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RAPE AND THE FEMALE SUBJECT IN APHRA BEHN'S *THE ROVER*

BY ANITA PACHECO

Critics have often remarked that in Aphra Behn's *The Rover*, ladies act like whores and whores like ladies.¹ On this level, the play presents a dramatic world dominated by the two principal patriarchal definitions of women, but in which the boundary separating one category from the other has become blurred. In the case of both Florinda, the play's quintessential "maid of quality," and the prostitute Angellica Bianca, the role reversals arise out of contrasting bids to move from subjection into subjectivity. It is Florinda's rebellion against the commodification of forced marriage that destabilizes her position within patriarchy, while Angellica Bianca's self-construction as Petrarchan mistress charts the attempt of a woman excluded from the marital marketplace to turn her beauty into an alternative form of power. This essay will examine the central role which rape plays in both these struggles to escape patriarchal devaluation. Before the obligatory happy ending, Florinda faces three attempted rapes that are called not rape, but seduction, retaliation, or "ruffling a harlot" (228); in presuming to make her own sexual choices, she enters a world where the word "rape" has no meaning. Angellica Bianca's subject position is shown to involve a complex complicity in the same cultural legitimation of male sexual aggression. This paper will suggest that the presence of rape in the experiences of these two characters works to interrogate and problematize different modes of female subjectivity by situating them within a patriarchal dramatic world in which the psychology of rape is endemic.²

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Rebellion against forced marriage is, of course, an age-old comic theme; but the terms in which Florinda articulates her defiance of paternal authority—her condemnation of the "ill customs" which make a woman the "slave" of her male relations (160)—presents this comic motif as a clash between the absolutist concept of marriage, in which women function as "objects of exchange and the guarantee of dynastic continuity," and the liberal concept, which invests them with the

autonomous subject's right to choose.³ However, the relationship between these two ideas of marriage during the early modern period was not one of simple opposition. The consensus view of marriage as an affective union may have led to general disapproval of aristocratic arranged marriage, but the woman's allotted role within the companionate ideal modified without seriously challenging patriarchal interests. If she was granted authority as "joint governor" of the household, she remained subject to her husband; and if she was dignified by her position at the center of the family, she was also confined to that domestic space.⁴ Women's essential inequality in the liberal model of marriage seems to have extended as well to their right to choose their partners. That freedom appears to have been granted more readily to men than to women, who had to make do, as Mary Astell complained in 1706, with the right of veto: "a woman, indeed, can't properly be said to choose, all that is allowed her is to refuse or accept what is offered."⁵ The liberal concept of marriage, therefore, offered women at best a tentative entry into the order of subjectivity.

The history of Early Modern rape law reveals a similarly uncertain transition from patriarchal to liberal attitudes towards women. While medieval rape law perceived rape as a crime against male-owned property, the legal focus shifted in the late sixteenth century from property to person. It was the female victim rather than her male relations who was the injured party in a case of rape, and the crime itself came to be seen not as a property violation but as the ravishment of a woman against her will.⁶

However, when it came to the law's practical application, it appears that patriarchal definitions of rape continued to hold sway. The evidence, admittedly, is immensely difficult to interpret; but Nazife Bashar, in her study of the records of the home counties Assizes from 1558 to 1700, detects a pattern of few prosecutions and a tendency to convict only when the victim was a young girl.⁷ Given that the women who brought rape charges before the Assizes generally belonged to the lower classes, Bashar's findings suggest a disinclination to take rape seriously unless it was seen to involve a grave property offense, such as the rape of man's virgin daughter.⁸

In the realm of sexuality and marriage, therefore, there was only a limited conceptual space available during the Early Modern period for female self-determination. In the opening scene of *The Rover*, Behn exhibits the contradictory female identity which this uncertainty generated, as Florinda seeks to define her independence in the very patriarchal terms that invalidate it: "I shall let him see, I understand better what's due

to my beauty, birth and fortune, and more to my soul, than to obey those unjust commands” (159). Florinda here asserts a value that precludes her being reduced to a mere object of exchange by her male relations, eager to establish a kinship alliance with a wealthy old man. She bases her claim to value not only on the accidents of beauty and high birth, but also on essence; the claim to possess a rational soul—a prominent argument in seventeenth-century proto-feminist writing borrowed from philosophical rationalism—entails a demand to be treated as a fully human subject rather than as the “slave” of patriarchal fiat.⁹

However, the properties which sustain Florinda’s status as an autonomous subject free to choose her own marriage partner are largely those for which her father and brother cherish her: it is her beauty, rank and fortune that make her such a prized asset on the marriage market. Even Florinda’s conviction of a spiritual center that makes her more than a saleable body may smack less of early feminist thought than of class pride, insofar as aristocratic ideology always justified class power by appeals to essential superiority. And when Florinda defends Belvile against Pedro’s suspicions, she introduces a final and crucial component of her value, at once a corporeal property and one surrounded with a powerful spiritual mystique: during the siege of Pamplona, Belvile “threw himself into all dangers” to preserve her honor (161).

On one level, Florinda’s attack on patriarchal compulsion points to the internal contradictions which work to destabilize ideologies of gender. Florinda is a beautiful and wealthy upper-class virgin, possessed of the cluster of class and gender attributes that make her, in this hierarchical masculine order, the most highly prized of women. At the same time, she is degraded to the level of an object, a commodity, however precious, in a coercive structure of exchange. The tension between these exalted and reductive valuations opens a space for rebellion and a bid for self-determination, for Florinda’s pride in her self-worth clearly chafes at the exploitation involved in forced marriage.

At the same time, however, the scene makes it clear that Florinda remains inscribed within male discourse. Because her self-esteem derives entirely from her status as a lady, she is able to measure her human value only by patriarchal standards. This contradiction in her self-conception becomes especially apparent in her attitude towards sexuality, which combines the determination to secure her own amorous choice with a chaste shrinking from the reality of female desire. In the opening scene, before the appearance of her brother Pedro, Florinda does not hesitate to do his sexual policing for him, reproaching their sister Hellena’s curiosity about the erotic realm as unseemly wildness in

a young woman destined for a nunnery. When it comes to her relationship with Belvile, Florinda avoids acknowledging her own sexual impulses by recoding their passion into a narrative of chivalric courtesy and nobility. In a later scene, she claims that her attachment to Belvile stems not from an unstable physical infatuation but from knowledge of his “merit” (190). Significantly, Belvile demonstrated that merit in the classic chivalric scenario of the knight’s defense of imperiled virginity:

when I was exposed to such dangers as the
licensed lust of common soldiers threatened,
when rage and conquest flew through the city—
then Belvile, this criminal, for my sake,
threw himself into all dangers to save my
honour. (161)

Florinda offers this story as evidence of Belvile’s aristocratic high-mindedness; but we may also detect the strong sexual subtext in this miniature chivalric romance, involving the hero’s determination to oust his rivals and claim exclusive possession of the object of desire.¹⁰

This passage also introduces us to several key aspects of the play’s exploration of rape. Although Florinda speaks of rape here as an unfortunate by-product of male lust (which is all the more unsavory in that it issues from low-class men), her account of the fall of Pamplona complicates this simple definition, identifying rape as an integral component of war and therefore as an expression of male violence and rivalry. Rape is “licensed” in a captured town as a legitimate outpouring of the “rage and conquest” of the victors, whose appropriation of these particular spoils of war serves not only to reward ordinary soldiers for services rendered, but equally to inflict a final humiliation on the enemy men.¹¹

However, if the play’s first account of sexual violence establishes an important link between rape and male aggression, it also introduces us, in the character of Belvile, to the chivalric conception of manliness. Moreover, as it is this encounter which sparks off their amorous attachment, the play clearly invites us to understand the relationship between Florinda and Belvile in terms of the chivalric ideal of manhood. It is immediately apparent that chivalry reinforces conventional notions of male activity and strength on the one hand and female passivity and vulnerability on the other, even if it seeks to channel masculine power into the benign function of protecting women from the sexual predations of other men. Florinda’s story, however, strongly implies that not all women are considered deserving of this protection. For what Belvile faced danger to preserve was the virginity of an upper-class woman threatened by the lust

of “common soldiers.” He appears on the scene not as an opponent of rape as such, but as the champion of chastity and class distinction, defending from involuntary defilement the woman who represents the patriarchal feminine ideal. The chivalric attitude to rape, it would seem, is that it exists only in relation to women whose class and sexuality make them valuable patriarchal commodities.¹²

Florinda’s tale of attempted rape reveals that the relationship for which she defies patriarchal dictates reinforces dominant ideologies of gender and class on virtually every level: it sublimates *eros* into a narrative of aristocratic virtue which mystifies the figure of the upper-class virgin as the passive, vulnerable, chaste and incomparably precious possession of men.¹³ This, paradoxically, is the relationship which Florinda claims the right to choose for herself, and she claims that right because she is an upper-class virgin. Yet that role, as she conceives of it, has little if any space for the desiring subject. Florinda’s squeamishness about sexuality confirms that to act as the agent of her sexual destiny is, by the patriarchal standards she almost entirely endorses, to forfeit all claim to status and value. The two contradictory meanings attached to the figure of the maid of quality in the play—autonomous subject and object of exchange—dictate that for Florinda to assert her value on one level guarantees that she will lose it on the other.

The play’s first scene of attempted rape makes it abundantly clear what it means to be a female sexual subject in this dramatic world. Florinda enters the scene determined to give herself to Belvile, and is accordingly surrounded by the signifiers of the sexuality she is so keen to erase from their relationship: she is out alone at night, “in an undress” (201), carrying a box of jewels symbolic of the dowry and maidenhead she desires to impart to the man of her choice.¹⁴ But the first man to appear is not Belvile but the drunken Willmore, who immediately sees sexual availability written all over this woman. This is a view of Florinda that no amount of resistance on her part is able to dislodge. Instead, Willmore reads her resistance in ways compatible with her appearance and conduct; in the first instance as the concern to preserve her good reputation: “I’ll be very secret. I’ll not boast who ‘twas obliged me, not I—for hang me if I know thy name” (202). For Willmore, then, sexual signs coupled with apparent disinclination make this encounter a seduction; while this wench may require a little coaxing, she is open to persuasion, for at bottom her “No” really means “Yes.”

Thus, Behn stages the first attempted rape as what Catherine MacKinnon has called a “contested interaction,” in which reality is divided along gender lines.¹⁵ What Florinda perceives as sexual aggres-

sion, Willmore calls a seduction. The audience, knowing considerably more about Florinda and her motives than Willmore does, has a double perspective on the action; it understands both that this *is* an attempted rape because the woman refuses her consent, and that in Willmore's eyes, Florinda, defined not by what she says but by her conduct and appearance, cannot be other than consenting. Willmore's perspective on the encounter is clearly patriarchal: rape is simply not something that happens to a woman whose behavior so flagrantly flouts prevailing ideals of feminine virtue. Yet interestingly, the scene portrays this view in terms of Willmore's belief in Florinda's consent; after all, by the close of the scene, he has paid her for sex, albeit at a meager rate. And if he is unaware of her non-consent, can he be a rapist? On this level, the scene explores the fine line separating Willmore's belief that Florinda is willing from his knowledge, not precisely of her non-compliance, but of the fact that he can treat her with impunity. The play interrogates Willmore's view of the encounter as a seduction, drawing attention to the cultural assumptions underlying it so that this "seduction" is laid bare as a form of socially sanctioned rape.

There is no doubt that this political analysis is partially neutralized by the scene's comic project, which finds humor in the confusion born of the characters' opposing perspectives and ensures that it is Willmore, chronically incapable of accepting that Florinda's "No" means "No," who gets the laughs. On this level, the scene is written with Behn's male spectators in mind, and accommodates the most complacent of responses to Florinda's predicament. The extent to which the scene's critique of patriarchy is able to break through the comic smoke-screen depends in large part on its staging.

For instance, while it would certainly be possible to play the scene in an exploitative manner, offering the audience a titillating blend of knockabout comedy and naked female flesh, the stage action also sets up a constant tension between what Willmore says and what he does, between his conviction that he is involved in a seduction and his steady application of a low level of physical force.¹⁶ Having stumbled upon what he takes to be a sure-fire sexual dalliance, Willmore is clearly in a hurry to get down to business with this "delicate shining wench" (201), and Florinda's responses to his advances throughout the scene tell us that he has grabbed hold of her and will not let her go. When she calls him a "filthy beast" (202), he greets her expression of physical revulsion with an outrageous display of libertine wit, claiming that sex with a "filthy beast" does after all have the distinct advantage of not being "premeditated and designed" (202), of existing outside of the moral

realm altogether. Yet this funny (because supremely unconvincing) argument for mutually guilt-free sex does not entirely obscure the intractable problem in Willmore's reading of the encounter as a seduction: that his forcefulness actually looks disturbingly like rape insofar as he does not appear to be giving this supposedly willing woman any choice in the matter.

And indeed, it is not long before Florinda accuses Willmore of sexual aggression with the cry, "Wicked man, unhand me" (202). Far from backing off, however, Willmore simply denies the charge by throwing it back in Florinda's face:

Wicked! egad child, a judge were he young
and vigorous, and saw those eyes of thine,
would know 'twas they gave the first blow—
the first provocation—come, prithee, let's
lose no time, I say—this is a fine convenient place. (202)

On one level, this is a pretty compliment, the same Petrarchan tribute to the power of the woman's beauty that Willmore has already used with stunning success on Angellica Bianca. Confronted with a woman who is proving distinctly uncooperative, Willmore apparently does not interpret her behavior as refusal of consent, for he continues to read her as open to persuasion and accordingly steps up his efforts with a more flattering seductive strategy. But of course, Petrarchan lovers are not normally in the habit of invoking judicial judgment in support of their view of the beloved; and in the context of this sexual encounter, the battle of wills between courtly lover and tantalizing mistress becomes a rape trial where blame is laid squarely on the shoulders of the sexually provocative woman—that female figure which has become so familiar to us through the characters of Angellica Bianca and Lucetta.

Willmore's provocation model of seduction, then, encompasses a double seduction; it is at once an attempt to seduce and a claim to have been seduced. In the first, the man is the subject, seeking to flatter the woman into yielding. In the second, the woman assumes the role of seductress, aggressive and guilty. Yet despite its foregrounding of the figure of the powerful female sexual subject, this second seduction paradigm in fact constitutes a fairly brutal assertion of masculine power. For its rationale is the inviolable rights of the male libido: because this alluring woman, scantily clad and smelling "like any nosegay" (201), has aroused his sexual desire, Willmore has every right to hold on to her arm; such are the prerogatives of the male sex drive which, once provoked, will not tolerate denial of its promised consummation. This

seduction narrative, then, not only validates the man's use of force, but also disallows the woman's non-consent on the grounds that, having called *eros* into play, she is not permitted to withhold gratification. Indeed, any resistance that Florinda makes will serve merely to condemn her as a tease who arouses male desire only to frustrate it.

Willmore's two seductions present two pictures of the sexual woman who offers resistance: as coy but susceptible to flattery and as provocative tease; while the former yields obligingly to his seductive efforts, the latter makes trouble, only to face the full force of the phallic prerogative. This strained double view registers the only two ways in which Willmore can conceive of a woman who acts as Florinda is acting, and if each figure plays her part in a narrative of seduction rather than rape, both are ultimately the terrain on which male mastery is affirmed.

The erotic psychology underlying this double seduction is glanced at in the dual configuration of desire contained in Willmore's lines. His invocation of the rather improbable figure of the "young and vigorous" judge suggests that to respond to the erotic violence emanating from a beautiful woman's eyes is a measure of manliness. But on the other hand, Willmore's honor discourse—"the first blow"—likens desire to an honor encounter, where failure to retaliate against an assault signals irrevocable humiliation and loss of face. Female beauty, it would seem, simultaneously confirms and threatens masculinity; to desire is at once to be the subject of desire and its victim. The cognitive confusion in Willmore's lines suggests that for men desire is troublingly ambiguous, never a simple reinforcement of masculine dominance. However, if desire is ambiguous, sex itself seems more straightforward: the honor metaphor turns phallic sex into a species of retaliatory violence through which female erotic power is remastered and manliness restored. If this is not rape, it is "normal" sex that is virtually indistinguishable from rape as the play will soon present it in the Blunt subplot: as revenge against female seductive power.

In the corresponding scene in Killigrew's *Thomaso*, the fool Edwardo plays the role that Behn here assigns to Willmore. Behn's substitution works not only to establish links between her rake-hero and the buffoon Blunt, but also to expose the phallocentric heart of the libertine hero who throughout the play professes to advocate sexual freedom for both sexes.¹⁷ Yet more importantly still, Willmore's introduction of the provocation model of seduction discloses the inextricable link between male sexuality and male power. Once again, the reading of the encounter as a seduction is problematized, not by suggesting that Willmore is a conscious rapist, but by uncovering the psychology of rape which is at

work in a masculinist view of heterosexual sex that turns sexuality into “a social sphere of male power.”¹⁸

Of course, the shadow of rape hangs over this double seduction in yet another way, which pertains specifically to the status of the female sexual subject. For Willmore’s two views of Florinda point in a fairly sinister fashion to the only roles that she is permitted to play in this sexual encounter. The scene, by highlighting Willmore’s successive dismissals of Florinda’s resistance, his systematic closing-off of the possibility of non-consent, encourages us to understand her predicament in this way. It becomes clear that Willmore cannot lose because Florinda cannot say “No.” Sex is going to take place no matter what the woman says or does and, contrary to appearances, Willmore does not perceive this as rape because, identified by the sexual signifiers that surround her, Florinda’s resistance is invalidated and the male libido given *carte blanche*: Willmore will not take “No” for an answer.

Willmore’s invocation of judicial judgment to authorize his reading of Florinda as sexually provocative places this “contested interaction” firmly within a legal context. Of course, this verdict depends on the judge’s being a real man—“young and vigorous.” Thus, we cannot read this passage as Behn’s attack on the inveterate masculine bias of rape trials, for Willmore’s proviso makes it clear that he does not regard the sober judiciary as the inevitable ally of his own swaggering macho values. Nevertheless, his appeal to the court of justice to validate his point of view at least raises the possibility that the judicial system, empowered to weigh evidence in a search for objective truth, might in fact give legal warrant to phallogocentric views of sexuality; it calls into question the legal supposition that a sexual encounter can be read objectively, from a “point-of-viewless” perspective that does not collude in constructing reality from the dominant male point of view.¹⁹

As relations between Florinda and Willmore deteriorate further, Behn continues to situate the confrontation of their opposing perspectives within the context of contemporary legal practice. When Florinda threatens to cry “Murder! Rape! or anything! if you do not instantly let me go” (202), Willmore, acting rather like his own defense counsel, seeks to consolidate his version of events by reading her conduct as evidence of the intention to provoke desire:

I’ll warrant you would fain have the world
believe now that you are not so forward as
I. No, not you—why at this time of night
was your cobweb door set open, dear spider—
but to catch flies? (202)

Florinda's behavior is offered as proof of a calculatingly predatory intention to entrap men. From here, it is but one small step to the figure of the prostitute, who makes a living out of inciting male desire. Willmore, predictably, takes this step, invalidating Florinda's resistance yet again by interpreting it as the prostitute's mercenariness:

Florinda: Sir, can you think—
Willmore: That you would do't for nothing—
Oh, oh I find what you would be
at. (202)

Willmore gets another laugh here, but it is arguable that on this occasion the humor works partly against him, exploiting the audience's superior knowledge to underline the fallibility of reading women's appearances as proof of their sexual intentions. Moreover, the play has taken pains to familiarize us with male attitudes towards prostitutes, those incarnations of dangerous and unruly sexuality regarded with fear and loathing by many of the male characters.²⁰ Consequently, we recognize that the hero's final judgment of Florinda places her well beyond the moral pale as a woman who is not only consciously provocative but also the very embodiment of unchastity.

The scene thus suggests that Willmore's references to Florinda's conduct ultimately evaluate not her will, in the sense of her individual moral and psychological state, but her chastity; or rather, her will is measured solely by her chastity, by her perceived membership of one of two categories of women: those who behave as the exclusive sexual property of their fathers or husbands, and those who behave as the common property of numerous men.²¹ This contested interaction, then, ultimately represents a clash between the two rival conceptions of rape that co-existed during the Early Modern period. In giving voice to Florinda's resistance, the scene enacts the view, articulated in legal statutes and commentaries, that all women, prostitutes included, were moral agents with the right to ownership and control of their bodies.²² Willmore, on the other hand, sees women not as persons but as clusters of signs that proclaim their position within the patriarchal order. No matter how sincerely he believes in Florinda's consent, that belief is shown to be rooted in a denial of female subjectivity and to be bolstered by an array of socially endorsed arguments, stereotypes and legal practices which ensure that the woman who transgresses patriarchal norms of femininity cannot not consent. So the hero's constant application of physical pressure ultimately makes perfect sense, for it conveys the patriarchal logic underlying this seduction: the woman who makes

sexual choices loses the right to choose. Once again, the scene alerts us to the fact that what we are watching is an attempted rape, both because Florinda is not willing, and equally because the very patriarchal standards that efface rape from the experience of the sexually wayward woman are shown in fact to normalize, even legalize, it.

When the next scene makes it clear that this is also an attempted rape according to patriarchal standards, the question of the man's belief again arises, for Willmore claims extenuating circumstances: "By this light, I took her for an errant harlot" (204). Belvile himself appears at the start of the scene to view rape as the violation of any woman's right to bodily integrity: "If it had not been Florinda, must you be a beast?" (204). But later in the scene, when he waxes lyrical on the subject of Florinda's "essence," it seems clear that what Willmore has threatened is a patriarchal prize: "tell me, sot, hadst thou so much sense and light about thee to distinguish her woman, and couldst not see something about her face and person, to strike an awful reverence into thy soul?" (204). Like the naïve royalist he is, Belvile wants essence to shine through appearances; but because this is an assumption the play continually undercuts—none of the male characters, Belvile included, can invariably tell ladies from whores—Willmore's self-justification takes on considerable force; for in a world where categorical distinctions are blurred, how can a man know which women are off-limits and which are available for his "diversion" (231)?²³

Later in the play, as Blunt prepares to rape Florinda, Frederick recommends caution as the best policy for dealing with this ambiguity: "'twould anger us vilely to be trussed up for a rape upon a maid of quality, when we only believe we ruffle a harlot" (228). Fred's nervousness articulates the strong possibility that, in a world where justice serves the interests of the most powerful men, the woman's rank will take precedence over her conduct, rendering the man's belief irrelevant. Yet the power which the signifiers of female character possess in a patriarchal world is reinforced in the very next scene, in which Don Pedro, the play's representative of upper-class male power, mistakes his sister for a whore and comes close to violating his own property.

On this level, the play's representation of rape implies that women's increasing demand for sexual independence produced a crisis in the patriarchal view of rape which facilitated the legal practice of evaluating cases of sexual assault from the perspective of the defendant's belief about the woman's character. This privileging of the male point of view became an integral principle of English rape law, upheld in 1868 by Mr. Justice Stephens: "where a man is led from the conduct of the woman to

believe he is not committing a crime known to the law, the act of connection cannot under any circumstances amount to rape.”²⁴ English law only modified this principle in 1975, after the infamous case of *DPP v. Morgan*, when the House of Lords decided a man could not be guilty of rape if he genuinely believed in the woman’s consent, even if his belief was based on unreasonable grounds.²⁵

It is no accident that when Florinda is next threatened with rape, it is not principally because she is acting like a whore, but because she has the misfortune to encounter a man who has decided that all women are whores. For Blunt’s misogyny, with its collapsing of categorical distinctions between women, reveals itself as the foundation on which those distinctions are constructed. Blunt is the seduced man of Willmore’s provocation model, the victim of the prostitute Lucetta’s seductive fiction that she is a “person of quality” who has fallen head over heels in love with him. When he has been robbed blind and abandoned in a Neapolitan sewer in his underwear, Blunt immediately berates himself for having been foolish enough “to believe in woman” (200); Lucetta’s seductive properties—her dangerous, predatory sexuality, her power to weave illusion and to instigate and frustrate desire—become the defining properties of her sex. As the boundary separating virgins from whores vanishes for the simple reason that all women are sisters under the skin, the play lays bare the fear of female sexuality that fuels the patriarchal dichotomy and simmers beneath the surface of the first scene of attempted rape. Indeed, Blunt’s response to his humiliation at the hands of this representative of womankind is precisely that which Willmore’s treatment of Florinda would lead us to expect: he decides to take phallic revenge “on one whore for the sins of another” (226).

Florinda’s encounter with Blunt also serves to remind us of the contradictions in her own subject position. Faced yet again with a good dose of phallic punishment that will be called not rape but justifiable retaliation, Florinda hastens to re-establish patriarchal distinctions, struggling to differentiate herself from the “most infamous” of her sex (226)—those “devils” (227), as she calls them, who by implication deserve everything they get—and finally producing Belvile’s diamond ring, the signifier that identifies her as under male protection. This episode makes it clear just how little has been changed by Florinda’s rebellion against forced marriage. The moment when she re-enters a world where the word “rape” has meaning is the moment when she presents herself as the property of Belvile, enacting the sexual transaction that has been her sole driving purpose. But the transaction to which she laid claim as the right of a fully human subject entails the disavowal

of her own subjectivity: her worth derives solely from the value imputed to her by a man of quality. The active sexuality that has propelled her towards her goal is denied, relegated to a world of authorized rape where bad girls “ask for it,” as Florinda embraces a patriarchy which seems all the more insidious for having been freely chosen.²⁶

However, if Florinda’s resistance in this scene works to consolidate the ideologies of gender that have subjected her to sexual assault, the attempted gang rape that follows, while revealing the normative status of the patriarchal view of rape, also re-stages her story in miniature.²⁷ The link between male sexuality and male honor is again accentuated as Willmore, put out that Pedro should have won the privilege of being the first to have sex with Florinda, initiates a contest in sex appeal that turns into a grotesque courtly charade:

Willmore: But sir—perhaps the lady will
not be imposed upon, she’ll choose
her man.

Pedro: I am better bred than not to leave her
choice free. (232)

The upper-class prerogative offered here is the very one which, claimed on a sexual level, has brought Florinda to this pass: treated as a whore who has no rights beyond choosing who rapes her first and who will, if she makes that choice, collude in her own sexual alienation by calling this not rape but consensual sex.²⁸

In the Angellica Bianca subplot, the play examines the psychology of a woman who seeks subjectivity through the provocation of male desire. This “mistress of the dead Spanish general” (173) has been thrown onto the world to survive as best she can, blessed with great beauty but unmarriageable. She thus adopts the profession of prostitute in part out of financial necessity. But her attempt to transform the prostitute into the Petrarchan mistress, wounding men with her eyes (183), suggests a more complex strategy. For it is a fundamental principle of Petrarchanism that the mistress must possess both beauty and chastity.²⁹ Angellica Bianca’s desire to play this role minus one of its requisite qualities therefore implies a deep-seated psychological need to turn her one remaining asset into a means of compensating for her loss of chastity and the radical diminishment that loss entails. Indeed, Behn invests her high-class prostitute not with the libertine exuberance of Killigrew’s Angellica, but with an immense pride bred by her astonishing beauty

and her experience of the power it gives her over men. Through the role of Petrarchan mistress, she stages and restages these power relations, striving to turn the exercise of her trade into an elaborate courtly love scene which confirms her ascendancy over the worshipping suitors brought to their knees by the desire she excites and thwarts in all but the fortunate few who can afford to pay for her favors. Thus her beauty and its proportionately exalted price come close to recreating the physical unattainability of the chaste Petrarchan lady.

Behn, however, consistently exposes the flaws in Angellica's subject position, not only by anchoring it in a compensatory strategy, but also by showing that the process of inciting male desire reinforces the diminishment she is striving to erase. The English gallants' shifting assessments of Angellica—the "adored beauty of all the youth in Naples" (173) who is also a "commodity," "the inn where a man may lodge" (177)—make plain that this woman who aspires to be the subject of desire simultaneously reduces herself to the level of an object.³⁰ And as she watches men gaze upon her portrait, she "connives in treating herself as, first and foremost, a sight."³¹ Indeed, the play will make it clear that the portrait which advertises her delectable charms is in part a sign of submission to the male spectator, flattering him, offering up the female figure as an eroticized object which exists to serve his pleasure.³²

Behn also stresses that this self-defeating subject position involves a radical separation of the woman's self-esteem from her sexuality. Angellica's pride is conditional on her remaining emotionally unavailable to her clients: "inconstancy's the sin of all mankind, therefore I'm resolved that nothing but gold shall charm my heart" (178). This passage shows Angellica attempting to efface her predicament by universalizing it: it is not she who is a discardable piece of merchandise, but men who are by nature inconstant. Her emotional detachment is thus portrayed as a defensive strategy that not only betrays the insecurity underlying it, but also necessitates the extinguishing of her emotional and sexual impulses: Angellica will arouse desire in others but feel none herself.³³

This process does, however, provide her with narcissistic pleasure; it feeds the pride of a woman who desires chiefly to be desired: "He that wishes but to buy gives me more pride, than he that gives my price can make my pleasure" (178). Moreover, the emotional and erotic attachment Angellica fears she has never in fact felt for the numerous customers who have succumbed to her charms and played the passive role of worshipful lover. The adoration that nourishes her pride does not, it would seem, stimulate her desire. That privilege is reserved for Willmore, who, far from deferring to the Petrarchan mistress, under-

mines her position of dominance by stealing her portrait, disrupting her carefully stage-managed courtly fiction and railing at her rather than bowing to her.

This same process of the disdainful mistress being attracted by aggressive masculinity is enacted in the song Angellica sings to attract a wealthy client, which tells of Damon's love for the cruel Celia:

But as beneath a shade he lay,
Weaving of flowers for Celia's hair,
She chanced to lead her flock that way,
And saw the amorous shepherd there.
She gazed around upon the place,
And saw the grove (resembling night)
To all the joys of love invite,
Whilst guilty smiles and blushes dressed her face.
At this the bashful youth all transport grew,
And with kind force he taught the virgin how
To yield what all his sighs could never do. (179–80)

This pastoral ditty endorses a potent rape fantasy: that which claims that there is no such thing as rape because in reality women both need and want a bit of “kind force” to release their sexuality. The scornful mistress here is only waiting for her lover to renounce his stance of sighing adoration and take on a more assertively masculine role.

Angellica's song points to a double participation in phallogentric views of sexuality. Firstly, it indicates the extent to which the practice of provoking male desire colludes in the project of erasing rape by calling it normal sexuality. As we will see, Willmore's theft of Angellica's portrait reinforces the link between the prostitute's self-blazoning and the validation of male sexual aggression. Yet Angellica's re-enactment of the erotics of her song when confronted with Willmore's assertive manliness suggests her own sexual involvement in the eroticization of male dominance and female submission. If this is female sexual masochism, Behn leaves us in no doubt that it is culturally generated rather than innate, an expression of the way sexuality, in a profoundly unequal society, can replicate power relations between the sexes, especially for a woman who remains hopelessly trapped in a subservient position *vis à vis* the male world. Behn, however, complicates this picture of Angellica's sexuality by turning her surrender to Willmore into an examination of the relationship between women and romance.

Willmore has two distinct responses to Angellica's portrait. He starts out like her other suitors, by worshipping her beauty, which he associates with royal power: “a thousand crowns a month—by Heaven as

many kingdoms were too little" (177). But later in the same scene, the portrait evokes a considerably less exalted response:

This posture's loose and negligent,
The sight on't would beget a warm desire,
In souls whom impotence and age had chilled.
—This must along with me. (181)

There is nothing remotely Petrarchan about these lines. The image that earlier commanded veneration is now treated as an eminently appropriate sexual fetish.³⁴

What separates these two disparate evaluations is a violent competition for Angellica's favors between Don Pedro and Don Antonio. For Willmore, this beautiful and expensive prostitute has from the start brought into play the anxieties about diminished power that characterize royalism throughout the play. For like his dispossessed prince, who can claim dominion only over the "little wooden world" of his ship (244), Willmore is flat broke. He and his cavalier companions consistently dignify their penury with the language of service: it is their "glory" to "suffer with the best of men and kings" (244). But Angellica forces into view the reality that nobility minus hard cash confers at best a limited status and power.³⁵ So Willmore, just before leaving the stage, curses the poverty that deprives him of possession of a beauty "which virtue ne'er could purchase" (177).

In Willmore's encounter with the portraits, the play again foregrounds the link between male desire and male power. And it is when he returns to the stage to find two wealthy aristocrats locked into a contest for possession from which he is excluded that Willmore reaches up and snatches one of the paintings, whose erotic allure suddenly confers mastery not on the represented woman, but on the libertine hero: "This must along with me." When Willmore is confronted with the recognition that the woman he cannot have is desired and will be possessed by another man with the purchasing power he lacks, the desire that worships is transformed into the desire that appropriates its object. The theft of the portrait, with its aggressive assertion of the right to sexual gratification, is an affirmation of his manliness in a context that diminishes it; and it provokes a violent confrontation with Antonio which escalates into a full-scale brawl between Spanish and English—those long-standing political rivals—from which the English emerge bloodied but victorious, claiming ownership of the portrait "by conquest" (182).

Behn's staging of the theft as a homosocial struggle associates the act with the male *agon* that characterizes numerous literary representations

of rape; from the Philomela myth to Shakespeare's *Rape of Lucrece*, the woman is only secondarily an object of desire and primarily the terrain on which inequalities of male power are fought out.³⁶ In *The Rover*, it is the woman's image rather than her body that is the site of conflict, but the psychology of rape arguably informs an act of sexual theft perpetrated by a libertine hero whose sexual impulses are shown to be rooted in competitive masculinity.

When called to justify his action, Willmore pleads provocation:

I saw your charming picture and was wounded;
quite through my soul each pointed beauty
ran; and wanting a thousand crowns to procure
my remedy—I laid this little picture to my
bosom. (182)

Behn's dramatization of the theft exposes this argument as a partial truth at best. For in reducing Angellica's representation from an icon of authority to a pornographic image, Willmore responded to something very real in the portrait: the fantasy of availability with which it flatters and empowers its male spectator. But the agonistic impulses which motivated the theft are here erased, recoded as a simple case of uncontrollable male desire for which the woman's beauty is responsible. Thus, if Behn does not concur with Willmore's judgment that Angellica was "asking for it," she does point to the way her provocative role enables the phallogentric rewriting of masculine aggression as female seductive power.

Willmore claims provocation in the courtly love idiom best calculated to appeal to Angellica Bianca; and its re-presenting of masculine self-assertion as desire suggests the way romance confuses the psychology of rape with that of love. Angellica's undoubted attraction to the hero's exaggerated manliness should be viewed in relation to this romantic blurring of the distinction between aggressive and amorous impulses. For Willmore's seductive strategy, which bombards Angellica with the provocation model's curious combination of flattery and blame, makes the relentless pursuit of a sexual conquest look like the amorous intensity of a masterful man.

When he is summoned to Angellica's presence, Willmore refuses to play the part demanded of him—that of contrite lover on his knees before the imperious mistress—and slips instead into the more ambiguous role of aggressive victim, berating the cruel seductress who has conquered him. He attacks Angellica as contemptibly mercenary, as a tease who flaunts her charms only to create "despair in those who

cannot buy" (183). Willmore tells us in an aside that all the "contempt" he heaps upon Angellica is "feigned" (186); thus, we are made aware, if we were in any doubt, that there is only one target of his verbal assault: the expensive price tag that stands between him and sexual gratification. And rather as he will with Florinda, he backs up his verbal onslaught with shows of physical force: he repeatedly grabs hold of Angellica, "to let you see my strength," as he puts it (185). But the role of aggressive victim, with its dual stress on the woman's guilt and on her erotic mastery, disguises this phallic assertiveness as a more appealing version of manliness, comprised of moral authority and the bitterness of frustrated love: "Though I admire you strangely for your beauty / Yet I condemn your mind" (185).

In Willmore's seduction of Angellica, Behn shows that romance turns male sexual aggression into love by reinterpreting it as angry resistance to the power of the woman's charms.³⁷ Thus, if Willmore's role of reproachful victim captivates Angellica in a way her customary diet of male deference does not, her attraction to his dominant masculinity points to something more complex than a longing for feminine submission, for Willmore offers her an irresistible fantasy: the triumph of her beauty over this most manly of men. Thus, Behn's analysis of the relationship between women and romance avoids simple theories of female masochism in favor of what Tania Modleski has described as "the complex strategies women use to adapt to circumscribed lives and to convince themselves that limitations are really opportunities."³⁸ Behn depicts Angellica Bianca as a woman torn between immense pride and an equally formidable psychic burden of disempowerment—an inner division that dissociates her sexuality from her sense of self-worth. Romance offers her a dream of psychic wholeness in which desire and pride are harmonized, in which erotic surrender to male power signals not self-subversion but the ultimate confirmation of her own power and value.

When Willmore's immediate betrayal explodes the dream of self-unity, Angellica's fragile constructed identity collapses with it, leaving behind a sense of utter worthlessness. The power of her beauty was all along merely "fancied," for,

My richest treasure being lost, my honour,
All the remaining spoil could not be worth
The conqueror's care or value. (237)

The masculine supremacy that has consistently punctured her Petrarchan fiction reappears here in its most brutal guise, in a metaphor of conquest that reveals a view of heterosexual relations as intrinsically

violent, as inherently akin to rape. For this deflowered woman, so absolute is the power men wield in the realm of sex and marriage that it likens them to conquerors exercising their dominion on women's bodies, which are in turn reduced to the status of plunder, to be cherished or discarded depending on their possession of that patrilineal prize: the intact hymen. Male dominance and female submission do indeed define the world for Angellica Bianca as she confronts the truth that the loss of her virginity outside wedlock is the essential and inescapable meaning of her life.

Angellica's metaphor of conquest suggests the extent to which the psychology of rape is embedded in a society governed by an ideology of male dominance. It is in this sense that the world of *The Rover* can be called a rape culture—not simply because sexual encounters are defined according to the property status of the woman involved, but equally because male (and to some extent female) sexuality reproduces a socio-cultural script which measures masculinity by the capacity to exercise power, both over women and, through women, over other men.³⁹ Willmore is the focus of the play's examination of rape, but he emerges less as a libertine exception than as the most extreme representative of a particular ideal of manliness. It is nothing unusual, as Harold Weber has shown, to find tension between the Restoration rake-hero's sensual and aggressive instincts.⁴⁰ But Behn's play stresses not tension but interconnection in its portrait of a male sex drive that is culturally manufactured, encoded with a cult of virile masculinity.

This depiction of a rape culture causes problems for Behn, for if she alerts us to the tendency of romance to turn rapists into lovers, comic conventions dictate that she must turn her rapist-hero into a husband. And in order to marry Willmore off, she has also to create a female subject considerably better equipped than either Florinda or Angellica Bianca to deal with the hero's predatory sexuality. Certainly Hellena's character comprises a series of pointed contrasts with her female counterparts. Although she is securely in possession of both hymen and fortune, her frank acknowledgment of her own sexual impulses distances her from patriarchal constructions of femininity, while her realism about the man's world she inhabits leads her to adopt male dress when venturing out alone and to repudiate romantic illusions about the object of her desire. Moreover, Hellena's wit makes possible a different mode of female sexuality. Her wit-bouts with Willmore offer a positive

alternative to the play's other sexual encounters, for through them Hellena arouses and frustrates male desire without facing the phallic retaliation normally reserved for the sexually provocative woman. Her wit represents a form of female seductive power which, emanating from the mind as well as the body, engages the hero's mind and body in a way that stabilizes and contains the rapacious properties of his libido.⁴¹

Hellena's parity of wit is accompanied by a bid for sexual equality manifested in her appropriation of libertine discourse: "Well, I see our business as well as our humours are alike, yours to cozen as many maids as will trust you, and I as many men as have faith" (194).⁴² By adopting the male subject position, Hellena seeks to compete with Willmore on equal terms, rejecting the sexual double standard that in this dramatic world is clearly enforced through rape. But the heroine's libertine posture works equally to obscure the relationship between male sexuality and power that the play has elsewhere exposed, for it rewrites the hero's phallic assertiveness as the unproblematic expression of a naturally unstable and transitory sexual instinct.⁴³ Ultimately, then, Behn has only a limited capacity to imagine a distinctly female subjectivity capable of negotiating the play's rape culture; and in attempting to domesticate her hero and provide for her heroine's happiness, she is driven to participate in the concealment of rape that her play has systematically revealed as a characteristic patriarchal strategy.

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NOTES

¹ See, for example, Elin Diamond, "Cestus and Signature in Aphra Behn's *The Rover*," *ELH* 56 (1989): 533–34; and Nancy Copeland, "'Once a Whore and Ever'? Whore and Virgin in *The Rover* and its Antecedents," *Restoration* 16 (1992): 21–26. All references to *The Rover* are to Aphra Behn, "Oroonoko," "The Rover" and *Other Works*, ed. Janet Todd (London: Penguin Books, 1992). Hereafter cited parenthetically by page.

² There is, to my knowledge, no in-depth study of representations of rape in *The Rover*, though several critics have offered interesting, if brief, analyses of the attempted rape scenes, which stress the way they work to criticize either the libertine hero or the stereotypically passive Florinda. See Jones de Ritter, "The Gypsy, *The Rover*, and the Wanderer: Aphra Behn's Revision of Thomas Killigrew," *Restoration* 10 (1986), 85–87, 90–91; Elaine Hobby, *Virtue of Necessity: English Women's Writing 1649–88* (London: Virago, 1988), 122–27; Jacqueline Pearson, *The Prostituted Muse: Images of Women and Women Dramatists 1642–1737* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988), 153–54; and Warren Chernaik, *Sexual Freedom in Restoration Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1995), 206–8. While I am indebted to each of these studies, I hope to present in this essay a fuller analysis of the presence of rape in the play, which not only takes into consideration its function in the Angellica Bianca subplot, but also looks more closely at its significance for Behn's attitudes towards female subjectivity and libertine

philosophy. For accounts of the treatment of rape in Restoration drama, see Elizabeth Howe, *First English Actresses: Women and Drama 1660–1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1992), 43–49; and Pearson, 95–99.

³ See Catherine Belsey, *The Subject of Tragedy: Identity and Difference in Renaissance Drama* (London: Routledge, 1985), 192 (quotation) and 192–200.

⁴ See Susan Amussen, *An Ordered Society: Gender and Class in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), 41–47; Belsey, 192–93; Roberta A. Hamilton, *The Liberation of Women: A Study of Patriarchy and Capitalism* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1978), 50–75; and *The Cultural Identity of Seventeenth-Century Woman: A Reader*, ed. N. H. Keeble (London: Routledge, 1994), 143–46.

⁵ Mary Astell, *Some Reflections upon Marriage* (1706; rpt. New York: Source Book Press, 1970), 29. See also Belsey, 201–2; and Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500–1800* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1977), 270–71.

⁶ See Nazife Bashar, “Rape in England between 1550 and 1700,” in *The Sexual Dynamics of History: Men’s Power, Women’s Resistance*, The London Feminist History Group (London: Pluto Press, 1983), 29–33; and Roy Porter, “Rape—Does It Have a Historical Meaning?,” in *Rape, An Historical and Cultural Enquiry*, ed. Sylvana Tomaselli and Roy Porter (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), 217. See also William Lambard, *Eirenarcha, or the Office of Justices of Peace* (1581–82; rpt. London: Professional Books Ltd., 1972), 136; and Michael Dalton, *Country Justice* (1619; rpt. London: Professional Books Ltd., 1973), 256–57.

⁷ Bashar, 33–38, 40–42.

⁸ Bashar, 42. For the importance of the victim’s age and class in the evaluation of rape cases, see also Guido Ruggiero, *The Boundaries of Eros: Sex Crime and Sexuality in Renaissance Venice* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1985), 89–108.

⁹ For an example of the seventeenth-century proto-feminist appropriation of philosophical rationalism see Mary Astell, *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies*, in *First Feminists: British Women Writers 1578–1799*, ed. Moira Ferguson (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1985), 188–89. See also Vivien Jones’s Introduction to the “Feminisms” section in *Women in the Eighteenth Century: Constructions of Femininity*, ed. Vivien Jones (London: Routledge, 1990), 192–94.

¹⁰ See J. Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages*, tr. F. Hopman (New York: Penguin, 1982), 76.

¹¹ See Susan Brownmiller, *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape* (New York: Penguin, 1977), 37–38.

¹² For feminist accounts of the chivalric attitude towards rape, see Susan Griffin, “The Politics of Rape,” in *Made from this Earth: Selections from Her Writing, 1967–1982* (London: The Women’s Press, 1982), 45–46; and Anna K. Clark, “Rape or Seduction? A Controversy over Sexual Violence in the Nineteenth Century,” in *The Sexual Dynamics of History*, 20–22.

¹³ My reading differs from that of Lynne Taetzsch, who argues that Belvile and Florinda embody the “ideology of soul love,” in which the lovers “must both be subjects, mutually autonomous individuals” (see “Romantic Love Replaces Kinship Exchange in Aphra Behn’s Restoration Drama,” *Restoration* 17 [1993], 34).

¹⁴ See Diamond, 533.

¹⁵ Catherine A. MacKinnon, “Feminism, Marxism, Method, and the State: Towards Feminist Jurisprudence,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 8 (1983), 652, 654.

¹⁶ For accounts of the exploitative use of rape in Restoration drama see Pearson, 96; Howe, 43–49; and Chernaik, 206–7.

¹⁷ On this level, I obviously disagree with those critics who read *The Rover* as an uncomplicated celebration of libertine masculinity. See, for example, Maureen Duffy, *The Passionate Shepherdess: Aphra Behn, 1640–89* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1977), 145–48; Katharine Rogers, *Feminism in Eighteenth-Century England* (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1982), 58; and Nancy Cotton, “Aphra Behn and the Pattern Hero,” in *Curtain Calls: British and American Women and the Theater, 1660–1820*, ed. Mary Anne Schofield and Cecilia Macheski (Athens: Ohio Univ. Press, 1991), 215–18. Critics who argue for a more ambivalent attitude to Willmore and to libertinism include De Ritter, 85–91; Hobby, 122–27; Pearson, 153; and Chernaik, 206–8.

¹⁸ MacKinnon, 646. See also Chernaik’s account of libertinism’s paradoxical equation of freedom with mastery, 1–21, 214–19.

¹⁹ See MacKinnon, 636; and Ellen Rooney, “‘A Little More than Persuading’: Tess and the Subject of Sexual Violence,” in *Rape and Representation*, ed. Lynn A. Higgins and Brenda R. Silver (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1991), 89.

²⁰ See, for example, the English gallants’ attitudes towards whores in 2.1 (176, 182–83).

²¹ See Clark, 19; and Carol Smart, *Feminism and the Power of Law* (London: Routledge, 1989), 41.

²² See Dalton, 257: “And yet to ravish a harlot against her will, is felony.”

²³ See 3.1 (194–96) for Belvile’s confusion over Florinda’s identity.

²⁴ Quoted in Clark, 20.

²⁵ See Clark, 20; and Jennifer Temkin, “Women, Rape and Law Reform,” in Tomaselli and Porter, 36. For the complexities of the case of *DPP v. Morgan*, see *Criminal Law*, 7th edn., ed. J. C. Smith and Brian Hogan (London: Butterworths, 1992), 451–52; and *Criminal Law: Cases and Materials*, 5th edn., ed. Smith and Hogan (London: Butterworths, 1993), 130–34.

²⁶ See Belsey, 193.

²⁷ On the normative status of the patriarchal view see Chernaik, 207.

²⁸ For a rather different reading of this episode, see Heidi Hutner, “Revisioning the Female Body in Aphra Behn’s *The Rover*, Parts I and II,” in *Rereading Aphra Behn: History, Theory, and Criticism*, ed. Heidi Hutner (Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1993), 110–11.

²⁹ See Catherine Gallagher, “Who Was That Masked Woman? The Prostitute and the Playwright in the Comedies of Aphra Behn,” in *Last Laughs: Perspectives on Women and Comedy*, ed. Regina Barreca (New York: Gordon and Breach, 1988), 24.

³⁰ See Diamond, 529–32; and Julie Nash, “‘The Sight on’t would Beget a Warm Desire’: Visual Pleasure in Aphra Behn’s *The Rover*,” *Restoration* 18 (1994), 78–79, 81–82.

³¹ John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (New York: Penguin, 1972), 51.

³² See Berger, 52–55.

³³ Gallagher (25–31) interprets the self-seller’s psychic inaccessibility rather differently: as the role Behn embraced in constructing herself as the female author-whore.

³⁴ See Diamond, 531–32.

³⁵ For the relationship between money and masculine self-worth in the play, see John Franceschina, “Shadow and Substance in Aphra Behn’s *The Rover*: The Semiotics of Restoration Performance,” *Restoration* 19 (1995), 34.

³⁶ See Patricia Klindienst Joplin, “The Voice of the Shuttle is Ours,” in Higgins and

Silver, 40–41; Nancy Vickers, “‘The Blazon of Sweet Beauty’s Best’: Shakespeare’s *Lucrece*,” in *Shakespeare and the Question of Theory*, ed. Patricia Parker and Geoffrey Hartmann (New York: Methuen, 1985), 98–102; and Coppélia Kahn, “The Rape in Shakespeare’s *Lucrece*,” *Shakespeare Studies* 9 (1976), 52–54.

³⁷ See Tania Modleski, *Loving with a Vengeance: Mass-Produced Fantasies for Women* (New York: Routledge, 1982), 40–45.

³⁸ Modleski, 38.

³⁹ See Peggy Reeves Sanday, “Rape and the Silencing of the Feminine,” in Tomaselli and Porter, 84–85.

⁴⁰ Harold Weber, *The Restoration Rake-Hero: Transformations in Sexual Understanding in Seventeenth-Century England* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1986), 49–90. See also Chernaik, 1–21, 214–19.

⁴¹ See Gallagher’s reading of the role of wit in the prologue to Behn’s first play, *The Forced Marriage* (24–25). See also Nash, 83–84.

⁴² Nancy Copeland (21) sees Hellena’s libertine discourse as an important device for narrowing the gap between virgin and whore in the play, while Frances M. Kavenik argues for the liberating effects of her espousal of libertine philosophy. See “Aphra Behn: The Playwright as ‘Breeches Part’,” in Schofield and Macheski, 184, 190.

⁴³ See Robert Markley’s account of Behn’s mystification of royalist libertinism in her Tory comedies, in “‘Be Impudent, Be Saucy, Forward, Bold, Touzing, and Leud’: The Politics of Masculine Sexuality and Feminine Desire in Behn’s Tory Comedies,” in *Cultural Readings of Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Theater*, ed. J. Douglas Canfield and Deborah C. Payne (Athens: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1995), 116–20.