



# Actresses as Working Women: Their Social Identity in Victorian England (Gender and Performance Series)

*Tracy C. Davis*

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In Victorian society performers were drawn from varying class backgrounds, and enjoyed a unique degree of social mobility. Nevertheless the living and working conditions of female performers were very different from those of their male colleagues. Their segregation and concentration in low-status jobs, like dancing, guaranteed economic insecurity. Their attempts to reconcile sexuality and the female life cycle to a physically demanding, itinerant occupation under constant public scrutiny led to assumptions about actresses' morality. These assumptions were constantly reinforced by theatrical conventions which reflected popular pornographic images, and were extremely difficult to overcome. This book should be of interest to students and teachers of theatre studies, women's studies, and social history.

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