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Directing Stephen Jeffreys' *The Libertine*

By

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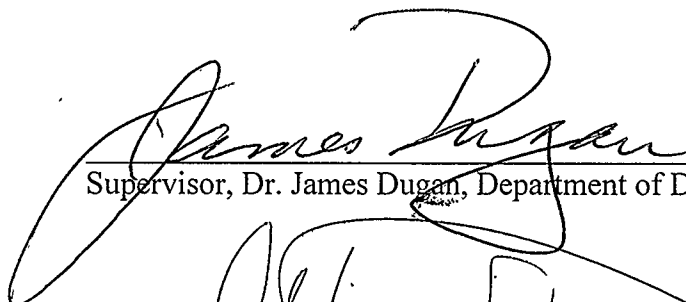
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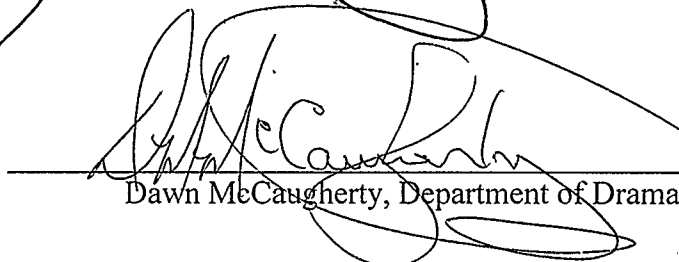
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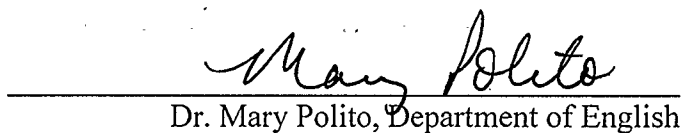
The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Directing Stephen Jeffreys' The Libertine" submitted by Kate Newby in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts in Directing.



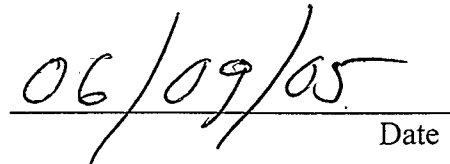
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Abstract

This thesis is a research paper in support of the production of Stephen Jeffreys' The Libertine under the auspices of the Department of Drama at the Reeve Theatre of the University of Calgary, November 29th to December 10th, 2005.

The first part of this paper consists of a chapter on the play's historical references in regard to the life and times of John Wilmot, Second Earl of Rochester and a chapter focusing on research involving the introduction of women to the Restoration stage.

The second part consists of a preparatory analysis of the text based on two separate editions, a review of the creative design process, and an evaluation of the rehearsal and performance process.

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I'm none of those who think themselves inspired,
Nor write with vain hopes to be admired;
But from a rule I have upon long trial,
T'avoid with care all sorts of self-denial.
Which way soe'er desire and fancy lead,
Condemning fame that path I boldly tread;
And if exposing what I take for wit
To my dear self a pleasure I beget
No matter though the censuring critics fret.

Those whom my Muse displeases are at strife
With equal spleen against my course of life,
The least delight of which I'd not forgo,
For all the flattering praise men can bestow.
If I designed to please, the way were then,
To mend my manners, rather than my pen;
The first's unnatural, therefore unfit,
And for the second I despair of it,
Since grace is not so hard to get as wit.

In all I write, should sense, and wit, and rhyme
Fail me at once, yet something so sublime
Shall stamp my poem, that the world may see
It could have been produced by none but me.
And that's my end, for man can wish no more,
Than so to write, as none e'er writ before.

John Wilmot, An Epistolary Essay
1647 – 1680

JUSTIFICATION AND INTENT

In March 1996 I attended a performance of The Libertine produced by the Steppenwolf Theatre Company in Chicago. I was not particularly impressed with the production itself but I was intrigued by the characters in the play, the rich text, and the complex relationships. The Libertine is not simply a reenactment of the life and times of John Wilmot, Second Earl of Rochester, it is a rich portrayal of the people that influenced 17th century theatre and the Court of Charles II. It is also a glimpse into the lives of the women and friends who influenced Rochester's passion and fury, and in particular, Restoration England's finest female tragedian, Elizabeth Barry.

The Libertine has enormous value as a thesis production. It is rich in storyline, language, themes, and creative research challenges. Written in the 1990s and set in England during the 17th century, the play dramatizes the decline of one of England's finest poets.

The play is so rich with research potential that one could spend years examining the socio-political world of 17th century England, the court of Charles II, the world of the Playhouse, and the writings of Wilmot. I have chosen to dedicate my research to three specific areas: investigating the play's events and personal relationships for historical accuracy; exploring the lives, careers, and reputations of the two pioneering English actresses referenced in the play; and an evaluation of the director/designer collaborative process, and The Libertine rehearsal process.

CHAPTER ONE: THE LIBERTINE

As The Libertine is a dramatic portrayal of the events and relationships that encompassed the life of John Wilmot, this section will uncover historical references specifically relating to the background, relationships, and the events that make up the heart of the play. For the purpose of clarity I will refer to Rochester when addressing events that relate to Jeffreys' script and when addressing historical facts I will use the name of Wilmot.

Wilmot's Early Years

As the son of Henry Wilmot, first Earl of Rochester, and Anne St. John, young Wilmot's early years were spent in the primary care of his mother who was a profoundly religious woman with a strong Protestant faith. Henry Wilmot was a loyal Royalist who devoted his life's energy to restoring the monarchy. Wilmot was such a trusted loyalist that after the Battle of Worcester, he was chosen as the only officer to accompany young King Charles on his escape from England to France. Wilmot's unyielding efforts to raise funds for the King and his commitment to restoring the Monarchy caused a rapid decline in his health. He died in 1658 two years before Charles took the throne as England's new King. At the time of his father's death young Wilmot was ten years of age. There is little historical mention of how his father's absence affected the young boy, yet in scene eleven of The Libertine Rochester blames Charles for taking his father from him:

Then I said to my mother: 'Why can't he be with us?' And she said: 'He has to be with the King.' And all the joy of those letters drained away for ever, because I knew there was someone else he preferred. You. And I've never forgiven you. (Hern, 2.11.70)

If Wilmot did blame Charles for his father's absence it was not until later in life, as at the time of the King's restoration, all references relating to Wilmot suggest that the young man showed no indication of resentment towards Charles.

Wilmot was twelve when the Monarchy was restored and it was during this period that he wrote and dedicated a poem to the King. The King rewarded the young boy with a handsome pension of 500 pounds a year and a tour of the continent as a gift. Wilmot rarely received this yearly pension, as it was customary for the King to grant rewards without ever following through with the payment. Wilmot did, however manage to take full advantage of the continental tour. Upon graduating from Oxford with a Masters degree at the age of fourteen, he set off on a tour of the continent with Sir Alexander Balfour, a prominent Scottish physician, as his guardian. It was on this trip that numerous historians claim Balfour tutored Wilmot in the art of heavy drinking, noting that the tour, which was to take one year, extended to three years of debauchery.

Elizabeth Malet

When the young man finally returned home from his Continental tour, his mother made a formal request to the King for Wilmot to wed the young Elizabeth Malet. Malet was a beautiful girl from a wealthy family and the match between Wilmot and the young lady was certain to relieve Anne St. John's financial concerns. After several unsuccessful attempts to court Malet, Wilmot resorted to kidnapping her. Several references address the extreme nature of Wilmot's actions as causing an enormous scandal. Malet's grandfather was so outraged he demanded, as a Minister of Parliament, that Wilmot be

arrested. Pressured by the government to act, the King was left with no other alternative but to arrest Wilmot and imprison him in the Tower.

The King's fondness for Wilmot allowed his release a short while later. Once freed, Wilmot volunteered to fight against the Dutch and in 1665, at the age of seventeen he went to war under the command of the Earl of Sandwich. Sandwich had tremendous respect for Wilmot's fighting ability and made note of the young man's loyalty to the King.

When Wilmot returned to England, Malet finally accepted his proposal and the couple was married. As Graham Greene notes, Malet was to become a constant in Wilmot's life:

They were never to part. She in the country would wait his coming when the bouts of vice were over, sometimes with impatience, sometimes with anger, but always with forgiveness; he in the town, whether in the arms of a whore from the stews around Drury Lane or in those of the loved mistress, Elizabeth Barry, was always aware of her constancy. (60)

Greene's reference is consistent with several of Malet's monologues in The Libertine. In scene thirteen, Malet expresses her despair when Rochester arrives on the doorstep diseased and in need of drink:

John. I am ever your last resort. When your mistress has kicked you into the street and no innkeeper in London will give you credit, when you are wasted with disease and the last whore in Covent Garden refuses to attend to you, then and only then do you come to me. (Dramatic, 2.12.108)

Jeffreys' depiction of Malet displays the frustration and anger Greene refers to. At the closing of the play, Malet's unyielding love places her as the only constant at the end of Rochester's life. In scene thirteen, Jeffreys has taken the liberty of incorporating the

contents of a letter Rochester wrote to Malet into the confrontation between the couple.

In the scene Rochester exclaims:

My most neglected wife, till you are a much respected widow I find you will scarce be a contented woman, and to say no more than the plain truth I endeavor so fairly to do you that last good service that none but the most impatient would be dissatisfied. (Dramatic, 2.12.108)

This passage in The Libertine is a direct quotation found in a letter Wilmot wrote to

Malet on November 20, 1677:

My most neglected Wife, till you are a much respected Widdow, I find you will scarce bee a contented woman, and to say noe more than the plaine truth, I doe endeavor soe fairly to doe you that last good service, that none but the most impatient would refuse to rest satisfy'd; what evill Angell Enemy to my repose does inspire my Lady Warr to visit you once a yeare & leave you bewitch'd for elev'n months after? I thanke my god that I have the Torments of the stone upon mee (wch are noe small ones) rather than that unspeakable one of being an eye witness to yr uneasiness; Doe but propose to mee any reasonable thing upon Earth I can doe to sett you a quiet, but confess in what part it is; these three yeares have I heard you continually complain nor has itt ever bin in my power to ob[tain] the knowledge of any considerable cause [to be] confident I shall nott have the like affliction three yeares hence, but that repose I owe to a surer friend than you; when [that] time comes you will grow wiser, though I feare nott much Happyer (Treglown 171)

Malet's response to Wilmot's comments are taken from a letter she wrote to him

sometime between 1676-77, the exact time period when Wilmot was known to have been

involved with Elizabeth Barry. Malet's letter is as follows:

If I could haue bin troubled att any thing when I had the happiness of resceiuing a letter from you I should be soe because you did not name a time when I might hope to see you: the uncertainty of which very much afflicts me whether this ode kind of proceeding be to try my patience or obedience I cannot guesse but I will neuer faile of

e[*i*]ther when my duty to you require them. I doe not think you design staying at bath now that it is to be soe full and God knows when you will find in your hart to leaue this place you are in: pray consider with your selfe wheather this be a reasonable way of proceeding and be pleased to lett me know what I am to expect for thear being soe short a time betwixt this and the sitting of Parlemant I am confident you will find soe much bussine[ss] as will not allow you to come into the country thearfore pray lay your commands upon me what I am to doe and though it be to forget my children and the long hopes I haue liued in of seeing you, yet I will endeauour to obey you or in the memory only torment my selfe with out giuing you the trouble of putting you in the mind thear liues such a creature as your faithfull humble (Treglown 128)

In scene thirteen, Jeffreys has taken a portion of the Malet letter and incorporated it into the dialogue between the couple to dramatize the hurt and frustration she feels.

Letters between the two offer tremendous insight into the couple's relationship, Malet's character, and the deep commitment she had for her husband throughout her life. Wilmot's letters display a sincere affection for his wife in the early years but a definite shift occurred in his correspondence after he became involved with Barry. Letters home appear less frequent, and as his relationship with Barry intensified, so did his impatience with Malet. One gets a clear indication of the desperation she must have felt by examining Wilmot's reactions in his written responses to her.

The Court, the Wits, and the Escapades

At the time of his marriage to Malet, Wilmot accepted a position as a Gentleman of the King's Bedchamber. This distinguished post offered him a generous yearly salary of one thousand pounds, which he received when the King remembered to pay him. The duties of a Gentleman of the King's Bedchamber required Wilmot to sleep in the

bedchamber one week of every quarter, to wait on the King when he dined in his chamber, and, if the Groom of the Stole was unable to attend the King, then it was a Gentleman who was required to fulfill the function of dressing the King in the morning.

Germaine Greer reports that the Duke of Buckingham, Charles' childhood friend, had a tremendous influence on Wilmot's early days at court suggesting that it was "through Buckingham that Wilmot made the acquaintance of Charles Sackville, Lord Buckhurst" (27). In The Libertine, Buckhurst is referred to as Charles Sackville. The play is consistent with historical references to Sackville being the jilted former lover of Nell Gwyn, an actress who went on to become one of Charles II's most cherished mistresses. Known for his satirical wit, Sackville, along with Wilmot and George Etherege were three of a group of nine young men known as the Wits. While at Court, the Wits were expected to provide impromptu rhymes, songs, and witty lampoons at a moment's notice. When their presence was not requested, they were left to their own devices and many of their escapades caused a great deal of scandal. One such event depicted in scene seven of The Libertine is the smashing of the King's sundial. Germaine Greer gives a detailed account of the events that are rumoured to have occurred one early June morning in 1675:

Rochester, Buckhurst, Lord Sussex, and Henry Savile were passing through the Privy Garden when they happened upon the elaborate set of sundials and chronometers that the Jesuit Francisus Linus had constructed for the King. Someone shouted, 'Kings and kingdoms tumble down and so shalt thou', and within seconds the structure was in smithereens. (22)

There is no reference to suggest the men were ever punished for the sundial escapade.

Greene makes note of a letter dated on the 26 June 1675 describing the event but he gives no mention as to who wrote the letter or to whom it was addressed:

My Lord Rochester in a frolic after a rant did yesterday beat down the dial which stood in the middle of the Privy Garden, which was esteemed the rarest in Europe. I do not know if upon that account he will be found impertinent, or if it is by the fall beat in pieces. (105)

Greene names Wilmot's cohorts as being Lord Middlesex, Lord Sussex and Henry Savile but, as with all other accounts of the scenario, there is no mention of the outcome or if punishment was imposed on the three men involved.

Jeffreys portrays another tragic event in scene nine of The Libertine that is also based on historical fact. The incident occurred at Epsom the year following the destruction of the sundial and resulted in the death of a man by the name of Mr. Downes. A letter written by Mr. Charles Hatton offers a detailed account of the events that led to the tragic death of Mr. Downes:

Mr. Downes is dead. The Lord Rochester doth abscond, and so doth Etherege and Capt. Bridges who occasioned the riot Sunday sen-night. They were tossing some fiddlers in a blanket for refusing to play, and a barber, upon the noise, going to see what was the matter, they seized upon him, and, to free himself from them, he offered to carry them to the handsomest woman in Epsom, and directed them to the constable's house, who demanding what they came for, they told him a whore and, he refusing to let them in, they broke open his doors and broke his head, and beat him seriously. At last he made his escape, called his watch, and Etherege made a submissive oration to them and so far appeased them that the constable dismissed his watch. But presently after, the Lord Rochester drew upon the constable. Mr Downes to prevent his pass, seized on him, the constable cried out murther, and, the watch returning, one came behind Mr Downes and with a spittle staff cleft his skull. The Lord Rochester and the rest run away, and Downes, having no sword, snatched up a stick and striking at them, they run him into the side with a half pike, and so bruised his arm that he was never able to stir it after.

(Greene 106)

Greene notes that an attempt was made to place Wilmot on trial for murder but since he was nowhere to be found no further action was taken. By the time Wilmot returned to court so much time had past, the King simply forgave him and it ended there.

In The Libertine, Rochester is depicted as going into hiding immediately following the tragedy at Epsom. Several references claim Wilmot masqueraded as a mountebank under the name of Dr. Alexander Bendo during this period. As bizarre and fictional as this would appear to be, it is clearly noted by Wilmot biographers, Greene and Greer, as fact, and Wilmot's physician, Dr. Burnet, recounts the Libertine's time as Dr. Bendo:

Being under an unlucky accident, which obliged him to keep out of the way, he disguised himself, so that his nearest friends could not have known him, and set up in Tower-street for an Italian mountebank, where he practiced physic for some weeks not without success. (Greene 108)

In Rochester: Complete Poems and Plays, there is a six-page proclamation written by Wilmot entitled Doctor Bendo's Bill. The following excerpt offers a glimpse into Dr. Bendo and the imagination of John Wilmot:

I have likewise got the knowledge of a great secret, to cure barrenness (proceeding from any accidental cause, as it often falls out, and no natural defect; for Nature is easily assisted, difficulty restored, but impossible to be made more perfect by man than God himself had first created and bestowed it) which I have made use of for many years with great success, especially this last year, wherein I have cured one woman that had been married one-and-twenty years, and two women who had been three times married; as I can make appear by testimonies of several persons in London, Westminster, and other places thereabouts. (121)

Wilmot's dramatic and detailed proclamation goes on to claim Dr. Bendo can cure everything from blemishes and unsightliness to scurvy and venereal disease not to mention having the ability to predict the future. The document does not offer proof that Wilmot ever posed as the good doctor but the declaration does provide the reader with a colourful commentary on the kind of advertising Londoners faced when they ventured into the streets.

The scene involving Dr. Bendo follows the incident in Epsom but there is no specific evidence to suggest that Wilmot's time as Dr. Bendo followed that tragedy. Wilmot is rumoured to have disappeared between 1675 – 6, around the time of the Epsom affair. If indeed this was the case, Wilmot could well have been playing the role of Dr. Bendo on the streets of London at the same time as George Etherege's depiction of Rochester as Dorimant in The Man of Mode became a huge success on the London stage.

The Playhouse

Wilmot took a keen interest in the playwrights of the day with many of London's playwrights dedicating their work to the infamous poet. David Farley-Hills suggests that Wilmot's sexual conquests and renegade behavior "might well help to account for the upsurge of libertine plays over this period" (153). At one time Wilmot was patron to Dryden but as Farley-Hills suggests, the two had a strained relationship, ending with exchanged insults in print. In his poem An Allusion to Horace, Wilmot condemns Dryden for what he claims is an egocentric need to please over a desire to create:

Five hundred verses every morning writ,
Proves you no more a poet than a wit.
Such scribbling authors have been seen before,
Mustapha, The English Princess, forty more,

Were things perhaps composed in half an hour.
 To write what may securely stand the test
 Of being well read over thrice at least,
 Compare each phrase, examine every line,
 Weight every word, and every thought refine;
 Scorn all applause the vile rout can bestow
 And be content to please those few who know.
 Canst thou be such a vain mistaken thing
 To wish thy works might make a play-house ring
 With the unthinking laughter, and poor praise
 Of fops and ladies, facetious for thy plays?
 Then send a cunning friend to learn thy doom
 From the shrewd judges in the drawing-room.
 (Complete Poems, 62)

This attack on Dryden is one of many verbal insults both poets hurled at each other and according to Jeremy Treglown, “the quarrel between the two poets continued throughout the period, gaining in intensity” (119). Things escalated when Dryden wrote An Essay Upon Satire, “a general lampoon on the Court and its writers, beginning with an attack on ‘saunt’ring Charles’ and culminating in 40 lines on Rochester” (232). Treglown and other scholars believe the literary attack “may have led to the beating-up Dryden suffered in Rose Alley, Covent Garden, on December 18, 1679” (232). According to numerous accounts, it was widely rumoured that Wilmot was most likely behind the beating although no evidence was ever found to substantiate the claim.

Wilmot’s colourful persona also influenced the writings of the day. Playwright and friend Aphra Behn used Wilmot as the model for her hero in The Rover and as previously mentioned, the character of Dorimant in The Man of Mode was heavily influenced by Etherege’s friendship with the poet. The Man of Mode was Etherege’s most successful play. Charles Gildon writes of the play as being an “Extraordinary Success; all agreeing it to be true Comedy, and the characters drawn to the Life” (Summers 311).

The friendship between Rochester and Etherege was based on mutual respect and admiration. Rochester's high regard for Etherege is noted in his poem A Session of the

Poets:

But Apollo had got gentle George in his eye;
And frankly confessed, of all men that writ,
There's none had more fancy, sense, judgment and wit.
(Complete Poems, 55.16-18)

Highly regarded within the theatrical world, there are several references to Wilmot writing prologues and epilogues for various playwrights and his charismatic appearance at the theatre as a member of the Court gave him and others like him powerful influence over the success of a play. The public relied heavily on the courtiers' opinions of a new play and if they felt a play was worth seeing the general public flocked to the Playhouse.

The audience of the times was composed of the aristocracy, common citizens, orange wenches, prostitutes, gallants and fops. With such a variety of spectators anything was possible and it was not uncommon for spectators to interrupt the play with improvised comments to the actors as occurs in scene two of The Libertine when the performance is disrupted by the enthusiasm of the playhouse patrons. Jocelyn Powell gives a wonderful example of the restless energy of the times:

Restoration society embodied an extreme of a common form of social schizophrenia. Idleness was in a sense as brutalizing a factor as poverty. The consumption of leisure in thought, reading, and conversation had its darker side in riot, atheism and curious forms of nerveless despair. Inigo Jones' fine new church in Covent Garden was as notorious a pick-up place as the playhouse itself. (14)

The social schizophrenia that Powell speaks of was most evident in the Playhouse pit where actors competed against London's most vibrant characters to gain the audience's attention. It is in this environment Elizabeth Barry made her first attempt at acting and

where it is assumed that Wilmot first encountered her. There are many references to the fact that Wilmot's introduction to Barry resulted from a wager he made with friends. After seeing a dreadful performance by Barry, Wilmot is said to have bet his friends that he could make her into the finest actress on the London stage. Again, there is no historical evidence that proves the wager took place but the scenario fits perfectly into the libertine antics associated with the Wits.

The brief but passionate relationship between Wilmot and Barry was profoundly intense and occurred at the most volatile time in Wilmot's life. Chapter Two will examine their time together in greater detail but in their correspondence it's clear how much Barry affected his passions. Their affair took place sometime between 1676-77, the roughest period in Rochester's short life.

The King

During the time Wilmot was involved with Barry it was also the period when he was banished from the Court for libelous poetry and scandalous behavior. Even at his worst he continued to be a favorite of Charles II and there appears to be no other courtier that received as much clemency as Wilmot did. When in favor, court culture gave Wilmot access to aristocratic privilege but as time passed Wilmot began to see himself as nothing more than a court clown, "endlessly ready to humiliate himself for the King's amusement, lower than the royal dogs who pissed with impunity against the courtiers' legs" (Greer 35). Wilmot's satirical poems and lampoons might have been his only defense against the hypocrisy of Charles' reign and he frequently used court access to publicly humiliate the King. Richard Harries remarks:

Rochester's fierce satire against the society of his time bears all the marks of disillusioned idealism. Satire, however scurrilous or scatological, gets its energy not only from the views it attacks but from the sense of corresponding virtues which are betrayed. (191)

Wilmot's vicious attack on Charles II in his play Valentinian gives a clear indication of how disillusioned and embittered Wilmot became towards the Monarchy and court life:

In the isle of Great Britain long since famous grown
For breeding the best cunts in Christendom,
There reigns, and, oh, long may he reign and thrive,
The easiest King and best bred man alive.
Him no ambition moves to get renown,
Like the French fool who wanders up and down,
Starving his subjects, hazarding his crown.
Peace is his aim, his gentleness is such,
And love he loves, for he loves fucking much.
Nor are his high desires above his strength;
His sceptre and his prick are of a length...(Walker, 74, II.1-11)

I hate all monarchs and the thrones they sit on,
From the hector of France to the cully of Britain. (Walker, 75, II. 32-3)

Greer credits Valentinian as being "Rochester's most disastrous satire on the King" (55).

Yet throughout these attacks, the King was wise enough to realize that his continual forgiveness was Wilmot's cruellest punishment. Greer states that "evidence in state papers and treasury books record Rochester's repeated attempts to obtain other positions of office, which would release him from the burden of attending the King" (55). His requests were repeatedly denied which suggests Charles II knew the only way to keep a close watch on Wilmot was to hold him at court where the King had a better chance of controlling his actions.

Scene eight of The Libertine represents Rochester's deep resentment and his obsession with humiliating Charles through an intended public reading of the play Sodom. There is no clear evidence to support the contention that Charles II ever

commissioned Rochester to write a play as a monument to his reign as is suggested in the play. It is difficult to believe that Charles would have been naïve enough to commission Rochester to write a play about the King knowing what the possible outcome might be. Wilmot is associated with having penned Sodom but there is some speculation that it may have been a collaborative effort by a group of wits. To date Sodom has not been performed publicly due to the play's sexual challenges and overwhelming visuals, as quoted by Harris in scene eight, and which Jeffreys has taken directly from the stage directions at the top of Sodom's Actus Secundus:

*Six naked women and six naked men appear, and dance,
the men doing obeisance to the women's cunts, kissing and
touching them often, the women doing ceremonies to the
men's pricks, kissing them dandling their cods, &c, and so
fall to fucking, after which the women sigh, and the men
look simple and sneak off.* (Complete Poems, 136)

It is not difficult to understand the level of stress Harris is under when he asks for clarification from Rochester regarding the staging of this particular scene. Sodom indicates Wilmot's tremendous desire to lash out at Charles II, as the play takes place in the mythical kingdom of Sodom where King Bolloximian rules the land. The following lines delivered by Harris as King Bolloximian in scene eight are also taken directly from the Sodom script:

Thus in the zenith of my lust I reign,
I drink to swive, and swive to drink again.
Let other monarchs who their sceptres bear,
To keep their subjects less in love than fear,
Be slaves to crowns – my nation shall be free.
My pintle only shall my scepter be.
My laws shall act more pleasure than command,
And with my prick I'll govern all the land.
(Complete Poems, 129)

This declaration by Bolloximian opens Sodom's Actus Primus and immediately presents the world within the play and Wilmot's brutal commentary on Charles II's reign. Jeffreys places the rehearsal of Sodom at the top of Act Two to remind the audience of Rochester's rage against the King and to show that his rage has escalated since the smashing of the sundial at the end of Act One. The purpose of the scene is not simply to shock the audience with a taste of Rochester's debauched poetry; it is an attempt to use the rage found in Rochester's poem to heighten the stakes of conflict between the patron, Charles, and the artist, Rochester. The conflict that arises out of Rochester's confrontation with the King in scene eight is the turning point for the poet. As all ties with the King become severed at the end of scene eight, Rochester's world begins to spin out of control.

Wilmot's poem, Signior Dildo, which precludes the Sodom rehearsal at the top of Act Two, is a moral commentary on the ladies of English society. Jeffreys' placement of Sodom is completely justified within the context of the story but Signior Dildo appears as a titillating afterthought by the playwright and does little to move the play forward. For that reason I chose to cut Signior Dildo from the production. However, Greer's analysis of the poem offers historical relevance to Wilmot's lampoon:

The poem is first and foremost an attack on Mary of Modena, the Catholic wife of the heir presumptive to the throne. Its appearance at the end of 1673 shortly after her arrival in England marks the beginning of the underground propaganda campaign against the succession, in which Dorset, Shepard and Rochester were all implicated – and the beginning of the end of Rochester's career as a courtier. (35)

Wilmot's moral condemnation of the King's Court can often seem to contradict his own extreme behavior and as Greer states:

It is hard to believe that a poet so possessed by moral indignation could have been the most licentious individual at Charles II's licentious court. Rochester's conspicuous failure as a courtier would seem rather to suggest that he was less a villain than the rest and less able to conceal his real loyalties and interests than they. (72)

The Martyr

By the time Wilmot's career as a courtier ended he was a broken, disillusioned, and severely ill man. Many biographers claim that Wilmot suffered from syphilis, which along with alcoholism, led to an early death. Greer refutes these claims stating that, "sick people would not be permitted to be at court, let alone in proximity to the king" and suggests that Rochester's sickness was more likely associated with "frailty of stature than from a venereal disease" (5). This claim corresponds with other evidence suggesting that Wilmot had been sick through much of his life commencing at an early age. Whatever the medical reason may have been for Wilmot's life-long illnesses, The Libertine does not directly portray him as a man suffering from syphilis but a man who has chosen to drown his disappointments in a lifetime of drink. Greer states it best when summing up Wilmot's reputation as a rogue and a libertine:

If Rochester had been a true libertine he would have lived as his peace-loving King did, untroubled by the strugglings of conscience and ready to ignore any principle that might prove inconvenient. The King avoided conflict as assiduously as Rochester sought it. Hardly a month went by in which Rochester was not implicated in some fracas. Some would say that this was simply because he was quarrelsome when drunk, which prompts a further question: why was he so often drunk? A tension between the necessity of doubting and the longing for belief tugs at even his most lyrical writing. (69)

Greer's summation suits Jeffreys' depiction of Rochester best as a man who railed against hypocrisy and who ultimately became disillusioned at society's indifference to truth. The Rochester in Jeffreys' The Libertine is a disillusioned idealist who attempts to hold a mirror up to society's decadent and hypocritical behavior and who ends his life as a Christian martyr.

By the time Wilmot died, on July 26, 1680, his friends assumed that he had gone mad. Many presumed it was syphilis but Wilmot stuck to his belief that he was suffering from kidney stones. Treglown states that a year before his death he had reconciled with his wife. The following is a heartfelt apology he wrote to Malet from London:

‘Tis not an easy thing to be entirely happy, but to be kind is very easy and that is the greatest measure of happiness. I say not this to put you in mind of being kind to me – you have practiced that so long that I have a joyful confidence you will never forget it- but to show that I myself have a sense of what the methods of my life seem so utterly to contradict.

I must not be too wise about my own follies, or else this letter had been a book dedicated to you and published to the world. (37)

In scene thirteen Jeffreys takes the last two lines of the letter to dramatize Rochester's last moment with Malet at the end of his life.

During the final months of his life Wilmot made peace with his God and just as with everything else in his life, this too, was unexpected. Simon Hampton offers an appropriate summation of the man and the myth:

A dazzling intellect - manifested often in a profound disdain for humanity – and a huge destructive energy, combined during his own lifetime to create a legend, both of the man and of his manners. In the world of Charles II's Court, itself characterized by excess and unrestraint, Rochester stands alone among his contemporaries as a

mythical figure – the intermingled elements of truth, half-truth and rumour which cling tenaciously to a cloudy picture of him making it still notoriously difficult to distinguish fact from fiction. (165)

For many of his contemporaries the most unsettling and seemingly uncharacteristic element of Wilmot's life was his final act of repentance but it is not so shocking when given the fact Rochester was close to his mother throughout his life. A deeply religious woman, Anne Wilmot raised her son as a devoted Protestant and although it would appear that much of his life was spent in rebellion, when one considers Harries' remark that Wilmot's fierce satire bore "all the marks of disillusioned idealism," it's not hard to comprehend that at the heart of Wilmot's satire lay a profound commitment to honesty and truth (191).

CHAPTER TWO: ACTRESS, LOVER, WHORE, OR ENTREPRENEUR

When the English Monarchy was restored in 1660, Charles II brought with him an abundance of newfound pleasures previously denied to the citizens under Cromwell's rule. Two of these pleasures were the rebirth of England's theatre scene and the introduction of women to the stage. Not since 1642, when an ordinance was passed declaring all theatres closed, had English audiences experienced the spectacle so many enjoyed during the Elizabethan, Jacobean and Caroline ages. While in exile in France, Charles fully embraced the world of the Playhouse. The enjoyment he received from French theatre made it inevitable that Londoners would one day see the rebirth of the English playhouse and a theatre scene that would flourish with the same intensity as the King had experienced on the Continent.

In 1660, as England's newly crowned king, Charles II immediately granted licenses to Thomas Killigrew and Sir William Davenant to establish two patent theatre companies in London. The patents not only provided Killigrew and Davenant with the power to plant the seeds of what would eventually blossom into a thriving London theatre scene, they also provided women with opportunities for employment.

Public attitudes towards female actors had clearly changed since a troupe of French actresses was driven from the English stage some forty years earlier. Eighteen years of theatre closure and puritanical oppression generated a newfound enthusiasm for public entertainment and the public's acceptance of women on the stage was thought of as an attractive addition to the playhouse experience.

The introduction of women to the stage did not, however, reflect in the actresses receiving equal wages. Female actors tended to receive twenty shillings less in weekly

wages than their male counterparts and those who were married had their wages fully controlled by their husbands, which may have been the reason why “the two actresses who eventually earned the most, Elizabeth Barry and Anne Bracegirdle, stayed single” (Howe 27). Receiving an income did little to provide women with the same level of social status their male counterparts took for granted. The status of an actress remained on par with that of a prostitute and as Tom Brown describes presented many challenges to the young ladies: “‘tis as hard a matter for a pretty Woman to keep herself Honest in a Theatre, as ‘tis for an Apothecary to keep his Treacle fro the Flies in hot Weather; for every Libertine in the Audience will be buzzing about her Honey-Pot” (166).

For those who were sexually promiscuous the Playhouse must have been a virtual playground but for those who were interested in keeping their virtue intact, the challenge to keep out of harm’s way must have been daunting. In his biography Nell Gwyn, Derek Parker offers some insight into the dangers actresses faced in the early years when he refers to Rebecca Marshall’s personal struggle:

One of the most handsome of the women, was forced to ask the King for protection against Sir Hugh Middleton, and a certain Mark Trevor assaulted her and pursued her with a sword when she rebuffed him. (44)

Virtuous or otherwise, actresses were strongly encouraged to give the appearance of being sexually promiscuous. Giving the impression that one was ‘available’ was far more likely to attract patrons to the theatre, and the more patrons attending performances, the greater number of tickets sold. Prologues, epilogues and satyrs were often used as a means of promoting an actress’s sexual promiscuity. The Session of Ladies gives a strong example of how actresses were promoted:

There was chestnut-maned Boutell, whom all the
 Town fucks,
 Lord Lumley's cast player, the famed Mrs. Cox,
 And chaste Mrs. Barry, i'th'midst of a flux
 To make him a present of chancre and pox.
 (Quoted in Howe First English Actresses, 35)

Elizabeth Howe suggests using an actress as a marketing tool to sell tickets was not the only reason to promote her sexual appeal. Howe believes that objectifying the actress as 'sexual,' "effectively diffused the threat to male society of having women speaking, acting and creating characters on the public stage" (36). Certainly from a contemporary standpoint Howe's comments are justifiably valid, however, it is equally important to look at these early pioneers, not as victims of male exploitation, but as a group of strong independent individuals with tremendous entrepreneurial spirit.

The first generation of English actresses did enter a male-dominated profession, but what is so remarkable is that they managed to rise to the same level of excellence as their male counterparts, in a relatively short period of time, with little to no theatrical training. Although they may have lived in a world defined by the male perspective, women such as Nell Gwyn and Elizabeth Barry carved out their own unique place in history. Together, they offer two examples of how richly complex and uniquely varied the lives of the Restoration actresses were. This chapter will explore the worlds of these unique women, in an attempt not to show them as victims but to display the tremendous fortitude, spirit, and perseverance that is the essence of England's first female actors.

Nell Gwyn

Nell Gwyn, the most infamous of the early pioneers, was a perfect example of what might be considered a natural talent. Gwyn's life was an extraordinary journey that

took her from a life of poverty, through the raucous early years of the theatre, and on to a relatively secure existence under the protection of the King. Several accounts of Gwyn's life mention a very poor upbringing with numerous references suggesting she grew up in a brothel. Derek Parker places Gwyn's birth in 1650, a year after Charles I was executed, and the same year wherein the Commonwealth Government introduced an Act of Parliament "to suppress the abominable sins of incest, adultery and fornication" (1). In order to cleanse society of sexual deviancy, the Act proposed all 'whores' be "cauterized and seared with a hot iron on the cheek, forehead or some other part of their body that might be seen, to the end [that] the honest and chaste Christians might be discerned from the adulterous children of Satan" (1). Needless to say, this Act of Parliament caused many female citizens to think twice before engaging in acts of sexual pleasure. Although many bawdy houses were forced to close, some, Parker suggests, continued to exist "in the areas of Long Acre, Drury Lane, and Covent Garden" (2). Covent Garden is considered the area of London where Gwyn's mother set up roots after her father was arrested and thrown in prison. It is thought that Nell's father, Thomas Gwyn, might have been a Captain under Charles I who was jailed after Cromwell's victory (4). Left on her own with two girls to care for, Mrs. Gwyn was forced to find employment and from Parker's account, she found work in a tavern called The Rose. Over time, Mrs. Gwyn managed to gain extra income catering to the individual needs of the bar's customers and as Parker suggests young Nell may have spent time as a child prostitute.

As a person of the female persuasion, there was little opportunity for employment during the Commonwealth era but the Restoration presented plenty of possibilities for a young ambitious girl. Gwyn's first opportunity came with the opening of the theatres in

1660. If Parker is correct about the year of Gwyn's birth as 1650, then Gwyn began her first job as an orange seller at the age of ten. Although there does not appear to be a consensus as to how she began in this particular trade, John Galt's account in The Lives of the Players claims Gwyn approached Thomas Betterton for employment in his company and when she was rejected, "[Gwyn] dressed herself up as an orange-girl and went to the playhouse to follow the occupation" (70). It is difficult to know whether this account is an accurate one but it certainly offers a wonderful depiction of Gwyn's feisty and ambitious nature. Donald Brook also remarks that as an orange seller, Gwyn "soon proved that she could match the audacity of the coarsest of the beaux who tried to flirt with her" (41).

Life in the pit was not without its fair share of drama and intrigue, for the orange girls did far more than simply sell fruit. In addition to tempting customers with luscious oranges, for a small sum, the feisty young girls also acted as liaisons between male and female audience members. For a higher fee, they might even be persuaded to offer their services to those desiring a more active performance than the one being offered on the playhouse stage. Orange sellers were considered a rough breed and as Parker points out, in the early days of the Restoration sellers held the same status as actresses. If sellers were on par with actresses and actresses were on par with prostitutes then when it came to respectability, all three groups were considered available as is suggested in A

Panegyric upon Nelly:

As men commence at University
No doctors 'till they've masters been before,
So she no player was 'till first a whore.
(Quoted in Parker Nell Gwyn, 177)

Even at a young age, Gwyn was able to distinguish the difference between the three trades for as soon as she was presented with the opportunity to ascend from the pit to the stage, the feisty young girl leapt at the chance. The lives of orange sellers, actresses and prostitutes might not have appeared that much different to some but for Gwyn, the difference between acting and the other two trades was the potential to obtain a more secure future. As one anonymous writer suggests, young Gwyn worked hard to achieve that goal:

The orange basket her fair arm did suit
 Laden with pippins and Hesperean fruit;
 This first step raised, to the wond'ring pit
 She sold
 The lovely fruit, smiling with streaks of
 Gold.
 Fate now for her did its whole force engage,
 And from the pit she's mounted to the stage;
 There in full lustre did her glories shine,
 And long eclips'd, spread forth their light devine:
 There Hart's and Rowley's soul did she ensnare,
 And made a king a rival to the player.
 (Quoted in Parker, 178)

This ode to Gwyn sheds light on a young woman whose personal charm afforded her the potential for long-term protection. There is no doubt that much of Gwyn's fame is the result of her intimate relationship with Charles II, but during the height of her popularity she was equally known for her remarkable comic abilities. One of Gwyn's gifts was her ability to charm people from all levels of society with her tremendous wit. Considered a woman of the people, Gwyn never forgot her roots and is quoted as saying, "[I] was born in a bawdyhouse, and brought up in a playhouse" (Parker 8).

The young orange seller first caught the attention of actor John Lacy. Brook claims, "Lacy took a benevolent interest in her, and gave her instructions in elocution,

deportment, and so forth” (41). Parker gives a different account, suggesting that Gwyn was the lover of both Lacy and a young leading man by the name of Charles Hart. Parker quotes Colley Cibber’s claim that “Hart introduced Mrs. Gwyn upon the dramatic boards. And has acquired the distinction of being ranked among that lady’s first felicitous lovers, by having succeeded to Lacy in the possessions of her charms” (47). Wherever the truth may fall, it was ultimately Gwyn’s responsibility to establish her rightful place on the stage and if Henry Wysham Lanier’s account is any indication, Gwyn clearly rose to the challenge:

Her best parts, naturally enough, were those she had merely to exhibit her own delightfully effervescent nature... When she was herself she was at her best. And she wore her flauntings of conventional morality like a gay plume fluttering in the breeze. (69)

Gwyn’s natural ability to charm the audience made her one of the finest comedic actresses of the early Restoration period and with Hart as her leading man they became known as the first ‘gay couple’ of the theatre, celebrated for their light-hearted and spirited repartee. John Harold Wilson also gives a detailed description of Gwyn’s comic technique:

[Gwyn] had only to be her own gay, giddy self, and to pick up a few, the pouting lower lip, and languishing cast of sleepy eyes denoting passion; the quick gesture or change of tone which emphasized the double meaning in a bawdy line; and the half-reluctant, half inviting management of her body in scenes when an actor tried to lay hands on her. (42)

Samuel Pepys was also a huge fan of Gwyn’s comic abilities and specifically makes mention of her turn as Florimel in Secret Love:

So great performance of a comical part has never, I believe,
in the world before as Nell do this, both as a mad girle, then
most of all when she comes in as a young gallant; and hath
the motions and carriage of a spark the most that ever I saw
a man have. It makes me I confess, admire her.

(Ormsbee 60)

Although comedy came easily to Gwyn, she lacked all the necessary technical skills associated with tragedy. Pepys' account after seeing her in John Dryden's The Indian Emperor was far less enthusiastic than the one he previously described: "It is a great and serious part which she does most basely" (Gilder 164). Dryden was well aware of Gwyn's inability to manage tragic roles and adapted a role in his tragedy Tyrannick Love to better suit her comic abilities. Wilson describes Gwyn's comic death turn at the end of the play: "Nell halted the death bearers attempting to carry her off the stage with 'Hold are you mad! You damned confounded dog! I am to rise and speak the epilogue...'" At the end of the epilogue, Wilson notes: "Nell kissed her hand to the pit, sank back on the bier, folded her arms and was carried off in triumph" (Wilson, Nell Gwyn, 94). These moments of comic brilliance made Gwyn one of the most popular actresses of the period. Her spirited manner eventually caught the attention of Charles II and it was not long after her appearance in Tyrannick Love, that Gwyn became the King's mistress. In 1670 she gave birth to their son, retired from the stage, and spent the next seventeen years at Court.

By all accounts Gwyn's relationship with Charles II was a respectful one; so respectful in fact that upon his deathbed, the King made his brother swear to continue to provide Gwyn with the means she had become accustomed to (Parker 161). Gwyn managed to outlive the King by two years but in 1687, she was stricken by apoplexy and died at the age of thirty-seven.

Throughout her full and varied life, Gwyn used her natural abilities, tremendous wit, and a healthy dose of ambition to overcome a life of poverty and garner a place in history as one of the most famous women of the Restoration.

Elizabeth Barry

In contrast to Gwyn's humble beginnings, Elizabeth Barry was born into a well-bred family. Barry's family life was stable through her early years but in her teens her father, a wealthy barrister, faced complete financial ruin through several ill fated attempts to aid Charles I. Barry was forced to fend for herself until Lady Davenant, the wife of Sir William Davenant, and a family friend, offered to take Barry under her wing. This gesture of kindness proved to be the chance of a lifetime for Barry, for after a period of time under Lady Davenant's tutelage she learned all the necessary etiquette skills that would eventually help her to become one of England's finest leading ladies (Downes 35). When the young Barry reached the age of fifteen, Lady Davenant convinced her husband to accept Barry into his theatre company. Barry's first attempts at acting were not successful and according to Cibber, she was dismissed from the company at the end of her first year. Cibber states the reason for Barry's dismissal was due to "a defective ear, or some unskillful dissonance in the way she pronounced her lines" (I, 159). Edmond Curll expands on Cibber's claim suggesting that Barry was dismissed not once but three times and did not succeed until Rochester gave her private lessons over a period of six months (King's Ladies, 111). According to Lanier, "Rochester made Barry act the role of the Hungarian Queen in the Earl of Orrery's Tragedy of Mustapha thirty times on the stage, and about twelve in the Dress she was to act in" (64). Lanier also claims Rochester

forced Barry to “enter into the Nature of each Sentiment, perfectly changing herself, as it were, into the Person, not merely by the Proper Stress, or Sounding of the Voice, but feeling really, and being in the Humour the Person she was supposed to be in...” (65).

Barry first encountered Rochester sometime in 1675, when the actress was seventeen years old. Rochester was eleven years older than Barry and certainly more experienced and as Henry Wysham Lanier attests: “no age ever produced a Person better skilled in the Passions and Foibles of Mankind as Lord Rochester” (65). The relationship is said to have begun under his tutelage and progressed into a serious but short relationship. Rochester was not renowned as an acting instructor and there are no other references to suggest he had a previous history tutoring actresses, yet popular opinion seems to lean towards a wager Rochester may have made with friends that claimed he could turn Barry into the finest actress on the English stage. If Rochester did train her in the early days of her career, it was Barry who was ultimately responsible for her own success, yet most scholars tend to credit Rochester with Barry’s ‘Pygmalion’ transformation, and rarely give her credit for the success she reached on her own.

Rochester’s tutelage certainly did not aid Barry to obtain immediate success on the stage for it took Barry a number of years before she was acknowledged as an actress of exceptional skill. It wasn’t until her role as Monimia in Thomas Otway’s The Unhappy Marriage where, as John Galt describes, the audience finally experienced the depth of her emotional versatility:

In scenes of anger, despair, and resentment, she was impetuous and terrible, and yet, she poured forth the sentiment with the most enchanting harmony; but it was by the soft and gentle affections that she gained the enviable distinction of ‘the famous.’ (87)

According to Galt, Barry received the public title of ‘The Famous’ as a result of her intimate relationship with Rochester, but after her turn as Monimia, he mentions that Barry’s portrayal changed the sexual connotations of the title’s original meaning to reflect her exceptional talent on the stage (87). Cibber also gives a testimonial to Barry’s later abilities that offers a very different view from the one he gave in the early part of her career:

Mrs. Barry, in characters of Greatness, had a presence of elevated Dignity, her Mein and Motion superb, and gracefully majestick; her Voice full, clear, and strong, so that no Violence of Passion could be too much for her: And when Distress, or Tenderness possess’d her, she subsided into the most affecting Melody, and Softness. In the Art of exciting Pity, she had the Power beyond all the Actresses I have yet seen, or what your Imagination can conceive. (92)

By all accounts, the part of Draxilla, in Thomas Otway’s Alcibiades is noted as Barry’s first acting role (King’s Ladies, 111). Treglown casts doubt as to whether Rochester saw Alcibiades, as “[Rochester] was in exile in the country” when the production took place in late September 1675 (29). Wilson speculates that, “If she ever had a period of training with Rochester, it may have been in the autumn and winter of 1675-76” (King’s Ladies, 111). Treglown dates April 1677 as the time Barry became pregnant with Rochester’s child, which supports Wilson’s claim they were together the previous year. By Treglown’s account, their relationship was “deliriously romantic” in the early months but following the birth of their child Elizabeth, “the relationship was never successfully resumed” (29). Greene also supports this claim suggesting their relationship ended soon after the birth of the young Elizabeth in 1678. However, the following letter written to Rochester by Henry Savile offers proof their relationship ended before the child’s birth:

The greatest newes I can send you from hence is what the King told mee last night, that your Lordship has a daughter borne by the body of Mrs. Barry of which I give your honour joy. I doubt that shee dos lye in much state, for a friend and protectrice of hers at the Mall was much lamenting her poverty very lately, not without some gentle reflections on your Lordship's want either of generosity or bowells toward a lady who had not refused you the full enjoyment of all her charms. (52)

Savile's gentle reprimand and plea for Rochester to take financial responsibility for the child suggests that the ties between Barry and Rochester were already severed by the time young Elizabeth was born which contradicts the claims made by Treglown and Greene that the relationship ended after the child was born.

Whatever the exact date may be the following letter offers a strong impression of Rochester's intense passion for the young seventeen-year old Barry in the early days of their relationship:

Dear Madam,

There is now no minute of my life that does not afford me some new argument how much I love you. The little joy I take in everything wherein you are not concerned, the pleasing perplexity of endless thought which I fall into wherever you are brought into my remembrance; and lastly, the continual disquiet I am in during your absence, convince me sufficiently that I do you justice in loving you so as woman was never loved before. (Treglown 102)

As Barry's success increased so did the tension with Rochester. The following letter written in 1678, displays Rochester's displeasure over Barry's behavior:

Madam,

Anger, spleen, revenge, and shame are not yet so powerful with me as to make me disown this great truth, that I love you above all things in the world. But I thank God I can distinguish, I can see every woman in you, and from yourself am convinced I have never been in the wrong in

my opinion of women. 'Tis impossible for me to curse you, but give me leave to pity myself, which is more than you will ever do for me. You have a character and you maintain it, but I am sorry you make me an example to prove it. It seems, as you excel in everything, you scorn to grow less in that noble quality of using your servants very hardly. You do well not to forget it, and rather practice upon me than lose the habit of being very severe, for you that choose rather than to be wise than just or good-natured may freely dispose of all things in your power without regard to one or the other. As I admire you, I would be glad I could imitate you; it were but manners to endeavour it. Which since I am not able to perform, I confess you are in the right to call that rude which I call kind and so keep me in the wrong for ever (which you cannot choose but take great delight in). You need but continue to make it fit for me not to love and you can never want something to upbraid me with.
Three o'clock in the morning. (Treglown 180)

It is not clear what previously occurred to cause such a passionate response in Rochester but his writing reveals the personal upset of a shattered relationship and the character of two very proud individuals. Rochester's intentional notation of the hour, his ability to profess his love at the same time as condemning her character, his self pity, and his threatening manner does little to give the impression of a secure man. Through his rage Rochester also reveals certain aspects of Barry's character that he believes to have changed. His reference to what he views as her inability to treat those around her with respect gives the suggestion that a change in Barry's character might have occurred as she became increasingly more successful.

References to their time together are noted as between the years of 1675 and 1678 and since Rochester was ill or banished during much of that period they must have spent a great deal of time apart. According to Treglown, "[Rochester] lived between fierce extremes from 1677 to 1680, all it seems, directly related or indirectly a result of his illness" (33). His illness, however, did not prevent him from taking action against Barry

as an unfit mother and taking their daughter out of her care sometime between 1678 and 1679. It is not clear why Rochester felt it necessary to take the child into his custody but the following missive indicates his severe displeasure over Barry's social behavior, which may have been the underlying factor in Rochester's decision:

Madam,

I am far from delighted in the grief I have given you by taking away the child; and you, who made it so absolutely necessary for me to do so, must take that excuse from me for all the ill nature of it. On the other side, pray be assured I love Betty so well that you need not apprehend any neglect from those I employ, and I hope very shortly to restore her to you a finer girl than ever. In the meantime you would do well to think of the advice I gave you, for how little show soever my prudence makes in my own affairs, in yours it will prove very successful if you please to follow it. And since discretion is the thing alone you are like to want, pray study to get it. (Treglown 216)

Treglown notes Rochester's jealousy over Barry's relationships with other men:

"According to contemporary scandal, after their affair ended she had a number of flings with friends of his, including Etherege, Buckhurst and, perhaps, his cousin Henry St. John" (30). Despite several attempts on the side of Rochester to hurt her on a deeply personal level, Barry continued to thrive as one of London's finest tragedians.

Life in the theatre was by no means a simple one during the Restoration era. Rehearsals began at ten o'clock every morning except Sunday with performances occurring in the afternoon. Evening performances were often held for private functions. Companies performed up to sixty productions a year with each play running no longer than a fifteen-day period (Howe 14). The first actresses entered the field completely unskilled. Many were illiterate which must have made the workload extremely challenging. Barry however, came to theatre with the skills and knowledge she had

gained under the guidance of Lady Davenant but this slight advantage did not stop Barry from working exceptionally hard. Thomas Betterton's complaint against the lazy arrogance of young actors offers insight into Barry's dedicated process:

They vainly imagine themselves Masters of that Art, which perfectly to attain, requires a studious Application of a Man's whole Life. They take it therefore amiss to have the Author give them any Instruction... Whereas, it has always been mine and Mrs. Barry's Practice to consult e'en the most indifferent Poet in any Part we have thought fit to accept of; and I may say it of her, she has so often exerted her self in an indifferent Part, that her Acting has given Success to such Plays, as to read would turn a Man's Stomach. (Gildon 15)

In addition to her strong work ethic and her many accomplishments, Barry is credited as the first woman to have received a benefit performance created in her honour. According to Doran in The Annals of the English Stage, King James II ordered a benefit performance in recognition of Barry's talent with all profits going directly to her (160). In addition to this, Wilson credits Barry as "one of the leaders of the group of players who revolted against the patentees and organized a new company at Lincoln's Inn Fields" (King's Ladies, 113). Barry also rose to the level of managerial status, with Anne Bracegirdle and Thomas Betterton as her co-managers, for a brief period of time in the late 1600s. Both Barry and Bracegirdle managed to hold their power for five years before Betterton took over as the sole manager of the company.

Through her long and varied career Barry was one of the few women in her field who managed to hold her own as an independent single working mother and even after the tragedy of her daughter's sudden death she continued to press on. At the end of her career Barry left the theatre for a life in the countryside, where she eventually died "from the bite of a favorite lap-dog, who had been seized, unknown to her, with madness" (Galt

87). Few women of the Restoration period managed to survive without relying on marriage as a means of security and Elizabeth Barry was one such woman.

Numerous young ladies, on the other hand, began a career in the theatre in the hope of attracting suitors. Keeping young ladies focused on the performance and not on gentlemen who had wandered backstage presented theatre managers with an enormous challenge in the early days. It became such a problem that in 1675, an agreement was created wherein the players were no longer permitted to refuse a role, miss rehearsal, wear costumes outside the Playhouse, or entertain audience members backstage. This must have caused tremendous upset to those who used the profession as a means of advancing social status (Milhous, 32-33).

Life for these pioneering women must have been a glorious, yet treacherous journey. There is no doubt that many were vulnerable targets for patrons who assumed that to be an actress meant to be sexually available. The introduction of women to the stage was a dramatic shift from the days when young boys skillfully performed female roles. By placing women on the stage for his own enjoyment, Charles II inadvertently enabled English women to become legitimate contributing members of society.

Nell Gwyn and Elizabeth Barry offer a small example of the tremendous fortitude these early pioneers possessed. Actresses of the Restoration period were not simply a group of morally weak, lower class harlots but a band of spirited individuals who entered the theatre profession from every level of society and social class. They were entrepreneurs who saw the potential for economic security and actively pursued it.

The majority of research devoted to Restoration theatre and in particular, to the lives and work of the first English actresses is written through the male perspective.

Physical traits have always been an important factor for determining whether or not an actress has marketability, which is why so many references refer to the ‘beauty’ of Nell Gwyn and why there is an underlying current of scholarly shock when the relatively ‘unattractive’ Barry grew to have such a successful career. Over four hundred years have passed since the first woman stepped on to the English stage and yet so little focus has been placed on their remarkable contributions, talent, and perseverance and so much placed on their roles as mistress or lover. If one must define these pioneers by the ‘role’ they played on the social stage then one must equally celebrate the ‘role’ they played as equitable contributors to a community that created one of the most vibrant periods in England’s theatre history.

CHAPTER THREE: FROM THE PAGE TO THE STAGE

Research on this project began several years ago after viewing a performance of The Libertine in Chicago. The play sparked my interest in researching the background of Elizabeth Barry and John Wilmot. I was intrigued by these historical figures and Stephen Jeffreys' look at 17th Century English theatre. Some of the research I conducted is in the previous two chapters, while other research involved examining the personal letters and writings of John Wilmot to gain a greater sense of the man behind the myth. Design research involved examining the fashions of the period and comparing them with the styles and influences of contemporary fashion designer Vivienne Westwood and various other fashion and rock icons of the 1980s.

The constraints of having a small design budget can sometimes be a blessing as it provides one with an opportunity to look at alternative ways of achieving the same results with less. It was essential the design concept support The Libertine in a way that unfolded the story in a clear and uncluttered manner. Since Jeffreys wrote the play in the 1990s, I chose to present a subtle representation of the Restoration period rather than attempting to replicate the era. This freedom gave designers and myself an opportunity to break away from a literal representation and create an abstract interpretation of the piece. The remainder of my research involved examining the texts found in two separate editions of The Libertine. The first edition is the original version published by Nick Hern Books and the second is the Dramatic Publishing edition. Both editions are relatively similar in structure through Act One but the re-writes found in the Dramatic Publishing version vary greatly in the second half of the script from the original edition. The end result of this examination was to take the strongest elements from both editions and incorporate

them into what became Act Two in the production. As I was evaluating both editions I made a decision to cut the song at the top of Act Two. The song entitled “Signior Dildo” is in both editions and does little to advance the story; in fact it is so different from the rest of the play that it appears completely out of place. The poem, written by Wilmot, is a wonderful satirical look at London society, but since it was doubtful that few audience members would know it as Wilmot’s work it seemed pointless to include it in the production; therefore Act Two, scene eight began with the Sodom rehearsal.

In the Dramatic Publishing edition, Jeffreys transfers the split that occurs between Rochester and Barry in scene eight into scene nine at Epsom and allows Rochester and Barry to resolve their dispute and leave together at the end of the scene eight:

ROCHESTER. I can now engage with nothing. I am
banished and must return to my wife in the country –

BARRY. No, you must not! You will not take the King’s
displeasure as a sign to run from me. Stay close to
London where I may lay easy hands upon you. And I
will sue for you to the King so he may quickly change
his mind.

ROCHESTER. Lizzie? (Pause.) I would be pacified. (She
holds out a hand to him. They exit together.)
(Dramatic, 2.8.80)

For the purpose of this production I chose to stay with the following version taken from the Hern edition:

BARRY. I love you, John, but I do not love the part of you
that determines always to show the worst of yourself,
the worst of ourselves, the worst of everything.

ROCHESTER. Well, that is the part of me which is
available. *Barry goes.* (2.8.56)

In the Hern edition, Rochester does not leave with Barry but instead challenges her to accept him for who he is. The result of this challenge causes him to lose Barry and he is left with only his bottle and his thoughts. The interaction between the two offers a stronger interpretation of struggle between the two lovers and represents Rochester's inability to change no matter what the consequences may be. It is a less romantic version than the second edition presents and a more honest portrayal of two strong willed and uncompromising people. Once I had chosen to use the Hern version for scene eight I continued with this edition through the rest of the play until the final death scene. The dramatic differences between the two editions are clearly represented in scene ten of the Dramatic Publishing version where Downs' death is followed by a scene entitled, "The Attic" (2.10.93). This scene replaces the Dr. Bendo scene and Rochester's return to Court in the Hern edition, with a scene where Rochester is holed up in a small attic room in the East End of London and visited by Charles II. The Dramatic Publishing edition condenses the two relatively long scenes; however in doing that, Jeffreys has cut Dr. Bendo, eliminating an important aspect of Rochester's descent into hell. The Dr. Bendo scene in the Hern edition offers a glimpse into the darker side of Rochester's embittered and tragic life. As Dr. Bendo, Rochester is forced to make his living masquerading as a doctor who claims to cure all ailments and who ultimately ends up 'servicing' women in London's East End. The Dr. Bendo scene provides a greater sense of Rochester's self-destructive decline and a stronger sense as to why so many abandoned him. By eliminating this scene from the rest of the play, it becomes harder to sympathize with both Barry's inability to take him back and Charles' final rejection of the poet in scene eleven of the Hern edition.

The decision to use the final scene in the Dramatic Publishing version instead of the Hern version was based on the strength of Jeffreys' re-writes. At the time I felt the second version offered a stronger portrayal of the poet's final moments but upon further reflection I am not sure that was the right choice. The Dramatic Publishing edition did not offer as strong a representation of Rochester's death as I originally thought it would. The original script has Rochester die in the arms of Malet while those around him speak of his life. There is no transition to the deathbed and a chaplain is not present. In the original version references to Rochester's religious conversion are simply addressed by Sackville and by Rochester after his death. The following epilogue is from the Hern edition:

ROCHESTER. When I poured away the last bottle of wine
 I saw the blood of Christ streaming onto the floor and it
 took all my effort not to throw myself on my face and
 guzzle. But I desisted and my mind cleared and I made
 an inventory of my life and found much wanting:
 injuries to divers people: want of attention to my
 affairs: a lifetime spitting in the face of God, and I
 knew I was to be cast down. I had long ago discarded
 the layer of formal politeness with which we negotiate
 the world, but now I had to wade through the slough of
 my licentiousness until I found level ground underfoot,
 a ground of true sensibility and love of Christ. Now I
 gaze upon the pinhead and see the angels dancing.
 Well. Do you like me now? Do you like me now?
Blackout. (Hern, 2.13.84)

In this version Rochester explains the reasons for his religious conversion without the need for a chaplain to be present but in the Dramatic Publishing edition much of what Rochester expresses in the original epilogue is dramatized in the death scene. In hindsight, I believe Jeffreys' original version is sharper and does not require a transition in the middle of the scene. If I were to direct the production a second time I would present the end scene in its original state and not the version that was presented in this

production.

Set Design

The concept for the set design came from a series of meetings with Douglas McCullough. Over a period of a few months commencing in April 2005, Douglas and I met several times to discuss the play's themes, characters, and the environment. Jeffreys' script describes the action as taking place in several different locations. Douglas and I agreed that it was more important to design an environment that symbolized the decay of Rochester's physical and spiritual being and the decline of a decadent society rather than to place too much emphasis on a literal transformation from one locale to another. In order to enhance the visual design, Douglas suggested constructing a raked stage. I was concerned with the noise level that would occur when actors walked across the hollow wooden flooring but in the end I decided the raked stage was the best visual alternative and worked to keep the noise level to a minimum. Douglas' choice to paint wooden planks for the flooring was an excellent representation of the floors one might find in the old English coffee houses and theatres. In order to suggest changes in locales Douglas designed enormous vertical flats that could be moved into various positions on the stage. The simplicity in design gave me enough variation to create different environments when needed. When the flats were not used in a scene they were moved off to the side to represent the entrances and exits in the wings of the theatre. In addition to having a practical purpose for the production, the flats added to the environment and gave a sense of depth to the stage. Due to the way the play is structured, transitions flow from one scene to another with absolutely no room for set changes. Douglas' design allowed transitions to occur smoothly without interrupting the flow of the performance. The other

essential feature in the set design was an area to represent the playhouse pit. The angle of the raked stage provided an illusion that the stage was much higher than the downstage area where the pit was located. The elevated stage also gave the pit its own defined space and allowed for two separate scenes to occur at the same time without too much confusion or clutter. In addition to being used in scene two at the Playhouse, the pit area was also used at the top of scene five to provide a sense of different locales in the Dog and Bitch yard. The pit area was also used as the gathering place for the actors at the top of Act Two while they waited for Rochester to begin the Sodom rehearsal.

Since much of The Libertine deals with events and people associated with the theatre it was important not to ignore the fact that the production takes place in a theatre space. The pit is an example of extending the action into the audience area. Placing company members in the pit at various stages throughout the play allowed me the option of bringing Rochester through the house at the top of Act Two without breaking theatrical conventions, and gave me the opportunity to incorporate the theatre space into the action of the play.

The strength of Douglas' set design came from the starkness, texture and tones created in the scenic painting. During our preliminary design meetings we focused on the emotional textures found in the mood of each scene. These discussions led Douglas to determine which colours and textures he used to create the scenic design. When speaking to Barry in scene twelve, Rochester refers to the theatre as a "gaudy gilded stage" (Herns, 2.12.76). This image, in addition to Rochester's physically decayed state represents the texture and tone of the play. Douglas and I came to the conclusion that Rochester's world is similar to New Orleans: although rich in its decadent past, years of filth, decay, and

human excess have covered its glory so that only flecks of the golden past shine through.

Costume Design

The aristocracy of the Restoration period was heavily influenced by the couture of Louis XIV's court. Fashion was ostentatious in its appearance and in England it represented a reaction against the previous era of repression associated with Cromwell's reign. The 17th Century was an age of enlightenment where the philosophy of Thomas Hobbes became a spiritual guide for liberal free thinkers. It was an age where people enjoyed a life rich with sensual pleasures, where sexual experimentation and lascivious behavior were encouraged. When analyzing the modes and lifestyles of the Restoration era I became aware of the similarities between 17th Century culture and the flamboyant subcultures that existed during the "Me" generation of the early 1980s. The club lifestyle during the eighties indulged in sexual androgyny, decadent behavior, alternative punk styles, and runway drugs like cocaine and ecstasy. The mode of fashion during the eighties displayed the same flamboyancy as the fashions of the 17th Century. Rockers like Adam Ant, Billy Idol, and Duran Duran had a unique style that incorporated femininity with an aura of masculine prowess. Eighties fashion models like Gia Carangi and Margeaux Hemingway portrayed the 'live hard, look hot' approach that represented eternal immortality. Club life during the eighties was a contemporary representation of the decadent and experimental culture that encapsulated the lives of the young free thinkers who thrived during the Restoration era. Since The Libertine was written in the early 1990s about 17th Century historical figures, costume designer, Lisa Roberts and I worked together to create a style that fused 17th Century fashion with the androgynous looks of the 1980's club scene.

The early meetings I had with Lisa were spent reviewing images in several fashion and art magazines to offer the designer a visual representation of the type of clothing and makeup aesthetic I was looking for. I felt it was important to stay away from the classic representation of the Restoration period for several reasons. The strongest reason was not due to budget constraints but due to the young artists I was working with. It was important for the actors to buy into the energy of the play, and the style of the clothes had to support the sexual and rebellious energy of the characters. Lisa designed the male costumes to incorporate the androgynous feel I was looking for by mixing silky feminine shirts with more masculine textures found in the pants and coats. The ultimate result was to increase the actor's sense of sexual prowess without feeling inhibited or too feminine. Instead of breeches, the men wore trousers and the 17th Century periwigs were replaced with eighties hairstyles. Lisa designed Rochester's Act One costume to incorporate leather with silk and velvet to support his flamboyant and complex personality. In Act Two Rochester's distressed clothing subtly reflected his internal disintegration. The Wits' costumes were designed to enhance their individual personalities with each costume suggesting an attempt to resemble Rochester. Etherege's costume represented a man serious about his craft yet not so serious as to display a touch of the flamboyant artist in an accessory or two. Sackville's costume was created to show the dramatic and rebellious party-going nature of a man on the move, and Billy Downs' attire shifted dramatically from a naïve lad in Act One to a younger version of Rochester in Act Two. The character of Alcock is the most grounded character in The Libertine. It was important to portray him not as a man in need of change but one willing to try on a new lifestyle. Lisa created Alcock's attire to resemble the clothing a biker might wear. When he accepts Rochester's

offer of employment Lisa suggested that he place the livery jacket over his vest instead of replacing the vest with the jacket. This was a wonderful addition as it symbolized Alcock's willingness to try the lifestyle offered to him with the option of shedding it at a moment's notice if he found it didn't fit. Lisa's design for Charles II presented a hint of the Restoration period through the cut of the waistcoat, but it also resembled a style that might be donned by fashion guru Karl Lagerfeld. Lagerfeld's persona exudes an air of superiority that is naturally displayed in those who hold positions of power, and he is a perfect contemporary example for Charles' character. The King's costume was created to strengthen these character traits and consisted of a velvet waistcoat with a black tailored shirt and pants. The tapered cut of the clothing, and the rich dark colours resembled the sleekness of a jaguar.

Lisa created the women's costumes with restrictive corsets, which supported the style of the Restoration period, however the dress designs for Jane and Barry had a contemporary feel. Their skirts were created with layers of gossamer fabric that provided a whimsical feminine sensuality and youthful sensibility. Barry's Act One costumes were transparent and flowing but as the play progressed Lisa designed Barry's dresses to suggest protective armor by using solid fabrics and layered capes.

The dress designs for Malet, Molly, and Mrs. Wills were created with a stronger sense of period. Each of these characters displays a practical self-sufficiency. Lisa created dresses for each of these women that suggested maturity and a country sensibility, which is in contrast to the dramatic, flighty world of the Playhouse or the dark, ethereal world of the Dog and Bitch yard. By the end of the play Malet's character softens. To enhance the gentle change that occurs, Lisa designed a nightdress in soft flowing fabric to give Malet

an angelic ethereal quality.

The makeup design also relied heavily on 1980's fashion sensibilities. Not every character was defined by the makeup. Characters such as Molly, Mrs. Wills, Malet, Alcock, and Etherege used subtle degrees of makeup to enhance their features. Rochester, Sackville, Downs, Charles II, Barry, and Jane incorporated the stylized maquillage of the eighties to heighten the dramatic features of their personalities. Lisa and I met several times with a student makeup artist, to review makeup and hairstyles used by contemporary fashion designers and to determine a makeup template for each character. Once we had determined the 'masque' for each character the templates were then distributed to the actors to add their own individual marks.

The actors were delighted with the look of the costumes and makeup. Once they had donned their costumes the company instantly re-energized their passion and commitment to the production. It's always astounding how costumes complete the final touches in character development for actors and it is an excellent sign when an entire company is ecstatic about their individual looks and the overall look of the production.

Lighting and Sound Design

Don Monty's lighting design was an important element in creating the mood and atmosphere of the production. Don and I spent time analyzing each scene to determine the atmosphere associated with the time of day and the mood of the characters. Since Douglas and I had decided to veer away from literal representations, Don was also free to interpret the play in an abstract way. Approaching the lighting design in this manner resulted in the creation of a series of dramatic lighting alternatives. The lighting in Act One was fairly conventional giving a sense of prosperity and hope, but as Rochester's world begins to shatter towards the end of the first act, the lighting shifted with it. In Act Two the lighting contrasted the bright youthful energy of Act One, and with the exception of the Epsom daylight found in scene nine, the majority of the lighting in Act Two was filtered with gobos to create dimly lit shadows or sharp shafts of light. Side lighting was used to heighten the dark and sinister atmosphere of the Dog and Bitch yard in scene five, spotlights were used in the monologues to isolate the inner thoughts of individual characters, green and red lighting was used at the top of the Dr. Bendo scene to produce a surreal carnival look, and side lighting was also used offstage left to give the impression that the Man of Mode was being performed on the Playhouse stage while the scene between Barry and Rochester took place in scene twelve. The lighting design also added a tremendous amount of atmosphere in the transitions from one scene to another. Don's design was highly successful in achieving an atmosphere for each scene that supported not only the story but also heightened the textures and colour tones found in the set and costume designs.

In conjunction with the lighting, Kevin McGugan's sound design also did a

tremendous amount to enhance the mood and atmosphere of the play. Meetings with Kevin were conducted in a similar way to those with Don. Each scene was discussed to determine where music might heighten or support a particular mood. Kevin and I also spent a great deal of time discussing the character traits and storylines of the three main characters to determine how the music could be thematically tied to Rochester's, Malet's, and Barry's storylines. The time we spent evaluating the play was well worth the effort, as Kevin's final score not only supported the production but also offered enormous support to the actors. Acting moments that were not fully realized were supported and enriched by the underscoring of music. During the rehearsal period, Kevin was brought in to help with the staging of the Playhouse scene. His presence was a great help when it came to synchronizing the events that were occurring on the stage with the action happening in the Pit. Kevin contributed to establishing the rhythms and pace of the Playhouse scene so that the two separate actions were able to overlap each other, yet keep their separate identities. The lighting and sound designs created a visual and aural representation of Rochester's journey and enhanced the production values. The results of the design collaborations were clearly displayed in the final production. It was a healthy collaborative process, which produced an interesting dramatic interpretation of another time period in a way that still supported the playwright's story and the company's work.

Conclusion

The Libertine was an excellent thesis choice. It provided me with invigorating research challenges and allowed me to research a period in theatre history with which I was unfamiliar. Since one could spend several years devoted to analyzing not only Wilmot's life and work but also the history and people of the period, I decided to focus my energy on areas that were directly related to the play. I have benefited greatly from the research I have conducted just as I feel the students benefited from their involvement in the production. The Libertine is also an excellent vehicle for young student actors. The majority of the characters are within their age range and the text is rich without being too complex. The experience gave thirteen students an opportunity to work on a well-written script that challenged them as actors.

The Libertine is a dense and complex play that requires actors to do a tremendous amount of pre-rehearsal preparation. This is difficult to accomplish in a student production where the time between the audition and the start of rehearsals is limited. The reality of this meant that a great deal of time in rehearsal was spent on text work. During the six-week period, I worked with the company to help them garner an understanding of how to work on a script. Developing the skills required to break down a text is an essential part of the actor's pre-rehearsal process and the time spent in rehearsal was valuable for the students but extremely time consuming. It became very clear early on that only one actor out of the thirteen-member company had the ability to work with text on their own. During the second week of rehearsal I realized I had to take time to teach them how to break down a script. If that didn't occur I knew that valuable time would be lost later in the process and unless they understood what they were saying and why, we

would never be able to move forward in the process. If one doesn't have a basic understanding of how to deconstruct a play for clues there is absolutely no way one can find his/her character's objectives and without clear objectives the play becomes a series of mini plays where cast members create their own stories using the playwright's words but not his intentions. I didn't want that to happen, so during the second week of rehearsal I shifted my focus from directing to teaching which seemed to benefit the process and definitely relieved my frustration.

Throughout the rehearsal period I attempted to create an environment similar to what occurs in a professional theatre setting. The primary purpose for this was to encourage them to develop a strong work ethic and a sense of responsibility to the company and the production. During the audition process, candidates were asked about their ability to commit to the rehearsal schedule. If candidates stated they were available and willing to commit to the schedule, as presented to them, then I held them to that. I knew that it would be impossible to accommodate the individual needs of a cast of thirteen, so in order to keep the rehearsal on schedule I chose to implement that rule from the start. This slightly militaristic approach worked very well and for the most part people arrived and were ready to work when called. I did a general block of the scenes and transitions within the first week and a half and continued to change bits and pieces through the rest of the rehearsal period. Jean-Pierre Fournier was brought in to work the fight sequences during the first three weeks of the rehearsal period and when his time with us was done, we continued to rehearse the sequences as a warm up at the beginning of each rehearsal day. Kevin McGugan was also present several times throughout the process to keep up to date with any directorial changes that might affect his sound design.

As we approached the final week of rehearsal the principal actor was still struggling with lines, which created a tremendous amount of frustration for the rest of the company. It was a challenge to keep the other members of the company focused and on track when they were so hindered by their fellow actor's inability to rise to the next level. When one actor is so much further behind in the process than the others, it has the potential to cause tremendous panic, and in this case a domino effect occurred. Several cast members working with the lead actor began to second-guess their work, resulting in a shift in balance. In the end, with strong encouragement, the lead actor rose to the challenge, but it took the week of the technical rehearsal to get the others back on track.

The technical rehearsal went fairly smoothly and the extra time taken in the cue-to-cue sessions was well worth it. The lighting at the end of both acts presented some concerns for me but after I talked it through with Don, he came up with solutions that enhanced the moments and provided me with what I felt was missing. The only other concern during the technical rehearsal occurred when the sundial was smashed, causing bits of plaster to fly into the audience at a rapid rate. That too was resolved and to my knowledge it never occurred again. By the time Opening Night occurred we were more than ready to open and once the play was up and running I stepped away from the production and entrusted it to the performers and the crew. The only time I was present through the run was to return to see the closing night performance. I had noticed in the show reports that the running times had sped up and when I questioned this I was assured that nothing had been compromised. However, when I saw the closing night performance I found the pace was frantic and several actors impossible to understand. Since it was closing night it was futile to mention it to the cast but if I should direct students in the

future, I will take a more proactive approach when I see drastic changes in the running times, as it likely means that pace has been replaced with speed.

Throughout the process, I saw amazing growth from several actors and each actor that came into the process exceeded my expectations. The endless hours of struggling to find ways to get through to them was worth it when I saw actors develop a sense of pride in their individual work and their work as an ensemble. I grew to be extremely proud of each and every one of them as I watched them develop by leaps and bounds. This was a difficult and challenging piece for students and they rose to every challenge I presented and more importantly, they developed a respect for the process and a professional work ethic that will benefit them in their future endeavors. Their commitment and desire to succeed resulted in a successful and fulfilling experience.

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