

Jane Milling

**“FOR WITHOUT VANITY, I’M BETTER KNOWN”:
RESTORATION ACTORS AND METATHEATRE ON THE
LONDON STAGE**

Prologue, To the Duke of Lerma, Spoken by Mrs. Ellen[Nell], and Mrs. Nepp.

- NEPP: How, Mrs. Ellen, not dress’d yet, and all the Play ready to begin?
- EL[LEN]: Not so near ready to begin as you think for.
- NEPP: Why, what’s the matter?
- ELLEN: The Poet, and the Company are wrangling within.
- NEPP: About what?
- ELLEN: A prologue.
- NEPP: Why, Is’t an ill one?
- NELL[ELLEN]: Two to one, but it had been so if he had writ any; but the Conscious Poet with much modesty, and very Civilly and Sillily—has writ none. . . .
- NEPP: What shall we do then? ’Slife let’s be bold,
And speak a Prologue—
- NELL[ELLEN]: —No, no let us Scold.¹

When Samuel Pepys heard Nell Gwyn² and Elizabeth Knipp³ deliver the prologue to Robert Howard’s *The Duke of Lerma*, he recorded the experience in his diary: “Knepp and Nell spoke the prologue most excellently, especially Knepp, who spoke beyond any creature I ever heard.”⁴ By 20 February 1668, when Pepys noted his thoughts, he had known Knipp personally for two years, much to the chagrin of his wife. He had met Knipp backstage and in the audience

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of the two playhouses. He knew her family and they shared a social circle; he had sung with her in domestic and social settings. Pepys had had much experience of Elizabeth Knipp's quotidian language and conversational mode of speech. The prologue, which offered the not-yet-in-role Nell Gwyn and the costumed Mrs. Knipp preparing for the play, begins in prose before breaking into bouncing rhyme to end more conventionally. Mrs. Knipp might seem to appear here as herself, yet Pepys eulogizes Knipp's speaking of the prologue as a theatrical experience. He does not compare her onstage performance of apparently natural speech to quotidian conversation nor does he talk of her acting. Rather, he judges it as an oratorical performance against other stage performances: she "spoke beyond any creature I ever heard." This article explores what the *performance* of the prologues and epilogues in the newly established duopoly of Restoration London theatres can reveal about how performers were known and represented, and what they tell us about the increasing individuation of those performers and the implications of this for acting and acting style.⁵

Prologues, epilogues, and induction scenes have many functions as paratexts, most notably to act as transitions for the audience between the playhouse and the fictional world of the play. In Tudor and Jacobean theatre we have patchy records of these metatheatrical scenes as only occasional elements. As Tudor household troupes evolved into commercial companies, the metatheatrical spaces of prologue and epilogue became increasingly important ways to manage audiences and audience expectations of the play. These texts playfully reflected the economics of playing and the relationship between playwright and company, as Loewenstein argues: "On the margins of dramatic representation—in induction and epilogues—the Elizabethan play is regularly represented by the speaking actor as 'ours,' the possession and, indeed, the product of the actors."⁶

Bruster and Weimann's study of Shakespearean prologues identifies the prologue as a liminal space that was primarily concerned with establishing authority for the company, the author, or the audience.⁷ For Tiffany Stern, pre-Restoration "prologues and epilogues indicated a special state of text-in-performance at which judgment could take place. They are there for new actors, and they are there for new plays—they are there for occasions when rejection is possible."⁸ These occasional treats of the pre-Restoration stage were performed by lesser actors in Tudor interludes. By the 1630s, prologues and epilogues were most often performed by hired men or young male performers who had played female roles and were "on the cusp of success as adult players."⁹ In other words, they were not written and designed to showcase or enhance the reputation of the leading players of the companies. Bruster and Weimann find prologues and epilogues to be a "zone of multiple transitions" for the performer, marking a move between functions within the troupe—whether an experienced actor was moving from adjunct to company member or a boy actor was moving into adult roles—or between roles in the repertoire.¹⁰

With the reestablishment of the theatre industry at the Restoration, prologues and epilogues became an expected part of new plays, revivals of dormant plays, and performances at Court and at Oxford. New prologues and

epilogues were written for the benefit nights for groups of players and playwrights and for the benefit nights of individual players, a trend that began in the 1690s. They were still an activity of audience management that generated and controlled expectations about the play and the players, but they began to take on a different complexion as performances.¹¹ During the Restoration, leading performers began to deliver the prologue more often, and prologues and epilogues began to be written to elevate the visibility of individual performers rather than the entire theatre company.

REPUTATION, CELEBRITY, SELVES: KNOWING THE PERFORMERS

In his exhaustive collection of prologues and epilogues of the long eighteenth century, Pierre Danchin characterizes the prologue speaker at the end of the Restoration period as a “highly individualized actor . . . who is known by name by the public and is supposed to speak *propria persona*, whether he appears as one of the characters in the play or pretends to be entirely independent from it.”¹² This focus on known performers delivering prologues in *propria persona*, that is, in his or her own person, charts a shift in theatrical practice from the pre-Restoration theatre, which rarely named and singled out its “star” performers in this way. As Danchin’s collection illustrates, it is a mode that evolved over the period.¹³ One of the ways we can chart the development of knowledge about the actors in metatheatrical spaces is by noting the frequency with which prologues and epilogues were printed with an identified speaker. For example, Danchin’s survey reveals that during the period January 1671 to January 1674, thirty-nine mainstage prologues were delivered by male performers, of which thirteen (one-third) were identified as spoken either by the leading actors (Thomas Betterton,¹⁴ William Smith,¹⁵ Charles Hart,¹⁶ James Nokes,¹⁷ Cave Underhill,¹⁸ and Michael Mohun¹⁹) or by the comic (Joseph Haines²⁰). By the period January 1701 to January 1704, of the fifty-five mainstage prologues delivered by male performers, thirty-six (two-thirds) were identified as spoken by the leading dramatic actors of the companies (Robert Wilks,²¹ Thomas Betterton, Colley Cibber,²² John Mills,²³ George Powell,²⁴ Barton Booth,²⁵ or Thomas Doggett²⁶) or the famed comic William Penkethman.²⁷ The increasing frequency with which the name of the speaker of prologues and epilogues was recorded suggests that the reader of playtexts was expected to have knowledge of individual performers.²⁸ During this same period, it was increasingly common for separately printed prologues and epilogues to be sold as artifacts: in the late 1670s and early 1680s during the Exclusion Crisis, politically inflected prologues were frequently printed in broadside.²⁹ By the 1700s, aesthetically valued pieces were appearing in poetic miscellanies, in poetic collections from playwrights, and in short-lived periodicals such as *A Pacquet from Parnassus* (published 1702), *The Diverting Post* (published 1704–6), or *The Muses Mercury* (published 1707–8).³⁰ Many of these separately produced copies of prologues and epilogues had the tag “Spoken by” and carried the performer’s name to a diverse public of provincial readers who were unlikely to have seen the originating performance in a London theatre.

However, we should note that while many more prologues and epilogues recorded the speaker’s name, we cannot assume that named actors delivered

the prologue in *propria persona*. The idea of an actor in *propria persona* that Danchin raises is a complex one and is a problem still much addressed today by contemporary theorists of performance wrestling with analyzing the identities of the autobiographical performer or the performers of task-based live art.³¹ Who is the speaking “I” of the Restoration prologue or epilogue? David Graver has created a taxonomy of actorly presence for the modern theatre that offers a useful way of looking at the prologue speaker. He considers at least seven ways to capture the “ontological complexity of the actor’s body on stage,” including as “characters, performers, commentators, personages, members of socio-historical groups, physical flesh, and loci of private sensations.”³² His list is designed to suggest not exclusionary categories but a multiplicity of possible interpretations that come into focus for an audience at different moments.

During the first years of the Restoration, the “commentator” function predominated in most prologues and epilogues; actors primarily voiced playwrights’ aesthetic concerns or comments on the play.³³ At the same time, the prologue actor stood as performer *qua* performer and a representative of the company. The content would remark upon the economic or entertainment value of the performance the company was offering. Graver suggests that we can also understand performers as representatives of a sociohistorical group, and we can see this most obviously in one of the novelties of the theatres of the Restoration theatrical period, the actress. Playwrights increasingly wrote for actresses in prologues or (more usually) epilogues. Later in the Restoration period, it became more common for playwrights to write for specific actresses. For example, Danchin’s collection of prologues and epilogues indicates that fourteen of the forty-seven epilogues for the period 1671–74 were given by women, but the women were not always identified by name. Thirty years later, nineteen of the thirty-five epilogues for the period 1701–4 were delivered by named actresses. A generic form of female epilogue emerged that developed the traditional entreaties to the audience for acceptance and applause into a form of flirtation with the audience. Diana Solomon notes that the rhetorical trope of the actress’s sexual availability produced the new genre of the bawdy female epilogue.³⁴ This recast in new form the long theatrical tradition of the bawdy jig following the mainpiece. In the majority of these epilogues, actresses stand as a generic type that represents a gendered group.

From the 1670s, commercially minded playwrights created more theatricalized prologues. Performers still served as commentators and as representatives of the company, but the prologues also included more reflexive moments of the actor as a “personage,” in Graver’s taxonomy, “an aura generated by the public circulation of stories about the actor” that is most obvious in the modern idea of celebrity.³⁵ Joseph Roach notes that this type of identity emerged during the Restoration period: “As their images and reputations began to circulate freely in the absence of their persons, actors and actresses became the first modern celebrities—popularly recognized public figures who were not also kings or queens.”³⁶ While audiences learned about the reputations of actors through images and anecdotes that circulated beyond the theatre, they also learned about them through their onstage activity. By 1700, around two-thirds of theatrical prologues and epilogues were delivered by identified performers, male and

female, each season, and of these around one-third had some element of reference to the professional persona of the performer.

Recent critics have examined the relationship between the personages of actors and the characters they played within the fictional worlds of the plays of the Restoration stage. This doubled relationship of performer persona and character holds true for most theatrical performance, the “inherent duality of theatrical activity,” as Jean Alter dubs it.³⁷ Lisa Freeman describes this relationship as competitive, noting that “the fictional persona created by a playwright often had to compete with the persona or public reputation of the actor or actress taking that part. In this very basic sense, the ‘character’ presented to an audience was neither singular nor unitary, but rather manifold and incongruous.”³⁸ For her, this means that Restoration and eighteenth-century theatre was always a place of resistance to the emergent idea of an interior, coherent, authentic, and moral self, as modeled by the novel.

The prologues and epilogues of the Restoration inverted this process, allowing audience members to build knowledge about an actor’s personage or professional persona through their memory of the theatrical roles and characters he or she had played. After around 1670, many of the new commercial playwrights explicitly wrote prologues and epilogues to help audiences do this. Durfey’s induction to *The Virtuous Wife* (1679) demonstrates that audiences were assumed to share in a complex understanding of playhouse politics and the personae of the leading players. When the actress Elizabeth Barry finds she is to play the eponymous virtuous wife, she complains that “Underhill, Jevan, Currier, Tony Lee/Nokes, all have better characters than me”³⁹ and “Throws her Part away.” In response, Anthony Leigh⁴⁰ “peeps out of a little window over the stage” and refutes the suggestion that he has a better part (“I play a Fool you know, a silly Rogue”) and accuses her of collaborating with James Nokes. Nokes himself then “peeps out of a little window [on] the other side of the stage” and Nokes and Leigh banter. “You’re a pimp, a Pandarus of Troy, a Gripe, a Fumble,” accuses Nokes. Leigh retorts, “Ye’re a Swash, a Toby in a Barrel.” These terms of abuse refer to the characters that each actor had played, with great success, during the preceding season.⁴¹ The argumentative tone of the exchange prefigures the violent onstage relationship of Sir Lubberly Widgeon (Leigh) and Lady Beardly (“Nurse” Nokes) and seems also to reveal more of the professional personae of the actors. Leigh and Nokes became a popular pairing from the mid-1670s, and their names appear as a shorthand for foolish blustering behavior in numerous poems and pamphlets.⁴² The prologue to Durfey’s *The Virtuous Wife* emphasizes the economic value of playing, as was conventional at the time. Leigh worries, “Sdeath are you mad, shall we lye down,/Lose all our shares, nay, and affront the Town?” Barry concedes, “Well I must do’t I see, or lose my share,/Come, come—be friends, I’ll Act—for once I’ll trye.” Here, the professional persona for both the male and the female actor includes membership in the group of commercial performers who need to please the town and an individual identity that builds on an accretion of roles.

A performer’s professional persona was not a static entity. Professional personae and reputations could be crafted within prologues and epilogues. The

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prologue to Durfey's *Marriage Hater Match'd* (January 1692), whose text pairs actor William Mountfort and actress Anne Bracegirdle, demonstrates how this might work. Bracegirdle, a young, unmarried performer, had made her debut with the United Company in 1688. She had had considerable success playing virtuous heroines and witty flirts and had taken several roles playing opposite Mountfort in previous seasons. The virtuous nature of the suffering heroines she played began to garner her a reputation for virtuous behavior offstage:

Mr. Monford *Enters, meets Mrs. Bracegirdle dressed in Boy's Cloaths, who seeing [him], Endeavours to go back, but he taking hold of her, Speaks*

MONFORT: Nay, Madam, there's no turning back alone;
Now you are Enter'd, faith, you must go on
And speak the Prologue, you for those are Fam'd
And th' Play's beginning.

BRACE: Would the Play were Damn'd
I shall ne'er wish the Poet good Success
For putting me into this nauseous Dress.
A Dress, which of all other things, I hate.⁴³

Durfey's implication that Bracegirdle was famed for prologues is interesting because in January 1692 she had delivered only two (possibly three) prologues and around four epilogues. This prologue was itself to develop her fame for delivering prologues. The cross-dressed Bracegirdle resists the potential illusion of gender complexity by drawing attention to her body and her resistance to wearing men's clothes, apparently providing a stable interiority under the "nauseous Dress." This echoed her performance as Semernia, the Indian queen of Behn's *The Widdow Ranter* (1689), who reluctantly disguises herself as a man to fight the English and save her rebel lover. She seems to disavow her performance of what was to become, partly because of this prologue, one of her theatrical specialties—breeches roles—at the very moment that she adds a cross-dressed performance to her repertoire. Although, as Diana Solomon argues, Bracegirdle's virginal public persona was paradoxically played against the fallen character of Phoebe in *Marriage Hater Match'd*, that virginal reputation is reconstructed in the prologue in language (but challenged in sense) through Durfey's ironic quip in Mountfort's mouth, "Well, we'll allow your Modesty is Fam'd." This quip works in two ways, both to reinforce a reputation that was being constructed around Bracegirdle by a series of writers and to challenge it, because informed members of the audience knew that Mountfort was the very person who could attest that Bracegirdle's modesty was in question.⁴⁴ This allusion confirmed the constructed nature of Bracegirdle's professional persona in the moment of its construction. What appears to be a reference to a moral interiority attached to Bracegirdle's real, offstage self is revealed as a writerly game with her evolving reputation and professional persona. In many ways Bracegirdle's professional persona was anomalous; the identity that was written for her

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resisted the sexualized norm for actresses of her generation and continued to emphasize her “virtue.” Two years later, during the complex negotiations in 1694 with Christopher Rich, manager of the United Company, she capitalized on this individuation by arguing that her public prominence merited a salary increase.⁴⁵

“WITHOUT VANITY, I’M BETTER KNOWN”: THE MISSING POPULAR PERFORMERS

Modern commentators have tended to concentrate on the celebrity of the leading dramatic actors, such as Bracegirdle and Betterton, but another group of male performers was greatly celebrated in their day as knowable individual personae—the fools. In the world of the prologue and epilogue, fools were the performers most skilled at establishing a fantasy of a knowable identity and at establishing a comic complicity and intimacy with an audience through direct address. The roll call of the leading fools or clowns hardly resonates for us today: John Lacy, Thomas Jevon,⁴⁶ Joseph Haines, Anthony Leigh, James Nokes, Thomas Doggett, and William Penkethman. Our histories have tended to concern themselves with the leading dramatic performers of the companies and have often missed the elision of popular and elite culture, the merging of entertainment from the public fairs and the mainstage in Restoration playhouses. The bold John Lacy,⁴⁷ who performed his own prologue for *The Dumb Lady* (1672), bounced onto the stage with this:

Here I am, and not asham’d who know it,
I humbly come your *Forma paup’ris* Poet.⁴⁸

Self-authorizing and in mock-bject form, Lacy played up the image of himself as the impecunious poet, even though he was a shareholding player. Later in the century, in the prologue to his play *The Devil of a Wife* (1686), Thomas Jevon addressed a section of the audience he dubbed his patrons and claimed, “My name’s Mr Jevon, I’m known far and near.”⁴⁹ Both Lacy and Jevon explicitly addressed the commercial value of their celebrity in the prologues to their first plays, where they attempted to negotiate their commercial success as writers.

One of the mechanisms that produced celebrity for these comic performers and seduced audiences into believing that the performer would reveal a knowable “I” was extemporization, which suggested tantalizing access to a “real self” and to the most explicit agency of the actor intervening in the scripted world of the text. When Robert Howard wrote a double ending to his *Vestal Virgin* (1664), he also wrote an epilogue for John Lacy that drew attention to the fluidity of plot and form as a theatrical conceit. Lacy’s epilogue to the tragic version starts:

By your leave, Gentlemen
After a sad and dismal Tragedy
I do suppose that few expected me.

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But for the comic version, Howard wrote an epilogue that seemed to put Lacy at a disadvantage:

LACY: By your leave, Gentle . . . How! What do I see!
 How! All Alive! Then there's no use for me.
 'Troth, I rejoice you are reviv'd agen;
 And so farewell good living Gentlemen.

[PLAYER] 1: Nay, Mr. Lacy.

LACY: What would you have with me?
 I can't speak Epilogues ex tempore.⁵⁰

Lacy then proceeds to deliver a beautifully turned epilogue, clearly not extempore but masquerading as such.

Dryden provided a prologue for Joseph Harris's *The Mistakes* (1690) that created even more of an illusion of extemporization:

Enter Mr. BRIGHT: Gentlemen, we must beg your pardon; here's no
 Prologue to be had to day; Our New Play is like
 to come on without a Frontispiece. . . .

Enter Mr. BOWEN: Hold your prating to the Audience: here's honest
 Mr. *Williams* just come in, half mellow, from the
 Rose-Tavern. He swears he is inspir'd with Claret,
 and will come on, and that Extempore too, either
 with a Prologue of his own or something like
 one. . . . *Exit Mr. Bright and Mr. Bowen.*

Enter Mr. WILLIAMS: Save ye Sirs Save ye! I am in a hopeful way
 I should speak something in rhyme now for the Play
 But the duce take me if I know what to say.⁵¹

Williams then “stumbles” physically and in the scansion of several lines, as Dryden built in the pauses, hesitations, and apologies of an actor making it up as he goes along. *Apparent* extemporization was a mode to which playwrights frequently returned as part of their hold on the textual world of performance. *Actual* extemporization was the preserve of the fools. The written traces of such extempore performances are found in prologues and epilogues written by comic actors or the more theatrically astute playwrights, such as Behn or Durfey, and are usually set within a context that directly references popular culture and popular performance from the fairgrounds.

The London fairs—Bartholomew Fair, which was held for two weeks in August, and Southwark Fair, which lasted for up to two weeks in September—offered a wide range of entertainments such as drolls, puppet shows, acrobatics, feats and exotic beasts, ropedancing, and music amid the stalls selling goods, food, and drink. The drolls were often based on folk traditions and ballads as well as cut-down versions of popular comedies and frequently made scurrilous reference to City of London authorities and topical political events. The booth theatres were temporary wooden structures that often had a gallery and bore a

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passing resemblance to the licensed playhouses.⁵² Thomas Jevon’s booth act was directly reproduced in Aphra Behn’s *Emperor in the Moon* (1687). In the prologue, Jevon describes how dramatic literature has failed to find success, so the company has “bought a share i’ th’ speaking Head./So there you’ll save a Sice.”⁵³ The speaking head was a well-known entertainment from the fairs, where it cost sixpence, or “a Sice,” to see it. A performer dressed as a learned doctor magically brought a bronze head to life. The head, conveniently situated on a table covered with a cloth, answered questions. (An advertisement for John Harris’s booth at Bartholomew Fair included the bronze speaking head and the doctor in a popular woodcut.⁵⁴) The act offered a direct appeal to the nonelite audience in the galleries and alerted all the audience to the generic playfulness of Behn’s farce. In Behn’s prologue, Jevon and the head improvise, in the manner of the fairground entertainment.

The Head rises upon a twisted Post, on a Bench from under the Stage.

After Jevon speaks to its Mouth[.]

[JEVON:] Oh! Oh! Oh!

STENTOR [the bronze head]: Oh! Oh! Oh!

After this it [he] sings Sawny,⁵⁵ Laughs, crys God bless the King in order[.]

Stentor answers.

[STENTOR:] Speak lower Jevon, if you’d have me repeat;

[JEVON:] Plague of this Rogue, he will betray the Cheat.

He speaks lower, it answers indirectly.

The text records only the manner of the gag rather than the improvised content of the exchanges that follow.

In the epilogue to the farce Jevon wrote, *The Devil of a Wife* (1686), the complex elision of character and professional performer is played up in the mode of popular droll performance. Jevon concludes the play onstage with Mrs. Percival, who has played his long-suffering wife in the comedy. He addresses her by her character name, Nell, but talks of his actorly activity of changing for the postperformance dance:

MR. JEVON: Come Nell, prithee while I dress for the dance, speak something in my behalf to these friends of mine here . . .

MRS. PERCYVAL: Who I Zekel, Oh Lord you know I want dacity when I come before great Folk.

Mrs. Percival replies in character as his wife and makes an address to the audience on behalf of her husband. Jevon interrupts:

MR. JEVON: Why how now, what a pox is all this for?
What speak an epilogue in prose? (the Devil)
I could have done that my self you foolish Jade.
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(Addresses himself to the Audience and makes a long Banter, and goes off, after that he speaks.)

Look you Huswife, there as good prose as any is in England
but I must have it in verse, all Beaten verse, away with it.

Although he turns to address Susanna Percival as “wife” once more, it is clear that Jevon, a comic famed both for his work with the theatre company and his fairground booth act, is bantering with the audience in his professional comic persona, not quite an “actorly” one and not quite his “real” self.⁵⁶

Another exponent of the improvised form was Joseph Haines. In the epilogue to fellow actor Hildebrand Horden’s *Neglected Virtue* (1696), Haines acted the “Mad man” and danced, sang, canted, and threw off his periwig. In the printed text the verse is interrupted with a footnote: “Here Mr. Hains made several pleasant Digressions too long to be inserted; and to make place for ’em, omitted some Lines of this Epilogue.”⁵⁷ In extempore performance the actor interposed a tactical self—not an obediently created character but a troublesome (though still a *performed*) persona. Such comic personae, with their confident direct address to an audience alluding to the delights of scurrilous, popular fairground entertainment, were valuable draws for the theatre.

The fools onstage summoned a tradition of popular entertainment that operated above and beyond the licensed theatres, a form of entertainment that had not been interrupted by the prohibition of playhouses during the Commonwealth. This tradition continued outside the literary traces of playtext and learned or elite criticism of the day.⁵⁸ In the induction sequence to Edward Howard’s *Man of Newmarket* (1678), actors Joseph Haines and William Shatterell come onstage as “themselves” and debate which play they should perform. Haines argues for a farce, drumming up the audience to support him: “Where thou shalt see me, Joe Haines, so mimick French and English mixtures; thou knowst my Talent that way.”⁵⁹ Haines had played the French tutor in Edward Ravenscroft’s *The Citizen Turn’d Gentleman* (1671), a range of fools such as Sparkish in William Wycherley’s *The Country Wife* (1675), and Harlequin in Ravenscroft’s *Scaramouch a Philosopher* (1677). He had also performed in the booths of the London fairs.⁶⁰ Although this remark seems to be an example of generic snobbery, suggesting that the nonelite members of the gallery might be the most acquainted with Haines’s alternate career as a performer in the London fairs, the fairs drew a wide social range, and in the theatres the players performed all genres to appreciative audience members seated in all the ranked spaces of the playhouse. Haines’s trademark ability as a parodic physical mimic of French social behavior drew upon his excursions in the train of the Duke of Buckingham to Louis XIV’s court in 1670, where he danced in the première of Molière’s *Le bourgeois gentilhomme*. Haines thus embodied the melding of low and elite culture in his professional persona to such an extent that when the theatres at the end of the century begin to produce a mixed program of entertainment, with frequent entertainments from dancers, singers, and more lowly fairground entertainments, he was the natural choice to introduce the Strong Kentish Man, a popular fairground act, as the summer entertainment at Dorset Garden.

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Mister Joseph Haines was his Master of Ceremonies and introduced him in a prologue upon the stage, and indeed who so fit to do it, as this Person, whose breath is as strong as the Kentish man’s back.⁶¹

One of the most interesting ways that Haines cultivated his celebrity was by deliberately merging religious belief, one of the most “private” aspects of a moral self, with a changing professional persona. Haines had toyed with audiences about his religious proclivities in metatheatrical material he had written since 1675:

So fast from Plays approv’d and Actors known,
To drolling, strolling Royal Troop you run,
That *Hayns* desparing is Religious grown...
I will reform—
But what Religion’s best in this, lewd Town,
My friends I’m yet like most of you, of none.⁶²

The story of Haines’s conversion to Catholicism is muddled by the many versions that exist, but it occurred during his European travels in the entourage of either William Soames, ambassador to Constantinople, or of the Earl of Castlemaine, ambassador to the pope. Haines returned to England in late 1688, during the fraught negotiations over James II’s removal from the throne. In Haines’s first recorded performance after William III’s accession in 1689, he took the role of Bayes, a parody of John Dryden that was originated by John Lacy, in a revival of *The Rehearsal*. In the prologue to this performance, his most printed prologue, he publicly recanted his conversion to Catholicism. Haines chose to enact his reconversion to Protestantism on the stage as a theatrical performance. He appeared as a penitent in a white sheet holding a candle, and in a combination of blasphemous parody and earnest supplication ended the prologue to *The Rehearsal*:

Well Sirs,
Being thus confess’d, and freed from Rome’s Pollution
I beg from your kind Hands, by Absolution (*kneeling*).⁶³

His request “from your kind hands” required not the conventional touch of an absolving minister but the conventional applause of a multitude of hands in the playhouse. He required a secular bodily response to an embodied performance that operated as a cluster of social, political, religious, and theatrical practices. A 1690 pamphlet by Tom Brown regarding Haines’s erstwhile Catholicism is subtitled, *Being the Third and Last Part of the Dialogue of Mr. Bays*; this links Joseph Haines to John Dryden,⁶⁴ whose Catholicism led to his fall from grace after 1689, by having Haines recount a scurrilous version of the travels on which his conversion occurred in dialogue with “Mr. Bays.” The pamphlet provides another account of this period of Haines’s life that became interleaved with Haines’s professional persona.⁶⁵ Brown’s pamphlet attributed Haines’s reconversion to “Interest, which a Poet ought always principally to mind; now the

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Protestant Religion, Mr. Hains, will qualifie you again for the Play-House” and to “Fashion,”⁶⁶ emphasizing the commercial and political aspects suspected to have been in play in Haines’s apparently personal spiritual declarations.

The Haines recantation prologue was very popular with audiences and was repeatedly performed. Recognizing its commercial value, Thomas Durfey wrote a second recantation prologue for him in 1690:

My Reconversion, Sirs, you heard of late,
I told you I was turn’d, but not to what,
The truth disguis’d for Cause best known to me;
But now what really I am,—you see;
In vain did *English* Education work,
My Faith was sick, I always was a *Turk*;
Besides my rambling Steps ere I came home,
Constantinople reach’d as well as *Rome*,
And by the *Mufti*, who nice Virtue priz’d,
For being so Circumspect, was Circumcis’d.⁶⁷

By now the force of repetition and cumulative excess of explanation reduces the aura of credibility about this recantation, for here Haines must confess himself a Muslim, and circumcised to boot. This is perhaps the most extreme example of celebrity produced by a professional performer adopting a persona that mimics the appearance of a private, moral self.

The extent of Haines’s celebrity as a recognizable persona performing an apparently knowable, comic self is demonstrated by the number of times he was invited to perform or write prologues and epilogues by other playwrights and players. When Congreve wrote the prologue to Powell’s play *A Very Good Wife* (1693), he vouched for the value of the play and of playwright George Powell, himself a well-known figure in the United Company, through the body of Haines.

Written for Mr Hains, and spoken by him.
Here’s a young Fellow here—as Actor—Powel
One whose Person, perhaps, you all may know well,
And he has writ a Play—that very Play
Which you are all come here to see, to day; . . .
First know, that favour which I’d fain have shown,
I ask not for, in his Name, but my own;
For, without Vanity, I’m better known.

The authorizing presence here is the comic actor, Joseph Haines, who is “better known.” The prologue continues to reveal by whom Haines is known:

Among the few, which are of noted Fame
I’m safe; for I myself am one of them.
You’ve seen me Smoak at Will’s among the Wits;
I’m witty too, as they are—that’s by Fits.⁶⁸

“For without Vanity, I’m better known”

Haines can be doubly authorizing because he is figured as famous in two contexts. The first is Will’s coffeehouse, a known haunt of playwrights and a group of writers dubbed the “Wits,” a cultural space that implies that the literary qualities of his work can be vouched for. The second context is onstage, where Haines stands for reliable entertainment value in performance, a value that inheres to his professional persona. By 1693, Haines was a highly recognized celebrity: the “I” of these texts holds both the fantasy of a stabilized, unitary interiority and the reality of continual variation, the interplay of visible surfaces, shifting between and within each performed experience. The body of the performer stands as a memorial that summons other spaces of performance, such as the coffeehouse and the fairground booth, for audience members who have also participated in his performance beyond the stage. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Haines was also the subject of the first biography of an actor, *The Life of the Late Famous Comedian, Jo. Hayns*, a contribution to a burgeoning print culture that was emerging around the celebrity performer.⁶⁹ Haines and Jevon were part of a tradition of celebrated fools and clowns: William Kemp,⁷⁰ Robert Armin,⁷¹ and Richard Tarlton⁷² had been celebrities of the pre-Restoration stage and were as widely known as the one or two leading actors of the Elizabethan and Jacobean companies. Although we are less acquainted with the celebrity comics of the Restoration stage today, the success of their often self-authored performances is evidenced by the large number of separately printed prologues and epilogues and by the regular commentary on them in anecdotes, printed ephemera, and theatrical pamphlets. Their personae appeared to offer audiences a veridical, knowable “I” and contributed to the rise in popularity of this kind of Restoration prologue and epilogue—and thus to the increased individuation of the known performer from the troupe.

“GRUNTING LIKE BETTERTON”: STYLE AND THE INDIVIDUAL

Metatheatrical spaces produced knowledge of a professional persona and, in the case of the comics, playful allusions to a knowable offstage personality. Inevitably, these spaces were also the place for discussions of acting skill and, particularly within the context of theatrical competition at the end of the seventeenth century, of acting *style*.

By the 1680s and 1690s, the economic value of a player’s name and of his or her identity had become increasingly important to acting companies. The appearance of certain performers could make or break a play, as numerous playwrights confess in their prefatory material. “And now for you who here come wrapt in Cloaks/Only for love of Underhill and Nurse Nokes,” says Elizabeth Barry in Otway’s epilogue to *Caius Marius* (October 1679).⁷³ Southerne’s epilogue to his *Wives Excuse* (1691) has Barry, who as Mrs. Friendall has remained virtuous against all odds, step forward to speak in the voice of a disgruntled audience member. Barry asks:

Why, when the means were in the Lady’s hand,
The Husband civil and the Lover near,
No more was made of the Wife’s Character?
Damn me, cries one, had I been Betterton

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And struts, and cocks, I know what I had done:
She should not ha' got clear of me so soon.⁷⁴

Southerne creates the audience member who is imaginatively entering into the character of the lover in order to complete the adulterous activity of the plot and, more significantly, entering into the actorly persona of Betterton, who “struts and cocks” and whose success in rakish roles would have cued the expectation of adultery. Here is a commentary on Betterton, although admittedly in a rather clichéd form, as a performer who struts and swaggers on stage.

By the 1690s, religiously motivated challenges to the theatre were building that emphasized the immorality and insincerity of actors.⁷⁵ The theatre defended itself against these attacks not so much with theoretical treatises as with daily lived experience, through the particularity of the bodies and personae of leading performers. When Farquhar defends the value of the stage in the face of the onslaught from Jeremy Collier and the members of the Society for the Reformation of Manners who challenged the theatre’s legitimacy,⁷⁶ he points to Betterton’s performance of Alexander the Great in Nathaniel Lee’s *The Rival Queens*:

Yet the whole Audience at the same time knows that this is Mr. Betterton, who is strutting upon the stage and tearing his Lungs for a Livelihood. And that the same Person shou’d be Mr. Betterton, and Alexander the Great, at the same time, is somewhat like an Impossibility, in my Mind. Yet you must grant this Impossibility in spite of your Teeth, if you han’t Power to raise the old Hero from the Grave to act his own Part.⁷⁷

Farquhar uses Betterton’s reputation and status as a leading performer to ground his championing of the representational agenda of the stage. Roach argues that this valorization of Betterton in particular (but also of players in general) within the public sphere becomes a form of surrogation. For Roach, Betterton, in recollection more than in performance experience, comes to stand as “a shadow king, a visible effigy signifying the dual nature of sovereignty, its division between an immortal and an abject body, and the ultimate symbolic diffusion of the former into a body of laws.”⁷⁸ Roach identifies the role the hagiology of Betterton plays in circum-Atlantic culture, but Betterton could come to be considered so significant and individual a performer only after he had made the particularly audacious commercial decision to secede from the monopoly of the United Company and establish what was to be popularly known as the Actors’ Company at Lincoln’s Inn Fields in 1695.⁷⁹

The self-authorizing force of reestablishing an actor-led playing company, which had not seen since before the Civil War, put the pressure for commercial success squarely onto the shoulders of the leading performers. Robert D. Hume suggests that Christopher Rich attempted to retain some players at Drury Lane in what was left of the Patent Company by offering individual actors a benefit night to offset the shortfall in their salaries. He demonstrates how the model of group benefits for the women players or young players and the logic of the playwright’s

third-night benefit led individual actors at both houses to establish a benefit night “to demonstrate popularity, to make an effort in one’s own behalf, and perhaps, just perhaps, to make a profit far beyond what could be earned in many weeks of salaried work.”⁸⁰ Cheryl Wanko discusses the social significance of the actor benefit in her study of the emerging fashion of the actor’s biography, an inevitable extension of the circulation of reputation. At such occasions, “the audience also gains cultural capital, a return on their benefit investment, by being seen at the most fashionable players’ benefits, thus affirming their good taste, and by assuring the regard and deference of a popular performer.”⁸¹ As the performers became increasingly distinguished from each other, in part through the mechanisms of the metatheatrical spaces, the drive for knowledge about performers developed and with it both the attraction of cultural significance that might accrue to the aficionado and the entertainment value of the fantasy “actor persona.” More than a line of business or the expectation of what an “actor in character” would provide, the theatrical activity beyond the performance of the play offered audiences knowledge of the actorly personae of individual financially successful players.

Commercial imperatives contributed to the evolution of an interest in individual acting *style*: the possibility that an increasingly consumerist public might develop a taste for the individual acting prowess of one company or one kind of performance over another and thus make one set of performers more financially successful than another. The intertheatre rivalry produced a number of theatrically referential plays that dwelled on acting ability and style, particularly from the members who were left at the Patent Company at Drury Lane, who acknowledged their company’s lack of experienced players and the implications that this had for their income and their acting. For example, in the epilogue to John Crowne’s *Caligula*, an unnamed girl actor acknowledged that its audience members preferred “the famous Actors” who had “fled from us to an old Tennis Court.”⁸²

In John Fletcher’s *Philaster; or, Love Lies a Bleeding* (1695), the young members of the company complained that they were hard pressed to find competent actors to perform in the manner to which the audience had become accustomed.

Philaster and Bellario, let me tell ye
For those bold parts we have no Hart or Nelly.
Those darlings of the stage that charmed you there
Our feebler strength must of their heights despair. . . .
The Elder Heroes of the other stage
Were striplings once of our young beardless age
And to perfection did not leap but climb.⁸³

The Patent Company called for patience to allow its younger performers to refine the arts of playing. Meanwhile, the company’s players mocked the impressive but limited playing of the “dear Antiquities” of the other house in an attempt to generate support for their own style:

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Yet if you think it better we can play
Like whining Zanger, or stiff Mustapha:
Or else, Gad mend me Rustan, you shall see
But who can make a figure such as he?⁸⁴

The reference to the dated rhymed tragedy of Orrery's *Mustapha* is a deliberate ploy to point up the age and the older style of the performers in the Actors' Company. Betterton's Solyman had been an early ranting role. William Smith, who was to die in 1695, had been a noble Zanger; and Samuel Sandford, known for his hunched shoulder, had played the devious Rustan.⁸⁵

This competition for audiences between the two companies was to translate into direct performance rivalry. Colley Cibber records the battle between George Powell and Thomas Betterton when Powell acted *The Old Batchelour* in mimicry of Betterton's style and when Cibber himself had an opportunity, during Doggett's short desertion to the other house, to try a different style for Fondlewife.⁸⁶ Likewise George Powell's *The Fatal Discovery* (1698) extended the criticism and mimicry of the other house:

We pluck the Vizor off from t'other house:
And let you see their natural Grimaces
Affecting Youth with pale Autumnal faces.
Wou'd it not any Ladies Anger move
To see a Child of sixty-five make Love.
Oh! My Statira! Oh, my angry dear (*Grunting like Betterton*)
Lord what a dismal sound wou'd that make here (*speaking like a Christian*)⁸⁷

In another example of overt discussion of the style of particular actors, the passionate style of Betterton, Barry, and Bracegirdle is mocked in the anonymous *The Female Wits* (1697), in which the author Marsilia directs a highly disorganized rehearsal at Drury Lane. In attempting to act the play within a play, the young actors are shown struggling with remarkable performance demands. Marsilia commands the actress, "Dear Mrs. Knight, in this speech, stamp as Queen Statira does, that always gets a Clap."⁸⁸ Mrs. Knight, a real actress with Drury Lane, is here instructed to imitate Bracegirdle's acting style in the role of Statira in Lee's *The Rival Queens*. Later in *The Female Wits*, Marsilia instructs the hopelessly miscast William Penkethman as the young hero Amorous:

I think you are oblig'd to me for choosing you for a Heroe. Pray do it well,
that the Town may see, I was not mistaken in my Judgment: Fetch large
strides; walk thus; your Arms strutting; your Voice big, and your Eyes
terrible.⁸⁹

Undoubtedly Penkethman was to perform in direct mockery of Betterton's great tragic heroes. This flurry of competitive metatheatrical banter indicates how personnel issues were affecting repertory choices. As Betterton, Barry, and Bracegirdle aged, they became increasingly famed for their tragic prowess.

A burgeoning print culture made the wider circulation of theatrical commentary, review, and audience perspectives possible, thus also creating knowledge of the leading players and their reputations apart from the performed encounter in the playhouse. However, these performed encounters, as the intercompany rivalries of the seasons after 1695 illustrate, came to be about a distinctive, individual style of playing, not just about a professional actorly persona as informed by character roles, company position, or even generic preferences.

Discourses emerge over the period that center attention on the aesthetic concerns of the “art of acting,” in which the activity of the successful performer was increasingly characterized and perceived as removed from the trade of impersonation. Here we see the beginnings of the valued cultural field of the artist.⁹⁰ Postlewait notes that Garrick’s “art, which seemingly overcame the distance between external performance techniques and internal vital passion (by means of native sensibility), and his life, which closed the social gap between an actor and a gentleman (by means of moral sensibility), offered reassuring evidence that the problem of a split identity was eminently solvable.”⁹¹ Roach identifies the paradigm shift in scientific thought that championed empirical analysis that was applied to the stage. Through metatheatrical stage conventions, through biography, and through the theatrical material produced by an emerging print culture, the actual activity of actors and the observation of difference in acting style became possible by the eighteenth century.⁹² Much ink has been spilled in charting the contests set up between the styles of representative actors of the eighteenth century: Garrick and Quin, Garrick and Macklin, Kemble and Kean. Such perception of differentiation became a kind of knowledge that was culturally valuable to the spectator.

In the complex representation of individual performers in prologues and epilogues, more than a line of business emerged. Audiences were seduced by these individuated performers, these apparently knowable personalities, who were to become economically significant within the theatrical marketplace. Rather than the leading dramatic actors and actresses of the day, it was the clowns and fools who most fully developed prologues and epilogues as performances of the veridical self. The benefits, metaphoric and economic, of an individuated actorly persona also carried a social and symbolic significance. As the theatrical institution changed, paralleled by movements in social understandings of identity, the differentiation of one actor from another began to generate an interest in acting “style.” The recognition of such stylistic niceties became an important mark of culturally significant audience taste. Restoration prologues and epilogues chart the tactical interventions of performers in spaces outside text, character, and the conventions of dramatic genre. They draw as much upon the performance of popular, fairground culture as the practices of licensed drama, and they mark the arrival of the celebrity performer.

ENDNOTES

1. Robert Howard, *The Great Favourite; or, The Duke of Lerma* (In the Savoy [London]: H. Herringman, 1668), n.p.

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2. Eleanor [Nell] Gwyn (1651?–87) was a leading actress with the King's Company. She made her debut in the 1663–4 season and quickly rose to prominence for her ability to play witty heroines in comedy. She and Charles Hart, the leading man of the King's Company, were regularly cast as a romantic double act. She is most remembered today as Charles II's mistress, by whom she had two sons. She left the stage in 1671 but remained an important figure at court until her death in 1687.

3. Elizabeth Knipp (d. ca. 1682), an actress and singer with the King's Company from 1664, usually performed supporting roles as a confidante to the leading character in tragedy or as a flirt in comedy. Much of the information we have about her comes from Pepys's diary. She was probably the partner of comic actor Joseph Haines. Nothing more is heard of her after 1682.

4. William Van Lennep, ed., *The London Stage*, vol. 1, 1660–1700 (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1960), cxxxv.

5. When Charles II became king in 1660, he granted patents for two theatre companies: Thomas Killigrew held the patent for the King's Company and William Davenant the one for the Duke's Company. These were the only legitimate theatre companies in London; they were permitted to employ actors under whatever terms they desired and to build new theatres. Lively competition between the companies for audiences and repertoire ensued. However, by 1682, stymied by management mistakes and the loss of their theatre in a fire, the King's Company was barely viable, and the Duke's Company effectively took them over to form the United Company. The entrepreneur Christopher Rich bought a controlling share in the United Company, seeing the moneymaking opportunity in the combined patents. In 1695, faced with intermittent pay and poor working practices under Rich, the leading performers, headed by Thomas Betterton, Anne Bracegirdle, and Elizabeth Barry, left to set up a separate company, under a license from the Lord Chamberlain, that is usually called the Actor's Company. Those performers who chose to stay with Christopher Rich were known as the Patent Company.

6. Joseph Loewenstein, "The Script in the Marketplace," *Representations* 12 (1985): 101–14, at 102.

7. Douglas Bruster and Robert Weimann, *Prologues to Shakespeare's Theatre: Performance and Liminality in Early Modern Drama* (Abingdon, Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2004).

8. Tiffany Stern, "'A Small-Beer Health to His Second Day': Playwrights, Prologues, and First Performances in the Early Modern Theater," *Studies in Philology* 101.2 (2004): 172–99, at 199.

9. Bruster and Weimann, *Prologues*, 20. Prologue and epilogue speakers are identified in amateur author John Clavell's *The Soddered Citizen* (1638), although, as Bentley notes, this was quite rare. See G. E. Bentley, *The Profession of the Player in Shakespeare's Time* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 262.

10. Bruster and Weimann, *Prologues*, 20.

11. As texts, the prologues and epilogues allowed writers to reflect on topical and political issues or comment on theatrical or generic concerns, often as a counterpoint to the mainpiece. They authorized the creative labor of the playwright, offering a playful emollient to the commercial imperative of the stage—the earning power of the play's third-night benefit for the playwright. See Judith Milhous and Robert D. Hume, "Playwrights' Remuneration in Eighteenth-Century London," *Harvard Library Bulletin* n.s. 10.2–3 (1999): 3–90.

12. Pierre Danchin, *Prologues and Epilogues of the Restoration, 1660–1700: A Complete Edition*, 7 vols. (Nancy: Publications de l'Université de Nancy II, 1981–8), 1:xxxvii.

13. Of course, pre-Restoration theatre had had its celebrated performers, but the prologue, epilogue, and induction spaces were not where these performers made their mark, with the exception of the comedians. Alexandra Halasz makes the case for the clown Richard Tarlton's celebrity in "'So beloved that men use his picture for their signs': Richard Tarlton and the Uses of Sixteenth Century Celebrity," in *Shakespeare Studies* 23 (1995): 19–38. One of the possible exceptions was Stephen Hammerton, who had made the transition from boy player of female roles to young romantic lead. His performance was discussed in several epilogues (in Shirley's *The Doubtful Heir*, Suckling's *The Goblins*, and Killigrew's *The Parson's Wedding*), although he did not deliver them. See Bentley, 225–7.

“For without Vanity, I’m better known”

14. Actor and theatre company manager Thomas Betterton (1635–1710) is first noted acting with John Rhodes troupe in 1659 at the Cockpit theatre in Drury Lane. After the Restoration, he settled with Davenant’s Duke’s Company and quickly rose to prominence, playing a wide range of leading roles in tragedy and comedy. Betterton bought shares in the company, and when Davenant died in 1668, he and Henry Harris took over daily management. Betterton negotiated the combining of the theatre companies as the United Company. Infuriated by Christopher Rich’s management of the United Company, he and eight fellow actors established the Actor’s Company in 1695. After some initial success, this enterprise was not as lucrative as he had hoped, and in 1705 Betterton and the company moved to John Vanbrugh’s new Queens’ Theatre in the Haymarket. Betterton died in April 1710, a few days after performing for his benefit night. He was hailed as a leading exponent of tragic acting and an innovative manager.

15. Actor and theatre manager William Smith (d. 1695) joined the Duke’s Company in 1661. He was a flexible performer, playing major roles as the tarnished hero in tragedy and the romantic hero (or occasionally the rake) in comedy. He was a shareholder in the Duke’s Company, but his political sympathies, as a supporter of the deposed Catholic James II, probably occasioned his retirement from the stage temporarily in 1688, when Protestant William III took the throne. He came out of retirement to join the Actors’ Company in 1695 but fell ill and died later that year.

16. Charles Hart (1625–83) was an apprentice actor in Charles I’s King’s Men in 1641. He fought on the Royalist side during the Civil War and became a shareholder in the King’s Company. He specialized in romantic comedy as half a romantic double act with Nell Gwyn, and in tragedy he played kingly, dignified roles. When the companies merged in 1682, Hart retired. He died in 1683.

17. James Nokes (ca. 1642–96) began his career with Thomas Betterton at John Rhodes’s Cockpit theatre in 1659. He was an original shareholder and comic actor with the Duke’s Company. He specialized in playing dullards, fools, and fops, and his name became a byword for folly in contemporary culture. He was regularly cast as part of a comic double act with Anthony Leigh, often cross-dressed.

18. Cave Underhill (1634–1713) was a comic actor who began his career in John Rhodes’s company in the Cockpit theatre before becoming shareholder in the Duke’s Company in 1660. He tended to play foolish old men, commoners, citizens, drunkards, and cowards. He was a shareholder in the United Company and later the Actors’ Company and continued to perform into his seventies.

19. Michael Mohun (ca. 1616–84) was a performer with Queen Henrietta’s company and Christopher Beeston’s company before the English Civil War, during which he fought for Charles I. In 1660 he became a shareholder in the King’s Company. He played a wide range of parts as devious villains and witty heroes. He complained about the loss of his share and his roles when the King’s Company merged with the Duke’s in 1682 and was reinstated to full company membership of the United Company for the last two years of his life.

20. Actor, writer, dancer, and comic Joseph Haines (d. 1701) first appeared with the King’s Company in London in 1668. He traveled abroad several times: in 1670 with the Duke of Buckingham and in 1685 with William Soames on his ambassadorial trip to Constantinople. Haines moved between the King’s and Duke’s companies and took only occasional roles for the United Company. He was a very popular writer and performer of prologues and epilogues. He supplemented his income by running a booth theatre at Bartholomew Fair, performing cut-down versions of plays, farces, and drolls and offering popular entertainment.

21. Robert Wilks (1665–1732) began his acting career in the Smock Alley Theatre in Dublin in 1691. He transferred to the United Company in 1693, then played with the Patent Company. He played comic heroes and lovers and was particularly famed for the rakish role of Sir Harry Wildair in George Farquhar’s *The Constant Couple* (1699).

22. Actor, writer, and theatre manager Colley Cibber (1671–1757) joined the United Company in 1690 and remained with the Patent Company in 1695. He specialized in fops and comic aristocratic roles and wrote a series of plays, including *Love’s Last Shift* (1696) and a version of *Richard III* (1699). He was a successful theatre manager, and in 1790 he took on daily control of the Patent Company with Robert Wilks.

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23. John Mills (d. 1736) was a leading actor who joined the Patent Company in 1695. He played a number of villainous and supporting roles, often paired with Robert Wilks.

24. George Powell (1668–1714), who debuted with the United Company in 1687, took on several of William Mountfort's roles when Mountfort was murdered in 1692. Initially he was a key performer in the Patent Company, playing vacillating heroes and villains in tragedy and rakish figures in comedy. He wrote and introduced several plays to the stage. He had a somewhat checkered later career, proving unreliable and argumentative.

25. Actor and manager Barton Booth (1681–1733) began his career in the Smock Alley Theatre in Dublin in 1698. He joined the Actors' Company and was considered a reliable secondary actor in a wide range of plays. He moved into management in the complex years of protounion between the companies after 1705.

26. Thomas Doggett (1670–1721) may have performed in Dublin in his youth, but he made his London debut in 1691 with the United Company. He was a gifted comic, playing a wide range of elderly fools, fops, and citizens and a famed rustic role as Hob in his own *The Country Wake* (1696). Doggett moved between companies after the split in 1695 and ran his own troupe in Norwich. In 1709, he became part of the actor-management team with Robert Wilks and Colley Cibber at the Haymarket.

27. William Penkethman (ca. 1660–1725) began his acting career with small roles with the United Company. He stayed with the Patent Company in 1695 and was a popular comic who was famed for his prologue delivery, often in strange dress or astride a donkey. He had a successful business in the fairgrounds, not only with droll booths but also importing diverting acts from the Continent, such as French dancing dogs. Penkethman played many citizen parts. He could dance and excelled in physical comedy. In 1718 he started a summer theatre in Richmond.

28. Prologues and epilogues involve individual actors representing emblematic figures. Examples include "Mr. Betterton, Representing the Ghost of Shakespeare" in the prologue to Dryden's *Troilus and Cressida* (1679) and Mrs. Butler's epilogue in character as La Pupsey with her lapdog in masquerade in Dufrey's *The Marriage Hater Match'd* (1692). From the 1670s there is an increase in prologues and epilogues that have named performers appearing in bad humor to berate the poet or audience: for example, "Mrs. Mary Lee, when she was out of humour" in Otway's *The Cheats of Scapin* (1677) or "Mr. Bowen coming upon the stage in a great huff" as the prologue to Thomas Dilke's *The Pretenders* (1698).

29. In 1678, Titus Oates, a disgraced Anglican clergyman, announced that he had uncovered a plot to assassinate Protestant Charles II and put his openly Catholic brother, James, Duke of York, on the throne. This unlikely "Popish plot" initiated an anti-Catholic frenzy across Britain and brought to a head much anxiety about a Catholic and absolutist monarchy, as modeled by Louis XIV in France. In 1679, the Earl of Shaftesbury attempted to have James excluded from the line of succession on the grounds of his Catholicism and introduced an Exclusion Bill to Parliament. A series of parliamentary tussles followed: the bill was introduced three times in parliaments held between 1679 and 1681, and three times Charles II dissolved Parliament before the bill could be voted upon. The Exclusion Crisis contributed to the crystallization of political parties in Britain: the "Tories" were defenders of the monarchy's independence and James's right to succeed, and the "Whigs" strenuously resisted the succession of a Catholic monarch. Political propaganda was printed and widely distributed during the Exclusion Crisis, and the theatre was not immune from the political debate. Several plays and prologues were censored for expressing a political point of view that was too strong. See Susan J. Owen, *Restoration Theatre and Crisis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

30. Richard Morton, "Textual Problems in Restoration Broadsheet Prologues and Epilogues," *The Library* s5-12.3 (1957): 197–203; Autrey Nell Wiley, *Rare Prologues and Epilogues, 1642–1700* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1940).

31. For a fuller discussion, see Michael Kirby, *A Formalist Theatre* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987); Elinor Fuchs, *The Death of Character: Perspectives on Theater After Modernism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996); and David Graver, "The Actor's Bodies," *Text and Performance Quarterly* 17.3 (1997): 221–35, reprinted in *Performance*, 4 vols., ed. Philip Auslander, *Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies* (Abingdon, Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2003), 2: 157–74.

“For without Vanity, I’m better known”

32. Graver, 222 (reprint, 159).

33. For example, in Edward Howard’s *The Man of Newmarket* (1678), although Joseph Haines and Robert Shatterell appear under their own names in the induction, they interrupt the unnamed “Mr. Prologue” in his duties—actually Thomas Clark, who had been in the company since 1673 but was not a regular prologue deliverer. Clark’s only known attempt before this point was the prologue to Lee’s *Rival Queens* (1677). Another old form of prologue called for emblematic player figures, as the hapless Richard Flecknoe had hoped to produce in the induction to his *Damoiselles à la mode* (1667). His Player figures are labeled simply 1 and 2, although he is wily enough to suggest a putative casting for his play that includes John Lacy as Sganarelle.

34. Diana Solomon, “Anne Bracegirdle’s Breaches,” *1650–1850: Ideas, Aesthetics and Inquiries in the Early Modern Era* 11 (2005): 229–49, at 240.

35. Graver, 226 (reprint, 163).

36. Joseph Roach, “The Performance,” in *The Cambridge Companion to English Restoration Theatre*, ed. Deborah Payne Fisk (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 19–39, at 20.

37. Jean Alter, *A Sociosemiotic Theory of Theatre* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990), 31.

38. Lisa A. Freeman, *Character’s Theater: Genre and Identity on the Eighteenth-Century English Stage* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 18.

39. 9. Jevon here is Thomas Jevon, see note 46 below. Elizabeth Currer (fl. 1673–1690) was an actress with the Duke’s Company, specialising in lively action parts, including Jenny Wheedle in Durfey’s *Virtuous Wife*. She was a popular deliverer of prologues and epilogues; Behn wrote the prologue to *The Feign’d Curtizans* (1679) for her. She found fewer parts available when the companies united after 1682. We have no record of performances by her after 1690.

40. Anthony Leigh [Tony Lee] (d. 1692) joined the Duke’s Company in 1671, playing fops, villains, corrupt priests, and foolish old men. He was a famed speaker of prologues and epilogues and established a successful comic partnership with James Nokes, who often played his cross-dressed wife or love interest.

41. Thomas Durfey, *A Virtuous Wife* (In the Savoy [London]: R. Bentley and M. Magnes, 1680), n.p. Leigh had played Pandarus in Dryden’s adaptation of *Troilus and Cressida* in April 1679; Gripe in Shadwell’s *The Woman Captain*, which had preceded Durfey’s play at Dorset Garden in 1679; and Fumble, the fond alderman, in Durfey’s *A Fond Husband* in May 1677. Nokes had just played Swash in Shadwell’s *The Woman Captain* and Toby in Durfey’s *Madam Fickle*, who hides in a barrel in Act V, in 1677. See *The Woman Turned Bully*, ed. Maria José Mora et al. (Barcelona: Publicacions i Edicions de la Universitat de Barcelona, 2007), 57 n. 64.

42. In Shadwell’s *The Tory Poets* (London: R. Johnson, 1682), Shadwell suggests that Dryden’s comedies were successful largely “Thanks to old Nokes that humours it so well” (5). In Jacob Dash[pseud.]’s poem *Aesop at Richmond* (London: [no publisher], 1698), the author mocks a provincial gathering, particularly an aspirational man of fashion, who is dismissed as a fool, thus as a Nokes: “The famous Noaks, or Tony Lee./Were ne’re so great a nokes as he” (12).

43. Thomas Durfey, *The Marriage Hater Match’d* (London: Richard Bentley, 1692), n.p.

44. Whether or not Mountfort and Bracegirdle were romantically involved is unclear. They were regularly paired as romantic lovers or as husband and wife onstage. The suspicion that Mountfort was Bracegirdle’s lover was to have fatal consequences when, in December 1692, just months after this prologue’s performance, Mountfort was killed by Captain Hill and Lord Mohun, jealous male followers of Bracegirdle. J[ane] Milling, “Bracegirdle, Anne,” in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), index no. 101003156.

45. Van Lennep, cii.

46. Dancing master Thomas Jevon (1651–88) joined the Duke’s Company in 1673. He specialized in low comedy, particularly singing and dancing roles, and was a popular Harlequin figure in Aphra Behn’s *Emperor of the Moon* (1687) and William Mountfort’s *Dr Faustus* (1688). He had a sideline in fairground booth performance.

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47. Playwright, dancer, and actor John Lacy (1615–81) began his performance career in the Cockpit theatre and joined Killigrew's King's Company in 1660 as a shareholder. He was particularly famed for physical comedy and dialect comic roles. He wrote several farcical plays, did satirical impersonations, and was a dancing instructor for the company.

48. John Lacy, *The Dumb Lady; or, The Farrier Made Physician* (London: Thomas Dring, 1672), n.p. *In forma pauperis* is a Latin legal term meaning "in the manner of a pauper," thus, to beg or petition.

49. Thomas Jevon, *The Devil of a Wife* (London: J. Heptinstall, 1686), n.p.

50. Quoted in Montague Summers, *The Restoration Stage* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1973), 181.

51. Joseph Harris, *The Mistakes* (London: Jo. Hindmarsh, 1690), n.p.

52. Sybil Rosenfeld, *The Theatre of the London Fairs in the 18th Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960).

53. Aphra Behn, *The Emperor of the Moon* (London: Printed by R. Holt for Joseph Knight and Francis Saunders, 1687), n.p.

54. The advertisement for John Harris's booth included the catchphrase "Mistake not the Booth; you may Know it by the Brazen Speaking Head in the Gallery." The advertisement is reproduced in Philip H. Highfill Jr., Kalman A. Burnim, Edward A. Langhans, ed., *A Biographical Dictionary of Actors, Actresses, Musicians, Dancers, Managers and other Stage Personnel in London, 1660–1800*, 16 vols. (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1973–1993), 7: 132. For a discussion see George Speaight, *The History of the Puppet Theatre* (London: George B. Harrap & Co., 1955), 152.

55. This is an old Scottish song to be found with music in Durfey's *Wit and Mirth; or, Pills to Purge Melancholy* (1707), i. 133. For the lyrics alone, see John S. Farmer, ed., *Merry Songs and Ballads: Prior to the Year A.D. 1800*, 5 vols. (London: privately printed [Gibbings?], 1897), 4: 46–7. The song was also sung in Durfey's *The Virtuous Wife* (1679) where its suggestiveness causes Lady Beardly to overheat.

56. Jevon, *The Devil of a Wife*, 55. Some version of this play is also recorded as present at Bartholomew Fair in 1699; see Rosenfeld, *Theatre of the London Fairs*, 11.

57. Hildebrand Horden, *Neglected Virtue* (London: Henry Rhodes, Richard Parker, Sam Briscoe, 1696), n.p. The epilogue was written by Mr. Motteux and spoken by Mr. Haines.

58. For an account of that tradition, see David Wiles, *Shakespeare's Clown: Actor and Text in the Elizabethan Playhouse* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Peter Thomson, "Clowns, Fools and Knaves: Stages in the Evolution of Acting," in *The Cambridge History of British Theatre*, vol. 1, *Origins to 1660*, ed. Jane Milling and Peter Thomson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 407–23; and Robert Weimann and Douglas Bruster, *Shakespeare and the Power of Performance: Stage and Page in the Elizabethan Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

59. Edward Howard, *The Man of Newmarket* (London: W. Crook, 1678), n.p.

60. See Rosenfeld, *Theatre of the London Fairs*, 8, 14.

61. Thomas[Tom] Brown (attrib.), *Familiar and Courtly Letters of Monsieur Voiture* (London: Sam Briscoe, 1700), 199.

62. "Prologue to Ev'ry Man out of His Humor, Spoken by Mr. Hayns, July, 1675," in Thomas Duffett, *New Poems, Songs, Prologues, and Epilogues Never Before Printed* (London: Printed for Nicholas Woolfe, 1676), 73.

63. *Mr Haines His Recantation Prologue upon His First Appearance on the Stage after His Return from Rome* ([London]: Printed for Richard Baldwin, 1689).

64. In Buckingham et al.'s *The Rehearsal* (1672), which is still regularly performed on the late Restoration stage, Dryden had been mocked as Mr. Bayes for writing heroic bombast.

65. Thomas [Tom] Brown, *The Reasons of Mr. Joseph Hains the Player's Conversion and Re-Conversion: Being the Third and Last Part of the Dialogue of Mr. Bays* (London: Printed for Richard Baldwin, 1690). Reprinted in *A Collection of All the Dialogues Written by Mr. Thomas Brown*. . . (London: John Nutt, 1704), 203–56.

66. Brown, *Reasons*, 31; in *Collection*, 253.

“For without Vanity, I’m better known”

67. Thomas Durfey, “Mr. Haines Second Recantation: A Prologue Intended to be Spoken by Him Dress’d in a Turkish Habit,” in Durfey, *New Poems, Consisting of Satyrs, Elegies and Odes* (London: J. Bullord and A. Roper, 1690), 204–5.

68. William Congreve, prologue to George Powell, *A Very Good Wife* (London: Sam Briscoe, 1693), n.p.

69. *The Life of the Late Famous Comedian, Jo. Hayns* (London: J. Nutt, 1701). *The Life* is apparently by Tobias Thomas but has been attributed to Thomas [Tom] Brown. See Cheryl Wanko, *Roles of Authority: Theatrical Biography and Celebrity in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2003).

70. William Kemp (d. 1610) was the most well-known Elizabethan clown. He originated many of Shakespeare’s comic roles and had a successful sideline in jigs and popular entertainment.

71. Robert Armin (1563–1615) took over William Kemp’s roles for the Lord Chamberlain’s Men when Kemp departed and was famed for his wordplay and mimicry.

72. Richard Tarlton (d. 1588) played the rustic clown with the Queen’s Men and was famed for his jigs, postperformance bawdy topical farces with song, dance, and jest.

73. Thomas Otway, *Caius Marius* (London: Tho. Flesher, 1680), n.p.

74. Thomas Southerne, *The Wives Excuse* (London: W. Freeman, 1692), n.p.

75. Matthew H. Wikander, *Fangs of Malice: Hypocrisy, Sincerity, & Acting* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2002).

76. For a further discussion of Jeremy Collier and the Society for the Reformation of Manners, see Robert D. Hume, “Jeremy Collier and the Future of the London Theater in 1698,” *Studies in Philology* 96.4 (1999): 480–511.

77. George Farquhar, *The Works of the Late Ingenius Mr. George Farquhar* (London: Bernard Lintott, 1711), 77.

78. Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 74.

79. See Judith Milhous, *Thomas Betterton and the Management of Lincoln’s Inn Fields, 1695–1708* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1979).

80. For further discussion of the evolution of the benefit, see Robert D. Hume, “The Origins of the Actor Benefit in London,” *Theatre Research International* 9.2 (1984): 99–111, quote at 109.

81. Wanko, 167.

82. John Crowne, *Caligula* (London: J. Orme, 1698), n.p.

83. John Fletcher, *Philaster; or Love Lies a Bleeding*, adapted by Elkanah Settle (London: R. Bentley, 1695), n.p.

84. George Powell adapted *Bonduca* from Beaumont and Fletcher, and spoke the prologue. *Bonduca; or, The British Heroine* (London: Richard Bentley, 1696), n.p.

85. The difficulties of the advanced years of the players of the Actors’ Company are gently reflected on by the company itself in the epilogue John Banks writes for his 1696 *Cyrus the Great*, with the eponymous role taken by Betterton. The epilogue has a dialogue between a boy and girl:

GIRL: Why, what d’you make of Mr. Betterton?

Boy: The Curtain’s dropt, and he is glad he’s gone;
The poet too, has loaded him so sore,
He scarce has breath enough for one word more.
Since most of the Old Actors then are kill’d.
And the Great Hero has forsook the Field;
What if we did; to cover such a Blot,
Address ourselves to th’ Audience?

GIRL: That’s well thought.

John Banks, *Cyrus the Great* (London: Richard Bentley, 1696), n.p.

86. Colley Cibber, *An Apology for the Life of Mr Cibber*, ed. Robert W. Lowe, 2 vols. (New York: Atheneum Press, 1888), 1: 203–9.

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87. “Prologue spoke by Mr Powell in answer to a scurrilous one spoke against him at Betterton’s booth in Little Lincolns-Inn-Fields,” in George Powell, *Fatal Discovery* (London: J. Orme, 1698), n.p.

88. W. M., *The Female Wits* (London: William Turner, 1704), 32.

89. *Ibid.*, 51.

90. I argue here for an early development of separation of the artistic realm that Pierre Bourdieu outlines in *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field*, trans. Susan Emanuel (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996).

91. Thomas Postlewait, “Autobiography and Theatre History,” in *Interpreting the Theatrical Past*, ed. Thomas Postlewait and Bruce McConachie (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1989), 248–72, at 250.

92. Joseph Roach, *The Player’s Passion: Studies in the Science of Acting* (Newark: University of Delaware Press [Cranbury, NJ: AUP], 1985).

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