

The Aesthetics of Acting in the Restoration

Robynne Curnow

Shakespeare, writing about 1600–1601, in the play in which he most thoroughly explores the image of man as actor and as creator of the drama of his life, *Hamlet*, indulges himself with a critique of insensitive and overblown acting.

Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue. But if you mouth it, as many of our players do, I had as lief the town crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus, but use all gently, for in the very torrent, tempest, and (as I may say) whirlwind of your passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness. O, it offends me to the soul to hear a robustious periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings, who for the most part are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb shows and noise. I would have such a fellow whipped for o'erdoing Termagant. It out-herods Herod ... Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion be your tutor. Suit the action to the word, the word to the action, with this special observance, that you not o'erstep *the modesty of nature*. For any thing so o'erdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold, as 'twere, *the mirror up to nature*; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure ... [III.ii. my italics]

To hold the mirror to nature is a commonplace of artistic theory, but just what does it mean? Dr Johnson in his dictionary gave two definitions of the word 'mirror': firstly, it may mean a 'looking glass, anything which exhibits objects by reflection', and secondly the word may refer to a 'pattern; for that on which the eye ought to be fixed; an exemplar; an archetype'.¹

To hold a mirror to nature, then, may be to represent particular nature, that which is apprehended by the senses; but it may also mean to offer a representation of generalized, archetypal nature, an idealized depiction of the actual. Hamlet's speech has been read as an exhortation towards naturalistic acting, but note that the purpose is 'to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure'; all of which suggests that the nature that is being aimed at is not that apprehended by the senses, but the universal and the ideal. It is interesting that Reynolds quotes

approvingly Hamlet's advice to the players, which he interprets as suggesting that the ideal of the poet or actor is to be like that of the painter; that is, not to be bound by a narrow or common conception of nature in order to reach a greater truth.²

Alan S. Downer³ has identified four distinct 'schools' of acting in the eighteenth century, which he calls after their leading exponents: Betterton, Cibber-Booth-Wilks, Macklin-Garrick, and Kemble; however, he concedes that though the emphases and techniques of these players varied, all sought, in their own way, to hold the mirror up to nature, and 'they all subscribed to the same basic set of acting conventions'.⁴ Alan Hughes discusses three main periods of acting, which correspond loosely to those of Downer: Baroque, Rococo, and Neo-Classical. The Baroque style was that of Thomas Betterton, Elizabeth Barry and the triumvirate of Cibber, Wilks and Booth, and Quin. The acting of Garrick, Macklin and Hannah Pritchard was representative of Rococo style, with Henderson, Sarah Siddons and J. P. Kemble typifying the Neo-Classical. The acting style of the Restoration, according to Hughes, was largely influenced by French classical Baroque.⁵

I shall be concentrating on the acting style of Betterton and, to a lesser extent, the triumvirate, who consciously followed the style of Betterton and his peers, and I shall focus on the period 1660-1710—the period spanned by the career of Thomas Betterton. The Baroque style was not immediately swept from the stage with the retirement of Betterton in 1710, though most of the great Restoration performers had left the stage by then, since their pupils were still acting.⁶ According to Cibber, 'Wilks, from his first setting out, certainly form'd his manner of acting upon the Model of *Monfort*; as *Booth* did his on that of *Betterton*'.⁷ Lucretia Bradshaw and Mary Porter modelled their style of acting on that of Barry, and Porter was trained by Betterton from early age, as Anne Bracegirdle had been. Quin, though acting on the same stage with Garrick until 1751 performed in what observers perceived as an old-fashioned style. Because the Baroque and the Neo-Classical schools shared a similar aesthetic basis, I shall occasionally draw on contemporary records of late eighteenth-century acting. The similarity between the acting styles of the Baroque and Neo-Classical periods was owing to their adherence to the Platonic idea of beauty as an imitation of the Ideal; art, including the art of acting, sought to represent the *beau idéal*, to surpass nature which was not perfect. The principle, derived from Aristotle, was restated by Dryden thus: 'The imitation of nature is therefore justly constituted, as

the general, and indeed the only, rule of pleasing, both in poetry and painting'.⁸ This was combined with the ideas of Plato, as expressed in *The Republic*, to yield an ideal of art as the imitation of *ideal nature*.⁹ Thus a teacher of Eloquence asserted: 'Art is necessary in order to correct or perfect Nature'.¹⁰ This conception of acting was more rigidly applied to tragedy; later in this paper I shall discuss the different style of comic acting and the aesthetic theories underlying it.

In such a system of belief, characterization did not mean the portrayal of an individual personality, but the representation of Ideas and Passions. Indeed, the word 'Character' did not acquire its modern meaning until late in the seventeenth century. Before 1690 it meant 'the delineation of an Idea, or essential form'; it was associated with the ideal Reality art was supposed to imitate. Only later did it come to mean the imaginary person in fiction or an actor's part.¹¹

The task of the actor was not to express the feelings and responses of a real individual, but to externalize the passions, to give the Passions physical representation for the audience. There was nothing 'naturalistic', in the modern sense of the word, about this acting. The actors' speeches were directed at the audience for whose benefit the performance was given, rather than to the other characters on the stage. This was not simply a matter of being audible, but a matter of courtesy, as Franciscus Lang, a Jesuit playwright and teacher, explained in 1727:

For if the Actors talk among themselves, as if no-one else were present, and listening, and so turn their faces and words reciprocally towards each other, then half of the audience is deprived of the Actor's appearance, and see him only from the side or entirely from the back, and that is opposed to propriety and natural decency and especially to the honour of the Audience itself.¹²

Also important is the fact that if characters directed their remarks to others on the stage, the actor's face would not be fully visible, a point emphasised by Gildon in *The Life of Thomas Betterton*.

As in a Piece of History-Painting, tho the Figures direct their Eyes never so directly to each other, yet the Beholder by the Advantage of their Position, has a full View of the Expression of the Soul in the Eyes of the Figures.¹³

In acting the passions, expressing the soul, the face was vitally important.¹⁴ Anthony Aston praised Elizabeth Barry because:

Her face somewhat preceded her Action, as the latter did her Words, her Face ever expressing the Passions; not like the Actresses of late Times, who are afraid of putting their Faces out of the Form of Non-meaning,

lest they should crack the Cerum, White-Wash, or other Cosmetic, trowl'd on.¹⁵



PLATE I: Four of the passions systematized by Le Brun.

In the seventeenth century it was a commonplace of theorists of all the branches of artistic endeavour that the function of the artist was to depict the passions truthfully.¹⁶ The artist 'was to represent the universal actions and passions of men—not as variable quirks of temperament, but as permanent elements of human character'.¹⁷ Dryden began his Preface to the translation of Du Fresnoy's *Art of Painting* by quoting the artist Gio. Pietro Bellori who argued that painters and sculptors should 'endeavour to correct and amend common nature, and to represent it as it was first created, without fault, either in colour, or in lineament'.¹⁸ Bellori cites Plato's *Timæus* dialogue, in which Proclus argues that a work of nature is less beautiful than a work of art, since art offers a better representation of ideal beauty than corrupt nature. Hence the Greek artist Zeuxis insisted that he needed to use five models for his portrait of Helen of Troy. Reference is made to Aristotle's precept that the function of the artist is to make things not as they are, but as they ought to be.¹⁹ Du Fresnoy makes a similar

statement to Bellori's: '... it is not sufficient to imitate nature in every circumstance, dully, and as it were literally, and minutely; but it becomes a painter to take what is most beautiful ...'²⁰

In the mid-seventeenth century, the French Academy of Painting and Sculpture began systematic efforts at the research, analysis and categorisation of the Passions. These efforts culminated in the illustrated essay by Charles Le Brun, official painter to Louis XIV, entitled *Conférence de M. Le Brun sur l'expression générale et particulière* (1698).²¹ Le Brun relied heavily on Descartes' *Les Passions de l'âme* (1649), but he added his own theory that the eyebrows were the key to the expression of the passions. He analysed 24 passions. PLATE I shows some of the artist's depictions of the passions. Le Brun's book was enormously influential; it is referred to in the *Life of Betterton*, Garrick knew it, Reynolds quoted it approvingly and applied its principles to his own work. What Le Brun did for facial expression, Gerard de Laïresse did for action and gesture in his *Het Groot Schilderboek*, published in Amsterdam in 1707 and translated into English in 1738 as *The Art of Painting in All its Branches*. De Laïresse was appalled by those modern painters who depicted life, 'Not as it ordinarily appears, but as it ought to be in its greatest perfection'.²² One of Laïresse's plates depicts

The violent [sort of motions] proceeding from fright, fear, despair, rage &c. or any thing that is unusual and sudden, and perturbates nature either by hearing or seeing; such as a sudden thunder, spectre, or frightful sight. These cause a shrinking, stretching and winding of the members.²³



PLATE II: G. de Laïresse



PLATE III: An engraving of 1709 showing the Closet Scene in *Hamlet*.
The actor represented may be Thomas Betterton.

[See PLATE II] The posture of the figure on the left of the plate is not dissimilar to that in which Hamlet (possibly played by Betterton) is depicted in an engraving of the Closet scene published in 1709 [PLATE III].

De Lairese's instructions for the arrangement of figures in paintings are extraordinarily detailed. Thus he indicates the 'different handlings of the same thing in persons of different conditions'²⁴ [PLATE IV].

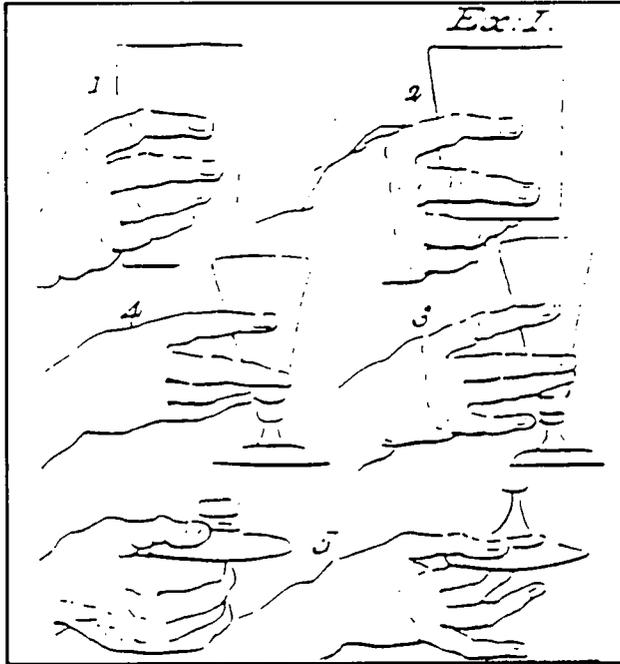


PLATE IV: G. de Lairese

The first figure displays a plebeian lack of grace, No.2 has 'some manners', No.3 holds the goblet in the manner of a princess, No.4 'Is a lady's woman, who, for fear of spilling, holds the glass handily, yet less agreeably than the other', and No.5 is a prince. The Dutch tragedian Jelgerhuis expressed his admiration for Lairese's work, but in his own manual he offered a slightly different interpretation of the hand positions. 'The first is a farmer; the second, the man of fashion; the third one, the most polite, offering an empty chalice, while the fourth one, places the last fingers of the hand as support under the foot of the chalice, indicating that it is filled with liquid, and that he attempts to keep it upright.'²⁵



PLATE V: Frontispiece to Kirkman's 'The Wits' (1674).

Let us now consider the representation of Falstaff in the Frontispiece to Kirkman's *The Wits* (1672) [PLATE V]. This frontispiece to Kirkman's collection of drolls is one of the few pictures we have of the early Restoration stage. Its accuracy is therefore questionable, but the players represented do seem to be using certain recognisable and codified gestures. Falstaff holds the goblet, as one might expect of him, as though it were full. The posture of the hands of The Changeling is also noteworthy. A changeling was, in one sense of the word, 'an imbecile, particularly one whose idiocy took the form of a spiritless vacancy of mind and limp flexibility of body'.²⁶ The hand position is strikingly similar to one of the gestures recorded by Thomas Bulwer [Plate VI]. These illustrations are taken from Bulwer's *Chirologia* (1644), a manual of oratorical gestures. Bulwer's efforts were based on the assumption that all passions, the universal, generalised emotions, have physical effects that are manifested in the body, and that these signs can be systematized and catalogued. *Despero*, 'I despair', is described by Bulwer as 'a posture of fear, abasement of mind, and abject and vanquished courage, and of utter despair'.²⁷ The Hostess's posture is recognisably that called *Supplico*, 'supplication'. It is therefore not coincidental that Gildon plundered Thomas Wright's *The Passions of the Minde* (1604) when discussing Betterton's acting techniques, or that he frequently quotes Quintilian at length; there was a close connection between oratory, psychology and moral philosophy (the distinction between the two was not clear), and acting.

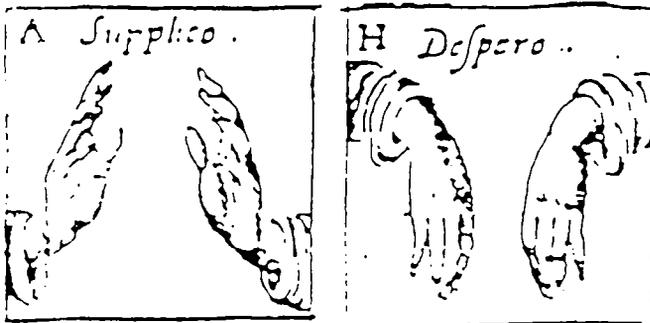


PLATE VI: Bulwer's *Chirologia*

Actors were admired for the ability to make quick and smooth transitions from one passion to another, and the plays written for them offered the opportunity to display this skill. Elizabeth Barry created the role of Corina in *The Revenge* (1680), an adaptation of Marston's

The Sydney Society of Literature and Aesthetics

The Dutch Courtesan which has been attributed to Betterton. This speech clearly invites the actor to display her ability to move convincingly from fierce rage through anguish and tender passion, to despair.

I'll be reveng'd; nothing but dire Revenge shall satiate my Rage. Methinks I am inspir'd with manly strength, a bloody courage swells my rising heart, and I shall act some wondrous dismal mischeif. And yet to see him bleed, he that has sworn so many tender things, and breath'd 'em all in kisses on my bosome; but now all those, and thousands new invented, he pays another Mistress more beloved. I die, I die, and cannot bear that thought, by which I finde I'm feeble woman still. ²⁸

Philip Parsons speaks of the 'complete externalisation of emotion' in the acting of the Restoration. The players expressed 'the passions'—Fear, Tenderness, Despair, Rage, Anguish, etc.—suggested by the lines, rather than the personal response of the character to situation. Parsons concludes that the aim of this sort of drama 'is not a representation of life, but a statement about life expressed in a pattern of emotional or moral postures'. ²⁹

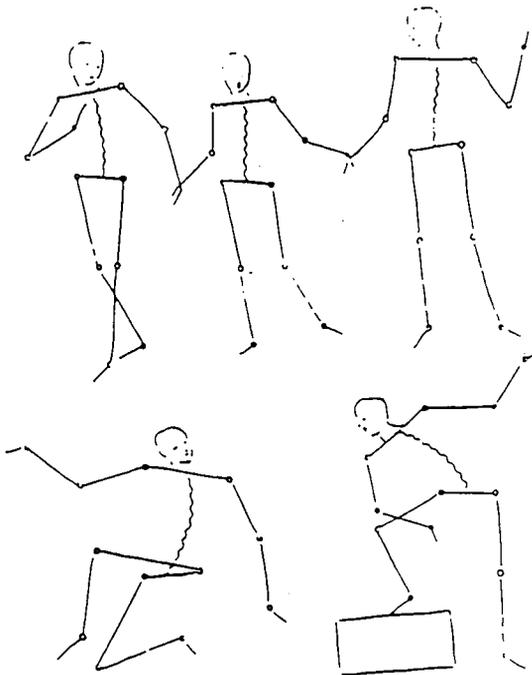


PLATE VII: G. de Lairese.

Joshua Reynolds argued that 'beauty' and 'nature' were different terms expressing the same concept. 'Deformity', he asserted, 'is not nature, but an accidental deviation from her accustomed practice'.³⁰ This of course had implications for dramatic representation. Actors recognised the need for decorum, grace, dignity, just as artists did.³¹ The development of normalized expression had begun in the Renaissance, and it was in the fifteenth century that Leon Battista Alberti, as he systematized the classical doctrines of art, established the *beau ideal* of attitude, the principles of balance and contrast. These principles were applied by de Lairese, as indicated by PLATE VII, and they are in evidence in the portrait of Macbeth which appeared in an edition of Shakespeare's play published in 1709. There is an harmonious contrast in the positions of the right arm and left leg, for example [PLATE VIII]. It is generally believed that the actor represented is Betterton.

The actor Barton Booth had an extensive knowledge of sculpture and painting; he closely studied his collection of prints to derive poses and facial expressions suitable for the drama, and was so effortlessly able to manage the transition from one 'Attitude' to another that his admirers claimed that his representation of the passions was indistinguishable from that of spontaneous reaction.

The conventions of comic acting, though still based on the belief that art was an imitation of nature, were different from those of tragic acting. The actors seem to have aimed more at the real than the ideal. Though grace was still important, the attitudes were scaled down, the dictates of decorum less rigid.

Looking at baroque commentary on portrait painting can give us clues about the nature of comic acting. Just as Reynolds rated Rembrandt as inferior to Raphael because his paintings were too particular, so comic acting was regarded as inferior to tragedy because it was closer to perceptible nature and everyday life. Not that all actors agreed with this. Cibber complained that the comedian Doggett 'over-valu'd Comedy for its being nearer to Nature, than Tragedy', a view that Cibber, though himself a comedian, did not endorse.³² In his thirteenth Discourse, Reynolds touches on the distinction between tragedy and comedy:

The theatre, which is said 'to hold the mirror up to nature', comprehends both these ideas [that is, following nature, and varying it or departing from it]. The lower kind of comedy, or farce, like the inferior style of painting, the more naturally it is represented, the better.³³

The author of *A Letter to A.H. Esquire Concerning the Stage* (1698)



PLATE VIII: Reproduced from Rowe's edition, 1709. The figure on the right may be Betterton, who was acting the role at the time.

argues that 'comedy is a Representation of Common Conversation and its Design is to represent things Natural; to show the faults of *Particular Men*'.³⁴ Comic roles seem to have given the players more scope for variation, because they were 'even more susceptible to differences imposed by eccentric faces, forms, and personalities'.³⁵ It is for this reason, as Highfill observes, that individual comic styles are even more difficult to visualize than those of tragedians, which were more formal and more strictly governed by contemporary notions of decorum. In comedy it is in order to show a worse likeness since deformity produces laughter.³⁶ Exaggerated deviation from nature, what would appear as the grotesque in painting, was the basis of some comedy. The grotesque violates the canons of beauty and grace for comic effect. This can be seen in Cibber's encomium on the acting of Susannah Mountfort as Melantha in Dryden's *Marriage-a-la Mode*.

Melantha is as finish'd an Impertinent, as ever flutter'd in a Drawing-Room, and seems to contain the most compleat System of Female Foppery, that could possibly be crowd'd into the tortur'd Form of a Fine Lady. Her Language, Dress, Motion, Manners, Soul, and Body, are in a continual Hurry to be something more, than is necessary, or commendable.³⁷

The word 'impertinent' occurs several times in Cibber's description of Mountfort's acting of Melantha. The word had, in addition to the modern sense of 'intrusive, presumptuous, insolent or saucy in speech or behaviour', an older sense of 'absurd, trivial, silly', and Cibber may be using either or both. The older usage of the word would link the portrayal of Melantha with the traditional critical pronouncements on comedy as a method for reforming vice and folly by ridicule. Equally significant is Cibber's emphasis in the description on excessive, unnatural and hasty movement.

The question that has not been, and probably cannot be, answered, is to what extent Restoration and eighteenth-century actors followed the precepts of orators and critical theorists. The author of *The Life of Thomas Betterton* catalogues gestures and actions suitable for the delineation of various emotions according to character type. However Gildon follows this catalogue with a complaint about the modern neglect of the Art of Gesture that makes it clear that what he has been describing is a theoretical ideal, and not necessarily the common practice of players of his day.

It were to be wish'd that this Art were a little reviv'd in our Age, when such useful members, which of old contributed so much to the Expression of Words, should now puzzle our Players what to do with them, when they seldom or never add any Grace to the Action of the Body, and never

The Sydney Society of Literature and Aesthetics

almost any thing to the Explanation or fuller Expression of the Words and Passions.³⁸

The illustrated acting manuals are prescriptive, the most comprehensive belong to the Neoclassical period, and most are French or based on French sources. How then can we be certain that English actors used these formalized gestures? Or that they *only* used classical gestures? Portraits of actors suggest that they did but this is not conclusive evidence.³⁹ As I have argued, the texts of the plays themselves often imply a certain kind of performance style, but those few promptbooks which have survived do not usually offer details of stage business. In the absence of a well-defined critical vocabulary, and in an age when dramatic criticism was in its infancy, it is often difficult to trust, or to interpret, the judgements of spectators. Samuel Pepys, a major source of information about the Restoration theatre, was as likely to be enchanted by an actress's legs as by her performance. In the eighteenth century Dr Johnson had a fierce dislike for Hannah Pritchard. 'It is wonderful how little mind she had', he stormed.⁴⁰ He was indignant because, though she was Garrick's leading lady and acclaimed for her portrayal of Lady Macbeth, Dr Johnson was convinced that she had never read the whole play. Johnson described her acting as 'mechanical', yet this was the actress who was commended by spectators for her 'spontaneous', 'easy', 'natural' style. Such contradictory accounts of Restoration and eighteenth-century acting styles offer little comfort to modern theatre historians. It is not surprising that when Shakespeare sought a metaphor for the transitoriness of human existence he found it in the image of the stage:

Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more.⁴¹

Notes

- 1 Cited by Jean Hagstam, *Sister Arts: The Tradition of Literary Pictorialism and English Poetry from Dryden to Gray*, Chicago & London, 1958, p.126
- 2 Joshua Reynolds, *Discourses on Art, with selections from The Idler*, ed. Stephen O. Mitchell, New York, 1965, p.102.
- 3 Alan S. Downer, 'Nature to Advantage Dressed: Eighteenth-Century Acting', *PMLA*, 58 (1943): 1002-37.
- 4 Downer, p.1002.
- 5 Alan Hughes, 'Art and Eighteenth-Century Acting Style. Part I: Aesthetics', *Theatre Notebook*, 41 (1987): 27.
- 6 Elizabeth Barry retired at the age of 52 in 1710. Anne Bracegirdle, who was brought up by Betterton as well as being trained by him, retired in 1707, probably

- because of the increasing power of her young rival Anne Oldfield. Elinor Leigh, who joined the King's Company in 1672, retired in 1709. Frances Maria Knight acted 1676-1719; Susanna Mountfort 1681-1703. Mary Betterton had largely ceased acting by the end of the seventeenth century but throughout the Restoration she and her husband spent much effort in training young players, for which they received additional wages. Quin did not retire until 1751, clinging to the last to his old-fashioned costume.
- 7 Colley Cibber, *An Apology for the Life of Mr. Colley Cibber*, ed. B. R. S. Fone, Ann Arbor, 1968, p.313.
 - 8 C. A. Du Fresnoy, *The Art of Painting. With Remarks Translated into English; with an Original Preface, containing a Parallel between Painting and Poetry. By Mr. Dryden*, London, 1695, repr. in the *Works of John Dryden*, Vol. XVII, ed. Sir Walter Scott, rev. George Saintsbury, Edinburgh, 1882-93, p.313.
 - 9 'Painting is not only to be considered as an imitation, operating by deception, but ... it is, and ought to be, in many points of view, and strictly speaking, no imitation at all of external nature.' Reynolds, pp.194-95. The passage of Plato alluded to is from *Republic X, passim*.
 - 10 Etienne Dubois de Bretteville (1650-1688) *L'Eloquence de la chaire et du barreau, selon des principes les plus solides de la Rhetorique sacrée et profane*, Paris, 1689, cited in Barnett, *The Art of Gesture: the practice and principles of eighteenth century acting*, Heidelberg, 1987, p.140.
 - 11 Rose Zimbardo, *A Mirror to Nature. Transformations in Drama and Aesthetics 1660-1732*, Lexington, 1986, p.16.
 - 12 *Dissertation de Actione Scenica Munich, 1727*, cited in Barnett, 'The Performance Practice of Acting', *Theatre Research International*, 3 (1977): 161.
 - 13 Gildon, *The Life of Thomas Betterton*, London, 1710, p.67.
 - 14 The theory of acting the passions was derived ultimately from Aristotle. See *Rhetoric*, Book III, chs 1 & 7; and Quintilian, *Institutes of Oratory*, Book XI, iii.
 - 15 Anthony Aston, *A Brief Supplement*, ed. Watson Nicholson, South Haven, Mich., 1920, p.78.
 - 16 'All arts having the same general end, which is to please; and addressing themselves to the same faculties through the medium of the senses; it follows that their rules and principles must have as great affinity as the different materials and the different organs or vehicles by which they pass to the mind, will permit them to retain.' Reynolds, p.109.
 - 17 Brewster Rogerson, 'The Art of Painting the Passions', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 14 (1953): 72.
 - 18 Du Fresnoy, p.292. Bellori's address was made to the Academy of St Luke at Rome, May 1664, and was printed in 4to. in Rome in 1672.
 - 19 Du Fresnoy, p.294.
 - 20 Du Fresnoy, p. 347.
 - 21 This essay grew out of a lecture on the art of Poussin given by Le Brun in 1667.
 - 22 Le Brun, p.100.
 - 23 Gerard de Lairesse, *The Art of Painting in All its Branches*, trans. John Frederick Fritsch, London, 1738, pp.15-16.
 - 24 de Lairesse, p.30.
 - 25 Johannes Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische Lessen Over de Gesticulatie en Mimiek ...*, Amsterdam, 1827; quoted by Barnett, 'The Performance Practice of Acting,

The Sydney Society of Literature and Aesthetics

- Part II: The Hands', *Theatre Research International*, 3 (1977): 11.
- 26 Joseph Roach, *The Player's Passion: studies in the science of acting*, Newark & London, 1985, p.50.
- 27 Thomas Bulwer, *Chirologia: or the Natural Language of the Hand*, (1644), p.37.
- 28 Thomas Betterton?, *The Revenge; or, A Match in Newgate*, 1680, II.ii. p.17.
- 29 Philip Parsons, 'Restoration Melodrama and its Actors', *Komos*, 11, No.3 (1970): 84.
- 30 Reynolds, p.99.
- 31 More particularly, such ideas about 'nature' and truth meant that, for example, certain kings were generally recognised as being unsuitable protagonists for tragedies because despite their historical truth their biographies did not reflect the 'true', that is, ideal, nature of kingship. It is not surprising, then, that Dryden took issue with Bellori. 'Now, as this idea of perfection is of little use in portraits, or the resemblances of particular persons, so neither is it in the characters of comedy and tragedy, which are never to be made perfect, but always to be drawn with some specks of frailty and defecence ... The perfection of such stage characters [i.e. historical figures] consists chiefly in their likeness to the deficient faulty nature, which is their original.' Dryden does, however, permit 'ingenious flattery', to show the inevitably flawed characters in tragedy in their best light.
- 32 Cibber, p.127.
- 33 Reynolds, p.201. This may explain the somewhat puzzling comments on the relative merits of the acting of Nokes and Leigh made by Cibber.
- 34 Zimbardo, p.228, n.39
- 35 P. Highfill, 'Performers and Performing', in *The London Theater World, 1600-1800*, ed. R. D. Hume, Carbondale, Ill., 1980, p.163, fn.116.
- 36 However, Congreve disputes this in his *Essay concerning Comedy*, and the Preface to *The Way of the World*; there he grounds the humour of comedy on the depiction of affectation.
- 37 Cibber, p.96.
- 38 Gildon, p.48. When he speaks of the practice 'of old', does he mean the early seventeenth-century acting style, or that of the Ancients? When he speaks of 'our Age', does he mean c.1710, or the period since the Restoration and the reopening of the theatres?
- 39 Kalman A. Burnim has argued plausibly for the accuracy of the portrayal of stage action in contemporary paintings in 'Eighteenth-Century Theatrical Illustrations in the Light of Contemporary Documents', *Theatre Notebook*, 14, No.2 (1959/60): 45-55.
- 40 James Boswell, *The Life of Johnson*, ed. R. W. Chapman, revised by J. D. Fleeman, intro. Pat Rogers, Oxford, 1980, p.616.