

Heteropticks: Spectatorship and
Theatricality on the Eighteenth-Century
London Stage and Beyond

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Abstract

The central research question of this project asks how to account for the relationship between spectator and spectacle across a variety of texts which construct theatrical and performance spaces in eighteenth-century London.

This study begins with an exploration of *The Spectator*, (1710-11) and asks what is at stake in the visual encounter between spectator and spectacle, and how this is structured. It uses *The Spectator* as a key text that resonates throughout eighteenth-century discourse on vision and spectacle. Not only does *The Spectator* explore the theatre and specifically theatrical practices, but it is more broadly invested in ways of looking and visual practices in the eighteenth-century city. Critics have traditionally dealt with *The Spectator* as advancing a particular disciplinary mode of vision, however I suggest ways in which *The Spectator* may be understood more broadly to advance a different and more pluralistic model of eighteenth-century spectatorship.

After having established the imaginative framework of what is happening in the spectatorial economy in Chapter One, subsequent chapters are organised thematically by space, taking into account first the theatre and then the pleasure garden. These chapters are concerned with exploring the cultural construction of these performance sites across a range of literature and visual sources including novels, plays, poems, prints and ephemera. Chapter Two maps out the imaginative spaces of the theatre auditorium, the stage, and backstage space, taking into account the female spectator specifically, and how women participate in spectatorial practices in the theatre space. Chapter Three maps out the pleasure garden as a theatrical space. Using the concept of sympotic space as a way to begin thinking about the pleasure garden theatrically, I argue for a holistic appraisal of the pleasure garden suited to its variety of spectacle and performance.

Contents

Acknowledgements	p. 5
List of Illustrations	p. 6
Introduction	p. 8
Chapter One: Spectatorship in <i>The Spectator</i>	p.17
Chapter Two: Imagining the Theatre	p. 60
Chapter Three: Mapping the Pleasure Garden	p. 112
Conclusions	p. 157
Bibliography	p. 163

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List of Illustrations

- 0.1** *Effects of Tragedy* (London: 1795). Held by The British Museum. Museum number: 1861,0518.1007 p. 14
- 0.2** William Hogarth, *The Laughing Audience* (London: 1766-1784). Held by The British Museum. Museum number: 1935,0522.1.21 p. 15
- 0.3** *Mrs Siddons* (after Beechey), from the *Lady's New Pocket Magazine* (London: 1795). held by the Victoria and Albert Museum, Blythe House Archive p. 16
- 1.1** *A peep into Brest with a navel review!* (London: July 1 1794). Held by Library of Congress. Call number: PC 3 - 1794 p. 57
- 1.2** *Symptoms of lewdness, or a Peep into the Boxes* (London: May 20 1784). Held by the The British Museum. Museum number: 1868,0808.6349 p. 58
- 2.1** *The Ruins of the Theatre from Bridges Street, after the Fire.* (London: 1809). Held by The British Museum. Museum number: 1880,1113.3125 p. 104
- 2.2** George Cruikshank and Isaak Cruikshank, *Acting magistrates committing themselves being their first appearance on this stage as performed at the National Theatre Covent Garden* (London: 1809). Held by The British Museum. Museum number: 1868,0808.7857 p. 105
- 2.3** Thomas Rowlandson, *Exhibition Stare Case* (London: 1811). Held by The British Museum. Museum number: 1876,0311.66 p. 106
- 2.4** *The Overflowing of the Pitt* (London: Sarah Sledge, 1771). Held by The British Museum. Museum number: 1991,1214.19 p. 107
- 2.5** *The Pit Door / La Porte du Parterre* (London: Carington Bowles, 1784). Held by The British Museum. Museum number: 1935,0522.1.41 p. 108
- 2.6** Frontispiece to Nicholas Nipclose, *The Theatres. A poetical dissection* (London and York: John Bell and C. Etherington, 1772) p. 109
- 2.7** *The Green Room Scuffle* (London: 1748). Held by The British Museum. Museum number: 1868,0808.13131 p. 110
- 3.1** Thomas Rowlandson, *Vaux-Hall* (London: 1785) Held by The British Museum. Museum number: 1880,1113.5484 3.2 p. 141
- 3.2** *Ridotto al' Fresco or the Humours of Spring Gardens* (1732) Held by Library of Congress. Call number: PC 3 - 1732 p. 142

- 3.3** Francis Hayman, *Mademoiselle Catherina* (1743) in David Coke and Alan Borg *Vauxhall Gardens: A History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2011) p. 143
- 3.4** *Taking Water for Vauxhall* (London: 1790) Held by The British Museum. Museum number: 1861,0518.959 p. 144
- 3.5** *The Vauxhall Demi-Rep* from M. Darly, *Macaronies, Characters, Caricatures &c* (London: 1772). Held by The British Museum. Museum number: 1915,0313.169 p. 145
- 3.6** *The Inside of the Ladies Garden at Vauxhall* (London: S. Fores, 1788) Held by The British Museum. Museum number: 1935,0522.4.37 p. 146
- 3.7** *A wonderful thing from Paris [Madame Sacchi at Covent Garden]* (London: 1816) in Coke and Borg (2011) p. 147
- 3.8** A.C. Pugin and J. Bluck, after T Rowlandson, *Vauxhall Garden* (1809) from Rudolph Ackermann, *Microcosm of London*, III pl.88 p. 148
- 3.9** *View of Vauxhall Gardens*, from the *Lady's Magazine* (1800), in Coke and Borg (2011) p. 149
- 3.10** Moses Harris, *The Vauxhall Fan* (1736), in Coke and Borg (2011) p. 150
- 3.11** James Gilray, *Blowing up the Pic-Nics: or, Harlequin Quixote attacking the Puppets* (London: Hannah Humphries, 1802) Held by The British Museum. Museum number: 1851,0901.1084 p. 151
- 3.12** Walter Sickert, *Little Dot Hetherington at the Bedford Music Hall* (1888). Held by Yale Centre for British Art. Accession number: B1979.12.819 p. 152
- 3.13** *Representation of the Grand Saloon in Vauxhall Gardens* (1786), in Coke and Borg (2011) p. 153
- 3.14** Edouard Manet, *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère* (1882). Held by The Courtauld Gallery, London p. 154
- 4.1** *The Ballet Theatre* (c. 1840 - 1845). Held by The British Museum. Museum number: 1966,0212.1 p. 158
- 4.2** *Mademoiselle Parisot* (London: 1794) Held by The British Museum. Museum number: 1868,0808.6524 p. 159
- 4.3** Programme and handbill, Theatre Royal Bury St Edmunds (2009) p. 160
- 4.4** Handbill, Art Macabre, *Masquerade* (London: 2016) p. 161

Introduction

This project is an exploration of eighteenth-century texts about spectatorship in performative spaces in London. It explores the construction of the spectatorial act, and also the spatially located practices and organisation of the spectator and spectacle in specific performance spaces. It aims to uncover how different theatrical spaces are culturally constructed in a variety of texts in the eighteenth century.

The first chapter seeks to outline the spectatorial project of Mr Spectator in Addison and Steele's *The Spectator* (1712). The subsequent chapters are organised by space. Chapter Two brings together literature that constructs the space of the theatre building, including a number of seldom-accessed theatrical texts. Chapter Three explores the pleasure garden, and argues for a more holistic approach to performance in the pleasure garden than has previously been suggested.

In positioning the critical aims of this thesis, Laura Engel (ed.), *The Public's Open to Us All: Essays on Women and Performance in Eighteenth-Century England* (2009) is a useful counterpoint. This collection represents an approach which endeavours to account for a variety of cultural production around the eighteenth-century stage. This collection presents a broad-based enquiry into performance, which is considered as theatrical, authorial and social. The contemporary performance of eighteenth-century texts is also discussed. My approach is in line with this collection's aims of 'intertextuality and dialogue', and consideration of various modes of performance.¹

To introduce my approach, it is first necessary to broadly outline some pertinent theorists in performance studies and discuss how these may be brought to bear on eighteenth-century literature. Richard Schechner is useful in describing the underpinnings of my approach to the project. His holistic vision of performance in *Performance Theory* was revolutionary at the time of publication, and remains vital today in teaching and promulgating Performance Studies. Schechner is broadly

¹Laura Engel (ed.), *The Public's Open to Us All: Essays on Women and Performance in Eighteenth-Century England* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2009) p. 7.

interested in the 'performance event'.² Born in a large measure out of "happenings" and performance art of the 1960s that sought to stage performance in spaces that challenged the concept of a theatre building, Schechner extends his concept of performance globally and across a variety of modes from scripted theatre to shamanic ritual. Vitaly, his vision of performance does not rely on what might traditionally be thought to be the essential components of a theatrical performance: a theatre, a stage, a script, even human actors. What is central, however, is the audience. Schechner constantly enquires into the relationship between performer and observer, negotiating and challenging the boundaries between them. His highly influential practice and thought exerts a pervasive and often unspoken influence in the field. Recent scholarship in dance theory, for example expounds a "choreological perspective" which relies heavily on Schechner's precedent in its insistence upon parity of focus upon spectacle, spectator and the maker of performance. This shows how researchers in multiple modes of performance, across different types of "stage", use this theoretical underpinning, and points towards my own aim to extend this line of enquiry into eighteenth-century literary sources.

Schechner's theory, based in theatre practice, may be seen to be counter-intuitive in some ways to a literary mode of enquiry. His source material often comes from ethnographic research from anthropologists in the field, and he is interested in live experience and the technologies of recording performance, rather than historical or literary sources. Rather than engaging in close textual analysis, he employs an almost scientific approach of making detailed charts and using diagrams to map out performance- famously the 'web' and the 'fan' seek to figure out conceptual shapes or 'deep structures' of performance.³ However, there is a common antecedent for Schechner's work and eighteenth-century studies, particularly in sociability, in Erving Goffman's *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959).⁴ Both use Goffman to explore social organisation and public behaviours, and employ his ideas of theatricality to investigate social interaction. This kind of sociological perspective employs a rich language of performance - Goffman's formulation of backstage and

² Richard Schechner, *Performance Theory* (1988; London and New York: Routledge, 2003) p.

³ Schechner, p. xvi, p. xviii.

⁴ Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (London: Penguin, 1959).

mainstage public arenas is one example that will recur in my discussion in Chapter Two of backstage space in the theatre. It is also useful to bear in mind Richard Sennett's discussion of the audience and the body in eighteenth-century culture. His 'bridge' between the theatre and the street is used to theorise the structuring of public life and public roles.⁵ Schechner uses Goffman as a jumping-off point to consider both lived and theatricalised behaviour, and how both are framed and performed. Goffman underlines the importance of reading how humans are involved in 'constructing and staging multiple identities', as opposed to a dismissive attitude of reading 'a kind of falseness' into notions of theatricality.⁶ This has a particular resonance in my investigation into eighteenth-century sources, firstly because satirical texts of the period provide a rich source of literature about theatre and performance in the period, and secondly as many critical narratives that explore vision and performance often run into notions of artificiality or duplicity in relation to theatricality and spectatorship. This project aims to show other ways of reading performance and theatricality as productive. Schechner often circles around Goffman's phrase 'reality is being performed', also, as a neat and yet richly suggestive phrase that speaks to the cultural importance of the theatrical paradigm.⁷ In addition, Schechner formulates a 'Goffman actor' or 'Goffman performer', characteristically illustrated in a chart, as a way of identifying and discussing everyday performers, as opposed to the professional actor or the person framed as performing.⁸ This is central to the conception of the crowd as performers, which will be germane to my reading of the pleasure garden in Chapter Three. This opens up ways of discussing performance wherein subjects may or may not be aware of their performance, and points towards the culturally productive social ritual of the promenading spectator in the pleasure garden.

I would like to continue by defining my key term 'spectatorship', using performance theorist Gay McAuley to do so. This text is crucial to my understanding of spectatorship and how the performance moment is constituted, and McAuley's

⁵ Richard Sennett, 'Public Roles' in *The Fall Of Public Man* (1977; London: Penguin, 2002) p. 64.

⁶ Schechner, p. x.

⁷ Goffman, in Schechner, p. 14

⁸ Schechner, p. 300.

structuring of the spectatorial relationship is key when considering my analyses of eighteenth-century texts. There are two main thrusts of McAuley's chapter "The Spectator in the Space" which are particularly pertinent to my thesis: the unchanging conditions of spectatorship, and the variables that change over time. Variables like space, class and gender will be under sustained analysis in my exploration of texts representing eighteenth-century theatrical spaces in London.

Spectatorship is more than the spectator and the spectacle in some kind of proximity to each other. McAuley is precise in her delineation of the exact conditions of spectatorship and her model is very neat in its simplicity. At the heart of the theatrical event - whether this be in a recognised theatre building or elsewhere - is what McAuley terms to the 'play of looks'.⁹ This is the vital exchange or economy of looks that is the engine of spectatorship. It is made up of:

1. Spectator/Spectacle look. Perhaps what we would naturally think of as the operative "look" of watching the play, this is complicated by the eighteenth-century idiom of going to "hear" a play. The play text and stage design can be investigated to ascertain where the stage picture seeks to direct the spectators' gaze, and theatrical records of audiences to tease out how this look is imagined to actually operate. Many theatrical prints of the theatre audience stage this look (See Figure 0.1, for example). The ideal spectator in this print seems to be the woman in the front row, her gaze towards the stage mediated by her veil. Her eyes are in fact downcast, in contrast to the woman in the box toward the left of the image, who scrambles indecorously for a better view through her opera-glass. However the most striking look in this print is in fact not the look towards the stage at all, but the amorous look between spectators.

2. Spectator/spectator look. How the audience interacts visually with each other is an important part of the theatregoing experience, and certainly in eighteenth-century discourse a vital part of constructing performance as a cultural event. Hogarth's *The Laughing Audience* (See Figure 0.2) is a striking visual example that sets the audience viewing the play, towards the bottom half of the print, in contrast with the interplay of touch and gaze between the spectators at the top. Gay McAuley uses

⁹ Gay McAuley, *Space in Performance: Making Meaning in the Theatre* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1999) p. 255.

this image to discuss the notion of activity and passivity in the audience, which is a recurring question in many of the critical articles I will discuss in this project. For McAuley, the idea of the spectator as a 'passive entity needs to be treated with caution', as it is often overstated and in fact goes against what the historical record actually reveals of audience activity.¹⁰ Certainly prints like the Hogarth show that spectatorial activity in the eighteenth-century audience on multiple levels, from consuming the play to consuming food and whatever else the orange-sellers may be offering.

3. Spectacle/Spectator look. The moment when the spectacle looks back. Theatrically speaking, moments when the actor on stage looks and speaks to the audience directly (direct address) are profitable to address. Moments when the socially spectated object looks back are equally culturally charged. McAuley draws attention to the violently inflected idiom surrounding this particular look - "lay 'em in the aisles", "knock 'em dead" - the 'aggression and fear' of which are part of the unique thrill of going to theatre, she states, 'exists because the actor looks back'.¹¹ William Beechey's portrait of Sarah Siddons is one of the most striking examples in this period of the actor looking out towards the spectator. (See Figure 0.3) The image here is from an etching after the original, reproduced in a ladies magazine, and points towards the ways in which the actor's body is reproduced and disseminated in the period. This print shows a detail from the original portrait, focussing upon Siddons' face. The arresting gaze of the full-length original is magnified. Siddons has an intriguingly soft, personable look here, maybe with a twinkle in her eye. This is perhaps compounded when contrasted with the imperious tragic figures she is usually associated with. Alongside this, the mask in her hand seems very much akin to the facial expressions which are represented in theatrical prints of Siddons in her celebrated tragic roles. Here we see, then, a peeling off of the constructed stage character; Siddons here is colluding with the audience in revealing the complex interplay of realities that takes place on her performing body. Her gaze is alluring, as if she is revealing a secret, yet also quite mischievous - can we trust the reality of what she is revealing to us?

¹⁰ McAuley, p. 240.

¹¹ McAuley, p. 261.

4. Spectacle/Spectacle look. The exchange between spectated figures must be accounted for too in this economy of looks in the theatrical space. Extra-textual encounters on the stage may create meaning as much as the playtext itself; similarly the spectacle may perform beyond its expected socially scripted exchange. Images of the crowd as a body of performers, for example the images of the audience at the pleasure garden I will analyse in Chapter Three, provide a rich and complex imagining of this look.

Rather than each look happening independently and divergently, the play of looks is an ever-turning engine that produces the cultural act of spectatorship. This sense of multiplicity and the concurrent nature of the play of looks is important when dealing with texts that construct complex and multivalent acts of spectatorship. It is seeking to account for all of these looks, and their interplay with each other, that informs my approach towards eighteenth-century theatrical culture.

There are other unchanging conditions of performance that must be understood as producing the performance event - the multiplicity of vision that spectators are afforded in the theatrical space and the “liveness” or lived experience of theatregoing. This encompasses the sheer number of visual foci that abound in the theatrical space and also acknowledges spectatorial choice. These unchanging conditions of performance are central to an understanding of how performance and theatrical space work. My aim is to place this blueprint of how spectatorship is understood to work in conversation with eighteenth-century sources. In the chapters that follow, the importance of the interchange and economy of gazes that McAuley so clearly elucidates, will be foregrounded and interrogated in relation to a variety of eighteenth-century texts, beginning with *The Spectator*.

Figure 0.1



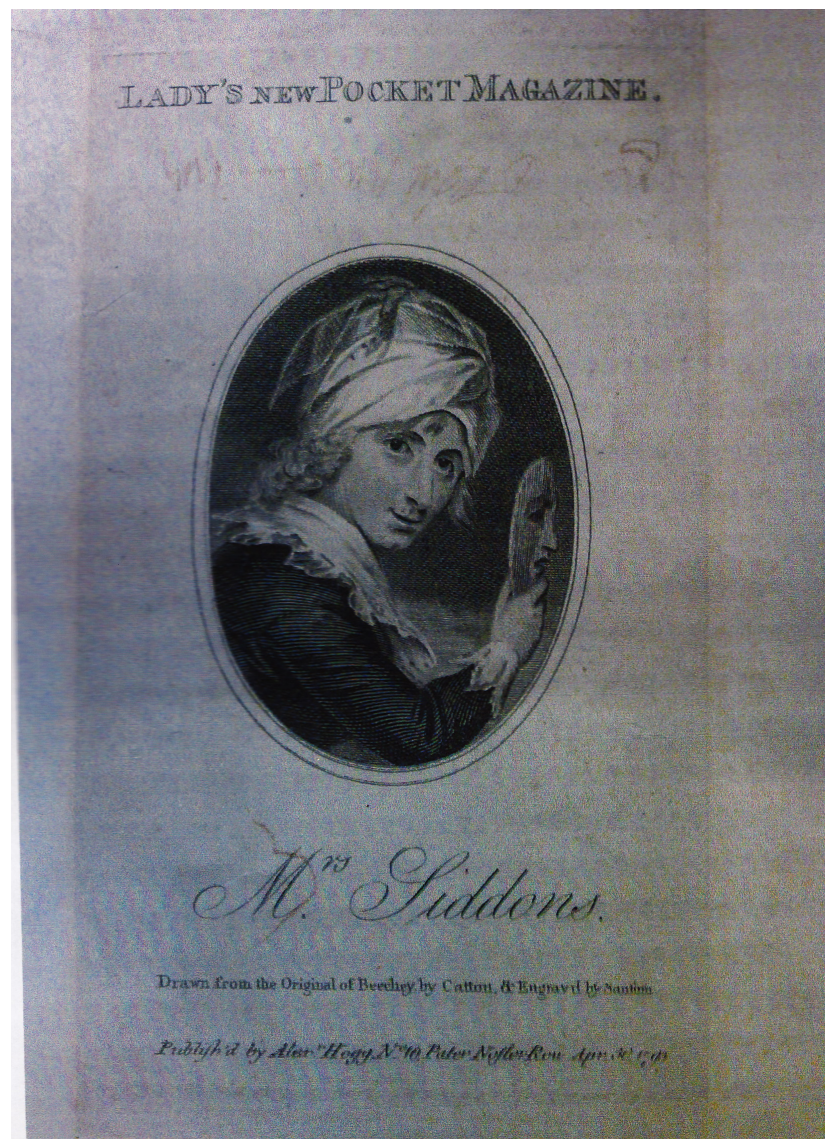
Effects of Tragedy (London: 1795). Held by The British Museum. Museum number: 1861,0518.1007.

Figure 0.2



William Hogarth, *The Laughing Audience* (London: 1766-1784). Held by The British Museum. Museum number: 1935,0522.1.21.

Figure 0.3



Mrs Siddons (after Beechey), from the *Lady's New Pocket Magazine* (London: 1795).
held by the Victoria and Albert Museum, Blythe House Archive.

Chapter One

Spectatorship in *The Spectator*

Introducing the Character of Mr Spectator

Joseph Addison and Richard Steele's *The Spectator* was a single sheet comprising one essay, printed six days a week for one penny. It enjoyed a successful print run in London from 1711-13, and after its initial publication it was subsequently anthologised and reprinted throughout the eighteenth century and after. Its lasting popularity has made it an influential text both at the time of its initial print run and beyond. The essays encompass a variety of subjects and tones, ranging from humorous satirical pieces to reflective essays on, for example, the passions and the pleasures of the imagination. Addison and Steele's narrating character, Mr Spectator, can be found discoursing on dress, the newly-imported art-form of opera, gardening, shopping - the everyday life of London's polite classes. Addison and Steele insisted that *The Spectator* would not publish on news or politics. Rather, their project was to comprise of educational and recreational essays concerned with the polite conduct of life, the formation of taste, navigating the social world and urbane spaces. Drawing an audience of relative heterogeneity from across the middle spectrum of life, *The Spectator* is an important text for exploring eighteenth-century culture in the city.

This chapter will examine the way in which *The Spectator* structures the act of spectatorship by investigating the character of Mr Spectator and the schema of spectatorship that he sets up. It also aims, through a broad and holistic reading of the publication, to uncover pluralistic ways of understanding looking and engaging with the ideas of seeing, sight and spectatorship. Such an analysis is important as it highlights a seldom-assessed aspect of the publication, one which has been overlooked in the critical positioning that many commentators take in their focus on reform and control within *The Spectator*. Considering *The Spectator* more theatrically and examining the play of looks at work in the publication is a valuable strategy for opening up a deeper understanding of spectatorship in its pages and more generally.

To begin, it is first necessary to introduce the character of Mr Spectator, who is set out by Addison and Steele in the very first number of *The Spectator* on Thursday, 1st March 1711.

Thus I live in the World, rather as a Spectator of Mankind, than as one of the Species; by which means I have made my self a Speculative Statesman, Soldier, Merchant and Artizan, without ever meddling with any Practical Part in Life. I am very well versed in the Theory of an Husband, or a Father, and can discern the Errors in the Oeconomy, Business and Diversion of others, better than those who are engaged in them; as Standers-by discover Blots, which are apt to escape those who are in the Game.

...

In short, I have acted in all the parts of my Life as a Looker-on, which is the Character I intend to preserve in this Paper.¹²

This widely read and well studied introduction to the character of Mr Spectator gives a blueprint for his mode of spectating. From this introduction, his spectatorial position seems rigid and unwavering. Never involved or attached, the ideal spectator here remains removed from a spectacle which he knows all the more thoroughly from his detached vantage point. Mr Spectator here, in his separation from the spectacle, models the authority of disinterested observation. The clear distinction between a spectacle and the detached critical observer seems concrete. There is no reciprocity in this scheme; the spectator's gaze is primary and reaps all the necessary information from a passive spectacle – indeed, a spectacle that remains seemingly oblivious in this case. Thinking this through in terms of Gay McAuley's play of looks, the spectator is active and enacting a one-way look upon the passive spectacle. There doesn't seem to be, in *The Spectator* No. 1 at least, any exchange or economy of looks.

Shortly after this description of himself as the speculative statesman, and just as well known, comes Mr Spectator's assertion in *The Spectator* No. 10 of the cultural space his diurnal speculations shall penetrate into - 'Clubs and Assemblies, at Tea-Tables and in Coffee-Houses' - spaces which are polite, cultured, urbane - and urban.¹³ As Mr Spectator introduces himself, then, he also stakes out the twin

¹² Donald Bond, ed., *The Spectator*, 5 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), I, pp. 4-5.

¹³ Bond, I, p. 44.

concerns so vital to my reading of the publication and to the project of this thesis: spectatorship and the city spaces it takes place in.

Mr Spectator's plotting out of the spectator/spectacle relationship has far reaching implications, indeed traces of it can be detected in current visual culture scholarship. For example, art historian Shearer West, writing on theatrical prints (a kind of theatrical literature which I will discuss further in Chapter 2) expresses caution about using these kinds of images as theatrical sources, as they constitute worryingly messy texts and sit far too close to the rabble of the audience's subjective experience of theatregoing - absolutely not conforming to the Addisonian ideal of removed observation.

Kristina Straub also investigates *The Spectator* No. 1 specifically in relation to theatrical culture as practiced throughout the eighteenth century. She describes its 'decorous' ideal of a 'detached' observer as a primary theoretical model of spectatorship that the lived theatrical practices of performance and production continually crashed up against and challenged, particularly in the areas of the body and sexuality.¹⁴ For Straub, the 'ideal spectator' as presented by Addison and Steele is one 'detached from the spectacle', and even 'benignly distant'.¹⁵ Quoting Steele in *The Spectator*'s forerunner, *The Tatler*, Straub draws parallels with Isaac Bickerstaffe's pleasure in 'being happy, and seeing others happy' for a pleasant two hours in the playhouse.¹⁶ For Straub, this sense of pleasure and involvement with the audience, so pleasingly expressed in *The Tatler*, finds a continuation in Mr Spectator's benignly removed spectatorial position.

This critical stance is, however, radically different from that of the two critics I will investigate most fully in this chapter, Scott Paul Gordon and Manushag N Powell, for whom the possibility of a benign Mr Spectator seems absent. Indeed, Gordon very firmly places his thought in opposition to a tradition of reading the

¹⁴ Kristina Straub, *Sexual Suspects* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992) p. 8.

¹⁵ Straub, p. 8.

¹⁶ Richard Steele, *Tatler*, (1709) in Straub, p.8.

“gentle” Spectator and instead focuses on discipline and threat.¹⁷ It is my aim here to explore the implications of these strands of critical thought and point towards a more multivalent reading of spectatorship in *The Spectator* than they allow.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, Fanny Burney’s play *The Witlings* (1779), which is heavily interested in modes of viewing, uses the Addisonian model of spectatorship to query social performances, especially in the gendered spaces of the milliner’s shop and the salon. Burney knowingly name-drops Addison in Act IV to cheekily underline her literary underpinnings, as Mrs Sapiens declaims her learned (but really quite pedestrian) opinion, ‘For *my* part, I have always thought that the best papers in the Spectator are those of Addison’.¹⁸ Burney also uses the aptly-named Censor - Mr Spectator styles himself “Censor” in a number of essays - to explore how an Addisonian position of detached observation can be maintained, or not, in a social theatre of ladies’ millinery shops and salon tea tables. Later, in the Romantic-period theatre theory of Joanna Baillie, issues of detachment and objectivity are intensely debated as she seeks to get ever more deeply into private spaces and private psyches in her *Plays on the Passions* (1798-1812). Baillie very definitely intended her plays for performance, not for closeted reading, and yet her playtexts explore the interiority of deep-seated passions. Alongside this, Baillie’s *Introductory Discourse*, which prefaces the plays, sets out her vision for more intimate styles of theatre stage design and lighting - something akin to a modern sense of a studio theatre - in order to foreground and experiment with the sense of an intimate relationship between the audience and actors. Figuring the relationship between spectator and spectacle, then, animates a great deal of important eighteenth-century theatrical literature both textually and in terms of staging practices.

The basic blueprint that *The Spectator* offers, then, is a very useful springboard from which to think about theatrical culture throughout the eighteenth century. However, I wish to unpick this spectatorial schema even further, and access the much more far-reaching vista that *The Spectator* offers. Straub notes in her analysis of *The*

¹⁷ Scott Paul Gordon, ‘Voyeuristic Dreams: Mr Spectator and the Power of Spectacle’, *The Eighteenth Century*, 36 (1995) p.9

¹⁸ Fanny Burney, *The Witlings*, ed. by Peter Sabor and Geoffrey Sill (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview, 2002) p. 116, iv. 95-6.

Spectator No. 1 that there is a certain ‘irony’ voiced in Addison and Steele’s introduction to their character.¹⁹ She states that ‘Critical authority in general depends on a clear separation between the spectator and the spectacle, but the irony of this passage suggests the untenability of this separation even as it voices it.’²⁰ Although helpfully proposing that we read *Spectator* No. 1 ironically, and not treat the spectatorial schema it proposes as an unequivocally stated paradigm, Straub does not precisely indicate in what ways exactly it is ironic and what the function of this irony is. Indeed I would go further and propose that very often *The Spectator* does not, to use a theatrical term, “play it straight”, and that bearing in mind both the straight reading and the ironic and more playful narrative simultaneously can be a productive approach to *The Spectator*’s politics of looking.

In a similar manner to Kristina Straub, Scott Paul Gordon, in his *Voyeuristic Dreams*, asserts the authority of Mr Spectator and how this breaks down in practice. Rather than in terms of lived performance practices in the theatre, for Gordon resistance is enacted in the social sphere through ‘strategic self-fashioning’, in the theatre of everyday life.²¹ In addition, the way in which this resistance is modelled differs significantly from Straub. In line with his authoritarian portrayal of Mr Spectator, this strategy is also described in terms of aggression. However, before considering these ‘aggressive spectacles’, firstly it is important to investigate how exactly the spectatorial economy is structured by Gordon.²²

For Gordon, Mr Spectator is a singular, monolithic eye (or, indeed, “I”) whose ocular domination serves as a tool of control and power. Although, as I hope to show, this portrayal of Mr Spectator is problematic in several ways, Gordon does address a number of issues surrounding the critical reception of *The Spectator*, and Mr Spectator as a character or literary device in particular. Firstly, Gordon’s project, inquiring into the realm of spectatorship, marks a departure from previous criticism which, perhaps

¹⁹ Straub, p 7.

²⁰ Straub, p.7.

²¹ Gordon, p.17.

²² Gordon, p.19.

surprisingly given *The Spectator's* very title, hesitates to examine the ways in which Mr Spectator looks. Gordon also explicitly addresses a previous critical tendency to avoid dealing with Mr Spectator as a literary device or tool. He confronts the tendency to view Mr Spectator as a kind of baffling or 'ridiculous' figure, who critics have tended to avoid rather than read fully as an assiduously deployed literary device.²³ However, the picture painted by Gordon is of a punishing, single-minded, and single-visioned, Mr Spectator whose purpose is to control and subdue. He structures an internalised process of reformation which for Gordon is based on fear and paranoia, and the 'threat of public humiliation'.²⁴ Crucially this does not play out literally in the streets and public places of the city. Gordon points towards a satirical episode, which plays out across a number of essays, in which Mr Spectator is involved in a scheme for a kind of proto-bobby on the beat as an example of how limited literal surveillance would be in the complex panorama of London. In this scheme, watchmen are set at intervals throughout the city in observatories to oversee the neighbourhood and discourage any criminal element. The design apparently has been met with success, as it is reported back to Mr Spectator, in quite humorously paternalistic terms, that 'all Persons passing by [the] Observatory behaved themselves with the same Decorum, as if your Honour your self had been present'.²⁵ What soon becomes apparent however is that once past the observatory, 'they are just as they were before'. Criminals soon learn the purview of the watchmen and take to prosecuting their business in unseen, un surveilled spaces. A 'Moving-Centrie' (i.e. sentry) is proposed, much like a policeman on patrol, but never seems to take shape.²⁶ The failed project exposes the limits of visible surveillance in the sprawling city.

Instead, Gordon contends, the surveillance work of *The Spectator* is unseen and is done by a process of internalisation whereby the penetrating and laser-focused gaze of Mr Spectator is potentially anywhere and everywhere, ready to expose and shame.

²³ Gordon, p. 3.

²⁴ Gordon, p. 9.

²⁵ Bond, IV, pp. 399-400

²⁶ Bond, IV, p. 408.

In a growing city teeming with faces, ‘any pair of unfamiliar eyes could be his’.²⁷ Yet I would contend that this panopticon-like reading of *The Spectator* is not borne out by a fuller reading. I find Gordon’s vision of a threatening, ominous all-seeing-eye sweeping across the pages of *The Spectator* and through the streets of London an unrepresentative reading. It does not account for many of the periodical’s complexities, its fascination with sight, the function of its satire, and, especially, it does not capture its humour. Reading the proto-bobby on the beat episode, it seems easy to come to a view of Mr Spectator as aligned with control and punishment, indeed as potentially aligned with the state. However, a fuller reading across the publication uncovers a much more pluralistic concern with facets of sight and spectatorship across a variety of different situations.

In terms of strategies of resistance, Gordon envisions a public adept at self-fashioning who adopt strategies to deflect or deceive Mr Spectator’s gaze. In this uneasy, treacherous landscape ‘one can never know whether a spectacle is looked at or whether it is actually looking’.²⁸ What emerges is something of a cold war, with aggressors and infiltrators, in which everyone is a combatant: ‘all individuals are vulnerable to innocent-seeming but potentially aggressive spectacles’.²⁹ Like Mr Spectator’s spectatorial strategy, this is structured in terms of threat and control, rather than an economy of looks in which spectacle and spectator fully take part, and which is mutually productive.

Beside these public personae, for Gordon, readers of *The Spectator* are rendered oddly ‘impotent’.³⁰ Although self-fashioning in the social sphere is seen as a way of enacting resistance to Mr Spectator’s punishing and controlling gaze, the readers at their morning dish of tea or in the coffee house, engaged in the act of reading, have no such recourse and, in Gordon’s view, are ‘powerless’ and vapidly passive.³¹ As I

²⁷ Gordon, p. 13.

²⁸ Gordon, p. 19.

²⁹ Gordon, p. 19.

³⁰ Gordon, p. 20.

³¹ Gordon, p. 20.

hope to show, reading *The Spectator* more theatrically opens up other possibilities. Instead of starting with a static scheme of spectatorship in which the gaze fixes the spectacle (whether resistant or otherwise), I would like to start with a theatrically-minded approach to looking, one which I want to show *The Spectator* is cognisant of, and often plays with.

Strategies of Reading

The Spectator as a periodical can be approached as diurnal journalism, with its stated intention of providing accessible reading as an accompaniment to the daily tea equipage, and read as such. The reading experience of consuming *The Spectator* essays sequentially, approximating the experience of the publication's original audience reading it day-by-day, is vastly different from accessing the anthologised volumes and cherry-picking essays according to interest and desire. The effect of reading sequentially is one of heterogeneity and the variety inherent in the original meaning of "magazine". The variety of topics and registers in use across the breadth of the publication comes to the fore, with serious, more philosophical essays sitting side-by-side with letters, lighter topics and satire. Faced with the volumes of collected numbers, however, and mindful that this is the way in which the text was mainly accessed throughout the eighteenth century and beyond, decisions have to be made about how to approach the volume of material. The work of critics, such as Straub, Gordon and Powell, that I will be engaging with in this chapter, often use choice phrases from across the breadth of *The Spectator* and very rarely quote at length or engage in the way *The Spectator* is structured and the various strategies readers may adopt. In contrast, my chosen approach aims to engage with *The Spectator* in a more sustained manner. For the purposes of this chapter I have identified a selection of numbers that I shall engage with in full. Texts such as *The Spectator* No. 250 bear out a full reading for the depth of engagement with the topic of sight that is sustained throughout the single number. I shall also unravel narrative arcs that run throughout *The Spectator*, often across its whole publication run. The war of the starers and peepers, for example, is a particular narrative that crops up across a good many numbers of the periodical, and often in snatches in sections of a number that will then

move on to other concerns. Particular moments in the text may be zoomed in on, but this is not necessarily a strictly chronological endeavour. Attempting to embrace long-running arcs reveals cross-pollinations that may flit between periods and indeed start encroaching on different narrative arcs altogether. With these reading strategies I hope to achieve a more rounded reading of *The Spectator* that can more fully account for its version of the multiplicities of forms of sight, spectatorship and speculation.

Processes of Sight and Speculation

Following Scott Paul Gordon, more recent scholarship builds on the notion of *The Spectator*'s single, disciplinary eye. Engaging with these critical discourses can open up ways of investigating in detail how spectatorship is both imagined in the pages of *The Spectator* and figured as a transaction with *The Spectator*'s audience.

In particular, Manushag N. Powell does a great deal in her article 'See No Evil, Hear No Evil, Speak No Evil: Spectation and the Eighteenth-Century Public Sphere' (2012) to extend the reading of the spectatorial act in *The Spectator*. She points towards later imitators of *The Spectator*, such as *The Auditor* and *The Prater*, to insist on a multi-sensorial and embodied experience of social spectating, and she investigates the fraught position of the body in *The Spectator*, and the (imaginary) flesh-and-bone personage of Mr Spectator. However, Powell's scholarship still owes great deal of critical positioning to Scott Paul Gordon's ideas on the authority and aggression inherent in the spectatorial act. For her, Mr Spectator's gaze remains one of aggression and control, deployed as a tool of 'surveillance'.³²

Powell's choice of vocabulary for discussing spectatorship is unusual in several instances. Her use of the word 'spectation', for example, is puzzling.³³ It is an odd-reading word that is rare in use, and does not tap into the rich vein of thought around performance, audience and theatre that "spectatorship" would. Perhaps this is a deliberate move on Powell's part to distance herself from theatre scholarship.

³² Manushag N. Powell, 'See No Evil, Hear No Evil, Speak No Evil: Spectation and the Eighteenth-Century Public Sphere', *Eighteenth Century Studies*, 45 (2012) p. 255.

³³ Powell, p. 255.

Although she mentions 'theatrical practices' in association with the importance of accounting for auditory as well as visual experience (as in "hearing a play"), she does not describe exactly which practices these might be.³⁴ Nevertheless this choice of language leaves questions as to what the practice of "spectation" might involve and what its theoretical underpinnings might be.

In addition, her use of the word 'synesthesia' to expand the sense considered beyond sight is perhaps a misuse, synesthesia being the capacity to experience sensory phenomena with the simultaneous activation of other senses: to see scent, or taste sound, for example. It does, however, highlight Powell's interest in accounting for all the senses working together, a significant development from Gordon's disembodied eye.³⁵ This acknowledgement of the embodied spectator is an important one, and one that Mr Spectator himself continually runs up against even as he writes the fiction of himself as the perfectly removed spectator.

Powell's use of the term *eidolon* is also interesting. Meaning an ideal, it lends itself well to a Mr Spectator who is created as an idealised spectator.³⁶ Its other meaning as a spectre or phantom points towards this idealised position as illusory, and also speaks to Mr Spectator's fleeting, glimpsed, half-seen presence in public company. It goes some way, too, towards plainly calling Mr Spectator a literary device; a character, in short. Specific use of the word *eidolon* is important when reading further into Powell's work. Her book *Performing Authorship in Eighteenth-Century English Periodicals* is built around the concept of the *eidolon* as a literary and performative strategy in periodical publications, and her work details lesser-known periodicals such as the *Female Spectator* and the *Drury-Lane Journal*.

Mr. Spectator as an *eidolon*, is, in Powell's words, 'nameless, insubstantial or transparent'.³⁷ This doesn't quite marry up with her enquiry into how the body keeps

³⁴ Powell, p. 258.

³⁵ Powell, p. 257.

³⁶ Powell, p. 255.

³⁷ Powell, p. 257.

intruding when interrogating Mr Spectator as an observer. Powell chooses not to tackle this head-on, referring instead to 'oddly-deployed' embodied moments, which seems to engender a critical narrative of *The Spectator* that is ill-at-ease with thinking theatrically about spectatorship.³⁸ Powell refers to Addison and Steele's 'oddly deployed representation of the physical senses in which the act of spectating involves far more than sight'.³⁹ Although, again, exactly which these instances might be is not illustrated.

Powell's Mr Spectator also 'refuses the reciprocity of the gaze with his readers', an assertion which is not supported with a primary source.⁴⁰ Although Mr Spectator does narrate instances in which the reciprocity of gaze is problematic to him as an individual, this also comes with an acknowledgement of the workings of the economy of looks, rather than a refusal of the whole process. His preference to avoid eye-contact is itself the problem here.

There is also scope to think literarily in terms of *The Spectator's* exchange with its readers. The act of reading may be thought of as a gaze levelled at Mr Spectator, with readers seeing and assessing his intellect and ideas, and enacting a reciprocity in writing letters. Powell does mention consuming, asserting that Mr Spectator 'does not wish to be consumed [...] unless we count his readers, who consume him optically each day, often while also consuming their breakfasts'.⁴¹ I would suggest that we should definitely count his readers since they are engaged in urban and urbane practices of consumption and spectatorship which *The Spectator* very definitely positions itself within. Added to this, Stuart Sherman, in his *Telling the Time: Clocks, Diaries and English Diurnal Form 1660-1785* (1996), describes the complex process by which Addison and Steele enacted exchange with their readers. Crucially, Sherman uses the visual metaphor of mirrors and mirroring to illustrate this reciprocal relationship in *The Spectator*.

³⁸ Powell, p. 256.

³⁹ Powell, p. 256, (my emphasis).

⁴⁰ Powell, p. 257.

⁴¹ Powell, p 260.

It should first be noted that whereas Mr Spectator's predecessor Isaac Bickerstaff, in Addison and Steele's *The Tatler* (1709), was portrayed as a gregarious, tattling, sociable man, Mr Spectator's silence is a salient feature of his character. This is both a rather humorous trope that gets Mr Spectator into a bind, and also a catalyst for discussion of his strict spectatorial schema. Thus, Sherman recognises the oddity of Mr Spectator's intense self-containment as a 'joke'.⁴² This echoes Mr Spectator's awkward moment in the coffee-house in *The Spectator* No. 46, when the more grave his countenance becomes, the more loud gales of laughter are provoked. Despite Mr Spectator's difficulties, the joke is a very popular one that the readers of *The Spectator* clearly wished to 'buy into'.⁴³ (Scott Paul Gordon states, conversely, that 'his character seems to have worried, rather than amused, original readers', although this is based on a reading of a 1711 satirical pamphlet attacking *The Spectator*.) So, for Sherman, Mr Spectator's exaggerated silence works like 'an actual mirror ... enact[ing] a reversal of the image it presents to those who stand before it'.⁴⁴ *The Spectator's* readers are imagined as, like Bickerstaff, 'gregarious sociable beings', engaged in the social world of chattering over tea and in coffee-houses.⁴⁵ Mr Spectator, the 'Silent Man', is their reverse presented back to them.⁴⁶ The 'transaction between paper and audience' is figured as both a correspondence *with* readers, as in a thoroughfare of communication to and from *The Spectator*, but also as a mirroring, corresponding *to* them.⁴⁷ This complex process of mirroring is key to what Sherman calls 'reciprocal filling'.⁴⁸ Just as readers fill *The Spectator's* pages with their letters and as objects of Mr Spectator's gaze, Mr Spectator also fills the audience's time and minds. This schema intimately involves the readership in a

⁴² Stuart Sherman, *Telling the Time: Clocks, Diaries and and English Diurnal Form 1660-1785* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1996) p. 114.

⁴³ Sherman, p. 114.

⁴⁴ Sherman p. 114.

⁴⁵ Sherman, p. 115.

⁴⁶ Sherman, p. 113.

⁴⁷ Sherman, p. 114

⁴⁸ Sherman, p. 115.

relationship of exchange with the text, and also figures them as an audience in a metaphorically visual sphere, involving the language of looking, mirroring and recognising.

Although Powell asserts that both sight and hearing are important aspects of sensory experience in the spectatorial world of *The Spectator*, I would add too that *The Spectator's* is a world full of stuff, fascinated with the tactile qualities of, for example, clothes and fabric. Indeed, Powell does touch obliquely upon the sense of touch with a discussion of prevailing theories of optics in the eighteenth century. The competing theories of intermission and extramission attempt to describe what is happening physiologically when the eye sees. Intermissionist theory describes the outside world entering into the eye and impressing upon it, whereas in extramissionist thought the eye itself reaches out to seize light. Indeed Addison himself calls the sense of sight a 'Kind of Touch' in *The Spectator* No. 411.⁴⁹ In this way, the operation of sight is a tactile process, and this suggestion of vision that handles and touches adds to the richness of embodied sight and also another valence to instances of sexualised sight in *The Spectator*.

Nevertheless, Powell's Gordon-esque reading of *The Spectator* produces an impression of a rather disturbing text, one that observes for 'intelligence-gathering', 'surveillance' and 'espionage', and one that ultimately aims at control.⁵⁰ *The Spectator* also paves a way for a multitude of subsequent imitators which, while using cruder methods, are, Powell asserts, 'not markedly different' in their ultimate aims.⁵¹ Read together, she writes, 'these texts offer up a mode of spectation that is aggressively invasive, organised openly around power struggles, and highly fraught in terms of gender and class behaviour'.⁵² Two highly similar episodes from *The Spectator* and *The Auditor* may be placed side by side here to explore the strategies at work in both, and

⁴⁹ Bond, III, p. 536.

⁵⁰ Powell, p. 260, p. 259.

⁵¹ Powell, p. 256.

⁵² Powell, p. 256.

in particular to tease out how far their modes of spectatorship may be ‘aggressively invasive’ in the way Powell describes.⁵³

The Spectator No. 250 introduces an unusual piece of technology. Purportedly sold by a Mr. Abraham Spy (or “A Spy”), it appears to be upon a similar design to a pair of opera glasses or a lorgnette. However, instead of giving a view of an object in direct line of sight, it diverts the gaze to the left or right. Therefore one may appear to be looking straight ahead, for example at a scene presented upon a stage, and yet in actuality gaze at the unsanctioned spectacle to either side. There is a dangerous and subversive frisson to this object that can cloak the direction and intention of the gaze. Yet in *The Spectator* the discourse is one of politeness, of sparing the blushes of those who may be stared in public places. Indeed, for Kristina Straub, Abraham Spy’s looking-contraption is a benevolent piece of kit that has the power to ‘neutralise the potentially noxious power of the gaze’.⁵⁴ It represents a ‘kinder, gentler politics of looking’ in the face of the rowdy, disturbing and disorderly theatre.⁵⁵

The Auditor, taking a cue from *The Spectator*’s ‘speculations’, introduces a contraption in a similar spirit to *The Spectator*’s theatrical glass: a tiny ‘Machine’, to be worn in pairs as a set of earrings, which can both amplify whispered secrets from 25 yards away, and block out unnecessary chatter or offensive impertinences.⁵⁶ *The Auditor* even directly compares this machine to a virtuoso’s microscope, echoing Addison and Steele’s use of this word and their engagement in satirising the scientific treatise in several instances throughout *The Spectator*. Powell suggests that, in episodes like these, both *The Auditor* and *The Spectator* portray ‘humans as proper objects of study’ but are adept at ‘blurring lines between studying and espionage’.⁵⁷ Certainly both of these contraptions are developed in the spirit of diverted attention and covert enquiry.

⁵³ Powell, p.256.

⁵⁴ Straub, p. 8.

⁵⁵ Straub, p. 8.

⁵⁶ *The Auditor* (1733) in Powell, p. 259.

⁵⁷ Powell, p. 259.

However, a key difference here is *The Auditor's* glee in discomfiting others. Whereas the theatrical contraption in *The Spectator* purports to spare the feelings of those being stared at, Powell describes the scene of the Auditor's club as disturbing and almost supernaturally uncanny, as the coterie, using the ear-pieces, communicate in barely audible susurrations, much to the discomfort of those around them. In this way, this imitator of *The Spectator* can be seen to take up several strands of Addison and Steele's periodical and embroider its own auditory variation, yet without the facility to imitate the original's complex enquiry into sight and spectatorship. By contrast with the blunt, almost disdainful Auditor, *The Spectator's* own fascination with sight appears neither entirely benevolent nor malicious. Rather, its sophisticated appreciation of spectatorship is able to encompass both registers.

It is also profitable to read *The Spectator* No. 46 alongside these kinds of enquiries into Mr Spectator as a literary construct, as it deals with Mr Spectator's own literary production. It explores the production of *The Spectator* in an imaginary sense, as flowing from Mr Spectator's pen rather than Addison and Steele's, and is incisive and funny about his critical positioning in the real world of coffee-house gossip. It both exposes Mr Spectator's own literary spectatorial project and exposes him to spectatorial scrutiny.

This number is a collection of pieces, rather miscellaneous but united in their coffee-house narrative. It is the first piece I will be concentrating on to begin with, in which Mr Spectator is in the coffee-house and silent as usual. Mr Spectator begins by musing on his collection of notes, or 'hints', something like a jotting-book and a prompt-sheet that he keeps to hand - 'they are my speculations', he asserts.⁵⁸ Like the chaos before civilisation, they are steeped in obscurity, wanting light to render them intelligible. The point is that they are not fully formed ideas or sentences, and when he drops them in the coffee-house, he is too embarrassed to own the disjointed ramblings. The notes are quickly picked up and passed around, and everyone is so amused by the mad jottings that a lad is enjoined to mount the auctioneer's stand and read them out loud. There is much conjecture over the meaning of the cryptic hints,

⁵⁸ Bond, I, p. 196.

which is only put to an end after Mr Spectator silently demands the papers, twists them into a taper, and lights his pipe with them. Sadly, all that remains for him to publish from his intended notes are the two letters that follow.

Like “spectator” and “spectate”, this essay presents another important use of a *speculare* word in *The Spectator*: speculations. In *The Spectator* No. 1 Mr Spectator proclaims himself a ‘speculative Statesman, Soldier, Merchant and Artizan’ but here we have an example of what his ‘Speculations in the first Principles’ actually look like.⁵⁹ Mr Spectator’s speculations are in this instance his notes on what he has been spectating about town but also on more imaginative or abstract concepts. He speculates on physical action, on objects - ‘Will Honeycomb’s pocket’, ‘bamboos, cudgels, drumsticks’, and on interesting or amusing pictures - ‘the black mare with a star in her forehead’, or ‘old-woman with a beard married to a smock-faced boy’, but also on more philosophical questions, like that of ‘Families of true and false Humour’.⁶⁰ His miscellany of ideas, when read out, in fact draws accusations of having been copied from *The Spectator*. His speculations here are in an imperfect, disjointed, rough form, and he is embarrassed that this idiosyncratic and fractured note-making finds its way to a public ear. These raw speculations, therefore, are digested and refined before making it to print. This may seem like standard journalistic practice but its dramatisation in this episode, where the stakes are high when the process is interrupted and the material is displayed in its raw form, points towards the importance of the literary process that is bound up in *The Spectator*’s spectatorial project.

Even though he affects mortification, and ultimately destroys the evidence, the inclusion of this cheeky peek into Mr Spectator’s notes serves a purpose. Firstly, Mr Spectator is vulnerable. Powell draws attention to moments in *The Spectator* where Mr Spectator is vulnerable and embarrassed, for example in *The Spectator* No. 12, where his colour drains from his face when he is frightened by a ghost story. Powell points out that this is evidence that Mr Spectator, who in her reading aims for almost ghostly incorporeality, actually does have a body that reacts biologically like the rest

⁵⁹ Bond, I, p. 4, p.196.

⁶⁰ Bond, I, p.197.

of us. Here, Mr Spectator has made a mistake by dropping his notes and is embarrassed - all eyes are on him as he reaches for the notes, and his 'steadfast countenance', at odds with the rest of the coffee-house, only serves to draw more laughter.⁶¹ Furthermore, it is quite funny to see Mr Spectator in a pinch like this. The limits of his silence are exposed and he looks rather ridiculous in his panic. The little coffee-house performance of his jotted notes is funny too, both the little coffee-house lad shouting out oddities such as 'Admission into the Ugly Club', and the merry speculation as to whether a madman, conspirator or indeed a Spectator-plagiarist wrote them.⁶²

Mr Spectator's solution entails the destruction of his notes, in addition to which he must affect a nonchalant air as he smokes his pipe whilst burning all his hard work. It is a comedic little vignette which might not be out of place in a jaunty, urbane stage comedy. Episodes like this, and I hope to show other ways in which humour and satire function in more essays in the periodical, are reminders that humour is in fact a key consideration when reading *The Spectator*. Reading critics such as Scott Paul Gordon, whose vision of Mr Spectator is of a po-faced authoritarian, one may be forgiven for constructing a picture of the spectatorial economy of *The Spectator* as a rather sterile affair with heavily defined and policed boundaries. I contest that rather there is room for playing and playfulness in a more nuanced and multivalent investigation of the spectatorial economy in *The Spectator*.

Added to this, in *The Spectator* No. 46 the reading audience is given a peek into the otherwise unseen production processes of the periodical. Time and again in eighteenth-century literature, and notably in theatrical literature, peeking into hidden scenes and hidden spaces is gleefully prosecuted. There is a pleasure in this which seems to be acknowledged in *The Spectator's* publication of this deliciously embarrassing episode.

In addition, *The Spectator* is revealed as a publication which engages in literary, writerly practice and is self-conscious about this. Rather than an imagined clean

⁶¹ Bond, I, p. 198.

⁶² Bond, I, p. 197.

transfer from the streets of London to the page, an episode like this underscores the imaginative work that goes into production of the papers. That this is tied up in the language of spectatorship and speculation is significant, as it places the process of sight and observation at the heart of the writerly, imaginative project of *The Spectator* and opens up yet more vantage points from which to consider the variety of its ways of looking. This is something of a revelation to an argument that seeks to present Mr Spectator as a monolithic figure with one, absolute, mode of looking. Here is an investigation, in *The Spectator's* own pages, of the way in which the essays present observed data. *The Spectator* is not in fact presenting objective observations in-and-of-themselves, like evidence in an experiment, but is engaged in the way in which the imaginative process is vital to interpreting and recording viewed phenomena. Read in this light, Mr Spectator is an engaged audience member, conscious of his engagement in the spectatorial process and possessed of imaginative agency.

The use of the word speculations is interesting here also, as it seems to point towards double meanings of looking into the future or financial speculation. Speculations, in Mr Spectator's literary production, are written records of that which has been seen. Yet they are embryonic, not yet formed into what will become *The Spectator* as it is published and read. They are a glimpse into a future not yet set and inked. To speculate, such a loaded concept at this particular point in the early eighteenth century, is to attempt a view of a possible future scenario, or indeed multiple futures and possibilities that are provisional and risky. There is a multiplicity of views even here, then, in Mr Spectator's raw materials, the acknowledgement of the proliferation of city sights and episodes and their potential to develop into literary material.

Mr Spectator's own ridiculousness in the coffee-house episode of No. 46 illustrates the untenability of his perfect objective position in real life. Episodes like this test the limits of his fictional persona, taking delight in the humorous exercise of deploying him in everyday situations and documenting the results. This not only illustrates one of the good-humoured aspects of *The Spectator's* project but also Addison and Steele's ever-revolving fascination with the fictional conceit they have themselves set up. In this manner, they are constantly prodding at and testing out Mr Spectator's spectatorial schema. Rather than asserting Mr Spectator's perfect

objectivity and silence and creating a fictional world that serves to constantly reaffirm this, time and again Addison and Steele challenge and interrupt Mr Spectator by intruding real life upon him.

Reading Gender

Powell in her essay moves from the Gordon-inspired death-ray vision of an all-seeing eye to consider elements of gossipship, sociability and the subtle and multivalent process of internalisation of *The Spectator's* vision of genteel and appropriate social behaviour. As Powell reminds us, here we are in mixed company. Just as *The Spectator* may be passed around and scribbled on by gents at the coffeehouse, so it may be perused by ladies at an elegant tea-table gathering. Just as in a theatre, what is presented must be fit to be seen by the ladies present. Powell reads further into this: to practice gentlemanly behaviour, one must behave as if a lady were present at all times. This seems to involve the internalisation of a hazy ghost-woman, a kind of queenly omnipresent spectator that hovers around in the imagination making sure that everything is above board. This is the feminised version of the virulent and cruel heedful eye, which instead appears to be gently admonishing rather than punishing.

Women could and did participate in *The Spectator's* reformation of manners, as a female correspondent's participation in a discourse on staring in Spectator No. 20 makes clear. However, I want to suggest that this rather shows active intellectual engagement in the visual field rather than the vague operations of a hazy, imaginary female figure. Added to this, women could also act in unruly or surprising ways in *The Spectator*. In the famous hoop-skirts crusade, for instance, a reader writes in complaining that since Mr Spectator has left off from his initial assault on the offending article, ladies in town have resumed their former habits and are swanning around in hoops with abandon. Women here are astute observers. Noting the 'withdrawing' of their detractor from the field they have resumed insurgent

behaviour.⁶³ “In short Sir,” the concerned letter-writer concludes, “since our women know themselves to be out of the eye of the Spectator, they will be kept within no Compass.”⁶⁴ Powell reads this as a kind of calling-out of badly-behaved female examples, and the fact that *The Spectator* publishes the letter at all, detailing as it does a failure in Mr Spectator’s long-lasting regulatory influence, an acknowledgement of the ‘agreed-upon fiction’ of the ‘privileged male gaze’ and the need to constantly reassert its position.⁶⁵ There is scope here, however, to first of all extend the consideration of female engagement - they are assiduous spectators themselves and assert their own right to self-fashioning - and, secondly, to read this episode more playfully as a kind of cat-and-mouse game which constantly re-asserts and challenges the spectatorial positioning of both parties.

This excerpt certainly isn’t the only letter from a female correspondent in *The Spectator*, nor the only one in which a woman writes with agency and self-possession about her own place in the spectatorial economy of her milieu. The coffee-woman’s letter of *The Spectator* No. 155, for instance, also evidences a female reader engaging with and being incorporated into the pages of *The Spectator*. The coffee-woman, signing herself ‘The Idol’, describes the impertinences she must put up with daily as a woman earning a living serving male clientele.⁶⁶ She asserts how she is ‘unavoidably hasped in my Bar’, physically unable to be anything other than a spectacle, almost like a butterfly pinned and framed.⁶⁷ She is also exercising her ability to reply to *The Spectator* - her letter is a direct complaint about his critique of women in public - and influence his opinion, as she succeeds in her aim of persuading him to defend her position.

The letter from *The Spectator* No. 20 also represents a woman negotiating a complex social stage. Yet, as her narrated scenario plays out, female agency is seen to

⁶³ Bond, II, p. 5.

⁶⁴ Bond, II, p. 5.

⁶⁵ Powell, p. 264.

⁶⁶ Bond, II, p. 108.

⁶⁷ Bond, II, p. 107.

be fairly limited. Nevertheless, *The Spectator* can be seen here as promulgating women's literary engagement and representing a form of female agency in the cultural sphere.

The correspondent in *Spectator* No. 20 signs herself 'S.C.', and her letter is the first instance in the collected pages of *The Spectator* to refer to 'a kind of Men', whom our correspondent chooses to call 'Starers'.⁶⁸ It seems that S.C. herself has coined this term, and it is one that Mr Spectator takes up and runs with in his reply, and indeed will return to in several issues across the print run of *The Spectator*. Already then, this is a significant naming and describing of a social phenomenon, and one produced from a woman's observation rather than an all-powerful Mr Spectator.

S.C.'s definition of a Starer is succinct and informative. They are 'a kind of Men [...] that without any regard to Time, Place, or Modesty, disturb a large Company with their impertinent Eyes.'⁶⁹ This is a gendered phenomenon. Starers are very definitely masculine, and although the indignant party here is a woman, his impertinences are suffered by all in mixed company. The Starer's offences are rooted in outright disregard of the categories 'Time', 'Place' and 'Modesty', that properly observed keep polite society smoothly functioning.⁷⁰

Interestingly, S.C. roots this kind of behaviour in a reading of *The Spectator* itself, and then goes on to draw her own distinction between what may be called spectatorship and other kinds of observation. She maintains that she has noticed this kind of impertinence 'Ever since the Spectator appeared'.⁷¹ There is the suggestion here both that this kind of behaviour is being practiced by imperfect mimics of Mr Spectator and also that *The Spectator* has cultivated S.C.'s own facility for reading and analysing this kind of social spectatorship. This points towards the *The Spectator's* influence in cultural life of London and also to a sophisticated readership engaging in

⁶⁸ Bond, I, p.86.

⁶⁹ Bond, I, p.86.

⁷⁰ Bond, I, p.86.

⁷¹ Bond, I, p.86.

cultural practices as they evolve in social spaces. As S.C. continues to delineate the spectatorial project of Mr Spectator, she also demonstrates a readership particularly engaged in problems of spectatorship and *The Spectator's* spectatorial project.

Her example of 'one of these monstrous Starers' takes place in her congregation at church, where 'one whole Isle (sic)' of the preponderantly female worshippers have been very much disturbed and provoked to 'Blushing, Confusion, and Vexation' by one man's outrageous 'Insolence'.⁷² Already a 'Head taller than any one in the Church', he finds it necessary to then stand on top of a hassock, commanding a better position from which to 'expose' himself to the congregation.⁷³ Like Mr Spectator himself, the outrageous Starer is silent, but his naked stare alone is enough that 'we' - S.C. includes herself in the affected demographic - 'can neither mind the Prayers nor Sermon'.⁷⁴ Mr Spectator's 'Animadversion' upon the whole episode is gratefully sought.⁷⁵

One of the fascinating ideas that is being played out in this spectatorial exchange is the idea that Mr Spectator's mode of spectating can be gauged by reading his opposite. Staring is constructed here in opposition to spectating, the practice of which the starer has crudely attempted to mimic. The Starer represents a breakdown of politeness, which serves to highlight in turn Mr Spectator's own sensitivity and discrimination in spectatorial practice. Staring is indiscriminate and indiscreet, it is aggressively chauvinistic, it disregards feelings and reciprocity and rather than controlling behaviour it shuts it down. This is an aggressively single-minded mode of spectatorship, with a single object in view.

Mr Spectator duly makes his reply to S.C.'s letter. Steele, writing as Mr Spectator, sums up the situation thus:

⁷² Bond, I, p. 86.

⁷³ Bond, I, p. 86.

⁷⁴ Bond, I, p. 86.

⁷⁵ Bond, I, p. 86.

The whole Transaction is performed with the Eyes; and the Crime is no less than employing them in such a Manner, as to divert the Eyes of others from the best Use they can make of them, even looking up to Heaven.⁷⁶

This is a theme familiar to readers of the well-known Dissection of a Beau's Head, in which a fantasy autopsy is described. It reveals the pristine '*Elevator*' muscles, which would 'Turn the Eye towards Heaven' had they ever been used, in contrast to the oblique '*Ogling Muscles*', worn and decayed with over-use.⁷⁷

Mr Spectator does not blame or ridicule the blushing, giggling females, who are displaying after all a certain modesty in their embarrassed consternation. The distraction and diversion of their gaze is something almost beyond their control. Added to this, Mr Spectator designates staring fellows to be 'a sort of out-law of good breeding', existing outside the bounds of good taste.⁷⁸ Their impudent behaviour is of a species with acting in that it is a mere performance of gentility, and a kind of artifice which all too often hoodwinks ladies of good breeding.

Ostensibly, S.C.'s letter may be read as stemming from a correcting, controlling urge that has been fostered under the influence of Mr Spectator. Added to this, Powell's regulatory, admonishing imaginary female figure may be read in this exchange, in which a female reader is limited in her real-world agency to effect change in a spectatorial economy she finds distasteful, and yet who is able to make her influence felt in the more imaginative realm of the pages of *The Spectator*. Furthermore, if our correspondent is in fact a confection of Steele and Addison's rather than an authentic reader, this would further underline the notion of the imaginary female figure and her corrective influence. Indeed, Mr Spectator's advice is for women to enlist a truly polite gentleman to combat the crime of Staring.

Faced with a starrer so impudently breaking the rules of polite society, ladies have no defence and must yield. Mr Spectator's only suggestion is to rely on gentlemen

⁷⁶ Bond, I, 85.

⁷⁷ Bond, II, pp. 572-3.

⁷⁸ Bond, I, 85.

acquaintances to combat the attack. These polite champions are authorised to deploy staring in service of female modesty, and stare right back. Indeed, if within seven days S.C. is still under optical attack, Mr. Spectator promises her the services of his friend Will Prosper, armed with 'Directions according to the exact rules of Opticks' from Mr Spectator himself with which to precisely plot his position for the counter-attack.⁷⁹ The power of the gaze is utilised here as a shaming tool. And yet the ladies do have a particular kind of look which they may employ in the battle. Mr Spectator advises them to 'Cast kind looks and wishes of success' on their gentleman champions.⁸⁰

Significantly, Steele employs humour here. This rude staring gent popping up meerkat-like above the heads of the congregation is funny. Mr Spectator's promise of a manual to determine the best sight-lines for a counter-attack is humorous in its very precision. As much as the writers of the *The Spectator* solemnly explore ocular transactions and the boundaries of politeness violated by staring, they remain good-natured and humorous. This is a theme that runs throughout the "Staring" numbers of *The Spectator*, that will become something of a war between the Starers and Peepers, with pitched battles taking place in social spaces all around town. An example of another essay which continues this satirical war is No. 377, which prints a 'Bill of Mortality' of young men killed by 'fatal Arts', including:

[...] *Will Simple*, smitten at the Opera by the Glance of Eye that was aimed at one who stood by him

[...] *Sylvius*, shot through the Sticks of a Fan at St. *James's* Church.

[...] *Strephon*, killed by Clarinda as she looked down into the Pit.⁸¹

and four gentlemen all standing in a row, who 'fell all Four at the same time by an Ogle of the Widow *Trapland*.'⁸² Here what Gay Mcauley calls the aggression of the

⁷⁹ Bond, I, p. 86.

⁸⁰ Bond, I, p. 87.

⁸¹ Bond, III, pp. 417-18.

⁸² Bond, III, p.417.

spectatorial act is blown up to comedic proportions in this mock-serious butcher's bill. The gaze, and specifically the female gaze here, is depicted as taking possession, invading, and causing wounds.

Another moment in Powell's argument which takes into account specifically female involvement in the visual field is in her consideration of a 1794 print of bare-chested ladies. Powell reads these ladies as simply disregarding the male gaze. I would read this slightly differently alongside other such similar images of the ostentatiously bedecked and sexualised female spectators, like this 1784 theatrical print of bare-chested ladies in a theatre box.⁸³ (See Figures 1.1 and 1.2)

This print pokes fun at the fashion for ever-receding necklines by placing two ladies (who appear to be Mrs Fitzherbert and the Countess of Buckinghamshire) completely bare-chested in a box at the theatre. The print portrays the theatre as a sexualised space, an arena where women may indeed be visually consumed. Yet the women in the box are not only sanguine and unflustered, they are actively participating in the spectatorial economy of this highly visual and social space - the inclusion of the lorgnette underscores this. The suggestion is that they are looking at other spectacles rather than the play on stage. However, the image is very much one of assiduous and interested participation rather than refusal. The print included in Powell's article may be read similarly as portraying female participation on women's own terms, rather than disinterest or disregard.

Powell reads feminine resistance to becoming objects of a sustained male gaze like *The Spectator's* as an interruption and a challenge to *The Spectator's* project and one that it is a struggle to contain within its pages. However I would suggest instead that female engagement with sight contributes to a multivalent understanding of social spectatorship in *The Spectator*. The rude starrer is single-minded and single-visioned, something very much akin to Scott Paul Gordon's single eye, which is the horror of the sophisticated spectator and indeed its exact opposite. This single vision is a poorly understood, ignorant imitation of sensitive, socially nuanced spectatorship. What Powell reads as a kind of interruption of the spectatorial project of *The Spectator* may

be instead seen as a feminine intellectual engagement with the multivalency of sight and spectatorship in *The Spectator's* social world. Indeed, these multiple ways of looking are foregrounded at various times in the periodical.

Heteropticks

To continue to read more thoroughly and closely in *The Spectator*, it is profitable to set out a number of essays in close detail. This opens up a series of strands of thought and further evidences the multivalency of sight and spectatorship in *The Spectator*. I will read two particular numbers in-depth, 46 and 250, to reveal the multifarious concerns of Addison and Steele around spectatorship.

No. 46 opens with the episode I discussed above, the coffee-house scene in which Mr Spectator sets his speculations on fire. After this, some salvaged fragments are presented in the form of two letters. The first letter regards a 'gospel-gossip', a wife whose time is taken up by religious meetings to the detriment of the household.⁸⁴ The second is from the 'Ogling-Master':

Mr. SPECTATOR

I am an *Irish* Gentleman, that have travelled many Years for my Improvement; during which time I have accomplished my self in the whole Art of Ogling, as it is at present practiced in all the polite Nations of *Europe*. Being thus qualified, I intend, by the Advice of my Friends, to set up for an Ogling-Master. I teach the Church Ogle in the Morning, and the Play-house Ogle by candle-light. I have all brought over with me a new flying Ogle fit of the Ring; which I teach in the Dusk of the Evening, or in any Hour of the Day by darkening one of my Windows. I have a Manuscript by me called *The Compleat Ogler*; which I shall be ready to shew you upon any Occasion: in the mean time, I beg you will publish the Substance of this Letter in an Advertisement, and you will very much oblige,

*Yours, &c.*⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Bond, I, p. 198.

⁸⁵ Bond, I, p. 199.

This letter introduces an important word in the lexicon of *The Spectator's* spectatorial economy: to ogle. Ogling is something to be mastered, evidently, and there is utility in mastering it in relation to certain city spaces. Different strategies of ogling are practised in church, the playhouse, and the ring - the designated lane for horse and carriage that encircles a park, notably the Ring at St James's Park, beloved of Mary Robinson, and Rotten Row encircling Hyde Park which still exists today for horse riders. These spatially-specific ogles are influenced by the time of day, which itself determines the conditions of light - the playhouse is candle-lit for instance, and the Ogling-master can simulate the eventide hour of a ride around the Ring by darkening his windows. Movement is also a factor to be considered - the 'flying Ogle' around the Ring seems rather acrobatic and takes into account the speed and position of a moving carriage as well as the twilight.⁸⁶

These concerns of place, movement, time of day and conditions of light are such as an actor might consider when entering upon a stage. To ogle is an art, an accomplishment to be learnt (and to pay good money for) along the lines of engaging a dancing master in order to cut an interesting and appropriate figure at a ball. It forms part of one's initiation into society, a skill to be negotiated and mastered if one wishes to enter into polite sociable spaces.

The word "ogle" has sexualised connotations to a modern audience: lechers might ogle, and young ladies in particular might be on the receiving end of an ogle. The Ogling-master's letter perhaps cuts an ironic eye towards towards a sexualised valance in the word's meaning, in asserting the ogle as "polite" art - hinting at a more base motivation for these polite pastimes of churchgoing and trips to the theatre. Certainly one wouldn't visit an ogling-master if one were solely at church to observe one's religious duties. However, the ogle remains curiously ungendered. The Ogling-master does not refer to the gender of an ideal customer, and the only hint of the ogle as a gendered practice is in its presentation as a refined accomplishment, evidence of its ladylike suitability but not necessarily of an exclusively feminine practice.

⁸⁶ Bond, I, p. 199.

Frustratingly, *The Compleat Ogler* is tantalisingly proffered but never referred to again. It doesn't seem to be a genuine title that was ever published, and appears to be more of a humorous fictional text whose presumed existence is funny in itself. Its title echoes that of an instructional text like Walton's *The Compleat Angler* (1653) and perhaps draws upon that text's instruction in hooking and catching, humorously transposing it to ocular practices. Perhaps the Ogling-master also has in mind Walton's celebration of his art as a communal and sociable practice. If only we could peruse *The Compleat Ogler* for a complete instruction in the art of the eighteenth-century gaze. Nevertheless, the word "ogle" comes up again and again in *The Spectator*; one of a number of sight-words which Addison and Steele seem to delight in. Just as with their essayists' delight in the minutiae of dress, there is real pleasure to be found here in the naming and description of ways of looking. Significantly, this essay in the *The Spectator* also links ways of looking to real spaces in the city. It is this impulse to map social bodies and city spaces which I will turn to in the chapters which follow, first of all mapping the imagined theatre auditorium, before turning to the pleasure garden.

Essay No. 250 demonstrates further the visually heterogenous interests of the spectator. This is a crucial essay for my purposes as it deals extensively with sight, engaging in many different discourses of vision from the social to scientific and gendered ways of looking. It also touches upon the playhouse and how passions are expressed visually. As such, it is worth reading and explicating this number fully. It comprises a pair of humorous letters, the first of which delineates a pseudo-scientific model of categorising looks and a second that proposes "A Spy's" satirical spyglass (see above, p. 30), and seeks Mr Spectator's further thoughts upon it.

Kristina Straub touches upon this Spectator essay briefly in her *Sexualised Suspects*. She reads its pseudo-scientific ordering of different instances of looks as affirmation of a natural ordering of spectatorial power, a kind of great chain of seeing that places everything in its proper, fixed place. I would like to suggest that this *Spectator* essay is probably not quite playing it straight, and that its satirical project should be teased out more fully in order to gain an insight into the complexities of *The Spectator's* politics of looking.

The first letter is from a 'T.J'.⁸⁷ The writer claims to have come across a curious text that he wishes to submit for Mr Spectator's perusal. Reportedly found 'in a Virtuoso's Closet among his Rarities', the piece is both a 'curiosity' and a 'treatise'.⁸⁸ The word virtuoso encompasses an acknowledgement of someone learned in natural philosophy, but also someone studious in the arts. This double recognition of scientific modes of writing and collection, and also a more literary fascination with words and describing people and behaviours is sustained throughout the letter. The virtuoso is also a much-satirized figure in this period. The essay itself relates to 'Speculation in Propriety of Speech'.⁸⁹ Speculation here seems to refer to the many ways of looking or employing one's cast of eye that can be read socially (as opposed to financial speculation, or speculation in *The Spectator* No. 46 which describes Mr Spectator's methods of literary production), and propriety of speech refers to the ways in which these looks may be properly named.⁹⁰

In Donald Bond's footnote to No. 250 he cites scientific treatises on optics generally and Humphrey Ditton's *A Treatise of Perspective* (1712) and John Shuttleworth's *A Treatise of Opticks Direct* (1709) in particular as possible inspirations for this essay.⁹¹ Ditton's treatise was in fact published a matter of weeks before this particular number of *The Spectator*, which may be seen to take gleeful inspiration from current transactions in London's scientific sphere, turning them to its own purpose. This is another way, alongside the chatter of coffee-houses and tea-tables, in which *The Spectator* is present in the social and intellectual spaces of the city.

The writer begins, 'Since the several Treatises of Thumbs, Ears and Noses, have obliged the World, this of Eyes is at your Service.'⁹² This references popular "thing"

⁸⁷ Bond, II, p. 469.

⁸⁸ Bond, II, p. 469.

⁸⁹ Bond, II, p. 469.

⁹⁰ Bond, II, p. 469.

⁹¹ Humphrey Ditton, *A Treatise of Perspective, demonstrative and practical* (London: B. Tooke and D. Midwinter, 1712), John Shuttleworth, *A Treatise of Opticks Direct* (London: D. Midwinter, 1709).

⁹² Bond, II, pp. 469-70.

narratives, of which Addison and Steele produced some typical examples, including ones for coins. The referenced publications on thumbs, ears and noses and the desire to add to the field of knowledge in accounting for sight suggests what Powell labels the urge towards a “synaesthetic” experience, that is accounting for or narrating a whole-body sensory experience. Powell reads across eighteenth-century periodical tradition, taking into account the praters, tatlers and auditors that compete with Mr Spectator in this sphere, arguing for an acknowledgement of the embodied audience and exploring the problem of an embodied “eidolon”, or narrating fictional “I”. Here, it seems in *The Spectator* No. 250, there is an acknowledgement of this urge to complete a (satirical) reading of the body’s senses.

The treatise advances a kind of classificatory system that seeks to describe not biological specimens but social creatures with the aim it seems of not only recognising instances of particular looks but also discovering the nature of the person. It begins with the ‘first eye of consequence’, the ‘director of opticks’, which may be supposed to be God in heaven - or even Mr Spectator himself - but which actually turns out to be the sun, which is used as a metaphor for the social dazzle of great and worthy personages, or luminaries.⁹³ The “straight” reading of the natural order of being trope finds a mirror in Addison’s hymn (still published in a widely-used Unitarian hymnbook) which begins with God as the all-seeing director of the natural world, ‘the Great original’, whose power is displayed in ‘the unwearied Sun’ and on through the spangled firmament and down to Earth.⁹⁴ The Virtuoso explains that humans, as well as other creatures, derive their sight from this original, acknowledging the necessity of light in the operation of sight, although its exact role is still debated at this point in the eighteenth century.

We are on much more solid ground with the essay’s subsequent investigation of a social problem, and a ‘sure test’ of social worth, whether one can behave with ease and politesse under the dazzle of the social spotlight. This decides whether the ‘speculator’ is of:

⁹³ Bond, II, 470.

⁹⁴ Addison in Sidney H. Knight and David Dawson (eds.), *Hymns for Living* (London: Lindsey Press, 2001) 232, l. 4-5

Species with that of an Eagle, or that of an Owl: The one he emboldens with a manly Assurance to look, speak, act or plead before the Faces of a numerous Assembly; the other he dazzles out of Countenance into a sheepish Dejectedness. The Sun-Proof Eye dares lead up a Dance in a full Court; and without blinking at the Lustre of Beauty, can distribute an Eye of proper Complaisance to a Room crowded with Company, each of which deserves particular Regard; while the other sneaks from Conversation, like a fearful Debtor, who never dares to look out, but when he can see no body, and no body him.⁹⁵

The importance of proper carriage and the proper gaze suited to each social encounter is paramount here, as the social whirl of polite society flashes by. The dazzled owl looks down and inwards, whereas the eagle looks outwards towards company. These owlish and eagle-eyed looks are gendered, with the assurance of a properly complaisant look designated particularly 'manly'. What the proper feminine gazes would look like in these situations is not illustrated.⁹⁶

Continuing with an enquiry into ancient precedent, we are told that 'Modern leers, sly glances and other ocular Activities' may be described as pertaining to 'the famous Argus', a many-eyed demigod in Greek mythology who is designated 'Pimp for his Mistress Juno', amongst other offices not seen fit to be described.⁹⁷ In some Greek myths this demigod turns into a peacock on his death, and his many eyes become his plumage. Perhaps there is an acknowledgement here of male strutting and showing off, allied with the lascivious register of 'leering'.⁹⁸ The many eyes, described alongside what are explicitly referred to as 'modern' leers, conjures up images of a crowded social tableau of glinting, busy eyes.⁹⁹ In this way it seems that Argus is being used here as a way towards coining a descriptor of particular crowd-related ocular behaviour.

⁹⁵ Bond, II, p. 470.

⁹⁶ Bond, II, p. 470.

⁹⁷ Bond, II, p. 470.

⁹⁸ Bond, II, p. 470.

⁹⁹ Bond, II, p.470.

Janus and double-headed vision that looks both forwards and backwards is dealt with next. The author ponders the optical effect of a person between two mirrors and the fashion for double-headed canes and spoons. However, it is noted that ‘there is no Mark of this Faculty, except in the emblematical Way of a wise General having an Eye to both Front and Rear, or a pious Man taking a Review and Prospect of his past and future State at the same Time’.¹⁰⁰ Interestingly, the idea of being “two-faced”, as in duplicitous, does not come into play here, nor the notion of a person having “eyes in the back of their head”. Perhaps these are not current idiom, but it seems odd that a perspicacious social observer and treatise-maker does not find a social metaphor for the Janus-headed look.

Idiomatic expressions to do with animal casts of eye are discussed next, and the treatise-writer seems to take real pleasure in matching descriptive language to observed human characteristics. After all, as our Virtuoso knows, the ‘Colours, Qualities, and Turns of Eyes vary almost in every Head’, and pinning each one down with language is something of an art.¹⁰¹ We are told that describing colours associated with looks is rather common, although to a modern reader the proffered list is not all that easy to match up with well-known expressions: what is a white look for example? What might a grey look be as opposed to a blue? However animal looks are the ‘most remarkable’ and require sharp observation and understanding of the ‘particular Quality or Resemblance’ in the described human.¹⁰² The cat-eyed person has a ‘greedy rapacious Aspect’, the hawk is ‘piercing’ and ‘those of an amorous roguish Look’ are matched to the sheep (‘and we say such an one has a Sheep's Eye’) not for any dumb innocence, it is stressed, but for slyness of the cast.¹⁰³ This ‘Metaphysical inoculation’ is nothing new, as the precedent of Homer’s ox-eyed goddesses is called upon to affirm the author’s method.¹⁰⁴ Inoculation here refers to the process of grafting two different specimens - or in this case species - together.

¹⁰⁰ Bond, II, p.471.

¹⁰¹ Bond,II, p. 471.

¹⁰² Bond, II, p. 471.

¹⁰³ Bond, II, p. 471.

¹⁰⁴ Bond, II, p.471.

This *Spectator* number was published in December 1711, and the more familiar process of inoculation, the introduction of foreign substances (as in the injection of smallpox), wouldn't be reported by the Royal Society until 1714. The word utilised here plays on the Latin construction of the word, *in+oculus* (eye), and although etymologically stemming from horticultural practices of grafting the bud (eye) of a plant, rather than having anything to do with human eyes, our Virtuoso doesn't let that get in the way of a good pun.

The 'peculiar Qualities of the Eye' are next under consideration, with attention trained upon the way the particular movement and the expression of the eyes may be employed.¹⁰⁵ It is noted that the eyes seem to share with the mind the ability to both receive and display emotion, and the relationship is configured as something of a two-way 'Thorough-fare'; the eyes being the portals which 'let our Affections pass in and out', to and from the 'House' of the mind. This calls into play contemporary theories of sight, which were, as discussed briefly above (p. 29), still caught between the two theories advanced by Ancient Greek philosophers of intromission and extramission. Rivka Swenson and Manushag N Powell neatly précis eighteenth-century thought about all five senses when they explain that:

during the Restoration and eighteenth century, the dominant theory of sense, for British scientists and laypersons, was *intromissionist*. In essence, it was believed that human subjectivity was produced *literally* by the external world, that ideas themselves came from without the body, entering and impressing themselves upon sensible beings.¹⁰⁶

Our Virtuoso does not concern himself with the debate about how exactly the eye may see. However, in its abilities to both process and project the passions the eye can be seen as a rather unique sensory organ that both receives and transmits. It is particularly interesting to think about this in relation to conceptions of spectatorship, as the eye here occupies a concurrently active and passive role. Further to this, the

¹⁰⁵ Bond, II, p. 471.

¹⁰⁶ Manushag N Powell and Rivka Swenson, "Introduction: Subject Theory and the Sensational Subject." *The Eighteenth Century*, 54 (2013) p.147.

visual process is figured as a 'Thorough-fare', painting a picture of the eye's busy traffic in and out, using the language of the city and built environment.¹⁰⁷

Added to this depiction in *The Spectator* of the eye as letting traffic in and out, it is this very movement of the passions through the eye which is described as the process that renders them visible as 'Love, Anger, Pride and Avarice, all visibly move in those little Orbs'.¹⁰⁸ A handful of illustrative vignettes prove the point: a young lady shows her 'secret Desire' to see a certain gentleman 'by a Dance in her Eye-balls'.¹⁰⁹ 'A covetous Spirit' casts a 'wistful Eye' upon the goldsmith's shop counter.¹¹⁰ The reader is even asked, '[d]oes not a haughty person shew the temper of his soul in the supercilious Rowl of his Eye?'.¹¹¹ Although this particular sight-word, rowl, does not appear in any dictionary I have accessed, including Samuel Johnson's and the OED, it appears as an almost intuitive or readily understood descriptive word which perhaps acknowledges a variant of "roll". Indeed, it does seem to encompass something of the theatrical eye-roll. Could this be an instance of *The Spectator* coining a sight-word, carefully considered and fitted to a particular observed ocular movement? Moreover, the reader is asked to observe his or her own eyeball, 'that moving picture in our Head' - does it not variously 'start and stare', redden, flash out lightning, glimmer and sparkle?¹¹² However, unfortunately, it turns out that the Virtuoso will not dissect the minutiae of the eyeball's repertoire : 'As for the various Turns of the Eye-sight, such as the voluntary or involuntary, the half or the whole Leer, I shall not enter into a very particular Account of them.'¹¹³ Although it would be quite wonderful to have an exact description of the fractions of a leer, perhaps it is understood that readers may make their own observations in the social laboratory.

¹⁰⁷ Bond, II, 471.

¹⁰⁸ Bond, II, p. 471.

¹⁰⁹ Bond, II, p. 471.

¹¹⁰ Bond, II, p. 471.

¹¹¹ Bond, II, p. 471.

¹¹² Bond, II, p. 471.

¹¹³ Bond, II, p. 472.

What our optic philosopher is interested in further describing however is the quality of oblique vision, which he labels 'Heteropticks'.¹¹⁴

Heteroptick gazes diverge from the straight line. They use the oblique muscle of the eye to look sideways rather than clearly straight ahead or directly upwards towards heaven. This finds an echo in the pseudo-scientific "autopsy" of the Beau's head, noted above (p. 39) , wherein the muscles that would raise the eyes upwards to heaven in search of God have been perfectly preserved, while these oblique muscles are withered away from over-use. The oblique muscles, it is understood, have been employed in less than pious uses, and the salacious, tattling sideways looks can be imagined. Allied with the gendered depiction of the effeminate Beau, this can be read as an instance of "queering" vision, deviating from the straight line.

Regarding the 'heteroptick' side-look, there is a distinction made in No. 250 between the 'natural' - 'a malignant ill Look' anciently associated with witchcraft, a potent, magic-casting cast of eye - and a look which:

when 'tis forced and affected it carries a wanton Design, and in Play-houses, and other publick Places, this ocular Intimation is often an Assignment for bad Practices: But this Irregularity in Vision, together with such Enormities as Tipping the Wink, the Circumspective Rowl, the Side-peep through a thin Hood or Fan, must be put in the Class of Heteropticks, as all wrong Notions of Religion are ranked under the general Name of Heterodox.¹¹⁵

Although the listed heteroptickal activities are described as 'wrong', the sheer enjoyment evident in this precise enumeration, not to mention the inclusion of things and places - the hood and fan, the playhouse - that *The Spectator* often and interestedly publishes on, points towards a reading that diverges from a straight indictment of oblique vision to one that is satirically interested in accounting for these heteroptick gazes.¹¹⁶ The descriptions here are full of human character and the hyperbolic 'Enormities', not to mention the reappearance of the exaggerated, rolling 'Rowl', are,

¹¹⁴ Bond, II, p. 472.

¹¹⁵ Bond, II, p. 472.

¹¹⁶ Bond, II, p. 472.

quite simply, funny.¹¹⁷ Furthermore, the action of cutting the eyes sideways may be thought of as the very look which may be said to be employed here - the satirical look. Rather than fixing a straight gaze upon sight and seeing, and playing the part straight, *The Spectator* here is theatrically inhabiting the character of the Virtuoso to cast a knowing eye over more social but no less interesting ways of looking.

This conceit slips as the letter draws to a close, and as the voice returns to talking directly to Mr Spectator rather than drawing a distinction between the supposedly found treatise and the letter-writer. Perhaps this slippage is an indication of the fast pace demanded of literary production for diurnal publication. As he signs off, the virtuoso/letter writer is also revealed as having an especial interest in applying to Mr Spectator. 'I hope you will arm your Readers against the Mischeifs which are daily done by killing Eyes', he begs, as it would be an especial favour to him, Mr Spectator's 'wounded unknown Friend'.¹¹⁸ The writer is now a little ridiculous himself and the reader is shown exactly why he may be so interested in branding ladies' peeps through hoods and fans as so malignant and heterodox.

This *Spectator* essay illustrates the wealth of language that can be deployed to talk about and describe how people look. What is important here is not just the taking in of a sight but the activity of casting a look - as in the casting of a spell, the significance is transmitted in the very act. Rather than solely locating meaning in viewing and the subsequent internal comprehension of a sight, here meaning is seen to be both created and communicated by the dance of the eyeballs.

The second letter in No. 250 is from the inventor Abraham Spy, drawing Mr Spectator's attention to a peculiar ocular contraption, the spying glass. This is the same letter which I earlier set alongside the Auditor's auditory machine. It acknowledges the 'Offences committed by Starers', which have often been under Mr Spectator's interrogation, and directly quotes *The Spectator* No. 20's enumeration of the offence committed by starers, without 'Regard to Time, Place or Modesty'.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ Bond, II, p. 472.

¹¹⁸ Bond, II, p. 472.

¹¹⁹ Bond, II, p. 472.

This evidences the complex narrative arcs that are sustained throughout the print-run of *The Spectator*, and the recurring strategy of presenting letter writers not only communicating with Mr Spectator but discoursing with each other through the publication.

In No. 250 Abraham Spy acknowledges Mr Spectator's assertion that impudent starers are uncouth individuals unlikely to listen to reasoned argument. Whereas Mr Spectator in No. 20 proposed a polite counter-attack to this behaviour, Abraham Spy has devised an entirely mechanical solution. He writes:

I thought therefore fit to acquaint you with a convenient Mechanical Way, which may easily prevent or correct Staring, by an Optical Contrivance of new Perspective-Glasses, short and commodious like Opera Glasses, fit for short-sighted People as well as others, these Glasses making the Objects appear, either as they are seen by the naked Eye, or more distinct, though somewhat less than Life, or bigger and nearer. A Person may, by the Help of this Invention, take a View of another without the Impertinence of Staring; at the same Time it shall not be possible to know whom or what he is looking at. One may look towards his Right or Left Hand, when he is supposed to look forwards: This is set forth at large in the printed Proposals for the Sale of these Glasses, to be had at Mr. Dillon's in Long-Acre, next Door to the White-Hart.¹²⁰

This it seems is already a commercial venture with premises in town, and Spy is keen to point out similarities with other popular ocular accoutrements. The reference to the Opera-Glass also suggests that the use of Spy's contraption may be particularly fitted to the playhouse. 'One may look towards his Right or Left Hand, when he is supposed to look forwards' brings to mind an eye diverted from looking straight ahead towards the stage, or indeed away from the sermon as in *The Spectator* No. 20's episode in church.¹²¹ This is a technology through which the heteroptick gaze may be practiced. Intriguingly, there are actual artefacts in the Science Museum which look exactly like the spyglass described here - although they are from much later in the century.¹²² They are called diagonal spy glasses, or, more poetically, jealousy glasses. Whether they are something of a folly designed from *The Spectator's* principles, or an idea arrived at separately is unclear. Nevertheless this object demonstrates the

¹²⁰ Bond, II, pp. 472-3.

¹²¹ Bond, II, p. 473.

¹²² Object numbers 1993-1142 (c.1750) and 1993-1143 (c 1770).

heteroptick gaze in action and is very much collected, classified and displayed as part of a scientific discourse.

Not only does the glass make the unsanctioned heteroptick gaze covert. Spy also describes how, by using the glass, 'A Person may, by the Help of this Invention, take a View of another without the Impertinence of Staring'.¹²³ The construction of where the social crime of impertinence lies here is interesting. According to Spy, the impertinence of the action does not lie within the intention of the starrer, nor within the act itself. It is rather the cognisance of being stared at that causes harm. If starers cannot be trusted to see the error of their impertinent ways then Spy's glass will neutralise the threat they pose. He goes on to describe how:

Beauty may be beheld without the Torture and Confusion which it suffers from the Insolence of Starers. By this means you will relieve the Innocent from an Insult which there is no Law to punish...¹²⁴

Innocent beauty remains unruffled, and yet there is the tacit assumption here that the urge to voyeuristically behold beauty is a legitimate desire. This is compounded as Spy petitions Mr Spectator for his own review of the glass, and particularly desires his 'Admonitions concerning the decent use of it'.¹²⁵ There is the strange elision here between starers, the object of Mr Spectator's consternation, and rational, 'decent' spectators.¹²⁶ There is the danger suggested here that Spy's glass could potentially make voyeuristic starers out of us all, as covert gazes go unchecked by social outrage. This is also a gendered schema of looks; the tortured and confused beauties here are female, as illustrated by S.C. in her letter concerning being stared at. Her limited agency in combating her starrer is taken away altogether with the use of such a spy-glass. She would be powerless to know who might be staring at her at any given

¹²³ Bond, II, p. 473.

¹²⁴ Bond, II, p. 473.

¹²⁵ Bond, II, p. 473.

¹²⁶ Bond, II, p. 473.

moment. Mr. Spectator's 'Admontions' on the glass unfortunately remain unknown.¹²⁷

Conclusions

Commenting on Addison in *The Spectator*, Virginia Woolf states that:

We begin to take note of whims, fancies, peculiarities on the part of the essayist which light up the prim, impeccable countenance of the moralist and convince us that, however tightly he may have pursed his lips, his eyes are very bright and not so shallow after all. He is alert to his finger-tips. Little muffs, silver garters, fringed gloves draw his attention; he observes with a keen, quick glance, not unkindly, and full of amusement rather than censure.¹²⁸

I think Virginia Woolf's appreciation captures a great deal of what is compelling and enjoyable about *The Spectator*, and everything that is missing from Scott Paul Gordon's analysis and those that follow him. It is amused and amusing and 'not unkind'.¹²⁹ It is deeply interested in the world of stuff. Woolf's configuration of the interplay between 'essayist' and 'moralist' is interesting, suggesting perhaps that the essayist's pleasure in language and technique is somehow transportative, and takes over from a stricter and more limited moralising or reformatory impulse.¹³⁰ The character of Mr Spectator in this light may be seen as a literary and imaginative tool that is superadded to the sober and practical Addisonian reformation of manners, lending depth and "lighting up" its otherwise shallow gaze. In this appreciation of *The Spectator*, Addison needs to be understood from a slightly different perspective that takes into account literary craft, but also pleasure. The way in which Woolf sketches his - the essayist's but also his creation's - eyes and glance is very suggestive and points towards a reading of spectatorship in which the embodied spectator is key. Indeed, as well as being interested in bodies that wear little muffs and adorn

¹²⁷ Bond, II, p. 473.

¹²⁸ Virginia Woolf, 'Addison' in *The Common Reader First Series* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1951) p. 139.

¹²⁹ Woolf, p. 139.

¹³⁰ Woolf, p. 139.

themselves with silver garters, Mr Spectator is fascinated by how the body sees and is affected by sight.

In this chapter I have discussed the ways in which *The Spectator* constructs the act of looking through the device of Mr Spectator and the delineation of his spectatorial schema, and also through deploying and playing with this model over time. This approach takes satirical humour in *The Spectator* seriously. In this view, Addison and Steele set up a model of detached critical authority in Mr Spectator and then satirically test its boundaries, recognising the untenability of this comedically circumspect and circumscribed character and thereby revealing the plurality of processes of spectatorship rather than an untroubled binary distinction between removed spectator and passive spectacle. It is also my suggestion that it is necessary to add to and extend current critical thought which tends to focus on domination and control in relation to sight in *The Spectator*; by drawing attention to a more pluralistic and “Heteroptick” understanding of spectatorship. This is revealed through engagement with a broader reading across the publication, allied with a theatrical perspective which is mindful of the spectatorial economy of looks at work. Having set it out here in theory, the next two chapters look more closely at looking in the theatrical spaces of the established theatre and the pleasure garden.

Figure 1.1



A peep into Brest with a navel review! (London: July 1 1794). Held by Library of Congress. Call number: PC 3 - 1794

Figure 1.2



Symptoms of lewdness, or a Peep into the Boxes (London: May 20 1784)

Held by the The British Museum. Museum number: 1868,0808.6349

Chapter Two

Imagining the theatre

Richard Steele's *The Theatre* (1720) imagines a coterie, or club, that would write collaboratively about the London theatre and publish at regular intervals. As such he introduced several innovations to *The Spectator's* model of spectatorship and diurnal periodical narration. As with Mr Spectator and his club, the theatrical coterie meets in specific London places. However, rather than public spaces like the coffee-house, *The Theatre's* coterie converses over a private tea-table. The organisation of the group and the recruitment rationale behind it reflects the spatial, and social, organisation of the theatre auditorium itself. *The Theatre's* primary narrator, Sir John Edgar, sets out the club's formative principles:

1. That a select Number of Persons shall be chosen, as real Representatives of a *British* Audience.
2. These Persons so elected, shall be stil'd *Auditors of the Drama*.
3. No Persons to have free Voices in these Elections, but such as shall produce Certificates from the respective Door-keepers of the Theatre, that they never refus'd to pay for their Places.
4. The Players shall chuse two of their own Society, *viz.* one Male, and one Female, to take care of their Interest, and for the better Information of these *Auditors*, in Matters immediately relating to their Customs and private Oeconomy.
5. One Dramatick Poet to serve for the Liberties of *Parnassus*; to be chosen only by Tragick or Comick writers.
6. Three of the Fair Sex shall represent the Front-Boxes.
7. Two Gentlemen of Wit and Pleasure for the Side-Boxes.
8. Three Substantial Citizens for the Pit.
9. One Lawyer's Clerk, and one *Valet de Chamber* for the first Gallery. One Journeyman-Baker for the Upper Gallery.
10. And one Footman that can write and read shall be *Mercury* to the Board.
11. This Body so chosen, shall have full Power, in the Right of the Audiences of *Great Britain*, to approve, condemn, or rectify whatever shall be exhibited on the *English* Theatre. ¹³¹

In this initial setting-out of the club rules, the 'Auditors' are set out in relation to their places in the auditorium.¹³² The audience is distinguished by gender, and also by

¹³¹ Richard Steele, *The Theatre*, ed. by John Loftis (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1962) p. 10.

¹³² Steele, p. 10.

status, working professions being distinguished from 'Gentlemen of... Pleasure'.¹³³ They are paying theatre-goers, taking their places alongside the rest of the audience and not taking advantage of any favour.

Steele continues in a subsequent number to describe the various qualities of the people elected to the club, with particular stress being laid on the sense and industry of the club members. They are also at pains to promote British trade and manufacture, for example in the textiles and tailoring of both the theatres' costumes and the audience's fashionable theatre-going attire. One particular young lady appointed to the boxes is very sensible of the spectacle she herself will constitute in this privileged viewing position. Her gown 'lin'd with cherry-coloured silk' - all of British 'Growth and Labour', of course - is described, alongside her hopes of convincing the theatre-going public of the 'Commodiousness, Beauty and Ease' of British manufacture and design.¹³⁴

It is interesting to note that alongside the audience, the players and writers are integral and form a reciprocal relationship with the audience. The formation of the club itself is in part justified in terms of the actors and producers of the drama. It has been a 'great Cause of Distress' to theatrical players, Sir John Edgar reports, that so often it is very difficult to judge the success of a production, owing to the 'very different Opinions of People of Quality and Condition'.¹³⁵ The club is formed in part to rectify the difficulty of grasping a concrete critical opinion amongst the varying reactions of the heterogenous theatre audience. Added to this, the theatrical club is imagined as collaborating with theatre professionals and so contributing to the production of new theatrical work. Steele also begins to think critically about the status of the actor as a working person, discussing the 'laborious life' of players, which may not be so apparent to theatregoers who only see them during the 'cheerfulness' and 'levity' of a good performance.¹³⁶ The economy of the playhouse

¹³³ Steele, p. 10.

¹³⁴ Steele, p. 11.

¹³⁵ Steele, p. 9.

¹³⁶ Steele, p. 7.

begins to be set out, not just in terms of ticket sales and profits, but as a working building housing working people.

Both women and men take their place in this microcosm of the playhouse audience, and it is interesting to note how this gendered audience intersects with class. The three ladies, who are crucial founding members of the club and feature significantly in the first issues of *The Theatre*, take their places in the front boxes. However women disappear from the subsequent sections of the audience, which are instead carefully delineated in terms of profession. As my exploration of theatrical texts will show, women do form significant members of the audience in all sections of the theatre, and I will turn to a particular examination of the female spectator in this space towards the end of this chapter. Steele's configuration here represents significant erasure of women from the critical and spectatorial economy of the playhouse.

Although Steele's narrator promises regular updates, and also makes the suggestion that the other club members may find an equally important voice in the paper alongside this primary narrator, this carefully constructed model of the critical audience remains tantalisingly out of reach. Steele never returns to his carefully imagined club, and instead the paper runs on for a few numbers mired in the real-life dramas and negotiations involved in the business of patent-holder - the theatrical office that Steele actually held at the time.

Although never borne out in full, *The Theatre* represents a significant development and extension of the critical mode of *The Spectator*. Whereas Mr Spectator himself remained the "Great original" around which the publication and his readers revolved, the theatrical club further extends the possibility of a multifarious and a multiply-located critical body.¹³⁷ Rather than playing with the fiction of a removed observer, what *The Theatre* seems to offer is a group of spectators intimately involved in the workings, and the working people, of the theatre.

¹³⁷ Addison in Knight and Dawson(eds.), 232, l. 4-5.

What Steele begins to do in spatially accounting for the audience and using it to inform his modelling of critical responses is something that can be traced through different kinds of texts about the theatre in the period. There are drifts of pamphlets, single-issue poems and other ephemera that delight in not only classifying and putting the audience in its proper place, but also peeking behind the curtain and figuring out the theatre's backstage goings-on. Part of what this chapter aims to do is to begin to organise and assess what kinds of ephemeral texts about the theatre were being produced in London at the time and what their narrative of performance and spectatorship reveals. After first describing the kinds of theatre poems produced in London during the eighteenth century, I will continue to map out the theatre auditorium with a particular focus on one theatrical poem, *The Upper Gallery*, published in 1733 and reprinted in 1753.¹³⁸

Allied to this enquiry into ephemeral texts is a consideration of theatrical prints. This is a large category that includes visual sources such as prints of staged scenes, prints of individual actors and actresses in character, playbills, prints of portraiture; even ceramic figurines and chess pieces. Although this category is large and potentially unwieldy, it is important to attempt to hold this multiplicity of texts in our gaze. Alongside the other literary sources that I will consider, it reflects the imaginative attempt to capture, record and think about the theatrical moment and the multiplicity of sites in which the body of the actor (both male and female) was reflected and consumed in the eighteenth century. Although this kind of survey might also extend into fine art portraiture (as in the successful 2013 National Portrait Gallery exhibition, and accompanying book by Gill Perry, *The First Actresses: Nell Gwyn to Sarah Siddons*), for the purposes of this project I have chosen to focus on reproductions in print in particular.¹³⁹ For me, this approach reflects the multiple sites of consumption of theatrical ephemera, and opens up enquiry into attendant implications to do with space, class and gender. It is interesting to note that this approach has garnered (dismissive) criticism from the otherwise collaboratively-

¹³⁸ Anonymous, *The Upper Gallery. A poem.* (Dublin and London: J. Roberts, 1733) and (London: W. Owen, 1753)

¹³⁹ Gillian Perry, *The first actresses: Nell Gwyn to Sarah Siddons* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2011). Exhibition held Oct. 20, 2011-Jan. 8, 2012 at the National Portrait Gallery London.

minded field of eighteenth-century art history. In addition to this, theatrical prints remain an under-used archival resource that reward critical attention and analysis as texts. Alongside this, playbills are another form of theatrical ephemera that may be productively explored. The material culture brought to the playhouse by the audience is another rich strand of evidence to draw from when considering the theatregoing audience. Scenes in novels, too, form an important site of imagining the theatre and its audiences.

Thinking meta-theatrically, playtexts about the theatre represent a significant source of literary material throughout the century. Dane Farnsworth Smith and M. L. Lawhon, in their *Plays About the Theatre in England, 1757-1800* (1979), record more than 120 in this period alone.¹⁴⁰ This is a theatrical appetite that can be traced to the satire on Dryden by Buckingham, *The Rehearsal* in 1672 (staged 1671), which spawns a multitude of progeny.¹⁴¹ Sheridan's *The Critic* (published 1781, staged 1779) towards the end of the eighteenth century takes up this mantle and introduces a number of innovations, and becomes the template for a new generation of plays about the theatre to imitate and update.¹⁴² The final section of this chapter will use Kitty Clive's *Bays in Petticoats* (1753) as an important, and seldom-used, text in this tradition which constructs multiple viewpoints of the working theatre auditorium.¹⁴³

We can also look to architectural plans and views of the patent theatres in question, at this point in time the Theatres Royal, Drury Lane and Covent Garden. This perhaps gives us a sense of space - the many hundreds of seats in the house; where are the toilets? - and also a sense of change over time. Rebuilding projects over the century, mainly due to fire, and infamously because of rioting, underscores the (mis)behaviour of the audience as a crucial factor in what the theatre building actually looks like. *The Spectator's* cudgel-wielding Trunkmaker, a well-known

¹⁴⁰ Dane Farnsworth Smith and M. L. Lawhon, *Plays about the theatre in England, 1737-1800, or, The self-conscious stage from Foote to Sheridan* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press and London: Associated University Presses, 1979).

¹⁴¹ George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, *The Rehearsal* (London: 1672)

¹⁴² Richard Brinsley Sheridan, *The Critic* (London: T. Becket, 1781)

¹⁴³ Catherine Clive, *The Rehearsal: or, Bays in Petticoats* (Dublin: J. Exshaw & M. Williamson, 1753)

Addisonian figure, thought to be based on a real theatregoing London character, underscores how the audience quite literally shapes the terrain of the theatre. The Trunkmaker, with his oaken cudgel, beats out his approbation on the fabric of the building. He is said to have ‘demolished three Benches in the Fury of his Applause’, and ‘seldom goes away from a Tragedy of Shakespear (sic), without leaving the wainscot extreamly shattered.’¹⁴⁴ Alongside this physical destruction, the great noise of the ‘Thwack’ of his cudgel rouses the rest of the upper gallery to applause, or, ‘if the audience does not concur with him, he smites a second time’.¹⁴⁵ This is a trope that Steele continues in *The Theatre*, with a ‘Journeyman-Baker’ who Sir John Edgar has an eye on to represent the upper gallery in the theatrical club.¹⁴⁶ There seems to be the threat of physical violence here too. ‘[H]e is a robust critick’ Edgar writes, ‘and can by Way of Cudgel keep Silence about him in the Upper-Gallery, where the Wit and Humour of the Play will not always command Attention’.¹⁴⁷ Although mere ‘Artizans’ in the cheapest part of the house, these cudgel-wielding critics are judicious in their praise and their violent applause ‘always hits the right Nail upon the Head’.¹⁴⁸

The physical destruction of the theatre seems to hold a particular fascination for the viewing public. There is a good number of similar prints of the theatre in ruins after the Drury Lane fire of 1809. (See Figure 2.1) The number of prints and drawings of this architectural spectacle points towards an urge to see the inside of the theatre, uncannily on the outside. Moments like this, when the theatre is destroyed or in crisis, often expose the theatre auditorium to scrutiny. A multiplication of political prints interrogate the particular political ruckus of the day, for example the so-called O.P. (meaning Old Price) riots of 1809, and there is a great deal of collecting around this in theatrical archives. Prints of the rioting audience, for example, can be seen to subvert the usual uses of space in the auditorium. (See Figure 2.2) In this print by

¹⁴⁴ Bond, II, p. 414.

¹⁴⁵ Bond, II, p. 414.

¹⁴⁶ Steele, p. 14.

¹⁴⁷ Steele, p. 14.

¹⁴⁸ Bond, II, p. 413, p. 416.

Cruikshank, titled *Acting magistrates committing themselves being their first appearance on this stage as performed at the National Theatre Covent Garden*, the orchestra is filled, not with musicians, but rioters sounding horns, bells and rattles. The stage does not host a dramatic reading, but the reading of the Riot Act by the “acting magistrates”.

However moments like this also reveal other, wider, concerns. An article in the *Morning Post* describes a scene in the theatre auditorium during the O.P. Riots of 1809:

In the pit the *row* was continued without interruption or molestation. The placards were not many, and scarcely any new. They were almost all directed against the private boxes, with allusions and inscriptions too indecent to be described, and which would disgrace the most barbarous and savage of the human race. At the conclusion of the play a Lady was descried in the second tier of boxes, who was supposed to be Mrs. HEWITSON. She was immediately pointed at by the gallant and generous defenders of the “*public cause*” and hooted (sic) with a yell and a torrent of abuse the most stunning and overwhelming. The Lady, however, stood her ground for some time: but the clamour continuing to increase, she at length withdrew, when *the gallant* band in the pit announced their *glorious* triumph with three cheers.¹⁴⁹

This periodical extract describes a historical moment in the theatre. However it also lays bare female vulnerability and agency in the theatre auditorium. It seems that female presence itself is here under attack. The woman here seems to have been identified solely due to her gender. Although she attempts to stand her ground in defence of her viewing position in the boxes, she is made to withdraw in a cruel and ‘overwhelming’ ejection from the theatrical space.

Rather than an excavation of historical sites or historical moments, however, what I aim to do in this chapter is explore a multitude of texts that represent the theatrical space of the eighteenth-century theatre building in order to examine how this space is imaginatively, culturally constructed. After introducing categories of ephemeral texts that contribute to the multitudinous imaginative depictions of the theatre, I shall proceed with an imaginative tour around the theatre building. This will investigate the construction of space inside the theatre building, from entering into the foyer, to the sections of the auditorium, the stage, and backstage space. This chapter will

¹⁴⁹ Unsigned, *Morning Post*, November 21st, 1809.

conclude with an investigation into how the female spectator specifically is imagined in the theatrical space.

Theatre Poems and Constructing the Patent Stage

Using theatre poems

Looking at eighteenth-century theatre poems, one is met with a sometimes bewildering array of texts that take as their subject all manner of figures associated with the stage. The poems tend to hudibrastic verses, range from sixteen-page pamphlets to works in volumes, and are more often than not satirical. Theatre poems should not be confused with theatrical satire, which is a broader term used to discuss satiric performance and playtexts – that is satire happening in and around the theatre. Unscripted mimicry and ad-libbing on the patent stages that skirt around censorship and libel laws are also important extra-textual practices of satire in the eighteenth century theatre. Theatre poems are also texts produced around the stage, and may be read alongside performance-centred material as part of an enquiry into meta-theatrical production, both literary and dramatic, in the eighteenth century. These kinds of texts constitute both audience and performers – the active bodies at the heart of the performance event - and in their comment, criticism, exploration and lampoonery, actively engage with what is happening on the stage and in the theatre building.

In this chapter, I explore satirical poems about the theatre from, roughly, 1730 to 1790. In much scholarship about and around the eighteenth-century theatre, satirical poems feature slightly, if at all. The main use for them has been biographical; for example many scholarly articles about Sarah Siddons reference in some manner one of the two *Siddoniad* poems. However even major figures like Siddons (or Mary

Robinson, whose career on the stage was not nearly as significant as Siddons', yet who provoked a significant number of satirical poems) have not been thoroughly appraised in terms of the prolific publishing of cheap and popular materials that they inspired. There has even been a marked reluctance on the part of some scholars to do so. Shearer West, for example, in dealing with the depictions of the acting body and the stage in theatrical prints of the eighteenth century, is wary of an audience that is perceived as hostile and theoretically muddying. There are similarities in the price, availability and circulation of single poems like the ones under discussion here and theatrical prints. However beyond the immediate similarities of the physical object, the way in which West portrays the audience is pertinent to a consideration of these texts. The audience are 'curious and ruthless, and printsellers capitalized on this malicious voyeurism.'¹⁵⁰ This is surely an ungenerous account of spectatorship in the London theatres; however this curiosity, and a certain ruthlessness of intent that seeks to peel back the facade of the theatre building and expose audience behaviour, is certainly a vital component of the theatre poem. In addition, West privileges documentation of an "actual" performance moment, an approach which does not critically reflect upon the ephemerality of the performance moment, and also sidelines theatrical texts that construct the range of theatrical business taking place in the auditorium alongside the figures of the actors: 'Far from giving us any indication of theatrical gesture and expression as it was actually performed on the stage, these prints mirror the audience reaction or exaggerate the problems attendant upon a particular performance'.¹⁵¹ The audience reaction, and the multitude of factors which are attendant upon performance, are what I hope to explore here. The poems and texts considered here are like these relatively cheap visual prints, intimately involved in spectatorship and the audience and much less preoccupied in capturing any kind of sustained, serious portrayal of the stage picture.

These kinds of ephemeral poems that I access here have seldom been critically discussed at length. John Jennings' 1964 article, 'David Garrick and Nicholas Nipclose', is an unusual instance of an article dealing specifically with one satirical

¹⁵⁰ Shearer West, *The Image of the Actor: Verbal and Visual Representation in the age of Garrick and Kemble* (London: Pinter, 1991) p.48.

¹⁵¹ West, p. 48.

theatre poem, *The theatres, a poetic dissection*, by the pseudonymous Nicholas Nipclose.¹⁵² This is a biographical evaluation; Jennings assesses whether the satire was known to Garrick, how it may have affected his practice, and if it impinged upon his reputation. I, however, am interested in exploring this kind of writing about the theatre in terms of its wider interest in exploring the constructions of the stage. Texts like this may be productively and usefully accessed to consider the interior spaces of the theatre building; the location of the theatre in the city; audience behaviours and the spectatorial practices of the satirical poet.

Before moving on to consider some particular poems in depth, it is useful to sketch out first the different kinds of satirical theatre poems that can be found in this period. The majority of theatre poems can be broken down into two modes of writing, which I have termed “theatrical” and “characteristic”. I have chosen these terms working from terms used in the poems themselves, for example “characteristical poem”.

The theatrical mode of satirical verse deals with the state of the theatre as a whole, that is the two patented stages of Drury Lane and Covent Garden; the people who work there, typically actors and managers but occasionally backstage personnel; and the implications the workings of the theatre has for the public and the town. These poems are very definitely about the theatre, rather than the drama – although specific acted characters on stage are dealt with, there is no real examination of plays and playwrights. In accessing these kinds of satires it is worth bearing in mind other texts with which they share similarities. Although, as with a great deal of satire in general, the influences and aims of the theatrical satire may be multifarious, there are some texts in particular which are of importance in contextualising the theatre poem.

¹⁵² John Jennings, ‘David Garrick and Nicholas Nipclose’, *Educational Theatre Journal*, 16 (1964). Nicholas Nipclose, *The Theatres. A poetical dissection* (London and York: John Bell and C. Etherington, 1772).

Perhaps the most well-known theatre satire is Churchill's *Rosciad* of 1761.¹⁵³ The *Rosciad* stages a mock procession, in the style of Pope, and triumphs in minutely criticising the movements of the acting body. After assessing the state of the acting talent of the day, as judged, in the poem, by Shakespeare and Ben Jonson, it proclaims Garrick as the greatest English actor. It had a wide influence in the eighteenth century and spawned numerous "New Rosciads" and other parodies, imitations and attacks. Joseph M. Beatty, Jr. (1927) lists an impressive 112 texts, beginning in the 1760s and carrying through well into the middle of the nineteenth century, that either directly imitate Churchill or show strong similarities to the *Rosciad*.¹⁵⁴ The main function of most of these imitative works is to update the work to include players currently on the stage, and as such may be used to chart these chronological differences. Beatty cites Hugh Kelly's *Thespis* (1766 and 1767) and *The Theatres: a poetical dissection* by Nicholas Nipclose (erroneously listed as 'a poetical dissertation') as just such imitative and poorly executed texts.¹⁵⁵ Beatty had no access to the poems, and works from reviews and short extracts of poems from *The Monthly Review*. Since his work at the beginning of the twentieth century there has been very little discussion of these numerous theatrical texts, produced in the spirit of amateur gentlemanly print culture.

Poems like *The Theatres* and *Thespis* may be read merely as imitators of Churchill, although notices in contemporary newspapers do suggest that they were treated as texts in their own right, *The Theatres* especially being 'reviewed in a manner appropriate to a major work of theatrical criticism'.¹⁵⁶ It is also apparent that the three poems were read alongside each other, with Kelly and Nipclose being censured for being rather more coarse and vituperative than Churchill. Indeed *Thespis* seems to

¹⁵³ Charles Churchill, *The Rosciad* (London: 1761).

¹⁵⁴ Joseph M. Beatty Jr, 'Churchill's Influence on Minor Eighteenth-Century Satirists', *PMLA*, 42 (1927).

¹⁵⁵ Hugh Kelly, *Thespis: Or, A Critical Examination Into the Merits of All the Principal Performers belonging to Drury-Lane Theatre* (London: G. Kearsly, 1766) and *Thespis: or, A critical examination into the merits of all the principal performers belonging to Covent-Garden Theatre. Book the second.* (London: G. Kearsly, 1767).

¹⁵⁶ Jennings, p. 270.

have had a life of its own, generating a great deal of answering poems with titles such as *The Anti-Thespis* (1767) and *The Rescue, a Thespian scourge* (1767).¹⁵⁷

Some critics have viewed *The Theatres, a poetical dissection* and *Thespis* as wandering, randomly-aimed squibs. Jennings, in his *David Garrick and Nicholas Nipclose*, describes this kind of plotless satire as ‘ungainly’, especially when viewed in terms of poetic structure.¹⁵⁸ However, an alternative strategy may be to read these poems within the context of popular theatrical texts. These kinds of satiric shots, which are aimed at specific named figures, and often take the form of a succession of single stanzas that deal with one named personage at a time, can be seen to share much in common with a different type of text altogether. Collections with such titles as *Green Room Gossip*, and *The Secret History of the Green Room* appear in the eighteenth century as miscellanies of theatrical and personal stories about actors, singers and managers; supposedly witnessed anecdotes; and even epitaphs of famous theatrical figures.¹⁵⁹ A satire like *The Theatres*, then, may be read as an inversion of this kind of frothy, gossipy, stagey text. Nipclose’s viewpoint is styled as critical and literary, incisive rather than speculative. The very naming of the pseudonymous author, which suggests the pinching together of wounds, and the ‘dissection’ of his title, points towards a critical project with the purpose, detachment and penetration of the surgeon. This language of the operating theatre shades neatly into the language of satirical comedy; the satirist is piercing, cutting, he has the theatres “stitched up”. Unfortunately, surgical language and the metaphor of opening up the theatre is not sustained throughout the poem. Nevertheless the roster of stars who line up before

¹⁵⁷ Anonymous, *Anti-Thespis: or, a vindication of the principal performers at Drury-Lane Theatre from the false criticisms, illiberal abuse, and gross misrepresentations of the author of a poem lately published, entitled, Thespis*. (London: H. Gardner, 1767).

John Brownsmith, *The rescue: or, Thespian scourge. Being a critical enquiry into the merit of a poem, intituled, Thespis. With some candid remarks on The Modesty, Good-Nature, and Impartiality of that piece. Written in hudibrastic verse*. (London: J. Williams, 1767).

¹⁵⁸ Jennings, p. 270.

¹⁵⁹ Gridiron Gabble (pseud; Joseph Hazlewood), *Green Room Gossip; or, gravity gallinip: a gallimaufry, consisting of theatrical anecdotes. With an appendix of grave subjects*. (London: 1809).

Anonymous, *The Secret History of the Green Room* (London, 1792).

the critic-surgeon's view appear as bodies to be examined one-by-one. The satire may be plotless, but it is entirely coherent as a physical examination.

The Theatres, in common with Kelly's *Thespis*, presents a narrator who is highly conscious of his authorial status as critic, and the critical project at hand. This results in a measure of justification and critical posturing, which more self-assured satirists like Churchill leave behind. Kelly for example makes the odd assertion that dramatic art has no 'rules'.¹⁶⁰ The casual spectator is anchorless, with no means 'To point out rude deformity from grace, And strike a line 'twixt acting and grimace'.¹⁶¹ It is the critic Kelly's job to draw this line. The spectatorial viewpoint this assumes is rather misguided, denying the audience the basic facility of discernment between gestures and expressions. As other theatre poems make clear, the eighteenth-century audience is adept at forming and expressing opinion.

The literary talents of Nipclose and Kelly may leave a lot to be desired, nevertheless the images and metaphors that they do sustain offer a series of interesting models with which to think about the theatre and theatrical space. In what follows I hope to open up some of these satirical strategies for imagining the spaces of the theatre building, and how these conditions of performance affect the theatrical relationship between spectator and actor.

The second "characteristic" mode concentrates on a single dramatic figure and interrogates their stagecraft, as opposed to the "theatrical" poems which treat of the stage or the drama as a whole. Nevertheless, many satirical examples of the characteristic mode share much in common with the critical theatrical poem, especially when exhibiting personally-directed satire that shades over into rank abuse. In contrast however, the two *Siddoniads* - *The Siddoniad a characteristic and critical poem* (1784), and *The Siddoniad, a poetical essay* (1785) - are examples of characteristic poems that are sympathetic, rather than critical, appraisals of the acting

¹⁶⁰ Hugh Kelly, *Thespis* [Drury Lane] p. 2

¹⁶¹ *Thespis* [Drury Lane], p. 2.

body. The “poetical essay” is a short poem that focuses on Siddons’ ‘virtue’ and ‘beauty’; the “characteristical poem” attempts to delineate her stage career in more detail.¹⁶² Rather than echoing the title of *The Dunciad*, the 1784 *Siddoniad* seems to be a kind of theatrical *Aeneid*, chronicling the illustrious journey of the Siddons. In acknowledging Churchill’s *Rosciad*, the poet aims ‘for a Churchill’s sweetness, not a Churchill’s gall’.¹⁶³ This paean of praise is an antidote to the satiric, biting poets. The poem is structured around Siddons’ roles, and relates Siddons’ body to both the text she performs (in this case *The Gamester* by Edward Moore), and the audience she performs to.

When BEVERLY’S rash fate she’s fix’d to weep,
 (Whose passions revel, while his virtues sleep;)
 To mark each change, pathetically just,
 Which feeling, we confess, and feel we must;
 Th’ arresting sympathy o’ersways each mind,
 And makes the cruel momentar’ly kind.¹⁶⁴

Although the text does imagine the audience, it is nevertheless an indeterminate quantity that is obscurely affected by ‘sympathy’.¹⁶⁵ The structuring of the theatrical relationship and the space of the stage and auditorium is not concrete. Nevertheless *The Siddoniads* are texts that are critically discussed fairly frequently, especially in contrast to the little-used texts under consideration here. They are interesting texts to consider in terms of the staging of the acting body, especially for such a culturally important figure like Siddons whose body is multiplied across a large number of texts and images. They do attempt to record the gesture, movement and voice of the actor - and sometimes comment on the difficulty of trying to capture the ineffable qualities of Siddons in performance. However for the scope of this project they are somewhat less useful as the spectatorial relationship between Siddons and her audience remains hazy.

¹⁶² Anonymous, *The Siddoniad, a poetical essay* (London: 1785), p. 5

¹⁶³ Thomas Young, *The Siddoniad: a characteristical and critical poem* (Dublin, 1784), p. 2.

¹⁶⁴ Young, p. 16.

¹⁶⁵ Young, p. 16.

Leaving aside poems such as elegies to Garrick – which I judge to be more in the realm of celebrity rather than specific to theatricality and performance - there are a handful of eighteenth-century theatre poems that defy the easy separation into broadly theatrical or characteristic. *The Fribbleriad* for example, written by Garrick himself, is a complex layering of an imagined theatrical character, real persons known in the town, and a kind of quasi-fantastic audience that is outrageous in its overflowing of defined theatrical, spectatorial boundaries. In brief, the *Fribbleriad* stages a convocation of the ‘Fribbling race’ who rail against Garrick’s portrayal of their ‘sex’ in the character of Mr Fribble in *Miss in her Teens*.¹⁶⁶ The appointed chair, Fizgig, (a character that satirises Garrick’s enemy, the voluble and riotous Thaddeus Fitzpatrick) whips the set up into a fribbling frenzy, and they resolve to kill Garrick. The strain however proves too much for the delicate fops, and they retire home. The text presents a host of issues around eighteenth-century attitudes towards and performances of homosexuality, and critics have accessed the *Fribbleriad*, and more often the character of Mr Fribble itself, to explore the history of the ‘evolution... of homosexual identities’ in British culture.¹⁶⁷ In addition to these questions of foppery, masculinity and sexuality, the *Fribbleriad* poses a certain type of audience behaviour that overflows the boundary between spectator and spectacle that is staged by the demarcations of the auditorium and stage in the theatre building. The ever more outrageous threats against the theatre and the plots to assassinate Garrick are specifically located in ‘public rooms’ in ‘town’ and as such stage a theatrical audience who make their displeasure known neither in the auditorium nor in critical publication.¹⁶⁸ The ridiculous fops are overblown, but their reaction to a theatrical text and performance is also uncontrolled in terms of the critical and theatrical space it takes place in. It is this trope of overflow that I want to return to later, in the context of the theatre building itself.

¹⁶⁶ David Garrick, *The Fribbleriad* (London: 1761) p. 10.

¹⁶⁷ Lawrence Senelick, ‘Mollies or Men of Mode? Sodomy and the Eighteenth-Century London Stage’, *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 1 (1990) 33-67, p. 33.

¹⁶⁸ Garrick, p. 6.

These types of theatrical poems consider the theatre not only in terms of a performance on stage, but also push the idea of performance and the theatre out to encompass the audience, the critics and the spaces of the buildings they operate in. In the next section I will explore in detail the imagined spaces of the theatre building, using one particular poem, *The Upper Gallery*, to structure a tour around the theatre.

Introducing *The Upper Gallery*

The Upper Gallery (1733, 1755) is a particularly fascinating text that, like the *Fribbleriad*, does not fall easily into a theatrical or characteristical category. Like the *Rosciad*, it owes much to Swift and Pope in its format as a descriptive satire in rhyming couplets, and some of the metaphors that are repeatedly sustained throughout the text. In terms of theatrical material, it is inviting, exciting and unusual – it is a tour around the theatre building. In the rest of this chapter, I will be following the structure of *The Upper Gallery* closely and will use this satirical text to consider different spaces inside the theatre building, starting with the entrance into the playhouse.

The Upper Gallery situates the theatre within a city swimming in its own filth. With a nod to Swift and his *Description of a City Shower* (1710), the anonymous poet describes the ‘Ev’ning Clouds’, ‘draggled Crowds’, and streets drenched in effluent from swelling kennels.¹⁶⁹ All life outside is retreating; goods for sale are being withdrawn indoors, young women are picking their way home with their skirts tucked up against the rain. The poet advises, should one be lucky enough to find the money in one’s pocket, that one should make a retreat to the theatre. This position, that of the impecunious writer, is significant for the poem. Costing ‘one fair

¹⁶⁹ Anonymous, *The Upper Gallery: a poem* (London, 1733), p. 4.

Splendid' (one shilling), the upper gallery is the cheapest seat in the house.¹⁷⁰ In this way the poet's means dictate his positioning within the theatre building, the way he enters and moves through the building and, crucially, the vantage point he is afforded from which to survey the auditorium. Following the tide of damp bodies into the playhouse, then, we first must mount the stairs.

Making an entrance

The Upper Gallery's author is acutely aware of distinctions. Entering the playhouse, he eyeballs the 'spruce Beaus' who loll, wrapped up, in their sedan chairs waiting for entrance to the auditorium.¹⁷¹ 'We', the cheerful, sprightly lower classes, 'whistle up the stairs'.¹⁷² The inverse directionality of the climb is drolly alluded to – the higher one ascends the stairs, the lower one descends in status. The picture is one of the fashionably lethargic upper class settling at the lower strata of the building while the lower bubbles to the top. Yet this upwards momentum, and the identification of the poet with the 'we' of the upper gallery spectators, is complicated as he makes his climb.

The vertiginous, ill-lit staircase makes some bodies susceptible to falling:

Oft some ill-fated Nymph, which careless Strides,
To the Wood's slipp'ry Verge her Foot misguides,
Supine she falls, her white limbs lie display'd,
And shoot a sudden Lustre thro' the Shade.
Eager to see, the Youths assemble round,
And the throng'd Galleries with Laughter sound.
So when a snowy Sheet attracts their sight,
The Bees, hoarse-murm'ring gather round the White.
So when the Lamp exalts its kindling Rays,

¹⁷⁰ *The Upper Gallery*, p. 4.

¹⁷¹ *The Upper Gallery*, p. 4.

¹⁷² *The Upper Gallery*, p. 4.

The Flies thick-circling buz around the Blaze.¹⁷³

Immediately, the theatre building provides the means of making the female body vulnerable and visible to an audience. The process of making the young Nymph into a spectacle is entirely accidental; it has not been actively initiated or desired by her. Nevertheless the portrayal of this 'supine' 'nymph' with her 'white limbs' on display uses the language of classical statuary that is also employed to describe the actress. *The Siddoniad: a poetical essay* uses the same kind of framing device to describe the body of 'SIDDONIA', flanked by 'new born cherubs'.¹⁷⁴ Although celebratory in its intention, this kind of representation of the actress reveals the conventions of framing the female body on display at work both in the portrayal of professional theatrical work and opportunistic sexualized spectacle.

The throng of bodies on the stair allows for an anonymous and intimate view of this sexualized spectacle. The titillation of the crowd however is bound up with derision, as the 'galleries with laughter sound'.¹⁷⁵ A reaction appropriate to a stage spectacle is produced by the incident, again underlining a continuum between the female spectacle and the actress. Even the conditions of light on the stair create the perfect setting for the whiteness of the woman's skin. The audience is figured in terms of insects attracted to light – unthinking and driven by instinct. The male spectator this creates is one driven by a compulsion to view and lacking critical reflection, a derogatory image of masculine specular consumption, but one that is nevertheless naturalized. The poet himself, however, indulges in the spectacle yet stands outside the buzzing swarm. Rowlandson's *Exhibition Stare Case* (See figure 2.3) illustrates this common satirical trope of (female) bodies falling down. In this print, even the classical statuary are moved to stare at the spectacle. The titillating print never quite reveals all, and instead relies on the viewpoints of the characters in the scene for the viewer to imagine explicit female exposure. Although jovially revealing bare flesh and backsides, the physical predicament of the women is alarming, and the print exposes female sexual vulnerability in a heaving, visually excitable crowd.

¹⁷³ *The Upper Gallery*, p. 4.

¹⁷⁴ Anonymous, *The Siddoniad, a poetical essay* (London: 1785), p. 5, p. 9.

¹⁷⁵ *The Upper Gallery*, p. 4.

The Upper Gallery is notable for the modes of movement that it repeats and sustains. The upwards movement of the crowd is one directional impulse that stages audience distinction. The movement of bodies overflowing or overspilling their proper space is suggested by the nymph who lies displayed, and is also figured in the stampede to exit the theatre. The poet himself gets a knock to the head as the tide of spectators tumble out of the building, in a massed throng which 'heaves' and 'plunges'.¹⁷⁶ Print satires of the period also make a scene of theatrical overflow. Prints like *The Overflowing of the Pitt* (1771) and *The Pit Door* (1781) pertain to the audience seated in front of and below the thrust stage in the pit (See Figures 2.4 and 2.5). These seats are of middling price, and house a socially mixed audience that is perhaps riper for satire than the galleries. However both scenes mirror the press of bodies in *The Upper Gallery*. Bodies are being squeezed, and are themselves overflowing out of bonnets, wigs, shoes and petticoats - and, rather disgustingly, mixing in vomit. In both pictures the bright auditorium can be tantalizingly glimpsed through the entranceway at the back of the picture. The smooth, pale, ordered columns mirror the ordered scenes of dramatic art on the stage; they are mocked by the disorderly bodies of the pit-door. This sense of physical overflow is matched by an overspilling of boundaries evident in poems like *The Fribbleriad*. In both cases, the parameters set out by the theatre are controverted by spectators. Incidentally, these overflowing images also make clear the manner of entering the theatre building for the patrons of the cheaper seats: a shabby corridor makes do instead of the foyer of the box-renters. Finally, circling is a significant pattern of movement that is sustained in the audience. Here, the buzz of insects circling around the spectacle of the young woman figures the compulsion to view the titillating scene. However the auditorium, it is remembered, is a 'dome'. All spectators must circle around the stage.¹⁷⁷

Taking a seat

¹⁷⁶*The Upper Gallery*, p. 13.

¹⁷⁷ *The Upper Gallery*, p. 5.

The poet has arrived at his seat, but the cheerful whistling has ceased. The upper gallery seems to be a forest of dark shapes:

In the dim Shade we sit, a doubtful Race,
Disguise each Voice, and cover'd ev'ry Face,
Hid in the uncock'd Hats wide spreading Round,
Or sunk in some old Tye's immense Profound;
Beneath, thick coats their friendly Capes expand.
And the Oak-Cudgel waves in ev'ry Hand.¹⁷⁸

The young Nymph who took a tumble on the stairs seems to have given up the ascent; this is a solely male crowd. Once again the dimness of the theatre is important, this time as an aid to disguise alongside a number of oversized garments. The 'Oak-Cudgel' is a prominent accessory to this shady attire, echoing *The Spectator's* Trunkmaker.¹⁷⁹ The menacing weapon however is not intended for bodily harm. As a foppish intruder tries to foray into the dim gallery, he is repelled by 'keen-stinging Jest' rather than an oaken answer to his 'glancing Cane'.¹⁸⁰ Instead the oak cudgel is kept handy to threaten the fabric of the theatre building. This is an active audience, which makes its views known physically. The 'torn wainscot', mentioned only in passing, testifies to the power of the opinion of the lower classes in the upper gallery.¹⁸¹ The threat here is all encompassing, in contrast to the threat to female propriety on the stair. The covered faces of this section of the audience perhaps avoid identification and punishment, but also function to obfuscate any individual features; the audience up in the gallery act as a simmering, coalesced mass.

The incident against the fop illustrates a class divide, but also a stand against fashion. The means of disguise, the immense old tye (a type of wig) and the uncock'd hat may be read also as unashamedly unfashionable attire. This is another means of

¹⁷⁸*The Upper Gallery*, pp.4-5.

¹⁷⁹*The Upper Gallery*, p 5.

¹⁸⁰ *The Upper Gallery*, p 5.

¹⁸¹ *The Upper Gallery*, p 5.

visually stratifying the audience and also binds the scruffy upper gallery crowd to the tattered space they inhabit.

Marc Baer's 'Theatre and Disorder in Late Georgian London' is an interrogation of the active audience that is focussed very specifically on the Old Price (O.P.) Riots of October-December 1809. Using the example of the highly-charged rioters, the conclusions that Baer draws are illustrative of more general audience practices in the eighteenth century. One of the most striking attributes of the disorderly, riotous audience is the paradoxical patterning and order that organises it. The upper gallery mob exemplifies this self-organisation of the audience that repels outsiders and is visually bound together. The costuming of the disorderly audience is another way in which group identity is asserted, again corroborated in the poem. Another point in the section of Baer's work that deals with the 'audience as actors' is the assertion of the 'mimetic' audience.¹⁸² Understood in eighteenth-century acting theory, mimesis is an imitative mode of making gesture and copying speech; it is not a sophisticated method of approaching the bodily work of acting. This is opposed to a mimetic approach which reveals the body struggling physically with internal thought processes. To discuss the eighteenth century audience as a mimetic entity, then, is to figure the actions that the audience-as-actor undertakes as never fully encompassing the maturity of expression that is found on the stage. The audience parrots back the emotion, action and volubility of the stage. The *Upper Gallery* audience exists firstly in the moments when the stage is not being used; when it is depicted during the show there is never a concrete picture of what is happening on the stage. There are no actors or stage actions to mirror or repeat. What a text like *The Upper Gallery* reveals is the prominence of theatrical behaviours in the eighteenth-century audience on an everyday, mundane basis. The dramatic occurrence of a riot is not needed to highlight the patterns of audience behaviours that take place in the theatre on a nightly basis. Rather, the presence of the observant poet reveals all.

Rioting and lesser physical disorder at the London patent houses is documented in financial records that detail the expenditure of repair - George Winchester Stone, for example, reports that the management of both Drury Lane and Covent Garden

¹⁸² Marc Baer, *Theatre and Disorder in Late Georgian London* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992) p. 186.

had to redecorate completely 'about once every ten years'.¹⁸³ Tearing wainscots in protest at a dissatisfying production ensures that the theatre interior is continually re-made. This physical remodelling of the theatre space is a powerful expression of Upper Gallery opinion; however there are also non-violent behaviours in the upper gallery that may prove equally powerful.

Cruel and uproarious behaviour that interrupts the performance and success of an individual, in this case a cellist, is recorded in the *Public Advertiser* of 29th October 1753.

He has been a standing joke with the Upper Gallery for a long time past, on account of the length of his nose. But as I am informed that no feature of his mind is out of proportion, unless it be that his good qualities are extra-ordinary, I take this opportunity to mention that it is cruel to render him uneasy in the business in which he is eminent and by which he must gain his livelihood.¹⁸⁴

There is the assumption here, perhaps ridiculed by the *Upper Gallery's* bristling throng, that the upper gallery audience will be moved by the correspondent's protestations.

The threat of the upper gallery may also be used to sabotage production. In the preface to her comedy *The Ton; or, follies of fashion* (1788), Lady Wallace protests that:

[M]any trembled before its appearance with the fears of seeing themselves unveiled, and declared, before it was brought upon the stage, an intention of opposing it. They used every illiberal art to do so...They spread abroad, that it was filled with indecencies, and sent information to several Ladies who had boxes, that they had better stay away, as a riot was determined upon, even before its appearance.¹⁸⁵

The organised disturbance never took place; *The Ton* played for three nights and was not revived.

¹⁸³ George Winchester Stone, introduction to *The London Stage 1747-1776* (Carbondale, University of Illinois Press, 1968) p. clxxx.

¹⁸⁴ Unsigned note to 'Prologue written by Mr Garrick', *Public Advertiser*, No. 5929, Monday 29th October 1753.

¹⁸⁵ Lady Eglantine Wallace, *The Ton: or, follies of fashion* (London, 1788) p. vi.

The opposition made between the Ladies in boxes and indecencies and riot suggests that the menace of the galleries loomed large. Whether Lady Wallace imagined these illiberal machinations or not, her assertions reveal how the threat of upper gallery uproar can be used to manipulate the production of a play and affect the playing repertoire. Audience activity in the eighteenth century audience, then, is not merely in terms of physical violence but also the cunning management of the expectation of physical action emanating from this section of the auditorium.

In the upper gallery, it is necessary to disguise not only the person, but also the voice. This points to another material condition of the theatre that is manipulated by upper gallery through: acoustics. The positioning of the upper gallery audience at the top of the auditorium creates the phenomenon of amplified and distorted echoes of the upper gallery's vocal reactions, which are described as 'Unreal sounds, but images of true.'¹⁸⁶ The individual voice is blended into an immense echo of sound that functions to provide an "image", or representation, of the audience. The acoustics of the theatre building present the audience back to itself, concurrently with the imagery deployed on the stage. This episode illustrates the audience participating in the making of imagery in the theatre in a manner that does not rely on solely specular engagement.

In another example of the importance of the acoustics of the upper gallery, the dome 'Ecchoes' the rising applause of the audience, creating the impression of greater approbation, but also feeding the sound back into the audience, who respond with ever more applause.¹⁸⁷ The interplay of material conditions and the audience creates a significant factor of the theatrical experience. The audience portrayed here are not simply the "audience as actors" that provide a set of behaviours and speech that the actors on stage must respond to. Instead they effect a more complete manipulation of the material conditions of the stage that the production is situated in.

The view from the top

¹⁸⁶ *The Upper Gallery*, p 10.

¹⁸⁷ *The Upper Gallery*, p 10.

Donald C Mullin, working from sources that depict the actual spaces of Covent Garden and Drury Lane in the eighteenth century, clarifies the viewing positions of the pit - looking up to the thrust stage; the boxes – looking across; and the galleries – looking down. ‘Audience perspective’ is stressed as a factor affecting audience reception of the drama, and special attention is paid to ‘the position of above’, that is the upper galleries.¹⁸⁸ In a particularly violent passage, Mullin explains:

Above, one understands that the violence or agony is at one’s feet, and therefore that one is safe from contamination. In the pit one might easily be splashed by the blood or drowned in the tears, and the sense of personal involvement or of immediate danger is more acute.¹⁸⁹

The audience up in the gods, apparently, remain insensitive to sentimental drama. This universalising of audience reaction is contentious – later a parallel is drawn between this audience model and families watching television – and an enquiry into theatregoers of the present day who frequently sit in the cheaper upper reaches of the West End’s Regency and Victorian theatres built along these lines might find issue with Mullin’s assertion of reduced sensitivity. Nevertheless the spectatorial position that he postulates is an interesting one in relation to an eighteenth-century audience. Certainly the viewing position that is put forward by *The Upper Gallery* in part seems to corroborate this view, as the poet seats himself in ‘untroubled Quiet’ where ‘Secure from high we view th’ amusing Train’.¹⁹⁰ The dichotomy this creates is perplexing; the bristling, fractious mob who wave oak cudgels are suddenly placid and untroubled. At this point in the poem, however, the upper gallery spectators are viewing the intrigue of vainly pursued affairs of in the auditorium – their removed observation is not a reaction to the stage picture. The lofty position of the upper gallery looks over the heads of the pit, quite literally. As the play begins, the seats on high are lent the position of authority, and pre-eminence in leading audience reaction to the spectacle – ‘High We preside...to call forth the tempest of applause’.¹⁹¹ Rather

¹⁸⁸Donald C Mullin, ‘Theatre Structure and its effect on Production’, in *The Stage and The Page: London’s “Whole Show” in the Eighteenth-Century Theatre*, ed. by George Winchester Stone, Jr. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981) p.79

¹⁸⁹ Mullin, p. 79.

¹⁹⁰ *The Upper Gallery*, p.6.

¹⁹¹ *The Upper Gallery*, p. 11.

than exemplifying disengagement, the rowdy galleries stimulate the rest of the audience's reaction.

In *The Upper Gallery*, the seating at the top of the building makes the rest of the auditorium available to view. There is some segregation of behaviour here; however rather than the segregation between pit and boxes, the most obvious distinction in audience behaviour is between the sexes. Women, whether in boxes or pit, are mere 'Magpies', as they chatter and stalk glittering toys.¹⁹² The power of the theatrical spectacle is such that 'e'en that Female round' is silenced when the play begins.¹⁹³ However what is particularly striking about this visual rove around the auditorium is the way in which the sections of the audience become blended together. Viewed from a height, the behaviour and appearance of bodies in the audience seems tediously uniform.

Ladies and Bawds, and Cits, and Rakes, and Beaux:
'Tis smiling, curt'sying all.¹⁹⁴

The distinct stratification of the audience that is promoted by the differently priced tickets and seating arrangements is troubled by audience behaviour. The use of word 'blended' in particular in relation to these polite behaviours of greeting highlights how the audience makes itself into a coherent, unified entity in the theatre building. The 'soft-waving' fans of the ladies in the pit and boxes mirror the waving oak-cudgels of the upper gallery.¹⁹⁵ In addition to satirising the violence done in the auditorium by a killing glance from behind a fan, the accoutrements of the theatre-goer are revealed as valuable means of expressing opinion.

The curtain falls

¹⁹² *The Upper Gallery*, p.9.

¹⁹³ *The Upper Gallery*, p.9.

¹⁹⁴ *The Upper Gallery*, pp. 5-6.

¹⁹⁵ *The Upper Gallery*, p. 7.

The evening's entertainment finishes, and the tide of spectators is released from the theatre building. The edifice cannot withstand or control the tide of muck swelling through the town, and the building discharges the crowd back into the swirling streets. The image of insects is deployed again:

The Beaux and Fair last quit the thinn'd Abode,
(The brawny Chairman pants beneath his Load)
Gay Creatures, proud of dress and transient Bloom,
The light things flutter round, and gild the Gloom.
So where the Sew'rs thro' broken Channels glide,
And stagnant Filth coagulates the tide,
Lur'd by the stench unnumber'd Flies resort,
And wanton circ'ling, mix in various Sport;
From side to side the humming Insects run,
Wave their gilt Wings, and glitter in the Sun.¹⁹⁶

Wafting butterflies are revealed to be swarming bluebottles in a crescendo of misogynistic disgust. Again the poem is totalising in its view of women in the theatrical space; the beauties described could be well-dressed matrons, or street prostitutes. The theatre disgorging the crowd is reminiscent of a Roman *vomitorium*.

The street is also a place of (professional) performance. As soon as he has quitted the building the poet is confronted by ballad singers and fire-eaters.

At length, I come where 'mid the admiring Round,
In Verse alternate, warbled Ballads sound,
Ballads myself had fram'd with wond'rous Art,
To gain a Supper, or a Milk-maid's Heart!
[...]
Now the arch Stripling from some neighb'ring Stand,
Hurls Flames malignant from his lifted Hand;
Whizzing they fly; the Crowd aghast retires
From the dread Squib, and future spreading Fires.
It bounces, bursts, and is a Flash is lost,
From side to side the reeling Crowds are tost;
Now heav'd on high, now trampled under Feet,
And *Poets* roll with *Coblers* in the Street.¹⁹⁷

Firstly, the poet is revealed as part of a performative economy that exists outside of the theatre building. The intersection of literary production, publishing,

¹⁹⁶ *The Upper Gallery*, pp. 10-11.

¹⁹⁷ *The Upper Gallery*, pp. 11-12.

performance and spectatorship is embodied in the street performer. The street entertainers are juxtaposed against the edifice of the theatre building, which has disgorged its spectators back into the town, nevertheless the same mechanisms of creating spectacle and audience are seen to be at work. Spectators form an 'admiring Round' without the Dome of the auditorium to shape their behaviour.¹⁹⁸ The acknowledgement of blendedness is here again as the roiling crowds carry on their way.

Theatrical poems, like *The Theatres*, do not take a wander around the vicinity of the playhouse. Nevertheless city spaces do play an important role. In particular, the trope of grubby rottenness is allied to place by calling upon associations to the fairground. Drawing upon Pope's Smithfield muses, Churchill's *Rosciad* places Dullness' throne atop the theatre building looking towards Smithfield. *The Theatres* takes up this sense of location. The gods of the theatre ('if any gods there be') are called upon to:

Pervade the Grub-Street gloom, which wraps around
Our ROYAL SHOW SHOPS, and their guides profound;
For SAINT BARTHOLOMEW let conquest run;
To Smithfield give their tinsel glare and FUN...¹⁹⁹

In this way the royally appointed stages are reduced to mere fairground booths. The named place of Bartholomew fair adds to the creation of satirical landscape that allies scribbling with Grub Street, and mumming with the fairground.

The 'tinsel' of Pope's Dullness is also revisited in a theatrical capacity - theatrical costume and the tricking out of performance space.²⁰⁰ The empty glitter of performance itself is evoked by use of this language in relation to the spoken word. Invocations used in dramatic prologue 'sparkle and betray', for example.²⁰¹ Both

¹⁹⁸ *The Upper Gallery*, p 11.

¹⁹⁹ Nicholas Nipclose, *The Theatres. A poetical dissection* (London and York: John Bell and C. Etherington, 1772) p. 5.

²⁰⁰ *The Theatres*, p. 5.

²⁰¹ *The Theatres*, p. 5.

poems link together through common language gross consumption and materiality and the physicality of speech and movement on the stage. Lloyd's *An Epistle to David Garrick* (1773), a characteristic poem that uses similar devices to *The Theatres*, creates an alternative vision of gross materiality in a poison garden of wasps, pendulous rotting fruit, and rank plants that seems to take root and overcome the theatre building.²⁰²

Where is the stage?

The Upper Gallery's surging, spilling, roiling mass of people is pressed oppressively close, affording opportunity for intimate observation of the audience's person and position. The stage, however, remains distant. Instead of a precisely observed stage picture, a troupe of images from well-known plays is deployed, each in quick succession. The rapid fire of texts, characters and playwrights is not physically *viewed* within the poem. The brisk listing of play names and actors suggests that quick-change of scene to scene, production to production that takes place in differing combinations throughout the night, throughout the week, throughout the season, is too slippery and ephemeral to grasp hold of. By contrast, the audience is a constant. The repeated use of play names and playwrights also suggests the solid object of the text. The poet of *The Upper Gallery* may always have recourse to a playtext, in the face of an ever-changing stage picture. Nevertheless what results in this poem is the re-hashing of commonplaces; *Hamlet* inspires 'rage', Brutus in *Julius Caesar* has a 'noble' death.²⁰³

The inability of this satirical poet to account for the ephemerality of the performance moment results in a blurry, unsatisfactory picture of the stage. The 1753 edition of *The Upper Gallery* does add 21 lines to this section, which mention more Shakespearean plays and the actors Cibber and Barry.²⁰⁴ It figures abstract passions, conducted in an obscure fashion to an audience that appears as a single

²⁰² E. Lloyd, *An Epistle to David Garrick* (London: 1773).

²⁰³ *The Upper Gallery*, pp. 9-10.

²⁰⁴ *The Upper Gallery* (1753) pp.

entity. This runs counter to the careful and complex delineation of the audience in the rest of the poem.

The Theatres and *Thespis*, and a good deal of similar critical offerings, on the other hand offer the reader a roster of the stars that are paraded one by one before the author's critical eye. The gossipy behind-the scene "Green Room" pieces pursue a similar strategy, clearly demarcating each theatrical personage with their name heading each entry. However both *The Theatres* and *Thespis* integrate each actor into the rhyme scheme:

There, not an actress certainly alive
Can e'er dispute pre-eminence with CLIVE ---
But, when to taste she makes the least pretence,
Or madly aims at elegance and sense;
When at high life she despicably tries,
And flares her frowsy tissue on our eyes,
There the wide waddle, and the ceaseless bawl,
Provoke the general ridicule of all...²⁰⁵

This is a typical example of a text that is critical of the acting body and each actor's vocabulary of movement, which are viewed in exclusion from the stage space or play text. The frowsy, dog-eared tinsel of Clive's wardrobe here also echoes the imagery of the fairground booth.

Both *The Theatres* and *Thespis* are structured around the two patent stages, with *Thespis* being produced in two separate sections: Book One deals with Drury Lane, Book Two with Covent Garden. Within each theatre, the actors are lined up according to gender. Echoing the practice of organising *Dramatis Personae* in playtexts, and listing featured actors on playbills, men are dealt with first, then women. As such the poems can be read as offering gendered representations of actors and acting. Male actors are commonly criticised for failing gentlemanly standards or grace, wit, deportment and judgement. Female actors are represented as rather more problematic to deal with than men, primarily because of their attractive bodies:

Indeed, where female merit must be tried,

²⁰⁵ *Thespis*, [Drury Lane} p. 44.

Tis hard to judge, and dangerous to decide;
A secret something in our breasts will warm
Where eyes can languish, and where lips can charm...²⁰⁶

Predictably enough, the main charge against women is that they are fat and old. (In this way, these theatrical poems tally with *The Rosciad*, which baldly calls Mrs Pritchard 'too fat and old'.²⁰⁷) Preferred actresses display 'nicety':

Of all the gifts an actress e'er possest,
The first, the noblest, is a feeling breast;
Yet the nice actress, with a cautious pride,
A gem like this shou'd often seek to hide,
And wisely fear it's value to reduce
In vain emotion, or in needless use.²⁰⁸

There are, however, ways of criticising the acting body that are common to both sexes. As the train of theatricals is paraded before the reader's view, a pattern is established of treating with general attributes of the actor first, before dealing with specific acted scenes and characters. Both positive and negative aspects are discussed. In this way, an interplay of authored text and performed interpretation is presented.

Although these criticisms revolve around the actor's person, glimpses of the performing body working within the theatrical space of the stage may be had. Appropriately to satirical comedy, the best illustrations of the dynamics of space on the stage are in its moments of failure. Some particularly interesting moments of stagecraft gone wrong include the actors looking back at the audience. The exchange of looks between actor and audience is figured in the Covent Garden *Thespis* as a bored inattentiveness on the part of the self-important actors, leading to a betrayal of dramatic scene for the audience. The misuse of space is also an issue needing critical correction. *Thespis* [Drury Lane] portrays silly and over-enthusiastic actors 'running'

²⁰⁶ *Thespis* [Drury Lane] p. 36.

²⁰⁷ Charles Churchill, *The Rosciad* (London: 1761) p.15, l. 496.

²⁰⁸ *Thespis*, [Covent Garden] p. 13.

to the forestage, and trampling all over the finely-wrought feeling of a scene.²⁰⁹ Interestingly, this ‘scandalous’ mismanagement of dramatic staging is seen as pitched to the ‘galleries’.²¹⁰

These texts create a variety performance, as different characters and scenes are whipped on and off stage. This is exactly the kind of performance mode found in the kinds of Smithfield booths that the poems critically range themselves against. Added to this, these theatre poems recreate the variety of performance found during a single night at the theatre, on either side of the authored main play. The hurlothrumbo of the main piece, afterpiece, musical interludes, dances and a whole host of *etceteras* may be glimpsed in playbills from the period, which list each item of the evening’s entertainment. Ironically, the theatre poems’ attempts to discuss the drama in terms of single and singularly sustained playtexts actually work to create the opposite effect.

The theatrical public sphere

The proximity of the body of the actor is an important concept in thinking around the way the theatre engages with the public sphere. The closeness of the spectator in the auditorium to the actor’s body is one desirable selling point used to attract the public into the theatre building, transforming them into a paying audience. What is key here is the dichotomy of outside and inside, public and private. If this simple dichotomy of inside/outside is accepted, what happens in the theatre is a process of transforming the public on the outside into an audience on the inside. Backstage space, then, promises a third sphere, an extra level, a kind of ultra-inside. Viewing backstage space can be seen as unofficial, outside the legitimate process of becoming an audience member. However, the green room is also a muddying of these

²⁰⁹ *Thespis*, [Drury Lane] p. 4.

²¹⁰ *Thespis*, [Drury Lane] p. 4.

categories: it is closed private space that is nevertheless open to the select few, usually the well-connected aristocratic guests of the actors.

Christopher Balme uses eighteenth-century playbills to examine the theatre communicating in the theatrical public sphere. This is an important consideration of a little-used theatrical source. The texts I am considering here are similar in the respect that they tend to be treated as theatrical ephemera along similar lines to playbills. However, what I am studying here are attempted satirical voyeuristic intrusions into the theatre by outsiders, and also satirical communication staged from inside the institution by the people who work backstage. These kinds of texts showcase what Balme describes as central to the imaginative draw of theatre over its public: its 'inner life' and 'inner workings'.²¹¹ Another element to consider is how texts like this offer access to the theatre's 'institutional practices'.²¹² Like the playbills Balme studies, the texts I have chosen also 'modulate the relationship between inside and outside' the theatre building, and also constitute texts that can be read to 'study the theatre public independent of the performance event'.²¹³

Tita Chico writes on the theatrical "tiring-room" - from attiring-room, or dressing room - in her study of the dressing room in eighteenth-century culture. Acknowledging the number of texts and prints that seek to gain access backstage, she acknowledges them as spaces that 'invite speculation'.²¹⁴ For Chico the tantalising dressing room is a 'figurative doorway', giving access to the body of the actress.²¹⁵ Going further into the theatre and pushing aside the stage curtain is like removing female garments; 'the first step in getting access to the actresses' bodies, an

²¹¹ Balme, p. 55.

²¹² Balme, p. 59.

²¹³ Balme, p. 41, p. 59.

²¹⁴ Tita Chico, *Designing Women: the dressing room in eighteenth-century English literature and culture* (Lewisburg, PA : Bucknell University Press, 2005) p. 44.

²¹⁵ Chico, p. 50.

association that eroticised the very act of looking behind the scenes.²¹⁶ I would like to acknowledge this narrative of eroticisation, whilst also exploring the theatre as a commercial space.

Backstage spaces

Although these theatre poets peer into all corners of the auditorium, the backstage area is closed to their critical eye. Indeed backstage space and the various professions that work within the theatre but do not take to the stage, such as set builders and costume makers - the people that work to create the *mise-en-scène* – do not feature heavily in theatrical poems. One glimpse can be found, however, in the frontispiece illustration to *The Theatres*, although its depiction of theatrical “mechanists” is less than respectful. (See Figure 2.6) Depicted as coarse-featured, hook-nosed and gormlessly staring, the backstage tailors and carpenters stand to the right of the picture. The muses Melpomene, who strikes a Siddonian pose, and Thalia, wearing a Abingdonesque aspect, petition Garrick from the left. Thalia’s mask, held aloft, mirrors the carpenter’s mallet. Melpomene holds a chalice, the tailor his scissors. Although Garrick’s head inclines towards the muses, his hand points to a placard held by ‘Mr Messink the Drury Lane Mechanist’ proclaiming ‘Processions for Ever’.²¹⁷ Garrick grasps a page inscribed ‘Arthur’s Round Table’, and the torn up names of Shakespeare, Rowe and Ben Jonson are trampled under his feet. The brightly lit interior on the side of the muses shades ominously towards dark on the side of the workers. The imputation here is clear; the crowd-pleasing spectacle of costly stage- and costume-design is tempting Garrick away from the dramatic arts of Tragedy and Comedy. That this should be figured as a turn away from illuminated classical beauty to a shady set of figures is perhaps not surprising. However the role that the backstage workers are given in this tableau is interesting.

²¹⁶ Chico, p. 55.

²¹⁷ Frontispiece to Nipclose, *The Theatres*.

They are actively petitioning Garrick, drawing him away from the theatric arts. Their focus is on ever more extravagant spectacle, presumably in the interest of continued employment. Rather than skilled and specialist craftsmen that enable the production of drama, they are uninterested and actively damaging to dramatic art. These benighted mechanists are sent packing to the murky corners of their backstage workshops, however, and Nipclose's dissection of the theatres does not probe into the reaches of backstage.

However, the backstage, private (but publicly accessed by the chosen few) area of the green room exerts a particular allure over the imagination. Visual sources, such as satirical prints that lay the green room open to prying eyes, may be accessed to construct the imagined space of backstage. In addition, a significant number of texts exist from this period that can be broadly termed green room miscellanies. They range from compendiums of jokes and witticisms, supposedly uttered in the green room by wits like Garrick and Foote, to more sober collections of biographical and performance history of leading players. They have wonderful titles: *Green Room Gossip*, *The Secret History of the Green Room*, *The Green Room Mirror*. Titles like this seem to promise racy secrets, however rather than being scandalous or scurrilous, collections like this instead give the reader access to information that is not gleaned by going to the theatre as a paying audience member.

It is this mediation of the theatrical relationship of spectator/spectacle and how this is staged within the theatre building, and also the commercial consideration of what the audience is paying to see, that I hope to show are key concerns in viewing backstage space. In their *Spaces of Consumption: leisure and shopping in the English town, c. 1680-1850*, Jon Stobart, Andrew Hann and Victoria Morgan use the terms 'front-space' and 'back-space' in their mapping of the eighteenth-century urban shop.²¹⁸ In this scheme, the front of the shop is open to the public gaze whereas the back is closed to all but the chosen few. This schema, and interruptions of it, are staged in depictions of the eighteenth century shop floor in both advertising material for actual shops, and in dramatic stagings of such spaces in plays. Fanny Burney's *The Wiltings* (1777), for example, does exactly this. This dichotomising of commercial space seems

²¹⁸ Jon Stobart, Andrew Hann and Victoria Morgan, *Spaces of Consumption: leisure and shopping in the English town, c. 1680-1830* (London: Routledge, 2007) p. 111.

to be confirmed in the case of the theatre. While any paying customer can gain access to the auditorium, where images are sold on the stage, the closed backstage space, with its mediated access, holds a particular allure.

Stobart, Hann and Morgan's consideration of "back-space" also takes into account the imaginative pull of goods stored away from the gaze of public. Occupying backspace, goods kept away from the public gaze occupy the same imaginative sphere as 'illicit books and prostitutes'.²¹⁹ This commercial register foregrounds the consideration of what is being sold in the theatre. Perhaps the expected and almost unremarkable analogy between the actress and the prostitute is one obvious imagining of the selling of the body on the stage. Indeed this is a staple of misogynistic, anti-theatrical prejudice in the period. However, what this model provokes is a consideration of the theatre as a working building, and the work of selling performance and the show itself as a specular commodity. Although the print at hand is damning of the commercial enterprise of the theatre as an institution, nevertheless a consideration of the spaces it stages brings to the fore issues around the theatre – and the theatre building's – engagement with the public as consumers. This is an area of critical investigation that mostly takes place on the level of administrative and financial records of the institution and rarely in terms of the theatre as a culturally constructed and imagined entity.

The song 'The Green Room Scuffle' comes from a compendium of witty poems and songs called *The Foundling-Hospital for Wit* (1743). However the print of the 'Green Room Scuffle' (see Figure 2.7) does not appear in any of the editions I have seen, suggesting that perhaps it was sold separately. The print, however, clearly does illustrate what happens in the song, which briefly is this: Kitty Clive and Peg Woffington the Drury Lane actresses are in dispute about who is the greater actress – whether by virtue of beauty or wit. This contest degenerates into what could fairly be described as a cat-fight. As other actors quickly pile in, their own self-absorption means that everyone is shouting about themselves and the argument is not resolved. The climax of the fight:

²¹⁹ Stobart, Hann and Morgan, p. 133.

PEG, in a Taste polite,
At once began the Battle:
Says she, "You may be right;
"But this is Tittle-Tattle,

Red-
Fac'd B—ch!"

Now bristles bonny Kate;
All ready, fierce and fiery,
"Such BRIMS (cries she) I hate –
"Cou'd DAVEY e'er admire Ye? --

PROSTITUTE!

My Beauty me defends,
Cries lovely pretty PEGGY;
Whilst you abuse your Friends;
And so – no more – I beg you -

HELL'S DUCHESS!²²⁰

What is immediately obvious here is the misogynistic commonplace of equating the backstage actress with the 'prostitute'.²²¹ Looking at the print, the flats of the stage can clearly be seen to the left, with actors emerging as if from the stage. This suggests that this is taking place immediately behind the stage, rather than being contained within a single green room, and is threatening to spill out onto the stage and into the auditorium. This shows actors as disorderly bodies, threatening to ruin the theatrical illusion of the stage picture. It is a moment of threat — it reveals that the carefully constructed stage picture is in fact very fragile, and could be ruined in a moment if the warring actresses take a misstep. Also, here again is the trope of overspill that we have seen in relation to Garrick's *Fribbleriad* and the *vomitorium* of the theatre building.

²²⁰ *The Foundling-Hospital for Wit* (London: G. Lion, 1743) p. 21.

²²¹ *The Foundling-Hospital for Wit*, p. 21.

The poem and print of the scuffle, alongside some of the theatrical poems I have considered earlier, portray the actor Kitty Clive. This variety of texts demonstrates the many ways in which the actress' body is consumed, and also points to another kind of text that represents the backstage, normally unseen spaces and processes of the theatre: Kitty Clive's own 'cleverly ludic' *Bays in Petticoats*.²²²

Plays about the theatre - *Bays in Petticoats*.

Theatre poems are useful in some measure in looking at the stage. Nevertheless the physical space, the actual boards that are trod upon, escape a fixed gaze from any of these satirical poets. For a view of the stage that is invested in the space of performance and the processes of creating spectacle, an alternative strategy is to turn to plays about the theatre. Reading these metatheatrical texts in conjunction with each other would perhaps constitute a significant step in fully accounting for the space of the theatre building in theatrical satire.

Plays about the theatre were hugely popular throughout the eighteenth century, evidencing an appetite in the theatregoing public for this kind of meta-theatrical or 'self-conscious' literature and performance.²²³ *The Rehearsal, or Bays in Petticoats* (1753) is by Kitty Clive and follows the convention of a great deal of plays about theatre at this time of taking its cue from Buckingham's *The Rehearsal* (1671), and embroidering its own current-day themes upon it. It is short playtext, in one act, produced as a farsical interlude. Like some of the theatre poems I have examined, the play is set in Drury Lane. The production was also staged in Drury Lane theatre. *Bays in Petticoats* is the only example I can find of a play about the theatre both written by and starring a woman. One of its fascinating aspects is the series of doublings which it enacts. Its satire is perhaps familiar to readers of Fanny Burney's *The Wiltings* (1779); there is

²²² Felicity Nussbaum, *Rival Queens: actresses, performance and the eighteenth-century British Theatre* (Philadelphia : University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010) p. 179.

²²³ Farnsworth Smith and Lawhon, *Plays about the theatre in England, 1737-1800, or, The self-conscious stage from Foote to Sheridan*.

indeed a character called Witling, and, as in Burney's play, Clive's central comedic character is a self-styled literary doyenne whose actual talents are rather meagre.

Like Clive writing the play, Mrs Hazard the central character is engaged in writing and producing a farce, borrowed and slightly altered from a male playwright. Hazard, however, disingenuously puts it forward as entirely her own creation. This doubling of authorial and characteristic persona is compounded as Clive actually played Mrs Hazard herself. Not only this, but as the play takes place in the setting of Drury Lane theatre, Mrs Hazard also references Kitty Clive as an actress she wants to secure for her production. Her lines here are reminiscent of a cattily critical theatre poem:

WITLING And who is to act that, pray?

Mrs HAZARD Why Mrs Clive to be sure; tho' I wish she don't spoil it; for she's so conceited, and insolent, that she won't let me teach it her.

[...]

I desir'd Mr Garrick wou'd take her in Hand; so he order'd her the Part of the Mad-woman directly.²²⁴

Later, Mrs Clive refuses to come to the rehearsal, and Mrs Hazard plays Clive's part herself. In this way the play can be seen to construct a kind of hyper-meta-theatricality, wherein self-referentiality reproduces itself in quick succession, giving the effect of scrambling over itself like a rank weed, overflowing neatly defined theatrical boundaries.

Traditionally the part of the playwright Bays in *The Rehearsal* is used by actors throughout the eighteenth century to mimic the current modish playwright of the hour. *Bays in Petticoats* rather offers, on the one hand a self-deprecatory wit on the part of Clive and her world of theatre professionals, and on the other an engagement with the kind of public, published criticism of Clive's own person and acting body. This kind of literary self-possession is mirrored in Clive's actorly persona. Despite the

²²⁴ Catherine Clive, *The Rehearsal: or, Bays in Petticoats* (Dublin, J. Exshaw & M. Williamson, 1753) pp. 15-16.

cruelly critical squibs I have engaged with above, she was celebrated as a gifted and assured performer. She also acted as her own theatrical agent, thereby possessing her own labour.

In addition to the re-doubling of self referential techniques, the position of the spectator is on multiple levels. The audience, who are in fact watching a fully staged production at Drury Lane, are invited to watch a rehearsal taking place in the empty and imperfectly prepared theatre, whilst at the same time spectating the on-stage audience who are watching the play. In this manner, the play may be viewed as a backstage text, as it offers an otherwise unseen view of the processes of making the final performance and making the stage into a specular arena. There are also rare glimpses of stage personnel - Mr Cross the actual Drury Lane prompter plays Mr Cross the prompter in the play. In this manner, the play exposes to view the unseen mechanics, and mechanists, of production.

Bays in Petticoats centres so personally around one theatrical practitioner – Kitty Clive. It engages with, not only her acting body and theatrical production, but her representation in the kinds of theatrical texts we have seen in this chapter’s exploration of satirical poems. In this way the play can be viewed as a mediation of the theatrical public sphere on the actress’ own terms. The dizzying spectatorial position that it demands caters to a spectatorial fascination with gaining visual access to the inside, and yet its own sustained self-referentiality constantly underscores the fact that this is theatrical representation and by no means a “real” insight into the theatre’s backstage life. It is a triumphant statement of theatrical power: on the art of Clive's engaging with the personal attacks of her own critics, and also the piece of theatre itself, which exposes the workings of the theatre at the same time as creating theatrical illusion. The satirical prints that we have seen attempt to offer a subversion of the theatrical transformatory process that makes the public outside the theatre into an audience inside the theatre, by offering access to a backstage space where the spectator stands outside the public/audience schema. *Bays in Petticoats*, then, reasserts the pervasive power of the theatrical relationship between spectator and spectacle, ensuring that the public in the theatrical public sphere are always kept in their place. Clive plays to the alluring fiction that she is affording us a “real” peep into the inner

workings of her world, yet she is always firmly in control of what she will let the audience see.

The female spectator in the theatrical space

In this chapter, I have begun to look at some ways in which the female spectator is depicted in a number of theatrical poems and prints. They are often misogynistic depictions by male writers. In contrast, we have seen Kitty Clive as a theatrical persona, negotiating both the stage and her theatrical literary tradition in *Bays in Petticoats*. In attempting to further account for the female spectator in the theatrical space I would like to turn, in my conclusion to this chapter, to Fanny Burney's novel *Evelina* (1777), and also consider the material culture of the female spectator. The concentration, in Burney's novel, on the emotions experienced by the eponymous female character dramatizes, in a distinctive and innovative way, some of the key differences between the spaces of the theatre building described in the theatre poems above. The novel, as it were, puts these spaces into dialogue with each other.

Burney's *Evelina* is a notable text for staging the fashionable whirl of a great number of sociable spaces in London. Burney's heroine, Evelina Anville, makes her debut in the London season, and in this epistolary novel she records her impressions of negotiating this complex social stage in a series of letters home. A notable episode in *Evelina* is a provocative and alarming scene of distress in the theatre building.

Evelina enjoys going to the theatre and opera, and attending performances forms an integral part of her entrance into the world. Part of the excitement of being present in the theatre for Evelina is bound up with been seen, and she takes pains to appear there in a manner sartorially appropriate to the space. On her first visit to Drury Lane, for instance, she is not suitably 'Londonized' in her dress, and the fact that she subsequently appears properly attired is a mark of her successful negotiation of these city spaces.²²⁵ Evelina enjoys the theatre, and makes some remarks about

²²⁵ Frances Burney, *Evelina*, ed. by Edward A. Bloom (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) p. 27.

plays she has seen, commenting on Garrick's naturalistic style of acting, for example. She is culturally engaged and responsive to the theatre as cultural as well as leisurely space.

However alongside the varied pleasures of theatre-going, Burney shows how restrictions placed upon a woman's bodily presence in the theatre can turn the experience into a humiliating and frightening one. In one scene, Evelina has been seated in the gallery with her cousins, the socially gauche and rather déclassé Branghtons. Tiring of their dull conversation, she forms a plan to make her way down to the more pleasurable company of her genteel friends who are in the pit, when she spies an acquaintance, Sir Clement Willoughby, near the gallery door. He offers his services as an attendant, and she accepts with alacrity.

However, Evelina's plan is foiled:

My intention was to join Mrs. Mirvan and accompany her home. Sir Clement was in high spirits and good-humour; and, all the way we went, I was fool enough to rejoice in secret at the success of my plan; nor was it until I got down stairs, and amidst the servants, that any difficulty occurred to me of meeting with my friends.

I then asked Sir Clement how I should contrive to acquaint Mrs Mirvan that I had left Madame Duval?

'I fear it will be almost impossible to find her', answered he; 'but you can have no objection to permitting me to see you safe home.'

He then desired his servant, who was waiting, to order his chariot to draw up.

This quite startled me; I turned to him hastily, and said that I could not think of going away without Mrs Mirvan.

'But how can we meet with her?' cried he; 'you will not chuse to go into the pit yourself; I cannot send a servant there; and it is impossible for me to go and leave you alone'.

The truth of this was indisputable, and totally silenced me.²²⁶

What is immediately obvious from this passage is that Evelina cannot autonomously move around the theatre building at will. She must be escorted from one party of acquaintances to the next. A woman encountered alone in the theatre

²²⁶ Burney, *Evelina*, p. 96.

building would be assumed to be of a different class, maybe even a prostitute. Therefore Evelina's body - sartorially correct and with genteel deportment - would be almost illegible if it were to appear alone. Her 'plan', which she comes to regret, is an attempt to intervene in the situation she has been placed in and bring her own will to bear on her positioning inside the theatre.²²⁷ This of course depends on the goodwill of her attendant - her distress is in reaction to being wrongly placed in the theatre's foyer, and being unable to extricate herself. This is significantly thought of in terms of space, of moving around the theatre building and going 'into the pit'.²²⁸

Her plan, designed to win freedom of movement, has in fact made her vulnerable to entrapment. Willoughby's design, once he has stranded Evelina in this manner, is to take her off alone in his carriage. The effect of this is silence: Evelina is shut out from the sociable exchange of genteel conversation, and she is also immobile - she appears suspended; frozen, almost, with fear.

Throughout this scene of distress she is acutely aware of being seen in this position. Indeed her recent acquaintance Lord Orville - the man, in fact she is set to marry at the end of the novel - does catch sight of her. His cry of - 'Good God do I see Miss Anville!' attests to the real shock of seeing Evelina in this position.²²⁹ Although Lord Orville tries to intervene, he is effectively paralysed by Willoughby's careful construction of the scene. His expression of shock is the only utterance of real significance that he can make - and it serves to compound Evelina's distress as it recognises her strange positioning, and confirms that she is indeed being looked at in this position. He is also unable to assimilate this positioning with Evelina's social probity and appearance - her body is illegible in this position, it cannot be engaged with, only reacted to in shock.

²²⁷ Burney, *Evelina*, p. 96.

²²⁸ Burney, *Evelina*, p. 96.

²²⁹ Burney, *Evelina*, p. 97.

This incident in the theatre foyer may be read alongside another scene in the novel where Evelina is viewing a play that is, unfortunately, 'indelicate'.²³⁰ She recounts that, 'Miss Mirvan and I were perpetually out of countenance, and could neither make any observations ourselves, nor venture to listen to those of others.'²³¹ This situation is 'provoking', as it runs counter to Evelina's desire to firstly, enjoy the play and secondly, take part in sociable and intellectual engagement in the theatre with her peers.²³² 'When the play was over', she continues, 'I flattered myself I should be able to look about me with less restraint.'²³³

Although Evelina wishes to enjoy the theatre, there is also, again, an expression of distress – particularly allied to the embodied quality of spectating – in negotiating, and being seen to negotiate, this important cultural space. A kind of shutting-down is at work in both these incidents. Immobility and silence is evident in the first extract in the theatre foyer, and then here with Miss Mirvan, a turn away from the auditorium and a limitation, or 'restraint' of speech, hearing and sight.²³⁴

Burney's novel presents London as a series of urban spaces and Evelina's negotiation of these social spaces is key to 'in the world'.²³⁵ Therefore the correct participation in the spectatorial scheme in a theatrical space is essential for a woman's entrance into society. Episodes where this is threatened, such as Willoughby's design, serve to expose the vulnerable edges of this constructed relationship. This elucidates the precarious position of women if others do not adhere to their own correct correlates.

²³⁰ Burney, *Evelina*, p. 79.

²³¹ Burney, *Evelina*, pp. 79-80.

²³² Burney, *Evelina*, p. 80.

²³³ Burney, *Evelina*, p. 80.

²³⁴ Burney, *Evelina*, p. 80.

²³⁵ Burney, *Evelina*, frontispiece.

Kristina Straub's model of the unruly lived experience of eighteenth-century theatre crashing up against attempts to impose order on the spectatorial exchange may be read in relation to Evelina's experiences. In addition, Gay McAuley provides a multivalent construction of spectatorial relations in the theatrical space, and she, similarly, observes that in the theatre 'the scopic drive is always being subverted or displaced'.²³⁶ In relation to what is going on onstage, this subversion can be seen as Evelina's embarrassment at the indelicate performance displaces attention onto the social. This subversion can also be read in the sense of the scopic regime of the quietly critical spectator being subverted by Burney's exploration of keenly felt female distress. The extracts from *Evelina* that I have been discussing here illustrate in vivid detail and immediacy the spectator/spectator look, which is revealed to inform the growth of Evelina as a socially productive entity, capable of negotiating city spaces and their spectatorial economies.

Conclusions

There is a proliferation of different types of texts about the theatre in the eighteenth century. The vast array and variety of texts in this vein can be unruly, however it is profitable to begin to account for their multiplicity. I hope to have shown some of the ways in which they structure both the physical conditions of being inside the theatre and the strategies of spectatorship at work in the audience. Theatre poems imaginatively construct going to the theatre and the different spaces of the auditorium, while backstage prints and texts peep into unseen spaces. The ephemeral action of the stage, however, in the texts considered here, seems recalcitrant to literary representation. Although this has been outside the scope of this chapter, this kind of investigation could be extended to include particular performance events. We can look to theatrical prints of actors in character, on specifically recorded dates, to try to pin down a particular performed moment. Another intriguing type of text that points towards this urge to record what is happening on the stage is the acting manual. At the same time as demonstrating for the amateur the precise movements and gestures one should mimic to portray specified emotional states, the texts also attempt to record the moving bodies of specific actors as actual examples of the

²³⁶ McAuley, p. 239.

actorly art. This is done via printed diagrams and complex sets of equations that constitute a kind of bodily notation system; a modern equivalent might be the Benesh notation system used in ballet. Plays about the theatre, meanwhile, cleverly construct layers of looking, and dramatise theatre spaces like the stage in incomplete, rehearsal states. I have been mindful in this chapter also to account for women in the theatre, as bodies on display, as theatrical practitioners, and also women in the audience as culturally productive social actors, engaging with narratives of spectatorship and the literal and cultural space of the theatre.

Figure 2.1



The Ruins of the Theatre from Bridges Street, after the Fire. (London: 1809) Held by The British Museum. Museum number:1880,1113.3125

Figure 2.3



Thomas Rowlandson, *Exhibition Stare Case* (London: 1811). Held by The British Museum. Museum number: 1876,0311.66

Figure 2.4



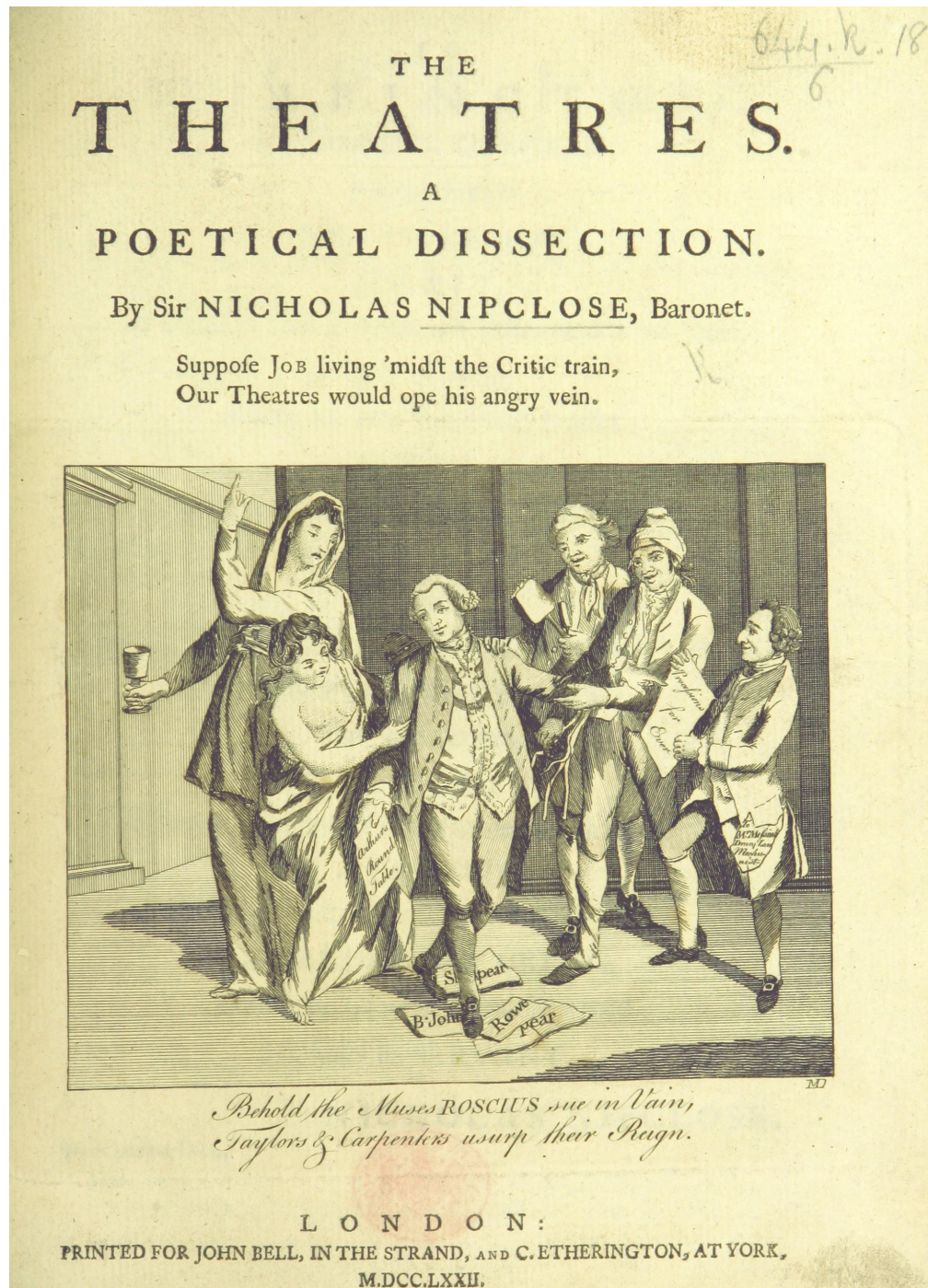
The Overflowing of the Pitt (London: Sarah Sledge, 1771). Held by The British Museum. Museum number: 1991,1214.19

Figure 2.5



The Pit Door / La Porte du Parterre (London: Carington Bowles, 1784). Held by The British Museum. Museum number: 1935,0522.1.41

Figure 2.6



Frontispiece to Nicholas Nipclose, *The Theatres. A poetical dissection* (London and York: John Bell and C. Etherington, 1772).

Figure 2.7



The Green Room Scuffle (London: 1748). Held by The British Museum. Museum number: 1868,0808.13131

Chapter Three

Mapping the Pleasure Garden

The eighteenth-century pleasure gardens in London offered musical and operatic concerts and strolling bands. Performers trod on tightropes, and ascended in balloons. The crowd ate, drank, danced and promenaded themselves as fashionable spectacles. Mechanical novelties like automata were on display, alongside theatrical tricks of light involving reflective surfaces that created moving scenes. The space itself offered panoramas and promenades, and use of landscape and light created “dark walks” where the sexual frisson of unchaperoned chance encounters hung in the air. The gardens at Vauxhall and Ranelagh used their situation on the river to stage spectacular fireworks, floating displays and regattas. Although we can visit the remnants of Vauxhall and Ranelagh gardens today, they now look like and are used much like public parks, and it is difficult to get a sense of how these important London theatrical spaces once functioned. Certainly the Victorian ideals of the healthful and hygienic public park do not have much in common with the pleasure, consumption, spectacle and fantasy of the eighteenth-century pleasure garden. Thomas Rowlandson’s print *An Evening at Vaux-Hall* (see Figure 3.1) is a useful image to begin to imagine what the eighteenth-century pleasure garden looked like. It shows the Orchestra building in its pretty, lamplit outdoor setting, and a colourful, fashionable, busy crowd. Vauxhall, Ranelagh and Marylebone are the main sites of pleasure gardens in London in this period, with the cost of entry decreasing from the dearest at Vauxhall to the cheapest at Marylebone. As Fanny Burney’s *Evelina* demonstrates, audiences for all of the various gardens are not necessarily rigidly stratified. Her heroine visits both Vauxhall and Marylebone during her London debut - and, as we shall see in this chapter, becomes entangled with worrisome spectacles in both. However, the sources I will be exploring in this chapter will deal with Vauxhall in the main, as the site for which most evidence survives, and which is most extensively dealt with critically. I would like to put forward an argument for a more holistic view of the “pleasure garden” however, that is not necessarily restricted geographically to Vauxhall. In a similar manner to Chapter Two, which explored the

theatre, this involves accessing the imagined space of the pleasure garden, rather than an archeological reconstruction of one particular site.

In addition, the sheer multiplicity of performances and spectacles on offer at the pleasure garden lends itself to a broader reading rather than focusing on individual performance events. Reading the pleasure garden as a performance site offers ways of thinking about spectatorship and theatricality outside the space of the legitimate theatre building, yielding deeper insights into eighteenth-century performance culture.

The Vauxhall Affray; or, the macaronis defeated is a useful text to introduce the pleasure garden, as it captures ideas of spectatorship in the gardens that do not revolve around a staged performance. *The Vauxhall Affray* is an unusual text that chronicles an interesting visual episode that took place in Vauxhall Gardens on a Friday evening in July 1773. On this evening, an actress named Mrs Hartley was promenading and enjoying the music around the Orchestra at Vauxhall with her gentlemen companions. The incident is narrated by one of these companions, Mr Bates, who reports that they ‘presently observed two gentlemen pass by, and looked (sic) at her in a manner not altogether genteel’.²³⁷ Returning after a short while with two or three others, the men ‘began an attack in form, resolutely determined to stare her out of countenance’.²³⁸ ‘To be a silent spectator of such insolence’, Bates asserts, ‘would be tacitly to countenance it’.²³⁹ He places himself between Mrs Hartley and her staring attackers, and, ‘turned about and looked them in my turn, full in the face’.²⁴⁰ The rude gentlemen, and Mr Bates interposing himself between them and the distressed lady, seem like almost perfect counterparts to the impolite Starers that S.C. describes in her letter to Mr. Spectator. What is at stake here is the assertion of specular rights. Mr Bates continues:

²³⁷ *The Vauxhall Affray; or, the macaronies defeated: being a compilation of all the letters, squibs, etc. on both sides of that dispute* (London: J. Williams, 1773) p. 10.

²³⁸ *The Vauxhall Affray*, p. 10.

²³⁹ *The Vauxhall Affray*, p. 11.

²⁴⁰ *The Vauxhall Affray*, p. 11.

A little effeminate being, whom I afterwards found to be a Mr. Fitz-Gerall, came up to me, dressed a la Macaroni, and impertinently asked me, "Whether any man had not a right to look at a fine woman?" [...] I answered, 'Most certainly; and that I despised the man who did not look at a fine woman; however, I begged leave to observe, that there were two distinct ways of looking at her - with *admiration*, and with *unauthorized contempt*.²⁴¹

Mrs Hartley herself appears in passive reported speech, and there are no sight words used in relation to her actively looking in any way. She quits the scene, and in the ensuing, and rather prolonged, exchange in the press she seems to all but disappear. The affray in the gardens led to a very public war of words in London periodicals between the main combatants, with interested onlookers also pitching in. The text itself is a collection of these: *a compilation of all the Letters, Squibs, etc. on both sides of that Dispute*. The gardens is revealed as a visual arena with high stakes, and it bleeds out beyond the boundaries of the gardens itself into the wider city and the print culture of London.

The pleasure garden has attracted critical attention in the field of art history, and I will examine Peter de Bolla and David Solkin, who engage with the pleasure garden in terms of visibility and representation, but not in terms of the theatricality of the space. I will progress to explore categories of theatrical space - centrally for my discussion, the concept of sympotic space - using David Wile's construction of these in his *A Short History of Western Performance Space* (2003), where the juxtaposition of the theatrical, culturally constructed spaces of the pleasure garden and the theatre will become further delineated. Looking at the pleasure garden in terms of sympotic space (stemming from the Classical symposium) opens up avenues into enquiring about the theatricality of the space on its own terms, rather than as an extension of other narratives, and in doing so demonstrates the unique performance culture of this space in the eighteenth-century city.

Art Historical Perspectives

A number of critics have dealt with the pleasure garden, and Vauxhall in particular, in relation to vision. Miles Ogborn explores Vauxhall as an emerging site of modernity in which heterogeneity and consumption are key. Vauxhall is a 'hybrid

²⁴¹ *The Vauxhall Affray*, p. 13.

culture', he argues, that plays host to 'endless varieties of consumption' - and these ideas of variety and consumption will be key in my exploration of theatrical space in this chapter.²⁴² Ogborn also uses the Vauxhall Affray to interrogate the construction of the Macaroni in not only gendered terms but as a consumer, overflowing boundaries of restrained tasteful consumption. Using these notions of hybridity and heterogeneity, I aim to build upon this reading towards a more theatrical reading that, alongside multiplicity of consumption and hybrid categories of identity, extends to multiplicity of vision. Ogborn is also in dialogue with Solkin and de Bolla, two art historians who have written extensively on vision in Vauxhall.

David Solkin and Peter de Bolla write about Vauxhall in terms of viewing art. Although acknowledging a more diversified range of spectacle and audience, these critics focus upon pictures and pictorial representation available to view in Vauxhall, constructing the pleasure garden as a gallery or exhibition space. De Bolla draws a parallel with Vauxhall's entry fee and that of the Royal Academy, placing them alongside each other in a particular cultural landscape, rather than with the theatre. Undoubtedly there were a great number of paintings on display at Vauxhall, alongside other pieces like trompe d'oeil landscapes and statues. However, I would like to place emphasis on the variety of spectacle and performance at Vauxhall, rather than zoom in on one particular mode of performance or spectatorship. I would like to examine some of Solkin and de Bolla's arguments here, and consider how they may be developed and extended with this purpose in mind.

Solkin constructs the pleasure garden as a site where a cultural 'cleansing' is enacted.²⁴³ The narrative is of an urge towards politeness, which uses the space to 'clean up' the fair, and positions the pleasure garden as a site that encloses and represses the sprawling, filthy fair.²⁴⁴ In this view of the pleasure garden, the repressed carnivalesque is allowed a watered-down return, but only via

²⁴² Miles Ogborn, *Spaces of Modernity: London's Geographies, 1680–1780* (London and New York: Guilford Press, 1998) p. 142, p. 139.

²⁴³ David Solkin, *Painting for Money: The Visual Arts and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993) p. 106.

²⁴⁴ Solkin, p. 148.

representations in pictures and ‘rural frolics’.²⁴⁵ The masquerade, rather than a true carnival procession through the streets, becomes the “Ridotto Al Fresco”, a polite, enclosed, ticketed event (see Figure 3.2).

The pleasure garden here is positioned opposite the fair; it is everything the fair is not, and yet still maintains ‘vestiges of carnival culture’.²⁴⁶ This approach is certainly useful alongside a consideration of theatricality in the pleasure garden. Reading the consumption of food in the gardens, for example, in this manner reveals a mere performance of eating and the pleasures of the belly. The pleasure garden’s transparent slices of ham, a commonplace in satirical literature about the gardens, are far removed from the greasy, finger-licking, pungent roast pig of the fair. In this way the pleasure garden can be viewed as an apparatus in a process of refinement, of “cleaning-up”, a key site in the march of politeness. However this discourse does present some problems in considering the audience. In it, the pleasure garden becomes a site of enclosure and repression and does not particularly allow for a sense of opening up and multiplicity.

Interestingly, Solkin calls the development of Vauxhall by Tyers a “Spectatorial” project of improvement, and points towards Mr Spectator’s visit to Vauxhall in Spectator number 383.²⁴⁷ Here the cultivation of manners is placed alongside the cultivation of space. This casts both projects as somewhat regimenting, and both as key moments in the march towards mannerly deportment and manicured lawns. As with my discussion of *The Spectator* in Chapter One, however, there is room here to allow for imagination, playfulness, and an element of fantasy in both.

Solkin deploys a dual strategy, reading pictorial representations of Vauxhall, before going on to discuss the display of paintings in Vauxhall itself. In depictions of Vauxhall, the central Grove with the Orchestra building is particularly notable. This is the scene which Rowlandson uses in his *Vaux-ball*, which gives a sense of the space Solkin is discussing here. Solkin goes on to contrast the display of paintings in the supper boxes, situated around the Grove, and that of paintings in the Prince’s

²⁴⁵ Ogborn, p. 118.

²⁴⁶ Solkin p. 120.

²⁴⁷ Solkin, p. 108.

Pavilion, another building in Vauxhall where company assembled for promenading and dancing. Interestingly, some of these paintings are theatrical. The original supper box paintings, which are now lost, included 'remarkable scenes of our comedies' and 'most celebrated dancers'.²⁴⁸ In the Pavilion, much more large-scale paintings were on display of Shakespearean scenes.

In regard to the supper boxes, Solkin reads the surviving paintings from the permanent display, and uses these pictures to describe the process of cultural cleansing which he sees Vauxhall enacting. Among the scenes depicted, there are pastimes like cards, childrens' games like see-saw and leap-frog, and festive practices like maypole dancing. These are pictures of the lower orders with their simple, rural pleasures. Indeed dancing features in a number of the pictures, and the may pole dancing scene is one of the best-preserved paintings that survives of these Vauxhall canvases. Solkin describes a three-step process of appropriation at work in the paintings whereby the 'grotesque' and 'carnavalesque' are made fit for consumption.²⁴⁹ First of all the removal of these features from the original setting of fair or carnival is enacted, both in the sense of their display at Vauxhall, but also within the represented scene. The dancing May-Day group for example, has been removed from London's grubby streets and placed en plein air, in the sunshine. Secondly their appearance is 'cleaned up, softened, rendered comic or sentimentalised'.²⁵⁰ Finally, the 'ordering impulses of the dominant high-culture aesthetic' are imposed on their representation.²⁵¹ In this way, images like these paintings are central to constructing 'a space of 'respectable' play' in the pleasure garden.²⁵²

Another important element seen in the supperbox painting is the placement of the high next to the low. The painting *Mademoiselle (sic) Catherina* is the most notable example of this. (See figure 3.3) The picture clearly sets side by side the group of fashionable, polite spectators and the Savoyard strolling entertainers with their

²⁴⁸ Solkin p. 150.

²⁴⁹ Solkin, p.139.

²⁵⁰ Solkin, p. 139.

²⁵¹ Solkin, p. 139.

²⁵² Solkin, p. 139.

automaton. The picture illustrates the hybridity and intermingling of different categories - the performer and spectator, English and foreign, inside and outside. The excitement in this blending of categories is depicted in the picture itself, as the group is entertained by the automaton, which is a mechanical doll dressed like a little lady. The 'piquancy' of boundaries being breached is illustrated in the play of gazes, which flits across the image from both sides.²⁵³ What is not quite touched upon by Solkin is that both the pictures under consideration here show activities - dancing, listening to strolling musicians, viewing automata - which are taking place within Vauxhall itself. These images are not just the representation of carnivalesque activities displayed for a decorously disengaged audience, but representations of an audience actively engaged in precisely these kinds of entertainments and spectacles. As Solkin acknowledges himself, the viewing of these paintings is mediated by the 'experience of Vauxhall' itself.²⁵⁴ Viewing art is 'part of a host of Vauxhall features' - I would term part of Vauxhall's variety of spectacle.²⁵⁵ Furthermore, these supper box pictures are positioned and designed to be read as in and amongst the audience.

Solkin also pays attention to the 'physical circumstances' of hanging.²⁵⁶ He sees the pictures as not being treated with a great deal of respect, hung out in the open at the mercy of the elements and not paid a great deal of attention. Indeed in Rowlandson's *Vaux-ball*, one cannot see them in the back of the supper boxes at all. The images are placed so as to be glanced at, rather than as the objects of studied attention.

There is also a tactile quality to the supper box paintings' placement. *The Gentleman's Magazine* reports that, 'At Vauxhall...they have touched up the pictures, which were damaged last season by the fingering of those curious Connoisseurs, who could not be satisfied without *feeling* whether the pictures were alive'.²⁵⁷ The damage of an active audience here is reminiscent perhaps of the damage caused to the theatre galleries by enthusiastic bashing of the woodwork. This is an intimate relationship,

²⁵³ Solkin, p. 145.

²⁵⁴ Solkin, p. 148.

²⁵⁵ Solkin, p. 148.

²⁵⁶ Solkin, p. 148.

²⁵⁷ *The Gentleman's Magazine*, 25 (1755), in Solkin, p. 148.

leaving the marks of the dirt of greasy fingers. It portrays an unruly audience, intruding past the boundaries of the picture frame.

Oliver Goldsmith's *Citizen of the World* humorously illustrates a supperbox scene. Goldsmith introduces the spectacular variety of the gardens, and its particular ways of viewing and performing. His narrator is a Chinese gentleman, Lien Chi, who writes letters back home reporting on the sights and customs of London. He accompanies a group of his English friends to Vauxhall, and his reaction to Vauxhall is one of fantasy and delight. His 'every sense' is 'overpaid with more than expected pleasure', from the 'glimmering' lights in the trees, the 'gaily dressed company', the natural beauty of the trees and song of the birds, to the culinary delicacies on offer.²⁵⁸ Supper is utmost in the company's mind and, after having run into some difficulty persuading the supper box keepers to let them have a 'genteel' box where they 'might see and be seen', they are finally installed in a somewhat more obscure box.²⁵⁹ The matron of the party, Mrs Tibbs, 'once praised the painting of the box in which we were sitting, but was soon convinced that such paltry pieces ought rather to excite horror than satisfaction'.²⁶⁰ Her criticism is affected; at points she 'forgets herself' and expresses unfeigned enjoyment, but is soon brought back to her 'miserable refinement'.²⁶¹ The paintings are presented here as an opportunity to perform disdainful criticism, which is valued by the middling Mrs Tibbs as a fashionably genteel pastime, never mind her own lack of taste. However, the main spectacle of the evening for Lien Chi and his unfortunate group is Mrs Tibbs herself. As the group enjoys the musical performance given from the Orchestra, she is politely encouraged to sing. Taking advantage of the group's goodwill she proceeds to caterwaul, 'with such a voice and such an affectation'.²⁶² Another of the party, the polite and modest 'widow', is desperate to see the water-works in another part of the garden.²⁶³ However, she does not dare to interrupt the singing woman by running off

²⁵⁸ Oliver Goldsmith, *The Citizen of the World and The Bee*, ed. by Austin Dobson (London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1934) p. 198.

²⁵⁹ Goldsmith, p. 199.

²⁶⁰ Goldsmith, pp. 199-200.

²⁶¹ Goldsmith, p. 199.

²⁶² Goldsmith, p. 200.

²⁶³ Goldsmith, p. 200.

to catch sight of the spectacle. Her face is a picture as she fights the desire to see the spectacular display, and her innate good-breeding. This humorous episode illustrates the garden's alluring variety, and the tension between its genteel ambience and the audiences's baser desires to consume fantastical spectacle. It also satirically employs audience participation and performance.

Solkin goes on to contrast the display of the supperbox paintings, and that of the much larger pictures in the Pavilion. These different modes of viewing again illustrate the variety of spectatorship within the gardens. According to Solkin, the visual arts are positioned as an 'ennobling cultural experience' in the Pavilion, and function as discussion points for 'matters of taste'.²⁶⁴ Four Shakespearean paintings hung in the Pavilion at Vauxhall. The depictions of Shakespearean scenes are much larger in scale compared to the supper box paintings. The Shakespearean paintings do not depict actors on the stage in the way that many theatrical prints of the period do, in a manner that aims towards depicting the performed moment of the actor in character as it happened on the London stage. Rather, they depict imagined scenes. Nevertheless, Solkin stresses, the paintings, whilst not direct representations of actors performing on the stage, take visual cues from Shakespearean plays as performed on the eighteenth-century stage. We can look to a number of theatrical prints and ephemera to find echoes of the visual language at work here. In addition to this, the classical interiors represented in the paintings find an echo in the design of Pavilion interior itself. Solkin reads these two strategies as putting the audience in a similar situation as they would enjoy in the theatre. Stemming from this, he sees the viewers of these paintings as occupying a similar critical position as they might do in the theatre building, a 'culturally familiar' landscape to Vauxhall's patrons.²⁶⁵ I would query this slightly. As I have explored in earlier chapters, the positioning and activity of the audience in the theatre building takes place in a space that is charged with meaning and where spectators participate in the visual economy in a multitude of ways. The "critical position" of any given audience member in the theatre varies significantly, as I have illustrated previously, both culturally, and spatially. I would query if this is straightforwardly recreated in a pleasure garden building in which the audience occupy space and negotiate space, both between themselves and the viewed

²⁶⁴ Solkin, p. 150.

²⁶⁵ Solkin, p. 151.

object, in a different manner. Rather, I would point to the stage-managed layout of Vauxhall, its use of theatre designers and artisans to build and decorate the space, and the insertion of the audience into a visual landscape that seems to extend into the pictures they are viewing. Rather than a framed stage and live interaction with speaking, moving actors (real people with real bodies), this pleasure garden viewing experience seems more like an immersive fantasy. It foregrounds the ways in which the site places the audience themselves on a kind of stage, constantly negotiating the spectatorial economy as both spectacle and spectator. Indeed, many contemporary sources make use of this trope of Vauxhall as a fantasy landscape; Goldsmith's narrator proclaiming Vauxhall a kind of 'Mahomet's paradise' gives a sense of the gardens as an exoticised dreamland.²⁶⁶ Rather than transplanting a theatre auditorium experience into the gardens, the pleasure garden can be seen to utilise theatrical tropes and modes of viewing to instead create an entirely different theatrical experience. Interestingly, however, Solkin raises the issue of how theatre-going may inform art criticism. In the case of these Shakespeare scenes at Vauxhall, the informed viewer will bring knowledge of having read the playtext, seen the production, and engaged in discussion over these works to a judicial and considered viewing of the paintings. This is one way in which the the experience of the theatre may be brought into the pleasure garden, and illustrates how the pleasure garden may be thought of in terms of a wider engagement with the theatrical culture of the eighteenth-century city.

Solkin uses this instance of theatrical judgement to illustrate a key moment in the formation of artistic, cultural taste in social spaces like the pleasure garden. Peter de Bolla also addresses a similar issue in his treatment of Vauxhall, using two distinct paradigms. De Bolla delineates the 'regime of the picture', which involves bringing one's knowledge - of a playtext and a theatre performance for example - to a viewing of a piece of theatrical art like the Vauxhall paintings. This approach privileges knowledge, education and access to cultural spaces like the theatre. This is in contrast to the 'regime of the eye', which de Bolla explores with particular reference to the pleasure garden. In contrast to an intellectual and socially privileged viewpoint, the regime of the eye is rather about somatically experiencing vision, a visual field that is open to 'all who have eyes to see', without relying on prior knowledge or

²⁶⁶ Goldsmith, p. 198.

experience to make sense of the spectacle.²⁶⁷ De Bolla stresses this paradigm at work in Vauxhall, over and above the kind of knowledge-centred criticism belonging to the regime of the picture.

Like the immersion of the viewer in the theatrically draped and set-dressed scenes in the Pavilion at Vauxhall, de Bolla also acknowledges the strategy of immersion at play in the gardens, describing the gardens as a place where ‘the distance between the “real” and the picture plane has become negligible.’²⁶⁸ In addition to delineating a certain temporal moment of looking which he terms ‘mirror time’, particularly associated with the kind of looking at work in Vauxhall, and which I will examine in detail later in the chapter, de Bolla lays out a number of visual strategies associated with the pleasure garden. De Bolla deals with the cultural construction of sight, rather than investigation of optics. There is a parallel here, never explicitly addressed by de Bolla, with the *Spectator* essays which play around with scientific treatises and anatomy and dissection. His ‘metaphorics’ of sight delineate different types of look, again an impulse *The Spectator* has.²⁶⁹ De Bolla’s use of Adam Smith’s *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759) further implicates Mr Spectator as the ideal impartial spectator. I have discussed the problems arising from this from the point of view of spectatorship and theatricality in Chapter One, and the ways in which Addison and Steele playfully theatricalise this position in order to test its boundaries. For de Bolla, the idealised impartial spectator remains exactly that, an ideal. The importance is rather placed on the imaginative work that takes place as one’s actions are “mapp[ed] onto” the internalised ideal.²⁷⁰ In Smith, sympathy is an imaginative act, and arrived at through a distinctly visual process. To illustrate this, Smith uses a particularly theatrical image:

The mob, when they are gazing at a dancer on the rope, naturally writhe and twist and balance their own bodies, as they see him do, and as they feel that they themselves must do in his situation.²⁷¹

²⁶⁷ de Bolla, p. 95.

²⁶⁸ de Bolla, p. 95.

²⁶⁹ de Bolla, p.73.

²⁷⁰ de Bolla, p. 80.

²⁷¹ Adam Smith, in de Bolla, p. 77.

For de Bolla, Vauxhall is an 'exhibitionary enclosure' - again the language of gallery and exhibition is at work here.²⁷² He also asserts that 'the activity of looking became visible' in Vauxhall.²⁷³ Whereas I am shifting my terms slightly to examine the pleasure garden as a theatrical space, the acknowledgement of *activity* of looking here is important. Vauxhall here is presented as a site in which looking and being looked at is heightened and privileged, and I aim to explore this also. However as I hope to have shown in preceding chapters, there are plural and significant ways in which spectatorship plays out in other London spaces, and I hope to account for the pleasure garden within this panorama.

Vauxhall for de Bolla is a key site for establishing a 'democracy of the eye', a freeing, imaginative and playful visual field. There is a political dimension to this, a visual democracy in which all ranks are able to participate in the field of vision and see each other. As de Bolla terms it, this is a 'viewing position which enfranchises all who has eyes to see'.²⁷⁴ Clearly concerned with a sense of visual parity, it is worth asking whether de Bolla accounts for gender in this vision of democracy also. De Bolla acknowledges that 'visuality in Vauxhall is fraught with questions bearing on gender', but briefly illustrates these in terms of binary positions.²⁷⁵ Interestingly, both gender and spectatorship are implicated here. De Bolla compares 'spectator and actor; a penetrative God and submissive woman, objectified quarry of sexual attention and predatory voyeur; upstanding man and effeminate fop'.²⁷⁶ However, whether the democracy of the eye enfranchises all women who have eyes to see remains unclear. In the *Vauxhall Affray*, the differently-inflected, gendered male subjects are central to the terms of the debate. The female body at the heart of the crisis, the actress Mrs, Hartley, doesn't enjoy parity of vision. Her access to the visual field is curiously curtailed. An interested onlooker, who is following the affray, reports that:

²⁷² de Bolla, p. 75.

²⁷³ de Bolla, p. 80.

²⁷⁴ de Bolla p. 95.

²⁷⁵ de Bolla, p. 97.

²⁷⁶ de Bolla, p. 97.

Mrs Hartley was seen in Richmond Gardens last Sunday with...Mr Moody the player; who wittily took and turned the lady around, laughing, and saying, "You shan't see her!".²⁷⁷

Here the silent Mrs Hartley seems, although in the spirit of fun, bodily manipulated by her male companion. It is for him to ironically display her and wittily take part in the terms of the visual debate, not her. However, in the visual sources I will read below there are a multitude of female bodies seeing and being seen, and there is much to be explored in terms of women's participation in the visual field.

The same publication regarding the Vauxhall Affray also continues to acknowledge the differences in the visual spheres Mrs Hartley occupies. 'She is not to forget', the correspondent writes, 'that she may be obliged to face an audience at Covent-Garden, where she may not meet many *persons* or *parsons* so strenuous in her cause'.²⁷⁸ Here, Mrs Hartley is recognised as a working actress on the stage, and a tension between the theatre and the pleasure garden as theatrical spaces is also acknowledged. She is on display and faces an 'audience' in both, and yet cannot rely on any gentlemanly protection from the potential violence of the Covent-Garden gaze.²⁷⁹ That she is 'not to forget' this appears somewhat threatening, perhaps warning not to mix up the spectatorial cultures of the two spaces.²⁸⁰ In addition to this, a 'Peep-o-Malico', who gleefully writes in to a London periodical to offer his opinion, brings up the possibility that the entire episode was in fact an orchestrated scene.²⁸¹ He has 'heard it whispered' that 'the parson is to write a play — *Coly* [i.e. the theatre manager George Colman] is to bring it out — the lady is to play a principal part in it'.²⁸² This scrap of gossip brings together the theatricality and artifice of the gardens alongside a sense of commercial speculation. He also offers his own farce for perusal, 'The Vauxhall Fray: or, a peep through the pocket hole'.²⁸³ The theatricality of the space and the participants involved is also underscored in another

²⁷⁷ *The Vauxhall Affray*, p. 119.

²⁷⁸ *The Vauxhall Affray*, p. 119.

²⁷⁹ *The Vauxhall Affray*, p. 52.

²⁸⁰ *The Vauxhall Affray*, p. 52.

²⁸¹ *The Vauxhall Affray*, p. 52.

²⁸² *The Vauxhall Affray*, pp. 51-2.

²⁸³ *The Vauxhall Affray*, p. 52.

letter-writer's proposal for a series of prints, one to depict Mr. Fitz-Gerall in the character of Garrick's Mr. Fribble.

De Bolla begins to use some language of the theatre, recognising the use of 'theatrical spacing', for example, as the visitor is conducted into the gardens.²⁸⁴ However, he never quite engages fully with a theatrical reading, as his focus is rather on art and architecture. On the other hand, it can be seen how de Bolla's arguments share some parallels with a more theatrical perspective. Indeed I would argue that using an approach derived from performance and theatre somewhat simplifies the terms of debate. For de Bolla, 'the viewer is constantly suspended between two distinct positions'.²⁸⁵ The construction of these positions here is *distinct*, and opposing. Further to this, de Bolla sets up a number of binary oppositions which he sees the audience at Vauxhall oscillating between. 'The entire scopic experience of the gardens promotes this dual position: spectator and actor, a penetrative God and submissive woman; objectified quarry of sexual attention and predatory voyeur; upstanding man and effeminate fop; patron of the arts and paying consumer; naive viewer and knowing connoisseur.'²⁸⁶ Although shuttling between these two positions is stressed by de Bolla as the pleasurable imaginative work that takes place in Vauxhall, this is still a construction that relies on duality, distinct binary poles, rather than the multiplicity, hybridity and heterogeneity that is underlined by Ogborn (see p. 113) and which is at the heart of the multivalent, lived spectatorial economy.

Describing the process of spectatorship in the gardens, de Bolla writes '[h]ere vision is imbricated within the witnessing of a theatrical event at which we participate and at which we spectate, there making us spectators'.²⁸⁷ The terms of debate here are rather complex and unnecessarily intricate. Using the model of spectatorship as I have staked out using Gay McAuley and others in my Introduction constructs a perhaps more streamlined synthesis of this process of becoming spectator and spectacle and the ever-turning engine of the play of looks. However, both approaches have in common the end result of the participants in the spectatorial economy

²⁸⁴ de Bolla, p. 82.

²⁸⁵ de Bolla, p. 82.

²⁸⁶ de Bolla, p. 97.

²⁸⁷ de Bolla, p. 82.

actively producing and participating in the visual culture. Both allow for the importance of playfulness and delight in artifice.

While the critics above touch upon theatrical discourse, I aim to focus on the pleasure garden as a theatrical space in a more sustained manner. Thinking theatrically would seek to offer a more holistic approach to audience and performance, rather than isolating one aspect of vision, or one particular group or spectacle in the pleasure garden. It would involve accounting for the experience of “going to the pleasure garden” and all that is encompassed in doing so; the experience of getting there, the embodied experience of negotiating space, not just looking at a singular object or scene. Several prints, for example, portray the river journey to Vauxhall (see figure 3.4). The river journey is represented as a significant part of the experience of the gardens. Many prints like this show ladies daintily stepping into or from a riverboat, and foreground the details of their fashionable attire. In this particular print the woman’s skirts are hitched up so she can step into the river boat. Her attractive, white-clad legs have not escaped the attention of the waterman, and her dainty, pale foot is contrasted against the mucky river as it hovers on the edge of the boat.

This approach also challenges the assumption that the theatrical is merely illusory or artificial, or that illusion and artifice are solely negative, treacherous attributes. Although, undoubtedly, these aspects of the pleasure garden are interrogated and used as cultural critique by authors such as Burney, there is room also to consider what the theatricality and theatrical techniques deployed in the gardens may be actively, positively, producing.

For Fanny Burney, the artifice of the gardens can be unsettling, disturbing and even tragic. Burney uses Vauxhall in her novels *Evelina* and *Cecilia* as a significant urban, and theatrical, space. In *Evelina*, her heroine promenades in the garden and very much enjoys listening to music in the open air; however for *Evelina* it is all perhaps a little too stage managed, and she is uncomfortably conscious of being guided by the formal layouts of the walks.

After she has enjoyed some music, suddenly -

As we were walking about the orchestra, I heard a bell ring, and, in a moment, Mr Smith, flying up to me, caught my hand, and, with a motion too quick to be resisted, ran away with me many yards before I had breath to ask his meaning, tho' I struggled as well as I could to get away from him. At last, however, I insisted upon stopping: 'Stopping, Ma'am!' cried he, 'why, we must run on, or we shall lose the cascade!'.²⁸⁸

And so run on they do, amongst - 'A crowd of people, all running with so much velocity, that I could not imagine what has raised such an alarm.'²⁸⁹ Burney exposes here how bodily vulnerable her heroine is - as she does with the theatre, too, in *Evelina*. However here in the pleasure garden it is the audience's sheer appetite for spectacle which is so alarming. The cascade was an illuminated scene of waterfalls which, by the play of light, seemed to really be flowing. Evelina remarks - 'The scene of the cascade I thought extremely pretty, and the general effect striking and lively'.²⁹⁰ Although it was said that, inspecting the cascade up close, one could easily discern how it was made from polished tin.

The famous dark walks scene, too, in *Evelina* explores more theatrical aspects of the pleasure garden. The dark walks are dimly lit, providing a rather sexual frisson, and unfortunately Evelina is harassed by a party of men - she is truly terrified. Later in the novel in Marylebone pleasure gardens there is another alarming spectacle - she is frightened of the fireworks, running in her fright into a pair of demi-reps or prostitutes. With the pleasure garden, like the theatre, open to all who can pay, it was frequented by prostitutes. Evelina does not recognise them as such however - further underscoring the trickiness or potential treachery of identity in a theatricalised space where anyone may enter and play dress-up, masking their true purpose.

Prints like the *Vauxhall Demi-Rep* (see figure 3.5) demonstrate the difficulties of visually deciphering any woman's status in the pleasure garden. To all intents and purposes the figure depicted here looks innocuous and pleasing; she is smiling, fashionably and fairly modestly dressed. She has flowers at her bosom, an accessory particularly associated with promenading in the pleasure garden. Her dress, then,

²⁸⁸ Frances Burney, *Evelina*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2002) p. 195.

²⁸⁹ Burney, p. 195.

²⁹⁰ Burney, p 195.

indicates the space - but what precisely makes her a demi-rep remains unclear. The appeal of the print seems to be titillation of spying out a lady of low morals, and points towards an urge to classify, especially in the face of Vauxhall's multitude of glimpsed identities.

In Mary Robinson's memoirs, the pleasure garden and fashion go hand-in-hand. Writing decades after the event, her recollections of outings to Vauxhall and Ranelagh include detailed descriptions of what exactly she was wearing. At her debut outing to Ranelagh, she describes how 'my habit was so singularly plain and Quaker-like, that all eyes were upon me'.²⁹¹ Here Robinson shows a command of the stage, playing an artless ingenue. Her 'plain' habit is artfully calculated, set off by the foils of the more sumptuous attire of others in the crowd.²⁹² Self-presentation and self-fashioning are at the forefront of what going to the pleasure garden means, and the very fabric placed on the body, the 'light brown lustring' and 'white chip hat', is of as much importance as anything else.²⁹³ Later, in a scene reminiscent of Evelina's perilous episodes, Robinson describes her fear at Vauxhall as her husband becomes 'lost in the throng', and a would-be chaperon attempts to abduct her, bodily lifting her into his own chaise.²⁹⁴ Robinson is a character in Rowlandson's *Vaux-Hall*, which can be read as a who's-who of late eighteenth-century fashionable society. Indeed, Robinson writes of how at the height of her notoriety she was often forced to quit the pleasure garden, owing to the crowds pressed around her supper box.

Prints like *The Inside of the Lady's Garden at Vauxhall* (see figure 3.6) derive their voyeuristic pleasure from determining female identity. The "backstage" peek into the latrine reduces all female bodies, whether prostitute or debutante, to one and the same. As a peek behind the scenes, it purports to display the reality being the artifice. It shows women in the acts of defecation and of applying makeup. A contraceptive sponge (or perhaps makeup puff?) appears to be carelessly discarded. Under the

²⁹¹ Mary Darby Robinson, *Memoirs of Mary Robinson*, ed. by Joseph Fitzgerald Molloy (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1895) pp. 63-4.

²⁹² Robinson, p. 63.

²⁹³ Robinson, p. 64.

²⁹⁴ Robinson, p. 84.

voluminous show of fashionable petticoats, all female bodies undergo the same bodily functions, and are seen to be equally disgusting and ridiculous.

Vauxhall Gardens is also used as a setting in Burney's novel *Cecilia*, with more tragic effect - the character Mr Harrell, drowning in debt, appears to almost manically indulge in the gardens, spending money he patently does not have on the food, singing too loudly (occasioning 'stares') - and ultimately collapsing under it all, resolving to put an end to his life.²⁹⁵ The artifice and theatrical illusion of the gardens can be used to illustrate the worst of a London society that is treacherous, threatening, artificial, vapid. It is a space that is artificial and confected, with its stage-managed landscape underscoring this. My approach towards reading Vauxhall as a performance space acknowledges this but also but also places importance on thinking around what theatricality may be actively, positively producing.

Mapping the pleasure garden as a sympotic space

I have set out some ways in which art historical perspectives on the pleasure garden may be developed and extended with a more theatrical approach in mind. I would like to continue by turning towards a performance historical approach to categorising theatrical space. A particular category I would like to start interrogating is that of sympotic space. This is a category of theatrical space that stems from the classical conception of the symposium. It encompasses eating, drinking, consumption, and an untethered gaze that does not rely on the frame of the stage as found in the theatre building. I will be using David Wile's chapter on sympotic space in *A Short History of Western Performance Space* (2003) to tease out these categories and start thinking about them in relation to the pleasure garden, and reflect on how opening up the pleasure garden to exploration using these kinds of theatrical and performance history-orientated categories is a valuable strategy.

Referring back to Rowlandson's 1786 image of Vauxhall (See Figure 3.1) allows us to engage with the sympotic narrative of the image. It is perhaps the most well-known image of eighteenth century Vauxhall Gardens. In it we can see a

²⁹⁵ Burney, *Cecilia*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1999) p. 398.

performance building - this is the orchestra. The image hints at other structures in the garden, too. We can see supper boxes here, forming a rather neat ring shape encompassing the orchestra. Other buildings in the gardens include the Chinese Pavilion and the Rotunda, all carefully positioned to unfold a variety of scenes and experiences as one promenades in the gardens. The tall trees point towards the *rus in urbe* attraction of the pleasure garden, which was cleverly landscaped to seemingly afford endless views out into the fields surrounding London. There is a musical performance with a female singer and an orchestra playing. The singer - in this print it is Madame Weischel - stands with a posy at her bosom and her songbook in her hands. Alongside these kind of musical performances there is a real variety of other performances and spectacles within the gardens. There are strolling musicians, there are *ridottos*, modelled on Italian carnival masques; fireworks; regattas on the river; balloon ascents; tightrope walkers; scenes and landscapes animated through the use of lighting technology; automata and other mechanical novelties like the musical bush - seemingly an ordinary bush planted in the gardens like any other - but upon walking past it, it would burst into song. There is an audience here, doing a variety of things and employing a variety of gazes. This is a really rich, complex image that represents the activity and performative variety of Vauxhall; it is also a very useful image to start considering the pleasure garden through the lens of symptomatic space.

SYMPOSIUM
variety
digestion
private
enclosed
evening
performer-centred
solo
body naked
slave performers
participatory
creates friendship (philophrosyne)

Table of attributes of sympotic space, taken from David Wiles, *A Short History of Western Performance Space*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) p. 137.

The Classical Greek and Roman philosophical conception of a Symposium responds to an ideal which encompasses several features: it is *private and enclosed*, which the pleasure garden certainly is. It is privately owned and enclosed from the city around it, and its entry fee - Vauxhall's is the steepest, although affordable to the middling classes - ensures a certain type of clientele, with servants and footmen being left at the door - there is a "coop" for them provided at the entrance. Rowlandson hints towards this enclosed nature of the space with the supper boxes in the background of the picture. This is certainly a built, constructed environment.

It is clear from the image that the gardens are open in the *evening* as well, with the lighting - only really suggested in this particular image with the hazily discerned lanterns - taking advantage of this to provide pretty pockets of illumination.

Digestion is a key feature of the sympotic space and we can find this happening in several little scenes in the picture. Underneath the orchestra we can see a party of people including Dr Johnson tucking in with gusto. The positioning of Johnson's

table is as part of the performance building itself. It is within the Orchestra building and underneath the performers - and so not offering a view at all of the staged performance. Rather, the diners are surrounded aurally by the musical performance and free to gaze upon many other visual intrigues in the garden - and they are also combined into the spectacle of the Orchestra building. To the right of the picture is another table of people being served drink and rather tipsily becoming quite familiar with each other. So imbibing is key here - eating, drinking, smoking. Added to this, the satirical culture of the eighteenth century is alive to the fact that eating and drinking is what one does at Vauxhall. A commonplace in literature of the period is the, usually, middling class father exclaiming at the price of refreshments for his family, and at the paltriness of the fare - a ham slice so thin as to be transparent, for example. However, consuming and digesting is key to this space, and the visual culture of the sympotic space marries up with this too, with the audience enabled to select and consume what pleases them visually, as well as off the menu.

It is thought that the dining at Vauxhall was originated so as to retain an audience who might otherwise seek refreshment elsewhere - but as well as making business sense the act of dining together is a way in which to cultivate polite sociability. Creating friendships (*sophrosyne*) is a key aspect of the symposium, and the socially cohesive work of creating bonds and friendship too points towards the pleasure garden's importance as a city space in which politeness can be forged. We can see this process at work in novels like Fanny Burney's *Evelina*.

Variety is the next aspect of sympotic space. It is clear that the pleasure garden offers a wealth of variety in terms of performance and spectacle. Variety is also aligned to the concept of digestion - as a healthful diet and a pleasing meal should offer variety to the palate. The sympotic space is *performer centred* - in that it does not make use of authored script, like a playtext. We can see this in terms of singing, performers like tightrope walkers and dancers, other spectacles like lights and fireworks, and also in the performative practices of the audience - fashion (and self-fashioning), being one key area in which bodily rather than scripted performance is crucial. Sympotic space utilises *solo*, rather than an ensemble or chorus performance. This image actually does focus upon Madame Wiesel as solo performer - and she

was indeed a star at Vauxhall for over 20 years. This stands in contrast to the cohesive and formally arranged groups of actors displayed in the theatre.

The sympotic space is a *participatory* space, and the pleasure gardens is a participatory experience; audiences physically participate by promenading through the grounds which opens up ever more spectacular entertainment; moving through the carefully managed walks and buildings, moving through different perspectives to enjoy the tromps d'ceils and effects of lighting, happening upon performances; perhaps dancing. Participation also points towards audience members' participation in the spectacular economy of the space, which Rowlandson capitalises upon in this image. The play of looks in the image is manifold - only a small section of the audience is looking at the musical performance - instead the visual intrigue and narrative of the picture is created in part by all these various interrelated gazes.

Of course, this sympotic schema is specific to Classical performance practices, which also includes the categories of naked performing bodies, and slave performers. I would not want to suggest direct analogues in the eighteenth century that we can paste on top of this blueprint. Although, with naked bodies it would perhaps be interesting to think about proxies for nakedness, with the need in acrobatic performances for ways of revealing more of the performing body, and the use of proto-leotard-type garments which we can see, for example, in images of the female tight-rope walker Madame Saqui. One particular print of Madame Saqui (see figure 3.7) is interesting on a number of different levels, not least because it shows the performer in the licensed theatre building - an example of pleasure garden variety performance bleeding through onto the legitimate stage. In it, Saqui's short skirts are sent billowing by the freedom of movement needed to perform. The men seated in the stalls can be seen with suggestively extended telescopic opera-glasses. This is a trope that can be seen in depictions of female rope dancers dating back to at least the seventeenth century, for example in Marcellus Laroon's *The cries of the city of London* (1688).²⁹⁶ This is a collection of depictions of hawkers and street performers on the streets of London which gives an impression of the noise, activity and spectacle of the city's streets. Laroon's 'The Famous Dutch Woman' depicts a well-known slack rope dancer, Mrs Saffry, who kept a booth in Smithfield in the 1680s. The plate featuring

²⁹⁶ Marcellus Laroon, *The cries of the city of London. Drawne after the Life* (London: P. Tempest, 1688)

the rope dancer shows another street performer lasciviously pointing at Mrs Saffry, directly underneath her short skirts, threatening to poke up her garments like the gentlemen in the Saqui print. In addition to underscoring the sexualised spectacle of these performing bodies, prints like this call to mind Saqui's theatrical antecedents, the contorted bodies of the fair, and underline the variety of theatrical spaces and narratives that she spanned. Madame Saqui found the height of her fame in Vauxhall gardens, where she combined the breathtaking skill of her performance with the landscape of the gardens and the dazzle of fireworks.

I would like to compare and contrast the Rowlandson image for a moment to an image of 1806 which appeared in Ackermann's *Microcosm of London*. (See Figure 3.8) This is an image of the same place, with the Orchestra shown as well an audience. Indeed this performance building is a popular choice for artists - more images of Vauxhall focus on this area than any other in the garden. This image is certainly spectacular, with the orchestra appearing somewhat like a giant firework, and the use of lighting against the evening gloom is much more privileged here. However, it is akin to a much more traditional view of a stage as a focal point in a theatre auditorium. The orchestra building is squarely the focus of the image here, with even the trees seeming to bend around it to form a frame for this stage. The audience are placed in front of it, and all are gazing at or responding to the performance. I would like to point out, too, the lovely little group of dancing ladies in this image. They are reminiscent of similar pale-gowned figures in images from the *Ladies Magazine* of the period, shown enjoying spaces like the pleasure garden and the theatre with proper, elegant decorum. (See figure 3.9, for example.) However, instead of the tall, pale and still columns of the ladies' dresses in the *Ladies Magazine*, the *Microcosm* ladies' skirts are whipped into movement as they dance. Their dance-steps are recognisable, and bound up in the sense of movement there seems to be a real sense of pleasure. Although dancing is perfectly proper in this space, and they are comporting themselves elegantly within the prescribed movements of the dance, there nevertheless seems to be a little wildness here in their jumping legs and twirling skirts.

This little scene points towards dance as a participatory performance practice, and also towards the introduction of professional dance in the pleasure garden.

Vauxhall introduced a dedicated stage for dance in its later years, and of course Sadler's Wells has grown from a similar pleasure garden space to the internationally renowned dance stage we have today. However, ultimately this image resists a sympotic reading by staging the pleasure garden as a performance space much like the theatre, represented using the same techniques. In contrast, Rowlandson's genius for theatrical spaces - and he is very much interested in theatre audiences and auditoria too - gives a sense of a much more untethered gaze and also opens up the sheer variety of gazes and performances at work in the pleasure garden.

Solkin agrees that this scene of the Orchestra and its surroundings is one of the most frequently depicted in images of Vauxhall. He provides a reading of a number of similar, earlier prints and identifies tropes which Rowlandson also makes use of, such as grouping, use of shade and the woman, seated at a refreshment table, turning to her male companion. Solkin also undertakes a reading of a fan which depicts the Orchestra scene (See figure 3.10). Solkin sees the fan as depicting a 'classically homogeneous unity' of both the depicted scene and the fan's user, who is imagined to be a lady comporting herself with the grace and restraint of the fan's polite figures.²⁹⁷ However there seems to be more at work here than just chaste and aesthetically pleasing enjoyment. A waiter in the lower left of the picture has conspicuously spilled a plate of food; a shady male figure loiters by the pillars of the orchestra building; men and women alike are seen tucking in to food enthusiastically and the fan does not shy away from depicting backsides on seats. The play of looks depicted tells a multitude of miniature stories, from the child engrossed in the musical performance, to the gentleman turning his back on his female dining companions to stare at a promenading woman. The '*Different Air Attitude and Decorum of the Company*', as well as referring to the unique atmosphere of the realm of the pleasure garden, refers too to the variety and heterogeneity of its enticing crowd.²⁹⁸

Within the criticism I have discussed, there is a certain amount of tension around where exactly the pleasure garden is positioned. On the one hand, designating the pleasure garden as an 'exhibitionary enclosure' aligns it with exhibitionary and

²⁹⁷ Solkin, p. 131.

²⁹⁸ *Pinchbeck's Fan Warehouse* (1737), in Solkin, p. 132.

gallery spaces and leaves out any acknowledgement of theatrical culture.²⁹⁹ The theatre does not feature in this view. However there is also the impulse to render the theatre and the pleasure garden as occupying the same cultural space, for instance in the treatment of the Shakespearean paintings by Solkin as recreating the same experience as the theatre in the pleasure garden.

The pleasure garden and the theatre can also be placed alongside each other as important urban social spaces. *Evelina*, for example, places both sites alongside each other - along with the Pantheon, shopping, and the ballroom - as important spaces in the social panorama of London. Added to this, uses of stage design like the cascades - often employing the same design professionals who are at work in the London theatres - alongside both the pleasure gardens' and the theatres' conditions of entry (paying a shilling in the case of Vauxhall), plus their broad clientele are similarities which are often used to group the pleasure garden and theatre together as theatrical spaces, and as important social spaces. However, looking at the pleasure garden through the lens of theories of performance space, we can also consider theatre *in opposition to* sympotic space.

SYMPOSIUM	THEATRE
variety	unity
digestion	purgation (catharsis)
private	public
enclosed	open-air
evening	morning
performer-centred	author-centered
solo	choral
body naked	body clothed
slave performers	free performers
participatory	judgemental
creates friendship (philophrosyne)	creates wisdom (sophrosyne)

Table of attributes of symposium and theatre, taken from David Wiles, p. 137.

²⁹⁹ de Bolla, p. 75.

This schema of opposing position is again taken from a Classical conception of performance spaces. Rather than an antagonistic position, sympotic space exists alongside the theatre, and its modes of performance exist to do something different to what is happening in the theatre building. This is especially pertinent to eighteenth-century theatrical culture in London, as the boundaries of the licensed, legitimate theatre are so clearly demarcated (at least in a legal sense) and alternative modes of performance must perforce exist in entirely different spaces.

The work of the theatre is *catharsis*, whereas the work of the sympotic space is *consumption and digestion*. Each space is doing opposite things. Consuming and digesting involve taking in, whereas catharsis is a purgation, enacted through pity and terror. The audience watch tragedies to go through a cathartic purging experience, which ultimately creates wisdom. This is the highest aim of the theatre, and in the eighteenth century it does only belong to the theatre, as the licensed stage is the only site where one could view a tragedy, or indeed a comedy or any licensed scripted performance. Of course, however, the theatre in this period is not only producing cathartic tragedies. Indeed, the eighteenth century theatre offers significantly more variety than the modern theatre, as evidenced by playbills of the period. It is exactly this kind of incursion into variety and more spectacular performance that some critics of the stage in the period are alarmed by. Satirical representations of Garrick, for example, show the kinds of masquerade, burlesque performance and spectacular fireworks that are seen as making incursions onto the stage. (See figure 3.11). Nevertheless, both unity of purpose and an authored playtext are both central to the theatre, although we can explore also how the eighteenth century audience can be read as more of an active, participatory audience, too, that exists alongside and does different things to the performed playtext. The example of Hogarth's audience and its orange sellers as explored in the Introduction, for instance, opens up questions around how the theatre audience may be described as active or passive, and indeed many of the texts explored in Chapter Two are vastly more concerned with everything else in the theatre building besides the stage picture.

I would also like to briefly query the category of *author centred* as opposed to performer-centred in relation to the pleasure garden, also, as it is worth noting how

pleasure garden performances exist in publication. Newspapers of the period for example often print new songs, advertised as being originated in Vauxhall Gardens, and they also advertised published compilations of Vauxhall songs. In this way, the gardens do exist in the world of authored, printed text.

Thinking theatrically in this way by no means offers a simple binary with direct analogues that we can simply transpose onto eighteenth-century spaces, but rather a tool to use to open up different avenues of enquiry into the pleasure garden as a performance space and situate it alongside, but operating in a significantly different way, to the theatre. In addition to this, it is worth considering Wile's historical narrative. In the Wiles chapter I am taking this construction of sympotic space from, a certain historical account is put forward, and it is I feel fairly typical of a wider performance studies perspective. If we are reading Wiles for a chronological account, the eighteenth century is glaring in its absence, as the historical narrative moves from the banqueting practices of the early modern period, to nineteenth-century music hall culture. There is ample scope here for investigating eighteenth century modes of performance as potential threads that might link these historical practices. Thinking specifically about Britain, and about London too, there is the potential to uncover and start to fill in a bit of a historical blank of particularly, peculiarly, British performance practices rooted in the city.

Wiles' main examination of historical sympotic performance spaces is that of the the nineteenth-century music hall. The music hall is a significant performance space that came to the fore after the change in licensing laws of 1837 which abolished the duopoly of the licensed stages. Undoubtedly this is an important moment in the history of British theatre, which transformed performance practices and completely changed the theatrical geography of London. However it is also interesting to think about the pleasure garden as potentially putting into practice similar cultural urges in an era before it became viable to place these on a stage. This would historically position the pleasure garden as a precursor to the music hall.

The music hall as a sympotic space offers 'the synthesis of performance, eating and drinking' and is a significant urban 'mode of forming and performing identity'. Dance also links the music hall and pleasure garden - dance as part of the staged

variety of performance and also dance as an audience practice, as mentioned above. Another parallel in addition to a sympotic narrative in comparing the music hall and pleasure garden, is that of modernity; the pleasure garden in Ogborn is a key site in the ongoing formation of the modern city.

As Wiles stakes out the music hall's sympotic culture, it is notable that he makes several references to later nineteenth-century Impressionist images of mirrors. Sickert's *Little Dot* is one example of a British artist using a mirror in a significant way in a painting of the music hall. (See figure 3.12). This intriguing image shows everything but empty seats reflected in the mirror. It demonstrates how the mirror offers multiple viewpoints and perspectives, and affords the opportunity to focus on scenes which may or may not be part of the presented stage picture. It offers a subversion of the gaze, which, like Mr Spectator's Heteroptical gazes, may deviate from the straight line. Wiles describes how the mirror in music-hall architecture 'removed the sense of material limitation' and 'encouraged self-reflexivity in the spectators, who could catch glimpses of themselves performing social identities as they sauntered in the promenade'.³⁰⁰ Both of these are central to the experience of Vauxhall, which presents the freedom of the (safely contained) outdoors, and offers glimpses of the performing self - in the art displayed alongside the audience and also in the strategic use of mirrors. Ogborn zooms in on the Vauxhall Rotunda's chandelier as a spectacle playing with the refraction of light and image, as the 'self-observing subject' consumes 'his own self-image', and the pleasure and allure in 'the construction of the identity through the pleasures of visibility'.³⁰¹ Mirrors also reflect back the chandelier's brilliance in the Rotunda. Although mirrors are not the focus of the image here (see Figure 3.13), they can be seen placed on the walls all around the Rotunda, reflecting the movement of the promenading, dancing crowd. In addition, it is interesting to note that some of the more well-known images in this vein are French, and it is worthwhile noting here the differences in development of this kind of theatrical culture in France and Britain and the different inflections of French cafe-cabaret and the British coffee-house. Well-known Impressionist paintings like Manet's *Bar at the Folies Bergere* (see figure 3.14) give a sense of cabaret culture. This image portrays the provocative gaze of the barmaid, while the mirror behind her

³⁰⁰ Wiles, p. 158.

³⁰¹ Ogborn, p. 151.

reveals a panorama of the cafe-cabaret and the tantalising glimpse of the aerial artist's legs. The mirror 'implicates the spectator the work of art', and in its sexually charged exchanges.³⁰² In contrast, the British coffee-house did not feature mirrored interiors, and did not host this type of cabaret performance. In the eighteenth century, references to "looking-glasses" and "pier-glasses" are most often associated with shopping, fashion and the emergence of the shop window. Defoe's observation of extravagant design and use of mirrors in shop fronts, 'to make a show to invite customers', describes both the theatricality and commercial impact of the mirror.³⁰³ The decision to employ mirrors at Vauxhall then, can be viewed as at once a Frenchified, foreign, imported novelty and also a reflection of the commercialised spaces of the city. Mirrors are also used in theatrical staging; they are used to reflect light as well as image. Mirrors give the impression of space, and multiply objects and figures. In addition to reflecting the self, mirrors reflect the audience.

'Mirror time' is a particular temporalised moment of viewing which for de Bolla is an important mechanism in what he calls 'reflection-representation' - a visual mode which he states is of particular importance in Vauxhall Gardens.³⁰⁴ Reflection-representation is simply the insertion of the spectator themselves into the spectacle, as we have seen with the construction of Vauxhall as a stage on which the audience itself treads. De Bolla sees this moment of 'self identification' as potentially tipping over into the dangerous realm of narcissism.³⁰⁵ Nevertheless, this spectatorial moment is important because at stake is 'who is allowed to recognise him- or herself as a subject'.³⁰⁶ De Bolla goes on to explain how 'pure' optical reflection, as in a mirror, provokes a crisis.³⁰⁷ The two options are the recognition of self, or the misrecognition of self. It is the temporality of this encounter that is stressed here, the moment of hesitation on the brink of self-recognition. There is an 'oscillation', an echo-like quality, as 'the viewer is caught up in the hesitory moment... a continual

³⁰² Wiles, p. 156.

³⁰³ Daniel Defoe, *The Complete English Tradesman, in familiar letters: directing him in all the several parts and progressions of trade*. Letter XIX (London: Charles Rivington, 1726) p. 260.

³⁰⁴ de Bolla, p. 126.

³⁰⁵ de Bolla, p. 128.

³⁰⁶ de Bolla, p. 127.

³⁰⁷ de Bolla, p. 127.

flip-flop' of both being *here* and being *there*.³⁰⁸ For de Bolla, this process is alarming, a crisis that offers neither 'comfort nor support'.³⁰⁹ It is a free-wheeling, unanchored moment. This is particularly apt in the setting of the pleasure garden where the untethered gaze is paramount. De Bolla is aware too of the dangers of cultivating 'dysfunctional' states of narcissism or voyeurism.³¹⁰ Nevertheless the moment of mirror time is an important mechanism whereby one 'take[s] one's place in the the culture of visibility', and the freewheeling dizziness of this moment also speaks to the allure and excitement of the pleasure garden. The untethered gaze of the pleasure garden dizzyingly freewheels between the variety of spectacle and the multiple reflections and refractions of the spectacle and the gaze. It is this variety, heterogeneity and the heteropticks of its many gazes which is captured by Rowlandson and key to the experience and ineffable appeal of the pleasure garden and its performance moment.

Conclusions

Given the heterogeneity of the pleasure garden, thinking theatrically is at once a unifying approach that brings together all these several modes of viewing, performance, and spectacle - yet still places emphasis on and accounts for plurality. It offers a holistic view. Secondly, although cultural critics in the eighteenth century themselves often arbitrated over what could be designated legitimate theatre, thinking theatrically like this about alternative sites like the pleasure garden uncovers a wealth of lived performance practices in eighteenth-century London that a limited view of just "the stage" cannot give. In addition, this approach offers a way into bringing the pleasure garden into a performance history narrative. It is a site which is often overlooked. There is the potential here to view the pleasure garden as a precursor to the nineteenth-century music hall, which is more critically visible in performance history narratives, and to open up a wealth of potential research opportunities in this vein - perhaps even informing contemporary theatre staging and practice. This reading of Vauxhall is valuable in exploring all its heteroptickal ways of

³⁰⁸ de Bolla, pp. 127-8.

³⁰⁹ de Bolla, p. 127.

³¹⁰ de Bolla, p. 128.

seeing, between performer and audience in diverse ways, and between the member of the audience themselves.

Figure 3.1



Thomas Rowlandson, *Vaux-Hall* (London: 1785) Held by The British Museum.
Museum number: 1880,1113.5484

Figure 3.2



Ridotto al' Fresco or the Humours of Spring Gardens (1732) Held by Library of Congress.

Call number: PC 3 - 1732

Figure 3.3.



Francis Haymans, *Mademoiselle Catherina* (1743) in David Coke and Alan Borg *Vauxhall Gardens: A History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2011)

Figure 3.4



Taking Water for Vauxhall (London: 1790) Held by The British Museum. Museum number: 1861,0518.959.

Figure 3.5



The Vauxhall Demi-Rep from M. Darly, *Macaronies, Characters, Caricatures &c* (London: 1772). Held by The British Museum. Museum number: 1915,0313.169

Figure 3.6



The Inside of the Ladies Garden at Vauxhall (London: S. Fores, 1788) Held by The British Museum. Museum number: 1935,0522.4.37

Figure 3.7



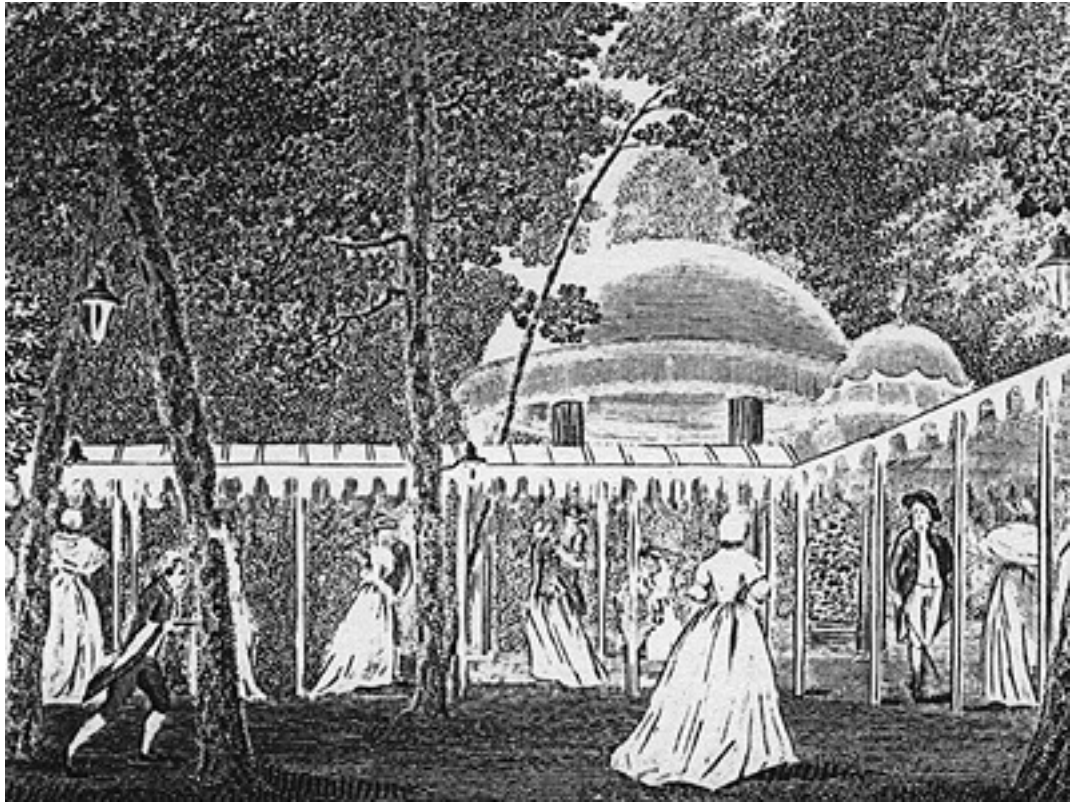
A wonderfull thing from Paris [Madame Sacchi at Covent Garden] (London: 1816) in
Coke and Borg (2011)

Figure 3.8



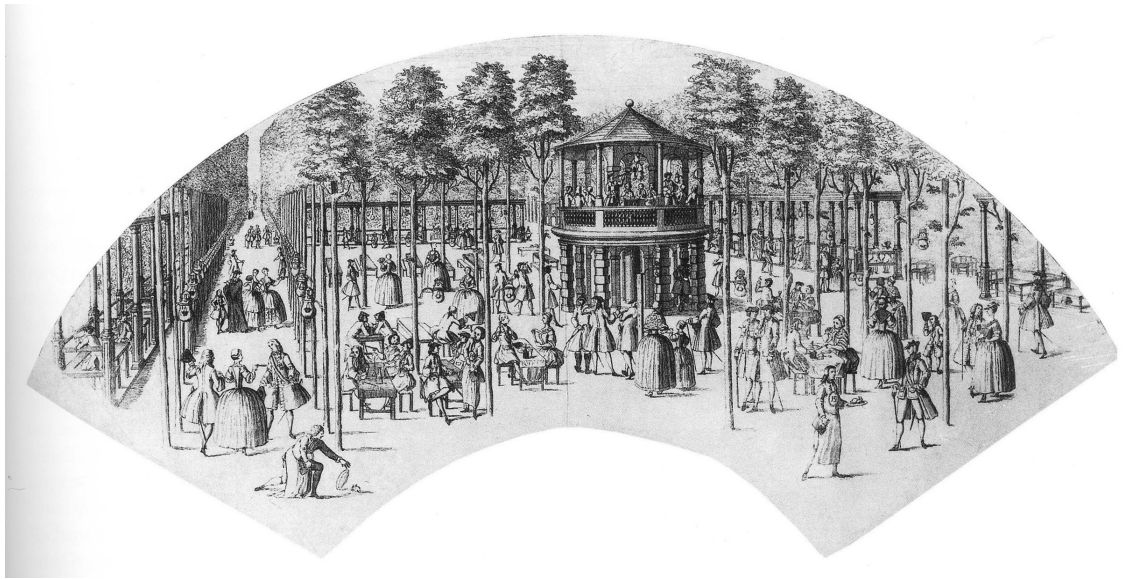
A.C. Pugin and J. Bluck after T Rowlandson *Vauxhall Garden* (1809) from Rudolph Ackermann, *Microcosm of London*, III pl.88.

Figure 3.9



View of Vauxhall Gardens, from the Lady's Magazine (1800), in Coke and Borg (2011)

Figure 3.10



Moses Harris, *The Vauxhall Fan* (1736), in Coke and Borg (2011)

Figure 3.11



James Gilray, *Blowing up the Pic-Nics: or, Harlequin Quixote attacking the Puppets* (London: Hannah Humphries, 1802) Held by The British Museum. Museum number: 1851,0901.1084

Figure 3.12



Walter Sickert, *Little Dot Hetherington at the Bedford Music Hall* (1888). Held by Yale Centre for British Art. Accession number: B1979.12.819

Figure 3.13



Representation of the Grand Saloon in Vauxhall Gardens.

Representation of the Grand Saloon in Vauxhall Gardens (1786), in Coke and Borg (2011)

Figure 3.14



Edouard Manet, *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère* (1882). Held by The Courtauld Gallery, London.

Conclusions

In this thesis I have sought to bring a variety of eighteenth-century literary and visual sources into dialogue with a theatrically-minded approach that seeks to account for the spectatorial relationship in the theatrical space. Chapter One explored Addison and Steele's *The Spectator* (1712) and staked out its visual concerns. I argued, taking my cue from *The Spectator's* fascination with forms of vision and social sight, for a more "Heteroptickal" reading of the publication, which allows for a pluralistic model of the spectatorial act. This disrupts a critical model of *The Spectator* as monolithic and disciplinary. Following on from this, I have aimed to uncover the "Heteropticks" of two different performance spaces in the eighteenth-century city; the theatre building and the pleasure garden. Chapter Two set out a variety of disparate and often unruly theatrical sources which can be explored for a view of the culturally constructed space of the theatre. It concentrated on theatrical poems published in London, and mapped out the spaces of the theatre building which are satirically imagined in these seldom-accessed texts. It also considered backstage texts, and plays about the theatre to round out an imagining of the theatre building. The female spectator in the theatrical space was also a primary concern in this chapter. Chapter Three engaged with the art historical perspectives of current scholarship exploring the pleasure garden, and argued for a more theatrical perspective that would be profitable in extending these visual analyses. It went on to establish the category of sympotic space, working from David Wiles, and how this may be productively mapped on to the eighteenth-century pleasure garden. This chapter also notes a historiographical gap in Wiles' work and makes a theatre-historical link from the eighteenth-century pleasure garden to the nineteenth-century music hall. In all three chapters, I have been concerned with accounting for the representation of women in my chosen texts and theatrical spaces. I have endeavoured to explore how women themselves can be seen to negotiate theatrical space, and to assess women as cultural producers in these spaces.

I am mindful of the ways in which such a study could be developed and extended. It could take into account different performance spaces in the city. Performance in eighteenth-century London also encompassed spaces like the street and the fair, and performers like ladder-dancers, quack doctors and even the crowd itself. These kinds

of performance spaces can be considered as separate spaces with differing cultural narratives to the theatre. For example the concept of processional space, and the culture of performing medicine, could be productively explored in relation to the fair. In addition, unique structures like the theatrical booth, and figures like the Merry Andrew particularly belong to the fair in this period.

Alongside this, sources like *The Tatler* essay number 108 exemplify a narrative of intermingling. In this essay Isaac Bickerstaff visits the theatre, expecting to see perhaps his 'old friend Mr Betterton' acting in a 'noble Tragedy'.³¹¹ However, to his 'unspeakable amazement' he sees 'a Monster with a Face between his Feet' - a contortionist.³¹² This is an intrusion of the grotesque into the theatre building, a spectacle best suited to the rough and brutish fair. Bickerstaff is 'very much out of countenance', especially considering the 'Admiration the Applause, the Satisfaction, of the Audience'.³¹³ As we have seen, acrobatic dancers like Madame Saqui in the pleasure garden come from a considerable tradition of performing at the fair. Songs originating in the pleasure garden are performed on the licensed stage. There is a bleeding through of different performance modes throughout different performance spaces in the eighteenth-century city: not a simple demarcation of separate performance modes and spaces.

There are also performance modes which are introduced to Britain in the eighteenth century which have subsequently developed performance cultures of their own.

Ballet and opera were both performed in the pleasure garden, as I have indicated, and other eighteenth-century sources could be taken into account also. Vauxhall's mid-nineteenth-century Ballet Theatre (see Figure 4.1) provides an alluring glimpse of colourful ballerinas set against the dusky gloom of the gardens, while prints of dancers on the stage (see Figure 4.2) make use of tropes we have seen in other types of theatrical prints, as opera glasses extend to gain views underneath the performance costume of the ballerina. Mr Spectator himself is interested in the opera and writes of

³¹¹ Donald Bond, ed., *The Tatler*, 3 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987) p.154.

³¹² Bond, *The Tatler*, II, pp. 154-5.

³¹³ Bond, *The Tatler*, II, p. 155.

the introduction of the Italian opera in London, and speculates on the development of the British opera.

I am also aware that this study has been London-centric, and does not take into account regional performance spaces and the regional circuits of theatrical companies in the period. In addition to regional archives, theatre researchers have access to regional theatrical spaces. An eighteenth-century theatre building still exists in Richmond, Yorkshire, and the restored Regency-era Theatre Royal in Bury St Edmonds is a working theatre, staging eighteenth-century plays each season alongside rehearsed readings and seminars further exploring the eighteenth-century and Regency repertoire (See Figure 4.3).

Eighteenth-century plays still form a significant part of British theatrical repertoire, although they are currently not produced with particular frequency. Recent productions in London include Deborah Warner's *A School for Scandal* (Barbican, 2011). This production foregrounded fashion and self-fashioning, with the use of women's shifts and brightly coloured panniers as outerwear, and constructed a knowingly self-conscious stage with anachronistic moments and nods to the audience. Pleasure gardens are now less visibly part of our cultural landscape, but can be traced in the culture of promenade performance, and also in contemporary variety performance (See Figure 4.4). This is a handbill for an artistic masquerade held in London, which featured performance art, cabaret, film and circus performance. The audience engaged in promenading, dancing, dress-up - as well as artistic participation (Art Macabre, who produced the handbill, are a theatrical life-drawing salon). It is my hope that a deeper understanding of spectatorship and theatricality on the eighteenth-century London stage and beyond, as I have presented here, has the potential to inform and innovate in contemporary theatre staging and practice.

Figure 4.1



The Ballet Theatre (c. 1840 - 1845). Held by The British Museum. Museum number: 1966,0212.1.

Figure 4.2



Mademoiselle Parisot (London: 1794) Held by The British Museum. Museum number: 1868,0808.6524.

Figure 4.3



Handbill and programme, Theatre Royal Bury St Edmunds (2009)

Figure 4. 4



Handbill, Art Macabre, *Masquerade* (London: 2016)

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