

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to analyse the dramatic results of introducing women to the public stage. The impact of the presence of women in female roles on the public stage. The impact of the presence of women in female roles on the public stage. The impact of the presence of women in female roles on the public stage.



THE IMPACT OF THE INTRODUCTION OF ACTRESSES ON ENGLISH DRAMA 1660-1700

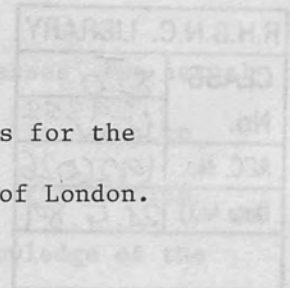
The thesis begins with an investigation of the exploitation of the female physique in Restoration drama. It examines the treatment of breeches roles after 1690 and shows how sexual relationships in both comedy and tragedy could be substantially changed through the visual, physical appearance of women.

ELIZABETH HOWE

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The ensuing chapters explore the way in which playwrights were influenced by the popular practice of having actresses in certain types of role and which plays around these women and their specialities. In particular, the growth and development of the tragedy, the gay tragic, the prostitute-actress figure and the pairing of contrasting female types is traced in relation to the actresses who made these conventions and characters popular. Thus the presence of a particular actress at a particular time may be seen to have crucially affected the course of the drama.

This thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the University of London.



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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to analyse the dramatic results of introducing women to replace boy-actors in female roles on the public stage. The impact of the actresses is examined in terms of both the general dramatic consequences of changing the sex of a performer from male to female and the individual influences of the various major actresses who emerged.

The thesis begins with an investigation of the exploitation of the female physique in Restoration drama. It examines the treatment of breeches roles after 1660 and shows how sexual relationships in both comedy and tragedy could be substantially changed through the visual, physical dimension provided by real women.

The ensuing chapters explore the way in which playwrights were influenced by the popular success of leading actresses in certain types of role and wrote plays around these women and their specialities. In particular, the genesis and development of she-tragedy, the gay couple, the prostitute-mistress figure and the pairing of contrasting female types is traced in relation to the actresses who made these conventions and characters popular. Thus the presence of a particular actress at a particular time may be seen to have crucially affected the course of the drama.

The thesis also examines the impact of the actresses' own actual or reputed characters on the roles written for them. It seeks to ascertain the exact nature of the relationship between the leading actresses and their public and how far spectators' knowledge of the women's own personalities affected the type of roles they were given.

The study concludes with a brief comment on the scope and general nature of the actresses' influence on Restoration drama.

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A NOTE ON STYLING, DATES AND EDITIONS USED

The date given in brackets after a play is the date of its first performance as given in The London Stage unless otherwise indicated. If a play has two titles (for example The Man of Mode, or, Sir Fopling Flutter), both will be given in the Bibliography; in the text, both will be given when the play is first referred to, but thereafter only the first title will be used. Prologues, epilogues and prefaces are quoted from the edition of the play (normally the first) cited elsewhere in the thesis and listed in the Bibliography.

Unless otherwise stated the place of publication of all texts is London only. When quoting from seventeenth-century editions long s has been printed as s.

First editions of plays have been used unless for some reason these were unavailable, or there is a good modern edition available.

ABBREVIATIONS

- Apology - An Apology for the Life of Mr. Colley Cibber
- The Development of English Drama - The Development of English Drama in the Late Seventeenth Century
- ELH - English Literary History
- ELR - English Literary Renaissance
- JEGP - Journal of English and Germanic Philology
- PQ - Philological Quarterly
- TLS - Times Literary Supplement.

I must also thank my husband for the benefit of his practical experience as a theatre director, Mrs. Echel Millesvick and Miss Joan Gifford for proof reading and Mrs. Gillis Craty who typed the thesis with great patience and skill.

Finally, I should like to convey my special gratitude to Professor Inga-Stina Eriksen who began as my official supervisor at Bedford College and who after her move from London to Leeds University continued to act as the best of supervisors, fulfilling in her encouragement, advice and support.

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INTRODUCTION

1660 was a momentous year both for England and for English theatre. In 1660 the monarchy was restored, the public theatres reopened after a break of some eighteen years and on August 21st a royal warrant was issued decreeing that in future women rather than boy actors would perform female roles on the public stage.

The warrant stated, somewhat piously, that actresses rather than boys should now take female parts so that plays could be deemed 'not only harmless delights but useful and instructive representations of human life'.¹ The wording implies that the change was to make dramas more 'realistic', and therefore make their moral instruction more obviously relevant. With hindsight this intention seems highly ironic, for English comedy from 1660 to 1700 soon acquired the reputation of being the opposite of 'harmless' and 'instructive' and a great deal of its so-called licentiousness and immorality has been blamed on the arrival of the actress.

For a twentieth century spectator, accustomed to seeing women on the stage, it is easy to agree with Colley Cibber that the removal of boy actors brought some sudden and wonderful transformations:

The other Advantage I was speaking of is, that before the Restoration no Actresses had ever been seen upon the English Stage. The Characters of Women on former Theatres were perform'd by Boys, or young Men of the most effeminate Aspect. And what Grace or Master Strokes can we conceive such ungain Hoydens to have been capable of?²

In fact, of course, the boys in their day were as effective, in every kind of dramatic role, as the women were in theirs. A spectator watching Othello performed by the King's Men in 1610 was absolutely convinced and overwhelmed by the acting of the boy playing Desdemona:

They also had their tragedies, well and effectively acted. In these they drew tears not only by their speech, but also by their action. Indeed Desdemona, killed by her husband, in death moved us especially when, as she lay in her bed, her face alone implored the pity of the audience.³

The writer here significantly referred always to Desdemona by a feminine pronoun: 'she lay in her bed', 'her face implored' and so on. Unquestionably, boy actor or not, she was a woman to him. Also early in the seventeenth century, Thomas Coryat was as astounded to see women on the stage in Venice as we might be to see boys:

I saw women acte, a thing I never saw before ... and they performed it with as good a grace, action, gesture and whatsoever convenient for a Player, as ever I saw any masculine Actor.⁴

So far as we can judge, boy actors were in no way inferior to female performers.

But if the actresses did not make plays either more believable or more uplifting, what did they achieve? To answer this question, I have made a close study of every play produced between 1660 and 1700, newly written, or adapted, and of their female casts and all surviving contemporary criticism of the women and their performances. My investigations arranged themselves naturally into two major lines of inquiry:

- (1) the general dramatic consequences of changing the sex of a performer from male to female
- (2) the individual influences of the various major actresses who emerged.

The first line of inquiry is dealt with almost entirely in the first chapter of this thesis. Here I examine those elements of Restoration drama which assume roles that would be literally impossible for boys to perform, because they exploit the female physique.

A number of critics have noted that the actresses were exploited for their sex and so encouraged provocative stage behaviour,⁵ but I have tried to show in more detail how sexual relationships in both comedy and tragedy could be substantially changed (for better and for worse) through the visual, physical dimension that only real women could provide. Throughout the thesis, I have found it useful to assess the female impact on comedy and tragedy in separate sections, even when similar principles may be applied to both genres.

My discussions of the specific impact of individual actresses are more extensive. For this area of my research I am especially indebted to Peter Holland's The Ornament of Action: Text and Performance in Restoration Comedy (Cambridge, 1979) and its approach to the study of Restoration drama in terms of its performers. Holland rightly emphasizes how the talent and popularity of a player could radically affect the nature of the drama a company produced; if a player proved very successful in one type of role, this fact influenced the playwrights who then tended to write plays around him (or her) and his speciality. In fact, patterns more complex than simple type-casting, or writing for the type associated with a particular actress, have emerged from my study and in chapters 2, 3, 5, 6 and 7 I have aimed to trace the development of dramatic genres, forms and conventions, as well as female character types, in relation to the actresses who made them popular. In this way, I hope to have shed new light on both Restoration tragedy and comedy and to have documented my belief that the presence of a particular actress at a particular time could crucially affect the course of the drama. The greatest actress of the age, Elizabeth Barry, was probably the most influential Restoration player of all and she figures prominently in all five chapters.

I have also devoted a chapter (chapter 4) to the impact of the actresses' own actual or reputed characters on the roles that were written for them. The women undoubtedly possessed an intimate relationship with spectators which their male counterparts did not: in what is still the only full-length study exclusively about the Restoration actress, All the King's Ladies: Actresses of the Restoration (Chicago, 1958), John Harold Wilson has suggested that as a result of this relationship dramatists were often forced to base their female parts on what the public knew of the women's private characters.⁶ I have tried to ascertain the exact nature of the relationship between the leading actresses and their public and to discover how far, if at all, spectators' knowledge of the women's own personalities affected the type of roles they played. This point is implicit in the arguments of the three preceding chapters and it might have seemed more natural to place this chapter at the start of the thesis since it deals with one of the fundamentals of Restoration theatre. However, although the discussion applies to both tragedy and comedy, it is much more relevant to the latter and so, I believe, it belongs here, as the way into my later chapters on comedy.

Surprisingly, although the influence of the Restoration player on the drama of his time is now well recognized, there has been no full critical evaluation of the actresses' special contribution. In his mainly historical study Wilson provides details of backstage conditions and acting techniques, and supplies a very useful appendix of actresses' biographies, but it is only in his final chapter that he attempts a critical evaluation of the actresses' contribution to Restoration drama. His conclusion - that, although the women brought a new grace and beauty to the stage, their immoral reputations and

behaviour 'pushed the drama steadily in the direction of sex and sensuality' and limited dramatists to producing only a few types of stock female character - seems both unjust to the abilities of the best actresses and outdated in the light of subsequent studies of the drama such as Eric Rothstein's Restoration Tragedy: Form and the Process of Change (1967), Holland's The Ornament of Action and Jocelyn Powell's Restoration Theatre Production (1984).⁷ Literary criticism has moved beyond simply condemning Restoration drama as licentious and immoral, and the adventurous and inventive way in which a number of dramatists transformed the conventional stereotypes of comedy has now been recognized. The influence of the actresses, both en masse and as individuals, has yet to be properly assessed: this thesis aims to provide the detailed appraisal that the subject deserves.

FOOTNOTES

1. Quoted from John Harold Wilson, All the King's Ladies: Actresses of the Restoration, Chicago, 1958, p.4.
2. Colley Cibber, An Apology for the Life of Mr. Colley Cibber, edited with notes and a supplement by R.W. Lowe, 1889, I, p.90.
3. Letter translated from Latin, quoted by Geoffrey Tillotson, 'Othello and The Alchemist at Oxford in 1610', TLS, 20 July 1933, p.494.
4. Thomas Coryat, Coryat's Crudities, Glasgow, 1905, I, p.386.
5. See, for example, J.L. Styan, Restoration Comedy in Performance, Cambridge, 1986, pp.91-4, and Wilson, All the King's Ladies, pp.67-86.
6. Wilson, All the King's Ladies, pp.105-8.
7. Ibid., pp.107-8.

CHAPTER 1THE FEMALE BODY ON THE PUBLIC STAGE

The arrival of the actress on the public stage did not, from the audiences' and the dramatists' point of view, mean the arrival of a new professional class of emancipated women; society's preconceptions dictated that the arrival of actresses signified primarily the arrival of female bodies for public display. As I shall emphasize, the women were viewed, above all, as objects - to be exploited for their beauty and for their sexual vulnerability. The actress's essential attributes were physical, not mental. In this way, she by and large confirmed, rather than challenged, the attitudes to gender in her society.¹ This is not to say that the actresses' dramatic role was always and exclusively that of a sex object: later chapters in this thesis will show that the leading female performers achieved a good deal more than this. However, in general, the women were perceived in terms of their physical attractions and exploited accordingly - with significant consequences for the drama. In exploring these consequences in this chapter, I shall in a sense be exploring a new kind of stage rhetoric (both verbal and visual) made possible by the presence of women in the theatre, but conditioned by social assumptions and tastes.

How far the appearance of blatantly sexually explicit plays in this period can be directly attributed to the introduction of the actress can never be precisely ascertained, as the tastes and inclinations of the age were in any case towards sexual display. The substitution of actresses for boys was itself symptomatic of a relaxation of morals after the repressions of the Puritan commonwealth.²

Certainly the sexual practices of Restoration comedy apparently mirrored those of many of its spectators. Although it is now recognized that the play-going public consisted of more than just courtiers and prostitutes, the audiences still represented only a minute fraction of English society, a fraction for whom an exhibition of blatant sex-play was something to titillate rather than to shock.³ However, if it was the tastes of London audiences that mainly dictated the trends the drama took, the presence of the actress made the new portrayals of sex possible and did much to encourage them.

The exploitation of the female form which occurred in comedy and tragedy has been considered detrimental to both genres. Critics have argued that the women were responsible for unnecessary sensationalized violence in tragedy while helping to make comedy coarse and cynical. John Harold Wilson, for instance, concludes that the actresses'

chief effect on dramatic literature was to push it steadily in the direction of sex and sensuality ... The actresses afforded the poet models for "impudent tomriggs," demimondaines, and harlots and by their provocative acting underscored his suggestive lines. In short, they helped the dramatist to "heap the steaming ordure of the stage."⁴

Wilson's moral condemnation of all 'sex and sensuality' in drama, regardless of its purpose, is, of course, misguided and blinkered - as was Jeremy Collier's blanket attack on the immorality and profaneness of the English stage, three hundred years earlier. My aim here, having surveyed the various ways in which the actresses' bodies were used in comedy and tragedy, is to re-examine the critical view that such exploitation had an entirely bad effect on the drama. Although there was a great deal of obvious titillation for its own sake, some dramatists were also able to explore sexual relationships and sexual

feelings in ways which had never before been possible. I would argue that in a number of the best plays of the period the sexual realism provided by the actresses aided the kind of cynically honest confrontation of social and moral problems that characterises Restoration comedy, and tragedy, at its best.

As elsewhere in the thesis, I have here found it helpful to discuss the impact of the actress on comedy and on serious drama separately (except for breeches roles), for, although writers of both genres aimed to utilize the women's physical attractions, the methods by which they did this were necessarily different.

The Female Body on Display in Restoration Comedy

From the beginning it was obvious that the female form constituted a major stage attraction and by the 1670s comic dramatists had begun to capitalize on it in various ways. It is no coincidence, for instance, that this decade - the period in which the actresses had begun to prove their abilities and yet were still a comparative novelty - saw a boom in sex-comedy in which a significant proportion of Restoration comedy attained a new degree of sexual explicitness. Focusing on adultery rather than love and marriage, these sex-comedies offered alluring glimpses of female semi-nudity in a proliferation of bedroom scenes involving wives and their young lovers in a state of undress. For example, in Aphra Behn's Sir Patient Fancy (1678), the act of adultery is presented with an unprecedented explicitness. The erring spouse, Lady Fancy, is discovered with her lover in a bedchamber directly after lovemaking, she is in a nightgown, he pulling on his clothes, while a few scenes later Lady Fancy is found again in the bedchamber 'in disorder' with Wittmore.⁵ For the stage

direction 'in disorder' we can assume that at least some of the actress' bosom was exposed - no question of using a boy here. Lady Fancy's nightgown would probably have been a loose linen garment with a low, drawstring neck allowing a considerable degree of décolletage.⁶ Similarly, for The London Cuckolds (1681) Edward Ravenscroft provided a bedroom scene which refers so precisely to the physical charms of the woman involved as to have made the performance of a boy in the role of wife extremely difficult, if not impossible. Ramble, the lover, unexpectedly appears in the wife Arabella's bedroom and announces that he is going to seduce her. He adds

Madam, come, your night-dress becomes you so well, and you look so very tempting - I can hardly forbear you a minute longer.

Arabella refuses him in such a way as to encourage him as much as possible, declaring,

Take notice then, thou desperate resolute man, that I now go to my chamber, where I'll undress me, go into my bed, and if you dare to follow me, kiss or come to bed to me; if all the strength and passion a provoked woman has can do't, I'll lay thee breathless and panting, and so maul thee, thou shalt ever after be afraid to look a woman in the face.

As she exits, her maid assures Ramble

I'll go and help her to bed, she has nothing but her night-gown to slip off.⁷

To the audience the act of intercourse must seem virtually about to happen on stage.

Restoration adaptations of earlier comedies show very clearly the way in which the opportunity for more explicit sex scenes was seized after 1660. Aphra Behn seems to have been particularly fond of inserting bedroom scenes and characters in an 'undress' into earlier dramas. For The Debauchee, or, The Credulous Cuckold (1677),⁸ for instance, she extended the original bedroom scene in Act III of

Brome's A Mad Couple Well Match'd (1637?-9). While Brome had 'the Bed put forth, Alicia in it', Behn directed 'A Bed-Chamber, Alicia sitting in her Nightgown at a Table undressing her.' At the end of the scene she had Saleware take Alicia to bed while Brome had to be content with the stage direction 'puts in the bed', to symbolize a coupling without actually showing anything.⁹ A similar alteration was made to Middleton's No Wit, No Help Like a Woman's (c.1617), in The Counterfeit Bridegroom (1677), again probably by Aphra Behn.¹⁰ The final act of the later version offers 'Widow discover'd sitting on a Bed, in a Nightgown, Noble in Bed, holding her by the Gown'. He tries to rape her, they struggle and she breaks free. In Middleton's play the couple simply 'enter confusedly' after the door to the bedroom is broken down.

Dramatists of the 1670s and after also tended to give detailed descriptions of a female character's appearance, particularly her breasts, to draw attention to the female form in question. In Ravenscroft's The Careless Lovers (1673), for example, the town gallant Careless points out the attractions of the masked Hillaria's figure:

A handsome Legg and Foot I'll be sworn; and here's a well shap'd
Hand and Arme; and what Breasts are here? How round and plump?

In Shadwell's A True Widow (1678) Lady Busy attempts to persuade Stanmore to marry Gertrude by giving him a catalogue of the girl's assets:

Ah what pleasure 'tis to lye by such a sweet Bedfellow! such
pretty little swelling Breasts! such delicate black sparkling
Eyes! such a fresh Complexion! such red powting Lips! and such
a skin!¹¹

Female as well as male playwrights exploited the female body in this way. In Aphra Behn's The Second Part of the Rover (1681) Willmore

courts Ariadne with praise of her physical beauties. He declares, those soft smooth Arms and Hands, were made t'imbrace as well as be imbrac'd, that delicate white rising Bosom to be prest, and all thy other charms to be injoy'd.¹²

The degree of realistic physical detail with which these dramatists describe women is highlighted when the examples above are compared with Renaissance dramatic practice, derived at least partly from the Petrarchan convention, of giving a set, generalized account of the beauties of a female beloved. In Ford's 'Tis Pity She's A Whore (pub. 1633), for example, Giovanni, while burning with incestuous desire for Arabella, praises her separate beauties thus:

the poets feign, I read,
That Juno for her forehead did exceed
All other goddesses; but I durst swear
Your forehead exceeds hers, as hers did theirs.
.....Such a pair of stars
As are thine eyes would, like Promethean fire,
If gently glanced, give life to senseless stones.
... The lily and the rose, most sweetly strange,
Upon your dimpled cheeks do strive for change.
Such lips would tempt a saint; such hands as those
Would make an anchorite lascivious.¹³

Not only are these all physical features that a boy would also have - there is no mention of breasts - but they are described in literary terms, without immediacy, in marked contrast to the sensuous, concrete adjectives of the Restoration descriptions: 'round', 'juicy', 'melting', 'pouting', 'swelling'. The Restoration accounts are in fact likely to have mirrored the actual actresses who took the roles; certainly the picture of Florimell in Dryden's Secret Love, or, The Maiden Queen (1667), 'such an Ovall face, clear skin, hazle eyes, thick brown Eye-browes, and Hair',¹⁴ we know from portraits to be a description of Nell Gwyn, the actress who played Florimell. Even when a Jacobean dramatist goes into more specific physical detail - as, for instance, in the Ward's inspection of his future wife in Middleton's Women Beware Women (pub. 1657) where he examines her

eyes, nose, teeth and legs - there is a distinct lack of eroticism. The Ward comments critically on Isabella's body as though she were a horse for sale.¹⁵

It seems important to point out that Renaissance poets, on the other hand, could be very lascivious. One might cite some of the love poetry of John Donne, such as 'To his Mistress Going to Bed':

Licence my roving hands, and let them go
Before, behind, between, above, below.¹⁶

Similarly there existed the tradition of the erotic epyllion to which Shakespeare's Venus and Adonis and Marlowe's Hero and Leander belong, carried to its extreme in Marston's The Metamorphosis of Pigmalion's Image (1598). In literature before 1660, therefore, there is a split between dramatic and non-dramatic representations of women as sexual objects, a split which largely disappears after 1660 with the introduction of the actress. In this respect, there is much less difference between the erotic language in Rochester's poems and that spoken (and manifested) on stage at the time, than there is between the descriptions of passion in Venus and Adonis and, say, the spoken passion of hero and heroine in Romeo and Juliet or even Antony and Cleopatra.

Breeches Roles

The introduction of female bodies on stage also had an effect on breeches roles in drama. Now such roles entailed the thrill of exposing a woman's legs to public view and they became a popular means of enhancing the actresses' physical attractions. As one critic has recently pointed out, there was no question of the actress challenging convention by truly impersonating a man:

It was central to the effect that the actress's femininity showed through: indeed, the aim seems to have been to draw special attention to her charms ... In bending, momentarily, the conventions of a society in which both men and women knew their sexual place, the actress in breeches serves to confirm rather than discredit these conventions.¹⁷

Prologues and epilogues show that the theatres were well aware of the provocative effect of the transvestite convention in the new circumstances. In the prologue to the Dryden-Davenant adaptation of The Tempest, for instance, Mrs. Jane Long draws attention to her male costume and role:

But, if for Shakespear we your grace implore,
We for our Theatre shall want it more:
Who by our dearth of Youths are forc'd t'employ
One of our Women to present a Boy.
And that's a transformation you will say
Exceeding all the Magick in the Play.
Let none expect in the last Act to find,
Her Sex transform'd from Man to Woman-kind.
What e're she was before the Play began,
All you shall see of her is perfect man.
Or if your fancy will be farther led
To find her Woman, it must be abed.¹⁸

Similarly the appeal of Southerne's Sir Anthony Love, or, The Rambling Lady (1690) was advertised in its epilogue as being the sight of 'The female Mountford [Susannah Mountfort] bare above the knee'. The epilogue to John Corye's The Generous Enemies (1671) is spoken by Mrs. Boutell who has spent most of the play disguised as a man and who reminds the audience of what they have thus gained:

'Tis worth your Money that such Legs appear,
These are not to be seen so cheap elsewhere.

That last line hints that Mrs. Boutell's sexual favours may be purchased off stage for a sufficiently generous price.¹⁹

Not surprisingly, then, the use of transvestite disguise became very frequent. John Harold Wilson has calculated that of some 375 plays first produced on the public stage in London during the period

1660-1700, including alterations of pre-Restoration plays, eighty-nine - that is, nearly a quarter - contained one or more roles for actresses in male clothes. In at least fourteen more plays actresses were required to don male costumes to play roles originally intended for men. This practice does not seem to have been tied to a particular actress, nor to a part of the period. In 1671 Jane Long appeared as Osiris in Settle's Cambyses while as late as 1696 Susannah Verbruggen appeared as Achmet, a eunuch, in Mary Pix's Ibrahim, The Thirteenth Emperour of the Turks (1696) and Mary Kent as Young Fashion in Vanbrugh's The Relapse. In addition there were many revivals of older plays with breeches parts originally played by boys, such as Beaumont and Fletcher's Philaster. Almost every actress appeared at some time or other in a breeches role.²⁰

Taking the popularity of female breeches roles to an extreme, three plays were apparently produced with all-female casts during June 1672: Killigrew's The Parson's Wedding, Dryden's Secret Love and Beaumont and Fletcher's Philaster. (According to The London Stage, Killigrew also prepared his Thomaso for an all-female production in the autumn of 1664 for which the intended cast list survives. We have no evidence that this production was actually staged.²¹) The prologues and epilogues to the three plays furnish ample evidence of the provocative intention behind the all-female casting. The prologue to Secret Love, spoken by Elizabeth Boutell, for instance, states

Accept us these bad times in any dress.
 You'll find the sweet on't, now old Pantaloon,
 Will go as far, as formerly new gowns,
 And from your own cast Wigs, expect no frowns.²²
 The ladies we shall not so easily please.
 They'll say what impudent bold things are these.
 That dare provoke, yet cannot do us right.

The most openly obscene is the epilogue to The Parson's Wedding,

which suggests, jokingly, that the boy-actors sold their sexual favours to homosexuals:

When boys play'd women's parts, you'd think the Stage
Was innocent in that untempting Age.
No: for your amorous Fathers then, like you,
Amongst those Boys had Play-house Misses too:
They set those bearded Beauties on their laps,
Men gave 'em Kisses, and the Ladies Claps.
But they, poor hearts, could not supply our room:
While we, in kindness to ourselves, and you,
Can hold our Women to our Lodgings too.

The actresses can be far more effective whores. The epilogue then discusses why women cannot always replace men in male roles and decides it must be because the women in the audience would be unable to find lovers:

The Madams in disguise would steal no more
To th'young Actors Chambers in mask'd Faces,
To leave Love off'rings of Points and Laces.
Nor can we Act their Parts: Alas! too soon
You'd find the cheat in th'empty Pantaloons.
Well; though we are not Women's-Men, at least
We hope to have your Gallants constant Guests.

The epilogue concludes with an offer to set up another theatre and to turn the present one into a brothel for the benefit of the gentlemen:

We will return your kindnesses this way:
We'll build up a new Theatre to gain you,
And turn this to a House to entertain you.²³

Dryden capitalized very obviously on the popularity of breeches roles as early as 1664 in The Rival Ladies by having two women disguised as pages pursuing, in competition with each other, the man they love. In the first act one of them is discovered bound to a tree and about to be stripped by robbers before he/she is rescued in the nick of time. On arriving at an inn, both disguised girls make a great fuss about not wishing to spend the night with men and at the end, as they prepare to fight each other, each unbuttons her doublet. One exclaims, 'Two swelling Breasts! a Woman, and my

Rival', before tearing open her costume to reveal a similar sight.²⁴

It is hardly surprising to find breeches roles inserted quite gratuitously into a production. The male disguise of Madam Fickle in the fifth act of Durfey's play of that name (1677) is, as such, irrelevant to the plot, while Charles Sedley's The Mulberry Garden (1668) has a scene unnecessary to the action in which Diana visits her love, Philander, in male attire, to bring him news concerning his friend - an incident which affects neither his behaviour nor that of anyone else in the play. John Crowne's adaptation of Shakespeare's Henry VI, Parts II and III, The Misery of Civil War (1680), contains a new mistress for Henry's son Edward, the Lady Elianor Butler, who pursues him to the battlefield and eventually 'appears in man's habit, challenges Edward and falls'.²⁵ At the end of the performance of John Caryl's The English Princess, or, The Death of Richard III (1667) Moll Davis was sent on stage to dance a jig and announce the next day's play. As Pepys put it, 'it came in by force only to please the company to see her dance in boy's clothes'.²⁶

The revelation of a disguised woman's true sex naturally formed an opportunity to show off intimate parts of the actress's physique. When the maid Frank appears dressed as a man in the anonymous The Woman Turn'd Bully (1675) Young Goodfield takes advantage of her revealing costume to caress her, thereby drawing attention to the titillating effect of her garb:

Let's kiss a little. How do thy Breeches fit thee? Ha,
Wench! (Is familiar)²⁷

In Act IV of Rawlins' Tom Essence, or, The Modish Wife (1676) Mrs. Monylove is seen 'dressing herself at a Table, having Night-cloaths on her head, in her half Shirt, and her Breeches on'²⁸ while Vernish feels Fidelia's breasts to discover her identity in Wycherley's The

Plain Dealer (1676). In Aphra Behn's The Younger Brother, or, The Amorous Jilt (1696), when the disguised page Olivia is accused of courting her mistress, Mirtilla 'Opens Olivia's Bosom, shews her Breasts',²⁹ to prove her innocence. A similar opportunity is taken in Shadwell's Bury Fair (1689) when another disguised page swoons and has her doublet opened in order to help her recover. Such scenes are a far cry from the decorous revelation of Leonora's identity in Shirley's The Grateful Servant (1629), for example, let alone the magical discovery scene at the end of Twelfth Night when Viola is reunited with her brother.

Even in comedies in which a woman disguised as a man is not directly used to show off the body of the actress, the element of innocence associated with some earlier uses of the disguise is gone. In the plays of Shakespeare or Beaumont and Fletcher, it is generally circumstances not altogether in her control that force the heroine to assume a male disguise, and if another woman falls in love with her it is by comic accident, as in Twelfth Night. Occasionally before 1660 the disguise is more calculating, as in Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice, Jonson's Epicoene (1609) and Middleton's No Wit, No Help Like a Woman's (1638), in which Mistress Low-water disguises herself as a man in order to court a rich widow and so repair her husband's fallen fortunes. (This play was revived, as we have seen on p.19 above, with alterations probably by Aphra Behn, in 1677, where slightly more prominence is given to the disguised woman.³⁰) However, such female cunning and calculation seem to appear more forcibly in many Restoration comedies.

The Restoration heroine is not usually forced to disguise herself as a man for self-protection, but she may do so to gain power,

or vengeance, or wealth, or from sheer high spirits. She may also deliberately charm another woman into falling in love with her. In The Careless Lovers (1673), for example, Hillaria dons male attire and joins her lover and his companions in a tavern. Having taken him in completely she reveals her identity and laughs at him. In The Woman Turn'd Bully (1675) Betty Goodfield and her maid decide to impersonate gallants and again spend an evening in a tavern. In Rawlins' Tom Essence Mrs. Monylove disguises herself as her brother and puts the woman who falls in love with her to bed with Mr. Monylove, her husband. In Aphra Behn's The Town Fopp, or, Sir Timothy Tawdrey (1676) the disguised Cellinda carries the courtesan Diana off to her lodgings where the besotted prostitute offers herself to the 'youth' before learning her mistake. In Durfey's The Virtuous Wife, or, Good Luck at Last (1679) the disguised heroine Olivia also courts a whore, Jenny Wheadle, and offers to marry her to make her keeper jealous. In Carlile's The Fortune-Hunters, or, Two Fools Well Met (1689) Maria does wear boy's clothes to get her lover out of prison, but her real purpose is to test his love by setting herself up as his rival. When they reach the point of fighting over herself and he accuses her of holding her sword like a girl, she laughingly reveals the deception. Durfey's The Marriage-Hater Match'd (1692) offers a debased variation on the convention of the faithful virgin disguised as a page in pursuit of the man she loves. Sir Philip's erstwhile mistress Phaebe has disguised herself as his servant, Lovewell, and helps him recover a fortune from a rich widow. He has no intention of marrying but she finally manages to trick him into it.

Several comedies such as Shadwell's The Woman-Captain (1679) or Southerne's Sir Anthony Love (1690) are centred upon a woman in

male disguise outsmarting and outdoing the men around her. In Sir Anthony Love Southerne took the idea to its limits, the disguised Lucia proving a sharper wit, a better intriguer and a more skilful seducer than the gallants she makes her companions.³¹ Unlike most comic heroines, she has no interest in marrying her lover ultimately — she simply enjoys being a man:

I am for Universal Empire, and wou'd not be stinted to one Province; I wou'd be fear'd, as well as lov'd: As famous for my Action with the Men, as for my Passion for the Women.

At the end of the play she gives her lover another woman as his wife; she prefers to retain her independence and his love by remaining his mistress. A further novel effect is gained by having not only various female characters but also a homosexual, the Abbé, attracted to Sir Anthony. Lucia/Sir Anthony is finally forced to reveal her true sex to the importunate Abbé:

Sir A: But 'tis not in my power to oblige you.

Abbé : I'll put it into your power, I warrant you.

Sir A: But that I doubt Sir. For very unhappily for your purpose; I am a - Woman.

Abbé : Ha! how, a Woman! (Drops her Hand.)³²

At the end of the play, when Lucia reveals her true identity to all the characters, she manages to make a fat profit for herself by blackmailing her erstwhile keeper, Sir Gentle Golding, into settling a fortune on her.

Fidelia, in Wycherley's The Plain Dealer (1676), is an exception to the majority of breeches roles in Restoration comedy. As a disguised page faithfully serving her lover until her constancy is finally rewarded she is an anachronism. Her separation from the corrupt and sophisticated world around her is emphasized by her speaking in verse rather than prose like the rest of the characters.³³ The faithful page convention also appears in Henry Higden's The Wary

Widow, or, Sir Noisy Parrat (1693) as the verse-speaking heroine Leonora bursts onto the stage in pursuit of her lover,

disguis'd in the habit of a Gentleman, running and out of Breath, looks about him, falls in a Swoond crying - He's gone, he's gone!³⁴

With the exception of the two examples just quoted, it would seem that in Restoration comedy transvestism is usually part of an intrigue plot and is more calculated than in most earlier comedy. This is surely at least partly because real women disguised as men tend to draw attention to the device as disguise. The actresses therefore caused the innocence which could be associated with comic transvestism before 1660, in Shakespeare's romantic comedy particularly, to be lost. Since the effect of dressing the women in male garments was always to show off their bodies, it must have become more difficult to recreate successfully a romance world such as the Forest of Arden in As You Like It, where things are not what they seem and all is magically turned upside down, including the sexes. As the pretence became more obvious the transformation had to stay on a more mundane level and comedy was pushed steadily towards the physically naturalistic.

The Actresses and Shakespearean Romantic Comedy: the Dryden-Davenant Tempest

The new sexual realism and salaciousness contributed, I believe, to a decline in the popularity of Shakespeare's comedy at this time. The comedies most commonly revived during the Restoration period were those of Beaumont and Fletcher, Shirley, Brome, Jonson and Middleton. As a rule, when Shakespeare's comedies were revived they seem not to have been successful: The London Stage gives only one revival of As

You Like It, one of Love's Labour's Lost and two of Much Ado About Nothing. Pepys dismissed Twelfth Night as a 'silly play' and 'one of the weakest plays that ever I saw on the stage'.³⁵ Although Downes says that Twelfth Night was a 'mighty Success', Viola, Sebastian and Orsino are suspiciously absent from his cast list, implying that the more romantic elements of the play may have been omitted altogether in performance.³⁶

The appearance of actresses whom the public imagined were mostly also prostitutes or, at any rate, women of uncertain character since they displayed themselves on the public stage, surely had a detrimental effect on the performance of Shakespearean comedy. The compelling conviction with which Shakespeare invested the unlikely events of, say, As You Like It, or The Tempest, could have been ruined when these events were performed on a stage where female roles tended to be indecent and were taken by notorious women rather than by boys. Although Restoration audiences clearly relished such devices as transvestism in the more artificial dramas of Beaumont and Fletcher,³⁷ they must have found it harder to give the aesthetic assent to Shakespeare's Golden World, which Elizabethan audiences were able to do. Although one critic has recently suggested that the boys in female dress in Shakespearean comedy may have created a titillating effect, this seems unlikely.³⁸ The reunion of Sebastian and Viola in Twelfth Night appears utterly convincing. There is certainly potential titillation in Olivia's falling in love with Viola/Caesar, and in Viola's realization of this; but this is resolved in, and overshadowed by, the sheer wonder of the recognition scene between brother and sister. It was only when these things were transformed under the new theatrical conditions post-1660 that they could become smutty or 'silly'.

The Dryden-Davenant adaptation called The Tempest, or, The Enchanted Island (1667) highlights the way in which the provocative use of actresses could change the nature of Shakespeare's romantic comedy (and in the view of one twentieth-century critic at least, 'ruin it'³⁹). In this version of the play Miranda's purity and ignorance of the male sex become a huge joke, her naiveté an opportunity for innuendo. She is given an equally naive sister, Dorinda, so that the two can discuss the strange creature, man, and display an ignorance of the facts of life which to the audience becomes comically smutty. In a new scene in Act I, Miranda declares of the male phenomenon,

I know no more than you [Dorinda]: but I have heard
My Father say we Women were made for Him

- a comment which, when spoken in an appropriately coy manner, presumably brought roars of appreciation from worldly-wise spectators. To similar effect Miranda and Dorinda speculate on the mystery of how they came into being:

I think he found us when we both were little, and grew
within the ground.⁴⁰

The fact that Miranda was probably played by an actress with a suspect reputation can only have encouraged Dryden and Davenant to alter the role in the way they did. The women in the Duke's Company who could have played Miranda in 1667 were Winifred Gosnell (although probably she did not since she later replaced Moll Davis as Ariel), Mrs. Jennings - one of the three actresses of whom Downes says that they were 'by force of Love ... Erept the Stage' - and Mrs. Anne Gibbs Shadwell, who seems to have been exemplary in later life but who was attacked for her behaviour in youth in 'A Satyr on the Players', with the phrase 'none was a greater Whore'.⁴¹ The last two seem the most likely candidates for Miranda and Dorinda.

The adaptors went on to add Hippolito, a lover for Dorinda who has never seen a woman before and therefore furnishes fresh scope for 'innocently' salacious sex talk. They also added Sycorax, the mother of Caliban, thus creating another female role and more opportunities for crude jokes. Trinculo courts Sycorax and she makes grotesque advances to him, promising to produce him children. This subplot provides a vulgar echo of the Miranda-Dorinda-Hippolito main plot. Sycorax is as ignorant as Hippolito of conventional morality and would like to marry and copulate with three other sailors as well as Trinculo. As Hippolito and Ferdinand quarrel over Miranda, Stephano and Trinculo fight for possession of Sycorax.

Even the reconciliations at the end of the play, when the jealousies of the four young lovers are sorted out, become an opportunity for more innuendo. Miranda and Dorinda are still 'innocent' of the facts of life - when they are told that going to bed with their men will produce children, Miranda says to Dorinda

If Children come by lying in a Bed, I wonder you
And I had none between us.⁴²

Sycorax's voracious appetite for sex finally discourages Trinculo who jokes

well, I must be rid of my Lady Trinculo, she will be in the fashion else; first Cuckold her Husband, and then sue for a separation, to get Alimony.⁴³

This comment, like the sexual innuendoes of the play, demanded that the audience view The Tempest and its characters in terms of their own society. By such references to contemporary life and comedy Dryden and Davenant effectively prevented spectators from 'losing themselves' in Shakespeare's original vision. Prospero strikes a similar note when he instructs his daughters on how to keep their men.

Whereas Shakespeare's Prospero preaches pre-marital chastity to his daughter, Miranda and Dorinda are advised to exercise the same caution as the heroines of Restoration social comedy. Dorinda should not allow Hippolito to touch her naked hand:

It is the way to make him love you more;
He will despise you if you grow too kind.⁴⁴

Similarly Prospero preaches to Hippolito the contemporary belief, reflected in both poetry and drama, that love once consummated never lasts: when Hippolito grows older he will no longer care for Dorinda. It is not surprising that Davenant's Miranda, unlike her predecessor, is full of anxiety over whether or not Ferdinand will be faithful: 'for I will dye when you are false'.⁴⁵ On his part, Ferdinand is suspicious that Miranda is at heart a Restoration coquette:

It is too plain: like most of her frail Sex, she's false,
But has not learnt the art to hide it;
Nature has done her part, she loves variety:
Why did I think any Woman could be innocent.⁴⁶

The dramatists' worldly, cynical approach to Shakespeare's Enchanted Island must be seen partly as the result of the change in performing conditions after 1660. Once Miranda was played by a woman whom the audience saw as sexually experienced, it naturally became extremely difficult to take her virginal innocence seriously and, by extension, the innocence of Shakespeare's whole creation. However, the changed climate did not simply result in a vulgar mockery of the original. Rather, Dryden and Davenant took a radically different approach, twisting Shakespeare's original conception into a means of satirizing contemporary and universal human behaviour. Here, as elsewhere, the actresses indirectly encouraged a harsh scrutiny of love relationships in comedy.⁴⁷

The Actresses' Contribution to Social Comedy

J.L. Styan is making too sweeping a statement when he says, the new actresses hardly brought a feminine delicacy or compassion to the relationships between characters, as might have been expected. Instead, they had much to do with a persistent element of cynicism both in writing and performance that surpassed anything that had gone before.⁴⁸

As we have seen, the provocative use of the actress was partly responsible for a more cynical approach in comedy, but this did not necessarily mean that relationships between characters were never treated compassionately as a result. The fact that the physical limitations created by the women made some Shakespearean comedy more difficult to perform also encouraged a sensitive treatment of social and moral issues. The finest comedies of the age offer their own serious and subtle appraisal of contemporary problems, particularly those concerning women, such as arranged marriage, the double standard and the non-availability of divorce. Of course, such appraisals came about partly as the consequence of changes in the moral and philosophical climate in which the dramatists were writing, but they are also surely the consequence of changes in the theatrical climate. From the naturalistic, unromantic comic approach fostered by the actresses there slowly evolved a subtle awareness, in later dramas, of the difficulties besetting relations between the sexes.

True love in the greatest Restoration comedy does not run smoothly to a happy-ever-after because these comedies are grounded in social realism, albeit a cynical realism. At the end of The Man of Mode, or, Sir Fopling Flutter (1676), for example, Etherege reflects life when he leaves us in some doubt as to whether Dorimant, the practised libertine, will settle permanently into marriage with Harriet. In Congreve's The Way of the World (1700), a play I shall

be returning to in several later chapters, the happy union of Mirabell and Millamant is achieved only after careful bargaining on both sides and an implicit realization of how vulnerable such happiness is. Vanbrugh's The Provok'd Wife (1697) and Southerne's The Wives' Excuse, or, Cuckolds Make Themselves (1691) offer sensitive and sympathetic investigations of the insoluble problem of a woman trapped in unhappy marriage, while The Country Wife and Southerne's The Maid's Last Prayer, or, Any Rather Than Fail (1692), which is also discussed in detail in a later chapter, illustrate the debasing effects of a society based on mercenary self-interest and the pursuit of sexual satisfaction. The cynical realism promoted by the actress forms part of the forces which went to create a socially acute drama - a drama which both mirrored and questioned the manners and the morals of the society who watched it.

The Actress and her Body in Tragedy 1660-72

In serious drama there were various types of provocative behaviour for the actresses to perform. These might be different to those of comedy, but the aim of many dramatists was the same as that of comic writers - to exploit the female physical attributes at their command. With this in mind, prevailing modes of tragedy were adapted and modified to include more scenes of women undergoing violence, particularly rape, more erotic love scenes, and more sensual descriptions. Once again the exploitation of the actress had both positive and negative effects; some dramas were designed merely to titillate and to thrill, but the developments also culminated in the greatest tragedy of the age, Otway's Venice Preserved, or, A Plot Discovered, which offers a magnificently compelling exploration of erotic passion.

Although Shakespeare's comedy was out of favour, it is not

surprising that the first part known to have been taken by a woman in a serious play was Desdemona in a 1660 revival of Shakespeare's Othello. Desdemona is a part which is well suited to the display of feminine attributes: she is gentle, passive and vulnerable, she is suspected of being a whore and is ultimately the victim of thrilling violence, a violence which takes place in the bedchamber. Restoration productions of the play would seem to have intensified the eroticism of the play with a good deal of visual sensuality. In her preface to The Dutch Lover (1673), Aphra Behn defended what had been attacked as prurient elements in her drama by citing various pre-Restoration plays with a similar element and she included among these 'The Moor of Venice in many places'.⁴⁹ The frontispiece illustration to Othello in Nicholas Rowe's 1708 edition of the works of Shakespeare shows a bare-breasted Desdemona sprawled across a bed, Othello moving towards her with a pillow (see Plate 1), and this probably illustrates actual stage practice. The mental traits which make Desdemona a strong character and an individual as well as a beautiful victim were probably of less interest to Restoration audiences and dramatists. From the beginning, the roles for actresses in serious drama were predominantly sexual: they were all related in some way to the experience of having a female physical presence on the stage.

The serious drama of the first twelve years of the period was not usually overtly erotic, but it is significant that, even at this early stage, the conventions that dramatists chose to follow in respect of their female characters all emphasize their physical, as opposed to mental traits. For example, whether the play was a heroic drama such as Dryden's The Indian Queen (1664), a tragicomedy such as Howard's The Surprizal (1662) or a sensational bloodbath such as

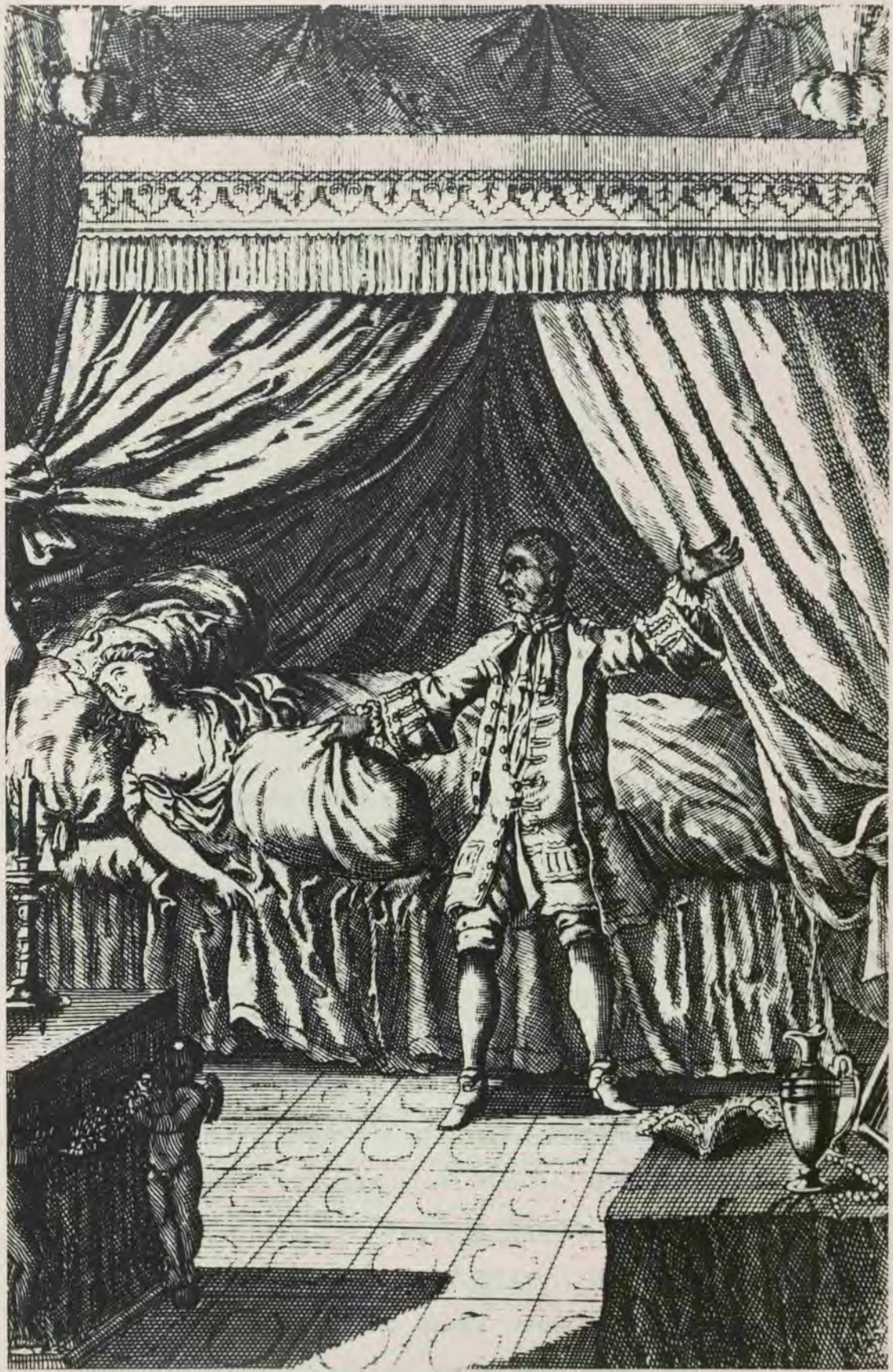


Plate 1

Settle's Cambyses, King of Persia (1671), the heroine's important quality was her beauty. In time female characters did come to express their own feelings more and more (as opposed to being mere objects), but even then their main role was usually to inspire love or lust (in either case the attraction was markedly physical) in the breasts of heroes and villains. As Settle put it in The Empress of Morocco (1673),

Oh Charming sex! -
 How vast a Circle does thy Magick take?
 The highest Spirits humblest Lovers make.
 All that Heroick Greatness, which but now
 Made haughty Foes and stubborn Nations bow,
 Turns Vassal to a Smile, a Looks disguise:
 Who conquer thousands are one Womans prize.⁵⁰

Whether consciously or unconsciously, the decision to present tragic heroines as such beautiful goddesses meant that the actress was being utilized primarily for her attractive appearance.

The popular Renaissance convention of love at first sight was of course given a new force with a real actress on the stage. Now the woman's beauty became for the first time a visible power and so the convention became a means by which dramatists could draw attention to the beauty of the actress (or, vice versa, the actual beauty of the actress could justify the convention). For example, in Stapylton's Hero and Leander (1667?), the image of Hero in the temple dramatically reverses Leander's soldierly determination to ignore the gentle sex. With one glimpse of the heroine, as another character puts it, 'He's blasted'.⁵¹ The first entrance of St. Catherine in Dryden's Tyrannick Love, or, The Royal Martyr (1669) blasts the tyrant Maximin in similar fashion - her beauty dissolves his aggression:

Her form glides through me, and my heart gives way:
 This Iron heart, which no impression took
 From Wars, melts down, and runs, if she but look.⁵²

In The Conquest of Granada (1st Part 1670, 2nd part 1671) Dryden made a point of displaying the beauty of the actress playing Almahide, and emphasized the irresistible effect of her loveliness on Almanzor, through Almahide's unconsciously seductive use of a veil. When Almahide first pleads to Almanzor for pity she 'falls at his feet being veyld'. As she unveils a moment later and reveals her beauty, his harsh manner crumbles and he is quite overpowered. At the same time, while Almahide wears her beauty with the innocence of a flower, the ambitious Lyndaraxa utilizes hers to win men to her designs. Her tantalising physical presence is deliberately employed to inflame her two adorers, Abdalla and Abdelemech. She first entices Abdalla:

Perhaps not love you - but I will be yours.
 (He offers to take her hand and kiss it)
 Stay Sir, that Grace I cannot yet allow;
 Before you set the Crown upon my Brow.
 That favour which you seek -
 Or Abdelemech, or a King must have,
 When you are so, then you may be my slave.
 (Exit: but looks smiling back on him)

Abdalla is left 'blasted' and aroused:

A glancing smile allur'd me to command,
 And her soft fingers gently prest my hand.
 I felt the pleasure glide thro' every part.⁵³

When he threatens to weaken, the stage directions instruct that Lyndaraxa first pass over the stage, and then re-enter and smile on him so that a fresh dose of her enchanting presence will reinforce his captivity. Thus, whether a female character is good, like Almahide, or evil, like Lyndaraxa, she exerts her influence through her sexual presence.⁵⁴

In each of these early cases the dramatist's approach to his female character was to direct the audience's attention to the simple fact of her physical presence on the stage. Here is a striking

instance of the actresses representing objects like pictures or statues to be gazed upon rather than active participants. There is a general tendency in serious drama of the period for the action to form tableaux. In his treatise on acting, the Life of Mr. Thomas Betterton, Charles Gildon on several occasions compared effective acting with history painting of the kind practised by Charles Le Brun and his followers. The actors' carefully rehearsed tableaux should convey the same striking and emotive effect as a brilliantly composed painting:

As in a Piece of History-Painting, tho the Figures direct their Eyes never so directly to each other, yet the Beholder, by the Advantage of his Position, has a full View of the Expression of the Soul in the Eyes of the Figures.⁵⁵

The women, of course, were frequently called upon to create the effect of an erotic painting.

The appearance of couch scenes in plays here and throughout the period contributes further to this impression. More common than the practice of unveiling female beauty was the dramatic device of placing it at a distance, asleep on a couch, bed or grassy bank where, attractively defenceless, and probably enticingly deshabillée, it offered a sexual thrill to audiences while unwittingly arousing a burning passion in the male viewing it (see Plate 2). In The History of Charles the Eighth of France, or, The Invasion of Naples by the French (1671), for instance, Charles gazes with desire upon the sleeping Julia as this song is sung:

Yet Oh Ye Powers! I'd dye to gain
But one poor parting Kiss!
And yet I'de be on Wracks of pain,
'Ere I'd one Thought or Wish retain,
Which Honour thinks amiss.⁵⁶

Later in the same play, Cornelia and Irene offer another picture of unconscious femininity: 'presented asleep upon a couch, and at their

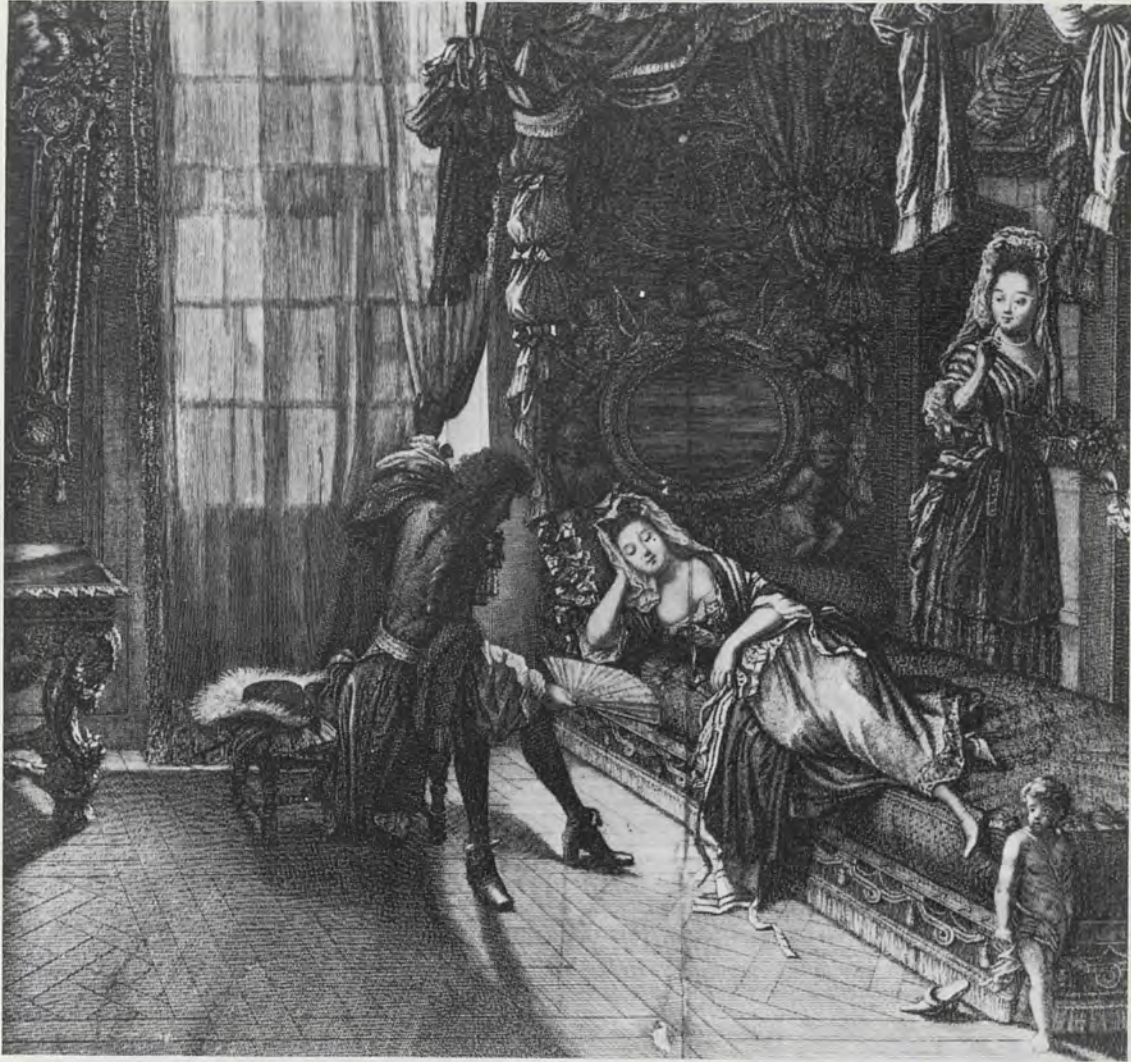


Plate 2

feet Sylvia'.⁵⁷ In Southerne's The Fate of Capua (1700) the wife Favonia is seen 'asleep on a Couch in an undress', while her husband's friend Junius stares hungrily:

- let me fix here -
 Stretch wide the Gates of sight to take her in,
 In the full triumph of her conquering charms.
 My eager Eyes devour her Beauties up,
 Insatiable, and hungry still for more.
 O! the rich Glutton, that enjoys this store!

The pose is used to particularly sensational effect in Samuel Pordage's Herod and Mariamne (1671). In the first act the heroine Mariamne is 'discover'd lying on a Couch' while the hero declares his passion for her. In Act IV she appears first 'lying on a Couch sleeping' and being watched lasciviously by Herod, and then, in a horrible reversal of this, reappears on the same couch soon after beheaded.⁵⁸

This idea of a sleeping female beauty being watched lustfully by a possible dangerous male was not new: in Shakespeare's Cymbeline Iachimo has a whole scene in which to gaze on the sleeping Imogen, having previously gained access to her bedroom. However, a comparison of the speech above, inspired by the half-naked Favonia, and Iachimo's words as he looks at Imogen illustrates how much more overtly erotic the device became with a real woman on the stage. Iachimo's most erotic lines when actually contemplating Imogen are

Cytherea,
 How bravely thou becom'st thy bed! fresh lily,
 And whiter than the sheets! That I might touch!
 But kiss; one kiss,⁵⁹

not, I would suggest, by any means comparable to Junius' direct expression of lust for Favonia. It is significant that Iachimo's most sensual lines about his experience - his account of kissing the mole beneath Imogen's breast - are spoken afterwards, to Posthumus, and he is lying. The erotic image here is an imaginary one. It is only in the Restoration tragedy that male lust could be directly aroused

by a visual female image.

Women and Violence

The actresses were also used to provide more salacious spectacles of blood and violence than had hitherto been possible; they were indirectly responsible for a wealth of gruesome suffering right through the period. The tradition of tyrant plays with all the concomitant cruelty (a tradition that can be seen from Cambyses, c.1560, through Marlowe's Tamburlaine to the plays of Fletcher and Shirley) flourished. Fletcher's Rollo, or, The Bloody Brother was revived in 1660 and the genre was taken up in Edward Howard's The Usurper (1664), John Caryl's The English Princess, or, The Death of Richard III (1667), Dryden's Tyrannick Love (1669), Pordage's Herod and Mariamne (1671), Lee's Caesar Borgia, Son of Pope Alexander the Sixth (1679), right up to Crowne's Caligula (1698) and Cibber's Xerxes (1699). Tyrannick Love describes an especially memorable spectacle of female suffering in its final act. The tyrant Maximin threatens St. Catherine with an appalling death for her mother if she refuses his love. At the climax of his menaces, 'the Scene opens and shows the Wheel'. Maximin's commands gruesomely emphasize the impact of this terrible machine on Felicia's vulnerable flesh, with particular reference to her breasts:

Go bind her hand and foot beneath that Wheel:
Four of you turn the dreadful Engine round:
Four others hold her fast'ned to the ground:
That by degrees her tender breasts may feel
First the rough razings of the pointed steel:
Her Paps then let the bearded Tenters stake,
And on each hook a gory Gobbet take;
Till th'upper flesh by piecemeal torn away,
Her beating heart shall to the Sun display.⁶⁰

The account is part of a long and flourishing tradition of sado-sexual female martyrdom that began with saints' legends, but in this

case the presence of the victim and the wheel adds a sensational visual dimension. With real women and elaborate scenery at its disposal the Restoration theatre could attach visual detail to a suggestive description. In this case, at the critical moment, when both St. Catherine and her mother are about to be strapped to the wheel, the guardian angel, Amoriel, descends and shatters the wheel with his flaming sword. In other dramas women were not so fortunate. Stabbing was very popular, offering as it did the striking image of a naked bosom spattered with blood. Settle's The Empress of Morocco (1673) concludes with the empress Laula running amok with a dagger before stabbing herself, while at the close of Dryden and Lee's Oedipus (1678) the mad Jocasta murders her children and the stage directions dictate

Scene Draws and discovers Jocasta held by her women, and stabb'd in many places of her bosom, her hair dishevel'd, her Children slain upon the Bed.

Madness (significantly a state in which a woman is rendered helpless, incapable of rational thought) was a convenient means of sending female characters into committing entertaining violence against themselves as in Robert Gould's The Rival Sisters, or, The Violence of Love (1695) in which Alphanta is brought out 'mad, stab'd in many places',⁶¹ with orders in the script to tear her wounds wider - presumably by tearing her clothes open to reveal more blood-covered flesh.

Rape

Rape is, not surprisingly, the most common type of violence inflicted on women in Restoration drama. The introduction of actresses caused rape to become for the first time a major feature of English tragedy. From 1594-1612, for instance, there are only four

plays in which rape actually occurs and there are only five between 1512 and 1625.⁶² However, after 1660, beginning with Thomas Porter's The Villain in 1662, rapes occur regularly in plays right into the eighteenth century.⁶³ The device gained a new lease of life in the 1690s because of Anne Bracegirdle, one of the prettiest and most popular of actresses, who came to specialize in having her virgin innocence brutally taken from her. In real life Mrs. Bracegirdle had a reputation for chastity and this must have added piquancy to the constant stage spectacles of her violation. Rapes were a means of giving the purest, most virginal heroines a sexual quality. They allowed dramatists to create women of such 'Greatness' and 'Perfect Honour',⁶⁴ as was felt to be appropriate to tragedy and heroic drama, but at the same time to exploit sexually the new female presence in the theatre. The fact that the women were enjoyed by men against their will also gave such salaciousness a kind of respectability which, as John Dennis sardonically suggested, made rape acceptable not only to lustful males in the audience but also to those hypocritical lady spectators who would censure sex scenes in comedy:

I would fain know from you ... for what Reason the Women, who will sit as quietly and passively at the Relation of a Rape in a Tragedy, as if they thought that Ravishing gave them a Pleasure, for which they have a just Apology, will start and flinch ... at the least approach of Rem to Re in Comedy ... 'tis not the luscious Matter which disturbs them in Comedy, but the secret implicite Satire upon the Sex ... a Rape in Tragedy is a Panegyrick upon the Sex: For there the Woman ... is suppos'd to remain innocent, and to be pleas'd without her Consent.⁶⁵

A rape could in fact allow a serious play to offer at least as good a display of naked female flesh as any sex-comedy. The high point of Dryden's Amboyna, or, The Cruelties of the Dutch (1673), for instance, is the rape of the heroine which takes place only just



Plate 3

entertainment, a kind of pornographic painting brought to life.

Restoration adaptations of Shakespeare further testify to the popularity of rape and attempted rape. In Nahum Tate's version of King Lear (1680) Cordelia is seized by lustful ruffians before being rescued by Edgar. The last act of Crowne's adaptation of Coriolanus, The Ingratitude of a Commonwealth (1681), offers a totally new sequence of sadistic events including a scene in which Virgilia, the wife of Coriolanus, appealingly pleads for mercy from her husband's enemy Aufidius, thereby inflaming him with lust. Aufidius imagines the joys of possessing Virgilia, conjuring up a picture of these for the spectators:

To Lock the tender Beauty in my Arms;
Blushing, yet Granting; Trembling, and yet Embracing,
I shall go Mad with the Imagination.⁶⁸

In fact this rape does not take place but Virgilia is 'brought in wounded' to bid her husband an agonized farewell. When adapting Cymbeline into The Injured Princess, or, The Fatal Wager (1682) Thomas Durfey replaced the very minor part of Helen with a confidante for Eugenia (Imogen) and daughter for Pisanio, named Clarona, in order to provide a new rape subplot. When Eugenia escapes from the court Clarona is blamed and Cloten orders that she be raped and then hanged. Jachimo (a new character, Durfey having renamed Shakespeare's Iachimo 'Shatillion') volunteers to do the deed and drags her out. As with Aufidius, his desire is increased by the victim's pleas for mercy. When Clarona's father appears Jachimo, undaunted, prepares to ravish her in front of him. Both Tate and Durfey used the idea of a rape taking place before the eyes of a loved one to produce an additional thrill.

The inexhaustible appetite of Restoration theatre audiences for

rape is particularly well shown by the staging of Rochester's adaptation of Beaumont and Fletcher's Valentinian (c.1610) in 1684. Rochester's alterations give the rape and death of Lucina much greater prominence, both by drawing out the suspense before the fatal act takes place and by reducing the number of political events occurring after it which might distract the audience from Lucina's heroism. A new scene was added to the first act in which Valentinian woos Lucina, and another to the third act in which the heroine wanders apprehensively through a 'Grove and Forest'. In this scene Rochester increased the dramatic build-up to the rape by a speech emphasizing Lucina's love for her husband and her awareness of her own vulnerable state:

That 'tis my wonder how the Pow'rs above,
Those wise and careful Guardians of the Good,
Have trusted such a force of tempting Charms
To Enemies declar'd of Innocence!⁶⁹

The phrase 'force of tempting Charms' highlights the threat to her person - Lucina is being made to point up her own seductive attraction in order to create maximum tension over the coming rape.

Rochester's additional scenes delay Lucina's rape until the fourth act. When the climactic court scene is finally reached, the changes, in the later version, to the conflict between emperor and wife are small but significant. The earlier Lucina roundly condemns the words of the obscene songs played to her as 'lascivious' and 'overlight for ladies'. Rochester rendered his Lucina more elaborately pure and chaste by having her comment instead

the words, I thank my Gods,
I did not understand.⁷⁰

The pimp Chlax assures her that the Emperor will teach her what they mean. Then Rochester added a new stage direction, 'Enter Valentinian, drawing in Lucina', and some new lines for him:

For what you are, I am fill'd with such Amaze,
So far transported with Desire and Love,
My slippery Soul flows to you while I speak.⁷¹

After Lucina is led out it is arranged that some dancing will take place while the rape is being committed. Valentinian warns Lycinus:

And if by chance odd noises should be heard,
As Women's Shrieks, or so; say, 'tis a Play
Is practising within.

Lycinus responds aptly:

The Rape of Lucrece,
Or some such merry Prank - It shall be done Sir.⁷²

The emperor then finally retires to do the deed, urging himself, 'I'll plunge into a Sea of my Desires'. The scene then opens 'and discovers 5 or 6 Dancing-masters practising'. The conversation with Lycinus will have left the audience in no doubt as to what is occurring while they watch this dance. With Chylax's report (as in the original) ''Tis done', the scene opens and 'discovers th' Emperour's Chamber. Lucina newly unbound by th'Emperour'.⁷³ Here, as throughout, because he had a real woman available to play Lucina, Rochester greatly elaborated on the precise physical circumstances of the rape.

The insistent physicality of Restoration presentations of rape makes a striking contrast with Shakespeare's handling of Lavinia's rape in Titus Andronicus. As in Rochester's Valentinian, the audience is acutely aware as they watch the play that the violation is taking place off stage and Lavinia must presumably have reappeared after in an appropriate state of dishevelment, and with wounds to signify that her hands and tongue had been cut off. However, the language which her father Titus uses in the face of her suffering, with its classical references and self-conscious word-play, distances us from the physical actuality of her pain and anguish:

Speak Lavinia, what accursed hand
 Hath made thee handless in thy father's sight?
 What fool hath added water to the sea,
 Or brought a fagot to bright-burning Troy?
 ...'Tis well, Lavinia, that thou hast no hands;
 For hands to do Rome service is but vain.

Likewise the speech of Lavinia's uncle Marcus transforms the hideous reality of Lavinia's tongue being cut out into a beautiful image:

Why dost not speak to me?
 Alas, a crimson river of warm blood,
 Like to a bubbling fountain stirr'd with wind,
 Doth rise and fall between thy rosed lips,
 Coming and going with thy honey breath.
 But sure some Tereus hath deflowered thee,
 And, lest thou shouldst detect him, cut thy tongue.⁷⁴

This poetry seems, in a way, divorced from Lavinia's suffering: it creates an imagistic world of its own and so takes away much of the horror of her maiming. By contrast, with the arrival of women actresses in 1660, in plays such as Dryden's Amboyna and Pix's Ibrahim spectacle and speech support one another and what the characters speak is used to elicit a response to what spectators can see. The women brought rape to life on the English stage.

Sensual Love in Tragedy: Language and the Visual Image

As we have seen in comedy, for the first time dramatic language could be made sexual without risk of a disparity between what an audience saw and what it heard. The voluptuous presence of the women on stage is reflected in tragedy in explicit avowals of desire and vivid, physical love imagery. Love scenes became enhanced by torrents of sensual language, as in Aureng-Zebe's declaration of love for Indamora:

Oh I could stifle you with eager haste!
 Devour your kisses with my hungry taste!
 Rush on you! Eat you! Wander o'er each part,
 Raving with pleasure, snatch you to my heart!
 Then hold you off and gaze! Then, with new rage

Invade you, till my conscious limbs presage
 Torrents of joy which all their banks o'erflow!⁷⁵

Such speeches gave love scenes a new intensity while heightening the impact of the actress's physical presence.

In this respect, the language of Nathaniel Lee's tragedies is particularly striking. In Mithridates, King of Pontus (1678), for example, Pelopidas arouses the desire of Mithridates for Semandra with this description of her naked beauty:

Behold her then upon a Flowry Bank,
 With her soft sorrows lull'd into a slumber,
 The Summer's heat had, to her natural blush,
 Added a brighter, and more tempting red;
 The Beauties of her Neck and naked Breasts,
 Lifted by inward starts, did rise and fall
 With motion that might put a Soul in Statues;
 The matchless whiteness of her foulded Arms,
 That seemed t'imbrace the Body whence they grew,
 Fix'd me to gaze o're all that Field of Love;
 While to my ravish'd eyes officious winds,
 Waving her Robes, displayed such handsom Limbs,
 As Artists wou'd in Polish'd Marble give
 The Wanton Goddess, when supinely laid
 She charms her Gallant God to new enjoyment.⁷⁶

As when a dishevelled Morena was revealed immediately after the sensual description of her rape, the appearance of Semandra after this supplies a real female figure to support the poetry. Again the actress is not being called upon to act so much as to illustrate an explicit speech.

As in comedy, alluring details of a female character's appearance are sometimes outlined in the text, presumably corresponding to the looks of the actress who took the role (as with Nell Gwyn in Secret Love⁷⁷). In Lee's Caesar Borgia (1679) Mary Lee is recreated for us in the Cardinal's description of Bellamira:

Oh such a skin full of alluring flesh!
 Ah, such a ruddy, moist, and pouting Lip;
 Such Dimples, and such Eyes! such melting Eyes,
 Blacker than Sloes, and yet they sparkl'd fire.⁷⁸

Tragic, as well as comic, dramatists before 1660 were undoubtedly less willing to describe female beauty in such concrete language. For instance, the only description we have of Shakespeare's Cleopatra is that given to Antony by Enobarbus, which is a marvellous account of the objects around the queen, but one which omits physical details of the woman herself. It is illuminating to compare Lee's picture of Bellamira with the non-sexual, metaphorical account of the beauty of Amidea in Shirley's The Traitor (1631):

Is she not fair,
Exceeding Beautiful, and tempting, Florio?
Look on her well. Methinks I could turn poet,
And make her a more excellent piece than heaven.
Let not fond men hereafter commend what
They most admire by fetching from the stars
Or flowers their glory of similitude,
But from thyself the rule to know all beauty.
And he that shall arrive at so much boldness
To say his mistress' eyes, or voice, or breath
Are half so bright, so clear, so sweet as thine
Hath told the world enough of miracle.
These are the duke's own raptures, Amidea,
His own poetic flames, an argument
He loves my sister.⁷⁹

The Duke's raptures are not only abstract in themselves, but are here expressed ironically through another person. Amidea is simply an 'excellent piece', representing a higher standard of beauty than stars or flowers. Shirley did not attempt to help the audience visualize the beauty in physical terms and there is nothing sensual in his chosen adjectives, 'clear', 'sweet' and 'bright'. In contrast, the account of Bellamira is very sensual - eyes 'melting', her lips 'pouting', and 'moist', her 'skin full of alluring flesh'. Even the Duke's seduction of Amidea in Act III of The Traitor, when he 'kisses her often' according to the stage directions, is lacking in immediate sexual feeling. He calls her a Queen of Love of whom Venus was merely a copy, he compares her face to a temple and her lips to an altar on which he offers

Myriads of flaming kisses with a cloud
Of sighs breath'd from my heart,
Which by the oblation would increase his stock
To make my pay eternal.⁸⁰

The contrast between this and Aureng-Zebe's declaration of love for Indamora, quoted on page 48, is ^{very marked} ~~total~~. However aptly the Duke's metaphor captures his feelings, it creates a separate image to which his action is compared, whereas the words of Dryden's hero address themselves directly to what the audience can see.

Lovers' Partings before and after 1660

Like other tragic dramatists, Lee used the enforced separation of lovers as an especially potent source of sexual emotion. When lovers who desire each other desperately are forced to part, the leaving becomes a trigger for sensual outpourings from the hero which are all the more fierce because he is being deprived of the physical fulfilment he longs for. When Titus, for instance, in Lucius Junius Brutus (1680), is prevented from consummating his marriage to Teraminta, he clasps her frantically and cries:

Come to my breasts, thou Tempest-beaten Flower,
Brim full of Rain, and stick upon my heart.
O short-liv'd Rose! Yet I some hours will wear thee;
Yes, by the Gods, I'll smell thee till I languish,
Rifle thy sweets, and run thee o're and o're,
Fall like the Night upon thy folding beauties,
And clasp thee dead: Then, like the Morning Sun,
With a new heat kiss thee to life again,
And make the pleasure equal to the pain.⁸¹

The oxymoron of pleasure and pain here seems to be central to these scenes: 'short-liv'd Rose', 'smell thee till I languish', 'clasp thee dead'. Significantly, the woman is constantly described as an object - in this case an object of consumption, a 'Tempest-beaten Flower' and a 'short-liv'd Rose'. She is also the passive object of the hero's attentions as he smells her, rifles her 'sweets' and clasps her dead.

Otway's Don Carlos, Prince of Spain (1676) is a seminal work

so far as such lovers' partings are concerned. A static drama, its main plot consists almost entirely of thwarted sexual passion in the tortured farewells of Don Carlos and his stepmother. So strong is their love that they are unable to accept the parting they know to be their duty. Although as early as Act II they vow to live apart, their resolve is undermined by the force of their physical passion for each other. Throughout the Queen's farewell speech in Act II, Don Carlos 'kisses eagerly' her hand so that she has to break hastily away, leaving him in an ecstasy of desire:

If such a transport be in a tast so small,
How blest must be he that possesses all!⁸²

They are unable to part of their own accord and so the king discovers their incestuous love and banishes his son; in this way Act III concludes with another long-drawn-out parting. Here again the emphasis is upon physical anguish: the horror of losing Don Carlos causes the Queen to collapse into the arms of her waiting woman. The finality of this parting is contradicted immediately for Act IV opens with the hero lingering outside the apartments of his love, unable to tear himself away. The lovers have another 'final' meeting and as Don Carlos kneels before the Queen the sexual tension increases once more:

Wear'd with all, I panting hither fly,
To lay myself down at your feet and dy.⁸³

At length the lovers decide to confront the king and the greatest climax of the play is reached when, regardless of his presence, Don Carlos finally gives way to his desires and embraces the Queen in front of her husband. He manages to hold her in his arms for some two dozen lines during which, while the king is consumed with jealousy, he is transported:

Rouze my Soul, Consider now,
 That to thy blissful Mansion thou must go.
 But I so mighty Joyes have tasted here,
 I hardly shall have sence of any there.⁸⁴

The lovers are torn apart, Don Carlos is led away and the Queen throws herself to the ground. Otway's use of thwarted sexual desire as the mainspring of tragedy renders a stolen embrace before a jealous husband as thrilling a climax as a whole sequence of horrific spectacles. His drama is constructed around the tantalising promise of sexual satisfaction being constantly snatched away and so relies heavily on a central female capable of creating such promise. Don Carlos is surely not a play that could have been written before the arrival of the actress.

Earlier drama, of course, also contained lovers' partings: we need only think of Romeo and Juliet, III, v. But, in contrast to the partings of Don Carlos, the comparatively brief lovers' farewell in, say, Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida is metaphysical rather than physical, in spite of earlier stress on frustrated desire in the pair:

We two, that with so many thousand sighs
 Did buy each other, must poorly sell ourselves
 With the rude brevity and discharge of one.
 Injurious time now with a robber's haste
 Crams his rich thievery up, he knows not how.
 With distinct breath and consign'd kisses to them,
 He fumbles up into a loose adieu,
 And scants us with a single famish'd kiss,
 Distasted with the salt of broken tears.⁸⁵

There were more protracted lovers' farewells in other pre-Restoration dramas. In Beaumont and Fletcher's A King and No King (1611), for example, Arbaces and Panthea, who believe they are brother and sister, attempt to part each other for ever and yet are irresistibly attracted to one another (this play was, perhaps not surprisingly, very popular during the period 1660-1700). In John Ford's Love's

Sacrifice (1633) Bianca, wife of the Duke, visits Fernanda, the man she loves, in his bedchamber, 'her hair loose, in her night mantle', in order to swear her platonic love before leaving him.⁸⁶ After 1660, however, dramatists recognized a new potential in such scenes: the presence of a real woman on the stage was an obvious means of intensifying the sexual chemistry between lovers as they touch and draw away. Therefore, as Otway's Don Carlos shows, such passionate scenes became a dramatic end in themselves, rather than simply one necessary stage in the action. Whereas in Troilus and Cressida, for instance, the couple's parting merely provides one climactic scene in the structure, in Don Carlos separation has become the stuff of which the whole drama is composed.

Venice Preserved

Otway's Venice Preserved (1682) is arguably the finest tragedy of the age, a brilliant manipulation of the sexual, sensual elements which had come to be associated with the heroine of tragedy by the 1680s: rape, erotic language, anguished farewells.⁸⁷ Otway could be said to have assimilated all the clichés of the age associated with women and put them to finer use. This play is the first of several examples in this thesis which seem to me to use conventional material popularized by the actress and yet to transform it, transcending the familiar to reveal a new and complex truth.

Otway's main modifications of his source - A Conspiracy of the Spaniards Against the State of Venice (1675) by César Vischard, L'Abbé de Saint Real⁸⁸ - were to create Belvidera (there is no main female character in the original) and to make the hero's motives love and desire for her rather than political idealism. Both hero and

heroine demonstrate the weakening, potentially destructive power of physical passion, as their honourable resolutions are undermined by the strength of their sensual attachment to each other. Belvidera at first dismisses her suspicions of Jaffeir's part in the rebellion:

Oh thy charming tongue
Is but too well acquainted with my weakness,
Knows, let it name but love, my melting heart
Dissolves within my breast, till with closed eyes
I reel into thy arms, and all's forgotten.⁸⁹

However, later she exerts her sexual power in order to make her husband betray the conspiracy against the Venetian state, and his best friend. It is the attempted rape of his wife by Renault that drives Jaffeir to agree to her demands. Jaffeir visualizes the rape with agonized precision:

Yes faith, in virgin sheets
White as her bosom, Pierre, dished neatly up,
Might tempt a weaker appetite to taste.⁹⁰

When his resolution wavers, Belvidera delivers a battery of affecting, sensual speeches. Beginning quietly,

Oh that kind dagger, Jaffeir, how 'twill look
Stuck through my heart, drenched in my blood to th'hilts!
Whilst these poor dying eyes shall with their tears
No more torment thee,

her lines build to a climactic image of female suffering on a grand scale:

save the poor tender lives
Of all those little infants which the swords
Of murderers are whetting for this moment.
Think thou already hear'st their dying screams,
Think that thou seest their sad distracted mothers
Kneeling before thy feet, and begging pity
With torn dishevelled hair and streaming eyes,
Their naked mangled breasts besmeared with blood,
And even the milk with which their fondled babes
Softly they hushed, dropping in anguish from 'em.

With her final reminder that she cannot be safe from her ravisher until the conspirators are secured, Jaffeir gives way. Significantly, he is also moved by the transporting effect of Belvidera's touch:

Methinks when in thy arms
Thus leaning on thy breast, one minute's more
Than a long thousand years of vulgar hours.⁹¹

Otway's play probes the disturbing relationship between sex and violence which is so glibly exploited for cheap effects in other tragedies. The fierce current of desire flowing between the lovers is constantly in danger of becoming sadistic brutality in Jaffeir and sexual masochism in Belvidera. As a pledge of faith to the conspirators, Jaffeir holds a knife to his wife's breast before handing her over as a hostage. When he discovers that the lives of the conspirators are not to be spared he draws again the fateful dagger - Belvidera alternately shrinking and offering her breast to the knife:

- Now then kill me
(Leaps upon his neck and kisses him.)
While thus I cling about thy cruel neck,
Kiss thy revengeful lips and die in joys
Greater than any I can guess hereafter.⁹²

'Death' in Restoration (as in Renaissance) literature is commonly equated with sexual orgasm. The crude subplot emphasizes the latent sexuality in such exchanges between husband and wife. There is a sordid parallel to Jaffeir's threats of violence as the courtesan Aquilina draws a dagger on her client, the old masochist Antonio, and kicks him to the ground. The senator's cry as he reaches sexual climax recalls the 'death' that Belvidera welcomed earlier:

Ohhh, yet more! Nay then I die, I die - I am dead already.
(Stretches himself out.)⁹³

Antonio's grovelling attachment to Aquilina is also an ironic comment on Jaffeir's hopeless slavery to Belvidera. The courtesan points out that, deep down, virtuous women are the same as she:

In their hearts
They're loose as I am; but an ugly power
Sits in their faces, and frights pleasure from 'em.⁹⁴

Belvidera's efforts to make her father intercede on behalf of the rebels comes too late. When she returns to Jaffeir and offers herself as his victim she makes more explicit the parallel between his threats to kill her and a masochistic form of lovemaking:

Yes, and when thy hands,
Charged with my fate, come trembling to the deed,
As thou has done a thousand thousand dear times
To this poor breast, when kinder rage has brought thee,
When our stinged hearts have leaped to meet each other,
And melting kisses sealed our lips together,
When joys have left me gasping in thy arms,
So let my death come now, and I'll not shrink from't.⁹⁵

It is hardly surprising that The Universal Magazine in May 1748 found that Belvidera 'often speaks immodestly'.⁹⁶ Although Jaffeir cannot summon the strength to kill Belvidera he resolves to bid her farewell forever in one of the most anguished of Restoration lovers' separations. The end of the play presents an appropriately bloody conclusion to the couple's insoluble struggle with passion; Jaffeir perishes on the scaffold with his best friend leaving a distracted Belvidera to rant despairingly. Venice Preserved shows enslavement to sensual passion leading to pain, dishonour and death. In doing so the play also offers implicitly an ironic comment on the prurient eroticism of some other tragedies and on the popularity of such eroticism with spectators.

The Growth of Female Desire in Serious Drama

As skilled tragic actresses, such as Elizabeth Barry, emerged (she created the role of Belvidera) the expression of erotic passion was not confined to male characters. From being merely an illustrious physical presence and the object of masculine desire, women in tragedy did grow to express more fully their own sexual desires, though in a manner that could also render the actress more seductive

than ever. Such sensual outbursts began as the province of the licentious villainess.- Poppea in Lee's The Tragedy of Nero (1674), for example, or the Queen in Settle's Love and Revenge (1674). In Dryden's Cleomenes, the Spartan Heroe (1692), the evil Cassandra attempts to seduce the hero through her marvellously suggestive account of the painting of the rape of Helen of Troy that she shows him:

Look better, Sir; You'll find it was no Rape;
 Mark well that Hellen in her Lovers Arms:
 Can you not see, she but affects to strive;
 She heaves not up her Hands to Heav'n for help,
 But hugs the kind Companion of her Flight.
 See how her tender Fingers strain his Sides;
 'Tis an Embrace; a Grasping of Desire;
 A very Belt of Love, that girds his Waste.
 She looks as if she did not fear to fall,
 But only lose her Love if she fell:
 Observe her Eyes; how slow they seem to rowl
 Their Wishing Looks, and languish on his Face:
 Observe the whole Design, and you wou'd swear,
 She Ravish'd Paris, and not Paris, Her.⁹⁷

The most sensational seductress of all is the outrageous villainess Homais in ^{Delariviere} ~~Mary~~ Manley's The Royal Mischief (1696). Homais is consumed with desire for Levean, Prince of Colchis. Her attendant, Achmet, describes her thus to Levean:

How often have I seen this lovely Venus,
 Naked, extended, in the gaudy Bed,
 Her snowy Breasts all panting with desire,
 With gazing, melting Eyes, survey your Form
 And wish in vain, 't had Life to fill her Arms.⁹⁸

Homais plans to charm the prince to her bed although she burns with so much sexual excitement that she fears she will not properly be able to relish the joys to her senses when they are finally joined. The scene for the seduction is set by a gently erotic song. A veiled Homais is brought to the prince, he kisses her and she swoons with ecstasy. As she sinks down he falls at her feet. The scene is shut as they retire to bed, but opens again to show the couple

in an appropriately blissful state. Homais is intoxicated by the experience:

I've Embrac'd a God,
No Mortal Sence can guess his Excellence
Where the Divine Impress has bin,
A pleasing trickling cools through all my Veins,
And tempers into Love, what else would be
Distraction.⁹⁹

Later she explicitly describes how she took the lead in their sexual encounter, 'rais'd his Longings to their utmost height' and brought them to 'Joys which dye upon my Breath unutterable'.¹⁰⁰ The exaggerations of The Royal Mischief are all too evident and were satirized at the time in the comedy The Female Wits. Nevertheless Homais was played by the great Elizabeth Barry who must have lent conviction to her burning sexual urges, however easily these could be parodied. Given that Homais can be taken seriously, it is difficult to see how the part could have been conceived without a real woman to take the role and thereby create what one critic has called the 'miasma of hot surging sex that hovers over the entire production'.¹⁰¹

As the speeches of Belvidera show, by the 1680s at least, erotic language was not confined to evil female characters. The virtuous heroine, if she were married, could express her sexual feelings with the same freedom as her villainous counterpart, and to equally seductive effect, while remaining, of course, strictly chaste in her behaviour. In John Banks' The Unhappy Favourite, or, The Earl of Essex (1681) the weeping, swooning Countess of Rutland adores her husband, the ill-fated Essex, and ecstatically recollects her marriage night:

The Night once gone, I did the Morning Chide,
Whose Beams betray'd me by my Essex side,
And whilst my Blushes, and my Eyes he blest,
I strove to hide 'em in his panting Breast,
And my hot Cheeks close to his Bosom laid,

Listning to what the Guest within it said,
 Where Fire to Fire the Noble Heart did burn
 Close like a Phoenix in her spicey Urn;
 I sigh'd, and wept for Joy, a showre of Tears,
 And felt a thousand sweet, and pleasant fears.

At their final farewell, before Essex is led to his execution, the Countess resumes the position of their marriage night, her head on her husband's breast:

Support my Head,
 My sinking Head, and lay it to the Pulse,
 The throbbing Pulse that beats about thy Heart,
 'Tis Musick to my Sences - O my Love!¹⁰²

She finally passes out and Essex kisses her senseless body before departing to his death. Though ostensibly swooning from grief, the sexual implication of the wife's collapse is unmistakable. Banks capitalized on the morality of the marriage bond to have the Countess act as passionately, in her way, as any lustful villainess.

The Actresses' Contribution to Tragedy

In general, the popular trend of exploiting actresses for their sexual attraction had a more detrimental effect on serious drama than it did on comedy. The presence of the women encouraged a substantial proportion of tragedy to deteriorate into little more than a series of sensational stimuli involving sex and violence. If the success of a drama is based upon such thrills, then the only way it can continue to be successful is by offering more and more outrageous and daring effects.¹⁰³ Of course, as always, the responsibility eventually lies with the dramatist and the way he chooses to use a device. While Mary Pix and George Powell are guilty of producing the most prurient and vulgar melodrama (see, for instance, Pix's Ibrahim, The Thirteenth Emperour of the Turks, 1696, or the anonymous Fatal Discovery, or, Love in Ruins, 1698) and the inflated erotic language in

Lee's plays can become monotonous, the actresses also indirectly inspired Venice Preserved, a play which explores uniquely the complexity of sexual relations between husband and wife, the disturbing proximity of sex and violence and the nature of sensual passion.

1. See F.E. Maus, "Playhouse Flesh and Blood: Actress and the Restoration Actress", *ESQ*, 48 (1961), pp. 291-311. Maus examines the introduction of women to stages of the attitudes towards acting prevailing in Restoration England.
2. See Peter Holland, The Ornament of the Stage: The Actress in Restoration Comedy, Cambridge, 1979, chapter 1.
3. John Harold Wilson, All the King's Ladies, p. 200.
4. Aphra Behn, Sir Patient Fancy, 1684, pp. 21, 22.
5. See Wilson, All the King's Ladies, pp. 200-201.
6. Edward Ravenscroft, The London Cuckold, 1671, pp. 1-2.
7. The play's author is not definitely known but is generally assumed to be Aphra Behn. For a discussion of the authorship see H.A. Hargreaves, The Life and Plays of Aphra Behn, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Duke University, 1955.
8. Richard Brome, A Gentlemen's Well, 1633, pp. 1-2. Aphra Behn, The Deviser, pp. 100-101.
9. For a discussion of authorship see Ravenscroft, The London Cuckold, Plays of Mrs. Aphra Behn, pp. 107-110.
10. Edward Ravenscroft, The Cuckold, 1671, pp. 1-2. Thomas Shadwell, A True Bunch, 1671, pp. 1-2.
11. Aphra Behn, The Second Part of the Rover, 1679, pp. 1-2.
12. John Ford, "The Fifth She's a Man", Essays in English Literature, 1975, 11, 192-201. There is a convention in Shakespeare's plays that women are nothing like the men's usual appearance. In the conclusion of Two Gentlemen of Verona even Laura's beauty is a laudable lack of physical attraction.
13. John Dryden, Essays of John Dryden, ed. by Thomas W. Higginson, Jr., Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1962, pp. 222-223.
14. Thomas Middleton, Every Man in the Moon, pp. 111, 112.

FOOTNOTES

1. This is not intended to be primarily a feminist thesis, but my account of the use of the actress does support the conclusions of recent work on the representation of women in art and what that representation reveals of underlying social and moral attitudes. See, for instance, The Representation of Women in Fiction, ed. C.G. Heilbrun and M. Higonnet, Baltimore, 1982 and Jean M. Kennard, Victims of Convention, Hamden, Conn., 1978.
2. See K.E. Maus, "'Playhouse Flesh and Blood": Sexual Ideology and the Restoration Actress', ELH, 46 (1979), pp.595-617. Maus examines the introduction of women in terms of the attitudes towards acting prevailing in Restoration culture.
3. See Peter Holland, The Ornament of Action: Text and Performance in Restoration Comedy, Cambridge, 1979, Chapter 1.
4. John Harold Wilson, All the King's Ladies, p.107.
5. Aphra Behn, Sir Patient Fancy, 1678, pp.38, 63.
6. See Wilson, All the King's Ladies, pp.68-71.
7. Edward Ravenscroft, The London Cuckolds, 1682, pp.26-7.
8. The play's author is not definitely known but is now usually assumed to be Aphra Behn. For a discussion of authorship see H.A. Hargreaves, The Life and Plays of Mrs. Aphra Behn, (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation) Duke University, 1960.
9. Richard Brome, A Mad Couple Well Match'd, 1653, IV, iii Aphra Behn, The Debauchee, or, The Credulous Cuckold, 1677, p.47.
10. For a discussion of authorship see Hargreaves, The Life and Plays of Mrs. Aphra Behn, pp.260-71.
11. Edward Ravenscroft, The Careless Lovers, 1673, p.9. Thomas Shadwell, A True Widow, 1679, p.61.
12. Aphra Behn, The Second Part of the Rover, 1681, p.17.
13. John Ford, 'Tis Pity She's a Whore, ed. Derek Roper, Manchester 1975, I, ii, 192-203. There is, of course, the anti-Petrarchan convention (as in Shakespeare's sonnet 130: 'My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun') used comically, as in Shakespeare's Two Gentlemen of Verona when Launce itimizes his beloved's laudable lack of physical attractions (III, i, 261ff).
14. John Dryden, Works of John Dryden, general editor H.T. Swedenberg Jr., Berkeley and Los Angeles 1954-, vol.IX, Secret Love, I, ii, 48-9.
15. Thomas Middleton, Women Beware Women, ed. Roma Gill, 1968, III, iii, 65ff.

16. John Donne, The Complete English Poems, ed. A.J. Smith, 1971, p.125.
17. Pat Rogers, 'Breeches Roles', in Sexuality in Eighteenth-century Britain, ed. Paul-Gabriel Boucé, Manchester 1982, pp.255, 257.
18. John Dryden, Works, vol.X, The Tempest, prologue, 27-38.
19. In chapter 1 of her book Still Harping on Daughters: Women and Drama in the Age of Shakespeare, Brighton, 1983, Lisa Jardine argues that the boy actresses were, in their way, no more 'innocent' in such roles, than the women. This seems unlikely (see p.30), but even if it were true we have no direct evidence, such as Mrs. Boutell's epilogue, to prove it.
20. Wilson, All the King's Ladies, p.73.
21. See The London Stage, Part I, ed. W. Van Lennep, Carbondale, Illinois, 1965, p.84.
22. It was the custom for some actresses to gain their costumes - usually new gowns - from their lovers (all the actresses had to provide their own costumes). See Wilson, All the King's Ladies, p.39.
23. Both prologue and epilogue quoted in Covent Garden Drolery, or, A Collection of all the Choice Songs, Poems, Prologues and Epilogues ... never in Print before, 1672, pp.1, 5.
24. John Dryden, Works, vol.VIII, The Rival Ladies, IV, iii, 52.
25. John Crowne, The Misery of Civil War, 1680, p.63.
26. Pepys, The Diary of Samuel Pepys, ed. Robert Latham and William Matthews, 1970-83, vol.8, p.101.
27. The Woman Turn'd Bully, 1675, p.33.
28. Thomas Rawlins, Tom Essence, or, The Modish Wife, 1677, p.41.
29. Aphra Behn, The Younger Brother, 1696, p.48.
30. George Powell also copied the device in A Very Good Wife (1693).
31. In their edition of Southerne's works Jordan and Love list a few other Restoration breeches heroines who, in their view, possess comparable valour, swordsmanship and sexual liberty. See The Works of Thomas Southerne, Oxford, 1988, vol.I, p.164.
32. Thomas Southerne, Works, ed. Jordan and Love, vol.I, Sir Anthony Love, I, i, 11-14, V, iv, 100-4. There is an obvious resemblance between Lucia and Moll Cutpurse, in Middleton and Dekker's Roaring Girl (1610), in that both girls try to actually live like men.
33. Philadelphia in Shadwell's Bury Fair (1689) is a similar role.
34. Henry Higden, The Wary Widow, 1693, p.15.

35. Pepys, Diary, vol.4, p.6 and vol.9, p.421.
36. John Downes, Roscius Anglicanus, ed. Montague Summers, 1928, p.23.
37. See Eugene M. Waith, The Pattern of Tragicomedy in Beaumont and Fletcher, Hamden, Conn., 1969, for an account of the nature of makebelieve in the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher.
38. See Lisa Jardine, Still Harping on Daughters, chapter 1, especially pp.19-20, 29-33.
39. Hazelton Spencer, Shakespeare Improved: The Restoration Versions in Quarto and on the Stage, Cambridge, Mass., 1927, p.203.
40. Dryden, Works, vol.X, The Tempest, I, ii, 319-20, 332-3.
41. Downes, Roscius Anglicanus, p.35 and 'A Satyr on the Players', c.1684, British Museum, Harleian Ms. 7319, quoted in Wilson, All the King's Ladies, p.187.
42. Dryden, Works, vol.X, The Tempest, V, ii, 182-3.
43. *Ibid.*, IV, ii, 164-6.
44. *Ibid.*, III, i, 136-7.
45. *Ibid.*, IV, i, 42.
46. *Ibid.*, IV, i, 105-8.
47. The Dryden-Davenant Tempest proved enormously popular with audiences. It was performed at least nine times on first opening and revived on at least six occasions after that. Shadwell later adapted it into a highly successful opera.
48. J.L. Styan, Restoration Comedy in Performance, p.89.
49. Aphra Behn, The Luckey Chance, or, An Alderman's Bargain, 1687, preface.
50. Elkanah Settle, The Empress of Morocco, 1673, p.14.
51. Sir Robert Stapylton, Hero and Leander, 1669, p.8.
52. John Dryden, Works, vol.X, Tyrannic Love, III, i, 23-5.
53. *Ibid.*, vol.XI, The Conquest of Granada, Part 1, III, i, 307, II, i, 160-5, 168-70.
54. Dryden's veil device would seem to have been an effective means of focusing spectators' attention on the beauty of the actress for it was copied by other dramatists soon after. In Settle's Cambyses (1671) Prince Smerdis falls in love with Phedima just before she covers her face with a veil: later he removes the veil as a preliminary to wooing. In Crowne's The History of Charles the Eighth of France (1671) Julia warns Charles that he is in danger before blushinglly placing a handkerchief before her face.

55. Charles Gildon, Life of Mr. Thomas Betterton, 1710, p.67. As Peter Holland points out, there is no evidence that Betterton had anything to do with the rules of acting that Gildon ascribes to him (see The Ornament of Action, note 13 on p.259).
56. John Crowne, The History of Charles the Eighth of France, 1672, p.47.
57. *Ibid.*, p.68.
58. Thomas Southerne, Works, vol.II, The Fate of Capua, III, v, 13-18. Samuel Pordage, Herod and Mariamne, 1673, pp.10, 52, 61.
59. Shakespeare, The Complete Works, ed. Alexander, 1951, Cymbeline, II, ii, 14-7.
60. John Dryden, Works, vol.X, Tyrannick Love, V, i, 245-53.
61. Nathaniel Lee, The Works of Nathaniel Lee, edited with introduction and notes by Thomas B. Stroup and Arthur L. Cooke, New Brunswick, 1954, 1955, vol.I, Oedipus, V, 413. Robert Gould, The Rival Sisters, 1696, p.53. Eric Rothstein makes the important point that Restoration audiences would be more accustomed to spectacles of naked women suffering violence because of public floggings and pillories. He also suggests that 'Past experience along with inattention and dim lights, must have conspired to make wounded heroines and "smoaking Relicks" less egregious than they seem in print, and far less egregious than they seem when abstracted' (Eric Rothstein, Restoration Tragedy, Form and the Process of Change, Madison, 1967, p.157). Nevertheless, however shocking these spectacles may or may not have been, the advent of actresses certainly encouraged a great deal of stage violence which was clearly intended to provide a titillating thrill for spectators.
62. For a full account of rape in these plays, see Suzanne Gossett, "'Best Men are Molded out of Faults": Marrying the Rapist in Jacobean Drama', ELR, 14 (1984), pp.305-27.
63. See Appendix I for list of plays containing rape 1660-1708.
64. Dryden criticized the female characters of Fletcher. 'Let us applaud his scenes of love; but let us confess, that he understood not either greatness or perfect honour in the parts of any of his women.' (Essays of John Dryden, ed. W.P. Ker, Oxford, 1900, vol.I, p.177.)
65. John Dennis, Original Letters, Familiar, Moral and Critical, 1721, vol.I, pp.63-4.
66. John Dryden, Amboyna, 1673, p.45.
67. Mary Pix, Ibrahim, The Thirteenth Emperour of the Turks, 1696, p.28.
68. Nahum Tate, The Ingratitude of a Commonwealth, 1682, p.55.
69. John Fletcher, Valentinian: A Tragedy As 'Tis Alter'd by the late Earl of Rochester, 1685, p.28.

70. Beaumont and Fletcher, The Dramatic Works, ed. Fredson Bowers, Cambridge, 1966-, vol.IV, Valentinian, II, v, 51-2. Fletcher, Valentinian, 1685, p.43.
71. *Ibid.*, p.44.
72. *Ibid.*, p.46.
73. *Ibid.*, pp.46, 47, 48.
74. Shakespeare, Titus Andronicus, III, i, 66-9, 79-80, II, iv, 21-7. For an account of the split between language and action in Titus Andronicus see Eugene Waith, 'The Metamorphosis of Violence in Titus Andronicus', Shakespeare Survey 10, ed. Allardyce Nicoll, Cambridge, 1957, pp.39-49.
75. John Dryden, Aureng-Zebe, ed. Frederick M. Link, 1972, IV, ii, 146-52.
76. Nathaniel Lee, Works, vol.I, Mithridates, III, 52-66.
77. See Holland, The Ornament of Action, pp.57-77, for evidence of dramatists writing with particular actresses in mind. I discuss this further in chapters 4 and 5.
78. Nathaniel Lee, Works, vol.II, Caesar Borgia, I, i, 29-32.
79. Shakespeare, Antony and Cleopatra, II, ii, 195ff. James Shirley, The Traitor, ed. John Stewart Carter, 1965, II, i, 165-79.
80. *Ibid.*, II, iii, pp.33-6.
81. Nathaniel Lee, Works, vol.II, Lucius Junius Brutus, III, iii, 171-9.
82. Thomas Otway, Don Carlos, Prince of Spain, 1676, p.16.
83. *Ibid.*, p.42.
84. *Ibid.*, p.50.
85. Shakespeare, Troilus and Cressida, IV, iv, 38-47.
86. John Ford, Love's Sacrifice, II, iv, in John Ford, ed. Havelock Ellis, 1888, pp.324-7.
87. W.H. McBurney has written a detailed account of the 'insistent physicality' of the play and the extraordinary degree of eroticism in its language. See W.H. McBurney, 'Otway's Tragic Muse Debauched: Sensuality in Venice Preserv'd', JEGP, 58 (1959), pp.380-99.
88. The basis of the play was La Conjuration des Espagnols contre La Republique de Venise (1674) by César Vischard, translated into English as A Conspiracy of the Spaniards Against the State of Venice (1675). The source is discussed in the introduction to the play as edited by Malcolm Kelsall, 1969, pp.xv-xvi.
89. Thomas Otway, Venice Preserved, ed. Kelsall, III, ii, 77-81.

90. Ibid., III, ii, 242-4.
91. Ibid., IV, i, 24-7, 48-57, 82-4.
92. Ibid., IV, ii, 409-12.
93. Ibid., V, ii, 91-2.
94. Ibid., II, i, 16-8.
95. Ibid., V, ii, 117-24.
96. Cited in McBurney, 'Otway's Tragic Muse Debauched', JEGP, 58, p.380.
97. John Dryden, Cleomenes, the Spartan Heroe, 1692, pp.22-3.
98. Mary de la Rivière Manley, The Royal Mischief, 1696, p.17.
99. Ibid., p.26.
100. Ibid., p.28.
101. Lucyle Hook, introduction to The Female Wits, Augustan Reprint Society Publication No.124, 1967, p.ix.
Of the actress's performance as Homais Mrs. Manley said, 'Mrs. Barry ... by all that saw her, is concluded to have exceeded that perfection which before she was justly thought to have arrived at; my Obligations to her were the greater, since against her own approbation, she excell'd and made the part of an ill Woman, not only entertaining, but admirable' (preface to The Royal Mischief).
102. John Banks, The Unhappy Favourite, or, The Earl of Essex, 1682, pp.14, 72.
103. Eric Rothstein agrees that, although one can find a thematic and moral purpose in some of the sensational violence of Restoration tragedy, 'one becomes more skeptical about the mangling of heroines, if only because the sexual interest of seeing wounded and recently raped women must have acted against the more respectable professions of the tragedies. By and large, though by no means entirely, the worst playwrights resorted most to assaults on their heroines.' (Restoration Tragedy, p.155.)

CHAPTER 2

THE CREATION OF SHE-TRAGEDY - 1: FROM HEROIC DRAMA TO 'THE ORPHAN'

The influence of the actresses on the development of Restoration serious drama has been surprisingly neglected by historians and critics. No full critical investigation of this topic has ever been made and yet, while the leading serious modes of drama during the 1660s were all male-dominated, by the end of the century a highly popular genre known as 'she-tragedy'¹ had emerged, centred on a female protagonist. The 1670s and 1680s saw a major shift from heroic drama - plays, often in rhyming couplets, focused on an exalted male figure pursuing glory, love and self aggrandizement against a background of war and politics - to pathetic drama: plays seeking to arouse a pitying, involved response in spectators through spectacles of suffering with a heavy female emphasis. The factors behind this dramatic shift are several and complex, but the presence of the actresses, I wish to argue, had a vital, yet hitherto unrecognized share in bringing about the change. In terms of a chronological study of Restoration tragedy 1660-1700, in this chapter and the next, I propose to discuss the complex part played by the actresses in the birth and development of 'she-tragedy', and above all, the crucial influence of Elizabeth Barry. In the first two decades of the period, within a gradual overall movement towards larger parts for women and towards pathetic tragedy, individual actresses made their own varied, not always 'pathetic', contributions; it was the arrival of Mrs. Barry, with her unique talent for projecting pathos and suffering which clinched the movement.

Scholarly Recognition of the Actresses' Contribution

So far, only a handful of scholars have made even a brief mention

of any actresses' contribution to Restoration tragic form. In a few lines Eric Rothstein and Robert Hume comment on the way in which the type-casting of Mrs. Barry and Mrs. Bracegirdle helped to determine the form of tragedies during the 1680s and 1690s. Although Hume concludes his discussion of the pathetic style of drama with the remark that

a point so far ignored must be strongly emphasized: the vogue and form of the pathetic play was greatly influenced by the availability of suitable actresses,²

he makes little effort to explain this observation. Two other critics who note the importance of the actress take still less trouble to expand on the point. Gunnar Sorelius simply states that

the introduction of actresses was responsible for certain significant changes. Female parts were added to the old plays as often as this was possible.

Allardyce Nicoll mentions in passing, as he discusses Mrs. Barry's 'debased' and 'licentious' private life, that she also helped to make pathetic tragedy popular.³ In actual fact, although Hume, Rothstein and Nicoll are correct in their assessment of the importance of Barry from 1680 onwards and Bracegirdle during the 1690s, the impact of the actresses on tragedy probably began earlier than this. I would suggest that the way in which female players were used, and their popularity, prompted a shift towards pathos and sentimentality some time before Barry and Bracegirdle appeared on the scene.

Possible Reasons for the Decline of the Heroic

The typical heroic drama is focused on the pursuit of an ideal by a powerful, aggressively masculine hero through both his public career as ruler and conqueror and his private life as lover. The plays are a celebration of greatness in men: they seek to demonstrate grandeur and to evoke admiration. By contrast, the aim of pathetic, or (as it

is sometimes called) affective, drama is to evoke pity, even tears, through the distress of its main characters working upon the emotions and sensibilities of the audience. A playwright of the early eighteenth century aptly summed up the aim of the pathetic genre:

To touch the Soul is our peculiar Care;
By just Distress soft Pity to impart,
And mend your Nature, while we move your Heart.⁴

Although such drama may have a political background, like the heroic, its political events exist in order to bring about distress, as in Otway's Venice Preserved, where the attempted rebellion against the state of Venice is the cause of Jaffeir's personal struggle to resolve the conflicting claims of his wife and his best friend. The heart of pathetic drama is love and its concerns are primarily domestic, even though its main characters may be rulers and leaders. Obviously one genre blends into the other, many plays combine characteristics of both types, and it is only by surveying twenty years' development that the shift from one style to the other becomes apparent. Still, by the 1680s heroic dramas, though sometimes written and performed, had basically gone out of fashion.

In his study of Restoration tragedy Eric Rothstein provides a helpful summary of the various factors which have usually been suggested to have contributed towards the decline of the heroic.⁵ The first (and, in my opinion, flimsiest) argument is that there was a growing tide of critical opinion during the 1660s and 1670s in favour of rejecting rhyme in drama. Prologues, epilogues, prefaces and works of criticism denounced rhyme for various reasons - that it was unpleasant to listen to, that it prevented the sense of lines from coming through, that it was unnatural. The discarding of rhyme does not, of course, in any way explain the general revolt against the heroic content of the plays - heroic attitudes, masculine dominance and so on -

which could survive (and indeed sometimes did) into blank verse.

Another cause of the decline may have been the appearance of Buckingham's The Rehearsal (1671?) and of Thomas Duffet's The Empress of Morocco (c.1673), which both parody heroic rhyme, themes and acting technique. However, criticism and burlesque alone surely cannot make a type of drama unpopular: as Rothstein points out, audiences are certainly capable of enjoying a play and relishing a mockery of it at the same time.

Traditionally, the change in dramatic style has been attributed to a change in the class of spectators attending the theatre - a shift from aristocratic to bourgeois audiences. More recently, research has shown that there is very little evidence to support the suggestion that the class composition of the Restoration audience changed appreciably during the 1670s and 1680s.⁶ Citizens as well as aristocrats had been theatregoers from the very beginning of our period. Possibly of more significance is an increased reference, and deference, to the 'Ladies' in prologues and epilogues at the time.⁷ This might imply both that there was an increase in the number of female spectators and that these 'ladies' preferred love and pathos to war and glory. Undoubtedly a number of prologues and epilogues during the 1670s and 1680s do advertise scenes of love and occasions for pity as a special attraction to the women in the audience. The prologue to Shipman's Henry III of France (1672), for instance, concludes,

Then for the Ladies he has Scenes of Love.
And here, Gallants, are fighting Scenes for you.

In the same year the prologue to Payne's The Fatal Jealousie addresses the 'Ladies' - 'you like lawful Monarchs sway' - and pleads on behalf of the author:

For if this Play can draw from you a Tear,
 He'd slight the Wits, Half-Wits, and Criticks too,
 And Judge his strength by his well-pleasing you.

The prologue to Durfey's The Siege of Memphis, or, The Ambitious Queen (1676) jokes that he who 'follows not' the rule of 'tender-hearted Females' is 'impotent, I'm sure, if not a Fool'. The prologue to Lee's Lucius Junius Brutus (1680) begins,

Rulers of abler conduct we will choose,
 And more indulgent to a trembling muse,
 Women for ends of government more fit,
 Women shall rule the boxes and the pit.

It is impossible to decide conclusively how far such flattering addresses were the cause, rather than the effect, of a shift in style from heroic to pathetic. The prologues and epilogues just quoted may have been designed merely to please the women and so ensure the chosen dramatic style a good reception. We have no precise evidence as to the size, tastes and influence of the female theatre-going public. Certainly pathetic drama must have had to win over male spectators (who were in the majority) as well in order to succeed.

Rothstein mostly blames its decline on the nature of the heroic play itself. Because such drama concentrated on the glorification of the hero, it could never deal in depth with serious moral problems and could only sustain public interest by becoming more and more spectacular and elaborate:

Its own logic drove it inescapably in one direction; and through its developing immense efficiency at doing only one thing, it made itself a victim of technological unemployment. For the theatre of the 1670's was discovering that the "sentimental" play could do half the heroic play's job, in whipping up the emotions of the audience, and the newly magnificent opera could do the other half, in cramming the public with sound, spectacle, and splendor.⁸

Rothstein's argument sounds logical but I can find no evidence to back his suggestion. Why, after all, should audiences not have continued to enjoy elaborate scenes within heroic tragedy as much as within opera?

And why, too, should the sentimental play have emerged as a serious rival to the heroic in the first place? Whatever the various causes were, I believe that there is one other, hitherto unconsidered, factor which played a vital part in the change of style. By the 1670s some leading tragic actresses had emerged whose popularity and talent must have made it necessary for dramatists to modify existing models of drama in order to accommodate them. Being rooted in the honour and glory to be won in war and politics, heroic plays could never offer women more than subordinate roles. So, as the actresses became established, they too must have encouraged the heroic decline.

Pathetic Tragedy and its Relation to Female Roles in Early Restoration Serious Drama

The argument that the actresses helped to further the decline of heroic drama is strengthened when we see that the main aims of the pathetic mode are closely related to the ways in which women were used in all forms of serious drama during the 1660s. The goal of pathetic tragedy - to stir emotion and touch the heart - means that it is aimed at an audience's sensibility and feelings as much as, or more than, at its intellect. Therefore it is visual objects - tableaux, attitudes - rather than words that form the central force of the drama. Colley Cibber attributed the success of John Banks' pathetic tragedies to the emotive images they presented:

all his chief Characters are thrown into such natural Circumstances of Distress, that their Misery or Affliction wants very little Assistance from the Ornaments of Stile or Words to speak them.⁹

Richard Steele felt that Banks' work was successful for a similar reason:

Yesterday we were entertained with the tragedy of "The Earl of Essex", in which there is not one good line, and yet a play which was never seen without drawing tears from some part of the audience: a remarkable instance, that the soul is not to be moved by words, but things; for the incidents in this drama are laid

together so happily, that the spectator makes the play for himself, by the force which the circumstance has upon his imagination.¹⁰

As the preceding chapter showed, the actresses were used primarily as affective objects in serious drama, to provoke a sensation, be it a sexual thrill, a shudder of horror, a stab of pity, or all three. To begin with, very little skill in speaking was demanded of the women; their entertainment value lay simply in their being on stage, gracing a scene with an affecting presence. As actresses gained more to say, their speeches still often served merely to enhance whatever the sensation was that their presence was designed to produce - to emphasize seductive charm, for example, or to underline pathos. The popular practice of presenting a tableau of female beauty and suffering, as where a raped woman was revealed in all her dishevelment, has precisely the effect Cibber and Steele noted in the plays of Banks: the spectator is encouraged to 'make the play for himself'. Of course he or she is often aided by emotive rhetoric from another character, describing, for example, the outrage which has led up to what is now before his eyes, or, indeed, describing what is being shown. But in either case the language serves as a kind of stage direction, and the most important rhetoric - producing the ultimate emotional effect - is visual: that of the female body itself. Therefore, as dramatists sought to make women more important in tragedy one might expect the drama to become more affective.

Within heroic drama and other forms of new serious drama during the 1660s and 1670s a main function of female characters was to evoke pity - another major aim of the pathetic genre. (At times male characters were also used to stir pity, but to a much lesser extent.) From the beginning of the period the most characteristic behaviour of a heroine was in accord with the traditional feminine stereotype

of physical softness, passivity, tenderness and vulnerability. In addition to making the women victims of male violence, Restoration dramatists of the first decade tended to stress such qualities in their female characters by constantly having them weep, grieve, appeal and plead - that is, demand sympathy in various ways. For example, the roles of Orazia in Dryden's The Indian Queen (1664), Cydaria in his The Indian Emperour (1665), Roxolana and Isabella in Orrery's Mustapha (1665), Plantaginet in his The Black Prince (1667) and Cleopatra in his Tryphon (1668), Maria in Howard's The Great Favourite, or, The Duke of Lerma (1668), Aurelia in Joyner's The Roman Empress (1670), Mariamne in Pordage's Herod and Mariamne (1671), Cornelia in Crowne's The History of Charles the Eighth (1671) and Mandana in Settle's Cambyses, King of Persia (1671) - all these involve sizeable scenes of weeping, grieving or pleading. When Acacis stabs himself in the final act of The Indian Queen, for example, the weeping of Orazia is used both visually and verbally to emphasize the pathos of his end:

Orazia weeps, and my parch't Soul appears
Refresh'd by that kinde Shower of pitying tears;¹¹

The attraction of the widowed Queen Isabella in Orrery's Mustapha is her ability to grieve, which is both shown and discussed:

When she her Royal Infant did embrace,
Her Eyes such Floods of Tears showr'd on her Face,
That then, Oh, Mustapha! I did admire
How so much Water sprang from so much Fire!¹²

In contrast, Lyndaraxa's role as hardhearted villainess in Dryden's two-part The Conquest of Granada (1670, 1671) is underlined by her refusal to weep at the death of an admirer:

Weep for this fool, who did my Laughter move!
This, whining, tedious, heavy Lump of Love?¹³

The Popularity of the Pathetic Heroine 1660-75

There is a variety of evidence to show that the vulnerable,

delicate female type began to become popular with audiences during the 1660s and early 1670s. For example, the dramatic importance of a heroine's pathetic behaviour is implied in the unusually detailed stage directions concerning Mandana's scenes of suffering in Cambyses. For the long speeches in Act III in which she hopes for death, the first printed edition gives exact instructions for where she should weep, lower her voice, raise her voice, weep again and so on. Similarly in Act IV her plea to the tyrant Cambyses, 'The favour I would have is this - to die', is accompanied by the direction, 'Raising her voice at the last two words'.¹⁴ Such precise instructions for the performance of a speech are rare, if not unique (I have not come across any similar example). We have no way of knowing whether these directions were part of Settle's original manuscript or inserted afterwards by the prompter, but in either case they reveal how much weight was given to this character's projection of pathos.

Davenant's fairly successful adaptation of Shakespeare's Macbeth (1664),¹⁵ develops Lady Macduff as a gentle, pitiful foil to the fierce Lady Macbeth. This alteration implies the desire to increase not only female roles, but also female pathos. In Shakespeare's play the brief appearance of Lady Macduff is moving and poignant. Davenant added to the part so as to add to the pathos - Lady Macduff is first seen 'disconsolate' and fearful for her husband's safety, while later she and her husband are given an emotional farewell. This scene places a sentimental stress on the pathos of the wife's unprotected situation which Shakespeare left unstated:

Can you leave me, your daughter and your son
To perish by that Tempest which you shun
When Birds of stronger Wing are fled away
The ravenous Kite do's on the weaker prey.

Left alone Lady Macduff weeps and elaborates on her vulnerable state:

Oh my Dear Lord, I find now thou art gone
 I am more valiant when unsafe alone
 My heart feels Manhood; it do's death despise
 Yet I am still a woman in my eyes
 And of my Tears thy absence is the cause
 So falls the Dew when the bright sun withdraws.¹⁶

In Elkanah Settle's Love and Revenge (1674), adapted from William Hemings' The Fatal Contract (first published 1653, probably first performed 1638), the vigorous, passionate Aphelia is transformed into a gentle saint, complete with pleading, grieving, weeping and a scene in which she is discovered upon a couch, in a dungeon.¹⁷ After her attempted rape by Clotair, Hemings' Aphelia marries ^{him} her seducer, believing her lover to be dead, but Settle's heroine remains chaste and constant to the end. As Settle explained in the postscript to his published play, the two plays divide after the second act: Settle's heroine resolutely resists an easy marriage and is sent to prison. When Clotair visits her there she has a moving scene in which she falls on her knees to him and pleads for release. (A possible disadvantage, from a commercial point of view, of Settle's change of plot, was that it deprived his drama of the thrill of Aphelia's marriage night and the entertaining scene in which she is dragged before Clotair 'in her petticoat and hair' and in which a man with pan and irons enters to torture her into admitting infidelity.¹⁸ It comes as no surprise to find that Hemings' original was also revived, as The Eunuch, in the 1680s.)

Dryden made a similar alteration to the heroine of Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida (1679) when he rewrote the play. Cressida becomes a figure who more easily inspires pity. Her wanton speeches are removed and she becomes a pure and dignified woman who stabs herself because Troilus believes her to be faithless:

Trust me, the wound which I have giv'n this breast
 Is far lesse painful, then the wound you gave it.¹⁹

The Rise of the Tragic Actress 1660-75

At the same time as the pathetic heroine was becoming a favourite type in new dramas, the leading tragic actresses themselves were becoming experienced and proving themselves in all kinds of serious roles. Pepys' diary shows that certain women had made their presence felt by the end of the 1660s. As early as 1662 he praised Mary Betterton, née Saunderson, or 'Ianthe' as he nicknamed her, for her role in a revival of Massinger's The Bondman, 'acting Cleora's part very well now Roxolana [Hester Davenport] is gone', and in the same play in 1664, 'Baterton and my poor Ianthe out-do all the world'. Mrs. Betterton's part in Orrery's The History of Henry the Fifth (1664) was 'most incomparably wrote and done'.

Pepys' admiration for the King's Company's Rebecca Marshall is still more striking. Her talent apparently first struck him when she played Evadne in a 1666 revival of Beaumont and Fletcher's The Maid's Tragedy: 'a good play, and well acted, especially by the younger Marshall, who is become a pretty good actor'.²⁰ Of her role as the Queen of Sicily in Dryden's Secret Love (1667) Pepys wrote enthusiastically, 'it being impossible, I think, ever to have the Queen's part, which is very good and passionate ... ever done better then ... by young Marshall'. A revival of Shirley's The Cardinal in the same year occasioned the remark 'wherewith I am mightily pleased; but above all with Becke Marshall', while Secret Love in 1668 brought 'certainly the best acted of anything ever that House did and perticularly, Becke Marshall, to admiration'. A revival of The Virgin Martyr, also in 1668, was redeemed by Mrs. Marshall: 'it is mighty pleasant; not that the play is worth much, but it is finely Acted by Becke Marshall'.²¹ Although Pepys praises Betterton more than he does 'Ianthe', he commends

no tragic player - male or female - as warmly and frequently as he does Rebecca Marshall. Even allowing for his particular interest in the female sex this seems to signify an outstanding talent.

Dramatists as well as theatre-goers would seem to have begun to appreciate the actresses' talents. In the preface to The Roman Empress (1670) the author William Joyner credited Rebecca Marshall and Elizabeth Boutell with the success of his Fulvia and Aurelia:

This Character [Fulvia, the Roman express] has ever been much extoll'd: if my art has fail'd in the writing of it, it was highly recompenc'd in the scenical presentation; for it was incomparably acted. I have for the greater variety of the Stage divided this Character, conferring some share of it on Aurelia, which, though a great, various, and difficult part, was excellently perform'd.²²

Interestingly, the majority of these female performances are not of the stereotyped pathetic female characters earlier described. The roles praised by Pepys come mainly from pre-Restoration plays. The one performance of a role in a contemporary work that he commends at length is that of the Queen of Sicily in Dryden's Secret Love and this is a strong and passionate character, although she certainly inspires pity at times. Joyner's Fulvia and Aurelia are both villainesses. In fact most of the roles taken by Mrs. Betterton and Mrs. Marshall during the 1660s were from Renaissance plays. Mrs. Betterton specialized in virtuous roles of all kinds: she played Ophelia, Juliet, and the Duchess of Malfi as well as Mandana in Settle's Cambyses. Rebecca Marshall specialized in roles of passionate intensity such as Evadne in The Maid's Tragedy, the Duchess in Shirley's The Cardinal, Dorothea in Dekker and Massinger's The Virgin Martyr and Berenice in Dryden's Tyrannick Love. In fact, although the evidence of new plays and adaptations implies that the frail vulnerable heroine was the most popular female type, both companies during the 1660s needed more new dramas than were available

and so revived a variety of pre-Restoration plays to fill the repertory. What seems to me most important is that at this early stage tragic actresses emerged with the talent to attract the attention of dramatists and spectators alike.

During the early 1670s Elizabeth Boutell and Mary Lee proved to be two more such actresses. Joining the King's Company in 1670, Mrs. Boutell created the heroine roles of Aurelia in The Roman Empress (1670), Benzayda in Dryden's The Conquest of Granada (1670, 1671) and Cyara in Lee's Nero (1673). In the mid-seventies, as they began to occur more frequently in new plays, she began to specialize very successfully in gentle timorous heroines (as suited to her appearance: she was 'low of Stature, had very agreeable Features, a good Complexion, but a Childish look. Her Voice was weak, tho' very mellow'²³) such as Rosalinda in Lee's Sophonisba, or, Hannibal's Overthrow (1675) and Clarona in Crowne's two-part The Destruction of Jerusalem by Titus Vespasian (1677).

Three out of four of Elkanah Settle's plays produced during the early 1670s centre on characters created by Mary Lee and together they established her as a leading tragedienne (she had hitherto taken only comparatively minor roles). The Empress of Morocco (1673) had Mrs. Betterton unusually cast as the play's lustful, ranting namesake and Mrs. Lee as her opposite, the noble Mariamne. Love and Revenge (1674), like its original, Heming's The Fatal Contract, has its action controlled by a woman disguised as a man. Settle, however, made this fact more obvious by transforming Heming's Eunuch, who appears to be a sinister, obscene and utterly blackhearted manipulator of events until the very end, into Nigrello, played by Mrs. Lee, who in the first act reveals to the audience that she is the ravished Chlotilda, bent on revenge. At

the end of this play Mrs. Lee spoke the epilogue, still as Nigrello in her male costume, but 'in a white wig and her Face discover'd'.²⁴

Settle's next drama, The Conquest of China by the Tartars (1676), still more fully exploited the idea of putting Mrs. Lee into man's dress in a serious play. Here the actress created the role of Amavanga, a brave Chinese queen, who disguises herself as a soldier and by adhering to a ridiculous code of honour persuades herself to propose a duel with the man she loves. The two fight and Amavanga falls, revealing her true identity to her unfortunate lover in her dying speech. However, at the end of the play Settle has her miraculously resurrected and all is happily resolved. Amavanga is, of course, not a pathetic heroine. The Conquest of China shows the ingenious lengths a dramatist had to go to in order to place a woman at the heart of a tragedy preoccupied with the honour code and victory in battle. All three plays show an effort on Settle's part to make the actress important within the more heroic styles of tragedy. A logical next step would be for dramatists to write tragedy which centred upon a woman behaving in a more popular feminine way - suffering, pleading, weeping - that is, to write pathetic she-tragedy.

An Increase in Tragic Love and Pathos

The move towards dramas of love and pathos in which women figured more largely was a gradual one, as changes in dramatic form tend to be. Though pathetic scenes became more frequent, plays were still usually focused on a hero rather than heroine: successful as Rebecca Marshall or Mary Lee were, they did not supersede leading actors such as Betterton, Smith, Harris and Hart. Nevertheless, from the mid-1670s, the 'feminine' subjects of love and pitiable distress in tragedy become more and more

apparent, and so too, then, does the importance of the actresses like Marshall and Lee. It is impossible to ascertain how far the latter was a cause of the former occurring, and how far an effect, but the two factors are surely connected.

For example, the highpoint of Dryden's Amboyna, or, The Cruelties of the Dutch (1673) is the rape of the heroine, Ysabinda, played by Rebecca Marshall, although the main protagonist is her lover, Gabriel Towerson. Similarly, even though Dryden's next play, Aureng-Zebe (1675), is written along the lines of his earlier heroic dramas, in this case the hero, Aureng-Zebe, is a much softer, more self-denying version of warriors such as Almanzor and Montezume.²⁵ For Aureng-Zebe, who can weep on occasion, the capacity for tears has become a mark of heroism and love is more important than glory. Also, although the play is based around him, the three women - Indamora, his love (Elizabeth Cox), Nourmahal, the lustful villainess (Rebecca Marshall), and Melesinda, the meek wife of Aureng-Zebe's erring brother Morat (Mrs. Corbett) - have leading roles to play. In Melesinda Dryden gave more prominence and more pathos to the self-denying, unrequited lover prefigured in Valeria in his Tyrannick Love (1669). Against her husband's unrelenting cruelty Melesinda produces an equally unrelenting stream of pleas, tears, swoonings and vows of constancy. Indamora is the virtuous heroine, inspiring passion in the emperor and in both his sons, Aureng-Zebe and Morat. Her influence reforms the heartless Morat, a significant victory for love.

It is interesting to find that Dryden's attempts to humanize Indamora and make her a little less than perfect apparently had a poor reception among the women in the audience. In the dedicatory epistle to the printed edition of the play Dryden humorously complained

That which was not pleasing to some of the fair ladies in the last act ... as I dare not vindicate, so neither can I wholly

condemn till I find more reason for their censures. The procedure of Indamora and Melesinda seems yet in my judgement natural, and not unbecoming of their characters. If they who arraign them fail not more, the world will never blame their conduct; and I shall be glad, for the honor of my country, to find better images of virtue drawn to the life in their behaviour than any I could feign to adorn the theater. I confess I have only represented a practicable virtue, mixed with the frailties of imperfections of human life. I have made my heroine fearful of death.²⁶

Dryden implied that female spectators disliked Indamora's cowardly trembling before Nourmahal's dagger in Act V. The apparent failure of his attempt to introduce the 'frailties and imperfections of human life' into female characterisation (Dryden might, on the other hand, have conceivably invented the ladies' complaint for the sake of his own argument) suggests that audiences' taste for a particular type of pure pathetic heroine continued to be a major force in shaping the drama. The distressed virgin must be flawless, as she had been in the new plays of the 1660s and as she was to be in later she-tragedy.

Dryden's next tragic work, his version of Shakespeare's Antony and Cleopatra named All for Love, or, The World Well Lost (1677), further develops his serious drama away from war and politics towards female-based love themes. The play is focused entirely on Antony, the lover, as he is divided between Cleopatra (Mrs. Boutell) whom he truly loves and Octavia (actress unknown) his wife and the mother of his children (the introduction of helpless children on stage is used to increase the anguish and pathos of Antony's dilemma, a device that was to become very popular²⁷). Plot in All for Love is reduced to a minimum, each scene being merely a variation on the central conflict with Antony being pulled first towards Octavia and then back to Cleopatra. The structure is one that was to be used again and again in affective tragedy - the enforced separation of two lovers who have one insurmountable obstacle to their love, with all the possible drama and suffering that that one obstacle can create: anguished partings, joyous reunions, confrontations with rivals and a

final permanent union in death. The way in which Dryden's Cleopatra differs from Shakespeare's highlights further the popular view of a heroine at this time. Played by Elizabeth Boutell (rather than the fiery Rebecca Marshall who was better known for proud queenly roles) Cleopatra in All For Love has no political ambition, no vanity, no arrogance and no cunning:

Nature meant me
A Wife, a silly harmless household Dove,
Fond without art; and kind without deceit.²⁸

This is very much the type on whom misfortunes fall in later pathetic tragedy.

Although Lee's tragedies of the 1670s generally centre upon male rulers, frequently in the tyrant tradition (Nero, Emperour of Rome 1674, Sophonisba 1675, Gloriana, or, The Court of Augustus Caesar 1676, Alexander the Great, or, The Rival Queens 1677, Mithridates, King of Pontus 1678, Oedipus [with Dryden] 1678, Caesar Borgia 1679), the theme of love becomes increasingly central. In his Allusion to Horace, for instance, Rochester attacked the way in which, in Sophonisba, the great Hannibal is portrayed as a 'whining amorous slave', the devoted lover of his mistress Rosalinda (Mrs. Boutell) rather than as a mighty conqueror.²⁹ The play's principal character Massinissa is also presented as an unheroic hero in that he is dominated by his passion for Sophonisba (Mrs. Cox): the central plot hinges on whether he should hand her over to her enemy Scipio or betray Scipio's friendship and allegiance. Gloriana revolves around the desires of the tyrant Augustus Caesar and the hero Caesario for the dazzling Gloriana (Rebecca Marshall). This play has its climax in the Emperor Augustus' bedchamber where Caesario is killed and dies clasping the dead body of Gloriana with the lines,

I'll grasp her all, and Love shall last be mine;
Give me but this, Caesar, the world is thine (dyes.)³⁰

- a reiteration of Dryden's sentiment, all for love, the world well lost for it. Similarly, although Alexander the Great charts that hero's fall, the roles taken by Rebecca Marshall and Elizabeth Boutell as the two queens, Roxana and Statira, are prominent. So distracting is the conflict between the two women, rivals for Alexander's love, that this has been seen as the main plot.³¹ Certainly their initial encounter creates a major climax and their vividly contrasting personalities and violent emotions have great dramatic impact. Marshall and Boutell regularly played rivals in love and I shall be considering the impact of this on tragedy in chapter 5.

The extravagantly sensuous diction of Lee's plays can also be seen as part of the development of drama from heroic to pathetic, affective tragedy since it is aimed at spectators' feelings and seeks to sweep them along by emotive images of love and suffering which reinforce what is being shown on stage. Lee's most sensuous descriptions are usually reserved for the women in his plays, as in this account by Ziphare of the grieving Semandra (Mrs. Boutell) in Mithridates, King of Pontus (1678):

But, Oh the Gods! I found her on the Floor,
In all the storm of grief, yet beautiful,
Sighing such breath of sorrow, that her Lips
Which late appear'd like buds, were now o'reblown,
Pouring forth tears at such a lavish rate,
That, were the World on Fire, they might have drown'd
The wrath of Heav'n, and quench'd the mighty ruine.³²

As the preceding chapter showed, the affective function of such purple passages is inextricably bound to the presence of the actress and the visual illustration to emotive imagery which she could provide.

In Otway's work love and pathos rapidly became still more important. Although his first work, Alcibiades (1675), follows popular heroic conventions and centres upon a warrior hero, the main action of

his second tragedy, Don Carlos, Prince of Spain (1676), consists almost entirely of the doomed love affair between the royal prince Don Carlos and his stepmother the Queen (played by Mary Lee who was by now the Duke's Company's leading tragedienne). The play represents a significant advance for the pathetic style of tragedy. As Otway's editor, J.C. Ghosh, points out, the play's source is a French historical romance by César Vischard from which Otway omitted all the political elements, retaining only the love story.³³ Every scene involving the lovers is designed to inspire pity as they attempt to part for ever and yet are unable to bear the separation. Their final farewell is particularly obviously constructed as a climax to the whole which will wring the last ounce of pathos from their situation. The Queen lies on a couch, poisoned by her husband:

all in ruful sables clad,
With one dim Lamp that yields imperfect light.

She is informed that her lover has killed himself:

Within upon his couch he bleeding lyes:
Just taken from a Bath, his Veins all Cut.

(It is worth noting that as tragedy became more concerned with love and pathos, and therefore more static, the couch pose was used for male as well as female characters.) Don Carlos then appears 'supported between two, and bleeding' to take what must positively be his last farewell. The lovers kneel down together and perish, first the Queen and then Carlos. Otway then uses the King to intensify the mood of pathos, his grief offering a means of further affecting the audience:

From these warm Lips, yet one soft kiss I'll take:
How my heart beats! Why won't the Rebel break?³⁴

It is significant that in its time this tragedy was apparently more successful than any other. Downes states

all the Parts being admirably Acted, it lasted successively
10 Days: it got more Money than any preceding Modern Tragedy.³⁵

Betterton, who played the King, is credited with the statement that it

stayed the most popular of Otway's plays.³⁶ It clearly influenced other tragic dramatists, particularly John Banks.

Elizabeth Barry

Thus, by the end of the 1670s, alongside the emergence of a series of popular, talented tragic actresses, the pathetic style, which had long been a female province, began to supersede the heroic. What then shifted the focus of tragedy decisively from hero to heroine was, I believe, Otway's association with the greatest tragic actress of her time, Elizabeth Barry, and the resulting production of The Orphan, or, The Unhappy Marriage in 1680. It would not be an overstatement to say that with this play Otway and Barry together shaped the main course of tragedy for the next thirty years.

We need to establish the context of Barry's contribution to The Orphan before examining the play in more detail. Her crucial influence on Otway was two-fold. On a personal level, the dramatist is known to have nursed an intense, unrequited passion for her for years,³⁷ a fact which presumably encouraged him to place her at the centre of his tragedy and which must have helped to invest it with its peculiarly overpowering emotional and sexual intensity. More importantly, on a professional level, he undoubtedly recognized and utilized her outstanding talent for performing emotive scenes. Remarkably, in the roles he wrote for Barry Otway seems to have been able to harness together his subjective involvement and his objective appreciation.

Elizabeth Barry (1658-1713) was undoubtedly the best actress of the Restoration and the comments of contemporaries testify to her extraordinary ability to move an audience. 'In the Art of exciting Pity,' said Cibber, 'she had a Power beyond all the actresses I have yet seen,

or that your Imagination can conceive'.³⁸ Of her performance as Isabella, the Hungarian Queen, in Mustapha by Orrery (date unknown but she undoubtedly played the role very early in her career), her eighteenth-century biographer, Edmund Curll, stated

The very Air she appeared with, in that distressed Character, moved them with Pity, preparing the Mind to great Expectations.

Having quoted the queen's speech to an insulting cardinal Curll commented,

Here, Majesty distressed by the hostile Foe, the Widow Queen forlorn, insulted by her Subjects, feeling all an afflicted Mother could suffer by a stern Councillor's forcing her to yield her only Son to be sacrificed to the Enemy to save themselves and City, these Passions were so finely expressed by her, that the whole Theatre resounded with Applauses.³⁹

This early success was gained in the portrayal of a character whose most noticeable characteristic is her suffering. It is interesting that Curll could make a distinction between the weakness of the play and the strength of Mrs. Barry's acting:

the play is but indifferently wrote, and stuff with Bombast, yet Mrs. Barry so happily hit it, she made that Queen, which was so much beloved, revive again.⁴⁰

Barry's tragic ability would seem to have developed and flourished with experience. Of her performance as Isabella in Southerne's The Fatal Marriage, or, The Innocent Adultery (1694) the unidentifiable author of a letter of 22 March 1694 stated

I never saw Mrs. Barry act with so much passion as she does in it: I could not forbear being moved even to tears to see her act.⁴¹

Southerne's comment concerning the creation of Isabella and his debt to Mrs. Barry was, 'I made the Play for her part, and her part has made the Play for me'.⁴² Even when playing a villainess Barry could still apparently gain the pity of spectators. Curll reported of her performance as Roxana in a revival of Lee's The Rival Queens sometime after 1690,

I cannot conclude without taking notice that tho' before our Eyes we had just seen Roxana with such Malice murder an innocent Person, because better beloved than herself; yet, after Statira is dead, and Roxana is following Alexander on her knees, Mrs. Barry made this Complaint in so Pathetic a Manner, as drew Tears from the greatest Part of the Audience,

O! Speak not such harsh Words, my Royal Master:
 But take, dear Sir, O! take me into Grace;
 By the dear Babe, the Burden of my Womb,
 That weighs me down when I would follow faster.
 O! do not frown, but clear that angry Brow;
 Your Eyes will blast me, and your Words are Bolts
 That strike me dead: the little Wretch I bear,
 Leaps frightened at your Wrath, and dies within me.⁴³

Significantly, Mrs. Barry was praised by contemporaries exclusively for her performances in Restoration tragedy. We have no accounts of her success in Jacobean or Shakespearean roles. Cibber actually stated that although Barry was the better actress, Mrs. Betterton was her superior as Lady Macbeth, for example.⁴⁴ If this was so, her dominance must have increased the current impetus towards pathetic tragedy.

Only one scholar, comparatively recently, has made a particular study of the outstanding impact of Mrs. Barry on tragedy at this time. In his Restoration Theatre Production Jocelyn Powell suggests, 'Perhaps the key figure in this change of style [towards affective, pathetic drama] is the actress Elizabeth Barry'. Powell believes that Mrs. Barry pioneered a new affective, sensational acting style which was designed to 'stir rather than penetrate human nature',⁴⁵ and that tragic actors such as Betterton followed her lead. It is difficult either to support or refute this suggestion since acting is a tantalisingly ephemeral art and one can only draw one's own conclusions from written records of an actress's performances. Certainly Mrs. Barry's affective acting was remarkable: whether it was wholly new is more doubtful. The signs of an affective tragedy evolving appeared, as we have seen, before Mrs. Barry was established as the leading actress of the Duke's Company. Nevertheless, Powell is correct in emphasizing the extraordinary effect of Barry's acting.

Otway wrote Barry's first known leading role in serious drama, as Lavinia in his grafting of Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet onto the

history of Marius from Plutarch and Lucan, a combination named The History and Fall of Caius Marius (1679). Otway made fashionable alterations to the Shakespearean original, wrenching the last drop of pathos and sensation from the tragedy by having Lavinia (Juliet) awake just in time to bid farewell to the dying Marius (Romeo) in the final act. Juliet's youthful eagerness and mature commonsense were replaced by sensational, extravagant appeals for pity,

Will you then quite cast off your poor Lavinia?
 And turn me like a Vagrant out of Doors,
 To wander up and down the streets of Rome,
 And beg my bread with sorrow? Can I bear
 The proud and hard Revilings of a Slave,
 Fat with his Master's plenty, when I ask
 A little Pity for my pinching Wants?
 Shall I endure the cold, wet, windy Night,
 To seek a shelter under dropping Eves,
 A Porch my Bed, a Threshold for my Pillow,
 Shiv'ring and starv'd for want of warmth and food,
 Swell'd with my sighs, and almost choak'd with Tears?

and bombast:

What shall I doe? how will the Gods dispose me?
 Oh! I could rend these Walls with Lamentation,
 Tear up the Dead from their corrupted Graves,
 And dawb the face of Earth with her own Bowels.⁴⁶

In other words, Otway would seem to have altered the language of Shakespeare's heroine so as to provide Barry with the kind of affecting speeches he realized she would be adept at delivering.

Then, less than a year later, Otway produced The Orphan. It is a tragedy based solely, as Caius Marius was not, on love and a distressed heroine. The plot marks a significant break away from heroic tradition in being centred upon a private family as opposed to royalty. The play is set in the pastoral retreat belonging to Acasto, a retired courtier, who is determined to turn his back on the corruptions of court life. The setting emphasizes Otway's focus upon sexual love relationships rather than the heroic goals of glory and power; its remoteness and seclusion create an atmosphere of claustrophobia in which the characters' frustrated

passions gain an additional intensity.

The focus of the play and innocent cause of its tragic sequence of events is Monimia, the orphan of the title and the role Barry created with such resounding success that Downes tells us it was one of the three parts which 'gain'd her the Name of Famous Mrs. Barry, both at Court and City'.⁴⁷ The brothers Castalio and Polydore both adore and desire Monimia and the climax of the play is the satisfaction (for Polydore) and the frustration (for Castalio) of that desire:

To touch thee's Heaven, but to enjoy thee, oh!
Thou Nature's whole perfection in one piece!⁴⁸

Although she loves and becomes the wife of Castalio, it is Polydore who enjoys Monimia, by a trick: he manages to substitute himself for her husband in bed on their marriage night. In this way, Monimia is made both an innocent victim and a fallen woman who, because of her adultery, is doomed to death.

As is typical of later pathetic heroines, Monimia's two outstanding qualities are her sexual desirability and her suffering vulnerability. Her role is passive: to inflame the men in the play with love and desire and to supply pathos through suffering unjustly. She is by repeated definition a 'poor and helpless orphan', a 'little tender flower' and the 'trembling, tender, kind, deceived Monimia'.⁴⁹ Her feminine attractions and her vulnerability are both emphasized by the language drawing attention to her breasts: with 'soft compassion swell'd' they 'shove up and down and heave like dying birds': 'with passion they did so lift up and down': Polydore feels 'I'd trust thee with my life on those soft breasts'.⁵⁰ Monimia's own words, like Lavinia's in *Caius Marius*, describe the pathos of her situation:

Why was I not lain in my peaceful grave
With my poor parents and at rest as they are?
Instead of that, I am wand'ring into cares.⁵¹

Venice Preserved, Banks' The Unhappy Favourite and Vertue Betray'd, or, Anna Bullen.⁵⁶ All these were influenced by Otway's Orphan; they concern the tearjerking anguish of thwarted love and desire and, apart from Lucius Junius Brutus, where love is relegated to the subplot, the main motivation of the hero is sexual - his physical passion for the heroine. Lee and Otway also gave the heroine an increasingly active part, not in terms of deeds, but in terms of speeches revealing her distress. In Venice Preserved, the audience's attention is fixed as much upon the anguish of the woman, as it is upon the hero, if not more. In The Unhappy Favourite and Anna Bullen this development is still more marked; in each case, the main characters are women. It is significant that all the five enduringly successful tragedies except The Unhappy Favourite were written for the Duke's Company with a Barry leading role and that Banks moved from the King's to the Duke's Company for the production of his Anna Bullen, the leading role of Anna being created by Mrs. Barry. Banks' move demonstrates how closely the evolution of female-based pathetic tragedy is related to the presence of this one actress.

6. See Knapp's study, *The Restoration Tragedy*, p. 100.
7. The increasing number of such actresses is noted by Kottelstein, *Restoration Tragedy*, p. 100, and by *English Drama*, p. 100.
8. Eric Rothstein, *Restoration Tragedy*, p. 100.
9. Colley Coker, *Apology for the Tragedy*, p. 100.
10. Richard Steele, *Tatler*, no. 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 925, 926, 927, 928, 929, 930, 931, 932, 933, 934, 935, 936, 937, 938, 939, 940, 941, 942, 943, 944, 945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955, 956, 957, 958, 959, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964, 965, 966, 967, 968, 969, 970, 971, 972, 973, 974, 975, 976, 977, 978, 979, 980, 981, 982, 983, 984, 985, 986, 987, 988, 989, 990, 991, 992, 993, 994, 995, 996, 997, 998, 999, 1000.
13. According to *The London Stage*, 1660-1700, p. 100, the first actress to perform in the Duke's Company was Mrs. Barry.

FOOTNOTES

1. The term 'she-tragedy' was probably coined by Nicholas Rowe, its first known usage being in the epilogue to The Tragedy of Jane Shore (1714):

 'If the reforming stage should fall to shaming
 Ill-nature, pride, hypocrisy and gaming,
 The poets frequently might move compassion,
 And with she-tragedies o'errun the nation.'

 (The Tragedy of Jane Shore, ed. Henry William Pedicord, 1975, Epilogue, 26-9.)

 It can however be applied to all the pathetic tragedies of the Restoration focusing on the suffering of a female protagonist. See also Robert Hume, The Development of English Drama in the late Seventeenth Century, Oxford, 1976, pp.216-7.
2. See Eric Rothstein, Restoration Tragedy, p.141 and Robert Hume, The Development of English Drama, p.220.
3. Gunnar Sorelius, The Giant Race Before the Flood, Uppsala, 1966, p.149. Allardyce Nicoll, A History of Restoration Drama 1660-1700, Cambridge, 1923, p.72.
4. Prologue, 'by a Friend', to Busiris, King of Egypt by Edward Young, 1719.
5. See Rothstein, Restoration Tragedy, pp.27-46. What follows is mainly a summary of the arguments as listed by Rothstein, but, as I have indicated, I have also inserted my own arguments when appropriate.
6. See Emmett L. Avery, 'The Restoration Audience', PQ, 1966, pp.54-61.
7. The increasing number of such addresses is noted, for instance, by Rothstein, Restoration Tragedy, p.44, and Hume, The Development of English Drama, p.340.
8. Eric Rothstein, Restoration Tragedy, pp.45-6.
9. Colley Cibber, Apology, II, p.16.
10. Richard Steele, Tatler, ed. George A. Aitken, 1898, I, p.125.
11. John Dryden, Works, vol.VIII, The Indian Queen, V, i, 168-9.
12. Roger Boyle, Earl of Orrery, Henry the Fifth and Solyman, 1668, p.74.
13. Dryden, Works, vol.XI, The Conquest of Granada, Part II, IV, ii, 83-4.
14. Elkanah Settle, Cambyses, 1671, pp.47-8, 53.
15. According to The London Stage, Part I, the play was performed on at least sixteen occasions between 1664 and 1696.

16. William Davenant, Macbeth, ed. Christopher Spencer, Yale Studies in English, vol.146, New Haven, 1961, III, vi, 8-11, 33-8.
17. For my earlier account of couch scenes and their significance, see chapter 1, pp.39-41.
18. William Hemings, The Fatal Contract, 1653, Act V, pp.I, 12.
19. Dryden, Works, vol.XIII, Troilus and Cressida, V, ii, 265-6.
20. When actresses first appeared on the stage they were referred to as 'actors', just like their male counterparts. The word 'actresses' nevertheless existed in the more general sense of a female doer. The first recorded use of the word 'actress' to refer to a female performer in the theatre, according to The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary, 2 vols., 1979, occurred in 1700 in Dryden's 'Epilogue to Pilgrim':

'To stop the trade of love behind the scene,
Where actresses make bold with married men.'
21. Samuel Pepys, Diary, vol.3, p.58, vol.5, pp.224, 240, vol.7, p.399, vol.8, pp.235, 398, vol.9, pp.37, 94.
22. William Joyner, The Roman Empress, 1671, preface.
23. Thomas Betterton, The History of the English Stage from the Restauration to the Present Time (compiled by Edmund Curll and William Oldys from the notes of T. Betterton), 1741, p.21.
24. Settle, Love and Revenge, 1675, epilogue.
25. For a discussion of the importance of Aureng-Zebe in the evolution of pathetic tragedy, see Arthur C. Kirsch, 'The Significance of Dryden's Aureng-Zebe', ELH, 29 (1962), pp.160-74.
26. Dryden, Aureng-Zebe, ed. F.M. Link, Dedicatory Epistle, 242-53.
27. See chapter 3, pp.128-9.
28. Dryden, Works, vol.XIII, All for Love, IV, i, 91-3.
29. Rochester, The Complete Poems of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, ed. David M. Vieth, New Haven and London, 1968, p.122.
30. Lee, Works, vol.I, Gloriana, V, ii, 205-6.
31. By William Archer who discusses the play in The Old Drama and the New, 1923, pp.153-7.
32. Lee, Works, vol.I, Mithridates, I, i, 153-9.
33. The Works of Thomas Otway, ed. J.C. Ghosh, Oxford, 1932, vol.I, p.42.
34. Thomas Otway, Don Carlos, Prince of Spain, pp.53, 61, 65.
35. John Downes, Roscius Anglicanus, p.36.
36. John Genest, Account of the English Stage, Bath, 1832, I, p.191.

37. For the evidence of this passion, see J.C. Ghosh, The Works of Thomas Otway, vol.I, pp.13-4.
38. Colley Cibber, Apology, I, p.160.
39. Thomas Betterton, The History of the English Stage (compiled from the notes of E. Curll and W. Oldys), pp.16-7. Curll's biographical facts, supposedly culled from the notes of Thomas Betterton, may be shaky in that they seem largely to be based on hearsay and gossip. However, his accounts of Barry performances, since they are so much in accord with other accounts of her talent, may be taken as fairly reliable.
40. Ibid., p.17.
41. Letter cited in A Biographical Dictionary of Actors, Actresses, Musicians etc, ed. Philip H. Highfill Jr., Kalman A. Burnim and Edward Langhans, Carbondale and Edwardsville, 1973-, I, p.318.
42. Thomas Southerne, Works, vol.II, The Fatal Marriage, dedication 'To Ant. Hammond Esq.', 35-6.
43. Betterton, The History of the English Stage, pp.22-3.
44. Colley Cibber, Apology, I, p.162.
45. Jocelyn Powell, Restoration Theatre Production, 1984, p.157.
46. Thomas Otway, The History and Fall of Caius Marius, 1680, pp.15, 64.
47. John Downes, Roscius Anglicanus, p.38.
48. Thomas Otway, The Orphan, ed. Aline Mackenzie Taylor, 1977, II, 406-7.
49. Ibid., I, 328, IV, 296, V, 453.
50. Ibid., III, 273-7, 488-9, IV, 390.
51. Ibid., I, 207-9.
52. Ibid., IV, 396-7.
53. According to Charles Gildon, The Complete Art of Poetry, 1718, I, p.290.
54. Charles Gildon, The Life of Mr. Thomas Betterton, p.71.
55. John Downes, Roscius Anglicanus, pp.37-8.
56. For statistics on how frequently The Orphan, The Unhappy Favourite, Anna Bullen and Theodosius were performed during the eighteenth century see The London Stage Part 2, ed. Emmett L. Avery, Part 3, ed. Arthur H. Scouten, Part 4, ed. George Winchester Stone, Jr. and Part 5, ed. Charles Becker Hogan, Carbondale, Illinois, 1960-68.

CHAPTER 3

THE CREATION OF SHE-TRAGEDY - 2: SUFFERING WOMANHOOD FROM OTWAY TO ROWE

Mrs. Barry continued to provide tragic inspiration for dramatists well into the eighteenth century. There is a clear line of development from her role in The Orphan through the most popular tragedies of the ensuing twenty years by Otway, Lee, Banks and Rowe, the main proponents of pathetic tragedy, all of whom created similar lead roles for Barry. In this chapter I propose to trace the development with emphasis on the actress's influence on each dramatist, rather than the dramatists' influence on each other.

Lee's Female-based Tragedy

Lee built immediately on the success of The Orphan. The biographer of Otway and Lee, R.G. Ham, has pointed out that both men borrowed ideas from each other's tragedies, showing, for example, how The Orphan was indebted to Mithridates in a number of ways.¹ However, Ham does not mention the still more obvious relation between The Orphan and Lee's next tragedy, Theodosius, which was probably first performed a few months after Otway's play (September? 1680).² In Theodosius the dramatic situation of The Orphan is reproduced. Again a Barry heroine is at the heart of the action, being loved by both heroes. The rivals in love are friends, deeply attached (they are not actually related, as Castalio and Polydore are, but each at some stage calls the other 'brother'), and they were played by Williams and Betterton who had created the roles of Castalio and Polydore. Athenais, the heroine, is, like Monimia the orphan, 'a maid / Of no degree, but vertue, in the World'³ and this forms the mainspring of the tragedy because it leads Varanes to try to make her his mistress rather than his wife, so that

she turns from him, even though she loves him, and agrees to marry Theodosius.

As in The Orphan, the motivation behind the actions of the main male characters is sexual passion for the Barry heroine. Theodosius fell in love with Athenais when he saw her bathing:

The Satyrs could not grin, for she was vail'd:
Nothing Immodest, from her naked bosom
Down to her knees the Nymph was wrapt in Lawn:
But oh for me! for me, that was too much!
Her legs, her Arms, her Hands, her Neck, her Breasts,
So nicely shap'd, so matchless in their Luster!
Such all-perfection, that I took whole draughts
Of killing Love, and ever since have languisht
With lingring surfeits of her Fatal Beauty!⁴

This speech, recalling the myth of Diana and Actaeon and the Biblical story of David and Bathsheba, is a typical piece of Lee eroticism, offering a luscious image of female beauty which he could be sure Mrs. Barry could match when she appeared. (It is worth noting that the lawn Athenais was wrapped in covers exactly those areas of the female physique which could equally not have been exposed on the Restoration stage.) Varanes has known Athenais for some time when the play opens but is equally overcome with desire whenever he meets her:

I swear I cannot bear these strange desires,
These strong impulses which will shortly leave me
Dead at thy Feet -⁵

Lee seems to have been intent on creating a heroine as similar to Monimia as possible - presumably because of Barry's success in Otway's play. Athenais' most emphasized qualities, too, are her sexual attractiveness and her wretchedness. From her first appearance Lee's heroine is in distress, fearful for the loss of her chastity and the possible faithlessness of Varanes. Some of her distressed speeches even contain verbal echoes of those of her predecessor. Monimia cries

If Castalio's false,
Where is there faith or honor to be found?

and Athenais,

Alas, Varanes,
If thou art false, there's no such thing on Earth
As solid goodness, or substantial Honor.

Likewise Monimia declares

I'd rather run a savage in the woods
Amongst brute beasts, grow wrinkled and deformed
As wildness and most rude neglect could make me,
So I might still enjoy my honor safe
From the destroying wiles of faithless men.

And Athenais,

Drive me! O Drive me from the Traytor man:
So I might 'scape that Monster, let me dwell
In Lyons haunts, or in some Tyger's Den;
Place me on some steep, craggy, ruin'd Rock,
That bellies out, just dropping in the Ocean;
Bury me in the hollow of it's Womb,
Where, starving on my cold and flinty bed,
I may from far, with giddy apprehension,
See infinite Fathoms down the rumbling deep!
Yet not ev'n there, in that vast whirle of Death,
Can there be found so terrible a ruine,
As Man; false Man, smiling destructive Man.⁶

The similarities of imagery in the speeches of the two characters show how Lee here borrowed Otway's ideas - the disappearance of honour from the world, the heroine's inclination to escape from man and hide herself among the beasts - and padded them out for more rhetorical effect.

Lee's style is more exaggerated and sensational, especially in the descriptive details and repetitions of Athenais' longer speech: 'some steep, craggy, ruin'd Rock', 'infinite Fathoms down the rumbling deep', 'Man: false Man, smiling destructive Man'. We can assume that such rhetoric suited Mrs. Barry's style of tragic acting: Otway, as we have seen, made similar changes to the language of Juliet for Lavinia in The History and Fall of Caius Marius.

In both plays a fatal error by one of the heroes makes happiness impossible for all three members of the love triangle, and creates those 'Natural Circumstances of Distress' so necessary to pathetic tragedy. As the tragedy of The Orphan is brought about initially by

Castalio's pride in concealing his marriage to Monimia, so that of Theodosius stems from Varanes' snobbish determination to make Athenais his mistress rather than his wife. Although she loves him, to protect her virtue she rejects him, and is precipitated into marriage with Theodosius. Too late, Varanes repents of his base offer and his discovery that Theodosius' new bride is his own Athenais is comparable to the moment when Castalio discovers what he imagines is his new wife's perfidy. In both cases, once the fatal discovery is made the action reaches an impasse; the only viable solution now for characters who are both honourable and true lovers is death.

Athenais and Monimia both escape their intolerable anguish by means of a dish of poison. Lee chose to dramatize his heroine's suicide, thereby increasing her pathetic role and giving her still greater prominence. Whereas Monimia only reported a *fait accompli* - 'I've drunk a healing draught'⁷ - the suicide of Athenais offered spectators another emotional tour de force from Mrs. Barry. The scene demands ceremonious formality. The stage directions read: 'Athenais drest in Imperial Robes and crown'd; A Table with a Bowl of Poison', while lute music and a melancholy song from the maid Delia create an appropriately affecting atmosphere. When Athenais finally takes the poison her pathetic role in the play is still by no means over. Like Monimia's, hers is a slow-working venom and she has the major climax of her wedding to Theodosius to come. The suicide of Varanes follows, his final request being that his body be laid at the feet of his love. The play's final image is of Athenais at the centre of a highly dramatic tableau of grief as she breathes her last upon the body of Varanes, at the feet of Theodosius:

Farewell, my Lord! alas! alas, Varanes!
To embrace thee now is not immodesty.⁸

Left alone, Theodosius has only a comparatively brief speech announcing

his intention to abandon his kingdom and go into permanent exile. The main set scenes of the play, the parting of Athenais from Varanes, her poisoning and the failed marriage ceremony are dominated by the heroine more than by any other character.

Theodosius was an immediate and long-lasting success. Lee wrote in the Epistle Dedicatory to the first printed edition,

The Reputation that this Play received on the Stage, some few Errors excepted, was more than I could well hope from so Consorious an Age.

In view of this success it is not surprising that Lee's next play, primarily a political one, should also have a love plot and a distressed heroine role for Mrs. Barry. The subplot of Lucius Junius Brutus (1680?) shares a number of the striking features of Theodosius: it has a strong strain of eroticism, a fearful, sorrowing heroine and a pair of lovers who are forced to part. In addition, Lee made use of other popular devices reliant on women with which to generate pathos, such as bloody wounds to the heroine and scenes of female pleading.

Although Brutus (played by Betterton) is the play's main character, his son, Titus (Smith), has almost as large a part to play. He is torn fatally between loyalty to his father and love for Teraminta (Mrs. Barry), who is of the base blood of Tarquin, Brutus' enemy. Like her predecessors, Teraminta is melancholy and fearful, emphasizing her piteous situation as she begs Titus to swear eternal love to her:

But to your death still cherish in your bosom
The poor, the fond, the wretched Teraminta.⁹

Titus is obsessed even more than Castalio or Varanes with the prospect of sexual union, but Teraminta is banished and the lovers are forced to part before their marriage is consummated. Sexual love being more important to him than honour, Titus resolves to join his traitorous

brother Tiberius in a plot against Brutus. The plot is foiled and all those involved, including Titus, condemned to death. When the sentence is announced Teraminta pleads for her husband's life - a chance for Mrs. Barry to take the centre of the stage and show the talent for tearful pleading that Curll for instance noted in her portrayal of Roxana. Lee must have had confidence in her ability, because the comments of an onlooker, Valerius, draw the audience's attention to her skill:

O Eloquence Divine! Now all the arts
Of Women's tongues, the Rhetoric of the Gods
Inspire thy soft and tender Soul to move him.

When Teraminta reaches the climax of her speech Valerius declares

Blest be thy tongue, blest the auspicious Gods
That sent thee, O true pattern of perfection!
To plead his bleeding Cause. There needs no more,
I see his Father's mov'd.¹⁰

Tears rise in the eyes of the hardened soldier Brutus, presumably encouraging tears in the eyes of spectators. However, both the suspense and the affecting power of the tragedy would be reduced if the father were to agree to his daughter-in-law's request. Instead Act IV concludes with the agonized farewell of the lovers.

Although Teraminta is less prominent here than in her earlier scenes, the play's final act involves her pleading, and that of several other female characters, for Brutus to spare Titus. After the affecting reunion of a scourged Titus to a 'defiled and mangled' Teraminta, his mother Sempronia, accompanied by women and 'mourners', arrives to plead for her son's life. Teraminta has already declared that

If there be ought that's human left about him,
Perhaps my wounds and horrible abuses,
Helpt with the tears and groans of this sad Troop.
May batter down the best of his resolves.¹¹

Lee seems to have been indebted to Shakespeare's Coriolanus for the

last scene, where the 'sad troop' interrupt Brutus in the Senate. Sempronia makes a lengthy plea for Titus and urges the others to 'hang about' the hard-hearted father. One may guess that a tableau was produced here with the main characters in the centre and other 'mourners' in attitudes of supplication on either side. Teraminta, overshadowed by Sempronia here, merely adds her plea to the others. Her wounds add weight to her appeal for pity:

By all these wounds, upon my Virgin breast,
Which I have suffer'd by your cruelty,
Altho you promis'd Titus to defend me.¹²

Titus is finally run through by Valerius, as he requests, thus avoiding the shame of execution by a common hangman. The play ends, like The Orphan and Theodosius, with an emphasis on the doomed triangle of central characters: Teraminta stabs herself to join her husband in the next world and over her body the dying Titus is reconciled with his father. Although Lucius Junius Brutus has a strong political theme (it was banned for seeming to support the Whigs¹³), Lee seems to have felt he needed love, pathos and a Barry heroine as well, even in a play whose main subject does not necessarily suggest such elements.

Shakespearean Adaptation: Increasing Pathos

Shakespearean adaptations from the years 1680 and 1681 usefully highlight how popular female pathetic features had become in serious drama by this time. April 1681 saw the Duke's Company's production of Crowne's adaptation of Henry VI Parts I and II, named Henry the Sixth, the First Part. In the dedicatory epistle to the published edition of this Crowne reiterated a complaint he had first voiced in his preface to The Destruction of Jerusalem (1677) a few years earlier - that a new focus on love in tragedy caused this genre to deteriorate into a series of sensational emotions with no appeal to

intellect at all:

I confess since Love has got the sole possession of the Stage, Reason has had little to do there; that effeminate Prince has softened and emasculated us the Vassals of the Stage.

When Crowne attempted to introduce some 'reason' into The Destruction of Jerusalem by means of a rational discussion of religion by one of its characters the result was uproar among spectators:

and reason is not at all popular; the ladies knew not what to make of his conversation, and the men generally slept at it.¹⁴

In the epistle to Henry the Sixth Crowne further lamented that dramatic art

pires more and more into a Trifle. For what vigour soever is necessary to please Ladies elsewhere, Impotence best delights 'em upon the Stage. The Poets that will hit the right Mark, must aim at the Boxes, and what Arrows they shoot over them are all lost, nor are our Male Judges of a more Masculine Spirit. I have always observed when an Actor talks Sense, the Audience begins to sleep, but when an unnatural passion sets him a grimacing and howling as if he were in a fit of the Stone, they immediately waken, listen, and stare, as if some rare Operator were about to Cut him.¹⁵

Whether they are just or not, Crowne's comments prove that pathetic drama and its flights of wild, unreasoning passion had become very popular. Also, although he scornfully dismissed the pathetic style as 'impotence', he still felt the need to cater to such taste, as his alterations to Shakespeare's Henry VI Parts I and II reflect. As he selected the episodes from the two plays that he wished to dramatise, Crowne's main change with regard to the female characters was to increase the love interest between Queen Margaret (Mary Lee, now Lady Slingsby) and Suffolk. At the end of his second act Crowne added a passionate exchange between the two, the queen declaring,

Oh! thou art my Sun:
My joyes and glories ripen, grow and flourish
Under thy beautiful and glorious beams.

A new love scene was inserted into Act III in which Suffolk recalls the occasion on which they fell in love:

I most unworthy to support so bright
 A Heaven of Beauty, did retire to gaze,
 Whilst all my Soul came crowding to my eyes,
 And thrusted till it almost crackt the Windows.¹⁶

They exult in the force of their love and the queen bewails the attentions of the king, 'each kiss gives me an Ague'. Significantly the final farewell between Queen Margaret and Suffolk was greatly expanded.

The queen weeps and laments:

My Fit returns again! unhappy we!
 Why are we two so nearly joyn'd in Love,
 And yet by Fortune kept so wide asunder,
 First by thy Marriage, and now by thy Banishment?¹⁷

The scene in which Margaret mourns over the head of Suffolk was also developed; the 'Scene is drawn' to reveal a tableau of grief, 'The Queen weeping - A Lady attending'. After a speech of woeful complaint Margaret is shown Suffolk's head, at which she swoons. She then recovers to listen to an account of Suffolk's end, when he uttered her name as he bent his head for the axe. Thus Crowne extracted additional pathos from his Shakespearean original.

Tate's three adaptations of Shakespeare at this time reflect the current trend still more strongly. The first of these was the luckless History of Richard II or, as it was renamed for stage performance, The Sicilian Usurper (1680), a play which was banned on 14 December 1680, the deposition of a monarch being considered no fit entertainment for the subjects of King Charles II (as indeed the original had also been considered subversive under Elizabeth I). Tate stressed in the dedicatory epistle that his 'Design was to engage the pitty of the Audience' for King Richard, 'in his Distresses'.¹⁸ Like Crowne, Tate achieved this by increasing the female element and by creating more love interest. The character of Richard's wife (actress unknown) was developed so that, although her lines were actually

reduced in the earlier part of the play, her role later, as the tearfully loyal supporter of the king, was much extended. In a new scene in Act III the queen meets Richard on a heath and proclaims her abiding affection for him, in spite of all their difficulties. He is moved by this constancy:

What language shall my bankrupt fortunes find,
To greet such Heavenly excellence as thine?¹⁹

Richard's queen continues to supply pathos throughout the play. In Act IV she enters 'supported by Ladies', having suffered fearful dreams. The Duchess of York fears the effect the news of the king's enforced abdication will have on her spirits:

How shall we now dare to inform her Grief
Of the sad Scene the King must Act today?

The king enters in mourning and the queen breaks out:

A Spectacle like this! O speak, my Lord!
The Blood starts back to my cold Heart; O speak!
What means this dark and mournful Pageantry,
This pomp of Death?²⁰

Her lines emphasize, perhaps over-emphasize, the pathos of her husband's situation. She never reproaches him for the 'base humility' with which he gave up his power - as Shakespeare's queen does in the original Act V, scene i - she merely pities him:

Oh my dear Lord, think not I meant t'upbraid
Your Misery - [weeps over him]²¹

For the royal couple's final meeting in Act V, Tate added a dramatic new stage direction:

Enter King Richard guarded, seeing the Queen, starts, she at the sight of him, after a pause he speaks

(whereas in the original the queen continues to speak as Richard enters). The king begs his wife to 'give Grief a Tongue', and this she proceeds to do, not, however, by robustly reproaching and seeking to strengthen her husband, as in Shakespeare's play, but by pouring

out a torrent of tearful pity:

Lean on my Brest whilst I dissolve to Dew,
And wash thee fair agen with Tears of Love.²²

Tate created a long and passionate farewell scene to delay the queen's departure for France. She at first refuses to go and Richard exclaims joyously,

Ive lost a single frail uncertain Crown,
And found a Virtue Richer than the World:
Yes, Bird of Paradise, wee'll perch together,
Sing in our Cage, and make our Cell a Grove.²³

The lines echo King Lear's unbearably moving 'We two will sing like birds i' the cage' to Cordelia. Since Tate had already written his adaptation of King Lear by this date it is hardly surprising that he should borrow from such a powerful scene to load his own drama with more emotion. When Richard and his queen finally must part she throws herself to the ground and Northumberland has to drag her away (as also Don Carlos and the Queen had to be separated in Otway's Don Carlos). Tate also replaced the restraint and formality of the last goodbye in Shakespeare - the king's lines

We make woe wanton with this fond delay.
Once more, adieu; the rest let sorrow say -²⁴

with a passionate speech, full of repetition and sonorous statement which leaves nothing unsaid:

Permit yet once our Death-cold Lips to joyn,
Permit a Kiss that must Divorce for ever,
I'll ravish yet one more, farewell my Love!
My Royal Constant Dear farewell for ever!
Give Sorrow Speech, and let thy Farewell come,
Mine speaks the Voice of Death, but Thine is Dumb.²⁵

When Richard is alone in prison, instead of talking with the Groom and Keeper, Tate has him receive a letter from his wife:

My Isabell; my Royal Wretched Wife?
O Sacred Character, oh Heav'n-born Saint!²⁶

He voices a dozen more lines of rapture and sits down to answer the letter; it is then that the murderers enter. The overall result

of Tate's alterations to the queen's part, apart from extending it, was to transform Richard and his wife into a pair of helpless, hopeless lovers immediately recognizable from earlier tragedies such as Otway's Don Carlos and Dryden's All for Love.

Tate altered Coriolanus to similar effect. In The Ingratitude of a Commonwealth, or, The Fall of Caius Marius Coriolanus (1681) the dramatist again made much of the hero's relationship with his wife and her anxiety for his welfare. While Shakespeare's Virgilia is described as being her husband's 'gracious silence',²⁷ Tate gave his Virgilia (actress unknown) many new lines in an attempt to focus attention on her fearful anguish. In the first scene of his adaptation in which Virgilia appears (having changed Volumnia's original 'express yourself in a more comfortable sort', to the more pathetic 'spare those feeble Tears'²⁸) the dramatist had her answer her mother-in-law in an aside:

Excuse my Tenderness, that Wishes still
For Peace and Martius: What's this Monster Country
That must be Fed with my Dear Martius's Blood?²⁹

In Act II Shakespeare gives Virgilia no words of welcome for her husband, but Tate added,

Ah my Dear Lord, What Means that Dismal Scarf?
My Joy lies folded There!³⁰

When the women take leave of Coriolanus Shakespeare gives Virgilia only a single exclamation, 'O the gods!', which Tate expanded into six lines of fear and anxiety. As in The History of Richard II (and the leavetaking of the Macduffs in Davenant's Macbeth), Tate here took the opportunity of creating pathos by building up the emotion in a farewell between husband and wife. Coriolanus calls his son Martius, his 'little Life', to be a comfort to Virgilia when he is gone, and at his boy's innocent prattle the father is moved to

tears.

Virgilia also has two more speeches in the scene where the women beg Coriolanus to spare Rome, whereas in Shakespeare's play she says almost nothing. Finally Tate totally reworked the end of the play: the women resolve to travel to Corioles to 'save Rome first, and then Coriolanus',³¹ - though, as a critic points out, 'how that could possibly have been accomplished Tate does not trouble to suggest'.³² The achievement of their object is, of course, unimportant; the purpose of the action is to establish the heroism of the female characters and to place Virgilia in an unprotected position, so that her rape by Aufidius may be attempted and finally her violent death brought about. A rape scene here would have had suggestive possibilities, but Tate discarded these in favour of pathos: at the sight of 'Virgilia brought in wounded' Aufidius' lustful rage is extinguished and he dies. The stage is thus set for a tear-jerking farewell of the lovers. Having explained the circumstances of her fatal wound to her husband, Virgilia dies and this is followed by the sentimental death of young Martius. At last Coriolanus perishes, embracing his wife and son. The last act of The Ingratitude of a Commonwealth is Tate's most radical departure from Shakespeare and vividly illustrates the kind of effects dramatists now sought.

The new importance of the heroine is particularly well illustrated by the best-known Restoration adaptation of a play by Shakespeare, Tate's notorious The History of King Lear (1680).³³ This play was by far the most successful of his adaptations to be produced: there are known revivals in May 1687, February

1688 and February 1689, as well as, of course, throughout the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth,³⁴ when Tate's rather than Shakespeare's was the version of King Lear usually performed. Tate altered the whole weight of the original drama so as to place the love of the 'hero' for the 'heroine' at its centre: Edgar and Cordelia become the main characters. In the dedication to the printed edition of the play, Tate explained that he felt a passion between Cordelia and Edgar to be the best way of holding the play together and of providing Cordelia with a convincing motivation for her actions in the first scene:

'Twas my good Fortune to light on one Expedient to rectifie what was wanting in the Regularity and Probability of the Tale, which was to run through the whole ... Love betwixt Edgar and Cordelia This renders Cordelia's Indifference and her Father's Passion in the first Scene, probable. It likewise gives Countenance to Edgar's Disguise, making that a generous Design that was before a poor Shift to save his Life.

Tate's intention was, most importantly, again to create a sense of compassion for the main characters, to heighten the 'Distress of the Story', by the changes in plot. Tate added that although he was 'Rack't with no small Fears for so bold a Change', he found it 'well receiv'd by my Audience'.³⁵ (Tate, incidentally, also added several highly voluptuous scenes between Edmund and Regan - another alteration one might expect after the introduction of actresses.)

The major effect of Tate's alteration is to transform King Lear into a vehicle for an actress. More than a hundred years later the author of the Memoirs of Mrs. Siddons commended Tate's Lear for the scope it offers its leading lady:

On the 21st January, 1788, the tragedy of King Lear was revived, in which she herself (Mrs. Siddons) performed Cordelia, a character of no great power.... The play acted was Nahum Tate's alteration, who has the fame of contriving the love intrigue between Cordelia and Edgar, without which circumstance, perhaps, the youngest daughter of Lear would

hardly have been deemed of sufficient importance to call upon the talents of a great actress ... female interest should be had for our audiences if it can be admitted without serious injury to the work.³⁶

The success of the adaptation in the first place was probably at least partly due to the fact that Mrs. Barry, fresh from success in The Orphan and Theodosius, created the role of Cordelia.

The story of this King Lear becomes the story of the sufferings of two lovers and their families. A love scene occurs almost as soon as the play begins, to establish the heroine's wretched and therefore pitiable situation:

Alas! What wou'd the wretched Edgar with
The more unfortunate Cordelia?
Who in Obedience to a Father's will
Flies from her Edgar's Arms to Burgundy's?³⁷

This, then, is the reason for Cordelia's apparent coldness in the next scene, between Lear and his daughters. Shakespeare's idea that her sparing replies show honesty, as opposed to the insincere effusions of Regan and Goneril, is totally alien to the popular view of tragedy at this time when the depth of a character's feelings is almost invariably measured by the number of lines she has to say. Edgar's main concern is to prove the sincerity of his passion for Cordelia. When Edmund tells him to flee because his father has threatened his death he seems relatively unconcerned; he is far more preoccupied with the question of whether or not Cordelia really cares for him -

Friend I obey you. - O Cordelia!³⁸

His disguise as poor Tom becomes a means of pursuing and protecting the vulnerable Cordelia.

Cordelia meanwhile pleads help for her father from Gloucester.

In doing this she offers the popular, moving vision of weeping beauty in an attitude of supplication that Mrs. Barry could perform so well.

Edmund exclaims

O charming Sorrow! How her Tears adorn her,
Like Dew on Flow'rs, but she is Virtuous,
And I must quench this hopeless Fire i'th'kindling.³⁹

As in her role as Lavinia in Caius Marius, Mrs. Barry was here called upon to express her feelings with heightened, rhetorical passion, as her Shakespearean counterpart would never have done:

And I have only one poor Boon to beg,
That you'd convey me to his breathless Trunk,
With my torn Robes to wrap his hoary Head,
With my torn Hair to bind his Hands and Feet,
Then with a Show'r of Tears
To wash his Clay-smear'd Cheeks and Die beside him.⁴⁰

Cordelia goes to the heath to aid her father, but is there seized by Edmund's ruffians for the rape he intends, before being rescued by Edgar. Her lover then reveals himself and explains that he took the disguise merely in the hope of supporting 'wretched Cordelia'.⁴¹ At this evidence of genuine affection Cordelia is moved to disclose her own love.

As in the original, Lear and Cordelia are reunited. Cordelia's exclamation, after her father has been led away, is significant:

That I cou'd shift my Sex, and die me deep
In his Opposer's Blood! But as I may,
With Women's Weapons, Piety and Pray'rs,
I'll aid his Cause.⁴²

The lines briefly hark back to earlier tragic heroines in male disguise, but Cordelia rejects the endeavours of women like Settle's Amavanga to fight like men. With the marked decrease in heroic drama the need for a shift in sex in the heroine is no longer necessary. Cordelia is typical of the leading tragic heroines of the 1680s and 1690s in that she, like Monimia and Athenais, shows her

virtue through passive suffering.

The last act of Tate's drama utterly transforms Shakespeare's tragedy by having the king and Cordelia rescued from death in the nick of time by Edgar and Albany - that is, Cordelia is rescued by Edgar for the second time. The end of the play is a celebration of their faithful love in which Edgar and Cordelia are treated as god and goddess. 'W'are past the fire,' says Edgar, 'and now must shine to Ages'. The 'Celestial Pair' are now to rule the kingdom while Lear retires into obscurity with Kent. The play concludes with a paean of praise from Edgar to Cordelia:

Divine Cordelia, all the Gods can witness
 How much thy Love to Empire I prefer!
 Thy bright Example shall convince the World
 (Whatever Storms of Fortune are decreed)
 That Truth and Vertue shall at last succeed.⁴³

Tate's Lear is, in a sense, a celebration of the virtuous heroine, who exemplifies the moral that 'Truth and Vertue' shall triumph. Edgar's speech could also be used as a guide to much future tragedy in that in Venice Preserved the following year, and in all subsequent 'she-tragedy', 'Love' was preferred to 'Empire', or indeed to any other consideration.

Venice Preserved and Mrs. Barry

Mrs. Barry's role as Belvidera in Otway's Venice Preserved (1682) formed the climax of the successful association of playwright and actress.⁴⁴ In his creation of this part Otway was clearly impressed by her performance as Teraminta in Lee's Lucius Junius Brutus. Having noted Belvidera's relation to Desdemona (also the daughter of a Venetian senator) and to Portia in Julius Caesar (to whom Belvidera

is compared in the play), Otway's biographer R.G. Ham draws attention to the numerous parallels between the plot and characters of Lucius Junius Brutus and those of Venice Preserved.⁴⁵ In particular, he regards Teraminta's testing of Titus' loyalty to his father, and her ensuing efforts to dissuade him from joining Tiberius' conspiracy, as early drafts of Belvidera's attempt to persuade Jaffeir to save the Venetian Senate. This idea seems reasonable. Lee and Otway clearly did influence one another and the same three players who took the lead roles in Lucius Junius Brutus - Barry, Betterton and Smith - created the Belvidera-Jaffeir-Pierre triangle in Venice Preserved (although in a sense, the two actors reversed parts, Betterton playing the gentler lover, Jaffeir, and Smith the strong-minded rival to the heroine, Pierre). Also Mrs. Barry probably played Teraminta so powerfully that Otway, already especially attached to the actress, was encouraged to create another such role for her, in which she was placed at the centre of the action. It is even tempting to suggest parallels between Belvidera's dominance over Jaffeir and Barry's over Otway, as at least one critic has done.⁴⁶

However it came about, Barry's role in Venice Preserved represents an important advance for the actress in Restoration tragedy. Although the plot of the play can be linked to the Popish plot and other contemporary events,⁴⁷ in its dramatic effect politics are subordinate to pathos and passion. As noted in chapter 1, Otway's main addition to his source was to create Belvidera⁴⁸ and in his play the heroine, not the hero, is the main protagonist. Perhaps echoing Teraminta's words,

There's something at your heart that I must find;
I claim it with the privilege of a Wife,

Belvidera demands from Jaffeir an equal share in the action:

Look not upon me as I am, a woman,
But as a bone, thy wife, thy friend.⁴⁹

Unlike Monimia, Belvidera does not exert her sexual power passively, and she succeeds in her determined resolution to make Jaffeir betray the conspiracy. It is she who decides the fate of the main characters and of Venice itself. Aline Mackenzie Taylor supports the view that Venice Preserved is a vehicle for a great actress rather than a great actor, arguing that Belvidera also possesses a moral dominance over her husband:

Belvidera dominates the crucial action as Pierre cannot - her role is the longest and most arduous in the old repertory of stock plays - whereas Jaffeir, who is so much under the influence of each, can very easily topple from his precarious perch as hero of the action.⁵⁰

The forcefulness of the heroine's character is conveyed in the first long account of her. Pierre's description of the grieving Belvidera creates a painting in words which is one of majesty as well as pathos:

Thy beauteous Belvidera, like a wretch
That's doomed to banishment, came weeping forth,
Shining through tears, like April suns in showers
That labor to o'ercome the cloud that loads 'em,
Whilst two young virgins, on whose arms she leaned,
Kindly looked up, and at her grief grew sad,
As if they caught the sorrows that fell from her.
Even the lewd rabble that were gathered round
To see the sight, stood mute when they beheld her,
Governed their roaring throats and grumbled pity.⁵¹

The heroine's first appearance, 'with two attendants', shortly after, brings the pathetic picture to life and gave Barry an impressive first entrance. Jaffeir's praise of his wife comes close to worship of the female sex:

Oh Woman! lovely Woman! Nature made thee
To temper Man: we had been brutes without you.⁵²

At the end of the play Barry, rather than Betterton or Smith, was the centre of attention. Belvidera remains the main source of pathos: after Jaffeir

and Pierre are dead she goes mad. In a tour de force for the actress, she frantically imagines she sees the ghost of her husband and eventually perishes calling to him:

Hoa, Jaffeir, Jaffeir!
 Peep up and give me but a look. I have him!
 I've got him, father! Oh now how I'll smuggle him!
 My love! my dear! my blessing! Help me, help me!
 They have hold on me, and drag me to the bottom.
 Nay - now they pull so hard - farewell - (She dies)⁵³

Banks' She-Tragedy

John Banks could be said to have completed the process of centring pathetic tragedy on women. A modern editor of The Unhappy Favourite (1682), T.M.H. Blair, has no hesitation in awarding him the credit for a new development in English drama, arguing that he was first to realize the full potential of the actress:

In plays regularly written for the Restoration stage parts were being created to suit individual actresses, and this practice naturally had its effect upon ... adaptations. Banks realized to the fullest extent the possibilities before him and therefore the increasing importance of women on the stage is a factor which must be taken into account in an explanation of his development. Banks, in making his drama revolve about the tragic ladies of history, made them the focal interest of the plot. In this respect he was an innovator.⁵⁴

By giving English historical tragedy (in the tradition of Shakespeare's history plays, or more recently, Tate's Richard II and Crowne's Henry VI) a focus on a distressed heroine, Banks did create something slightly different, but Blair greatly overestimates the originality of his achievement. The Unhappy Favourite and Banks' later plays use women in familiar ways, with fearful, suffering heroines, cruelly separated lovers and erotic descriptions: the difference is really just that Banks placed these elements within an English historical setting. His tragedies are not so much a change of direction as the

culmination of twenty years' growing appreciation of the actress and ways in which she could be used.

Banks was clearly eager to follow the fashion for women in tragedy, but, perhaps because he was writing for the King's Company which had no single tragedienne of Barry's stature, he followed his source, a novel called The Secret History of the most Renowned Queen Elizabeth and the Earl of Essex, and gave the play three leading female roles, rather than a single pathetic heroine (whereas his next tragedy, written for the Duke's Company, contains only one leading female role). The veteran Anne Quin, experienced in all manner of tragic roles, played Queen Elizabeth, Mrs. Corbett who specialized in gentle, timorous females (she created the role of Melesinda in Dryden's Aureng-Zebe) played Rutland, Essex's wife, and Sarah Cooke, 'highly regarded for romantic or tragic roles', played Nottingham, the villainess.⁵⁵ All three were well practised and proficient in tragic roles.

The three women dominate the plot in that they initiate what little action there is. Smarting from Essex' refusal of her love, Nottingham, the 'Machiavile of all thy Sex',⁵⁶ plots her revenge on Essex, using the adoring Burleigh as tool. Her furious rants and petulant tearing of his letter show that the motive behind her scheming is personal spite rather than political ambition - the rejection of her 'celebrated Charms'. In this sense Banks was no more 'feminist' than any other tragic dramatist of the period and merely continued tradition; although his women control the action they are not interested in affairs of state. They are essentially still domestic creatures for whom personal relations are paramount. Even Elizabeth

is seen wrestling with her private passions, rather than showing the 'heart and stomach of a king'. The historical background of the play, like the politics of Venice Preserved, acts mostly as an entertaining backdrop to a series of dramatic love conflicts. An echo from Lady Macbeth's famous soliloquy in one of Nottingham's later speeches,

Now Dragons Blood distill through all my veins,
And Gaul instead of Milk swell up my Breasts,
That nothing of the Woman may appear,
But horrid Cruelty, and fierce Revenge -⁵⁷

was clearly not inserted to suggest a specific parallel between Banks' villainess and Shakespeare's ambitious queen (as, for example, Otway did intend in the comparison of Belvidera and Brutus' Portia). Banks borrowed the idea merely to exploit a satisfyingly thrilling image in relation to his villainess at an appropriate moment.

As we have seen become popular (in Davenant's Macbeth, for instance, or Lee's Alexander the Great), a soft, exaggeratedly feminine heroine acts as a foil to the ranting villainess. The Countess of Rutland constitutes the play's main source of pathos as she pleads, weeps and swoons in the face of her husband Essex's sufferings - like Tate's wives in The Ingratitude and Richard II. She enhances the sense of his distress with fears for his safety and supplications to the queen for mercy on his behalf. The fact that she is pregnant adds more pathos to her pleas:

And ah, which cannot choose but stir your heart
The more to pity me, th'unhappy frighted Infant,
The tender Off-spring of our guilty Joyes,
Pleads for its Father in the very Womb,
As now its wretched Mother does.

Like Monimia, the Countess' role as pathetic victim is enhanced by sensual emphasis on her feminine traits of physical frailty and softness. When she runs weeping before the queen and clutches her robe,

her pleading has a strain of sensuality:

O throw me not away - Wou'd you be pleased
 To feel my throbbing Breast, you might perceive,
 At ev'ry name, and very thought of Essex,
 How my Blood starts, and Pulses beat for fear,
 And shake and tear my Body like an Earth-quake.⁵⁸

Finally as 'women take off her hold' on the queen, the frail Countess collapses before being literally carried out by her attendants. She passes out again at her final farewell to Essex before he is led out to be executed. Such extreme sensitivity had by this time become a vital adjunct of the pathetic heroine, emphasizing both visually and verbally her excessive state of suffering.

The figure of Queen Elizabeth completes the range of dramatic effects from his actresses that Banks was able to achieve in The Unhappy Favourite. The main dramatic conflict of the play is centred upon Elizabeth and her struggle between her unconquerable attraction to Essex and her duty to condemn him. There is all the more suspense in this struggle because she has to keep it to herself and preserve an outer semblance of majesty (although she does indulge in more anguished asides than any other Restoration heroine to date). The idea of portraying a female ruler struggling with her unrequited love for an unsuitable man was not new (see, for instance, Zempoalla in Dryden's The Indian Queen or Fulvia in Joyner's The Roman Empress) but Banks took its potential for emotive effect much further than any of his predecessors had done.

To the end, the queen's love for the hero triumphs over her anger; her status as a pathetic victim is unimpaired because her decision to have Essex executed is prompted by a deception by Nottingham, rather than being her own conscious choice. Elizabeth

is prepared to save Essex if he returns the ring she gave him together with a humble request that his life be spared. For no obvious reason, she uses Nottingham as her intermediary, and naturally the villainess reports falsely that the Earl remained obstinate and aggressive. Too late Elizabeth discovers her mistake, and she and Rutland are left to mourn the unfortunate Essex together. The play's conclusion is an excellent example of the way in which suspense in such pathetic tragedy is created by outside circumstances, rather than through character development. Although she is also a queen, Elizabeth is primarily that familiar female type, the virtuous tender heroine. It would be outside the bounds of that type if she were to be made vengeful and bitter; she remains, to the end, like Monimia or Athenais, the victim of a terrible misunderstanding. Banks developed the ramifications of her tragic situation as far as he possibly could, but he did not develop her character. As Steele noted, the moving effect of The Unhappy Favourite is created not through language and character so much as through the situations in which the characters find themselves.

The Unhappy Favourite is not strictly a she-tragedy in that Essex is as important a character as any of the women. Essex is an interesting figure because he represents the final stage in the emasculation of the hero before the heroine definitely took over as the main protagonist of pathetic tragedy. In this play he has the main role of innocent, suffering victim, supported by Rutland. As serious drama shifted its emphasis from masculine glory to pathos, the hero first grew more traditionally feminine in his behaviour, before fading out in favour of the heroine. His role changed from an active to a passive one, from protagonist to victim, his status as

a powerful ruler or warrior (if he had such a status; Castalio and Polydore, for example, do not) became irrelevant and he was required only to suffer, to lament and even, on occasion, to weep. Although still a heroic hero, Dryden's Aureng-Zebe, for instance, is gentler, more temperate and more loving than his heroic predecessors, and can be reduced to tears. Once pathos became a play's main aim, the heroic hero was further debilitated so that by Lucius Junius Brutus we have a hero, Titus, who is in a permanent state of intense emotional vulnerability, weeping before his father and in the face of death, and continually expressing anguish of some kind - be it melancholy, terror or shame. Even his tough and powerful father, Brutus, is called upon to weep at times - when he says farewell to his son and when Teraminta pleads that Titus' life be spared. The logical conclusion of this development was for dramatists to place a woman rather than man at the centre of tragedy. The beset heroine is the obvious recourse of affective drama since she is by definition a weak, passive being, inclined to weep and plead and excluded from the glorifying arenas of war and empire.

Essex stands as the drama's final attempt to make the hero the main character of affective tragedy. Banks simply made him behave as a pathetic heroine would do. In his audiences with Elizabeth, the traditional male-female roles are reversed, she being moved to pity by his pleading. Essex laments his misfortunes in a manner more reminiscent of Monimia than Alexander:

Where art thou Essex! where are now thy Glories!
Thy Summers Garlands, and thy Winters Lawrels,
The early Songs that ev'ry morning wak'd thee.

When he asserts himself the queen strikes him a box on the ear and his anguished response is almost ridiculous:

Ha! Furies, Death and Hell! a Blow!
Has Essex had a Blow!⁵⁹

Always weak, the unfortunate Essex is occasionally in danger of losing his dignity entirely.

Anna Bullen

Banks' next tragedy, Anna Bullen (March 1682), probably appeared a month or so after Venice Preserved, and has a distressed heroine, created by Mrs. Barry, rather than a distressed hero. The reason for this change must at least partly have been that Banks was now writing for the Duke's Company and so had a great tragic actress at his disposal. While the success of The Unhappy Favourite presumably encouraged Banks to write another English historical drama, in the character of Anne Boleyn, or Anna Bullen, he was able affectingly to combine for Barry the conflicting passions and queenly majesty of Elizabeth, the sensuous femininity of Rutland and the tragically misunderstood innocence of Essex:

For Anna Bullen ... I drew her in all the nicest Ideas that ever my Pen or Fancy could be capable of.⁶⁰

In the opening scenes of the play it is explained that Anna Bullen was tricked into believing that her love Piercy (played by Betterton) had married Lady Diana Talbot, and so she was persuaded to marry King Henry VIII. Having set up this potentially tragic situation, Banks had only to develop the circumstances in a way which provided the maximum dramatic tension and affecting pathos from the actress. The queen is assailed on one side by a jealous King Henry who does not believe that she cares for him, and on the other by a reproachful Piercy who believes her inconstant. At the same time

the evil Cardinal Wolsey and the ambitious Lady Elizabeth Blunt (another ranting villainess in the style of the Countess of Nottingham) plot her downfall and execution. The heroine herself is passive; her role in the drama is to respond with appropriate anguish to each new twist in the situation. As she puts it,

Was ever Virtue stormed like mine?
 Within, without, I'm haunted all alike:
 Without tormented with a jealous King;
 Within, my Fears suggest a thousand Plagues,
 Bid me remember injur'd Piercy's wrongs.⁶¹

Thus Mrs. Barry had the fullest possible scope for deploying her 'power' in the 'art of exciting pity'.

The hallmark of the pathetic heroine is her sensitive vulnerability. As Southerne was to do with Isabella in The Fatal Marriage, Banks emphasized the queen's suffering by expressing it in physical terms, as of a frail body brutalized by misfortune. Anna Bullen does not actually appear raped, maimed or bleeding, but the discovery that she need not have married Henry at all is a physical weight pressing upon her:

If I can bear all this, I challenge Atlas
 To Live under a Load so vast as mine.

A meeting with Piercy elicits the cry

Help, for I stagger with the treble weight
 Of Grief, Despair, and Pity!

When she finally leaves him her physical exhaustion reinforces the sense of her unbearable suffering:

Piercy, adieu - I can - I will - I must
 No more.⁶²

When she does dare to meet him again she swoons with emotion and Piercy picks her up before guards burst in and she is arrested for treason. The way in which the suffering of the pathetic heroine is portrayed here is clearly part of the general trend, observed in the previous chapter, of suggestively emphasizing the vulnerable

femininity of the actress by making her the victim of violence.

Maternity - that hallowed and, of course, exclusively female state - is also used to enhance Anna Bullen's status as innocent victim. She, like the Countess of Rutland, is pregnant, while, in the most sentimental scene of the play, her daughter the Princess Elizabeth pleads to Henry for her mother's life:

Pray save my Mother, Dear King-Father do;
And if you hate her, we will promise both,
That she and I will go a great, huge Way,
And never see you more.⁶³

Like Lucius Junius Brutus, Henry cannot resist a twinge of compassion in the face of female supplication (the fact that such hard-hearted rulers are moved renders the scene more affecting for the audience), but, as history of course dictates, he too conquers his pity and the drama is not deprived of its tragic ending.

Banks led up to Anna's final ordeal, her unjust beheading, with a climactic series of emotional farewells. Her last scene suggests a moving tableau. The stage directions state 'Enter Queen going to Execution all in White: Diana, Women in Mourning; Guards'. The women become a kind of wailing chorus:

Alas! Most Gracious Mistress, none can wish
Themselves more Innocent for Death, than you.

Bullen bids goodbye first to her brother, and then to her child, her farewells punctuated by a suspenseful succession of messages that the other traitors are being despatched. Banks built up the tension also by playing upon the emotion inherent in the idea of a woman's beheading:

My Lord, I've but a little Neck;
Therefore I hope he'll not repeat his Blow;
But do it, like an Artist, at one Stroke.

Finally, the heroine's turn for the scaffold comes. She forgives the King, prophesies that her daughter will become a great queen, embraces Diana for Piercy (whose absence at this point focused more attention on Barry) and goes triumphantly to her execution: 'For Innocence is still its own Reward'.⁶⁴ Thus Anna Bullen gives us full-blown she-tragedy.

She-tragedy as a Popular Genre

Mrs. Barry repeated her success as Monimia, Belvidera and Anna again and again. Her popularity and influence is reflected in the fact that similar tragic roles for her were added to essentially masculine plays. Dryden, for instance, added Marmoutier to The Duke of Guise (1682) although her part is quite unnecessary to the plot and probably did not exist in the first version of this drama.⁶⁵ Crowne similarly created an underplot for his Darius, King of Persia (1688) which would enable Mrs. Barry to delight audiences as the suffering Barzana. Female pathos remained a staple ingredient of the tragic repertoire until the end of the century and well beyond in such plays as Lee's The Princess of Cleve (prob. 1682), Settle's Distress'd Innocence, or, The Princess of Persia (1690), Southerne's The Fatal Marriage (1694), Pix's Queen Catharine, or, The Ruines of Love (1698) and Rowe's The Fair Penitent (1703).⁶⁶ Around 1690 the vogue for she-tragedy was further boosted by the emergence of Anne Bracegirdle as a leading tragic actress for the United Company alongside Mrs. Barry. As the younger of the two, Mrs. Bracegirdle usually performed the gentle, vulnerable heroine, while Mrs. Barry played a stronger, more mature type such as a ranting villainess, monarch or matron. At the same time Mrs. Barry never lost the position she had

gained in the 1680s as the queen of pathetic tragedy and this was reinforced by her creation of the title role in Southerne's hugely successful The Fatal Marriage in 1694.

In the dedication to the published edition of The Fatal Marriage Southerne attributed the success of this tragedy entirely to Mrs.

Barry:

I made the Play for her part, and her part has made the Play for me.⁶⁷

The play has all the main features of previous female-dominated pathetic drama: a domestic setting, the minimum of plot, a sexually desirable, endlessly suffering heroine for whom suicide is ultimately the only solution to her difficulties. Once her distressing circumstances are established (these being her poverty and the bigamy she unwittingly commits so that she, like Monimia, is both victim and adulteress), Isabella's role simply consists of reiterating her misery in tones ranging from wild distraction to stoical resignation:

Do! Nothing, no, for I am born to suffer.

Southerne underlined more strongly than Banks or Otway the sense of his frail heroine being cruelly and sadistically victimized by an unkind world. Officers arrive to plunder her house and she describes herself as the 'game of fortune',

The common spectacle, to be expos'd
From day to day, and baited for the mirth
Of the lewd Rabble.⁶⁸

Isabella's marriage to Villeroy alleviates her poverty but brings still greater anguish when her first husband, Biron, reappears. The sight of him sends her into a swoon and again she sees herself as the prey of the rabble:

My reputation! O, 'twas all was left me;
The vertuous pride of an uncensur'd life;
Which, the dividing Tongues of Biron's wrongs,

And Villeroy's resentments tear asunder,
To gorge the Throats of the Blaspheming Rabble.⁶⁹

No rabble appears in the play, but the verbs 'tear' and 'gorge' suggest that some inhuman force is waiting to dismember and devour her. Isabella visualizes Biron throwing her away when he discovers what she has done, 'curst', 'torn' and 'like a pois'nous Weed'.⁷⁰ The mental strain eventually cracks her sanity:

This little Ball, this ravag'd Province, long
Cannot maintain -⁷¹

The oblivion of madness is only temporary and she returns to sanity and more suffering than before:

To drive the horror back with greater force
Upon my Soul, and fix me mad for ever.⁷²

She is denied death as a relief from suffering - she swoons again at the fresh horror of Biron's murdered body but cannot die:

Doom'd to come back, like a complaining Ghost.⁷³

As she is pulled from his body her cries further emphasize her sense of being brutalized: 'O they tear me! Cut off my Hands'.⁷⁴

Finally, visibly battered, 'Her hair disheavel'd, her little Son running in before, being afraid of her', Isabella manages to stab herself, perishing eventually with the appropriate lines

The Waves and Winds will dash, and Tempests roar;
But Wrecks are toss'd at last upon the Shore.⁷⁵

Southerne's play, with its perhaps disturbing undercurrent of sadism, entertains its audience with the spectacle of a woman being remorselessly wrecked mentally and physically; its affecting power is wholly created by a wallowing in female suffering. It constitutes a type of drama quite unique to the Restoration and one which stems directly from the ways in which the new actresses were used and the impact they had upon the stage.

Maternity and Mrs. Barry

One of the most marked features of the character of Isabella is her passionate maternal feeling. Banks and Otway had already used motherhood to enhance the pitiable state of Belvidera, the Countess of Rutland and Anna Bullen, and as early as Dryden's All For Love helpless children were introduced to increase the anguish and pathos of the hero's dilemma. This use of children was nothing new (see, for instance, the pathos of Lady Macduff's son in Macbeth or the little Prince Mamillius in The Winter's Tale), but whereas the state of motherhood was relatively infrequently presented in Renaissance drama, as against fatherhood,⁷⁶ the introduction of the actress resulted in far more numerous presentations of a mother's feelings. Isabella's sufferings are magnified because her small son must share them. She is given further pain when her father-in-law agrees to care for the child so long as she never sees him again; she protests, 'I live but in my Child'.⁷⁷ Her death scene is rendered more affecting by her tearful farewell and blessing to her boy.

Such maternal feeling became used more and more often to evoke pity in tragedies of the 1690s and early 1700s.⁷⁸ As the leading exponent of she-tragedy Elizabeth Barry probably had some special responsibility for this development for, as she grew older, it would have been natural for dramatists to write such motherly roles for her, particularly in view of her frequent pairing with the younger Anne Bracegirdle. Thus we find her playing a mother in a number of turn-of-the-century tragedies: Pix's Queen Catharine (1698), Cibber's Xerxes (1699), Southerne's The Fate of Capua (1700),

Wiseman's Antiochus the Great, or, The Fatal Relapse (1701), Dennis' Liberty Asserted (1703) and Rowe's Ulysses (1705). Her success as a tragic mother must have encouraged dramatists at the rival theatre to supply such roles for other actresses. We find, for instance, when Cibber adapted Shakespeare's Richard III in 1699 he added a scene in which Queen Elizabeth (played by Mrs. Knight) weeps over the little princes as they are torn from her to be imprisoned in the Tower. Such scenes clearly succeeded in bringing tears to the eyes of theatre-goers. In 1711 The Spectator (No.44) noted that:

A disconsolate Mother with a Child in her Hand, has frequently drawn Compassion from the Audience, and has therefore gained a Place in several Tragedies ... a young Gentleman, who is fully determined to break the most obdurate Hearts, has a Tragedy by him, where the first Person that appears upon the Stage is an afflicted Widow in her Mourning-weeds, with half a Dozen fatherless Children attending her, like those that usually hang about the Figure of Charity.⁷⁹

The Conclusion of the Development: Rowe's Tragedy

Rowe's The Fair Penitent at the beginning of the eighteenth century may be said to mark the final stage of Barry-inspired she-tragedy. She created the central role of Calista and, although the play did not apparently do well initially (there are no records of revivals), after it was brought to the stage again twelve years later it remained hugely successful for over a century. A comparison with its source, The Fatal Dowry (pub. 1632) by Philip Massinger and Nathan Field, highlights the way in which this play stands as the apotheosis of the Barry pathetic mode.

Both plays deal with personal, as opposed to political events, but the domestic, private setting of Rowe's play is far more marked. The Fatal Dowry is the story of Charalois, an honourable young man who is driven to kill his faithless wife and her worthless lover, is acquitted of murder, but finally stabbed as he leaves the court by

the dead lover's loyal friend. However the true thematic centre of the play is not this individual and his misfortune but society as a whole and the overriding importance of a formal organized system of justice. The court acquits Charalois of murder, but as he dies he acknowledges the justice of his end. This thematic emphasis is reflected in the sheer number of characters in The Fatal Dowry. In addition to the half dozen memorable main characters there is a host of advocates, creditors and tradesmen, each with his own concerns and loyalties. The play also gives weight to both sides of the central conflict - it illustrates the feelings not only of those who care for Charalois, but also of those who support his rival. At the end one is no better than the other. The Fatal Dowry suggests that, since society is composed of many individuals, each with his own point of view, justice must be represented by an objective arbiter above them all.

On the other hand, like Southerne's The Fatal Marriage, The Fair Penitent focuses on a single female character and seeks to submerge the minds of the audience in her emotions. Events are presented only in relation to Calista; the first part of The Fatal Dowry (up to the marriage of Charalois and Beaumelle) is merely retold as past history in the opening scene and the killing of Lothario is shown not as an unlawful act, but as fuel for Calista's suffering. The character of the lover's father is omitted because his concern for his son would be a distraction and similarly Rossano, Lothario's friend, is reduced to being simply the audience to whom the lover can tell the story of the heroine's seduction. The conversation of the other main characters is predominantly concerned with Calista so that the early scenes become a build-up to her first

appearance.

Rowe changed the personalities of Massinger's main characters as well as their place in the drama for the same reason. Beaumelle is in many ways the least developed of Massinger's main characters - not even mentioned until Act II and dead by the end of Act IV. She is cold, hard-headed and determined on adultery until Charalois discovers her perfidy. Faced with his sorrowful accusations she apparently repents. This penitent speech was presumably the source of Rowe's Calista:

Though I was bold enough to be a strumpet.
 I dare not yet liue one: let those fam'd matrones
 That are canoniz'd worthy of our sex,
 Transcend me in their sanctity of life,
 I yet will equall them in dying nobly,
 Ambitious of no honour after life,
 But that when I am dead, you will forgiue me. 80

Charalois' response is, significantly, 'How pity steals upon me!' In this brief scene Rowe must have recognized Beaumelle's potential as a pathetic heroine. Beaumelle is always seen in action; after her marriage she loses no time in having an affair and she has little time to indulge in repentance for this before she is killed. Calista, by contrast, although she dominates the play, is a passive victim. Her seduction (which occurs before her marriage so she is never an adultress) occurred almost against her will. Her attraction to her seducer is a complicating factor, but one which should not obscure the central theme which is that she is essentially a noble figure on whom wrong-doing, the worst possible calamity, has fallen.

With dramatic emphasis shifted to the heroine, the Charalois equivalent in Rowe's tragedy becomes a weaker character. By having the events concerning the burial of Altamount's father narrated

instead of performed Rowe rejected the opportunity of establishing the hero's strength and nobility, as the eighteenth-century playwright and critic, Richard Cumberland, pointed out:

for who that compares Charalois, at the end of the second act of Massinger, with Rowe's Altamount at the opening scene of The Fair Penitent, can doubt which character has most interest with the spectators. We have seen the former in all the most amiable offices which filial piety could perform; enduring insults from his inveterate oppressors, and voluntarily surrendering himself to a prison to ransom the dead body of his father from unrelenting creditors. Altamount presents himself before us in his wedding suit, in the splendour of fortune and at the summit of happiness ... the happy and exulting bridegroom may be an object of our congratulation, but the virtuous⁸¹ and suffering Charalois engages our pity, love and admiration.

Cumberland's last comment is particularly significant. In Rowe's play Calista performs precisely the function he described for Charalois. She is presented as 'virtuous and suffering' and she 'engages our pity, love and admiration'. Altamount is to be viewed only in terms of his relationship with Calista. His killing of Lothario is presented not in terms of its effects on him, but of its impact on her. He does not die at the end of the play, but merely faints, thereby helping to convey the depth of sorrow and pity to be felt for Calista's death. Altamount's feebleness also renders the character of his rival more attractive than in the Massinger original. Because Lothario is loved by the most important person in the drama he gains in importance. Rowe's libertine has a certain charm and fascination whereas Massinger's adulterer remains merely a vain fop with animal appetites. Lothario actually admits that he would have married Calista had not his suit been rejected by her father, thereby adding to the sympathy the audience should feel for Calista.

The character of the heroine's father is in each case strongly affected by the dramatist's overall intention. Rochfort in his position as the retiring premier president of the court exemplifies

the honour and rectitude of official justice and Massinger also used him to present the conflict between personal feeling and public law. Rowe employed this inner conflict to very different effect. Sciolto's stern sense of Calista's guilt contributes to her suffering and drives her on to suicide, while his pity for her emphasizes the pathos of her anguish:

I have held the balance with an iron hand,
And put off ev'ry tender, human thought,
To doom my child to death; but spare my eyes
The most unnatural sight, lest their strings crack,
And my old brain split and grow mad with horror.⁸²

Rowe in fact used The Fatal Dowry only for its basic dramatic situation; he could really have chosen any earlier drama for his source so long as it had somewhere a female victim who would arouse pity. It is significant that Rowe did not acknowledge his Massinger source. The real inspirations of The Fair Penitent were the popularity of she-tragedy and the tragic ability of Elizabeth Barry. Like The Fatal Marriage this play relies almost entirely upon its leading lady's affecting portrayal of suffering for its effect. One can understand the opinion of the London Magazine critic in the early nineteenth century who, in his review of a revival of The Fatal Dowry at Drury Lane on 8th January 1825, noted that while 'Massinger's tragedy is full of poetry, downright vigorous dramatic dialogue, and full of character and stern passion', The Fair Penitent was simply 'a better acting piece'.⁸³ Rowe's source, like that of his predecessors, Otway, Lee and Banks, was the talent of a particular actress rather than the work of another dramatist. In the ensuing chapters I shall further explore this issue: the way in which the talent and typecasting of a popular actress could change and shape the course of drama.

FOOTNOTES

1. See Roswell G. Ham, Otway and Lee, New Haven, 1931, p.145.
2. Robert Hume and Judith Milhous point out that three months was the normal lapse between production and publication of a play during the 1680s. An early summer first performance of Theodosius is therefore 'a real possibility'. (Hume and Milhous, "Dating Play Premières from Publication Data, 1660-1700", Harvard Library Bulletin 1974, pp.390, 391.)
3. Nathaniel Lee, Works, vol.II, Theodosius, II, i, 381-2.
4. Ibid., I, i, 191-9.
5. Ibid., II, i, 350-2.
6. Otway, The Orphan, I, 269-70 and 356-60. Lee, Theodosius, II, i, 288-90, III, ii, 56-67.
7. Otway, The Orphan, V, 441.
8. Lee, Theodosius, V, iv, 75-6.
9. Lee, Works, vol.II, Lucius Junius Brutus, I, i, 58-9.
10. Ibid., IV, 367-9, 385-8.
11. Ibid., V, i, 58, 104-7.
12. Ibid., V, ii, 130-2.
13. See Lucius Junius Brutus, ed. John Loftis, 1968, introduction, pp.xii-xviii.
14. John Crowne, The Destruction of Jerusalem by Titus Vespasian, in 2 pt., 1677, Part II, the Epistle to the Reader.
15. John Crowne, Henry the Sixth, the First Part, 1681, Epistle Dedicatory.
16. Ibid., pp.27, 33.
17. Ibid., p.61.
18. Nahum Tate, The History of Richard II, 1681, The Epistle Dedicatory.
19. Ibid., p.31.
20. Ibid., pp.37, 38.
21. Ibid., p.39.
22. Ibid., p.48.
23. Ibid.

24. Shakespeare, King Richard II, V, i, 101-2.
25. Tate, Richard II, p.50.
26. Ibid., p.53.
27. Shakespeare, Coriolanus, II, i, 166.
28. Ibid., I, iii, 1-2. Tate, The Ingratitude of a Commonwealth, 1682, p.7.
29. Tate, The Ingratitude, p.8.
30. Ibid., p.15.
31. Ibid., pp.37, 54.
32. Hazelton Spencer, Shakespeare Improv'd, p.269.
33. The dedication to Richard II makes it clear that Tate's Lear was written before it, although not apparently produced until February 1681.
34. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, Tate's Lear had come under severe critical attack and in 1838 Macready's production of Lear restored most of the elements of Shakespeare's play (although some 12,000 lines of the original folio were still omitted).
35. Nahum Tate, The History of King Lear, in Shakespeare Adaptations, edited with an introduction and notes by Montague Summers, 1922, dedication 'To my Esteem'd Friend Thomas Boteler Esq.'. I have used this edition rather than the first edition because the final pages of the latter are missing in the British Library's only copy.
36. James Boaden, Memoirs of Mrs. Siddons, 1827, II, pp.234, 236.
37. Nahum Tate, The History of King Lear in Summers' Shakespeare Adaptations, p.183.
38. Ibid., p.189.
39. Ibid., p.209.
40. Ibid., p.210.
41. Ibid., p.233.
42. Ibid., p.239.
43. Ibid., p.252.
44. According to A General View of the Stage by one Mr. Wilkes, 1759, Otway was at work on a mysteriously lost tragedy when he died. This tragedy was also centred on a woman: 'The story was that of Iphigenia'. (Ham, Otway and Lee, pp.216-7.)

45. See R.G. Ham, Otway and Lee, p.198.
46. See Venice Preserved, ed. Kelsall, footnote on p.xxii.
47. For an account of the source of Venice Preserved, see chapter 1, footnote 88.
48. Venice Preserved may be related in various ways to the political situation of the time. It seems likely that both Antonio and Renault were intended as caricatures of Shaftesbury. The play cannot be read as an exact allegory of the Popish plot because Antonio, at least, is as corrupt as the conspirators, but the prologue does specifically refer to recent events. The tragedy clearly represents some comment on the Popish plot and recent upheavals.
49. Lee, Works, vol.II, Lucius Junius Brutus, II, i, 462-3. Venice Preserved, III, ii, 119-20.
50. Aline Mackenzie Taylor, Next to Shakespeare: Otway's 'Venice Preserved' and 'The Orphan' and their History on the London Stage, Durham, North Carolina, 1950, p.143.
51. Otway, Venice Preserved, I, 257-67.
52. Ibid., I, 336-7.
53. Ibid., V, iv, 24-9.
54. John Banks, The Unhappy Favourite, ed. T.M.H. Blair, New York, 1939, p.9. For an account of the source see this edition, pp.36-49.
55. Wilson, All the King's Ladies, p.131. Also, see pp.168- and 130-2 for lists of the roles previously performed by these three actresses.
56. John Banks, The Unhappy Favourite, 1682, p.64.
57. Ibid., p.57.
58. Ibid., p.54.
59. Ibid., pp.24, 41.
60. John Banks, Anna Bullen, 1682, dedication.
61. Ibid., p.48.
62. Ibid., pp.13, 51, 52.
63. Ibid., p.68.
64. Ibid., pp.70, 74, 75.
65. Since Marmoutier is never an integral part of any scene involving more than two people and is confined almost exclusively to the parts of the play which Dryden says he wrote later, one can

infer that she was an extraneous addition. She provides a love interest and is not directly connected to anything else.

66. See also for instance, William Mountfort's The Injur'd Lovers (1688), Crowne's Regulus (1692), Southerne's Oroonoko (1695), Pix's Agnes de Castro (1695) and Motteux' Beauty in Distress (1696). All these are of course not actually 'she-tragedies' in the strict sense of the word, but female distress is a vital part of their pathetic effect. Similarly Durfey's adaptation of Chapman's Bussy d'Ambois (1691) presents the heroine Tamira (played by Mrs. Bracegirdle) as a much more pathetic character than Tamira in the original.
67. Thomas Southerne, Works, vol.II, The Fatal Marriage, dedication 'To Ant. Hammond Esq.', 35-6.
68. *Ibid.*, II, ii, 66, II, iii, 23-5.
69. *Ibid.*, IV, iii, 153-7.
70. *Ibid.*, IV, iii, 266, 267.
71. *Ibid.*, V, ii, 18-19.
72. *Ibid.*, V, ii, 66-7.
73. *Ibid.*, V, iv, 61.
74. *Ibid.*, V, iv, 74-5.
75. *Ibid.*, V, iv, 251, 300-1.
76. Maynard Mack, for example, comments on the relatively small numbers of mothers, as opposed to fathers, in Shakespeare. See Maynard Mack, 'Rescuing Shakespeare', International Shakespeare Association Occasional Paper No.1, Oxford, 1979, p.8.
77. Southerne, Works, vol.II, The Fatal Marriage, I, iii, 265.
78. It should be pointed out that paternal feeling was also used to pathetic effect in, for instance, Dryden's Cleomenes (1692) and Catherine Trotter's The Fatal Friendship (1698).
79. The Spectator, Dublin, 1753, vol.I, pp.178-9. The use of children for pathetic effect is discussed in the chapter 'Repetition and Prolongation' in Arthur Sherbo's English Sentimental Drama, East Lansing, Michigan, 1957, pp.53-8.
80. Philip Massinger, The Plays and Poems of Philip Massinger, ed. Philip Edwards and Colin Gibson, Oxford, 1976, I, The Fatal Dowry, IV, iv, 69-75.
81. Richard Cumberland, The Observer, 1786, III, pp.273-4.
82. Nicholas Rowe, The Fair Penitent, ed. M. Goldstein, 1969, V, 108-12.
83. The London Magazine, vol.I, February 1825, pp.287-8. The Barry heroines of she-tragedy went on to inspire the cult of saintly

victimized womanhood which is prevalent in the novel as well as in drama throughout the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth. In his study of Samuel Richardson, for example, A.D. McKillop takes pains to point out that Restoration drama was the main literary background from which Richardson's novels developed (A.D. McKillop, Samuel Richardson Printer and Novelist, Chapel Hill, 1936, especially p.147 ff.). Like the plays which have been discussed here, Clarissa, for instance, gains its gripping effect from its audience's involvement with the prolonged and relentless anguish of a heroically suffering woman.

CHAPTER 4LIFE OVERWHELMING FICTION: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE
ACTRESSES AND THEIR AUDIENCE AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE DRAMA

The Restoration audience was accustomed to enjoying a drama on two levels for at least some of the time - in terms of the characters and their adventures, and in terms of the players behind the characters. The Restoration theatre was patronized regularly by various informed groups, most of whom were familiar with the real-life personalities and exploits of the members of the two companies and the gossip about them. This fact has been noted and discussed by a number of critics in recent years and some of its effects on the drama have been analysed.¹ However, in this respect, the important contribution of the actress alone has not been fully understood. In this chapter I should like to examine in detail the unique relationship between the most popular actresses and their audiences and, as no one has done before, to systematically relate these actresses' parts to the pro- and epilogues that they spoke and to what is known of their lives and reputations. It will become clear that, more than any other type of player, the leading actresses achieved a remarkable degree of intimacy with their public and that this intimacy had sometimes a considerable effect on the drama.

The Intimacy of the Restoration Theatre

The intimate, coterie atmosphere of the Restoration theatre in general encouraged a far greater involvement between actor and audience than had ever occurred before in England. The two theatres were patronized regularly by a relatively small fraction of London society in which the court figured largely. A good proportion of

the theatre-goers attended at least once a week, knew each other and members of both companies personally and almost considered the playhouses their private property. There is plenty of evidence to show how greatly the hushed and reverent atmosphere that we associate with watching a play today was lacking in the London theatres at this time. The audience might leave the auditorium and then come back to it, hiss, spit, even fight duels during the course of a play.² The Restoration player might have to yell to make himself heard at times, and would certainly have to cope with a variety of interruptions from critical spectators:

they spread themselves in Parties all over the House; some in the Pit, some in the Boxes, others in the Galleries, but principally on the Stage; they Cough, Sneeze, talk Loud, and break silly Jests; sometimes Laughing, sometimes Singing, sometimes Whistling, till the House is in an uproar; some Laugh and Clap; some Hiss and are Angry; Swords are drawn, the Actors interrupted, the Scene broken off, and so the Play's sent to the Devil.³

Such scenes must have encouraged every member of the audience to be aware of the struggling actors as real people, as well as in terms of the parts they played.

Further intimacy was achieved because spectators were free to go behind the scenes at any time and mingle with the players (and the actress was probably the main attraction of such backstage visits). The visits, like the catcalls and other interruptions from the auditorium were an effective means of keeping the spectator aware that the performers were 'only acting'. In his diary, for instance, Pepys recorded how he went backstage on one occasion and met Rebecca Marshall and Nell Gwyn, who had just been playing the saintly martyred Dorothea and her guardian angel, in Massinger's The Virgin Martyr. Even Pepys was shocked by the contrast between the stage roles of the two actresses and their behaviour in real life:

but Lord, their confidence, and how many men do hover about them as soon as they come off the stage, and how confident they [are] in their talk.⁴

On another occasion Pepys went through her part with Mary Knepp:

'and here I read the Qu's to Knepp while she answered me, through all her part of 'Flora Figarys', which was acted today'.

Once again Pepys was struck by the difference between actors on stage and off:

how poor the men [the actors] are in clothes, and yet what a show they make on the stage by candle-light, is very observable.⁵

The Audience and the Actress

For a variety of reasons, spectators tended to take a special interest in the private life of the actress. To begin with, women on the stage were a novelty and so people would come to the theatre out of curiosity to see what they were like as well as to watch them act a role. The prologue to Othello in 1660 by Thomas Jordan 'to introduce the first Woman that came to act on the Stage' implies that spectators' first reaction would be to wonder what such a person's private character could be like if she allowed herself to appear in public in such a profession:

Do you not twitter Gentlemen? I know
You will be censuring, do't fairly though;
'Tis possible a vertuous woman may
Abhor all sorts of looseness, and yet play;
Play on the Stage, where all eyes are upon her,
Shall we count that a crime France counts an honour?⁶

This prologue implies that the woman's personal morals will be judged before the merits of her performance: she is thus considered in her own person first, rather than in terms of the role she played.

Even after the actress was no longer a novelty, the tendency

to speculate and gossip about the morality of her personal behaviour remained. Partly also no doubt because Restoration satirists followed misogynist tradition in reserving their most vituperative abuse for women, as the descendants of Eve the temptress, contemporary theatrical satires refer in far more detail to the sexual liaisons of the actresses than they do to those of the actors. This is particularly true of Robert Gould's 'The Playhouse' (1700), in which the longest and most vicious attacks are upon female players:

Prepare we then to go behind the Scenes,
There to survey the Copper Kings and Queens,
Strutting in State, tho' Slaves by Nature meant,
As they were truly those they Represent:
But most the Women are Audacious seen,
All Paint their Outsides and all Pox within.

An actress is described:

What Satyr can enough the Villains Sting
That fight and stab for so abhor'd a Thing?
A ten times cast off Drab, a Hackny Whore,
Who when Sh'has ply'd the Stews and tir'd a Score,
Insatiate as a Charnell, yawns for more.

Although actors are declared to be 'As loose, as Vile, and Brutal in their Kind',⁷ the actual attack on them is noticeably briefer. Similarly the names of the actresses figure far more frequently in court satires of the period. 'Lampoons', for instance, describes how Mrs. Johnson passed through the hands of more than one keeper:

From Duke and from Lord pritty Johnson is fled
Thus kindly embraceing her Godfery she said,
If plenty of money my dearest had more
I should not be Counted so Arrant a Whore
If thou would'st maintaine me I'de not goe astray
Nor ever receive more rings from Tho: Gray.

'Satyr on both Whits and Toryes. 1683.' mentions in passing a liaison between Rebecca Marshall and the famous fop, Sir George Hewett:

With whom as much our Satyr strives in Vain
As Love, to wound his heart, since Marshal's Reign.⁸

'The Session of Ladies' (April 1688) is actually set in a playhouse where, among a variety of lecherous ladies known to the court, Mrs. Boutell, Mrs. Cox and Mrs. Barry compete for the favour of Adonis, the actor Cardell Goodman, who is enthroned upon the stage:

There was chestnut-maned Boutell, whom all the Town fucks,
Lord Lumley's cast player, the famed Mrs. Cox,
And chaste Mrs. Barry, i'th'midst of a flux
To make him a present of chancre and pox.⁹

Robert Gould's references to specific actresses include his account of Elizabeth James: an actress's fatal ability to charm a man's 'Patrimonial Lands' from him is accompanied by the phrase 'Think of Ned Bush - then think of Mistress James'.¹⁰ Through such satires the names and exploits of a number of actresses became public property.

The public fascination with actresses' private lives is shown by the way in which critics included references to the women's off-stage relationships in their dramatic criticism. The prompter John Downes in Roscius Anglicanus, for example, could not resist reminding readers of Moll Davis' involvement with King Charles after her performance in Davenant's The Rivals:

And all the Women's Parts admirably Acted: chiefly Celia, a Shepherdess being Mad for Love; especially in Singing several Wild and Mad Songs. My Lodging it is on the Cold Ground, etc. She perform'd that so Charmingly, that not long after, it Rais'd her from her Bed on the Cold Ground, to a Bed Royal.¹¹

Similarly in Gildon's critical Comparison Between Two Stages a discussion on Mrs. Barry's performance as Cleopatra includes a passing reference to her off-stage reputation:

Ramble: I do think that Person the finest Woman in the World upon the Stage, and the ugliest Woman off on't.

Sullen: Age and Intemperance are the fatal Enemies of Beauty; she's guilty of both, she has been a Riotter in her time, but the edge of her Appetite is long ago taken off.

An exchange about Anne Bracegirdle also includes speculation about her personal character:

Sullen: But does that Romantick Virgin still keep up her great Reputation?

Critic: D'ye mean her Reputation for Acting?

Sullen: I mean her Reputation for not acting: you understand me -¹²

Theatrical gossip soon came to be about male players as well, but there was, in general, far less public interest in their private lives. For example, the actors Edward Kynaston, Charles Hart and Cardell Goodman were all 'kept' by aristocratic ladies at some stage in their careers, but there is comparatively little contemporary comment on their situation. Even though 'The Session of Ladies' is centred upon female competition for the sexual services of Goodman, the women competing are really the focus of the writer's attacks. The same is true of Gould's account of Goodman's affair with the Duchess of Cleveland:

Now hear a Wonder and 'twill well declare
How resolutely lewd some Women are;
For while these Men we thus severely use,
Our Ladies differ hugely from the Muse;
Supply their wants, and raise 'em from Distress,
Advanc'd ev'n for their very Wickedness.
Goodman himself, an Infidel profess'd,
With Plays reads Cl d nightly to her Rest:
Nay in her Coach she whirls Him up and down,
And publishes her Passion to the Town.¹³

Of course, a number of theatre-goers knew actresses more intimately, in every sense, than they knew actors, because they arranged sexual liaisons with them. The majority of actresses would seem to have also been kept women of some kind, even if they were not strictly working prostitutes. Some women trod the boards solely with a view to gaining themselves a keeper, just as a number

of males attended the theatre with the intention of choosing themselves a mistress. As Robert Gould exaggeratedly put it:

An Actress now so fine a thing is thought,
A Place at Court less eagerly is sought.
As soon as in that Roll the Punk's engross'd
Some Reverend Bawd does thus the Drab accost,
Now is the Time You may Your Fortune raise,
And meet at once with Pleasure, Wealth and Praise,
'Tis now, like Nell you may Immortal grow,
Fam'd for your Impudence, and Issue too.¹⁴

Thus in numerous cases, an extremely personal, hitherto unknown, relationship between spectator and performer came into existence. The companies themselves, although they occasionally complained at losing talented actresses to keepers in the audience -

... our Women who adorn each play
Bred at our cost, become at length your prey¹⁵

- exploited the sexual availability of their women as a means of attracting audiences, advertising the fact in prologues and epilogues:

And last, to take away all sad Complaints,
These Plays debauch our Women into Saints.
Forgive it in the plays, and we'll engage,
They shall be Saints no where but on the Stage.

Item, you shall appear behind our Scenes,
And there make love with the sweet chink of Guinnies
The unresisted Eloquence of Ninnies.
Some of our Women will be kind to you,
And promise free ingress and egress too.¹⁶

Nell Gwyn and Moll Davis, mistresses of the king himself, were only two of many: Jane Long was kept by the courtier George Porter, Margaret Hughes by Prince Rupert, Elizabeth Barry by Lord Rochester, Mrs. Johnson by Henry, Earl of Peterborough, Susannah Uphill by Sir Robert Howard, and Betty Hall by Sir Philip Howard, to name but some of those whose involvements are definitely known.¹⁷

Sexual desire for a performer as well as the wish to see a play might now bring a man to the theatre. This is not to say that every man visited the theatre with the express intention of a sexual en-

counter with a prostitute, merely that the sensual attractions of the actresses, and the spectators' appreciation of them, added a new dimension to the act of watching a play. Thus Cibber declared of Mrs. Bracegirdle that

her Youth and lively Aspect threw out such a Glow of Health and Chearfulness, that on the Stage few Spectators that were not past it could behold her without desire.

Cibber's comment brought a disgusted and self-righteous response from the nineteenth-century editors (^{Maidment and Logan} ~~unnamed~~) of the plays of John Crowne:

This concluding observation seems strange to those whose habit it is to go to a Theatre for the purpose of seeing a play in a poetic, not in a sensual aspect, and who regard the performers merely as the automatons engaged to work out and illustrate the object the author had in view, and not as individual specimens of humanity of a low order, entirely apart from their theatric glory, who could for a moment be thought of for baser uses. The spectators who delighted in the drama before the introduction of women on the stage, could not possibly have any other attractions than those arising from the play itself, its poetry and action; and those who go to a theatre with other thoughts and designs have no true sense of the intention of Stage Plays, and certainly no feeling for its poetry.¹⁸

It is interesting to find this critic regarding all performers pre-1660 as simply 'automatons' while the actresses, because they could be considered 'for baser uses', are 'individual specimens of humanity'. One may dispute the critical assumptions behind the comments, but they do emphasize how much the Restoration spectator was aware of the woman behind the role.

The Restoration Prologue and Epilogue

The Restoration theatre also possessed one other unique link between actor and audience - that is, a new brand of highly familiar, highly personalized prologue and epilogue. Initial and concluding addresses to the audience of course existed in some form in both medieval and Renaissance English theatre. However, in the Restoration age prologues and epilogues became important parts of the

performance. Almost every play printed had its prologue and epilogue printed with it and a huge new range of possibilities in such addresses was realized.

Restoration prologues and epilogues were not limited to pleas for a good reception for a particular drama, as their predecessors often were: mostly they constituted spicy pieces of theatrical gossip, freely discussing personalities, politics, the rival company, current scandal and the latest improvements in scenery. They were generally more scurrilous, more satirical and more wittily polished than their Renaissance predecessors and they often contained personal references which meant that they could only be spoken by one particular player. These developments are highlighted if one compares, for instance, Jonson's prologue to Volpone with Wycherley's to The Country Wife (1675). Jonson's prologue, beginning

Now luck yet send us, and a little wit
Will serve to make our play a hit,¹⁹

is a specifically authorial address which promises a good comedy and instructs the audience. It could have been spoken by anyone, not even necessarily an actor in Volpone; sometimes prologues in Jonson's time may not have been spoken at all, but merely appeared in the printed text. Wycherley's prologue, on the other hand, was spoken, and clearly designed to be spoken, by the star of the play, Charles Hart, who played Horner. This is an intimate communication between actor and audience from which the playwright is jestingly excluded. Hart separates himself immediately from the dramatist, explaining he has been asked to speak on Wycherley's behalf:

Poets, like cudgelled bullies, never do
At first or second blow submit to you;
But will provoke you still and ne'er have done,
Till you are weary first with laying on.
The late so baffled scribbler of this day,
Though he stands trembling, bids me boldly say.

The prologue is tailored to what the public already know about the actor: with 'But though our Bayes's battles oft I've fought' he reminds spectators that he played heroes in several of John Dryden's tragedies - the name 'Bayes' was used to refer to Dryden in George Villiers' satirical attack on his tragedies, The Rehearsal (1671).

The central argument of Jonson's prologue is to praise and defend the playwright and the play: it promises to 'mix profit with your pleasure', to avoid 'monstrous and forced action' and plagiarisms, and to adhere to the three unities of time, place and action. The central argument of the Restoration address (possibly written with irony by Wycherley himself) is a joke in which Hart and the audience seem banded together against a quaking, yet aggressive author. The actor promises that he and his fellow players will anticipate spectators' dislike of any play and 'murder' it for them - that is, destroy it by acting it badly. This is, of course, also a joke against the players themselves, but it is couched in terms of a conspiracy between audience and performers. The prologue is not, of course, a sincere attack on Wycherley, but it does convey a sense of special intimacy between actor and spectator. Appropriately Hart's final comment -

We set no guards upon our tiring-room,
But when with flying colours there you come,
We patiently, you see, give up to you
Our poets, virgins, nay our matrons too²⁰

- is an invitation to the public to go behind the scenes and join the actors, and more to the point, the actresses.

Just occasionally Elizabethan and Jacobean prologues and epilogues do emphasize the actor's 'real' self - as, for instance, in the epilogue to Shakespeare's As You Like It or the induction to Marston's The Malcontent (1604). In the Restoration this is common-

place: Wycherley's prologue shows that by 1675 this type of address had become a familiar and direct communication between player and spectator. In fact, in view of the evidence of spectators' noisy behaviour during the course of a performance, a sort of conversation possibly took place, in which on one side the actor or actress delivered an outrageous and inflammatory speech, while on the other the audience hissed, cheered or yelled back comments, as it considered appropriate. In any case, such a style of address brought actors in their real selves closer to their public.

It is interesting to find that the moralist Jeremy Collier attacked prologues and epilogues for precisely this reason. Although he felt them to be no more coarse or indecent than play dialogue, the words were put into the mouths of real people, not of the imaginary characters:

Now here properly speaking the Actors quit the Stage, and remove from Fiction into Life. Here they converse with the Boxes, and Pit, and address directly to the Audience.... But here we have Lewdness without Shame or Example: Here the Poet exceeds himself.... And to make it the more agreeable, Women are Commonly pick'd out for this Service.²¹

Collier's criticism contains two points worthy of note. Firstly he felt that through prologues and epilogues the actors moved 'from Fiction into Life'. This being so, spectators would presumably become more aware of the performance as a fiction and the actors as themselves, merely playing fictional characters. Secondly, Collier was particularly disgusted to see that it was women who were commonly picked out to deliver the prologues and epilogues. It was the actresses, therefore, who entered most of all into this more intimate relationship with theatre-goers.

She-Prologues and Epilogues

In time a particularly familiar and personal type of prologue and epilogue became the special province of leading actresses,²² giving them a closer involvement with spectators than their male counterparts possessed. From the start, both the King's and the Duke's companies were quick to use the charms of their female members to put their audiences into a receptive and benevolent mood at the beginning and end of a performance. Thirty years into the period the epilogue to Durfey's Bussy D'Ambois, or, The Husband's Revenge (1691) was to make this point:

Writers sometimes may Interest want,
But something's in a Female supplicant,
The Learned tell us, that can never fail
To move the Kindly Nature of the Male.

Pepys was presumably not alone in finding an indifferent evening's entertainment offset by a good female address at the end: a visit to a revival of Shirley's Hyde Park elicited the comment,

It is but a very moderate play, only an excellent Epilogue
spoke by Becke Marshall.²³

With a mixture of coquettish humour and suggestiveness (aided in many cases by their wearing men's clothes), a number of leading actresses obviously proved very successful at coaxing their audiences into good humour.²⁴

Whereas before 1660 prologues and epilogues were hardly ever performed by a transvestite female speaker - as Rosalind puts it at the end of Shakespeare's As You Like It, 'It is not the fashion to see the lady the epilogue' - John Harold Wilson notes that during the period 1660-1710 at least a hundred were spoken by a particular named actress, in addition to some simply designed to be delivered by any female speaker. He calculates that of the women who became actresses

before 1689, at least twenty-six were entrusted with one or more prologues and epilogues.²⁵ My own reading indicates that this was far in excess of the number of named male players so entrusted. The only male speakers who figure with equal prominence were the leading comedians of the two companies - Nokes, Leigh, Underhill, Lacy and, most popular of all, Haines. But even Haines could not compete with the two greatest and most popular actresses: Wilson tells us that Anne Bracegirdle had at least nine prologues and twenty-two epilogues, Mrs. Barry, six prologues and twenty-one epilogues. These statistics suggest, incidentally, that epilogues were much more important than prologues; presumably the final impression counted most in creating the mood spectators took home with them and in perhaps obliterating the effects of a bad play.

A number of these 'she' prologues and epilogues were tailored closely to the stage roles and known personality of the speaker and so could not have been spoken by anyone else. In the epilogue to Aphra Behn's The City-Heiress, or, Sir Timothy Treat-all (1682), for example, 'written by a Person of Quality', the comedienne Mrs. Butler gently satirizes the low morals of her audience by making fun of her role in the play as the heroine Charlot:

My Part, I fear, will take with but a few,
A rich young Heiress to her first Love true!

She then hints at her own easy virtue through her ensuing appeal to the men in the audience:

What is't you see in Quality we want?
What can they give you which we cannot grant?
We have their Pride, their Frolicks, and their Paint
We feel the same Youth dancing in our Blood;
Our dress as gay.... All underneath as good.

Contemporary satires about Mrs. Butler's offstage life are in accord with the impression these lines create. The 'Satyr on both Whigs

and Toryes. 1683.' states that:

Whorwood, whom Butler clapt and made a Chiaux,
To save his Stake, marry'd, and clapt his Spouse,

while 'The Wedding' asks

But Butler oh thou Strumpet Termagant
Durst thou pretend to husband or gallant
Ev'n to thy owne Profession a disgrace
To sett up for a Whore with such a face
Who but an Irish Fool would make this Choice?²⁶

Thus in the epilogue Mrs. Butler is, in a sense, deliberately shrugging off her role and addressing spectators as 'herself', as she would have been known to them.

After Durfey's Love For Money, or, The Boarding-School (1691), Mrs. Butler and her co-star, William Mountfort, give an entertaining duologue as epilogue, arguing about their roles, again with suggestive reference to Mrs. Butler's other career:

B. D'ye hear me Mr. Mountford, pray come back,
D'ye know what I've done here?

M. Yes, play'd a Crack.

B. A Crack, what's that?

M. Pisk leave your bant'ring stuff,
I'm sure you know what th'word means well enough.

They discuss the way in which their roles have satirized whores and cullies:

M. The Satyr in my Part makes equal sport
As th'Poet thinks,

B. Ay, th'Devil take him for't.
When one Dutch Lover in a keeping way
One month is better than a twelve months play,

M. Is it so faith?

B. Yes as I make 'em pay.

Similarly the epilogue 'intended for' Rochester's Valentinian (1684), which was to have been spoken by Mrs. Barry, is full of

personal innuendo for those aware, as the majority of spectators are bound to have been, that Barry had been Rochester's mistress. In it she was to refer to Rochester as the 'new Genius' who:

As sharply could he wound, as sweetly engage,
As soft his Love, and as divine his Rage,
He charm'd the tenderest Virgins to Delight,
And with his Style did fiercest Blockheads fright.
Some Beauties here I see -
Though now demure, have felt his pow'rful Charms,
And languish'd in the Circle of his Arms.

The epilogue was printed with the note 'intended to have been spoken by Mrs. Barry'; perhaps the actress herself objected that the lines were too personal.

Barry's reputation for being mercenary in her sexual dealings - as Tom Brown bitterly put it, 'Should you ley with her all Night, She would not know you next Morning, unless you have another five Pound at her Service'²⁷ - was also played upon. Speaking as a mistress in the impudent prologue to Ravenscroft's The London Cuckolds (1681), 'written by a Friend', Barry declares:

But if with me Misses would counsel joyn,
We'd make the Tenant pay a swingeing Fine.

Re-entering 'as in a fret', having played the moody jilt in Durfey's The Intrigues At Versailles, or, A Jilt in All Humours (1697), Barry first complains at the role assigned to her:

How long, and oft, have I, in well wrought Scenes,
Dazled like Glittering Empresses and Queens,
Acted all passions, love, grief, joy and shame,
The Great Court Lady, and the City Dame.²⁸
And if sometimes, a wanton subject came
Yee Poets Characters, decent were, and civil,
But ours ... Curse on't here, makes me act the Devil.

However, she finds consolation in the idea of the money to be earned from the part:

The Play by Judges, has commended been,
And if it bring but the new Money in:
Money's a certain Medicine for my Spleen.

She concludes,

Mine's but a sort of Play-house constancy,
 My part, I own, I hate to a degree.
 But if it Money gets, will patience borrow,
 Set a good face, and play't agen tomorrow.

The epilogue implies a kind of cynicism about life and theatre, which is shared by the actress and her audience.

The Relation Between the Actress, her public persona and her stage roles: 1 - Mrs. Bracegirdle

The actresses who spoke their own personalized prologues and epilogues gained a public persona - a persona which was naturally, as we have seen, in line with the way in which they were portrayed in contemporary gossip and satire. Thus Mrs. Butler was popularly perceived as a jilt, Mrs. Barry as, among other things, a mercenary mistress. These images were generally based in some kind of truth: there is generally no smoke without fire in such cases. Although the gossip and the satire may have been greatly exaggerated we know for a fact that many of the actresses were also the mistresses of wealthy and aristocratic men. Mary Betterton, actress and chaste wife of Thomas, never figured in any scurrilous satire and never (as far as I have been able to ascertain) spoke a suggestive prologue in her life.

From the point of view of their influence upon the drama, it is irrelevant whether the implications of the 'she' prologues and epilogues were absolutely true or not. What is essential is that because of them the public was encouraged to see an actress as a particular type - Mrs. Butler as whore, for instance - so that dramatists then tended to base that actress's stage roles around her persona.

This pattern is particularly evident when one considers the epilogues and the roles, both comic and tragic, of Anne Bracegirdle.

The most striking feature of Mrs. Bracegirdle's epilogue persona is her reputation for chastity. Unlike many of her fellow actresses, she retained an unstained reputation. She never married and if she had lovers they were presumably carefully concealed. She may in reality have not been as chaste as she seemed: William Congreve could have been a successful lover and after him Robert Leke, third Earl of Scarsdale, who bequeathed her £1,000 in 1708.²⁹ Charles Gildon professed scepticism in A Comparison Between Two Stages:

Ramble: And Mrs. Bracegirdle ...

Critic: Is a haughty conceited Woman, that has got more Money by dissembling her Lewdness, than others by professing it.³⁰

However she was popularly seen as the perpetual virgin and so in the epilogue to Cleomenes (1692), for instance, she declares,

This Day, the Poet, bloodily inclin'd,
Has made me die, full sore against my Mind!
Some of you naughty Men I fear, will cry
Poor Rogue! would I might teach thee how to die!
Thanks for your Love; but I sincerely say,
I never mean to die, your wicked Way.

The popular pun on 'die', of course, involves the sense of experiencing sexual orgasm.

In view of this notorious virtue, it is not surprising that when Mrs. Bracegirdle played a role in which she had to expose her legs in man's dress - suggestive behaviour that one might not expect from an actress of spotless reputation - some reference to this should be made beforehand. In the prologue to Dufey's The Marriage-Hater Match'd (1692), in which Bracegirdle played the discarded mistress, Phaebe, disguised as a manservant, she appears with William Mountfort,

'in Boy's Cloaths', complaining to him about her transvestite costume:

Would the Play were Damn'd:
I shall ne'er wish the Poet good Success;
For putting me into this nauseous Dress;
A Dress, which of all other things I hate.

She then proclaims her chastity, 'Men, nor their Garbs, did e'er my Credit wrong', to which Mountfort responds

That's much, faith, having known the Stage so long,
Well, we'll allow your Modesty is Fam'd.³¹

The other main characteristic of Mrs. Bracegirdle's persona, apart from her chastity, was her popularity. Throughout the last decade of the seventeenth century she remained the darling of the theatre-going public. 'Never,' says Cibber, 'was any Woman in such general Favour'.³² In several of her addresses Mrs. Bracegirdle teasingly discusses the many men she had to reject. In the prologue to Mountfort's The Successful Strangers (1690), for example, she graphically describes the plight of the cast-off mistress and then the admirers that she is obliged to refuse:

Some on first floor did lodge, in plate did feast,
And nothing but tit bits cou'd they digest;
Toys of all sorts, with Squirril, Lizzard, Parrot,
And in three Months, O flesh! how cou'd they bear it,
In clogs did beat the hoof, and lay in Garret;
Some sparks have told me they wou'd do as much,
If I had grace enough to be but such;
Nay I was offer'd fifty Shillings - Dutch.

At this point she appears to recall the business in hand:

But - to our Author -

The idea of having her seem to become sidetracked enhances the sense of gossiping intimacy in this prologue. For the epilogue to Dryden's King Arthur, or, The British Worthy (1691), Mrs. Bracegirdle actually walks onto the stage flourishing a handful of love letters which she proceeds to read out loud for spectators' benefit:

Here's one desires my Ladiship to meet
At the kind Couch above in Bridges-Street.

Oh Sharping Knave! That wou'd have, you know what,
For a Poor Sneaking Treat of Chocolat.

She proceeds to read several more, mocking the authors in each case, before strengthening her popular chaste image by the conclusion:

My wisest way will be to keep the Stage,
And trust to the Good Nature of the Age

- a flattering touch for theatre-goers. The epilogue must have proved highly successful because the joke was repeated a few years later. On preparing to deliver the epilogue to Peter Motteux' Beauty in Distress (1698) Mrs. Bracegirdle produces what she thinks is a petition from the dramatist to the spectators:

H'as sent me a Petition here for you.
That's it - Cry Mercy! That's a Billet-doux.

She seems about to read yet another love letter. However, in this case, affecting surprise, she 'puts it up in haste' and then pulls out the proper petition.

How did this popular view of Mrs. Bracegirdle - as a professional virgin, irresistibly attractive, possessing many admirers, yet resolutely chaste - affect her stage roles? Her parts in both comedy and tragedy were in fact strikingly in line with this image. In tragedy she generally played the virtuous heroine, loved by both hero and villain, sometimes raped but always pure: typical roles in this genre include Antelina in Mountfort's The Injur'd Lovers, or, The Ambitious Father (1688), Urania in Powell's Alphonso, King of Naples (1690), and Camilla in Charles Hopkins' Boadicea, Queen of Britain (1697). In comedy Bracegirdle was most often cast as the fortunate young heroine, dogged by numerous importunate suitors, coquettishly refusing them all until finally united with the man of her choice. Comic roles of this kind which she created include Fulvia in Durfey's The Richmond Heiress, or, A Woman Once in the

Right (1693), Angelica in Congreve's Love for Love (1695), Mrs. Purflew in Thomas Dilke's The Lover's Luck (1695), Flora in Thomas Dogget's The Country-Wake (1696) and, most famous and charming of all, Millamant in Congreve's The Way of the World (1700). The dates of these comedies show that they all ran parallel to, or slightly behind, the prologues and epilogues earlier quoted.

In The Richmond Heiress Fulvia, like the actress who played her, actually rejects all men and marriage completely:

I'll no more trust Mankind, but lay my Fortune out upon myself.³³

Congreve even seems to be referring directly to her popular epilogue to King Arthur, with the business of the billets-doux, when in The Way of the World Millamant complains, in her pose of heartless coquette, of all the love letters that she receives:

O ay Letters - I had Letters - I am persecuted with Letters - I hate Letters - No Body knows how to write Letters; and yet one has 'em, one does not know why - They serve one to pin up one's Hair.³⁴

Durfey may also be presumed to have been playing on Mrs. Bracegirdle's well-known habit of teasing and rejecting her followers when he inserted a coquette role for her in the first and second parts of his The Comical History of Don Quixote trilogy (1694, 1695). In the first part her character, Marcella, hard-heartedly rejects all who love her, according to tradition, but in the second part she is punished for this by being made to fall unrequitedly in love, as Durfey explained:

I think I have given some additional Diversion in the continuance of the Character of Marcella; which is wholly new in This Part, and my own Invention; the Design finishing with more pleasure to Audience, by punishing that coy Creature by an extravagant Passion here, that was so inexorable and cruel in the First Part, and ending with a Song so incomparably well sung, and acted by Mrs. Bracegirdle, that the most Envious do allow, as well as the most Ingenious affirm, that 'tis the best of that kind ever done before.³⁵

Durfey had supplied what the public were clearly delighted to see: their favourite in love for once, instead of being loved. ~~Mary~~ *Delariviere* Manley pandered to popular taste in an opposite way in her tragedy Almyna, or, The Arabian Vow (1706) by finally giving Almyna/Mrs. Bracegirdle the man she loved. Unusually in this tragedy Bracegirdle was cast, not as a rape victim, but as an unrequited lover driven mad by the frustration of being rejected. Having observed that at no time in her career had Mrs. Bracegirdle ever acted better in a tragedy, ^{TS.} ~~Mary~~ Manley explained in the preface to the printed edition that.

She so far Acted her self into the kind Wishes of the Town, that in Compliment to their better Opinion, the Author has thought fit to make her happy in her Lover.

Almyna furnishes a particularly vivid example of the way in which an actress's popularity could affect the writing of drama. But the mass of examples shows that every dramatist, more or less, had the public view of Mrs. Bracegirdle in mind when he produced roles for her.

The Relation Between the Actress, her public persona and her stage roles: 2 - Mrs. Currer

The case of Elizabeth Currer affords another striking instance of a correspondence between stage roles and the persona derived from prologue and epilogue - although the persona in this case is somewhat different. In both comedy and tragedy during the 1670s and 1680s Mrs. Currer specialized in playing mistresses and whores and she frequently displayed her legs in breeches roles.³⁶ Her most famous part was as Aquilina the courtesan in Otway's Venice Preserv'd, kicking the old senator Antonio about the stage to satisfy his masochistic lusts. According to Thomas Davies,

when Leigh and Mrs. Currer performed the parts of doting

cully and rampant courtezan, the applause was as loud as the triumphant tories, for so they were at that time, could bestow.³⁷

Mrs. Currer also played the passionate mistress whom Crowne added for Edward in his adaptation of Shakespeare's Henry VI Parts II and III (The Misery of Civil War 1680), pursuing her lover to the battlefield and begging to share his struggles. At this Edward immediately seeks a cottage where they can bed together and although she puts up a token protest, 'Fye, Fye, such thoughts as these at such a time?', she is easily persuaded: 'Well - since I must'.³⁸ In her prologues and epilogues Mrs. Currer comes over as appropriately bold, knowing and easy of virtue. In the prologue to Aphra Behn's The Feign'd Curtezans, or, A Night's Intrigue (1679), for example, in which she played Marcella, one of the two 'feign'd curtezans', she complains jokingly of the bad effect of the current reformation of morals on her efforts to find a lover to support her:

Who says this Age a Reformation wants,
When Betty Currer's lovers all turn Saints?
In vain alas I flatter, swear and vow
You'l scarce do anything for Charity now:
Yet I am handsome still, still young and mad,
Can wheadle, lie, dissemble, jilt - egad,
As well and artfully as ere I did,
Yet not one Conquest can I gain or hope,
No Prentice, not a Foreman of a Shop,
So that I want extremely New Supplies;
Of my last Coxcomb, faith, these were the Prize;
And by the tatter'd Ensignes you may know,
These spoils were of a Victory long ago:
Who wou'd have thought such hellish times to've seen
When I shou'd be neglected at eighteen?

In the same year, in the epilogue to Tate's The Loyal General, having just played a villainous queen who ended up in a nunnery, she speaks with similar lively impudence:

I'faith I've broke my Prison Walls to see ye;
Must I be cloyster'd up? Dull Poet stay,
I hate Confinement tho' but in a Play,
Doom me to a Nun's Life? .. A Nun! Oh Heart!
The Name's so dreadful, that it makes me start!
No! Tell the Scribbling Fool I'm just as fit

To make a Nun as he to make a Wit.
 What? A-la-mort messieurs? Nay then, I'll fit ye
 Adieu! I'faith, no Epilogue for Betty!
 And yet, shame on my Foolish Woman's Heart,
 I fain wou'd see ye smile before we part.

In 1683 Mrs. Currer was also to mockingly complain at being cast in a fairly moral play. In the prologue to Ravenscroft's Dame Dobson she declares:

Gallants, I vow I am quite out of heart,
 I've not one smutty Jest in all my part.

The real facts of Mrs. Currer's life are unknown but she probably sold her favours, at times, like many of her colleagues. 'A Satyr on the Players' implies as much when it urges her to leave London and join the Dublin theatre company:

Currer 'tis time thou wert to Ireland gone
 Thy utmost Rate is here but half a Crown
 Ask Turner if thou art not fulsom grown.³⁹

Whether she deserved her reputation or not, what is undeniable is that when Mrs. Currer played women of dubious morals (her speciality) the audience must have had the peculiar satisfaction of seeing her prologue/epilogue persona and her stage role blend into one.

The Relation Between the Actress, her public persona and her stage roles: 3 - The Actress in General

How far was a dramatist truly limited by what an audience might know of an actress's private life? John Harold Wilson believes that the Restoration playwrights were severely limited because of this and compares their situation to that of Shakespeare writing for boys:

Shakespeare's women were the creations of a teeming imagination; his poetic pen gave to airy nothing a local habitation and a name, and its only limitation was the number of competent, well-trained boys available at a given time.... But the Restoration playwright, working in an age when the speaker had become more

important than the word, confined by the necessity of writing not just for actresses but for a specific Nell, Anne, or Betty ... had to suit his roles to their abilities, their types, and, worst of all, to their personal reputations.⁴⁰

The Restoration critic and playwright John Dennis would have agreed with this. In 1711 he observed:

For it has been a Complaint of Two thousand Years standing, that Poets have been us'd to violate their Subjects, and to force their Characters out of complaisance to their Actors, that is, to their Interest. Most of the Writers for the Stage in my time, have not only adapted their Characters to their Actors, but those Actors have as it were sate for them.⁴¹

Colley Cibber seemed to lend support to this view when he noted that

the private Character of an Actor will always more or less affect his Publick Performance ... I have seen the most tender Sentiment of Love in Tragedy create Laughter, instead of Compassion, when it has been applicable to the real Engagements of the Person that utter'd it. I have known good Parts thrown up, from a humble Consciousness that something in them might put an Audience in mind of - what was rather wish'd might be forgotten.

Significantly, his example of such an embarrassing clash is of a woman's role:

Those remarkable Words of Evadne in The Maid's Tragedy - A maidenhead, Amintor, at my Years? - have sometimes been a much stronger Jest for being a true one.⁴²

This was one problem that can certainly never have arisen when The Maid's Tragedy was performed by boy-actors. The critic William Chetwood too, related a sorry tale, also about women, of how Mrs. Barry received a 'Horse-laugh' from the audience when as Cordelia in Tate's Lear, she delivered the line

Arm'd in my Virgin Innocence I'll fly,

her lack of such innocence being all too well known. This 'turn'd to Ridicule' a scene 'of generous Pity and Compassion'. Mrs. Bracegirdle, on the other hand, apparently gained a round of applause when she spoke the line, 'more as a Reward for her reputable Character, than, perhaps, her Acting claim'd'.⁴³

However it would be most inaccurate to say, as Dennis and Wilson imply, that an actress of dubious reputation could never take a serious part without provoking laughter. This was certainly not true, for instance, in the case of Mrs. Jane Rogers. After various immoral exploits, this actress eventually went to live with the actor Wilks. This did not prevent her from being cast as the pure and suffering wife Amanda in Cibber's Love's Last Shift (1695), and in its sequel, Vanbrugh's The Relapse (1696). She also played the Bracegirdle-equivalent in tragedy for Rich's company - the suffering, noble, virginal young heroine: in Abel Boyer's Achilles, or, Iphigenia in Aulis (1699) she played Iphigenia, in Catherine Trotter's The Unhappy Penitent (1701) she played Margarite of Flanders, in Bevill Higgons' The Generous Conqueror, or, The Timely Discovery (1701) she played the pure Armida. The difference between these roles and her real-life character is highlighted in an amusing anecdote by Cibber. He related how Mrs. Rogers hoped that, since she was playing a chaste heroine in another tragedy called The Triumphs of Virtue (1697, author unknown), she might be able to play such a character in real life:

Her Fondness for Virtue on the Stage she began to think might persuade the World that it had made an Impression on her private Life; and the Appearances of it actually went so far that, in an Epilogue to an obscure Play, the Profits of which were given to her, and wherein she acted a Part of impregnable Chastity she bespoke the Favour of the Ladies by a Protestation that in Honour of their Goodness and Virtue she would dedicate her unblemish'd Life to their Example.

The epilogue in question included the lines:

I'll pay this duteous gratitude; I'll do
That which the play has done - I'll copy you.
At your virtue's shrine my vows I'll pay,
Study to live the character I play.

But shortly afterwards she apparently agreed to live with fellow-actor Wilks. Cibber lamented mockingly, 'But alas! how weak are the Strongest Works of Art when Nature besieges it?',⁴⁴

Mrs. Rogers is not the only example of such an anomaly. The 'jilt' Mrs. Butler played the naive, virginal heroine Charlot in Behn's The City-Heiress (1682). Mrs. Boutell, as Edmund Curll put it, 'generally acted the young innocent Lady whom all the Heroes are mad in Love with'.⁴⁵ She played, for instance, Statira in Lee's The Rival Queens (1677), Christina in Wycherley's Love in a Wood (1671), Melantha in Dryden's Marriage-A-la-Mode (1672) and the purest of all comic heroines, Fidelia in Wycherley's The Plain-Dealer (1676). Yet in real life, if contemporary satires are anything to go by, Mrs. Boutell had a fairly notorious reputation. An anonymous poem, simply called 'Lampoons', relates,

Betty Bowtall is true to whom she pretends
Then happy is hee whom she Chuses for freind
Shee faine would hang out Widdows peak for a signe
But ther's noe need of Bush where there is so good wine.

'The Session of Ladies' describes her as 'Chestnut-man'd Boutel, whom all the Town F--ks' and in 'Satyr on Bent--g &c. 1688/9' she is called a 'Whore' who

Poor Armstrong's Life betray'd,
And past upon Maccarty for a Maid.⁴⁶

For John Corrye's The Generous Enemies (1671) Mrs. Boutell spoke a suggestive epilogue, in breeches:

'Tis worth your Money that such Legs appear,
These are not to be seen so cheap elsewhere:
In short commend this Play, or by this light,
We will not sup with one of you to night.

There is also a provocative double meaning in the prologue Mrs. Boutell spoke to Duffet's The Spanish Rogue (1673):

None sure will rail at faults we Women make,
When the kind failing's only for your sake.

All the evidence points to Mrs. Boutell's public persona being very much at variance with the many 'pure' roles that she played, apparently with success.⁴⁷

For a variety of reasons an actress's 'persona' might not be in accord with her stage role. In some cases a dramatist must simply not have been able to obtain the actress he wanted, or else have deliberately refused to limit his cast to the characters of the female players available. We need also to take account of those subtle instances in which a dramatist might create a role for an actress which was purposely at variance with her public persona to make a particular point: Peter Holland has made a study of several such instances.⁴⁸ Perhaps the most striking example of this was when Southerne took the extreme step of casting Mrs. Bracegirdle as a sin-hardened, unfaithful wife in The Maid's Last Prayer, or, Any, Rather than Fail (1693) in order to emphasize the degraded type of libertine society he had chosen to portray. In one sense, of course, this technique reinforces Dennis's point that dramatists had to rely on what was known of his performers' private characters. But it also denies the criticism of both Dennis and Wilson that the actor's 'sitting' for his part had a limiting effect on the drama. The common correlation between persona and role gave the Restoration playwright a very effective weapon; he could cheat audience expectations, and make thematic and satiric points, by producing an unexpected part for an actress which was at odds with her usual behaviour both on stage and off. I shall be returning to this point in later chapters when I discuss the effects gained from the typecasting of certain actresses.

It is also fair to say that a correspondence between an actress's persona and her roles is less pronounced in tragedy than it is in comedy (as might be expected in a drama that tended to be further removed from real and contemporary life than comedy was). For example,

by the 1680s Mrs. Barry, who was known to have had several lovers and was portrayed in lampoons as a mercenary prostitute, usually played mistresses and unfaithful wives in comedy, but in tragedy she played a large number of virtuous heroines. Her three most famous parts were, as we have seen, Monimia, Belvidera and Southerne's Isabella. John Harold Wilson is of the opinion that in tragedy, where events and characters were so incredible anyway,

it made little difference whether the players were saints or sinners, so long as the writer avoided those unfortunate lines which could suddenly expose the incongruity between stage character and actor character and arouse a "Horse-laugh".⁴⁹

However, I feel that the creative process with regard to Mrs. Barry, at least, may be seen as more complex than Wilson (the only critic who has really considered this question) implies. It is interesting to note that in almost all her parts, from Monimia in 1680 onwards, however honourably her characters behave, they are generally in some way sexually experienced. Even though she is cruelly deceived, Monimia does sleep with Polidor. The heroines Belvidera, Isabella, Anna Bullen or Fulvia (in Crowne's Regulus, 1692), are all wives, who could thus behave virtuously without actually possessing 'virgin innocence'. This feature is highlighted when Mrs. Barry's tragic roles are compared with those of Mrs. Bracegirdle, her opposite in so many serious dramas. Right through the period 1688-1706, while her foil Mrs. Barry performed a range of parts from virtuous wife to lustful villainess, Mrs. Bracegirdle's parts in tragedy remained comparatively constant: every one a variation of the innocent virgin. In those tragedies in which she did play a wife rather than a virgin, her characters were still markedly pure in comparison with Mrs. Barry's; in Cleomenes (1692), for example, she played the meek and helpless Cleora, while Barry played

the jealous, passionate Cassandra; in Gildon's Love's Victim, or, The Queen of Wales (1701) she played the saintly Queen of Wales, Guinoenda, while Barry played the envious, arrogant Queen of Bayonne, her slighted rival; in Rowe's The Fair Penitent (1703) Bracegirdle's role as Lavinia, the idealized, obedient wife of Horatio, was designed to highlight the tragic weakness in the Barry heroine, Calista, who is a magnificently repentant 'fallen woman'. (In the next chapter I shall be examining in detail the impact of this pairing of Barry and Bracegirdle on the drama in general.)

It is plain that the relationship between the actresses' 'real' personalities and their stage roles was both varied and intricate. There are no definite rules and the relationship seems to have varied according to the popularity and talents of the actress, the aims of the dramatist and the capacity of a company at a particular time. However, there is sufficient evidence to imply that a sensible dramatist usually needed to take the public attitude towards an actress into account when creating a leading role for her. The unfortunate experience of Dryden's protégé, George Granville, offers a final, illuminating example of what could happen if a dramatist failed to consider Mrs. Bracegirdle's special closeness to her public when giving her a main role in his play.

In the preface to his first serious work, Heroick Love (1698), the young Granville explained why he had decided to make Mrs. Bracegirdle's role, most unusually for a tragedy, that of a vain coquette, rather than that of a virtuous heroine:

Had he form'd her a moving Character, should he have brought her in lamenting her Misfortune and attracting Compassion, this would have prejudic'd the Chief Hero of the Play; for all the Pity which she had excited, must necessarily have rais'd so much Indignation against him. The Author thus was under a

Necessity to represent her in such a manner, that no body might be concern'd, or take any part in her Misfortune.

But Granville underestimated both Mrs. Bracegirdle's talent for playing coquettes (much exercised in comedy), and her popularity with audiences. His aim was to divert attention and sympathy onto the hero, but so charmingly did Bracegirdle perform her role that the teasing Briseis actually turned out to be the part 'Which in the Representation meets the loudest Applause', as Granville put it later in the preface. As her prologues and roles like Millamant show, theatre-goers loved to see Mrs. Bracegirdle captivating and then frustrating her languishing admirers: when she played a coquette this character became enormously attractive. Granville's plan failed because the bond between actress and public was strong enough to outweigh the dramatic impact of the lines he had written for her.

The Debunking Epilogue of Tragedy

As I have shown, the Restoration prologue and epilogue became a means by which an actress could step out of her role and address the audience in her own person thus fostering an awareness of the play as a fiction. This process of eroding spectators' suspension of disbelief at the theatre was taken a stage further in the epilogue (not necessarily written by the author of the play in question) spoken after a tragedy which directly made fun of the events just portrayed. This type of epilogue flourished from the late 1660s until early in the eighteenth century and it became a speciality of the actress.

Debunking epilogues first appeared towards the end of the 1660s. At the end of Howard's The Great Favourite (1668), for instance, Nell

Gwyn, having played its heroine, confides her dislike of serious drama:

I know you in your hearts
Hate serious Plays, as I do serious Parts,
To trouble us with Thoughts and State-designs -
A melancholly Plot tied with strong Lines,
I had not the least Part today, you see,
Troth, he has neither writ for you, nor me.

She goes on to declare prophetically,

Henceforth, against all sad and Grave intreagues
We'll make Offensive and Defensive Leagues;
And for all that dare write Tragedy
We'll make a Law - with a hugh Penalty.

Nell Gwyn, a supreme comic actress, was apparently ill-suited to serious roles,⁵⁰ and she voices this fact on several occasions in order to undercut a serious drama in which she has just appeared. In 1669, for the epilogue to Dryden's Tyrannick Love, she prevents stage hands from carrying her 'dead body' off the stage and introduces herself, out of her role as Valeria, as 'the ghost of poor departed Nelly'.⁵¹ Jestingly she reminds spectators of her inability to play serious parts and that the role she has just played is quite at odds with her true personality:

To tell you true, I walk because I dye
Out of my calling, in a Tragedy.
O Poet, damn'd dull Poet, who could prove
So senseless! to make Nelly dye for Love ...
As for my Epitaph when I am gone,
I'll trust no Poet, but will write my own:
"Here Nelly lies, who, though she lived a Slater'n,
Yet dy'd a Princess, acting in Saint Cathar'n".

Such epilogues were not restricted to comic actresses like Nell in tragedy. At the end of Southerne's The Fate of Capua (1700), for example, Mrs. Barry, who had created the role of the heroine Favonia, reappears to deliver an epilogue, by one Colonel Codrington, making fun of the anguished scruples over their adultery which Favonia and her lover have expressed in the play, and also making fun of Favonia's



husband's resentment of their passion:

The squeamish Capuan wou'd not share his Wife.
 Why Wives are Wives: And he that will be billing,
 Must not think Cuckoldom deserves a killing.
 What if the gentle Creature had been kissing,
 Nothing the good Man marry'd for, was missing.

Even though Mrs. Barry is known to have moved spectators to tears by her performance as Isabella in Southerne's The Fatal Marriage, as soon as the tragedy is over the behaviour of this heroine is ridiculed by the comedienne, Mrs. Verbruggen:

Now tell me, when you saw the Lady dye,
 Were you not puzzled for a Reason why?
 A Buxom Damzel, and of Play-house race,
 Not to out-live th'injoyment of a brace!

Even the virtuous Mrs. Betterton reappears to deliver a debunking epilogue in 1677 to The Siege of Babylon. As Statira in this play by Samuel Pordage she is finally saved from death, by the plot, but she reminds spectators that at the King's theatre they could see the same character die, in Lee's The Rival Queens:

We live, and Dye, as pleaseth Mr. Bays.
 At one House, I am, by Roxana, slain,
 But see, at this, I am alive again,
 And spite of all her Cruelty and Rage,
 I live, am Queen and Triumph, on the Stage.

In this way Mrs. Betterton reminds audiences not only of the fictional nature of what they had just seen, but also of the conditions of theatrical competition.

One of the most effective and entertaining ways of debunking a serious play was to have the tragically slaughtered heroine return to life in the end, as Nell Gwyn did at the close of Tyrannick Love, to step out of her play-world and make fun of what had just happened. (I can find no instance, incidentally, in which a slaughtered male character reappears.) At the end of Otway's Alcibiades (1675), for example the murdered Timandra reappears to attack the playwright and

his liking for stage violence:

Now who says Poets don't in blood delight?
 'Tis true the varlets care not much to fight;
 But faith, they claw it off when e'er they write;
 Are bully Rocks not of the common size;
 Kill ye men faster then Domitian flyes.
 Ours made such Havock, that the silly Rogue
 Was forc't to make me rise for th'Epilogue.
 The fop damn'd me, but e're to hell I go,
 I'd very fain be satisfy'd, if you
 Think it not just that he were serv'd so too.⁵²

All these epilogues offer further evidence of the cynicism that the actresses brought to Restoration theatre. The debunking suggests in each case that the moral statements and implications of the text are not, ultimately, to be taken seriously by the cynical actresses or by the audience. This may be one reason for the predominance of actresses delivering such speeches; as knowingly exploited, as well as exploiting, professionals, they seem to be at the heart of society's cynicism - cynical about their own morality and that of their audience.

Why did the tragic playwrights allow their dramas to be mocked in this way by the women? Sometimes they even wrote the debunking epilogues themselves: Dryden certainly wrote the epilogue which Nell Gwynn delivered to Tyrannick Love.⁵³ Even if they did not actually write them, the dramatists presumably allowed them to be delivered, although they may not perhaps always have had the choice. One reason for the epilogues may of course have been that the dramatists shared the cynicism of the actresses and spectators and did not take the morality of their tragedy seriously either. Even if they did, they presumably had to give way to commercial pressures. Once an actress like Nell Gwyn had scored a success with a debunking epilogue such verses became a popular fashion and a sure means of

boosting audiences.

These epilogues are of course another facet of the extraordinary self-consciousness of Restoration theatre, the mutual acceptance of actor, playwright and spectator that what is being performed in the theatre is a fiction and everybody knows it. As Bayes the Poet is made to say in Buckingham's The Rehearsal, when asked how dead characters in a tragedy get off the stage,

Go off! why, as they came on; upon their legs; how should they go off? Why do you think the people here don't know they are not dead?⁵⁴

I have tried to show that, for various reasons, it was the actress, far more than the actor, who encouraged this selfconsciousness and who forged the newly intimate relationship with audiences. It was the actresses who delivered the most personal of prologues and epilogues and who were most often given the opportunity to mock the virtuous characters of tragedy. It was the actresses who risked a 'Horse-laugh' if they played a character at odds with their public reputations. As Mrs. Currer puts it in the epilogue to Tate's The Loyal General (1679),

You know how oft, like preaching Sisters, we
Have from the Stage Lectur'd your Vanity;
Yet like those Sisters, out o'th'Preaching Mood,
You have surpriz'd and found us Flesh and Blood!

FOOTNOTES

1. See especially Holland's The Ornament of Action, Jocelyn Powell, Restoration Theatre Production, pp.3-23, and J.L. Styan, Restoration Comedy in Performance, pp.6-7.
2. For fuller accounts of such conditions in the theatres see Peter Holland, The Ornament of Action, chapter 1, John Harold Wilson All the King's Ladies, chapter 3 and J.L. Styan, Restoration Comedy in Performance, pp.7-11.
3. George Granville, The She-Gallants, 1696, preface.
4. Samuel Pepys, Diary, vol.9, p.189.
5. Ibid., vol.8, p.463.
6. Thomas Jordan, 'A Prologue to introduce the first Woman that came to act on the Stage, in the tragedy called the Moor of Venice', in A Royal Arbour of Loyal Poesie, 1664, pp.21-2.
7. Robert Gould, The Works of Mr. Robert Gould, 1709, vol.II, pp.247-9.
8. 'Lampoons' Ca. 1678, Harvard MS. Eng. 636 F., Harvard College Library, Cambridge, Mass.
'Satyr on both Whigs and Toryes. 1683.', British Museum, Harleian MS. 7319. Both quoted in Wilson, All the King's Ladies, pp.153, 172.
9. Court Satires of the Restoration, ed. John Harold Wilson, Columbus, Ohio, 1976, p.206, stanza 9.
10. Robert Gould, Works, II, p.249.
11. John Downes, Roscius Anglicanus, pp.23-4.
12. A Comparison Between Two Stages, anon. (generally considered to be by Charles Gildon), 1702, pp.18, 17.
13. Robert Gould, Works, II, p.252.
14. Ibid., p.249.
15. Nat Lee, Works, vol.I, The Rival Queens, Epilogue, 8-11.
16. Epilogues to Crowne's The Destruction of Jerusalem Part 1 (1677) and Shadwell's The Libertine (1676).
17. For more details, see John Harold Wilson, All the King's Ladies, pp.11-21 and his appendix of actresses' biographies.
18. Colley Cibber, Apology, vol.I, p.172. John Crowne, Dramatic Works, London and Edinburgh, 1874, vol.IV, p.12.
19. Ben Jonson, Volpone, ed. Philip Brockbank, 1968, Prologue, 1-2.

20. William Wycherley, The Plays of William Wycherley, ed. Peter Holland, Cambridge, 1981, The Country Wife, Prologue, 1-6, 11, 24, 25-8. Jonson, Volpone, Prologue, 8, 25, 31.
21. Jeremy Collier, A Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage, 1698, p.13.
22. The actresses' only serious rival in this field were the popular comedians, see p.151 of this chapter.
23. Pepys, Diary, vol.9, p.260.
24. The fashion for suggestive epilogues delivered by little girls took the idea of a risqué address a stage further. The epilogue to Otway's Don Carlos (1676) furnishes an early example:
 He'l write for me, he swears by all above,
 When I am bigg enough to be in love.
- The majority of these occurred during the last five years of the century. In 1696 there were nine such addresses including the epilogue to Banks' Cyrus the Great which was spoken by a boy as well as a girl. Other examples include the epilogues to Durfey's The Commonwealth of Women (1685), Powell's Cornish Comedy (1696) and to Fletcher's Bonduca, or, The British Heroine, ed. George Powell (1695), delivered by one 'Denny Chock, But Six Years Old':
 But tho' I'm yet too Young for Turtle's play,
 By your warm Suns a Blooming Flower I'll grow,
 And keep my Rose-bud, for your Smiles to blow.
25. Wilson, All the King's Ladies, p.89.
26. 'The Wedding', Ca. 1689, Harvard MS. Eng. 633. Both this and the preceding quotation from 'Satyr on both Whigs and Toryes' quoted from Wilson, All the King's Ladies, p.129.
27. Thomas Brown, The Works of Mr. Thomas Brown, 1708, III, p.43.
28. A reference to her playing the title role in Thomas Dilke's The City Lady (1696).
29. A number of lampoons suggest that Congreve and Mrs. Bracegirdle were lovers, or even that they were married. He was undoubtedly in love with her. See Biographical Dictionary of Actors, Actresses etc., ed. Philip Highfill Jnr. et al., vol.2, pp.276-8.
30. Gildon, A Comparison Between Two Stages, p.199.
31. Mountfort was eventually murdered defending Mrs. Bracegirdle from the attentions of one Captain Hill. The Player's Tragedy, an anonymous roman à clef published in 1693, gives a fictionalised account of the incident and suggests an affair between the two performers:
 'Bracilla [Bracegirdle] ... is believ'd at last, to have found all her cold indifference melt at the secret and well mannag'd Advances of Monfredo's [Mountfort's] Love'.
 (p.4)

Tom Brown in his Letters from the Dead to the Living, also suggests an affair when he has Mountfort complaining of backache,

'pox on you, says he, for a bantering Dog, how can a single Girdle do me good, when a Brace was my Destruction?' (The Works of Mr. Thomas Brown, 1707-8, vol.III, p.224).

32. Cibber, Apology, vol.I, p.170.
33. Thomas Durfey, The Richmond Heiress, 1693, p.63.
34. William Congreve, Comedies, edited with an introduction by Bonamy Dobrée, 1925, p.371.
35. Thomas Durfey, The Three Parts of the Comical History of Don Quixote, 1729, the preface to the second part.
36. Currer breeches roles include Mrs. Hadland in Aphra Behn's The Counterfeit Bridegroom (1677), Ariadne in Behn's The False Count (1681) and the title role in Behn's The Widow Ranter (1689).
37. Thomas Davies, Dramatic Miscellanies, 1784, III, p.215. Nahum Tate cashed in on their success in Venice Preserved; in his adaptation of Cokain's Trappolin Suppos'd a Prince, called A Duke or No Duke (1684), Tate had Leigh as Trappolin gaze lustfully at Currer as the Duchess in her nightgown and chase her lasciviously at every opportunity. As Sir Patient Fancy and his wife in Behn's Sir Patient Fancy (1678) Leigh and Currer represented another comic case of thwarted desire.
38. John Crowne, The Misery of Civil-War, pp.33-4.
39. 'A Satyr on the Players', quoted in Wilson, All the King's Ladies, p.136.
40. Wilson, All the King's Ladies, pp.107-8.
41. John Dennis, Critical Works, ed. E.N. Hooker, Baltimore 1939-43, I, p.418.
42. Cibber, Apology, vol.I, p.250.
43. William Chetwood, A General History of the Stage, 1749, p.28. Barry created the role of Cordelia in Tate's Lear in 1681, Bracegirdle played the role in October 1706. (See The London Stage Parts I and II.)
44. Cibber, Apology, vol.I, pp.135-6. The epilogue is quoted from Lowe's notes in this.
45. Betterton, History of the English Stage, p.21.
46. 'Lampoons', quoted in Wilson, All the King's Ladies, p.122. Court Satires of the Restoration, ed. Wilson, p.206, stanza 9. 'Satyr on Bent--g etc. 1688/9', 'Choyce Collection, A.', p.301, MS in the Ohio State University Library, Columbus, Ohio, quoted in Wilson, All the King's Ladies, p.122.
47. There is no evidence to imply that Mrs. Boutell was not successful in the virtuous roles she played, for she continued to play such parts throughout her career. Lee's The Rival Queens, in which she created the role of the pure Statira, was certainly a highly successful play, much revived.

48. See Peter Holland, The Ornament of Action, chapters 5, 6, 7.
49. Wilson, All the King's Ladies, p.106.
50. Pepys voiced his dislike of Nell in tragedy on several occasions. On a production of Dryden's The Indian Emperour in 1667 he wrote that he 'was most infinitely displeas'd with her being put to act the Emperour's daughter; which is a great and serious part, which she do most basely' (Diary, vol.8, p.395). Similarly a production of Sir Robert Howard's The Surprizal in the same year 'did not please me today, the actors not pleasing me, and especially Nell's acting of a serious part, which she spoils' (Diary, vol.8, p.590).
51. See Plate 4.
52. Other tragic epilogues for which female speakers rose from the dead include those to Samuel Pordage's Herod and Mariamne (1671), the anonymous Romulus and Hersilia, or, The Sabine War (1682) and Dryden's Cleomenes (1692).
53. Dryden is, in a sense, a special case. Derek Hughes has argued convincingly that, taking French prose romances, Caroline platonic literature and later developments from the Caroline models such as Orrery's heroic dramas as a starting point, Dryden then wrote heroic dramas with more realistically flawed characters who fail to match their ideal counterparts. Hughes points out that Nell Gwyn, her unsavoury reputation and her unsuitability for tragic roles played an important part in Dryden's presentation of the gap between ideal and reality. Her comic, debunking epilogue to Tyrannick Love emphasizes, then, an intended disparity between actress and role. See Hughes, Dryden's Heroic Plays, Lincoln, Nebraska, 1981, especially pp.73, 75, 183.
54. George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, The Rehearsal, ed. D.E.L. Crane, Durham, 1976, V, i, 346-8.

CHAPTER 5

PAIRED FEMALE TYPECASTING AND ITS IMPACT ON RESTORATION DRAMA

Throughout the greater part of this thesis I have emphasized the way in which most of the major Restoration actresses became type-cast, usually specializing in one or very few kinds of role by which the public identified them. If an actress was popular then a playwright naturally aimed to insert parts tailored to her capacities in his drama, thereby, hopefully, ensuring its success. In this chapter I wish to consider in detail one form of female typecasting which seems to me to have outstanding impact on dramatists' work throughout the period - that of a pair of leading, contrasting female characters, usually rivals, in tragedy.¹

Perhaps the most memorable feature of much Restoration tragedy is the presence of two leading female characters, frequently in competition for the same man, and wholly dissimilar in attitude and behaviour. One is chaste and gentle, the other wild and passionate. While the idea of such contrasting figures cannot be called original, it was only in the Restoration - because some popular actresses specialized in the contrasting types - that the phenomenon became a permanently recurring feature of the drama.² The pairing flourished as a result at both theatres, and in time appeared in comedy as well as tragedy.

Beginnings: the Pair in the 1660s

There is no one production in which the success of two particular actresses as contrasting characters may be said to have triggered

off a whole series of imitations. However, during the 1660s several factors would seem to have worked together so that by the next decade Rebecca Marshall and Elizabeth Boutell, the first actresses to specialize in this way, were cast opposite each other significantly often - Marshall as the embodiment of fierce passion, sometimes, but not always, a villainess, Boutell as the incarnation of gentleness, goodness and chastity.

Several Jacobean and Caroline plays including such contrasts were revived early on, in particular Beaumont and Fletcher's The Maid's Tragedy. This was first revived in 1662 and remained a favourite throughout the next forty years.³ Evadne and Aspatia may be seen as prototypes for later pairs of characters - Evadne being savage and sexually experienced, Aspatia passive, chaste and suffering:

Thus, thus, Antiphilia: strive to make me looke
Like sorrowes monument, and the trees about me
Let them be dry and leavelesse, let the rocks
Groane with continuall surges, and behind me
Make all a desolation, - Looke, looke wenches,
A miserable life of this poore picture.⁴

The two are also of course rivals for the love of Amintor. Rebecca Marshall was successful in the role of Evadne as early as 1666 when Pepys wrote appreciatively of the production, 'a good play, and well acted, especially by the younger Marshall'.⁵ (However, although Downes listed Mrs. Boutell as playing Aspatia in this early production, there are no records of her belonging to the theatre until 1670, so he was probably mistaken. But Boutell almost certainly played Aspatia in later revivals and Downes presumably made the error because he remembered her better than her predecessor.) The play may well have helped to inspire later incarnations of the two female types.

The two types existed both separately and together in new plays as well as revivals of the 1660s. I have shown in chapter 2 how much in demand the gentle vulnerable virgin became by 1670, while what has been called the 'lustful villainess' type seems to have emerged as a fairly popular character in new plays at about the same time.⁶ This type was not in fact necessarily lustful, nor wholly villainous, but, like Evadne, she was invariably flawed, passionate and sexually experienced. Her antecedents may partly, perhaps, be traced back to Renaissance drama: Shakespeare's Tamora, Cleopatra and Lady Macbeth, Marston's *Insatiate Countess*, Webster's *Vittoria* and Middleton's *Beatrice-Joanna*, all of whom reappeared on stage after 1660.

The first appearance of such a character in a Restoration play was Davenant's influential introduction of Roxolana into his new version of the opera *The Siege of Rhodes* in 1661. The main difference between this and the original 1656 edition of the work is that it contains a foil for the virtuous Ianthe (Mrs. Betterton) in the empress Roxolana (Hestor Davenport), who is jealous of her husband Solyman's love for the pure heroine. Davenant added a scene to the first part in which Roxolana wildly attacks Solyman for inconstancy and is dismissed. In the second part, driven by desperation, she approaches the sleeping Ianthe with intent to kill her, 'having a Turkish Embroidered Handkerchief in her left hand, And a naked Ponyard in her right'.⁷ However, Ianthe awakes in time and so sways Roxolana by her goodness that the two kiss in friendship. The play concludes happily; Roxolana is reconciled with Solyman and Ianthe returned to her true love, Alphonso.

The Siege of Rhodes was enormously successful and Pepys began

to refer to Mary Betterton as 'Ianthe' and Hester Davenport as 'Roxolana' in his diary in recognition of their success in the parts. Perhaps then in imitation of Davenant, Dryden gave his timorous heroine a fearsome rival in The Indian Queen (1664). The usurping queen of the title, Zempoalla (probably played by Anne Marshall, elder sister of Rebecca⁸), has a central role, not only intriguing for political power, but also suffering unrequited love for the hero, Montezuma, who rejects her and loves the meek and retiring Orazia.

Dryden gave Zempoalla and her frustration prominence over the gentle Orazia and she expresses her complex and passionate emotions at length. She struggles at first to resist love because it is for an unworthy object (Montezuma is her prisoner) and therefore dishonourable:

'Tis love, 'tis love, that thus disorders me!
How pride and love tear my divided soul!
For each too narrow, yet both claim it whole.

Nevertheless, Zempoalla eventually seeks a charm to make Montezuma love her. When this fails, like Roxolana in The Siege of Rhodes she 'sets a Dagger' to the breast of her rival⁹ - presumably the device had proved entertaining enough to be used again. Its presence reinforces the parallel between Roxolana and Ianthe and Zempoalla and Orazia. Again the victim of the dagger survives - in this case because another of Orazia's admirers saves her in the nick of time.

Significantly, Dryden criticized in The Siege of Rhodes, among other things, a want of 'variety of Characters'.¹⁰ His modifications to the Roxolana-type make her less simplistic and reveal new possibilities in the character of the 'darker woman' (because Zempoalla

and later equivalentents are not always wholly evil, this seems a fairer description than 'lustful villainess'). Dryden's queen is not merely a jealous rival for the love of the hero, her passion is complicated by a desire for power and a pride which conflicts with her love. This struggle is symbolized by the moment in which Zempoalla raises her dagger again, this time to stab Montezuma, but then cuts the cords that bind him instead. Finally, in a potentially moving scene, thwarted in love and in ambition, she stabs herself with the dagger:

All that cou'd render Life desir'd is gone
Orazia has my Love, and you my Throne.¹¹

Dryden's play suggested that the unsuccessful rival could be made as sympathetic as the conventional heroine and later this became an important feature of the tragic pairing.

Dryden was presumably at least moderately satisfied with Zempoalla because for the sequel to The Indian Queen the following year - The Indian Emperour - he created her equivalent in Almeria, Zempoalla's daughter, who contrasts with another meek heroine, Cydaria. In this play an aged Montezuma now ironically loves Almeria (Orazia being dead) but she and Cydaria both love the hero of this play, Cortez. Almeria reminds audiences of the earlier drama, when, like Zempoalla, she falls in love against her reason with an enemy:

My Mother's Pride must find my Mother's Fate.¹²

Cortez, of course, loves Cydaria.

Dryden developed both rivals in new directions suggesting less admirable qualities in the frail heroine and more sympathetic traits in her passionate opposite. Cydaria, for instance, is a coward. When Almeria draws a dagger on her (implying that the idea had become

very popular by this time) Cydaria, unlike the brave Ianthe, shows great fear and is glad to obey Cortez's command that she hide behind him so that he gets the blow. Similarly, when both women express a wish to stay with Cortez as he goes into battle, it is Cydaria who for a cowardly reason begs against separation:

Leave me not here alone, and full of fright,
Amidst the Terrors of a Dreadful night.

Almeria, on the other hand, is full of selfless courage:

Then stay and take me with you; though to be
A Slave to waite upon your Victory.
My Heart unmov'd, can Noyse, and Horrour bear,
Parting from you is all the Death I fear.¹³

Exploiting the dagger motif still further, Dryden also reintroduced it into the final act when Almeria again threatens Cydaria with the weapon and the victim shows a most unheroic terror:

I yet am Tender, Young, and full of Fear
And dare not Dye, but fain would tarry here.¹⁴

This time Almeria stabs first Cydaria and then herself. When actually believing that she is about to die Cydaria does show some courage, but this proves unnecessary since Almeria only intended her own wound to be fatal. The dark woman dies forgiven by Cortez and her rival whose hands she joins just before she expires. She also repeats her willingness to die for Cortez who cries remorsefully

You for my sake, Life to Cydaria give:
And I could dye for you, if you might Live.¹⁵

Almeria reveals a positive side to the 'darker woman's' aggression. In this case the unsuccessful rival seems perhaps more attractive than the pure heroine. This shift is reflected in the casting. The cowardly Cydaria was played by Nell Gwynn the comedienne, whom Pepys found quite wrong for the part:

I find Nell come again, which I am glad of, but was most infinitely displeas'd with her being put to act the Emperour's

daughter; which is a great and serious part, which she doth most basely.¹⁶

According to Downes, Anne Quin (née Marshall) played Almeria, having already played Zempoalla and Evadne in a very early revival of The Maid's Tragedy. Anne Quin was by no means restricted to villainous roles: she played Celia in Jonson's Volpone (1661), Edith in Fletcher's Rollo, Duke of Normandy, or, The Bloody Brother (1661), Alizia in Boyle's The Black Prince (1667) and, much later, Thalestris in Pordage's The Siege of Babylon (1677). Audiences would in fact have been more accustomed to seeing her in noble parts. Already then the tragic pairing was no simple conflict between good and evil. Once the 'darker woman' began to be played by actresses as popular and talented as Rebecca Marshall and Elizabeth Barry, dramatists would develop the sympathetic potential of this character still further.

Both Davenant's adaptation of Macbeth in the mid-1660s and later new plays suggest that contrast between female characters was becoming popular. Davenant's major change to Macbeth (c.1664) was to develop Lady Macduff as a foil to Lady Macbeth, adding several new scenes in which their differing attitudes to power and honour are opposed. The heartless ambition of Lady Macbeth, for instance, is emphasized by contrast with Lady Macduff's rejection of such aims:

The world mistakes the glories gain'd in war,
Thinking their Lustre true: alas, they are
But Comets, Vapours! by some men exhal'd
From others blood.

Whereas Lady Macbeth incites her husband to regicide, Lady Macduff persuades her husband to ignore the witches' prophesy of his success:

He that believes ill news from such as those
Deserves to find it true: their words are like
Their shape, nothing but fiction.¹⁷

In Howard's The Usurper (1664) and Caryll's The English Princess (1667), the tyrants' prisoners, Queen Timandra and Princess Elizabeth, proudly defend their virtue while their pages, Calanthe and Charlot in disguise, contribute a softer image of shy, shrinking femininity. There is a similar juxtaposition of timorous and strongminded women in Stapylton's Hero and Leander (Celona and Hero), Crowne's Juliana (Juliana and Paulina) and Settle's Cambyses (Mandana and Phedima), all produced in 1671. For many of these plays we have no cast list but the casts which do survive suggest no significant pattern of casting. Mrs. Betterton, for instance, played the strongminded Juliana in Crowne's play, but in the same year played the gentle captive Mandana in Settle's Cambyses. These pairings may often simply have been an excuse for offering audiences two attractive types of womanhood instead of one. As Villerotto (in Howard's The Surprizal, 1662), when about to rape one of each type, puts it,

Pretty; their different tempers bring to my enjoyment
 Variety of bliss; in her embraces
 I shall enjoy a calm, and childish innocence;
 In th'other, loftiness of minde, and spirit,
 As if kinde nature had presented now
 All that she cou'd produce for me to rifle.¹⁸

The Impact of Rebecca Marshall and Elizabeth Boutell

From their first appearance together it is plain that Rebecca Marshall and Elizabeth Boutell were an effective acting combination. Playing Fulvia and Aurelia in Joyner's The Roman Empress in 1670 (probably the year in which Boutell joined the King's Company), they earned special praise from the author:

The antient Phaedra is here set off in a real Fulvia ... This Character has been ever much extoll'd: if my art has fail'd in the writing of it, it was highly recompenc'd in the scenical

presentation; for it was incomparably acted. I have for the greater variety of the Stage divided this Character, conferring some share of it on Aurelia, which though a great, various and difficult part, was excellently performed.¹⁹

Joyner gave the traditional female pair a new twist by having Mrs. Boutell undergo a radical change of type halfway through. Initially Aurelia seems meekly virtuous, weeping and pleading with her father:

Sir let these tears
Soften that breast, which the age, war and custom
Seem to have armed so against compassion.

However, at the news that her lover has killed her brother, she is transformed into a bloodthirsty plotter for revenge, working in union with the passionate and sadistic Fulvia (played by Marshall):

hereafter
These fountains of my eyes be ever dry;
My hands, and tongue audacious to commit
Mischiefs to terrifie mankind.²⁰

Joyner seems to have felt that the change would offer a pleasing shock of novelty for spectators: he did it, he explained, 'for the greater variety of the stage'.

In view of Joyner's tribute to the fine acting of Marshall and Boutell, it is not surprising to find them acting together in a series of contrasting roles soon after. Their successful partnership resulted in a definite pattern of women in conflict, running through a variety of serious plays. In the same year as The Roman Empress Dryden cast them in leading, opposed roles in The Conquest of Granada.²¹ Marshall played the lively and wicked Lyndaraxa, Boutell was the loving and virtuous Benzayda. Lyndaraxa gave Pepys' favourite actress an especially good role, as she shamelessly exploits the fatal attraction she exercises on her two wooers, Abdalla and ^eAbd_hlemech, in order to obtain her ambition to be queen:

A glancing smile allur'd me to command;
And her soft fingers gently prest my hand,
I felt the pleasure glide through every part.²²

Dryden developed the character of Lyndaraxa far beyond anything suggested by sources of the play such as La Calprénède's Cassandra and Cleopatra. In his study of La Calprénède and Dryden H. Wynford Hill has noted that:

Lyndaraxa was probably intended to be the stock unscrupulous rival of the heroine, but this capable and fascinating woman develops so rapidly under the hand of the entranced author that she quite outstrips her type and challenges in interest the heroine herself.²³

This is what one might have expected, considering Dryden's treatment of Lyndaraxa's predecessors in The Indian Queen and The Indian Emperour and the fact that he had Mrs. Marshall's talents at his disposal.

Marshall and Boutell went on to appear as the corrupt Poppea and pure Cyara in Lee's Tragedy of Nero (1674), the passionate Berenice and pious Clarona in Crowne's The Destruction of Jerusalem (1677) and, most successfully, as Roxana and Statira in Lee's Alexander the Great, or, The Rival Queens (1677).²⁴ The latter became a stock play and the roles of Roxana and Statira were later taken by Barry and Bracegirdle. Apart from Alexander's death, the scenes of conflict between the two queens - Roxana battling for her rights as Alexander's first wife, and Statira defending herself as his second, most beloved - are the most dramatic and memorable in the play. This plot recalls that of The Siege of Rhodes: Lee even revived the dagger device which he took to its limits. The scene in which Roxana attacks Statira with her dagger is built up to most elaborately. In the preceding act Roxana graphically describes the torments of jealousy she suffers and makes plans to kill her rival. The fatal encounter between the queens opens with Statira's vision prophesying her coming death:

Statira is discover'd sleeping in the Bower of Semiramis. The Spirits of Queen Statira her Mother, and Darius, appear standing on each side of her, with Daggers threatning her.²⁵

Finally the women face each other and Roxana manages to stab Statira just before help arrives. The latter nevertheless survives long enough to take farewell of Alexander and to forgive her rival. Once Statira is dead, Roxana has the dramatic and taxing scene in which, clinging to his robe, she begs for Alexander's love and pleads on behalf of the child she carries within her. Here follows the famous speech quoted by Curll in which Mrs. Barry apparently managed to regain the audience's sympathy in spite of having just murdered the heroine.²⁶ Again, as in The Indian Emperour or The Conquest of Granada, the 'villainess' is given ample opportunity to charm spectators and so win their support.

With Marshall and Boutell together scoring successes for the King's Company, the other House must soon have felt the need to offer similar pairings in their tragedies. At all events, in 1671 we find the Duke's Company producing Samuel Pordage's Herod and Mariamne with virtuous Mariamne and heartless Salome, and Crowne's The History of Charles the Eighth of France which sets the gentle goodness of Julia against the vengeful ranting of Isabella. A perhaps surprising change of casting is to be noted in Crowne's drama in that Mrs. Betterton, normally a virtuous heroine, here created the role of Isabella. However, she clearly had no difficulty with evil roles. Cibber says she was a better Lady Macbeth, for instance, than Mrs. Barry was:

even Mrs. Barry, who acted the Lady Macbeth after her, could not in that Part, with all her superior Strength and Melody of Voice, throw out those quick and careless Strokes of Terror from the Disorder of a guilty Mind, which the other gave us with a Facility in her Manner that render'd them at once tremendous and delightful.²⁷

Mrs. Betterton was also cast as the devilish Empress of Morocco in Settle's play of that name two years later, in which she was called upon to perish like Isabella, bloody and ranting. In Settle's play *Mary Lee*, who had created the wicked Salome in Pordage's play, also in effect swapped types and played the honourable Mariamne. This change is one of a number of such instances which prove that the theory of typecasting in the Restoration theatre should not be taken too far. Female typecasting was never absolute if the actress was sufficiently versatile. The swapping of types in this play also implies that at this time the Duke's Company had no pair of actresses effective enough together to be set up in direct competition to Marshall and Boutell.

In Settle's *Ibrahim the Illustrious Bassa* (1676) Mrs. Betterton reverted to her usual type, playing the Christian captive princess Isabella opposite Mrs. Lee's proud and jealous queen Roxolana in yet another version of the plot of Davenant's *The Siege of Rhodes*. In this case Roxolana has tamed her husband Solyman but loses her power over him when Isabella appears on the scene. Roxolana draws a dagger on Solyman and finally takes a dish of poison herself, in the ignominy of rejection. Solyman is reformed by this act; too late he consigns Isabella to her true love and swears to spend his life mourning Roxolana. Settle therefore gave the jealous queen more sympathy, perhaps, than Davenant had done. This may have been partly due to the fact that Mary Lee was cast as Roxolana; she was a favourite actress of Settle's and he usually cast her sympathetically.²⁸

The Duke's Company's answer to Lee's *The Rival Queens* was Samuel Pordage's *The Siege of Babylon* (1677). In this play Mrs.

Betterton played Statira and Mrs. Lee Roxana, both now widows of Alexander and rivals for the love of Orontes, who, of course, loves Statira. Like Dryden's Almeria, Roxana wrestles with her passion but cannot bring herself to stab the man she loves. Pordage revived the dagger device once again by having Statira bravely 'shew her Breast' to Roxana's knife in the third act. Defeated in the final act Roxana flourishes the fateful dagger for the last time, to hold the enemy at bay and to stab herself. Statira points the moral of her end, 'Thus Gods their Judgement show', and Roxana is 'carried off the Stage Raveing'.²⁹ Pordage's rival queens seem in every way inferior to Lee's: the conflict between them is less exciting and the sympathy Lee managed to suggest for Roxana is lacking in Pordage's melodrama. The play seems to be just a poor effort to cash in on Marshall and Boutell's success at the other theatre.

Female Pairing 1678-88

In 1677 Rebecca Marshall retired from the stage. Her loss to the theatre is reflected in the fact that although various kinds of contrasting female pairing continued sporadically throughout the next decade, there was no clear pattern of such roles in either company and no two actresses who made a speciality of playing opposite one another.

In Lee's plays the disappearance of a pair of balanced, contrasting female characters is very marked after Mrs. Marshall's retirement. In Mithridates (1678), as Semandra and Monima Mrs. Boutell and Mrs. Corbett (who also tended to play gentle heroines)

had very similar, virtuous roles. Lee then began to write for the Duke's Company and in Oedipus (1678) Mrs. Betterton had a central, senior role as the doomed Jocasta and Mary Lee a supporting, rather than opposing, role as the proud and constant Eurydice, a generation younger than Jocasta. Caesar Borgia (1679) has only one leading female part - that of Bellamira who was played by Mrs. Lee. Then came Mrs. Barry's success in Otway's The Orphan (1680) so that Lee's next few plays, Theodosius (1680), Lucius Junius Brutus (1680), The Princess of Cleve (1680?) and Constantine the Great (1683) each have only one starring part, for her.

In the main, serious plays after 1677 with more than one leading woman simply tend to contain two or more contrasting stereotypes of varying dramatic importance. The actresses available continued to perform the types they were best at. In Banks's The Destruction of Troy (1679), for instance, Mrs. Betterton played Andromache, the faithful wife of Hector, Mrs. Barry the 'ingenue' role of Polyxena, beloved of Achilles, and Mrs. Lee the cameo role of insane Cassandra who appears sporadically to prophesy Troy's destruction in ranting tones. Banks' Unhappy Favourite contains, as we have seen, three very different leading female roles for Mrs. Quin, Mrs. Corbett and Mrs. Cook. The extraordinary 'heroine' of Settle's The Female Prelate (1680), the villainous Pope Joan, does have a foil in Angeline, the pure wife of the Duke of Saxony, but the Duchess is a comparatively minor part. The lack of a strong pair of female rivals after 1682 must also be attributed to a general lull in the production of new plays at this time. Hume notes that with the King's Company in such difficulties that theatrical competition ceased, the years 1683-88 produced on average only four new plays per annum.³⁰

Female Pairing Revived:The Influence of Barry and Bracegirdle on Tragedy 1689-1700

The revival of London theatre in 1688 coincided with Anne Bracegirdle's arrival in the Duke's Company. Her tragic ability seems to have been appreciated at once for her first recorded performance is in a leading role - as Antelina in Mountfort's The Injur'd Lovers (1688). The part of Antelina is equal to that of her rival, Oryala, who was played by Mrs. Barry. Antelina is gentle, distressed and chaste, Oryala bold and passionate. Both love the hero who chooses Antelina. With the coming of Bracegirdle the United Company would seem to have deliberately seized the opportunity to emulate the Marshall-Boutell successes of the early 1670s with a new version of the old rivalry.

Personal friendship may have been one reason why such a balanced tragic partnership existed between Barry and Bracegirdle from the very start of the latter's career. They were apparently always good friends: Mrs. Barry did not feel threatened by her younger colleague, Mrs. Bracegirdle had no wish to oust Mrs. Barry from her position of tragic supremacy. Cibber records that when the Patentees of the United Company, in an attempt to cut actors' wages, offered several of Barry's and Betterton's chief roles to the younger actors, Powell and Bracegirdle,

farther their first Project did not succeed; for tho' the giddy Head of Powel accepted the Parts of Betterton, Mrs. Bracegirdle had a different way of thinking, and desir'd to be excus'd from those of Mrs. Barry; her good Sense was not to be misled by the insidious Favour of the Patentees; she knew the Stage was wide enough for her Success, without entring into any such rash and invidious Competition with Mrs. Barry, and therefore wholly refus'd acting any Part that properly belong'd to her.³¹

The very fact that Barry and Bracegirdle were close friends and

worked well together must have encouraged Mountfort and others to write plays in which they could star together.

The pattern of Barry-Bracegirdle typecasting set up in The Injur'd Lovers never varied. The two actresses never swapped types like Mary Betterton and Mary Lee. Although Mrs. Barry played a wide spectrum of roles from evil to good, Mrs. Bracegirdle always played the innocent virgin, whether she was cast as Mrs. Barry's rival, friend or daughter. (The nearest they came to an exchange was Granville's Heroick Love in which Barry played the dignified and virtuous Chruséis and Bracegirdle her light-hearted and coquetish rival.) As the preceding chapter showed, this division was partly the result of public perception of their true personalities: Mrs. Barry was known to have been the mistress of at least one man, Mrs. Bracegirdle never lost her famed reputation for chastity. And perhaps no one wanted to see Bracegirdle, who became the 'Cara, the Darling of the Theatre',³² a villainess.

The division of roles may also be attributed to a difference in acting skills. Mrs. Barry was very versatile in tragedy; Southerne praised her as the virtuous Isabella, Dryden praised her equally for her performance as the villainous Cassandra.³³ Curll testified to the fact that she could make an unattractive character like Roxana in The Rival Queens seem sympathetic. In Congreve's The Mourning Bride the passionate Zara played by Barry even eclipsed the heroine Almeria, played by Bracegirdle, when Congreve had deliberately created the latter to give his favourite actress the star role:

Mrs. Barry out-shin'd Mrs. Bracegirdle in the Character of Zara in The Mourning Bride altho' Mr. Congreve design'd Almeria for that Favour.³⁴

Barry was the obvious choice for the often more interesting and unexpected 'darker woman'. Mrs. Bracegirdle was an excellent comedienne, but her tragic range seems limited: perhaps Barry's very presence in the same company inhibited her from developing her tragic skills.

For nearly twenty years, Barry and Bracegirdle, the most popular and talented actresses of the age, dominated the form of female characterisation in tragedy because dramatists wrote their plays round them and their stereotypes. Their continuous success ensured that a leading pair of contrasting women remained a feature of serious drama from 1688 until 1706 when they created complementary roles for the last time as the sisters Almyna and Zoradia in Mrs. Manley's Almyna, or, The Arabian Vow (shortly after this Bracegirdle retired from the stage). Barry and Bracegirdle were cast together in at least thirty new serious plays;³⁵ they played contrasting roles in nearly two thirds of the new tragedies produced by Betterton's company between 1695 and 1706. This represents an enormously impressive achievement - the personal stamp of two performers upon the shape of tragedy for nearly two decades.

It is a tribute to both the inventiveness of many Restoration dramatists and to the acting skills of the two women that, in spite of the limitations of typecasting, they performed a remarkable range of different roles over the years. Mountfort's The Injur'd Lovers is clearly indebted to The Indian Emperour model in that, in contrast to the chaste and passive Antelina, Oryala is flawed but not unsympathetic - a woman divided between her warring passions of love and pride whose solution to her problems is ultimately to stab herself. Unlike Almeria however, Oryala does actually manage to marry Rhusanes,

the man she loves, by a trick, although Rhusanes reacts to the discovery of this with uncomplimentary horror: 'Convulsions choak me'.³⁶ Oryala could be said to represent a halfway point in the spectrum of different female characters played by Barry as a foil to Bracegirdle's purity. Lower down the spectrum, so to speak, Barry's roles could be a good deal more evil - as Isabella, for instance, in Bancroft's King Edward III (1690), as Homais in ^{Manley's} ~~Pix's~~ The Royal Mischief (1697) or as Cassandra in Dryden's Cleomenes (1692). The latter gave Barry a particularly polished opportunity to display her skills as passionate lover and ranting schemer and she clearly rose to the challenge. 'I can scarcely refrain from giving every one of the Actors their particular commendations', wrote Dryden in the preface to the first printed edition,

but none of them will be offended, if I say that the Town has generally granted that Mrs. Barry, always excellent, has, in this Tragedy excell'd herself, and gain'd a Reputation beyond any Woman whom I have ever seen in the Theater.

Higher up the spectrum Mrs. Barry played a range of wholly sympathetic, wholly virtuous characters, although her roles still contrasted with those of Mrs. Bracegirdle. The contrast was here generally achieved by making the Barry roles markedly more strong-minded, more passionate and more dominant. In several tragedies, for instance, Barry played opposite Bracegirdle as a forceful mother or some other senior figure: Charles Hopkins' Boadicea (1697) presented Barry as the fighting queen of Britain and Bracegirdle as her pathetically raped daughter: in Pix's Queen Catharine (1698) Barry played the play's namesake and Bracegirdle her ward: in Rowe's Ulysses (1705) Barry played Penelope and Bracegirdle her son's beloved.

In Cyrus the Great, or, The Tragedy of Love (1695) Banks had the innovative idea of making Barry the beloved of the two rivals and Bracegirdle the sufferer of unrequited love. Barry's character, Panthea, is pursued by Cyrus while Bracegirdle's character, Lausaria, hopelessly pursues him. However Lausaria's unrequited love does not take her outside the limits of Bracegirdle's typecasting, for Lausaria does not plot vengeance and murder but is driven distracted in a picturesque manner. Banks would seem to have derived the idea for this development from Durfey's casting of the actress as the frustrated Marcella in The Second Part of The Comical History of Don Quixote earlier in the year. In this play Bracegirdle apparently expressed her sorrow through a song which received tumultuous applause (Anne Bracegirdle was an extremely talented singer):

a Song so incomparably well sung and acted by Mrs. Bracegirdle, that the most Envious do allow, as well as the most Ingenious affirm, that 'tis the best of that kind ever done before.³⁷

Banks used Bracegirdle's voice in a similar way. In Cyrus the Great she was called upon to sing two such songs, 'distracted, drest like Cupid' - a clear attempt to capitalize upon the Durfey success. Although Cyrus the Great was apparently written years earlier,³⁸ Banks must have revised it and added much to Lausaria's role for its 1695 production - the similarity between this part and that of Marcella is too close to be accidental.

In 1698 George Granville attempted to reverse the traditional Barry-Bracegirdle pairing still further. In Heroick Love (1698) he had Mrs. Barry play the noble Chruseis and Mrs. Bracegirdle the vain and foolish Briseis. As shown in the preceding chapter, this experiment failed. Barry could be accepted by the public in both sympathetic and unsympathetic roles, Bracegirdle could not. For all Granville's efforts to reduce spectators' compassion for Briseis

she turned out to be the play's most popular character. After this there were no more attempts to write unsympathetic roles for Bracegirdle in tragedy.

Occasionally Mrs. Barry was paired opposite Mrs. Bowman, instead of Bracegirdle, presumably because Bracegirdle, also the company's leading comedienne, was too busy with other roles. In Pix's The Czar of Muscovy (1701), for example, Barry played the passionate Zarriana and Mrs. Bowman the gentler Marina, possibly because Mrs. Bracegirdle had been busy playing Portia in Granville's The Jew of Malta the month before. Barry and Bowman played together in similar parts in Jane Wiseman's Antiochus the Great (1701), Charles Boyle's Altemira (1701) and John Oldmixon's The Governour of Cyprus (1703). All these writers, except perhaps Pix, would have been considered comparatively minor dramatists so that, although they may have written their plays with Bracegirdle in mind, they had to accept an inferior actress (though Bowman was good and experienced) in her stead. After Bracegirdle's retirement Barry played opposite a variety of actresses such as Mrs. Oldfield (in Rowe's The Royal Convert, 1707) and Mrs. Rogers (in Irene, or, The Fair Greek by Charles Goring, 1708). The tradition of female pairing must by then have become too strong for even the loss of Bracegirdle to have affected it.

Barry and Bracegirdle's success helped to shape tragedy at the other main London theatre at Drury Lane as well as at their own in Lincoln's Inn Fields. As before, when Mrs. Betterton and Mrs. Lee were cast in similar roles to Mrs. Marshall and Mrs. Boutell, the dramatists writing for Rich's company³⁹ soon attempted to capitalize on the success of Betterton's group by creating contrasting tragic roles for their own actresses, Mrs. Knight (the Barry equivalent) and

Mrs. Rogers (playing parts like Bracegirdle's). In 1695 appeared Bonduca, the British Heroine (adapted from Fletcher's play, possibly by George Powell) with Mrs. Knight as Bonduca and Mrs. Rogers as her daughter Claudia. (Lincoln's Inn Fields of course then copied this with Barry and Bracegirdle in Boadicea by Charles Hopkins two years later.) In the same year Rich's company also produced Robert Gould's The Rival Sisters in which Knight and Rogers played the sisters of the title and Catherine Trotter's Agnes de Castro in which Rogers played the heroine, Agnes, and Knight the murderous Elvira. In the following year Rogers and Knight played rivals in love in Hopkins' Neglected Virtue, or, The Unhappy Conquerors and Pix's Ibrahim, The Thirteenth Emperour of the Turks. In Richard Norton's Pausanias, the Betrayer of his Country (also 1696), Mrs. Knight played the mother of Pausanias and Rogers his mistress. (Mrs. Knight, like Barry, was significantly older than her colleague.) In 1699 competition between the two theatres raged so fiercely that both put on tragedies about Iphigenia at about the same time: Bracegirdle took the role in Dennis's Iphigenia at Lincoln's Inn Fields and Rogers played the same part in Abel Boyer's translation of Racine's Iphigenia en Aulide at Drury Lane.

In 1696 Rich's company also produced The Female Wits, an anonymous satiric drama making fun of the tragedies of mesdames Manley, Pix and Trotter. The play shows rehearsals for Marsilia's (Mrs. ^{Manley's} ~~Pix's~~) latest melodrama which soon emerges as a thinly disguised Royal Mischief. Not surprisingly we find Mrs. Knight being directed by Marsilia in the title role - Mrs. Barry had created the original role of Homais. This fact offers further proof that Knight was regarded as the Drury Lane equivalent of Mrs. Barry.

Female Pairing in Comedy

The pairing of contrasting female types was not restricted to tragedy. Although the feature is far less marked here, some dramatists also provided two different styles of comic heroine, the contrast most usually being between one who was bold and witty and another who was gentler and more restrained. The idea was not new; Shakespeare's Much Ado About Nothing, for example, contains such characters as does Shirley's The Sisters, both of which plays were revived after 1660. As actresses in both companies tended to become typecast as one sort of heroine or the other it was natural that new comedies began to be written to this pattern and they occur throughout the period. In 1667, for example, Flora's Vagaries appeared, by Richard Rhodes, with Nell Gwyn as the lively Flora and Mrs. Knepp as her more timorous cousin, Otrante. In Thomas Shadwell's The Sullen Lovers the following year, the two heroines are characterized in a manner reminiscent of Jonsonian humours characters - Emilia (Mrs. Shadwell) a retiring manhater, Carolina (actress unknown) cheerful and witty. Each has a lover suitable to her disposition. Sedley's The Mulberry Garden (1668) contains a pair of serious and a pair of witty daughters (actresses unknown), Wycherley's Love in a Wood, or, St. James's Park (1671) contrasts the serious Christina (Mrs. Boutell) with the lively Lydia (Mrs. Cox), Edward Revet's The Town-Shifts, or, The Suburb-Justice (1671) contrasts Mrs. Lee's Leticia with Mrs. Long's 'mad-cap' Fickle. Later examples include Phillis and Diana in Peter Belon's The Mock-Duellist, or, The French Valet (1675), Elvira and Clara in John Leaned's The Counterfeits (1678, Mrs. Lee and Mrs. Barry), Sylvia and Maria in James Carlile's The Fortune-Hunters, or, Two Fools Well Met (1689, Mrs. Butler and Mrs. Mountfort) and Dorothea and Feliciana in William Mountfort's The Successful Strangers

(1690, Mrs. Knight and Mrs. Mountfort).

What is immediately apparent from the list above is, firstly, that no particular pair of actresses such as Marshall and Boutell emerged to make such pairings their speciality, and, secondly, that these pairings occurred relatively infrequently. There is no obvious reason for this. Presumably if two gifted and popular actresses had specialized successfully as contrasting comic rivals they might have established a strong trend. What did occur, however, was the occasional introduction of a popular tragic actress partnership into comedy. In Wycherley's The Plain Dealer (1676) Marshall and Boutell continued their famous rivalry within a comic framework and the same happened with Barry and Bracegirdle in some comedies of the 1690s.

In The Plain Dealer Rebecca Marshall was cast as the villainous Olivia, unfaithful mistress of the hero Manly, while Elizabeth Boutell played Manly's constant lover Fidelity. The latter proves her devotion by serving him disguised as a page and finally wins him. Olivia is both heartless and lustful; she tries to seduce the disguised Fidelity and is fiercely vengeful when finally defeated. The chaste Fidelity is still more obviously an outcast from serious drama - her disguise as a page belongs to the tragicomic world of Beaumont and Fletcher rather than to Restoration London. She even speaks in verse - the only character to do so:

But did there never any love like me,
That, untried tortures, you must find me out?
Others, at worst, you force to kill themselves,
But I must be self-murderess of my love,
Yet will not grant me power to end my life,
My cruel life, for, when a lover's hopes
Are dead and gone, life is unmerciful. (Sits down and weeps)

Wycherley's use of Marshall and Boutell in their traditional tragic

roles contributes to the dark, at times disturbing nature of the main plot of the 'comedy', just as the behaviour of the male characters Manly and Vernish (Olivia's husband) often seems too vicious and savage to belong comfortably in a comic work. Vernish, for instance, attempts to rape Fidelia:

F: Oh, oh! Rather than you shall drag me to a death so horrid and so shameful I'll die here a thousand deaths; but you do not look like a ravisher, sir.

V: Nor you like one would put me to't but if you will -⁴⁰

Even the happy ending, in which Manly and Fidelia retreat from society entirely, seems out of place in a comedy. Whether or not the introduction of such jarring elements may be considered successful, they presumably had a thought-provoking effect and so drew attention to Wycherley's scathing satiric attack on the greed, lust and corruption of Restoration libertine society.

Such an attempt to transport a tragic female pairing into comedy is rare before 1690. In general the contrasting heroines, even rivals, of comedy seem unrelated to those of tragedy. Rebecca Marshall, in fact, hardly ever performed in comedy. All kinds of tragic rhetoric and behaviour might be parodied in comedy - Mrs. Loveit, Harriet's rival in The Man of Mode, for instance, rants in tragic style and is an object of ridicule - but Wycherley's is the only comedy in which the Marshall-Boutell combination was transferred, wholesale, from one genre to another. I can find no similar instance of parallel casting before the 1690s, that is, of a pair of actresses obviously repeating a successful tragic partnership in a comedy.

During the 1690s, unlike Boutell and Marshall, Barry and Bracegirdle were cast together in a number of comedies both before and after the break away from the United Company. Of course these

actresses were not known solely as contrasting rivals and they played some other types of comic roles together. In Shadwell's The Scowrers (1690), for example, their two parts, both attractive, bear little or no relation to their typecasting in tragedy and were presumably given to them for the sake of employing the theatre's two most popular actresses. Although in The Wives' Excuse, a year later, Southerne clearly designed the two main female roles with some of Barry and Bracegirdle's tragic associations in mind, their traditional opposition - purity versus passion - was not one of them. Barry created the part of the virtuous heroine, Mrs. Friendall, who nobly resists all the efforts of the rake Lovemore (played by her male partner in many tragedies, Betterton) to seduce her, in spite of the fact that she is attracted to him and dislikes her husband. Southerne required all Barry's talent for pathos to show the truly miserable predicament of the faithful wife trapped in an unhappy marriage. Bracegirdle played Mrs. Friendall's unmarried friend Mrs. Sightly, who is pursued by Friendall (Barry's husband in the play) in the hope that society will believe that he is having an affair with her even if he is not. Like Bracegirdle's usual tragic parts, Mrs. Sightly is chaste and virtuous, the innocent victim of a rapacious male, but the similarities between her role and Barry's are more marked than the contrasts. Together Mrs. Friendall and Mrs. Sightly strengthen Southerne's satiric message about the plight of women in a male-dominated libertine society. Barry and Bracegirdle also took similar, as opposed to contrasting, parts in the anonymous She Ventures and He Wins in 1695 (as the virtuous wife Urania and the lively heiress Charlot) and Vanbrugh's The Provok'd Wife in 1697 (as the good wife Lady Brute and her friend Bellinda). It is interesting to see that, as the wife in each case, Barry still always played the senior character and the non-virgin.

Durfey's The Marriage-Hater Match'd (1692) is the first of a series of plays in which it seems to me the traditional Barry-Bracegirdle partnership of tragedy is deliberately recalled to make a point. In this play Bracegirdle played the virtuous Phaebe who has been debauched by and is determined to marry the 'marriage-hater', Sir Philip. Barry played Lady Subtle, a haughty widow who has jilted Sir Philip and from whom he attempts to recover a fortune. Lady Subtle is proud and passionate and she rants vengefully, 'Oh, I could tear my Flesh, burn, Stab, or poyson'.⁴¹ Thus, as in many tragedies, Barry's character and Bracegirdle's are involved with the same man, the Barry character is wild and passionate and the Bracegirdle heroine a (comparatively) innocent victim. Surprisingly however, in this comic context Phaebe and Lady Subtle unite in their opposition to Sir Philip and enjoy triumphing over him. Phaebe, unlike the Bracegirdle heroines of tragedy, is a plotter; she even tricks Lady Subtle out of her fortune, although she compensates her for this by getting her a rich husband, the fool Van Grin. At the end Sir Philip is reconciled to the idea of marriage to Phaebe and returns to Lady Subtle the money that properly belongs to her. These deviations from tradition highlight important features of the play: that the 'hero', won by the Bracegirdle heroine, is no hero at all, but basically a corrupt libertine (although Durfey did allow him a romantic change of heart at the very end): that the heroine in libertine society must exercise independence and great cunning in order to survive and cannot afford to behave in a traditionally feminine, passive way. Like Fidelity, Phaebe is a victim of male lust but she extricates herself from her predicament on her own. Durfey's satire, like Wycherley's, is strengthened by an arresting use of a tragic formula in a comic context.

Durfey also cast Barry and Bracegirdle as contrasting rivals in The Richmond Heiress, a year later, but again altered the usual formula by uniting instead of opposing them. Bracegirdle played the sensible, virtuous Fulvia, Barry the highminded, passionate Sophronia. Sophronia loves the hero Frederick but loses him to Fulvia (because the latter has a fortune): 'He's gone, and tears my Heart-strings as he goes'. However, when Sophronia then goes on to prove Frederick's inconstancy to Fulvia, the two women combine in scorning the hero who exits in a fury - 'Hell take all Heiresses, and all the Sex besides'. Fulvia finally decides never to marry, a decision warmly commended by her friend:

thou art a dear Example for all thy Sex to copy out thy Virtue, for that a kind and tender heart like thine, moulded for Love and softned with Endearments, should generously on the account of honour, resist a Traytor, that with strong Enchantments of Vows and Oaths, had long time made Impression, is a performance heightened to a wonder, and will be reverenc'd in succeeding ages.⁴²

The fact that the most famous stage rivals of the day here forget their rivalry and unite against the man instead drives home Durfey's message - that in a libertine society where men are out for what they can get from women financially and sexually, women must band together to protect themselves. The play's epilogue, spoken by a woman, further emphasizes the point, addressing the men:

This Theam occasions our new Scenes to Night,
To shew a Woman once was in the right:
The Satyr's gentle, and I think 'tis new,
And only meant to teach ye to be true.

John Crowne also subverted the Barry-Bracegirdle tragic association in The Married Beau, or, The Curious Impertinent (1694). In this comedy Barry played the proud coquette wife Mrs. Lovely and Bracegirdle the devout Camilla - both attracted to the same man. Although she is married, the emotional Mrs. Lovely allows herself to

be seduced by the man, named Polidor. (Could his name be an ironic reminder of the adulterous Polidor of The Orphan?) Afterwards she suffers agonies of remorse and resists his further advances. In a fit of pique Polidor confesses something of the affair to Mr. Lovely, who denounces his wife as a whore. However the lovers then stage a scene for Lovely's benefit in which Mrs. Lovely vigorously rejects Polidor and so the husband is quite pacified. Thus Crowne defied audience expectation and had the flawed, uncontrolled Barry heroine reform and for once escape punishment. At the same time Polidor is reformed by the 'vertuous, devout reserv'd' Camilla.⁴³ Mrs. Bracegirdle's part in this comedy is closer to her usual roles in tragedy; Crowne made her pure to the point of being religious and strict. But here she dominates the hero, instead of being the passive object of his desires.

Congreve's use of Barry and Bracegirdle in Comedy

In his tragedy The Mourning Bride (1697) Congreve provided a typical division of roles for Barry and Bracegirdle. Barry played the sexually experienced, impetuous Zara, frustrated in her love for the hero, Bracegirdle played his beloved Almeria, gentle, virtuous and passive. More unusually, in comedies before and after this play Congreve also used the tragic Barry-Bracegirdle partnership and to highly original effect. Whereas Wycherley and Dufey seem to have introduced this element into their comedy to strengthen its satiric message, Congreve aimed, I believe, to go further and to give his plays an additional tragic dimension through the 'tragic' roles. The comedies concerned are The Double-Dealer (1693) and The Way of the World (1700).

In The Double-Dealer Congreve made an obvious attempt to move beyond the conventional limits of comedy, towards a more serious conflict between good and evil. The play's motto, from Horace's Ars Poetica, is 'interdum tamen, ^{et} a vocem Comeodia tollit' - 'now and then however, even Comedy raises its voice'.⁴⁴ The drama has a contemporary setting and is peopled with familiar comic types - the cuckold Sir Paul Plyant and his promiscuous wife, the foolish Froths, the coxcomb Brisk, a sensible, loving hero and heroine. However the plot seems reminiscent of tragedy; it is centred on an Iagoesque villain, Maskwell, and his associate and mistress, Lady Touchwood, and their wicked intrigues are finally discovered and punished. The tragic parallel was strongly emphasized by the fact that Barry and Bracegirdle were cast as contrasting rivals. Bracegirdle played the heroine Cynthia who loves and is loved by the hero Mellefont. Barry played the wildly emotional Lady Touchwood, also in love with Mellefont whom she has unsuccessfully tried to seduce. When he rejected her,

she flew to my Sword, and with much ado I prevented her doing me or her self a Mischief: Having disarm'd her, in a Gust of Passion she left me.⁴⁵

Like Cassandra in Dryden's Cleomenes the year before, Lady Touchwood desperately seeks revenge when her act of seduction fails:

Oh Mellefont! I burn; married to Morrow! Despair strikes me. Yet my Soul knows I hate him too: Let him but once be mine, and next immediate Ruin seize him.⁴⁶

Barry's character thus speaks and behaves as she would in a tragic role ranting rhetorically and even finally drawing a dagger on her husband when he discovers her perfidy. Lord Touchwood himself is no foolish cuckold, that stock figure of comedy; he is a noble character who, once he learns of his wife's betrayal, casts her off with dignity and authority, 'Go and thy own Infamy pursue thee'.⁴⁷ Here too the casting reinforced the parallel with tragedy; Lord Touchwood

was played by Kynaston, an actor associated far more with tragedy than with comedy.

Beside the more decidedly comic characters the Touchwoods and Maskwell stand out as intruders from another world. Even Maskwell's plan to win Cynthia for himself recalls the plotting of villains, such as the king in The Injur'd Lovers and Genselaric in Brady's The Rape (1692), to enjoy the Bracegirdle heroine:

Cynthia, let thy Beauty gild my Crimes; and whatsoever I commit of Treachery or Deceit, shall be imputed to me as a Merit.⁴⁸

But the comic framework contains these savage emotions. Cynthia seems never to be in serious danger and all is happily resolved at the end. Nevertheless, by carrying over conventions such as the Barry-Bracegirdle typecasting from one genre to another, Congreve offered a new perspective on the precepts of comedy. Adultery - that of Maskwell and Lady Touchwood - is shown as an evil, harshly condemned, whereas this is an act taken lightly in most other comedies.

Congreve's 'Epistle Dedicatory' to the printed play highlighted both his serious intention and its lack of success with audiences. He stressed first his moral purpose - 'I design'd the Moral first, and to that Moral invented the Fable' - and his effort 'to preserve the three Unities of the Drama'. Then he defended Maskwell's Iagoesque soliloquies, which had apparently come under attack, as a perfectly acceptable dramatic contrivance. This may be so, but Maskwell's style of speech belongs more commonly to tragedy than to comedy and so perhaps seemed unnatural to some spectators. Similarly the fact that Mellefont, the hero, was deceived and 'made a Fool',⁴⁹ was apparently resented. In Restoration comedy the hero or 'truewit'

traditionally tricks others: he is never gulled himself. In tragedy, on the other hand, the hero is often deceived by the plausible villain (see, for example, Lee's Theodosius, Otway's Venice Preserved, Mountfort's The Injur'd Lovers and innumerable other contemporary tragedies). Congreve's epistle implies that The Double-Dealer was an experiment in combining comedy and tragedy which unfortunately proved unsuccessful with the public. As regards the casting of Barry and Bracegirdle, however, it remains an interesting exploration of how genre could be carried over by these actresses so as to give comedy a new dimension.

In one sense The Way of the World may be seen as an improvement on the 'tragicomedy' that Congreve had attempted more crudely in The Double-Dealer. The plot and characters can be seen as having a tragic dimension but this is assimilated into the whole rather than standing out as an intrusion. For example, Barry and Bracegirdle were again cast in contrasting roles: Bracegirdle created the part of the charming heroine Millamant and Barry that of the passionate villainess Mrs. Marwood. The two are rivals for the love of Mirabell, who of course loves Millamant, so that Marwood seeks revenge for her rejection. However, Marwood does not appear as an outcast from tragedy - she talks and behaves like the other comic characters. She does not soliloquize like Maskwell nor rave like Lady Touchwood or a Mary Pix tragedy queen. She possesses all the jealous pride and vicious thirst for revenge of a traditional villainess but these emotions are contained and hidden, and even when they burst forth - as in her exchanges with her lover Fainall in Act III - they are not expressed in inflated, melodramatic rhetoric and are the more powerful for this reason. When Fainall, for instance, mocks her for her hypocritical friendship with his wife, she loses control and threatens

to reveal their affair in this way:

It shall be all discover'd. You too shall be discover'd; be sure you shall. I can but be expos'd - If I do it my self I shall prevent your Baseness.⁵⁰

As rivals, Millamant and Marwood attack each other as fiercely as do Statira and Roxana, but they use the weapons appropriate to their society - barbed words beneath a semblance of elaborate good manners. In their vicious confrontation in Act III Marwood first tries to embarrass her opponent by revealing that she knows Mirabell and Millamant are in love: 'The Secret is grown too big for the Pretence: 'Tis like Mrs. Primly's great Belly; she may lace it down before, but it burnishes on her Hips'.⁵¹ However, Millamant knows the depth of Marwood's own feelings for Mirabell and retaliates more than effectively:

Mar: Mr. Mirabell and you both may think it a Thing impossible, when I shall tell him by telling you -

Mil: O dear, what? for it is the same thing, if I hear it - Ha, ha, ha.

Mar: That I detest him, hate him, Madam.

Mil: O Madam, why so do I - And yet the Creature loves me, ha, ha, ha. How can one forbear laughing to think of it - I am a Sybil if I am not amaz'd to think what he can see in me. I'll take my Death, I think you are handsomer - and within a Year or two as young. - If you cou'd but stay for me, I shou'd overtake you - But that cannot be - Well, that Thought makes me melancholick - Now I'll be sad.

Mar: Your merry Note may be chang'd sooner than you think.

Mil: D'ye say so? Then I'm resolv'd I'll have a Song to keep up my Spirits.

Marwood cannot maintain Millamant's tone of good humour. She exposes her feelings with her intense 'detest him, hate him' and with her dark threat - 'Your merry Note may be chang'd'. Millamant's long speech is a brilliant series of jibes - about the difference in their ages and about Mirabell's preference for herself. Finally Marwood

is forced to hear a song (in Bracegirdle's beautiful voice) that rams home the triumph of her rival:

Then I alone the Conquest prize,
 When I insult a Rival's Eyes:
 If there's Delight in Love, 'tis when I see
 That Heart which others bleed for, bleed for me.⁵²

In tragedy Bracegirdle's character tended to be the passive victim of the villainess Barry's spite and cunning: in sophisticated London society the tables are turned.

This change to the usual Barry-Bracegirdle battles has, I suggest, two important effects. Firstly, it highlights the point made throughout the play that success in libertine society requires wit, cunning and the concealment of one's real feelings. (Even Millamant's acceptance of Mirabell's proposal of marriage is couched in terms of a jesting series of provisos which keep the expression of their total commitment at bay.) The weapons that work well for a Barry villainess in tragedy, such as a bloodthirsty willingness to commit murder with one's dagger, are ineffectual here; at the end of the play Fainall draws his sword on his wife, but Sir Wilfull holds him off and Mirabell's cunning wins the day. Secondly, the tragic parallel gives The Way of the World a gravity which sets it apart from most other comedies. Beneath the wit and repartee burn passionate love and hatred. Familiar comic figures - the cuckold, the coquette heroine, the mistress - are portrayed with a new depth of feeling.

This potent absorption of tragic elements within a comic framework was perhaps one reason for the play's modest success. Congreve was surprised that it achieved even this. 'That it succeeded on the Stage, was almost beyond my Expectation; for but little of it was

prepar'd for that general Taste which seems now to be predominant in the Pallats of our Audience.⁵³ In fact, however much comic tastes might have changed by the end of the century, the popularity of the Barry-Bracegirdle pairing never waned. The Way of the World offered audiences a brilliantly entertaining version of a familiar partnership within an effective blend of comedy and tragedy and this perhaps protected the play from total failure.

Women in the Movies, New York, Chicago, San Francisco, 1976 and *Samuel Johnson, Virgins, Vamps and Villains: The American Selected Movie Mornings*, Montreal, 1978).

3. For a full account of all the revivals of this play, see Arthur Colby Sprague, Beaumont and Fletcher on the Restoration Stage, Cambridge, Mass., 1926.
4. Beaumont and Fletcher, The Dramatic Works, ed. Bowers, vol. II, The Maid's Tragedy, II, II, 71-6.
5. Pepys, Diary, vol. 7, p. 397.
6. See chapter 3, pp. 43-7 and Eric Rothstein, Restoration Tragedy, pp. 139-41.
7. William Davenant, The Stage of Rhodes, 1653, p. 37.
8. According to Pepys (Diary, 5, pp. 33-4) she had a leading part in The Indian Queen. Since she played Almeria, Zamperella's equivalent in the sequel, The Indian Emperor, the leading part was probably Zamperella.
9. Dryden, Works, vol. VIII, The Indian Queen, III, 1, 37-8, IV, 1, 30. Arthur C. Kirsch suggests that Zamperella may 'be a recollection of the dominating or lascivious females in Fletcherian drama', such as Evadne or Cleopatra in The False One (Arthur C. Kirsch, Dryden's Heroic Drama, New York, 1972, p. 86).
10. Dryden, Essays, vol. I, p. 130.
11. Dryden, Works, vol. VI, The Indian Queen, V, 1, 128-9.
12. Ibid., vol. IX, The Indian Emperor, IV, 1, 26.
13. Ibid., IV, iv, 133-4, 141-2.
14. Ibid., V, II, 177-8.
15. Ibid., V, II, 329-30.
16. Pepys, Diary, vol. 8, p. 395.
17. Spencer, Davenant's Macbeth from the Yale Manuscript, I, v, 23-6, II, v, 91-5.
18. Robert Howard, Four New Plays, 1665, p. 58.

FOOTNOTES

1. This has been discussed briefly in Wilson, All the King's Ladies, p.97, and Rothstein, Restoration Tragedy, pp.141-4, but neither critic has systematically analysed the known pairings.
2. It is interesting to find how long these two female stereotypes have endured. In early twentieth-century films, for example, women were similarly categorized as whores or virgins, vamps or 'nice girls'. The likenesses between the perception of women in Restoration drama and in the early movies are very striking (see Molly Haskell, From Reverence to Rape: The Treatment of Women in the Movies, New York, Chicago, San Francisco, 1974 and Sumiko Higashi, Virgins, Vamps and Flappers: The American Silent Movie Heroine, Montreal, 1978).
3. For a full account of all the revivals of this play, see Arthur Colby Sprague, Beaumont and Fletcher on the Restoration Stage, Cambridge, Mass., 1926.
4. Beaumont and Fletcher, The Dramatic Works, ed. Bowers, vol.II, The Maid's Tragedy, II, ii, 71-6.
5. Pepys, Diary, vol.7, p.399.
6. See chapter 2, pp.75-7 and Eric Rothstein, Restoration Tragedy, pp.139-41.
7. William Davenant, The Siege of Rhodes, 1663, p.37.
8. According to Pepys (Diary, 5, pp.33-4) she had a leading part in The Indian Queen. Since she played Almeria, Zempoalla's equivalent in the sequel, The Indian Emperour, the leading part was probably Zempoalla.
9. Dryden, Works, vol.VIII, The Indian Queen, III, i, 37-8, IV, i, 30. Arthur C. Kirsch suggests that Zempoalla may 'be a recollection of the dominating or unscrupulous females in Fletcherian drama', such as Evadne or Cleopatra in The False One (Arthur C. Kirsch, Dryden's Heroic Drama, New York, 1972, p.86).
10. Dryden, Essays, vol.I, p.150.
11. Dryden, Works, vol.VIII, The Indian Queen, V, i, 288-9.
12. Ibid., vol.IX, The Indian Emperour, IV, i, 28.
13. Ibid., IV, iv, 133-4, 141-4.
14. Ibid., V, ii, 277-8.
15. Ibid., V, ii, 329-30.
16. Pepys, Diary, vol.8, p.395.
17. Spencer, Davenant's Macbeth from the Yale Manuscript, I, v, 25-8, II, v, 93-5.
18. Robert Howard, Four New Plays, 1665, p.50.

19. William Joyner, The Roman Empress, preface. Having cited this quotation already in chapter 2, I apologize for repeating it again here. It seems to me to be worth giving again for a different reason.
20. *Ibid.*, pp.4, 6.
21. There is little doubt that Dryden, acknowledged as the greatest dramatist of his age, could have his plays cast according to his own ideas. A letter reveals his care over the casting of his plays; in August 1684 he wrote to his publisher, Jacob Tonson, that,

'for the Actors in the two plays, which are to be acted of mine, this winter, I had spoken with Mr. Betterton by chance at the Coffee house this afternoon before I came away: and I believe that the persons were all agreed on, to be just the same you mentioned. Only Octavia was to be Mrs. Buttler, in case Mrs. Cooke were not on the Stage. And I know not whether Mrs. Percivall who is a Comedian, will do so well for Benzayda. (Dryden, The Letters, ed. C.E. Ward, Durham, 1942, 23-4.)
22. Dryden, Works, vol.XI, The Conquest of Granada, Part 1, II, i, 168-70.
23. Herbert Wynford Hill, La Calprenède's Romances and the Restoration Drama, Nevada, 1910, p.82.
24. This play quickly became and remained a stock play; according to the London Stage it was performed on at least 12 separate occasions between 1660 and 1700, 36 between 1700 and 1729 and 35 between 1729 and 1746.
25. Lee, Works, vol.I, The Rival Queens, V, opening.
26. See chapter 2, p.88-9.
27. Cibber, Apology, I, p.162.
28. See chapter 2, pp.80-1.
29. Samuel Pordage, The Siege of Babylon, 1678, p.61.
30. Robert Hume, The Development of English Drama, p.340.
31. Cibber, Apology, I, p.189.
32. *Ibid.*, p.171.
33. See p.194 for Dryden's praise of Barry as Cassandra.
34. Anthony Aston, A Brief Supplement to Colly Cibber Esq. his Lives of the Late Famous Actors and Actresses, 1747?, pp.6-7.
35. See Appendix II for full list of plays in which Barry and Bracegirdle were paired together.
36. William Mountfort, The Injur'd Lovers, 1688, p.24.

37. Thomas Durfey, The Comical History of Don Quixote, Parts 1-3, p.99.
38. See The London Stage, Part 1, 1660-1700, p.cxlvi.
39. The King's and Duke's companies had amalgamated into The United Company in 1682. Then, in 1695, Betterton's group, including Barry and Bracegirdle, broke away, leaving what was mainly the younger players under the management of Christopher Rich.
40. William Wycherley, The Plays, ed. Holland, The Plain-Dealer, IV, ii, 343-9, 470-4.
41. Thomas Durfey, The Marriage-Hater Match'd, 1692, p.23.
42. Durfey, The Richmond Heiress, pp.31, 62, 63-4.
43. John Crowne, The Married Beau, 1694, cast list.
44. William Congreve, Comedies, The Double-Dealer, title page.
45. *Ibid.*, pp.126-7.
46. *Ibid.*, p.135.
47. *Ibid.*, p.210.
48. *Ibid.*, p.149.
49. *Ibid.*, pp.114, 115.
50. *Ibid.*, p.365.
51. *Ibid.*, p.387.
52. *Ibid.*, pp.388-9, 390.
53. *Ibid.*, p.336.

CHAPTER 6SHE-COMEDY?

Having traced the emergence of a 'she-tragedy', I now wish to consider the general impact of the introduction of actresses on comedy. Did, for instance, the presence of real women in the theatre result in a fuller and more sympathetic presentation of the female and her point of view in comedy? Did particular actresses emerge to inspire major roles in this genre, as in tragedy? Did the arrival of the actresses encourage a fuller and more vigorous exploration of 'feminist' issues than heretofore and help to provoke, on the stage at least, more equality between the sexes? In the past critics have explored a wide range of influences upon late seventeenth-century English comedy - from French and Spanish drama to contemporary philosophy. Although the performers themselves have now been recognized as a significant factor, no one has yet properly considered the significance of the actresses in particular as a force for change in the development of the comedy. My intention in this chapter is to remedy this deficiency and to assess what developments can convincingly be attributed, both directly and indirectly, to the new female performers.

As the differing questions above suggest, this is of necessity a long and wide-ranging chapter. The female contribution to comedy took various forms. I have had to include first a chronological account of the development of comedy from the point of view of the actresses available, and then some individual studies of later actresses who had a particularly important impact. Both discussions lead to the final, more general, investigation of the 'feminist' aspects of Restoration comedy which the actresses helped bring about.

Nell Gwyn and the creation of the 'gay couple'

The appearance of the 'gay couple' has rightly been called 'the most distinctive new contribution to comedy of the 1660s, the first new change in the comic form in the Restoration'.¹ The typical gay couple consists of a pair of lively, witty lovers whose love contains an element of antagonism - each desires the other but is wary of commitment. The male, who is generally a rakish gallant, dislikes the notion of marriage because it entails a loss of freedom; the lady appears to distrust marriage for the same reason but is usually using her apparent dislike of the commitment to keep her lover at bay until she is sure that his motives are honest. This mutual antagonism is expressed through a battle of wits and repartee by which they test one another's affection. The concept of such a couple did not originate in the Restoration - its roots have been traced from Shakespeare through Shirley, Brome and Davenant - but the phenomenon flowered only after 1660, when it became the most striking ingredient of comedy between 1670 and 1700.² This development would not and could not have come about without the introduction of actresses and one comic actress especially, Nell Gwyn. As Peter Holland puts it, 'what was new was not simply having women on stage but a woman who could credibly rival male wit'.³

Holland has described how the already existing convention of a pair of witty lovers was only developed and made popular once Gwyn and Charles Hart (lovers in real life, incidentally) began to play such a couple for the King's Company.⁴ He points out that, after Hart and Gwyn had been cast as the anti-platonic lovers Philidor and Mirida in James Howard's All Mistaken, or, The Mad Couple in May 1665, they immediately went on to perform opposite each other in

plays written earlier which used the convention - Howard's The English Mounsieur and Rhodes' Flora's Vagaries - plays which had had only limited success when first performed, but which now gained a new lease of life.⁵ In Howard's All Mistaken Philidor and Mirida are each pursued by a flock of other lovers and although they are immediately attracted to each other they make an agreement very early on that neither is to feel committed to the other and 'we will be both as mad / As we please'.⁶ Even when they come together at the end of the play both reject marriage, emphasizing that they hate the idea of being chained together. Thus the play contains the fundamental ingredients of what was to become the characteristic Restoration 'gay couple' mode.

Two years after this came Hart and Gwyn's immense success as the gay couple Celadon and Florimell in Dryden's Secret Love, in February 1667. As Holland points out, Dryden definitely wrote the part of Florimell specifically for Nell because the description of this character in the text of the play is also a description of the actress herself.⁷ The entire production was apparently enormously popular and, if Pepys' opinion is anything to go by, Nell was its most popular element:

the truth is, there is a comical part done by Nell, which is Florimell, that I never can hope ever to see the like done again by man or woman ... so great performance of a comical part was never, I believe, in the world before as Nell doth this.⁸

After this, almost every performance of comedy by the King's Company during that season and the next was designed to make use of Hart and Gwyn as a gay couple. We know of at least six more performances of Secret Love, four of Robert Howard's The Surprizal with Nell as the bold Samira, and two of James Howard's All Mistaken and The English

Mounsieur and Rhodes' Flora's Vagaries. There was also a revival of Philaster in November 1667 with Nell as Bellario and Hart as Philaster and one of The Wild Goose Chase early in 1668 in which Nell probably played Oriana and Hart Mirabell. Holland does not mention that Nell and Hart became so identified with their roles in Philaster that they were mentioned in the prologue to another revival of the play a quarter of a century later:

That good old play Philaster ne'er can fail,
But we young actors, how shall we prevail?
Philaster and Bellario, let me tell ye,
For these bold parts we have no Hart, no Nelly,
Those darlings of the stage that charmed you there.⁹

The lines suggest how great was the impact of the couple at this time.

To fully appreciate Hart and Gwyn's achievement it is worth looking at the nature of their 'gay-couple' relationships in more detail than Holland provides and also to take account of their contribution to Buckingham's The Chances. Just before the couple's appearance in Secret Love, we can be practically certain that their success in All Mistaken encouraged Buckingham to alter Fletcher's The Chances (Jan. or Feb. 1667) to provide another opportunity for them to play witty lovers. The part of the Second Constancia, who has only a small role as Don John's drunken whore in the original, was greatly enlarged and transformed for no obvious other reason than for Nell Gwyn to play again the witty heroine opposite Hart as Don John. The new Second Constancia seems as lively and independent as Don John and, like him, distrusts marriage: 'that charme', says she in a new section in Act V, 'seldome proves fortunate'. At the end, as in All Mistaken, the lovers jestingly reject marriage:

Don John: And shall we consummate our Joys?

Constan.: Never;
We'll find out ways to make 'em last for ever.

Don John: Now see the odds 'twixt marry'd Folks and Friends:
Our Love begins just where their Passion ends.¹⁰

In spite of the striking similarity between the roles of Mirida and the Second Constancia, Holland is wary of stating positively that Nell took both roles:

It has occasionally been suggested that Nell Gwyn played the part of the second Constancia ... It would appear to be the first major role written for Nell Gwyn and designed to link her to Hart as a sort of 'gay couple'.¹¹

The only source Holland acknowledges for this assertion is John Harold Wilson's comparatively brief entry on Nell Gwyn in the appendix to All the King's Ladies in which 'probably the Second Constancia in Buckingham's The Chances' is included among Nell's roles.¹² In fact there is other fairly conclusive evidence that this was the first of a highly individual type of role written especially for the actress. Nell certainly appeared at the end of the play to dance, for the epilogue mentions 'When Nell has danc'd her Jig'; it seems extremely unlikely, when the Second Constancia is so much in line with her previous comic roles opposite Hart, that Nell was only required to come on and perform a jig once the play was over. Nell Gwyn also danced a jig at the close of Dryden's Secret Love, Howard's All Mistaken and Dryden's An Evening's Love, or, The Mock-Astrologer (1668), and in each case she had previously played a witty heroine opposite Hart. Ken Robinson has also discovered a cast list including Nell Gwyn,¹³ although it is a late one, being written in the 1735 edition of the play and its reliability is questionable since it includes an actor who died in 1664.

A month or so after this came the crucial production of Dryden's Secret Love. The characters of Celadon and Florimell undoubtedly had a great influence on subsequent gay couples. In this respect, the most important way in which Florimell and Celadon differ

from their counterparts in All Mistaken and The Chances lies in their attitude to marriage. At the end of the earlier comedies both partners apparently reject marriage in favour of freedom. Florimell, however, is resolved that Celadon shall be her husband and she wins him finally by disguising herself as a man and charming her rivals, Orinda and Sabina, from him. At the end, although they do it in a jesting way, the lovers agree to marry, their mutual acceptance expressed in terms of a proviso-scene in which, in a light-hearted manner, each lays down conditions with a view to escaping the conventional horrors of matrimony. Such scenes and such an attitude to marriage were to become a major feature of future portrayals of the gay couple.

The idea of a comic marriage bargain was not new: there are proviso-scenes, of a kind, in for example Massinger's City Madam (1632?), Fletcher's Rule a Wife and Have a Wife (1624), Brome's A Mad Couple Well Match'd (1637?-9) and Dryden's own The Wild Gallant (1663). However the scenes in the first three plays consist of shrewish females commanding extravagant conditions intended to assure them of absolute sovereignty in marriage, and Isabella, the charming and resourceful heroine of The Wild Gallant, makes a similar bid for mastery. Secret Love is the first Restoration comedy in which both partners mutually recognize the difficulties of marriage and through a battle of wits make some balanced attempt to safeguard both their own freedoms and the bond between them.¹⁴ They agree, for instance, never to be jealous, to love as long as possible and when they no longer do, to admit it. They also decide not to be called husband and wife but 'Mistress' and 'Gallant'. If Florimell breaks any of the conditions she will suffer a month of fasting nights; if Celadon breaks the agreements his wife will

make him a cuckold. Although the exchange is a joke this is still a significant recognition of the dangers and difficulties of matrimony. We are not intended to take the scene seriously but Dryden's innovation represents an advance in the treatment of love and marriage in comedy. The Hart/Gwyn style of lovers are in a new sense equals, each fighting to maintain his or her independence and to form an alliance which will not constrict and so stifle their love. The dramatist conceived the innovation, but the inspiration of his assertive heroine was Nell Gwyn and thus, albeit indirectly, she brought a new approach to comic love relationships between the sexes.

Not surprisingly, the next new comedy the King's Company produced, Charles Sedley's The Mulberry Garden (May 1668), contained another gay couple, Wildish and Olivia, for Hart and Gwyn.¹⁵ The Mulberry Garden concludes with another lighthearted proviso-scene between the lovers in which each discusses what he or she sees as the pitfalls of marriage.¹⁶ The scene is noteworthy for the way in which it picks up and develops what had presumably been a popular feature of Secret Love. Here, instead of laying down conditions, the lovers jokingly describe the disadvantages they feel they will suffer once they lose their freedom. The play ends with an idea lifted directly from Secret Love - Olivia, like Florimell, threatens her future husband with cuckoldry if he displeases her. A sense of the difficulties besetting love after marriage would now seem to have become an intrinsic part of the gay couple formula.

A month later the King's Company produced Dryden's An Evening's Love with another vehicle for the talents of Hart and Gwyn in the roles of Wildblood and Donna Jacintha. Although their plot is partly based upon Molière's Le Dépit Amoureux

its real source lies in its performers' previous successes together. Not surprisingly this comedy also contains another variation on the proviso-scene; in this case it takes the form of a duet sung by Jacintha and Wildblood in Act V which is a competition between husband and wife as to who shall dominate. The character of Donna Jacintha seems particularly closely related to the personality and talents of Nell Gwyn. Not only do Jacintha's wit, resourcefulness and ability to playact reflect what we know of the actress herself, but one of the character's speeches actually implies a direct reference to Nell's own life. When Wildblood asks Jacintha 'Then what is a gentleman to hope from you?', she answers

To be admitted to pass my time with, while a better comes:
to be the lowest step in my Staircase, for a Knight to mount
upon him, and a Lord upon him, and a Marquess upon him, and
a Duke upon him, till I get as high as I can climb.¹⁷

Nell of course began as the lover of Hart and from him became the mistress of Charles, Lord Buckhurst (in the summer of 1668) and was to leave the stage the following year to become the mistress of her "Charles III", King Charles II - 'as high as I can climb'. This was a bold, even a dangerous speech with the king among the spectators.

The success of Hart and Gwyn in Secret Love may be seen as a catalyst which established their particular kind of anti-platonic lovers as the most popular type of protagonists in comedy. After Dryden's success the other House followed suit. Its next new comedy, Etherege's She Would If She Could (February 1668) contains two pairs of such lovers, the cousins Ariana and Gatty and their gallants, Courtall and Freeman. Like Florimell, Ariana and Gatty (played by Mrs. Jennings and Moll Davis) are lively and independent; they hold their own in battles of wit with their lovers and test their constancy.

Florimell gave Celadon a year to prove his constancy: at the end of Etherege's play the girls give their suitors a trial period of a month in which to keep their resolution to marry them. Moll Davis, the creator of Gatty, was the Duke's Company's closest equivalent to Nell Gwyn. David Bond has pointed out the striking parallels between the careers of the two women. He suggests that originally Nell was promoted as a rival attraction to Miss Davis at the Duke's theatre. Like Moll Davis, Nell was trained as a dancer and, although Pepys did not think her dancing anything like as good as her rival's, she soon became famous for her jigs, as we have seen. In All Mistaken, Nell sang an obvious parody of Moll's celebrated song from Davenant's The Rivals - 'My Love is on the Cold Ground'.¹⁸ After Nell's success opposite Hart, however, Moll had to imitate Nell, instead of vice versa, and the Duke's theatre gave her a similar madcap role. Moll's only previous comic roles had been as Ariel in the Dryden-Davenant Tempest and as Aurelia, a romantic, verse-speaking role, in Etherege's The Comical Revenge, or, Love in a Tub (1664).

Etherege altered Dryden's gay couple formula by placing his comedy within a recognizably contemporary social setting (rather than in a more remote and artificial 'Sicily') and by making the heroines' attitude to marriage more serious. Whereas Florimell could always prove more than a match for Celadon, Ariana and Gatty are aware that society's double standard stacks the odds against them:

Gatty : How I envy that sex! Well, we cannot plague 'em enough when we have it in our power for those privileges which custom has allowed 'em above us.

Ariana: The truth is, they can run and ramble, here and there, and everywhere, and we poor fools rather think the better of 'em.¹⁹

The madcap wit which Florimell produces on every occasion, whether

with Celadon or in private with her maid Flavia, becomes for Ariana and Gatty more of a weapon with which they display a careless independence and so maintain an equal footing with the men in public. Alone together they admit their vulnerability and their love for Courtall and Freeman. To Ariana Gatty declares,

I hate to dissemble when I need not. 'Twould look as affected in us to be reserved now we're alone as for a player to maintain the character she acts in the tiring room.²⁰

With this apt theatrical simile Etherege suggested a more serious side to the wit and gaiety of the Gwyn heroine.

The Comic Heroine 1668-76

Initially, Nell Gwyn's impact was crucial in making the gay couple a constant feature of comedy. However, the idea would not have continued to be used by dramatists had other performers not been available in both companies to sustain the trend and inspire fresh characters. As with tragedy, I should now like to examine some aspects of Restoration comedy over the next three decades in terms of the available actresses' influence on dramatists (rather than from the point of view more commonly taken, of how one dramatist influenced another). As we have seen, the presence of a popular actress at a certain time could have an important influence on a dramatist and his creation of a character.

In the preface to The Sullen Lovers, or The Impertinents (May 1668), performed by the Duke's Company, the author Thomas Shadwell grumpily attacked the immoral behaviour of the kind of gay couple portrayed by Hart and Gwyn at the rival theatre:

but in the playes which have been wrote of late, there is no such thing as perfect Character, but the two chief persons are most commonly a Swearing, Drinking, Whoring, Ruffian for a

Lover, and an impudent, ill-bred tomrig for a Mistress, and these are the fine people of the Play; and there is that Latitude in this, that almost anything is proper for them to say.

Carolina and Lovel, the gay couple in Shadwell's comedy, are markedly more restrained and less bawdy in their language than the couples portrayed by Dryden and Sedley. They are also less prominent - the serious lovers Emilia and Stanford and the foolish Lady Vaine seem to be equally important characters. Although these adjustments must partly have been the result of Shadwell's own different approach to comedy, they also reflect, as did She Would If She Could, the Duke's Company's lack of an impudent leading comedienne equivalent to Nell to carry the play. In fact, by the end of May 1668 matters had worsened in this respect, since Moll Davis had left the stage and her replacement, Winifred Gosnell, was apparently less talented both as a comedienne and as a singer. Seeing Mrs. Gosnell in a revival of The Tempest in 1669 Pepys wrote that 'it [presumably the role of Ariel] is but ill done, by Gosnell in lieu of Mall Davis'.²¹

The lack of a suitable comedienne does seem to have affected the new comedy produced by the Duke's Company in the late 1660s and early 1670s. The two new comedies of 1669, Boyle's farces Mr. Antony and Guzman, contain only comparatively minor parts for women. Aphra Behn's tragicomedy The Forc'd Marriage, or, The Jealous Bride-Groom the following year does include the lighthearted Aminta (played by Mrs. Wright who only appeared on the stage in that year), a Gwyn-type character who flirts skilfully with her lover Alcander and is pursued by a fool, Falatius (as Gwyn's character was also pursued by a fool in All Mistaken). However Aminta is only a supporting role and the grave Alcander is not at all the Charles Hart type of lover. The main female role in the play is definitely Erminia,

played by Mrs. Betterton, an honourable bride who is strangled by her jealous husband.

From 1670, due to the presence of the actress Jane Long, a type of impudent heroine did appear on the stage of the Duke's theatre. During the 1660s Jane Long had made breeches roles her speciality: she played Dulcino in Shirley's The Grateful Servant (c.1667 - Downes noting that this was 'the first time she appear'd in Man's Habit'²²) and the boy Hippolito in the Dryden-Davenant Tempest. Around 1670, to great acclaim, Mrs. Long played the title role in Betterton's The Woman Made A Justice:

Mrs. Long, Acting the Justice so charmingly; and the Comedy being perfect and justly Acted, so well pleas'd the Audience, it continu'd Acting 14 Days together.²³

This play was never printed but from the title, the nature of Mrs. Long's parts in The Grateful Servant and The Tempest and the tone of Downes' review, we can deduce that the actress played a bold resourceful heroine who disguised herself as a judge. Betterton very probably wrote the play with Long's talent specifically in mind.

The same may be true of the leading role of Mrs. Brittle in Betterton's The Amorous Widow which was also produced about this time.²⁴ Mrs. Brittle is an attractive wanton wife who deceives her old spouse in various, inventive ways. Mrs. Long played her 'so well', said Downes, 'that none Equall'd her but Mrs. Bracegirdle' (who presumably played the role some years later).²⁵ Mrs. Brittle and her lover, the rake Lovemore, are no gay couple; they do not really love each other and are solely bent on enjoying themselves. When Mrs. Brittle gets the opportunity to be free of her husband entirely - 'I'll give a Sum of Money to be rid of her', he says - she realizes that her lover is only a philanderer and that she is

better off as she is:

I'm glad I know it in time, whilst I have power to make my
Retreat. I had like to have been finely caught.²⁶

Although she was clearly adept at playing cunning women, Betterton does not seem to have seen Mrs. Long as a Nell-type of witty heroine in love.

In view of these successes, it is not surprising that Mrs. Long was chosen to speak the impudent epilogue to Edward Howard's tragic-comedy The Women's Conquest (1671) having just played the breeches role of Mandana, Queen of the Amazons:

We Amazons did her unconquer'd yield,
And nobly too, when Love had gain'd the Field,
Against whose Darts, what Woman wears a Shield?

For Edward Revet's The Town-Shifts (1671) Mrs. Long created the part of Fickle, another bold and lively heroine who advises her serious cousin Leticia (played by Mary Lee) on how to avoid an unwelcome suitor:

Pretend thy self sick, and so avoid it; I protest, were it my
case (as it is thine) I would rather dye, than have Leftwell,
he looks so like a Horse-courser.²⁷

John Harrington Smith thinks this play is ahead of its time in giving first place to the serious couple - Leticia and her lover - rather than to the gay couple, Fickle and Friendly.²⁸ This observation perhaps overemphasizes the play's importance (what of the tragic-comedies of Dryden and Behn already discussed?) but does serve as a reminder that at this date the Duke's Company still had no actress to rival Nell Gwyn. Mrs. Long was popular and talented, but never seems to have become a comedienne of Nell's standard.

However, the lively heroine was faring no better at the other House. Nell Gwyn left the stage to become the mistress of Charles II

some time after playing Valeria in Dryden's Tyrannick Love in June 1669. In Wycherley's Love in a Wood (1671) Hart was partnered with Elizabeth Cox and they played the gay couple Lydia and Ranger who end the play with a typical lighthearted exchange on marriage. Mrs. Cox was no substitute for Nell Gwyn; no comment on her performance as Lydia survives but thereafter she played only romantic parts such as Palmyra in Dryden's Marriage-a-la-Mode (1672) and Constantia in Duffett's The Amorous Old Woman, or, 'Tis Well If It Take (1674) so she cannot have been particularly successful. The King's Company was therefore no better off than its rival for lively comediennes. Not surprisingly, when Shadwell adapted Molière's L'Avare (probably 1672) he made the principal couple, Theodore and Isabella, more serious than the French originals.

Drury Lane's Nell-substitute in Dryden's Marriage-a-la-Mode (c.1672) was Elizabeth Boutell. The nature of her part and the fact that she was cast opposite Hart suggests that the character was probably originally written for Nell Gwyn rather than Mrs. Boutell. The play's recent editor, Mark Auburn, argues that

If Dryden had written Melantha for Betty Boutell (and we may be sure he knew the capacities of his company), we would expect more naiveté and innocence.²⁹

This makes sense: Mrs. Boutell had taken only romantic and serious parts up to that date. Melantha has a wonderful comic monologue of her own in which she practises her French words and makes expressions in her mirror which one imagines Nell Gwyn would have performed superbly. However, Mrs. Boutell seems to have been a better actress than Mrs. Cox, and presumably proved more capable as a gay heroine, for she was cast in another lively role, as Laura in Dryden's The Assignation, or, Love in a Nunnery, shortly after. Yet this play failed and it is no coincidence perhaps that Mrs. Boutell subsequently

played no other witty comic heroines.³⁰

Nevertheless, in spite of an apparent dearth of suitably talented actresses in both companies the resourceful, lively girl and the gay couple did not disappear so they presumably still appealed greatly to both dramatists and spectators. In 1672 Wycherley created the wilful and charming Hippolita who dominates The Gentleman Dancing-Master (we have no record of who played Hippolita) while Shadwell's highly successful Epsom Wells contains among other memorable characters the gay couples Rains and Carolina and Lucia and Bevil (Carolina played by Mrs. Johnson and Lucia by Mrs. Gibbs). As Hume points out, Shadwell, always sensitive to popular trends, here provided the witty, impudent characters he had complained about in earlier prefaces.³¹ Edward Ravenscroft's The Careless Lovers (1673) has the witty lovers Careless and Hillaria (Hillaria played by Mrs. Clough, one of the Duke's Company's young players for whom this Lenten play was written) and The Woman Turn'd Bully (1675), author unknown, has for its lead role the determined Betty Goodfield who disguises herself as a man and agrees to marry her lover at the end, after the standard mockery of marriage (there is no record of who played Betty). In Crowne's The Countrey Wit (1676) the capable Christina (Mary Lee) reforms her libertine lover while Shadwell's The Virtuoso (1676) contains two gay couples. Although during the 1670s comedy tended to centre more upon adultery than love and marriage, the wayward wife, like Betterton's Mrs. Brittle, might also be a resourceful female plotter - like Mrs. Moneylove (Margaret Hughes) in Rawlins' Tom Essence (1676), for example, or Lady Dunce (Elizabeth Barry) in Otway's The Souldiers Fortune (1680).

Since the King's Company was in trouble during the early 1670s

for various reasons,³² it was from the Duke's Company, efficiently run by Betterton, that all these new comedies came. No leading actress at this time seems to have been outstanding in comedy, as Nell Gwyn was: the records surviving show various women playing lead roles, the most important of these being the players who specialized more in tragedy, Mary Betterton and Mary Lee. The one comedy of this period which is obviously centred on a woman is Durfey's Madam Fickle, or, The Witty False One (1676), adapted from Rowley's A Match at Midnight (1622), in which Mary Lee created the title role. Durfey seems to me to have written the part of Madam Fickle especially for her, with her tragic roles also in mind. Like Nigrello, her role in Settle's Love and Revenge two years earlier, Lee's character here has been ill used by a man and so she swears revenge. In this case her vengeance takes the form of ruthlessly toying with the affections of as many men as possible. When her plots succeed, like Nigrello, Madam Fickle exults in her success in a verse soliloquy at the end of Act IV: 'And Hell shall laugh to see a womans wit'.³³

More tragic skills were required in the deception of Fickle's suitors. A modern editor of the play has noted that 'one unusual feature of the dialogue is the occasional use of blank verse, especially in the amorous interviews that Fickle conducts with her various lovers'. This 'unusual feature' was surely a further means of using Mrs. Lee's tragic experience. To charm her suitors, Madam Fickle deliberately assumes the poses and rhetoric of a tragic heroine:

Now to my posture - This book - Languishing eyes - So - And necessary handkerchief to wipe imaginary tears off.

When an admirer suspects her of being unfaithful she regains his trust with a pretence of tears which later, in private, she scorns:

Thus with the snowy veil of innocence,
Contriving women cover their pretence.³⁴

Madam Fickle finally dresses as a man and in this disguise offers to fight all her suitors at once, possibly a reference to Mary Lee's role as Amavanga in Settle's The Conquest of China around the same time. — Amavanga is a vigorous female warrior who, by a quirk of fate, engages with her lover in single combat. For her challenge to the men Durfey gave Mary Lee a melodramatic tour de force which forms the climax of the play's parody of tragic rhetoric:

I'll bathe my lips in gore, kiss bleeding wounds, cleave helmets, stand a breach, and dare a cannon, divide a heart in two, hah! Hah! — 'Tis done. Soul of Belona, I'll exhaust a flood, turn Earth to chaos, oceans into blood. Consume your timorous cringing amorists, that would possess their Heav'n, but dare not bleed for't. Blood is my province; therefore with you all am I resolv'd to fight.³⁵

This speech offered the actress a marvellous opportunity to display her histrionic talents and probably earned her a special round of applause from spectators. Madam Fickle is then deterred from actually fighting by the husband who had deserted her: he reveals her true identity to the others before removing his own disguise and effecting a reconciliation with his wife. In Madam Fickle Durfey produced an entertaining parody of Mrs. Lee's roles in tragedy and a type of comic heroine eminently suited to her talents in both genres. The play is an interesting instance of a dramatist adapting his comedy to the best, but not the most suitable, actress available.

Mrs. Barry as Comedienne 1678-81

Around 1675 the Duke's Company was 'very much Recruited',³⁶ and its additional members included Mrs. Barry, who was to become from 1676 the company's main exponent of gay heroine roles. Beginning with minor roles in both comedy and tragedy, by 1676 Barry had sufficiently proved herself to be allowed to take leading roles as the serious heroines Elvira in Ravenscroft's The Wrangling Lovers, or,

The Invisible Mistress and Theodocia in Rawlins' Tom Essence. Soon after this she took the livelier part of Constanta in Madam Fickle and is listed by Downes in Roscius Anglicanus as playing Mrs. Loveit in The Man of Mode. However, in view of the comic roles that she created immediately before and after this play I would suggest that it is far more likely that Barry had the lead as the intelligent heroine Harriet, opposite Betterton's reformed libertine Dorimant. Although Downes gives most of the comedy's female cast, he most surprisingly omits all mention of Harriet. Betterton and Barry were paired together in similar lead roles a few months later in Aphra Behn's The Rover. In no comedy of this period did Barry play a discarded mistress; she was invariably cast as virgin or wife. It would seem to have been far more natural for Mary Lee to play Mrs. Loveit, especially since Downes lists Mary Betterton as playing Dorimant's other discarded mistress, Belinda. How appropriate to have these two, the most important actresses in the company at that time, ousted in favour of the rising young star Mrs. Barry, as was to occur in real life! The melodramatic histrionics of Mrs. Loveit's part seem very well suited to Mrs. Lee's style of acting. In listing Barry for Mrs. Loveit Downes may have been thinking of a production later on, for she did take this role in revivals some years after.³⁷

At all events, Barry then went on to create the most attractive witty heroine of the decade apart from Etherege's Harriet, Hellena in Aphra Behn's The Rover. The Rover was adapted from Killigrew's Thomaso, or, The Wanderer (written 1654 and published a decade later) and Behn's most important addition was the character of Hellena as an appropriate match for the rake hero Willmore.³⁸ In these two figures the type of gay couple popularized by Hart and

Gwyn made its most effective reappearance to date. Like Florimell Hellena holds her own against the womaniser Willmore and assumes male disguise to successfully court her rival, the courtesan Angellica Bianca. Finally she tames the rake, threatening,

to find out all your haunts, to rail at you to all that love you, till I have made you love only me in your own defense, because nobody else will love you.³⁹

However, Hellena is openly in favour of marriage and instead of a proviso-scene she gives a bleak picture of what will become of her if she becomes his mistress:

what shall I get? A cradle full of noise and mischief, with a pack of repentance at my back?⁴⁰

Although The Rover has an exotic foreign setting its gay couple are not presented in a wholly romantic light, as Florimell and Celadon were. The double standard exists here as elsewhere and Hellena recognizes that marriage is the best way of retaining her reputation and Willmore's affection.

After playing Hellena, Mrs. Barry remained the company's leading comic actress for ten years, the number of prologues and epilogues she spoke at this time conveying how popular she had become (this before her great successes in tragedy). She began to play adulterous wives as well as ingenues, Emilia in Durfey's A Fond Husband, or, The Plotting Sisters (1677) for example, and Mrs. Goodvile in Otway's exceptionally bitter satire Friendship in Fashion (1678).⁴¹ Her comic speciality, however, was to be neither of these but the fallen woman, a type she did not begin to play until the early 1680s (her specializing in such roles is perhaps another reason for Downes listing her as Mrs. Loveit). Until that time she played various witty heroines and wives but does not seem to have made any kind of character especially her own in comedy. It would seem that during

these years dramatists produced the roles that were popular and then Barry was automatically cast in them as the company's best actress, rather than that she directly inspired her roles as she began to do in tragedy. It was only when she played the courtesans Corina and La Nuche in Behn's The Revenge, or, A Match in Newgate (1680) and The Second Part of the Rover (1681) that she was able to display her tragedienne's ability to project passion, desire and anguish within a comic context and other characters in the same vein followed. (This development will be considered in more detail in the next chapter.) By the end of the 1680s therefore Barry was playing very few witty young heroines and those roles were usually taken by the greatest comediennes that the stage then possessed - Mrs. Mountfort and Mrs. Bracegirdle.

Katherine Corey

What of the King's Company during the late 1670s and early 1680s? It continued to produce fewer new comedies than the Duke's Company and its lack of talented comediennes is aptly illustrated by the best of its comedies, Wycherley's The Plain Dealer (1676), whose two main female roles - Olivia and Fidelia - were designed for and played by actresses better suited to tragedy. As the preceding chapter showed, these two parts were deliberately created with Rebecca Marshall and Elizabeth Boutell's tragic typecasting in mind. However, the King's Company did possess one comedienne worthy of note - Katherine Corey. Although this actress never played the popular witty heroine, she had, for over two decades, her own original impact upon comedy. Presumably not an attractive woman, Mrs. Corey specialized in older character parts such as ugly man-haters, bawds, mothers, governesses and shrews. The number of such roles

that she created between 1670 and 1692 (the year of her last recorded role as the Abbess of Charlton in The Merry Devil of Edmonton) implies that she was both popular and talented and the presence of her talent within the company must have ensured that her specialities regularly appeared on the Restoration stage. Early examples of typical Corey roles include Mrs. Joyner, the bawd in Wycherley's Love in a Wood (1671) and Teresa, the scolding wife, in Duffett's The Spanish Rogue (1673).

Mrs. Corey also created a significant number of lead roles which must have been written especially for her. She presumably impressed both Wycherley and Duffett as they each created a lead role for her shortly after Love in a Wood and The Spanish Rogue. She played Strega, the amorous old woman in Duffett's play of that title in 1674. After a considerable build-up of references to her hideousness, Strega finally appears in Act III and proceeds to pull out her false eyebrows, eye, tooth and finally her false leg! Such slapstick is a far cry from the sophisticated exchanges of the gay couple but it requires at least as much comic skill. In Wycherley's The Plain Dealer (1676) Mrs. Corey had the hilarious, beautifully written part of the law-obsessed Widow Blackacre in the subplot and, always a sign of a player's popularity, she spoke the epilogue as well. Thereafter Mrs. Corey appeared regularly in supporting parts and occasionally took leads. She was not, of course, equipped to play the typical comic heroine but now and again a dramatist produced a vehicle for her talents, notably Ravenscroft's Dame Dobson, or, The Cunning Woman (1683), a one-woman equivalent of Jonson's The Alchemist in which she gulled a series of fools with her 'magic' skills, and Shadwell's The Amorous Bigotte, With the Second Part of Tegue O'Divelly (1690) in which she played the hypocritical bigot of the

title, Beliza, with a passion for the priest Tegue O'Divelly. Mrs. Corey's impact upon Restoration comedy was only sporadic, yet it should not be overlooked.

Susannah Mountfort 1686-1703

The most influential comedienne of the entire period, along with Nell Gwyn and Anne Bracegirdle, was Susannah Mountfort (or Susannah Percivall as she was called before her marriage to William Mountfort in 1686, or Susannah Verbruggen as she was known after her second marriage to another actor, John Verbruggen in 1694). Having first appeared on the stage at the age of fourteen, in 1681, by the end of the decade she had established herself as the United Company's leading comedienne, skilled in the performance of both witty breeches roles and grotesque characters. A Comparison Between Two Stages called the actress 'a Miracle' and in the preface to The Female Wits (1696) the anonymous author mourned her as one 'whose Loss we must ever regret, as the Chief Actress in her Kind, who never had anyone that exceeded her'.⁴²

Susannah Percivall's first leading role was as Nell in Thomas Jevons' The Devil of a Wife, or, A Comical Transformation (1686). She also spoke the epilogue to this successful comedy with Thomas Jevons (who had played her husband in the play) so by this time the company had begun to recognize her talents. Soon after this she married the rising young actor and playwright William Mountfort and the two of them frequently played together thereafter as a gay couple in the style of Gwyn and Hart until the murder of Mountfort by Captain Hill on December 10th 1692. Thus for a few years the Mountforts encouraged the gay couple to flourish in such comedies

as Carlile's The Fortune-Hunters (1689), Shadwell's Bury Fair (1689), Dryden's Don Sebastian (1689) and Mountfort's own Greenwich Park (1691).⁴³ Husband and wife spoke the epilogue together to Don Sebastian, with a humorous exchange between their characters Antonio and Morayma which was clearly written to take advantage of the performers' real-life relationship. Antonio suggests that they first enjoy a night of passionate love and then marry, but Morayma insists on marriage first and she adds

First wed and, if you find that life a fether,
Die when you please; the sooner, sir, the better.

These lines would obviously be much funnier with the knowledge that they were actually directed at a man by his wife, just as the Mountforts' real relationship must have added piquancy to all their witty quarrels in the comedies themselves.

After her husband's death, Mrs. Mountfort continued to specialize in gay resourceful heroines, inspiring several comedies centred upon such a character. Cibber mentioned that she was extremely good in breeches roles, 'a more adroit pretty Fellow than is usually seen upon the Stage', and that

people were so fond of seeing her a Man, that when the Part of Bays in the Rehearsal had for some time lain dormant, she was desired to take it up.⁴⁴

This ability certainly led Southerne to create for her the title role in his successful comedy Sir Anthony Love (1690) for he stated as much when commending her acting of the part in the dedicatory epistle:

since I have this occasion of mentioning Mrs. Montford, I am pleased, by way of Thanks, to do her that publick Justice in Print, which some of the best Judges of these Performances, have, in her Praise, already done her, in publick places ... as I made every Line for her, she has mended every Word for me; and by a Gaiety and Air, particular to her Action, turn'd every thing into the Genius of the Character.⁴⁵

Gerald Langbaine wrote that the play 'was acted with extraordinary

Applause; the Part of Sir Anthony Love being most Masterly play'd by Mrs. Mountfort'.⁴⁶ Southerne's comedy is centred in all its plots upon its resourceful heroine, Lucia, and her breeches disguise as Sir Anthony Love. In most cases the occasion of a woman disguising herself as a man is connected with the pursuit of the man she loves, but Lucia is simply determined to prove herself as good as any man, and she dominates the action:

I am for Universal Empire, and wou'd not be stinted to one Province; I wou'd be fear'd, as well as lov'd: As famous for my Action with the Men, as for my Passion for the Women.⁴⁷

Lucia masterminds every plot and soon proves both wittier than the men she makes her companions and a more skilful seducer. Except for the act of seduction itself, of course, the play presents a woman who can do everything a man does in society and do it better - giving Mrs. Mountfort the opportunity to employ her talents as male impersonator to the full.

The success of his wife as Sir Anthony presumably inspired Mountfort to write another major breeches part for her as Florella in Greenwick Park the following year. Florella's relish for playing a man recalls Lucia's:

there's such an Air and Freedom belongs to the Breeches, to what our Dull and dragging Petticoats allow of, that ad-heartlikins I fancy my self of the Masculine Gender, and am for ravishing the first woman I meet.⁴⁸

Two years later George Powell (who played opposite Mrs. Mountfort on several occasions) created another leading breeches role for the actress as Annabella in A Very Good Wife. Mrs. Mountfort played the wife of the title who courts a rich widow dressed as a man in order to help her impoverished husband, Courtwit. Like Aphra Behn's The Counterfeit Bridegroom fifteen years earlier, the play was based

upon Middleton's No Wit No Help Like A Woman's. One imagines that the achievements of Mrs. Mountfort at this time were what prompted Powell to use the idea again.

Susannah Mountfort stands out among her fellow comediennes for her ability to play not only charming heroines but also ugly, foolish and low life characters. She played grotesques with as much relish as she played women of wit. Cibber noted that she

was so fond of Humour, in what low Part soever to be found, that she would make no scruple of defacing her fair Form to come heartily into it; for when she was eminent in several desirable Characters of Wit and Humour in higher Life, she would be in as much Fancy when descending into the antiquated Abigail of Fletcher, as when triumphing in all the Airs and vain Graces of a fine Lady; a Merit that few Actresses care for.

She was 'Mistress of more variety of Humour than ever I knew in any Woman Actress'⁴⁹ and this other talent also had its impact upon the repertoire. She soon developed a line, for instance, in uncouth country girls, such as Winifred in Duffey's Sir Barnaby Whigg (1681), Susan and Mrs. Jenkin in Ravenscroft's Dame Dobson (1683) and Nell in Thomas Jevons's The Devil of a Wife (1686). For Southerne's The Maid's Last Prayer (1693) she created the old maid of the title, Lady Susan Malepert:

that Youthful Virgin of five and forty, with a swelling Rump, bow Leggs, a shining Face, and colly'd Eyebrows ... sure she's an Original.⁵⁰

The eye-brows are false, a source of considerable anxiety to their owner. Lady Susan's speech is also full of comic potential, her lines continually punctuated with squawked exclamations, 'O law!', 'O Jesu!', 'O crimine!' and so on. Mrs. Mountfort's success in the role is implied by the fact that she played a very similar role a few months later as Catchat, a 'stale Virgin' who fancies that every man is in love with her, in Thomas Wright's The Female Virtuoso's. Still in character, she spoke also the epilogue to this play:

I try'd to leave you, Gentlemen, in vain,
 The rest are gone, but I'm return'd again;
 And that you're pleas'd, my Vanity discovers,
 I'll set you all down in my List of Lovers.

Thomas Durfey was particularly strongly influenced by Mrs. Verbruggen's talent for the grotesque. In his adaptation of Don Quixote for the stage he added for her the part of the vulgar, extremely funny Mary the Buxom, whose success extended itself over two more plays and culminated in her marriage. In the preface to The Second Part of the Comical History of Don Quixote (1694) Durfey wrote,

Then I must tell my severe Censurers ... that I deserve some acknowledgement for drawing the Character of Mary the Buxom, which was entirely my own, and which I was not obliged to the History at all for ... by making the Character humorous, and by the extraordinary well acting of Mrs. Verbruggen, it is by the best Judges allowed to be a Masterpiece of Humour.⁵¹

The epilogue to this play was clearly designed to further exploit the actress's success. In a parody of the many female epilogues in which the speaker offers her sexual favours to spectators, her father urges Mary to 'serve 'em in some other way / Provided they'll be civil to Play'. Mary replies in her usual crude vigorous style:

What other way Zooks can I serve 'em in,
 Unless they have any Lockram Smocks to spin;
 Will these, dee think, prefer a Country Tool
 In Serge and Dowlas - Vather you're a Fool:
 For ought I see amongst this longnos'd Crew,
 They'd rather wear out Smocks, than pay to make me.

Not surprisingly The Third Part of the Comical History is advertised as being with the attraction of 'the Marriage of Mary the Buxom'.

Durfey went on to create a similar role for Mrs. Verbruggen as Gillian Homebread in The Bath, or, The Western Lass (1701). Mrs. Verbruggen more than matched Durfey's conception of the part - her 'incomparable performance answering my design, has rais'd it, if not to her Master-piece, yet at least second to any'.⁵²

Cibber was equally impressed by Mrs. Verbruggen as Gillian:

In a Play of D'urfey's, now forgotten, call'd The Western Lass, which Part she acted, she transform'd her whole Being, Body, Shape, Voice, Language, Look, and Features, into almost another Animal, with a strong Devonshire Dialect, a broad laughing Voice, a poking Head, round Shoulders, an unconceiving Eye, and the most bediz'ning, dowdy Dress that ever cover'd the untrain'd Limbs of a Joan Trot. To have seen her here you would have thought it impossible the same Creature could ever have been recover'd to what was as easy to her, the Gay, the Lively, and the Desirable.⁵³

Both Mary and Gillian, like Lady Susan, require a skilled rendering of peculiarities of speech to make them funny, so Mrs. Verbruggen must have been adept at capturing such peculiarities.

When Betterton's troupe left the United Company in 1695, the Verbruggens were ordered to remain at Drury Lane. Although John Verbruggen was allowed to join Betterton in 1697, his wife remained with the Drury Lane company. There she continued to play breeches roles, lively heroines and character parts until she died in 1703.

Anne Bracegirdle

When Colley Cibber joined the United Company in 1690 Mrs. Bracegirdle was

but just blooming to her Maturity; her Reputation as an Actress gradually rising with that of her Person.⁵⁴

The year saw Mrs. Bracegirdle in a number of comedies but only in supporting roles - as Julia, for instance, in Crowne's The English Friar, or, The Town Sparks and as Charlot in Sir Anthony Love. However, she was already speaking a significant number of humorous prologues and epilogues. For example, even though she did not play the most important female character in each case, in 1690 she spoke the prologue to Mountfort's The Successful Strangers, the epilogue to Shadwell's The Amorous Bigotte, the prologue to Dryden's Amphitryon,

or, The Two Sosas and the prologue to Southerne's Sir Anthony Love. In 1691 she played the first of her most characteristic type of comic heroine, the orphan Mirtilla, 'witty, modest, virtuous' and an heiress, in Durfey's Love for Money. From the early 1690s until her retirement in 1707 she was the leading comedienne of her company, leaving the stage eventually 'in the Height of her Favour from the Publick, when most of her Contemporaries whom she had been bred up with were declining'.⁵⁵

The pattern of comedy from 1693 reflects the impact of Mrs. Bracegirdle's popularity and her particular comic skills. From Durfey's Love for Money onwards she seems to have inspired a special kind of witty heroine: the irresistible heiress who is pursued by admirers but who finds it difficult to be sure of the man who loves her.⁵⁶ It is illuminating to compare Mrs. Bracegirdle's comic roles with those of Mrs. Mountfort, especially since they were both leading comediennes at the same time (though after Betterton's split from the United Company in 1695 they were in different companies). The typical Mountfort witty heroine is cunning, resourceful, frequently assumes a breeches disguise and is very active. Sir Anthony and Annabella (the heroine of Powell's A Very Good Wife) initiate and carry out plots for financial gain, they are pursuers rather than the pursued. It was, on the other hand, comparatively unusual for Mrs. Bracegirdle to disguise herself as a man,⁵⁷ her characters have wealth and they are usually pursued rather than pursuing. The typical Bracegirdle heroine is passive; her task is to protect her reputation and discern if her lover is worthy of her, not to initiate action.⁵⁸ In Southerne's The Wives' Excuse (1692), for instance, Mountfort played Mrs. Witwoud, the arch plotter on

other people's behalf as well as on her own, while Bracegirdle played Mrs. Sightly, the innocent victim of Witwoud's plots and Friendall's designs. Mountfort also of course played a variety of comic caricatures while Bracegirdle consistently played young and attractive females. One can even discern a trace of this contrast in type-casting in Congreve's The Old Bachelor in which Mountfort was called upon to create the affectations of Belinda and Bracegirdle the steadiness and good sense of Araminta.

The other main difference between the roles of the two actresses lies in their degree of seriousness. Mrs. Mountfort's roles are predominantly lighthearted, be they breeches roles like Sir Anthony, or 'character' parts such as Gillian and Mary the Buxom (her role in The Wives' Excuse is an exception, but this is an exceptionally serious comedy). Mrs. Bracegirdle's heroines however tend to be more serious, both in terms of their personalities and their thematic function. The fact that the Bracegirdle character is often wealthy and therefore the prey of fortune-hunters renders her especially vulnerable: she has to be wary and suspicious and she may be used as a satiric illustration of women's victimisation in a libertine society. In Durfey's The Richmond Heiress, for example, when Fulvia discovers that her lover Frederick is only interested in her fortune she becomes embittered and scorns marriage entirely: 'the Race of Men are all Deceivers'.⁵⁹ Mrs. Sightly, in The Wives' Excuse, similarly rejects marriage because the suitor is unworthy. In Congreve's Love for Love the Bracegirdle heiress finally gains a lover who is worthy of her. Valentine proves the depth of his affection for Angellica and she, echoing Fulvia, tells another of her admirers,

You would all have the Reward of Love; but few have the Constancy to stay 'till it becomes your due. Men are generally Hypocrites and Infidels, they pretend to Worship, but have

neither Zeal nor Faith: How few, like Valentine, would persevere even to Martyrdom, and sacrifice their Interest to their Constancy!⁶⁰

Congreve's Millamant - perhaps Bracegirdle's greatest creation - embodies a similar problem. She loves Mirabell but is wary of showing her affection too freely. Nevertheless we are allowed glimpses of the depth of her feelings behind her mask of wit and raillery, as when she admits to Mrs. Fainall.

Well, If Mirabell should not make a good Husband, I am a lost thing; - for I find I love him violently.⁶¹

Millamant too is an heiress, pursued by worthless suitors ('a Shoal of Fools for Tenders'⁶²) and Mirabell is a rake who has already seduced one mistress - Mrs. Fainall - and married her off. Millamant's charm and wit, which would be the whole essence of a Mountfort witty heroine, are partly a protection of more serious feelings.

Similarly, the eventual proviso-scene between Mirabell and Millamant is a more serious version of the usual gay couple bargaining. It is as lively and humorous as any in the period, but beneath its jesting anti-romanticism lies a sincere compact between a rake and a coquette to establish conditions under which the traditional causes of strife within marriage can be avoided. The striking difference between this proviso-scene and its predecessors is the presence of an implied belief in the permanence of the participants' love. Unlike, for instance, the lighthearted exchange between Florimell and Celadon, there are no references to the fact that their love may not last, no decision to admit love has ended if it does and no threats of gallants, cuckoldry or extra-marital affairs. Within what had become a traditional formula Congreve sought to convey the depth of his characters' affection and the importance of the step they propose to make.

None of the characters created by Mrs. Mountfort have the subtlety and grave overtones of Fulvia, Sightly or Millamant: all three roles require an actress with more than simply a talent for wit and humour. Mrs. Bracegirdle was also of course a leading tragedienne and I would suggest that it was her exceptional range of talents which left its special mark on the comedy of the 1690s and early 1700s.

The Female Point of View: I - A Stronger Female Voice

Having considered the shaping of Restoration comedy by individual actresses, we can return to the other questions posed at the start of this chapter. Did the appearance of the actresses result in greater weight being given to the female point of view in comedy? Does such drama post-1660 present greater equality between the sexes and, if so, how far can this be attributed to the arrival of the female performers? In fact these two questions are substantially different and seem to have very different answers. Since most Restoration comedy - and indeed all comedy to a certain extent - reflects the values and attitudes of its society one cannot expect a marked increase in basic sexual equality in the drama without a corresponding shift in contemporary life. Whatever the social changes that resulted as England under a restored monarchy emerged from the chaos of civil war, no such substantial shift towards true sexual equality occurred and no such shift appears in the drama.

In the past a kind of critical myth of sexual equality has been attached to Restoration comedy, under whose influence C.V. Wedgwood, for instance, contrasts the position of women in Shakespearean and Restoration comedy:

The old system of chivalry, in which women were chattels - precious chattels, but chattels nonetheless - to be protected and possessed, had in an attenuated form governed the moral outlook of the upper classes well into the seventeenth century. A new morality had not yet been worked out to fit a society which now finally came unmoored from feudalism and chivalry. With all their cynicism, the morals of the fast set in the later seventeenth century represent a move towards greater justice between men and women. The capacity to meet a man on equal terms, which had been the prerogative of an occasional Brunhild or Britomart, was now open to any woman of quick wits. It can hardly be sustained that the morality depicted by Wycherley, Etherege, Congreve and Vanbrugh is an advance on that depicted by Spenser, Shakespeare, Massinger, or even Ford. But at least theirs is a society in which neither Hero nor Imogen could be so scandalously mistreated by their lovers with the full approval of society.⁶³

Although this passage highlights the greater appearance of sexual equality that the cynicism of the anti-platonic gay couple often gives, Wedgewood's view of Restoration society and its drama is fundamentally mistaken. Very many recent studies - for instance, Laurence Stone's The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800 and Angeline Goreau's Reconstructing Aphra: A Social Biography of Aphra Behn - have presented a very different picture of female submission in a male-dominated society. Nor can Wedgewood have properly considered the implications of Southerne's The Wives' Excuse and Vanbrugh's The Provok'd Wife. A woman like Mrs. Sightly could be just as much a victim of slander, in her own way, as Shakespeare's Imogen. In Restoration drama and society, however wittily a girl might defeat her lover in conversation, her real freedom was severely limited. She had to remain a virgin until she became a wife, and once married, as The Wives' Excuse illustrates, she was technically chained to the man for life. Even after separation from one's husband, to love another man openly spelt ruin. Restoration man on the other hand had all the sexual freedom women lacked, his reputation sometimes even enhanced by the number of affairs he was known to have had. This is the situation in the majority of comedies and by and large the actresses were called upon to reinforce traditional stereotypes - the girl guarding her reputation,

in search of a happy and secure marriage, and the mistress also in need of marriage as the only means of redeeming her honour.

Of course plenty of comedies continued the convention of a resourceful girl disguised as a man who organizes the action, but the Restoration breeches heroine generally achieves no more freedom than her Renaissance predecessors. Few indeed attain the 'masculinity' of Middleton and Dekker's Moll Cutpurse (The Roaring Girl 1610) who not only fights, swaggers and smokes in her male attire but rejects wedlock in favour of her present life:

I have no humour to marry, I love to lie o'both sides o'th'bed myself, and again o'th'other side; a wife you know ought to be obedient, but I fear me I am too headstrong to obey, therefore I'll ne'er go about it.⁶⁴

In most cases Restoration heroines assume male disguise for the same reasons as their predecessors - to pursue the men they love with marriage in view. Those married already return to their husbands and former positions after their adventures are over. Southerne's Lucia is the only breeches heroine I have come across who truly follows Moll Cutpurse's example (on her own cynical Restoration terms) in resolving to live like a man. As we have seen, the apparent equality of the gay couple is sustained by the woman's ability to hold her own in bouts of wit and to hold the man's affection: his is the only true freedom. The gay female does not dread or scorn marriage at all and her anti-matrimonialism is generally no more than an expedient pose to capture a man who triumphs too much in his own elusiveness.

But if the Restoration saw no feminist revolution, either in life or on the stage, a significant quantity of its comedy does deal, directly or indirectly, with sexual inequalities in society and the

introduction of actresses did, I believe, help to bring about more expression of an exclusively female point of view in comedy. The Restoration heroine may not have possessed any more rights than her Renaissance predecessor, but she often seems more vociferous in demanding her rights. The establishment of the gay couple may not have given the heroine the same freedom as her libertine lover, but it gave her an opportunity to express her own rights and needs forcefully in their battles. The Hart-Gwyn formula may have begun, in Secret Love, as a series of bantering, romantic exchanges between lovers, but by plays like She Would If She Could and The Rover it became an important satiric means of conveying the female viewpoint in a relationship. At the same time, as I have shown, the emergence of popular and talented comediennes fostered comedies focused on women and so encouraged dramatists already interested in the subject to write plays about female problems in society.

Southerne's The Wives' Excuse, for example, represents probably the most bitter and uncompromising dramatic attack on the double standard in the period (and in any preceding period in English drama), and to make his point the dramatist clearly utilized the talents of the theatre's best three actresses - Mrs. Barry, Mrs. Bracegirdle and Mrs. Mountfort. The play is centred absolutely on their characters while the men are deliberately much less sharply individualized. In particular, Southerne relied on Barry's tragic as well as comic abilities to project the depth of unsentimental suffering in Mrs. Friendall - the loyal wife of a philanderer who nobly resists the attentions of an attractive gallant even though she secretly loves him. Southerne's modern editors, Harold Love and Robert Jordan, point this out:

the part of Mrs. Friendall in The Wives' Excuse was the first that Southerne had been given the opportunity to create for his future Isabella, Elizabeth Barry, and it is possible that his sense of her powers as a tragic actress was one of the factors influencing him towards a darker, more thoughtful kind of comedy.

Barry's great talent was especially necessary for the play's remarkable and moving climax in which Mrs. Friendall makes a final attempt to make her suitor, Lovemore, understand her feelings and the situation she is in under society's double standard. Significantly, her speech here, although set as prose in all early editions of the play, was originally written in blank verse:

Mr. Lovemore, some Women won't speak so plain,
 But I will own to you, I cannot think
 The worse of you for thinking well of me:
 Nay, I don't blame you for designing upon me,
 Custome has fashion't it
 Into the way of living among the men;
 And you may be i'th' right to all the Town:
 But let me be i'th' right too to my Sex
 And to my self: thus far may be excus'd:
 You've prov'd your Passion and my Vertue try'd;
 But all beyond that tryal is my crime,
 And not to be forgiven:
 therefore I intreat you, don't make it impossible to me for the
 future, to receive you as a friend; for I must own,
 I wou'd secure you always for my Friend:
 Nay more, I will confess my heart to you:
 If I cou'd make you mine - ... 65
 But I am marry'd, only pittty me.

Of course, the credit for the play's sensitivity towards the female plight goes to Southerne, but the presence of actresses like Barry must have encouraged him to write the comedy in the first place.

The same is true of other comedies in which women's problems in society are presented less harshly. The preceding chapter showed how Durfey used Barry and Bracegirdle in The Marriage-Hater Match'd and The Richmond Heiress to attack libertines who marry for money. For Vanbrugh's The Provok'd Wife - 'a play more true than pleasant'⁶⁶ - Barry created the role of another suffering wife, chained to a boorish, drunken husband. The comedies of Aphra Behn, especially The Feign'd

Curtezans, The Rover Parts 1 and 2, The Town-Fopp, The Revenge and The City-Heiress are full of attacks on arranged marriage and the double standard and in the last two plays, at least, Behn clearly used Barry's tragic talents as well to express her 'feminist' message (as the next chapter will show). Even in less overtly satiric comedies, the popularity of the actresses, in and out of breeches, helped to ensure a steady stream of lively, resourceful, articulate heroines in the tradition of Shakespeare's girls in male disguise.

Thomas Durfey's A Commonwealth of Women (1685) is an adaptation of Fletcher's The Sea Voyage (1622) which usefully highlights the way in which Restoration comedy tends to give more sympathy to a specifically female point of view without actually allowing women any more rights than its predecessors pre-1660. Both the plays form part of a literary tradition of Amazonian women who attempt to rule men but are eventually defeated and forced to acknowledge male supremacy. Other plays in the tradition include William Cartwright's The Lady Errant (1635), The Female Rebellion (1659?) and Edward Howard's The Women's Conquest (c.1670) and The Six Days' Adventure, or, The New Utopia (c.1671). Restoration dramas of this kind have essentially the same attitude towards women's rights as those written pre-1660. In the preface to The Six Days' Adventure Edward Howard admitted that although 'perhaps it is more the authority of usage and manners, than the law of nature, which does generally incapacitate the Rule of women', the female characters in the play were

rather made use of to confirm the judgement and practice of the world in rendering them more properly the weaker Sex, than to authorize their government.⁶⁷

However, although Durfey's comedy reaches essentially the same conclusion as Howard's two plays and the Fletcher original - the women hand over power to the men - he made several interesting changes to

the earlier play. The Jacobean comedy is a romantic drama set on an island ruled by women whose leader, Roselia, is determined to maintain control. Her feminist assertions that men are monsters are to be interpreted as an unnatural reversal of order: the background to the drama is that men as pirates have abused their power thus forcing women to behave unnaturally. When Roselia finds her daughter tending a shipwrecked mariner she admonishes her:

Have I not taught thee
The falshood and the perjuries of men?
On whom, but for a woman to show pity,
Is to be cruell to her selfe; the soveraignty
Proud and imperious men usurpe upon us,
We conferre on our selves, and love those fetters
We fasten to our freedomes.⁶⁸

As one of the men who is washed up on the island says of the older generation of pirates, 'As they for spoyle ever forgot compassion / To women ... We now, young able men, are faln into / The hands of women'.⁶⁹ At the end order is restored. The women recognize the rightness of male dominance and Roselia, referring to herself in the third person, surrenders her power to Sebastian her husband:

She do's give up her selfe,
Her power and joyes, and all, to you,
To be discharged of 'em as to burthensome.⁷⁰

Because it is unnatural for her to possess it, power is too burdensome.

In The Commonwealth of Women however, matters are ordered differently. At the first appearance of the women, when Fletcher merely required three ordinary Amazons to enter Durfey demanded a tableau: 'Roselia seated high' and the other women 'all drest in Amazonian Habits, plac'd about her'.⁷¹ Of course Durfey was partly using the actresses in their Amazonian costume to create an attractive picture, but another effect of the grouping and warlike attire is to create an impression of female force and aggression. Durfey

then inserted a new speech for Roselia in which she asserts that those who believe women incapable of government betray their own weakness and stupidity and that although men may be physically stronger

I cannot yet Conceive, why this shou'd bind us
To be their Slaves; our Souls are Male as theirs;
And that we have hitherto forborn t'assume,
And mannage Thrones: I say, altho' we have not
Challeng'd a Sovereignty in Arts and Arms;
And writ ourselves Imperial, hath bin
Mens Tyranny, and our Modesty - not defects
Or want of Judgement.⁷²

Fletcherian women resisted men because they were ill used by them: when rightly used they return to their original subjection.

Durfey's Roselia, on the other hand, argues in general, theoretical terms that men and women are of equal ability.

Durfey also made significant alterations to the end of the drama. In The Sea Voyage Roselia's husband is given several long speeches greeting her and claiming her back. She acquiesces briefly to his domination and it is his words, organizing the return home, which end the play. In The Commonwealth of Women however it is Roselia who most emphatically controls the final scene. First she turns down one of the men who has been courting her and bestows another Amazon upon him. Then, having ordered everyone to retire and relate their stories, she formally hands over power to her husband Sebastian as an independent gesture - not in obedience to his request:

For times are alter'd now, so is the Government,
Whilst my Sebastian lives: 'Tis he must rule it.⁷³

The lines imply that she gives Sebastian power because she loves him, not because men have an automatic right to rule women. The phrase 'whilst my Sebastian lives' implies that male rule may be only temporary. Durfey provided the usual generic conclusion - the lovers are paired off and a man is in power once more - but the strongest voice

is female. It seems to me significant that Katherine Corey took the role of Roselia. As in Dame Dobson, two years earlier, she here created an older woman character who dominates the action. The fact that Durfey had such a suitable player available was surely an incentive for him to expand Roselia's part in the way that he did. As in some of his other comedies, Durfey used a popular actress to forcefully express a 'feminist' viewpoint.

The Female Point of View: II - Marital Discord

One consequence of an increasingly vigorous expression of the female point of view in comedy seems to me to have been a fuller portrayal of conflict between the sexes. Generally speaking the battle of the sexes occurs more frequently in Restoration comedy than it does in comedy pre-1660: whether the plot concerns a gay couple or a husband and wife at odds with one another, the focus is often on conflict rather than on harmonious union. I would agree with Robert Hume's statement in The Rakish Stage, that although Restoration comedy is not actually hostile to marriage, 'it increasingly exhibits an awareness of the drawbacks and possible pitfalls of matrimony'.⁷⁴ This seems to be a natural development as female characters were made more articulate in their resentment at social injustices. The proviso-scene, for instance, although it is a kind of love scene, shows couples' increased awareness of the difficulties and disadvantages of the marriage bond. In the sequel to his The Souldiers Fortune (1680), The Atheist (1683), Otway actually portrayed the gay couple of the first part, Courtine and Sylvia, after their marriage, both bitterly unhappy and Courtine in constant pursuit of other women. At the end of Newcastle's The Triumphant Widow (1674), Southerne's The Wives' Excuse and Durfey's The Richmond Heiress,

Lady Haughty, Mrs. Sightly and Fulvia all, for various reasons, reject marriage entirely. Many lively heroines accept marriage while bitterly regretting the loss of their freedom.

There are many comedies about adultery in which the final reconciliation between husband and wife seems to be distinctly temporary, if it occurs at all. Of course we should distinguish here between the many comedies in which marital discord is portrayed solely for comic effect (as part of a long-standing dramatic tradition) and plays which seriously depict a wife's sufferings after a bad marriage has been contracted. There are innumerable examples of the first type, especially during the 1670s: one might cite Wycherley's The Country Wife (1675), Dufey's A Fond Husband (1677), Behn's Sir Patient Fancy (1678), Otway's The Souldiers Fortune (1680), Dufey's A Fool's Preferment, or, The Three Dukes of Dunstable (1688), Farquhar's The Beaux Stratagem (1707) and Shadwell's Epsom Wells (1672). At the end of the latter, in a parody of a proviso-scene, the Woodleys make an agreement to separate:

Mrs. W. The business is, we like not one another, and there's an end on't.

Mr. W. But let's execute our Divorce decently: for my part I'll celebrate it like a Wedding.

Mrs. W. To me 'tis a more joyful day.⁷⁵

Less common are the more bitterly satiric dramas such as The Wives' Excuse and The Provok'd Wife which vividly depict marriages in perpetual conflict and the sufferings of the wives who are trapped in them. In either case the emphasis is on conflict, not reconciliation, between the sexes.

Sarup Singh suggests that the reason for this change in the portrayal of marriage is to be found in the developments in England during the civil war and interregnum when the foundations of the

traditional patriarchal family were challenged. He cites the historian Keith Thomas who lists various potentially significant factors:

the unusual part played by women in war, litigation, pamphleteering and politics, the appearance in English of continental feminist writings, and the attacks, sometimes by women themselves, on their limited educational opportunities, their confinement to domestic activity, their subjection to their husbands and the injustices of a commercial marriage market.⁷⁶

Critics are in general agreement that social change and social problems should be held at least partly responsible for a moral turmoil and bitter sexual conflict in Restoration comedy which is not so prevalent in earlier comedy.⁷⁷ However, as I have suggested, the introduction of actresses also played a part, albeit indirectly, in the development. The new performers were instrumental in the creation of both the gay couple and the stronger expression of the female viewpoint and these factors are an intrinsic part of the trend for dramatising marital discord. Although some dramatists' concern with society's injustices towards women presumably stemmed initially from changes in the social and philosophical climate, the strong female presence in the theatre from 1670 onwards must surely have encouraged the writers to explore female subjects in greater depth than ever before. To this extent the actresses may be said to have contributed towards a fresh assertion of women's rights in comedy.

She-Comedy?

Donald Bruce is of the opinion that the end of the seventeenth century saw the emergence of comedy centred upon a woman rather than a man:

Millamant in The Way of the World comes to play the part assigned to Dorimant in The Man of Mode. The heroine, not the hero, sub-

jugates all, and indulges every caprice.⁷⁸

Bruce suggests that Harriet Woodvile in The Man of Mode marks the first stage in the transition from the gallant to his lady as the 'centre of interest' and assigns several causes, literary, theatrical and social for the transition:

the expert feminist propaganda of Mrs. Behn, the rise of such accomplished actresses as Mrs. Bracegirdle and Mrs. Barry, the increasing patronage of the playhouses by respectable women, and the evidences of feminine power provided by the royal mistresses.⁷⁹

Two objections to Bruce's whole 'she-comedy' theory immediately present themselves. Firstly his view of the significance of The Man of Mode is far too neat: the Restoration transition from hero to heroine, if such a one exists, surely began years earlier with the witty heroines created by Nell Gwyn. Secondly, although many spectators might find Millamant the most charming character in The Way of the World, she is far from being the most important figure in terms of plot and theme, and the double standard is as firmly in existence in this play as it was in The Man of Mode. If then, as Bruce seems to argue, some form of 'she-comedy' did emerge around 1700 it certainly cannot match the more pronounced genre of 'she-tragedy' which is obviously dominated by a central female protagonist and is a drama in which even the male characters assume traditionally feminine characteristics.

However, Bruce's idea cannot be quite dismissed. As we have seen, the success of Mrs. Barry and Mrs. Bracegirdle and other actresses did generate a number of comedies with leading roles for women rather than men and although these are scattered throughout the period, there appears to be something of an increase during the 1690s when Bracegirdle and Barry starred together in comedies such as The Marriage-Hater Match'd, The Richmond Heiress, The Wives' Excuse, The

Maid's Last Prayer and The Provok'd Wife. To focus a comedy upon a lively female protagonist was nothing new (witness Shakespeare's As You Like It or Shirley's The Scornful Lady), but the emphasis of these plays upon specifically female considerations could be called an original development in English drama, a move closer to 'she-comedy' than ever before. The new approach cannot be attributed to the actresses alone, but amid the mass of social, literary, philosophical and personal influences upon a Restoration comic playwright their talent and popular success played an important part.

8. James Howard, All Mistaken, in The New Comedy, 1672, 1677.
9. See chapter 1, p. 20, and footnote.
10. Payne, Diary, vol. 7, p. 94.
11. Prologue to Philidor, quoted J.R. Wilson, Wells Acts, South Mistress, 1938, p. 67.
12. Buckingham, The Chances, 1682, pp. 59, 62.
13. Holland, The Decrement of Action, p. 84.
14. John Harold Wilson, All the King's Ladies, p. 137.
15. See Notes and Queries, 22: (1879), pp. 435-7.
16. Katherine Lynch has shown that Dryden was also directly indebted to Honoré d'Urfé's romance L'Astrée for the prologue-scene which bears a strong resemblance in fact between the French lovers Sylvie and Stella. See Katherine Lynch, 'D'Urfé's Astrée and the "Prologue Scenes" in Dryden's Comedies', Philological Quarterly, IV (October 1921), p. 203.
17. As Holland notes (The Decrement of Action, p. 84, n. 1903), although we have no cast list for this play there was no one else in the company at that time suitable to perform these roles.
18. John Harrington Smith gives particular notice to this prologue-scene, quoting it at length and deciding that 'except for the "prologue" scene in The Day of the World, no other in the comedy of the period talks so much about the gay couple. Note how clearly they see the disadvantages of marrying, yet with what courageous gaiety they face them'. (The Gay Couple in Restoration Comedy, p. 23.)
19. John Dryden, Works, vol. 2, As You Like It, IV, 1, 139-41.

FOOTNOTES

1. Peter Holland, The Ornament of Action, p.82.
2. See John Harrington Smith, The Gay Couple in Restoration Comedy, Cambridge, Mass., 1948, pp.3-9.
3. Holland, The Ornament of Action, p.86.
4. Ibid., pp.82-6. Nell was probably Hart's mistress from the time she became an actress in 1664 until she became the mistress of Charles, Lord Buckhurst in 1667.
5. Holland does not mention that in Jan. 1667 Nell also played the more serious role of Celia in a revival of Fletcher's The Humorous Lieutenant opposite Hart as Prince Demetrius.
6. James Howard, All Mistaken, or, The Mad Couple, 1672, p.23.
7. See chapter 1, p.20, and footnote.
8. Pepys, Diary, vol.8, p.91.
9. Prologue to Philaster, quoted J.H. Wilson, Nell Gwyn, Royal Mistress, 1952, p.67.
10. Buckingham, The Chances, 1682, pp.59, 62.
11. Holland, The Ornament of Action, p.84.
12. John Harold Wilson, All the King's Ladies, p.147.
13. See Notes and Queries, 224 (1979), pp.435-7.
14. Katherine Lynch has shown that Dryden was also directly indebted to Honoré D'Urfé's romance L'Astrée for the proviso-scene which bears a strong resemblance to that between the French lovers Hylas and Stelle. See Kathleen Lynch, 'D'Urfé's Astrée and the "Proviso Scenes" in Dryden's Comedy', Philological Quarterly, IV (October 1925), p.303.
15. As Holland notes (The Ornament of Action, p.262, n.109), although we have no cast list for this play there was no one else in the company at that time suitable to perform these roles.
16. John Harrington Smith gives particular praise to this proviso-scene, quoting it at length and declaring that 'except for the "proviso" scene in The Way of the World, no other in the comedy of the period tells so much about the gay couple. Note how clearly they see the disadvantages of marrying, yet with what courageous gaiety they face them'. (The Gay Couple in Restoration Comedy, p.64.)
17. John Dryden, Works, vol.X, An Evening's Love, IV, i, 139-42.

18. See David Bond, 'Nell Gwyn's Birthdate', Theatre Notebook, 40 (1986), pp.3-9.
19. George Etherege, She Would If She Could, ed. Charlene M. Taylor, 1972, I, ii, 141-6.
20. *Ibid.*, V, i, 304-7.
21. Pepys, Diary, vol.9, p.422.
22. John Downes, Roscius Anglicanus, p.27.
23. *Ibid.*, p.30.
24. The London Stage lists The Woman Made a Justice as first performed on February 19th 1670 and The Amorous Widow sometime in November of the same year. The performance of The Woman Made a Justice is on the Lord Chamberlain lists at Harvard and is quite likely to be the première. The other date, as a première, is more dubious.
25. Downes, Roscius Anglicanus, p.30.
26. Thomas Betterton, The Amorous Widow, 1706, p.69.
27. Edward Revet, The Town-Shifts, or, The Suburb-Justice, 1671, p.59.
28. John Harrington Smith, The Gay Couple in Restoration Comedy, pp.122-3.
29. John Dryden, Marriage-a-la-Mode, ed. Mark S. Auburn, 1981, p.xvi.
30. Apart from the 'disguised page' type of breeches role such as Fidelia in The Plain Dealer, Mrs. Boutell created a varied selection of supporting roles from Margery Pinchwife in The Country Wife to the furious discarded mistress Mrs. Termagant in Shadwell's The Squire of Alsatia (1688).
31. See Hume, The Development of English Drama, p.296.
32. In November 1671 the Duke's Company opened a rival theatre, Dorset Garden, with a capacity for spectacle that the King's Company could not match, and then, three months later, the theatre belonging to the King's Company actually burnt down. Even when the new Drury Lane theatre finally opened two years later, its facilities could not compete with those of Dorset Garden. The company was not expanding and there were constant arguments between owner and performers (see Hume, The Development of English Drama, pp.280-2).
33. Thomas Durfey, Two Comedies By Thomas Durfey, ed. Jack A. Vaughn, Cranbury, New Jersey and London, 1976, Madam Fickle, IV, ii, 386. See, for comparison, Elkanah Settle, Love and Revenge, 1675, end of Act IV.
34. *Ibid.*, introduction, p.39, II, ii, 155-7, III, ii, 320-1.
35. *Ibid.*, V, iii, 153-60.

36. Downes, Roscius Anglicanus, p.35.
37. There were revivals of The Man of Mode with Barry as Mrs. Loveit in November 1706 and April 1708. Also in April 1708 incidentally, was a revival of The Rover in which Barry played another discarded mistress, Angellica Bianca. Since Barry played the heroine of the latter in 1677 it would seem natural that she played the heroine of The Man of Mode as well at that time.
38. Aphra Behn actually split Killigrew's Thomaso into two characters: Willmore and his serious companion Bellvile. Bellvile is paired with Florinda and they form a contrast to the gay couple, Willmore and Hellena.
39. Aphra Behn, The Rover, ed. F.M. Link, 1967, V, 413-6.
40. Ibid., V, 453-4.
41. Barry's roles 1677-80 in comedy were as follows:
 1677: Clorinia - Porter's The French Conjuror (young girl)
 Hellena - Behn's The Rover (young girl)
 Emilia - Durfey's A Fond Husband (wife)
 1678: Mrs. Goodvile - Otway's Friendship in Fashion (wife)
 Clara - Leaned's The Counterfeits (young girl)
 Sophia - Durfey's Squire Oldsapp (young girl)
 1679: Cornelia - Behn's The Feign'd Curtezans (young girl)
 Olivia - Durfey's The Virtuous Wife (wife)
 Mrs. Gripe - Shadwell's The Woman-Captain (wife)
 1680: Lady Duncce - Otway's The Souldiers Fortune (wife)
 Camilla - Maidwell's The Loving Enemies (young girl)
 Corina - Behn's The Revenge (whore).
42. Charles Gildon, A Comparison Between Two Stages, p.200.
43. For some reason the two were not paired together in Mountfort's other comedy The Successful Strangers: here Mountfort was paired with Mrs. Knight as the serious lovers, and his wife paired with George Powell as the gay couple Feliciano and Antonio.
44. Colley Cibber, Apology, I, p.167.
45. Thomas Southerne, Works, vol.I, Sir Anthony Love, dedication 'To my Friend, Tho. Skipwith Esq.', 14-20.
46. Gerald Langbaine the Younger, Appendix to Account of the English Dramatic Poets, 1691.
47. Southerne, Works, vol.I, Sir Anthony Love, I, i, 11-14.
48. William Mountfort, Greenwich-Park, 1691, p.47.
49. Cibber, Apology, I, pp.166, 165.
50. Southerne, Works, vol.I, The Maid's Last Prayer, I, i, 70-2.
51. Thomas Durfey, The Comical History of Don Quixote, p.99.
52. Thomas Durfey, The Bath, 1701, The Epistle Dedicatory.

53. Cibber, Apology, I, pp.166-7.
54. Ibid., p.170.
55. Ibid., pp.173-4.
56. Bracegirdle's involvement with Congreve - the greatest comic dramatist of the age - must have contributed to her success. As Barry's relation to Otway, the greatest tragic dramatist of the age, seems to have helped generate a particular kind of female protagonist to dominate tragedy, so it appears that Congreve's passion for Bracegirdle enriched his appreciation of her acting skills and so impelled him to create for her a range of especially bewitching and memorable heroines: Araminta, Cynthia, Angellica and Millamant. These must surely be seen as Congreve's tribute to Anne, if not a reflection of how he saw her. In either case his comedies would not have been the same without her inspiration. For this reason alone Mrs. Bracegirdle's contribution to Restoration comedy is formidable.
57. See chapter 4, pp.155-6. Bracegirdle also donned breeches in the anonymous She Ventures and He Wins (1696), Pix's The Innocent Mistress (1697) and Burnaby's The Ladies Visiting Day (1701). In the latter her character comments significantly on how little the wearing of breeches suits her: 'Sure everybody Minds me! I never was in Breeches before, and if I get safe out of 'em! they are Dreadful things - I shall never go through with it.' (The Ladies Visiting Day, 1701, p.35.)
58. I should emphasize that the typical Bracegirdle heroine here described is the one which recurs with such frequency as to make a significant impact upon comic form. Bracegirdle did on occasion play other kinds of women in comedy - for example in Durfey's The Intrigues at Versailles (1697) she played a wayward wife and she played a vigorous heroine of the Mountfort type in Pix's The Innocent Mistress (1697).
59. Thomas Durfey, The Richmond Heiress, p.64.
60. William Congreve, Comedies, p.331. Not surprisingly Anne Bracegirdle was cast as Portia in The Jew of Venice, Granville's adaptation of Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice. Portia is of course another heiress who tests her lovers to find the one who is worthy of her.
61. Ibid., p.410. Here, as in chapter 5, I aim to show how originally and interestingly Congreve treats a popular female character type.
62. Ibid., p.370.
63. C.V. Wedgwood, quoted in Sarup Singh, Family Relationships in Shakespeare and the Restoration Comedy of Manners, Oxford, 1983, p.146. The critical myth of sexual equality in Restoration drama probably began with Meredith's 'Essay on Comedy' in which he suggests that great comic writing requires 'a society of cultivated men and women ... wherein ideas are current, and the perceptions quick, that he [the writer of comedy] may be supplied with matter and an audience' (George Meredith, 'An Essay on Comedy', in Comedy, ed. Wylie Sypher, Garden City, New York, 1956, p.3).

64. Middleton and Dekker, The Roaring Girl, ed. A. Gomme, London and New York, 1976, II, ii, 36-9.
65. Southerne, Works, vol.I, The Wives' Excuse, introduction, p.265 and V, iii, 83-100.
66. The Comedies of Wycherley, Congreve, Vanbrugh and Farquhar, ed. and with an introduction by James Leigh Hunt, 1849, p.xlvi.
67. Edward Howard, The Six Days' Adventure, or, The New Utopia, 1671, preface.
68. Beaumont and Fletcher, Comedies and Tragedies, 1647, The Sea Voyage, p.7.
69. *Ibid.*, p.17 (wrongly numbered 25).
70. *Ibid.*, p.19.
71. Thomas Durfey, The Commonwealth of Women, 1686, p.22.
72. *Ibid.*, p.24.
73. *Ibid.*, p.55.
74. Robert Hume, The Rakish Stage: Studies in English Drama 1660-1800, Carbondale and Edwardsville, 1983, p.183.
75. Thomas Shadwell, Epsom Wells, 1672, p.94.
76. Keith Thomas, 'Women and the Civil War Sects', Past and Present, No.13 (April 1958), p.55, quoted in Sarup Singh, Family Relationships etc., p.157.
77. See, for instance, Hume, The Rakish Stage, p.204. Of course marital discord and attacks on arranged marriage may be found in comedy throughout the seventeenth century - for example, George Wilkins, The Miseries of Enforced Marriage (1607).
78. Donald Bruce, Topics of Restoration Comedy, 1974, p.135.
79. *Ibid.*

CHAPTER 7

THE PROSTITUTE AND THE MISTRESS IN RESTORATION COMEDY

In terms of female character types, Restoration comedy exhibits one original feature in particular: it contains a remarkable range of prostitutes and mistresses (both kept and unkept) and it grants certain types of mistress more sympathy and a greater dramatic importance than ever before.¹ In this chapter I wish to examine this phenomenon in detail with the aim of showing that the actresses who came to specialize successfully in certain types of whore roles then influenced dramatists to treat the character in a new and more sensitive way. In particular, the typecasting of Elizabeth Barry as a suffering, 'tragic', discarded mistress, in comedies from Aphra Behn's The Revenge (1680) onwards, proved crucial. Prostitutes and mistresses might, by and large, have remained in supporting roles, as they usually were before 1660, had it not been for Barry's success in playing variations on the suffering mistress. While Mrs. Behn's personal concern with the situation of the kept mistress in society might have been the cause of such a role being written for Barry in the first place, it was the talent and popularity of the actress that sustained the trend. The contribution of Mrs. Barry and other actresses to this development in comedy will become clear if we trace in detail the changes to prostitute and mistress characters throughout the period.

The Prostitute and the Mistress in Comedy 1660-72

The prostitutes in new comedies of the 1660s are presented with varying degrees of sympathy but they are all kept women who grant their sexual favours for money not love, which they seem in-

capable of feeling. They are also none of them major characters. They range from caricatures such as the three whores and their bawd in Dryden's The Wild Gallant (1663), who provide no more than a crudely comic interlude, to the inaptly named Mistress Christian, pregnant but unmarried, in Dryden's The Feign'd Innocence, or, Sir Martin Mar-All (1667). Restoration dramatists at this time tended to follow an earlier comic convention in frequently marrying off their whores to fools. In Etherege's first comedy The Comical Revenge (1664), for instance, Wheadle and Sir Frederick Frollick are eventually forced to espouse their 'wenches', Mrs. Grace and Mrs. Lucy, while in Dryden's Sir Martin Mar-All the apparently innocent Christian manages to trap the lustful Lord Dartmouth into becoming her husband. In John Lacy's The Old Troop, or, Monsieur Raggou (1664?) the soldiers' prostitute Dol Troop manages to win Raggou as husband by the toss of a coin. In Howard's The English Mounsiour (1663) the libertine Wellbred helps his mistress Mrs. Crafty in her plot to marry the foolish Frenchlove.

There were also revivals of earlier comedies containing prostitutes. For instance, Killigrew's The Parson's Wedding was staged titillatingly with an all-female cast, a year after The English Mounsiour in October 1664. Here the prostitute Mrs. Wanton defends her profession with cheerful belligerence:

And I would fain know the difference betwixt ours, and a wedding crime, which is worst; to let love, youth and good humour betray us to a kindness, or to be gravely seduc'd by some aunt or uncle, without consideration of the disparity of Age, Birth, or Persons, to lie down before a Joynture.²

This argument looks forward to the comedies of Aphra Behn with their attacks on arranged marriage and to The Rover Part II especially, in which the hero rejects conventional matrimony and enters into a permanent alliance with a courtesan instead. A month or so after this

production of The Parson's Wedding, incidentally, the King's Company also apparently performed Killigrew's Thomaso, the comedy containing the courtesan Angellica Bianca which Behn later adapted as The Rover. These early productions show that all the future developments of prostitute and the mistress characters were based to some degree in dramatic conventions of the previous era. The arrival of the actress did not necessitate a radically different kind of character: she was easily assimilated into existing modes of comedy.

Most of these prostitutes of the 1660s are no more than crudely portrayed 'humour' characters whose profession is cheerfully accepted, not morally condemned. However occasionally a dramatist wrote more thoughtfully from the whore's point of view. James Howard gave Mrs. Crafty a prose soliloquy at the start of Act II in which she laments the precariousness of her existence,

This life of mine can last no longer than my Beauty,
and made the heroine of the comedy offer a tartly satiric comment on the heroes' efforts to get their mistresses married off:

Truely Mr. Comely, I have not heard of better natur'd men then you and Mr. Welbred, for endeavouring to get your Mistresses well married; but most commonly you young men never think of those kindnesses till you'r weary of the Faces.³

This issue of the whore's victimization by the libertine was to become of central importance in future comedies.

In general, the prostitute characters of the early 1670s are not markedly different from those of the 1660s. In Shadwell's The Humorists (1670) the fool Drybob is tricked into marrying Friske, a 'vain wench of the Town' whom he debauched. In Wycherley's Love in

a Wood (1671) Lucy, the kept mistress of Dapperwit, is eventually married off to the hideous Alderman Gripe. But although Gripe is a most unpleasant character, with a chillingly pragmatic attitude to the marriage,

I shall get my five hundred pound again, and get heirs to exclude my daughter and frustrate Dapperwit. Besides, 'tis agreed on all hands, 'tis cheaper keeping a wife than a wench,⁴

there are no implications that spectators should feel sorry for Lucy. She is still a woman who gives her favours for money rather than love and respectable marriage is all a woman of her kind can hope for. The fact that Lucy has been manipulated constantly by a bawd, her mother Mrs. Crossbite, is not made a source of sympathy for her either. It was only later in the period, in comedies in which the prostitute falls in love, that the tragic implications of the bawd-prostitute relationship began to be realized.

In Wycherley's The Gentleman Dancing-Master (1672) the two 'common women of the town', Mrs. Flirt and Mrs. Flounce, are basically caricatures, as their names suggest. Wycherley again drew a cynical parallel between keeping a wife and keeping a whore, the one advantage of the former being that it costs less. The fool Monsieur de Paris offers to be Mrs. Flirt's keeper with the comment,

there's little difference betwixt keeping a wench and marriage - only marriage is a little the cheaper but the other is the more honourable now.

Continuing this idea, Flirt then lays down her conditions as his mistress in a parody of a gay couple's proviso-scene. Unlike Lucy, who is forced to become the wife of a detestable old man for the sake of respectability, Mrs. Flirt is a successful professional mistress with no need of matrimony. As if to further emphasize her triumph, Mrs. Flirt speaks the epilogue:

You good men o'th'Exchange, on whom alone
 We must depend when sparks to sea are gone,
 Into the pit already you are come -
 'Tis but a step more to our tiring-room,
 Where none of us but will be wondrous sweet
 Upon an abler love of Lumber Street.⁵

The contrast between the fates of the whores in Love in a Wood and The Gentleman-Dancing Master - two plays separated only by the space of a year - seems a significant one. The state of the kept mistress in Wycherley's later comedy is no longer cowed, but flourishing. She may not be strictly respectable but she has carved a comfortable niche for herself in society (unimpeded, of course by the experience of being in love). This change may be partly attributable to social factors: in time a substantial number of women (several of them actresses) had become successful kept mistresses with an accepted place in the London social scene. The most famous of these, from the point of view of the playhouse, was of course Nell Gwyn. Whatever the reason, the most common type of prostitute character in comedy during the 1670s was the tough, calculating, successful professional mistress. This development was undoubtedly aided by the fact that the skilled comedienne Mrs. Currer began to specialize in such roles.

Mrs. Currer as Whore 1675-9

Currer had her first whore role in comedy as Betty Frisque, resourcefully deceiving her keeper Drybone in Crowne's The Countrey Wit (1675?). This robust and cunning manipulator was to become typical of the kind of prostitute Mrs. Currer portrayed. Inconstant Betty retains the upper hand by alternately upbraiding her old lord and showing extravagant fondness. She is excessively mercenary:

Drybone complains plaintively that he has to pay 'Forty pound a Dimple'. Betty flirts with the rake hero, Ramble, but is finally reconciled with Drybone on condition that he gives her a settlement of five hundred pounds a year in case they quarrel again. This secured, she echoes Mrs. Flirt in promising, 'I am yours in the new-fashion'd Matrimony for ever'.⁶ Like Flirt, she has found a most satisfactory alternative to marriage.

Mrs. Currer probably played a similar whore a year later in Aphra Behn's The Town Fopp (1676). The cunning Betty Flauntit strongly resembles Betty Frisque and I would suggest that she was created by the same actress. Betty Flauntit skilfully controls her unpleasant keeper, Sir Timothy and, even when he is tricked into marriage to another woman at the end, she manages to organize matters in her favour. Although the play's most important female character is the heroine, Celinda, the last lines of the play belong to Betty:

Betty: What am I like to lose my Timy? Canst thou have the heart to leave me for ever? I who have been true and constant to you.

Sir T: Alas! now do I melt again, by Fortune - thou art a Fool, dost think I wou'd have had her, but for her Fortune; which shall only serve to make thee out-flaunt all the Cracks in Town - go - go home and expect me, thou'lt have me all to thy self within this day or two.⁷

Interestingly, Mrs. Currer was a 'Betty' herself and the repetition of this Christian name in Behn's play surely makes the possibility that she played Flauntit more likely. In the epilogue to Behn's The Feign'd Curtezans (1679) Mrs. Currer even went so far as to describe herself as the same kind of 'Betty' as Misses Frisque and Flauntit:

Who says this Age a Reformation wants,
When Betty Currer's lovers all turn saints!
In vain, alas, I flatter, swear and vow

You'l scarce do anything for Charity now.
 Yet I am handsome still, still young and mad,
 Can wheedle, lie, dissemble, jilt - egad,
 As well and artfully as ere I did,
 Yet not one Conquest can I gain or hope.

Mrs. Currer may also have created Mrs. Tricksy in Dryden's The Kind Keeper, or, Mr. Limberham (1678) - an extreme version of Betty Frisque, ruthlessly managing her keeper, Limberham, with a combination of ranting fury and extravagant affection. Tricksy, like Betty Flauntit, also unsuccessfully pursues the comedy's hero and gains a good settlement from her besotted lover at the end:

and to give good example to all Christian Keepers, will take thee to my wedded Wife: And thy four hundred a year shall be settled upon thee, for separate maintenance.⁸

Mrs. Currer certainly played the similarly deceitful, mercenary Madam Tricklove in Dufey's Squire Oldsapp, or, The Night-Adventurers in the same year. Triumphant in her schemes, Tricklove has the last work in the play:

But to forge plots in an extremity,
 Let every Mistress henceforth learn from me.⁹

Madam Tricklove is at least as important a character in the play as the two pure heroines, the wife Christina, played by Mrs. Price, and her niece Sophia, played by Mrs. Barry. In the first printed edition (1679) Mrs. Currer's name is placed first in the female cast list (whereas normally one would expect the virginal heroine's name, not the whore's, to come first) and she speaks the highly entertaining epilogue in which she pokes fun at her foolish old keeper:

Yet, Gallants if you please, you may be kind,
 Prove so - or may this Curse your Fortune be; points to
 May you all live, till y'are as dull as he; Oldsapp
 And all your darling Misses prove like me.

This and the number of other prologues and epilogues that she was called upon to speak at this time, implies that Mrs. Currer was at the height of her popularity in the late 1670s. This is surely why

her type of kept mistress - bold, deceitful, unscrupulous and triumphant - predominated at this time.

Buckingham's The Chances

Before leaving the early part of the period I should like briefly to consider the treatment of the whore character in Buckingham's The Chances (1667). This comedy provides an exception to the usual type of prostitute of the 1660s and its exceptional nature is to be attributed to the actress who played the role - Nell Gwyn. It must surely have been the fact that he had this popular and attractive comedienne in the part of the Second Constanca that impelled Buckingham to turn Fletcher's drunken whore into a witty, madcap heroine.

Fletcher's prostitute has nothing to say and merely appears to arouse the lust of Don John in the single scene they have together: 'a stout whore, / I love such stirring ware'.¹⁰ In the later play Constanca not only wins the hero, but her murky past is ignored or made a joke of and she is presented as a kind of free spirit. She is by implication not a seasoned member of the profession, for the elderly Antonio tells Don John that he bought her from her mother for five hundred gold pieces. The fact that Constanca apparently spent the night with Antonio is presented as a joke - he was too impotent to do anything. Constanca says cheekily:

Well, and what did you do when I was abed with you all night?
confess that if you dare.¹¹

Her 'profession' does not trouble Don John. In fact, in a new scene between himself and Constanca in Act IV, he jestingly expresses a preference for a girl who is not a virgin:

No Maid? why, so much the better, thou art then the more experienc'd; for my part I hate a bungler at any thing.¹²

At the end of Fletcher's play the audience hears that the whore is about to be whipped. Don John pleads for her and she is to be spared if she shows appropriate signs of penitence: 'if we see contrition in your whore Sir, / Much may be done'.¹³ The whore herself does not reappear and there is no question of the audience being encouraged to feel sympathy for her. Contrastingly, in Buckingham's version, Don John and the Second Constanca meet again, discuss their mutual dislike of marriage and finally end the play together, lightheartedly rejecting matrimony but implying that some form of permanent union is to exist between them:

DJ: And shall we consummate our Joys?

C2: Never;
We'll find out ways to make 'em last for ever.¹⁴

Fletcher's Constanca and Buckingham's not only have different personalities, they are completely different types of character. The Chances furnishes a striking early instance of the way in which the actresses themselves could be responsible for changes to the prostitute type. When highly popular performers such as Nell Gwyn and Elizabeth Barry took such roles dramatists would have found it extremely difficult not to make their parts both large (if not leading) and sympathetic.

The Plight of the Forsaken Mistress and the Plight of the Forsaken Prostitute: The Man of Mode (1676) and The Rover (1677)

In spite of a prevailing vogue for a more robustly comic type of kept mistress, two dramatists produced more serious, even sombre,

treatments of 'fallen women' during the mid-1670s. These treatments are not obviously the result of any leading actress's influence (as was the case in The Chances), but they need to be discussed because they form the beginnings of a more sympathetic and complex approach to the difficult problem of how women who give themselves to men outside marriage should be considered. Etherege's The Man of Mode deals, among other things, with two mistresses who give their favours for love, not money, and are then discarded. In Behn's The Rover a prostitute falls in love and so rejects the moneymaking side of her profession. Although in neither play is the mistress/prostitute the most important female figure, both types were to become lead characters when they became the speciality of Elizabeth Barry.

The situation of a kept woman such as Betty Flauntit is a relatively straightforward one: she is incapable of any deep attachments and her goal, which she is well equipped to achieve, is financial security from her keeper with the freedom to enjoy sex with other, more attractive men who may take her fancy. In The Man of Mode Etherege explored the more complex, basically insoluble problem of a loving mistress who gives her favours in secret for nothing and is then rejected when her lover grows tired of her and decides he would like to marry a wealthy virgin. Both Mrs. Loveit and Bellinda have been lovers of Dorimant: Mrs. Loveit he simply discards because he has lost interest, Bellinda he tries to place in the awkward position of remaining his mistress while he arranges to marry the heiress Harriet. The situation of both women is pathetic and pitiable: unlike the cynical prostitute, they are victims of their own emotions, the libertine ethic and the double standard of society.

Etherege in a sense solves the problem from spectators' point

of view with regard to Mrs. Loveit by making her an object of ridicule. Ranting and raving uncontrollably, like a tragedy queen who has strayed into the wrong play, Mrs. Loveit forfeits her right to sympathy. Her inability to conceal her feelings is an unattractive weakness in a society in which a woman's ability to disguise her emotions is vital. Bellinda, however, is not mocked and only the fact that she is a comparatively minor character (and Harriet an extremely charming, witty heroine) prevents her from seriously disturbing the balance of the comedy. Shocked and horrified by Dorimant's treatment of Loveit, her 'friend', Bellinda nevertheless cannot resist his advances. In the scene in Act III, in which she agrees to do all that he demands of her in the way of an assignation, she tells him 'I will' almost as one hypnotized.¹⁵ She is desperately afraid of being found out and so losing her reputation, and she feels guilty over her betrayal of Loveit, but she will still risk everything for her lover's sake - only, surely, to be discarded entirely in the end. It is difficult to believe that she will manage to prolong her refusal of Dorimant's request for another assignation at the end of the play, even though he has now become officially engaged to Harriet. In any case, whether she agrees or breaks with Dorimant for ever, Bellinda will suffer.

Etherege kept the end of the play relatively 'comic' by focusing the action on Harriet, who is a match, verbally at least, for Dorimant and is the woman he seems to truly love. Nevertheless, the discomfort engendered by the presence of her two discarded predecessors remains in the last scene to undermine the 'happy ending', especially since immediately after becoming engaged Dorimant tries to arrange another meeting with Bellinda! In later comedies centred upon a discarded mistress the unpleasant nature of the faithless

libertine was to be made still more apparent.

The Rover (1677) is the first play by Aphra Behn in which that author began to show her serious interest in the situation of the prostitute who falls in love and is thus reformed. In its presentation of the courtesan Angellica Bianca The Rover makes a much stronger attack on society's double standard than its source, Killigrew's Thomaso, does. At one stage Killigrew's Angellica does condemn the hypocrisy of masculine attitudes towards the whore - 'what are we guilty of that you have not confess'd? What crime stains us that you would not now act?' - but ultimately she supports society's disapproval of her behaviour. She admits that her life is sinful and that she has no right to be the wife of Thomaso:

Me he will not marry, nor shall not if he would; because I love him he shall not for my sake be guilty of any action he may blush for.¹⁶

Although later she imagines that, after all, he may still marry her and she then tries to persuade him to remain single so that she can continue to be his mistress, in the end she admits defeat and quietly accepts Thomaso's marriage to Serulina. In the company of another reformed prostitute, Paulina (who is dramatically reformed and who declaims at length against whoring) Killigrew's Angellica Bianca finally plans to go to Italy to try to forget her love and to free him from her potentially embarrassing presence.

Behn on the other hand chose to emphasize the suffering of the whore when discarded by the man she loves and her Angellica Bianca is not so accommodating. Unlike Killigrew's courtesan who accepts the custom of wealthy Don Pedro in spite of loving Thomaso, Behn's Angellica is faithful to Willmore and refuses to accept her lover's involvement with other women. Moreover, instead of professing

herself unworthy, the later Angellica refuses to accept her rejection meekly and reappears raging jealously, like Mrs. Loveit, at his betrayal. To emphasize the seriousness of her feelings she is given a verse soliloquy lamenting her plight:

He's gone, and in this ague of my soul
The shivering fit returns.¹⁷

Angellica's solution to the problem of being discarded is even more melodramatic than Mrs. Loveit's - she pursues Willmore brandishing a pistol. She is finally defeated nevertheless and departs cursing passionately:

Live where my eyes may never see thee more.
Live to undo someone whose soul may prove
So bravely constant to revenge my love.¹⁸

Angellica's suffering does cloud the comedy's happy ending to a certain extent, although, like Loveit and Bellinda, she is finally eclipsed by the capable heroine who successfully tames the rake-hero. The balance of dramatic power, so to speak, remains in this play with the virginal heroine, Hellena, who was created on stage by Mrs. Barry. Nevertheless, the change of approach towards the prostitute at this time is significant, pointing the way towards more radical depictions of the character. It is interesting to see how the balance of dramatic power shifts once Barry began to play discarded mistresses instead of witty heroines in comedy.

1680 - The Revenge and Mrs. Barry

As we have seen, during the 1670s Mrs. Barry became the Duke's Company's leading comedienne, playing first young virgins and then wives. Yet at the same time she was proving her worth in tragic roles. Early in 1680 she created her most important tragic role to date as Monimia in The Orphan and later that year she also played her

first 'tragic' prostitute in comedy. We cannot be sure of exactly when The Revenge, or, A Match in Newgate, Aphra Behn's adaptation of John Marston's The Dutch Courtesan, was first performed, but it was probably during the summer of 1680, about six months after The Orphan.¹⁹ This, then, was the time which Mrs. Behn had to fashion the heroine of Marston's The Dutch Courtesan into a vehicle for Barry's resoundingly proved talent for pathos - a vehicle which would also express her own ideas about the prostitute. The fact that Mrs. Barry seems to have been both a friend of Mrs. Behn and the mistress of at least one man in real life can only have strengthened the dramatist's decision to write the part with this actress in mind.²⁰

In Corina, the heroine of The Revenge, Behn provided what she had only suggested in Angellica Bianca - a full study of a tragically suffering courtesan, unjustly discarded by the man she loves. The dramatist transformed Franceschina, Marston's whore, who is tough and impenitent and who is finally consigned to jail and a whipping for her sins. From the very beginning Behn created sympathy for her whore by emphasizing her true passion for her lover, Wellman, who has already lost interest. In fact the innocent Corina is closer to Etherege's Bellinda than to Angellica Bianca: she is a loving mistress rather than a prostitute. Behn made it clear, by giving her heroine some additional lines in the first act, that she was a virgin before Wellman seduced her:

but yet I'm true, true as my Vertue when you first seduc'd it,
false as you are, - and yet I love you strangely.²¹

Corina is in a brothel not to earn money but to shelter because no respectable house will take her in. In this way Behn created for Barry a pathetic heroine who is surprisingly similar to Monimia. Both Monimia and Corina are the victims of libertine desire and the

former is also, in a sense, a fallen woman, since she commits adultery, albeit unknowingly.

Behn made considerable changes to the original in order to emphasize Corina's steadfast love for her seducer. In the first act, for instance, she is made to express anxiety, as Franceschine does not, about Wellman's growing coldness towards her and about whether he will return to her on the morrow. To Wellman's companion, Friendly, Corina says

I have been false to Vertue, false to Honour, false to my Name and Friends; but was to Wellman ... all mercie, all complying sweetness.

To this Friendly replies

I cou'd not slightly part with such a Jewel, or, Indian-like, barter this real Gold for shining gingling Bawbles. Marinda! [Wellman's fiancée] Heaven, thou'rt an Angel to her!²²

Not surprisingly, in Act II, Behn extended the courtesan's attack on her bawd, making the other woman more responsible for Corina's seduction. We hear how Mrs. Dunwell emphasized Corina's charm to Wellman and showed him the best way to persuade her to submit. Finally, in scenes of passionate anguish, which Barry would presumably have performed with great ability, Corina draws a dagger on her bawd and then fires a pistol at Wellman. (Behn seems to have favoured the pistol as a means for prostitutes to attempt to avenge themselves on their perfidious lovers!) Having missed shooting Wellman, Corina 'offers to stab herself; Friendly runs to her, prevents her, and she seems fainted a little while in his arms'.²³ All this new action for the whore strongly resembles the style of acting that Barry would have been called upon to produce in Otway's tragedies: the character of Corina combines the wild ranging emotionalism of Lavinia in Otway's Caius Marius with the pathetic vulnerability and sadness of Monimia.

In Act IV Corina, like Franceschina, rejects another would-be client. Behn also added a line stressing her heroine's constancy: 'canst thou believe that after Wellman's love, I cou'd receive a Raskal to my Arms?'.²⁴ Behn then had Corina's wooer, Trickwell, attempt to rape her before she is rescued by a disguised Wellman. The rape or attempted rape was of course to become a typical feature of 'she-tragedy'. There are the inevitable stage directions for Corina to enter 'disordered'. The dramatist then inserted a new scene to generate more pathos in which Friendly reports the supposed death of Wellman to his love, who 'seems to faint'. Her plot to visit Wellman's fiancée is then an impulse of the moment, rather than Franceschina's more premeditated crime, and her readiness to betray Friendly represents a sudden revulsion against him for being, as she thinks, the murderer of her beloved.

Perhaps Behn's most striking and significant alteration to Act V of Marston's drama was to omit the lengthy and climactic diatribe against prostitutes by Freevile, the friend of Franceschina's lover:

What man, but worthy name of man, would leave
 The modest pleasures of a lawful bed,
 The holy union of two equal hearts,
 Mutually holding either dear as health,
 The undoubted issues, joys of chaste sheets,
 The unfeigned imbrace of sober ignorance:
 To twine th'unhealthfull loines of common loves
 The prostituted impudence of things
 Senseless like those of cataracts of Nile,
 Their use so vile takes away sense! How vile
 To love a creature, made of blood and hell,
 Whose use makes weak, whose company doth shame,
 Whose bed doth beggar, issue doth defame!²⁵

The sentiments of this speech are utterly contrary to the intended theme of Behn's play. It is indeed difficult to imagine the lines being spoken on the Restoration stage in the context of anything other than a tragedy. The effect of the speech, even in tragedy,

might have been unfortunate. Surely it would have been a brave actor who, before King Charles II himself, was able to denounce a mistress as one 'Whose use makes weak, whose company doth shame'. Marston's lines remind us of how greatly the social and moral climate surrounding the theatre had changed over the last twenty years.

Corina's behaviour at her arrest is very different from that of her predecessor. Franceschina is vengeful and vicious, Corina accepts imprisonment nobly:

With Joy, since Wellman lives, and lives to be perjur'd, no matter what becomes of poor lost me.²⁶

Behn then struck a blow for feminism by using the witty comic heroine Diana to provide a kind of salvation for Corina, after all the men in the play have failed her. Resourcefully, Diana arranges that Wellman pretend to her own foolish suitor, Sir John Empty, that Corina is his sister so that Sir John will consent to marry her. Thus a potentially tragic end for the whore is averted in favour of the traditional comic conclusion. Instead of Franceschina's punishment, a harsh whipping and gaol, Corina wins a husband by deception. Behn further softened Marston's ending by having Wellman offer a sort of apology to the woman he has injured:

it was not want of Love, my Fortune did depend upon my Marriage, but when I saw the Woman destin'd for me, I must confess I felt new flames possess me, without extinguishing the old.²⁷

This is as far as Behn, or any other Restoration dramatist, would go by way of consoling the unjustly suffering 'whore'. The sin of the fallen woman, however noble natured, can never be forgiven and forgotten: in tragedy such as Rowe's The Fair Penitent she must die (even if she was actually raped) and in comedy the best she can hope for is usually marriage to a wealthy fool. Corina declares that she will marry Sir John if this is what Wellman desires. In losing

the man she loves she will suffer in any case:

since I must lose you, and am by your Commands obliged to Life,
no matter how forlorn and wretched 'tis.²⁸

Wellman's fiancée, Marinda, generously offers to call Corina 'sister', for which the unfortunate mistress is duly grateful.

In highlighting the Barry part, Behn made Marinda a weaker character than her Marston counterpart, Beatrice. The latter's opening speech is long (eighteen and a half lines) and expresses her simplicity, good nature and grace. In place of this Marinda has only a few commonplace lines to Wellman and Behn also cut a long speech by Freevile extolling her virtue. A note of squeamishness was also added to her character: she is fearful of the prospect of visiting Friendly and Corina in Newgate. The alterations serve to further focus spectators' interest and sympathy on the discarded mistress.

The Revenge marks a new development for English drama in the treatment of a woman who gives herself to a man outside marriage. I can only find one play before 1660 in which the main character is a prostitute who is reformed by falling in love and who then suffers through being rejected by her lover. The play is Dekker's The Honest Whore Parts 1 and 2 (1604). Nevertheless, the heroine of this play, Bellafront, is substantially different from Corina and Mrs. Barry's subsequent roles in this mould. Although she suffers in her rejection by Hippolito and in her marriage to the worthless Matheo, Dekker's Bellafront is emphatically not an object of pathos. Dekker mitigated Bellafront's crime by the fact that she was led to the profession of prostitute through being initially seduced by Matheo, but his aim was to point out the evil of the whore and her way of life:

the heroine's reform represents the moral message of the play. By contrast, the aim of Aphra Behn was to create sympathy for an essentially noble female who becomes the prey of a libertine. Corina is not a working prostitute but the innocent victim of Wellman: she does not need to reform and if anyone is at fault it is her seducer. Like the majority of tragic heroines created on stage by Barry, Corina exists primarily to engender pity, even tears, from spectators, combining soft erotic femininity with wild, passionate anguish. We have no record of how The Revenge was received but the performance of its leading character must have been successful since both Aphra Behn and other comic dramatists went on to create more variations on the suffering mistress for Mrs. Barry to play. In this way a new comic type was born.

Mrs. Barry and Mrs. Behn 1681-2

Since Mrs. Barry was probably the theatre's most popular performer at the beginning of the 1680s, it is hardly surprising that Aphra Behn produced two more examples of suffering mistresses for her to play in comedy very soon after The Revenge. In The Rover Part II (1681) Willmore's wife Hellena is now dead and he falls in love with the beautiful and passionate courtesan, La Nuche, played by Barry.²⁹ Like Angellica Bianca (and unlike Corina), La Nuche is determined not to fall in love and is convinced, in theory, that money offers much greater security than pledges of male affection:

I'll not bate a Ducat of this price I've set upon my self, for all the pleasures Youth and Love can bring me.³⁰

She is also genuinely scornful of marriage and believes her best option is to find a wealthy keeper. Nevertheless, like her predecessor, she falls in love with penniless Willmore and vacillates

between struggling to resist his overtures and suffering torments of jealousy at his apparent inconstancy. Thus the role offered Barry an opportunity to portray the kind of conflict of emotions that she had excelled in performing in The Orphan and Theodosius. In La Nuche love conquers worldly common sense and she turns against her bawd:

from Childhood thou hast trained me up in cunning, read Lectures to me of the use of Man, but kept me from the knowledge of the right ... but oh how soon plain Nature taught me Love!³¹

In this play Behn provided an unusual and romantic alternative to the normal fate of the whore reformed by love: her heroine fails to marry her lover but they form a permanent alliance and he seems to remain faithful. Willmore is even willing to live in poverty so long as it is shared with La Nuche. Like Don John and the Second Constancia, Willmore and La Nuche love but retain their freedom: marriage is not always a fulfilling experience in Restoration comedy and these two, it is implied, create something better. This idea is of course quite different from anything in Thomaso, the original source: in Killigrew's comedy, as in most seventeenth-century dramas, whores are beyond the pale so far as marriage is concerned and a man's wife can never be in the same category as his mistress. Behn's radical alternative was also, in a sense, a tribute to Barry's popularity; when this actress played a prostitute in love then the character was able to rise above the common lot of her kind.

The love scenes between Willmore and La Nuche are explicitly sexual. In one scene he rapturously kisses her bosom and lips crying 'Come, haste, my Soul to Bed', while in another (unaware of her true identity on this occasion because she is in disguise) he makes love to her crying

Thou art all Charms, a Heaven of sweets all over, plump smooth
 round Limbs, small rising Breasts, a Bosom soft and panting -
 I long to wound each sense.³²

The phrase 'small rising breasts' recalls the description of Monimia's breasts when they 'shove up and down and heave like dying birds'. Here, as in Otway's tragedies, Barry's role is highly erotic. In this play, however, her sexual desirability is not a fatal trap to herself and others - rather, Behn sought to show that sexual passion is a vital part of lasting love. La Nuche finally grants Willmore a free partnership 'without the formal foppery of Marriage',³³ and together the couple represent an ideal: a truly loving relationship beyond the mercenary and constraining limits of conventional marriage.

Although the end of The Rover Part II was 'romantically satisfying',³⁴ it did not of course provide a realistic solution to the problem of the woman who gives herself to a faithless libertine - nor, incidentally, did it provide Barry with an opportunity to stir audiences' emotions by her portrayal of suffering. A year later, remedying both deficiencies, Behn produced a comedy about a mistress in a contemporary social setting and written from a much more cynically realistic point of view. The plot of The City-Heiress (1682) is in some ways very similar to that of Etherege's The Man of Mode: a libertine, Wilding, is in the process of attempting to cast off one mistress, seduce a second and marry an heiress. The first woman is Diana, a common woman who has been kept by Wilding, the second is Lady Galliard, who loves him and whom he succeeds in seducing on one fateful occasion, and the third is Charlot, the innocent 'city-heiress' of the title. However, in Behn's play it is Lady Galliard, played by Barry, who is the female centre of interest, rather than the heiress whom the hero finally marries.

Although La Nuche is a courtesan and Lady Galliard a respectable widow, the two characters are similar in that they are both beautiful, proud, passionate and much sought after by men. Like La Nuche, Galliard falls in love with a rake but strenuously resists his efforts to seduce her. In her case Wilding even apparently proposed marriage but she refused him, recognizing that he would never be faithful. Galliard's wavering between desire and duty required from Barry another passionate inner conflict between love and sense. The dilemma recalls the struggles of Monimia, Athenais and Belvidera to resist base passion and the sexual chemistry between Galliard and Wilding recalls that between these tragic heroines and their importunate lovers.

In the end, like Etherege's Bellinda, Galliard cannot resist the pleas of the rake. Wilding has his way by promising that the deed will be done 'with modesty and silence'.³⁵ Their lovemaking in Act IV forms the climax of the play and it constituted a tour de force of erotic passion for Mrs. Barry. Wilding visits the widow at night fired by desire and embraces her:

Let me unlade me in that soft white Bosome,
That Storehouse of rich Joys and lasting Pleasures,
And lay me down as on a Bed of Lilies.³⁶

The two struggle and she breaks away from him only to call him back when he eventually 'offers to go'. Wilding mocks the invitation and Galliard is forced to resolve her agonizing dilemma: either she steels herself to reject the man she loves, which she actually seems incapable of doing, or she sleeps with him and becomes, in the eyes of society at least, a whore. She has now lost the option of marriage which was also a poor solution to the problem since Wilding would be as inconstant a husband as he would be a lover and she would lose her freedom and wealth to him into the bargain. As she feels

her desires master her Galliard expresses in extravagant verse her anguish:

A Whore? A Whore! Oh, let me think of that!
 A man's Convenience, his leisure hours, his Bed of Ease,
 To loll and tumble on at idle times;
 The Slave, the Hackney of his lawless Lust!
 A loath'd Extinguisher of filthy flames,
 Made use of, and thrown by. - Oh, infamous!³⁷

Inflated, even melodramatic as these lines may seem, they express the central message of the play. The loving mistress is merely a rake's toy to be enjoyed until lust is satisfied and then discarded. Behn wrote in verse rather than prose and gave the lines to Barry, the queen of tragedy, in order to bring home as forcefully as possible the pathos of the woman's position.

Wilding finally persuades the widow by cunningly accusing her of only pretending to care for him - something that Galliard's passionate nature cannot allow:

What heart can bear distrust from what it loves?
 Or who can always her own Wish deny?
 My Reason's weary of the unequal Strife;
 And Love and Nature will at last o'ercome.

(A libertine male in Restoration society can of course follow the dictates of 'love' and 'nature' with impunity.) Galliard submits, murmuring 'you must undo me if you will', she 'sinks into his Arms by degrees' and is led to the bedchamber. Wilding, 'with his arms about her' cries triumphantly:

In Loves kind Fever let me ever ly,
 Drunk with Desire, and raving mad with Joy.³⁸

The deed done, Galliard is racked with remorse. She desperately tries to convince Wilding that she will not remain his mistress although the scene makes plain that the affair will never end until he discards her. By merely threatening to kill himself if she

rejects him Wilding is able to have his mistress in his arms again, 'leaning on him'. Galliard's sigh of passion as she does so, 'Ah, Wilding -' recalls Barry's most famous line as Monimia in The Orphan, the 'Ah, Castalio' which she could never apparently speak without weeping and which made such a memorable impression upon spectators.³⁹ Behn may well have deliberately recalled the earlier play here to load her scene, the scene of Galliard's renewed submission, with still more emotion.

The wretchedness of Lady Galliard is immediately increased by the fact that after these love-scenes her normally retiring suitor, Sir Charles Meriwill, emboldened by drink, attempts to rape her. She is only able to hold him off by promising to marry him the next day. The crude and drunken lovemaking of Galliard's husband-to-be contrasts painfully with the preceding seduction by Wilding: sexual ecstasy for both man and woman is juxtaposed with the grim reality of what is for the woman a safe but loveless marriage. This marriage is what Galliard finally has to choose because she cannot contemplate life as a mistress. As Sir Charles puts it;

You wou'd be left to the wide World and Love,
To Infamy, to Scandal, and to Wilding.⁴⁰

Behn underlined her attack on society's double standard through an unusual use of Mrs. Currer in the role of Wilding's other faithful mistress, his kept woman, Diana, discarded in favour of Lady Galliard and Charlot. Diana appears at first sight to resemble Mrs. Currer's other whore roles, that is, she seems to be a common kept woman, mercenary, cunning and sin-hardened. She manages to trick an old fool into marrying her after Wilding has got rid of her and ends up with the 'seditious knight', Sir Timothy Treat-All, who is told

that she will be a 'Comfort to your Age, and bring no scandal home'.⁴¹
 However, Diana also possesses unexpected depths of feeling. She truly loves Wilding and this gives her frantic boasting at the beginning of the play an underlying pathos:

Happy's the man that can approach neerest the side-box where I sit at a Play, to look at me; but if I daign to smile on him, Lord, how the o're-joy'd Creature returns it with a bow low as the very Benches! Then rising, shakes his Ears, looks round, with pride, to see who took notice how much he was in favour with charming Mrs. Dy.⁴²

Although this account is directed at the perfidious Wilding, it is primarily intended to bolster her own desperate spirits. Behn likewise gives Diana a moment of dignity when in answer to Sir Timothy's angry question in the final scene, 'How, have I married a Strumpet then?', she responds proudly

You give your Nephews Mistriss, Sir, too coarse a name: 'Tis true, I lov'd him, onely him, and was true to him.⁴³

Behn strengthened her attack on the libertine's treatment of women by showing that a kept woman too may be capable of caring for her keeper and so may suffer emotionally as well as financially when discarded. Diana is not merely a figure of fun like Dryden's Mrs. Tricksy, in Mr. Limberham, or Betty Frisque: she is as capable of love as Galliard or Charlot. The contrast for spectators between this character and Currer's other roles in the same mould must have strengthened the point Behn wished to make.

The only characters to benefit in The City-Heiress are the young men - Wilding and Sir Charles. Charlot is being married for her fortune; there seems to be no question, as there was with Dorimant and Harriet, that Wilding has discovered the nature of true and lasting love. Charlot is only a comparatively small part in any case and was played by Mrs. Butler, a much less important actress than Mrs. Barry. The main focus of the play is the dramatic conflict

between the libertine and the Barry 'tragic' mistress, a conflict that was to recur in later comedies.

The Maid's Last Prayer (1693)

The fact that during the 1680s no playwright followed Aphra Behn in producing a tragic mistress role for Barry is not surprising when we consider that after 1682 comparatively few new plays were produced for the remainder of the decade.⁴⁴ But with the revival of the theatre in 1689 variations on the tragic mistress type that was Barry's speciality revived also. The greatest of such roles in the early 1690s is undoubtedly Lady Malepert of Southerne's The Maid's Last Prayer: Barry's remarkable abilities helped to inspire the most psychologically subtle and impressive portrayal of a reformed prostitute in Restoration comedy.

Unlike Corina, Southerne's is a true prostitute: she sells her sexual favours for money, she is not sentimentalized and her sins are clearly displayed. Yet, when she falls in love with a rake, sleeps with him and is then discarded, she suffers dramatically and in a manner that required all Barry's talent for passion and pathos. Thus the role incorporates some aspects of the actress's other prostitute and mistress roles but is in other ways strikingly original. Lady Malepert is neither a debauched virgin nor a hardened professional. In a sense she resembles Angellica Bianca since she too is a working prostitute who allows her affection for a rake to ruin her. However, Lady Malepert is a much more realistic character, portrayed with depth and insight. A spoilt, immature eighteen-year-old, Lady Malepert has been married off to an ugly, foolish husband and is, when the play opens, unknown to him, a professional whore

under the management of her bawd Wishwell. She is not interested in the money she earns from her exploits but she enjoys power and admiration and allows Wishwell to manipulate her.

The bawd in comedy before and after 1660 is generally a grotesque, a comic butt, or both. Southerne's bawd, however, is a fully rounded character: he took pains to show Wishwell's motivation and point of view. As she sits at her toilet, she gazes at her reflection and soliloquizes bitterly:

A Woman turn'd of fifty, was ne're design'd to be lookt upon:
I may Wash, and Patch, and please my self; cheat my hopes, with
the dayly expence of Plaister, and repairs; no body will take
the Tenement off my hands.

Because she is beyond enjoying the attentions of the opposite sex herself, Wishwell exploits Lady Malepert:

While I am Mistress of Malepert's Beauty, I am not very sensible of the loss of my own: For her sake I will be Courted.⁴⁵

Lady Malepert is apparently also the means by which Wishwell can avenge herself on men for their past treatment of herself. She calls men 'beasts', and takes a grim pleasure in defeating the attempts of the young rakes to win her charge by their charm alone. She tells Lady Malepert

there are a great many pretty Gentlemen to be had; but what will you get by any of 'em in the end? Just so much Experience, and Repentance for your pains.⁴⁶

This detail in Southerne's delineation of the bawd in turn gives depth to Lady Malepert and the complex, often stormy relationship between the two women.

Wishwell keeps Lady Malepert working for her by a mixture of flattery -

Thou Charming Creature! Be forever thus, thus Dear, thus Young,
thus every killing Fair! -

and appeals to her baser nature:

Love your self, and then you'l Love nothing but your Interest.⁴⁷

In spite of this Lady Malepert has never been wholly converted. She is attractive and wilful and has no fears of poverty:

But why shou'd I do anything against my Inclinations? I don't want the Money.⁴⁸

The conflict between bawd and protégée reaches its climax when the heroine falls in love with the rake Gayman. Gayman is also attracted to her but, like Willmore before him, has no intention of paying for a woman's favours when he can win them for nothing:

That a Woman, at Eighteen, an Age, when Love, and Pleasure us'd to rule, shou'd in the midst of plenty, value her self upon the Reputation of a Publican, and always sit at the Receipt of Custom!⁴⁹

Gayman determines to cure Lady Malepert of her disgraceful pastime; when he has finished with her she will sleep with men because they charm her into it - not for their money. To this end he takes the place of Sir Ruff Rancounter, her next client, convinced that after a night of his lovemaking she will never be able to stomach the attentions of her aged customers again. The act of intercourse duly takes place and Lady Malepert does experience a joy she has never known before. However, she unfortunately remains ignorant of the exchange: although in the dark she has tried to imagine that her partner is Gayman, she believes she has slept with Sir Ruff.

The scene once the night is over required all Barry's capacity for powerful emotion. In contrast to the language in the rest of the play, Lady Malepert expresses her discovery of love lyrically and rhetorically:

I have slept away my life,
My better part of it, my life of Love ...
How cou'd Sir Ruff do this? O Love!

What canst thou not do in a Woman's Heart!
 That brutal thing [i.e. Sir Ruff], whom, as I thought, I loath'd,
 Thy gentle Fires have softned by degrees,
 And melted into Gayman.⁵⁰

Transformed by her new discovery, Lady Malepert renounces her career as a prostitute and tells 'Sir Ruff',

Let Wishwell bear the mercenary blame -
 Her baseness wrought me to her sordid ends:
 But I'll return your Bills -

Significantly, she also gives her bedfellow a ring with which to 'make a better Marriage' than the one she is in.⁵¹ As Aphra Behn did in The Rover Part II, Southerne hinted here that an unlawful, yet truly loving union is better than an arranged marriage which is socially respectable but loveless.

Unlike The Rover Part II, however, Southerne's comedy represents not an ideal, but his most bitter and cynical view of libertine society. Lady Malepert's new happiness is swiftly shattered as she discovers that she really has slept with Gayman - 'then I am ruin'd'.⁵² Ironically, she can only enjoy the man she loves when she imagines him in someone else (or thinks she does). To actually give herself to such a rake means the loss of her reputation and position. With appropriate symbolism, at this moment the cosy darkness which had enveloped the lovers is dispelled by the light of a candle carried by Wishwell.

Furious at Gayman's trick, the bawd locks the couple in their bedroom to be discovered by the lady's husband. But by this time Gayman has changed his mind. Embittered by the fact that his partner could not tell the difference between his lovemaking and that of Sir Ruff, he no longer cares to 'reform' her:

the Lady receiv'd me for Sir Ruff; but when I think of the pleasures that came after, that she shou'd still mistake me,

for that bargaining Booby of her Bawds providing; I don't forgive her.⁵³

Far from wishing to change her mode of behaviour by exposing her adultery to her husband, he tells Lady Malepert that, coarsened by her affairs, she is fit only to be a prostitute:

since 'twas impossible to have you to my self; it goes a great way in my Cure, to know that any Fool may engage you for the time.⁵⁴

Instead of exposing his wife's affairs to Lord Malepert when this gentleman arrives, Gayman manages to explain away his presence to the gullible cuckold. He then continues his vengeance against Lady Malepert by proposing to his other 'love', Maria, in front of her, as Dorimant proposed marriage to Harriet in front of Mrs. Loveit. But whereas Dorimant's proposal is only partly intended to annoy his mistress and truly signifies how far Harriet has conquered his affections, Southerne presented the traditional union of 'hero' and 'heroine' in a much more unpleasant light. Crueller than either Willmore or Dorimant, Gayman apparently chooses marriage neither for love, nor parental approval, nor a fortune, but as a calculated punishment for his mistress. He even goes so far as to ask her publicly for her opinion on the match so that she is forced to give an assent to it - expressing her true feelings at the same time in anguished asides. The audience's attention in this scene remains focused not on the reforming bride-to-be, but on her broken-hearted rival, who cries to herself desperately at one point 'How the Tyrant Triumphs!'⁵⁵ The line of course, and indeed the whole scene, demanded all Barry's talent for pathos.

A critic has suggested that, in proposing to Maria, Gayman 'is rejecting the favour as the mainstay of the relationship, and acknow-

ledging that Maria's wit and sense are preferable to Lady Malepert's beauty and sensuality'.⁵⁶ This seems to me to be a most mistaken interpretation of the event. Maria is almost the most minor female character in the play and there is practically no evidence of her 'wit and sense'. On the contrary, she has a fatal love of gambling which blinds her to the fact that her so-called friends at the card-table, Lady Trickitt and Garnish, are cheating her. She makes no lively brilliant speeches and has no bouts of repartee with Gayman. She accepts him cautiously: 'Well, Sir, you may repent this rashness',⁵⁷ and reserves her enthusiasm for her beloved gaming. Southerne would seem to have deliberately deprived Maria of the usual attractions of the witty heroine in order to focus sympathy on Lady Malepert. This would have been enhanced by the fact that the star of the company played Lady Malepert and a comparatively minor actress in the company, Mrs. Rogers, played Maria.

Lady Malepert also becomes a sympathetic character because she recognizes her mistakes. To have kept her public reputation unstained is, she admits, 'more than I deserve'. Having learned the value of love too late, like Corina in The Revenge, she turns upon her bawd:

O, I must hate you,
You have undone me with the only Man
I ever Lov'd, or shall.

However, Southerne did not sentimentalize her reformation. Wishwell is unperturbed by the girl's apparent change of heart. Now that Gayman's love is no longer a threat she is confident that she can win back her business asset: 'I am sure to keep her in my Power'.⁵⁸ In view of Lady Malepert's youth and impressionable nature the bawd is probably correct in her assumption. The tragedy of this discarded mistress is strengthened by the fact that her rejection by Gayman has

probably pushed her back into a life of prostitution.

Southerne's play is perhaps the harshest and most bitter attack on libertine society in the period. 'Love', says one character in it,

is Nature's Appetite Diseases'd:
Where we have no Concern, we're always pleas'd.⁵⁹

With all her faults, Lady Malepert is the only character in the comedy (except perhaps her foolish old aunt, Lady Susan) who experiences love as more than 'Nature's Appetite Diseases'd'. For the rest of the characters, in a society founded upon the pursuit of sexual pleasure and material gain, love and affection have become pointless weaknesses. It is bitterly ironic that the prostitute in the play should show up the inadequacies of the others. Such cynicism would seem to have been too much for audiences to take and Southerne's play failed:

I have had my ends of this Play, and shou'd have been glad if it had answer'd every Bodies: I think it has its Beauties, tho' they did not appear upon the Stage.⁶⁰

Even with Mrs. Barry in the role, there were apparently limits to the sympathy a dramatist could gain for the discarded mistress.

Variations on the Barry Tragic Mistress in Comedy 1690-97

If the 1690s is the period under consideration, Jocelyn Powell is quite wrong in stating that 'the cast-mistress of Restoration comedy is generally a figure of fun'.⁶¹ The Maid's Last Prayer was only part of a vogue for placing within a comedy a mistress who speaks in some form of tragic rhetoric and who feels with tragic intensity - a vogue for which Barry may be seen as largely responsible since, after her role as Corina in The Revenge, such characters became her speciality. Over the years Barry created more suffering mistresses:

Dorinda in Mountfort's Greenwich Park (1691), Lady Touchwood in The Double Dealer (1692), Mrs. Lovely in Crowne's The Married Beau (1694) and Bellinda in Pix's The Innocent Mistress (1697). These mistresses vary in virtue: Mrs. Lovely is an erring wife who repents, Dorinda and Lady Touchwood are vengeful, passionate and justly punished, Bellinda is all noble suffering. Whatever the personality, each part offered the company another means of displaying their leading lady's unique ability to project extremes of emotion.

Barry's roles in both Greenwich Park and The Double-Dealer were, I believe, affected by the fact that in the early 1690s two other actresses had become at least as popular as she so far as comedy was concerned (as was not the case during the early 1680s). Mrs. Mountfort and Mrs. Bracegirdle were both enormously popular with audiences at this time and this must surely be one reason why the two plays contain charming and intelligent heroines for them to play, heroines who equal, though they do not supersede, the Barry mistress figure in dramatic importance. Unlike Maria in The Maid's Last Prayer, these heroines provide a positive alternative to the erring mistress. Congreve and Mountfort did not apparently share Southerne's concern with the rights of the fallen woman and so use the talents of the actresses available to different ends.

In Greenwich Park Susannah Mountfort, the wife of the author, played Florella, a witty heroine who has a major part as well as winning the heart and hand of the hero at the end. With her sister, Violante, she also offers some highly critical remarks at the beginning of the play concerning women who allow themselves to be seduced. Violante declares that

however Gay or Splendid a Miss may appear for the time she Triumphs, she falls at last as unpityed, as unhappy,

and Florella adds,

I cannot help thinking that she who will be Debauch'd to mend her condition, will afterwards lye with any man that can better it.⁶²

In this way, before the mistress appears Mountfort indicates that his audiences' attitude towards her should be a fairly unsympathetic one.

Dorinda is a kept mistress: she is supported by her lover Lord Worthy who seems at the start to love her devotedly. However, she is in love with, and eventually sleeps with the lively rake, Young Reveller - a crime, the play implies, and one for which she is eventually punished. Nevertheless, Dorinda's role is far from being that of a Mrs. Tricksy or a Betty Frisque, heartlessly deceiving her keeper: her character is full of the serious feeling and stirrings of conscience which had become Barry's hallmark, and it offered the actress plenty of scope for stirring spectators' emotions. Dorinda often speaks in verse and on her first appearance defends herself, so to speak, against the preceding attack implied in the speeches of Violante and Florella by explaining the circumstances of her becoming a kept woman. She reproaches her bawd who is also her aunt:

Oh tell me not of Honour, what I ought
Of Obligation's Gratitude to Worthy:
'Tis true, he is the Man who first seduc'd me,
And thou art she who first betray'd me to him:
I then was Poor, was ignorant of Sin;
So Innocent, that had I lov'd as now,
I could not for the Soul of me have told
What 'twas I long'd for more than talk and kisses.⁶³

Dorinda's youth and immaturity were her undoing. We learn that she also suffered unjustly at the hands of a cruel stepmother so that her 'Vanity was eager of the Bait'⁶⁴ when it was offered. Now, like Lady Malepert, Dorinda has fallen in love and so agrees to her bawd's

tempting suggestion that she pursue Young Reveller and yet continue to live off Lord Worthy.

Like many of Barry's other roles, including La Nuche and Lady Galliard, Dorinda is, sexually, wildly passionate. Perhaps because in this play she is more villainess than victim, she expresses her sexual feelings with particular explicitness - anticipating, for instance, the joys of sensual love with Young Reveller:

What harmony will be in both our Souls!
 Whilst trembling sighs bedew the willing Lips,
 And every squeeze still closer than the former.
 O Extasie!
 But hold, keep down my Joy, it were a Crime
 That I should lose my self before my time.⁶⁵

Young Reveller, in turn, is fired with passion for her - 'her every touch distracts me'⁶⁶ - and Act IV ends with their withdrawal to the bedroom together. Young Reveller's rapture the morning after recalls that of Wilding after his night with Lady Galliard:

O what a Luscious Feast of Love I've had, the unexpected Conquest rais'd the Joy; full of desire and trembling with my doubts I lay half-satisfy'd, then half destroy'd, she cry'd, oh do not, do not ruine me; Weakly she struggl'd till she seem'd quite tyr'd, then fainting sigh'd; do force me Villain do: I took the yielding moment in its Prime, and sent my expiring Soul to seek for hers.⁶⁷

Can one assume from this account that Dorinda put up a credible pretence of being a virgin? At all events, Greenwich Park presents the same female dichotomy as The Revenge, The City-Heiress and The Maid's Last Prayer - the sensual mistress who provides all the sexual joys a man could desire balanced by a virginal heroine who is not presented as a sexual being at all but who wins the hand of the hero in the end. In such comedy, as in tragedies such as Venice Preserved, Barry as sensual mistress specialized in erotic love scenes.

In contrast to Southerne, Mountfort dealt very leniently with

his rake. At the end of the play, when Lord Worthy discovers the affair between his friend and his mistress he absolves Young Reveller entirely and places all the blame on Dorinda:

I did love her (to my shame I own it) above the World ... and she has well repaid me: thy Ignorance, and my Breach of Friendship in not trusting thee, makes thee unblamable; but she's sure doubly damn'd, to wrong me with the only Man she knew my Friend.⁶⁸

Young Reveller is not to blame because he did not know that Dorinda was already Lord Worthy's property - never mind his betrayal of Florella! Also one cannot help questioning the depth of Lord Worthy's love for his mistress: if he loved her 'above the World' why did he not marry her instead of seducing her and thus forcing her to live outside the pale of respectable society? Lord Worthy himself may not be as constant as he implies for he turns from Dorinda to Violante immediately after making this speech and announces his plans to marry the latter. His revenge on Dorinda is to publicly discard her, announcing to the company his future plans to live a 'sober, discreet Life' in marriage to Violante. Dorinda cannot compete with 'a Fortune and a Face'⁶⁹ and is left railing powerlessly. The conclusion of the play focuses on the two contented couples. Mountfort was clearly not interested in using Barry to explore the problems of a fallen woman in libertine society: unlike Southerne two years later, he followed the pattern of comedies such as The Man of Mode and The Rover, marrying the hero off happily and leaving the mistress discredited.

There is no moral ambiguity in Congreve's presentation of Lady Touchwood. She is a married woman, not a kept mistress, and there are no extenuating circumstances to excuse her becoming the mistress of Maskwell. When the play opens she has been his mistress for some time, both she and Maskwell have lost interest in each other and she

now desires the play's hero, Mellefont. Unlike Young Reveller, however, Mellefont is no rake, he is not tempted by the Barry-mistress's sensual charms and remains the faithful suitor of Cynthia, played by Anne Bracegirdle. Although Lady Touchwood is in the mould of previous Barry 'tragic' mistresses - she speaks in heightened rhetoric and burns with sexual passion - she is, as I have shown, strictly a wholly evil foil to the purity of the Bracegirdle heroine. Her villainous plots with Maskwell are finally exposed and she is justly punished. It was not until The Way of the World that Congreve properly addressed himself to the problems of the discarded mistress in contemporary society.

In Crowne's The Married Beau (1694) Barry played Mrs. Lovely, who succumbs on one fatal occasion to the temptation of becoming the mistress of her husband's friend Polidor, in a scene reminiscent of the seduction of Lady Galliard by Wilding:

What shall I do with him? I'm yielding! yielding
He pulls her off the Stage, and bolts the Door.⁷⁰

Mrs. Lovely typically expresses her shame and remorse in verse:

Oh, Madam! I confess I've been surpriz'd
 By wicked Polidor; he forc'd himself
 Into my Chamber, and he wou'd not leave me
 Till he had ruin'd me. Oh spare me! spare me!⁷¹

Crowne's play is however predominantly comic in tone. Mr. Lovely deserved to be made a cuckold: he boastfully begged Polidor to try and seduce his wife in order to hear how thoroughly his friend was rebuffed and he himself adored. Mrs. Lovely manages to keep her one act of adultery a secret from him and is thankful to have the opportunity to remain faithful thereafter. The rake Polidor marries the strong-mindedly pious Camilla who is to reform him thoroughly - a humorous variation on the traditional reform of the libertine by a pure woman. Crowne's comparatively happy ending makes the sensible

point that a woman need not be 'ruined' for ever by once giving in to temptation.

Mary Pix's The Innocent Mistress (1697) offered Barry the opportunity to play a completely fresh variation on her usual tragic mistress role: as the title of the play suggests, Bellinda and her married lover, although mutually adoring, have a purely platonic relationship. This time the rhetorical lines Barry was called upon to deliver are all profoundly virtuous: for instance, at one point Bellinda pledges that she will retire from society and instructs that her faithful lover be told the news:

Tell him, lest he should take it ill of you, that I have ... resolv'd to fly from him and all the World, and in my Father's House remain as in a Cloister ... I have the Goal in view, bright Honour leads me on, the part is glorious, but, oh! 'tis painful too.⁷²

In spite of Bellinda's virtue, the couple's efforts to resist their overwhelming desire for each other provide the opportunity for a sensual scene comparable to those of Greenwich Park and similar comedies. As in tragedies such as Don Carlos or Anna Bullen, Bellinda's efforts to part from her lover provoke moments of frantic sexual passion. In Act V Sir Charles cannot restrain himself from embracing Bellinda:

What! uncontroul'd clasp thee thus! Oh, Extasie! with wild Fury run o'er each trembling beauteous Limb, and grasp thee as drowning Men the dear Bark from whence they were thrown.

Bellinda at this stage breaks away with the modest cry

Away, away! What are we doing? Divide him, Heaven, from my fond guilty Eyes.⁷³

Virtue is rewarded: Sir Charles finally discloses that he never consummated the marriage to his present wife and a little later it is revealed that the lady actually possesses another husband who predates Sir Charles. The lovers embrace passionately at the news and in an

ecstasy Bellinda swoons:

Ha! the trasporting Joy has caught her Rosie Breath, and those
bright Eyes are in their snowy Lids retir'd ... Wake my Bellinda,
'tis thy Beauclair calls.

Recovering, Bellinda delicately withdraws:

I fear I have offended that Virgin Modesty by me still prac-
tis'd and ador'd; now we must stand on forms, till time and
decency shall crown our Wishes.⁷⁴

I do not believe that any parody was intended in making Barry a pure
mistress after all the loose women she had played in earlier comedies.
She was still of course playing pure women in tragedy, and her talent
would have made any mode of behaviour convincing.

It should be noted that this comedy also contains a more con-
ventional comic heroine created by Anne Bracegirdle. She is the
lively Mrs. Beauclair (sister of Sir Charles) who disguises herself
as a man and is partnered with an appropriately rakish and witty
hero, Sir Francis Wildlove. Presumably, in an attempt to guarantee
the success of her comedy, Mrs. Pix carefully provided appropriate
roles for both the company's leading ladies.

The Fate of the Whore in Comedy 1688-1700

To assess the impact of Barry's line of mistress roles from
1680 until the end of the century, her achievement needs to be seen
in the context of the general treatment of the whore in comedy dur-
ing this period. Did the trend for presenting the mistress in a
tragic light confine itself only to Barry's special roles or did her
success help to effect an overall change in all prostitutes, kept and
unkept mistresses in comedy?

It is certainly true to say that the fate of the whore, be she

a kept or unkept mistress, began to change after 1688. The Mrs. Flirt/Betty Frisque type of successful kept woman and the common prostitute all but disappeared from comedy; where such characters do appear they tend, unlike Mrs. Flirt or Betty Frisque, to be punished. For instance, the hardboiled whores, mistresses Betty Margaret and Termagant, in Shadwell's The Squire of Alsatia (1688), are minor characters, firmly dismissed at the end of the play, while Betty Jiltall in Durfey's Love for Money (1691) is punished for the marriage she manages to secure for herself by trickery when her new husband is arrested for debt.⁷⁵ The jilting Madame de Vendosme in Durfey's The Intrigues at Versailles (1697), who betrays her keeper by flirting with other men on every possible occasion, gains rough treatment for her behaviour from her keeper, Blunder (who is, in spite of his name, no fool):

Your entertainment Jezabel tonight, shall be half a dozen of kicks, or so, or it may be a light Drubbing.⁷⁶

The fashion for treating the loving mistress sympathetically, on the other hand, was not confined solely to mistresses played by Barry. For example, in Shadwell's The Squire of Alsatia Mrs. Bracegirdle created the role of Lucia, a naive virgin who has been seduced by the hero, Belfond Junior. The innocence and vulnerability of Lucia would have been reinforced by the fact that she was played by Anne Bracegirdle: the implication of this piece of casting is that the character is to be seen as a victim rather than as a whore. Thoughtless but not cruel, Belfond Junior guiltily promises to make Lucia reparation for the loss of her honour, for he has no intention of marrying her and no longer loves her:

how can a goodnatur'd man think of ever quitting so tender, and so kind a Mistress, whom no respect, but Love, has thrown into my Arms? And yet I must: But I will better her condition.⁷⁷

Unfortunately Lucia wants neither marriage to someone else nor money. She wants only what he cannot give her - his constant love. In the end she receives £1500 from Belfond's father together with the promise that her seduction will be kept secret. This is sufficient to appease her father to whom she is returned after a tearful parting from her lover. As a woman of means, Lucia will now have no difficulty in finding a husband, or rather, her father will find one for her. Belfond is eventually entirely reformed by love for the pure Isabella (Mrs. Mountfort). Unlike Dorimant, his reformation is unequivocal:

I look on Marriage as the most solemn Vow a man can make; and 'tis by consequence, the basest Perjury to break it.⁷⁸

Yet Lucia is not simply conveniently forgotten at the end, rather the play is preaching that in an ideal society of true gentlemen the debauching of girls like her should not take place.

In The Way of the World (1700) Congreve provided a most skilful and thought-provoking version of the discarded mistress in Mrs. Fainall, played by Mrs. Bowman (Mrs. Bracegirdle was occupied playing the witty heroine Millamant and Mrs. Barry the fiery mistress of Fainall, Mrs. Marwood). Mrs. Fainall has been Mirabell's mistress some time before the play opens and when he lost interest in her he arranged for her to marry his friend Fainall, a man whom she comes to despise as well as hate. In the conversation between Mirabell and Mrs. Fainall in Act II she complains bitterly to her former lover about the husband he married her to. Mirabell is not sympathetic; he merely suggests that, discreetly, she take a lover. Grimly realistic, he points out that the double standard in society necessitated her marriage:

Why do we daily commit disagreeable and dangerous Actions? To save that Idol Reputation. If the Familiarities of our Loves

had produc'd that Consequence, of which you were apprehensive, where cou'd you have fix'd a Father's Name with Credit, but on a Husband?⁷⁹

Avoiding both clichés and melodrama, Congreve here presented the 'way of the world' for women: Mrs. Fainall is a victim of libertine gallantry and must endure her lot. I would disagree with Jocelyn Powell when he suggests that Mirabell and Mrs. Fainall

had obviously agreed that marriage was out of the question. He had his way to make and she was not rich enough.⁸⁰

There was no question of Mrs. Fainall 'agreeing' to anything; she had no choice but to fall in with Mirabell's decision. He did his best to sugar the pill by keeping her fortune in trust for her ('When you are weary of him, you know your Remedy'⁸¹), but it is a pill nonetheless. Mirabell is not apparently ashamed of the fact that he took advantage of her having loved 'with Indiscretion'.⁸² Presumably his opinion is that a woman in society should, as Millamant does, exercise caution in all her dealings with the opposite sex.

After this scene, Mrs. Fainall never again discloses her feelings, but our knowledge of her private suffering informs us of a deeper meaning behind several of the apparently trivial comments she makes. This is especially noticeable in her relationship with Millamant who seems to be ignorant of the past affair of Mirabell and her friend. Millamant asks Mrs. Fainall if she should marry Mirabell, 'Shall I have him? I think I must have him', to which Mrs. Fainall responds

Ay, ay, take him, take him, what shou'd you do?⁸³

Her repetitions may well be intended to create a sense of her suppressed bitterness. As in the case of Lady Malepert, the torment of the discarded mistress is here increased by the public assent she is forced to give to her lover's marriage. She cannot, however,

bring herself to reassure Millamant of Mirabell's constancy. When Millamant admits her secret fear, 'If Mirabell should not make a good Husband, I am a lost thing', her companion's reply is brusque:

If you doubt him, you had best take up with Sir Wilfull.⁸⁴

At the end of the play Fainall discovers his wife's affair with Mirabell and threatens in savage terms to ruin her:

You, Thing, that was a Wife, shall smart for this. I will not leave thee wherewithal to hide thy Shame: Your Body shall be Naked as your Reputation.⁸⁵

Above all, Fainall's pride has been stung: he has been used like the traditional fool of comedy and married off to the discarded whore. The viciousness of his reply is a shocking reminder of how little love there is in the Fainall marriage. Mrs. Fainall's means and reputation are saved by the fact that Mirabell holds her money in trust for her. In this way she gains the most she can hope for - her good name and her fortune are secure. Mirabell also suggests that her marriage may now become more bearable because the Deed of Trust 'may be a Means, well manag'd', to make Fainall and herself 'live easily together'.⁸⁶ Since Fainall has just been prevented from running his wife through with his sword this seems unlikely - perhaps Mirabell is trying to ease his conscience? But although Congreve's solution to the problem of the discarded mistress cannot be called a happy one, he did manage, uniquely, to make his conclusion both realistically unsentimental and comically appropriate.

Taken together the comedies discussed here, both with and without Barry, imply a serious and moral attitude towards all women who fail to keep the rules of female chastity that society demands. The prostitute and the mercenary kept mistress are punished for their sins: the loving mistress betrayed by the libertine is viewed

sympathetically but must inevitably suffer. There seem to be no more successful whores such as Mistress Christian or Betty Flauntit. To a large extent this shift can be attributed to changes in the taste of audiences (and there were, presumably, a variety of social and political factors working to influence that, which lie outside the bounds of this thesis). Shadwell's The Squire of Alsatia in 1688 was enormously popular and its success is usually taken as a significant indication of the public's desire to see an exemplary, moral style of comedy. The prologue to the play appears to be addressing a new kind of audience, who, unlike its forbears, will appreciate a purer style of drama:

Our Poet found your gentle Fathers kind,
And now some of his works your favour find.
He'll treat you still with somewhat that is new,
But whether good or bad, he leaves to you.
Baudy the nicest Ladies need not fear,
The quickest fancy shall extract none here.

The trend continued into the 1690s with Jeremy Collier's notorious attack on immorality in drama coming at the end of that decade. However, although the change in the treatment of the mistress in comedy can be seen as part of a wider dramatic change, the casting of Mrs. Barry as 'tragic' whore as early as 1680 also played its part in the transition, as we have seen. By demonstrating the new potential in a familiar comic character she inspired dramatists to transform the fallen woman from corrupt temptress or figure of fun into a new brand of comic heroine.

FOOTNOTES

1. For a study of prostitutes in drama before 1660 see Angela Ingram, 'In the Posture of a Whore': Changing Attitudes to 'Bad' Women in Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama, 2 vols, Salzburg, Austria, 1984. For a general study of the prostitute in the comedies of Aphra Behn and in pamphlets, see Eva Simmons, 'Virtue Intire', Aphra Behn's Contribution in her Comedies to the Marriage Debates of the Seventeenth Century, (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation) London University, 1988.
2. Thomas Killigrew, Comedies and Tragedies, 1664, p.151.
3. James Howard, The English Mounsieur, 1674, pp.10, 19.
4. William Wycherley, The Plays, Love in a Wood, V, ii, 59-63.
5. Ibid., The Gentleman Dancing-Master, V, i, 666-9, Epilogue, 24-9.
6. John Crowne, The Countrey Wit, 1675, pp.58, 86.
7. Aphra Behn, The Town-Fopp, 1677, final speeches.
8. John Dryden, The Kind Keeper, or, Mr. Limberham, 1680, p.65.
9. Thomas Durfey, Squire Oldsapp, or, The Night-Adventurers, 1679, final lines.
10. Beaumont and Fletcher, The Dramatic Works, vol.IV, The Chances, IV, iii, 136-7.
11. Buckingham, The Chances, 1682, p.60.
12. Ibid., p.48.
13. Beaumont and Fletcher, The Dramatic Works, vol.IV, The Chances, V, iii, 227-8.
14. Buckingham, The Chances, p.62.
15. George Etherege, The Man of Mode, ed. John Barnard, 1979, III, ii, 73.
16. Thomas Killigrew, Comedies and Tragedies, written by Thomas Killigrew, 1664, pp.339, 396.
17. The Rover, IV, ii, 398-9.
18. Ibid., V, 353-5.
19. Although anonymous, most recent commentators such as Robert Hume and Peter Holland attribute The Revenge to Aphra Behn. For the lengthiest and most detailed account of the play's authorship, see H.A. Hargreaves, The Life and Plays of Mrs. Aphra Behn, pp.275-84.

20. In her biography of Aphra Behn, Maureen Duffy suggests that Mrs. Barry is 'My dear Amoret, Mrs B' of a poem called 'Our Cabal' (Maureen Duffy, The Passionate Shepherdess: Aphra Behn 1640-89, 1977, p.124).
21. Aphra Behn, The Revenge, 1680, p.7.
22. Ibid., pp.9-10.
23. Ibid., p.19.
24. Ibid., p.39.
25. John Marston, The Dutch Courtesan, ed. M.L. Wine, 1965, V, i, 67-79.
26. The Revenge, p.52.
27. Ibid., p.61.
28. Ibid., p.62.
29. Since Willmore has been popularly equated with Rochester, Barry was in a way playing herself (see Duffy, The Passionate Shepherdess, p.200).
30. Behn, The Second Part of The Rover, 1681, p.9.
31. Ibid., p.60.
32. Ibid., pp.66, 80.
33. Ibid., p.81.
34. Hume's opinion of the end of The Rover Part II is that it is 'romantically satisfying but simply seems a flight from reality' (Robert Hume, The Development of English Drama, p.353).
35. Behn, The City-Heiress, 1682, p.33.
36. Ibid., p.38.
37. Ibid., p.41.
38. Ibid., pp.41-2. Maureen Duffy points out that so powerful is this scene of lovemaking that it was used in one of the most savage satires against Mrs. Behn, equating her of course with the character of Galliard:
 'What though thou bringst (to please a vicious age)
 A far more vicious widow on the stage,
 Just reeking from a stallion's rank embrace
 With rifl'd garments, and disorder'd face.'
 (See The Passionate Shepherdess, p.212.)
39. See chapter 2, p.92.
40. The City-Heiress, p.58.
41. Ibid., p.61.

42. Ibid., p.17.
43. Ibid., p.61.
44. See chapter 5, p.190, and footnote 30.
45. Thomas Southerne, Works, vol.I, The Maid's Last Prayer, II, i, 8-11, 15-16.
46. Ibid., II, i, 244-6.
47. Ibid., II, i, 126-7, 230-1.
48. Ibid., II, i, 240-1.
49. Ibid., I, i, 52-5.
50. Ibid., V, i, 25-6, 33-7.
51. Ibid., V, i, 47-9, 54.
52. Ibid., V, i, 65.
53. Ibid., V, i, 17-20.
54. Ibid., V, i, 201-3.
55. Ibid., V, i, 355.
56. R.D. Scheer, Thomas Southerne's Sir Anthony Love: A Critical Edition, (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation) University of Southern California, 1971, p.139.
57. Southerne, Works, vol.1, The Maid's Last Prayer, V, i, 352.
58. Ibid., V, i, 309-11, 312.
59. Ibid., II, i, 251-2.
60. Ibid., dedication 'To the Honourable Mr. Charles Boyl.', 30-3.
61. Jocelyn Powell, Restoration Theatre Production, p.196.
62. William Mountfort, Greenwich Park, p.13.
63. Ibid., p.15.
64. Ibid.
65. Ibid., p.18.
66. Ibid., p.26.
67. Ibid., p.48.
68. Ibid., p.57.
69. Ibid., p.58.
70. John Crowne, The Married Beau, p.33.

71. Ibid., p.36.
72. Mary Pix, The Innocent Mistress, 1697, pp.26-7.
73. Ibid., p.41.
74. Ibid., p.51.
75. Betty Jiltall was played by Mrs. Butler and in the epilogue to the play Mountfort accuses the actress of also being a town jilt in real life. Mrs. Butler had a fairly loose character in real life (see chapter 4, pp.151-2).
76. Thomas Durfey, The Intrigues at Versailles, 1697, p.57.
77. Thomas Shadwell, The Squire of Alsatia, 1688, p.53.
78. Ibid., p.85.
79. William Congreve, Comedies, p.368.
80. Powell, Restoration Theatre Production, p.196.
81. Congreve, Comedies, p.368.
82. Ibid., p.367.
83. Ibid., p.409.
84. Ibid., p.410.
85. Ibid., p.437.
86. Ibid., p.441.

CONCLUSION

Did not the Boys Act Women's Parts Last Age?
Till we in pitty to the Barren Stage
Came to Reform your Eyes that went astray,
And taught you Passion the true English Way.
Have not the Women of the Stage done this?
Nay took all Shapes, and used most means to Please.

This epilogue (to Settle's The Conquest of China, 1676, spoken by its leading lady, Mrs. Mary Lee) captures, in a sense, the positive and negative aspects of the actresses' contribution to Restoration drama which this thesis has explored. Undoubtedly the actresses did bring before English spectators forms of 'passion' hitherto unseen: through them sexual passion and sexual desire were portrayed more explicitly than before and, on occasion, with new perception. Conversely, as the innuendo in the line 'taught you Passion the true English way' implies, the women also brought some gratuitous titillation onto the stage and promoted prostitution off it. In this context, the word 'Reform' in the third line is highly ironic. The 'Barren' quality of the stage before 1660 is questionable: the pre-Restoration stage lacked the grace, beauty and truth of real women (boys could not bear children and so were also, of course, literally barren), but it was fruitful too in that it lacked the limitation that real women could impose when they were perceived, as the Restoration actresses frequently were, solely in terms of their physical attractions.

A similar duality is implicit in 'took all Shapes, and used most means to Please'. On the one hand, the women did present an impressive range of roles: 'all Shapes' might suggest particularly Elizabeth Barry's formidable ability to portray every kind of heroine

and villainess and Mrs. Mountfort's skill in grotesque as well as attractive roles. At the same time 'all Shapes' also suggests those breeches roles designed primarily to show off a female form and this, together with the ambiguous phrase 'us'd most means to please', brings us back to a dramatic perception of the actress as above all a sexual object. Even the intimacy of this epilogue and the sense it conveys of there being a close involvement between actresses and spectators could be said to have brought good and bad consequences for drama. The actresses constituted a main vehicle for the self-consciousness of Restoration theatre and this self-consciousness brought with it a dramatic cynicism which was sometimes healthily skeptical, sometimes unnecessarily destructive, both morally and aesthetically. A subtle and sensitive questioning of social attitudes and dramatic conventions went hand in hand with savage mockery of accepted standards and rules for its own sake. In the debunking she-epilogues which undercut 'solemn' tragedies and their morality the general cynicism engendered by the actresses extended to genres and to theatrical illusion itself.

Good or bad, the actresses' influence on drama was a powerful one. Even after the novelty of their presence on stage had worn off, they remained, arguably, the most popular single element of London theatre. A number of them were outstandingly talented and possessed of a rapport with spectators that no male actor could emulate. This thesis has shown that when patterns of female casting are traced systematically they yield some striking results. The most popular and skilful actresses undoubtedly changed the face of tragedy in the period and left their mark on comedy in all kinds of ways. To conclude by blaming the women, as John Harold Wilson does, for 'the

general atmosphere of immorality that pervades Restoration drama' seems not so much unfair as irrelevant, just as there seems little point in trying to explain why 'the Restoration playwrights produced so few female characters comparable with the great women's portraits in the Elizabethan gallery'.¹ In the fertile period for theatre between 1660 and 1700 the quality of the actresses' contribution was as mixed as that of the drama itself. Therefore, as Mary Lee puts it at the end of her epilogue:

And if to damne us now is our Reward,
I say no more; but - Faith 'tis very hard.

FOOTNOTES

1. John Harold Wilson, All the King's Ladies, p.107.

APPENDIX I

RAPES OR NEAR RAPES IN ENGLISH DRAMA 1660-1708.

Thomas Porter:	<u>The Villain</u>	(1662)
Edward Howard:	<u>The Usurper</u>	(1664)
John Dryden:	<u>The Conquest of Granada</u>	(1670, 1671)
Elkanah Settle:	<u>Cambyses, King of Persia</u>	(1671)
Henry Shipman:	<u>Henry the Third of France Stabb'd by a Fryar;</u> <u>with the fall of the Guise</u>	(1672)
Henry Nevil Payne:	<u>The Fatal Jealousie</u>	(1672)
John Dryden:	<u>Amboyna, or, the Cruelties of the Dutch</u>	(1672)
Elkanah Settle:	<u>Love and Revenge</u>	(1674)
Thomas Shadwell:	<u>The Libertine</u>	(1675)
Thomas Otway:	<u>Alcibiades</u>	(1675)
William Wycherley:	<u>The Plain Dealer</u>	(1676)
Nathaniel Lee:	<u>Mithridates, King of Pontus</u>	(1678)
Elkanah Settle:	<u>Fatal Love, or, The Forc'd Inconstancy</u>	(1680)
Nahum Tate:	<u>The History of King Lear</u>	(1680)
John Crowne:	<u>The Ingratitude of a Commonwealth</u>	(1681)
John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester:	<u>Valentinian</u>	(1684)
Charles Sedley:	<u>Bellamira, or, The Mistress</u>	(1687)
William Mountfort:	<u>The Injur'd Lovers, or, The Ambitious Father</u>	(1688)
Elkanah Settle:	<u>Distress'd Innocence, or, The Princess of</u> <u>Persia</u>	(1690)
George Powell:	<u>Alphonso, King of Naples</u>	(1690)
Nicholas Brady:	<u>The Rape, or, The Innocent Impostors</u>	(1692)
John Fletcher (with anonymous alterations):	<u>Bonduca</u>	(1696)
Mary Pix:	<u>Ibrahim, the Illustrious Bassa</u>	(1696)

Charles Hopkins:	<u>Boadicea, Queen of Britain</u>	(1697)
Charles Gildon:	<u>Phaeton, or, The Fatal Divorce</u>	(1698)
John Crowne:	<u>Caligula</u>	(1698)
Peter Motteux:	<u>Beauty in Distress</u>	(1698)
Mary Pix:	<u>Queen Catharine, or, The Ruines of Love</u>	(1698)
Colley Cibber:	<u>Xerxes</u>	(1699)
Thomas Durfey:	<u>The Famous History of the Rise and Fall of</u>	
	<u>Massaniello: the Second Part</u>	(1699)
Nicholas Rowe:	<u>The Ambitious Stepmother</u>	(1700)
Mary Pix:	<u>The Czar of Muscovy</u>	(1701)
John Oldmixon:	<u>The Governour of Cyprus</u>	(1702)
George Farquhar:	<u>The Twin-Rivals</u>	(1702)
William Taverner?	<u>The Faithful Bride of Granada</u>	(1704)
Anon.:	<u>Zelmane, or, The Corinthian Queen</u>	(1704)
Charles Goring:	<u>Irene, or, The Fair Greek</u>	(1708).
John Hancock:	<u>Secrets, with the Death of Richmond</u>	(1692)
Thomas Southerne:	<u>The Maid's Last Prayer, or, Any Rather than</u>	
	<u>Fail</u>	(1693)
William Congreve:	<u>The Old Bachelor</u>	(1693)
Thomas Durfey:	<u>The Richmond Heiress, or, A Woman Once in</u>	
	<u>the Right</u>	(1693)
William Congreve:	<u>The Double Dealer</u>	(1693)
Thomas Southerne:	<u>The Fatal Divorce, or, The Innocent Adulterers</u>	(1694)
John Crowne:	<u>The Married Bachelor, or, The Fortunate Adulteress</u>	(1694)
Elkanah Settle:	<u>The Ambitious Slave, or, A Generous Ravage</u>	(1694)
William Congreve:	<u>Love for Love</u>	(1695)
"A Young Lady":	<u>The Tutor and the Slave</u>	(1695)
John Banks:	<u>Cyrus the Great, or, The Tragedy of Love</u>	(1695)

APPENDIX II

PLAYS IN WHICH ELIZABETH BARRY AND ANNE BRACEGIRDLE APPEARED TOGETHER

William Mountfort:	<u>The Injur'd Lovers, or, The Ambitious Father</u>	(1688)
Elkanah Settle:	<u>Distress'd Innocence, or, The Princess of Persia</u>	(1690)
John Bancroft:	<u>King Edward the Third, with the Fall of Mortimer, Earl of March</u>	(1690)
Thomas Shadwell:	<u>The Scowrers</u>	(1690)
Thomas Southerne:	<u>The Wives' Excuse, or, Cuckolds Make Themselves</u>	(1691)
Thomas Durfey:	<u>The Marriage-Hater Match'd</u>	(1692)
John Dryden:	<u>Cleomenes, the Spartan Heroe</u>	(1692)
John Bancroft:	<u>Henry II, with the Death of Rosamond</u>	(1692)
Thomas Southerne:	<u>The Maid's Last Prayer, or, Any Rather than Fail</u>	(1693)
William Congreve:	<u>The Old Batchelor</u>	(1693)
Thomas Durfey:	<u>The Richmond Heiress, or, A Woman Once in the Right</u>	(1693)
William Congreve:	<u>The Double-Dealer</u>	(1693)
Thomas Southerne:	<u>The Fatal Marriage, or, The Innocent Adultery</u>	(1694)
John Crowne:	<u>The Married Beau, or, The Curious Impertinent</u>	(1694)
Elkanah Settle:	<u>The Ambitious Slave, or, A Generous Revenge</u>	(1694)
William Congreve:	<u>Love for Love</u>	(1695)
'A Young Lady':	<u>She Ventures and He Wins</u>	(1695)
John Banks:	<u>Cyrus the Great, or, The Tragedy of Love</u>	(1695)

Thomas Dogget:	<u>The Country-Wake</u>	(1696)
^{Delariviere} Mary Manley:	<u>The Royal Mischief</u>	(1696)
Peter Motteux:	<u>Love's a Jest</u>	(1696)
Thomas Durfey:	<u>The Intrigues at Versailles, or, A Jilt in all Humours</u>	(1697)
Mary Pix:	<u>The Innocent Mistress</u>	(1697)
Mary Pix:	<u>The Deceiver Deceiv'd</u>	(1697)
William Congreve:	<u>The Mourning Bride</u>	(1697)
Charles Hopkins:	<u>Boadicea, Queen of Britain</u>	(1697)
George Granville:	<u>Heroick Love</u>	(1698)
Peter Motteux:	<u>Beauty in Distress</u>	(1698)
Catherine Trotter:	<u>The Fatal Friendship</u>	(1698)
Mary Pix:	<u>Queen Catharine, or, The Ruines of Love</u>	(1698)
Henry Smith:	<u>The Princess of Parma</u>	(1699)
Mary Pix:	<u>The False Friend, or, The Fate of Disobedience</u>	(1699)
Charles Hopkins:	<u>Friendship Improv'd, or, The Female Warriour</u>	(1699)
John Dennis:	<u>Iphigenia</u>	(1699)
William Congreve:	<u>The Way of the World</u>	(1700)
Nicholas Rowe:	<u>The Ambitious Stepmother</u>	(1700)
William Burnaby:	<u>The Ladies Visiting Day</u>	(1701)
Mary Pix:	<u>The Double Distress</u>	(1701)
Charles Gildon:	<u>Love's Victim, or, The Queen of Wales</u>	(1701)
Nicholas Rowe:	<u>Tamerlane</u>	(1701)
Charles Boyle:	<u>As You Find It</u>	(1703)
Nicholas Rowe:	<u>The Fair Penitent</u>	(1703)
John Dennis:	<u>Liberty Asserted</u>	(1704)

Anon:	<u>Zelmae, or, The Corinthian Queen</u>	(1704)
Nicholas Rowe:	<u>The Biter</u>	(1704)
Susannah Centlivre:	<u>The Gamester</u>	(1705)
John Vanbrugh:	<u>The Confederacy</u>	(1705)
Nicholas Rowe:	<u>Ulysses</u>	(1705)
George Granville:	<u>The British Enchanters, or, No Magick Like Love</u>	(1706)
Mary Pix:	<u>The Adventures in Madrid</u>	(1706)
<i>Delarivière</i> Mary Manley:	<u>Almyna, or, The Arabian Vow</u>	(1706)
Joseph Addison:	<u>The Restoration, 1673</u>	
Thomas Baker:	<u>The Honour of the Age, 1701</u>	
John Buncroft:	<u>Henry II, King of England: with the Death of Rosamond, 1173</u>	
	<u>King Edward the Third, with the Fall of Mortimer, Earl of March, 1291</u>	
	<u>The Tragedy of Sebastian, 1679</u>	
John Banks:	<u>The Albion Queens, or, The Death of Mary Queen of Scotland, undated, c. 1714</u>	
	<u>Cyrus the Great, or, The Tragedy of Love, 1684</u>	
	<u>The Destruction of Troy, 1679</u>	
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