THE CLARK NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 8 SPRING 1985

A Promptbook Copy of *An Evening's Love*

In 1936 the theater historian William Clark observed, "Promptbook copies . . . do not exist for a single Restoration play." Clark's comment may have inspired other scholars to search for these items, for during the following decades a number have been uncovered. Edward A. Langhans, in his *Restoration Promptbooks* (1981), lists twenty from London theaters of the period, eleven of which he reproduces in facsimile. Most of the plays listed, however, are by minor authors, and the prompt notes are relatively sparse. Among the fuller promptbooks from the early eighteenth century, only a few are by Restoration authors. Thus the copiously annotated prompt copy of John Dryden's comedy *An Evening's Love; or The Mock Astrologer* recently acquired by the Clark Library is a valuable addition to the canon, providing us with details on theatrical production in the period and a new perspective on a play by the Restoration's most distinguished poet and one of its best dramatists.

Why are prompt copies so important? The typical printed version of a Restoration play tells us little about the staging of the work and of course nothing at all about omitted or altered passages in the text as it was performed. A promptbook therefore not only allows us a glimpse of the play as it was perceived by contemporary audiences but offers evidence of changing tastes in theatrical fare.

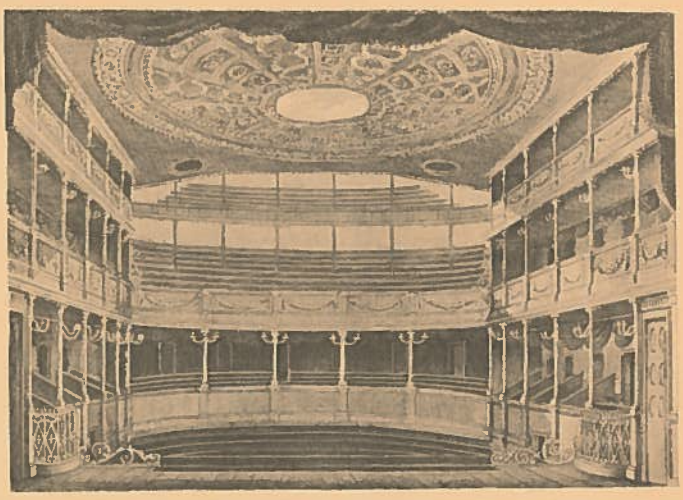
For the audience of a play, the words of the playwright, the acting, the sets, merge to create an illusion of wholeness. Behind that illusion is the work of the prompter. At each performance he stands in the wings, bent over his prompt copy, regulating the machinery of the entire play. In the first number of Aaron Hill's *The Prompter,* published on 12 November 1734, there is a description of this "humble but useful officer" behind the scenes of the playhouse, who, despite his appearance, seems to have had incredible power in this world of pasteboard illusions:

> He never forsook his post but, like a general in the field, had many *aides de camp* about him, whom he dispatched with his orders, and I could perceive that though he seemed not to command, yet all his instructions were punctually complied with, and that in the modest character of an adviser he had the whole management and direction of that little commonwealth.

Hill proceeds to describe the prompter in action—how the actors listen anxiously to his every word; how by ringing the bell suspended from his arm he is able to summon up all kinds of music and by blowing the whistle hanging round his neck he can direct the movement of the sets like a conjurer. "I have seen Heaven and Earth pass away and Chaos ensue, and from thence a new Creation arise, fair and blooming as the poets fancy, and all by the powerful magic influence of this wonder-working whistle," writes Hill of the prompter's godlike powers.

The book that he studies so intently is, in some sense, magical. In addition to the original text, there are all the instructions for making the play work. Unlike many of the comedies of the time, with their emphasis on dialogue and witty exchange, *An Evening's Love* has elements of what has been called "Spanish Romance," a dramatic form filled with intrigue, turns of plot, and swordplay. Though the dialogue in this play, too, is often witty, Dryden imported into the work some of Molière's broader, more farcical, kind of comedy and added a personal ingredient of bedroom farce. As a result, there is an abundance of music, scene changes, and disguise. For a prompter interested in an active day at the theater, *An Evening's Love* was the perfect comedy. And it demanded a promptbook that reveals a great deal about the performance of the play.

The promptbook at the Clark was prepared on a copy of the 1691 quarto edition, presumably for use at Drury Lane, where all the known performances after this date were given. The comedy was first performed on 12 June 1668 by the King's Company at the Bridges Street theater. John Downes, the author of *Roscius Anglicanus* (1708), listed it among the important "stock" plays, though the



View of the old Theatre Royal in Drury Lane shortly before its demolition in 1792. Opened on 26 March 1674, the theater was in use for 117 years, until 4 June 1791. (Engraving from Theatrum Illustrata, *1825.)*

number of performances recorded in *The London Stage* is not impressive. The records for performances during the Restoration, however, are notoriously incomplete, and Downes may have known more than the faulty records will give us on such matters. We do know that it was acted at Drury Lane after the King's Company moved there on 26 March 1674 and that it continued to be acted there after the acting companies went through a variety of unions and dissolutions. The publication of a quarto in 1691 suggests a performance at that time, even though there is no other record of one. When it was acted on 21 April 1705, it was announced as a play "Not Acted these six Years," indicating the possibility of a performance in 1699. It was revived once more during the 1713–14 season, again in the spring of 1716, and, apparently for the final time, on 18 October 1717. The Clark prompt copy, then, must have been prepared for one or more of the half-dozen revivals between 1691 and 1717, but some of the notes may reflect a tradition of performance from the earliest production in 1668.

Though legible throughout, the copy is badly stained, especially at the end, where it appears as if water had soaked through, leaving an identical pattern on the last several pages. The early wrappers on the copy identify the play front and back by its subtitle, *The Mock Astrologer,* carefully penned, and embellished on the back cover with an elaborate floral design. The manuscript notes within appear to have been entered by at least three hands, possibly for different performances. Most notations are penned, some in brown ink, others in black; but at one point a penciled direction is still faintly discernible, though overwritten in ink.

Leaving aside for the moment the numerous excisions and alterations in the text, we can describe the prompt notes as a series of instructions to various members of the company, those backstage as well as the performers. There are warning calls for the actors and musicians; notations defining their entrances and exits; cues for music and sound effects; detailed lists of stage properties, with directions for their placement; and notes on scenery. Taken together, these instructions give us a more immediate sense of how the production must have looked—and sounded—to contemporary audiences than the bare printed text can.

Back cover, prompt copy of Dryden's An Evening's Love; or The Mock Astrologer.

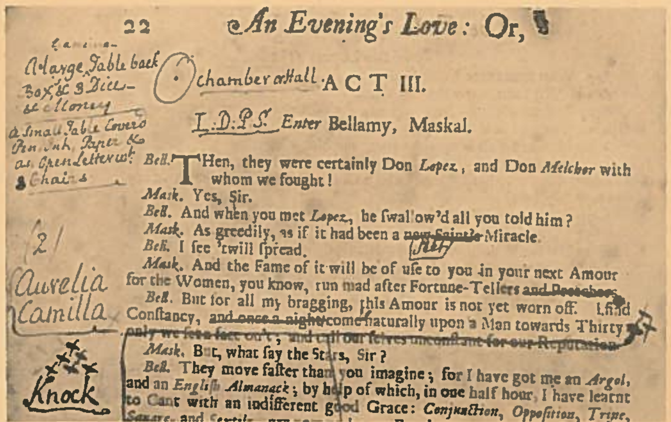
Information on setting, for example, comes almost entirely from the manuscript notes. The printed text defines the locale of only one scene (act 1, sc. 2), and that one, significantly enough, is altered in manuscript from the original setting in "A Chapel" to a "Garden." This and the other indications of place ("A Street," "Chamber or Hall," "Garden & Walls") presumably refer to stock scenery. Accompanying property lists help to fill in the visual effects: the prompter's notes at the beginning of act 3 call for "A large Gameing Table back / Box's, & 3 Dice— / & Money," to be brought forward later in the act for the gambling scene, and just under that is the list for the opening scene, to be furnished with "a Small Table Cover'd / Pen, Ink, Paper & / an Open Letter wth: / 8 Chairs." Props brought onstage by the actors are included in cast warnings—like this one for the quarrel scene in act 4: "Jacinta / a Purse / Beatrix / a P: of scissors wth a Brass Chain / & a Pair of Garters, / Maskall. / a Knife & a Comb."

A reference to the "Trap" in a note instructing the stagehands provides an interesting insight into another detail of stage production. That various trapdoors might be used in a comedy involving a pretense at supernatural occurrences is hardly surprising. They were commonly used to give the impression of the sudden disappearances of ghosts or to achieve spectacular effects. But the context here indicates that the scenery was occasionally also gotten off the stage in this manner.

Some of the manuscript stage directions are written in a kind of code. The beginning of each act, and scene changes within the act, are signaled by a circle with a dot in the middle, which indicates the blowing of the whistle for the stagehands to move into action. *X*'s arranged in a pyramid are a cue for music or some kind of sound effect, usually specified underneath (whether the precise number of *X*'s —anywhere from three to nine—and the pattern of dots surrounding some of the pyramids have any significance is not clear; likely they were mere embellishments). One such pyramid, this of nine *X*'s, has "Flourish here" written underneath; another has "Knock." "Trample" appears below two others, signaling the approach of characters from offstage, or, in keeping with the theatrical illusion, from outside the room in which the action has been taking place. These marginal notations are matched by an *X* in the text to mark the exact point the sound is called for.

Entrance and exit cues are defined in relation to the prompter. A few merely tell us whether a character is to enter or leave the stage from the prompter's side (PS) or from the side opposite the prompter (OP), but most specify the "door" as well. Thus we learn that this play used three points of entry on each side of the stage, signaled by the abbreviations LDPS, MDPS, UDPS, and LDOP, MDOP, UDOP (lower, middle, and upper door). How many of these notations refer to actual doors, however, is uncertain. While we know from the prompter's notes that a real door is used in the garden scenes, some of the notations may simply indicate entrances through the wing passages.

The interpretation of "doors" has some bearing on the date of this promptbook. Although the Drury Lane theater still had at least two doors on each side of the proscenium arch in the early 1690s, the lower ones were closed off in 1696 to accommodate more seats. Unfortunately, however,


22 *An Evening's Love*: Or,

ACT III.

Enter Bellamy, Maskal.

Bell. THen, they were certainly Don *Lopez*, and Don *Melchor* with whom we fought!

Mask. Yes, Sir.

Bell. And when you met *Lopez*, he ſwallow'd all you told him?

Mask. As greedily, as if it had been a new Saint's Miracle.

Bell. I ſee 'twill ſpread.

Mask. And the Fame of it will be of uſe to you in your next Amour for the Women, you know, run mad after Fortune-Tellers and Preachers.

Bell. But for all my bragging, this Amour is not yet worn off. I find Conſtancy, and once a night come naturally upon a Man towards Thirty: only we ſeem fact on't, and call our ſelves unconſtant for our Reputation.

Mask. But, what ſay the Stars, Sir?

Bell. They move faſter than you imagine; for I have got me an *Argol*, and an *Engliſh Almanack*; by help of which, in one half hour, I have learnt to Cant with an indifferent good Grace: *Conjunction*, *Oppoſition*, *Trine*,

Page illustrating several types of prompt notes.

there isn't enough internal evidence to interpret more than one door literally. Nor do the cast warnings give any clue to the date, as they do in some promptbooks, since they are by character, not by actor. Since the abbreviations used here have previously been found only in promptbooks known or assumed to date from the eighteenth century, it seems likely that the Clark copy was used for performances during this period.

But was the copy entirely prepared for a single eighteenth-century revival or do some of the notations date from a different time than others? There are two schools of thought on the way promptbooks were prepared. Professor Langhans of the University of Hawaii, who has been studying promptbooks for years and prepared the excellent facsimile volume mentioned earlier, tends to think mainly in terms of individual performances. He argues that various members of the acting company were responsible for different areas of instruction and that the different hands found in some promptbooks (including the one at the Clark) reflect this division of labor. After examining a Xerox copy of the Clark's promptbook, Professor Langhans has suggested to us the likelihood that it was prepared for the performances of Dryden's comedy at Drury Lane during the 1713–14 season, when Thomas Newman was the prompter, or perhaps for one of the two later performances, in 1716 and 1717, under W. R. Chetwood's direction.

A. H. Scouten, Emeritus Professor from the University of Pennsylvania, tends instead to think in terms of a theatrical tradition. He believes that promptbooks were used over and over again, that different hands may represent the work of different prompters and can tell us a good deal about the kinds of theatrical traditions that were carried on as well as the ways in which a play was reinterpreted by successive prompters. There is much in the Scouten view that is particularly attractive in thinking of the Clark's prompt copy of *An Evening's Love*. If, as Professor Scouten demonstrates, theaters were reluctant to throw away old prompt copies, there is no reason to think that, in preparing a new promptbook using the 1691 quarto, the prompter would have ignored the useful information found in older prompt copies. Even if it was wholly prepared for one of the later revivals, then, it likely reflects a tradition of performance at Drury Lane going back to the seventeenth century.

But a few scraps of evidence indicate that the promptbook may actually have been used—and altered—over a period of time. The pencil annotation and an occasional printed letter traced over in ink suggest that the copy had faded with time and handling and was restored for a later performance. Several entrance and exit cues are in a different hand than the majority, as if one prompter were filling in information omitted by an earlier one; and in two cases, existing cues have clearly been altered to bring a character in from a different part of the stage. Perhaps most significantly, the change of locale in act 1 from a chapel to a garden is written in a different hand and ink than the other notations on setting—apparently in the same hand that is responsible for many of the extensive cuts and changes in the text.

These textual alterations are the strongest evidence that some portions of this prompt copy, though not necessarily all, were prepared for an eighteenth-century performance. A few changes simply modernize the text (*thee*, for example, is changed to *you*) and some passages appear to have been deleted simply in order to shorten the play or to speed its pace. But most of the deletions and alterations represent an unmistakable intent to clean it up. Double entendres, oaths, passages of "barefaced bawdry," cynical comments on marriage and abusive ones on parents, and all allusions to religion are systematically emended or excised entirely. The scale of these changes suggests the work of a prompter aware of the attacks made by Jeremy Collier in 1698 on the "immorality and profaneness" of the stage. But this merely tells us that *some* of the excisions were probably made after that date. In fact there was considerable pressure on the theatrical companies to reform the language and decorum of their productions throughout the 1690s. There is even a point at which "Pox on him" is first deleted and then restored, suggesting some disagreement about what was proper or some change in the moral atmosphere over a period of time.

Perhaps the oddest information imparted by this promptbook is that all of Dryden's delightful songs have been cut. Although some of them are sexually suggestive, if not downright bawdy, others are merely charming songs of love. The absence of such songs, along with the deletion of some substantial dialogue, changes Dryden's play from an exotic contemplation of the workings of love into a fast-paced farce—just the kind of play that Dryden complained about in his discussion of comedy prefaced to the printed version of the play. All Restoration comedies underwent revisions and bowdlerizing during the eighteenth century, and there is no reason why Dryden's comedies should have survived the prudery of theatrical audiences of the next century better than most. But without the songs and double entendres, it is hardly surprising that *An Evening's Love* was not performed after 1717. In addition to what this prompt copy tells us about the Restoration and eighteenth-century stage, then, it also provides knowledge about the kind of plays the audiences of the times wanted or at least what the playhouse managers and the prompters thought they wanted.

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International Conference to Be Held This Summer

This August, shortly before Halley's comet becomes visible to the human eye for the fourth time in three hundred years, leading scholars from around the world will gather at the UCLA campus and UCLA's Clark Library for a conference entitled "Newton and Halley, 1686–1986." The year 1986 marks both the reappearance of the comet and the presentation to the Royal Society, three centuries ago, of the first manuscript of Newton's *Principia*. The UCLA meeting, immediately following the XVII International Congress of the History of Science in Berkeley, California, will recall the extraordinarily fruitful collaboration between Sir Isaac Newton and his younger contemporary, Edmond Halley.

Newton and Halley shared a range of scientific interests, and they came in contact often, first through correspondence, documented from at least the 1670s, and later as associates and members of the Royal Society. Halley, approximately fourteen years younger than Newton, had a great admiration for the latter's genius, and Newton benefited from Halley's loyalty on more than one occasion. In spring of 1686, when the first version of the *Principia* was presented to the Royal Society, the physicist Robert Hooke demanded credit for his part in the discovery of the inverse-square law, and Newton, infuriated, threatened to suppress parts of the manuscript still in his possession. It was Halley who managed to dissuade Newton. At the behest of the Royal Society, he also took responsibility for overseeing the publication of the treatise and for concomitant expenses. Halley saw the manuscript through the several changes it underwent during the year that followed. The achievement manifest in the completed *Principia,* which had grown to three books by spring of 1687, exceeded even Halley's enthusiastic expectations, and Halley's ode, prefatory to the first edition, speaks of Newton as one who, more than any other mortal, had approached the gods.

It is most likely that Newton's *Principia* as we know it would not exist today had it not been for Edmond Halley's efforts; yet, without applying Newton's then recently developed celestial mechanics, Halley would probably not have predicted the return of the comet which now bears his name. Halley, who had an interest in astronomy even before his student years at Oxford, eventually became convinced that the bright comets seen in 1680 and 1682 traveled elliptically around the sun, though other astronomers favored parabolic or hyperbolic paths. Implied in Halley's theory was the possibility of seeing these comets more than once: a comet in elliptical orbit would periodically reappear over the earth, whereas one moving in a parabolic or hyperbolic curve would not. Halley had some difficulty, however, with the calculations needed to systematize the observation of comets seen only at extremely rare intervals. It was with the help of Newton's orbital calculations, which he requested and received in 1684, that Halley was able to draw the conclusions he presented in his 1705 treatise, *A Synopsis of the Astronomy of Comets.* He proposed there that the comet sightings of the years 1531, 1607, and 1682 had occurred during the returns, roughly

Edmond Halley. Frontispiece to Tabulae Astronomicae *(1749), published posthumously. The volume, now at the Clark, is from the Bullard collection.*

each seventy-six years, of a single celestial body and that, accordingly, the comet would reappear in 1758. It did reappear, within just a few days of the time Halley predicted. The same comet, last seen on earth in 1910, will next become visible in late 1985, fading from view by mid-1986.

The thirty-five scholars who have accepted invitations to speak or to be moderators at the conference honoring Newton and Halley will come from a half-dozen countries, more than twenty institutions, and varied fields of interest. Scientists and historians of science from the Observatoire de Paris, the Royal Observatory, Greenwich, and the Adler Planetarium, Chicago, will be joined by scholars from such academic institutions abroad as the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge, London, Durham, Rome, Melbourne, and New South Wales; and from such American universities as Harvard and Rice, the University of Indiana, the California Institute of Technology, and the Berkeley and Los Angeles campuses of the University of California. Among Americans to take part in the conference will be I. Bernard Cohen, Albert Van Helden, and Richard Westfall. Scholars expected from the United Kingdom include A. H. Cook, Alan Gabbey, Derek Howse, S. R. Malin, Simon Schaffer, F. R. Stephenson, G. L'E. Turner, and David Waters. R. W. Home will be coming from Australia; Margaret J. Osler, from Canada; Suzanne Débarbat, from France; and Paolo Casini, from Italy. Approximately seventy-five specially invited attendees will represent other countries.

The cosponsors of the summer conference are the Clark Library and UCLA's recently established Center for Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Studies, an organized research unit approved by the Regents of the University of California during their March 1985 meeting. The event's

principal organizers are Roger Hahn and John Heilbron from the Office of the History of Science at Berkeley, Donald Yeomans of the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, Robert Westman of the History Department at UCLA, and Norman Thrower of the Geography Department at UCLA. The UCLA administration has been most supportive; Provost Raymond Orbach, who has a professional interest in the topic, will welcome participants and make introductory remarks.

The working portion of the meeting, to be held at the Clark Library, will be invitational. It will consist of five sessions: "Newton and Halley," "Newton and the *Principia*," "Halley," "The Comet," and "Instruments and Ideas." A panel discussion led by Professor Richard Popkin, on "Newton as Alchemist and Theologian," will conclude the formal sessions.

Two of the conference's events will be open to the general public. The first of these will be an on-campus lecture by Fred L. Whipple, Emeritus Professor of Astronomy at Harvard University and Director of the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Dr. Whipple, who is a 1927 UCLA graduate, will lecture at Schoenberg Hall on 11 August at 7:30 P.M. on the topic "About Halley's Comet and Others." Tickets will be required for admission and can be obtained free of charge from the UCLA Central Ticket Office.

The other public event will be an exhibit on the history of science, to open at the Clark in early August. This exhibit would have pleased the Library's founder, William Andrews Clark, Jr., who was very much interested in astronomy and went to some effort to popularize it. On the grounds of his estate, he built an observatory and opened it to the public, even providing visitors with the services of an instructor. After the Clark observatory was razed some years ago because it had become unsafe, Clark's six-inch Brashear telescope was removed to the UCLA campus, where it is used today in one of the domes on top of the Mathematical Sciences building; the Clark meteorites, including one weighing 357 pounds, became the nucleus of the Leonard Collection, curated by the UCLA Institute of Geophysics and Planetary Physics.

The exhibit, which will remain mounted until mid-September, will contain items from the Clark's collections on the history of science, including a first edition of the *Principia*, Halley's Atlantic isogonic chart in the earliest state, a group of seventeenth-century broadsides on comets, and several items from the Sir Edward Bullard collection of Halleiana.* Complementing the printed material, there will be a display of scientific instruments and meteorites from the Institute of Geophysics and Planetary Physics. Among the meteorites are some from Diablo Canyon, Arizona, part of the collection donated to UCLA by the Clark family.

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*The Clark's recent acquisition of items from the Bullard collection was made possible by the generosity of the UCLA Foundation and Chancellor Charles Young, who provided the funds. An article about this collection will appear in the next issue of *The Clark Newsletter*.

Anniversaries

While almost everyone was talking ad nauseam about George Orwell in 1984, some of us commemorated the bicentenaries of the deaths of Samuel Johnson and Denis Diderot. Aficionados of round numbers will rejoice again, because 1985 is the tercentenary of so many things, including the births of three major composers and an Augustan poet, the publication of the fourth folio of Shakespeare, and two important political events. The music of Scarlatti, Handel, and Bach will be revered more widely than usual, at least until 31 December. The birth of John Gay is being remembered by two groups (small but enthusiastic), one in Britain and one in the United States. Charles II died in 1685, to be succeeded by the last Catholic king of Britain, James II, who caused such upheaval in only three years that we have due cause to remember him as an unwitting founder of British democracy (of a sort). It is harder to say quite what anyone will make of inconspicuous literary events of 1685, such as the publication of the anonymous *History of Nicerotis: A Pleasant Novel* (were there any unpleasant ones?), John Bunyan's *Holy War* in Dutch, or the young Samuel Wesley's collection of poems under the unlikely title of *Maggots*. Even the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, by which Louis XIV deprived Protestants at a stroke of their civil and religious liberty, will probably not cause much of a stir.

Nothing particularly spectacular seems to have occurred 250 years ago: no European monarchs were put to death, no far-reaching social or political changes were wrought, no new Continental literary work of genuinely enduring importance (except perhaps the Abbé Prévost's *Manon Lescaut*?) first saw the light of day, so 1735 will probably be overlooked. I think this is a pity. The character of an age, its "feel," is not necessarily contained in its greatest literature, nor always in its most memorable political events, since these are frequently eccentric rather than normative. It is in some measure a distortion of literary history to designate, as some still do occasionally, the first half of the eighteenth century in England with labels like the Age of Pope or the Age of Reason (a truly incredible misnomer) or with some similar phrase whose capital letters lend it authority. As a period of literary history, that half century might more aptly be called the age of Amhurst, Blackmore, Cibber, Dennis, Eachard, Forbes, Gilbert, Hughes, . . . and Young.

Others will give all due attention to the highlights of 1685 (and 1785, for that matter). I shall look at 1735. The depth of the Clark Library's holdings offers a rare opportunity for an attempt to arrive at an understanding of the year in Britain. It was a fairly ordinary year, all things considered, and therefore more likely to be representative than the one in which Diderot and Johnson died. True, two established, nay famous, authors published their collected works in 1735: Pope and, for the first time, Swift. Pope also issued a new edition of the *Dunciad*, two new poems, and, by subterfuge, his notorious *Letters* (not the done thing at all to publish those). But who now will wish to resurrect Thomas Blackwell's commentary on Homer, Abel Boyer's *History of Queen Anne*, or even Lord Bolingbroke's *Dissertation upon Parties*? Together with other

works of far more stunning obscurity, these really form the base upon which Pope, Swift, Burke, Johnson, and Gibbon built the superstructure that attracts most of our attention when we look at the eighteenth century nowadays.

Take the theater: the foremost dramatist of the day, without any doubt whatsoever, was the actor-manager Colley Cibber, whose reputation has been entirely submerged by Pope's elevating him to the exalted position of Arch Dunce. Since the plays of Cibber's only serious rival, Henry Fielding, are hardly even read these days, let alone performed, the earlier eighteenth-century theater tends to be passed over with (at best) a polite cough. The only exception, really, is the eternally popular *Beggar's Opera*. In 1735, Fielding wrote two new plays, and Gay's *Opera* went into its fourth edition in seven years. But neither would have got very far without ready-made theatrical targets: Cibber himself, and his sentimental drama, Italian opera (very fashionable when Gay was writing), and such light comedy as Henry Carey's unpronounceable *Chrononhotonthologos* (published in 1735). Similarly, Johnson's *Rasselas* is still read and remembered with pleasure, but few besides specialists look at Father Jerome Lobo's *Voyage to Abyssinia* (1735), which Johnson, then twenty-six and struggling, translated from a French edition, and used later when he made Rasselas a prince of Abyssinia.

Two hundred and fifty years ago, Marivaux's *Paysan Parvenu* made its first appearance in English, and Lord Lyttelton cashed in on a popular genre with his political satire, *Persian Letters*. (As usual, someone else exploited his success, enterprisingly enough, with a "continuation.") The book trade continued to rely on old favorites, including several that had appeared first in 1685: Nathaniel Crouch's unwittingly ironic *English Empire in America* and John Banks's allegorical political play, *The Unhappy Favourite,* which the later theater audiences gleefully reapplied to their own situation under Sir Robert Walpole's government. Numerous Dryden plays were still holding the stage and being reprinted, as were the Duke of Buckingham's *Rehearsal* and Nathaniel Lee's *Sophonisba,* which had inspired James Thomson's immortal line, in his own play of the same name: "Oh, Sophonisba, Sophonisba, oh!" The enduring success of these Restoration plays showed that in the eyes of producers and audiences in 1735 nothing much had changed, politically at any rate, in fifty years. Having taken four years to recover from the public scorn poured on his dramatic verse, Thomson wrote an eloquent anti-Walpole poem, *Liberty*. Although 1735 was a good year for opposition literature, which contains some resounding political rhetoric, Thomson was disappointed, for his poem, like all the rest, was so entirely ineffective as a political weapon that Walpole saw no point in continuing to finance propaganda in defense of his own government.

Two 1735 publications, both now virtually unknown, catch my eye. One is *A Yorkshire Tragedy. By Mr. William Shakespear,* the other, *Tell-tale Cupids Lately discover'd in the Eyes of a certain Court Lady, Now Displac'd.* First published in 1608, *A Yorkshire Tragedy* is a very brief play whose theme must have struck eighteenth-century readers (and possibly audiences: it seems not to have been performed in London) as "Not so New as Lamentable and True," since its protagonist is a man driven by the specter of poverty to murder his children. As dozens of political pamphlets reveal, not everyone was convinced by the official government line that Britain was more prosperous than ever before. Without being sensational, the play was horrifyingly relevant to the plight of many despairing people impoverished by the recent development of financial capitalism. Shakespeare was not the author of *A Yorkshire Tragedy,* but that never worried anyone in 1735. *Tell-tale Cupids* reveals another side of eighteenth-century life. The preface is a satirical warning to Walpole that court favorites fall, sooner or later: then the main narrative describes, with a falsely coy lasciviousness, the tale of a countess ensnared and ruined by the corruption and intrigues that were normal in high places. The brief volume is padded out with semisatirical, semiscandalous verses on various well-known public figures. With a kind of crude smirk, the whole of this little book exposes the immorality behind the elegant facade of court life. If in 1985 we were to commemorate only the elegancies and the highlights of literature and music, we might forget that the eighteenth century had its smutty, scandalous, altogether inglorious side, too. Let us get the balance right by recalling the more ordinary men and women of 1735.

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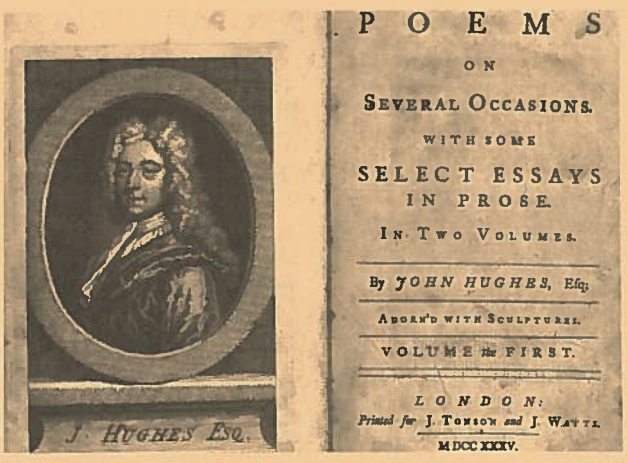

Swift's opinion of a poet whose works first appeared in 1735. Both inscriptions are generally thought to be in Swift's hand. (From the Clark copy.)

COMMENTARY: The Text, The Clark, The Critic

"The text" was the focus of discussion this past February at an all-day symposium entitled "Textual Editing and Criticism," an event that I hope will inaugurate a continuing series at the Clark on the production and evaluation of texts. The meeting was sponsored by the Clark Library and the Southern California Critical Forum, a group formed by Leo Braudy and Daniel Calder, English Department Chairs at USC and UCLA, to promote critical discussion among scholars in the Los Angeles area.

The idea of an informal gathering of textual critics had been talked of for some time. The final impulse to bring it about came after several conversations with Jerome McGann, author of the controversial *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism,* and with Philip Gaskell, author of *A New Introduction to Bibliography* and *From Writer to Reader: Studies in Editorial Method.* Professor McGann is Doris and Henry Dreyfuss Professor of Humanities at the California Institute of Technology; Professor Gaskell, Librarian of Trinity College, Cambridge, has an annual winter-term appointment at Caltech. Initially Professors McGann and Gaskell had agreed to hold a dialogue at the Clark on issues of contemporary textual criticism, but the scope of the meeting was later enlarged. It was agreed that there would be three papers, each with prepared responses followed by discussion from the audience. This format was meant to provide the opportunity for an exchange of views, and the symposium's title was purposely broad to encourage the consideration of a range of periods and issues.

The speakers did traverse quite an expanse of time: from Geoffrey Chaucer, to James Joyce, to Tom Stoppard. As the day began, Joseph Dane of USC, with respondents Henry A. Kelly of UCLA and Ralph Hanna of UC Riverside, spoke on "Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales:* Toward a Critical Consensus on the Worst Edition." Then Jerome McGann, whose respondents were Gwin Kolb II of UCLA and Vincent Cheng of USC, presented an analysis of "*Ulysses* as a Postmodern Text: The Gabler Edition." After lunch, Philip Gaskell, with respondents Leo Braudy and Hersh Zeifman, both of USC, treated some Stoppard plays as examples of "Variation in Stage Plays and Film."

The issues considered combined into a chronology of their own, from evaluating texts, to developing new editions, to adapting texts for specific purposes. Focusing on Joseph Urry's 1721 edition of *The Canterbury Tales,** commonly agreed to be "the worst," Professor Dane examined the process by which scholars achieve a critical consensus on the merit of literary editions. His observation that a number of the features which had given Urry's work its bad name had been the very ones commended in other editions of Chaucer led to the uncomfortable conclusion that there may be a lack of consensus on the criteria themselves. Questions of criteria concerned Professor McGann as well. Analyzing the recently published synoptic Gabler edition of *Ulysses,* he discussed the assumptions underlying Hans Walter Gabler's work. As he spoke about the problem of textual instability faced by editors of modern texts, he reflected on the relation of textual editing to literary criticism. Later Professor Gaskell, a member of the editorial board for the Gabler *Ulysses,* presented his views on the criteria and procedures used in preparing that text. In his own paper, he went on with the notion of the unstable text and discussed variation in dramatic works resulting from the collaboration of playwright, director, and actors. He noted instances of variation in Stoppard's *Travesties* and traced in greater detail the evolution of his *Night and Day.* He then moved on to film and, treating the motion picture as text, explained its innate instability —even a completed picture undergoes change in response to external pressures.

All the speakers addressed the issues of what constitutes a text and which criteria apply in the definition; certainly, in the last two decades serious questions have been raised about the tradition of establishing a "correct text" by hypothesizing the existence of an author's urtext. The view of the published text as an evolved "social construct" challenges this notion of unmediated authorial intention and entails increased responsibility for assembling the most comprehensive information possible about the creation of a text and for making critical choices about its proper form. The Gabler *Ulysses* is an impressive example of a text developed with a sense of this responsibility. The edition is both a continuous text embedding all manuscript variants and a critically derived reading text. The work of textual criticism has thus drawn closer to that of literary criticism, a field which has assumed an unprecedented role in current literary studies.

At the center of these interlocking disciplines are the texts and, therefore, the libraries that house them. The textual critic deals with the book as both a physical object and an intellectual product, and his work, which all of literary scholarship draws on, could not be done without rare-book and special collections libraries. Aside from private collections, they are, after all, the home of the books and manuscripts which constitute the canon of our written culture. In view of this, I consider it fitting that over fifty literary scholars chose to gather for the symposium held here at the Clark. And if I seem guilty of having brought the discussion around to the rare-book library as the fulcrum upon which all this essential activity turns, I gladly plead Enlightened Self-Interest.

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*The Urry edition, part of the Clark's collections, was on display during the conference.

The Clark Newsletter is published by
UCLA's William Andrews Clark Memorial Library
2520 Cimarron Street, Los Angeles, California 90018
Library Telephone: (213) 731-8529
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A luncheon inaugurated the Clark Library's 1985 Summer Postdoctoral Fellowship Program. Scholars in residence at the Clark met informally with UCLA faculty, librarians, and the Summer Program Director, Margaret C. Jacob.