

The Academie
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## AUTHOR

Barnes, Joshua

## TITLE + SUBTITLE

The Academie; or, The Cambridge Dunns

## PRINTED

Not printed

## COMPANY + PLAYHOUSE

Trinity College, Cambridge

## PREMIERE

1675 Jun 26

## ORIGINAL TITLE-PAGE:

From the MS in Emmanuel College.

(Two versions, both manuscript, bound together; each corresponding to each year in which it was performed; both written in the same hand)

The Academie / Or / The Cambridge Dunns / A Comedy. /

Written / By J: B: A: B: [?]med: when it was acted 1676 / J: B: A: B: jun. when it was acted 1675 /

[A note after the dramatis personae 1675:

It seems to appear from a speech of Ds Proctor Page 25 that this play was acted June 26 1675, a curious specimen of the licentiousness of the times, when such a composition was allowed to be represented publicly by the undergraduates of a College.]

## MODERN EDITIONS:

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## EPISTLE DEDICATORY TO:

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## EPISTLE CONTENTS:

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## PROLOGUE AUTHOR

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## PROLOGUE SPEAKER

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## PROLOGUE

"Prologue to the University": Laments the weakness of wit when submitted to others' judgement, and requests no "waves of Malice" from the audience in order to make the play a success.

## EPILOGUE AUTHOR

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## EPILOGUE SPEAKER

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## EPILOGUE

Asks for the audience's applause, but warns them that if their criticism is too sharp with "this tender birth" they may have no more plays performed.

## CAST OF CHARACTERS:

[The 1675 MS includes names of actors and characters; the 1676 Ms leaves out the actors' names. Only the description of Madam Shawdarwoods differs from that of 1676, in 1675 it reads "A young Lady woo'd by supficial & Spendall but livng Truewit"]

[?]Knt Son

Mr Dooal M.A. Supficials Tutor

Shavily

Mr Carelife M.A. Ticks and Spendal's Tutor

[?]Wicks

Mr Superficial Fellow commonner An empty pretending rich Fop

Barnes

Ds Proctor &gt; B.A. afterward [...] Good

Ds Greame	Ds Tully	> Scholars but debauch'd
Greene	Truewit	[?]Ironicò A sober lad, well behav'd, of good fortune, but [...]
King	Ticke	> Two debauch'd Pensioners Witty &
[?]Bedwir	Spendal	> wicked, but no scholars
Mason	Cheat	A knavish cuckoldly Vintner
Knt [i.e. Knight?]	Vatican	a knavish [?]huckster
Duncomb	Thimble	a silly Taylor, subject to his Wife Easy and fawning
Jessop	Ralph	a Shoemaker A cunning subtle Adulterer
Brampton	Mr Smoothtongue	An honest, wary Cuckold, but [...]
Jessup	Drawer	
Mason	[1st ] Clowne	>
Greame	2nd Clowne	> Ticks Country men Clowns ignorant
Duncomb	3rd Clowne	> northern rusticks
Barnes	4th Clowne	>
Hughes	Madam Shawdarhoods	a rich heiress A modest, pleasant, prudent Lady
Amias	Susanna	her Chambermaid
Smith	Mrs Smoothtongue	Handsome, pleasant, humoursome and witty, but overreaching
Stavelly	Mrs Cheate	Handsome, Conventicl'd, envious & [...]
Woodgate	Mrs Stitchwell	Handsome, close, but dishonest
Mantua	Joane Thimble	A fooling malapart light Huswife
Amias	Margerie	A common barnwoman; cunning & [...]

LOCATION:

Cambridge

PLOT SUMMARY:

The play opens with Proctor and Tully complaining of their secluded life at the college and deciding to lead a new life outside the college walls. At a tavern, Tick and Spendall come to have a drink and make a pass at Mrs. Cheat, the vintner's wife, whom he confidently allows to see his customers in his belief that she is an honest woman because she goes to conventicles. In fact, she is quite wanton (as all the women of her kind are according to Tully and Spendall, who tell one another stories of sexual encounters with non-conformist wives) and she lets them kiss her. She even offers to present Mrs. Smoothtongue to them in a future rendezvous at a conventicle. The act ends with a new scene in which Tully orders Thimble the tailor a new coat for him and another for Tully.

In act 2, Truewit meets Spendall and Tick. He tells them he needs to remind his father to send him money, and that, as his letters pass by his hometown parson's hands before they reach his father's, he needs Spendall to write a letter commending him as if it was written by a Cambridge priest. In exchange, Truewit will write some acrostic verses for Spendall, which Spendall wants to send to young and wealthy Mrs. Shawdarhoods as if written by him. In the meantime, Tully and Proctor have got drunk and kick and fight one another until they fall down. Spendall and Tick come in, help them and become friends, and they all leave together to meet Truewit in his chamber, who is reading aloud some of the verse he has just written and has decided to court Mrs. Shawdarhoods too. They all exchange their writings and leave. The scene then changes to show Shawdarhoods *sola*, reading a poem aloud and then leaving the stage, which is occupied by Superficial, Carelife, Dooal and Vatican; the latter hears his mates requests and agrees to use his own money to furnish them with all they need (to repair a gown, a new sword, etc.), on the condition that they pay him later.

In the tavern (in 2.5), Proctor, Tick, Spendall and Tully are drinking again, and Thimble comes in to request the money from the gowns he made for them. He tells them his wife has ordered him not to return home without the money, or else she will hit him with a "gyant [?]shole". However, he is persuaded to play along in the droll they are rehearsing. For the droll, some chairs are covered

with a piece of cloth to represent the place in which the Duke's bride lies hidden while a glass of wine represents the body of his dead daughter. In the droll, the Duke (Tick) comes in to find his daughter dead, and whenever he laments he drinks from the bottle while the others drink and smoke. Then he asks a Magus (Proctor) for the whereabouts of his bride's remains, and Gallicando (Thimble) tells them how he murdered them. [El resto es casi ilegible, pero parece tener que ver con beber y apalear o emborrachar a Thimble].

The droll is interrupted by Mrs. Thimble's arrival. She pulls her husband by the ears and chides him for not taking care of their many children, and asks the scholars for the money; but they fondle and kiss her and persuade her to wait till the next day.

In 3.1., Truewit finally meets Mrs. Shawdarhoods and he is smitten by her beauty and manners. However, he comments, he is too poor to deserve her. She is quite attracted to him, too, but must ask him to leave because Superficial is about to arrive. She and her maid Susanna suspect that Superficial is not being honest with her, and in his visit they find this confirmed, not only is he superficial but also the poems he brings are from Truewit.

A day seems to have passed in the transition from act 2 to act 3, because Mr. and Mrs. Thimble return to the tavern to ask the now permanent scholar-customers for the money due to them. Mr. Thimble is a bit too shy, and she chides him again. The scholars try again to mollify her with promises and kisses, but no one seems to succeed; so they finally resort to threats and tell her that she must wait willy nilly until next Monday. After they leave, there come in Vatican, Ralph the Shoemaker, Mrs. Smoothtongue and Mrs. Stitchwell, all of whom come from the conventicle; they all want their money, too; and they too are told to go to Tully's chamber the next Monday.

From the tavern, Ticke and Spendall have gone to a bawdy-house, where they argue on the advantages and disadvantages of smoking (Tully: smoke "cleanses the braine and stomacke, its the most Virtuoso of all Cathartic medicines..."; Spendall: "tis the fountaine of all diseases, a Catholicke poison..."). Then they ask Margerie to drink and stay with them (while she picks their money from their pockets). In the meantime: Proctor goes to Mrs. Stitchwell's shop (3.5), where he finds Ralph flirting with her; Ralph (who is married) leaves at once, and Proctor and Mrs. Stitchwell retire to her chamber. Tick receives the visit of four northern country clowns (4.1) who bring him news of his father; they want to take him to church (as if churches were to them the highlights of Cambridge architecture), but he tells them to meet him for dinner in his chamber. And Spendall visits Mrs. Shawdarhoods (4.2) and gives her a description of Superficial as a heavy drinker and smoker and as someone who is not as wealthy as he says, has got several bastard sons and is unfit to study at all; all of which Mrs. Shawdarhoods regards as a description of Spendall himself, and so she dismisses him.

In the next scene (4.3), seemingly some time later, Truewit is thrilled with a letter from her, in which she declares her affection for him. Superficial comes in to pick up a letter that he is supposed to have written for Mrs. Shawdarhoods. What Truewit does is to respond to her letter and have Superficial deliver it for him, unaware of its real contents.

In the meantime, Spendall and Tick come in with Mrs. Smoothtongue, seemingly after having spent the night (or a while) with her. She is offered money, but she says that they must keep it if what she gives them is not better than what Mrs. Cheat gives them. She also says that her husband has left for three days; but he comes back suddenly, and the scholars are forced to act as if they had been waiting for him to order some books. They do so, and then, after the husband leaves (5.1), they come back with money. They ask her to choose the one who will spend the night with her, and she chooses Spendall.

Still in 4.5, Carelife, Superficial and Dooal comment that Vatican will disgrace them all unless they pay him what they owe him (9-12 pounds each), and they decide to arrange a meeting with him at Tully's chamber the next Monday, where something has been plotted to get rid to all their debts.

This happens in act 5; and while Truewit tells Mrs. Shawdarhoods the news that he has received news of the death of an uncle who had made him his heir and declares that he is willing to marry her (she is happy for him, but she declares he must first obtain his degree), all the other scholars meet at Tully's and pledge themselves to Bacchus and Venus for the success of their plot against the "duns".

The first is Thimble. He is told to write the receipt while Proctor goes out to his chamber to get the money. But as soon as he has written it down, Tully snatches the receipt away and declares they will not pay. Thimble runs off in despair, not only because of what has happened, but also

because of what his wife will do to him.

The next is Cheat, whom they accuse of serving poor wine. They bet him until he confesses, and then he leaves.

The third group is Mr. and Mrs. Smoothtongue. They tell him they have already paid by giving his wife enough satisfaction for two nights; and she adds that she would have done it for nothing if she had known she would have received so much satisfaction.

Finally, there come Mrs. Stitchwell and Ralph, whom the scholars threaten with telling their husband and wife about their love affair.

The most serious challenge, however, is Vatican. But Tully has heard that he is afraid of the dark, and Proctor puts on a sheet and hides. When Vatican comes in he is scared, falls down and "bepisses himself" when he is told by the ghost that he must prepare to descend to hell. Vatican offers him money, and the ghost tells him to write a bill saying that he forgives all debts due to him. Then Proctor takes off his disguise and all go out to celebrate their success at the Rose.

#### SCENE DIVISIONS AND LOCATIONS:

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Scenes are neatly separated. But no specification of location, except when the following:

- 1.4. A Tavern.
- 2.5. A Tavern.
- 3.3. A Tavern.
- 3.4. Scen: A Bawdy House.
- 3.5. Scene a Seamstresse Shop.
- 4.3. Scene Truwits Study or Chamber.
- 5.3. Scene Sr Tully's Chamber.

#### STAGE DIRECTIONS:

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There are not many stage directions, and very few deserve special attention. The allusion to a "a Glass of Sack" which is covered "with a clean Handkerchiffe" and the "finest chair covered" (2.5) during the performance of the droll, and the allusion to "Margerie, Ticke smoaking, both drunke" (3.4) are perhaps the most significant ones.

#### REFERENCES TO PROPS AND COSTUME

- 3.4. Scen: A Bawdy=House. Table and Candle, pipes, [?]flaggin &c

#### SONGS AND DANCES:

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|---------|---------|--|
| 3.4.p20 | Spental | "Give me a bowle of your nappy, nappy Ale" (a catch: two 6-line stanzas)                         |
| 4.4.p23 | Tick    | "A mighty paine to love it is,/ And tis a paine the paine to miss" (a catch: two 8-line stanzas) |

#### REFERENCES TO REAL PLACES:

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|---------|---|
| 1.4p3   | "[she] is as impudent and couchant as the Damn'dest Whore in Whetstones Park" |
| 2.4.p11 | "The tavern over Market Hill (which is pretty broad)" [the Eagle?]            |
| 5.3.p30 | The Rose  |

#### REFERENCES TO CONTEMPORARY EVENTS:

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#### SOURCES:

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#### REVIEWER:

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