‘The All-Excelling Actress Blushing Bow’d’: A Practice-as-Research Exploration of the Performance of Gender in ‘Restoration Theatre’ by Mid-Eighteenth-Century Actresses.

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Abstract

This thesis aims to update and correct the performance of gender in both modern actor-training and modern performance of 'Restoration theatre', by using Practice-as-Research as a methodology to investigate current theories and arguments regarding the performance of gender by mid-eighteenth-century actresses. Practice-as-Research has been used to critically embody traditional archival evidence concerning specific performances by mid-eighteenth-century actresses in order to see how they spoke to the perception of gender at the time. What was discovered was then compared with modern approaches towards performing 'Restoration theatre' to challenge or complement current prevailing narratives in drama schools and the professional stage regarding the performance of gender in 'Restoration theatre'.

The research here demonstrates that the performance of gender in plays from the period defined as 'Restoration theatre' did not fit into the binary categories of 'masculine' and 'feminine' as currently taught and performed. Additionally, it shows that though eighteenth-century society would not recognise the terms 'gender play' and 'feminism', the eighteenth-century stage did have performances and characters whose actions and beliefs would now be seen through the lens of these terms. Understanding this not only challenges existing approaches and skills for the performance and teaching of 'Restoration theatre' but introduces new approaches and skills for performers and actor-trainers alike.

Table of Contents

Images

List of Recorded Clips

Introduction

In 2010 I was studying Classical Acting, and a well-known English theatre director came to give us a masterclass on acting in 'Restoration theatre'. At one point he asked for volunteers to read a scene between Mrs Sullen and her love interest, Archer, from *The Beaux Stratagem* by George Farquhar (1707).[1] I volunteered to read for Mrs Sullen; however, it was soon apparent that my performance was not what the director was looking for. After telling me to read the same line several times, including instructing me to repeat the line exactly as he said it, he declared in frustration that 'feminism has ruined actresses for these roles'.[2] These roles, he declared, should be very 'feminine' – by which he meant they were to be flirtatious, enticing and 'soft' – but that thanks to feminism women had lost those qualities and were too 'hard'. He then had every woman in the room read the line in as 'soft' a way as possible.

This encounter left me upset and frustrated. Aside from the pedagogical issues in his methods of teaching, his sweeping generalisation of both the skills of modern female-identifying performers and the behaviour of women in the late-seventeenth and eighteenth centuries felt reductive, stereotyped and erroneous.[3] I did not have the historical knowledge to challenge his statement that modern 'feminism' is antithetical to the viewpoint and behaviour

[1] In modern day theatre parlance 'Restoration theatre' commonly means late seventeenth- and eighteenth-century theatre. Further discussion of the term occurs later in this Introduction.

[2] I use the terms 'actors' and 'actresses' when discussing the eighteenth century because their use at the time impacted the identity, performances, and treatment of performers both on and off-stage. For modern day theatre I generally use the gender-neutral term 'performer' to hold space for those who do not wish to identify by gender. The director quoted here used the term 'actresses' to refer to modern female-identifying performers.

[3] For modern performers who do identify by gender I often use the terms 'female-identifying' and 'male-identifying' to recognise that gender identity does not necessarily relate to biological sex assigned at birth, and that gender arguably determines sex categorisation as much as sex categorisation determines gender (Butler 1999). Sometimes I do use 'male' and 'female', and 'women' and 'men', but again I use these terms to refer to people who identify under those categories no matter their assigned categorisation at birth.

of Restoration theatre's female characters, and this gap in knowledge prompted me to find out more. I wanted to interrogate his statement that Restoration theatre's female characters adhered to this particular version of femininity usually connected to the modern system of gender as a binary. In addition, if the answer was they did not, how can Restoration theatre be performed and taught instead? The main objective of this thesis, therefore, is to investigate and update current approaches towards the performance of gender in Restoration theatre in both actor-training and professional performance.

What is Restoration Theatre?

The term 'Restoration theatre' as it is applied in the theatrical world is misleading as it can include plays written after the historical Restoration period of Charles II's reign (1660 to 1685), up to and including plays written in the late eighteenth century. In academic theatrical periodisation 'Restoration' usually refers to plays written and performed between 1660 and 1710, however in practical actor training and performance it is usually used for plays from 1660 to 1800. Many drama school training programmes, including mine at LAMDA, teach late-eighteenth-century plays by Richard Brinsley Sheridan and Oliver Goldsmith as 'Restoration theatre'. In *Delicious Dissembling: A Compleat Guide to Performing Restoration Comedy* (2002), Suzanne M. Ramczyk explicitly states that the same techniques used to perform the comedies of the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth century can be applied to the works of Sheridan and Goldsmith (Ramczyk 2002, p.182).

The condensing of a century and a half of theatre into one term, 'Restoration theatre', is a major hurdle when trying to study anything as nuanced as the performance of gender. Understandings of sex and gender shifted significantly between 1660 and 1800: in 1660 the

theory that ‘male’ and ‘female’ existed as binary opposites was not the dominant paradigm, but by 1800 it was (Laqueur 1990, pp.154-7). Using ‘Restoration theatre’ as an all-encompassing term to discuss plays from 1660 to 1800 can eliminate detailed discussion and exploration of how the performance of gender in the theatre changed as society changed. Rendering the whole period liable to be treated as if the gender landscape at the end of the eighteenth century applied to the previous one hundred and forty years.

The elision of different historical approaches to gender can often be seen in how current representations of eighteenth-century gender in popular culture use our modern, binary paradigm. For example, spectatorship as being inherently powerful and ‘masculine’ and spectacle as being inherently disempowering and ‘feminine’. This is despite scholarship arguing that the division between ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ ebbed and flowed in the eighteenth century (Wahrman 2004, p.40) as did the power and gendering of ‘the gaze’ (Straub 1992, p. 19).

The television show *Harlots* (2017-2019), is an example of this. Based on Hallie Rubenhold’s 2005 book *The Covent Garden Ladies*: *Pimp General Jack and the Extraordinary Story of Harris's List* (IMDb, no date), the protagonists of the series are women working in the London sex trade in 1763 (*Harlots*, 2017). For the most part these women are displayed as flamboyantly feminine: with heaving bosoms (near exposed or totally exposed) and obvious make-up. Nancy Birch, played by Kate Fleetwood (IMDb, no date), is the exception as she dresses in male clothing with no make-up. Nancy makes her living from what would now be called sadomasochism (her clients pay her to whip them) (*Harlots*, 2017). Her apparent appeal to men comes from her subversion of the hierarchy of power – both gender and class –

through her physical domination and her spectatorship of her client's pain. Dressing Nancy in male clothing therefore acts as a visual device to inform a modern audience that she and her work occupy a more 'masculine' space than the other sex workers do. Kristina Straub (1992) argues, however, that in the eighteenth century spectatorship was neither necessarily masculine nor powerful, in fact power often lay 'with spectacle rather than spectator' (Straub, p.19). Using male clothing to codify Nancy as a transgressive character who subverts power and gender norms may be effective for modern audiences, but likely does not represent how eighteenth-century members of society would necessarily have seen her.

In order to not replicate the error of smoothing over the nuances of gender performance during the period of Restoration theatre, it was therefore necessary for me to focus on a specific point in time between 1660 and 1800. I chose to focus on the mid-eighteenth century as it was a notable period of gender play in the theatre (Wahrman 1998, pp.149-150). This offered the most scope to experiment both with Restoration theatre performances that would not be commensurate with a modern gender binary, and those that would. It was my hope that this research would in turn open up a broader range of gender performance for those performing in Restoration theatre today.

Actions on stage are crucial to the performance of gender, because, as Judith Butler (1988) argues, gender performativity is, 'the mundane way in which bodily gestures, movements, and styles of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self' (Butler, p.519). The written text is still important when researching gender performance because, as is often the case today, the text was the initial point of characterisation for actors and actresses in the eighteenth century (Stern 2000, p.214). How a performer embodies the text, however, is as

important for understanding characterisation, especially in terms of gender, because the 'stylized' repetition of acts both creates gender identity and 'reflects' gender identity (Butler 1988, p.519).

Documentation is exceedingly important when researching historical performance practices, but documents cannot capture the moment of performance. Asking modern performers to use their training and experience to embody the documented evidence available can both illustrate potential elements of performance missing from these documents, and give tools and skills for modern performers to use. Investigating the mid-eighteenth century, when the performance of gender was so varied, gave us leeway to experiment with the presentation of gender through casting choices as well as the performers' physical and vocal expression. That is why this thesis focuses on theatrical performance from the mid-eighteenth century and Practice-as-Research became the primary methodology to do so.

Practice-as-Research

> [I]n what ways were eighteenth-century actresses' bodies mediated by specific moments and occasions, and what elements of independence and creativity were they able to exercise when assigned specific roles and scripts to play? How, for example, did extemporization, gesture, and personal reputation counter or elaborate upon the words they were given to speak? (Nussbaum 2010, p.25).

Since the 1990s there has been increased research into the lives and careers of eighteenth-century actresses and how they influenced the theatre and society of their time. How eighteenth-century actresses' off-stage 'private' gender performativity interacted with their on-stage 'public' gender performance has been extensively studied by scholars such as Helen Brooks (2015), Laura Engel (2011), Felicity Nussbaum (2010) and Shearer West (1999). Their

research into how fashion, personal writings, public writings, portraiture and personal appearances interacted with an actress's theatrical roles has brought awareness and understanding of how adept some eighteenth-century actresses were at managing their presentation of gender in support of their career. This research has expanded our understanding of the impact and work of eighteenth-century actresses; however, the examination of the embodied elements Nussbaum refers to above is often limited by the need to rely on documentation from the period. Extemporization and gesture use the interplay of the written text and the performer's body in the moment of performance to produce their effect.

The live nature of theatrical performance makes it impossible to see exactly how eighteenth-century actresses combined these elements on the stage; instead, their performance style has to be inferred from what images, reviews, private letters and treatise on acting have been preserved. This, however, means that these performances live on as literary work or still visuals, not as the living, embodied performances that they originally were. As Gilli Bush-Bailey concludes in her article 'Re:Enactment' (2012) 'Theatre historians should acknowledge what we know but often leave to be realised by others: that text may be embodied and that, without the body, theatre is only a place of the imagination' (Bush-Bailey, p.296). Reading about how to perform is abstract, it is only by putting an exercise or piece of text into action that layers of character are revealed, or a true understanding of an exercise is realised. Performance is a craft that exists within the performer's body, removing it to text creates an artificial distance from the body that turns it into something else.[4]

[4] By 'craft' I mean 'An occupation or profession requiring technical skill and know-how, esp. one which involves using the hands; a manual art or trade.' (OED 2023). 'Craft' is often used by professionals to refer to their skills,

Practice-as-Research can come closer to understanding these ephemeral aspects of performance and characterisation that emerge in the moment of performance. Combining a modern performer's embodied knowledge of their craft with what the documentation tells us about past performance, allows for an exploration of the different ways characters could have been embodied.

Discoveries can then be taken back to the documentation to see what matches the historical record and what, perhaps, may challenge what we currently believe. Practice-as-Research, however, cannot be definitive regarding what the embodied aspects of historical performance looked like because a moment of performance is heavily dependent on the context in which it takes place. What it can do is raise interesting questions to challenge or support current theories of past performance. In addition, and more importantly for this thesis, the discoveries made during a Practice-as-Research investigation of past performance can increase the variety of tools and approaches available to current performers and theatre-makers.

Robin Nelson's (2013) book *Practice as Research in the Arts* describes Practice-as-Research as a process by which scholarship's 'know-that' (the outsider knowledge of artistic practice as represented by traditional academic research based on readings of documentation) is scrutinised through the use of modern performer's 'know-how' (their embodied, tacit knowledge of performance that can only be manifest by doing), in order for us to discover the

for example Seyler and Haggard's conversations on performing comedy were turned into *The Craft of Comedy* (2013).

'know-what' (methods used, composition, impacts etc.) (Nelson, pp.37- 47). The relationship between 'know-that', 'know-how' and 'know-what' and what knowledge they cover is shown in the diagram below.

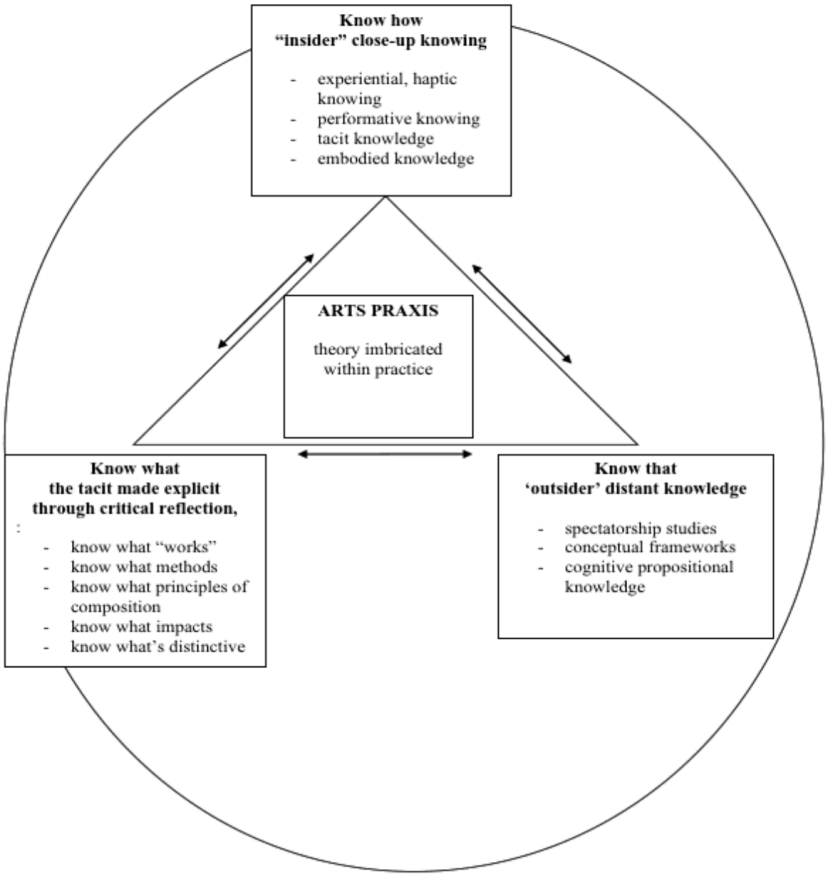


Figure 1: 'Modes of knowing: multi-mode epistemological model for PaR' (Nelson 2013, p.37).

In this thesis the 'know-what' of how eighteenth-century actresses presented gender on-stage is what the archival documentation coupled with modern practice can reveal about the possible methods, impacts and principles of composition these actresses used. Taking what is shown in the archive and theorised by theatre historians as to how gesture and *tableau* were used in eighteenth-century performance as well as gender performativity of the time ('know-that') and asking modern performers to use their tacit and embodied knowledge of

performance ('know-how') to try to embody the archival research, hopefully brings us closer to the 'know-what' – a richer, more multi-textual understanding of the intersection of eighteenth-century acting and representations of gender.

Once more it is important to acknowledge that the ephemerality of embodied practice and the necessity of using present bodies without the history and context of past society (from understandings of concepts like 'personal space' to physiological changes affected by nutrition, labour, exercise, disease etc.), Practice-as-Research can never *recreate* past performance. It can deepen our interpretation of the past by working with the archive to flesh out (metaphorically and physically) our understandings, but it is not definitive. Its power lies in it being 'a dynamic mode of interrogation' (Bratton and Bush-Bailey 2011, p.97) in which present action can engage with past action.

This engagement between past action and present action is key for this thesis: investigating the past through the present can challenge prevailing narratives in modern actor-training regarding the use of the gender binary in Restoration theatre. Similarly, researching past action can inspire present action through the revelation of rediscovered or reimagined approaches for performance.

Revival as Methodology

My approach towards using Practice-as-Research to investigate historical performance was heavily influenced by Jacky Bratton and Bush-Bailey's chapter 'Case Study 2: Memory, absence and agency: an approach to practice-based research in theatre history' in Baz Kershaw's *Research Methods in Theatre and Performance* (2011). In this chapter they laid out

'revival' as a methodology for researching theatre history through performance (Bratton and Bush-Bailey, pp.102-107).

Taking up Mark Franko and Annette Richards' challenge to bring 'back the past to unsettle the present' (Franko and Richards in Bratton and Bush-Bailey 2011, p.100), Bratton and Bush-Bailey created their methodology as a way to investigate the work of playwright/actor/manager Jane Scott. They found the archival documentation that remains of Jane Scott's work 'full of gaps and absences to be filled by the performers' (Bratton and Bush-Bailey 2011, p.102). Bratton and Bush-Bailey were inspired by Joseph Roach's argument that there is a 'kinaesthetic imagination' which exists in 'gestures and habits, in skills passed down by unspoken traditions, in the body's inherent self-knowledge, in unstudied reflexes and ingrained memories' (Roach in Bratton and Bush-Bailey 2011, p.102). Along with Franko and Richards' argument that 'Performance studies need to consider, and to interpret, that which remains, persists and returns' (Franko and Richards in Bratton and Bush-Bailey 2011, p.103) they decided 'to explore and trust to the history carried in the body of the performer' (Bratton and Bush-Bailey 2011, p.102).

Bratton and Bush-Bailey emphasise the difference between 'revival' and 'reconstruction': 'Approaches that seek to 'reconstruct' past performance axiomatically carry the notion that the first, or original, state can be rebuilt' (Bratton and Bush-Bailey 2011, p.106). 'Revival' is therefore,

> used to indicate the new realisation of an old – normally a classic – text, and carries the implication that director and cast bring their contemporary world into fruitful dialogue with the author's work from an earlier time […] 'revival' acknowledges the present and works to reawaken that which can be brought into use again. (Bratton and Bush-Bailey 2011, p.107)

In order to study the work of Jane Scott in the present day through practice they cast a 'specially created company to use present performers, and the marks of performance tradition that they carry, to explore the possibility of historical agency' (Bratton and Bush-Bailey 2011, p.107). Inspired by their choice to create a 'company' I attempted to do the same for my Practice-as-Research, my hope was that using the same performers for more than one performance would allow for their knowledge and experience with eighteenth-century acting techniques to grow from one project to the next.[5]

Our explorations of acting techniques focused on the use of physical gesture, due to its importance in eighteenth-century acting (Burwick 2009, p.80), and the use of static *tableau*s or 'pictorial attitudes' by performers in scenes for dramatic emphasis (Burwick 2009, pp.89-98). [6] We investigated how gesture and *tableau* could have combined with other aspects of a performer's stage craft – voice, movement, blocking, timing and pacing – to perform gender. For the most part I approached performers who had trained to use their body as the starting point of characterisation, for example as is taught under the Meyerhold, Laban and Lecoq systems. In particular, I wanted performers with training beyond acting techniques based on psychological realism, such as Konstantin Stanislavski's early twentieth-century teaching (Carnicke 2010, p.1).

[5] See Appendix A for the list of performers and Practice-as-Research.

[6] Given the detail and nuance Practice-as-Research requires, I decided it was necessary to focus on the non-musical elements of eighteenth-century performance in order to do the research justice. I do recognise, however, that song and dance were integral to eighteenth-century theatre, and that by leaving them out I have created an artificial division out of practicality. Similarly, this limitation caused me to not investigate *The Beggar's Opera* beyond the workshops in 2017.

Training based on Stanislavski's earlier work operates from a psychological understanding of character (or personality) that Roach (1993) argues only started to begin in 1773 with the publishing of Denis Diderot's *Paradoxe sur le comédien* (Paradox of the Actor).[7] I hoped that performers trained to worked with gesture and physicality would reflect a pre-psychology era in which the physical manifestation of the passions (emotions) were what actors and acting theorists focused on for discussions of 'natural' acting (Roach 1993, p.59). In addition, I hoped their embodied understanding of physical movement would make them quicker to understand the power of gesture and movement in performance.

In Bratton and Bush-Bailey's Practice-as-Research work on Scott, 'Working it Out' (2002) the company of actors spent time in the first week of rehearsal on 'an eclectic mix of Laban and actor-training exercises' (Bush-Bailey, p.13): an 'embodied dig' that acknowledged 'how we used our bodies in the present but sought to be alert to connections with the past practices we hoped to find' (Bush-Bailey 2002, p.13). This week of training was also 'to sensitise actors, imbued with a twentieth-century notion of acting, to a more stylised and gestural form of theatre' (McCaw 2002, p.62). Dick McCaw (2002) raises that in much modern actor-training '[w]hile there is ample discussion of vocal projection, little is spoken about how an actor can project a gesture' (McCaw, p.64). My intention for working with performers with a history of physical training was for their 'know-how' to already include an understanding of how to project gestures and use them to enhance text. This was both to save valuable time teaching these skills, and because the muscularity, specificity and understanding of their own bodies gained through the repetition of movement in physical actor-training methods would, I

[7] Stanislavski's early work currently dominates actor-training in the Western world (Roach, p.14).

hoped, give these performers an advantage in finding the fluidity and clarity of eighteenth-century gesture in performance.

In the recorded video of 'Working it Out' (2002) McCaw instructs the performers that gestures 'must be clear, must be legible. That's how we read big gestures in the theatre. If it's a muddy gesture, we won't understand it' (Working it Out 2002). Similarly, in the recorded clips of Giannandrea Poesio's workshop on period gesture, he focused on getting the specificity and clarity of meaning and movement right for each gesture (Working it Out 2002). Performers with a background in physical actor-training, much of which is very rigorous, already have a 'know-how' of to embody the clarity, specificity and yet fluidity of movement and gesture for the stage: similar to what most actors and actresses of the eighteenth century must have had.

Modern performers with training in physical, embodied performance techniques could possibly also tap into what Katherine Newey calls 'embodied performance history' (2002),

> Most interestingly for me, the idea of a revival encouraged the project participants to revive skills which most performers know about in a kind of performance history which is carried in their bodies and passed down the generations through training. The idea of a 'revival' gives us a way of thinking about acting as a form of cultural memory […] performance works as a type of collective memory of the profession, but one which is always also embodied in the present. (Newey, p.67)

This collective memory of past performance that used gestures and *tableau* exists in the influences on modern physical-based actor training and therefore in the bodies of those trained in those styles. For example, Jacques Lecoq's earliest experience of theatre choreography was with Jean Séry, a former ballerina with the company of the Paris Opera (Lecoq 2009, p.4), and he was heavily inspired by *commedia del'arte* in Italy (Lecoq 2009, p.

5). Lecoq specifically mentions that he learned the gestures and movements of Harlequin from a performer who was himself taught by an ageing Harlequin (Lecoq 2002, p.6); an example of historical gesture being passed 'down the generations through training' (Newey 2002, p.67).

The genesis of Lecoq's technique and his subsequent training is evidence of how present is connected to the collective memory of past performance. Poesio (2002) says that since the end of the sixteenth century,

> [T]he importance of the Commedia lay mainly in the fact that it had a significant influence on the evolution of the various theatre arts. Many rules, principles and conventions stemming from the Commedia tradition survived long after its decline, being assimilated into drama, opera and ballet. (Poesio, p.41)

He also argues that, since the gestures used in opera and ballet stem from the same source as those used in the theatre (and that in the eighteenth century they were not as distinctive genres as they are now), the study of historical theatrical gesture can benefit from studies on gesture in opera and ballet (Poesio 2002, p.41). Lecoq's training reflects his exposure to *commedia dell'arte* and a history of gesture connected to eighteenth-century theatrical gesture via ballet. Although what Lecoq learned as the Commedia tradition was not the traditional Commedia dell'Arte as performed prior to the end of the eighteenth century, the gestures it used and still uses came from that tradition (Poesio 2002, p.41).

Meyerhold was also heavily influenced by *commedia dell'arte* and 'the interplay of character and action as it had operated […] not only in Renaissance Italy, but also in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century France' (Leach 2010, p.28). Arguably performers trained in these practitioners' methods hold some 'know-how' of past theatrical expression through the

gestures and movements they learned in training. Lisa Lapidge seemingly tapped into this embodied knowledge when she animated the gesture for 'Joy', turning it from a picture,

Figure 2: 'Joy' (Siddons 1807, p.26).

to an expressive movement by incorporating a small jump: (https://youtu.be/bys1z1C4anw). Lisa's modification of 'Joy' also illustrates Poesio's (2002) point that 'one of the tenets shared by every primary resource on the topic [of how to use gesture] […] is the interpretive freedom that each performer is allowed in executing the movements' (Poesio, p.46). This interpretive freedom when embodying gesture was constantly emphasised in the Practice-as-Research for this thesis, allowing for new discoveries of how the gestures could be used in modern productions and suggesting ways they could have been used in the mid-eighteenth century.

While a physical performance background could help minimise some of the distance in performance styles and perhaps give insight of past practice through present practice, it remained important to remind ourselves that the focus was on 'revival' rather than 'reconstruction'. In the (nearly) three centuries since the mid-eighteenth century, large differences in understanding of emotion, performance and physical expression have occurred (Roach 1993, p.14). Similarly, there is always the danger of mistaken discoveries, especially

ones made early on in the research, being replicated and unquestioned as the research continues. Though initially these concerns and differences appear daunting enough to stimy using Practice-as-Research as a methodology, Newey (2002) states,

> I would argue that we are right to approach explorations of past performance styles with caution when looking for authenticity […] But in the exploration of past performance texts through experimentation in the rehearsal room and on the stage, supported by a variety of other kinds of evidence, there is a process of testing all the materials which is perhaps more rigorous than standard textual scholarly work. (Newey, p.69)

In light of this we tried to remain constantly aware that this was a process of investigation not verification, while still acknowledging that, as performers (or embodied researchers), our insights held weight and importance when 'testing' materials and theories of theatre history. With the caveat that both in the rehearsal process as well as over the course of this PhD, it was important to keep returning to the primary resources to ensure, as much as possible, that early errors in understanding were not perpetuated in later performance.

This thesis arguably takes the use of practice to explore theatrical history in 'Working it Out' (2002) further by focusing on the performance of gender and by asking how the research can, and should, be used in contemporary performance. This necessitated a specific focus on what those involved in the Practice-as-Research brought from their current contexts: not just to try to understand where modern approaches differ to those of eighteenth-century actors, but to understand how eighteenth-century approaches can benefit modern performance.

In addition to their performance skills, the Practice-as-Research relied on the performers' 'know-how' as humans who exist in a gendered landscape dictated by gendered acts (Butler 1988, p.519) to help illustrate how different acts, such as eighteenth-century gesture, could

perform gender. The Practice-as-Research intended to go from initial observations like: Can the gestures as described or drawn be performed as they are depicted? Are they physically possible? How does a performer embody the transitional moments between gestures? To questions like: How does gender both influence gestures and be influenced by them? Do costumes based on gender identity affect how physically possible certain gestures are (for example, do dresses that limit upper arm movement affect the expansion of the arms for certain gestures)? Does our sense of 'feminine' and 'masculine' behaviour change the emotional quality of a gesture (for example, do gendered notions about what is 'modest' or 'direct' influence the direction of a performers gaze when performing a gesture)? What do these elements do to our sense of a character's gender identity? This search was very much like an 'embodied dig' (Bush-Bailey 2002, p.13), as similar to an archaeological dig there are layers of artifacts of the body to discover.

In primary sources such as *Practical Illustrations of Rhetorical Gesture* (1807) gestures are often gendered: the gesture for 'Affection' is gendered as female and maternal/domestic, while 'Anger' is gendered as male and military,

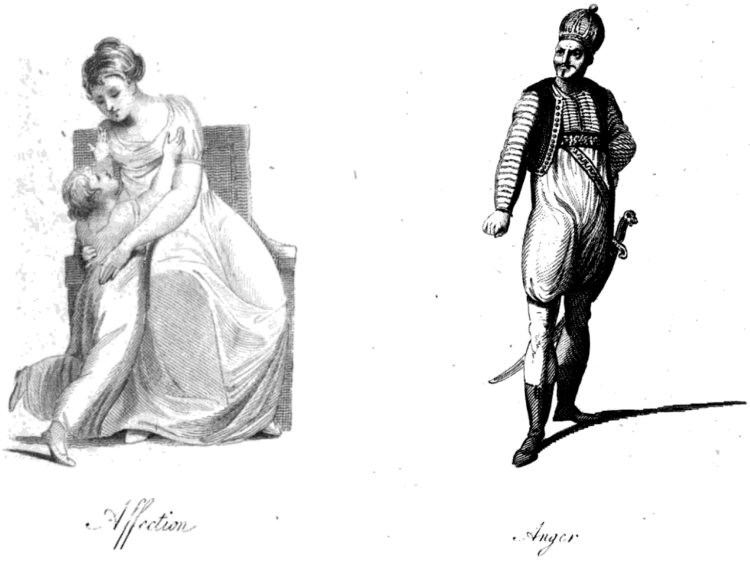


Figure 3: ‘Affection (Siddons 1807, p.16); Figure 4: ‘Anger’ (Siddons 1807, p.41).

The timing and pacing of a gesture can change both its emotional meaning and the emotional meaning of the text; changes which can also influence how gender is performed and perceived. The performers’ ‘know-how’ was used in our work to take the gestures from stillness on the page into the body, revealing nuances and signifiers that can expand on current scholarly discussions of gender, eighteenth-century performance and gesture. When what is found in performance is viewed through the lens of academic research on the eighteenth century, the ‘know-what’ – the impacts, principles of composition and methods – of the performance of gender in both the eighteenth century as well as the performance of gender today, can become clearer.

Initially I looked at the performance of gender in the mid-eighteenth century more broadly as I researched both male and female characters that were performed cross-dressed and non-cross-dressed by actors and actresses mid-century. As the timeline in Appendix A demonstrates, we began with several workshops looking at scenes from plays that had been cross-dressed, performing them as they were originally cast and then cross-dressing the roles that had been historically cross-dressed. Many interesting avenues of research arose out of these workshops, however as we went along my focus turned to the cross-dressed roles performed by the actress Peg Woffington, as well as the female roles she performed opposite, as coming closest to answering my original question about how much leeway actresses had when performing ‘femininity’.

On the mid-eighteenth-century stage, Woffington was the actress most celebrated for her cross-dressing (Wahrman 2004, 49). On stage she created 'an ambiguously gendered persona' (Nussbaum 2010, p.191), and her performance of Sir Harry Wildair in *The Constant Couple* become the era's most iconic instance of theatrical gender play (Wahrman 2004, 49). Though focusing on a single performer brings obvious limitations when researching a broad era of theatrical performance, Woffington's successes and failures in cross-dressing certain roles makes a good case study for researching what aspects of gender performance and gender-play appealed to mid eighteenth-century society, and what did not.

Butler's argument that 'In imitating gender, drag implicitly reveals the imitative structure of gender itself' (Butler 1999, p.175) further piqued my interest in exploring female-to-male cross-dressed roles in Restoration theatre. In modern performance there is a distinction between cross-dressed performances which are an 'attempt to imitate the "real"' (Drouin 2008, p.25) and drag performances which are 'self-referential and sometimes parodic' (Drouin 2008, p.26). The Donmar Warehouse's all-female Shakespeare trilogy of *Julius Caesar*, *Henry IV* and *The Tempest* would be considered cross-dressed performances as they approached the roles seriously and with a focus on characterisation, not self-referential humour. Drag-kinging on the other hand involves cross-dressing that 'reads dominant male masculinity and explodes its effects through exaggeration, parody and earnest mimicry' (Halberstam 2005, p.130). Therefore, part of my exploration was to see how much eighteenth-century cross-dressing by actresses like Woffington attempted to present 'the real' and/or used self-referentiality for humorous effect. Two different explorations of Lottie Priestley as Wildair opposite Jared Nelson as Colonel Standard in Act IV sc.i from *The Constant Couple* show this. The first time we explored this scene Lottie attempted to imitate the 'real'

of a male character (https://vimeo.com/817286073/7ef13dc7cd). The second time round she performed in more of a self-referential and parodic way (https://youtu.be/a3oFMyt-tCA). Subsequently I looked at how both of those aspects challenge the way that gender in Restoration theatre is currently taught. Not only to give more interest to current productions of Restoration theatre, but to carry on the work of 'revealing the imitative structure of gender itself' both in the past and in the present.

I also looked at the performance of non-cross-dressed female roles to understand the nuances of 'feminine' performativity on stage, including if behaviours coded as 'masculine' could have been used to perform them. As my opening anecdote displayed, a binary understanding of gender is often placed on training for Restoration theatre, therefore it was of interest for me to analyse non-cross-dressed female roles to see whether they were archetypal examples of a binary 'femininity', or if there was more nuance to their gender performativity. For this I looked at the characters of Lady Lurewell from *The Constant Couple* and Calista from *The Fair Penitent*, specifically the performance, context and text of Lurewell in Act I sc.ii (https://youtu.be/gVWXdDdIt3A) and Calista in Act IV sc.i (https://youtu.be/Y4Ff2N4PO7g).

In order to fully understand how the nuances of gender can come through via the interplay of the performer's body, voice and the text, at times I have done specific, deep-dive analyses of moments from the Practice-as-Research and the original play texts.[8]

[8] For specific clips please see 'List of Recorded Clips' on page 6. See Appendix A for full recordings of the Practice-as-Research.

The Challenges of Practice-as-Research

When researching the performance of gender, it is important to recall that Practice-as-Research investigations of historical practice cannot fully distinguish themselves from the sentiments and understandings of the present. For example, a relatively recent change in Western society and academia is that we operate through a gender paradigm that recognises and discusses non-binary and trans identities.[9] In the eighteenth century however, even though individuals and society had elements that we would now define as trans or non-binary, these terms did not exist, and people would not have viewed themselves or others through their definitions. This is a paradigmatic shift that it would be impossible for a modern, Western performer to step in to.

Actor training and approaches have also significantly changed, particularly with the influence of the relatively new field of psychology. Similarly, though the collective memory of past performance arguably still exists in the performer's body, our bodies change as we adapt to new physical realities. Even in the last twenty years the invention of the smart phone means we now spend a significant portion of our day hunched over and scrolling with our thumbs. Our norms and attitudes to the body and clothing have also shifted, as Bush-Bailey (2012) found in 2002's 'Working it Out': 'A move to experiment with a period absence of under-garments beneath the flowing dresses for the women was roundly rejected by twenty-first-century actresses' (Bush-Bailey, p.292).

[9] Even those who reject these terms and identities recognise the meaning of these terms through their denial.

Another challenge facing the Practice-as-Research was that 'an historical audience can never be recreated, locked as we are into historically and culturally specific ways of seeing' (Newey 2002, p.66). An audience, however, was necessary at times to help us understand how to engage with them (even if what they responded to was different from an eighteenth-century audience). Hence, we performed *The Constant Couple* at The Gulbenkian theatre in Canterbury and a series of scenes at the Ovalhouse theatre in London. The performances at The Gulbenkian did not have the house lights up, which meant audience interactions like asides did not connect because the performers could not see anyone to direct them to. This was rectified at the Ovalhouse theatre and the difference was notable: audience and performer could acknowledge each other, and the performers could play off of the audience responses. This change can be seen in a comparison of Act IV sc.i of *The Constant Couple* at The Gulbenkian Theatre in 2018 (https://vimeo.com/817286073/7ef13dc7cd) versus at the Ovalhouse Theatre in 2019 (https://youtu.be/a3oFMyt-tCA).

There were other challenges I encountered due to time and money limitations. I covered travel and accommodation but could not pay for the performers time, therefore we had to work around other work commitments the performer's had. Each project depended on who was available, so I did not get to use the same performers each time and not everyone had the physical training I preferred. Time constraints also meant we focused on rehearsing the physical aspects of performance, rather than any vocal requirements. Many of the performers had vocal training from drama school, even specific training on the use of 'classical text', so I made the decision to trust their knowledge of voice.[10] Unfortunately this created an artificial

[10] Since the early-twentieth century, actor-training for 'classical theatre' (generally defined as pre-twentieth-century theatre) in the United Kingdom has focused on the use of the voice and text, with physicality generally a secondary consideration (Simms 2019, pp.118-124).

separation between voice and movement, and the performers unfamiliar with Restoration theatre text struggled. Interestingly, a similar issue was noted by Sarah Greene (2002) in 'Working it Out' (Greene, p.25).

Separating out elements of performance from one another, either due to practical challenges or for research purposes, often happens. All of the work collated by the R18 Collective do it to some extent: https://www.r18collective.org/teaching-resources (The R18 Collective, no date).[11] For example, *(English version) A sequence of passionate attitudes after Jelgerhuis, by Laila Cathleen Neuman* by the Dutch Historical Acting Collective has Laila Neuman perform various 'attitudes' or gestures against a black background, accompanied by music but no dialogue (The R18 Collective, 2022). The work is a lovely illustration of how eighteenth-century gesture can be embodied to convey emotional subtext: the lack of spoken text and contextual scenery puts our sole attention on to the gestures and their affect. While spotlighting the gestures is an excellent way to illuminate how they can convey emotional meaning, the problem is we miss how text and the 'attitudes'/gestures they analyse can work together. Similarly, while the black background is excellent for highlighting Neuman's movements, it does not show how gesture interacts with either scenery or other performers.

Further examples on the R18 Collective website, all by the Dutch Historical Acting Collective, similarly isolate elements of eighteenth-century performance with the same benefits and drawbacks. Four short videos called *An etude on facial expression according to Le Brun performed by João Luís Paixão* consist of a close up of João Paixão's face against a black

[11] The R18 Collective is a group of academics specialising in Restoration and eighteenth-century theatre history who are trying to collate practical research for use in education and by professional theatres (The R18 Collective, no date).

background as he silently performs the facial etudes for Love-Desire-Joy, Fear-Despair-Rage, Hatred-Aversion-Sorry and Courage-Hope-Anger (the R18 Collective, 2022). The films are soundless, which highlights the impact of the etudes but means that once more we do not see how they interact with text. *13 acting exercises from Aaron Hill's 'An Essay on the Art of Acting' (1753) performed by Jed Wentz* features Jed Wentz speaking text at the same time as following Aaron Hill's exercises (the R18 Collective, 2022). Wentz's performance shows how Hill's instructions can interact with text: as he changes the movement of his facial muscles according to Hill's instructions, so the pitch and tone of his voice changes (the R18 Collective, 2022). Again, however, because the video consists of Wentz performing on his own and is filmed up close instead of on a stage, how Hill's exercises could have functioned on the stage is incomplete.

A more personal challenge I faced was that although I had initially intended to perform as well as research, direct and produce the Practice-as-Research, I found it incredibly hard to wear so many hats. Bush-Bailey (2012) raises some interesting concerns about situating 'the theatre historian outside the event […] commenting on the work of the re-enactor/performers; […] doing the preparatory scholarly work that informed the embodied research of others' (Bush-Bailey, p. 292). Therefore, I had wanted to perform the material myself to understand the demands, constraints and uses of the technical skills and performance of gender from within my own body. Though I did perform in some of the early workshops and played Lady Darling in *The Constant Couple* (2018), I found my reflections as a performer suffered from the need to observe and, ultimately, direct the performers for the purpose of the research. Additionally, I had to organise the practical elements of a show (costume, venue, schedule etc) so, in the latter work, I dropped the role of performer.

Tiffany Stern, in *Rehearsal from Shakespeare to Sheridan* (2000), describes how the role of 'director' as we know it now did not exist in Restoration and eighteenth-century theatre. Rather, various combinations of playwrights, theatre managers and prompters ran rehearsals to ensure the actors and actresses knew their lines, entrances and exits, and that important parts of the play could be heard (Stern 2000, pp.171- 238).

Initially, when working on *The Constant Couple* (2018), I attempted to run rehearsals as they did in the eighteenth century by just focusing on the elements mentioned above. In addition, since eighteenth-century actors and actresses usually only knew their parts in a play, not the whole narrative (Stern 2000, p.219), I tried to avoid discussing where a character fit into the narrative in order to let the performers figure those aspects on their own. Unfortunately, rather than liberating the performers as I had hoped it would, such an open process paralysed many of them and stymied rehearsals. In the end I took up elements of modern directing such as discussing the arc of the narrative, character intention and so forth.

This action on my part appears historically inaccurate, but it does raise a question: did actors and actresses really work as independently from each other as we currently believe? On the most simplistic level it seems implausible that there would not have been any collective cast discussion about the play either during or after rehearsals. Although Stern (2000) argues that actors and actresses 'were encouraged only to be good in their roles, not to make the full play a success: the play as a unity and the actor as a player of parts were naturally opposed' (Stern, p.182), it is hard to believe that at least some professional actors and actresses did not recognise that narrative sense and company cohesion can have a positive impact on the

reception of a play and their performance. There are records of complaints about actors and actresses only knowing their parts, not the whole play (Stern 2000, p. 231), but after several weeks of rehearsal for a performer to still be ignorant of how their part fit in to the play's narrative sounds almost intentional.[12] These are certainly interesting questions and challenges to explore further outside of this thesis.

Resources and Approach for Practice

When it comes to how I approached my historical research I used a combination of secondary and primary sources. The primary sources consisted of images taken from various archives, as mentioned above, and eighteenth-century documents from The British Library and online collections such as Gale Primary Sources' Eighteenth-Century Collections Online, The London Stage Database (run by the University of Oregon), and online newspaper and journal archives. These sources gave further context for the performances we investigated in practice, such as responses and reviews of actresses in particular roles. The London Stage Database was useful to see the popularity of certain actresses in particular roles because you can look up how many times they performed a role in a season, especially when compared with other actors and actresses. Reviews of performances are heavily influenced by bias, so the casting data is a more reliable indicator of whether or not an actress was popular enough for it to be financially worthwhile to keep casting her. This is particularly so when researching cross-dressed performances as changing attitudes towards cross-dressed women influenced some later eighteenth-century commentators to downplay their success (Wahrman 2004, pp.49-50).

[12] Even in modern times stories abound of famous performers being late and unprepared for rehearsal. So much so, it is often parodied. In Season three of *Only Murders in the Building* (2023), Paul Rudd plays an unprofessional, chronically late and underprepared movie star cast in a Broadway production.

The main resources I used for understanding eighteenth-century acting and what it may have looked like were: *Practical Illustrations of Rhetorical Gesture*, edited by Henry Siddons in 1807 and based on *Ideer Zu Einer Mimik* (1795) by Johann Jakob Engel; images of eighteenth-century actors and actresses in performance from the Folger Library in Washington DC and the Harvard Theatre Collection in Boston, Massachusetts; Roach's *The Player's Passion* (1993); Frederick Burwick *Romantic Drama: Acting and Reacting* (2009); and Dene Barnett's *The Art of Gesture: The Practices and Principles of 18th Century Acting* (1987). The performers mainly used images from *Practical Illustrations of Rhetorical Gesture* as it contains sixty images of gestures with their meanings (Appendix B) and descriptions of how to use them. The simplicity of pictorial references really helped to understand their embodiment beyond what written descriptions could.

Though Siddons' edited version of *Practical Illustrations…* was first printed in 1807 in England – half a century after the period I am investigating – in his introduction he mentions that Engel's work has long been known and esteemed on the English stage (Siddons 1807, p. iii). In addition, the gestures as drawn and the description of their usage on-stage, are similar enough to older images of rhetorical gesture used in acting, such as John Bulwer's 1644 book *Chirologia* (1974 [1644]), that it is highly likely these gestures were used in the mid-eighteenth century. We also looked at images taken from engravings and paintings of actors and actresses in performance as they showed variation in how the gestures could be used, with the caveat that these images were likely to have been manipulated to adhere to prevailing aesthetic ideals and conventions (Davis 2011, p.95).

Gender and Sex in the Eighteenth Century

In his work *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (1990) Thomas Laqueur argues that from the seventeenth century gender in Europe shifted from what he calls a 'one-sex model' to a 'two-sex model', which has dominated since the end of the eighteenth century (Laqueur 1990).[13] Laqueur defines the one-sex model as being one that saw women as 'essentially men in whom a lack of vital heat – of perfection – had resulted in the retention inside of structures that in the male are visible without' (Laqueur 1990, p.4). Male and female bodies were believed to be biologically the same, both possessing penis and testicles, but men's existed externally and woman's internally. Perceived physical and cognitive differences between men and women were not ascribed to sex, but rather to the dominance of the superior 'dry' and 'hot' humours in men (the vital heat mentioned above) and the inferior 'cold' and 'moist' humours in women (Laqueur 1990, p.4). Women were less perfect versions of men and ranked lower on a 'vertical, hierarchical axis' (Harvey 2002, p.901).

The transition from the one-sex model to the two-sex model was not a complete replacement, instead a period of flux occurred in the eighteenth century as both models existed in conjunction with each other (Laqueur 1990, p.150). During this time there was debate and concern 'whether gender identity was understood to be *assumable* – so it could be learned, imitated, performed, donned and doffed at will – or whether it was understood as innate, essential, and pre-determined by sex' (Wahrman 2004, p.48). This period of upheaval as society transitioned created a space for what Dror Wahrman (2004) calls 'gender play' to occur in England (Wahrman, p.41). Meaning that at times during the eighteenth

[13] Laqueur (1990) looks at the shift in Europe as a whole, however this thesis will focus on understandings of gender in English society and the London stage.

century apparent subversions of gender were met with varying attitudes of resignation, tolerance and, crucially, appreciation (Wahrman 2004, p.40). This gender play was seen most dramatically with women: although as a whole women were certainly not freed from the confines of gender, individual women were given leeway to subvert gender boundaries (Wahrman 2004, pp.14 and 36).

Masculinity in the Eighteenth Century

Thomas King (2004) and Randolph Trumbach (1998) argue that in the vertical hierarchy of the one-sex model desire was not gendered, rather it was connected to the concept of rank and status imbricated within gender. It was considered normal for adult men to be attracted to women and to young men/boys as they both ranked lower on the social scale: young men/boys' lack of years gave them a lower rank, making them they acceptable sexual partners despite religious and social edicts against male-male sexual activities (King 2004, p.25; Trumbach 1998, p.6). As the shift from the one-sex model to the two-sex model occurred, the male body became the 'scene of contested action among men of various ranks' (King 2004, p.179). Key to this was the redefining of male sexuality and its connection to 'masculinity', a process which Trumbach (1998) claims meant there were two sexes, male and female, but three genders: men, women and sodomites [men who had sex with men] – with sodomites combining gendered aspects of women and men (Trumbach, p.3).

Karen Harvey (2002) argues that an increasingly egalitarian language of natural rights irrespective of rank began to gain traction in the eighteenth century, presenting a need to define 'women' as qualitatively different from 'men' so that political power could be kept out of their reach (Harvey, p.17). The patriarchal connection of masculinity to freedom and

femininity to subjection has generally manifested in manhood being affirmed by men's sexual mastery (Pateman in King 2004, p.14). Thus, according to Trumbach (1998), there was a splitting of 'men' and 'sodomites' so that, 'however far equality between men and women might go, men would never become like women since they would never desire men. Only women and sodomites desired men' (Trumbach, p.9). The existence of men who had sex with men presented a threat to active masculinity, so they were increasingly condemned as deviant and pushed out to the margins of society (Trumbach 1998, pp.6-7). As part of their deviancy, they were portrayed as connected to a culture of excess and luxury focused on the pleasures of the self (King 2004, p.6).

The link between 'sexual deviancy' by men and excess can be seen in the shift in the meaning of 'effeminacy'. In the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth century, 'effeminacy' was a gender-neutral shorthand for 'corruption, degeneracy, enervation, supineness and self-indulgence' (Wahrman 2004, p.63). As the century progressed, however, 'effeminacy' became increasingly gendered, becoming a descriptor for men who had sex with men (King 2004, p.6). Whereas previously women could be described as 'effeminate', by the end of the century the term had shifted to only being a descriptor for men whose sexuality was suspect.

Femininity in the Eighteenth Century

As the eighteenth century progressed, women and men were increasingly defined as fundamentally, biologically different. Instead of women being seen as 'lesser', the two-sex model focused on there being a fundamental difference between male and female, making women 'other' (Banister 2018, p.6). This meant '[i]ncreasingly women's bodies were

portrayed as radically different from men's – and in turn, women's bodies were seen as determining their personalities and capabilities' (Tague 2002, p.9).

As the two-sex model became more dominant, 'social commentators increasingly portrayed women as naturally modest, chaste, and obedient, attaching any woman who failed to live up to these ideals as unnatural, even monstrous' (Tague 2002, p.44). Despite the increasing dominance of this belief 'the female role, and thus the wifely role, that conduct writers valorised as natural […] did not come naturally but demanded endless self-monitoring and self-denial' (Thomason 2014, p.3). Traits considered inherent to womanhood were actually a code of conduct that women had to consciously adhere to. Some managed better than others, and some had the appearance of adherence without the substance. Since desire and sexual agency were not to be admitted to or acted upon, women who did and were found out were branded as 'whores' and faced social consequence (Marsden 2006, pp.150-1). There was also increasing concern that women could behave as 'whores' while appearing chaste: 'eighteenth-century conduct material reveals an anxiety about women who can act and appear other than themselves' (Nachumi 2008, p.7).

Though women were increasingly confined to the roles of wife and mother (Wahrman 2004, p.12), in the mid-eighteenth century women who took on elements of masculine behaviour were largely celebrated in popular culture. Stories of women dressing and living as soldiers or sailors were very popular, such as the wildly successful 1750 biography of Hannah Snell who lived as a male soldier in the army (Wahrman 1998, p.130). Though these stories had their critics at the time, it is only towards the end of the century that the dominant attitude towards them shifted to one of condemnation (Wahrman 2004, p.253).

Actresses and Gender Performance

In the last twenty years, research on eighteenth-century actresses has focused on their status as professionals, their success in the theatre, and how they managed their careers. Brooks (2015), Nussbaum (2010) and Engel (2011) have unpacked the ways in which successful actresses negotiated their careers by navigating societal expectations of femininity and gender performativity both on- and off-stage. A re-examination of actresses' careers and their engagement with gender that has turned scholarly attention towards female-to-male cross-dressing on-stage in the eighteenth century, particularly the mid-eighteenth century.

By the late 1770s military and cross-dressed women were so common on-stage that the 'female knight' trope was practically a cliché (Wahrman 1998, p.118). Both female characters who dressed up in male clothing in the world of the play and male characters being performed by cross-dressed actresses were popular. Often broadly termed as 'breeches roles', cross-dressing within a play by actresses playing female characters had been a common practice since women were allowed on the English stage in 1660 (Straub 1992, p.127).[14] The popularity of 'breeches roles' has long been attributed to its appeal to the male gaze in an era when women's legs were generally covered and considered hyper-sexual. Since the 1990s this theory has been challenged by academics who argue that the appeal of 'breeches roles' went beyond the 'male gaze'.[15]

[14] Cross-dressing by female characters was a common narrative trope before actresses were allowed on-stage. Famous examples are William Shakespeare's Viola from *Twelfth Night,* Rosalind from *As You Like It* and Portia from *The Merchant of Venice*.

[15] The theory that breeches roles were purely to appeal to male desire is still espoused. In 2019 at the International Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies (ISECS) conference in Edinburgh, a recently graduated PhD candidate presented a paper referencing the 'fact' that Woffington's success was because her legs looked good in breeches.

Actresses performing sexually attractive masculinity made '[f]emale theatrical cross-dressing, particularly at mid-century […] a site of cultural resistance to this narrowing of masculine and feminine down to certain opposite, proscribed roles, even as it serves as one of the grounds of its construction' (Straub 1992, p.143). Brooks (2015) draws a distinction between what she calls 'breeches' roles – a female character who cross-dresses within the narrative of the play – and 'travesty' roles – in which a cross-dressed actress plays a male character (Brooks, p.13). She argues that 'travesty' roles spoke back to a 'one-sex understanding of the body in which sexual identity was mutable' (Brooks 2015, p.13), whereas 'breeches roles' looked to the two-sex model by showing 'the transparent femininity beneath the male disguise, reflecting the growing perception of the body as fundamentally gendered' (Brooks 2015, p.13). Like in society at large, the one-sex and two-sex models existed side-by-side for a time in the theatre, with performers embodying the question of whether gender could be assumed or if it was restricted to the biological signifiers of the body.

Woffington performed both breeches and travesty roles, such as Silviya in *The Recruiting Officer*, Macheath in *The Beggar's Opera*, Lothario in *The Fair Penitent,* and Wildair in *The Constant Couple* (Nussbaum 2010, p.191). According to Brooks' (2015) categorization of cross-dressing on the stage, Silviya was a 'breeches' role because the character cross-dressed in the narrative of the play, while Macheath, Lothario and Wildair were 'travesty' roles as they were male characters normally performed by men. Drag and cross-dressing in performance rely on the interaction between the 'real' gender of the performer and the gender of the character, which is then seen as illusory, artificial and false (Butler 1999, p.xxii). This 'perpetual displacement […] suggests an openness to resignification and recontextualization'

(Butler 1999, p.176). Brooks (2015) argues that Woffington's 'travesty' roles 'drew on the audience's foreknowledge of her biological sex and of her other female roles, whilst concurrently embodying masculinity, [cultivating] a camp sensibility which playfully brought into tension and queered cultural notions of masculinity and femininity' (Brooks, p.70).

Nussbaum (2010) agrees that Woffington's cross-dressing in male roles destabilised attempts for the reification of gender roles, but for her they were a break from the past rather than looking back, 'actresses in travestied dress consistently resisted close association with outdated assumptions about women and became instead harbingers of freedoms yet to come' (Nussbaum, p.193). Whether looking forward or looking back, the consensus amongst scholars like Straub, Brooks and Nussbaum is that there was more to female-to-male cross-dressed roles on the stage than an appeal to the male gaze, and that the possibilities presented by actresses performing masculinity acted as a challenge to increasingly binary notions of gender.

Actors and Gender Performance

This thesis focuses on the performance of gender by mid-eighteenth century actresses, but it is important to understand what was occurring for actors at this time. Though there was a trend in the 1770s and 1780s to perform mostly or fully gender swapped productions of *The Beggar's Opera* (Wahrman 2004, p.50), male-to-female cross-dressing was more unusual from the mid-eighteenth century onwards than female-to-male cross-dressing. Anxiety about the association between 'sodomites' and 'feminine' behaviour seems to be a key reason actors became wary of male-to-female cross-dressing (Friedman-Romell 1995, p.465). Mid-century actors were very aware of their gendered status and tried to cultivate an image of

‘manliness’ ‘to define themselves in opposition to homosexually “tainted” others’ (Straub 1995, p.262). A ‘wider public awareness that ‘mollies’ or sodomites cavorted in drag in their private assemblies may have led to […] a conscious avoidance of drag that carried sexual overtones or amorous ambiguity’ (Senelick 2000, p.214). Male-to-female cross-dressing in the theatre became ‘only as churlish and unsexed plebian females or as galumphing men’s men incapable of keeping up the disguise’ (Senelick 2000, p.214). From mid-century onwards ‘male theatrical cross-dressing had become more a travesty of femininity than an imitation […] performances tended to emphasize the contrast between the actor's masculinity and the femininity he put on' (Straub 1992, p.34) .

Changes in how masculinity was perceived in the eighteenth century profoundly affected the character of the ‘fop’. Fops were always considered ‘effeminate’ in the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries, and as the meaning of effeminacy changed so did the characterisation of the fop. Early fops were ridiculed because they were only about form and appearance with no substance to them, not because they displayed a ‘suspect’ sexuality (Staves 1982, p.413-6). Effeminacy ‘which had meant both to like women and to be like women, lost this first meaning […] Moreover, to be like a woman was, increasingly, also to be homosexual’ (McGirr 2007, pp.47-8). As the meaning of effeminacy changed so did the reasons to mock and ostracise fops. As will be argued in Chapter One, the shift in the meaning of effeminacy and the increasing demonisation of the fop on gendered grounds, could have been a major factor in the popularity of Woffington’s performance of Wildair.

Current Production and Training Context of Restoration Theatre

In the past decade, the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) has put up William Congreve's *Love for Love* (2015); Aphra Behn's *The Rover* (2016); Mary Pix's *The Fantastic Follies of Mrs Rich (The Beaux Defeated)* (2018); Thomas Otway's *Venice Preserved* (2019); and John Vanbrugh's *The Provoked Wife* (2019).[16] The National Theatre produced Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer* (2012) and Farquhar's *The Beaux Stratagem* (2015).[17] The Donmar Warehouse performed Farquhar's *The Recruiting Officer* (2012) and Congreve's *The Way of the World* (2018). Shakespeare's Globe produced a renamed version of John Dryden's 1675 play *Aureng-zebe* called *The Captive Queen* (2018). The Orange Tree Theatre in Richmond is not one of the larger theatres in London, but it is well-known and long running, and in 2018 they put on a production of Congreve's *The Double Dealer*.

Of these productions, I watched the RSC's *The Provoked Wife* (2019) and Shakespeare Globe's *The Captive Queen* (2018) in person and viewed recorded versions of The National Theatre's productions of *She Stoops to Conquer* (2012) and *The Beaux Stratagem* (2015). For the other productions mentioned, I have looked at what pictures and clips are available online.

The Provoked Wife (2019) had the most connection to my research as in 2019, at the Ovalhouse, we explored Act IV scene iii, in which Lord Brute cross-dresses as Lady Brute to fool the watch. The RSC used shared lighting, and though the performers did not use specific period gestures their movements were deliberate and expansive (*The Provoked Wife*, 2019). Caroline Quentin as Lady Fancyfull made use of improvisation for comedic effect, in the

[16] Notably they are the only major theatre on this list to include plays written by female Restoration playwrights.
[17] I have not included the National Theatre's adaptation of Sheridan's *The Rivals*, called *Jack Absolute Flies Again* (2022). Though it follows the general plot and characters of *The Rivals* it changed the language and set it in WWI. This feels like a big enough departure from the original to exclude it from this list.

performance I saw she caused even the cast break character and laugh when she improvised eating a prop grape. In the play text Fancyfull is a solid example of a female fop: her narcissism makes her too self-involved to realise when she is being tricked and laughed at by the other characters (Staves 1982, pp.413 -416). In the RSC production it is unclear if Quentin or the director (Phillip Breen) thought of Fancyfull as a female fop – the play's program does not indicate it (Rodgers 2019) – however Quentin's performance of self-involved narcissism was highlighted by the production's use of mirrors and excessive luxury to represent her home (*The Provoked Wife*, 2019).

Quentin as Fancyfull was clearly older than the actresses playing the two heroines – Lady Brute and Bellinda. Her age highlighted at one point by having her appear bare-headed with cropped, grey hair (*The Provoked Wife*, 2019). Fancyfull's crush, Heartfree, was played by a then fifty-three-year-old John Hodgkinson ('John Hodgkinson' 2023). Heartfree is in love with Bellinda, played by a thirty-two-year-old Natalie Dew ('Natalie Dew' 2021), and is disgusted by Fancyfull, played by the fifty-nine-year-old Quentin ('Caroline Quentin' 2023). Though Fancyfull is written as being deluded about her looks and appeal, especially in contrast to Bellinda, the play never says she is notably older than Bellinda (Vanbrugh 1697). Casting for a large age gap between Fancyfull and Bellinda, particularly when Heartfree is closer to Fancyfull's age than Bellinda's, inevitably brings up comparisons of the sexual appeal of older women versus younger women. The audience sees the older woman punished for seeing herself as attractive and for desiring Heartfree, but Heartfree is not penalised for desiring a much younger woman, in fact he wins her heart. Jean Marsden (2006) argues that in most Restoration comedy older women are objects of ridicule (Marsden, p.48), so it is telling that

in a play where this is not obviously the case the RSC made their female fop older than the play's heroines.

This thesis does not have the space to explore in depth how older women are often treated as figures of ridicule, but its frequency in modern productions is noticeable. The National Theatre's *The Beaux Stratagem* (2015) had the only older female character, Jane Booker's Lady Bountiful (who is not a fop), in period hair and make-up that made her look ridiculous in comparison to the subdued modern looks of Mrs Sullen and Dorinda (Harlan 2015). The Donmar Warehouse's *The Way of the World* had Lady Wishfort similarly styled in an exaggerated way. Though she is period appropriate, compared to the more modern, subtle make-up of the younger female characters, she looks overblown and ridiculous (Donmar Warehouse 2018).

In terms of how the female characters of these plays were performed, in the National Theatre's *The Beaux Stratagem* the two main female characters – Mrs Sullen and Dorinda – had very different body language around each other versus when they were around men (*The Beaux Stratagem* 2015). When Mrs Sullen is describing to Dorinda how drunk Mr Sullen (Dorinda's brother) was the night before, Dorinda sits on the stairs with her legs akimbo. When Mr Sullen arrives on stage, Dorinda suddenly sits more upright and closes her legs. In *She Stoops to Conquer* (2012) Katherine Kelly as Kate Hardcastle straddled the arm of a sofa and hitched up her skirt in order to capture the interest and attention of her shy love interest, Hastings (John Heffernan) (Person 2012). This sexual directness clearly gave Kelly more comedic leeway with the scene but is unlikely to meet the approval of those who claim the women of Restoration theatre embodied a 'soft' and restrained notion of femininity.

Almost all the Restoration comedies mentioned above are presented with period costume and styling, including *The Fantastic Follies of Mrs Rich* at the RSC (Royal Shakespeare Society 2018) and *The Double Dealer* at the Orange Tree Theatre (the Orange Tree Theatre 2018). *The Rover* at the RSC differed slightly as it used a pastiche of various period costumes from the late-seventeenth century onwards (Royal Shakespeare Society 2016). In contrast, the two Restoration tragedies – *Venice Preserved* and *The Captive Queen* – used entirely modern costume and stage design (*The Captive Queen* 2018; Royal Shakespeare Society 2019). Perhaps because Restoration tragedy is felt to be more alienating to a modern audience than the Restoration comedy, both productions felt a modern context would make them more accessible. Or maybe the late-seventeenth- and eighteenth-century clothing felt too 'camp' for the seriousness of the narratives.[18]

The Donmar Warehouse made a 'behind the scenes' guide for *The Way of the World* (2018), which gives some insight into how they approached gender. The characters are described as 'living within a hierarchical society with a fixed social status, including that of gender status issues between men and women' (Watkiss 2018, p.17). This included gendered physical behaviour: 'The use of the fan […] during the Restoration era is became [sic] increasingly associated with the female' (Watkiss 2018, p.19) and 'Now, as tech puts focus on minute angles and corners of the work, there's time around the edges for – literally and metaphorically – learning to kick your dress for emphasis' (Tyabji 2018, p.15).

[18] 'Camp' here is used to mean 'Art, performance, literature, etc., which is exaggerated, affected, or over the top in style or execution, esp. in a knowing or playful way, or which is not restrained by traditional or prevailing ideas of good taste or decorum, or current fashion' (OED 2023).

Jenny Jules, who played Mrs Marwood, writes that 'I was looking at her [Mrs Marwood] as an archetype and looking at her in isolation, that she behaves in quite a male, roughish way – in a villainous way. Where has her independent wealth come from? Why can she move freely through this play and twist people's minds, acting a bit like a man?' (Jules 2018, p.26). To address such questions:

> Amy Erickson, an economic historian, was invited into the rehearsal room [she explained that] Married people in London were in the minority during this period […] The figure of Mrs Marwood, who is unmarried and in control of her own wealth, was not unusual. (Watkiss 2018, p.9-10)

Restoration Theatre in Current Actor-Training

The list of Restoration theatre productions from the last decade is not extensive, therefore it is not surprising that Restoration theatre is less commonly taught than other classical theatre genres. Ben Naylor, the MA in Acting Classical course leader at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama (Central), replied to my enquiries that since the MA only consists of a year, the decision was made to focus on Greek, Early Modern and Realistic theatre (2023). Restoration theatre did not make the cut as 'the transferable skills from Restoration work were less applicable to a contemporary acting career' (Naylor 2023). The actress and director Hermoine Guildford – who recently directed the second year BA Musical Theatre students at Central in *The Country Wife* – affirmed that in her experience it is unusual for drama schools to think it's worth pursuing training for Restoration theatre (Guildford, 2023).[19] If it does appear in training, it is often brief. Eunice Roberts at the British American Drama Academy (BADA) explained that 'At BADA we teach Restoration as part of our High Comedy class, so

[19] Guildford is herself a graduate of Central and has appeared in several productions of Restoration plays, including the RSC's *Love for Love* in 2015.

Restoration only features as a part of the module, after which they move on to other periods' (2023).

Some longer courses do take more time to focus on Restoration theatre, although again there is a strong emphasis on its transferable skills. Wendy Gadian, the course leader of the BA in Musical Theatre at Central School of Speech and Drama, was one of the few course leaders who emphasised both the importance of teaching Restoration theatre for its own sake as well as its transferable skills 'in voice, heightened text and language, movement, clown, comedy and the concept of 'embodied heightened performance' in relation to the use of song in performance' (Gadian 2023).

Gadian also put me in touch with Guildford, quoted above. Guildford relayed that when she was a student she was very influenced by Fidelis Morgan (who wrote *The Female Wits* in 1981) when Morgan directed her in a Restoration theatre production (Guildford, 2023). Guildford was very aware of issues of gender in Restoration plays, particularly themes of domestic violence, like in *The Country Wife* when Pinchwife threatens his wife Margery with a knife (Guildford, 2023). She emphasised that the way these themes are openly discussed and shown in Restoration theatre is radical even for today – her students were shocked by Pinchwife's brutality – making them important to both perform and teach (Guildford, 2023).

AT RADA, Francine Watson Coleman teaches period movement: 'Francine is a specialist […] in period-specific movement, style and codes of behaviour as they relate to the meaning and performance of playtexts [...] [she] specialises in staging Elizabethan and Restoration plays.' (RADA, no date). Though I did not get to interview Watson Coleman for this thesis, she worked

with the Donmar in 2018 on *The Way of the World*. The behind-the-scenes guide quoted above gives some insight into her approach to Restoration theatre. The guide mentions how 'As well as the historical research, there was the "bodily research" […] This embodied the "value system" with which the leisured classes ran their lives. Francine's initial task was to consider what this "value system" was with the actors' (Watkiss 2018, p.18). The Assistant Director, Jo Tyabji, recalls Watson Coleman calling this 'forward comportment' (Tyabji 2018, p.13).

The guide also includes 'Examples of Embodying the Physical Manners of the Time into the Actors' Performances' (Watkiss 2018, p.19). Though these examples do not reference Watson Coleman, given that she was directing the performers in period movement for the play it can be assumed this list came from her. The examples used include 'Bows and curtseys […] The use of the fan […] Gentleman in heels […] Nonchalance: the new grace' (Watkiss 2018, p.19). The behind-the-scenes guide never mentions the use of period gesture. This absence strongly indicates that Watson Coleman's approach to Restoration theatre does not include period gesture, but instead focuses on comportment, the use of fans and skirts, bows and curtsey's and an air of nonchalance.

As of writing this, LAMDA does not list a course leader for the one-year course in Classical Acting that I did in 2009/10 – which has since changed to an MA and an additional MFA (LAMDA, no date). The course specification states that Restoration comedy is still taught and that,

> Practical class work will normally consider the development of a character, through character investigation off contextual research, interaction and

> observation with reference to the work of Stanislavski and Rudolf Laban. (LAMDA, no date).

A reading list included recommends Bonamy Dobrée's *Restoration Comedy 1660–1720* (1924) and *Restoration Tragedy 1660–1720* (1929), as well as John Russell Brown's *Restoration Theatre* (1965) (LAMDA, no date).

This is the only actor-training programme so far to include Restoration tragedy, however the books recommended tend to dismiss it as a genre. Dobrée (1929) argues that it 'forfeited its superb detachment from life, its really healthy artificiality […] the romantic basis showed itself in the form romance always takes upon itself unless rigorously chastened by art, namely as sentimentality' (Dobrée, p. 58). The problems with Restoration tragedy, Dobrée (1929) states, began '[w]ith Mrs. Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko* […] romance lost a certain cliff-like hardness, and subsided into a sea of emotions […] the stage was then vacant for the sentimental comedy of Cibber, Steele , and their contemporaries (Dobrée, p.58). Singling out 'Mrs. Aphra Behn' (male authors just get a last name with no suffix) as starting the downfall of tragedy displays a dismissive attitude towards women's influence on the genre echoed by writers like Anne Righter (1965) in the other book recommended: *Restoration Theatre, Stratford-Upon-Avon Studies* (1965).

> Realistic, essentially masculine in outlook, always a trifle bitter, [Restoration] comedy cut a little too close to the bone to please many of the women and their attendant fops […] Tragedy, on the other hand, flattered exactly those romantic notions and grandiose dreams of the self which comedy set out to deflate. It loosed no arrows of mockery at the inhabitants of Fop's Corner; it consistently assured women that they were beings enskied and sainted […] Restoration tragedy continued to embody a feminine as opposed to a masculine point of view (Righter 1965, pp. 138-9).

By deliberately connecting Restoration tragedy's perceived inferiority to femininity, women, and 'fops', Righter is explicitly negative about the influence of women, femininity and effeminacy on the theatre. Hugh Hunt's (1965) chapter on 'Restoration Acting' is much less explicit in its disparagement of women's influence on the theatre; though he asserts that the basis of Restoration actresses' appeal was the revelation of their attractive bodies on stage and their availability and willingness to become the mistresses of wealthy men (Hunt, pp.181-3). As Morgan (1981) commented, this attitude regarding the skills of Restoration actresses would be like 'for future generations to remember of Glenda Jackson only that she worked as a counter assistant for a high street chemist' (Morgan, p. x).

Admittedly, sentiments like these towards the influence of women and 'fops' on Restoration tragedy are not unexpected for 1929 and 1965, however it is questionable that these books are being recommended in 2023. Particularly as there is now a wealth of scholarship and research easily available that challenge these regressive views.

Restoration Theatre Acting Manuals

The general lack of performances of and training for Restoration theatre is reflected in the limited availability of resources on how to perform in Restoration theatre available outside of drama schools. What acting manuals there are all solely look at Restoration comedy. *Acting in Restoration Comedy* (1991) by Simon Callow and *Delicious Dissembling: A Compleat Guide to Performing Restoration Comedy* (2002) by Ramczyk are the only two acting manuals focused on Restoration theatre. Maria Aitken's book *Style: Acting in High Comedy* (1996) includes scenes from Restoration comedy but is not focused on it.

The Craft of Comedy: Correspondence between Athene Seyler and Stephen Haggard (1958) also does not focus on Restoration comedy alone but does discuss it. Most importantly, Seyler's words and performances, alongside Edith Evans', are often referenced as prime examples of acting in Restoration comedy (Styan 1986, p. 120). Callow (1991) references Seyler and Evans' performances as the blueprints for female characters in Restoration comedy (Callow 1991, p. 84) and Ramczyk (2002) calls Seyler's book the 'wonderful *Craft of Comedy*' (Ramczyk, p.101). As Robert Barton (2013) writes, 'Seyler was recognized as one of the great technical experts on the playing of high comedy […] She had a particular flair for Restoration comedy and excelled in Sir Nigel Playfair's revivals' (Barton, p.8).

Though it was written over thirty years ago, Callow's *Acting in Restoration Comedy* (1991) is arguably still the most influential acting manual on Restoration theatre currently available. It's the top source on Google for Restoration theatre acting, and is the only source quoted in an article titled 'Acting in Restoration Comedy' (Schiffman 2007) in the North American theatre newspaper *Backstage*.[20] Though Roberts at BADA replied to me that there is no unifying approach for teaching Restoration theatre at BADA, she recommended '[i]f you are wanting to read about actors today and how they have approached the work, you can look at Maria Aitken and Simon Callow' (Roberts 2023).

It is notable then that Callow admits in his Preface,

> When Maria Aitken invited me to teach a master class in Restoration Comedy, I firmly declined. By no stretch of the imagination am I a master in plays of the period: my personal experience of them is limited to one play, *The Relapse*, and, though that one experience compelled me to think deep and hard about the

[20] The article is in fact one of the very few hits for 'Acting in Restoration theatre' on Google that is not just a direct link to Callow's book.

> period and its plays, it hardly qualified me to lay down the law about it either. (Callow 1991, p.xiii)

He was eventually convinced by Aitken's argument that they would only focus on *The Relapse*, and that 'a Master Class was to be understood not in the sense of a Master handing on his wisdom, but of a collective attempt to gain mastery over the material' (Callow 1991, p.xiii). Despite the admission that his experience of Restoration comedy was limited to one production, Callow goes on to confidently give both general and specific advice on how to perform in it. He never indicates what his sources are for the history of the Restoration theatre, so it is impossible to establish the veracity of his historical pronouncements.

Despite Callow's opacity regarding his sources, his book has strong similarities to J.L. Styan's *Restoration Comedy in Performance* (1986), indicating that Styan was one of his main sources. They use the same quote from Colley Cibber's *Love's Last Shift* (1696) to justify how Restoration women's physicality is to be performed (Styan 1896, p.125 and Callow 1991, p. 83), and both refer to the 'revival' of Restoration comedy in the 1920s and 1930s (Styan 1986, p.4) as the examples to follow when performing Restoration comedy (Styan 1986 and Callow 1991).[21] It is therefore interesting to learn from Seyler that these productions (which she famously performed in) included some guesswork on how to perform the plays (Seyler and Haggard 2013, p.128). Even Styan (1986) admits that performers in these revivals had 'to create their own style and standard of acting when faced with the need to reconcile the old comedies to an audience for the most part unfamiliar with them' (Styan 1986, p.43). Which raises a question, to be explored outside of this thesis, regarding how much current

[21] According to Styan (1986), Restoration theatre fell out of fashion in the nineteenth century, but Playfair's productions in the 1920s brought them back into the repertoire (Styan, p. 4).

approaches to performing Restoration comedy reflect the world of the 1920s rather than the late-seventeenth and eighteenth centuries?

In fairness to Callow, he is not an academic dedicated to proving the veracity of his statements, nor could he have known that his book would stand out so much in an area with very limited options for study. Callow is an actor and, in this context, an actor-trainer. His primary task is to ensure performers can approach Restoration comedy with a measure of confidence and skill. In addition, he wrote his book over three decades ago; we do not know what he would write now. The only indication we have is a discussion he had at the National Theatre in 2009, 'Simon Callow Acting in Restoration Comedy The Acting Series… revisited' (2009). Callow's opinions appeared to remain unchanged; however, again, this talk was over a decade ago and his thoughts may have shifted.

Even so, with the benefit of thirty more years of research, discourse and understanding around gender and theatre history, Callow's book is ripe for challenge. Callow himself emphasises the importance of knowing the 'style' of the play you are in, meaning 'you need to ask questions about the world from which the play came, and the theatrical practice of the day' (Callow 1991, p.6).

Callow places much emphasis on the language of the plays and how they use wit to propel them forward. Classical theatre training in the United Kingdom generally emphasises that how characters use language is the most important element of performance (Simms 2019, pp. 118 – 124). What the characters are saying, their wit, and the energy of their rhetoric are placed centre-stage, so to speak, and the physical aspects – particularly the gestures used

when these plays were originally performed – are downplayed or even ignored. Though research on gesture was available when Callow wrote this book – Barnett's *The Art of Gesture: The Practices and Principles of 18th Century Acting* was published in 1987 – he does not even mention them.[22]

Chapters One and Two relate how my research specifically refutes or complicates Callow's instructions for how to perform women characters in Restoration comedy, but before going into such detail, the general tone of Callow's book with regard to women deserves some scrutiny.

Callow's writing presents women as magical objects of desire, not real human beings with thoughts and feelings that go beyond how to entice men. The title of Chapter Five is 'The Art of Being a Woman' (Callow 1991, p.79), but there is no chapter called the 'Art of Being a Man'. The only other chapter that focuses on a specified group is the chapter 'Fops' (Callow 1991, p.51) in which there is no mention of female fops. In separating out women characters by their gender but not doing the same for men, Callow implies that the standard character is male and that women are a separate, notable 'Other'. Similarly, calling it the 'Art' of being a woman, implies that women's behaviour is a performance or façade, whilst men's behaviour is without 'Art'.

[22] In addition, Max Stafford-Clark's *Letters to George* (1989) describes how he worked on gestures from the seventeenth- and eighteenth-centuries with actors from his theatre company Joint Stock (Stafford-Clark, p.21). Callow had been a member of Joint Stock (Callow 2004, p.65) and though he left the company prior to the period Stafford-Clark's book details (Callow 2004, p.81) it is not inconceivable he would have heard about Joint Stock's experimentation with gesture.

Callow continues previous trends focusing primarily on Restoration actresses' desirability to men: 'the revelation of women on the stage was a kind of witchcraft' (Callow 1991, p.79) and 'the *frisson* caused by the arrival of women with all their erotic potential into a hitherto all-male enclave' (Callow 1991, p.81). Words like 'witchcraft' in combination with discussing the actresses' 'erotic potential' conjures up images of sirens and other mythical beings that take the female form. The actresses and the women they performed become mysterious, irresistible, alien, perhaps duplicitous. They are not real human beings with contradictions, emotions and needs of their own.

Furthermore, Callow almost seems to regret that women on the stage are no longer presented as magical,

> The magic of women, their ju-ju, was, again until very recently, one of the great branches of theatrical art: their clothes, their physical movement, the tricks, as it were, of their trade, were studied and perfected not only by the actresses themselves – who acquired astonishing expertise in creating their effects within a tiny range of permitted behavior [sic] – but by their directors. As recently as 1951, when Laurence Olivier directed and played opposite Vivien Leigh in Rattigan's *The Sleeping Prince* […] All the lights went up a few points whenever Vivien Leigh walked on stage, and they went down again when she left it […] it was a way of enhancing the kind of witchcraft her character represented, the million ways of being a woman. (Callow 1991, p.81).

That he regrets this change in how women are presented on stage is strengthened by a quote just prior to this one,

> To recapture [the celebration of femininity] in more modern times can be tricky. Women have well and truly claimed their position in the theatre, as writers, directors, managers […] as well as actresses. The novelty has, to say the least, worn off. In addition to this, in our age, the transformation in sexual politics has called into question the very notion of celebrating femininity: is that not merely another form of oppression, by which women are obliged to behave according to men's definition, satisfying men's fantasies and requirements? This is a very new development, and carries with it, as usual in any ideological breakthrough, a complex mix of gains and losses. (Callow 1991, pp.80-1)

Callow's sentiments are echoed in the complaint from the visiting director at LAMDA that 'feminism has ruined actresses for these roles'. He and Callow appear to feel that the power and interest women characters in Restoration comedy have comes from their ability to embody a specific, sexually enticing version of femininity.[23]

Femininity, Masculinity and Feminism

The terms 'feminism', 'feminine' and 'masculine' have come up numerous times in this Introduction; however, what is considered 'feminine' or 'masculine' is very influenced by cultural context and historical period. 'Feminism' too 'is multifaceted, diverse in in both its historical forms and in its political and intellectual context: it's an umbrella, sheltering beliefs and interests that may be not just different but incompatible with one another' (Cameron 2018, p.8).

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED)* 'masculine', has been in use since 1425 for 'Designating an object deemed to be of the male sex on the basis of some quality, such as strength or activity, esp. as contrasted with a corresponding object deemed female' (*OED* 2022). From 1425 'feminine' has meant 'characteristic of, befitting, or regarded as appropriate to the female sex. Of a woman: having or exhibiting the qualities, behaviour, or appearance considered as typical of the female sex' (*OED* 2022). Notably, though both definitions make a connection to either the male sex or the female sex, only the definition for masculine defines specific qualities: 'strength or activity'. The definition for 'feminine' does

[23] The phrase 'The magic of women, their ju-ju' (Callow 1991, p.81) contains suspect racial imagery in addition to driving home the image of women as mysterious.

not specify qualities beyond those 'considered as typical of the female sex'. Furthermore, while 'masculine' has quotes from 1550 that show it to mean 'vigorous, powerful. Of a man: manly, virile' (*OED* 2022), 'feminine' is only connected to specific qualities from 1856: 'having characteristics conventionally associated with the female sex, such as prettiness and delicacy' (*OED* 2022). That 'masculine' was more clearly defined in terms of qualities associated with it centuries earlier than 'feminine' was, relates back to previous points that there was anxiety around defining 'masculine' and 'masculinity' long before there was anxiety over defining 'feminine'.

Given the above, we should not assume that 'prettiness and delicacy' were considered 'feminine' in the late-seventeenth and eighteenth-centuries. Thus, when analysing modern discourse on acting in Restoration theatre, the question must be asked: how much are modern understandings of 'masculine' and 'feminine' being imposed on theatre between 1660 and 1800?

'Feminism' is another term to define and grapple with. Since 'feminism can engage in useful dialogues with a wide variety of methodologies' (Ahn 2020, p.26), in today's world there is a 'difficulty of defining feminism, since it engages with so many other critical approaches' (Ahn 2020, p.27). Deborah Cameron (2018) points out that while many writers say we should talk about 'feminisms' rather than 'feminism', there are two fundamental beliefs that feminism rests on,

1. That women currently occupy a subordinate position in society; that they suffer certain injustices and systemic disadvantages because they are women.
2. That the subordination of women is neither inevitable nor desirable: it can and should be changed through political action.

(Cameron 2018, p. 9).[24]

Given that Callow's book came out in 1991, and that the visiting director is of the same theatrical generation, there is a strong possibility that their concept of 'feminism' was based on what is often termed the 'Second Wave' of feminism that began in the 1960s (Ahn 2020, p.27) and towards which there was significant backlash in the late 1980s and 1990s (Cameron 2018, p.2). One of the key areas the 'Second Wave' addressed was the representation of women (Ahn 2020, p. 28), in particular the representation of women and 'femininity' being one and the same (Cameron 2018, pp.67-70). They wanted 'to liberate women from […] the idea that a woman's worth was determined by her ability to produce herself as a desirable object for man's consumption' (Cameron 2018, p.79), in other words to separate a woman's worth from the 'feminine wiles' that Callow claims Restoration theatre advocated for. This objective in the 'Second Wave' is likely the source of Callow's statement that those in Restoration theatre were 'far from feminist' (Callow 1991: 80), and the visiting director's claim that 'feminism' and Restoration theatre were not compatible.

The goal of this thesis within the feminist discourse is to challenge representations of women characters in Restoration theatre as rigidly 'feminine'. It does this by recognising that the modern, Western system of 'two sex/two genders' has often been imposed in situations where this binary did not and does not exist (Ahn 2020, p.34). Actresses and women characters of Restoration theatre were not limited to the binary expressions of gender as taught in much actor training today. Exploring the varied ways actresses expressed gender

[24] Admittedly, even these two broad points are a source of contention. There are currently heated debates between feminists in both academia and public discourse regarding who can be included under the umbrella term 'women' and who cannot.

performativity on stage gives modern performers scope to challenge the current gender binary as taught and go beyond it. In addition, by centring the performance skills of Woffington in male roles, I hope to move further away from attributing the success of late-seventeenth- and eighteenth-century actresses to the men around them towards recognising that their skills were in fact the key to their success.[25]

Chapter Breakdown

Chapter One focuses on comedy plays and performances by cross-dressed and non-cross-dressed actresses in them. Chapter Two looks at cross-dressed and non-cross-dressed performances by actresses in tragedy.

In the first part of Chapter One, I analyse the success of Woffington's performance as Sir Harry Wildair from *The Constant Couple* by Farquhar (1699). The London Stage Database shows that Woffington performed Wildair more than any actor or actress mid-century, and that up until the late eighteenth century the role was generally more successful when performed by an actress than an actor. Our Practice-as-Research explorations indicate that cross-dressing Wildair may have rehabilitated his character in a time when the reception of the archetypal roles of the rake and fop had shifted from praise and amusement to condemnation. Behaviours that might have made Wildair either sexually suspect or too sexually aggressive when performed by an actor, were softened when performed by a cross-dressed actress. At the same time, cross-dressing an actress as Wildair allowed audience members to enjoy

[25] In science, feminists talk of ''the Matilda effect', a tendency to credit women's achievements to the men they work with' (Cameron 2018, p.109). Perhaps in the theatre this should be called 'the Barry effect' after Elizabeth Barry: her career and considerable dramatic skills are often attributed to unsubstantiated reports her supposed lover the Earl of Rochester (who wasn't an actor) 'trained' her after a disastrous debut.

transgressive sexuality without public disapproval. Woffington's performance as Wildair shows the scope of gender portrayal available to actresses, subsequently opening up opportunities for modern performers to experiment beyond the gender binary taught in training.

The second part of Chapter One analyses the character of Lady Lurewell from *The Constant Couple* to see how non-cross-dressed female roles in Restoration comedy related to gender in the eighteenth century. This was to explore whether or not the demands of the role conform to what modern acting manuals and training stipulate for the performance of female characters, scrutinizing statements that female roles and actresses celebrated 'femininity' and were not feminists. What we found was that Lurewell uses the expectations of eighteenth-century 'femininity' to get what she wants, but her behaviour does not always conform to what modern-day training and manuals consider 'feminine'. Similarly, her explicit awareness of the imbalance of power between men and women in society and her desire to have revenge for it, reveals an awareness of gender inequality that could be termed 'feminist'. How conduct books concerned with the behaviour of the 'ideal' woman are used in modern training for the performance of Restoration women characters is also scrutinised. As is the ubiquitous advice to performers that the use of fans is intrinsic to the performance of women in Restoration theatre.

Chapter Two looks at tragedy, recognising that though it is less performed today than Restoration comedy, the importance it had for theatre in the eighteenth century makes it vital to investigate when looking at the breadth of gender performance by actresses in Restoration theatre. Again, the chapter is split in two. The first part focuses on Woffington's

cross-dressed performance as Lothario in *The Fair Penitent* (1702) by Nicholas Rowe. My initial interest in Woffington's performance of Lothario was piqued by modern scholars' claims that it was a critical and popular failure. After analysing the records of her performances as Lothario in both Dublin and London, however, I have come to disagree that it was a failure. Though it was definitely not as successful as her Wildair, it was a moderate success in Dublin and the sickness that ended her career occurred too close to her first performances of Lothario in London to definitively argue for its success or failure there. Despite this discovery, the Practice-as-Research did highlight that the difference in success between Woffington's Lothario and Wildair could be because, unlike with Wildair, cross-dressing Lothario impacted his narrative role as a sexually aggressive antagonist thereby undermining his character, rather than improving it.

In the second half of Chapter Two, I examine the role of Calista from *The Fair Penitent*, one of the most popular tragic female roles of the time. The Practice-as-Research revealed that Calista's anger and rage are foregrounded throughout the play. Anger at the time was considered 'unnatural' for women to express, so public displays of anger could be considered visceral feminist acts. Once again raising questions about Callow's assertion that the women in Restoration theatre were 'far from being feminists' (Callow 1991: 80) and the visiting director's statement that feminism 'ruined' actresses for these roles.

<u>Future Areas for Research</u>

As stated, the scope of my Practice-as-Research was larger than what this thesis can cover, and there are several avenues for future research that I would like to mention.

The 2017 workshops spent some time looking at scenes from *The Beggar's Opera* (1728). In the mid- to late-eighteenth century there were performances of *The Beggar's Opera* in which the entire cast was cross-dressed, performances in which only Polly Peachum and Macheath were cross-dressed, and performances in which only Macheath was cross-dressed (Lysons 1775-82). Exploring these casting choices, particularly a scene in which Lucy Lockitt and Polly learn that Macheath has pledged himself to both of them, led to some interesting discoveries. In particular the moment that Robert G. Slade, cross-dressed as Polly, copied the way Lisa, who was playing Lucy, performed the gesture 'Joy' (https://youtu.be/bys1z1C4anw).

Figure 5: 'Joy' (Siddons 1807, p.26).

Robert's mimicry had an immediate and electric effect on Lisa: though she remained still, her face flushed directly after he copied her. She visibly bristled at his imitation, both as Lisa the performer and as Lucy the character. As the clip shows, moments later Lisa mocked the way Robert performed a gesture and directed her delivery of the word 'monster' not to Macheath, to whom the insult is meant, but towards Robert (https://youtu.be/cZL03vBttCY).

Lisa recognised that what Robert did had affected her. After they finished the scene, she told him, 'There was a change of gear for me, when you imitated me. And not just that you

imitated me, but that you as a *man* imitated me. And it just made my blood boil' (Connell, Lapidge, Parsons and Slade, 2017). Robert responded that he imitated her because he wanted to be like her, he wanted to do what she as a woman would do and therefore appear more feminine (Connell, Lapidge, Parsons and Slade, 2017). To Lisa, however, it came across as mocking, not complimentary. Interestingly, rather than making Robert's performance of femininity feel 'real', his mimicry highlighted the artificiality of his performance thereby making it funny, as evidenced by my and Hilary Connell's laughter when he copied Lisa.

By repeating what Lisa had just done, Robert underscored that Lisa's representation of femininity as a 'real' woman, as herself and as Lucy, was also a performance. This challenged her perception of what Butler (1988) terms her 'abiding gendered self' (Butler, p.519), unsettling her and making her retaliate. Lisa's later mocking imitation of Robert made it explicit that she as Lisa/Lucy considered his performance of femininity artificial, undermining his representation of femininity as 'fake' and underlining her own as 'real'. Occurring early on in my research, this moment made me realise how much cross-dressing as parody could have impacted both audience perception of character as well as the relationship between performers and characters.

The many different casting choices for *The Beggar's Opera* deserve further study as examples of the different iterations of mid-century cross-dressing. Particularly the avoidance of any suggestion of male-male sexual desire by never having a cross-dressed male-to-female Polly perform opposite a Macheath played by a non-cross-dressed actor. Also of interest is that while cross-dressed Macheaths seemed to be non-parodic, cross-dressed Pollys definitely were parodic. An image of the comedian Mr Bannister as Polly exemplifies this,

Figure 6: Anon, 'Mr. Bannister in the Character of Miss Polly Peachum', 1781 in 'Theatrical Clippings Collectanea; coll. By Lysons'. Scrapbook A.16.2. Folger Shakespeare Library., Washington DC.

This drawing depicts Bannister as incongruously overweight and jowly for Polly, and apparently his performance was considered so hilarious and exaggerated that when he entered the stage as Polly on April 22, 1782, a Mrs Fitzherbert of Northamptonshire,

> could not suppress the laugh that seized her on the first view of this *enormous* [sic] representation […] not being able to banish the *figure* [sic] from her memory [she] was thrown into hysterics, which continued without intermission until yesterday morning, when she expired. (Lysons 1775-82)

Bannister's Polly exemplifies the parodic, comedic approach to cross-dressing male-to-female roles that Straub (1992) and Laurence Senelick (2000) describe occurring as the eighteenth century progressed. These differences between female-male cross-dressing and male-female cross-dressing were evident in the 2017 workshops; there was just not the time to explore them further.

We did manage to briefly look at the cross-dressing of Sir John Brute in *The Provoked Wife* (1697) at the Ovalhouse theatre in 2019. This was a very popular role for David Garrick to

perform and evidenced by the wealth of material objects and pictures depicting him as Sir Brute dressed in women's clothing (Friedman-Romell 1995, p.465), it is clear the drag element of this role particularly appealed.

Figure 7: Anon, 'David Garrick in the character of Sir John Brute', Harvard Theatre Collection, The Houghton Library.

Figure 8: Anon, (1769) 'Mr Garrick in the Character of Sr John Brute in the Provoked Wife', Harvard Theatre Collection, The Houghton Library.

These depictions of Garrick in the role, and the role itself, further show the different appeal and approach male-to-female cross-dressing had from female-to-male cross-dressing. Further examination of this this scene, Garrick's performance, and the reception of both, coupled with an analysis of our Practice-as-Research experimentation with the role would be interesting avenues for future work.

While working on this thesis several performers asked if there was a 'neutral' gesture that they could return to when they were not performing a specific emotion. Though there does not appear to be a universal 'neutral' gesture, images from the time suggest that some characters had gestural motifs. Images of actresses cross-dressed as Wildair show the actress with one hand tucked into a jacket or waistcoat,

Figure 9: Goldar, John (1777) *Mrs. Barry as Sir Harry Wildair [in Farquhar's] The Constant Couple*. London: Published by T. Lowndes & Partners [Online] [Accessed January 29, 2020] Available from: LUNA: Folger Digital Image Collection https://luna.folger.edu/luna/servlet/detail/FOLGERCM1~6~6~271146~118666:Mrs--Barry-as-Sir-Harry-Wildair--in#

Figure 10: Anon. 'Margaret Woffington as Sir Harry Wildair From a painting by W. Hogarth' In possession of Augustin Daly, Harvard Theatre Collection, The Houghton Library.

Indicating that this was a 'neutral' gesture for the character to return to. This question of whether there were 'neutral', or 'theme' gestures used in performance, would also be interesting for further research.

Conclusion

The last thirty years of research has revealed that not only did the perception of gender completely change between 1660 and 1800, but within that one hundred and forty years the perception of gender was nuanced and in flux. Unfortunately, this knowledge has not transitioned from scholarship into modern performance and training for Restoration theatre. In the past few decades British theatre has increasingly experimented with gender as cross-dressing, drag and gender-blind casting have become more prevalent. However, in modern productions of classical theatre, gender play has generally been limited to Shakespeare. Although historically gender play occurred in the eighteenth century, since the 1920s Restoration theatre has been performed as if the gender binary that has only been dominant since the nineteenth century, was strictly applied from 1660 onwards.

The aim of this thesis has been to use a Practice-as-Research methodology to embody historical, archival research on gender performance on the mid-eighteenth-century stage, in order to challenge and update how gender in Restoration theatre is currently taught and performed. It is important to recognise that even with Practice-as-Research, modern performers cannot exactly replicate how historical performance was embodied in the past. Therefore, rather than trying to recreate mid-eighteenth-century performances, our focus

was on ‘revival’ (Bratton and Bush-Bailey, pp.102-107). The performers experimented with embodying archival research as an exploration of theories on mid-eighteenth-century performance, in order to challenge modern approaches to Restoration theatre.

Chapter One

Comedy: The Sword and the Fan

When looking at what is taught about Restoration theatre, acting for Restoration comedy dominates. At LAMDA we looked at comedies from the late-seventeenth century, such as George Etherege's *The Man of Mode* (1676), through to comedies from the late-eighteenth century, like Sheridan's *The School for Scandal* (1777). As shown in the Introduction, Ramczyk (2002) acknowledges that she applies the same techniques to late-eighteenth-century plays as plays from the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth-centuries (Ramczyk, p.182). Seyler briefly mentions some minor differences between eighteenth-century behaviour and late-seventeenth-century behaviour; however, aside from this not much distinction is made (Seyler and Haggard 1958, pp.64 and 89). As discussed previously, though Callow focuses specifically on *The Relapse* (1696) by Vanbrugh, he extrapolates this out to apply to Restoration comedy as a whole – which he acknowledges goes into the eighteenth century. None of them mention Restoration tragedy, thus we see how actor training for Restoration comedy dominates modern-day training for Restoration theatre as a whole, including how to approach the performance of gender. This chapter will therefore focus specifically on Restoration comedy, while Restoration tragedy will be discussed in Chapter Two.

Modern actor training tends to advocate for a narrow, quite rigid definition of gender in Restoration comedy, though research shows that this does not reflect how these characters were generally written or performed at the time. Nor do they acknowledge the discussions and debates around 'femininity' that occurred in the late-seventeenth and eighteenth century. When put under the microscope we can see that much of what modern actor trainers

and writers like Callow and Ramczyk teach about how to perform female characters is based on what conduct books at the time considered ideal femininity, not on how women actually behaved. In the eighteenth century, women and actresses incorporated elements of both masculinity and femininity into their behaviour. In contrast to Callow and Ramczyk's portrayal of women embracing 'femininity' without question, female characters did recognise, advocate against and manipulate 'femininity' in these plays. Lurewell from Farquhar's *The Constant Couple* (1699) is an example of this.

In the second half of this chapter, I focus on the performance of Lurewell as she demonstrates how conventionally written and gendered female roles can have a more dynamic relationship with gender than is currently advocated in actor-training. Our Practice-as-Research revealed how Lurewell both manipulates the performance of femininity for her own gains, and confidently displays anger, calculation and action, all behaviours considered inappropriate for women by eighteenth-century moralists and conduct book writers.

The very popular mid- to late-eighteenth-century practice of casting cross-dressed actresses in the role of Wildair – the male protagonist of *The Constant Couple* – also shows that eighteenth-century actresses were not limited to performing 'femininity' but could successfully perform 'masculinity'. Focusing on the success of Woffington's performance of Wildair, shows the options available to actresses for playing around with masculinity, femininity, and androgyny on the mid-eighteenth-century stage. Putting the historical record of female-male cross-dressing in eighteenth-century theatre into a laboratory process with modern performers illuminated the scope actresses had to perform masculinity and

androgyny when cross-dressing Restoration male roles and, more subtly, when playing female roles.

The Sword: Peg Woffington and 'That Gay, Dissipated, Good-humoured Rake'

Wahrman argues in *The Making of the Modern Self* (2004) that in the second half of the eighteenth century actresses were much more popular in the role of Wildair than actors were (Wahrman, p.51). This indicates that there was something specific about how the character engaged with gender, particularly masculinity, that benefited from being performed by a cross-dressed woman rather than a man. This is particularly notable because the role was originated by a male actor – Robert Wilks – and his portrayal was so popular that it was the seminal role of his career (Murtin 2012). Examining how cross-dressing Wildair may have related to changing gender norms in society can help us gain a better understanding of the options open to eighteenth-century actresses when it came to the performance of gender.

First, however, Wahrman's assertion that it was not popular to cast an actor as Wildair after the mid-eighteenth century needs to be scrutinised. The London Stage Database contains cast lists for all performances of *The Constant Couple* at the two main London theatres in the mid-eighteenth century: Covent Garden and Drury Lane. As a source for who performed when and how often they performed, it shows that when Woffington started to act as Wildair, *The Constant Couple* was performed more often than it had been since Wilks' retirement.[26] At Covent Garden Mr Ryan took over from Wilks as Wildair in 1733/4 until 1741/2 (regaining the

[26] See Appendix C for a detailed table of who performed Wildair after Wilks retired, between 1732/33 and 1799/1800.

role when Woffington moved to Drury Lane).[27] At Drury Lane, Theophilus Cibber played Wildair from 1732/3 until 1734/5, and was succeeded by Mr Giffard in 1738/9 to 1739/40. Ryan, Cibber and Giffard all performed the role approximately one to four times per season. Outside of Covent Garden and Drury Lane, Giffard had the most appearances in 1732/33 when he performed Wildair seven times at Goodman's Fields. In contrast, in Woffington's first season at Covent Garden as Wildair, she appeared for a total of sixteen performances. Subsequently, until 1756/7 when she collapsed due to ill-health (Shaughnessy and Shaughnessy 2008, p. xvii), whenever she was in London she performed as Wildair on average five to eight times per season.

After Woffington retired, performances of *The Constant Couple* dropped off significantly: at Covent Garden it was only performed nine times in total between 1758/59 and 1785/6 (all by male actors), with a twenty-year gap between 1762/3 and 1784/5. At Drury Lane, Mr Woodward took over from Woffington when she left for Covent Garden, though with a frequency of once or twice a season as Wildair, he was clearly not as popular as she. After Woodward, Wildair was performed by a series of male actors at Drury Lane until 1765/6, most of them only appearing in the role once. Though Wildair reverted 'back' to male actors at both Covent Garden and Drury Lane, they never met with the success that Woffington had. The fact that male actors performing Wildair did not seem to capture the same interest as Woffington supports John Hill's (1755) comment that, 'The stage, at present, affords no actor who has this gaiety, connected with the address and manner of a gentleman; and therefore,

[27] It is likely Mr Ryan also performed as Wildair in the 1732/3 season at Covent Garden, however there is no name mentioned on the bills for these performances (London Stage Database).

we have not seen [Wildair] acted tolerably, nay, scarce attempted, except by a woman' (Hill, p.175).

Woffington's success as Wildair was clearly largely due to her skills as a performer, as the anonymous author of *The Life of James Quin, comedian* (1766) said of her,

> [T] here was no woman yet had appeared upon the stage who could represent with such ease and elegance the character of a man. Everyone who remembers her must recollect that she performed Sir Harry Wildair […] far superior to any actor of her time.' (Anon, p.67)

However, even if her particular appeal as Wildair is taken out of the equation, the records show that actresses were generally more successful than actors as Wildair from mid-eighteenth century onwards. After a period of casting actors as Wildair, Drury Lane in 1770/1 went back to casting actresses as Wildair, first with Mrs Barry and subsequently Mrs Greville, Miss Walpole, Mrs Jordan and Mrs Goodall. Covent Garden cast Mrs Achmet as Wildair in 1789/90.

Admittedly not all the actresses were successful in the role, most of them only appeared as Wildair a couple of times per season. Even so, Drury Lane's move to almost exclusively casting women as Wildair bore fruit in 1788/9 when Mrs Jordan almost equalled Woffington's most successful year (fifteen performances at Covent Garden in 1740/1) by performing Wildair twelve times. Though it must be acknowledged that Woffington's success was mostly down to her skills as a comedic performer, it is also clear that from mid-century on, actresses were on the whole more successful as Wildair than actors. This implies that after the mid-eighteenth century there were aspects of Wildair as a character that either appealed more when performed by a woman or appealed less when performed by a man.

The Rake and the Fop

Senelick (1990), Straub (1992, 1995), Trumbach (1998), George Haggerty (1999), King (2004), Wahrman (2004) and Elaine McGirr (2007) have all looked at how the shift in notions of appropriate masculinity in the eighteenth century influenced the culture of the time, including the stage. They have identified two major shifts in society particularly relevant to how the theatre engaged with masculinity.

As the eighteenth century progressed, the late-seventeenth century's celebration of what Pat Gill (2000) calls 'an ideal of aristocratic, urbane English masculinity' (Gill, p.202) began to give way to what Deborah C. Payne (2015) calls the 'bourgeois sensibilities of the eighteenth century' (Payne, p.1015). According to Ingrid Tague (2002) this meant society began to reject elite aristocratic modes of marriage that 'continued to reflect patriarchal and economic motives' (Tague, p.38) for what Trumbach (1998) describes as a more middle-class belief 'in marrying for romantic love' (Trumbach, p.111). The effect this had on the theatre was to turn the character of the aristocratic Libertine rake from what McGirr (2007) calls 'a heroic masculinity' (McGirr, p.35) to what could be called an inappropriate masculinity. The rake's inability and refusal to conform to the love/marriage ideal meant that,

> [t]he mid-century rake, therefore, is a villainous version of his Restoration character […] the Restoration rake is brought back and re-cast: instead of a heroic masculinity, a brave defiance of the laws of state and religion, and a rejection of feminising sociability, he is shown to be devious, tyrannous, and immoral. (McGirr, p.35)

If ‘the rake’ in a play were to avoid being made into a villain, then they had to be changed by love and marriage. Thus, Payne (2015) argues, by mid-century, ‘The reformed rake would become a staple of sentimental comedy’ (Payne, p.1015).

The other male character of the Restoration that underwent a profound change due to shifting social norms was the ‘fop’. As discussed in my Introduction, the eighteenth century saw a marked rise in anxiety around men who engaged in what we now term homosexual relationships. Trumbach (1998), Haggerty (1999) and King (2004) have looked at how this anxiety affected how masculinity was defined and enacted in eighteenth-century society. As it became more unacceptable for men to associate with behaviours considered ‘feminine’, ‘effeminacy’, shifted from being a non-gender specific ‘condemnation of […] corruption, degeneracy, enervation, supineness and self-indulgence’ (Wahrman 2004, p.63) to being associated with men behaving in ways that encroached on femininity and women’s pursuits (King 2004, p.242).

The character of the fop had always been associated with effeminacy when it was meant as a condemnation of excess (Wahrman 2004, p.63). This association remained even as the definition of effeminacy changed and anxiety around male homosexuality grew, so that ‘[s]atires on effeminate men [were] more likely, after mid-century, to associate foppishness with sexual perversion’ (Straub 1995, p.268). As Haggerty (1999) puts it, ‘Restoration fops are comically monstrous and later fops are morally monstrous’ (Haggarty, p.45). Fops came to represent anxieties around what was masculine behaviour and what was not, and because the theatre made ‘social desires and anxieties concrete […] embodying contested social codes in its panoply of characters’ (King 2004, p.183), ‘foppish’ behaviour became short-hand to

make something private and unknowable – a person's sexual desires – public and knowable to the audience. Men could feel assured that by identifying 'effeminate' behaviour they could identify homosexuals, and that by avoiding those same 'effeminate' behaviours they could affirm their status as belonging in masculine society. Fops came to represent beliefs of how homosexual men behaved whilst at the same time creating and reinforcing them.

Sir Harry Wildair as a Rake

As a sexually licentious man who is very open about his liaisons with prostitutes and upper class 'mistresses' – like Lurewell – Wildair has very strong elements of 'the rake'. He exhibits a casual disregard towards women: he uncaringly disregards his marriage proposal to Lurewell; he refuses to accept Angelica's rejection of his advances; he makes statements like 'Now, why should I be angry that a woman is a woman? Since inconstancy and falsehood are grounded in their natures, how can they help it?' (Farquhar, 2010, 2.2: 62); and at the end of the play, he proposes to Lurewell that they continue their affair after his wedding to Angelica, 'harkye, when the honey-moon is over, about a month or two hence, I may do you a small favour' (Farquhar, 2010, 5.2: 67). These attitudes and behaviours are in keeping with how Restoration rakes 'frequently appear to hate women and marriage' (Linker 2011, p.3).

Admittedly, Wildair is less cavalier with women than earlier rakes. By 1699, when Farquhar wrote *The Constant Couple*, attitudes towards men who treated women as disposable sexual objects had already begun to harden. According to Brian Corman (2015) writers began to create 'a new version of the rakish hero, less extravagant and less selfish, more outward looking, humane, and patriotic' (Corman, p.465). Thus, despite his many attempts to convince Angelica and Lurewell to sleep with him, Wildair never tricks or forces either of them into

bed. Rather, in spite of his obvious prejudices against women's constancy and their intellectual equality with men, he engages in battles of wit with both Angelica and Lurewell to try to woo them. Wildair is therefore more in line with what Trumbach (1998) calls a 'more self-restrained kind of libertine' (Trumbach, p.76) that arose in the latter part of the seventeenth- and early eighteenth-centuries (Trumbach 1998, p.76).

Despite this, by the mid-eighteenth century opinions had shifted further. Both Wildair's interactions with Angelica and Lurewell and his opinions of women would have been considered unacceptably libertine. Like most of his fellow rakes, his treatment of women went against the mid-eighteenth-century promotion of marriage for love: he only proposes to Angelica because he treated her like a prostitute (unforgivable behaviour to a woman of his social class) and has to salvage her reputation and his by marrying her. His continued pursuit of sexual relations with Lurewell after his engagement would also have put him at odds with the mid-century idealisation of the '[r]omantic marriage, [that] was monogamous marriage' (Trumbach 1998, p.111).

It is doubtful that these aspects of Wildair's behaviour would have been considered with the same equanimity in the mid-eighteenth century as in the late-seventeenth- and early-eighteenth-centuries. McGirr (2007) argues that in response to these difficulties reconciling the rakes behaviour with his status as the hero 'the 'original' rakes from the earlier works [were] re-visited, reviewed, and re-written in the later texts' (McGirr, p.35-8). Casting Woffington as Wildair was arguably a literal re-casting to mitigate the problematic aspects of Wildair's sexual behaviour. Instead of a male actor playing Wildair, with the inherent gendered assumptions made of his libertine behaviours, casting an actress complicated the

gendered readings of Wildair's actions because the knowledge of her off-stage sex softened the danger of his behaviour towards Lurewell and Angelica.

Brooks (2015) has argued that Woffington's romantic scenes with Lurewell and Angelica were felt by some to be lacking in believability,

> While the audience could accept the dramatic representation through the rest of the performance, the combined knowledge of the actress's biological body, as well as the androgynous, rather than heterosexual masculine performance Woffington offered, made love-making scenes at best unintelligible, and at worst disgusting [...] Sexually unbelievable […] the pairing of an attractive woman with an androgynous lover failed to move audiences in the way required by the dramaturgy. (Brooks, p.78)

The critic and sometime performer John Hill (1755) was very strong in his condemnation of Woffington's Wildair as a romantic or sexual partner to Lurewell or Angelica, 'Mrs Woffington pleases in Sir Harry Wildair in every part, except where she makes love; but there none of the audience saw her without disgust' (Hill, p.202). 'Disgust' is a very strong word and at first glance words like this, and Woffington's seeming failure to convince the audience she could successfully seduce a woman, are a mark against her performance. However, if we view her casting as an attempt to recast Wildair's by now more unacceptable 'rakish' aspects, then perhaps her lack of believability when 'making love' was to her benefit rather than detriment. If the audience could not entirely believe that her Wildair could or would seduce Angelica or Lurewell, then his attempts to do so lose their sting. His lack of belief in monogamy and continued attempts to convince either woman to have sex with him, are no longer a threat to social mores. Instead, Wildair's actions become absurd and comical: the audience has the dramatic irony of knowing his efforts will fail while giving them permission to enjoy the comedy of the attempt and consequences of failure. To an eighteenth-century audience

Woffington's lack of male anatomy meant she could not seduce women out of their virtue – at this time 'sapphic love' or female-female sexual desire was not considered cause for concern (King 2004, p.48) – thus her Wildair could remain Thomas Davies' (1780) 'gay, dissipated, good-humoured rake' (Davies, p.256) without issue. Woffington's Wildair offers no real threat to the sexual morals of his audience, he is reclaimed through the emphasis of his comic good-nature and the de-emphasis of his sexual threat.

The Cross-Dressed Wildair as Rake

The performances of *The Constant Couple* in 2018 and 2019, including rehearsals and the performer's reflections afterwards, acted as a theatre laboratory to see what aspects of character came through for performers and audience that were not immediately obvious through an analysis of the text or historical record. [28] What we saw was that at times the combination of the text and embodiment of Wildair by a cross-dressed actress emphasised a similarity between Wildair's body and the female character's body. In a time where female-female sexual attraction was disregarded, this could have undermined the sexual threat presented by Wildair and created disbelief for some in Woffington's love scenes with Angelica or Lurewell.

An example of this was in Act II sc. iii in which Wildair and Lurewell see each other for the first time since parting in Paris (which occurs before the play begins). Here, the text makes it very

[28] Rehearsal 'as a detailed working out of stage business, did not really exist until the twentieth century' (Bush-Bailey 2002). However, given the performers' unfamiliarity with the gestures and performance styles of the eighteenth century and the focus on 'reviving' these performances through their embodied research, we had a more modern rehearsal process so we could discuss our discoveries as we went.

clear that Wildair and Lurewell are each other's equals: Wildair enters quoting the first part of a rhyming couplet from Dryden's *Aureng-zebe*, and Lurewell completes the quote,

> *Wildair.* My life, my soul, my all that Heaven can give!——
> *Lurewell.* Death's life with thee, without thee death to live.
>
> (Farquhar, 2010, 2.3: 66)

In this clip from the second time we explored this scene in January 2019, with Lottie playing Wildair and Emily Prudence Shore playing Lurewell, the dramatic nature of their lines was emphasised by both of them performing exaggerated tragic gestures (https://youtu.be/qqZ5I1CAHKE). Emily's decision to follow Lottie's choice to underscore the tragic origin of the lines through gesture, demonstrated Lurewell's instant recognition of Wildair's quote and her ability to complete it. Though the play does not instruct the performers to physically 'quote' *Aureng-zebe* with tragic gesture, the subtext of compatibility in flirtatious humour led Lottie and Emily to perform a physical embodiment of two lovers in sync with one another. This is the first time we see Wildair and Lurewell interact, so their verbal and physical harmony highlights their similarities.

The scene continues to present Lurewell and Wildair as being in harmony, they bounce questions and answers back and forth with rapid wit, building up to another shared line,

> *Lady L.* No, no; but was forced to capitulate. But since you are come to raise the siege, we'll dance, and sing, and laugh——
> *Sir H.* And love, and kiss——
>
> (Farquhar, 2010, 2.3: 96-8)

In performance, the rhythm of the text led Lottie and Emily to dance towards each other, again mirroring their actions (https://youtu.be/RvIrpgOOPnw). It is interesting to compare the effect of this scene emphasising the similarity between Lurewell and Wildair when Wildair

is performed by a female-identifying performer as opposed to by a male-identifying performer. When Ross Virgo performed this scene in 2018, also emphasising the similarities, the scene acted as an indicator of how suited Lurewell and Wildair are intellectually and romantically (https://youtu.be/zKKjg_Y04_M). However, when Lottie performed the scene to emphasise the similarities, not only did it indicate a romantic and intellectual similarity between Lurewell and Wildair, arguably it reminded the audience of a gender/sex similarity between Lottie and Emily. Perhaps one of the reasons why love scenes between Lurewell and Wildair were not considered believable by some commentators was that they highlighted the similarities between the actress's off-stage gender and sex.

Furthermore, though Ross and Lottie approached performing Wildair in very similar ways, the awareness that Ross is a male performer playing a male part and Lottie is a female performer playing a male part had a subtle influence on the scene. When Ross performed Wildair, though he performed him with lightness, good-humour and ease, when he grabbed Emily/Lurewell into an embrace and propositioned her, he had an air of sexual confidence, assurance and even a little danger (https://youtu.be/vu3nVHSsD_Y). Lottie, though equally flirtatious, briefly hesitated before grabbing Emily/Lurewell and seemed less assured (https://youtu.be/9-kTgYhOnrs). This difference meant that there was a suspended moment of sexual tension between Ross and Emily that did not occur between Lottie and Emily. It is important to note, however, that the hesitation on Lottie's part and the comparative lack of sexual tension/danger between her and Emily in contrast to Ross and Emily cannot be assumed to be an inherent aspect of a cross-dressed Wildair. Another female performer in the role could absolutely bring the same level of sexual tension and confidence as Ross or any other male performer, if not more so. However, for an eighteenth-century audience expecting

there to be a lack of sexual tension and danger between two actresses, this difference in Lottie and Ross's performance demonstrates that any hesitation or lack of confidence by a cross-dressed Wildair in a love scene could have fed into a sense that their flirtation was not believable. It is possible this was partly why some eighteenth-century spectators saw Woffington's Wildair as 'sexually impotent' (Brooks 2015, p.78).

Off-stage tension related to a performer's off-stage gender can also impact their on-stage performance and how their characters are presented and received by an audience. This was first noted in a post-rehearsal conversation with Lottie and Ross in January 2018. Lottie raised that she thought the other performers responded differently to her than Ross,

> *Charlotte* [Lottie] *was talking […] to me and Ross, about how actors may be acting differently to her as opposed to Ross […] She said she was talking about it to Emily, and Emily was saying that the quality of her flirtation with Wildair when it's Charlotte* [Lottie] *versus Ross is a bit different.* (Parsons, 2018)[29]

Later, after the first night of performances in 2018, I spoke with Emily and Hilary backstage regarding Emily's comment to Lottie that the quality of her flirtation was 'different' with Lottie compared to Ross.

Both Hilary and Emily mentioned that there was a difference rehearsing with Lottie than with Ross. Though both acknowledged that this may have been due to differences in personality rather than gendered expectations, they agreed that there was a sense of playfulness with Lottie that was not there with Ross,

> *Emily: I think I [inaudible] from the get-go, it's like Lottie has this playfulness to her, that's like, I wanted to flirt with her more! […]*

[29] Though this conversation was not recorded, later that evening I took voice notes on what we had discussed.

> *Hilary: She plays the jokes, and maybe its… it's so hard to know, is she playing the joke this way? Or is this how I feel because, I'm a woman, she's a woman […] but, sort-of in a knowing way? Like, I'm let in on the joke [Emily makes a noise in agreement] and you can play it a bit as in 'Isn't this man terrible? Yes, he's terrible! Oooohhhh'. Like it becomes more of a, I mean, a show. 'Look at me showing! […] You feel like kids playing. [Emily makes a noise in agreement] In a sense. 'I'm going to play the damsel in distress, and you're going to play the big bad guy' […] Yeah, it feels like kids play, like let's play 'House', you play this, I'll play that.* (Connell and Prudence-Shore, 2018)

In post-show interviews I did with Emily and Hilary this sense of difference came up again,

> *Emily: I don't know if it's also where and when I grew up, there's this thing that in the circle of friends I had there was a safety in flirting with your female friends, of just playful, being playful in a way, but it wasn't anything serious. Whereas, you had to watch out which guys you could have that same playful flirtation with, and it not mean anything […] I almost felt that naturally with Lottie. Like, here's an ease, let's just go do it and play? Because it obviously didn't mean anything, whereas when you put a guy in there […] I don't feel like I can be as playful yet, I have to get to know you a bit more before things warm up […] with Charlotte* [Lottie] *there was that immediate ease of 'Let's just have fun'.* (Prudence-Shore, 2018)

> *Hilary: Technically, Ross did push the blocking further in terms of the lecherousness of it. Like when he fell down, he looked under my skirt and stuff like that, [Lottie] never did that in that scene. To a certain extent I liked it because it was funnier and it gave me a bigger reaction, like 'My God, what are you doing on the floor? Get away' But at the same time there's a bit of an 'Oh, this is a different scene'. And if she were to do it, it would be very much […] I don't know how to describe it. It's very much like, he's over there and he's gonna do it and I'm not in on the joke, there's not like, there's almost like a silent communication with Lottie before she does something that's very much: We're both in charge of what the other is doing more? Whereas with Ross there's a bit more 'action/reaction' from both of us […] She came in drunker, but drunker on her own. He came in drunk* at *me.* (Connell, 2018)

I also discussed with Hilary how her perspective of this dynamic in the play could have been affected by her and Lottie's heterosexuality: that the dynamic of avoiding potential off-stage attraction when performing a flirtatious scene may have been different with Lottie had the scene not been performed by two women who identify as heterosexual (Connell, 2018). There

is also a sense of threat behind both Hilary and Emily's discussion of performing a sexually emotive scene with a male performer versus a female performer that goes beyond possible mixed messages about attraction. Though they only explicitly referenced avoiding any accidental mixing of on-stage/off-stage attraction, they both imply there is a potential threat to their safety that is felt with a male scene partner as opposed to a female scene partner.[30] Emily says there was a 'safety' with flirting with women, Hilary talks about not being 'in on the joke' with Ross. In Hilary's description, Ross's choices felt more sudden and less collaborative than Lottie's. In a Q&A with the audience after one of the performances, there was a discussion amongst the female performers about this sense of 'threat' and why it was easier to be more playful with Lottie. All of them were at pains to underline that they do not find Ross as a person threatening, but rather his sex and gender meant there was a sense of threat there regardless of what he as an individual was like.

This sense of 'sexual threat' experienced by the female performers acting opposite Ross in 2018, and how that influenced their performances, is interesting when reading comments from the eighteenth century that Woffington failed at performing love scenes as Wildair. Firstly, because sexual threat and potency could be easily conflated, and secondly because the actresses performing opposite Woffington possibly also felt a playful ease in their love scenes. This could have made the scene seem less sexual and more friendly to some members

[30] As performer, I have been involved in situations where a male scene partner has made me feel uncomfortable or unsafe. Like Emily and Hilary, I now try to make my personal boundaries as clear as possible with male performers, while still trying to honour the tone of the scene. Comparatively, I have performed romantic scenes with female performers – including female performers who were openly attracted to women – but never felt the need to censor myself in the same way despite similar potential for attraction on-stage to be confused with attraction off-stage. I recognise that there are aspects of gender and heteronormativity that affect my differing responses. I suspect too that my comparative ease with women when performing romantic scenes, could convey a lack of sexual tension to some.

of the audience. Though some obviously did not enjoy this shift in dynamic, it could have been beneficial for an audience less approving of sexually threatening behaviour by male rakes.

Mid-eighteenth-century attitudes make it even more likely that eighteenth-century actresses may have felt more at ease with another woman in the role of Wildair, thereby making Woffington's love scenes less sexually threatening. Specifically, the power balance in heterosexual relationships and the comparative lack of anxiety that society had for female-female sexual relationships at the time.

That women were at a disadvantage to men when it came to their sexual agency and perception of their sexual agency has been well documented by scholars such as Marsden (2006), Amanda Vickery (2009) and Tague (2002). As Tague (2002) says '[m]odesty was in turn a sign of chastity, the most important characteristic of a women in a patriarchal society that defined female honor [sic] in terms of sexual purity (Tague, p.22). Because of this need to appear modest and chaste Marsden (2006) claims '[f]emale sexual agency immediately established the woman as a "whore" or "punk", and the only way in which a woman who had behaved unchastely could satisfactorily demonstrate her repentance was through prolonged and visible suffering' (Marsden, p.150), or 'provincial seclusion or exile' (Vickery 2009, p.14). Despite increasing disapproval for the ideals of libertinism, not only did men not face a similar loss of reputation if they demonstrated sexual agency, Trumbach (1998) argues that '[m]ale reputation and identity […] proved itself most easily by going to prostitutes (Trumbach, p.15). This imbalance in sexual agency meant that in a situation where a woman's chastity could be compromised, she was at a decided disadvantage regarding her reputation and the consequences of what occurred.

Because women were supposed to be 'naturally modest, chaste and obedient, attacking any woman who failed to live up to these ideals as unnatural, even monstrous' (Tague 2002, p.44), any woman who ended up in a situation where her sexual intentions were misread risked social ostracization. Actresses that Nora Nachumi (2008) describes as 'possess[ing] a sexuality emphatically denied to the period's feminine ideal' (Nachumi, p.11) were perhaps particularly aware of how their performances could be misread. Like Emily and Hilary with Lottie, they may have found a similar ease and playfulness in love scenes with Woffington. Additionally, Woffington and the actress she performed opposite would not have had to worry that the suggestion of same-sex attraction would upset their audience or affect their reputation because '[t]he sexual behaviour of women was […] defined by their relationship to men and not in opposition to a sapphist minority' (Trumbach 1998, p.42). Trumbach (1998), King (2004) and Wahrman (2004) claim it was only in the last decade of the eighteenth century that 'widespread sapphophobia' (King 2004, p.48) became a feature of the social moral landscape, after which cross-dressed roles became increasingly criticised and minimised in the theatre (Wahrman 2004, pp.52/3).

Woffington's appeal as Wildair might have been because it allowed a mid-eighteenth century audience to enjoy the comedy and wit of Wildair's interactions with Angelica and Lurewell without the discomfort and disapproval that an actor performing libertine attitudes may have given rise to. This follows Nussbaum's (2010) statement that, 'as an imitation man, s/he also would have defanged the misogyny of the play' (Nussbaum, p. 220). However, it is important to note that though Woffington's performance of Wildair may have 'defanged the misogyny' of Wildair's *behaviour* towards women, in terms of how Wildair *talks* about women, arguably

a cross-dressed actress made his misogyny paradoxically more noticeable and, depending on the audience, either more questionable or more acceptable.

In rehearsals for *The Constant Couple*, Lottie picked up on how an actress saying Wildair's lines could make their misogyny more noticeable,

> *It's just interesting to see […] a woman playing something that a man would say […] Cause I talked to people about it […] and I said some of the lines and they're like 'Wow... that is either gonna go down as funny or it's gonna go down as, like, especially for men you might get women being like 'Haha! I see she's taking the piss out of a man' [Ross makes a sound of agreement] or it's gonna be men being like 'Oh this is uncomfortable, I'm not gonna laugh. Do we do that? Do we, is that how we come across? [Ross: 'Yes'] And it's that weird sort of 'should I, should I laugh? I'm not gonna laugh cause that's… D'you know what I mean?'* (Parsons, Priestly and Virgo, 2018).

For example, when Wildair explains to Standard (in reference to a man's honour being 'concerned' with a woman) 'An honourable lover is the greatest slave in nature: some will say, the greatest fool'. When said by Ross this comes across as a blanket generalisation that women make 'honourable lovers' their slaves and fools. Tague (2002) argues that in the eighteenth century many saw a woman's proper role as being that of the ideal, submissive wife (Tague, p.2), so for a woman to make a slave of a man implies an upending of the natural order. The common stereotype of the time was that women who dominated their male partners/husbands were meddling and extravagant (Vickery 2009, p. 9). Much as today there is a sexist stereotype of a decisive female partner 'wearing the pants' by taking over the traditional male hierarchy in a relationship, *A New Canting Dictionary* of 1725 has an entry for the 'Henpeckt Husband whose wife wears the Breeches' (Anonymous 1725, p.63). Thus, it is quite likely that many in the audience may have agreed with Wildair that a man who is a slave to a woman is to be laughed at. In addition, a man advocating that behaving with

'honour' is the same as being a slave may have also been interpreted as advocating for men to behave without honour towards women. Once more Wildair comes close to revealing a libertine attitude to love and marriage no longer acceptable in the mid-eighteenth century. Certainly, when Ross said these lines, they came across as a stereotypically sexist point of view that men in love become slaves and fools to women's desires (https://youtu.be/piqg5xEJs6M).

When Lottie says this line, however, its tone shifts (https://youtu.be/IFPNoa8FYtQ). Firstly, as Lottie pointed out, the generalised sexism of the line really stands out when spoken by a woman. It puts a mirror up to men's behaviour because the sentiment is familiar but the context of who is saying it is not. A woman saying something that the audience has experienced men saying has a distancing effect, creating a space for the audience to question the thoughts behind the words, not just accept them as something men say about women. Potentially it is even more jarring to know that Lottie is deliberately performing masculinity at this point, that these sexist utterances are part of that performance. Male audience members perhaps unused to hearing these remarks spoken by someone they feel at a distance to, may be forced to ask whether such attitudes are considered inherent to masculinity. As Lottie says, it makes them ask, 'Do we do that? Do we… is that how we come across?' (Parsons, Priestly and Virgo, 2018). It should also be noted that Ross responded 'Yes' to Lottie's observation, a 'Yes' that in the recording sounds like he agrees with Lottie that the lines being said by a woman could cause men in the audience to question how and if they perform gender at the expense of women (Parsons, Priestly and Virgo, 2018).

This complicates Nussbaum's (2010) point that, 'as an imitation man, s/he also would have defanged the misogyny of the play and called into question the stability of gender construction' (Nussbaum, p.220). In many ways we can see that the misogyny of these comments by Wildair are not 'defanged', rather they are put into sharp relief. In addition to forcing the audience to critically engage with the sentiment behind the words and the reasons men say them, when said by a woman they could be seen to give these sentiments legitimacy. When a male performer like Ross has a line about what women like in a man, we take it as his character speaking from personal experience or a stereotype he believes. However, when the words are spoken by a woman, even a cross-dressed one, the origin of their truth shifts from the stereotyped belief of an outsider to the potential confirmation, or confessional, of an insider. An actress speaking these lines could give them the legitimacy of insider confirmation. Audience members prone to agreeing with Wildair's sentiments may feel they have confirmation of their sexist thoughts. Wildair may have seemed less unacceptably misogynist with this 'insider' confirmation. Still rakish, but more palatable to eighteenth-century morality.

Smoothing Wildair's sexism and misogynistic behaviour away by having a cross-dressed actress perform him would not just have been beneficial to his acceptability as a 'reformed rake' but also perhaps have mitigated aspects of his personality that were considered too close to 'effeminacy'.

Sir Harry Wildair as Fop

Cross-dressed actresses were in a unique position to embody effeminacy without the anxiety or danger performing effeminacy had for actors. This likely added to the reasons why

actresses had more success as Wildair than actors from mid-century onwards: they had more freedom to perform what Trumbach (1998) terms the 'three genders' (Trumbach, p.3) of the eighteenth century without the repercussions actors could face. To understand how a cross-dressed Woffington could have mitigated Wildair's effeminacy to make him more palatable to shifting eighteenth-century moral values, we need to understand why Wildair could be defined as a 'fop' and what audiences might have objected to. Understanding what constituted 'foppish' or 'effeminate' behaviour also demonstrates the range of gendered behaviours available to mid-eighteenth-century actresses, opening up options for modern performers beyond the rigid binary of 'masculine' and 'feminine'.

Elisabeth Heard (2008) has argued that Wildair was not a new version of the rake, rather he was a new version of the fop, 'In [Wildair], Farquhar expands upon the Restoration comedy fop. [He] is overtly concerned with appearances […] loves women [...] and would rather talk than fight.'(Heard, p.28). Wildair's 'foppish' elements are most particularly evident in Act IV sc.i when Standard challenges him to a duel.

First, this exchange in which Standard is attempting to convince Wildair that their duelling skills and courage are matched,

> *Colonel Standard:* Come, come, sir, I like your facetious humour well enough; it shows courage and unconcern. I know you brave, and therefore use you thus. Draw your sword.
> *Wildair:* Nay, to oblige you, I will draw; but the devil take me if I fight.
> *[…]*
> *Colonel Standard:* You fought in the army, to my knowledge.
> *Wildair:* Ay, for the same reason that I wore a red coat; because 'twas fashionable.
> *Colonel Standard:* Sir, you fought a French count in Paris.
> *Wildair:* True, sir, he was a beau, like myself. Now you're a soldier, colonel, and fighting's your trade; and I think it downright madness to contend with any man in his profession.

(Farquhar 2010, 4.1: 5-24)

There are several elements in this exchange that align Wildair more with the fop than the rake, in particular how the fop and effeminacy were represented in the mid-eighteenth century.

Wildair's reluctance to duel is an explicit rejection of a practice strongly associated with masculine behaviour at the time. In eighteenth-century England duelling was intricately tied to elite masculinity and was considered the epitome of elite 'masculine honour' (Gardner 2000). Often fatal, duels came with a code of conduct, including that certain disagreements always required a challenge and that anyone who received a challenge must accept (Andrew 2013, p.52). Though technically a man could refuse a challenge, a refusal was usually considered an act of cowardice and social ostracization would follow (Shoemaker 2002, p.540). Kevin Gardner (2000) states '[a]nyone who refused a challenge to duel would be hazarding his very manhood, and male society could be unforgiving' (Gardner, pp.97-8).

Wildair's explicit refusal to duel confounds Standard, because according to the norms of their society, Wildair courts social disgrace by doing so. In addition, he further risks his masculine status by admitting his refusal is because he is less skilled than Standard and telling Standard to 'take her!' when informed that the quarrel is over a woman. Donna T. Andrew (2013) argues that until the last third of the century 'courage, intrepidity, or valour were understood as elements of the basic male qualities of determination, self-control, and steely resoluteness' (Andrew p.33). Despite duelling's place as a defining characteristic of manhood for the elite, some in the audience might have praised Wildair's refusal to fight as they saw duelling as

belonging 'to a system of vice […] constituting a sort of constellation of corruption' (Andrew 2013, p.4). However, according to Robert B. Shoemaker (2002) for most of the century this did not stop duelling by the male elite, and men were still judged by their peers if they avoided a duel (Shoemaker, p.542). By mid-century Wildair's refusal to engage in such a key display of masculinity could have left him open to accusations of effeminacy.

A poem from 1763 shows that Wildair's sexuality and masculinity may have been reconsidered in light of societal changes. Called 'Fencing' it appeared in *St James Magazine* in October 1763 by an anonymous author (Appendix D). It is a semi-serious, semi-satirical defence of fencing, or duelling, with sections such as,

> But if the Arts were first design'd
> For the advantage of mankind,
> The noble Science of Defence
> Merits its title in this sense.
> For man, by nat'ral Inclination,
> Endeavours at the Preservation
> Of his own life and Reputation.
> Honour is like true Steel, a Metal,
> That's very bright, and very brittle;
> And b'ing so brittle, and so rare,
> It is unconscionably dear. (*St James Magazine*, p.129)

The stanza after this one shows how the refusal to duel may have impacted the perception of Wildair's masculinity,

> Shall WILDAIR, that Starch piece of Folly,
> Before my face salute Miss MOLLY? (*St James Magazine* 1763, p.129)

In terms of connecting Wildair to effeminacy and transgressive homosexuality, what really stands out here is the link between the names 'Wildair' and 'Molly'. Both are capitalised, drawing the eye to them as the most important parts of their respective lines and creating a

connection between them; the poem calls Wildair a 'Starch piece of Folly' which rhymes with 'Molly'; plus, it declares that Wildair salutes 'Miss Molly', indicating that Wildair pays respect to 'Miss Molly'. The writer clearly wanted the reader to explicitly connect Wildair with the name or term, 'Molly'. In the eighteenth century 'Molly' was a common slang word for 'An effeminate man or boy; a homosexual man' (*OED* 2020).[31] Using the prefix 'Miss' before 'Molly' strengthens the link between Wildair and transgressive, effeminate sexuality because 'mollies' were seen by some to have '"extinguished" their manliness by imitating women' (King 2004, p.119). It was also rumoured that male sex workers in 'molly houses' (or male brothels) took women's names, pronouns and dressed like women (Trumbach 1998, p. 7). The poem is not explicitly saying that Wildair is a 'molly'; however, it makes such a strong connection that a society with a heightened awareness and anxiety around transgressive male sexuality would not have missed the implication that Wildair had forfeited his 'masculinity' and embraced 'effeminacy' by refusing to duel.

Wildair's rejection of duelling and the questions this might have raised about his gender and sexuality could have been compounded by other aspects of his behaviour and stated beliefs. Early in the eighteenth century it was considered desirable for men to copy the polish of the French in their manner of behaviour (Cohen 1999, p.56), but as the century progressed the masculine male body was increasingly seen as 'the carrier of an emergent nationalism marking itself as distinct from the international, courtly, and effeminate body' (King 2004, p.179). Men who focused on the external aspects of their identity – clothing, behaviour and language – began to be 'associated with a demonised French taste in fashion and manners'

[31] The Oxford English Dictionary has examples of 'molly' being used in this way up to 1993 (OED 2020 'molly').

(King 2004, p.180). Association with France and the connection between fashionable men and effeminacy meant that '[b]y the mid-century, being fashionable was considered not just unmanly but politically and socially subversive […] antithetical to 'real' Britishness' (McGirr 2007, p.49). Fops, who had always been associated with 'being all appearance and no substance' (Staves 1982, p.413) therefore 'risked forfeiting [their] identity as *English* and as a *man* (Cohen 1999, p.51) by focusing on their appearance. In 1699, when *The Constant Couple* was first written and performed, Wildair's embrace of French culture was commensurate with the refined tastes and behaviours of aristocracy, but as the eighteenth century progressed this began to be seen as sexually and socially suspect, even unpatriotic.

Even Wildair's misogynist utterances about women and their behaviour could have placed his masculinity under question by mid-century. As we have seen, Restoration rakes were increasingly considered unacceptably misogynistic because they went against the prevailing trends of marital love and fidelity; however, it is important to note that misogynist attitudes were also considered unacceptable because,

> [M]isogyny was relocated as an effect of *some* [sic] men's "homosexual narcissism." Against the encroachments of the "woman-hating" sodomite, the public sphere defended the complementariness of the sexes across the differences between them. (King 2004, p.119)

While Wildair's comments on women tend to 'defend' the predictability of their nature, his defence rests on their inferiority not their complementariness. For example, his comment to Standard, 'Now, why should I be angry that a woman is a woman? Since inconstancy and falsehood are grounded in their natures, how can they help it?' (Farquhar, 2010, 2.2: 60). For a society in which misogyny had shifted from being the sole domain of the Libertarian rake to also belonging to the '"woman-hating" sodomite', Wildair's comments on women may have

added to his effeminacy. Certainly, the poem quoted above connects Wildair with effeminacy, so casting a woman may have avoided some uncomfortable connections for actors performing the role, and the audience watching.

Cross-dressed Wildair in Practice

Putting the duel scene between Wildair and Standard into practice demonstrated how their interaction might have been uncomfortable for an audience wary of suggestions of male-male sex. It also showed that though casting a cross-dressed actress shifted the sexual connotations of the scene to more 'acceptable' heterosexuality, it opened up the range of gendered behaviours available to actresses to perform. It is important to acknowledge here that in all eras different members of an audience experience a performance in different ways. The avoidance of obvious allusions to male-male sex does not mean more subtle allusions do not appear. In fact, possibly a cross-dressed Wildair allowed for male-male sex to be inferred in a way that was easily denied.[32] The Practice-as-Research highlighted how cross-dressing Wildair could have been transgressive in less obvious ways. Woffington's performance of Wildair was not just a mechanism to assuage eighteenth-century morality, it also subtly challenged it.

An example of how Woffington as Wildair could have toned down overt suggestions of male-male sexual desire/intimacy, making it more acceptable to an eighteenth-century audience, can be seen on this line said by Wildair to Standard (https://youtu.be/KIopW3ISOTQ),

> *Wildair*: Sheath your weapon; and then, if I don't satisfy you, sheath it in my body.
>
> (Farquhar, 2010, 4.1: 51-2)

[32] Scenes between Lurewell/Angelica and a cross-dressed Wildair also raise the suggestion of female-female sex where previously there had been none.

Though Wildair's line is ostensibly about Standard's desire to duel him over the love of Lurewell, the sexual connotations are quite clear. Since the medieval era '[r]eserved to men, valorised by their hardness, length, and sharpness, pulled out of a sheath hanging from the haunches and returned thereto, Swords […] become a banal, cross-cultural phallic symbol' (Bibring 2005, p.152). Jennifer Low (2003) notes that since the introduction of duelling into aristocratic society in the Early Modern period, penetration with a sword created, 'a correspondence between [a man's] physical experience and that of the permeable body of the female or the vulnerable body of the unseasoned youth' (Low, p.7). Wildair's comment makes the competition of masculinity overt by making the connection between swords/duelling and penises/sex unavoidable. If Wildair does not satisfy Standard's masculinity with his words, he is happy to prove that Standard is the more powerful and masculine by being stabbed with his 'sword'. However, the specific use of the words 'sheath' and 'satisfy' and the connection between being stabbed in a duel and being a passive sexual partner implies that Wildair is really suggesting he prove Standard to be the more virile by letting himself be penetrated sexually. If Standard is denied sexual satisfaction from Lurewell because Wildair's words fail to convince him he is not a cuckold, he can get sexual satisfaction from Wildair instead.

During rehearsals in 2018 for *The Constant Couple* we recognised that the line above had a blatant, sexual meaning and that an actress could have used the sexual connotations of the line without the concern an actor would have had for the overt implication of a same-sex relationship. In fact, Lottie and I realised in rehearsals that an actress performing Wildair *had* to make the sexual innuendo obvious because society automatically codes opposite sex

interactions as having a sexual undertone, the line would invite laughter no matter how it was played. If a performer tried to gloss over the innuendo, they ran the risk of the audience laughing at them rather than at the line.

Furthermore, when we returned to this scene in 2019, we realised that the obvious suggestion of heterosexual sex in the double entendre did not eliminate the suggestion of homosexual sex. Because Wildair is coded as male the implication of same sex attraction remained for those inclined to recognise it. The layering of gender and sexuality that occurs with cross-dressed roles (Sullivan 2003, p.196) lets the scene reference both a heterosexual interaction between a male actor and a female actress (more acceptable to a mid-century audience), as well as a more transgressive homosexual interaction between two male characters (with the plausible deniability that the lines were being said in a heterosexual context). Eighteenth-century actresses like Woffington would have been very used to the layering of hetero- and homosexual meaning cross-dressed performances could take. Brooks (2015) contends that 'breeches' roles at the time used the audience's knowledge that a female character was disguised as a man to get away with risqué homosexual undertones (Brooks, p.84). Performers and audience members who were open to the suggestion of male-male homosexual sex could therefore enjoy the implication without obviously transgressing.[33]

[33] This really became obvious the second time we explored this scene in front of an audience because we worked with shared lighting. Lottie found that being able to choose who to say particular lines to meant she could change their implications. Looking at the audience instead of Jared as she said a line made it clear she understood the dual meaning of her words. While choosing to direct lines to just men or just women in the audience could make a comment either suggestive or conspiratorial.

When we returned to Act IV sc.i in 2019 we discovered another point when a cross-dressed Wildair could turn what would have been a taboo suggestion of homosexual attraction into a more 'acceptably' heterosexual one (https://youtu.be/a3oFMyt-tCA). Standard has just instructed Wildair to draw his sword to fight (https://youtu.be/h0u0Jq5UOyM),

> *Wildair:* Perhaps, colonel, this is the prettiest blade you have seen.
> *Colonel Standard:* I doubt not but the arm is good; and therefore, think both worth my resentment. Come, sir.
>
> (Farquhar, 2010, 4.1: 8-12)

In this performance we (myself as director and the performers), decided to really emphasise the flirtatiousness of Wildair asking Standard if he does not have 'the prettiest blade you have seen'. We heightened the gender/sexuality confusion of having a woman performing Wildair by inserting stereotypically 'feminine' movements into Lottie's 'masculine' performance, playing off of the audience's knowledge of her cross-dressing. Jared/Standard then responded to Lottie/Wildair's gender layering by experiencing attraction to her/him and subsequently expressing confusion about that attraction. Jared/Standard acts as a stand in for members of the audience who may have been reluctant to experience homosexual attraction, mirroring their confusion about feeling attraction to Lottie/Wildair. Standard's attraction to a cross-dressed Wildair makes the scene 'acceptably' heterosexual on the surface while bringing out the underlying homoerotism. For an eighteenth-century audience that did not want to admit to male-male sexual attraction there could have been comfort in knowing that Wildair was performed by a cross-dressed woman. At the same time, those who wanted to, could still enjoy the homoerotic subtexts because Wildair was still a 'he'.

That there were recognisable homosexual undertones that emerged when a woman performed cross-dressed as a man was not completely lost on those who were prejudiced

against such suggestions. There is a passage in *Memoirs of the celebrated Mrs Woffington* (1760) in which the anonymous author discusses an incident where Woffington is alleged to have kissed a Mr L--- backstage while dressed as Wildair. The author complains that "[Mr. L---] might have *known* her in some *other* Character and some other Place; in a Character, that would reflect less Dishonour to his Taste, than to *know* an Actress, when *acting the Man*" (Anon 1760, p.33). This passage shows that there were those who thought a cross-dressed Woffington took on enough of a male persona that implications of her behaving in a sexual nature with a man while dressed as Wildair could be seen as morally suspect, even when she was off-stage.

Sir Harry Wildair and Masculinity as Performance

> *Colonel Standard:* You fought in the army, to my knowledge.
> *Wildair:* Ay, for the same reason that I wore a red coat; because 'twas fashionable.
> (Farquhar, 2010, 4.1: 20-2)

Wildair's line that he joined the army for reasons of fashion makes him suspect according to the rules of eighteenth-century masculinity. His suggestion that such a masculine pursuit as being in the army and fighting are not real, that they can be put on and discarded at whim, raises questions about what else he is performing and/or covering up. Since by the mid-eighteenth century there was a real fear of secret male-male sexual activity, Wildair's statement that he could assume and discard the trappings of the army – what Harvey (2015) claims was beginning to be seen as the epoch of British masculinity (Harvey, pp.810) – would align him with those who were feared to put on the trappings of eighteenth-century masculinity in order to hide their effeminacy. That Wildair refuses to fight Standard was (as we have seen) a confirmation to some that he did not possess an acceptable level of eighteenth-century masculinity. However, like Standard, the audience would not have realised this if they had known he had 'fought in the army' and duelled a 'French count'.

Audience members concerned about effeminacy in men could have seen in Wildair a concerning realisation that even men who met certain standards of English masculinity could be hiding a transgressive sexuality. If instead of joining the army for reasons of patriotism Wildair joined for reasons of fashion, it meant that rather than saluting the flag he was, in the words of the poem above, saluting 'Miss Molly'.

When performed by a woman however, the meaning of the line shifts again. Instead of Wildair's seeming cowardice when refusing to fight Standard being about an unacceptable effeminacy, it becomes more about acceptable femininity. Increasingly throughout the eighteenth century women were defined as being 'naturally chaste, modest and obedient' (Tague 2002, p.44). Fighting and violence are not indicative of obedience: so according to eighteenth-century moralists a woman would have to go against her 'nature' to participate. For an audience concerned with men hiding effeminacy behind a façade of masculinity, it may have been more comfortable to accept such pretence and ultimate cowardice from a woman cross-dressed as a man because it could be attributed to the actress's 'real' identity as a woman. For these audience members, Wildair's 'cowardice' in the face of Standard's challenge could have shifted from being evidence of him being what Haggerty (1999) describes as the 'morally monstrous' fop (Haggerty, p.45), to being a case of the actress negotiating her off-stage 'nature' and her on-stage gender.

This interplay between the actress's on- and off-stage gender could also have been a way for those who were interested in the representation of same-sex attraction to enjoy the suggestion of it without publicly seeming to do so. Brooks (2015) argues that, cross-dressed

as Wildair, a key aspect of Woffington's appeal was her presence as a female androgyne, occupying elements of both masculinity and femininity,

> [I]t was the mutability and instability of gender identity presented by Woffington's performance which was so enjoyable. Rather than transgressing sex/gender boundaries in the way that a transvestite might, the female androgyn, as Piggford argues, employs 'a camp sensibility – a code of appearance and behaviour that mocks and ironizes gender norms – in order to undermine the gender assumptions of their specific culture'. (Brooks, pp.70-1)

Brooks goes on to argue that not only was the instability of gender enjoyable for the way it brought gendered performance into relief, but also because it allowed for both men and women to experience sexual attraction to Woffington/Wildair, using 'heterosexual attraction to unsettle the basis both of gender identification and heterosexual eroticism' (Brooks 2015, p. 75). If we think back to the aspects of Wildair's character that might have unsettled a society whose notions of ideal masculinity rejected the 'foppishness' he embodied, it is doubly interesting to see how Woffington's performance could have been a venue for men to feel acceptable attraction to another man whilst being able to claim that they were attracted to the body underneath the male character, not the male character himself.

That Woffington's ability to perform masculinity was specifically noted and praised by so many men in her society seems a good indication that her attraction was not just due to knowledge of her as having a female sexed body. Davies (1780) said of Woffington's Wildair that 'she represented [Wildair] with so much ease, elegance, and with such propriety of deportment, that no male actor has since equalled her in that part (Davies, p.256). Hitchcock (1788) wrote,

> The former standard for acting [Wildair] was Mr Wilkes. Everyone who had attempted it after him fell very far short. It was reserved for Miss Woffington to

> exhibit this elegant portrait of the Young Man of Fashion in a stile [sic] perhaps beyond the author's warmest ideas. (Hitchcock, p.108)

The anonymous author of *The Life of James Quin* (1766) said of Woffington, 'there was no woman yet had appeared upon the stage who could represent with such ease and elegance the character of a man. Everyone who remembers her must recollect that she performed Sir Harry Wildair […] far superior to any actor of her time.' (Anonymous 1766, p.67). Theophilus Cibber (1748) said of Woffington,

> [W]hen she is obliged […] to assume the Breeches, and *Chapeau bien troufflée* of the Gallant […] she becomes at once a pretty adroit Cavalier Youth, of the first Quality, with an easy Address, a genteel Gesture, and a polish'd spirited Air, becoming the Behaviour of a gay young Gentleman, whose Vivacity tempts him not to forget his good Breeding: The best of our modern fine Gentleman, on the Stage, might profit by the Example. (Cibber, p.39)

These quotes indicate that a fair number of men watching Woffington's performance not only saw her performance of masculinity as believable, but they also saw it as so good it could teach other men how to behave. The audience knew that Woffington's off-stage sex was female and had seen her perform roles that were gendered female before, but her believable performance of masculinity allowed her to occupy both genders at once. It is plausible therefore that this believability allowed male audience members who felt attracted to her as Wildair to enjoy the transgression of being attracted to masculinity, while at the same time feel safe in the knowledge that the performer they felt attraction to was female.

A poem included in Robert Hitchcock's *An historical view of the Irish stage* (1788) illustrates how this duality of Woffington as Wildair, in particular the inclusion of masculinity, increased her attraction,

Peggy, the darling of the men,

In Polly won each heart;
But now she captivates again,
And all must feel the smart.

Her charms resistless conquer all,
Both sexes vanquished lie;
And who to *Polly* scorn'd to fall,
By *Wildair* ravish'd die.

Wou'd lavish nature, who her gave
This *double power* to please;
In pity give her, *both* to save,
A *double* power to ease. (Hitchcock, p.107)

As the poem shows, Woffington's attraction as Wildair appealed to both men and women: 'Other examples speak to a more explicitly erotic response by female spectators, suggesting that the appeal of travesty for some women *was* [sic] in the space it gave them to explore same-sex desires.' (Brooks 2015, p.75). First-hand accounts of women's responses to Woffington as Wildair are not as prolific as male critics' responses; however, Vickery (1998) recounts that in March 1741 a Miss Mary Warde wrote that at Covent Garden '[A]cts Mrs Woffington, the finest woman I ever saw, & what is almost incredible she is as Genteel a young Fellow & in Mens Cloths esteemed as an Actress better then in her own' (Vickery, p.225). Miss Mary Warde specifically praises Woffington both as 'the finest woman I ever saw' and 'as Genteel a young Fellow', it seems that Woffington's presence as both woman and man presented an attractive duality to Miss Mary Warde.

Cross-dressing Sir Harry Wildair in Modern Performance

In the modern-day, performances such as Woffington's can challenge the prevailing narrative in actor training books and classes on Restoration theatre that women in the seventeenth and eighteenth-centuries were passive, not active, in their sexuality or gender presentation

and adhered to a strict definition of ‘femininity’. Instead, cross-dressed performances like Woffington’s show how gender presentation was in flux and what is often defined as ‘masculine’ or ‘feminine’ in productions of Restoration theatre today is different to how it has been in the past. Lottie’s performance as Wildair in 2019 demonstrated that even in moments where an actress performing Wildair could have played with femininity, the nature of the scene required her to be active with it, not passive. For example, at this point in the scene Lottie as Wildair managed to throw Standard/Jared off balance by including sexually enticing moments that played on her off-stage persona as a woman and Standard/Jared’s attraction (https://youtu.be/nY2I6vdH5E8),

> *Wildair*: […] we'll wait on her together: you shall draw your sword—I'll draw my snuff-box: you shall produce your wounds received in war—I'll relate mine by Cupid's dart: you shall swear—I'll sigh: you shall sa, sa, and I'll coupée; and if she flies not to my arms, like a hawk to its perch, my dancing-master deserves to be damned.
>
> (Farquhar, 2010, 4.1: 64-9)

These two photographs taken during this moment in performance show Lottie’s use of intimacy and sexuality to influence Standard/Jared more closely than the video,

Figures 11 and 12: Photos by James Frederick Barrett, 2019.

As can be seen in both these images and the video, at these moments Lottie moved close to Standard/Jared, creating a physical intimacy with him. She also emphasised the 't' in 'dart' and the 'sigh' on the line 'and I shall sigh', slowing down these words to make them explicitly sexual. On the sigh, her voice went higher and breathier, making the 'sigh' sound more feminine as well as orgasmic in a way that confused Standard/Jared, making him 'unsure' whether to respond to her masculinity or her femininity. Lottie as Wildair did not passively receive Standard/Jared's advances, rather she actively manipulated her presentation of gender to control the situation. Her suggestiveness was not coy, it was explicit, she did not resort to 'feminine tricks' (Callow 1991, p.82) to capture Standard/Jared's attention. Given the language of the text in this scene and the obvious suggestiveness it lends itself to when

said by a cross-dressed actress, it is plausible that actresses like Woffington and those who followed her were as direct as Lottie was in her performance.

Similarly, it is possible that like Lottie, Woffington played around with masculinity, femininity, effeminacy and androgyny as Wildair to 'win' the encounter with Standard. The way she looks directly and unabashedly at the viewer in her portrait 'Margaret Woffington as Sir Harry Wildair From a painting by W. Hogarth' (see above on p.25) certainly indicates that she was not inhibited in her performance by any notions of modest 'feminine' behaviour; instead she was comfortable in being direct and 'masculine' in her gaze. This is important because the demonstration of a woman's capability and enjoyment of behaving in a masculine way could have inspired both female audience members (like Miss Warde) and other actresses to experiment with gender, such as not limiting the behaviour of female characters to 'feminine' traits. Actresses could see that there was interest and enjoyment for a woman playing with masculinity (and gender as a whole) and that they could be celebrated rather than ostracized for performing a direct sexuality contrary to the ideal model of the submissive, chaste wife (Tague 2002, p.2). In addition, understanding the range of gender expression mid-century actresses like Woffington performed on the stage could inspire modern performers and directors of Restoration theatre to engage in gender play, cross-dressing and gender-blind casting, in a similar way to how British theatre has experimented with Shakespeare and gender in the last couple of decades.

The Fan: Lady Lurewell's 'trial of skill'

Cross-dressed roles gave actresses scope to play with gender performativity in ways that could both challenge and reinforce the gender norms of the eighteenth century. The

opportunity to perform cross-dressed does not, however, feature in modern day manuals or training for the performance of Restoration theatre. They tend to focus on female-identifying performers playing female roles only. Some, like Callow, base their beliefs of how to perform female roles on what he calls the 'theatrical art' of 'the magic of women, their ju-ju' (Callow 1991, p.81), 'their clothes, their physical movement, the tricks, as it were, of their trade' (Callow 1991, p.81). An approach that disregards the humanity of these characters for a mystical ideal and reduces the negotiations and complexities of gendered behaviour and expectations for women from the time to being 'tricks' of their 'trade'. Again, dehumanising the struggles and expectations they face and flattening women characters into focusing only on their attractiveness and efforts at attractiveness to men.

Others, like Ramczyk, base how these roles are to be performed on 'deportment', a concept that comes from the restricted version of femininity given by moralists and conduct books from the time. This is despite many of the female roles in Restoration theatre not actually fitting within the narrow definition of femininity found within the conduct books and moralising tracts of the time. In fact, these female roles can show an awareness and willingness to manipulate or break these rules of behaviour for their own ends. For example, in the play Farquhar is possibly most well-known for today – *The Beaux Stratagem* (1707) – Mrs Sullen does not stay with her abusive, drunken husband, instead she enlists her brother to help her exit the marriage and actively flirts with (and nearly sleeps with) another man while married (Myers 1995, pp.306-322). All in contravention of the writings by moralisers of the time who 'portrayed a bad husband as the ultimate opportunity for a woman to demonstrate her virtue through her continuing love and respect for him' (Tague 2002, p.43).

In tragedy this defiance of expectations and conventions by women often resulted in disaster, becoming a testament to the struggles and unfairness faced by women in the seventeenth- and eighteenth-centuries. In comedy though, women like Mrs Sullen generally have a happy ending by being brought back to what was considered acceptable moral behaviour. Mrs Sullen is saved from disgrace for her behaviour with Archer when her drunken husband agrees to dissolve their marriage and she gets engaged to Archer instead. Despite these women being brought back to social acceptability at the end, it is important to recognise that the subversive women of Restoration comedy spend the majority of the play in non-compliance to the strict rules of femininity of their society. They may be acceptably tamed at the end of the play but for the majority of the time they offer women in the audience a potential catharsis through their defiance of the rules. This defiance of the type of femininity advocated for in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century conduct books, and subsequently modern-day acting books, can be seen in the character of Lurewell in *The Constant Couple.*[34]

My examination of Lurewell occurred as we researched *The Constant Couple* as a whole in practice. Though my original focus was on Woffington's performance of Wildair in the mid-eighteenth century, I realised as we experimented with the play that Lurewell was an interesting case study as to how far female characters in eighteenth-century plays manipulated and pushed the rules of conduct for eighteenth-century women. The way that Lurewell is written, and subsequently the way the text calls for her to be performed, shows that she does not fit the archetype of femininity proposed in modern training and acting manuals. In fact, she is a good example of how rigidly following the narrow definition of

[34] These conduct manuals and books, such as Richard Allestree's *The ladies calling* (1673), were often written in the late-seventeenth century/early-eighteenth century, however they were still being used, reprinted, and referred to until the late-eighteenth century (Tague 2002, p.29).

'femininity' found in modern acting books and training can end up narrowing down a performer's options for performance in an unhelpful way. Unlike Woffington's performance of Wildair, there does not seem to have been a particular actress consistently associated with the performance of Lurewell, therefore I have focused here on how she has been written, what that suggests for performing her, and what our Practice-as-Research discovered.

Lady Lurewell and the Expression of Female Sexual Desire

Lurewell specifically challenges the theory that a social structure in which women were unable to follow their sexual desires and were subject to the authority of men was both the most beneficial to society and something that women appreciated. As Laura Linker (2011) has shown, Farquhar seems to have taken inspiration from Catherine Trotter, Mary Pix and Delariviere Manley's explorations of the contradictions women had to negotiate when it came to sexuality, marriage, agency and the libertine philosophy (Linker, pp. 9-10). Like Trotter, Pix and Manley's female characters, Lurewell's story of pre-marital sex and subsequent social exile is that of a woman grappling to find her place 'in a culture that espoused ideals of freedom yet expected women to remain chaste, socially decorous, and confined to the home' (Linker 2011, p.73). As the eighteenth century progressed the 'distinction between active and passive sexuality becomes increasingly important […] the central point becomes the degree to which the woman *acted* on these [sexual] urges – even if her action consisted of no more than articulating her feelings' (Marsden 2006, p.11). The articulation of feelings, particularly sexual desires, by a female character on stage was therefore a political act in a society

increasingly of the belief that women should be, and were, naturally submissive and passive, especially when it came to sex.[35]

In our exploration through practice of *The Constant Couple* we discovered that throughout the play the narrative clearly highlights how the gendered expectations of society were weighted against women such as Lurewell. In particular we found that though Lurewell and Wildair are, in the words of Wildair, 'finger and thumb' and as like as a 'pair of guinea's', Wildair is free to openly pursue love and sex while Lurewell cannot. Lurewell is as independently wealthy and in control of her life as Wildair, but unlike him she has to live on the margins of society, disguising her true desires in order to conform to society's moral code. Lurewell's negotiation between her desires and the social expectations placed on her as a woman are on display throughout the play, particularly in Act I sc.ii when the audience learns that she consciously manipulates the expectations of ideal femininity in order to achieve her desires.

Lurewell and her personal maid Parly engage in a discussion about why Lurewell is intent on capturing the affection of Standard even though she's not particularly interested in him (https://youtu.be/gVWXdDdIt3A). In this conversation Lurewell reveals that when she was younger, she had sex with a man before marriage,

> *Lurewell*: My virgin and unwary innocence
> Was wrong'd by faithless man.
>
> (Farquhar, 2010, 1.2: 14-5)

In Act III sc.iii we learn further details about the man she slept with,

[35] This will be explored further in Chapter Two when looking at the role of Calista in *The Fair Penitent.*

> *Lurewell*: He bribed my maid, with his gold, out of her modesty; and me, with his rhetoric, out of my honour. [*Weeps.*] He swore that he would come down from Oxford in a fortnight, and marry me.
>
> (Farquhar, 2010, 3.3: 33-6)

Lurewell's seducer is clearly the one most in the wrong as he bribed her maid and tricked Lurewell into sleeping with him by promising her marriage; however, she is the one forced to negotiate the fall out. Though Lurewell's intention was to marry her seducer, an action that would have rectified her behaviour in the eyes of society, the fact that she did not – even though it was through no fault of her own – renders her an outcast. Lurewell is lucky, because her actions never become public, she therefore never faced public punishment for it, unlike the heroines of tragedy for whom the public revelation of their actions usually leads to their death. Her father dies before he can find out, leaving her an heiress free to travel the world and live independently. Lurewell's rage at her treatment by 'faithless man' and her subsequent status as a social pariah (albeit a secret one) leads her to take revenge on men by having them fall in love with her and then rejecting them. Despite her rage she accepts her social exile as the consequence of what happened – an action that arguably allows her to be 'redeemed' at the end of the play – and claims that once she is satisfied in her revenge she intends to retire in seclusion to the country.[36]

Her financial independence gives her more autonomy than other women would have had to act, and her status as a fallen woman ironically frees her from social constraints, allowing her

[36] After seeing the 1988 performance of *The Constant Couple* at the Royal Shakespeare Company, Max Stafford-Clarke commented 'What is shocking to us is […] that [Lurewell] talks so directly about her seduction. In the world of Restoration Comedy, we're so accustomed to finding sex to be all vague gossip, inuendo, beauty spots and chat' (Stafford-Clarke 1989, pp.34-5). Arguably, Stafford-Clarke's impression that such a frank discussion of sex was unusual in Restoration comedy comes from the choice of plays performed in the twentieth century. That Lurewell's frankness is unusual for us now is no evidence that it was unusual then, especially given the limited repertoire of Restoration comedy performed today.

to follow her desires for travel as well as revenge. She can also embrace her sexuality in a way a woman living under the constraints of modesty could not, allowing her to act rather than just react. As she says to Parly after revealing her secret,

> *Lurewell*: But now, glance eyes, plot brain, dissemble face,
> Lie tongue, and
> Plague the treacherous kind.
>
> (Farquhar, 2010, 1.2: 16-8)

Lurewell's back-story and situation personalises the toll faced by women demonized for following their sexual desires. Her acceptance of her position on the fringes of society means that Lurewell does not rebel against the system in a substantial way, however for the audience she embodies the pain and anger of an inherently unfair system. Her single-minded focus on inflicting pain on the men in her peer group is evidence of her pain, as is her contempt of them. When Parly says that Standard loves her, Lurewell responds 'Therefore I scorn him' (Farquhar, 2010, 1.2: 10). Lurewell represents the painful reality faced by women in a society that claimed 'chastity [was] the most important characteristic of a woman in a patriarchal society that defined female honor [sic] in terms of sexual purity' (Tague 2002, p.22).

Lurewell's situation and her feelings about it are also a rebuttal to Callow's (1991) claim that,

> The men and women in these plays meet on terms of equality. If the gallants are libertines, then the heroines are emancipated, and can talk freely about love and sex; but ultimately, the women rarely overstep the final barrier of chastity or fidelity, a fact on which many a Restoration plot hinges. (Callow, p.11)

That women like Lurewell are punished by having to live on the fringes of society when they 'overstep the final barrier of chastity or fidelity' whilst men do not, shows that rather than meet on terms of equality, women met men at a disadvantage. The women of Restoration

comedy may appear emancipated enough to express themselves in words, but they were still subject to men and men's desire. Claiming that men and women met on terms of equality glosses over the social constraints faced by women, thereby cutting off both an important aspect of nuance and character for performers acting female roles and a source of tension between these heroines and the 'gallants and libertines'. Rather than being a sign of their 'equality' with men, the way Lurewell manipulates the men around her shows that the clever use of words was often the only defence women had against the desires of men.

Lady Lurewell's Femininity as Performance

Looking at the personal writings of elite eighteenth-century women, Tague (2002) argues that we can 'view the ways in which they [elite women] constructed their identities for a variety of audiences, including not only their husbands but also other family members and friends (Tague, p.3). Vickery (2009) similarly claims that 'Married women were at once deferential wives and powerful mistresses, a conceptual inconsistency that women often manipulated to their advantage' (Vickery, p.10). Though Tague and Vickery look specifically at how women manipulated their identities and behaviours within marriage, one can reasonably surmise that if women did so within the bounds of wedlock, then unmarried women like Lurewell were also able to manipulate their identities and behaviours for their own purposes too.

It is clear from her words that Lurewell recognises that some men require the presentation of modesty and chastity in order for her to make them a 'captive'. In her performance of Lurewell in 2018 Emily showed this negotiation of identity and behaviour in Act I sc.ii (https://youtu.be/Ja--3clkS8I). As Standard enters, Emily as Lurewell utters derisively to the audience, 'Oh lord! No sooner talk of killing, but the soldier is conjured up' (Farquhar, 2010,

1.2: 41), her head bobbing towards Standard without looking at him. She then picked up her skirts, swept herself to stage left, and in a higher and softer tone than on the previous line said, 'You're upon hard duty, Colonel, to serve your king, your country, and a mistress too' (Farquhar, 2010, 1.2: 42-3). While saying this she did a wide and graceful turn, placing her clasped hands on the side of her waist. She ended by gracefully opening her arms into the gesture of 'Enthusiasm', modifying it so that her body faced the audience and her head and shoulders turned coyly towards Standard.

Figure 13: 'Enthusiasm' (Siddons 1807, p.48).

There was a clear distinction between her rather brisk and matter of fact tone before Standard arrived, and her behaviour after. Her body language was no longer as direct as it had been to Parly: she faced away from Standard and only turned her head towards him. The implication of her stance was that he must come towards her, not the other way around. The tone of her voice became more modulated, her vocal tempo slowed down, her pitch went higher and breathier, her words elongated and her consonants softened. The overall effect went from presenting a woman of decisive action to presenting a woman content to be admired, approached rather than approaching.

That Lurewell's change of behaviour is a performance for the benefit of Standard's expectations of femininity becomes explicit rather than implicit when in a jealous fit of pique Standard declares that as he is no longer in the army, he cannot in conscience continue to court her. He then exits the stage, prompting Lurewell to say,

> *Lurewell:* Now the devil take thee for being so honourable: here, Parly, call him back, I shall lose half my diversion else. Now for a trial of skill.
>
> (Farquhar, 2010, 1.4: 79-80)

Emily moved to the other side of the stage as she said this line. Her tone of voice on 'Now for a trial of skill' went back to being matter-of-fact, and she adjusted her bodice to show more cleavage (https://youtu.be/UHseNmOuMuk). She then conspicuously adopted the gesture of 'Devotion' as Standard re-entered the stage,

Figure 14: 'Devotion' (Siddons 1807, p.15).

Lurewell then enacts a performance of submission for Standard by declaring she will give up her independence and freedom, reject her considerable inheritance and follow him to an army camp. In performance, Emily built Lurewell up to a display of extreme emotional distress over the idea of Standard leaving England without her. Stuttering and quavering, her voice

pitched higher, she fluttered her fan and then pretended to weep loudly (https://youtu.be/GWfruhA5gFY). In word and action Emily/Lurewell performed a certain kind of fragile, dependent, submissive femininity, positioning Standard to feel like he would be the authority in the relationship, free from the dominance of her wealth or desires. Lurewell's performance, and how Emily acted it, is calculated to convince Standard that Lurewell shall play the role of 'the ideal, submissive wife' (Tague 2002, p.2), thus manipulating him into retaining his interest in her.

Lurewell understands that the submissive femininity praised by moralists in the eighteenth century often required conscious performance. She confesses to the audience that what she is about to do is a 'trial of skill' – in other words her performance skills are going to be tested convincing Standard that she conforms to a socially acceptable femininity. Alerting the audience to the fact that what she is about to do is a performance, what she does afterwards demonstrates to them that this 'femininity' can be believably enacted without a basis in reality. The play text gives some stage directions for Lurewell's 'trial of skill', for example noting when she begins to cry, but for the most part the actress playing Lurewell understands how to perform the scene from the structure of the lines. For example, in this moment the dialogue makes it clear that the actress performing Lurewell is to stutter and hesitate,

> *Standard*: Why are you so curious, madam?
> *Lurewell:* Because——
> *Standard*: What?
> *Lurewell:* Because, I, I——
> *Standard*: Because, what, madam?—Pray tell me.
> *Lurewell:* Because I design to follow you. *[Crying].*
>
> (Farquhar, 2010, 1.4: 88-93)

Lurewell's apparent struggle to say that she wishes to follow Standard to the front lines is in line with eighteenth-century notions of feminine modesty in which making a direct, overt statement of desire would be considered immodest (Pritchard 2008, p.18). In addition to her voice, Emily used her body and her fan to enhance the sense of difficulty that the script indicates (https://youtu.be/GWfruhA5gFY). She turned away from Standard as if looking him in the eye as she said her 'design' was too much for her. Her fan fluttered as if in agitation, overwhelmed by strong feelings she is too afraid to articulate, presenting the appearance of a submissive and modest woman only able to overcome her natural passivity through the force of strong emotion.

Lurewell's 'trial of skill' is an embodied representation of how the submission and modesty 'conduct writers valorised as natural was one that required conscious submission to a male authority figure and constant attention to one's duty' (Thomason 2014, p.3). The reality that behaving in this way took conscious effort went against a growing sentiment in the eighteenth century that there was,

> '[A]n unmediated connection between a lady's external attributes and her internal self […] The way she appeared and behaved was disciplined, in effect, by the assumption that her demeanour reflected the quality of mind. (Nachumi 2008, p.7)

That Lurewell could so successfully perform modesty when she was considered to no longer have a natural claim to it, puts the lie to the belief that a woman's behaviour sprang from her nature. This would have unsettled some as in the eighteenth century, 'The uncertain relation between a woman's appearance and her true "self" was cause for much concern on the part of moralists, sermonizers, and conduct authors' (Pritchard 2008, p.16). Lurewell's 'trial of skill' raises the question that if a woman could so convincingly perform modesty, either in 'real'

life or on the stage, how could men know whether or not a woman actually possessed the traits of chastity and submission that they required? And therefore how 'natural' could those traits be if someone who does not possess them could so be so convincing? Lurewell's performance to keep Standard's affection indicates that by requiring women to behave in a certain way, society was asking them to hide their true nature rather than reveal it.

It is important to note that though this scene shows a woman successfully imitating the behaviour of modesty without the reality of it, Farquhar does not condemn or punish Lurewell for faking this idealised femininity. On the contrary, from the beginning of the scene Lurewell's behaviour is presented as a just and understandable response to her betrayal: she *has* to perform modesty because the behaviour of men has taken the reality of it away from her and given her nothing in recompense. Though she dissembles and lies, the narrative conclusion seems to be that if men did not treat women like the anonymous man treated Lurewell, women would not then feel compelled to trick men into believing their modesty. The play shows that women did not conform to the ideals of femininity espoused in conduct manuals and supports the idea that they should not need to.

The danger faced by a modern performer following what is taught in acting books or training is that Lurewell would not be as direct and assertive as she needs to be when alone or with Parly. This would risk watering down the important distinction between who Lurewell actually is and who she performs for men. Similarly, for modern performers and directors approaching a female role, the knowledge that the performance of an idealised femininity took conscious effort would allow them to choose moments where the façade drops, or moments where we see the effort behind the illusion, in order to gain the audience's sympathy and deepen the

characterisation of the role. This is basically a reversal of Callow's instruction that 'In Restoration comedy it is not enough simply to be a woman, the actress has to give an *exhibition* [sic] of being a woman (Callow 1991, p.82). Rather, in Restoration comedy it is not enough to simply give the exhibition of being a woman, you need to show the complexities and negotiations women faced for simply being.

Restoration Comedy, Femininity and Feminism in Modern Performance

As previously discussed, the impetus for this examination of the performance of gender on the mid-eighteenth-century stage is rooted in my own drama training for Restoration theatre. Those of us performing female characters were encouraged to present a more passive, less direct demeanour: relying on subtle enticement and coy flirtation through arched looks and fluttering fans. Women were to lure, not approach; they were to be indirect in their intentions, not direct; and they were to enjoy the effect on men this had. These instructions are echoed in modern acting books for Restoration comedy. As is the sentiment by the visiting director described in the Introduction, that the women in these plays cannot be approached through a feminist lens.

Though I do not have a record of this moment with the visiting director, his general point is reflected in Callow's (1991) more moderate claim that,

> Restoration comedy celebrates femininity […] To recapture this in more modern times can be tricky […] in our age, the transformation in sexual politics has called into question the very notion of celebrating femininity: is that not merely another form of oppression, by which women are obliged to behave according to men's definition, satisfying men's fantasies and requirements? This is a very new development, and carries with it, as usual in any ideological breakthrough, a complex mix of gains and losses. What is certain, though, is that the dramatists of the Restoration, both men and women, were far from being feminists. (Callow, pp.79-81)

Callow does not go so far as to say that feminism has 'ruined' modern performers for these roles, but there is a strong implication that what he calls 'feminism' is a problem for performing Restoration theatre. He asserts that Restoration dramatists were very definitely not 'feminists' without describing what beliefs he counts as 'feminist'. Similarly, Callow mentions celebrating 'femininity' without explaining what exactly he means, although as discussed, his use of the words 'witchcraft', 'magic' and 'ju-ju' regarding women's behaviour imply femininity as something mysterious and Other.

In contrast to Callow's assertion, Lurewell's anger at the injustice of her situation and how the narrative underlines the inequality faced by men and women in society, is arguably 'feminist'. Her anger and manipulation of the men of her acquaintance is also presented as something for the audience to empathise with. Her situation acts as an argument against the imbalance of power between men and women in society. As discussed, if a modern performer were to avoid the suggestion that Lurewell was aware of this inequality because they believed that the women of Restoration comedy were 'far from being feminists', they could miss that Lurewell's justified anger is key to her actions being viewed with compassion rather than scorn. Similarly, if Lurewell's performance of 'femininity' is done with the intention of 'celebrating' it rather than as a commentary on how it is consciously assumed, the comedic effect and wider point of the artificiality of such displays of 'femininity' would be lost.

Ramczyk's *Delicious Dissembling* (2002) is a newer guide to acting in Restoration comedy in which the restriction of female characters to a particular binary notion of 'femininity' continues. In her introduction on how to move as a 'Gentlewoman', Ramczyk (2002) quotes John Essex (1726), saying, 'John Essex, in his *Dancing Master*, cautioned: If she holds her head

upright, and the body well disposed, without affectation, or too much boldness, they say, There goes a stately lady.' (Ramczyk, p.130). Though the *Dancing Master* is ostensibly about dancing, by warning women to avoid 'too much boldness', Essex is connecting physical deportment to an idealised version of feminine behaviour.[37] Ramczyk does not reference modern notions of feminism as being in conflict with 'Restoration femininity', but titles like 'A Lady's Subtle Arsenal' (Ramczyk 2002, p.160) support the notion that female characters should act indirectly rather than directly. The women of the time, she says, 'sought to portray a sense of ease and naturalness in their bearing […] all the while aware of the artful picture they were presenting' (Ramczyk 2002, p.130).

Many of the physical gestures Ramczyk describes in 'A Lady's Subtle Arsenal' reference or allude to seduction: 'Lower the eyelids and peek from underneath. This is a particularly seductive gesture, but it can also be used for registering sarcasm or boredom'; 'Elegantly and slowly shrug and lower the shoulders to draw attention to the *décolletage.* The purpose is obvious'; and 'Flutter the eyelashes to register seduction, anger, amusement, or even sarcasm' (Ramczyk 2002, p.161). A similar list for those performing male roles is simply called 'Other Gestures for Men', and mostly includes suggestions to indicate displeasure, disagreement, idleness, boredom, punctuation, and other emotions not focused on attraction (Ramczyk 2002, pp.161-2). Only one gesture in the list for men mentions seduction: 'Idly toy with a watch that hangs from the neck or that has been tucked into the pocket of a waistcoat. This may be used to suggest seduction or boredom' (Ramczyk 2002, p.162). Unlike the

[37] Essex also wrote *The young ladies conduct: or, rules for education, under several heads; with instructions upon dress, both before and after marriage. And advice to young wives* (1722), showing an interest in teaching young women conduct beyond dancing lessons.

gestures of seduction for women, this gesture still does not involve bringing attention to a body part.

In addition to her use of Essex, Ramczyk (2002) includes in her Appendices 'A Partial List of Writings on the Art of Deportment in the Restoration Era' (Ramczyk, p.179). Other scholars and practitioners have noted that a reliance on conduct/deportment manuals, both directly and indirectly, when performing Restoration theatre, can occur at the expense of the performance of character. At a 2014 public discussion on 'How to stage Restoration Comedy on the modern stage?' (TFTI 2017) Professor Michael Cordner commented to Michael Billington that there is a,

> [F]alse tradition about how you're supposed to do these plays [this tradition takes] conduct books, manuals for how to behave, from the period presuming that that represented how people did, in reality, behave. But how to make yourself better books feed off the fact that most of the people who buy them aren't actually behaving like that. […] but that has been imposed in a very big way, and you can still buy books that tell you how to do Restoration theatre that effectively start with deportment. And a deportment which is imposed and stifles. (TFTI 2017, 14:35:00 – 15:48:00)

These didactic writings had at their source an anxiety around women's needs, desires and behaviours and sought to therefore correct them by lecturing and training women, especially elite women, in what they considered appropriate behaviour. As can be seen in the anecdotes of my training and the quotes above from Callow and Ramczyk, one of the effects of this reliance on conduct manuals, or writings on 'deportment', is that a rather narrow definition of femininity dominates the teaching on how to perform female roles.

The Fan in Restoration Comedy

The difference between how modern actor training and acting manuals teach Restoration theatre and what our Practice-as-Research revealed about the performance of these roles, can be seen in the use of the fan. In the talk above Billington responds to Cordner's statement of a false tradition of deportment in modern versions of Restoration theatre, by calling it 'that tradition of fluttering of fans' (TFTI 2017, 15:36:00). This 'tradition of fluttering of fans', or the importance of the fan in Restoration comedy, appears in Ramczyk (2002), Callow (1991) and in the guide to *The Way of the World* (2018): 'The fan work becomes a means by which a woman may attract a man' (Ramczyk, p.14); 'The use of the fan, far from being an arbitrary affectation, was part of the enormous repertory of a woman's wiles' (Callow, p.82); and 'in experimenting with using the fan, the actors were looking at how this iconic object allows a lady to say things which she can't actually freely verbalise in that society' (Watkiss 2018, p.18). Callow and Ramczyk argue that fans were used in a particular manner. Callow (1991) says the use of the fan was an 'inherited wisdom; one can imagine a mother teaching her daughter' (Callow, p.82), he also claims they spoke a language of its own, though he dismisses the idea that there was a specific 'language of the fan' (Callow 1991, p.82). Ramczyk (2002) does focus on a specific language of the fan, without explicitly calling it that, by linking specific movements with particular thoughts (Ramczyk, p.159). Similarly, Jenny Jules from *The Way of the World* mentions that 'We have learnt about the secret language of the fan, so it will be interesting to see how each of the female characters use their fans […] it is something we are going to have to be on the same page with!' (Jules 2018, p.28).

Interestingly enough, in pictures of eighteenth-century actresses in performance – particularly from the mid to late-eighteenth century – many of the actresses depicted are not holding a fan. This could be an omission by the artist to create a pleasing picture, however;

when performing *The Constant Couple,* we discovered that fans often hindered the use of gesture. In particular the use of specific gestures that research like Celestine Woo's *Romantic Actors and Bardolatry* (2008) and Roach's *The Player's Passion: Studies in the Science of Acting* (1992) have shown were used extensively in late seventeenth- and eighteenth-century acting. Though Emily, Hilary and I all found the fans were very useful as a comedic prop to emphasise a point or emotion, the gestures functioned in a similar way on their own. In addition, by getting in the way of a gesture the fan often overrode the gesture's specific meaning. This meant that though the comedy of the moment was kept, the performance lost the extra layer of subtext that specific gestures gave.[38] The difficulties we faced, coupled with the fact that many pictures of actresses in performance from the time do not include fans, does seem to hint that fans were not as indispensable to female characters as Callow and Ramczyk argue they were.

Similarly, though Callow in particular focuses on the fan as a flirtatious prop (Callow 1991, p.62), in our Practice-as-Research the fan was generally not used as such unless the character was consciously performing femininity. For example, when Emily as Lurewell tried her 'skill' on Standard. It is particularly pertinent that though she was performing the character most prone to displaying flirtatious behaviour, Emily remarked during rehearsal that she was more likely to use her fan in an imitation of a penis than to coyly flirt with it. This can be seen in Act I sc.ii when Emily snapped her fan closed, held it at pelvis height, and jabbed it outward on 'Plague the treacherous kind' (https://youtu.be/snkVL0EEV00). From our experience

[38] In *The Constant Couple* we felt that the pros of using fans outweighed their cons. However, for *The Fair Penitent*, Hilary and I decided Calista would not have a fan as it could not be used for comedic effect and so felt only cumbersome to include.

performing *The Constant* Couple, fans, like 'femininity', were much more versatile in their use and less crucial than is indicated by Callow, Ramczyk and other actor trainers.

The Craft of Comedy (2013) includes additional thoughts by Seyler on 'Fans, Trains and Stays' in Appendix B (Seyler, p.127). Here Seyler admits,

> Why should one set up to know anything about the use of the fan in any historical period? I very certainly have never read any descriptions, nor do contemporary pictures give more than an indication here or there. I suppose one bases any guesses one may make about these periods about what one knows of their customs and background and the spirit of their times. (Seyler and Haggard 2013, p.128)

This is a revealing point, that the use of the fan in the Restoration comedy productions of her time were based more on 'guesses' than specific evidence. As discussed in the Introduction, the 1920's and 1930's revival of Restoration comedy in the United Kingdom, notably Sir Nigel Playfair's productions at the Lyric Hammersmith in which Seyler starred, have arguably set the blueprint for how Restoration comedy is performed even today. Seyler's comment indicates that the constant use of the fan in twentieth-century productions is not because fans were so integral to the lives of women (Callow 1991, p.82 and Watkiss 2018, p.18), but because twentieth-century performers assumed they were. Again, it seems that much of what is considered the way to perform Restoration theatre today has more to do with twentieth-century ideas about the late-seventeenth and eighteenth centuries than the period itself.

Conclusion

The performance and popularity of cross-dressing Wildair in the second half of the eighteenth century shows that significant shifts in masculinity occurred in this period and also illustrates the possibilities open to actresses for gender play. Actresses could alternate between performing masculinity, femininity and androgyny, sometimes even in the same scene. That eighteenth-century actresses engaged in gender play like this is a strong argument against modern performers and theatre-makers feeling like they must adhere to the strict, binary, gendered behaviour taught in acting books and actor training for Restoration theatre. The very act of cross-dressing Wildair as well as what we found in practice, can hopefully be inspiration for modern performers and theatre-makers to involve gender play when performing Restoration theatre.

Furthermore, the character of Lurewell reveals that the 'feminine' behaviour taught in modern acting books and drama training, does not adequately represent the realities and nuances of actual eighteenth-century femininity. Lurewell controls her interactions with men and her 'trial of skill' shows the audience how the kind of chaste, modest femininity society considered her ineligible for could be consciously performed. Similarly, her awareness of the gender inequalities in her society are at odds with modern assertions that the women of Restoration comedy celebrated 'femininity', and that modern feminism does not work with how Restoration dramatists viewed the world.

Female characters in Restoration theatre need not be performed according to current notions of femininity: where appropriate performers can imbibe a character with cynical or feminist

views on the performance of femininity, similar to Lurewell's. Even the 'rule' that fans were ubiquitously used by women in Restoration theatre can be dispensed with, as not only does it appear fans were not as vital to female characters as has been claimed, but they get in the way of the use of gesture.

Chapter Two

Tragedy: Dangerous Seduction and Justified Anger

In general, the tragedy plays of Restoration theatre have not held up to modern tastes the same way the comedies have, and are therefore rarely staged (Thomson 2007, p.9). Two notably recent and relatively rare productions were the Royal Shakespeare Society's 2019 production of Otway's *Venice Preserved* (1682) and Shakespeare's Globe 2017/18 production of *The Captive Queen*, a renamed version of Dryden's 1675 play *Aureng-zebe* (McKenna 2018). That Restoration and eighteenth-century tragedies are hardly ever performed is perhaps the reason that they do not appear in modern acting manuals, or most modern drama training. This omission gives modern performers and theatre makers an incomplete picture of how gender was performed in Restoration theatre.

Restoration tragedy was different from comedy in its execution and its approach. According to Lisa A. Freeman (2002), tragedy was considered to be dignified and authoritative in a way that comedy was not (Freeman, p.87). In particular, '[p]laywrights […] self-consciously selected fables and themes for tragic interpretation that had allegorical, analogical, or even direct significance for patriotic ends' (Freeman 2002, p.89). Unlike comedy, which sought to expose 'both the private negotiations among individuals and the public conditions that govern and naturalize those negotiations' (Freeman 2002, p.143), tragedy upheld 'the articulation of public virtue through the suppression of the private' (Freeman 2002, p.143). Marsden (2006) argues that female suffering defined tragedy in Restoration and eighteenth-century theatre, and that though female suffering remained central as the eighteenth century progressed, the representation of female sexuality became more muted (Marsden, p.134).

Dobrée, who published *Restoration Tragedy 1660-1720* in 1929, claims that 'we identify ourselves with the persons of a tragedy as we watch it' (Dobrée, p. 9), but we don't for comedy (Dobrée, p.10). This is an interesting distinction to consider when approaching the performance of tragedy: if the audience needs to identify with a character in order for their fate to appear tragic, anything that interrupts that identification can limit the success of the tragedy.

Restoration tragedy performed on the modern stage starts from a position of disadvantage in terms of modern audiences identifying with the characters as it tends to be written in verse and employ 'hyperbolic language' (Wheatley 2000, p. 84). The complex language of tragedy can be a barrier to a modern audience's understanding of the play. In addition to the use of verse and hyperbole,

> [T]he form of acting in tragedy was highly rigid and codified into strict forms. Gestures were formalised and melodramatic with much emphasis on the hands [...] The style of movement in tragic acting was stiff, representative of a limited range of practicable emotions with no gradations in between […] The vocal technique owed much to the style of preaching and canting. The voice was used musically with a whining, nasal tone that must have risked droning monotony. (Holland 1979, p.60)

And just as the performance of tragedy echoed the more formal use of verse as its text, comedy was performed in a more 'natural' way; however, it must be emphasised that the evidence of what exactly was seen as 'natural' acting for comedy is limited and such performance style could still seem stylised to modern eyes (Holland 1979, pp.57-58). Indeed, as Roach (2000) points out, 'Artifice is in the eye of the beholder, not to mention in the historical period of the beholder, and all stage performance is in some way stylized […] When

individual subjects have lived with a style long enough, they begin to think of it as nature' (Roach, p. 22).

Acting manuals such as Callow's (1991) and Aitken's *Style: Acting in High Comedy* (1996) tend to focus on the 'style' of Restoration comedy. As Roach (2000) describes, due to the large gap in time between when these plays were written and performed and the modern day, what was natural then appears stylised now. This is even more so for Restoration tragedy with its use of verse, dense language and formal acting. At first glance they appear impenetrable and foreign to modern audiences, bringing us back to possible reasons why both *Venice Preserved* (2019) and *The Captive Queen (Aurang-zebe)* (2017) used modern dress and stage design. However, modern audiences enjoy the similarly dense language of the Jacobean and Elizabethan playwrights. Though it can be anathema to claim his language is difficult to understand, even the plays of Shakespeare can be dense and hard for a modern audience to understand. Arguably, if audiences can enjoy Ben Jonson, Christopher Marlowe, John Fletcher, Jon Webster and Shakespeare's history plays, they can enjoy Restoration tragedy, so long as theatre-makers approach them in interesting and engaging ways that show how their narratives can still resonate today.

As discussed in the previous chapter, in Restoration comedy female characters who transgressed social norms were brought back to acceptable behaviour and circumstances and subsequently allowed to re-join society by the end of the play. A key characteristic of tragedy in Restoration and eighteenth-century theatre was female suffering (Marsden, p.134), so female characters who transgressed from what was considered acceptable, willingly or unwillingly, usually only found redemption through death or extreme difficulty. This was

especially so for the popular genre of 'she-tragedy', in which the central female character's deviation from socially acceptable behaviour would inevitably lead to her death.

Calista from Rowe's *The Fair Penitent* (1703) is a prime example of 'she-tragedy': her infidelity with Lothario leads to both his murder and her death by suicide. She breaks the rules of how women of her status were supposed to behave and think, going so far as to articulate the deep inequalities faced by women in her society and their subordination to men. Though in the world of the play Calista's behaviour was so transgressive that her death was the only acceptable way for her to find redemption, the audience experienced the injustice of her situation through her visceral emotions, garnering enough empathy that her fate was considered tragic. One of the most successful actresses in the role, Susannah Cibber, similarly juggled the public's sympathies and condemnation for an off-stage life that broke conventions around female sexual behaviour and agency. Her private life and the character of Calista intertwined to create a condemnation of the inequalities faced by women under male rule.

The Fair Penitent includes Lothario, one of the most infamous dramatic rakes of the eighteenth-century stage. Unlike the rakes of the late-seventeenth- and early-eighteenth-century comedies, Lothario is the play's antagonist. Despite this, he was a very popular character to perform throughout the eighteenth century and many well-known actors played him. Given growing eighteenth-century anxieties regarding men who desired other men, and the subsequent suspicions that male actors began to face when it came to their sexuality, possibly his popularity amongst actors and audience was due to his status as an unapologetic rake. Actors would benefit from being associated with the very obviously virile heterosexual masculinity that Lothario embodied, even if it meant playing a morally reprehensible

character who dies in the first half. It is therefore intriguing that Woffington chose to perform Lothario cross-dressed both in Dublin and in London. Unlike Wildair, Lothario did not need to be redeemed from the villainy of being a rake because his villainy is of narrative import. Nor was his masculinity suspect as his masculine virility is central to the plot. Though Woffington was not as successful at performing Lothario as she was of Wildair, later descriptions and scholarship have painted her as being much less successful than she actually was. In saying that, both the success she did have as Lothario and the fact that her Lothario was not as successful as her Wildair, gives some insight into the boundaries of performing masculinity for eighteenth-century actresses. Particularly when combined with what we found in our Practice-as-Research explorations of *The Fair Penitent*.

Dangerous Seduction: Peg Woffington's 'gay Lothario, in his Age of Joy '

The Fair Penitent's story revolves around Calista, a young aristocratic woman who secretly slept with Lothario before her arranged marriage to Lothario's blood-enemy, Altamont. The play begins after Calista's marriage to Altamont and focuses on the consequences of her secret being revealed. By the end of the play Lothario has been killed in a duel and Calista has killed herself by his corpse. The play was very popular throughout the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth century, and well-known actors and actresses of the time often played the roles of Lothario and Calista respectively (Staves 2007, p.87 and Eger 2007, p.34).

Lothario is obviously the play's antagonist: the audience first meets him describing to his friend Rossano that a combination of lust for Calista and desire for revenge on Altamont and Sciolto (Calista's father) led him to break into her room while she was asleep. There he 'seduced' her,

Lothario Til, with short sighs and murmuring reluctance,
The yielding fair one gave me perfect happiness.
(Rowe, 1815, 1:1: 152-3)

Having slept with Calista Lothario explains that he quickly lost interest in her, 'At length the morn and cold indiff'rence came' (Rowe, 1815, 1.1: 156). He then describes how the next time he saw Calista, she tearfully begged him to marry her, but in horror at the idea of marriage he pretended illness and left, subsequently avoiding Calista's desperate letters to talk. That Lothario is an amoral seducer is therefore the very first thing we learn about him. His lack of morals and narcissistic behaviour is further cemented in Act IV sc.i when he meets with Calista and refuses to take any responsibility for his behaviour, or for the situation Calista has found herself in. So much so that he acts like she is the one who hurt him by marrying Altamont. Altamont overhears the argument and learning what happened between Calista and Lothario he immediately challenges Lothario to a duel and kills him.

To a modern reading what Lothario did to Calista was rape. He mentions that after breaking into her room while she was sleeping 'Fierceness and pride, the guardians of her honour,/Were charmed to rest' (Rowe, 1815, 1.1: 145). He also mentions her 'murmuring reluctance' and subsequent 'yielding'. Alone with a man who had broken into her room and refused to take 'no' for an answer, Calista does not come across as a willing sexual partner in Lothario's retelling. Even to an audience prone to believing Calista responsible for her 'seduction', Lothario went counter to the eighteenth-century notions of acceptable behaviour by men towards women that we saw in Chapter One. Despite this, Lothario is described as a sympathetic and attractive character by some eighteenth-century commentators. Samuel Johnson (1779) said of him, 'Lothario, with gaiety which cannot be hated, and bravery which

cannot be despised, retains too much of the spectator's kindness' (Johnson, p.160). Richard Cumberland (1791) added that, '[Lothario's] high spirit, brilliant qualities, and fine person are so described as to put us in danger of false impressions in his favour and to set the passions in opposition to the moral of the piece.' (Cumberland, p.81). Given the indifferent and dismissive way Lothario treats Calista after sleeping with her, it is even more surprising that Cumberland goes on to say of Lothario's behaviour, 'I suspect that the gallantry of Lothario makes more advocates for Calista than she ought to have.' (Cumberland 1791, p.81). Cumberland's use of the word 'gallantry' could be referring to 'Bravery, dashing courage, heroic bearing' rather than 'Courtliness or devotion to the female sex' (Oxford English Dictionary 2019), a difference which would explain why his behaviour could be viewed as 'gallant'. Either way, Johnson and Cumberland's description of Lothario and their admiration is at odds with how Lothario's behaviour comes across to a modern understanding and, presumably, how Rowe intended given that Lothario is the play's antagonist.

Clearly Lothario's character managed to transcend his suspect morality to achieve popularity. Perhaps this is why, after her success as Wildair, Woffington played Lothario in Dublin when she was there from 1751 to 1754 (Shaughnessy and Shaughnessy 2008, p.xxviii) and later in London at Covent Garden, first on March 24, 1757, and then on April 22, 1757 (London Stage Database). Given that Lothario is an antagonist, at first the decision for her to play him seems strange since Wildair is the protagonist of *The Constant Couple,* and she received particular praise for her charm in the role. However, when considering that descriptions of Lothario remark on his 'high spirit' and 'gaiety', the choice for her to take on the role after her success as Wildair makes more sense. Wildair and Lothario have similar enough qualities – both are charming libertines – that the assumption may have been that she would be as successful in

the one as the other. Recent scholarship has followed commentary after she died by claiming that her performance as Lothario was a failure, but though it was not as successful as her Wildair, on closer inspection the evidence for her Lothario being poorly received is weak.

Critical Reception of Woffington's Lothario

There is no record of Woffington having performed Lothario in London prior to 1757 (London Stage Database) so it appears the first time she played him was in Dublin when she returned there from 1751 until 1754 (Davies 1780, p.307 and Hitchcock 1788, p.217). During her time in Dublin, she performed as Calista in *The Fair Penitent* twice.[39] After these two initial performances she did not play Calista in Dublin again; instead, she played Lothario six times in total during her time there.[40] She performed Wildair a total of thirteen times while in Dublin but, notably, when she started performing Lothario (the 1752/53 season and the 1753/54 season) she only performed Wildair four more times to Lothario's six (Sheldon 1967, p.409). Possibly she would have performed both roles more often than this, but the theatre she was at, Smock-Alley, was severely damaged in politically based riots in March 1754 and as a consequence she sailed back to London (Shaughnessy and Shaughnessy 2008, p.xvii).

The evidence against her Lothario being well received in Dublin comes from comments after her death made by Davies (1780) and the anonymous writer of her posthumous *Memoirs of the celebrated Mrs Woffington* (1760). Davies (1780) wrote,

> In Dublin she tried her powers of acting a tragedy rake, for Lothario is certainly of that cast; but whether she was as much accomplished in the manly tread of the buskin'd libertine, as she was in the genteel walk of the gay gentleman in comedy,

[39] On October 21, 1751, and January 23, 1752 (Sheldon 1967, p.418).
[40] These performances were on January 29, 1753, February 5, 1753, February 26, 1753, May 18, 1753, November 15, 1753, and January 31, 1754 (Sheldon 1967, p.418).

> I know not; but it is certain that she did not meet with the same approbation in the part of Lothario, as in that of Sir Harry Wildair. (Davies 1780, pp.256-7)

Davies admits to not talking from a place of first-hand knowledge of Woffington's performance as Lothario, therefore we can assume his comment comes from second- or third-hand evidence, possibly many years after the fact when personal biases would be more likely to colour memories of her success. Additionally, though his comment that 'she did not meet with the same approbation' implies that her performance was not a huge success, importantly it does not necessarily mean her performance as Lothario *failed*. Rather that it did not become as popular as her performance of Wildair. Considering that Wildair was the defining role of her career, one could reasonably infer that people enjoyed her Lothario even if it was less than her Wildair.

The Anonymous writer of the 'notoriously suspect' (Shaughnessy and Shaughnessy 2008, p.xi) *Memoirs of the celebrated Mrs Woffington* is much more certain that Woffington's performance of Lothario in Dublin failed,

> Those who were resolved to commend every Thing she did […] commended her in the warmest Terms possible […] Others, and who were the most indicious of the Audience, as strenuously insisted, that both her Action and Elocution were highly improper, and her Conception of the Character quite erroneous […] for a Woman, in such a Character as *Lothario*, to personate that gay, perfidious Libertine, was an absurd, an inconsistent and impotent Attempt […] In a Word, those who were capable of judging impartially, by not being biased by their personal Connections with our Actress, unanimously agreed, that she was absolutely unfit for the Character, and played it with all the Impotence of mere Endeavour. (Anon 1760, pp.30-1)

This is a much more severe indictment of Woffington's performance as Lothario than Davies' commentary. The author does admit that there were members of the audience who liked it but dismisses them as 'Those who were resolved to commend every Thing she did'. Their

subsequent argument that a woman performing such a role was 'absurd', 'inconsistent' and 'impotent', and their description of the audience members who did not like her performance as being 'those who were capable of judging impartially' displays a strong bias against Woffington having even attempted the role. The Anonymous author's judgment of Woffington's success as Lothario does not appear to be based on the overall reception it received, but from a prejudice against women performing a 'gay, perfidious Libertine'. The author's description of Woffington's performance and her success appears to stem from their being 'Unable to reconcile the disjoint between Lothario and Woffington's sexed bodies, and thereby the break between the dramatic fiction and the stage reality' (Brooks 2015, p.81). How much the Anonymous author's review of Woffington as Lothario reflected the actual sentiments of the audience in Dublin is therefore debatable.

Further reading of the *Memoirs* clarifies that the author had broader issues with women performing male roles, even Woffington's celebrated performance of Wildair. Though the obvious success of Woffington as Wildair was indisputable, the author makes it clear that her performance skirted the boundaries of what they thought appropriate. This extract describes Woffington and a Mr L--- kissing backstage while she was dressed as Wildair,

> It was in this Character [Wildair] that the well-known Mr L.--- became acquainted with her […] It is true, indeed, that Mr. L--- had been seen talking to our Actress behind the Scenes, and even *kissing* her behind the Scenes, when personating Sir *Harry*; […] he might have *known* her in some *other* Character and some other Place; in a Character, that would reflect less Dishonour to his Taste, than to *know* an Actress, when *acting the Man* (Anon 1760, p.33).

Mr L--- kissing a cross-dressed Woffington elicits almost the same level of distaste and condemnation that Trumbach (1998) describes male-male romantic and/or sexual relationships causing in the mid-eighteenth century (Trumbach, p.3). To the author,

Woffington is not *just* clothed in male attire nor *just* acting a man, she has become male enough in the role that her kissing a man while dressed as Wildair becomes an act for disgust.

That Woffington gained enough aspects of maleness while cross-dressed to make her kissing a man in costume unacceptable, appears to be at odds with the assertion that a woman performing Lothario was automatically an 'impotent Attempt' (Anon 1760, p.31). The author's argument that the nature of womanhood prohibited Woffington, or any actress, from believably acting a Libertine like Lothario, is explicitly based on the idea that it was impossible to forget the reality of her womanhood. Yet two pages later they find a cross-dressed Woffington to have taken on enough elements of manhood that her kissing a man dressed as Wildair becomes dishonourable. This contradiction in how much Woffington could successfully become a man and the author's clear distaste for women performing masculinity indicates that perhaps their review of Woffington's success as Lothario had less to do with the audience's reception and more to do with a belief that women performing male characters transgressed a boundary of taste and honour. To be clear, any bias that the author of *Memoirs of the celebrated Mrs Woffington* may have had regarding Woffington's cross-dressed performances does not automatically invalidate their assertion that some of the audience in Dublin did not enjoy or believe her performance as Lothario. It just indicates that they may have had a reason to focus on those who disliked the performance and dismiss the audience members who, in their own words, 'commended her in the warmest Terms possible' (Anon 1760, p.30). That Woffington's Lothario was not a dismal failure at the time is also borne out by two other references to her performance, one matter of fact and one effusive.

The first, is from Hitchcock's *An historical view of the Irish stage* (1788) in which he describes Woffington's time in Dublin in 1751 as being 'compared to Cæsar; she came, she saw, she overcame' (Hitchcock, p.218). According to him, 'The public papers every day were filled with panegyrics, on her person, elegant deportment and inimitable acting' (Hitchcock 1788, p.218). He goes on to say, 'Nor was her merit confined to one peculiar line of acting; her next character was Phillis in *The Conscious Lovers*; Young Bevil, Sheridan' Myrtle, Digges […] and, to finish the round, Lothario, in *The Fair Penitent*.' (Hitchcock 1788, p.219). Though he does not highlight Lothario as one of her more successful roles – his list of the 'parts in which she peculiarly charmed the public' (Hitchcock 1788, p.219) does not include Lothario – he does not mention any role as having been unsuccessful. In fact, Lothario is clearly included in the parts that she acted with 'merit', despite not being included as a favourite.

Hitchcock's rather neutral account of Woffington's performance of Lothario is cast into the shade by a very enthusiastic and effusive poem titled *The Vision*, Inscribed to Mrs Woffington' (1753) written anonymously by 'A Lady'. In the poem the writer highlights several parts performed by Woffington, praising each of them lavishly for the emotion Woffington's performance of them evoked. Interestingly, she does not mention Woffington's Wildair, but dedicates a stanza to Woffington's Lothario,

> Next, all adroit, each taper Thigh enclos'd
> In many Vestments, with *Parisian* Step;
> Light as the bounding Doe she tripp'd along,
> The gay LOTHARIO, in his Age of Joy.
> *Venus* supriz'd, thus whisper'd, "Let me die,
> "If dear ADONIS wore a lovelier Form."
> Then clasp'd the Youth-dress'd Damsel to her Breast,
> And sighing, murmur'd, *O that for my sake*
> *Though wert this Infant what thou represents.*
>
> The all-excelling Actress blushing bow'd; (A Lady 1753).

Clearly, the 'Lady' who wrote this poem was much taken by Woffington's performance. Most particularly, the writer's sexual attraction to Woffington as Lothario dominates the description of her in the role as she dwells on Woffington's body ('enclos'd' thighs and lovely 'Form') and Venus' desire for Woffington to truly be the youth she is performing. A love-struck Venus clasping Woffington to her breast, sighing and murmuring is a very sexual image. The poem makes it obvious that the eroticism of Woffington's Lothario is due both to her offstage gender – the description of her thighs and walk are all gendered 'she' – and her onstage masculinity – Lothario in 'his Age of Joy'. Culminating in a very sexualised blend of the two in 'the Youth-dress'd Damsel'. It is the very instability of her being gendered as solely masculine or solely feminine that renders her desirable, 'The cross-dressed actress threatened the apparent naturalness and stability of what was becoming dominant gender ideology by suggesting a feminine sexuality that exceeded the heterosexual role of women' (Straub 1992, p.135). Unlike the anonymous writer of *Memoirs of the celebrated Mrs Woffington* the anonymous writer of *The Vision* embraces Woffington's androgyny in male attire and a male role: to her, Woffington's androgyny is attractive, whilst to the writer of *Memoirs…* Woffington's androgyny is distasteful.

What makes this poem even more notable in terms of the reception to Woffington's Lothario, is that it professes to be written by a woman, 'very few documents survive (if indeed they ever existed) which provide a first-hand account of a woman's response to the theater [sic]' (Marsden 2006, p.12). If truly written by a woman, it is notable that she focuses on Woffington's Lothario and does not even mention Wildair, opening up the possibility that reactions to Woffington's performances – and the reasons for those reactions – cannot be

entirely understood from the writings of male critics and writers. Women in the audience may have been interested in different aspects of Woffington's performances than men, what some may have seen as 'impotent' they may have seen as liberating. Both with regards to being allowed to feel sexual desire for another woman, and the vicarious pleasure of watching another woman behave in ways that were barred to them by expectations of gender.

These accounts, coupled with the frequency in which Woffington played Lothario in Dublin, show that though her performance was not celebrated by everyone, it was not universally panned. Clearly there were members of the audience who enjoyed it, and members who did not. That the role was not a huge success in Dublin might explain why she only performed it in London years later in 1757. By the same token, if it had been a disaster, it is doubtful that both she and the manager of Covent Garden would have reprised it for the London stage.

In terms of her success as Lothario in London, it is important to note the circumstances around the dates of her performances. Woffington played Lothario two times at Covent Garden in 1757: the first was on March 24 where she is billed as playing Lothario for the 'First time' and her second (and last) performance as Lothario was a Benefit that occurred just under a month later on April 22 (London Stage Database). Three and a half weeks after the second performance, towards the end of a performance as Rosalind in *As You Like It*, Woffington staggered offstage and collapsed in an incident described by Tate Wilkinson (1790),

> Monday, May 17, 1757 […] [Woffington] went through Rosalind for four acts without my perceiving she was in the least disordered, but in the fifth she complained of great indisposition. I offered her my arm, the which she graciously accepted; I thought she looked softened in her behaviour, and had less of the *hauteur*. When she came off at the quick change of dress, she again complained of being ill' but got accoutred and returned to finish the part, and pronounced in the epilogue speech, "If it be true that good wine needs no bush – it is as true that

> a good play needs no epilogue," &c. &c – But, when arrived at – "If I were among you I would kiss as many of you as had beards that pleased she." Her voice broke, she faultered, endeavoured to go on, but could not proceed – then in a voice of tremor screamed, O God! O God! Tottered to the stage door speechless, where she was caught […] She was given over that night, and for several days; but so far recovered as to linger till near the year 1760, but existed as a mere skeleton. (Wilkinson, pp.118-9)

Woffington's collapse ended her stage career and she retired to Teddington until her death in 1760 (Shaughnessy and Shaughnessy 2008, p.xvii). Whether she would have performed Lothario again is hard to know, but her collapse so soon after her second performance means that we cannot read anything into the fact that she only performed Lothario twice in London. In fact, that she played the role again a month after the first time seems to indicate that the first time was not a disaster. Though the April 22 performance was for a Benefit, meaning the managers were not necessarily aiming for a hit, it would have been unfair to stage a performance for a Benefit that had previously been met with either apathy or dislike. Similarly, though again it is hard to be conclusive with a sample size of two, that the performances occurred a month apart would have been consistent with the frequency of Woffington's performances as Wildair: in the prior season of 1755/56 she performed Wildair approximately once a month (London Stage Database).

Since it is unclear what caused her collapse on May 17, 1757, it is important to note that her acting as a whole appears to have suffered that season, 'In the winter 1756 and spring 1757 […] Woffington grew very languid, - and except her Frenchified lady […] all her characters lost attraction' (Wilkinson 1795, p.128). J. Fitzgerald Molloy's *The Life and Adventures of Peg Woffington* (1897) says, 'It was noted that during the season of 1756-57, her appearance was not so regular as in days of yore; for now her health began to give way' (Molloy, p.333).

Woffington may have been suffering the effects of her illness months before her eventual collapse and any performance of hers in this period would likely have been impacted by her ill-health. A role that her audience had never previously seen her in would have particularly suffered in its reception. Experiencing what was thought to be the results of 'overwork and fatigue' (Molloy 1897, p.334) a role like Lothario that required the performance of 'high spirit [and] brilliant qualities' (Cumberland 1785, p.81) might have been beyond her abilities.

Posthumous reviews of her performance of Lothario do not mention her ill-health, instead her short-comings are attributed to an inability to perform 'the manly tread of the buskin'd libertine' (Davies 1780, p.256). Wahrman (2004) argues that in the late eighteenth century, when attitudes towards gender play had shifted to one of condemnation, critics looked back at past cross-dressed performances and reimagined them as unsuccessful, claiming that audiences of the time had seen cross-dressed performances as absurd or degrading (Wahrman, p.50). That so many later descriptions of Woffington's Lothario are positive it was a failure, despite there being no clear evidence to that effect from the time, gives pause to wonder how much changing attitudes to cross-dressed performances influenced this subsequently dominant narrative? Woffington's success as Wildair was so indisputable that the audience's enjoyment of her in that role could not be denied (in particular because Dora Jordan experienced similar success as Wildair in the late-eighteenth century), but her success as Lothario was and is more open to interpretation. Critics less accepting of gender play and more invested in gender boundaries could therefore view her reception through a lens of disbelief in her ability to transcend her off-stage gender to play a virile, hyper-masculine Lothario.

In addition to the potential influence of her illness and latter changing attitudes to cross-dressing, Woffington was generally considered to be fairly inadequate at performing tragic roles. As an anonymous writer said of her, 'Little can be said of her tragedy-acting' (Anon 1758, p.38). Francis Gentleman (1770) called her 'the screech-owl of tragedy' (Gentleman, p.171), and of her performance of Calista he claimed she 'barked out the penitent with as dissonant notes of voice as ever offended a critical ear; we allow she was very pleasing to the eye, but highly offensive to cultivated taste. (Gentleman 1770, p.275). These strong reactions to her performances in tragedy imply that perhaps too much weight has been given to Lothario's nature as a cross-dressed role for its more muted reception. Perhaps the reason Woffington's Lothario was not as successful as her Wildair was fundamentally because she just did not excel at tragic roles.

The theory that Woffington's Lothario failed to impress the audience, particularly in London, admittedly cannot be completely debunked, mostly because there is a lack of first-hand commentary or reviews from the time of her performances. My analysis argues that there may have been other elements that lead to her performance being described as a failure by some after her death. However, if what I show here is true, that Woffington's Lothario was not the failure it is portrayed as being, it must be acknowledged that it is also true that her Lothario did not become the iconic role that Wildair did for her – despite the similarity in their 'gaeity', 'high spirits' and Libertine propensities. This could be due to her comparative lack of skill in tragedy, or her illness in her final season, or – as claimed – that Lothario was not compelling or believable when performed cross-dressed. It is here that the explorations of the role through Practice-as-Research gives more insight into the complexities Woffington faced performing Lothario cross-dressed. This helps us understand why her portrayal of

Lothario did not become the success that Wildair did, and what that can tell us about any limits actresses may have faced when performing masculinity.

Lothario in Practice

Curious to see why Woffington's Lothario was moderately successful but did not reach the iconic status of her performance of Wildair – and if that said something about the limits of female-male cross-dressing at the time – we put two scenes from *The Fair Penitent* into practice in January 2019. The scenes were chosen because they set up Lothario's persona and showed his relationships to the other key characters, Calista and Altamont. Each scene was practiced and performed twice, once with a male performer playing Lothario and once with a female performer playing Lothario. In both versions of each scene, the other characters were played by the same performers. Those playing Lothario did not watch the alternate version of the scene they were in, so that their interpretation of the scene was not affected by watching another person perform it.

The first scene was Act I sc.i, in which we first meet Lothario, and he tells Rossano about his 'seduction' of Calista and the aftermath. In this moment we get a sense of Lothario as a person and his relationship to Calista, Altamont and Sciolto. In the first version of our exploration Max Attard played Lothario with Raphael Ruiz as Rossano (https://youtu.be/hOd-rghnSqw), in the second version Emily performed Lothario with Raphael retaining the role of Rossano (https://youtu.be/DBvsNxL1di0).

There are a few moments within the scene as performed by Max and then by Emily to highlight in terms of trying to understand both the appeal of Lothario as a character, and why

Woffington's Lothario was not as successful as Wildair. Specifically, when Lothario describes breaking into Calista's room and seeing her sleeping, in Max's performance he allows the imagery of the words to describe the scene and give the tone of Lothario's sexual excitement. His gestures do not dominate the action, rather they support the meaning of the words as a subtext. In this clip Max/Lothario's left hand grips his sword in excitement at 'warm, tender, full of wishes'; he does a larger, more obvious – though non-specific – gesture to emphasise '*charmed* to rest'; his right hand goes to his breast in an indicative and non-sexually suggestive way on 'within her bosom all was calm'; and when he says 'as peaceful seas that know no storms' his right hand and torso rise and fall mimicking both the seas and breathing (https://youtu.be/qVDK6qCm_Eg). The words, his tone of voice, emphasis and actions, combine to give a sense of remembered excitement: we can tell Lothario was clearly in a heightened state of desire during the incident remembered in the retelling, but the sexual nature of his encounter is not made explicit. In a previous workshop conducted in April 2017 James Nickerson experimented with the same speech (https://youtu.be/OTqbOX-n-aY). He too performed this section without making the sexual nature of the encounter very explicit; like Max he allowed the emotions of the encounter to come through in the words, his tone, emphasis and supportive gestures. That two male performers chose to approach this monologue in this way is interesting when compared to how Emily performed this moment as Lothario, and how another female performer, Lisa, approached it at another one-day workshop in April 2017.

What stands out in both Emily and Lisa's performance in contrast with Max and James, is their use of sexually explicit gestures at this point in the monologue. In Emily's case she strokes the hilt of her sword with her left hand in a suggestive way on the words 'loose, unattired, warm,

tender', her voice suggestively dropping in tone and volume; on 'as peaceful seas that know no storm, only lifted gently up and down by tides' she mimes a sexual act, her hands in front of her as if holding a body and her pelvis thrusting up and down in sync with the words (https://youtu.be/NmkcOagDi7U). Lisa also used a sexually explicit gesture in this monologue, one used in the modern day to refer to someone stroking a vulva, on the line 'warm and tender', turning the line into an explicit reference to sex instead of a more oblique one (https://youtu.be/7LAlGBTDUVw). Emily was not present at the workshops in 2017, nor does she know Lisa, so there is no possibility that she was inspired by Lisa's overtly sexualised gesture to perform in a similar way.

That *both* female performers independently felt the need to embellish the heightened sexual tone of Lothario's monologue with sexually explicit gestures in a way that the male performers did not, raises interesting questions around their confidence in performing a sexualised masculinity.[41] Both women seem to have felt that the sexual nature of the words or the incident being described would not come through in their performance without additional signalling to the audience, whilst the men did not feel a similar need to make Lothario's sexual conquest and aggression explicit. This lack of confidence in conveying the sexual aggression of Lothario may have arisen out of Emily and Lisa's awareness that the audience may not believe in their ability as Lothario to overpower (either willingly or unwillingly) Calista's desire to remain chaste.

[41] It is important to note that none of these performers had watched their counterparts in the scene, nor did they discuss it. Similarly, just as Emily was not in the workshop with Lisa, Max was not in the workshop with James.

Without believing that Lothario could and would overwhelm Calista, the tension between them later on in the play, and Calista's moral dilemma between duty and desire, could be undermined. 'Lothario's sexuality is powerful, aggressive and dominates the play' (Brooks 2015, p.18), he needs to be a believable sexual threat in order for him to be dangerous. If he does not have a believably dangerous, almost irresistible, sexuality then it would perhaps be hard for an audience to understand why Calista would be so overwhelmed (consensually or not) that she gives up her sense of duty to her father and goes against all her morals. Especially after Rossano makes it clear she was initially very guarded towards Lothario,

> *Rossano* I've heard you oft describe her haughty, insolent,
> And fierce with high disdain: it moves my wonder,
> That virtue thus defended, should be yielded
> A prey to loose desires.
>
> (Rowe, 1815, 1.1: 130-3)

Both Emily and Lisa seemed to instinctively think that the gap between their 'real' bodies and Lothario's could raise questions in the audience about the sexual power of their performance. When re-watching recordings of the performance, it appears that they both unconsciously sought to mitigate questions around their sexual danger by making the sexual element explicit. Though we do not have records describing exactly how Woffington performed Lothario, it is not inconceivable that she would have felt a similar gap when performing him. Possibly, like Emily and Lisa, she felt the need to compensate by being more sexually obvious, which, considering how scenes of love-making between actresses and cross-dressed actresses were met by disbelief and disgust by some critics (Brooks 2015, pp.77-8), might have rather heightened the audience's knowledge of her differently sexed body than hidden it. Or, potentially, she did not and performed it more like Max and James did, thus appearing 'impotent' to some in the audience as they felt a lack of sexual danger. Either way, in a

performance where the character's sexual danger was so important to the narrative of the play – unlike in *The Constant Couple* where Wildair's failure to seduce Angelica is key – those audience members already critical of an actress's ability to portray masculinity would perhaps have had their doubts confirmed.

This apparent insecurity when a female performer plays Lothario and how that can affect the nature of the performance, can also be seen a little later when Lothario reacts to Calista calling herself his wife. When Max performed this, he clearly felt comfortable in playing into the comic aspects of Lothario's reaction to the word 'wife' and subsequent pretence of illness in order to get away from Calista (https://youtu.be/5X1kilwlleg). Here we can see why Lothario was described as having a 'gaiety which cannot be hated' (Johnson 1779, p.160) and a 'high spirit, brilliant qualities, and [a] fine person' (Cumberland 1785, p.81). Though he behaves terribly towards Calista, the audience cannot help but laugh at his overblown fear of marriage and transparent attempts to flee the horror of a woman expecting marriage. In performance, Max's voice went comically high on 'I started at that name!", emphasising Lothario's overreaction to the mention of marriage and making his fear even more absurd. Laughter at Lothario over his fear of marriage does not threaten the believability of his masculinity. In fact, it feeds into the desire for sexual freedom from marriage so fundamental to the 'Libertine creed' (Haggerty 1999, p.6), a sexual freedom that went against eighteenth-century morals, but which was still considered masculine.

For a female performer on the other hand, laughter at Lothario's fear of marriage may come too close to laughter at the performance of masculinity. Nussbaum (2010) claims that Woffington as Lothario 'may well have provoked the embarrassed titters peculiar to comedy

rather than tragedy' (Nussbaum, p.224) due to the unbelievability of her performance of virile masculinity. For an actor, exposing an amusing side of Lothario was unlikely to undermine belief in their performance of gender, however for an actress any laughter could potentially remind the audience of the difference between their performed gender and their 'real' gender and provoke 'embarrassed titter's'. The line between laughing at a character and laughing at a performer can be thin. Thus, it is interesting to see that unlike Max, Emily did not play into the comedy of this moment (https://youtu.be/fo_I_HgHOaY). Instead, she kept the seriousness of the whole speech, a choice that could be seen as counter to Lothario's reputation for 'gaiety' and 'high spirits'. It is possible that unlike Emily, Woffington did try to bring comedy to the role, and potentially laughter at Lothario's expense was too close to laughter at her expense, leading some to think 'that both her Action and Elocution were highly improper, and her Conception of the Character quite erroneous' (Anon 1760: 30). Or perhaps the fear of inviting ridicule may have inhibited Woffington from pursuing Lothario's 'gaeity' with the same energy that she brought to that 'gay, dissipated, good-humoured rake' (Davies 1780, p.256) Wildair. If so, this would have been a performance choice that would not have played to her strengths as a comedic performer but rather her weaknesses as a tragic performer.

One of the key reasons attributed to Woffington's lack of talent at tragedy was that her voice was considered a major flaw. As well as Gentleman (1770) bluntly writing that she 'might be called the screech-owl of tragedy' (Gentleman 1770, p.171), Wilkinson (1790) said, 'Mrs Woffington, - though beautiful to a degree had a most unpleasant squeaking pipe' (Wilkinson, p.25). Other commentators were more diplomatic in their critiques of her in tragic roles, 'her voice was disagreeable and she is charged […] with not sufficiently divesting herself of her

own character in her assumed one' (Brewer 1795, pp.4-5). How much Woffington's mixed reception as Lothario was due to the difficulties of an actress playing the role versus what was considered her lack of skill and dissonant voice is hard to say. Certainly, if her skills as a tragedian were lacking that would have impacted the believability of the role, especially if she felt that she could not utilise her comedic powers as Lothario without highlighting her 'real' sex too much. A 'squeaking pipe' of a voice could also have been a hinderance for such a notoriously masculine role, considering that a high-voice is often used to denote femininity or effeminacy.

There are other moments in the play that could potentially have drawn the audience's attention to the fact that Lothario was being performed cross-dressed in a manner that would have undermined the performance. When Lothario describes Calista's distress at his refusing to marry her, he says she reacted 'Straight with tears and sighs, with swelling breasts, with swooning and distraction'. The reference to 'swelling breasts' could remind some audience members of the performer's 'real' sex, especially if she physically indicates to them (https://youtu.be/RljlfyB50j4). Instead of it appearing only as Lothario imitating the passions of a woman's 'pow'rful arts' – as it does when a male performer plays it – it could appear that the woman performing the character is showing her 'true' gendered self as opposed to the 'performed' gendered self of Lothario. As shown in Chapter One, this knowing nod to the performer's 'real' gender works in *The Constant Couple* by adding to the comedy of the moment and potentially mitigating elements of gendered behaviour that had become uncomfortable for a mid-eighteenth-century audience. However, in *The Fair Penitent*, a reminder to the audience that Lothario's masculinity is performed rather than considered innate could increase a belief in the 'impotence' of the Lothario they are watching.

The explorations of cross-dressing Lothario in modern practice highlight how and why the role was more prone to ambivalent and/or negative reactions being reported after Woffington's retirement and death. Lothario's narrative import is predicated on the success of his masculine virility: any insecurity on the part of a cross-dressed actress as to the success of their masculine portrayal, or any predisposition by an audience to question a cross-dressed actress' performance of masculinity, would influence how successful he was as the play's antagonist. If the audience does not believe in Lothario's ability to sexually overwhelm and overpower Calista (consensually or not), then the dangerous nature of Lothario could be seen by some as 'impotent', as the writer of *Memoirs of the celebrated Mrs Woffington* claimed. Unlike with Wildair, where the interplay of femininity, masculinity and androgyny added beneficial layers of innuendo and comedy, when performing Lothario that interplay appears to have put some audience members off.

Woffington's performance as Lothario has been painted in commentary given after her death as unsuccessful and a misstep. Looking at the evidence available however, this representation of the success of her Lothario is questionable. Certainly, given that she performed Lothario a fair amount in Dublin it must have had enough admirers there to make it profitable to keep casting her as him. The poem *The Vision* shows that there were even some admirers who saw it as a highlight of her career. Even critical sources after the fact, like the anonymous writer of *Memoirs…* admit that there were audience members who enjoyed her performance. The reception she received in London is even harder to parse than that in Dublin, considering the crippling illness she faced a month and a half after her first appearance as him there. Though even there it seems that it did not universally provoke what Nussbaum (2010) describes as

‘embarrassed titters’ (Nussbaum, p.224) as she performed him again a month after the first time. What can be said with surety is that her Lothario was not as successful as her Wildair.

Perhaps because the expectations of performing an aggressive masculine sexuality dominated the portrayal of Lothario, any uncertainty – either by actress or audience – in the sexual danger presented by a cross-dressed woman, risked making the character appear sexually ‘impotent’. This would be in line with what Brooks (2015) claims, that ‘knowledge of Woffington's female body and her androgynous presence obviated that immersion in the dramatic realism which Burke identified as central to the power of tragedy’ (Brooks, p.81). Again, however, this potential gap in believability may have affected some in the audience but given the evidence from her Dublin and London appearances it was not as devasting to her success as Lothario as Brooks argues it was. Or perhaps because Woffington was just not very appealing in tragic roles, some in the audience felt that her voice and manner were less suited to Lothario than Wildair. Either way, though Woffington’s Lothario was not the incredible success her Wildair was, it does appear to have been appreciated enough that it was profitable for her to play him more than once in Dublin and London. Indicating that there was, and subsequently still is, space for tragic roles in Restoration theatre to include cross-dressing and gender play.

Justified Anger: The Proto-feminism of Calista

The Fair Penitent was the first of Rowe’s ‘she-tragedies’ and proved to be enduringly popular throughout the eighteenth century (Sherbo 2021).[42] The role of Calista, the ‘Fair Penitent’ of

[42] Rowe coined the term ‘she-tragedy’ for his genre of tragic plays in which a female character was the narrative and empathetic centre of the action (Eger 2007, p.34).

the title, was a key tragic role for many actresses as it put a female character's emotional journey at the centre of the narrative, thereby allowing for the skills of the actress performing her to be highlighted (Eger 2007, p.34). My research into Calista came out of my research of Woffington's Lothario: learning how popular Calista was to perform in the eighteenth century and seeing in the Practice-as-Research how her anger is foregrounded in the play intrigued me as to what she could reveal about the performance of female roles in tragedy. Given the similarities of her private life, that Susannah Cibber performed Calista the most in the mid-eighteenth century further indicates what some have called the proto-feminist (Freeman 2002, p.131) appeal of Calista.[43]

Though at first glance the play appears to be purely punitive towards Calista for following her desires, in fact it asks the audience to see the situation through her eyes and positions them to empathise with the reasons for her ruin (Eger 2007, p.33). Calista is an obedient daughter whose father (Sciolto) has arranged for her to marry Altamont. However, she finds herself attracted to Lothario, enemy to both Altamont and Sciolto. Lothario subsequently uses her, possibly against her will, both to satisfy his desire and as a means for revenge against Altamont. Ultimately found out, Calista is rejected by her father and kills herself as a way to recover her familial honour, assuage her guilt and join her dead lover, Lothario.

Calista's situation is a result of her being unable to follow her desires and being subject to the authority of the men in her life. A fact that she makes pretty clear in Act III sc.i. Though we

[43] 'In Europe, the beginnings of political feminism are usually located in the late eighteenth century' (Cameron 2018, p.2). However, there was 'a tradition of writing in which women defended their sex against unjust vilification [that] had existed for several centuries before [the eighteenth century]' (Cameron 2018, p. 2-3), a tradition that is often referred to as 'proto-feminist' (Eger 2007, p.33) or 'protofeminist' (Freeman 2002, p.131).

did not have the time to explore this particular scene in practice, it is an important one to look at in terms of how the character and performance of Calista engaged with eighteenth-century notions of femininity and the role of women.[44]

Calista and Eighteenth-Century 'Feminism'

The scene begins with Sciolto berating Calista for not being happy on the day of her wedding, to which Calista responds,

> *Calista* Is then the task of duty half perform'd?
> Has not your daughter given herself to Altamont,
> Yielded the native freedom of her will
> To an imperious husband's lordly rule,
> To gratify a father's stern command?
> (Rowe, 1815, 3.1: 7-11)

In response, Sciolto declares that whether or not she was happy with the marriage, she had better resign herself to the situation as he would rather see her dead than be dishonoured by her. He then leaves the room and Calista has a monologue alone on stage. Presumably, given the lack of other characters present, this monologue would have been directed out to the audience, turning them into her confidantes. In her speech Calista makes it plain that she has no free will over her life and the knowledge of that is acutely painful,

> *Calista* How hard is the condition of our sex,
> Through ev'ry state of life the slaves of man!
> In all the dear delightful days of youth
> A rigid father dictates to our wills,
> And deals out pleasure with a scanty hand.
> To his, the tyrant husband's reign succeeds;
> Proud with opinion of superior reason,
> He holds domestic bus'ness and devotion
> All we are capable to know, and shuts us,
> Like cloister'd idiots, from the world's acquaintance,

[44] We did not explore this scene in 2019 when we looked at *The Fair Penitent*. I had planned to conduct a smaller workshop to look at it in late 2019/early 2020, but clashes in schedules, my maternity leave and restrictions due to Covid19, prohibited this.

> And all the joys of freedom. Wherefore are we
> Born with high souls, but to assert ourselves,
> Shake off this vile obedience they exact,
> And claim an equal empire o'er the world?
>
> (Rowe, 1815, 3.1: 33-46)

Through her words and her clear intellectual parsing of the situation, Calista both describes and demonstrates that women are the intellectual equals of men. Showing her listeners therefore that the fact that women's freedom is curtailed to a 'cloister'd' world of 'domestic bus'ness and devotion' amounts to a gross injustice. An injustice that it is implied goes against the natural order of the world, for 'Wherefore' are women 'Born with high souls' if they are not given equal opportunities to men? That the actress playing Calista would have said this to an audience that she could look directly at, due to the shared lighting of the eighteenth-century stage, likely made this a very powerful moment. In the early and mid-eighteenth century, audiences would have still believed in the rhetorical tradition that the 'spirit [a strong emotion or image] moves the actor, who, in the authenticity of his transport, moves the audience' (Roach 1993, pp.44-5). Facing the audience and looking them in the eye was considered to increase the likelihood of the audience being moved by the same spirit that moved the performer (Roach 1993, pp.46).

As the action of the play continues, the audience is privy to more of Calista's thoughts, again often directly addressed out to them, allowing them to see and feel the bind she has been put in, between the manipulations of Lothario and the demands of her father. Before we meet Calista, we hear the story of her 'seduction' from Lothario in Act I sc.i. As discussed, though it is not explicitly called rape in the script it is clear from Lothario's description that this 'seduction' involved physical and emotional coercion. Even to eighteenth-century ears the

manner of his 'seduction' would likely have been seen as suspect, given that it begins with him breaking into Calista's room uninvited while she was sleeping. She clearly tries to rectify the situation by marrying him, but Lothario loses all interest in her and spurns her entreaties for marriage. Thus, the audience learns at the beginning of the play that Calista was at the very least coerced into behaving immorally (if not forced to), and that she was doubly wronged because Lothario then refused to make things right by marrying her. Calista has been used terribly by Lothario and the audience is therefore primed to have some sympathy for her. Even if they think she is morally at fault for sleeping with Lothario, she did not 'yield' easily, and she subsequently tried to rectify her downfall by marrying him. She may have been morally suspect to an eighteenth-century audience, but they likely still saw that her downfall was orchestrated and controlled by a man.

Though the text is compellingly written to show the value of Calista's argument that her woes are due to her life being lived at the whim of the men around her (Eger 2007, p.37), it is through performance that the argument for how this inequality punishes women would come to life. As stated, the emotional bond between performer and audience would encourage the audience to engage with Calista's plight in a way that the written text could not, such that the success of Calista's challenge to the restrictions placed on women would have largely depended on the abilities of the actress playing her. It was the performance of the character 'Calista' that would allow her to go beyond Rowe's intention to merely inspire great pity in the audience for her plight (Eger 2007, p.33) and let her become the character 'famous in the popular imagination as an advocate for the Female Sex […] often cited as a model of endurance by proto-feminist writers' (Eger 2007, p.33).

Ideal Femininity and The Fair Penitent

The unfairness of a world that refused to let women like Calista decide their own fate or follow their own desires, and the suffering that these restrictions gave rise to, was something that even those who advocated for women to obey their fathers and husbands recognised. George Savile, the Marquis of Halifax, in his popular conduct book for women *The lady's new-year's gift: or, advice to a daughter* (1688) brings this inequality in society up and even recognises it as an unfair burden on women; however, he excuses it as a necessary unfairness in order for society to function lawfully. Though Savile wrote his book in 1688, it remained popular into the eighteenth century: Aaron Hill in his guise as *The Plain Dealer* (1730) – a sort-of proto-advice columnist to whom people wrote letters and he responded – recommends Savile's book to a governess of two young girls as, 'Reading that little Book, called, *The Advice to a Daughter* […] is enough to make young Women learn to *Know themselves* […] A *Knowledge* of *themselves,* will be the *Preservative* of their *Honour'* (Hill and Bond 1730, p.44).

Savile writes that when it came to marriage, 'It is one of the *Disadvantages* belonging to your *Sex*, that young Women are seldom permitted to make their own *Choice* […] In this Case there remaineth nothing for them to do, but to endeavour to make that easie which falleth to their *Lot*' (Savile 1734 [1688], p.19). A few pages later he notes another inequality for women,

> [O]ur Sex seemeth to play the *Tyrant* in distinguishing *partially* for our selves, by making that in the utmost degree *Criminal* in the *Woman,* which in a *Man* passeth under a much *gentler Censure.* The Root and the Excuse of this Injustice, is the Preservation of Families from any *Mixture* which may bring a Blemish to them: And whilst the *Point* of *Honour* continues to be so placed, it seems unavoidable to give your *Sex* the greater share of the Penalty. But if in this it lieth under any *Disadvantage*, you are more than recompens'd by having the *Honour* of *Families* in your keeping. (Savile 1734 [1688] , p.25)

Clearly Savile, and by extension people like Hill who recommended this book to young ladies, recognised the inequality of how women were expected to behave when it came to sex, love and marriage and how unfair the punishments were if they transgressed when compared with men. Despite this acknowledgment however, Savile justifies this unfairness by placing women at the moral heart of the family and declaring that the satisfaction of that is enough to recompense them for their lack of freedom and the burden of moral scrutiny. Women's freedom is placed in opposition to the morality of society because, 'it is safer some *Injustice* should be *conniv'd* at in a very few Instances; than to break into an Establishment, upon which the Order of Human Society doth so much depend' (Savile 1734 [1688], p. 24). Women, his reasoning suggests, must not only bear the injustice of inequality but they must do so with the knowledge that to transgress, accidently or on purpose, could bring down 'the Order of Human Society'.

Calista's narrative journey and the opinions she gives on the matter directly counter the notion that women were somehow compensated for their lack of freedom by the knowledge that they were keeping society together. Savile's reasoning, relatively dispassionate and seemingly rational on paper (at least to those who, like him, thought men 'had the larger share of *Reason* bestowed upon them' (Savile 1734 [1688], p. 21)) becomes immensely cruel and hard to justify when the injustice of the system is embodied in a character like Calista. Through the emotional intimacy of performance, Calista's lack of options and the cruelty of a world that decrees her honour more important than her life, becomes visceral and harder to dismiss with platitudes about moral integrity. Similarly, Savile's theory that men are bestowed with more 'reason' and should therefore dictate how women live their lives is challenged by Calista's articulate representations of the unfairness of it all – particularly when her

arguments are juxtaposed against the cruelty of Lothario and the didactic heavy-handedness of her father's morality. Calista's argument against women living under the rule of men would have been made stronger through the embodied representation by an actress of the cruel emotional outcome of such inequality.

Recent scholarship has focused on Calista's articulation of the imbalance of power between men and women and how that fit in with eighteenth-century expectations of femininity. Shaun M. Strohmer (1999) argues that in the course of the play Calista's journey causes her 'to reject the role of passive, disempowered spectacle' (Strohmer, p.63). Brett D. Wilson (2012) posits that Calista is based on turn-of-the-eighteenth-century feminists Catherine Trotter, Mary Astell, Lady Mary Chudleigh and Sarah Fyge Egerton (Wilson, pp.35-49). She was, he says, 'an amalgam of turn-of-the-century discourses of feminist polemic, scourging misogynist authorities and institutions, exposing patriarchal power as an artificial construct sustained by force and fraud' (Wilson 2012, p.49). Both Strohmer and Wilson rely on a textual analysis of the play in order to evaluate how Calista engages with eighteenth-century femininity and feminism. Although Strohmer (1999) does point out that 'the effectiveness of this story is not in the picture of virtue, but instead in her [Calista's] performance of passion' (Strohmer, p.58), he still relies on the text to understand how that performance of passion could have been realised. Elizabeth Eger (2007) also recognises the power Calista's emotions would have had on-stage, although she attributes this to Rowe's writing, not the actress performing her,

> Rowe asks the audience to see through Calista's eyes, if only for a moment, offering a woman's assessment of the world she lives in rather than a more stereotypical vision of passive femininity. Such moments of dramatic intensity were known as "hits' or 'points' and often remained fixed in the public memory long after the play's plot had been forgotten. These 'hits' created a space in which

> women's voices could be heard, forming important moments of resistance in a scheme of representation that tended to allow women little agency (even of this male-authored variety). (Eger, p.33)

Viewing Calista through Practice-as-Research, however, shows that it is important to explore the impact of her character in performance as well as in writing to understand how she connected to eighteenth-century notions of femininity and the feminist rhetoric of the time.

Calista in Practice

For the purposes of exploring the performance of Calista, I will focus on the performances of Act IV sc.i we did in January 2019 at the Ovalhouse Theatre. In this scene Lothario and Calista argue about the night they slept together. They are overheard by Altamont who then kills Lothario in a duel, causing Calista to attempt to take her life.

When first approaching how to perform this scene, the performers and I discussed eighteenth-century expectations on women and pre- or extra-marital sex. We drew upon the sentiments expressed by publications like *The lady's new-year's gift* and popular novels of the time in which women were increasingly defined by their chastity and punished for any transgressions (McGirr 2007, p.84). This was to explain how high the stakes are for Calista, and why, when her secret is found out and Lothario is killed, she turns to suicide. With this in mind we looked for gestures in Siddons' *Practical Illustrations of Rhetorical Gesture* (1807) that seemed appropriate for the scene, as well as images from the eighteenth century of actors and actresses in particular roles that I had sourced from The Harvard Theatre Collection, The Folger Library and The British Library. I did not include any images from the eighteenth century of actresses in the role of Calista because I wanted Hilary (who played

Calista) to choose the gestures she would use according to what she felt was necessary for the scene, not what gestures actresses in the role had used. As I will discuss shortly, it was then interesting to compare the gestures Hilary chose to do to with the images of actresses performing Calista to see what, if any, similarities there were.

Working with the notion that eighteenth-century acting involved the use of a series of *tableau* (Roach 1993, p.59) we wanted to begin by choosing a visual theme of gestures and *tableau* that would capture the dynamic of the scene. Thus, because the scene begins with Lothario trying to convince Calista to be intimate with him again while she reacts in horror to what has occurred between them, we chose the images from *Practical Illustrations* labelled 'Distraction and Persuasion' and 'Persuasion repulsed',

Figure 15: 'Distraction and Persuasion' (Siddons 1807, p.49); Figure 16: 'Persuasion repulsed' (Siddons 1807, p.50).

These images were useful as a visual representation of Calista keeping an increasing physical distance between herself and Lothario as she becomes more and more upset with him (as seen occurring in 'Persuasion repulsed'). As if she wished to separate herself from the memory of her night with him: 'Let that night, That guilty night, be blotted from the year' (Rowe, 1815, 4.1: 24-7). Because Lothario is trying to persuade her to sleep with him again,

the distance also represents a defensive technique to stop him from forcing physical intimacy on her (again). This can be seen in a still image taken from a performance of the scene when Lottie performed as Lothario.

Figure 17: Photo by James Frederick Barrett, 2019.

Calista's words indicate distress, despair and anger, so we focused on gestures that were appropriate to those emotions, or that could be adapted to them. For example on,

> *Calista* The hours of folly and of fond delight,
> Are wasted all, and fled; those that remain
> Are doom'd to weeping, anguish, and repentance.
> (Rowe, 1815, 4.1: 11-3)

Hilary moved from the gesture for 'Despair' to that of 'Painful Recollection' on 'fond delight…' indicating the pain of the memory of that night (https://youtu.be/p9pPCoeLDSU),

Figures 18: 'Despair' (Siddons 1807, p.47); Figure 19: 'Painful Recollection' (Siddons 1807, p.11).

In addition, at points in the scene Hilary used the gestures for 'Scorn', 'Terror', 'Horror' and 'Reproach' (https://youtu.be/SVxCXG23HnI).

Figure 20: 'Scorn' (Siddons 1807, p.12); Figure 21: 'Terror' (Siddons 1807, p.23); Figure 22: 'Horror' (Siddons 1807, p.24); Figure 23: 'Reproach' (Siddons 1807, p.51).

Most of these gestures involved an extension of her arms: an expansion into the physical space that magnified her presence and heightened her emotional responses. When looking at images of eighteenth-century actresses performing Calista, this extension of the arms – and thus the general sense of large, strong, emotional responses that dominate the space – appears to be a general pattern of performance of the character.

Figure 24: John Thornthwaite, (1776) 'Mary Ann Yates as Calista in Rowe's 'The Fair Penitent'', Macdonnell Collection, The National Portrait Gallery.

Additionally, when comparing images of Miss Bruton and Mrs Siddons performing as Calista to gestures taken from *Practical Illustrations…* it appears that the gesture for 'Horror' was an iconic image of Calista (and similarly used by Hilary in the picture above).

Figure 25: Anon., 'Mrs Siddons in the Character of Calista in the Fair Penitent', 1780-1800, The British Museum.

Figure 26: Samuel De Wilde, (1791) 'Miss Bruton as Calista', Harry R. Beard Collection at the V&A.

Calista is clearly and unambiguously distressed by the situation she has been put in: she is 'undone', been given up to 'shame', and her father will disown or kill her because of her behaviour (her most frantic response is when she realises her father is about to find out).

Calista's use of the word 'shame' to describe her situation is important as it carries a moral overtone, 'The painful emotion arising from the consciousness of something dishonouring […] or of being in a situation which offends one's sense of modesty or decency' (OED 2021). Society's moral judgement of her behaviour appears to be a large part of what is causing her such emotional distress. Lothario on the other hand does not feel any such shame, in fact he continues to pursue Calista even though she is now married to Altamont. Calista's distress therefore puts the lie to Savile's assertion that women were comforted by their status as being the moral heart of society in recompense for their freedom. Calista becomes an embodied representation of the emotional toll an unequal society takes on women. For an audience watching Calista's distress, an audience for whom the passions – or emotions – felt by the actor on stage were believed to directly affect the passions of those watching, supposedly dispassionate arguments such as Savile's that women were not hurt by their subordination to men would have been exposed as wrong and immensely cruel.

The particular emotions that Calista feels and the manner in which they dominate the stage show how the very act of performing her may have challenged societal notions of acceptable feminine emotional display. As we explored this scene through practice, we found that the language Calista uses requires strong, large, clearly defined and emotionally expressive physical movement and vocals. The images above of eighteenth-century actresses in the role demonstrate that performing Calista produced a display of emotion that would have challenged eighteenth-century moralists' theories of women as naturally passive, meek and calm.

Calista and the Performance of Anger

In Act IV sc.i Calista speaks in quite long, convoluted and descriptive sentences. Lengthy sentences containing detailed imagery can easily get confusing and muddled for an audience if a performer does not distinguish the thoughts and emotional journey behind them.[45] In order to do this a performer needs enough physical and vocal stamina to sustain the breath to the end of each thought without breaking it up, otherwise the audience can lose the sense of it (Berry 2000, p.82). In addition to vocal clarity, in the eighteenth century clear physical movement through gesture was considered important to the narrative trajectory and understanding of a performance,

> The function of gestures was to […] to express by face and hands and posture the passion which moved the character; to emphasize important words; to announce the beginning, and the ending of a passage or speech, and to perform certain other similar specified functions. (Barnett 1987, pp.18-19)

We found in practice that, particularly when her emotions are heightened, Calista's words are so dense that a listener could easily lose the meaning of what she is saying. Anyone performing her, therefore, has to accompany the text with clear and distinct gestures so that both audience and performer do not lose the sense of her argument. Hilary's gestures were therefore not only chosen for their emotional resonance, but also because we found that larger, extended gestures leave a strong impression and sense of emotional clarity. So much so that the emotional beats of the text could be highlighted by the shift from one gesture to another. In this way the trajectory of Calista's argument could be clarified, keeping the

[45] The difficulty of making such long, intricate thoughts intelligible for the audience is a well-known hurdle. Modern acting books on Classical acting, such as Cicely Berry's seminal book on voice in classical theatre *The Actor and The Text* (2000), go into great detail on how to ensure the images and emotional narrative of each line is heard and understood by the audience.

meaning of the thought and her emotional journey legible (a legibility that could be threatened were a performer to feel they had to shift their focus towards presenting a certain type of femininity).

This can be seen in the clip (https://youtu.be/HEYC08Qp8GU)' on Calista's line,

Calista Art thou so base to upbraid me with a crime,
Which nothing but thy cruelty could cause?
If indignation raging in my soul,
For thy unmanly insolence and scorn,
Urg'd me to do a deed of desperation,
And wound myself to be reveng'd on thee,
Think whom I should devote to death and hell,
Whom curse as my undoer, but Lothario.
(Rowe, 1815, 4.1: 40-7)

The line from 'If indignation raging in my soul' to 'my undoer, but Lothario' is one thought, and one sentence. There is no full-stop to break it up. Instead, there are a series of commas, allowing Calista to build in anger and descriptiveness of how she would punish Lothario. To get to the end of the thought the performer must ensure that their breath can last until the end of the sentence, as well as allow for the build in vocal intensity required to keep the emotional sense of what she is saying. This is much easier said than done, especially when performing in a corset which constricts the breath. Calista's building anger requires a forceful and powerful tone, to say this line in a softer voice would lose the sense of rage powering it. The performer cannot conserve their breath in order to reach the end of the line. All of which made this line particularly difficult for Hilary, who despite her vocal and acting training found saying this line in one breath with the right amount of vocal intensity a struggle. Her struggle for breath on this line can just be heard in her performance, she has a slight gasp for air at

'reveng'd on thee' and moves to the gesture of 'Reproach' to cover an intake of breath on 'Think' (https://youtu.be/s-By0HxPuUc). It was here that we discovered that an added benefit of the gestures, particularly the gestures that involved extended arm movement, was to allow for a line to be broken up into shorter breaths without losing the build-up of the thought and its meaning.

Hilary's switch to the gesture 'Reproach' on the word 'Think'

Figure 27: 'Reproach' (Siddons 1807, p.51).

performed several functions: moving on a word emphasises it and in this case that emphasis adds to the build-up of emotion in this section of Calista's speech; as discussed the change of gesture acted as a cover for Hilary to take in more breath without being too obvious; using a gesture with arm extension like 'Reproach' allows for the performer to take more breath into their lungs as it frees the ribcage (similar to some vocal strengthening exercises that ask for the arms to be opened so the ribcage can expand); and such a strong gesture of anger underlines the rage behind Calista's words. Most crucially the gesture adds to the emotional intensity of the line so that the last word 'Lothario' becomes the climax of Calista's rage.

Even with the use of gesture to help, sustaining breath throughout was a challenge for Hilary. In performance, however, it does seem that the challenge of keeping breath throughout this speech is important to giving the audience the sense of Calista's emotional distress. It is important that there is enough breath for the performer to be heard and to ensure important words are clear to the audience; however, when people are in the throes of strong emotion, such as anger and hurt, they can and do lose breath as the body is flooded with adrenaline from strong emotions. To have Calista struggle to breath continuously and evenly acts as a visceral sign of how upset and enraged she is, one that many watching could empathise with. For a performer to smooth out the breath too much or break the sentences up so they do not struggle at all, would not only impact the sense of the words by fragmenting the images and thoughts but would likely make Calista appear much too in control and therefore less emotional. Calista's anger and distress at her betrayal by Lothario and the danger of the position she finds herself in is crucial to the tragic nature of her situation, and the audience needs to empathise with her enough that her eventual death strikes an emotional chord. When reading the text, even when reading aloud outside of a performance environment, this vocal distress and the physical demands on the performer are not immediately evident, so it is hard to get a sense of the intensity of emotion for the character. The technical requirements of the stage places physical and vocal demands on the performer in a way that heightens the sense of emotion the character is experiencing.

How the technical demands of such a dense text amplifies the performance of Calista's rage is interesting considering women's anger was frowned upon in some quarters of eighteenth-

century society. Richard Allestree in *The ladies calling* (1673) – a conduct manual for women written in the late seventeenth century and popular throughout the eighteenth century (Tague 2002, p.29) with new editions being printed as late as 1787 (Eighteenth Century Collections Online) – claimed that anger was 'indecent for the gentler Sex' (Allestree 1727 [1673], p.46). He also claimed that when women display anger 'they render themselves at once despis'd and abhorr'd' (Allestree 1727 [1673], p.46) and that while they seek 'to vent their rage, they are but a sort of speaking brutes […] sure it gives them little cause of triumph when they consider how odious it makes them, how unfit (yeah intolerable) for human society' (Allestree 1727 [1673], p.47). That Calista displays anger at Lothario in this scene and earlier at her father in Act III sc.ii, and that her rage at both is justified by the way they have treated her, defies such didactic rules and condemnations of female anger as Allestree's. The image of the actress in a rage could have normalised women's anger to an audience, showing that it is natural and understandable for a woman to experience anger when provoked. By including and justifying Calista's feelings in these two scenes, and the subsequent way the text asks for the actress playing Calista to physically extend into the space around her, Calista's rage is centred and highlighted verbally and physically. A public display of a woman actively showing strong emotions would have been a challenge to those who believed women should admit 'no unhandsome earnestness, or loudness of discourse' (Allestree 1727 [1673], p.7). As McGirr (2007) says, Calista's anger was considered by some as a challenge to acceptable feminine behaviour for reacting to her situation with 'rage, insolence, and scorn' (McGirr, p.84).

As our practice found, the way in which Calista's lines are structured – her focus on how she has been wronged first by her father Sciolto and then by her lover Lothario and her display of anger and rage – is clearly key to her characterisation. It would be impossible to perform her in this scene without a display of rage and anger for even the fact that her lines cause the performer saying them to run out of breath is indicative of strong, overriding emotion. Her actual words also show it, as she talks about 'indignation raging in her soul'. A build-up of strong emotions, like rage and anger are necessary to carry her to the climax of the scene in which Altamont has to forcibly stop her from killing herself with Lothario's dagger. His words too show that she is displaying an abundance of anger as he stops her while yelling, 'What means thy frantic rage?' (https://youtu.be/KeYUremL_qQ). Calista's pain is not passive or hidden, it is active and unmissable.

Susannah Cibber and the role of Calista

In the mid-eighteenth century, Susannah Arne Cibber (Mrs Cibber) was the most prolific performer of Calista, performing her a total of fifty-seven times between 1742 and 1763, alternating between Covent Garden and Drury Lane right up until the end of her career (see Appendix E).[46] Cibber's success as Calista can be seen not only in how many times she performed her, but because the number of performances of *The Fair Penitent* overall increased when she started playing Calista. Clearly, something about her performance of Calista spoke to audiences, so much so that in the mid-eighteenth century they went to see her in the role again and again.

[46] The Licensing Act of 1737 allowed only Covent Garden and Drury Lane to perform plays (Engel 2011, p.10).

What Susannah Cibber brought to the role of Calista that made her so popular can perhaps give us insight into how and why the role resonated with eighteenth-century audiences, helping to see what aspects of our Practice-as-Research ring true for the eighteenth century. Cibber first played Calista in 1742 and was a fairly instant success, playing her eight times at Covent Garden in her first season compared to Mrs Robert's two at Drury Lane. 1742 is notable as a date because it is only a few years after 1738 when her husband (Theophilus Cibber) brought her lover (William Sloper) to court, seeking monetary damages for criminal consciousness (Soule 2004). The public enthusiastically followed the trial and resulting scandal, and when it was revealed that Theophilus had essentially prostituted his wife to Sloper in exchange for payment of his debts, public opinion went against Theophilus (despite him winning in court) and Susannah separated from him to live with Sloper (Soule 2004).

Though Calista's story was not the same as Cibber's, there was perhaps enough similarity that someone watching Cibber perform as Calista could have had a titillating sense of experiencing Cibber's actual pain and rage at how her husband had treated her. The connection may have also been strengthened because, like Calista, Cibber did not just accept her fate but followed her own needs for love and desire. Calista is forced into a marriage with a man she does not love, making it clear that she is a slave to the desires first of a father and then a husband. Cibber was pushed into marriage to Theophilus by her father for financial gain (Nash 1977, pp.65-75), treated like a sex slave by her husband to cover his debts, and then publicly exposed by him as an adulterer in an effort to extort money out of her lover. Cibber's private life and the characters she played became intertwined (Nachumi 2008, p.23).

Calista's statement that women are subject to the whims of men and that marriage is equal to slavery reflected how Theophilus had the power to force his wife into a form of prostitution. The sympathy that revelation gained Susannah Cibber in the trial could be applied to the position the men in Calista's life have put her in, evidencing the painful cruelty faced by women in a society where, as Thomason (2014) and Vickery (2009) claim, a father or a husband had dominance over a woman's life and choices (Thomason, p.2 and Vickery, p.9). Cibber and Calista's experiences countered the myth that submission to male authority guaranteed happiness.

As we saw, when acted, the dialogue requires a strong, emotive performance from the person playing Calista that places her pain and rage at the centre of the narrative and the stage. Susannah Cibber's place for a long time as the most successful actress in the part is strong evidence that the role of Calista was performed in a similar manner and that Calista's display of feeling, particularly hurt and anger, was a necessary aspect of her appeal and the appeal of the play. Cibber's success is a strong indication that the audience responded to Calista as an emotive counterargument to the supposed benefits of pursuing an ideal femininity of subordination to the men in her life. If Calista had been free to marry whomever she wished, potentially her seduction and disgrace could have been avoided. Off-stage, being a dutiful wife and daughter did not save Cibber from pain or mistreatment either. She married the man her father wanted for her and then found herself ordered into a sexual relationship with another man for her husband's benefit. When Cibber then performed the anger, pain and injustice Calista feels at the situation she finds herself in, it is quite likely given Cibber's history

and the public interest in her private affairs that the audience felt like they were seeing her private anger and pain at the injustices she had faced as a dutiful woman. Both Calista and Cibber's stories put the lie to declarations by moralists like George Savile that duty and obedience would give women enough satisfaction to make up for the inequality they faced.[47]

The role and performance of Calista also challenges Callow's statement that 'What is certain though, is that the dramatists of the Restoration, both men and women, were far from being feminists' (Callow 1991: 80). If feminism is fundamentally based on the ideas that women occupy a subordinate position in society, that they suffer certain injustices and systemic disadvantages because they are women, and that the subordination of women is neither inevitable nor desirable (Cameron 2018, p. 9) then Calista could be considered a feminist character. It would be a disservice to her (and other roles in Restoration tragedy) to assume that they 'were far from feminist' and therefore miss the very clear feminist arguments she espouses and embodies.

Conclusion

The enduring popularity of *The Fair Penitent* throughout the eighteenth century stands as good evidence that audiences felt differently about Calista's emotional displays than those who condemned her for it. Even if audience members morally disapproved of her behaviour,

[47] In fact, Calista became a figure of feminist resistance. As Elizabeth Eger (2007) writes 'In 1799 the actress, poet and novelist Mary Robinson published *A Letter to the Women of England, on the Injustice of Mental Subordination*, under the pseudonym Anne Frances Randall. This pamphlet carried an epigraph from Calista's speech […]: 'Wherefore are we/Born with high Souls, but to *assert ourselves*?' By identifying with Calista, Robinson placed herself in a distinguished tradition of feminist writing, as well as self-consciously joining the ranks of radical writers of the 1790s.' (Eger, p.37).

her popularity as a character and the continuing success of the play show that people were drawn to watch her in a narrative that placed her emotions and anger at its heart. The 'know-what' of how that could have been performed and experienced is found in our Practice-as-Research, which showed how the words and gestures could come together to compose a 'Justified Anger' towards Calista's situation. Potentially, the more the play was performed, the more Calista's emotions became normalised, giving her arguments – both articulated and embodied – against the restriction of women's freedom, opportunity to influence and challenge the audience's expectations of 'appropriate' femininity. That Cibber's performances as Calista were so popular strongly indicates that the audience recognised the damage women faced from an unequal society. Calista demonstrates that eighteenth-century women were aware of their unequal place in society and shows that some women actively rejected the unfairness of their situation and the status quo. As with Lurewell, we see that contrary to what practitioners such as Callow argue, traits we would now recognise as 'feminist' can be appropriate performance choices for Restoration female characters. In fact, in Calista's case, they are crucial.

Similarly, what the Practice-as-Research has shown once again is that fans can be dispensed with when performing Restoration theatre, and that doing so is beneficial as eighteenth-century gesture can then be used to present a coherent emotional subtext for audiences to follow, especially for moments where the text is confusingly dense.

Woffington as Lothario also expands on what is taught regarding acting in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century plays because he is such a virile, stereotypically masculine role. That

Woffington performed as Lothario and that her performance was not the failure that has been reported, shows that actresses could go beyond performing 'femininity' in tragedy as well as comedy. Like with Wildair, Lothario reveals that the rigid rules of gender currently taught for performing Restoration theatre misrepresent the actual realities of gender in Restoration theatre. Recognising and understanding how gender play impacted the way roles were performed and received, often in ways that would be considered 'modern' today, gives performers and theatre-makers more scope to engage in gender play without succumbing to fears of being ahistorical.

Conclusion

When it comes to the performance of Restoration theatre there is a gap between the academic, historical understanding of gender and performance from the era and what is taught in drama training and acting manuals. This thesis has sought to create a critical dialogue between the historical research of mid-eighteenth-century performance practice and the embodied knowledge of modern performers, to reveal a 'know-what' understanding of gender performance in Restoration theatre that can be taught and performed today. Though my Practice-as-Research looked at the performance of gender on the mid-eighteenth-century stage more broadly, the focus here has been narrowed down to examining mid-eighteenth-century actresses' performance of masculinity and femininity, and how that gives modern-day performers and theatre-makers options when it comes to cross-dressing, gender play and gender-blind casting.

Using Practice-as-Research to explore historical performance through the methodology of 'revival' has allowed me to delve into questions such as whether or not gender in Restoration theatre was as limited as it is often presented in modern actor-training and manuals, and whether or not 'feminism' had 'ruined actresses for these roles'. Recent scholarship has focused more on the contributions and impact that actresses had on the theatrical world than previously, giving us great insight into seventeenth- and eighteenth-century actresses' careers and lives. Much of this research, however, relies on archival documentation which is limited when it comes to understanding how performer and text intertwine in the moment

of performance. This thesis has therefore sought to critically engage with theories of historical theatrical practices through the histories of performance carried in present performers' bodies and skills. In turn, what has been discovered can be used to change how Restoration theatre is taught and performed today.

Researching historical performance through a Practice-as-Research methodology requires an acknowledgment of the inability for us in the present to 'know' the embodied experiences of those in the past. There can be a temptation to impose what modern performers do and experience on past performers, without considering that even aspects such as our understanding of 'embodied experiences' have shifted and changed in the intervening centuries. Practice-as-Research can only tell us how the performers involved experience and engage with the work, a reality that may cause some to dismiss it as an ineffective methodology. However, arguably, all historical research can only tell us about our view of the past through the present, as it always involves conscious and unconscious selectivity and interpretation of materials, depending on the positioning of the historian. Just as more traditional historical methods filter evidence and research to create an understandable narrative of history for a reader, so the performer's body filters evidence and research to create an understandable embodiment of performance history for themselves and those watching. While what emerges cannot tell us exactly how historical performers embodied character and performance, it can act as a provocation to what we think we know and understand about historical performance by raising further possibilities to explore or discuss. In addition, and perhaps more importantly, this thesis demonstrates that exploring historical performance through Practice-as-Research can introduce approaches and skills that are novel

to the current theatrical environment. This can have a profound effect on how characters and plays from the past are experienced by performers and audiences today.

As it currently stands, most modern actor training and professional productions of Restoration theatre approach gender through a lens heavily influenced by the 'rediscovery' of Restoration theatre in the early twentieth century. This lineage has dominated the teaching and performance of Restoration theatre since the 1920s, making modern performance of gender in Restoration theatre more reflective of what practitioners in the 1920s interpreted seventeenth- and eighteenth-century 'femininity' and 'masculinity' as being (instead of what the historical evidence says they were). The Practice-as-Research in this thesis has challenged these approaches; as a result, it has expanded on the skills and options available to modern performers of Restoration theatre and also suggested possibilities of how certain elements of archival evidence could have been embodied.

The performers who worked in the workshops, performances and rehearsals for this thesis, took gestures and performance techniques from the archive and, using their knowledge from training and experience, put them into live performance to discover 'know-what' possibilities of eighteenth-century acting styles. For example, how pace and timing influences the meaning of eighteenth-century gestures, and how those gestures can make dense text more accessible to both performer and audience. This was seen when Hilary used gesture to manage large chunks of Calista's text, clarifying what she was saying and increasing the emotional impact of Calista's words, particularly her anger.

Exploring the roles of Sir Harry Wildair, Lady Lurewell, Lothario and Calista through Practice-as-Research added extra layers to theories on the performance of gender in both non-cross-dressed female roles and cross-dressed female-to-male roles. For example, Lottie's presence as a cross-dressed woman playing Wildair made certain lines and scenes much more explicit in their suggestion of male-female sexual interactions. Showing how, even before questions of performance style arise, just the act of casting a woman as Wildair must have impacted on the character and narrative – even if the exact impact wasn't necessarily the same as in our practice. Similarly, cross-dressing Lothario revealed possible pitfalls that Woffington could have faced when performing him, perhaps explaining why Lothario was not as popular for her as Wildair was (though it was not the failure that some have claimed).

The Practice-as-Research also revealed how much both Calista and Lurewell's rage and hurt were, and are, foregrounded in narrative and performance. In the social norms and morals of the eighteenth century, anger was considered transgressive for women to express. That Calista and Lurewell's explicit expressions of anger are presented as justified and perhaps even sympathetic, indicates that at least some members of the audience were receptive to arguments against women's marginalisation. It also highlights that, contrary to what has been claimed by modern practitioners like Callow, sentiments that would now be labelled 'feminist' were part of Restoration theatre.

Modern-day performers should not shy away from expressing 'feminist' sentiments through their actions as well as their words. Calista's anger should be embraced, not tempered by desires of appearing attractive. Lurewell's anger and grief should be similarly palpable in order

to inspire understanding and empathy in the audience. For both these characters, holding back strong emotions because they are not considered appropriately 'feminine' enough, would do a strong disserve to them.

This thesis has demonstrated that the performance of Restoration theatre in the mid-eighteenth century did not keep to the narrow, binary definition of gender as presented in modern-day actor training and acting manuals. Female roles were not limited to 'feminine' behaviour, nor did they eschew 'feminism' or limit their actions to passively enticing men. Additionally, cross-dressed female-male roles explored layers of meaning and commentary on gendered behaviour, demonstrating that women could not only access 'masculine' behaviour but could excel at it.

Female-to-male cross-dressing in the mid-eighteenth century also allowed the theatre to rehabilitate certain roles that no longer fit in with how society viewed masculinity while still allowing space for transgressive same-sex desires. This may inspire modern practitioners to consider if characters in Restoration theatre who's actions current society may struggle with can perhaps be rehabilitated through the use of parodic and non-parodic gender play. For example, during rehearsals Max expressed deep discomfort with Lothario's speech, as a man he felt so uncomfortable stepping into a character who relished in what we now consider rape, that it made him physically nauseated. A female-identifying or non-binary performer may have enough distance from Lothario's version of masculinity to not have the same qualms performing his sexually predatory behaviour. Conversely, the displacement that

occurs hearing a non-male-identifying person express such attitudes may make Lothario's speech even more uncomfortable and shocking.

Though the use of gesture and *tableau* was a big learning curve for the performers, they found them very useful in performance. As practical tools, gesture and *tableau* allowed the performers to convey interesting subtexts regarding a character's private thoughts and feelings, and their relationships with other characters. Gesture was a particularly powerful tool to use when performing Restoration tragedy as the language used is so distant from our current usage. The physical subtext of the gestures acted to bridge the emotional distance between audience and character that the use of dense language can cause.

The use of fans is another aspect of gender performance in Restoration theatre that we found differs from what is taught in modern actor-training. Despite the emphasis on fans being important for female characters, we discovered they often got in the way of performing the gestures. Plus, the emphasis on words and comedic timing that fans are touted as being crucial for, could be achieved solely through gesture. These discoveries echo the lack of fans in pictures of eighteenth-century actresses in performance and underscore that, as Seyler states, practitioners in the 1920s assumed their ubiquity. Modern performers could benefit from knowing that gestures can do the work of fans and that fans are not 'indispensable', as this gives them the choice when to use them or not.

This thesis demonstrates that 'feminism' has *not* 'ruined' modern-day performers for Restoration theatre and that, contrary to what Callow claims, some Restoration theatre could

be considered to express ‘feminist’ sentiments. Similarly, modern performers of Restoration theatre need not feel constricted by a binary approach to gender, rather they can and should embrace experimenting with gender play. Given increasingly divided opinion on the value of the gender binary, one could argue that it is imperative for productions of Restoration theatre to embrace its connection to historical gender play. Doing so could make Restoration theatre more appealing to a younger generation for whom gender identity is increasingly more fluid and complex (Berkowitz et al 2023, p.1), as well as perhaps challenge beliefs that gender has always existed as a binary.

Theatre is at its best when it engages and challenges audiences on topics relevant to their lives. The move away from a gender binary towards a more fluid and questioning approach to gender currently impacts Western politics, media, entertainment, education, sport and law. Restoration theatre is in tune with these changing ideas, having at times embraced gender fluidity and multiplicity. This thesis demonstrates that given the prominence and importance conversations around gender currently have, Restoration theatre should be an essential element of modern actor-training. Similarly, the work here has shown that Restoration theatre can be as inspiring to theatre-makers experimenting with gender play in Classical theatre as the plays of Shakespeare currently are. My main objective for this thesis has been to offer new approaches for the performance of Restoration theatre, and in doing so I hope that it can help reposition Restoration theatre as an important genre for performance, experimentation and study.

APPENDIX A

Practice-as-Research Projects, including Cast Lists and Links to Recordings

2017

April 21, 2017: Workshop 1. One-day workshop exploring scenes from *The Beggar's Opera*, *The Fair Penitent* and *The Constant Couple*.

Act One Scene One, *The Fair Penitent* by Nicholas Rowe

- James Nickerson (male-identifying) – Lothario
- Robert G. Slade (male-identifying) – Rossano

Act Two Scene Two, *The Beggar's Opera* by John Gay

- Hilary Connell (female-identifying) – Macheath
- Robert G. Slade – Polly Peachum
- James Nickerson – Lucy Lockitt

Act Two Scene One, *The Constant Couple* by George Farquhar

- Hilary Connell – Angelica
- Robert G. Slade – Sir Harry Wildair

Recordings:

- Part One: https://vimeo.com/645565860/cc3af84662
- Part Two: https://vimeo.com/645981383/da0ee8dff5
- Part Three: https://vimeo.com/645984419/1d328e6918
- Part Four: https://vimeo.com/645991145/19b0c2d949
- Part Five: https://vimeo.com/645998622/2d510e31cf
- Part Six: https://vimeo.com/646010471/1d9caa4c07
- Part Seven: https://vimeo.com/646016402/25075814a4

April 23, 2017: Workshop 2. One-day workshop exploring scenes from *The Beggar's Opera*, *The Fair Penitent* and *The Constant Couple.*

Act One Scene One, *The Fair Penitent* by Nicholas Rowe

- Lisa Lapidge (female-identifying) – Lothario
- Robert G. Slade – Rossano

Act Two Scene Two, *The Beggar's Opera* by John Gay

- Hilary Connell – Macheath/Polly Peachum/Lucy Lockitt
- Robert G. Slade – Macheath/Polly Peachum

- Dana Blackstone (female-identifying) – Polly Peachum/Lucy Lockitt
- Lisa Lapidge – Lucy Lockitt/Macheath

Act Two Scene One, *The Constant Couple* by George Farquhar

- Robert G. Slade – Sir Harry Wildair
- Hilary Connell – Angelica
- Semane Parsons (female-identifying) – Sir Harry Wildair

Recordings:

- Part One: https://vimeo.com/646019878/49310f158f
- Part Two: https://vimeo.com/646025979/454a91bbe4
- Part Three: https://vimeo.com/646030765/db504e5dd0
- Part Four: https://vimeo.com/646064410/f39d94f04b
- Part Five: https://vimeo.com/646066462/a8937a2991

August 6 & 13, 2017: Workshop 3. Two one-day workshops exploring Peg Woffington's epilogue 'The Volunteer'.

- Hilary Connell

Recordings:

- Part One: https://vimeo.com/646080464/9c33f9f5af
- Part Two: https://vimeo.com/646085344/1dff6c6145

December 10, 2017: One-day workshop and introduction of cast as preparation for performance of *The Constant Couple* at the Gulbenkian Theatre, Canterbury on January 17-19, 2018.

- Ross Virgo (male-identifying)
- Lottie (Charlotte) Priestley (female-identifying) [48]
- Hilary Connell
- Emily Prudence Shore (female-identifying)
- Jared Nelson (male-identifying)
- Dana Blackstone
- Priscilla Berringer (female-identifying)
- Simon Rodda (male-identifying)
- Semane Parsons.

2018

January 3 – 16, 2018: Rehearsals for production of *The Constant Couple* (weekends included).

- Ross Virgo
- Lottie Priestley
- Hilary Connell

[48] Lottie changed her stage name from 'Charlotte' in 2019.

- Emily Prudence Shore
- Jared Nelson
- Dana Blackstone
- Priscilla Berringer
- Simon Rodda
- Simon Eile (male-identifying)
- Semane Parsons.

January 17-19, 2018: Performances with audience of *The Constant Couple* at The Gulbenkian Theatre, Canterbury.

- Lottie (Charlotte) Priestley – Sir Harry Wildair/Butler
- Ross Virgo – Sir Harry Wildair/Butler
- Emily Prudence Shore – Lady Lurewell
- Hilary Connell – Angelica Darling
- Jared Nelson – Colonel Standard
- Simon Rodda – Vizard
- Priscilla Berringer – Parly
- Simon Eile – Smuggler
- Semane Parsons – Lady Darling
- Dana Blackstone – Maid

Recordings:
January 17, 2018: Ross Virgo performing as Wildair.
- Due to technical issues with the recording equipment this night's performance was not documented.

January 18, 2018: Lottie Priestley performing as Wildair.
- Part One: https://vimeo.com/646899938/6ce117cfbb
- Part Two: https://vimeo.com/646889637/335d22dbfb
- Part Three: https://vimeo.com/646910487/43d8e63c7e

January 19, 2018: Ross Virgo performing as Wildair for the first half, and Lottie Priestley performing as Wildair for the second half of the show.
- Part One: https://vimeo.com/645175327/31e7407258
- Part Two: https://vimeo.com/644865406/39afddab01
- Part Three: https://vimeo.com/645212490/1e75a9fcc0
- Part Four: https://vimeo.com/646875061/386e067766

2019

January 6, 2019: One-day workshop and introduction/re-introduction of cast as preparation for theatre laboratory performance at The Ovalhouse Theatre, London, on January 26, 2019.
- Max Attard (male-identifying)

- Jared Nelson
- Emily Prudence Shore
- Lottie Priestley
- Hilary Connell
- Raphael Ruiz (male-identifying)

January 13 – 25, 2019: Rehearsals for theatre laboratory performance at The Ovalhouse Theatre, London.

- Max Attard
- Jared Nelson
- Emily Prudence Shore
- Lottie Priestley
- Hilary Connell
- Raphael Ruiz

January 26, 2019: Theatre laboratory performance at The Ovalhouse Theatre, London.

Act One Scene One, *The Fair Penitent* by Nicholas Rowe

- Max Attard – Lothario
- Raphael Ruiz – Rossano

Act One Scene One, *The Fair Penitent* by Nicholas Rowe

- Emily Prudence Shore – Lothario
- Raphael Ruiz – Rossano

(Jared Nelson as Sciolto and Lottie Priestley as Altamont briefly walking across the stage in both versions)

Act One Scene One, *The Fair Penitent* by Nicholas Rowe

- Raphael Ruiz – Lothario
- Hilary Connell - Calista

Act One Scene One, *The Fair Penitent* by Nicholas Rowe

- Raphael Ruiz – Lothario
- Hilary Connell - Calista

Act Four Scene Three, *The Provoked Wife* by John Vanbrugh (revised version)

- Max Attard – Sir John Brute
- Jared Nelson – Justice of the Peace
- Emily Prudence Shore – Constable
- Raphael Ruiz – Second Watch
- Lottie Priestley – Servant

Act Two Scene Three, *The Constant Couple* by George Farquhar

- Lottie Priestley – Sir Harry Wildair
- Emily Prudence Shore – Lady Lurewell

Act Four Scene One, *The Constant Couple* by George Farquhar

- Lottie Priestley – Sir Harry Wildair
- Jared Nelson – Colonel Standard

Recordings:

- Part One: https://vimeo.com/645554005/9d7321c852
- Part Two: https://vimeo.com/645561703/5f2e49d5bd

APPENDIX B

A Discovery

A Discovery

Affection

Affection

Agility

Agility

Anger

Anger

Apprehension

Apprehension

Astonishment

Astonishment

Conceit

Conceit

Conceit

Conceit

Contempt

Dejection

Dejection

Despair

Despondency

Despondency

Devotion

Devotion

Distraction & Persuasion

Distraction & Persuasion

Enthusiasm

Enthusiasm

Excited Interest

Excited Interest

Expectation

Expectation

Expectation

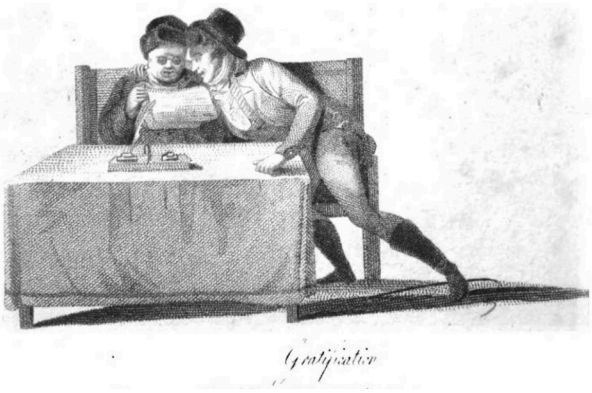
Expectation

Fallen greatness

Fallen greatness

Fashionable Impudence

Foppery



Gratification

Hauteur

Hearty Welcome

Hopeless Love

Horror

Idiotism

Indifference

Jealous Rage

Joy

Loftiness

Love

Love

Menace

Menace

Mirth

Mirth

Obsequious attention

Obsequious attention

Obsequiousness

Obsequiousness

Painful recollection

Painful recollection

Persuasion repulsed

Persuasion repulsed

Phlegm

Phlegm

Pride

Quietude

Reproach

Rustic Cunning

Scorn

Scorn

Servility

Printed for Richard Phillips, New Bridge Street

Servility

Sickness

Sickness

Sublime admiration

Sublime admiration

Sublime admiration

Supplication

Suspicion

Terror

Terror

Thirst

Tranquil Joy

Voluptuous Indolence

Voluptuary

Vulgar Arrogance

Vulgar Astonishment

Vulgar triumph

APPENDIX C

Frequency of Actors and Actresses Appearing in London as Sir Harry Wildair in *The Constant Couple* from 1732/33 to 1799/1800
(Aka from the retirement of Robert Wilks until the end of the eighteenth century)

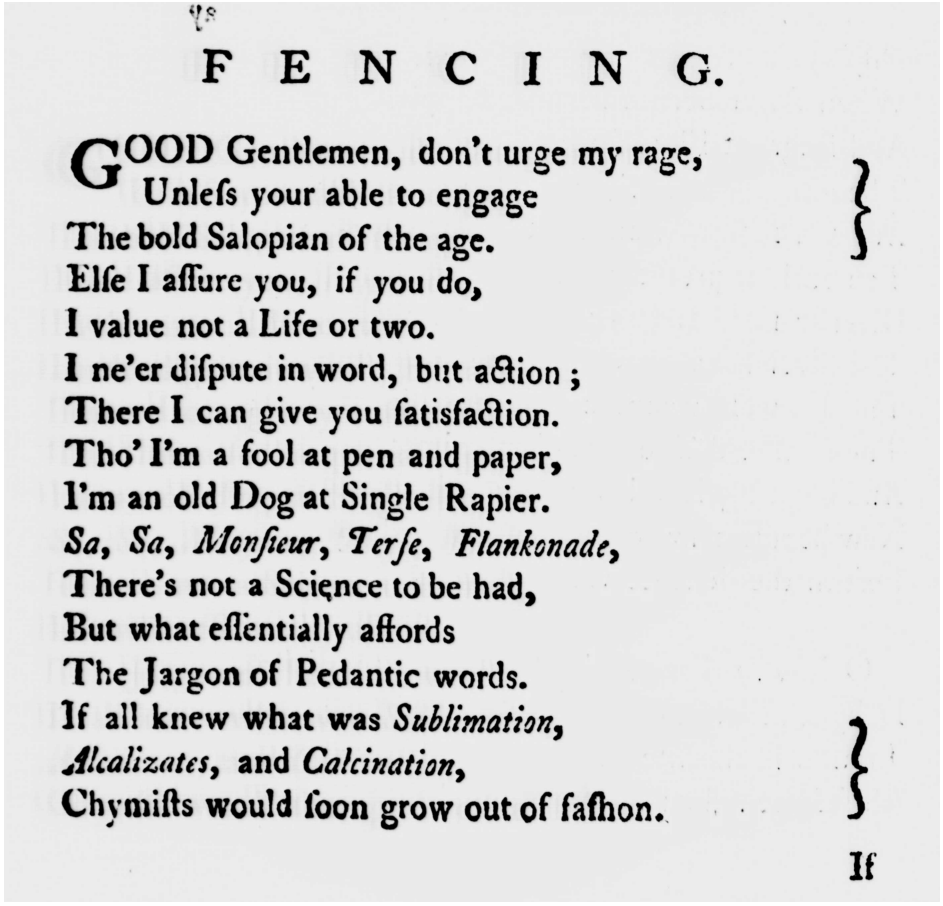
Season	Drury Lane	Covent Garden	Lincoln's Inn Fields	Goodman's Fields
1732/33	Mr Cibber Jr (T.) x 2	Mr Ryan (possibly?) x 3		Mr Giffard x 7
1733/34	Mr Cibber Jr (T.) x 1	Mr Ryan x 2		Mr Giffard x 5
1734/35	Mr Cibber Jr (T.) x 3	Mr Ryan x 1 Mr A. Hallam x 1		Mr Giffard x 5
1735/36		Mr Ryan x 3		Mr Giffard x 3
1736/37		Mr Ryan x 2	Mr Giffard x 5	
1737/38		Mr Ryan x 3		
1738/39	Mr Giffard x 1	Mr Ryan x 4		
1739/40	Mr Giffard x 2	Mr Ryan x 3		Mr Giffard x 1
1740/41		Mr Ryan x 1 Mrs Woffington x 16		
1741/42	Mrs Woffington x 6	Mr Ryan x 1		
1742/43	Mrs Woffington x 4 Mr Garrick x 2 (with Woffington as Lady Lurewell)			
1743/44	Giffard x 1 Mrs Woffington x 8		Mr Giffard x 2	
1744/45	Mrs Woffington x 5			
1745/46	Mrs Woffington x 2 Mr Foote x 4 (with Woffington as Lady Lurewell)			
1746/47	Mr Cibber Jr (T.) x 1 (with Woffington as Lady Lurewell) Mrs Woffington x 2			
1747/48	Mrs Woffington x 4			
1748/49		Mrs Woffington x 4		
1749/50	Mr Woodward x 3	Mrs Woffington x 5		
1750/51	Mr Woodward x 1	Mrs Woffington x 4		
1751/52	Mr Woodward x 1			
1752/53	Mr Woodward x 1			

1753/54	Mr Woodward x 2			
1754/55		Mrs Woffington x 6		
1755/56		Mrs Woffington x 8		
1756/57		Mrs Woffington x 4		
1757/58				
1758/59		Mr Smith x 2		
1759/60		Mr Smith x 1		
1760/61				
1761/62	Mr O'Brien x 3			
1762/63	Mr O'Brien x 2 Mr King x 1	Mr Woodward x 1		
1763/64	Mr O'Brien x 2			
1764/65				
1765/66	Mr Dodd x 1			
1766/67				
1767/68				
1768/69				
1769/70				
1770/71	Mrs Barry x 2			
1771/72	Mrs Barry x 2			
1772/73				
1773/74				
1774/75				
1775/76	Mrs Greville x 1			
1776/77				
1777/78				
1778/79	Miss Walpole			
1779/80				
1780/81				
1781/82				
1782/83				
1783/84				
1784/85		Mr Lewis x 1		
1785/86		Mr Lewis x 4		
1786/87				
1787/88	Mr Dodd x 1 Mrs Jordan x 4			
1788/89	Mrs Jordan x 12			
1789/90	Mrs Goodall x 2 Mrs Jordan x 2	Mrs Achmet x 2		
1790/91	Mrs Jordan x 1 Mrs Goodall x 1			
1791/92	Mr Dodd x 1			

1792/93	Mrs Goodall x 1			
1793/94				
1794/95	Mrs Jordan x 1			
1795/96				
1796/97				
1797/98				
1798/99				

APPENDIX D

FENCING. *St. James* magazine; Oct 1763; 3, British Periodicals pg. 128



FENCING.

GOOD Gentlemen, don't urge my rage,
Unleſs your able to engage
The bold Salopian of the age.
Elſe I aſſure you, if you do,
I value not a Life or two.
I ne'er diſpute in word, but action;
There I can give you ſatisfaction.
Tho' I'm a fool at pen and paper,
I'm an old Dog at Single Rapier.
Sa, Sa, Monſieur, Terſe, Flankonade,
There's not a Science to be had,
But what eſſentially affords
The Jargon of Pedantic words.
If all knew what was *Sublimation,*
Alcalizates, and *Calcination,*
Chymiſts would ſoon grow out of faſhon.

If

If arts be then to cant and quibble,
In terms ſo unintelligible,
Fencing may claim a juſt Defence
To many with as little Senſe.

But if the Arts were firſt deſign'd
For the advantage of mankind,
The noble Science of Defence
Merits its title in this ſenſe.
For man, by nat'ral Inclination,
Endeavours at the Preſervation
Of his own life and Reputation.
Honour is like true Steel, a Metal,
That's very bright, and very brittle;
And b'ing ſo brittle, and ſo rare,
It is unconſcionably dear.

Go, tell the Tradeſman he's a Cheat,
The Alderman a cuckold great,
Call Serjeants Knaves, or Beggars Poor,
Or call an Oyſter-woman Whore,
They'll tell you, by a Demonſtration,
The value of a Reputation.
How then ſhould Gentlemen eſteem
Their Honour, that choice Diadem?
Shall BULLY DAWSON huff and ſwagger,
And chalenge me to draw my Dagger?
And I ſit meanly down, and be
The Butt of the whole company?
Shall this young fool me blockhead call,
And every Coxcomb take the Wall?
Shall WILDAIR, that Starch piece of Folly,
Before my face ſalute Miſs MOLLY?
Shall little BILLY BUTTERFLY
Look pert, and tell me plain, You lye?

Where ſhall a Gentleman redreſs
His fainting honour in Diſtreſs?
Would you have them and lathy Courtiers
Stand kick and cuff like brawny Porters?
Rowl in the Dirty Streets, and Squabble
In Channels to divert the Rabble?
This would be ſhocking to the Beaux,
Who value leſs their lives, than cloaths.
Who chuſe in Duel to be ſlain,
And in the bed of honour lain.

No, I've a Way that ne'er miſcarries,
I'll ſtab 'em *Alamode de Paris*.
I'll thruſt 'em neatly thro' the Lungs,
And ſtop the Raſcals ſaucy tongues;
Thoſe Sparks that underſtand to Fence,
May teach men manners, and good Senſe.
None then can hate my Art, but Aſſes,
Who keep their conſciences in Caſes,
As Fidlers do their Crowds and Baſes.

There is another Sort of Science,
Or rather Art, of bold Defiance,
That's acted on Moorfields' Theatre,
Where Vinegar is Arbitrator.
Here thoſe, that fight, with blacks are ſuggil'd,
Or, as the Vulgar call it, Cudgel'd:
And differs little in th' invention,
From that which I before did mention:
Only in this Way, ſturdy Wood,
In th' other, Steel lets out the blood.

When e'er I chance to diſagree
From any in the Company,
My Sword can chalenge their aſſent,
The moſt deciſive Argument.

It

It has the very edge of Wit,
And makes the obſtinate ſubmit;
In loud and warm diſputes prevails,
Where ARISTOTLE's reaſon fails;
Enforces contrary Perſuaſions,
And baffles even Demonſtrations.
My nimble Wriſt ſhall prove downright,
That Snow is black, and Charcoal white;
That WHIGS are the true Church Criterions,
That TORIES are rank Preſbyterians;
That DANIEL has forgot to cant,
And that the Devil is a Saint.
All this I prove: they that diſpute 'em
Meet me anon, and I'll confute 'em.

Appendix E

Season	*Number of performances of Calista in The Fair Penitent at Covent Garden*	*Number of performances of Calista in The Fair Penitent at Drury Lane*
1736/37	Mrs Buchanan – 2 performances. Mrs Horton – 2 performances.	*The Fair Penitent* not performed.
1737/38	Mrs Horton – 2 performances.	Mrs Giffard – 1 performance.
1738/39	Mrs Horton – 2 performances.	'Unknown Gentlewoman' – 1 performance. Mrs Roberts – 1 performance.
1739/40	Mrs Horton – 1 performance.	*The Fair Penitent* not performed.
1740/41	*The Fair Penitent* not performed.	*The Fair Penitent* not performed.
1741/42	*The Fair Penitent* not performed.	*The Fair Penitent* not performed.
1742/43	Mrs Cibber – 8 performances.	Mrs Roberts – 2 performances.
1743/44*	Mrs Pritchard – 1 performance. Mrs Horton – 1 performance.	Mrs Giffard – 2 performances.
1744/45	Mrs Pritchard – 1 performance.	Mrs Cibber – 6 performances.
1745/46*	*The Fair Penitent* not performed.	Mrs Giffard – 1 performance. Miss Budgell – 1 performance.
1746/47	Mrs Cibber – 13 performances.	*The Fair Penitent* not performed.
1747/48	Mrs Ward – 2 performances.	Mrs Cibber – 6 performances.
1748/49	Mrs Ward – 3 performances (6 March 1749 performance is unclear, as Mrs Woffington is credited as 'The Fair Penitent' alongside Mrs Ward's 3rd performance this season as 'Calista').	Mrs Cibber – 5 performances
1749/50*	Miss Bellamy – 1 performance.	Mrs Ward – 4 performances.
1750/51	Mrs Cibber – 5 performances.	Mrs Pritchard – 2 performances. Miss Bellamy – 1 performance.
1751/52	Mrs Cibber – 2 performances.	Miss Bellamy – 6 performances.
1752/53	Mrs Cibber – 3 performances. Miss Macklin – 1 performance (Benefit for Mr Macklin).	Miss Bellamy – 3 performances. Mrs Davies – 1 performance.
1753/54	Miss Bellamy – 2 performances.	Mrs Cibber – 4 performances.
1754/55	*The Fair Penitent* not performed.	Mrs Cibber – 2 performances.
1755/56	*The Fair Penitent* not performed.	Mrs Cibber – 2 performances.
1756/57	Mrs Gregory – 4 performances. Mrs Hamilton – 1 performance.	Mrs Cibber – 1 performance.
1757/58*	Mrs Bellamy – 2 performances.	*The Fair Penitent* not performed.
1758/59*	*The Fair Penitent* not performed.	*The Fair Penitent* not performed.
1759/60*	*The Fair Penitent* not performed.	Mrs Yates – 1 performance.
1760/61	*The Fair Penitent* not performed.	Mrs Cibber – 1 performance.
1761/62*	*The Fair Penitent* not performed.	*The Fair Penitent* not performed.
1762/63	*The Fair Penitent* not performed.	Mrs Cibber – 1 performance.

* Susannah Cibber (Mrs Cibber) did not perform at Covent Garden or Drury Lane in these seasons.

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