Affecting Objects;
or, The Drama of Imperial Commodities in English Performance, 1660-1800

by

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ABSTRACT

Early modern theater was a major site of cultural exploration into Britain’s imperial ambitions. The frequency with which drama depicted exotic locations and foreign peoples has prompted a wealth of excellent scholarship investigating how London theater portrayed Asia and the New World. With so much attention paid to the places and people of the world, however, dramatic scholarship has yet to take note of the way in which the commodities of empire, the actual driving force behind expansion of British trade routes and colonial holdings, featured in long eighteenth-century drama. Affecting Objects; or, the Drama of Imperial Commodities in English Performance, 1660-1800 investigates how imperial commodities—goods made available by Britain’s rapidly expanding trans-Atlantic trade routes—were used as stage props in long eighteenth-century comedy as a means to explore domestic ramifications of Britain’s developing empire. Affecting Objects recovers the presence of exotic commodities in the theater by bringing together branches of object theory, material culture studies, performance scholarship, and theater history.

Drawing attention to imperial commodities used as theatrical props on the Restoration and eighteenth-century stage, I reassess commonly studied plays as well as critically overlooked works. Foreign “things” in performance, such as spices and produce in seventeenth-century Lord Mayor’s Shows, china in William Wycherley’s The Country Wife (1675), jewels from the East in Oliver Goldsmith’s She Stoops to Conquer (1773), and the Indian shawl in Elizabeth Inchbald’s Appearance is Against Them (1785), informed reception of the works they appeared in while also influencing how the people of London understood the role of those commodities in their everyday lives. As the
commercialism of British society increased, imperial commodities became necessary
“actors” in British social relations; the British stage responded in kind by showcasing how
such goods dictated and mediated communal relations and constructions of the self. I argue
that the way in which exotic goods were utilized in performance served to create,
investigate, underwrite, and/or critique a British national and personal identity
constructed upon access to and control over imperial commodities.
DEDICATION

To Mom and Dad, who always believed I could do it.

And to my brother, who will now be required to call me “Doctor” at all family functions.
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Introduction: Empire, Commodities, and Comedy

“the play house cannot be artificially cordoned off from the symbolic economy of the culture that surrounds it.”

Andrew Sofer, *The Stage Life of Props* ¹

The rise of the British Empire was inexorably intertwined with the material commodities of Asia and the New World. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the reach of Britain expanded across the globe. This growth was driven not by a desire to acquire land but by aspirations to dominate international trade routes and control access to valuable commodities. As Britain’s influence in the world increased the development of a pro-mercantilist ideology fostered the nation’s almost insatiable need for the goods the world had to offer.² During this period produce and tobacco from the Americas, spices from the Spice Islands, china porcelain and tea from the Far East, and textiles and jewels from India morphed from exotic curiosities, to luxuries, and, finally, to staples of British society. Consequently, the roughly two hundred year period referred to as Britain’s “first empire” (approximately 1583-1783) should be understood within the framework of Britain’s growing consumption of and dependence on imperial commodities.³ These objects affected London in entirely unforeseen ways. As James Walvin asserts, while Britain was busy changing the makeup of the world, commodities from all over the world “entered everyday British life and changed forever the domestic

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³ Throughout this dissertation I use the term “consumption” to denote both the actual consumption of goods (tea, spices, produce) as well as the purchasing of inedible goods (china, textiles, and jewels).
face of Britain itself.”

This dissertation explores how such commodities participated in “everyday British life” and how “everyday British life” formed around and in response to these objects.

In an effort to understand the interdependent relationship of British citizens to the goods imported from around the world, scholars have turned to a variety of sources including historical records, first-person accounts, and fictional narratives. Linda Levy-Peck and Woodruff D. Smith include discussions of foreign and luxury goods in works that trace the development of British consumer society in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Examining the objects themselves, material culture scholars such as Maxine Berg, Beth Tobin, and David Porter explore how the various goods of empire featured in British life. Ileana Baird and Christina Ionescu’s recent collection of essays, *Eighteenth-Century Thing Theory in a Global Context*, focuses solely on the study of foreign things in British literature. Although the above scholars encompass only a select sample of

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4 Walvin, ix.
5 Exotic goods had been making their way into England for centuries, before the seventeenth century such objects typically entered England as tributes given to English ambassadors or gifted to nobility. Peck, 18.
differing approaches and outcomes regarding the study of empire and objects, the trend across all fields has been to overlook the possibility of drama as a uniquely fruitful source with which to investigate the presence of imperial commodities in Britain. The use and depiction of imperial commodities in London theater has been left almost entirely unexamined. In addressing this untapped area of scholarship this dissertation investigates the dramatic works as medium of creative investigation into lives that were being lived alongside imperial commodities.

Bringing attention to the significance of imperial commodities in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century dramatic performance, this dissertation illuminates the way in which Britain’s development into an imperial power affected the domestic spaces of London by giving British audiences a sense of what objects meant and could mean in their daily lives. *Affecting Objects; or, The Drama of Foreign Commodities in English Performance, 1660-1800* investigates how “imperial commodities”—goods brought into England by way of expanding transatlantic trade routes—were used as stage props in long eighteenth-century comedy as a means to explore domestic ramifications of Britain’s developing empire. Imperial commodities in performance informed reception of the works they appeared in while also influencing how the people of London understood the role of those commodities in their everyday lives. Studying the ways that foreign commodities feature in comedies on the London stage during the long eighteenth century

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reveals the complicated and contradictory roles these objects played in English society, the rhetoric of mercantilist capitalism, and the expansion of British power.  

Throughout this dissertation I argue that imperial goods were utilized in drama to create, investigate, underwrite, and/or critique a British national and personal identity constructed upon access to and control over exotic commodities. As the commercialism of British society increased foreign commodities became necessary “actors” in distinctly British social relations. The theater responded in kind by demonstrating the ability of imperial commodities to dictate and mediate communal relations and constructions of self. Spanning a range of plays and playwrights from the Restoration to the 1800’s, I argue that imperial goods in domestic comedies depicted both the promise and the problems inherent in the nation’s increasing reliance upon foreign goods. In doing so, Affecting Objects deepens understanding of the place of such objects in the lives of British subjects while providing new avenues of engagement with both obscure and well-known dramas.

In laying out the argument of this dissertation I do not mean to suggest that the subject of empire has been ignored by theater scholars. In fact, the study of empire on the long-eighteenth century stage has become something of a critical mainstay. Douglas J. Canfield, inspired by Laura Brown’s early work, includes brief discussions of empire on the Restoration stage to conclude each chapter in Heroes and States. By far the most

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9 As the British Monarchy/Great Britain did not officially exist until 1707 labeling the people and the nation of England as “British” when discussing the period before 1707 is admittedly somewhat anachronistic. Linda Colley, Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 7. I feel justified in my use of the term “British,” however, as my project investigates the social, economic, and political processes that I argue were in existence before and lead to the formation of the British Empire. In other words, though the nation was not officially deemed Great Britain until 1707 the ideologies that allowed for its establishment were in existence well before then and therefore can be labeled as British.

extensive examination of empire in Restoration drama is Bridget Orr’s *Empire on the English Stage: 1660-1714*, in which Orr exhaustively catalogues and categorizes all the plays she believes either address or portray the subject of empire.\(^{11}\) Richard Kroll’s *Restoration Drama and ‘The Circle of Commerce’* approaches the subject through economics by exploring how the genre of tragi-comedy expresses emerging economic thoughts concerning international trade and global mercantile expansion.\(^{12}\) Chi-ming Yang’s *Performing China* investigates how, in the century following the Restoration, Western “performances” of China (any “theatrical acts” of “cultural translation, ritual, live arts, and textual practices of public culture”) were less about the depiction of China as a place and more concerned with the establishing a sense of “economic virtue” in order to shape the British consumer.\(^{13}\) Arguing that the theater both depicted and influenced and depicted national debates about identity and empire, Mita Choudhury draws upon post-colonial theory in *Interculturalism and Resistance in the London Theater, 1660-1800* in order to place the London theater at the center of conversations on eighteenth-century culture.\(^{14}\) Also exploring how the performance of empire intertwined with

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\(^{13}\) Chi-ming Yang, *Performing China: Virtue Commerce, and Orientalism in Eighteenth-Century England, 1660-1760* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011), 7. Also focusing on China, Robert Markley’s *The Far East and the English Imagination, 1600-1730*, is not limited exclusively to drama, but he spends a chapter discussing the blatantly pro-English economic rhetoric in Dryden’s 1673 pro-mercantile play *Ambyna*.

politics, Louise H Marshall’s *National Myth and Imperial Fantasy* examines history plays on the early eighteenth-century stage (1719-1745) in order to investigate how the stage created and portrayed the myth of an “imperial Britain.”15 Finally, focusing on the tail end of the eighteenth century, Daniel O’Quinn’s *Staging Governance: Theatrical Imperialism in London, 1770-1800* and *Entertaining Crisis in the Atlantic Imperium, 1770-1790* examine how the stage responded to the economic crises brought about by the financial fallout of the East India Company and the mental implications of the loss of the American Colonies.16

The above works—by no means an all-encompassing list—show the breadth of scholarship falling under the larger heading of empire studies on the long-eighteenth century stage. There are, however, two things of note that are representative of the state of the field as a whole. Firstly, scholars, with few exceptions, tend to focus on the genre of heroic drama and tragedy, leaving comedies’ depiction of empire underdeveloped.17


17 This point is best demonstrated by looking at noted scholar Douglas J. Canfield’s two-book study on genre in the Restoration Theater. The first book, *Tricksters and Estates: On the Ideology of Restoration Comedy*, lays out the generic conventions in the various forms of comedy in the Restoration, leaving the follow up, *Heroes and States* to address serious drama and tragedy. In the latter Canfield takes the time to end each chapter with a short epilogue dedicated to “the romance of empire” which he sees as “a major subtext of Restoration tragedy,” thereby making the implicit argument that Restoration comedy did not address empire. Canfield, *Heroes, 5*; Douglas J. Canfield, *Tricksters and Estates: On the Ideology of Restoration Comedy* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1997). Additionally, while Bridget Orr does not ignore the way comedy participates in the ideology of empire, she condenses study of it to only one chapter of her book, leaving the other seven chapters free to explore serious drama and tragedy.
Secondly, though the economics of mercantilism clearly feature largely in extant work on empire, there has yet to be concerted attention paid to how the actual commodities of empire feature on the stage.\textsuperscript{18} The former is, of course, understandable as tragedies and histories were often set in exotic or distant locations, offering the audience a glimpse at foreign empires or peoples. It is only natural, then, that study of empire on the stage would begin where the indicators of empire are most readily apparent.

I, however, have chosen to focus this dissertation mainly on the genre of comedy. I make this choice, not because it is not that the topic of empire is absent from the comic genre, but because critics have yet to fully identify and examine all of the ways that the subject of empire manifests itself in performance. The typical London theatergoer, unlike the figures depicted in a heroic drama, would not have visited the “exotic” lands or come in contact with the large number of foreign dignitaries that were so often featured in tragic and serious dramas. They would, however, have encountered the products that merchants imported from such places (silk, china, tea, sugar, jewels, and so forth). It is these objects that often make an appearance in British comedies. Comedy, then, is the genre in which the British subject’s interaction with these foreign goods is demonstrated and explored in the most familiar terms.\textsuperscript{19} Comedies of the long eighteenth century, then,

\textsuperscript{18} This is not to argue that there has been no mention of foreign objects on the stage at all. Roach argues that the presence of feathers (along with women and children) in performances where there is interaction between Indian and the English signify fears of miscegenation. Roach, Cities, 119-178. Yang draws attention to the China/china paradox—the exotic and mysterious land of China and its “dual identity” as china, the “prized, and arguably spectacular, object named by the same five letters”—thus China to the people of England is both a place and a commodity. Her work, however, mainly focuses on examining how China was performed in drama in order to create a sense of superior British virtue, not how china was used in performance. Yang, 3.

\textsuperscript{19} Orr is correct when she points out that “[t]ea, coffee, pepper, spices, cottons, silks and slaves became vitally important to the English economy during this period but their acquisition was only rarely
are an invaluable source in an examination of local attitudes held by the British populace, concerning the state’s increasing dependence on mercantilism and the development of the British Empire. Importantly, examining how domestic comedies included the local indicators of empire—imperial commodities imported from places associated with the expansion British mercantile powers—reveals the complicated and sometimes contradictory place these commodities filled in British society.

In order to adequately address the place of imperial commodities in over 140 years of comedy, I limit the comedies I examine in this chapter to those with a clearly “local” setting—either in or around the city of London.20 Although excluding comedies set outside London may limit this project’s engagement with larger questions of comedy’s relationship to empire in provincial or rural settings (an avenue surely worthy of further study), a restriction to London allows me to focus attention on how imperial commodities were used in domestic comedy and also enables me to identify comedies that, heretofore, have yet to be recognized as being in conversation with the subject of empire. Expanding the list of empire-centered dramatic works to include comedies featuring the various products made available through colonialism fully recognizes the significant role such material commodities played in the emerging British Empire.

This brings me to my second observation concerning extant work on empire in long eighteenth-century theater: the lack of scholarship on goods used as stage properties in performance. Theater scholars have begun to explore this area with much of the work taking place in Renaissance studies. For example, Frances Teague meticulously

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20 I make an exception for John Crowne’s City Politics (chapter three) which, despite its purportedly foreign setting, was clearly meant to be understood by an English audience as local.
catalogues the stage properties used in Shakespeare’s works in *Shakespeare’s Speaking Properties*; the scholars in Jonathan Gil Harris and Natasha Korda’s *Staged Properties in Early Modern English Drama* take differing approaches. In an impressive joining of theatrical object study and cognitive science, Arthur F. Kinney’s *Shakespeare’s Webs: Networks of Meaning in Renaissance Drama* explores how the brain processes objects that appear in Shakespeare’s works, such as mirrors, books, clocks, and maps.\(^{21}\) Despite the fruitful outcomes of the above works, this type of prop scholarship has yet to be taken up in an extended manner in the study of long eighteenth-century theater. Notable exceptions to this are the work of Andrew Sofer (a theater scholar whose approach to prop scholarship I am indebted to, as can be seen in my first chapter) on fans in Restoration drama; Margaret Ferguson’s “Feathers and Flies: Aphra Behn and the Seventeenth Century Trade in Exotica”, an examination of exotic objects (specifically objects that could be worn) on the Restoration stage; and, though they are regulated to the place of simple material signifiers, Michael Neil’s account of china oranges and china porcelain in William Wycherley’s *The Country Wife* (1675).\(^{22}\)

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The study of stage properties in dramatic works is so important to object and material culture studies because while stage properties function as symbols in drama they are also real objects that work in real ways in the real world. The inclusion of imperial commodities in domestic comedy would both reflect their current place in society and reinforce their continuing cultural significance. Consequently, drama provides scholars a unique opportunity to examine the place of exotic goods in British life. Once the presence of these objects in drama is recognized, it is possible to investigate the way they affect the action of the play, and, in turn, how such plays may have affected an audience’s perception of the object. This dissertation, then, recognizes how the symbolic and the real of the imperial commodity as prop work together, each influencing and drawing upon the other in the moment of performance.

Because the works examined in this dissertation predate the nineteenth century, I do not simply adopt the mindset that imperial commodities in drama will adhere to the prescripts of Orientalism as laid out by Edward Said. Rather than transposing Orientalist attitudes back onto seventeenth and eighteenth century dramas, I explore the various ways works from this period differed from or may have contributed to the development of Orientalism in the nineteenth century. In practice, this means not approaching imperial commodities in performances with the pre-conceived notion that they will always be featured as “othered,” foreign, feminine, sexual, and disruptive (though they might be any or all of those things). Instead, I approach these objects with questions regarding how they were utilized by the people of England and how, in turn,


23 Said makes it clear that the orientalist attitudes he studies were based off of thought processes and assumptions that were already fully developed by the nineteenth century. Edward W. Said, Orientalism. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).
their various uses affected the way they were perceived and the cultural connotations that began to adhere to them. Ultimately, I argue that the inclusion of imperial commodities in long eighteenth-century performances can be found to uphold a type of “proto-orientalism,” to borrow a phrase from Rahul Sapra, revealing the complicated economic and social relationship of England with Asia and the New World.

Given that this project covers 140 years of theater my aim is not to provide a detailed archive of all the imperial commodities used in long eighteenth-century drama. Nor do I seek to lay out a linear narrative of British attitudes towards foreign goods on the stage, due in no small part to the fact that I do not believe a simple linear narrative exists. Instead, my work seeks to combine theater history, material culture studies, and object scholarship in order to examine the way imperial commodities on the stage informed the reception of the plays they appeared in, and how, in turn, those plays informed the way the people of London understood those commodities. The larger goals of this dissertation, then, are to layout a functional theoretical model for approaching the study of objects in long eighteenth-century drama, to draw attention to theatrical props on the Restoration and eighteenth-century stage in order to both reevaluate commonly studied plays and “recover” heretofore critically ignored works, to understand better the place of imperial commodities as it was imagined in everyday life in London, and to

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24 Interestingly, by demonstrating the ability of imperial commodities to both exist and act in the private areas of British households the presence of these goods in long eighteenth-century drama highlights the fault lines of a developing orientalist discourse in which the East and West were entirely separate entities—the “Orient” as located in the distant past and the “Occident” as existing in the present and the future.

investigate the relationship of mercantilist and imperialist ideologies in relation to British subject formation and the consumption of foreign goods.

The first chapter lays out the theoretical methodology applied throughout the dissertation. The physical presence of props in performance allows critics to think through the ways objects embody complex ideas and “perform” actions for watching audiences. In order to undertake a study of objects in the dramatic medium, however, an approach must be formulated that both recovers the presence of objects on the stage and recognizes their relationship to action. Combining the work of prop scholar Andrew Sofer, object scholar Bruno Latour, and recent advances in the field of cognitive science regarding things, action, and human perception, I develop what I term an “action-oriented” approach to the study of objects in drama. This methodology brings attention to the ways objects in drama participate in, as well as make meaning through onstage action, offering a means by which to study the influence of imperial objects in the drama’s portrayal of the British social.

The subsequent chapters of Affecting Objects present a range of case studies exploring imperial objects that were featured in English performance. Chapter two traces how seventeenth-century Lord Mayor’s Shows, popular annual street performances, used a range of imperial commodities such as gold, jewels, spices, produce, and tobacco to create and shape attitudes towards the world, and race, and England place in international trade. Examining Shows by Thomas Middleton, Thomas Dekker, John Tatham, and Elkanah Settle, men who also composed works for the theater, this chapter argues that exotic commodities in Lord Mayor’s Shows garnered support for the expansion of English mercantile power in three separate but related ways: as physical demonstrations of the world’s wealth; as a way to define the various races of the world in relation to such goods;
and, in the free distribution of spices and produce as part of the narrative, these Shows fostered Londoners’ desires for such goods while demonstrating a type of power that was only available to those with access to foreign commodities. Ultimately, by celebrating an “Englishness” based upon both the nation’s and the people’s ability to consume the goods of the world, imperial commodities in Lord Mayor’s Shows helped to fashion English watchers into ideal consumers.

The third chapter turns to a series of plays in which china oranges, porcelain, and Indian gowns, commonplace imperial commodities, are used by libertines to manipulate the perceptions of others. In William Wycherley’s *The Country Wife* (1675), Horner uses china to distract Sir Jasper from his sexual conquest, and in John Crowne’s *City Politics* (1683), the courtier Artall capitalizes on his recent purchase of a fashionable Indian gown to sleep with the wife of an addled barrister. Rather than relegating the signification of these objects to symbolic stand-ins for the sexual mystique of a far off “Orient,” this chapter examines how these items function within respectable British spaces in a way that allows for successful and possibly socially threatening sexual assignations. By using imperial commodities as a means to control the way others understand a situation, the characters in these plays demonstrate the way in which such objects participated in the structuring of personal identities, forecasting the power of these items in the British social as well as their possibly ominous place at the heart of domestic interactions.

The fourth chapter focuses on the conflation of Eastern jewels with the performance of femininity and the maintenance of male-centered power structures. Tracing the place of foreign jewels in Wycherley’s sex-comedy *The Plain Dealer* (1676) and Oliver Goldsmith’s more sedate laughing-comedy *She Stoops to Conquer* (1773), I
argue these works portray unease regarding the need for male control of the female body as well as the riches of the East. In both plays the contest for control over foreign jewels is expressed through the presentation of opposing forms of femininity. Whereas the dishonest women and their quest for jewels function as a real threat to masculinity, the loyalty and honesty of their virtuous doppelgangers depicts the “proper” demonstration of womanhood while reforming the men of the play in a way that aligns with acceptable British, masculine norms. Ultimately, by rewarding the worthy women in both plays with possession of the Eastern jewels, and then safely containing those women and the jewels through marriage, these works physically depict the gendered rhetoric used to underwrite the British imperial process.

I round out Affecting Objects with a chapter investigating how the uncontrollable actions of an Indian shawl in Elizabeth Inchbald’s Appearance is Against Them (1785). I argue that the play offers a thinly veiled warning against unthinkingly succumbing to the desires driving expansion of the British Empire at the close of the eighteenth century. Each chapter presents a distinctly different argument concerning the use of imperial commodities in performance, yet they converge upon the idea that in performance these commodities contributed to the formation of British national and personal identities. Through an examination of the way that imperial commodities were included in staged representations of English domestic life, my dissertation advances a conversation regarding the problematical relationship of those living in London to the world’s commodities during the rise of the British Empire.
Chapter 1

Objects in Action: Analyzing Stage Properties in Eighteenth-Century Drama

“The word drama is used in two main ways: First, to describe a literary work, the text of a play; and, second, to describe the performance of this work, its production….Drama can be further defined as action.”

Raymond Williams, Drama in Performance

“we have to follow the things themselves, for their meanings are inscribed in their forms, their uses, their trajectories. It is only through the analysis of these trajectories that we can interpret the human transactions and calculations that enliven things….it is the things-in-motion that illuminate their human and social context.”

Arjun Appadurai, The Social Life of Things

In March of 1666 a curious Samuel Pepys—rising naval administrator, theater enthusiast, and avid diarist—ventured into the back rooms of the closed Theatre Royal at Drury Lane and was struck by the “mixture of things” he encountered: “here a wooden-leg, there a ruff, here a hobbyhorse, there a crown.” Bemused by this odd assortment of items, Pepys recorded feeling dismayed at the disconnect between “how fine they show on the stage by candle-light, and how poor things they are to look now too near hand, is not pleasant at all”.

This seemingly unremarkable diary entry highlights the two larger ideas central to this chapter. Firstly, Pepys’ list of stage properties is one of only a handful of existing historical documents that record the actual objects that appeared on

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1 Raymond Williams, Drama in Performance (New York: Basic Books, 1968), 172-73, emphasis original.
4 Pepys, 77.
the stage in the Restoration and eighteenth century. Secondly, in describing his different reactions to coming into contact with objects in real life versus in a performance setting, Pepys unknowingly lights upon the very quality that makes dramatic literature such a promising medium for investigating objects that circulated in in English society.

Dramatic works often serve as spaces of imaginative investigation into the role and power of objects. In the very scripting of their actions, a playwright highlights, exaggerates, and possibly changes human perceptions of an object. Long eighteenth-century drama offers scholars interested in imperial commodities an untapped resource in which to examine how objects mirrored, supported, and/or dictated common attitudes and social practices. But in order to undertake the larger project of analyzing the presence of imperial commodities in long eighteenth-century drama, it is first necessary to step back and take stock of the larger methodological and theoretical factors involved. These include the difference between reading a text and watching a performance as well as the complications of accessing the “watching” through reading. It also includes noting the advantages and shortcomings of previous prop scholarship, the cognitive processes that occur when a person encounters objects in action, and how the developing field of “new materialism” addresses the role of the human in the study of objects. Studying objects in dramatic performance, both a physical and communal medium, necessitates the formation of a theoretical methodology that takes into account the above areas as well as the way stage properties engage with both meaning and action. This chapter lays out a methodological approach for analyzing objects in drama, providing the necessary groundwork for the case studies of colonial objects in domestic comedies that are presented in the chapters that follow.
Using the concept of action, the feature that sets drama apart from other literary mediums, as the thread with which to knit together the four related sections of this chapter, I develop what I term an “action-oriented” approach to the study of objects in drama. This action-oriented approach brings attention to the presence of objects on the stage and recognizes the fundamental ways that objects participate in as well as make meaning through onstage action. I begin by considering the difference between reading a dramatic text and watching a performance, so as to demonstrate how dramatic texts can be approached by readers today in what that privilege the moment of performance. This type of reading allows for the “recovery” of objects that were likely present on the stage in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century productions. The second section moves into a discussion of prop scholarship and how the work of Andrew Sofer sets the standard by which to define stage properties and recognize their unique “meaning making” qualities. The third section briefly addresses recent findings in the field of cognitive science concerning action and human perception, findings that have a bearing on how critics understand reception in the theater particularly as related to objects. The final section turns to object scholarship and argues the work of Bruno Latour offers the most efficacious means by which to understand the place of objects in drama, as well as the formation of the social. In its entirety, this chapter demonstrates how an action-oriented approach to the study of objects in drama provides a method to examine the place of objects in the continual feedback-loop of ideological and social construction that reverberated in and out of eighteenth-century London theaters.

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5 Andrea Stevens’ Inventions of the Skin, an examination of the practice of theatrical makeup in early modern drama, stands as an excellent example of how privileging the moment of performance by using play texts to imagine the physical experience of a dramatic work allows scholars to better understand the medium and the messages of drama. Andrea Rae Stevens, Inventions of the Skin: the Painted Body in Early English Drama, 1400-1642 (Edinburgh: Edinburg University Press, 2013).
i. Text and Performance

The main challenge of analyzing objects in long eighteenth-century drama is the decided lack of information concerning the actual objects that appeared on the stage. *The London Stage, 1660-1800,* an exhaustive 11-volume study of extant documents and records dealing with London theater in the period, opens its only page allotted to props in eighteenth-century drama with the caveat that while “[n]umerous plays” mention the use of stage properties, scholars know little regarding the types of items used as “the documents which reveal usage are usually missing.” Despite the fact that such records are either missing or do not exist, along with the sets, scenery, and costumes, theater companies would have owned and recycled stage properties from performance to performance. A 1677 legal suit by one Robert Baden brought against the King’s Company for the amount of £135 12s over past due payments on the purchasing of “properties” suggests that a rather sizeable amount of money was spent by theater companies on stage properties. The lack of prop lists or theater company records detailing what objects were owned means that while object scholarship has flourished across various fields in the humanities, including literary studies, studies of objects in eighteenth-century drama have not kept pace.

Today scholars most often encounter the works of Restoration and eighteenth-century playwrights in their textual form, rather than in performance, but, as Richard Steele instructs the reader in his preface to *The Conscious Lovers* (1722), “a play is to be seen, and is made to be represented with the advantage of action, nor can appear but with

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7 Van Lennep, xci.
half the Spirit without it; for the greatest effect of a play in reading is to excite the reader to go see it.”

These words serve as a reminder to modern scholars that plays of the early modern period, excluding closet dramas, were primarily created for and executed through performance. Because the dramas we study today were written to be performed, an understanding of their physical iteration must remain at the fore of any analysis. Given that scholars of long eighteenth-century drama can only approach theatrical works via published editions of plays, privileging the moment of performance presents a challenge. In order to read plays with attention to the physical realities of a seventeenth- and eighteenth-century performance setting, one must consider how the “advantage of action” might have been used to realize the content of a dramatic text in a live performance.

The idea that one should privilege the moment of performance when reading Restoration or eighteenth-century plays has been championed by other theater scholars. In The Ornament of Action Peter Holland stressed the critical problems that occur “when the connection of the published text to the performance text is only dimly perceived,” calling for Restoration scholars to take up a “practice of reading” that would explore “the connection… that practice has with the practice of watching performances.” To aid in

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9 Dramas written during the eighteenth century were, of course, printed to be read, but, as Steele’s words indicate, performance was the primary means by which dramas were meant to be conceived.
10 It must be acknowledged that Restoration and eighteenth-century actors would not necessarily have had access to complete play texts, only prompt books containing their lines and cues.
11 Peter Holland, The Ornament of Action: Text and Performance in Restoration Comedy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 100. Holland puts forth that the connection between play text and performance were so strong that the “act of reading [a play text]” during the Restoration was meant “to be a re-creation of the events of the stage.” Holland, 106. For more the relationship between dramatic text and performance see also Williams, Drama in Performance; Elaine Aton and George Savona, Theatre as Sign-System: A Semiotics of Text and Performance (London: Routledge, 1991); David Bradley, From Text to Performance in the Elizabethan Theatre: Preparing the Play for the Stage (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Robert Weimann, Author’s Pen and Actor’s Voice.
thinking through the performance while reading Holland argues for recognition of “theatre space,” a concept that encompasses the physical space of the theater (stage, pit, and boxes), the people in the theater (actors and audience members) as well as the scenery.\textsuperscript{12} It is the coming together of these many elements during the moment of performance that leads Holland to label drama a uniquely “communal act.”\textsuperscript{13} Holland is not the only scholar to privilege the moment of performance or theorize about the influence of theater space on audience reception, but his call to use a particularized approach to reading play texts that takes into consideration the physical realities of theater space is useful for studying objects in early modern performance.\textsuperscript{14} By reading plays with particular attention to the physical properties that playwrights wrote into performances—objects that are mentioned in the stage directions, props that would have been necessary to execute the action on the stage, as well as any items revealed as present through character dialogue—scholars can recover vital information about what types of objects appeared on the Restoration and eighteenth-century stage.

To give an example of the information this type of reading generates, the stage directions in the last act of John Dryden’s the \textit{The Kind Keeper} (1680) instruct that the character of Limberham runs on the stage \textit{“with the Jewels”} he is worried would be

\textsuperscript{12} Holland, 20. Holland does not specifically addresses the place of stage properties in his concept of theater space, but they fit under his category of scenery.

\textsuperscript{13} Holland, 21.

stolen, and some lines later he asks those on stage to “behold this Orient Neck-lace.”

The specificity of the “this” in reference to the “Orient Neck-lace” suggests that one of the “jewels” the actor carried on stage with him during the performance was a necklace; moreover, when saying “behold this Orient Neck-lace” the actor likely held up the necklace for the other characters (and therefore the audience) to see. Though the necklace is only mentioned once in the text, in a performance the necklace would have entered the stage when Limberham did, and, unless it was transferred out of his hands is some way, remained on the stage until he left. This example demonstrates how looking at the stage directions may inform us which objects were on the stage. But only by coupling an examination of stage directions with dialogue are we able to flesh out that understanding as well as gain information as to how the characters may have interacted with the objects. Objects used in performances were physically present for the audience in a way not always made evident through traditional textual analysis; an object-centered critique of drama, then, must remain aware of where objects might have been during a performance. A prop that only garners a single line or stage direction in a text might have been visually present and active for an audience for an entire scene or act. Its physical presence and impact may have been more profound than its minimal textual presence suggests.

The other information gained from this example is the way performance necessarily draws attention to action(s) as related to objects. Limberham enters onto the stage carrying jewels, he likely holds up a necklace which the characters and audience

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16 Because modern editors may make the choice to insert stage directions it is imperative to ensure the editions being consulted clearly mark any editorial additions. Whenever possible, stage directions should be confirmed by consulting early publications of the play text.
alike look at, and when he leaves the stage he takes the jewels and necklace with him. Furthermore, in the narrative of the drama he worries the jewels will be stolen and he describes another character’s ability to wear them. Carrying, holding, looking, stealing, and wearing are all actions done or demonstrated to be possible in relationship to the jewels displayed on the stage. In this way, the play informs indirectly about the actions that might be taken with or through objects. Especially when we are dealing with objects unfamiliar to modern audiences or scholars, considering actions in which props played a role provides insight as to how a seventeenth- or eighteenth-century actors and audiences interacted with said objects.

If we remain mindful of the physical form of a play, we may gain access to the extra-textual spaces of signification and communication that only occur when onstage action takes place before a watching audience. Though it is impossible to recover with certainty the performance choices involved in an eighteenth-century production, using the texts of plays as a means to visualize the physical possibilities of their performance allows scholars to think through the possible points of interaction between the onstage action and audience reception. This type of thought experiment is not an act of historical reconstruction so much as an act of historical imagining, but it is an imagining that has real implications for understanding how play performances physically engaged with their audiences. Thinking through the physical dimensions of a performance enables a more complete account of the different elements involved in a performance. Such investigations reveal spaces teeming with objects and, moreover, gives objects that are silent in the text a “voice” that they would have possessed in the performance.

Visualizing the presence of objects in performance allows scholars to execute an analysis
that recognizes how the actions of objects on the stage were meaningful to eighteenth-century audiences.

ii. Stage Properties and Meaning

Recognizing the presence of objects in drama allows dramatic scholars potential new avenues of inquiry with which to enhance their understanding of a play. Additionally, examining how the objects featured in drama can assist material culture and object scholars in understanding that object’s role in society. As for the former, the work of Andrew Sofer, and to a lesser extent Frances Teague, features heavily in my approach to studying stage properties as both scholars explore how the physical presence of props onstage in a fictional narrative allows objects to take on an exaggerated significance during a performance. In other words, a prop, by being physically present in a performance situation, makes and generates meaning in a unique way. As both scholars make a concerted effort to lay out a specific methodology for prop scholarship, understanding their separate approaches and terminologies helps to distinguish how I make use of their work throughout this dissertation.

Teague and Sofer take differing approaches in both defining what constitutes stage properties as well as how stage properties make meaning in performance. Teague

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17 The subsequent chapters of this dissertation provide extended demonstrations of both these outcomes.
defines a stage property as: “an object, mimed or tangible, that occurs onstage, where it functions differently from the way it functions offstage. At the moment when the audience notes its entry into the dramatic action a property has meaning: it may also have meaning as one of a class of objects. A property can carry multiple meanings, which may sometimes conflict.”\textsuperscript{19} Central to Teague’s definition of a property is “meaning” and the idea that an object “means” differently on the stage than it does off the stage. This idea is rooted in her distinction between “ordinary function” of an object and the “dislocated function” of a stage property. Teague views the ordinary function of an object as, essentially, the job that object is designed to do in the real world. To use her example, a knife’s ordinary function is to cut or slice. However, when a prop appears onstage in a performance Teague argues its function automatically becomes dislocated. The knife, used in the real world as a tool for cutting, might be used on the stage to “connote passion or violence.”\textsuperscript{20} For Teague, the function of any object on stage is \textit{always} dislocated: a property “has a function, but it is not the same function as it has offstage (though it may imitate that ordinary function).”\textsuperscript{21} Though Teague concedes that properties “have too many functions on the stage for a critic to say ‘This is the way that a property works’ with any finality” she remains adamant that an object’s function in drama is that it is always dislocated “i.e. they do not function in the same way on stage as they do in the real world.”\textsuperscript{22}

\textsuperscript{19} Frances Teague, \textit{Shakespeare’s Speaking Properties} (Cranbury: Associated University Presses, 1991), 17 emphasis original.
\textsuperscript{20} Teague, 18.
\textsuperscript{21} Teague, 17-18. Teague does acknowledge that costumes and furniture, unlike hand properties, do retain (not just imitate) their ordinary functions in a performance.
\textsuperscript{22} Teague, 121.
Teague’s recognition of the potentials of prop scholarship for dramatic analysis makes her work essential in any study addressing objects in performance. But in laying out such a firm divide between an object’s ordinary function and a prop’s dislocated function in the moment of performance Teague makes two assumptions with which I disagree. Firstly, Teague’s argument assumes that in the “real world” all objects are always used in conjunction with one ordinary function: that in everyday life knives are only used to cut, clothes are only used for the purpose of keeping warm, and that jewelry is only used as a means of adornment. Taking such a rigid position on the functionality of an object does not take into account the myriad ways objects are used as well as the performativity that occurs with and through objects in everyday social settings. While an object might be identified as having a primary use function—the tool function for which it is most often associated—that primary function is not always the function an object is used for off the stage. Meaning that if an object is being used in drama for a means outside of its primary use function that does not mean it is being used in a way that should automatically be relegated to the status of dislocated function. Secondly, building upon my first objection, to approach a stage property from the position that its function is always dislocated may prompt one to ignore the way the function of the fictional object in drama may draw upon, refigure, or add to the ordinary functions of an object for the audience. This is not to say one should do away with the idea of dislocated function altogether, only that attention needs to be paid to the way the seemingly dislocated function of objects on the stage, especially common, everyday objects, can inform an understanding as to how that object actually functions (or functioned) in the real world.  

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23 My third chapter is particularly focused on this concept.
This point especially holds true when examining dramas from the past. Such works contain objects that could appear to function in a dislocated manner, but, in actuality, they might simply be functioning in an exaggerated form of one of their many ordinary functions.

Sofer’s approach to stage properties, with a definition based on action and his emphasis on the way objects collect multiple meanings both inside and outside the theater, offers more suitable material with which to build a methodology for analyzing objects in dramatic performance.24 Sofer defines a prop as “a discrete, material, inanimate object that is visibly manipulated by an actor in the course of performance.”25 In this definition a prop is not just an object that it placed on the stage; it is an object that has both moved into a performance situation and is physically moved by an actor during performance. For Sofer, the key difference between a prop and a piece of scenery or set design is that a prop must be “triggered” by an actor through the actor’s movement (purposeful or accidental) of an object in performance.26 Through the physical manipulation of an object, an actor transforms a simple set piece or costume element into a part of the play’s action. A prop, then, “is something an object becomes, rather than something an object is,” and it is entirely possible for an object to move in and out of the

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25 Sofer, *The Stage Life* 11, emphasis original.
26 Sofer, *The Stage Life* 11. For example, a chair that appears onstage is a piece of scenery until the chair is physically moved by the performer, then it becomes a stage prop. This movement does not necessarily have to be purposeful or scripted, an actor can improvise action with the chair or trip over the chair and in doing so prop status will have been achieved. Though Sofer specifically identifies actors as being the manipulators of props he does include the chandler from *The Phantom of the Opera* and the helicopter from *Miss Saigon* as examples of props, even though they are manipulated by stagehands during the performance. Objects that are moved by stagehands between scenes, however, are not props, 16.
prop designation multiple times in a performance.\textsuperscript{27} By making his definition of a stage property situation-specific, Sofer directly ties recognition of an object as a prop to the element of action.\textsuperscript{28}

In \textit{The Stage Life of Props} Sofer traces the use of specific classes of props through multiple performance iterations in order to both gauge how props function in performance situations and how a prop’s performance history allows it to collect various meanings and significations. He argues that stage props simultaneously function for audiences on two different registers: as physical objects onstage in a fictional narrative and as representatives of a similar “class” of objects that concurrently exist off the stage.\textsuperscript{29} The dual registers of a stage prop continually inform each other throughout a performance, allowing objects on a stage to become uniquely vocal.\textsuperscript{30} Thus, Sofer

\textsuperscript{27}Andrew Sofer, “‘Take up the Bodies’: Shakespeare’s Body Parts, Babies, and Corpses” in \textit{The Prop’s The Thing: Stage Properties Reconsidered}, Vol. 18 of \textit{Theatre Symposium}, ed. J.K. Curry (Tuscaloosa: University Alabama Press, 2010): 135-148, 135. Sofer’s approach towards objects originated Appadurai’s work. In the “The Social Life of Things,” Appadurai moves away from attempting to pinpoint the invisible quality separating a \textit{thing} from a \textit{commodity}, and instead puts forth that a \textit{commodity} is simply a \textit{thing} that has temporarily moved into a “commodity situation”. Appadurai identifies a “commodity situation” as the period when a thing’s “exchangeability (past, present, or future) for some other things is its socially relevant feature.” Thus, “things can move in and out of the commodity state” at any given time, and “such movements can be slow or fast, reversible or terminal, normative or deviant”. Appadurai, 13.A commodity, then, is simply an object that has temporarily moved into a commodity situation, and may at any point transition back into being a thing.

\textsuperscript{28} Sofer, \textit{The Stage Life}, 11, 16-19. Importantly, for objects to fully inhabit the designated position as a prop there must be some sort of recognition from two or more parties that the thing in question currently exists in a modified state from that of a simple object. In other words, for an object to function as a prop actors and audience members must, on some level, register that the object in question has travelled from being an object to a prop. Sofer, \textit{The Stage Life}, 31

\textsuperscript{29} Sofer, \textit{The Stage Life}, xi, 16-19. Sofer’s use of the term “class” in relation to objects is based off the Teague’s work.

\textsuperscript{30} The process of drawing upon to social history of an object while rewriting its signification on the stage a prop “creates and sustains a dynamic relationship with the audience as a given performance unfolds.” Sofer, \textit{The Stage Life}, vi. This process does not stop after a single performance, but continues across multiple performances as playwrights continue to utilize and refashion the same classes of props over and over again: “the prop’s very fluidity as a theatrical sign encourages playwrights to use it as a concrete tool to subvert the symbolism previously embodied by the object it represents.” Sofer, \textit{The Stage Life}, ix-x. This means that as a class of props is used repeatedly the audiences’ engagement with that class of props will continue to change based on how they have been featured across multiple productions. Sofer’s conception of how a prop works in performance draws directly from Appadurai’s work with how humans
conceives of props not as inert things only able to represent a single idea, but as multifaceted objects able to respond to previous and current performance iterations. He stresses that a prop’s ability to impart meaning is enhanced by the fact that “no recognizable object arrives on stage innocent:” all objects have a unique “social history” and when they appear on the stage they “bring their own historical, cultural, and ideological baggage on stage with them.” In other words, a prop’s social history will invariably influence the audience’s reception of it and its place in the drama’s narrative. In this way, playwrights and actors are able to comment on and add to—consciously or unconsciously—the social significance already present within any prop.

An excellent example of the effect the social history as well as the cultural biography of an object can have during a performance can be seen when Charles II lent his coronation robes to the actor Thomas Betterton to use on the stage. When worn during the performance, the social history of the garments would have been constructed out of the expectations, meanings, and significance a Restoration audience would have found in the class of garments appropriate for a coronation; the cultural biography of those particular robes would have resided in the fact that those were the exact robes Charles II wore on his coronation. During the performance these two elements, the robe’s social history as well as its cultural biography, would have had bearing on the audience’s

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interact with commodities. Appadurai postulates that as objects, particularly commodities, move through society they have the ability to gather and store various types of meaning. These meanings are identified as either the “social history” of an object—the various significations that are attached to a class of objects—or the “cultural biography” of an object—the meaning attached to one specific object. As objects travel through society people either instill or react to particular meanings attached to them. And in exchange situations humans place value on a commodity by responding to the object’s social history or cultural biography. Thus, the meanings objects “collect” serve to continue moving them through society.

31 Sofer, The Stage Life, 17.
32 Sofer, The Stage Life, ix.
understanding and experience of the play. While a stage property might not always have a particular cultural biography for an audience, as Sofer makes clear, all objects, no matter how innocent, contain some type of social history.

Rather than follow his line of inquiry outside the theater, however, Sofer restricts his study to how certain classes of props function across various plays in specific periods of dramatic history. Sofer makes the choice to not look beyond how the theater arguing that “[b]efore we can hope to ascertain ‘the cultural project of things,’ we must first recover their trajectories within the unfolding spatiotemporal event in the playhouse.” While I understand his reasoning for focusing mainly on the play house, I argue that one cannot separate the trajectory of objects in the playhouse from similar objects outside of the playhouse. To do so results in a partial analysis of the object. But if one follows Sofer’s line of reasoning—that after viewing a prop in performance the object can begin to signify differently for the audience members—the next logical step is to investigate how this “new signification” instilled though theatrical performance could be taken by audience members outside the theater, be recycled or reconstructed, and then brought back into the theater for the next performance. In this way, the London theater and the world outside of it would be continually responding to, reconstructing, and reinforcing a person’s understanding of interactions with particular objects.

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34 The communion wafer (host) in medieval drama, the bloody handkerchief on the Elizabethan stage, the skull in Jacobean theater, the fan on the long-eighteenth century stage, and guns on the modern stage.

35 Sofer, *The Stage Life*, 19. Sofer admits that understanding objects outside the playhouse is important for materialist scholarship, but for the purposes of his investigation, one that focuses primarily on the moment of performance and how performance traditions influence stage properties, he purposely confines his focus to the theater.
iii. Action, Cognition, and the Theater

It is only by seeing a play, writes Steele, that an audience will have “the effect of example and precept.” Steele’s words (as well as those of Pepys with which I opened this chapter) alight upon the unique way the medium of performance affects the viewer. Because the main inquiry of this dissertation hinges upon the physical nature of drama it is necessary to touch upon the cognitive processes that occur when a person views action taking place. Doing so fully recognizes the means by which performances define or redefine how one understands an object and the actions that object allows. As stated earlier, in a performance situation action is a key mode of communication between the actors and the audience, a point made all the more compelling when one understands the fundamental role that action plays in a person’s ability to process information. “The way people represent and understand the world around them,” write Diane Pecher and Rolf Zwaan “is directly linked to perception and action.” Although the realm of cognitive science may seem far removed from the world of the theater, recent findings regarding human cognitive processes, especially in relation to objects, have the potential to revolutionize the field of performance studies.

36 Steele, 14.
38 Contrary to a Cartesian model of consciousness which separates the mind and body into two distinct spheres, cognitive scientists now know cognition is very much embodied. Not only are humans not able to separate our minds from our bodies, our body’s interaction with the world directly influences how our mind processes the world around us. See M. Jeannerod, The Cognitive Neuroscience of Action (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1997); George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and Its Challenge to Western Thought (New York: Basic Books, 1999). Pierre Jacob and Marc Jeannerod, Ways of Seeing: The Scope and Limits of Visual Cognition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); C. Von Hofsten and K. Rosander ed., From Action to Cognition (Amsterdam: Elsevier,
One reason perception is so intrinsically linked to action is the role mirror neurons play in the brain’s ability to process visual stimuli. Mirror neurons are the neurons in the brain that become active both when a person performs an action and if that person simply watches another perform that same action. For example, if one person were to watch another person hold up a necklace even though only one person is physically completing the action identical mirror neurons are activated in the brains of both people. On a neurological level, then, performing an action and watching someone else perform an action has similar cognitive effects. Applying this information for the purposes of performance studies, Bruce McConachie, a pioneer in the field of cognitive science and performance studies, postulates that when "actors use stage props to express and extend their goals and feelings, audiences will also interpret these actions through their mirror neuron systems." Although audience members do not directly interact with the props in

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a performance, when they watch actors using objects their mirror neurons are active in line with those of the performers.

Action also plays a fundamental role in the way humans conceptualize objects and how they function in the world. In *Engaging Audiences* McConachie outlines the cognitive processes by which humans view the inanimate world: when we view things outside of ourselves we use either “visual perceptions” or “visuomotor representations.”

A person’s visual perceptions are engaged when they are simply viewing a static situation; for example, when processing the fact that an object is a necklace. Visuomotor representations, on the other hand, are intrinsically linked to action—this is the part of our brain that we use when we note that a person is carrying a piece of jewelry or when we watch someone put on a necklace. When someone views an object and processes action taken in relation to that object that person is cycling between these two visual systems. It is the process of switching between visual perceptions and visuomotor representations that allows humans to make sense of the outside world, meaning humans are invariably attuned to observing action in relation to objects.

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41 McConachie, *Engaging Audiences*, 56-63. In his discussion of “visual perceptions” or “visuomotor representations” McConachie, who himself is not a cognitive scientist, synthesizes the work Pierre Jacob and Marc Jeannerod in *Ways of Seeing*, 133-177.
The place of action is not only unconsciously received when viewing objects already in action; humans also inherently understand objects through knowledge of possible actions that could be taken with them. For example, we only understand what a necklace is when we understand that it is something one wears around the neck, or, to return to Teague’s knife, we understand a knife based on our ability to use it as a tool for cutting. The idea that when we look at an object we immediately see it as “affording” us various actions, whether we actually complete that action or not, was popularly pioneered by J. J. Gibson. Gibson terms the actions made possible with or in relation to an object as an object’s “affordances,” and cognitive scientists have maintained that terminology when referring to the actions that man perceives in objects.42

An object’s affordances are not finite, and they do not manifest themselves the same for everyone; certain factors influence a person’s ability to perceive possible actions he or she could take with and in relation to an object. Anna M. Borghi writes that a person will “derive different affordances from objects” based on “the constraints of one’s body, on the perceptual characteristics of the object in question, and on the situation at hand.”43 Different people in similar situations might register entirely different


affordances in the objects they encounter. Borghi also records that affordances can be both social and personal. Society influences a person’s understanding of an object’s affordances, but that person has the ability to form their own assessment of the actions an object allows. Personal conceptions of affordances can be developed because “a person’s intention to perform an action modulates visual processing by favoring perceptual features that are action-related.” In other words, the goals a person has when encountering an object will dictate what affordances of an object are most obvious. The many factors that influence a person’s ability to gauge an object’s affordances invariably means that past experiences with an object come into play when encountering present interactions with said objects, and that the present interactions with an object could possibly influence future interactions. Just as the social history of an object is continually being modified and added to, and just as the significations of a stage property can be rewritten across multiple performances, a person’s understanding of an object and its affordances are also always in flux. Past and present interactions with an object, whether directly experienced or viewed in a performance situation, continually alter an understanding of that object’s affordances. Action, then, is not only a theoretical concept that transforms objects into stage properties during the moment of performance, it is the very quality that helps define an object for a viewer both inside and outside the world of the theater.


45 Borghi also points out that in order to interact with certain objects a person often needs to have had previous experience with them either personally or in a socio-cultural setting — if a person has never encountered an object its affordances, and thus an understanding of what the object is, are not accessible. Borghi, “Object Conception”, 30.
Understanding the cognitive processes that occur when a person views an object in action is of such importance to scholars of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century drama because the actions taken in relation to objects on the stage may have served to refashion or define how audiences understood the affordances and actionable possibilities inherent in those objects. Bence Nanay puts forth that when humans watch dramatic performance they enter a different cognitive state that she labels “theater perception.” In a state of theater perception, Nanay argues the audience is even more susceptible to the influences of theater space and an audience’s awareness of the actions and actionable possibilities as tied to people and things become even more heightened.\(^\text{46}\) This means that if a playwright is attempting to redefine an object (as William Wycherley does with china in *The Country Wife*), the medium of performance will make an audience even more cognizant of and susceptible to actor interactions with an object. The various meanings bound up in objects that appear on stage make them highly symbolic, but the actual actions taken with and in relation to an object serve to define the object for the audience. An object used in an expected way may have simply reinforced current conceptions of that object, but, if the function of that object was sufficiently dislocated—if it was used for a purpose in which it was not primarily associated—by virtue of viewing that function the audience’s understanding of that object and its affordances were being altered.

Although it may seem counterintuitive to say scholars can theorize the cognitive processes occurring in an audience watching a performance from centuries ago, as McConachie argues, “performance scholars can assume that the fundamentals of paying attention have varied little over the centuries. The basic properties of consciousness

\(^\text{46}\) Nanay, 245.
evolved thousands of years ago and there is no reason to suspect that they have changed
during recorded history.” When seventeenth- and eighteenth-century audiences were
watching actors perform with objects their mirror neurons would have been triggered by
the action on the stage and would have been firing in line with the neurons of the actors
who were performing. Audience members would have been switching between visual
perceptions and visuomotor representations when processing the onstage action. The
actions the actors were taking with and in relation to objects, including imperial
commodities, would have served to define and possibly alter how audiences understood
those objects and their potential uses. Consequently, reading eighteenth-century play
texts to understand audience and actor interactions with objects not only helps scholars
better understand the action that is taking place on the stage, it also helps us visualize the
cognitive connections that were occurring between the audience and actors during the
moment of performance.

iv. Object Scholarship and Bruno Latour.

Both Teague and Sofer, like scholars before them, approach props primarily as
passive vessels of meaning. Although Sofer recognizes that in a performance props “can
and do take on some of the functions and attributes of subjects, which accounts in part for
their uncanny fascination on stage,” he is adamant that “props remain objects, not

47 McConachie, Engaging Audiences, 31.
48 There is a long history of excellent scholarship that focuses on the symbolic significance of
specific props in a performance. One need only look at the vast amount of scholarship surrounding
Othello’s handkerchief ranging from the 1975 psychoanalytic reading by Linda E. Boose in “Othello's
Handkerchief: The Recognizance and Pledge of Love” to Ian Smith’s fascinating reclamation of the
handkerchief for Othello in "Othello's Black Handkerchief." Shakespeare Quarterly 64, no. 1 (2013): 1-25
to see that the study of the meaning of stage props in drama has remained a mainstay of critical inquiry.
Linda E. Boose in “Othello's Handkerchief: The Recognizance and Pledge of Love," English Literary
subjects.” By adhering to a strict subject/object divide Sofer misses the opportunity to engage with drama’s portrayal of the agency of non-human actors. The final key for analyzing the relationship of objects in drama to the world outside the theater, then, is to advance beyond exploring the meanings of props in performance in order to understand how the object participates in action. In other words, in order to take into account the many potential outcomes of a study of objects in drama, one must take an action-oriented approach.

In recent years the fields that can be loosely classified under the larger heading of new materialisms (thing theory, object-oriented ontology [OOO], and actor network theory [ANT]) have offered suggestive new avenues for studying objects in the world, but the efficacy of these differing approaches toward object study varies when applied to the dramatic medium. Object-oriented ontologists such as Graham Harman, Ian Bogost, and Timothy Morton seek to discover the essential qualities of an object so as to understand how that object is able to act in and influence the real world. The strictures of OOO stipulate that an object’s essence can only be ascertained when that object is entirely removed from the social structures of humans. Yet, as humans are enmeshed in

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51 An example of this line of reasoning that pertains directly to literary analysis can be found in Graham Harmon’s “The Well-Wrought Broken Hammer: Object-Oriented Literary Criticism” in which he calls for literary scholars not to examine “the social conditions that gave rise to any work” but instead to strip down or expand literary works “in order to discover the point at which [Moby-Dick] ceases to sound
every aspect of the dramatic form (its creation, execution, and reception), studying objects in the medium requires a type of scholarship that does not exclude the human.

Thing theory, with its particular attention to objects in literature and cultural studies, might appear most congenial to dramatic scholarship. Bill Brown describes thing theory as a methodology with which to “think with or through the physical object world” in order to “establish a genuine sense of the things that comprise the stage on which human action, including the action of thought, unfolds.”52 Despite the suggestive use of a theatrical metaphor, Brown limits A Sense of Things, his primary application of thing theory in literary analysis, to the realm of narrative fiction, a term he uses as shorthand for the novel.53 But his investigation into “fundamental questions of literary form” through analysis of “rhetorical grammars on which…novelists depend” does not address fundamental questions of literary forms outside of the novel.54 Although thing theory is valuable in its acknowledgment of literature’s ability to explore the nature of objects, drama, requires a methodology that can better address its physical properties (pun intended).55

53 Brown, A Sense of Things, 16.
54 Brown, A Sense of Things, 16. Though he does not separate objects entirely from their human significations, Brown’s methodological approach to narrative fiction aligns more directly with OOO than with the work of Latour. Brown wants to “see what happens when we objectify literary texts so that they become for us objects of knowledge about physical objects”, 18. In other words, Brown views the form of narrative fiction as having essential qualities that, if probed properly, will unleash information regarding the essential qualities of the objects contained within. For Harman’s critique of thing theory see “The Well-Wrought Broken Hammer”, 183-203.
55 My choice to label my methodological approach towards objects in drama as “action oriented” directly counters the apparent erasure of the human that some find objectionable in object-oriented ontology.
The work of Bruno Latour, however, does not seek to isolate the object from the human; in fact, in plotting out the network of attachments between humans and objects ANT emphasizes their enmeshed qualities. Furthermore, Latour privileges the place of fiction in exploring object agency writing that because literary theorists “deal in fiction” they have been “much freer in their enquiries” than social scientists in recognizing the importance of non-human actors. He attributes this freedom of enquiry to the way that “[n]ovels, plays, and films… provide a vast playground to rehearse accounts of what makes us act.” If fiction is a condensed meditation upon the forces that “make us act,” then dramatic performance is the demonstration of that meditation in action. His recognition of the way objects participate in action, as well as his emphasis on analyzing the quality of attachments, makes Latour’s body of work the best means by which to develop an action-oriented approach to the study of objects in drama.

Latour’s repeated investigations regarding the circumstances surrounding “action”—what sets action in motion, why certain actions occur, and the effect action has—has the potential to alter our understanding of objects in a medium in which action is, quite literally, a fundamental means of communication. Latour conceives of action as

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57 Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, 54. Despite his keen insight as to the place of action in the social, Latour makes the mistake of lumping novels and plays together without recognizing that plays employ action in an entirely different form than novels.

58 In recent years scholars of English Renaissance drama, in particular, have begun to utilize the works of Bruno Latour in their critiques, most notably: Julian Yates, "Accidental Shakespeare," *Shakespeare Studies* 34, (January 2006): 90-122; Henry S. Turner, *Shakespeare's Double
the result of the constant mediation of numerous forces, internal and external, human and non-human; action is “a node, a knot, and a conglomerate of many surprising sets of agencies that have to be slowly disentangled.” Believing that scholars interested in the power-relationship between subjects and objects make a fundamental misconception of either claiming objects have no power at all—“they are just there to be used as the white screen on to which society projects its cinema”—or that objects are “so powerful that they shape…human society,” Latour dismisses both positions and instead puts forth the claim that power resides in both positions. In Latour’s work objects are recognized as participants in the tangle of action because their material reality—their existence, form, or location—means they are “capable of making one do things that no one, neither you nor they [objects], can control.” Given the participation of objects in action, the relationship of “subjects” to “objects” cannot be couched in terms of command or mastery, for there is none. Instead, this relationship should be thought of as a series of mutually constructive attachments in which both subject and object are continually formed and reformed in a social relation that is ideological. Action, then, is not the


59 Latour, Reassembling the Social, 44.
60 Latour, We Have Never, 53
62 For Latour, objects should not be understood simply as passive vessels of meaning, but as active participants in the network formed, in part, by attachments between humans and objects. Because the label of subject and object carry with them the false notions of power and passivity Latour eliminates them entirely as viable designations to be replaced with the less prescriptive label of “actants”, Reassembling the Social, 54-55. Thus, any use of the term ‘subject’ in my work refers not to a subject/object binary but to a subject in the sense of the ideological construction taken up by humans living within a specific geographical, social, and political circumstance.
63 When we think of existence in terms of distinct polarities what disappears from view are “[t]he very sources of attachment—the formidable proliferation of objects, properties, beings, fears, techniques
result of an essential quality residing in either human or object, as practitioners of OOO would assert; rather, the nature of the attachment between human and object allows for action. This does not mean that objects have the same type of agency as men, but it does mean that they should be understood as important players in the makeup of what Latour deems “the social,” players capable of participating and motivating action.  

Only including the work of Sofer in an investigation into the place of stage properties in performance mean any actions or outcomes a prop is associated with are simply recycled into that prop’s multiple significations, but, as Latour’s work demonstrates, objects exist for humans not only as bearers of meaning but also as sources of action. It is not enough, then, to simply recognize props as objects that carry multiple meanings; one must go further and investigate the actions those objects enable or enact with the mindset that the object itself is a dynamic contributor to the drama. Dramas can be thought of as the type of “node” of action that Latour describes because in their physical form they depict the “surprising sets of agencies” that prompt and allow for certain actions and events to occur. Taking up Latour’s position regarding the role of that make us do things unto others”. Bruno Latour, “Factures/Fractures: From the Concept of Network to the Concept of Attachment,” Res 36 (1999): 20-31, 24.

Though their methods are extremely different the similarities between Latour’s work and those of cognitive scientists dovetail is myriad ways. Perhaps one of the most interesting is how, in their creation of a system they call “embodied realism” Lakoff and Johnson arrive (in their own separate way) at a point where they see the subject/object binary to be false: “Embodied realism can work for science in part because it rejects a strict subject-object dichotomy. Disembodied scientific realism creates an unbridgeable ontological chasm between objects which are ‘out there,’ and subjectivity, which is ‘in here.’ Once the separation is made there are only two possible, and equally erroneous, conception of objectivity: Objectivity is either governed by the things themselves (the objects) or by the intersubjective structure of consciousness shared by all people (the subjects)….The alternative we propose, embodied realism, relies on the fact that we are coupled to the world through our embodied interactions….What disembodied realism misses…is that, as embodied, imaginative creatures, we never were separated or divorced from reality in the first place.” Quoted in Bruce McConachie, “Falsifiable Theories for Theatre and Performance Studies” Theatre Journal 59 (2007): 553-577, 566 , emphasis original.

64 Latour calls for a fundamental reconstruction of how we perceive the makeup of what he deems the social. Whereas customarily society is understood as constructed by man’s relationship to other man, Latour puts forth the social should be conceived as a network of attachments between man and objects, neither having total control over the other.
objects in action expands focus beyond the actions of characters in drama to include the way participate in those actions—a move that enables critics to investigate the way plays “perform” complex ideas to audiences through objects.

Understanding objects as having equal opportunity to participate in action has immediate bearing on how scholars of drama conceive of objects that appear in performance. “Actors,” writes Latour “are always engaged in the business of mapping the ‘social context’ in which they are placed.” Although here Latour is using the term “actors” in the very general sense of people or things that are involved with/reacting to their surroundings, this sentiment can be very easily applied to the study of drama: actors, as in everyone on the stage (objects included), are demonstrating (or “mapping”) for the audience the norms, conventions, and possibilities of the “‘social context’ in which they are placed.” By mapping out the network depicted in a drama (objects included) scholars gain a better understanding of how those objects participate, allow for, and motivate action. When stage props are recognized as actors/characters in and of themselves, characters responsible for the onstage action, it becomes possible to ascertain what dramas are revealing about that object’s role in the social.

In the section above, I outlined how a person’s conception of an object’s affordances influence the form of action that may be undertaken in relation to the object, but because humans do not have complete command of objects the outcome of said action may not produce the desired results. In their involvement in the formation of the social, Latour conceives of objects as acting as “intermediaries” or “mediators:” when

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65 Latour, *Reassembling*, 34.
66 By using the term “equal” here I do not mean to suggest that all actants in the network are equally powerful, only that when initially plotting out the nodal points in a network one should not fail to recognize all the actors involved.
objects function as “intermediaries” they “transport meaning or force without transformation,” whereas when they function as “mediators” they “transform, translate, [and] distort the meaning or the elements they are supposed to carry.”67 In much the same way an object can move into the designation of a prop, an object functions as an intermediary when it works the way in which we expect it to and as a mediator when it breaks down or ceases to act as we would expect it to. Though when an object is in a mediator state it can be conceived of as working “improperly,” according to Latour, it is much easier to understand the importance of that object’s place in the social when it is no longer functioning as it should. This is because when objects function as intermediaries they are almost unremarkable; they do not draw attention to themselves, but when objects function as mediators, when they cease to work as expected, we are also able to suddenly comprehend the entirety of their role in the social.

Objects used as props highlight the unpredictable nature of things: they can be shown to transport or they can be shown to translate. In fact, some plays could be said to concern themselves entirely with the unforeseen consequences that occur when objects transfer from intermediaries to mediators. For example, when a person simply puts on an Indian gown in a play that object’s role in the social may go unnoticed, but when an Indian gown plays a central role in the undermining of marital vows (chapter three), or if a marriage is waylaid over the fight for control of foreign jewels (chapter four), or if an

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67 Latour, Reassembling the Social, 39. The terms intermediary and mediator should not be understood as describing something essential within a thing but as describing an object’s function within its current network of attachments. In other words, these designations are not permanent labels for an object in question, but an identification of the action the object is performing in a specific network at a specific time.
Indian shawl given as a gift leads to social chaos (chapter five), the function of those colonial objects in the social makeup of England are made manifest.\textsuperscript{68} In its directive to plot out a vast network of connected actors, Latour’s work offers a methodology by which to study the arrangement of forces that allow for action, particularly in drama. A criticism leveled against ANT, however, is that it assumes a “flat ontology of actors” leaving “no room for asymmetry” thus preventing qualitative evaluation of points within the network.\textsuperscript{69} Yet Latour provides a clear solution to this objection in his often overlooked article “Factures/Fractures: From the Concept of Network to the Concept of Attachment”.\textsuperscript{70} He directs us to explore not the things we are attached to, but the quality of our attachment to things. Doing so moves the question away from “whether we should be free or bound [to objects]” and towards the question of “whether we are well or poorly bound.”\textsuperscript{71} Objects themselves are not good or bad or powerful or weak, but our attachment to objects may be any of those. Latour insists “there is only one way of deciding the quality of these ties: inquire of what they consist, what they do, and how one is affected by them.”\textsuperscript{72} In other words, analyzing and evaluating the actions afforded by attachments to certain objects speaks to the quality of those objects in the social. In this directive, Latour moves us away from a strictly observational argument—objects have the power to influence us—and turns us towards

\textsuperscript{68} There is clear overlap between Teague’s conception of the dislocated function of props in performance and the idea of objects in drama functioning as mediators.

\textsuperscript{69} Harmon, \textit{Prince of Networks}, 208. Latour himself acknowledges that some consider ANT “Machiavellian” given that “everything can be associated with everything, without any way to know how to define what may succeed and what may fail.” Bruno Latour, \textit{An Inquiry into Modes of Existence} (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 64.

\textsuperscript{70} “Factures/Fractures” is, in my opinion, the clearest statement of ideas that first took form in \textit{Petite Réflexion sur le Culte monderne des dieux Fâïtiches} (Paris, 1996), a work not translated into English until 2010’s \textit{On the Modern Cult of the Factish Gods}.

\textsuperscript{71} Latour, “Factures/Fractures”, 22. Emphasis original.

\textsuperscript{72} Latour, “Factures/Fractures”, 22.
an ethical call—we need to be aware of how objects influence us in order to determine the quality of our attachment to them.73

Rather than restricting us to a flat ontology of actors, Latour’s work privileges neither humans nor objects in order to allow for better examinations and evaluations of actions. The process of recognizing actors and evaluating attachments actually results in a more accurate account of the social’s asymmetries as well as a better understanding of the object’s place in the social. Using Latour’s work to analyze objects in eighteenth-century drama takes us beyond the question of “What do these objects represent?” to examine the more interesting questions of “What do these objects do?”, “What actions do they allow?”, and “What does that tell critics about the nature of the British subject’s attachment to them?”

As all four sections of this chapter demonstrate, drama—a medium in which one is able simultaneously to recognize meaning and view action in the presence of physical things (both people and objects)—offers scholars a unique opportunity to study objects in action. The very act of writing a chapter with separate sections, however, results a linear and hierarchical account of a methodology that ought not to be conceived of as privileging one mode of thought or approach over another. The action-oriented approach towards object study that I undertake in this dissertation can only be realized by combining all of four sections. Scholars must read a dramatic text with attention to how the action of performance may have been undertaken so that the physical properties of the

73 Latour also addresses the relation of ‘action’ to ‘quality’ in An Inquiry into Modes of Existence in his discussion of the ignored attributes found within the term ‘construction’. After observing that the notion of ‘construction’ carries with it the loss of the “source of action,” and that with this loss the “direction” of the action becomes “uncertain,” he argues that the “most decisive ingredient of the composite notion of construction” is that it “introduce[s] a value judgment…on the quality of the construction”. Here Latour again turns to fiction to explain his claim: “it is not enough for Balzac to be carried away by his characters, he still has to be well carried away”. Latour, An Inquiry, 159.
play are brought out. Stage props must be understood as both fictional and real life objects that have the ability in a performance to collect and embody multiple meanings. During the moment of performance, Restoration and eighteenth-century audience members would have been processing the action on the stage in a way that served to define and refigure their understanding of certain objects. And, finally, exploring fictional performances of objects in action sheds light on the power and quality of real-life objects and attachments in the British social.\textsuperscript{74}

In order to understand the place of an object in the social, one must consider that object in action: the static thing tells us little; the active thing reveals volumes about who uses it and what it is used for. An action-oriented approach to objects in drama compels scholars to think across the constructed boundary between theater and real life while bringing forth the myriad objects and their attachments as depicted on the stage. In doing so, we are better able to perceive the reciprocal, ideological relationship between the theater and the social. As the following chapters in this dissertation demonstrate, using this approach, I am able to analyze how dramas in the long-eighteenth century made use of exotic goods and, in doing so, depicted life in a city that was being increasingly affected by an ever greater number of imperial commodities.

\textsuperscript{74} Though Sofer’s conception of props in drama, cогitative scientists’ conception of human perceptions of objects, and Latour’s conception of objects in the social each begin from different positions and pursue vastly different goals, their findings converge in fascinating and unexpected ways: the idea that action is the key to understanding objects and perception, the elimination of false binaries (subject/object, mind/body) in order to not let prescribed notions of the world dictate exploration of it, and the belief that in order to understand objects we must study these objects in motion.
Chapter 2

Merchandising Empire: Commodities in Seventeenth-Century Lord Mayor’s Shows

“...I would venture to say that if one began to look for something like an imperial map of the world in English literature, it would turn up with amazing insistence and frequency well before the mid-nineteenth century. And turn up not only with the inert regularity suggesting something taken for granted, but—more interestingly—threaded through, forming a vital part of the texture of linguistic and cultural practice.”

Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* 1

The previous chapter laid out the action-oriented approach I take towards the study of imperial commodities in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century performance. Using dramatic texts as a means to think through the physical nature of past performances highlights the presence of objects. Recovering the participation of objects in performance enables an analysis of a dramatic work that combines the various meanings embodied in a stage property with an account of the object’s participation in the play’s action. Taking such an approach allows for the enhanced understanding of a dramatic work as well as an avenue from which to gauge an object’s role in the social makeup of Britain. Turning from theory to practice, this chapter investigates imperial commodities in seventeenth-century Lord Mayor’s Shows—a genre of civic performance in which the subjects of mercantilism, English power, consumerism, and race were acted out before a vast London audience. The actual presence of imperial commodities in Lord Mayor’s Shows was essential for the communication of the genre’s pro-mercantile rhetoric. Furthermore, their inclusion in the performances helped to shape local perceptions of Asia and the New World.

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When writing of the role that English mercantilism played in the formation of the British Empire in *Wealth of Nations* (1776), Adam Smith opined that “to found a great empire for the sole purpose of raising up a people of customers may at first sight appear a project fit only for a nation of shopkeepers. It is, however, a project altogether unfit for a nation of shopkeepers; but extremely fit for a nation whose government is influenced by shopkeepers.”² Smith made this observation at the close of England’s first empire (1583-1783), the roughly two hundred year period in which Britain established and expanded its power base throughout the world.³ Yet even at this juncture, before the increased social mobility brought about by the industrial revolution and the rise of the nineteenth-century British Raj, Smith describes England as a place already populated by “customers,” a people who existed to consume the goods the world made available to them by the might of the British Empire. Although it is, perhaps, easy in our highly commercialized age to imagine how consumer wants could influence the government, how, in an era before rampant consumerism, were a people raised to be customers?

Linda Levy Peck approaches this question head-on in *Consuming Splendor*, an investigation of the development of English desires for luxury goods of which foreign items were a staple.⁴ Peck lays out how “new wants” were created through a larger

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³ Historians customarily recognize Britain’s “first empire” as ending between America’s declaration of independence in 1776 and Britain official recognition of America’s independence in 1783.
network of people and institutions (purchasing agents, importers, the aristocracy, and print about travel to foreign lands), and she goes on to credit the development of public spaces like the New Exchange, an economic and social place where both women and men could buy and display items, for developing modern notions of shopping. Peck insightfully and meticulously catalogs how public spaces contributed to the rise of English consumerism, but she does not address how seventeenth-century theatrical and/or civic performances contributed to the “new wants” of the English population. In their inclusion of imperial commodities, Lord Mayor’s Shows were one of the chief means by which livery companies introduced and perpetuated pro-mercantilist ideologies to the population of London, ideologies that would become the backbone of England’s rapid commercial expansion in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Lord Mayor’s Shows garnered local support for international trade and, most importantly, help to shape Londoners into willing consumers.

The moniker Lord Mayor’s Shows, also called Lord Mayor’s Triumphs and Lord Mayor’s Pageants, both during the period and in modern scholarship, references the collection of pageants performed in celebration of the annual inauguration of London’s new Lord Mayor—the man who for the next year would function as the head of the City’s twelve main livery companies. Civic ceremony accompanying the oath-taking of the new Lord Mayor dates back to the thirteenth century, but by the seventeenth century

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5 Peck, 112-152.

6 Following the example of Tracey Hill, I refer to the entirety of the day’s celebration as the “Show” and the individual episodic performances within the Shows as “pageants.” Tracy Hill, *Pageantry and Power: A Cultural History of the Early Modern Lord Mayor’s Show, 1585-1693* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), 12.
Lord Mayor’s Shows had developed into extravagant, highly choreographed affairs. Customarily celebrated on October 29th, the new Lord Mayor, accompanied by a lavish procession, would make his way through London on a pre-determined and highly symbolic route. Commencing at the Guildhall, the seat of the livery companies’ power, the soon-to-be Lord Mayor would be escorted to the Thames and conveyed by barge to Westminster where he would swear oaths of fealty before the Royal Exchequer. The procession would then return to the heart of the City, again via the river, stopping at St. Paul’s Churchyard before ending the day at Cheapside. At various points on this route grandiose staged pageants were performed before the new Lord Mayor and the watching crowds. Not beholden to any larger linear narrative, though occasionally linked in themes, the individual pageants took place atop either stationary or peripatetic pageant wagons decked out in elaborate sets. Each pageant contained actors playing fictional, historic, and/or allegorical figures who spouted flowery rhetoric celebrating England and its mercantile might.

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9 For a detailed examination of the material means of putting on the Shows, see Hill, 53-214. As cast lists do not exist for the Shows little is known regarding who, exactly, performed in them. The speculation ranges from professional actors, members of the livery companies, children, or, most likely, a mix of the three. Lancashire notes that John Lowen (a King’s Men actor and a member of the Goldsmiths’ Company) performed a role in Anthony Munday’s *Chruso-thriambos* (1611). Lancashire, “London Street Theater”, 334. Hill, on the other hand, points to firsthand accounts which mention the presence of child actors (both boys and girls) to support the argument that children made up the bulk of the performers in the pageants. Hill, 137-146. See also, David M. Bergeron, "Actors in English Civic Pageants." *Renaissance Papers* (1972): 17-28 and Harold Newcomb Hillebrand, *The Child Actors: A Chapter in Elizabethan Stage History* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1964), 28-40.
The requisite political pandering in Lord Mayor’s Shows seems to render them a rather formulaic medium of expression, especially if held up next to the dramas of the period. Yet, as Tracy Hill points out in *Pageantry and Power*, comparing the Shows to dramas inevitably leads to an assessment of the Shows as failed moments of performance, an assessment that misses the opportunity to examine their participation in forming attitudes towards international trade. Instead, Hill argues that scholars should “focus on the social, cultural and economic contexts in which the Shows were designed, presented and experienced” in order to understand their political ramifications.\footnote{Hill, 6-7.} Paula Backscheider phrases it best when she deems these pageants a form of “street politics.”\footnote{Paula R. Backscheider, *Spectacular Politics: Theatrical Power and Mass Culture in Early Modern England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 65.} Lord Mayor’s Shows, ostensibly unrefined in message, spoke to the public using easily understood modes of communication thereby involving them in a larger discourse concerning English power and the expansion of the mercantile process.

Although these ostentatious civic celebrations appear far removed from the theater of London, studying Lord Mayor’s Show has direct bearing on an understanding of early modern theater performance practices in relation to imperial commodities. The list of noted playwrights who lent their skills to crafting these spectacles is extensive: Thomas Middleton, Thomas Dekker, Anthony Munday, Thomas Heywood, and John Webster all wrote at least one Show; after the Restoration the overlap of playhouse and pageant continues with John Thatham and Elkanah Settle each writing multiple Shows.\footnote{Most of the playwrights who wrote Lord Mayors Shows were members of one of the twelve livery companies, which might account for why Shakespeare never wrote a Show. Hill, 96.} This list reveals a clear overlap between the world of professional London theater and Lord Mayor’s Shows, prompting Anne Lancashire to argue that Lord Mayor’s Shows...
were “intertwined with the development of the Elizabethan, Jacobean, and Caroline playhouse theater, with the influences flowing in both directions.” Most importantly, for the purposes of this dissertation, the presence of imperial objects in Lord Mayor’s Shows demonstrates a pattern in the world of performance in associating such objects with the formation of a sense of Englishness. Seventeenth-century Lord Mayor’s Shows were overflowing with commodities from around the world such as silks, jewels, spices and pepper, tobacco, and multiple varieties of fruits and nuts. Featuring exotic and/or valuable goods in performances that blatantly celebrated the benefits of international trade, a position not yet unilaterally accepted in England, served to construct and support a fantasy of England as the world’s dominant trading power, a fantasy England would eventually make into reality.

As the Shows were commissioned for the express purpose of celebrating the livery companies of London they might be considered a more constricted genre than theatrical dramas. Although the messages of these Shows were predetermined the means by which that message would be communicated was not necessarily so, meaning that a study of how the rhetoric of the Shows was communicated through material means reveals information regarding performance practices as well as the place of those materials in English life. Taking into account the situations in which imperial commodities appear in seventeenth-century Lord Mayor’s Shows and, more importantly, how such goods were treated by pageant characters and gathered watchers alike, scholars are allowed a window into the development of the British consumer. Moreover, the rhetoric of Lord Mayor’s Shows as connected to the goods of the world demonstrate a

14 Lancashire, “London Street Theater”, 338. Hill also points out that the “zenith of the mayoral Shows was virtually the same as that of the professional early modern stage.” Hill, 21.
means by which English populations were introduced to the idea of England as a world
power based on merchant companies made strong through local support of international
trade, an idea that predated and possibly contributed to the actual development of the
British Empire.

In its examination of Lord Mayor’s Shows across the seventeenth century, I put
forth that there were three primary ways imperial commodities in Lord Mayor’s Shows
helped to garner support for the expansion of English mercantile power. Firstly, the
inclusion of commodities in the Shows physically enacted the supposed benefits of
international trade by depicting the East and the Americas as full of valuable, easily
accessible goods that could be brought to London. This tactic served to encourage
support of international trade and investment in newly formed joint-stock companies.
Secondly, the frequent inclusion of imperial commodities alongside brown, black, and the
supposed indigenous populations of the world communicated to the watching Londoners
a view of “othered” figures as existing only in relation to goods the English wanted to
possess. Moreover, as such figures were frequently depicted as happy to work for the
English harvesting, collecting, and sharing such goods, the interaction of othered figures
with imperial commodities in these Shows encouraged the subjugation of peoples,
thereby tacitly underwriting and possibly contributing to developing notions of race.
Thirdly, the lavish distribution of spices and produce during these events both fostered
Londoner’s desire for such goods while, more importantly, demonstrating a type of
power that was only available to those with access to and possession of foreign
commodities. Ultimately, the use of imperial commodities in the Shows helped to
construct an idea of Englishness as based upon both the nation’s and the people’s ability
to consume, literally and monetarily, the goods of the world, thereby fashioning the idea of the English state as concomitant with control over foreign commodities. In this way imperial commodities in Lord Mayor’s Shows were integral to shaping the English watchers into willing consumers.

Before beginning an analysis of how imperial commodities were used in the Lord Mayor’s Shows, however, it is first necessary to touch upon the logistics of putting on a Show, the publishing of Show texts, and the makeup of the Shows’ audience. Each year the livery company from which the new Lord Mayor was chosen was in charge of paying for and overseeing that year’s Show. The company would select the Show’s writer and artificer (the man who was in charge of building the visual spectacle) as well as approve the Show’s larger design or theme.\(^\text{15}\) Because the cost to put on these Shows was great, a disproportionate number of Lord Mayors were elected from the richer companies, such as the Merchant Taylors or the Grocers.\(^\text{16}\)

The first recorded Lord Mayor’s Show was in 1535, but it was not until 1585 that published copies of the Shows began to appear, and almost all of what is known about the form and content of Lord Mayor’s Shows comes from these texts.\(^\text{17}\) The content of these printed Show texts varies from short, broad descriptions of individual pageants, more common to Shows in the early years of printing, to, in the later years, elaborately detailed descriptions complete with lines of dialogue and sometimes even authorial explanations.

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\(^\text{15}\) For more on the role of artificer in Lord Mayor’s Shows see Hill, 53-118. It is not clear if the writer would propose a yearly theme to the company or if the company would request a certain theme; themes and characters were likely recycled given that the writer and artificer had roughly a month to construct each Show. Hill, 72-73.

\(^\text{16}\) For a chronological list of Lord Mayor’s Shows and their corresponding livery company from 1585-1639 see Hill, 337-342. For Shows from 1655-1708 see Appendix A.

\(^\text{17}\) Lancaster, London Civic Theater, 52. Hill notes that a partial copy of a Show was printed in 1566, 222. For an extensive discussion of the printing processes of Lord Mayor’s Shows see Hill, 214-236.
of the visual symbolism in each pageant. As the Shows became increasingly formulaic after the Restoration it became customary to record long lists of groups and individuals who made up the processional, the order in which they were arranged, and how they were attired before finally arriving at the fictional scripted performances which made up the Show.

That these texts were published and distributed in some fashion is certain, but it is not known when they were published, for whom they were intended, and how they were distributed. Hill records circumstantial evidence supporting the argument that the livery company responsible for that year’s Show commissioned to have the program published so that copies could be distributed to the company’s members, but she admits that there is not enough evidence to conclusively prove this hypothesis. Most of the Shows written by Settle have “Sold By” printed on their title page, indicating that they were sold to the general public; however, this designation of sale is unique to Settle’s Shows as in over a century of printed Show texts no other existing program gives any indication they were sold to the public. It is also not known if the Show texts left to us were written before or after the October 29th performance. Given that post-Restoration Shows were both written in past tense and included the names and order of appearance of the distinguished

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18 Hill, 220-21
19 For example, “Sold by Randal Taylor, near Stationers-Hall” is printed on the title page of Settle’s *The Triumphs of London* (1692). Elkanah Settle, *The triumphs of London performed on Saturday, Octob. 29, 1692, for the entertainment of the Right Honourable Sir John Fleet, Kt., lord mayor the city of London* (London: Printed by James Orme and are to be sold by Randal Taylor, 1692) Early English Books Online.
people who marched in them, it seems reasonable to assume that Shows’ programs post-1660 were written and distributed after the performance.

Though scholars do not know who, exactly, the Show texts were printed for, there is more known about who was meant to watch the Show performances: in short, everyone. Unlike the playhouses of the seventeenth century, Lord Mayor’s Shows were free and open to the public, meaning they were performed for a much larger and likely more diverse audience than their more traditional theatrical cousins. In fact, part of what enabled these Shows to spread their particular brand of patriotic, mercantile rhetoric was their ability to reach a wide swath of the London population. Although the writers of the Shows did not make a habit of discussing audience makeup, surviving accounts from those who attended Shows reveal much about the audience. In 1617 Orazio Busino, a visiting Venetian ambassador to England, wrote an eyewitness account of Middleton’s Show The Triumphs of Honor and Industry that provides a fascinating description of the social and economic diversity of those who watched these celebrations. Positioned at a local merchant’s house to observe the Show, Busino writes:

While the procession was being ordered we gazed up and down the street. The houses have many high vantage points and all the facades are entirely of windows…[that]were filled with the handsomest faces, like so many beautiful paintings, with varied headtires [sic] and rich clothing of every colour….Looking below us onto the street we saw a huge mass of people, surging like the sea….It was a chaotic mixture: dotards; insolent youths and children, especially of that race of apprentices….; beribboned serving wenches; lower-class women with their children in their arms…. We saw few carriages about, and fewer horsemen; only a few carrying ladies to watch the procession from the houses of close friends or relatives on the street, because the insolence of the crowd is extreme….Looking up again at windows farther down the street, we saw various young men mingling with lovely damsels and, in our naiveté, we thought that these were brothers or husbands for the protections of each young lady. We were told, however, that, to
the contrary, these men were their servants, which is to say in plain language their lovers and favourites, granted great intimacy and many liberties.21

Busino’s description records the sheer variety of those watching this particular Show: visiting dignitaries, merchants, people who can afford “rich clothing,” old people, youths (including apprentices), serving wenches, lower-class women and children, and well-to-do ladies and their lovers.

Other sources confirm the range of people the Shows were able to reach. Samuel Pepys recorded in his diary that he attended the Thatham’s 1660 Show at the house of “Mr. Isaacson's, a linen-draper at the Key in Cheapside” which served as “a very good place to see the pageants, which were many.”22 In 1656 John Bulteel’s *Londons Triumph* (sic), the first of many Shows to receive what would become a customary title, details that the ceremonies were attended by “the Lord Protector and his Councell.”23 It is not known when and how often the King or other royalty attended the Shows, but the full, printed title of Matthew Taubman’s *London’s Great Jubilee* (1689) recounts that the Show was for “the Entertainment of the Majesties, who with their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Denmark, the whole Court, and Both Houses of Parliament, Honour his Lordship this Year with their Presence.”24 David Bergeron alliteratively

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22 Samuel Pepys, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys* vol. I, ed. Robert Lanier and William Matthews, (Berkley: University of California Press, 1970), 277. Though he joined in the city-wide celebration Pepys clearly looked down upon pageants as a theatrical form given that he described them as “good, for such kind of things, but in themselves but poor and absurd.”


24 Matthew Taubman, *London’s Great Jubilee containing a description of the several pageants and speeches, together with a song, for the entertainment of Their Majesties, who with Their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Denmark, the whole Court, and both Houses of Parliament, honour His*
divides the massive audience for the Shows into three groups: the “monarchy” the “merchants” and the “multitudes.” The need to please such a wide-ranging audience perhaps accounts for the Show’s sometimes puzzling mix of pro-mercantile rhetoric with sheer visual spectacle.

Hill poses a question that scholars must come to terms with in studying Lord Mayor’s Shows, asking: “when we talk of the Lord Mayor’s Shows, what entity do we actually mean? The performance, the printed text or some ambiguous combination of the two?” The surviving texts of seventeenth-century Lord Mayor’s Shows inhabit an even more nebulous position between traditional literary form and historical document than play texts. Show programs include spoken dialogue of the characters from each pageant, but they also include a larger amount of description of the performance than any early modern play text. Though he does not directly address Lord Mayor’s Shows, Peter Holland writes that understanding a text as a type of historical record of a past performance is particularly relevant in the cases of masques and entertainments “where the performance is not to be repeated,” suggesting scholars view the programs of these types of performances as “an attempt to recapture the glories of one particular day” and

Lordship this year with their presence. (London: Printed for Langley Curtiss ..., 1689). Early English Books Online.


Hill, 214.

For a discussion of the complications regarding reconstructing a performances from Show texts see Hill, 215-221 & 236-250. David M. Bergeron also addresses the question of reconstructing a Show from the text in “Civic Pageants and Textual Performance.”
imagining that the “the text is like a large souvenir program, whether the buyer was present at the original performance or not.”

That being said, the Show texts were not entirely accurate representation of what occurred on that day. The Show writers had leeway as to what information they felt necessary to include and what was appropriate to leave out. For example, Heywood ends *Londons Jus Honorarium* (1631) with the assertion that he would not waste paper by writing “needless and Impertinent deciphering [of] the worke” given that the visuals of the pageant constructed by his partner Gerard Christmas were so accurate that he “shall not neede to point unto them and say this is a Lyon, and that an Unicorne”. Additionally, Busino’s account of Middleton *The Triumphs of Honour and Industry* provides details that Middleton himself left out of his published text, most notably that the people playing the part of “Indians” had “tinted faces” and were dressed in “a little apron” adorned with “red and variably colored bird feathers.” Unfortunately, if a Show writer elected to leave out some information regarding what occurred in his Show, there are few avenues through which to recover that information.

In order to accurately approach the study of this genre and understand the effect these Shows had on British conceptions of self and country, scholars must attempt to recreate the physical experience of both putting on and witnessing these performances. In this chapter, I use the Show texts, however flawed they may be, to reimage the moment of performance as it would have been experienced by a watching audience; the moment

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that Backscheider refers to as the “‘spectator text,’” a moment both forever lost and also integral to understanding the place of these Shows in the lives of the London population. All discussion in this chapter of performance choices or the physical experience of the Shows themselves is reconstructed as best as possible with information from texts that were not necessarily created for that purpose; whenever possible I attempt to enhance this construction with relevant historical documents, but out of necessity the empty spaces must be filled in with conjecture.

Although Show texts are not necessarily reliable historical documents, I am inclined to agree with Bergeron who views the printing of civic pageants as a necessary step in ensuring that political messages of the performance were clearly communicated. The programs could not be expected to capture the entirety of the performance, but by focusing the reader’s attention on what he thought important the writer of the text could highlight the parts of the Show’s performance that best communicated the Show’s larger message. Consequently, I conceive of the texts of Lord Mayor’s Shows as faithful in their attempt to communicate what the writer thought were the most important elements of each Show.

When looking at Shows across the seventeenth century certain patterns in techniques, habits, and attitudes can be identified: personifications of the different regions of the world, royalty from the far reaches of the world kowtowing to English

32 An additional challenge here has been to select a tense to write in when discussing the Shows. Because this chapter attempts to reconstruct the one and only moment of performance of these Shows I have chosen to refer to them in past tense instead of the present, as is typically customary when drawing from printed texts. This choice is made with the intention to place further emphasis on the Shows original, physical performance and the communication that would have occurred at that time.
might, pageant wagons displaying wealth brought into London via trade, and the distribution of goods to the watching crowds. Given the limited amount of time writers and artificers had to compose the Shows and the fact that artificers were expected to make use of the pageant wagons already in the possession of the various livery companies, this repetition is not surprising. I believe it reasonable to assume that any patterns recorded across the programs of multiple Lord Mayor’s Shows may have been integral to the main messages of the genre, and would have been more likely to have been emphasized in a performance.

Although much of London seems to have treated these events as an excuse for celebration, Lord Mayor’s Shows were, in fact, complex rhetorical and symbolic performances seeking to convince the London population to support international trade and the expansion of English mercantile power. Every aspect of Lord Mayor’s Shows supported the idea that expanding English international trade was beneficial for the population of London; in fact, part of the job of these Shows was to ease fears regarding the risks of international trade. There was a divide during the period as to whether

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34 For works that examine Lord Mayor’s Shows specifically in relation to the subject of power see Backsheider, 1-55; James Knowles, “The Spectacle of the Realm: Civic Consciousness, Rhetoric and Ritual in Early Modern London” in *Theatre and Government Under the Early Stuarts*, ed. J.R. Mulryne and Margaret Shewring, 157 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Lancashire, “London Street Theater”; Hill, 270-336. Raymond Tumbleson complicates the analysis of the performance of power in these Shows by setting the power of the Lord Mayor directly against that of the King arguing that “these pageants provided a performative affirmation of authority, but the authority affirmed was in covert competition with that of the Crown.” In other words, these Shows garnered support for the merchant companies while also demonstrating to both King and country the powerful position the merchant companies held in the City. Raymond D. Tumbleson, “The Triumph of London Lord Mayor’s Day Pageants and the Rise of the City” in *The Witness of Times: Manifestations of Ideology in Seventeenth Century England*, ed. Katherine Z. Keller and Gerald J. Schiffhorst, 53 (Pittsburgh: Duquesne UP, 1993), 55.

international trade benefitted the state. With gold and silver bullion in short supply, some feared that money sent out of England to purchase exotic items drained the country of its much-needed coin. Exotic goods were desirable, but it was deemed by some to be too much of a sacrifice to send out gold and bullion to foreign lands only to get back products.\textsuperscript{36} On the other side of the argument, as Robert Markley lays out, were those who conceived of trade as able to “generate wealth in excess of the expenditures of labor and capital,” and in doing so trade could be “both mutually beneficial for all (civilized) parties concerned and yet always work to the economic advantage of England.”\textsuperscript{37} Merchants who stood to benefit the most from a people and a nation who supported investment in international trade sought to ease the anxieties of detractors in multiple ways, and the elaborate Lord Mayors Shows were the perfect opportunity to showcase, and in most instances exaggerate, the positive potential of foreign trade.\textsuperscript{38}

Through physical performance, a Show served as a symbolic demonstration of how investment in trade benefitted the English state, merchants, and all those who gathered to watch the festivities. One of the prevailing cultural fables found throughout early modern texts, argues Laura Brown, is the relationship of oceans, seas, and rivers

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\item The debate regarding the value of investing in foreign trade carried well into the eighteenth century and was a key motivator in the development of modern economic thought. Recently scholars have focused how facets of this debate extend to dramatic performance. Richard Kroll and Valerie Foreman demonstrate how the tragic-comic genre, both before and after the interregnum, showcased the benefits of international trade by exploring the way loss could lead to eventual gain. Richard Kroll, \textit{Restoration Drama and "The Circle of Commerce"} (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Valerie Forman, \textit{Tragicomic Redemptions: Global Economics and the Early Modern English Stage} (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2008). See also Bradley D. Ryner, \textit{Performing Economic Thought: English Drama Mercantile Writings, 1600-1642} (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2014).
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with ideas of English expansion. This cultural fable was embodied in Lord Mayor’s Shows through the use of the Thames as a featured location on the procession route. As stated earlier, before any of the day’s festivities could begin in earnest the new Lord Mayor first had to swear fealty to the King at Westminster. He would do so via a journey down the Thames accompanied by a host of elaborately decorated barges. Using the Thames as the initial route to and from the City allowed the Shows to highlight the importance of that body of water in the process of international trade. Furthermore, beginning the celebration of the new Lord Mayor in this manner allowed for the symbolic reenactment of the mercantile process. Merchants needed to convince the populace at large that profit was only achievable through initial loss or exodus; these ideas were performed when the man who was to be the next Lord Mayor would leave the City via the Thames only to return newly endowed with a new title and accompanied by riches. In this way the Show route reinforced the idea of the Thames as the means by which wealth from outside the City would enter London.

Alongside the return of the new Lord Mayor to the City, Shows in the first half of the seventeenth century would often feature the arrival of merchant ships laden with goods from across the world. Pageants that took place on the water and/or the banks of the Thames, called “water shows,” provided another means by which the idea of successful, profitable trade ventures were acted out before the population of London.

40 To this day royal celebrations in England emphasize the importance of the Thames to the city of London through this type of water spectacle, most recently in Queen Elizabeth II’s Diamond Jubilee in 2012.
41 After 1661 the elaborate water shows appear to cease as the first pageant of the day is often identified as being performed at St. Paul’s. However, the symbolic traveling from the City to Westminster and back with a host of elaborately decorated barges continued for the entirety of Lord Mayor’s Shows.
The content of water shows varied from the simple presentation of merchant ships arriving together with the new Lord Mayor to reenactments of sea battles or similar lavish displays on the river. Often water shows were followed by explanatory speeches on the land that emphasized, in some way, the importance of trade. Some water shows made do with simple allusions to trade as in Thomas Heywood’s *Porta Pietatis* (1638) where the character of Proteus opens the water show with a speech that references “that Fleece / Which makes th’ East Indies without England meete, / Prosper to all your hearts desires ” and John Tatham’s *London’s triumphs* (1661) which concluded its water show with a sea captain praising the new Lord Mayor while making reference to the “Merchant’s Vessels” in the harbor that were “Big Womb’d with Riches.”\(^{42}\)

Other water shows, however, featured the actual commodities of trade by prominently displaying them on the ships that sailed into the City. In *The Tryumphs of Peace* (1620) John Squire describes the water pageant as containing a ship “figuring the traffique or trade of the…company of the Haberdashers” on which rode figures representing “the 4 parts of the world, Asia, Africa, America, and Europa, each of them inuiting [sic] their trade vnto their coasts”.\(^{43}\) In the water pageant of *The Triumphs of Fame and Honour* (1634) a ship met the new Lord Mayor on the riverbank, and John Taylor describes it as loaded with “divers [sic] other commodities, that marchants and others that are free of the Company of Cloth-workers, doe receive from foreigne parts by


\(^{43}\) John Squire, *Tes irenes trophaea, or, The triumphs of peace that celebrated the solemnity of the right honourable Sir Francis Iones*, STC 23120.5 (London: Printed by Nicholas Okes, 1620), *Early English Books Online*, emphasis original. See note 75 below for a discussion of the word “inuiting.”
Following the ship’s arrival a speech to the onlookers catalogs the ship’s cargo as made up of “‘silks and velvets, oyle, and wine, / Gold, silver, Jewels, fish, salt, sundry spices, / Fine and course linen, druggs of divers prices: / What every Realme or climate can produce.’” Munday’s *The Triumphs of Re-united Brittania* (1605) opens with the arrival of a ship whose captain declares his vessel has made a “rich returne / Laden with Spices, Silks, and Indigo.” The imperial commodities that are said to make up this ship’s cargo then take center stage as the captain commanded a boy and a ship’s mate to “Take of our Pepper, of our Cloves, and Mace, / And liberally bestow them round about” by hurling them out to the watching crowd. These repeated performances of valuable imperial commodities coming to London via the Thames provided a means to reinforce the idea of international trade as beneficial for London.

Outside of the inclusion of imperial commodities, Shows that featured precious metals and jewels offered a direct challenge to the argument that international trade drained England of bullion. In the water show of *Chruso-thriambos, or The Triumphes of Golde* (1611), appropriately themed for its celebration of a new Lord Mayor from the Goldsmiths, Munday directs readers that one must “Imagine...that from the rich and Golden Indian Mines, sundry Ships, Frigots and Gallies, are returned home”. The reader is informed that in one of these ships a “Golden King” accompanied by his

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44 John Taylor, *The triumphs of fame and honour, or, The noble accomplish'd solemnity...*, STC 23808 (Imprinted at London: [s.n.], 1634). *Early English Books Online.* This pageant has a unique feature of an explanatory section after the descriptions of the pageants are given. The explanation, however, does not really give the “meaning” of the show, but instead tries to give historical and geographic details.

45 Taylor, *The triumphs of fame and honour*.


“peerelesse Queene” has arrived to “behold the Countries beauty, and the immediate day of sollemne triumph”. ⁴⁹ The King and Queen had come to London “at their owne entreatie,” according to Munday, and are described as having “brought into England,…no meane quantity of Indian Gold.” ⁵⁰ Munday does not record what, if any, speeches were given during this pageant, so it is unclear how much of the above information would have come across during the performance, but it is entirely likely that the King and Queen were displayed before the crowds alongside the “Indian Gold” they are said to have brought.

Precious metals did make an appearance in another pageant in this Show. Before the arrival of the King and Queen, the water show portrayed “Divers [sic] Sea-fights and skirmishes” at the conclusion of which the winners of these battle were attended on shore by “Indian page[s]” all of whom were “laden with Ingots of Golde and Silver”. ⁵¹ Whereas the description the Indian King and Queen does not specify if precious metals were present, the Indian pages who accompanied the (likely) white victors are specifically described as displaying precious metals. The suggestion in this pageant, then, is that the figures from India—the representatives of what India had to offer the English people—are directly linked to the presence of Gold on English shores.

Five years later in Chrysanaleai (1616), Munday again included an “Indian” royal figure bringing Gold and foreign wealth directly to the people of London. ⁵² Instead of simply bearing silent witness to the day’s activities, this King interacts directly with the

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⁴⁹ Munday, Chruso-thriambos, 19-21.
⁵⁰ Munday, Chruso-thriambos, 21-22.
audience by “hurling gold and silver every way about him.” This King is accompanied by “six other triburatie Kings on horseback” who are described as having carried “Ingots of gold and silver.” Although this King is not given a voice, the significance of his actions was interpreted for the Lord Mayor and the onlookers by one Sir William Walworth who recited that the King’s “Indian treasure liberally is throwne: / To make his bounteous heart the better knowne.” As this Show was commissioned by the Fishmongers, a livery company not automatically associated with foreign trade, Munday explains that these figures were there to demonstrate the Fishmonger’s desire to recognize the importance of the Goldsmiths, but on a more practical level, the presence of precious metals carried by the tributary Kings along with the Indian gold tossed out to the audience again directly reinforced the idea that trade with other countries results in the arrival of gold in England. Staging ships returning to the City via the Thames loaded with imperial goods and royal figures sharing their riches Lord Mayor’s Shows celebrated the beneficial outcomes of international trade.

Another method by which merchants and explorers encouraged investment in international trade was to write about the lands outside of Europe as practically overflowing with available goods. Markley argues that English mercantilist writings sought to fashion an imaginary view of the world as an inexhaustible “storehouse” of luxury goods and raw materials. This tactic helped to foster a fantasy that the English needed only to invest money and people into the expansion of trade and they would soon

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53 Munday, Chrysanaleia, 91.
54 Munday, Chrysanaleia, 92 & 94.
55 Munday, Chrysanaleia, 340-41.
56 Munday, Chrysanaleia, 335-39.
be rewarded with easy access to the limitless variety of goods the world had to offer.\textsuperscript{57} Markley suggests that it was the belief that the world was brimming with unclaimed riches that provided impetus for backers to invest in the expansion of English merchant ventures and newly developed joint-stock companies, even though in the early seventeenth century profits from these ventures were far from guaranteed.\textsuperscript{58}

Examples of this type of writing are plentiful and, as Lord Mayors Shows of the seventeenth century emulate the selfsame rhetoric via performance, are worth examining. One early example is by Thomas Hariot, a cartographer working for to Sir Walter Raleigh, who wrote “A Breife and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia” (1588) during his 1585 journey to Virginia that promised to tell “of the Commodities There Found, and to be Raised, as well Merchantable as Others.”\textsuperscript{59} This text exhaustively catalogues and describes the myriad resources Hariot felt Virginia had to offer the English “by way of traffique and exchange with our owne nation of England” promising that those who invested in a Virginia colony would “enrich yerselues the prouiders: those that shall deale with you, the enterprisers in generall, and greatly profit our owne countrey men.”\textsuperscript{60} Hariot divides the land’s natural resources into a three different categories: the first consisting of what could be cultivated or gathered but was not for human consumption such as copper, fur and skins, and “dyes of divers kinds;” the second category contained “such commodities as Virginia is knowen to yeeld for victuall and sustenance of man’s life” including grains, fruits, beasts, fowl, and a plant “the Spanyards

\textsuperscript{57} Markley, 4.  
\textsuperscript{58} Markley, 4-5 & 210-11.  
\textsuperscript{60} Hariot, 8-9.
generally call…Tobacco;” and the third category lists various woods and stones that could be used to build structures by those willing to inhabit the land.61 In this 48-page work, Hariot spends only ten pages discussing indigenous people who already lived there, choosing instead to focus on the land’s commodities.62

A similar tactic is taken in regards to Madagascar by one Walter Hamond who in 1640 wrote a tract whose title promised to examine “A paradox Prooving that the inhabitants of the Isle called Madagascar, or St. Lavrance, (In temporall things) are the happiest people in the world.”63 At the bottom of the title page, however, Hamond’s real intention is revealed: to provide “moſt probable Arguments of a jopefull and fit Plantation of a Colony there” so as to allow for the “relieving of our Engliſh Ships, both to and from the Eaſt Indies.” Before turning to a discussion of the island’s inhabitants and their happiness, Hamond first writes of the Island’s natural abundance saying that what “groweth here naturally” exceeds “what our Northerne Geponicks labour for, by cultivating the earth” and includes “trees of divers kinds” which “beareth…fruit serving for food” such as “Oranges and Limons…and a kinde of Palmito.” Additionally, the land itself is described as teeming with promise for animal husbandry as “The Plaines afford excellent Pasturage….Their Rivers are plentifull flored with Fiſh and Fowle of all kindes. Cattle they have in fuch abundance….Their Oxen are large….Sheepe they have great flore….wild Hogges they have in the woods…but for beasts of prey, as Lions, Tigers, Woolves, and the like. We faw none.” Hamond surely intended his description of the island as naturally overabundant and void of predators to encourage the colony he hoped

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61 Hariot, 15, 17, & 21.
62 Hariot, 34-44.
63 Walter Hamond, “A paradox Prooving that the inhabitants of the isle called Madagascar, or St. Laurence, (in temporall things) are the happiest people in the world” STC 12735 (London: Printed by J. Raworth, B. Alsop, T. Fawcet, and M. Parsons for Nathaniell Buter, 1640). *Early English Books Online*. 55
to have established there. Importantly, both these texts present Virginia and Madagascar as mythical lands of plenty and inexhaustible spaces of easily accessible resources for English consumption.

As in the above works, Lord Mayor’s Shows adopted these techniques during the performance in effort to highlight the natural resources of the world. The pageant wagons, one of the main sources of visual spectacle in the Shows, were often decorated so as to depict the regions England would eventually colonize as superabundant in produce and spices. In *The Tryumphs of Truth* (1613) Middleton twice featured “five islands, artfully garnished with all manner of Indian fruit trees, drugs, spiceries, and the like.”64 Four years later in the *Triumphs of Honor and Industry* (1617), the Show witnessed by Businio, Middleton made use of this trope in a pageant that contained “[a] company of Indians, attired according to the true nature of their country [who] are set to work in an island of growing spices: some planting nutmeg trees, some other spice trees of all kinds; some gathering the fruits, some making up bags of pepper.”65 The variety of fruits and spices presented in this pageant spoke to the idea of the wealth that would come from having access to such a place. Moreover, while some “Indians” were busy harvesting the island’s natural wealth others were planting spice trees, serving to figure this island as a space that would continually produce. Like Virginia, and Madagascar, the islands that Middleton constructed for the audience were made distinctive in their natural plenty.


The depiction of lands outside of Europe as naturally plentiful was even more prevalent in the Lord Mayor’s Shows of the latter half of the seventeenth century.

Tatham’s *London’s Tryumph* (1659), written for the Grocers, contained a pageant “representing several of the places of Countries, in which the Commodities belonging to the Grocers trade doe grow, and the natives disporting therein, in habits of each Nation; on one part of the said Stage is placed a Clove Tree, in another a Nutmeg Tree and a Current Tree, on another part thereof is planted Rice, Rasons, Figgs, and Druggs”.

Jordan also made use of this trope in *London Triumphant* (1672) in a pageant that contained a space he deems the “wilderness” of “America” which:

> doth consist of divers Trees, in several sorts of green Colours, some on Blossom, others wealthily laden with some green and some ripe and proper Fruits and Spices, as Dates, PineApples, Cloves, Nutmegs in their Cortex, Figs, Raisins, large Plumbs, Vines laden with great Clusters of red and white Grapes, Sebestens, Tamarinds inhabited with Tawny Moors, who are laborious in gathering, carrying, setting, sorting, sowing, and ordering the Fruits and other Physical Plants of their Country, several Baskets of which stand up and down here and there ready gathered…

Far from being an actual “wilderness,” this land is clearly overflowing with produce and consumable goods. Again a description is given of fruits in various stages of “ripeness” suggesting this was a display of an eternal harvest, one that will not stop once everything has been bagged. Though Jordan does not offer a description of the “Indian Garden of

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Post 1655 there were a total of twelve Shows titled *London’s Triumphant(s)*, not including Jordan’s *London Triumphant* (1672) and *London’s Royal Triumph* (1684) and Settle’s four *The Triumphs of London* (1691-93 & 1695). Because of the potential for confusion I will include the date of the Show after its title even if it was previously given.


68 The embodiment of “America” in this pageant spoke directly to the pride of an English Nationalism based on trade. Described as a woman with “a tawny Face…adorned with several necklaces of Pearl, Gold, and…Jewels” with arms covered in “a variety of glittering bracelets,” this figure praised
Spices” featured in London’s Joy (1681), the song performed in this garden by “black” performers posing as native inhabitants of the garden tells of the “Cinnamon, Nutmegs, of Mace, and of Cloves” that are so “plenty they grow in whole Groves” alongside the “Sugar and Gums, Our Spices and Plums.” Given the tradition of bedecking pageant wagons with goods it is reasonable to assume that the many commodities listed in this song would have decorated the pageant wagon depicting the “Indian Garden of Spices.” Foreign commodities in Lord Mayors Shows represented what England could mine from the world if they were willing to venture out and take it. The presence of goods in these examples demonstrates how Lord Mayor’s Shows depicted and defined the regions of the world for the people of London by the goods they could produce.

The Shows’ repeated extravagant display of lands that were teeming with natural wealth necessarily leads to a discussion of the role of spectacle in performance. Frances Teague defines spectacle as moments in performance when “the visual matters more than the verbal” or, to phrase it differently, when “what is said has less importance and effect than what is seen.” She notes that in Shakespeare studies, with its history of lauding Shakespeare’s use of language, moments of spectacle are often discounted as being less English merchants for saving her from the cruelty of the other European trading powers. She criticized the “hauty Spaniard and the cruel Dutch” who “stole [her] goods,” “ransack’d [her] riches,” “over-ran [her] land,” and ruined Peru and Mexico. It was only with the “English Nation” where America had found “rest more peaceable and kind, / full of Humanity” and who persuaded her to “a generous and fair way of Trade.” English trade, then, presumably of the goods she is surrounded with on the pageant wagon and covering her person, is framed as a liberating force, and trade itself, aligned with ideas of deliverance and peace, stokes the pride of English nationalism. Jordan, London Triumphant, 9.


70 Interestingly, more Shows before the interregnum included ships arriving laden with goods from around the world while post-Restoration Shows more prominently featured depictions of faraway lands as full of commodities.

worthy or not as well written, and that “[m]odern conceptions of drama, even of Renaissance drama, have difficulty regarding spectacle…in any serious way.” because “[s]pectacles deliberately confuse meaning.”\footnote{Teague, 90-91, 118} In their use of sea battles, merchant ships, and elaborately decorated pageant wagons it is clear the Shows sought to use visual stimuli in order to spark amazement and wonder in their audience; a practice that makes them easy to dismiss as being of little literary value.\footnote{Even Thomas Heywood seemed to resent the need to create spectacle as in the text of his 1633 Show, \textit{Londini Emporia}, instead of describing the third pageant he simply tells the reader it was “a Modell devised for sport to humour the throng, who come rather to see then to heare.” Thomas Heywood, \textit{Londini Emporia} in \textit{Thomas Heywood’s Pageants: A Critical Edition}, ed. David M. Bergeron (London: Garland Publishing, 1986), ln. 329-330.} I argue, however, that the use of spectacle in the Shows did not so much confuse their meaning as enhance it. Though decidedly lacking in subtly, spectacle itself can function as a primary tool in the performance of power. The overwhelming spectacle of Lord Mayor’s Show performances was necessary in order to portray the might—or at least imagined might—of the emerging merchant companies and England as a world trading power.

Lord Mayor’s Shows used pronounced means to demonstrate their power and encourage investment in trade, but in their spectacle-filled performances the Shows likely served to also shape London’s view of the world and the people in it. In all the instances given above in which the world’s abundance is featured, as well as in many of the examples of wealth entering London, the commodities in the performance are accompanied by a range of “exotic” racialized figures: Middleton’s Shows displayed “Moores and “Indians,” “natives” populated Tatham’s island, Jordan’s America is inhabited with “tawny moores,” and his Indian Garden of Spices contained black men and women. Whether intentional or not, in depicting spectacular versions of how the
populations of the world existed in relation to both consumable goods and the people of London Lord Mayor’s Shows directly influenced an English conception of the other and the self.

The sheer prevalence of racialized figures in Lord Mayor’s Shows has drawn the attention of critics interested in the overlap between race and performance, but surprisingly little attention has been paid to the mechanics of how the race of these figures would have been performed for audiences.\(^7^4\) Show texts often reveal to the reader the skin color, race, or region from which a character hailed, but, as seventeenth-century audiences would not have had these texts in hand when watching the performance, meaning figures purportedly from the far off reaches of the world must have communicated their race or their country of origin to the gathered crowds through visual means.\(^7^5\) Given the performance norms of the period it seems most likely that white actors performed these roles by darkening their skin in some manner.\(^7^6\) Nevertheless,

\(^7^4\) Anthony Gerard Bundy provides an account of Lord Mayor’s Shows from 1585 to 1692 in which black figures appear recording that from 1585 to 1692 there were at least nineteen Shows with black figures. This list is problematic, however, as Barthelemy does not specify how he determined which figures were black and if this number includes other figures such as Turks, ‘Mugals’, or Indians. Anthony Barthelemy, “Words of the Sponsors: Blacks in Lord Mayors Pageants” in Black Face Maligned Race: The Representation of Blacks in English Drama from Shakespeare to Southerne, 42 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1987). Ania Loomba writes that “Blacks and other outsiders were represented…more insistently in Jacobean mayoral shows” showing how “their presence…signified the new territories that held the promise of commercial expansion for the Companies that sponsored the pageants”. Ania Loomba, “Introduction to The Triumphs of Honour and Virtue” in Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works, ed. Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino, 1714 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 1714. See also, Gary Taylor, Buying Whiteness: Race, Culture, and Identity from Columbus to Hip Hop (New York: Palgrave Macmillian, 2005),125-132; Peter Fryer, Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain (New York: Pluto Press, 2010), 26-32.

\(^7^5\) Though at times these figures identify themselves in speeches there is disagreement among critics over how much, if any, the watching crowds would have been able to hear. For an overview of the different positions on this matter, see Kara Northway, “‘to Kindle an Industrious Desire’: The Poetry of Work in Lord Mayors’ Shows." Comparative Drama 41, no. 2 (2007): 167-192.

\(^7^6\) This was the technique reported to have been done by Queen Anne in Ben Jonson’s infamous Pageant of Blackness (1605). Unlike past masques, in which performers used black cloth coverings on their bodies and black vizards over their faces, in the Masque of Blackness the faces of Queen Anne and her ladies were darkened with a type of black pigment. Virginia Mason Vaughan, Performing Blackness on English Stages, 1500-1800 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 65. Andrea Stevens points out
Peter Fryer argues that black performers actually played the roles of Indian or African characters in Lord Mayor’s Shows claiming eye-witness drawings of certain pageants in which the features of some of the figures are shaded in, which he interprets as indication of the race of those performers, as proof. Fryer also refers directly to the written texts of the pageants arguing that the many references to the “negro” and “moor” characters indicates the inclusion of black performers. Fryer’s reasoning, however, seems highly speculative as it is based upon the assumption that these sketches were trying to record the truth of these actors race instead of the more likely possibility that they were simply attempting to relate what white actors were trying to communicate through the use of blackface. This is not to say there were no black performers in London, only that there is not enough evidence to suggest that Lord Mayor’s Shows regularly employed black performers to play the many figures representing different lands and races.

Given that almost every time an Indian, Moor, or racially othered figure appears in a Show that person is accompanied by, or is accompanying, an exotic commodity, I argue the material means of enacting “otherness” in these performances did not stop with the darkening of skin. Imperial commodities in Lord Mayor’s Shows not only displayed the wealth of the world to the population of London but, in the absence of black or brown


77 Fryer, 27.
78 Fryer, 27-32. For example, he points to the text of John Bulteel’s Londons Triumph (1656) records that there were “two Leopards bestrid [sic] by two Moors”—as opposed to two men dressed as Moors. Fryer, 27.
performers, these objects also assisted in the performance of “otherness.” Importantly, the process of presenting racially distinct populations alongside and through the consumable goods of the world served to equate and define populations of people mainly with the potential for English consumption.

In these Shows figures who stand in as emblems or silent representatives of their lands demonstrate the simplest iteration of the conflation of peoples and lands with goods. Returning to Squire’s watershow in *The Tryumphs of Peace* (1620), this Show contained four figures representing “Afia, Africa, America, and Europa, each of them inuiting [sic] their trade vnto their coastts.” The written description of the Show clearly communicates both the origins and the symbolic significance of these figures, but, as no dialogue relating this information to the audience is recorded, those watching the pageant would have had to rely on visual cues in order to connect these figures to the lands and wealth they were meant to represent. Presumably, this effect was accomplished by Squire’s pairing of each figure with a material commodity that signified both the figures place of origin as well as what that region had to offer the English. Asia is described as holding “Panchayian spices,” Africa is a “blackmoore” who has “in her hand the branch of a Nut-megg-tree,” America is a “tawny Moore, vpon her head a crowne of feathers,” and “Europa” wears an “imperiall crown” and holds “a cluſter of grapes.”

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79 Squire, *Tes irenes trophaea*. The *Oxford English Dictionary* does not provide an entry for “inuiting,” but it is possible to interpret the “u” in “inuiting” to be an archaic printing of the letter “v,” meaning “inuiting” is meant to be read as “inviting.” Thus it is possible that these four figures are meant to be seen as encouraging or “inviting” trade to their regions. Likewise, it is also possible that “inuiting” is a mistaken printing of the word “intuiting,” and in its verb form “intuit” can mean “to receive or assimilate knowledge by direct perception or comprehension” or “to know anything immediately, without the intervention of any reasoning process.” “intuit, v.”. *OED Online*. March 2014. Oxford University Press. September 12, 2014. That interpretation suggests that Squire expected the watching audience to automatically perceive these figures as representing trade from their specific regions.

80 Squire, *Tes irenes trophaea*. 64.
the descriptions of skin color lends further credence to the idea that the commodities they carried helped in communicating their race. Africa’s description as a “blackmoore” and America’s as a “tawny Moore” suggests that the skin color of these figures would have been one indication of race and/or origin. There is, however, no indication as to the color of Asia’s or Europa’s skin. Even though Asia’s skin is not differentiated from that of Europa’s in the text, the spices she holds, a commodity typically associated with India and/or the Pacific Spice Islands, would have marked her for the onlookers as the representative of India or the Spice Islands. This, of course, does not mean that the skin of the person playing Asia was not darkened during the performance in some fashion, but it does suggest that Squire meant the commodity she was paired with to function as her defining characteristic.81

Although silent, emblematic roles as those in Squire’s Show were common for both racial and allegorical figures alike, racially othered figures sometimes played starring roles in their own pageants. Defying their traditional performance history as villains and devils, black figures in Lord Mayor’s Shows were often presented in a seemingly positive light.82 The frequent presentation of black characters makes Shows appear inclusive, but the presence of commodities as connected to these figures

81 Male foreign royalty feature regularly in Shows, but the metaphorical embodiments of far off lands are almost always female. This pattern of having foreign lands embodied in female figures is also seen on the Restoration stage in what Cynthia Lowenthal identifies as “romance[s] of conquest.” Plays that explore the subject of English colonialism in the New World through the relationship of a heroic white male character (the English) and a native women (the conquered land). According to Lowenthal, the love plots of these stories perform the ideological work of conquest by transferring ideas of occupation and triumph away from invasion and battle and onto the attainment of the native woman by the white man. Regardless of the fact that such possession is couched in the terms of love, as the women’s bodies were “metaphorically linked with the land” the men possessing them were also in possession of the land. Although Lord Mayor’s Shows do not feature such love stories, the embodiment of lands in female figures correlates with what was going on in the theatrical world. Cynthia Lowenthal, Performing Identities on the Restoration Stage (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2003), 51 & 63.

82 Barthelmy, 1-17.
demonstrates that the apparently positive presentation of black kings and queens in Shows, in fact, just a cipher for ideas of English dominance through mercantile means. The two most well-known examples of black figures in Shows are the “king of the Moors” from *The Triumphs of Truth* (1613) and the “Black Queen” from *The Triumphs of Honour and Virtue* (1622), both written by Middleton on behalf of the Grocers Company. Critics have noted the way in which the speeches of these figures laud Christian (English) merchants for spreading Christianity around the globe. In focusing attention on the religious rhetoric of these speeches, however, the physical presence of commodities in relation to these two figures has been overlooked. During the performance both figures were presented before audiences in relation to spices. Thus, these figures served to support pro-mercantile rhetoric based just as much on access to valuable goods as on religious conversion.

Middleton’s “king of the Moors” best exemplifies how attention to the physical moment of performance modifies an understanding of a Show’s rhetoric. The king’s speech acknowledges the amazement of the “white people” whose “Christian eyes” had never seen a “king so black;” he assures the onlookers that even though he is “a Moor” the “religious conversation / of English merchants” had introduced him to the “true Christian faith.” In this way the king is presented as the paragon of successful religious conversion: the black man, whose skin color marks him as damned, has been saved through the efforts of Christian merchants. Middleton’s king does not appear to be directly defined by any commodity; he does not throw out gold to the onlookers, nor is he

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83 See Loomba, 1714-16; Gary Taylor, 125-132
85 The way this king praises his religious conversion causes Gary Taylor to identify him as “the first unequivocally positive representation of a black speaker in the entire surviving corpus of English dramatic texts”. Taylor, 126.
described as being surrounded by or adorned with any valuable goods. Nonetheless, the ship he and his attendants arrive in follows the reappearance of the spice islands that featured in the earlier water show, the ones described as decorated with “all manner of Indian fruit trees, drugs, spiceries, and the like.”

Middleton records that this particular pageant took place in “Paul’s Churchyard where stand ready the five islands,” a wording that suggests the spice islands were set up in the large space as fixed backdrop for the King’s speech. It is not clear if the king’s ship traveled directly from the islands, thereby suggesting that the king is their ruler, or if the king appeared from another part of the churchyard. Regardless, the reappearance of the Spice Islands as a backdrop for the appearance of the king of the Moors, the main figure in this pageant, forms a clear connection between the two. The king’s proximity to these islands links both his and his attendants’ bodies to the products on the island, and his blackness, something he directly singles out, is thereby also connected to the consumable goods on the islands. Only by envisioning the moment of performance is the presence of the “spice islands” and their influence on how one understand the king of the Moors. The ostensible purpose of the king of the Moors in this pageant may have been to connect English merchants to spreading Christianity throughout the world, but in the performance his person also promises access to the spices on the Spice Islands from which he came.

Middleton revisits the idea of mercantilism as a method of spreading Christianity in *The Triumphs of Honour and Virtue*, only in this Show commodities feature far more

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86 The text of this Show suggests that these “islands” were present in two difference locations: they first appear on barges in the water show and then are also present in St Paul’s Churchyard. Middleton, *The Triumphs of Truth*, 390 & 200-201.


88 If the king’s ship did proceed toward the onlookers directly from the spice islands that would have served as another figurative replica of trade ships journeying to London.
prominently in both spoken and visual rhetoric. In one pageant a “Black Queen,” also
identified in the text as the “black personage representing India” and the “Queen of
Merchandise,” addressed the crowd from atop a pageant wagon “bearing the title the
Continent of India.”

Her wagon is said to have been covered with “all manner of spice-plants and trees bearing odour,” and when she came forward to give her speech she was born “upon a bed of spices, attended by Indians in antique habits.”

The various names the Black Queen is given in the text allow a reader to understand her as the representative of blackness, India, and merchandise, but for those watching it would have been her dark skin, the pageant wagon’s title (for those in the audience who could read), and the physical presence of the spices in the performance that would have defined her person.

Like Middleton’s king of the Moors, the Queen of Merchandise spoke directly of her black skin color saying “this black is but my native dye / but view me with an intellectual eye / …you’ll then find / a change in the complexion of the mind: / I’m beauteous in my blackness.”

Although the rhetoric of her speech primarily suggests that the watchers should see through her skin color to the inner “Christian holiness” she now possesses, her blackness is also made synonymous with the “gums and fragrant spices…/ My climate heaven does with abundance bless.”

Essentially, when she asked the watchers to see her blackness as “beauteous” they were not instructed to ignore her blackness; instead, they are told to view her blackness as beautiful because it is linked to “the riches and the

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92 Middleton, *The Triumphs of Honour and Virtue*, 79, 64-65. The idea that the spices the Black Queen was accompanied by may have perfumed the air speaks physical response that one might have had watching this pageant: when seeing the body of the Black Queen the bodies of those watching would have been stimulated by the smells that accompanied her.
sweetness of the east.” The rhetoric of the Black Queen’s speech encouraged those watching to see not just her color but the wealth her color represented. The people of London were being asked to conflate her skin color with merchandise and excuse the former for the latter.

Any analysis of the presentation of race in Lord Mayor’s Shows is complicated by the fact that an accurate portrayal of the world was always sacrificed for the sake of sensationalism and communicating larger rhetorical goals. The often vague or contradictory descriptions of figures in Show texts present to the modern reader an apparently confused portrayal of the world’s population. Middleton’s “black” and “Indian” Queen as well as his “Moorish” king from the Spice Islands demonstrate how othered figures in Shows were often linked to multiple lands and/or races. Yet, as Ania Loomba argues, the “blurring” as well as the “specificity” of race in Lord Mayor’s Shows is “important for unraveling the politics of English trade and colonial contact during the period.”

Rather than offer clarity, the presence of imperial commodities in performance often attributed to the Shows’ “blurring” of race. Patterns in commodity/race parings can be established, as in Asia’s holding of “Panchayian” spices,” but there is no one commodity that is exclusively matched with one race. For instance, the “Indians” that labor gathering, bagging, and planting spices in Middleton’s The Triumph of Honor and Virtue are described in Busino’s account of the Show (not in Middleton’s text), as

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93 Middleton, The Triumphs of Honour and Virtue, 73.
94 For example, in Jordan’s London’s Royal Triumph one figure is described as an “Oriental Indian Negro” with no real explanation of what that description entails. Thomas Jordan, London’s Royal Triumph (London: Printed for John and Henry Playford, 1684), 7.
95 Loomba, 1715.
adorned with “red and variously colored bird feathers.” In English performance history feathers were typically indicative of Indians from the Americas (along with tobacco leaves/pipe). The attire of these figures communicated they were Indians from the America’s while the actual spices they are associated with communicate these are Indians from the Spice Islands. Thus the watchers of Middleton’s Show were presented with what might be considered contradictory racial signifiers. Along similar lines, the “tawny moors” inhabiting the “wilderness of America” in Jordan’s London Triumphant work with produce found mainly in the Spice Islands.

Attempting to understand seventeenth-century presentations of race in Lord Mayor’s Shows by commodity pairing alone is doomed to fail. What is important to take away from these and other examples of apparently confused presentations of race, then, is the actions the figures are doing in relation to the commodities they are presented with and how those actions serve to support a pro-mercantile rhetoric. The “blurred” presentation of race in Lord Mayor’s Shows demonstrates a worldview in which there were English, Europeans, and others. As the othered figures, regardless of skin color or place of origin, were commonly depicted as working with foreign goods they were essentially defined for the audience by their ability to produce goods for English consumption. In other words, the Shows were less concerned with geographic and racial

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96 Busino, 180.
97 Joseph Roach, Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996) 125-26. Thomas Dekker’s Londons tempe (1629) also contains an “Indian boy” whose “attire is proper to the Country”. Only this figure “holds in one had a long Tobacc pipe, in the other a dart”. Here the presence of the tobacco pipe, rather than spices, suggests that this Indian should be understood as from the Americas. Thomas Dekker, Londons tempe, or, the feild of happiness, STE 6509 (London: Nicholas Okes, 1629), Early English Books Online.
98 David M. Bergeron argues that these figures were “definitely meant to represent inhabitants of the ‘East Indies’. Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works, 1268 n. 177. Additional support of this is seen in the fact that these figures are immediately followed by a “rich personage presenting India”, though this figure does not identify herself as India to those watching. Middleton, The Triumphs of Honour and Industry. 53.
accuracy then they were with formulating an ideological construct that framed the lands
and people and commodities outside Europe as naturally belonging to or serving the
population of London.

Ultimately, the blurring of race in the Shows served to support what Ayanna
Thompson labels the “white/right gaze:” a term that recognizes how any racialization of
characters on the English stage—including racialization that falls outside a discussion of
skin color—does not reveal truths about the racialized figure so much as reinforce the
shared identity traits of the white audience.99 In other words, black figures did not express
what it meant to be black so much as, in their portrayal of difference, standardize what it
meant to be English. Thompson argues that in early modern performances a “racialized
epistemology” is “constructed through the codification, empowerment, and normalization
of the white/right gaze of the English audience.”100 For a general population that would
have had little actual contact with people from different races, Thompson points out that
the seventeenth-century London stage functioned as a type of heuristic device, and rather
than simply reinforcing “emerging notion[s] of race,” Thompson makes the case that
performances of race on the London stage “helped to create the actual discourses for the
physical construction of race.”101 If the white/right gaze was triggered in seventeenth-
century theatrical performances of race, there is no reason to think that Lord Mayor’s
Shows, performed before a vast audience, also similarity contributed to the construction
of racial discourse.

99 Ayanna Thompson, Performing Race and Torture on the Early Modern Stage (Routledge,
2008).
100 Thompson, 4.
101 Thompson, 15.
The way black and brown figures were made to interact with the commodities they were paired with in these performances offers the most telling insight as to how these Shows communicated a sense of whiteness as based upon consumption. As can be seen in the examples given through this chapter, racialized figures were rarely described as stationary next to their commodities, more often they are described as doing work, gathering and packing the goods that in the narrative fiction of the Shows would be shipped off to London. The Indians in Middleton’s 1617 Show were “set to work…planting… gathering…and making up bags;” Tatham’s 1661 London’s Triumph contained a number of “Indians” some “Pruning, others Gathering, others Planting several sourts of Grocery, others disporting and throwing their fruits about, to show the abundance or profit of labour;” and the “tawny moors” in Jordan’s 1672 Show were “laborious in gathering, carrying, setting, sorting, sowing, and ordering.”

These figures seem to exist in these pageants for the sole purpose of displaying how they could work for the benefit of the English.

In addition to miming the manual labor required to bring commodities to English shores, black and brown figures in post-Restoration Shows also performed songs that, in a horrifying disregard of the realities of the developing circum-Atlantic slave trade, told of their joyous, carefree lives. The Indians in Tatham’s 1661 Show sung “Who leads a life so free from Care, / As such in Labour active are?” The “tawny moors” featured in Jordan’s American “Wilderness” declared themselves to be “happier than they that do set

us a work.”104 The song’s repeated chorus told the audience of a people who “labour all Day, yet…frolick at Night / With smoaking and joking, and tricks of Delight.”105 In Jordan’s *London’s Joy* (1681) the “Jolly Planter that live in the East,” described as “Tumblers, Dancers and Vaulters, all Blacks, Men and Women,” sung of the pleasures of their work:

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From Torments or Troubles of Body or Mind,
Your Bonny brisk Planters are free as the Wind,
We eat well to Labour, and Labour to eat,
Our planting doth get us both Stomach and Meat;

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We Sing, Dance, and trip it, as Frolick as Ranters;
Such are the sweet Lives of your bonny brave Planters.106
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The above songs, performed in fantastical lands of perpetual abundance for an audience already bearing witness to the economic might of merchant companies, depicted the world outside of England as containing a playful, willing, and happy, black/brown workforce, and as Barthelemy points out, in doing so they provide “justification for slavery as well as for colonialism and the consequent notions of racial superiority.”107

Building off of Barthel
ey’s estimation of these songs as imparting messages of white superiority and black inferiority, I put forth the physical inclusion of imperial commodities in these pageants was paramount to ensuring such messages were consistently passed on to the English audience.108 Show texts clearly provide the lyrics to the songs, but in a performance it was not guaranteed that those in the crowds would have been able to make out the words; a fact that stands true for songs and speeches alike. This problem, however, was mitigated by the spectacle of the performance itself: even if a

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107 Barthelemy, 53.
108 Barthelemy, 50-58.
person could not hear what the performers were saying they would have been able to see the action of the pageants laid out before them. Thus, over the course of the seventeenth century the white audiences of Lord Mayor’s Shows were repeatedly made witness to physical performances of race as acted through differing relationships to the commodities of the world. In their planting, harvesting, and bagging of commodities the bodies of racialized figures in the Shows were consistently cast in the role of worker, and as audience members the white English watchers were automatically cast in the role of consumer. The only way to ensure those roles were acted out and understood was through the direct inclusion of the world’s commodities in the performance. Simply by attending the day’s events a white audience member would have been a participant in the construction and development of the period’s racial discourses.

The construction of white Englishness as predicated upon the processes of consuming the goods of the world was reinforced in the Shows through the actual distribution of foreign commodities to those in the audience. At the beginning of the century presumably white figures distributed imperial commodities, as in Munday’s 1605 Show in which sailors threw out pepper, cloves, and mace and in Middleton’s 1617 Show where Busino records that children threw out “various confections” into the crowd.109 As the Shows developed over the course of the century, however, black and brown figures took over the distribution of goods. During the latter half of the century the figure of a “Negro boy” on the camel throwing out spices and nuts became a regular feature of all Shows commissioned by the Grocer Company. Tatham’s London’s Triumphs (1659) contained “a Camel with a Negar on his back, having a Pendent in the one hand, and with

109 Busino, 182.
the other takes out of his Dor[], Cloves, Currence and other Fruit, and throwes among the people.”¹¹⁰ Jordan’s *London Triumphant* (1672) had a “Negro Boy” on the back of a camel “mounted betwixt two Baskets which contain several sorts of Fruits as Raisons, Almonds, Dates, Figs, Prunes, and other variety of Grocery Wares” and periodically he would “scattereth with a plentiful hand [these wares] amongst the people who scramble as much for them as if they were a cast of so much silver.”¹¹¹ Settle records that *The Triumphs of London* (1692) featured a “Negro habited according to the Indian Manner” riding on a camel “between two Frails [sic] of Fruits, as Raisins, and Almonds, Dates, Spices, and Gumms of all sorts;” in one hand the boy held the banner of the King, and his other hand was busy “liberally distributing the Bountiful Product of his Country.”¹¹²

All told, the figure of the “Negro Boy” who passes out goods to the watching crowds makes an appearance in five Grocer Shows.¹¹³ In this figure we see the final presentation of the relationship of othered people to imperial commodities: the “negro boy” in these Shows does not just harvest, he willingly distributes. This figure embodies the fantasy of black and brown populations providing the people of London with consumable goods. As the goods he threw out crossed over from the fictional narrative of English dominance to the actual possession and consumption by the London audience the fiction of the Shows was made real. The performance of the relationship of black and brown figures to imperial commodities—as defined by them, working to cultivate them,

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¹¹² Settle, 3.
¹¹³ Tatham’s *Londons Tryumph* (1659), Jordan’s *London Triumphant* (1672), *London in its Splendor* (1673), and *The Triumphs of London* (1678), and Settle’s *The Triumphs of London* (1692).
and happy to share them with the English—created a sense of Englishness that was Christian, white, and, above all, destined to consume what the world could provide.

Lord Mayor’s Shows can certainly be included as a type of narrative that sought to increase desire for consumption of foreign goods. But, more importantly, using foreign commodities in the Shows also allowed mercantile companies to align themselves with a type of power made available only through access to and possession of foreign commodities. In my first chapter I stressed how props in performance are able to simultaneously function on two separate levels: as physical objects participating in a fictional narrative, and as a representation of a similar “class” of objects concurrently existing and acting outside of the performance. Products like the almonds freely tossed out to the crowd in the performance communicate the idea of the wealth of the world along with the generosity of the merchants freely distributing them, but these “performance” almonds also link those ideas to the actual almonds that were for sale in the City or that had been purchased by those wealthy onlookers watching the Show from the windows: to possess those goods was to, in part, participate in the glory of the English nation being celebrated in the Show.

The presence of imperial commodities in Lord Mayor’s Shows may have created “new wants” and encouraged people to purchase such goods, but the real power of these objects in performance was the demonstration of how access to commodities could make people act. The actual passing of commodities from inside the fictional world of the performance out into the real world reveals the way in which the crowds immediately surrounding the pageants became actors in the fantasies created by the Show, thereby

serving to participate in cementing the Shows’ pro-m mercantile rhetoric. Jordan’s
description of the “negro boy” in his 1672 and 1678 Shows offers a rare glimpse into
interaction between the performance and the audience. As detailed above, in London
Triumphant (1672) Jordan records that when the boy would “scattereth” his wares those
on the ground would “scramble” for the goods “as if they were a cast of so much
silver.”115 In The Triumphs of London (1678) his description of the crowd and their
reaction is much more derogatory: “The Negro with a Prodigal hand, fcatere th abroad in
the Tumult, where you might see an hundred persons cofunfdly fcrambling in the dirt for
the Frail Acheivement of a Bunch of Raifins, or a handful of Dates, Almonds,
Nutmegs.”116 Jordan’s distain for the crowd hints at what Busino’s description of the
1617 Show reveals: those in a position to grab for these goods in the street would have
been lower on the social and economic scale (the “dotards,” “youths,” “apprentices,” and
“serving wenches”). But when those of higher status watched these types of interactions,
perhaps, as Pepys did, from the houses lining the streets, they would have been
witnessing the ability of these commodities to make people “scramble,” to make people
run, push, grab, and take, all so that they could consume. In this way those in the
immediate vicinity of the Show became actors in a demonstration of the livery
companies’ power. For those watching with the money to invest, the seduction of Lord
Mayor’s Shows lies in observing a world full of easily obtainable goods, a happy and
subservient workforce, and eager customers at home, a seduction that could not be
achieved without the presence of imperial commodities.

116 Thomas Jordan, The Triumphs of London (London: Printed for John Playford at the Temple-
Church, 1678), 3. Early English Books Online.
After well over a century of spectacular, city-wide celebrations that were cancelled only due to war, plague, or fire Lord Mayor’s Shows in the form discussed throughout this chapter ceased at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Celebration of Lord Mayor’s Day itself did not come to an end, but the parades no longer contained elaborately staged pageants. Comparing the amount of money spent on a Show at the beginning of the century and the end demonstrates a waning of enthusiasm on the part of the livery companies in investing in such an expensive activity: the Merchant Taylor’s account book records that the cost of the 1605 Show as 710£. 2s. 5d. but in 1693 the company only spent 479£.14s.02d. Postulating as to likely reasons why the Shows halted in the eighteenth century, Tumbleson argues that initially Shows were necessary to assert “the importance of the city in the awkward adolescence of its economic explosion from local to global center,” and once that idea was accepted by the general public in London “there was no longer a need to enact symbolic Triumphs of London because London had triumphed.” In Lord Mayor’s Shows merchants were not simply celebrating themselves, they were, for all intents and purposes, “selling” the benefit of international trade to a skeptical population, and once that message was wholly accepted as the backbone of England’s approach towards the world there was no need to continue.

117 The last recorded early modern Lord Mayor’s Show took place in 1708 and mainly consisted of pageants used in previous Shows. Tumbleson records the last Lord Mayor’s Show as occurring in 1701, but Settle publish a final The Triumphs of London in 1708. Tumbleson, 53. Elkanah Settle, The triumphs of London for the inauguration of the Right Honourable Sir Charles Duncombe, Knight… (London: Printed for and to be Sold by A. Baldwin, 1708). Eighteenth Century Collections Online.

118 Although the Shows in this form halted in the eighteenth century the office of the Lord Mayor and celebrations marking his reign continued in various forms in subsequent centuries. Peter Claus briefly discusses the nineteenth-century versions of Lord Mayor’s Shows as a means for historical remembrance in “Recalling the City: The Lord Mayor’s Show and the Pageants of Memory,” Ranam: Recherches Angliases et Nord-Americaines, Vol 36, Issue 3. (2003): 139-144. Today a modern Lord Mayor’s Show (a parade staffed by local businesses) takes place in London during the month of November. For information on the modern Show see www.lordmayorsshow.london

119 Sayle, 84 & 144.

120 Tumblson, 54
The Shows depicted the fantasy of a world genuflecting to English power, and the imperial commodities used in these Shows became part of the cultural imagery of English mercantile dominance over the rest of the world. If one visits the Guildhall Library in London today and looks over the seventeenth-century livery company account books, however, there is little indication that imperial commodities took part in Lord Mayor’s Show performance.\textsuperscript{121} Nonetheless, Show texts clearly demonstrate how the presence of imperial commodities in performance served to shape English audiences’ perceptions of the world, its people, and their place in it.

\textsuperscript{121} The single record of imperial commodities being purchased for a show is in 1617 when the Grocery Company’s account book records that they purchased “50 sugar-loaves, 36 pounds of nutmegs, 24 pounds of dates, and 144 pounds of ginger.” Qtd. in J. Aubrey Rees, \textit{The Worshipful Company of Grocers: An Historical Retrospect, 1345-1923} (London: Chapman and Dodd, 1923), 132.
Chapter 3

Matters of Manipulation: China Oranges, Porcelain, and Indian Gowns in Restoration Comedy

“since the public theater is a commercial enterprise, everything that appears on its stages is not only a theatrical sign but a commodity offered for the consumer’s visual consumption….Civic obligation, religious devotion, and what can only be called advertising are all bound up with the stage life of the object.”

Andrew Sofer, The Stage Life of Props

The previous chapter argues that seventeenth-century Lord Mayor’s Shows embodied and promoted the tangle of fantasy, foresight, and power that drove the expansion of the mercantile arm of early English imperial aspirations. The repeated inclusion of imperial commodities in these yearly street spectacles helped to shape the population of London into consumers by equating “Englishness” with possession of and control over the various commodities of the world. In Lord Mayor’s Shows imperial commodities clearly “spoke” on multiple registers and, in the latter half of the seventeenth century, they spoke just as loudly in the theater.

Having explored the presence and participation of imperial objects in supporting pro-mercantile rhetoric on a national level, this chapter examines how the Restoration stage portrayed the place of imperial commodities in the English social. Taking the position that the actual presence of imperial commodities in the action of dramas reveals something about the place of those commodities in London daily life, this chapter examines how three types of popular and widely available goods—china oranges,

Porcelain from China, and Indian gowns—featured in domestic comedy in relation to life in England to construct aspects of English public identity. Examining the ways these commonplace commodities feature in comedies of the period provides us with a more phenomenological account of what it was like to live in an England filled with exotic goods.

Dramas of the Restoration were highly topical, engaging with issues ranging from politics and religion to fashion and local gossip. Although the audience makeup of the theater during this period was not as exclusively court focused as scholars previously assumed, the plays were not performed before an audience as economically and socially diverse as that which attended the yearly Lord Mayor’s Shows. Those who could afford to regularly attend plays in the early years of the Restoration—Samuel Pepys and the Earl of Rochester, for example—were often either part of the rising professional class or aristocrats; in other words, populations with ready access to some disposable income. The somewhat incestuous relationship between theater and court may have resulted in an era of drama that appears less rhetorically complex, but because Restoration playwrights were directly catering to and interacting with the fashionable tastemakers of the country, their works had to keep up to date with the latest social trends.

Consequently, the Restoration stage offers unique insight into the rise of consumer society in London during the latter half of the seventeenth-century. Stock character-types in Restoration comedy, particularly those of the rake and the fop, often

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explored the rising materialism of the Town in a way that simultaneously offered
celebration and condemnation. Imperial commodities were frequently referenced in
plays of the period alongside discussion of the regular cavalcade of wigs, dresses, laces,
and fans: in Aphra Behn’s The City Heiress (1682) the foolish Whig sympathizer Sir
Timothy Treat-All says he keeps his will in a “Japanese cabinet,” in Charles Sedley’s
Bellamira (1687) a woman’s vanity is outlined when she is described as wearing a
“Petticoat of the New Rich Indian Stuffs,” in John Vanbrugh’s The Relapse (1696) Sir
Tunbelly commands the servants to “set all the Turkey-work Chairs in their places,” and
in Mary Pix’s The Beax Defeated (1700) Mrs. Rich commands her “Indian Curtains” be
drawn to make the house ready for visitors. The numerous mentions of imperial
commodities in these plays makes clear that such goods were being integrated into the
social fabric of London. In all of the above examples, however, the objects referenced
were not necessarily present before the audience during the performance. First and
foremost, then, this chapter seeks to bring attention to imperial commodities that
repeatedly appeared on the Restoration stage, no doubt as a result of their increased
presence in London.

3 As key observers of fashion and fashionable items, rakes and fops are related in their attention to
the material. The characters of Dorimont and Sir Foppling Flutter in George Etherege’s comedy of manners
The Man of Mode (1676) serve as an excellent example of the thin dividing line between that of rakish
gallant and preening fool on the Restoration stage. Noting how the fop’s obsession with materiality was
forecast in a negative light, Bridget Orr writes that the “fop’s commodification is caused by an obsession
with personal adornment which is later cast as peculiarly feminine.” Bridget Orr, Empire on the English
of Mode; or, Sir Foppling Flutter ed. John H. O’Neill in The Broadview Anthology of Restoration & Early

4 Aphra Behn, The City Heiress; or, Sir Timothy Treat-All in The Works of Aphra Behn Vol. II, ed.
Montague Summers (New York: Phaeton Press, 1967), 3.1; Charles Sedley, Bellamira: or The Mistress in
Sir Charles Sedley’s the Mulberry-Garden (1668): And, Bellamira: Or, the Mistress (1687): an Old-
Spelling Critical Edition with an Introduction and Commentary. 82 (New York: Peter Lang, 2001),
1.1.200; John Vanbrugh, The Relapse or, Virtue in Danger in The Relapse and Other Plays, ed. Brean
Hammond, 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 3.3.58-59; Mary Pix, The Beau Defeated; or The
Lucky Younger Brother ed. Elizabeth Kubek, in The Broadview Anthology of Restoration & Early
Unlike Lord Mayors Shows, playwrights writing for the theater were not required to sell a pro-mercantilist agenda. Because imperial commodities in comedies of the period were not required to function prescriptively, and because many of these goods were relatively new introductions to England, playwrights had more freedom to explore the object’s role in the social descriptively. On the surface, oranges, chinaware, and Indian gowns seem to have very little in common, but these goods do have some shared qualities: they each have a connection to the East, their presence in England was a result of the West’s expansion of foreign trade, and, they were fashionable goods that had become a recognizable part of English domestic life in the seventeenth century.

When one catalogues the frequency and type of imperial commodities that made an appearance in Restoration comedy, it becomes immediately evident that when playwrights took pains to make clear through dialogue or stage directions that imperial commodities were present on the stage, those objects typically had an effect on the resulting action of the scene or the play. This chapter then builds upon two observations regarding the actual presence of these commodities on the stage as related to their

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5 That does not mean they did not, especially in the eighteenth century when characters began extolling on the virtues of English mercantilism. For example, in George Lillo’s *The London Merchant* (1731) the character Thorowgood, after detailing the “glittering gems, bright pearls, [and] aromatic spices” of the East, instructs that it is “the industrious merchant’s business to collect the various blessings of each soil and climate.” George Lillo, *The London Merchant; or, The History of George Barnwell* ed. Lincoln Fuller in *The Broadview Anthology of Restoration & Early Eighteenth-Century Drama*, ed. J. Douglas Canfield, 294 (Toronto: Broadview Press, 2001), 2.3.23-24 & 28-30.

6 It is possible that the objects this chapter addresses were sometimes used in drama as set pieces and/or background decoration. For example, while the stage directions in Etherege’s *The Man of Mode* suggest that the Orange Woman who berates Dorimont in the first scene brings her “fruit” in the stage with her, there is no suggestion in the text that the oranges played any significant role in the scene besides to provide a level of believability. George Etherege, *The Man of Mode; or, Sir Foppling Flutter*, ed. John H. O’Neill in *The Broadview Anthology of Restoration & Early Eighteenth-Century Drama*, ed. J. Douglas Canfield. 526. (Toronto: Broadview Press, 2001), 1.1.41. Nonetheless, I purposely do not address the presence of imperial commodities that may have been used onstage to lend certain amount of “realism” to a domestic scene. That being said, this choice led to few exclusions as almost every time a playwright indicates the actual presence of an imperial commodity on the stage that object took part in the play’s action.
meanings and their actions. As to the former, when playwrights indicated the presence of these goods on the stage, the objects were rarely used to simply lend reality to a scene; in other words, their presence on the stage typically carried some type of symbolic significance. And to the latter, in the action of the play imperial commodities were often used as a means for some type of self-presentation, typically in ways that allowed for the manipulation of others’ perceptions. Imperial commodities were ideal for this type of manipulation for a variety of reasons: their presence in London was growing, they were relatively new and fashionable, they were rapidly becoming available to larger portions of the population, they had local social and cultural association, and, finally, these objects crossed or blurred boundaries, allowing those in the drama who used them the ability to do the same. Consequently, these imperial commodities were both associated with and cemented certain kinds of boundary crossing behaviors.

This chapter touches upon a range of works by George Etherege, John Dryden, and Susanna Centlivre while also offering in-depth examinations of the imperial commodities in William Wycherley’s *The Country Wife* (1675) and John Crowne’s *City Politics* (1683). As the commodities in these works often appear alongside moments of sex or sexual transgression it would be easy to ascribe their inclusion to a belief on the part of the playwright that these objects represented the sexuality of the East. Rather than attributing the presence of these objects to already existing English notions regarding their connection to a sexually licentious “Orient,” however, I argue the stage is more concerned with depicting the way that imperial commodities could be used in a type of self-fashioning that, in the tradition of Restoration drama, just so happens to be successful sexual assignations, marriages to rich heiresses, and the cuckolding of the
citizen. In this way the stage demonstrates awareness, if not necessarily a conscious one, of the way imperial commodities were becoming a part of everyday life and were instrumental to the construction of English identity.

All the plays addressed in this chapter demonstrate the promise and problems of constructing the self in relation to foreign objects. In the works this chapter examines, the characters who recognize the affordances of these popular foreign items are able to capitalize on them and, in doing so, dictate how others perceived both their person and a given situation. Although some of the comedies addressed in this chapter seem to revel in the ingenuity of those who used these exotic goods so as to engineer their desired outcomes, the repeated inclusion of the unrepentant libertine rake hero who uses imperial commodities to undercut social structures demonstrates a clear wariness regarding the increasing presence of these items, their easy availability, and their influence in the social. By turning to these items to control reception of the situation or their person libertine rake-heroes demonstrate the way in which such objects participated in the structuring of personal identities, forecasting the power of these goods in the British social as well as their possibly ominous place at the heart of British domestic relationships.

Imperial commodities had the ability to travel between frames of self and blur the boundaries between public and private spaces. One of the earliest examples of this phenomenon is found in George Etherege’s comedy She Would if She Could (1668). The final act of this play finds Sir Oliver Cockwood appealing to his wife for forgiveness for his lecherous ways. He is unaware, however, that at the very moment he is declaring his belief in her faithfulness the man she desires to sleep with, Sir Courtal, is hiding under
their dining table. The security of Courtal’s hiding place is threatened when Sir Oliver accidentally “let[s] fall a China orange,” which promptly rolls under the table.⁷ Though to a modern reader the significance of this specific fruit in the Cockwood’s dining room may not warrant attention, its presence in an English theater, not to mention English culture, was a direct result of the way international trade was changing the social face and the consumption habits of England.

China oranges were a relatively new commodity in the West, and their introduction to England coincides with a veritable cultural “orange boom” in London during the seventeenth century. The “china orange” was a distinct orange variety that seems to have greatly affected orange consumption in England. The *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) identifies the “china orange” as “the sweet orange of commerce…originally brought from China.”⁸ A definition that differs little from that given by Samuel Johnson in 1775: “The sweet orange: brought originally from China.”⁹ Though separated by centuries both dictionary entries single out the china orange’s sweet taste; in fact, it was the uncommon sweetness of these oranges that initially contributed to their popularity in the West. The *OED*’s further identification of the china orange as being the “orange of commerce” points to the central relationship commerce played in the identity of this orange. Examining the introduction and dissemination of china oranges throughout the West makes clear how its presence in seventeenth-century

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England was a direct result of advancements and expansions of trade with the East, both on the continent of Europe and in England.\(^\text{10}\)

All orange varieties originated in China and then spread to India and then throughout the Mediterranean as early as the first or second century AD.\(^\text{11}\) The oranges that eventually thrived in the Mediterranean were not the sweet fruit that we associate with oranges today; they had a thicker rind, were seedy, and were more often described as bitter than sweet. This “bitter orange,” also sometimes called the “Seville orange” due to Spain’s large orange groves, is likely what was imported into England from Spain and Portugal as early as the fourteenth century.\(^\text{12}\) Though prized for their pleasing smell and supposed medicinal purposes, they were likely more often used for cooking and adding flavor in sauces than as an item one consumed raw and on its own.\(^\text{13}\) It is not known how and when the china orange, specifically, made its way to the West. As Samuel Tolkowsky laments in *Hesperides: A History of the Culture and Use of Citrus Fruits*, one of the earliest, and arguably still the most in-depth, exploration of the dissemination of citrus throughout the world: “Of all the problems connected with the history of

\(^{10}\) As oranges needed a more temperate climate in order to thrive they were never grown en masse in England. Certain members of the aristocracy were able to cultivate a few trees and protect them in green houses, but, for the most part, oranges were imported from outside England. McPhee, 85-86. McPhee points out the continued connection between China and the sweet orange given that the botanical name of what is thought of the modern sweet oranges is *Citrus sinensis*. John McPhee, *Oranges* (New York: Straus and Giroux, 1967), 70.


\(^{12}\) Hyman, 11. Laszlo records that oranges were likely introduced to Spain and Portugal in the eleventh or twelfth century. Pierre Laszlo, *Citrus: A History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 17.

\(^{13}\) Laszlo, 19-20.
citriculture in Europe, none has exercised more the minds of investigators, nor led to the writing of so many pages of worthless conclusions, as that of how, when, and whence the sweet orange-tree, as distinguished from orange-trees generally, first reached the continent.\textsuperscript{14}

Despite their moniker, the china oranges that were eaten in England were not shipped directly from China; the long overseas journey from China to England prohibited the shipping of any fresh fruit. It is more likely that the china oranges imported into England were from Portugal, one of the largest fruit producing regions in Europe.\textsuperscript{15} Though there is no agreement amongst scholars as to exactly how and when Portugal obtained the first sweet orange trees, all theories agree on the fact that it was only after Portugal began actively pursuing overseas trade with the East that a newer, sweeter variety of orange became widely available in England.\textsuperscript{16} One prevailing theory is that sometime in the early sixteenth century Portuguese sailors acquired a new variety of orange tree from India that produced a sweeter orange than the West was familiar with.\textsuperscript{17}

\begin{itemize}
\item Tolkowsky, 234.
\item Tolkowsky writes that no mention of sweet oranges appear in “citrus literature” until the sixteenth century, 234.
\item One popular theory is that Vasco da Gama brought the new variety of orange back to Portugal at the beginning of the sixteenth century, but there is no solid evidence to support this claim. Tolkowsky, 234; Hyman 13. Webber argues that evidence suggests sweet oranges were already present in the Mediterranean by the end of the fifteenth century and were introduced into Portugal before de Gama sailed to China, 10. Regardless of exactly when these first sweeter orange was introduced to Portugal, scholars agree it was the Portuguese who made the oranges popular and available throughout Europe. Webber, 9-11; Tolkowsky, 240 & 245; Hyman, 16.
\end{itemize}
After being brought back to Portugal the oranges from these trees were exported throughout Europe under the name “Portugals” or the “Portugal orange.” Hyman floats the possibility that what was known as the “Portugal orange” on the continent simply went by the name “china orange” in England. Although it is possible that the Portugal orange and the china orange were one in the same, Tolkowsky argues that the china oranges of the seventeenth century were an entirely separate and even sweeter variety. According to Tolkowsky, the china orange arrive in Europe in 1635 when one Don Francisco Mascarenhas of Portugal brought an orange seedling from China. The planting and cultivation of this tree over subsequent years introduced china oranges to the West and allowed for Lisbon’s dominance of the china orange trade. Regardless of which history is true, what is apparent is how the Portuguese capitalized upon Europe and England’s developing chinoiserie obsession in the naming of their newer, sweeter orange.

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18 The name for the sweet orange in Greece, Turkey, and other parts of the Mediterranean still retains its link to “Portugal orange”. Hyman, 17.

19 There is no consensus by scholars as to if there was a difference in between the “Portugal orange” and the “china orange.” Hyman treats the two terms interchangeably and implies that in England it was simply the term china orange that stuck, 16-17, 37. Webber, however, refers to the sweet orange made popular by the Portuguese only as the Portugal orange and never uses the term china orange; he does credit the Portuguese with “contributing much to the spread and popularization of orange growing by introducing a superior variety” of oranges from a “mother tree” brought to Portugal from China, 11. Webber’s choice to use the term “Portugal orange” exclusively might be attributed to the fact that he investigates the place of the oranges in Europe as a whole, and the term china orange may have been a regionalism from the British Isles. Tolkowsky is one of the few scholars to definitively state that Portugal oranges and china oranges were two distinctly different varieties, Tolkowsky, 246-248. A 1677 dictionary of English to French translation appears to support Tolkowsky’s position as “Sevil Orange” is translated to “Orange de Portugal” and “China Orange” as “Orange de la Chine.” Guy Miege, *A new dictionary French and English with another English and French according to the present use and modern orthography of the French enriched with new words, choice phrases, and apposite proverbs* (London: Printed for Thomas Basset, 1679), *Early English Books Online*.

20 Tolkowsky, 246-248.

Despite the dubious specificity of Tolkowsky’s claim that the china orange was introduced to the West in exactly 1635, that idea that china oranges were a later addition to the West is supported by the term’s later appearance in writings of the period. The OED identifies the earliest recorded usage of the term “china orange” as 1666, written by none other than Samuel Pepys. In March of that year, a mere two years before the commodity makes it appearance in Etherege’s play, Pepys writes in his diary that he entertained the Lord Bruncker and Mrs. Williams with “wine and China oranges,” a fruit that was “a great rarity” due to “the war.” Pepys’ casual use of the term and apparent familiarity with the fruit indicates he was familiar with the fruit before he served it to Lord Bruncker. In the latter half of the seventeenth-century the term “china orange”

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23 The term “china-orange” does appear in a few English texts that pre-date Pepys’ dairy—all from translations of works written in the 1650s. In 1658 John Evelyn translated the work *The French Gardner* (first printed in France in 1651) into English, and under the heading “Orange varieties available after February” the “china-orange” is listed. On this list the china-orange is separate from both the “Bigarrades” (a sour orange) and the grouping of the “Spanifh”, “Genoa”, “Portugall”, “and Princive” oranges. Nicolas de Bonnefons, *The French gardiner instructing how to cultivate all sorts of fruit-trees and herbs for the garden : together with directions to dry, and conserve them in their natural / an accomplished piece written originally in French and now transplanted into English by John Evelyn, Esq.* (London: Printed by J.M. for John Crooke, and are to be sold at his shop ..., 1669), 132. *Early English Book Online.* In the original French edition the orange “de la Chyne” is listed, but the “Portugall” orange is not. Nicolas de Bonnefons, *Le jardinier françois, qui enseigne à cultiver les arbes et herbes potagères : avec la manière de conserver les fruicts et faire toutes sortes de confitures... et masepans* (Paris: P. Des-Hayes, 1651), sig. K1r; BNF Gallica. [http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k105504m](http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k105504m), January 24, 2015. A 1666 tract titled *The history of the Caribby-islands*, translated from a 1658 work titled *Histoire naturelle et morale des iles Antilles de l'Amerique*, also makes mention of china oranges. Masquerading as an educational text—but actually listing out the marketable commodities of the Caribbean—the work puts forth that there are “two kinds” of oranges, “some...sweet, others sharp,” with the “china orange” falling into the former category: “Some indeed call the China Orange, the Queen of Oranges...[and] celebrate the delightful sweetness of the China-Oranges, there are others prefer the excellent taste and picquancy [sic] of our America-Oranges”. John Davis, *The history of the Caribby-islands, viz, Barbados, St Christophers, St Vincents, Martinico, Dominico, Barbouthos, Monserrat, Mevis, Antego, &c in all XXVIII in two books: the first containing the natural, the second, the moral history of those islands: illustrated with several pieces of sculpture representing the most considerable rarities therein described: with a Caribbian vocabulary / rendred into English by John Davies*, trans. John Davis (London: Printed by J.M., 1666), 29. *Early English Books Online.* So while Pepys was clearly not the first to record the term “china orange” in 1666, all of the accounts above suggest that the “china orange” was introduced to the West sometime at the beginning of the seventeenth century.
begins popping more frequently. In the satirical work *The young gallant's academy, or, Directions how he should behave himself in all places and company* (1674) Samuel Vincent instructs that after entering the playhouse and making their way to the pit aspiring rakes must “give a hum [sic] to the China-Orange-wench, and give her her own rate for her Oranges (for 'tis below a Gentleman to stand haggling like a Citizens wife) and then to present the fairest [orange] to the next Vizard-mask.” 24 “China-orange trees” are included as part of the set in Henry Purcell’s *The Fairy Queen: an Opera* (1692). 25 And John Dunton’s semi-autobiographical work *The Dublin Scuffle* (1699) recounts his purchasing of oranges from the “China-Orange Wench” at the playhouse. 26

When attempting to piece together the significance of separate mentions of china oranges in dramatic literature, one must recognize, to use the words of Robert Palter, that “[w]hat is at stake here is not the truth of some minor—even trivial—episode in the social history of citrus fruits; what is a stake is the very way we are to understand history, whether as a succession of amusing anecdotes…or as the complex interweaving of long-term socio-economic and political forces.” 27 The interweaving of socio-economic and political forces in London during the late seventeenth century resulted in china oranges becoming one of the first egalitarian imperial commodities; they were made available and consumed by people across all levels of the social spectrum. Palter records that china oranges

24 Samuel Vincent, *The young gallant's academy, or, Directions how he should behave himself in all places and company* (London: Printed by J. C. for R. Mills, at the Pestle and Mortar without Temple-Bar, 1674), 56. *Early English Books Online.*


26 John Dutton, *The Dublin Scuffle* (London: Printed for the author and to be sold by A. Baldwin ... and by the booksellers in Dublin, 1699), 336. *Early English Books Online.* The language of Dunton’s “china-orange encounter” so closely resembles the instructions laid out in Vincent’s work that one wonders if the latter was consulted.

27 Palter, 391.
oranges at the theater cost sixpence, “half the price of admission to the cheapest seats in the upper galleries.” Although Palter interprets the price of china oranges as an indication that the fruits were too expensive for many, sixpence was far removed from the price of other luxury imperial commodities. 28 The aristocracy in the boxes and the journeymen in the middle galleries could enjoy the same imperial commodity. Pepys could use them to entertain a visiting Lord for dinner and orange women could sell them on the streets and in theaters. 29 The china orange’s presence in England, then, coincides with and participated in the changing face of England’s domestic spaces, including the space of the theater.

It is no coincidence that many of the references to china oranges during the latter half of the seventeenth century have a connection to the theater; the very experience of going to the theater was visibly affected by the influx of china oranges into England. In 1663 Mary Meggs received exclusive rights to sell “oranges, lemons, fruits, sweetmeats, and all manner of fruiterers [sic] and confectioners wares” to theater patrons. 30 She and the women she oversaw were licensed to sell a range of produce, but oranges must have made up a large part of her trade given that she became known as “Orange Moll” and that the women who assisted her were referred to as “oranges girls” or “wenches.” 31

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28 Palter, 389-90. Noting that there was an increase in orange consumption during the sixteenth century, almost all of Palter’s sources addressing the presence of oranges in England are from the mid-seventeenth century and onwards; further supporting the idea that increased orange consumption during the seventeenth century influenced their inclusion in literary texts. Palter, 386-390.

29 By the end of the seventeenth century oranges, quite possibly of the Chinese variety, were so ubiquitous that one John Houghton writes that in London oranges were “carried in the eye of all about the streets, we see they are very much consumed by the ordinary people.” Qtd. in Hyman, 21


31 Orange girls got their name from their routine of standing at the front of the theater facing the audience and yelling “‘Oranges, will you have any oranges?’” Derek Parker, Nell Gwyn (Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing, 2000), 46. The famous Restoration actress Nell Gwyn made her start as an orange girl. Parker, 46-7; see also Roy MacGregor-Hastie, Nell Gwyn (London: Robert Hale, 1987), 33.
license issued to Meggs does not specify that she would sell specifically china oranges, but it stands to reason that the more pleasing taste of the china orange, when available, would have made it the most popular orange variety inside and outside the theaters. Furthermore, as both Vincent and Dutton directly identify the orange girls as “china orange wenches” the suggestion is that china oranges were the fruit these women were best known for. Of course, in the social makeup of the English theater orange girls, like the actresses on the stage, were just as likely to be identified as prostitutes rather than professional. Orange girls were notorious for selling both fruit and their bodies to the men who attended plays, meaning the fruit that they peddled served as both a cover and a symbol for their sexual misdeeds.

By 1668 the china orange was a recognizable enough commodity in England that it could appear in Etherege’s domestic comedy without appearing out of place; its presence is so natural it is easy to overlook. Etherege’s choice to include Sir Cockwood’s errant china orange in Lady Cockwoods’ dining room is significant, however, when understood in relation to the good’s local sexual significations, the relationship of these two figures, and the way this play addresses the subject of public versus private space. Dale Underwood argues that the action of She Would if She Could plays out between two opposing spaces—the libertine world of London and the domestic space of the Cockwood’s home—it is Sir and Lady Cockwood’s desire to participate in the libertine world of these London spaces that leads to the continual disruption of their marriage. This play features many of the fashionable public spaces of London, and scenes are set in

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33 Dale Underwood, Etherege and the Seventeenth-Century Comedy of Manners (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), 66-67. For more on the scenic spaces in this play see also, Holland, 48-54.
The Mulberry Garden (2.1), The New Exchange (3.1), a public tavern called “The Bear” (3.3), and the New Spring Gardens (4.2). Sir Oliver spends much of the play trying to evade what he views as the overbearing interest of his wife so he can carry on with the women of London, and Lady Cockwood spends her time in the play attempting to control Sir Oliver’s actions so she can carry on with Sir Courtall without harming her reputation. The china orange that Sir Oliver brings to his wife, then, traverses the public and private spaces of London.

The sexual symbolism of the china orange in the play comes from the libertine locations (the theater) and the scandalous people (the orange girls) these fruits were attached to. These local associations inform an understanding of Sir Oliver and Lady Cockwood as well as Etherege’s choice to use a china orange in this scene. The audience is not made privy to where Sir Oliver purchased this item between the New Spring Gardens (located at Vauxhall) and his London home, but as his character is continually portrayed as seeking out the fashionable, libertine spaces of London the suggestion is he would have acquired the orange from an orange woman while in one of London’s newly popular but sometimes scandalous locations.

Before he drops the china orange, Sir Oliver is in the midst of apologizing to his wife for his many faults—faults the purchase of a china orange hints at—and after he

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34 To add to the scenic backdrops that likely would have indicated to the audience these different settings, in each case the audience is also informed via dialogue where the action is or will be taking place. Etherege, She Would if She Could, 2.1.11, 3.1.149, 3.2.47, 4.1.129-30.
35 Certainly there were other means by which to purchase china oranges than from orange girls, but as the play would have been performed in a theater the most immediate examples of china oranges for a watching audience would have been the orange girls who were in the theater during the performance, making connections between the action on the stage and the action of the theater more immediately accessible.
36 For a history of Vauxhall Gardens, including discussion of if less savory aspects, see David Coke, Vauxhall Garderns: A History (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011).
recovers the orange Sir Oliver reveals he purchased it as a gift for his wife.\textsuperscript{37} The thoughtful simplicity of the gift might have lent a certain sweetness to Sir Oliver’s gesture of reconciliation, had that gesture not already been comically undercut by the orange almost revealing the presence of Lady Cockwood’s would-be lover.\textsuperscript{38} In fact, if one understands the china orange’s local sexual significations as a symbol of the promiscuous china orange girls, then the oranges action in the drama—rolling under the table and coming to rest next to her would-be lover—serves to cement an association between Lady Cockwood and the “orange wenches” of the theater. By almost revealing to her husband that she is no different than the sexually promiscuous women who sold oranges in the playhouses the china orange becomes another means by which to cast aspersions on Lady Cockwood’s sexuality.

China oranges also make a brief appearance in Susanna Centlivre’s \textit{Love’s Contrivance} (1703) in a scene that highlights their natural inclusion in the English social as well as their ability to be the very object with which to cross social spaces.\textsuperscript{39} As is the plot of so many comedies in the Restoration, the young heiress Lucinda is being kept from her beaux of choice (Bellmie) by her father (Selfwill) who would rather she marry the rich, old Sir Toby. Bellmie tasks his hapless former servant Martin with the job of circumventing Selfwill and Sir Toby in order to get a message to Lucinda. This task is made difficult by

\textsuperscript{37}Etherege, George. \textit{She Would if She Could}, 5.1.220. Courtall is able to escape notice by hiding in a closet while Lady Cockwood distracts Sir Oliver; by the time Sir Oliver has reclaimed the orange Courtall is safely hidden away.

\textsuperscript{38}As one who attempts to be properly fashionable in all things it makes sense that Sir Oliver would choose a china orange as an object of reconciliation.

\textsuperscript{39}Susanna Centlivre, \textit{Love’s Contrivance: or, Le Medecin Malgre Lui} in \textit{The Dramatic Works of the Celebrated Mrs. Centlivre, With a New Account of Her Life} vol. 2, ed. John Pearson (New York: AMS Press, 1968). Line numbers not provided. Centlivre adapted the character of Martin from Molière’s \textit{Le Medecin Malgre Lui} (1666). The addition of Lucinda as well as the china orange is entirely of her own making.
the fact that Martin, who has descended to the disreputable job of “faggot-maker” has no believable reason or means to come into contact with a woman of Lucinda’s rank. His first attempt at bridging this gap is to disguise himself as an orange-seller who sells “china oranges” for the price of “four a penny.” As in Etherege’s *She Would if She Could*, Centlivre’s orange crosses over from public to private spaces. Martin is able to gain access to Selfwill’s home by shouting the cheap price of his china oranges from outside the house, thereby garnering the attention of Selfwill and Sir Toby. Selfwill and Sir Toby decide they want to purchase Martin’s oranges allowing him reason to enter the house and providing him an opportunity to talk to Lucinda. Once he is inside, Martin attempts to sneak Lucinda a note hidden in an orange, but Lucinda, uninterested in the fruit, strikes it from his hand and the hidden letter is revealed.

The humor of this moment stems not only from Martin’s choice to play a male version of the female orange wench, or in Lucinda’s inability to understand that Martin has been sent by Bellmie, but in the way that the action on the stage draws attention to the audience and the physical space of the theater. Having discovered Martin’s ruse, Selfwill exclaims “a Letter in an Orange?—This is a new way of pimping.” A1690 epilogue written by Thomas D’urfey, however, makes clear that hiding a letter in a china orange was not the “new way of pimping” Selfwill believes it to be. In D’urfey’s “An Epilogue to the Opera of Dido and Aneas,” recorded as performed at “Mr. Preist's Boarding-School at Chellsey,” the speaker, decrying the vulgarities of the English playhouse and praising the respectable decorum of the boarding school, declares that “No Love-toy here can pass to

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40 Centlivre, 3.1.
41 Centlivre, 3.1.
42 Centlivre, 3.1.
private view, / Nor China Orange cram'd with Billet dew, / Rome may allow strange
Tricks to please her Sons, / But we are Protestants and English Nuns.”43 For both
Centlivre and D’urfey to have written of the practice of using china oranges as a means to
disguise the exchange of love letters, especially given the likelihood that Centlivre was not
in attendance at Mr. Priest’s Boarding School the day D’urfey’s epilogue was read,
suggests that in the theater china oranges were used as a means by which to exchange notes
and love letters unseen. Not only were china oranges able to cross spaces, in cases like this
they were a means by which to manipulate what others perceived a situation to be. What
masquerades as the simple purchasing of fruit could actually be a clandestine exchange.
Those at the theater watching Centlivre’s play would have been surrounded by orange girls
selling fruit, and the humor in this moment of the play is reflected onto those in the
audience who may or may not have been exchanging letters via orange.

Although the presence of china oranges in these plays does not appear to be
remarkable, the fact is these objects work in these fictional narratives because their actual
presence in the lives of these characters is so unremarkable as to go almost unnoticed by
the reader. The playwrights, and by extension the characters of the play, were able to use
the fact that these commodities had become commonplace in the lives of the English to
their own advantage. Furthermore, these two examples of china oranges demonstrate the
way objects in performance generate significance and humor from local associations.
Both speak to issues of sexual impropriety, but an impropriety that is London specific. In
other words, the china oranges in these plays did not express an established belief in their

43 Thomas D’urfey, New poems, consisting of satyrs, elegies, and odes together with a choice
collection of the newest court songs set to musick by the best masters of the age. (London: Printed for I.
Bullord, at the Old Black Bear in St. Paul's Church-Yard, and A. Roper, at the Bell near Temple-Bar,
1690), 82-83, emphasis original. Early English Books Online.
connection to Eastern sexuality so much as connect their relatively new presence in Western life allowed for playwrights to explore new expressions of Western sexuality.

Embracing this point is key to approaching the presence of imperial commodities in William Wycherley’s The Country Wife (1675). Though more often remembered for its use of china porcelain (addressed below), the presence of china oranges in this play is in direct dialogue with the local associations of the fruit as well as the play’s subsequent use of china. In this sex comedy, the notorious rakehell Horner, tired of single women trying to pressure him into marriage, makes the decision to only sleep with the married women of the town. In order to bypass the suspicious husbands of the Town and gain direct access to their wives, Horner spreads the rumor that a bout of syphilis acquired in France has left him a eunuch. No longer seen as a threat by the husbands of London, Horner is allowed, even encouraged, to spend time with their wives. The Country Wife portrays Horner as a master manipulator, and in that role he repeatedly demonstrates how physical objects, particularly imperial commodities, participate in public manipulation.

The characters of The Country Wife can be split into two separate categories: those who possess knowledge of the inner workings of the Town and those who do not. In this play knowledge is not only about having the correct information; it is about understanding the ways of the Town and being able to use that information to one’s advantage. Examining a character’s ability to properly read signs—literal, figurative, and linguistic—both Deborah C. Payne and Michael Neill have written on the way in which The Country Wife differentiates between those who are able to fulfill their desires and

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those who are the foolish dupes.\textsuperscript{45} Payne argues that during the period “sophisticated systems of interpretation were used” in lieu of honest exchange; and that while “[t]he characters in \textit{The Country Wife} turn to these systems of interpretations for their knowledge of each other…the action of the play reveals, a certain epistemology is not to be found—especially in a society given to reading the ‘signs’ of faces and speech.”\textsuperscript{46} If for Payne the linguistic signs of the play point to society’s inability to ever “know” with certainty, then for Neill the symbolism of the physical signs in \textit{The Country Wife} function for the audience, if not the characters, as a reliable source of knowledge. Bridging these two arguments, I argue that the outside associations of china oranges’ coupled with their actions inside the world of this play offers the audience real insight into the characters while also highlighting the versatility and possible unreliability of material signifiers in the real world.

The acquisition of knowledge is mainly explored in \textit{The Country Wife} via the figure of Margery Pinchwife—the recently married country girl from which the play takes its title. The audience is made witness to the play’s satirical take on Town manners through the “education” Margery receives during the play. Margery’s husband, Mr. Pinchwife, who does not yet know about Horner’s feigned impotence, spends much of his time in the play’s narrative attempting to keep Margery away from both the Town and Horner’s negative influence. In Pinchwife’s view the corrupting forces of the Town will certainly ruin the innocence of his country wife and render him a cuckold. Pinchwife’s


\textsuperscript{46} Payne, 404.
desire to keep his new wife sequestered from the social forces London and the rakes who populate it results in him refusing to take her to the theater, disguising her as a boy when they visit the New Exchange, and, eventually, locking her in the house. Pinchwife’s efforts are for naught, however, as upon their visit to the New Exchange Horner manages to coax Margery away from her ever-watchful husband. When she reenters the scene the stage directions indicate that she arrives “running with her hat under her arm, full of oranges and dried fruit.”

It is important to note that the text indicates that Margery enters with “oranges,” not “china oranges,” and throughout the scene the oranges are never referred to as being of the “china” variety. The text not differentiating between oranges and china oranges points to the most common complication in recovering the physical presence of exotic commodities in drama. The ability of scholars to correctly identify what items were on the stage depends on the use of very specific terminology, either in stage directions or in dialogue, on the part of the playwright. Fortunately, in the fourth act the text makes clear that the oranges Margery brought on the stage with here were meant to be understood as china oranges when, at her husband’s instance, Margery details that when she and Horner were out of sight Horner “sent away a youth…for some dried fruit and china oranges.” In between the time it took for the youth to acquire the china oranges Margery says Horner kissed her “an hundred times.” The text’s use of both oranges and

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47 Wycherley, The Country Wife, 3.2. Line numbers for stage directions not provided.
48 Sweet china oranges were presumably the most popular orange variety in public spaces such as theaters and the New Exchange. Thus labeling Margery’s oranges as “china oranges” might have been redundant considering the oranges on the stage, and possibly even the oranges currently being enjoyed by audience members, would have been in view of those in the theater.
50 Wycherley, The Country Wife, 3.2.18.
china oranges suggests that during the period it was not always necessary to specifically designate a “china orange” as such.

Although the audience is made privy to exactly what occurred between Horner and Margery in the fourth act (a relatively innocent kissing session), when the oranges initially make their appearance in the third act everyone is left to fill in the blank as to the range of possible sexual indiscretions the china oranges signify. Payne argues that humor in Restoration sex comedies is generated from the use of interpretive signs and the binary that is created between those who are able to interpret the signs and those who cannot, and that “Horner’s genius for deciphering these particularized signs,” as well as “improvising” with them, accounts for his comedic moments as well as his successes.\footnote{Payne, 404-406, 413.}

The exchange between Horner, Pinchwife, and Margery after the third-act dalliance has occurred demonstrates Horner’s ability for just such improvisation through the sign/commodity of the china orange. Horner has used the excuse of shopping as a means to cover up their liaison, and the commodity of the china orange functions as the material means by which he can both “prove” their innocence and showcase his conquest. Glorifying in his ability to needle the sanctimonious Pinchwife, Horner feigns innocence as to what has happened saying “I have only given your little brother an orange, sir.”\footnote{Wycherley, \textit{The Country Wife}, 3.2.559.} To which Pinchwife narrates his knowledge of what has occurred in an aside: “You have only squeez'd my Orange, I suppose, and given it me again.”\footnote{Wycherley, \textit{The Country Wife}, 3.2.560-61.} All the while Margery remains oblivious to the power-play occurring at her expense.
One of the reasons Margery’s return to the stage with an armful of china oranges after her inappropriate dalliance is so humorous is its reversal of the traditional comic situation. Typically a rake and his lover would attempt to frantically hide evidence of their assignation from a suspecting husband. In this instance, however, the two men, Horner and Pinchwife, are aware an indiscretion has occurred, and it is the naive Margery who is entirely ignorant that a boundary has been crossed. As a reformed rake, Pinchwife understands what likely occurred between Horner and Margery, although he does not yet know how far his suspicions are justified, and, as Neill points out, when Margery returns to the stage “laden with oranges and dried fruit, she appears in Pinchwife’s eyes like a walking sign of his cuckoldom.”

Margery, in her ignorance of the ways of the City, understands the oranges only as evidence of the finer things in London, whereas the men on stage, and everyone in the audience, recognizes their clear allusion to the sexual indiscretion that has taken place off stage.

In his desire to hide his shame, Pinchwife desperately tries to cover up the reality of the situation from the others, but to his dismay Margery insists on highlighting his shame by forcing her oranges on her disapproving husband: “O dear bud, look you here what I have got, see.” Though the text does not directly indicate what her character is doing on the stage during Horner and Pinchwife’s subsequent exchange, her response to Pinchwife’s instance that they leave, “Stay till I have put up my fine things, bud,” suggests that she is engrossed in examining and fiddling with the oranges Horner has given her, an activity that only increases the double entendre intended in presence of the

54 Neill, 8.
The act ends with Margery literally thrusting evidence of Horner’s conquest in the form of an orange in Pinchwife’s face. In what is the final straw for Pinchwife, Margery declares “I don’t know where to put this [orange] here, dear Bud, you shall eat it; nay, you shall have part of the fine gentleman’s good things, or treat as you call it, when we come home.” The stage directions indicate that Pinchwife “strikes away the orange,” meaning that Margery must be close enough to Pinchwife to hand him the offending object.

The importance of the china oranges in The Country Wife can only be fully understood when considered in conjunction with the china porcelain in the infamous “china scene” of the fourth act. Mirroring the larger circumstances of the “china orange scene” almost exactly—in that the china scene features a rake, a wife, a husband, and a commonplace imperial commodity—Horner uses the cover of shopping for china to complete his sexual conquests under the nose of Lady Fidget’s unsuspecting husband, the arrogant Sir Jasper. Here, contrary to his dalliance with Margery, Horner has much more knowledgeable and experienced partner in Lady Fidget. If we consider the “china orange scene” to be Horner beginning Margery’s education in the process of how carries on sexual assignations, then the “china scene” is the full-on demonstration of two people who have mastered this type of subterfuge.

Unlike china oranges, china porcelain in the history of the West, its acquisition as well as its place in English households, has long been an area of scholarly interest.

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56 Wycherley, The Country Wife, 3.2.563.
58 Neill also makes note of the link created between Margery and Lady Fidget in the fourth act through the china oranges and china porcelain, 9.
59 For general works on the history of porcelain see John Goldsmith Phillips, China-trade Porcelain: An Account of its Historical Background, Manufacture, and Decoration, and a Study of the
presence of china porcelain in England also owes itself to Portugal’s early establishment of trade with China, and almost all of the china trade was done out of the city of Canton, an inland city on a river, from which the Portuguese had exclusive trading rights.\textsuperscript{60}

Initially loaded onto ships as a means to weigh down cargo holds full of spices, porcelain quickly became one of the most popular imports from China.\textsuperscript{61} By the seventeenth century porcelain had become a staple in English households.\textsuperscript{62} Though spices, tea and textiles from China were popular through Europe, it was porcelain, states Berg, that “defined the ‘Orient’ to European consumers.”\textsuperscript{63}

China porcelain came in a range of styles and prices. Plain blue and white china was common, and, though not cheap, could be obtained in “china houses” at reasonable prices; on the other end of the spectrum, the aristocracy and those who had the money

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\textsuperscript{60} Phillips, 12-16. The Chinese Empire was one of the richest and most powerful empires in the world during the sixteenth century. It was also notoriously closed to outsiders; European traders were never allowed to enter the country and were instead confined to certain buildings within walled cities. Portuguese had a settlement at Macao in 1557 from which they were able to trade. The Portuguese were the first Europeans to establish regular trade with China, followed by the Dutch and then the English. In the sixteenth century England did not have any direct trade with China, china porcelain made its way to England in the sixteenth century via the Portuguese ships that traveled between Canton and Lisbon. English and Dutch merchants would then buy the china in Lisbon and import it into their respective countries. Phillips, 17-18.

\textsuperscript{61} James Walvin, \textit{Fruits of Empire: Exotic Produce and British Taste, 1660-1800} (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 26; Berg, 72. Before the introduction of chinaware to England dishes were most commonly made of pewter, wood, or tin-glazed earthen wares. Berg, 71; Porter, 135.

\textsuperscript{62} Porter records that most middle and upper-class houses possessed Chinese porcelain by the early eighteenth century, 139.

\textsuperscript{63} Berg, 71.
could special order personalized china dishes at exorbitant prices.\textsuperscript{64} Owning china was a marker of status, but it was a status symbol that was available for those with the money to purchase it.\textsuperscript{65} Although men and women alike could use china, it became especially associated with women. “Even as Chinese porcelain spread to middling households,” writes David Porter, “its firm associations with the feminized rituals of the tea table suggest that it remained predominantly, though by no means exclusively, an object of female consumption, and one which women tended to invest with a greater degree of personal significance.”\textsuperscript{66} The connection of women to their chinaware did not go unnoticed in literary circles as “the ubiquity of literary scenes and metaphors pairing women with chinoiserie objects of various kinds suggests that they most likely had some degree of experiential resonance.”\textsuperscript{67} Having or possessing china became a common sign of rank in a fashionable household as well as indication that the woman who possessed the item was of quality.

In the narrative of \textit{The Country Wife}, china is brought on the stage for the purpose of providing Horner and Lady Fidget with a cover story. After locking themselves in a room, leaving Sir Jasper and Lady Squeamish to stew outside, Lady Fidget returns to the stage holding the piece of china in her hands.\textsuperscript{68} Whereas during the “china orange scene” humor is generated from Margery’s inability to understand the symbolism of her oranges

\textsuperscript{64} Berg, 71-2; Phillips, 34-41.
\textsuperscript{65} Because a comparatively large swath of the population could afford to obtain some type of porcelain, Berg identifies it as a “semi-luxury.” Berg, 72.
\textsuperscript{67} Porter, 31.
\textsuperscript{68} The stage directions instruct that after Horner and Lady Fidget finish they reenter the stage: Wycherley, \textit{The Country Wife}, “Lady Fidget with a piece of China in her hand, and Horner following” 4.3.
while her husband clearly squirms under the weight of their implications, in the “china scene” humor is generated at the expense of Sir Jasper who is unable to understand the double signification of china. Sir Jasper sees nothing but evidence of a shopping trip while the audience understands the piece of china to be the physical evidence of sexual indiscretion that has occurred offstage. Everyone on the stage and in the audience is in on the joke, laughing at Sir Jasper’s ignorance.

As discussed in chapter one, Francis Teague argues that in Shakespeare’s comedies objects and disguises “become sources of comedy when their dislocated function require that they be used inappropriately.” In other words, audiences find it funny when an object is used in a play in a way that is entirely contrary to the means by which it would ordinarily be used. This observation remains true when applied to Restoration comedy, as much of the humor of the “china scene” is located in the utter absurdity of equating china with the act of sex. Whereas china oranges were easily connected to public spaces where oranges could be purchased and to the sex work of orange girls, china porcelain was a symbol of the domestic English household and dignified society: “within the context of the European luxury debates,” writes Berg, “China [the country] was associated not with sensuality and excess, but with ethics, harmony, and virtue.” The cognitive dissonance of blending together the perceived social civility of china with the outrages sexual acts of Horner and Lady Fidget results in an exalted level of humor. Thus china, the “emblem of civilized society,” functions in

69 As James Ogden points out, the humor in the china scene in is mainly generated from the fact that Sir Jasper does not understand the double meaning of china. James Ogden, Introduction to The Country Wife (New York: Norton, 1991), xviii.
70 Frances Teague, Shakespeare’s Speaking Properties (Cranbury: Associated University Presses, 1991), 71.
71 Berg, 50
Much of the scholarship on the “china scene” focuses on the relationship of china to Horner and male sexuality: Payne identifies “the infamous ‘china house’ scene” as “the best instance of Horner’s ability to create shades of meaning;” Webster argues that on the stage china “becomes a metaphor for Horner’s sexual potency” and that “pieces of china come to symbolize Horner’s potency, his bedroom, and the acts performed there;” Neill views the china “a potent sign of Horner’s phallic prowess;” Richard Kroll asserts that china is “a metaphor for Horner’s semen;” Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace classifies the china as representative of “Horner’s irrepressible phallicism;” and Porter labels the china as a sign of the “rakish hero’s sexual potency.” All this attention on Horner, however, overlooks the active participation of Lady Fidget in duping her husband and the role china plays in this scene in connection to women and women’s desires.

In addition to representing Horner’s sexuality, the presence of china directly speaks to unchecked female desire, specifically, desire as linked to sex as well as shopping. Linda Levy Peck writes that as shopping became an accepted part of English life during the seventeenth century there were those who viewed it as “subversive of the social order” due to a belief that it “invert[ed] gender roles” and “encourage[ed] illicit

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72 Neill, 9.
74 Kowaleski-Wallace does link china to female desires when she argues that “Wycherley’s use of china as a metaphor for the male body established both the desirable qualities of the commodity and a distinctly female demand for it,” 56, emphasis original.2
Lady Fidget’s character plays directly to these fears as it is she who provides impetus for the action of this scene and is then chiefly in control of the particular sign system that the onstage china generates. When Sir Jasper first finds Lady Fidget embracing Horner he exclaims “is this your buying China, I thought you had been at the China House?” revealing that it was Lady Fidget who initially created the cover of shopping for china. Horner, able to take a hint, immediately alights on the possibilities of Lady Fidget’s cover: “China house! That’s my Cue, I must take it.” When Lady Fidget emerges from the locked room not only is she the one holding the piece of china, she is also the first one to use the term china as a double entendre for sex: “I have toiling and moiling for the prettiest piece of china.” Mrs. Squeamish, another married woman in the room who understands what Lady Fidget’s china signifies, continues this play on words by begging for similar treatment and not be denied Horner’s “china:"

_Mrs. Squeamish:_ “Oh Lord I'll have some China too, good Mr. Horner, don't think to give other people China, and me none, come in with me too.”

_Horner:_ Upon my honour I have none left now.

_Mrs. Squeamish:_ Nay, nay I have known you deny your China before now, but you shan't put me off so, come—

_Horner:_ This Lady had the last there.

_Lady Fidget:_ Yes indeed Madam, to my certain knowledge he has no more left.

Lady Fidget has exhausted Horner to the point where he cannot service the equally voracious Lady Squeamish.  

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76 Wycherley, _The Country Wife_, 4.3.86.


78 Wycherley, _The Country Wife_, 4.3.190-99.

79 As Neill points out, Horner’s response to Mrs. Squeamish’s demand for china is “I will have a roll-wagon for you too, another time,” which suggests the actual piece of china that appeared on the stage
Linking china to the sexual appetites of women points to the final way that china functions as a source of humor in this scene. Markley writes that “[t]he double—or multiple—meanings of ‘China’ reflect satirically the corruption of language in fashionable society and comically the dialogical undermining of social discourse,” and while language is certainly a factor in this scene, the physical presence of the china, as well as the actions taken in relation to it, would likely have served as a more immediate connection for the audience. Given the popularity of china in London it was an object that was likely already present in the houses of those in the audience; meaning that

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women in the audience would have, at some time in their lives, gone shopping for china. The implication of the china scene, however, is that china shopping was not necessarily an innocent pastime. By using “china shopping” as an alibi for sex, and then bringing actual china on the stage as evidence of a “successful” shopping trip, the china scene turns all the women in the audience who owned china into Lady Fidgets and all the men into potential Sir Jaspers. A threatening prospect given Lady Fidget’s assertion that “we women of quality never think we have China enough.”

Wycherley clearly intended his use of china to have this effect as in his subsequent play *The Plain Dealer* (1677) the character Olivia remarks that she will “never forgive the beastly Author [Wycherley] his china” as “he has quite taken away the reputation of poor China itself, and sullied the most innocent and pretty furniture of a ladies chamber, insomuch, that I was fain to break all my defiled vessels.” According to Olivia, because Wycherley soiled the reputation of china, her reputation has been harmed by association. Olivia is, however, the representation of the hypocritical woman who hides her libidinous ways through feigned innocence. Wycherley has her mimic objections to *The Country Wife* as a means to suggest that Olivia, and the women she represents, are so offended by Wycherley’s presentation of china because it actually reveals the truth about her person.

China in *The Country Wife*, typically viewed as a marker of civilized society and so closely linked to the construction of a proper female identity, becomes on the stage, and possibly then off the stage, a marker of female sexual impropriety or unchecked

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desires. Although Margery ends the play declaring that she “must be a country wife still” because she can’t “like a city one, be rid of my must husband and do what I list,” the larger trajectory of the play as indicated through the use of imperial commodities is that with practice she may eventually learn to manipulate signs to her liking and join the ranks of Lady Fidget and Lady Squeamish. Given time, Margery will change from the naive country wife into an experienced town wife.

In the above works there is awareness as to the potentially threatening state of affairs in an England where selfhood can be constructed upon and perceptions can be manipulated with the imperial commodities made available to an ever larger number of people. Even though the using of imperial commodities to as a tool with which to manipulate perceptions and actions is not condemned in these works, it is not necessarily celebrated either, especially in the case of Horner and Lady Fidget. The bawdy reputation of Restoration comedy of manners notwithstanding, in *Tricksters and Estates* Douglas Canfield lays out how social comedies of the period often end rather sedately with marriage between two equally matched partners; those who have done wrong or who do not operate according the proper English/Tory ideology are punished with public humiliation or by having their desires come to nothing. Horner, however, is not the typical rake-hero of Restoration comedy as he does not end the play safely contained through the institution of marriage; he ends the play unattached, unreformed, and unwilling to modify his behavior in any way. Additionally, Lady Fidget’s infidelity (as

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well as that of Mrs. Squeamish and Mrs. Dainty) is never revealed or punished. Both these characters portray a sexuality that undercuts the dramatic world’s traditional pro-marriage stance. Lady Fidget’s actions and the fact that she will likely continue them displays a woman’s sexuality as threatening to her husband. Moreover, Horner’s refusal to marry along with his intention to continue pursuing married women places him as a continual threat to all men. Horner’s last lines, and the closing lines of the play, portray his clear disregard for the traditionally valued male friendships: “Vain fops, but court, and dress, and keep a pother / To pass for women’s men with one another; / But he who aims by women to be prized, / First by the men, you see, must be despised.” So as to be “prized” by the women of the town, Horner is willing to be “despised” by all the men. This denunciation of his relationships with other men, typically the most important relationship in a Restoration comedy, makes him an especially ominous figure. Horner and Lady Fidget, the two characters who are most adept at manipulating material signs, are transgressive and dangerous figures.

I argued in the first chapter that the “dislocated function” of stage props should be understood as related, not separate from, the “ordinary function” of objects in the real world. In other words, the “dislocated function” of props in comedies provide insight into the some aspect of the ordinary function of such objects outside the theater. During the moment of performance the dislocated functions of china oranges and china porcelain in

She Would if She Could, Love’s Contrivance, and The Country Wife exaggerate the

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85 Because of Horner’s unrepentant attitude as well as Lady Fidget’s successful affair Canfield labels The Country Wife a subversive comedy, 129-30.
ordinary functions and meanings of these objects. These meanings are chiefly drawn not from their connection to the East, but instead are drawn from the objects’ real-life associations and uses outside the theater. Imperial commodities do not have a monopoly on being used in matters of manipulation; dramatic history is full of multivalent textiles and objects, but the repeated pattern of imperial commodities being used as a means of manipulation during the Restoration suggests that the influx of foreign commodities into England was having an impact on the social makeup of London. The rapidly changing social face of London as a result of trade with the larger world and the rising consumption habits of the population, has resulted in change points of contact and a shifting relationship with material items. That these objects are so often connected to sexual subjects owes itself to the fact that playwrights, in attempting to pinpoint, exaggerate and then either lambast or celebrate the current habits of London populations, turned to these objects that were becoming more and more present in the daily loves of Londoners.

I now turn from china oranges and china porcelain towards Indian gowns in Dryden’s *Sir Martin Mar-All* (1667) and *The Kind Keeper* (1678) as well as John Crowne’s *City Politiques* (1683). As an article of clothing, Indian gowns do easily fall into the category of hand prop, as do the other commodities I have examined thus far. The line between property and costume is sometimes blurred, however, and just because an item can be worn does not mean it cannot also function as a prop. That which can be worn can also be handled or moved in the same way that props can.\(^{88}\) In the following plays, these Indian gowns are both worn and handled in some fashion. Moreover, the

\(^{88}\) According to Sofer, a hat or a sword, if it is worn by a character, is also a prop if it is “handled” in some way. Andrew Sofer, *The Stage Life of Props* (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 2003), 34.
Indian gowns’ active participation in the action of the comedy puts these garments in a place outside of a simple costume. Teague writes that in the comedies of Shakespeare “characters learn about or establish identity not by affiliating with a particular faction (as one might in a history play), but rather by exploring alternative identities,” and such exploration is often undertaken through use of a property that “hides identity.”89 In the following plays, however, the Indian gowns do not simply hide the identity of the wearer; they suggest alternate identities within in the English social structure. It is the ability of Indian gowns to be multivalent and multipurposed that makes them so useful to the characters in the drama, and the characters who recognize this are able to use it to their advantage. Fluctuating between property, costume, and disguise, the Indian gowns in these plays allow the wearers a certain level of anonymity and control over self-presentation in a manner that allows them to successfully engineer their desired outcomes.

In John Dryden’s *Sir Martin Mar-All* (1667), Warner, Sir Martin’s patient serving man, spends the entirety of the play attempting to counteract his dim-witted master’s uncanny ability to ruin even the best laid of plans.90 Warner continually engineers ingenious means by which Millisent, a rich heiress, and Sir Martin can get married, only to have Sir Martin literally mar them all. Samuel Pepys saw this play multiple times and judged it to be “undoubtedly the best comedy ever was wrote;” nevertheless, it was not an entirely original work as Dryden adapted it from Molière’s popular comedy *L’Étourdi*

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89 Teague, 56 & 77.
In Molière’s play the blundering Lélie (the inspiration for Sir Martin) pursues the beautiful, young Célie (Millisent) with the help of his quick-witted servant Mascarille (Warner). At the close of Molière’s play the buffoonish Lélie marries the heiress Célie despite the fact that he consistently ruined Mascarille’s attempts to help him. When adapting *L’Étourdi* to suite English tastes Dryden kept much of the central plot the same, with the exception of the ending. Dryden ends *Sir Martin Mar-All* with Millisent, having realized the truth of Sir Martin’s idiocy, trading places with her maid Rose during a double wedding ceremony. Instead of marrying Sir Martin, Millisent marries Warner, a man whose ingenious wit better matches her station. This switching of brides (or husbands) at the end of this play was an invention entirely of Dryden’s own making, and one that rewards the hard work and cunning of the Warner character. Millisent manages to arrange a marriage more to her liking through the use of “two Indian gowns and Vizard-masks” she commands Rose to retrieve from her room.

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Indian gowns, also called morning gowns, dressing gowns, nightgowns, or banyans (bannian), became the indoor garment of choice for fashionable women and men. Scholarship on Indian gowns, based almost entirely on their presence in British and American eighteenth-century portraiture, is sparse and sometimes contradictory. Some scholars attempt to differentiate between the

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92 Rather than challenging the class-conscious decorum of the Restoration stage, Warner is revealed to be a lord who was forced to take employment after his father mortgaged his estate. It is Rose who marries the foolish, but still titled, Sir Martin. Though the maid Rose seems to be getting the short-end of the deal in her marriage to Sir Martin (instead of to Warner), the play implies she has also benefitted as she gains a title and access to his wealth.

93 The implication at the end of Molière’s comedy is that Mascarille will find someone to marry having successfully paired off his master.

94 Dryden, *Sir Martin Mar-All*, 5.2.32.
various names applied to these garments, but there is no general consensus as to what might differentiate a morning gown from a banyan or an Indian gown, thus, the terms are frequently used interchangeably. These robe-like garments were meant to be worn over

Figure 2.
Banyan
© Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

clothing in place of formal coats and came in two different styles. The earlier gowns were believed to be modeled after Japanese kimonos and had a billowing cut that could be secured around the waste with a sash. In the latter half of the eighteenth century a more fitted coat-like style of gown came into fashion; this gown had a double row of buttons down the front and a more structured collar. Men, whose shorn heads were bare when not covered in wigs, often paired these gowns with caps modeled in the style of turbans, and Margaret Swain writes that the overall effect of pairing an “elegant kimono topped by a turban-like cap” was to provide the wearer with a “delightfully oriental appearance.”

Figure 3.
Banyan
China. 1720-1750. T.31-2012
© Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

96 See Figure 2 & 3 for examples of kimono style banyans.
97 Swain, 12.
Indian gowns entered English fashion in the seventeenth century and then continued to grow in popularity. Various historical records offer a glimpse into their rising availability. Swain records that in 1634 a letter from Amsterdam tells of the purchasing of “an Indian warme gown.” Samuel Pepys, never one to be behind in a matter of fashion, purchased an Indian gown for himself in 1661, and in 1663 his wife was sent “a very noble parti-coloured Indian gowne.” In 1666 Pepys records that purchased another Indian gown “to be drawn in” for his official portrait. By 1684 Indian gowns were popular enough that a Robert Croft and a Mrs. Mary Mandove were acknowledged as “Indian Gown Maker[s]” for the King and Queen, respectively. Indian gowns were initially worn indoors and in private, as their looser cut made them ideal for wearing inside the house while doing work or relaxing. The wearing of Indian gowns outside in informal public settings eventually became commonplace, if not always condoned by everyone. By the end of the eighteenth century Town and Country Magazine records that Banyans were “worn in every part of town, from Wapping to Westminster, and if a sword is occasionally put on, it sticks out of the middle of the slit behind. This, however, is the fashion…and what can a man do? He must wear a Banyan.” Though over the century it became fashionable for young rakes to appear out

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98 Cunningham, 3.
99 Qtd. in Swain, 11.
102 Cunningham, 3.
103 Cunningham, 5.
104 Qtd. in Cunningham, 6.
of doors in their Indian gowns, it seems to have been a fashion statement that never caught on with women.

Despite the exotic style and monikers of these garments, theories abound as to what, exactly, the connection was between the Indian gowns of England and the East. Brandon Brame Fortune postulates that the fashion “may have its roots in robes brought back from India by Englishmen or from the Orient by Dutch merchants.” Patricia Cunningham argues that perhaps it was “trade with the Orient” that motivated English demands for “nightgowns of the kimono style,” or that the style of the gowns may “derive from Persian and Turkish caftans.” Swain writes that the term banyan for these gowns was adopted from the moniker applied to Hindu traders in India who were said to wear similar garments, an idea that may have been inspired by Samuel Johnson’s definition of a “bannian” as “a man’s undress, or morning gown, such as is worn by the Bannians in the East Indies”. Cunningham connects the term “banyan” to India as well when she records that “English soldiers stationed in Indian adopted the bannion as early as 1670.” It seems likely that there is some truth in all of these theories. Although no clear consensus regarding these gowns’ direct relationship to the East can be reached, all

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106 Cunningham, 3. Cunningham, covering a wide spectrum of possibilities regarding the origins of Indian Gowns, postulates that the common association of English robes with Turkish clothing may have originated in the sixteenth-century diplomatic tradition where the Sultan was said to gift diplomats with native robes, 3. Cunningham also hypothesizes that the popularity of this item in England might be connected to the fact that in an official portrait by Holbein Henry VIII wore “what appears to be an Islamic caftan.” 4.


scholars agree that these items were directly influenced by and made popular because of England’s fascination with exotic commodities and increase in overseas trade.

The fact that Indian gowns did not necessarily have to be imported directly from India to receive the label of Indian gown or banyan further contributes to the difficulty of tracing the connection of these garments to international trade.\textsuperscript{109} While at first the label of Indian gown may have been applied only to pieces imported from East, it appears to also have eventually been applied to gowns manufactured locally with the popular silks and cottons from Asia: “Certainly gowns, as well as material, were imported from India from the middle of the seventeenth century to the end of the eighteenth century,” writes Swain, but “[i]t would appear that the term Indian gown…refers more it its oriental appearance than its country of origin.”\textsuperscript{110} By the eighteenth century, garments tailored in this “exotic” fashion but whose materials and construction originated entirely in England could still be called Indian gowns or banyans. Regardless of the fact that by the end of the eighteenth century any real connection of these gowns to the Far East may have become tenuous, Ariane Fennetaux points out that with names like Indian gown and banyan “the distinctive oriental connotation[s]” of the garment were “retained even long after it had stopped being imported from India.”\textsuperscript{111} What one can take away from looking at the relationship of these garments to the East is that the “Indian gown” was not a simple item discovered and then imported directly from India so much as it was a Western fashion phenomenon that grew out of the conflation of diplomatic, mercantilist, and eventually


\textsuperscript{110} Swain, 11 & 12.

\textsuperscript{111} Fennetaux, 8.
mercantilist influences. The effect national interests had on personal fashion resulted in an outwardly foreign garment ideal for uniquely English purposes.

Before it was acceptable to appear out of doors in one’s dressing gown, seventeenth-century Indian gowns were commonly worn at masquerades, parties in which foreign or fantastical dress was expected. The Indian gown’s early association with masquerades along with its rising popularity and presence in seventeenth-London explains why Dryden likely turned to this specific item during the faux masquerade scene at the end of Sir Martin Mar-All. Warner’s final elaborate plan to ferry Millisent away from the watchful eyes of her father entails that he and his party dress up as “Gentleman maskers” and, in the ensuing confusion created the spectacle, separate the women from their guardians. When Millisent commands Rose to “fetch…down two Indian gowns and Vizard-masks” so that the two can disguise themselves and “be as good a Mummery” to the men “as they to us” she chose garments that would have been acceptable in the festive atmosphere of a masquerade. As a young, fashionable heiress, a woman of Millisent’s station would have believably owned Indian gowns, and her happening to be in possession of those garments would have seemed natural to those in the audience.

When envisioning how long and in what capacity the Indian gowns would have actually been present onstage it becomes clear how they contributed to the sense of decadent frivolity required to pull off the dual marriages. The play text does not make it clear exactly when the two women put on their gowns, but given that immediately following Millisent’s command a series of dances takes place in which all the characters

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112 Cunningham, 4.
113 Dryden, Sir Martin Mar-All, 5.2.37
114 Dryden, Sir Martin Mar-All, 5.2.32-34. Though Millisent claims they will “be as good a Mummery to them as they to us”, in reality their mummery is better as they are able to distinguish between Warner and Sir Martin while the men are not able to tell them apart.
participate, it seems likely that Rose would have returned immediately with the garments. Because the men in the scene are already dressed in their “maskers” gear it makes sense that Millisent and Rose would have donned their disguises in front of the audience and then joined in the dancing. As the marriages take place offstage it is possible that the women could have put on their Indian gowns backstage after everyone has danced off the stage, but the visual gaiety of the scene would have been greatly enhanced if the women were costumed so as to match the already disguised men. That the two women are dressed in their Indian gowns and masks when everyone renters the scene is certain as the text indicate the Rose and Millisent are “vail’d;” furthermore, the men are unaware that the switch has occurred until Rose and Millisent unmask.

There is no indication, opportunity, or reason for the women to change out of their gowns before the play concludes, so likely the actresses would have been wearing their Indian gowns for approximately the last hundred lines of the play. Thus, beyond the Indian gowns being noticeably present during the play’s happy resolution, they were clearly key actors in bringing it about.

In the world of the play, then, the English taste for the Indian gowns allows the two women to disguise themselves so as to arrange marriages to their liking. There is an important distinction to be made in the type of “dress up” that Millisent and Rose are participating in when they put on their Indian gowns—the two are not disguising

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115 While the texts indicates that “Rose exits” on Millisent’s command there is no clear indication as to when she returns and if she takes part in the masquerade. Millisent is clearly part of the dancing as Lord Dartmouth makes note of her presence: “They [the maskers] point to Miss Millisent.” Dryden, Sir Martin Mar-All, 5.2.52.

116 As Millisent does not reveal her plan to the audience through dialogue, and it is only after the unmasking occurs that it is made clear the women have switched places, from a performance aspect it makes sense that the disguised women would have switched partners during the dances. If performed this way observant audience members could witness the switch take place and unobservant ones might be caught off guard by the reveal.
themselves as Indians or women from India; instead, through the use of a markedly foreign garment, they are dressing as English women of quality. In other words, this seemingly foreign article of clothing allows for a fluidity of identity within the bounds of acceptable Englishness, and Millisent is able to take advantage of this fluidity to marry whom she chooses. Dryden’s choice to feature two Indian gowns in this spousal swap speaks to the liminal quality embodied in these newly fashionable garments. Millisent’s choice to marry Warner is not one that her father, fiancé, or Sir Martin are aware of; it is made entirely of her own volition. She is only able to successfully engineer the swap due to her understanding of the way the Indian gown combined with a mask could be used to make a believable disguise for a lady of her station. Understanding the affordances Indian gowns offer, Millisent is able to manipulate the men’s perception of the situation. In doing so, she makes a personally satisfying but momentarily potentially threatening marriage choice. Though Dryden removes any real threat to the socially conscious world of the Restoration by revealing that Warner is, in fact, an impoverished Lord, Warner’s status is only revealed after Millisent has already married him. Though it is only for a brief moment, in the world of the play Millisent has used her Indian gown as the means by which to defy the conventions of society and to marry a penniless servant.

Dryden features the ability of Indian gowns as a tool of manipulation in a much more risqué scene eleven years later in The Kind Keeper (1678), a play that is bawdy even by Restoration standards.117 The action of The Kind Keeper takes place in a less-than-reputable boarding house (i.e. a brothel) where the young rake Woodall successfully seduces both the married Mrs. Brainsick as well as the kept mistress Mrs. Tricksy before

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marrying Lady Pleasance. *The Kind Keeper* contains the expected series of hiding places, close calls, and disguises that are so common in the libertine sex comedies of the period. The fifth act finds Mrs. Brainsick darting into Mrs. Tricksy’s empty room so her husband, Mr. Brainsick, will not to find her alone with Woodall. Woodall, afraid Mr. Brainsick will peak in the room and see it is occupied by Mrs. Brainsick and not Mrs. Tricksy, spots Mrs. Tricksy’s “Indian Gown upon the bed.”118 Woodall instructs Mrs. Brainsick to “clap it on” and turn around confident that Mr. Brainsick “will easily mistake you [Mrs. Brainsick] for her [Mrs. Tricksy], if he shou'd look in.”119

Again, the sexual signification of this particular Indian gown is chiefly drawn from its place in the world of the play and the social norms of England. Because this particular Indian gown belongs to Mrs. Tricksy, the kept woman of the play, it is already somewhat indecent through association. Mrs. Tricksy’s role as a kept mistress means she is a continual consumer of pricy (often foreign) goods that her married lover, Limberham, purchases for her. The natural assumption would be that the fashionable garment in her room was a gift from Limberham.120 When Mr. Brainsick looks into the room, as Woodall feared he would, he does vocalize the garment’s connection to the East as well as to the sex he believes the woman wearing it is about to have: “‘Tis an Assignation I see: for yonder she stands, with her back toward me, drest up for the Duel, with all the Ornaments of the East.”121 Despite the implication in Mr. Brainsick’s statement—latent

118 Dryden, *The Kind Keeper*, 5.1.65.
120 The figure of the mistress, notes Berg, was typically considered to be “an object of conspicuous consumption,” 6. This quality is demonstrated in Mrs. Tricksy’s character: earlier in the play Woodall disguises himself as an Italian scent merchant and Limberham attempts to purchase his goods for Mrs. Tricksy, and, as pointed out in chapter one, Limberham purchased jewels and jewelry for Mrs. Tricksy which he attempts to take back.
121 Dryden, *The Kind Keeper*, 5.1.75-77.
ideas about promiscuous Eastern sexuality as represented in the “ornament” the woman
wears is what clues him into the sexual assignation about to occur—it must be
remembered that, outside of a masquerade, appearing before company in an Indian gown,
a private, indoor garment, would not have been on the edge of what was appropriate. Mr.
Brainsick believes he is viewing the infamous Mrs. Triksy in a state of undress that
would have been inappropriate out of doors in the typical English social order. In other
words, Mr. Brainsick does not believe the women in the room is going to have sex only
because she is dressed up in a garment from the East, he believes she is going to have sex
because she is in a state of undress.

Mrs. Brainsick’s donning of the Indian gown helps convince Mr. Brainsick of
Woodall’s story. By having Mrs. Brainsick dress in Mrs. Triksy’s Indian gown Woodall
not only disguises Mrs. Brainsick, he is able to manipulate how he understand what is
about to happen in the bedroom. Just like naïve Sir Jasper in *The Country Wife*, Mr.
Brainsick stands outside the door as his wife finally consummates her affair with the rake
of the play. Mr. Brainsick even offers to stand guard while Woodall completes the
assignation, and when Limberham arrives and demands to be let into Mrs. Triksy’s
room Mr. Brainsick (believing that Woodall to be completing the act with Mrs. Triksy)
ensures that his own cuckolding takes place by fighting Limberham off.

It is not entirely clear how long the Indian gown would have appeared before the
audience, but the most likely scenario—that it was not seen until after Mrs. Brainsick had
already slept with Woodall—further contributes to the idea that its sexual significations
are drawn from the action of the drama. This scene was not set in Mrs. Triksy’s room
but in the common area or hallway of the boarding house. The actress playing Mrs.
Brainsick likely walked through one of the stage doors to simulate entering Mrs. Tricksy’s room with Woodall instructing her to put on the Indian gown from the stage. This staging would have made Mr. Brainsick’s almost poetic comment regarding the women waiting dressed in her “ornaments of the East” serve as an interpretive narration regarding what his character supposedly sees when he looks through the stage door. The text is clear, however, that when Mrs. Brainsick exits the room she is wearing the Indian gown; thus, the visual effect for the audience would have been Mrs. Brainsick exiting the stage (entering the bedroom) in her normal dress and, after having had sex with Woodall, returning to the stage (exiting the bedroom) wearing evidence of the encounter upon her body. This effect must have been intended as there is no other reason to have Mrs. Brainsick exit to room wearing the gown. In this way the Indian gown, much as the china oranges and china porcelain, takes its scandalous signification from the activity that just occurred off the stage.

Both of Dryden’s plays feature Indian gowns in situations that could be understood as either liberating or compromising. On the one hand, the “hero” of each play achieves success while the foolish counterpart(s) are undercut. On the other, both plays, aided by the presence of Indian gowns, clearly challenge the idea of marriage as a

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122 The other possibility, though less likely because there is no scene change indicated in the text, is that Mrs. Tricksy’s rooms were set behind scene screens that were opened and closed. If that was the case then the Indian gown may have been in full view of the audience from the moment Mrs. Brainsick entered the room.

123 Mrs. Brainsick could have simply taken it off in the room and placed it on the bed where she found it, and wearing the garment out requires it be placed back in the room before Mrs. Tricksy returns. While a small amount of comedic tension is created by the need for Woodall to “throw” the gown back into the room without Mrs. Tricksy noticing it was gone, the play does not dwell on that tension for more than two lines, making it come across as an afterthought. The real effect of having Mrs. Brainsick wear the Indian gown out, then, was the visual impact it would have given the audience.

124 As both *Sir Martin Mar-all* and *The Kind Keeper* were written for and acted by the Duke’s Company, it is possible that the Indian gowns featured in both plays were owned by the company and were one in the same.
secure, male-controlled institution. This same question is raised in relation to the Indian gown in John Crowne’s satirical farce *City Politiques*. And whereas *Sir Martin Mar-All* and *The Kind Keeper* feature the powerful quality of Indian gowns only for brief, though striking, moments, *City Politiques* features the manipulative power of the Indian gown much more prominently.

The larger conceit Crowne’s *City Politiques* is to satirize both public and private matters of governance with the action of the play split across two plots: the primary plot addressing the behind the scene workings of public matters of state and the secondary plot dealing with threats to domestic security. When understood as a whole, Crowne’s two-part plot structure mocks how attention to outside threats allows for interior corruption. Though the separate plots are relatively self-contained, certain characters feature in both, the most prominent being the character of Paulo Camillo, a gullible social climber and the newly elected Lord Podesta of Naples. Podesta, as he is referred to throughout the play text, receives erroneous information and becomes convinced of a conspiracy within Naples that will allow for an impending invasion. Distracted by preventing this fictitious threat, Podesta does not notice the very real domestic threat the character of Florio poses to his marriage. Florio, described in the cast list as a “debauch,” spends the play masquerading as a reformed rake and feigning sickness so he can be allowed access to the beautiful Rosaura, Podesta’s young wife.125 Artall, friend of Florio another “debauch” who “follows the Court,” mirrors Florio’s actions and in his pursuit of Lucinda, the young wife of the old lawyer Bartoline.126 As the absurdities of the invasion

plot play out, Florio and Artall successfully seduce these young wives and, at the play’s conclusion, are never censured for their actions.

Although City Politiques is purportedly set in Naples, not London, it is such a thinly veiled satire of people and politics in contemporary London that its Italian setting does little to disguise the play’s actual focus on London and its citizens. This idea is supported by the play’s immediate reception in London. One written account of the play’s first performance makes clear that those in attendance understood the “City” in City Politiques to be London:

Yesterday was acted at the Theatre Royal the first of a new play entitled the City Politiques, the novelty of which drew a confluence of spectators under both qualifications of Whig and Tory to hear and behold a lord mayor, sheriffs, and some aldermen with their wives in their usual formalities buffooned and reviled; a great lawyer with his young lady jeered and intrigued; Dr. Oates perfectly represented, berogued and beslaved; the papist plot egregiously ridiculed; the Irish testimonies contradictorily disproved and befooled; the Whigs totally vanquished and undone; law and property men over-ruled; and there wanted nothing of artifice in behavior or discourse to render all these obnoxious and despised.¹²⁷

The positions, people, and political affiliations mentioned here are specifically English in their designation, and certainly this writer was not alone in his ability to pinpoint the overlay between the action of the play and current London politics.¹²⁸ The transparent use of Naples as a cover to satirize London life and politics means City Politiques is, for all intents and purposes, a type of domestic comedy.

¹²⁸ Upon publication Crown wrote a preface defending himself from having written characters that were recognizable as local Londoners: “That I never designed to personate anyone appears, because I have not done it”. Crowne, preface to City Politiques, lines 32-34. Despite Crowne’s protestations that City Politiques did not make reference to any real people Restoration and contemporary critics connect the play’s characters to figures such as Titus Oats, Stephen College, and Rochester. For an accounting of other possible figures Crowne satirized in this play see Susan Owen, Restoration Theatre and Crisis (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 99-100.
It is Artall, the court debauch, who explicitly introduces the Indian gown to the stage. After spotting Lucinda during a visit to the Podesta’s house Artall reasons that in order to carry on an affair he will have to come up with a plan to circumvent the ever-watchful presence of Bartoline, Lucinda’s old husband. Artall decides to follow Florio’s example and masquerade as a sick but now reformed rake.\(^{129}\) So as to justify his presence in the Podesta’s house, Artall goes one step further and pretends to actually be the sick Florio, something he is able to do because he just so happens to “have an Indian gown and cap at the door, just new out of the shop.”\(^{130}\) Artall appears in the next scene dressed in his Indian gown and cap and instantly attracts both the attention of Lucinda, who thinks he is a “handsome sick gentleman” and Bartoline, who assumes he is the rich (and near death) Florio.\(^{131}\) Desiring that his wife be made benefactress of Florio’s wealth, Bartoline is happy to believe that the disguised Artall is Florio, and he encourages Lucinda to spend time with him.

It is significant that this play focuses so heavily on male sexuality as expressed through an Indian gown as during the latter part of the seventeenth century and into the eighteenth Indian gowns became increasingly tied to men’s public portrayal of self. Indian gowns not only became staples of men’s private wardrobes, they began to feature prominently in portraits that constructed a certain type of British and Western masculinity. The continuing popularity of Indian gowns and their place in identity formation is showcased by their presence as the garment of choice for the rising moneyed class of gentlemen in eighteenth-century portraiture. In posing in his Indian gown, Pepys was at

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\(^{129}\) Though it is never stated outright, the clear implication is that Florio and Artall are pretending to be sick with syphilis.

\(^{130}\) Crowne, 2.1.441.

\(^{131}\) Crowne, 2.1.481.
the forefront of a trend that the likes of Dryden (1698), Sir Isaac Newton (1702), and Jonathan Swift (1718) and many others both in Britain and in the Americas.¹³²

Fennetaux, one of the few scholars who pushes beyond simply observing the presence of Indian gowns in male portraits to examining the “connection between the garment and masculine self-image,” points out how “the large number of eighteenth-century portraits showing men in their nightgowns, and the absence of such a phenomenon regarding women, points to the existence of a specific link between the garment and the male self-image.”¹³³ Fennetaux argues that in a time when the concept of a British masculinity was being explored outside ideas of aristocracy these specific garments “encapsulated many of the century’s key gender, political philosophical, economic and aesthetic preoccupations.”¹³⁴ As these portraits commonly pictured industrious men at work in their private offices, Fennetaux postulates that in portraiture these garments came to embody “a modern definition of masculinity, as the values with which they were associated—industry, sobriety, and politeness—mapped out a specifically masculine domain,” meaning that these gowns “not only identified its wearer as an artist or a philosopher, but also reaffirmed his masculinity.”¹³⁵

Understanding the way men wore Indian gowns, however, is not as simple as saying they were only the respectable garments of the scholarly class. As the magazine account of men going around London in the banyans suggests, young ne’er-do-wells also wore Indian gowns. In fact, in the second painting of Williams Hogarth’s A Rake’s Progress (1733), the famous pictorial account of a young man’s downfall through living

¹³² Cunningham, 8; Swain, 13.
¹³³ Fennetaux, 82 & 89.
¹³⁴ Fennetaux, 89.
¹³⁵ Fennetaux, 85.
a depraved, licentious London life, Tom Rakewell (the rake of the title), wears an Indian gown of the fitted variety.¹³⁶ The Indian gowns, then, was the fashionable dress of choice for two opposing versions of English masculinity: “the dress of the polite gentleman and of the licentious rake, of the sober and wise man and of the vain, extravagant follower of fashion. It could be the symbol of both the industrious intellectual and of the idle good-for-nothing, of the manly English gentleman and the effeminate French fop.”¹³⁷ Ultimately, it seems Indian gowns were objects that allowed the wearers a certain fluidity of identity, thus their popularity in portraiture. Indian gowns were both fashionable and of the “now” yet also timeless; they were for personal but also sometimes public use; though they covered the body they were a variation on a state of undress; and, by virtue of their very design history and fabric, they forecast an idea of exoticness while being thoroughly English and Western garments. The Indian gown was, essentially, a uniquely liminal object, and when wearing it possessors were able to take up some of its liminal qualities.

Indian gowns were markers of two opposing forms of masculinity, making them the ideal commodity with which to pair Artall with in his role as reformed rake and actual rake. Artall’s character draws from the contrasting significations of the gown in order to conduct his affair with Lucinda. Wearing the Indian gown allows Artall to play the role of sick, reformed rake, which is how Lucinda and Bartoline immediately understand him.¹³⁸ For the audience, however, who knows that the Indian gown is being used as a ruse, the garment speaks to the crafty and scandalous nature of Artall, man who is going to great lengths to sleep with a married woman. Artall’s Indian gown does not force Bartoline to

¹³⁶ Fennetaux, 81.
¹³⁷ Fennetaux, 89.
¹³⁸ Artall also uses a nose patch to help him appear syphilitic.
mistake Artall for Florio, nor does it work all on its own, but with it Artall is able to
manipulate Bartoline into seeing what he wants him to. Artall clearly credits the gown as
being the item that allows him to fool Bartoline, and when he forgets to bring it with him
he realizes immediately that without it he will be unable to pull of his subterfuge: “Ha,
where’s my gown and cap? I came in such amorous haste I forgot my sick dress, and I
shall never be able to act my sick part without it.”139 True to his worries, without the aid
of his gown Bartoline immediately sees through Artall’s ruse. The wearing of the Indian
gown allows for multiple interpretations, but it is Artall, the savvy rake, who is able to
recognize this and use the item to manipulate the action on the stage. The Indian gown,
then, is the perfect theatrical prop and real commodity with which to communicate
simultaneously the multiple ideas of masculinity embodied in his character.

The Indian gown, or gowns, in City Politiques allow for the actions that align with
the garments conflicting significations. I suggest the possibility of there being multiple
Indian gowns in the play because it is likely Florio wore one as well. Florio is never
directly identified as wearing an Indian gown; rather, the play opens with Florio
described as “in his nightgown.”140 Similar terminology is used in the second act when,
after Artall has already announced that he intends to go put on his recently purchased
“Indian gown and cap” in order to masquerade as Florio, the stage direction
accompanying his return the stage read that he enters “in a nightgown and cap, a patch
on his nose.”141 The use of the term “nightgown” as applied to Artall’s garment—an item
specifically referenced as Indian gown a mere twenty lines earlier—suggests that the term

139 Crowne, 5.1.6-8.
140 Crowne, 1.1
141 Crowne, 2.1.
“nightgown” as applied to Florio’s gown does not exclude the possibility that the garment was of the “Indian” variety. Additionally, Artall’s thinking that an Indian gown is the best means by which to play at being Florio adds further credence to conceiving of Florio’s gown as Indian. If Artall was to mimic Florio it stands to reason that the two would be dressed alike. If Florio, a figure who also spends his time in the play vacillating between playing the reformed man and the successful rake, also wears an Indian gown for the duration of the play then the commodity on his person allowed for and signified the dual qualities and ideas of identity fashioning in the same way as Artall’s gown. The social significations already embodied in Indian gowns suggest that even before the actor playing Florio opened his mouth at the beginning of the play to declare that he intends to cuckold Podesta, the garment that he wore spoke to Florio’s status as a character who could be playing many parts: his dress marks him as both gentleman and rogue, scholar and rake. Just as Artall does with his Indian gown, Florio fashions his projection of self by means of this particular commodity in order to manipulate Podesta’s evaluation of actions.\(^{142}\)

As an affirmation of masculinity, as well as a mark of anxiety over masculinity, the Indian gowns worn by Artall and Florio reflect the conflicting place of these two characters in the play’s depiction of constructing identity through commodities.\(^{143}\) As a

\(^{142}\) I do not intend to argue that all nightgowns on the Restoration stage be considered of the “Indian” variety. On the other hand, many plays call for characters to come on the stage in their nightgowns, and it is not out of the realm of possibility, given the fashionable tastes of the Restoration audiences and the rising popularity of these items that the playhouses might have owned one or more recognizably Indian gowns that actors may have worn on the stage if the occasion called for it. Meaning that a fashionable foreign items might have been present in the midst of many a bedroom scene.

\(^{143}\) Importantly, the Indian gown as a means of identity construction is was available to everyone and a regular part of the English social fabric. Artall did not purchase his Indian gown solely as disguise; it was already in his possession, and only after he spots Lucinda does he decides to use it to help him feign sickness. Artall had purchased the Indian gown to wear as himself, a court follower, and then used it instead to play the part of the reformed rake.
satire, Crowne’s portrayal of libertinism in *City Politiques* is not a positive one. The play’s marked disparagement of Tory libertinism was not lost on the seventeenth-century audience as apparently one supporter of the late John Wilmot was so incensed by what he took to be Crowne’s disrespectful depiction of the Earl in the character of either Florio or Artall that he publically beat Crowne in the street: “Mr. Crowne was cudgeled on Wednesday last in St. Martin’s Lane and he that beat him said he did it at the suite of the Earle of Rochester some time since deceased who was greatly abused in the play for his penetency.”

Similar to the character of Horner, then, one of the most challenging aspects of Florio and Artall is the difficulty of reconciling their actions in line with Restoration ideology. Florio and Artall fulfill the traditional function of the libertine rake, but this play does not celebrate their actions. Although Crowne was a royalist, as Anthony Kaufman makes note, “Crowne’s distrust of the court as embodied in the likes of Rochester is expressed in the figures of Florio and Artall. Although they embody audacious wit and perform the necessary political ritual of ‘horning the cit,’ they are nonetheless ambiguous and finally inadequate characters who represent for Crowne a sense of debasement.” Susan Owen also interprets Crowne’s depiction of Tory libertinism as unenthusiastic, arguing that Florio “undermines the family” in his seduction of the married Rosaura and that Artall is best considered as “the play’s debunking center.” Is Artall the demonstration of the courtly figure cuckolding a deservingly two-faced lawyer who has foolishly entered into a May-December marriage?

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146 Owen, 105 & 106.
or, is he a threatening figure of libertine excesses who, like Horner, challenges the domestic center of the English state? The answer is that he, like the Indian gown, can appear as both depending on the beliefs one brings into the playhouse. In depicting his character Crowne turns to a commodity that allows both possibilities and then lets the audience decide for themselves where truth falls.

Ultimately, the Indian gowns in City Politiques emphasize the highly cynical nature of this play, especially as it pertains to England’s inability to correctly perceive threats from within. That this play understands items of clothing, particularly gowns, as enabling a form of identity construction is clear. When the Podesta discovers someone has worn his official gown to pass himself off as Paulo Camillo (the Podesta’s real name) he reacts in fear because “there’s no difference between the Lord Podesta and me but a gown,” and if he were the play the part of Lord Podesta the fraud could have brought down the state from within. If a gown of state can makes a man into the Podesta, then a gown of fashion can also make a man into someone or something dangerous. In City Politiques the foolish characters demonstrate a great fear of the outside world: Podesta, the Bricklayer, and Dr. Sanchy fear invasion and Bartoline fears the influence “going abroad” might have on his young and impressionable wife. The joke is that none of them recognize that the abroad is already at work in the City, though not in the way they would have imagined. Artall and Florio with their Indian gowns infiltrate and undercut what should be the most private domestic spaces of the play.

That Horner, Artall, and Florio (as well as Lady Fidget and Woodall) are able to successfully manipulate and then act in potentially socially threatening ways while each

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147 Crowne, 3.1.517-18.
148 Crowne, 2.1.401.
accompanied and/or aided by an imperial commodity speaks to the place of those commodities in the minds of either the playwright or the audience. Just as the figures of the libertine rakes in these plays hold a complicated and uneasy relationship to the reigning ideology of the time, so too does the use of these commodities in comedy reveals a possible uneasiness as to the centrality of imperial objects in domestic London. The role of these imperial commodities as mediators one uses to act out a type of Englishness is exaggerated to the point of absurdity, but in these hyper-realized moments of self-fashioning, the actual place, ability, and role of these items in the everyday lives of London citizens is unavoidably highlighted. When appearing on stage these commodities were most often used as a means for one character to manipulate a situation or another person, often for the purposes of sexual conquest. These goods had become actors in British social relations, and they were not straightforward ones.
Chapter Four
Riches from the East: Women, Jewels, and British Masculinity in works by William Wycherley and Oliver Goldsmith

“Precious stones and artifact manufactured in India from precious materials were the currency that ensured the implementation of English rule in India; they were also on an imaginative level the imagistic language through which India and those that administered colonial rule were accessed.”

Marcia Pointon, *Brilliant Effects*¹

The previous chapter examines how china oranges, china porcelain, and Indian gowns—imperial commodities common throughout English households—were featured in Restoration comedies as a means by which one could control the presentation of self as well as manipulate the perceptions and actions of others. Though this type of identity construction was sometimes depicted as positive or harmless, the repeated attachment of these items to the figures of unrepentant rakes and cheating wives forecasts these widely available commodities and the manipulation undertaken through them as potentially socially threatening. Turning away from the role of commonplace imperial goods to objects typically associated with luxury and wealth, this chapter examines the concern regarding control of Eastern jewels and jewelry in a way that properly ingratiates these items under male control in the British social system.²

After Shylock’s daughter Jessica ran away with Lorenzo in the *Merchant of Venice* (1593) we are told Shylock stood in the street yelling “My daughter! O my

² I use the North American spelling of ‘jewelry’ throughout this chapter except in instances where I am quoting scholars who use the British spelling ‘jewellery’.
ducats! O my daughter” telling everyone she stole “two sealèd bags of ducats” along with “jewels, two stones, two rich and precious stones.” The boys of Venice, greatly amused at Shylock’s distress, followed him derisively chanting “‘His stones, his daughter, and his ducats!’” The boys’ choice to mock Shylock for losing “his stones” suggests that when Jessica absconded with Shylock’s money and jewels she took his manhood as well, explaining why Shylock seems to be more upset over the loss of his jewels than his daughter. Although we are told that one of the rings Jessica ran away with, a gift from Shylock’s departed wife, had sentimental value, no such sentiment is attributed to the diamond Shylock purchased for “two thousand ducats” or the “the jewels in her [Jessica’s] ear” that Shylock says he could reclaim if only, as he wishes, she lay dead at his feet. Because Shylock is the villain—the play’s scapegoat figure of a threatening, foreign religion—his emasculation is meant to be humorous and his reaction to it evidence of his degenerate character. The play celebrates the theft because not only has Shylock been unmanned by his inability to control his daughter and his jewels, but also because Lorenzo, the Christian man who Jessica runs away with, will profit from Shylock’s loss by gaining ownership of Jessica and the jewels through marriage.

John Dryden may have had Shylock and his daughter in mind when he wrote the comic plot to Don Sebastian (1690). In this play the Mufti, the Muslim advisor to the emperor and representative of a supposedly greedy foreign religion, is also unable to control the jewels he finds so precious. When Don Antonio, a Portuguese noble, falls in

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4 Shakespeare, 2.8.24.
6 Shakespeare, 3.1.72, 74.
love with Morayma, the Mufti’s daughter, the two meet in secret to plan their escape. Antonio reveals it is not only his love for Morayma that motivates him to pursue such a dangerous relationship but also his “Christian intention, to revenge myself upon thy Father; for being the head of a false Religion.” Unperturbed by Antonio’s hatred of her father, Morayma provides means by which to augment her lover’s vengeance:

Morayma: meet me under my window, tomorrow night, body for body, about this hour; I'll slip down out of my Lodging, and bring my Father in my hand.

Antonio: How, thy Father!

Morayma: I mean all that's good of him; his Pearls, and Jewels, his whole contents, his heart, and Soul; as much as ever I can carry. As in Merchant of Venice, Morayma steals her father’s treasured possessions and runs way with a Christian man. Unlike Shylock’s jewels, however, these jewels directly enter the action of the drama and in the last half of the play the fight for possession of this casket of jewels as well as Morayma becomes the motivating factor for the actions for the men in the lower plot. In this play, control over both the jewels and Morayma becomes the symbolic means by which the men will realize power.

Though Don Sebastian’s efforts to rule ultimately end in a tragedy providing a cautionary notice to remain aware of how the sins of the father affect the children—a

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8 Dryden, 3.2.314-323.
9 In another echo of Shylock, the Mufti demonstrates a perverse relationship to his jewels over his daughter when, after wrestling the jewels from Morayma’s grasp, he tells her she is “but my flesh and blood, but these are my Life and Soul.” Dryden, 4.2.199-200.
warning that could be interpreted as counter-imperialist in purpose—the action of the comic plot fully endorses Don Antonio’s efforts to avenge Christianity and his country through marriage to Morayma.\footnote{The upper plot is, of course, not a straightforward portrayal glorious imperial rule. For an examination into themes of power and imperialism in this work see Richard Kroll, ""The Double Logic of Don Sebastian,"" Huntington Library Quarterly: Studies in English and American History and Literature 63, No. 1-2 (2000): 47-69; Derek Hughes, "Dryden's Don Sebastian and the Literature of Heroism." Yearbook of English Studies 12, (1982): 72-90, and English Drama, 1660-1700 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 362-365.} The Mufti is defeated, leaving Antonio free to marry Morayma and claim her father’s Eastern treasure. In robbing the Mufti of his property (both his daughter and his riches) Don Antonio, the figure of the noble, Christian man, socially and economically unmans the Mufti, the representative of corrupt Eastern rule and religion. The acting out of male control of the female body and Eastern jewels in Don Sebastian provides an unambiguous endorsement of male/Western rule over a corrupt, feminized East.

Both Merchant of Venice and Don Sebastian celebrate the female theft of jewels and the resulting emasculation that follows as beneficial to England’s white, Christian worldview. Although Lorenzo and Don Antonio are not fortune hunters and do not directly set out to gain possession over Shylock’s and the Mufti’s jewels, by marrying the daughters of these foreign figures they certainly profit in the end. The theft of foreign jewels in these performances underwrote the imperial process, but in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries jewels and their theft are featured in domestic comedy in a more ambiguous manner. This chapter argues that the emasculation of British men at the hands of women via the theft of foreign jewels served as a heuristic device demonstrating the proper ways by which to enact proper forms of femininity and masculinity.
Focusing on the connection between foreign jewels, female sexuality, and male control, this chapter examines two works that portray foreign jewels in a domestic setting: William Wycherley’s sex-comedy *The Plain Dealer* (1676) and Oliver Goldsmith’s laughing-comedy *She Stoops to Conquer* (1773). Although these works were written a century apart and for different audiences, the inclusion of explicitly Eastern jewels in the two plays demonstrates a continuing concern, both on and off stage, regarding retaining control of the female body and the jeweled riches of the East so as to ensure the continuation of a stable, male, and properly British social structure. The men in these plays face emasculation at the hands of dishonest women unless they are able to ensure Eastern jewels are possessed by the right, honest woman. In order for these comedies to come to their traditional resolution (i.e. marriage) the men must ensure the correct women obtain possession of the jewels, and in the resulting marriage both woman and jewels will be safely contained under proper male control. The two plays set up and achieve this outcome differently: *The Plain Dealer* depicts the dispensing of male justice in regaining control over Eastern jewels, whereas *She Stoops to Conquer* uses a battle between opposing forms of femininity to properly educate and reform young, errant males. Despite their differences, both works feature dishonest women and Eastern riches as a threat to British social stability, an idea that must be brought forth, demonstrated on the stage, and then, in the end, safely contained by the (re)establishment of proper male control. By emphasizing the connection between jewels and female sexuality the underlying ideology of both plays privileges male control over, if not direct ownership of, foreign jewels. The conflation of women with jewels and jewelry in these comedies fulfills rhetorical ends that underwrite the British imperial process, allowing for
performances that reinforce the idea of male (British) ownership and use rights of both the feminine body and Eastern riches.\textsuperscript{12}

In order to understand how these plays speak to British masculinity through Eastern jewels it is first necessary to discuss how the rhetoric of British imperial expansion became inexorably tied to discussions of female consumption.\textsuperscript{13} Although men certainly purchased a great deal of the imperial commodities imported into England (as demonstrated in my previous chapter) that reality was increasingly glossed over in eighteenth-century literature as women were repeatedly cast as the main consumers of foreign goods. Literary examples of women tied to imperial commodities are plentiful: when Gulliver speaks of the excesses of the English people to his Houyhnhnm master he connects the consumption of the world goods to women’s dietary habits recounting that “whole globe of earth must be at least three times gone round, before one of our better female Yahoos [humans] could get her breakfast or a cup to put it in.”\textsuperscript{14} Similarly, the “various offerings of the world” arrayed on Belinda’s dressing table in Alexander Pope’s \textit{The Rape of the Lock}—the “casket” of “India’s glowing gems”, the scents from “Arabia”

\textsuperscript{12} Throughout this chapter, I use the terms jewels, gems, and precious stones interchangeably when making reference to gemstones such as diamonds, emeralds, and sapphires. I use the term jewelry when referring to pieces of jewelry that may or may not have contained jewels.


and the combs made of “tortoise” and “elephant”—connects the alluring femininity of Belinda to foreign items she surrounds herself with. In these examples male narrators (and authors) portray the ownership and use of imperial commodities as directly related to the dietary and beauty regimens of Britain’s women.

The conflation of the consumption habits of women with Britain’s “need” to expand served a rhetorical purpose. Women were often rhetorically positioned as the primary consumers of foreign goods in English culture, argues Laura Brown, so that the motivating ideals behind imperial expansion would appear to be driven by female excesses, not by masculine desires. Brown ascribes female figures in the collective unconsciousness of the English to the position of mediators who embody differing English values. The figure of a woman could join in a single discourse the ideas of romance and trade as well as the ideals of aristocratic and bourgeois systems. In this way, the women who possessed foreign goods came to represent the “massive historical, economic, and social enterprise of English imperialism,” and the adorned women in literature, a figure of consumption and commodification, became a synecdoche for Empire. In other words, the constant association of women with foreign commodities in literature both represented and promulgated an idea of women as the scapegoats for the “necessary” expansion of the British Empire; the men of England could not be blamed for any negative consequence of imperial expansion as they were only providing English women with what they wanted. Regardless of whether an author intended to support or

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17 Brown, 45.
undercut the imperial process, the repeated utilization of the ‘women as consumer of the world’s goods’ motif in literature served to support the values underlying mercantile capitalist ideology.

As Pope’s placement of Indian jewels on Belinda’s table demonstrates, the rich and complicated history of Western thought regarding jewels drew upon two primary themes: the relationship of women with jewelry and the connection of jewels and gemstones to the East. Literature expressed this unique relationship by going beyond women’s wearing of jewelry and equating it with her essential womanhood. A woman could be referred to as a jewel by a lover, as Romeo does in Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* (1597) when he describes Juliet as “a rich jewel in an Ethiope’s ear.”\(^{18}\) Additionally, a woman’s chastity could also be rhetorically referred to as her jewel as Lady Fidget does in *The Country Wife* (1675) when she sarcastically states that she and her companions are “savers” of their “honour, the jewel of most value and use.”\(^{19}\) Along with an association to a woman’s person and her chastity a woman’s jewels could also be used in reference to their genitalia.\(^{20}\) This association was one of the few also taken up in the rhetoric of masculinity. As Shylock’s “stones” indicate, male genitalia could also be referred to as “jewels.” Nonetheless, the larger historical and literary relationship of women with jewels made Eastern jewels and jewelry the ideal commodity connecting women to the idea of the excessive consumption of foreign goods.

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The conflation of the East with gems and jewels in Western literature has a long history: in Edmund Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene* (1590), Duessa is described as covered in “perelesse pretious stone” which adds to the “endless richesses” and “sumptuous shew” of a court that “Ne Persia selfe, the nourse of pompous pride / like ever saw;” exoticism is played up in Chaucer’s *The Prioress’s Tale* (1392), a story set in a city in Asia, in which the you boy who is martyred is described as a “gemme of chastite, this emeraude…the ruby bright;” and in Mandeville’s *Travels* (1357) Mandeville emphasizes the riches of the Kingdom of Cathay when describing the “precious stones” and “great orient pearls” worn by the barons in the court of the Chan.\(^1\) The literary conflation of foreign lands with precious stones was so engrained in English tradition that when Thomas Jordan personified the regions of the world in *London Triumphs* (1674) Asia is described as wearing a headpiece adorned with “Jewels,” Africa has “Ropes of large round Pearl” around her arms and “great bright Jewells” in her ear, America wears “a triple Chain of Diamonds about her neck,” and the only splendor Europa displays is a helmet of gold.\(^2\)

The rapid expansion of maritime trade in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries made the extensive literary association of the East with valuable gemstones a lived reality for those living in England. Europe had long been aware of India’s diamond mines, but Gedalia Yoge\(v\) writes it was not until the “intensification of trade between India and


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Europe” in the sixteenth century that “regular” trade in precious gemstones between the continents could be established. 23 Whereas in previous centuries small amounts of gems were transported via long and dangerous overland routes, the overseas shipping boom provided an “important stimulus to the [diamond] trade by reducing the risk of the voyages.” 24 This comparatively easy access to the jewels of the East fostered greater investment in colonial ventures; the Portuguese, followed soon after by the Dutch and the English, began importing gemstones, particularly diamonds, into Europe along with spices and fabric. As a result, a flood of foreign gemstones entered into the European marketplace during the seventeenth century. 25

Following England’s establishment of regular overseas trade with India the East India Company made efforts to monopolize the Indian diamond, and the Company was eventually put in direct control of the importing of diamonds and pearls into England. 26 Rather than institute rigid control over the industry, however, the Company’s decided to allow private ships and merchants the freedom to import diamonds, pearls, and other precious stones from India as long as they were paid proper royalties. The Company’s

24 Yogev, 81.
26 Yogev, 81-93; Pointon, Brilliant Effects, 16. In the seventeenth century pearls were the most fashionable gemstone; in eighteenth centuries diamonds replaced pearls as the jewel of choice. This was likely the result of England’s access to Indian diamonds. Pointon “Women”, 12.
savvy decision allowed for the rapid increase in the number of gemstones in England.\textsuperscript{27} Allowing private merchants the right to conduct the diamond trade in any way they saw fit resulted in London becoming the international trade center for diamonds by the end of the seventeenth century.\textsuperscript{28} The influx of gemstones from the East into the West directly affected the form of jewels and jewelry in Europe. Jewelry historians mark the seventeenth century as the period when jewelers mastered the ability to cut multifaceted gemstones with great precision; the greater amount of elaborately cut jewels resulted in a new fashion trend for women who began wearing separate daytime and nighttime jewelry, the latter being more ornate and covered in gemstones.\textsuperscript{29}

The increased amount of jewels in London is made manifest by their frequent presence in long eighteenth-century comedy. Without even taking into consideration the many mentions and asides in comedy concerning jewels, jewelry, or caskets of jewels, these items make appearances on the stage in works by almost every playwright of note: Thomas Durfey’s \textit{A Commonwealth of Women} (1685) features jewels from the Americas and \textit{The Marriage Hater Matched} (1692) also has a casket of jewelry, jewels appear in Colley Cibber’s \textit{Love Makes a Man} (1702), a diamond necklace goes missing in John Vanbrugh’s \textit{The Confederacy} (1705), and another diamond necklace is stolen in George Farquhar’s \textit{The Beaux Stratagem} (1707), Susanna Centlivre has a character denounce the value of jewels that appeared onstage in \textit{A Bickerstaff’s Burying} (1710), David Garrick’s \textit{The Gamsters} (1758) features a diamond ring, Miss Sterling shows off her many jewels in George Coleman (the elder) and David Garrick’s \textit{The Clandestine Marriage} (1766),

\textsuperscript{27} Yogev and Scarisbrick mark the 1660’s deal struck between the Company and the Marranos Portuguese Jewish community in London for the rights to participate in the diamond trade as the event that allowed for the large influx of diamonds into England. Yogev, 94-110; Scarisbrick, \textit{Jewellery: Makers}, 51.
\textsuperscript{28} Yogev, 83
\textsuperscript{29} Scarisbrick, \textit{Jewellery: Makers}, 68.
and Hannah Cowley’s *A School for Greybeards* (1786) also features a casket of jewels.\(^{30}\) Needless to say, the association of women to jewels is emphasized in all these plays.

Marcia Pointon’s work, which I rely on throughout this chapter, examines the social and cultural significance of jewelry in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, particularly as pertaining to women. Women feature heavily in Pointon’s work because while “rings, watches, shoe buckles, jeweled boxes and ornamented canes were an important part of the self-presentation rituals pertaining to sociable masculinity,” masculinity itself was not “discursively tied in with a relationship to jewels in the way femininity was.”\(^{31}\) For Pointon, the history of women’s relationship to jewelry is “the history of transforming economic value into transcendent (aesthetic and moral) worth.”\(^{32}\) It is jewelry’s ability to “stand as both material and immaterial,” to represent the body as well as its ephemeral qualities such as chastity and honor, that “situates jewels and jewellery as a powerful agent in the dynamics and in the politics of femininity.”\(^{33}\) In the patriarchal society of England a woman’s jewelry was rhetorically understood as both a physical marker of her actual economic worth and exterior sign of inherent virtue. In this

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It must be noted that unlike the other objects examined in this dissertation, jewels and jewelry that appeared on the stage were likely not the “real thing.” Strictly speaking, spices from the East were actually spices from the East and a china orange was actually a china orange, but actual jewels would have been far too expensive for a theater company to borrow or purchase for the purposes of performance. It also would have been entirely unnecessary to use real jewels on stage because seventeenth- and eighteenth- century jewel forgeries were quite sophisticated. Tracks dating back to the sixteenth century instruct how to produce imitation stones through alchemic processes.\footnote{Pointon, Brilliant, 34.} During the seventeenth century gems were often artificially manufactured with specially treated glass (known as “paste” jewels) and they were so realistic as to be indistinguishable from the real thing.\footnote{For work on paste jewelry and it connection to femininity in the nineteenth century see Aviva Briefel, The Deceivers (London: Cornell University Press, 2006). 146-179, 147.} Though the “jewels” in the performance may have been of the costume variety, their outward appearance would not have advertised that fact. Furthermore, in the fictional narrative of the drama the characters interacted with the jewels as if they were authentic.

Given the historical association of the East with jewelry, combined with the very real economic circumstances of the flood of Eastern gems, particularly diamonds, imported into England during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, jewels or jewelry
that appeared in dramas of the period did not necessarily have to by explicitly connected to the East or international trade. Jewels were from outside England, and any jewels appearing in long eighteenth-century performance could conceivably be understood in conversation with the expansion of British imperial holdings. The two plays I focus on in this chapter, however, go out of their way to make clear the connection between their jewels and the East. In both Wycherley’s *The Plain Dealer* and Goldsmith’s *She Stoops to Conquer* jewels that are specifically Eastern in origin, metonymies for the riches of the East, must be brought under male control, even if that control is through the proxy of the female body.

*The Plain Dealer* features the contest for possession of Eastern jewels as a means to demonstrate both proper and improper performances of gendered British identity. Wycherley’s follow-up to *The Country Wife*, *The Plain Dealer* does not replicate the traditional generic conventions of the Restoration sex comedy. Manly, the titular “plain dealer,” is neither dashing libertine nor witty rake-hero; he is a sea captain who considers himself too honorable and forthright to participate in what he views the hypocrisy of London society. An unabashed misanthrope, Manly takes pride in his honesty and ability to speak his mind in all situations. He cares nothing for wit or rank, the typical concerns of a Restoration protagonist; instead, he proudly declares that he “weigh[s] the man, not his title.”37 He describes himself as an “unmannerly sea fellow” and decries the population of London as a collection of “pimps, flatterers, detractors, and cowards, stiff nodding knaves, and supple pliant kissing fools.”38 Manly intended to “settle himself

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38 Wycherley, *The Plain Dealer* 1.1.44 & 233-34.
somewhere in the Indies,” away from the deceitful people he so despises, but the opening act conversation between two sailors reveals that after engaging in a battle with a Dutch trading ship in which he was forced to sink his ship along with his fortune “the value of five or six thousand pound.” Consequently, Manly has returned to London destitute, accompanied by Freeman, a penniless gentleman and Manly’s former lieutenant, and Fidelia, a lovesick young woman disguised as a ship boy. Manly plans to set out for the Indies again after collecting his beloved Olivia—who, unbeknownst to Manly has taken his jewels and married another—along with the remainder of his fortune which he left in her care: “five or six thousand pounds” in the form of money and jewels.

Manly’s connections to the East are easily overlooked, but multiple factors in *The Plain Dealer* would have caused an eighteenth-century audience to understand Manly as a product of England’s investment in maritime trade. Given that *The Plain Dealer* was staged only two years after the third Anglo-Dutch war had come to an end, Manly’s battle with a Dutch ship—a nation that conducted extensive trading in the East Indies and was England’s greatest competition in overseas trade during the seventeenth century—would have been understood as resulting from the series of wars the two nations had fought over dominance of Eastern trade routes. The extent of Manly’s fortune was large, approximately £10,000-£12,000 before he sunk half of it into the ocean and the other half into Olivia. Although Manly may hold the status of a gentleman, there is no indication that he holds any lands or titles or has inherited any money, meaning he must have earned

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40 Wycherley, *The Plain Dealer*, 1.1.532.
his fortune by some other means.41 As a sea captain Manly would have been able to amass this amount of money by either pirating international trade ships or engaging in some aspect of England’s growing trade with the East. Finally, Manly’s desire to set up a life in the East, a place where he says the people possess an “honest, downright barbarity,” suggests he is familiar with the land and its inhabitants, a familiarity he would have achieved through participating in international trade.42 Observing how comedies engaged with empire through the introduction of new character types, Orr notes that at the end of the seventeenth century the stage began to include merchants, planters, “colonial prostitutes,” nabobs, and sea captains as “the resolvers of plots, providers of wealth and eccentric adopters of exotic custom,” meaning that Manly fits into the stage’s developing response to the effect of foreign spaces on the local populations of London.43 As a sea captain who fights in international trade wars and who has grown wealthy through trade with the East, Manly himself is representative of the way in which England’s investment in foreign trade was affecting the local population of London.

Manly’s connection to the East has direct bearing on an understanding of the jewels that he has placed in Oliva’s possession; they are representative of both the wealth he likely acquired due to international trade as well as the actual commodities that were being brought to London. This simple understanding of the significance of the jewels in *The Plain Dealer* is immediately complicated, however, by the way the play connects the jewels to both Manly and Olivia’s person as well as how the two are pitted against each

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41 Bridget Orr argues that Manly should be considered a gentleman because Freeman, who remarks upon his own gentility, volunteered to work in Manly’s service and because Manly captained a ship large enough to employ multiple boys and pages. Bridget Orr, *Empire on the English Stage, 1660-1714* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001), 240.

42 Wycherley, *The Plain Dealer*, 1.1. 616-17.

43 Orr, 214.
other in a competition for control over them. The depth of Olivia’s betrayal can only be
expressed through objects that can be connected to Manly’s manhood. Likewise, Manly’s
subsequent punishment of Olivia is best achieved and represented for before the watching
audience through objects that connect to notions of Olivia’s femininity as well as
chastity. Jewels, then, provide the perfect medium by which to encompass the entirety of
the contest between Olivia and Manly. Only by taking into consideration the many
meanings embodied in the jewels that one can understand how Manly’s eventual triumph
reforms his person, rewards the proper type of femininity, and underwrites ideologies
regarding British male control over the East.

In many ways, *The Plain Dealer* is an investigation into the question of who has
the right to possess these jewels, and how legal rights are often nebulous. In Manly’s
recounting of the exchange the jewels were not given as a gift; rather, he describes the
event to Freeman almost as a contractual engagement. Manly stresses the importance he
placed on the transfer of his jewels to Olivia as emblematic of his estimation of her
person as well as his trust in her faithfulness. Olivia swore to Manly she would follow
him to the Indies, and it was this promise that motivated Manly to give her the jewels so
that “she might the better keep” her word.44 When Freeman expresses incredulity at
Manly’s high regard of Olivia and her ability to keep to her oath, Manly dismisses his
worries saying that Olivia “had given me her heart first, and I am satisfied with the
security; I can never doubt her truth and constancy.”45 Olivia first pledged her love and
loyalty to Manly, and Manly marked that pledge with his jewels. Because Olivia swore
she would remain true to Manly while he was away, the jewels he supplies her with

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44 Wycherley, *The Plain Dealer*, 1.1.590.
function not only as a material signifier of his feelings for her, but also as a marker of Olivia’s chastity. Jewelry was “a key European cultural component in symbolic and economic exchange rituals” and, writes Pointon, jewelry “as a textual field is heavily invested in ideological significance relative to bodies, and by extension also to colonialism, gender and sexuality.” When Manly exchanged his Eastern jewels to secure Olivia’s travel to the Indies he laid claim to her body with valuable objects that both recognized and symbolized her supposed chastity. Although Olivia may have been dishonest in acquiring the jewels, she did not break any laws, and though Manly has been wronged, his inability to convince a lawyer to take up his case in the third act makes clear that English law will not offer him any recourse to regain his goods.

The battle for possession of the jewels becomes a contest between Manly and Olivia; both their physical bodies as well as Manly’s masculinity and Olivia’s femininity are rhetorically intertwined with the jewels. Although only Olivia was described as having given “her heart” in exchange for the jewels, when Manly discovers that Olivia does not love him he declares that she “has restored [his] reason with [his] heart.” Yet Freeman, who can see the bravado in Manly’s declaration of completeness, immediately reminds him that as long as Olivia has the jewels Manly cannot consider himself whole: “there are other things which, next to one’s heart, one would not part with. I mean your

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46 Pointon, “Intriguing”, 493-94. Even though at no point in the play are the Eastern jewels directly identified as taking the form of jewelry, in the last act Manly is said to offer Olivia some “jewels” which the text later identifies took the form of “pendants” and a “locket,” suggesting that the Eastern jewels Manly originally invested in Olivia may very well have taken the form of jewelry. Wycherley, The Plain Dealer, 5.3.127 & 129.
47 Manly spends much of the third act attempting to interest a lawyer to take up his case against Olivia with no success.
48 Wycherley, The Plain Dealer, 2.1.683.
jewels and money, which it seems she has sir.”⁴⁹ Manly gave Olivia his heart along with
his jewels, and despite his desire to convince himself otherwise, he cannot become whole
until he regains both. Reinforcing the connection between Manly’s heart and the jewels,
when Freeman and Fidelia attempt to convince Olivia to return the jewels they express
Manly’s right to them in language that stresses a physical connection:

**Freeman:** Madam, there are certain appurtenances to a Lover's heart, called
jewels, which always go along with it.

**Fidelia:** And which, with lovers, have no value in themselves, but from the heart
they come with. Our Captain’s, madam, it seems you scorn to keep, and
much more will those worthless things without it, I am confident.

The core of Manly, his heart, was made manifest in the jewels he gave to Olivia, and
Freeman and Fidelia’s words suggest that by rights, when she relinquishes her claim to
one she ought to return the other.⁵⁰

Olivia undermines Manly’s claim to the jewels first by belittling their value, twice
calling them “trifles,” and then by reframing the jewels as tied not to Manly’s heart but to
her honor.⁵¹ The jewels were originally given as surety of Olivia’s chastity, and she
alights upon that to keep them in her possession. Olivia tells Manly she no longer
possesses the jewels having transferred ownership of them to another man, her new
husband. Were she to ask for the jewels back, she says, her husband would assume she
only came to possess them in exchange for her “honor.”⁵² Manly’s literal unmanning at
this turn of events is clear: his jewels, which are linked to his heart and his manhood, are
now the property of another man. Furthermore, Olivia’s chastity, the very thing for which
the jewels were given in surety, is being enjoyed by her new husband. Manly’s outward

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⁴⁹ Wycherley, *The Plain Dealer*, 2.1.684-86.
purpose in the play becomes the quest to regain his jewels, but his secret plan to sleep with and then humiliate Olivia makes clear his desire to restore his manhood, something Olivia, in being false, has robbed him of.

Olivia’s hypocrisy and lack of real chastity are showcased as a threat to all the men in the play, not just Manly. “Fictional representations” of jewels and jewelry, writes Pointon, often appear within “the crises endangering marital harmony and social stability,” and Olivia’s threat to masculine “social stability” is demonstrated via the dishonest means she uses to acquire jewels from other men. Lord Plausible and Novel, not knowing that Olivia is married, have also gifted her with jewels. Lord Plausible defends Olivia’s feeling towards him by pointing to the fact that Olivia “has received some jewels from me of value.” To which Novel responds that she has also received “presents” from him, which, we learn in the last act of the play, took the form of jewelry. As a woman playing the part of a fashionable, demure London lady, Olivia’s ability to exploit social norms and swindle the men around her out of their jewels demonstrates the type of threatening femininity her person represents. Furthermore, not only does she lie to men to cheat them out of their jewels, she shows no compunction about cheating on her husband.

Therein lies the tension surrounding Olivia’s retaining possession of the jewels. If tradition dictates that a woman’s jewels are to be understood as material markers of her chastity and virtue then Olivia, as one who the audience knows has neither, certainly has no right to possess or wear those that Manly entrusted to her. To create that tension,

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54 Wycherley, The Plain Dealer, 4.2.61-2.
55 Wycherley, The Plain Dealer, 4.2.63.
however, is the purpose of Olivia’s character. Arguing that *The Plain Dealer* is best understood in terms of its relationship to criticism Wycherley received over *The Country Wife*, Jennifer Airey points out how Olivia’s expression of shock over the play’s use of china (discussed in the previous chapter) parrots actual comments made by women in regards to his play.⁵⁶ This idea is made manifest in the dedication to *The Plain Dealer*, satirically written to a notorious town Madame, in which Wycherley expresses his disdain for women who “renounce in public” what they are entertained by in private.⁵⁷ Olivia, then, is the surrogate figure for a group of women Wycherley sought to censure. In the dedication Wycherley directly connects jewels to women’s honor and female hypocrisy: “For those who are of quality without honor…have their quality to set of their false modesty, as well as their false jewels, and you must no more suspect their countenances for counterfeit than their pendants.”⁵⁸ In a just world jewels would express essential qualities, an inner trait made manifest in an outer form of display, but here Wycherley highlights how “false jewels” like “false modesty” can serve to disguise. Olivia, the woman of “quality without honor,” can choose to wear her real jewels knowing they will not reveal her hypocrisy; in fact, they will do the opposite by forecasting her chastity. The disconnect between external signifier and interior reality, however, is the very thing that Wycherley seeks to emphasize in the figure of Olivia; only by doing so can Olivia, and the women she represents, be exposed and punished at the end of the play.

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⁵⁷ Wycherley, Dedication to *The Plain Dealer*, lines 63.
⁵⁸ Wycherley, Dedication to *The Plain Dealer*, lines 98-102.
For modern critics the most uncomfortable aspect of *The Plain Dealer* is its clear endorsement of what can only be understood as Olivia’s rape. Capitalizing on Olivia’s attractions to Fidelia (who Olivia does not know is a woman in disguise), Manly substitute’s himself for Fidelia thereby gaining access to Olivia’s body. Although Manly’s scheme to sleep with Olivia so that he “lie with her, out of revenge” makes him appear a far worse character than Olivia, the audience is meant to condone Manly’s actions in light of Olivia’s deceitful promiscuity and desire to cuckold her husband. In fact, Manly and Fidelia use the term “revenge” to describe the sexual assault Manly will commit a combined eleven times in three separate scenes; leaving no doubt that Manly, and by extension the audience, understands his actions as a type of just retribution.

Olivia has stolen Manly’s jewels, so, by sleeping with her and exposing her lack of honor, he will steal her metaphorical ones. Humor is meant to be found in the fact that Olivia is unaware she has slept not with Fidelia, the “man” she desires, but with Manly, a man she hates. In his first step towards regaining his manhood Manly makes Olivia the fool by using her own sexual desires against her.

Outside of his taking advantage of Olivia, the difficulty of coming to terms with Manly as a character is also rooted in the challenge of placing him within heroic Restoration character types and seventeenth-century notions of manhood. He is neither rake, nor libertine, nor fop, nor fool. As a self-proclaimed plain dealer, Manly places himself outside the norm of what a gentleman should be, except for the fact that in his

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59 Wycherley, *The Plain Dealer*, 3.1.119
61 Airey argues that as “[r]ape imagery pervades the antitheatrical debate” in Olivia’s actual rape Wycherley is able to punish the hypocrisy of both Olivia and his female detractors. Airey, 10 & 15.
many asides and his deceptive actions he proves himself a rather poor plain dealer. As discussed earlier, he appears to categorically fit in best with the other sea captains and nabobs of Restoration drama, except for the fact that as the titular hero the audience is encouraged to support him rather than laugh at him, as is the norm with those figures. As the “naval officer eager to make his fortune through ‘good voyages’ to the Indies,” Orr argues that Manly embodied anxieties regarding the negative effects of trade on the manners of formerly respectable English gentlemen, again complicating unquestioned support of his character.

Robert F. Bode’s work on this play provides a possible solution to the question of Manly’s character that directly influences how we understand Manly’s final actions as related to Olivia and jewels. Pointing out how Manly describes his personal philosophy as to do “a rude thing, rather than an unjust thing,” Bode puts forth that the inconsistencies in Manly’s character are only understood if Manly is viewed not as a representative of truth, as a typical plain dealer, but as the embodiment of justice. In Bode’s estimation, Manly struggles to stay true to himself because in *The Plain Dealer* justice is unattainable, a quality clearly expressed in Manly’s inability to engage the law in the recovery of his property as well as the secondary plot’s portrayal of Widow Blackacre and dishonest lawyers. If, as Bode suggests, the Widow Blackacre is emblematic of the corrupt legal state, then Olivia, in her deceitful acquisition of the

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63 Orr, 240.

64 Bode, 1. Wycherley, *The Plain Dealer,* 1.1.33-34.
jewels and desire to sleep with whomever she pleases, represents the ultimate corruption of the social state.\textsuperscript{65} Consequently, Manly’s treatment of Olivia, both in her physical rape enacted offstage and her metaphorical one performed through jewels before the cast of the play (which I will address in detail momentarily) serves as the means by which balance is brought back into the world of the play.

Though possession of the jewels drives the action in the main plot, and their presence is felt or referred to in each act, the jewels themselves do not actually appear onstage until the final act, and when they are they are contained in a cabinet. The habit of having jewels appear on the stage in a cabinet or casket was likely done, in part, out of necessity. Instead of furnishing the actors with believable costume jewelry it might have just been easier to bring a container on the stage and suggest that jewels were in it. Also, if jewels are being stolen, as they so often are in dramas, it becomes much easier, and perhaps more visually interesting, to transport them around the stage in a box—a small box being much easier to carry and move around than an armful of jewelry. Beyond these practical performance considerations, however, jewel caskets and cabinets were actual items primarily used by women for storage of their jewels and other personal effects.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries jewel caskets and cabinets ranged in size from small easily portable boxes to large stationary pieces of furniture; often they contained small drawers and compartments for jewels and other small items.\textsuperscript{66} Jewel caskets were especially popular among women.\textsuperscript{67} Though it was possible for men to

\textsuperscript{65} Bode, 2.
\textsuperscript{66} Pointon, \textit{Brilliant Effects}, 75-81. See Figure 4 and 5.
\textsuperscript{67} Pointon, \textit{Brilliant Effects}, 67-107.
purchase and possess similar cabinets, especially of the larger immovable variety.

Pointon records that “the imagery of jewel-boxes” was “particularly linked to the female

subject.”

The relative lack of privacy wives had before the nineteenth century meant that her jewel casket “might have been her only means of securing something from the view of others.”

A woman’s jewel casket was a deeply personal item which housed not only the jewels that were so connected to her sexuality, but also any private belongings she would not want others to have access to. And, like the jewels they contained, jewel caskets had symbolic representations that were likely drawn upon when they appeared on the stage. Jewel caskets offered “a suggestive and readily recognizable visual equivalent” of eighteenth-century descriptions of women’s genitalia: “The relationship between ostentatious visibility and secretive occlusion summed up by the image of jewels safely stowed in their velvet-lined box represents the female body as sexualized through its

68 Pointon, Brilliant Effects, 81. Of course, the three caskets in The Merchant of Venice are the most famous representatives of caskets as connected to the female body in a dramatic work.

69 Pointon, Brilliant Effects, 77.
secret thresholds.” In addition to the visual connections between the jewel caskets and female sexuality, the terms ‘jewel’ and ‘box’ had been in use as slang terms for women’s vaginas since the sixteenth century, meaning the concept of a woman’s “jewel casket,” a private, personal container presumably filled with riches, was rife with sexual implications.

This historical relationship between women and their jewel caskets speaks directly to the significance of Manly’s final actions in the play and leads me to counter a claim made by Ashley Brooks Bender in her article on the “correlation between property and identity” as related to cabinets and containers in *The Plain Dealer*. Arguing that the “conspicuous absence of his [Manly’s] cabinet, in which he places his cash and jewels, corresponds to the conspicuous inconsistencies of his character,” Bender assumes that the

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71 Jonathon Green, "box" in *Green's Dictionary of Slang*, Vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 558. Green notes that the term “jewel case” was also used in reference to a woman’s vagina, but the example he provides as evidence postdates the eighteenth century.
72 Bender, 2.
cabinet itself, not just the jewels it contains, were Manly’s property.\textsuperscript{73} There is, admittedly, contradictory evidence as to whom the cabinet itself belongs. The multiple times Manly’s “investment” in Olivia is referenced throughout the play (first as riches and then jewels) the cabinet itself is never mentioned. Vernish, Olivia’s husband, does refer to it as “his [Manly’s] cabinet of jewels” and when Manly regains the cabinet of jewels in the last act he declares “’Tis mine indeed now again.”\textsuperscript{74} Both utterances could suggest that both the cabinet and its contents do belong to Manly. There is no straightforward indication as to whether the audience were understand the cabinet, and not just what the cabinet contains, as Manly’s property. I argue, however, that the historical relationship between women and their jewel cabinets supports the idea that the cabinet itself was Olivia’s property, while the jewels within it were Manly’s, and once Manly has possession of Olivia’s cabinet he has the material means by which to reveal her deceitful and unchaste nature.\textsuperscript{75}

Manly’s first form of revenge against Olivia, her rape, cannot be performed before an audience, but by exposing the contents of her jewel cabinet to everyone, he is able to perform a second metaphorical rape of Olivia’s honor. “[C]hests and small caskets,” writes Pointon, are so fascinating in literature due to “the fact that they may be opened,” and opening this cabinet and exposing its private contents is exactly how Manly

\textsuperscript{73} Bender, 1-2.
\textsuperscript{74} Wycherley, \textit{The Plain Dealer}, 4.2.155-56 & 5.3.58.
\textsuperscript{75} This stance is strengthened by the fact that when Olivia sees Manly with the cabinet she exclaims “has he his Jewels again too? What means this? O 'tis too sure, as well as my shame! which I'll go hide forever.” Manly has possession of his jewels again, and Olivia knows his will now be able to expose her shame as represented through the cabinet. If one considers the cabinet to be Olivia’s property, and not Manly’s, its presence in the drama becomes another expression of the exterior not matching the interior as Olivia’s cabinet is filled with ill-begotten jewels. Wycherley, \textit{The Plain Dealer}, 5.3.70-72.
achieves Olivia’s ultimate humiliation.\textsuperscript{76} Upon regaining his jewels Manly tells all who are gathered that he has “never yet left my Wench unpaid” and the stage directions indicate that he “\textit{Takes some of the jewels and offers them to Olivia.”}\textsuperscript{77} If Olivia has failed up until this point to realize that the man she slept with was Manly, not Fidelia, then Manly’s declaration and offering of jewels drives home that fact. Furthermore, labeling the jewels he attempts to give as payment he publicly pronounces her a prostitute that he has slept with in front of all the characters of the play. As a final insult, he “pays” her with goods she only moments earlier considered her own property. Olivia refuses to accept the jewels, instead striking them from Manly’s hands, which allows Lord Plausible and Novel to pick them up and identify them as their own:

\begin{quote}
\textit{Lord Plausible:} These Pendents appertain to your most faithful humble Servant.
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textit{Novel:} And this Locket is mine; my earnest for love, which she never paid: therefore my own again.\textsuperscript{78}
\end{quote}

The contents of Olivia’s jewelry cabinet, then, reveal her true nature to everyone in the room. Her cabinet contains no honest jewels of her own, only those of the various men she is surrounded by. Taking into consideration the cabinet’s link to Olivia’s sexuality, Manly, the figure of true justice, literally opens up her private space and exposes its shameful secrets to the world.

Key to understanding the final significance of the jewels in this play is to make note of who possess them at the end. As I have been emphasizing throughout, the jewels in \textit{The Plain Dealer} cannot be easily partitioned off as representative of any single idea.

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\textsuperscript{76} Pointon, \textit{Brilliant Effects}, 81
\textsuperscript{77} Wycherley, \textit{The Plain Dealer}, 5.3.
\textsuperscript{78} The stage directions instruct that that Manly “\textit{Takes some of the Jewels, and offers 'em to Olivia; she strikes 'em down: Plausible and Novel take 'em up.}” Wycherley, \textit{The Plain Dealer}, 5.3.
\end{flushright}
They are symbols of both male and female sexual organs while also speaking to larger ideas of women’s sexuality in general; in the world of the play they function as symbols of Manly’s heart and Olivia’s honor (or lack thereof). Moreover, they are actually commodities of the East, evidence of England’s investment in international trade, and confirmation of personal wealth as amassed through such trade. It is these final qualities that are drawn upon when Manly, having finally regained his jewels and his manhood, properly invests both in Fidelia. In taking Olivia’s cabinet, reclaiming his jewels, and then giving them all to Fidelia, Manly not only completes his degradation of Olivia’s property and her feminine space before the audience, he also demonstrates the proper investing of his Eastern fortune in a socially constructive manner.

As the hypocritical woman in this play Olivia represents a negative form of femininity, and Fidelia, the only female in The Plain Dealer depicted in a wholly positive light, functions as Olivia’s direct opposite by serving as the example of the perfect English woman. Fidelia’s chief quality, as her chosen name suggests, is her steadfast loyalty to Manly, a feature Olivia does not possess. In her actions Fidelia demonstrates she is everything that Olivia is not, an idea she vocalizes early in the play when trying to understand why Manly persists in loving Olivia: “she was left behinds, when I was with him. /…. / She has told him she loved him; I have showed it.”79 Fidelia’s dedication to Manly is so strong that she twice follows through with Manly’s requests that she act the “pimp.”80 While Manly enacts his first form of “just revenge” on Olivia offstage, Fidelia, the woman who really loves him, is left with the indignity of remaining on the stage lamenting the hopelessness of her situation. It is only through her cooperation, her

79 Wycherley, The Plain Dealer, 1.1. 550-52.
80 Wycherley, The Plain Dealer, 3.1.94.
willingness to “give away her lover not to lose him,” that Manly is able to enact his sexual revenge upon Olivia. Though Fidelia’s participation in Olivia’s rape is disturbing, in the world of the play it is the ultimate portrayal of her devotion to Manly. Furthermore, her assistance is what allows Manly to take the first step in reclaiming his manhood, a process that is brought to completion when he regains his jewels—another success Fidelia is directly responsible for as Manly only regains possession of them because Olivia believed she was handing them over to Fidelia. If Olivia is Manly’s undoing, then Fidelia is his savior.

Before the retrieving his jewels Manly is an ineffectual character. With no money and no legal recourse, he is both unwilling and unable to function in London. Manly’s initial mistake was entrusting his jewels to the wrong woman; he trusted Olivia’s word and was subsequently betrayed by her actions. Consequently, throughout the play Manly functions as a fractured character who has lost control of his manhood and his property, but it is through his struggle to regain both that Manly is taken from a place of social isolation—his desire to escape to the Indies with Olivia—to, in his joining with Fidelia, a generative and productive member of society.

Witnessing Manly physically reclaiming and subsequent giving of his jewels to Fidelia, the audience sees the proper circulation of Eastern goods within the English social system. Manly’s regaining of his jewels happens in conjunction with his discovering that the loyal Fidelia is actually a woman. Rather than keep the jewels in his possession he immediately gives them as a gift to Fidelia, saying “take forever my heart

81 Wycherley, *The Plain Dealer*, 3.1.140.
and this [cabinet of jewels] with it.” By immediately giving the jewels to Fidelia, a woman who has proved through her actions she deserves them, Manly is able to step away from his misanthropic ways. Furthermore, in the final lines of the play Manly apologizes to Fidelia for giving her such a small gift saying she deserves the “Indian world,” by which he clearly means more gemstones, and that he will now “go thither out of covetousness for [her] sake only.” In this declaration we see that Manly no longer conceives of India as a space where he wishes to live; he envisions it now as a space by which he will gain more jewels for Fidelia, a woman who deserves them. Fidelia, however, reveals she is the sole recipient of a hefty inheritance, meaning Manly will not be required to leave England. By turning around and investing the Eastern jewels in Fidelia instead of simply keeping them for himself in the ideology of empire Manly has fulfilled the duty of the British male: he has given the correct female what she wants (jewels from the East) and has been rewarded for his actions with a secure life in England. Most importantly, while Fidelia physically possesses the jewels, as she will marry Manly and, presumably, be a dutiful wife, the jewels, and his masculinity, will remain firmly under his control.

*She Stoops to Conquer* also features a fight for control over Indian jewels as a means by which to portray the British male coming into his own. On the surface *The Plain Dealer* and *She Stoops* are two comedies that are drastically different in setting, tone, and purpose; the biting satire and course sentiments in Wycherley’s play have no place in Goldsmith’s almost farcical world of mistaken identities and comical errors. At

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82 Wycherley, *The Plain Dealer*, 5.3.122. Manly only physically possesses the jewels for approximately 60 lines.

83 Wycherley, *The Plain Dealer*, 5.3.147.
the beginning of both plays, however, foreign jewels are possessed by the wrong woman, and at the plays’ conclusions the jewels have been restored to their proper owner. But in *She Stoops*, the battle for possession of an Indian casket of jewels occurs between two contrasting versions of femininity. This contest must be successfully negotiated before the jewels can come under the rightful control of a man who, through this battle, learns how to successfully integrate himself as a functioning member of British society.

*She Stoops to Conquer*, deemed a laughing comedy by Goldsmith because of its unashamedly comical action and somewhat silly nature, defied expectations when it rose to immediate popularity despite the theater’s decades-long turn towards sentimental comedy. The bulk of scholarly work on *She Stoops* focuses on Kate Hardcastle and her “stooping” so as to win the heart of Charles Marlow. All of the critical attention paid to Kate and Marlow’s plot has left scholarship on the seemingly more traditional plot of Miss Constance Neville and Mr. Hastings surprisingly underdeveloped. The work of

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85 Kate does so by dressing up like a barmaid and tricking Marlow—a man who is so shy around women of quality that he describes “a modest woman, dressed out in all her finery” as “the most tremendous object of the whole creation”—into thinking she is a poor relation of the actual Kate Hardcastle. Kate disguises herself in this way so she can both reach her own estimation of Marlow’s character as a potential husband as well as “teach him a little confidence” around women. Oliver Goldsmith, *She Stoops to Conquer*, ed. James Ogden (New York, W.W. Norton, 2001), 2.1.106-08 & 2.1.486.

James E. Gill and Christopher K Brooks, in particular, demonstrates how attention on Kate alone threatens to overlook some of the larger social and economic concerns of the play as embodied in the characters of Mrs. Hardcastle and Constance. It is Constance’s actions toward her Indian jewels that bring about the final and larger resolutions of the play; she should not play second fiddle to Kate.  

Taking its cue from the standard dramatic storyline, the young lovers Constance and Hastings are kept apart by a representative of the older generation who, motivated by personal greed, is into trying to stop the union. Mrs. Hardcastle, Constance’s guardian and aunt, would rather see Constance married to her boorish son Tony, a joyous lout who wants nothing to do with Constance or marriage in general. Mrs. Hardcastle’s plans might simply be understood as motherly affections, she does excessively dote upon Tony throughout the play, but Kate insightfully attributes her step-mother’s desires to arrange such a clearly unsuitable match to Constance’s “fortune,” a matter that Kate describes as “no small temptation.” As Constance’s legal guardian, Mrs. Hardcastle has been given “sole management” of her inheritance, and Kate is “not surprised to see her unwilling to let it go out of the family.” Constance’s fortune, the one that Mrs. Hardcastle tries so hard to keep in her possession, “chiefly consists in jewels” which, we are informed, were left to her by her uncle “the India Director.” This detail identifies the jewels as Indian in origin and directly implicates them in the controversies surrounding the smuggling of Indian jewels into England in the latter half of the eighteenth century.

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86 Following critical tradition I will refer to Kate, Constance, and Tony by their first names and Marlow and Hastings by their last.  
87 Goldsmith, 1.1.187.  
88 Goldsmith, 1.1.188-89  
89 Goldsmith, 2.1.335-36.
England’s contentious involvement in the Indian diamond trade at the end of the eighteenth century makes Goldsmith’s choice to explicitly connect Constance’s jewels, and the man who gave them to her, to India has negative connotations. The relatively loose regulation structure the Company kept over the diamond trade in India meant the system was easy to circumvent and rife with corruption. The Company’s early decision to allow private merchants control over the importing of diamonds into England, with the only stricture being that they pay proper royalties to the Company, enabled the rapid expansion of the Indian diamond trade in Europe; by the end of the eighteenth century, however, corruption and greed of the Company’s factors was leading to the breakdown of the diamond trade. Private traders who did not wish to pay royalties to the Company would simply smuggle their diamonds into Europe, amassing personal fortunes and making it impossible for the Company to regulate the market and make a profit.90

By the 1760s the security of the Anglo-Indian diamond trade, and by association the solvency of the East India Company, was also threatened by the many corrupt English factors stationed in India (agents who were the point of contact between the England and the local populations). These factors amassed fortunes through bribes, manipulation, and outright theft, necessitation that they find a way to transfer their newly acquired wealth back to England.91 Turning wealth into gemstones and smuggling them into England was one way dishonest factors could hide their ill-begotten goods. In 1764 the Company attempted to stop this type of corruption by forbidding its employees from receiving any extravagant presents, including jewels, from the local rulers.92 This dictate, however,

90 Yogev, 167.
91 Yogev, 167.
92 Pointon, Brilliant Effects, 190.
seemed to have had little effect as corruption and the massive accumulation of personal wealth by the Company’s managers only increased in the following decades. Pointon’s work detailing the amount of local outrage condemning the Company as well as King George IV and Queen Charlotte for allowing the corrupt Indian diamond trade to continue demonstrates that the English were aware of and angered by the Company’s actions (and inactions).  

Even before Warren Hastings’ decade-long trial for his mismanagement of the English East India Company in Bengal (1784-1794), of which diamonds and the diamond trade played a major part, those in England were aware of the corrupting elements of the East India Company.

By labeling her uncle as an “Indian Director,” and saying that the jewels came directly from him, Constance has revealed to the audience that he was at best a nabob and at worst a smuggler who avoided paying the proper royalties on his goods. And though the text does not directly identify Constance’s jewels as diamonds their connection to India frames them in a negative light. In this way the controversial social history of Indian jewels is brought into the narrative of the comedy and then made manifest in the disorder surrounding the onstage jewels. In the action of the drama the jewels’ dishonest entry into the British social combines with the deceitful actions of all those who seek to control them in the drama, forming a chaotic chain of events that are only brought to an end when Constance chooses honesty over deception.

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93 For an examination of the place of the diamond trade in the Warren Hastings trial see Pointon, Brilliant Effects, 179-199 and “Intriguing Jewellery”.
95 We are also not told outright if Constance’s jewels take the form of jewelry, but the fact that Constance begs Mrs. Hardcastle to be allowed to wear them suggests that they are.
The national crisis accessed through the Indian jewels in *She Stoops* is mirrored through the depiction of a local crisis of masculinity. Compared to the women, the men in the play are relatively unimpressive: Mr. Hardcastle is unaware that his wife is holding Constance’s jewels hostage and, despite his misgivings, he allows for Tony’s infantilization to continue. Tony, when not under the thumb of his overbearing mother, spends his time drinking, carousing, and generally acting immature. The two love interests of the play, Marlow and Hastings, are far from being perfect specimens of British manhood. Writing on the presentation of masculinity in *She Stoops*, James Evans points out that initially Marlow and Hastings are introduced to the stage as “exaggerated figures” who are decidedly “out of place in a rural tavern”. The landlord of the tavern where the two stop to ask for directions describes the pair as looking “woundily like Frenchmen,” implying that they were decked out in City fashions contrary to their country local. Furthermore, before they discover Liberty Hall is not an inn their actions and there treatment of Mr. Hardcastle is decidedly rude, an effect that likely would have come across to an audience as an example of City arrogance.

These weak and flawed male characters are paired with comparatively stronger women. Examining what he calls “marriage ethics” in Goldsmith’s works, Christopher K. Brooks argues that Goldsmith made a habit of including women in his works who help their men combat problems with masculinity. Brooks writes that Goldsmith’s young females are relegated to three different roles: “teachers, women of ‘virtue,’ quiet or secretive heroines,” and by embodying any one (or all three) of the above roles Brooks

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97 Goldsmith, 1.2.67. Evans, 54.
98 Evans, 55.
views Goldsmith’s heroines as countering and ultimately correcting the flaws of their male counterparts. In this way the women use their inherent virtue to “‘make’ men…by teaching them, rebuilding them, or completing them,” preparing the men for marriage as well as their entrance into adulthood. Completely overlooking Constance’s relationship with Hastings and her influence on the other men in the play, Brooks holds up Kate as the example of the woman in She Stoops who is able to contribute to the personal growth of her future husband by “representing the goodness that he lacks and by maintaining some sort of ‘virtue’.” If Kate’s virtue is to shape Marlow into a productive male member of society by curing him of his fear of women, then, in her efforts to obtain her jewels, patience, honesty, and consistency are the virtues that Constance teaches Hastings. In order for Constance to demonstrate these qualities She Stoops directly positions two opposing types of femininity against each other, one older and foolish and the other younger and steadfast.

Mrs. Hardcastle, the comic “villain” of the play, portrays a wholly different and overall more lighthearted form of negative femininity than that depicted by Olivia in The Plain Dealer. Whereas Olivia satirizes the hypocritical sexuality of London women, Mrs. Hardcastle satirizes the self-centered women who are obsessed with fashion and insist on acting younger than their years. The play opens with Mrs. Hardcastle lamenting living in an old country house that “looks for all the world like an inn” away from the fine things

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101 Brooks, “Marriage”, 24. Brooks argues that the stooping of Kate’s character in order to instruct Marlow how to interact with women without compromising her virtue clearly demonstrates her role as both teacher and both woman of virtue. Though I find Brooks argument concerning the significance of women in relation to the ethics of marriage in Goldsmith’s plays compelling, I do not agree with his assessment of Kate as an early feminist character. Certainly the mere argument that women exist in Goldsmith’s works for the purpose of “completing” the men of the drama suggests that Kate’s apparent freedom in her choice of husband ultimately only serves patriarchal norms.
and fashionable people of London.\textsuperscript{102} Affecting an extreme aversion to all things “old-fashioned,” Mrs. Hardcastle refuses to admit that as an older woman she no longer belongs to the fashionable London world she so misses.\textsuperscript{103} When Mr. Hardcastle refers to his love of his “old wife,” teasing her for being “fifty and seven,” a number Mrs. Hardcastle balks saying that she was “but twenty when [she] was brought to bed of Tony,” and that as “he’s not come to years of discretion yet” she is far younger than her husband claims.\textsuperscript{104} It is possible that Mrs. Hardcastle is not as old as Mr. Hardcastle makes her out to be, but she is certainly not the young, fashionable woman she would like to be.\textsuperscript{105} This exchange comes across as playful teasing between a loving couple, but given that Mrs. Hardcastle is lying to Tony about his age so as to keep him under her control her obsession with youth is not entirely innocent.

Mrs. Hardcastle’s fixation on age is featured in a discussion between Mrs. Hardcastle and Hastings in which Hastings pokes fun at Mrs. Hardcastle by equating the right to wear jewels with the subject of age. In the eighteenth century, jewels were associated with youth and sexuality, and commentators often made fun of older women who wore too much jewelry.\textsuperscript{106} In an effort to both flatter and tease Mrs. Hardcastle for her fixation over London fashion, Hastings responds to her request to know “the most fashionable age about the town” with the response that “some time ago, forty was all the mode; but I’m told the ladies intend to bring up fifty for the ensuing winter.”\textsuperscript{107} To this he

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext[102]{Goldsmith, 1.1.14-15.}
\footnotetext[103]{Goldsmith, 1.1.19.}
\footnotetext[104]{Goldsmith, 1.1.23, 29-30, 31-33.}
\footnotetext[105]{We are never informed of Mrs. Hardcastle’s actual age (though she does suggest that she is forty), but as at the end of the play we find out Tony is of legal age, it is possible that Mrs. Hardcastle lies about her age as well. Goldsmith, 1.1.27.}
\footnotetext[106]{Pointon, “Women”, 27.}
\footnotetext[107]{Goldsmith, 2.1.537-39 & 539-40.}
\end{footnotes}
adds, “No lady begins now to put on jewels till she’s past forty.” Mrs. Hardcastle, not seeing the joke that is being played at her expense, is thrilled with this information and takes it to mean that the rules of fashion support her right to retain possession of the jewels. In fact, when Constance begs to wear the jewels in the next act Mrs. Hardcastle references Constance’s youth as the very reason she will not be allowed to have them: “Such a girl as you want jewels? It will be time enough for jewels, my dear, twenty years hence.” In this, Mrs. Hardcastle’s wish to maintain control of the jewels seems to be less for their monetary value than for the idea that owning them means she still possesses the youthful sexuality she so desires.

Given the way ownership of the jewels is the main concern of this plot, the young men of She Stoops seem singularly uninterested in procuring them. Tony has no desire to marry Constance, even though marriage might secure him the jewels. Hastings begs Constance to leave England without her jewels and elope with him to France but, true to her name, Constance remains steadfast in her refusal to leave without the Eastern jewels that are her birthright. She tells Hastings in no uncertain terms that the only reason she will not run away with him is the need for her to regain possession of her jewels; assuring him that “[t]he instant they are put into my possession you shall find me ready to make them and myself yours.” Despite her effort to tempt him into waiting with the prospect of owning both her and her jewels, Hastings, playing the role of the sentimental and idealist lover, vehemently denounces any interest in the jewels exclaiming “Perish the

108 Goldsmith, 2.1.524.
109 Goldsmith, 3.1. 115-17.
110 Although Mrs. Hardcastle whispers to Tony that she is only keeping hold of the jewels for his benefit, her refusal to treat Tony as an adult makes it likely that the jewels would stay in her possession. Goldsmith, 3.1.143.
111 Goldsmith, 2.1.338.
baubles! Your person is all I desire.”\textsuperscript{112} Constance’s refusal to be swept up by Hasting’s romantic bravado reveals that she, like Kate, is the practical adult of the pair. Tony and Hastings, the immature males, are too young and foolish to understand the necessity of access to this type of wealth.

At various points in the play, Mrs. Hardcastle, Constance, Hastings, and Tony attempt to maintain or secure possession of them through dishonest means that, on a comedic level, mirror the possibly corrupt means by which they initially entered the British social system. Mrs. Hardcastle, attempting to keep the jewels for herself, lies to Constance and claims they are “missing.”\textsuperscript{113} Constance feigns interest in Tony and begs Mrs. Hardcastle for permission to wear her jewels so she can run away with them. The jewels only appear on the stage for a brief moment, but that brief moment highlights the ineffectual means by which Hastings has tried to secure the jewels for Constance. Tony, prompted by Hastings, steals the casket of jewels from his mother’s bureau and gives the container to Hastings, who foolishly passes it onto Marlow for safekeeping.\textsuperscript{114} Marlow, not knowing the casket’s contents or its importance, entrusts it to Mrs. Hardcastle, who is relieved to have the items back in her possession. This confusion is humorous, but it also physically attaches the jewels to the idea of unproductive chaos.

It is only when Constance becomes the exemplar of honesty that these jewels are pulled out of the corrupt system and are able to finally come into her possession. It is Constance who insists she and Hastings return to Liberty Hall after deciding to abandon the jewels and elope without the fortune. Appealing directly to Mr. Hardcastle, the male

\textsuperscript{112} Goldsmith, 2.1.341.
\textsuperscript{113} Goldsmith, 3.1.151. At this point in the play Mrs. Hardcastle is unaware that the jewels have been stolen from her bureau.
\textsuperscript{114} The stage directions read “Enter Tony running in with a casket.” Goldsmith, 3.1.
authority figure who has been decidedly absent in her plot, Constance explains herself saying “[s]ince [my father’s] death, I have been obliged to stoop to dissimulation to avoid oppression. In an hour of levity, I was ready even to give up my fortune to secure my choice. But I’m now recovered from the delusion, and hope from your tenderness what is denied me from nearer connection.” Constance, like Kate, has “stooped,” only for her it did not lead to conquering. She labels her stooping as negative and only undertaken in order to defy the “oppression” of her aunt. Ever the level-headed character, she describes her brief decision to “give up her fortune” and run away as a “delusion” and chooses instead to use honesty as a means by which to finally gain her jewels. Importantly, Hastings, finally demonstrating a level of maturity, participates in Constance’s confession. He begs forgiveness for his rash actions assuring Mr. Hardcastle that their love is sincere as before the chaos depicted in the play their “passions were first founded in duty.” These actions, the admission of folly and demonstration of honesty, are what enable the couple to gain permission to wed as well as possession of the jewels. Not only does Constance’s honesty and desire not to sneak away in the night gain her possession of her jewels, it serves as impetus for Mr. Hardcastle to finally reassert control over the other members of his household. Having learned of the actions of his wife towards Constance and her chosen husband, Mr. Hardcastle declares himself “glad” that the two “have come back to reclaim their due” and performs his own act of honesty by admitting to Tony that he has actually been of age for three months.  

115 Goldsmith, 5.3.122-126.  
116 Goldsmith, 5.3.120-121.  
117 The jewels do not make an appearance on the stage in this final scene, but the implication is the jewels will be taken away from Mrs. Hardcastle and given to Constance.  
118 Goldsmith, 5.3.129-30. Mr. Hardcastle has Tony formally renounce Constance, a gesture that finally recognizes him as an adult.
cannot be said to have reformed to quite the same degree as Hastings, it was Constance’s honesty that freed him from the rule of his overbearing mother. Inexplicably, Brooks mistakenly attributes Kate with having “defeated the mercantile efforts” of Mrs. Hardcastle thereby “free[ing] her friend Constance Neville and her step brother…to pursue the ‘love matches’ that they nearly lost because of parental pressure to marry into wealth.” It is clearly Constance and her display of honesty, not Kate, who brings about the final and larger resolutions of the play.

*She Stoops to Conquer* does not denounce wealth and mercantilism, as Brooks argues, only mercantilism performed in dishonorable ways and through dishonest means. Pointing to the play’s complex character development as the subtle way this work was able to speak to social issues, Gill argues Goldsmith sets up a “series of symmetrical dispositions of characters to highlight the conflicts of values which it develops,” and it is the presentation and negotiation of each character within their personal domain that allows for “issues at first appearing to be intractable” to be ultimately presented as “constructively negotiable.” The actions of Mrs. Hardcastle and Constance in their attempts to maintain or gain control over the Indian jewels explores the “conflicts” and “values” of their opposing forms of femininity. Mrs. Hardcastle attempts to control the circulation of her jewels within a system that benefits her alone. She refuses to adhere to time and the proper order of things, attempting instead to control what is decidedly out of her control, and becoming a joke in the process. Constance, on the other hand, is able to wash the jewels clean of their negative associations through the honest actions she finally takes to obtain them. Most importantly, although the Eastern jewels will come into

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120 Gill, 4.
Constance’s possession, upon her marriage to Hastings they will ultimately fall under his control. Thus, the fractured “intractable” social system presented at the beginning of the play has been negotiated in a manner that satisfies the female desires while also reaffirming male rule.

Both plays considered in this chapter reinforce the idea of the British woman as consumer of eastern jewels while also emphasizing the importance of maintaining proper possession of the jewels in decidedly male and English control. In these plays Eastern jewels in possession of the wrong woman are likened to ideas of instability and emasculation, whereas jewels in the possession of women who have fulfilled the actions of proper English women both ensure the growth of the male character and secure socially sanctioned marriages. The loyalty and honestly of Fidelia and Constance is rewarded with jewels from the East, and the audience understands that both of the young women have the right to wear these jewels, as their interior will match their external signifiers. Most importantly, while the virtuous woman are rewarded with their jewels, they are also safely contained within the bounds of marriage. If one puts these plays in the contexts of trade with East India, which, in their association of the jewels onstage with the East, both clearly do, the suggestion is that improper feminine ownership of the wealth must be brought into the proper male-sanctified control. As they have fulfilled the destiny ascribed in their names, Fidelia and Constance will be able to wear their jewels and become the adorned women whose bodies both motivated and justified Western control of the East.
Chapter Five

Imperial Attachments: Elizabeth Inchbald’s “little shawl” and the East India Company

“plays are productions that depend on action, and require talents of a nature, in which writing has, perhaps, the smallest share”

Elizabeth Inchbald, “Remarks on The Wonder”¹

The previous chapter examines how Eastern jewels were employed in Wycherley’s The Plain Dealer and Goldsmith’s She Stoops to Conquer as a means to underwrite the rhetoric of imperial expansion and reinforce notions regarding the importance of male-centered power structures. By ensuring that the women who embodied and acted out the qualities of loyalty and honesty were given possession of the Eastern jewels the men in these plays were able to stave off the threat of emasculation, safely contain the jewels through marriage, and become productive members of British society. I close out this dissertation with an examination of the social, political, and literary implications of placing an Indian shawl as a source of action on the English stage in the latter half of the eighteenth century.

“Who would have thought,” ponders Mr. Walmsley in the second half of Elizabeth Inchabald’s two-act afterpiece Appearance is Against Them (1785) “that little shawl wou’d have turned out of such consequence?”² Walmsley’s exclamation of disbelief over the centrality of a seemingly innocuous textile serves as the ideal point to begin discussion of a play that, at its heart, explores the place of objects in British

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² Elizabeth Inchbald, Appearance is Against Them in The Plays of Elizabeth Inchbald vol. 1, ed. Paula R. Backscheider (New York: Garland, 1980), 2.1. Unless otherwise stated all lines from Appearance is Against Them from this edition. References are to act and scene only as line numbers are not provided. Spelling has been modernized for clarity.
society. As the characters in this play lose, find, give, steal, buy, exchange, and return this Indian shawl, they never once call into question the nature of their attachment to it, something I argue the play encourages the audience to do. I argue taking account of the actions allowed for or prompted by attachment to the restless Indian shawl in Appearance provides insight into how this play, a seemingly innocuous farce, investigates the unpredictable and often undesirable consequences that occur when a people become too invested, both socially and monetarily, in foreign objects and economies. Approaching Appearance with the mindset that the Indian shawl is “acting” its influence in the social reveals how this play draws attention to the uncontrollable, unpredictable, and sometimes unfortunate consequences of forming attachments without consideration of their quality. By extending the negative associations and actions of the Indian shawl in Appearance outside the bounds of the stage and onto the audience, Inchbald subtly censures the desires, processes, and outcomes of Britain’s expanding empire. Ultimately, an action-oriented critique of this work reveals how Appearance, in its inclusion of an Indian shawl, offers up a pointed critique of Britain’s attachment to foreign lands and commodities.

An eighteenth-century playwright and theater critic, Elizabeth Inchbald (1753-1821) is more often remembered for her novels, including A Simple Story (1791) and Nature and Art (1796). However, she initially made a name for herself in London by writing popular plays that commented on contemporary social issues. Amy Garnia characterizes Inchbald’s dramatic writing as containing a certain level of
“outspokenness” due to their “constant critique of institutional systems of power.”\(^3\) She surmises that Inchbald’s works were able to escape the attention of the Chief Examiner of Plays because many of these critiques were hidden “within domestic plots and conciliatory closures.”\(^4\) Inchbald’s canny ability to avoid censorship allowed her to write a number of works disparaging British imperialism. Contemporary critics have noted the frequency with which Inchbald addressed the subject of the British Empire: of Inchbald’s twenty-one existing plays, five are recognized as depicting, commenting on, or blatantly critiquing the British colonial process.\(^5\) Appearance, however, has yet to be recognized for its participation in any discussion of Empire. This is no doubt because, in a cursory examination, this play simply appears to have nothing to do with the subject of British imperialism.

Like many satires of the period, Appearance contains a cast of stereotyped characters and couples, all of whom are concerned with advancing their own interests.

Miss Angle, the country girl who has come to London to get a husband, finds herself

\(^3\) Amy Garnai, *Revolutionary Imaginings in the 1790s: Charlotte Smith, Mary Robinson, Elizabeth Inchbald* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 124.

\(^4\) Garnai, 150. Despite her knowledge of current events Inchbald never stated the exact nature of her political leanings. James Boaden, the editor of Inchbald’s memoirs, believed that Inchbald was “somewhat radical” despite the fact that “she was very fond of the king and the royal family.” Annibel Jenkins, *I’ll Tell You What: The Life of Elizabeth Inchbald* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2003), 518.

courted and then forgotten by Lord Lighthead, a capricious rake. Her desperation to recapture the notice of her former lover drives her to steal and then lie to cover up the theft. Unlike Miss Angle, Lady Mary Magpie, the ridiculous, aging socialite, has managed to secure a marriage proposal from the prudish yet dutiful Mr. Walmsley. Walmsley, however, has an aversion both to his fiancée and to marriage, so in lieu of genuine affection, he distracts Lady Mary with lavish gifts. As the action of the farce unfolds, others become embroiled in the affairs of these two couples: Fish, Miss Angle’s meddlesome maid; Miss Loveall, a lady of questionable repute; and Clownly, a naive country suitor.

Appearance opens with Lady Mary excitedly showing Miss Angle her most recent gift from Walmsley: an Indian shawl. Upon Lady Mary’s exit, Fish hatches a scheme that she believes will help Miss Angle regain the attention of Lord Lighthead. Fish instructs Miss Angle to “return” some valuable object to Lighthead along with a note declaring her refusal of his generous gift. This, Fish says, will remind him of Miss Angle, and, seeing that he did not actually send her the gift, he will assume a rival lover had sent it and become jealous. Conveniently, Lady Mary’s new shawl is the perfect object with which to hook the fashionable Lighthead. Ignoring Miss Angle’s halfhearted protests, Fish takes the shawl from Lady Mary’s room claiming that Lighthead will return it, along with his love, to Miss Angle before nightfall. Lighthead, however, is no longer interested in Miss Angle and can now be found courting the infamous Lady Loveall. When Lighthead receives the “returned” gift from Miss Angle, he assumes he had actually given her the shawl and, noting its obvious value, immediately re-gifts it to Lady Loveall. Upon the discovery that her precious shawl has been stolen Lady Mary becomes so upset
that, to the delight of Walmsley, she breaks off their engagement. Overjoyed by his return to bachelorhood, but seeking to comfort Lady Mary in both her loss of the shawl and his person, Walmsley vows to apprehend the thief. When he spots his nemesis, the Lady Loveall, wearing the shawl, he revels in his opportunity to jail this scandalous woman. In the end, everyone, including those falsely accused of theft, gathers in one room. The shawl is returned to Lady Mary and a tearful Miss Angle confesses her role in the entire humiliating affair.\(^6\)

It is useful to consider for a moment why Inchbald would choose to make an Indian shawl such a crucial object in this play. The Western world had long been a large consumer of Indian cloth: between 1780 and 1790 alone the East India Company imported into Europe well over one million pieces of Indian textile.\(^7\) Even decades after the “calico craze” of late seventeenth-century England, relatively inexpensive plain white calicos and luxurious elaborately patterned chintz fabrics remained hugely popular.\(^8\) As

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\(^6\) Despite receiving initially favorable critical reviews Appearance faded into theater history. After the opening performance at Covent Garden Theater it was performed approximately a dozen more times before leaving the stage; though there is evidence Appearance was revived in the America’s under the appropriate title The Adventures of a Shawl, a moniker that mimics the it-narratives so popular in the late eighteenth-century. Leo Huges and A.H Scouten, ed., Ten English Farces (Austin: University of Austin Press, 1948), 242-244, n243. Even with its brief theatrical run Appearance had some significant successes: King George III commanded a performance, and the Prince of Wales also attended a separate performance. Jenkins, 184. Additionally, Appearance was the first of Inchbald’s plays to appear in print. Roger Manvell, Elizabeth Inchbald: England’s Principal Woman Dramatist and Independent Woman of Letters in 18th Century London: a Biographical Study (Lanham: University Press of America, 1987), 34.


Annibel Jenkins notes, by centering *Appearance* around “the gift of a shawl, an item that was quite in vogue,” Inchbald draws upon “current fashion to motivate the plot.” Given the large amount of Indian textiles in London, the Indian shawl in *Appearance* was a commodity the fashionable London audience would have been familiar with.

The Indian shawl in *Appearance* is clearly an influential non-human actor, though no one onstage is able to recognize fully its ability to dictate and shape action. The characters in *Appearance* expect the shawl to “act” in a controllable manner. Instead the shawl’s place in the social sets it squarely at the center of the onstage confusion. Walmsley, who does not love the Lady Mary, uses the shawl as a substitute for affection; yet when the shawl goes missing Lady Mary breaks off their marriage plans. Miss Angle uses the shawl as bait to entice Lord Lightfoot; yet he ignores her attempts at reconciliation and instead uses the shawl to court the disreputable Lady Loveall. Lady Loveall wears the shawl to the theater and, in doing so, is arrested. And Humphry, the doltish servant to Clownly, endures Lady Mary’s comical inquisition as to the whereabouts of her shawl even though he has never come in direct contact with it.

Though the shawl never remains with any one person for an extended length of time, and by the end of the play the shawl seems to have ceased its circulation, due to their attachments to the item the relationships between the characters have been harmed in entirely unforeseen and possibly irreparable ways.

The Indian shawl both makes the characters act while also causing those actions and the resulting consequences to take a specific shape. The question, then, is how has this object gained such influence in the social? *Appearance* suggests the characters are

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9 Jenkins, 188.
impelled to interact with the shawl based on their own vanity. When first showing off the shawl, Lady Mary runs through its distinguishing qualities: she tells Miss Angle it is “worth at a moderation valuation, no less than a hundred and fifty guineas,” that it “came over…from India,” that it is “beautiful,” and that there is only “one more such in all India.” Lady Mary clearly expects Miss Angle to admire her for possessing such a pricy, exotic, and unique item. As the play progresses one might be tempted to classify Lady Mary’s obsessive attachment to this particular item as representative of the absurdity of her character were it not for the fact that the actions of the other characters reveal they are similarly affected by the shawl. Miss Angle and Fish acknowledge Lady Mary’s “ridiculous vanity,” but immediately light upon the shawl as the best object with Miss Angle can reengage Lord Lighthead’s attention. Upon receiving the shawl, Lord Lighthead proclaims it to be the perfect thing to regain the attentions of Lady Loveall, and though we are not made privy to Lady Loveall’s reaction when she receives the shawl, the fact that she immediately wears it to the theater surely indicates that this fashionable item would attract the notice of others. In each instance the characters are drawn to interaction with the shawl through their desire to be recognized and admired.

In the world of Appearance, then, attachment to the shawl is motivated by an element of vanity, but by giving the shawl explicitly Indian origins and a tragic backstory, Inchbald is able to further critique the characters who desire this item. After listing the shawl’s qualities, Lady Mary divulges that in its journey from India the shawl was “in that terrible storm of October last.—Little did I think, when I heard of those

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10 Inchbald, 1.1.
11 Inchbald, 2.1.
12 Inchbald, 2.1.
dreadful wrecks, and the many souls that perished, that I had a shawl at sea: if I had, I
should have suffered a martyrdom!”¹³ Lady Mary’s declaration reveals two related
points: one, men died in the process of bringing this commodity to London, and two, this
fact does not seem to bother Lady Mary. If anything, the story of danger averted and lives
lost only enhances the value of the textile. Lady Mary’s talk of possible martyrdom over
a shawl certainly augments her absurdity, but the chilling way she glosses over the deaths
of men in order to express her relief at having received this item adds a level of
callousness to her otherwise frivolous character.

This insensitive mindset is not found in Lady Mary alone: when Fish attempts to
assure Miss Angle the shawl is safe, she declares “I am sure it is not in half the danger as
when it was in the great storm!”, and Walmsley gives thanks to “providence” for saving
the shawl “from the storm at sea, to save me from a worse storm on land.”¹⁴ These
repeated mentions of the storm ensure those watching the drama are not able to forget the
deadly circumstances attached to this foreign item’s journey to London. In this way the
shawl is both a marker of vanity and a symbol of heartless narcissism. More importantly,
the references to the storm highlight how it was the process of shipping the shawl from
India to England—an economically motivated process necessitated by England’s desire
for foreign goods—that put the sailors in the path of the storm. The shawl, an object
originating in India yet desired in England, prompts and dictates the series of actions that
results in the deaths of those responsible for the transport of such items.

Inchbald’s declaration that drama “depend[s] on action” illustrates she was a
playwright attuned to the unique communicative possibilities of physical performance.

¹³ Inchbald, 1.1.
¹⁴ Inchbald, 1.1 & 2.1.
Inchbald capitalizes on the presence of the Indian shawl in Appearance by creating an extra-textual moment of identification between the audience and the production. The popularity of Indian textiles in London makes it entirely likely that some in the audience may have been wearing their Indian fabrics to the performance. In a moment where Inchbald is unquestionably linking the onstage action to the audience, Walmsley reveals he caught Lady Loveall wearing the coveted shawl as she was “going into Covent Garden theater,” the very theater in which Appearance was performed.\footnote{Inchbald, 2.1} Presumably, the intended effect for this line was to draw attention to any women in the theater who were wearing their fashionable Indian items, cunningly aligning them with the actions of the foolish Lady Mary and the lascivious Lady Loveall. Making an association between the onstage Indian fabric and any other Indian fabrics in the theater transfers all the negative qualities attached to the “fictional” Indian shawl—lack of control, vanity, callousness, and death—outside the bounds of the stage and onto any “real world” Indian textiles present in audience. This reciprocal moment between representation and realism underscores the idea that the desires and actions responsible for bringing the Indian shawl to Miss Angle’s parlor may not be confined to the fictional world.

Recognizing the connection between the onstage Indian textile and any other Indian fabrics in the theater necessitates further discussion of the physical presence of the shawl in the performance. After its initial introduction the shawl’s explicitly Indian origins are not referenced again during the play; in all subsequent dialogue it is simply referred to as the “shawl,” not the “Indian shawl.”\footnote{Though Fish and Walmsley each bring up the shawl’s journey to England, as well as the deadly storm, they do not make specific mention of the shawl having come from India.} Furthermore, besides repeated assertions of the
shawl’s beauty, no description of the shawl is ever given. Readers of the farce, then, may not remain aware of the shawl’s foreign origin, but an eighteenth-century audience would not have been able to forget that detail given that the object was present before them throughout the performance. Although the exact appearance of the shawl is an element lost to time, the sheer amount of historical research on the subject of the Indian textile trade enables critics to piece together with its possible visual characteristics. Given that Inchbald likely chose to feature an Indian shawl in Appearance because of its status as a fashionable object, it seems counterintuitive to suppose that the shawl used in the production would not have exhibited the geometric and/or botanic traits customarily found in the popular Indian textiles of the period. Thus even when the shawl’s link to India was not directly referenced, its appearance would have functioned as a constant visual marker of its Indian origins. Additionally, every time the shawl was brought on the stage its fashionable yet foreign exterior would have served as reminder of the tangle of social, economic, and political factors currently engulfing the very company that would have been responsible for bringing it to English shores, the East India Company (EIC).

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18 Lemire, “Fashioning Global Trade,” 366. See also, Rosemary Crill, Textiles from India. See Figure 6 & 7.
Appearance was written and performed at the tail end of a period of extreme economic and political controversy for the EIC. During the period of 1763-84 the Company became the largest exporter and de facto governing force of Bengal, the richest province in the Indian subcontinent; despite its monopoly over the exportation of Bengali textiles, poor management of the Company left it teetering on the brink of bankruptcy. The financial straits of the EIC threatened both British supremacy in India and the large tax revenues generated by the EIC’s endeavors. The impending insolvency of the Company forced the British state to intervene resulting in a heated political and public debate over whether rule by parliament or rule by the Crown would prove the most

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effective method of reining in the wayward corporation. In 1784, the year before
Appearance was staged, the East India Act was passed and the Crown established, with
much public support, a Board of Control to oversee the diplomatic powers of the
company. All the while Bengali products continued to pour into England, flooding the
British market and severely disrupting the sale of local English textiles. Historically
English cloth and craftsmanship did not compare in either quality or design with Indian
cloth, and at the time cottons from Bengal were being imported into Britain en masse and
sold at prices up to 50 and 60 percent lower than textiles manufactured domestically. A
well-informed London theatergoer (or avid shopper) would have been aware of the influx
of Indian products into England as well as the importance the government placed upon
ensuring their continued circulation.

The shawl’s appearance, then, the very thing that causes the characters to
recognize the shawl’s value and prompts them to believe they can use it to bring about
their own personal actions and ends, also perpetually links to the social history of this
particular class of objects. In this way, the fictional world depicted on the stage and the
real-world significance of this object continually influence the construction and reception
of the other. The power of this Indian textile in the play’s representation of the social—a

20 Lawson, 124. Inchbald was unquestionably aware of the controversies surrounding British
interests in India as she makes reference to them in The Mogul Tale. Jenkins, 161.

21 Robins, 61. India’s superior manufacturing capabilities meant that India was capable of making
both expensive socially desirable textiles as well as less expensive utilitarian cotton fabrics. For
information on muslin fabrics from Bengal see Ruby Ghuznavi, “Muslins of Bengal” Textiles from India:
The Global Trade, ed. Rosemary Crill, 303 (New York: Seagull Books, 2006). For more on India’s
dominance in the textile trade see John Guy, Woven Cargoes: Indian Textiles in the East (New York:
Thames and Hudson, 1998), esp. 38-53; Maxine Berg, “Asian Luxuries”, Luxury and Pleasure, 46-84, and
“Quality, Cotton, and the Global Luxury Trade,” in How India Clothed the World: The World of South
Asian Textiles, 1500-1850, ed. Giorgio Riello and Tirthankar Roy, 39-414 (Boston: Brill, 2009); Giorgio
Riello, “The Indian Apprenticeship: The trade of Indian Textiles and the Making of European Cottons”, in
How India Clothed the World: The World of South Asian Textiles, 1500-1850, ed. Giorgio Riello and
representation that continually crosses the boundary between fiction and real life—is so strong that even when the shawl is not on the stage, desire for it, and concern over who possesses it, dictates the character’s actions. Most importantly, the shawl, a participant in Britain’s fraught attachment to India, is now present and active in London. With such a noticeably foreign object at the center of the play’s entirely domestic action an audience would have been unable to escape the visual reminder of the way in which India had worked its way into the everyday life of the British.

Miss Angle’s interaction with the Indian shawl reveals that Appearance moves beyond simply recycling the shawl’s social history into its multiple onstage meanings. By demonstrating the power and the unpredictability of the shawl in the social, Appearance blatantly criticizes England’s attachments to foreign goods. While the obvious pun in Miss Angle’s name references fishing (an angle being another term for the hook at the end of a fishing line on which one attaches bait or a lure in order to catch a fish), the term ‘Angle’ can also be used rhetorically to refer to the English. Therefore, Miss Angle is, literally, “Miss English” and functions as both a representative of a kind of “home-grown” Englishness and England itself. As for the former, Miss Angle came to London from the English countryside to try to “sell” herself on the marriage market. Whereas in the country she was “admired” for her “beauty” and “virtue” her simple English-country qualities are not valued in the fashionable London market. Much like the local cloth from the English countryside that could not compete with popular Indian fabrics, Miss Angle (the country import) is not desired in a London that finds value only in what is

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23 Inchbald, 2.1. Tellingly, the man who does desire Miss Angle is the laughable, and decidedly unfashionable, Mr. Clownly.
fashionable. As a proxy of England itself, *Appearance* clearly suggests Miss Angle makes a mistake in believing she can control the trajectory of the Indian shawl. In fact, involving herself with this foreign object is what leads to her undoing. At the play’s close it is Miss Angle who ultimately takes responsibility for the entire situation: “Had poverty seduced me to the crime of which I am accused, less would have been my remorse, less ought to have been the censure—But *vanity*—*folly*—*a mistaken confidence*…and *my own attractions*, prompted me.” Miss England’s complete inability to manage the trajectory of one little shawl does not portend well for an England that, at the dawn of the nineteenth century, was becoming more entrenched in the imperial process.

Thus, the action of *Appearance* clearly demonstrates a value judgment regarding the quality of the attachments to this particular item. The characters are motivated to engage with the Indian shawl due to their own vanity, folly, and hubris. The actions of the shawl (both those caused by it and that it allows for) are death, confusion, threat of incarceration, and the breakdown of social bonds. The meanings the shawl draws upon from outside the play’s narrative only serve to heighten the negative occurrences within the action of the drama itself. The shawl was brought to London due to the English people’s desire for foreign products, and its destructive presence in the domestic setting directly alludes to the economic mismanagement of the East India Company and the subsequent threat to British world dominance. While the Indian shawl itself may not be bad, attachment to it certainly is. The subject/object relations as constructed in the world of the play are disastrous and not necessarily in the power of the individual characters to reconstruct on their own. In this way, *Appearance* suggests that even those not directly

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24 Inchbald, 2.1. Emphasis mine.
participating in or benefiting from British designs on India were still at risk, be it economically or socially, by the British state’s attachments.

By pivoting between representation and the real world at the nodal point of the Indian shawl Appearance speaks to myriad social, political, and economic concerns in late eighteenth-century London. Recognizing this interplay puts us in the position to make sense of what is perhaps the drama’s most puzzling feature: its sudden and seemingly unfinished conclusion.25 After all the confusion, Lady Loveall simply returns the shawl to a now single Lady Mary while Walmsley instructs the group that from this point on they should not judge too harshly as people all too often have only “appearances against them.”26 Though Walmsley’s sentiment seems to absolve the group of any guilt, the fact remains that there is not a single character left onstage who is entirely blameless or even admirable. This ending takes on a new significance, however, if one rethinks the function of Walmsley’s final words. I believe it quite possible that during the performance the actor playing Walmsley, instead of directing his closing lines only towards the other actors onstage, may have turned and directed them to the audience, thereby including them as participants in the events they had just witnessed. If the closing lines of the performance implicate the audience as contributors to the onstage chaos, then the “unfinished” ending of the play actually serves to highlight how the chaos brought about by the Indian shawl has not, in fact, ended; it has only momentarily abated. This is because at that very moment, imperial objects were outside the theater acting upon

25 Jenkins makes note of what she calls the “ambivalent” ending of this play but does not put forth possible interpretation, 190.
26 Inchbald, 2.1.
British society, just as British society was acting to acquire them. In this way Appearance suggests that, at the close of the eighteenth century, attachments, not appearances, were what the British had against them.

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27 One should not forget this shawl’s mysterious double, the “one more such in all India” alluded to by Lady Mary, that has yet to make its way to English shores. Inchbald, 1.1.
Coda

Historian David Armitage writes that when studying the British Empire the “domestic” cannot be separated from the “extraterritorial.” ¹ Anne McClintock makes a similar claim when she asserts that “imperialism is not something that happened elsewhere.” ² Both of these scholars recognize that as the nascent British Empire expanded outward in London itself the economic and social processes supporting the progression towards Empire were introduced, celebrated, and, ultimately, integrated into the lives of the British subject. In order for overseas British imperialism to gain support from those living in England, a related yet altogether different type of ideological imperialism had to occur within London. If British history cannot be partitioned off from the imperial process then neither can London theater.

This dissertation has only begun to document the ways in which “London imperialism” and reactions to it were expressed through imperial commodities in performance. The sheer number of plays written during the long eighteenth century means there remain many avenues of inquiry into this subject. I have focused on the actual objects in the performance, as far as they can be determined, but a study of the rhetoric in regards to mention or discussion of these objects would yield further and likely fruitful information. For example, why were so many references to imperial commodities, and the characters who used them in Restoration comedy, derogatory? How did the expansion of the British Empire during the eighteenth century affect the rhetoric used in relation to these objects?

Even more work remains to be done on the actual commodities that appeared on the stage. Although I focused my study on domestic comedy, all genres of performance should be examined for their inclusion of imperial commodities, especially those that were set in Asia and the New World. Another avenue of inquiry that might be taken is further study into the relationship of men to imperial commodities during the Restoration, especially in the figure of the fop who, unlike his rake counterpart, is often publically derided for his attachment to the material. Another character type that warrants study in relation to objects is the collector or scientist who is obsessed with foreign exotica. Appearing in works of playwrights such as Thomas D’urfey and Susanna Centlivre, this figure seems to have come about as a direct result of the many objects entering Britain as well as the developing scientific fields.  

It would also be fruitful to examine the prop conventions of individual playwrights: Who made use of the most objects, imperial or otherwise, in their plays? Were there certain stage properties that playwrights used more than others? Did female playwrights write objects into their works differently than men? If such patterns were located, what would that tell us about the British Empire on the stage?

Theater historians such as Robert D. Hume and Judith Milhous are making great strides in their attempt to collect information about the stage, and technological advances are better enabling the cataloguing and accessibility of information regarding such performances. The above investigations would be greatly enhanced by the creation of a database that lays out the objects that were used as stage properties in long eighteenth-century drama. A database such as this would give eighteenth-century scholars the ability study the relationship between objects in

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culture and the use of those objects in performance. Beyond simply listing the props used, if made searchable in a variety of ways—by theater company, playwright, genre, origin of stage property, and time period—such a database would allow scholars to ascertain what different theater companies likely owned, the types of props that feature in relation to genre, and the frequency with which individual playwrights feature types of properties in their plays.

Any or all of the above areas of investigation would provide a scholar with years, if not a lifetime, of work. Even so, by undertaking projects similar to that of this dissertation scholars of long eighteenth-century drama will be better equipped and able to realize the way in which the plays they study addressed and encompassed every aspect of British life, including the material.
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Secondary Works:


APPENDIX A

DATA COLLECTED DECEMBER 2013-AUGUST 2014
LIST OF LORD MAYOR’S SHOWS 1655-1708

<table>
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1 For a list of Lord Mayor’s Shows pre-1640 see Tracy Hill, *Pageantry and Power: A Cultural History of the Early Modern Lord Mayor’s Show, 1585-1639* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), 337-342.
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