

ARTHUR MURPHY'S THEATRICAL
CRITICISM:
A CRITICAL EDITION

Thesis for the Degree of Ph. D.
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
ROBERT G. KEESEY
1969



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thesis entitled

ARTHUR MURPHY'S THEATRICAL CRITICISM:
A CRITICAL EDITION

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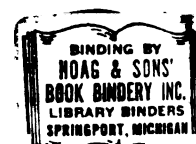
Robert G. Keesey

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for

Ph.D. degree in English


Major professor

Date August 22, 1969



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ARTHUR HUGHES
A STUDY

The edition presents a selection of the theatrical reviews which appeared in the London Chronicle during the years 1757-59 and have been considered the most important of the critical criticisms produced in the period. In their publication in a volume, however, the question of authorship of the reviews was generally inaccessible to the student of the history of this period. Since these essays have attracted little critical attention, the Introduction supplies pertinent biographical and theatrical background, an examination of the critical premises underlying the reviews, and an attribution study.

All of the sixty unsigned or pseudonymously signed introductory letters and reviews that appeared in the London Chronicle of 1757-59 have been claimed for

ABSTRACT

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By

Robert G. Keeseey

The edition provides an annotated text of the theatrical reviews written by Arthur Murphy for the London Chronicle during the years 1757-58. These pieces have been considered the best sustained series of theatrical criticisms produced in the eighteenth century, but their publication in a tri-weekly newspaper and the question of authorship have heretofore made them generally inaccessible to the student of the London theatre of this period. Since these essays have received little critical attention, the Introduction includes pertinent biographical and theatrical background, an examination of the critical premises underlying the reviews, and an attribution study.

All of the sixty unsigned or pseudonymously signed introductory letters and reviews that appeared in the London Chronicle of 1757-58 have been claimed for

Murphy by one scholar or another. The attribution study argues that only the "Tragicomicus" letter of Jan. 18-20, 1757, the thirty-seven essays entitled The Theatre running from Jan. 20-22 to April 14-16, 1757, the "Atticus" letter of Nov. 18-21, 1758, the unnumbered Theatre column signed "Atticus" of Dec. 2-5, 1758, and the unnumbered and unsigned Theatre papers of Dec. 7-9, 9-12, 19-21, 1758, can be ascribed to Murphy. The study adds new external evidence connecting Murphy's Gray's-Inn Journal, No. 8 (1754) with Theatres No. 16 and 17 of the spring of 1757, and new internal evidence demonstrating that the initial thirty-seven essays were the work of a single writer, to the already substantial body of evidence for Murphy's authorship of the first and most important series of Theatre papers. Based on the critical positions taken by Murphy in writings that preceded and followed the Chronicle essays, and on those taken in the first series of reviews, it argues that except for the final five papers of 1758 for which there is strong external evidence supporting ascription to Murphy, the contradictions in the remaining pieces outweigh the similarities of style and critical concerns upon which earlier attributions were founded.

The examination of Murphy's critical premises attempts to place his ideas in the shifting milieu mid eighteenth-century critical thought, and to provide the

reader with Murphy's particular concepts of the ambiguous terms such as nature, taste, genius, etc., that dominated the criticism of this era. The study reveals that although Murphy was not a theoretical critic in the sense of one who devotes works to the systematic exposition of critical problems, when his total canon is taken into consideration, he at one time or another dealt with the major critical issues of the period. And though having little merit as a theorist in his own right, most of his views generally being derivative, his constant interest in theoretical matters gave a solid foundation to his practical criticism. Hence, unlike many periodical critics, when Murphy used the conventional terms he had definite ideas in mind, and, as much as is practicable, his appeal was always to precedent, to premises about the nature and ends of his subject, to aesthetic norms, rather than to personal impressions or individual taste as the basis of criticism.

A THESIS

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of English

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To the Michigan State, Michigan, and Yale University Libraries I owe thanks for the use of their facilities; to Dr. R. S. Wilkinson and Mrs. Caroline Blunt of the Michigan State University Special Collections I owe a particular debt for their unfailing courtesy and personal assistance in making the resources of this Division available to me. To Professors Elwood P. Lawrence and Sam S. Baskett I am grateful for the early encouragement and assistance that made feasible my studies at Michigan State University. Professor John A. Yunck graciously gave his time and advice to this dissertation when he had no obligation to do so other than the general considerateness that is ever his standard. To Professors Howard P. Anderson and Joseph Waldmeir fell the laborious task of seeing the work through its several stages. Their criticisms were invariably helpful, and the kindness with which they were tendered is deeply appreciated. My greatest debt, one for which this note is but meager recompense, is to Professor Arthur Sherbo. Beyond the obligation for his always prompt and attentive guidance, it was his interest and scholarship in the area that provided the foundation for the present edition.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION	
I. RATIONALE, BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH, AND THE THEATRICAL MILIEU OF THE 1750'S	1
II. MURPHY'S CRITICAL PREMISES	28
III. INTRODUCTION TO THE TEXT	100
TEXT pieces that appeared under the name of William Murphy	
"TRAGICOMICUS" LETTER OF JAN. 18-20, 1757; <u>THE THEATRE</u> , NOS. 1-34, JAN. 20-22, 1757- APRIL 14-16, 1757; <u>THE THEATRE</u> , DEC. 7-9, 9-12, 19-21, 1758	134
APPENDIX A criticism, including those reviews by "the first critic" & regular	
"ATTICUS" LETTER OF NOVEMBER 18-21, 1758, AND <u>THE THEATRE</u> , DEC. 2-5, 1758	349
APPENDIX B critics, like Leigh Hunt and William Hazlitt, a larger group than those who appeared before and on the stage of the 18th century	
LIST OF ALL THEATRE PAPERS AND INTRODUCTORY LETTERS APPEARING IN THE 1757-58 <u>LONDON</u> <u>CHRONICLE</u>	360
LIST OF WORKS CITED	363

Theatrical Criticism in London in 1752 (New York, 1931), pp. 108 and 142.

RATIONALE, BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH, AND THE
THEATRICAL MILIEU OF THE 1750'S

In the London Chronicle, a tri-weekly newspaper founded in 1757, there appeared intermittently during the years 1757 and 1758 a number of unsigned theatrical criticisms under the title, THE THEATRE. Most of the fifty-eight pieces that appeared under this heading have been attributed, by various scholars, to Arthur Murphy. More than thirty years ago, Charles Harold Gray, in what continues to be the standard survey of eighteenth-century theatrical criticism, acclaimed these reviews as "the first important theatrical criticisms written for a regular newspaper," and found them to "rank with the work of the later critics, like Leigh Hunt and William Hazlitt, a larger series than we have found in such a paper before and one that is perhaps the best in the century."¹ Despite Gray's pointing the way, in 1966 it could still be noted by the editors of Aaron Hill's The Prompter, one of the

¹Theatrical Criticism in London to 1795 (New York, 1931), pp. 106 and 142.

few important sources of theatrical essays to precede Murphy's work, that "this aspect of the eighteenth-century English theatre remains curiously neglected by modern scholars. Except for the theatrical papers in the Tatler and the Spectator, the bulk of this writing remains remote and generally inaccessible to the student."²

It was in response to this state of affairs that the present edition was undertaken. Its objective is to make accessible to the student of the eighteenth-century London theatre an important body of criticism, and to save him the time and trouble of looking up relevant background information by providing an annotated text. Since this criticism has been largely neglected, it was thought that a critical introduction containing pertinent biographical and theatrical background, a study of the critical premises underlying the essays, a comparison of Murphy's work with that of his contemporaries, and some new arguments for attribution, might prove useful to the reader.

Although the Murphy canon includes a good deal of dramatic criticism, this edition is concerned only with his theatrical criticism, that is, criticism of the acted drama, as opposed to that of the drama as literature

²William W. Appleton and Kalman A. Burnim (New York, 1966), p. vi.

dissociated from theatrical presentation. Since all but a few of the theatrical criticisms attributed to Murphy appeared in the London Chronicle of 1757 and 1758, and since those few which did not have been reproduced in a well-annotated modern edition, this edition is confined to his London Chronicle pieces.³

Although he is the subject of two modern biographies, Arthur Murphy has received little critical attention. For most students of literature, his name evokes recollections of the Johnson circle; for some, it suggests a minor eighteenth-century dramatist. Why Murphy has been so little regarded is a puzzle. Possibly, it is because he did so many different things well, yet in each was overshadowed by the leading figure or figures in that area. Dramatist, critic, actor, essayist, political polemicist, student and translator of the classics, biographer, lawyer partially responsible for the first modern copyright laws, and intimate of Johnson, Burke, Garrick, and many of the leading literary, theatrical and political figures of his time, Murphy, more than most, deserves the title, man of letters. Unfortunately, the man of letters is honored mostly as an abstract ideal

³ See New Essays by Arthur Murphy, ed. Arthur Sherbo (East Lansing, 1963).

and critical attention is generally devoted only to the superior individual in a particular field.

As a comic dramatist alone, Murphy has been overlooked. His plays are seldom, if ever, anthologized or studied, yet he, along with Foote, Colman, and Garrick, began the revival of the Restoration comedy of wit and manners that is usually credited to Goldsmith and Sheridan. Ernest Bernbaum made this point many years ago: "The drama of the 1750's showed a strong revival of the comic spirit. A new group of playwrights--notably Samuel Foote, Arthur Murphy, George Colman--raised comedy, not to the high level on which it moved in the days of Vanbrugh, but much higher than in the depressing period between 1730 and 1750."⁴ A. H. Thorndike found Murphy, "a more loyal follower of the old tradition than either Colman or Garrick," and ranked him with Goldsmith and Sheridan as the leading late eighteenth-century proponents of "the great tradition that began with Dryden and Etherege but had been sadly lapsing after Farquhar."⁵

Though perhaps Sheridan's The School for Scandal and The Rivals and Goldsmith's one success, She Stoops to Conquer, may be considered superior to Murphy's best

Arthur Murphy (New York, 1946), p. 294.

⁴The Drama of Sensibility (Cambridge, Mass., 1925), p. 205.

⁵English Comedy (New York, 1929), pp. 422 and 436.

comedies, The Way to Keep Him, All in the Wrong, and Know Your Own Mind, the judgment is a nice one. Certainly Murphy produced far more popular and consistently good plays than either. For "sixty years between 1756 and 1815 not one passed in which audiences failed to see a play or plays by Murphy."⁶ Professor James Lynch, surveying the repertory of the London theatres between 1737 and 1777, informs us that in an era when a run of nine or ten nights was considered successful, "More than four hundred nights during the last sixteen years of the period were devoted to the plays of Murphy and Colman alone."⁷

As a periodical essayist Murphy was more than competent, and "On Macbeth (8), Shakespeare Vindicated in a Letter to Voltaire (12), King Lear (16, 17), On Tragedy (48), On Comedy (49) and On the Burlesque Style (50) are essays which lift the Gray's-Inn Journal above the general level of its contemporaries."⁸ A contributor to, among other periodicals, the Literary Magazine and the Monthly Review, he was the latter's leading drama critic from 1786 to 1789.

⁶Howard Hunter Dunbar, The Dramatic Career of Arthur Murphy (New York, 1946), p. 294.

⁷Box, Pit and Gallery: Stage and Society in Johnson's London (Berkeley, 1953), p. 28.

⁸Walter Graham, English Literary Periodicals (New York, 1930), p. 124.

His two political journals, the Test (Nov. 6, 1756-July 9, 1757) and the Auditor (June 10, 1762-Feb. 8, 1763) are important documents in the history of the political machinations that took place during the Seven Years' War. Both are well-written, but Murphy's defense of the aristocratic Whig position against that of the popular Pitt, who was supported by the London trade interests, and his later defense of the Lord Bute ministry, which was attempting to negotiate an unpopular peace against the wishes of a merchant class interested in expansion and empire, earned him more enemies than friends.⁹ The latter exposed him to a number of satirical attacks, and the supporters of John Wilkes, the popular leader of the opposition who had been prosecuted for his writings in the North Briton, the anti-ministerial periodical which warred with Murphy's Auditor, made their presence felt in the playhouse against Murphy for a good while.¹⁰

Murphy's translation of Tacitus (1793) was "the first good English version of the Roman historian and it remained the standard one for nearly a hundred years."¹¹

⁹ See R. D. Spector, English Literary Periodicals and the Climate of Opinion During the Seven Years' War (The Hague, 1966), chaps. 1-4, passim.

¹⁰ Dunbar, Murphy, pp. 150-164, passim.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 303.

His Essay on the Life and Genius of Samuel Johnson (1793) includes some original material not "gleaned" by Boswell, Hawkins, and Mrs. Thrale; his two-volume Life of David Garrick (1801) contains much useful information for the student of the eighteenth-century theatrical world and is the best contemporary portrait of the great player. The Essay on the Life and Genius of Henry Fielding (1762), held in little esteem by modern Fielding scholars, was the principal biography for almost a century. What is often overlooked is that, despite the inaccuracies, sententious moral tone, and lack of completeness, Murphy defended Fielding quite well against the charge of complete immorality usually levelled against him in this period.¹² But a summary of achievements fails to capture the man. From the perspective of our time he is a minor literary figure, peripheral to the great men of the era. But the tendency to fuse our literary judgments and our concepts of the historical personage distorts our picture of the man in his time. Unless a minor literary figure has achieved distinction in another field, we too often unconsciously relegate him to the same position, as a figure of respect and influence in his time, that we assign

¹²Ibid., pp. 137-140.

James P. Clafford, Hector Lynn, 1760-1840 (Oxford, 1941), p. 66.

him on our scale of literary values. Hence, we tend to view Murphy as another litterateur attending the Great Cham, Johnson, or as a minor figure in the theatrical milieu dominated by Garrick and others.

It is easily forgotten that Murphy's portrait hung at Streatham, the home of the Thrales and the gathering-place of the Johnson circle, alongside those of Johnson, Burke, Garrick, and Reynolds, and that he was regarded as a social and intellectual equal by many of the outstanding men of his day. Goldsmith dreaded Murphy's wit, which due to Goldsmith's almost neurotic desire to shine in conversation he was often subjected to, and on one occasion after Murphy had baited him, not undeservedly, Mrs. Thrale recorded the incident and her feelings: "I could not avoid pitying him [Goldsmith] when I saw him so humbled under the lash of a man who though so far superior to him in Friendship, Honour and every manly Virtue, in Person, Address, and every pleasing Quality, is not to be compar'd with him as a Writer."¹³ It is a good indication of the esteem in which Murphy was held, though it undervalues him as writer--not unexpectedly since Mrs. Thrale had little regard for the drama.

It was Murphy who introduced Johnson to the Thrales, and far from being just another recipient of Johnson's

¹³James L. Clifford, Hester Lynch Piozzi (Mrs. Thrale) (Oxford, 1941), p. 86.

dicta, he was regarded as a friend and conversational equal. Boswell, no great admirer of Murphy, noted, "To hear him [Johnson] and Murphy talk of literature gave me an unusual relish for it; and I perceived there was hardly any book which in a critical mouth might not be made to appear of some worth."¹⁴

Tate Wilkinson claims that Murphy and Samuel Foote were the only theatrical people not in awe of Garrick and who could work the domineering Roscius to their ends: "But Mr. Foote's knowledge of Garrick was superficial when compared with Mr. Murphy's; for Mr. Murphy's cool and sensible penetration made him a perfect judge of the whole inward soul of Mr. Garrick."¹⁵ Later, Wilkinson remarks, "Mr. Garrick, though attached to subordination, was kept in order and decorum himself by our present ingenious writer, Counsellor Murphy."¹⁶ The statements of his peers tell us that Murphy was more influential and respected in his time than modern literary opinion might lead us to expect.

Born in Ireland, Dec. 27, 1727, the second son of Jane French and Richard Murphy, a Dublin merchant, Arthur

¹⁴ The Private Papers of James Boswell, ed. Geoffrey Scott and Frederick Pottle (Privately printed, 1928-1934), XI, 237.

¹⁵ Memoirs of His Own Life (York, 1790), I, 22.

¹⁶ Ibid., III, 48.

Murphy and his brother James (1725) were soon left to the care of their mother when in 1729 their father died on a trading voyage.¹⁷ Mrs. Murphy's brother, Jeffrey French came to her aid and on his advice she sold the property in Dublin and in 1735 moved to London, where French was a merchant. The family was dependent on French and he promised to establish the boys in business or a profession. Arthur was soon sent to France to reside with his maternal aunt, Mrs. Arthur Plunkett, and in 1738 he was enrolled in the English college of the Jesuit monastery at St. Omer, where for the next six years he distinguished himself as a student of the classics and developed an interest in the drama and the French critics.

In 1744 he returned to London and for the next three years, while dwelling with his mother in the Strand, pursued mercantile studies at Webster's Academy--apparently at his uncle's direction. Though little enamoured of becoming a merchant, he now had the chance to explore London and under the guidance of his brother James, who had studied at Westminster School and was soon to enter the Middle Temple, he was introduced to the coffee-houses,

¹⁷Unless otherwise noted, for the following biographical information I am indebted to Murphy's two modern biographers, John Pike Emery, Arthur Murphy (Philadelphia, 1946); Howard Dunbar, Dramatic Career; and to his contemporary biographer, Jessé Foot, The Life of Arthur Murphy, Esq. (London, 1811).

theatres, and a group of young bloods including Beau Tracy, Thaddeus Fitzpatrick, William Havard, and Samuel Foote.

In 1747 his uncle sent him to Cork as an informal apprentice to Edmund Harrold, an eminent London merchant who had an establishment there. But two years later, when French commanded that he go to Jamaica where French owned a plantation, Murphy refused and returned to London. Though tired of the drudgery of the merchant world, he attempted to regain his uncle's favor by accepting an assistant bookkeeper's position with Ironside and Belchier, bankers in Lombard Street. But after a year, when French failed to respond, he quit and plunged wholeheartedly into the London literary and theatrical life that had long attracted him. Since his return to London, he had frequented the theatres, coffee-houses and taverns where writers and actors gathered and had become acquainted with many of them. Among these were Charles Macklin, Samuel Foote, David Garrick, William Collins, and Christopher Smart, many of whom, along with Murphy, were members of the Shakespeare Club, a group that met at the coffee-houses to discuss Shakespeare and literary and theatrical topics in general.

It was probably at the Bedford Coffee-house, sometime in 1751, that Murphy met Henry Fielding, who was at this time projecting plans for his Convent-Garden

Journal. And early in 1752, when this periodical actually began to appear, Fielding took Murphy on as a second assistant. His job was the humble one of scanning the London papers for news items and arranging them for the "Modern History" section of the Journal, but this work under Fielding was a valuable apprenticeship for Murphy's later literary endeavours. His contributions to the main essays seem to have been slight: Emery credits him with having a hand in Nos. 53, 62, 64, and 65; Sherbo concurs in No. 62 only, while Dunbar feels there is not sufficient evidence for attribution. There was an air of excitement about the Journal during this period, for Fielding was constantly engaged in verbal warfare with, among others, Bonnell Thornton and the notorious John Hill, at this time the subject of Smart's satirical Hilliad, which Murphy contributed to, and a man for whom Murphy bore a life-long antipathy.¹⁸

On October 21, 1752, more than a month before the demise of the Covent-Garden Journal, Murphy became a partner with "Charles D'Anvers," of whom virtually nothing is known, in the publication of a weekly periodical called the Craftsman, or New Craftsman. There are no extant copies of this periodical. Using the pseudonym Charles

¹⁸ Arthur Sherbo, Christopher Smart: Scholar of the University (East Lansing, 1967), pp. 91-92.

Ranger, taken from the name of a character in Benjamin Hoadly's Suspicious Husband, Murphy wrote a weekly essay in the Craftsman under the rubric Gray's-Inn Journal. Almost a year later, on September 29, 1753, after forty-nine issues of the Craftsman, he began to publish the Gray's-Inn Journal as an independent venture.¹⁹ He ceased publication of the Gray's-Inn Journal on September 21, 1754, after fifty-two issues, presumably to concentrate on his imminent acting career. However, Sherbo credits him at this time with a periodical entitled, The Entertainer, which ran from September 3, 1754, weekly through November 19, 1754, overlapping both the final issues of the Gray's-Inn Journal and Murphy's first appearance on the stage.²⁰

In format and content the Gray's-Inn Journal was in the periodical tradition of the Spectator, Tatler, and the later Convent-Garden Journal. Like the last, the main essay was followed by a section, in this case entitled "True Intelligence," containing items of topical interest, often of a theatrical nature. As an admirer of Addison, many of Murphy's essays, like those in the

¹⁹ For a history of the dating, revisions and the various editions of this periodical see Roland B. Botting, "The Textual History of Murphy's Gray's-Inn Journal," Research Studies of the State College of Washington, XXV (1957), 33-48.

²⁰ New Essays, pp. 1-16.

Spectator, were conceived as corrective satire aimed at moral improvement in his readers. He satirized women, coffee-house clientele, card-playing, the Royal Society, affected travelers and what he deemed general foibles. But his particular disposition was toward the theatre and theatrical life; hence, a number of the essays are concerned with dramatic criticism. In these he championed natural acting, opposed pantomimes, and theorized about comedy and tragedy. By and large, his style was lucid and entertaining and his contribution to the periodical essay notable.

Murphy had little profit from the Gray's-Inn Journal though it was not a financial failure. He had hoped to be one of his uncle's heirs, but when French died in 1754 he left nothing to his nephews. Faced with debts, a common state for Murphy throughout much of his life, he was advised by his friend Samuel Foote to try the stage. Under Foote's tutelage he prepared himself and was engaged for the 1754-55 season at Convent Garden, ostensibly as a replacement for Spranger Barry who had gone to Dublin for the season. On October 18, 1754, Murphy made a successful debut as Othello, a considerable achievement since it invited comparison with Barry, who was considered the finest Othello of the day. During the remainder of the season he appeared as Zamor in Aaron Hill's Alzira, Young Bevil in Steele's The Conscious

Lovers, Archer in Farquhar's The Beaux' Stratagem, Hamlet, Richard III, and Biron in Southerne's Fatal Marriage.

With the proceeds from his benefit night plus his salary, he seems to have been able to pay most of his debts.

In the 1755-56 season he acted under Garrick at Drury Lane and, besides repeating some roles from the previous season, played Osmyn in Congreve's The Mourning Bride, Horatio in Rowe's Fair Penitent, Gothmund in Brown's Athelstan, Bajazet in Rowe's Tamerlane, and the lead in Henry Jones' Earl of Essex. He made few appearances in the latter half of the season, for it seems he and Garrick were at odds. Though Murphy was a great admirer of Garrick, the two men clashed a number of times in their long relationship. But the season was a financial success and after paying debts, Murphy cleared about £400,--a considerable sum at this time. He did not return to the stage after this season, and in later life glossed over the fact that he had been an actor. As a player he seems to have been quite competent; he had an attractive appearance, good judgment, and a good voice, but he lacked the power and magnetism of the great performer.

One of the reasons for his financial success in the 1755-56 season, was the production of his popular farce, The Apprentice, written in 1753 but first performed Jan. 2, 1756. A satire on spouting clubs, the

gathering places of stage-struck youths, it held the stage for almost half a century, and the great comedian Henry Woodward "owned" the role of Dick the apprentice until his death in 1777. Murphy's farce, The Englishman from Paris, lost until recently, was performed with little success in the spring of 1756.²¹ For Foote's The Englishman Returned from Paris, utilizing the same plot which he apparently took from Murphy in conversation, beat Murphy's play to the stage by almost three months. In retaliation, Murphy, in The Spouter; or the Triple Revenge, a play printed early in 1756 but never meant to be acted, satirized Foote along with John Hill and Theophilus Cibber, who at this time was attacking Garrick in a series of lectures on the drama.

These were productive years for Murphy. In addition to the three farces, he completed his first tragedy, The Orphan of China, sometime in 1756 though it was not performed until 1759. He wrote a mock elegy, "Elegy Written in a London Churchyard," contributed a review of Athelstan to his friend Smart's Universal Visiter,²² revised the second edition of his Gray's-Inn

²¹See Simon Trefman, "Arthur Murphy's Long Lost Englishman from Paris: A Manuscript Discovered," Theatre Notebook, XX (1966), 137-141.

²²Sherbo, New Essays, pp. 179-184.

Journal and saw it through the press, and in November, 1756, undertook the Test in defense of the fallen New-castle administration. This journal was soon answered by Owen Ruffhead's Con-Test, whose raison d'etre was contradicting the Test in support of the Pitt ministry, and Murphy found himself embroiled in a full-scale political paper-war.

Thus, in January 1757, when Murphy began his first series of theatrical criticisms in the London Chronicle, he was eminently qualified for such a task. For the past eight years he had been intimately involved in the literary and theatrical life of London. He was widely read in the literature of the drama and in critical theory. He was a lucid and entertaining writer, a proven essayist able to meet the demands of regular composition. Though his best work as a playwright was still in the future, his experience as a writer and his two years as a professional actor had taught him that works meant for performance demanded critical standards different from those meant only to be read--a lesson few critics of the time had learned. That Murphy's London Chronicle criticism was the best of its kind in the century should not be surprising.

Though the mid-eighteenth century was not a remarkable period for the creation of drama, it was one of

the most eminent periods in the history of the English theatre. Seldom before, and never since, has the theatre played such a part in the life of its time. Murphy, reflecting on half a century's association with the London theatrical world, commented that in Garrick's time, "the theatre engrossed the minds of men to such a degree, that it may now be said, that there existed in England a fourth estate, Kings, Lords, and Commons, and Drury-Lane Playhouse."²³ There is more fact than hyperbole in Murphy's statement. More than a century and a half later, George Winchester Stone, discussing the attempt of himself and his colleagues to reconstruct the London stage as it existed from 1660 to 1800, wrote of the mid-century theatre, "The institution which emerges is not a property, a stage, an actor, a text, or an audience, but a complex business enterprise of increasing prosperity, which took its place as a constant in the daily life of London--as much of a constant as the church, the government, the market, the transport system, or the building and victualling trades."²⁴ The theatre had been a vital force in the first quarter of the century under the acting and direction of

²³Life of Garrick, II, 201.

²⁴The London Stage 1660-1880, Part 4: 1747-1776 (Carbondale, 1962), I, xix.

Cibber, Wilks, and Booth, but by 1732 it had fallen into a state of decline. At the end of this year, Wilks was dead, Booth ailing, and Cibber retired. The audiences flocked to see Rich's pantomimes, and legitimate comedy and tragedy had few supporters. But in the 1740's, Garrick and Charles Macklin revitalized the stage with their natural acting styles, and in 1747, when Garrick and James Lacy assumed the joint managership of Drury Lane, one of the great theatrical eras began.

The London Patent houses of this era were above all actors' theatres: "Because of its dependence on the repertory system, the Georgian theatre had kept alive the masterpieces of the older drama, and in presenting them also fashioned a race of great actors whose equals perhaps have not been seen before or since."²⁵ Garrick, of course, was the acknowledged master, but he was not unchallenged in a number of roles. The handsome Spranger Barry was his most formidable rival. They often appeared in the same roles and their rivalry filled both houses. "Barry was the most irresistible of stage lovers, and in tenderness and majesty was as incomparable as Garrick was in the grand and conflicting passions of humanity."²⁶

²⁵Appleton and Burnim, Prompter, p. v.

²⁶H. Barton Baker, English Actors (New York, 1879), I, 204.

There was also the irascible Charles Macklin who began the theatrical reformation with his interpretation of Shylock, a low comedy role until he restored the original. His contribution to natural acting has been often overlooked in the adulation of Garrick.²⁷ Henry Mossop, a tall and stately actor with a strong and harmonious voice, was, despite a certain mechanical quality, a notable and popular tragedian. Samuel Foote, actor, author, sometime-manager, was the leading mimic. The great comedian of the day was Henry Woodward. His Marplot, Bobadil, Touchstone, Mercutio, and Lord Foppington were unsurpassed and he rivalled John Rich as Harlequin.

The women were no less regarded than the men. Hannah Pritchard, who held the stage for thirty-six years, excelled in both comedy and tragedy though she leaned toward comic roles. Known for her portrayal of characters of intrigue, mirth, and gaiety, and for those of the term-agent, she was also a fine Queen in Hamlet and, until late in the century, an unequalled Lady Macbeth. Susanna Maria Cibber's forte was the tender and passionate heroine. She was an accomplished singer and though not a beautiful woman, "her person was perfectly elegant";²⁸ at the age

²⁷ Alan S. Downer, "Nature to Advantage Dressed: Eighteenth-Century Acting," in Restoration Drama, ed. John Loftis (New York, 1966), pp. 339-340.

²⁸ The Thespian Dictionary (London, 1805), sub Cibber.

of fifty she could still play the part of a juvenile heroine with plausibility. The expressive and vivacious Peg Woffington excelled in roles of females of high rank and in comic parts, but her most famous was the "breeches" part as Sir Harry Wildair in Farquhar's The Constant Couple. In this role she had replaced Robert Wilks, the unrivalled "fine gentleman" of an earlier era. Georgeanne Bellamy disputed Mrs. Cibber in the "love-lorn heroines of tragedy."²⁹ Acclaimed for her beauty, wit, and passion, by 1760, at the age of twenty-nine, her beauty had faded, and never quite having had the professional competence that allowed other actresses to overcome this loss, her stage career was over. The most famous comedienne of the era was Kitty Clive. She acted from 1728 to 1769 and her only flaw was a penchant for playing tragedy, a genre for which she was completely unsuited and one which she often turned into burlesque.

A relatively stable, highly professional company of actors was the sine qua non of the repertory system. In a season which ran from mid-September through May, each theatre gave approximately one hundred eighty performances of fifty different plays. Only the most competent professionals could meet such a schedule.

²⁹ Baker, Actors, I, 275.

Though the Licensing Act of 1737 had restricted the legitimate drama to the two Patent theatres in Drury Lane and Covent Garden, the competition was intense. In the 1750's, the two theatres were almost equal in size, with Drury Lane having an estimated capacity of 1,268 persons and Covent Garden 1,335.³⁰ That throughout the decade Drury Lane had an average attendance of about one thousand persons a day and Covent Garden only thirty to fifty less, marks the equality of their offerings. Actors could move freely between the two houses or, as they often did, go to Dublin for the season. Hence, monopoly had no adverse effect on the excellence of performance and may in fact have aided it by concentrating the actors in a circumscribed area. It did, however, severely limit the outlets for new drama.

The audience came from all walks of life, though the upper-middle class set the moral, social, and economic tone of the theatre in this period. The lower classes, workmen, sailors, servants, apprentices, all but the lowest (who seldom had the price of admission), sat in the upper or "shilling" gallery. The small businessmen, shopmen, experienced clerks, and journeymen were divided between

³⁰For statistics on capacity and attendance, and for the following information on the nature of the audience, I am indebted to Harry William Pedicord, The Theatrical Public in the Time of Garrick (Carbondale, 1954).

the upper and lower galleries. The gallery audience made up the largest share of "after money," income from the practice of admitting at "half price" after the third act those who were either previously engaged, or, more commonly, those interested only in the entertainment that followed the mainpiece. Though the galleries were often loud and obstreperous, a more critical audience sat in the pit. Here gathered professional men, public servants, men from the inns of court, and the young men about town; this was, in general, a literate and interested audience, many of whose members were regular theatregoers and competent critics. In line with the change from an aristocratic to a middle class theatre, wealthy traders and employers now joined the aristocracy in the boxes. Though some of the earlier abuses, such as the seating of patrons on the stage, were gradually abolished, by modern standards this was a difficult audience to play for. As late as 1788, a critic in the Monthly Review could still talk about "catcalls," the "vociferous importunities of orange-women," and "the licentious clamours of the galleries."³¹ It was an axiom that, "Mr. Town and John Bull would have their own way and not be in the least controlled."³² Surprisingly, these theatregoers were

³¹LXXIX (July 1788), 79.

³²Wilkinson, Memoirs, II, 36.

quite generous to novice performers, a phenomenon often remarked upon, but when displeased with a seasoned actor, even one of their favorites, they were capable of halting the performance with noise and a barrage of refuse.

They came to theatres heated by coal burning fireplaces and lighted by Spermacetti and wax candles and oil lamps. If they came for the full bill of fare, they were in the theatre from six o'clock to ten. The evening "consisted of a Prologue, a full five-act Main-piece, an Epilogue, some form of theatrical dance (usually narrative and comic), a two-act Afterpiece, a good deal of popular music, and during the benefit season, a number of specialty acts."³³ The afterpiece was usually a farce, a pantomime, a ballad opera, or a burletta. At Covent Garden, the afterpiece would more often be a pantomime, for its manager, the eccentric John Rich, was himself a leading Harlequin and "revolved his afterpiece program about a repertory of five elegantly got-up pantomimes each season."³⁴ At Drury Lane, satirical farces predominated but Rich's competition forced Garrick to offer more pantomimes than he preferred.

³³ Stone, London Stage, I, xxiv.

³⁴ For this and the following information about the theatrical repertory, I am indebted to Stone, London Stage.

tragedy Despite the accusations levelled at Rich by his contemporaries that he corrupted the public taste with his pantomimes and pageants, his mainpiece offerings were similar to those at Drury Lane, and throughout the 1750's the competition between the two houses in legitimate drama was stiff. The edge held by Drury Lane was due to its having a slightly superior company of actors headed by the inimitable Garrick, rather than to its being the last bastion of legitimate drama. However, it is true that Rich was less amenable than Garrick to producing the work of new writers.

Shakespeare Out of the one hundred eighty acting nights, each theatre usually presented about sixteen different tragedies, thirty comedies, and six miscellaneous types--histories, tragicomedies, opera, masques. This was the period of the great Shakespeare revival, and between the two theatres generally fifteen or sixteen of his plays were produced each season. The most popular tragedies of the period were Shakespeare's, with Romeo and Juliet heading the list, followed by Hamlet, King Lear, Macbeth and Othello. Second only to Shakespearean tragedy was the pathetic variety with Otway's The Orphan and Venice Preserv'd, Rowe's The Fair Penitent and Jane Shore, and Congreve's The Mourning Bride the most popular representatives of the type.

comedy The ratio of comic offerings to those of tragedy show this was an age of comedy. It far outdistanced

She Would and She Would Not.

tragedy in both the number of performances of old and new works and in the quality of the plays being written at this time. Though a good deal of critical attention has been devoted to sentimental comedy in this period, comedy of manners still dominated the stage, and performances of this type alone almost doubled those of sentimental comedy. When Shakespearean comedy, humours comedy, and comedy of intrigue are taken into consideration along with that of manners, presentations of sentimental comedy constitute less than one-fifth of the comic repertory.

Once again, the single most important author was Shakespeare; his Much Ado About Nothing, The Tempest (usually altered as an opera), As You Like It, The Merchant of Venice, Twelfth Night, Measure for Measure, and The Merry Wives of Windsor were among the most popular plays of the period. The most popular single comedy was Benjamin Hoadly's The Suspicious Husband, a combination of manners, intrigue and sentiment. Season after season, the plays that formed the basis of the comic repertory included Farquhar's The Beaux' Stratagem and The Recruiting Officer; Mrs. Centlivre's The Wonder, The Busy Body, and A Bold Stroke for a Wife; Ben Jonson's Every Man in His Humour and The Alchymist; Congreve's The Way of the World and Love for Love; Steele's The Conscious Lovers; Colley Cibber's The Careless Husband, his completion of Vanbrugh's The Provok'd Husband, Love's Last Shift, and She Would and She Would Not.

The most popular work by far in the miscellaneous category was Gay's ballad opera, The Beggar's Opera. It was performed more times than any other work and topped even Romeo and Juliet by a good margin. Shakespeare's histories, Richard II, Richard III, and Henry VIII were often played. A few comic operas, Burgoyne's The Maid of the Oaks, and Bickerstaffe's Maid of the Mill and Love in a Village, were perennial productions. A surprising entry was the Covent Garden revival of Milton's masque, Comus, which was given ninety-four times between 1747 and 1776. It is of interest to note, and a mark of the prevailing attitudes of the time, that tragicomedy had little success in this period.

is no longer tenable. The alterations and innovations that kept critical theory in a state of flux throughout the century have been well documented, though the meaning and implications of these changes continue to be a source of speculation and argument. For some modern critics the new directions taken during this time herald a "romantic" aesthetic, for others, they are only shifts and extensions within the framework of Neo-Classicism. What is important here, to an attempt to place Murphy's critical theories in perspective, is the necessity of sorting from this welter of conflicting and contradictory positions those elements with enough commonality to be

and as characteristic marks of mid eighteenth-century critical thought.

By the 1740's, the age of French Neo-Classicism, that had struck

II

MURPHY'S CRITICAL PREMISES

That the eighteenth century was a period of critical turmoil, a period in which occurred some of the most important and far-reaching changes in not only critical theory but in the philosophical and psychological foundations of such theory, is a common-place of contemporary scholarship. The view, which regarded the criticism of this period as a series of smug and self-assured proclamations based on unarguable and immutable literary laws, is no longer tenable. The alterations and innovations that kept critical theory in a state of flux throughout the century have been well documented, though the meanings and implications of these changes continue to be a source of speculation and argument. For some modern critics the new directions taken during this time herald a "Romantic" aesthetic, for others, they are only shifts and extensions within the framework of Neo-Classicism. What is important here, to an attempt to place Murphy's critical theories in perspective, is the necessity of sorting from this welter of conflicting and contradictory positions those elements with enough commonality to be

used as characteristic marks of mid eighteenth-century critical thought.

By the 1740's, the standards of French Neo-Classicism, that had strongly influenced English critical theory in the last quarter of the Seventeenth Century, received little endorsement. From Dryden on there was a growing realization that the "rules," which were the essence of early neo-classical doctrine and which received their authority from contemporary interpretations of the maxims of the "ancients," were a set of after-the-fact descriptions. They were derived from the model literary works of classical antiquity, without regard for historical and cultural needs and differences, and they failed to account for anything beyond, and even here not very satisfactorily, the structural aspects of literature.

J. W. H. Atkins remarks:

Amid conflicting cross-currents there was already an awakening to the need for something more than the rules, a realization that the poetic appeal was not to the intellect alone, but to the emotions as well; and methods of appreciation, as distinct from methods of composition, became now the main consideration. Certain general principles, for instance, were either emphasized anew or tentatively set forth for the first time. Fixed rules, it was asserted, were inconsistent with a changing environment; a distinction

was drawn between the 'mathematical reason' and the 'poetical reason'; 'good taste' was advocated as the test of literary excellence; and attempts were made to clear up obscurities in the critical terminology.³⁵

The rejection of these "fixed rules" led the critics of this period to search in new directions for a more viable set of principles.

Why the rules came to be called into question during this particular time remains a matter of speculation. Hypotheses range from ideas about the rise of "mechanistic" philosophy destroying the special provinces of poetry, hence, producing counter-arguments attempting to preserve these provinces, to suppositions about changing social conditions creating a climate in which literature and criticism flourished. Obviously, there is no simple answer, nor single factor, that will serve to explain this complex process. However, one phenomenon that stands out, though always in conjunction with other factors, is that a constantly growing body of criticism, both theoretical and practical, generated the examination of its own principles. As R. S. Crane points out, "it was in a period from Dryden to the end of the eighteenth century,

³⁵ English Literary Criticism, 17th & 18th Centuries (London, 1951), p. 185.

and to some extent under the influence of Dryden's example, that criticism of poetry, painting, and the other fine arts became, for the first time in English literature, an important branch of learning, considered worthy of cultivation, for both practical and theoretical ends, by some of the most distinguished minds of the time."³⁶

Previous to this time, the existing body of criticism was largely theoretical. It was a body of deductive literary precepts which were seldom applied to individual works. With the rise of practical criticism the great disparity between theory and practice became increasingly recognized. This recognition received its initial stimulus from the inability of the critics to reconcile the excellences of Shakespeare with his violation of the rules.³⁷ From this point, it was a short step to the realization that the rules explained little, if anything, about the beauties and effects of English drama in general. By 1702, though at this time still a minority opinion, Farquhar could say, "All the Authorities, all the Rules of Antiquity have prov'd too weak to support the Theatre, whilst others who have dispenc'd with the

³⁶"English Neo-classical Criticism: An Outline Sketch," in Critics and Criticism, ed. R. S. Crane (Chicago, 1952), p. 372.

³⁷See Clarence C. Green, The Neo-Classical Theory of Tragedy in England During the Eighteenth Century (Cambridge, Mass., 1934), pp. 82-101.

Critics, and taken a Latitude in the OEconomy of their Plays, have been the chief Supporters of the Stage, and the Ornament of the Drama; this is so visibly true, that I need bring in no instances to enforce it."³⁸

The ensuing search for a more serviceable set of principles moved the source of these principles from its locus within literature to stations outside of literature.³⁹ This search took three general directions, though it must always be noted that the directions were not separate entities but were a matter of emphasis, each always partaking of elements from the others. One direction was an attempt to ground the principles of literary structures in that most ambiguous concept, "nature." This direction emphasized the works themselves as the focal point of critical theory. Another trend was toward an audience-centered aesthetic, toward theories of evaluation based on the "effects" of literature. The third line of development was the renewed interest in theories of creation. Here the emphasis was on concepts of "genius,"

³⁸"Discourse upon Comedy," in Critical Essays of the 18th Century, ed. W. H. Durham (New Haven, 1915), p. 263.

³⁹For the nucleus of the following ideas I am indebted to: M. H. Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp (New York, 1953); Walter Jackson Bate, From Classic to Romantic (Cambridge, Mass., 1946); René Wellek, A History of Modern Criticism, 1750-1950 (New Haven, 1955), I; R. S. Crane, op. cit.

"imagination," and "invention," which allowed the artist to transcend the rules.

As long as the source of the rules had remained the literature itself, as was the case with the old principles, which were essentially compositional or structural precepts abstracted from individual works, there was, at least theoretically, no problem with either theories of creation or of evaluation. For if the source of the principles is the literature, and if these principles are accepted as basic critical premises, then both evaluation and creation work tautologically, i.e., in order to create a work of art one need only follow the compositional rules; to evaluate a work, one need only determine its conformity to the rules.

It goes without saying that actual critical practices never approached this kind of simple-minded reduction. However, as a reductio ad absurdum of the self-contained nature of those critical theories which were based on notions of immutable structural rules, the oversimplification may point to one reason for the number of directions taken after rules-oriented theories were rejected. When the search for new literary principles placed the source of these principles somewhere outside of literature, e.g., in "nature," it broke the tautology that bound together literary works, their creation, and their evaluation, and thus allowed for differing, and even contradictory, premises for each of these aspects.

R. L. Brett points out, "With the breakdown of traditional authority it was natural that criticism should turn to the new philosophy of ideas and substitute psychological explanation for the dictates of Aristotle."⁴⁰ This psychological bias can be seen in the question of whether a work of art appeals to the reason or to the feelings; it was a question that remained one of the primary concerns throughout the century. With this shift to the "effectiveness" of literature there arose that battery of ambiguous concepts that are interpreted by some as harbingers of Romanticism, and by others as logical extensions of Neo-Classicism: taste, the 'sublime,' genius, imagination, fancy, invention. These, along with nature and imitation, became the important concepts of eighteenth-century criticism.

What the fragmentation into a number of philosophical and psychologically based theories means to an attempt to characterize mid eighteenth-century critical thought is, that by this time, what is generally termed Neo-Classicism is no longer definable by a particular set of tenets. In the 1750's, it is not unusual for a critic to propose that literary works follow at least those rules of the ancients which are founded on universal humanity,

⁴⁰ The Third Earl of Shaftesbury (London, 1951), p. 127.

i.e., "nature"; to base his concept of artistic creation on definitions of "genius," "judgment," and "imagination," largely borrowed from the associationist psychology that had developed out of the thought of Hobbes and Locke; to ground his theory of evaluation in both a Neo-Platonic concept of "taste," and in the pleasure and moral utility of Horace's utile et dulce. It is important to keep in mind that generally these premises were implicit rather than explicit. And that often, the critic, when dealing with individual works or when theorizing about the various forms, did not separate, or was even unaware of, such categories as structure, creation, and evaluation. These all blend in the evaluation of any given work and are only tools that allow one to sort trends from the critical complexities of this period.

If the Neo-Classicism of this time cannot be defined by a particular set of precepts, it appears that it may be defined by a commonality of critical approach and a few generally held assumptions. One of the basic aims of Neo-Classicism, as opposed to the impressionistic tendency of Romanticism, was, "to discover the principles or the 'laws' or 'rules' of literature, of literary creation, of the structure of a literary work of art, and of the reader's response."⁴¹ Despite the various

⁴¹Wellek, History, I, 12.

directions taken in this search, and despite the ambiguities of such concepts as imagination, fancy, taste, and the 'sublime,' there were always implicit assumptions of, "a stable psychology of human nature, a fundamental set of norms in the works themselves, a uniform working of human sensibility and intelligence allowing us to reach conclusions which would be valid for all art and all literature."⁴²

This then, was roughly the state of English critical theory, when, in the 1750's, Murphy began his career as a practicing critic. By the last half of the eighteenth century, any critic who had pretensions to more than personal opinion, had to confront, and attempt to solve for himself, a multitude of critical problems. And as Murphy appears to have been more aware than most of this critical legacy, it is not surprising to find him subject to quite diverse influences.

He had been educated in France, was a life-long student and translator of the classics, and he maintained a passionate and abiding interest in most aspects of English literature and its criticism--particularly that of the drama. Throughout his early writings he makes reference to, among others, Horace and Aristotle, to Boileau,

⁴²Ibid.

Arthur Caskey, "Arthur Murphy as Critic," *Studies in English Literature*, XXXVII (1940), 596-603.

Rapin, Bossu, Bouhours, Dacier, and Voltaire, to Locke, Dryden, Shaftesbury, Pope, Dennis, Rymer, and Johnson. In his common-place book, probably written in the 1780's, there are notes on, or references to Lowth, Harris, Hurd, Marmontel, Vida, Blair, Lord Kames, and Fontenelle.⁴³ It may be no exaggeration to claim that Murphy was as well read in critical theory, in both that of the past and of his contemporaries, as any critic in eighteenth-century England. That he was aware of the various cross-currents brooks no contention. That he attempted, often quite successfully, to resolve many of these theoretical problems, will be demonstrated in the following survey of his critical premises.

The primary objective of examining Murphy's theories is to acquaint the reader of his theatrical criticism with those assumptions upon which this criticism is based. A second purpose is to provide the reader with Murphy's particular uses and definitions of those ambiguous concepts, "nature," "taste," "imagination," etc., that were fundamental to the criticism of this period. Finally, there is the intrinsic interest in examining the theories of a critic, who except for some

⁴³ J. Homer Caskey, "Arthur Murphy's Common-Place Book," SP, XXXVII (1940), 598-609.

attention to his statements on the drama, has been largely overlooked; and possibly finding he is a better critic than has been supposed.

One of the main reasons Murphy has been overlooked as a theorist, and the chief difficulty in attempting to survey his premises, is that he was not a systematic critic. This is not to impugn his logic in the handling of specific critical problems, it is only to point out that he left no single treatise, or group of works, in which his critical theories were systematically set forth. The closest he comes to this is in a few sequences of essays in the 1786 edition of the Gray's-Inn Journal. During a time span of almost half a century, he dealt, at one point or another, with most of the critical problems of the period. But his treatment of these problems is scattered throughout the Gray's Inn-Journal, the Monthly Review, the London Chronicle, and his lives of Johnson, Fielding, and Garrick. It is surprising to find how much space he devoted to critical concerns when he was ostensibly writing biography.

This means, that in order to examine Murphy's critical theories in the same way one would those of a systematic critic, his premises must be collected from the different sources, and juxtaposed in some logical sequence. But it is important that no system be imposed on these concepts that might alter their meanings. To

avoid this problem, the various critical concerns have been ordered in the same general patterns that most eighteenth-century criticism appears to have followed, i.e., to begin with his statements about the rules seems the logical starting point; to move next to his ideas of nature and imitation, which are premises of literary structures; then to his notions of genius, imagination, judgment, and invention, all concepts of artistic creation; after this, to the "affective" aspects--taste and its alliance with morality, and the sublime; finally, most of these converge in his theories of the different literary forms.

As the survey proceeds, an attempt will be made to place Murphy's ideas in the critical milieu of the period, and to compare his concepts with the prevailing ones. Where particular influences are obvious, they will be pointed out. However, when dealing with a critic as subject to the various cross-currents as Murphy, the matter of influence is, at best, specious.

Even a casual glance at some of Murphy's statements regarding the rules, particularly in those essays where the limits of time and space precluded any consideration of critical principles, turns up a number of seeming inconsistencies. At times, he appears to advocate almost a rigid French Neo-Classical adherence to the rules. "The Plot is very far from being conducted artificially,

and in a just Subordinancy to the Rules of the Drama."⁴⁴
 "The Rules of the Drama are frequently destroyed, and in general it is such a Jumble of Banqueting, Rioting, Loving, Fighting, Drinking, and Quarrelling, that a worse play could not be well chosen to suit the modern Taste."⁴⁵

Opposed to these are a number of counter-statements in which the inadequacy of these precepts is recognized. Often, as for so many eighteenth-century critics, it was Shakespeare's transcendence that made this inadequacy most obvious. "The light of Nature was his guide. In some instances he saw the beauty arising from the Unity of his subject; in others, he chose to follow the chain of historical events, and he felt, as his auditors always feel, that the warmth, the spirit, and the rapidity of his genius, could give even to wild variety all the graces of connection."⁴⁶

But Shakespeare was only the most conspicuous example of the rules' inherent limitations as critical principles. Of Otway's The Orphan Murphy remarks, "In the Play now before us there are many admirable Strokes of Genius, and the Story shews us how greatly those Critics

⁴⁴London Chronicle, Jan. 25-27, 1757.

⁴⁵London Chronicle, Feb. 12-15, 1757.

⁴⁶Gray's Inn-Journal, No. 41 (1786). Hereafter abbreviated GIJ.

are mistaken, who insist that the Subject of Tragedy should always be some illustrious Action depending among great and exalted Personages."⁴⁷ And of the English tragedians he can say, "Our poets are sufficiently possessed of the Spirit of Tragedy, but they are not attentive to the minute rules of correct taste, and the trouble of blotting. It may be added, that they have more real fire, sublimer sentiments, and characters better marked than any nation whatever."⁴⁸

A number of his seeming inconsistencies are explained in those theoretical passages in which he examines the limits and the usefulness of the rules. The following quotations best summarize not only Murphy's position on the rules, but the one commonly held by most late eighteenth-century critics.⁴⁹ In a review of Henry Pye's translation of Aristotle's Poetics, he says of Pye's projected commentary on this work that a dissertation of this nature "may teach the critic not to adopt, with superstition, rules of the drama, merely because they are in Aristotle; for in the Greek writer many rules are

⁴⁷London Chronicle, Mar. 8-10, 1757.

⁴⁸GIJ, No. 73 (1786).

⁴⁹A. Bosker in his Literary Criticism in the Age of Johnson (The Hague, 1930), p. 64, uses one of Murphy's statements on the rules (GIJ, No. 87) to exemplify the common eighteenth-century position.

to be found, which are not fundamental, but adapted entirely to the structure of the ancient drama."⁵⁰ In one of the Gray's-Inn Journal essays he makes his most cogent statement on this matter:

That the rules established by Aristotle and Horace are, for the most part, agreeable to nature, I am ready to allow. Men of inferior genius may think it in their interest, and, if they will, their duty to conform to those rules. They may, in that school, learn the economy of a just and well arranged fable. But fable is but a secondary beauty; the exhibition of character, and the excitement of the passions, justly claiming the precedence. With the rules, which theoretical writers have drawn into a system, Shakespeare appears not much acquainted. Of those rules some are valuable, because founded in NATURE; others are of positive institution only, and like many arbitrary acts of civil society, they cease in time to have the force of obligation.⁵¹

Hence, most of the time, when Murphy takes an author to

⁵⁰The Monthly Review, LXXX (February 1789), 148. For Murphy's contributions to this periodical I am indebted to Benjamin C. Nangle, The Monthly Review (1749-1780): Indexes of Contributors and Articles (Oxford, 1934).

⁵¹GIJ, No. 41 (1786).

task for not following the rules, he is referring to those general laws of "nature," not to the precepts of the ancients--except where they are one and the same.

The obvious problem with this concept is the inconsistency which manifested itself in the criticism of individual works. Which are the rules of nature, good for all time and place, and which are the arbitrary ones? Each critic of the period seems to have drawn the line at a different point. Not only might each critic draw a different line within this general concept, but his line of demarcation often changed at various times in his career, or when dealing with different writers. Murphy was no exception to this disparity. While he advocated an adherence only to "those rules founded in nature," he sometimes criticized on the basis of the "arbitrary" ones.

Central to Murphy's discussion of the rules, and central to any examination of eighteenth-century critical theory is that problematic concept, "nature." But before exploring the various senses in which Murphy used this term, some of the critical directions implied in the foregoing statements about the rules might be noted.

Implied here are the general directions taken in the eighteenth-century search for more comprehensive literary principles. The most apparent is the turn toward "nature" in an attempt to ground literature in

something more fundamental than arbitrary rules of composition. The recurring term, "genius," points toward the interest taken during this time in the properties and characteristics of artistic creation. And such phrases as "real fire," "sublimar sentiments," and the "excitement of the passions," suggest an "affective" or audience-centered aesthetic.

"Nature" is one of the most important yet elusive critical concepts of the eighteenth century. The shifts and changes in the ideas of "nature" that took place during this period have been viewed by a number of intellectual historians as the key to eighteenth-century thought.⁵² Basically, "Nature and Reason are normally associated in the earlier part of the century, Nature and Feeling in the later."⁵³ But the meaning of the term was constantly shifting and in the use of "nature" as an aesthetic norm alone, A. O. Lovejoy identifies eighteen different senses of the word.⁵⁴

Murphy's use of the term falls into two general categories: (1.) imitation of "nature" as a structural

⁵²See A. O. Lovejoy, The Great Chain of Being (Cambridge, Mass., 1936); Basil Willey, The Eighteenth Century Background (London, 1940).

⁵³Willey, p. 207.

⁵⁴"'Nature' As Aesthetic Norm," in Essays In the History of Ideas (New York, 1960), pp. 70-73.

principle, i.e., art as a representation of the usual or probable in life, a representation in which the various events must have plausible connections; (2.) "nature" as an "affective" concept, i.e., only a "just imitation of nature" elicits the desired response from an audience.

The following quotations illustrate the first category:

. . . and Scrub is justly drawn from Nature, though not always acted so.⁵⁵

It seems a kind of fatality in the literary World, that fashion seems to govern, what should only be directed by the Standard of Nature.⁵⁶

. . . when Truth breaks in upon him, when he sees and feels himself ridiculous, it is from irresistible Circumstances, and without a Violation of Nature.⁵⁷

[that Jonson's Every Man in His Humour survived for 160 years] . . . shews us that the Painter's Pencil must have been faithful to Nature, otherwise we should hardly please ourselves, at present, with Portraits whose Originals are no more.⁵⁸

⁵⁵London Chronicle, Jan. 20-22, 1757.

⁵⁶Ibid., Jan. 27-29.

⁵⁷Ibid., Feb. 10-12.

⁵⁸Ibid., Mar. 31-Apr. 2.

For Murphy, as for most eighteenth-century Neo-Classicists, "nature" was shared common experience. The "improbably possible" violated common experience almost as much as did the "impossible." However, the concept of imitation, which was derived from a rather literal interpretation of Aristotle's Mimesis, was not one of "photographic naturalism."⁵⁹ It did not limit the artist to the known world, only to a credible one, to "the invention of something, which, though not actually existing, was in strict accordance with the laws of nature and reason."⁶⁰ Thus, Murphy could say of Shakespeare's supernatural beings, "There is something so wild, yet so solemn, in the Speeches of his imaginary Persons, that we cannot help thinking them Natural, and must confess, that if there are such Beings, it is highly probable, their Manners and Vocations, their Sports and Pastimes, their Delights and Resentments, must be such as he has represented."⁶¹

Occasionally, Murphy uses the term "romantic," as an antonym of "natural." In its usual eighteenth-century sense the qualities designated by this term were

⁵⁹Wellek, History, I, 14.

⁶⁰Bosker, Age of Johnson, p. 10.

⁶¹GIJ, No. 8 (1754).

the "mere produce of unregulated imagination; they were not reasonable, they did not imitate Nature, and they were therefore condemned as Gothic, unnatural, ridiculous and childish."⁶² It is in this sense that Murphy means the word when he says of Jodrell's The Persian Heroine, "That is made romantic which should have been rendered probable."⁶³ or, when speaking of Delap's The Captives, "An audience expects to see a piece, after all its turns and revolutions of fortune, conducted to its final period by probable means. In the play before us the event is romantic."⁶⁴

In the second general category of Murphy's employment of the term "nature," a "just imitation of nature" is a necessity if the artist is to move an audience. When he says, "without Nature it being impossible to reach the Heart,"⁶⁵ or, "The rest of the Piece is a Succession of Miracles, unnatural and improbable Turns of Fortune, and we are every Moment surprised with some new Discovery to make us stare, but not reach our Hearts,"⁶⁶

⁶²Logan Pearsall Smith, Four Words: Romantic, Originality, Creative, Genius (Oxford, 1924), p. 9.

⁶³Monthly Review, LXXV (July 1786), 58.

⁶⁴Ibid., 62.

⁶⁵London Chronicle, Feb. 12-15, 1757.

⁶⁶Ibid., Jan. 25-27.

he assumes there is something inherently "affective" in a just imitation. He states this assumption more explicitly in a review of Burke's, A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful:

"But surely in the imitative arts we can never lose the idea of imitation. If the object be inconsiderable, or even odious, it will please in a just representation; and if the object be Sublime or Beautiful, it will please the more on this account, if the imitation be just; but if the imitation be defective, we revolt from it, notwithstanding the excellence of the original."⁶⁷

Why the achieving of certain effects in an audience, "reaching their hearts," is so desirable is involved with eighteenth-century premises about the ends of art. In the audience-centered aesthetic of the period, the ultimate end of art was moral instruction.⁶⁸ The most effective means to this end, and sometimes an end in itself, was pleasure, i.e., through pleasure the audience is made receptive to instruction. And a "just imitation of nature" was posited as one of the primary sources of pleasure.

⁶⁷The Literary Magazine, XIII (April 15-May 15, 1757), 185.

⁶⁸See Abrams, Mirror, pp. 14-21.

When Murphy Mentions the creative artist, that individual capable of creating those literary structures which so "affect" us, the one recurring term is "genius." It was genius that allowed the artist to transcend the rules. Genius was one of Murphy's favorite terms, and was used so often in his criticism of Shakespeare that it almost functioned as an epithet: "He was not versed in Aristotle's art of poetry; but he had what was better than art; a genius superior to all mankind."⁶⁹ For Murphy, a genius was one, "who possesses the leading faculties of the mind in their vigour, and can exercise them with warmth and spirit upon whatever subject he chuses."⁷⁰

What Murphy meant by this is set forth in his Life of Fielding. Here he examines, what he calls, the "principal efficient qualities" of genius: imagination, judgment, and invention. The analysis begins with the imagination which:

must, in particular, be very quick and susceptible, . . . that it may receive the strongest impressions either from the objects of Nature, the works of art, or the actions and manners of men; for it is in proportion as this power of the mind is wrought upon,

⁶⁹GIJ, No. 89 (1786).

⁷⁰Life of Fielding, p. 36.

that the author feels in his own breast those fine sensations, which it is his business to impart to others, and that he is able to describe things in so lively a manner, as to make them, as it were, present to us, and of consequence to give what turn he pleases to our affections. The Judgment also must be clear and strong, that the proper parts of a story or description may be selected, that the disposition of the various members of a work may be used, as to give a lucid order to the whole, and that such expression may be made use of, as shall not only serve to convey the intended ideas, but shall convey them forcibly and with that decorum of style, which the art of composition requires. . . . Invention must also concur, that new scenery may be opened to the fancy, or, at least, that new lights may be thrown upon the prospect of Nature; that the sphere of our own ideas may be enlarged, or a new assemblage may be formed of them, either in the way of fable or illustration; so, that if the author does not disclose original traces of thinking, by presenting to us objects unseen before, he may at least delight by the novelty of their combination, and the points of view in which he offers them. The power of mind, moreover, which exerts itself in what Mr. Locke calls the association of ideas, must be quick, vigorous,

and warm, because it is from thence that language receives its animated figures, its bold translation of phrases from one idea to another, the verbum ordens, the flowing metaphysical expression, which constitutes the richness and boldness of his imagery; and from thence likewise springs the readiness of ennobling a sentiment or description with the pomp of sublime comparison, or striking it deeper on the mind by the aptness of witty allusion.⁷¹

Imagination, judgment, and invention then, are the primary attributes of genius. An exploration of what these terms meant to Murphy should give some notion of his conception of both the artist and the creative process.

Murphy's concept of the imagination is a common one in eighteenth-century critical thought. What he says about it here is essentially a restatement of Addison's idea;⁷² which in turn owes its genesis to Locke.⁷³ That Murphy was influenced by both of these men is a matter of fact. The Gray's-Inn Journal was, in large part, a conscious imitation of both the format and the principles

⁷¹Ibid., pp. 36-37.

⁷²See Spectator, No. 417.

⁷³Kenneth MacLean, John Locke and English Literature of the Eighteenth Century (New Haven, 1936), p. 11.

of the Spectator; and his references to Locke are numerous. The reason for citing Addison here, rather than going directly to Locke, is that what Addison, and in turn Murphy, label "imagination," comes under the general heading of "perception" in Locke's An Essay Concerning Human Understanding.⁷⁴ However, what is important here is that Murphy's concept of imagination is a mechanistic one. It is not a "creative" faculty in the Romantic sense but simply one that perceives and associates sensations conveyed into the mind from external objects.

Much of the time when Murphy uses the term "imagination" in his criticism it is in a slightly different sense. Rather than a faculty of perception, he appears to mean what Locke defines as "wit": the, "assemblage of ideas, and putting those together with quickness and variety, wherein can be found any resemblance or congruity, thereby to make up pleasant pictures and agreeable visions in the fancy."⁷⁵ Murphy is using the term in this sense when he says, "To regulate and govern the imagination, is recommended by a Greek Philosopher, as a point of moment in the conduct of life. The

⁷⁴II, ix, 183-192. All references are to the New York, 1959 reprint of the standard 1894 edition, ed. Alexander Campbell Fraser.

⁷⁵Essay, II, xi, 203.

imagination is the liveliest faculty of the soul; it gives to all objects the hue and colour, which they seemingly wear; and we love and hate, hope and fear, according to the scenes which are pictured to our fancy."⁷⁶

Implied in this quotation are two common eighteenth-century aspects of imagination. One is the use of imagination and fancy as synonyms; the distinction between these terms belongs to later critical theory. The second aspect is the distrust of the imagination. Though imagination is necessary to the creative process it must always be held in check, for an excess of it invariably violates "nature." Flights of fancy create unnatural similitudes. Thus Murphy says of Congreve's The Mourning Bride, "After this, the Remainder of Osmyn's Part is all Rant and wild Poetry, the Ideas and Expressions being drawn from the Store of Imagination, without the Simplicity always natural to Emotions of the Heart."⁷⁷

Judgment is the faculty that holds fancy in check. In Locke's theory of the association of ideas, it controls the "tendency of the mind to join incorrect ideas to words so that a true and correct taste might be established."⁷⁸

⁷⁶GIJ, No. 23 (1786).

⁷⁷London Chronicle, Jan. 25-27, 1757.

⁷⁸Martin Kallich, "The Association of Ideas and Critical Theory: Hobbes, Locke and Addison," ELH, XII (1945), 314.

Though Murphy does not mention Locke in connection with his concept of judgment, his notion of this faculty of discrimination seems to stem from him. Since Locke, after delineating the properties of wit, opposes judgment to it, "judgment, on the contrary, lies quite on the other side, in separating carefully, one from another, ideas wherein can be found the least difference, thereby to avoid being misled by similitude, and by affinity to take one thing for another,"⁷⁹ and since elsewhere Murphy quotes Locke's preceding definition of wit,⁸⁰ the influence may be assumed.

Invention, for Murphy, could be separated into two types: "one, primary and original, which could associate images never before combined; the other, secondary and subordinate, which could find out for those ideas, which had been assembled before, a new place, a new order, and arrangement, with new embellishments of the most harmonious and exalted language."⁸¹ In the first, invention opens "new veins of thought"; in the second, it places "ideas, that have been pre-occupied, in a new light, and lends them the advantages of novelty, by the force of a

⁷⁹ Essay, II, xi, 203.

⁸⁰ GIJ, No. 92, 1786.

⁸¹ Life of Fielding, p. 30.

sublimar diction, or the turn of delicate composition."⁸²

Murphy placed no particular premium on the first type, and, in general, found it quite rare and overrated.

"There is reason to believe, that of what we call Primary, or Original Invention, there has not been so much in any one poet (not even excepting Homer) as has been generally imagined."⁸³ In the second type of invention, the poet availed himself of learning and brought history, science, morality, and theology, to bear in placing ideas in a new light. For Murphy, the charge of "lack of invention" against an author often indicated both the critic's failure to recognize the merits of the second type, and a misplaced emphasis on the first.

In the division of invention into two types, Murphy is not implying an imagination-fancy dichotomy. That dichotomy meant a difference in kind, and Murphy is here talking about degree. In the imagination-fancy split, one is a creative faculty, the other an associative faculty. Here, both types of invention are associative.

In summary, Murphy's concept of "genius" is of an individual who possesses superior faculties, not

⁸²Ibid., p. 31.

⁸³Ibid., p. 32.

necessarily innately superior but raised to this level by learning and experience, and superior to other men's faculties only in degree, not in kind. In large part, these faculties are predicated on the psychological premises of English empiricism. The artist is neither regarded as prophet, nor is he applauded for spontaneous self-expression. His art is conscious, and learning is regarded as a prerequisite. He is acclaimed for his ability to create an artistic analogue of "nature" from which an audience receives both pleasure and knowledge.

The nature of the aesthetic judgment, was one of the major critical problems throughout the eighteenth century. With the disregard of the rules and the emphasis on "effectiveness," the problem was inevitable. The central question raised was whether the faculty of aesthetic judgment resided in the reason or the feelings. R. L. Brett claims, "It is not too much to say that the development of critical theory throughout the eighteenth century was determined by this question . . . It is a question that is always in the background and it may be truly said that the history of eighteenth-century aesthetics is the chronicle of the attempts made to answer it."⁸⁴

Taste was the term used most frequently in connection with aesthetic judgment. This ambiguous concept

⁸⁴Shaftesbury, p. 136.

could mean either "personal preference," or could signify a "universal standard of judgment."⁸⁵ In the first sense it was allied with feeling, in the second, with reason. The extreme of the first sense meant critical relativism; the extreme of the second, an agreed-upon set of rational standards. Shaftesbury's way out of this impasse was by conceiving of taste in the same manner he conceived of his "moral sense," i.e., as an innate faculty, partaking of both reason and the feelings, which immediately perceives and judges beauty in the same way in which the moral sense immediately perceives and makes moral judgments.⁸⁶ In fact, he saw the same "sense" operating in both. For Shaftesbury, "beauty and goodness are the same and taste is as much concerned with morals as with the arts."⁸⁷

Murphy's concept of taste, a term he frequently uses, appears to have been borrowed directly from Shaftesbury. In one of the Gray's-Inn Journal essays he says,

A taste for the arts is the highest embellishment and ultimate finishing of an accomplished mind; it gives an elegance to a man's way of thinking, throws

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 130.

⁸⁶Ibid., p. 132.

⁸⁷Ibid.

a polish on his manners, and by insensible degrees refines the passions and affections of the soul. It may be added that a fine taste is the inlet of some of the most delicate pleasures human life is susceptible of, and may therefore properly be called, in the language of Shaftesburian philosophy, the internal sense. By means of this faculty, we are acquainted with many elegant sensations, to which the generality of men seem entire strangers.⁸⁸

Here, taste is an innate faculty but one which must be cultivated if it is to reach its full development. Elsewhere, Murphy explicitly connects taste with morality; a connection that is implicit in most of his criticism.⁸⁹

For Murphy, the difference between taste and judgment is the difference between instantaneous perception and deliberate reflection. Taste combines reason and feeling; judgment is purely rational. Someone with only judgment can, after "mature" and "leisurely" deliberation, wherein the work of art is compared with nature, "pronounce the piece to be like, without manifesting any particular relish or pleasure. It is not so with the man of taste. He enters at once into the spirit

⁸⁸GIJ, No. 44 (1786).

⁸⁹Monthly Review, LXXIX (July 1788), 82.

and stile of an author, sees in an instant how he selects the circumstances in a description, enjoys the turn of his expression, and his art in touching the passions."⁹⁰ It apparently never bothered Murphy, nor his contemporaries, that some of their concepts had a mechanistic basis, and others, such as this one, were premised on innate, or a priori, ideas.

One of the more pronounced aspects of Murphy's criticism, one interwoven with the concept of taste, is his moral sententiousness. In the later examination of his theories of the various genres, the tendency to make literary judgments on the basis of moral standards will become apparent. A continual recurrence of statements such as the following will be encountered: "The Author has not inlisted himself in the Cause of Virtue, nor has he endeavored, anywhere, to impress a proper Moral on the Minds of his Auditors";⁹¹ "The Truth is, Sir John's Comedies are generally too licentious, and Vice is rather exhibited in an attractive Garb, than in the odious and forbidden Mien, which it should be the Business of Writers for the Stage to represent, in order to serve the Purposes of Virtue and good Manners."⁹²

⁹⁰GIJ, No. 44 (1786).

⁹¹London Chronicle, Mar. 29-31, 1757.

⁹²Ibid., Mar. 3-5.

This preoccupation with morality, as an important criterion of literary excellence, appears to have its genesis in two of the previously discussed premises. The first, and more obvious, is the common eighteenth-century supposition that the ultimate end of art is moral instruction. The second, and perhaps one that has sometimes been overlooked, is the alliance of taste and morality; the concept of a collateral moral and aesthetic sense that immediately perceives the good as well as the beautiful.

Another significant aspect of the emphasis on "effectiveness" was the concept of the sublime. From the last quarter of the seventeenth century, when Boileau's translation of Longinus' Peri Hupsous strongly influenced English criticism, and through the eighteenth century, sublimity was a paramount aesthetic idea. By 1757, when Murphy reviewed Burke's A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful, the sublime had developed from a rhetorical concept which focused on the emotions evoked by a "high" or "grand" style, one in which these emotions were seen in terms of their power to persuade, to an aesthetic concept in which the emotions were regarded as the source of aesthetic pleasure. However, it had remained one in which the nature of the sublime was sought in the peculiar characteristics of those objects in art and nature that raised emotions, until Burke began the movement away from the

idea that sublimity depended on qualities residing in the object, and toward a psychological and physiological investigation of the aesthetic experience.⁹³

In his review, Murphy takes Burke to task and, citing both Longinus and Boileau, asserts that sublimity resides in the object which raises pleasurable emotions: "The effect of the sublime is, as Longinus has told us, to enlarge the mind with vast conceptions, and to transport it with a noble pleasure beyond itself."⁹⁴ A few lines later, he reaffirms this position, "Whatever fills the mind with magnificent ideas is sublime." For Murphy, the sublime resides in great thoughts, vast conceptions, the extraordinary, the astonishing, in almost anything that arouses strong emotions. And, unlike Burke who bases his concept on the single emotion of terror, Murphy claims, "all the other passions, grief, love, rage, indignation, compassion, etc.,"⁹⁵ as well as terror, to be associated with the sublime. As an evocative force, the sublime is immediately perceived. It strikes, it transports; it is not something that is deliberated and pondered.

⁹³See Samuel Holt Monk, The Sublime (Ann Arbor, 1960), particularly pp. 84-100.

⁹⁴Literary Magazine, XIII (April 15-May 15, 1757), 185.

⁹⁵Ibid.

Often, when Murphy uses the term in his criticism, he uses it in the earlier rhetorical or stylistic sense. When he says, "There are many elegant Touches of Poetry in this Play, and Zanga often rises to the Sublime,"⁹⁶ or, when analyzing Addison's *Cato* he singles out "the Sublime soliloquy in the fifth act,"⁹⁷ the emphasis is on the evocative, and in turn morally persuasive, power of a high or grand style. In this sense, the sublime consists of an "emotional appeal wedded to loftiness of thought and expression," one in which, "the fusion of high feeling and thought imparts to the language an eloquence that defies analysis."⁹⁸ In his theatrical criticism, Murphy uses the sublime as a rhetorical concept to a far greater extent than as an aesthetic one.

Most of the premises discussed so far, form the basis, either explicitly or implicitly, of Murphy's theories of the various genres and forms. That Murphy was particularly interested in delineating the peculiar characteristics and provinces of epic, tragedy, and comedy, should not be surprising. As René Wellek points out,

⁹⁶London Chronicle, Feb. 5-8, 1757.

⁹⁷Ibid.

⁹⁸Brett, Shaftesbury, p. 146.

"The distinction between genres was basic to the neoclassical creed, so basic that its assumptions were never, to my knowledge, properly examined during this time."⁹⁹ Just as the earlier neo-classical rules were prescribed in relation to particular genres, the later Neo-Classicism sought new principles relative to the different genres.

In a sequence of essays in the 1786 Gray's-Inn Journal (Nos. 86-92), in which the basis and provinces of the various forms are explored. Murphy comes closer to a systematic exposition of his theories than in any of his other writings. He begins with the assumption that, "In order to decide upon the excellence or imperfection of any art, it is necessary to know the original intent and aim of that art, with the various means by which it accomplishes its designs."¹⁰⁰ He goes on to say, "the author of the essays on characteristics" has determined that there are "three primary branches of composition, poetry, eloquence, and argument."¹⁰¹ And a "just coalition of all three forms the consummate beauty

⁹⁹History, I, 19.

¹⁰⁰Until otherwise noted, all quotations are from GIJ, No. 86 (1786).

¹⁰¹These primary branches and their development is a rather loose interpretation of, and elaboration on, Shaftesbury's concept, cf. Characteristicks, (London, 1732), I, 236-240.

of fine writing." It would be desirable for criticism to distinguish "the respective graces of all kinds of writing. It would enable us to ascertain and fix the proper criterions by which to judge of the beauties proper to each different species."

With this goal in mind, Murphy then proceeds to develop a rather elaborate theory about language and the rise of the "three modes of writing" which will eventually serve as the basis for delineating the particular provinces of each form. He begins with a theory of language that is largely a paraphrase, though somewhat distorted, of Locke:¹⁰²

Man being a sociable creature, it was necessary, that certain signs, universally agreed upon, should be used for the reciprocal conveyance of his ideas. Sounds, which we call words, were the quickest vehicles, and therefore grew into general use. As the stock of ideas enlarged, the demand for words became more extensive: mutual intercourse begat further acquisition, and language daily increased. That every distinct idea should be expressed by a term appropriated to it was altogether impossible. The mind, therefore, soon found an expedient to supply its wants. Reason began to compare, to distinguish,

¹⁰²Cf. Essay, III, i-iii, 3-32.

and separate the various ideas, which had passed through the senses, and were formed into different combinations by the power of imagination. A similitude was discovered between various images. It followed, that things were expressed by borrowed names on account of a resemblance existing between them. The term thus transferred was called a metaphor, and what was thus introduced out of necessity, became in process of time an absolute luxury.

He then leaves Locke's hypothesis and proceeds to elaborate on Shaftesbury's concept.¹⁰³ "The poets, who, it is probable, were the first composers, were soon aware of the beauty that results from metaphysical expression. They were to lead mankind from huts and dens to a state of civilization. By their songs and ballads the imagination of their hearers was to be seized, and for this purpose every thing was to be painted forth in the warmest coloring." But this idyllic state was temporary: ". . . cities were multiplied, and states enlarged themselves: artificial passions began to operate; ambition grasped at power; and envy, jealousy, revenge, and malice, sowed the seeds of discord, of party and faction." Under these conditions, control was needed; but, "There was not time for the measured writer to produce his composition, an immediate

¹⁰³See n. 101.

address was requisite to influence the passions of the multitude: men of genius came forth, and, destitute of number, addressed the people in humble prose."

However, in order to influence the passions, the orator "could not divest himself of all the properties of poetry," for the "least appearance of design upon their understandings" would be self-defeating. Thus, the orator need still "address the imagination" by the continual use of "ambitious ornaments" and "gaudy colourings"; but he would use these more sparingly. "The imagination was addressed as it affords access to the passions. In this manner eloquence deduced its origin, a less luxuriant kind of poetry, disengaged from regular numbers, but still filling the ear with harmony, and moulding the passions in its own end and use."

Finally, as "arts and manufactures increased and science extended itself, it was not enough that poetry charmed with its graceful combinations, and that eloquence awakened and agitated the passions; reason began to exert its influence, to look for utility and truth in every composition, and stripping away the luxuriances of lavish description, coolly and dispassionately to consider every thing that was offered. Hence sprang the didactic, or the argumentative form."

Thus, the principal intent of poetry is to please and its appeal is to the imagination. Eloquence addresses

the passions and its intent is persuasion. Argument's province is reason, and its function is to compare, affirm and negate. Murphy goes on to say, "there are not in human nature any other inlets of perception, or any other faculties of sensation, to which the art of a writer could apply. The imagination, the passions, the reason are the three springs of composition." However, "men of refinement and reflection" have perceived, "that the joint force of all three united, must carry the power of genius to still a greater degree of perfection." Thus, "eloquence has learned from poetry to warm and enliven the imagination: poetry has marked the influence of eloquence on the passions" and "both have found it necessary to recommend themselves to reason." And reason, "aware that a mere train of deductions would be too dry, takes occasion to adorn itself with the flowers of imagination, and, in some speculation, endeavours to awaken the passions."

Though, "a concurrence of the primary branches of writing is requisite in all works of genius," there is a danger of their encroaching "on each others territories." To avoid this, it has been the task of criticism "to fix the boundaries of each kind." The "great masters of this art" have taught us to "determine how far one mode of composition may encroach upon another; and while it borrows assistance, we know that the just colourings,

which belong to the kind, must be always carefully preserved." Murphy closes the essay by remarking that the various types of writing now practiced, "are modes of poetry, eloquence and argument differently blended." And an examination of the various blendings will, "perhaps, enable us to see the peculiar merit of an Epic Poem, a Tragedy, or a Comedy." His final statement implies a typical eighteenth-century hierarchy of types, and a certain lack of regard for the "lesser" kinds, such as the various lyric forms: "The reader may at his leisure carry the research into other subordinate branches of writing."

At the beginning of the next essay, before commencing the examination of the various forms, Murphy ties his tripartite hypothesis in with Horace's precepts about the ends of art. Quoting from the Ars Poetica that the aim of poetry, "is to afford at once utility and delight: to offer what may be agreeable to the fancy, and conduces to the advantages of human life," and that, "it is not enough that a poem abounds in beauties; it must find its way to the heart, and rouse the soul with what passions it pleases," he points out that this description of the "leading requisites" of poetry includes the three primary modes of composition.¹⁰⁴ For "to please, to persuade,

¹⁰⁴GIJ, No. 87 (1786).

to instruct," are the ends of poetry, eloquence and argument.

With this elaborate hypothesis about the origins of language, the subsequent rise of the primary modes of composition, and the relation of these modes to generally accepted premises about the ends of art, Murphy was attempting to evolve literary principles more basic and more viable than the old rules. These principles would be founded on "nature"; and, as natural and immutable laws, they would be good for all time and place and, thus, avoid the temporal and arbitrary qualities of the old rules. When he said, "There are not in human nature any other inlets of perception, or any other faculties of sensation, to which the art of a writer could apply. The imagination, the passions, and reason are the three springs of composition," the appeal was to "nature" as the source of irreducible literary principles.

This becomes most obvious when, giving the epic pre-eminence, he begins his examination of the various forms. He first lists some of the rules of the epic as laid down by Bossu and others, e.g., one entire action with a beginning, middle and end, and the necessity of taking up the story in medias res. Then, he points out the limitations of such an approach:

They have treated largely of the machinery; of the time the fable should include, with many other

particulars, which, though proper to be explained, do not any way conduce to the refinement of taste, or the improvement of true genius. These rules, with many others of equal moment, are no more than observations upon the practice of great writers; and what great writers have done, critics have been willing to convert into a law. Such laws may, in general be convenient, but they are arbitrary at best. Those rules only, which are founded upon the inward frame and constitution of man, can be regarded as permanent, and unalterable.¹⁰⁵

The reason Murphy gives the epic pre-eminence among the different forms is that "it affords the freest and most ample room for a display of the three original species of writing." The epic writer has the most "unbounded latitude." He has the scope for "agreeable exhibitions of nature, to please the imagination"; he may "take occasion to improve his readers"; and the "whole art of eloquence is like wise perfectly open to the epic author." Murphy avers that all the great epics combine poetry, eloquence, and argument. However, these are combined in different proportions, and Homer appeals more to the imagination, Virgil to the passions, and Milton to reason.

¹⁰⁵Ibid.

There is a touch of irony in Murphy's giving the epic pre-eminence, for this was the position given it by the seventeenth-century French critics, whose advocacy of a strict adherence to the rules he is here rejecting. Aristotle had given tragedy the dominant place. However, following the logic of his hypothesis about the "natural" branches of composition and their particular appeals, and the implicit assumption of the superiority of those forms which give most latitude to a combination of these elements, he was forced to concede epic the prominent place because of its scope. Despite its theoretical pre-eminence, the epic was honored, by Murphy and by most eighteenth-century critics, more as an ideal than as an immediate and active literary form. The century theorized about the epic, but wrote tragedies and comedies. Murphy commended the epic, but his care and interest was the drama.

Tragedy can claim but second place, for only in the epic can "the powers of genius, such as imagination, eloquence, and reason," be executed in their full force.¹⁰⁶ Tragedy "comes before the eye," which is both its limitation and its power. A reader can be held with "florid imagery" but not an auditor. Hence, "in the regions of fancy," the appeal to the imagination, the drama "must

¹⁰⁶GIJ, No. 89 (1786).

yield to the epic." But, "in the art of eloquence and in all applications to our reason, tragedy can boast full room for the most vigorous exertion." The chief reason it can so powerfully affect the passions is precisely because it is visual, performed. Acting, "serves to render the touches of the writer more striking, and more feelingly expressive."¹⁰⁷ In the terms of Murphy's tripartite distinction, tragedy appeals most to the passions and comedy to the reason.

The end of tragedy is to arouse, "hope, joy, terror, and pity, which are the true Tragic Passions."¹⁰⁸ But the ultimate goal of appealing to the passions, is, of course, moral instruction: "We are taught by the catastrophe to avoid the errors that involve the agents in certain ruin, and to pursue the road that leads to happiness."¹⁰⁹ Tragedy, "addresses itself to our humanity: It is the school of virtue, in which we exercise the tender and generous affections."¹¹⁰

Since a just imitation of nature is a necessity in "affecting" an audience, there are some rules, "which our modern writers would do well to take into consideration,

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ London Chronicle, Mar. 12-15, 1757.

¹⁰⁹ Life of Garrick, II, 165.

¹¹⁰ GIJ, No. 76 (1786).

if they wish to form a regular, a probable, and a coherent plot."¹¹¹ In this matter of structure, Murphy recommends following Scaliger's "idea of the constituent parts of tragedy," which, he feels, is a more thorough delineation than Aristotle's "beginning, middle, and end." According to Murphy, Scaliger's four basic requisites are: Protasis (the "opening of the business," introduction of characters, and necessary antecedent transactions); Epitasis (the "working up of the plot to a state of perplexity and impending danger"); Catastasis (the "full growth of the fable"); Lysis (the "solution of the Gordian knot").¹¹²

Murphy's concept of tragedy, with its emphasis on effectiveness, has the advantage of being able to encompass non-classic types such as domestic tragedy. It allows him to say of Otway's The Orphan, "the Story shews us how greatly those critics are mistaken, who insist that the subject of Tragedy should always be some illustrious Action depending among great and exalted personages";¹¹³ or to champion Lillo, "who made the distress of domestic life as interesting as the events that have

¹¹¹Life of Garrick, I, 260.

¹¹²Ibid., 254-260.

¹¹³London Chronicle, Mar. 8-10, 1757.

attended heroes and unfortunate kings."¹¹⁴ However, his hypothesis of the primary modes of composition each appealing to different faculties, imagination, reason, and the passions, rules out tragicomedy as an acceptable form. For the duality of this form lessened both the effect on the passions, which was the particular province of the eloquence of tragedy, and on the reason, which was the province of comedy. The mixing of forms defeats the ends of each.

Though tragedy and epic fill the first two places in Murphy's examination of forms, they are given these positions mostly out of convention: his acceptance of common eighteenth-century assumptions about the hierarchy of genres. The form he devoted most time to, both as a critic and an author, was comedy. His reputation as a dramatist rests on his comedies. And, if he is to receive attention for other than his practical criticism, it will probably be as a theorist of comedy.

Though comedy was the paramount dramatic form of the eighteenth century, critical theory was devoted mostly to tragedy and epic. J. W. Draper, in what is still a standard survey of eighteenth-century comic theory, claims, that despite a greater interest in theorizing about epic and tragedy, there was nevertheless a considerable

¹¹⁴Life of Garrick, I, 232.

corpus of comic theory.¹¹⁵ However, this corpus was disproportionately small in comparison with the body devoted to tragedy and epic. Out of approximately a dozen writers cited by Draper in his attempt to ascertain the prevailing concepts, Murphy is referred to nine times. And the only source Draper seems to have used for Murphy's statements about comedy was the Gray's-Inn Journal. When Murphy's statements in the London Chronicle, the Monthly Review, and the lives of Garrick, Johnson, and Fielding, are also taken into account along with those from the Gray's-Inn Journal, he appears to have given more constant consideration to comic theory than almost any other eighteenth-century critic.

The central problem of comedy in the eighteenth century, one that Murphy attempted to solve both as a dramatist and a critic, was to unite the excellence and power of Restoration comedy with the moral utility posited by eighteenth-century theory.

Every Age has a peculiar Characteristic to distinguish it: the last Century was remarkable for a comic Genius, which sometimes run out into unwarrantable Luxuriances, and a Breach of Manners; the present Times have acquired a politer Taste, but cannot produce any work of Theatrical Humour. The

¹¹⁵ John W. Draper, "The Theory of the Comic in Eighteenth-Century England," JEGP, XXXVII (1938), 208.

former transgressed through an Excess of Vigour;
the latter are decent, but they have that kind of
Decency which arises from a Want of Power, rather
than of Will.¹¹⁶

This dichotomy appears to have been the stimulus for Murphy's continual investigation into the sources of comedy; his attempts to isolate those elements which produce the effects we call comic, and to define the particular provinces of comedy. He sought those components that would provide, powerfully and forcefully, pleasurable and morally persuasive comedy.

In the sequence of essays on the primary modes of composition and their relationship to the different forms, he begins his discussion of comedy by pondering why comedy is not recognized as an achievement equalling epic and tragedy.¹¹⁷ He supposes it is because comedy deals with "known and familiar" ideas and therefore meets with "less indulgence," for everyone thinks he can judge of the familiar. But, he argues, a "just portrait" of the familiar is a difficult achievement. It requires, "as fine and as lively an imagination as any of the other imitative arts." Comedy is only one of the imitative arts, hence, as is true of the others, a "just imitation

¹¹⁶GIJ, No. 50 (1756).

¹¹⁷GIJ, No. 90 (1786).

of nature" is one of its basic premises. Imitation of nature is one of Murphy's two central comic premises and, as will be seen later, many of his important distinctions rest on this premise.

He is appealing to "nature" as an aesthetic norm when he says, "The trick of an embarrassed fable and perplexed incidents is worn threadbare. To see the persons of the drama merely the sport of chance, of accidents, and of mistakes, may divert in pantomime, but something of more value is expected in comedy. We go to the theatre to see manners as they exist in society."¹¹⁸ Imitation of nature, in the case of comedy, means imitation of manners, of common life, of probable incidents and resolutions that follow logically. "We have often said, and we repeat it, that comedy is an imitation of human life. The author who gives anything else, may divert the upper gallery with inexplicable noise, with bustle, business and turns and counterturns of adventure; but he departs from his art, and is no poet."¹¹⁹

What is called "business," a term that Murphy often uses in his criticism when dealing with comedy, are those turns, incidents and actions that hold an audience's

¹¹⁸ Monthly Review, LXXVI (Jan. 1787), 81.

¹¹⁹ Monthly Review, LXXIX (Oct. 1788), 371.

attention and that should move the plot forward to resolution. "Business" is a structural necessity if a comedy is to hold and affect an audience. However, "Business" can be a writer's trick, something by which he holds an audience's attention where there is no substance. Hence, as a critical term, Murphy often uses it in this derogatory sense. In its best sense, "business" complements the principal action and does not in itself become the point of focus. "In every comedy there should be a principal action, and all episodic, or inferior concerns, should move with that; sometimes crossing, accelerating, or retarding the main event; and all either having an influence on that event, or brought to a conclusion by it."¹²⁰

But imitation of nature goes beyond the probable incidents and logical resolutions of structure. It is inextricably interwoven with Murphy's other central concept, "ridicule," and with his concept of the "humours." And these are involved with the portrayal of character, which is the essence of comedy. Comedy is that, "province of the drama, in which the manners are the main object. The poet of genius, who wishes to shew himself a master in his art, makes it his study to exhibit the turns and windings of the inward frame; the temper of the man; the foibles that warp and distort his conduct; and

¹²⁰Monthly Review, LXXVIII (May 1788), 371.

the humours that gather to a head, and render him odd, extravagant, and eccentric."¹²¹

In Murphy's search for pleasurable and useful comedy, ridicule becomes the mainspring of his comic theory. If comedy is to be morally instructive, it must first give pleasure by appealing to, and raising, those passions or emotions which are its particular province. Murphy posits contempt and laughter as the comic emotions, and ridicule as their effective cause.

In his theory of the primary sources of composition and their particular appeals, he views ridicule as a mode of eloquence, i.e., a rhetorical device affecting the passions.

The comic writer, as well as the tragedian, must derive his force from the primary sources of composition: he must seize our imaginations with striking pictures of human life; he must instruct our reason by inserting sensible observations on the manners of the world; and he must frequently apply himself to those passions, which it is the merit of his art to awaken. In the last-mentioned particular consists the beauty of a well wrought comedy.¹²²

¹²¹Life of Garrick, II, 169.

¹²²Until otherwise noted, all quotations are from GIJ No. 90 (1786).

Both the tragic and the comic poet then, must select the special mode of eloquence that will arouse those passions which are the province of his particular art. And ridicule is the agent of the comic passions: "Ridicule, by which comedy works, is as much a mode of eloquence, as the several arts of persuasion, and the several figures, which rhetoric has reduced into a system for the excitement of the more serious passions."

Murphy then attempts to find out the source of ridicule. He is surprised that, "neither Aristotle, Tully nor Quintilian, has given a just and adequate definition of ridicule." Fielding had "thrown some light upon the matter" in his preface to Joseph Andrews when he placed its source in affectation. But, Murphy argues, this is too limited an approach, for the ridiculous "may be found where there is no affectation at the bottom," and cites Parson Adams as an example. He thinks Akenside in his On the Pleasures of the Imagination has given the clearest definition: "the ridiculous always arises from repugnant qualities, ill-paired and blended together."

What is important to Murphy's "affective" theory is that the ridiculous is not simply a matter of perceiving and comparing incongruous qualities. If this were so, the appeal would be to reason rather than the passions. It is here Akenside lends his greatest support, and

Murphy quotes: "The sensation of ridicule is not a bare perception of the agreement or disagreement of ideas, but a passion or emotion of the mind consequential to that perception." And, Murphy asserts, "the emotions here intended are laughter and contempt, and these it is the business of comedy to excite." Thus, the perception of the ridiculous, a blending of repugnant and incongruous qualities, produces sensations that arouse the proper comic emotions: laughter and contempt.

Ridicule, as a mode of eloquence, or rhetorical device, that raised the proper comic emotions, was ultimately an agent of moral correction. Murphy, in common with many, viewed ridicule as an instrument of reform. It had the power to correct the vices and follies that were held up to it. But, in Murphy's theory, unless the passions were affected, that is, unless the audience received pleasure, was entertained, comedy would not be morally persuasive. That it is only "by placing the humours and foibles of human nature in a ridiculous light, that the true comic force is created," led Murphy to an examination of the proper subjects of comedy, to seek out those characteristics that are properly ridiculous. It is in this examination that his two central premises, imitation of nature and ridicule, come together.

"In producing portraits of mankind, it is not enough to display foibles and oddities: a fine vein of

ridicule must run through the whole, to urge the mind to laughter." For Murphy, the danger of displaying only foibles and oddities, is that one chances exhibiting only "disagreeable characters" without entertaining. The presentation of only "humorists" does not "furnish an agreeable entertainment." He sees this as a particular failing of the "humours theory" of comedy. He points out that Ben Jonson sometimes fails to entertain because of his tendency to "draw deformity"; and, quoting Dennis, adds, "Jonson is so eager to pursue folly, that he forgets to take wit along with him."¹²³ Murphy cites Shadwell as another example of this tendency: "His plays exhibit Bartholomew-fair characters. He might say in the title-page of every one of them, 'Walk in and see the Monster.'"

However, the representation of "humours" is still important to the "best of comedies." The distinction Murphy wishes to make is between natural and unnatural characters. The display of only "humorists" is not a just imitation of nature. One cannot just present, "a set of characters, in themselves absurd, and under the dominion of some predominant humour, without one person among them of sober manners." This would not be

¹²³Until otherwise noted, all quotations are from GIJ, No. 91 (1786).

entertaining. For, "in the usual course of life," which is the province of comedy, a set of such characters, unleavened by others of "common sense and common honesty," is seldom encountered. A second, and minor point, is that without balance the charm of contrast is lost.

Since the representation of "humours" remains an important comic element, Murphy's task is to define that quality in human actions which the "best critics" have named "humour," and to ascertain in what way it is a proper subject of comedy. Acknowledging Jonson as his basic source, he says "humour" as applied to the mind, is a metaphysical expression of the bodily humours. And just as one of the bodily humours predominates and thus influences the natural temper, "when some quality, opinion, prejudice, or absurdity, doth possess the general cast and frame of thought, as to draw to it the spirits, the affections, and ideas, out of their proper course, so as to make them run one way: that may be said to be a mental humour."

Carrying the metaphor further, he points out that when a humour in the body causes minor imbalances an "alterative" is applied. Hence, when an individual, "has a particular cast of thought, that warps his imagination, and breaks out in distorted, odd, and irregular sentiments, or actions, not immediately attended with danger," an "alterative of ridicule" is called for. A mental humour

is, "a disease of the mind, that does not rise to vice or criminality, demanding only the correction of ridicule."

But a mental humour must be more than just a primary source of the ridiculous, a fit subject for ridicule. It must be such that its portrayal is a just imitation of nature.

It is not enough that the author has somewhere seen it in real life: it should be of such extensive influence, as to constitute a species. We then acknowledge it to be a character drawn from life. Our pleasure arises from comparing the copy with the original, and the truth of imitation is sure to give delight. I shall only add, that though the humorist, when faithfully delineated, is the richest entertainment the poet can offer, yet comedy may well subsist without any such character. There are in life a sufficient number of follies, which, though they do not rise high enough to deserve the name of humour, are the proper quarry of the comic writer, and demand the lash of ridicule. He, it is true, who exhibits genuine humours will always bid fairest for success: he shows the deepest insight into the inward frame, and by displaying the ridiculous in the strongest colouring, gratifies that love of laughter, which is the first principle of comedy.

The premises of ridicule and imitation of nature are the distinguishing marks between true comedy and sentimental comedy, between comedy and farce. Farce is entertaining, it often uses the lash of ridicule and, in so doing, is morally instructive. However, though farce partakes of ridicule it is never a just imitation of nature. "Farce cannot be deemed an exact and legitimate species of the drama; it delights in exaggeration, and, in every portrait, enlarges the features beyond their true proportion; instead of real character, it gives an overcharged caricature; but the strong colouring has its moral use, and by the power of well-directed ridicule contributes to the good of society."¹²⁴

Sentimental comedy was the opposite side of the coin. It was often a just imitation of nature but had not the power and force of ridicule. J. Homer Caskey has pointed out that, "It was Murphy who most persistently, from the sixth to the last decade of the eighteenth century, led the fight against sentimental comedy."¹²⁵ Murphy's most cogent statement, one that may serve as a summary of his position on sentimental comedy, follows his essay on ridicule. Here, he takes the critics of

¹²⁴Life of Garrick, II, 169.

¹²⁵"Arthur Murphy and the War on Sentimental Comedy," JEGP, XXX (1931), 576.

his time to task for their failure to recognize ridicule as essential to comedy, and their supposition that imitation of nature provides a sufficient basis for comedy.

A faithful draught of the manners, and the general characters, in the course of civil life, is sufficient to answer their idea of comedy. Should the several persons, represented in the drama, be in their conduct correct and regular, of amiable manners, and upon all occasions governed by principles of honour and virtue, such pieces, in their judgment, may be considered as legitimate. To this notion it is that we owe that new fangled species of the drama, called sentimental or pathetic comedy. . . . Compositions of this kind, while they give a transcript from real life, may claim their share of praise; but whether the mass of mankind affords, with probability, those select groups of virtuous characters, may be questioned. Persons, whose minds are warped by folly, diseased by humour, or tainted with vice, are, I believe, more frequently seen. This is the condition of life, and it is from the obvious manners of the world that the writer of comedy professes to copy.¹²⁶

And, as has already been seen, it is those persons warped by folly and tainted with vice who are the primary source of the ridiculous.

¹²⁶ GIJ, No. 91 (1786).

Murphy's comic theory came close to bridging the gulf between the power and force of the Restoration comedy of wit and manners and the moral utility of his own age. By positing ridicule as the effective cause of the comic emotions, his theory retained for comedy the correction of vice and folly. And by insisting on a just imitation of nature, and by defining this as the good leavened with the bad, vice balanced with virtue, the probable rather than the exceptional, he avoided the one-sided portrayal of intrigue and licentiousness of which Restoration comedy was accused.

The final premises to be dealt with here, ones not usually a factor in the work of most critics but an essential element in Murphy's, are those concerning acting. By the 1750's Garrick and Macklin had made natural acting the dominant style, but the transition from the "exaggerated" school of Colley Cibber, Robert Wilks and Barton Booth was by no means complete.¹²⁷ The performances of James Quin, the last great proponent of the exaggerated style, and those of a number of lesser actors continued to be held in high regard. The books and essays on acting popular in the period reflect the

¹²⁷For information about the various "schools" of acting in this period I am indebted to Downer, "Acting."

transition. Though they generally agree that natural acting is the preferable mode, there is not consistent agreement about the methods for achieving such a style.

John Hill, for example, in his treatise on the art of playing, advocates a balance between the stateliness and dignity of the old style and the liveliness and animation of natural acting with its ability to affect forcefully the emotions of an audience. He lists the commonly-held requirements of an actor as understanding, sensibility, fire, good figure, and gaiety of temper in comedians, but more importantly, he maintains that acting can be methodized: "The intent of this treatise is to shew what acting truly is; to reduce to rules a science hitherto practiced almost entirely from the fancy." He argues that, "Genius, we hear men say, is all; playing is not to be acquired by study: As it is the representation of human life, they say it ought to be the sole production of nature; and that to give it rules, is to take from it all its spirit, But this is error."¹²⁸ For Hill, few actors possess the "discernment" and "understanding" to "represent properly" the ideas of the poet; it is when they attempt solely to follow nature rather than established methods that they are most likely to be guilty of both misrepresentation and "bombast."

¹²⁸The Actor; or a Treatise on the Art of Playing (London, 1755), pp. 1 and 5.

Aaron Hill's approach is almost diametrically opposed to John Hill's. His emphasis is on the study of "nature," particularly the inward workings and outward manifestations of the various passions. The actor must actually feel the passion if he is to portray it convincingly: "To act a passion well, the actor never must attempt its imitation, 'till his fancy has conceived so strong an image, or idea of it, as to move the same impressive springs within his mind, which form that passion, when 'tis undesign'd, and natural." For him, "This is an absolutely necessary, and the only general rule." Though he spends the remainder of his essay cataloguing the different facial and muscular reactions, the "outward marks" that communicate the "ten dramatic passions" upon which all others are only variations, he always returns to his primary rule that the imagination must first conceive "a strong impression of the passion." All else follows from this, for "an idea cannot be strongly conceived without impressing its own form upon the muscles of the face. Nor can the look be muscularly stamp'd, without communicating, instantly, the same impression, to the muscles of the body. The muscles of the body, must, in their natural, and not to be avoided consequence, by impelling or retarding the flow of the animal spirits, transmit their own conceived sensation, to the sound of the voice,

and to the disposition of the gesture."¹²⁹

Given the central premises of Murphy's literary criticism, "imitation of nature" and "effectiveness," it is not surprising to find his approach to acting similar to Aaron Hill's. To advocate any mode of acting other than a "natural" one based on a faithful portrayal of the passions would violate Murphy's fundamental critical ideas. It is not simply that stylized acting is the antithesis of a faithful representation of nature. But as imitation of nature is a sine qua non for eliciting the pleasurable emotional responses that conduce to learning, so stylized acting leads toward the opposite effect. It tends to distance the audience from the drama, to create a detachment that seldom allows the audience to forget they are only observers. As in much of his criticism, Murphy does not make completely clear the link between imitation and effectiveness but it is implied when he says, "The skilful performer imitates the voice of nature: he speaks the same simple and affective language";¹³⁰ or of Mrs. Cibber in Jane Shore, "There is such a Wildness of Exertion in her Powers, and such lively Description in her Countenance as almost make the Audience afraid the Roof is coming down,

¹²⁹"An Essay on the Art of Acting," in Works (London, 1754), IV, 339 and 340.

¹³⁰GIJ, No. 89 (1786).

when she falls on the Ground and still seems to shrink lower to avoid the Beam, which her distracted imagination makes her think is falling upon her."¹³¹

In much of his commentary on acting, Murphy concentrates on imitation of nature. More often than not, his statements are of a general kind: "Mrs. Pritchard gave a specimen of the most natural acting that had ever been seen. She did not appear to be conscious of an audience before her: she seemed to be a gentlewoman in domestic life, walking about in her own parlour, in the deepest distress, and overwhelmed with misery."¹³² And, "The composure of his Manner, and the Tones of his Voice, taken exactly from Nature, are truly Comic, without any Stage Trick, or over-acted Pleasantry."¹³³ However, in the places where he gives a detailed description of a performance, Murphy paints a more vivid picture and tells us more about what was meant by "imitation of nature" than any theatrical critic of the period: "It was in Lear's madness that Garrick's genius was remarkably distinguished. He had no sudden starts, no violent gesticulation; his movements were slow and feeble; misery was depicted in his countenance; he moved his head in the most deliberate

¹³¹London Chronicle, Mar. 19-22, 1757.

¹³²Life of Garrick, I, 234.

¹³³London Chronicle, Feb. 12-15, 1757.

manner; his eyes were fixed, or, if they turned to anyone near him, he made a pause, and fixed his look on the person after much delay; his features at the same time telling what he was going to say, before he uttered a word. During the whole time he presented a sight of woe and misery, and a total alienation of mind from every idea, but that of his unkind daughters."¹³⁴

In the Gray's-Inn Journal (No. 4, 1754) Murphy devoted an essay to the art of acting; here, he set forth the concepts of acting that underlie his theatrical criticism. He began by saying that "the Precept" which Horace has "laid down for the good Writer," the "close and steady Observance of Men and Manners" and the drawing from this source of "exact Resemblance and the true Language of Nature," is also the "best Rule for an Actor; for both are Professors of imitative Arts." An actor must observe and imitate the habits and actions of the various social classes, but to these "external Circumstances of Carriage must be joined a close and intimate Knowledge of the human Heart; its most secret Movements must be unfolded, and the Actor must be thoroughly acquainted with their minutest Effects upon the human Body, in what Proportion they agitate the Nerves and Muscles; how they impress the Features with their respective Signatures, elevate or

¹³⁴Life of Garrick, I, 27-28.

contract the Brow, brace or relax the Sinews and command the Attitude and Disposition of the whole Person." Here, and in the assertion that each passion has its particular "Adjuncts, its own Air, its own Look, and its own proper Tone," Murphy seems to be considerably influenced by Aaron Hill's work.

Like Hill, Murphy continually returns to the central idea of studying the workings of the mind. Once an actor has learned to distinguish the "Nature and Boundaries of each Affection," he must study the "various Shiftings and Veerings of the Soul" and "observe how the several Passions rise and fall in quick Vicissitude." He must "perceive minutely" the "very Point" where one passion succeeds another. The most difficult to portray are what Murphy calls "thwarting Passions," the "frequent occasions in which the Breast is distracted by two different Passions at once, both working the Heartstrings in one mixed Emotion." These are the province of only the great actor, for they are often "imperceptible" to even a "skilful Observer" and their portrayal is the height of the actor's art: "To express these complicated Sensations, where several Passions at once agitate the Soul, requires such a Command of Countenance and Voice, that it is certainly the greatest Perfection of an Actor, and with a Kind of magic Power it always leads an Audience into the most pleasing Distress."

Though he advocated the study and imitation of the passions as the most important element in an actor's development, Murphy never attempted to methodize the portrayal of the affections as many critics did. From his own experience as an actor he had learned that even the best understanding and insight could raise an actor only to the level of competence; that the great performer possessed qualities that were ultimately ineffable. He paid Garrick the highest tribute when he said that it was virtually impossible to describe what made Garrick so great as an actor. Others had an adequate understanding of the passions and often had superior physical attributes, but Garrick's "imagination was so strong and powerful, that he transformed himself into the man he represented, and his sensibility was so quick, that every sentiment took immediate possession of him. Before he uttered a word, the varying passions began to work, and wrought such rapid changes in his features, in his action, his attitudes, and the expression of his eye, that he was, almost every moment, a new man."¹³⁵

As a theorist in his own right, except where comedy was concerned, there is little to be said for

¹³⁵Life of Garrick, II, 177.

Murphy. His ideas were, in general, derivative. However, he was aware of and contended with the major critical concerns of the period. Doing so, gave his practical criticism a solid theoretical foundation. That a coherent and well thought out body of theory underlies their criticism, cannot be claimed for many newspaper and periodical writers. When Murphy uses the ambiguous terms that so cloud the criticism of his time, he has definite concepts in mind. And though it is often implicit rather than explicit, his appeal, as much as is possible, is always to precedent, to premises about the nature and ends of his subject, to aesthetic norms, rather than to personal impressions or individual taste as the basis of criticism.

His writings on comedy warrant more than the cursory survey given them here. By mid-century the theory that comedy was a satirical art, "an art that shows people what to do by representing them on the stage doing what they should not," had almost given away to the idea of "sympathetic laughter."¹³⁶ The transition is reflected in Murphy's work. Though he continued to regard comedy as an agent of moral correction, his efforts to ascertain the proper subjects of ridicule reveal that he

¹³⁶Stuart M. Tave, The Amiable Humorist (Chicago, 1960), p. 47.

shared the prevailing concern for the misuse of this weapon. Like Corbyn Morris, and probably to some extent under the influence of Morris' work, Murphy appears to have been trying to strike a balance between satire and sympathetic laughter in his careful distinction between ridicule and raillery, and in his opinion that a one-sided portrayal of "humorists" often elicits contempt or disgust instead of the pleasurable responses that should be the province of comedy.¹³⁷ When the impotence of comedy that relies solely on sentiment, good nature, and good humor is considered, Murphy's attempts to moderate the excesses yet preserve the forcefulness of Restoration comedy seem a felicitous compromise between the old and new theories.

If only mediocre as a theorist, as a practical critic Murphy was exceptional. His work in the London Chronicle was the best series of theatrical criticisms in the century.¹³⁸ In many ways his Chronicle pieces were sui generis. Quantitatively, not until late in

¹³⁷ An Essay towards Fixing the True Standards of Wit, Humour, Raillery, Satire, and Ridicule (1744), ed. J. L. Clifford, Augustan Reprint Society, Series I, No. 4 (Ann Arbor, 1947), pp. 34-38.

¹³⁸ For much of the following information about theatrical criticism in the periodicals of this era I am indebted to: Gray, Theatrical Criticism; Graham, English Periodicals; Donald E. Keese, "Dramatic Criticism in the Gentleman's Magazine, 1747-1784" (Ph.D. diss., Michigan State Univ., 1964).

the century can such a sustained series be found. Qualitatively, the series was unsurpassed until the early nineteenth-century work of Leigh Hunt and William Hazlitt. Most of the publications devoted to theatrical matters that preceded Murphy's *Chronicle* criticisms were too short-lived to provide any comparison. This state of affairs persisted until well after the 1750's. The few that had lengthy runs, such as Steele's Theatre and Aaron Hill's Prompter, in actuality gave only a portion of their space to theatrical matters. Steele, in fact, after the first few issues seldom dealt with drama. Hill's theatrical essays, particularly those on acting, were the most important precursors of Murphy's work; however, almost half of the issues of The Prompter were given over to essays of a general nature. Few of the numerous periodicals modeled on the Spectator and the Tatler devoted more than an occasional essay to the theatre. Murphy's Gray's-Inn Journal was the exception, and even here only a relatively small number of essays were concerned with the drama.

Newspapers, magazines such as the Gentleman's and the London, and literary reviews like the Monthly and the Critical did print a good deal of dramatic criticism. A number of the reviews found in these publications are excellent. But they appeared sporadically and were the work of various writers; hence, their quality was extremely uneven and a sustained series by a single author infrequent.

Most of the criticism in the magazines and literary reviews treated drama as literature and seldom acknowledged the distinction between the closet and the stage that is so important to a just evaluation of a play. Though these publications at times concerned themselves with acting, often it was in relation to books and essays on this art rather than to performances or particular actors. The form of most of the dramatic criticism found in these periodicals left much to be desired. Though it often varied from review to review even within a given publication, in general it consisted of a plot summary, specimens of dialogue, and critical comments. Sometimes the comments were interspersed, often they were simply tacked on the end. Except in the best criticism, the reviewer commented on individual blemishes or merits and did not proffer the principles upon which he based his judgments.

Murphy's excellence as a theatrical critic does not rest on a handful of brilliant analyses that transcend the usual views of his age. On the contrary, as the examination of his premises has shown, most of his opinions are the ones generally expected from a literate critic of this period. What does set him apart is his ability to comment lucidly and knowledgeably in paper after paper on a wide variety of plays, and to communicate vividly a sense of the actual performances. His detailed descriptions of acting alone raise him above the

mass of theatrical critics. Though criticism in general at this time was beginning to focus on character rather than fable, Murphy's analyses of the psychological motivations of various dramatic characters are some of the earliest and most illuminating. The unique structure that he makes use of in the Theatre essays, background, analysis, and commentary on acting, is far superior to the paraphrase-example-comment pattern of most of his contemporaries, and heralds modern newspaper and periodical practice. Most important, he is one of the first English critics to remind his readers continually that drama is a live art, that "what the players call business" can make a work with small literary merit extremely entertaining in the theatre, and that the converse is also true. If this sounds like the most obvious commonplace, most readers need only consider their own education in the drama to realize how seldom such distinctions really are made. It marks Murphy as a superb theatrical critic in an era of competent drama critics.

III

INTRODUCTION TO THE TEXT

In the London Chronicle for Jan. 18-20, 1757, there appeared a letter, signed "Tragicomicus," offering to undertake a regular series of theatrical criticisms and asking that space and the title, The Theatre, be reserved for such pieces.¹³⁹ The letter was followed by thirty-seven unsigned essays under this heading, beginning in the Jan. 20-22 issue of the Chronicle and ending, near the close of the 1756-57 theatrical season, with the April 14-16 issue. The thirty-seven essays were numbered consecutively 1 through 34 with the numbers 24, 25, and 30 being repeated, though there was no repetition of the essays. The repetition of the numbers has no bearing on the attribution of this first series of essays to one writer: for the second No. 30 appeared at a time when the theatres were closed and continued an examination briefly introduced in the first No. 30 of the influence

¹³⁹To aid the reader in following the attribution argument, a list of all the Theatre papers and introductory letters printed in the 1757-58 London Chronicle has been placed in Appendix B.

of Jonson's Every Man in his Humour on Hoadly's Suspicious Husband; and the first Nos. 24 and 25 were so short as to be little more than announcements of performances, hence, were obviously too inconsiderable to be regarded as regular essays.

The following fall, almost two months into the 1757-58 season, a letter signed "Th.C.," regretting the absence of the previous year's critic, containing specimens of the letter writer's abilities as a critic, and offering to replace the former writer as a regular contributor, appeared in the Nov. 26-29 Chronicle. The subsequent issue contained criticisms under the heading, The Theatre No. 1, and though unsigned, appears to be the work of the letter writer, "Th.C." The Dec. 3-6, 6-8, and 8-10 issues included Theatres No. 1 through 3 with the author of the second No. 1 taking "Th.C." to task for his inadequacies as a critic. The last essay of this series was signed, "Philomuse."

No more theatrical criticisms are found in the London Chronicle until the fall of 1758, when a new Theatre series began with the Oct. 3-5 issue. Once again the essays were unsigned, and this time they were not preceded by a letter of introduction. After an hiatus of two weeks, Theatre No. 7 was printed in the Nov. 7-9 issue. It was introduced by a letter, signed "N.S.," regretting the sudden departure of the previous critic

and offering to replace him. Theatres No. 8-11 followed until Nov. 18-21 when, concomitant with No. 11, the last of the series, there appeared a letter, signed "Atticus," attacking the theatre critics for their tendency toward panegyric rather than discrimination and offering to supply some future essays. Nothing further appeared until Dec. 2-5 when the Chronicle printed an unnumbered Theatre piece again signed, "Atticus." This was followed by three more unnumbered Theatre papers, though unsigned ostensibly by "Atticus," with the last occurring in the Dec. 19-21 issue.

All of the series have been claimed, by one scholar or another, for Arthur Murphy. There is little doubt that Murphy was the "Tragicomicus" who initiated and wrote the longest and most important series, the thirty-seven essays that appeared in the winter and spring of 1757. Howard Dunbar, C. H. Gray, Arthur Sherbo and John Pike Emery, with varying degrees of assurance, concur in the attribution of these essays to Murphy.¹⁴⁰ The major piece of external evidence is Samuel Johnson's letter, quoted in Boswell's Life, concerning his

¹⁴⁰ Since much of the attribution argument will be concerned with Gray, Theatrical Criticism, pp. 128-142, Dunbar, Dramatic Career, pp. 38-40, 56-60, 305-10, Sherbo, New Essays, pp. 75-78, and Emery "Murphy's Criticisms in the London Chronicle," PMLA, LIV (1939), 1099-1104, page references to these works will be inserted parenthetically within the text.

proposals for an edition of Shakespeare.¹⁴¹ These proposals were printed in Theatre No. 33 (actually the thirty-sixth essay) with "splendid encomiums" by, Johnson believed, his friend Arthur Murphy. Dunbar (p. 38) also cites the anonymous author of A Letter to M. deVoltaire: With Contemporary Descants on the . . . Desert Island as believing that Murphy had written for the London Chronicle.

Given this opening wedge, the case from here is built on convincing similarities between the Theatre essays and Murphy's other writings, and on the internal evidence that the thirty-seven essays were the work of a single writer. The arguments for Murphy's authorship of the first series have been cogently set forth in the places noted and Dunbar provides a sufficient summary of them:

Murphy, according to the evidence of Dr. Johnson, wrote one of these essays, and he probably wrote all of those in the first group. Their general organization is similar; their critical comment is never contradictory and often shows close resemblance; the opinions set forth generally agree with those Murphy expresses elsewhere; and they often refer to criticisms in preceding numbers and promise forthcoming criticisms

¹⁴¹Ed. G. B. Hill, rev. L. F. Powell (Oxford, 1934), I, 327-328.

which later appear. In other words, it seems obvious that one author wrote all of the essays in the first group. There is external evidence that Murphy wrote one of them, and this external evidence, internally supported, is nowhere contradicted, externally or internally (p. 305).

I have little evidence to add to that of Dunbar, Gray, and Emery for Murphy's authorship of this series, though there is one piece that corroborates their almost certain attribution.

Each notes the fact, that in Theatre No. 17 the writer quotes from Johnson's Miscellaneous Observations on the Tragedy of Macbeth and mentions that Johnson is now working on his edition of Shakespeare. This, of course, ties in with the proposals and encomiums in No. 33. What no one has pointed out, though Dunbar and Emery have remarked on the similarity of the discussion of "remorse," is that Theatres No. 16 and 17, which deal with Macbeth, are a thinly veiled revision and expansion of Murphy's 1754 Gray's-Inn Journal essay No. 8 on Macbeth. Many of the same phrases, quotations, and even whole paragraphs, from this essay form the basis of Theatres No. 16 and 17. Here too, may be found some of the same quotations from Johnson's Miscellaneous Observations, though here they are neither placed within quotation marks nor is Johnson mentioned as is the case in the Chronicle

pieces. It appears Murphy may have borrowed them at this time by way of Mrs. Lennox's Shakespear Illustrated, though there is no mention of her work either in the Gray's-Inn Journal No. 8.¹⁴² It may also be of interest to note that Murphy did not include the 1754 essay on Macbeth in the 1756 edition of the Gray's-Inn Journal; hence, he might plausibly have assumed that few readers would remember it in 1757. Unless one can conceive of another author borrowing the Gray's-Inn Journal essay, rewriting it, and at the same time recognizing the Johnson quotations and crediting him with them, this essay almost certainly ties Murphy to the first series of Theatre essays.

The other evidence I have to offer does not substantiate attribution but is concerned with the argument that the first thirty-seven essays were the work of one writer. It is only of importance to the case for Murphy's authorship of the first series in that by adding to the already substantial evidence for internal consistency, the whole series may be convincingly attributed to him on the basis of the few external pieces of evidence. However, this evidence assumes considerable importance in the arguments for attribution of the later and more doubtful groups of Theatre essays.

¹⁴² (London, 1753), I, 278-290.

The author of the letter that preceded the first series of Chronicle essays set forth his criteria for theatrical criticism:

I could wish to see a short Analysis of every Play, with a summary Account of its Merit or Deficiency, and whether it owes its Reception to Character, Wit, Humour, and Incident combined, or to any one of those Requisites detached from the rest. If to this it were added by whom each Play was written, when first produced, and what Degree of Success it met with, it would prove an agreeable and not unentertaining Part of your Paper, more particularly if accompanied with Criticisms on the acting, not calculated to give Pain to the Performer, but derived from the Source of Nature, Taste, and Good Sense.

An examination of the thirty-seven essays that followed this letter, shows that these criteria served as organizing principles for the essays.

In almost every case where a play is considered for the first time, each review follows a pattern that begins with an introductory statement telling, "by whom each Play was written, when first produced, and what Degree of Success it met with." This is followed by "a short Analysis of every Play, with a summary Account of its Merit or Deficiency," and in turn, by "Criticisms on the Acting." In a few places, the third basic element in

the pattern, criticism of acting, is interwoven with the analysis. Now and then, due to limits of time and space, the criticism of acting is deferred until a future review. There are also a few places where an essay was obviously meant to span more than one issue of the Chronicle; hence, the organizational pattern is not repeated. Later in the season, when a play is being performed for a second or third time, the critic does not bother to repeat the pattern unnecessarily but only comments on the acting of a particular performance: usually, he refers the reader to a former paper for the information. But in most of the reviews where these organizing principles would be applicable, a particular structural sequence based on the letter writer's criteria is followed.

More important than the organizational pattern, for this in itself offers little support for attributing the essays to one writer since once a pattern was set in a newspaper or journal it might be, and often was, followed in the reviews done by later critics for the publication, is the Chronicle writer's constant use of specific sources to fulfill his criteria. If he was to inform his readers, "by whom each Play was written, when first produced, and what Degree of Success it met with," in the numbers of a tri-weekly paper, many of which would contain two or three reviews of plays which were first produced over a period spanning almost two hundred years, he needed a

considerable body of theatrical history at his fingertips. Unless he had painstakingly accumulated and organized such information from his own study of dramatic history, he would be forced to use theatrical handbooks as his source: for these were the only readily accessible repositories of the information he needed.

From the dozen or so theatrical handbooks and dramatic play lists that were published before 1757, there were only a few likely candidates.¹⁴³ Since most of the handbooks were published prior to 1730, and since the critic for the Chronicle gave the same kinds of information for plays produced after this date, it was most likely that he used a more contemporary source. The most plausible choices were William Rufus Chetwood's The British Theatre (Dublin, 1750), Theophilus Cibber's The Lives of the Poets of Great Britain and Ireland (London, 1753), and A List of all the Dramatic Authors, with some Account of their Lives; and of all the Dramatic Pieces ever published in the English Language, to the Year 1747, attributed to John Mottley and published in 1747 appended to Thomas Whincop's tragedy, Scanderberg. One of the problems in ascertaining the use of a particular

¹⁴³For the bibliographic information about the theatrical handbooks of this period, I am indebted to Carl J. Stratman, Dramatic Play Lists, 1591-1963 (New York, 1966).

handbook, is that in a number of instances they all contain the same information. The later handbooks were based on the earlier ones and often drew much of their new matter from the same sources. However, the thirty-seven essays contain sufficient information to isolate one handbook from the others despite this overlapping.

There is little doubt that the author of the first group of Theatre essays used Mottley's List throughout as his primary reference work. In the places where he did not employ Mottley, he apparently did not utilize another handbook but took his information from other sources, e.g., the acknowledged use of Whalley's edition of Ben Jonson in Nos. 29, 30; or the use of Mrs. Lennox's Shakespeare Illustrated when dealing with Shakespeare's plays. In the thirty-seven essays there are about twenty-seven reviews where the use of a handbook is indicated, that is, where the writer introduced a review with information about the author and early productions of the work. This number does not include the reviews of Shakespeare, a special case that will be dealt with later. Out of the twenty-seven reviews, the information given in twenty-one of them can be found in Mottley; in a number of these, only the information given in Mottley agrees with that in the essays. In only a few cases where Mottley does not have the information given in the essays does another handbook contain such matter,

and in these instances, as has been mentioned, it appears that other than handbooks were the source.

A brief comparison of the information given in Mottley, Cibber, and Chetwood with that given in the Chronicle essays, will demonstrate The Theatre author's use of Mottley's List as his primary source of theatrical history. Cibber's work can be quickly eliminated for many of the dates are either not given or do not agree with those in the Theatre essays, e.g., Theatre No. 1 says Congreve's Love for Love first appeared in 1691, Cibber does not give a date; No. 1 says The Careless Husband was first exhibited in 1704, Cibber does not list the play; No. 1 says The Beaux' Stratagem was first acted in 1710 and notes that the author, Farquhar, died during the run, Cibber gives this information about the author but dates the play 1707. This pattern persists throughout the series, with the information given by Cibber more often disagreeing than agreeing with that presented in the essays.

With Chetwood's British Theatre, the problem is a bit more difficult for most of the dates agree with those in Mottley and those in the essays. However, much of the information found in both Mottley and the essays is not given by Chetwood. The Theatre critic's criteria included not only the date of the first production, but "what Degree of Success it met with." Only Mottley's

List consistently gives this information, e.g., Theatre No. 1 says, "with very great and merited success," Mottley says, "with very great and deserved success"; No. 2, "with great success," Mottley, "with great applause"; No. 7, "with great applause," Mottley, "with great success"; No. 8, "with great applause," Mottley, "with great applause"; No. 15, "exhibited with great applause for the first time in 1681," Mottley, "acted at the Theatre Royal in 1681 with great Applause." In most of the places where the Theatre critic does not inform his audience about the play's initial reception, the information is not given by Mottley.

There are more cogent examples that support the arugment for the Theatre author's use of Mottley's List. The following examples show direct borrowing and contain information not included in the other handbooks: Theatre No. 2 says, "the Author has availed himself pretty much of the Tartuffe of Moliere, and a translation of it called the Puritan in the reign of King Charles II," Mottley says, "It is taken from the Tartuffe of Moliere, and the translation of it, called The English Puritan; acted in the Beginning of the Reign of King Charles II"; No. 3, "This Night the Chances, a Comedy by Beaumont and Fletcher, and in the Year 1682 revived with alterations by Villiers Duke of Buckingham at the Theatre in Dorset Gardens," Mottley, "The Chances, a Comedy. This Play was revived, with great Alterations, by Villiers Duke of

Buckingham in the Year 1682, and was acted with great Applause, at the Theatre in Dorset-Garden." No. 21 begins with a lengthy discussion of Otway, noting, among other things, that he was a neglected genius, had a problem with excessive drinking, and that, because of his connection with Shadwell, had no friendship with Dryden. This is followed by a four line quotation concerning Otway taken from Rochester's Session of the Poets. Mottley gives the same information and the same quotation.

The most important example is found in Theatre No. 6. Here, in a review of Mrs. Centlivre's The Wonder, is mentioned her dedication of this play to the Elector of Hanover, the "spirit" she showed in making such an unpopular public declaration at this time, and the rewards she received after George I assumed the throne. Mottley's List not only contains this information, which the other handbooks do not, but Mrs. Centlivre's modern biographer, John Wilson Bowyer, informs us that, "Mottley's sketch is demonstrably accurate in many details not included by other biographers."¹⁴⁴ The Theatre critic could have gone to no other source at this time but Mottley's List for his information on Mrs. Centlivre. When this is considered along with the foregoing examples, there is little doubt that the author of the first series

¹⁴⁴The Celebrated Mrs. Centlivre (Durham, 1952), p. 6, n. 9.

of Theatre essays consistently relied on Mottley's handbook when he needed theatrical information of an historical nature.

The one constant exception to the use of Mottley comes when the works of Shakespeare are being reviewed. Here the critic slightly modifies his criteria. Instead of informing his readers about the date and reception of the play, he tells them something about the original sources that Shakespeare drew from and modified. The theatrical handbooks do not contain such information. For this information, the critic used Mrs. Lennox's Shakespear Illustrated: or the Novels on which the Plays of Shakespear are Founded. He himself more or less tells us this by mentioning her work in Theatres No. 12 and 13. And a comparison of the information given in her work with that given in most of the Shakespeare reviews attests to the critic's use of her work throughout the first series of essays.

When the evidence of the Theatre critic's consistent use of Mottley's List and Mrs. Lennox's Shakespear Illustrated is added to the evidence for internal consistency presented by Dunbar, Gray, and Emery, and when all the internal evidence is considered alongside the few important pieces of external evidence, there is little doubt that the author of the first thirty-seven Theatre papers was Arthur Murphy.

The attribution of the group of five essays that appeared in the fall of 1757 is much more doubtful. The first two of this series, those ostensibly by "Th.C.," have been claimed for Murphy only by Dunbar (pp. 306-309), though Sherbo (p. 75) supports this attribution. Dunbar's argument is that Murphy satirized Theophilus Cibber by first writing the letter of criticism, signed "Th.C.," and the following Theatre No. 1 which is connected with the letter by similarity of tone, approach, and a reference to the "former Paper," and then by taking the supposed author of these reviews to task in the second Theatre No. 1 for his inadequacies as a critic. There is little evidence within the essays to recommend Dunbar's argument. The evidence that Dunbar presents really only supports the argument that Murphy had ample motivation at this time to satirize Cibber: a motivation, incidentally, that could be attributed to half the theatrical world in this period. The nature of the matter contained in the first two essays, and the rather mild strictures put on their author in the second Theatre No. 1, simply do not support the case for a satirical attack. There is no reason in fact, given Theophilus Cibber's unmitigated gall, that he could not have actually written the first two essays, although there is nothing in Cibber's Monthly Review criticisms

that argues either for or against this point.¹⁴⁵ However, there is little use in presenting a point by point argument against Dunbar's position here, for Dunbar's argument has no validity unless Murphy was the author of the three essays that followed those by "Th.C."

Dunbar, Emery, Gray and Sherbo attribute these three essays to Murphy. In general, the essays follow the style, tone and organizational pattern of the first series, however, there are crucial differences that argue against Murphy's authorship. The second Theatre No. 1 opens with a review of The Fatal Marriage and says, "This Play was written by the late Mr. Southerne, and it was on its first Appearance received with great Applause. He was a Native of Ireland, and died in a very advanced Age in the year 1748 or 1747, at his House at Westminster." This information is similar to the kind given by Murphy in the previous season's series; however, using Mottley, he would have given the date of the first performance as 1694, and would have been more precise about the date of death, May 26, 1746. The other essays do not give this kind of background information, hence, cannot be compared. Should it be assumed that after relying on Mottley's

¹⁴⁵For Theophilus Cibber's work in the Monthly Review see Nangle, Indexes.

List throughout the first series, Murphy had then discarded the work?

Further on in Theatre No. 1 there is a review of The Tempest. The critic remarks, "The Manager caused this Performance to be sung a few Winters ago, and now he hath caused it to be said: In both these acts he was perhaps wrong; for to convert Shakespeare into Shakesperelli, is a wilder Transformation than ever Mr. Rich and Mr. Woodward have exhibited in their Pantomimes; and the Tempest, as written by our great Poet, is a Play fitter for the Closet than for Theatrical Representation." Murphy elsewhere agrees that the play should not have been turned into an opera, but he is diametrically opposed to this critic's opinion about the theatrical value of the original drama. In Theatre No. 16, Murphy noted that many critics found Macbeth the best of Shakespeare's "productions," but went on to say that he found The Tempest, Lear, Othello and Hamlet its equal. Later, in the Life of Garrick, Murphy says, "In the beginning of 1757, Shakespeare's play of the Tempest was converted into an opera. In this an error of judgment must be acknowledged. The original is the most entertaining, and, in some respects, the most complete production, in the whole circle of the drama (I, 298)"; "Had he [Garrick] revived the Tempest, as it stands in the original, and played the character of Prospero, he would have done

justice to the god of his idolatry, and honour to himself (I, 302)." That Murphy might change his opinion of a play is perfectly acceptable, but that he took one position, then its opposite, and then returned to the first, is not so readily acceptable, especially, when most of the opinions he advances in the Life of Garrick corroborate those propounded in the first series of Theatre essays.

The critic in Theatre No. 1, uses the review of The Tempest to disclaim and castigate "Th.C.'s" comments on Henry Mossop and explains: "The Fact is, our Theatrical Intelligence must occasionally consist of Contributions from various Hands; and a Pen is sometimes branched by Hands unequal to the Task." In the following Theatre No. 3, he says, "There are always some young Oxonians and Cantabs in Town, who are fond of communicating their Thoughts to me on these Matters; and whenever I see a Paragraph written with an Air of Truth and Impartiality, I shall not scruple to give it a Place in the Chronicle, even though I was not myself actually present at the Representation." Dunbar and Gray both note that this seems to be a shift in editorial policy from the earlier series of essays but do not point out just how major the change is. In at least six of the first thirty-seven essays, Murphy had gone out of his way to make statements such as the following: "As the Author of

these Paragraphs did not see it performed, he thinks proper to reserve what he has to say of this Play till it be presented again: And this he thinks infinitely more ingenuous than to follow the Example of the Writers of the Age, who for the most part, speak of what they have neither seen nor ever understood (Theatre No. 4)"; "We have determined never to speak of what we have not seen; and therefore must beg our Reader's Indulgence till the next Opportunity (Theatre No. 14)."

In the rest of the material contained in the three essays, there is little that argues against Murphy's authorship; however, there is just as little in support of the attribution. That the organizational pattern is similar to the relatively unique one of the first series of essays, does not in itself argue for a continuation by the same writer. The absence of introductory information, in fact, argues against it. As has been mentioned, once a pattern was set in a newspaper or journal, it often became the one followed by later critics: witness, for example, Murphy's following of the Monthly Review's rather bland paraphrase, quotation, and comment pattern in his later dramatic criticisms for this periodical. Although the opinions of Henry Mossop's acting advanced by the critic in the second Theatre No. 1 are similar to those offered by Murphy in Theatre No. 34, one only need look at a general work like the Thespian

Dictionary (London, 1805) to realize that these opinions of Mossop's acting were ones commonly held at this time.

It would seem then that the few important differences between the first and second series of Theatre essays give more credence to the argument against Murphy's being the author of the second series, than the similarities support the argument for attribution. The similarities are more easily explained than the differences; hence, until the contradictions are resolved, the attribution to Murphy of the fall 1757 Theatres 1-3 is most doubtful. And, of course, unless these essays can be ascribed to him, there is no argument for crediting him with the two "Th.C." essays that preceded them.

The first six essays that appeared in the fall of 1758 can be regarded as a unified series. Though the first four are headed by Roman numerals and the following two by Arabic, there is a similarity of style, tone, and critical opinion; furthermore, the first essay promises to take up matters which are dealt with in the second, and the sixth refers the reader back to the second. Gray (p. 141) noted that there was a similarity of tone and style between this series and the first series but felt that a few differences of critical opinion between essay No. 5 of this series and No. 19 of the first made attribution to the same author doubtful. Dunbar and Emery, on the basis of style, tone, diction, and critical

opinion, claim these essays for Murphy and argue that the inconsistencies can be ascribed to the changes in point of view that a critic might undergo in the space of a few years. Sherbo concurs in their attribution.

The argument crediting Murphy with this series is the weakest of any of the attribution arguments. Dunbar and Emery answer only the most minor aspects of the few contradictions pointed out by Gray, and Gray had overlooked a number of inconsistencies running throughout this series: not unexpectedly since the great breadth of his study precluded devoting close attention to any single part. One important difference that has been overlooked is that the author of the third series constantly uses the first person singular. Throughout the first series, Murphy invariably used the first person plural, only in a few places did he shift to the first person singular. In the places where background information is given in the third series, a comparison shows that Mottley's List was not used as the source. For the background to Measure for Measure, Mrs. Lennox's work could have been used, though both she and Murphy (No. 18) refer to "Cynthio's" novel and the author here calls him "Centhos." In the first two essays of the third series there is no attempt to follow an organizational pattern like that of the first series. The first essay begins, sans introduction, with a critique of the acting.

Though there is some analysis of the play preceding the commentary on acting in the second essay, the author says, "But I have unawares run into a criticism upon a play, when my design was to confine myself solely to some remarks upon an actor." Should it be assumed that Murphy has dispensed with the criteria he so consciously attempted to follow in the first series?

In Theatre No. IV the critic says of Congreve's Love for Love, "I should say, that this is the best comedy either antient or modern, that ever was written to please upon the stage; for while the most superficial judges admire it, it is impossible but the nicest and most accurate, must approve." He then launches into a point by point panegyric. Murphy's admiration for this play is considerably more qualified, "If we were to impute any Fault to this Piece, we should say it is immoral, and the Poet speaks now and then instead of the Characters (Theatre, No. 1)." In No. 6 of the third series, the author says of Farquhar's The Twin Rivals, "I think the play now under consideration is as proper a spectacle as ever was exhibited by way of a public entertainment." This is followed by a laudatory review of the play's excellences. Compare Murphy's statement in Theatre No. 9: "This Piece has many Circumstances in the Fable neither entertaining, nor fit for the Stage: and yet it has its

comic Beauties. A great Part of the Story is interesting."

This pattern of overstatement persists throughout the third series of essays. In No. III, the critic makes many of the same points about Mrs. Centlivre's The Wonder that Murphy made in No. 6, but the tone here is almost savage in comparison with Murphy's matter-of-fact critique. Again, in No. III, the critic's encomiums on The Beggar's Opera are as effusively complimentary as his attack on The Wonder is deprecatory, and quite extreme when compared with Murphy's laudatory review of Gay's piece in Theatre No. 32.

Theatre No. 5 of the third series contains favorable reviews of two pantomime dances. Though Sherbo (p. 205, n. 218) claims Murphy was not "inimical to comic dancing," citing an approving mention of two Italian dancers in the "True Intelligence" section of Gray's-Inn Journal No. 3 (1754), it appears Murphy never gave comic dancing any serious critical consideration. In the thirty-seven essays of the first series, he did not review dances and mentioned pantomimes only to derogate them. He devoted the whole, or part, of three Gray's-Inn Journal essays (1756, Nos. 5, 71, 77), and parts of numerous "True Intelligence" sections, to ridiculing pantomimes and entertainments. He generally thought that most theatrical entertainments catered to a debased public

taste, hindered the production of legitimate drama, and, if they had merit in their own right, should be exhibited at other than the two Patent theatres. To mention comic dancing in a "True Intelligence" section, often little more than a collection of theatrical news items, is one thing, but suddenly to give two favorable reviews to comic dances in columns that had been devoted to serious consideration of legitimate drama seems to violate Murphy's usual opinion of entertainments.

In Theatre No. 6 of the third group, the author says, "On Wednesday the 19th instant was revived a comedy not acted these twelve years, called The Twin Rivals." Could Murphy have forgotten that a year and a half before, in Theatre No. 9, he had reviewed The Twin Rivals?

The final and most important evidence against the attribution of the third series to Murphy is found in No. 5 of this group. Here appears the contradiction, that Gray noted, of Murphy's Theatre No. 19 commentary upon Garrick's portrayal of Sir John Brute in Vanbrugh's The Provok'd Wife. In No. 19 Murphy says, "Mr. Garrick is not generally allowed to play Sir John Brute as well as many other Parts: We cannot help thinking the Critics who have determined this Matter somewhat mistaken: A large uncouth Figure, with a deep toned Voice is by no means necessary; on the contrary, perhaps the Appearance of one, worn out with excessive Debauchery is the more

natural of the two." He goes on to give a number of examples of Garrick's excellence in this role. The heavy-handed approach to the role that Murphy says is "by no means necessary" is an implicit description of the great James Quin, who for years had "owned" this part. The critic in No. 5, reverses this position: "It is amazing to me that Mr. Garrick will attempt the part of Sir John Brute; a part which he not only apparently mistakes, but in which he is absolutely prejudicial to the morals of his countrymen." He then mentions Quin by name and his interpretation of the part. He does, however, allow that in certain scenes, some of the same ones Murphy mentions, Garrick has merit.

It is most difficult to ascribe this contradiction to Murphy's changing his opinion. For even earlier than the Chronicle essays, in No. 38 of the Gray's-Inn Journal (1754), and then later, in the Life of Garrick (II, 100), Murphy praises Garrick's interpretation of Sir John. In the Life, Murphy makes virtually the same points about Garrick's portrayal that he does in Theatre No. 19. As was the case in the second series of Theatre essays, we are forced to accept a double change of opinion if the essays are to be attributed to Murphy.

But the inconsistency of the commentary on Garrick is not the only contradiction between No. 19 (1757) and No. 5 (1758). Everyone seems to have bypassed an important

one between the two analyses of the play itself. Murphy feels that, from the standpoint of morality, it would have been preferable had Lady Brute endeavoured to reclaim her husband through "becoming Patience and correct Behaviour." He goes on to say, "But when at present we see the provok'd Wife only excited to an Emulation of Vice, when we see her endeavouring to outstrip her Husband in a Dereliction of Morals, and see them both pursuing their separate Paths of Wickedness, we revolt from the witty and humorous Writer, and cannot help condemning him for the Looseness of his Principles." The critic in No. 5 says, "when all is said and done, her Ladyship, and my cousin Belinda are at best a couple of as willing tits as a man would desire to meet with: but as I do not apprehend characters of this kind are likely to do much mischief, I cannot help thinking that the author was wholly in the right rather to draw his women as he has done, than by giving them opposite manners, to have made them such unmeaning things as half our modern comedies are filled with. For instance, can anyone think that Lady Brute would give half so much pleasure to the audience if instead of being a wanton, intriguing, witty wag (as Razor calls her) the author had copied her from Patient Grizel."

When the individual pieces of evidence against Murphy's authorship of the third series of Theatre essays

are placed together, the total body is a good deal larger than that for the attribution. Though any single piece may be explained away, it is difficult to argue against the whole.

The fourth series of essays, that preceded by the letter, signed "N.S.," is claimed for Murphy only by Sherbo, though Gray admits, "it is not easy to detect any differences in the criticisms themselves (p. 141)" between this series and the earlier ones. But since Sherbo himself (p. 76) is careful to inform the reader that unless the preceding group of Theatre essays can be ascribed to Murphy, an attribution which he accepts and amplifies on the basis of Dunbar's and Emery's earlier arguments, there is not much evidence for crediting Murphy with this fourth series of essays. And since the arguments advanced here demonstrate that attribution of the previous series to Murphy is most doubtful, there is little reason to give the fourth series much attention at this time. However, a few problems that must be taken into account by anyone giving future consideration to Murphy's authorship of this series should be mentioned.

First, in those places where it is applicable, a comparison shows that the author of the fourth series did not use Mottley's List for background information. In No. 8 of this series, in a review of The Wonder, the author says that because Mrs. Centlivre is a woman, she

is "exempted" from critical censure. Murphy's discussion of the play in Theatre No. 6 and in the Life of Garrick (I, 312) belies this position. In the fourth series there is favorable commentary on the dance, and No. 8 contains an approbatory mention of the pantomime, Harlequin Ranger. This would be antithetical to Murphy's usual critical stance in regard to entertainments, particularly pantomimes.

Finally, Theatres No. 9 and 11 are commendatory reviews of Balthazar Galuppi's Italian opera, Attalo, performed at the King's Theatre in the Haymarket. In the thirty-seven essays of the first series, Murphy did not review productions at other than the two Patent theatres. When the two reviews of Attalo appeared, there was no lapse of activity at Drury Lane and Covent Garden; the critic could have reviewed The Orphan, The Earl of Essex, The Siege of Damascus, or A Bold Stroke for a Wife.

Murphy remarked on opera only once in the first series of essays (No. 1), a one-sentence reference, approving the music but not the libretto to Thomas Arne's Eliza, an English opera performed at Drury Lane. That it was an English opera may seem to be a trivial point, but in the "True Intelligence" section of Gray's-Inn Journal No. 9 (1754), Murphy decried the fashion for Italian opera, which he thought "extravagant and unnatural," though he asserted that English composers such as Arne, Handel, and

Boyce, might put their music to an "elegant drama," and the result would be "an high and rational entertainment." In the Monthly Review for September, 1787 (p. 245), he allowed that opera may have its own beauties, hence, may be "acceptable in the theatre." But more important, he said of opera here, "The species of composition which is intended to be the vehicle of music, and, indeed, to derive its power from the songs interspersed, ought never to be brought to the test of strict criticism (my italics)."

The fifth and last series of essays, that which begins with the first "Atticus" letter in the Nov. 18-21 Chronicle, followed by four unnumbered Theatre papers, the first of which is also signed "Atticus," running from Dec. 2-5 to Dec. 19-21, is almost assuredly the work of Murphy. There is too much external evidence designating Murphy as the author of the final three essays of this series, those in which the character of Marplot from Mrs. Centlivre's The Busy Body is analyzed and the actors who have played this role compared, to deny the attribution. Emery (p. 1104) cites two contemporary pamphlets, the anonymous Letter to the Hon. Author of the New Farce, Called the Rout (London, 1759) and An Inquiry into the Real Merit of a Certain Popular Performer (London, 1760), usually attributed to Murphy's friend and occasional collaborator in the Gray's-Inn Journal, Thaddeus Fitzpatrick, that refer to Murphy as the author of the

Chronicle criticism. Dunbar (p. 59, n. 38) adds the Dec. 22-25 issue of Lloyd's Evening Post to the contemporary references. But more important (pp. 56-60), he adds a great deal of evidence concerning Murphy's relationship with Garrick at this time: his antagonism toward the manager for Garrick's failure to produce his Orphan of China; Murphy's accusation that Garrick gave John Hill an idea of Murphy's for a farce called The Rout, which Garrick produced and which is criticized in this Theatre series; Murphy's own admission, in the Life of Garrick (I, 331) that he undertook a paper-war against Garrick at this time. Much of this situation is dealt with by implication and innuendo in the final three Theatre essays. J. W. Bowyer adds to the external evidence, noting that the Theatrical Monitor for Nov. 7, 1767, also ascribes the Chronicle criticism of Garrick's Marplot to Murphy.¹⁴⁶

There is less certainty about the two "Atticus" papers but there is enough evidence to make the attribution to Murphy convincing. Dunbar (p. 58) offers a cogent argument for Murphy's authorship, and Sherbo (p. 78) supports and strengthens the claim. The critical principles set forth by "Atticus" are those followed in the last three essays. The first unsigned Theatre column

¹⁴⁶Mrs. Centlivre, p. 110.

of the last series, that of Dec. 7-9 dealing with Dodsley's Cleone and Mrs. Bellamy's acting, is linked by similarity of tone, style, and critical concern with the preceding "Atticus" essay which is concerned with the same subjects. Some of the implications and innuendoes that tie the final papers to Murphy's and Garrick's relationship at the time can be found in the "Atticus" essays. Despite the two-week break between the first "Atticus" letter and the first of the final four essays, when the five criticisms are read as a group, with Murphy's avowed paper-war against Garrick being kept in mind, a careful attack on the manager can be seen developing. Garrick could shrug off the usual crude pamphlet or newspaper attack often levelled against him, but Murphy well knew that "anxiety for his fame was the Manager's reigning foible"; hence, that a fair and objective criticism, based on substantial principles of acting and demonstrable knowledge of previous interpretations of the role, could not be disregarded as just another personal attack and would cut Garrick to the quick.¹⁴⁷ The devising and execution of such a criticism takes time and historical research, but its tentative beginnings can be seen in the initial "Atticus" letter.

¹⁴⁷Life of Garrick, I, 331; See above, p. 9.

In light of the arguments advanced here, this edition includes only the "Tragicomicus" letter and the thirty-seven Theatre papers from the winter and spring of 1757; the two "Atticus" pieces and the final three unnumbered Theatre essays of 1758. However, since Arthur Sherbo has reprinted and annotated the two "Atticus" papers, they have not been included in the Text but have instead been placed in Appendix A.¹⁴⁸ In general, no attempt has been made to modernize the text in regard to capitalization, punctuation, orthography, and the frequent use of italics. Changes of this nature inevitably lose something of the spirit and effect of eighteenth-century composition. Only the use of the long "ſ," oversized initial capitals, running quotation marks, and the inconsistent and sometimes confusing practice of italicizing personal names and names of dramatic characters where emphasis clearly was not intended, have been altered in favor of modern conventions. Obvious compositorial errors, such as omissions of letters or words and orthographic variants for which there is no eighteenth-century precedence, have been silently emended.

Explanatory notes will be found at the end of each essay. They identify persons, quotations, and allusions, correct the dating of initial productions,

¹⁴⁸New Essays, pp. 92-95 and 97-98.

provide a modicum of background for the more obscure references, attempt to point out the pertinent sources of Murphy's information, and elucidate those commonly used critical terms not discussed in the Introduction.

To obviate unnecessary repetition, works that have been referred to in the Introduction are cited by short title in the Text. The most frequently used sources have been abbreviated as follows: The London Stage 1660-1800, Parts 1-4, ed. William Van Lennep, Emmett L. Avery, Arthur H. Scouten, and George Winchester Stone, Jr., 8 vols. (Carbondale, 1960-65), is cited as London Stage, Part, and the volume of the Part; Allardyce Nicoll, History of English Drama, 1660-1900, 6 vols. (Cambridge, 1952), is referred to as Nicoll; John Genest, Some Account of the English Stage, 10 vols. (Bath, 1832), is listed as Genest; and the Dictionary of National Biography, ed. Leslie Stephen, et al., 63 vols. (London, 1885-1900) is abbreviated D.N.B..

To save space, there are usually no references given in the short biographical sketches of performers since these were compiled from various sources. For the information in the sketches I am indebted to Genest, the D.N.B., The Thespian Dictionary (London, 1805), H. Barton Baker, English Actors, 2 vols. (New York, 1879), and D. E. Baker, rev. Stephen Jones, Biographia Dramatica, or, a Companion to the Playhouse, 3 vols. (London, 1812).

Unless otherwise noted, line references and Latin translations are according to the editions of the Loeb Classical Library. Where Murphy has followed a Latin passage with his own translation, no further translation is offered, since even where there are discrepancies between his rendition and that of others, his best conveys the sense in which he intended the passage. All references to Shakespeare are to the New Cambridge edition, ed. W. A. Neilson and C. J. Hill; those to Pope are to the Twickenham edition, ed. John Butt, et al., 6 vols. (London, 1939-62).

THE LONDON CHRONICLE, January 18-20, 1757.

POSTSCRIPT.

To the Authors of the CHRONICLE.

Gentlemen,

I Agree with the Writer of the Introduction to your Paper, "That the Public is rather wearied than satisfied with the weekly and daily Papers," which have been served up to them for some time past.¹ Your undertaking seems much better calculated to gratify Curiosity than any of your Rivals, and to administer likewise to that Love of Variety, which is so natural to the Mind of Man. As we have no Comic Writers among us, your Paper may serve as a Mirror to reflect the Manners of the present Age, when Time with his effacing Hand shall have totally obliterated the reigning Customs and Ideas. On this Account I would have annual Collections made of your Papers; and if they are hereafter found in the Bodleian Library, or in the Repositories of Antiquarians, Posterity may be enabled to form clearer Ideas of this glorious Period, than any of the Commentators have been able to suggest in relation to the Singularities exhibited by Ben Johnson.

One Part of your Plan is, I think, defective. It will conduce very little to the Advancement of true Knowledge, to inform future Times that such a Play was acted at Drury-Lane, and such a one at Covent-Garden. I could wish to see a short Analysis of every Play, with a summary Account of its Merit or Deficiency, and whether it owes its Reception to Character, Wit, Humour, and Incident combined, or to any one of those Requisites detached from the rest. If to this it were added by whom each Play was written, when first produced, and what Degree of Success it met with, it would prove an agreeable and not unenterprising Part of your Paper, more particularly if accompanied with Criticisms on the acting, not calculated to give Pain to the Performer, but derived from the Source of Nature, Taste, and Good Sense.²

If you agree with me in this Matter (as you certainly must) I will with Pleasure undertake that Department: And I therefore desire you will order a new Type of the following Letters in Capitals, T, H, E, A, T, R, E; being resolved to convey all Intelligence of this Nature under the Title of THE THEATRE which I would have placed in some conspicuous Part of the Chronicle, to be reserved in all your future Publications for my Criticisms, without

being ever preoccupied by Letters from the Hague, or any other Topic whatever.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your very humble Servant,

TRAGICOMICUS.

¹The introductory paragraphs to the first issue of the London Chronicle (Jan. 1, 1757) said, "The Paper which we now invite the Publick to add to the Papers with which it is already rather wearied than satisfied consists of many Parts." This introduction was written by Samuel Johnson. Boswell, Life, I, 317.

²For Murphy's use of these criteria as organizing principles in the reviews, see above, pp. 106-7.

THE LONDON CHRONICLE, January 20-22, 1757.

THE THEATRE. No. 1.

Drury-Lane, Jan. 20, 1757.

This Evening was presented a Comedy called the Careless Husband, written by Mr. Colley Cibber.¹ This Piece was exhibited for the first Time in the Year 1704, at the Threatre in Drury-Lane, with very great and merited Success. It is of that Species of the Drama, which the modern Critics call genteel Comedy, the Action being among People in high life, whose Characters, fine by Defect and delicately nice, as Mr. Pope expresses it,² are drawn with a very masterly Hand. Sir Charles Easy's indolent Enjoyment is finely marked, and beautifully contrasted by the self-tormenting Fretfulness of Lord Morelove. Lord Foppington is a Fop of the last Age, with all the Fashionable Vices, a very ridiculous Vanity, and a pleasant vein of Raillery.³ Lady Betty Modish is the most finished and best drawn Coquette of the English Stage; the Business⁴ is that of People of Fashion, interesting, and productive of some very entertaining situations; though we cannot help thinking the Discovery of Sir Charles with Edging (which last Character is inimitably

acted by Mrs. Clive)⁵ rather borders upon Indelicacy, though it afterwards occasions a very pathetic⁶ and beautiful Conclusion of the Piece.

Covent-Garden, Same Day.

Mr. Congreve's Comedy of Love for Love, which appeared the first Time in Lincoln's-Inn Fields, in the Year 1691, was acted here this Evening.⁷ The Success of this Piece was such, that Mr. Betterton and the other Managers gave the Author a Share in the House, on Condition that he should produce a new Play every Year; which Mr. Congreve accepted, tho' he had afterwards too great a Regard to his Reputation to perform the Article.⁸ Wit, Plot, Humour, and Character are exquisitely combined in this Piece. The Limits of our Paper will only allow us to say that Valentine, Foresight, Sir Sampson, Ben and Miss Prue are inimitably drawn, and produced in the most diverting Situations. If we were to impute any Fault to this Piece, we should say it is immoral, and that the Poet speaks now and then instead of the Character; we could wish Mr. Garrick would do Honour to the Memory of Mr. Congreve, by appearing in some of his Plays.

Drury Lane, 21st.

This Evening was performed the Opera of Eliza, for the Benefit of Mr. Arne, who, we think, has acted the

Part of the ancient Tyrant upon himself, by joining a Living to a Dead Body.⁹

Covent-Garden, Same Day.

The Stratagem, by Mr. Farquhar, was performed here. This Play was acted first in the Year 1710, and the Author died during the Run.¹⁰ The Business of it is admirably imagined, and the Dialogue is airy and pleasant, though, as is frequent with this Writer, it often dwindles into mere Chit-chat. The Humours of a jolly Landlord are well exhibited in Boniface. Archer is ever a pleasant and a pretty Fellow; and Scrub is justly drawn from Nature, though not always acted so. The Plot is well conducted, till we come to the Close, when Mr. and Mrs. Sullen are parted in an unnatural Manner, and with a strong Degree of Immorality on the Side of Archer, who also concludes the Piece with a Moral¹¹ (if I can so call it) which I could wish were altered for such a one as would not be an Affront to the Understanding and Manners of the Audience.

¹See Theatre No. 2, n. 8.

²"Fine by defect, and delicately weak," Moral Essays, II, 44.

³Unlike most eighteenth-century critics, for whom the terms "raillery" and "ridicule" were synonymous, Murphy regarded raillery as a more gentle corrective device than ridicule: "No tincture of ill-nature must be suffered to mingle in the composition of raillery." He defined it as, "a delicate exertion of pleasantry upon

the foibles, the slight indiscretions, the mistaken opinions, or even the virtues of men, when carried to some degree of excess." GIJ, No. 25 (1786).

⁴For Murphy's use of this term see above, p. 77.

⁵Catherine "Kitty" Clive, 1711-1785, was one of the foremost comediennes of the period. By 1731 she was an established actress and maintained her popularity until her retirement in 1769. Her specialty was comic characters of the middle and lower classes. Known for her wit, understanding, and a superb sense of timing, she was as highly regarded by her colleagues as by the public.

⁶"In all eighteenth-century critical writings the term pathetic is used in its generic sense of producing an effect upon the emotions, not necessarily the tender emotions." Monk, The Sublime, p. 13, n. 11.

⁷This play was first performed on April 30, 1695, when Thomas Betterton, as the manager of a newly formed company of actors, reopened the old playhouse in Lincoln's Inn Fields as the new Theatre Royal. John Hodges, William Congreve the Man (New York, 1941), p. 52.

⁸Congreve's biographer substantiates this agreement but feels that natural indolence as well as a desire to "preserve his artistic integrity" prevented Congreve from fulfilling it. *Ibid.*

⁹Thomas Arne's Eliza was first performed in May, 1754, at the Little Theatre in the Haymarket. For Murphy's acclamation of Arne's music, see above, pp. 127-8, and GIJ, No. 37 (1754). The "Dead body" is Richard Rolt's ludicrous libretto in which Brittania, Liberty, Peace, and other allegorical figures, inhabit an idyllic pastoral world that is about to be attacked by the wicked figure of Spain. The "ancient Tyrant" is Mezentius, mythical king of the Etruscans who put his victims to a slow, torturous death by binding them hand to hand and face to face with a rotting corpse. Virgil, Aeneid, VIII, 485-88.

¹⁰The Beaux' Stratagem was produced on March 8, 1707, at the Queen's Theatre in the Haymarket and Farquhar, only thirty years old, died sometime late in May. A. J. Farmer, George Farquhar (London, 1966), p. 13.

¹¹At the close of the play Archer says: "'Twould be hard to guess which of these parties is the better pleased, the couple joined, or the couple parted: the one

rejoicing in hopes of an untasted happiness, and the other in their deliverance from an experienced misery.

Both happy in their several states we find,
Those parted by consent, and those conjoined.
Consent, if mutual, saves the lawyer's fee--
Consent is law enough to set you free."

THE LONDON CHRONICLE, January 22-25, 1757.

THE THEATRE. No. 2.

Drury-Lane, Jan. 22, 1757.

This Evening was performed at this Theatre, Aaron Hill's Translation of Voltaire's Mèrope, acted for the first Time in 1749.¹ The Subject of this Piece is very finely handled in the Italian by Massei, to whom the French Author has addressed his Performance in a very elegant Dedication, in which he has paid him every Acknowledgment, that a generous Mind always thinks a Tribute due to transcendant Merit.² Voltaire seems in all his fugitive Pieces to have considered this Play as his Master-piece, and accordingly we find him frequently boasting of La Mèrope Française.³ The Truth is, he has justly valued himself for this Work, the Success of which was very great. The Story is nobly conceived; the impregnable Virtue of the Queen, her maternal Affliction, and her Indignation at the Insolence of the Usurper are strikingly marked; the youthful Heroism of her Son introduced in Disguise, ignorant of his own Birth, and charged with the Murder of the young Prince, without being conscious that he himself is that royal Person, is a

Situation that cannot fail to engage every feeling Heart; and the double Distress of the Queen just going to sacrifice her Son for a Murder, and the imminent Danger of the young Man, forms, in my Opinion, one of the most pathetic Scenes on any Stage; and the Passions are here excited to as strong Emotions as the Drama can afford. After this Incident, which is in the third Act, it must be observed that the Interest weakens, and, the Discovery being made, the Play never rises to any Thing like a Climax of Terror and Pity, which should always be the Case in a Tragedy, and which is in general too much neglected by the French Writers. Aaron Hill has not improved the Play in this very obvious Point: what he seems to have aimed at, was to render it strongly Sentimental:⁴ In this he has often succeeded: this Writer does not appear to have wanted a Power of thinking, but in order to impress his Thoughts with Force and Energy, he has had Recourse to such laboured Diction, as has justly deserved the Censure passed on him by a great Genius, viz. that he was fond of making bold Experiments in Language.⁵

Covent-Garden, Same Day.

Mr. Cibber's Nonjuror was performed; a Play in which the Author has availed himself pretty much of the Tartuffe of Moliere, and a Translation of it called the Puritan in the Reign of King Charles II.⁶ Mr. Cibber's Piece was performed in the Year 1717, with great Success:

the Character of Maria is inimitably drawn: her Coquetry, her Vivacity of Understanding, and her Wit and Raillery render her very justly a Favourite with the Audience; and Mrs. Woffington's admirable Performace imprints every Scene, and heightens Maria's Charms with her own Sensibility and Elegance.⁷ The Conduct of this Comedy is such as might be expected from one who perfectly understood the Stage; the Incidents are pleasing, and serve besides to promote the Exhibition of Character.⁸ Upon the whole, Mr. Pope's Censure, when he says, "No Merit the dear Nonjuror claims," seems rather the Result of his satyric Spleen, than the Effect of his serious Judgment.⁹

Drury-Lane, 24th.

The Tragedy of the Earl of Essex, by Mr. Jones, was acted here. This Piece was produced for the first Time at Covent-Garden Theatre, in the Year 1753, with a Success which seems rather to be owing to the Circumstances of the Story than any capital Merit in the Writing. It is observed in the Spectator that the original Play on this Subject, though very defective in the Writing, yet from the Conduct of the Story was never seen without many wet Eyes.¹⁰ The same Remark may be made without Regard to the Alteration, and we may still with the Author of the complimentary Verses prefixed to it.

And the Head wonder'd how the Heart was mov'd.¹¹

Covent-Garden, Same Day.

Was performed the Committee, acted first in 1665.¹² Many of the Characters are drawn in Allusion to the Politics of the Times, and with Humour they expose the Disputes then subsisting. However, the Pleasantry is now in a great measure lost, the Ideas and Manners of those Times being effaced. The Play has, however, the Advantage of a lasting Character, which is that of Teague,¹³ who has many characteristical Marks, besides making Bulls;¹⁴ his Honesty and Courage recommend him; his simple Cunning, which divertingly instead of avoiding, leads him into Blunders; and those Blunders which help to produce new Turns and Incidents, are all Beauties in this Piece. Modern Writers, who attempt to rival this Character, will be sure to fail, unless a Comic Genius should arise with some Knowledge of the Stage, with Wit that extends beyond Joe Miller's Jests,¹⁵ and with an Idea of Character deduced from an inward Survey of the Movement of the Mind, and not superficially formed, by stringing together all the hackney'd Bulls that have already palled our Relish.

¹Aaron Hill, poet, dramatist, journalist, translator, and theatre manager, died in 1750. His periodical, The Prompter, and his Essay on the Act of Acting constitute some of the most important theatrical writing of the first

half of the century. Though Merope was not performed until April 15, 1749, Hill had completed the translation in 1745. He also translated Voltaire's Alzire and Zaïre. For comments on the latter, see Theatre No. 4.

²Voltaire completed his Mèrope in 1737, but it was not acted until 1743. The first edition of this work, 1744, included a lengthy letter of dedication to the Italian author, François-Scipion Massei, who had composed his Merope in 1713. Oeuvres Complètes de Voltaire (Paris, 1887), IV, 179. Murphy referred to and quoted from this dedication in GIJ, No. 20 (1754).

³The original Pièces fugitives (1740) was a small collection of verse, letters, and short prose pieces. The content of this collection seems to have varied from edition to edition and often the collection itself appeared as part of larger editions of Voltaire's works. See Georges Bengesco, Bibliographie des Oeuvres de Voltaire, 5 vols. (Paris, 1890). Of the two editions (1740 and 1763) that I have been able to examine, only that of 1763 contains a mention of Mèrope, but the information given is not applicable here. However, in GIJ, No. 12 (1754), Murphy referred to "the several Performances in Criticism with which Voltaire has introduced into the World his various poetical Compositions" as going "by the Name of, Fugitive Pieces"; hence, the dedicatory letters and prefaces to the dramas were part of the edition of the Fugitive Pieces used by Murphy. But an examination of these reveals that only in the prefatory matter to Merope itself did Voltaire give encomiums to this play.

⁴"Voltaire's Polyphontes is the tyrant dictating terms--Hill's Polyphontes talks of love and addresses the Queen as his sister and his soul; Hill introduces some description of Arcadian simplicity in which the prince was reared; Hill embellishes the account of the prince's prayer in the temple with trembling altars and glories beaming around; and he brings into the scene, where Merope attempts to sacrifice her son, a funeral song and a procession of virgins in white." Dorothy Brewster, Aaron Hill (New York, 1913), p. 150.

⁵I have not been able to identify the "great Genius." It may be an allusion to Pope, who in Chapter VI of The Art of Sinking in Poetry made Hill one of the "Flying Fishes" that soar momentarily out of "the profound" only to fall back, and in the Dunciad of 1728 (II, 283-86) portrayed him as one of the "divers." In later editions, at Hill's request, the lines were changed;

however, Pope continued to refer to him in the notes as someone who had been "guilty of bombast" in his youth.

⁶In his autobiography, Cibber says of the Nonjuror, "To give life, therefore, to this design [to satirize the Jacobitism that led to the Scottish rebellion] I borrow'd the Tartuffe of Moliere, and turn'd him into a modern Nonjuror." An Apology for the Life of Colley Cibber, ed. B. R. S. Fone (Ann Arbor, 1968), p. 282. Cibber does not mention the Puritan. A play with this title, possibly by Thomas Middleton, was acted in 1714 with a "bill that bore the heading: Not Acted these 50 Years." London Stage, Part 1, 71.

⁷Margaret Woffington, 1714?-1760, Garrick's 'lovely Peggy,' was also a close friend of Murphy. Though not a beauty, she was tall and well-formed, expressive and vivacious. Competent in all roles, she was particularly acclaimed for her portrayal of females of high rank and for playing "breeches" parts of fine gentlemen such as Sir Harry Wildair in Farquhar's The Constant Couple.

⁸Because Cibber has such a desire to be in the public eye that he would rather be reviled than ignored, his actions and words often made him the butt of satire; so much so, that his real achievements as an actor, dramatist, and manager, were usually obscured. His comedies were popular with the public, but Murphy was one of the few critics to recognize Cibber's artistry and craftsmanship as a dramatist. See Theatres No. 1, 13, 23 and the "Atticus" letter of Nov. 18-21, 1758.

⁹"No merit now the dear Nonjuror claims,
Moliere's old stubble in a moment flames."
Dunciad (B), I, 253.

¹⁰Murphy's memory fails him here. It was the Tatler, No. 14, May 12, 1709, that said of the original play, John Banks' The Unhappy Favourite, or the Earl of Essex (1681), "Yesterday we were entertained with the tragedy of the Earl of Essex; in which there is not one good line, and yet a play which was never seen without drawing tears from some part of the audience." The Tatler went on to ascribe this phenomenon to the "incidents" of the story itself.

¹¹This line is from the verses prefixed to Henry Jones' drama but it refers to Banks' work. The poem compliments Jones on overcoming this failing of Banks' piece. It is of interest to note that the author of these

"complimentary Verses" was Murphy's old enemy, Macnamara Morgan, with whom he fought an aborted duel at the Bedford Coffee-house on Nov. 2, 1753, because Morgan alleged that the Gray's-Inn Journal's reason for being was to puff Garrick.

¹²The first known performance of Sir Robert Howard's Committee was on Nov. 27, 1662. London Stage, Part 1, 58.

¹³The main character in The Committee was so popular that in later comedies and farces, "Teague" became a generic name for the stock figure of the low Irishman.

¹⁴"Bulls" were the stock solecisms, ludicrous jests, and self-contradictory propositions, delivered in a heavy brogue, that marked the comic figure of the low Irishman.

¹⁵In 1739, T. Read published a collection of jests that he had commissioned John Mottley to compile, and which Mottley unwarrantably titled Joe Miller's Jests after a well-known comic actor of the period who had died the previous year. D.N.B., sub Miller, XXXVII, 416.

THE LONDON CHRONICLE, January 25-27, 1757.

THE THEATRE. No. 3.

Drury-Lane, Jan. 25, 1757.

Mr. Congreve's Tragedy called the Mourning Bride, produced for the first Time in Lincoln's-Inn Fields, in the Year 1696, was exhibited here this Evening.¹ The Success of this Piece was, in all Probability, chiefly owing to the great Reputation of its Author, and the false Taste, which prevailed in those Days. It seems a Kind of Fatality in the literary World, that Fashion seems to govern, what should only be directed by the Standard of Nature. One may reasonably imagine that Audiences, when the Mourning Bride was wrote, were chiefly fond of being elevated and surprised,² and indeed the same vicious Relish seems to re-commence at present; otherwise we should not see Plays received with Applause, when their chief Merit consists in Trick, Incident, and Business; without Character, Fable, or Language. The Mourning Bride is not entirely defective in the three last mentioned Particulars: Zara is a commanding Character; the Vicissitudes of her Rage and Love; her noble Propensities, and the Vehemence of her Passions, which tear her Virtues

up,³ are all drawn in very fine Proportions. Osmyn is likewise a Character well conceived: The first Introduction of him is very striking, and his Exit in the Close of the first Act leaves the Mind in a Pause of Suspence. His filial Piety very properly leads him to visit his Father's Tomb; the Discovery that he is Alphonso, when he comes out of the Vault, is very artificial,⁴ and is succeeded by a recognizing Scene between him and Almeria, in which Joy and Tenderness are affectingly mingled. After this, the Remainder of Osmyn's Part is all Rant and wild Poetry, the Ideas and Expressions being drawn from the Stores of Imagination, without the Simplicity always natural to Emotions of the Heart. The rest of the Piece is a Succession of Miracles, unnatural and improbable Turns of Fortune, and we are every Moment surprized with some new Discovery to make us stare, but not reach our Hearts. However, upon the Whole, this Tragedy is on the Side of Virtue, and in that Respect, and that only, it is the best of all Mr. Congreve's Plays.

Covent-Garden, Same Day.

Was performed, the first Part of Henry the Fourth, written by Shakespeare. The Plays of this Author must never be judged by the strict Rules of Dramatic Poetry, with which it is to be imagined, he was not acquainted; and therefore to try him by what he did not know, would

be trying him by a Kind of ex post facto Law; Regularity of Design being introduced in this Country since the Decease of that great Genius. Mr. Hume, in his History of Great Britain, has given a pretty just Character of him, when he says, "A striking Peculiarity of Sentiment, adapted to a singular Character, he frequently hits as it were by Inspiration; but a reasonable Propriety of Thought he cannot, for any Time, uphold;"⁵ unless the Character of Falstaff be an Exception to this very sensible Writer's Opinion. For indeed the Character of Sir John nowhere flags, and he generally upholds a Propriety of thought, if it be considered in regard to the Manners of the Speaker. Bullying, Cowardice, Vaunting, Defection, boasted Activity, and bodily Indolence, Profligacy, and Pretensions to Decorum, form such a party-coloured Groupe as moves our Laughter irresistibly; his Wit, and, on all Occasions, the Pleasantry of his Ideas, provoke us to laugh with him, and hinder the Knight's Character from sinking into Contempt; and we love him, in Spight of his degrading Foibles, for his enlivened Humour and his companionable Qualities. It is somewhat surprizing that the Players have agreed to supersede one of the best Scenes in the Play, which is that between Falstaff and the Prince, where Sir John personates by Turns the King and his Son, with such a Vein of Humour as perhaps would divert an Audience beyond any thing in the Comedy.⁶

Drury-Lane, 26th.

This Night the Chances, a Comedy by Beaumont and Fletcher, and in the Year 1682 revived with Alterations by Villiers Duke of Buckingham at the Theatre in Dorset Gardens, was acted at this House.⁷ The Bills of the Day mention further Alterations: we could wish that, when Mr. Garrick thought of any Alterations, he had given such as would have rendered it not entirely offensive to all Decency and Virtue.⁸ In many Passages we meet with very fine Writing; just Thoughts enlivened by spirited Dialogue, Wit, Humour, and Strokes of Character. The Play however, owes its Success principally to quick Turns of Business, a Variety of Incidents, and some diverting Situations. The Plot is very far from being conducted artificially, and in a just Subordinancy to the Rules of the Drama; and Vice and Folly are represented in a favourable Light. On the Revival of this Play, a few Winters ago, the Connoisseurs were divided about Mr. Garrick, and the late Mr. Wilks:⁹ many Persons of Taste, who remembered the Latter, preferred the deceased Performer; be that as it may, Mr. Garrick's Admirers had great Reason on their Side, because he certainly plays the Part with great Vivacity; and in his Hands Don John is a new created Personage, that will always divert, while our modern Roscius¹⁰ walks the Stage.

Covent-Garden, Same Day.

Was performed the Inconstant, by Mr. Farquhar; first acted in 1703.¹¹ The most striking Incident in this Play, which is the Scene when the Bravoës rob young Mirabel, and are afterwards hindered from perpetrating their intended Murder, is founded on a true Story, that happened in Paris.¹² There is not much Fancy in this Comedy; the Dialogue is generally small Talk, and the Conduct such as not very much to engage the Attention. Whenever this Play is acted at the other House, we regret Mr. Garrick in Duretette,¹³ though we must own Mr. Woodward¹⁴ is diverting throughout, and Mrs. Clive¹⁵ performs wonderfully well in the Character of Bizarri.

¹The Mourning Bride was first performed in February, 1697. London Stage, Part 1, 474.

²In Villiers' The Rehearsal, I, i, 42-3, the "new kind of wits" are defined as "fellows that scorn to imitate nature, but are given altogether to elevate and surprise."

³In III, ii, 228-230, Osmyn says of Zara:
But she has Passions which out-strip the Wind,
And tear her Virtues up, as Tempests root
The Sea....

The Complete Plays of William Congreve, ed. Herbert Davis (Chicago, 1967).

⁴Murphy uses this word in the approbatory sense of artful, with art, skilfully wrought; it carries none of the derogatory connotations of affected or unnaturally contrived.

⁵David Hume, The History of England from the Invasion of Julius Caesar to the Revolution in 1688 (London, 1848), IV, 374.

⁶II, iv.

⁷Villiers' adaptation was played as early as February, 1667. London Stage, Part 1, 102.

⁸In the fall of 1754 Garrick "carefully retouched and pruned down" Villiers' adaptation. Percy Fitzgerald, The Life of David Garrick (London, 1868), I, 300.

⁹Robert Wilks, 1665?-1732, was the unrivalled "fine gentleman" of the first quarter of the century. He and his co-managers at Drury Lane, Barton Booth and Colley Cibber, were the leading proponents of the "exaggerated" style of acting. Though also a fine tragedian, particularly in pathetic tragedy, his best roles were comic figures in fashionable society.

¹⁰The most celebrated Roman actor, d. 62 B.C., was considered to have reached such perfection in his art that his name became a synonym for histrionic excellence.

¹¹George Farquhar's The Inconstant, an adaptation of John Fletcher's The Wild Goose Chase (1621?), was first acted in February, 1702. Eric Rothstein, George Farquhar (New York, 1967), p. 21.

¹²In the preface to The Inconstant Farquhar said, "I had almost forgot to tell you, that the turn of the plot in the last act is an adventure of Chevalier de Chastillon in Paris, and matter of fact; but the thing is so universally known, that I think this advice might have been spared, as well as all the rest of the preface, for any good it will do either to me or the play." The Dramatic Works of George Farquhar, ed. A. C. Ewald (London, 1892), I, 328.

¹³Garrick has played the part earlier, but after February, 1754, it appears to have become Henry Woodward's role. See London Stage, Part 4, vols. I-II.

¹⁴Henry Woodward, 1714-1777, was the leading comedian of the period. Known for his *Marplot*, *Bobadil*, *Touchstone*, *Mercutio*, *Lord Foppington*, and a host of

similar roles, he was also a fine Harlequin. At this time he and Garrick divided the comic parts at Drury Lane.

¹⁵See Theatre No. 1, n. 5.

THE LONDON CHRONICLE, January 27-29, 1757.

THE THEATRE. No. 4.

Drury-Lane, Jan. 27, 1757.

This Night was acted the Tragedy of Zara, translated by Aaron Hill from the Zaïre of Voltaire, and produced for the first time in the Year 1734, at the Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane.¹ Being upon a religious Subject, it does not entirely suit the Genius of a Nation that seems divesting itself more and more every Day of all Manner of religious Principles; and indeed since the Reception of Lord Bolingbroke's Works, it is no Wonder if it goes off more heavily than ever.² The Character of Osman has a dignified Elevation of Mind; but the Distress is hardly any where brought to that Degree of acute Feeling which we find in the Tragedies of Shakespear and Otway. Lusignan is very well sketched, and receives infinitely more beautiful Touches from the exquisite Pencil of Mr. Garrick, than it owes to the Hand of the Poet. It is remarkable that this Play has had the Honour of producing, on the first Night of its Exhibition both in Paris and in London, two very admirable Actresses; Mademoiselle Gossin³ and Mrs. Cibber.⁴ To the former Voltaire has addressed his

Piece in a short and neat Copy of Verses;⁵ and it is also worthy of Observation, that the same great Genius has paid an immortal Tribute to the Merit of Mrs. Cibber. After having informed us of an Actress in Paris who reformed the Abuses that had crept into the Art of Acting, and happily exchanged the pompous declamatory Tone for the Voice of nature in all her various Emotions,⁶ he proceeds to say, That Mrs. Cibber introduced the same Improvement on the English Stage in the Character of Zara: And he closes the Passage with a very sensible Remark; "It is strange, says he, that it has obtained in almost every Art, that People find out, after a Deviation of long Continuance, the very Point where they ought to have begun, viz. the Simplicity of Nature. The Truth is, this Simplicity of Nature is the distinguishing Perfection of Mrs. Cibber; and from her the Passions speak with such enchanting Powers, that she is very justly the first Ornament of the English Stage."⁷

Covent-Garden, Same Day.

Was performed Richard the Third, altered from Shakespear by Colley Cibber.⁸ Mr. Garrick has been such an admirable Commentator on this Character, that it is needless to criticise it. However, as Mr. Barry⁹ appeared in it, for the first Time, this Night, we propose hereafter to enter into an Examination of it; but chuse to defer

this Matter till we have seen Mr. Barry once more; not thinking it fair to determine his Merit in it till he performs it free from the Sollicitude of a first Adventure.

Drury-Lane, 28th.

Eliza again. Vide our last Saturday's Paper.¹⁰

Covent-Garden, Same Day.

Was revived here a Comedy of Beaumont and Fletcher's, called, Wit Without Money.¹¹ As the Author of these Paragraphs did not see it performed, he thinks proper to reserve what he has to say of this Play till it be presented again: And this he thinks infinitely more ingenuous than to follow the Example of the Writers of the Age, who, for the most part, speak of what they have neither seen nor ever understood.

¹Aaron Hill's Zara received its premier in the Great Room or Theatre in York Buildings, Villars Street, on May 29, 1735. London Stage, Part 3, I, xxxiii. The first performance at Drury Lane that Murphy refers to throughout this review did not take place until January 12, 1736. Ibid., I, 542.

²Many of Bolingbroke's philosophical writings were not published until three years after his death, when in 1754 the first edition of his collected works was issued. Murphy reacted strongly to Bolingbroke's Deism and usually lost no opportunity to deprecate the Viscount's philosophical principles. See for example GIJ, No. 29 (1754) and No. 84 (1756).

³Jeanne Gaussin, 1711-1767, whose oriental beauty and voluptuous grace gave her eminence in roles of the pathetic heroine, made her debut in April, 1731 and played a number of parts before appearing in the premier

of Voltaire's *Zaïre* on August 13, 1732. Fredrick Hawkins, The French Stage in the Eighteenth Century (London, 1888), I, 265-67; Annales Dramatiques (Paris, 1808-12), IV, 213-14.

⁴Susanna Maria Cibber, 1714-1766, made her celebrated debut as an actress in Hill's *Zara* on Jan. 12, 1736. However, by this time she was an accomplished singer and had been appearing in opera and oratorio since 1732. Sister of Thomas Arne, the well known composer, she had a short-lived and scandalous marriage with the nefarious Theophilus Cibber. Elegant and exquisite rather than beautiful, she had the temperament of a true prima donna and usually plagued Garrick until she got her way in the matter of parts and dress. Competent in both comedy and tragedy, she was the most famous representative in this period of the tender and passionate heroines of tragedy.

⁵See *Épître XXXVIII*, "A Mademoiselle Gaussin" (1732), Oeuvres Complètes, X, 279.

⁶Adrienne Lecouvreur, 1690-1730, friend of Voltaire and the most renowned French actress of the eighteenth century.

⁷*Seconde Épître Dédicatoire* (1736), Oeuvres Complètes, II, 548-49.

⁸Cibber's adaptation was first produced at Drury Lane in the 1699/1700 season. See Cibber, *Apology*, pp. 81 and 152.

⁹Spranger Barry, 1719-1777, was Garrick's leading rival in the 1750's. They often appeared in the same parts, and in a few, such as *Othello* and *Romeo*, Barry surpassed Garrick. Particularly handsome, he excelled in the role of lover.

¹⁰See *Theatre* No. 1.

¹¹This comedy (1614?) was popular throughout the Restoration and eighteenth century but invariably in an altered version. See A. C. Sprague, Beaumont and Fletcher on the Restoration Stage (Cambridge, Mass., 1926), pp. 255-57.

THE LONDON CHRONICLE, Jan. 29-Feb. 1, 1757.

THE THEATRE. No. 5.

Drury-Lane, Jan. 29, 1757.

This Evening was repeated the Tragedy of The Earl of Essex.¹ This Play having been mentioned by us already, we shall not detain our Readers any longer, than to observe, that Mr. Ross appears in the Part of Essex with a very becoming Propriety.² His Figure looks genteel and amiable; his Powers are pleasing all thro' the Character; and upon the whole it appears, that when he exerts himself, he is equally fitted for the graceful Walks of Tragedy as he is of Comedy. It were needless to give Commendation to the established Merits of Mrs. Cibber and Mrs. Pritchard.³ After the Play was presented the Entertainment of Lethe; in which the new Part of Lord Chalkstone was introduced by Mr. Garrick.⁴ This Character bears some Resemblance to Lord Feeble, in an Account of a Club published sometime since in the World.⁵ The Circumstances of Ridicule are greatly heightened, however, in this Piece; and there are many additional Foibles brought in, which very strikeingly improve the Picture. An old Debauchee of Quality, overwhelmed with Debilities, and

still fond of Pleasures, which his impaired Senses can no longer take, is a very proper Personage for the Drama. Chalkstone is quite exhausted in the Service of Vice; and the Ridicule arises from the very diverting Exhibition the excellent Actor gives us of a Man, agonizing at every Pore, yet still forcing his Spirits, and assuming the Appearance of fashionable Gaieties, as if they were laudable Qualities, even while we perceive him sinking under the painful Vivacity. His Hint for improving the Place, for clumping the Trees, etc. is perfectly a characteristic Stroke; though we could wish the Ridicule were carried further. If he desired Aesop to send to Hyde Park-Corner for Images and Statues, if he recommended a Tin Cascade, if he advised more Regularity, Vistas answering Vistas, etc. or ordered a Shrubbery, according to the present fashionable Taste, with other Satyrical Touches of the same Nature, we are of Opinion it would be a proper Addition, and then some other less spirited Passages might be retrenched.⁶ Upon the whole, Lord Chalkstone is admirably dressed; his Air and Walk are finely enfeebled, and at the same time enlivened, through the whole Deportment of this great Comedian.

Covent-Garden, Same Day.

Was repeated Richard the Third, by Mr. Barry.⁷

The Qualities which constitute Richard's Character are

such as require a nice Discernment of Spirits, otherwise the Actor will be likely to fail in the distinguishing Singularities of this very complicated Hero. This, we imagine, is the Case in many Scenes, as this Actor performs them. The deep designing Villainy of Richard is generally converted into Rant in the Soliloquies, which are never agitated with the Passions, except where Joy transports him. They are mostly Situations of dark, cool, and deliberate Wickedness, and should be uttered with deep and grave Tones of Voice, and a gloomy Countenance. These two Requisites Nature has denied this Performer, tho' she has been very liberal to him in Qualifications for Love, Grief, and enraged Tenderness. Accordingly, he does not seem to carry with him that covered Spirit of Enterprize, which is so peculiar a Mark of the Character: He is too turbulent in all the Scenes where he is alone; and the Humour of Richard, which never should take off the Mask, is with him too free and open. Richard's Pleasantry never rises to Mirth; it always proceeds from what the Poet calls the mala mentis gaudia, the wicked Pleasures of the Mind;⁸ and it should therefore never become totally jocund, but should ever be a mixed Emotion of Joy and Malice. Where he jokes about his Score or two of Taylors, and finds himself a marvellous proper Man, there should be no free Exultation, because his Mirth is ironical, and he is still sensible of his own Deformity, and therefore he should smile and smile, and be a Villain.⁹ This Rule

will hold all through, except in the triumphant Self-Congratulations of Ambition. The Love Scene, we apprehend, he entirely mistakes: Richard has a Tongue that can wheedle with the Devil, but not pour out the melting Harmony of Romeo. Richard indeed says afterwards, He truly loved,¹⁰ but his Love was nothing more than Lust. Were he capable of having real Regard for a Woman, he could never have recourse to Expressions of his Passion suitable to a Varanes;¹¹ and as he only intended to have her, but not keep her long, however he might smooth his Face in Smiles, his Words could not come from him like Flakes of feathered Snow that melted as they fell. In the Scenes of Hurry and Bustle Mr. Barry rises upon his Audience, but is sometimes apt to set out with his Voice strained to its utmost; by which Means it becomes thin, and therefore does not carry with it sufficient Terror. Upon the whole, we think this Contest lies between Mr. Barry and Mr. Mossop.¹² If the former could play the three first Acts as well as Mr. Mossop, he would excel his Antagonist: And if the latter were as quick and animated as Mr. Barry in the two last Acts, he would approach very near to Mr. Garrick.

¹See Theatre No. 2.

²David Ross, 1728-1790, performed in Dublin in 1749 and made his first appearance at Drury Lane in 1751. Essex was acknowledged as one of his best roles. A

competent tragedian, particularly in the pathetic and domestic varieties, at this time in his career he often played the role of the lover in genteel comedy.

³Hannah Pritchard, 1711-1768, held the stage for thirty-six years. She was highly regarded in all kinds of parts and some gave her precedence over Mrs. Cibber for general excellence. Renowned in characters of intrigue, mirth, and gaiety, she was equally effective in roles as far apart as Doll Common and Lady Macbeth.

⁴This one-act dramatic satire was based on James Miller's An Hospital for Fools (1739) and was Garrick's first play. It was presented at Drury Lane on April 15, 1740. Garrick made a number of revisions over the years and in 1756 introduced the character of Lord Chalkstone. Elizabeth Stein, David Garrick, Dramatist (New York, 1938), pp. 25 and 33.

⁵Lord Feeble was introduced in Nos. 90 and 91 (1754) of Edward Moore's periodical The World.

⁶Murphy refers to the penchant for regularity in architecture and gardening that was actually at this time being replaced by a taste for Gothic and Chinese styles. See for example The World, Nos. 15, 117, 118, and 178 (1753-56). The older fashion was the one in which "every grove should nod at a rival, and every walk be paired with a twin-brother" (World, No. 15); "of gardening which projected gravel walks, clipt yews, and straight lined avenues, with a profusion of brick walls, iron palisades, and leaden images." (World, No. 178). The "Tin-Cascade" pointed up the artificiality of the fashion for it was a standard stage-prop in pantomimes; Murphy sometimes used "Tin-Cascade" as a symbol of the tastelessness and inanity of these entertainments. See GIJ, No. 33 (1754), and No. 14 (1786).

⁷See Theatre No. 4.

⁸Virgil, Aeneid, VI, 278-9.

⁹"That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain."
Hamlet, I, v, 108.

¹⁰Murphy alludes to a scene not in the original but one introduced by Colley Cibber in his 1699/1700 adaptation. Alice Wood, The Stage History of Shakespeare's King Richard the Third (New York, 1909), p. 83. In this scene (III, i), after Richard has decided that Lady Anne

has outlived her usefulness, she accuses him of having dissembled all his vows of love and he answers:

Not one--for when I told thee so I lov'd:

Thou art the only soul I never yet deceiv'd.

In The Dramatic Works of Colley Cibber (London, 1777), II.

¹¹Varanes in Nathaniel Lee's Theodosius; or, The Force of Love (1680) was particularly suited to Barry's talents as a lover. For a review of Barry in this part see Theatre No. 34.

¹²Henry Mossop, 1729?-1774?, despite vanity, pomposity, and stilted mannerisms, was one of the most popular and one of the best tragedians of this era. In tragedy, he took second place only to Garrick and Barry and in some roles rivalled them.

THE LONDON CHRONICLE, February 1-3, 1757.

THE THEATRE. No. 6.

Drury-Lane, Feb. 2, 1757.

This Evening was repeated the Tragedy of Zara. After the Play was acted the last new Farce, called the Reprisal, for the Benefit of the Author, of which we shall give some Account in a future Paper.¹

Covent-Garden, Same Day.

Richard the Third again, by Mr. Barry; For an Account of him, Vide our last. After the Play was presented a Farce, taken chiefly from a Comedy of Mr. Dryden's.² Whenever this Piece is performed again we recommend to our Readers to pay a visit to Mrs. Woffington in the Character of the Fine Lady, which, we think, will afford them a very high Entertainment, her Figure being whimsically delightful, and her acting admirable.³

Drury-Lane, 3d.

A Comedy called The Wonder, by Mrs. Centlivre, was presented here this Night. This Piece was first produced in the Year 1713, and dedicated to his present Majesty, at a very remarkable Juncture.⁴ He was then at

Hanover, and a Writ was demanded here by the Whigs to call him to his Seat in the House of Peers, as Duke of Cambridge, which was then his Title. This, however, was refused; and it shewed no small Spirit in a Woman to make so public a Declaration of her Zeal for the Succession in the House of Hanover. When the Royal Family came over to the Throne of these Realms, they honoured the Play with their Presence, and made a very handsome Present, as it is said, to the Writer. We are informed this Comedy is founded on a Spanish Story.⁵ The Dialogue is very paltry in general, and the Characters are not marked with any separating Peculiarities, unless the Jealousy of Don Felix may be accounted such. As Mrs. Centlivre understood the Business of the Stage, she has contrived to keep the Attention of her Audience alive by a very quick Succession of Scenes. Don Felix is admirably performed by Mr. Garrick. His Situation in the last Act is diverting; and the whole Scene between him and Miss Macklin⁶ has many Touches in the Execution, very good on the Side of that promising Actress, and exquisite on the Part of our admired Comedian. Mr. Woodward and Mrs. Clive are, according to Custom, highly pleasant:⁷ And upon the whole, this Play is a Proof that what the Players call Business will succeed without Writing, when it is in the Hands of such excellent Performers.

Covent-Garden, Same Day.

Was repeated Wit without Money, by Beaumont and Fletcher.⁸ If the Manager does not get Money by this Play, he will have neither Money nor Wit;⁹ for he has really shewn none by the Revival. Like most of the Plays of these Authors, the Plot is wild, inconsistent, and improbable. There is however one, and we think but one good Scene; which is, when the Hero strips to return his Friends their Cloaths; with which they had rigged him for his Adventure. There is not much Wit in the Dialogue: The Humour is not equal to what these Writers have produced in other Places, and therefore we could wish a better Choice had been made on this Occasion. Of the Acting we chuse to say nothing.

¹Tobias Smollett's farce, The Reprisal; or, The Tars of Old England, was first produced on Jan. 22, 1757, at Drury Lane. London Stage, Part 4, I, 577. The intended "future account" of this work did not appear in the Chronicle; however, Murphy gave it a scathing review, actually a counter-attack for the Critical Review's deprecatory appraisal of his Apprentice the previous season, in the Literary Magazine of Jan. 15-Feb. 15, 1757. See Sherbo, New Essays, pp. 109-10.

²Henry Dell's The Frenchified Lady Never in Paris, first played on March 23, 1756. (London Stage, Part 4, II, 533.), was an adaptation of Colley Cibber's The Comical Lovers, or Marriage à la Mode (1707) which in turn owed its genesis to a combination of Dryden's Marriage à la Mode (1673) and his Secret Love (1667). Leonard R. Ashley, Colley Cibber (New York, 1965), p. 61.

³See Theatre No. 2, n. 7.

⁴The Wonder: A Woman Keeps a Secret was first acted at Drury Lane on April 27, 1714. Bowyer, Centlivre, p. 152. For Murphy's source of the following information about the dedication of this play, see above, p. 112.

⁵Her only definite source was Edward Ravenscroft's The Wrangling Lovers (1677) but there were a number of French, Spanish, Italian, and English plays that dealt with the same subject. Bowyer, Centlivre, p. 172.

⁶Maria Macklin, 1733-1781, daughter of the great actor, Charles Macklin, made her debut in 1753. Though never a great actress, she was highly trained and competent in both comedy and tragedy.

⁷For Woodward see Theatre No. 3, n. 14; for Mrs. Clive, No. 1, n. 5.

⁸See Theatre No. 4, n. 11.

⁹John Rich, 1682-1761, long-time manager of Covent Garden and an exceptional Harlequin, was held in little regard by Murphy and other critics because of his penchant for pantomimes and entertainments. See above, p. 25.

THE LONDON CHRONICLE, February 3-5, 1757.

THE THEATRE. No. 7.

Drury-Lane, Feb. 4, 1757.

The Comedy called The Suspicious Husband, which was very justly received with great Applause at Covent-Garden Theatre in 1747, was acted here this Evening, to a crowded Audience.¹ Ranger, Clarinda, and Strictland, are the principal Personages in this Play; their Characters have separating Qualities to distinguish them from the general Mass of human Life. As Jacky Meggot is only just beheld and lost, we cannot think he ranks as a Character: The Author has started the Game, but not hunted it down, and in the Sportman's Phrase we may cry out, "Stole away."² An Englishman returned from Paris has been frequently exhibited, but Characters from Italy are somewhat uncommon:³ Tho' indeed of late the Singularity is diminished: Mr. Archibald Bower having thought proper to entertain the Town with one highly remarkable; but his Adventures from Macerata to the Canton of Bern, tragi-comic indeed in themselves, are rather too far removed from Probability for the Stage.⁴ Erasmus, it is true, has observed one Circumstance which might render

that Hero fit for the Drama. The Pretence of reforming Religionists, says he, zealously fond of an Innovation of Principles, however serious and tragical they may begin, gradually end like a Comedy in a Marriage.⁵ But to return: the Dialogue of this Comedy is not inspirited with the Wit of Congreve. It is, however, always sensible, often sprightly, and never rises to a Disregard of Nature. Ranger is ever a good Companion, without being a professed Wit; he says lively Things with an easy and spirited Negligence; his Frolics are diverting; and the Humour of his Character arises from his Resolution to trouble his Head about no body's Business, and his yet being the very Man who undesignedly, in the Pursuit of his Pleasures, brings about all the Discoveries and lively Incidents in the Play. He is the Reverse of Marplot, and fairly puts all Characters to Bed.⁶ This is, perhaps, the first Part in which Mr. Garrick enchanted the Town in Comedy.⁷ The laughing careless Disposition of Ranger is finely represented by him, and the Vivacity of his Countenance almost converts every Thing to Wit, where there is really none. More is meant than meets the Ear from this Actor in general. The Scene between him and Clarinda, where he is making Love to his Cousin, is acted inimitably by him and Mrs. Pritchard. Mr. Woodward sets out so well, that we could wish he did not stay so much

at home with his Aunt, and that he gave us more of his Company.⁸

Covent-Garden, Same Day.

Wit without Money again. Too common a Case!

Drury-Lane, 5th.

The Careless Husband, already mentioned by us, was repeated this Night.⁹ As the Fops of the last Age are now totally obliterated, we could wish Mr. Woodward would copy some Model in modern-practised Life, and then his great Spirits would have a visible Direction, and render him complete in this Character.¹⁰ Lady Betty Modish is not the Character Miss Pritchard has played best.¹¹ The Part indeed requires an experienced Actress; and we wish we could say to her in regard to her Performance, as we can truly in respect of her elegant Appearance, O Matre pulchra filia pulchrrior.¹²

Covent-Garden, Same Day.

Wit without Money again. For the Manager's Sake, we wish this could be inverted, and then he would have his Pockets pretty full: And for our own Sakes, we should be glad to have Wit for our Money.¹³

¹ Benjamin Hoadly's play was one of the most popular comedies of the period; it was presented by the Patent theatres 178 times between 1747 and 1776. London Stage, Part 4, I, clxiii-clxiv.

²A common phrase of the hunt in reference to an animal having left its lair unperceived and gained a start on its pursuers. O.E.D., sub steal.

³Hoadly's Jack Meggot, just returned from Italy, has the cultural affectations and pretensions which made the indiscriminating traveler one of the standard subjects of satire in this period. Murphy alludes to his own satirical farce, The Englishman from Paris (1756), and to Samuel Foote's more popular The Englishman Returned from Paris (1756) which Foote ostensibly plagiarized from Murphy. See above, p. 16.

⁴Archibald Bower, 1686-1766, author of The History of the Popes (5 vols., 1748-1761), was at this time engaged in a paper-war over the veracity of his alleged religious convictions and of the experiences he claimed to have undergone. Writing as an ex-Jesuit, he had published a dubious account of the Inquisition at Macerata and his escape from Italy which was answered by a number of pamphlets, some satirical. D.N.B., VI, sub Bower.

⁵I have not been able to find the source of this observation.

⁶Marplot, in Mrs. Centlivre's The Busy Body (1709), wanders about trying to be of service to his friends but invariably manages to interrupt their intrigues. Bowyer, Centlivre, p. 99. "Who fairly puts all Characters to Bed." Pope, "The First Epistle of the Second Book of Horace Imitated," 291. See Theatre No. 15.

⁷Garrick had been acclaimed in a number of comic roles between his London debut in 1741 and the premier of The Suspicious Husband, in 1747. See Carola Oman, David Garrick (Suffolk, 1958), chaps. 2-3, and Fitzgerald, Garrick, I, 82-199, passim.

⁸In Act I, iii, we are informed that Jack Meggot, played by Henry Woodward, resides with his aunts.

⁹See Theatre No. 1.

¹⁰See Theatre No. 3, n. 14.

¹¹Hannah Pritchard's daughter made a highly acclaimed debut on Oct. 9, 1756, as Juliet but never fulfilled the expectations held for her as an actress. In 1762 she married the actor John Palmer and left the stage

in 1768, the same year that her mother retired. Lady Betty Modish was one of the parts in which her mother excelled.

¹²"O maiden, fairer than thy mother fair."
Horace, Odes, I, xvi, 1.

¹³See Theatre No. 6.

THE LONDON CHRONICLE, February 5-8, 1757.

THE THEATRE. No. 8.

Drury-Lane, Feb. 5, 1757.

This Evening was presented the Tragedy of Cato, written by the justly admired Mr. Addison, and exhibited at the Theatre in Drury-Lane in the Year 1713.¹ This Play was intended at that Juncture, when Party-Feuds distracted the Nation, to enforce the Spirit of Liberty, and awaken a Regard for our noble Constitution in the Breasts of Englishmen. Sir Richard Steele has informed us, in a Letter to Mr. Congreve concerning his Friendship for Mr. Addison, wherein he vindicates himself from the Indelicacy in his Behaviour charged upon him by Tickell, that he was obliged to urge very pressing Arguments, in order to prevail over the Author's natural Timidity, before he could get his Consent to adventure it on the Stage.² Sir Richard's Zeal was, however, very ardent for the Whig Party, which he thought would be greatly served by this Performance; and he therefore undertook to bring together such an Audience on the first Night, as would put the Success out of all Danger. The Tories were resolved on their Part not to be distanced by the Zeal of the

opposite Party; and the Struggle between both Sides was, which should be most violent in Applause: And from an Anecdote in one of Pope's Letters we learn, that the Lord Bolingbroke, then Secretary of State, called for Mr. Booth, who played Cato, into the Stage-Box, and gave him fifty Guineas in a Purse, for Maintaining so well the Cause of Liberty, and opposing a Perpetual Dictator.

To this, says Pope, the Whigs are now preparing an Answer.³ Certain it is the prodigious Success of the Play, however noble in Sentiment and Diction, was in a great measure owing to the national Divisions. The Play was translated into Italian and French; but we never could learn that it conduced to the Improvement of the pretty Princes in Italy, or that it has been in usum Delphini.⁴

Many elegant Copies of Verses were sent to the Author on the Occasion; but the noblest Enconiums were given him by Mr. Pope in his admirable Prologue, which was finely calculated to interest the Audience in the Piece. To do Justice to the Memory of Mr. Addison, we must allow that it was no common Effort of Genius to raise such a beautiful Superstructure upon so narrow a Foundation. The Death of Cato does not offer, at the first View of it, any alarming Situations: It is barren of Incident, and has very little of what the Players call Business. Hence, it has been a Fashion among over-refining Critics to censure this Tragedy with great Severity of late Years:

But it should be considered, that to protract so simple an Action into five Acts shewed a creative Imagination, and that there are many noble Passages in the Play. Such are the two Scenes between Syphax and Juba; such is Cato's little Senate; such is the Scene where he opposes his naked Breast to the Conspirators; the Close of the fourth Act; the sublime Soliloquy in the fifth Act; and the dying Words of Cato. Voltaire has justly observed, that the Love-Plot throws a Languor over the whole:⁵ The Business, during the Scenes of softer Passion, always stands still; and is therefore uninteresting. The Character of Cato is wonderfully well imagined, and greatly sustained all thro': Sempronius is distinguished by a daring Spirit of Enterprize; and the wily African has appropriate Peculiarities. The rest of the Personages, both Men and Women, are fainter Representations of the Hero. The Sentiments, as far as they regard the three first, are always suitable to the Character: The Language is polished into an Elegance all thro', and is often nervous and sublime. The Poet is too fond of Similies, and introducing them with "So where, etc." However, two of these Comparisons are wrought up into very noble Imagery.

---Thou hast seen Mount Atlas,
 When Storms and Tempests thunder on his Brows,
 And Ocean break their Billows at his Feet,

It stands unmov'd, and glories in his Height.
 Such is that haughty Man: His tow'ring Soul
 Midst all the Shocks and Injuries of Fortune,
 Rises superior and looks down on Caesar.⁶

The other is in the Mouth of Syphax, and has a double Beauty, as it illustrates and heightens the Subject it is applied to, and at the same time is an Instance of the natural Propensity of the Mind to drive its Reasonings from its habitual Ideas.

So where our wide Numidian Wastes extend,
 Sudden th' impetuous Hurricanes descend;
 Wheel thro' the Air, incircling Eddies play,
 Tear up the Sands, and Sweep whole Plains away;
 The helpless Traveller, with wild Surprise,
 Sees the dry Desart all around him rise,
 And, smother'd in the dusty Whirlwind, dies.⁷

These are Flights of Elevation beyond the modern Muse's Wing; and however our Audiences in general are fond of Performances where the Passions are more intensely agitated than in this Piece, it must be allowed, in Spite of fashionable Criticism, that Cato, upon the whole, is the Work of Genius, and that such a Composition would do Honour to any Age or Country. Having said so much of the Writing, we shall take another Opportunity to animadvert on the Acting. After the Play was presented,

for the first Time, a new Farce called, The Author; of which hereafter.⁸

Covent-Garden, Same Day.

Wit without Money again!

Drury-Lane, 7th.

Was presented the Tragedy of The Revenge, written by Doctor Young, presented first in 1721, with great Applause. If we are not greatly mistaken, this Play is founded on a Story told in the Spectator.⁹ We cannot consider it as a Copy of Othello: It has only the necessary Coincidencies, that will inevitably be found in Writers who treat resembling Subjects; and to succeed after such a masterly Hand as Shakespear, is a Proof of an uncommon Genius. In the working of the Jealousy there is nothing like Imitation: Zanga is an original Character, and borrows no Aids from Iago: He has an Head for any dark Machination to compass his Revenge; and it is observable that, where a less fruitful Fancy would have fallen into a near Similitude, he has finely varied the Circumstances. Iago begs his General to scan this Matter no further; Zanga recommends to Alonzo to do Nothing rashly, but to weigh each Circumstance; both natural Strokes; because it is certain, in the former Instance, that a Mind once disordered loves to pore over what gives it Pain, the more so for being forbid

to do it: And in the latter Case Zanga sends Alonzo to think, -- "that is to be undone."¹⁰ There are many elegant Touches of Poetry in this Play, and Zanga often rises to the Sublime. There is however, no other Character in the Piece but his; Alonzo is very inferior to Othello; and Eleonora is not sufficiently interesting. In as much as Zanga is superior to the other Personages of the Piece, so is Mr. Mossop to all the other Performers.¹¹ He closes the fourth Act with fine dignified Feelings of Remorse, and in the fifth, when he greatly discovers his deep-laid Plot, (a Stroke entirely new and differing from Shakespear) this Actor utters every Word with such an animated Glow, that irresistibly he commands the thundering Applause of all his Auditors, and stamps himself an excellent Actor on every Imagination.

Covent-Garden, Same Day.

Wit without Money again. After the Play was given a strange Representation of human Nature degraded to the lowest Offices, throwing itself into contemptible Distortions, and tingling Bells to please a Parcel of Children Six Feet high.¹²

¹Cato was first played on April 14, 1713, at Drury Lane. London Stage, Part 2, I, 299.

²Thomas Tickell, the editor of Addison's works, had generally disparaged Steele in the preface to the edition. In a public letter to Congreve (Dec. 1721), prefixed to an edition of the play The Drummer which Steele claimed should be included among Addison's works, Steele said of Cato: "All the town knows how officious I was in bringing it on; and you, that know the town, the theatre, and mankind, very well, can judge how necessary it was to take measures for making a performance of that sort, excellent as it is, run into popular applause. I promised before it was acted, and performed my duty accordingly to the author, that I would bring together so just an audience on the first days of it, it should be impossible for the vulgar to put its success or due applause to any hazard." The Letters of Richard Steele, ed. R. Johnson (London, 1927), p. 167.

³In a letter to John Caryll of April 30, 1713, Pope mentioned the contest of applause between the Whigs and Tories and went on to say: "I believe you have heard that after all the applauses of the opposite faction, my Lord Bullingbrooke sent for Booth who played Cato, into the box, between one of the acts and presented him with 50 guineas; in acknowledgment (as he expressed it) for his defending the cause of liberty so well against a perpetuall dictator: the Whigs are unwilling to be distanced this way, and therefore design a present to the said Cato very speedily." Correspondence of Alexander Pope, ed. George Sherburn (Oxford, 1956), I, 175.

⁴"(attrib. use of Latin delphini in the phrase ad usum Delphini, 'for the use of the Dauphin'.) Of or pertaining to the Dauphin of France, and to the edition of Latin Classics, prepared 'for the use of the Dauphin,' son of Louis XIV." O.E.D., sub delphini.

⁵"La coutume d'introduire de l'amour à tort et à travers dans les ouvrages dramatiques passa de Paris à Londres, vers l'an 1660, avec nos rubans et nos per-ruques. Les femmes, qui y parent les spectacles, comme ici, ne veulent plus souffrir qu'on leur parle d'autre chose que d'amour. Le sage Addison eut la molle complaisance de plier la sévérité de son caractère aux mœurs de son temps, et gâta on chef-d'oeuvre pour avoir voulu plaire." "Sur La Tragédie," in Lettres Philosophiques (1734), Oeuvres Complètes, XXII, 155-56.

⁶II, vi, 10-16.

⁷II, vi, 51-57.

⁸See Theatre No. 12.

⁹Murphy is answering Mottley's observation that Edward Young's play was based on Othello. The story of the jealousy of Don Alonzo that Murphy refers to did not appear in the Spectator but in Steele's Guardian, No. 37 (April 23, 1713).

¹⁰III, i.

¹¹See Theatre No. 5, n. 12.

¹²John Rich in the pantomime Harlequin Sorcerer. It was the original version of this pantomime, first produced in 1725 with Rich as Harlequin, that "took the town by storm," made Rich's career, and created almost overnight a passion for these entertainments that remained unabated for the better part of the century. Thelma Niklaus, Harlequin (New York, 1956), p. 139. When dealing with pantomimes, Murphy often uses the phrase "ringing of bells" as a synecdoche for the inane sounds, motions, and machinery that constituted these productions. In the last line of the review, he is playing on the title of his friend Christopher Smart's A Collection of Pretty Poems for the Amusement of Children Six Foot High (1756).

THE LONDON CHRONICLE, February 8-10, 1757.

THE THEATRE. No. 9.

Drury-Lane, Feb. 8, 1757.

The Comedy called, The Careless Husband, was repeated this Evening. After the Play was presented the last new Pantomime called, Mercury Harlequin.¹ We suppose it is an intended Elegance in this Performance to invert the Title; in all the French little Pieces wherein Harlequin is concerned, his Name standing first; and generally, on the English Stage, the Precedence being determined to him; as Harlequin Sorcerer, Harlequin Skeleton, Harlequin Doctor Faustus, etc.² But perhaps the Author of this Piece had a Mind to shew his Regard to the Heathen Mythology: If so, it carries a Moral with it; because, if a Deference is paid to the Dreams of Pagan Theology, does it not inculcate to all Unbelievers that a proper Regard is also due to a sublimer System? In this Deistical Age we could wish the Remark were duly observed.³ Tho' we must observe one material Exception we have to this Piece, in regard to the Purity of Manners (Conduct, Sentiment, and Diction, we do not pretend to criticise) which is, that to roast a Frenchman is not

very charitable, nor indeed political; because we have, perhaps, lately so roasted the French, that we have burnt ourselves.⁴

Covent-Garden, Same Day.

Richard the Third again. We have not perceived any Reason to make any Alterations in our former Judgment concerning the Performance of this Character, in regard to the Deficiencies, nor to add to our Encomiums, with respect to any new Beauties struck out by the Actor.⁵

After the Piece, The Frenchify'd Lady. Would it not be worth the Manager's While, and would it not answer Mrs. Woffington's Trouble, to revive the Play as wrote originally?⁶ In the Contraction there are no Beauties preserved, but in Melantha; and even in that the Colours are huddled and confused: Whereas, were it represented at full Length, instead of the Sketch, the Town would have the Pleasure of seeing a good Comedy; and Mrs. Woffington's Appearance would give such a Spirit to the whole, as would make it a very agreeable Night's Entertainment.

Drury-Lane, 9th.

The Mourning Bride repeated, with a new Actress in the Character of Zara.⁷ This Character requires a Mrs. Pritchard or a Mrs. Gregory;⁸ and an unexperienced Actress could not adventure upon a more dangerous Part.

After the Play, the Farce of The Author, being the third Night. We defer giving our remarks on it till it is published.⁹ In the mean Time, we will hint to those of our Readers, who have a Mind to chase the Spleen with Laughter, that it will fully answer their Purpose.

Covent-Garden, Same Day.

The Twin-Rivals was acted; a Comedy written by Mr. Farquhar, and produced in the Year 1705.¹⁰ This Piece has many Circumstances in the Fable neither entertaining, nor fit for the Stage: and yet it has some comic Beauties. A great Part of the Story is interesting; and the Irishman in this Piece, as well as in the Committee, helps to carry on the Business, and to create many humorous Adventures, without the sole Merit of making Bulls.¹¹ The Irishman in the Committee is, however, the best of the two. Mr. Barrington, as well as we can judge of this Kind of provincial Acting, abounds in Humour arising from a close and just Imitation.¹² After the Play, Harlequin Sorcerer, and more Ringing of Bells.¹³

¹By Henry Woodward; it was first performed on Dec. 27, 1756. London Stage, Part 4, II, 573.

²These were among the most popular pantomimes of the day. George Winchester Stone notes, "From 1747 until his death fourteen years later he [John Rich] rotated nine elaborate pantomimes as the mainstays of his after-pieces, running about four each season." Among the nine were Harlequin Sorcerer, given 210 times in this period, Harlequin Skeleton (183), and Harlequin Dr. Faustus (38). London Stage, Part 4, I, xlv.

³For Murphy's views on Deism see Theatre No. 4, n. 2.

⁴"Roasted" in the sense of ridiculed, made the butt of jests. Murphy alludes to the war with France which at this time was going badly, a number of colonies having fallen. For the past three months he had been claiming in The Test that an invasion by France was probable and that England was militarily and psychologically unprepared for the war. His scapegoat, of course, for this situation was the Pitt ministry.

⁵See Theatre No. 5.

⁶Murphy refers to Dryden's Marriage à la Mode. For the sources of The Frenchified Lady see Theatre No. 6, n. 2. For Mrs. Woffington see Theatre No. 2, n. 7.

⁷The "new actress" was one Miss Rosco, of whom there is virtually no information. London Stage, Part 4, II, 581.

⁸For Mrs. Pritchard see Theatre No. 5, n. 3. Mrs. Gregory, d. 1790?, made her London debut in 1754 and remained a popular performer until her retirement in 1773; however, most of these years were spent on the Dublin stage. Her best roles were those of the heroine in pathetic tragedy. Murphy thought highly of her in these parts and was one of the first critics to champion her. See GIJ, No. 19 (1754).

⁹See Theatre No. 12.

¹⁰This play was first acted on Dec. 14, 1702. London Stage, Part 2, I, 29.

¹¹For Teague in Robert Howard's The Committee see Theatre No. 2, n. 13.

¹²About John Barrington, d. 1773, there is little information. A comedian, he made his first appearance in the 1745-46 season and seems to have spent much of his time on the Irish stage. Tate Wilkinson said of him, "Mr. Barrington was not a very good comedian; but yet was in low Irishmen, (Mr. Moody indeed excepted) the best I ever say--such as the Teagues, in the Committee, Twin Rivals, etc." Memoirs, I, 123.

¹³See Theatre No. 8, n. 12.

THE LONDON CHRONICLE, February 10-12, 1757.

THE THEATRE. No. 10.

Drury-Lane, Feb. 10, 1757.

The Comedy of The Suspicious Husband, mentioned by us already, was presented here this Evening.¹ Without any Aggravation of Features, which is perhaps the Case in the original Painting of Kiteley, Mr. Strictland is finely exposed to the Ridicule of Mankind.² Has not Ben Johnson sometimes carried Matters too far? and does he not fall under the Censure which Seneca has passed on the Luxuriancy of Ovid? Nescivit quod bene cessit relinquere; when a Thing is happily said, he does not know how to leave it, but teases us with touching and re-touching.³ In The Suspicious Husband nothing of this sort can be charged to the Author: The Incertitude of the Mind tinctured with Jealousy, prying into every thing, inclined to place a Confidence in Domesticks, and yet starting back on itself, and hesitating to do it, is strikingly, but not improbably portrayed; and in the Close of the Piece, when Truth breaks in upon him, when he sees and feels himself ridiculous,⁴ it is from irresistible Circumstances,

and without a Violation of Nature, that he resolves upon a Reformation; no Turpitude being so disagreeable to Men in general as that of being the Object of Laughter. If there were any Performer on the Stage capable of supplying Mr. Garrick's Place, we should be glad to see him in the Character of Strictland, which, we are informed, he has a Mind to do on the first Appearance of this Play.⁵ We should then see the latent Foibles of the Mind, not flung into Shades, but standing forth upon the Canvas in strong and natural Attitudes. We should then see---But we reserve this Matter till Every Man in his Humour is next acted, when, we think, we shall have a very fair Subject for Criticism.⁶ After this Play was acted The Intriguing Chambermaid, written by the late humorous Mr. Fielding,⁷ in every one of whose Pieces, though there is sometimes Irregularity, Hurry, and Inadvertence, yet there is always infinite Pleasantry, and, in Shakespear's Words, 'He never wants the natural Touch.'⁸ The last Part of this Remark we must also appropriate to Mr. Woodward and Mrs. Clive in this Performance, as well as many others:⁹ He who can behold them without Laughing, may conclude that either his Body or Mind is disordered; and should immediately consult a Monroe, or a Taylor.¹⁰

Covent-Garden, Same Day.

Richard the Third again. We have been guilty of

an Omission in not doing early Justice to Mrs. Woffington's Excellence in this Play.¹¹ In a Piece of Painting one always looks at the capital Figure first; and though it may sometimes so happen that there are Exceptions to be made to the Drapery, the Attitude, the Expression of Passions in the Countenance, etc. of the Hero of the Work, yet we sometimes find the Graces of a Master-Hand in some secondary Personage, and here and there some Strokes of Merit in the general Accompagnement du Tableau.

¹See Theatre No. 7.

²Kitely, a character in Jonson's Every Man in his Humour. In Theatre No. 30 Murphy again mentions the influence of Every Man on The Suspicious Husband, and in the second Theatre No. 30 he compares Jonson's Kitely and Hoadly's Strictland.

³Controversiae, IX, 5, 17.

⁴In Act V, ii, Strictland says, "I see, I feel myself ridiculous."

⁵Garrick usually took the part of Ranger.

⁶See Theatres No. 29, 30, and the second No. 30.

⁷Fielding's two-act farce was first acted on Jan. 15, 1734 at Drury-Lane. London Stage, Part 3, I, 358.

⁸Murphy is playing on: "From whence himself does fly? He loves us not,/He wants the natural touch,..." Macbeth, IV, ii, 9.

⁹For Woodward see Theatre No. 3, n. 14; for Mrs. Clive, No. 1, n. 5.

¹⁰Probably John Monro, 1715-1791, at this time chief physician of Bethlem Hospital. His Remarks on Dr. Battie's Treatise on Madness (1758) "has the distinction of being the first contribution to psychiatry to come from Bethlem Hospital." A Treatise on Madness and Remarks on Dr. Battie's Treatise, ed. R. Hunter and Ida MacAlpine (London, 1962), p. 18. Taylor is more doubtful. Murphy may be alluding to John Taylor, 1703-1772, a well-known surgeon and oculist of the period who wrote a number of treatises on the human eye. Though a skilled surgeon, "his methods of advertising were those of the charlatan" and caused him to be satirized on the stage a number of times. See D.N.B., LV, sub Taylor.

¹¹For Mrs. Woffington see Theatre No. 2, n. 7.

THE LONDON CHRONICLE, February 12-15, 1757.

THE THEATRE. No. 11.

Drury-Lane, Feb. 12, 1757.

The Earl of Essex was performed here, being the third Time this Season.¹ Having already done Justice to the capital Performers in general, we cannot help being particular, at present, in regard to Mrs. Cibber.² The more lively the Imagination of a Performer is, in suggesting proper Feelings in the various situations of the Drama, the more difficult will it prove to go through a Scene not properly impassioned by the Poet, where the Occasion requires it. The Actor's or the Actress's ideas will then be aiming at something natural and animated; and if the Writer's Language has not answered these inward Workings of real Sensibility, an intelligent Performer must play with Discontent, from a Consciousness that the Scene is not work'd up to its due Degree of Emotion. This we take to be Mrs. Cibbers's Case all through this Play: There is not any where enough for her to do, though the Situation and Circumstance of her Character would have admitted fine Poetry from a masterly Hand. However, in the Scene between her and Essex, her

Countenance, so expressive of Grief, supplies the Deficiencies of the Writing; and when she pronounces

And every Object blast when thou art gone,³

Her Face exhibits such a Picture of Sorrow, and the Tones of her Voice are so harmoniously plaintive, that even Inhumanity must feel itself softened. In the succeeding Scene, when her conjugal Affection rises to a Kind of Phrenzy for the Loss of her Husband, such Wildness, such Despair, and such a tender Indignation, takes Possession of her, that her Powers of Voice become astonishing from the Strength they acquire, and the Melody that accompanies them in that furious Elevation. The Words of Rowe in the Fair Penitent faintly describe her.

Mad as the Priestess of the Delphic God,

Enthusiastic Passion swell'd her Breast,

Enlarged her Voice, and ruffled all her Form.⁴

We have only to regret that the bad State of Health of this Actress, and also of Mr. Garrick, has not permitted them to appear often enough together this Season.

Covent-Garden, Same Day.

Was performed the Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet.

This Play is founded upon an Italian Novel, by Bandello.⁵ There is Reason to think Shakespear was not Master of the Italian Language, as it appears that the Circumstance of Juliet's awaking before Romeo's Death is omitted in a

Translation of the Novel, to be seen in the Court of Pleasure. Had Shakespear seen the Original, he would never have omitted such a fine dramatic Incident. Otway perceived this Omission, and in his Caius Marius has taken Advantage of so beautiful a Circumstance.⁶ But we cannot help agreeing with Mr. Garrick in his Preface, to the Play, as it now stands, that it is surprizing such a Genius as Otway has not struck out a Scene of more Nature, Terror, and Distress.⁷ He who generally spoke the Language of the Heart, has, in this Instance, given us nothing but unaffecting Conceits, which can never agitate the Passions; as was proved some Winters ago, when Mr. Sheridan attempted to restore Otway's Lines, amidst the general Hissing of the whole House.⁸ The Scene, as it now stands, is written by Mr. Garrick, and has not an Idea or Expression through the whole which is found ineffectual; so well has he judged of the natural Force of unornamented Dialogue in Distress. It is in Parts of this Sort that Mr. Barry should attempt to rival the modern Roscius; because we believe, in this, he has divided the Town with him.⁹ If we were to decide the Palm between them, we should, perhaps, give it to Mr. Barry; though the Romeo of Drury-Lane has peculiar Strokes in many Passages, where he snatches a Grace, as the Poet has it, beyond the Reach of Imitation.¹⁰ However, in the last Act Mr. Barry's Tones of Voice are

purely elegiac, and he captivates all Hearts with such a resistless Harmony, that perhaps the Distresses of Love were never better impressed upon an Audience, unless the Performance of Tancred and Sigismunda may be allowed an Exception.¹¹

Drury-Lane, 14th.

This Evening was performed the Comedy of Amphytrion, partly taken from Plautus by Mr. Dryden in 1691, and revived this Winter with many Retrenchments and Alterations, and some Additions from Moliere.¹² We cannot help thinking a bad Choice was made, when this Comedy was selected. When the heathen Mythology prevailed, the Subject being agreeable to the Ideas of the People, it may have been an entertaining Comedy; but at present, it is too far removed from the Regions of Probability to interest a sensible Audience. It likewise should be considered, that when the Masque was in Use, the Imposition might be better kept up, when the Two Sosias could not be distinguished from each other. Besides, Ille Ego, being the common Idiom of the Romans, it could not fail to carry with it an additional Pleasantry, whereas in English me-me is unnatural, and therefore no Merriment arises from it.¹³ Many of the Embarrassments, which would be otherwise diverting, grow insipid from their Want of Probability. The Play is altogether well acted: It will

be no Novelty to our Readers, if we mention that Mr. Woodward has great Humour all through; we shall therefore pass him by, to mention that Mr. Palmer's Performance deserves great Commendation; in the Balcony, the Composure of his Manner, and the Tones of his Voice, taken exactly from Nature, are truly comic, without any Stage Trick, or over-acted Pleasantry.¹⁴

Covent-Garden, Same Day.

Was presented The Rival Queens, written by Nat. Lee, and produced in the Year 1677. This Author has a great deal of true poetic Fire, and occasionally a great Command of the Passions. It seems however, that the Seeds of that Madness, for which he was afterwards confined in Bedlam, began to work in him very early, and to this it is owing that he so frequently shakes Hands with Nature, and flies away into the Realms of Chaos and old Night.¹⁵ Alexander was in himself a romantic Hero, and passing thro' such an Imagination as Lee's, no Wonder if he comes out more romantic. Hence the whole Story is tinctured with Improbability, and is therefore uninteresting. The Rules of the Drama are frequently destroyed, and in general it is such a Jumble of Banquetting, Rioting, Loving, Fighting, Drinking, and Quarrelling, that a worse Play could not well be chosen to suit the modern Taste. It was burlesqued by Colley Cibber in a Farce

called the Rival Queens.¹⁶ We are sorry Mr. Barry's fine Acting in this Play is all thrown away; without Nature it being impossible to reach the Heart.

¹See Theatres No. 1 and 5.

²For Mrs. Cibber see Theatre No. 4, n. 4.

³V, iii, 309.

⁴I, i, 200-3.

⁵Murphy probably used Mrs. Lennox's Shakespear Illustrated, I, 97-98, as the source for this and the following information about the genesis of Romeo and Juliet. See above, p. 113, and Theatres No. 12 and 13. Mrs. Lennox claims that Shakespeare did not understand Italian, for his play is not based directly on the Ninth Novel of Bandello but on a bad translation into English (William Painter's The Palace of Pleasure, London, 1567) of, among other works, a poor French translation of Bandello entitled Histoires Tragiques extraictes des Oeuvres de Bandel. One of her proofs is the considerable difference between Bandello's and Painter's death scenes that Murphy is discussing here.

⁶In The History and Fall of Caius Marius (1679), Thomas Otway transformed the two lovers of Romeo and Juliet into classical Romans.

⁷Garrick revised Romeo and Juliet in 1748 but it was not published until two years later. Fitzgerald, Garrick, I, 229-30. In the advertisement to this edition, Garrick noted that Otway had made use of the "affecting circumstance" of Juliet's waking before Romeo dies, but that it was a "matter of wonder that so great a dramatic genius did not work up a scene from it of more nature, terror and distress."

⁸The fine tragedian and manager of the Smock Alley Theatre in Dublin, Thomas Sheridan, 1719-1788, father of Richard Brinsley. Since Caius Marius had not been acted since 1735, Murphy is referring to Sheridan's adaptation of Romeo and Juliet, first played in Dublin in 1746 (Nicoll, III, 306.); but I am not able to identify the particular performance.

⁹See Theatre No. 4, n. 9.

¹⁰"And snatch a Grace beyond the Reach of Art."
Pope, Essay on Criticism, 155.

¹¹The passionate love-affair of the main figures in James Thomson's tragedy (1744) was a perfect vehicle for an actor with Barry's particular talents.

¹²Dryden's Amphitryon; or the Two Sosias (1690) was revised by John Hawkesworth and acted on Dec. 15, 1756, at Drury-Lane, Nicoll, III, 267. The prologue to Hawkesworth's version said:

The scenes which Plautus drew, to-night we shew
Touch'd by Moliere, by Dryden taught to glow.

¹³In Plautus' work (II,i), Sosia, attempting to convince his master, Amphitryon, that he [Sosia] has two selves says, "neque lac lactis magis est simile quam ille ego similest mei": "One drop of milk is no more like another than that I is like me." In the corresponding scene in Hawkesworth's version (III, i), Sosia says, "That other me, has posted himself there before me, me."

¹⁴John Palmer, 1728?-1768, often confused with the more famous actor by the same name who made his debut in 1762, played roles of the well-bred gentleman in comedies and the tender heroes of pathetic tragedy.

¹⁵Nathaniel Lee's fusing of pathetic and heroic elements made him one of the most influential writers of tragedy in the seventeenth century and at this time he was commonly ranked with Dryden. In 1684 his mind failed completely and he was confined to Bedlam until 1689, three years before his death. In Bk. II of Paradise Lost, Satan has to traverse the realms of "Chaos and old Night" in order to reach Eden.

¹⁶Cibber's mock-heroic parody of Lee's play was probably written about 1703. "He reduces the queens to queans (that is, sluts) and strains even harder than Lee to produce prodigious similes but fails amusingly." Ashley, Cibber, p. 75.

THE LONDON CHRONICLE, February 15-17, 1757.

THE THEATRE. No. 12.

Drury-Lane, Feb. 13, 1757.

The Tragedy of Merope was repeated here this Evening.¹ Having already given some Account of this Play, we shall not detain our Readers longer on this Article, than to observe that Mr. Holland, who performs the Part of Dorilas, is a very happy Imitator of Mr. Garrick.² Whenever we see this Actor, he calls to Mind two Lines of Ovid, which may very justly describe a Person, who constantly endeavours to conform his Gait, his Voice, and Look, to those of the much admired Manager.

---Non illo quisquam solertior alter

Exprimit incessus, vultumque modumque loquendi.³

After the Play was presented Mr. Foote's Farce, called The Author.⁴ This Piece is truly of the farcical Kind; the principal Characters being so whimsical, that we can hardly believe they have any where a real Existence; and yet, as the Author was obliged to advertise that his Satire was not directed at any particular Person, we must imagine it bears a Resemblance to some living Prototype, otherwise there would have been no Room for the Suspicion.⁵

However, real or imaginary, there are such Strokes of the Bizarre throughout the Farce, that no body can be present at it without being highly diverted. There is one scene, in which Mr. Foote convinces us that he can copy from Nature with great Success. The Character of Vamp the Bookseller is drawn with Truth; his Features are acknowledged to be exact, without being overcharged in the Colouring. Every Circumstance about Mr. Yates, both in his Dress and Manner, is peculiarly adapted to the Trade; and the Audience are highly pleased with the close Imitation of Nature, both in the Writer and the Actor.⁶

Mrs. Clive, though she heightens the Pleasantry of her Character, yet seems to reduce it within the Bounds of Nature; at least, if it may be called a Caricatura, it is very little larger than the Life; Idiots and Drivellers are, in general, disagreeable Personages in the Exhibition; but there is no beholding this excellent Actress, without Laughing at every Turn of her Countenance.⁷ Mr. Foote's own Performance has great Merit; the Extravagance of Cadwallader's Mind and Manner, together with the whimsical Circumstances of his Dining with the Princes, his Pedigree, and his Enquiry into the Poet's Amour with his Wife, all come very properly within the Province of Farce, and happily answer the End of that Kind of Writing, which is to raise a Laugh, and send the Audience Home in Good Humour.

Covent-Garden, Same Day.

The Twin-Rivals: Vide one of our former Papers.⁸

Drury-Lane, 17th.

The Tragedy of Zara, and Lord Chalkstone: Vide
a former Paper.⁹

Covent-Garden, Same Day.

The Tragedy of Hamlet, written by Shakespear, was performed at this Theatre. This Play is formed upon the Story of Amleth in the Danish History of Saxo-Grammaticus. If the Reader has a Mind to see the Use Shakespear made of it, we refer him to Mrs. Lenox's Shakespear Illustrated, where he will find the Passage translated to his Hand by a Friend of that Lady's.¹⁰ The Story has a very romantic Air; abounds with Improbabilities; and is such altogether as would scarce have struck any Imagination but Shakespear's. Amleth, we are told, put on the Guise of Folly, rolled on the Ground, covered his Face with Filth, raked the Embers with his Hands, etc. How finely has Shakespear taken this Hint! And what a dignified Mind has he presented to us in young Hamlet?----The Ghost is entirely his own Invention; nothing of this Sort being in the History: How nobly is that imaginary Personage introduced! And what a Solemnity of Ideas the Poet has assigned him! The Scene, in which young Hamlet first hears of his Father's Spirit, is not the most important, but is as

finely conducted as any Passage in the Play. The young Prince's disjointed Manner of asking Questions, and the minute Exactness of those Questions----Staid it long?----Armed, say ye?----Pale----or Red----and fixed his Eyes upon you? etc.¹¹ All these little Touches are agreeable to the Affections of the Mind, when we talk of a Person we love either absent or dead, and in the present Case they serve to alarm the Imagination, and to raise our Expectation of the Event. In the original Story the Catastrophe is full of Terror: Amleth, having made the Nobility drunk, sets Fire to the Palace and during this Confusion, goes to the Usurper's Apartment, and tells him that Amleth was there to revenge his Father's Death; upon which the King jumping out of Bed, he was instantly put to Death, and Amleth was proclaimed King. The Historian concludes with this Remark. "O brave young Man, who covered more than human Wisdom under the Guise of a Natural, and not only secured his own Safety by that Artifice, but obtained the Means of completely revenging his Father; and it is now left to every Body to judge which was greater, his Bravery or Wisdom."¹² If Shakespear had not deviated from this Circumstance, he would perhaps have given the finest Scenes of Terror in the last Act that ever have been imagined: and then a Subject that opens so nobly would have been grand also in the Close. As the Play now stands, the Innocent, contrary

to Tradition, falls with the Guilty; like the Personage in Tom Thumb, all he boasts is, that he falls the last; and the World is left to judge which is worst, the Fencing of the Actors, or the Folly of the Poet in introducing it.¹³

¹See Theatre No. 2.

²Charles Holland made his debut under Garrick's tutelage in 1755. He had all the requisites of an exceptional performer and in the heroes of tragedy, for which he was best suited, was a public favorite. But his career was brief for in 1769, at the age of thirty-six, he died of smallpox. Murphy thought highly of this promising actor and wrote an obituary for him in the December, 1769, Gentleman's Magazine. See Sherbo, New Essays, p. 138.

³"No one more dexterously than he mimics the gait, and the countenance, and the mode of speaking." Metamorphoses, XI, 635-36. trans. H. T. Riley (London, 1858).

⁴This farce of Murphy's friend Samuel Foote, 1720-1777, actor, manager, dramatist, and the great mimic of the period who regularly parodied the other actors at his morning "Tea" in the Little Theatre in the Haymarket, was introduced on February 5th at Drury Lane. See Theatre No. 8.

⁵In the Public Advertiser for Feb. 5, Foote announced: "Whereas it has been represented to the Managers of Drury Lane that Mr. Foote in his new Farce call'd the Author, intends introducing the Character of a Gentleman for whom he has the greatest esteem and regard, he thinks it incumbent upon him to assure the Public, that all the persons in that piece are fictitious and general. Samuel Foote." London Stage, Part 4, II, 580. Foote, however, has used an acquaintance of his, a Mr. Aprice [Apreece], as the model for Cadwallader and within a short time Aprice was a public laughing stock. In January of 1758 the farce was revived but Aprice induced Garrick to cancel it after one performance. The following December when it was to be

revived again, Aprice got an order from the Lord Chamberlain to stop its being played. See London Stage, Part 4, II, 608, 644 and 701; Percy Fitzgerald, Samuel Foote (London, 1910), pp. 145-54.

⁶Richard Yates, 1706?-1796, held the stage as a comedian for almost half a century. Though not one of the great actors of the period, he was a more than competent comedian, particularly in low comic parts, and a good pantomimist who was often seen as Harlequin. He was held by some to be unequalled in Shakespearean clowns.

⁷For Mrs. Clive see Theatre No. 1, n. 5.

⁸See Theatre No. 9.

⁹For Zara see Theatre No. 4; for Chalkstone in Lethe see No. 5.

¹⁰For Murphy's use of Charlotte Lennox' study of Shakespeare's sources see above, p. 113. Mrs. Lennox says she "was favored" with the translation of Saxo-Grammaticus "by a friend" but does not identify him. She also notes that she is uncertain about whether Shakespeare founded his story on a literal translation or "met with the incidents drest up like a novel." Shakespear Illustrated, II, 267.

¹¹I, ii, 213-45.

¹²Shakespear Illustrated, II, 259.

¹³At the close of Fielding's burlesque of heroic tragedy, The Tragedy of Tragedies; or, the Life and Death of Tom Thumb the Great (1730), everyone is slain except the King who kills himself and as he falls says, "And all I boast is--that I fall the last."

THE LONDON CHRONICLE, February 17-19, 1757.

THE THEATRE. No. 13.

Drury-Lane, Feb. 17, 1757.

Shakespear's Play, called, The Life of King Henry the Eighth, was performed here this Evening. The Author of Shakespear Illustrated, observes, very justly, that there is a Misnomer in the Title, as the whole Piece only takes in the Transactions of twelve Years of King Henry's Reign. Holingshed, it appears, was our Author's historical Guide, the Characters being copied from him; and in general many of the Sentiments, and not seldom whole Speeches, are the original Property of the Historian.¹ In treating Facts so well ascertained, and Characters in general so well understood, Shakespear's Invention was fettered, and he could not make any considerable Departure from authenticated Tradition. However, he seems upon most Occasions, as has been remarked of a celebrated French Poet, to create the Thoughts of others:² Every Thing comes from him with an Air of Originality. When we once forgive him the Violation of all the Rules of the Drama, we must allow that he greatly compensates for this want of Regularity by very striking

Beauties. The Incidents in Harry the Eighth are very interesting. The Death of the Duke of Buckingham, the Divorce of Queen Catharine, the Wedding of Anne Bullen, and the Fall of Woolsey, are important Events, which cannot fail to attract our Attention. The Character of the King is set off in such a Glow of Colouring, that though the Poet has faithfully taken it from Holingshed, it seems a Personage of his own Invention. The haughty Churchman is likewise admirably drawn; and if we should add, that Mr. Mossop's Performance seems to correspond with the Poet's Idea, it would be very far from a Compliment.³ A well imitated sacerdotal Pride appears in every Cast of his Countenance, and in his whole Manner; his subtlety, his unfeeling Stiffness, and a certain mean Kind of Craft, are preserved amidst all his Grandeur: the Dejection of Spirits which takes Possession of him afterwards, has still a Sort of fallen Dignity, and whoever has a Mind to hear the following Lines, among many others, uttered with all the Graces of Elocution, is desired to attend this Actor, the next Time he appears in this Character.

This is the State of Man; To-day he puts forth
 The tender Leaves of Hopes, To-morrow blossoms,
 And bears his blushing Honours thick upon him;
 The third Day comes a Frost, a killing Frost,
 And when he thinks, good easy Man, full surely

His Greatness is a ripening, nips his Root,
And then he falls, as I do.⁴

Covent-Garden, Same Day.

The Twin-Rivals again.⁵

Drury-Lane, 18th.

The Wonder; or, a Woman keeps a Secret: Vide
a former Paper.⁶

Covent-Garden, Same Day.

The Provoked Husband was exhibited here this Evening. This Play was begun by Sir John Vanbrugh, at whose Death four Acts were found, and falling into the Hands of Mr. Cibber, the Piece was finished for the Stage by him.⁷ On the first Night's Performance, which was in 1727, we are informed, the Audience made a very remarkable Mistake. Being inclined to have a Lick at the Laureate, they fell upon poor John Moody, and treated him, and all the Passages of real Humour, with strong Marks of Disapprobation, while the Scenes, in which Mr. Cibber's Hand was most concerned, went off with general Applause. John Moody's Character they all agreed was the Offspring of Cibber's low Pleasantry. But as soon as Sir John's four Acts were published, the Voice of the People was instantly changed.⁸ What before passed for Buffoonery was acknowledged to be a true Exhibition of Nature, and

the Piece was received with the general Applause it deserved. Mr. Cibber has made so fine an Use of Sir John's Remains, that we can hardly think it a Misfortune that this Play was not finished by the original Author; the more especially, as we are sure his Intention of turning the Lady out of Doors would not have had so fine an Effect as the Reconciliation brought about by Mr. Cibber. And indeed Mrs. Woffington's Person is so amiable all through, and her very Follies are so becoming and so enchanting, that we should never bear parting with her in so rough a Manner.⁹ Besides Mr. Barry's manly Sorrow when parting from her, and the Flood of Joy which breaks in upon him, on their Reconciliation, are such beautiful Circumstances, that we may justly say of him, what Mr. Cibber has recorded of Wilks; "I never saw any Passion take so natural a Possession of an Actor, nor any Actor take so tender a Possession of his Auditors."¹⁰

¹Mrs. Lennox says "This Play, tho' called, The Life of King Henry the Eighth, takes in only the Transactions of twelve Years of his Reign."; "The historical Facts upon which this Play is founded, are all extracted from Holingshed; the Characters generally drawn closely after this Historian, and many of the Speeches copied almost literally from him." Shakespear Illustrated, III, 171.

²I am unable to identify the source of this remark.

³For Mossop see Theatre No. 5, n. 12.

⁴III, ii, 352-58.

⁵See Theatre No. 9.

⁶See Theatre No. 6.

⁷Colley Cibber's The Provoked Husband, fashioned from the unfinished comedy, A Journey to London, that Sir John Vanbrugh left at his death in 1726, was first played in January, 1728. Cibber made the original "more moral, more sentimental, more regular, more probable." It was the most acclaimed of all his plays, being given eighty-two times in twenty-six seasons. Ashley, Cibber, pp. 72-73.

⁸In his Apology (p. 284), Cibber records the incident about his enemies unwittingly damning Vanbrugh's part of the play but says nothing specific about the character of John Moody being singled out for disapprobation. In the preface to the first edition (1728) he mentions having published Vanbrugh's four acts in order to vindicate himself and confound his detractors.

⁹For Mrs. Woffington see Theatre No. 2, n. 7.

¹⁰For Spranger Barry see Theatre No. 4, n. 9. Cibber said this of the actor and manager Robert Wilks (see Theatre No. 3, n. 9) in the preface to the first edition of The Provoked Husband (1728).

THE LONDON CHRONICLE, February 19-22, 1757.

THE THEATRE. No. 14.

Drury-Lane, Feb. 19, 1757.

Mr. Congreve's Comedy, called, The Double Dealer, was presented here this Evening. Mr. Mossop wants nothing but being accustomed to the Walks of Comedy, to qualify him to be very successful in many Characters in common Life.¹ We mention this, because his Deportment is rather too constrained in Maskwell; though it is but Justice to say, his Utterance is throughout the Part very just, graceful, and pleasing; he has likewise conceived the Character well. So good a Performer should, on all Occasions, assume more Consciousness of his Merit; and we can assure him, that his Auditors would frequently find their Pleasure heightened by a Degree of Carelessness; whereas at present they sometimes feel it abated by his over-delicate Diffidence.

Covent-Carden, Same Day.

Was revived a Comedy, called, The Rover. We have determined never to speak of what we have not seen; and therefore must beg our Readers Indulgence till the next Opportunity.²

Drury-Lane, 21st.

This Evening was presented Every Man in his Humour. In a former Paper we promised a Critique on this Play; but having Matter of some Moment and Novelty to offer in our next Article, we chuse to defer this Matter, in order to speak of rising Merit, not yet so distinguished as it really deserves to be.³

Covent-Garden, Same Day.

Was performed the Tragedy of The Fair Penitent, written by the late Mr. Rowe.⁴ The Part of Calista was so admirably performed by Mrs. Gregory, that we chuse to dedicate the Remainder of this Part of the Chronicle to her alone.⁵ This excellent Actress, not yet sufficiently known to our Playhouse Followers, has very great Requisites for the Stage. In her Person she rises above that Stature, where, as Mr. Cibber says, the Graceful begins.⁶ Her first Appearance strikes us with an Air of Dignity; her Deportment keeps up that Impression; her Voice is agreeable in all its Variations; she has a quick Sensibility of Imagination, which informs every Feature, and renders her Countenance a varied Mirror of Passions, that rise and fall by Turns. This is really wrote down from what we have seen this Night. Mrs. Gregory seems further to have an Understanding that can frame just and lively Ideas of Character; and when

once her Imagination is impressed with that Character, it seems to take entire Possession of her. With these Accomplishments she came forth to perform Calista, or rather to be Calista; for so in fact she was throughout the Play. The Fair Penitent has a Mind conscious of Guilt, but with a lively Sense of Honour, sometimes enfeebled with her Weakness for Lothario, and at other times actuated with the noblest Passions, all participating of the Glow of Virtue, and driven by Shame to the highest Tumult of Emotion. Accordingly, her first Words,

Be dumb for ever, silent as the Grave, etc.

and again,

For oh! I've gone around through all my Thoughts,

But all are Indignation, Love, or Shame;

And my dear Peace of Mind is lost for ever,⁷

were spoken with a wild Vehemence, that at once seized the whole Audience. In the Scene between her and Horatio, she discovered all the insolence of guilty Pride, all the Agony of a Soul stung by its own Consciousness, and all the Impatience of Reproach from others, so natural to an elevated Spirit ever ready to reproach itself. Her Air and Countenance displayed conflicting Passions; superior even in Confusion, she beheld Horatio with a fine Mixture of Astonishment and Indignation, when he first named Lothario; and through that

whole Passage there was such a Wildness in her Looks and the Tones of her Voice, as is very uncommon on the Stage.---

Dishonour blast thee, etc.⁸

These Words were uttered with such a Burst of Indignation, as alarmed the Audience, and her Looks and Attitude were at the same Time astonishingly commanding.

Her Manner of seizing the Paper from Horatio, and tearing it Piece-meal, had all the Extravagance of Haughtiness, inwardly hurt and enraged to Fury.

---Henceforth, thou officious Fool,

Meddle no more, nor dare even on thy Life,

To breathe an Accent that may taint my Honour.⁹

In uttering this, so elevated and warm was her Manner, that even Virtue shrunk under her, and Horatio was but the second Person in the Scene.

Mrs. Gregory had a Preservation of Character all through her Performance. The Wildness of her Despair in the last Act, when her Heart has almost lulled itself to Rest, is finely distinguished from her Violence at setting out.

And dost thou bear me yet thou patient Earth!¹⁰

All this Speech was delivered with a Kind of pent-up Fury; her Manner of stabbing herself, and the Extravagance of Grief and Remorse in her Countenance, are strong Circumstances; and upon the whole she had

such a forcible Expression of Passions, that we cannot refrain from what may appear a bold Assertion, but a true one, that Mrs. Gregory is at least equal, if not superior to any Actress whatever in this Part. Mrs. Cibber undoubtedly, when she is impassioned, is harmonious and alarming; but she has some tame Passages: whereas our new Actress never subsides into still Life, but is always Calista.¹¹ To conclude, if, in Spite of Fashion, the Beau Monde does not go to see this excellent Actress, though at a deserted Theatre, they deserve to see no other Play but the WONDER for the rest of the Season.¹²

¹For Mossop see Theatre No. 5, n. 12. Compare the following comments on Mossop with those in Theatres No. 27 and 34.

²For Murphy's views on Aphra Behn's comedy see Theatre No. 15.

³For Every Man in his Humour see Theatres No. 29 and 30.

⁴Nicholas Rowe's pathetic tragedy The Fair Penitent (1703) ranked alongside Congreve's Mourning Bride and Otway's The Orphan and Venice Preserved in popularity at this time. London Stage, Part 4, I, clxiii.

⁵For Murphy's special regard for Mrs. Gregory as a tragedian see Theatre No. 9, n. 8, and Theatres No. 16, 27 and 29.

⁶In the preface to the first edition (1728) of his Provoked Husband, Colley Cibber said of the actress Anne Oldfield, "She was in Stature just rising to that Height, where the Graceful can only begin to shew itself."

⁷II, i, 1, and 6-8.

⁸III, i, 156.

⁹Read "Virtue" for "Honour." III, i, 176-8.

¹⁰V, i, 228.

¹¹For Mrs. Cibber see Theatre No. 4, n. 4.

¹²Murphy's views on Mrs. Centlivre's comedy are set forth in Theatre No. 6.

THE LONDON CHRONICLE, February 22-24, 1757.

THE THEATRE. No. 15.

Drury-Lane, Feb. 22, 1757.

Mr. Dryden's Play, called, The Spanish Fryar, exhibited with great Applause, for the first Time, in 1681, was revived here this Evening, for the Benefit of Mr. Foote, for his Farce of The Author.¹ As this Play is of that Species of the Drama which we understand by Tragi-Comedy, we cannot, perhaps, do better than to transcribe Mr. Addison's Remarks on this Kind of Writing. "The Tragi-Comedy (says he) which is the Product of the English Theatre, is one of the most monstrous Inventions that ever entered into a Poet's Thoughts. An Author might as well think of weaving the Adventures of Aeneas and Hudibrass into one Poem, as of writing such a motley Piece of Mirth and Sorrow. But the Absurdity of these Performances is so very visible, that I shall not insist upon it. The same Objections, which are made to Tragi-Comedy, may in some measure be applied to all Tragedies, that have a double Plot in them, which are likewise more frequent upon the English Stage, than upon any other: For tho' the Grief of the Audience, in such Performances,

be not changed into another Passion, as in Tragi-Comedies; it is diverted upon another Object, which weakens their Concern for the principal Action, and breaks the Tide of Sorrow, by throwing it into different Channels. This Inconvenience, however, may in a great measure be cured, if not wholly removed, by the skilful Choice of an Underplot, which may bear such a near Relation to the principal Design, as to contribute towards the Completion of it, and be concluded by the same Catastrophe."² Thus far Mr. Addison: How far Mr. Dryden's Play is liable to the above Censure, or partakes of the qualifying Circumstances mentioned in the latter Part of this Criticism, shall be the Subject of our Inquiry in some future Paper, as we are afraid such a Disquisition would lead us too far at present.³ Suffice it for this Time to have hinted such a Criticism to our Readers, who may, if they have Leisure, and think it worth their while, examine The Spanish Fryar by the Lights which so fine a Writer as Addison has offered to their Judgments.

Covent-Garden, Same Day.

Was performed The Rover, a Comedy, written by Mrs. Behn. There are two Plays under this Title by this Lady, one exhibited first in the Year 1677, the other in 1681.⁴ Mr. Pope has passed a very just Censure on this Writer in the two following Lines:

The Stage how loosely does Astræa tread,
 Who fairly puts all Characters to Bed?⁵

In the Play before us there is a very remarkable Instance of this putting to Bed. One of the Personages of the Drama takes off his Breeches in the Sight of the Audience, whose Diversion is of a complicated Nature on the Occasion. The Ladies are first alarmed; then the Men stare: The Women put up their Fans.--'My Lady Betty, what is the Man about?'--Lady Mary, 'sure he is not in earnest!'--Then peep thro' their Fans--'Well, I vow, the He creature is taking off his odious Breeches--He--he--Po!--is that all?--the Man has Drawers on.'--Then, like Mrs. Cadwallader in the new Farce,--'Well, to be sure. I never saw any Thing in the Shape of it'⁶--Mean time, the Delight of the Male Part of the Audience is occasioned by the various Operations of this Phænomenon on the Female Mind.--'This is rare Fun, d--n me--Jack, Tom, Bob, did you ever see any thing like this?--Look at that Lady yonder--See, in the Stage Box--how she looks half-averted,' etc. etc. It is Matter of Wonder that the Upper Gallery don't call for an Hornpipe, or, 'Down with the Drawers,' according to their usual Custom of insisting upon as much as they can get for their Money.⁷ But to be a little serious, it should be remembered by all Managers that this Play was written in the dissolute Days of Charles the Second; and that Decency at least

is, or ought to be, demanded at present. Had this Play been acted at Edinburgh, the Alarm spread among the Scotch Clergy would not be in the least surprizing, and their Invective against Stage Plays would have been just and seasonable; whereas, we are well informed, their Displeasure is now directed against a very moral Piece, subservient to the Purposes of Religion and Virtue: And we are glad that the Manager of Covent-Garden Theatre is shortly to make Amends to the Public, for the Revival of The Rover, by exhibiting on his Stage The Tragedy of Douglas; of which the Reader may see a Character in Mr. Hume's Dedication prefixed to his Four Dissertations, lately published by Mr. Millar.⁸

¹Dryden's play was first acted near the beginning of November, 1680. London Stage, Part 1, 292; For The Author see Theatre No. 12.

²Spectator No. 40, April 16, 1711.

³Unless Theatre No. 10, Nov. 14-16, 1758, can be considered his, Murphy never realized the projected review of this drama.

⁴Aphra Behn's second work by this title was a seldom played sequel to the first. The initial Rover was this author's best dramatic work and was performed more than 200 times between 1677 and 1775. Frederick M. Link, Aphra Behn (New York, 1968), pp. 52 and 65.

⁵"The First Epistle of the Second Book of Horace Imitated," 290-91.

⁶Mrs. Cadwallader, character in Foote's The Author. See Theatre No. 12, n. 5. Murphy may be quoting the line from the stage version, for it appears in neither the 1757 nor 1778 editions of this farce.

⁷For the nature of the upper-gallery audience see above, pp. 22-23.

⁸The Rev. John Home's tragedy, Douglas, was first acted on Dec. 14, 1756, in Edinburgh and was an immediate success, partly due to its appeal to Scotch nationalism. Its popularity prompted the Presbytery of Edinburgh to issue a public "Admonition" against theatregoing and to take action against Home and against those ministers who had attended performances. The "Admonition" was widely known and was reprinted in the London Chronicle for March 8-10, 1757, as well as in a number of other London periodicals. A short excerpt will give the reader the flavor and tone of this exhortation: "On these Accounts, and for many other obvious and weighty Considerations, the Presbytery, warmed with just Concern for the Good of Souls, do in the Fear of God, warn, exhort, and obtest, all within their Bounds, as they regard the Glory of God, the Credit of our holy Religion, and their own Welfare, to walk worthy of the Vocation wherewith they are called, by shewing a sacred Regard to the Lord's Day, and all the Ordinances of divine Institution; and by discouraging, in their respective Spheres, the illegal and dangerous Entertainments of the Stage. The Presbytery would plead with all in Authority, with Teachers of Youth, Parents and Masters of Families, to restrain by every habile Method, such as are under their Influence, from frequenting these Seminaries of Folly and Vice." David Hume's "Dedication," also reprinted in the March 8-10, Chronicle, was written on Jan. 3, 1757, less than a month after the premier of Douglas, and was prefixed to the first edition of his Four Dissertations, one of which was the well known "Of Tragedy." For Murphy's comments on Douglas see Theatres No. 23 and the second No. 24.

THE LONDON CHRONICLE, February 24-26, 1757.

THE THEATRE. No. 16.

Drury-Lane, Feb. 24, 1757.

Shakespeare's Tragedy of Macbeth was performed here this Evening. Hollingshed's Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland, have supplied our great Dramatic Poet with the Materials of many of his Plays; and whoever chuses to compare the Play with the Original, will find that the Poet has traced the Historian very closely in this Performance.¹ It has been said by many Critics, that the Writing of this Play is the best of our Author's Production. Why this Opinion should be subscribed to, we cannot perceive; we think him equally beautiful in The Tempest, not to mention Lear, Othello, and Hamlet. The Stile of Macbeth is indeed peculiar, abounding in Words infrequent in their Use, but remarkably strong and picturesque: The Language takes a Tincture from the Subject, which being dark and gloomy, it thence follows, that the Poets Choice of Words, and their Arrangement, are calculated to fill the Mind with Imagery of the most solemn and awful Aspect. In Consequence of this, the Writing of Macbeth is distinguished from the Poet's general Stile,

and has been called the best, merely because it is different. As the supernatural Agency of Witches is very early introduced, it may not be amiss to mention, in the Words of so fine a Critic as Mr. Johnson, that, "in the Time of Shakespear the Doctrine of Witchcraft was established by Law and the Fashion, and as Prodigies are always seen in proportion as they are expected, Witches were every Day discovered, and multiplied so fast in some Places, that Bishop Hall mentions a Village in Lancashire, where their Number was greater than that of the Houses. Upon this general Infatuation (continues the same judicious Writer) Shakespear might be allowed to found a Play, expecially since he has followed with great Exactness such Histories as were then thought true; nor can it be doubted that the Scenes of Inchantment were, both by himself and his Audience, thought awful and affecting."²

This Criticism justifies the Poet for introducing a Machinery so whimsical, as it may appear in the present Age. The Use he has made of it is certainly admirable. Macbeth's Mind, in itself not bad, is by these Personages filled with Ideas of Royalty, and very naturally the Account of them kindles a Blaze in the more combustible Temper of his Wife, who omitted nothing that might urge him to perpetrate the Deed. Boetius says, Animus etiam Macbethi per se ferox prope quotidianis conviciis conjugis stimulabatur.³ Shakespear has nobly conceived the

Character of Lady Macbeth from this Hint, and has given her Features the highest Colouring, and the strongest Proportions. The gloomy Meditations of Macbeth very finely describe the Irresolution of his Mind, and, in order to abate the Horror, Shakespear has occasionally softened his Temper. His Wife, however, laid the Daggers ready, and the Deed must be done. What strong Workings has the Poet given the Imagination on this Occasion? Visions become Realities; the Ideas of the Mind are embodied: 'Is this a Dagger that I see before me?' nay, they are thrown into Action, 'Thou marshal'st me the Way that I was going.'⁴ So strong is the Painting, that with all his Efforts he can hardly recollect his Senses, to find out that it was the bloody Business informed thus to his Mind.⁵ One would imagine the Horror in this Scene could hardly be carried further; and yet immediately we are told, 'It is now the witching Hour of Night, when Murder is alarmed by his Centinel the Wolf, etc.'⁶ The Imagination could not well be filled with more awful Ideas. The Confusion of conscious Guilt is finely marked in the succeeding Scene, and our Author has contradicted what he has told us in the Beginning of his Play, viz. 'Present Fears are less than horrible Imaginings.'--Hark!--Who lies in the Antichamber?--This is a sorry Sight!--How is it with me when ev'ry Noise appalls me? etc.'⁷ After this, Macbeth never knows a Moment's Peace of Mind,

but is full of Scorpions, which incessantly goad him;⁸ and the more he is goaded by them, the more he hardens himself in Villainy. We cannot but mention this as an amazing Proof of our Author's Insight into Nature, who has, in three different Characters, separated the Workings of Remorse, and shewn its Operation to be productive of remarkable Effects in each, according to their respective Tempers. For this Remark we are not sure to whom we are indebted: But it would lead us beyond the Bounds of these Remarks, to insist on this at present; and therefore we shall continue our Observations in a subsequent Paper.⁹

Covent-Garden, Same Day.

Was repeated The Fair Penitent. We are obliged to the Gentleman who sent us his Observations on Mrs. Gregory's Performance, which, though elegantly written, we are obliged to suppress; because we think most of the Remarks have been already presented to the Public in a former Paper.¹⁰ We are pleased, however, to have an Opportunity of saying that her Performance has had Power enough, in Spite of Fashion, to attract the most numerous and polite Audience that has been seen at this Theatre during the whole Season.

¹Compare "Shakespear has pretty exactly followed the thread of the History in this Play." "It is not to

be doubted but Shakespear followed Holingshed in the Facts which compose this Play, as well as in many of his other historical Plays." Lennox, Shakespear, I, 272-3.

²Between "Fashion" and "and as" read, "and it became not only unpolite, but criminal to doubt it,". Between "houses" and "Upon this" read, "The Jesuits and Sectaries took advantage of this universal Error, and endeavoured to promote the Interest of their Parties by pretended Cures of Persons afflicted by evil Spirits, but they were detected and exposed by the Clergy of the established Church." Whether Murphy is quoting directly from Samuel Johnson's Miscellaneous Observations on the Tragedy of Macbeth (1745), which he cites in Theatre No. 17, a continuation of the present review, or whether he has taken the Johnson passages from Mrs. Lennox's Shakespear Illustrated (I, 285), I am unable to determine. There is an additional complication in that this essay and No. 17 are an expansion and revision of GIJ, No. 8 (1754), hence, Murphy may have augmented his original sources. See below nn. 3, 9, and Theatre No. 17, nn. 5, 7, and 9.

³Hector Boece (Boetius, Boethius), 1465-1536, principal of King's College, Aberdeen, whose Scotorum Historiae (1527), as translated into the Scots vernacular by John Bellenden in 1533, was Holingshed's primary source of Scottish history. However, "Animus etiam per se ferox prope quotidianis convitiis uxoris (quae omnium consiliorum ei erat conscia) stimulabatur" does not come from Boece but from George Buchanan's Rerum Scoticarum Historia (Edinburgh, 1582), Bk. 7, p. 73. When revising GIJ No. 8, Murphy must have forgotten which author supplied the quotation, an easy mistake since in the GIJ essay they were mentioned in the same sentence: "Macbeth (says an ingenious Author) is the same in Shakespear, as in Boetius and Buchanan. The Poet conforms his Fable and Characters to the Traditions of his Historians. 'Animus etiam Mecbethi per se ferox, prope quotidianis conviciis conjugis (quae omnium Consiliorum ei erat conscia) stimulabatur.' "Macbeth, fierce of himself, was spurr'd on by the almost daily Reproaches of his Wife, his Bosom-Counsellor in all his Designs.'" The "ingenious Author" may be the scholar and editor, John Upton, 1670-1749, who gives the same Buchanan quotation in his Critical Observations on Shakespeare (London, 1748), p. 29. Mrs. Lennox (I, 273 and 279) mentions Boetius as one of Shakespeare's sources but quotes from the English rather than Latin version.

⁴II, i, 33 and 42.

⁵"It is the bloody business which informs/Thus to mine eyes...." I, i, 48-9.

⁶...Now o'er the one-half world.
Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse
The curtain'd sleep. Witchcraft celebrates
Pale Hecate's offerings, and wither'd Murder,
Alarum'd by his centinel, the wolf, (II, i, 49-53.)

⁷"...Present Fears/are less than horrible imaginings." I, iii, 137-8. The rest of the quotation will be found between lines 19-59, II, ii.

⁸"O, full of scorpions is my mind, dear wife!" III, ii, 36.

⁹Murphy is indebted to himself for this remark. At the close of GIJ No. 8 (1754) he says, "Guilty Ambition moves in a Sphere so narrow in itself, that it seems almost impossible to Diversify it; and yet we see it differently modified in four Characters of our Author. If we view Hamlet's Father-in-Law, how different is the remorse of the Dane, from the Scot's Distraction? The Confusion of King John how distinguished from both? While the close, the vigilant, and the jealous Guilt of Richard is entirely peculiar to himself." See beginning of Theatre No. 17.

¹⁰A lengthy analysis of Mrs. Gregory's performance in Rowe's tragedy is found in Theatre No. 14.

THE LONDON CHRONICLE, Feb. 26-March 1, 1757.

THE THEATRE. No. 17.

Continuation of Remarks on MACBETH.

Drury-Lane, Feb. 26, 1757.

We mentioned in our last the different Effects of Remorse in three different Characters of Shakespear. It would have been expressed with more Accuracy, had we said four; as we may trace the Workings of a guilty Conscience in four of his capital Personages.¹ In Richard we perceive it in short transitory Goadings, which, however, the Obstinacy of his Villainy finds the Means of silencing, till at length we find him starting off his Couch in all the Horrors of the wildest Despair; but this only prevails while his scattered Senses are lost in a Confusion between sleeping and waking. In King John we see a Mind quite desolated by incessant Corrosions, and he has not the guilty Fortitude to oppose the Assaults of Conscience; but he intirely abandons himself to Melancholy. The Usurper in Hamlet seeks Occasion to excite the Feelings of Repentance in his Breast, but Vice has such an Hold of him, that he cannot extricate himself;

and he declares himself incurable. The Species of Macbeth's Remorse differs from them all. His Temper of Mind seems to be naturally superstitious and thence he is easily overcast with Clouds of Horror, and his creative Fancy, the sure Concomitant of Superstition, fills him with a thousand visionary Fears. It is owing to this that the 'Table's full;' ² the real Introduction of the Ghost being only to impress the Scene deeper on the Minds of the Audience. He tells us,

Stones have been taught to move, and Trees to speak;
 Augurs that understand Relations, have
 By Magpies, and by Choughs, and Rooks, brought forth
 The secret'st Man of Blood.---³

The Consequence of this is, that he resolves to indulge his gloomy Turn of Thought by a superstitious Visit to the Witches; and from the very Torture of Mind, which his Guilt occasions, he hardens himself still more in Villainy.

---I will To morrow,
 Betimes I will unto the weird Sisters---
 More shall they speak---
 And a little after,

I am in Blood,
 Stept in so far, that, should I wade no more,
 Returning were as tedious as go o'er.⁴

In this Manner we find he does not, like King John,

abandon himself to Despair; like Hamlet's Father-in-law, endeavour at Repentance; nor, like Richard, to subdue his Tendencies to Remorse, but he is at once resolute and timorous, determined to pursue the bloody Tract of Ambition, and at the same Time a Prey to all the Vulture-Cares of Wickedness. Thus Intrepidity and Superstition, Remorse and Cruelty, are all blended together, and render Macbeth a different Villain from any other on the Stage. If the Reader will take this Hint, and review the Play, it will immediately strike him how masterly the Poet is in the Execution of this complicated Character. As we have mentioned his Visit to the weird Sisters, it may not be improper to transcribe Mr. Johnson's admirable Remarks on the magic Incantation. "As this is the chief Scene of Inchantment in the Play (says that judicious Writer) it is proper in this Place to observe with how much Judgment Shakespear has selected all the Circumstances of his infernal Ceremonies, and how exactly he has conformed to common Opinions and Traditions. Thrice the brinded Cat hath mew'd, etc."⁵

Toad, that under the cold Stone,
Days and Nights has forty-one,
Swelter'd Venom sleeping got,
Boil thou first i' th' charmed Pot.
Fillet of a fenny Snake,

In the Cauldron boil and bake;

Eye of Neut, and Toe of Frog, etc.⁶

"The Babe, whose Finger is used, must be strangled in its Birth; the Grease must be human, but must be dropped from a Gibbet, the Gibbet of a Murderer; and even the Sow, whose Blood is used, must have offended Nature, by devouring her own Farrow. These are Touches of Judgment and Genius."⁷ There are many more elegant Remarks of this Author, which we are constrained to suppress, as they would exceed the Bounds of our Paper. But we refer our Readers, if they have a Mind to read a fine Criticism, to a small Pamphlet, called, Miscellaneous Observations on the Tragedy of Macbeth, published some time since by Mr. Johnson, as a Specimen of a new Edition of Shakespear, which, we have the Pleasure to inform our Readers, he is now about.⁸ From his Erudition and Genius we may expect to see our great Dramatic Poet restored to us in his Habit as he lived. But to return to Macbeth:--In the Scene where the Apparitions appear, that Piece of Machinery is also managed in such a Manner as to be perfectly agreeable to the fantastic Practices of Witches; and at the same time they are, as Mr. Upton observes, symbolical Exhibitions of what hereafter is to happen to Macbeth, while, according to the Delight these extraordinary Personages are supposed to feel in Mischief, they palter with him in a double Sense, which at length brings on

that wild Confusion which, as Truth dawns upon the Mind, makes this wicked Hero venture every thing, in all the Agonies of Guilt, Horror, Rage, and Despair.⁹ In the last Act, before the Fallacy of the Witches is discovered, his Spirits sink into a settled Gloom, and occasionally he gives into a strain of the finest Moralities that ever were uttered on any Stage, or in any Language:¹⁰ Besides their acknowledged Truth, they take such a Tincture of Melancholy from Macbeth's State of Mind, that from that very Circumstance they have something more peculiarly affecting than perhaps was ever felt from Sentiment before. Having said so much of this Play, we shall take another Opportunity to attend Mr. Mossop thro' his Performance, when, we imagine, we shall find that he has conceived this Character very justly; and that he has great Merit in the Execution.¹¹

Covent-Garden, Same Day.

The Rover again: Of which we shall only repeat the unanimous Voice of the Town, viz. That nothing is worse than the Play itself, except the Acting of it.¹²

Drury-Lane, 28th.

This Evening was presented Oroonoko, written by Mr. Southern, and produced for the first Time in 1696. As this Play is of the tragicomic Species, we shall defer

our Remarks, till we have fulfilled our Promise in regard to The Spanish Fryar.¹³

Covent-Garden, Same Day.

The Fair Penitent again, by Mrs. Gregory.¹⁴

¹See Theatre No. 16, n. 9.

²III, iv, 46.

³Read "known" for "taught" and "and" for "that." III, iv, 123-6.

⁴Read "And betimes." III, iv, 132-4 and 136-8.

⁵Miscellaneous Observations on the Tragedy of Macbeth (1745). This passage from Johnson was also re-printed in Lennox, Shakespear, I, 285.

⁶For "forty-one" read "thirty-one." Between "charm'd Pot" and "Fillet" read "Double, double, toil and trouble/Fire burn and Cauldron bubble." IV, i, 6-14.

⁷Read "must not only be" and "have dropped." Miscellaneous Observations; also in Lennox, Shakespear, I, 288.

⁸For Murphy's encomiums on Johnson's Proposals for an edition of Shakespeare see Theatre No. 33.

⁹John Upton (see Theatre No. 16, n. 3), in his Critical Observations, pp. 38-9, says, "Then again those apparitions being symbolical representations of what shall happen to him are introduced paltering with him in a double sense, and leading him on, according to the common notions of diabolical oracles, to his confusion." Mrs. Lennox (I, 289) mentions the "learned and ingenious Mr. Upton" and then gives the above quotation. In V, viii, 19-20, Macbeth says, "And be these juggling fiends no more believ'd/That palter with us in a double sense."

¹⁰Murphy refers to the famous "To-morrow, and to-morrow" speech. V, v, 17-28.

¹¹Theatre No. 34 contains a long review of Mossop as Macbeth.

¹²See Theatre No. 15 for a review of this comedy.

¹³Thomas Southerne's tragicomedy, based on Aphra Behn's novel of the same title, was first acted in 1695. Nicoll, I, 154. Murphy did not fulfill his promise in regard to either.

¹⁴See Theatre No. 14.

THE LONDON CHRONICLE, March 1-3, 1757.

THE THEATRE. No. 18.

Drury-Lane, March 1, 1757.

This Evening was presented Shakespear's Play, called, Measure for Measure. The Story of this Piece is extremely affecting and interesting. It is taken, according to our Author's Custom, from an Italian Narrative in Cynthio's Novels;¹ and is in brief as follows: The Duke of Vienna, in order to have an Opportunity of mending the Laws, and gaining a Knowledge of his Subjects, makes a temporary Abdication, under Pretext of retiring for some time from his Dominions. But instead of withdrawing, he betakes himself to a Convent, and disguises himself in the Habit of a Fryar. It happened that Claudio had seduced a young Lady, for which he is ordered to be executed by the Substitute of the Duke. Upon which, Isabella, Sister to Claudio, immediately interests herself in his Cause, and endeavours to deprecate his Fate. The Deputy, who proves deaf to her tenderest Importunity, is caught by her Youth and Beauty, and offers to save him, if she will gratify his inordinate Desires. Superior to Disgrace, she rejects it with Scorn; and when her

Brother intreats her to save his Life, with Loss of her Honour, she is fired with a noble Indignation. Mean time the Duke, in the Habit of a Fryar, finds a Succedaneum, by sending, in Isabella's room, another Lady, to whom the Vice Duke had been formerly contracted. Notwithstanding this, Claudio is ordered again for Execution; when the Duke shakes off his Fryar's Dress, and enters the City. Isabella seizes the Opportunity to complain of the Administration during his Absence; and after some Incidents, not unentertaining, the whole Secret is cleared up, and Angelo, the Deputy, is, in his Turn, ordered for Execution. The generous Isabella here again interposes and sollicit his Pardon. The Duke marries Isabella; and thus Virtue is crowned with a bright Reward. This, if we are not mistaken, is the Sum of Shakespear's Story. In the Conduct of the Fable the Poet has made some Mistake, and he has unnecessarily overcharged it with super-numerary Incidents, which do not much conduce to the main Business, and he has crouded it with episodical Characters.² The Reader, who has not seen this Play, may however easily conceive how touching many of the above described Situations must be in so masterly an Hand as Shakespear's. In Isabella's Character there is a fine Variety of Passions, and a beautiful Struggle between her Virtue and her tender Sentiments for her Brother. The Duke is likewise a very important and interesting

Character; and, notwithstanding some farcical Scenes, the Business of the Piece irresistably commands Attention. As there is very fine Writing in many Passages of this Play, and as many of the Characters are admirably acted, a critical Enquiry into the Beauties of these two different Arts, shall be offered to our Readers when Measure for Measure shall happen to be repeated.³

Covent-Garden, Same Day.

Was presented the Tragedy of King Lear, as altered from Shakespear by Mr. Tate.⁴ The Part of King Lear was performed by Mr. Barry:⁵ But as the present Writer had not the Pleasure of seeing it, he can only say, that he is glad to find this excellent Actor has chosen this Play for his Benefit, when, if he can squeeze in among the great Crowd, that he supposes will be attending on the Night of so fine a Performance, he makes no Doubt but he shall meet with a very exquisite Entertainment; and then he will offer his Remarks to the Public with his usual Integrity.

¹Mrs. Lennox observes that the play is based on "The fifth Novel of the eighth Decad of the Hectomythi of Giraldi Cinthio." Shakespear, I, 21. She also (I, 21-24) gives a synopsis, similar to Murphy's, of Shakespear's plot.

²Mrs. Lennox (I, 25) says, "The Story of Juriste and Epitia afforded an affecting Subject for a Play; and it is to be wished, since Shakespear thought proper to found one upon it, that he had left the Fable simple and

entire as it was, without loading it with useless Incidents, unnecessary Characters, and absurd and improbable Intrigue." Murphy, however, holds the play in much higher regard than does Mrs. Lennox.

³Murphy did not review this work again.

⁴Nahum Tate's adaptation (1681) of Lear was the version played until 1756. Among other things, he omitted the fool and gave the play a happy ending by restoring Lear to the throne and giving Cordelia a husband. After 1756 Garrick's revision of Tate's adaptation, which restored many of Shakespeare's lines but retained the love scenes, marriage, happy ending, and continued to omit the fool, was the version usually acted. D. Nichol Smith, Shakespeare in the Eighteenth Century (Oxford, 1928), pp. 20-23.

⁵For Spranger Barry see Theatre No. 4, n. 9.

THE LONDON CHRONICLE, March 3-5, 1757.

THE THEATRE. No. 19.

Drury-Lane, March 3, 1757.

Sir John Vanbrugh's Comedy, called the Provok'd Wife, was acted this Evening.¹ It is judiciously remarked by Mr. Pope concerning this Writer, that Van wants Grace that never wanted Wit.² The Truth is, Sir John's Comedies are generally too licentious, and Vice is rather exhibited in an attractive Garb, than in that odious and forbidden Mien, which it should be the Business of Writers for the Stage to represent, in order to serve the Purposes of Virtue and good Manners. Had Lady Brute been provoked to a noble Indignation at the Conduct of her Husband, after endeavouring to reclaim him by becoming Patience and correct Behaviour on her Side, had she then given Vent to the Emotions of Spirit natural to a slighted Woman, and, with the Intercession of her Relations, demanded a Separation, what a beautiful Contrast would the Poet have given us between the Brutality of an hardened Debauchee, and the amiable Deportment of a virtuous Wife? But when at present we see the provok'd Wife only excited to an Emulation of Vice, when we perceive her endeavouring to

outstrip her Husband in a Dereliction of Morals, and see them both pursuing their separate Paths of Wickedness, we revolt from the witty and humourous Writer, and cannot help condemning him for the Looseness of his Principles. If his admirable Genius were exerted to set our Passions on the Side of Truth, to provoke our Merriment by the ridiculous Appearances of Folly, and to make us recoil from the Turpitude of corrupt Manners, this Author would perhaps have deserved the Precedence among all our English Writers. His Dialogue is always natural and enlivened, abounding in Wit, Humour, and quick and unexpected Turns; his Images are generally familiar and entertaining, from their agreeable Association; his Fable is well conducted, full of what the Players call Business, tending to produce entertaining Situations, and frequent Opportunities for lively Traits of Character. These different Talents are all assembled in the Play before us. Sir John's Soliloquy inimitably opens the Play, and the whimsical Foibles of his own Character: He does not come forth tamely to tell a dull Story, but he is instantly thrown into Action, and every thing has Manners. Lady Brute, it cannot be denied, is well drawn, though not well imagined, for the Reasons already given. Lady Fanciful has the Air of a Caricature; but, if strictly examined, she exhibits a just Imitation of a Person who has bid Adieu to the native Ornaments of her Sex, and is fantastically

ridiculous. The Character is admirably acted by Mrs. Clive, who, besides that spirited Eclat which instantly seizes her Audience, never fails to give us many little Touches of Imitation perceptible only to the nice Observer.³ Mr. Garrick is not generally allowed to play Sir John Brute as well as many other Parts: We cannot help thinking the Critics who have determined this Matter somewhat mistaken: A large uncouth Figure, with a deep toned Voice, is by no Means necessary;⁴ on the contrary, perhaps, the Appearance of one, worn out with excessive Debauchery is the more natural of the two; and it is probable, if the Ladies of Quality were called upon as Evidences, we should find that Men of a flimsy Texture, have, to all Intents and Purposes, as much Brutality as more robust Constitutions. Mr. Garrick is not morosely sullen, but peevishly fractious with his Wife. In his Manner there is an Appearance of Acrimony, rather than downright Insensibility and Rudeness. And this is certainly a just Conception of the Character; for it appears that the Knight is naturally of a lively Turn, with an unmannerly Vein of Wit. He sees Things in a pleasant Light, that is to say, a Light that diverts others, though he does not seem to be entertained himself with his own ideas. This appears to be the Intention of the Poet, and this is the Intention of this fine Comedian. How full of frolic Festivity is he in the Tavern Scene,

when free from Women, and elevated by Wine and my Lord Rake! Even Temperance and Sobriety wish to be of the Party, and to enjoy the Knight's Company. When examining the Taylor, how finely does he, like all drunken Men, lose Sight of his intended Idea, and gape and stare, and change those meaning Eyes into the most unideal that ever were seen!--When personating Lady Brute, you would swear he had often attended the Toilet, and there gleaned up the many various Airs of the fair Sex: He is perfectly versed in the Exercise of the Fan, the Lips, the Adjustment of the Tucker,⁵ and even the minutest Conduct of the Finger. When he returns Home, Nature, at his first Appearance, seems to be harrassed out; and through the rest of the Scene he is extremely Laughable, his Voice, his Looks, his Attitude are Comic to the highest Degree, when he makes his solemn Reflection: "He comes to my House, etc."⁶ Whoever has seen him sit down in his Chair, must acknowledge that Sleep comes upon him by the most natural Gradations: Not the minutest Circumstance about a Man in that Situation escapes him: The Struggle between Sleep and his Unwillingness to give Way to it is perfectly just: The Lid depressed, yet faintly raised; the Change of his Voice from distinct Articulation to a confused Murmuring: The sudden Oppression of his Senses and the Recovery from it; his then beginning again his broken Chain of Thought, and the malicious Smile that

unexpectedly gleams from him, till he is at Length totally overpowered, are all such acknowledged Strokes of Art, that they keep the whole House agitated at once with Laughter, and Admiration of the Comedian, who can thus exhibit both the mental and external Workings of Nature without Exaggeration.

Covent-Garden, Same Day.

The Rover again. The Managers seem resolved by the Repetition of this Play to give us as little Trouble as possible.⁷

¹Vanbrugh's popular comedy was first played about mid-April, 1697. London Stage, Part 1, 477.

²"The First Epistle of the Second Book of Horace Imitated," 289.

³For Mrs. Clive see Theatre No. 1, n. 5.

⁴Murphy alludes to the great James Quin, 1693-1766, the last important proponent of the "exaggerated" style of acting (see above p. 87), who had retired in 1751 but had acted a few benefits for friends since that time. Quin dominated the stage from the early 1730's until Garrick supplanted him in the mid-1740's. Highly regarded in almost any part he undertook, his style was perfectly suited for declamatory tragedies such as Addison's Cato; he was an incomparable Falstaff, and for almost a quarter of a century he "owned" the role of Sir John Brute. Tate Wilkinson says of Garrick and Quin in this part: "The Provok'd Wife was acted with approbation that season [1749] at Covent Garden; for though Garrick was then performing Sir John Brute, yet there were many obstinate critics of opinion, that the character was better conducted by Mr. Quin. Indeed there cannot be any one part acted more differently than that character was by Mr. Garrick and Mr. Quin. Yet had the author been then living, I

venture to pronounce he would have allowed both right."
Memoirs, IV, 146.

⁵"A piece of lace or the like, worn by women
 within or around the top of the bodice in the 17-18th c."
O.E.D.

⁶"Wear a sword, sir!--And what then, sir? He
 comes to my house, eats my meat, lies with my wife, dis-
 honours my family; gets a bastard to inherit my estate--
 And when I ask a civil account of this--Sir, says he,
 I wear a sword...." IV, iv.

⁷See Theatre No. 15.

THE LONDON CHRONICLE, March 5-8, 1757.

THE THEATRE. No. 20.

Drury-Lane, March 5, 1757.

This Evening was performed King Richard the Third.¹ King Richard by Mr. Mossop: It was in this character the Actor now before us appeared first on the English Stage, and gave strong Assurances of that theatrical Excellence, which he has ever since supported by good Sense, and fine Powers of Voice.² As we have already given a summary Account of his Merit in Richard, in the Distinction we made between him and Mr. Barry, we need not at present follow him through the several Scenes of this Play:³ We shall therefore content ourselves with saying, that he has justly conceived the Character in every Situation; that he seems to know the real Drift of Richard, in every Speech of designing Villainy, or of artful Hypocrisy; and that the Tone of his Voice is generally justly varied, and never fails to be an Eccho to the Sense.⁴ Should Mr. Garrick's Constitution remain so tender, as to render it not adviseable for him to go through the Fatigue of this laborious Part any more, we think we may safely say to him, Tu nunc eris alter ab

illo,⁵ though equal Spirit and Brilliancy can hardly be expected. We are pleased to find, that he has made choice of Zara, and Lord Chalkstone for his Benefit;⁶ as besides his own and Mrs. Cibber's Performances, we shall see Mr. Garrick in two Characters admirably acted on the same Night; the Pleasure resulting from which will, no Doubt, be heightened by that Satisfaction, which, the Spectator informs us, Sir Roger De Coverley felt "at the Sight of a Multitude of People, who seem pleased with one another, and partake of the same common Entertainment."⁷

Covent-Garden, Same Day.

The Rover again!

Drury-Lane, March 7.

Was performed Ben Johnson's Alchymist: "By this Expression," says Mr. Whalley, in his elegant Edition of this Poet's Works, "is meant, one who pretends to the Knowledge of what is called the Philosopher's Stone, which had the Faculty of transmuting baser Metals into Gold. The Author in the Choice of his Subject was happy, for the Age was then extremely addicted to the Study of Chemistry, and favourable to the Professors of it. There was also at this Time a particular Controversy on foot, with the famous Doctor Anthony, about his aurum Potabile, which was warmly agitated by the Members of the Faculty;

and we shall find that our Poet alludes to this Dispute, in some Passages of this Play."⁸ However, as the Circumstances of this Dispute are not interesting now, and as the Foible ridiculed in this Piece is now almost obliterated, it follows of course, that the Humour appears frequently unintelligible, and loses its Poignancy. This Play sets out finely in the Midst of Things: The Plot is admirably conducted; and the fourth Act is, perhaps, one of the finest, for Contrivance, in the English Drama. We may venture, notwithstanding, to assert, that the Alchymist owes its present Reception on the Stage, to the inimitable Performance of Mr. Garrick. It is, indeed, no wonder, that all Degrees of People conspire to applaud the Performer, who has roused all the noblest Emotions of the Soul, when they see him descending to an Imitation of Nature in her meanest Littlenesses of Action. And yet how admirably does he exhibit the minutest Circumstances, with the exactest Precision, without Buffoonry or Grimace:-- There is no twisting of Features, no Squinting, but all is as correct as if a real Tobacco Boy were before us.⁹ It is really surprizing how he, who has occasionally looked unutterable Things, can present us such a Face of Inanity: The Actor who can amazingly reach the Sublime in a Lear, or Hamlet, and then exhibit the most ridiculous Appearances, must be possessed of such two-fold and

opposite Powers, as hardly ever before concentered in one Man, and are not likely to form such a Tragicomic Genius again.

Covent-Garden, Same Day.

Was acted Shakespear's Othello, by Mr. Barry.¹⁰

It was in this Part this excellent Tragedian started on the English Stage; and it is not to be wondered, that such a Performance met with such warm and general Approbation. Mr. Barry's Powers in general are nobly adapted to this Character. From his first Entrance into Cyprus, in the second Act, we have nothing left but to admire: The Vehemence of his tender Passion for Desdemona seizes every imagination: His Dignity in quelling the Riot is commanding: His first Tendencies to Jealousy are beautifully expressed, and are finely smothered, till at length they burst out into an amazing Wildness of Rage. In the Scene where he collars Iago, nothing can be more masterly than his whole Performance: The Extravagance of all his Ideas, and of the Emotions attendant on them, is perfectly characteristic. When we hear him speak, "I had been happy if the general Camp," etc.¹¹ we cannot help being hurried away with his Enthusiasm; and when he collars Iago, it is actually astonishing how his Powers carry him through such a long continued Climax of Terror; and yet he adds further to our Admiration when, a little

after, he burst out with, "If there be Cords, or Knives, Poison, or Fire," etc.¹² The whole is vented with the impetuous Ferocity natural to one of Othello's Complexion, still improved with the Harmony of Voice. Every ensuing Scene is greatly supported, and his acting through the whole fifth Act, where the most violent Passions rise and fall in the quickest succession, is such, that were he never to play any thing else, it is sufficient to stamp him an admirable Tragedian. Were it our Business at present to decide which Part this Actor performs best, we should not hesitate to pronounce, that in Othello he has more Strokes of Genius than in any other Character whatever; and perhaps on some future Occasion, we shall endeavour to point out these to the Reader.¹³

¹As altered by Colley Cibber. See Theatre No. 4, n. 8.

²For Henry Mossop see Theatre No. 5, n. 12. This outstanding tragedian made his first appearance on the English stage in Richard III on September 26, 1751, at Drury Lane. However, for the previous two years he had been a regular performer at the Smock Alley Theatre in Dublin. London Stage, Part 4, I, 262.

³For the comparison see Theatre No. 5.

⁴"The Sound must seem an Eccho to the Sense." Pope, Essay on Criticism, 365.

⁵"Now you will be next after him." Virgil, Eclogues, V, 49.

⁶For Aaron Hill's Zara see Theatre No. 4. Murphy refers to Garrick's farce Lethe (see Theatre No. 5) in which Lord Chalkstone was the main character.

⁷The Tory country squire, the most famous and delightful character in the Spectator papers, is described as feeling thus in No. 335, March 25, 1712.

⁸The schoolmaster and editor, Peter Whalley, 1722-1791, published his 7 vol. Works of Ben Jonson in 1756. Since Murphy refers to Whalley in other reviews of Jonson's plays, all act and scene references are to his edition. For the quotation see Whalley, III, 5, n. 1.

⁹Garrick played the part of Abel Drugger, a Tobaccoman, i.e., a seller of tobacco, a tobacconist. In III, iv, Kastril addresses Drugger as "tobacco-boy."

¹⁰For Barry see Theatre No. 4, n. 9. He was generally acknowledged the finest Othello of the era. See above pp. 14, and 19.

¹¹III, iii, 345.

¹²III, iii, 388-9.

¹³Murphy did not follow through on this.

THE LONDON CHRONICLE, March 8-10, 1757.

THE THEATRE. No. 21.

Drury-Lane, March 6, 1757.

This Evening was presented the Tragedy of The Orphan, written by Otway, and first produced in 1680.¹ The Author of this Piece lived among the Wits of Charles the Second's Time, but was a neglected Genius; which, however, is not so much a Reproach to the Age, if we reflect that the Author seemed to be very neglectful of himself, addicted rather too much to Drinking, and elated or depressed in his Spirits, according as the Success of his Compositions had filled his Purse, or his excessive Debaucheries had exhausted it. It does not appear that he lived in any Kind of Friendship with Mr. Dryden: On the contrary, there was rather a Misunderstanding between them (tho' they were the two greatest Genius's of that Age) on Account of Otway's close and intimate Connection with Shadwell. In The Session of the Poets, a very humourous and pleasant Poem, we find this Attachment to Shadwell recorded, and his Poverty made a Joke of, because, as Shadwell was not well with the Wits

of those Times, it is more than probable that Otway hurt himself by a wilful Adherence to him.

Tom Otway came next, Tim Shadwell's dear Zany,

And swears for Heroics he wrote best of any:

Don Carlos his Pockets so amply had fill'd,

That his Mange was quite cur'd, and his Lice were
all kill'd.²

Otway died at an Alehouse on Tower-hill, about three or four and thirty Years of Age.³ What a Loss to all the Lovers of the pathetic Drama! It were to be wish'd that such a Genius had met with more Encouragement, sufficient at least to have kept him from dying untimely thro' Distress; and then it is more than probable that he, who improved so greatly from his first Play to the Writing of Venice Preserv'd, would have proved a more formidable Rival of our great Shakespear. In the Play now before us there are many admirable Strokes of Genius, and the Story shews us how greatly those Critics are mistaken, who insist that the Subject of Tragedy should always be some illustrious Action depending among great and exalted personages. Rowe, in his Prologue to The Fair Penitent, is so elegantly refuted this Doctrine, that we cannot help transcribing the Lines.⁴

Long has the Fate of Kings and Kingdoms been

The common Business of the Tragic Scene:

As if Misfortune made the Throne her Seat,

And none could be unhappy but the Great.
 Stories like these with Wonder we may hear;
 But far remote and in a higher Sphere
 We ne'er can pity what we ne'er can share.
 Like distant Battles of the Pole and Swede,
 Which frugal Citizens o'er Coffee read,
 Careless for who shall fail or who succeed.
 Therefore an humble Theme our Author chose,
 A melancholy Tale of private Woes.⁵

That Otway has raised the most beautiful Scenes
 of Distress from domestic Incidents need not here be
 pointed out, the striking Passages of this Play being in
 every Body's Mouth: The Loves of Castalio and Monimia
 are touched with the most delicate Hand, and the young
 Imagination is inflamed with the tenderest Enthusiasm;
 However, it must be observed, that the Circumstance on
 which the Catastrophe turns is rather gross and shocking,
 and surely that part of it should have been thrown into
 Narrative, as it must be agreed that Polydore's going to
 Monimia's Bed-Chamber, raises Ideas too coarse for the
 Refinement of the Tragic Muse; and in his subsequent
 Behavior he sports too much with those Pleasures, of
 which the Chastity of the Stage requires that a Poet
 should "deem with Mysterious Reverence."⁶ This is what
 Virgil was aware of, when he tells us, that the Trojan
 Chief and Queen Dido met together in a Cave:⁷ The Poet

throws a transparent Veil over his Lovers through which we discover enough, without having the whole too glaringly displayed to view; and it must be acknowledged, that the pathetic Distress and the Catastrophe in the fourth Book is worked up with as tender Feelings as were ever excited by a Poet. We shall conclude with observing, that never was there finer acting between two Performers than Mr. Garrick and Mrs. Cibber entertained us with on the above Night: They seemed to warm and animate each other to such a Degree, they were both carried beyond themselves; and if they will resolve to exert themselves in the like Manner, when this Play is acted again, we will venture to promise our Readers as sensible a Pleasure as they ever yet felt at the Theatre.

Covent-Garden, Same Day.

The Wonder again!⁸--We hear that the Play of Hammer Gurton is speedily to be revived at this Theatre, and that it is to run for twenty Nights without interruption.⁹

¹Next to the tragedies of Shakespeare, the pathetic tragedies of Thomas Otway, The Orphan (1680) and Venice preserv'd (1682) were the most highly regarded in the period. See Theatre No. 14, n. 4.

²Read "Tom" for "Tim"; "writes" for "wrote." John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, "A Session of the Poets," 8-6, in Poems, ed. Vivian De Sola Pinto (Cambridge, Mass., 1953). Otway's Don Carlos; Prince of Spain (1676) is one of the least "affected" of the rimed heroic tragedies. Nicoll, I, 120-21.

³d. 1685. Roswell Ham, Otway and Lee, Biography from a Baroque Age (New Haven, 1931), corroborates the foregoing information given by Murphy about Otway's life.

⁴For a review of Rowe's popular tragedy see Theatre No. 14.

⁵Read "humbler" for "humble"; Between "but the Great" and "Stories like" add:
Dearly, 'tis true, each buys the crown he wears,
And many are the mighty monarch's cares:
By foreign foes and home-bred factions pressed,
Few are the joys he knows, and short his hours
of rest.

⁶In Paradise Lost, VIII, 598-9, Adam speaking of his and Eve's copulation in comparison with that "common to all kinds" says:
Though higher of the genial Bed by far
And with mysterious reverence I deem

⁷The meeting in which Dido and Aeneas first consummate their love is given only a few lines. Aeneid, IV, 170-3. We are only told that Dido no more "dreams of a secret love: she calls it marriage and with that name veils her sin."

⁸Murphy means The Rover, see his correction in Theatre No. 22.

⁹The early comedy Gammer Gurtons Nedle, c. 1575, by an unidentified "Mr. S," had seldom, if ever, been acted since the last quarter of the sixteenth century.

THE LONDON CHRONICLE, March 10-12, 1757.

THE THEATRE. No. 22.

Drury-Lane, March 10, 1757.

This Evening was presented The Fair Quaker of Deal, a Comedy written by Charles Shadwell, Son of the well-known Shadwell,¹ who succeeded Mr. Dryden as Poet-Laureate, and was the Author of many Comedies; in which, tho' there is great Irregularity of Design, and many farcical Incidents, yet there is always a natural Vein of Humour in some Characters, and many Strokes of Genius. Of the Son we cannot say so much: He has farcical Situations, whimsical Turns of Business, and low Buffoonery, without the Father's Justness in the Outlines of his Characters, or his Merit in the Colouring. In short, The Fair Quaker of Deal is a Play unworthy of Drury-Lane Stage, and is totally beneath any further Criticism.

Covent-Garden, Same Day.

For The Wonder, which was mentioned by Mistake in our last, read The Rover again, as it was acted on Tuesday Night. On Thursday, The Rover again! And this present Saturday Night, The Rover again!--Not excepting

The Fair Quaker of Deal, The Rover is the worst Play on the Stage;² and we hope we shall not have Occasion to mention it again for some time, as the Play-Bills inform us that the Tragedy of Douglas is to be acted on Monday next;³ the Beauty and Morality of which, we are informed, will compensate for the Dullness and Ribaldry of The Rover.

¹Thomas Shadwell's modern biographers, Michael W. Alssid (New York, 1967) and Albert Borgman (New York, 1928), mention a son Charles who wrote The Fair Quaker of Deal (1710), but for whom, unlike Thomas Shadwell's other children, there is no record of birth. Except for Alssid's statement (p. 15) that Charles died in Ireland in 1726, no further information is given by either biographer. The D.N.B., sub Thomas Shadwell, claims a younger son Charles, fl. 1710-1720, published a two-volume collection of his plays at Dublin in 1720, and that his first play, The Fair Quaker of Deal was successfully produced at Drury Lane in 1710. The London Stage, Part 2, I, 214, substantiates the success of this comedy.

²For a review of Aphra Behn's comedy see Theatre No. 15.

³Murphy reviews John Home's tragedy in Theatres No. 23 and the second No. 25.

THE LONDON CHRONICLE, March 12-15, 1757.

THE THEATRE. No. 23.

Drury-Lane, March 12, 1757.

This Evening was presented The Stratagem; for some Account of which see one of our former Papers.¹ We shall at present only observe, that whenever Mr. Garrick and Mr. Woodward come together in this Play, the Art of these two Comedians is so collusive, that our Mirth is finely kept up, almost to a Degree of Satiety.² As the Occasion is so fair, we cannot help adding, that we are glad to see so laughable a Comedy advertised again for the Benefit of Mr. Havard, whose intellectual and moral Qualities very justly intitle him to the Favour of the Public.³ An Ode of his Writing, in Commemoration of Shakespear, is set to Music by Dr. Boyce, and will be performed on the same Night;⁴ from which the Audience may, after the Play, deduce this Reflection, That they have been assembled together in the Service of a Man of Genius.

Covent-Garden, Same Day.

Was performed, instead of The Rover again as we

mentioned in our last, a Comedy written by Mr. Cibber, called The Refusal.⁵ We are pleased to find that we have prevailed with the Manager to interrupt the Run of so licentious a Performance as the Rover, and to introduce so good a Comedy as the Refusal, of which we shall speak more hereafter, being in Haste at present to mention a Matter of some Novelty in our next Article from this Theatre.

Drury-Lane, March 14.

This Evening was performed The Chances; for an Account of which we refer our Readers to a former Paper.⁶

Covent-Garden, Same Day.

Was presented, for the first Time, a new Tragedy, intituled, Douglas, to a most numerous and splendid Audience. As this Author writes intirely on the Side of Morality, we cannot conceive why an inflammatory Spirit should have arose against him in his own Country.⁷ It may, however, be some Consolation to him, that from a British Audience he has met with the warmest Testimonials of Approbation, and that he has sent many of them home, if not better Men, at least very sensibly alive to the Loveliness of Virtue. We cannot, at present, pretend to give an exact Critique on this Piece, but a short History of our own Affections, while under his Operation, is in our Power, and that we beg Leave to offer to the Public.

From the opening of the Play, we felt our Passions irresistably seized, and attached to the Subject: Mrs. Woffington, who begins it, breaks into a beautiful Pathos, at once poetical and simple:⁸ As the Story unfolds itself by Degrees the Interest grew stronger; and upon the Introduction of Mr. Barry our Hopes and Fears were agreeably set at Variance.⁹ The Scene in which Mr. Sparks makes his first Appearance seemed to us admirably written, and very finely performed by the Player:¹⁰ The pastoral Simplicity of his Language and the Purity of his Manners were highly pleasing: Our Expectation is well worked up, and Terror and Pity reign in every Breast, till by due Degrees the Discovery is made, when a Tide of Joy breaks in upon us. There is likewise a great deal of Tenderness between the Mother and the Son when she discovers herself to him; and Mr. Barry in the Passage, which succeeds this, entertained his Auditors with some masterly Strokes of Acting. The Catastrophe was likewise very affecting: Hope, Joy, Terror, and Pity, which are the true Tragic Passions, were here agitated to a very high Degree of Emotion. Upon the whole, the Character appeared to us well drawn; the Diction has an easy Strength, no where too rich, generally expressive, often impassioned, and some times sublime. Though the Fable bears a Resemblance to that of Merope, yet the Circumstances are sufficiently varied.¹¹

Mr. Barry acquitted himself well in his Part; Mrs. Woffington convinced us, that she can touch the tender Passions very feelingly, and Mr. Sparks rose greatly above himself by descending, if we may be allowed the Antithesis, from the Fustian of Acting to the simple Workings of Nature. To conclude, we met with a very pathetic Entertainment this Night, and will venture to promise our Readers the same pleasing Melancholy whenever they chuse to see the Tragedy of Douglas.

¹See Theatre No. 1.

²For Woodward see Theatre No. 3, n. 14.

³Murphy's friend William Havard, 1710?-1778, began his stage career in 1730 and remained a popular actor of secondary characters until his retirement in 1769. Thoughtful and intelligent, his understanding and conception of a character too often outstripped his ability to portray him. Though also a playwright, he was known more for his worth as a decent and sensible man than as a performer or writer.

⁴A copy of Havard's ode will be found in Theatre No. 31. This piece seems to have been highly regarded since Christopher Smart mentions its presentation at a meeting of the Shakespeare Club (for which see above, p. 11) in 1756. Sherbo, Smart, p. 107. In the musical world of eighteenth-century England, William Boyce, 1710-1779, ranked with Thomas Arne, and both were second only to Handel.

⁵Colley Cibber's comedy, based on Molière's Les Femmes savantes, was first performed in 1721. For Murphy's assessment of Cibber and his works see Theatre No. 2, n. 8, and Theatres No. 1, 13, and the "Atticus" letter of Nov. 18-21, 1758.

⁶See Theatre No. 3.

⁷For Home's tragedy and the strictures placed on it by the Edinburgh Presbytery see Theatre No. 15, n. 8.

⁸For Mrs. Woffington see Theatre No. 2, n. 7.

⁹For Spranger Barry see Theatre No. 4, n. 9.

¹⁰About Luke Sparks, d. 1769, there is little information. He seems to have been a respectable tragedian. Genest, V, 77, records him at Drury Lane in the 1745-46 season and apparently he retired in 1764. Tate Wilkinson said of his performance in Douglas, "Sparks was approved in Old Norval, but was not more than tolerable." Memoirs, IV, 241.

¹¹David Hume, in the Dedication prefixed to his Four Dissertations (see Theatre No. 15, n. 8.), gives Douglas "Preference to the Merope of Masei and to that of Voltaire, which it resembles in its subject."

THE LONDON CHRONICLE, March 15-17, 1757.

THE THEATRE. No. 24.

Drury-Lane, March 15, 1757.

This Evening was presented Amphitryon, and after
the Farce of The Author, for both which, Vide our
former Papers.¹

Covent-Garden, Same Night.

Was repeated the new Tragedy of Douglas mentioned
our last: we have collected the Opinions of the
Public concerning this Piece, and we find it generally
agree, that a beautiful Simplicity runs through the
whole Composition, and that some of the Scenes are ex-
ceedingly tender and pathetic. We wait the Publication
of the Play before we can add any Thing to our former
remarks,² and shall conclude, that with Pleasure we
have advertised for the Author's Benefit on Thursday
evening, when we make no Doubt that, though the Age in
general is fond of Finery, he will find feeling Hearts
encourage a Writer who dares to imitate the ancient
simplicity, and who, in all his Scenes of Distress,
imitates the native Accents of the Passions.

¹For Amphitryon see Theatre No. 11: for The
Author No. 12.

²See the second Theatre No. 25.

THE LONDON CHRONICLE, March 17-19, 1757.

THE THEATRE. No. 25.

Drury-Lane, March 17, 1757.

Was presented The Careless Husband; for which,
vide one of our former Papers.¹

Covent-Garden, Same Night.

Was acted the new Tragedy of Douglas, for the
benefit of the Author, to a very brilliant and crowded
audience. As this Tragedy is now published, we shall
take an Opportunity next Week to give our Thoughts
relative to the Writing of this Piece.²

¹See Theatre No. 1.

²See the second Theatre No. 25.

THE LONDON CHRONICLE, March 19-22, 1757.

THE THEATRE. No. 24.¹

Drury-Lane, March 19, 1757.

Shakespeare's Comedy, called, Much Ado about Nothing, was performed this Evening. Benedick is one of Mr. Garrick's best Parts in Comedy: All thro' the Part his Pleasantry is inimitable; and, if he had no other Merit in it, would sufficiently recompence his Auditors in the Speech where he first deliberates whether he shall marry Beatrice. His Manner of coming forth from the Arbour, and the Tone of his Voice, when he says, 'This is no Trick,'² etc. is diverting in the highest Degree. His Arguments to reason himself out of his former youthful Resolutions against Marriage, are exquisitely humorous; and they are quite agreeable to the Practice of Mankind in general, who seldom want delusive Fallacies to urge in Behalf of their Passions, when once they are become fond of any Object whatever. Many of the Scenes in this Comedy are both interesting and entertaining, and particularly when Mr. Garrick resolves to give the Challenge,³ his Performance is perhaps equal to any Thing we have seen from this masterly Actor.

Covent-Garden, Same Night.

Was repeated the new Tragedy of Douglas, by Command of his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales. The Success this Play has met with does great Honour to the Author, and likewise to the Patrons he has met with; and it is with Pleasure we have heard that his Royal Highness the Duke ordered an handsome Present for the Writer, who has found Means to touch the Heart with unadorned Simplicity and Tenderness.⁴

Drury-Lane, March 21.

The Tragedy of Jane Shore, written by Nicholas Rowe, Esq: was presented this Evening, for the Benefit of Mrs. Cibber.⁵ This Tragedy, the Author tells us, was intended for an Imitation of Shakespear's Stile and Manner,⁶ but in fact it is no more equal to him, than the Performance of some certain Actors is to our modern Roscius,⁷ whom they pretend to copy. This Play, however, is very far from being void of Merit. Jane Shore, Hastings, and Alicia, are interesting Characters. In the former, Miss Pritchard's Performance, which is all well designed, is prejudiced by the blooming Health which attends her.⁸ Mr. Garrick makes the most of Hastings; but the Author has not afforded him any one Scene sufficiently capital for his powerful Genius. To Mrs. Cibber he has been more liberal, as he has given her Room in the mad Scene for many Strokes, which cannot be

sufficiently admired. There is such a Wildness of Exertion in her Powers, and such lively Description in her Countenance as almost make the Audience afraid the Roof is coming down, when she falls on the Ground, and still seems to shrink lower to avoid the Beam, which her distracted Imagination makes her think is falling upon her. We cannot help expressing our Satisfaction that such a Genius was attended by a polite and crowded Audience, to testify their Gratitude on the above Night for the Pleasure they receive from her, whenever she appears on the Stage in other Parts of the Season.

Covent-Garden, Same Night.

Was presented King Lear, for the Benefit of Mr.

Barry: We shall content ourselves at present with congratulating this Performer, that such a splendid Appearance did Honour to his Merit; and in our next we shall give a Critique on this Performance, and on the Tragedy Douglas.⁹

¹For an explanation of the repetition of numbers above, p. 100.

²II, iii, 228.

³IV, i.

⁴The nature and extent of the Duke's present has obscured; however, it is known that later this year became tutor of the Prince of Wales, afterward King

George III. Alice Edna Gipson, "John Home, A Study of His Life and Works" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1916), p. 22.

⁵Rowe's pathetic tragedy (1714) ranked in popularity during the century with his own Fair Penitent, Otway's The Orphan and Venice Preserv'd, and Congreve's Mourning Bride. For Mrs. Cibber see Theatre No. 4, n. 4.

⁶The title page of the first edition and most subsequent editions said, "Written in Imitation of Shakespear's Style."

⁷Garrick of course. See Theatre No. 3, n. 10.

⁸For Miss Pritchard see Theatre No. 7, n. 11.

⁹He analyzes Douglas in the next but never executes the proposed review of Barry's Lear.

THE LONDON CHRONICLE, March 22-24, 1757.

THE THEATRE. No. 25.¹

Drury-Lane, March 22, 1757.

This Evening was performed a Comedy, called, Rule a Wife and have a Wife, written by Beaumont and Fletcher;² which would afford us ample Scope for Observation, both with respect to the Piece itself, and the Performance of it; but as the Public will expect that we should comply with our Promise of giving a particular Account of Douglas, we must defer what will naturally offer upon this Head, until the next Representation shall afford us another Opportunity.

Covent-Garden, Same Night.

The same Evening Mr. Smith performed the Part of Hamlet, for the first time, in the celebrated Tragedy of that Name, for his own Benefit.³

Remarks on the Tragedy of DOUGLAS.⁴

The dedicatory Letter, prefixed by Mr. Hume to his Four Dissertations, lately publish'd, raised an Expectation, with respect to this Composition, which perhaps has not been intirely gratified.⁵ The very elegant

Author of that Address, whose Knowledge and Taste are indisputable in Subjects of Literature, has formed his Sentiments of dramatic Poetry, from those exquisite Models we have derived from Sophocles and Euripides. In the masterly Productions of those Artists, Simplicity of Design appears the essential Beauty. One Action, of sufficient Importance to command the Attention and attach the Affections of an Audience, is at all Times kept in View, and no subordinate Events are introduced, but what immediately tend to the Completion of the principal Design. From this simple Sketch of the Greek Drama, it will be obvious to the Reader, that a Play conducted upon this Plan, which the most able Critics, from Aristotle down to Brumoy,⁶ have established as the invariable Standard of the tragic Drama, must want the principal Requisite to take hold of the Minds of an English Assembly of Spectators, who have been so long accustomed to be entertained with an amazing Series of Incidents, thrown together often without any Consistency, and seldom with any Regularity of Design. These few Observations will perhaps explain why Douglas has not been received with the same Warmth with which the ingenious Dedicator deservedly speaks of it. In criticising this Tragedy, it will be unnecessary to enter into an Investigation of the Management of the Plot, which would lead us farther than the Limits of this Paper will permit. Let it

suffice to say, that there is an Unity of Design, rendered extremely interesting by a Diversity of Situations, which all lead to one Point, and engage the Heart, without distracting the Attention of the Audience. Lady Randolph, whose Character is finely drawn, opens the Play in a Strain of poetic Melancholy, which marks, in a masterly Manner, the gloomy State of her Mind--

Ye Woods and Wilds, whose melancholy Gloom
 Accords with my Soul's Sadness, and draws forth
 The Voice of Sorrow from my bursting Heart,
 Farewell a while: I will not leave you long;
 For in your Shades I deem some Spirit dwells,
 Who from the chiding Stream, or groaning Oak,
 Still hears, and answers to Matilda's Moan.

O Douglas! Douglas! If departed Ghosts
 Are e'er permitted to review this World,
 Within the Circle of that Wood thou art,
 And with the Passion of Immortals hear'st
 My Lamentation: hear'st thy wretched Wife
 Weep for her Husband slain, her Infant lost
 My Brother's timeless Death I seem to mourn;
 Who perish'd with thee on this fatal Day.
 To thee I lift my Voice; to thee address
 The Plaint which mortal Ear has never heard.
 O disregard me not; though I am call'd
 Another's now, my Heart is wholly thine.⁷

It is not beside the Subject to observe here, that Mrs. Woffington uttered this Speech with most affecting Accents, and in her whole Person displayed an Elegance of Dejection, which has seldom been seen on the Stage.⁸ The amiable Author of Elfrida remarks, that Shakespear is perhaps the only English dramatic Writer, who could unite Sentiment with Passion.⁹ We are inclined to think, this Gentleman will be of Opinion, that Mr. Hume has happily succeeded in this very difficult Task, in the following Passages--

Scarce were they gone, when my stern Sire was told
That the false Stranger was Lord Douglas' Son.
Frantic with Rage, the Baron drew his Sword
And questioned me. Alone, forsaken, faint,
Kneeling beneath his Sword, fault'ring I took
An Oath equivocal, that I ne'er would
Wed one of Douglas' Name. Sincerity
Thou first of Virtues, let no mortal leave
Thy onward Path! altho' the Earth should gape,
And from the Gulf of Hell Destruction cry
To take Dissimulation's winding Way.¹⁰
Alas! I am sore beset! let never Man,
For Sake of Lucre, sin against his Soul!
Eternal Justice is in this most just!
I, Guiltless now, must former Guilt reveal.¹¹

The Discovery of Douglas, by means of a Shepherd, who is taken up as an Assassin, affords perhaps one of the finest Scenes on the Stage. The whole is the Language of Nature, and the Infant's History is developed in the most simple, artless Manner, each Circumstance strengthening the preceding, and preparing the Audience for the important Secret, when mentioning the Incident of the Youth's attacking a desperate Band of Robbers, which Adventure young Norval had before related of himself, puts it beyond all Doubt, that the young Hero can be no other, than Lady Randolph's Son. We do not recollect a Denouement managed with more Art, that is, with less Appearance of it, than the Circumstance we have just pointed out; and think this Part of the Play, may, without any disrespect to Sophocles, be compared to the Management of the Grecian Bard, in his admired Tragedy of Oedipus. Quotations would be endless, should we undertake to point out all the striking Passages in this Play, in which it is observable, that the Author every where speaks the Language of Passion, and is in this Respect very properly compared to Otway, though perhaps the latter sometimes goes out of His Way for poetical Ornaments. How beautiful are the following Lines spoken by Lady Randolph, upon hearing of the Danish Descent.

How many Mothers shall bewail their Sons!

How many Widows weep their Husbands slain!

Ye Dames of Denmark! ev'n for you I feel,
 Who, sadly sitting on the Sea-beat Shore,
 Long look for Lords than never shall return.¹²

Likewise in the following--

In the wild Desart on a Rock he sits,
 Or on some nameless Stream's untrodden Banks,
 And ruminates all Day his dreadful Fate.
 At Times, alas! not in his perfect Mind!
 Holds Dialogues with his lov'd Brother's Ghost;
 And oft each Night forsakes his sullen Couch,
 To make sad Orisons for him he slew.¹³

Nor can I forbear to add--

O! tell me who, and where my Mother is!
 Opprest by a base World, perhaps she bends
 Beneath the Weight of other Ills than Grief;
 And desolate, implores of Heav'n, the Aid
 Her Son should give.¹⁴

The following Sentiment, in the Mouth of Douglas,
 must be sensibly felt by every ingenuous Mind.--

To the Liege-Lord of my dear native Land
 I owe a Subject's Homage: but ev'n him
 And his high Arbitration I'd reject.
 Within my Bosom reigns another Lord;
 Honour, sole Judge, and umpire of itself.¹⁵

The fifth Act opens with a Solemnity equal to
 the first.

Douglas: This is the Place the Centre of the Grove.
 Here stands the Oak, the Monarch of the Wood.
 How sweet and solemn is this midnight Scene!
 The silver Moon, unclouded, holds her Way
 Thro' Skies where I could count each little Star.
 The fanning West-wind scarcely stirs the Leaves;
 The River, rushing o'er its pebbled Bed,
 Imposes Silence with a stillly Sound.
 In such a Place as this at such an Hour,
 If Ancestry can be in aught believ'd.
 Descending Spirits have convers'd with Man,
 And told the Secrets of the World unknown.¹⁶

And, not to trespass on the Patience of the
 Reader, we shall only observe farther, that the Catastro-
 phe is brought about in a natural, tho' unexpected Manner,
 and nothing can be more expressive of the inherent Dig-
 nity of the Hero of the Tragedy, than the Regret, which
 he utters, of not having had an Opportunity of running
 the Career of Fame.

Unknown I die; no Tongue shall speak of me.--
 Some noble Spirits, judging by themselves,
 Many yet conjecture what I might have prov'd,
 And think Life only wanting to my Fame:
 But who shall comfort thee?¹⁷

And now we shall beg Leave to close these Remarks,
 with promising the ingenious Author the universal

Admiration of all true Judges of this Species of Writing, and will venture to assure him, that whatever Anathemas some of his Brethren may pronounce gainst him, the Excommunication will be taken off in the Court of Parnassus.¹⁸

¹For an explanation of the repetition of numbers see above, p. 100.

²Modern scholarship generally ascribes this comedy (1624?) to John Fletcher alone. Of the Beaumont and Fletcher comedies that had been popular through the Restoration, only this one, The Chances, and Wit without Money, had much success in the eighteenth century. William W. Appleton, Beaumont and Fletcher (London, 1946), pp. 70 and 109.

³William Smith, 1730?-1819, made his debut in 1753 under the tutelage of Barry, playing Theodosius in Nathaniel Lee's tragedy by this name to his mentor's Varanes (For a review of these two in Lee's play see Theatre No. 34). His manners, voice, and appearance, helped earn him the appellation of "Gentleman" and made him particularly suited for the heroes of tragedy and the leads in genteel comedy, in which roles he had a distinguished career that lasted until 1788.

⁴See Theatre No. 15, n. 8, and Theatre No. 23.

⁵For David Hume's dedication see Theatre No. 15, n. 8. Among other things, Hume rated the play superior to the Meropes of Voltaire and Masei, commended the play for its "Fire and Spirit," "Tenderness and Simplicity," and said of its author, John Home,: "You possess the true theatric Genius of Shakespear and Otway, refined from the unhappy Barbarism of the one, and Licentiousness of the other."

⁶The Théâtre des Grecs (1730), a three-volume history, translation, and criticism of classical Greek drama by the Jesuit scholar and litterateur, Pierre Brumoy, 1688-1742, was a popular critical work of the period. Mrs. Lennox, with the help of Johnson and others, published an English translation of Brumoy's study in 1759.

⁷I, i, 1-19. In line 14, "timeless" in the sense of untimely.

⁸For Peg Woffington see Theatre No. 2, n. 7.

⁹The author of Elfrida (1752) was the clergyman and minor poet, William Mason, 1724-1797. He made the remark in the third of five prefatory letters to this tragedy in which he attempted to justify the employment of a Sophoclean chorus, an adherence to the unities, and the use of an Anglo-Saxon setting and subject matter.

¹⁰I, i, 189-200.

¹¹III, i, 61-4.

¹²III, i, 301-5.

¹³IV, i, 87-94.

¹⁴IV, i, 169-173.

¹⁵IV, i, 397-401.

¹⁶V, i, 1-12. Line 10: "Aught believed" in the sense of give credence to.

¹⁷V, i, 212-6.

¹⁸Murphy refers to the "Admonition" issued by the Edinburgh Presbytery. See Theatre No. 15, n. 8. The dream vision or mock court of Parnassus in which the modern and ancient writers and philosophers were put into a hierarchy according to what the viewer deemed their respective merits, was a favorite subject of the periodical essayists. See for example Murphy's own GIJ Nos. 4, 51 and 86 (1756).

THE LONDON CHRONICLE, March 24-26, 1757.

THE THEATRE. No. 26.

Drury-Lane, March 24, 1757.

Shakespear's Play, intitl'd, The Winter's Tale, was performed here this Evening, for the Benefit of Mr. Woodward. The Plot of this Play is taken from the old Story of Dorastus and Fawnia.¹ The Poet has introduced a greater Variation of Circumstances in this Piece than is common with him, when he builds his Fable upon the Story-Books or Novels that were then in vogue. Notwithstanding many Improbabilities in the Conduct, there is something that pleases and attaches the Mind very strongly in the several Incidents. The Jealousy of Leontes is somewhat sudden; but as Shakespear was thoroughly acquainted with this Passion (as indeed he was with all our Affections) he here gives us several masterly Strokes of Nature, though it must be observed that the Colouring is sometimes indelicate and coarse.² The Laws of Hospitality are destroyed by this blind Rage; Polixenes King of Bohemia (or, according to Sir Thomas Hanmer, Bythinia, as the former is an inland Kingdom, and the latter a maritime Country, which is necessary from many Incidents

in the Play)³ is obliged to fly to avoid being murdered, and the infant Daughter of Leontes is sent after him for Protection, the jealous Monarch being possessed with a Notion that the Child was not his own.

In Consequence of this Fancy, the Queen Hermione is imprisoned, and afterwards, for her Preservation, reported to be dead. The Loves of Florizel and Perdita, the Daughter of Sicilia, commence sixteen Years after. In order to get over this long Space, Shakespear makes Time a Personage of his Drama, and puts the following Apology into his Mouth:

I that please some, try all, both Joy and Terror
 Of Good and Bad, that mask and unfold Error;
 Now take upon me in the Name of Time
 To use my Wings--Impute it not a Crime
 To me, or my swift Passage, that I slide
 O'er sixteen Years, and leave the Growth untried
 Of that wide Gap--
 --Your Patience this allowing
 I turn my Glass, and give my Scene such growing
 As you had slept between--
 --Imagine me,
 Gentle Spectators, that I now may be
 In fair Bythinia, and remember well
 I mention here a Son o' th' King's, whom Florizel
 I now name to you; and with Speed so pace

To speak of Perdita, now grown in Grace
 Equal with wond'ring--⁴

In the Days of our great Poet, the Unities of the Drama were very little understood: Romances and Books of Chivalry were the Taste of the Times. Hence Regularity of Design was not looked for by an Audience, and it is no Wonder, therefore, if Shakespear embraced a fashionable Error, which gave rise to a Variety of Incidents, and well agreed with his unbounded Genius. The Pastoral Scenes throughout this Play, are wrought with a masterly Hand. How naturally is the old Shepherd introduced in the Storm. "They have frightened away (says he) two of my Sheep, which I fear the Wolf will sooner find than the Master; if any where I find them, 'tis by the Sea-Side brouzing of Ivy."⁵--The Description of the Shipwreck in the Mouth of his Son the Clown, is admirably picturesque. "I would you did but see how it chafes, how it rages, how it takes up the Shore,--but that's not to the Point--Oh! the most piteous Cry of the poor Souls--Sometimes to see 'em, and not to see 'em--now the Ship boring the Moon with her Mainmast, and anon swallowed with Yeast and Froth, etc."⁶--The Ship boring the Moon with her Mast is finely natural from an untutor'd Rustic: the Fate of Antigonus, who was charged with the Child of Leontes, is well told by the same Person. "To see how the Bear tore out his Shoulder-Bone; how he cried to me

for Help, and said his Name was Antigonus, a Nobleman."⁷

The Loves of Florizel and Perdita, form a Subordinate Plot, which is productive of many beautiful and entertaining Scenes: By Means of their Affection we are plainly led on to the Discovery of Perdita's being Leontes' Daughter. It were to be wished this had been effected without changing the Scene again into Sicilia: But Space as well as Time are annihilated when Shakespear pleases, and the Delusion is so pleasing that we are at all Times ready to give into it. The Relation given to Autolycus of the Manner how the Shepherd found the Bundle, artfully prepares us for the Denouement: Circumstance rises upon Circumstance; "The Mantle of Queen Hermione-- Her Jewel about the Neck of it--the Letters of Antigonus found with it, etc."⁸ The subsequent Account of the Meeting of Polixenis and Leontes is exquisitely tender, and we naturally acquiesce in their Conviction: "Leontes being ready to leap out of himself for Joy of his found Daughter, as if that Joy were now become a Loss, cries-- Oh thy Mother! thy Mother!--then asks Bohemia Forgiveness, then embraces his Son-in Law; then again worries he his Daughter with clasping* her."⁹ We could wish that the Discovery of Hermione was unfolded by Means as natural and probable: Her having lived sequestered for many Years might be allowed, if she did not stand for a Statue at last. This Circumstance is certainly childish, as is

likewise the pretended Revival of her by Musick. Had Hermione been discovered to us in a rational Manner, the Close would have been pathetic, whereas at present, notwithstanding many Strokes of fine Writing, Reason operates too strongly against the Incident, and our Passions subside into Calmness and Inactivity. We shall conclude this long Paragraph with two Remarks: 1st, That Mr. Garrick has judiciously altered this Play for Representation, as it is possible that extended into five Acts the Improbabilities and Changes of Place would have tired, whereas at present the whole is more compact, Absurdities are retrenched, and our Attention is alive throughout.¹⁰

2dly, As the Circumstances of the Infant's being taken up with jewels about it; of the Person who had Care of the Child being lost, and the subsequent Discovery by Means of those Jewels, have a palpable Resemblance to the Incident in the Tragedy of Douglas, it may be observed that the Author of that Piece has been happy in a beautiful Coincidence of Thought, or has successfully kept his Eye on Shakespear's Passage, which he has converted to his own Use, and embellished with many elegant Touches of his own.¹¹

Covent-Garden, Same Night.

Was presented The Fair Penitent, for the Benefit of Mrs. Woffington, who appeared, for the first Time, in

the Character of Lothario. The Interest, which the Heart naturally takes in the Business of this Play, was weakened by our being conscious that a Woman was playing the Part; but we must say that Mrs. Woffington takes off her Hat, draws her Sword, fights and dies with such an elegant Gallantry, that she is the prettiest Fellow on the Stage.¹²

*Clipping her is the common reading; we have ventured to change it for a Word that gives a clearer Idea, and may possibly have been altered by an hasty Compositor.¹³

¹See Lennox, Shakespear, II, 71.

²Though Murphy never questions the validity of Mrs. Lennox's information concerning Shakespeare's sources, he quite often, as he does here, disagrees with her evaluation of how effectively Shakespeare used these sources. In the foregoing comments, Murphy appears to be responding to Mrs. Lennox's assertions that Shakespeare rendered the original Dorastus and Fawnia story even more "absurd and ridiculous" (II, 75), and that in regard to the suddenness of Leontes' jealousy, "The Legerdemain, who shews you a Tree that buds Blossoms and bears ripe Fruit in the Space of five Minutes, does not put so great a Cheat on the Senses, as Shakespear does on the Understanding." (II, 77).

³Sir Thomas Hanmer, 1677-1746, after an important and successful political career, edited the first Oxford edition of Shakespeare (1743-44). However, I suspect that Murphy's information came from Shakespear Illustrated (II, 87) rather than Hanmer's edition: "Sir Thomas Hanmer, in his Edition of Shakespear, has this Note at the Beginning of the Winter's Tale. This Country, here called Bithynia, hath in all former Editions been printed Bohemia, an inland Kingdom,..."

⁴For "mask and unfold" read "makes and unfolds"; for "Bythinia" read "Bohemia." IV, i, 1-7, 15-17, 19-25.

⁵Read "scar'd" for "frighted," "have" for "find," and "best sheep." III, iii, 65-8.

⁶III, iii, 89-94.

⁷III, iii, 96-8.

⁸V, ii, 36-8.

⁹For "Leontes" read "Our King." V, ii, 53-9.

¹⁰This alteration is not Garrick's Florizel and Perdita, an afterpiece derived from The Winter's Tale sometime early in the decade but neither published nor played until the 1758-59 season. The London Stage, Part 4, II, 521, lists a Jan. 21, 1756 performance of The Winter's Tale in "3 acts" as "Alter'd by Garrick." Since the biographers do not list this work among Garrick's adaptations, and since the quotations given by Murphy are to be found in the original, I assume that Garrick's revisions in this case were simply a matter of cutting rather than rewriting.

¹¹In Home's tragedy, III, i, 126-57, Norval, the Shepherd's son, is revealed to be the heir, Douglas, by the jewels found with him as an infant.

¹²For Mrs. Woffington see Theatre No. 2, n. 7. She usually excelled in roles of this type; in Theatre No. 28 Murphy praises highly her Sir Harry Wildair.

¹³Modern editions choose "clipping her."

THE LONDON CHRONICLE, March 26-29, 1757.

THE THEATRE. No. 27.

Drury-Lane, March 26, 1757.

The Tragedy of Zara, was presented this Evening for the Benefit of Mr. Mossop; and after the Play Mr. Garrick performed the Character of Lord Chalkstone in Lethe. As both these Pieces have been already sufficiently taken Notice of by us in a former Paper, we shall not say any Thing further of them at present.¹ We shall content ourselves with expressing our Satisfaction at the uncommonly numerous and splendid Appearance of Ladies and Gentlemen, who attended this excellent Actor in the above Night. As he had so many Witnesses of his Merit, we need not here follow him through the several Scenes, in which his Abilities were highly conspicuous; it will suffice in general to say, and every one, who was present, will confirm our Assertion, that Mr. Mossop has formed to himself just Ideas of the Character of Osman, and that he not only expresses the Sentiments with very fine Powers of Voice, but that he very elegantly varies the Tones, observing an artful and judicious Gradation in the Rise and Fall of every Passion.² This, in this

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rformer, is a Sacrifice to Judgment, because we are
 sure, that if he chose indiscriminately to exert those
 strong Powers, which are peculiar to him, the Multitude
 would be more pleased with him; whereas in his present
 manner, in many Situations of the Play, he lays no Claim
 to our Applause from an Exertion of Voice, but, fore-
 going that great Advantage, he attaches himself wholly
 to Nature, and he entirely succeeds by suppressed Tones,
 and by sensible and delicate Strokes of Art. This we
 are proud to have an Opportunity of mentioning, because
 we have lately had the Misfortune of perusing an invidi-
 ous Libel, written with worse than Cibberian Forehead
 and Cibberian Brain, in which this Gentleman is injuri-
 ously calumniated.³ It is very visible, that the Writer
 of this defamatory Book is not an Examiner Emunctae naris,
 but a Critic nullius naris;⁴ for surely, if he had not
 lost those Organs of Sensation, he would never be able
 to endure the Smell of all the Filth he has raked to-
 gether. This notable Writer has abused Mr. Garrick, and
 bestowed very high Encomiums upon a squinting, hemming,
 coughing, spitting Actor, who, it may very fairly be
 presumed, cannot at this Day please any one Man in England
 but himself. While Mr. Mossop has the Honour of such
 Company at his Benefit, and the additional Satisfaction
 of sending them home with true and rational Delight, he
 need not suffer a Moment's Disquietude from the malevolent

Criticisms of a Man, who cannot make a single Remark upon the Profession of an Actor, more than the Commonplace Chat, which he has gleaned up in Coffeehouse Circles, where he still

--Takes the foremost Place,

And thrusts his Person full into your Face;⁵
 who does not understand the common Rudiments of Grammar, not to mention the impoverished Sterility of Sentiment, and the more than Gothic Barbarism of his Phraseology. When so inimitable a Tragedian as our modern Roscius, who chalked out the Paths of Nature for all his Contemporaries, is vilified by this Writer, it is an Honour to Mr. Mossop to partake of the Scurrility; and, like one of Mr. Bayes's Kings of Brentford, he may walk off the Stage, proud to smell at the same Nosegay with Mr. Garrick.⁶

Covent-Garden, Same Night.

Was performed the Tragedy of Macbeth, for the Benefit of Mrs. Gregory, whom the present Writer is sorry he could not attend; but from the Accounts he has heard of her, he longs much to see her Performance of Lady Macbeth, that he may have an Opportunity of doing Justice to the many Strokes of Genius, which, he is well informed, she displayed in this Character.⁷

Drury-Lane, 28th.

Was performed The Wonder, and the Farce of The Author, for the Benefit of that admirable Comedian Mrs. Clive. Both the said Pieces have been mentioned by us in a former Paper.⁸

Covent-Garden, Same Night.

The Tragedy of Alexander, for the Benefit of Miss Nossiter. For an Account of this Play vide a former Paper.⁹

¹For Zara see Theatre No. 4; for Lethe No. 5.

²For Mossop see Theatre No. 5, n. 12, and the comments on his acting in Theatres No. 14 and 34.

³The reference is to the disreputable Theophilus Cibber, 1703-1758, son of Colley Cibber, and himself an actor and sometime-manager. Despite an unattractive appearance and a shrill voice, he was a very talented performer with an intimate knowledge of stage business. His abilities, however, were vitiated by a personal obnoxiousness and by extravagance which led him to engage constantly in churlish actions in order to maintain himself. The "libel" that Murphy alludes to is obscure. Since the Dissertations of 1756 in which he attacked Garrick, Cibber apparently published a further attack which included Mossop (see Dunbar, Murphy, p. 306). Genest, IV, 460-1, mentions a "pamphlet called the Theatrical Examiner" published in 1757 which effusively praises Theophilus Cibber's acting. This would correspond with Murphy's accusation below that Cibber "bestowed very high encomiums upon a hemming, coughing, spitting actor," which obviously refers to Cibber himself. "...Still, still remain/Cibberian forehead, and Cibberian brain." Pope, Dunciad (B), I, 217-18.

⁴Not an Examiner with a keen nose, i.e., a correct taste or nice discernment, but a critic with no taste at all, literally--no nose. See Horace, Satires, I, iv, 8, "Facetus, emunctae naris, durus componere versus." The

punning on the word nose and Murphy's reference to Cibber's having lost this organ may be more than metaphorical. None of the biographers that I have been able to examine mentions Cibber's lack of a nose or mentions venereal disease, but in Murphy's The Spouter, or Triple Revenge, in which Cibber is satirized in the figure of squintey'd Ancient Pistol, Pistol has his artificial nose and teeth on a table before him.

⁵Mark first that Youth who takes the foremost place,
And thrusts his person full into your face.
With all thy Father's virtues blest, be born!
And a new Cibber shall the stage adorn. Pope,
Dunciad (B), III, 139-42.

⁶In Villiers' burlesque of heroic tragedy, The Rehearsal (V, i), most of the characters in Bayes' play, including the Kings of Brentford, are killed in a gigantic battle. When Bayes is asked, "how shall all these dead men go off?" He answers, "Go off! why as they came on--upon their legs."

⁷For Mrs. Gregory see Theatre No. 9, n. 8.

⁸For The Wonder see Theatre No. 6; for The Author No. 12.

⁹The reference is to Nathaniel Lee's Rival Queens in which Alexander is the main figure. See Theatre No. 11.

THE LONDON CHRONICLE, March 29-31, 1757.

THE THEATRE. No. 28.

Drury-Lane, March 29, 1757.

The Tragedy of The Mourning Bride, already mentioned in a former Paper, was presented here this Evening.¹ The three capital Characters of this Play are well performed. The haughty, resentful, and tender Spirit of Zara, and the filial Piety, the disguised Heroism, and conjugal Love of Osmyn, are justly represented by Mrs. Pritchard and Mr. Mossop. The heartfelt Sorrow of the mourning Bride is elegantly exhibited by Miss Macklin, whose Grief is extreamly becoming all through the Play; and in the Scene where in a Distraction of Sorrow she supplicates for her Husband's Life, and thereby makes the Discovery that Osmyn is Alphonso, the Accents of her Affliction are so piercing, and her Distress so exquisite, that Tears immediately moisten every Eye, and we feel Prognostics of that Power which she is likely to have in many of the tenderly-impassioned Characters in Tragedy.² As Mr. Garrick and this Actress are to appear together in the Parts of Lord and Lady Townly next Saturday,³ for her own Benefit, we promise ourselves an agreeable

Entertainment; and make no doubt but she will then receive a very ample Proof of the Sense the Town has of her rising Merit in her Profession.

Covent-Garden, Same Night.

Was performed, for the Benefit of Mr. Ryan, Mr. Farquhar's Comedy, called, The Constant Couple; or, A Trip to the Jubilee, produced for the first Time in the Year 1700.⁴ The Public are highly indebted to Mrs. Woffington for the Preservation of this Character, which would otherwise be lost to the Stage, as not one of our Comedians seems qualified to undertake this Part, the more especially as the Memory of Mr. Wilks is not intirely worn out of People's Minds.⁵ She is certainly the only one fit to represent the fine Gentleman on our Stage at present; and undoubtedly she supports it throughout with great Spirit.⁶ The Part is finely imagined, gay, frolicksome, and airy; whenever he enters, the Stage is instantly livened, and the Business he is employed in is such as entertains, though it cannot be said to interest us very longly. The Author has not inlisted himself in the use of Virtue, nor has he endeavoured, any where, to press a proper Moral on the Minds of his Auditors. Scenes in which the two Clinchers are introduced are farcical, and should not be admitted within the Province of Comedy.⁷ Beau Clincher is not a fit Object for

the Raillery of so sprightly a Fellow as Sir Harry, and his Follies are almost too absurd to make us believe they ever had a real Existence: According to the Custom of this Writer the Dialogue frequently dwindles into frivolous Chit-chat; but his Plays in general are so light and pleasant, that we are always highly entertained with them, though he does not offer to our Understandings the Sense and Wit of a Wycherley and Congreve.

¹For Congreve's popular tragedy see Theatre
No. 3.

²For Maria Macklin see Theatre No. 6, n. 6.

³Characters in Colley Cibber and Sir John Vanbrugh's The Provoked Husband. See Theatres No. 13 and 30.

⁴This comedy was first acted in November, 1699. Rothstein, Farguhar, p. 19. Lacy Ryan, 1694?-1760, may have begun his stage career as early as 1710 and he continued to perform regularly until close to his death in 1760. In the 1750's he was one of the last proponents of the "exaggerated" style. Though never in the first rank of actors, for many years he was highly esteemed in the secondary characters of tragedy and in some comic roles.

⁵For Robert Wilks, the inimitable Sir Harry Wildair of the first quarter of the century, see Theatre No. 3, n. 9. For Peg Woffington see Theatre No. 2, n. 7.

⁶James Lynch has pointed out that, "so completely was she identified with the part of the fine gentleman that the presence of the play [The Constant Couple] in the repertory of a theatre is a certain indication that Mrs. Woffington was a member of the company at the time." Box, Pit and Gallery, p. 147.

⁷For Murphy's distinctions between comedy and farce see above, p. 85.

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THE LONDON CHRONICLE, March 31-April 2, 1757.

THE THEATRE. No. 29.

Drury-Lane, March 31, 1757.

This Evening was performed, to one of the most numerous and polite Audiences that have been seen this Season (for the Benefit of Mr. Beard)¹ Ben Jonson's Comedy, called, Every Man in his Humour. If we consider that this Piece was exhibited in the Year 1598, being near 160 Years ago, it must be allowed that it is a Proof of an uncommon Genius to entertain us at this Time of Day with Ideas and Manners totally obliterated. It shews that the Painter's Pencil must have been faithful to Nature, otherwise we should hardly please ourselves, at present, with Portraits whose Originals are no more; for, excepting the Picture of Jealousy in the Drawing of Kately, there is not one Personage in the Whole Groupe known to our modern Critics. Besides, the Business lies so much in what we call middle Life, or perhaps low Life, and in Parts of the Town disgusting to People of Fashion, such as the Old Jewry, Lothbury, etc. that nothing but the strong Colouring of old Ben could support the Piece. It is worth observing that the Scene of this Play was at

first fixed in Italy, and the Names of the Dramatis Personae were exotic, such as Lorenzo de Pazzai senior, Lorenzo junior, Thorello, etc.² But our Author's Discernment soon perceived the Absurdity of giving a foreign Drapery to English Personages, and exhibiting the Manners of Cheapside on the Rialto. He therefore, by a poetical Act of Parliament, changed their Names, and fixed their Residence in their own Country. Though there remains still, as is judiciously observed by the ingenious Mr. Whalley in his late Edition of this Author, a very remarkable Absurdity. Wellbred talks of Kitely's Cloaths and Wine being poisoned; which might be a good Allusion to Italian Manners, and accordingly it was eagerly caught at by Thorello, who instantly says, "O me! I remember my Wife drank to me last, and changed the Cup, and bade me wear this cursed Suit To-day." But certainly this Speech should not remain in the Mouth of Kitely, no such Custom being known in this Country. "Had Jonson recollected (says Mr. Whalley with great Judgment,) it is probable he would have varied the Thought, to adapt it more consistently to the Genius and Manners of the Speaker."³ It may not be improper to take Notice, that according to the modern Acceptation of the Word Humour, this Piece does not by any Means answer the Title.⁴ A Critic of these Days would naturally expect a Set of Humourists, or Men deeply tinged with Habits and Oddities

discolouring their whole Conduct; instead of which we have but one Character of that Cast, which is Kitley; Old Knowell having no peculiar Mark; his Son and Wellbred being merely young Fellows upon Town; Stephen and Matthew two contemptible Half-fools; and in short, all the rest, excepting Bobadill and Brainworm having no distinguishing Characteristic. Bobadill's Oddities are not strong enough to denominate him an Humourist; he has indeed a ridiculous Affectation of Courage and military Skill; and when he takes a Kicking, he affords us a very laughable Contrast. Brainworm is an impudent notable Fellow, and diverts by the various Appearances he assumes: And Justice Clement is an hearty chearful old Fellow, but has no particular Bias to the Gratification of any prevailing Humour, or whimsical Turn of Mind. The Poet has two Passages, one in this Play, and the other in Every Man out of his Humour, which may serve to inform us of what he intended in the Title.

Cob. Nay, I have my Rheum, and I can be angry as well as another, Sir.

Cash. Thy Rheum Cob?--thy Humour, thy Humour!--thou mistak'st--

Cob. Humour!--what is that Humour?--Some rare Thing, I warrant--

Cash. Marry, I'll tell thee, Cob--it is a Gentleman-like Monster, bred in the special Gallantry of our Time by Affectation, and fed by Folly.

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Cob. How? must it be fed?

Cash. Oh! ay;--Humour is nothing if it be not fed. Didst thou never hear that? it's a common Phrase, feed my Humour--⁵

In the Play called Every Man out of his Humour, he hath the following Passage--

--When some one peculiar Quality
Doth so possess a Man, that it doth draw
All his Affects, his Spirits, and his Powers,
In their Constructions, all to run one Way;
This may be truly said to be a Humour.⁶

In this latter Passage the Author shews us that he had formed an exact Idea of Humour in the strict Sense of the Word: But we apprehend, when he called the Play now before us Every Man in his Humour, he meant to be understood in the former Sense, and intended to shew us a Set of Men following their Affectations. What was usually called Manners in a Play began now, says the above-mentioned ingenious Editor, to be called Humours; the Word was new, and the Use or rather Abuse of it was excessive.⁷ We should therefore be inclined to think that Ben Jonson took Advantage of a Phrase in Vogue, and intended merely an Exhibition of Manners or Humours in the loose Sense of the Word, as it was commonly used; and not a Picture of People under the Operation of one strong Foible, not vainly assumed out of Levity, or imitative

Folly, but rooted in the Mind, and engrossing all their Thoughts. Kately indeed is a Character of this latter Class, and his Spirits and Powers all run one Way, which may be said to be a Humour. This much we thought proper to remark concerning the general Idea of the Manners and Characters of this Play. The main Action turns on the Jealousy of Kately: To shew this Foible in ridiculous Appearances, and to hold up a Mirror, where it may see itself, is the Poet's principal Scope; though all the other Characters are busy in their own separate Walks, and have their own subordinate Pursuits. How far they all conduce to forward the chief Business, and how they are blended together, so as to form one coherent and entire whole, shall be our Enquiry in our next Paper; when we shall incidentally animadvert on the Sentiment and Diction, and shall give our Opinion of the acting of this Piece; their being Matters that would lead us beyond the Bounds of these occasional Criticisms, were we to pursue them further at present.

Covent-Garden, Same Night.

The Mourning Bride was acted for the Benefit of Mr. Sparks, who was amply requited on this Occasion for his just Performance in the Character of Norval the Shepherd.⁸ Mrs. Gregory is inferior to Nobody in the Part of Zara:⁹ Her Person and Deportment are suitable to the Character,

and in one Particular she seems to excell her Rivals;
 viz. In her Manner of uttering the ironical Sarcasms of
 Zara, which she delivers with a painful Smile, and a Kind
 of mortified Pride, without bordering upon the Regions of
 Comedy. Mrs. Bellamy, who has been withheld from us by
 Indisposition all this Winter, made a very elegant Appear-
 ance in Almeria, and made all who heard and beheld her,
 sensible that the Stage will lose in her one of its most
 beautiful Ornaments.¹⁰ Mr. Barry is particularly fine
 in the Character of Osmyn:¹¹ His Figure is striking on
 his first Appearance; his Recognition of Almeria is ex-
 quisitely tender and rapturous: His Impetuosity is
 amazing, when he imagines himself at the Head of his
 Troups; and when he says,

Then shall I smear these Walls with Blood,
 Disfigure and dash my Face, etc.

And a little after,

Then Garcia shall die panting on thy Bosom, etc.¹²

He delivers himself with such a Vehemence of Love and
 Sorrow, and such a tender Outrage of Voice, as must
 alarm the whole Audience. Upon the whole, we think Mr.
 Barry appears to so great an Advantage in this Character,
 that we could wish he would look out for more Parts of
 the same Cast, in which he will be always sure to add to
 his Reputation, and to the Entertainment of the Public.

¹John Beard, 1717?-1791, "was one of the most eminent English singers and the first to become a leading vocalist at a time when castrati were singing the leading male (and sometimes female) parts in opera." Groves Dictionary of Music and Musicians, sub Beard. In 1759 he married John Rich's daughter, and upon Rich's death in 1761 he became manager and proprietor of Covent Garden, a position he maintained until 1767 when he sold the Patent and retired.

²In the preface to Whalley's edition of Jonson, I, ix-x, the Italian Dramatis Personae of the 1601 quarto were compared with the English characters and setting of the 1616 folio.

³Whalley, I, xi-xii. For Whalley, and Murphy's use of his edition see Theatre No. 20, n. 8.

⁴For Murphy's concept of "humour" see above, pp. 82-84.

⁵Between "Humour!" and "what is" read "mack, I think it be so indeed;" Every Man in his Humour, III, ii.

⁶These lines are spoken in a short dialogue following "the second sounding" or music, and precede Act I.

⁷Whalley, I, 145, n. 4.

⁸For Congreve's tragedy see Theatre No. 3; for Luke Sparks see No. 23, n. 10. Norval was his role in Douglas that Murphy praised in No. 23.

⁹For Mrs. Gregory see Theatre No. 9, n. 8.

¹⁰Though Georgeanne Bellamy, 1731?-1788, seems to have lacked the professional competence of the great actresses of the era, her beauty, personal magnetism, and a continual public interest in her private life, made her one of the most popular performers of the day, rivalling Mrs. Cibber in the heroines of tragedy.

¹¹For Spranger Barry see Theatre No. 4, n. 9.

¹²Read "will" for "shall," "dash my/Disfigur'd face," and "lie" for "die." III, i, 350-1, and 358.

THE LONDON CHRONICLE, April 2-5, 1757.

THE THEATRE. No. 30.

Drury-Lane, April 2, 1757.

Sir John Vanbrugh's and Mr. Cibber's Comedy, called The Provoked Husband, was presented this Evening for the Benefit of Miss Macklin.¹ Lord Townly, who has been indisposed for some Years past, was, we hear, so well recovered, as to see Company that Night.² How his Lordship looked, or whether he is in Danger of a Relapse, we cannot take upon us to say, not having been present on the above Occasion. It is indeed, reported, that Betts run high, and he is already pitted against some other theatrical Peers:³ Of this important Matter our Readers shall be sure to have the earliest Intelligence, whenever his Lordship appears in Public again.

Covent-Garden, Same Night.

Was presented the Tragedy of Douglas, being the fourth Night, for an Account of which, vide two of our former Papers.⁴

Continuation of Remarks on Every Man in his Humour.⁵

Mr. Dryden has somewhere compared a well-wrought Comedy to a Country Dance, where two or more lead off, the rest fall in by Degrees, till they all mingle in the sprightly Tumult; then they separate into several petty Divisions; detached Parties are made from the main Body, and at length they all meet together again, and form one entire harmonious Movement.⁶ This Remark we think perfectly applicable to the Play now under Examination: We have already mentioned the principal Personages of the Piece, with a short Account of their Manners or Humours. How exquisite is the Poet's Skill in grouping these together! While each Person has his own By-Concerns, he helps forward the main Action, and they are all brought together, and made acquainted with each other by Means probable and natural. Perhaps no Writer had greater Art in the Conduct of his Plots than Johnson: He is always sure to prepare us for every Character worthy our Notice, and this he does, quasi aliud agens,⁷ as if minding other Business, in the Course of which we receive accidental Notices of the Person, who is afterwards to appear; and thus our Expectation is raised before we see him engaged in any Scene of Action. Old Knowell opens this Play, and the Letter from Wellbred, who dives⁸ in Kitely's Family, to young Knowell, gives us, casually as it were, a further Insight into the Business: It promises us more new

Characters, and the suburb Humour of Master Stephen is likely to be entertaining, when contrasted by the City Fop. Then again, how judiciously is Bobadil described, and after the Account of his peculiar Oaths and assumed Valour, his mean Condition is nicely touched by his Landlord's saying, 'He owes me forty Shillings, my Wife lent him out of her Purse by Sixpence a Time.'⁹ Bobadil's Affectation is finely kept up, and we find too that he is one of Wellbred's Rioters; and he likewise prepares us for the Character of Downright: We are thus let into a Knowledge of all the Dramatis Personae, except Kately, whose Jealousy being of a secret Nature, that Matter could only come from himself. And how finely is this developed! His Fear of being known to be jealous acquaints us with it; and Wellbred's Followers give Occasion to all his Suspicions. It is observable that Kately and Othello complain of an Head-ach, when first their Wives come to them, amidst their Suspicions.¹⁰ The Part Brainworm takes in thwarting Old Knowell's Purposes, is diverting, and serves to puzzle Matters till the Business is worked up to a Crisis, which happens from the Rendezvous of Wellbred's Revellers at Kately's House. Then, in order to favour their separate Schemes, how artfully is it contrived that Brainworm should send Old Knowell to Cob's (a suspected House)¹¹ in Quest of his Son, and that Wellbred should send Kately in Quest of his Wife,

and the Wife in Search of her Husband, to the same Place; which occasions their being all brought before Justice Clement, for whom we have been sufficiently prepared during the preceding Parts of the Play. Through Brainworm it likewise happens that Bobadil and Downright meet at the Justice's, where every thing being cleared up, Wellbred, Young Knowell, and Kately's Sister, are sent for to the Tavern, then called the Windmill, which then stood, as Mr. Whalley tells us in a Note, at the Corner of the Old Jewry towards Lothbury.¹² Thus very artificially all Parties are brought together; the Denouement is skilfully made out; Kately is convinced of his Error, and the jolly Temper of the old Justice prevails on them to conclude the Evening in Chearfulness and Good humour.

If the Limits of our Paper would permit, we could with Pleasure review separately the Characters of Kately and Bobadil, the two conspicuous Figures in this Piece; but this perhaps is unnecessary, as they are both so well performed by Mr. Garrick and Mr. Woodward.¹³ The latter, in our Opinion, never conceived a Character better than that of Bobadil, who is the best Braggadocio on the Stage; his Assurance has a Mixture of Modesty, and is heightened by it: While he pretends to be a consummate Master of every Branch of military Knowledge as well as Courage, he protests he has only some small Rudiments of the Science, 'as to know his Distance or so.'--When he is

sure his Friends will prevent Mischief, he begs them to let his Enemy come on with 'I won't kill him,' and when at last he takes a Beating, 'he is planet-struck, fascinated, etc.'¹⁴--All this Mr. Woodward performs with such a Reserve and Gravity, and such a judicious Jeu de Theatre, that he is justly a Favourite with the Audience all through the Piece. Were we to examine Kately we should find the Suspicious Husband to be in some Measure copied from it:¹⁵ The Scenes where both those Characters are tempted to confer with their own Domestics, and are yet afraid to do it, and then continue about it and about it, palpably resemble each other. Were we to give the Preference to either, we should declare the modern to have lopped Excrescences, and to have therefore rendered his Scene a juster Imitation of Nature, where there is nothing too often touched nor nothing overdone. But the former has the Advantage of Mr. Garrick's Performance; in this Actor every Thing has Manners, every Thing has real Life, and whatever his Author may have done, he does not any where exceed the natural Workings of Jealousy. But this Disquisition must be adjourned till he performs this Part again, when we shall trace Mr. Woodward and Mr. Garrick through all their various Shapes in this justly admired Comedy.

¹For this comedy see Theatres No. 13 and 28; for Maria Macklin see No. 6, n. 6.

²The Bills for this performance explain the allusion: "Lord Townly-Garrick, 1st time for 10 years; Lady Townly-Miss Macklin 1st time in the part here." London Stage, Part 4, II, 590.

³Both theatres were presenting the play this season and at the other house Spranger Barry usually played Lord Townly.

⁴See Theatres No. 23 and the second No. 25.

⁵See Theatre No. 29.

⁶Dryden makes this comparison not in regard to comedy but to versification in drama. "How comes this confederacy [having a second speaker supply the last half of a verse begun by another] to be more displeasing to you, than in a dance which is well contrived? You see there the united design of many persons to make up one figure: after they have separated themselves in many petty divisions, they rejoin one by one into a gross: the confederacy is plain amongst them, for chance could never produce anything so beautiful; and yet there is nothing in it, that shocks your sight." Essay of Dramatic Poesy, in Essays of John Dryden, ed. W. P. Ker (Oxford, 1900), I, 103.

⁷Since I find no particular source for this Latin phrase, Murphy's own translation, "as if minding other Business," best captures the intended sense.

⁸Though Sherbo, New Essays (p. 194, n. 38) records two other peculiar uses of this word in Murphy's Enter-tainer, in both "dive" can be read in the sense of "immerse." Here I suspect a misprint for "lives" since Wellbred resides with Kitley.

⁹I, iv.

¹⁰"I have a pain upon my forehead here." Othello, III, iii, 284.

¹¹Wrongly suspected of being a bawdy house, or, at best, a place of assignation.

¹²For Peter Whalley and his edition of Jonson see Theatre No. 20, n. 8.

¹³For Henry Woodward see Theatre No. 3, n. 14. Bobadil was one of his great roles.

¹⁴I, v; IV, ii; IV, vii.

¹⁵Murphy mentioned this influence in a review of Hoadly's play (Theatre No. 10), and in the second Theatre No. 30 he compares the two works.

THE LONDON CHRONICLE, April 5-7, 1757.

THE THEATRE. No. 30.¹

As there have been no public Representations at either of our Theatres, since our last Paper, we shall endeavour to amuse our Readers, for the present, with an Examen of the Character of The Suspicious Husband:² We shall remark the distinguishing Features; how they are touched by the Hand of the ingenious Artist; where he has kept his Eye on the Portrait of Jonson;³ where his Colouring is feebler; and where the Traits are more delicate; for finely delicate they often are. The Suspicious Husband has this Advantage over Kitely, that he is lifted above him into a genteeler Sphere of Life. Mr. Strictland is not a Dealer in Grograms,⁴ but we find is just returned from Bath, and has politer Connections in Life than Kitely, which undoubtedly gives him more Importance, inasmuch as the Concerns of a Gentleman always attract more Attention than a Tradesman or a Mechanic. His Jealousy is not occasioned by a Resort of a ridiculous Bully and Set of Drivellers, to his House, but by the Gaieties of a Coquette. He dreads his Wife's having a female Friend. "Clarinda (says he) nor e'er a Rake of

Fashion in England, shall live in my Family, to debauch it.--No two of you can never be an Hour by yourselves, but one or both are worse for it."⁵ Hinc illae lacrymae.⁶

Hence the Cause of his Suspicions; which is at once a nice Stroke of Satyr, and, while it may be allowed to disturb a Temper inclined to Jealousy, it does not entirely justify the Suspicion, as when Debauchees and Rioters frequent a Man's House, which is the Case of Kitley. Both Poets meant to ridicule groundless Suspicions; and surely the modern Author has imagined this Part of the Story better than his Predecessor. The Scene in which Mr. Strictland tempts the Servant is evidently copied; but even here one Circumstance is altered for the better, and gives a beautiful Heightening to the Portrait. Instead of tampering with a Man, he has artfully substituted a Maid Servant, which gives Occasion to this elegant Stroke: "No, she is a Woman, and it is the highest Imprudence to trust her."⁷ Then he shifts about to his Man Tester; and here again his bad Opinion of the Women very artfully recurs: "I like his Simplicity well--But will not his Simplicity expose him the more to Lucetta's Cunning."⁸ Then he veers about again, and thinks he had better trust Lucetta at once; but she may reveal it to his Wife; and so he breaks into the same Incertitude, without discovering the least Hint of what is lurking in his Mind to either of his Servants. These

Touches shew a fine Sense of Humour, and of Character. Nothing can be more beautiful than the Accident of Ranger's Hat being left in the Room; and perhaps a Trifle of that Sort was never wrought up into more Pleasantry. The Embaras is indeed highly diverting, and very artificially managed. His seizing his Wife's Letter to Clarinda from the Maid, serves likewise to expose and to aggravate his Foible; and when the Servant knocks at the Room-Door his Behavior is characteristic.--"Hark--Two gentle Taps--was that the Signal--Ha! another Tap!--The Gentleman is in Haste, I find."⁹ Upon his opening the Door, how sensible must he be of his own Folly! The Beauty of the Poet's Art all through is, that he has made Use of Circumstances which serve to awaken Mr. Strictland's Jealousy, and at the same Time to make him ashamed of himself, which leads by very natural Degrees to a Reformation in the Close; and this judicious Management Jonson has wanted till he comes to the Developement of the whole. When every Thing is cleared up to Mr. Strictland, and Ranger's running about the House sufficiently explained, was there ever a finer Stroke in any Play whatever than when Ranger says, "I don't know whether I had dared or no, if I had not heard the Maid say Some thing of her Master's being jealous--Oh! damn me, thought I then, the Work is half done to my Hands."¹⁰ This is indeed a just Satyr upon groundless Suspicion, and finely calculated to

correct his distempered Way of thinking, after so many Feelings of his own ridiculous Folly as he met with the whole Day. Thus we are judiciously prepared for the Alteration of evil Habits, and when it happens we acknowledge it to be just and natural. Upon the whole, the Author's Management of this Part cannot be too much admired, and if he has had his Eye on Jonson, he has certainly excelled him in many nice Strokes of Character. We are glad to find this Play advertised for Mr. Ross's Benefit on Wednesday next, when we make no Doubt but there will be a numerous and polite Audience, at once to admire a Hoadly and a Garrick, and to encourage so pleasing a Performer as Mr. Ross, of whom if we cannot say he is the greatest Genius, we may at least say he is the most gentleman like Actor on the Stage.¹¹

¹For an explanation of the repetition of numbers see above, p. 100.

²See Theatres No. 7 and 10.

³See Theatres No. 10 and the first No. 30 concerning the influence of Jonson on Hoadly.

⁴A dealer in cloths, fabrics. In the Dramatis Personae we are told that Kitley is a merchant.

⁵I, ii.

⁶"Hence those tears" (The cause of his grief is now seen). Horace, Epistles, I, xix, 41.

⁷II, iii.

⁸II, iii.

⁹V, i.

¹⁰V, ii.

¹¹For Ross see Theatre No. 5, n. 2.

THE LONDON CHRONICLE, April 7-9, 1757.

THE THEATRE. No. 31.

There being a Cessation of theatrical Business this Week, we think we cannot better fill up this Department of the CHRONICLE, than by recommending to the Perusal of our Readers Mr. Havard's ODE to the Memory of SHAKESPEAR.¹ The ingenious Author of this little poetic Composition has not adopted the Practice of the Generality of his contemporary Ode-writers: He has not, like them, merely endeavoured to give us a motley Piece of patch-work Versification, composed of Shreds and Remnants from Spencer, Milton, and Shakespear. The modern Way of writing Poetry resembles the Method among Boys at School, where he succeeds best, who remembers the greatest Number of choice Phrases and Hemisticks from the Classics, and contrives to weave them altogether in one Piece. This Artifice, with the Help of a little unintelligible Imagery, and a few abstract Ideas and Passions personified, will help to furnish out an Ode that shall elevate and surprize,² and make us gaze and stare, but leave no Kind of Trace of Thought or Sense behind it. This lofty Jargon Mr. Havard has not aspired to, but has modestly

contented himself with uniting both Sentiment and suitable Diction; at the same time that it is poetical, it is a Critique on Shakespear, and in some Places it rises to the Sublime. We shall not detain our Readers any longer from the Piece itself, than just to mention that it cannot fail to be a good Entertainment on the Stage, when it is rendered still more enthusiastic by the musical Graces of such a Genius as Dr. Boyce.³

An ODE to the Memory of SHAKESPEAR.

Written by Mr. Havard.

And set to Music by Dr. Boyce.

To be sung at Drury-Lane Theatre, Tuesday the 12th inst.*
by Messrs. Beard, Champness, etc. etc.⁴

Titles and Ermine, fall behind;

Be this for a Tribute to the Mind:

O for a Muse of Fire,

Such as did Homer's Soul inspire!

Or such an Inspiration as did swell

The Bosom of the Delphic Oracle!

Or one yet more divine,

Thine, SHAKESPEAR, thine!

Then should this Song immortal be;

Nor the Verse blush that praises thee.

Taught by yourself alone to sing,

Sublime you soar on Nature's Wing;

How sweet the Strain! how bold the Flight!

Above the Rules

Of Critic Schools,

And cool Correctness of the Staggyrite.

When Horror ombers o'er the Scene,

And Terror with distorted Mien,

Erects the Hair, and chills the Blood;

Whose Painting must be understood

To strike such Feelings to the Soul?

What Master-Genius works the whole?

SHAKESPEAR alone.

He, pow'rful Ruler of the Heart,

With ev'ry Passion plays;

Now strokes the String, and every Part

The magic Touch obeys.

He reigns alone;

Nor can his Throne

Fear Usurpation, or Decay,

Lasting as Time, and bright as Southern Day.

SHAKESPEAR! no single Merit's thine:

How can we sep'rate what's Divine?

Thy Mind effulgent shoots forth Rays,

Like the bright Sun, ten thousand Ways,

Yet is the Body all intire,

One glorious Mass of intellectual Fire.

Now roars the Scene with Humour's Jest;

Now plaintive Sorrows flow:
 And now, with Pity's Sigh opprest,
 We feel, we share the Lover's Woe.
 When jealous Passions rage,
 What Thunder shakes the Stage!
 Loud as the Trump th' Arch-Angel bears,
 When the last Sound shall rend the Spheres.
 Others may by unwearied Aim,
 One Passage only find to Fame;
 Thro' one unvaried Track pursue,
 And keep the destin'd Mark in View:
 But, SHAKESPEAR, that undaunted Soul,
 Leaps into Space, and occupies the Whole.
 If e'er thy lofty Wing
 Too daringly has flown,
 'Twas but, Columbus like,
 To find out Worlds unknown.

C H O R U S

Then, Britain, boast that to thy Sons was giv'n
 The greatest Genius ever sent from Heav'n!

*The Reader will please to remember Mr. Havard's Benefit is on the above Night.

¹For Murphy's friend, the actor William Havard, and for the background to this ode see Theatre No. 23, nn. 3 and 4.

²For this phrase from Villiers' The Rehearsal see Theatre No. 3, n. 2.

³For the composer, William Boyce, see Theatre No. 23, n. 4.

⁴For John Beard see Theatre No. 29, n. 1. Concerning [Samuel?] Champness there is little information other than his being listed as one of a handful of regular singers in the Drury Lane company from the 1748/49 season to that of 1773/74. He must, however, have been an exceptional vocalist for in the 1775/76 season he is listed in the Covent Garden company as "brought from retirement for the oratorios." London Stage, Part 4, III, 1909.

THE LONDON CHRONICLE, April 9-12, 1757.

THE THEATRE. No. 32.

Drury-Lane, April 11, 1757.

This Evening was presented The Beggar's Opera, written by Mr. Gay, and acted for the first time in the Year 1727, at the Theatre in Lincoln's-Inn-Fields. It had a Run of sixty-three Nights the first Season, and has very deservedly continued to be performed ever since.¹ In this Piece we have a new Species of Comedy, of which Mr. Gay has the Honour of being the unrivall'd Inventor, though many ineffectual Attempts were made in Imitation of it by Colley Cibber, and others.² As it was intended in the Plan of it to be a Burlesque upon Operas, Intricacy and Complication of Plot were in no way essential; but the Humour and Strokes of Satyr are all highly exquisite. It was exhibited some time after the great Reception of Gulliver's Travels; and Dr. Swift was so sensible of its Merit, that in one of his Letters, he writes to Mr. Gay, 'The Beggar's Opera has knocked down Gulliver. Lord! how the University Lads adore you!'³--Indeed all Degrees and Ranks of Men have justly concurred to admire this

very admirable Piece of Humour, which is perhaps the finest Original in our own or perhaps any Language.

Covent-Garden, Same Night.

The Rover, and Ding-dong Bell again!⁴--

¹Gay's ballad opera was first performed on Jan. 29, 1728, at the theatre in Lincoln's-Inn Fields. It had a run of thirty-two consecutive nights and was played sixty-two times in the first winter and spring. London Stage, Part 2, II, 931 and 956.

²Cibber's one imitation, Love in a Riddle (1729), had no success. However, at the time Murphy was writing, three or four comic operas which Cibber had no hand in were commonly attributed to him. See Ashley, Cibber, pp. 76-77, and 206.

³The letter is dated Dublin, March 28, 1728. Murphy rearranged the quotation: in the letter the last sentence preceded the first by three or four paragraphs. The Correspondence of Jonathan Swift, ed. F. Elrington Ball (London, 1913), IV, 21-23.

⁴For The Rover see Theatre No. 15; "Ding-dong Bell" refers to Harlequin Sorcerer, see Theatre No. 8, n. 12.

THE LONDON CHRONICLE, April 12-14, 1757.

THE THEATRE. No. 33.

To the Admirers of SHAKESPEAR.

Having nothing new to say of theatrical Matters at present, we embrace the Opportunity of informing all Persons of Taste, that an Edition of the Works of our great dramatic Genius is now preparing for the Public by one of the best Critics of this Age (to speak of him in the most moderate Terms) who has approved himself, in various Branches of Writing, an English Classic of the first Magnitude. It need not be mentioned that Mr. Samuel Johnson is the Gentleman whom we here intend. His manly Way of Thinking, his extensive Erudition, his exquisite Taste and sound Judgment, have been sufficiently displayed in The Rambler. In these beautiful Compositions there is not only to be found a fine Vein of original Sentiment, but he hath also enriched the English Language with a copious Variety of Diction beyond any of his Contemporaries. Add to this that Monumentum Aere perennius which he hath erected in Honour of his native Tongue;¹ we mean his Dictionary, in which he hath supplied the Want of an Academy of Belles Lettres, and performed

Wonders towards fixing our Grammar, and ascertaining the determinate Meaning of Words, which are known to be in their own Nature of a very unstable and fluctuating Quality. To his Labours it may hereafter be owing that our Drydens, our Addisons, and our Popes shall not become as obsolete and unintelligible as Chaucer;² and from him we may reasonably expect a more correct Edition of our great Shakespear than has been hitherto offered to the Public, as he is undoubtedly acquainted with the Rise and Progress of English Literature, and as he is thoroughly possessed of all the requisite Qualifications of a great Critic. By such a Genius the Public may promise themselves that Difficulties will be explained, without torturing the Sense; that Errors will be detected, and the true Reading restored, without Licentiousness, or obtruding unnatural and unwarranted Alterations; that the Author's Way of thinking will be preserved, without an Insertion of childish Conceits; that Beauties will be pointed out, agreeable to that sublime Imagination which he is known to be possessed of; and in short, that we shall have an Edition worthy of Shakespear and of Mr. Johnson. In this we have delivered our own Opinion with Candour and Sincerity; and we now beg the Reader will peruse his own Proposals,³ which, at the same Time, that they shew the Modesty of the Author in speaking of himself, will also prove how thoroughly sensible he is of

the Difficulties of his Undertaking, and therefore how likely he is to succeed in the Removal of them, since we know him to be possessed of a Genius to which we may apply what was said of Caesar, 'the Alps and Pyreneans sink before him.'⁴ But we shall detain our Readers no longer from Mr. Johnson's own Words. [Here followed a copy of the Proposals. The reader will find an annotated modern edition of this work in vol. 1 of Johnson on Shakespeare, ed. Arthur Sherbo (New Haven, 1968).]

¹"A monument more lasting than bronze." Horace, Odes, III, xxx, 1.

²Our Sons their Fathers' failing Language see,
And such as Chaucer is, shall Dryden be. Pope, Essay on Criticism, 482-83.

³Johnson's Proposals For Printing, By Subscription, The Dramatick Words of William Shakespeare was first published in 1756; the edition appeared in 1765.

⁴...In vain has nature formed
Mountains and oceans to oppose his passage;
He bounds o'er all, victorious in his march.
The Alps and Pyreneans sink before him. Joseph
Addison, Cato, I, iii, 11-14.

THE LONDON CHRONICLE, April 14-16, 1757.

THE THEATRE. No. 34.

Drury-Lane, April 16, 1757.

Shakespear's historical Tragedy of Macbeth was performed here this Evening: As we have, in two former Papers, given an Account of the Plan and Writing of this Play, we have only to remark at present that Mr. Mossop has very great Merit in the Performance of this Character.¹ He seems to have studied the Poet with great Accuracy, and indeed the Part requires great Labour and Application from any Performer, who is ambitious of excelling in it. If our Readers will please to recollect our former Criticisms, they will perceive, at one View, what a Variety of Situations Macbeth is placed in; and certainly there is nothing in the whole Compass of the Player's imitative Art so difficult as to support a Character through a long Series of Different Actions, and to preserve the same original Man through a Vicissitude of Emotions, sometimes exalting, sometimes depressing, now driving to Madness, and now falling into Melancholy and Despair. If Mr. Mossop fails in any of the Requisites for this Part, it is in his Department, which, we think,

has not sufficient Freedom and Gallantry. In the Scene where his guilty Conscience pictures to him a visionary Dagger, we are of Opinion, that he displays a great Judgment: His Countenance is strongly impressed with Terror, and the deep Tones of his Voice very justly suit the Solemnity and Awfulness of the Occasion. The Scene is perhaps one of the hardest to be well executed among all Shakespear's Plays; because the Poet does not here so much help the Actor, as in other Passages, but on the contrary he requires great Aid from the Performer, to give, as it were, Reality to airy nothing, and terrify an Audience against the Testimony of the faithful Eyes, as Horace calls them.² The Effect in this Case must proceed from the strong Tokens the Player gives of his being possessed with the Idea; and the Idea cannot be excited but by a strong and creative Imagination. In the Scene where Banquo's Ghost appears, the Apparatus of the ghastly Look and bloody Forehead help the Audience and the Actor, because the Object appears terrible of itself. Therefore though Mr. Mossop performs well in this last Situation, yet we cannot ascribe to him the same Degree of Merit as in the former. In general throughout the Play he speaks the Soliloquies with great Propriety; but now and then, is he not somewhat out of Time in his Pauses? That is to say, does he not continue too long in them? In Musick a sudden Cessation of the whole Band has a fine Effect,

because it breaks out again very quickly into a full Tumult of Harmony, which would be greatly hurt, if the Pause were allowed to be too long. We observed in a former Paper that a melancholy Gloom overcasts the Mind of Macbeth;³ but this is by slow and imperceptible Degrees, till at length it settles into a Kind of determined Despondency, that makes him grow a weary of the Sun,⁴ and therefore resolved desperately to hazard every Thing. We think this Performer very just in his Execution of this difficult Part of the Character; in him we perceive the strong Brilliancy of the Colouring fade away by proper Gradations till it finally ends in the darkest Shade. Upon the whole, we are clearly of Opinion, that if Mr. Mossop will resolve to play this Part more carelessly, he will play it better; because, while he is over studious to please, his Deportment becomes constrained, whereas every Attitude of Macbeth requires Boldness and Freedom; and indeed in this last Circumstance consisted the superior Merit of Mr. Garrick, who supported this extreme hard Part with such a commanding Air in every Movement, and such a graceful Horror, if we may so express it, as has hardly been equalled even by himself in any other Performance.

Covent-Garden, Same Night.

Was presented Theodosius; or, The Force of Love, written by Mr. Lee, and produced in the Year 1680, at the Duke of York's Theatre.⁵ This Tragedy is perhaps the best of this Writer's Productions. Some Circumstances of the Story are exquisitely beautiful. The Warmth of Imagination in Varanes and Theodosius is finely conveyed to us: Their Friendship is delicately touched; and the Description of Athenais is such as youthful Poets fancy when they love. It is hard upon Mr. Smith, who, we think, has Merit in Theodosius, that he is so much overshadowed by Mr. Barry in Varanes, as not to be sufficiently taken Notice of by the Audience.⁶ But indeed Mr. Barry's admirable Powers for touching the tender Passions are here exerted in their full Force. The Poet has given every elegant Embellishment to the Love of Varanes; though indeed here, as well as in other Plays, he is apt now and then to riot a little, and break through the Boundaries of Discretion. But for this he has pleaded his Apology in his Preface. "It has been observed (says he) that I abound in ungoverned Fancy; but I hope the World will pardon the Sallies of Youth; Age, Despondence, and Dullness, come too fast of themselves. I discommend no Man for keeping the beaten Road: But I am sure the noble Hunters, that follow the Game, must leap Hedges and Ditches sometimes, and run at all, or never come into the

Fall of the Quarry." ⁷ Certain it is such a Poet as Lee, who abounds in such tender Strokes of Poetry, is infinitely preferable to a cold correct Writer, who preserves an equal Mediocrity throughout. There are Beauties in the Play before us sufficient to furnish out half a Dozen modern Tragedies. We cannot close this Article without transcribing one Passage which Mr. Barry speaks particularly well. In love every body knows his Accent; but the following Description has all the Advantages of Spirit and Variety in his Elocution.

When thro' the wood: we chas'd the foaming boar,
 With hounds that open'd like Thessalian bulls,
 Like tygers fleec'd, and sanded as the shore,
 With ears and chests, that dash'd the morning dews:
 Driv'n with the sport, as ships are tost in storms,
 We ran like winds, and matchless was our course:
 Now sweeping o'er the limit of a hill,
 Now with a full career come thund'ring down
 The precipice, and sweat along the vale. ⁸

Drury-Lane, 18th.

The Orphan, for the Benefit of Miss Pritchard:
 And at Covent-Garden, The Committee, for the Benefit of Mr. Shuter. For both these, see our former Papers. ⁹ We shall only add, that for the future, when Repetitions of the same Plays come quick upon us, we shall not open our

Theatre merely to mention them, as this Paper is now crowded with Matter; but shall leave the Space to be filled with something more valuable than the trivial Information, that such and such Plays were acted.

¹For Macbeth see Theatres No. 16 and 17; for Henry Mossop see Theatre No. 5, n. 12, and the reviews of his acting in Nos. 14, 20, and 27.

²Segnius irritant animos demissa per aurem/quam quae sunt oculis subiecta fidelibus et quae/ipse sibi tradit spectator. "Less vividly is the mind stirred by what finds entrance through the ears than by what is brought before the trusty eyes, and what the spectator can see for himself." Ars Poetica, 180-2.

³See Theatre No. 17.

⁴I 'gin to be weary of the sun." V, v, 49.

⁵In either September or October of this year. London Stage, Part 1, 291. For Nathaniel Lee see Theatre No. 11, n. 15.

⁶William Smith was a pupil of Barry's and had made his debut in this role, see Theatre No. 25, n. 3; for Barry see No. 4, n. 9.

⁷Read "It has been often observed against me,".

⁸For "fleec'd" read "flu'd." I, i, 246-54.

⁹For The Orphan see Theatre No. 21; for The Committee No. 2; and for Miss Pritchard No. 7, n. 11. Ned Shuter, 1728?-1776, began his career in 1744 playing boys parts and held the stage until the year of his death. This fine comedian really came into his own in the 1760's and from that period was regarded as one of the great comic geniuses of the century.

THE LONDON CHRONICLE, December 7-9, 1758.

THE THEATRE.

Covent-Garden, 6th December.

The tragedy of Cleone has gained strength every night.¹ The pathetic powers of the Author having been felt by many persons of distinguish'd taste, the Ladies now begin to revolt against fashion, and to send for places to this long neglected theatre. Indeed it would have been the highest injustice to Mrs. Bellamy, if the town had continued incurious about such acting as hers.² The play being now published, it will perhaps be found not unentertaining both to the Writer and the Reader, to point out the particular passages, in which the poet and the actress have co-operated upon the passions of their Auditors. This we shall do upon some future occasion; in the mean time we will assure Mr. Dodsley, that the malevolent Vade mecum, which a well-known scribbler recommends to all who intend to see this play, as a proper directory for their judgments, hath totally missed its aim.³ It may, indeed gratify the Manager, for whose use it was principally written: But it will never justify his refusal

of a piece, which, had it been acted at Drury-Lane, would, in some degree, have compensated for all the bawdy that has been there exhibited; as the whole composition of Cleone tends entirely to exercise the virtuous affections, to awaken in the heart the tender domestic passions, and to give the highest gratification to our moral sense, by striking portraits of the real beauty of Goodness, and the deformity of Vice. Instead of being confirmed in gaming, in intrigue, and in lewdness; instead of learning how to make an assignation at a china-shop, to ruin her family, and dishonour her husband; every woman, who attends to this affecting piece, will inevitably go home with strong tendencies to be very unfashionable; that is to say, To prove a good Wife, and a tender Mother. To defeat, as far as in him lies, these fine impressions, was the intention of a long since exploded essay-writer.⁴

But as malevolence generally carries its own punishment with it, we are glad to hear that the fatality of a farce hangs over this man's head; and, if Mr. Dodsley is in any degree vindictive, he will have a fair opportunity of returning him the compliment, by publishing a few hints, proper for those who intend to see Dullness wrapp'd in the Veil of Charity, at Drury-Lane, on the 20th inst.⁵

When that day is over, we shall suggest to our readers some idea of the rule by which pieces are received or rejected at the said theatre.⁶

Drury-Lane, Dec. 6.

The Comedy of the Busy Body being at present the important object of attention, it is my design to administer all the materials in my power for the gratification of public curiosity. In order to enable the critics to take a-round-about view of the present subject of the debates at the toilet, at breakfast, at dinner, at supper, at court, and even at the much adored Whist-table; I shall give a brief chronicle of the actors, who have appeared in the character of Marplot, with the distinguishing marks or specific qualities of each of them, from the original performer of the part, down to the present actor, who fills the Theatre with it three times a week, and has put the King of Prussia entirely out of every body's head.⁷

But before I attempt these, my historical portraits of these personages of the drama, it may not be improper to lay before the reader a just analysis of the character, as it has been put out of the hands of the poet: By this criterion, and not the name of a Garrick, or any other performer, we are to frame a judgment of the justness or impropriety of the performance.

Marplot, in age, in rank and circumstances, is under one and twenty, a gentleman, and of a good fortune; keeps the best company; honest in his passions; of manners not inelegant, at least not under-bred; no swords-man,

good natur'd, and ever eager for opportunities (whether seasonably or unseasonably he does not stay to enquire) of proving his regard for his friends, and he is ever officious in their service. By instigations of this kind his natural curiosity is quickened: his desire of knowing every thing is constantly spurred on by the pleasure he feels in being of use to those of his acquaintance; and his curiosity perpetually finds the means of gratifying his favourite passion for doing good. It is hard to say which is his characteristic quality; the two humours, just mentioned, are so compounded in him, that we can hardly tell which is predominant; but we plainly see them both feeding and assisting each other, and from the beginning to the end of the play he is entirely led away by these propensities, fair and laudable when within bounds, but in Marplot ridiculous from their over-growth. For a player to shew himself under the influence of these double incitements to action it must be allowed, is very difficult; but in this his whole art should consist, and he who lets either of these colours too strongly prevail, will be found by the discerning critic defective in the character.

Suppose an Angelo, or Hogarth, or any body famous for making the mind think upon canvass, were to give Mrs. Centlivre's Marplot in the most striking attitude and circumstances of the character:⁸ What qualities would

he bring together to compose the man above described? This once found, the transition will be easy to the player, and we shall know what sort of person, what manners, and what deportment he should have to acquit himself like an artist in this part.

From the circumstance of Marplot's being a ward, the first and most natural quality a painter would think of giving him, would be the appearances of youth, which ever has a softness of features, a careless, giddy, thoughtless, happy eye. The mimic countenance would not appear marked with the lines of time: there would be in his look the emanations of complacency, chearfulness, good nature, and general philanthropy: there would be no traces of suspicion, of jealousy, of envy, of timorous self-love, or the corrosions of avarice: but all would be vacant, open and serene. In the drapery, and all the artificial insignia arising from education, our painter would take care to give him a fashionable dress, the appearance of polished manners, and the disposition of his whole person would be such as should denote him a gentleman at first sight.

[To be continued.]

¹This tragedy by the poet and bookseller, Robert Dodsley, was first performed on Dec. 2, and was given a laudatory review by Murphy in the Theatre column signed "Atticus" of Dec. 2-5. (See Appendix A for this essay.)

²For Mrs. Bellamy see Theatre No. 29, n. 10; for her performance in Cleone see Appendix A.

³The "malevolent Vade mecum" was a pamphlet entitled An Account of the Tragedy Cleone (London, 1758), which disparaged Dodsley's tragedy, and which Murphy thought was written by John Hill at Garrick's instigation. Garrick had refused Cleone and Dodsley felt that he was now trying to eclipse the play by appearing as Marplot in Mrs. Centlivre's Busy Body (1709), a role that was "owned" by Henry Woodward, hence, was certain to attract a crowd eager to view Garrick's challenge. For background see above, pp. 128-30, and Dunbar, Murphy, 56-60.

⁴Hill had written the "Inspector" essays in the London Daily Advertiser.

⁵Hill's farce, The Rout, ostensibly based on an idea plagiarized from Murphy and apparently forestalling Murphy's work by the same title (see above, p. 129), was played on Dec. 20th for the benefit of the General Lying-in-Hospital. As a charity piece it was received politely but when Hill demanded a benefit it was deservedly damned. Oman, Garrick, p. 220.

⁶The rancor stems probably more from Garrick's refusal at this time of Murphy's Orphan of China than from the refusal of Dodsley's tragedy. Dunbar, Murphy, chap. 4.

⁷At this point in the Seven Years' War the German alliance was being warmly debated in the periodicals, and the victories of Frederick of Prussia, one of the few bright spots for England at this stage, were constantly in the news. Spector, Periodicals, 35-60, passim.

⁸The painter and engraver William Hogarth, 1697-1764, and Michelangelo, who was often referred to at this time as Michael Angelo. Compare Aaron Hill's feeling that if Hogarth, who had portrayed a pleased theatrical audience, were to attempt a "displeased and ill-natured one," such a piece "tho' more horrible beyond measure than Michael Angelo's Last Judgment might have stronger effects than a statute in reforming the abuse against which it would be levelled." The Prompter, No. 136.

THE LONDON CHRONICLE, December 9-12, 1758.

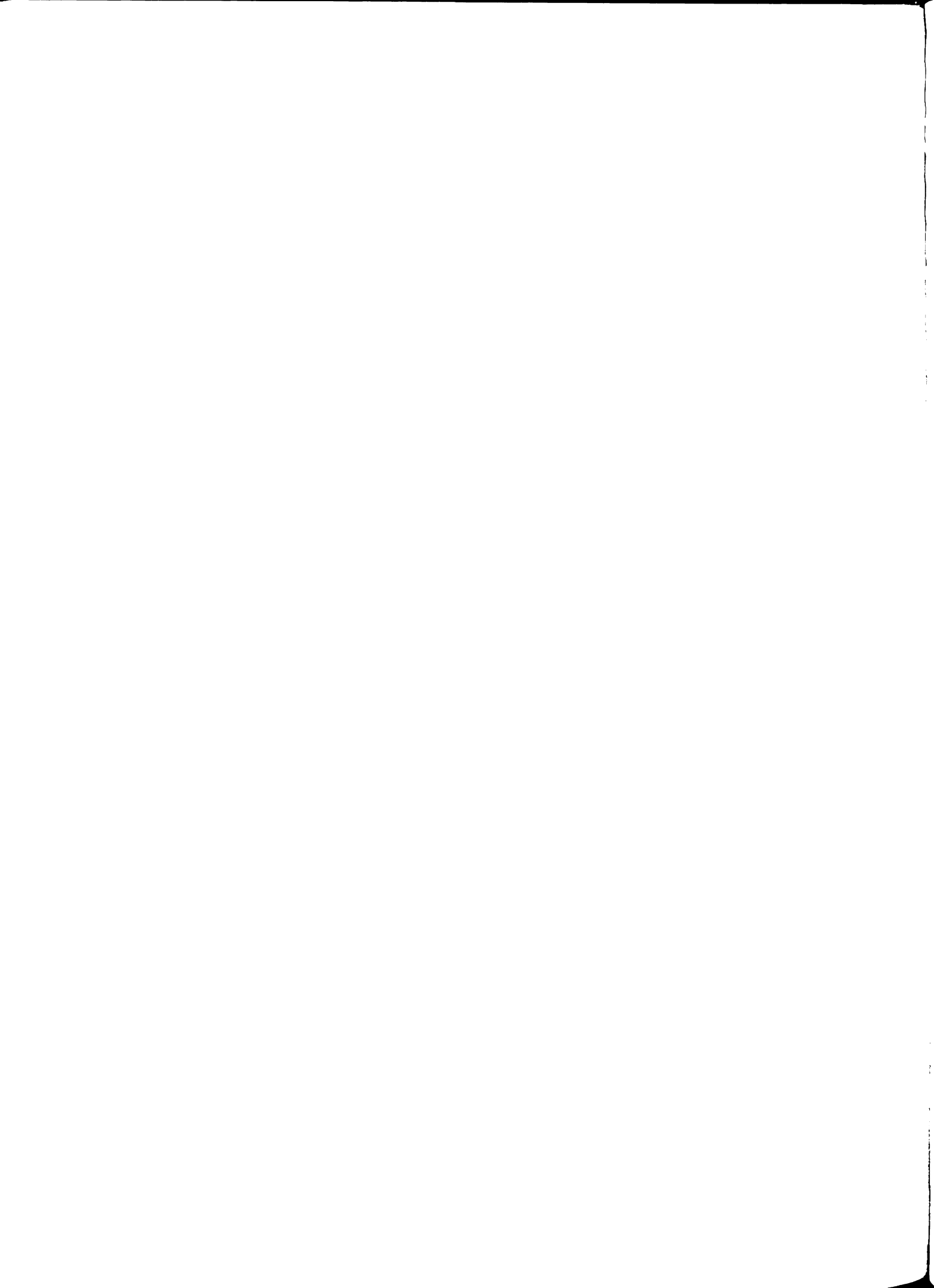
THE THEATRE.

Drury-Lane, Dec. 9.

The Busy Body was again repeated at this Theatre to a crowded audience: a convincing proof that the Manager can cram the gaping town with his chapon bouillé as often as he pleases;¹ and as a Satire on the public taste we are told at the head of each Play-bill, how often they have been made fools with this old revived New Piece.

Having in our last given, as we imagine, a just description of the character, and of the external appearances, which accompany Marplot, we shall at present give the reader an historical deduction of the various trans-migrations of the Busy Body, from its first exhibition down to the present time.

The first person whom I find in the dramatis personae for this part is Mr. Pack;² of whom tradition says, that he was of an agreeable person, a pleasing voice, and an open, vacant, undesigning countenance: what he wanted in skill and art, he derived from the novelty of the character, to make himself the favourite of the town; and with something of the Fribble³ interwoven into his natural



deportment, he passed upon his judges for a very good Marplot, insomuch that he gained the name of the Busy Body; and afterwards kept a tavern, called Marplot's Head. To him succeeded one Bickerstaff,⁴ without any requisites at all for the character; he had neither youth, person, voice, or countenance. Joe Miller,⁵ who stands next in the Theatrical Chronicle, and whose Jests are at present in high esteem with all the sayers and retailers of good things, was, what is generally called, an actor of spirit: not very remarkable for the excellence of his understanding, but very happy in the buffooning way of humour, as Lord Shaftsbury calls it.⁶ He had a comical kind of face, a shrill voice, and was excellent in that species of absurdity which gives the idea of a simpleton or fool. The famous Mr. Nokes was the founder of this school of acting.⁷ Of Nokes, Cibber says, "the ridiculous solemnity of his features was enough to set a whole bench of Bishops in a titter. When he debated any matter with himself, he would shut up his mouth with a dumb studious pout, and roll his full eye into such a vacant amazement, such palpable ignorance what to think of it, that his silent perplexity gave your imagination as full content, as the most absurd thing he could say. He had a shuffling shamble in his gait, and an awkward absurdity in his gesture, that you would not suppose he had a grain of common sense."⁸ Studied in this stile of

acting, Joe Miller entertained the town with the character of Marplot, and hitherto each performer represented him with his shoulders up to his ears, a downright stupid country looby, until Mr. Theophilus Cibber (who, it is said, was lately lost in the Irish Seas) gave it the air of a pert, forward, impudent, town coxcomb;⁹ not being able to give the rustic simplicity of his predecessors, he shaped the part in another way, and with the assistance of a grotesque visage, squint and grimace, he made a shift to procure many admirers. Upon his leaving the company at Drury-Lane, the Busy Body fell to the lot of Mr. Macklin, an excellent actor in parts that fitted him, who has laboured more to come at the true spirit of theatrical criticism, than any of his brethren, and is actually in possession of more knowledge of his art, and of the drama in general, than any actor on the stage.¹⁰ But so long ago as the year 43, a certain manager, it is said, injured him essentially, and hinc illae lacrymae;¹¹ Macklin is banished from the stage; so true is the saying, that the doer of wrongs never forgives the person he has prejudiced.¹² But Mr. Macklin, however skilful in his execution of many characters, was not by nature fitted for Marplot: his features are too strong, and his looks too busy: every cast of his eye denoted too much thought, and the florid, free, and vacant, were not sufficiently in his mien and countenance. Tho' nature had enabled him to acquire

great skill in his business, yet in the externals requisite for Marplot, she had protested against him, and therefore we do not find that his success was equal to his judgment. This is the genealogy of Marplot at Drury-lane. At Lincoln's-Inn-Fields, in the mean time, Christopher Bullock, a pupil of old Cibber's, appeared in the part.¹³ Bullock was tall, agreeable in his person, had a comic kind of voice, which vented itself in a shrillness of tone, but never sunk into meanness. He was a good actor, and was the first who bodied forth,¹⁴ as Shakespear phrases it, the character of Marplot. In him you saw a young man of tolerable breeding, genteel deportment, an expressive face, and frequent variations of expression; and, in short, he executed naturally, what The.Cibber aimed at by the false succedaneum of twisting his features. Bullock was a true comic genius, but he died in his prime. After him came one Egleton, who had formerly been a page at court;¹⁵ being in himself thoughtless, extravagant, good-natured, totally regardless of consequences on all occasions, he transfused those qualities into his acting of Marplot; and all these qualities being kept awake by the natural curiosity of the part, Mr. Egleton acquitted himself with a graceful absurdity, and no small degree of pleasantry. On his death, the part was taken up by an actor, of whom the town had little expectation for some years; which indeed was chiefly owing to his being

thrown into improper characters; but a sudden accident producing him in more suitable situations, he grew into great esteem: in Marplot he was excellent. The person I mean is the late Mr. Chapman.¹⁶ In spite of a person not very graceful, and a voice rather hoarse, unharmonious, and not youthful, yet he found means to be perhaps the best Marplot that ever trod the stage. He had great good nature, and strong appearances of a friendly disposition in his countenance. This last is an indispensable requisite; without these externals, the part cannot be performed; as we have shewn in our last, that benevolence, and the love of his friends, are among the characteristic passions that actuate Marplot. In these particulars nature had not entered a Caveat against Chapman; on the contrary, she favoured him; and, in conjunction with these requisites, his curiosity took so fine a possession of him, that he ever appeared desirous to know what was going forward, that he might do good to his friends; and his desire to do good, led him into many awkward perplexities, in which he ever behaved with a face unalterably fixed in the pursuit of his favourite passions; and while the difficulty in which he involved himself shook your sides with laughter at his folly, the whimsical earnestness of his looks, and the busy gravity of his eye, rendered the ridicule still more rich and poignant. We could with pleasure trace Chapman thro' the

particulars of the part; but we have already overflowed into great length. In our next we shall give a parallel between Mr. Woodward and Mr. Garrick, the present competitors for the laurel.

Covent-Garden, Same Day.

The Tragedy of Cleone has given the strongest proof of success, by drawing better houses than in the beginning of the run.¹⁷ We shall embrace the first opportunity to give our readers some of our closet reflections on this piece.

¹Compare Dryden's use of this phrase: "But one Oedipus, Hercules, or Medea had been tolerable: poor people, they escaped not so good cheap; they had still the chapon bouillé [boiled capon] set before them, till their appetites were cloyed with the same dish, and, the novelty being gone, the pleasure vanished; so that one main end of Dramatic Poesy in its definition, which was to cause delight, was of consequence destroyed." Essay of Dramatic Poesy, in Ker, I, 46.

²George Pack, fl. 1700-1724, primarily a comedian, was the original Marplot in both The Busy Body and Mrs. Centlivre's 1710 sequel entitled Mar-Plot. After his retirement he opened a public-house called the 'Busy Body' under the sign of a full length portrait of himself as Marplot.

³In Garrick's Miss in Her Teens, the character of Fribble was meant to expose "the pretty gentlemen, who chose to unsex themselves, and made a display of delicacy that exceeded feminine softness." Murphy, Life of Garrick, I, 118.

⁴There was an actor by this name who played the role of the Captain in, oddly enough, Mrs. Centlivre's farce, A Bickerstaffs Burying (March, 1710), but I find no other information concerning this performer.

⁵Joe Miller, 1684-1738, was allegedly a competent comedian but his chief fame seems to have stemmed from the well-known jest book that was unwarrantably given his name. See Theatre No. 2, n. 15.

⁶See Part I, ii-v, of "An Essay on the Freedom of Wit and Humour," in Characteristicks, I.

⁷James Nokes, d. 1692?, began his career in 1659 as a boy actor in the company assembled by Rhodes at the Cockpit. He was the leading comedian of the latter seventeenth century.

⁸Murphy does not misquote but he selects phrases and sentences from a more elaborate description. See Cibber, Apology, 83-6.

⁹For Theophilus Cibber see Theatre No. 27, n. 3. He drowned in October, 1758, when the ship on which he was crossing to Dublin foundered off the coast of Scotland.

¹⁰See above, pp. 20 and 87.

¹¹"Hence those tears." Horace, Epistles, I, xix, 41. See Murphy's use of this phrase in the second Theatre No. 30.

¹²In 1743 Macklin and Garrick led an actors' strike against Fleetwood, then manager of Drury Lane. The strike failed and Garrick and the others were re-engaged but because of Fleetwood's personal animosity Macklin was not. Macklin and his supporters felt that Garrick had broken the covenant and was to blame for Macklin's banishment--an exile that lasted until the 1747/48 season.

¹³The actor and dramatist, Christopher Bullock, 1690?-1724, was Lincoln's Inn Fields' challenger in the comic roles played by Colley Cibber at Drury Lane.

¹⁴"And as imagination bodies forth." A Midsummer Night's Dream, V, v, 14.

¹⁵Of Eggleton there is little known. He played this role from 1723 to 1726 and Genest, III, 81, says that according to Chetwood, Eggleton's "person was perfectly genteel, and he was a very pleasing actor, but through a wild road of life, he finished his journey in the 29th year."

¹⁶The career of Thomas Chapman, d. 1747, seems to have begun about 1723, and Genest, IV, 220, mentions that "he was celebrated for Brass, Marplot and Lucio, for all Shakespeare's clowns and particularly Touchstone."

¹⁷For this tragedy of Dodsley's see the preceding Theatre essay and nn. 1 and 3 to that essay.

THE LONDON CHRONICLE, December 19-21, 1758.

THE THEATRE.

In my last I promised a parallel between Mr. Garrick and Mr. Woodward in the character of Marplot.¹ As I have already given a delineation of the character, and the criterion, by which the performance of it should be judged, the question now before us will admit of an easy discussion.² I shall arrange the remarks I have to make under the heads which are essentially necessary to be considered in an examination of a point of this nature.

The External Insignia of the Character.

Mr. Woodward has about him some traces of youth; he is loosely genteel in his person; has the air of a gay, giddy, unthinking town coxcomb: though he does not altogether appear the fine gentleman (which by the way is unnecessary in this part) he does not seem mean, or unbred: his deportment is easy and debonaire, very well adapted to the strenuous idleness of Marplot; and he is so capable of mingling a tincture of the simpleton, in all parts where it is proper, that this character sat very easy upon him; and in all situations it seemed to

come to him, as the theatrical critics generally phrase it: not to mention that his dress was well chosen.

Mr. Garrick looks much too old for a ward; has not that frankness in his mien, which is peculiar to his rival: he cannot assume the giddy and the undesigning: he seems on many occasions in the play to be more underbred, than is consistent with Marplot's circumstances; and all through the piece we see him attempting to go to the character (to use another town phrase) while the discerning critic cannot help remarking that he ought to observe the advice of the poet, when he says,

Leave such to trifle with more grace and ease,
Whom folly pleases, and whose follies please.³

The Countenance.

In this Mr. Woodward was perfectly happy for the character in question. He appeared innocent of an idea, till some present object excited it, and even then it seemed but a kind of half-conception, which however served him as a will-o'-the-whisp to lead him on blundering, as it were, into sense, but ever mistaking his path, and running into absurdity. In this however, he seemed to have no harm, but, on the contrary, strong appearances of the characteristick goodness of Marplot. He does mischief so innocently, that we all forgive him from our hearts; and, whenever he does wrong, they who suffer by

it see plainly that his meddling disposition carries its atonement along with it. His looks are busy, but foolishly so; and he is like the Absent Man in this point, that while a crowd of circumstances are about him claiming his attention, he is attached to a single point, namely his eagerness to know every thing that he may be of service to his friends, and, on that account, he very naturally is regardless of all other consequences.

Mr. Garrick's face is strongly marked with great sensibility; it ever has the pale cast of thought;⁴ the traces of care are rather too legible: every look of his seems to carry with it a degree of cunning, and of sharp discernment: he has sometimes the curiosity of the Double Dealer,⁵ rather than that of Marplot, and when he would appear undesigning, is it not something of a counterfeit thoughtfulness, which seems to gleam, but faintly, over features generally fixed in habitual intenseness of thought? In short, Mr. Garrick cannot look undesigning; nor can his curiosity be thought to have its source in a total inattention to his own affairs, and the good-natured principle of helping others. It looked, to me, as if he had a sly intention to mar the projects of his friends, and, when the mischief is done, he assures them that 'He has a great regard for them, and meant them well.-- But--a,--things have so fallen out, that a--but to be sure he never loved any body so well in his life.'

Voice.

Mr. Woodward, as we have observed of Bullock and Pack,⁶ has a comical shrillness in his powers of elocution, that, when he pleases, sounds unthinking, and always inspirits every scene, where absurdity and whimsical distress are concerned.

Mr. Garrick's voice is remarkably distinct, articulate, and sensible, and every tone of it sounds as if it were influenced by a thinking mind. His modulation, which is very fine in most characters, is here too regularly and significantly harmonious for a silly, empty, giddy, frolicsome fellow; and, like his looks, it seems to be the effect of an understanding that attends with accuracy to its own ideas:

'-- -- -- --His Soul

Still sits at squat, and peeps not from its hole.'⁷

Genius.

In this Mr. Woodward is not by any means deficient: He has imagined so many characters with propriety, that it would be injustice to deny him a considerable portion of the Vis comica.

But in genius Mr. Garrick has not his equal. His imagination is generally correct, and always lively: it paints things to him in warm and strong colourings; and thence it results that he often makes beautiful impressions on his audience. He generally perceives, to use an

expression of Dr. Akenside's, the finest attitudes of things.⁸ But Genius cannot do every thing: it cannot create imagery. It can command the whole intellectual train; it can awaken passions in its own breast, and convey their operation to others; but it cannot give a new face; it cannot recall the days of youth; wear out the visible lines of thought; put another eye in the head; nor form, for the purpose of one night, the organs of speech over again. It has performed wonders in Mr. Garrick, and with the help of chalk and charcoal makes him a Lear or an Abel Drugger.⁹ But with such assistances Marplot would be grotesque; and upon the whole, he is not by nature fitted for this character, which he has chosen, in my opinion, very injudiciously.

The Execution.

Mr. Woodward is equal throughout the part; ever giddy, good-natur'd, boyish and unthinking. Curiosity and a desire to serve his friends are always uppermost, and go hand in hand. In Mr. Garrick, the character appears variegated and inconsistent. Curiosity seems to be the predominant, nay the only passion, and he is too intensely busy in almost every scene; occasionally he tips the audience the wink; "Now for it, says he, you shall see a bit of mischief." Pulchra Laverna, da mihi fallare,¹⁰ seems to be his wish, rather than any benefit to poor Charles. He is so violently in earnest to see the monkey,

that any body of common sense, who knew the danger, would take care he should not; whereas Woodward is at first foolishly and giddily bent upon it, but then he very soon desists, and you see him look over his shoulder with his head averted from the company, boyishly enjoying the thoughts of a peep at Pug, and concealing his design from every one, insomuch that he is the readiest in his vacant manner to quit the room: this is the very nature of curiosity; in order to gain its end, it appears undesigning. Then Woodward returns in the highest glee to take a view of the Monkey, and when the china is thrown down, he does not stand aghast as if he had seen a ghost: no snivelling; no whimpering; in his countenance you read a joy that his friend is escaped, and a confusion for the danger he had incurred; and to cover the whole, he briskly and pleasantly tells how Pug flew into his face, etc.¹¹

When Mr. Garrick gets behind Miss Macklin to evade a cudgelling, he stands laughing at the old fellow with the pleasantry of Ranger;¹² when he draws his sword in the last act, his fencing attitude, and whole manner, put us in mind of Don John;¹³ it is the same trick over again: in another scene we have a touch of Abel Drugger, and when he is eating an orange, instead of the gay, the vacant, and the careless genteel young man, one would swear he is copying Shuter in Squire Richard.¹⁴ These contrarieties are surprising in Mr. Garrick, as on all

other occasions he acts uniformly upon one plan; and, for the most part, upon true principles. To conclude, throughout the whole character of Marplot, he is so motley, that he seemed to me like Harlequin making up a pound of snuff with a pinch from every body's box, Rapee and Spanish, etc. jumbled together; or like the miser, mentioned by Fielding, who was happy when he picked his own pocket of a guinea, and with joy locked it up in his bureau.¹⁵

P. S. It were injustice not to mention that in the scene, where Marplot attempts to bully the old man, Mr. Garrick acts then like himself, and has the advantage over his antagonist:¹⁶ The circumstance of running about from door to door to alarm the neighbourhood by using the different knockers, might as well have been reserved for a pantomime. In Woodward's absence it might have been of service.¹⁷ I must add, in Mr. Garrick's just praise, that this is the first part in comedy, in which, I think, he has fallen very short of himself.

¹For Henry Woodward see Theatre No. 3, n. 14.

²See the preceding two unnumbered Theatre essays.

³Pope, "The Second Epistle of the Second Book of Horace Imitated," 326-7.

⁴"Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought."
Hamlet, III, i, 85.

⁵Maskwell in Congreve's The Double Dealer, see Theatre, No. 14.

⁶See preceding Theatre essay.

⁷Pope, Moral Essays, I, 114-5.

⁸Murphy appears to be misquoting, "The fairest, loftiest countenance of things." Mark Akenside, The Pleasures of the Imagination (1757), I, 46.

⁹In the Alchymist, see Theatre No. 20.

¹⁰"Fair Laverna [the goddess of theft], grant me to escape detection." Horace, Epistles, I, xvi, 60-1.

¹¹"No great Harm, I beg of you to forgive me. Longing to see the Monkey, I did but raise up the Board, and it flew over my Shoulders, scratched all my Face, broke yon China, and whisked out of the Window." IV, iv.

¹²In The Suspicious Husband, see Theatres No. 7 and 10.

¹³In the Chances, see Theatre No. 3.

¹⁴For Ned Shuter see Theatre No. 34, n. 9; Squire Richard, a character in the Cibber-Vanbrugh Provoked Husband, see Theatre No. 13.

¹⁵I am unable to identify the source of this allusion.

¹⁶For the circumstances behind this vitriolic comment see above, p.129 and nn. 3 and 6 to the unnumbered essay of Dec. 7-9.

¹⁷Woodward, who in addition to his excellences as a comedian was also Drury Lane's leading Harlequin, had gone with Barry this season to open a new theatre in Dublin.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

"ATTICUS" LETTER OF NOVEMBER 18-21, 1758, AND
THE THEATRE, DECEMBER 2-5, 1758.

THE LONDON CHRONICLE, November 18-21, 1758.

To the PUBLISHER of the LONDON CHRONICLE.

SIR,

I Have observed that your paper, ever since its commencement, has been uniformly and equally supported in all its various departments, one excepted; namely, the theatrical animadversions. Your news hath been collected with all possible accuracy; and your analysis of books hath preserved a just impartiality and discretion, neither wantonly praising, on the one hand, or malignantly censuring on the other. But can this be said of your paragraphs dated from the Playhouse? In truth, the prismatic glass of flattery hath occasionally thrown such random and indiscriminate lights on all objects, that our eyes begin to be dazzled, and we turn away from the false delusive glare with aversion and disgust. When a writer runs on in a strain of panegyrick, and overflows into general praise for two or three columns, he puts me in

mind of a lady, in whose company I once happened to dine, "la! (says she) what a mighty pretty room this is--well, to be sure I never saw such chairs in all my born days!--charming table linen!--sweet knives and forks!--and these are pretty plates too!--and, la!--did any body ever see such beautiful saltsellers, and the dear lovely little spoons in the middle of 'em!"--It is impossible, Sir, that every performer in a theatrical exhibition can deserve elaborate commendation, nor can such commendation be of any credit to your paper, because the enlightened part of mankind must withhold their assent; and certainly it can be of no service to the lowest class of your readers, because they are not thereby informed of the principles of a just and well regulated taste.

To give assistances to the faculty of the mind, just mentioned, and to make the gross of mankind not altogether irrational in their enjoyments, but on the contrary to awaken in them some idea of truth and propriety, in the art of dramatic poetry and the business of an actor, was, I imagine, the primary intention of the plan of your paper. And this, and this only, can justify the allotment of so much room in the Chronicle to imaginary heroes, who, most assuredly, are not so much the objects of public attention, as the importance of a man to himself may make the players dream they are. A friend of mine once told me a story of a young girl with whom he

travelled in a stage coach to Kensington: "The Town is most prodigiously busy," says she. Pray Ma'am, said the Gentleman, what employs the Town so much at present?-- "Short aprons, Sir, are coming into fashion, and every body's hurried out of their wits to make 'em fast enough."-- Not unlike this girl, who conceived that what was doing in her mistress's shop must be the concern of mankind, the Players, as soon as the Houses open, suggest to themselves that the memoirs of the Theatre engross all our imaginations; and P. P. the Parish-clerk, is outdone in self-sufficiency by every actor in the company.

May it not be fairly inferred, Sir, that the writer, who has hitherto supplied you with criticism, has viewed them all in the same light? how otherwise could it happen that a muster-roll of their names hath been so constantly presented to us? ad captandum vulgus. To promote the sale of your paper, each actor will tell you his name is inserted: But if I understand the humours of the public rightly, a treatise upon insects would answer the purpose full as well; and the oeconomy and prudence of the Ant would make as considerable a figure in print, as the management of any theatrical grub whatever.

Indeed, if the art be developed; the rule of just imitation established; the rise and process of each passion explained; the beauties of a well complicated fable

pointed out; the touches of character rendered still more pleasing to the intelligent, and palpable to the unfeeling; if it be remarked where poetry, sentiment, and passion, are assembled by the poet, and where the actor catches the flame from him, and glows with a natural warmth: in short, if nature be explained in her secret workings, by a judicious critic, and new lights be let in upon the mind of the reader, then indeed the Chronicle may receive advantage and reputation.

To perform all this, I grant, is a difficult task, and more than can be expected in the course of so quick a publication; but some approaches may be made towards it. If every writer in this way would preserve an independant spirit, and exercise the portion of Judgment, which hath fallen to his share, with Integrity, the criticism would then be manly; and when it is not so, it is downright meanness. Si paulum a summo deæssit, vergit ad imum. Why will not an author be of some little consequence to himself, as well as the players? Indeed to lavish a profusion of praise, the Histrionalis favor, has been the vice of many writers of the age. They have vied with each other in verses to each popular actor; they have made themselves cheap to the under-servants of the muses, and have exalted some of them into an importance of which they have been known to make an arrogant and self-interested use. Potentia sua ad impotentiam est

usus. If we look into the Spectator, the Tatler, and the Guardian, we shall find that the authors of those papers acquitted themselves in their calling with a chaste reserve in this, as indeed in every other respect; and tho' the late Colly Cibber was a manager, and may very fairly be accounted, without any disparagement of the present race of actors, in his double capacity of Dramatic Author and Performer, a genius greatly superior to any of his successors, yet there are no traces of adulation to be found in any of the compositions of his contemporaries. Could a manager in these times produce a comedy within a hundred degrees of the merit of the Careless Husband, what reams of commendatory poems would be poured forth!--what a number of copies of verses would be left at the printers by unknown hands!--and in an ecstasy how would a certain writer cry out, "Did ever dramatic characters rain such uproars of applause?"*--To speak a plain truth, Sir, it seems to me, as if Mr. Bowman, the humble attendant of Lord Chalkstone, had penned most of the criticisms I have lately seen; and from the writers the same idle spirit of adulation descends to the readers, and runs among them from Coffee-house to Coffee-house throughout this metropolis: and thus--it is remarkable what I am going to say--thus a very ingenious French

*Vide Estimate of the Manners.

writer[†] who has lately written against the stage, enjoys a full completion of the wish (namely that a theatrical madness should rage among the enemies of his country) which he has placed in the title page of his book. Dii meliora piis erroremque hostibus illum.--

You will ask me, Sir, if I would have the above-mentioned spirit of adulation converted into a strain of invective? I answer, no; all extremes are vicious. I would not have the writer of the Chronicle take a malignant ungentlemanly pleasure in abuse, nor would I have him condescend to pimp for a playhouse. Truth should direct his pen: he should consider whether the managers of our theatres act agreeably to the laudable purposes of the dramatic muse; whether they abstain from bawdy plays, and bawdy farces, with many points of enquiry equally interesting: and, as I have remarked already, the end of his writing should ever be to extend the principles of a true taste, both in writing and acting. Were it not very trite, I should say in the words of Tully, That he should not dare to hazard what is false, and that he should dare to speak every truth.

These, Sir, are my sentiments concerning the office of a writer, who holds intercourse with the public and takes upon him to direct the general taste. If you agree with me, I shall solicit a place for this letter

[†]Rousseau of Geneva.

in the Chronicle; and after that, if the correspondence of so blunt and unfashionable a critic shall prove acceptable to you, or your readers, I shall continue to send you some occasional animadversion, as they may happen to occur in my visits to either theatre; and this I shall endeavour to do like a gentleman and a scholar; certainly I shall ever do it with an INDEPENDENT SPIRIT and with TRUTH. I am, Sir, your constant reader, and humble servant,

Nov. 20, 1758.

ATTICUS.

THE LONDON CHRONICLE, December 2-5, 1758.

THE THEATRE.

To the Author of the Theatrical Paragraphs.

SIR,

Having observed that you gave a place in your department of the Chronicle to the letter, which I sent you, not very long since, relative to the spirit and morals of a critic, I shall now solicit room for another short epistle. The subject I mean to touch upon is Mr. Dodsley's Tragedy of Cleone. Concerning this piece the common Newspapers have informed us of an anecdote, which, in my opinion, gives a kind of poetical consecration to the story, and demands for it the attention of the public.

When we hear that Mr. Pope had made choice of the Legend, on which the present tragedy is founded, in order to raise a dramatic superstructure upon it, indeed we regret that his fine imagination was not exerted to finish the design: then we should have felt the power of the author of Eloisa to Abelard; all the fine strokes of passion, all the vehemence of love, madness and despair, in all probability, would have been introduced into the piece. But, it is said, his apprehension of ill treatment from an incensed manager deterred him from the execution of his plan. The public are however indebted to Mr. Dodsley for giving us Mr. Pope's favourite subject; the more especially as he has laid the circumstances in a manner so interesting and affecting, that they brought tears from every eye in the Theatre, on the first night of its exhibition.

It is not my purpose at present to give a detail of the fable, lest I should deprive those who have not seen it acted, of the pleasure of learning the whole in a more feeling manner at the playhouse: and indeed to be guilty of such an anticipation before the run of the play is over, would be an act of injustice to the author. When it is published I shall send you some critical remarks upon it; in the meantime I must own I had a pleasure, which the Theatre has not afforded me this great while; I mean the pleasure of relieving real heartfelt anguish by a flood of tears. And this did not happen once only;

the humanity of the whole audience burst into these overflowings several times during the representation. The effect was produced by a tale of domestic distress, conducted with perspicuity and simplicity. The language is not so laboured and metaphorical as the Theatrical diction has been of late years; to elevate and surprise was not the aim of the author. To move the heart with the natural strokes of an Otway, rather than of a Rowe, seems to have been the intention of Mr. Dodsley; and the tears poured forth on the occasion are the best evidences that he has not mistaken his talents.

Having paid my tribute of thanks to the author, it were downright ingratitude, should I dismiss this letter without mention of Mrs. Bellamy. Never did a part more naturally become an actress: her first appearance was amiable and interesting; and her words fell from her, as if they were the pure effusions of her heart. Artless innocence, truth, candor, and every lovely quality, seemed to accompany her in her distress; the storm no sooner began to gather about her, than every mind in the theatre took a tender interest in her fortunes; and her departure from her own house, in order to fly for shelter to her father's, with her little infant, was executed by this performer in a manner so affecting, and with such genuine accents of the passions, that he must have arrived at a very high degree of inhumanity, who can hear and see her

without melting into tenderness. Were I to say that I have not seen scenes of madness better executed either by Mr. Garrick or Mrs. Cibber, I am sure I might hazard the assertion without being confuted by any judicious critic, who has felt the power of Mrs. Bellamy in the character of Cleone. Her attachment to her dear infant, the fixed position of her eyes, which shewed that every other object was excluded from her mind, her tender prattle to him, when she thinks him alive, and her lamentations over him, when again she thinks him dead, were traits of nature as finely performed by her, as they were difficult to be executed. Her gradual recollection of her senses, after a fainting fit, will hardly be excelled by any performer on the stage. I have seen a circumstance similar to this, admirably exhibited in King Lear: but Mrs. Bellamy did not fall short of it. There was a slow movement of the eye that denoted astonishment, and marked, at the same time, the ideas that slowly broke in upon her recovering understanding. Her manner of gazing at her father, and by degrees recollecting him, was exquisitely tender; and, to be brief, the paleness that covered her face, till she expired, spoke an imagination feelingly possessed by the ideas which nature and the poet suggested.

After having censured, in a former letter, all those writers who are too lavish of their praise, I should

not have been so profuse of it myself, were I not convinced from the uproar of applause given to Mrs. Bellamy, when she came on to speak the epilogue, that I have here delivered the sentiments of the whole audience.

I shall conclude with saying, that Mr. Sparks pleased me, in spite of Wilkinson's mimicry; and that I think the tragedy of Cleone, and the performance of it, are both highly deserving of the public favour. I am, Sir, your humble servant,

ATTICUS.

APPENDIX B

LIST OF ALL THEATRE PAPERS AND INTRODUCTORY LETTERS APPEARING IN THE 1757-58 LONDON CHRONICLE

FIRST SERIES

- January 18-20, 1757, letter signed "Tragicomicus."
January 20-22, 1757, The Theatre, No. 1.
January 22-25, 1757, The Theatre, No. 2.
January 25-27, 1757, The Theatre, No. 3.
January 27-29, 1757, The Theatre, No. 4.
Jan. 29-Feb. 1, 1757, The Theatre, No. 5.
February 1-3, 1757, The Theatre, No. 6.
February 3-5, 1757, The Theatre, No. 7.
February 5-8, 1757, The Theatre, No. 8.
February 8-10, 1757, The Theatre, No. 9.
February 10-12, 1757, The Theatre, No. 10.
February 12-15, 1757, The Theatre, No. 11.
February 15-17, 1757, The Theatre, No. 12.
February 17-19, 1757, The Theatre, No. 13.
February 19-22, 1757, The Theatre, No. 14.
February 22-24, 1757, The Theatre, No. 15.
February 24-26, 1757, The Theatre, No. 16.
Feb. 26-March 1, 1757, The Theatre, No. 17.

March 1-3, 1757, The Theatre, No. 18.
March 3-5, 1757, The Theatre, No. 19.
March 5-8, 1757, The Theatre, No. 20.
March 8-10, 1757, The Theatre, No. 21.
March 10-12, 1757, The Theatre, No. 22.
March 12-15, 1757, The Theatre, No. 23.
March 15-17, 1757, The Theatre, No. 24.
March 17-19, 1757, The Theatre, No. 25.
March 19-22, 1757, The Theatre, No. 24.
March 22-24, 1757, The Theatre, No. 25.
March 24-26, 1757, The Theatre, No. 26.
March 26-29, 1757, The Theatre, No. 27.
March 29-31, 1757, The Theatre, No. 28.
March 31-April 2, 1757, The Theatre, No. 29.
April 2-5, 1757, The Theatre, No. 30.
April 5-7, 1757, The Theatre, No. 30.
April 7-9, 1757, The Theatre, No. 31.
April 9-12, 1757, The Theatre, No. 32.
April 12-14, 1757, The Theatre, No. 33.
April 14-16, 1757, The Theatre, No. 34.

SECOND SERIES

November 26-29, 1757, letter signed "Th. C."
Nov. 29-Dec. 1, 1757, The Theatre, No. 1.
December 3-6, 1757, The Theatre, No. 1.
December 6-8, 1757, The Theatre, No. 2.
December 8-10, 1757, The Theatre, No. 3,
signed "Philomuse."

THIRD SERIES

- October 3-5, 1758, The Theatre, No. I.
 October 5-7, 1758, The Theatre, No. II.
 October 7-10, 1758, The Theatre, No. III.
 October 12-14, 1758, The Theatre, No. IV.
 October 14-17, 1758, The Theatre, No. 5.
 October 19-21, 1758, The Theatre, No. 6.

FOURTH SERIES

- November 7-9, 1758, letter signed "N. S.," and
The Theatre, No. 7.
 November 9-11, 1758, The Theatre, No. 8.
 November 11-14, 1758, The Theatre, No. 9.
 November 14-16, 1758, The Theatre, No. 10.
 November 18-21, 1758, letter signed "Atticus,"
 and The Theatre, No. 11.

FIFTH SERIES

- December 2-5, 1758, The Theatre, signed "Atticus."
 December 7-9, 1758, The Theatre.
 December 9-12, 1758, The Theatre.
 December 19-21, 1758, The Theatre.

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