

## The Reception of Women on the English Stage in the Renaissance and Restoration: A Comparative Study

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When the English theatres reopened in 1660 after their eighteen-year closure occasioned by the Civil War and Interregnum, a significant change occurred to theatrical practice: for the first time, professional actresses were seen on the London stage. While this was a major transformation of theatrical culture, performing women were not entirely new in the Restoration theatre. Although the advent of the professional actress in the Restoration has been seen as a novelty, it relied in large part on an already existing vibrant female performance culture in Renaissance England. This article will explore examples of women performers before 1642 and compare their reception with the response received by their counterparts after 1660. I argue for the importance of the context of performing women in the Renaissance in order to understand the arrival of the professional actress in the Restoration. Following recent scholarship on female performers in the Restoration, I also claim that while the first actresses were undoubtedly sexualised, there is also substantial evidence that they were considered as professionals. One such example can be found in the case of Elizabeth Barry and the contract arrangements she made with the theatre company that employed her. Barry was able to achieve a professional status in the Restoration theatre denied to any of the performing women who were her Renaissance counterparts.

First of all, it is important to clarify the situation for female performers in England compared to other European countries. Women had regularly been seen on the professional stage in Spain since 1587, in Italy from the 1560s and in France from the 1590s.<sup>(1)</sup> These continental female performers were seen by English travellers abroad. For example, Fynes Moryson noted the appearance of women on the stage during his visit to Italy in the late sixteenth century: "In Florence they had a house where all the yeare long a Comedy was played by professed players once in the weeke and no more, and the parts of wemen were played by wemen [...]. And one Lucinia a woman player, was so liked of the Florentines, as when shee dyed they made her a monument with an Epitaphe."<sup>(2)</sup> England was therefore considerably behind in admitting actresses to the

public theatre compared with some of its European neighbours. Indeed, a significant reason for this change when it did occur was that the future king, Charles II, and his Court spent the Interregnum in Europe and were influenced by theatrical practice there. Charles II notably spent time in Paris, where Thomas Killigrew and William Davenant were members of the exiled court.<sup>(3)</sup> Upon his restoration to the throne Charles also restored the theatre, issuing a warrant on 21 August 1660 to appoint Killigrew and Davenant as managers of two rival troupes, the King's Company and the Duke's Company.<sup>(4)</sup> On 25 April 1662, Charles II issued a warrant that stipulated that women should henceforth play female roles in order to bring about moral reform:

[F]or as much as many plays formerly acted do contain several profane, obscene and scurrilous passages, and the women's parts therein have been acted by men in the habit of women, at which some have taken offence, for the preventing of these abuses for the future, we do hereby strictly command and enjoin that from henceforth no new play shall be acted by either of the said companies containing any passage offensive to piety and good manners, nor any old or revived play containing any such offensive passages as aforesaid [...] And we do likewise permit and give leave that all the women's parts to be acted in either of the said two companies for the time to come may be performed by women so long as their recreations, which by reason of the abuses aforesaid were scandalous and offensive, may by such reformation be esteemed not only harmless delight, but useful and instructive representations of human life, to such of our good subjects as shall resort to the same.<sup>(5)</sup>

The King here points to the obscenity of boys or men cross-dressing to perform female roles, which was believed to have the potential to incite homosexuality. The performance of women's parts by women is part of the moral reform of the stage that will also clean up other "profane, obscene and scurrilous" aspects of the Renaissance theatre.

## **The Renaissance**

As the 1660 document makes clear, the performance of female roles by male actors had been customary before the closure of the theatres. Accusations had been levelled at this practice, usually conflating it with the deceitfulness of acting in general. For example, in 1582 Stephen Gosson likened cross-dressing to the collapsing of distinctions based on social hierarchy: "in Stage Playes for a boy to put on the attyre, the gesture, the passions of a

woman; for a meane person to take upon him the title of a Prince with counterfeit porte, and traine, is by outwarde signes to shewe them selues otherwise then they are, and so with in the compasse of a lye".<sup>(6)</sup> However, apparently there were no recorded complaints that this convention led to a lack of realism in dramatic representation. Indeed, on seeing actresses perform in Venice in 1611 Thomas Coryat expressed surprise that women could act at all: "I saw women acte, a thing that I never saw before, though I have heard that it hath beene sometimes used in London, and they performed it with as good a grace, action, gesture, and whatsoever convenient for a Player, as ever I saw any masculine Actor".<sup>(7)</sup> Whereas George Sandys thought the Italian actresses playing women's parts were "too naturally passionated".<sup>(8)</sup> Thomas Nash even saw the use of cross-dressing to represent female roles as a point of pride which differentiated the English stage from its counterparts on the continent: "Our Players are not as the players beyond sea, a sort of squirting baudie Comedians, that haue whores and common Curtizens to playe womens partes".<sup>(9)</sup> Thus it seems that the influence of continental European theatre was a stronger motive for the advent of the actress than any assumption that women would be superior in performing female parts. As Phyllis Rackin notes, there was no law prohibiting women from performing professionally in Renaissance England.<sup>(10)</sup> Charles II's 1662 warrant strongly encourages this practice but does not overturn an existing ban.

Because of the lack of legal prohibition against female performance in the Renaissance, women were occasionally seen in the theatres at this time. In many cases, these actresses were members of foreign companies and may have been poorly received by some as a result of xenophobia (like that exemplified by Nash). In 1574, for example, Thomas Norton was upset by the "assemblies to the unchaste, shamelesse and unnaturall tomblinge of the Italian Weomen".<sup>(11)</sup> Perhaps most famously, the French actresses who performed at the Blackfriars Theatre in 1629 were reportedly "hissed, hooted, and pippinpelted from the stage".<sup>(12)</sup> Elizabeth Howe ascribes this negative reaction to "xenophobia and professional jealousy" but concedes that "the violence of the reaction suggests that for many theatre-goers the sight of women acting and speaking on the public stage represented an outrageous rupture of social as well as theatrical convention".<sup>(13)</sup> However, these women went on to appear at two other theatres, the Red Bull and the Fortune, and William Prynne (a notorious anti-theatricalist) noted their popularity, claiming that "there was great resort" to see these actresses perform.<sup>(14)</sup> Howe also notes that the French actresses were even invited to perform at Court by Queen Henrietta

Maria. A rare example of a native English female performer is Mary Frith, who in 1612 was cited in the London Consistory Court for having “sat there vppon the stage in the publique viewe of all the people there p[rese]nte in mans apparrell & playd vppon her lute & sange a songe”.<sup>(15)</sup> Frith apparently appeared either as an actor in the play or as the singer of an afterpiece. She was certainly a rather exceptional case; Coryat’s surprise at seeing actresses perform in Venice (noted above) suggests that the sight of a woman on stage in England was a rarity. Coryat does note that women acting was something “that [...] hath beene sometimes used in London”, although Thornton Shirley Graves believes he may be referring to actresses in touring companies from abroad or ladies in Court entertainments, rather than professional actresses on the Shakespearean stage.<sup>(16)</sup>

While paid actresses may not have been the norm on the professional London stage, female performers were frequently seen in other contexts. The *Records of Early English Drama* volumes contain a considerable amount of evidence of women’s involvement in various forms of theatrical activity in the Renaissance (and earlier), including mystery plays, pageants, mummings, morris dancing, freak shows and so on. Recent scholarship has uncovered a great deal of activity by British women in provincial performance: James Stokes, for example, has used the *REED* material to demonstrate that women were central to dramatic activity in Somerset and Lincolnshire.<sup>(17)</sup> Furthermore, scholars have also examined the participation of aristocratic women in performance culture. It is well known that the Queens of James I and Charles I, Anna of Denmark and Henrietta Maria, were themselves fond of acting and encouraged and indeed participated in numerous masques staged at Court.<sup>(18)</sup> Furthermore, there is evidence that Henrietta Maria appeared in at least one play that included speaking roles, in contrast with the more silent and stylised masques usually performed by women at Court: William Whiteway’s diary for 1632/33 records that she “acted her part in a Comedy before the King” and the play in question was Walter Montagu’s *The Shepherd’s Paradise*, written specifically for the Queen and her ladies to perform, in which she played Bellessa.<sup>(19)</sup> Clare McManus has argued that by treating the involvement of early modern women in theatrical culture as distinct from what has conventionally been termed “the Renaissance all-male stage”, we marginalise the rich history of women’s performance in the period.<sup>(20)</sup> Even if we restrict our interest to commercial theatre, the additional evidence of women’s contributions to theatrical culture outside London and at court is significant because it provides an important context for the advent of the professional actress in 1660. Indeed, Michael

Shapiro sees the English stage as late in introducing actresses, rather than unique in not employing women in the Renaissance.<sup>(21)</sup>

## The Interregnum

Despite the parliamentary prohibition against stage plays, some performances did occur during the Civil War and Interregnum.<sup>(22)</sup> Perhaps most famously, William Davenant staged an operatic entertainment with “declamations” and music at his home in London, Rutland House, for ten days in May 1656.<sup>(23)</sup> When no official criticism resulted, later that year Davenant staged what is generally regarded as the first English opera, *The Siege of Rhodes*. In order to avoid prosecution he downplayed the theatrical nature of the piece: its title page calls it a “Representation by the Art of Perspective in Scenes, And the Story sung in *Recitative* Musick”, although it also contained a “small narration” delivered by “seven persons”.<sup>(24)</sup> Significantly, the entertainment featured a female role, Ianthe, sung by Catherine Coleman. Emboldened by his success, Davenant transferred *The Siege of Rhodes* to a theatre, the Cockpit in Drury Lane.<sup>(25)</sup> Catherine Coleman (née Ferrabosco) has been named as England’s first professional actress. Given that her husband also performed in the entertainment, taking the part of Alphonso, and that her father-in-law, Charles Coleman, was involved in composing the music, it is likely that Catherine Coleman was also paid for her participation.

## The Restoration

As noted above, when the theatres reopened in 1660 they followed theatrical practice on the continent by featuring female performers. The two Restoration theatre managers appointed by the King, Thomas Killigrew of the King’s Company and William Davenant of the Duke’s Company, were apparently in competition to be the first to introduce women to the professional stage in London: both men were training a handful of actresses by August 1660, shortly before the theatres reopened.<sup>(26)</sup> A performance of *Othello* at the Vere Street Theatre by Killigrew’s King’s Company on 8 December 1660 was probably the first to feature a professional actress. A special prologue and epilogue for the occasion written by Thomas Jordan emphasise the novelty of a woman taking the role of Desdemona; the speaker eagerly proclaims:

I Come, unknown to any of the rest  
To tell you news; I saw the Lady drest;

The Woman playes to day, mistake me not,  
No Man in Gown, or Page in Petty-Coat.<sup>(27)</sup>

The woman's exact identity is uncertain but was probably Anne Marshall.<sup>(28)</sup> Elizabeth Howe notes that by "by the middle of 1661 actresses were an established feature of the English stage."<sup>(29)</sup> However, the advent of the professional female performer was not a seismic shift but rather a more gradual change. In the early 1660s, male performers of female roles acted women's parts concurrently with the new actresses. One such figure was Edward Kynaston, described by the prompter John Downes as a "Compleat Female Stage Beauty" and by diarist Samuel Pepys as "the loveliest lady that ever I saw in my life".<sup>(30)</sup> Thus it seems that at least initially audiences were still willing to accept performances of female roles by trained male actors. This suggests that playgoers did not necessarily consider that women were better at acting such parts or if they did find women superior, apparently verisimilitude was not considered a significant goal of theatrical representation.

As we have seen, Charles II's 1662 warrant that encouraged women to play female parts couched this change in terms of a desire to avoid the obscenity of cross-dressing. It is therefore ironic that one of the immediate consequences of the advent of the actress was the sexualisation and objectification of the female performer, particularly through dressing her in male attire. Restoration drama made great use of breeches roles, in which female characters dressed as men in order to reveal their legs (usually covered by voluminous skirts but here exposed in knee-length trousers). Of 375 new plays or adaptations performed in the period 1660–1700, 89 (nearly a quarter) contain one or more breeches parts.<sup>(31)</sup> Evidently one kind of cross-dressing (male to female, in order to play women's parts on stage) was to some degree replaced by another (female to male) and the results could be equally disturbing for those concerned with the morality of the theatre. Of course, cross-dressing was used in the Renaissance too, notably by Shakespeare. However, theatre historian J. L. Styan argues that the device was employed to different effect before and after the closure of the theatres. The Restoration use of the breeches role was, he writes:

unrelated to the happy convention in Shakespeare of presenting the boy actor first as a girl in skirts and then as a boy in doublet and hose. Julia, Portia, Rosalind, Viola and Imogen all explore the ambiguities of representing both male and female simultaneously, forcing comparisons of attitude and action, but

these were attitudes and actions of the mind, not the body.<sup>(32)</sup>

William Wycherley famously featured a breeches part in his 1675 play *The Country Wife* by including a scene in which the innocent but eager Margery is dressed in boy's clothes by her jealous husband. Pinchwife does this in order to keep her away from the rakes of the town, including the notorious Horner, but of course the plan backfires and the male costume in fact allows Horner to carry Margery away from her husband for an intimate walk. When they return, Margery runs in eagerly "*with her hat under her arm, full of oranges and dried fruit*", exclaiming that "[t]he fine gentleman [Horner] has given me better things yet".<sup>(33)</sup> This kind of scene, full of sexual innuendo, is probably what Styan had in mind when he drew the distinction between Restoration breeches roles and those in Shakespeare. However, it is worth noting that Shakespearean cross-dressing could of course be performed in a way that sexualised the actress as much as the performer playing Margery in *The Country Wife*.

While cross-dressing was usually employed in comedy, the actress could also find herself eroticised in tragedy. A new genre developed in the Restoration that put women at the centre of such drama. Known as she-tragedy, these plays focused on the suffering of the female heroine. She was often subjected to, or at least threatened with, rape, and in such scenes her body was gratuitously exposed on stage, for example in John Dryden's *Amboyna* (1683), where the heroine, Ysabinda, is raped off stage before being revealed tied to a tree with her clothes torn and her breasts exposed.<sup>(34)</sup> In the case of both comedy and tragedy, the presence of women on stage was linked with theatre's new visual appeal. Seventeenth-century critic John Dennis suggested this connection when he identified the two main innovations of the Restoration stage as "scenes and women", highlighting the advent of the actress and the introduction of perspective scenery as twin innovations of the Restoration theatre.<sup>(35)</sup> As well as being subjected to violence on stage in she-tragedy, actresses also ran the risk of physical and sexual assault in real life. Rebecca Marshall was the object of violence on several occasions: in 1665, for example, she testified that she was "in fear of her life" after Mark Trevor "assaulted her violently in a coach".<sup>(36)</sup> The following year she alleged that Sir Hugh Middleton sent a "ruffian" to assault her; the man "ran close up to her and clap[ped] a turd upon her face and hair and fled away in a trice" after she confronted Middleton about the "ill language" he used with regard to the theatre's actresses.<sup>(37)</sup>

The actress's reception inside the theatre may not have been overwhelmingly

positive either: the 1660 petition of the Cockpit players to the King suggests some resistance on the part of the actors to working with their female counterparts.<sup>(38)</sup> This suggests that an element of competition developed between actors and actresses and that some male performers were unhappy at having to share the limelight and the theatre's profits with women. This jealous response points to the popularity of the new female performers. Furthermore, as Joanne Lafler notes, unlike their counterparts in France, Spain and Italy, the first English actresses were not usually married to other company members and so did not have the protection of a husband.<sup>(39)</sup> Their status as free agents may have made actresses even more unsettling to social norms.

Recent scholars of Restoration theatre history have done much to demonstrate the power of the actress. Such critics go beyond assumptions that the actress was merely valued for her sexuality and objectified on stage and argue that performing women in the Restoration occupied a position of significant influence. Deborah C. Payne, for example, claims that while objectification hindered the female performer's professional status to some degree, "in a public sphere with an increasingly pronounced sense of the visual, objectification simultaneously *amplified* actresses, situating them at the new nexus of power".<sup>(40)</sup> Thus while Dennis's association of women on stage with scenic effects might seem to diminish actresses, in fact his comment pinpoints the major reasons for the Restoration theatre's success. And while cross-dressing could undoubtedly sexualise the actress, breeches roles also offered her a means to explore types of behaviour usually prohibited to women. Furthermore, cross-dressing parts could be similarly liberating for women in the theatre audience who "may have reveled in the momentary lifting of restrictive gender roles that the breech performer embodied" as they watched the actress on stage dress and behave like a man.<sup>(41)</sup> The positive response to Restoration actresses can be seen in the fact that the English stage never went back to having boys perform female roles.<sup>(42)</sup>

A clear example of the Restoration actress's success and popularity can be found in the figure of Elizabeth Barry. Barry is first listed as a member of the Duke's Company in 1673-74 and acted until 1710, playing both majestic tragic roles and witty comic heroines.<sup>(43)</sup> The actress was in fact the first performer to be awarded an annual benefit night, a significant way of boosting her income and an acknowledgment of her popularity with the audience. Benefits were nights on which a particular actor or actress would take home the evening's takings minus the theatre's operating expenses for the evening.



Performers could earn more than £50 on such a night, a sum that could double the annual salary of a secondary company member. The actor or actress in question usually picked the play that would be staged for his or her benefit (often a role in which he or she was particularly popular) and was responsible for selling tickets to patrons, focusing on the upper classes, who could pay generously. Benefits became a key part of the theatre's financial operations in the early eighteenth century. They were stipulated in performers' contracts and the season would end with a run of benefit performances, usually with the company's biggest star going first. Theatre manager Colley Cibber tells us in his memoirs that "During the Reign of King *Charles*, an Actor's Benefit had never been heard of" and pinpoints Barry as "the first Person whose Merit was distinguish'd, by the Indulgence of having an annual Benefit Play, which was granted to her alone, if I mistake not, first in King *James's* time, and which became not common to others 'till the Division of this Company, after the Death of King *William's* Queen *Mary*".<sup>(44)</sup> Barry was the first, and for some time the only, performer to be singled out for this important monetary bonus.

By the mid-1680s, Barry had come to rival the principal male actors in the company (the first actress to do so) both in terms of her importance to the staging of the drama and her popularity with the audience. While several of the key actors held shares in the company as a financial perk, tradition precluded women from doing so. Barry therefore made a special arrangement for an annual benefit performance with the United Company as part of her contract: "Mrs Barry made an agreement with Dr Davenant, Mr Killigrew, Mr Smith and Mr Betterton for 50 s per week and the profit of a play every year. Upon a second agreement with Mr Thomas Davenant, it added if the day's charge being deducted there wanted of £70, they were to make it up. What was above £70, she was to have".<sup>(45)</sup> Until this time, benefits had usually been reserved for playwrights as a way of compensating them for their work. The dramatist received the profits from the third night of the play's performance after the deduction of house charges. In the 1660s and 1670s, house expenses were around £25 per night and a full house could make about £100 so writers could receive upward of £75 from the benefit performance.<sup>(46)</sup> There was some precedent for benefits for performers as well. Such performances had occasionally been used to remunerate groups of performers (often groups of women) or junior actors.<sup>(47)</sup> However, Barry was the first to negotiate this right for any individual performer (male or female) as a part of her contract and it gave a significant boost to her salary.

According to Gilli Bush-Bailey, Barry's negotiation of an annual benefit night

“represents a fundamental shift in power relations within the company system”.<sup>(48)</sup> Henceforth it was acknowledged that the performers who acted in a play were just as responsible for its success as the dramatist who wrote the script. Even more significantly, since Barry was the first to achieve this arrangement, it is the actress who is recognised as the most important factor in bringing plays to life on the stage. Bush-Bailey reads Barry’s demand for a benefit night as “a highly pragmatic move, rooted firmly in her desire to be better paid” because “the actress was increasingly aware of her share in the company’s success” and that it “was not adequately reflected in her annual salary”.<sup>(49)</sup> Because women could not be sharers in the theatre company, Barry had to take a different approach in order to be properly remunerated. It is also crucial to note the importance of the audience to the benefit system. As I have mentioned, the performers had to sell tickets themselves (just as the playwrights did) so in order to make a good profit on her night, the actress needed to be popular with playgoers and to have influential connections. Barry clearly had such status with her audience or she would not have made this arrangement. Barry’s special benefit nights testify that she was an important performer in the Duke’s Company and was recognised as such by her fellow performers and her manager.

Katherine Eisaman Maus posits that one reason for the success of the Restoration actress was that at this time the understanding of the relationship between genders was moving away from a model based on hierarchy, in which women were regarded as subordinate to men, and towards a concept of polarity, in which the sexes were regarded as different.<sup>(50)</sup> This theory helps to explain both why professional actresses were introduced in the 1660s and why their sexuality was a key concern on stage. However, despite negative attitudes towards them, Restoration actresses were nevertheless important theatre professionals, as Barry’s career demonstrates. This article enables us to acknowledge that sexual objectification and professional appreciation could exist simultaneously in the Restoration audience’s response to the female performer. Furthermore, it is important to note that although the advent of the professional actress in the Restoration has rightly been considered a new phenomenon for the English stage, her way was paved by the rich female performance culture at court, in the regions and on the continent during the Renaissance. The eighteen-year closure of England’s theatres from 1642 to 1660 has often been used in scholarship to separate the Renaissance from the Restoration stage and to deny the importance of theatricals in the Interregnum. However,

this article demonstrates that we must consider performance across the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in order to understand fully the advent of the professional actress on the Restoration stage. One major rupture in theatrical practice did, however, take place. Although the absence of trained boy performers of female roles has been cited by some as a reason for employing women performers in the Restoration, the English stage never went back to boy actresses, even after sufficient time had elapsed to train new ones. “The Woman playes to day” not just on the night that Jordan’s prologue was spoken in 1660, but ever since.

### Notes

- (1) Oscar G. Brockett and Franklin D. Hildy, *History of the Theatre: Foundation Edition* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2007), 141, 178-79. Brockett and Hildy note that professional actresses in Spain can be traced back as far as the fifteenth century and by the mid-sixteenth century they were included in several acting troupes, however most women’s roles were played by boys or men until women were licensed to appear on stage in 1587 (141). They also claim that the presence of the Italian actress Isabella Andreini (1562-1604) in France did much to encourage the acceptance of actresses in Paris (178). Finally, they point out that Marie Fairet was contracted to act with a French provincial theatre company in 1545 but few French actresses are mentioned until the 1590s and women did not act in Paris until 1607. Stephen Orgel notes that “The problem of female chastity was sufficiently resolved, officially at least, in French and Spanish theatres merely by requiring that the actresses be married”. *Impersonations: The Performance of Gender in Shakespeare’s England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) 2.
- (2) Fynes Moryson, *Shakespeare’s Europe: Unpublished Chapters of Fynes Moryson’s Itinerary. Being a Survey of the Condition of Europe at the End of the 16th Century*, introd. Charles Hughes (London: Sherratt and Hughes, 1903) 465.
- (3) See the biographies of Charles II, Killigrew and Davenant in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* ([www.oxforddnb.com](http://www.oxforddnb.com)). Killigrew was also sent to Italy by the King during his exile.
- (4) For the text of the warrant, see “Warrant granted by Charles II to Killigrew and Davenant, 21 August 1660”, in *Restoration and Georgian England, 1660-1788*, ed. David Thomas, *Theatre in Europe: A Documentary History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) 11-13.
- (5) “Killigrew’s patent, 25 April 1662”, in *Restoration and Georgian England, 1660-1788*, ed. Thomas, 16-18 (17-18).
- (6) Stephen Gosson, *Playes Confuted in Fiue Actions* (London, 1582) n.p.
- (7) Thomas Coryat, *Coryat’s Crudities*, 2 vols (Glasgow: MacLehose, 1905) 1:386.
- (8) George Sandys, *A Relations of a Journey Begun an: Dom: 1610* (London, 1615) 246.
- (9) Thomas Nash, *Pierce Pennilesse His Svpplication to the Diuell* (London, 1582), n.p.
- (10) Phyllis Rackin, “Shakespeare’s Cross-Dressing Comedies”, in *A Companion to Shakespeare’s Works: The Comedies*, ed. Richard Dutton and Jean E. Howard (Malden, MA:

- Blackwell, 2003) 114-36 (online ed., n.p.).
- (11) Quoted in E. K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, 4 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923) 4: 273.
  - (12) Quoted in Gerald Eades Bentley, *The Jacobean and Caroline Stage: Dramatic Companies and Players*, 7 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1941-68) 1:25.
  - (13) Elizabeth Howe, *The First English Actresses: Women and Drama 1660-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) 23.
  - (14) Quoted in Bentley, *Jacobean and Caroline Stage*, 6:226. Bentley notes that, given their apparently negative reception at the Blackfriars, it is odd that the actresses went on to perform in other venues and points out that hissing and pippen-pelting were types of behaviour more familiar at the Red Bull and the Fortune than the Blackfriars.
  - (15) Quoted in P. A. Mulholland, "The Date of *The Roaring Girl*", *The Review of English Studies* ns 28 (1977): 18-31 (22). Frith's unconventional life was the inspiration for Thomas Dekker and Thomas Middleton's play *The Roaring Girl* (published 1611). See also Mark Eccles, "Mary Frith, the Roaring Girl", *Notes and Queries* 230 (1985): 65-66.
  - (16) Thornton Shirley Graves, "Women on the Pre-Restoration Stage", *Studies in Philology* 22 (1925): 184-97 (195). There is also the case of *England's Joy*, Richard Vennar's pageant that was to be staged at the Swan in 1602 featuring a cast of gentlemen and gentlewomen. Although a large number of tickets were sold, Vennar disappeared with the takings and the play was not performed. The "scurvie play set out by one virgin, which proved a fyemartin without voice" seen by Richard Madox in 1583 was probably, as Dympna Callaghan claims, an account of a performance by an inadequate male actor of female roles. *Shakespeare Without Women: Representing Gender and Race on the Renaissance Stage*, Accents on Shakespeare (London: Routledge, 2000) 71.
  - (17) James Stokes, "Women and Mimesis in Medieval and Renaissance Somerset (and Beyond)", *Comparative Drama* 27 (1993): 176-96 and "Women and Performance: Evidences of Universal Cultural Suffrage in Medieval and Early Modern Lincolnshire", in *Women Players in England, 1500-1660: Beyond the All-Male Stage*, ed. Pamela Allen Brown and Peter Parolin (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005) 25-43. Brown and Parolin's edited collection is an extremely valuable contribution to the history of female performance, considering women's involvement in drama "beyond London", "beyond elites", "beyond the Channel", "beyond the Stage" and "beyond the all-male". The volume argues for a broad and inclusive definition of the term "performance", which encompasses "any act of embodied display or representation intended for an audience" (5).
  - (18) See Clare McManus, *Women on the Renaissance Stage: Anna of Denmark and Female Masquing in the Stuart Court 1590-1616* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002) and Sophie Tomlinson, *Women on Stage in Stuart Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
  - (19) *Records of Early English Drama: Dorset and Cornwall*, ed. Rosalind Conklin Hays, C. E. McGee, Sally L. Joyce and Evelyn S. Newlyn (Toronto: Brepols Publishers and University of Toronto Press, 1999) 202. Tomlinson describes *The Shepherd's Paradise* as "the first play written for women actors in English" (*Women on Stage in Stuart Drama*, 59).
  - (20) Clare McManus, "Women and English Renaissance Drama: Making and Unmaking 'The All-Male Stage'", *Literature Compass* 4.3 (2007): 784-96.
  - (21) Michael Shapiro, "The Introduction of Actresses in England: Delay or Defensiveness?", in

- Enacting Gender on the English Renaissance Stage*, ed. Viviana Comensoli and Anne Russell (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999) 177-200.
- (22) For the text of the warrant, see “Order for Stage-plays to cease” [2 September 1642], in *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum*, ed. C. H. Firth and R. S. Rait, 3 vols (London: His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1911) 1:26-27.
- (23) Mary Edmond, “Davenant, Sir William (1606-1668)”, in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/7197>.
- (24) William Davenant, *The Siege of Rhodes*, in *Drama of the English Republic, 1649-60*, ed. Janet Clare, Revels Plays Companion Library (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002) 181-233 ([193], [194], 195).
- (25) The title-page to the 1659 edition notes that the play had been performed at the Cockpit. In 1663 an expanded edition was published which included another female character, Roxolana.
- (26) Howe, *The First English Actresses*, 23.
- (27) Thomas Jordan, “A Prologue to introduce the first Woman that came to Act on the Stage in the Tragedy, call’d *The Moor of Venice*” and “Epilogue [to *Othello*]”, in *The Prologues and Epilogues of the Restoration 1660-1700*, ed. Pierre Danchin, 4 parts (Nancy: Publications de l’Université de Nancy, 1981-85), part 1, 1:55-56.
- (28) Howe makes a strong case for Marshall and rules out the other actresses in Killigrew’s company, Mrs Eastland, Mrs Weaver and Katherine Corey (*The First English Actresses*, 24).
- (29) Howe, *The First English Actresses*, 24.
- (30) John Downes, *Roscius Anglicanus*, ed. Judith Milhous and Robert D. Hume (London: The Society for Theatre Research, 1987) 46; Samuel Pepys, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, ed. Robert Latham and William Matthews, 11 vols (London: Bell, 1970-83) 1:224. The impact on Kynaston’s career of the English stage’s transition to actresses has been fictionalised in Jeffrey Hatcher’s play *Compleat Female Stage Beauty* (1999), subsequently made into a film with the shorter title *Stage Beauty* (2004).
- (31) Howe, *The First English Actresses*, 57. This includes adaptations of pre-Restoration plays.
- (32) J. L. Styan, *Restoration Comedy in Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986) 134.
- (33) William Wycherley, “The Country Wife”, ed. Peggy Thompson, in *The Broadview Anthology of Restoration and Early Eighteenth-Century Drama*, gen. ed. J. Douglas Canfield (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2001) 1038-1100 (III.iii.592 s.d.; III.iii.595).
- (34) Howe, *The First English Actresses*, 45.
- (35) John Dennis, “The Causes of the Decay and Defects of Dramatic Poetry, and the Degeneracy of the Publick Tast”, in *The Critical Works of John Dennis*, 2 vols (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1939-43) 2:275-99 (278).
- (36) “To the King’s Most Excellent Majesty, the Humble Petition of Rebecca Marshall, 1665”, in *Restoration and Georgian England, 1660-1788*, ed. Thomas, 185.
- (37) “The Deposition of Mrs. Rebecca Marshall against Sir Hugh Middleton, 8 February 1666”, in *Restoration and Georgian England, 1660-1788*, ed. Thomas, 186.
- (38) “The petition of the Cockpit [Phoenix] players, 13 October 1660”, in *Restoration and Georgian England, 1660-1788*, ed. Thomas, 13-14.
- (39) Joanne Lafler, “Theatre and the Female Presence”, in *The Cambridge History of British*

- Theatre Volume 2: 1660-1895*, ed. Joseph Donohue (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) 71-89 (73).
- (40) Deborah C. Payne, "Reified Object or Emergent Professional? Rethorizing the Restoration Actress", in *Cultural Readings of Restoration and Eighteenth-Century English Theater*, ed. J. Douglas Canfield and Deborah C. Payne (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1995) 13-38 (16).
- (41) Beth H. Friedman-Romell, "Breaking the Code: Toward a Reception Theory of Theatrical Cross-Dressing in Eighteenth-Century London", *Theatre Journal* 47 (1995): 459-79 (470).
- (42) The absence of trained boy performers following the eighteen-year closure of the theatres has been posited as a reason why actresses were introduced. But if this had been a major factor, presumably women would have given way to boys on stage once men had been trained again.
- (43) Paula R. Backscheider, "Barry, Elizabeth (1656x8-1713)", in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy3.library.mcgill.ca/view/article/1557>.
- (44) *An Apology for the Life of Mr. Colley Cibber, Comedian, and Late Patenter of the Theatre-Royal. With an Historical View of the Stage during his Own Time. Written by Himself* (Dublin, 1740) 233, 95-96.
- (45) "Petition of the players, December 1694", in *Restoration and Georgian England, 1660-1788*, ed. Thomas, 42. Although the document is from 1694, Robert D. Hume dates the arrangement to "about 1685". "The Origins of the Actor Benefit in London", *Theatre Research International* 9 (1984): 99-111 (101).
- (46) By 1690, playwrights received the sixth night as a benefit as well and by the early eighteenth century they were given the profits of every third night for the duration of the run of play, however long that might be. Hume, "The Origins of the Actor Benefit", 100.
- (47) Hume, "The Origins of the Actor Benefit", 101.
- (48) Gilli Bush-Bailey, *Treading the Bawds: Actresses and Playwrights on the Late-Stuart Stage* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), 63.
- (49) Bush-Bailey, *Treading the Bawds*, 63.
- (50) Katharine Eisaman Maus, "'Playhouse Flesh and Blood: 'Sexual Ideology and the Restoration Actress'", *English Literary History* 46 (1979): 595-617.

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