

# ‘Before she ends up in a brothel’

## *Public Femininity and the First Actresses in England and the Low Countries*

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### Abstract

This essay explores the first appearance of actresses on the public stage in England and the Dutch Republic. It considers the cultural climate, the theaters, and the plays selected for these early performances, particularly from the perspective of public femininity. In both countries antitheatricalists denounced female acting as a form of prostitution and evidence of inner corruption. In England, theaters were commercial institutions with intimate spaces that capitalized on the staging of privacy as theatrical. By contrast, the Schouwburg, the only public playhouse in Amsterdam, was an institution with a more civic character, in which the actress could be treated as unequivocally a public figure. I explain these differences in the light of changing conceptions of public and private and suggest that the treatment of the actress shows a stronger public-private division in the Dutch Republic than in England.

*Keywords:* restoration theaters, actresses, privacy, public sphere, Schouwburg, drama

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Theater historians who have discussed the advent of actresses on the public stage in England after the Restoration have only recently begun to explore the international context for this event. England, after all, was not the only country where women were not allowed to act on stage until such a late date. Michael Shapiro points out that in the late sixteenth century, Italy and Spain became the earliest countries in Europe to permit women on the public stage. France followed suit in the early seventeenth century. Itinerant French troupes had included women, but the theater delayed the appearance of professional actresses, perhaps, as Perry Gethner and Melinda Gough have argued, as a consequence of the Wars of Religion.<sup>1</sup> Shapiro briefly mentions the Low Countries as a place where, parallel to other Protestant countries, 'the picture is also mixed', because there too, women were allowed to act in traveling troupes but not at public playhouses until much later, beginning with the appearance of Ariane Nozeman in 1655.<sup>2</sup>

Shapiro's explanation for the delayed introduction of stage actresses in England is largely practical: he sees the male guild-like system of acting and the professional interests of men as the primary reason why the practice of cross-dressing persisted for so long. Although younger actors were hired as apprentices, the professional situation was different for actors in the Low Countries since apparently they did not earn enough to make acting their primary trade and most, Louis Peter Grijp notes, had other professions to earn a living.<sup>3</sup> Deborah Payne Fisk includes a short comparison between the two countries in a chapter on the Restoration actress, mainly to show that the prohibition on female acting was caused by 'the Protestant suspicion of actresses'.<sup>4</sup> However, as Shapiro points out, Catholic authorities everywhere continued to assert control over and in some cases repress female acting.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, the religious situation in the Republic was more complicated than in England.

1 Gethner and Gough, 'Advent', 218. The breakthrough in France was influenced by traveling Italian troupes as well as 'women's cultural visibility' in court and salon culture (218).

2 Shapiro, 'Introduction', 181.

3 Grijp, 'Boys', 140.

4 Payne Fisk, 'Restoration', 71.

5 Shapiro, 'Introduction', 179-180. See for the temporary ban on female acting on stage in Spain, Carrión, 'Legally'.

The public church was Calvinist, but there was limited toleration, especially of private religious practice. Although it gave rise to controversy, Catholics were allowed to serve among the regents of Amsterdam's only public theater, the Schouwburg; some of the major figures behind the public theater before and after the change in policy towards women – including three regents for much of the period and, after his conversion in 1641, the famous playwright Joost van den Vondel – were Catholics. Clearly, the suggestions offered by Shapiro and Payne Fisk are important, but can only partly account for the near-simultaneous arrival of actresses on the public stage in England and the Dutch Republic.

While I am interested in these explanations for the late timing, in this essay I would like to treat this remarkably simultaneous development as an opportunity to explore the cultural climates in which early actresses performed and particularly the types of public femininity their presence reflected and constructed. This essay examines early actresses from the perspective of the changing paradigms of public and private in the seventeenth century. The introduction of actresses in playhouses around the mid-seventeenth century was not necessarily a clear indication that the newly developing public sphere was being opened up to women. Instead, it was complexly related to the separation of the public and private realms and the increasing importance of a new ideology of domesticity, formulated by Protestant reformers and others.

Much recent discussion has been devoted to these cultural changes, building on the seminal work on the public sphere by Jürgen Habermas.<sup>6</sup> In a useful revision of Habermas's ideas, Michael McKeon has discussed the gradual redefinition of public and private as a shift from conceptual 'distinction' to 'separation,' by which the two come to be understood as opposing, rather than continuous realms of being.<sup>7</sup> Within a traditional framework, which McKeon associates with the political system of absolutism, the term private was understood to mean secret and without public office.<sup>8</sup> This perspective on the public-private relationship was undermined by the upheaval of the Civil Wars and the questioning of absolutism in the seventeenth century. The emergence of the idea that the household was not just separate from, but opposed to and contrasting with the marketplace and the state went, McKeon explains, hand in hand with a new understanding of the household as a separate space within which women take up key roles. Part of this emerging ideology of domesticity was a more positive conception of privacy as central to identity and the self. Although women's public speech and action had long been treated as inappropriate and unchaste, these new ways of thinking about the household and the relationship between public and private destabilized earlier prohibitions on female publicity and reestablished them with added force. The theater, in its many forms, is not easily situated culturally in relation to these larger cultural developments or even to the division between public and private in general, in spite of our use of terms like 'public' and 'private,' 'coterie,' or 'closet' theater, which would suggest that different types of performance can clearly be plotted in relation to the divide. In order to examine female acting as a form of public femininity, in other words, we must assess the cultural

6 Habermas, *Structural*.

7 McKeon, *Secret*.

8 McKeon, *Secret*. See also Longfellow, 'Public'.

environment and theatrical precedents for female acting, as well as the space and type of institution in which actresses were introduced.

This essay considers the earliest actresses from three different angles: by analyzing contemporary reactions to female acting both before and after women were permitted on the public stage, by considering the nature of the theatrical space and the civic and commercial position of the theaters in which they performed, and by taking a brief look at the plays in which they first appeared. Given the pervasive cultural association between female visibility and eroticism, I argue that these contexts and texts reflect the simultaneous presence of three ways of conceiving public and private in accounts of and approaches to actresses. First, positively conceived female theatricality relied on traditional models of thought that treated public and private as equally theatrical yet distinct. This is a model that is associated with the political system of absolutism, a model within which female theatricality could be virtuous if associated with aristocratic and royal public performance. Second, antitheatrical condemnations of female acting saw the private self as primary and thus as potentially hidden by an artificial, devious public outwardness that is suggestive of inner corruption. This view became absorbed into reformers' general effort to advance the household as central to faith and, along with it, a new ideology of domesticity and privacy. Both first and second views are in evidence in English treatments of female acting. A third possibility found in these texts and contexts is the prioritization of public femininity without an interest in private identity. I align this treatment of actresses with the professionalization of acting and a more developed ideology of domesticity that considers the private as not just opposed to the public but irrelevant to it; evidence of this approach is seen in Dutch theatrical practices and texts. These three views suggest a distinct perspective on and treatment of female acting in England and the Low Countries. They should be situated within larger trends towards a conceptual division between public and private that would come to characterize modernity.<sup>9</sup>

### *The Cultural Contexts for Female Theatricality*

Theater historians have amended the simplistic idea that women were barred from theatrical practice in England prior to the Restoration. As Pamela Brown and Peter Parolin point out,

Queens, aristocrats, and gentlewomen danced, sang, and recited in masques, plays and court and manor entertainments; non-elite women in village, town and city took roles in parish drama and festive pageantry; Italian prima donnas and French actresses came to England to perform for both courtiers and commoners; and poorer women worked as itinerant entertainers, ballad singers, and mountebanks.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> See further exploration of conceptions of public and private in both countries, in particular in relation to writing by women, in my book-length study of the subject. Van Elk, *Early*. Art historians and historians have long argued for a highly developed ideology of domesticity in the Low Countries. Examples are Kloek, *Vrouw*; Schama, *Embarassement* and Westermann, "Costly". McKeon uses the terms 'tradition' and 'modernity' to explore the division of public and private. See McKeon, *Secret*.

<sup>10</sup> Brown and Parolin, *Women*, 1.

These four categories of female playing span the social spectrum, from courtly to itinerant entertainment, but do not include the professional theater. Yet, as Natasha Korda has shown, women were involved professionally in the public theater behind the scenes, as patrons and providers of a variety of services.<sup>11</sup> While women engaged in different activities that were theatrical to a degree, acting as a *paid* activity was an all-male phenomenon that was itself rooted in a long-standing tradition of amateur performance, especially in educational settings and in guild-based productions. Traveling playing companies in England also employed only male actors, even though women participated in other forms of itinerant entertainment.<sup>12</sup>

Theatrical practices in the Low Countries prior to the advent of the actress were similarly multifaceted. On the public stage, women's roles were played by men and a small number of boys. All-male acting was common in the Chambers of Rhetoric, amateur societies that organized literary competitions.<sup>13</sup> The Schouwburg was founded in 1638 and managed by prominent members of these organizations, who began offering performances to a paying audience for the purpose of general education and edification. At the Schouwburg, women worked behind the scenes, as they did in England.<sup>14</sup> Court culture was not as dominant in the Dutch Republic as in England, but the courts of Elizabeth of Bohemia and Mary Stuart in The Hague did introduce English masque practices into the Low Countries, including acting by courtly ladies.<sup>15</sup> However, itinerant acting, as noted above, was fundamentally different, even though Dutch traveling players were inspired by and sometimes joined English all-male troupes on the continent, as Ben Albach has explained.<sup>16</sup> In contrast with England, some Dutch wives and daughters of male actors performed at fairs, much like female acrobats and tightrope walkers; since such acting troupes were formed by members of the Chambers of Rhetoric and in exceptional cases performed at foreign courts, Dutch female acting bridged the gap between lower-class itinerant performance and acting in front of elite audiences.<sup>17</sup> This cultural overlap in the Republic sets it apart from England, where

11 Korda, *Labors*.

12 Traveling English troupes on the continent started to feature female actresses in the 1650s, though the earliest records show that these were not English women. For this fascinating history, see Katrizky, 'English'.

13 Although they were normally excluded from membership, women may have acted for the Chambers of Rhetoric on occasion. J. A. Worp gives two examples of Chambers from the Southern Low Countries that employed women to act certain roles, and he cites a legal document from a Chamber of Rhetoric in Zeeland that mentions women acting in 1530, a sentence that is still found in the renewed version of the document in 1608. However, these scant records do not provide us with certainty about female acting in the seventeenth century. See Worp, *Geschiedenis*, 1, 180-181.

14 Not much research has been done on this subject. A cursory look reveals that the records of expenses for the Schouwburg list names such as 'Trijntje Jacobs' who was paid 48 guilders, 13 nickels, 8 doits, on 19 July 1642 and 'Pietertje Dircke' who was paid 14 guilders, 8 nickels on 17 March of the same year. These listing are for lump sums, unlike payments for actors, who are usually paid per performance, suggesting that these women provided other services. See Amsterdam, Stadsarchief (hereafter SA), Archief van het Burgerweeshuis (Oud Archief 367A; 1.2.3.2; 426), Ontvangsten en Uitgaven, 1638-1652, 62 and 64. <https://archief.amsterdam/inventarissen/inventaris/367a.nl.html>. (Accessed on 9 May 2017).

15 Keblusek, "'divertissement'", 196-200.

16 Albach, *Langs*.

17 Albach gives a brief overview of the career of a couple of early Dutch actresses in *Langs*, 73-75.

public acting, on the London stage and in the provinces, remained an all-male affair. In other words, in England itinerant acting was treated as culturally equivalent to acting on the public stage where actresses were concerned, whereas acting in entertainments and masques at court by elite women was seen as a distinct practice that was not subject to the same prohibitions. In the Low Countries, elite and itinerant acting were not differentiated from each other in this way, but acting professionally on a public stage was set apart.

The effect of the social distinction in England is evident in one recorded instance of female acting in a playhouse prior to the Restoration: the appearance on stage in November 1629 of French women who were members of a visiting acting troupe. They performed at Blackfriars Theater and at Henrietta Maria's court. The women were reportedly booed and hissed off stage, but, as Elizabeth Howe has pointed out, they were subsequently welcomed repeatedly at court, showing the degree to which the setting for female acting and the social composition of the audience made a difference.<sup>18</sup> This divergent response highlights the double nature of female performance in public: in a setting where access was potentially open to all, female theatricality was controversial, whereas in a courtly setting, more accustomed to feminine display, it was respectable. In a monarchy, noble female public appearances were expected and presented as evidence of virtue. In England, courtly women took part in pageants and other aristocratic spectacles as a matter of course. Thus, spectacular display in public was endorsed as part of what Habermas calls 'representative publicness', by which he means the public display of the monarch and nobility as 'an embodiment of some sort of "higher" power' to shore up the social order and the association of authority with birth and status.<sup>19</sup> Female acting, however, was limited to a courtly audience to remain within a tradition of pastime, cultivation, and elegance.

When the Puritan William Prynne denounced female acting in *Histriomastix* (1632), a publication for which he was severely punished, his crime was partly related to timing: he uttered his sentiments linking actresses to prostitutes just as the Queen had appeared in several theatrical performances at court. His work was not only penalized for sedition but also for the social conflation of female acting, placing all female theatricality under the heading of prostitution without exempting the court. The injunction against acting that he cites, under his famous entry that describes 'Women-Actors' as 'notorious whores', is the Pauline prohibition on public speech by women.<sup>20</sup> The appeal of this attitude to female acting was strong in the Low Countries too: Prynne's work was translated into Dutch in 1639, shortly after the opening of the Schouwburg, and would inspire invective against the theater by authors like Petrus Wittewrongel and Guiljelmus Saldenus.<sup>21</sup> Wittewrongel formulates his concern with female theatricality particularly in relation to cross-dressing, perhaps because the first version of his work, later expanded, was published in 1655 and most likely written before the first female actress acted at the Schouwburg. As part of his general anxiety about the presence of women in public spaces, he voices a stronger concern

18 Howe, *First*, 22-23.

19 Habermas, *Structural*, 9.

20 *Histriomastix*, R5r4r.

21 Wittewrongel, *Oeconomia*, II, H6hr-M6mv; 1167-1194, and Saldenus, *d'Overtuyghde*. For further context, see Schenkeveld-van der Dussen, 'Toneelbestrijding' and Groenendijk, 'Nadere'.

with keeping women as audience members within the domestic sphere than with female acting or public speech.

Unlike Wittewrongel, Saldenus wrote *d'Overtuyghde Dina* in 1666, when actresses had become a common sight at the Schouwburg. He uses their example to address the Pauline prohibition at some length. His treatise has the form of a dialogue between Apollos, a preacher, and Dina, a young woman who enjoys watching comedies at the theater. When Apollos points out that women on stage violate Paul's injunctions by speaking in public, Dina voices two related objections: that Paul's words are meant to apply only to preaching and that comedies are not performed for 'de gemeynte', a word with a changing meaning but which is here used to denote a church community or parish.<sup>22</sup> Apollos retorts that the injunction applies wherever there is a crowd of people, thus defining the public realm more broadly than Dina is hoping to. He applies Paul's words to any kind of gathering, making exceptions only for queens and in case of emergency.<sup>23</sup> This narrowing of the space within which women are allowed to speak is part of a larger trend among Pietists and Puritans to curb public femininity in favor of an emphasis on the proper placement of women within the domestic realm. This meant that the association of female public performance with eroticism was unavoidable and that any public role, however virtuous, might point to a corrupt, sexualized identity, which was especially damning in light of the newly conceived private realm as a space for reform and devotion.<sup>24</sup>

In both countries, the association of paid female acting with prostitution formed the principal obstacle to the employment of actresses. A leading figure in the Amsterdam theater, playwright and comic actor Isaac Vos emphasized the connection in 1645, ten years before the first professional Dutch actress, Ariana Nozeman, made her debut. In a Dutch translation of a German version of the 1592 anonymous English play *Somebody and Nobody*, Vos inserted a short passage of his own on women players. The character Nobody recounts a journey during which he comes across a variety of temptations. He arrives at a city fair where he encounters comedians. Trying to get him to come see them perform, a player tells Nobody that his troupe is special: 'We have a little daughter,/who performs without parallel,/I pray see how you like her acting.'<sup>25</sup> Two word choices stand out in this speech. The man uses *ageert* or 'agitates' for perform, choosing a word that is, as its Latin etymology suggests, associated with exciting, even disturbing, strong speech. The acting style of the girl is presented, in other words, as full of passion. Second, the word I have translated as 'like' is 'smaectk' in the original. Literally, *smaectk* means 'taste': the man is asking Nobody to 'taste' her acting, hinting at the idea of female acting as sexual temptation, all the more sinful in light of the age of the actress and the possibility that the speaker is her father. Of course, Nobody is not impressed. He assures the man, 'it were far better that you placed her with good people/before she ends up in a brothel'. The man gets

22 Saldenus, *d'Overtuyghde*, Dr-Dv; 45-46.

23 Idem, Dv-D2r; 46-47.

24 Starting points for research into developing views of privacy are McKeon, *Secret*; Longfellow, 'Public'; Rambuss, *Closest*; Orlin, *Locating*; and Huebert, *Privacy*.

25 'Wy hebben een dochtertje,/dat nonpareilje ageert,/ick bid siet eens hoe dat jou haer gespeel smaectk'. Vos, *Iemant*, Gr, 41.

angry and asks him if 'because of acting one would/see an honest daughter as unchaste', to which Nobody responds, 'men have a hard enough time keeping their honor/let alone weak women'. When the man counters that the French do allow women to act, Nobody finishes the conversation with a firm rejoinder that female acting 'is not the manner of the country here.'<sup>26</sup> Nobody treats the all-male acting tradition not only as more respectable, but also as part of Dutch identity. Across Europe, women who wanted to act on a public stage faced this association of female acting with sexuality, based on the premise that any public speaking was sexually suspect. Yet, in England, with its tradition of royal public display and female theatrical performance at court, such ideas seemed to be applied especially to acting for financial gain by non-aristocratic women. In the Low Countries, female acting on stage was prohibited, but even though Vos did not like it, women were able to perform in groups of traveling players, as they could in countries like Italy and France. This suggests that it was the institutional nature of acting and the link with the Chambers of Rhetoric that prevented female acting, not the social status of the women involved. Yet, in both countries, as reformers gained increasing cultural visibility, antitheatricalist literature mounted formidable opposition to acting in general and female acting in particular.

### *The First Actresses*

Shortly after Vos wrote his translation, there were signs of change. Between 1648 and 1651, a few women were paid for singing at the Schouwburg, suggesting the gradual loosening of attitudes about female performance in the theater.<sup>27</sup> Ultimately, Albach relates, the emergence of an extraordinary company of traveling players was responsible for the opening up of the professional stage to actresses.<sup>28</sup> Formed by 1647 under the leadership of Jan van Fornenbergh, this troupe acted at the court of the Archduke Leopold William in the Southern Low Countries and later at courts in Denmark, Holstein, and Sweden. Among them

<sup>26</sup> 't waer veel beeter datje se by goe luy bestede/eer datse in een bordeel raeckt'. The man asks, 'Wel ... zou men om 't speleens halven/een eerlijcke dochter voor lichtveerdich schouwen?' Nobody's response is, 'de mans hebben 't quaet genoeg datse haer eer bewaren/'k laet staen de swacke vrouwen'. Finally, he concludes, 'oock is 't hier de manier van 't lant niet'. Idem, Gr, 41.

<sup>27</sup> The most extensively researched account of transvestite acting at the Schouwburg is by Grijp, 'Boys', and on singing, including by women, see especially Veldhorst, *Perfecte*. As far as we know, no women took acting parts before 1655. In the records, there is an unusually high payment of 1 guilder for three performances, on 19 July 1642, to someone named Tijsje van de Schilde (SA, Archief van het Burgerweeshuis (Oud Archief), Ontvangsten en Uitgaven, 65.). Tijsje is normally a female name, but this seems to be a case of confusion. Around this time, the Schouwburg was performing *Tijsken vander Schilde*, a 1613 play by Samuel Coster in which the title character is a male robber. It seems the record-keeper was thinking of this title; it is even possible that the actor was paid so much to sing a song in this play, which coincidentally featured a robber with the same name. A later record for 12 November 1647 includes payments to the same performer, but lists the name as 'Tijs vande Schilde'. At that point payment had gone down to 6 nickels per performance, a sign that the actor may have taken on minor or mute roles by then (SA, Archief van het Burgerweeshuis (Oud Archief), Ontvangsten en Uitgaven, 80). In other words, there is no convincing evidence for female acting before Nozeman in the account books, as Veldhorst (*Perfecte*, 198) and Grijp ('Boys', 150) also believe.

<sup>28</sup> See for the general context, Albach, *Langs*.

were Gillis Nozeman and his wife Ariana, the daughter of actor, rhetorician, and author Adriaan van den Bergh, who had himself formed a troupe of players that included English actors in 1639. Ariana had, says Albach, most likely acted at fairs with her father's troupe from childhood.<sup>29</sup> She was not the only wife of an actor in this troupe; Susanna Eeckhout and Elisabeth Kalbergen were also affiliated with the company through marriage.<sup>30</sup> In 1654, Fornenbergh's troupe was allowed to perform for a stretch of time within the Amsterdam city walls with female actors. Their prominence is attested to by the fact that their performance was on one occasion honored by the presence of the entire city council. In the preface to the play *De wanhebbelyke liefde* (*Indecent Love*), printed in 1704, the anonymous author recalls the event. The crowds were impressed, he writes, 'due to the excellence of their clothing, artful Stages, good new Plays, and civilized performances, accompanied by elegant Female Players, (among whom their own Wives,) at a time when all female parts at our Schouwburg were still performed by male persons'.<sup>31</sup> The city magistrates subsequently permitted the Schouwburg to hire the most prominent players of the troupe, again drawing large audiences. A few months later, on 19 April 1655, in what seems to have been a carefully prepared moment, Nozeman made her debut on stage. Her first performance was in a 1644 play by Jan Schipper called *Onvergelijkelijke Ariane* (*Incomparable Ariane*). Over the next six years, she took on a wide variety of roles. In 1661, the Schouwburg hired four women to replace her when she died, probably of the plague.

England's first woman to appear on the public stage is usually thought to have been either Anne Marshall or Margaret Hughes, one of whom most likely played the part of Desdemona on 8 December 1660, though we are not absolutely certain that this was the first performance. Hughes was unmarried and famously had an affair with Prince Rupert; Marshall was married to an actor, like Nozeman, and her younger sister also acted on the Restoration stage.<sup>32</sup> Actor-poet Thomas Jordan's famous prologue, purportedly written for the occasion, refers, like Vos's passage, to France as a precedent, this time in a positive way: 'Shall we count that a crime *France* calls an honour?' He assures spectators, 'Tis possible a vertuous woman may/Abhor all sorts of looseness, and yet play;/Play on the Stage, where all eyes are upon her.'<sup>33</sup> 'The difference', he claims, countering the kind of attitude espoused

<sup>29</sup> Albach, 'onvergetelijke', 80. Kossmann believes the reference in Vos to the girl actor may be to Ariana herself, but this is speculation (*niederländische*, 123). Ariana's first name is spelled differently by theater historians; she is also sometimes designated by her maiden name as Ariana van den Bergh. I have chosen the spelling Ariana and her married name, the most widely used variant. For Nozeman's biography, see, Albach, 'onvergetelijke' and 'Ariana'. Also Nozeman, 'vergeten' and her entry 'Bergh', *Digitaal*, <http://resources.huygens.knaw.nl/vrouwenlexicon/lemmata/data/ArianaNozeman>. (Accessed on 17 March 2017).

<sup>30</sup> It seems likely, given payment records, that all three women performed at the court of Christina of Sweden and her mother in 1653. Dahlberg, 'Vondels', 308.

<sup>31</sup> The original reads, 'om de kóstelykheid hunner kleederen, kunstige Tooneelen, goede nieuwe Tooneelstukken, én ordéntelyke uitvoeringe, vergezelschap van déftige Speelsters, (waar onder hunne eigene Vrouwen,) in een tyd dat alle vrouwe-rollen op onzen Schouwburg, nóg door mans persoonen wierden uitgevoerd'. *Wanhebbelyke*, \*6. Also qtd. in Albach, 'onvergetelijke', 81.

<sup>32</sup> For more information on Hughes and Marshall, also known under her married name as Anne Quin, see Highfill et al., *Biographical*, IIX and XII.

<sup>33</sup> Jordan, *Royal*, 21-22; C3r-v.

by Vos, 'lies onely in the custom'.<sup>34</sup> Where Vos was holding on to transvestite acting as part of Dutch national identity, Jordan uses the example of France with no qualms because the royalists in exile had come into contact with and emulated French culture for its sophistication, without worrying about the effect it might have on their Englishness.<sup>35</sup> His epilogue begins by asking the audience, 'And how d'ye like her[?]', reminiscent of Vos's player's invitation to 'see how you like her acting'. Jordan leaves the final judgment up to the ladies in the audience, but not before turning the accusation of whoredom back on the male accusers: 'he that censures her in such a case/Hath a soul blacker than *Othello's* face'.<sup>36</sup> Both Vos and Jordan invoke sexual promiscuity almost as a matter of course. Jordan's promise that the actress will have a civilizing effect on the stage anticipates, Fiona Ritchie points out, the royal patent that allowed women to act and isolates cross-dressing as the only moral blemish on the theater.<sup>37</sup> Permitting women to act will, Jordan assures the audience, 'purge every thing that is unclean,/Lascivious, scurrilous, impious or obscene'.<sup>38</sup> At the same time, in denying a sexual reading of their presence, he also admits it is foremost in the mind of the audience members. His nervous joke suggests the tenuousness of the actress's reputation under the pressure of the 'black' souls of the male audience.

Jordan's epilogue shows a fascination with the relationship between public and private. To defend the actress, Jordan tells the audience that she 'is the same thing in publick as in private;/As far from being what you call a Whore,/As *Desdemona* injur'd by the Moor'.<sup>39</sup> This formulation is based on a theatrical understanding of private and public self. Jordan claims that the 'truth' about the private self of the actress is the same as the truth about *Desdemona*, the role she plays. Moreover, the audience member's identity is also presented as theatrical, as the slanderous spectator is accused of having 'a soul blacker than *Othello's* face'. The remark shows that Jordan understands the private and public self in equal terms. This formulation is particularly suited to the play *Othello*, which itself asks questions about the relationship between public and private truth about women, established only, it seems, in performance and subject to potentially destructive male interpretation. By logical extension, Jordan says that if the ladies in the audience think the actress unchaste, 'She means to act no more, and this shall be/No other Play but her own Tragedy'.<sup>40</sup> Jordan's repeated presentation of the public-private relationship in the language of performance matches the traditional treatment of the two realms as continuous and conceptually equal, typically, McKeon argues, found under absolutism and closely linked to Habermas's concept of representative publicness.

While Jordan's use of theatrical language presents public and private both as a product of performance, antitheatrical literature highlights the greater importance of the private self. In a much-cited essay on the Restoration actress, Katherine Maus describes the fundamental

34 *Idem*, 22; C3v.

35 See the extended discussion of the prologue and epilogue in Ritchie, *Women*, 4-9.

36 Jordan, *Royal*, 23; C4r.

37 Ritchie, *Women*, 6.

38 Jordan, *Royal*, 22; C3v.

39 *Idem*, 23; C4r.

40 *Ibidem*.

opposition of public and private in these works. The distinction between private and public self signals the beginning of the longer and uneven development towards a conceptual separation of the two, also described by McKeon. Maus writes, “The antitheatricalists and antifeminists conceive of an inner, “real” self, which is too often profoundly private, and of an outer self which, though it should express the reality within, too often conceals or distorts it.”<sup>41</sup> In *The Antitheatrical Prejudice*, Jonas Barish uses the phrases ‘absolute identity’ and ‘the belief in an absolute sincerity’ for such Puritan conceptions of the self, formulated in contrast with acting and performance.<sup>42</sup> This positing of a self within is at odds with Jordan’s language, since he treats public and private as equal – even if potentially contrasting – roles, and he operates on assumptions of a pervasive theatricality. Jordan’s concern is to assert coherence between two selves, but neither is necessarily seen as deeper or more truthful and therefore prior to the other; they are, in his words, ‘the same thing.’

The notion of public and private self as equally theatrical could evoke strong audience responses. Maus cites William Chetwood, who remembers an occasion when Anne Bracegirdle, who was known for her virtue and chastity, received applause when reciting Cordelia’s line ‘Arm’d in my Virgin Innocence’ in Nahum Tate’s version of *King Lear*. Chetwood contrasts her reception with that of Elizabeth Barry, single and noted for her promiscuity, who with the same words, ‘created a Horse-laugh . . . and the scene of generous Pity and Compassion at the close turn’d to Ridicule.’<sup>43</sup> Although Maus notes that the sexuality of the actress was ‘an extension of her histrionic function,’ the possibility of opposing chaste role and sexual self is a source of laughter in the anecdote, just as the congruence of chaste role and chaste self leads to approbation.<sup>44</sup> Unlike the representation of actresses in antitheatrical literature, this anecdote does not imagine the actress as *first* sexual privately and *then* chaste publicly. Chetwood and Jordan show that in the theater, the relationship between public and private was not conceived of in terms of priority, primacy, or causation but as distinction *and* continuity. From this perspective, women’s performances could base themselves on examples of real noble women and their public display of virtuous femininity. At the same time, their private selves were associated with a secrecy that was just as theatrically displayed. In the juxtaposition of the traditional view of public and private with the antitheatrical response to it, we can see two different paradigms at work, as reformers were keen to separate out the private self more deeply and rigorously than before.

Eventually, the ‘modern separation out of the public and the private,’ as McKeon calls it, leads to a disappearance of that self from public view.<sup>45</sup> Hints of this can be seen in the treatment of Dutch actresses. The fanfare with which Nozeman appeared on stage, by contrast with the obscure debut of Marshall or Hughes, suggests a presentation in the Dutch Republic of the actress as only a public figure, constructing a publicness seen as unrelated to a private identity that was not discussed and assumed to be properly chaste. What we see in response to Nozeman’s first appearance is a repeated play on her name in

41 Maus, “Playhouse”, 607.

42 Barish, *Antitheatrical*, 94.

43 Maus, “Playhouse”, 599.

44 Idem, 601.

45 McKeon, *Secret*, xix.

early productions, not only on the opening night. A few weeks after Nozeman's first performance, on 20 May 1655, for instance, the players at the Schouwburg put on a *na-spel*, or interlude performed after the main play of the evening. The piece was written for Nozeman and entitled *Genavent Ariaentje* (*Goodevening little Ariana*). Nozeman often acted opposite her husband and even on occasion with their young daughter Maria, suggesting a delight in having actors perform roles that were continuous with, yet different from their private selves. These casting choices also point to little anxiety about the conflict between the two. Albach speculates on a special moment during a performance of Schipper's *Onvergelijkelijke Ariane in Thessalien* (*Incomparable Ariane in Thessalia*, 1656), the sequel to the earlier play chosen for Nozeman's debut. At one point, the heroine disappears and a search party repeatedly cries 'Ariane! Ariane!' This, Albach speculates, 'may have sounded like cheers of applause for the new star through the space of the Schouwburg.'<sup>46</sup> The moment does not resemble the Bracegirdle-Barry incident discussed by Maus, where the overlap or contrast between role and person led to an intense audience response, nor does it betray the concerns of antitheatricalists about the relationship between performance and truth.

Although reformed literature was and continued to be influential in the Dutch Republic, the circumstances of Nozeman's first performances reflect a different conception of public and private than those in evidence in the Restoration theater. In these instances, identity is a matter of outward fact of marital status and name, not inner truth, and private self is otherwise not alluded to. In the Schouwburg's staging choices and in the absence of sustained speculation about Nozeman's sexuality, privacy is positioned outside of public scrutiny, to the point of irrelevance and unknowability.<sup>47</sup> This contrasts with the situation in England, where, Cynthia Lowenthal argues, actresses' 'visual availability ... translated into a communal, extratheatrical discourse filled with speculations about the offstage activities of their bodies.'<sup>48</sup> While it would be too much to extrapolate from this contrast a conclusion about the state of the separation of public and private in either country, the possibility of keeping the private self of the actress undisclosed is not found in contemporary discussions of actresses in England, suggestive of disparate cultural contexts for the new phenomenon of female performance in the playhouse.

### *The Theatrical Environment*

The differences between the two countries are also apparent in the professional environments and even the buildings in which English and Dutch actresses first made their

<sup>46</sup> Albach, 'onvergetelijke', 82.

<sup>47</sup> The one possible exception is a scurrilous anonymous poem entitled *The Ghost of Tegnagel* (*De geest van Tegnagel*, 1658), which describes Nozeman as 'Van den Berghs Adriaentje,/Whom I so oft have caressed' ('Van den Berghs Adriaentje,/Die 'k soo vaeckmael heb ghestreelt', A9r). While this is on the face of it a conventional description of the actress as sexually available, historians have debated whether this is indeed a reference to Ariana or to her sister; the poem speaks slanderously of many in the world of the professional theater at the time, so it is difficult to take this single reference as an indication of a general tendency to sexualize the private lives of actresses.

<sup>48</sup> Lowenthal, *Performing*, 112.

appearance. When the first English actress entered the stage in 1660, much had changed in the playhouse since before the Civil Wars. Not only were boy actors no longer widely available, but even the old theaters themselves had largely been destroyed. The new buildings were relatively intimate, ranging from a renovated tennis court to other indoor spaces more akin to pre-war private theaters. Although members of different social classes could and did attend, those of lower status were no longer immediately standing in front of the stage, as in the days before the Civil Wars, but seated at the back.<sup>49</sup> Clearly, the culture of theatergoing had changed. Howe has linked the Restoration theater with the court, calling it ‘a coterie theater’ operating in what she calls ‘more exclusively a court milieu than it had been in the Caroline period.’<sup>50</sup> The two dominant theater managers after the war, William Davenant and Thomas Killigrew, were themselves associated with the court. It is possible that with this changed atmosphere came a new set of demands on theatrical practice. Smaller spaces may have kindled theater managers’ desire for modernization and a fashion for naturalism that would be less hospitable to transvestite acting.<sup>51</sup> Even though Restoration theaters were in principle open to all, their accessibility was limited in terms of size and intended audience, which was more courtly than before the Restoration. Public playhouses were now roofed and smaller, featuring inner spaces, machinery, and scenic backdrops as well as a sizable forestage – theatrical innovations that allowed for quick shifts between settings. The smaller size of the theaters also allowed for increased closeness between audience and actors. Edward Langhans estimates that ‘The most distant spectators in the largest houses were probably only 60ft to 70ft from the stage.’<sup>52</sup> There was plenty of spectacle in the Restoration theater, but plays could also use their intimate spatial quality to stage convincingly all types of private scenes, set in bedrooms and other small spaces.

The Amsterdam Schouwburg, opened in 1638 and renovated and enlarged from 1663 to 1665, featured, like the Restoration theaters, a proscenium stage with shutters, a forestage, and inner spaces. Yet the Dutch theater differed from its English counterparts in many aspects.<sup>53</sup> Where English theaters primarily set out to make a profit and had to contend with rival theaters to attract audiences, the Schouwburg was, especially in its original intent, more ‘public’ in the civic sense of the term. Its status as the only public theater in Amsterdam meant it had no professional competition locally. When the main Chambers of Rhetoric in Amsterdam merged, magistrates, prominent members of the chambers of rhetoric, and playwrights decided to found a theater as a venue used to educate and bring together the larger public. Major investments came from two charitable institutions, one for orphans and one for old men, which in turn took all of the profits once the

49 Langhans, ‘Post-1660’, 14-17.

50 Howe, *First*, 23.

51 The royal patent that allowed women to act not only proclaimed it less immoral than transvestite acting, but also stated that plays needed to be ‘useful and instructive representations of human life’, suggestive of a preference for realistic stage presentations. The argument for naturalism is made in Payne Fisk, ‘Restoration’, 73-75. For the patent, see Thomas, *Restoration*, 16-18, esp. 17-18.

52 Langhans, ‘Post-1660’, 15.

53 For details on the building, for which we have a large number of records, see Albach, ‘Schouwburg’. For the renovation and addition of many visual effects, see Amir, ‘26 mei’.

Schouwburg started making money. Even traveling players at fairs had been required to give part of their income to charity, so that theater more generally was perceived as having at least in part a civic responsibility. The Schouwburg was run, not by theater owners and managers, but by a board of regents appointed by the City Magistrate. At the same time, over the years, profit would become an important consideration, and the management of the Schouwburg certainly aimed at drawing large audiences. After 1660, concerns about this development would lead to a shift in Schouwburg policy towards more serious French drama and a less popular orientation. In the mid-century when the earliest actresses appeared on the stage, the Schouwburg had, we might say and especially compared with English theaters, a mixed approach, both desiring to bring in large audiences and fulfill its original didactic function, in light of its association with the civic authorities and charity.<sup>54</sup>

English Restoration theaters, which aimed at making a profit and attracting an elite audience, and the Schouwburg, a civic space adorned with quotations that pointed to its educational function, were thus quite distinct urban institutions. This is reflected in their location: the Schouwburg took up a central position in the city of Amsterdam, while Restoration theaters were located on the margins of the city proper. The difference in the status of the theater can also be seen in the presence of the Amsterdam city council on important occasions, such as the opening of the renovated Schouwburg in 1665, by contrast with the appearance of the English monarch in his capacity as a private person at Restoration theaters, sparking gossip about his affairs with actresses. Where the English stage constructed the public realm in part as a publicizing of the private for profit, the Amsterdam Schouwburg at least in intention associated the public realm with city government, social cohesion of the larger community, and civic responsibility.<sup>55</sup> Over time, of course, the nature of theaters' public role changed. The Schouwburg became more profit-oriented, yet it would also see a return to more philosophical and less spectacular plays in the later decades of the seventeenth century. As Mieke Smits-Veldt has explained,

The didactic idealism that marked playwrights of the first years would increasingly give way to the offering of entertainment, also by authors of the 'serious' plays. With the gradual professionalization of the theater the pleasing of the public seems to become a goal in itself for a good many of them. The ultimate didactic, educational function of the classic genres would never be rejected by anybody, however.<sup>56</sup>

Overall, then, it is clear that the arena within which English and Dutch actresses first appeared is dissimilar, with the former primarily profit-oriented and targeted at a particular social group and the latter remaining associated, however ambiguously, with a moralistic function. This had an impact on the plays in which women were cast, as well as the nature of their public presence.

<sup>54</sup> Porteman and Smits-Veldt argue that Jan Vos, a key figure in the Schouwburg until 1667, intended to use spectacular drama in order to 'please the large public and increase the receipts' (*Nieuw*, 524). New norms were established especially under the influence of the intellectual society *Nil Volentibus Arduum*, founded in 1669.

<sup>55</sup> Jeff Weintraub explains how the term 'public' has been defined differently over time. The two perspectives I uncover here, one associated with the marketplace and display, the other with civic institutions, match two of his four models for thinking about the public/private divide. Weintraub, 'Theory', 7.

<sup>56</sup> Smits-Veldt, *Nederlandse*, 28-29.

### *Plays and Players*

While the theater as building and institution provided the framework for the actress's performance, within the plays themselves, she could appear in public and private locations, each with their own complex set of associations and values. What should we make of the particular plays in which the earliest actresses performed? As theater historians and literary critics have pointed out, the presence of actual female bodies on stage in England undeniably led to changes in theatrical policies and decisions. There are debates about the extent to which the employment of actresses encouraged a sexualization of women on stage, but few contest that there was a general trend in that direction. Jean Marsden has most forcefully made the case that the new theatrical intimacy and the presence of actresses led to the objectification of the female body, particularly in rape scenes and breeches roles. Payne has countered this impression by pointing out that the sexualizing of actresses, so famously articulated in the prologues and epilogues in which they addressed the audience directly, is a marginal phenomenon. Instead, she discerns a trajectory towards increasing professionalization of female acting. With admirable balance, Laura Rosenthal discerns a dual development: on the one hand plays challenged patriarchy by defending women's rights to choose their own partners in marriage, while on the other hand they put women in positions in which they are sexually threatened and objectified. She argues that this ambivalent treatment 'theatricalizes the instability of the status of women' at this time.<sup>57</sup> It is beyond the scope of this essay to resolve this debate, but on balance it is clear that the new culture of the Restoration theater was invested in presenting women in intimate as well as public settings, offering up their bodies and selves for display. English theater, in other words, benefitted from a public femininity presented as a performance of the private, defined in the traditional sense as a space of secrecy and sexuality, not as the more positively conceived domestic realm of the reformers.

Like English audiences, Dutch theatergoers were fond of romantic plays, often translated from French or Spanish originals, set in Mediterranean and other exotic locations, and sometimes featuring near-rape scenes, although these were already popular prior to the introduction of women on stage.<sup>58</sup> While more research is needed, there does not seem to have been a notable increase in sexual material after women began taking on female roles, as we might expect given the association of acting with prostitution prior to the appearance of actresses. Although it was not a legal requirement as it was in Spain, most actresses were married and employed as part of a couple, enabling them to maintain a reputation for propriety.<sup>59</sup> The *Parsonageboek* (*Book of Roles*), a book recording roles of actors for the

<sup>57</sup> See Marsden, *Fatal*; Payne, 'Reified'; and Rosenthal, 'Reading', esp. 204. See for other compelling arguments, Straub, *Sexual*, and for a more general account of the questioning of patriarchy, Staves, *Players*'. Howe is largely in agreement with Marsden on the sexualizing of actresses (Howe, *First*).

<sup>58</sup> Amanda Pipkin's argument for the use of rape scenes to articulate a Dutch identity is in part based on Joost van den Vondel's famous *Gijsbrecht van Aemstel* (1638), performed at the opening of the Schouwburg. This suggests that the imagery of rape was culturally and politically useful in the young republic well before the first actresses performed. Pipkin, *Rape*.

<sup>59</sup> All three actresses who performed in the early years, Nozeman, Kalbergen, and Eeckhout, were married to actors. For the Spanish laws, see Carrión, 'Legally'.

season 1658-1659, shows Nozeman playing a wide range of characters, but no particular tendency to cast her in texts with overtly sexual scenes or to put on erotic plays.<sup>60</sup> In the majority of the nearly one hundred performances for which we have records, Nozeman took the lead, often with her husband. She appeared in almost fifty roles, frequently in plays of what Albach calls 'a high literary caliber'.<sup>61</sup> Many plays in which Nozeman performed were tragedies or tragi-comedies – the genre that was called 'happily ending tragedy' in the period.<sup>62</sup> She acted only occasionally in the comic interludes with which the evening ended and only once in a short ballet. Sexual roles, while not prominent, were not avoided either. Nozeman played two notable comic parts, in her husband Gilles Nozeman's *Lichte Klaartje* (*Frivolous Klaartje*, 1645) and in Gerbrand Bredero's *Moortje* (*Little Moor*, 1615). In the former she was the clever adulterous wife, and in the latter she appeared as Moy-ael, a prostitute who runs a brothel.

The transition from transvestite to female acting was more gradual in the Low Countries than in England, perhaps explaining why the selection of plays did not undergo major changes merely in response to the presence of women. The records for the 1658-1659 season also give us ample information on the persistence of transvestite acting after Nozeman's debut. Even with multiple women in the company, men continued to perform female parts, not only in comedies but also in tragedies. There is a certain playfulness about male and female casting, for instance in the case of one *na-spel* entitled *A Tablegame* (*Een Taafelspel*), in which a man took the part of Venus, but a woman, Eeckhout, played Comus.<sup>63</sup> Such cross-gender casting is also seen in England, often in the interest of profit. For instance, an all-female cast performed three plays in 1672, in a bid by the King's Company to draw audiences to the theater at Lincoln Inn's Field – a move that Jacqueline Pearson describes as 'desperate'.<sup>64</sup> The Dutch practices are more complex, considering for example that on the same night of the performance of *A Tablegame*, Nozeman and Eeckhout took on minor male roles as Messenger and Tell-Tale in the tragedy *Herdoopers Aanslag op Amsterdam* (*Anabaptists' Attack on Amsterdam*). Still, such casting of women as men is rare in this season.<sup>65</sup> By contrast, men frequently acted women's parts, as in the comedy *De Quae Grieten* (*The Angry Wenches*), which featured Nozeman as the Second Wench and two men as the First and Third Wenches.<sup>66</sup> This casting was not always a matter of necessity since sometimes men were cast in female roles even when there were actresses available. Nonetheless, later in the season, when the company included three or even four women, it seems that transvestite casting became more routine in comic interludes than in other types of plays.

60 Wybrands reproduces the records in 'Amsterdamsche'. The book is also now available on-line in the SA, Archief van het Burgerweeshuis (Oud Archief 367A; 1.2.3.2), Exploitatie van de Schouwburg, no 429. <https://archief.amsterdam/inventarissen/inventaris/367a.nl.html>. (Accessed on 9 May 2017).

61 Albach, 'onvergetelijke', 82.

62 These plays are listed as 'blij-eindend Treurspel'. See e.g. Wybrands, 'Amsterdamsche', 273.

63 Idem, 252.

64 Pearson, *Prostituted*, 28-29. Other occasions of all-female performance she cites are mostly later, in the eighteenth century when some women even specialized in taking on male roles.

65 Wybrands, 'Amsterdamsche', 251.

66 Idem, 253. See also Grijp, 'Boys', for the continued casting of men in female roles after 1655.

Karel Porteman and Mieke Smits-Veldt describe the plays that were popular around mid-century as ‘mostly pieces with lots of action and complicated intrigue, preferably at royal courts, in which romantic love, revenge, honor, and duty battled each other in passionate rivalry, and in which also, albeit less than before, they catered to the old taste for visual cruelties.’<sup>67</sup> The play chosen for Nozeman’s debut, *De onvergelijkelijke Ariane* by Schipper, fits the description exactly. While the Ariane of the play is the ‘rescued chastity’ (*Verloste Kuysheyt*) of the subtitle, Schipper combines romantic perspectives on love with occasional innuendo, directed not only at the protagonist but also at other female characters, who were, in 1655, still played by men and boys.<sup>68</sup> Ariane, in other words, is not the only object of desire in the play. She is, however, the only one to be presented primarily in terms of the divine, both elevated and sexually attractive. In a complex scene, for instance, Ariane goes to the temple of Diana to be cleansed and confirmed in her virginity. Her unwanted suitor, Marcilenus, secretly enters the temple before she does, so that he can watch her bathe.<sup>69</sup> There is a hint of nakedness when Ariane enters the temple and asks her servant to put her clothing away. But in the scene that follows, an accomplice of Marcilenus pretending to be ‘Diana’ enters to recommend marriage to Ariane and to present Marcilenus as the best candidate for her groom. It is a transparent and funny bit of staging that is instantly rejected by the not-so-gullible leading lady. The scene contains sexually arousing material, confirms the idealizing of Ariane from previous scenes, pokes fun at the use of acting to fool women, and mocks the desiring male character. The play had been adapted and written nine years before Nozeman’s first appearance on stage, but it seems likely that the leading role was greatly enhanced by her taking it on. Schipper’s multiple presentations of women, as romantic and comic characters, as divine love objects and down-to-earth figures who make up their own minds about marriage, suggest a potential for complex public femininity. In this play and many others of the period, the nature of women’s response to male desire governs women’s roles, but it is a premise that predates the appearance of actresses on the Dutch stage and does not preclude variation and ambiguity in the public women to which audiences were exposed.

By comparison, *Othello* includes only three female roles: that of the virtuous Desdemona, besieged by suspicion unfairly and placed in a sexual light by Iago’s slander, the more complex Emilia, partly driven by a desire to please her husband and partly motivated by loyalty to her mistress, and Bianca, possibly unfairly identified as a courtesan by others. All three have their moments of articulating desire and, we might say, overstep the bounds of

67 Porteman, *nieuw*, 525.

68 The subtitle is *Verloste Kuysheyt uyt Romen (Rescued Chastity from Rome)*. The printing date of 1646 is erroneous since the title page says that the play was performed on stage in the year 1655. The text I have used is the second edition of the play; an earlier version was printed in 1644, and the play itself is based on Schipper’s own translation of Jean Desmarets’s novel *L’Ariane*. Early on in the play, Palamedes describes his love for Camilla as being marked by five stages, the first is caused by her eyes, the second by the touch of her hand, the third by caressing her cheeks, the fourth will be caused by kissing her on the lips, which is causing him to feel ‘something rising up’ (‘Daer voel ik yets oprijzen’). When she asks where the fifth is, he says he could not point to it or could, but only if allowed (Schipper, *Onvergelijkelijke*, B4v; 16). By 1658, the role of Camilla was played by a woman, but the role of Emilia, her friend and confidante, was performed by a man. Wybrands, ‘Amsterdamsche’, 260.

69 Schipper, *Onvergelijkelijke*, Er-E4r; 59-65.

female propriety. Bianca and Emilia are able to articulate their sexual embodiment more openly than Desdemona, but Desdemona's violation of patriarchal dictates, in choosing her own unconventional marriage partner, has fatal consequences. If the original production for which Jordan composed the prologue and epilogue featured, as is to be assumed, boys or men in the roles of Emilia and Bianca, it would have clarified the extent to which female embodiment leads to nefarious and false sexualization on stage. By contrast with her mistress, Emilia's tragic death in the end is caused not by her sexual choices but by her unwillingness to obey and protect her husband at all cost. The spectacle of the two women's corpses on stage, joined in the end by Othello's dead body, would have enabled audiences to compare the physically male Emilia, whose crime was defiant speech, with the physically female Desdemona, whose virtuous but sexualized body would have summoned strong emotions, from the admiration for besieged, noble femininity to the guilty sexualized spectatorship that Jordan aligns with the racial other. In this moment, the English stage would have made clear the complexities that beset English actresses, poised between sexual and virtuous publicity, constructed through theatrical performance and one corrupted by the other.

### *Conclusion*

The texts, spaces, and contexts for the performances of the first actresses in England and Low Countries present us with different paradigms for understanding their presence in a more or less public playhouse. The English Restoration stage, driven by commercial concerns and yet intimate in atmosphere, seemed particularly suited to the traditional understanding of public and private as distinct but conceptually equal, presenting the private self as equally theatrical as the public self. This pervasive theatricality is what worried antitheatricalists most and made them denounce the discontinuity between the public role and the "private" truth of the actor as hypocrisy. Their protests against female acting were a sign of what would be an increased emphasis on the private realm as not theatrical but properly the space of devotional exercise and domestic bliss. Public femininity, for them, was inevitably sexual, but for the Restoration stage such associations had commercial benefits, and the plays selected for the early actresses reflected this profitability. The situation in the Dutch Republic was different: there we find a third possibility, namely a concentration on the actress as public figure without considering the relation to her private self as important or problematic. At the Schouwburg, the private realm is not exposed to public view, based on a stronger separation of the two spheres. Such a perspective is enhanced and made possible in the theater by the Schouwburg's mixed civic-commercial function.

The appearance of female actresses on both the Dutch and the English stage at roughly the same point in time presents us with a measure for thinking about issues of privacy, publicity, and especially about the place of women in an arena that was traditionally dominated by men. The first actresses constitute a particular type of test case for the idea of a female presence in a public space, a challenging new phenomenon that would permanently transform the theater.

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