

THE CREATION OF THE ROLE OF
SIR PETER TEAZLE IN RICHARD BRINSLEY
SHERIDAN'S
THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL
AND AN ANALYSIS
OF THE ACTING PROBLEMS INVOLVED

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ABSTRACT

The creation of the role of Sir Peter Teazle involved several avenues of approach. A detailed analysis of the times current with the 1777 premiere of The School for Scandal was necessary since Sheridan was a playwright who wrote about his times and was, himself, a product of his times. In comparing the analysis of the period with the characters found in the play, the actor discovered that Sheridan drew his ideas of character from people he had actually known and to whom he had been exposed. This first-hand information, coupled with Sheridan's abilities to create character and situation plus his knowledge of the theatre, produced a play which ranks, today, as one of the outstanding dramatic contributions to come from the pen of the late eighteenth-century playwrights.

From the analysis of the acting script, the actor determined several aspects of Sir Peter's character, namely, he is a man who is: (1) disposed toward sentiment, (2) an enemy to scandal, (3) easily duped by Joseph and his sentiments, (4) self-pitying, (5) in love with his wife in spite of all their wrangling, (6) respectful of Rowley's fine character but not his opinions, (7) stubborn, (8) protective of his ego in making a pretense to Sir Oliver, (9) able to find pleasure in wrangling with Lady Teazle, (10) not above rascality, (11) intolerant when his opinions are not accepted, (12) jealous of Charles, and (13) inclined to quick changes of mood. This material was helpful in

utilizing the formula established by Lajos Egri in creating a tri-dimensional character analysis of Sir Peter Teazle which dealt with the physiological, sociological, and psychological make-up of the character.

When the character analysis was completed, the actor was then ready to enter the rehearsal phase. Throughout the rehearsal phase, the problems in creating the role arose. These fell mainly into three categories: interpretation, memorization, and movement. The movement and interpretation problems were generally solved by the time the fifth week of rehearsals was reached. Memorization, however, especially in the screen scene, remained a problem throughout the rehearsal phase and into the performance.

The dress rehearsals brought an adjustment in characterization. In this phase, the actor had the feel of the costume, the adjustment to other characters in costume, and the adjustment of movement within the set and on the apron stage.

The three-night performance phase revealed that the characterization was successful. Also, during this phase, minor adjustments in movement and interpretation were brought about by the lack of anticipated response from the audience of the first night's performance. These adjustments proved successful in view of the positive response to them in the two successive performances.

As a result of undertaking this study, the actor learned that in moving from modern drama to the eighteenth-century comedy of

manners, the actor must have complete faith in the director's ability to use a scholarly approach in determining movement and his ability to perceive the entire production, while the actor must concentrate his efforts on characterization.

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CHAPTER I

A LOOK INTO THE TIMES CURRENT WITH THE MAY 8, 1777 PRODUCTION OF THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL

On the evening of May 8, 1777, a sudden roar was heard to come from the Drury Lane Theatre in London. The audience was wildly applauding and cheering the first performance of Richard Brinsley Sheridan's The School for Scandal. The tumbling of the screen in the fourth act of the play had set the crowd in a frenzy of excitement and assured Sheridan that his play was a success.¹

Sheridan had, in 1776, acquired part ownership of Drury Lane, and no significant developments had come forth during the early months of his new management. The plays produced were taken from Garrick's shelves and staged with no more than an occasional touching up, or perhaps an epilogue written by Sheridan.

In February, 1777, Sheridan did, however, put on a play of his own choice. He chose Vanbrugh's The Relapse, "expurgated and adapted in accordance with the growing taste for decency."²

After the accession of George I and his Queen Anne, the patronage of the theatre shifted. Previously, the nobility were the sole patrons

¹ W. A. Darlington, Sheridan (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1933), pp. 66-67.

² Darlington, loc. cit.

of the theatre; but now, with a king who understood no English, and a Queen who showed no interest, actors and managers had to turn, for the first time in theatre history, from royal patronage to that of the general public.³

The political, social, and economic changes which took place in England during the eighteenth century gained their impetus, in part, from one significant factor--the rise of the middle class. The upsurging of this group was not to express itself only in England. All of Europe was to be affected by this movement, a movement that was to express itself in a bloody and catastrophic manner in France.

England, however, was not the scene of a bloody political revolution. The monarchy was a stable, firmly established reality. The king, to be sure, enjoyed the love of his subjects and their firm support in the identical manner in which England's monarch does today.

The eighteenth century in England, as on the entire continent, was a robust era. An entirely new class of wealthy merchants was established through the newly exploited trade potentialities in India and the West Indies. The class distinctions, heretofore characteristic of English society, were being destroyed by this group of wealthy merchants. The once impenetrable barriers of the upper classes were being torn down. "The tastes of this middle class had become supreme,"⁴ and

³ Alice Glasgow, Sheridan of Drury Lane (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Co., 1940), pp. 8-9.

⁴ Ibid., p. 10.

Sheridan was to write his plays to please those tastes. This was an age when puritan morals were ridiculed. Excessive drinking was the fashion. Even the ladies consumed great quantities of porter with their lobster, and gentlemen would sit for eight and ten hours at one session over claret, rock-punch and brandy, or port. Drunkenness was not a vice to conceal. Intoxication was openly tolerated and sanctioned. The man who could consume uncommon quantities of spirits found that achievement to be a great source of pride and vanity. Sheridan was himself a hardened drinker and expressed his views on the subject in his lines from The Duenna:

A Bumper of good liquor
Will end a contest quicker
Than Justice, Judge or Vicar.

This particular appetite seems to have been universally felt. It was not confined to the middle class but was represented in all classes:

That drinking and getting drunk were therefore not only prerogative of courts, but were regarded as good form in bourgeois circles too, throws a definite light on the manners governing social intercourse in general.⁵

Card playing and gambling enjoyed equal esteem among the populace. As the century progressed, these pastimes even surpassed that of drinking:

Not a single diversion known to the eighteenth century, however, was as popular as cards. An absolute craze for gambling seemed to possess these times. High and low, rich and poor, nobility, bourgeoisie, the man on the

⁵ Max von Boehm, Modes and Manners (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, n.d.) p. 280.

street--one and all were devoted to cards; there was no party without its card-game, no circle without its sharper.⁶

With all the moral laxness in constant evidence, this century presented a "hey-day" for thieves and robbers:

In London no one went out without a weapon, for roughs attacked coaches in crowded streets in broad daylight, cut the thongs holding the body of the coach, and robbed the passengers of their valuables. The owners of Vauxhall Gardens, which lay just within Vauxhall Gate, informed the public that the road as far as Westminster Bridge would be lighted at night and guarded against robbers.⁷

The theatre audiences found no trouble in identifying themselves with the characters portrayed on the stage. The characters were a true representation of the times. Sheridan did not have to reach far for the subject of his School for Scandal. Alice Glasgow substantiates this fact by stating:

It was an age of scandal, openly discussed and openly disseminated, in many cases openly invented. Privacy was the prerogative only of the humble and the obscure. Newspapers depended for their circulation upon a restricted class of readers. They fed the insatiable and prurient curiosity of the middle classes by lurid bits of gossip from the Great World. The gentlemen or ladies of fashion recognized with a satisfied smile the names of his or her friends in the columns of some lying sheet; or perhaps he saw his own, and realized with horror that neither age nor sex nor position rendered one immune from the filthy fingers of the gossip-writers.⁸

Sheridan in many instances presents "lords," "ladies," and "Sirs" in his plays. This, too, was in keeping with the times. Money could buy

⁶ Ibid., p. 293.

⁷ Ibid., pp. 270-271.

⁸ Glasgow, op. cit., p. 19.

almost anything for its possessor, and the business of conferring titles had become vast and lucrative. Within a period of thirteen years after his rise to power, Pitt had been instrumental in creating more than eighty new peers. When his life finally came to its close, he had conferred almost one hundred and fifty coronets.

The vast audiences could easily identify themselves with the characters on the stage, for they were truly all represented. Some were not pleased to see themselves caricatured, but then there was always fun to be had at the expense of someone else.

The eighteenth century was an age, too, of oratory, both in parliament and on the stage. Words, as such, were unimportant. Rather the inflection given to the words had the greatest effect upon the listener.⁹ Parliament was the seat of many a heated argument and long dissertation. This was the age of Pitt, Burke, and North. Sheridan, too, may be listed among these men. He was a member of the House of Commons for some thirty years. Being a Whig, Sheridan was engrossed in many struggles on the side of the Crown. The French Revolution and the struggle for independence of the American Colonies had the British parliament ablaze with fervor and heated argument. In this parliament Sheridan sought recognition:

Sheridan looked upon Drury Lane as a source of income, making possible a spectacular political career. The theatre and its problems was never permitted to interfere with more important matters such as speech making, gambling, drinking and the

⁹ Ibid., p. 21.

pursuit of political preferment. While Sarah Siddons, the Kembles, King, Palmer, Dodd, Mrs. Abington, the lovely Farren, Dora Jordan, Queen of Comedy, and other brilliant stars filled the theatre, Sheridan drained the cash box for his own purposes, and even Siddons had to fight for her salary with a determination that gained her the one adverse criticism ever levelled against her--a reputation for avarice. Kemble, in his efforts to mount and costume his plays with some degree of dignity, was ever at odds with the Patentee, and only his great admiration for Sheridan made him bear with the situation for so many years. Finally, in 1802 he left Drury Lane forever.¹⁰

Sheridan was pleased to achieve recognition as a playwright, but he was more concerned that these successful plays should insure him a sufficiently adequate income to keep him out of debtor's prison, in which he was later to languish, to permit him to continue to lead the luxurious life to which he had become accustomed, and to keep him free to pursue his career in parliament. Sheridan was extremely fortunate that while he was engrossed in the Warren Hastings trial he had such a capable and talented man as John Kemble to manage the Drury Lane Theatre for him. The unfortunate situation was, however, that Sheridan did not himself possess a greater sense of values which would have made him see the worth of Kemble.¹¹

Sheridan was, with his great talents and frailties, but a human being in the turbulent society of eighteenth century England. Not only were the problems of all classes in trade and politics his in parliament, but the whims of society and the ever-changing fashion in decorum and

¹⁰ Rosamond Gilder, "Kemble Religion," Theatre Arts Monthly, XVII (February, 1933), 146.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 145.

dress concerned him in his writing. The new wealthy merchant paid for a seat in Drury Lane, and the fops and dandies were transformed into characters in Sheridan's plays.

The Historical Background for the Characters
of Sir Peter and Lady Teazle

Since much of The School for Scandal is concerned with the consternation of Sir Peter over his disappointment with Lady Teazle because she has not met his standards as a proper wife, an examination should be made of Sir Peter's objections. According to the text, Sir Peter married a girl from the country with simple tastes so that he could be assured of a spouse who would not degenerate into the distasteful woman whom Sir Peter continually saw around him. There were two distinct and widely different modes of living in 1777: the country life of simplicity, and the city life of extreme affectation.

London was separated from the country towns by a series of impassable and treacherous roads. Throughout eighteenth century English history there are many accounts of journeys which, though of relatively few miles, took an exceedingly long time and caused no end of discomfort to the travelers. In speaking of the country squire, Synge says:

He seldom went further than his own country town, for a journey to London was still full of danger and discomfort, nor were these fears purely imaginary. A journey from the North of England to the Capital was so hazardous that men shook their heads and made their wills before starting.¹²

¹² M. B. Synge, A Short History of Social Life in England (New York: A. S. Barnes & Company, 1906), pp. 286-287.

This reluctance to travel was not only felt by the country folk. The poor road conditions caused many hardships to the city dweller as well:

"At the end of the town (London) some part of the coach broke, and we were obliged to get out, and took shelter at an alehouse; in half an hour we jogged on, and about an hour after that, flop we went into a slough, not overturned, but stuck. Well, out we were hauled again, and the coach with much difficulty was heaved out!"¹³

"Defoe speaks of a lady near Lewes whose coach had to be dragged to church by six oxen, the road being too stiff for horses to attempt."¹⁴

With the existing road conditions, the remoteness in general aspect of the rural areas of England was not hard to visualize:

Or, again, listen to a famous Birmingham bookseller visiting a village in Leicestershire, where the villagers set dogs on the strangers: "Surrounded with impassable roads," he says, "no intercourse with man to humanise the mind, nor commerce to smooth their rugged manners, they continue to be boors of nature." ...True, the wandering pedlar who travelled from village to village would sometimes bring a stained and tattered newspaper, which was read and re-read to a gaping and ignorant set of country folk...Life was trivial and interests limited, centering for the most part around the monotonous doings of the country squire.¹⁵

Life for the daughter of the country squire was dull at best, and perhaps in many cases frustrating. Even into these remote areas of England an occasional bit of news or scandal or of the latest fashion in London would penetrate. Given an opportunity to compare life in the country with that of the city, a fashion-minded daughter of a country squire might naturally feel discontent.

¹³ Ibid., p. 288.

¹⁴ Synge, loc. cit.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 284.

The daintiness of a fashionable city dwelling was not to be found in the country home, and, indeed, the duties of a young girl in no way corresponded to those of the lady of fashion in the city:

The interior of their houses was plain. Often enough the country gentleman had no carpet on his floor or curtains to his windows. He had no piano, but there might be found a harp, spinet, or virginal in the house of the smaller squire...Indeed, it was part of a woman's education at this time to take lessons in carving, so that she might perform her duty properly.¹⁶

The country girl could, again, see a vivid contrast in the city life with her drab existence in comparing the men around her with the beau monde of London:

The country squires, like Sir Charles Grandison of Richardson, were coarse, evil-smelling and brutal. They were accused of wearing their shirts half a week, of being gluttonous in the consumption of their food.¹⁷

The formal education of this girl was scant, if there was any at all. Parents were only concerned that she be trained in the arts of house-keeping. Occasionally she entered the realm of the finer arts by learning to play an instrument so that she might entertain her father and his guests:

It was the custom of Squire Western every afternoon, as soon as he was drunk, to hear his daughter play the harpsichord.¹⁸

The domestic virtues, then, were encouraged in the country girl. The wide gulf between this life and that of the London lady of fashion

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 290.

¹⁷ Jay Barret Botsford, English Society in the Eighteenth Century (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1924), p. 269.

¹⁸ Synge, op. cit., p. 292.

was clearly illustrated in an amusing account of the day of a lady of fashion as given in the English Lady's Catechism:

"How do you employ your time now?"
 "I lie in Bed till Noon, dress all the Afternoon, Dine
 in the evening, play at Cards till Midnight!"
 "How do you spend the Sabbath?"
 "In chit chat!"
 "What do you talk of?"
 "New Fashions and New Plays!"
 "How often do you go to Church?"
 "Twice a year of oftener, according as my husband gives
 me new Cloaths!"
 "Why do you go to Church when you have new Cloaths?"
 "To see other People's Finery, and to shew my own,
 and to laugh at those scurvy, out of fashion
 creatures that come for Devotion!"
 "Pray, Madam, what Books do you read?"
 "I read lewd Plays and winning Romances!"
 "Who is it you love?"
 "Myself!"
 "What, nobody else?"
 "My Page, my Monkey, and my Lap Dog!"
 "Why do you love them?"
 "Why, because I am an English lady, and they are Foreign
 Creatures, my Page from Genoa, my Monkey from the
 East Indies and my Lap Dog from Vigo!"¹⁹

The stigma attached to being a country girl spurred many such women to action. They endeavored by various means to come to London and to learn city ways:

"Marjory Mushroom" was one of thousands who sought to escape the stigma of being termed a "country girl," by coming to the metropolis, and learning there the latest vagaries of the mode. Here she achieved the fashionable accomplishments of dancing, music and French. As a part of her education in social life, the French friseur screwed up her hair, the shoemaker pinched her toes, and staymaker reduced the circumference of her waist to but a few inches. But she learned as well the manners of the ton, and such words as "ravishing, charming, divine."

¹⁹
 A. E. Richardson, Georgian England (London: B. T. Batsford Ltd., 1931), p. 21.

And most important of all, the new art of flirtation: When I meet a gentleman in our walks, I must look full at him as I can, to shew my teeth...flourish my rattan, to shew my shapes. And though in a room, I am to speak as low and mumbling as I can, to look as if I did not care whether I was heard or not; yet in a public place, I am to talk as loud and fast as possible, and call the men by their plain surnames and tell all about our last night's parties.²⁰

Sir Peter Teazle, beyond a doubt, was atypical of his class. The fashionable society of men in London could never practice the admirable restraint indulged in by Sir Peter. As has been previously stated, the men of eighteenth century England were a pleasure-loving lot. London was characterized by the nobility, the tradesmen and merchant princes, and the lower classes. What Sir Peter's occupation may have been is purely a matter of speculation. Urban society was clearly pictured in the following account by Plumb:

At the head of urban society were the merchant princes, with whom few lawyers and high civil servants could associate on terms of equality both in wealth and social standing. Towards the end of their careers, these merchants often bought up great estates to endow themselves with the social prestige which went with land ownership and which could enable their sons and daughters to marry into the aristocracy or to acquire a title in their own right. These were the men who controlled the Bank of England and the great chartered companies and jealously protected their privileges. They had close financial ties with the government and it is not surprising that in Politics they tended to support Walpole and call themselves Whigs; but of course to them Whiggery was not a radical creed. It meant, quite simply, the Hanoverian dynasty, with toleration to dissenters and the preservation of things as they were. In habits of life, the merchant princes differed little from the noblemen; they lived in equal state, built as grandly, and spent as prodigiously on furniture, food, and servants. But not all merchants were merchant princes. The great majority were middling people, mildly prosperous because of their industry

²⁰

Botsford, op. cit., p. 277.

and thrift which bred a distinctive ethos. Among these, the ordinary merchant and prosperous shopkeepers, the traditions of seventeenth-century life were stronger. They were still attached to the puritan attitude...²¹

Sir Peter's adherence to puritanical attitudes may class him with this latter category. He appeared, though, to be a man of more than modest means. Where his title came from is, again, only a matter for speculation. Botsford states that the orders of knighthood were, at times, bestowed upon the wealthy merchant class:

Peerages were occasionally conferred on bankers and Anglo-Indians, but George III clung closely to his policy that no man engaged only in trade, however large his fortune, should be created a British peer. All that the most wealthy traders and manufacturers could expect, accordingly, was knighthood or a baronetcy.²²

During this period in England there was a great levelling of the social classes. As the merchant class gained in numbers and in wealth, they naturally began to affect the manners and way of life of the nobility:

The extravagances and other shortcomings of the nouveaux riches should not blind one to the levelling of social classes and the higher standard of living followed in the wake of the influx of wealth. People of lesser importance profited by the prosperity of the nabobs and of the rich merchant aristocracy. The latter group was gradually overcoming time-old prejudice towards its character, and was winning the respect of Englishmen and foreigners.²³

²¹ J. H. Plumb, England in the Eighteenth Century (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1951), p. 14.

²² Botsford, op. cit., p. 151.

²³ Ibid., p. 264.

Since the occupation of Sir Peter Teazle is not mentioned in the script, his classification is difficult. He exhibits characteristics of several classes. His apparent wealth would tend to class him with the wealthier merchants, while his puritanical attitude places him with the ordinary merchant and prosperous shopkeeper. Owing to his title, however, the former group would seem more appropriate. Nevertheless, he was a man of the fashionable London group in spite of the fact that he did not adhere to its pleasure-loving existence. Lady Teazle, the daughter of a plain country squire, came, as has been noted, from a vastly different background. But like the girl who would be rid of the stigma attached to being classed as a country girl, she soon learned the foibles and idiosyncrasies of the London lady of fashion.

The Drury Lane Theatre and the Audience of the Late Eighteenth Century

The Drury Lane Theatre was one of two theatres built under patents from Charles II. Thomas Killigrew, the patentee, built and opened the theatre on May 7, 1663. It was divided into Boxes, which cost 4s., Pit, 2s.6d., Middle Gallery, 1s.6d., and Upper Gallery, 1s. The pit benches were covered with green cloth, and the floor was steeply raked so that people at the back of the pit could converse with the occupants of the boxes behind. There were six proscenium doors and an apron stage. The lighting was by chandeliers. There was a glazed cupola over the pit, and windows. A French visitor who went to the theatre soon after its opening says it was the best he had ever seen, with a finely

equipped and most ingenious stage; he was especially charmed by the decoration and arrangement of the boxes and tiers, and the gilded leather of the upholstery.²⁴ The theatre was burned in 1672 and rebuilt in 1674. In many ways the second Theatre Royal was a great improvement on the first. The stage now projected in a semi-oval right up to the front row of the pit, there were side wings instead of stage boxes, and the whole action of the play took place beyond the proscenium pillars. The orchestra played above instead of below the stage.²⁵ From this time forward, Drury Lane was the home of many distinguished managers and actors. In 1746, David Garrick went into partnership with James Lacy in the management of Drury Lane. Garrick introduced many reforms, insisted on order and decency as well as proper rehearsals, excluded the public from the stage--although that took time--, introduced new lighting, founded a Pension Fund which still functions, and surrounded himself with a wonderful company including Spranger Barry, Mrs. Pritchard, Mrs. Theophilus Cibber, Peg Woffington, and Kitty Clive.²⁶

The drama was essentially English in nature, though it was not without Continental influences in certain forms:

...its chief sources of inspiration are to be discovered in the works of Shakespeare and of his successors. There is an unquestioned French, German, and Italian influence on this period, but after all the foundation of the dramatic work is

²⁴ Phyllis Hartnoll, ed., The Oxford Companion to the Theatre (London: Geoffrey Cumberlege, Oxford University Press, 1951), p. 201.

²⁵ Hartnoll, loc. cit.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 203.

to be sought for, not in continental, but in previous English example...tragedy held still that low position which it occupied in previous years. Every season there were revivals of serious dramas and the production of new tragedies, but these were hopelessly outnumbered by the innumerable farces, comic operas and entertainments of the time. One thing is plain, too. Tragedy of the pseudo-classic sort was not popular. It was put on the stage through conventional prejudice, but the audiences manifestly preferred, as well, the romantic enthusiasm of the melodrama.²⁷

The Drury Lane Theatre was the scene of many types of drama, including interludes, farces, comic operas, comedies, tragedies, operatic farces, and melodramas.

Sheridan is credited with being the last "literary" dramatist until the later nineteenth century, and after The School for Scandal new dramatic literature was found only in closet drama. Since there were numerous writers of the time, the question arises as to why Sheridan was singled out as a significant landmark in eighteenth century dramatic writing. A look at the trend in repertory gives a satisfactory answer to this question:

Before 1777 the seasonal repertoire had included along with several Shakespearean dramas, a few other revived plays written before about 1730, and the new dramatic efforts of the year--quite a large number of plays of the year before or of ten or twenty years before. That is, dramas had been written throughout the mid-century that were substantial enough (even if mediocre in a literary sense) to maintain their places in the repertory. The repertory continued to be representative, therefore, of mid-century dramatic effort. But later in the century the situation changed. Besides the Shakespearean and other revivals from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the repertory had become unrepresentative of all but current dramatic activity. The desire for novelty, the

²⁷

Allardyce Nicoll, XVIII Century Drama 1750-1800 (Cambridge: University Press, 1927), p. 56.

increasingly scornful attitude many writers had for the stage, the increased size of theatres--these and many other factors played a part in bringing about this change. But the fact that the actable plays themselves had become little more than directions for the actors (and for scene painters, stage carpenters, musicians, and choreographers) tended to perpetuate the changed situation, so that repertories ever after--even during the recent dramatic renaissance--have not been arranged along the well-established lines that were followed in the eighteenth century. In short, except for dramatists like Sheridan who combined literary skill with an effective knowledge of the theatre, the actors and managers, instead of adding to their permanent fame by authorship, had, by composing new pieces only for immediate use of their stages, written themselves into dramatic oblivion.²⁸

The proclivity of the eighteenth century audience for superficial and non-enduring drama was paramount. Yet, in spite of this superficiality, a play such as The School for Scandal was highly successful:

The records of theatrical performances prove that such pieces as those of Garrick, Townley, Sheridan, and Foote...were highly successful. This success can be explained in part at least by the perennial desire of audiences to laugh at the absurd, particularly when absurdity can be identified as the exclusive possession, not of themselves, but of their acquaintances or enemies.²⁹

The trend in dramatic taste of the audience was moving rapidly to the predominance of overly-sentimental comedy, a brand of comedy that was rapidly reaching the proportions of the comédie larmoyant, or "weeping" comedy, so popular in France. The desire to fight against this deterioration of comedy inspired Sheridan and Goldsmith to produce some of the few lasting works of the period:

²⁸ James J. Lynch, Box, Pit, and Gallery (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1953), p. 180.

²⁹ Ibid., pp. 224-225.

Sheridan is therefore the exceptional dramatist among that large group of writers who had other connections with the theatre. He shared with them the propensity for farcical situation and caricature; but he went beyond them in providing the stage with "literary" drama. Equally skillful in creating effective stage business, he surpassed them in that he was able, by gaining a detachment impossible in sentimental comedy, to open out his plays on larger horizons. Nevertheless, Sheridan supplied only two enduring dramas; and these, in spite of their merit, could do little more than point the way for other professional theater men. But the time was late. By 1777, the date of The School for Scandal, the professionals had largely turned to melodrama, musical farce, and comic opera. Actor-authors and manager-authors thereafter largely confined their efforts to the furnishing of bare scenarios, of mere outlines, which made possible the exploitation of maximum "sound and shew."³⁰

Sheridan's thorough knowledge of the stage and stagecraft aided him immeasurably in creating such a play as The School for Scandal. He was dealing with a society that he knew well. During the time he spent at Bath, the fashionable resort, he encountered many "Lady Sneerwell's" and "Mrs. Candour's." The spirit which animated The School for Scandal was similar to the Restoration writings of Wycherley and Congreve. So much is the spirit of these earlier writers involved in Sheridan's work that in it can be seen the failings of these writers as well:

His plot is so involved that only a brilliant tour de force in the screen scene--so brilliant that it has become a kind of locus classicus for comic invention--enables him to unweave the web he has so closely entangled round his characters. The wit, too, colours all of the dialogue and, scintillating as it is, it seems to obscure the personality of the various dramatis personae. Everyone in this world of refined manners is able to say something that is brilliant. Never for a moment does the sparkle disappear; so that sometime we are inclined to be surfeited with too much of these intellectual fireworks. We pine occasionally for

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Ibid., pp. 179-180.

some of Goldsmith's "humor" and homely "nature," feeling that this comedy of Sheridan's possesses that "High" tone against which the former did battle. In many ways, indeed, The School for Scandal is to be related to contemporary comedies. The very satire of scandal-mongering is a picture of that age which so many of the semi-sentimental dramatists loved to depict, and, although in spirit Sheridan looks back over a period of eighty years, he is in touch in this way with his own time. The School for Scandal is not, as so many critics have implied, entirely a miracle in the year 1777.³¹

The audiences of this period felt no reluctance in expressing themselves openly. If a play was bad, everyone, including the actors, soon knew about it. The history of audience reactions in this period was laden with accounts of riots, jeerings, cat-calls, and the hurling of objects at the actors. Not only was the audience expressive during the play, but before it as well:

The riot and struggle for places can scarcely be imagined... Though a side box close to where we sat was completely filled, we beheld the door burst open, and an Irish gentleman attempt to make entry, vi et armis--"Shut the door, boxkeeper!" loudly cried some of the party--"There's room by the pow'rs!" cried the Irishman, and persisted in advancing. On this, a gentleman in the second row rose, and exclaimed, "Turn out that black-guard!" "Oh, and is that your mode, honey?" coolly retorted the Irishman; "come, come out, my dear, and give me satisfaction, or I'll pull your nose, faith, you coward, and shillaly you through the lobby!"

This public insult left the tenant in possession, no alternative; so he rushed out to accept the challenge; when, to the pit's general amusement, the Irishman jumped into his place, and having deliberately seated and adjusted himself, he turned round, and cried, "I'll talk to you after the play is over."³²

Theatre managers tried in vain to suppress the vocal utterings and physical actions of the audience. After the famous riot in the

³¹ Nicoll, op. cit., pp. 161-162.

³² Ibid., p. 9.

Haymarket in 1738, a court of law declared that the public had a legal right to express its dislike of any particular play or of any particular player, and that "the judicature of the pit had been acquiesced in, time immemorial. For a number of years any managerial change of custom was the signal for a riot."³³ This sort of crowd apparently accepted The School for Scandal with much pleasure, judging from the tremendous ovation the play received.

Contemporary criticism yields two distinct points of view. Charles Lamb, who expressed one viewpoint, stated:

Amidst the mortifying circumstances attendant upon growing old, it is something to have seen the School for Scandal in its glory.³⁴

Lamb highly praised the original cast of the play and expressed his regret that, to his way of thinking, no other cast had reached the high degree of skill achieved by the original.

Through the eyes of the critics on the other side of the fence, as it were, another type of criticism is encountered, stemming from the puritanical attitude toward the theatre and the drama:

In January, 1777 appeared an article deploring its immorality and reminding the theatres of their commanding duty to combat vice and support the cause of virtue. The comedy is "as defective in morality as abundant in wit. More dangerous to the manners of society than it can possibly tend to promote its pleasure." Referring presumably to Joseph Surface the writer remarks that "however odious hypocrisy may be, it is for the interests of virtue that some attention should be paid to

³³ Walter S. Scott, The Georgian Theatre (London: John Westhouse, Ltd., 1946) pp. 16-17.

³⁴ E. M. W. Tillyard, Lamb's Criticism (Cambridge: University Press, 1923), p. 87.

appearances," and further says that Charles is more dangerous to morality than his brother because he is made attractive. He concludes by saying that Sheridan probably wrote the play to assist in destroying a taste for the sentimental comedy of Cumberland, but the latter "has judiciously exerted the whole duty of an author, which is, not only to paint nature, but to paint such parts of it as every good man would wish to see imitated."³⁵

Contemporary criticism of the play was neither unanimously in favor nor in disfavor. Only the test of time has shown the true worth of The School for Scandal. One fact, however, is significant: among all the contemporary writers of dramatic literature, Sheridan stands alone, rivaled only by Goldsmith, in the creation of plays of literary merit as well as good, lasting theatre. The School for Scandal comes down through the years to the modern theatre audience as an indispensable link between modern society and its glittering past. The play not only has provided audiences with pleasure, but has provided for the actor a challenging task.

The variety of interpretations of the role of Sir Peter Teazle seems not to have affected the popularity of the play. The role was created originally by Thomas King in the May 8, 1777 premiere:

King reached the climax of his reputation in 1777, when he created the part of Sir Peter Teazle in "The School for Scandal." His style of acting was much less maniere than was usual at the time; he was at ease and familiar in his acting, and was one of the first actors to give naturalistic and life-like performances rather than the highly stylized representations with which the audiences of the day had hitherto been familiar, and which were the common theatrical fare until the days of Kean.³⁶

³⁵ Newell W. Sawyer, The Comedy of Manners From Sheridan to Maugham (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1931), pp. 19-20.

³⁶ Scott, op. cit., pp. 61-62.

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An actor did not have to have the attributes of King to be successful in the role of Sir Peter. In the experience of Richard Wroughton, who performed the role at Drury Lane in 1787, may be seen that King's advantages were not shared:

"A stirring, sound, and sensible performer." Despite the natural disadvantages under which he laboured, being knock-kneed, with an inexpressive face and an uninteresting voice, he was able in a great measure to overcome his defects, and gained a large measure of appreciation from public and managements alike.³⁷

In 1818 William Farren first appeared in London at Covent Garden as Sir Peter Teazle:

...always one of his finer parts. Vandenhoff, writing of him in this role said: 'I have never seen any representation of Sir Peter that could compare with him in animation, ease, naturalness of manner and piquancy of effect.'³⁸

William Warren, a fine actor of old men's roles, was especially successful as Sir Peter Teazle in 1847 with the Boston Museum Stock Company.³⁹

The notable actor John Drew also included Sir Peter in his repertory.

In 1923 he performed the role with Ethel Barrymore as his Lady Teazle.⁴⁰

The memorable performances of these fine actors in the role of Sir Peter Teazle have, along with the genius of Sheridan, given The School for Scandal an undisputedly lofty niche in the realm of dramatic literature.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 106.

³⁸ Hartnoll, op. cit., p. 256.

³⁹ John Mason Brown and Montrose J. Moses, The American Theatre (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1934), p. 374.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 335.

To say that Sheridan was thoroughly appreciated in his times would be committing a gross error. In spite of the high esteem in which he is now held, he was the victim of much calumny and mud-slinging. In the July and August numbers of the 1816 Gentleman's Magazine is found an article occasioned by the death of Sheridan in July of that year:

It is to be lamented that the author did not apply himself with more care to improve the heart and stimulate the public mind to the cultivation of morality....Mr. Sheridan on this occasion appears in a great measure to have forgotten the legitimate end of dramatic composition and not to have been sufficiently sensible that whatever is intended for the amusement of society at large should also be capable of communicating solid instruction and producing real amendment.⁴¹

Lord Byron wrote a final fitting tribute to Sheridan in his poem,

"Monody":

Long shall we seek his likeness--long in vain
And return to all of him which may remain,
Sighing that Nature formed but one such man,
And broke the die--in moulding Sheridan.

The eighteenth century of Sheridan's England was fraught with many changes from the previous century. Perhaps, of these changes, the most clearly evidenced was the tremendous advance made toward the levelling of social class distinction, a change brought about largely by a newly rising and powerful class of wealthy merchants. The conscientious endeavors of this class to ape the aristocracy in mode of living and dress gave rise to a new consciousness of fashion on a large scale which had hitherto been enjoyed only by a few. The assumption of theatre patronage by this new class had a profound effect upon the drama of the period. To please the taste of the vast middle class audiences, The School for Scandal was born.

⁴¹ Sawyer, op. cit., p. 21.

CHAPTER II

A BREAKDOWN OF THE ACTING SCRIPT AND A CHARACTER ANALYSIS OF SIR PETER TEAZLE

A Breakdown of the Acting Script

Prologue: Sir Peter Teazle

Blocking

Enter stage Right.
Cross to down center,
Bow, then begin.

Voice characteri-
zations for lady
Wormwood and Lisp.
Lisp with a Cockney
accent.

Mime reading the
paper.

Script

A School for Scandal! tell me,
I beseech you,
Needs there a school this modish
art to teach you?
No need of lessons now, the know-
ing think;
We might as well be taught to
eat and drink.
Caused by a dearth of scandal,
should the vapours distress
our fair ones--let them
read the papers;
Their powerful mixtures such
disorders hit;
Crave what you will--there's
quantum sufficit.

"Lord!" cries my Lady Wormwood (who
loves tattle,
And puts much salt and pepper in
her prattle,)
Just risen at noon, all night at
cards when threshing
Strong tea and scandal--"Bless me,
how refreshing!
Give me the papers, Lisp--how
bold and free!
Last night Lord L. (sips) was
caught with Lady D.
For aching heads what charming
sal volatile!

Mime reading the
paper.

If Mrs. B. will still continue
flirtin',
We hope she'll DRAW, or we'll
UNDRAW the curtain.

Fine satire, tho in public all
abuse it.

But by ourselves (sips) our praise
we can't refuse it.

Now Lisp, read you--there, at
that dash and star."

"Yes, ma'am--A certain Lord had
best beware,
Who lives not twenty miles from
Grosvenor Square;
For should he Lady W. find willin',
Wormwood is bitter"--

"Oh! that's
me, the villain!
Throw it behind the fire, and never
more
Let that vile paper come within
my door."

Thus at our friends we laugh,
who feel the dart;
To reach our feelings, we ourselves
must smart.
Is Sheridan so young, to think
that he
Can stop the full spring-tide
of calumny?
Knows he the world so little,
and its trade?
Alas! the devil's sooner raised
than laid.
So strong, so swift, the monster
there's no gagging.
Cut Scandal's head off, still the
tongue is wagging.
But Sheridan bids our players to
be brave,
And seek the monster, Scandal, in
her cave.
For your applause and laughter, too--
We'll fight--tonight--like
cavallieros true,
Till every drop of blood--or
scandal is spilt for you.

Bow to audience--
Exit Right.

Act One, Scene One: Lady Sneerwell's Dressing Room.

Lady Sneerwell
 Snake
 Pert
 Joseph Surface
 Maria
 Mrs. Candour
 Crabtree
 Sir Benjamin Backbite

In this opening scene appear the characters who may be called the "faculty" of The School for Scandal: Lady Sneerwell, Mrs. Candour, Snake, Crabtree, and Sir Benjamin Backbite, whose sole interest in life is making their friends and acquaintances the victims of calumny. Lady Sneerwell makes clear her mission in life by stating:

...and I am no hypocrite to deny the satisfaction I reap from the success of my efforts. Wounded myself, in the early part of my life, by the envenomed tongue of slander, I confess I have since known no pleasure equal to the reducing of others to the level of my own injured reputation.

In the dialogue between Snake and Lady Sneerwell, Sir Peter is revealed as a man well disposed toward sentiment--the tendency to be influenced by emotions rather than reason, and whose thoughts, opinions, and judgments are colored with emotion. Snake, in speaking of Joseph Surface says:

Yes: yet Sir Peter vows he has not his equal in England; and above all, he praises him as a man of sentiment.

Joseph Surface makes clear his intentions: to dupe Sir Peter into thinking him a man of sentiment, and to win Maria for himself.

Mrs. Candour, Crabtree, and Sir Benjamin Backbite advance the air of scandal-mongering with their petty, but somewhat amusing stories of

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their acquaintances. Mrs. Candour points out the marital problems of Sir Peter:

I own I was hurt to hear it, as I indeed was to learn from the same quarter, that your guardian, Sir Peter, and Lady Teazle have not agreed lately as well as could be wished.

In raking several people over the coals, the scandalous group reveal Charles Surface's character as that of an extravagant libertine. Maria, who hates scandal and scandal-mongers, is unable to listen further to the scandal and leaves. The scene closes as Lady Sneerwell states that she is now going to plot mischief while Joseph studies sentiment.

Act One, Scene Two: A Room in Sir Peter Teazle's House.

Sir Peter Teazle
Rowley

Enter Left,
pause, look back
through door, then
at audience. Cross
to apron center, then
begin soliloquy.

Sir Peter:

When an old bachelor marries a young wife, what is he to expect? 'Tis now six months since Lady Teazle made me--the happiest of men--and I have been the most miserable dog ever since! We tift a little going to church, and fairly quarrelled before the bells had done ringing. I was more than once nearly choked with gall during the honeymoon, and had lost all comfort in life before my friends had done wishing me joy. Yet I chose with caution--a girl bred wholly in the country, who never knew luxury beyond one silk gown, nor dissipation above the annual gala of a race ball. Yet now she plays her part in all the extravagant fopperies and fashions and the town, with as ready a grace as if she never had seen a bush or a grass-plot out of Grosvenor Square! I am sneered at by all my acquaintance, and paragraphed in the newspaper. She dissipates my fortune, and contradicts all my humors; yet the worst of it is, I know I love her, or I should never bear all this. However, I'll never be weak enough to own it.

Strut along apron
Right.

Cross back to apron
center.

Begin cross to exit
Left door.

(Enter Rowley--Right)

Rowley:

Oh! Sir Peter, your servant:
How is it with you, sir?

Cross Right
toward Rowley.

Sir Peter:

Very bad, Master Rowley, very bad.
I meet with nothing but crosses
and vexations.

Rowley:

What can have happened since
yesterday?

	Sir Peter:	A good question to ask a married man!
	Rowley:	Nay, I'm sure, Sir Peter, your lady can't be the cause of your uneasiness.
Sarcastically.	Sir Peter:	Why, has anybody told you she was dead?
	Rowley:	Come, come, Sir Peter, you love her not withstanding your tempers don't exactly agree.
Strongly.	Sir Peter:	But the fault is entirely hers, Master Rowley. I am, myself, the sweetest-tempered man alive, and hate a teasing temper; and so I tell her a hundred times a day.
	Rowley:	Indeed!
Cross below Rowley, down Right.	Sir Peter	Ay: and what is very extraordinary, in all our disputes, she is always in the wrong! But Lady Sneerwell, and the set she meets at her house, encourage the perverseness of her disposition. Then, to complete my vexation, Maria, my ward, whom I ought to have the power of a father over, is determined to turn rebel too, and absolutely refuses the man whom I have long resolved for her husband; meaning, I suppose, to bestow herself on his profligate brother.
Turn and cross Left to Rowley.	Rowley:	You know, Sir Peter, I have always taken the liberty to differ with you on the subject of these two young gentlemen. I only wish you may not be deceived in your opinion of Charles. My life on't, he will retrieve his errors yet. Their worthy father was, at his years, nearly as wild a spark; yet, when he died, he did not leave a more benevolent heart to lament his loss.

Inspired at
the thought of
"sentiment."

Pace Right, pause,
cross Left.

Sir Peter:

You are wrong, Master Rowley. Joseph is indeed a model for the young men of the age. He is a man of sentiment, and he acts up to the sentiments he professes; but, as for Charles, take my word for't, if he had any grain of virtue by descent, he has dissipated it with the rest of his inheritance. Ah! my old friend, Sir Oliver, will be deeply mortified when he finds how part of his bounty has been misapplied.

Rowley:

I am sorry to find you so violent against the young man, because this may be the most critical period of his fortune. I came hither with news that will surprise you.

Pause, turn
to Rowley,
surprised.

Sir Peter:

What! let me hear.

Rowley:

Sir Oliver is arrived, and at this moment in town.

Quickly.

Sir Peter:

How! you astonish me! I thought you did not expect him this month.

Rowley:

I did not; but his passage has been remarkably quick.

Sir Peter:

Egad, I shall rejoice to see my old friend. 'Tis sixteen years since we met. We have had many a day together: but does he still enjoin us not to inform his nephews of his arrival?

Rowley:

Most strictly. He means, before it is known, to make some trial of their dispositions.

Turn away.

Sir Peter:

Ah! There needs no art to discover their merits--however, he shall have his way; but, pray, does he know I am married?

Turn to Rowley.

Turn to
audience.

Rowley: Yes, and will soon wish you joy.

Sir Peter: What, as we drink health to a friend in consumption! Ah, Oliver will laugh at me. We used to rail at matrimony together, but he has been steady to his text. Well, he must soon be at my house, though-- I'll instantly give orders for his reception. But, Master Rowley, don't drop a word that Lady Teazle and I ever disagree.

Rowley: By no means.

Glancing at Left
door.

Sir Peter: For I should never be able to stand Noll's jokes; so I'll have him think, Lord forgive me! that we are a very happy couple.

Rowley: I understand you:--but then you must be very careful not to differ while he is in the house with you.

Exit Left.

Sir Peter: Egad, and so we must--and that's impossible. Ah! Master Rowley, when an old bachelor marries a young wife, he deserves--no--the crime carries its punishment along with it.

(Exits)

(Rowley shakes his head and exits Right.)

Act Two, Scene One: A Room in Sir Peter Teazle's House.

Sir Peter Teazle
 Lady Teazle
 Busy

(Enter Sir Peter and Lady Teazle)

Enter Left--
 Lady T. followed
 By Sir Peter.
 Cross to Down
 Center.

Sir Peter: Lady Teazle, Lady Teazle, I'll not bear it!

Lady T.: Sir Peter, Sir Peter, you may bear it or not, as you please; But I ought to have my own way in everything, and what's more, I will too. Though I was educated in the country, I know very well that women of fashion in London are accountable to nobody after they are married.

Sir Peter: Very well, ma'am, very well; so a husband is to have no influence, no authority?

Lady T.: Authority! No, to be sure!--if you wanted authority over me, you should have adopted me, and not married me: I am sure you were old enough.

First line to audience, wiping brow.

Sir Peter: Old enough!--ay, there it is! Well, well, Lady Teazle, though my life may be made unhappy by your temper, I'll not be ruined by your extravagance!

Take flower from basket and throw it on floor.

Lady T.: My extravagance! I'm sure I'm not more extravagant than a woman of fashion ought to be.

Cross Down, Left of center to apron.

Sir Peter: No, no, madam, you shall throw away no more sums on such unmeaning luxury. 'Slife! to spend as much to furnish your dressing-room with flowers in winter as would suffice to turn the Pantheon into a greenhouse, and give a garden party in February.

	Lady T.:	And am I to blame, Sir Peter, because flowers are dear in cold weather? You should find fault with the climate, and not with me. For my part, I'm sure I wish it was spring all the year round, and that roses grew under our feet!
Hold head.	Sir Peter:	Oons! madam--if you had been born to this, I shouldn't wonder at your talking thus; but you forget what your situation was when I married you.
Shake finger at her.		
	Lady T.:	No, no, I don't; 'twas a very disagreeable one, or I should never have married you.
Cross up center to chair and sit.	Sir Peter:	Yes, yes, madam, you were then in somewhat a humbler style--the daughter of a plain country squire. Recollect, Lady Teazle, when I saw you first sitting at your embroidery, in a pretty figured linen gown, with a bunch of keys at your side, your hair combed smooth over a roll, and your apartment hung round with fruits in worsted, of your own working.
Pleasantly.		
Has calmed down.		
	Lady T.:	Oh, yes! I remember it very well, and a curious life I led. My daily occupation to inspect the dairy, superintend the poultry, make extracts from the family receipt-book, and comb my aunt Deborah's lapdog.
(Sir Peter nods in remembrance.)	Sir Peter:	Yes, yes, ma'am, 'twas so indeed.
	Lady T.:	And then, you know, my evening amusements! To draw patterns for ruffles, which I had not the materials to make up; to play cards with the Curate; to read a sermon to my aunt; or to be stuck down to an old spinet to strum my father to sleep after a fox-chase.

Rise, cross to
fireplace.

Sir Peter:

I am glad you have so good a memory. Yes, madam, these were the recreations I took you from; but now you must have your coach--and three powdered footmen before your chair; and, in the summer, a pair of white ponies to draw you to Kensington Gardens. No recollection, I suppose, when you were content to ride double, behind the butler, on a docked coach-horse?

Lady T.:

No--I swear I never did that; I deny the butler and the coach-horse.

Step closer to
her.

Sir Peter:

This, madam, was your situation; and what have I done for you? I have made you a woman of fashion, of fortune, of rank--in short, I have made you my wife.

Lady T.:

Well, then, and there is but one thing more you can make me to add to the obligation, that is--

To audience.

Sir Peter:

My widow, I suppose?

Lady T.:

Hem! hem!

Cross down
Right.

Sir Peter:

I thank you, madam--but don't flatter yourself; for, though your ill conduct may disturb my peace of mind, it shall never break my heart, I promise you; however, I am equally obliged to you for the hint.

Lady T.:

Then why will you endeavor to make yourself so disagreeable to me, and thwart me in every little elegant expense?

Turn to her,
imitating her
voice on "elegant
expenses."

Sir Peter:

'Slife, madam, I say, had you any of these little elegant expenses when you married me?

Lady T.:

Lud, Sir Peter! would you have me be out of the fashion?

Agitated.	Sir Peter:	The fashion, indeed! what had you to do with the fashion before you married me?
	Lady T.:	For my part, I should think you would like to have your wife thought a woman of taste.
First line to audience.	Sir Peter:	Ay--there again--taste! Zounds! madam, you had no taste when you married me!
Sir Peter grimaces.	Lady T.:	That's very true, indeed, Sir Peter! and, after having married you, I should never pretend to taste again, I allow. But now, Sir Peter, since we have finished our daily jangle, I presume I may go to my engagement at Lady Sneerwell's?
	Sir Peter:	Ay, there's another precious circumstance--a charming set of acquaintance you have made there!
	Lady T.:	Nay, Sir Peter, they are all people of rank and fortune, and remarkably tenacious of reputation.
Cross Right.	Sir Peter:	Yes, egad, they are tenacious of reputation with a vengeance; for they don't choose anybody should have a character but themselves! Such a crew! Ah! many a wretch has gone to the gallows who has done less mischief than those utterers of forged tales, coiners of scandal, and clippers of reputation.
	Lady T.:	What, would you restrain the freedom of speech?
Cross in to Right of center.	Sir Peter:	Ah! they have made you just as bad as any one of the society.
	Lady T.:	Why, I believe I do hear a part with a tolerable grace. But I vow I bear no malice against the people I abuse: when I say an ill-natured thing, 'tis out of pure good humor; and I take it for granted they deal

exactly in the same manner with me.
But, Sir Peter, you know you
promised to come to Lady Sneerwell's
too.

Sir Peter: Well, well, I'll call in just to
look after my own character.

Lady T.: Then, indeed, you must make haste
after me or you'll be late. So
good-bye to ye.
(Exit)

Cross down to
apron center.

Pleasantly.

Sir Peter: So--I have gained much by my
intended expostulation! Yet with
what a charming air she contradicts
everything I say, and how pleasantly
she shows her contempt for my
authority! Well, though I can't
make her love me, there is great
satisfaction in quarrelling with her;
and I think she never appears to such
an advantage as when she is doing
everything in her power to plague me.
(Exit)

Exit Left shaking
head.

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Act Two, Scene Two: A Room in Lady Sneerwell's House.

Lady Sneerwell
 Joseph Surface
 Sir Benjamin Backbite
 Crabtree
 Mrs. Candour
 Lady Teazle
 Maria
 Sir Peter Teazle
 Pert

Lady Sneer.: Nay, positively, we will hear it.
 Mrs. Can.: Yes, yes, the epigram, by all means.
 Sir Ben.: O plague on't, uncle! 'tis mere nonsense.
 Crab.: No, no; 'fore Gad, very clever for an extempore!
 Sir Ben.: But, ladies, you should be acquainted with the circumstance. You must know, that one day last week, as Lady Betty Chariot was taking the dust in Hyde Park, she desired me to write some verses on her ponies; upon which, I took out my pocket-book, and in one moment produced the following:--
 Sure never were seen
 Two such beautiful ponies;
 Other horses are clowns,
 But these macaronies:
 To give them this title
 I am sure can't be wrong.
 Their legs are so slim,
 And their tails are so long.
 Crab.: There, ladies, done in the smack of a whip, and on horse-back, too.
 Mrs. Can.: A very Apollo, mounted--indeed, Sir Benjamin!
 Sir Ben.: Oh dear, lady! --trifles--trifles--

(Enter Lady Teazle and Maria)

- Mrs. Can.: I must have a copy.
- Lady Sneer.: Lady Teazle, I hope we shall see Sir Peter.
- Lady T.: I believe he'll wait on your ladyship presently.
- Lady Sneer.: Maria, my love, you look grave. Come, you shall sit down to piquet with Mr. Surface.
- Maria: I take very little pleasure in cards--however, I'll do as your ladyship pleases.
- Lady T.: (Aside) I am surprised Mr. Surface should sit down with her; I thought he would have embraced this opportunity of speaking to me before Sir Peter came.
- Mrs. Can.: Now, I'll die; but you are so scandalous, I'll forswear your society.
- Lady T.: What's the matter, Mrs. Candour?
- Mrs. Can.: They'll not allow our friend Miss Vermillion to be handsome.
- Lady Sneer.: Oh, surely she is a pretty woman.
- Crab.: I am very glad you think so, Ma'am.
- Mrs. Can.: She has a charming fresh color.
- Lady T.: Yes, when it is fresh put on.
- Mrs. Can.: Oh, fie! I'll swear her color is natural: I have seen it come and go!
- Lady T.: I dare swear you have, ma'am: it goes off at night and comes again in the morning.
- Sir Ben.: True, ma'am, it not only comes and goes; but, what's more, egad, her maid can fetch and carry it!

- Mrs. Can.: (Laughing) How I hate to hear you talk so! But sure now, her sister is, or was, very handsome.
- Crab.: Who? Mrs. Evergreen? O Lord! she's six-and-fifty if she's an hour!
- Mrs. Can.: Now positively you wrong her; fifty-two or fifty-three is the utmost--and I don't think she looks more.
- Sir Ben.: Ah! there's no judging by her looks, unless one could see her face.
- Lady Sneer.: Well, well, if Mrs. Evergreen does take some pains to repair the ravages of time, you must allow she effects it with a great ingenuity; and surely that's better than the careless manner in which the widow Ochre caulks her wrinkles.
- Sir Ben.: Nay, now, Lady Sneerwell, you are severe upon the widow. Come, come, 'tis not that she paints so ill--but, when she has finished her face, she joins it on so badly to her neck, that she looks like a mended statue, in which the connoisseur may see at once that the head's modern, though the trunk's antique!
- Crab.: Ha! ha! ha! Well said nephew!
- Mrs. Can.: Ha! ha! ha! Well, you make me laugh; but I vow I hate you for it. What do you think of Miss Simper?
- Sir Ben.: Why, she has very pretty teeth.
- Lady T.: Yes, and on that account, when she is neither speaking nor laughing (which seldom happens), she never absolutely shuts her mouth, but leaves it always on ajar, as it were--thus.
- (Shows her teeth)

Mrs. Can.: How can you be so ill-natured?

Lady T.: Nay, I allow even that's better than the pains Mrs. Prim takes to conceal her losses in front. She draws her mouth till it positively resembles the aperture of a collection-box, and all her words appear to slide out edge-wise, as it were--thus:

How do you do, madam?

Yes, madam.

Lady Sneer.: Very well, Lady Teazle; I see you can be a little severe.

Lady T.: In defense of a friend it is but justice.

(Enter Sir Peter Teazle)

But here comes Sir Peter to spoil our pleasantry.

Enter Right,
bow, cross
up Left.

Sir Peter: Ladies, your most obedient.
(Aside) Mercy on me, here is the whole set! a character dead at every word, I suppose.

Mrs. Can.: I am rejoiced you are come, Sir Peter. They have been so censorious--and Lady Teazle as bad as any one.

Stuffy.

Sir Peter: That must be very distressing to you, Mrs. Candour, I dare swear.

Mrs. Can.: Oh, they will allow good qualities to nobody; not even good nature to our friend Mrs. Popsy.

Sir Peter is
surprised.

Lady T.: What, the fat dowager who was at Mrs. Quadrille's last night?

Cross down Right.
Front to audience.

Mrs. Can.: Nay, her bulk is her misfortune; and, when she takes so much pains to get rid of it, you ought not to reflect on her.

Lady Sneer.: That's very true, indeed.

Lady T.: Yes, I know she almost lives on acids and small whey; laces herself by pulleys; and often, in the hottest noon in summer, you may see her on a little pony, with her hair plaited up behind like a drummer's and puffing round Hyde Park on a full trot.

Sir Peter grimaces.

Mrs. Can.: I thank you, Lady Teazle, for defending her.

To Mrs. Can. Sir Peter: Yes, a good defense, truly.

Mrs. Can.: Truly, Lady Teazle is as censorious as Miss Sallow.

Crab.: Yes, and she is a curious being to pretend to be censorious--an awkward gawky, without any one good point under heaven.

Mrs. Can.: Positively you shall not be so very severe. Miss Sallow is a near relation of mine by marriage, and, as for her person, great allowance is to be made; for, let me tell you, a woman labors under many disadvantages who tries to pass for a girl of six-and-thirty.

Shows much displeasure during these bits of gossip.

Lady Sneer.: Though, surely, she is handsome still--and for the weakness in her eyes, considering how much she reads by candle-light, it is not to be wondered at.

Mrs. Can.: True; and then as to her manner, upon my word I think it is particularly graceful, considering she never had the least education; for you know her mother was a Welsh milliner, and her father a sugar-baker at Bristol.

Sir Ben.: Ah! you are both of you too good-natured!

Agitated.
Aside to audience.

Sir Peter: Yes, damned good-natured! This
their own relation! (Aside)

Mrs. Can.: For my part, I own I cannot bear
to hear a friend ill-spoken of.

Cynically.

Sir Peter: No, to be sure.

Sir Ben.: Oh! you are of a moral turn.
Mrs. Candour and I can sit for an
hour and hear lady Stucco talk
sentiment.

Lady T.: Nay, I vow Lady Stucco is very
well with the dessert after dinner;
for she's just like the French
fruit one cracks for mottoes--
made up of paint and proverb.

Mrs. Can.: Well, I will never join in ridi-
culing a friend; and so I constantly
tell my cousin Ogle, and you all
know what pretensions she has to
be critical on beauty.

Crab.: Oh, to be sure! she has herself
the oddest countenance that ever
was seen; 'tis a collection of
features from all the different
creatures of the globe.

Sir Ben.: So she has, indeed--a bullfrog
front--

Crab.: Nanny-goat nose--

Sir Peter
becomes in-
creasingly
horrified.

Sir Ben.: Lamb's-wool locks--

Crab.: Lizard Lips--

Sir Ben.: Complexion of a crocodile--

Crab.: And tortise-shell teeth--

Sir Ben.: In short, her face resembles a
congress at the close of a general
war--wherein all the members, even
to her eyes, appear to have a
different interest, and her nose
and chin are the only parties like
to join issue.

Cross down Left.

	Mrs. Can.:	Ha! ha! ha!
Horrorified.	Sir Peter:	(Aside) Mercy on my life!--a person they dine with twice a week!
	Lady Sneer.:	Go--go--you are a couple of provoking Toads.
	Mrs. Can.:	Nay but I vow you shall not carry the laugh off so--for give me leave to say that Mrs. Ogle--
Cross up Right.	Sir Peter:	Madam, madam, I beg your pardon--but there's no stopping these good gentlemen's tongues. But when I tell you, Mrs. Candour, that the lady they are abusing is a particular friend of mine, I hope you'll not take her part.
	Lady Sneer.:	Well, said, Sir Peter! but you are a cruel creature--too phlegmatic yourself for a jest, and too peevish to allow wit in others.
Sarcastically.	Sir Peter:	Ah, madam, true wit is more nearly allied to good nature than your ladyship is aware of.
	Lady T.:	True, Sir Peter: I believe they are so near akin that they can never be united.
Sir Peter is again irritated.	Sir Ben.:	Or rather, madam, I suppose them man and wife, because one seldom sees them together.
	Lady T.:	But Sir Peter is such an enemy to scandal, I believe he would have it put down by parliament.
Turn to Lady T. Give lines vehemently.	Sir Peter:	'Fore heaven, madam, if they were to consider the sporting with reputation of as much importance as poaching on manors, and pass an act for the preservation of fame, I believe many would thank them for the bill.

	Lady Sneer.:	O Lud! Sir Peter; would you deprive us of our privileges?
Bitterly.	Sir Peter:	Ay, madam; and then no person should be permitted to kill character and run down reputations, but qualified old maids and disappointed widows.
	Lady Sneer.:	Go, you monster!
	Mrs. Can.:	But, surely, you would not be quite so severe on those who only report what they hear?
Cross up center.	Sir Peter:	Yes, madam, I would have the indorsers liable, too, for the principals debts; and in all cases of slander currency, whenever the drawer of the lie was not to be found, the injured parties should have a right to come on any of the indorsers.
	Crab.:	Well, for my part, I believe there never was a scandalous tale without some foundation.
Cross Right.	Lady Sneer.:	Come, ladies, shall we sit down to cards in the next room? (Enter Pert, who whispers to Sir Peter)
	Sir Peter:	(To Pert) I'll be with them directly. (Exit Pert) (Aside) I'll get away unperceived.
	Lady Sneer.:	Sir Peter, you are not going to leave us?
Turn to Lady S. Bow and exit Left.	Sir Peter:	Your ladyship must excuse me; I'm called away by particular business. But I leave my character behind me. (Exit)
	Sir Ben.:	Well--certainly, Lady Teazle, that lord of yours is a strange being: I could tell you some stories of him would make you laugh heartily if he were not your husband.

Lady T.: Oh, pray don't mind that; come,
 do let's hear them.

(Exit all)

The remainder of the scene is concerned with Joseph Surface, Maria, and Lady Teazle.

Joseph and Maria have been left alone in the room. Maria protests against all the scandalous gossip she has just witnessed, and Joseph, in his best hypocritical manner, agrees fully with her and adds a few of his own sentiments on the subject.

Joseph chooses this time to mildly chastise Maria for being unkind to him and showing favoritism for his brother, Charles. He is pleading on his knees with Maria not to leave him as Lady Teazle enters.

To cover this embarrassing situation, Joseph shifts the gist of his plea and, after Maria is sent out, explains to Lady Teazle that he was trying to persuade Maria not to inform Sir Peter of his attachment to Lady Teazle. Lady Teazle is a bit skeptical at this and states:

"Indeed! but you seemed to adopt a very tender mode of reasoning--do you usually argue on your knees?"

Joseph immediately shifts the conversation and asks Lady Teazle when she is coming over to see his new library. Lady Teazle states that though she has admitted him as a lover, it would be unwise to visit him alone at his home. She exits and Joseph sums up his situation:

"A curious dilemma, truly, my politics have run me into! I wanted, at first, only to ingratiate myself with Lady Teazle, that she might not be my enemy with Maria; and I have, I don't know how, become her serious lover. Sincerely I begin to wish I had never made such a point of gaining so very good a character, for it has led me into so many cursed rogueries that I doubt I shall be exposed at last."

Act Two, Scene Three: A Room in Sir Peter Teazle's House.

Sir Oliver Surface

Rowley

Sir Peter Teazle

(Enter Sir Oliver and Rowley
Stage Left)

Sir Oliver: (Laughing) So my old friend is married, hey?--a young wife out of the country. (Laughing) That he should have stood bluff to old bachelor so long, and sink into a husband at last!

Rowley: But you must not rally him on the subject, Sir Oliver; 'tis a tender point, I assure you, though he has been married only seven months.

Sir Oliver: Then he has been just half a year on the stool of repentance!-- Poor Peter! But you say he has entirely given up Charles-- never sees him, hey?

Rowley: His prejudice against him is astonishing, and I am sure greatly increased by a jealousy of him with Lady Teazle, which he has industriously been led into by a scandalous society in the neighborhood, who have contributed not a little to Charles' ill name. Whereas the truth is, I believe, if the lady is partial to either of them, his brother is the favorite.

Sir Oliver: Ay, I know there are a set of malicious, prating, prudent gossips, both male and female, who murder characters to kill time, and will rob a young fellow of his good name before he has years to know the value of it. But I am not to be prejudiced

against my nephew by such, I promise you! No, no; if Charles has done nothing false or mean, I shall compound for his extravagance.

Rowley: Then, my life on't, you will reclaim him. Ah, sir, it gives me new life to find that your heart is not turned against him.

Sir Oliver: What! Shall I forget, Master Rowley, when I was at his years myself? Egad, my brother and I were neither of us very prudent youths.

Rowley: Sir, 'tis this reflection gives me assurance that Charles may yet be a credit to his family. But here comes Sir Peter.

Sir Oliver: Egad, so he does! Mercy on me, he's greatly altered, and seems to have a settled married look! One may read husband in his face at this distance!

(Enter Sir Peter Teazle)

Enter Right,
cross Left to
Sir Oliver.
Elated.

Sir Peter: Ha! Sir Oliver--my old friend. Welcome home again!

Sir Oliver: Thank you, thank you, Peter! and i'faith I am glad to find you well, believe me!

Slapping him
on the back.

Sir Peter: Oh! 'tis a long time since you left--fifteen years, I doubt, Noll, and many a cross accident in the time.

Sir Peter is
apprehensive at
"married."

Sir Oliver: Ay, I have had my share. But, what! I find you are married, hey, my old boy? Well, well, it can't be helped; and so--I wish you joy with all my heart!

Surprised.

Sir Peter: Thank you, thank you, Noll.--
Yes, I have entered into--
the happy state; but we'll not
talk of that now.

Sir Peter
grimaces.

Sir Oliver: True, true, Peter; old friends
should not begin on grievances
at first meeting. No, no, no.

Rowley: (To Sir Oliver) Take care, sir.

Sir Oliver: Well, so one of my nephews is a
wild rogue, hey?

Becoming
excited.

Sir Peter: Wild! Ah! my old friend, I grieve
for your disappointment there;
he's a lost young ~~man~~, indeed.
However, his brother will make
you amends; Joseph is, indeed,
what a youth should be--everybody
in the world speaks well of him.

Calms down.

Sir Oliver: I am sorry to hear it; he has too
good a character to be an honest
fellow. Everybody speaks well of
him! Psha! then he has bowed as
low to knaves and fools as to
honest dignity of genius and
virtue.

Surprised.

Sir Peter: What, Noll! do you blame him for
not making enemies?

Sir Oliver: Yes, if he has merit enough to
deserve them.

Fondly.

Sir Peter: Well, well--you'll be convinced
when you know him. 'Tis edification
to hear him converse; he professes
the noblest sentiments.

Sir Peter is
alarmed at this
attitude.

Sir Oliver: Oh, plague of his sentiments! If
he salutes me with a scrap of
morality in his mouth, I shall be
sick directly. But, however, don't
mistake me, Peter; I don't mean to
defend Charles' errors: But,
before I form my judgment of either

of them, I intend to make a trial of their hearts; and my friend Rowley and I have planned something for the purpose.

Rowley: And Sir Peter shall own for once he has been mistaken.

Vehemently.

Sir Peter: Oh, my life on Joseph's honor!

Sir Oliver: Well--come, give us a bottle of good wine, and we'll drink the lad's health, and tell you our scheme.

Cross Left to
Sir O. Take him
Around shoulders
and begin to exit
Left.
Pause.

Sir Peter: Allons, then!

Sir Oliver: And don't, Peter, be so severe against your old friend's son. Odds my life! I am not sorry that he has run out of the course a little: for my part, I hate to see prudence clinging to the green suckers of youth; 'tis like ivy round a sapling, and spoils the growth of the tree.

Begin to exit again
Left.

Act Three, Scene One: The same as the previous scene. A continuous action.

Sir Peter Teazle
 Sir Oliver Surface
 Rowley
 Moses
 Maria
 Lady Teazle
 Busy

(Enter Busy)

Busy: A Gentleman to see you, sir.

Sir Peter
 pauses, then
 turns to Busy.

Sir Peter: Well, then, we will see this fellow first, and have our wine afterwards. But how is this, Master Rowley? I don't see the point of your scheme.

Rowley: Why, sir, this Mr. Stanley, whom I was speaking of, is nearly related to them by their mother. He was once a merchant in Dublin, but has been ruined by a series of undeserved misfortunes. He has applied, by letter both to Mr. Surface and Charles: from the former he has received nothing but evasive promises of future service, while Charles has done all that his extravagance has left him power to do; and he is, at this time, endeavoring to raise a sum of money, part of which in the midst of his own distresses, I know he intends for the service of poor Stanley.

Sir Peter is surprised at this revelation.

Sir Oliver: Ah, he is my brother's son.

Concerned.

Sir Peter: Well, but how is Sir Oliver personally to--

Rowley: Why, sir, I will inform Charles and his brother that Stanley has obtained permission to apply personally to his friends; and,

as they neither of them have ever seen him, let Sir Oliver assume his character, and he will have a fair opportunity of judging, at least, of the benevolence of their dispositions.

Resignedly.

Sir Peter: Well, well, make the trial, if you please. But where is the fellow whom you brought for Sir Oliver to examine, relative to Charles' affairs?

Rowley: Below, waiting his commands, and no one can give him better intelligence.--This, Sir Oliver, is a friendly moneylender, who, to do him justice, has done everything in his power to bring your nephew to a proper sense of his extravagance.

Sir Peter: Pray, let us have him in.

Rowley: (Calls to Busy) Desire Mr. Moses to walk upstairs.

Sir Peter: But, pray, why should you suppose he will speak the truth?

Rowley: Oh, I have convinced him that he has no chance of recovering a certain sum advanced to Charles but through the bounty of Sir Oliver, who he knows is arrived.

(Enter Moses)

Here is the honest moneylender.
--This is Sir Oliver.

Sir Oliver: Sir, I understand you have lately had great dealings with my nephew Charles.

Sir Peter
crosses down to
apron Left.

Moses: Yes, Sir Oliver, I have done all I could for him; but he was ruined before he came to me for assistance.

	Sir Oliver:	That was unlucky, truly; for you have had no opportunity of showing your talents.
Sir Peter listens intently.	Moses:	None at all; I hadn't the pleasure of knowing his distresses till he was some thousands worse than nothing.
	Sir Oliver:	Unfortunate, indeed! But I suppose you have done all in your power for him?
	Moses:	Yes, he knows that. This very evening I was to have brought him a gentleman from the city, who does not know him, and will, I believe, advance him some money.
Quickly.	Sir Peter:	What, one Charles has never had money from before?
	Moses:	Yes, Mr. Premium, formerly a broker.
Snaps fingers.	Sir Peter:	Egad, Noll, a thought strikes me! --Charles, you say, does not know Mr. Premium?
	Moses:	Not at all.
Cross Right to Oliver	Sir Peter:	Now then, Noll, you may have a better opportunity of satisfying yourself than an old romancing tale of a poor relation: go with my friend Moses, and pretend you are Premium, and then I'll answer for it, you'll see your nephew in all his glory.
Take him down Left. Brightly.		
	Sir Oliver:	Egad, I like this idea better than the other, and I may visit Joseph afterwards as old Stanley.
Sir Peter smiles at Oliver's pleasure.	Sir Peter:	True, so you may.
	Rowley:	Well, this is taking Charles rather at a disadvantage to be sure. However, Moses, you understand Sir Peter, and will be faithful.

Si
075

To

Tu

Si
2
81

Tu
Si

	Moses:	You may depend on me.--(Looks at watch) This is near the time I was to have gone.
	Sir Oliver:	I'll accompany you as soon as you please, Moses--But hold! I have forgot one thing--how the plague shall I be able to pass for a moneylender?
Sir Peter looks-over Sir Oliver.	Rowley:	Is Sir Oliver too smartly dressed to look like a moneylender, Moses?
	Moses:	Not at all; 'twould not be out of character.
	Sir Oliver:	Well, but how must I talk? There's certainly some cant of usury and mode of treating that I ought to know.
To audience. Turn to Moses.	Sir Peter:	Oh, there's not much to learn. The great point, as I take it, is to be exorbitant enough in your demands. Hey, Moses?
	Moses:	Yes, that's a very great point.
	Sir Oliver:	I'll answer for't I'll not be wanting in that. I'll ask him eight or ten per cent on the loan, at least.
	Moses:	If you ask him no more than that, you'll be discovered immediately.
	Sir Oliver:	Hey! what, the plague! how much then?
Sir Peter, facing front, registers shock.	Moses:	That depends upon the circumstances. If he appears not very anxious for the supply, you should require only forty or fifty per cent; but if you find him in great distress, and want the moneys very bad, you may ask double.
Turn to Sir Oliver.	Sir Peter:	A good honest trade you're learning, Sir Oliver!

Sir Oliver: Truly I think so--and not unprofitable.

Moses: Then you know, you haven't the moneys yourself, but are forced to borrow them for him of a friend.

Sir Peter listens.

Sir Oliver: Oh! I borrow it of a friend, do I?

Moses: And your fiend is an unconscionable dog; but you can't help that.

Sir Oliver: My friend an unconscionable dog, is he?

Moses: Yes, and he himself has not the moneys by him, but is forced to sell stocks at a great loss.

Sir Oliver: He is forced to sell stocks at a great loss, is he? Well, that's very kind of him.

Bows to Oliver on "Premium."

Sir Peter: I'faith, Noll--Mr. Premium, I mean,--you'll soon be master of the trade. But Moses! would not you have him rail a little against the protective laws? That would be in character, I should think.

Looking at Moses.

Moses: Very much.

Rowley: And lament that a young man now must be at years of discretion before he is suffered to ruin himself?

Moses: Ay, a great pity!

Sir Oliver: So, so--Moses shall give me further instruction as we go together.

Sir Peter: You will not have much time, for your nephew lives close by.

Sir Oliver: Oh, never fear! my tutor appears so able, that though Charles lived in the next street, it must

be my own fault if I am not a complete rogue before I turn the corner.

(Exits with Moses)

Cross up
center, sit.

Sir Peter:

So, now I think Sir Oliver will be convinced; you are partial, Rowley, and would have prepared Charles for the other plot.

Rowley:

No, upon my word, Sir Peter. I have also another evidence in my power, one Snake, whom I have detected in a matter little short of forgery, and shall shortly produce to remove some of your prejudices, Sir Peter, relative to Charles and Lady Teazle.

Irritated.

Sir Peter:

I have heard too much on that subject. Well, go bring me this Snake, and I'll hear what he has to say presently. And pray, tell Maria I want to speak with her.

(Exit Rowley)

Seated. This
speech given
directly to
audience.

I should be glad to be convinced my suspicions of Lady Teazle and Charles were unjust. I have never yet opened my mind on this subject to my friend Joseph--I am determined I will do it--he will give me his opinion sincerely.

(Enter Maria)

So, child, has Mr. Surface returned with you?

Maria:

No, sir; he was engaged.

Pleasantly.

Sir Peter:

Well, Maria, do you not reflect, the more you converse with that amiable young man, what return his partiality for you deserves?

Maria:

Indeed, Sir Peter, your frequent importunity on this subject distresses me extremely--you compel

me to declare, that I know no man who has ever paid me a particular attention whom I would not prefer to Mr. Surface.

Surprised and irritated. Sir Peter: So--here's perverseness! No, no, Maria, 'tis Charles only whom you would prefer. 'Tis evident his vices and follies have won your heart.

 Maria: This is unkind, sir. You know I have obeyed you in neither seeing nor corresponding with him: I have heard enough to convince me that he is unworthy my regard. Yet I cannot think it blameworthy, if while my understanding severely condemns his vices, my heart suggests pity for his distresses.

Dogmatically. Sir Peter: Well, well, pity him as much as you please; but give your heart and hand to a worthier object.

 Maria: Never to his brother!

Points to door Right in anger. Sir Peter: Go, perverse and obstinate! But take care, madam: you have never yet known what the authority of a guardian is: don't compel me to inform you of it.

Shake finger at her. Maria: I can only say, you shall not have just reason. 'Tis true, by my father's will, I am for a short period bound to regard you as his substitute; but must cease to think so, when you would compel me to be miserable.
(Exit)

Slap knee, rise, cross down apron center Sir Peter: Was ever a man so crossed as I am, everything conspiring to fret me! I had not been involved in matrimony a fortnight, before her father, a hale and hearty man, died, on purpose, I believe, for the pleasure of plaguing me with

Look at door Right.
Calms down, becomes
more pleasant.

the care of his daughter.--
(Lady Teazle sings without)
But here comes my helpmate! She
appears in great good humor. How
happy I should be if I could
tease her into loving me, though
but a little.

(Enter Lady Teazle)

Lady T.: Lud! Sir Peter, I hope you haven't
been quarreling with Maria? It is
not using me well to be ill
humored when I am not by.

Cross Right.
Chucks her under
chin.

Sir Peter: Ah, Lady Teazle, you might have
the power to make me good humored
at all times.

Lady T.: I am sure I wish I had; for I want
you to be in a charming sweet temper
at this moment. Do be good humored
now, and let me have two hundred
pounds, will you?

Grimaces--
front to audience.

Sir Peter: Two hundred pounds; what, an't
I to be in a good humor without
paying for it! But speak to me
thus, and i'faith there's nothing
I could refuse you. You shall
have it; but seal me a bond for
the repayment.

Gently.

Bend down and purse
lips to receive kiss.

Lady T.: Oh, no--there--my note of hand
will do as well.

Lady T. extends
her hand.

(Offering her hand)

Taking her hand.

Sir Peter: And you shall no longer reproach
me with not giving you an indepen-
dent settlement. I mean shortly to
surprise you; but shall we always
live thus, hey?

Lady T.: If you please, I'm sure I don't
care how soon we leave off
quarrelling, provided you'll own
you were tired first.

Glowingly.	Sir Peter:	Well--then let our future contest be, who shall be most obliging.
	Lady T.:	I assure you, Sir Peter, good nature becomes you. You look now as you did before we were married, when you used to walk with me under the elms, and tell me stories of what a gallant you were in your youth, and chuck me under the chin, you would: and ask me if I thought I could love an old fellow, who would deny me nothing--didn't you?
Take her hand. Start to stroll slowly Left.		
Pause.	Sir Peter:	Yes, yes, and you were as kind and attentive--
Strolling Left again.	Lady T.:	Ay, so I was, and would always take your part, when my acquaintance used to abuse you, and turn you into ridicule.
Pause, surprised, to audience.	Sir Peter:	Indeed!
	Lady T.:	Ay, and when my cousin Sophy has called you a stiff, peevish old bachelor, and laughed at me for thinking of marrying one who might be my father, I have always defended you, and said, I didn't think you so ugly by any means, and that you'd make a very good sort of a husband.
Pleased.		
	Sir Peter:	And you prophesied right; and we shall be the happiest couple--
	Lady T.:	And never differ again?
Moving closer to her.	Sir Peter:	No, never,--though at the same time, indeed, my dear Lady Teazle, you must watch your temper very seriously; for in all our little quarrels, my dear, if you recollect, my love, you always began first.
	Lady T.:	I beg your pardon, my dear Sir Peter indeed, you always gave the provocation.

Still pleasantly.	Sir Peter:	Now, see, my angel! take care--contradicting isn't the way to keep friends.
	Lady T.:	Then don't you begin it, my love!
Irritated on "There now--on" Gently.	Sir Peter:	There, now! you--you are going on. You don't perceive, my life, that you are just doing the very thing which you know always makes me very angry.
	Lady T.:	Nay, you know you will be angry without any reason, my dear--
Becoming irritated.	Sir Peter:	There! now you want to quarrel again!
	Lady T.:	No, I'm sure I don't: but, if you will be so peevish--
More irritated. cross Left.	Sir Peter:	There now! who begins first?
	Lady T.:	Why, you, to be sure. I said nothing--but there's no bearing your temper.
Becoming angry. Cross Right to her.	Sir Peter:	No, no, madam: the fault's in your own temper.
	Lady T.:	Ay, you are just what my cousin Sophy said you would be.
Angry.	Sir Peter:	Your cousin Sophy is a forward, impertinent gipsy.
	Lady T.:	You are a great bear, I am sure, to abuse my relations.
They both turn back to back.	Sir Peter:	Now may all the plagues of marriage be doubled on me, if ever I try to be friends with you any more!
	Lady T.:	So much the better.
Turning head to her.	Sir Peter:	No, no, madam; 'tis evident you never cared a pin for me, and I was a madman to marry you--a pert, rural coquette, that had refused

half the honest squires in the neighborhood!

Sir Peter grimaces.

Lady T.: And I am sure I was a fool to marry you--an old dangling bachelor, who was single at fifty, only because he never could meet with any one who would have him.

Turn head to her.

Sir Peter: Ay, ay, madam; but you were pleased enough to listen to me: you never had such an offer before.

Sir Peter grimaces on "broke his neck."

Lady T.: No, didn't I refuse Sir Tivy Terrier, who everybody said would have been a better match? For his estate is just as good as yours, and he has broke his neck since we have been married.

Slaps thigh.
Turn to her.
Cross up and around Lady T. slowly.

Sir Peter: I have done with you, madam! You are an unfeeling, ungrateful--but there's an end of everything. I believe you capable of everything that is bad. Yes, madam, I now believe the reports relative to you and Charles, madam. Yes, madam, you and Charles are, not without grounds--

Point finger at her.

Lady T.: Take care, Sir Peter! you had better not insinuate any such thing! I'll not be suspected without cause, I promise you.

Turn from her.

Sir Peter: Very well, madam! very well! a separate maintenance as soon as you please. Yes, madam, or a divorce! I'll make an example of myself for the benefit of all old bachelors. Let us separate, madam.

To audience.

Lady T.: Agreed! agreed! And now, my dear Sir Peter, we are of a mind once more, we may be the happiest couple, and never differ again, you know! (Laughs) Well, you are

Bow to her.

Peter is seething with anger.

going to be in a passion, I see,
and I shall only interrupt you--
so, bye! bye!

(Exit)

Move quickly to
apron center.

Sir Peter:

Plagues and tortures! can't I
make her angry either! Oh, I am
the most miserable fellow! But
I'll not hear her presuming to
keep her temper: no! she may
break my heart, but she shan't
keep her temper.

(Exit)

Shake finger at
audience.

Exit Left.

Act Three, Scene Two: Before Charles Surface's House.

Trip

Moses

Sir Oliver Surface

In this scene, Sir Oliver, posing as Mr. Premium, and Moses encounter Trip, the French valet to Charles Surface. Trip is indeed not like the average servant. He is dressed almost as any fop would be. His manners are those of the gentry, evidenced by the refined manner in which he takes snuff. Trip's willingness to put up his master's clothes as security for a loan he, Trip, wants to secure from Moses adds a comic touch which makes this role interesting and challenging to the actor assuming it.

Through the lavishness displayed by the servant Trip, Sir Oliver comes into actual contact with Charles' extravagance. After this brief encounter, all three exit to enter the house. Sir Oliver expresses his opinion of the encounter in his final aside:

If the man be a shadow of the master, this
is the temple of dissipation indeed!

Act Three, Scene Three: Another Room in Charles Surface's House.

Charles Surface
Careless
Sir Medley
Sir Harry Bumper
Trip
Sir Oliver Surface
Moses

The scene opens and discovered are Charles Surface and his friends engrossed in drinking and song. Trip enters and announces Moses and a Mr. Premium. Charles is delighted to see the man who is to lend him money. Sir Oliver (Premium) is somewhat bewildered at what he sees. The house has been divested of almost every moveable thing of value. In a very short time, Sir Oliver finds himself faced with great quantities of drink which he must consume to be sociable.

Soon, Charles' friends leave the room to play dice so that he may conduct his business with Mr. Premium. Sir Oliver learns that there is nothing left of the family property to serve as security for a loan, with the exception of the family paintings. Sir Oliver is livid at this prospect. He is convinced that Charles is indeed a lost soul.

The scene ends as Charles, Careless (who is to act as auctioneer), Moses (the appraiser), and Sir Oliver exit to enter the picture room of the house.

Act 1

House

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Act Four, Scenes One and Two: A Picture Gallery in Charles Surface's House.

Charles Surface
Sir Oliver Surface
Moses
Careless
Rowley
Trip

Charles, Careless, Sir Oliver, and Moses have entered and the auctioning of the portraits begins. One by one the ancestors are sold. At each individual sale, Sir Oliver becomes more enraged. Finally, after all the others have been sold, the portrait of Sir Oliver comes up for sale. To the amazement of Sir Oliver, Charles refuses to part with the picture of Sir Oliver:

No, hang it! I'll not part with poor Noll.
The old fellow has been very good to me, and,
egad, I'll keep his picture while I've room
to put it in.

This final piece of sentiment places Sir Oliver in a better frame of mind. He is now ready to forgive Charles everything.

Sir Oliver and Moses exit as Rowley enters. Charles asks Rowley to take the draft of money given him for the portraits, cash it, and take a hundred pounds of it to give to Mr. Stanley who is in distress. Charles exits and Sir Oliver re-enters.

When Rowley shows Sir Oliver the draft of money and tells him that Charles has commissioned him to give some of it to Stanley, Sir Oliver is then thoroughly convinced that Charles is at heart a truly charitable man. Sir Oliver and Rowley decide that it is time now for a visit to Joseph in the guise of Mr. Stanley, the poor relation.

Act Four, Scene Three: A Library in Joseph Surface's House.

Joseph Surface
Handy
Lady Teazle
Sir Peter Teazle
Charles Surface

Joseph Surface is awaiting the arrival of Lady Teazle in order to gain further control over her:

I have a difficult hand to play in this affair.
Lady Teazle has lately suspected my views on
Maria; but she must by no means be let into
the secret,--at least, till I have her more in
my power.

Lady Teazle enters and complains to Joseph that Sir Peter has become so ill-natured to her of late, and that she wishes that he would permit Maria to marry Charles so that he would no longer have suspicions of her.

Joseph very cleverly tries to convince Lady Teazle that she must sin in her behalf so that she may be conscious of deserving the scandalous stories about her and Charles. Lady Teazle, however, is not easily swayed to his way of thinking:

If I could be persuaded to do wrong, it would be by
Sir Peter's ill-usage sooner than your honorable logic,
after all.

Just at the point where Joseph is making great progress, Handy enters to announce Sir Peter. The announcement throws everyone into a state of panic.

Lady Teazle runs and hides behind the screen. Joseph has just time enough to place himself on the couch, take up a book, and start to read when Sir Peter enters.

Enter Right.
Cross up Left.
First line to
audience.

Sir Peter:

Ay, ever improving himself.
Mr. Surface, Mr. Surface--

Joseph:

Oh, my dear Sir Peter, I beg your pardon. (Gaping, throws away the book) I have been dozing over a stupid book. Well, I am much obliged to you for this call. You haven't been here, I believe, since I fitted up this room. Books, you know, are the only things I am a coxcomb in.

Sir Peter looks around
the room.

Sir Peter:

On "that's proper",
Point to screen.
Cross up to screen.

'Tis very neat indeed. Well, well, that's proper; and you can make your screen a source of knowledge--hung, I perceive, with maps.

Joseph:

Oh, yes, I find great use in that screen.

Sir Peter:

I dare say you must, certainly, when you want to find anything in a hurry.

Joseph:

(Aside) Ay, or to hide anything in a hurry either.

Becomes serious.
Indicating Handy.

Sir Peter:

Well, I have a little private business--

Joseph:

(To Handy) You need not stay.

Handy:

No, sir.
(Exit)

Joseph:

Won't you be seated, Sir Peter?

Cross down
Left, sit.

Sir Peter:

Well, now we are alone, there is a subject, my dear friend, on which I wish to unburden my mind to you--

Speech to audience,
matter of fact.

a point of the greatest moment to
my peace; in short, my good friend,
Lady Teazle's conduct of late has
made me very unhappy.

Joseph: Indeed! I am very sorry to hear it.

Surprised at his
own words.

Sir Peter: Yes, 'tis but too plain she has
not the least regard for me, but,
what's worse, I have pretty good
authority to suppose she has formed
an attachment to another.

Joseph: Indeed! you astonish me!

Increased
concern.

Sir Peter: Yes! and between ourselves, I
think I've discovered the person.

Joseph: How! you alarm me exceedingly.

Sighs.

Sir Peter: Ay, my dear friend, I know you
would sympathize with me!

Joseph: Yes, believe me, Sir Peter, such
a discovery would hurt me just
as much as it would you.

Comfortingly.

Sir Peter: I am convinced of it. Ah! it is
a happiness to have a friend whom
we can trust even with one's family
secrets. But have you no guess who
I mean?

Looks at Joseph.

Joseph: I haven't the most distant idea.
It can't be Sir Benjamin Backbite!

Sir Peter: Oh no! what say you to Charles?

Joseph: My brother! impossible!

Shakes his
head slowly.

Sir Peter: Oh, my dear friend, the goodness
of your own heart misleads you.
You judge others by yourself.

Joseph: Certainly, Sir Peter, the heart
that is conscious of its own
integrity is ever slow to credit
another's treachery.

Stress
"Principle."

Somewhat
sadly.

Sir Peter: True; but your brother has no sentiment--you never hear him talk so.

Joseph: Yet I can't but think Lady Teazle has herself too much principle.

Sir Peter: Ay; but what is principle against the flattery of a handsome, lively young fellow?

Joseph: That's very true.

Sir Peter: And then you know, the difference of our age makes it very improbable that she should have any great affection for me; and if she were to be frail, and I were to make it public, why the town would only laugh at me, the foolish old bachelor, who married a girl.

Joseph: That's true, to be sure--they would laugh.

Sir Peter: Laugh! ay, and make ballads, and paragraphs, and the devil knows what of me.

Joseph: No, you must never make it public.

Sir Peter: But then again--that the nephew of my old friend, Sir Oliver, should be the person to attempt such a wrong, hurts me more nearly.

Joseph: Ay, there's the point. When ingratitude bars the dart of injury, the wound has double danger in it.

Sir Peter: Ay--I, that was, in a manner, left his guardian: in whose house he had been so often entertained; who never in my life denied him--my advice!

Sir Peter is touched by Joseph's sentiment.	Joseph:	Oh, 'tis not to be credited! There may be a man capable of such baseness, to be sure; but, for my part, till you can give me positive proofs, I cannot but doubt it. However, if it should be proved on him, he is no longer a brother of mine--I disclaim kindred with him: for the man who can break the laws of hospitality, and tempt the wife of his friend, deserves to be branded as the pest of society.
Removes handkerchief and dabs eyes.	Sir Peter:	What a difference there is between you! What noble sentiments!
	Joseph:	Yet I cannot suspect Lady Teazle's honor.
To audience. This speech must not become saddened. The comic spirit must be maintained.	Sir Peter:	I am sure I wish to think well of her, and to remove all ground of quarrel between us. She has lately reproached me more than once with having made no settlement on her; and, in our last quarrel, she almost hinted that she should not break heart if I was dead. Now, as we seem to differ in our ideas of expense, I have resolved she shall have her own way, and be her own mistress in that respect for the future; and, if I were to die, she will find I have not been inattentive to her interest while living. Here, my friend, are the drafts of two deeds, which I wish to have your opinion on. By one, she will enjoy eight hundred a year independent while I live; and by the other, the bulk of my fortune at my death.
Take out will. Turn in chair to Joseph.	Joseph:	This conduct, Sir Peter, is indeed truly generous--(Aside) I wish it may not corrupt my pupil.
To audience.	Sir Peter:	Yes, I am determined she shall have no cause to complain, though

I would not have her acquainted with the latter instance of my affection yet a while.

Joseph: (Aside) Nor I, if I could help it.

Rises. Happier.
Cross Right to
Joseph.

Sir Peter: And now, my dear friend, if you please, we will talk over the situation of your hopes with Maria.

Joseph: (Softly) Oh, no, Sir Peter; another time, if you please.

Sir Peter: I am sensibly chagrined at the little progress you seem to make in her affections.

Joseph: (Softly) I beg you will not mention it. What are my disappointments when your happiness is in debate!
(Aside) 'Sdeath, I shall be ruined in every way!

Paying no
attention to
Joseph's words.

Sir Peter: And though you are averse to my acquainting Lady Teazle with your passion, I am sure she's not your enemy in the affair.

Joseph: Pray, Sir Peter, now oblige me. I am really too much affected by the subject we have been speaking of to bestow a thought on my own concerns. The man who is entrusted with his friend's distresses can never--

(Re-enter Handy)

Well, Handy?

Handy: Your brother, sir, is speaking to a gentleman in the street, and says he knows you are within.

Joseph: 'Sdeath, blockhead, I'm not within-- I'm out for the day.

Snap fingers.

Sir Peter: Stay--hold--a thought has struck me!--you shall be at home.

	Joseph:	Well, well, let him up. (Exit Handy) (Aside) He'll interrupt Sir Peter, however.
Cross to Joseph Take him by arm, cross down center.	Sir Peter:	Now, my good friend, oblige me, I entreat you. Before Charles comes, let me conceal myself somewhere, then do you tax him on the point we have been talking, and his answer may satisfy me at once.
	Joseph:	Oh, fie, Sir Peter! would you have me join in so mean a trick?--to entrap my brother too?
Looking around room for a place to hide.	Sir Peter:	Nay, you tell me you are sure he is innocent; if so, you do him the greatest service by giving him an opportunity to clear himself, and you will set my heart at rest. Come, you shall not refuse me: (Going up) here, behind the screen will be--
Cross up to screen. Stops abruptly. Looking at Joseph.		Hey! what the devil! I'll swear I saw a petticoat!
Joseph takes Sir Peter's arm. Takes him down center.	Joseph:	Ha! ha! ha! Well, this is ridiculous enough. I'll tell you, Sir Peter, though I hold a man of intrigue to be a most despicable character, yet you know, it does not follow that one is to be an absolute Joseph either! Hark'ee, 'tis a little French milliner, a silly rogue that plagues me; and having some character to lose, on your coming, sir, she ran behind the screen.
On "French milliner" Peter looks back at the screen, front again, smiles.		
Terrified.	Sir Peter:	Ah, a rogue--But, egad, she has overheard all I have been saying of my wife.
	Joseph:	Oh, 'twill never go any farther, you may depend upon it!
Cross to Left door.	Sir Peter:	No! then, faith, let her hear it out.--Here's a closet will do as well.
	Joseph:	Well, go in there.

To Joseph.
Goes in door.

Sir Peter: Sly rogue! sly rogue!
(Goes into the closet)

Joseph: A narrow escape, indeed! and a
curious situation I'm in, to
part man and wife in this manner.

Lady T.: (Peeping) Couldn't I steal off?

Joseph: Keep back, my angel!

Sticking his
head out.

Sir Peter: (Peeping) Joseph, be severe with him.

Joseph: Back, my dear friend!

Lady T.: (Peeping) Couldn't you lock
Sir Peter in?

Joseph: Be still, my life!

Sticking head
out again.

Sir Peter: (Peeping) You're sure the little
milliner won't blab?

Joseph: In, in, my dear Sir Peter!--
'Fore Gad, I wish I had a key
to the door.

(Enter Charles Surface)

Charles: Hello! brother, what has been the
matter? Your fellow would not let
me up at first. What! have you had
a moneylender or a wench with you?

Joseph: Neither, brother, I assure you.

Charles: But what has made Sir Peter steal
off? I thought he had been with
you.

Joseph: He was, brother; but hearing you
were coming, he did not choose to
stay.

Charles: What! was the old gentleman afraid
I wanted to borrow money of him!

Joseph: No, sir: but I am sorry to find,
Charles, you have lately given that
worthy man grounds for uneasiness.



Charles: Yes, they tell me I do that to a great many worthy men. But how so, pray?

Joseph: To be plain with you, brother, he thinks you are endeavoring to gain Lady Teazle's affections from him.

Charles: How, I? O Lud! not I, upon my word. --Ha! ha! ha! ha! so the old fellow has found out that he has got a young wife, has he?--or, what is worse, Lady Teazle has found out she has an old husband?

Joseph: This is no subject to jest on, brother. He who can laugh--

Charles: True, true, as you were going to say--then, seriously, I never had the least idea of what you charge me with, upon my honor.

Joseph: Well, it will give Sir Peter great satisfaction to hear this.
(Raising voice)

Sir Peter opens
door slightly
to listen.

Charles: To be sure, I once thought the lady seemed to have taken a fancy to me; but, upon my soul, I never gave her the least encouragement. Besides, you know my attachment to Maria.

Joseph: But sure, brother, even if Lady Teazle had betrayed the fondest partiality for you--

Charles: Why, look'ee, Joseph, I hope I shall never deliberately do a dishonorable action: but if a pretty woman was purposely to throw herself in my way--and that pretty woman married to a man old enough to be her father--

Joseph: Well!

Sir Peter
closes door
abruptly.

Charles: Why, I believe I should be obliged to borrow a little of your morality, that's all. But, brother, do you know now that you surprise me exceedingly, by naming me with Lady Teazle; for i'faith, I always understood you were her favorite.

Joseph: Oh, for shame, Charles! This retort is foolish.

Charles: Nay, I swear I have seen you exchange such significant glances--

Joseph: Nay, nay, sir, this is no jest.

Charles: Egad, I'm serious! Don't you remember one day, when I called here--

Joseph: Nay, pr'ythee, Charles--

Charles: And found you together--

Joseph: Zounds, sir, I insist--

Charles: And another time, when your servant--

Joseph: Brother, brother, a word with you!
(Aside) Gad, I must stop him.

Charles: Informed, I say, that--

Joseph: Hush! I beg your pardon, but Sir Peter has overheard all we have been saying. I knew you would clear yourself, or I should not have consented.

Charles: How, Sir Peter! Where is he?

Joseph: Softly, there! (Points to closet.)

Charles: Oh, 'fore Heaven, I'll have him out. Sir Peter, come forth!

Joseph: No, no--

Takes Peter by
the arm. Swings
him around so that
he stops above him.

Happily.

Charles: I say, Sir Peter, come into court.
(Pulls in Sir Peter) What! my old
guardian!--What!--turn inquisitor,
and take evidence incognito? Oh,
fie! Oh, fie!

Sir Peter: Give me your hand, Charles--I
believe I have suspected you
wrongfully; but you mustn't be
angry with Joseph--'twas my plan!

Charles: Indeed!

Sir Peter: Bit I acquit you. I promise you
I don't think near so ill of you
as I did. What I have heard has
given me great satisfaction.

Charles: Egad, then 'twas lucky you didn't
hear any more. Wasn't it, Joseph?

Sir Peter: Ah! you would have retorted on him.

Charles: Ay, ay, that was a joke.

Sir Peter: Yes, yes, I know his honor too well.

Charles: But you might as well have suspected
him for all that. Mightn't he,
Joseph?

Sir Peter: Well, well, I believe you.

Joseph: (Aside) Would they were both out
of the room!

Sir Peter: And in future, perhaps, we may not
be such strangers.

(Re-enter Handy and whispers to
Joseph)

Handy: Lady Sneerwell is below, and says
she will come up.

Joseph: Gentlemen, I beg pardon--I must
wait on you downstairs; here's a
person come on particular business.

Pats him on
back.

Charles: Well, you can see him in another room. Sir Peter and I have not met in a long time, and I have something to say to him.

Joseph: (Aside) They must not be left together. I'll send Lady Sneerwell away, and return directly. (To Sir Peter) Sir Peter, not a word of the French milliner.

Cross Left.
Cross back to
Charles.

Sir Peter: (To Joseph) I! not for the world! (Exit Joseph) Ah, Charles, if you associated more with your brother, one might indeed hope for your reformation. He is a man of sentiment. Well, there is nothing in the world so noble as a man of sentiment.

Charles: Psha! he is too moral by half; and so apprehensive of his good name, as he calls it, that I suppose he would as soon let a priest into his house as a wench.

Chuckling.

Sir Peter: No, no,--come, come,--you wrong him. No, no, Joseph is no rake, but he is no such saint either, in that respect.--
(Aside) I have a great mind to tell him--we should have such a laugh at Joseph.

Charles: Oh, hang him! he's a tedious recluse, a young hermit!

Sir Peter: Hark'ee--you must not abuse him: he may chance to hear of it again, I promise you.

Charles: Why, you won't tell him?

Takes Charles
down Left.

Sir Peter: No--but--this way.--
(Aside) Egad, I'll tell him. Hark'ee, have you a mind to have a good laugh at Joseph?

Charles: I should like it of all things.

Almost in a
whisper.

Sir Peter: Then, i'faith, we will! I'll be
quit with him for discovering me.
(Whispers) He had a girl with him
when I called.

Charles: What! Joseph? you jest.

Sir Peter: Hush!--a little French milliner--
and the best of the jest is--she's
in the room now.

Charles: The devil she is!

Sir Peter: Hush! I tell you. (Points to the
screen).

Charles: Behind the screen! Odds life!
let's unveil her!

Sir Peter: No, no, he's coming back!--you
shan't, indeed!

Charles: Oh, egad, we'll have a peep at
the little milliner!

Sir Peter: Not for the world!--Joseph will
never forgive me.

Charles: I'll stand by you--
(Re-enter Joseph Surface)

Sir Peter: Odds, here he is!
(Charles throws down the screen)

Charles: Lady Teazle, by all that's
wonderful!

Sir Peter: Lady Teazle, by all that's
damnable!

Charles: Sir Peter, this is one of the
smartest French milliners I ever
saw. Egad, you seem all to have
been diverting yourselves here at
hide and seek, and I don't see who
is out of the secret. Shall I beg
your ladyship to inform me? Not

Charles starts
to go to screen.
Sir Peter catches
him and drags him
back.

Charles goes
again.

Peter drags him
back.

Charles goes
to screen.

Holding his head.

Horrified!
Frozen.

Sir Peter stands frozen, horrified at this incredible situation.

a word!--Brother, will you be pleased to explain this matter? What, is Morality dumb too? --Sir Peter, though I found you in the dark, perhaps you are not so now! All mute! Well--though I can make nothing of the affair, I suppose you perfectly understand one another; so I'll leave you to yourselves. (Going) Brother, I'm sorry to find you have given that worthy man grounds for so much uneasiness.

Sir Peter grimaces. Turns front to audience.

--Sir Peter! there's nothing in the world so noble as a man of sentiment!
(Exit)

Joseph: (Haltingly) Sir Peter--notwithstanding--I confess--that appearances are against me--if you will afford me your patience--I make no doubt--but I shall explain everything to your satisfaction.

To audience.

Sir Peter: If you please, sir.

Sir Peter looks confused at this muddled explanation.

Joseph: The fact is, sir, that Lady Teazle, knowing my pretensions to your ward Maria--I say, sir, Lady Teazle, being apprehensive of the jealousy of your temper--and knowing my friendship to the family--she, sir, I say--called here--in order that--I might explain these pretensions--but on your coming--she withdrew--and this, you may depend on it, is the whole truth of the matter.

Point to Lady T.

Sir Peter: A very clear account, upon my word; and I dare swear the lady will vouch for every article of it.

Turn to her.

Lady Teazle: For not one word of it, Sir Peter!

Sir Peter: How! don't you think it worth while to agree in the lie?

Lady T.: There is not one syllable of truth in what that gentleman has told you.

Sir Peter: I believe you, upon my soul, ma'am!

Joseph: (To Lady Teazle) 'Sdeath, madam, will you betray me?

Lady T.: Good Mr. Hypocrite, by your leave, I'll speak for myself.

To Joseph. Sir Peter: Ay, let her alone, sir: you'll find she'll make out a better story than you, without prompting.

Lady T.: Hear me, Sir Peter!--I came here on no matter relating to your ward, and even ignorant of this gentleman's pretensions to her. But I came, seduced by his insidious arguments, at least to listen to his pretended passion, if not to sacrifice your honor to his baseness.

To audience. Sir Peter: Now, I believe, the truth is coming, indeed!

Joseph: The woman's mad!

Lady T.: No, sir; she has recovered her senses, and your own arts have furnished her with the means. Sir Peter, I do not expect you to credit me--but the tenderness you expressed for me, when I am sure you could not think I was a witness to it, has penetrated so to my heart, that had I left the place without the shame of this discovery, my future life should have spoken the sincerity of my gratitude. As for that smooth-tongued hypocrite, who would have seduced the wife of his too credulous friend, while he affected honorable addresses to his ward--I behold him now in a light so truly despicable, that I shall never again respect myself for having listened to him.

(Exit)

Sir Peter has,
for a moment,
a somewhat hopeful
look.

Sternly.
Exit Right.

Joseph: Notwithstanding all this, Sir
Peter, Heaven knows--

Sir Peter: That you are a villain! and so
I leave you to your conscience.
 (Exit)

Joseph: (Following) You are too rash,
Sir Peter; you shall hear me.
The man who shuts out conviction
by refusing to--
 (Exit)

11

Act Five, Scene One: The Library in Joseph Surface's House.

Joseph Surface
Handy
Sir Oliver Surface
Rowley

As a result of Sir Peter's discovering Lady Teazle, Joseph is in a state of frenzied despair. Handy now informs Joseph that a Mr. Stanley is waiting to see him. Joseph, who at this point feels that he would not be able to "bestow even a benevolent sentiment," exits as Sir Oliver and Rowley enter.

"What! does he avoid us?" says Sir Oliver. Rowley assures him that Joseph's nerves are perhaps a bit on edge at the moment, and that the sight of a poor relation may be too much for him. Rowley and Sir Oliver arrange to meet at Sir Peter's after the interview with Joseph, and Rowley exits as Joseph enters.

In the course of the interview between Joseph and Sir Oliver, the latter is enraged at the things he hears. Not only does Joseph pretend not to be able to offer assistance to Sir Oliver, who is posing as Mr. Stanley, but he tells him that his uncle (Sir Oliver) is not a generous man: in fact, he is plainly a "tightwad." Sir Oliver, realizing that he has given overly much to Joseph, exhibits a masterpiece of control over his rage. He leaves the scene, exclaiming in his final aside, "Charles, you are my heir!"

Rowley enters to tell Joseph that Sir Oliver has arrived in town and means shortly to meet both him and his brother. In view of the

recent events and his treatment of Mr. Stanley, Joseph is completely vexed, and after Rowley exits, ends the scene with:

Certainly his coming just at this time is the cruellest piece of ill-fortune.

Act Five, Scene Two: A Room in Sir Peter Teazle's House.

Busy

Mrs. Candour

Sir Benjamin Backbite

Lady Sneerwell

Crabtree

Sir Oliver Surface

Sir Peter Teazle

Rowley

Lady Teazle

The news of the discovery of Lady Teazle has spread to the "faculty" of The School for Scandal. To satisfy their insatiable curiosity they have appeared at Sir Peter's house. They know that Lady Teazle was discovered, but by whom, they are not certain. There is a great deal of speculation as to whether it was Charles or Joseph. Sir Benjamin eloquently describes the fabricated duel between Sir Peter and Joseph in which Sir Peter was supposedly run through with a small-sword. Crabtree enters at this point to contradict his nephew and to assure the party that it was Charles, not Joseph, with whom Sir Peter fought, and Sir Peter is now suffering a bullet lodged in his thorax.

Sir Oliver Surface enters, only to be mistaken by the confused "faculty" as a physician in attendance to Sir Peter. Sir Oliver, somewhat bewildered by the confusion, is surprised that Sir Peter is in such critical condition. The group is brought back to reality, however, as Sir Peter enters the room.

(Enter Sir Peter Teazle)

Sir Oliver: Odds heart, Sir Peter! you are come
in good time, I promise you; for
we had just given you over!

Enter Left. Pauses to look at this gathering, surprised.	Sir Ben.:	(To Crabtree) Egad, uncle, this is the most sudden recovery!
	Sir Oliver:	Why, man! what do you do out of bed with a small-sword through your body, and a bullet lodged in your thorax?
Confused.	Sir Peter:	A small-sword and a bullet?
	Sir Oliver:	Ay; these gentlemen would have killed you without law or physic, and wanted to dub me a doctor, to make me an accomplice.
Cross to Sir Oliver.	Sir Peter:	Why, what is all this?
	Sir Ben.:	We rejoice, Sir Peter, that the story of the duel is not true, and are sincerely sorry for your other misfortune.
To audience.	Sir Peter:	(Aside) So, so; all over the town already.
	Crab.:	Though, Sir Peter, you were cer- tainly vastly to blame to marry at your years.
Turn to Crab. in anger.	Sir Peter:	Sir, what business is that of yours?
	Mrs. Can.:	Though, indeed, as Sir Peter made so good a husband, he's very much to be pitied.
Rising anger.	Sir Peter:	Plague on your pity, ma'am! I desire none of it.
	Sir Ben.:	However, Sir Peter, you must not mind the laughing and jests you will meet with on the occasion.
Livid.	Sir Peter:	Sir, sir! I desire to be master in my own house.
	Crab.:	'Tis no uncommon case, that's one comfort.

Seething.

Sir Peter: I insist on being left to myself; without ceremony, I insist on your leaving my house directly!

Mrs. Can.: Well, well, we are going; and depend on't, we'll make the best report of it we can.
(Exit)

Sir Peter: Leave my house!

Sir Ben.: And how patiently you bear it.
(Exit)

Cross to
Right door.
Return center
to Oliver.

Sir Peter: Fiends! vipers! furies! Oh! that their own venom would choke them!

Sir Oliver: They are provoking indeed, Sir Peter.

(Enter Rowley)

Rowley: I heard high words: what has ruffled you, sir?

Pace up.
Irritated.

Sir Peter: Psha! What signifies asking? Do I ever pass a day without my vexations?

Rowley: Well, I'm not inquisitive.

Sir Oliver: Well, Sir Peter, I have seen both my nephews in the manner we proposed.

Turn to
Oliver.

Sir Peter: A precious couple they are!

Rowley: Yes, and Sir Oliver is convinced that your judgment was right, Sir Peter.

Sir Oliver: Yes, I find Joseph is indeed the man, after all.

Rowley: Ay, as Sir Peter says, he is a man of sentiment.

Sir Peter becomes increasingly irritated.	Sir Oliver:	And acts up to the sentiments he professes.
	Rowley:	It is certainly edification to hear him talk.
	Sir Oliver:	Oh, he's a model for the young men of the age! But how's this, Sir Peter? you don't join us in your friend Joseph's praise, as I expected.
To Oliver.	Sir Peter:	Sir Oliver, we live in a damned wicked world, and the fewer we praise, the better.
	Rowley:	What! do you say so, Sir Peter, who were never mistaken in your life?
Cross down Left.	Sir Peter:	Psha! plague on you both! I see by your sneering you have heard the whole affair. I shall go mad among you!
	Rowley:	Then to fret you no longer, Sir Peter, we are indeed acquainted with it all.
Turn to Rowley.	Sir Peter:	And does Sir Oliver know all this?
	Sir Oliver:	Every circumstance.
Almost fearful.	Sir Peter:	What, of the closet and the screen, hey?
	Sir Oliver:	Yes, yes, and the little French milliner. Oh, I have been vastly diverted with the story! ha! ha! ha!
Turn to audience.	Sir Peter:	'Twas very pleasant.
	Sir Oliver:	I never laughed more in my life, I assure you: ha! ha! ha!
Sarcastically imitating their laughter.	Sir Peter:	Oh vastly diverting! ha! ha! ha!

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	Rowley:	To be sure, Joseph with his sentiments! ha! ha! ha!
	Sir Peter:	Yes, his sentiments! ha! ha! ha! Hypocritical villain!
	Sir Oliver:	Ay, and that rogue Charles to pull Sir Peter out of the closet: ha! ha! ha!
	Sir Peter:	Ha! ha! 'Twas devilish entertaining, to be sure!
	Sir Oliver:	Ha! ha! ha! Egad, Peter, I should like to have seen your face when the screen was thrown down: Ha! ha!
	Sir Peter:	Yes, my face when the screen was thrown down: ha! ha! ha! Oh, I must never show my head again!
Hold head.		
	Sir Oliver:	But come, come, it isn't fair to laugh at you neither, my old friend; though, upon my soul, I can't help it.
Turn to Oliver. Sarcastically.	Sir Peter:	Oh, pray, don't restrain your mirth on my account: it does not hurt me at all! I laugh at the whole affair myself. Yes, yes, I think being a standing jest for all one's acquaintance a very happy situation. Oh, yes, and then of a morning to read the paragraphs about Mr. S--, Lady T--, and Sir P--, will be so entertaining!
To audience.		
Mime reading paper.		
	Rowley:	Without affectation, Sir Peter, you may despise the ridicule of fools.
		(Lady Teazle comes to the door-way, turns, and leaves again.)
Sir Peter paces, irritated.		But I see Lady Teazle going towards the next room; I am sure you must desire a reconciliation as earnestly as she does.

	Sir Oliver:	Perhaps my being here prevents her coming to you. Well, I'll leave honest Rowley to mediate between you; but he must bring you all presently to Mr. Surface's, where I am now returning, if not to reclaim a libertine, at least to expose hypocrisy.
Turn to Oliver, pointing finger at him.	Sir Peter:	I'll be present at your discovering yourself there with all my heart; though 'tis a vile unlucky place for discoveries. (Exit Sir Oliver)
	Rowley:	We'll follow.
Looking through Left door.	Sir Peter:	She is not coming here, you see, Rowley.
	Rowley:	No, but she has left the door of that room open, you perceive. See, she is in tears.
Back to Rowley, facing Left door.	Sir Peter:	Certainly a little mortification appears very becoming in a wife. Don't you think it will do her good to let her pine a little?
	Rowley:	Oh, this is ungenerous in you!
Turn to Rowley.	Sir Peter:	Well, I know not what to think. You remember the letter I found of hers evidently intended for Charles!
	Rowley:	A mere forgery, Sir Peter! laid in your way on purpose. This is one of the points which I intend Snake shall give you conviction of.
Turn to Left door. Start to go.	Sir Peter:	I wish I were once satisfied of that. She looks this way. What a remarkably elegant turn of the head she has. Rowley, I'll go to her.
	Rowley:	Certainly.

Pause, turn to
Rowley.

Sir Peter: Though, when it is known that we
are reconciled, people will laugh
at me ten times more.

Rowley: Let them laugh, and retort their
malice only by showing them you
are happy in spite of it.

Snap fingers.

Sir Peter: I'faith, so I will! and, if I'm
not mistaken, we may yet be the
happiest couple in the country.

Rowley: Nay, Sir Peter, he who once lays
aside suspicion--

Wide-eyed,
almost in anger.

Sir Peter: Hold, Master Rowley! if you have any
regard for me, never let me hear you
utter anything like a sentiment: I
have had enough of them to serve me
the rest of my life.

Exit Left.

(They exit)

Act Five, Scene Three: The Library in Joseph Surface's House.

Joseph Surface
Lady Sneerwell
Sir Oliver Surface
Charles Surface
Sir Peter Teazle
Lady Teazle
Maria
Rowley
Snake

As the scene opens, Lady Sneerwell is chastising Joseph for a blunderer. He has not only ruined the relationship between him and Sir Peter, but has cleared the way for Charles to pursue Maria. Lady Sneerwell is extremely irritated at this, since she has, herself, designs on Charles.

Snake, now, is their last resort. Both Joseph and Lady Sneerwell are relying upon letters forged by Snake to intimidate Charles and Lady Teazle.

The bell rings, announcing a visitor whom Joseph thinks will be Sir Oliver, and Lady Sneerwell retires to another room. Sir Oliver enters, and Joseph, who still believes him to be Mr. Stanley, anxiously tries to persuade him to leave. As the persuasion is in progress, Charles enters. He is surprised to see Sir Oliver, whom he believes to be Mr. Premium. Both brothers try their best to persuade their visitor to leave, but to no avail. They finally are forced to resort to physical ejection, and, as they are doing this, Sir Peter, Lady Teazle, Maria, and Rowley enter.

Enter Right.
 Sir Peter in lead.
 Cross in to center.
 Astonished.

Sir Peter: My old friend, Sir Oliver--hey!
 What in the name of wonder!--
 here are dutiful nephews--assault
 their uncle at his first visit!

Lady T.: Indeed, Sir Oliver, 'twas well
 we came in to rescue you.

Rowley: Truly it was; for I perceive,
 Sir Oliver, the character of old
 Stanley was no protection to you.

Sir Oliver: Nor of Premium either: the neces-
 sities of the former could not
 extort a shilling from that bene-
 volent gentleman; and with the other
 I stood a chance of faring worse
 than my ancestors, and being knocked
 down without being bid for.

Joseph: Charles!

Charles: Joseph!

Joseph: 'Tis now complete!

Charles: Very.

Sir Peter
 looks scornful.

Sir Oliver: Sir Peter, my friend, and Rowley
 too--look on that elder nephew of
 mine. You know what he has already
 received from my bounty; and you
 also know how gladly I would have
 regarded half my fortune as held in
 trust for him? Judge, then, my
 disappointment in discovering him
 to be destitute of truth, charity,
 and gratitude!

Sir Peter: Sir Oliver, I should be more sur-
 prised at this declaratinn, if
 I had not myself found him to be
 mean, treacherous, and hypocritical.

Lady T.: And if the gentleman pleads not
 guilty to these, pray let him call
 me to his character.

Take Lady T. and
Maria up center.

Sir Peter,
Lady T., and
Maria observe
this scene from
up center.

Sir Peter: Then, I believe, we need add no more; if he knows himself, he will consider it as the most perfect punishment that he is known to the world.

Charles: (Aside) If they talk this way to Honesty, what will they say to me, by-and-by?

(Sir Peter, Lady Teazle, and Maria retire).

Sir Oliver: As for that prodigal, his brother, there--

Charles: (Aside) Ay, now comes my turn: the damned family pictures will ruin me!

Joseph: Sir Oliver--uncle, will you honor me with a hearing?

Charles: (Aside) Now, if Joseph would make one of his long speeches, I might recollect myself a little.

Sir Oliver: (To Joseph) I suppose you would undertake to justify yourself?

Joseph: I trust I could.

Sir Oliver: (To Charles) Well, sir!--and you could justify yourself, too, I suppose?

Charles: Not that I know of, Sir Oliver.

Sir Oliver: What!--Little Premium has been let too much into the secret, I suppose?

Charles: True, sir; but they were family secrets, and should not be mentioned again, you know.

Rowley: Come, Sir Oliver, I know you cannot speak of Charles' follies with anger.

Sir Oliver: Odd's heart, no more I can; nor with gravity either. Sir Peter, do you know the rogue bargained with me for all his ancestors; sold me judges and generals by the foot, and maiden aunts as cheap as broken china.

Charles: To be sure, Sir Oliver, I did make a little free with the family canvas, that's the truth on't. My ancestors may rise in judgment against me, there's no denying it; but believe me sincere when I tell you--and upon my soul I would not say so if I was not--that if I do not appear mortified at the exposure of my follies, it is because I feel at this moment the warmest satisfaction at seeing you, my liberal benefactor.

Sir Oliver: Charles, I believe you. Give me your hand again: the ill-looking fellow in the fuzzy wig has made your peace.

Charles: Then, sir, my gratitude to the original is still increased.

Lady T.: (Advancing) Yet, I believe, Sir Oliver, here is one whom Charles is still more anxious to be reconciled to.
(Pointing to Maria)

Sir Oliver: Oh, I have heard of his attachment there; and, with the young lady's pardon, if I construe right--that blush--

Coming down
center.

Sir Peter: Well, child speak your sentiments.

Maria: Sir, I have little to say, but that I shall rejoice to hear that he is happy; for me, whatever claim I had to his attention, I willingly resign to one who has a better title.

Charles: How, Maria!

Hands on hips. Sir Peter: Heyday! what's the mystery now? While he appeared an incorrigible rake, you would give your hand to no one else; and now that he is likely to reform I'll warrant you won't have him.

Maria: His own heart and Lady Sneerwell know the cause.

Charles: Lady Sneerwell!

Joseph: Brother, it is with great concern I am obliged to speak on this point, but my regard to justice compels me, and Lady Sneerwell's injuries can no longer be concealed.
(Opens the door)
(Re-enter Lady Sneerwell)

Sir Peter is surprised.
To audience. Sir Peter: So! another French milliner! Egad, he has one in every room of the house, I suppose!

Lady Sneer.: Ungrateful Charles! Well may you be surprised, and feel for the indelicate situation your perfidy has forced me into.

Charles: Pray, uncle, is this another plot of yours? for, as I have life, I don't understand it.

Joseph: I believe, sir, there is but the evidence of one person more necessary to make it extremely clear.

Turn to Rowley. Sir Peter: And that person, I imagine, is Mr. Snake.--Rowley, you were perfectly right to bring him with us and pray let him appear.

Rowley: Walk in, Mr. Snake.
(Enter Snake)
I thought his testimony might be wanted; however, it happens

unluckily, that he comes to confront Lady Sneerwell, not to support her.

Lady Sneer.: A Villain! Treacherous to me at last! Speak, fellow, have you too conspired against me?

Snake: I beg your ladyship ten thousand pardons: you paid me extremely liberally for the lie in question; but I unfortunately have been offered double to speak the truth.

Lady Sneer.: (Going) The torments of shame and disappointment on you all!

Lady T.: Hold, Lady Sneerwell--before you go, let me thank you for the trouble you and that gentleman have taken in writing letters from me to Charles, and answering them yourself; and let me also request you to make my respects to the scandalous college, of which you are president, and inform them that Lady Teazle, master of arts, begs leave to return the diploma they granted her, as she leaves off practice, and kills characters no longer.

Sir Peter is
delighted.

Lady Sneer.: You too, madam!--provoking--insolent! May your husband live fifty years longer!
(Exit)

Wide-eyed.

Sir Peter: Oons! what a fury!

Lady T.: A malicious creature, indeed!

Scornfully to
Lady T.

Sir Peter: What! not for her last wish?

Lady T.: Oh, no!

Sir Oliver: (To Joseph) Well, sir, and what have you to say now?

Joseph: Sir, I am confounded, to find that Lady Sneerwell could be guilty of bribing Mr. Snake in this manner, to impose on us all, that I know not what to say: however, lest her revengeful spirit should prompt her to injure my brother, I had certainly better follow her directly.
(Exit)

Hand on hips.
Sarcastically.

Sir Peter: Moral to the last drop!

Sir Oliver: Ay, and marry her, Joseph, if you can. Oil and vinegar!--egad, you'll do very well together.

Rowley: I believe we have no more occasion for Mr. Snake at present?

Snake: Before I go, I beg pardon once for all, for whatever uneasiness I have been the humble instrument of causing the parties present.

Sir Peter: Well, well, you have made atonement by a good deed at last.

Snake: But I must request of the company, that it shall never be known.

Surprised.

Sir Peter: Hey! what the plague! Are you ashamed of having done a right thing once in your life?

Snake: Ah, sir, consider--I live by the badness of my character; and, if it were once known that I had been betrayed into an honest action, I should lose every friend I have in the world.

Sir Oliver: Well, well,--we'll not disgrace you by saying anything in your praise, never fear.
(Exit Snake)

Chuckling.

Sir Peter: There's a precious rogue!

Lady T.: See, Sir Oliver, there needs no persuasion now to reconcile your nephew and Maria.

Sir Oliver: Ay, ay, that's as it should be, and, egad, we'll have the wedding tomorrow morning.

Charles: Thank you, dear uncle.

Sir Peter: What, you rogue! don't you ask the girl's consent first?

Charles: Oh, I have done that a long time--a minute ago--and she has looked yes.

Maria: For shame, Charles!--I protest, Sir Peter, there has not been a word--

Sir Oliver: Well, then, the fewer the better: may your love for each other never know abatement.

Sir Peter: And may you live as happily together as Lady Teazle and I--intend to do!

Charles: Rowley, my old friend, I am sure you congratulate me; and I suspect that I owe you much.

Sir Oliver: You do, indeed, Charles.

Rowley: Deserve to be happy--and you over-repay me.

Sir Peter: Ay, honest Rowley always said you would reform.

Charles: Why, as to reforming, Sir Peter, I'll make no promises, and that I take to be a proof that I intend to set about it. (Taking Maria by the hand) But here shall be my monitor--my gentle guide.--Ah! can I leave the virtuous path those eyes illumine?

Turn to Lady T.

To Rowley.

Sir Peter: Though thou shouldst wave thy
 beauty's away,
Thou still must rule, since
 we'll obey:
A Fugitive from Folly view,
No refuge near but Love and you:
 (To audience)
You can, indeed, each fear remove,
For Scandal dies, if you approve.

The last two lines
to the audience.
All bow.

(Curtain)

A Character Analysis of Sir Peter Teazle

The analysis of Sir Peter Teazle was approached from several angles: a study of the script to determine character, research into contemporary history to analyze Sir Peter's counterpart in actual life, and the use of a formula for character analysis established by Lajos Egri in his book The Art of Dramatic Writing.¹ A thorough analysis requires these avenues of approach, especially when dealing with a character found in an eighteenth-century setting in which customs, manners, and everyday living conditions differed from those of today.

When analyzing the script to determine character, the actor should take the following points into consideration: (1) the character's lines about himself, (2) what the character does, and (3) what other characters say about him. In addition to these factors, the actor should determine where the character comes from and what he has been doing.

The Script Analysis of Sir Peter Teazle

In Act One, Scene One, Sir Peter is mentioned as a man who is disposed toward sentiment. Joseph Surface intends to use this disposition to advance his own aims. Sir Peter has been hoodwinked by the false Joseph.

In this first scene, where Sir Peter and Lady Teazle's marital difficulties are mentioned, Joseph, whose real interests lie in Maria, makes a pretence of love for Lady Teazle to clear the path for his

¹ Lajos Egri, The Art of Dramatic Writing (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1946), pp. 36-37.

advances to Maria. This deception proves not only a painful experience for Lady Teazle later in the play, but serves also to increase the dislike Sir Peter will eventually have for Joseph when the truth of his character is revealed.

Act One, Scene Two, Sir Peter's opening soliloquy, tells a good deal about himself:

When an old bachelor marries a young wife, what is he to expect? 'Tis now six months since Lady Teazle made me--the happiest of men--and I have been the most miserable dog ever since!

Why has Sir Peter's outlook changed? The soliloquy further states that he has married a girl from the country whose tastes were simple, but since she has come to the city, her newly-acquired habits of extravagance have been a great disillusionment to Sir Peter. Further, not only the extravagance of his young wife causes Sir Peter concern, but the effect that the extravagance has upon Sir Peter's friends and acquaintances is disheartening. He states: "I am sneered at by all my acquaintance, and paragraphed in the newspapers." Yet, out of this tirade comes one significant fact--Sir Peter loves his young, foolish wife, in spite of her follies.

Rowley, the old family servant of the Surfaces, now enters the scene. Through his long years of good and faithful service, he has become a friend of Sir Peter and is no longer regarded as a servant, but more as a man of wisdom and trust.

Throughout the dialogue Sir Peter proves to be a stubborn individual. He cannot see a possibility that his marital difficulties

may, in part, be laid to his own inability to yield a point. "The fault is entirely here," he says, and, "in all our disputes, she is always in the wrong!" Sir Peter continually places the blame for his marital difficulties upon outside forces, completely divorcing himself from blame. Lady Teazle's faults, then, lie in her own proclivity for folly and in her relationship with the scandalous "faculty."

Rowley, however, sees this frailty in Sir Peter's character and has obviously differed with him in the past in his impressions of people. Rowley says: "You know, Sir Peter, I have always taken the liberty to differ with you on the subject of these two young gentlemen." Sir Peter, again exercising his stubbornness, tells Rowley that he is wrong. "Joseph is indeed a model for the young men of the age. He is a man of sentiment, and acts up to the sentiments he professes."

Sir Peter is both delightfully surprised and apprehensive at the news of Sir Oliver's return to England. He is delighted, because he and Sir Oliver have been friends since childhood, and apprehensive because he feels that since he and Sir Oliver had always maintained a disdainful attitude toward marriage, Sir Oliver would now think that Sir Peter has displayed a weakness in his character by becoming married. However, there is nothing Sir Peter can do to hide this fact. The only hope he has is that Sir Oliver will not discover that their married life has been somewhat of a turmoil, for, as he says: "I should never be able to stand Noll's jokes."

Thus far, Sir Peter's character has shown him to be disposed toward sentiment; he has been easily duped by Joseph and his sentiment; he has

a somewhat self-pitying attitude; he loves his wife; he respects the fine character of Rowley, but does not respect his opinions on Lady Teazle, Joseph, and Charles; he is stubborn; and in an effort to guard his ego, he must make a pretense to his friend, Sir Oliver.

In Act Two, Scene One, Sir Peter and Lady Teazle have been wrangling and are still doing so when they enter together. Their argument only serves to re-affirm that Sir Peter is furious at Lady Teazle's extravagances, but his stubbornness does not permit him to give an inch in the argument. Here, in the final soliloquy, a new side of Sir Peter is revealed. The impression is given that perhaps Sir Peter secretly, inwardly, gets some enjoyment from his wrangling. He says:

Well, though I can't make her love me, there is great satisfaction in quarreling with her; and I think she never appears to such an advantage as when she is doing everything in her power to plague me.

Act Two, Scene Two, serves to re-establish the fact that Sir Peter is an enemy to scandal, and for this reason is disliked by the "faculty." The Joseph-Lady Teazle scene serves to increase the folly of Lady Teazle, thus indirectly affecting Sir Peter.

In Act Two, Scene Three, the actor learns that Sir Peter's sentimentality is not shared by his friend Sir Oliver. Sir Peter's refusal to yield comes to the fore again:

Rowley: And Sir Peter shall own for once he has been mistaken.

Sir Peter: Oh, my life on Joseph's honor!

Act Three, Scene One, displays Sir Peter's rascality in devising the scheme whereby Sir Oliver may masquerade as Premium and Stanley to discover the merits of his nephews.

Sir Peter's intolerance becomes evident in his quarrel with Maria. When Maria refuses to accept a man whom she does not like, but whom Sir Peter prefers, the result is anger in Sir Peter. Again, to him, the fault does not lie in his own stubbornness, but in that of Maria.

The entrance of Lady Teazle and the argument that ensues brings out Sir Peter's stubbornness again in refusing to yield on any point. Here, Sir Peter's jealousy of Charles is made known.

Sir Peter's jealousy of Charles is again displayed in Act Four, Scene Three. His blind belief in the goodness of Joseph's character permits him to accept the idea that there is nothing wrong in the fact that Joseph was entertaining a "French milliner" prior to Sir Peter's entrance. What he would condemn in others, is permissible in Joseph. He would even ask Joseph to stoop to deception to prove his point regarding Charles. After Lady Teazle is discovered, only one jolt was necessary to bring about a complete reversal in Sir Peter's feelings toward Joseph. Prior to the discovery, Sir Peter had the utmost faith in the goodness of Joseph's character. He had become, to Sir Peter, the epitome of honor. Now, as the screen tumbled, the entire illusion of Joseph came crashing about Sir Peter's head, and, for the first time, he sees Joseph in his true light.

Sir Oliver's impression of Joseph as an untruthful and uncharitable nephew in Act Five, Scene One, will serve, in later scenes, to further the distaste Sir Peter now has for Joseph.

Act Five, Scene Two, shows the embarrassment which Sir Peter feels at being confronted with the events of the screen scene. Sir Peter's

ability to change his mood quickly is shown at the end of the scene. Prior to the end of the scene, Sir Peter has been in a raging temper. He is extremely embarrassed that Sir Oliver has heard of his humiliating experience at Joseph's house. Yet, as soon as Sir Oliver leaves, Sir Peter becomes light-hearted and almost kittenish at the prospect of making amends to Lady Teazle.

In this scene, Sir Peter no longer shows his high regard for sentiment. His experience with Joseph has taught him a lesson. He cautions Rowley:

Hold, Master Rowley! if you have any regard for me, never let me hear you utter anything like a sentiment: I have had enough of them to serve me the rest of my life!

At this point, the actor has seen the beginning of a reversal in the character of Sir Peter which is consummated in the last scene of the play. After Joseph has completely lost face, Charles has been championed, and Rowley has been proved right all along, Sir Peter mellows to the point that he now feels that he and Lady Teazle will, at last, settle down to a happy marriage.

From the script, then, the actor has discovered several aspects of Sir Peter's character, namely, he is a man who is: (1) disposed toward sentiment, (2) an enemy to scandal, (3) easily duped by Joseph and his sentiments, (4) self-pitying, (5) in love with his wife in spite of all their wrangling, (6) respectful of Rowley's fine character but not his opinions, (7) stubborn, (8) protective of his ego in making a pretense to Sir Oliver, (9) able to find pleasure wrangling with Lady Teazle, (10) not above rascality, (11) intolerant when his opinions are not

accepted, (12) jealous of Charles, and (13) inclined to quick changes of mood.

Sir Peter as Seen by the Other Characters

The actor may summarize Sir Peter's relationships with other characters as follows:

Lady Teazle has all but shattered any illusions he might have had regarding her before the play begins. Their scenes together show Sir Peter, at the outset, hopeful of reaching an understanding with his wife. However, before the scene has progressed too far, the inevitable quarrel has set in, Sir Peter is livid, and Lady Teazle has her way while Sir Peter has only added to his misery. Yet, in spite of all their wrangling, one fact is made clear--Sir Peter loves his young and foolish wife, or he "should never bear all this." When, however, all deceptions in the play have ceased, their relationship takes on a brighter aspect, and the long-sought-after happy relationship becomes imminent.

To Joseph Surface, Sir Peter is a man of trusting faith and sublime ignorance, easily duped, and swayed by the employment of a few sentiments. After his knavery has been brought to light, however, Sir Peter can no longer be deceived. Sir Peter becomes a man to whom supplications are made, rather than one to be defamed.

The "faculty" of The School for Scandal regard Sir Peter as they do all their other acquaintances. He is to be scandalized and gossiped about as is everyone else. They deplore his sentimentality because it

smacks of a goodness of character which is completely foreign to them. Mrs. Candour cannot find an ally in Sir Peter through her attempts to convince him that she is not a scandalous person. Sir Benjamin, the wit of the "faculty," and one whose barbs are particularly sharp, cannot elicit the humorous response from Sir Peter which he does from others in the company. Lady Sneerwell, with all her feline craftiness, makes no attempt to impress Sir Peter, since she holds him in contempt from the beginning of the play to the end. The fact that Sir Peter ejects the scandal-mongers from his home in the last act gives them more pause for thought, and unlimited possibilities for scandal. In short, the "faculty" is an element which moves into Sir Peter's life, dwells for a short period while they impart their venom, and moves on, unscathed by the events of Sir Peter's life.

To Maria, Sir Peter is essentially a good man, but a man whose judgment in affairs of the heart is not to be trusted. As the play opens, she is greatly disappointed with Sir Peter because she feels that he is grossly unfair in his condemnation of Charles and is truly being very unkind to her.

There is a mutual respect between Sir Peter and Sir Oliver. A life-long friendship has caused Sir Peter to be concerned with the fact that he must maintain the position of high esteem which he has in Sir Oliver's opinion. Sir Peter depends upon the high regard which Sir Oliver has for him to justify his actions and opinions in the play.

Charles has a considerable respect for Sir Peter and, as is brought to light in the screen scene, would not do anything to harm him.

Sir Peter's marital problems are amusing to Charles and greatly appeal to his sense of humor, through which Charles sees the comic situation of an old man married to a young girl.

Rowley sees a truer picture than the others. To him, Sir Peter is an honest man who in reality loves his wife and who is being misled by the false sentiments of Joseph. Rowley is certain that Sir Peter's impressions of Charles and Joseph will change when he recognizes their true characters.

Sir Peter as Seen by the Egri Analysis

Lajos Egri, in The Art of Dramatic Writing, sets down a formula for the creative analysis of character.² Egri has provided three phases of analysis: physiological, sociological, and psychological. To complete the requirements of the formula in the analysis of Sir Peter Teazle, the actor should utilize what he may derive from the script, and what he may construct from the material contained in Chapter One.

Physiologically, Egri utilizes the following factors: Sex, Age, Height, Hair, Eyes, Skin, Posture, Appearance, Defects, and Heredity.

Physiologically, Sir Peter is a male in his late fifties or early sixties. He is of average height, five feet-nine or ten inches. His hair is very thinned at this age, however, he wears the white powdered wig of the contemporary fashion. His brown eyes, clear and fair complexion, and erect posture give Sir Peter a clean and neat appearance. His weight is normal for a man of his years. He is, when not plagued with the cares of his young wife, a fairly pleasant person. There are

² Egri, loc. cit.

no abnormalities or deformities in his physical stature. He has enjoyed good health and had the normal inescapable childhood diseases such as chickenpox, measles, and whooping cough, which were at least as prevalent in the eighteenth century as they are today. The actor should assume that Sir Peter inherited no constitutional defects since none are indicated in the play.

Sociologically, Egri includes the following factors: Class, Occupation, Education, Home Life, Religion, Race, Nationality, Place in Community, Political Affiliations, and Amusements.

Sir Peter's title would place him in the upper middle class. His occupation is never mentioned in the play, but, because of his close relationship with Sir Oliver over a period of many years, the actor may conclude that he may have indulged in trade in his younger days to amass his fortune, which is of considerable size.

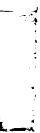
Since Sir Peter's education is never discussed in the play, the actor must conclude that he possessed the average education of a man of his class. In all probability, the majority of his education was had in the home through the use of tutors, as was customary in his time. There is nothing in the play of a philosophical nature through which any indication of a higher education could be derived. Sir Peter's home life, until the time of his marriage to Lady Teazle, was quiet and well-managed, but lonely. Since Sir Peter does not appear as a man who indulges in extravagances, the actor may conclude that his home was managed on a fairly economical basis.

Religion is unimportant in this analysis, since religious issues do not enter into the play. Historically, a man of Sir Peter's position would, in all probability, belong to the established Church of England. Sir Peter is of the white race and of English nationality.

To establish Sir Peter's place in the community, in view of the fact that relatively little is given by the script, the answer must come from a series of assumptions. Sir Peter's class has already been established. Men of this class resided in the fashionable residential sections of London, in large homes with the usual retinue of servants--maids, coachmen, footmen, etc. The wealthier families of the aristocracy employed a great number of servants; however, since Sir Peter is not a man of extravagance, the actor may conclude that the number of his servants would be kept to the bare minimum. Sir Peter is a solid member of the community. He employs servants, is a successful businessman, and enjoys the respect that his title and fortune bring him. From the script, however, one faction of the community exists with which Sir Peter would have nothing to do. This is the "prating, malicious gossips in the neighborhood" of which Sir Oliver speaks.

Sir Peter's political affiliations, like his religion, do not enter into the play, since no political issues are involved. Historically, a man of Sir Peter's status would, in all probability, belong to the Whig Party, as was discussed in Chapter One.

Amusements and diversions are not mentioned in the play. Since Sir Peter does not appear as a man who indulges in drink and gambling, the popular amusements of the beau monde, the actor may conclude that



he confines himself to the quieter diversions of the time--reading sentimental novels, taking walks in the popular amusement gardens in London, and perhaps an occasional trip to a neighboring town to visit a friend or acquaintance.

Psychologically, Egri includes the following points: Sex Life, Moral Standards, Ambition, Frustrations, Temperament, Attitude toward Life, Complexes, Personality, Abilities, Qualities, and I.Q.

Sir Peter's sex life is not underlined by Sheridan in the play. The sex drive is perhaps evidenced in the fact that Sir Peter, now an old man, has married a young girl. There must be, beyond a doubt, a physical attraction for Lady Teazle. This attraction is evidenced by Sir Peter's frustration that his marriage is not going well, and by his desire to make Lady Teazle love him.

Sir Peter's ambition is not an issue in this play. There is no indication that he wishes to achieve a higher status than that which he already possesses. He is a man of rank and wealth. These represent goals in life already achieved.

Sir Peter's only significant frustration lies in Lady Teazle. He does not receive the love he wants from her, she is a spendthrift, and she is becoming no better than her "faculty" acquaintances. Sir Peter's temperament has probably been of a somewhat explosive nature for a number of years. This could not possibly have developed in the six months that he and Lady Teazle have been married. The vexations Sir Peter encounters now have, perhaps, heightened his explosive nature. His outlook on life has been darkened somewhat because of his domestic

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problems. The situation between him and his wife has pushed his tolerance to the limit. Sir Peter is fighting against becoming resigned to an extravagant wife. Normally he has no obsessions other than his proclivity for sentiment; however, now he is obsessed with the idea that he must fight the habits of Lady Teazle. The extravagances of the age do not fit into his conception of proper living, and certainly are not to be condoned in his wife.

Sir Peter presents a somewhat outgoing personality. He possesses the common gregariousness of a normal human being and, as a result, enjoys people about him. He does not live within himself, but is willing to confide and discuss his problems with others.

Sir Peter's abilities are not an important issue in the play. Sheridan does not ask the character to demonstrate his physical abilities. On the basis of Sir Peter's present financial and social status, the actor may conclude that he possesses those abilities which enabled him to achieve these things. Historically, a man of his status would have achieved a fair proficiency in fencing, though this was truer of an earlier period. It is likely that Sir Peter was a passable dancer, since dancing was considered an integral part of the social education of people of fashion.

The actor may conclude that Sir Peter is, on the positive side of the ledger, essentially a peace-loving individual, who loves his wife, and who displays a firmly entrenched attitude of virtue, honor, and decency. On the other side, however, he is stubborn, intolerant when crossed, and jealous of his wife's love.

Sir Peter's intelligence is normal for a man of his position. Since the play does not involve a discussion of his intelligence, the actor may conclude that on the basis of the position which Sir Peter has achieved, a certain amount of intelligence was required. An indication of some limitations in Sir Peter's intelligence have already been noted in the script, namely, that he does not appear to possess a valid judgment of character; he does not respect the opinions of others; and he does not control his stubbornness as does a truly intelligent man.

Through the formula established by Egri, the actor may provide himself with an insight into the character which, along with what has been determined from the script itself, should provide a foundation for the creation of the role. A thoughtful consideration of Sir Peter as he is encountered in the script and in light of the Egri analysis takes the actor a long way toward a successful performance. The application of this analysis will be followed in the discussion of the next chapter when the character in rehearsal will be presented.

CHAPTER III

THE CREATION OF THE ROLE OF SIR PETER TEAZLE

The creation of the role of Sir Peter Teazle involved two phases which were closely related: (1) the actor's approach to playing the role, and (2) the analysis of the specific acting problems which arose out of the rehearsal period.

When preparing himself for a role in an eighteenth-century comedy of manners, the actor's attention is first drawn to the fact that The School for Scandal is not a play essentially of action, but of words. In this particular type of comedy of manners, unlike Goldsmith's She Stoops to Conquer, the farcical elements are at a minimum. Thus, the comic element, with the exception of the screen scene in the fourth act, is contained almost entirely in the dialogue.

The actor should have a clear concept of what comedy of manners is. The School for Scandal possesses all the requirements of a good comedy of manners: the presentation of sophisticated characters in a fairly plausible situation which emphasizes their superficialities and wit by brilliant and satirical lines and generally by at least one high dramatic moment.¹

Little is to be found in the literature written on the subject of high comedy and comedy of manners to give the actor an indication of

¹ Barnard Hewitt, Art and Craft of Play Production (New York: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1940), pp. 314-315.

how a role in such plays is to be enacted. The actor searches for any possible hint he may get which will make the task easier. An invaluable aid in the preparation of the role of Sir Peter Teazle which gave the actor an indication of an approach to characterization was a suggestion of Athene Seyler, who explains the essentials of comedy as follows:

What, then is at the root of comedy? The essentials are: lack of balance, distortion, over-emphasis or under-emphasis, and surprise. Now, all these things are only relative to something else: the truth. So that you must first see the truth of a character before you can upset its balance. But you must believe in the distorted view of the truth that you have discovered. Having drawn the character a little out of proportion you must passionately believe in that measurement as the correct one. I think that your true comedian does both these things at once; that is to say, he is aware instinctively that the emphasis he is laying on one side of his portrait distorts it, and yet he offers it as a true likeness. The "standing outside"--the approach to the character--is the first process. The second process is concerned with presenting this view, and depends on what we call technique. It is the craft of appearing to believe in the balance of a thing that one knows is out of balance. This sounds like a theory of tight-rope walking! And indeed I think it is mental tight-rope walking, in which the slightest slip ends in disaster. If you forget the whole character while presenting one angle, or if you lose your vivid consciousness of this angle in your realization of the other sides of the character, your intention with regard to the audience will be lost.²

Applying this theory to Sir Peter Teazle, then, shows that Sir Peter was conceived as a character who is out of proportion. At no time does he appear as behaving in what to him would be a normally calm manner. He is either incensed at the behavior of Lady Teazle or the "faculty," or he becomes almost kittenish in his attempts to make

² Athene Seyler and Stephen Haggard, The Craft of Comedy (New York: Theatre Arts, Inc., 1946) pp. 16-17.

Lady Teazle love him. The "standing outside" of the character to which Miss Seyler refers is the pointing up of these extremes of behavior in Sir Peter, and yet these extremes must appear to be the correct representation of the character and must be thoroughly believed by the actor.

Sir Peter is not bound up in the highly artificial comedy of the play. His scenes represent a more natural form of comedy in situations which are closer to reality than those of the artificial scenes:

In the eighteenth-century play The School for Scandal the manners of the times are consciously held up to ridicule in certain scenes, and one gets the artificial comedy on one side centering round Joseph and Lady Sneerwell, contrasted with true natural comedy in the Teazle scenes.³

In the preparation of the role, a knowledge of eighteenth century manners and decorum is necessary. Since, in the eighteenth century a conscious effort was made to display manners and good breeding, those manners should be reproduced whenever possible on the stage. In The School for Scandal the actor is strongly concerned with proper physical movements. Sitting in chairs, for example, was different from today. A look at the paintings of the period shows that the occupant of a chair was not comfortably seated on the entire seat, but always sat on the outer edge, and this for good reason. The tight-fitting breeches worn in that period did not permit the man the freedom which our modern trousers do. A fashionable fad of the period was to display as much of the calf of the leg as possible. When seated this could only be

³ Ibid., p. 76.

accomplished by sitting on the outer edge of the chair with one knee lowered and bringing the leg back. Standing with the feet at right angles displayed the calf of the leg to its best advantage. The bow was executed in the most graceful manner possible. Taking snuff was done in a most refined manner. Graceful movement and stance was the earmark of this period and should become a part of the actor's technique.

To capture the feeling of the period, the play was staged in conventional drop and wing settings. As a consequence, a minimum of furniture was used, and the actor found himself standing most of the time. This necessitates some readjustments on the part of the actor who has been used to performing in modern plays in realistic settings where he frequently can be seated. In an eighteenth-century setting, the actor finds himself in an acting area of usually only one level, and playing on the same plane as the other actors. The apron of the stage becomes an important acting area for soliloquies. The actor moves in and out of the set the better to communicate his thoughts to the audience.

When studying the dialogue of The School for Scandal, the actor realizes that herein lies the importance and the vital portion of the play. Since The School for Scandal does not possess a great degree of farcical action, the movement tends to become somewhat static. Thus, the comedy lies almost entirely in the dialogue. The dialogue, as does that of Shakespearean drama, presents new problems to the actor. The eighteenth-century manner of speech is sufficiently

different from the speech of today to demand special study. This style of dialogue presents a new set of problems in interpretation to the actor, problems which will be discussed later in the chapter.

When careful consideration has been given to the nature of comedy, manners, decorum, movement, and speech, the actor then has an adequate background to enter the rehearsal period at which time the actual creation of the role begins.

In the initial line rehearsals the problem of dialogue which comes vividly to light is that the utmost care must be taken with line interpretation. Proper emphasis must be given the nouns and verbs in the speeches. Frequently, during the rehearsal period, there was considerable difficulty in being understood. The use of a British accent only added to the complexities of clear speech.

In this production of The School for Scandal, the director decided that an attempt should be made to affect British speech. In order to achieve consistency, a student from England worked with the cast to achieve this end. The effort, in the final result, was not satisfactory. The ability to imitate varied to such an extent among the actors that the end result was not a unified method of speaking, but rather a conglomeration of accents. The effort, for the most part, was abandoned, and only such words as would betray a Mid-Western pattern of speech were altered, such words as "can't," "shan't," and those containing the "o" sound.

Generally, the initial reading rehearsals served to clear up several problems arising from the script. Clarification of the meaning

and pronunciation of archaic words such as "Zounds," "'Slife," "'Sdeath," "Lud," and "Oons," was given at this time. A realization was reached that a verbatim knowledge of the lines was necessary, since the modern actor is not equipped to ad lib in a consistent eighteenth-century manner. An understanding of the meaning of the lines as well as the rhythm found therein was necessary for an intelligent interpretation. The old phraseology of eighteenth-century dialogue is at times confusing and requires clarification.

To approach the specific acting problems encountered by the actor, an examination of the prologue to the play is in order, since this was performed by the actor in addition to the role of Sir Peter Teazle.

The prologue involves a two-fold problem: interpretation, and movement. The narrator of the prologue entered from the right proscenium door and crossed to the apron center to begin. Upon reaching this position, a bow was made as the hat was swept off the head and then replaced. During the blocking rehearsals, the director devoted a period of time at the beginning of each session to practicing the bow. To perfect this movement to the point that it became graceful and not labored took a considerable amount of practice, both at rehearsals and at home. By the time the blocking was set, this movement had been mastered.

Since in the prologue the actor faces the audience for the first time, the importance of this preface to the play cannot be overstressed. Through these first lines, the audience must become acquainted with

the type of speech used in the play. Further, the subject matter, scandal, is introduced.

In the presentation of the prologue, three distinct characters must be clearly delineated: the narrator, Lady Wormwood, and Lisp. To solve the problem of characterization in the prologue, the principles of character placement used in oral interpretation were adopted. The narrator, facing full front, introduced the theme, "A School for Scandal." When the lines of Lady Wormwood appeared, the actor turned slightly left, placing the character on the right of the audience. The voice had to change pitch here, becoming higher and more throaty in the imitation of this lady of fashion.

Lisp, the servant, then had to appear reading the newspaper. Here, the actor, faced slightly to the right of center to place Lisp on the left of the audience. The voice again underwent a change. It became somewhat blatant, and there was a change in accent. Lisp, being a servant, would not have the refined speech of Lady Wormwood. Here a bit of Cockney appeared. "Ma'am" became "mum," "square" became "squay-yah."

Finally, the narrator returned to comment on the foregoing conversation and to finish the prologue, again making a deep graceful bow and sweeping aside the hat, replacing it, and exiting.

Sir Peter, as such, is first introduced to the audience in the opening soliloquy of Act One, Scene Two. This is the most difficult of Sir Peter's speeches. In this opening speech he must show his miserable condition brought about by the extravagance of his wife.

He is angry, and, from the glance back at the left door through which he entered, the audience must conclude that he has just come from an argument with Lady Teazle.

As Sir Peter informs the audience of Lady Teazle's follies, he is carried away emotionally at one point. When he reaches, "Yet now she plays her part in all the extravagant fopperies and fashions...", a short strutting, almost dance-like step is done. This required a great deal of practice in an effort to coordinate the movement with the lines. At first, this seemed an impossible task. After many practice sessions, a method was devised whereby the most natural-appearing entrance into the dance step could be effected. Although this movement problem was encountered in the blocking rehearsal phase, the perfection of the movement did not occur until well along in the setting rehearsals. The actor must begin conditioning his body at the point where he says, "Yet now..." so that by the time he reaches "extravagant fopperies and fashions..." he is fully in the dance step which ends on "grass-plot out of Grosvenor Square."

Finally, the last portion of the soliloquy is reached, beginning with, "Yet the worst of it is, I know I love her...." Here is a complete change of mood. Sir Peter becomes almost gentle. The fact that Sir Peter really loves his wife must be evident here. This portion of the soliloquy not only involves a change of vocal emphasis, but of facial expression as well. Here, Sir Peter shows that he is not a demon, but a really likeable old man. The last sentence, "However, I'll never

be weak enough to own it," is given rapidly, and Sir Peter begins to make his exit left.

Perhaps the most significant problem in this first soliloquy is that of restraint. Sir Peter is angry and vociferous in his complaints against Lady Teazle, but this anger must not reach undue proportions so as to ruin the comic effect, or to fail to reveal that Sir Peter is a human being and not an ogre. A balance must be maintained to keep the emotions expressed in their proper perspective.

Upon the entrance of Rowley in the scene, another problem is encountered. Since this scene takes place in the down-stage area and on the apron, the problem of focus enters. Characteristic of this type of play is the one-plane playing to which the actor must adapt. The absence of an abundance of stage properties leaves large empty areas on the stage. The scene between Sir Peter and Rowley finds them both in the down-stage area, well away from the main part of the set. The problem, then, is one of focus. Upon the entrance of Rowley, Sir Peter acknowledges him and then focuses his responses, for the most part, on the audience. This involves playing a great deal full-front so that the audience grasps every nuance the actor imparts in characterization.

Act Two, Scene One, brings the problem of tossing-off lines. This occurs first with Sir Peter's line, "Old enough!--ay, there it is!" Here, as throughout the entire play, two distinct focal points exist: lines spoken to the actors on the stage, and lines which are meant only for direct communication to the audience. This amounts to impressing the audience with the existing situation. Lady Teazle has

referred to Sir Peter's old age: "Old enough!--ay, there it is!" says Sir Peter in response. This is given directly to the audience as if to say, "You see, now she attacks my age!"

Sir Peter has occasion to sit in this scene. As was previously mentioned, this movement had to be practiced to achieve the most graceful effect possible. After several sessions the actor began instinctively to sit on the edge of the chair with the legs apart and the downstage knee lowered, bringing the leg back.

Since the tight-fitting breeches of the costume caused the actor to sit in this position, a discussion of the problems arising with costume is in order. During the rehearsal period, several points were taken into consideration. A large handkerchief was used to provide stage business, since the kerchief was an integral part of eighteenth-century dress. The actor must always be conscious of the fact that he must not at any time put his hands in his pockets. The breeches worn during the performance would have no pockets, and by becoming used to doing without them in rehearsals, the actor was free to develop other business.

Throughout the dialogue here, certain contractions are encountered which may require special attention: "God's Wounds," becomes "Zounds," "God's Life," becomes "'Slife," and "God's Death," becomes "'Sdeath."

The problem of presenting the quarrel in this scene effectively was considerable. During the setting rehearsals, a concentration was made on the intensity involved. The scene opens with Sir Peter storming, and it ends the same way. To play the entire scene in this manner would

spoil the comic effect and become tedious for the audience. Through repetition, the levels of intensity were distinguished. Again, the factor of restraint on the part of Sir Peter played a prominent part in the interpretation of this scene. Sir Peter's ever-present desire to be friends with his wife played an important part in the actor's interpretation.

In Act Two, Scene Two, are encountered the asides, set down as such by the playwright. These, like the tossed-off lines referred to earlier, are to be communicated directly to the audience. Though the character has, for the moment, left the scene by focusing his attention on the audience, the aside is delivered in character.

Act Three, Scene One, presented two major problems, those of movement and interpretation. Sir Peter has occasion to stroll from center stage to stage left. The movement begins on Lady Teazle's line, "I assure you, Sir Peter, good nature becomes you," and ends on Sir Peter's line, "And you prophesied right." This movement required a considerable amount of practice in the setting rehearsals to insure that the dialogue would be most effectively given in the time allotted.

The argument in this scene with Lady Teazle must build from the beginning. The actor must exercise caution so as not to be too forceful to begin with, but to build his intensity gradually. The limitations of Sir Peter's age had their influence on this scene. Although he feels quite young and gallant, the actor cannot forget that he is playing an old man who must affect young and gallant mannerisms with studied effort.

In response to Lady Teazle, Sir Peter must be lighthearted, stubborn, and finally seething with anger. The quarrel builds magnificently. Sir Peter is in a happier mood than he has been in for months. As Lady Teazle begins to contradict him, he is at first surprised, disappointed, and then irritated, ending finally in a rage that sends Lady Teazle off the stage laughing in her triumph. Poor old Sir Peter must let off steam, and he does so in his short soliloquy to the audience, again taking them into his confidence.

One of the distinguishing features of eighteenth-century comedy of manners is the fact that a confidential speaking relationship exists between the actor and the audience. The audience is an every-ready listener to those remarks which the character wishes to confide. The freedom of focus, or the choice of easily directing comments to those on the stage or confiding in the audience, as in the aside, is a factor which should be established as early as possible in the rehearsal phase. Consequently, in the eighteenth-century play, the actor finds himself in a closeness of contact with the audience which does not exist in conventional modern drama.

In Act Four, Scene Three, the screen scene occurs. This scene is one of the most challenging scenes for Sir Peter and one in which the actor can best display his talents. Sir Peter runs the gamut of emotion and mood.

Sir Peter must enter the scene with an air of concern for his plight. This concern, great though it is in Sir Peter's mind, must be conveyed to the audience at first in a somewhat reserved manner.

As the dialogue progresses and the fact is revealed that Charles is suspect, the concern is conveyed with increasing intensity. The scene builds to Sir Peter's speech beginning, "I am sure I wish to think well of her..." This particular speech posed a specific problem. The actor may be carried away in a wave of self-pity and may, by the very nature of the discourse, become saddened to the point where the comic element is lost. This danger was averted in rehearsal by maintaining a conscious effort to convey the concern in Sir Peter's mind while keeping the entire tone of the speech up to such a degree that it escaped moroseness. To be sure, Sir Peter is actually indulging in self-pity at this moment, but the lines themselves must be conveyed in their comic sense. The line, "...and, in our last quarrel, she almost hinted that she should not break heart if I was dead," can be delivered so as to elicit pity from the audience. Pity, however, is not the desired effect. To maintain the comic spirit, the line was delivered with a rising inflection as if Sir Peter was slightly incensed at this thought, rather than depressed.

Here, again, much of the humor of the scene comes from the comic earnestness of Sir Peter, contrasted by Joseph's sentiments and asides. The problem, at this point, is not one of movement, but of interpretation and facial expression. Sir Peter is seated, facing the audience as he converses with Joseph, almost as if he were a child telling his mother that he was being bullied by one of the larger boys in the neighborhood. Seated facing full front, Sir Peter carries on what actually amounts to a conversation with two people, i.e., Joseph and

the audience. Through his facial expressions along with the lines, he must convey his embarrassment and hurt to the audience. An intense playing of this scene--Sir Peter with his little-boy attitude, and Joseph with his sentiments which he hopes are deluding Sir Peter--produces an electrifying effect upon the audience, who, along with Joseph, are aware of the presence of Lady Teazle behind the screen.

Sir Peter must, later in the scene, do a good deal of fast moving. The first occasion is when he is seeking a place to hide prior to Charles' entrance. The actor is faced with the problem of scurrying around the room for a place to hide while he is imparting a steady stream of dialogue. This movement begins on the speech, "Nay, you tell me you are sure he is innocent." During this short speech the actor must look around the room, spot the screen, decide that he is going to hide behind it, approach it, and stop suddenly. After manipulating the dialogue in several ways during the setting rehearsals, the solution was found. By breaking up the first line with brief pauses, the actor has time to search the left side of the stage: "Nay,/ you tell me/ you are sure/ he is innocent." A turn to Joseph for the next lines, "if so, you do him the greatest service by giving him an opportunity to clear himself, and you will set my heart at rest," gives the actor an opportunity to check the right side of the stage from where he stands. On, "Come, you shall not refuse me." he has seen the screen and has decided to hide there. "Here, behind the screen will be--" gives sufficient time for a quick cross to the screen, and,

"Hey! what the devil! I'll swear I saw a petticoat!" provides the actor with the abrupt stop and a turn to Joseph.

Sir Peter has now become extremely elated over the prospect of being able to witness Charles' statements from a concealed position. His rascality is now at work. Sir Peter's decision to hide behind the screen, coupled with the consternation of Joseph, offers the audience a moment of comic suspense. The movement, of necessity, must be rapid, since Charles is on his way up. Again, Sir Peter's age imposed limitations. He is not as frisky as he was in his youth. The effect, then, is an old man who moved rapidly but with much effort, which in itself adds to the comic element.

When, later in the scene, Charles has discovered from Sir Peter that someone was behind the screen, the actor was faced with the problem of how to detain Charles from making the discovery. This problem was easily solved through the employment of the apron of the stage. The episode began in the downstage left apron area with Sir Peter standing between Charles and the screen. When Charles would approach the screen, it was necessary for him to cross below Sir Peter, thus giving him an opportunity to take only a few short steps, catch Charles, and return to the original position.

The episode in Act Five, Scene Two, in which Sir Peter is being ridiculed by Rowley and Sir Oliver, posed a problem in interpretation. The lines call for laughter from Sir Peter in response to the jibes of Rowley and Sir Oliver. By playing this episode on the apron stage left, full-front to the audience, it was possible to respond to the

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jibes and comment on them to the audience. The use of facial expression played an important part in the acting process. When Sir Peter responded with an imitation of Sir Oliver's laugh, he then immediately altered his facial expression to that of disgust and anger. An example of this method may be seen thus: "Yes, my face when the screen was thrown down: ha! ha! ha!" is given with a bright, good-humored countenance. Then on, "Oh, I must never show my head again!" the face has become sullen and shows, once more, the true irritation felt by Sir Peter at this moment.

In Act Five, Scene Three, Joseph has been under fire for his rogueries. Just at the point where his rascality seems completely revealed Lady Sneerwell appears, having been concealed in another room. Lady Sneerwell's entrance elicits a response from Sir Peter, the response, "So! another French milliner! Egad! he has one in every room of the house, I suppose!" This line is not designated as an aside. However, in an effort to turn Sir Peter's surprise and disgust into a comic situation, the line was given as an aside to the audience.

Before discussing the rehearsal period and the evolution of character, certain facts should be made clear. The actor creating the role of Sir Peter Teazle, of necessity, had to possess a pre-established acting ability before undertaking a project of this nature. In the actor's experience, several previous roles were those of older men, so that the assumption of the role in this play was not an entirely new experience. Perhaps the most closely-related prior role was that of Mr. Hardcastle in Goldsmith's She Stoops to Conquer.

The experience gained in this role was an invaluable aid in the creation of Sir Peter Teazle.

The influences of a bi-lingual home environment provided the actor with a facility for dialect which made assuming an English accent a relatively easy task. Several years of prior voice training equipped the actor with a facility for a wide range of vocal expression. These factors, plus a few years more age than the rest of the cast, contributed vastly in the creation of the role.

The development of the character in relation to others in the play began in the blocking rehearsals. The prior study of the play and previous experience gave the actor a familiarity with eighteenth-century movement which left him relatively free to concentrate on character development without being too heavily encumbered with movement problems. The grasp of Sir Peter as an old man was accomplished early in the blocking phase. What had to develop later in the setting rehearsals was Sir Peter's reaction to the other characters.

In spite of previous experience with eighteenth-century comedy, the learning of the lines proved in some scenes to be difficult. Sir Peter has two scenes with Lady Teazle in which they quarrel. The scheduled evening rehearsals proved too short to permit the setting of the lines and their coordination with the movement. Once the movement had been established in the blocking phase, extra rehearsals were evidently needed. The actor and actress took it upon themselves to meet frequently in the earlier part of the day to rehearse the quarrel scenes in Act Two, Scene One and Act Three, Scene One. These extra

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rehearsals were both beneficial and necessary in meeting the requirements of the rehearsal schedule. Not until the fifth week of rehearsal did these quarrel scenes reach a stage of development in which the lines were secure and the movement coordinated.

The screen scene proved to be the greatest memorization problem. The psychological problem involved the realization that this is the most important scene in the play, it is the scene in which the climax, or high dramatic moment, occurs, and it is extremely lengthy. The significance of key words to give the actor the cue for his next line demanded verbatim knowledge of the line as found in the text. The problem seems to have centered in a single page of the script where Joseph is trying to persuade Sir Peter that Charles is not the man to suspect. Although, as was mentioned previously, Sir Peter faces the audience in this episode, he must pay especial attention to what is being said to him. If he lets his mind wander for the briefest moment, he may lose the vital cue word which he needs for his next line.

In the fifth week of rehearsal the character of Sir Peter had emerged from the trial-and-error stage. The pattern now was set. It was clearly established in the mind of the actor both what his relationships and his reactions were to the other characters. The actor had at this point achieved a characterization that appeared satisfactory but needed polishing. From this point to the performance the polishing took place. Line tempo, picking-up cues, and keeping the flow of the movement were stressed. Scenes were worked in their entirety rather than in sections.

The dress rehearsals provided the actor with the opportunity of tightening-up the characterization. The feel of the costume influenced the movements. The flare of the coat, the lace at the sleeves, the tight breeches and silk stockings, and the feel of the wig provided an atmosphere in which the eighteenth-century mannerisms came to life and became an integral part of the actor's characterization. The sight of the other characters in their beautiful costumes helped to establish the feeling of the period and made the actor see his relationship to this setting. The bow came to life when accompanied by the sweep of the broad hat. The drop and wing setting gave the movement new meaning when it could be seen in relation to what was on the stage and painted on the drops.

Sir Peter was generally well received by the audiences over the three-night run of the play. The feel of the audience was necessary to add the final touch to the characterization. The actor now knew which episodes proved amusing. The moments of suspense during the screen scene became an established fact through the audible gasps which ran through the audience. Sir Peter's dance step had achieved the desired effect when the audience laughed to see this old man becoming frisky. The fact that the actor could take the audience into his confidence and deliver the aside directly to them elicited the desired humorous response. Throughout the rehearsal periods, the episode in Act Five, Scene Two, previously mentioned, when Sir Peter is being ridiculed by Sir Oliver and Rowley, was blocked so that Sir Peter did not face full-front during the jibes. During the first performance, the actor did

not feel that the episode was receiving the response that it should. The comic situation of Sir Peter being harrassed by his two friends should have elicited laughter from the audience. After analyzing the reasons for the lack of laughter, the realization was reached that the audience, in the original blocking, could not see Sir Peter's facial reactions. For the second and third performances, the episode was played full front so that the audience could grasp the tortured facial expression of Sir Peter, and the desired reaction was achieved, finally gaining humorous response from the audience.

The previously mentioned short episode in the screen scene, where difficulty in memorization was experienced, never felt comfortable during the three performances. The episode reached its highest peak in the second performance. In this performance the tempo was kept up to the proper pace, and the episode seemed to run more smoothly.

The play was generally well received, and the actor felt that his characterization, on the whole, achieved its purpose: the comic presentation of the trials and tribulations of an old eighteenth-century bachelor who has married a young girl.

In considering the general problems of the role, the actor realizes he was fortunate in having had prior experience in a play of this period under the same director. Regardless of this fact, however, many problems still existed.

The establishing of an eighteenth-century period pattern of movement and interpretation was no easy task for the actor accustomed to the modern medium. In the cast assembled, the problem was multiplied.

Significant among the general problems was the blending of the eighteenth-century style with the modern. In the true eighteenth-century manner, the actors would grasp any possible opportunity to draw the attention of the audience away from the others on the stage in an effort to become the "shining light." This could never appeal to the modern audience. Consequently, some aspects of modern ensemble playing must be adapted to the eighteenth-century style in an effort to achieve an acceptable balance and preserve the period flavor.

Since the actor is entirely involved in his characterization problems, he must have the utmost faith in his director as a person who is able to envision the over-all effect of the play. Consequently, the actor, in creating the role of Sir Peter, was at times puzzled at the directions given him to achieve the eighteenth-century style. Playing an episode, for example, back to back, is not a device commonly used in modern acting. These unfamiliar "old" methods require intense concentration and much practice.

The body in general must undergo training for the creation of the role. Sir Peter cannot move as a heavy-footed old man. In spite of his age, he must have a facility of graceful movement characteristic of the eighteenth century. He must bow, sit, rise, and walk with a grace that appears inbred.

The actor's capacity to adapt to the eighteenth-century style plays a large part in determining the success of his creation. The actor must make the change from modern acting techniques to those of the eighteenth century. He must become accustomed to a new kind of dialogue. In the

production under examination, the adaptations had to be made rapidly. A short rehearsal period placed many restrictions upon the actor. He had to learn lines rapidly, perfect an English accent, smooth out movement and interpretation quickly, and become accustomed to a costume in two dress rehearsals before the opening performance. Consequently, a leisurely approach was impossible in the creation of the role.

Among the more significant problems was that of Sir Peter's age. The fact that he is an old man doubled the difficulty of the actor's task. Not only did the actor have to adapt to the eighteenth-century mannerisms and speech, but in addition adapt to them in the character of an old man. For this reason the detailed character analysis was invaluable. Without it, the task would have been considerably more difficult in the time allotted.

The language, as was previously mentioned, only added to the problem of memorization in the short rehearsal period. Verbatim knowledge was an absolute essential in order to do both the author and the period justice.

These, then were the problems encountered and their solutions by the actor. Some were surmounted easily, others with difficulty. All of them were challenging.

CHAPTER IV .

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The undertaking of the creation of a role in a play of an historical nature entails a considerable amount of research on the part of the actor. A detailed study of the playwright, his times, and his dramaturgy is an integral part of the actor's preparation. The creation of the role of Sir Peter Teazle involved several avenues of approach. A detailed analysis of the times current with the 1777 premiere of The School for Scandal was necessary since Sheridan was a playwright who wrote about his times and was, himself, a product of his times. In comparing the analysis of the period with the characters found in the play, the actor discovered that Sheridan drew his ideas of character from people he had actually known and to whom he had been exposed. This first-hand information, coupled with Sheridan's abilities to create character and situation plus his knowledge of the theatre, produced a play which ranks, today, as one of the outstanding dramatic contributions to come from the pen of the late eighteenth-century playwrights.

After sufficient research had been done on the playwright and the period, an analysis of the character from the acting script was undertaken. From the analysis of the acting script, the actor determined several aspects of Sir Peter's character, namely, he is a man who is:

(1) disposed toward sentiment, (2) an enemy to scandal, (3) easily duped by Joseph and his sentiments, (4) self-pitying, (5) in love with his wife in spite of all their wrangling, (6) respectful of Rowley's fine character but not his opinions, (7) stubborn, (8) protective of his ego in making a pretense to Sir Oliver, (9) able to find pleasure in wrangling with Lady Teazle, (10) not above rascality, (11) intolerant when his opinions are not accepted, (12) jealous of Charles, and (13) inclined to quick changes of mood. This material was helpful in utilizing the formula established by Lajos Egri in creating a tri-dimensional character analysis of Sir Peter Teazle which dealt with the physiological, sociological, and psychological make-up of the character. With the character analysis thoroughly in mind, the actor was then ready to enter the rehearsal phase.

The initial reading rehearsals served to acquaint the actor with the peculiarities of the eighteenth-century dialogue. The meaning and pronunciation of archaic words were explained. The development of an English accent was aided by the employment of a student from England.

In the blocking rehearsals, the actor realized the adaptations which had to be made in moving from a modern play to that of the eighteenth century. There were now no variations in levels to provide contrasts. The actor became accustomed to one-plane playing. He had, now, to assume the movements of an old man in the eighteenth-century period. The bow had to be perfected. Rising, sitting, walking,

standing, and taking snuff had to be learned so as to portray these movements in the most graceful manner possible. Oddities in directions had to be assimilated, such directions as playing an episode back-to-back with another character, which seemed awkward, but which achieved the eighteenth-century comedy of manners style.

Throughout the setting rehearsals problems were encountered, problems in movement, interpretation, and memorization. Certain scenes required the actor to take upon himself extra rehearsal periods with others in the cast in order to smooth out rough spots. Generally, by the fifth week of the setting rehearsal, the character of Sir Peter was fairly well set. However, memorization proved to be a problem throughout the rehearsal periods and remained a problem even into the performance phase. The memorization problem, the actor discovered, seemed to rest in only one episode in the screen scene.

The dress rehearsals brought a further adjustment in characterization. In this phase, the actor rehearsed with the costume for the first time. He could feel the tightness of the breeches, the flare of the coat, the feel of the wig, and the exposure of the leg through the silk stockings. Movements now took on new meanings. The flare of the coat during the bow, the sweeping off of the hat, the lace at the sleeves, and the flow of the cape, added a final touch to the movement in this eighteenth-century setting. The drop and wing set made the actor realize what his limitations in movement were. Now he could see the lack of pieces on the set and the furniture and room furnishings

painted on the drops, and his relation to them. The apron stage brought him into the actual close contact with the auditorium seats and for the first time he had the feeling of being removed from the set and in close contact with the audience.

The three-night performance revealed that the characterization was successful. Also, during this phase, minor adjustments in movement and interpretation were brought about by the lack of anticipated response from the audience of the first night's performance. These adjustments proved successful in view of the positive response to them in the two successive performances. The actor, then, had a sounding board in the presence of the audience to judge for himself how effective his work had been.

As a result of undertaking this study, the actor learned that in moving from modern drama to the eighteenth-century comedy of manners, the actor must have complete faith in the director's ability to use a scholarly approach in determining movement and his ability to perceive the entire production, while the actor must concentrate his efforts on characterization.

Finally, in retrospect, the solution of the problems involved was greatly enhanced by the actor's previous acting experience in eighteenth-century comedy.

In conclusion, experience in creating a role in an eighteenth-century comedy of manners provides the actor with numerous opportunities to broaden his technique. The research technique employed in a study of this nature establishes a pattern of approach which may be utilized

in the creation of any role. The self-confidence gained through the experience of close audience contact may be transferred to other roles. This same close contact with the audience develops a deeper consciousness of and sensitivity to audience reaction. Habits of precise diction are developed through the delivery of lines requiring specialized handling. Greater vocal variety, particularly in pitch and projection, assists in the development of vocal control and variety of expression. The grace of movement required in the eighteenth-century play enhances the actor's ability to move freely and gracefully, and further develops body control.

The major disadvantage that may result from the creation of a role in an eighteenth-century comedy of manners is the tendency to overplay the role. While this may not prove to be a disadvantage in the eighteenth-century style, carried over to the modern medium, this tendency may result in an unwanted distortion of the character.

These, then, are the advantages and disadvantages discovered in creating the role of Sir Peter Teazle. For the actor who is seriously interested in broadening and improving his technique, the value of a study of this nature cannot be underestimated.

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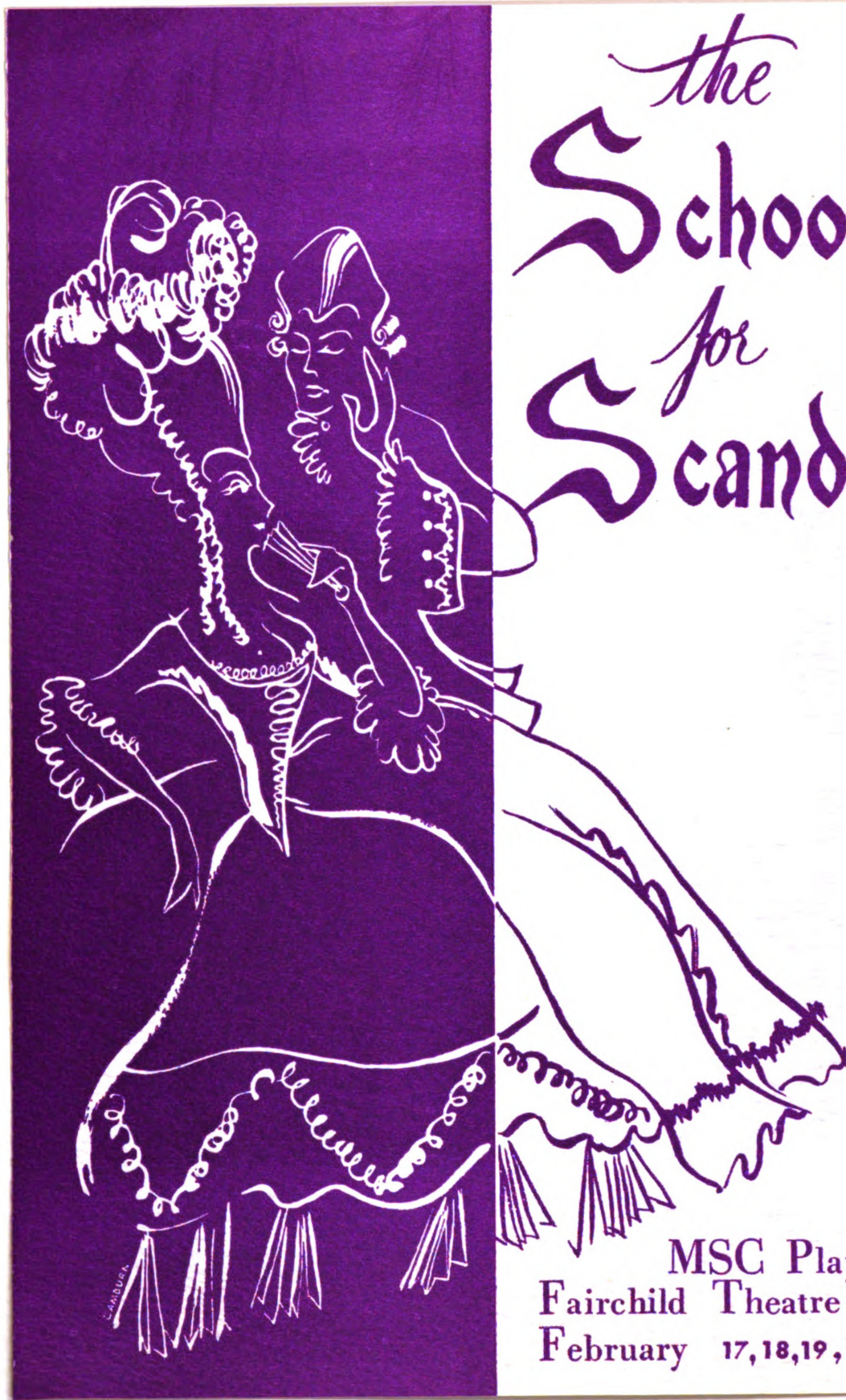
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APPENDIX

the School *for* Scandal



MSC Players
Fairchild Theatre
February 17, 18, 19, 1955

M.S.C. PLAYERS 1910 - 1955

As Michigan State College celebrates its centennial year in 1955, history repeats itself tonight when the curtain rises on "The School For Scandal." For this play, on April 22, 1910, was the first formal dramatic presentation on the campus, with "Prof. King's Class in Dramatics" as actors and producers. While tonight's Players prepare for their 1955 version of the famous Sheridan comedy, it might not be amiss to look into the forty-five years of our dramatic past.

Professor E. Sylvester King, a Northwestern University graduate who joined the staff of the Department of English in 1909, presented "The School For Scandal" in the old M.A.C. Armory which stood on the site of the present Music Building. In 1918, he staged Shakespeare's "As You Like It" in a wooded area near the Library appropriately named "The Forest of Arden." For thirteen years the Armory and "Forest" were the two locations of campus plays. In 1923, the "Little Theatre" of the Home Economics Building became the official home of plays, and of the Michigan Delta Chapter of Theta Alpha Phi which was founded in 1924. Joining the theatre staff in 1931, Cecil H. Nickle directed plays and assumed charge of design and lighting. Included in his designs was a second production of "The School For Scandal" in 1934. For several years, plays were also presented in the State Theatre on Abbott Road.

The Department of Speech and Dramatics was organized officially in 1937. On the retirement of Professor King, Dr. W. Fawcett Thompson was appointed director of dramatics. The Union Ball Room was used for a theatre and the tradition of Shakespeare under the stars was revived with the erection of a stage for the Band Shell. Joining the staff in 1937, Don Buell established the Studio Theatre which produced numerous one-act plays for campus and touring performances.

Maxwell Anderson's "High Tor" was the play chosen in March, 1940, for the opening of Fairchild Theatre. Its large and well-equipped stage was augmented by the smaller Studio Theatre stage which enabled an expanded program of one-acts, full-length plays, and "M.A. thesis" productions. New directors in both theatres included William Whittaker, Paul Geisenhof, and Harold Hansen. With the outbreak of World War II in 1942, Don Buell became director of dramatics, a post he held until 1953. During the war years, a full schedule of plays was maintained, and student variety troupes performed at Fort Custer and Percy Jones Hospital in Battle Creek.

In 1947, Wilson B. Paul became head of the Department of Speech. Subsequent years have seen a tremendous growth in enrollment, curriculum, and dramatic activities. Eleanor Chase established the Children's Theatre, and since her marriage to Dr. Zack York, the work has been under the direction of Jed Davis and Margaret Paton. Experimental productions were expanded in Studio and Arena Theatres by Stuart Chenoweth. Costuming and make-up were combined in a new course under the supervision of Ralph W. Duckwall, Jr. In design and technical direction, now under Virgil Godfrey, a distinguished list of staff members has included: Ben Wampler (currently with CBS-TV), Charles Gaupp, Harold Niven (now at Ohio State), Wilbur Dorsett (now at Rollins College, Florida), and Zack York (now head of Speech at Western Michigan College of Education). Dramatic writing courses were expanded to include television by John Jennings (now at Modesto College, California), and visiting directors from England were Richard Carey of the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, and Nevill Coghill of Oxford University.

An expanded production program, including television drama, brought further additions to the staff in 1954, including: Roger M. Busfield, Lewin Goff, and John A. Walker. The theatre season at M.S.C. now schedules annual productions of nine full-length plays, many one-acts, and original plays by M.S.C. students. Performances are held on campus in Fairchild, Studio, and Arena Theatres. The Children's Theatre and M.S.C. Players tour productions to near-by Michigan cities, and Toyshop Theatre (with child actors from the classes in Creative Dramatics) presents four plays annually. Last season 173 student actors and many more crew members gave 58 performances on campus and on tour before a total audience of 33,409.

Thus reads the story of those first forty-five years! No one can view such a record without paying tribute to the enthusiasm and devotion of the many hundreds of students who made such history possible. The third generation of M.S.C. Players dedicates its 1955 production of "The School For Scandal" to the alumni, staff members, and friendly audiences who have continuously encouraged the progress and development of the educational theatre.

THE DEPARTMENT OF SPEECH

MICHIGAN STATE COLLEGE

PRESENTS

RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN'S

The School For Scandal

Directed by
STUART CHENOWETH

Designed by
HERBERT CAMBURN*

Lighting by
JED DAVIS

Costumes by
RALPH W. DUCKWALL, JR.

Co-sponsored by the Michigan Delta Chapter of Theta Alpha Phi on the evenings of February 17, 18, 19, 1955, at 8:15 p.m. in Fairchild Theatre.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(In order of appearance)

LADY SNEERWELL	NANCY LOU PARKER*
SNAKE	DOUGLAS EASLEY
PERT	LOIS PATENGE*
JOSEPH SURFACE	RODGER BIRTWELL
MARIA	PATRICIA JONES*
MRS. CANDOUR	JENNIE POND
CRABTREE	PATRICIA DAVIES*
SIR BENJAMIN BACKBITE	FRANK BRAMAN*
SIR PETER TEAZLE	FRANK SERRESSEQUE*†
ROWLEY	HERBERT CAMBURN*
BUSY	MADGE MEZEY
LADY TEAZLE	JANET ROSE
SIR OLIVER SURFACE	RONALD NEUBERT
MOSES	WILLIAM GALARNO*
TRIP	REGINALD MASON
CHARLES SURFACE	RONALD GAINER
CARELESS	RAY THOMAS
MEDLEY	KARL ZIEGENHAGEN
SIR HARRY	PAUL MOORE*
HANDY	JOHN GOETZ

SCENE — London, 1777

Act I: The action alternates between Lady Sneerwell's House and Sir Peter Teazle's House.

Act II: The action takes place in Charles Surface's House and the library of Joseph Surface's House.

Act III: The action alternates between the library of Joseph Surface's House and Sir Peter Teazle's House.

There will be an eight minute intermission between the acts.

Harpischord music for the production is from Telemann's "Fantasia," played by Dr. Ernst V. Wolff of the Department of Music.

*Members of Theta Alpha Phi

†The role of Sir Peter Teazle is being played by Frank Serresseque in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts degree in Speech and Drama.

STAFF FOR "THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL"

Production Supervisor	Virgil Godfrey
Lighting Supervisor	John A. Walker
Technical Supervisors	Ralph W. Vanderslice, Jr., Robert Hazzard
Stage Manager	Claire Taplin*
Assistant to Director	Barbara Purvis
Costumes	Nancy Ryan, Head; Members of the Class in Speech 346
Lighting	Orlie Bennett, Head; William Holmes, Robert Neece; Members of the Class in Speech 345
Make-up	Douglas Rider, Patricia Davies*, Head; Members of the Class in Speech 346
Music and Sound	William Lewis and Paul Moore*
Poster, Display and Program Design	Herbert Camburn*
Properties	Madge Mezey, Lois Patenge*
Publicity and Promotion	John Goetz, Martha Loomis
Scene Construction and Painting	Members of the Classes in Speech 242, 340, and 343

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The M.S.C. Players wish to express their sincere appreciation to the many students, staff members, and friends who have made this production possible, and especially to: John Hekhuis and the Auditorium staff; James Maher, Stage Carpenter; Don Rodgers and the stage electricians; Helen Greene and the Union Box Office staff; the Alumni Association; Information Services; Spartan Magazine; the State News; Ethelyn Sexton and the State Journal; WKAR-AM, FM, and TV; Jacobson's and the Campus Book Store for their displays; WILS and WJIM.

FOR THETA ALPHA PHI

President	Herbert Camburn
Vice-President	William Galarno
Secretary	Lois Patenge
Treasurer	Joan Dragon

THEATRE STAFF OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SPEECH

Wilson B. Paul, Head of the Department of Speech	
Stuart Chenoweth, Director of Dramatics	
Don Buell	Virgil Godfrey
Roger M. Busfield	Lewin Goff
Ann Clark	C. H. Nickle
Jed Davis	Margaret Paton
Ralph W. Duckwall, Jr.	John A. Walker

Graduate Assistants	
Robert Hazzard	Ralph Vanderslice, Jr.
	Mary Jane Watkins

COMING EVENTS

Nicholas Gray's BEAUTY AND THE BEAST—Children's Theatre Touring Company, East Lansing High School, February 27

Robinson Jeffers' THE CRETAN WOMAN—Theta Alpha Phi Arena Production Little Theatre, Home Economics Building, April 21, 22, 23

Andreyev's KATERINA—M.A. Thesis Arena Production, Little Theatre, Home Economics Building, May 5, 6, 7

John Jennings and Owen Reed's MICHIGAN DREAM—Centennial Music Drama, Auditorium, May 12, 13, 14

M.S.C. PLAYERS PRODUCTIONS

1954-55

The School For Scandal (a)
Huckleberry Finn
The Male Animal

1953-54

Beauty And The Beast
Arms And The Man (A)
The Winter's Tale
The Man Who Came To Dinner (A)
Rumpelstiltskin
Euripides' Medea
Mr. Dooley, Jr.
Escape
Gramercy Ghost

1952-53

The Women Have Their Way (A)
Just For The Fun Of It (o)
Ah, Wilderness!
The Grass Harp (A)
A Sleep Of Prisoners
Heidi
She Stoops To Conquer
Simple Simon
A Doll's House

1951-52

For Love Or Money (A)
Miss Julia (d)
Green Grow The Lilacs
Beyond The Horizon (A)
Playboy of the Western World (a)
The Ghost of Mr. Penny
Rose Without A Thorn
The Emperor's New Clothes
Skylark

1950-51

Blithe Spirit
The Enchanted (A) (d)
How The Stars Were Made (A) (o)
The Corn Is Green (A) (d)
The Skin Of Our Teeth
The Imaginary Invalid (A)
From Morn To Midnight (d)
The Indian Captive
Goodbye My Fancy
Jack And The Beanstalk
The Time Of Your Life

1949-50

Night Must Fall (A)
Out Of The Frying Pan (A)
Heartbreak House (d) (s)
Elizabeth The Queen (a) (s)
Tom Sawyer
Shoemaker's Prodigious Wife &
The Old Maid And The Thief
Cinderella
Ghosts
George Washington Slept Here

(a) M.A. Thesis in Acting

(A) Arena Theatre

(o) M.A. Thesis Original Play

(d) M.A. Thesis in Directing

(s) M.A. Thesis in Design

1948-49

Room Service
The Importance Of Being Earnest
Boy Meets Girl (A)
Romeo And Juliet
The Secret Of Pat Pending
Electra
Grandmother Slyboots
Dark of the Moon
The Night Of January 16th
Billy The Kid

1947-48

Bolted Doors (o)
The Male Animal
As You Like It
The Ghost Of Mr. Penny
All My Sons
Mr. Dooley, Jr.
Music At Night
Mr. and Mrs. North

1946-47

Hotel Universe (d)
The Drunkard
Joan of Lorraine
The Far-off Hills
Winterset
Two On An Island

1945-46

Fairy Forest (d)
You Can't Take It With You
The Little Foxes
Blithe Spirit

1944-45

Pygmalion
Personal Appearance
Kind Lady

1943-44

Letters To Lucerne
Guest In The House
Then It Was Summer (d)
Claudia

1942-43

Her Husband's Wife
Thunder Rock
Hay Fever

1941-42

The Imaginary Invalid
What A Life
Stage Door
Tovarich

1940-41

Othello
Night Must Fall
Accent On Youth
This Thing Called Love

1939-40

Henry VIII
High Tor
Our Town
Seven Keys To Baldpate

1938-39

Taming of the Shrew
Spring Dance
Lady Precious Stream

1937-38

The Merchant of Venice
The Wild Duck
Another Language

1937

Take My Advice
Monsieur Beaucaire

1936

When Nighthood Was In Flower
The Late Christopher Bean

1935

Enter Madame
The Way Of The World
Chanticleer
Girl Shy
Mis' Nelly of N'Orleans

1934

An Ideal Husband
A Midsummer Night's Dream
The School For Scandal

1933

The Brat
Makropolous Secret
The Charming Pretender
Little Women
In Love With Love

1932

The Tinker
Little Old New York
Holiday
Death Takes A Holiday

1931

The Three Shadows
The Servant In The House
Skidding
Pomander Walk
The Gossipy Sex

1930

The Mistress Of The Inn
The Clean-Up
Captain Jinks Of The Horse Marines
Aren't We All

1929

Outward Bound
Graustark
The Colonel's Maid

1928

The Show-Off
Candida
Kismet
He Who Gets Slapped
The Patsy

1927

Hell-Bent For Heaven
The Youngest
Minick
Robin Hood
R.U.R.

1926

Believe Me Xantippe
Francesca di Rimini
The Goose Hangs High

1925

Mr. Blank
Out Of Town
The Tempest
Am I Intruding
Take A Tip From Me

1924

For One Night Only
The New Co-Ed
Miss Somebody Else
A Midsummer Night's Dream
The Guest Retainer

1923

Nothing But The Truth
Hamlet

1922

The Merry Wives of Windsor

1921

Ingomar
Green Stockings

1920

Comedy of Errors

1919

The Merchant of Venice

1918

Kindling The Hearth Fire
The Arrival Of Kitty

1917

The Snowball
Back To The Farm

1916

Three Hats
The Gay Deceivers
Twelfth Night

1915

Pillars of Society

1914

A Scrap of Paper
A Midsummer Night's Dream

1913

A Night Off
As You Like It
Sweet Lavender

1912

Magda
The Money Spinner

1911

Esmeralda
The Rivals

1910

The School For Scandal

BIOGRAPHY

Frank V. Serresseque was born in Detroit, Michigan on September 2, 1927. He attended the Detroit Public schools and graduated from high school in 1945.

He attended Michigan State University from 1946 until 1948 when he left school to serve in the United States Army. After a period of four year's service, he returned to Michigan State University to complete his undergraduate work. During this time he was active in the Michigan State Players productions and twice received the Spartan Magazine Drama Award for his portrayals of Mr. Hardcastle in She Stoops to Conquer, and Sheridan Whiteside in The Man Who Came to Dinner. Mr. Serresseque received his Bachelor of Arts degree in August, 1954.

The following term he entered graduate school. While completing the requirements for the Master's degree, he served as a graduate assistant for the Student Speaker's Bureau.

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