

“Let us see what our painters have done for us”:
Garrick and Sheridan on the Spectacularization of Drury Lane

IWATA Miki

“And we will hear it” (5.1.76)¹—in Act 5 of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (c. 1595–96), when Egeus comically introduces an amateur play by the workmen in Athens to celebrate the wedding of Theseus and Hippolyta, the merry duke is interested enough to say so. Egeus warns against the idea with the comment that “I have heard it over, / And it is nothing” (5.1.77–78), but he still repeats the same phrase, “I will hear that play” (5.1.81). Approving or disapproving, just like the two Athenians, Elizabethan theatregoers would *hear* plays—rather than *see* them—because of the lack of sets, lights and large-scale stage properties on the stage. However, as Peter Thomson asserts how “what can reasonably be called the ‘modern’ theatre began in England in 1660” (3), things became different when two new theatres were commissioned after the eighteen years of theatre closure on the occasion of Restoration of Charles II. Pointing out that literary critics have tended to ignore the contribution of scenery to Restoration drama, Thomson emphasizes the achievements of William Davenant and Thomas Killigrew—managers of the two patent theatres. According to him, “Davenant was the pioneer and mastermind of the transfer of perspective scenery from the privacy of courts to the public stage” (12). Killigrew also “could not afford to ignore such a popular innovation” (12), though he had to raise the price of admission for that.²

Although the shift away from aural to visual theatre was a gradual but irrevocable

This is an expanded and revised version of the paper read at a symposium at the 83rd ELSJ Annual General Meeting held at the University of Kitakyushu on 21–22 May 2011. I appreciate all the valuable comments and questions from the floor and the other members of the panel.

¹ Hereafter, plays with line numbers, as in this citation, are cited by act, scene, and line(s), separated by periods. Otherwise, only page numbers will be given in parenthesis.

² Samuel Pepys’s diary on 12 February 1667 reveals Killigrew’s confidence in his achievements in the renovation of playhouses, in which he told Pepys that “the stage is now by his pains a thousand times better and more glorious then ever heretofore.” (723). However, it is William Davenant who was generally regarded as the inventor of modern theatres, as John Dennis recollected in 1723, though unfavourably, that “Sir William Davenant was the first who brought Scenes upon the Stage” (no pagination).

trend throughout modern English drama, David Garrick especially accelerated the tendency during his managership of the Theatre Royal at Drury Lane between 1747–76, partly in collaboration with Philippe-Jacques de Loutherbourg, a French painter and set designer. R. B. Sheridan, Garrick's successor, has also been thought to follow in their steps as a theatre manager. In fact, afterpieces written by him—including *The Camp* (1778), *The Wonders of Derbyshire* (1779), and *The Critic* (1779)—make good use of the scene paintings of Loutherbourg. When he adapted Kotzebue's *Die Spanier in Peru* (1796) into *Pizarro* in 1799, the tragedy's climax was the highly spectacular scene in which the Peruvian resistance soldier, Rolla, bearing the heroine's baby, "*tears from the rock the tree which supports the bridge*" (5.2.37) over the cataract in order to save the baby from the Spanish soldiers closing in on them. In the same year, James Gilray drew a caricature titled *Pizarro Contemplating over the Product of His New Peruvian Mine*, in which Sheridan gloats over the gains from the play, standing in a nook of the exotic stage set. Gilray here suggests that Sheridan is exploiting the contemporary taste for spectacle blended with sentimentalism for a financial purpose rather than an artistic one.³

Through the surface of opportunistic entertainment, however, transpires Sheridan's sense of hesitation about the spectacularization of the London theatre world in the late-eighteenth century. In this paper, by examining afterpieces made by Garrick and Sheridan in 1770s, I would like to make two points: first, the spectacularization of Drury Lane under Garrick's governance was closely connected with the wider historical context, especially with the burgeoning idea of the British nation that held dear the military power over foreign enemies; then, in spite of his position as a playwright-cum-manager, Sheridan's theatrical penchant was going against the current of the times, which, coupled with his relationship with Garrick, made his already mysterious character even more impalpable.⁴

I. Reformations of Drury Lane under Garrick's Management

Even before becoming joint-patentee of Drury Lane in association with James Lacy in 1747, Garrick was known for his visual-oriented theatricality right from the start.

³ For the cultural and political contexts of *Pizarro*'s reception, especially those in caricatures, see McPherson 607–31.

⁴ E. H. Mikhail, editing a miscellany of Sheridan's biographies, perplexedly comments that there was "something elusive about Sheridan" (ix), as he kept no diary, wrote no memoirs, and had little passion for writing letters. This is rather surprising, considering that the eighteenth century in England can be said as the age of letters and journals.

Memoirs of the Life of David Garrick (1780) by Thomas Davies, bookseller and author contemporary with him, recounts his impressive debut as an actor performing Richard III on 19 October 1741, with “the novelty” (1: 40) of his style. At the news of Buckingham’s arrest, “Garrick’s look and action...were so significant and important, from his visible enjoyment of the incident, that several loud shouts of approbation proclaimed the triumph of the actor” (Davies 1: 41). The novelty was his eloquent pictorialization of passions coupled with a lighter style of verbal delivery.

Christopher Baugh compares Garrick’s acting style with that of Thomas Betterton about half a century earlier, and finds a pivotal difference between them. While Charles Gildon’s *The Life of Mr. Thomas Betterton* (1710) claims that “tho the Passions are very beautiful in their proper *Gestures*, yet they ought never to be so extravagantly immoderate, as to transport the Speaker out of himself” (86), it is precisely such a kind of transport through the actor’s identification with the role that Garrick aimed at. His way of acting “naturally paved the way for a perception of theatre as a carefully planned and composed pictorial as well as a rhetorical experience,” which cannot afford “spatially to confuse the performers’ relationship with the audience” (Baugh, *Garrick* 20). Thus, even though stage-spectators sitting on the sides of the forestage were traditional enough to date back to Elizabethan theatres, Garrick forced through the discontinuance of the practice in 1762.⁵

The natural extension of this direction towards the pictorial experience of a play was the renovation of scene paintings and lighting effects, which was to be achieved by Garrick’s connection with the Continent partly as a descendant of a Huguenot family coming to England after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685. As Graham Gibbs has pointed out, in the two-way intellectual trade, “Huguenots [in England] played a large role, as designers, directors, switchboard operators and subscribers,” as well as “translators and commentators,” because many of them had the knowledge of French, Latin, and other European languages, which was often their own means to gain sustenance (21–22).⁶ Of course, theatre was no exception to this cultural commerce. Jean Monnet, a French theatre manager in Paris, wrote to Garrick (with whom he was not acquainted) in 1748, asking him to invite his company to Drury Lane. Garrick refused for some reason, but instead gave him advice to hire

⁵ At first, there was not a little reluctance to accept the removal on the audience’s side. However, after 30 years, Tate Wilkinson’s *Memoirs* (1790) favourably recounts the change, saying, “my gentle reader, suppose an audience behind the curtain up to the clouds, with... beaux and no beaux crowding the only entrance, what a play it must have been” (Nagler 379).

⁶ For the detailed examination on the Huguenots in England including their social origins and responses to their new home, see Cottret, *The Huguenots in England*.

Haymarket and open a subscription for a French comedy. Though the tour in 1749 proved an abject failure, this was the beginning of their friendship and, when Monnet re-established himself as director of the Opéra-Comique in Paris in 1751 after six years' interval, he invited Garrick to France.

The *Journal* of Charles Collé, a French dramatist and songwriter, illustrates how enthusiastically he was received in Paris: “[Garrick] gave us a sketch of that scene where Macbeth thinks he sees a dagger in the air.... He filled us with terror; it is impossible to paint a situation better.... What he played before us was a kind of tragic pantomime, and from that one piece I would not fear to assert that that actor is excellent in his art” (Qtd. in Hedgcock 109–10). This “tragic pantomime” was part of Garrick’s project to propagate Shakespeare in the Continent.⁷ Pantomime was not only a perfect method for Garrick to eliminate a language barrier, but it also served to impress his visual-oriented performance style on the French audience, which can be seen in Collé’s choice of words, “to paint [*peindre*] a situation.”

As a colleague, Monnet was quick to understand Garrick’s management policy. Their correspondence was mainly practical but helpful for each other. For example, Monnet’s letter written sometime in 1765 tells his friend that “I will send you a reflector and two different samples of the lamp you want for the footlights at your theatre” (Qtd. in Hedgcock 391). Behind Garrick’s well-known modification of lighting at Drury Lane in 1765–66 was their transcontinental partnership. One notable fruit of this Garrick-Monnet connections was Phillipe-Jacques de Louterbourg visiting England in 1771, carrying Monnet’s introductory letter to Garrick with him:

My friend, Mr Louterbourg, the bearer of my letter...has a great desire to meet you and has begged me to procure your acquaintance. You are a lover of the arts and artists and you will find him to your taste.... He is not expensive and I advise you strongly to let him paint three small pictures for you, one a sea piece, another a landscape in the manner of Berghem, and thirdly a battle scene. (Qtd. in Baugh, *Garrick* 28)

Louterbourg was a son of a miniature painter from a Polish Protestant family, fleeing from persecution by the Roman Catholic Church. His mother wanted him to be a cleric in the Lutheran Church, though, after the family moved from Strasbourg to

⁷ For Garrick’s reputation as a better interpreter of Shakespeare than scholarly editors, see Cunningham, *Shakespeare and Garrick*. According to her, even Edmond Malone, “the consolidator of the editorial conventions and techniques used to this day in scholarly publishing” could “not downplay the contributions to Shakespeare’s abiding status made by Garrick’s acting” (165).

Paris, he had an artistic education there. On arrival in London in the late autumn of 1771, Louthembourg initially went to Domenico Angelo, who was at the same time a fencing master, a stage-machinist, and a friend of Monnet and Garrick. Moreover, Angelo's wife was the Sheridans' family friend. We can see from this how interactive and close-knit the theatrical circle of the day was. Garrick and Louthembourg were said to meet in Angelo's house in Soho. After some negotiations, Garrick decided to employ him as a stage designer with a payment as high as £ 300 in his first year.

Fortunately, it proved that he made a good bargain. Henry Angelo, Domenico's son, later recollects the inventiveness of Louthembourg's stage design at the performance of Garrick's Christmas pantomime, *A Christmas Tale* (1773), and its impact on the contemporary London audience:

Louthembourg's first *début*, I think, was in a dramatic piece which Garrick wrote for the occasion, “The Christmas Tale,” where he astonished the audience, not merely by the beautiful colouring and designs, far superior to what they had been accustomed to, but by a sudden transition in a forest scene, where the foliage varies from green to blood colour. This contrivance was entirely new, and the effect was produced by placing different coloured silks in the flies, or side-scenes, which turned on a pivot, and, with lights behind, which so illumined the stage, as to give the effect of enchantment. (2: 326)

Here Angelo emphasizes the shock of the transformation scene where the whole stage—the scene painting and the colour of lighting included—was quickly changed. As he describes the device as “entirely new,” Louthembourg updated the practice of pantomime transformation, which usually meant a quick change of actors' costumes. His passion for mechanical devices eventually developed into the Eidophusikon in 1782, a kind of moving panorama with three-dimensional sets, lighting, and sound effects.⁸

Angelo in the quotation above, however, seems to mistake the time of the designer's *début* in London. In the account books of Drury Lane for the 1772–73 season, there is already a payment record to him. Besides, his first major piece of work was not *A Christmas Tale*, premièred on 27 December 1773, but a revival, on 9 October 1773, of David Mallett and James Thomson's masque *Alfred* (1740). In this

⁸ With its use of glass for reflective light, the Eidophusikon is thought to be the predecessor of Étienne Gaspard Robertson's Phantasmagoria in 1797, as well as cinematograph's remote ancestor. For Louthembourg's career after leaving Drury Lane in 1781, see Baugh, “Philippe de Louthembourg: Technology-Driven Entertainment and Spectacle in the Late Eighteenth Century,” 258–68.

play, Loutherbouurg dazzled the audience not only with his spectacular scene transformation but also with his superfine pictorialization of landscape.

II. Garrick's Adaptation of *Alfred* (1773) and the Burgeoning "British" Identity

Alfred was originally written as a private masque to be performed at Cliveden, the country house of Frederick, Prince of Wales, on 1 August 1740, in order to commemorate the accession of his grandfather, George I, and celebrate Princess Augusta's birthday as well. Performed in the next year when the War of Jenkins's Ear against Spain broke out, the play likens the prince to Alfred the Great and depicts his legendary victory over the Vikings. At the climax, King Alfred is going into battle to defend the British shores from the intruders, leaving her queen in the hands of a hermit. Then, the hermit introduces a bard of the nation to the king and sends him off with the following song:

HERMIT. Behold, my Lord, our venerable Bard,
Aged and blind, him whom the Muses favour.
Yet ere you go, in our lov'd country's praise,
That noblest theme, hear what his rapture breathes.

An ODE.

*When Britain first, at heaven's command,
Arose from out the azure main;
This was the charter of the land,
And guardian Angels sung this strain:
"Rule Britannia, rule the waves;
"Britons never will be slaves." (42)*

Maintaining the traditional traits of the prophet-poet like Tiresias and Homer, the inspired bard here is blind. Instead of the lost sight, he is equipped with spiritual insight and the voice to utter it, whose fruit, together with Thomas Urne's music, is a jingoistic song celebrating the British naval power, "Rule, Britannia." In this original version, the voice and the music are essential to boost a sense of national solidarity. At the same time, it appears that the battle heavily relies on the individual, heroic strength of the warrior-king. The hero-worshipping aspect becomes clear when King Alfred, on leaving for the front, prays that God "preserve the hopes of *England*! while I go / To finish thy great work, and save my country" (Mallet & Thomson 41). In this way, the masque paid homage to the Prince of Wales by comparing him to the

ancient ruler.

However, when Garrick rewrote the work for the public commercial theatre in 1773, King Alfred surprisingly triumphs over the Vikings as early as in the fourth act. At the climactic scene in Act 5, the king declares a military build-up to prepare for future threats:

ALFRED But these roving *Danes*
 A stricter watch demand. Means more effectual
 Must now be try'd, from our insulted shores
 To keep aloof this still-descending war.
 'Tis naval strength, that must our peace assure,
 Be this the first high object of my care,
 To wall us round with well-appointed fleets. (62)

King Alfred in Garrick's version does not count himself as the sole pillar of the nation. He acknowledges that he needs “Means more effectual”—in other words, “naval strength”—to defend the insular nation. Alfred's sense of his responsibility for his country here is clearly different from that of a feudal king. To use Benedict Anderson's words, changes made in Garrick's *Alfred* reflect the shift from the dynastic realm—where “Kingship organizes everything around a high centre” (19)—to “the modern culture of nationalism” (9) burgeoning in the late-eighteenth century.

In the general celebration of victory towards the end of the play, the hermit directs King Alfred's attention to the magnificent view of his navy.

HERMIT. Yet ere you go,
 One moment, **Alfred**, backward cast your eyes
 On this unfolding scene; where, pictur'd true,
 As in a mirror, rises fair to sight
 Our *England's* genuine strength and future fame.
Here is seen the ocean in prospect, and ships sailing along.
Two boats land their crews.
One sailor sings the following Ode: after which, the rest join lively dance.
 When **Britain** first at heaven's command,
 Arose from out the azure main... (63–64)

Asking Alfred (and the audience by implication) to “cast your eyes / On this unfolding scene,” the hermit demonstrates that the grand finale is meant for the eye

rather than for the ear. The voice of the prophet-poet is made to give way to the spectacular discovery of the large-scale models of the prospects of a naval camp of the day, conflating King Alfred's legendary battles with the wars in the eighteenth century. The visual pleasure is enhanced by the sailors' dance.⁹ In general, Garrick's version reflects his distinct penchant for a visual-heavy theatre and its relation with a nationalistic craze for the Royal Navy.

One of the contemporary reviews of the performance in the issue of *St. James's Chronicle* for 4–9 October 1773 well illustrates the audience's enthusiasm. Interestingly, the reviewer seems to take pleasure in using art terminology to describe the play's finale.

This most singular exhibition is an incontestable proof of the rapid progress of the British arts. The general view is so critically exact, that one can hardly give human invention credit for the execution; and wonderful as it may appear in point of distance, perspective, &c. it is not chargeable with the smallest impropriety.

The view of Spithead and the fleet is taken from the saluting battery, which we here see mounted with cannon. Every ship of the line is a beautiful perfect model, with rigging &c. complete, dressed with their proper suits of colours, and carrying their regular number of guns; the Isle of Wight, in the background, forms a just and beautiful relief; the royal yacht is seen sailing into the harbour, under a salute of battery and the whole fleet. Numberless and various kinds of vessels are beheld under weigh, with their sails full, making their different tacks, amongst which is readily distinguished the model of the beautiful cutter belonging to the Duke of Richmond, remarkable for its blue and white striped sails. The deception of the sea is admirable.—In short, the whole representation cannot but suffer from this, or any attempt to describe it. (no pagination)

Discussing the visual culture of the theatre, Shearer West maintains that the “increasing visuality in eighteenth-century London moved art and theatre close together” (273).¹⁰ Though she mainly deals with an interrelationship between players and their portrait paintings, we can see from the article above that the association of theatre with the fine arts of the day might have been broader, including landscape

⁹ The singer's namelessness in the play may be comparable with Anderson's argument of tombs of Unknown Soldiers as the emblem of nationalism. See Anderson 9–37.

¹⁰ By the word “visuality,” West means the human perception of the optical information: “Visuality is about reception—or *how* people look at their world—and it is inextricably linked with *what* people look at” (272).

paintings and even a prototype of installations. The reviewer calls the climactic display of the naval base in Spithead an “exhibition” and asserts that it is evidence of the progress of “the British art.” What the reviewer thinks decides the quality of art is how accurately it can represent the real base and, therefore, the critic vouches for the reliability of the theatrical representation of Spithead, saying it “cannot but suffer from this, or any attempt to describe it.” In other words, it is not enough to read the review. You must go and *see* it.

At that time, military camps were popular destinations for fashionable people, especially for society ladies. However, the super-realistic representation of a military parade on stage was a good alternative to actually going all the way to Portsmouth and see the real fleet. Loutherbouurg’s theatrical spectacles served as a substitute for real camps for those who wanted to enjoy a jingoistic excitement and a sense of national solidarity in the presence of a camp in its glory. In a similar way, when Sheridan revised Henry Woodward’s pantomime, *Fortunatus* (1753), in January 1780, another anonymous reviewer praised the spectacle added by Loutherbouurg. The new scene was totally unrelated to the original plot as it depicted the siege of Fort Omoa in the Bay of Honduras in October 1779. The issue of *The London Chronicle* for 1–4 January 1780 commends the pantomime for “the happy contrivance of this scene (which is a fresh proof of Mr. De Loutherbouurg’s [*sic*] great abilities as an artist),” by which “the audience see [*sic*] the mode of defence used by the besieged, and the British tars in the act of scaling the walls of the fort, at the same time” (Qtd. in Sheridan, *DW* 2: 782).

Winking at the fact that Loutherbouurg is a Polish-French from Alsace, the reviewer of *Alfred* regards this show as a landmark in “the British art,” which itself functions as a proof of British national strength. Linda Colley explains how the “British” identity was developed among the people in Great Britain not from the self-contained sense of homogeneity but from “the belief that they were different from those beyond their shores, and in particular different from their prime enemy, the French” (17). However, her argument sometimes simplifies the complicated situation of eighteenth-century international affairs. In the London theatrical world, for example, Garrick’s French connection actually helped to promote Londoners’ pride in their navy fighting against the Catholic countries.¹¹

¹¹ The religious stand of Garrick and Loutherbouurg is ambiguous and should not be reduced to being anti-Catholic. David Worrall interprets *A Christmas Tale* as a “visually innovative transmission of Masonic symbolism” (134), emphasizing the politicized role of alternative religions. See Worrall 133–67. Murray L. Brown maintains that one of the Loutherbouurg’s most famous paintings, *A Midsummer’s Afternoon with a Methodist Preacher* (1777), implies “his interest in and defense of Emanuel Swedenborg in the face of John Wesley’s attacks on the theater” (121).

David Armitage in *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* claims that the idea of “the British Empire” was “criticised and challenged even at the moment it emerged” and therefore was “originally an ideology, not an identity; that is, it was a contribution to political argument, and not a normative self-conception” (172). According to Armitage, the idea of the British Empire was always a counterargument against something within—the war-phobic Walpole government, for example. Likewise, within the Drury Lane Theatre, there might have been undercurrents contradictory to each other, and Garrick sometimes failed to achieve the balance between the visual-heavy palate and patriotism of the audience. As early as 1755, when the Seven Years’ War against France was impeding, Garrick got a painful lesson on the choice of performance for the xenophobic audience. Vanessa Cunningham gives a concise account of a theatre riot which brought “the most serious disruptions ever known at Drury Lane” (23–24), occasioned by his attempts to stage an exotic ballet, *The Chinese Festival*, by the company led by the Swiss French choreographer, Jean Georges Noverre. As she puts it, “Swords were drawn, bloodshed ensued, two men died, the theatre was trashed and the windows of Garrick’s house were broken by the mob. Reluctantly, Garrick withdrew the ballet; Noverre and his hundred dancers paid off and sent back to France” (24).

The debacle was used as a good weapon by George Colman the Elder in his *A Letter of Abuse, to D—d G—k, Esq* (1757), where he insinuates that “we are obliged for a very singular Discovery, namely, that your Father was a *Frenchman*, which Anecdote will, in some Measure, tend to elucidate the Motives of your Conduct last *Winter*, in introducing an Army of *Frenchman*, under the Disguise of Dancers into this Kingdom” (Caines 1: 281). The riot damaged Garrick’s reputation as a British theatre manager as well as the buildings.

Since then, Garrick as a manager remained careful enough not to offend his audience’s patriotic sensibility. And yet, an undated letter of Sheridan, supposedly written immediately after he succeeded Garrick as manager of Drury Lane in 1776, may offer a glimpse into what he inwardly felt during his long reign. Sheridan reports to his father-in-law, Thomas Linley the Elder, that “[w]e have, by and with the advice of the privy council, concluded to have Noverre over” (*Letters* 1: 102–3). Even without Cecil Price’s note on the phrase “the privy council”—“The new proprietors, and Garrick” (*Letters* 1: 102)—one could sense not only Garrick’s remaining influence but also his tenacious hope to invite Noverre from France, though, fortunately or unfortunately, this plan proved abortive.

III. R. B. Sheridan's Afterpieces Playing with the Mania for Spectacle

Embarking on the purchase of Drury Lane, Sheridan found Garrick a trustworthy guide. Another letter by him to Linley on 4 January 1776 says that “G. [i.e., Garrick] seems likely always to continue our friend, and to give every assistance in his power” (*Letters* 1: 97). Thus, it is quite natural that, in the undated letter cited above, Sheridan also tells Linley that “there is a species of pantomime to be shortly put on foot, which is to draw all the human kind to Drury” (*Letters* 1: 103), and declares to follow his predecessor's management policy. Sheridan, however, will prove ambivalent towards the current visual-oriented, patriotic tendency of the time.

The first of Sheridan's afterpieces written for Loutherbourog is a musical entertainment titled *The Camp*, performed on 15 October 1778. Its plot is just a sparse, passionless pastiche of George Farquhar's *The Recruiting Officer* (1706): a girl named Nancy disguises herself as a man to be a recruit to be reunited with his lover, William, in Coxheath Camp. With the help of an army-loving lady whose model is obviously Georgiana Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire, the heroine's adventure ends on a successful note.¹² It can be reasonably guessed that the main purpose of the work was to display Loutherbourog's spectacular sets and the contemporary audience also took the play as such, as *The Morning Post*, 16 October 1778, says that “This petit piece is said to be the production of Mr. Sheridan...in order to introduce Mr. *Loutherbourog's* [sic] scenic spectacle of Coxheath Camp, with a kind of dramatic propriety” (Qtd. in. *DW* 2: 708).

Nevertheless, its subplot concerning the Irish painter, O'Daub, plays against this objective in a series of metatheatrical insider jokes. In the first place, O'Daub is not Sheridan's invention. He is originally a stage-Irish character in John Burgoyne's *The Maid of Oaks*, performed on 5 November 1774, with the set design by Loutherbourog. Sheridan recycles the role in his own play, featuring once again John Moody, the actor who played the part in *The Maid of Oaks*. At the beginning of the work, Gauge, an exciseman of the camp district, comes across his old friend, O'Daub. He tells Gauge that he has come here on business.

O'DAUB. Faith it's a foolish one—you must know I got such Credit at the Fete Champetre there that little Roscius [i.e., Garrick] recommended me to the Managers of Drury Lane Theatre, and so I am now a kind of a Deputy

¹² Robert W. Jones interprets *The Camp*, along with *The Critic*, as Sheridan's satirical attack on the British army, which was “dubious, effete, and luxuriant and, as such, wholly unready to face invasion” (26).

Superintendent under Mr. Leatherbag the great painter; that is, as soon as he executes any thing, I design it my Jewel.

GAUGE. And what—are they going to bring the Camp on the Stage?

O'DAUB. You have it—Cox-heath by Candle light my Jewel! (*DW* 2: 729)

In Act 1 of *The Maid of the Oaks*, O'Daub, at the request of his colleague architect, sings a song titled “Then away to Champêtre” (15–16), which at once closes the first act and leads the play into the main plot. According to O'Daub here, the song gained such a favourable opinion of the ex-manager that he was recommended to work under Loutherboung as a deputy painter of Drury Lane. Playfully going between the real and fictional worlds, the playwright tickles the audience's expectations for the spectacular presentation of Coxheath Camp at the climax.

However, his joke is a double-edged sword because it can deflate their eagerness to be beguiled by the miraculous craftsmanship of the famous designer. O'Daub's lines cannot help reminding them that the apparently lifelike landscape is in fact just an artificial composition of painted boards and model horses, mainly prepared not by Loutherboung himself but by the drudgery of O'Daub, the vice-painter. Even his malapropism—“Leatherbag”—makes the name of the admired painter sound ridiculous and renders him as if he were just one of the stage properties.

Later in the play, O'Daub begins his data-collecting sketches of the camp, though, as he is a neophyte, he does not understand the jargons of stagehands. While he thinks aloud about the acronyms in his orders—“let me Study my orders a little, for I'm not used to this Stage Business. P.S. and O.P.—who the Devil now is to understand that?—O but here's the Explanation here, P.S.—the Prompter's Side and O.P.—opposite the Prompter” (*DW* 2: 742)—a serjeant and his soldiers as well as local people enter and suspect him of being an enemy agent.

SERJEANT. He certainly must be a Spy by his drawing figures.... Hush! and shall convict him out of his own mouth.

O'DAUB. P.S.—Yet the Star and Garter must certainly be P.S.

SERJEANT. P.S.—What the Devil does he say?

1ST COUNTRYMAN. Treason you may Swear by our not understanding him.—

O'DAUB. Aye, and then O.P. will have the advantage.

SERJEANT. O.P.—That's the old Pretender—A Damn'd French Jacobite Spy—my life on't!

2ND COUNTRYMAN. And P.S. Prince Steward I suppose. (*DW* 2: 742–43)

Importantly, the joke here—O’Daub’s newly acquired theatre jargons being misinterpreted both by soldiers and locals as the Jacobite codes—mocks not the Jacobites themselves but the Francophobic Britons, who see a Jacobite plotting in everything. The real Coxheath Camp, near Maidstone, was one of the army camps Britain established along the possible invasion routes after France openly intervened in the War of American Independence in 1778. These camps were, as it were, an ideological embodiment of the British power and solidarity, which was part of the reason they became a popular spectator sport. Still, the scene rather makes anti-Jacobite sentiment ludicrous and trivial. In short, there is a hidden, but unbridgeable gap between what the main plot demonstrates and what the subplot insinuates.¹³

Nevertheless, it appears that the audience either did not recognise the strained relationship of the subplot with the much-expected spectacle, or just ignored it. The unsigned review in *St. James’s Chronicle* (15–17 October 1778) well illustrates both the enthusiasm for the camp entertainment and the comparatively cold reception of Sheridan’s lines:

The Piece concludes with a View of the Right wing of The Camp, and the Regiments in Motion, which exceeds every Thing in Scenery we have ever seen. The Dialogue appears to be the Work of Mr. Sheridan, junior. It has the Excellencies and Blemishes of that Writer. It is sprightly, ornamental, and yet level to the tinselled or untinselled Vulgar;...the Writer and the Composer are so totally eclipsed by the Painter that the Entertainment of the *Camp*, will always be attributed to the Talents of Mr. de Louthembourg [*sic*]. (Qtd. in *DW* 2: 712)

While the review commends the spectacle, it dismisses all the other elements including words and music of the piece. A similar attitude can be seen in another comment on the performance in *Town and Country Magazine* (vol. 10, 1778): “the chief merit of this performance is due to M. de Louthembourg, whose fine representation of Cox-heath Camp does great honour to him as an artist. Indeed, the whole performance seems chiefly designed to introduce the happy effects of that great master’s pencil, as the dialogue, tho’ written by Mr. Sheridan, can only be considered as a temporary *jeu d’esprit*” (Qtd. in *DW* 2: 714). The latter reviewer, in his use of the adversative conjunction “tho’,” does not forget to show respect for the author of the

¹³ Fintan O’Toole’s *A Traitor’s Kiss*, the first biography of Sheridan focusing on his Irish origin, points out that, from the early stage of their friendship in mid-1770s, Sheridan had a barrier against his identification with the Whig grandees: “his sense of being Irish” (141). This may also be a part of the reason for his ambiguous handling of the anti-Jacobite feeling in *The Camp*.

renowned *The School for Scandal* (1777), and yet the dialogue is simply disposed of as “a temporary *jeu d’esprit*,” which contributes little to the merit of the work.

In contrast to the popular neglect of Sheridan’s covert satire on the Francophobic mania for army and spectacle, Loutherboung achieved such a brilliant reputation that he was “called to Warley Camp near Brentwood in Essex to make a record of the monarch’s visit there” (Joppien, commentary on op. 59, no pagination), as early as five days after the stage production of *The Camp*. Likewise, the issue of *The London Packet* for 8–11 January 1779 remarks on another collaborative work of Sheridan and Loutherboung, a pantomime entitled *The Wonders of Derbyshire* (8 January 1779), as follows: “The sublime stile of the paintings seemed to have awed the genius of buffoonery and low humour” (no pagination).

Perhaps because of these bitter receptions, *The Critic*, performed on 30 October 1779, deals with Loutherboung’s spectacular sets even more subtly. The burlesque is written after the fashion of *The Rehearsal* (1671) by George Villiers, 2nd Duke of Buckingham, which mocks John Dryden in the character of Bayes by metatheatrically showing a rehearsal of his play on stage.¹⁴ However, while *The Rehearsal* jibes at the bombastic dramaturgy, *The Critic* appears to celebrate spectacles and propagandistically ridicule the government’s incompetence at the prospect of a Franco-Spanish invasion. Dangle, the eponymous critic who is dangling from the theatrical world, goes to see a rehearsal of *The Spanish Armada*, a new tragedy of Puff, an all-round hack writer. Puff is, to a considerable degree, the author’s own self-humiliating portrait¹⁵—he is a self-avowed opportunist who caters to everybody with his “Art of Puffing” (*DW* 2: 511). On the request of Sneer, Dangle’s friend, Puff shows a portion of his expertise, which once again makes a joke bridging over the worlds within and without the play. When a new comedy is to be on stage, he writes a review of it on “the day before it is to be performed” (*DW* 2: 514), which consists of a long panegyric for the players belonging to Drury Lane as well as for “the scenery—The miraculous power of Mr. DE LOUTHERBOURG’s pencil are universally acknowledged!” (*DW* 2: 15).

All the actors mentioned in Puff’s paean—James Dodd, Robert Palmer and Thomas King—are parties involved in the first performance of *The Critic*. Dodd was

¹⁴ A century after Buckingham’s play, the late-eighteenth-century London audience was still familiar with the burlesque, partly because Garrick kept staging *The Rehearsal* again and again. However, as Tiffany Stern points out, Garrick used “the medium of Bayes to criticize contemporary acting, changing the play’s thrust from [Dryden and his heroic plays] to ‘the absurd stile of acting’ that he was struggling to update” (243).

¹⁵ Michael Corder makes a long list of common features of Sheridan and Puff as playwright-cum-manager, commenting that “Puff would understand the reasons for Sheridan’s [behaviour towards actors]” (xli).

performing the role of Dangle, Palmer playing as Sneer, King himself was featured as Puff, and Loutherbouurg was in charge of the set of this performance. In this case, however, the playwright’s metatheatrical jest will not discourage the audience’s immersion into the play. Rather, by blurring boundaries between theatrical roles and real actors, Puff’s rushing torrent of eulogy creates an inclusive atmosphere of celebration which drags the audience by force into a carnival.

David Crane remarks that this overall celebration marks a watershed between *The Critic* and *The Rehearsal*, which is a more obvious and sometimes flat satire on Dryden. Even in the play’s bitter moments—casting ridicule on Richard Cumberland in the character of Sir Fretful Plagiary and attacking Lord North’s lack of policy with Lord Burleigh’s silence—“politics and the theatre marry together in a celebration of England” (Crane 94). His observations on the difference between the two rehearsal plays are convincing, but it is also natural for Sheridan to be amiable to what he is making fun of; after all, as Linda Kelly concisely indicates, “it is the officious Mr Puff, not Sir Fretful, whose tragedy is burlesqued in *The Critic*” (90). Moreover, it is slightly questionable whether this happy marriage of theatre and politics can be really taken at face value, since it is described as the fruit of the compromise of Puff—the far more practical director than Bayes.

In *The Rehearsal*, Bayes’s idealistic and overly-theoretical demands *ad absurdum* finally lead to the breakdown of the rehearsal and his parting thrust, “Since they will not admit of my Plays, they shall know what Satyrist I am. And so farewell to this Stage, I gad, for ever” (5.1.433–36). On the other hand, Puff’s absolute priority is to get his work actually performed on stage, even at the expense of his own script. Thus, when the under prompter tells him that the players very liberally “cut out or omit what ever they found heavy or unnecessary to the plot” (DW 2: 520) in Act 2, Scene 1, he indulgently answers, “They are in general very good judges,” and calls to Dangle and Sneer, “let us see what our painters have done for us” (DW 2: 520–21).

Puff’s words are at once the cue for a scene-change in *The Critic*, the start of the last rehearsal of *The Spanish Armada*, and the first part of Loutherbouurg’s spectacle. Now the curtain rises and reveals Tilbury Fort. Though Dangle exclaims, “very fine indeed!” (DW 2: 521), the centrepiece comes in the closing scene—the Spanish Armada. Puff explains, “you will have a battle at last, but, egad, it’s not to be by land—but by sea—and that is the only quite new thing in the piece” (DW 2: 536). Puff’s words must have reflected the actual performance, as *Morning Chronicle*, 29 September 1779, advertised the play as “A New Musical Piece.... In the course of which will be displayed a Transparency, representing the destruction of the Spanish Armada” (Qtd. in DW 2: 466).

In spite of his resentment over the massive cut of lines—"here has been such lopping and topping, I shan't have the bare trunk of my play left presently" (*DW* 2: 537), Puff makes an all-out effort to lead the spectacular battle-scene to success:

Scene changes to the sea. The fleets engage—the musick plays 'Britons strike home'.—Spanish fleet destroyed by fireships, &c. —English fleet advances—musick plays 'Rule Britannia'.—The procession of all the English rivers and their tributaries with their emblems, &c., begins with Handel's water musick—ends with a chorus to the march in Judas Maccabaeus. During this scene, Puff directs and applauds every thing. Then—

PUFF. Well, pretty well; but not quite perfect. So, ladies and gentlemen, if you please, we'll rehearse this piece again to-morrow. (*DW* 2: 550)

And it *is* a success. For all the ludicrous accidents and liberal revisions of players and stagehands, Puff miraculously brings the play to a successful finale, as Crane praises that "it is the genius of a great showman like Puff not to lose his nerve at the approach of the ludicrous" (95). Nevertheless, importantly, Puff finishes the play (it can be both *The Critic* and *The Spanish Armada*) with the words, "we'll rehearse this piece again to-morrow," toppling over what he himself has been piling at the very end. While Bayes abandons his work halfway, Puff achieves everything that the audience would demand—a magnificent sea battle with model ships in motion, exalting music including "Rule, Britannia," and a solemn procession celebrating the British victory over Spain—and yet, he implicitly throws cold water on the audience's absorption by jestingly saying that it is just an imperfect work in progress. Sheridan's virtually last comedy suggests a covert sense of hesitation about what it is doing.

IV. "There must be a revolution": The Theatre Managers' Predicaments

Critics have variously interpreted Sheridan's withdrawal from playwriting and entry into politics after *The Critic* (he was elected MP for the first time for Stafford on 12 September 1780). Frank Donoghue argues that "Sheridan's ostensibly drastic and ill-starred career change" is not due to "his ambition but rather to his attitude toward print culture" (831). According to him, Sheridan, in the age of rapidly growing publishing industry, could not contain his distrust of the commercial circulation of writing and preferred political speeches in which he could keep a tighter authorial control. On the other hand, Francis David Taylor insists on the simultaneity and interrelationship of Sheridan's theatrical and political activities from the very start of

his career. Taylor maintains that his afterpieces like *The Camp* reveal "the radical Sheridan...continuing to negotiate the complex politics of the American War" (31), so that he gives "a portrait of a dramatist and parliamentarian whose beginnings in the theatres of both Covent Garden and Westminster were intimately bound up with the political crisis" (19).¹⁶

While the former heavily focuses on Sheridan's propensity as a man of letters, the latter attempts to explain his whole career from the political viewpoint. In either case, there is no room in their arguments to pay any attention to Garrick's influence on Sheridan. However, his brief, but reasonably intimate, partnership with Garrick might have contributed much more to his career—or, at least, his ambiguous attitude towards spectacular entertainments coloured with war sentiments—than was traditionally estimated.

When Garrick wrote to John Hoadly (3 January 1776) to communicate his intention to resign from the theatre—"I will not stay to be Sixty with my Cap & bells" (*Letters* 3: 1063)—what he felt was too much for his old bones was in fact not the physical strain of acting but the mental burden of managing a theatre. Thus, the letter continues to say that "there must be a revolution, or my successors will Suffer much, I had a resource in my own Acting, that counter-acted all the Evil designs of these Gentry" (*Letters* 3: 1063). Regrettably, there was no revolution at Drury Lane. As Garrick apprehensively predicted, the first winter season under Sheridan's management ran for only three weeks because of a disagreement among proprietors and the subsequent rebellion of the actors.

In his long letter to Garrick on 15–16 October 1776, Sheridan reports the situation in detail and laments that "there never was known such an uncommonly epidemick Disorder as has raged among our unfortunate Company" (*Letters* 1: 107). Sheridan was indeed unfortunate, as he did not have such a weapon as Garrick held to exercise his authority. As mentioned above, Garrick's acting style itself was visual-heavy, which helped establish his incontrovertible preeminence, and perhaps made him less reluctant to humour both demanding players and his audience's propensity for patriotic spectacle. In contrast, Sheridan's weapon was his words and therefore, in spite of his reputation as a master of witty dialogue, Sheridan could not boast of such an influence as Garrick's on late eighteenth-century theatrical world, where texts were

¹⁶ It is true that Sheridan's political opponents generally attacked him as an anti-patriotic radical, as Charles Abbot describes Sheridan as "the most active and mischievous partisan of the republican faction, ... acting himself, hand and heart, with the most desperate Jacobins" (1: 23). However, we should also note Marc Baer's comment that "Sheridan in fact presented too many facets to an age in which large segments of the politically active population thought dichotomously—loyalism versus radicalism" (151).

increasingly losing their significance, being replaced by gestures and spectacles. Of course, Sheridan the manager was an opportunist who, following Garrick's way, tried to exploit spectacular resources to win the spectators' favour. However, as a playwright, he might have continued to cherish his unrequited desire to make his plays *heard*, not merely watched. The anticlimactic ending of *The Critic* well demonstrates his dilemma as a man of theatre.

Tohoku University

Received August 29, 2013

Works Cited

- Abbot, Charles, Baron Colchester. *The Diary and Correspondence of Charles Abbot, Lord Colchester, Speaker of the House of Commons 1802–1817*. 3 vols. London: John Murray, 1861. Print.
- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. 1983. 3rd ed. London: Verso, 2006. Print.
- Angelo, Henry. *Reminiscences of Henry Angelo, with Memoirs of His Late Father and Friends*. 2 vols. London, 1828–30. Print.
- Armitage, David. *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire*. Cambridge: CUP, 2000. Print.
- Baer, Marc. "The Ruin of a Public Man: The Rise and Fall of Richard Brinsley Sheridan as Political Reformer." Morwood and Crane 151–77. Print.
- Baugh, Christopher. *Garrick and Louthembourg*. Theatre in Focus. Cambridge: Chadwick-Healy, 1990. Print.
- . "Philippe de Louthembourg: Technology-Driven Entertainment and Spectacle in the Late Eighteenth Century." *Huntington Library Quarterly* 70.2 (2007): 251–68. Print.
- Brown, Murray M. "Philippe Jacques de Louthembourg's *A Midsummer's Afternoon with a Methodist Preacher*: Swedenborg, Wesley, and the Gospel According to Luke." *1650–1850: Ideas, Aesthetics, and Inquiries in the Early Modern Era* 8 (2003): 119–34. Print.
- Burgoyne, John. *The Maid of the Oaks*. London: T. Becket, 1774. *MLA Literature Collections*. Web.
- Caines, Michael, ed. *Lives of Shakespearian Actors I: David Garrick, Charles Macklin and Margaret Woffington by Their Contemporaries*. 3 vols. London: Pickering & Chatto, 2008. Print.
- Colley, Linda. *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707–1837*. 1992. 2nd ed. New Haven: Yale UP, 2005. Print.
- Cordner, Michael. Introduction and notes. *The School for Scandal and Other Plays*. By Richard Brinsley Sheridan. Oxford: OUP, 1998. Print.
- Cottret, Bernard. *The Huguenots in England: Immigration and Settlement c. 1550–1700*. Trans. Peregrine & Adriana Stevenson. Cambridge: CUP, 1991. Print.

- Crane, David. “Satire and Celebration in *The Critic*.” *Sheridan Studies*. Morwood and Crane 87–95. Print.
- Cunningham, Vanessa. *Shakespeare and Garrick*. Cambridge: CUP, 2008. Print.
- Davies, Thomas. *Memoirs of the Life of David Garrick, Esq.* 2nd ed. 2 vols. London: Davies, 1780. ECCO. Web.
- Dennis, John. *Remarks on a Play Call’d, The Conscious Lovers, a Comedy*. London: T. Warner, 1723. ECCO. Web.
- Donoghue, Frank. “Avoiding the ‘Cooler Tribunal of the Study’: Richard Brinsley Sheridan’s Writer’s Block and Late Eighteenth-Century Print Culture.” *ELH* 68.4 (2001): 831–56. Print.
- Garrick, David. *Alfred, a Masque*. London: T. Cadell, et al., 1773. *MLA Literature Collections*. Web.
- . *The Letters of David Garrick*. Ed. David M. Little and George M. Kharl. 3 vols. Oxford: OUP, 1963. Print.
- Gibbs, Graham C. “Huguenot Contributions to England’s Intellectual Life, and England’s Intellectual Commerce with Europe, c. 1680–1720.” *Huguenots in Britain and Their French Background, 1550–1800*. Ed. Irene Scouloudi. Houndmills: Macmillan, 1987. 20–40. Print.
- Gildon, Charles. *The Life of Mr Thomas Betterton, The Late Eminent Tragedian*. London: Robert Gosling, 1710. ECCO. Web.
- Hedgecock, Frank. *A Cosmopolitan Actor: David Garrick and His French Friends*. London: Stanley Paul, 1912. Print.
- Jones, Robert W. “Sheridan and the Theatre of Patriotism: Staging Dissent during the War for America.” *Eighteenth-Century Life* 26.1 (2002): 24–45. Print.
- Joppien, Rüdiger, ed. *Philippe Jacques de Louthembourg RA, 1740–1812*. London: Greater London Council, 1973. Print. Exhibition Catalogue, Kenwood, the Iveagh Bequest, London, 2 June–13 August 1970.
- Kelly, Linda. *Richard Brinsley Sheridan: A Life*. London: Pimlico, 1998. Print.
- Mallet, David, and James Thomson. *Alfred*. London: A. Millar, 1740. *MLA Literature Collections*. Web.
- McPherson, Heather. “Caricature, Cultural Politics, and the Stage: The Case of *Pizarro*.” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 70.4 (2007): 607–31. Print.
- Mikhail, E. H., ed. *Sheridan: Interviews and Recollections*. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1989. Print.
- Morwood, James, and David Crane, eds. *Sheridan Studies*. Cambridge: CUP, 1995. Print.
- Nagler, A. M., ed. *A Source Book in Theatrical History*. New York: Dover, 1959. Print.
- O’Toole, Fintan. *A Traitor’s Kiss: The Life of Richard Brinsley Sheridan*. London: Granta, 1997. Print.
- Pepys, Samuel. *The Diary of Samuel Pepys: A Selection*. Ed. Robert Latham. London: Penguin, 2003. Print.

- Shakespeare, William. *The Norton Shakespeare: Based on the Oxford Edition*. Gen. Ed. Stephen Greenblatt. 2nd ed. New York: Norton, 2008. Print.
- Sheridan, R. B. *The Dramatic Works of Richard Brinsley Sheridan*. Ed. Cecil Price. 2 vols. Oxford: OUP, 1973. Print.
- . *The Letters of Richard Brinsley Sheridan*. Ed. Cecil Price. 3 vols. Oxford: OUP, 1966. Print.
- Stern, Tiffany. *Rehearsal from Shakespeare to Sheridan*. Oxford: Clarendon, 2000. Print.
- Taylor, David Francis. *Theatres of Opposition: Empire, Revolution & Richard Brinsley Sheridan*. Oxford: OUP, 2012. Print.
- Thomson, Peter. *The Cambridge Introduction to English Theatre, 1660–1900*. Cambridge: CUP, 2006. Print.
- Villiers, George, 2nd Duke of Buckingham. *The Rehearsal*. 1671. *Restoration Drama: An Anthology*. Ed. David Womersley. Oxford: Blackwell, 2000. 141–70. Print.
- West, Shearer. “The Visuality of the Theatre.” *Players, Playwrights, Playhouses: Investigating Performance, 1660–1800*. Ed. Michael Cordner and Peter Holland. Houndmills: Palgrave, 2007. 271–93. Print.
- Worrall, David. *Theatric Revolution: Drama, Censorship and Romantic Period Subcultures 1773–1832*. 2006. Oxford: OUP, 2008. Print.
- The London Packet* 8–11 January 1779. *GALE Digital Collections: British Newspapers 1600–1950*. Web.
- St. James’s Chronicle* 4–9 October 1773. *GALE Digital Collections: British Newspapers 1600–1950*. Web.