves of gold. Brown sees in the Amazon trope a justification for empire building: by conquering the so-called Amazons, the colonizers restore the gender order proper to Christendom. Seizing the material wealth available in the Americas was merely a benefit that came with the conquest. Thus, gender difference symbolized racial difference, and the categories of race and gender became conflated.²⁰ Although the real-world indigenes living in the Americas were neither hoarding vast gold reserves nor interested in forcing a matriarchal social structure on the English, they proved to be useful as a trope that could claim some basis in reality. What happens, then, is that the stage Amazon is a trope pretending to be a reality.

In this chapter, I am interested in plays that make a masculinized Amazon out of real-world indigenes.²¹ For the purposes of this study, I use the term "Amazon" to denote a non-

English female character who is marked as an Other by engaging in behaviors that are threatening to patriarchal supremacy. In each case, that usurpation makes her a threat to society and results in her destruction. Dryden, Southerne, and Behn all wrote about real-world locales with Amerindian characters taken from the accounts from the expanding English contact with the Americas. The racialized images onstage weren't accurate depictions of other cultures, especially as they were filtered through the white bodies of the actors onstage. Rather, they sought to represent actual foreign cultures for London audiences. The reality of the world outside of Europe—a world with which the English were becoming increasingly familiar—gives these plays a weight that the more fantastical depictions of Amazons did not.²² In each case, the fictional narrative of the piece contrasts acceptable behaviors for women with unacceptable transgressions, showing the destruction of a character who strays too far from traditional gender roles. The exotic settings serve to link gender difference with civilized society, stressing the importance of maintaining separate spheres for preserving the nation. At the same time, the performance, as embodied and communicated by the signifying power of the actress, made her celebrity a tool of erecting the very difference that she threatened. Although the actress's presence onstage might be destabilizing to the traditional order, the meaning of the performance that she enacted constrained her iconoclasm.

European powers and their colonies shared a complex relationship which was reflected in their stage depiction as well. Plays with American settings and Amerindian characters were extremely popular with London audiences throughout the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.²³ The ability to imaginatively experience the exotic New World and its inhabitants seems to have appealed to English theatre patrons. John Dryden echoes this notion. Discussing his sources for *The Indian Emperour*,²⁴ Dryden claimed that his method of writing was

essentially ethnographic: “as near as I could, [I] have traced the Native simplicity and ignorance of the *Indians*, in relation to *European* Customs.”²⁵ Of course, Dryden had no way of knowing if this claim was actually true, as he never traveled to the colonies himself. Realistically, all he is saying here is that he hewed as close to other writers’ descriptions of the New World as he could. What is important is not the accuracy of his claim, however, but that he asserts for his audience that the play is a reliable portrait of the foreign world and its people. He told interested parties that they could glean information about the colonies from his plays. The cultural work his writing accomplished is made clear by the phrase “simplicity and ignorance.” Dryden assured the reader both that they could take his play as truth, and that it confirmed the superiority of English culture.²⁶ The claim to ethnographic realism serves as a useful illustration of the construction, recently articulated by Elizabeth Maddock Dillon, of the “performative commons.”²⁷ To some extent, metropolitan audiences believed they were seeing real, accurate portrayals of the New World onstage. Because they believed the veracity of the depictions, although the stage version of Amerindians presented to London audiences was almost entirely fictional, those plays had more force in urging the audience to maintain their English values.

Considering the nature of the performance event, however, troubles the assumption that a spectator in the period could take American plays as fully realized anthropological studies. The performer in a Native American role might be distinguished by costume pieces like feathers, but she was still clothed in the fashionable, contemporary dress of an upper-class English lady. Costuming almost certainly led to a strong identification with English values and identity.²⁸ As Max Harris has argued, Dryden’s *Indian Emperour* “used a distant setting to advance an alternative perspective on a present debate” in English culture.²⁹ Each of my cases here worked along similar lines. Although the plays are set in the Americas, they are primarily concerned with

English behavior. The performers onstage were all English-born, speaking in English, costumed predominantly in English garb, performing plays in an English acting style. Indeed, these performance conventions were the only reason that an audience member could appreciate and evaluate the action of the play. The exotic locales and accoutrements flavored the performance and offered novelty and interest to appeal to the ticket-buying public, but as English-authored texts performed by English actors for English audiences, their concerns were with English peoples first and foremost. Each of these plays, then, stresses that Englishwomen must remain in their prescribed place in society in order to thrive and to preserve the national character.

At the same time that the fictional content of these plays sought to reify gender difference, the women playing the roles onstage were themselves a threat to that construction. The introduction of actresses to public theatres was a sea change for theatrical culture and women's role in society, providing a viable path to a public career that, if maximally successful, granted economic independence and celebrity. Although women made less money overall than men from acting, a career on the stage was the most lucrative professional option for working women to that point in history.³⁰ Though acting did not guarantee a woman financial freedom, the monetary rewards available to a successful actress could potentially liberate her from the need for marriage. For instance, Elizabeth Barry, the first great female star of the era, apparently earned £100 annually at the end of her career, in addition to the bonus of a benefit night.³¹ Actresses were also able to supplement their income through the largesse of patrons and an admiring public.³² An income of that magnitude would be significantly more than the average income of a naval officer, a clergyman, many types of laborers and tradesmen, and shopkeepers. A star of Barry's caliber would have an annual income roughly equivalent to a lawyer.³³ Some of the most famous actresses of the era, including Barry, Nell Gwyn, and Anne Bracegirdle,

remained single throughout their lives. The ability to earn an independent living constituted a major threat to the traditional marriage economy. Similarly, as Joseph Roach has pointed out, the long eighteenth century saw the emergence of celebrities whose fame did not derive from an aristocratic or religious source.³⁴ The possibility of a woman winning fame on the stage threatened those two traditional pillars of society, the aristocracy and the church. Though a career on the stage was far from a guarantee of fame and economic stability, the early English actresses constituted an unprecedented challenge to the social institutions that were critical to maintaining a separation between the genders.

The structure and audience of the theatres was more intimate than in previous generations, giving patrons an unprecedented interest in and access to the personal lives of the players.³⁵ On the Restoration stage, personality was as important to spectatorship as the drama. While earlier audiences may well have had favorite actors, star culture onstage begins in earnest during the Restoration. As with previous generations, actors specialized in lines of business that dictated which roles they received. In a reciprocal relationship, audiences came to expect performers to enact certain types of characters onstage. Marvin Carlson describes this phenomenon, which he calls ghosting, as the audience's being confronted with "the identical thing they have encountered before, although now in a somewhat different context."³⁶ Audiences grow accustomed to seeing actors perform a particular type of role. Any time they see a performance, they associate the performer with her previous work onstage. This association eventually becomes an expectation that influences an audience's reception of a performance.³⁷ If this process happens with the fictional roles that an actor plays, it stands to reason that an actress's personal life, which was often well known by the Restoration audience, would have a similar impact on audience reception.

Casting was the most important factor in determining what the audience's experience in the theatre was like. Much of the pleasure of the play for Restoration audiences was in how the actor's presence mediated the character.³⁸ According to Roach, celebrities exist in the popular imagination with a "body cinematic" (Roach's term is purposefully anachronistic; hereafter I use "theatrical") and a "body natural," similar to the dualistic nature of the monarch in the period. While the performer exists as a flesh-and-blood human, her celebrity exists apart from her self, fixed and unchanging. These two constructions are inextricably linked in the minds of the public.³⁹ A viewer in the period held both these bodies in mind while watching a play, and the intimate nature of the theatrical culture meant that audience members frequently knew a great deal about the offstage lives of the actors. The audience's knowledge about an actress's body natural impinged upon her body theatrical during performance. Extra-theatrical information served to enhance the drama by either confirming an actor's skill in playing characters dissimilar to herself or offering a chance for art to imitate life. The audience was always conscious of the performer, her type, and her reputation.

Often, the conflation of body theatrical and body natural took the form of salacious sexual intrigue, which manifested itself in broader discourse as a linkage between actresses and prostitutes. The connection between acting and prostitution in the period has been well documented as a larger cultural strategy to contain actresses as a professional class.⁴⁰ Here, I argue that the close connection between life and fiction mitigated the damage a new group of independent, famous women could do to English civilization by turning the actresses' skill and celebrity back on itself. By performing plays which asserted the importance of maintaining traditional social structures, these actresses unintentionally foreclosed the possibility of a wholesale reorganization of English culture.

The framework that I have termed “hauntography,” the process by which performance not just illuminates but solidifies cultural ideological constructions, explains how the fictional roles and the actresses’ celebrity functioned synergistically to solidify and promote the importance of gender differences in society. To illustrate the ways in which these performances made meaning, I shall unpack the complex relationship between the actresses, their characters, and the audience. In so doing, I follow Robert Hume’s suggestion that theatre historians working on drama from this period should examine casting choices to understand plays in their original context more fully.⁴¹

To begin, I analyze Henry Purcell’s semi-operatic adaptation of John Dryden’s tragedy *The Indian Queen*. Dryden’s version debuted in 1664, depicting a war over a princess between the kings of Mexico and Peru before the arrival of Spanish conquistadors. Thomas Betterton was tasked with adapting the piece as an opera in 1695, and asked Purcell to write the music. The play deals with the portion of the Americas taken by Spain and is the only one of my examples to feature no European characters. Telling the fictional story of a war between the Mexican and Peruvian empires, the play’s title character is the villainous usurper Zempoalla, who stole the Mexican throne from the true queen. The play’s initial production in 1664 reflected the vogue in heroic tragedy of the 1660s for plays that reflected contemporary events by having a rightful monarch reclaim the throne from which she had been deposed. While Zempoalla is not a warrior, she displays political cunning and a bloodlust that make her unfeminine in contrast to the play’s other major female character, the submissive ingénue Orazia. The operatic remount, staged in 1695, starred Frances Knight as Zempoalla and Jane Rogers as Orazia. The opera depicts a corrupted world spoiled by female power, and thus showed the importance of decorous

femininity. Zempoalla is not unfit for the throne because of her usurping nature, but rather her desire to rule is a function of her failure to exhibit behaviors proper to her gender.

Next, I shall examine Thomas Southerne's dramatization of Aphra Behn's novel *Oronooko*, which was among the most popular plays of its day. Telling the story of the titular African prince and his romance with the heroine Imoinda on a slave plantation in Suriname, Behn's novel was not terribly successful until Thomas Southerne adapted the play for the stage in 1695. One of the most notable alterations that Southerne makes to the text is that his Imoinda is white instead of African. Using this as a point of departure, I examine why blackface was not acceptable for white actresses, and then move on to look at Southerne's use of violence in the play. In *Oroonoko*, Southerne employs a split-plot tragicomic form to contrast multiple potential roles for women in society. Ultimately, however, only the character who willingly returns herself to masculine control has a positive outcome. Featuring Knight and Rogers, both of whom also appeared in *The Indian Queen* that same year, the play was fantastically successful, becoming one of the most popular plays of the long eighteenth century. The longevity it exhibited allowed audiences to come into contact with the story extensively over the course of the century, making it a powerful disseminator of gender ideology.

To close, I analyze the initial production of *The Widow Ranter* by Aphra Behn. Unlike the previous two examples, Behn's play was based on recent history, dramatizing a real encounter in the Virginia colony. One of the first dramatic representations of Native Americans onstage in London, the premiere starred newcomer Anne Bracegirdle as the Indian queen Semernia and Elizabeth Currer as the title character. The decision to give the dignified, tragic role to the emerging actress has major ramifications on the way the play represents indigenous femininity as a contrast to English womanhood. Though the play wasn't successful, it helped to

launch Anne Bracegirdle's career and established her as a celebrity. I shall also discuss several images of Bracegirdle in costume as Semernia that circulated throughout her career. In all, this chapter will explore how embodied performances of indigenous characters in the late seventeenth century were meant to solidify English femininity.

The Indian Queen: An Exclusionary Politics

To begin, I shall examine the operatic adaptation of John Dryden and Sir Robert Howard's *The Indian Queen*.⁴² One of the earliest plays of the Restoration, it had a highly successful initial run in the early 1660s before largely disappearing from the stage in favor of its sequel, *The Indian Emperor*.⁴³ As with many of the early Restoration heroic tragedies, *The Indian Queen* is an allegory about restoring a rightful ruling family to their throne, using fiction to address recent history.⁴⁴ Its initial run was interrupted by a closure of the theatres for a fast day to recognize Charles I as a martyr, likely making the piece an even more overt celebration of lawful kingship.⁴⁵ The play's topical nature was shrouded with exotic trappings: the story is set in Mexico and concerns an ahistorical war between the Peruvian and Mexican empires. Of course, the staged version of Mexico presented was nothing like real life, but rather an exotic imagining drawn from travelogues and other sources.⁴⁶ The goal was to create a visually impressive spectacle that would draw in a broad range of patrons, ideally for repeat viewings. *The Indian Queen* presented a fictional image of the New World as if it were real in order to appeal to customers. That distortion, however, had ramifications on conceptions of both English and indigenous women, which were amplified by the operatic remount of the piece. The narrative of both the play and operatic versions of *The Indian Queen* concerns the elimination of the title character, an evil usurper, from power. In performance, the opera suggested that women were most properly to be excluded from political affairs. In the character of Zempoalla, a

woman's desire for power and sex is bound up with pagan bloodlust and characterized as inherently unfeminine. This performance, with its scenic spectacle, was a perfect vehicle for the grandiose new form of semi-opera that was then the vogue of the London theatre world.

The opera also made some interventions into the story that changed the audience's experience of the piece. As the piece migrated genre from play to opera, it constituted a case of transmedial surrogation, making it a fertile ground for my study. The opera revised its source material, but it could not fully replace it. In the ruptures between the source material and its remount as an opera, the piece took on new meaning. When the play was originally produced, the nation was in the early stages of the Restoration, celebrating the return of the Stuart monarchy. By the time of its operatic revival, the country had gone through the Glorious Revolution and was in the early stages of becoming a trans-Atlantic colonial power. The original production dealt with the nature of lawful kingship in the aftermath of the Restoration, but the opera was mounted in a very different political context. Rather than questions of political theory, the opera presented an even more exoticized world to interrogate questions of national identity as articulated through gender. For the operatic *Indian Queen*, the villain Zempoalla's gender is as much a problem as her usurpation of the throne.

The story of the play concerns an invented, fictional war between the Mexican and Peruvian empire. The Mexicans are ruled by Zempoalla, who seized power years before by murdering the former king and exiling his pregnant wife. At the opening, the Mexicans have just lost a decisive battle to the Peruvian forces, under the command of the brilliant general Montezuma. As a reward for his service, the Peruvian king, Ynca, offers him any reward of his choosing. When Montezuma asks for the hand of Ynca's daughter Orazia, however, the king rebuffs his impertinence, as he is not of royal lineage and cannot marry the princess. Infuriated,

Montezuma defects to the Mexican side, and quickly conquers Peru at the head of his new army, capturing Ynca and Orazia in the process. Zempoalla vows to sacrifice all her prisoners to thank the gods for her good fortune, and also falls in love with Montezuma. He spurns her advances, and pleads for Orazia to be spared, but Zempoalla refuses. As the play reaches its climax, Zempoalla has her conjurer summon spirits, who foretell her downfall, and prepares to make her sacrifice. The killings are stalled, however, when the rightful queen Amexia returns, causing Zempoalla to commit suicide. Amexia reveals that Montezuma is her son and the rightful prince of Mexico, meaning he is free to marry Orazia. The play ends with the restoration of justice and peace, as Montezuma ends the war and prepares to assume the throne with his betrothed.

Zempoalla is the play's most interesting persona, befitting her status as the title character. She is also a fever-dream caricature of a lustful, pagan queen with a destructive thirst for power and sex. Although she isn't a warrior herself, "her aggression is repeatedly expressed in her thirst for human sacrifice," as she brings up her vow in each act.⁴⁷ The language of the promise itself emphasizes her bloodlust: "All that I take shall on thy Altars bleed;/Princes themselves shall fall, and make thy Shrine,/Dy'd with their blood, in glorious blushes shine" (I.ii.53-55).⁴⁸ The human sacrifice motif that accompanies Zempoalla throughout the play emphasizes her violent nature through a culturally loaded image: pagan sacrificial rituals clearly demonstrated an alien and inferior society.⁴⁹ The inherently unnatural quality of her exercise of power is further developed linguistically through repeated images of chaos and natural disaster that accompany her foul moods.⁵⁰ The Mexican people and her underlings refer to Zempoalla as "Dread Empress," suggesting that her power derives from fear rather than the more appropriate feelings of love that the people should have for their rightful monarch. Dryden also connects her love of violence with lustfulness, as she enthuses at one point that "Next to posses, 'tis pleasure to destroy"

(III.ii.16). The Queen's bloodlust demonstrates her unfitness as a ruler, underscoring the fact that she has illegally usurped the throne. Her penchant for violence and sexuality reveal her primitive nature, and the distant setting of the piece grafts that primitivism onto the indigenous woman.

Zempoalla's deficient femininity is further expressed through her maternal failures over the course of the play as she destroys her relationship to her son Acacis. Her first line comes after she hears that her son was captured in the recent battle and expresses the type of grief a mother might be expected to exhibit: "O my Acacis!/Does not my grief, Traxalla, seem too rude,/Thus to press out before my Gratitude/Has paid my debts to you?" (I.ii.1-4). Throughout the play, however, her love for Montezuma and insistence on sacrificing Orazia drive Acacis to hate her. He repeatedly intercedes on Orazia's behalf, but Zempoalla refuses to budge in hopes that executing the younger woman will make her son and Montezuma love her. By the end of the play, Acacis has completely turned on Zempoalla. As he dies, they have the following exchange:

Acacis: *Orazia*—

Zemp: Fond childe, why do'st thou call upon her name?/I am thy Mother.

Acacis: No, you are my shame,/That blood is shed that you had title in,/And with your title may it end your sin:/Unhappy Prince, you may forgive me now,/Thus bleeding for my mothers cruel vow." (V.i.148-157)

"I am thy Mother./No you are my shame" is, in fact, a split line, suggesting that Acacis hastily interrupts the queen to reject her with his dying breath. Not only has she failed to protect her son, but her blind commitment to the sacrificial vow has poisoned him against her. He dies bitterly rejecting her love, simultaneously blaming her vow for his own death.

Zempoalla's foil in the play is Orazia. Where the Queen is aggressive and domineering, Orazia is deferential and demure. Though she loves Montezuma, she refuses to defy her father's

command that they not marry. When she and Ynca are captured by the Montezuma-led Mexican army, she denounces her love for his betrayal: “O *Montezuma*, cou’d thy love engage/Thy soul so little...Ye Gods how much was I mistaken here! I thought you gentle as the gaulless Dove;/But you as humorsome as windes appear” (II.i.37-43). Until marriage, a woman was subject to her father’s control; Orazia refuses to violate her filial duty for the sake of fulfilling her own desires. Later, Acacis frees her from captivity and execution, but she refuses to flee if her father cannot join her: “To Prison I’le return,/And there in fetters with my father mourn” (IV.ii.72-73). At the play’s conclusion, Orazia’s constancy is rewarded as she ends up marrying Montezuma and becoming queen of Mexico and Peru. By staying in her prescribed place, Orazia gets everything that Zempoalla tries to take by force.

Zempoalla hates Orazia because both Montezuma and Acacis love the younger woman more than her. In fact, the most overtly violent moment that the Queen has in the play comes at Orazia’s expense. When the villainous general Traxalla threatens to kill Montezuma so that he can have the Peruvian princess himself, Zempoalla bursts into the scene and threatens: “*Enter Zempoalla hastily, and sets a dagger to Orazia’s breast.* Zempoalla: “The wounds thou giv’st I’le copy on her brest. Strike, and I’le open here a spring of blood,/Shall add new Rivers to the crimson flood” (IV.i.42-44). Though the situation resolves without bloodshed, this episode establishes a stark contrast between the two women. Zempoalla’s actions and dialogue emphasize both Orazia’s blameless victimhood and that the Queen herself is maddened by the other woman’s innocence. The peril in which Orazia finds herself throughout the play is directly attributed to Zempoalla’s jealousy; the resolution that rewards the princess over her rival demonstrates the necessity of proper behavior.

The operatic *Indian Queen* is also a useful case because of its generic boundary crossing, going from play to opera, which changed the way that the audience experienced the story. Dramatic opera became increasingly popular on the English stage in the latter part of the seventeenth century thanks to the efforts of Henry Purcell and Thomas Betterton. The leadership of the United Company decided to re-mount Dryden's *Indian Queen* as an opera. This decision would have a lasting effect on the theatrical landscape of London, however: before the production could come to fruition, a Betterton-led secession split the United Company in two. The actors' revolt of 1695 was one of the landmark events in theatre history of the late seventeenth century and a culmination of the poor management of a lawyer named Christopher Rich. In the late 1680s, Rich had purchased Alexander D'Avenant's patent, giving him a stake in the management of the United Company. In 1693, he took over management duties of the company in full. He was a champion of early English opera, spending liberally on lavish productions. While they were popular, dramatic operas often lost money on their initial productions. *Diocletian* (1690), *King Arthur* (1691), and *The Fairy Queen* (1692) all lost money due to high production costs even though audiences liked them. Though later remounts of operas were more profitable because they could re-use stock scenery and required less rehearsal, the United Company over-invested in Purcell's operas in the first part of the decade.⁵¹ When Rich's productions lost money, he tried to balance his books by spending less on talent. He slashed salaries and tampered with actors' benefit performances. Tired of Rich's abusive, penurious management, Thomas Betterton and several of the other leading performers in the company seceded and decamped to the disused theatre at Lincoln's Inn Fields.⁵²

Although Rich financed the operas, which could prove lucrative by attracting new patrons to the theatre, Betterton had been their chief dramatic architect. He masterminded the

creation and staging of the pieces. He had been paid £50 to stage *The Indian Queen* before the revolt, a huge sum equivalent to roughly one-third of his annual acting income.⁵³ After the secession, Rich found himself with a troop of inexperienced actors, who would be totally outshone by the far more famous and accomplished new company in town. The Lincoln's Inn Fields theatre in which Betterton's group had taken up residence, however, lacked the technological capability of Rich's Dorset Garden Theatre, which allowed for far greater spectacle. Rich moved ahead and mounted *The Indian Queen* with the company members who remained, partly because he didn't want to lose money on the music and scenery already completed. He may also have been motivated by a desire to show Betterton up by continuing to produce operas without him, especially since the Betterton couldn't mount any in his new theatre.⁵⁴

The operatic version of *The Indian Queen* kept the plot and much of the text of the original play intact, adding music to enhance the piece. Apparently neither Restoration audiences nor playwrights were totally sold on the idea of music conveying the emotional or story content of a play. While the dramatic operas featured more music than a standard play, the playwright's dialogue was still expected to do most of the storytelling.⁵⁵ According to Cecil Price, of the 1404 lines in the original text, approximately 640 are either cut or altered in some way for the musical version. The textual cuts and music radically alter the tenor of the piece, specifically as relates to Zempoalla and Orazia.⁵⁶ Before Act II, Purcell added a masque in which the characters Fame and Envy debate the fate of the queen. Fame begins "I Come to Sing Great Zempoalla's Story/Whose beautiful Sight/so Charming bright/out shines the lustre of Glory" (Appendix 1-4). A chorus of followers echo Fame, before Envy responds: "What flatt'ring Noise is this/at which my Snakes all Hiss/I hate to See fond Tongues advance/high as the Gods ye Slaves of Chance"

(Appendix 12-15). Fame issues the rejoinder “Scorn’d Envy heres nothing that thou Canst blast/Her Glories are to bright to be o’er Cast” (Appendix 16-17). Envy volleys back once more that “I Fly from the Place where Flattery Reigns/see those mighty things that before/such Slaves like Gods did adore/Condemn’d & unpittyd in Chaines” (Appendix 18-21). The masque closes on a positive note for Zempoalla, as Fame and the chorus respond “Begone Curst Fiends of Hell Sink Down/where Noysome Vapours Dwell/While I her Triumph Sound/to fill the univers a Round” (Appendix 22-25). Replacing a scene between Acacis and Montezuma in which their friendship is developed further, the Masque of Fame and Envy depicts the powerful emotions at war in Zempoalla as she is torn between joy and grief. Her plight is made deeply human through the addition of the masque. The song depicts Zempoalla’s victory as hollow, as Envy chips away at her ability to enjoy holding the throne.⁵⁷

Zempoalla’s plight is further intensified by a song written specifically for her, “I attempt from love’s sickness to fly in vaine.” She characterizes herself as the victim of forces beyond her control, singing:

I attempt from Loves Sickness to fly in vaine
 Since I am my Self my own feaver and Pain
 No more now fond heart with Pride no more swell
 Thou canst not raise forces enough to rebell
 For Love has more Powr & less mercy than fate
 To make us Seek ruin and Love those that hate. (Appendix 56-61)

Here, the tormented Indian Queen has a chance to share her side of the story. Rather than a soulless, power-mad usurper, the operatic version of Zempoalla gives deeper insight into her interiority, depicting her as a slave to passions beyond her control. Although she is less

villainous, the Purcellian Zempoalla is also less of an active agent in her own story. In the play, she tries to maintain her grasp on power while also winning Montezuma's heart. Without the song clarifying her emotional torment, the audience might read her pursuit of the general as another manifestation of her desire for control. In the opera, however, this song removes the possibility of ambiguity. She laments that passion holds sway over her desires, and that her reason is subordinate to her emotions. Though she would like to escape the clutches of love, she cannot, even if it means ruin. The operatic Zempoalla subordinates her political ambition to her passions, consonant with larger cultural beliefs in the period that women were more susceptible to emotion.

Purcell's music also adds depth to Orazia. Though many of her lines were excised, the opera added a two-verse song for her in place of a fourth-act speech. The speech was a lament about the apparent victory of the wicked Queen. The song, by contrast, details her devotion to Montezuma:

They tell us that you mighty Powers above,
 Make perfect your Joys and your blessings by Love;
 Ah! why do you suffer the blessing that's there;
 To give a poor Lover such sad torments here,
 yet tho' for my passion such grief I endure,
 my love shall like yours be constant and pure.
 To suffer for him gives an ease to my pains,
 There's joy in my grief, and there's freedom in Chains.
 If I were divine he cou'd love me no more.
 And I in return my adorer adore;

Oh! Let his dear life then (kind Gods) be your care,

For I in your blessings have no other share. (Appendix 63-75)

The song offers the audience further proof of Orazia's virtue as she laments that she is made to suffer so for loving Montezuma. Interestingly, however, Orazia's song is remarkably similar to Zempoalla's. Both women decry the viciousness of love, complaining that they have no choice but to suffer because of their feelings. By deepening Zempoalla and softening her villainous nature, the operatic remount also eliminates much of the contrast between the two women.

Hauntographic Resonances

The operatic *Indian Queen* was more popular than its source text and replaced the original in the repertory until at least 1715.⁵⁸ Although the operas had little literary respect, they were hugely impactful theatrically. In terms of theatrical culture, mounting operas attested to the viability of England as compared to her continental rivals, many of whom had been putting on spectacular operatic entertainments with elaborate scenic machinery for some time.⁵⁹

Additionally, visiting Italian and Russian ambassadors and aristocrats were taken to see *The Indian Queen* in 1696 and 1697, further speaking to its place in the culture.⁶⁰ The production's popularity suggests that it offered large numbers of spectators a glimpse into the world of Dryden's Mexico.

Given the fact that the operatic *Indian Queen* was in development at the time of the Betterton secession, Anne Bracegirdle was likely intended for Zempoalla as she was an accomplished singer.⁶¹ With her absence from the company, the role went to Frances Knight, who would appear later that year as the Widow Lackitt in *Oroonoko*. Jane Rogers would also appear in both *The Indian Queen* and *Oroonoko*. Interestingly, neither Knight nor Rogers sang her own song in the performance, apparently by convention. Price suggests, based on her name

appearing in the cast list of the British Library manuscript of Purcell's music for the piece, that the singer Laetitia Cross replaced Rogers to sing Orazia's song in *The Indian Queen*.⁶² Rogers wasn't known as a singer, and stage reality apparently didn't require that a performer's portrayal be an unbroken, cohesive whole. Similarly, Cross likely sang Zempoalla's song "I attempt from Love's sickness to fly" at the top of Act III, Scene ii before Knight entered to begin the dramatic scene. While all of this intrigue—the company politics, the rushed nature of the adaptation, and the in-play switch ups—suggests a jumbled mess to modern observers, we may draw a number of conclusions about the way in which the performance made meaning. Ultimately, the contrast between the women established in Dryden's play was likely weakened by the convoluted casting and performance process of the opera.

Restoration audiences obviously had a very different set of aesthetic criteria by which they evaluated theatre. It would appear that they prized performative virtuosity over artistic cohesion in their tastes; as such, the superior singer Cross could double both Orazia and Zempoalla and the performance remained legible to the viewers. Further, at least some portion of the audience would have recognized the operatic Zempoalla as a character designed for Bracegirdle's skillset. The interchangeability of the characters and performers likely disrupted the standard process of ghosting. Distinct aspects of Zempoalla were variously embodied by both Knight and Cross, further shaded by Bracegirdle. Knight was older than Cross, having been in the company for over a decade at the time the opera went up. For Cross, however, *The Indian Queen* was one of her first roles. She was so young—the authors of the *Biographical Dictionary* give her a probable birth date of 1677—that she was still known professionally as "the Girl" at the time.⁶³ While Cross would eventually feature in a sex scandal with a member of the aristocracy, at this time she had a far more innocent quality than the more well-known Knight.

Moreover, Bracegirdle had a well-established reputation for chastity by this time.⁶⁴ The innocence of the young singer Cross and the fact that the role would likely have been associated with Bracegirdle suggests that audiences likely read the operatic Zempoalla with more sympathy than her textual counterpart.

Additionally, if Cross indeed sang Orazia's song, then any implied contrast between Orazia and Zempoalla was even further adulterated. The dramatic text showed Orazia as a foil to Zempoalla, an obedient daughter in contrast to the usurping villain of the piece. The songs written for each woman eroded their opposition, however. Having Cross play both characters further blurs the distinction between the Queen and the ingénue. Zempoalla and Orazia express great emotion and depth, rendered through the young Cross. Both of the songs show the singer as a victim of fate and outsized passions. Such a characterization played into the current discourse surrounding gender and women's roles in society.

Dryden's play equated violence with foreign, pagan beliefs, symbolized by the usurping Indian Queen. Purcell's opera, while retaining some of Zempoalla's fierceness, deepens her emotional life and shows her plight more fully. Medical science and cultural beliefs in the period regarded women as less developed, more passionate versions of men. While there were two genders, there was only one sex—male—and women existed in a state of incomplete maleness. Their presumed underdeveloped nature led to the belief that emotions like anger and lust held much greater sway over them.⁶⁵ While the opera gives additional depth to Zempoalla's character, it still shows her as susceptible to her feelings. Even though her violent behavior is more fully explained, she is still an unfit ruler because of her gender. She tries to transcend the limitations of her gender but is ultimately undone by passion. In the opera, both Zempoalla and Orazia are incapable of rational behavior. Orazia survives the events of the play by staying in a tightly

circumscribed role. Zempoalla's ambition dooms her because she cannot control her emotions; Orazia gets everything Zempoalla wanted by subordinating herself to masculine control.

Purcell's music made the events of the play speak directly to English culture. Rather than foreign or exotic-sounding, the music is highly English.⁶⁶ First of all, the homogeneity of the music further collapses the distinction between the two women, as their music is tonally similar. Moreover, the opera performed for English women the importance of remaining in their social roles. By preserving separate spheres, women could expect to receive a happy life. Violence, passion, ambition, and desire were all vilified through their association with alien cultures. Zempoalla's story, rendered by Knight and Cross, was a cautionary tale about the chaos that would result from challenging the established order. As a play with no European characters, *The Indian Queen* depicted a "semi-civil society, wealthy, monarchical and warlike but tainted with superstition, human sacrifice and improper female power."⁶⁷ During the early stages of the colonial enterprise, the English believed that Amerindian cultures could eventually be raised up to the level of civilization that the English then enjoyed, and they also feared that their society might be corrupted to the level of primitivism they perceived in the New World.⁶⁸ Plays like *The Indian Queen* showed the ideological importance of traditional gender roles in society. By equating an ambitious woman with pagan violence and primitive society, the opera showed the necessity of maintaining traditional, separate spheres for men and women.

Pathos, Tragedy, and the Amazon: Thomas Southerne's Imoinda

Aphra Behn's novella *Oroonoko* (1688), which takes place in Suriname and tells the story of a failed slave rebellion, has become a fertile ground for theorizing nascent Restoration ideas about the intersection of gender and race. Dramatizing the enslavement of an African prince and his attempt to escape captivity by leading a slave rebellion, the novel was a modest

success. It found a much wider audience through its adaptation for the stage by playwright Thomas Southerne. He made a host of changes to Behn's novel, ranging from superficial details to drastic revisions of the plot, characters, and story. Southerne's *Oroonoko* was a smash hit with London audiences, and played at least once every year from its debut until the early nineteenth century.⁶⁹ Over the course of the eighteenth century, the play was rewritten multiple times, eventually becoming a sentimental examination of the cruelties of slavery and a major abolitionist document. Having held the stage for the entire century, Southerne's play reached a far wider audience than did Behn's novel.

The novel is a first-person narrative that blurs the line between author and narrator. Behn tells the title character's story after meeting him in Suriname. Oroonoko began life as an African prince, embodying the idealized qualities of a monarch. During battle, a general sacrifices himself to save Oroonoko's life. When the prince goes to inform and console the general's family, he immediately falls in love with the daughter Imoinda. Unfortunately, at the same time, her famous beauty has attracted the attentions of the king, who claims her as his wife. Through the interventions of another of the king's wives, Oroonoko is able to visit Imoinda in the harem. When the king discovers this, he sells Imoinda into slavery.

A short time later, Oroonoko himself is tricked by an evil sea captain and yoked into slavery himself. After his transport to Suriname, he meets the narrator and impresses her and her friends with his dignified, regal bearing and his remarkable strength. Eventually, by coincidence, he and Imoinda are reunited in Suriname and resume their relationship. She becomes pregnant, and Oroonoko is horrified by the thought of his child being born into slavery. Due to their royal heritage, they ask for release from bondage and to be returned to their home. The craven colonial deputy governor Byam continually fobs off Oroonoko's request with vague promises, and the

prince becomes fed up and leads a slave rebellion. The revolt is quashed, and Oroonoko whipped for his role in the events. To avenge his honor, Oroonoko plots to murder Byam. Fearful that Imoinda will be raped and executed after his death, he kills her before trying to carry out the assassination. The death of his wife and their unborn child, coupled with his punishment, saps his energy, and he is captured before he can complete his plans. The novel ends with a graphic description of his execution, throughout which he dispassionately smokes a pipe to prevent giving satisfaction to his captors. The novel is such a sympathetic portrait of the violence done to Oroonoko that it was rumored Behn had carried on an affair with the titular king.⁷⁰

Southerne changed Behn's text substantially, most notably adding a comic subplot about two sisters named Charlotte and Lucy Welldon, recent arrivals to Suriname. The two have exhausted their options for husbands in polite English society and been forced to come to the colony to look for suitable mates. Charlotte has traveled in men's clothing, planning to claim relation to a recently deceased planter. Shortly after arriving, she meets the Widow Lackitt, a wealthy woman herself in search of a husband, and plans to swindle Lackitt out of her fortune before marrying. In the comic plot's resolution, Charlotte acquires the Widow's money and a husband, while Lucy and the Widow also find men to marry. The whole play then concludes with the characters from the Welldon plot witnessing Oroonoko's death, with Charlotte functioning like a stage version of Behn's narrator from the novel. The alterations to the text have been read as reconfiguring the piece from the apology for natural, absolutist kingship and the declining Stuart monarchy that Behn created to a Whiggish vision of England's future as a capitalist, imperial economy.⁷¹

In particular, I focus here on Southerne's alteration of Imoinda's race from a dark-skinned African to a white woman, and his manipulation of genre by the addition of the comic

subplot that details the husband-hunting adventures of the Welldon sisters. In discussing these emendations, I shall argue that Southerne's play created an opportunity for the audience to see two competing visions of femininity enacted by the actresses Jane Rogers and Susanna Verbruggen. Specifically, in performance, Southerne's *Oroonoko* juxtaposes a failed Amazonian rebellion alongside the homosexually charged seduction of Widow Lackitt by the breeches-clad Charlotte Welldon. In so doing, Southerne tailored each role to the talents of the woman he wrote for: Rogers was a highly skilled tragedienne, while Verbruggen was known for her comic ability and affinity for breeches roles. At the same time, however, the performance showed the tragic heroine was destroyed for her desire to escape the social structure, while Charlotte's actions restore a complete patriarchal dominion.

Additionally, Verbruggen was married to the actor John Verbruggen, who played the title character in blackface.⁷² Their extra-theatrical linkage highlighted Southerne's dramatization of Behn's textual narrator and played both on contemporaneous rumors about Behn's miscegenous affair with Oroonoko and sexual fears about miscegenation in general. Viewed hauntographically, we can see that *Oroonoko* accomplishes multiple ends by again conflating foreignness with an improperly ordered gender hierarchy. The performance shows the destruction of the native Amazon figure, while Welldon ends up happily engaged to a proper suitor. Even though Imoinda's behavior is more traditionally feminized, her participation—however limited—in a slave rebellion ensures her death, while Welldon's flirtations with the Widow return all the Englishwomen to male control. As in *The Indian Queen*, a major constitutive element of civilization is the separation of the genders. By the end of *Oroonoko*, Imoinda is destroyed and the Welldon sisters and Widow Lackitt re-integrated into mainstream society.

Southerne's Interventions: Whiteness and Genre

Much of the critical commentary on Southerne's revision of Behn's plot focuses on the alterations that he made in bringing her story to the stage. The most salient change in the play is Imoinda's race. In Behn's text, she is described as a "beautiful *Black Venus*" whose appearance is a female match for the ebony-skinned Oroonoko (14, emphasis in original).⁷³ Throughout the narrative, Behn takes great pains to emphasize the European-ness of both African characters in behavior, thought, and appearance. Late in the text, however, she notes that Imoinda is "carv'd in fine Flowers and Birds all over her Body" (40). After interjecting this remarkably foreign detail, the narrator is quick to redeem her scarification by associating it with African nobility: "I had forgot to tell you, that those who are Nobly born of that Country, are so delicately Cut and Rac'd all over the fore-part of the Trunk of their Bodies, that it looks as if it were Japan'd" (40). Moreover, the narrator insists on her attractiveness, saying "I have seen an [sic] hundred *White* Men sighing after her, and making a thousand Vows at her Feet, all vain, and unsuccessful" (14, emphasis in original). Neither her skin color nor her body markings hamper her beauty, verified here through her ability to be attractive to white men. Still, her appearance is markedly different from an Englishwoman of any class or caste.

By contrast, Southerne's Imoinda is white. Rather than the Coromantin princess of Behn's novel, the play says that she came to Africa as the daughter of a white mercenary who led the king's army. When her father sacrificed himself by taking a poisoned dart intended for Oroonoko, the prince fell in love with her. Obviously, as the Imoinda of the play was designed to be played onstage, there are both practical and theoretical considerations behind her transformation. Convention and tradition overwhelmingly precluded the possibility of an actress

wearing blackface during the Restoration.⁷⁴ Despite this, female blackface in England was not entirely without precedent.

In the early seventeenth century, Anne of Denmark, Queen consort to James I, asked Ben Jonson to create a masque wherein she and her courtiers could play black African women. The result was *The Masque of Blackness* (1605), the first collaboration between Jonson and the designer Inigo Jones. Additionally, it was the first use of both blackface and perspective scenery in England.⁷⁵ The masque's story concerns the daughters of the River Niger who, lamenting the black skin that prevents them from exhibiting true beauty, are on a quest for some way to change their lot. The nymphs hear of a powerful king—James I—who has the ability to transform their skin to white. As a vehicle for metaphorical content, *The Masque of Blackness* establishes blackness as a category that overlaps with but is distinct from pure beauty. Whereas blackness is tied to night and death, whiteness and beauty are generative, restorative concepts.⁷⁶ Its sequel, *The Masque of Beauty*, further stresses these themes as the daughters of the River Niger receive the whiteness they crave in the original masque.

While blackness had previously been played in masques, performers generally did so by wearing a mask. During the performance of *Blackness*, however, Queen Anne and her ladies painted their faces and arms black. Whatever pleasures Anne had in mind in playing a dark-skinned daughter of Africa, the piece's reception by some was less than enthusiastic. The diplomat Sir Dudley Carleton said of the performance:

Instead of Vizzards, their Faces, and Arms up to the Elbows, were painted black, which was Disguise sufficient, for they were hard to be known; but it became them nothing so well as their red and white, and you cannot imagine a more ugly Sight, than a Troop of lean-cheek'd Moors...[The Spanish Ambassador danced

with] the Queen, and forgot not to kiss her Hand, though there was Danger it would have left a Mark on his Lips.⁷⁷

Lynda Boose notes that Carleton's criticisms of the masque construct the women's blackness as a type of contagion. He fears that the makeup will rub off on the ambassador's lips, but his practical worry reveals a deeper, metaphorical hesitancy about containing blackness more generally. In fact, Anne was pregnant at the time of the performance.⁷⁸ The masque's content, attesting to the superiority of whiteness, and Carleton's response depict a society with deep concerns about non-white peoples. Anne's pregnancy added to the anxiety of the masque, then, as it placed in the audience's mind the Queen bearing a dark-skinned heir to the English throne, undermining the performance's overt message about the aesthetic supremacy of whiteness. Indeed, one of the purposes of Jonson's piece was to fix whiteness as categorically superior to blackness in the culture.⁷⁹ Blackness is constructed here as more powerful than whiteness when figured forth through a female body because blackness is "capable of absorbing and coloring [whiteness]."⁸⁰

Whitening of the stage-Imoinda, then, is of a piece with a larger cultural strategy that erases black women at every turn because their bodies are considered inherently dangerous. Nussbaum notes that skin color was becoming an "index to virtue" by the end of the seventeenth century. As such, a black Imoinda couldn't represent "heroic femininity onstage."⁸¹ She adds that female blackface apparently constituted a threat that cross-dressing did not.⁸² While the Restoration continually depicts women in male dress—including in *Oroonoko*—there are no definitive instances of women in blackface. As race was just beginning to solidify as a category, however, the performance of blackness by a white woman destabilizes categories far more fundamentally and threateningly than does the performance of masculinity.

Breeches roles can be reduced to sexualization and therefore have an obvious function in the visual world of the playhouse.⁸³ The same is not true of a woman in blackface. In fact, there was even some scientific opposition to female blackface performance. The physician and philosopher John Bulwer's book *Anthropometamorphosis* argued that the Moors had become black originally because their ancestors engaged in face-painting that eventually resulted in the irreversible dyeing of their skin.⁸⁴ Carleton's revulsion at Anne's painting of herself fits into a larger cultural narrative about preserving one's outward, natural appearance.

More than medical concerns about preserving English whiteness, however, I suggest that in performance a woman in blackface would present an immediate dilemma for the visual economy of the Restoration theatre which cannot be overcome. Almost all commentary on Behn's novel notes the exaggeratedly Europeanized attributes which she assigns to both Oroonoko and Imoinda, even amidst their exotic qualities. Blackface onstage, however, would force the audience to one of two unpleasant social choices: either the actress playing Imoinda ceases to be a sexual object, or the English ideals of beauty and whiteness, in place as stage conventions since at least 1605, must expand to admit a black woman. The male gaze of the theatre cannot authorize an attractive woman of color onstage, because it would unsettle the emergent discourse on race. The simplest solution was to change the character's race to avoid presenting the problem to audiences. By making Imoinda white, Southerne allows the audience to regard the actress playing her as a sexual object without challenging norms of beauty.⁸⁵ Because of the absence of a visual marker of Otherness, Imoinda's outsider status was established by the play's narrative.

Finally, Southerne's most thorough revision to the text is his addition of a comic subplot involving a pair of women called the Welldon sisters. Dispensing with the entirety of the African

setting, Southerne begins his tale in Suriname and has Oroonoko and his companions report the African intrigue as exposition throughout the first half of the play. As the play begins, Charlotte Welldon, played by Susannah Verbruggen, enters dressed in men's clothing. Accompanied by her sister Lucy, the pair have exhausted their marriage prospects in London and decamped to Suriname, where "[husbands grow] as thick as oranges, ripening one under another. Week after week they drop into some woman's mouth. 'Tis but a little patience, spreading your apron in expectation, and one of 'em will fall into your lap at last" (I.i.6-10).⁸⁶ After decrying the state of the London marriage market and its sexist structure, Charlotte unveils her plan. They will pretend to be related to a recently deceased planter to gain entry to the upper-class English society there and set about obtaining husbands. Additionally, Charlotte reveals that her breeches disguise will allow her to cheat a local Widow out of her fortune. Their brief exchange puts the pieces on the board for the play's comic plot, which begins as the Widow Lackitt enters about a hundred lines into the play.

Over the next four-plus acts, Charlotte sets about deceiving the Widow Lackitt in two ways. She secures the Widow's "boobily son" Daniel as a husband for Lucy and herself seduces the Widow while in male garb. The Widow gives her £1000 and a chest of jewels to ensure her loyalty. Charlotte consummates the relationship via a bed trick by substituting Jack Stanmore, a colonist who had long pursued the Widow's affections, and the play ends with Jack marrying the Widow and a newly-enriched Charlotte marrying his cousin Stanmore.

By introducing the comic adventures of the Welldons, Southerne revised the novella to make it more successful as a performance if less tonally coherent to later critics. He recalibrated the story to a tragicomic split-plot form that had become popular due to the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher in the early seventeenth century and remained a favorite of audiences throughout

the Restoration.⁸⁷ Although Behn assiduously avoided comedy in her version of the story, Southerne employed a form that was well known as a crowd pleaser.⁸⁸

Despite the popularity of split-plot plays with Restoration audiences, the presence of the Welldon sisters has proven to be a thorny problem for later critics of the text both for its comic tone and its unusual gender politics.⁸⁹ Laura Brown has demonstrated that “sustained disjunction is a primary end of [tragicomic] drama,” and that audiences valued a formal coherence between the two plots more than thematic unity.⁹⁰ Following Brown, I shall examine *Oroonoko*’s narrative disjunction as being productive of the performance’s meaning. Rather than a problem to be solved through canny textual interpretation, I argue that the two plots allow the audience to engage multiply with two different visions for women’s role in society, both of which are dangerous and must be controlled. While each plot produces its own ideological ramifications for gender, the distance between them also generates a meaning.

The Welldon sisters—and particularly Charlotte—fuel the play’s meaning *vis-à-vis* gender in two ways, one romantic and the other pathetic. Charlotte Welldon, as played by Susannah Verbruggen, offers a counterpoint to two other female characters in the play. In her own plot, Welldon enacts a subversive version of stage romance in opposition to Frances Knight’s turn as the Widow Lackitt. Upon the Widow’s entrance, Welldon greets her with a kiss, evoking a teasing response from the Widow: “You’re a younger brother, I know, by your kissing...you kiss as if you expected to be paid for’t. You have birdlime upon your lips. You stick so close, there’s no getting rid of you” (I.i.115-120). This exchange is the first in a series of interactions that all derive their power from the dramatic irony generated by the disguised female body of Welldon. The spectator knows that Welldon is in Suriname for the purpose of securing a husband and a fortune, but the Widow sees herself as having the upper hand in the situation. She

teases Welldon for the mercenary nature of the kiss, suggesting that she won't be easily taken in. The Widow wants to fashion herself as perceptive. She makes clear that she is interested in Welldon, excusing her forwardness with her status: "Well, I'm glad you spoke first to excuse my modesty. But what, modesty means nothing and is the virtue of a girl that does not know what she would be at. A widow should be wiser" (I.i.197-202). Moments later, however, we see that she will play the dupe in Welldon's con. Stanmore enters and warns Welldon to take care with the Widow:

STANMORE: I assure you, my friend, she'll cheat you if she can.

WELLDON: I don't know that; but I can cheat her, if I will.

STANMORE: Cheat her? How?

WELLDON: I can marry her; and then I'm sure I have it in my power to cheat her.

(I.i.233-237)

The opening establishes that much of the comedy of the situation will derive from the arrogant Widow's inability to live up to her image of herself as worldly and cunning. While the Widow believes herself to be a canny negotiator, she will ultimately be exposed as a buffoon to the delight of the audience. Her embarrassment is due to the fact that, in spite of her supposed romantic acumen, she cannot tell that the person in front of her is actually a woman.

Stanmore worries his friend will fall victim to the rapacious Widow's desires. Indeed, the language of the opening interaction between Welldon and the Widow is unambiguously sexual, lending credence to his fears. Welldon begins their exchange by suggesting that "a lusty young fellow may happen to tempt" her to surrender her widowhood (I.i.141). Shortly thereafter, the Widow says "You shall find me as easy as anybody you can have to do with, I assure you. Pray

try me, I would have you try me, Mr. Welldon” (I.i.172-174). Though she is discussing her fairness as a businesswoman, the lines also clearly operate as double entendre.

After Stanmore’s entrance, Southerne has Welldon provide a knowing wink to the audience about her true identity:

WELLDON: We were just upon the brink of a bargain as you came in.

STANMORE: Let me drive it on for you.

WELLDON: So you must, I believe, you or somebody for me. (I.i.219-221)

Welldon will, of course, require the services of a Stanmore to “drive on” the swindle by fulfilling the sexual promise that the scene sets up. Moments later, Stanmore begins his warning to Welldon, informing him that the Widow “would circumcise you to get more of you” (I.i.227-228). Of course, the audience knew that it would take a good deal more than circumcision for the Widow to receive any satisfaction from Welldon. These lines simultaneously foreshadow the Widow’s coming humiliation and further emphasize her sexual rapacity. Stanmore characterizes her lustiness as such that it will literally demolish a penis; fortunately for Welldon, she has no penis to maim. The Widow’s punishment is justified because she is destructive of masculinity, and her comeuppance is amusingly enacted by another woman playing a man.

As a woman who was unmarried but also obviously not a virgin, a widow was aggressively sexualized and depicted as oversexed and lusty. Additionally, stage widows were regularly heaped with scorn.⁹¹ Because a widow controlled her own property and operated independent of male control, she was a threat to patriarchal culture. Thus, she had to be made a figure of fun and derision.⁹² In society, young widows were aggressively sexualized, whereas older widows were considered revolting. Frances Knight played the Widow, and based on her casting, we can gather the Widow of *Oroonoko* was meant to be sexually alluring. By 1691, she

had a well-established reputation for looseness and her frequent breeches roles suggest that she had a good figure.⁹³ Further, Welldon describes her thusly: “Her pretty person and fortune (which, one with the other, you know, are not contemptible)” (I.i.239-240), suggesting that she is at least moderately attractive. Moreover, Jack Stanmore’s attraction to her positions her as a sexual object. Susannah Verbruggen was near the apex of her career when *Oroonoko* was produced for the first time. She was also a specialist in breeches roles, originating at least seven roles of that type.⁹⁴ In his autobiography, Colley Cibber praised her ability to play cross-dressed roles, noting that the audience was particularly enamored of her breeches parts:

Nor was her Humour limited to her Sex; for, while her Shape permitted, she was a more adroit pretty Fellow, than is usually seen upon the Stage: Her easy Air, the cock’d Hat, and Cavalier in fashion. People were so fond of seeing her as a Man, that when the Part of *Bays* in the *Rehearsal* had, for some time, lain dormant, she was desired to take it up, which I have seen her act with all the true, coxcomblly Spirit, and Humour, that the Sufficiency of the Character required.⁹⁵

Both Verbruggen and Knight were therefore constructed as sexual objects onstage; their characters, a woman in breeches and a widow, heightened the sexual energy of the performance.

Wordplay throughout the opening tells the viewer that Welldon will need a surrogate to consummate the relationship. By the end of the play, in fact, order will be totally restored: Welldon has reverted to her female clothing and engaged herself to a man, and the Widow has been punished for her arrogance and returned to patriarchal control by being yoked to Jack Stanmore rather against her will. Indeed, some critics suspect that the closing of the play suggests she may even be pregnant with Jack Stanmore’s child.⁹⁶ If so, she would be fully returned to the marriage economy from which she had escaped at the play’s beginning.

Southerne's stage-Suriname isn't a carnivalesque space free from the social order of London; rather, the mores of London govern the colony as well, as none of the women have the ability to live free of masculine dominance.⁹⁷ English customs will not be threatened by foreign invasion, because the colonial world can be made to adhere to the same rules as the home island.

In opposition to the bawdy sexuality of the Widow and Welldon plot, Jane Rogers as Imoinda presents a totally different vision of femininity. Rogers had been a second-tier actress competing, mostly unsuccessfully, with Elizabeth Barry and Anne Bracegirdle for roles before the secession of Betterton's contingent. Staying with Rich, Rogers found her fortunes in the company greatly improved in the absence of the two leading ladies. She had an affair with the leading actor Robert Wilks, who described her thusly:

tall, finely shaped, and exceedingly genteel. Her face indeed was not extremely beautiful, yet she was, take her all together, the most agreeable Woman on the stage. Her Wit and Humour joined to the Character she had then for Virtue and Modesty, render'd her Company acceptable to Ladies of the Greatest Rank.⁹⁸

Of course, as both an actor and Rogers' lover, Wilks may be exaggerating the extent to which the actress was able to impress the ladies of her day. Still, she rose to the top ranks of Rich's company by the end of the century and made sixty pounds yearly by 1703. While this was half of the salary Barry and Bracegirdle commanded at the rival company, she was still among the most well-paid performers of the era.⁹⁹ We may also be able to determine something of her acting style in the role of Imoinda.

In a letter to an actress named Mrs. Hollyday in 1731, Aaron Hill advises his addressee on the playing of Imoinda. According to Peter Holland, each role had exactly one right way of being played, which only changed with great effort by the work of transcendent performers once

per generation.¹⁰⁰ While Hill is describing the role as played by Mrs. Porter, Rogers continued playing through at least 1714, when she left for Lincoln's Inn Fields after a dispute with Anne Oldfield.¹⁰¹ Although the role may have changed some in its transmission from Rogers to Potter, the nature of the eighteenth-century repertoire stressed fidelity to the original as much as possible and can likely tell us a great deal about the way the character was played. Describing the moment when Imoinda sees Aboan's dead body, Hill says:

She would, first, have worn upon her face, an easy look of joy, the effect of her escape to her husband; but she would have chang'd it, into a look of apprehension, and concern, upon observing *Oroonoko's* expression on, that, There's, now, no further use of words!

Next, upon his talking of death, and pointing to *Aboan's* body, she would have assum'd a more earnest *fear* and, catching off her *eye* from her *husband*, look'd aside for the body; and advanc'd toward it, with her face bent upon it, and her hands a little rais'd, in sign of the pity, she felt, at sight of such a barbarity, tho' not yet, imagining, that it was one so dear to her husband, as *Aboan*.

But, while she bends over the body, she discerns whose it is; and starting back with astonishment, and horror, throws out her arms, to their utmost extent, and, at the same instant of time, cries out, with a voice, rais'd into *wonder*, and *agony*—ABOAN! as if she would have added, Is it he. The man, so near to you? So loving, and so lov'd, by you?

In the same moment recollecting, that *Oroonoko's* fate must, in all likelihood, be *next*. The horror of that conception *roots* her feet to the *stage*—Yet, she forces herself half round, toward her husband, and with her arms still stretch'd wide out,

looks at him with a speechless, imploring, distraction of countenance; sometimes, turning her eye to *Aboan's* body, and then back upon *Oroonoko*, till the sense of what she apprehends, throws her *lips, arms, and frame*, into a *trembling*, that must touch every heart, in the audience.¹⁰²

The effect here, near the play's climax, is to see Imoinda tossed violently between her passions. She transitions sharply from the joy of evading the governor and returning to Oroonoko to sorrow at Aboan's death, and then an ultimate terror as she realizes that escape is impossible for the two of them. Hill remarks on the "rais'd hands" that indicate "pity," and the tears and applause that she elicits from the audience. Finally, her outstretched arms and the manipulation of her "lips, arms, and frame," into a "trembling" visually communicate to the audience her tormented journey to understanding her fate. Hill, writing in 1731, probably emphasizes the sentimental aspects of Imoinda's suffering more than an original audience member might have, but the contrast with the Welldons and Widow is plain. Whereas the comic plot draws on and plays with the conventions of stage love, Imoinda fits squarely within the bounds of both the strictures of tragic style, but also the emergent subgenre of she-tragedy.

While the specifics of Rogers' portrayal may have differed in some minor details from Porter's, we can read in Hill's description of the character the dramatic trend of the late seventeenth century towards pathetic or she-tragedy. Developing in the 1680s and maturing in the 1690s, she-tragedy focused on the intense suffering of a female character. In particular, sexual abuse was a popular plot feature of the she-tragedies, as it allowed playwrights to construct women as sexual objects without making them lustful. A character subjected to rape was sexually available but did not herself choose to shed her maidenhood.¹⁰³ While Oroonoko is the primary figure of the play's tragic plot, and he behaves consistently with the genre

conventions of heroic tragedy, Imoinda's arc subjects her to a range of abuses and attempted rapes. In this moment, her fortunes turn on a dime from salvation to despair, all of which must be displayed extra-textually by the performance of the actress.

Conversely, Charlotte Welldon existed in a comedy that asked her to convincingly mimic the stage language of love and desire in service of punishing the recalcitrant Widow.

Performance of stage romance in the Restoration was highly codified:

It is...theatrical and is not drawn naturally from real life. It is highly self-conscious and partakes fully of the spirit of comic writing...It exhibits the niceties of behaviour, especially sexual behaviour...For the actors it involves an extra dimension of posturing and projection, and demands a conscious sense of style verging on caricature and burlesque.¹⁰⁴

The visual, embodied language of stage romance was as conventionalized as the language of courtship. Such a performance was right in Susannah Verbruggen's wheelhouse as one of the most highly respected comediennes of the age, highly skilled in breeches roles. In terms of performance, while Rogers enacted a highly specific, choreographed evocation of tragic behavior, Verbruggen played Welldon with a rakish mien.

While Verbruggen's Charlotte partakes in flirtatious, masculine behaviors, Imoinda undergoes brutal mistreatment at the whims of the men around her. Her presence in a heroic tragedy assures her destruction, though it only reaches its fullest expression if the actress properly enacts the conventions of tragic behavior. Each performer's body is guided and conditioned both by the genre conventions of their respective plots and by the performance traditions of the Restoration theatre. The "sustained disjunction" that Brown identifies as a feature of tragicomedy is embodied onstage by the two variant types of acting that appear side by

side, scene to scene. On one level, we can attribute the popular taste for tragicomedy to this type of variety: viewers were given a wider range of entertainments in a single play, appealing to a broader spectrum of tastes.

The simultaneity of the two plots also has the effect of displacing the punishment for Welldon's gender transgressions onto Imoinda. Welldon spends the length of the play passing as a man and flouting convention. Although her cross-dressing does support patriarchal cultural goals by taming the Widow, she still enriches herself in the process, and only returns to her proper place because she chooses to marry Stanmore of her own volition. She avoids any comeuppance for her actions, though, as Imoinda is put through the she-tragedy wringer in her place. Interestingly, the punishment is also congruent with Welldon's violations. Charlotte Welldon unduly benefits from masculine prerogative, stealing the cultural power generally accorded to men. At the same time, the audience repeatedly sees Imoinda subjected to unwanted sexual advances and violence as she merely tries to escape slavery with her husband. The masculinity that Welldon takes on is abusively forced onto Imoinda to tightly police her actions.

While the play does not explicitly connect Imoinda's abuse with Welldon's actions, *Oroonoko* depicts transgressive behavior as possible only for English women as Welldon's punishment is shifted to Imoinda. Additionally, as Welldon is married at the play's end, she is re-integrated into normative society, encasing her in a domestic role after her adventures. She is able to enjoy a respite from patriarchal dominance without lasting consequences to her body or her social standing. Imoinda, by contrast, is a devoted wife who is nevertheless always in danger of violence, usually of a sexual nature. Her death in the play also revises Behn's novel; in Behn's text, Oroonoko kills his wife to prevent her from falling into the hands of the governor. In the play, Oroonoko cannot bring himself to kill her, and so she dies by her own hand. Southerne's

Imoinda resists colonial power with self-directed violence. Her suicide is an assertion of agency that is also destructive of her very person. Onstage, Oroonoko fails to act in the decisive manner of his literary counterpart, and Imoinda must take action, even at the cost of her life.

The disjointed plot juxtaposed an Amazon engaged in high tragedy with a free-wheeling Englishwoman in a gender-bending plot. Seeing the two distinctive performance styles onstage at the same time emphasized the incommensurable nature of English and foreign experience. The audience would almost certainly have known, based on performance style, that Imoinda was doomed while Welldon would end up happily married. Although the action is all set in Suriname, the split-plot nature of the play served to establish cultural differences between the two societies onstage. English society is comic and regenerative, while the foreign characters must be contained. Because the comic plot must end with a marriage, the audience knew that Welldon, despite her adventures, would be returned to masculine control. As such, she never truly threatens patriarchal culture in the way that Imoinda does.

Hauntographic Resonances: Erasure and the Erotic

Ultimately, Southerne's *Oroonoko* affirms for a London audience that Englishness can and should be effectively exported to the colonies in order to maintain an empire. Oroonoko's failed rebellion and Imoinda's participation in it constitute a transgressive attempt to upend the Eurocentric civilization of the colony. The parallel Welldon plot offers a view of romantic intrigue typical to London-based comedy of manners. While Imoinda, through her connection to the African prince, is destroyed, the Welldons survive and attain both wealth and husbands in the new world. Though *Oroonoko* may have elicited pathos for the title character's downfall, it also assured English audiences that they were indeed superior to the people whose land they took and who were forced to work on that land.

Oroonoko is a complex play from a textual standpoint and considering it in performance adds even more dimensions to its meaning. In this section, I want to consider the ramifications of *Oroonoko*'s performance as hauntographic manifestations of emerging identity categories. I shall examine the white Imoinda and the interactions of the split plot to interrogate them as instances of hauntographic performance. Southerne's adaptation of *Oroonoko* is an excellent product for this type of analysis because, like *The Indian Queen*, it is a transmedial product. The entirety of the performance event is a surrogational practice and as the theatre company attempts to bring the novella to life, the alterations that Southerne made to Behn's text force the stage version to be an imperfect replication. Although the audience might not have read Behn's novel, they would have likely been aware to some extent that it was the source text for Southerne's play. In the gaps where the stage play does not fully reproduce Behn's text, ghosting of the actors and characters onstage—by both the novel and other events—allows the audience to interact with the production to produce novel conclusions about the ideology of colonialism, sexuality, and gender.

While the whitened Imoinda solves multiple practical and ideological problems that would have faced a Restoration actress in blackface, the stage character can't completely erase her literary counterpart. Although the play had a wider audience than the novel, Behn's version of the text remained in cultural circulation.¹⁰⁵ What happens, then, is an interesting case of transmedial surrogation where the stage-Imoinda seeks to, but cannot entirely, replace the novel-Imoinda. Although the play was more popular than its source, and reached a broader range of viewers, the novel was still read and discussed, and some portion of the viewing public could have been expected to be aware of the character's blackness. Thus, even without blackface, Jane Rogers is blackened by the spectral presence of the literary character. Roach characterizes

Behn's aggressive European-izing of Oroonoko and Imoinda as "the relentless assimilation of African identity into European ideology" as she gives them all the idealized qualities of European aristocrats in mien and appearance while also decorating them with exotic ebony skin and tribal scarifications that mark them as Others.¹⁰⁶ The whiteness of the stage-Imoinda is another step towards this assimilationist strategy. Southerne takes Behn's Europeanizing vision to its logical conclusion, giving Imoinda a white body to match her European virtues. By turning Imoinda white, Southerne suggests that indigenous peoples can be thoroughly transformed to meet European standards of behavior and beauty. He draws on English cultural and stage history to depict skin color as a mutable category. Like the nymphs of *The Masque of Blackness*, Southerne's Imoinda changed her appearance to meet English ideals of beauty; shadowed by her literary surrogate, Jane Rogers's performance onstage and Southerne's alteration of the character's origins affirmed the audience's belief in the superiority of white skin and suggests that the imperial project can succeed in remaking the world in the image of England. Also, like Anne of Denmark in *The Masque of Blackness*, Imoinda is pregnant. The resistance to Anne in blackface was at least in part due to the fear that her royal progeny might somehow be visually marked as Other. Her pregnancy reflects a cultural fear of contagion and adulteration of the royal line. With the removal of the makeup, however, the threat is defused. In *Oroonoko*, Imoinda carries the child of an African king; that child, representing a confluence of African nobility and white maternity, is destroyed when Imoinda dies. Ultimately, only the English characters are productive.

At the same time, the play's plot resolves through Imoinda's violent destruction of herself. She resists the advances of a white, colonial male character, taking up arms to defend herself and her body, and she too is killed for her efforts. Skin color comes to represent the other

aspects of indigenous culture that empire-building sought to change. By whitening Imoinda, Southerne's play participates in the emergent discourse of race as it relates to skin color. Southerne's white Imoinda offered a clear vision for colonial control of non-white bodies: even their physical beings could be transformed to serve English interests. Should they still resist assimilation into the role that the colonial powers have for them—even if it violates their local customs, as Imoinda and many of the English characters repeatedly point out she is already married—they can simply be destroyed. *Oroonoko* displays a vision of the world in which useful femininity is properly productive through its role in the marriage economy, and anyone resisting that position can be disposed of without damage to the social order. Though the tragic story of the African prince and his doomed bride might stir up sentimental feelings in the audience, the play offers no space for their re-integration into colonial society.

Imoinda accomplished cultural work beyond the repression of non-white femininity, however. For one thing, by introducing a miscegenous romance, Southerne was entering into contested territory at the time. In 1691, the Virginia colony passed harsh anti-miscegenation laws aimed at women. Under the new law, women who had illegitimate children with black men were subject to a fifteen-pound fine and forced into indentured servitude for five years; the child was indentured until the age of 30. A contemporary Maryland law said that any woman who married a slave was herself sold into slavery for the duration of her husband's lifetime. At the same time, however, female colonists complained that their husbands lived as if among a harem of women, suggesting that the laws were more about patriarchal control than racial purity.¹⁰⁷ Edward Long, among the earliest English historians of Jamaica, frankly explained the reason for legal restrictions on women's behavior: "The lower class of women of England are remarkably fond of the blacks, for reasons too brutal to mention; they would connect themselves with horses and

asses if the law permitted them.”¹⁰⁸ Writing nearly a century after the first anti-miscegenation laws were passed, Long’s defense evinces a pathological view of sexuality in the colonies. Lower-class women are characterized as uncontrollably lustful, and Long draws a connection between black men and animals. Amidst his denigrations of women and black men, however, is the conclusion that English patriarchy suffers from a sexual inadequacy so pronounced that it must resort to legislating its own continuation.

While the colonies enacted draconian restrictions on female behavior, audiences in the metropole regularly witnessed in *Oroonoko* the stage romance between an African prince and a white woman. In the theatre, viewers were treated to the exact spectacle that colonial authorities were trying to avoid. Of course, as a slave herself, the stage-Imoinda is not the inviolable image of English femininity that the laws meant to protect. Still, the dissonance between the reality on the ground in the colonies and the London stage is striking. The white Imoinda, counterintuitively, serves the same purpose as the anti-miscegenation laws. Although her doomed romance with Oroonoko may stir up sentimental affection for the fiction onstage, the play hardly depicts their love as a model for others to follow. While the colonial legislatures banned racial mixing for women, London society saw a vision of miscegenous romance that accomplished two goals simultaneously: indigenes could be made white, and, failing that, they could be contained or destroyed when they failed to properly assimilate. While anti-miscegenation laws used political authority to modify public behavior, the narrative of *Oroonoko* shaped in the minds of metropolitan audiences the idea that racial mixing is dangerous and deleterious.

At the same time, the juxtaposition of the tragic romance with the Welldon sisters again serves to establish the bounds of acceptable behaviors. While Charlotte takes on male attire, and

even provocatively enjoys the masculine prerogative of seducing a woman, she does so in service of re-establishing patriarchal control of the colony. Not only does she find a husband through her adventures, but she also manages to appropriately discipline the Widow Lackitt. Dawn M. Goode argues that lesbian intrigue on the Restoration stage was harmless fun for the seductive woman in breeches, but the woman who desired the breeched female was meant to be disdained for her “excess femininity.” The woman who lusted for another woman was, either through her ignorance of the truth or the unconventional nature of her urges, aberrant and derided. In particular, widows were a common figure of this type of punishment as a way of undermining their financial independence and returning them to male control.¹⁰⁹ As we shall also see in *The Widow Ranter*, then, the Englishwoman’s breeches serve to restore order, while the foreign one’s resistance is too transgressive to be allowed. The split plot serves as a delimitative force for gender play.

The play’s epilogue, written by William Congreve and delivered by Verbruggen in character as Charlotte, called direct attention to the differences between women’s situations in the colonies and London. In the speech, Verbruggen playfully jokes about the sexual freedoms available to Englishwomen. After saying that English husbands are more forgiving of infidelity than would be “a spouse of Oroonoko’s nations,” she advised the women in the audience to “bless your stars, you happy London wives,/Who love at large, each day, yet keep your lives” (Epilogue 20-22). After telling them not to pity Imoinda’s situation, Verbruggen blames her death on the repressive beliefs of the non-Christianized world: “Poor soul! She wanted some of our Town Breeding./Forgive this Indian’s fondness of her Spouse;/Their law no Christian liberty allows” (28-30). “Christian liberty” amounts to sexual freedom. The last lines of the epilogue celebrate the superiority of the metropole and its values: “damn the heathen school where she

was taught./She might have learned to cuckold, jilt, and sham/Had Covent Garden been in Surinam” (Epilogue 33-35). Notably, the closing image of the speech is that of the London theatre district in the colonies; rather than bringing native peoples to the home island for re-education, the English customs should be exported. Imoindia dies, the epilogue argues, because she lived in a repressive world, not because she asserted her own agency to resist the Lieutenant Governor’s power. Verbruggen’s performance of the epilogue, then, accomplished a rhetorical trick. While the speech overtly claims for Englishwomen a greater freedom than they would find in the New World, it reduces that freedom to the sexual rather than the political. Englishwomen can carry on affairs or cross-dress in plays, but that is the whole of the arena in which their freedom consists. That way, not only is maintaining English femininity depicted as essential to the character of the nation, it is also argued to be a superior form of womanhood with more privileges. The last image the audience sees is the Englishwoman celebrating the superiority of English liberty, reinforcing the play’s central tenet.

Eroticizing the Other: *The Widow Ranter* and the Sexualization of the Indigenous Amazon

The Widow Ranter is one of the earliest and most sympathetic portraits of Native Americans on the English stage that simultaneously depicts indigenous peoples as exoticized/eroticized Others whose concerns and problems are nevertheless similar to those of their English fellows in the Virginia colony. A tragicomedy set in the burgeoning Virginia colony, the play presents a fictionalized version of Nathaniel Bacon’s 1676 rebellion against the colonial government alongside a comic romantic plot featuring the title character. *The Widow Ranter* was the first play for London audiences with an American setting.¹¹⁰ As the earliest opportunity for audiences to imaginatively interact with the American colonies in the

performative commons, *The Widow Ranter* is a useful window into English conception of Native American peoples and their society.

In the original production, the doomed Native American queen Semernia was played by newcomer Anne Bracegirdle. I shall compare Bracegirdle's performance as Semernia to Elizabeth Currer's enactment of the Widow Ranter and how their differing public images impacted audience reception of their fictional counterparts. In addition to the play text and performance, I shall draw on contemporary images of Bracegirdle in costume as Semernia, examining the way that *The Widow Ranter* constructs Native American femininity and difference for a London audience through the body of a white Englishwoman.

Bacon's Rebellion and Behn's Interventions

First, I want to briefly discuss the events of Bacon's Rebellion that provide Behn's source material. In addition to marking Behn's alterations to Bacon's tale, this will also highlight the rebellion's real-world implications for gender in the Virginia colony. While the colonial world that Behn creates onstage does not accord with the reality in which women lived on the other side of the Atlantic, Bacon's Rebellion is remarkable for the extent to which women participated actively in its fomentation and execution.

The rebellion, which was named for the aristocratic planter Nathaniel Bacon who led the insurgent forces, turned Virginia on its head for the summer and early fall of 1676. The uprising was based on two major grievances: first, newer transplants to the colony claimed that the government was filled with and controlled by a corrupt network of sycophants who offered preferential treatment to their friends and refused to allow recent arrivals any foothold in the administration of Virginia's affairs. Second, the rebels claimed that the government's Indian policy was too lax, leading to incursions that were disproportionately affecting the newer

colonists. While Bacon's untimely death made the insurrection fizzle out, it briefly looked as if the crown government in Virginia might be in serious trouble.

The seeds of Bacon's Rebellion were planted with the colony itself. Since its inception, Virginia had struggled to develop a clear policy for sharing land with the Natives. The position that would eventually become Bacon's—that the white colonists should eradicate or drive out all the Natives—had been articulated as early as 1622 by colonial Governor Francis Wyatt. Reasoning that the English would never truly be safe as long as they shared the land, Wyatt took inspiration from God's command to the Israelites that they expel the Canaanites from the Promised Land as he called for the removal of the indigenous peoples.¹¹¹ By the 1670s, however, under Governor William Berkeley's aegis, the colonists and natives had developed a system of alliances that divided indigenous tribes, broadly, into friendly and unfriendly groups. Specifically, the Pamunkey Indians that Behn places at the center of her play were a valued ally to the colonists who had, thanks to Berkeley's negotiations, fought other Native tribes on behalf of the English from 1656 onward.¹¹² This complex web would be threatened with the events of 1676 that led to Bacon's rebellion.

Nathaniel Bacon was a young man of aristocratic descent who held a plantation located on the frontier of the colony. Amidst the increasing aggression between the English colonists and Natives, Bacon illegally held a group of Appomattox Indians that he claimed had stolen his corn. His illegal imprisonment of the group drew an official censure from Berkeley, beginning their adversarial relationship.¹¹³ In January of 1676, Bacon's plantation was attacked in a raid by a group of Susquehannocks, killing his overseer. Thereafter, he had trouble getting servants to work his remote estate, and he lost his tobacco crop, which constituted a significant financial setback.¹¹⁴ Bacon became publicly critical of the governor's handling of the situation, and

Berkeley's opponents saw that Bacon could provide their cause the aristocratic leadership necessary for an effective opposition to the governor.¹¹⁵ A group of colonists held a rally, and Bacon's friends plied him with liquor before taking him to meet the group. Enflamed by their cries of "A Bacon! A Bacon!" he agreed to lead an expedition against the Native population even without an official commission to do so. Within a few days, the rebel faction had recruited over 300 men to its cause.¹¹⁶ Having appealed to the young man's drunken vanity, the anti-Berkeleyite forces had their leader and the rebellion was begun.

Rather than a precise attack on incursive groups, Bacon and his men had in mind the wholesale slaughter of any indigenous people they could find. They indiscriminately attacked Native forts and settlements, disrupting both colonial and Native American life in the area.¹¹⁷ In late June, Bacon returned to Jamestown with 400 men behind him and demanded an official commission as the Assembly was concluding legislative business. With the Assembly building surrounded, an exasperated Berkeley burst forth and offered to fight Bacon in single combat. His offer refused, he bared his chest and told Bacon to shoot him and have an end of things. Bacon insisted he had no designs on Berkeley's safety and merely wanted legal orders to fight against the colony's enemies. Threatened by Bacon's forces, the Assembly issued a declaration of war and named the rebel the commander-in-chief of the military, while pardoning all his prior rebellious actions. Shortly thereafter, Berkeley sent a secret letter to Charles II explaining Bacon's rebellious actions and requesting both military support and a new governor for the colony.¹¹⁸ Bacon sent his own letters back to England to criticize the Berkeleyite government's handling of matters and drafted the *Declaration of the People of Virginia* as both a critique of Berkeley and a legal cover for the rebellion.¹¹⁹ While Bacon worked on a plan to justify his actions, news of more Native incursions eventually led him back to the James River by mid-

August.¹²⁰ September saw the heaviest fighting of the rebellion, as Bacon and his men returned to Jamestown to battle the loyalist forces of the governor for control of the capital.¹²¹

At this point, further bloodshed seemed certain, if not for a quirk of fate. During his forest expedition, Bacon and his men had been plagued by infestations of lice. One of these pests would ultimately resolve the affair more quickly than Berkeley could have hoped, as a louse's bite caused Bacon to contract typhus and a bloody diarrhea consistent with dysentery. The disease led to his swift decline, and he spent his last days deliriously claiming that reinforcements from England were sure to arrive shortly. He would die on 26 October, and his rebellion all but died with him.¹²²

The whole episode concluded rather anticlimactically. Charles II received Berkeley's letters on 27 October, just a day after Bacon died, and issued a warrant for the rebel's arrest. Charles was concerned that a full rebellion would deprive his government of 100,000 pounds of tobacco per annum, a massive economic blow. Thus, he dispatched a fleet with 1000 trained soldiers to restore order. The warship *Bristol* departed on 19 November with 70 troops aboard, and more ships followed her on 3 December. Charles II had dispatched two commissioners, Sir John Berry and Francis Moryson, aboard the *Bristol* to assess the situation and prepare a report on the events. Upon their arrival on January 29 of 1677, they were shocked to find that Berkeley was alive, Bacon was dead, and the revolution defused. The governor had hanged 23 of the rebels, giving them a traitor's death.¹²³ Berkeley's resolution to the affairs was praised by Berry and Moryson, although he would ultimately be recalled to England for insulting them. He died in England 9 July of 1677, less than a year after Bacon, while trying to exonerate himself for his treatment of the commissioners.¹²⁴

In dramatizing the events of the rebellion, Behn takes a fair amount of dramatic license. *The Widow Ranter* features multiple plotlines, with Bacon's story unfolding as a heroic tragedy alongside a sex comedy/comedy of manners featuring the title character. The real-life Nathaniel Bacon was an arrogant wastrel. Born to a wealthy family in 1647, the young Bacon was frequently in legal trouble. He engaged a secret marriage with a woman named Elizabeth Duke, which led to her father disinheriting her. Later, he was discovered plotting to cheat a man out of his fortune.¹²⁵ To extricate his son from his legal problems, Bacon's father gave Nathaniel £1800 and sent him to the Virginia colony.¹²⁶ Beyond his apparently unscrupulous nature, Bacon was plainly unpleasant. Before his marriage to Duke, her father had offered the young woman a substantial sum of money if she would marry *anyone* other than Bacon. Moreover, he was described as "very ambitious and arrogant" and treated his fellows poorly, especially those he considered "dumb."¹²⁷ By contrast, the stage-Bacon is an exemplar of masculine honor typical of a tragic hero. In the play, Behn replaces Governor Berkeley with a governing council that rules Virginia while a new governor is en route from England to assume control of Virginia. Rather than rebelling against an appointed representative of the crown, then, Behn's version of Bacon is trying to set right the mismanagement of the colony by the Whiggish, Parliamentary council.

His efforts are threatened by his fervent love of the Pamunkey queen, named Semernia by Behn. Indeed, the ruling council believes Bacon wants to make war on the Natives so that he might have an honest reason to kill Semernia's husband to take her for himself. While fighting both the Pamunkey and colonial forces, Bacon kills the Pamunkey King Cavarnio in a heroic duel, leading Semernia to take command of the Native army. Under the mistaken impression that his beloved has been whisked away with the retreating Pamunkey forces, Bacon pursues Semernia and accidentally kills her. Driven mad with grief, he swallows poison, bringing his

rebellion to an end and giving him a much nobler death than the bloody flux that took his real-world counterpart.

Semernia was based on the real woman Cockacoeske, whose relationship to the real Bacon could not have been more different than Behn's stage version. While the two are lovers in the play, in reality, Bacon aggressively hunted Cockacoeske in order to kill her. She had become the tribe's chief some years before after her husband's death. When the fighting broke out, she sought to align herself with the Berkeley government because of Bacon's indiscriminate killing of all Native Americans in the colony. She herself was the primary target of Bacon's August operations in the Virginia woods. Though she considered surrendering to Bacon, she saw the mutilated body of an old woman and fled rather than submit to his capricious and cruel whims. Most of her people were sold into slavery, but the queen managed to survive for ten days before turning herself in.¹²⁸ After the rebellion ended, the commissioners were particularly critical of the rebels' treatment of the Pamunkey. When meeting with the commissioners, the queen refused to speak English in the negotiations and was able to secure a number of gifts and a prominent place for her tribe amongst the allied Natives.¹²⁹ Despite this, she would eventually die in 1687 with the Pamunkey tribe in extremely poor condition.¹³⁰ A far cry from Behn's heroic love affair, the real-world rebellion had disastrous effects for Cockacoeske and her Pamunkey tribe.

The other half of the play is comprised of a sex comedy plot, drawn from Behn's imagination instead of historical sources. At the same time Bacon makes war on the Virginia colony, the wealthy Widow Ranter has designs on the rebellion's second-in-command, Lieutenant General Dareing. In a typically confusing romantic plot, Dareing is passionately in love with Mrs. Crisante, the Widow's younger friend, who herself loves Friendly, a wealthy planter. Dareing captures Crisante in a raid on Jamestown and resolves to hold her until she

surrenders to his advances. The Widow Ranter disguises herself as a man come to woo Crisante, and offers to engage Dareing in a duel for the young woman. When he figures out the Widow's identity, Dareing is impressed with her fortitude and consents to marry her immediately, even before the war is concluded. While both Bacon and Semernia are killed, the four other lovers are united happily, along with the newly arrived adventurer Hazard and the recently widowed Madam Surelove.

News of the rebellion and its consequences was disseminated throughout England via two pamphlets: *Strange News from Virginia: Being a Full and True Account of the Life and Death of Nathanael Bacon* (1677) and *More News from Virginia* (1678). These two items offer a straightforward account of Bacon's grievances and his actions, and they take pains to emphasize the rebel's gentle birth and his essential gallantness, dispelling any suggestion that he was motivated by an intemperate disposition towards alcohol.¹³¹ The pamphlets must have constituted one of Behn's major sources and likely gave her the idea for her play. Wilber Henry Ward contends that Behn's primary source for the play, however, was the report of the Royal Commissioners. He argues that the level of familiarity that Behn shows with the progress of the conflict and Bacon's evolving demands could only have come from reading the official reports, to which she likely had access due to her court connections. Additionally, the Pamunkey queen isn't mentioned at all in the two pamphlets and must be drawn from the report.¹³²

Whatever her sources, Behn's alterations to the story—and the details that she kept—have profound effects on the shape of the drama. First, Bacon is transformed from the arrogant, intransigent rebel of history to a stock figure of Restoration heroic drama: a typically noble aristocrat caught in an irresolvable conflict between duty and love. Further, Bacon is a stereotypical Behnian hero: a well-born, proud second son in need of money.¹³³ By turning

Berkeley into a hodge-podge of ne'er-do-well counselors as Bacon's adversary, Behn honors her political commitment to Tory royalism while simultaneously illustrating the new reality in which the colony exists. Rather than resisting Berkeley—and by extension the Stuart government which Behn tirelessly supported throughout her career—Bacon is a crusader on behalf of political power that is legitimated through aristocratic birth and rule.

The most jarring alteration Behn makes is the interracial romance she invents for Bacon and Semernia. It is difficult to imagine the man who spent weeks camping in louse-infested swamps in hopes of exterminating all the Natives in Virginia even speaking kindly to Cockacoeske, much less fighting a war to win her heart.¹³⁴ Rooting Bacon's military actions in romantic intrigue both accords to typical conventions of Restoration drama and further softens his character for the audience. Moreover, romance—even miscegenous romance—befits an Englishman of aristocratic birth far more than genocidal rage. As I shall demonstrate later, the role of Semernia proves crucial to understanding the play's message to its audience and the impact of the performance on theatrical culture.

Many readings of the play focus on its relationship to Behn's very public political beliefs. While we can and should read the play with the knowledge that Behn was an ardent supporter of the Stuart monarchy, we should be skeptical about the extent to which political allegory is the text's primary resonance. For one thing, Behn had possibly spent some time in jail just a few years prior for her overzealous anti-Monmouth propaganda.¹³⁵ Additionally, the writing was clearly on the wall for James II and the Stuarts by the time she was writing *The Widow Ranter*. Before the play could be produced, William of Orange would be crowned King of England, and Behn would die five days later.¹³⁶ While Behn's Tory politics frequently pervade her work, this play appeared in a dangerous moment to rhapsodize about the embattled Stuarts. *The Widow*

Ranter conforms to Tory orthodoxy, advocating for a strong, sovereign monarch, and can be read as a paean to the Stuarts. It can just as easily be read as generally supportive of monarchy and of knowing one's place in the world. Given her recent difficulties, Behn had good reason to allow for multiple readings of the play rather than a pro-Stuart screed.

Additionally, we should consider the material conditions facing Behn at the time of writing. By the late 1680s, Behn was desperately in need of the money that a hit would provide. Possibly recently jailed, she was certainly quite ill. In a letter from Behn to a Mrs. Waller in praise of the latter's deceased father-in-law, the playwright claims "I am very ill & have been dying this twelvemonth." Moreover, written in an extremely shaky hand, the letter includes a post-script that notes "I humbly beg pardon for my ill writing madam for Tis with a lame hand scarce able to hold a pen."¹³⁷ Facing financial and health problems, Behn could little afford further legal trouble with the ascendant Whig party or the incoming Orange monarchy. While London still had its fair share of Tories, and Behn wouldn't have totally abandoned her beliefs, I would argue that the play is predominantly the product of her attempt to create something that would appeal to a large section of the theatergoing public and generate some income. Although the play would fail due to poor casting resulting from her death and managerial meddling, I think that it is reasonable to believe Behn was more interested in appealing to the public rather than making grandiose political points at this juncture in her life.

Hauntographical Resonance

The Pamunkey queen Semernia and the Widow Ranter offer contrasting visions for femininity, which were enhanced by the contrast between the actresses playing the roles. Superficially, though, the two characters have much in common. Both Semernia and the Widow Ranter are (obviously) widowed, though to different effects. Ranter is a typical Restoration

widow: lacking both virginity and a husband, she exhibits a hyperactive libido that drives her comic pursuit of men. Ranter's machinations to snare Bacon's lieutenant Dareing provide the engine for the play's comic plot. By contrast, Semernia is widowed during the action of the play when Bacon kills the Pamunkey King Cavarnio. Although Semernia and Bacon have proclaimed their affections for one another, they cannot consummate their romance. Semernia cannot love her husband's killer: "when I consider him [Bacon] as Murderer of my Lord—[*Fiercely*] I sigh and wish—some other fatal hand had given him his Death" (V.iii.32-34).¹³⁸ While the Englishwoman is sexually empowered and emancipated by the loss of her husband, the Native woman is eventually undone by the same.

Additionally, both the Widow Ranter and Semernia are breeches roles. By changing her clothing, the Widow Ranter becomes masculinized in her behavior as well. During the climactic battle between the rebels and the government forces, Behn's stage directions note "*Dareing and some Souldiers, Ranter fighting like a Fury by his side, he putting her back in vain; they fight out*" (105). Later, when she finds two colonial council members hiding and mistakes them for dead, she comments "I'll see what Moveables they Have about them, all's Lawful Prize in War." [*Takes their Money, Watches and Rings; goes out*] (V.iii.114-115). Having taken on a man's garment, the Widow easily takes on a man's role in the conflict. She is the only character whose fighting ability is specified in the stage directions—"like a Fury"—and Dareing is incapable of keeping her out of the battle. She then plunders what she thinks are corpses, happily embracing the chaotic nature of the war.

While breeches can endow a female character with masculine energies and abilities, the material world of the theatre limits the clothing's transgressive power by using pants as a tool to further sexualize an actress's body. Although a female character often dons breeches to free

herself from the rigid social confines placed on her gender, the garment allowed spectators to see the performer's legs that would normally be hidden by skirts.¹³⁹ The popularity of breeches roles rested largely in the way that the masculine attire served to sexualize the actress's body for a male viewer. While women's petticoats obscured the contours of an actress's body, breeches accentuated her legs, hips, and buttocks. Thus, while female stage cross-dressing may challenge larger societal norms around gender and clothing, its use in the theatre is sanctioned because it provides visual pleasure to an implied heterosexual male viewer. As Pat Rogers observes, in order for the breeches part to achieve its effect, the female body of the performer had to remain recognizably female.¹⁴⁰ Even when the disguise is represented as impenetrable in the fictional world of the stage, the audience is aware that the performer is female. This method of performance "emphasiz[ed] the *performance* of masculinity."¹⁴¹

At the same time, breeches are metonymically linked with the phallus as a cultural symbol of patriarchal supremacy. Unlike the biological aspects of sex, however, pants can be taken on by women as a challenge to patriarchy.¹⁴² As such, breeches function as a symbolic phallus onstage that indicates a woman's attempts to operate outside of the strictures of patriarchal society. The male gaze serves as a theatrical Trojan horse: under the guise of giving the audience what they want, playwrights may sneak in commentary on gender norms. Women onstage could enact any sort of destabilizing performance they liked because they were still able to be subjected to the objectifying leering of the audience. Ultimately, the sexualizing nature of the gaze authorizes playfulness surrounding gender conventions because the bodies onstage can always be read as sexual objects if the commentary becomes too subversive. Through breeches performance, the actress was objectified even as her character was liberated.

The Widow Ranter undergoes a similar process. She initially clothes herself in breeches as a ploy to win Dareing's affections and challenges Dareing to a duel. Figuring out her true identity, Dareing is moved by the effort she has put into winning his love. He takes her hand and proposes, and they have the following exchange:

DAREING: Give me thy hand Widow, I am thine—and so intirely, I will never—
be drunk out of thy Company—Dunce is in my Tent—prithee let's in and bind the
bargain.

RANTER: Faith, let's see the Wars at an end first.

DAREING: Nay, prithee, take me in the humour, while thy Breeches are on—for
I never lik'd thee half so well in Petticoats.

RANTER: Lead on General, you give me good encouragement to wear them.

(IV.iii.80-84)

Dareing shows the audience the proper reaction to the Widow's change of apparel. The grandiosity of her romantic gesture and her new attire provoke his love, and he insists here, comically, that she keep her pants on. He is so taken with her that he insists that Parson Dunce immediately perform the marriage in his tent. The Widow remains in breeches for the rest of the play, having won the heart of the captain and likely the lust of men in the audience as well.

Semernia, by contrast, fares less well after changing her costume. Although Behn has her and her handmaiden "*dress'd like an Indian Man, with a Bow in her Hand and Quiver at her Back;*" we are quickly told that the Pamunkey have disguised her so that she won't be captured if they are overrun (110). Additionally, her speech betrays a different tenor from her garb. Her servant Anaria warns the Queen that if she is captured, Bacon will rape her: "what he cannot gain

by soft submission, force will at last o'ercome"(V.iii.15-16). Surprisingly, Semernia confesses her love for Bacon:

I adore this General,--take from my Soul a Truth—till now conceal'd—at twelve years Old—at the Pauwomungian Court I saw this Conqueror. I saw him young and Gay as new born Spring, Glorious and Charming as the Mid-days Sun, I watch't his looks, and listened when he spoke, and thought him more than Mortal.
(V.iii.18-23)

Semernia further laments that "I have no Amazonian fire about me, all my Artillery is sighs and Tears" (V.iii.36-37). Almost immediately after this revelation, her army is surprised by Bacon's, as he demands Semernia be turned over to him. The Pamunkey general Cavarro gets the drop on Bacon and prepares to shoot him with poisoned arrows, but Semernia runs out, ordering them to hold their fire. Her shouting gives away her position, and Bacon attacks furiously, mortally wounding the queen in the confusion. With her dying words, Semernia thanks Bacon for resolving her intractable dilemma between vengeance and love: "The noblest office of a Gallant Friend, thou's sav'd my Honour and hast given me Death...Now I may Love you without Infamy, and please my Dying Heart by gazing on you" (V.iii.57-61). While she took on the martial clothing to protect herself from capture and ravishment at Bacon's hands, her disguise actually leads to her undoing. The same device that empowers the Widow Ranter dooms Semernia.

The Widow Ranter behaves in much less appropriately feminine ways than Semernia. She easily adapts to the soldier's life when she dons her breeches, while Semernia cannot slip her gender role by taking on male attire. Ultimately, though, the Widow's martial skill secures a husband for her and returns her to normative society. By contrast, Semernia attempts to lead an

army while cross-dressed in her husband's place. She also goes to war to resist the desires of Bacon, who, as an Englishman, is her social superior in every way. The historical outcome of the rebellion provided a template, but Behn did not have the option of showing Semernia win. Staging English warriors suffering a defeat at the hands of Native warriors led by a woman would have been unthinkable, suggesting that indigenous peoples could best Englishmen, that a woman could be a better general than a man, and that the colonial project was not justified. Instead, the Widow Ranter enjoys a wild romp outside her prescribed place but willingly returns to society. The destruction of the Pamunkey queen does nothing to harm the English civilization; rather, her death ensures that the English are the ascendant culture in Virginia. Having Semernia survive the events of the play would have carried too many unsettling questions for the viewers, so Behn dispenses with her while the Widow joins her English companions happily.

Notably, *The Widow Ranter* was a failure and disappeared from the repertory. In the dedicatory epistle to the printed edition of 1690, the play's producer George Jenkins laid the blame at Rich's feet for cutting the text: "Had our Author been alive she would have Committed it to the Flames rather than have suffer'd it to have been Acted with such Omissions as was made."¹⁴³ Given its failure onstage, the primary legacy of *The Widow Ranter* for English culture was Anne Bracegirdle's celebrity. Although the play didn't enter the repertory, Bracegirdle became one of the biggest stars of her day. The result of Bracegirdle's performance is, on some level, to bring popular awareness to the existence of non-English femininity. At the same time, however, both through the events of the play and Bracegirdle's subsequent celebrity, English womanhood is constructed as superior to indigenous. Drawing on the erotics of the Other, Bracegirdle ultimately subsumes them into her own star power. Though her character was killed

in the play, she depicted an indigenous character through her own body and personality. Any eroticism felt for the Other, then, is ultimately just directed at Bracegirdle.

Interestingly, we have multiple images of Bracegirdle in her costume from *The Widow Ranter*.¹⁴⁴ The first, a close-up of the actress, depicts her in the style of a queen, wearing a crown and jewelry.¹⁴⁵ She also wears feathers in her hair to signify her non-Englishness. In the second image, a full-body portrait, her feathered headdress is far more pronounced, and she carries additional feathers in her left hand. While her dress is rather conventionally English, she wears sandals to further convey her Native status. She is attended by two small children, both dark-skinned native boys. One carries the train of her dress, while the other holds a parasol to shield her from the sun. The painting identifies her as “The Indian Queen.” Finally, a third image depicts the actress wearing a conical, vertical crown of feathers. The *décolleté* of her dress is similarly adorned with feathers, and she wears a quiver of arrows across her chest, with the fletched ends visible over her shoulder. All of the portraits emphasize the character’s foreignness with costume elements that exoticize the Englishwoman.

The images depict Bracegirdle’s Semernia as exhibiting a mixture of signifiers of English regality and native exoticism and eroticism. Obviously, historical and anthropological realities were of little importance to either the producers or the audience of the original staging. Instead, the paintings suggest a blending of costumed symbols of queen-ness and otherness. Bracegirdle’s image displays the same hybridity of Native American and English femininity that Behn’s writing does. By taking on both a familiar and an exotic appearance, Bracegirdle-as-Semernia visually embodies for the audience the dynamic at work in Behn’s text. Semernia didn’t have a prolonged stage life, but the image of Bracegirdle garbed as the Indian Queen remained a part of her public persona. Here we can see how cultural artifacts work in the hauntographical process to

shape society's attitudes at the same time the artifacts are shaped by their own culture, and how Bracegirdle's celebrity figures larger in the cultural imagination than any of the political or literary aspects of the drama. Bracegirdle herself, eventually revered as "the model of English beauty," was famous for her ability to blush; apparently, the redness of her flushed state highlighted the whiteness of her skin.¹⁴⁶ These portraits similarly emphasize the particular English-ness of her beauty by contrasting the actress with the trappings of an exotic, Native American queen.

Bracegirdle's portrait is telling in that we have so many images. First of all, we have no guarantee of fidelity between the portraits and Bracegirdle's actual appearance in the play. They obviously were not painted from the production itself, as the actress would have had to sit for them at some other time. Moreover, the scene with the two boys does not appear in the text anywhere, and the only specific costume mentioned is the breeches. As Laura Engel points out, portraiture was a common way for actresses to promote and control their public persona for fans.¹⁴⁷ For whatever reason, Bracegirdle sat for the portraits and likely wanted to capitalize on her notoriety for the part. The Native queen proved to be a breakout role for her and launched her as a rising star in the company. Semernia's memorialization in portrait titillated spectators through the contrast between the two dark-skinned boys and Bracegirdle's white Englishness, further underscoring both the pleasure of the illusion and her ultimately English virtue. While Bracegirdle helped bring a certain vision of Native American femininity to life for metropolitan London audiences, she simultaneously erased it through the fact of her own national origins. In the circulation of the images, then, we see an English actress solidify her own celebrity and social position through the simultaneous enactment and erasure of non-English, indigenous identity.

The majority of Londoners could not experience the colonial world firsthand, nor would they want to. The day-to-day reality of living in colonial America was, for most people, filled with brutal labor and a host of dangers. London residents could, however, vicariously visit Virginia through the drama. The play showed a London audience an imaginary yet realistic version of the Virginia colony that offered multiple interpretive possibilities, all of which could overlap. Various, an audience member might enjoy the play purely as fiction, see the economic potential of the colonial world, imaginatively experience the exotic and erotic qualities of the Native characters, understand the necessity of expanding English civilization to the untamed Americas, or some combination thereof. All of these readings were available for the portrait as well as the play. The world of *The Widow Ranter* became condensed to the image of Bracegirdle as Semernia. The portrait, then, similarly offered viewers a chance to vicariously experience Virginia through the vector of Bracegirdle's celebrity.

The headdress that Bracegirdle wears in the portrait is, according to tradition, an artifact brought by Behn from Suriname that became a prop in the King's, and later United, Company stock.¹⁴⁸ Heidi Hutner identifies as one of the central problems of the play the fact that a white Englishwoman could not fully portray Indian-ness for the London audience. She further argues that if an actress had successfully played a character's racial difference, her acting would have been viewed as a form of "going native" and would therefore have been cause for extreme alarm.¹⁴⁹ I would counter that the London audience didn't want to see a real Native body onstage. Rather, what they want is precisely what the experience in the playhouse gave them: imaginative engagement with the geographically distant colony, rendered legible and safe through the aesthetics of the theatre. This imaginative tourism gave the viewer the ability to project a wide range of beliefs and values onto the actress's performance and her physical body.

The headdress serves as a powerful visual symbol of the character's Otherness, and its provenance and New World origin enhance both the exotic and erotic aspects of Bracegirdle's performance.

Here, the actress functions as what Roach calls an effigy, a performer who serves as a vessel for evoking cultural memories through the process of surrogation.¹⁵⁰ Bracegirdle is, like all Restoration actresses, sexualized throughout the play. In particular, the breeches scene at the end of the play conflates indigenous sexuality with danger and death. This conflation supports the general stereotype during the era of indigenous women as purveyors of wanton lustiness.¹⁵¹ Bracegirdle-as-effigy conveys the sexual availability of Semernia; she is married to the Indian King Cavernio but sexually objectified by Bacon's lust as well. As Anaria points out during the play's climax, Bacon threatens to rape Semernia if he cannot persuade her to submit to his advances. Simultaneously, Bracegirdle's performance conveys to the audience that indigenous women are highly sexual but also subject to rape in the event that they resist English desire. In typical Behnian fashion, however, subjecting women to violence leads to disaster.¹⁵² Miscegenation is both alluring and dangerous, as Bacon's trans-racial romantic interest leads to the death of his beloved and himself. Ultimately, however, the romance is unconsummated. Blurring national and gendered lines results in destruction rather than a generative union. Bacon's flirtation with the queen, and her administration of the Pamunkey government, proves disastrous. Metonymically, we can also view the openness of Native women to English sexual advances as representative of the availability of the Americas to the English colonial project, and the danger attendant there as well.¹⁵³

At the same time, Semernia's Indian-ness is concealed by her adherence to an idealized version of English femininity.¹⁵⁴ The actual whiteness of Bracegirdle further serves to distance

the performance from actually representing indigeneity. While the commingling of sexuality and death warns the audience about the dangers of racial mixing, the actress herself is an uncomplicated object for the audience's sexual energies. Even if the play warns spectators about sexuality's risks, the production likely derived much of its intrigue from the public exhibition of a female body. If we take Pepys as a normative theatre patron, we can see the likelihood of this reaction by the number of times he dismisses a play while praising the attractiveness of the women he saw at the theatre. *The Widow Ranter* serves both to titillate the audience and chastise them for the same titillation. The character of Semernia entices the viewer with her foreign, doomed qualities; the actress Bracegirdle fixes any sexual intrigue that might accompany that enticement on a white body. By surrogating Cockacoeske in the fiction, Bracegirdle makes the indigenous woman visible, but through her own body and persona she erased the actuality of indigenous life.

Hutner also remarks upon the difficulty of finding fixed meaning in *The Widow Ranter*, as the play is filled with internal contradictions and conflicting messages about the stability of race, gender, and nation.¹⁵⁵ While we cannot claim definitively what the audience for the play was like, the theatergoing public of the Restoration likely comprised a wide cross-section of London society.¹⁵⁶ As such, the play offers a range of interpretive conclusions to viewers. Some viewers likely focused on the drama's fictional content. Tory spectators, meanwhile, may have read the play as a warning about the dangers of rejecting a sovereign monarch, while the growing merchant class might have seen in the Virginia colony a model for a future mercantile-dominated democracy. I would revise Hutner's claim as it applies to performance instead of text. While the fictional content of the play wreaks havoc with notions of stable categories around race, gender, and nation, the performative enactment of the text offers far more concrete answers. Both Currer

and Bracegirdle offered a concrete realization to characters who are, textually, categorically interstitial.

Currer, whose image was that of a stereotypical Restoration actress, gives a definite quality to the Widow. She was well known for playing highly sexualized characters, most often mistresses and prostitutes, and frequently breeches roles as well.¹⁵⁷ Beyond her professional reputation, the few details about her personal life that exist suggest Currer's life was tumultuous. In May of 1676 the Lord Chamberlain issued an order for her arrest, though no evidence survives to indicate why. She may have possibly been abroad from 1685-1689 when no roles in London are recorded for her.¹⁵⁸ *The Widow Ranter* was the second to last role she played in London; it played on 30 November, 1689. The last archival evidence of her presence in the city is a pair of legal hearings when she sued the management of the United Company.¹⁵⁹ Her first suit was heard on 17 February, 1690, and the second 8 March, 1690. Details are scant, but whatever the issue was, it seems to have ended her career in London. *The Widow Ranter* may have been performed amidst her deteriorating relationship with the company, depending upon how quickly events unfolded. Her legal troubles with the management of the United Company may have sent her back to the provinces in hopes of greater fortune, though no record of her death exists. Currer's onstage persona was unambiguously sexual, and her private life seems to have been riotous and litigious. For an audience aware of her reputation, Currer may well have synched up with the libidinous, wild Widow Ranter who challenged her social status.

Still, the effect of the breeches part depended upon the actress being unmistakably female in the costume.¹⁶⁰ While the role as written blends masculine and feminine qualities, Currer's performance must have been unambiguously female. The implied heterosexual, male gaze of the audience served to limit the transgressive potential of the Widow as well. The Widow Ranter

could fancifully throw off the shackles of her patriarchal society for the duration the play, but Curren could not. The audience was not threatened by the notion that Ranter might continue to exist free of male control; for one thing, she is obsessive in her pursuit of Dareing. More than that, however, Curren's presence onstage as the Widow would have assured them that, gender-bending fun aside, the Widow wasn't going to re-make society. The actress's power to disrupt society was undermined by the nature of theatrical business. As she was typecast, the audience knew what to expect, and very few plays diverged from successful formulae. Plays might have engaged in blurring boundaries, but performances did not.

The Widow Ranter served a similar function to that of her counterpart in *Oroonoko*, the Widow Lackitt: both women offered an element of chaos that had to be resolved through the comic plot. Ranter, in spite of her martial abilities and her masculinized romantic pursuit of Dareing, was ultimately a more traditional figure. Lackitt tries to dictate the terms of her union with Welldon and to retain control of her finances, whereas Ranter seems eager to yoke herself to the captain at any cost. Although she proves an eager and capable warrior, her engagement in battle is in service of re-establishing a normative relationship. Lackitt is a recalcitrant figure who requires humiliation through the events of the plot; the comedy in *Oroonoko*'s plot derives from her being put in her place. Ranter, by contrast, generates comedy through her dogged pursuit of an unwilling man. Both are lusty, as widows in the period were generally depicted, but Ranter displays far more agency in selecting her mate. This may be a function of Behn's generally proto-feminist stance on women and the marriage market, but we can also read Ranter's agency as a product of her adherence to social order. Because the Widow Ranter doesn't aspire to live outside established norms, she can choose her own husband. Lackitt, on the other hand, must be forced into a union because of her intransigence.

Again, the objectifying gaze of the audience limited the extent to which the audience was inclined to see the widows as subversive. An innate part of the actress's craft in the Restoration was performing sexual availability. Skilled performers were able to manipulate the public's desire to see women departing from the bounds of appropriate behavior to great financial success.¹⁶¹ Individuals could achieve wealth and fame, but their roles ultimately reinforced broadly circulating cultural ideas about women and their place in society: they were innately lustful, less developed, and in need of careful management. The emergence of actresses, while allowing some women a path to independence, underscored the importance of maintaining traditional gender roles amidst changing social structures. Early English actresses, then, participated in a complex process: they could be successful by performing sexual availability, flirtatiousness, and attractiveness, but in doing so they re-inscribed the importance of those values at the same time as they themselves were objectified by the scopic structure of the theatre. The objectifying, sexualizing nature of the theatrical event limited the transgressive potential of the performance. From the outset of each play, then, the audience would have little concern that the widows would remain financially independent.

Bracegirdle also offered an unambiguous physical form—that of chaste, white Englishhood—to the Pamunkey queen. At the same time Bracegirdle serves as an effigy for the varied cultural desires of the audience, she began to construct her own public persona through the performance. Semernia—or at least the exotic trappings that attended her—was repeatedly memorialized through portraiture. Straddling the first and second generations of Restoration actresses, Bracegirdle was still subjected to the scurrilous slander that sought to characterize the emergent profession as little more than glorified prostitution. Nevertheless, she was eventually able to cultivate a highly respected image of chaste dignity. Performers developed a line by

repeatedly playing similar roles for an audience, shaping their onstage persona and creating an expectation around their type.¹⁶² At the same time, actresses manipulated the interplay between their fictional roles and their offstage reputation to establish their celebrity.¹⁶³ Semernia is the same type of role that would eventually become Bracegirdle's specialty in tragedy: a chaste heroine torn between lovers, sometimes subjected to sexual assault but never herself sexually aggressive. The roles she played exhibited the same type of virtuous reputation she enjoyed in her private life.¹⁶⁴ Although *The Widow Ranter* failed to catch on with audiences, Semernia was an early link in the chain of Bracegirdle's self-fashioning as a celebrity by marking out the contours of her onstage type. That type, in turn, was read with her reputation for chaste behavior to fix her celebrity in the popular imagination.

Finally, beyond Bracegirdle's performance, *The Widow Ranter* participated in the cultural dialog surrounding race, class, and gender as identity categories. Today, skin color serves as the dominant constitutive element of race, often to the exclusion of any other factor. In England in the late seventeenth century, however, skin color was only a part of the conception of racial difference. Manners, customs, forms of government, economic systems, language, and mode of dress all entwined with skin color to produce racial categories for the English in the period, all of equal or more importance than skin color. Early English colonists regarded indigenous peoples through a class-based hierarchy, considering members of Native American ruling classes as roughly equal to their own aristocrats. In the colonies, Bacon's rebellion was a watershed moment in the transition from class as the dominant element of colonial identity to race. One of the outcomes of the insurrection was the recalibration of Anglo-Virginian identity on the basis of a shared whiteness with authority concentrated in and deriving from white, male, patriarchal figures.¹⁶⁵ Certainly, the play reflects attitudes about identity, but it also serves to shape those

attitudes by offering a metropolitan London audience a view of the recent history of their colonies. In practice, during the earlier part of the century, large numbers of Europeans had sexual relations with indigenous peoples.¹⁶⁶ In fact, Cockacoeske had a biracial son named John West with an English colonel.¹⁶⁷ By the 1680s, however, laws forbidding racial mixing had arisen.¹⁶⁸ In the play, Bacon and Semernia never consummate their relationship. By depicting a fictional account of their romantic longing that also showed the impossibility of miscegenation through a performance that was both highly sexualized but also safe, *The Widow Ranter* helped to galvanize English ideas about the interconnected nature of race and gender. Indeed, while the play is set in Virginia, Behn's primary concern is the behavior of her English audience.¹⁶⁹

The Widow Ranter was a failure. It played once and disappeared from the repertory, and Behn didn't benefit from it at all because she was dead by the time it was mounted. Despite its failure, the play gave London audiences an imaginative taste of colonial Virginia, and it launched the career of the most successful actress of the second generation of female performers in London. Though the play wasn't present on the stage, the multiple images of Bracegirdle as Semernia attest to a fascination with juxtaposing English beauty with exotic markers of foreignness. Those markers—feathers, arrows, a parasol—emphasized Bracegirdle's whiteness, the Englishness of her appearance and her beauty. *The Widow Ranter* showed the consequences of a world that abandoned its traditional rules and demarcated the boundaries of acceptable behavior. Maintaining English identity required maintenance of gender roles. The portraits of Bracegirdle, though, showed that England could benefit from adopting and exploiting things from New World, as long as they were made to confirm the superiority of the emerging idea of the English race.

Stage depictions of the Americas in the late seventeenth century were often extremely popular with audiences as it gave them a way to imaginatively engage with the colonial world, which most of them were unlikely to ever see firsthand. These plays claimed anthropological, ethnographic accuracy, based on accounts from those who had been to the New World. In reality, they presented to audiences a message about English values; namely, that Englishwomen already enjoyed an enviable amount of latitude in the behaviors permitted to them. To destabilize society by pursuing the prerogatives of men would prove disastrous because England would take on the aspects of her colonial possessions. That message was rendered through the cautionary tale of Zempoalla's corruption of her femininity and nearly her entire country through the pursuit of masculine power and the juxtaposition of doomed indigenous women enmeshed in tragedies with their merry English counterparts in the comedic halves of the split-plot plays *Oroonoko* and *The Widow Ranter*. Seeing the first generation of English actresses could titillate and intrigue audiences by presenting the spectacle of exoticism, but it also worked to limit the power of women from the non-aristocratic ranks to upset the established order. While all these plays reveled in gender play to varying extents, they ultimately affirm that women should keep to their traditional roles and enjoy the freedoms they already have for the good of the nation and the emerging notion of the white race.

CHAPTER 3

PARTNERS IN EMPIRE

In this chapter, I shall examine the ways in which performances on both sides of the Atlantic used gender as a vehicle to shape public attitudes toward society and the military. In the colonies, British soldiers frequently staged popular plays that served to foster a connection to the distant homeland. At the same time, women on the London stage would don military attire to mock and shame British men into service. I shall examine a garrison performance of *The Recruiting Officer* at the Annapolis-Royal outpost in Nova Scotia in 1733 to explore the rationale for and ramifications of colonial garrison performances that were acted solely by men. Next, I shall contrast the garrison play with metropolitan performances by Peg Woffington and Kitty Clive that engaged with military themes. I suggest that the relationship between these two groups of performances was chiasmatic: while the garrison staged a sentimental version of the home that they had left, the London theatre allowed comfortable metropolitan audiences to experience an aestheticized and eroticized version of the century's warfare and form opinions on the military that they so despised.

In the previous chapter, I examined how the London stage of the late seventeenth century stressed maintaining a distinction between the genders as a key element of a civilized society. Discourses surrounding race, nation, and gender interacted through the process of hauntography with the celebrity of the nascent English actresses to stress to the audience the importance of preserving gender differences. Here, I examine how gender, the military, and celebrity interacted in the middle of the eighteenth century to again reify the importance of gender difference to

maintaining British identity at home and in the empire abroad. Kathleen Wilson argues that, although British society enjoyed the material fruits of colonialism, they were concerned that exposure to the New World could have deleterious effects on their traditional social structures. In particular, they were worried about the decay of gender roles as they interacted with foreign civilizations.¹⁷⁰ Again, Elizabeth Maddock Dillon's theoretical construction of intimate distance is useful to my argument: British colonial society articulated its superiority to colonized peoples through performance of its key values.¹⁷¹ The hierarchical separation of the genders remained a major constitutive element of British identity. In this chapter, I examine how the British military became a metaphor to show the centrality of that ideological formation to the nation's identity.

The eighteenth century was, for England and the United Kingdom, a period of almost constant war. Beginning the century with the War of Spanish Succession and concluding with the Napoleonic Wars, large numbers of British men were deployed on the continent and throughout the empire engaged in a protracted struggle for global military supremacy.¹⁷² The eighteenth-century soldier had, even in the best of circumstances, an unenviable job and received little thanks for his efforts. English/British society of the late seventeenth and eighteenth century was remarkable for its anti-militarism. Although citizens accepted the need to fight wars in the changing global/colonial landscape, popular opinion remained galvanized against maintaining a standing army and particularly against the army exerting any sort of political influence.¹⁷³ After each of their major wars in the seventeenth century, the English disbanded the army at the conclusion of hostilities. Even as late as 1697, the English mustered out the army at the conclusion of the Nine Years' War to prevent the foreign-born William III from engaging in further foreign military adventures or oppressing his subjects.¹⁷⁴ By the time the War of Spanish Succession concluded in 1714, however, the public accepted that a standing Royal Army was to

be a permanent feature of their world going forward.¹⁷⁵ In light of rapidly developing military technology, future wars would increasingly require a dedicated, professionalized soldiery to fight. Though the British resigned themselves to the necessity of a professional army, they remained deeply ambivalent about its role in society.

Negative attitudes toward the army were not without base. Although the British, isolated by geography from the major fighting of the eighteenth century, had far less contact with soldiers than their European counterparts, what interactions they had tended to be negative.¹⁷⁶ The citizenry had to lodge, feed, and pay soldiers when they were quartering in any given area. Private quartering of soldiers was a public nuisance, but the bulk of British subjects were politically opposed to building forts and barracks. By putting large numbers of soldiers together amongst themselves without civilian oversight, the populace feared that they would foment ideas of rebellion and military governance. Private quartering thus remained standard practice as the lesser of two evils, in spite both of its unpopularity and the fact that it was retrograde tactically.¹⁷⁷ The British seemed content to live alongside soldiers while complaining about having to do so and about the low moral fiber of the army that required such a sacrifice.

The rough and unrespectable character of the average British soldier was amplified by popular culture but not totally invented out of thin air. While some of the Royal Army's membership came from volunteers, the low status and punishing nature of the work made the proposition unattractive. With each major war of the period, the government thus had to conscript men into service to bolster the ranks.¹⁷⁸ The law said that any able-bodied men who had no means of supporting themselves were liable to impressment. As a result, "only men with neither pride nor cause for it would join the army willingly; debtors could be drafted as punishment, convicts were offered pardons for enlisting, and unemployed vagrants could be

ordered into the army.”¹⁷⁹ The army was hardly attracting the best and brightest members of society to its ranks, and most of the troops came from somewhere on the fringes of society. The popular perception of the soldier as a criminal rogue was supported and enhanced by the character of its constituents.

Although recruitment had the benefit of sweeping the dregs of society out of towns and into the army, the practice of recruiting formed another major unpleasant point of contact between civilians and the military. Recruiting officers were paid by the head for their services, incentivizing them to maximize the number of bodies they could deliver with little regard for either the letter or spirit of the law that allowed them to do their job, such that “recruiting practices were...deceitful and brutal, such as false promises and blackmail.”¹⁸⁰ The law also left tremendous leeway for unscrupulous enforcement, such that “the poor, the friendless, and the ‘undesirable’ (however defined) were all drawn into the commissioners’ net.”¹⁸¹ The volunteers that occupied the ranks were mostly tradesmen displaced by nascent industrialization and often wooed by less-than-honest means.¹⁸² Recruitment, then, was a double-edged sword that simultaneously filled the army with unrespectable indigents and further incurred the enmity of civilians.

Once in the service of the army, whether by deception, ill-luck, or lack of options, life for the soldier got even worse. Military discipline was harshly physical, and training was constant, boring, and repetitive.¹⁸³ Both the brutality and the incessant drilling, however, were crucial for the army’s mission of forming a mass of undisciplined and often unwilling recruits into a cohesive fighting unit. The invention of the gun represented a fundamental shift in the nature of warfare: while the age of melee warfare allowed the strongest soldier to carry the day,¹⁸⁴ gun technology required warriors to develop professionalized skills.¹⁸⁵ By the eighteenth century,

guns had developed to be both extremely demanding and highly effective killing machines. Martin Van Creveld points out that “considerations pertaining to both safety and effectiveness demanded that weapons be used in a precisely coordinated fashion.”¹⁸⁶ Eighteenth-century combat teams required extensive practice to maintain formations, avoid friendly fire, and stagger shooting with reloading across the battery so that they maintained a consistent rate of fire.

Though gun technology had reached new heights, it was still far from simple. An eighteenth-century flintlock musket required up to thirty different motions to load and fire.¹⁸⁷ At the same time as a soldier undertook the mechanical actions of firing and reloading, he was also facing enemy fire. An effective volley in the period would kill or injure between ten and fifteen percent of the opposing forces.¹⁸⁸ A soldier thus had to remember and execute a series of complicated actions surrounded by dead and dying compatriots and under the knowledge that he himself might be struck at any moment. The only way to prepare a person to function effectively in these conditions was endlessly repetitive training that violently punished failure or deviance. The goal was both to produce the physical ability to perform the routines and also to cultivate “an unthinking soldiery...drilled and browbeaten to the point where he was little more than a machine.”¹⁸⁹ Training eschewed the creation of brotherly bonds between soldiers or an *esprit de corps* in favor of forging a mechanized, monolithic fighting force. Military theory of the period saw less value in giving the troops an ideological goal to fight for than in programming them as pliant, mechanical subjects before placing them in the field. As Van Creveld argues, “it is hardly surprising that the best armies of the period were those which were most successful in turning their men into soulless robots goose-stepping forward at exactly 90 paces the minute.”¹⁹⁰ Once in the army, the British soldier was merely a cog in the imperial war machine.

The structure of the military apparatus also offered little succor. Officers had scant regard for the well-being of individual soldiers or their safety. Again, the nature of the battlefield discouraged regard for humanity. Generals commanded their troops from high ground, sending orders to the men via liaison officers. Because maintaining cohesive formations was essential to the commander's ability to see and direct his troops, parade exercises were rigorously employed as a part of training to ensure soldiers were prepared to maneuver properly. As with the individual exercises, mistakes were met with harsh physical abuse. In forging individual soldiers into a unit and then ordering them about from a safe remove, commanders often came to think of the men in their charge as pawns in a grandiose game of chess.¹⁹¹ While individual commanders may have taken more interest in their men, overall there was little to be gained by thinking of the soldiers in one's command as human beings. Further, on the field level, higher-ranking troops proved more stick than carrot in motivating the rank-and-file: sergeants-major stood behind the infantry with pikes in place to prevent the men from bolting after the first volley was fired in anger.¹⁹² It is no wonder, then, as John Childs notes, "there was a basic lack of respect on the part of the British soldier for his officer."¹⁹³

The terrible lot of the soldier made desertion extremely common. The army, however, had invested time and training into its recruits and could ill afford to have resources wasted in men running away. While basic training took about a year to prepare a recruit to effectively enter combat, it took nearly six years to truly master the soldierly arts.¹⁹⁴ As with training, the army used brutal punishment to curb desertion. Flogging was the most common form of corporal punishment and was generally carried out publicly to serve as an example for others contemplating trying to flee the service.¹⁹⁵ Military law distinguished itself from its civil counterpart in both its fierceness and its aims: "The object of military law was not—and is not—

to make men virtuous by punishing moral default, but to produce instant and complete obedience.”¹⁹⁶ All aspects of army culture worked to fashion a soldier who was compliant to his superiors in the service of functioning as an effective war fighter.

After enduring brutal training techniques in the face of radically changing military technology and tactics, the British soldier was charged with the protection and maintenance of a global empire. If the soldier were posted domestically, he could expect to be reviled by his countrymen as a threat to their liberty.¹⁹⁷ For one, maintaining a standing army led to higher tax rates. Additionally, the peacetime practice of using soldiers as a police force did little to improve social attitudes toward the Redcoat.¹⁹⁸ At home, then, the army was regarded as an expensive, authoritarian menace to beloved British liberty. Britons regarded themselves as the freest people of Europe, and the army was an unnatural infringement on their innate rights. The succession of the Hanoverian dynasty to the British throne, and their continental attitude toward keeping a robust army as a matter of policy, did little to rehabilitate the image of the army.¹⁹⁹

As an alternative to domestic duty, however, deployment abroad was no more pleasant. Being sent to the continent meant facing intense combat against the highly professionalized French army and German mercenaries. Even worse was a garrison assignment to one of the empire’s new overseas possessions. Officers and enlisted men alike faced dire prospects when being sent to the colonies: “Enduring virtual banishment on foreign service for years on end, they could look forward to a military career which in many cases amounted to a life sentence.”²⁰⁰ These garrisons were frequently neglected, receiving little in the way of supplies. Medical care was scarce, so death from disease was common. No special clothing was issued either, meaning that soldiers in sweltering Jamaica and freezing Canada had the same uniform to see them through.²⁰¹ Military service in the colonies was thus in many ways indistinguishable from a

prison sentence. In fact, it may well have been worse: the average soldier's life vacillated between brutal work, extreme boredom, and outright violence. Soldiers were charged with building and maintaining fortifications as well as their garrison responsibilities. At the same time, garrisons were surrounded by hostile forces. Indigenous peoples and colonial powers existed alongside one another in a tenuous balance that threatened to spill over into actual violence at any time. While soldiers on colonial garrison duty were somewhat insulated from the public's ire, they were also isolated from their home and family by distances that were virtually insurmountable. Though nothing about the martial profession was particularly desirable, garrison duty was the least attractive option of all.

Public opprobrium, dehumanizing violence from peers and enemies, vicious labor and combat, isolation, death, disease: all of these pervaded army life in the eighteenth century. Despite the danger of the work, soldiers had the second-lowest average pay of any trade: wages were *8d.* per day, minus a *2d.* charge for room, board, and other services.²⁰² As a result, marriage was difficult: a soldier was neither respectable nor comfortable enough economically to attract much romantic attention. From the late seventeenth century on, moreover, soldiers had to obtain their captain's permission to marry, ostensibly to ensure that the woman was of high moral fiber. In practice, this rule was intended largely to avoid having soldiers get swindled into marrying prostitutes or other camp followers, but it had the effect—when coupled with the other mitigating factors—of ensuring that the army was filled largely with bachelors. During the American Revolution, five out of every six Redcoats were unmarried.²⁰³

Life in military camps and garrisons was not the mono-gendered atmosphere that one might imagine, however. Alongside the men of the Royal Army and Navy in almost every theatre of deployment were large numbers of women as well. These women included officers'

wives and families, nurses, and so-called “camp followers” who performed services ranging from laundry to prostitution. Although the British military was idealized as a manly space in which proper masculine behavior was molded and disseminated, the army could not have operated without the large numbers of women involved. In fact, the mixed-gender world of military deployments probably contributed in great part to its less-than-shining public image.

The social world of the camp/garrison was generally grim. Sexual diseases were rampant amongst soldiers, and darker forms of sexuality pervaded the culture. Wife-swapping was common, as was child rape. Sylvia R. Frey speculates that children were raped with far more frequency than appears in the historical record, in fact, suggesting that the shame associated with the crime meant it only came to light in instances where the victim caught a venereal disease from her assailant.²⁰⁴

Women also sometimes found themselves on the front lines of war. Most often, due to the ubiquity of siege warfare, when women were in combat roles, it was against their will. They were forced to take on the defense of their homes to safeguard their lives, property, and bodily autonomy.²⁰⁵ Outside of siege scenarios, there weren’t large numbers of women engaged in battle. Some exceptional cases are documented, though women who went into battle had to disguise themselves to do so.²⁰⁶ Those who were compelled to enter the military generally did so out of dire economic or family situations that left them little other choice for survival. Typically, however, popular representations of warrior women sentimentalize their motivations for entering the military with a romantic plot, as the woman is in pursuit of a lost husband or lover.²⁰⁷

To begin, I explore a production of George Farquhar’s *The Recruiting Officer* staged by soldiers in the Canadian garrison of Annapolis-Royal in 1733. Although by this time women had been on British public stages for the better part of a century, garrison performances were

typically all-male affairs. I examine the ideological ramifications of performing a play with a role written as a breeches part for a woman but having a young man onstage instead. The conventionalized nature of the stage romance authorized the performance of a possibly dangerous sentiment, while also ultimately upholding the centrality of gender difference to the British worldview. At the same time, the play helped to connect the garrison to the home country from which it was isolated geographically.

Next, I proceed to London performances of plays and epilogues that engaged with military themes. In particular, I look at two performances from 1746 by the mid-century star Peg Woffington: her role as Belvedera in Charles Shadwell's *The Humours of the Army* and a popular epilogue entitled "The Female Volunteer." I place these alongside an epilogue given in the same year by her rival, Kitty Clive, called "An Epilogue Recommending the Cause of Liberty to the Beauties of Great Britain." Woffington and Clive were bitter enemies and had highly contrasting personal reputations as well: Woffington was regarded as free-spirited and libidinous, whereas Clive was irascible but chaste. Though the pieces have many superficial differences in style, they ultimately create the same meaning, namely, that women should be excluded from military service for the preservation of British identity. The eighteenth century was a period in which notions of gender, both scientifically and socially, were in flux. Cross-dressed performance was a primary method for negotiating those changing roles.²⁰⁸ Here, I look at how cross-dressed performance with a specifically military overtone was essential in that discourse.

Soldiers Performing Plays

The British Military: A Culture of Performance

Though brutal, British military culture of the eighteenth century was highly performative. Training and discipline were enacted with extreme visibility in order to produce an effective warrior out of the various undesirables unlucky enough to land themselves in the service. On campaign, the army was charged with performing the martial activities that advanced Britain's interests as an emerging colonial and global power. What is surprising, however, are the ways in which military culture was suffused with performance in the traditional theatrical sense. Throughout the eighteenth century, both the army and the navy regularly staged amateur military theatricals for a variety of reasons. In the literal and figurative senses, the military was a culture of performance, which made it a useful vehicle for disseminating ideological messages regarding gender.

War-making in the eighteenth century followed a social calendar, and it took a convenient hiatus during the winter months when the weather was no longer conducive to fighting. At home, the break in fighting coincided with the peak of the theatrical season.²⁰⁹ In the colonies, however, there was seldom a theatre district operating for the delectation of the fighting men. As a result, they had to stage their own plays. For instance, during the American Revolution, officers operated their own theatre companies: New York had a Theatre Royal, occupied Philadelphia had the Southwark Theatre, the "Gentlemen of the Garrison" ran a theatre in Savannah, Georgia, and St. Augustine, Florida, also had a company.²¹⁰ Theatre was so central to military life that a group of officers being held prisoner in Staunton, Virginia, built a so-called "comedy house" in the prison camp where they staged plays to pass the time.²¹¹ Theatrical culture and play-going were so ingrained in the British Army that, during the American

Revolution, the colonists planned to blow up the Southwark Theatre in Philadelphia because most of the members of the command were expected to attend. The plot was foiled, however, and the performance for that evening canceled.²¹² We can see from this how large a role the theatre played in the life of a British officer.

Roles in garrison performances were largely restricted to officers, although enlisted men could play smaller parts.²¹³ Why would a soldier undertake the burden of being in a play, especially given the enmity between the officers and the enlisted class? Moreover, why would the army allow its members to spend so much time on frivolity? For the individuals, performing in plays proved the solution to a thorny problem that faced the officer classes. Drawn mostly from the younger sons of aristocratic households or from upwardly mobile gentry, army officers felt an affinity with the cultural elite of Great Britain. At the same time, however, these men were alienated from mainstream society by their association with the lowly army. By staging plays, officers were able to promote themselves as cultured, dignified, and sophisticated members of the polite classes. Although playacting was hardly a respectable career at home, I contend that a large part of its appeal lay in the fact that it offered the British officer on deployment a socially acceptable way to perform his social superiority to his fellow soldiers. Even if playing a lower-class character, the officer burnished his class position by being onstage.

Theatre was an ideal way to promote class identity, both from the perspective of the individuals involved and taking a broader view. Further, allowing soldiers to stage shows was safer than alternative ways in which they might display their class position. For instance, another way in which officers signaled their social status was through their dress: “Infatuated with French military fashion, officers paraded themselves in uniforms bedecked with Frenchified

frills.”²¹⁴ British identity in the long eighteenth century, though, was defined largely in opposition to Frenchness. As Linda Colley illustrates:

the British conceived of themselves as an essentially “masculine” culture—bluff, forthright, rational, down-to-earth to the extent of being philistine—caught up in an eternal rivalry with an essentially “effeminate” France—subtle, intellectually devious, preoccupied with high fashion, fine cuisine and etiquette.²¹⁵

Given both the suspicion with which the British regarded the French and the fact that the army spent most of the eighteenth century fighting with France across the globe, French fashion infiltrating the ranks of the officer class was cause for concern to mainstream society. Fear of an effeminized army pervaded the British populace throughout the eighteenth century.²¹⁶ Theatrical performance was a safer way for British officers to demonstrate their gentility and superiority to the rank-and-file soldier. The selection of plays that promoted specifically British markers of nation, class, and gender authorized a performance that also held political significance for the army.

All this explains the affinity for staging plays from the perspective of a British officer, but there were also larger cultural reasons that playacting was encouraged in the military. From a purely practical point of view, staging a play gave soldiers a common task to pursue while they might otherwise be idle. In building a theatrical space, rehearsing, and presenting a play, both officers and their subordinates could be engaged in an exercise that boosted morale.²¹⁷ While performance was a way for officers to distinguish themselves, that does not mean that the enlisted soldiers were necessarily disdainful of it. They could, as I noted, participate by playing smaller roles. Furthermore, given the endless drudgery and harshness of life in the army, staging and seeing a play was likely a welcome respite from the grimness of life. Additionally, as Gillian

Russell points out, “the construction of ‘manliness’ also entailed the capacity to bond successfully in an institutional context—hence the fact that play-acting was an intrinsic part of the curriculum of public schools and military academies.”²¹⁸ The overarching structure of the military took little interest in fostering bonds between the individuals in its ranks. Day to day, however, these men had to live and work together. While theatre offered a way for upper-class officers to display their gentility, it was also a common practice in British culture for men across social strata to bond by staging plays together. Garrison performance thus simultaneously acted to articulate class distinctions and to solidify the soldiery into a cohesive unit. Mainstream Britons wanted the army kept at a distance from polite society. Russell describes military theatricals as establishing a martial identity that is “within but distinct” from society writ large, displaying both connections to and separation from elite culture.²¹⁹ Within the world of the army, these performances achieved the same goal, characterizing the officer classes as superior to but still enmeshed within the military.

Garrison performances in the colonies took on a different valence, though one with far greater importance for Britain’s global ambitions. The army, of course, had the primary task of fighting Britain’s enemies in Europe, Asia, and the Americas. Increasingly over the course of the eighteenth century, however, the British came to regard the military as a cultural institution whose presence abroad could be used to promote British values in her colonial holdings. Indeed, after putting down the Jacobite rebellion of 1745,²²⁰ the Duke of Cumberland officially recognized the cultural mission of the army and accordingly sought to expand the remit of the military.²²¹ In particular, theatre was the primary form of culture that the British exported to their colonies to promulgate their ideology in the New World. Military performance, often in areas with staunch anti-theatrical traditions in place, paved the way for civilian, professional

companies to follow their example. Performance, then, became an explicitly political act that disseminated pro-British ideological material.²²² In colonial areas whose boundaries were continually shifting, as in Canada, garrison theatre asserted British values and identity. Moreover, the very act of performing a play, setting aside the thematic resonances of the play's story, was an assertion of British identity and political ideology. In addition to the purported masculinity of eighteenth-century British culture, liberty was one of the treasured hallmarks of British supremacy. The fictional content of the drama served to disseminate Britishness as a concept, underscoring the twin pillars of masculinity and liberty. At the same time, however, merely by performing a play—a socially accepted avenue for male bonding in defiance of local opposition to theatre—the army achieved cultural goals beyond its role as a fighting force.

The political valence of garrison performance held for British colonists in the Americas as well. British settlers in the Americas were disposed to an anti-theatrical prejudice, drawn as they often were from the most puritanical segments of the Old World. Military theatre, then, was an important foothold for commercial theatrical enterprises in the New World. As a garrison's theatrical endeavors did not have to generate revenue to pay actors and re-invest in the company, soldiers could perform plays with relative impunity. Ultimately, we can see the connection between theatre and the idea of Britishness in the eventual ban imposed on performance by the American colonists in the run-up to the American Revolution. As Peter A. Davis demonstrates, theatre was “a political and social symbol of English oppression.”²²³ Playacting had become so synonymous with British domination of the colonies that they embargoed it, just as they might any other consumer good. The inroads established by the military's theatrical endeavors resulted in a culture that made performance an explicitly political act that conveyed and solidified ideas about national identity and gender.

In this context, then, we can examine a performance of George Farquhar's *The Recruiting Officer* in the fledgling British colony of Annapolis-Royal in Nova Scotia. Early eighteenth-century Nova Scotia was a microcosm of the larger colonial world, with British and French settlers competing for supremacy alongside indigenous people and an emerging Acadian—mixed French and indigenous—population. The town was settled in the early seventeenth century as Port-Royal by the French. A group of British grenadiers captured the city and re-christened it Annapolis-Royal in honor of the current English queen. Annapolis-Royal was garrisoned with 400 British troops in 1711, but throughout the 1720s it underwent regular raids from the natives in the area. Although the British had won the town—and most of Nova Scotia—from the French during the War of Spanish Succession, French Catholic priests remained in the area, working to keep the indigenes from becoming overly Anglicized.²²⁴ By disseminating Francophone culture and Catholicism, the clergy sought to undermine British efforts in the region. The cultural mission of the Annapolis-Royal garrison, then, was of nearly equal importance to its military operations in Canada. Edward Cornwallis, a general who also served as governor of Nova Scotia, “believed that soldiers could take a leading role in reforming society and that one aim of imperial policy should be the promotion of cosmopolitan, industrious, and Protestant populations.”²²⁵

The Recruiting Officer made perfect sense for the environment in which the garrison found itself, as it is rare among comedies of the period in that it takes as its setting not London, but rather the provincial town of Shrewsbury. Captain Plume, the rakish officer of the title, has come to town to drum up recruits for the ongoing war effort. Throughout the play, his subordinate, Sergeant Kite, engages in a range of comically unscrupulous practices to press men into military service. Alongside the comic scenes of recruitment, Plume has a romantic plot with the ingenue Silvia. Her brother Owen died while serving in the military, leaving her as the sole

heir to her family's fortune. Her father, Justice Balance, though he had previously approved of Plume as a suitor, becomes concerned about wasting his fortune on a soldier. To prevent her marriage to an unsuitable man, Balance makes Silvia promise that she won't "dispense" of herself without his consent. To circumvent her promise, Silvia disguises herself as a man named Jack Wilful. Plume and the foppish Captain Brazen both try to recruit Silvia-as-Wilful, though she remains evasive. After sharing the bed of a local woman named Rose, Silvia-as-Wilful is accused of rape and tried in disguise by her father, who sentences her to Plume's command. Silvia reveals her identity, and Balance realizes he has unwittingly given his blessing to the marriage. Plume retires from the army to marry Silvia and transfers all his recruits to the Captain Brazen. Not only does the play's plot celebrate life outside London, but it also employs some gender-bending comic hijinks to reinforce the importance of preserving gender difference in the world at large.

According to the *Boston Gazette*, June 4-11, 1733 [sic throughout]:

Annapolis Royal, Jan. 22. 1732/3. Saturday last being the Anniversary of his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales's Birth Day, the same was observed here with great Solemnity. In the afternoon the young Gentlemen of the Garrison, at the desire of the Honourable Lieut. Governour *Armstrong*, Commander in Chief of the Province, Entertain'd the Ladys and Gentlemen of the Place by acting the Comedy called *The Recruiting Officer*: Their actions and behaviour upon the Stage far exceeded what every body expected by their performance, and gave universal Satisfaction to all Spectators. The Night was usher'd in with Illuminations and Bonfires, round which the Soldiers made loud Acclamations of Joy. The Governour according to his Custom on such Occasions, having ordered

Liquor in abundance to be distributed amongst them. After the Play was over his Honour Entertain'd the Company with a Magnificent Ball, in his own Hall, and the Gentlemen concluded the Night with Drinking their Majesties, his Royal Highness's, and the Royal Family with many other Loyal Healths.²²⁶

In London, *The Recruiting Officer* was among the most successful and long-running plays of the eighteenth century: it played 447 times between its debut in 1706 and 1776.²²⁷ Although the play was overwhelmingly popular with audiences, it drew the ire of the anti-theatrical polemicist Arthur Bedford, who denounced it for defaming the army:

there was lately published a *Comedy* call'd *The Recruiting Officer*, to render this Employment as odious as possible...one *Captain* is represented as a notorious Lyar, another as a Drunkard, one intreagues with Women, another is scandalously guilty of *debauching them*...In this *Play* the *Officers* are represented as quarrelsome, but Cowards.²²⁸

Bedford would doubtless have found *The Recruiting Officer* an ill-fitting occupation for the soldiers of the garrison, and also a poor tribute to Frederick, Prince of Wales, whom he served at the end of his life.²²⁹ Still, Bedford's disdain for the play specifically because he feels it depicts the army in an unflattering light flies in the face of the historical record. The play was a favorite of the officer class in London and was frequently performed by the patent theatres at their request.²³⁰ Clearly, something in the play resonated with the military men, as they enjoyed Farquhar's play both at home and abroad. Furthermore, the play was frequently produced during times of national crisis—as during the Jacobite Uprising of 1745—to boost patriotic feelings and combat cultural anxiety over the army's role in society.²³¹ Bedford's condemnation of the play,

then, as promoting harmful ideas about the army could hardly have been a less accurate view of how audiences would ultimately engage with the piece.

Some of this appeal derives from the fact that Farquhar knew of what he wrote. An Irish Protestant, Farquhar may have fought at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690, contributing to the final defeat of the Catholic James II. Definitively, however, we know his family home was burnt when he was young by a group of Catholic Jacobites in retaliation for his family's Protestant, pro-England beliefs. This early trauma explains the pro-military, anti-Catholic positions that he continually espoused throughout his literary career.²³² Farquhar's writing is not merely jingoistic pro-military propaganda, however; he spent time in the employ of the government as a recruiting officer himself and based the play on his experiences from that time. Having trained initially as an actor, Farquhar's prospects as a performer were limited by both a poor speaking voice and a remarkable case of stage fright. The exclamation point on the end of his acting career was an incident wherein, during a production of Dryden's *The Indian Emperor*, he forgot to use a blunted sword and accidentally ran a fellow actor through. Though the actor recovered, Farquhar couldn't bring himself to return to acting and turned to playwriting instead. He achieved his first major success in 1699 with *The Constant Couple*, which was a smash hit. Around this same time, he allegedly discovered the actress Anne Oldfield when he heard her reading a play while working in her aunt's tavern and secured her a tryout. Although he was thoroughly enmeshed in the London theatrical scene, he failed to achieve financial success. His money problems were exacerbated by his personal life. Farquhar met a widow who told him that she had a large fortune from her deceased husband. As it turned out, she had no money but did have two children in need of support. After *The Constant Couple*, however, Farquhar's next two plays had failed to find much success. In dire need of money, he joined the army and secured a position as a

lieutenant of grenadiers. He was eventually sent to the Midlands to work as a recruiter.²³³ His time in the army provided both a much-needed steady income and also the material that would eventually become his masterwork. Both the circumstances of his life, then, and the affinity of the military for the play suggest that it served as a faithful window into life in the British Army.

Military personnel could realistically identify with the play—Eric Rothstein says its “basic plot is almost a comic documentary.”²³⁴ Such familiar subject matter made the play an obvious choice for the Annapolis-Royal garrison, as does the play’s attitude toward the provinces. For the most part, British comedy of the Restoration and early eighteenth century is overwhelming metropolitan in its concerns. The countryside and its inhabitants are generally depicted as backwards, uninteresting, and lacking in any type of admirable sophistication. The Shrewsbury of *The Recruiting Officer*, by contrast, is a lively and respectable town of its own, “an analogue to, rather than an intruder within, the world of London.”²³⁵ Producing the play in a remote, colonial context likely allowed the participants and the audience to see themselves in similar terms. Annapolis-Royal was, for all intents and purposes, a world away from eighteenth-century London. By producing a play that demonstrated the value of the world outside the metropole, the officers of the garrison doubly performed their cultural validity: the fictional content of Farquhar’s play flattered their town, while the act of putting on the play showed that the colony’s cultural cachet was rising. At the same time, the performance emphasizes the connection between the colony and the metropole. *The Recruiting Officer* may take a provincial setting, but its status as a perennial favorite of London audiences made it a symbol of high culture. By offering the same play in Annapolis-Royal that captivated the attention of viewers in the capital, the soldiers of the garrison emphasized that their tastes were aligned with the elite

audiences of London. Even though the play is about Shrewsbury, its performance articulates the aspirational sophistication of the Canadian outpost.

Furthermore, putting on a play and a ball in honor of the Prince of Wales gave the proceedings an explicitly patriotic, pro-British agenda. As the newspaper report described, the evening ended with the group drinking toasts to the royal family, making explicit the political significance of the event. The patriotic ideological mission of the celebration is further amplified by the play's content. *The Recruiting Officer* served to shore up morale for the mission of the colonists and soldiers living on the frontier. Farquhar drew on his experiences as a grenadier for the play, but he also wrote it in the shadow of the fantastic successes the English found in the early part of the War of Spanish Succession. The epilogue, speaking of the war song of the grenadiers, notes that it "was performed with wonderful success at the great operas of Vigo, Schellenberg, and Blenheim. It came off with the applause of all Europe, excepting France; the French found it a little too rough for their *delicatesse*."²³⁶ The sites of performance listed all refer to recent English victories over the French, made clear by the subtle dig at the fragility of the French in response to the performances. In particular, Blenheim was a major triumph wherein John Churchill, the Duke of Marlborough, routed a numerically superior French army decisively, turning the tide of the war strongly against the French. Early in the play, Plume alludes to having been at Blenheim, further burnishing the army's reputation by reminding the audience of their success.²³⁷ Although Blenheim was nearly three decades in the past by the time of the 1733 production (and the victory had ultimately come to mean little in light of the fact that the War of Spanish Succession ended, more or less, in a stalemate), for a group of soldiers living in a perpetual combat zone, performing a play that depicted the army's glory was a logical choice. Furthermore, Denys Van Renen reads the play as a piece of entertaining propaganda that

“depicts the systematic integration of the conditions of war into every facet of rural life.”²³⁸

Living in a hostile, colonial world, constantly under threat of sudden violence from both indigenous peoples and the other colonial powers, even the civilians living in Annapolis-Royal were liable to be pressed into fighting in defense of their homes with little notice. Their reception context suggests that they must have been aware that warfare was already deeply ingrained in their lives, which further explains the approbation they expressed for the performance. Van Renen goes on to argue that Farquhar’s play valorizes the notion of constant warfare and suggests that English society cannot turn back the clock to a time in which the English could embrace their geographic isolation to avoid conflict. The realities of colonization and technology entailed that England would be forced to fight more and more for her supremacy among the colonial powers. For Van Renen, the play “reduce[s] the world to one filled with warfare [as] an inescapable condition of being.”²³⁹ While a London audience might have found their attitude toward warfare re-calibrated by this ideological theme, the Annapolis-Royal audience already lived in the world that the play suggested. Being in a rural, isolated environment under the constant threat of violence, they already had first-hand experience with the play’s subject matter. Marking the play as a celebration of the family in whose service they ostensibly endured such a life offered a moving ideological justification for undertaking such risks.

All this is not to suggest that *The Recruiting Officer* provides an uncritical vision of life in the military. In fact, its popularity in the colonies—where it was produced with great frequency as well—was likely due in large part to the warts-and-all version of the government that Farquhar presents.²⁴⁰ A year before the Annapolis-Royal garrison production, *The Recruiting Officer* debuted in New York, quite possibly the first professional theatrical production in the American colonies.²⁴¹ Farquhar flatters the army and speaks to the necessity of

the military, but he does not overly glamorize the actual processes of war.²⁴² Take, for example, Sergeant Kite's description of how well-suited the butcher he aims to recruit is to the job of a surgeon:

the third campaign that you make in Flanders, the leg of a great officer will be shattered by a great shot. You will be there accidentally and with your cleaver chop off the limb at a blow. In short, the operation will be performed with so much dexterity that with the general applause you will be made Surgeon General of the whole army. (IV.ii.155-160)

In one fell swoop, Farquhar has his ethically questionable clown Kite describe in graphic detail both the grievous nature of combat wounds and the opportunistic benefit that attends men willing to embrace the brutal nature of war. Rothstein notes that Farquhar

concealed neither the chicanery of recruitment nor the dangers of war. He evidently felt that he had made the army's position strong enough to withstand such realistic touches...The rhetoric and tone of good feelings, with which *The Recruiting Officer* keeps brimming over, soften the effect of Farquhar's candor in the particular scenes of recruiting and impressment.²⁴³

For a London audience, the remoteness of battle, even with Farquhar's unflattering descriptions, likely made the humor a useful antidote to the violence. In Annapolis-Royal, however, such violence was much closer to home for both the performers and the audience. Farquhar's frankness, then, given the positive response that the paper reported, likely appealed to the reality of the colonists' situation. For a garrison on the frontier, unlike an elite London audience, the reality of war was ever present. Gardner reads the play as an attempt to show war realistically while simultaneously depicting the military in a positive light.²⁴⁴ The Annapolis-Royal audience

needed no such persuasion, however, as they were already immersed in the world that Farquhar depicted.

Garrison Performance and Hauntographical Resonances

The Gentlemen of the Garrison who performed *The Recruiting Officer* in celebration of the prince's birthday were not celebrities in the traditional sense. Their names have been lost to history, unlikely ever to be recovered. The audience, however, was intimately familiar with the men onstage. Annapolis-Royal in the early eighteenth century was "a society where everybody knew everybody else."²⁴⁵ Though they weren't stars, the intimacy of the colony allowed the audience a high level of familiarity with the performers. As such, I contend that the audience's relationship to the performers was similar in character to the relationship a spectator in a London patent theatre would have viewing a celebrity onstage, as the performance would be colored by extra-theatrical information.²⁴⁶ Michael L. Quinn says that a celebrity exhibits "an overdetermined quality that exceeds the needs of the fiction, and keeps [the performer] from disappearing entirely into the acting figure or the drama."²⁴⁷ The intimacy of the Annapolis-Royal garrison ensured a similar reception context for this performance of *The Recruiting Officer*.

The Annapolis-Royal spectators could have engaged with the play in multiple ways. On the fictional level, they might enjoy the fanciful intrigues of the romance plots and the depiction of life in the provinces. Beyond that, they probably enjoyed seeing men they knew from daily life playing their roles. After all, as the *Boston Gazette* said, "Their actions and behaviour upon the Stage far exceeded what every body [sic] expected by their performance, and gave universal Satisfaction to all Spectators." Crucially, though, the author's mention of audience expectation implies that they were aware of the material bodies performing the roles: they had in mind what

a performance by a troupe of officers would be like. The audience must have been always partially cognizant of the offstage reality of the performers. In discussing medieval theatre, Sarah Beckwith has noted that a key difference between a priest's celebration of the mass and religious drama was that the priest did not cease holding his office at the conclusion of the performance as did an actor.²⁴⁸ That same logic extends to garrison performance, as the soldiers' offstage identity must have impinged on the audience's perception of them. Specifically, the audience was aware that they were all men and that they were official representatives of the government. Because the play was performed by government agents, it could also be read by a viewer as officially advocating the ideas it put forth. The gender play on stage served to enforce the importance of maintaining a clear delineation between male and female in the New World. Just as emergent ideas surrounding race underscored the necessary separation of genders, so too the military became a site for building that same construction.

As a part of Annapolis-Royal's official celebrations in honor of Prince Frederick, the play served an obvious political purpose. Putting on a play popular in the mother country advertised the cultural validity of the settlement, striving to bolster the connection between the colonial power and its holdings. Annapolis-Royal might as well have been another planet as far as London was concerned. As the Duke of Newcastle allegedly said when asked about plans for defending the colony, "Annapolis, Annapolis. Oh! yes Annapolis should be defended...where is Annapolis?"²⁴⁹ By raising the cultural profile of Annapolis-Royal, the producers of the play might be able to attract the attention of the Duke of Newcastle and his peers. More importantly, though, the play affirmed for its immediate audience a commitment to preserving traditional British values in the colonial setting. Despite the carnivalesque gender bending that happens in the play, all of the female characters are re-integrated into patriarchal control by the conclusion

of the plot. *The Recruiting Officer*'s ideological message, instantiated in this performance by governmental representatives, acted as a bulwark against the decay of categories that the British feared would occur outside the home islands by playing with but ultimately reifying gender norms.

Silvia spends the majority of *The Recruiting Officer* enacting an elaborate plan to circumvent her father's wishes. Silvia's promise not to marry without Balance's permission is the animating force for her cross-dressed adventures later in the play as she must contrive a way to gain her father's approval for the match with Plume. Her disguise as Wilful is defiant of a patriarchal authority but not of that authority writ large, as she does not use her power to subvert the larger social world.

Early in the play, Plume makes an important observation about Silvia that distinguishes her from the play's other female characters. His admiration for her stems from her qualities that are in excess of her femininity:

I love Silvia, I admire her frank, generous disposition. *There's something in that girl more than woman.* Her sex is but a foil to her. The ingratitude, dissimulation, envy, pride, avarice, and vanity of her sister females do but set off their contraries in her. (I.i.247-251) [Emphasis added]

On the fictional level, this statement is a straightforward remark that sets out to draw a separation between Silvia and the other women in the play: she is worthy of the hero's affections because she lacks the foibles that pervade other women. Conveniently, Plume's words here also hint at why Silvia's masquerade will be successful, as she possesses enough masculine virtue to "pass" as a man. Metatheatrically, though, the line "something in that girl more than woman" called to mind for the Annapolis-Royal viewer the materiality of the male body they saw in the role.

Perhaps eliciting laughter from the spectators, and perhaps accompanied by some bit of stage business to heighten the speech's double entendre, Plume's words in this specific context point out the masculinity of the performer. The Annapolis-Royal viewer could read this moment multiply: they could take in the fictional content of the text while also enjoying the dramatic irony generated by the line's suggestion that Silvia was quite literally (by the standards of the day) "more than woman." The text and its instantiation here operate synergistically through the hauntographic process to foreground, from the beginning of the play, the fact that Silvia was played by a young officer of the garrison. All her behavior, then, was available to be read as paradigmatic.

In the same scene, Plume informs the audience that Silvia is a virgin. He complains that during their courtship "she would have the wedding before consummation and I was for consummation before the wedding. We could not agree. She was a pert, obstinate fool and would lose her maidenhead her own way" (I.i.230-233). Silvia's virginity is a conventional quality of an ingenue but has greater ramifications because the character is marked from the play's outset by her adherence to social norms. Even though Plume wanted sex, she denied him until they were wed. By contrast, Plume is himself already a father many times over, because he makes Sergeant Kite adopt his bastard children. Despite his dalliances outside of wedlock, the play's plot sees Plume rewarded with Silvia's hand and her inheritance. Though Silvia's breeched adventures are risqué, they are ultimately not transgressive. She doesn't pretend to be a man so that she can usurp masculine prerogative, but rather so that she may attain a husband. Her *nom-de-homme*, "Wilful," further underscores that the disguise has more to do with her wishes than sexual freedom.

That the breeches don't confer special power on Silvia is comically emphasized in a scene after she and Rose have spent the night together. Silvia, dressed in a wig and her nightcap, says "I have rested but indifferently, and I believe my bedfellow was as little pleased" (V.i. 1-2).

Rose enters, and the two engage in some badinage:

Silvia: Good morrow, my dear, how d'ye this morning?

Rose: Just as I was last night, neither better nor worse for you.

Silvia: What's the matter? Did you not like your bedfellow?

Rose: I don't know whether I had a bedfellow or not.

Silvia: Did I not lie with you?

Rose: No. I wonder you could have the conscience to ruin a poor girl for nothing.

(V.i.4-9)

Rose laments that her reputation will be destroyed though she received no sexual satisfaction from the evening they spent together. Though Silvia tries to allay her fears, moments later the constable bursts into the room with a warrant for the arrest of Wilful and his "whore," which appellation Rose protests: "Whore! Never was poor woman so abused!" (V.i.27). The play's text emphasizes that Silvia's night with Rose was chaste; though she wears the breeches, she does not take advantage of masculine prerogative of penetrative sex.²⁵⁰ The fictional content of the play stresses Silvia's transformation into Wilful is playful rather than transgressive.

The plot resolves with all the lovers destined to marry. Plume, having his fortunes secured, decides to leave the army. His closing speech is a final opportunity for the play to show that Silvia's adventures haven't de-stabilized the order of things:

With some regret I quit the active field,

Where glory full reward for life does yield;

But the recruiting trade with all its train,
 Of lasting plague, fatigue, and endless pain,
 I gladly quit, with my fair spouse to stay,
 And raise recruits the matrimonial way. (V.vi.160-165)

These lines playfully suggest that Plume will continue to do his duty to King and Country by raising a family to staff the army, echoing his observation in Act I that “recruiting officers...leave as many recruits in the country as they carried out” (I.i.220). Light-hearted though the speech is, these last lines drain Silvia’s cross-dressing of any remaining power. The play closes by explicitly delimiting Silvia’s future prospects to her procreative function. Not only that, but her progeny will be destined for the military as well, which is a particularly cruel fate. Although Silvia has voiced the clearest opposition to war throughout the play, Plume’s last speech re-purposes her uterus as a military installation, serving as an incubator/barracks for future recruits.²⁵¹ Though she may have cross-dressed to subvert her father’s will, the play’s conclusion very firmly re-establishes a patriarchal order that is, in many ways, harsher than previously. Plume speaks last, offering Silvia no space to contradict his plans as she had done with Balance. He reduces her to her biological function, basically hailing her as a brood mare. Finally, he invokes state control over her body by promising their children to military service. Though the play blurs gender lines in its course, the plot’s conclusion firmly reinscribes a clear demarcation between the genders and the cultural superiority of men.

But what of the performance, which was suffused with homoerotic energy throughout? After all, both women were played by men, as the performance emphasized. The wooing of Rose could be read as an attempt to demonstrate a performative type of masculinity. The actor playing Silvia-as-Wilful was not enacting the performance to destabilize gender norms but to emphasize

their constructedness and limitations.²⁵² A woman could choose to behave as a man, just as the man onstage behaved as a woman for the sake of the performance. By showing the artificiality of the behaviors, the performance suggested to viewers in the audience that they could choose to retain the same gendered behaviors as their home country, even in the far-off colony. Having the role played by a governmental agent would have allowed the audience to see the play's ideological message as official. Unlike women, eighteenth-century men gained no material benefit from cross-dressing; there were no social prerogatives to be gained by wearing the clothing of the other sex.²⁵³ The officers onstage might have derived some social prestige for their roles, but at the same time they also transmitted an ideological message about the importance of maintaining British gender norms in the colony. Michael Dobson has noted that "one way in which young officers could at once display their courage, their education, and their *esprit de corps*, it transpires, was by performing female roles."²⁵⁴ Though drag performance conveyed no social benefits for men, playing these roles was likely valorized for young officers because of the ideological importance of the performances.

That's not to preclude the possibility of the viewers reading the moment as homosexually charged. A man, playing a woman, pretending to be a man, engaging in flirtatious behavior and exciting the martial passions of two other men gave the viewer a great deal to untangle.²⁵⁵ In a traditional production, where the audience was able to see Silvia's femininity through her disguise as Wilful thanks to the embodied performance of the actress, the audience was unlikely to read the moment as homoerotically charged. For a London audience watching Anne Oldfield play Silvia, the romantic intrigue here is a bit of fun gender play. After all, the *raison d'être* of the breeches role was that the audience knew that the performer was a woman.²⁵⁶ For an audience seeing a young officer in the role, however, the implication was far different. The

performing body seen through the character is male, and the stage-romance is between two men. Sodomy and homosexuality in the military were punishable by death.²⁵⁷ Why, then, would performances that implied and celebrated homosexual romance be welcomed with such enthusiasm?

The ban on homosexual relationships indicates a number of things about the culture of the military. First of all, sexual relationships between soldiers and sailors must have been common enough that the government felt it necessary to impose a brutal punishment to curb such behavior. The lack of gender parity between soldiers and female camp followers doubtless played a role in fostering sexual relationships between men. Still, prostitution was common enough around the army that this is not the only explanation. I suggest that the primary reason for the prohibition of sodomy is also the explanation for why it happened. As demonstrated previously, eighteenth-century military training needed to mechanize and de-humanize the subject to prepare him for battle and sought no special measures to encourage bonding among the men. A sexual connection between soldiers limited their effectiveness as a fighting force; the more emotionally bonded troops were, the more poorly they would fare when large numbers of the company were cut down in battle. While the persistent cultural fear about effeminacy in the army likely played a role in the sodomy ban, so too, I argue, did a desire to prevent excessive emotional connections between the soldiers. By performing a play in which an officer played the object of another's man's lust, then, the army could canalize sexual desire to the stage, where it would be safely expressed without contaminating the forces at large. By expressing potentially dangerous and disruptive ideas in a safe, fictional context structured by theatrical convention, garrison performance helped to defang the possibility of same-sex relationships between soldiers.²⁵⁸

Crucially, this type of institutional drag performance carried within itself an ideological construction that mitigated the sexual overtones of the piece. As Marjorie Garber has argued, drag performance in an all-male space like the military “is a way of asserting the common privilege of maleness” in a way that is “at once erotic and misogynistic.”²⁵⁹ The male body, clothed in female garb and taking on feminine behaviors, certainly stirred up sexual energy, especially as the play engages in the ribald language of seduction. At the same time, the performance had a man’s body burlesquing femininity. While the performance might titillate, it also positioned maleness as innately superior as it could knowingly enact and mock femininity. By playing female roles, the performance allowed the male body—and specifically the male body of a representative of the British government—to subsume women under its signifying power.

In performing the play, the garrison wasn’t trying to engender public support for the war effort like a London production might have done. In different reception contexts, specifically those animated and underpinned by war and violence, the content of a drama takes on radically different meanings.²⁶⁰ The soldiers and the residents of Annapolis-Royal who attended the production were already deeply enmeshed in the colonial project. Additionally, the residents of the colony were isolated from the metropole in ways that even those living in provincial parts of Britain weren’t. Military camps existed in the eighteenth-century cultural imagination as spaces of misrule and destabilization. The relative freedom with which the genders interacted gave camps an aura of licentiousness and danger. Additionally, in the camps military and civilians interacted in far more intimate ways than they did anywhere else in society.²⁶¹ A colonial garrison like Annapolis-Royal likely had the same cultural reputation as an army camp. Moreover, as Kathleen Wilson points out, Europeans looked on the Americas as a laboratory for

history in which they might observe how humans had been shaped by their environment.²⁶²

While this notion is obviously based on a deeply racist view of indigenous peoples and their development, it also meant that European colonists living among the natives were a part of the experiment. The British were fearful that their residents living in the New World would be degraded by their new surroundings, suffering a ruinous decay of traditional values. Promoting the cultural viability of the colony, then, was an important way to counteract negative perceptions from the metropole as well as to retain racial supremacy. Theatre, as one of the primary British exports to the colonies, and a primary way for the colonists' experience to be communicated back to the homeland, was of crucial importance in accomplishing this goal. The 1733 production of Farquhar's play performed this work in two ways: both by showing that Annapolis-Royal was culturally viable enough to stage a play, and by communicating the importance of maintaining traditional gender values to the local audience.

Players Playing Soldiers

Woffington and Clive: Celebrity and Rivalry

At the same time that British soldiers in the colonies staged plays, London playhouses were similarly suffused with military men, both onstage and off. Plays frequently featured a range of soldiers and sailors, both heroic and villainous, from the officer classes and enlisted men alike. The audience was also frequently full of soldiers, as playgoing was an extremely popular hobby for them.²⁶³ The army and the playhouse were deeply entwined with one another, which made the stage a valuable site for the construction and shaping of masculinity and its relationship to military identity.²⁶⁴ In this section, I shall analyze the ways in which two star actresses of the period, Peg Woffington and Kitty Clive, took two very different approaches to addressing Britain's fighting men through performance. The two women were bitter enemies

with diametrically opposed reputations. Woffington was lively and warm, idolized for her beauty while drawing censure and ridicule for her high-profile affairs. Clive, by contrast, had a fiery temper and irascible public image but was praised for having an unimpeachable moral character. Despite the differences in their celebrity images, both women ultimately contributed to the same cultural construction: that women needed to maintain a subordinate position in society to ensure order. Just as emergent racial difference was used to emphasize the importance of gender difference, so too does the military become a venue for showing the cruciality of maintaining clear separation between genders.

Woffington and Clive were bitter rivals both onstage and off. So well-known was their antipathy that Thomas Davies comments in his biography of David Garrick: “No two women of high rank ever hated one another more unreservedly than these great dames of the theatre.”²⁶⁵ Their disdain for one another, as well as the public’s interest in it, is exemplified by an anecdote from Davies’ *Dramatic Miscellanies*. During a production of *I Henry IV* at Drury Lane, Woffington had taken the role of Lady Percy to help boost attendance.²⁶⁶ Clive heckled Woffington for playing such a small part, insinuating that Woffington’s star power was fading. Woffington replied in “a very cool, but cutting” tone that Clive had recently failed to draw much of a crowd while playing one of her favorite roles. Davies notes that after this retort, “a most terrible fray ensued,” and “though I do not believe that they went so far as pulling caps.” The actor Spranger Barry had to leave the stage, mid-performance as Hotspur, to break up the argument because it was louder than the actors in the play.²⁶⁷

The *Henry IV* fracas was memorialized in a print with an accompanying poem entitled “The Green Room Scuffle or, Drury Lane in an Uproar.”²⁶⁸ The engraving at the top depicts Spranger Barry coming between the two women in a dramatic pose, evocative of stage posture.

To his left, a still-costumed Woffington reaches out with both arms in attack; to his right, Clive extends her right hand in defense/defiance, with her left hand on her hip. On the right side of the picture, an old man, exaggerated to the point of looking nearly ancient, stands poised to strike a prone, beleaguered-looking younger man with his cane. A banner bearing the old Globe Theatre motto, “*Totus Mundus Agit Histrionem*”²⁶⁹ hangs above the scene, while bemused onlookers peak out from the wings behind the action. The print suggests that the action backstage at the theatres is just as entertaining as the plays presented onstage. Barry looks absurd in striking a stately, dignified pose amidst the chaos, while the women appear jealous and wild. The jovial interlopers poking their heads backstage illustrate that theatregoers can derive as great pleasure from players’ offstage antics as from their dramatic talents.²⁷⁰ Finally, the Latin motto above the scene sardonically implies the double nature of celebrity. All the world is indeed a stage for performers because audiences familiar with them will always take note of their actions and behaviors. While there was doubtless real animosity between Woffington and Clive, their rivalry was produced and fueled in the popular imagination by ephemera like “The Green Room Scuffle.”²⁷¹

The text of the ditty beneath the portrait, set to the tune of the popular song “Gossip Joan,” makes light of the dust-up as well. In general, it’s a piece of doggerel that obviously aims to make hay and sell some quick copies out of a timely piece of pop culture gossip. One segment bears some closer scrutiny, however, as it offers a useful window into the way Woffington and Clive were constructed in opposition to one another. The sixth and seventh stanzas, describing the difference between the actresses, state (“Kate” here refers to Clive):

Kate, who was long ill-us’d

Depended on her *Merit*

But PEG, by all abus'd,
Said, She had only *Spirit*

Pretty Girl!

None knew from whence it rose,
But 'twas about their Duty:
To rise by *Wit* one chose,
And t'other by her *Beauty*:

Both are Vain!²⁷²

Here, the Woffington/Clive rivalry is construed by the author as a battle between skill and physical attractiveness. Clive, the clever and talented performer, achieved her status as a star by “merit.” By contrast, the author suggests Woffington’s career depended entirely upon her beauty.²⁷³ The green room battle, in addition to providing fans of the theatre with an exciting piece of news from behind the curtain, served as a comment on feminine caprice. Each woman argues that she has had the harder lot, though the author notes that “both are vain.” He disdains the haughtiness of each actress, but the formulation is clear: Clive is more talented, Woffington more beautiful. That these qualities are aligned against one another is revelatory: apparently, an actress could not enjoy a reputation for both wit and beauty.

As I shall discuss, Woffington and Clive constructed (and had constructed for them) celebrity personae that contrasted their offstage reputations in order to distinguish themselves in the theatrical marketplace. Despite their divergent public images, Woffington and Clive both performed roles that drew on and played with military culture to reify masculine superiority and the importance of maintaining a strict border between the two genders. A woman could be

allowed to engage in any behavior she might wish as long as her actions were localized to herself and she upheld the dominant ideology.

Woffington: Eroticising the Army

Margaret Woffington, though she would become one of the most celebrated actresses of the mid-eighteenth century, came from extraordinarily humble beginnings. As with any of the early British actresses, the exact circumstances of her youth are difficult to pin down with complete certainty. Still, we know that she was born in Dublin in the early part of the century to a Catholic family, and that her father died shortly after her birth, leaving the family in dire financial straits.²⁷⁴ At a young age, Peg, as she would become known, quit school to sell vegetables in the streets, hoping to allow the family to scratch out a living. Her fortunes improved, however, when she met a woman named Madame Violante, a French dancer and minor theatrical impresario who recruited children and teenagers to put up shows. Struck by the young woman's appearance and her bearing, Violante offered her a role in the children's company she was assembling.²⁷⁵ This youthful ensemble introduced her to the stage and gave her a passion for acting, leading to one of the great theatrical careers of the mid-eighteenth century.

She would rise to fame in the 1730s playing at Aungier Street and Smock Alley in Dublin, collecting roles such as Ophelia, Gay's Polly, and Silvia in *The Recruiting Officer*. During this time she also debuted in the role that would make her a legend: a travesty version of Sir Harry Wildair in Farquhar's *The Constant Couple*.²⁷⁶ By 1741, she had gained enough notoriety to relocate to London. After playing Silvia in *The Recruiting Officer* at Goodman's Fields in September of that year, she was hired to join the Drury Lane company. Woffington made her Drury Lane debut on 22 September 1741 as Mrs. Sullen in *The Stratagem*.²⁷⁷ Over the next fifteen years, Woffington would variously be a member of the Drury Lane and Covent

Garden companies, along with making frequent returns to Dublin to visit her family and perform there as well. Her economic success allowed her to pay for her younger sister's education and lift her mother out of poverty and acquainted her with high society. By the 1756-57 season, however, her health was in decline. Her career ended abruptly in May of 1757 when she suffered a seizure onstage while speaking an epilogue after playing Rosalind in *As You Like It*. After the seizure, she would never act again and died a short time later.²⁷⁸ Despite the sadly anticlimactic end of one of the great stage careers of the eighteenth century, Woffington was a prominent fixture on the British stage for two decades.

Two aspects of Woffington's life and career deserve special mention, as they have direct bearing on her martial performances. First, she was the pre-eminent performer of both breeches and travesty roles in her day. The breeches role of Silvia in *The Recruiting Officer* was one of her most famous pieces—she played the character opposite Garrick's Plume to much acclaim—but perhaps her crowning achievement was playing the rake Sir Harry Wildair in Farquhar's *The Constant Couple*. Farquhar had created the role for his friend Robert Wilks in 1699, and Wilks had found tremendous success with it. Wildair made him a stage favorite of the ladies, and no actor attempted to play the part for a generation after his retirement because he owned the part so fully.²⁷⁹ Spurred on by the tremendous success she had found in breeches parts, however, Woffington set her sights on Wildair as a challenge for her dramatic prowess. The success she found as the rake was beyond anything she could have hoped for. Men and women flocked backstage to compliment her in the role, and it became her signature part.²⁸⁰ The role was so successful that, during her time at Covent Garden, the theatre spent twelve pounds—more than twice her weekly salary of five pounds, five shillings—to have a new waistcoat made to accentuate Woffington's figure as Wildair.²⁸¹ At a time when theatres attempted to stage plays

with their existing stock of scenery and costumes as much as possible to keep costs down, the extravagant expenditure on a costume piece is a testament to the drawing power of Woffington as Wildair.

In addition to Woffington's popularity with audiences in the rake's part, the contemporary response to her demonstrates the erotic intrigue that her performance could engender. After her initial turn as Wildair in Dublin, the following lines appeared in the press, entitled "On Miss Woffington's Playing Sir Harry Wildair":

Peggy, the darling of the men,
 In Polly won each heart:
 But now she captivates again.
 And all must feel the smart.
 Her charms restless conquer all,
Both sexes vanquished lie:
 And who to *Polly* scorn'd to fall,
 By *Wildair* ravish'd die.²⁸²

The anonymous author refers to Woffington's performance as the ingenue in *The Beggar's Opera* as evoking a predictable response from the men in the audience. Her version of Wildair, however, expands her erotic appeal. Notably, the author doesn't describe this as necessarily a positive thing: her sexuality causes a "smart" and "conquer[s]" the viewers, who are "vanquished" as they "die." The language conjures images of a rapacious and unstoppable force, dominating spectators and subsuming their agency under its irresistible power. As she moves outside of the prescribed social role of female attractiveness, her erotic power, though undeniable, is subtly depicted as dangerous. Woffington the woman wasn't content to limit

herself to female roles, and Woffington the actress is reaping the benefits that accompany her iconoclastic achievements, as well as the dangers. The public are powerless to resist her charms, as the author implies she is unwilling to accept anything less than the complete adoration of all onlookers.²⁸³

This sexual intrigue leads to the second remarkable aspect of Woffington's career: her private life. As with most of the extremely famous British actresses of the eighteenth century, Woffington's series of romantic liaisons were well-known and the subject of much ribald fun for both her fans and foes. Her highest-profile affair was with David Garrick, with whom she lived for two years. Though the pair never married, Garrick allegedly contemplated marriage throughout their liaison and tried to revive her interest unsuccessfully after they split. During their time as a couple, Woffington and Garrick were luminaries of London society and entertained high-profile guests, including Samuel Johnson.²⁸⁴ The unconventional nature of their union, living openly without marrying, made Woffington a figure of sexual intrigue even more than many of her peers.

Further fueling Woffington's mercenary reputation was her relationship with Edward Bligh, the Earl of Darnley. Bligh had become interested in Woffington after seeing her onstage and paid to have her set up in an apartment near Drury Lane.²⁸⁵ In a letter to Horace Mann, Horace Walpole—who in spite of his avowed hatred of Woffington as a performer, frequently found himself writing about her—discusses a juicy rumor he heard about the two of them:

One night that she played Sir Harry Wildair, he told her, she had pleased him so well, that he should play five acts that night as well as she: she offered to bet him ten guineas, that he did not—but he did—and then asked her to pay him—"No, my Lord," said she, "double or quit!"²⁸⁶

The veracity of the story is dubious, at best. How Walpole would have had access to this information is unclear. Moreover, he later repeated the story with a different character in the role of Woffington's lover.²⁸⁷ Regardless, Walpole described the actress as both sexually and economically voracious. Although she remained a popular socialite throughout her life, as an economically independent woman with an unusually public sex life, Woffington was constructed as an insatiably mercenary agent.

From antiquity through the early modern period in Europe, the dominant cultural belief was that women were more innately sexual than men. Over the course of the eighteenth century, women's sexual desires were revised to create what Angus McLaren has called "a new, middle-class image of the respectable, asexual female."²⁸⁸ One of the key sites of the recalibration of women's sexual agency was the female orgasm. Traditional Galenic medicine held that, as their bodies were essentially homologous, both man and woman needed to achieve sexual climax to produce the seeds necessary for procreation. One of the results of a shifting understanding of biological gender difference was what Laqueur has termed the "demotion of the female orgasm."²⁸⁹ Women's sexual pleasure during intercourse came to be regarded as incidental to its procreative purpose, and so the cultural narrative surrounding women regarded them less as naturally rapacious and more as innately capable of a chaste, non-erotic type of love.²⁹⁰

Walpole's obsessive focus on Woffington's sexuality tried to exclude her from middle-class propriety by linking her to an earlier, more aggressive form of sexual behavior.

Another probably apocryphal story concerns Woffington's London debut in the role of Sir Harry Wildair. Upon exiting after a particularly vigorous round of audience approbation, Woffington exclaimed to someone in the wings: "In my conscience, I believe half the men in the House take me for one of their own sex," to which her interlocutor replied, "It may be so, but, in

my conscience! the other Half can convince them to the contrary.”²⁹¹ Again, Woffington’s performative virtuosity is inextricably linked to her sexuality. While half of the audience is taken in by the illusion, the other half have enjoyed her favors offstage. Woffington’s androgyne performances cannot be separated from her sexuality; indeed, for her contemporaries, they were one and the same.

Felicity Nussbaum argues that the eighteenth-century actress was a site of tensions and questions in society, and the theatre was a key venue for interpolating political subjects.²⁹² Woffington’s high visibility as a socialite made her a strong candidate for shaping public attitudes through her work as an actress; audiences could orient themselves to emerging identities by engaging with her work. Nussbaum notes that Woffington’s contemporaries, including Robert Hitchcock, James Quin, and Francis Gentleman, all praised her travesty roles for her exceptional ability to pass as male. She further notes that, in contrast to the conventional wisdom about breeches performance being for the delectation of men in the audience, it seems to have been Woffington’s goal to persuade the viewer of her fictional masculinity. Thomas Davies said her acting was completely masculinized, lacking any femininity.²⁹³ Woffington’s masculine behavior was not necessarily limited to her dramatic work, however. According to tradition, Woffington was the only woman admitted to Thomas Sheridan’s Dublin-based Beefsteak Club and may even have become its president.²⁹⁴ The Beefsteak Club, a private organization whose almost universally male, generally well-connected members met to dine on beef and discuss politics, was a symbol of the emergent middle class and British liberty. Woffington’s access to the club gave her a unique insight into political events of her day.²⁹⁵ As a woman with a high profile who earned acclaim for blurring gender roles, Peg Woffington was the perfect candidate for performing martial roles that spoke to the social role of the army with respect to gender. Her

roles in *The Humours of the Army* and her famous epilogue “The Female Volunteer” required her to perform a martial, masculine character. Despite her gender-bending performances, Woffington’s work onstage created a space for women in society at large that excluded them from public action through military activity.

One of Woffington’s signature roles was Belvedera, the Female Officer, in Charles Shadwell’s *The Humours of the Army*.²⁹⁶ Shadwell, the son of the Poet Laureate Thomas Shadwell, never attained the level of success that his father found writing for the stage. Still, he produced a small body of work that received production and frequent revival, especially in Dublin. Of these, *The Humours of the Army* was the most successful. Based on his experiences serving in the Peninsular Campaign during the War of Spanish Succession, Shadwell dedicated the play to his commander, Major General Newton.²⁹⁷ Shadwell’s play makes light of the ineffective British and Portuguese coalition on the Iberian Peninsula through officer characters of various nationalities written in exaggerated dialects, poking fun at the failed war effort but mitigating any criticism of the English by placing the blame at the feet of other members of the alliance.

The bulk of the play’s plot, however, is devoted to two romantic intrigues. In the main plot, the rakish officer Young Fox is in love with Victoria, daughter to the brigade’s commanding officer, General Bloodmore. Predictably, Bloodmore opposes the liaison, instead preferring that Victoria marry Biskett, the local businessman who supplies the army with food. Through a standard series of intrigues, Biskett is duped and Young Fox united with Victoria in marriage. More interesting, though, is the secondary plot. A new recruit, named Willmot but having enlisted under the name Straitup, has joined the English forces. Having had enough of his wife’s abuse, he reveals he has enlisted in the army to escape from her. Shortly after, his wife

Belvedera arrives looking for him. She is dressed in male attire, masquerading as a Mr. Hickumbuz. General Bloodmore makes Belvedera a lieutenant of grenadiers in the company, having coincidentally had a vacancy in need of filling. Thus, Belvedera can continue looking for her estranged husband. They eventually meet when Belvedera is tasked with drilling the troops, Willmot among them. She subjects them to physical and verbal abuse, until Willmot snaps and tries to kill her. He is apprehended and subjected to a court-martial. While Belvedera insists to her friend Clara that she intends to see him executed, when the trial comes she faints at his possible fate for love of him. Belvedera's true identity is revealed and she is happily reunited with her husband.

The drill scene, when Belvedera exercises the men under her command, is notable in the way it has the actress perform military maneuvers onstage.²⁹⁸ In the play's drilling scene, Sergeant File-off gives the soldiers commands, and Belvedera abuses them when they fail to follow properly: “(*Strikes one of the fellows*) is that a posture for a Gentleman Soldier, Sirrah, (*to another*) who cockt your cap for you Dog ha!”²⁹⁹ Later, File-off and Belvedera exercise the men in drill tactics:

FILE-OFF: Now Sir, pray try if you can Remember the Exercise.

BELVEDERA: Silence—Clap your Right Hand to your Firelocks.

FILE-OFF: (*To the Soldiers*) altogether there.

BELVEDERA: Poise your Firelocks. (*To Willmot*) Villain, I'll stick you if thou do'st not mind the Words of Command.

WILLMOT: (*Aside*) I wish he would, that I might be eased of his Damn'd Impertinence.

BELVEDERA: Rest your Firelocks! Fools, Blockheads, Dogs, do it all together.

FILE-OFF: That Passion of Yours is very graceful, and is one of the politest parts of the Art Military. (172)

Moments after this, Willmot snaps and tries to shoot Belvedera, leading to his court-martial. The scene's comic power derives from the gender inversion; Belvedera, in spite of the fact that she is in disguise and presumably has no military training, is able to command the men in the manual exercise effectively. She does so well, in fact, that File-off praises her passion and fitness for the office. While the play does not specify detailed stage business, it is clear from the dialogue that Belvedera engages in animated coaching of the men's posture. Although the scene ends with a violent outburst from Willmot, the preceding actions were likely exaggerated for comic effect. The disparity between Belvedera's feminine identity and the prowess she displays in drilling the soldiers invited both laughter and possibly reflection. The audience saw the bodies onstage enacting a *manqué* display of military precision, with only the woman successfully controlling the action. Belvedera's disguised masculine performance, which reaches its climax in this scene, displays "a hypermasculinity which...critiques men's most bellicose aspects."³⁰⁰ If the fictional Belvedera can effectively perform the manual exercises, why couldn't her offstage counterparts?

The original production of *The Humours of the Army* closed with Belvedera performing the steps of the manual exercise during her epilogue. While speaking the line "No Warlike Weapons are to me unknown, to Prime, to Charge, and Cock let me alone, I'll exercise with anyone in Town," a marginal note indicated "here she does the Motions with a Fuzee" (95).³⁰¹ Woffington first appeared in the role of Belvedera at Drury Lane on 23 April 1746. The production was billed as *The Humours of the Army, or The Female Officer* (New Dress'd), and indicated that the "Mainpiece not acted these 30 years."³⁰² The playbill for *The Humours of the Army* also noted that Woffington was to speak an epilogue in character. The announcement

possibly refers to the original epilogue, but an original or occasional epilogue was seldom performed for more than the first few nights of a play's London debut. As such, it is unlikely that this particular epilogue was revived with the play. More likely is that the announcement referred to "The Female Volunteer," a similarly titled piece that Woffington had debuted the previous month. Though it wasn't written for *The Humours of the Army*, "The Female Volunteer" also had the actress performing while clothed in the garb of a soldier. The similarities end there, however: in contrast to the vengeance-seeking Belvedera, "The Female Volunteer" was a sexually playful, flirtatious speech encouraging British men to resist the invading Jacobite forces. It became a hit with audiences, and she performed the piece several times over the course of the spring of 1746, making it one of her signature epilogue performances.

Over the course of the eighteenth century, the prologues and epilogues were reserved for the most skilled performers in the company. William Rufus Chetwood notes that they were among the most difficult tasks an actor could be assigned, as it was crucial to send the audience out of the theatre happy. Woffington herself was as highly regarded for her epilogues as for any of her most famous roles, and she was regularly assigned epilogues throughout the 1740s.³⁰³ A good epilogue might save a bad play, which likely accounts for Knapp's observation that actresses were very seldom assigned prologues and generally reserved for the epilogue.³⁰⁴ While Knapp doesn't offer a clear explanation for this phenomenon, I suggest the actress's unique ability to provide flirtatious, teasing innuendo could pique the interest of an audience even after an otherwise dismal evening at the theatre. Thus, epilogues often have marked differences in tone and style from the main pieces that they accompany. Additionally, while the prologues and epilogues were judged more as performance vehicles than literary text, they were often printed and circulated in newspapers, even when the play they accompanied wasn't.³⁰⁵ In this way, a

prologue or epilogue took on an independent life of its own. “The Female Volunteer” is an excellent example of an epilogue whose reputation outshone the plays it followed.

“The Female Volunteer” was written by an unknown author.³⁰⁶ The epilogue is a very likely candidate for the 23 April performance of the Shadwell play as Woffington had done it three times in the previous month. She debuted the piece after a 17 March 1746 performance of Fletcher and Beaumont’s *The Scornful Lady*, played it again on 22 March after *The Merchant of Venice*, and a third time after Cibber’s *The Lady’s Last Stake* on 10 April.³⁰⁷ The text references the recent defeat of the government forces in January by the invading Jacobite forces at the Battle of Falkirk Muir.³⁰⁸ The piece’s subtitle, “An Attempt to Make Our Men Stand,” served as both a call to arms for men in the audience to resist the Jacobite invaders and a ribald sexual pun. The stage directions have Woffington enter in men’s clothing, reading a newspaper that reports the loss at Falkirk and denounce the soldiers: “Plague of all Cow’rds, I say...Our Men retreat! before a scrub *Banditti*!” (1-3). In her disgust, Woffington proposes that women must save the country in another line that functions as a clear double entendre: “Well, if ’tis so, and that our *Men* can’t *stand*,/’Tis time we Women take the Thing in *hand*” (5-6). Explicitly drawing a connection between the military and the phallus, Woffington suggests that Britain’s women will have to see to matters both martial and sexual. After calling attention to her masculine attire, she defends her actions by calling her clothing “no unnat’ral transformation:/For if in Valour real *Manhood* lies,/All Cowards are but Women in Disguise” (10-12). With the government forces abandoning the field to the Scottish and Catholic invaders, the regular gender dynamics of society are already disrupted. She suggests that they might as well be fielding an army of women for all the good they’ve done in defense of the country.

After mocking the imagined responses of the soldiers, Woffington returned to sexual punning: “place me in the Van,/And post me, if I don’t----bring down my Man” (15-16). The dashes suggest a loaded pause, in which Woffington almost certainly engaged in some suggestive, comic business. She goes on to suggest that the female army would prove wildly successful: “Had we an Army of such valourous Wenches/What Man d’you think would dare t’attack our Trenches? O! how the Artill’ry of our Eyes would maul them!” (17-19). As before, her speech explicitly conflates warfare with sexuality, this time by implying that the women’s charms would prove too great for any invading force. “Jesting apart----” she claims, before proceeding ironically to an extended joke about the fate of British women should the Church of England give way to Catholic domination:

We Women have strong Reason
To stop the Progress of this Popish Treason;
For sure, when Female Liberty’s at Stake,
All Women ought to *bustle* for its Sake.
Should these audacious Sons of *Rome* prevail,
Vows---Convents---and that Heathen Thing---the *Veil*,
Must come in Fashion. Oh! such Institutions
Would suit but oddly with our---*Constitutions*. (23-30)

The same sexual power that Woffington sought to deploy in defense of the nation will be quashed if a Catholic, Stuart monarchy is restored to the throne. English liberty—and specifically women’s liberty—was threatened by the invading army. As previously illustrated, the British saw themselves as enjoying an unusually high level of liberty when compared to the rest of Europe. In “The Female Volunteer,” Woffington playfully constructed this liberty as a

specifically sexual freedom absent Catholic restrictions on women's behavior and clothing.

Again, Woffington probably performed some comic business before the payoff of "constitutions" in line 30. The segment on women's sexual freedom closes with Woffington making a joke at her own expense: "And I've some *private Reasons* 'gainst *Confession*" (32).

This line played on Woffington's well-known offstage life. First, as an Irish-born woman, she was at least nominally Catholic, an aspect of her biography that some portion of the audience would have known.³⁰⁹ Her "private reasons" might have read as stemming from familiarity with the Catholic Church's practices. The objections to the Catholic invaders would have seemed more pointed coming from a Catholic woman. Of course, the line's primary valence of meaning was sexual, pointing to Woffington's reputation for free-spiritedness in her private life. In order to confess and receive absolution, she would have to both lament her behavior and theoretically seek to change it. The "private reasons" she has for objecting to confession teasingly suggested that she enjoyed her life as it was. As such, the line gestured to her personal life and celebrity, flirtatiously demonstrating that she had an obvious stake in continuing to enjoy "Female Liberty." While she wanted to continue to live free of tyranny and needed the army to protect her, the primary way she enjoyed that freedom was sexual.

In the speech's final stanza, Woffington exhorted the women in the audience to exert their influence on British men:

In Freedom's Cause, ye Patriot-Fair, arise,
Exert the sacred Influence of your Eyes;
On valiant Merit deign alone to smile,
And vindicate the Glory of our Isle.
To no base Coward prostitute your Charms,

Disband the Lover who deserts his Arms:

So shall you *fire* each Hero to his *Duty*,

And *British* Rights be sav'd by *British* Beauty. (39-46)

Throughout the speech, Woffington drew a connection between military power and sexual power. At the end, having toyed throughout the piece with gendered expectations, she ultimately characterizes women's influence as restricted solely to the realm of the sexual. The only influence that the women of Britain can realistically expect to exert is in denying their affections to men who refuse to fight. Despite the playful destabilization of gender that she expressed throughout the epilogue, Woffington ultimately performed a conservative, traditional role as the Female Volunteer. While "British Beauty" may save "British Rights," it won't do so on the battlefield.

The frequent performance of the epilogue—at least three times and possibly four within a month—suggests that audiences were quite taken with Woffington's turn as the Volunteer. Additionally, the piece was frequently reprinted in broadside format, appearing in *The Foundling Hospital for Wit*, *A Banquet of the Muses*, *The London Magazine*, and the *General Advertiser* throughout 1746.³¹⁰ The broadside was accompanied by a portrait of Woffington in her Female Volunteer garb.³¹¹ Positioned daintily with her feet apart and her hands turned out in an expressive gesture, Woffington wears breeches, a waistcoat and ruffled cravat, the standard officer's red coat, tricorn hat, and a sword on her hip. On the floor behind her is the newspaper referenced in the stage directions and a theatrical mask.³¹²

Most superficially, Woffington celebrated the ability of British women to influence the men around them through feminine charm. On a deeper level, Woffington donning a soldier's garb and openly mocking British soldiers for their failure was a bold attack on a patriarchal

institution. Certainly, some members of the audience read the performance as arguing that she and the women of the nation would make better troops than the type of men who lost a battle to the Jacobite forces. If British men could not protect the nation, then the women might have to do it. Conservative members of the audience might have found such a suggestion scandalous. As Woffington played on her own celebrity and referenced her own sexuality, audience members might have read “The Female Volunteer” as the actress arguing for both masculine roles and masculine rights. The performance gestured toward possible usurpation of masculine roles and, possibly, greater sexual freedom for women.

At the same time that she made light of the cowardice of the army, however, she also emphasized her own femininity throughout “The Female Volunteer.” In particular, the inclusion of Woffington’s portrait, in costume, with the broadside reveals the centrality of her physical body to the piece’s popularity and, ultimately, its meaning. The interaction between Woffington’s body, her celebrity, and the speech text produced a message that undercut the fierceness of her attack on the British soldiers. The sexual puns and references to her private sex life throughout the piece positioned Woffington as a sexual object. Further, the breeches costume showed off her figure for the delectation of an implied heterosexual spectator. Woffington’s performance played with self-objectification. Woffington certainly celebrated her own sexuality in the speech, but she also sexualized herself. As we shall see, the sexualized nature of the piece provided a path for backlash on precisely these grounds.

Catherine Clive: The Anti-Woffington

Much like Peg Woffington, Catherine “Kitty” Clive came from humble origins. Born Catherine Raftor in 1711, her father was Irish, though she was born in London. She found herself in the theatrical profession due to serendipitous circumstances: according to one anecdote, her

theatrical career began when she was washing the steps of the Beefsteak Club and singing to herself to pass the time. Several theatrical managers were inside and, amazed at her natural talent and beautiful voice, immediately put her on the stage.³¹³ By the season of 1728-29, she had begun to collect larger roles and was ascending to stardom. A few years later, she developed a friendship with Henry Fielding, cementing her position as a member of the theatrical elite.³¹⁴ Over the course of her four decades on the stage, she remained a stage favorite. Her abilities as a comedienne were perhaps even exceeded by her work as a singer, as she was a favorite performer of Handel's and helped to popularize his work.³¹⁵

Like any actress in the period, Clive's personality was as much a part of her celebrity as her performances, though in a rather unusual way: the slights against her character weren't for sexual profligacy, but rather for her temperament. In fact, much like Bracegirdle before her, Clive maintained a reputation for "militant chastity" throughout her life. This reputation was fueled largely by her rather early marriage: she became Kitty Clive after marrying George Clive, a non-practicing lawyer, in 1733. Their marriage was unhappy, and by 1735 the two had separated, though they would never legally divorce. He moved away from the city and eventually faded from prominence, while she stayed in London and maintained a highly successful stage career.³¹⁶ The failure of her relationship with Mr. Clive seems to have cemented her in the popular imagination as a paragon of decorous femininity, insofar as her relationships with men were concerned.³¹⁷

Although Clive's personal sexual conduct was unrepachable, she did carry a reputation for having a quick temper and an acid tongue. Obviously, her rivalry with Woffington was common knowledge, and she was also engaged in a bitter feud with Susannah Cibber that was sparked by competition for the role of Polly in *The Beggar's Opera*.³¹⁸ Her anger was not limited

to her peers onstage, either. During Garrick's management of Drury Lane, the two often clashed. Wilkinson observed that "The valiant Boadicea never hurled her spear with more furor than Clive, that Amazonian Thalestris of Drury Lane theatre, who pursued that great general, Garrick, whenever he offended her; indeed, the whole green-room dreaded her frowns."³¹⁹ Throughout her career, the public image of Clive as a virtuous exemplar was mediated by her reputation as quick-tempered and difficult. Contemporaries attributed her fiery nature to her Irish heritage, although more recently critics have argued that her tempestuousness was a deliberate strategy to combat the misogyny inherent in the theatre world at the time.³²⁰ Either way, her assertiveness led to perhaps the greatest accomplishment of her career.

Clive was a fierce advocate for her rights as a laborer. In late 1736, the actor Theophilus Cibber, who was also the deputy manager of Drury Lane, wanted to take the role of Polly in *The Beggar's Opera* from Clive so that his wife, Susannah Cibber, could play it. Fearful of the precedent that such a loss would set, Clive pushed back against the management. She argued in speeches onstage that the role rightfully belonged to her and that Cibber's manipulation was unfair. Cibber published an anonymous article claiming that Clive had lost the role on her merits as a performer and attempting to paint her as vain and difficult. Clive took the unusual step of writing a newspaper article in her defense as well, characterizing herself as the victim of an abusive, nepotistic manager. In the end, she convinced the public by her work on and offstage that the role properly belonged to her.³²¹ This case prefaced an even greater battle in her future.

In 1744, before Garrick had taken over Drury Lane, Clive authored and published a pamphlet entitled *The Case of Mrs. Clive Submitted to the Publick*. In the piece, she attacked the managers of both Drury Lane and Covent Garden—Charles Fleetwood and Christopher Rich—for colluding to keep actor salaries low. She claimed that, because only two theatres were

authorized by patent, they could conspire to manipulate actor pay, and accused them of managing a public relations campaign to smear actors as greedy at the same time:

the Managers thought it was in their Power to reduce the Incomes of those Performers, who could not live independant [*sic*] of their Profession; but in order to make this appear with a better Face to the Town, it was agreed to complain of the Actors Salaries being too great, and accordingly a false Account was published of them in the daily Papers³²²

She noted that Rich and Fleetwood had become quite wealthy by this arrangement while the actors suffered. Worse, she accused the two of price fixing. When Fleetwood at Drury Lane offered her a lower salary for the next season, she applied to Rich at Covent Garden, who offered the same small amount, leading her to suspect a conspiracy. The problem, as she described it, was that there were too few opportunities for actors because of the small number of theatres. If locked out of Drury Lane and Covent Garden, “when the Managers dismiss an Actor, where are they to apply?” (Clive 16).

Perhaps most injurious, Clive attacked Rich for taking some of her parts away in the middle of the season and in so doing “broke thro' the Customs of the Theatre” as, in her experience, “That it never was a Custom to discharge any, but upon Neglect of their Business, or such as were obnoxious to the Publick” (Clive 14-15). Clive argued that it was unfair for the management to control the parts she played when she still received acclaim for her acting in them. Indeed, the basis of her argument was an appeal to the goodwill of the theatre-going public: “the Publick was the only Support of all, consequently had an indisputable Right to be pleased in the best manner possible” (Clive 15). Clive’s pamphlet was well-received by the public and was an important step forward for actors as laborers generally and for actresses in

specific.³²³ More importantly, the pamphlet fixed Clive in the public imagination as a passionate defender of her rights and abilities as a performer. Clive honestly believed that she could perform her roles better than other members of the company, and she claimed ownership of them on that basis.³²⁴ By taking her argument to the public in *The Case of Mrs. Clive*, she affirmed a reciprocal relationship between herself and her audience: she showed them that she believed herself to be worthy of their esteem, and she simultaneously made clear that she understood her continued success depended on continuing to perform well.

Not surprisingly, Clive's status as a favorite of audiences increased over the 1740s. She was frequently entrusted with epilogues, generally only assigned to the most talented and respected performers in the company. In particular, Clive specialized in epilogues that commented on news and current events.³²⁵ In the spring of 1746, around the same time that Woffington found success with "The Female Volunteer," Clive performed her own piece that dealt with the Jacobite crisis. After a performance of *Twelfth Night* at Drury Lane on 15 April 1746, Clive gave the epilogue, entitled "An Epilogue Recommending the Cause of Liberty to the Beauties of Great Britain."³²⁶ The piece wasn't original for the occasion, however, as it had originally been written for and performed by the actress Anne Oldfield after the previous Jacobite invasion of 1715.³²⁷ Clive's and Woffington's performances of these two epilogues engage in some similar lines of argument about women's role in British society.

"An Epilogue Recommending the Cause of Liberty" has some superficial differences from "The Female Volunteer." To begin, Clive's epilogue was performed in women's dress, and she had only effusive praise for the men in her audience. She began by noting that the rebels had been suppressed and charging her fellow Britons with preventing further uprisings: "Loyalty Triumphant lifts her Head,/Methinks 'twere ev'ry *British* Subject's Care/To kill henceforth the

Seeds of Civil War” (2-4).³²⁸ She didn’t engage in the playful badinage that Woffington did, though. Instead of berating the men for their failures, she praised the army for putting down the rebels: “Our Chiefs have done their Part, and quell’d the Riot” (5). Rather than denouncing and mocking men for their cowardice, Clive noted that they had performed their role in society admirably. Of course, the day after she spoke the piece, the Jacobites were crushed at Culloden; still, Woffington was playing the Female Volunteer throughout and after this as well. Clive’s epilogue offered a clear riposte to Woffington.

Clive offered the women in her audience a set of instructions similar to those Woffington did. Men having put down the rebellion, she says that “Ladies, now ’tis now yours, to keep us quiet./Would you your utmost Charms and Art employ...for those, that would destroy all,/Reserve your Frowns, your Favors for the Loyal” (6-12). As in “The Female Volunteer,” British women are urged to reserve flirtatious affection for those men who show the proper loyalty to the Hanoverian king. Such actions should prevent anyone from wanting to join the Jacobite cause: “Stout though the Traitor be, that Thought must grate him,/For who’d Rebel, to have that Circle, hate him?” (13-14). Women’s power resides in their sexuality; by denying affection to potential rebels, British women can prevent anyone from wanting to join their ranks. In this way, the women fulfill a role similar to the men who engage in battle. Women protect the realm through domestic and social influence, however, rather than war fighting.

Clive made the connection between sexuality and warfare explicit just a few lines later. Praising the righteousness of the Loyalist cause, she characterizes British women as soldiers in their own way: “Happy our Monarch, that his Glorious cause/Such Troops of Beauty to his Service draws” (23-24). The function of the “Troops of Beauty” is not found on the battlefield but in bestowing their favors on subjects loyal to the king. By encouraging British men with their

favors, the women in the audience will ensure that “happy too are those Beauties, whose soft Charms,/Are kept in chearful [sic] Lustre by his Arms” (25-26). The word “arms” here is a sexual pun, indicating both that the military keeps British women safe while also evoking the image of a lover’s embrace. These four lines construct a clear separation between the roles that men and women play in society: men serve as protectors, and women, the so-called “troops of beauty,” are relegated to a subservient position. The appellation “troops of beauty” restricts women from the battlefield by suggesting that their war is waged on the home front. The only arms appropriate to their station are those of their victorious, patriotic lovers. Clive’s language here, even with the martial metaphor applied to British women, clearly indicated that they should observe a role different from their male counterparts in resisting invading forces.

In the epilogue’s conclusion, Clive sounded the same dire warning that Woffington did for resisting foreign invaders and rebels; namely, that women will suffer far more under the oppressions of Catholic rule than men. She equated the Catholic Jacobites with eastern rule, arguing that “’Tis cold coquetting in the Sultan’s State...In *Persias* [sic] Realms, the Female Fate yet worse is,/Mere Cattel there, like Camels sold, or Horses” (41-47). Having laid out the dire alternatives to Hanoverian rule, Clive pivoted to make her final case for women’s support of men: “For Women (search the Globe) you scarce will hit on/One Place so sweet to live in, as old *Britain*” (51-52). She closed by enjoining the women in the audience to heed her advice for their own good: “Since then such Joys in *Britain* only flow,/How much to guard them, Ladies, lies on you?/And as the World can no such Monarch boast,/Let ROYAL *GEORGE* be ev’ry BEAUTY’S Toast” (59-63). If British women want to continue to enjoy “coquetting,” it is incumbent upon them to support the army rather than shaming men. Women’s ability to flirt with men was both their sole source of power and the freedom they most needed to protect. In order to

preserve their uniquely British freedom, the women of the nation must observe a supportive cultural role that bolstered men's resolve rather than challenging it.

The Clive epilogue was three decades older than "The Female Volunteer" and was originally written to be performed in celebration of the revolution's suppression. At the time of her performance in 1746, however, while the Jacobites were past their high-water mark, the threat was not yet fully defused. Clive's choice of the Oldfield epilogue was almost certainly fueled, at least in part, by a desire to upstage Woffington. She had appeared in the production of *The Scornful Lady* in which Woffington had debuted her piece in March, and Woffington played Viola against Clive's Olivia in *Twelfth Night* the evening of the Clive epilogue.³²⁹ Regular theatregoers would almost certainly see in Clive's choice a marked contrast with her rival. Still, despite the cosmetic differences resulting from the performer's dress, both pieces make a similar case to British women. In the reactions to the pieces, we can see how they impacted attitudes about gender roles.

Woffington and Clive: Hauntographical Resonances

Peg Woffington and Kitty Clive were bitter rivals onstage and off. Their rivalry played out over the course of their careers, and their respective responses to the Jacobite crisis offered yet another opportunity for differentiation. Though both performances celebrated the supremacy of British society, Woffington did so by playfully usurping masculine attire and playing on her public persona. "An Epilogue Recommending the Cause of Liberty" achieved the same result while observing a more decorous behavior. Not only was Clive clad in female clothing, but her speech lacked both the sexual overtones and playful challenges to masculine authority of Woffington's *Female Volunteer*. Overall, the epilogue was in keeping with Clive's offstage reputation for chastity. The contrast between the Woffington and Clive performances illustrates

the way that celebrity and performance interacted to create a subordinate cultural position for women. Again, the celebrity and economic power of the actress was co-opted. Though she could attain fame and fortune, a woman was still expected to perform subordination, whether explicitly through the language of a piece or implicitly by trading on her sexuality. Those performances were able to reach thousands of viewers, and broadside reproductions widened that audience even further.³³⁰

Although the military and the theatre might seem strange bedfellows, eighteenth-century performance conventions made them an ideal pair for disseminating ideological messages. Joseph Roach has remarked on the similarities between eighteenth-century acting style and military drill: both were highly ordered disciplines that sought to instill in the participants' bodies a mechanized adherence to strict conventions.³³¹ In both the theatre and the barracks, the body was conditioned to adhere to prevailing attitudes about the importance of control and mastery of nature.

Interestingly, though, Woffington's martial performances disrupted that sought-after order by centering the spectacle on a symbol of disorder: a woman in military dress performing drill maneuvers. Like all performances, stage depictions of the military were inherently surrogate, in that they were an imperfect, fictional replication of the reality of military life. Female martial performance was doubly so, as a fictional representation of military drill staged via a female body that would seldom be placed in a combat role. Further, as with all breeches roles, the audience was able to see Woffington's femininity through her masculine attire. In *The Humours of the Army*, Belvedera reveals her gender to resolve the plot's action. "The Female Volunteer" was filled with sexual puns and double entendre meant to titillate the audience, playing on Woffington's public persona to comment on the military. Through Woffington's

performances, the gap between the real-world military and the stage version was filled with sexuality. Seeing a female body enact the mechanization of eighteenth-century warfare made it less harsh than the brutal reality which soldiers actually faced. Additionally, the sexualized nature of the performance gave military action an erotic component. As the New World was gendered female in the popular imagination, female military performance further intensified the already sexual nature of imperial conquest.

Contemporary reaction to “The Female Volunteer” reveals exactly this preoccupation with sexuality. While theatrical audiences and the public engaged by periodicals enjoyed Woffington’s Female Volunteer enough to circulate the image widely, the response wasn’t entirely positive. A pamphlet entitled *The Soldier’s Letter to the Female Volunteer: Being an Earnest Request to Hang up the Hat, and Pull off the Breeches with a Persuasive against False Appearances*, published under the pseudonym Will Wattle offered a mocking reply to Woffington’s performance.³³² Wattle immediately begins by stating that Woffington is, despite her clothing, obviously a woman. He then derisively accuses her of sexual profligacy: “*We Women take the Thing in Hand*. When was the time you did not? I ask’d all our Regiment, which consists of three Battalions, that Question; and they vowed they knew not” (3). He continues in this vein, saying she may “make them, strictly and literally speaking, a Standing Army” (4). Having twice accused her of sexually servicing an entire army of men, he suggests that her performance may entice some of the rebels to homosexual urges for their fellow soldiers. Wattle denounces her cross-dressing as French, before again attacking her person: “by opening a sufficient *Breach* (which I verily believe you can do) induce them to enter; which, after they have done, you may possibly bring a severe *After-Clap* to bear upon them, which will disorder them” (4). Punning on the word “breach,” Wattle ties together cross-dressing and sexual

wantonness. He characterizes both as destructive by suggesting Woffington is also rife with disease, such that she could disrupt the entire rebel army by infecting them all with a sexual illness.

The pamphlet closes with a discussion of the proper order of society, encouraging women like Woffington to abandon usurping masculine clothing and behaviors. A soldier does his duty by fighting in the military, while a woman does hers by wearing the proper clothing and encouraging men instead of mocking them. Clearly, Woffington's performance hit a nerve through its transgressive nature such that the pseudonymous Wattle felt the need to strike back by encouraging her not to stray from prescribed womanly behaviors. Indeed, he described her sexuality as corrupt and infectious. Woffington's flirtatious performance, which provided the intrigue of "The Female Volunteer," also opened her to attack. By trying to reduce Woffington to an aberrant sexual agent, Wattle resisted the confusion of gender categories.

Notably, however, for women seeking a life in the military, usurpation of masculine prerogative was not at all the goal. In fact, hiding their sex was of paramount importance. Being found out could result in expulsion, corporal punishment, rape, or death. To protect themselves, women had to take on a variety of behaviors. Women in the military bound their breasts to avoid detection. Even more problematic, however, was dealing with the natural processes of life. The close proximity in which soldiers lived required bodily functions to be acknowledged in rather frank detail. Women had to fashion tubes through which they urinated, or to squat to simulate defecation to keep from revealing their sex. Menstruation also presented grave challenges to safety. One woman intentionally fought with her commander on a monthly basis to get punitive guard duty during her cycles. Behaviorally, these women were forced to understand masculine norms and perform them as aggressively and competently as possible to integrate themselves

into the martial community.³³³ Women who chose to seek their fortunes in the army didn't do so to wantonly enjoy the benefits of maleness. They performed masculinity to survive the circumstances into which they were thrust. Far from destabilizing gender, these women's lives depended precisely on *not* challenging norms.

Kathleen Wilson has illustrated that, for eighteenth-century British society, the opposite of femininity was not masculinity, but vulgarity.³³⁴ I posit that Wattle's objection was not to the fact that a woman played a soldier as much as that Woffington specifically did so. The conflation of the military with an indecorous female sexuality was the root of the problem. The sexual nature of his attack on the actress suggests that his objection was based on her perceived deficiencies in adhering to proper feminine behavior. The vulgarity of "The Female Volunteer" drew his criticism more than the military garb. Notably, he is silent on her role in *The Humours of the Army*, which featured both the dress and the behavior of a soldier.³³⁵ "The Female Volunteer" was obviously written to engage with the audience's knowledge of Woffington's sexual persona and current events. By trading on her public image, Woffington struck a chord with London audiences, both good and bad.

By contrast, Clive's piece escaped censure. Even though the message of both pieces is essentially the same, "An Epilogue Recommending the Cause of Liberty" failed to excite the opprobrium of commentators. Both women's epilogues argued that the role of their fellows is to support men by withholding affection from cowards and traitors. The Clive piece lacked the sexualized playfulness of Woffington's performance, however, which meant that she was operating within the sanctioned boundaries of female behavior. At the same time, Clive did not enjoy as much acclaim as Woffington. She only performed her epilogue once, and it apparently did not circulate in print. Still, it fit her image as a model of chaste social comportment.³³⁶

The meaning that arises from these performances is not that women cannot participate in warfare, but that they should not. Just as in Annapolis-Royal, the military showed the importance of maintaining gender difference, though here in quite a different way. Wattle's negative reaction to the Woffington epilogue demarcates the boundary at which women's behavior became problematic. While her body was capable of performing manual exercises and taking on military attire, fact that the piece could excite a backlash, no matter how small, reified the importance of maintaining a separation between the genders. Both Woffington and Clive, in very different ways, contributed to creating a separate position for women that restricted them from military service.

The army existed to fight Britain's wars, to secure British supremacy in Europe, Asia, and the Americas. This, in turn, would ensure the steady flow of materials around the globe to fuel the emerging mercantile economy. In addition to its obvious participation in empire-building, the army also served a cultural role in establishing ideological constructions of nationhood. The British worried about the decay of their traditional social hierarchy and categories as they underwent the colonial project. Theatre became a major discursive site where, through the metaphor of the military, society could engage with ideas and test boundaries of women's role in the developing global empire, attesting to the centrality of gender difference to British identity. Actresses like Woffington and Clive, and ideally their offstage fellows around the country, became partners in forging the national identity that underpinned Britain's global imperial project.

Although British citizens may not have had much respect for the constituent members of the army, they certainly enjoyed the benefits it provided them. As Linda Colley notes, over the course of the century the state of near-constant warfare played a key role in forging a national

British identity and consciousness.³³⁷ With this emergent British identity, the fortunes of the soldier's image were buoyed. In addition to a war fighting force, then, the army became an exponent of Britishness to the crown's colonies around the globe. Performances by colonial garrisons served to export British identity and ideology to the New World and to perform British society for deployed troops. Simultaneously, martial performances in the metropole such as those of Woffington and Clive recalibrated both the role of women in the public arena and the image of the army.

CHAPTER 4

FEMALE ENTHUSIASTS

In the previous two chapters, I have examined how British performance constructed gender difference as an integral part of the nation's identity. The Americas introduced the British to the indigenous peoples of the new world, which offered a challenge to British social structures by suggesting that there were other ways to order a civilization. In actuality, though, the greatest threat would come not from the Americas, but from a much closer source when France fell into revolution. As Britain's chief rival for global supremacy, the collapse of the French aristocracy might have initially seemed a boon to British ambitions by hamstringing France's ability to focus on foreign affairs. As the revolution intensified into the Terror, however, it threatened more than just French colonial endeavors. As violence consumed France, the revolution threatened not just the Bourbon dynasty, but the notion of aristocratic governance itself; it sought to eradicate not just Catholic dogma, but religion as a whole; and it even called into question the role of women in society.

For a short time, it looked as if women might well take a more active role in the running of the emerging French state.³³⁸ During the *Ancien Regime*, women had no political rights or autonomy. As the revolution reshaped France, though, many women sought expansion of their rights. On 5 October 1789, a group of women armed with pikes, clubs, and other makeshift weapons marched on Versailles in protest of bread shortages and high prices. Throughout 1792, women held demonstrations in support of their right to bear arms. In 1793, a group of women formed the Society of Revolutionary Republican Women, an all-female political group

committed to radical politics. Though the club would only last a few months before being dissolved, women fought to assert themselves as political subjects during the upheaval of the revolution.³³⁹

Resistance to women's traditional disempowerment was not just a disorganized free-for-all, but a holistic movement with intellectual justification, just like the revolution writ large. Groups of French women issued a number of letters and pamphlets calling for equality between the sexes. Among their demands were legal protection and political enfranchisement, as well as the right to wear breeches and an end to shaming military deserters by clothing them in female dress.³⁴⁰ The most comprehensive argument for gender equality came from Olympe de Gouges, a playwright and political activist. In response to the National Assembly's *Déclaration des Droits de l'Homme et du Citoyen de 1789*, she issued a specifically gendered declaration in 1791 with *Déclaration des Droits de la Femme et de la Citoyenne*. Just as Abbé Sieyès and the Marquis de Lafayette had argued for the essential and inalienable equality between men across classes, so too de Gouges claimed that men and women were equal by nature. One of the cruxes of her argument was that women were subject to the same legal punishments as men but denied full participation in the political life of the state.³⁴¹ Though it had little material impact on women's role in society, the piece was a forceful intellectual justification for women's liberation and exposed the hypocrisy of a revolution that asserted the equality of all men but failed to address gender inequities. De Gouges's political activism, including her arguments for women's liberation, would eventually result in her arrest and execution.³⁴²

Across the channel, the French Revolution inspired a fierce debate that included discussion of the role women should play in society.³⁴³ Mary Wollstonecraft voiced support for the revolution generally, as she believed that it would lead to a political system that allowed for

greater gender equality.³⁴⁴ As such, her commentary eventually focused specifically on gender.

In 1791, Charles Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord gave a report to the National Assembly in which he argued that women's education should be restricted to domestic training.

Wollstonecraft issued a response entitled *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, in which she argued that women's inferiority was not innate but socially engineered due to a lack of equal educational opportunities. She claimed that offering women the same education as men would prove that they were capable of greater levels of responsibility and that doing so would have a positive effect on the nation as a whole.³⁴⁵ The work was generally well received in both the United Kingdom and France.³⁴⁶ Women's education was a site through which deconstructing gender difference could be debated.

The cogency of Wollstonecraft's argument is evident in the response it ultimately provoked. Dror Wahrman has mapped out what he terms the short eighteenth century, which ended in the 1780s due to a shift in gender ideology. Around that time, the sex-gender system came to dominate the discourse of gender difference in response to the possibility of material improvement in women's political autonomy. In previous eras, the prejudice against women regarded them as base and animalistic, in need of social control because they were more susceptible to animal passions. During this era, however, that prejudice changed. According to Wahrman, "The reaction to Wollstonecraft resulted not only from sudden anxieties about what she had to say, but also from the very fact that she and like-minded women continued to say it."³⁴⁷ By the beginning of the 1800s, the sex-gender system redefined women as inherently fragile and docile and therefore incapable of wielding political agency. As women demanded greater participation in society, the grounds on which that claim was rejected changed. By the

end of the long eighteenth century, antifeminist rhetoric sought to tie female subjugation to supposed natural factors that emphasized weakness.³⁴⁸

As the American Revolution led to the loss of a large part of Britain's colonies in North America and the French Revolution radically reshaped that country's society, Enlightenment philosophy argued for a more fluid society with greater equality. Of course, this expansion in rights was restricted to men. Alison G. Sulloway has defined a "compensatory equation," in which greater acceptance of the Enlightenment belief in the equality of all men was counterbalanced by tighter circumscription of women's roles. According to Sulloway, "In some unspecified way, woman's segregated domesticity was supposed to compensate for man's expanding universes and to forestall revolution both at home and overseas."³⁴⁹ A cultural double standard emerged, as "public men" were heroic citizens but "public women" were regarded as prostitutes.³⁵⁰ The desire to restrict women to the private, domestic world was fueled by masculine anxiety about the disruptive influence of the French Revolution.³⁵¹

The backlash to women's possible emancipation also drew on the established trope of gender difference as an index of civilization. The Anglican clergyman Thomas Gisborne insisted that "the female form [is] not commonly doomed, in countries where the progress of civilization is far advanced, to labours more severe than the offices of domestic life."³⁵² The argument is a tautology: in developed civilizations, women are biologically suited only to domesticity, and so a civilized society must confine them to the domestic sphere. As the political situation in the larger world allowed the possibility that women might gain greater autonomy, the cultural trope of the gender-transgressing woman became more threatening to the established order.

Though the French Revolution was primarily a national crisis, its ripple effect could be felt throughout Europe. The collapse of a longstanding, stable government and its attendant

upheaval was largely unprecedented. Jahan Ramazani has pointed out that literature is not bound by national borders: “playwrights, and readers...forge alliances of style and sensibility across vast distances of geography, history, and culture.”³⁵³ In the Revolution Controversy, British writers responded to the events unfolding in France; Wollstonecraft focused that response specifically on the gendered aspects of the revolution. Naturally, the geographic proximity of France and the United Kingdom meant that British theatre would respond to the Revolution as well. The Lord Chamberlain’s office forbade the production of plays that specifically dealt with the French Revolution,³⁵⁴ nevertheless, playwrights and actors worked out its political implications for audiences through elliptical means. Indeed, performance is often a key site for this kind of negotiation. In her critique of the Habermasian public sphere, Janelle Reinelt says, “For performance scholars, the necessity of developing an international analysis of the concept of the public sphere seems clear because performance often claims to play an important role in such a sphere.”³⁵⁵ The crisis of the French Revolution spurred a re-negotiation of gender politics, and performance figured prominently in that discussion.

In light of the transnational crises surrounding the French Revolution and its challenge to gender roles, I begin with a discussion of one of the most famous female figures of the French Revolution, Charlotte Corday. I treat her assassination of the journalist Jean-Paul Marat and her subsequent trial and execution as a performance meant to visibly enact the lengths that the new Republican government was willing to go to in order to ensure that traditional gender roles would be preserved. Corday was executed not so much for committing a murder as for asserting herself as having an authority to undertake political action. Corday’s execution was a violent boundary to women’s independence. The fact that she had to be executed was a sign of French corruption. Avoiding having to confront a similar problem was the goal of British society.

Next, I shall examine Richard Brinsley Sheridan's final play, the tragedy *Pizarro*. Specifically, I analyze the performance of Sarah Siddons as Elvira, the camp follower and mistress to Pizarro, in the original run and its reception. While the play allows Elvira to enjoy some of the same iconoclastic behavior that the earlier eighteenth century delighted in—she is largely responsible for Pizarro's defeat, for instance—the reception of the role demonstrates a much more limited scope for feminine behavior. Although the play is set in a world marked by military conflict with no true domestic space, and Elvira was plucked from her family at a young age by the villainous Pizarro, critical reaction excoriated the character for her perceived transgressions. The notion that a woman could contribute to a masculinized world was beyond the pale, eliciting strong pushback. *Pizarro*, one of the most popular plays of the whole century, helped to cement the newly emerging domestic position of women. Though the play was a hit, it provoked a number of vicious responses that showed a hostility to the notion of women operating outside a tightly prescribed environment.

Finally, I look at *The Female Enthusiast*, a Romantic tragedy by the obscure English-American playwright Sarah Pogson Smith that dramatizes the assassination and its aftermath. Pogson Smith takes a great deal of liberty with the story, re-imagining Corday as a reluctant hero who is thrust into action by the collapse of civil society around her. Pogson Smith reconfigured the trope of gender difference as a barometer of civilization. In *The Female Enthusiast*, Corday is not trying to usurp male prerogative; rather, she is forced to do the work of men because of a corrupt society. For Pogson Smith, it's not the case that gender difference is a product of civilization. Instead, a civilization should be judged by its ability to protect the domestic sphere.

The theatre was a key site for testing and reaffirming emerging boundaries, as it had long been a space where gender play was allowed and, in some ways, celebrated.³⁵⁶ In each of the

cases in this chapter, a woman was thrust into the public sphere because of a failed civil order that could not provide a discrete, domestic space. The maintenance of a separate sphere for women was an indicator of an orderly society; as *Pizarro*'s Elvira and both the real and fictional Corday showed, women taking on public roles was a sign of destabilization. In revolutionary France and the contemporaneous England, this behavior was met with vicious condemnation. Although Pogson Smith is far more critical of French society than Corday herself, her play does suggest that a proper world does not force women to act outside the home.

As the stage and its audience changed their relationship to gender destabilization, they reaffirmed a new reality. In response to the French Revolution, a transnational backlash against women as public agents of their own destiny broke out. That backlash was articulated, in part, by performance. Audiences were no longer amenable to or supportive of the transgressive woman. Instead, women were restricted to the domestic world, and societies were judged by their preservation of women's domestic spaces. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, the public sphere was much less open to women's emancipation than it seemed it might be a century earlier.

The Execution of Charlotte Corday: A True Melodrama

On one level, the collapse of the French monarchy and its destabilizing influence on French foreign ambitions was good news for the British Empire. As France devolved into violence and terror, however, Britons regarded the events with increasing alarm. The prospect of the conflagration crossing the channel and igniting a similar anti-monarchical fervor in the British was a constant worry throughout the period. Popular opposition amongst the press sought to characterize the French Revolution not just as anti-British in spirit but also as anti-masculine. Manliness was one of the hallmarks of British society. As Linda Colley says,

The British conceived of themselves as an essentially “masculine” culture—bluff, forthright, rational, down-to-earth to the extent of being philistine—caught up in an eternal rivalry with an essentially “effeminate” France—subtle, intellectually devious, preoccupied with high fashion, fine cuisine and etiquette, and so obsessed with sex that boudoir politics were bound to direct it.³⁵⁷

For British conservatives, the French Revolution was the sad but inevitable result of a society that was oversexed and corrupted by femininity.³⁵⁸ Promotion of traditional values—a patriarchal society, the nuclear family, and women firmly ensconced in domestic roles—was crucial to the maintenance of the nation itself.

Despite the perception of an effeminized French society run amok, the scene in France was hardly a paradise for women. As the monarchy collapsed, Marie Antoinette became the symbolic face of the corruption of the *Ancien Regime*. In this climate, women had to tread lightly to try to shape a better role in the emergent society and to avoid running afoul of revolutionaries who had a liberal attitude toward the use of violence. Amidst the Revolution, as in the *Ancien Regime*, vice was personified as a woman. From the sin of Eve in the garden to the current queen’s crimes against the state, women were regarded with deep suspicion.³⁵⁹ The events surrounding Charlotte Corday’s assassination of Jean-Paul Marat, as well as her subsequent trial and execution for the crime, provide a useful window into the gender dynamics of the revolution. The trial and execution was a performance of exclusion of the feminine from the political, public sphere. By executing Corday, and specifically through the details of her execution and desecration, the Republic demonstrated a commitment to enshrining patriarchal values in the new society.

In 1793, the journalist and polemicist Jean-Paul Marat was at the peak of his powers. After failing to find success as a scientist or doctor, he seized upon the Revolution to recast himself as a writer and political theorist. Adopting the title *The Friend of the People*, he wielded considerable influence throughout the early years of the Revolution. As a part of his public image, Marat frequently invoked the rhetoric of the martyr. In one extreme example, while on trial for treason, he pulled out a gun that he always carried and put it to his temple, threatening to kill himself immediately if found guilty. By the summer months of that year, he had driven the opposition party, the Girondists, to near destruction. His bitter political invectives and his frequent invocations of death attracted the attention of a young woman named Charlotte Corday. A Girondist sympathizer, she decided that the only way to save France was to destroy Marat.³⁶⁰

Corday was born to a family of lesser nobility who were largely destitute by the time of her birth. Her mother died when she was young, but her father saw to her education. In addition to her religious training, young Corday was fascinated by the philosophy of Rousseau and the work of Plutarch. A copy of Plutarch was the only personal effect she took with her on her fateful trip to Paris.³⁶¹ She read so voraciously that a witness to her trial would later remark “Her head was a fury of readings of every sort.”³⁶² At the time of the killing, she had left her father’s house and moved in with her aunt because she and her father continually argued about politics.³⁶³ She would emphatically demonstrate her commitment to her political beliefs shortly thereafter. Distressed by Marat’s attacks on the Girondists, Corday left Normandy for Paris to kill the journalist and save her friends. She initially planned to assassinate him in public on the Champ de Mars, then the National Assembly. Chantal Thomas describes Corday’s achievement drawing its power from her understanding of performance: “The specificity of Charlotte Corday is that,

like an artist, she wanted to create her great moment by herself and give it the greatest possible theatricality.”³⁶⁴ Her plans, however, were derailed by circumstances beyond her control.

Marat suffered from a flesh disease that was then largely mysterious, though we now suspect it to be a form of psoriatic arthritis which caused his skin to break out with burning, oozing sores. The only way to ease the intense pain was for Marat to soak in a tub of cool water. He would soak in his tub for hours at a time, writing with an arm draped out of the bath. He would, from time to time, take visitors to discuss matters of importance to the Republic. Hearing of this, Corday headed to meet him in his home. She stopped on the way and bought a black hat with green ribbon; after her capture, the green hat stuck prominently in the minds of witnesses to the point that the color green was banned for its association with anti-revolutionary sentiment. She also bought a kitchen knife with a five-inch blade, which she would use to assassinate Marat.³⁶⁵ So armed, she set off to her enemy’s home.

Corday first arrived at the house around 11:30 in the morning on 13 July 1793 but was turned away by Marat’s fiancée Simonne Evrard, who said he was too sick to receive visitors. She left a letter for him, claiming to have knowledge of a Girondist conspiracy underway in Caen, but she forgot to include a return address. Not hearing from Marat, Corday returned that evening around seven, at the same time the day’s newspapers were being delivered. She was able to enter his apartment and again asked Evrard for admittance. The fiancée tried to turn her away again, but Corday managed to speak loudly enough that Marat heard her and requested that she be shown into him. She spoke with Marat for about fifteen minutes with Evrard present; when Evrard stepped out for a moment to get more medicine for Marat’s bath, Corday struck. She stabbed him just below the shoulder blade, severing his carotid artery. He yelled “Help me, my dear friend!” to Evrard, and but the wound wasn’t survivable.³⁶⁶

Rushing back into the room, Evrard yelled at Corday. The newspaper delivery man, Laurent Bas, threw a chair at her but missed. He eventually captured her “by holding on to her breasts,” as he would later testify.³⁶⁷ Corday was exceedingly calm in laying out her rationale, telling the police commissioner, “having seen that civil war was on the point of exploding throughout France and persuaded that Marat was the principal author of this disaster, she had wished to sacrifice her life for her country.”³⁶⁸ Parisians largely reacted with outrage, demanding that she be killed immediately. They were dissuaded, however, because authorities claimed that Corday, a woman, could not possibly have acted on her own. They insisted that she must have been the face of a conspiracy, and they needed time to question her to root out her accomplices. Throughout the interrogation and trial, however, she insisted that she had acted alone. In addition to her desire to assert herself as a politically informed and active subject, Corday also apparently wanted to demonstrate that women were “both physically and morally more than strong enough to commit acts of patriotic violence.”³⁶⁹

In prison, Corday was allowed to write letters in hopes that she might reveal a co-conspirator. She wrote to her father, apologizing for “dispos[ing] of my existence without your permission.”³⁷⁰ Corday compared herself to a tragic heroine from a Corneille play; coincidentally, Corneille was a distant ancestor of hers. She also wrote a letter to France, assuring them that they would eventually understand her actions. She requested that her portrait be painted before she went to the guillotine. As was customary, she had her hair cut short, and she gave a lock of her hair to the painter as she was led away. At her execution, Corday was dressed in the red shirt given to traitors to the state and was paraded to the scaffold. Throughout, she maintained an air of calm dignity. An observer, Pierre Notelet, said, “Her beautiful face was so calm that one would have said she was a statue. Behind her, young girls held each other’s

hands as they danced. For eight days I was in love with Charlotte Corday.”³⁷¹ Indeed, her relaxed bearing and magnetism would prove to be a powerful part of her ongoing mystique.

In the aftermath of her execution, two irregularities demonstrate a notable gendered valence to the event. According to tradition, Corday suffered two postmortem humiliations that deviate from normal procedures. First of all, immediately after the decapitation, an executioner’s assistant named Legros lifted her head by the remains of her hair and swung it around. He also slapped her cheek. Some observers claimed that in the wake of the slap, the severed head opened its eyes and blushed. Legros was punished for his actions, but the slap was a final, excessive indignity forced on the woman.³⁷² Further, Corday was allegedly subjected to a medical examination after her death to confirm her virginity. By killing Marat and insisting on her political subjecthood, Corday had made herself a public woman. The examination was meant to make Corday’s body “doubly public” by making intimate details of her life open knowledge.³⁷³ A contemporary journal, *Les Affiches, Annexes et Avis divers*, claimed that Corday was four months pregnant at the time of her death. Demonstrating that Corday was not a virgin would have served to open her private life while also suggesting that she had acted on the orders of a man. She had repeatedly insisted that she had no man in her life.³⁷⁴ By falsifying that claim, the authorities could have invalidated Corday’s assertion of her subjectivity. Although some historians question the veracity of the exam, the postmortem violations of Corday’s body point to the importance of her actions in shaping the Republic’s gender politics.³⁷⁵

Although Corday’s entire public career spanned four days, she had a profound impact on the Revolutionary world. Corazzo and Montfort describe Corday as an early example of Peter Gay’s *femme-homme*, a social category that blurred gender lines. In France, the *femme-homme* was characterized as excessively violent and was contraposed to the submissive, domestic wife.

The attacks on Corday as a *femme-homme* stem from her inability to fit into either the mold of a proper woman or the revolutionary ideal of feminine propriety.³⁷⁶ To underscore this point, multiple women's groups attacked her for killing Marat, trying to distance themselves from Corday in advance of a possible anti-feminist backlash. The Society of Revolutionary Republican Women did not want to glorify a woman committing an act of violence for fear of being branded a group of rogues.³⁷⁷ While Corday's assassination of Marat was an explicitly political act, women who supported the new revolutionary society needed to ensure that it would not come to be considered a female one.

The Republican government wanted to build a new society—and specifically a “new man”—based on tightly ordered gender roles.³⁷⁸ More generally, then, the problem was precisely that Corday exhibited outwardly all the appropriate characteristics of femininity. She had a very feminine voice and spoke very well. People liked her and found her striking in appearance. The day after the execution, the *Journal de Perlet* said,

The spectacle of such wickedness, beauty, and talent united in the same person, the contrast between the magnitude of her crime and the weakness of her sex, her appearance of actual gaiety, and her smile before the judges, who could not fail to condemn her, all combined to create an impression on the spectators that is difficult to portray.³⁷⁹

This account of the young woman reveals a complicated attitude toward the impression she projected toward onlookers. She was, to all outward observers, a normal young woman possessed of no small amount of charm. Knowing that she had committed an unprecedented act of violence, though, gave her an aura of mystery that worked synergistically to make her an

irresistible figure. Corday did, briefly, captivate the imagination of the nation just like a tragic heroine from a Corneille play.

To combat Corday's relaxed demeanor and attractive magnetism, the Jacobins employed multiple strategies. All of the contemporary journalistic accounts of Corday at the trial and execution emphasize that she was calm, cool, and accepted her fate with aplomb.³⁸⁰ For the Jacobins, however, Corday was described like a woman possessed by a demon. Religious thought in the period considered the female more susceptible to demonic influence because of their less-developed physiology and psychology; in the Jacobin press, then, Marat was shown as a martyr to the unbridled, avenging feminine.³⁸¹ Marat's friend Jacques-Louis David painted the definitive image of the murder, *The Death of Marat*. The famous painting depicts the journalist in his tub, clutching the note that Corday left for him. The woman herself, however, is nowhere to be seen: "That is why it was not enough to get rid of her physically; it had to appear that she had never existed."³⁸² By excising Corday from the portrait, David downplayed the role of the young woman in the events.

For David, it was simple to erase Corday's involvement. In the history of the revolution, however, the Jacobins had no such strategy available to them. They had to reckon somehow with the fact that a twenty-five year-old woman of unremarkable origins was able to kill one of their leading lights. They had tried to undermine her actions by investigating a possible conspiracy and violating her bodily autonomy after her death. Additionally, they had the playwright and journalist Fabre d'Eglantine write a denigrating screed about her appearance and behavior, published in the *Gazette Nationale*:

Charlotte Corday was 25 years old, which is, according to our customs, almost an old maid, the more so with her mannish carriage and tomboyish stature...She had

no fortune and lived a paltry existence with an old aunt; her head was full of books of every sort; she declared, or rather she avowed with an affectation which approached the ridiculous, that she had read everything, from Tacitus to *Portier de Chartreux*... This woman absolutely threw herself outside her sex; when nature recalled her there, she experienced only disgust and boredom; sentimental love and its soft emotions no longer approach the heart of a woman who has the pretention to knowledge, to wit, to free-thought, to the politics of nations, who has a philosophic mania and who is eager to show it. Sensible and amiable men do not like women of this type... Charlotte Corday is a remarkable example of the seal of reprobation with which nature stamps those women who renounce the temperament, the character, the duties, the tastes and the inclination of their sex.³⁸³

Corday's intellectualism, her erudition, and her desire for knowledge were all turned against her. All of the features that led to her political commitment were a petard on which she was hoisted by the Jacobins. To them, these qualities made her unfeminine, a model to be avoided. Moreover, they sought to control the record to show that Corday was unattractive. In her appearance, they protest, she was masculine and unappealing. No normal man, they insist, could find her attractive. That accounts for her old-maid status. The Marquis de Sade went further, saying, "The barbarous assassin of Marat, similar to one of those composite creatures to whom one can assign no sex, vomited up by Hades for the unhappiness of both sexes, belongs solely to neither."³⁸⁴ To de Sade, Corday is not just masculine, but monstrously Other. She exhibits the characteristics of neither sex, and is repulsive for her categorically interstitial nature. Ultimately, the goal of the Jacobins was to destroy Corday's status as an icon. As a woman who existed free from the

control of a husband or a father, who undertook a boldly political act, they had to castigate her image to prevent her from becoming an exemplar of a new revolutionary woman.³⁸⁵

Corday's execution was meant to turn back feminist gains and to forcibly eliminate from Republican discourse the idea of a woman as a free, independent political subject.³⁸⁶ Had a man murdered Marat, he too would have been executed for the crime. He would not, however, have encountered the same level of posthumous abuse that Corday did. Her actions were particularly dangerous because they spoke to a hidden political will amongst the women of France. It was crucial to have the murder be staged and then interpreted by the public at large as aberrant and as revelatory of a damaged psyche. By shading Corday as a monster, both in action and in her departure from gender norms, the Jacobins tried to keep the political power of women out of the mainstream. In the short term, they would be successful. As public events, these executions staged the willingness of the state to use violence to patrol the borders of the appropriate range of the feminine. The permanence of Corday as a historical subject, however, could not be guillotined, slapped, and given a gynecological exam to sap its power.

Corday's assassination of Marat was the most frequently cited image of the revolution, surpassing even the storming of the Bastille. Within France, artistic representations of the event focused on Marat, but abroad Corday became the protagonist.³⁸⁷ In Britain, she was hailed as a hero and frequently compared to Joan of Arc and the Biblical heroine Judith.³⁸⁸ Her execution was carried out as punishment for the murder she committed. It took on a symbolic importance, however, as it was a violent restriction of a woman's ability to participate in the political life of the state. Occurring in the same year as the executions of Marie Antoinette and Olympe de Gouges, Corday's killing showed that the Republic was willing to use force to keep women in the domestic sphere.³⁸⁹

For Corday's execution to have the effect of curtailing women's advances into the political sphere, it needed to have a meaning beyond the destruction of her corporal body. The execution, and her image in the popular consciousness, needed to take on a symbolic meaning. In this way, Corday became like a figure in a romantic melodrama, her actions and fate accorded a meaning well beyond her physical existence. According to Peter Brooks, "the melodramatic body is a body seized by meaning. Since melodrama's simple, unadulterated messages must be made absolutely clear...to the audience, bodies of victims and villains must unambiguously signify their status."³⁹⁰ Corday's body suffered a physical execution, and it also underwent a metaphorical interrogation in popular imagination.

In the immediate aftermath of Marat's death, representations largely erased Corday from the story. A number of plays entered the French repertoire that celebrated Marat as a hero. One of the most popular, *L'Ami du Peuple ou La Mort de Marat*, staged a spectacular version of his funeral. His body was carried onstage, its wound prominent, with Evrard following close in a veil. His heart was borne on a cushion, and roses rained down on the proceedings from above. Liberty came down to speak and crowned Marat's body.³⁹¹ The play's popularity was probably due to its ability to allow theatregoers to imaginatively attend the funeral of their hero, presented with even more pomp than the original event. Around the same time, the *Republicaines Revolutionnaires* staged parades in which they carried Marat's tub.³⁹² The absence in the tub evoked the memory of Marat in the parade-goers, again allowing a broader, public reconciliation with the loss of the hero.

Abroad, however, Corday was the protagonist of the story, with her heroic status showing the corruption of the French during the Reign of Terror. Her actions were not about trying to steal male prerogatives but the result of a civilization that had collapsed to a point where there

was no domestic space available for a young woman. A society's level of civilization could be judged by the extent to which it allowed women to fulfill their duties as domestic, rather than public, actors. By drawing on this construction, English-language theatre was able to celebrate Corday as a laudable figure while also undermining her claims to political agency. As the eighteenth century closed, that trope would prove a useful schematic for women's place in the world, and English-language theatre would eagerly take it up.

***Pizarro*: Sheridan's Hit**

Richard Brinsley Sheridan is best remembered for his satirical comedies of the 1770s, but the greatest hit of his lifetime actually came at the end of his writing career in the 1790s. *Pizarro*, though far less enduring in its influence, was a massive hit with London audiences that proved a tremendous boon to Drury Lane's financial health. Despite the play's popularity, critics have tended to dismiss it both as overblown melodrama and as a betrayal of his earlier work which mocked the same type of spectacular extravagance that *Pizarro* indulged in.³⁹³

Whether *Pizarro* deserved it or not, the play enjoyed a wildly successful run, eventually proving to be the most popular play of the 1790s.³⁹⁴ Opening on 24 May 1799, the initial run extended for 31 nights and generated £13,624, totaling a fourth of Drury Lane's income for that season.³⁹⁵ At the time, Sheridan was in desperate need of a hit. While he is well remembered as a dramatist, his tenure as manager of Drury Lane was largely a financial disaster. In 1794, he had dipped into the theatre's cash reserves to pay for renovations and expansions to the space and had yet to make the money back. Actors—including Sarah Siddons herself, the great tragic star of the company—frequently complained that Sheridan was behind in paying them their wages.³⁹⁶ The financial straits into which the theatre had fallen necessitated drastic measures, so Sheridan

wrote *Pizarro*. This was the only play he wrote after his election to Parliament, essentially serving as a return from a self-imposed retirement from playwriting.³⁹⁷

Sheridan adapted *Pizarro* from the plots of two plays by German dramatist August von Kotzebue: *Die Sonnenjungfrau* (*The Virgin of the Sun*) and *Die Spanier in Peru* (*The Spaniards in Peru*).³⁹⁸ Kotzebue was tremendously popular with British audiences in the late eighteenth century, and Sheridan sought to capitalize on that trend. In his native country, Kotzebue was derided as a killer of drama; British critics expressed similarly unkind views towards the writer. His low literary reputation owes to the fact that his pieces were conceived as performance vehicles more than literary works. Featuring action-oriented plots with lots of opportunity for spectacle, an optimistic view of human nature, and well-developed female characters, Kotzebue's plays appealed to a wide range of audience members. In the two decades from 1790 to 1810, 36 Kotzebue plays were published in translation, and 22 of those were performed.³⁹⁹ Whether or not cultural authorities were happy about it, London audiences were firmly in the grip of Kotzebue-mania.

Joseph Donohue, while expressing the usual critical derision of *Pizarro* as a piece of literature, notes that the play nevertheless speaks to Sheridan's ability to understand and cater to public tastes. Combining spectacle, music, and roles written to suit the talents of his star company members, *Pizarro* was a calculated blockbuster that rewarded Sheridan's perspicacity with a hit that ranked with *The Beggar's Opera* in terms of monumental theatrical successes of the century.⁴⁰⁰ Certainly, the play's locales offer extravagant scenographic possibilities. The action opens in the Spanish camp, and later scenes unfold in the Peruvian Temple of the Sun and in a countryside landscape filled with caves, hills, and a canyon spanned by a bridge that serves as a prop for the high point of the dramatic spectacle.

The play's plot is a fairly straightforward late eighteenth-century heroic tragedy. Drawing on the Black Legend,⁴⁰¹ the play tells the story of the noble Peruvians and their struggle against the wicked Spanish conquistadores endeavoring to wipe them out. Under the command of the brutal Francisco Pizarro, the Spanish forces are preparing for a surprise attack on the Peruvians during an upcoming religious ceremony. Unfortunately for the Spaniards, however, their brilliant general Alonzo has defected to the Peruvian side out of love for Cora. She had been promised to the noble Peruvian general Rolla, but he steps aside for love of her and allows her to marry Alonzo. As the play begins, the Spanish fear they cannot defeat the Peruvians while Alonzo and Rolla command their armies.

Despite the Spanish plans to ambush the ceremony, the Peruvians receive word of the coming attack and march out to meet their enemies. Before the battle, Rolla gives a stirring, patriotic speech to his men. Alonzo orders his wife and their infant son to wait with the other wives and children instead of staying to watch the fighting. He then makes Rolla swear that, should he die in battle, Rolla will marry Cora and take their son as his own. Although the battle is fierce and the Peruvians suffer initial setbacks, they are eventually able to drive off the Spanish, though Alonzo is captured while the king is saved. When Rolla informs Cora of Alonzo's capture and his last wishes, she refuses his advances and insists that he selfishly let her husband be captured so that he could take over his family. Bitterly hurt, Rolla hatches a plan to rescue his friend.

Meanwhile in the Spanish camp, Pizarro interrogates Alonzo and decides to execute him for his betrayal. Alonzo insists, however, that the pagan Peruvians are superior to the Spanish in terms of both conforming to Christian ideals and innate nobility of spirit. He resolves to meet his fate nobly, refusing to return to the Spanish fold. Pizarro's consort, a former nun named Elvira,

begs the Spanish general to spare Alonzo's life because executing an enemy rather than beating him on the field of battle is beneath the dignity of a conqueror. Pizarro refuses, however, saying that he cares more about conquering Quito than his future reputation and claiming that history will understand and absolve him. Furious at his intransigence, Elvira turns on Pizarro and plots to revenge herself on him.

Elvira and Rolla's plans eventually intersect. Having disguised himself as a monk come to visit the prisoner before his execution, Rolla sneaks into his cell and offers to change places with him. Giving Alonzo the monk's costume, Rolla sends him back to Cora. Moments after this, Elvira arrives planning to free Alonzo herself. She and Rolla talk, and she convinces the Peruvian to assassinate Pizarro for her while he sleeps. Taking a dagger from her, Rolla steals into Pizarro's tent, where the Spanish general is in the midst of a nightmare about the horrors of battle. At the crucial moment, however, Rolla's moral rectitude refuses to allow him to murder a sleeping enemy. Elvira comes to check on his progress, and her alarm at seeing his failure wakes Pizarro. Pizarro has them both arrested and declares both shall be tortured and executed for attempting to murder him.

Amidst the excitement in the camp, Cora waits miserably contemplating killing herself and the baby for anguish at the loss of Alonzo. When he suddenly returns, she rushes off to meet him and leaves her baby under a tree. Two Spanish soldiers spot the child and capture it, believing that it will be safer away from its pagan parents. Meanwhile, Pizarro has freed Rolla from captivity because he does not think it proper to imprison or execute a warrior of Rolla's skill. As Rolla prepares to leave, the Spanish soldiers arrive with the baby. Rolla recognizes the child as Alonzo's and pleads with the conquistador to spare its life, offering to be executed in the baby's place. Pizarro refuses, so Rolla grabs the child and steals away with it.

In a climax that reveled in the spectacular possibilities of the new Drury Lane stage, Rolla flees the camp, battling against the pursuing Spanish forces. All the characters remark on his martial prowess, and he manages to escape, destroying a bridge in his wake to keep the pursuers at bay. He returns the baby and dies of a wound received in the escape as Ataliba and Alonzo lead the Peruvians into battle against the Spanish. During the fighting, Elvira arrives wearing the novice's habit that she wore when Pizarro first met her. The conquistador, engaged with Alonzo in single combat, is struck motionless by the sight and killed as a result of his inaction. Alonzo, Cora, and their child are restored, and the Spanish prepare to leave the Peruvians in peace. Pizarro's body is carried off, and the Peruvians declare Rolla a hero and prepare to celebrate his life. Elvira declares she will return to the religious life, living out her days as a nun praying for the welfare of the Peruvian people.⁴⁰²

Because Sheridan didn't read German, he hired a writer and translator named Matthew "Monk" Lewis to prepare a translation of the two pieces to which he would edit and add dramatic elements. Lewis completed the translation, but Sheridan disliked it and paid a different, now unknown writer £100 for a second version.⁴⁰³ In the adaptation process, he altered the tenor of the source text. The most original aspect of Sheridan's version of the story—and also the aspect of the piece that has received the most critical attention—is the speech in the second act from Rolla to his troops in advance of the battle against the Spanish. Rolla's monologue engaged both the recent past and contemporary crises in British politics and foreign policy. While the speech was Sheridan's primary contribution, it wasn't actually new material. The text was drawn from an address that Sheridan had given in 1788 during the impeachment trial of Warren Hastings, then governor of the British colony in India. Hastings had allegedly wronged some native women, which served as an impetus for a push amongst the Whigs in Parliament to press

for his removal from office. The trial ultimately lasted for nearly seven years before the public's diminished interest led to an acquittal in 1795. Still, Rolla's speech recycled the address, staging for audiences a reminder of Hastings's supposed corruption in an arena in which he couldn't defend himself. While Hastings was acquitted, then, Sheridan had the last laugh on the matter.⁴⁰⁴

At the same time he rehashed old grievances, Sheridan also spoke to contemporary concerns facing the country. As the Napoleonic Wars consumed the continent, Britons were fearful of a French invasion of the home islands. The title character is based on Napoleon himself, and Loftis claims the speech was meant to shore up English morale in light of the invasion scare. By including such a patriotic, anti-Napoleonic sentiment, Sheridan shored up the play against attacks. Although he had been a vocal Whig as an MP and had regularly spoken out on behalf of the revolution in France, he used Rolla's address to his troops to attack Bonaparte while he demonstrated a clear commitment to British freedom and the Hanoverian dynasty.⁴⁰⁵ The patriotic nature of the address likely served to stem some of the criticism directed at the source material's foreign origins as well. In spite of the foreign origins and setting of the story, throughout *Pizarro*, Sheridan addressed himself to his fellow countrymen.

In that light, some of Sheridan's alterations impact the play's attitudes toward gender and appropriate British femininity. Donohue attributes Kotzebue's popularity to, among other things, his willingness to deal with more salacious material than many of his contemporaries.⁴⁰⁶ Though Sheridan retains the titillating exotic location and wanton heroine, his version tones down the overt sexuality of the Kotzebue piece. Further, Sheridan notably softens Elvira's character, making her more palatable to the star for whom he wrote.⁴⁰⁷ The Kotzebue version of the character was a breeches role, though Sheridan eliminated that aspect of the character as well.⁴⁰⁸ Elvira was written specifically for Sarah Siddons, the great star of the late eighteenth-century

stage.⁴⁰⁹ De-sexualizing the character from Kotzebue's version suited Siddons's professional line, her dignified offstage reputation, and images of female respectability that were coalescing in popular culture at the time. One of Sheridan's larger themes in *Pizarro* is balancing a pro-British, nationalist ideology with skepticism toward the maintenance of a global empire. Gender was a key site in which that theme was expressed.⁴¹⁰ Here, I explore the ways in which the play's reception illustrated a change in perceptions of gender roles through the response to the character of Elvira. Specifically, while the play featured a powerful starring role for Sarah Siddons, it also elicited criticism for showing a woman who moved throughout a masculine space.

Siddons' Elvira

While there had been female stars before Sarah Siddons, she took the concept of female celebrity to new heights. She was likely destined for the stage from her birth in 1755 in Wales to the Kemble acting family. Eight of her siblings—most notably her brother John Philip Kemble—would also become actors. Throughout her life, she lived in the context of a theatrical dynasty which she elevated to its apex. She began her career playing in the provinces, especially Bath, gaining notoriety and acclaim. She eventually attracted the attention of a Reverend Henry Bate, who advised David Garrick that her presence in the company might prove a boon to his upcoming farewell season. Bate negotiated on her behalf, securing a number of smaller, mostly comic roles for her. She was pregnant when the 1775-76 season opened, which delayed her debut. Siddons eventually played Drury Lane for the first time on 29 December 1775, in the role of Portia. That first season would ultimately prove disastrous; though Garrick was welcoming, his impending retirement overshadowed the newcomer. Moreover, the women in the company were apparently reluctant to welcome a new competitor into their ranks, and Siddons found herself unable to gain a foothold in the company. Reviewers were unkind, noting that she seemed

unable to fit her voice to the larger space of the Drury Lane theatre. After Garrick left the company in the spring of 1776, Sheridan took over and dismissed Siddons. She returned to the touring circuit, presumably resigned to a career as a provincial star. As it happened, however, she would ultimately have the last laugh. Over the course of the next six years, Siddons repaired and burnished her damaged reputation, playing a variety of tragic roles that even included a turn as Hamlet in York. In particular, she enjoyed four tremendously successful and financially lucrative seasons in Bath. Her star again on the rise, Sheridan came to recruit her once more for Drury Lane. Though the memory of her previous failure made her wary of a return to London, she eventually accepted Sheridan's terms. She and her husband had four children to care for, and the promise of greater financial security was too great to pass up. By 1782, there were far fewer female stars in the company, and in short order she seized control of the repertoire of great, tragic roles that would cement her reputation as the greatest actress of her day. In the 1782-83 season, Siddons found the success that had eluded her in her previous turn on the London stage. She quickly became the most visible female star of Drury Lane, and it was difficult for patrons to gain a seat in the house when she appeared on the bill.⁴¹¹ Her phenomenal success, which was a transitional moment in acting style from the mannered, declamatory style that predominated most of the eighteenth century to the romantic style of the early nineteenth century, derives largely from innovations in technique. Siddons's influence on audiences, and on theatre more generally, was due to a robust, newly psychological attitude to playing her roles.

We see in Siddons's approach a novel understanding of character and action in the art of the actor that both responded to and shaped the trends of the day. In terms of character, she introduced a new level of preparation to the actor's craft. She devoted extensive time to studying her roles in preparation for playing a part and tried to understand and replicate a character's

emotions. In addition, she endeavored to understand the other characters as well as her own, concerning herself with their business in addition to hers.⁴¹² Her biographer Thomas Campbell records her as saying “The quality of abstraction has always appeared to me to be so necessary in the art of acting.”⁴¹³ For Siddons, in the context of the eighteenth century, the word “abstraction” seems to mean something closer to our modern usage of the word “concentration.”⁴¹⁴ The fact that she felt it necessary to make such a claim speaks volumes about her commitment to her roles relative to the average performer on the Drury Lane stage. Indeed, we may see further evidence of the importance of concentration to her stage work through a convention of the period that she eschewed. It was common, at the time, for performers to drop character when not speaking, or to break character to greet friends and admirers from the stage in the midst of a performance. Siddons, however, focused on rendering her character the entire time she was onstage, even if not speaking or moving. Moreover, she never broke to speak to the audience—unlike even her famous, revered brother. Ultimately, her style stressed unity of character and the marking out of fine, subtle detail in characterization and performance.⁴¹⁵

These subtleties were also expressed physically through her use of body in her unique, revolutionary method of depicting emotion through action as well. For example, Lady Macbeth was one of her most celebrated roles. Traditionally, during the character’s mad scene towards the end of the play, she entered holding a candle. Siddons, however, elected to put the candle down so that she could repeatedly wring her hands as if trying to wash off the blood stains she imagined. The move was such a huge departure from what Hannah Pritchard, the previous Lady Macbeth had done that, according to Siddons, Sheridan rushed to her dressing room right before she went onstage to try to talk her out of it. She stuck to her plan, however, and the hand-washing gesture became a key part of her mad scene.⁴¹⁶

Perhaps Siddons's most revolutionary conceit, however, was her ability to render action in a revelatory way. Eighteenth-century acting required the performer to strike certain codified poses called "points" that were meant to signify the emotional state of the character. Siddons was acclaimed for the speed with which she could hit her points, transitioning quickly between positions while still properly rendering the emotional meaning of the point legible. Her hobby as a sculptor likely gave her a detailed understanding of posing and figure behavior and contributed significantly to her methods.⁴¹⁷ The emerging culture of Romanticism in the theatre "is marked by an increasing insistence that the performer should show the transitions from one moment to another, should act through reaction, should convey the thought processes that eventually issue in speech."⁴¹⁸ Siddons's ability to hit her points quickly, then, both contributed to the transition to more action-oriented, psychological style at the same time that it perfectly suited the contemporary taste. Moreover, her face was highly expressive, capable of rendering the same fine emotion that her body depicted.⁴¹⁹ In her physicality, then, Siddons was both revolutionary and of her moment. She is often positioned in theatre histories as the inheritor of Garrick's legacy.⁴²⁰ Like Garrick, Siddons changed the way that actors onstage sought to render their characters. More than Garrick, however, Siddons's performances, novel for their speed and action, infused her characters with an interiority that was expressed through a higher degree of movement than previous generations. Through her high level of preparation and her fast-paced, action-oriented performances, Siddons's style revealed the inner workings and inner life of a character to a degree theretofore unseen on the London stage.

In developing a style of performance that valued more intellectual depth and action than her precursors, Siddons naturally challenged contemporary gender norms that sought to establish women as intellectually inferior and docile. Her case, then, is particularly interesting, as she

excited in her spectators reactions that were largely unprecedented, destabilizing her gender onstage and the appropriate behavior of her audiences as well. Pat Rogers notes that “The affective value of her acting is regularly imagined as a mode of power.”⁴²¹ That power, predictably, was gendered male. Contemporary critics flouted gender conventions when writing about Siddons, with the term “sublime” frequently being applied to her work. The sublime had entered British aesthetic discourse with the 1757 publication of Edmund Burke’s treatise *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*. Burke places the sublime and the beautiful against one another; the sublime is powerful, raw, natural, and masculine, while the beautiful is elegant, aesthetic, mannered, and feminine. Though gender convention dictated that a woman’s performances were supposed to be beautiful, Siddons was regularly described as sublime.⁴²² As her portraitist Joshua Reynolds observed, “The Sublime impresses the mind at once with one great idea; it is a single blow.”⁴²³ To see Siddons, then, was to be swept out of oneself and one’s senses. Her biographer James Boaden describes her as achieving a sort of honorary maleness through her dramatic abilities: “There was a male dignity in the understanding of Mrs. Siddons, that raised her above the helpless timidity of other women.”⁴²⁴ Heather McPherson has argued that Siddons exhibited a unique type of power that transcended gender bounds. Though the actress always foregrounded the femininity of her characters in her writings, visual depictions of her emphasize her raw power.⁴²⁵ Her ability to elicit such wild, emotional responses allowed her—onstage, at least—to exist outside the confines of her biological sex.

This transcendence of gender was not confined to Siddons herself. Audience response to Siddons’s acting exhibits a similar lack of concern with appropriate gender behavior. Boaden says of her effect on the men in her audience, “those *tears*, which manhood, at first, struggled to

suppress, but at length grew proud of indulging. We then, indeed, knew all the LUXURY of grief.”⁴²⁶ The description is telling: Boaden notes that decorum dictated that the men fight against displaying emotion before giving in to the overwhelming spectacle. Ultimately, however, crying at Siddons was a point of pride, indicating that the viewer had an appropriate level of reverence for her skill. Moreover, Boaden calls the “grief” that the men in the audience felt a “luxury.” Given that he suggests a male viewer needs to suppress the tears for as long as possible, one can assume that tragedy in the theatre was one of the few safe areas for expressing grief publicly. As Siddons herself was able to exert masculine power through performance, the spectacle she created allowed a safe venue for men to show feminine behavior. Her ability to wring tears from the men in her audience was remarkable. No less an icon of British masculinity than the king himself fell under the sway of her dramatic abilities. Though George III apparently preferred both Covent Garden and comedy, he was a great admirer of Siddons and regularly attended her performances. Observers noted that the king would often cry, an action which he tried to hide behind the monocle he wore.⁴²⁷ As with the average viewer that Boaden described, George III fought to keep his tears from other onlookers. Sensibility, the philosophical framework that pervaded Britain in the late eighteenth century, prized the expression and reception of emotion.⁴²⁸ For men in the audience, Siddons offered an outlet for non-masculine feeling. The honorary maleness that Siddons achieved was due, at least in part, to her performing such valuable cultural work. Even more valuable, though, was the way in which her acting affected the women in her audience.

When discussing the fact that her brother, whom she nevertheless revered, had achieved greater acclaim than herself, Siddons remarked “perhaps in the next world women will be more valued than they are in this.”⁴²⁹ Obviously, in spite of the honorary maleness that Boaden

attributed to her, Siddons did not feel especially valued by her society. As we shall see, her personal life contributed to the constraints she must have felt. Certainly, many women in her audience felt the same. Lindal Buchanan remarks that “Siddons’s ‘masculine’ performance on stage, therefore, served tragedy and, in so doing, also fulfilled a civic purpose—reviving the sympathies of women jaded by affluence, apathy, and pride.”⁴³⁰ Beyond those positive feelings, however, Siddons gave the women in her audience an otherwise non-existent outlet for frustration with the extreme patriarchal society they lived in. During Siddons’s career, audiences developed a habit of shrieking along with her during her performances.⁴³¹ In particular, women cried vociferously, screamed, had ecstatic meltdowns, and even fainted as her character suffered onstage.⁴³² The women, then, themselves performed the character’s emotions alongside Siddons from their place in the house. Michael Booth notes that Siddons’s characters are almost universally subjected to the capricious whims of men who treat them as objects for their use. They are brought to ruin either through the active machinations or the indifference of men in their lives. Her female audience recognized its own highly regulated, constrained social position in her characters, and their extreme emotional response was reflective of the consonance between stage and life.⁴³³ The fictional content of her performances, then, plays an even more important social role for women than it did for men. There was almost no other acceptable venue for women to express frustration, anguish, or disgust with the “world of men who defined and circumscribed them, and denied them what we would consider the most basic of civil rights.”⁴³⁴ By channeling negative responses into the theatre—where such wild flights of fancy could be expressed with little threat to mainstream society—Siddons provided a safety valve for the subjects of patriarchal society to vent their discontent. The theatre and tragedy, then, are not just a way to “revive the sympathies” of women, as Buchanan says, but a way to canalize objections

to male dominance to prevent those objections from entering discourse writ large. While Siddons destabilized gender onstage and in her audience, her doing so ultimately reified for the British world the exact roles subverted within the theatre walls. As Wahrman points out, the late eighteenth century saw a sea change in the way that women were treated, with gender roles being far more restrictive than in previous eras. The development of a Romantic theatre, focused on feeling and emotion, makes sense as a social palliative for the curtailment of formerly acceptable behaviors. Siddons's acting, then, was a lightning rod for female disenchantment with the world outside the theatre.

A crucial aspect of Siddons's ability to challenge gender perceptions was her notably blameless private life, in which she performed the role of dutiful wife and mother as well as she rendered her tragic women on the stage. More than anyone before her, Siddons was "specifically the woman who had shown that life upon the wicked stage need not bring with it any blameworthy personal associations."⁴³⁵ She married William Siddons, a fellow actor, in 1773 at the age of eighteen.⁴³⁶ From her earliest days, then, she was billed as "Mrs. Siddons," aligning her personal identity with matronly and wifely ideals. The audience's knowledge that Siddons herself was a devoted wife and mother allowed her to play recalcitrant, deviant, or transgressive roles without overtly threatening to bring that same iconoclasm off the stage.⁴³⁷ By promoting the gulf between her offstage life and the tragic roles she inhabited, Siddons allowed the audience to marvel at her acting as an impressive dramatic accomplishment rather than an expression of real-life degeneracy. This strategy ultimately afforded her a greater leeway in the public sphere than any of her predecessors had enjoyed.⁴³⁸ Of course, it was customary to refer to English actresses with the title "Mrs." regardless of their actual martial status. Both Elizabeth Barry and Anne Bracegirdle—women with widely distinct reputations—were so identified,

though neither ever married. For the erstwhile Sarah Kemble, however, the title “Mrs. Siddons” was reflective of her offstage character. Moreover, playing under the name Siddons instead of her family name initially must have limited her ability to trade on brand recognition. Still, she promoted her identity as a married woman at the expense of her career prospects.

By all accounts, Siddons not only defined her public image through her marital status but also adhered to the strictures of propriety. Her remark about women hopefully having a better lot in the next world may have applied to her domestic life as well. William began his life as a fellow actor, but he never enjoyed any notable success and eventually devoted himself to the management of his wife’s career. His failure to achieve success on the stage embittered him, and their marriage was filled with strife as a result of his frustrations. William’s lack of dramatic distinction did not, however, mean he was penniless. Legally, though Sarah made almost all of the family’s income, she was beholden to her husband’s control. He tended to her business affairs and provided his wife with an allowance, though no records survive that indicate how big this sum was.⁴³⁹ Adding insult to injury, William was as effective a business manager as he had been an actor. Until 1802, when Sarah and her brother defected to Covent Garden, the Siddonses were frequently in financial straits as William was routinely incapable of getting Sheridan to pay his wife’s salary on time.⁴⁴⁰ The financial exigencies caused by Sheridan’s unscrupulous management and her husband’s ineptitude would lead to the only major unflattering claim that attended Siddons throughout her life: that she was uncommonly greedy.

Although the Siddons’s marriage seems to have been less than idyllic, she mostly managed to avoid the sexually charged innuendo that tended to follow most early English actresses. She was once smeared for allegedly having had an affair with one Thomas Lawrence, a serial womanizer who had seduced two of her daughters. To defend her from the accusation,

William offered a public reward for anyone who could identify the source of the rumors. The only other insinuation against her character came in 1809, a year after William's death. Someone published an anonymous letter entitled *Mrs. Galindo's Letter to Mrs. Siddons*, alleging that the latter had carried on a lengthy affair with the former's husband in spite of the woman's multiple pleas for her to stop. Neither rumor gained much traction in the popular imagination, though, and Siddons maintained a sterling reputation throughout her life.⁴⁴¹

Far more common was the accusation that Siddons was marked by excessive avarice. Siddons had a large family to care for and a husband whose earning prospects were limited at best. With her income in the capital constantly at the mercy of Sheridan's bad business, she was forced to tour frequently to remain solvent. When touring, Siddons generally had demanding terms to ensure that the trip would be lucrative. While these demands were due to the precarious nature of her employment with Drury Lane, critics sought to pillory her as a capricious and mercenary star squeezing blood from a stone by extorting provincial theatres' last penny in exchange for her presence. Moreover, Booth speculates that the stress of her initial failure to achieve fame at Drury Lane, along with the years of dues-paying that she endured in the provincial theatres, imbued her with "a basic sense of insecurity."⁴⁴² Despite the very legitimate reasons for Siddons's attention to financial detail, she was attacked for greed.

As with her domestic role as a proper wife, Siddons also cultivated an image of perfect British motherhood throughout her career, enhancing both the public's perception of her as a private subject and also her dramatic abilities.⁴⁴³ Siddons was well regarded for her maternal qualities. She and William had seven children, of whom five would die before Siddons herself.⁴⁴⁴ Buchanan suggests that the "maternal ethos" that Siddons cultivated as a part of her public image was crucial to disarming any threat her stardom and masculine performance style posed.⁴⁴⁵ From

her earliest appearance on the London stage, Siddons's image was deeply aligned with motherhood. Her initial debut in 1775 was delayed by the birth of a child.⁴⁴⁶ Throughout her career, she often acted while pregnant, further performing her maternal identity alongside her characters.⁴⁴⁷ Moreover, in Garrick's version of *The Fatal Marriage* that served as her successful re-entry to Drury Lane in 1782, her real-life son Henry played her child in the play as well. The image of the two of them in character together would eventually be memorialized in a portrait.⁴⁴⁸ In writing about her technique, Siddons also carefully foregrounded her domestic identity. She noted that "It was my custom to study my characters at night, when all the domestic cares and business of the day were over."⁴⁴⁹ Though she was a professional who took her work seriously, she made clear here that she subordinated her work as a performer to her duties as a wife and mother.

Siddons's stage roles were ghosted by her domestic identity throughout her career.⁴⁵⁰ In particular, *Pizarro* was performed in the context of a well-known domestic tragedy in her life. Seven months before she appeared as Elvira, her daughter Maria had died of tuberculosis. She performed the role of Elvira still in mourning, with the audience aware of her maternal grief.⁴⁵¹ The disease had so ravaged Maria that by the time she died, though she was only nineteen, she appeared greatly aged.⁴⁵² Both broadly across her entire career and in the specific context surrounding *Pizarro*, then, Siddons's performances were read through the lens of her highly cultivated public image.

Ultimately, Sarah Siddons achieved new heights of fame and respectability for English actresses through her canny manipulation of her public persona and, more importantly, her considerable talents as an actress. The gulf that she was able to establish between her offstage life and her fictional characters, I would suggest, is what led to her success. She conformed to a

very tightly prescribed gender role in her real life, one which varied widely from the roles she was typically called upon to play. Her celebrity arose from the sense that she was not promoting herself but instead working to serve the playwrights who created her characters. The self-control she performed through the propriety of her private life licensed any onstage departures from feminine decorum. In this light, we can examine her turn as Elvira.

In the opening stage directions, Sheridan describes a lavish, exotic scene that prepares the audience for the visual spectacle that will pervade the piece; indeed, reviews noted that the camp was one of the most striking scenes. Elvira was revealed, asleep: “*A magnificent Pavilion near PIZARRO’S Tent—a View of the Spanish Camp in the back Ground.—ELVIRA is discovered sleeping under a canopy on one side of the Pavilion*” (657). A contemporary critic of the play attacked the logic of the opening, questioning why a woman would choose to nap in the middle of a military camp in the midst of an ongoing war.⁴⁵³ While the scene may not make sense from a tactical perspective, Siddons was introduced as a spectacular element alongside the magnificence of the camp. In objectifying her thus, Sheridan overtly traded on her star status, assuring the audience that there would be no wait to see their favorite star. At the same time, the play begins to depict Elvira as a subject with little agency in this world. She was just another piece of set dressing. Her agency was further undermined by the first action of the play. Pizarro’s secretary, Valverde, enters and kisses the hand of his commander’s sleeping mistress. She awakens and reacts “*with indignation*,” asking “Shall I inform your master of this presumptuous treachery? shall I disclose thee to Pizarro? Hey!” (657). While she threatens to reveal his transgression, she ultimately lets it go. She does, however, tell Valverde that Pizarro’s fame is the reason she loves him, because “I was formed to be won by glory and renown” (658). The entirety of the opening depicts Elvira as helpless, an object or prize to be captured by masculine achievement. This

expository information will eventually prove crucial to the play's climax and resolution. Having Siddons in the role, however, likely amplified the audience's affective response to the character as a submissive subject to masculine will because of her popular image as the ideal version of British womanhood. The next scene further elucidates her status.

Immediately after this, Pizarro enters to meet with his generals to discuss the progress of the campaign against the Peruvians. He greets Elvira by asking why she's smiling, and she replies that "to laugh or weep without a reason, is one of the few privileges we women have" (659). The character overtly refers to the highly restricted role she experiences in the Spanish military camp. Through Siddons's performance, however, these lines take on an additional valence of meaning; the only freedom she experienced was onstage, via her ability to replicate emotion for the delectation of an appreciative crowd. While men in the audience could hear in the line a description of the emotional caprice associated with femininity, women could understand the extremely limited freedoms allowed them.

Pizarro then orders Elvira out for the meeting, though she refuses to leave his tent. Protesting that women provide the motivation for men's grandiose actions but are never allowed to participate in them, she insists that she be allowed to remain. Pizarro finally relents, insisting that she be silent before taking note of her recent intransigence: "PIZ: Ha!—there's somewhat in her manner lately— [PIZARRO *looks sternly and suspiciously towards ELVIRA, who meets him with a commanding and unaltered eye*]" (660). This exchange drew the attention of the opening night reviewer from *The Oracle*, who remarked, "Elvira, who appeared a few minutes before, the enfeebled slave of her passion, assumes a dignity and resolution, which even shook the tyrant for a moment."⁴⁵⁴ The fast transition between the two moments serves both fictional and dramatic purposes. In terms of the story, this moment serves to highlight the discord in Pizarro's

relationship to his mistress and plant the seeds that will eventually lead to his downfall; it also gives Siddons an early chance to show her range and ability to move quickly between emotional states. Throughout the play, Sheridan employed quick shifts in tone like this to capitalize on Siddons's skill set. Moreover, this exchange again served a meta-theatrical purpose by aligning women in the audience with a character who will eventually challenge her circumscribed role in her society. As the reviewer remarked, the moment illustrated the suppressed power of Elvira's character; this oppressed resolve will eventually find its way to the surface.

At the conclusion of the first act, Pizarro reveals that he plans to marry the Peruvian king Ataliba's daughter after the war to secure his claim. Though he assures Elvira that the marriage is one of political convenience, and that his love for her will not be diminished by the match, Elvira begins to sour on the conquistador. The act concludes with a lengthy speech in which she laments both her specific dilemma and, more generally, the fickleness of masculine love. She decides that, as Pizarro will inevitably abandon her, she will seek revenge:

Oh, men! ye who, wearied by the fond fidelity of virtuous love, seek in the wanton's flattery a new delight, oh, ye may insult and leave the hearts to which your faith was pledged, and, stifling self-reproach, may fear no other peril; because such hearts, howe'er you injure and desert them, have yet the proud retreat of an unspotted fame—of unrepenting conscience. But beware the desperate libertine who forsakes the creature whom his arts have first deprived of all natural protection—of all self-consolation! What has he left her!—Despair and vengeance! (665)

Here, Sheridan provides an opportunity for Siddons to perform a mad scene, again tailoring the part to her specialties as an actress. This speech also reverses eighteenth-century stereotypes

about sexual wantonness. In early part of the period, women's sexuality was carefully policed in part because they were assumed to be closer to nature and therefore more susceptible to lust. Here, however, Elvira argues that men are inconstant and unreliable, spurning a faithful partner for potential excitement. She goes so far as to say that the duty Pizarro—and by extension men—owes her is a “natural protection.” Though she will ultimately play a key role in Pizarro's downfall, her seeking revenge is justified because *he* has violated natural law by casting her aside. *Pizarro* was a rare case in which Siddons's character was able to reclaim some power from a man to whose whims she was subject; this speech provides a justification for her subsequent unfeminine actions.

Interestingly, at least part of what Pizarro seems to value in Elvira is her masculinity. After the Spanish are defeated by the Peruvians in the battle, she finds Pizarro brooding in his tent. After asking what troubles him, he asks her how else he should react to a humiliating defeat and the loss of his men. The two then have the following exchange:

ELVIRA: I would have thee feel assured that a new morning shall arise, when the warrior's spirit shall stalk forth—nor fear the future, nor lament the past.

PIZARRO: Woman! Elvira!—Why had not all my men hearts like thine?

ELVIRA: Then would thy brows have this day worn the crown of Quito. (680)

Just as Siddons revealed a masculine interiority through the robustness of her tragic acting, Elvira's heartening words to Pizarro make him wish that his men could show the same resolve. To this point, the audience has seen her characterized both as a submissive object and also as an iconoclast of gender roles. From her perspective, the play is a journey from the control of a domineering patriarch toward freedom and self-actualization. At the beginning of the play, she

was merely more set dressing; as the character develops, tailored to Siddons's strengths, she becomes an active agent in the drama.

Later, when Pizarro finds that his forces have captured Alonzo, he rejoices that he can execute the traitor and finally crush the Peruvians. Elvira insists that Pizarro spare the rebel's life, as it would be beneath the honor of a conquistador to kill an enemy not in battle. She pleads by appealing to her resolve and constancy:

bear some memory of the sacrifices I have made for thy sake. Have I not for thee quitted my parents, my friends, my fame, my native land? When escaping, did I not risk in rushing to thy arms to bury myself in the bosom of the deep? Have I not shared all thy perils, heavy storms at sea, and frightful 'scapes on shore? Even on this dreadful day, amid the rout of battle, who remained firm and constant at Pizarro's side? Who presented her bosom as his shield to the assailing foe? (684)

While Pizarro is revered as a hero, Elvira protests that she has endured each hardship that he has, and even more. She even abandoned her family and home to be with him and has risked her life alongside his at each juncture. Pizarro agrees with her, saying, "In love thou art thy sex's miracle—in war the soldier's pattern—and therefore my whole heart and half my acquisitions are thy right" (684). As did Siddons herself, the character blended the best qualities of a man and a woman in her loyalty, constancy, and bravery. Here again, Pizarro further praised Elvira for her martial qualities. While this gender instability makes her a suitable partner for the conquistador on his adventures across the Americas, it also leads to her betrayal of him.

Pizarro steadfastly refuses to spare Alonzo's life, and Elvira swears hatred for him, vowing revenge to his face: "Come, fearless man—now meet the last and fellest peril of thy life—meet! and survive—an injured woman's fury, if thou canst" (685). She goes to free Alonzo

from prison herself and finds that Rolla has taken his place there. The two hatch an assassination plot to kill Pizarro, which fails when Rolla finds himself unable to kill the sleeping Spaniard. Elvira forgives the Peruvian general for his failure before again invoking an image that reverses gender norms: “my sole regret is, that I trusted to thy weakness, and did not strike the blow myself” (692). The moment is one of several that echoes Lady Macbeth, Siddons’s most famous and beloved role, as she curses a man unable to fulfill his duty. She describes Rolla, who the play repeatedly asserts is a paradigm of masculine nobility, as “weak” for his principled opposition to the murder. Elvira insists that she was more equipped to carry out the murder and therefore more masculine. Rolla’s adherence to a strict moral code, ironically, effeminizes him in Elvira’s eyes. Railing at Pizarro as he condemns her to death, she reveals that he took her from a nunnery and killed her family:

Then, will vibrate on thy ear the curses of the cloister’d saint from whom you stole me. Then, the last shrieks which burst from my mother’s breaking heart, as she died, appealing to her God against the seducer of her child! Then the blood-stifled groan of my murder’d brother—murdered by thee, fell monster—seeking atonement for his sister’s ruin’d honour.—I hear them now! To me, the recollection’s madness. (693-694)

If Rolla failed to properly execute his masculine duties because he was too ethical, then Pizarro is the exact opposite. Infuriated by Elvira’s betrayal, he orders that she and Rolla will be tortured and then executed. The erstwhile mistress excoriates Pizarro for his lack of morality. He violated the institutions of both church and family by taking Elvira for his lover, and now he again makes clear that he is without a moral code. The masculinist world in which Elvira lives fails her at every turn.

After the failed assassination, Elvira spends the rest of the act in high dudgeon, giving Siddons ample opportunity to display her virtuosic command of emotion. Hearing of her fate, Elvira gives a graphic speech in which she presages the tortures that she is about to face:

Yes, rack me with the sharpest tortures that ever agoniz'd the human frame; it will be justice. Yes—bid the minions of thy fury—wrench forth the sinews of those arms that have caress'd and—even have defended thee! Bid them pour burning metal into the bleeding cases of these eyes, that so oft—oh, God!—have hung with love and homage on thy looks—then approach me bound on the abhorred wheel—there glut thy savage eyes with the convulsive spasms of that dishonour'd bosom, which was once thy pillow!—Yet, I will bear it all; for it will be justice, all! And when thou shalt bid them tear me to my death, hoping that thy unshrinking ears may at last be feasted with the music of my cries, I will not utter one shriek or groan—but to the last gasp, my body's patience shall deride thy vengeance, as my soul defies thy power. (693)

This passage, the most florid in the play, is a ghastly description of the effects of torture. Julie Stone Peters reads it as evocative of the Hastings trial. Though the actual violence is kept offstage, it is described in excruciating detail here, as it was during the impeachment of Hastings—often in such terms that spectators at the proceedings were overwhelmed.⁴⁵⁵ Similarly, Dana Van Kooy suggests that the florid language was meant to evoke in the audience the sufferings regularly inflicted upon colonial subjects not just in Spanish-controlled areas but British ones as well.⁴⁵⁶ While the colonial setting of the play likely did conjure images of indigenous abuse, I would argue that this speech, coming from Siddons, put the spectators in mind of far more immediate images of body horror. Rather than thinking of the plight of far-

away colonial subjects, their attention was likely captivated by the graphic descriptions focused on the actress's body. Given Siddons's skill at playing material pitched at an intense emotional tenor, this speech was probably far more immediately wrenching than referential or reflective. With suggestions of red-hot metal being poured into her eyes and her limbs being ripped out, Elvira re-cast her body, once a site of love for Pizarro, into a horrific wasteland, ravaged by his hatred. The language here served to again objectify Elvira's body, just as the opening of the play did. She insists that she will refuse to scream, becoming silent in the face of her agony. Destroying her body is a way for Pizarro to demonstrate his command, but he will be reducing her to the level of a thing rather than a human. Her silence is evocative of her objecthood. Moreover, by refusing to scream, she denies Pizarro any pleasure from the punishment he intends to mete out. As Elvira's body changes from a sexual object to a tortured one, Pizarro will receive no comfort or pleasure from her death. Rendered through Siddons's performance, this scene likely horrified audiences with the immediacy and vividness of the descriptions of *her* fate more than calling their attention to something external to the action of the play.

Of course, Elvira escapes the metal-in-the-eye-sockets treatment that she predicts. She has Valverde bring her the old novice's habit instead of the clothing she has been wearing, described as "the gaudy trappings that remind her of her shame" (700). The decision to resume the novice's clothing has fatal consequences. While Pizarro battles Alonzo, Elvira comes out to watch, and the action is described thusly: "*At this moment ELVIRA enters, habited as when PIZARRO first beheld her.—PIZARRO, appalled, staggers back.—ALONZO renews the Fight, and slays him*" (701). In the final scene, Elvira achieved multiple things simultaneously. Most overtly, in the fictional world of the play, she frees herself from Pizarro and avoids the punishment he intended for her. In bringing about his death, Elvira also allows Alonzo and the

Peruvians to defeat the Spanish and set the world to right. Outside the fictional content of the play, the moment was also a reference to Siddons's role as Lady Macbeth, as the novice's habit she wore was visually quite similar to Lady Macbeth's nightgown.⁴⁵⁷ She also disarms her own newfound independence almost immediately. Elvira announces that she intends to return to her religious calling, devoting herself to praying for Alonzo and his family and the Peruvians more generally. At last restored to her rightful place as a nun, Elvira has shed Pizarro's control in exchange for life in the church. She assures Alonzo that her life going forward will be much more fulfilling than the illicit love she shared with Pizarro: "Humbled in penitence, I will endeavor to atone the guilty errors, which, however mask'd by shallow cheerfulness, have long consum'd my secret heart" (702). Any independence Elvira might enjoy lasts but a few lines as she transfers control of her life from Pizarro to the Catholic Church. While her journey might be to escape the patriarchal control of the conquistador, she is ultimately re-absorbed in another patriarchal institution. She proclaims that the change is a welcome one, as she trades the "shallow cheerfulness" of her previous life for devotion to the Church. In terms of the play's meta-narrative, her arc is similarly welcome. Elvira exchanges an extra-marital sexual relationship for a life that ensures she is subject to masculine control without any transgressive aspect. Still, the audience response to Elvira proved to be one of the most controversial aspects of the play.

In its initial run, *Pizarro* played for over 100,000 audience members.⁴⁵⁸ Predictably, a play as popular as *Pizarro* stirred up a great deal of contemporary reaction. Susan Valladares suggests that the play was such a hit because, in addition to the spectacle of the production, its ambiguities allowed multiple interpretations. Indeed, the play even drew a number of famous admirers, including the abolitionist William Wilberforce in his first visit to the theatre in over

twenty years and Lord Nelson after his victory in the Battle of the Nile.⁴⁵⁹ Even King George III saw *Pizarro*, a significant visit as he hadn't been to Drury Lane in about five years at the time.⁴⁶⁰ Critical reactions to the play, however, regarded it as a literary travesty that stoked moral outrage. In particular, the play's treatment of its female characters came in for abuse.

An anonymous pamphlet, *A Critique on the Tragedy of Pizarro*, appeared in 1799.⁴⁶¹ The bulk of the text is devoted to mocking the implausible nature of much of the plot. Indeed, the author ultimately says of the play "Such is the celebrated tragedy of Pizarro, which appears to me in plot, character, and language, equally deficient" (39). The author does, however, note that his attack is on the play as a piece of literature, and he sets aside how the meaning and enjoyment of the piece might be enhanced by performance. Of Elvira's first speech, in which she outlines her fears about Pizarro's nature, he says "the latter part of which, I think, verges close upon incomprehensibility" (12). He did, however, enjoy her speech about Pizarro's gallantry, calling it "truly sublime," though he further notes that such a speech undermines the play's message because it muddies the audience's reaction to the villainous Spaniard (23-24). Later, as a part of attacking the unconvincing plan that Elvira and Rolla hatch to kill Pizarro, he laments that "the heroine, throughout the play, seems to have the whole of Pizarro's army (not omitting the General himself) under very good *petticoat government*" (29). Throughout, he dismisses Elvira's agency and highlights her unvirtuous nature as a way of demonstrating inconsistencies in the plot. Somehow, at the end of the pamphlet, he comes to a shocking conclusion: "The mixed dignity and tenderness of Elvira is well supported, and her character, with the exception of now and then lapsing a little too much into the virago, is by far the best in the piece" (39). Although Elvira's role in the play's action seems incongruous to the author, he finds her character to be the best part of the play. Still, he makes sure to chide her once more for good measure as a virago,

lest his analysis become too fulsome. His reaction to the role was likely influenced by the touches Sheridan included to shape the piece for Siddons. The levels—“mixed dignity”—to which he refers were features of the part meant to cater to Siddons’s affinities as an actress.

Others, however, found less to admire in Elvira. Samuel Argent Bardsley wrote an analysis of the play in which he also sought to demonstrate its low literary merits.⁴⁶² Most of Bardsley’s opposition to Elvira stems from the internal contradictions he sees in her makeup. He finds that she is moving but that her motivations seem to offend logic and decorum:

The Author seems to have bestowed no common pains, to render her an object of Sympathy and Interest. Her sentiments are lofty, her language energetic, and the virtuous struggles of repentance and remorse are forcibly depicted. Yet, on a close investigation of the Character, it does not strike me as founded in Nature, nor consistently supported as drawn by the Author. (28)

In particular, he finds the suggestion that she would choose willingly to travel with Pizarro after the conquistador killed her mother and brother loathsome and unrealistic. He also quibbles with the gender indeterminacy of the character displayed when Pizarro praises her as “the Soldier’s pattern,” claiming that a woman that brave would refuse to associate with a group of brigands like the Spanish. He was also likely reacting negatively to the suggestion that she could have displayed enough fortitude to win such praise from her lover. The idea of a woman receiving praise for being manly was beyond the pale, especially since Bardsley concludes his remarks on her character by attacking “her departure from the strict rules of female chastity and refined delicacy” (47). He concludes by saying that “She is not qualified for a Tragic Heroine” (47). His sensibilities seem particularly offended that he believes Sheridan seems to have intended that

Elvira be admired and respected. While a less than exemplary female character might be admitted to the stage, the audience should not be asked to embrace her.

The author of the polemic *Adultery Analyzed* advanced a similar line of attack. Published under the pseudonym Philippus Philaretus, the subtitle “An Inquiry into the Causes of the Prevalence of that Vice in these Kingdoms” illustrates its purpose.⁴⁶³ Lamenting the erosion of morals in contemporary society, the author finds several causes for the increasing prevalence of bad behavior. Among these, he lists *Pizarro*, and specifically Elvira. While he acknowledges that the patriotic and anti-French sentiments of the play were noble and necessary when it premiered, the deleterious influence of Elvira has proven too great a cost for the nation to bear. “We should recollect that sage and true maxim, that ‘none can be truly great who is not truly good,’ This sentiment, the author of *Pizarro* seems either to have forgotten or, studiously, to have kept out of sight of the audience” says the author as a way of framing the criticism (123). His first objection is that Elvira loves Pizarro despite his lack of virtue, and he repeats Bardsley’s complaint that Elvira would feel affection for her family’s murderer. He further objects to Elvira’s supposed exemplary nature, saying that “the author...as if desirous of confounding all distinction between right and wrong, virtue and vice, holds up this woman of passion and infatuation to the admiration of his audience” (127). Apparently, the author read the bravery with which she confronted her fate as a redemptive move, meant to ensure her esteem in the eyes of the audience. He concludes, “the reflecting mind seems compelled to consider the character of Elvira as a great blemish in this popular drama: since it cannot but be considered as inconsistent, contradictory, and tending, by its imposing nature, to promote the cause of immorality” (130-131). Because Elvira failed to adhere to a proper feminine passivity, and because she escaped death, critics saw the play as constructing her as a praiseworthy figure.

The most virulent criticism came from *The Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine, or Monthly Political and Literary Censor*. A conservative journal with a rabidly xenophobic bent, the *Anti-Jacobin Magazine* was often out in front of the anti-Kotzebue sentiments expressed in the period. In a piece entitled “Remarks on Kotzebue’s *Pizarro*,” a writer calling himself An Admirer of the Drama writes in a feverish emotional pitch that suggests he believed *Pizarro* would lead to the eradication of civilization as it currently existed.⁴⁶⁴ Unlike the others, the Admirer is equally concerned with performance and text, since “Dramatic representations have a stronger influence on the public mind...because...the representation by living characters makes a more indelible impression” (207). Additionally, a stage play obtains a wider audience than a printed one does, making its influence broader. Attacking the immorality of Kotzebue and Sheridan’s failure to temper that streak, the author explicitly condemns the fact that Elvira does not receive a just punishment for her actions in the play: “Elvira is one of the most reprehensible characters that was ever suffered to disgrace the stage, and yet she goes off un-punished...we behold the principles of a prostitute held up in an enviable light” (208). This passage features a bit of rhetorical legerdemain in which the critic derides Elvira as a “prostitute.” He does this despite the fact that the character was forcibly seized by Pizarro and conscripted into the life of a camp follower. Simply existing in the masculine world of the camp, however, is enough to make the critic label her as transgressive of traditional sexual morality. The only public role available to a woman was as a prostitute.

Ultimately, though, the author’s concern is not so much the vulgarity he saw in the drama, however, as the reaction it might inspire in the women who saw it. He railed against the idea female spectators might see Elvira as worthy of emulation:

there is not a girl of any elevation of spirit and ignorance of the world, who will not, on witnessing the effusion of this unusual personage in the drama, cry out, “How admirable Elvira’s sentiments and conduct are!” The poor girl loses sight of the flagitious part of the woman’s character, in the more dazzling one of the heroine. (208)

Of course, the author’s diatribe betrays more than a little anti-woman sentiment, as he seems convinced that women will be unable to resist the allure of the fiction. He further suspects that women will find Elvira’s situation so attractive as to want to emulate her, though he fails to point out exactly what about her story is alluring. The character ends the play alone, her family and lover dead, resigned to entering a convent in a foreign country. Such an outcome is hardly desirable, even if she is free from Pizzaro’s control.

More likely, then, is that his argument is not so much with the textual Elvira as with Elvira specifically as played by Siddons. The character, rendered by an actress of such grand reputation, would attain a far more flattering cast. For comparison, here are his comments on Cora, the play’s other significant female character:

Cora’s character...is brought forward under such circumstances as must extort a superficial tear from the spectator, unless, like myself, he will be determined to steel his heart against any distress which does not rise intrinsically out of the moral position of the party—here it is the irrelevant incident of a child suddenly left...which excites the pity of an audience. (209)

He dismisses Cora’s situation as failing to arouse feeling because she has no real moral dilemma. The author has the same attitude of superiority to the average viewer here that he expresses elsewhere, but he doesn’t see Cora as a contaminating force like he does Elvira. Without an

actress like Siddons animating the character, though, Cora exists as an abstraction rather than a being that could excite feeling.

The opposition that critics expressed toward Elvira indicates the tremendous power Siddons exerted over audiences. Further, she exerted an unusual amount of power in society. Politicians like William Pitt, Edward Gibbon, Edmund Burke, and Sheridan watched her perform to master techniques for enflaming the emotional passions of their audience.⁴⁶⁵ Much of the *Anti-Jacobin Review*'s opposition to Elvira was motivated, I suspect, by the fact that she was played by an actress with as much cultural cachet as Siddons. Siddons herself, though she had the limited rights of a woman in the long eighteenth century, shaped popular attitudes to an uncommon degree. From thence derives the force of the play.

The world that Elvira moves in in the play is martial; she lives in a military camp, having renounced both religion and polite society to live with Pizarro. She lives in a society that offers her no opportunity for a decorous, feminine role; the world of the play lacks a domestic space. On the rare occasions that we see one—as when Cora and Alonzo play with their child—it is quickly rent apart by conflict. Elvira cannot be a wife or a mother in the military camp. The world of the Spaniards has failed her. It offered nothing except for an active, public life, more than she abdicated her duty as a woman by joining them.

Hauntographical Resonances

The reaction to Siddons' character, and the very suggestion that she might be exemplary, speaks to a changing attitude toward women more generally. Sheridan wrote the role of Elvira specifically for Siddons and with her talents in mind. In a recent article on Siddons in *Pizarro*, Selena Couture argues that Sheridan intended for Siddons, the ideal icon of British femininity, to add to his critique of British colonialism. While I aim to extend and complicate her analysis in

this section, her point about Siddons's image is cogent.⁴⁶⁶ According to Michael L. Quinn, one of the defining characteristics of celebrity is the inability of the performer to completely “disappear” into the role.⁴⁶⁷ Despite the rapturous responses of audiences—crying, screaming, wailing—they almost certainly always perceived Siddons, on some level, as Siddons, even as they viewed her character layered over the top of her celebrity. The point of attending the theatre on a night when Siddons performed was to see, for example, *Siddons-as-Elvira*, not just to see Elvira; the fictional content of the play was secondary to the power of the actress herself. In the case of *Pizarro*, that affective power likely resulted in a complex blend of sympathy and derision for a character whose role is equally complicated.

Moreover, the play repeatedly cited Siddons' most famous role, Lady Macbeth, both in plot and production elements. In her remarks on the Shakespearean heroine who became her trademark, Siddons emphasized that the character was not a domineering usurper but merely a normal woman whose ambition overrides her better judgment: “Her feminine nature, her delicate structure, it is too evident, are soon overwhelmed by the enormous pressure of her crimes.”⁴⁶⁸ She further argued that the play's plot revealed that Lady Macbeth generally, and by extension women as a whole, were indeed of weaker constitution: “The different physical powers of the two sexes are finely delineated, in the different effects which their mutual crimes produce. Her frailer frame, and keener feelings, have now sunk under the struggle.”⁴⁶⁹ Still, her turn as Elvira excited considerable pushback, no matter how much she tried to emphasize the feminine aspects of her characters. If she could infuse Lady Macbeth with a moving dignity, so too might she do for Elvira.

Certainly, *Pizarro*'s success with audiences indicates that the play struck a chord. Further, a letter in the British Library collection shows William Siddons demanded payment of

Sarah's salary for a benefit performance of *Pizarro*.⁴⁷⁰ Given the proportion of a performer's yearly income that could come from a good benefit night, she must have selected the role knowing that audiences wanted to see her play Elvira and would come out in numbers for the show. We can even read the opposition to Elvira as further evidence of both her effectiveness in the role and its popularity. While moralists needed little prompting to dash off a screed against some perceived threat to British society, there is no point in proscribing behaviors that nobody engages in. Her status as an icon of British feminine virtue meant that Siddons's characters might influence popular attitudes as well as her offstage behavior. The staunch opposition of moralists to allowing a character like Elvira to enter culture as a laudable, sympathetic figure suggests an evolving attitude towards a woman's role. What we see changing here is not the drama as much as the reactions to it. Moreover, as Siddons's acting style was perceived as a more realistic, revelatory method than prior generations, her characters were in danger of being read as exemplars of real life. Moralists, then, needed to draw a clearer distinction between the stage and the world than before. Siddons's offstage conduct was blameless, but that wasn't enough. Further, Sheridan had de-sexualized the role, even eliminating the character's status as a breeches part. Still, in order to ensure a tightly controlled patriarchal world, critics had to excoriate her fictional lives as well.

The virulence of these attacks suggests that the true danger was in Siddons elevating Elvira, both through her skill as a performer and through the blamelessness of her personal life. The response to Elvira reveals a concern with audience reception—and specifically women's reception. Because Siddons was so revered and had such a major impact on British culture, her depiction of Elvira might have made the character appear more aspirational than the fiction itself does. Although Elvira's status at the end of *Pizarro* is hardly desirable, she spends the bulk of

the play transgressing the boundaries of a woman's station. She is also an active agent in the defeat of the villainous titular conquistador. The character received no praise for her role in defeating the evil Pizarro, however.

The critics who attacked her character must have been fearful that those actions would appear seductive when brought to life through the power of an actress as talented and respected as Siddons. By attacking Elvira, moralists who wished to limit the play's influence showed that her lack of adherence to the domestic sphere was worthy of castigation, and any woman thinking of following in her footsteps would be open to similar censure. This type of response produced a cultural injunction against the forms of gender play that earlier generations tolerated and, in some ways, celebrated. Whereas a certain amount of gender instability had previously been used to solidify British femininity, audience response around *Pizarro* had to be shaped to exclude gender transgression.

By the close of the eighteenth century, the actress was a permanent fixture of British society. The reality of transgressive women playing chaste characters was impossible to curtail. At the same time, Britain was in a period of cultural backlash against the perceived radicalism of the French Revolution. The collapse of the French government sparked fear that Britain might fall under a similar revolutionary tide.

Notably, Sheridan was warning Britons about the dangers of a French invasion and the presumed tyranny of Napoleon. *Pizarro* was meant to provoke a patriotic, anti-French sentiment. Still, the horrors of the revolution had engendered a widespread cultural fear of anything too excessively disruptive to conventional British society. In particular, French society was caricatured as excessively feminized and corrupt, making a transgressive female figure a dangerous proposition. Elvira's flouting of convention, especially as rendered through the

sublime performative virtuosity of Siddons, was just such a disruption, and therefore it received the strongest negative response. By attacking Elvira, critics sought to eradicate any non-domestic space for women. While they could not fully purge women from the theatrical public sphere, cultural authorities could try to limit the potentially destabilizing effects that drama had on its patrons.

Fictional Revolutionary: *The Female Enthusiast*

Despite the thoroughgoing fear of female empowerment that the French Revolution intensified, this anxiety did not manifest itself as a blanket condemnation of all transgressive women. In fact, Charlotte Corday became a hero in the English-language media for killing the journalist Jean-Paul Marat. Rather than characterizing the assassination as a woman usurping male prerogative to assert herself as a political agent, depictions of the event showed Corday as the victim of a failed society. Just as indigenous cultures were once characterized as primitive due to insufficient separation between genders, so too French society's collapse became a case study for the dangers of extremism. In this section, I examine *The Female Enthusiast*, a play by an obscure writer named Sarah Pogson Smith. Born in Britain but eventually settling in America, Pogson Smith's play celebrates her adopted country as an idyllic paradise that balances a rejection of tyranny with healthy respect for traditional social structures. As such, *The Female Enthusiast* and its fictionalization of Corday's story makes for a useful counterpoint to *Pizarro*. The existence of a domestic space for women becomes an index by which the success of a society may be judged.

Pogson Smith's fictional Corday is not like Elvira, operating as a public agent against the conventions of her world. Rather than depicting Corday's actions as an example of female intransigence, *The Female Enthusiast* uses a highly fictionalized real-life example to show the

consequences that social upheaval can wreak. Pogson Smith's play is laudatory of her new homeland, holding the nascent country up as a paragon of virtue. Through Corday's story, however, Pogson Smith demarcates a line beyond which social reorganization would have disastrous consequences, as it did in France. Though the play seeks to celebrate America, it highlights the importance of maintaining a traditional gender ideology, like that of Britain.

One of the first English-language plays that deals with Corday and Marat is *The Female Enthusiast*, a five-act Romantic tragedy by Sarah Pogson Smith. Pogson was born in Essex, England in 1774, and died in Charleston, South Carolina in 1870.⁴⁷¹ She gained her married name through marriage to a Judge Peter Smith, who married her after his first wife died. The pair weren't married long, and after they separated, she moved to Charleston. She published multiple plays while living in Charleston, all attributed to "A Lady" but copyrighted under the name "Sarah Pogson."⁴⁷² *The Female Enthusiast* was her first play, published in 1807.

The Female Enthusiast also presents a problem in terms of its possible production history. Alexander Placide may have produced the play at the Charleston Theatre: "This play may have been produced in Charleston, because Placide, manager of the Charleston Theatre during the early 1800s, encouraged new plays by local writers, and because the large French community in Charleston would have had a strong interest in political events in France."⁴⁷³ By contrast, Charles S. Watson argues that Placide would have been unlikely to stage the show because he supported the Revolution, and the play expressed an anti-French sentiment.⁴⁷⁴ *The Female Enthusiast* was the only one of Pogson Smith's plays published individually; all the others appeared in a single volume. The other six plays, however, were all produced. Kritzer says this points to the likelihood of a production as well.⁴⁷⁵ Richard Soddors's dissertation on Placide's management of the Charleston Theatre contains in its appendix a very thorough list of

the plays produced from 1799-1812.⁴⁷⁶ No record of *The Female Enthusiast* appears there.⁴⁷⁷ It is possible that a smaller theatre presented the piece; whether or not it was given a full production, the play makes interesting interventions in Corday's story. *The Female Enthusiast*, like *Pizarro*, crossed multiple borders through its genesis. Pogson Smith was born in England, but she lived and plied her trade in America. For the play, she took as her subject a French event already freighted with political significance in the Anglo-American consciousness. By examining Pogson Smith's reimagining of the story, we can gain a useful perspective on emerging American female identity. Kritzer points out that early American women playwrights "participated actively in theatre's project of creating a distinctive definition of the American, taking for themselves the challenge of creating both comic types and exemplary models of American womanhood."⁴⁷⁸ By writing plays for performance and publication, women threw their hat into the public sphere, aiming to participate in shaping future female subject positions.⁴⁷⁹ As we shall see, Pogson Smith addresses herself to her fellow countrywomen through the story of Corday, the iconoclastic woman par excellence of the historical moment.

The most salient feature of Pogson Smith's version of Corday's story is a fleshed-out personal life. In the play, Charlotte's father has a major role, and she also has a brother and a fiancé.⁴⁸⁰ The young woman's world is also filled with friends and companions who round out the dramatic action. Pogson Smith depicts Charlotte in the vein of the Romantic tragic heroine, an idealistic woman forced into an unthinkable choice by her corrupt society. The play obviously wants the viewer to regard Charlotte as a patriot and martyr for the cause of liberty, and Marat as an incarnation of abstracted evils. Her family and friends, then, serve multiple purposes. Most basically, the other characters convey exposition that drives the story along. On a more sophisticated level, Charlotte's family adds a human dimension to her tragedy.

The primary plot focuses on Corday's assassination of the evil Marat; when we meet the protagonist, she is distractedly consumed with thoughts of vengeance, unable to think of anything else. Both she and her friends remark on her change in disposition, though everyone else attributes it to the absence of her gallant fiancé, de Vernueil, who is away fighting in the wars. Her brother Henry, himself preparing to join the fighting, assures her that she will feel better when de Vernueil returns. Charlotte, however, contrives a plan to depart for Paris, leaving her maid Annette to deliver news of her plan to the family. She finds Marat addressing a group of his followers, described as "a motley crew."⁴⁸¹ As in the actual events, Charlotte gains access to Marat by claiming she has information about Girondist conspirators. When the two are alone, she kills him and is immediately captured by his friend and collaborator Chabot. An angry mob storms the Corday house and, despite de Vernueil's gallant defense of the patriarch, kills Charlotte's father. Charlotte's friends and family continue to suffer the consequences of her actions: Henry hatches a plot to rescue her by entering her jail cell in disguise (essentially the same plot as Rolla's rescue of Alonzo in *Pizarro*) and trading clothes with her, then protesting his own innocence when the captors find him in the cell. Charlotte refuses rescue, insisting the mob will kill him when they discover his identity as her brother. She nobly accepts her fate, and de Vernueil kills himself in despair after seeing her coffin. Henry is beaten badly by the mob but manages to escape by feigning his death. He is the only Corday to escape.

Parallel to this, the play features a romantic subplot in which Henry Corday and his friend Belcour vie for the hand of Charlotte's friend Estelle. Belcour has recently negotiated with Estelle's father Duval for her hand in marriage; unfortunately, she and Henry are in love. Duval hates soldiers, however, and angrily refuses to allow his daughter to marry Henry. Flouting Duval's orders, and to ensure that the father won't be able to come between them, Henry and

Estelle marry in secret. Moreover, Henry has resolved to kill Marat himself to prevent his sister from doing so, and Estelle agrees to marry him to prevent the assassination. Belcour is enraged at this and challenges Henry to a duel. Before the duel can come to fruition, though, Estelle appeals to Belcour's better nature and implores him to be a friend to the couple. He relents, and the two inform Duval as well. The older man flies into a rage and disowns his daughter. Given both his rejection and the hostile political climate, Henry and Estelle end the play by planning to flee to America, while Belcour assures them that he will work to convince Duval to reverse his judgment. Overall, the play ends on a deeply pessimistic note, with the Corday family shattered and dispersed from their homeland of France, and the mob rule of the Reign of Terror taking root.

Unsurprisingly, Pogson Smith took some liberties with Corday's story in bringing it to the stage. Her version of Corday combined elements of the real woman with fictional inventions that complicate reading the character as a manifestation of either pure feminine virtue or total recalcitrance. The most obvious and important change for the play is the addition of and interest in Charlotte's male relations. In reality, Corday had neither a fiancé nor a brother, and her father was notably resistant to her political activity. On the dramatic level, the addition of the male characters serves to heighten the pathos of Charlotte's situation. Adding de Vernueil, the father, and Henry—along with Charlotte's friend Estelle and the maid Annette—gives a domestic component to the story that the real events elided because of their political ramifications. To humanize the character, Pogson Smith offers the audience a window into her personal life. In doing so, however, she also expands the scope of the ramifications of Charlotte's actions. Rather than resulting solely in her own destruction, Pogson Smith's Charlotte Corday unintentionally brings ruin to her fiancé and her father. In reality, Corday's father lived through the events of his

daughter's assassination of Marat, likely because he rejected her rebellious nature. Unlike the real woman whose political beliefs drove a wedge between herself and her father, however, the fictional Charlotte is a dutiful daughter who shows no desire to transgress against her father's wishes. Regardless, her murder of Marat undoes her family. Throughout the play, Pogson Smith depicts Charlotte as a heroic and noble woman possessed of a true belief in the rightness of her actions. Moreover, Marat appears as a vain, callow villain whose ideology and followers are dangerous and do in fact need to be eliminated. He exhorts his followers that "the head of each base conspirator... Shall roll beneath us, an abject football... Well ye know/Whose blood to spill—and whose to spare—without/The tedious mockeries of courts and judges./Judge for yourselves—and quickly execute" (155-156). Clearly, Marat is exactly as dangerous to the people of France and the ideals of justice as Charlotte repeatedly claims. Still, through the addition of Charlotte's male relations, Pogson Smith's play reveals that transgressing gender boundaries has major consequences.

At no point does Pogson Smith try to show Charlotte as a villain or even a naïve girl whose blinkered understanding of the world leads her in over her head. Rather, she is spurred on by a legitimate, patriotic desire to save her country. Pogson Smith gives Charlotte a long speech as she sets out for Paris in which she discusses her motivations:

Let me, then, whisper that foul name: Marat,
 And the last conflict end. The monster's name
 Steals every thought, and female weakness flies.
 With strength I'm armed, and mighty energy
 To crush the murderer and defy the scaffold.
 Let but the deed be done. For it, *I'll die*.

For it, I sacrifice—I quit—myself

And all the softness of a woman's name,

Leave a venerable, doting father!...

My hand shall save them.

The innocent again shall walk in safety.

Thousands shall bless the blow by which he falls. (147)

Charlotte takes pains to explain that she is aware that she will not survive the assassination, but that she has no choice. By sacrificing herself, she can save her homeland. Her language here also indicates that she knowingly departs from the bounds of feminine propriety. As she lays down her life, so too does she lay down the societal pressures that circumscribe her role to the domestic sphere. By entering the political world, however, Charlotte undoes her domestic one. Just after this speech, Charlotte says that killing Marat will also spare her family further suffering, foreshadowing the tragic resolution to the play's plot. Charlotte's actions, then, are simultaneously necessary and transgressive, indicating an ambivalent attitude towards women's participation in public life.

Throughout the play, Charlotte is repeatedly called "enthusiastic," by both her supporters and her enemies. Indeed, that appellation gives the play its title. For a contemporary reader or viewer, the word meant something closer to the modern "fanatic."⁴⁸² While the modern usage would indicate that Charlotte has an above-average interest in affairs of state, the play suggests that her interest is more like a monomaniacal obsession. Both her brother Henry and Marat's crony Chabot declare that Charlotte is an enthusiast, and they claim that her spirit will lead her to destruction. Pogson Smith doesn't just have the other characters tell us that Charlotte is unusual, however. Charlotte's speeches almost always turn to lengthy justifications and defenses of her

actions, or philosophical treatises on threats to liberty and the ideal type of government. For example, the following exchange between Chabot and Charlotte is reflective of her standard rhetorical mode:

CHARLOTTE: I am prepared

To stand the charge, as one whose act was just,

And for the welfare of my suffering country,

Whose gratitude and justice will proclaim me

A benefactor—not an assassin.

CHABOT: Thou art mistaken, mad enthusiast!

France will condemn thee to the guillotine—

CHARLOTTE: If such my doom, France is the fettered slave

Of factious, criminal, blood-thirsty men—

And soon will fall beneath a *weight of crimes*.

CHABOT: Lead on! (CHARLOTTE *walks out with dignity*. CHABOT *follows*.)

(166-167)

Here, the young woman defends herself on the basis of an appeal to idealized liberty.

The assassination scene further exemplifies Charlotte's political commitment in a style that has major ramifications for the gender politics of the story. Pogson Smith softened the scandalous nature of having the young woman confront Marat while he was bathing. Ultimately, Pogson Smith's telling of the events actually inverts tropes around romance and gendered violence. After delivering his incendiary speech to his supporters, Marat is informed that Charlotte has important intelligence about conspirators. Instead of meeting her from his tub, Marat invites Charlotte into his room. The stage directions say, "*Back scene opens to discover*

MARAT *in his chamber, dressed in a loose bathing gown and slippers. At the farthest end of the room stands his bath. MARAT comes forward*’ (157-158). Of course, an audience member in the period may well have read the unmarried young woman meeting the louche, be-robed Marat in his bedroom as indicating a salacious overtone. Given the virginal, heroic qualities of Charlotte and the viciousness of Marat, a spectator might have read a sexual malice into the scene. It is Marat, however, and not Charlotte who is violated in the bedchamber. We might read Charlotte’s assassination of the journalist as an act of phallic usurpation, wherein she takes the male prerogative of political action into her own hands, symbolically represented through the phallic dagger. In dramatizing the murder, Pogson Smith characterizes the proceedings with a symbolic value that underscores the literal act of gender transgression that the young woman carries out.

Moreover, in this scene, Pogson Smith draws on and subverts contemporary dramatic conventions of gender and violence. In response to the assassination of the actual Marat, French society did not want to accept a solely political motivation for Corday’s actions. Rather, they wanted the woman to have been motivated by love and/or jealousy, which were intelligible—if undesirable—emotions that a woman might express.⁴⁸³ Socially, women had long been considered more susceptible to emotion and passion than men. Thus, tragedy often has a woman act out vengeance on herself or a lover who has spurned affections. The speech that Pogson Smith gives Charlotte as she steels herself to stab Marat co-opts the language of the jealous, jilted woman and re-directs it towards her beliefs:

A few short moments, and his doom is fixed.

My heart that sickened if an insect died,

My bosom nursed in softest tenderness

Burn to destroy—feel a powerful impulse
 Strengthening every nerve, compressing
 Every thought to one keen point—revenge!
 Enthusiastic fervor bears me on,
 And gentler passions fly before its power! (157)

She uses the same word others have for herself here, saying she is consumed by “enthusiastic fervor.” Further, she describes the murder as an act of revenge. Rather than jealously striking down a lover who has committed some personal slight, though, the young woman avenges herself on behalf of those who have suffered at Marat’s hand. In a moment of dramatic irony that allows the audience to enjoy some dramatic double-speak, Charlotte tells Marat that “I am come/To point out the *deadliest* foe...and a sure way to rid our country of him” (158). As she stabs him, she exclaims “Murderer of prisoners—of priests defenseless—Of helpless women—die! The innocent/Shall live. Now art thou death’s prisoner” (158). By drawing on existing conventions around the wronged woman in fiction, Pogson Smith gives her Charlotte the same monomaniacal focus that the real woman seemed to possess. She uses her ability to duplicitously gain audience with Marat to enact her revenge. As Charlotte’s political ambition maps onto normative ideas about women’s psychology, Pogson Smith re-calibrates Charlotte Corday in exactly the opposite way from what the Jacobins tried to do. Rather than reducing the woman to a pawn of masculine machinations, Pogson Smith’s Charlotte, for good or ill, is an agent of her own beliefs.

History and Fiction: Hauntographical Resonances

Pogson Smith offers a contrasting, exemplary vision for society through a speech Duval gives. He tells his daughter that he wants to see her married because, in the current climate in France, a single woman “often falls/A victim to designing villainy” (160). Rape here serves as a symbol of political turmoil, a common discursive construction in the period.⁴⁸⁴ Estelle protests that virtuous women are rewarded with a good life. Duval says not in France, but then lavishes praise on the new American nation as a paragon of respect for women:

There *is* a land where such indeed's the case—
 Not *thine*, my child. It is America.
 There, in the conjugal or single state—
 In affluence or pale-cheeked poverty—
 Each female who respects herself is safe.
 Each walks the path of life secure from insult,
 As strongly guarded by a virtuous mind
 As she who's in a gilded chariot borne. (161)

Pogson Smith describes America as a place that values women of all classes and social states, treating them all with dignity and respect. Opposed to this utopian vision is revolutionary France, a place where women could not enjoy safety of any kind. In opposing the ideal of America to France, Pogson Smith shows that a society can be effectively judged through its maintenance of women's safety and domesticity. She dramatized the consequences that befell women who sought to make that world a reality, effectively shaming the play's male characters for their failure.

At the play's end, Henry Corday echoes this sentiment as he and his wife prepare to leave: "Come where quiet reigns./Under the protection of America,/Domestic ease securely reposes./There, we may yet enjoy tranquility;/And, 'midst the sons of true-born liberty,/Taste the pure blessings that from freedom flow" (181). The failure in the play is not of patriarchy writ large, but rather of the specifically corrupt version represented by Marat. Such disorder forces women from their prescribed domestic roles, throwing things into chaos. Charlotte's first speeches demonstrate that she is not choosing to assassinate the journalist because she wants to be a masculine, political actor, but rather that she is forced to do so because no one else will. France has failed to allow her to live the private life she desires. Her words and actions for the rest of the play show that she is as committed to the ideals of liberty and justice as any citizen should be, so she is not to blame for what follows. By framing the play's action in this way, Pogson Smith makes clear that a society should allow women protection within the home. In *The Female Enthusiast*, patriarchal culture is perfected not when it forces women out of political life, but rather when it properly allows women the domestic sphere that they innately desire. The domestic tragedy, then, stresses the importance of preserving a traditionally ordered society.

Early American women playwrights "participated actively in theatre's project of creating a distinctive definition of the American, taking for themselves the challenge of creating...exemplary models of American womanhood."⁴⁸⁵ *The Female Enthusiast* shows Charlotte Corday as a passionate hero who has been failed by the men in her life and the government of her country. In representing her destruction and the destruction of her family, the play uses the generic conventions of the tragic form to illustrate the consequences of a disordered world. By contrast, Pogson Smith explicitly positions America as having perfected liberty, a perfection that is made legible through the safety and respect accorded to women by protecting

their role as domestic caretakers. By showing Corday as a noble character who understands her place in society even as she transgresses it, Pogson Smith criticizes the culture of the French Revolution for its failures *vis-à-vis* protecting women. In the play, the heroic Corday exemplifies nobility and patriotism, establishing those qualities as appropriate female virtues. For Pogson Smith, American women should have the same spirit as Corday, while enjoying the benefit of living in a culture that allows them to express their virtue in a safer way—as wives and mothers.

Richard Brinsley Sheridan wrote *Pizarro* as an explicitly patriotic rallying cry that pilloried both the Spanish and the French as tyrannical monsters. Despite his obviously pro-British agenda, however, Elvira excited a torrent of criticism. The furor over her character, specifically as rendered onstage by Sarah Siddons, showed a great deal of anxiety around maintaining clear separation between men and women. Moralists seemed terrified that the virtuosic performative ability of Siddons might make young British women choose to model themselves on Elvira. At a time when the French Revolution suggested that the old order might be vulnerable to collapse, anti-feminist writers saw in Elvira a symbol of their worst fears about female emancipation.

Similarly, though Pogson Smith championed Corday and a certain amount of revolutionary sentiment, *The Female Enthusiast* made clear that a woman might indeed be forced to assert political agency, but that assertion was the product of a failed society. Pogson Smith's Charlotte is a Romantic heroine, but she repeatedly insists that her actions are tragic because French men have failed to preserve the domestic sphere for women. In light of that failure, she has no choice but to kill Marat to save the French. Thus, Pogson Smith used a real woman to both castigate the worst excesses of the French Revolution while establishing a hard boundary on what constituted acceptable feminine behavior. Corday's assassination of Marat was a failure of

French society to protect its vulnerable women. While America is commendable for its own revolutionary successes, Pogson Smith asserts, the new nation should not abandon all of the traditional social structures of British society.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, the borders of the male and female genders had solidified into a form that no longer celebrated transgressive behavior. We can see the increasing impermeability of gender roles through the cases of *Pizarro* and Corday/*The Female Enthusiast*. The freewheeling sexuality and enjoyable gender play of previous generations gave way to a more solid conception of gender as fixed and rooted in biology. The negative reactions to Elvira, the battle for Corday's image, and the ambivalent Charlotte of *The Female Enthusiast* all spoke to a world that has less tolerance for women who fail to adhere to a strictly domestic role than people previously had. Britain had undergone massive social and economic changes during the eighteenth century, transitioning from a relative backwater to a major European empire. The home islands had coalesced into a largely unified Great Britain, three monarchies had transitioned power relatively peacefully, and the nation had defeated her primary rival, France, in a series of global wars. These victories, along with the collapse of the French monarchy, left Britain the primary global power, though she lost the American colonies in the process. Still, British society avoided being dragged into a conflagration on the home front on the order of the French Revolution. Although the islands were opened to visitors from North America and Asia and contact with indigenous peoples had introduced new social practices and ideas to British society, the nation left the eighteenth century with patriarchy enshrined as a fundamental virtue of the culture. The theatre of the late eighteenth century affirmed the value of masculine control of the world.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The long eighteenth century is the crucible in which our modern world was fired: a capitalist, globalized economy began to emerge, fueled by the influx of treasure extracted from the colonial world. European nations projected power around the globe through both military and economic means. Performance became a crucial way that Anglophone society built gender disparity into the systems of control that came to dominate our world today. To understand and unravel these systems, we must have a clear understanding of the genealogical heritage from which they came.

In this study, I have shown how the English actress was a key feature in establishing gender difference and the subordination of women as a cornerstone of British national identity. The introduction of actresses to the English public theatre in the late seventeenth century constituted a rupture in the nation's social fabric. Women from lower- and middle-class backgrounds had a new level of cultural visibility and a nascent professional avenue available to themselves. This development, along with the nation's expanding colonial enterprises, had the potential to radically restructure gender roles. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, however, this promise had largely been foreclosed upon. Women's roles had been restricted largely to the domestic world.

Through the process I have termed *hauntography*, British theatre actively participated in the construction of the nation's identity, particularly *vis-à-vis* gender. Performance, both in London and abroad, participated in a larger cultural discourse about what a specifically British

womanhood should look like. The fictional content of plays and performance events, which the audience read through the lens of the performers' personal lives and amidst ongoing debates about the biological science of sexual difference, colonial enterprise, and the nation's political affairs, created an idealized social position for the nation's women.

The celebrity of the first English actresses was co-opted in service of constructing British womanhood as both domestic and subordinate. Anne Bracegirdle secured a comfortable life for herself without ever marrying and maintained a reputation for chastity throughout her life. The series of portraits in her Semernia costume celebrated her Englishness set off with the exotic trappings of the indigenous costuming. By the time Sarah Siddons was the dominant actress on the English stage, however, a blameless public life could no longer fully launder an unrespectable character. Though Siddons was a longsuffering wife and devoted mother, Elvira still did not escape censure for behavior that was far less iconoclastic than Bracegirdle's Indian Queen.

We can see the process playing out through the cases examined here. In the late seventeenth century, female characters might receive acclaim for iconoclastic, masculine behavior. Both the Pamunkey queen Semernia in *The Widow Ranter* and the enslaved Imoinda of *Oroonoko* take up arms to resist colonial forces. Even though the women die in the course of the plays, audiences took to them. The role of Semernia helped to launch Anne Bracegirdle to stardom, and *Oroonoko* became one of the most popular plays of the entire eighteenth century. By the middle part of the century, Peg Woffington's flirtatious military performances were still popular with audiences. We can begin to see the coming backlash in the way "The Female Volunteer" elicited misogynistic pushback to police the borders of proper gender behavior. By the time *Pizarro* premiered in 1799, Elvira excited a firestorm of criticism largely just by virtue

of her being a woman in the masculine space of a military camp. Over the course of the century, the change in reception of women's stage roles serves as a barometer for changes in the broader culture.

Similarly, we can look at the pieces' attitudes toward civilization and women's role in it. The fictionalized, colonial worlds of the plays explored in the first chapter all end with a regenerative restoration. Zempoalla is defeated and the Peruvian and Mexican thrones are joined under the rightful rule of Montezuma. The Welldon sisters secure husbands and fortune that will sustain them in their new home, Suriname. The English in Virginia suppress Bacon's rebellion and the Pamunkey threat, securing the colony and a series of marriages through the battle. In the latter two cases, although the plays present the destruction of Oroonoko and Semernia as tragic, the comic portions of the plays' split plots are triumphal for the English characters. The masculinized behaviors of the Englishwomen wasn't an impediment to the reproduction of a world that mirrored the metropole in the colonies. In fact, in *The Widow Ranter*, the title character's participation in the war is essential to the English victory. The case studies from the second chapter show a world threatened at home and abroad by forces bent on its destruction. The fictional, provincial world of *The Recruiting Officer*, pervaded by images of military conflict, was consonant with the Annapolis-Royal environment of the 1733 production. Kitty Clive and Peg Woffington exhorted British men in their audience to defend the homeland from the Jacobites and their Catholic allies. In both cases, women impress upon the men around them that masculine failure will result in female emancipation. If the colony or the country were to be overrun, women would be forced to defend the nation where the men failed. In both *Pizarro* and *The Female Enthusiast*, however, destabilized gender roles lead to the collapse of colonial civilization. The Spaniards are driven out of Peru, and the Corday family flees a decaying France

in the aftermath of Charlotte's death. The British view of revolutionary France was an enflamed, radical society whose years of decadence had led to collapse. The worlds of the third chapter's studies are irreparable largely because of category decay between male and female.

The long eighteenth century began in England with the possibility, however slight, of greater female emancipation from patriarchal social structures. By the end of the century, patriarchy was in greater force than ever. Though individual women were able to capitalize on the nascent profession of the actress to their benefit, the overall cultural position of women in the Anglophone world was subordinated. Still, these women played a major role in increasing the cultural visibility of Englishwomen, even if widespread emancipation never arrived.

¹ On the contemporary understanding of race in the period, see Karen Ordahl Kupperman, *Settling with the Indians: The Meeting of English and Indian Cultures in America, 1580-1640* (New Jersey: Roman and Littlefield, 1980); Karen Ordahl Kupperman, "Presentment of Civility: English Reading of American Self-Presentation in the Early Years of Colonization," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 54, no. 1 (1997): 193-228; Roxann Wheeler, *The Complexion of Race: Categories of Difference in Eighteenth-Century British Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000); Ivan Hannaford, *Race: The History of an Idea in the West* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), Chapter 7; *Racism in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Harold E. Pagliaro (Cleveland: Case Western Reserve University Press, 1973); Nicholas Hudson, "From Nation to 'Race': The Origin of Racial Classification in Eighteenth-Century Thought," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 29, no. 3 (1996): 247-264; for a discussion of the dangers of applying modern conceptions of race to Restoration literatures, see Derek Hughes, "Race, Gender, and Scholarly Practice: Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko*," *Essays in Criticism* 52, no. 1 (2002): 1-22. Hughes argues in the piece that the word "race" almost never has its modern meaning in the period. For another view of the role of skin color in determining race, see Ayanna Thompson, *Performing Race and Torture on the Early Modern Stage* (New York: Routledge, 2008).

² Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837, 2nd Edition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 257.

³ Judith Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory," *Theatre Journal* 40, No. 4 (1988): 521-522.

⁴ Butler, "Performative Acts," 528.

⁵ Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990).

⁶ See Robert B. Shoemaker, *Gender in English Society, 1650-1850: The Emergence of Separate Spheres?* (London: Longman, 1998); Faramerz Dabhoiwala, *The Origins of Sex: A History of the First Sexual Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Ruth Perry, "Colonising the Breast: Sexuality and Maternity in Eighteenth-Century England," in *Forbidden History: The State, Society, and the Regulation of Sexuality in Modern Europe*, ed. J.C. Fout (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 107-138; Randolph Trumbach, *Sex and the Gender Revolution, Volume One: Heterosexuality and the Third Gender in Enlightenment London* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); Angus McLaren, "The Pleasures of Procreation: Traditional and Biomedical Theories of Conception," in *William Hunter and the Eighteenth-Century Medical World*, eds. W.F. Bynum and Roy Porter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Karen Harvey, "The Substance of Sexual Difference: Change and Persistence in Representations of the Body in Eighteenth-Century England," *Gender and History* 14, no. 2 (2002): 202-223; Karen Harvey, "A Century of Sex? Gender, Bodies, and Sexuality in the Long Eighteenth Century," *Historical Journal* 45, no. 4 (2002): 899-916; Tim Hitchcock, *English Sexualities 1700-1800* (New York: McMillan, 1997).

⁷ Dror Wahrman, *The Making of the Modern Self: Identity and Culture in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004).

⁸ Teresa de Lauretis, *Technologies of Gender: Essays on Theory, Film, and Fiction* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 3.

⁹ Joseph Roach, *It* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007), 36.

¹⁰ Robert Hume, *Reconstructing Contexts: The Aims and Principles of Archeo-Historicism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2009), 26.

¹¹ Elizabeth Maddock Dillon, *New World Drama: The Performative Commons in the Atlantic World, 1649-1849* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 16.

¹² Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 2.

¹³ Roach, *Cities of the Dead*, 11-13.

¹⁴ Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2003), 143.

¹⁵ Roach, *Cities of the Dead*, 2.

¹⁶ Karen Ordahl Kupperman, "Presentment of Civility: English Reading of American Self-Presentation in the Early Years of Colonization." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 54, no. 1 (1997): 194.

¹⁷ On the transformative economic and artistic impact of the introduction of women to public theatre in England, see Deborah C. Payne, "Reified Object or Emergent Professional? Retheorizing the Restoration Actress," in *Cultural Readings of Restoration and Eighteenth-Century English Theatre*, eds. J. Douglas Canfield and Deborah C. Payne (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1995), 13-38; Laura J. Rosenthal, "'Counterfeit Scrubbado': Women Actors in the Restoration," *Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation* 34, no. 1 (1993): 3-22; Katharine Eisaman Maus, "'Playhouse Flesh and Blood': Sexual Ideology and the Restoration Actress," *ELH* 46 (1979): 595-617; Elizabeth Howe, *The First English Actresses: Women and Drama 1660-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

¹⁸ Kupperman, "Presentment of Civility," 194. For more on the contemporary understanding of race in the period, see Kupperman, *Settling with the Indians: The Meeting of English and Indian Cultures in America, 1580-1640* (New Jersey: Roman and Littlefield, 1980). On the contemporary understanding, evolution, and discourse of race and skin color, see Roxann Wheeler, *The Complexion of Race: Categories of Difference in Eighteenth-Century British Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000); Ivan Hannaford, *Race: The History of an Idea in the West* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), Chapter 7; *Racism in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Harold E. Pagliaro (Cleveland: Case Western Reserve University Press, 1973); Nicholas Hudson, "From Nation to 'Race': The Origin of Racial Classification in Eighteenth-Century Thought," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 29, no. 3 (1996): 247-264; for a discussion of the dangers of applying modern conceptions of race to Restoration literatures, see Derek Hughes, "Race, Gender, and Scholarly Practice: Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko*," *Essays in Criticism* 52, no. 1 (2002): 1-22. Hughes argues in the piece that the word "race" almost never has its modern meaning in the period. For another view of the role of skin color in determining race, see Ayanna Thompson, *Performing Race and Torture on the Early Modern Stage* (New York: Routledge, 2008).

¹⁹ Kupperman, "Presentment of Civility," 194.

²⁰ Laura Brown, *Ends of Empire: Women and Ideology in Early Eighteenth-Century Literature* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 140-160.

²¹ Bridget Orr discusses a number of plays such as Thomas d'Urfey's *A Commonwealth of Women* that depict a fictionalized Amazon societies, noting that these often serve to justify existing social norms. See Orr, *Empire on the English Stage: 1660-1714* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 204.

²² For more on the trope of the Warrior Woman in popular culture of the period, see Dianne Dugaw, *Warrior Women and Popular Balladry: 1650-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 143-148. For a related but distinct discussion of the connection between gender and racial difference in non-dramatic eighteenth-century literature, see Felicity Nussbaum, *Torrid Zones: Maternity, Sexuality, and Empire in Eighteenth-Century English Narratives* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), especially 1-21. Nussbaum argues that British culture in the period sought to re-direct the medieval and Renaissance stereotype of all women as sexually rapacious solely onto indigenous women in hopes of encouraging productive, domestic wifhood and motherhood amongst British women.

²³ Ana Elena Gonzalez-Trevino, “‘Kings and their crowns’: Signs of Monarchy and the Spectacle of New World Otherness in Heroic Drama and Public Pageantry,” *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture*, 42 (2013): 106.

²⁴ *The Indian Emperour* was the sequel to *The Indian Queen*, the play under discussion in my chapter here. *The Indian Emperour* continues the story of Montezuma, detailing his destruction at the hands of the Spanish *conquistadores*. *The Indian Emperour* had a far more successful stage history and has received much more scholarly attention than its predecessor.

²⁵ John Dryden, *The Works of John Dryden, Volume IX*, ed. John Loftis (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), 27-28. Joseph Roach reads the popularity of American plays as part of a larger cultural interest in looking closely at all parts of the world, fueled by the concurrent development of microscopy. Peoples of the world were regarded like other biological organisms, available for viewing, study, and classification. See Roach, “The Artificial Eye: Augustan Theatre and the Empire of the Visible,” in *The Performance of Power: Theatrical Discourse and Politics*, eds. Sue-Ellen Case and Janelle Reinelt (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1991),

131-145. On the contemporary popularity of exotic locales in plays as “vicarious tourism,” see Roach, “The Enchanted Island: Vicarious Tourism in Restoration Adaptations of *The Tempest*,” in *‘The Tempest’ and Its Travels*, eds. Peter Hulme and William H. Sherman (London: Reaktion Books, 2000), 60-72.

²⁶ As Gonzalez-Trevino puts it, “Knowledge about the broad category of Amerindian culture through Indian plays was one means of nurturing their [meaning the English] sense of economic entitlement and cultural superiority, regardless of the historical and cultural inaccuracy of such representations,” “‘Kings and their crowns,’” 110.

²⁷ Elizabeth Maddock Dillon’s highly influential recent work in *New World Drama: The Performative Commons in the Atlantic World* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014) analyzes the relationship between European powers and their colonial possessions. Revising the Habermasian public sphere, Dillon argues that the Atlantic world is best understood as a “performative commons,” a space in which the medium of performance shaped and structured the relationship between Eurocolonial powers and their American possessions. Performance, as it did not exclude illiterate persons, reached a much wider audience than did print culture. Key to her argument is the notion of “intimate distance,” an ideological construction in which “European colonials sought to assert that vast cultural (if not biological) distance separated them from the individuals with whom they shared the intimacies of daily life and physical habituation in the colony,” (16). The performative commons was the process by which the colonial powers articulated and constructed difference.

²⁸ Max Harris, “Aztec Maidens in Satin Gowns: Alterity and Dialogue in Dryden’s *The Indian Emperor* and Hogarth’s ‘The Conquest of Mexico’,” *Restoration: Studies in English Literary Culture, 1660-1700* 15, no. 2 (1991): 65.

²⁹ Harris, "Aztec Maidens in Satin Gowns," 67.

³⁰ Felicity Nussbaum, *Rival Queens: Actresses, Performance, and the Eighteenth-Century British Theatre* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 49. Nussbaum also notes that within a few generations, the female stars of a company were paid more than their male costars. Successful actresses were afforded a standard of living superior to that of the middle classes, but they often lacked the social stature that might accompany their income. Still, especially after the introduction of actors' benefits as a supplement to wages in the late seventeenth century, a talented performer could earn a comfortable living from the stage. See also Judith Milhous, *Thomas Betterton and the Management of Lincoln's Inn Fields, 1695-1708* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1979), 26-48; Milhous, "United Company Finances, 1682-1692," *Theatre Research International* 7, no. 1 (1981/1982): 45-50; Robert Hume, "The Origins of the Actor Benefit in London," *Theatre Research International* 9, no. 2 (1984): 99-111; Hume, "The Economics of Culture in London, 1660-1740," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 69, no. 4 (2006): 504-508.

³¹ Philip H. Highfill, Kalman A. Burnim, Edward A. Langhans, *A Biographical Dictionary of Actors, Actresses, Musicians, Dancers, Managers, and Other Stage Personnel in London, 1660-1800, Volume 1* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1973), 323.

³² Nussbaum, *Rival Queens*, 55.

³³ Hume, "The Economics of Culture in London," 495. Hume offers the caveat that actors' salaries are very difficult to pin down because theatrical records before 1700 are woefully incomplete. Further, the relative buying power of money in the period is difficult to translate to modern standards because goods and services were priced in very different ways during the long eighteenth century. For instance, while food was relatively expensive, housing could be acquired

cheaply. Still, based on the information we have, the top-earning performers were able to live comfortable lives.

³⁴ Joseph Roach, "Patina: Mrs. Siddons and the Depth of Surfaces," in *Notorious Muse: The Actress in British Art and Culture, 1776-1812*, ed. Robin Asleson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 196. See also Joseph Roach, *It* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007), 15-18.

³⁵ Henry William Pedicord draws on multiple sources in *The Theatrical Public in the Time of Garrick* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1966), 16-17, to estimate that in 1750 approximately 1.7% of Londoners regularly went to the theatre. In the mid 1680s, that number was likely lower—the two patent theatres were forced in 1682 to consolidate into the United Company due to low attendance. The devoted core of playgoers was very familiar with the performers onstage, especially if we take Pepys to be emblematic of a regular audience member. Further, unlike the public theatres of the Renaissance, Restoration playhouses were enclosed spaces, lending themselves to a more intimate atmosphere. For a dramatic and lurid illustration of the relationship between the stage and the playhouse, see Judith Milhous and Robert D. Hume, "Murder in Elizabeth Barry's Dressing Room," *The Yale University Library Gazette* 79, no. 3/4 (2005): 149-174. There, they detail the story of a former lover of Barry's who entered the playhouse in a state of advanced drunkenness and, as she later testified, repeatedly interrupted the play by talking to her while she was acting. The man would later fight and kill a rival for her affections in her dressing room. Though an extreme example, the anecdote makes clear the close connection between audience and performer in the era.

³⁶ Marvin Carlson, *The Haunted Stage: The Theatre As Memory Machine* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003), 7.

³⁷ Carlson, *The Haunted Stage*, 8.

³⁸ Peter Holland, *The Ornament of Action* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 76.

³⁹ Roach, *It*, 36.

⁴⁰ Rosenthal, "Counterfeit Scrubbado"; Kirsten Pullen, *Actresses and Whores: On Stage and in Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), especially chapter 2.

⁴¹ Robert Hume, "Theatre History 1660-1800: Aims, Materials, and Methodology," in *Players, Playwrights, Playhouses: Investigating Performance 1660-1800*, eds. Peter Holland and Michael Corder (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 20. See also Judith Milhous and Robert Hume, *Producible Interpretation: Eight English Plays, 1675-1707* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1985), 3-35. Milhous and Hume outline a theory they call "producible interpretation," which prefers for dramatic criticism readings that can be clearly communicated to an audience via performance. This theory involves a similar recovering of historical context for a play.

⁴² The authorship of the dramatic *Indian Queen* is a matter of some debate. Both Dryden and his brother-in-law, Sir Robert Howard, had a hand in its creation. In *The Lives and Characters of the English Dramatick Poets*, published in 1699, Gerard Langbaine and Charles Gildon attribute the play to Howard. The authoritative edition of Dryden's works, published by the University of California Press, includes *The Indian Queen* and editors John Harrington Smith and Dougald MacMillan claim the play is chiefly Dryden's work—see Vol. VIII, 283 for their argument. Conversely, H.J. Oliver argues that the play is chiefly Howard's, with only minor contributions from Dryden, in *Sir Robert Howard, 1626-1698: A Critical Biography* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1963). Derek Hughes says of the debate that, although he refers to Dryden as the author based on the California edition's doing so, "I regard Howard as the chief author of the

play” in *Dryden’s Heroic Plays* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1981), 177, n. 1. I shall follow suit here, especially as questions regarding authorship of the dramatic text are largely irrelevant to my present argument.

⁴³ William VanLennep, *The London Stage, Part 1: 1660-1700* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1965), 74-75 lists ten productions over the course of its first month in the repertory.

⁴⁴ Derek Hughes, “Restoration and Settlement: 1660 and 1688,” in *The Cambridge Companion to English Restoration Theatre*, ed. Deborah Payne Fisk (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 127. See also Elaine McGirr, *Heroic Mode and Political Crisis, 1660-1745* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2009), 30-67.

⁴⁵ VanLennep, *The London Stage, Part 1*, 75.

⁴⁶ Sources on the Americas included Samuel Purchas’s *Purchas his Pilgrimes* and the sections of Gomberville’s *Polexandre* that dealt with Mexico. For more on the sources of the play, both dramatic and historical, see John Harrington Smith and Dougald MacMillan, “Commentary on *The Indian Queen*,” in *The Works of John Dryden, Volume VIII*, eds. John Harrington Smith, Dougald MacMillan, and Vinton A. Dearing (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962), 282-304.

⁴⁷ Orr, *Empire on the English Stage*, 142.

⁴⁸ John Dryden, *The Indian Queen* in *The Works of John Dryden, Volume VIII*, eds. John Harrington Smith, Dougald MacMillan, and Vinton A. Dearing (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962), All textual references are to this edition and appear parenthetically in text.

⁴⁹ Orr, *Empire on the English Stage*, 142-143.

⁵⁰ Derek Hughes, *Dryden's Heroic Plays* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1981), 23.

⁵¹ Andrew Pinnock, "Play Into Opera: Purcell's 'The Indian Queen'," *Early Music* 18, no. 1 (1990): 6-7.

⁵² For more on the actors' revolt, see Judith Milhous, *Thomas Betterton and the Management of Lincoln's Inn Fields* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1979), Chapter 3.

⁵³ Judith Milhous, "The Multimedia Spectacular on the Restoration Stage," in *British Theatre and the Other Arts, 1660-1800*, ed. Shirley Strum Kenny (Washington: Folger Books, 1984), 60-62. Milhous speculates that Betterton and the other artists in the company continued to produce operas against their economic self-interest owing to the artistically exciting challenge of putting on such grandiose shows.

⁵⁴ Robert D. Hume, "Opera in London, 1695-1706," in *British Theatre and the Other Arts, 1660-1800*, ed. Shirley Strum Kenny (Washington: Folger Books, 1984), 70.

⁵⁵ Cecil A. Price, *Henry Purcell and the London Stage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 4.

⁵⁶ Price, *Purcell and the London Stage*, 131. He sees the alterations in the text as designed primarily to strengthen Zempoalla and develop her interiority. Orazia's role is heavily cut, making Zempoalla the only female character with any depth. He suggests that Dryden himself may have been responsible for the cuts. Andrew Pinnock argues against Price's view, saying that the emendations to the text are haphazard and mar the piece's clarity. Zempoalla's sacrificial vow is cut, though later references to it remain intact. Another of the cuts removed a speech in which Acacis discusses Zempoalla seizing the throne from Amexia while the latter was pregnant. While Price reads this alteration as designed to make the Queen less villainous, Pinnock suggests that the plot is muddled because the characters in the operatic version consistently act based on

information they have which the audience doesn't. See Pinnock, "Play into Opera: Purcell's 'The Indian Queen'" *Early Music* 18, no. 1 (1990): 3-21. Regardless of the motivation for the cuts, the effect is ultimately to soften the harshness of the villain.

⁵⁷ Price, *Purcell and the London Stage*, 134.

⁵⁸ Smith and MacMillan, "Commentary on *The Indian Queen*," 283.

⁵⁹ Milhous, "Multimedia Spectacular," 61-62.

⁶⁰ Hume, "Opera in London," 71.

⁶¹ Price, *Purcell and the London Stage*, 128.

⁶² Price, *Purcell and the London Stage*, 131. The manuscript is cataloged at the British Library as Add. MS 31449. The entry for the operatic remount in *The London Stage* similarly credits the songs to Cross. See VanLennep, *The London Stage, Part I*, 444. It is unclear whether Cross sang the part in character or as herself.

⁶³ Highfill, Burnim, and Langhans, *Biographical Dictionary, Volume 4*, 62.

⁶⁴ Howe, *The First English Actresses*, 99.

⁶⁵ Sara Mendelson and Patricia Crawford, *Women in Early Modern England, 1550-1720* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 19-26. See also Fletcher, *Gender, Sex, and Subordination in England, 1500-1800*; Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992); Karen Harvey, "The Substance of Sexual Difference: Change and Persistence in Representations of the Body in Eighteenth-Century England," *Gender and History* 14, no. 2 (2002): 202-223.

⁶⁶ J.A. Westrup, *Purcell* (London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1965), 142. Westrup says that, judging from the music only, the play could easily have been set in England. For a full musicological analysis of the score, see Price, *Purcell and the London Stage*, 133-143, Pinnock, "Play into

Opera,” 3-21, and Roger Savage, “The Theatre Music,” in *The Purcell Companion*, ed. Michael Burden (Portland: Amadeus Press, 1994), 357.

⁶⁷ Orr, *Empire on the English Stage*, 141.

⁶⁸ Kupperman, “Presentment of Civility,” 226.

⁶⁹ Sources differ on exactly how long the play ran. Elizabeth Maddock Dillon claims that it played annually until 1829 in *New World Drama*, 54. Felicity Nussbaum, however, says that it held the stage until 1801. Felicity Nussbaum, *The Limits of the Human: Fictions of Anomaly, Race, and Gender in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 157.

⁷⁰ Laura Rosenthal, “Owning Oroonoko: Behn, Southerne, and the Contingencies of Property,” *Renaissance Drama* 23 (1992): 49.

⁷¹ For example, see Kalissa Hendrickson, “‘The Trust and Credit of a Guinea-Bawd’: Circulation, Credit, and the Bodied Economy in Thomas Southerne’s *Oroonoko*,” *Restoration & 18th Century Theatre Research* 27, no. 2 (2012): 35-60. Hendrickson argues that the play repeatedly juxtaposes economic ideas with bodies and sex throughout both the tragic and the comic plots to explore England’s expanding identity as a commercial empire and the evolving idea of credit. Similarly, Julia A. Rich argues that the “hard comedy” subplot is meant to show a morally bankrupt community that will inevitably arise with the erosion of traditional, heroic values that Oroonoko symbolizes. See Rich, “Heroic Tragedy in Southerne’s *Oroonoko* (1695): An Approach to a Split-Plot Tragicomedy,” *Philological Quarterly* 62, no. 2 (1983), 187-200.

⁷² Virginia Mason Vaughan, *Performing Blackness on English Stages, 1500-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 155.

⁷³ Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko*, Norton Critical Edition, ed. Joanna Lipking (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1997). All references to Behn's novel are to page numbers from this edition.

⁷⁴ Duffy argues that a Restoration actress would not have been willing to don blackface and ends her consideration of the topic there; see *The Passionate Shepherdess*, 269. Similarly, Felicity Nussbaum notes that a black woman had yet to appear on the public stage in the eighteenth century, providing a material basis for Southerne's alteration. Dark female characters from the Renaissance were played by boy players wearing blackface makeup. See Nussbaum, *Limits of the Human*, 158. She does, however, discuss a Restoration masque, *Calisto: or, The Chaste Nymph* by John Crowne, in which two actresses play the nations of Africa and the Americas. The characters complain about having "lost" their white skin, which Nussbaum interprets as a reference to the skin color of the actresses beneath their makeup. Even if this provides a counterexample, the tradition of the Restoration stage was overwhelmingly against actresses wearing blackface.

⁷⁵ Anthony Gerard Barthelemy, *Black Face, Maligned Race: The Representation of Blacks in English Drama from Shakespeare to Southerne* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1999), 20.

⁷⁶ Lynda E. Boose, "'The Getting of a Lawful Race': Racial Discourse in Early Modern England and the Unrepresentable Black Woman," in *Women, "Race," & Writing in the Early Modern Period*, eds. Margo Hendricks and Patricia Parker (London: Routledge, 1994), 49-50.

⁷⁷ Qtd. in Boose, "Getting of a Lawful Race," 51.

⁷⁸ Boose, "Getting of a Lawful Race," 49-51.

⁷⁹ Andrea Stevens, *Inventions of the Skin: The Painted Body in Early English Drama, 1400-1642* (Edinburg: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 99.

⁸⁰ Boose, "Getting of a Lawful Race," 46. For more on *The Masque of Blackness*, see Stephen Orgel, *The Jonsonian Masque* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), 113-130; Kim F. Hall, *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 128-140; Anne Cline Kelly, "The Challenge of the Impossible: Ben Jonson's *Masque of Blackness*," *College Language Association Journal* 20, no. 3 (1977): 341-355; Stevens, *Inventions of the Skin*, 88-100; Hardin Aasand, "'To blanch an Ethiop, and revive a corse': Queen Anne and *The Masque of Blackness*," *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 32, no. 2 (1992): 271-285; Bernadette Andrea, "Black Skin, the Queen's Masques: Africanist Ambivalence and Feminine Author(ity) in the Masques," *English Literary Renaissance* 29, no. 2 (1999): 246-281.

⁸¹ Nussbaum, *Limits of the Human*, 158.

⁸² Nussbaum, *Limits of the Human*, 158.

⁸³ Kirsten Pullen, *Actresses and Whores*, 48.

⁸⁴ Stevens, *Inventions of the Skin*, 94. Stevens also notes that the masque was performed during a time when English culture was vigorously debating the ethics of cosmetics, with conservative factions opposing the use of make-up as it obscured natural beauty.

⁸⁵ We might also read the white Imoinda as a further testament to the disconnect between skin color and race in the period.

⁸⁶ All textual references are to the Regents Drama edition of the play, edited by Maximillian E. Novak and David Rodes (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003).

⁸⁷ See Hume, *The Development of English Drama in the Late Seventeenth Century*, 181-184 and 209-213 for a discussion of tragicomedy in the period. Hume notes the vexed nature of "tragicomedy" as a classification, as the plays don't always share formal characteristics. He

specifically notes *Oroonoko* seems to fit the genre, but the title page refers to it as “A Tragedy,” which he attributes to the ill-fated nature of the title character. See also Laura Brown, “The Divided Plot: Tragicomic Form in the Restoration,” *ELH* 47, no. 1 (1980): 67-79.

⁸⁸ Hendrickson, “‘Trust and Credit of a Guinea-Bawd’,” 36, n. 3. She suggests two motives for including the subplot: Southerne had a hit in the previous season with *The Fatal Marriage*, another split-plot play that took its tragic material from Behn’s *The History of the Nun*, and he may well have been trying to capture lightning in a bottle twice by repeating the same formula. Moreover, he had previously written a highly successful breeches role for the actress Susannah Verbruggen in 1691. As such, he was probably trying to capitalize on audience taste with the inclusion of the Welldons. Tragicomedy had been a popular theatrical form since the Renaissance, with Shakespeare, Beaumont and Fletcher, and Middleton all writing highly successful works in that genre. Behn herself had also recently had success with tragicomedy in *The Widow Ranter*.

⁸⁹ The standard reading regards the co-existence of the Welldons and Oroonoko as designed to draw a comparison between slavery and the marriage economy, in line with Southerne’s generally sympathetic views on women’s place in society. For representative examples, see Robert L. Root, *Thomas Southerne* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1981), 95-98; Maximillian E. Novak and David Rodes, “Introduction to *Oroonoko*,” *Oroonoko* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003), i--xlii; Jaqueline Pearson, *The Prostituted Muse: Images of Women and Women Dramatists, 1642-1737* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1988), 113-115.

⁹⁰ Brown, “The Divided Plot,” 67, 69.

⁹¹ For more on the Restoration widow figure, see Jon Lance Bacon, “Wives, Widows and Writings in Restoration Comedy,” *Studies in English Literature* 31, no. 3 (1991), 427-443;

Beverly Cardwell Debord, "The Widow in Restoration Comedy," (Ph.D. dissertation, West Virginia University, 1983).

⁹² Barbara J. Todd, "The Remarrying Widow: A Stereotype Reconsidered," in *Women in English Society 1500-1800*, ed. Mary Prior (London: Methuen, 1985), 55.

⁹³ Philip H. Highfill, Kalman A. Burnim, Edward A. Langhans, *A Biographical Dictionary of Actors, Actresses, Musicians, Dancers, Managers, and Other Stage Personnel in London, 1660-1800, Volume 9* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1973), 58-60.

⁹⁴ Between 1693 and 1696, Verbruggen originated 23 roles in new plays in London. Howe, *The First English Actresses*, 188.

⁹⁵ Colley Cibber, *An Apology for the Life of Colley Cibber*, ed. BRS Fone (New York: Dover Publications, 1968), 95.

⁹⁶ Kristina Bross and Kathryn Rummell, "Cast-Mistresses: The Widow Figure in *Oroonoko*," in *Troping Oroonoko from Behn to Bandele*, ed. Susan B. Iwanisziw (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2004), 64.

⁹⁷ Bross and Rummell, "Cast-Mistresses," 65.

⁹⁸ Qtd. in Highfill, Burnim, Langhans, *A Biographical Dictionary, Vol. 13*, 69.

⁹⁹ Highfill, Burnim, Langhans, *A Biographical Dictionary, Vol. 13*, 70.

¹⁰⁰ Holland, *The Ornament of Action*, 66. See also Joseph Roach, "The Performance," in *The Cambridge Companion to English Restoration Theatre*, ed. Deborah Payne Fisk (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 19-39; on the nature of roles as a type of property belonging to a performer, see Nussbaum, *Rival Queens*, 161-163.

¹⁰¹ Highfill, Burnim, Langhans, *A Biographical Dictionary, Vol. 13*, 71.

¹⁰² Aaron Hill and Urania Hill Johnson, *The Works of the Late Aaron Hill, Esq.: Consisting of Letters on Various Subjects, and of Original Poems, Moral and Facetious; with an Essay on the Art of Acting*, Vol. 1 (London: Printed for the Benefit of the Family, 1753), 143-145.

¹⁰³ Howe, *The First English Actresses*, 45. See also Jean Marsden, *Fatal Desire: Women, Sexuality, and the English Stage, 1660-1720* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 60-100.

¹⁰⁴ JL Styan, *Restoration Comedy in Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 164.

¹⁰⁵ Orr, *Empire on the English Stage*, 275.

¹⁰⁶ Roach, *Cities of the Dead*, 155.

¹⁰⁷ Joyce G. MacDonald, *Women and Race in Early Modern Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 93-96.

¹⁰⁸ Qtd. in Margaret W. Ferguson, "Juggling the Categories of Race, Class, and Gender: Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko*," in *Women, "Race," and Writing in the Early Modern Period*, eds. Margo Hendricks and Patricia Parker (London: Routledge, 1994), 211.

¹⁰⁹ Dawn M. Goode, "'Under a Petticoat': Excess Femininity and Lesbian Desire on the Restoration and Early Eighteenth-Century British Stage," *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 36, no. 2 (2013): 177-183.

¹¹⁰ Janet Todd and Derek Hughes, "Tragedy and Tragicomedy," in *The Cambridge Companion to Aphra Behn*, ed. Derek Hughes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 93.

¹¹¹ Daniel Richter, *Before the Revolution: America's Ancient Past* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011), 201.

¹¹² James D. Rice, *Tales from a Revolution: Bacon's Rebellion and the History of Early America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 12.

¹¹³ Rice, *Tales from a Revolution*, 28.

¹¹⁴ Rice, *Tales from a Revolution*, 34-36.

¹¹⁵ Kathleen Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power in Colonial Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 160.

¹¹⁶ Rice, *Tales from a Revolution*, 40-41.

¹¹⁷ Rice, *Tales from a Revolution*, 52.

¹¹⁸ Rice, *Tales from a Revolution*, 69-73.

¹¹⁹ Brown, *Good Wives*, 163.

¹²⁰ Rice, *Tales from a Revolution*, 77-84.

¹²¹ Rice, *Tales from a Revolution*, 90-95.

¹²² Rice, *Tales from a Revolution*, 100-101.

¹²³ Brown, *Good Wives*, 174.

¹²⁴ Rice, *Tales from a Revolution*, 102-129. For more on Bacon's Rebellion and its aftermath, see Rice; Brown pp. 138—177; Alfred A. Cave, *Lethal Encounters: Englishmen and Indians in Colonial Virginia* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011); Stephen Saunders Webb, *1676: The End of American Independence*, 2nd Ed. (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1995); Wilcomb E. Washburn, *The Governor and the Rebel: A History of Bacon's Rebellion in Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1957).

¹²⁵ Brown, *Good Wives*, 160.

¹²⁶ Cave, *Lethal Encounters*, 154.

¹²⁷ Rice, *Tales from a Revolution*, 27-28.

¹²⁸ Rice, *Tales from a Revolution*, 86.

¹²⁹ Brown, *Good Wives*, 168.

¹³⁰ Rice, *Tales from a Revolution*, 169.

¹³¹ Both pamphlets and the commissioners' report are reproduced in the authoritative critical edition of *The Widow Ranter*, ed. Aaron Walden (New York: Garland Publishing, 1993).

¹³² Wilber Henry Ward, "Mrs. Behn's 'The Widow Ranter': Historical Sources," *South Atlantic Bulletin* 41, no. 4 (1976): 94-96.

¹³³ Jenny Hale Pulsipher, "The Widow Ranter and Royalist Culture in Colonial Virginia," *Early American Literature* 39, no. 1 (2004): 56.

¹³⁴ Pulsipher reads the alterations to Bacon's character as a strategy to make him conform to standards of the Restoration tragic hero. See "Royalist Culture in Colonial Virginia," 46-47.

¹³⁵ Janet Todd, *The Secret Life of Aphra Behn* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1997), 289.

¹³⁶ Todd, *The Secret Life of Aphra Behn*, 432.

¹³⁷ British Library, MS RP 2204.

¹³⁸ All textual references are to Walden's edition of the play, based on the first edition copy in the Huntington Library.

¹³⁹ Howe, *The First English Actresses*, 56.

¹⁴⁰ See Pat Rogers, "The Breeches Part," in *Sexuality in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Paul-Gabriel Bouce (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1982), 244-258 for a full discussion of the trope in the era. See also J.L. Styan, *Restoration Comedy in Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 133-141. For a recent perspective on breeches roles undermining patriarchal norms, see J.A.P. Pablos, "Women in Breeches and Modes of Masculinity in Restoration Comedy," *Sederi—Yearbook of the Spanish and Portuguese Society for English Renaissance Studies* 22 (2012), 69-91. Pablos argues that the breeches role offers the opportunity

to challenge gender norms through performing masculinity. While the examples are persuasive, the plays cited—*The Woman Turned Bully* (1675), *The Female Captain* (1680), and *Sir Anthony Love* (1690)—are fascinating in their deviations from convention, they aren't necessarily representative of the dominant trends in the era.

¹⁴¹ Ayanna Thompson, *Performing Race and Torture on the Early Modern Stage* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 30.

¹⁴² Anna Clark, *The Struggle for the Breeches: Gender and the Making of the British Working Class* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 68.

¹⁴³ George Jenkins, "Dedicatory Epistle," in *The Widow Ranter*, ed. Aaron Walden (New York: Garland Publishing, 1993), 1.

¹⁴⁴ Images available via the National Portrait Gallery: D792, D19498, and D790. --

[https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw41898/possibly-Anne-](https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw41898/possibly-Anne-Bracegirdle?LinkID=mp50361&search=sas&sText=anne+bracegirdle&role=sit&rNo=5)

[Bracegirdle?LinkID=mp50361&search=sas&sText=anne+bracegirdle&role=sit&rNo=5](https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw41898/possibly-Anne-Bracegirdle?LinkID=mp50361&search=sas&sText=anne+bracegirdle&role=sit&rNo=5)

[https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw35098/The-Indian-Queen-Anne-](https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw35098/The-Indian-Queen-Anne-Bracegirdle?LinkID=mp50361&search=sas&sText=anne+bracegirdle&role=sit&rNo=0)

[Bracegirdle?LinkID=mp50361&search=sas&sText=anne+bracegirdle&role=sit&rNo=0](https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw35098/The-Indian-Queen-Anne-Bracegirdle?LinkID=mp50361&search=sas&sText=anne+bracegirdle&role=sit&rNo=0)

[https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw41876/An-Indian-Queen-possibly-Anne-](https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw41876/An-Indian-Queen-possibly-Anne-Bracegirdle?LinkID=mp50361&search=sas&sText=anne+bracegirdle&role=sit&rNo=2)

[Bracegirdle?LinkID=mp50361&search=sas&sText=anne+bracegirdle&role=sit&rNo=2](https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw41876/An-Indian-Queen-possibly-Anne-Bracegirdle?LinkID=mp50361&search=sas&sText=anne+bracegirdle&role=sit&rNo=2)

One of the images also identifies Bracegirdle as "The Empress of China." Joseph Roach has written extensively about this portrait of Bracegirdle. See Roach, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 125-127; Roach, "The Global Parasol: Accessorizing the Four Corners of the World," in *The Global Eighteenth Century*, ed. Felicity Nussbaum (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 93-106. For an analysis of the portrait in the context of performer portraiture more generally, see Chloe

Wigston Smith, "Dressing Up Character: Theatrical Paintings from the Restoration to the Mid-Eighteenth Century" in *Prologues, Epilogues, Curtain-Raisers, and Afterpieces: The Rest of the Eighteenth-Century London Stage*, eds. Daniel J. Ennis and Judith Bailey Slagle (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2007), 70-105.

¹⁴⁵ Another image appears to be a variant of this one, with Bracegirdle in a similar pose and costume.

¹⁴⁶ Roach, "The Performance," 36.

¹⁴⁷ Laura Engel, *Fashioning Celebrity: 18th-Century British Actresses and Strategies for Image Making* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2011), 17-20.

¹⁴⁸ Dillon, *New World Drama*, 97.

¹⁴⁹ Heidi Hutner, *Colonial Women: Race and Culture in Stuart Drama* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 106.

¹⁵⁰ Roach, *Cities of the Dead*, 36.

¹⁵¹ Margo Hendricks, "Civility, Barbarism, and Aphra Behn's *The Widow Ranter*," in *Women, "Race," and Writing in the Early Modern Period*, eds. Margo Hendricks and Patricia Parker (London: Routledge, 1994), 234. Although it happened a few years after *The Widow Ranter*, an episode from Bracegirdle's private life bore a striking resemblance to Semernia's plight. A soldier, Captain Richard Hill, became obsessed with the actress in the fall of 1692, but she rejected his advances. With the help of Lord Mohun, a notorious libertine, Hill attempted to kidnap Bracegirdle. He planned to rape the actress and then force her to marry him. After the attack was thwarted, Hill stabbed and killed the actor William Mountfort, whom Hill suspected of being a rival for her affections. The episode served to earn her even more plaudits for her chastity in the public imagination. See Highfill, Burnim, and Langhans, *Biographical Dictionary*,

Volume 2, 271-272. Incidentally, Mountfort was married to the eventual Susannah Verbruggen, who married John shortly after her first husband's murder.

¹⁵² For readings that offer appraisals of the feminism in Behn's life and work, see Todd, *The Secret Life of Aphra Behn*; Angelina Goreau, *Reconstructing Aphra: A Social Biography of Aphra Behn* (New York, Dial Press, 1980), Derek Hughes, *The Theatre of Aphra Behn* (New York: Palgrave, 2001); *The Cambridge Companion to Aphra Behn*, eds. Derek Hughes and Janet Todd (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

¹⁵³ Orr notes that the figure of America was gendered female when depicted in Lord Mayor's pageants, *Empire on the English Stage*, 55.

¹⁵⁴ Hendricks, "Civility, Barbarism," 234.

¹⁵⁵ Hutner, *Colonial Women*, 92.

¹⁵⁶ On the multifarious composition of late seventeenth century audiences, see Harold Love, "Who Were the Restoration Audience?" *The Yearbook of English Studies* 10 (1980): 21-44; Harold Love, "The Myth of the Restoration Audience," *Komos* 1 (1967): 49-56; Emmett L. Avery, "The Restoration Audience," *Philological Quarterly* 45 (1966): 54-61; Robert D. Hume, *The Development of English Drama in the Late Seventeenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 23-28. For a discussion of women's role in the audience over the period, see David Roberts, *The Ladies: Female Patronage of Restoration Drama, 1660-1700* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989). For a more traditional view of the audience as a predominantly upper-class coterie, see John Loftis, "The Audience," in *The Revels History of Drama in English, Vol. V, 1660-1750*, ed. T.W. Craik (London: Methuen and Company, 1976), 13-25.

¹⁵⁷ Howe, *The First English Actresses*, 78-79, 101-102.

¹⁵⁸ Highfill, Burnim, and Langhans, *Biographical Dictionary, Volume 3*, 99. The 1684 *Satyr on the Players* advised her by name to seek her fortune in Ireland, where she would possibly have more earning power than London.

¹⁵⁹ Notices of the suits are available in the London Public Records Office: PRO LC 5/192, Folio 15 and PRO LC 5/150, p. 366.

¹⁶⁰ Rogers, "Breeches Roles," 255.

¹⁶¹ Styan, *Restoration Comedy in Performance*, 126-133.

¹⁶² Holland, *The Ornament of Action*, 79.

¹⁶³ Nussbaum, *Rival Queens*, 18-22. Nussbaum terms this triangulation the "interiority effect."

¹⁶⁴ Howe, *The First English Actresses*, 98-99.

¹⁶⁵ Brown, *Good Wives*, 171-177.

¹⁶⁶ Todd, *The Secret Life of Aphra Behn*, 56.

¹⁶⁷ Hutner, *Colonial Women*, 97.

¹⁶⁸ Margaret Ferguson, "News from the New World: Miscegenous Romance in Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko* and *The Widow Ranter*," in *The Production of English Renaissance Culture*, eds. David Lee Miller, Sharon O'Dair, and Harold Weber (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 166.

¹⁶⁹ Elliott Visconsi, "A Degenerate Race: English Barbarism in Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko* and *The Widow Ranter*," *ELH* 69, no. 3 (2002): 673-674. Visconsi reads both of Behn's major late-career pieces with American settings as a response to her country's repeated rejection of the Stuart monarchy, informed by a thoroughly pessimistic view of the English in general.

¹⁷⁰ Kathleen Wilson, *The Island Race: Englishness, Empire, and Gender in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 6.

¹⁷¹ Dillon, *New World Drama*, 16.

¹⁷² In 1700, the Spanish King Charles II died without issue, and with him the last of the Spanish branch of the Habsburgs. He named as his heir Philip, Duke of Anjou, one of Louis XIV's grandsons. The prospect of a Bourbon on the Spanish throne, giving the French control over both their own and the Spanish global empires, incited the English, Dutch, Austrians, and certain segments of the Holy Roman Empire to renew their alliance from the 1680s to forcibly place the Holy Roman Emperor, Leopold I, on the Spanish throne. Fighting began in 1701 with hostilities taking place across Europe. The early progress of the conflict led to some stunning victories for England and her allies, most notably at the Battle of Blenheim in 1704. The alliance was ultimately unable to achieve a decisive victory, however. The war continued until the Peace of Utrecht in 1714, borne more of exhaustion with war than a true resolution. In the settlement, some territory changed hands, and Philip became the Spanish king in exchange for renouncing any claim on the French throne. For more on the war, see James Falkner, *The War of Spanish Succession* (Barnsley, South Yorkshire: Pen and Sword Military, 2015); *The War of the Spanish Succession: New Perspectives*, eds. Matthias Pohligh and Michael Schaich (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018). For more on English involvement specifically, see Falkner, *Marlborough's War Machine, 1702-1711* (Barnsley, South Yorkshire: Pen and Sword Military, 2014).

¹⁷³ G.W. Stephen Brodsky, *Gentlemen of the Blade: A Social and Literary History of the British Army Since 1660* (New York: Greenwood, 1988), 6.

¹⁷⁴ John Brewer, *The Sinews of Power: War, Money, and the English State, 1688-1783* (New York: Knopf, 1989), 43.

¹⁷⁵ Brewer, *Sinews of Power*, 137.

¹⁷⁶ The Irish campaigns after the Glorious Revolution and the Jacobite uprisings of 1715 and 1745 mark the only times during the long eighteenth century that land operations unfolded on the home islands.

¹⁷⁷ Brewer, *Sinews of Power*, 46-49. Regarding the antiquated nature of private quartering, it is obviously much more difficult to mobilize troops who are dispersed across a town full of private homes than ones centrally located within a barracks or fort.

¹⁷⁸ Brewer, *Sinews of Power*, 49.

¹⁷⁹ Brodsky, *Gentlemen of the Blade*, 12.

¹⁸⁰ Brodsky, *Gentlemen of the Blade*, 8.

¹⁸¹ Brewer, *Sinews of Power*, 50. An account from Halifax in the 1740s illustrates this point: an unpopular preacher's enemies managed to get him pressed into the army despite his gainful employment. After several months, he was finally able to free himself, but the incident is telling; doubtless numerous members of the army were there against their will.

¹⁸² Silvia R. Frey, *The British Soldier in America: A Social History of Military Life in the Revolutionary Period* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 12.

¹⁸³ Brodsky, *Gentlemen of the Blade*, 9-10.

¹⁸⁴ Melee warfare refers to a disorganized style of close-quarters fighting carried out primarily with swords, clubs, axes, and the like. This was the predominant method of combat until gun technology was developed to the point where large numbers of soldiers could be provided with affordable, reliable firearms.

¹⁸⁵ Martin Van Creveld, *Technology and War: From 2000 B.C. to the Present* (New York: The Free Press, 1989), 82.

¹⁸⁶ Van Creveld, *Technology and War*, 94.

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- ¹⁸⁷ John Childs, *Armies and Warfare in Europe, 1648-1789* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1982), 105.
- ¹⁸⁸ Van Creveld, *Technology and War*, 94.
- ¹⁸⁹ Childs, *Armies and Warfare in Europe*, 67.
- ¹⁹⁰ Van Creveld, *Technology and War*, 94.
- ¹⁹¹ Brodsky, *Gentlemen of the Blade*, 10-11.
- ¹⁹² Van Creveld, *Technology and War*, 94.
- ¹⁹³ Childs, *Armies and Warfare in Europe*, 68.
- ¹⁹⁴ Childs, *Armies and Warfare in Europe*, 105.
- ¹⁹⁵ Childs, *Armies and Warfare in Europe*, 67-68.
- ¹⁹⁶ John Laffin, *Tommy Atkins: The Story of the English Soldier* (London: Cassell, 1966), 100.
- ¹⁹⁷ Brodsky, *Gentlemen of the Blade*, 11.
- ¹⁹⁸ Brewer, *Sinews of Power*, 54-55.
- ¹⁹⁹ Brewer, *Sinews of Power*, 59. On liberty as a constituent ideological facet of British identity, see Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837*, 2nd Edition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 30-42. The British saw themselves as the freest people in Europe and, consequently, the world. That freedom was closely tied to the nation's Protestant identity.
- ²⁰⁰ Brodsky, *Gentlemen of the Blade*, 11.
- ²⁰¹ Brodsky, *Gentlemen of the Blade*, 11.
- ²⁰² Frey, *British Soldier in America*, 54.
- ²⁰³ Frey, *British Soldier in America*, 59-60.
- ²⁰⁴ Frey, *British Soldier in America*, 60-61.

²⁰⁵ John A. Lynn, *Women, Armies, and Warfare in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 202.

²⁰⁶ The most famous woman warrior of the period was Hannah Snell, who disguised herself as a man, joined the Royal Marines, and fought in India at the siege of Pondicherry, amongst other places. She was wounded and sought the services of a local woman to avoid having the regimental surgeon discover her true gender. Upon returning to England, she revealed to her shipmates that she was a woman and was able to secure an army pension. Her story became a public sensation, and she briefly made a living performing military exercises and singing for audiences. My focus in this chapter is on actresses playing soldiers, and so I don't deal with Snell at any length. For more information on her remarkable story, see the anonymously authored *The Female Soldier, or The Surprising Life and Adventures of Hannah Snell* (London: Printed by R. Walker, 1750), available on Eighteenth-Century Collections Online. For discussion of her life, see Matthew Stephens, *Hannah Snell: The Secret Life of a Female Marine* (Oxford: Ship Street Press, 1997); for an analysis of her performances, see Georgina Lock and David Worrall, "Cross-Dressed Performance at the Theatrical Margins: Hannah Snell, the Manual Exercise, and the New Wells Spa Theatre, 1750," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 77, no. 1 (2014), 24.

²⁰⁷ Lynn, *Women, Armies, and Warfare*, 188-189.

²⁰⁸ Lynne Friedli, "Passing Women: A Study of Gender Boundaries in the Eighteenth Century," in *Sexual Underworlds of the Enlightenment*, eds. Roy Porter and G.S. Rousseau (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 235. See also Randolph Trumbach, "London's Sapphists: From the Three Sexes to Four Genders in the Making of Modern Culture," in *Body*

Guards: The Cultural Politics of Gender Ambiguity, eds. Julia Epstein and Kristina Straub (New York: Routledge, 1991), 112-141.

²⁰⁹ Gillian Russell, *The Theatres of War* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 28-29.

²¹⁰ Frey, *British Soldier in America*, 68.

²¹¹ Frey, *British Soldier in America*, 68.

²¹² David Worrall, "Theatre in the Combat Zone: Military Theatricals at Philadelphia, 1778," in *Urban Identity and the Atlantic World*, eds. Elizabeth A. Fay and Leonard von Morze (New York: Palgrave, 2013), 230.

²¹³ Frey, *British Soldier in America*, 68.

²¹⁴ Brodsky, *Gentlemen of the Blade*, 14.

²¹⁵ Linda Colley, *Britons*, 257.

²¹⁶ Kathleen Wilson, *The Island Race: Englishness, Empire, and Gender in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 128.

²¹⁷ Russell, *Theatres of War*, 159.

²¹⁸ Russell, *Theatres of War*, 131.

²¹⁹ Russell, *Theatres of War*, 158.

²²⁰ While the Glorious Revolution of 1688 was carried off without extensive bloodshed, the installation of William and Mary on the throne wasn't without objectors. The deposed James II fled to France, and his partisans earned the appellation Jacobites. The cause enjoyed particular support in heavily Catholic Ireland and Scotland, James's ancestral homeland. In 1715, his son, James Francis Stuart, would launch a failed invasion to reclaim the throne. The Jacobite cause would continue to simmer until Charles Francis Stuart, James II's grandson, launched a final incursion in 1745. Despite early successes, the uprising was eventually quelled by the Duke of

Cumberland and the Jacobite cause faded in its aftermath. For more on the rebellions, see John Baynes, *The Jacobite Rising of 1715* (London: Cassell, 1970); Daniel Szechi, *1715: The Great Jacobite Rebellion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006); John L. Roberts, *The Jacobite Wars* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2002); Geoffrey Plank, *Rebellion and Savagery: The Jacobite Rising of 1745 and the British Empire* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005); Michael Hook and Walter Ross, *The 'Forty Five: The Last Jacobite Rebellion* (Edinburgh: HMSO, The National Library of Scotland, 1995), Jacqueline Riding, *Jacobites: A New History of the '45 Rebellion* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016).

²²¹ Plank, *Rebellion and Savagery*, 5.

²²² Russell, *Theatres of War*, 158-159.

²²³ Peter A. Davis, "Puritan Mercantilism and Anti-Theatrical Legislation in Colonial America," in *The American Stage: Social and Economic Issues from the Colonial Period to the Present*, eds. Ron Engle and Tice L. Miller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 26.

²²⁴ W.M. MacVicar, *A Short History of Annapolis Royal: The Port Royal of the French, from Its Settlement in 1604 to the Withdrawal of the British Troops in 1854* (Toronto: Copp, Clark, 1897), 61-72.

²²⁵ Plank, *Rebellion and Savagery*, 157.

²²⁶ *Boston Gazette* (Boston, Massachusetts), June 4-11, 1733.

²²⁷ Michael Shugrue, introduction to Regents Restoration Drama edition of *The Recruiting Officer*, ed. Michael Shugrue (Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 1965), xx.

²²⁸ Arthur Bedford, *The Evil and Danger of Stage Plays* (London, 1706), 150-152.

²²⁹ Scott Mandelbrote, "Bedford, Arthur (bap. 1668, d. 1745)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

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- ²³⁰ Terence M. Freeman, *Dramatic Representations of British Soldiers and Sailors on the London Stage, 1660-1800: Britons, Strike Home* (Lewiston, New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1995), 28-30.
- ²³¹ Kevin J. Gardner, "George Farquhar's *The Recruiting Officer*: Warfare, Conscription, and the Disarming of Anxiety," *Eighteenth-Century Life* 25 (2001): 58, n. 3.
- ²³² Eric Rothstein, *George Farquhar* (New York: Twayne Publishing, 1967), 13-14.
- ²³³ Rothstein, *George Farquhar*, 16-25.
- ²³⁴ Rothstein, *George Farquhar*, 129.
- ²³⁵ Rothstein, *George Farquhar*, 131.
- ²³⁶ George Farquhar, *The Recruiting Officer*, ed. Michael Shugrue (Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 1965), epilogue, lines 14-17. Further citations are to this edition and appear in the text.
- ²³⁷ For more on Blenheim, see James Falkner, *Blenheim 1704: Marlborough's Greatest Victory* (Barnsley: Pen and Sword Books, 2004); Richard Holmes, *Marlborough: England's Fragile Genius* (New York: HarperCollins, 2008).
- ²³⁸ Denys Van Renen, "'The Air We Breathe': Warfare in Farquhar's *The Recruiting Officer*," *College Literature: A Journal of Critical Literature Studies* 43, no. 2 (2016): 400.
- ²³⁹ Van Renen, "The Air We Breathe," 415-419.
- ²⁴⁰ Jason Shaffer, *Performing Patriotism: National Identity in the Colonial and Revolutionary American Theatre* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 73-78.
- ²⁴¹ Odai Johnson, William J. Burling, and James A. Coombs, *The Colonial American Stage, 1665-1774: A Documentary Calendar* (Madison, New Jersey: Fairleigh Dickson University Press, 2001), 109.

²⁴² Van Renen, "The Air We Breathe," 418.

²⁴³ Rothstein, *George Farquhar*, 133.

²⁴⁴ Gardner, "Warfare, Conscription, and the Disarming of Anxiety," 48.

²⁴⁵ Gisa Hynes, "Some Aspects of the Demography of Port Royal, 1650-1755," *Acadensis* 3, no. 1 (1973): 13. Port Royal was the French name for the settlement before it was captured and re-christened by the British.

²⁴⁶ Carol Symes has discussed this same phenomenon as it relates to the medieval period. See Symes, *A Common Stage: Theatre and Public Life in Medieval Arras* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007), 187.

²⁴⁷ Michael L. Quinn, "Celebrity and the Semiotics of Acting," *New Theatre Quarterly* 6, no. 22 (1990): 154.

²⁴⁸ Sarah Beckwith, *Signifying God: Social Relations and Symbolic Act in the York Corpus Christi Plays* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 140.

²⁴⁹ Qtd. in Gardner, *An Analytical History*, 201.

²⁵⁰ Trumbach, "London's Sapphists," 114. Penetrative sex was the sole domain of the male in the period; women could engage in non-penetrative sexual behaviors without attracting scorn, but those who violated this dictum would be examined medically and often punished. Along similar lines, pre-pubescent boys could be penetrated without excessive cultural anxiety, but the penetration of an adult male was cause for significant alarm. See also Trumbach, "Sex, Gender, and Sexual Identity in Modern Culture: Male Sodomy and Female Prostitution in Enlightenment London," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 2, no. 2 (1991): 186-203; Terry Castle, *The Apparitional Lesbian: Female Homosexuality and Modern Culture* (New York: Columbia Press, 1993); Laurence Senelick, "Mollies or Men of Mode?: Sodomy and the Eighteenth-Century

London Stage,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 1 (1990): 33-67; Michael McKeon, “Historicizing Patriarchy: The Emergence of Gender Difference in England, 1660-1760,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 28, no. 3 (1995): 295-322; Kristina Straub, *Sexual Suspects: Eighteenth-Century Players and Sexual Ideology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), Chapter 3.

²⁵¹ Van Renen, “The Air We Breathe,” 422.

²⁵² Friedli, “Passing Women,” 235. Further Terry Castle has argued that eighteenth century British culture was fascinated with masquerade, disguise, and transvestitism as a mode of exploring, testing, and ultimately solidifying social identities. See “The Culture of Travesty: Sexuality and Masquerade in Eighteenth-Century England,” in *Sexual Underworlds of the Enlightenment*, eds. Roy Porter and G.S. Rousseau (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 156-180.

²⁵³ Friedli, “Passing Women,” 235.

²⁵⁴ Michael Dobson, *Shakespeare and Amateur Performance: A Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 123.

²⁵⁵ Rothstein argues that the same-sex eroticism in the text actually serves to argue against the possibility of same-sex relationships in the military by using the familial imagery to depict the army as a microcosm of society writ large, *George Farquhar*, 136. Similarly, Van Renen contends that Plume never evinces any actual homoerotic desire, “The Air We Breathe, 415. Obviously, the sexual politics of an all-male production would have been different from Farquhar’s vision for the text or any productions on the home islands.

²⁵⁶ Rogers, “The Breeches Part,” 244-258.

²⁵⁷ Russell, *Theatres of War*, 140; Wilson, *The Island Race*, 177.

²⁵⁸ In *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety* (New York: Routledge, 1997), Marjorie Garber notes, following Magnus Hirschfeld's work, that the military traditionally has higher rates of transvestitism than mainstream society. Garber adduces this tendency to "complicated interplay of forces, including male bonding, acknowledged and unacknowledged homosexual identity, carnivalized power relations, the erotics of same-sex communities, and the safety afforded by theatrical representation," 55-56. Similarly, Laurence Senelick says of the Renaissance stage in England, "with its boy-players portraying young women, must have accepted an androgynous ideal of beauty and been permeated to some degree with homophilic feeling, acceptably neutralized by performance conventions" and that theatre has an "historical role as a safehouse for the depiction of gender ambiguities and mystery within restrictive societies." Senelick, "Mollies or Men of Mode?," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 1 (1990): 38-42.

²⁵⁹ Garber, *Vested Interests*, 60.

²⁶⁰ Worrall, "Theatre in the Combat Zone," 219.

²⁶¹ Russell, *Theatres of War*, 46-47.

²⁶² Wilson, *The Island Race*, 9.

²⁶³ Freeman, *Dramatic Representations*, 33, points out that soldiers and sailors remained keen on plays throughout the century even though the cost of attending was high relative to their modest income. See also John Loftis, *The Politics of Drama in Augustan England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), 35; the theatres were "places of recreation alike for high government officials and officers of the army and the navy."

²⁶⁴ Lock and Worrall, "Cross-Dressed Performance," 26, notes that performances like Woffington's "Female Volunteer" could reach tens of thousands of subjects through repetition,

as well as further dissemination in print format as a broadside. Terence Freeman argues that stage-soldiers provided a masculine counterpoint to sentimental and romantic heroes, and soldiers enjoyed the depiction of themselves as exemplars of British masculinity. He also suggests that military characters might have garnered popularity as a reaction to the proliferation of Italian opera in London theatres during the early part of the eighteenth century. See *Dramatic Representations*, 24-26.

²⁶⁵ Thomas Davies, *Memoirs of the Life of David Garrick, Esq., Volume 1* (London: Printed for the Author, 1780), 318.

²⁶⁶ According to Davies, the play was lightly attended because James Quin wasn't acting Falstaff, and audiences were so devoted to his version of the character that anyone else in the role was a poor draw. Davies's description of Woffington's presence in the small role is thus: "a very beautiful and accomplished actress condescended, in order to give strength to the play, to act the trifling character of Lady Percy," *Dramatic Miscellanies, Volume 1* (London: Printed for the Author, 1783-1784), 232. The performance in question was 15 January 1746 (Old Style) and is recorded in *The London Stage, Part 3, Vol. 2*, ed. Arthur H. Scouten (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1961), 1279.

²⁶⁷ The entire incident is recorded in Davies, *Dramatic Miscellanies, Vol. 1*, 231-233. Davies also remarks that the fighting was not limited to the actresses. Owen M'Swiney (also variously spelled Swiney and McSwiney) a theatrical impresario and middling playwright who was an ardent supporter of Woffington, struck Clive's brother with his cane. The brother retaliated by grabbing M'Swiney by the jaw. It was the ruckus of the physical altercation that likely drew Barry backstage to put a stop to things.

²⁶⁸ Image available via the Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University: 746.01.20.01+.

<http://findit.library.yale.edu/catalog/digcoll:552326>

²⁶⁹ Generally rendered as “All the World’s a Stage,” though literally something closer to “The Whole World Performs as Actors.”

²⁷⁰ At the time of the green room scuffle, audiences were still allowed to go backstage for an additional fee. Doing so was an expression of wealth and privilege and was a beloved part of the theatre experience. When Garrick took over management of Drury Lane in April of 1747, he sought to end this practice because of its obviously intrusive and distracting nature. Playbills advertised ““The Admission of Persons behind the Scenes has occasioned a general Complaint on Account of the frequent Interruptions in the Performance, ‘tis hop’d Gentlemen won’t be offended, that no Money will be taken there in the future.” Initially, of course, angry patrons demanded to retain access to the backstage area and would try to force their way past guards. Failing that, they would shout complaints from the house about the new rules. Eventually, however, the ban on backstage visits took hold, especially thanks to an increase in visual spectacle, as going backstage ruined the illusion. See Allardyce Nicoll, *The Garrick Stage: Theatres and Audience in the Eighteenth Century* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1980), 78-82.

²⁷¹ On the economics of celebrity and theatrical rivalries in the period, see Felicity Nussbaum, *Rival Queens: Actresses, Performance, and the Eighteenth-Century British Theatre* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), Chapters 1 and 2. Nussbaum charts how British actresses defined themselves in the public imagination through the roles that they played, and how competition for those roles—and their ownership, both literally and figuratively—fueled rivalry. For more on celebrity self-definition and promotion in the period, see Laura

Engel, *Fashioning Celebrity: Eighteenth-Century British Actresses and Strategies for Image Making* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2011).

²⁷² “The Green Room Scuffle, or Drury Lane in an Uproar,” lines 21-28, available at <http://hdl.handle.net/10079/digcoll/552326>. The publication date on the print is 29 January, 1746 (Old Style), meaning it appeared in print two weeks after the incident occurred.

²⁷³ Another anecdote about their rivalry further illustrates this dichotomy. Seeking to mend fences, Woffington asked when she might enjoy the pleasure of Clive calling on her. Clive responded “Madame, I have been thinking of it, and upon consideration find I have a reputation to lose.” Woffington cheekily replied “Madam, so should I have too if I had your face.” This repartee was recorded in a letter from Lady Hertford to her son. See the *Biographical Dictionary, Volume 16*, 206. The authors describe this exchange as “one of the most surely authentic” tales of the Woffington/Clive rivalry. As with the Green Room Scuffle, it established Woffington as beautiful, whimsical, and salacious, and Clive as arch, pragmatic, and virtuous.

²⁷⁴ Janet Dunbar, *Peg Woffington and Her World* (London: Heinemann, 1968), 10. Dunbar gives 1717 or 1718 as the likely year of her birth, although the *Biographical Dictionary, Volume 16*, 197, notes that sources variously report her birth year as anywhere from 1714 to 1721.

²⁷⁵ Dunbar, *Peg Woffington*, 8-9.

²⁷⁶ Philip H. Highfill, Kalman A. Burnim, Edward A. Langhans, *A Biographical Dictionary of Actors, Actresses, Musicians, Dancers, Managers, and Other Stage Personnel in London, 1660-1800, Volume 16* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1975), 198-200.

²⁷⁷ Highfill, Burnim, and Langhans, *Biographical Dictionary, Vol. 16*, 204.

²⁷⁸ Highfill, Burnim, and Langhans, *Biographical Dictionary, Vol. 16*, 215.

²⁷⁹ Dunbar, *Peg Woffington*, 37.

²⁸⁰ Dunbar, *Peg Woffington*, 38.

²⁸¹ Highfill, Burnim, and Langhans, *Biographical Dictionary*, Vol. 16, 202.

²⁸² Qtd. in *The Dublin University Magazine, A Literary and Political Journal*, Vol. XXXV (Dublin: James McGlashan, 1850), 130.

²⁸³ Woffington's omnisexual charms were the subject of much versifying in the period. Another anonymous poet, quoted in Dunbar, 39, notes that "when lately she dressed in men's clothes...[was] chief of the belles and the beaux!" The same poem describes her as "A creature uncommon/who's both man and woman." While the tone is celebratory of her appeal, the image of the gender-bending actress was almost certainly not without some menace to the standard order. Still, breeches and even travesty performance was ultimately safe because they appealed to the sexual appetites of heterosexual male viewers, even if they could be enjoyed alternatively by others as well. See Randolph Trumbach, "London's Sapphists: From Three Sexes to Four Genders in the Making of Modern Culture," in *Body Guards: The Cultural Politics of Gender Ambiguity*, eds. Julia Epstein and Kristina Straub (New York: Routledge, 1991), 118-120; Pat Rogers, "The Breeches Part," in *Sexuality in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, ed. Paul-Gabriel Bouce (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1982), 244-258.

²⁸⁴ Highfill, Burnim, and Langhans, *Biographical Dictionary*, Vol. 16, 205-206.

²⁸⁵ Dunbar, *Peg Woffington*, 69.

²⁸⁶ Horace Walpole, *Horace Walpole's Correspondence, Yale Edition, Volume 17* (New Haven: Yale University, 1937-1983), 176.

²⁸⁷ According to note 36 on page 176 of the Yale edition of Walpole's correspondence, the story is repeated later about Theobald Taaffe, a minor Irish nobleman with whom Woffington was also romantically involved. Walpole's prurient interest in Woffington's personal life, despite his

claims to find her a poor actress, suggest anything he claims about her is dubious at best. In another amusing anecdote, Taafe allegedly ended his affair with Woffington to engage himself to an heiress. As a second son, he needed to secure his future fortune. Incensed, Woffington disguised herself as an army officer and infiltrated their engagement ball. She introduced herself to the heiress and let slip that rumor held Taafe had been carrying on with an actress of some renown, and that the relationships overlapped. To prove the claim, Woffington showed the heiress love letters Taafe had sent her, and the engagement was ended unceremoniously. See Dunbar, *Woffington*, 41-46. Though this is another unverifiable anecdote, it further speaks to the connection between Woffington's ability as a performer and her sexuality in the popular imagination.

²⁸⁸ Angus McLaren, "The Pleasures of Procreation: Traditional and Biomedical Theories of Conception," in *William Hunter and the Eighteenth-Century Medical World*, eds. W.F. Bynum and Roy Porter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 326. On the changing conception of women's sexuality and gender ideology, see Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990); Robert B. Shoemaker, *Gender in English Society, 1650-1850: The Emergence of Separate Spheres?* (London: Longman, 1998), 59-72; Faramerz Dabhoiwala, *The Origins of Sex: A History of the First Sexual Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 141-169; Ruth Perry, "Colonising the Breast: Sexuality and Maternity in Eighteenth-Century England," in *Forbidden History: The State, Society, and the Regulation of Sexuality in Modern Europe*, ed. J.C. Fout (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 107-138.

²⁸⁹ Thomas Laqueur, "Orgasm, Generation, and the Politics of Reproductive Biology," *Representations* 14 (1986): 3; see also Laqueur, *Making Sex*, Chapters 2 and 3.

²⁹⁰ Perry, "Colonising the Breast," 212.

²⁹¹ Highfill, Burnim, and Langhans, *Biographical Dictionary, Vol. 16*, 202. The interlocutor is variously reported to have been the manager John Rich, the actor James Quin, or (most amusingly) Kitty Clive. The indeterminate identity of the other speaker does little to burnish its veracity.

²⁹² Nussbaum, *Rival Queens*, 193-194.

²⁹³ Nussbaum, *Rival Queens*, 197. The salacious verses on her sexual allure for both men and women, as well as the anecdote about Taaffe's engagement ball, further underscore her performative ability.

²⁹⁴ Highfill, Burnim, and Langhans, *Biographical Dictionary, Vol. 16*, 214.

²⁹⁵ Nussbaum, *Rival Queens*, 201.

²⁹⁶ According to *The London Stage, 1660-1800: A Calendar of Plays, Entertainments, and Afterpieces, Together with Casts, Box-Receipts, and Contemporary Comment, Volume 3, Part 2, 1729-1747*, ed. Arthur H. Scouten (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1960), 1235-1290, Woffington played Belvedera six times between April of 1746 and February of 1747. By contrast with some of her other common roles, she played Lady Betty Modish in Cibber's *The Careless Husband* and Lady Townly in John Vanbrugh's *The Provoked Husband* three times each in that span, Silvia in *The Recruiting Officer* once, and she only played Sir Harry Wildair in *The Constant Couple*, her most famous and beloved part, twice. Her turn as Belvedera was her most frequently performed role over that period, and must have proved quite popular with audiences to merit six revivals in less than a year.

²⁹⁷ Freeman, *Dramatic Representations*, 62. While the forces under the Duke of Marlborough's command achieved successes early in the War of the Spanish Succession, the Peninsular

Campaign on the Iberian Peninsula was disastrous. The British troops there forged an uneasy alliance with the Portuguese but were poorly supplied and generally neglected. The alliance eventually collapsed and the British achieved none of their goals in Spain. For more on the campaign and its failures, see A. D. Francis, *The First Peninsular War, 1702-1713* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1975);

²⁹⁸ Lock and Worrall distinguish between two types of eighteenth-century plays about the military: those, like *The Recruiting Officer*, that have a military backdrop, and those that feature actual military movement onstage, "Cross-Dressed Performance," 24. *The Humours of the Army* meets both criteria, as it is set in a camp and actually depicts exercises.

²⁹⁹ Charles Shadwell, *The Humours of the Army* (Dublin: Printed for Joseph Leathly and Patrick Dougan, 1720), 171. All further references are to this edition and occur in text.

³⁰⁰ Beth H. Friedman-Romell, "Breaking the Code: Toward a Reception Theory of Theatrical Cross-Dressing in Eighteenth-Century London," *Theatre Journal* 47, no. 4 (1995): 475.

³⁰¹ Fuzee, an Anglicized version of the French-derived word fusil, was a type of light flintlock musket.

³⁰² *The London Stage, Vol. 3, Part 2*, 1235. Shadwell's play would be re-written in 1763, retitled *The Female Officer*, attributed to John Philip Kemble. Some critics, notably Felicity Nussbaum, mistake the latter version for the one in which Woffington appeared, although this was impossible because the 1763 version debuted after her death.

³⁰³ Mary E. Knapp, *Prologues and Epilogues of the Eighteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961), 36.

³⁰⁴ Knapp, *Prologues and Epilogues*, 8, 87.

³⁰⁵ Knapp, *Prologues and Epilogues*, 6.

³⁰⁶ Knapp, in *Prologues and Epilogues*, 104, suggests Henry Fielding as a possible author.

Regardless of the piece's provenance, it was solely associated with Woffington in popular culture.

³⁰⁷ In-text references are to the line numbers in the edition printed in Pierre Danchin, ed., *The Prologues and Epilogues of the Eighteenth Century: A Complete Edition* (Nancy: Presses Universitaires de Nancy, 1997), 1737-1760, Vol. 5, pt. 3, 215-216. Confusingly, Danchin's introductory text for the piece claims "There is no certainty that this epilogue was actually spoken," although three instances in *The London Stage* advertise Mrs. Woffington as the Female Volunteer, and the epilogue referenced after *The Humours of the Army* may have been "The Female Volunteer" as well. It may also have been performed after further revivals of *The Humours of the Army* in 1746. See *The London Stage, Volume 3, Part II*, 1227, 1227, 1231, 1235.

³⁰⁸ By the time Woffington debuted as the Female Volunteer, the crisis was largely over as the rebel army had failed to capitalize on the victory at Falkirk Muir, and the Jacobites would be soundly defeated at Culloden on 16 April, 1746.

³⁰⁹ Woffington eventually renounced Catholicism and converted to the Church of England in 1753. Owen M'Swiney left her a sizable fortune in his will on the condition that she convert to Protestantism. Highfill, Burnim, and Langhans, *Biographical Dictionary*, Vol. 16, 213-214.

³¹⁰ Nussbaum, *Rival Queens*, 325 n. 52. Nussbaum notes that some of the printed versions have slight variations in the text.

³¹¹ Image available via the University of Illinois Theatrical Print Collection, Rare Book & Manuscript Library, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign: W844-29.

<https://digital.library.illinois.edu/items/87e67460-4e7d-0134-1db1-0050569601ca-4>

³¹² Nussbaum reads the sword, pointed down, as a phallic image conveying impotence, mocking the army and playfully gesturing to the performer's gender. She further argues that Woffington's Irish-Catholic heritage provided the audience some dramatic irony to enjoy as well. Having a known Catholic woman denounce Catholicism apparently added to the audience's enjoyment of the piece, as it amounted to a public recanting of beliefs. See Nussbaum, *Rival Queens*, 204-210, for her analysis of the piece. I would add that Woffington's Catholicism probably added urgency to the message as well. In the theatre, the audience witnessed a Catholic person telling them first-hand that the religion was more repressive and would threaten one of the hallmarks of the emerging British identity by stamping out liberty.

³¹³ Highfill, Burnim, and Langhans, *Biographical Dictionary*, Vol. 3, 342. The authors note that this anecdote may be spurious, and that it conflicts with the account of William Rufus Chetwood who, writing in 1749, claims that he and Theophilus Cibber discovered Clive after hearing her sing. Chetwood was Drury Lane's prompter at the time, and his account came earlier than the Beefsteak Club story.

³¹⁴ Highfill, Burnim, and Langhans, *Biographical Dictionary*, Vol. 3, 342-344.

³¹⁵ Highfill, Burnim, and Langhans, *Biographical Dictionary*, Vol. 3, 348. Despite her immense success in comedy and opera, Clive was always slightly less well-regarded for her work in tragedy. Samuel Foote blamed her inauspicious record in tragedy as due to "Delicacy of Figure and...Elegance of Behavior" necessary for proper performance. See Foote, *The Roman and English Comedy Considered and Compared* (London: Printed for T. Waller in Fleet Street, 1747), 42.

³¹⁶ Highfill, Burnim, and Langhans, *Biographical Dictionary*, Vol. 3, 344-345.

³¹⁷ Nussbaum, *Rival Queens*, 153. Of course, Clive did receive some jibes in popular culture for her presence onstage, but nowhere near the amount of scurrilous or vitriolic type of criticism directed at many of her contemporaries. She did have a close relationship with Horace Walpole, who revered her as a performer and eventually developed a close friendship with her. When she retired from acting, she moved into a cottage on his estate at Strawberry Hill and lived there until the end of her life. No real evidence exists to suggest that their relationship was anything other than friendly, however. Highfill, Burnim, and Langhans, *Biographical Dictionary*, Vol. 3, 354-355. Walpole's fondness for Clive further explains his obsession with criticizing Woffington.

³¹⁸ Highfill, Burnim, and Langhans, *Biographical Dictionary*, Vol. 3, 346.

³¹⁹ Tate Wilkinson, *Memoirs of His Own Life, Volume 3* (York: Printed for the Author by Wilson, Spence, and Mawman, 1790), 43.

³²⁰ Nussbaum, *Rival Queens*, 153.

³²¹ Berta Joncus, "'In Wit Superior, as in Fighting': Kitty Clive and the Conquest of a Rival Queen," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 74, no. 1 (2011): 23-42; see also Nussbaum, *Rival Queens*, 58-59.

³²² Catherine Clive, *The Case of Mrs. Clive Submitted to the Publick* (London: Printed for B. DOD at the Bible and Key in Ave-Mary-Lane near Stationers-Hall, 1744), 8. Further references occur as parentheticals in the text.

³²³ Nussbaum, *Rival Queens*, 161. Nussbaum notes that Clive's life's work became the quest for a woman to define and own her own property, which was precluded in the period by the legal doctrine of coverture which stated that a woman's husband took possession of all her property by default. For performers, however, each performance was unique and unrepeatable and inseparable from her body and persona. Thus, an actress's roles were "among the very first

properties—both intellectual and embodied—that a woman could possess in her own name and that depended upon her personal identity rather than her husband or family.” Nussbaum terms this configuration “performative property.”

³²⁴ Her contemporary Samuel Foote defended her on similar grounds, saying “The Lady has now and then perhaps (owing to an Earnestness for the Success of the Business) expressed herself behind the Scenes in too loud and forcible a manner. This Circumstance has (I am afraid) given some part of the Audience not a very favourable Opinion of her Temper. But when the Public are assured, that this Vehemence is assumed in order to procure a more decent Entertainment for themselves, I doubt not but they will convert their Resentment to Approbation,” *The Roman and English Comedy Considered*, 42-43.

³²⁵ Nussbaum, *Rival Queens*, 173. Later in her career Clive also wrote for the stage, and her epilogues frequently took up dramatic criticism as well.

³²⁶ Danchin, *The Prologues and Epilogues of the Eighteenth Century*, Vol. 5, pt. 3, 225; also recorded in *The London Stage Part 3, Volume 2*, ed. Arthur H. Scouten (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1961), 1232..

³²⁷ “An Epilogue Recommending the Cause of Liberty to the Beauties of Great Britain, Spoken by Mrs. Oldfield at the Theatre-Royal,” in *The Prologues and Epilogues of the Eighteenth Century: A Complete Edition* (Nancy: Presses Universitaires de Nancy, 1997), 1737-1760, Vol. 2, pt. 3, 628-630. Further references to this text occur as parentheticals in the text.

³²⁸ Interestingly, in using the older epilogue, Clive’s performance was a bit ahead of current events. When Oldfield spoke it in 1716, the rebellion had been suppressed. On 15 April of 1746 when Clive performed the piece, however, the Jacobites weren’t quite finished. Bonnie Prince Charlie’s forces had failed to capitalize on their victory at Falkirk in January, and the writing was

certainly on the wall for their cause. The rebellion would be defeated the next day, 16 April, when William Augustus, the Duke of Cumberland, met the Jacobite army at Culloden in Scotland. The undisciplined, poorly supplied, and exhausted Jacobites were no match for Cumberland's crack troops, and the battle was a complete rout. The Jacobite lines broke quickly, and Cumberland had his men fire on the fleeing rebels to prevent further uprisings. Approximately 3000 out of the 5000 Jacobite soldiers were killed in the battle, while Cumberland lost only fifty troops. His actions decisively ended the rebellion, and earned him the nickname "the Butcher of Culloden." Bonnie Prince Charlie narrowly escaped the field, and evaded capture by disguising himself as a woman named Betty Burke. He eventually escaped to the continent and lived out his days in Rome, embittered and descending into alcoholism. The Jacobite Uprising of 1745 remains to this day the last incursion into the British home islands. For more on the end of the rebellion, see Hook and Ross, *The 'Forty Five*, 85-124; John Sadler, *Culloden: The Last Charge of the Highland Clans 1746* (Stroud: The History Press, 2009); John Prebble, *Culloden*, 2nd Edition (London: Penguin, 1996).

³²⁹ *London Stage*, Part 3, Vol. 2, 1232.

³³⁰ Lock and Worrall, "Cross-Dressed Performance," 26-27.

³³¹ Joseph Roach, "Power's Body: The Inscription of Morality as Style," in *Interpreting the Theatrical Past: Essays in the Historiography of Performance*, eds. Thomas Postlewait and Bruce A. McConachie (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1989), 109-110. The most comprehensive history of eighteenth-century acting style is Dene Barnett's *The Art of Gesture: The Practices and Principles of 18th-Century Acting* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1987). Although most of Barnett's examples are drawn from continental texts on acting, they likely apply to English performance conventions as well. For an analysis specifically of English acting in the

period, see Alan S. Downer, "Nature to Advantage Dressed: Eighteenth-Century Acting," *PMLA* 58 (1943): 1002-1037. For contemporary commentary on acting theory and style, see David Garrick, *An Essay on Acting* (London: Printed for W. Bickerton, 1744); Aaron Hill, *An Essay on the Art of Acting* (London: Printed for J. Dixwell, 1779), originally published in *The Prompter*, 1735. For a discussion of the mechanized nature of Garrick-era acting and its relationship to scientific and philosophical thought, see Roach, *The Player's Passion: Studies in the Science of Acting* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1985), Chapter 2.

³³² Will Wattle, *The Soldier's Letter to the Female Volunteer: Being an Earnest Request to Hang up the Hat, and Pull off the Breeches with a Persuasive against False Appearances* (London: Printed and Sold at the Pamphlet-Shops of the Royal Exchange, Temple-Bar, and Charing-Cross). Page references appear parenthetically in the text.

³³³ Lynn, *Women, Armies, and Warfare*, 192-196.

³³⁴ Wilson, *The Island Race*, 25-26.

³³⁵ It's also possible the author of the Wattle tract saw the piece in broadside, rather than onstage, and so didn't see *The Humours of the Army*. Still, the pathologically sexual nature of his assault on Woffington suggests that he saw her as aberrant sexually.

³³⁶ Ironically, Clive was far more revolutionary than Woffington. Though Woffington had several notable affairs and remained unmarried, she didn't wage the sort of public campaign for economic autonomy that Clive did. Through the public case that she made for ownership of her roles, Clive achieved an unprecedented level of self-sufficiency. Still, by adhering to a traditional model of sexual propriety, she was able to gain greater freedom with less public censure. See Nussbaum, *Rival Queens*, Chapter 5. Heretofore actresses might attain economic independence through their work, but Clive represented a new degree of self-sufficiency and control.

³³⁷ Linda Colley, *Britons*, 54.

³³⁸ Dror Wahrman, *The Making of the Modern Self: Identity and Culture in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 34.

³³⁹ Joan Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere in the Age of the French Revolution* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), 93-151. For more on women in the revolutionary era, see Shirley Elson-Roessler, *Out of the Shadows: Women and Politics in the French Revolution, 1789–1795* (New York: P. Lang, 1996); Jennifer N. Heuer, *The Family and the Nation: Gender and Citizenship in Revolutionary France, 1789–1830* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005); Olwen H. Hufton, *Women and the Limits of Citizenship in the French Revolution* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992); Darline Gay Levy and Harriet B. Applewhite, “Women and Militant Citizenship in Revolutionary Paris,” in *Rebel Daughters: Women and the French Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 79-101; James F. McMillan, *France and Women: 1789–1914: Gender, Society and Politics* (London: Routledge, 2000), Ch. 1–3.

³⁴⁰ Elizabeth Racz, “The Women’s Rights Movement in the French Revolution,” *Science & Society* 16, no. 2 (1952): 152-156.

³⁴¹ Olympe de Gouge, “The Declaration of the Rights of Woman,” in *Women in Revolutionary Paris, 1789–1795: Selected Documents*, ed. and trans. Darline Gay Levy, Harriet B. Applewhite, and Mary Durham Johnson (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1979), 87–96. The document is often referred to by the shortened name given here, although the title translates fully to “The Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen.”

³⁴² She was arrested after distributing a poster calling for a public vote on what type of government the country should adopt. She was charged with royalist and anti-revolutionary ideology, in part because she had volunteered to defend the king during his trial, believing he

deserved exile rather than execution. That provided a useful pretext to accuse her of royalist ideology and eliminate her dangerous rhetoric, though she was a Girondist and favored a constitutional monarchy similar to that of the United Kingdom. She was executed in November of 1793 for her political activism. See Joan Wallach Scott, *Only Paradoxes to Offer: French Feminists and the Rights of Man* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 19-56; Janie Vanpée, "Performing Justice: The Trials of Olympe de Gouges," *Theatre Journal* 51, no. 1 (1999): 47-65; Marie Beauchamps, "Olympe de Gouges's Trial and the Affective Politics of Denaturalization in France," *Citizenship Studies* 20, no. 8 (2016): 943-956; Annie Smart, *Citoyennes: Women and the Ideal of Citizenship in Eighteenth-Century France* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2011), 115-152.

³⁴³ Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* inaugurated the debate when it was published in 1790 (London: James Dodsley, Pall Mall, 1790). Burke, though opposed to French foreign policy, argued that the revolution was an unjust rebellion against God, monarchy, and aristocracy. Even if the revolution allowed Britain to prosper internationally, the damage it did to natural order was too great a price to pay in Burke's estimation. Mary Wollstonecraft, among others, attacked Burke, arguing for greater political and social equality. See Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Men* (London: J. Johnson, 1790). On Wollstonecraft's involvement in the revolution controversy, see Claudia L. Johnson, *Equivocal Beings: Politics, Gender, and Sentimentality in the 1790s* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 23-46; Chris Jones, "Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindications* and their Political Tradition," in *The Cambridge Companion to Mary Wollstonecraft*, ed. Claudia L. Johnson (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002), 42-58; Tom Furniss, "Mary Wollstonecraft's French Revolution," in *The Cambridge Companion to Mary Wollstonecraft*, ed. Claudia L. Johnson

(Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002), 59-81; Mitzi Myers, "Politics from the Outside: Mary Wollstonecraft's First *Vindication*," *Studies in Eighteenth Century Culture* 6 (1977): 113-132 .

³⁴⁴ Anne K Mellor, *Romanticism and Gender* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 32-33.

³⁴⁵ Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (London: J. Johnson, 1792).

³⁴⁶ R.M. James, "On the Reception of Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 39, no. 2 (1978): 293-302; Isabelle Bour, "A New Wollstonecraft: The Reception of the *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* and of *The Wrongs of Woman* in Revolutionary France," *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 36, no. 4 (2013): 575-588. Reactions varied by political persuasion—*The Anti-Jacobin Review* was unenthusiastic—but the overall reaction to the work was approving.

³⁴⁷ Wahrman, *The Making of the Modern Self*, 34-35.

³⁴⁸ Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 5.

³⁴⁹ Alison G. Sulloway, *Jane Austen and the Province of Womanhood* (Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989).

³⁵⁰ Levy and Applewhite, "Women and Militant Citizenship," 80.

³⁵¹ Lawrence E. Klein, "Gender and the Public/Private Distinction in the Eighteenth Century: Some Questions about Evidence and Analytic Procedure," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 29, no. 1 (1995): 101. Klein argues that the public/private male/female distinction can be overly simplistic and reads the eighteenth century through the lens of nineteenth-century historiography, and that the term "public" was not automatically derogatory when applied to a woman. Still, he notes that the end of the eighteenth century does mark a shift in the way these categories were regarded.

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- ³⁵² Thomas Gisborne, *An Enquiry into the Duties of the Female Sex* (London: Printed for T. Cadell Jr. and W. Davies, 1797), 20.
- ³⁵³ Jahan Ramazani, *A Transnational Poetics* (Chicago: U Chicago Press, 2009), 24.
- ³⁵⁴ Wendy C. Nielsen, "Edmund Eyre's The 'Maid of Normandy' or, Charlotte Corday in Anglo-Irish Docudrama" *Comparative Drama* 20, no. 2 (2006): 171.
- ³⁵⁵ Janelle Reinelt, "Rethinking the Public Sphere for a Global Age," *Performance Research* 16, no. 2 (2011), 16.
- ³⁵⁶ Wahrman, *The Making of the Modern Self*, 48.
- ³⁵⁷ Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837, Revised Edition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 257.
- ³⁵⁸ Colley, *Britons*, 258.
- ³⁵⁹ Chantal Thomas, "Heroism in the Feminine: The Examples of Charlotte Corday and Madame Roland," in *The French Revolution 1789-1989: Two Hundred Years of Rethinking*, ed. Sandy Petrey (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 1989), 72.
- ³⁶⁰ Simon Schama, *Citizens: A Chronicle of the French Revolution* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989), 730-735.
- ³⁶¹ Chantal Thomas, "Heroism in the Feminine: The Examples of Charlotte Corday and Madame Roland," in *The French Revolution 1789-1989: Two Hundred Years of Rethinking*, ed. Sandy Petrey (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 1989), 68-70.
- ³⁶² Qtd. in Thomas, "Heroism in the Feminine," 69.
- ³⁶³ Nina Corazzo and Catherine R. Montfort, "Charlotte Corday: *femme-homme*," in *Literate Women and the French Revolution of 1789*, ed. Catherine R. Montfort (Birmingham: Summa Publications, 1994), 47.

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- ³⁶⁴ Thomas, "Heroism in the Feminine," 71.
- ³⁶⁵ Schama, *Citizens*, 731-735.
- ³⁶⁶ Schama, *Citizens*, 735-737.
- ³⁶⁷ Schama, *Citizens*, 737.
- ³⁶⁸ Schama, *Citizens*, 737.
- ³⁶⁹ Schama, *Citizens*, 737-738.
- ³⁷⁰ Schama, *Citizens*, 739.
- ³⁷¹ Schama, *Citizens*, 739-741.
- ³⁷² Nina Rattner Gelbart, "The Blonding of Charlotte Corday," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 38, no. 1 (2004): 206.
- ³⁷³ Patrice Higonnet, "Cultural Upheaval and Class Formation During the French Revolution," in *The French Revolution and the Birth of Modernity*, ed. Ferenc Feher (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 88.
- ³⁷⁴ Corazzo and Montfort, "Charlotte Corday: *femme-homme*," 45.
- ³⁷⁵ In particular, Elizabeth R. Kindleberger says that the virgin exam was introduced to the narrative in the nineteenth century and was based on hearsay. See Elizabeth R. Kindleberger, "Charlotte Corday in Text and Image: A Case Study in the French Revolution and Women's History," *French Historical Studies* 18, No. 4 (1994): 984.
- ³⁷⁶ Corazzo and Montfort, "Charlotte Corday: *femme-homme*," 34.
- ³⁷⁷ Thomas, "Heroism in the Feminine," 72.
- ³⁷⁸ Kindleberger, "Charlotte Corday in Text and Image," 979.
- ³⁷⁹ Qtd. in Kindleberger, "Charlotte Corday in Text and Image," 979.
- ³⁸⁰ Kindleberger, "Charlotte Corday in Text and Image," 981-982.

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- ³⁸¹ Peter Brooks, "The Revolutionary Body," in *Fictions of the French Revolution: Colloquium on Fictions of the Revolution*, ed. Bernadette Fort (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1991), 40.
- ³⁸² Thomas, "Heroism in the Feminine," 74.
- ³⁸³ Qtd. in Corazzo and Montfort, "Charlotte Corday: *femme-homme*," 35.
- ³⁸⁴ Qtd. in Corazzo and Montfort, "Charlotte Corday, *femme-homme*," 33.
- ³⁸⁵ Corazzo and Montfort, "Charlotte Corday, *femme-homme*," 47.
- ³⁸⁶ Corazzo and Montfort, "Charlotte Corday, *femme-homme*," 49.
- ³⁸⁷ Wendy C. Nielsen, "Edmund Eyre's The 'Maid of Normandy' or, Charlotte Corday in Anglo-Irish Docudrama" *Comparative Drama* 20, no. 2 (2006): 171.
- ³⁸⁸ Guillaume Mazeau, "Scripting the French Revolution, Inventing the Terror: Marat's Assassination and its Interpretations," in *Scripting Revolution: A Comparative Study of Revolutions*, eds. Keith Michael Baker and Dan Edelstein, trans. Chloe Edmondson and Keith Michael Baker (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015), 136; Corazzo and Montfort, "Charlotte Corday: *femme-homme*," 45.
- ³⁸⁹ Nielsen, "Edmund Eyre's The 'Maid of Normandy,'" 178.
- ³⁹⁰ Peter Brooks, "Melodrama, Body, Revolution," in *Melodrama: Stage, Picture, Screen*, eds. Jacky Bratton, Jim Cook, and Christine Gledhill (London: BFI Publishing, 1994), 18.
- ³⁹¹ Marvin Carlson, *The Theatre of the French Revolution* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966), 166.
- ³⁹² Higonnet, "Cultural Upheaval and Class Formation," 88.
- ³⁹³ Contemporary opinion was unkind to the play's literary merits, as it spawned two lengthy attacks in pamphlet form, one by Samuel Argent Bardsley and the other anonymous. Shorter

attacks appeared in newspapers and journals, equally dismissive of the play as a piece of literature. In particular, critics drew a comparison between *Pizarro* and Mr. Puff's ludicrous *The Spanish Armada* from Sheridan's own satirical piece *The Critic*, accusing him of becoming exactly the sort of pandering impresario he had previously mocked. A representative recent example can be found in John Loftis's "Whig Oratory on Stage: Sheridan's *Pizarro*," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 8, No. 4 (1975): 454-472. He begins his discussion of the play's political meaning to its audience with the apologetic "Despite the traditional and justified disparagement of *Pizarro* by students of the drama," leaving little doubt as to his opinion of the play's relative merits in the Sheridan corpus. While *Pizarro* unquestionably lacks the wit and liveliness of Sheridan's earlier work, its literary quality is of little import to my analysis here. Most of the recent work on the play which I cite is based on a similar premise.

³⁹⁴ Michael Wiley, "Linguistic Instability in RB Sheridan's *Pizarro*," *SEL: Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 55, no. 3 (2015): 603.

³⁹⁵ Heather McPherson, "Caricature, Cultural Politics, and the Stage: The Case of *Pizarro*," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 70, no. 4 (2007): 607.

³⁹⁶ McPherson, "Caricature, Cultural Politics, and the Stage," 612.

³⁹⁷ McPherson, "Caricature, Cultural Politics, and the Stage," 613.

³⁹⁸ Selena Couture and Alexander Dick, "Introduction," in *Pizarro*, eds. Selena Couture and Alexander Dick (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 2017), 16.

³⁹⁹ Valeria Pellis, "The Fluctuating Shape of Authority: Some Reflections on *Pizarro*, from Kotzebue's Original Text to Sheridan's Great National Drama," *Textus XIX* (2006): 407-408.

⁴⁰⁰ Joseph Donohue, *Dramatic Character in the English Romantic Age* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), 126-127.

⁴⁰¹ The Black Legend was a widely disseminated propagandistic version of the history of the colonization of the Americas that characterized the Spanish as excessively cruel and abusive in their treatment of indigenous peoples when compared to the other supposedly beneficent colonial powers. It was the dominant British view of Spanish colonial endeavors during the eighteenth century, fueled by anti-Catholic sentiment. See William S. Maltby, *The Black Legend in England: the Development of Anti-Spanish Sentiment, 1558-1600* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1971).

⁴⁰² Richard Brinsley Sheridan, *Pizarro*, in *The Dramatic Works of Richard Brinsley Sheridan*, Vol. 2, ed. Cecil Price (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), 625-650. Further references to the text are to this edition and appear as parenthetical citations.

⁴⁰³ After the play became a hit, Lewis was angry that his version had been cast aside, and he eventually published it to some small success. Around the time Sheridan was working on mounting the production, the British writer Anne Plumptre, Kotzebue's most famous translator in English, was preparing her own versions of the two plays for publication. Sheridan bought her publisher off to delay their release until after his play had opened. Plumptre's published versions were moderately successful, although regarded as published versions of Sheridan's stage play. Couture and Dick, "Introduction," 18-19.

⁴⁰⁴ For more on the Hastings affair and Sheridan's involvement, see Julie Stone Peters, "Theatricality, Legalism, and the Scenography of Suffering: The Trial of Warren Hastings and Richard Brinsley Sheridan's *Pizarro*," *Law & Literature* 18, no. 1 (2006): 15-45, and Julie A. Carlson, "Trying Sheridan's *Pizarro*," *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 38, no. 3/4 (1996): 359-378.

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- ⁴⁰⁵ John Loftis, "Whig Oratory on Stage: Sheridan's *Pizarro*," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 8, no. 4 (1975): 461.
- ⁴⁰⁶ Donohue, *Dramatic Character in the English Romantic Age*, 146.
- ⁴⁰⁷ Donohue, *Dramatic Character in the English Romantic Age*, 130-131.
- ⁴⁰⁸ Couture and Dick, "Introduction," 38.
- ⁴⁰⁹ Selena Couture, "Siddons's Ghost: Celebrity and Gender in Sheridan's *Pizarro*," *Theatre Journal* 65 (2013): 183.
- ⁴¹⁰ Couture and Dick, "Introduction," 32.
- ⁴¹¹ Michael Booth, "Sarah Siddons," in *Three Tragic Actresses: Siddons, Rachel, Ristori*, ed. Michael Booth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 12-18.
- ⁴¹² Booth, "Sarah Siddons," 48-49.
- ⁴¹³ Thomas Campbell, *Life of Mrs. Siddons*, 2 vols. (London: Effingham Wilson, Royal Exchange, 1834), 1: 140.
- ⁴¹⁴ Russ McDonald, "Sarah Siddons," in *Great Shakespeareans Set II, Part II*, ed. Peter Holland (London: Continuum, 2010), 355.
- ⁴¹⁵ Booth, "Sarah Siddons," 60.
- ⁴¹⁶ Campbell, *Life of Mrs. Siddons*, 2: 37-38.
- ⁴¹⁷ Lindal Buchanan, "Sarah Siddons and Her Place in Rhetorical History," *Rhetorica: A Journal of the History of Rhetoric* 25, no. 4 (2007): 421-422.
- ⁴¹⁸ Booth, "Sarah Siddons," 2-3.
- ⁴¹⁹ Booth, "Sarah Siddons," 50-51.

⁴²⁰ Pat Rogers, "'Towering Beyond Her Sex': Stature and Sublimity in the Achievement of Sarah Siddons," in *Curtain Calls: British and American Women in the Theatre, 1660-1820*, eds. Mary Anne Schofield and Cecelia Macheski (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1991), 52.

⁴²¹ Rogers, "Towering Beyond Her Sex," 53.

⁴²² Rogers, "Towering Beyond Her Sex," 55.

⁴²³ Joshua Reynolds, *A Discourse Delivered to the Students of the Royal Academy on the Distribution of the Prizes* (London, 1771).

⁴²⁴ James Boaden, *Memoirs of Mrs. Siddons, Volume II* (London: Henry Colburn, 1827), 116.

⁴²⁵ Heather McPherson, "Masculinity, Femininity, and the Tragic Subline: Reinventing Lady Macbeth," *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 29 (2000): 305-306.

⁴²⁶ Boaden, *Memoirs of Mrs. Siddons, Volume I* (London: Henry Colburn, 1827), 327.

⁴²⁷ Booth, "Sarah Siddons," 35.

⁴²⁸ On sensibility, see Julie Ellison, *Cato's Tears and the Making of Anglo-American Emotion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999); Paul Goring, *The Rhetoric of Sensibility in Eighteenth-Century Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press); on sensibility and gender, see G.J. Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Christopher Nagle, *Sexuality and the Culture of Sensibility in the British Romantic Era* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

⁴²⁹ Qtd. In Sandra Richards, *The Rise of the English Actress* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), 81.

⁴³⁰ Buchanan, "Sarah Siddons and Her Place in Rhetorical History," 424.

⁴³¹ Richards, *Rise of the English Actress*, 79.

⁴³² Booth, "Sarah Siddons," 28.

⁴³³ Booth, "Sarah Siddons," 30-31.

⁴³⁴ Booth, Sarah Siddons," 31.

⁴³⁵ Rogers, "Towering Beyond Her Sex," 58.

⁴³⁶ Booth, "Sarah Siddons," 13.

⁴³⁷ Jeffrey N. Cox, "Baillie, Siddons, Larpent: Gender, Power, and Politics in the Theatre of Romanticism," in *Women in British Romantic Theatre: Drama, Performance, and Society, 1790-1840*, ed. Catherine Burroughs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 37-38.

⁴³⁸ Buchanan, "Sarah Siddons and Her Place in Rhetorical History," 429.

⁴³⁹ Booth, "Sarah Siddons," 62.

⁴⁴⁰ Booth, "Sarah Siddons," 16.

⁴⁴¹ Philip H. Highfill, Kalman A. Burnim, Edward A. Langhans, *A Biographical Dictionary of Actors, Actresses, Musicians, Dancers, Managers, and Other Stage Personnel in London, 1660-1800, Volume 14* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1975), 28-29.

⁴⁴² Booth, "Sarah Siddons," 15-16.

⁴⁴³ On Siddons' public image as a mother, see Ellen Malenas Ledoux, "Working Mothers on the Romantic Stage: Sarah Siddons and Mary Robinson," in *Stage Mothers: Women, Work, and the Theatre, 1660-1830* eds. Laura Engel and Elaine McGirr (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2014), 79-101; see also Chelsea Phillips, "'I Have Given Suck': The Maternal Body in Sarah Siddons's *Lady Macbeth*," in *Shakespeare Expressed: Page Stage, and Classroom in Shakespeare and His Contemporaries*, eds. Kathryn M. Moncrief, Kathryn R. McPherson, and Sarah Enloe (Madison: Fairleigh Dickson University Press, 2013), 19-34.

⁴⁴⁴ Booth, "Sarah Siddons," 63.

⁴⁴⁵ Buchanan, "Sarah Siddons and Her Place in Rhetorical History," 426.

⁴⁴⁶ Booth, "Sarah Siddons," 14.

⁴⁴⁷ Buchanan, "Sarah Siddons and Her Place in Rhetorical History," 429-430.

⁴⁴⁸ Images available via the National Portrait Gallery: NPG D41670.

[https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw205639/Mrs-Siddons-and-her-Son-in-the-Tragedy-of-Isabella-Sarah-Siddons-ne-Kemble-Henry-](https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw205639/Mrs-Siddons-and-her-Son-in-the-Tragedy-of-Isabella-Sarah-Siddons-ne-Kemble-Henry-Siddons?LinkID=mp04109&search=sas&sText=sarah+siddons&role=sit&rNo=11)

[Siddons?LinkID=mp04109&search=sas&sText=sarah+siddons&role=sit&rNo=11](https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw205639/Mrs-Siddons-and-her-Son-in-the-Tragedy-of-Isabella-Sarah-Siddons-ne-Kemble-Henry-Siddons?LinkID=mp04109&search=sas&sText=sarah+siddons&role=sit&rNo=11)

Buchanan, "Sarah Siddons and Her Place in Rhetorical History," 428-429.

⁴⁴⁹ Campbell, *Life of Mrs. Siddons*, 2: 35.

⁴⁵⁰ Booth, "Sarah Siddons," 62.

⁴⁵¹ Couture, "Siddons's Ghost," 187.

⁴⁵² Highfill, Burnim, and Langhans, *Biographical Dictionary*, Vol. 14, 32-34.

⁴⁵³ *A Critique on the Tragedy of Pizarro* (London: Printed for W. Miller, Old Bond Street, 1799), 7.

⁴⁵⁴ "Review of *Pizarro*," *The Oracle*, May 25, 1799.

⁴⁵⁵ Julie Stone Peters, "Theatricality, Legalism, and the Scenography of Suffering: The Trial of Warren Hastings and Richard Brinsley Sheridan's *Pizarro*," *Law & Literature* 18, no. 1 (2006): 33.

⁴⁵⁶ Dana Van Kooy, "Darkness Visible: The Early Melodrama of British Imperialism and the Commodification of History in Sheridan's *Pizarro*," *Theatre Journal* 64 (2012): 191.

⁴⁵⁷ Couture and Dick, "Introduction," 34

⁴⁵⁸ Couture, "Siddons's Ghost," 196.

⁴⁵⁹ Susan Valladares, *Staging the Peninsular War: English Theatres 1807-1815* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2015), 19-21.

⁴⁶⁰ Couture and Dick, "Introduction," 22.

⁴⁶¹ *A Critique on the Tragedy of Pizarro* (London: Printed for W. Miller, Old Bond Street, 1799).

References to the text appear as parenthetical citations.

⁴⁶² Samuel Argent Bardsley, *Critical Remarks on Pizarro, A Tragedy Taken from the German Drama of Kotzebue, and Adapted to the English Stage by Richard Brinsley Sheridan with Incidental Observations on the Subject of the Drama* (London: Printed for T. Cadell, Junior, and W. Davies in the Strand, 1800). References to the text appear as parenthetical citations.

⁴⁶³ Philippus Philaretus, *Adultery Analyzed* (London: Printed for J.J. Stockdale, 41, Pall-Mall, 1811). References to the text appear as parenthetical citations.

⁴⁶⁴ "Remarks on Kotzebue's *Pizarro*," *Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine, or, Monthly Political and Literary Censor* III (1799), 207-210. References to the text appear as parenthetical citations.

⁴⁶⁵ Buchanan, "Sarah Siddons and Her Place in Rhetorical History," 414.

⁴⁶⁶ Couture, "Siddons's Ghost," 194. Couture and Dick also argue that Siddons was cast as Elvira and Dorothea Jordan was cast as Cora because having Jordan play Elvira might cause the audience to draw unfortunate parallels between the play's Pizarro and William, the Duke of Clarence, who was in a relationship with Jordan at the time. "Introduction," 38.

⁴⁶⁷ Michael L. Quinn, "Celebrity and the Semiotics of Acting," *New Theatre Quarterly* 4 (1990): 155.

⁴⁶⁸ Campbell, *Life of Mrs. Siddons*, 2: 33.

⁴⁶⁹ Campbell, *Life of Mrs. Siddons*, 2: 33.

⁴⁷⁰ British Library Add MS 35118, 76-77.

⁴⁷¹ Details on her life are scant, and her timeline presents something of a problem. *The Female Enthusiast* appears in the volume *Plays by Early American Women, 1775-1850*, ed. Amelia

Howe Kritzer (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995). Kritzer says in the introduction that Pogson Smith came to Charleston in either 1788 or 1793. The sources for her assertion are unclear. Her death record in the Charleston Public Library, however, indicates that she was a resident of Charleston for just 15 years in advance of her 1870 death. She is buried there in the Episcopal churchyard. Pogson Smith is so obscure that even the Charleston Public Library has little concrete information on her. *The Female Enthusiast* was printed in Charleston in 1807, and her later plays are all copyrighted there as well. She must have been a resident of Charleston before then if she had her plays published there.

⁴⁷² Kritzer, "Introduction," 18-19.

⁴⁷³ Kritzer, "Introduction," 19.

⁴⁷⁴ Charles S. Watson, *Antebellum Charleston Dramatists* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1976), 33.

⁴⁷⁵ Kritzer, "Introduction," 20.

⁴⁷⁶ Richard Soddors, "The Theatre Management of Alexandre Placide in Charleston, 1794-1812, Volume 1" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Louisiana State University, 1983), 382-793.

⁴⁷⁷ Textual evidence makes me suspect that Pogson Smith at least intended for the play to be produced. It features a good deal of action, as well as rather detailed stage directions.

⁴⁷⁸ Kritzer, "Introduction," 1.

⁴⁷⁹ Kritzer, "Introduction," 2.

⁴⁸⁰ In *The Female Enthusiast*, the patriarch of the family is called Corday, while his daughter is called Charlotte. To distinguish the characters from one another, I will follow suit in this section.

⁴⁸¹ Sarah Pogson Smith, *The Female Enthusiast*, in *Plays by Early American Women, 1775-1850*, ed. Amelia Howe Kritzer (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995), 155. Further references to the text appear as parenthetical citations.

⁴⁸² Kritzer, *The Female Enthusiast*, 154, n. 6.

⁴⁸³ Corazzo and Montfort, "Charlotte Corday: *femme-homme*," 48.

⁴⁸⁴ Lisa Maria Crisafulli, "Historical Agency in Romantic Women's Drama," in *Women's Romantic Theatre and Drama*, eds. Lilla Maria Crisafulli and Keir Elam (Surrey: Ashgate, 2010), 44-45.

⁴⁸⁵ Kritzer, "Introduction," 1.

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