

# 'The little-ingenious Garrick and the ingenious little Hogarth'

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ROBIN SIMON:

In July 1746 the great actor David Garrick wrote a reply to an invitation from the reverend John Hoadly –

[CAPTION: The Revd John Hoadly (right) detail from double portrait with Dr Maurice Greene, 1747, National Portrait Gallery]

WILLIAM CHUBB:

Your invitation to the Old Alresford I most cordially accept of and the little ingenious Garrick with the ingenious little Hogarth will get up on a horseblock. Mount a couple of quadrupeds, or one if it carries double and high away to the reverend Rigdom Funnydose there to be merry, facetious, mad and nonsensical. '

ROBIN SIMON:

Well they were certainly facetious. The house party acted, at least to their great enjoyment, what was described as a little bawdy play by Garrick, entitled Rag-and-jaw – rag and jaw. At this stage I think I ought to make one thing clear about Georgian life and humour, it's, well how shall we put it, very down to earth.

And so if you wish you may put your hands over your ears now. Rag-and-jaw is a skit upon the relationship between Brutus and Cassius in Julius Caesar, only now of course inevitably the characters are Brute-arse and Cassy-arse. I didn't say that Georgian, Georgian humour was subtle.

Accompanied by Lucius, oh sorry Loose-arse. Garrick played Cassy-arse and the reverend John Hoadly was Brute-arse. Hogarth played the part of Griliardo, head cook to the devil. And he simply couldn't remember his lines – rather like some of those opera stars we've all heard about. They were written upon the lantern that he carried in his hand. These lines will give you a good idea of the quality of Garrick's writing and the wit.

WILLIAM CHUBB:

I am Old Nick's cook and hither and I come to slice some steaks off thy brawny bum, make sausage of thy guts and candles of thy fat. And cut thy cock off to regale his cat.

ROBIN SIMON:

In order to place this fully in its context I should stress that the reverend John Hoadly aka Brute-arse was chaplain to Frederick Prince of Wales. Hoadly's rise in the church had been rapid, so rapid indeed as to make us think of the more spectacular abuses of the Roman Catholic Church during the Renaissance.

It was entirely due to the fact that his father had just become Bishop of Winchester. The Reverend John Hoadly was ordained deacon, first of all on the 7th of December 1735 at the age of twenty-four. He was made a priest a fortnight later.

Just five days later, on Boxing Day, little Christmas present, he was made chaplain to the Prince of Wales. But by this stage he'd already become chancellor of the diocese of Winchester before he'd even been ordained at all. Very soon Hoadly possessed no fewer than eight freeholds in the church, one of which was Old Alresford in Hampshire. And all of them in the Winchester diocese.

He built a modest little rectory – which was just completed when he invited Garrick and Hogarth to come to stay. It's now a most successful wedding venue. And the sheer scale of the thing can be judged by comparing the size of the people in front, with the building behind.

He eventually added the Mastership of St Cross Winchester and was awarded a doctorate from the Archbishop of Canterbury,

[CAPTION: William Hogarth, *Archbishop Herring*, 1744/1747, Tate Britain]

becoming then Chaplain to Augusta, Princess dowager of Wales after her husband, Frederick, had been killed by a cricket ball in 1751.

[CAPTION: John Faber after Thomas Hudson, *Augusta Princess of Wales*, 1751]

All along John Hoadly would much have preferred to have been a playwright, like his brother Benjamin, only it wouldn't have been so profitable of course as the church.

[CAPTION: William Hogarth, *Benjamin Hoadly the Younger*, c 1742]

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As it was he contented himself with pouring out libretti for oratorios and masques, all published anonymously to protect the good name of the church – while privately collaborating with his brother on such plays as – the *Suspicious Husband* – which gave Garrick one of his most famous roles.

[CAPTION: Francis Hayman, *David Garrick as Ranger in 'The Suspicious Husband'* by Benjamin Hoadly the Younger and John Hoadly]

Well, John Hoadly's friendship with Hogarth went back to the publication of *A Rake's Progress* in 1735, for which he provided the commentaries underneath each scene.

[CAPTION: William Hogarth, *A Rake's Progress*, 1735]

And it was to Hogarth that Hoadly remarked that he did sometimes visit his chief parish – because the shepherd ought occasionally to be seen among his flock, even if it was only to fleece them.

But Garrick's collaboration with Hogarth was to prove both longer and more profound, it was not all plain sailing, how could it be? When one of the two friends – Hogarth, possessed such a notoriously short fuse. This great double portrait, in the exhibition, was the subject of a legendary row between the two.

[CAPTION: William Hogarth, *Mr and Mrs David Garrick*, 1757]

John Hoadly described it in the making on the 21st of April 1757.

WILLIAM CHUBB:

Hogarth has almost finished a most noble portrait of our spritely friend David Garrick and his wife. They are a fine contrast. David is sitting at a table smiling thoughtful, over some composition, his own, you may be sure. And Madame, archly enough, stealing away his pen unseen behind. It has not so much fancy as to be affected or ridiculous and yet enough to raise it from the formality of a mere portrait.

ROBIN SIMON:

Well Garrick's features were famously mobile and it was said that he kept changing his expression deliberately, during the sitting, in order to tease Hogarth – so that the artist thought he himself was failing to take a correct likeness. Eventually, when he realised what was happening, Hogarth exploded and struck his brush across the face and damaged it.

And indeed x-rays prove this to be true, for there are brush marks across the eyes. Well the quarrel was over as quickly as it arose and Hogarth and Garrick remained close companions, until Hogarth's death in 1764. It was a remarkably fruitful relationship. The painter learnt from the actor and the actor from the painter.

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Hogarth had already complained about Garrick's capacity to shift the expression of his face, when he was working on what remains the greatest portrait of any actor in performance – painted a decade earlier just before that theatrical jaunt in Hampshire and that is Garrick as Richard III.

[CAPTION: William Hogarth, *David Garrick as Richard III*, 1745. Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool]

The painting records the performance, an overnight runaway success from the first night onwards, on the 19 October 1741 – that effectively launched the modern era of the stage. Until Garrick appeared, acting styles had become ossified, very much again in the manner of modern opera singers – that somebody's called delightfully the – 'park and bark', approach.

Choose your position, preferable downstage centre, set your legs apart and make a lot of noise. And when you think you've finished mark the moment for applause by raising one arm. One thinks of Luciano Pavarotti whose entire career was limited to that kind of acting.

Garrick changed all that through the introduction of the most startling naturalism. In his physical movements, his voice, his verse speaking and perhaps above all in his facial expressions, that gave Hogarth so much trouble. Now the old method of acting was exemplified by the Irish actor James Quin,

[CAPTION: William Hogarth, *James Quin*, c.1739, Tate Britain]

who weighed in around 20 stone, in later years, and who someone described – and it wasn't meant as a compliment – as walking in blank verse.

[CAPTION: Thomas Gainsborough, *James Quin*, c.1763, National Portrait Gallery]

Quin himself remarked of Garrick's performance.

[CAPTION: Thomas Gainsborough, *James Quin*, 1763, National Gallery of Ireland]

WILLIAM CHUBB:

If this young fellow be right, then we have all been wrong.

ROBIN SIMON:

In old age, Richard Cumberland recalled the extraordinary effect of seeing Garrick on the stage as Quin, that star of the previous generation.

WILLIAM CHUBB:

I beheld little Garrick, young and light and alive in every muscle and feature come bounding onto the stage with the heavy paste Horatio, Quin – heavens, what a transition, it seemed as if a whole century had been stepped over in the transition of a single scene.

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ROBIN SIMON:

Well Hogarth and Garrick evidently discussed the difference between the two actors and Hogarth produced this ingenious drawing,

[CAPTION: William Hogarth, *Relative proportions of James Quin and David Garrick*, 1746]

accompanied by his own explanation of why Garrick appeared to so much greater effect, despite being, apparently, so much less impressive in appearance off the stage.

Quin was about six feet tall while Garrick claimed five feet six inches, but was shorter. Since contemporary accounts clearly describe him as quote 'low in stature'. Now five foot six was above average, average height was five foot five.

And so to be low in stature he must have been five foot four. And while the, one of the amusing things about these two friends, Hogarth and Garrick and hence Carrick's remark to Hoadly, which gives this talk its title. Hogarth was known all his life as the five foot man, but he was probably four feet eleven inches.

Quin was, shall we say, stately. Garrick at least in the 1740s, when this drawing dates from, 1746 was still slim and elegant although already worried about his weight. And so Hogarth draws them at the same height, to demonstrate that Garrick had what Hogarth termed the taller proportion.

WILLIAM CHUBB:

If the exact figure of Mr Quin were to be reduced to the size of the print of Mr Garrick it would seem to be the shortest of the two because Mr Garrick is of the taller proportion. Let those figures be doubled down so they can be seen at once. Then let it be asked, which represents the tallest man?

ROBIN SIMON:

The reference to the print of Mr Garrick, is to the engraving of Garrick as Richard III.

[CAPTION: William Hogarth and Charles Grignion after William Hogarth, *David Garrick as Richard III*, 1746]

And the reason for Hogarth writing this explanation, in answer to a correspondent in Norwich – is that Quin, at this very time – the letter is dated 21 October 1746 – Quin marked his effective reappearance on the London stage after an absence with a performance of all things, of all things as Richard III, at John Rich's Covent Garden Theatre. Garrick was now of the same company, the very man who'd made this role his own, while Quin was absent.

The two actors' alternation in this part soon stopped and the moment everyone had been waiting for, when they appeared together in Rowe's *The Fair Penitent* – that performance so

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vividly recalled by Richard Cumberland, we've heard, it was an overwhelming success, so much so that Garrick recalled of a deafening applause.

WILLIAM CHUBB:

Faith – I believe Quin was as frightened as myself.

ROBIN SIMON:

But while Garrick won the battle of the Richards he was concerned about taking on the roles that Quin had made famous and was so acutely aware of the striking difference in their physical stature. When Garrick was preparing to play Macbeth, one of Quin's famous roles, for the first time, he took the extraordinarily unusual step of publishing a spoof critical attack on his own performance in advance, in order to deflect any anticipated criticism – this was in 1744.

WILLIAM CHUBB:

In an essay on acting, in which will be considered the mimical behaviour of a certain fashionable faulty actor, to which will be added a short criticism of his acting in Macbeth.

ROBIN SIMON:

You will hear straightaway that Garrick is describing Quin, who was indeed, in these words, Irish, tall, corpulently graceful.

[CAPTION: Thomas Gainsborough, *James Quin*, 1763, National Gallery of Ireland]

And that Garrick is also considering how Macbeth might be depicted by a painter.

WILLIAM CHUBB:

Valour and ambition, the two great characteristics of Macbeth, form in the mind's eye a person of mere six feet high, corpulently graceful, a round visage, a large hazel eye, aquiline nose, pro,- prominent chest and a well-calfed leg, rather inclined to that which is called an Irish leg.

This I say would be the painter's choice, were he to give us the Macbeth of his imagination. I mention this only to prove that Mr Garrick is not formed in the least externally, no more than internally, for that character.

[CAPTION: Johan Zoffany, *David Garrick and Mrs Pritchard in 'Macbeth'*, 1768, Garrick Club]

ROBIN SIMON:

The later portrayal by Johan Zoffany of Garrick, in this very part might have been designed to prove a point – for he appears almost diminutive beside a towering Mrs Prichard, though I

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might add that Zoffany was being quite flattering toward Mrs Prichard at this time of her career. This was incidentally her final performance. By now she was truly vast. And only the year before Garrick had been dreading playing opposite her on stage.

WILLIAM CHUBB:

I must be at London, which I'm sorry for, on Tuesday to run over my scenes on Wednesday morning – oh sick, sick, sick. And Mrs Prichard will make me sicker, great boobies, modelling head and no teeth – oh!

Sick, sick, spew.

ROBIN SIMON:

He was a real pro though, he went ahead. Garrick's eccentric essay of 1744 also provides us with a lot more information, in particular insights into the precision with which he, Garrick, prepared and understood his characterisations.

During his lifetime Garrick was probably most celebrated for a role that had barely thirty lines of text in the whole play. The tobacconist Abel Drugger, in Garrick's own adaptation of Ben Jonson's *The Alchemist*. As Abel Drugger, and there he is on the right, as we look.

[CAPTION: Johan Zoffany, *David Garrick (right) as Abel Drugger in 'The Alchemist'*, 1770, Private Collection]

Garrick contrived to appear on stage for an astonishing amount of time and created an hypnotic performance, almost entirely out of what is called business – stage business, that had not only the audience, but as you can see, in fact, in this picture, frequently his fellow actors in stitches.

When he adapted *The Alchemist* in 1743 Garrick, of course, because he was Abel Drugger, brought Drugger's entrance right forward to the beginning of act I scene I – in place of the original, act I scene III. And this sketch by Johan Zoffany shows Garrick at his first entrance.

[CAPTION: Johan Zoffany, *David Garrick as Abel Drugger in 'The Alchemist'*, 1769-70, Ashmolean Museum Oxford]

In the left hand figure we see Drugger, hat in hand, eyes averted, edging into the room. In the right hand image he's pulling a crown coin out of his pocket for the pretended alchemist, subtle, while getting into a terrific muddle about what to do with his hat.

Now one of the things we ought to notice is the way in which Drugger's feet are parallel. This is one of the most powerful signifiers to an eighteenth-century audience of lowly social status. And also his arms and hands. And then again his knees sag with nervousness.

In the final scene of Hogarth's *Marriage a la Mode* we see a servant in the pose adopted by Garrick for Abel Drugger.

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[CAPTION: William Hogarth, 'The lady's death', *Marriage A-la-Mode*, 6, 1745, National Gallery]

This resemblance between the servant in Hogarth's series,

[CAPTION: Detail, Johan Zoffany, *David Garrick as Abel Drugger in 'The Alchemist'*, 1769-70, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford]

the prints were published in April 1745, and the most celebrated comic turn of the moment would have prompted everyone to reflect that Hogarth's servant has been to an Abel Drugger – in order to purchase the poison with which the Countess has just committed suicide.

Now I ought really to, we ought to, we thought we'd spare just a, a minute or two to explain about this business of hands and feet, and because we're no longer aware, in the way that visitors for example to the exhibition, if there were such a thing, of first Georgian portraits.

Eighteenth-century people were acutely aware of the way you held yourself, of your deportment. Properly brought up people stood one way and held their hands one way. Oafish, low born lower class people didn't know about these things. And there's a wonderful demonstration of these differences in Hogarth's first scene in *Marriage a la Mode*, which you can see in the print form in the exhibition.

[CAPTION: William Hogarth, 'The Marriage Settlement' *Marriage A-la-Mode*, 1, 1743–1745. National Gallery]

So that here you see the viscount, who is posh, has his hands differently disposed. The daughter of the city merchant, who is obviously low born, doesn't know how to behave, and so she has her, her hands in a similar position. Moreover the young viscount has his back arched, she has her shoulder slumped.

The earl, this is a marriage of convenience of course, the earl who's broke but posh, even though he's got gout he still keeps his feet in the correct position, which is to say, at right angled to each other. The merchant doesn't know any better and has his feet parallel to each other.

It's quite extraordinary to reflect on these things but William who's properly brought up is going to show us how, how to stand.

WILLIAM CHUBB:

Well I don't know if I can, sort of roughly like this.

ROBIN SIMON:

And would you mind turning in my direction?

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WILLIAM CHUBB:

Uh, golly, got to think about it. Yes I think I can...

ROBIN SIMON:

Exactly, thank you very much. Because what you could, you had to have your feet at right angles but you couldn't have your hand pointing in the same direction as the foot which is pointing there, so you had to be like that. And then so if you wanted to change round the other way, you had to go like that – yes I think enough of this stuff.

It's terribly difficult for us, but for an eighteenth-century person, hence the popularity of dancing masters, who taught exactly this kind of thing it was engrained in a properly brought up person. Well in Garrick's essay about Macbeth he also wrote about playing Abel Drugger and revealed how precisely he calculated the movements of the parts of his body and the expression on his face.

[CAPTION: Detail, Johan Zoffany, *David Garrick as Abel Drugger in 'The Alchemist'*, 1769-70, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford]

We know that the stage business, which really made the sort of climax of his performance, involved Abel Drugger's fiddling about with an expensive item of the supposed alchemist's equipment – a urinal that he was not supposed to be touching and it broke in his hands.

He therefore anticipates, this is all without a line, so people are talking on stage, I'm talking about upstaging all his fellow company, this is exactly what Garrick did all his life, and this was the part in which he excelled in upstaging. He anticipate being punished for it, which is also constant, with the condition of course of Hogarth's servant.

WILLIAM CHUBB:

When Abel Drugger has broken the urinal he is mentally absorbed with the different ideas of the invaluable price of the urinal and the punishment that may be inflicted. Now if this is, as it certainly is the situation of his mind how are the different members of the body to be agitated?

Why, thus. His eyes must be reversed from the object he is most intimidated with, and by dropping his lip at the same time to the object, it throws a trembling languor upon every muscle. And by declining the right part of the head towards the urinal it casts the most comic terror and shame over all the upper part of the body that can be imagined.

And to make the lower part equally ridiculous, his toes must be inverted from the heel and by holding his breath he will unavoidably give himself a tremor in the knees. And if his fingers, at the same time, seem convulsed, it finishes the completest low picture of grotesque terror that can be imagined by a Dutch painter.

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ROBIN SIMON:

Clearly Hogarth had taken inspiration from Garrick's performance.

[CAPTION: Detail of William Hogarth, 'The lady's death', *Marriage A-la-Mode*, 6, 1745, National Gallery]

First performed in 1743, for his depiction of the servant in the final painting of *Marriage a la Mode*, which he can't have completed much before the end of 1744. But inspiration also worked in the opposite direction with Garrick learning as much from Hogarth.

Indeed, in the prologue to Garrick and Colman's play the *Clandestine Marriage*, Garrick generously acknowledges its inspiration in Hogarth's *Marriage a la Mode*.

WILLIAM CHUBB:

Poets and painters, who from nature draw, their best of Richard's stores have made this law, that each should neighbourly assist his brother and steal with decency from one another. Tonight your matchless Hogarth gives the fault, which from his canvas to the stage is brought.

Each as it suits him takes a separate road, their one great object, *Marriage a la Mode*, where titles dain with sits to have and hold, and change rich blood for more substantial gold, an honoured tray from interest turns aside to hazard happiness for title pride.

ROBIN SIMON:

Well as you can hear the last two couplets describe very precisely the plot as set out in the opening scene of Hogarth's great series.

[CAPTION: James Basire after a drawing by William Hogarth, *David Garrick in 'The Farmer's Return'*, 1762]

Again, in the prologue to the *Farmer's Return*, Garrick announced that it was only Hogarth's having made a drawing of himself in the lead role that persuaded him, Garrick, that this little pay was worth publishing.

WILLIAM CHUBB:

Had not his friend Mr Hogarth flattered him most agreeably by thinking the famer and his family not unworthy of a sketch by his pencil, to him therefore this trifle, which he has so much honoured, is inscribed, as a faint testimony of the sincere esteem which the writer bears him both as a man and as an artist.

[CAPTION: *The Farmer's Return from London. An Interlude. Programme from the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane*]

ROBIN SIMON:

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Let's look at two illustrations of Garrick playing in *The Farmer's Return*, one by Hogarth and one by Zoffany. Zoffany was taken up by Garrick as the artist chosen to immortalise him in paint. Since Hogarth simply couldn't devote as much time to doing that as Garrick wished.

[CAPTION: Johan Zoffany, *David Garrick in 'The Farmer's Return'*, 1762, Yale Center for British Art]

And this was Zoffany's very first theatrical composition, exhibited at the Society of Artists in May 1762.

[CAPTION: James Basire after a drawing by William Hogarth, *David Garrick in 'The Farmer's Return'*, 1762]

Garrick hung Hogarth's drawing of him, as the farmer, in his drawing room in the Adelphi, although it's now only known from this etching. This short interlude, *The Farmer's Return* was just ninety-four lines long.

And it was written by Garrick as a benefit night for Mr Pritchard, who's last performance, as I mentioned before was to be with Garrick in *Macbeth* a few years later.

[CAPTION: Johan Zoffany, *David Garrick and Mrs Pritchard in 'Macbeth'*, 1768]

And the *Farmers Return* was first produced at Drury Lane on the 20 March 1762. It revolves around the return of a farmer to his family in the country after a visit to London to see the coronation of King George III and Queen Charlotte, which had taken place on the 22 September 1761.

There was a tradition of showing a coronation on the London stage in a coronation year. And Garrick had faithfully observed that tradition. And initially *The Farmer's Return* was a development of that performance. Garrick actually rather hastily had to alter satirical references to the royal family – material far too sensitive in an interlude for Mrs Pritchard's benefit, since she'd been dressmaker to the queen – both for her wedding on the 8 September 1761 and her coronation, the duties of which – and I think this is absolutely fascinating – included advice on deportment from the actress to the queen.

Garrick therefore dropped most of the coronation material and replaced it in the *Farmer's Return*, with an account of *The Cock laying Ghost*, a famous contemporary incident involving a supposed poltergeist.

[CAPTION: Johan Zoffany, *David Garrick in 'The Farmer's Return'*, 1762, Yale Center for British Art]

James Basire after a drawing by William Hogarth, *David Garrick in 'The Farmer's Return'*, 1762]

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It's usually said that these two pictures show the same moment – well they don't, instead they form a remarkable visual record of two sequential moments in the performance of a great actor.

Zoffany elaborated the set but the same props can be seen in each, such as the stick, resting against the leg, the pipe, the candle, ale, jug. There's even a cat in the background, which I presume was stuffed. By reference to the text we can discover that the two pictures show two different points in the farmer's report to his wife and children, as he explains his visit to the cock laying ghost.

This hoax was highly topical at the time of the play's performance in March 1762 – it had only just been revealed, uncovered as a fraud in the preceding month of February. It was included by Hogarth as a detail in credulity, superstition and fanaticism.

[CAPTION: William Hogarth, *Credulity, Superstition and Fanaticism*, 1762

Detail, right, The Cock Lane Ghost]

There is the bed, with the disposed ghost and there's a mallet which, with which the child involved tapped away at the wooden wall. Although the ghost was such a last minute addition to Garrick's play it created the climactic scene, which unfolds as follows.

Now we're going to share this bit. And I should explain that the terrible Archers Loneshire accent we're going to adopt is entirely justified, by the spelling in the text. William is the farmer or 'farmer and I and his wife he's Jan and I'm Jane.'

WILLIAM CHUBB:

The top joke of all, and what pleased me the most, some wise ones and I sat up with the ghost.

ROBIN SIMON:

A ghost!

WILLIAM CHUBB:

With her nails and her knuckles she answered no noise, for yes [knock] she knocked once and for no, [knock, knock] she knocked twice.

ROBIN SIMON:

Now that's precisely the moment that's implicated depicted by Zoffany at the left.

[CAPTION: Johan Zoffany, *David Garrick in 'The Farmer's Return'*, 1762, Yale Center for British Art

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James Basire after a drawing by William Hogarth, *David Garrick in 'The Farmer's Return', 1762*]

Hogarth however, on the right shows a psychologically more acute moment, when the farmer goes on to tease his wife by pretending that he asked the ghost whether his wife is faithful to him.

The wife complacently replies, she supposes the ghost answers yes, which would mean knocking once, at which point the farmer swears that it said no. Placing his pipe back in his mouth, leaning back and watching his wife's reaction out of the corner of his eye.

WILLIAM CHUBB:

I asked her one thing.

ROBIN SIMON:

What thing?

WILLIAM CHUBB:

If yo dame was true.

ROBIN SIMON:

And the poor soul knocked one.

WILLIAM CHUBB:

By the zoons [knock knock] it was two.

ROBIN SIMON:

I'll not be abused John! Boo-hoo. She cries, I'm reading the stage direction, it says – cries. This is the upsetting moment shown by Hogarth, after which the farmer diffuses the situation by saying –

WILLIAM CHUBB:

Come prithee wife, no crying – the ghost, among friends was much given to lying.

ROBIN SIMON:

And all ends very happily. Well what makes this great innovation of Hogarth's, the theatrical portrait or theatrical history painting, so ably developed by Zoffany. What makes these pictures so central to the age of the first Georgians is that at the time the theatre itself was far and away the single greatest shared cultural experience, save only perhaps for listening to sermons, only rather more fun.

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Almost the first thing that George I did in 1717, in the aftermath of the treaty of Utrecht, when France and Britain incredibly, however briefly were actually allies, rather than at war was to ask the French regent if he could very kindly send a French company of actors to London.

[CAPTION: Godfrey Kneller *George I*. c 1714, National Portrait Gallery]

This was an understandable request: George I didn't speak a word of English but was fluent, like every monarch, aristocrat and aspiring merchant in Europe, is fluent in French. He held his cabinet meetings in French, although with Rupert Walpole, the first ever prime minister, he went one better and conversed in Latin.

[CAPTION: Godfrey Kneller *Robert Walpole*. c 1710–15, National Portrait Gallery]

Unusually and in contrast with almost all the European courts there was no private theatre at the court in England which had important consequences because it meant that the royal family who were really drama-mad had, per force, to attend the public theatres in the middle of London, more often than not in the form of command performances for the king and queen.

And that in turn did a huge amount to raise the status and popularity of the stage. The theatrical craze of the eighteenth century was given unstoppable momentum by Garrick's revolutionary performance as Richard III. Moreover the painting of 1745 together with the many, many copies of the engraving after it, firmly established this new genre of portraying actors in performance.

[CAPTION: William Hogarth, *David Garrick as Richard III*, 1745. Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool]

There had been a few paintings of the kind before this date although they had little impact. Given the enthusiasm of Charles II for the stage, it's not surprising that he owned a striking large scale portrait of John Lacey in three roles.

[CAPTION: John Michael Wright, *John Lacey in three roles*, c.1670, Royal Collection]

In 1689 appeared Knellers portrait of another royal favourite, Anthony Leigh in the Spanish Friar.

[CAPTION: Godfrey Kneller, *Anthony Leigh in 'The Spanish Friar'*, 1689, National Portrait Gallery]

Towards 1720 Giuseppe Grisoni painted Colley Cibber as Lord Fopington in a picture that bears an unsettling resemblance to Brian Sewell.

[CAPTION: Giuseppe Grisoni, *Colley Cibber as Lord Fopington*, c 1720, Garrick Club]

Curiously, it should be called Lord Fotherington, otherwise there really are none, no pictures of this kind and none at all that amount to history painting, with a notable exception of a few

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paintings by Hogarth himself in the years immediately before his portrait of Garrick – especially *Falstaff Examining his Recruits*

[CAPTION: William Hogarth, *Falstaff examining his recruits*, 1730, Private Collection]

and *The Beggar's Opera*

[CAPTION: William Hogarth, *The Beggar's Opera*, 1729, Yale Center for British Art]

– both dating from around 1729, both of them composed after Hogarth had taken drawings directly from the stage which we can see, I'm delighted to say, in the exhibition.

In making these drawings and the drawings date from 1728, Hogarth knew very well that he was following the practice of the great French artist Antoine Watteau

[CAPTION: Antoine Watteau, *Les Comédiens Italiens*, c. 1720, British Museum]

who had made this and other drawings from the stage, when in London from 1719 to 1720, in the care of the future friend of Hogarth Dr Richard Mead, some of whose miniatures incidentally made their way into the Royal Collection.

[CAPTION: Allan Ramsay, *Dr Richard Mead*, 1746, Foundling Museum]

Nonetheless in working from and with the stage Hogarth's aim was entirely different from that of Watteau who preferred using different sketches, made at different times, to distil, as it were, the essence of the experience in one perfect, one might almost say monumental composition rather than interpreting a particular moment, as Hogarth delighted in doing.

[CAPTION: Bernard Baron after Antoine Watteau, *Les Comédiens Italiens*, 1733, British Museum]

And Watteau would never attempt to identify the individual actors, that would go against every precept of the French Academy of Art, which intended that the artist should always rise above the particular gross, unreformed nature to the general and to the ideal.

With such pictures as *The Beggar's Opera* and *Falstaff Examining His Recruits*, Hogarth knew he was creating a new genre of great significance in the history of British art. Portraiture had always been the principal object of artistic patronage in Britain. And that didn't fit at all with Hogarth's ambitions for British art.

The point is that the French Academy had developed very clear ideas about the hierarchy of art and portraiture wasn't at the top. The highest form of art, everyone in Europe has agreed, was what was called history painting, then came portraiture, genre, landscape, all the way down to still life.

A history would illustrate a story, an episode from the bible or from classical literature or from certain modern classics. And it was essential that the artist should illustrate a specific

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part of a text. Hogarth realised that a kind of British history painting could be created by interpreting theatrical performances.

He would choose a specific moment of just a few lines that would therefore conform in one way to the precept of the French Academy. But these new theatrical paintings also offered a way of painting portraits, they were two things at once, they were histories of a kind and they were portraits at the same time.

It would be a mistake however, even with Falstaff Examining his Recruits, to go looking in the works of Shakespeare for the moment that Hogarth is interpreting.

[CAPTION: William Hogarth, *Falstaff examining his recruits*, 1730, Private Collection]

When he sat with his sketchbook in the stalls at Drury Lane, Hogarth wasn't watching Shakespeare's Henry IV part II act II scene III, but the version in which it was only played at the time, an adaptation by the actor and manager Thomas Betterton of which Hogarth shows act IV scene III.

All the actors can be identified, John Harper is Falstaff, next to him, behind the table, Josiah Miller as Silence which Colley Cibber plays Shallow next stage right. All three of them appear in the stage mutiny banner in Hogarth's Southwark Fair, a picture painted in 1733 and engraved in 1734.

[CAPTION: William Hogarth, *Southwark Fair*, 1734]

Well it's the same story with Garrick as Richard III:

[CAPTION: William Hogarth, *David Garrick as Richard III*, 1745, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool]

we're not looking here at a moment in Shakespeare's play, for the very good reason that it was never performed at the time. The text that Garrick was acting had been massively adapted by Colley Cibber in 1699

[CAPTION: ? Henry Cheere, *Colley Cibber*, painted plaster, c. 1740, National Portrait Gallery]

to conform more closely to the classical rules, the unities – one time, one place, one action.

And it's Cibber's name that appears on his collected works with no mention of Shakespeare.

[CAPTION: The Dramatic Works of Colley Cibber]

This, the nightmare scene on the eve of the battle of Bosworth Field exemplifies Cibber's changes.

[CAPTION: William Hogarth, *David Garrick as Richard III*, 1745, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool]

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Shakespeare has two tents and two main actors upon the stage at this point, Richard and his opponent Richmond and that would simply never do in the eighteenth century.

Cibber's version showed just one actor and one tent. As a matter of fact, Cibber's version was so successful that it was always played instead of Shakespeare's all the way through until 1877. And even Lawrence Olivier's famous opening soliloquy, in his 1955 film of Richard III, not only draws upon it he included an acknowledge to both Garrick and Cibber in the opening credits.

[CAPTION: Laurence Olivier, *Richard III*, film, 1955, detail of credits]

Hogarth zooms in on the central figure and so creates a composition with a single hero, single action, single location. And we can identify the lines in Cibber's text to which the picture refers as Richard wakes from a nightmare.

WILLIAM CHUBB:

Give me another horse! Bind up my wounds! Have mercy heaven!! Uh, it's not, it was but a dream. But then it's so terrible it shakes my soul, cold drops of sweat hang on my trembling flesh, my blood grows chilly and I freeze with horror.

ROBIN SIMON:

But Hogarth employed subsidiary narrative details of a kind that French academics also approved. In this case watch-fires in the background. In order to behave the heroic status of his villain Cibber had borrowed heavily from other plays by Shakespeare, not only the preceding one as it were, Henry VI part III, but also Richard II and even Macbeth.

And especially he borrowed from Henry V. He was drawn to the matching scene in that play depicting the eve of battle, when the two armies of England and France are drawn up opposite each other before Agincourt. Cibber therefore provided the following description in his Richard III.

WILLIAM CHUBB:

The Armand is accomplishing the knights with clink of hammers closing the rivets up. Give dreadful notes with preparation, while some like sacrifices by their fires of watch, with patience sit and inwardly ruminates the morning's danger.

ROBIN SIMON:

And I think a lot of you will recognise this is a very close echo of Shakespeare's Henry V act IV, the prologue.

WILLIAM CHUBB:

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And from the tents the armourers accomplishing the knights with busy hammers closing rivets up, give dreadful note of preparation. The poor condemned English like sacrifices by their watchful fires sit patiently and inly ruminate the morning's danger.

ROBIN SIMON:

Well why this passion for altering Shakespeare? Because to the early Georgians, Shakespeare is obviously a genius, but frankly a misfit. In the years following the restoration of the monarchy in 1660 and the revival of the theatre the English always suspected, they certainly hoped, that Shakespeare was great but his plays didn't fit with international norms of theatrical presentation which was all rather worrying. Like everything else in contemporary Britain the drama was considered in relation to how they did things in France. And in France in a nutshell the stage had to observe those unities. As a result Shakespeare's plays were altered wholesale to fit.

Decorum was restored, so that all those bodies that littered the Shakespearean stage were removed, they, none of them appear. King Lear was provided with a happy ending – but so was Romeo and Juliet. Although with that play, for extended periods you could go and see the happy ending at one play house – Drury Lane and the tragic ending at the other, across the road at Covent Garden on the same night.

Romeo and Juliet was even played, just to make it perfectly classical, as a tale in ancient Rome, so that we hear the immortal words Marias, Marias, wherefore art though Marias. We like to think of Garrick as the champion of Shakespeare and so he was.

But he wasn't so in any reverence performing authentic text, even at the very time when the texts were being so carefully edited by the likes of Dr Jonson and Lewis – well I'm going to call him Tybalt – Theobald.

Garrick was first and foremost a man of the theatre and cut Shakespeare to fit as merrily as anyone. At the height of his mature career, just a year before Hogarth painted that double portrait of 1757 – Garrick explained his slashing of a Winter's Tale to three acts in place of five.

WILLIAM CHUBB:

The five long acts, from which our three are taken, stretched out to sixteen years they buy forsaken. Lest then this precious liquor run to waste it is now confined and bottled for you taste.

ROBIN SIMON:

At first Garrick played Lear, with the happy ending, but later revived the tragedy, even then he felt compelled to cut it to bits. As he explained –

WILLIAM CHUBB:

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This tragedy, in its original state, exhibits a beautiful collection of poetical flowers choked up with a profusion of weeds, the unretrenched produce of luxuriant fertility. And it was an undertaking of a great merit to root out the latter without injuring the former.

ROBIN SIMON:

Vocationally Garrick liked to claim that he was reviving Shakespeare's original version and he did so, he claimed he was doing it with Macbeth in the 1760s, well... up to a point Mr Garrick, so long as you ignored the massive speech written by Garrick for himself as Macbeth, which, allowed him to writhe about on the floor for six minutes before finally expiring.

Nonetheless Garrick was indeed the champion of Shakespeare, he built a temple to Shakespeare on the banks of the Thames, by his house, recorded by Zoffany across, it's just across the road from his villa at Hampton.

[CAPTION: Johan Zoffany, *Mr and Mrs Garrick at the Shakespeare Temple, Hampton, 1762, Garrick Club*]

Then he conceived and directed the Shakespeare Jubilee of 1769, which effectively confirmed Shakespeare as the leading poet and playwright in the English language and as a figure of European stature – neither of which had looked at all likely for most of the preceding century.

[CAPTION: Ticket for the Shakespeare Jubilee, 1769]

With this celebration Garrick confirmed his position as Bardolitar in chief, especially with the recycle at Stratford upon Avon of his Ode 'upon dedicating a building and erecting a statue to Shakespeare at Stratford upon Avon', despite the fact that it rained so much they renamed it Stratford under Avon.

And yet Garrick remained cavalier in his approach to the text – as a letter about his changes to Hamlet, very late in his own career reveals – he explained in 1773.

WILLIAM CHUBB:

I have played the devil this winter, I have dared to alter Hamlet. I have thrown away the gravediggers and all the fifth act. And notwithstanding the galleries, we're so fond of them, I have met with more applause than I did at five and twenty, this is the great revolution in our theatrical history and for which, twenty years ago, instead of shouts of approbation I should have the benches thrown at my head.

ROBIN SIMON:

Many agreed, most agreed, our friend the reverend John Hoadly told Garrick that he hadn't altered the play enough. Shakespeare is in a sense an early Georgian himself. It's from this time onwards that he gained a European reputation and so too did Hogarth and Garrick, whose names were united with that of Shakespeare in European minds.

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Garrick secured his international fame by going at the height of his career on a grand tour, via Paris to Rome in 1763-5. He took both cities by storm, not least with party tricks such as the dagger speech in Macbeth and with brilliant impromptu demonstrations of his versatility, of the kind recorded by the art critic, Denis Diderot who knew Garrick in Paris.

[CAPTION: Louis-Michel van Loo, *Denis Diderot (1713-84)*, 1767]

WILLIAM CHUBB:

Garrick puts his head in the gap between folding doors. And in the space of four or five seconds his face will pass successively from mad happiness to moderate happiness to peaceful happiness and then – from tranquillity to surprise, from surprise to astonishment, from astonishment to sadness from sadness to dejection, from dejection to fright, from fright to horror, from horror to despair, then all the way back again to where it started.

Could it be his soul can possibly experience the whole gambit of sensations that he expresses on his face? Frankly I don't believe it. If you were to ask this celebrated gentleman who alone is worth a trip to England, just as Rome alone justifies a visit to Italy. If you were to ask him to play the Little Pastry Cook, he would act it for you.

And if you demanded a scene from Hamlet he would play that as ready to cry at dropping his cakes as to follow the path of a dagger in the air.

ROBIN SIMON:

Hogarth in his turn was made famous not through such lovely paintings as this double portrait of Mr and Mrs Garrick.

[CAPTION: William Hogarth, *Mr and Mrs David Garrick*, 1757, Royal Collection]

No one anywhere in Europe bought Hogarth's paintings. The Louvre has only just acquired its first Hogarth. Very few Europeans have even seen a painting by Hogarth.

What everyone knew, everyone knew about was Hogarth's engravings, especially the famous Progresses, of which we can see the first astonishing example in the exhibition, *A Harlot's Progress*, published in 1732.

[CAPTION: William Hogarth, *A Harlot's Progress*, 1732, Royal Collection]

Now it's well known that Hogarth later explained his conception of this entirely new art form by way of reference to the stage.

WILLIAM CHUBB:

I have endeavoured to treat my subjects a dramatic writer. My picture is my stage and men and women my players.

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ROBIN SIMON:

The contemporaries of Hogarth and Garrick saw how their art was intertwined, as indeed we've tried to suggest this evening. Christopher Smart wrote in 1752 –

WILLIAM CHUBB:

While thinking figures from the canvas start and Hogarth is the Garrick of his art.

ROBIN SIMON:

In his Progresses Hogarth was creating something peculiarly British that offered an original alternative to history painting. Breaking free from the confines of the single canvas within which one central episode might be depicted, Hogarth offered six images, but all telling one story and in which the referential details fill out the narrative with all the richness of any contemporary novel – although those contemporary novels were in fact indebted to the Progresses rather than the other way around. No wonder Hogarth's friend Henry Fielding and incidentally this is a posthumous portrait by Hogarth of Fielding and Garrick imitated Fielding in order for Hogarth to take the likeness.

[CAPTION: James Basire after William Hogarth, *Henry Fielding*]

It's no wonder that Fielding referred to these inventions of the Progresses as comic histories. He was implying that the most original innovations certainly of eighteenth-century British art, the Progresses was founded upon Hogarth's understanding of French academic theories while creating something entirely new.

Hogarth's autobiographical notes record his satisfaction that his Progresses were regarded, even in France, as a new kind of history.

WILLIAM CHUBB:

My works are called for abroad and a description of them is become the more necessary as it seems they are considered therein as it were an historical light.

ROBIN SIMON:

Enlightened Europeans got the message – Diderot among them but in particular the German author of a contemporary commentary on the engravings, Georg Christoph Lichtenberg, which remains the finest ever written.

[CAPTION: Georg Christoph Lichtenberg 1742-99]

Lichtenberg had also been fortunate enough to see Garrick act many times in London.

And his account of Garrick's acting is one of the most detailed and perceptive that we have.

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[CAPTION: Georg Christoph Lichtenberg's commentaries on Hogarth's engravings, published at Göttingen 1794-9, title page, right]

Lichtenberg also arrived at a very early understanding of Shakespeare's plays, of precisely the kind that was to place the bard at the centre of the European Romantic imagination.

Lichtenberg thought of the three, Hogarth, Garrick and Shakespeare and united in genius, as indeed they are embodied – Cibber or no Cibber – in Hogarth's parting of Garrick as Richard III.

WILLIAM CHUBB:

What work might one not write when Shakespeare, Hogarth and Garrick, there is a similarity in their genius, a concrete knowledge of man in all conditions of society made comprehensible to other people by word, by the engraving tool and by gesture.

ROBIN SIMON:

Now this year marks the 250th year of Hogarth's death. More significantly and every more precisely today is Shakespeare's 450th birthday. It's also the feast of St George. So it seemed to us the perfect moment to offer – to end with, our own Shakespeare adaptation from Henry V.

BOTH

Cry – God for Hogarth, Garrick, Shakespeare and St George.

ROBIN SIMON:

Thank you.

[Audience applause]

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