



Prologues and Epilogues of Restoration Theater: Gender and Comedy, Performance and Print

Diana Solomon

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"Often perceived as merely formulaic or historical documents, dramatic prologues and epilogues - players' comic, poetic bids for the audience's good opinion - became essential parts of Restoration theater, appearing in over 90 percent of performed and printed plays between 1660 and 1714. Their popularity coincided with the rise of the English actress, and *Prologues and Epilogues of Restoration Theater* unites these elements in the first book-length study on the subject. It finds that these paratexts provided the first sanctioned space for actresses in Britain to voice ideas in public, communicate directly with other women, and perform comedy - arguably the most powerful type of speech, and one that enabled interrogation of misogynist social practices. This book provides a taxonomy of prologues and epilogues with a corresponding appendix, and demonstrates through case studies of Anne Bracegirdle and Anne Oldfield how the study of prologues and epilogues enriches Restoration theater scholarship."

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