Representations of Restrictive Gender Ideologies in Restoration Theatre & Fiction

By

Ariella Gunn

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of

The University of Manitoba

in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of English, Theatre, Film & Media

University of Manitoba

Winnipeg

Copyright © 2024 by Ariella Gunn

Table of Contents

Abstract……………………………………………………………………………………….iii

Acknowledgements…………………………………………………………………..………..iv

Introduction……………………………………………………………………………………1

Traditional Male and Female Gender Roles in the Restoration Period………………...2

Libertine Masculinity and Possessive Masculinity……………………………..……4

Libertinism and Effeminacy……………………….…………………………..…8

My Thesis Chapters………………………………………………………………..…9

Chapter 1: Libertine Masculinity in Restoration Comedies……………………...…….12

The Rake Figure in Behn's Comedies…………………..…….……………………12

Aspiring Rakes and Their Violence Against Women in Behn's and Wycherley's Comedies………..……......……………..…………………………..……19

The Rake Figure in Wycherley's Comedy..…………..………..………….…..……...25

Chapter 2: Masculine Heroines and Female Libertines……………………….…...…32

Heroines on Stage……………………………………….……………………….33

Honour, Sexual Desire, and Romantic Connection in Behn's and Wycherley's Comedies……………………………………………………………………48

Chapter 3: Masculinity and Effeminacy in Restoration Prose……..…….………..…...54

Hattige: Heroine or Female Villain?……………………………………..…...…55

What Makes a [Restoration] Man?……………………………………………………60

Conclusion…………………………………………………………………………………72

Works Cited……………………………………………………………………………...76

Abstract

This thesis explores topics of gender, sexuality, and male and female agency in Restoration literature and theatre, specifically Aphra Behn's *The Rover* (1677) and *The City Heiress* (1682), William Wycherley's *The Country Wife* (1675), and Sébastien Brémond's *Hattige; or the Amours of the Prince of Tamaran* (1680). It explores how these authors understand and explore the ways in which both genders were confined by dominant models during this time period, while also navigating the fluidity and complexity of these models. This thesis focuses on how libertinism and its emphasis on sexuality relates to gender categories. Given that access to libertinism is dictated through social class, sexuality, and wit, certain aspects of libertinism can be available for women. While women cannot completely do this and dominate men in the same way, they can harness parts of this libertine role, although they still must be careful about their reputation and honour. This thesis explores topics of the libertine figure and other categories of gender in relation to that figure through its representation in popular genres of Restoration literature (comedy and amatory secret history), arguing that as represented in these texts, sexuality and gender are constitutive of one another.

Acknowledgements

A huge thank you to Dr. Erin Keating for not only encouraging me to write a thesis and offering to be my advisor, but also for providing a level of support and guidance that went well beyond my expectations, and for which I will be eternally grateful. Thank you for giving me the best feedback on my work over the years and pushing me to be a better writer. I would also like to thank my committee members Dr. Pam Perkins and Dr. Armelle St-Martin for their time, feedback, and interest in my thesis. Thank you to Dr. David Watt for chairing my defence and for his kind words of encouragement. I also would like to thank Dr. Erin Keating and Dr. Warren Cariou for their recommendation letters and for their assistance in my successful application for the SSHRC CGS-M.

I would also like to thank my wonderful friends and family for all their encouragement. Thank you to my amazing parents for their unwavering love and support, to my brothers Jeremy and Matthew for constantly cheering me on, to my best friend Rachel for studying with me and always making me laugh, and to my boyfriend, Gavin, for being such a loving and positive presence in my life.

Introduction

"Why must we be either guilty of fornication or murder if we converse with you men — and is there no difference between leave to love me, and leave to lie with me?" (Behn, *Rover* 170). This line, from Aphra Behn's play *The Rover* (1677), comically highlights the sexual constraints faced by both women and men in Restoration Britain. Hellena, an upper-class woman, says this to Willmore, the play's libertine hero. This quotation emphasizes the greater restrictions women face, in that it demonstrates how few options women have with regard to romantic relationships and to their general fates. This quotation also shows the heteronormativity that dominates many Restoration literary texts. Although men had fewer restraints than women did in the Restoration period, this quotation suggests that men are conditioned by their society to view women in a purely sexual way. Thus, this quotation indicates that the only relationship that can exist between unrelated men and women is of a sexual nature. My thesis will be focusing on this idea in four literary works: Aphra Behn's *The Rover* and *The City Heiress* (1682), William Wycherley's *The Country Wife* (1675), and Sébastien Brémond's *Hattige; or, The Amours of the King of Tamaran* (1676, English translation 1680). My thesis explores how these authors understand and explore the ways in which both genders are confined by the dominant gender norms of English society during the Restoration, while also navigating the fluidity and complexity of these models. Ultimately, my thesis explores topics of the libertine figure and other categories of gender in relation to that figure through its representation in popular genres of Restoration literature (comedy and amatory secret history), considering the question: how is the relationship between gender and sexuality represented in these texts?

Traditional Male and Female Gender Roles in the Restoration Period

Given that "male dominance" was consistently "reinforced" in the Restoration period (McKeon 295, Eales 4), most women lacked freedom in nearly every aspect of their life. As Jennifer Eales suggests, women in "early modern England were disadvantaged because they were born into an overtly patriarchal society" (Eales 4). As Michael McKeon argues, the "interest of the family" was always centered around men (McKeon 297). Women were not only given less power, but they were even "described by male authors as morally, intellectually, and physically weaker than men" (Eales 3). Given their lack of options, women were pushed to find husbands to support them and even to sacrifice "love for financial security" (Gill 2). Married women — though they at least were able to ensure their financial security with a husband and would occasionally be allowed to "possess separate property" (McKeon 298) — had even less power in some ways, given that a married woman was always "under the coverture of her husband" (Crawford 153). Women were therefore "expected to cede, or merge… into the identity of their spouse" (Barclay 37). As reflected in Behn's words, women also had very little sexual power, as men became "aggressors in courtship" (Barclay 35), and the fear of sexual assault permeates both *The Rover* and *The City Heiress*. As Andrew Sofer writes, women were viewed by men "as prey — a faceless object of desire that drives men by turns to romantic idealization, misogynistic violence, and sexual cynicism" (Sofer 67). This societal structure, as Sofer suggests, affects both men and women, as women must be aware of this and be on guard around men, out of fear that they will be sexually assaulted. But also, Sofer's words imply that this response from men was represented as almost involuntary, indicating that men struggled to control their actions.

It is important to note that gender is not the same for everyone. However, in the texts that my thesis focuses on, the interest of the authors is specifically upper-class women and men. This

is an important distinction, as there were vast differences between the expectations for the nobility and gentry in comparison to the labouring classes. Upper-class women were extremely restricted in their behaviour and forced to follow strict codes of honour and sexuality that did not apply to men, such as waiting until marriage, remaining proper, and concealing any sexual desires. Declining to follow these rules would result in major "social repercussions" (Van Renen 119). Upper-class women who engaged in sexual relations before marriage feared for the loss of their honour and virtue, and often struggled to find husbands as a result. Robert Markley emphasizes the limitations and impossible expectations women face: "women must be chaste even though they are always about to become whores" (Markley, "Unstable" n.p.). However, despite these restrictions, the authors and playwrights I focus on are looking for ways around the "patriarchal hierarchy" (Szilagyi 446) and gender roles that follow from it, and moments where women may gain agency.

Certainly, "male domination and the subordination of women are constants" (McKeon 300) in history. However, critical work on masculinity about the Restoration period indicates that it was not just women who faced unfair and unrealistic standards, but that men were also subject to scrutiny on the basis of gender and sexuality. Therefore, despite the clear patriarchy which restricted women's freedom, sexuality, behaviour, finances, and marriage choice, men were also restricted in certain ways. While women had more access to a fluidity of gender (i.e. women could act in masculine ways without losing their own femininity), men did not have that same freedom, and gender for men was more strongly fixed in this period. The expectation for men was to be very masculine, while women were able to act in masculine ways without much consequence. For example, as I will discuss later, the fear of being labelled effeminate — "a desire to emulate women that was plainly incompatible with sexual desire for them" (McKeon 308) — was a large part of Restoration culture for men. Effeminacy did not have positive

connotations and, in fact, signaled a man's sexual incompetence and feminine nature. This is why men did not have as much room to explore different gender roles, as they were afraid of being forced into an unfavourable societal position.

As I will focus on, a significant part in the definition of gender in this period was sexuality. But also, gender was understood in the Restoration period as fluid. In other words, we can consider gender as defined by a type of performance, which demonstrates that it was fluid, as one could change the way their gender is perceived. Judith Butler writes that gender is "a public action and performative act" (Butler, "Performative" 526), defined by repetition of behaviour and acts, and is a "practice of improvisation within a scene of constraint" (Butler, *Undoing* 1). Following this, McKeon writes that the concept of gender "works to discriminate not only socialized behaviour from natural fact, but also masculinity from femininity" (McKeon 301). This further complicates the fluidity of gender within gender restrictions in the Restoration period. Notably, the reason gender ideology was so contradictory in the Restoration period was because people in that time period did not believe that the body was stable; as Lacquer writes, "to be a man or a woman was to hold a social rank, a place in society… not to *be* organically one or the other of two incommensurable sexes" (Lacquer 8). Sex, as he writes, was "not an ontological category" (Lacquer 8). This pushed people in the Restoration period to be very rigid and bring in more gender restrictions, as they believed that the body was fluid, which caused anxiety in this rigid society. Thus Behn's, Wycherley's, and Brémond's writing was very radical for its time, as they try to represent a more fluid gender performance.

Libertine Masculinity and Possessive Masculinity

A very large part of my thesis revolves around libertine masculinity. I will examine how these texts explore the ways libertinism is available in different ways to both genders and its

potentialities and drawbacks. These playwrights and authors are interested in libertinism and how it relates to gender positions in society. Libertinism is a type of masculinity that was available to men in the Restoration period that was primarily characterized by excessive drinking, carnality, adultery, cuckolding, and desire for power. Given that masculinity in the Restoration period was defined mostly through sexual performance, it is evident that this sexual aspect of libertinism is one of the most important parts. The libertine rake (another name for a libertine figure, typically used in Restoration comedies) is a sexual adventurer and a "radical questioner of social [and] political… values" (Webster 2). They often make "explicit criticisms of the institution of marriage because it suppresses sexual desire by incorporating it into the economic system" (Russell 23). Often having upper-class, "masculine privilege" (Mackie 37), they seek to establish their independence from societal norms. This privilege also extends to their feelings towards women, in the way that they tend to view women (and lower-class men) as sexual objects.

While their acts may seem to be done purely out of self-interest and a desire for pleasure, they are actually quite radical in their fight against society. They were skeptical of England's public institutions as they assumed those institutions attempted to hamper their pursuit of "private joys" (Webster 2). They also questioned the dominant "moral values" (Webster 2) of Restoration society. As a result, they were often portrayed by Restoration authors such as Behn as lustful men who lack both morality and the ability to restrain themselves sexually. As Erin Mackie writes, "the rake's elite social status and reputation for dazzling erotic and stylistic prowess has often overshadowed his grubbier, more overtly violent and criminal features" (Mackie 35).

Further, as I will examine in my first chapter, a stereotypical behaviour of libertines that some participants took to more than others was the act of cuckolding (where one man makes a

cuckold out of another by having sex with his wife). As Eve Sedgwick notes, "the object of man's existence is to cuckold men" (Sedgwick 55). However, while the concept of cuckolding may initially appear to be about men's sexual desires, the actual desire to cuckold is not about the women but in fact about the men. Thus cuckolding can be read as queer, given that it places the two men in a sexual context and positions them as sexual competitors vying for the more superior role. Cuckolding is the main way in which men still "eroticized masculine hierarchical relationships" (Rosenthal, "Masculinity" 97); Sedgwick suggests, "'To cuckold' is by definition a sexual act, performed on a man, by another man" (Sedgwick 49). The specific words "performed on a man" stand out as Sedgwick implies that while the sex is performed with the woman, the actual action is with the man, which raises questions about where the desire to cuckold comes from. Sedgwick argues that the act of cuckolding creates a bond between men, and also that this bond in general is "not detrimental to 'masculinity' but definitive of it" (Sedgwick 50). This indicates a clear link between gender and sexuality, in that a man makes a sexual act involving another man's wife in order to strengthen his own masculinity.

Libertine figures "expanded the possible sexual roles and identities available to late-seventeenth-century men" by complicating men's relationships with each other (Webster 3). Essentially, men must spend time with one another in order to keep up their masculine appearance. When men surround themselves with women only, they begin to act like them, and will be seen as feminine rather than masculine — which is why the bonds between men are so important. It was also a common fear in this period that by acting in a feminine way, men would end up inadvertently changing their bodies and become feminine (as "effeminacy was held to signify a desire to emulate women"), losing their sexual power in the process (McKeon 308). In order to be considered a libertine figure, a man needs to have relationships with other men, which is part of the homosocial aspect of libertinism. Sedgwick writes that Restoration drama

emphasized "heterosexual love chiefly as a strategy of homosocial desire" (Sedgwick 50). In other words, "much of a man's social world consisted of men, but erotic or intimate feelings towards those men had to be channeled through the medium of a woman" (Rosenthal, "Masculinity" 97-8).

In my thesis, I focus on how libertinism and its emphasis on sexuality relates to gender categories. Libertinism is only one form of masculinity, but in these texts, it is the model of masculinity, and other types of masculinity are measured against it. Libertinism is a gender category in which sexual performance is central. For men, if they are unable to perform sexually, they cannot be considered libertines. Further, as I discuss in my second chapter, given that access to libertinism is dictated through social class, sexuality, and wit, certain aspects of libertinism can be available for women. Essentially, there is a sense of dominance in Restoration society through sexual performance. As I will explore, while women cannot completely do this and dominate men in the same way, they can harness parts of this libertine role, although they still must be careful about their reputation and honour, and therefore the most rebellious acts are typically done in secret or in disguise as men.

Although libertinism is demonstrated as the dominant masculinity, these texts delve into other kinds of masculinity available to men in the Restoration period. These other kinds of masculinity are used by the playwrights in different ways to make the audience think critically of the libertine figure. For example, as I discuss in chapters one and three, another dominant form of masculinity is possessive masculinity. Men who fall under this category are unable to obtain a libertine status as they do not fit specific standards of wit, intelligence, homosociality, and appearance. Like Pinchwife (*The Country Wife*) and Blunt (*The Rover*), these men may have qualities of a libertine such as a violent nature and entitled feelings about women — allowing the audience to question the supposed attractiveness of the libertine figure — but they still fall short

of a libertine status. While it is surprising that they are able to act in this way despite not only not having the high status of a libertine but also having low status with both men and women, this can be attested to the general male/female power imbalance in the Restoration period. Possessive masculinity in these texts, held up against libertine masculinity, helps us understand how the unattractive qualities we criticize in the former actually make up a large part of libertinism.

Libertinism and Effeminacy

As reflected in my third chapter, it is important to note that while masculine gender roles were very important in Restoration society, these roles were not static. As Michele Cohen suggests, these roles could change depending on behaviour and surroundings. Effeminacy is another type of masculinity that was available for (but not exactly desired by) men. While effeminacy and libertinism appear to be completely opposite, these two masculinities were closely related. Many Restoration literary works depict effeminate men as sexually incompetent and inferior to other men in the eyes of both men and women. Cohen writes that "In the eighteenth century, dictionaries [say] effeminacy meant 'admission of the qualities of a woman, softness, unmanly delicacy,' but also '[an] addict[ion] to women'" (Cohen 7). This means, however, that to spend too much time with women, while seemingly masculine and libertine-like, could actually label a man as effeminate. Jeremy Webster writes about these masculine roles and emphasizes the importance of sexual performance for libertine culture and for avoiding effeminacy.

Notably, stage libertinism is often discussed in relation to stage fops. Critics define stage fops as an "effeminating spectacle" (Kavanaugh 25), placed "between the masculine and feminine" (Martinez 73). Fops were considered to be "well versed in matters of fashion and manners," obsessed with "outward appearance… [such as] make-up, hairstyle and dress"

(Martinez 74). Williams writes that "because of the inherent theatricality which defines his dramatic characterization and conduct, the fop… regularly succeeds in becoming the focus of social attention" (Williams 1). However, given that there is an abundance of scholarly work on stage fops, I wanted to consider the ways that effeminacy can be more subtle and fluctuating, which is often not applicable for the typically overdramatic, consistently feminine-acting stage fops.

My Thesis Chapters

My first chapter focuses on the male characters in three Restoration comedies: Behn's *The City Heiress* and *The Rover*, and Wycherley's *The Country Wife*. This chapter focuses on libertine masculinity, examining what constitutes it and analyzing characters who are able to access certain traits of libertines but cannot be considered a true libertine. I will examine how through their construction of the characters Willmore and Horner, both playwrights examine (and critique) popular libertine masculinity. Behn, in particular, through her libertines, offers a "darker condemnation of the antifeminism and male libertinism of her time" (Markley, "Unstable" 142). For example, Willmore (*The Rover*) is only able to relate to women in a sexual manner because of his adherence to this libertine form of masculinity.

My second chapter focuses on the female characters in Behn's *The City Heiress* and *The Rover*, and Wycherley's *The Country Wife*. Behn and Wycherley not only directly address female sexual desires but create sympathetic, inspiring heroines who are not afraid to seek sexual liberation. I will explore the constraints placed on women in the Restoration period by examining these authors' characters and how they navigate their own sexualities and gender identities. Further, the Restoration period is widely known as the Era of the Actress, as it was the first time when women became regular actors on the stage. While "a woman speaking onstage was not

unheard of before the Restoration," most female roles on the stage "were played by boys or, occasionally, men" (Sofer 68-9). This chapter focuses on the significance and impact of the female body being on stage for the first time, in a society "that works to commodify women as sexual objects" (Sofer 67). Also, this chapter analyzes the "sexual ambiguity, mistaken identity and erotic tensions" (Byrd 69) that arise when characters such as Hellena (*The Rover*) cross-dress.

My third chapter examines Restoration prose, specifically Brémond's *Hattige*; *or the Amours of the Prince of Tamaran*. This chapter focuses on its representation of libertinism and effeminacy. I will draw on scholars such as Webster and Cohen to identify the various types of Restoration masculinities. Libertine figures "expanded the possible sexual roles and identities available to late-seventeenth-century men" (Webster 3), and effeminacy was defined by an "addict[ion] to women" (Cohen 7), which resonates with libertinism. Effeminacy and libertinism appear to be two ends of the masculinity spectrum, and yet they are almost interchangeable in ways. In *Hattige*, Brémond demonstrates the rigid nature of Restoration masculinities, while also trying to navigate these very complex gender boundaries and show how easily one can switch from a libertine title to an effeminate one. Further, each male character in *Hattige* represents a slightly different type of masculinity, and each character's fate is closely tied to their masculinity. Additionally, I will examine how the main female character (Hattige) embodies masculine traits but is still perceived as feminine and beautiful. I will explore how she successfully works around gender boundaries and manipulates and deceives men, and yet is not totally condemned for her behaviour. Hattige differs from the female characters in the plays, in that although they manage to find a sense of power over men, this power is always given back to the men by the end of the plays. In contrast, Hattige gets to keep this power.

Ultimately, my focus is on the shifting relationship between sexuality and gender in literary representation. In modern days, sexuality and gender are represented as distinct and to suggest otherwise would likely be considered offensive. However, these authors are radical in that they represent sexuality and gender in the Restoration period as intertwined. Therefore, the aim of my thesis is to demonstrate how in these texts, as demonstrated by these authors, sexuality is constitutive of gender.

Chapter 1: Libertine Masculinity in Restoration Comedies

This section will focus on three Restoration comedies, Wycherley's *The Country Wife* (1675) and Behn's *The City Heiress* (1682) and *The Rover* (1677). *The City Heiress* is centered around the libertine character Wilding, who has been disowned by his rich (but fop-ish) uncle Sir Timothy, and his attempts to regain his inheritance, privately seduce Lady Galliard, and also convince the rich city heiress, Charlot, to give him her hand in marriage. *The Rover*'s libertine character is Willmore, who similarly attempts to seduce multiple women and also ensure his financial security. *The Country Wife* focuses on the libertine character Mr. Horner, who, at the start of the play, fools other men by spreading a rumour that he is a "eunuch" (Wycherley 4) in an attempt to make love to married women without being suspected. Horner spends the entirety of the play looking for ways to make cuckolds out of other men, such as Mr. Pinchwife (with his wife, Margery) and Sir Jasper Fidget (with his wife, Lady Fidget). In this section, I analyze the male rakes — and the aspiring rakes — in these three plays to identify the ways that these plays engage with libertinism as a masculinity. All three playwrights demonstrate, through their libertine figures, how this dominant masculinity can create societal problems if it is fully embodied. The three libertine figures help us understand how libertinism is a type of masculinity that, although appearing very glamorous, can end up posing difficulties and restraining men. Notably, also, the three aspiring-libertine characters in each play (Sir Charles, Blunt, and Pinchwife) are an important contrast to encourage audiences to question the qualities of the libertine figure.

The Rake Figure in Behn's Comedies

The libertine figure in *The City Heiress*, Wilding, aligns very closely with the traditional libertine figure (or stage rake) outlined in my introductory section. As Robert Markley notes, he certainly displays his entitled, masculine feelings of privilege and promiscuity: "in the first act alone, [Wilding] pledges love to both the beautiful rich widow, Lady Galliard, and to the young city heiress, Charlot, and, for good measure, keeps a mistress, Diana, as well" (Markley, "Feminism" 148). He also becomes frustrated with Lady Galliard when she says she will not sleep with him, indicating that he believes he deserves her submission despite how she feels about it, calling her "my Widow" (Behn, *Heiress* 9) and suggesting that she has changed: "I thought you'd love me too, curse on the dull mistake" (Behn, *Heiress* 7). Wilding's actions demonstrate difficulties women during this time period had in that men did not always respect their desire to remain honourable and would pressure them into having sexual relations without regard for the effect this would have on the women's reputation. Wilding says, "you cou'd not then forbid my Passion too" (Behn, *Heiress* 7), even blaming her, suggesting that his actions stem "from [her] own encouragement" (Behn, *Heiress* 7). Wilding further demonstrates this behaviour when he says to Lady Galliard, "you turn'd me off for Honour" (Behn, *Heiress* 7). The fact that Wilding understands the societal standards for female behaviour and honour and yet still pushes Lady Galliard to go against them makes his actions even more egregious. Wilding is aware of Lady Galliard's love for him and even leads her to believe he is "boast[ing] [her] love" (Behn, *Heiress* 9) to other men in the play, increasing the possibility of ruining her reputation. However, unlike other male characters in Behn's plays (such as Willmore, Blunt, and Sir Charles who display physical and sexual aggression), Wilding does not do anything too drastic, just the standard libertine behaviour — stringing along multiple women and charming everyone.

The libertine figure in *The Rover* (Willmore) is similar to Wilding, but Wilding is presented in a better light. Wilding is presented as a more successful libertine figure than

Willmore, given that he consistently gets what he desires. Willmore, on the other hand, gets what he wants, but he is tamed into it. For example, Wilding gets Lady Galliard to sleep with him, and Willmore fails to seduce Hellena, one of his love interests. Wilding successfully seduces Lady Galliard, whereas Hellena actually triumphs over Willmore, given that she convinces him to marry her as a result of her wealth. Also, Willmore is a much darker character in the sense that Behn takes his entitled feelings about women a step further. While Wilding has sexual relations with Lady Galliard, it is consensual, whereas Willmore attempts sexual assault multiple times. Willmore, then, further demonstrates the problems with libertine masculinity. He views women as something to "gain" (Behn, *Rover* 173), as if they are objects. For example, he is so angry with Angellica, a beautiful courtesan whose prices are exceedingly high that he says, "may she languish for mankind till she die, and be damned for that one sin alone" (Behn, *Rover* 177); as reflected in my introduction, libertines such as Willmore believe that women should be easily accessible to them. Given that Willmore cannot afford Angellica's prices and thus he is prevented from having access to her, he uses the word "sin" as a method of shaming her. Essentially, Willmore weaponizes moral discourse to attempt to convince Angellica that she is committing a sin by not letting him have her.

Wilding's typical libertine actions help us understand what Behn is attempting to do with Willmore: if we even slightly exaggerate these libertine qualities, they are very unappealing. While Wilding is portrayed as a restrained, witty, social, adulterous libertine figure, Willmore is portrayed as a serial attempted rapist who is unable to restrain himself sexually, even around his friend's lovers. Willmore's sexual violence even temporarily breaks bonds of friendship with Belvile, when he tries to sexually assault Florinda, who is waiting for Belvile so they can elope together. Willmore effectively ruins their chance to elope by scaring her away, and Belvile's anger demonstrates the extent to which Willmore has temporarily damaged Belvile's perception

of him. Willmore says, "how the devil should I know Florinda?" (Behn, *Rover* 124), and Belvile argues, "a plague of your ignorance! If it had not been Florinda, must you be a beast? A brute? A senseless swine?" (Behn, *Rover* 124). Belvile is not only shaming Willmore for his actions towards Florinda, but even calling attention to the fact that Willmore's actions are unacceptable towards any woman. Thus, libertinism is a type of masculinity that, if exaggerated, can break down homosocial bonds.

Willmore has such strong entitled feelings about women, that if a woman (even accidentally) places herself in a position where she is alone with a man, he feels safe to assume that she is signaling sexual availability. For example, in scene three of act two when Florinda is alone in her garden and has left the door unlocked for Belville, Willmore comes by and sees that her door is open. He says, "hah — what has God sent us here! A — female!" (Behn, *Rover* 201) implying that she is not only an object, but that she is 'his' and now in 'his' possession. Trying to force himself on her ("thou ought the sooner to lie with me"), Willmore accuses her of provoking him: "a judge were he young and vigorous, and saw those eyes of thine, would know 'twas they gave the first blow — the first provocation" (Behn, *Rover* 202). Willmore's perspective on their encounter, where he finds her "in an undress" (Behn, *Rover* 201), "is clearly patriarchal: [believing that] rape is simply not something that happens to a woman… [who demonstrates] ideals of feminine virtue" (Pacheco 328). He asks her: "why at this time of night was your cobweb door set open dear spider — but to catch flies" (Behn, *Rover* 202). As Pacheco argues, Willmore believes that her door being open implies that she is inviting men to sleep with her. Worse, he believes that she has a "predatory intention to entrap men" (Pacheco 332).

Willmore's manipulative, predatory actions clearly contradict and challenge the societal view of libertinism as an admirable masculinity. His actions point to rape culture that was very prevalent in the Restoration period — as Anita Pacheco suggests, rape was seen as an

"unfortunate by-product of male lust" (Pacheco 326). In the Restoration period, there was a general belief that "women desired sex but required men to overcome their natural modesty" (Barclay 41). Willmore's actions draw on the Restoration idea that it is not on the man to behave properly towards women, but in fact, if a woman does not desire sex, it is her responsibility to not place herself in a position where she is alone with a man. If a woman has done that then it is considered socially excusable for men to rape her, given that she was, in their minds, signaling sexual availability. Willmore even threatens Florinda: "come — or I shall be damnably angry" (Behn, *Rover* 202). The patriarchal logic behind Willmore's sexual violence is that "the woman who makes sexual choices loses the right to choose" (Pacheco 332-3). In addition, as Katie Barclay has suggested, violence was often used as a courting device: "force was considered a normal part of courting behaviour and so sexual violence was located alongside wooing as methods to overcome the female will" (Barclay 44). Thus, Willmore views his actions not as rape but as an act of seduction. This seduction also has, as Pacheco indicates, two layers: "it is at once an attempt to seduce and a claim to have been seduced" (Pacheco 329). Willmore not only tries to force himself on Florinda but tries to convince her that she is to blame for his actions, in the sense that female beauty "simultaneously confirms and threatens masculinity; to desire is at once to be the subject of desire and its victim" (Pacheco 330). Pacheco's use of the word "victim" is notable as it is still relevant in today's society, wherein female students in school are banned from wearing sleeveless shirts because it is 'inappropriate' — placing the blame and responsibility on the female students so as not to provoke any of their male counterparts. Similarly to this scene, the responsibility should be on the *men* to not act inappropriately, and yet it always falls on the women.

However, it is important to emphasize that even with all of Willmore's sexual violence, he is still the play's "titular hero" (Oliver 44) and is loved by two of the heroines in the play. He

is also a big part of the homosocial group and is depicted as a man of quality. Thus, even though he can be horribly violent, the play does not necessarily treat him in this way, given that he charms Hellena and Angellica and does not display these qualities with all the women. While Florinda refers to him as a "filthy beast" (Behn, *Rover* 202), potentially encouraging the readers to see him in a similar light and recognize his horrible actions, at the end of the play, he is completely forgiven by her, and she even brings him into this community. The fact that Willmore is the hero, despite displaying qualities of sexual violence, entitlement, and rudeness, could encourage the audience to question whether or not he should be the hero.

Behn further demonstrates the problems with libertine ideology by painting a world "where the word 'rape' has no meaning" to the libertine characters, and even to the male characters who are not libertines (Pacheco 323). In *The City Heiress*, Lady Galliard is almost raped by Sir Charles and is then forced to marry him, and even though Florinda faces three attempted rapes, they are not referred to as such, and instead, are called "seduction, retaliation, or 'ruffling a harlot'" (Pacheco 323). The seeming casualness (and the high number) of attempted sexual assaults in both plays is Behn's attempt to get the audience to understand that this treatment of women is so common in real life that it is often overlooked. In *The Rover*, "rape is attempted most often, not by the typical villain or fool, but by Willmore, the play's dashing hero" (Olivier 55). This is a reflection of the male-dominated seventeenth-century society, and, moreover, it is Behn's attempt to encourage a sense of discomfort in the audience and to get them to question why they celebrate a libertine character who continually attempts sexual assault.

Behn also criticizes the possessive sexuality aspect of libertine masculinity and overall what masculinity entailed in this time. In the Restoration period, women had very few options, and they were always supposed to be legally taken care of by a male figure in their lives. As

Jacqueline Eales writes, there was a "parallel between power in the state and that of the father within the family… both forms of authority were natural and God-given" (Eales 4). In *The Rover*, Hellena and Florinda's brother Don Pedro controls them, given that the absence of a father figure means that the brother will be in charge and have control. Even Belvile, who is actually the one genuinely good man in *The Rover*, still buys into the concept of women as objects or commodities. He says about Florinda, "I won her by my sword" (Behn, *Rover* 165) — still clearly viewing women in this way, where they are owned by men. Pacheco writes about the concept of "the hero's determination to oust his rivals and claim exclusive possession of the object of desire" (Pacheco 326), which, in this case, is Florinda, indicating that despite Belvile's genuine love for Florinda, he still views her as an object of desire. Willmore is a very good example of this on several occasions; for example, outraged at Angellica's prices, Willmore takes down her portrait, and both her hired bravos and the surrounding men all begin fighting to get the portrait back; the fact that Willmore does so is indicative of both the lack of protection women had in the Restoration period and the entitlement men felt to women's bodies.

Further, in the fifth act of *The Rover*, Behn paints the supposed heroes in a very negative light, highlighting the way that men try to control women with violence. In this horrific scene, this group of men are planning a gang rape on Florinda, and the man who wants to go first is Florinda's brother, Pedro. This scene is set up as a comic scene, but there is nothing comic about this — only in the sense that it is so horrible and uncomfortable that it may provoke uncomfortable laughter in the reader or audience. This exaggeration of the attempted gang rape (and even having Florinda's own brother in it) demonstrates how literature reveals but also shapes ideology — if there was only one attempted rape, it would not have been as impactful. Behn's decision to exaggerate these attempted rapes make it impossible for the audience to ignore this, and hopefully reflect on their own discomfort.

Aspiring Rakes and Their Violence Against Women in Behn's and Wycherley's Comedies

There are several other male characters in these plays who display violent qualities, yet they are notably not libertine figures. These characters raise the question of why Behn makes these comic characters possess the violence but nothing else of the libertine. The representation of these characters is important, as these almost-libertines allow the audience to be disgusted by qualities that are shared by the libertines. These characters also have lower social status, and yet they still demonstrate strong feelings of privilege over women, so much to the point where they can enact violence (both physical and sexual) on them.

The characters Sir Charles Meriwell (*The City Heiress*) and Blunt (*The Rover*) are portrayed as very unlikeable, unattractive, and predatory characters. In *The City Heiress*, the character Sir Charles, who is presented as a sort of 'country fool,' forces himself into Lady Galliard's bedroom and tries to drunkenly sexually assault her, while begging her to "marry [him] to morrow" (Behn, *Heiress* 47). This situation reinforces Barclay's suggestion that eighteenth-century playwrights "imagined falling in love as a form of violence, because they understood love to require the subordination of women to their male lovers, reflected in the promise 'to obey' in the wedding vows" (Barclay 36). Sir Charles' actions were not uncommon, and rape abduction was a legitimate concern. Barclay further indicates that "the act of falling in love for women involved overcoming the female will, an inherently violent act, preparing her for the loss of identity expected within marriage" (Barclay 36). This is proven in Lady Galliard's trajectory, where Sir Charles causes her to lose all her power; in her panic, she frets about "how [she] shall… fend him hence" and decides that "to be rid of him, [she'll] promise [to marry] him: [hoping] he'll have forgot it in his sober Passion" (Behn, *Heiress* 47). However, the hidden witnesses — Sir Anthony Meriwell and Mrs. Closet — make her word a binding contract, and

Sir Charles' feelings of entitlement (and desire to control Lady Galliard) become true since she is then forced to marry him even though she does not want to. Likewise, Blunt's actions in *The Rover* indicate feelings of entitlement. When he takes an interest in Lucetta and is asked by the other men what her name is, he scoffs, "her name? No, 'sheartlikins, what care I for names" (Behn, *Rover* 175), demonstrating that he does not care to get to know her and that he only cares about sleeping with her. In addition, Blunt believes Lucetta to be upper-class, which indicates both his unsophisticated difference from the courtly wits and his belief that even upper-class women do not deserve his respect. These characters' behaviour gives us a better understanding of how they view women — even though they are unattractive non-libertines, they still feel like they are owed attention and sex by the most attractive and highly desirable upper-class women.

In Behn's creation of such an awful, violent character as Blunt, she encourages the audience to consider if he is really that different from the central libertine figure. She does this by creating a scene where Florinda is running away from Willmore, who is trying to rape her, and tries to seek shelter in Blunt's house, where he then tries to rape her too. By placing Florinda in a horrible situation where she is trapped between these two men (even sexual predators), we cannot ignore the fact that they are equal, and they both have the same intention with Florinda. Blunt and Willmore really are not that different from one another; it is only that Blunt is distinctly painted in an unlikeable way. Lucetta robs Blunt of his belongings, and Blunt is so angry that he tries to take revenge on the first woman (Florinda) that he finds himself alone with. Blunt's horrible treatment of Florinda suggests that he thinks that not only are all women the same ("a generation of damned hypocrites… dissembling witches!"), but that it is acceptable for him to brutally rape Florinda just because Lucetta wronged him (Behn, *Rover* 226). Further, his earlier statement "what care I for names" (Behn, *Rover* 175) proves that he felt he was above her, and his anger stems from his feeling that she has taken this power he felt he had over her. He

threatens Florinda: "I will kiss and beat thee all over… revenged on one whore for the sins of another" (Behn, *Rover* 225-6). Here, Florinda is "degraded to the level of an object, a commodity, however precious, in a coercive structure of exchange" (Pacheco 325), in that Florinda must help restore the underlying power imbalance that Lucetta disrupted. While Florinda manages to escape, it is clear that Blunt feels so entitled to his feelings that if given the chance, he likely would have acted on impulse and sexually and physically assaulted her. By exaggerating the violence of the central libertine, and including this unusually violent would-be libertine character, Behn highlights this shared quality, encouraging the audience to consider if the qualities that distinguish them are so important that one character can get away with this violence but another cannot.

But why are Sir Charles and Blunt not libertine figures, even though they possess qualities of one (i.e., violence and entitlement over women), and if they are not libertines, what is Behn illustrating about Restoration society by creating unlikeable male characters who still feel entitled to these qualities? The reason for possessing these qualities despite not being libertines, is merely because they are men, and these characters live in a world with a huge power imbalance. Even though these men were considered generally unattractive, they still had more power than the women. Women were able to wield some power in the Restoration period, but they were living in a man's world, and, unfortunately, they were controlled by the men in their lives. A wife was "considered her husband's property under English common law" (Oliver 45), and marriage led to women's "loss of personal identity" (Barclay 37) — widows had the most power, given that they had money and power from their marriage, and their husbands were no longer there to control them! However, the reason why men like Sir Charles and Blunt are not libertines is more complicated: money and status play a large role in determining whether or not a man can be a libertine. Sir Charles has an estate, but it is a country estate, which was much less

impressive in the Restoration period. In addition, unlike the libertine figure, who is (curiously) painted as 'cultured,' Sir Charles is more rustic: he hunts and drinks heavily. While libertines often drink, they drink primarily to be social among other men, and they do not often drink around women; in these comedies they are not depicted as drunk (with the exception of Willmore, who is a more extreme libertine figure and is a deeper critique of libertine culture). Given this, the depiction of Sir Charles stumbling, very drunk, into Lady Galliard's bed chamber suggests that he needed to be drunk in order to have the courage to pursue her. Libertine figures are depicted as very confident in themselves, and Sir Charles' clear lack of confidence further separates him from a libertine such as Wilding.

As for Blunt, he has potential qualities of a libertine, but he loses his power when Lucetta steals his belongings (which also emasculates him). However, it is notable that Belvile (Florinda's suitor) and Willmore are poor, but they are still gentlemen/cavaliers: "cavaliers as handsome, witty, libertine, potent Tories who are worthy," "loyal to the royalist cause" and "irresistible to women" (Canfield 115, Markley "Unstable" 11, Todd 13). Both birth and being a gentleman were extremely important for status in the Restoration period. Blunt is not a Royalist (which was considered, especially by Behn, as she was one herself, the wrong side of politics), and the only reason the other men in *The Rover* allow Blunt into the group is because they view him as their only source of funds while they are in exile (Behn, *Rover* 176). In the Restoration period, status was a hierarchy decided at birth, such that someone's worth is established with blood. Blunt recognizes this, and the fact that he was not born into a high status, so he tries desperately to be part of the group. This is another way in which he is different from a libertine, because he tries too hard and wit is supposed to be natural. As Sedgwick has indicated, wit is a signifier of upper class — "wit [was] a token of class membership or mobility" (Sedgwick 61) — both because someone of high class is expected to have all the necessary social graces and

because they typically had higher education and were therefore able to express themselves more elegantly. Further, “lack of wit… goes with being a cuckold and with the urban bourgeoisie or the insufficiently urban gentry” (Sedgwick 61). Blunt’s consistent repetition of the word “‘sheartlikins” demonstrates that he struggles to speak eloquently. He is also not a gentleman — he has the money, so the other men allow him into the circle, but once he has lost his money, he has lost his power. And, as indicated in Charlot’s words to Wilding: “I cou’d love you, though you were a slave, And I were Queen of all the Universe” (Behn, *Heiress* 13), a true gentleman will not lose his power when he loses his money.

The Country Wife by William Wycherley is comparable to Behn’s comedies in its similar grouping of different characters, the distinct roles they play, and its clear criticism of violence. In Wycherley’s play, the character most similar to Blunt and Sir Charles is Mr. Pinchwife. Like Blunt and Sir Charles, he demonstrates very violent qualities, yet he is not a libertine figure. Pinchwife also has a country estate and lacks the libertine confidence and wit. But Pinchwife is different from Blunt and Sir Charles because his insecurities are much more evident — his violence stems from entitlement, but also from intense anxiety and fear of being cuckolded. He is so terrified of being made a cuckold by the play’s libertine figure (Horner) that he takes out these feelings on his wife, and is physically and verbally abusive. He unintentionally reveals to Horner how scared he is, enticing Horner further and leading the audience to mock him. This mockery is furthered by his name, Pinchwife, which is deliberate and upfront in its meaning: Pinchwife forcefully keeps his wife so close to him that he is almost pinching her (reinforcing his physical abuse), and the word pinch in relation to a person also connotes an uptight nature. His jealousy “provokes him to threaten a violence towards his wife, first with a knife, then with a sword” (Oliver 41). All these aspects of his character make Horner, as “a wit and a cuckolder” (Sedgwick 62), even more excited to make a cuckold out of him, and Pinchwife knows this. He

is so fearful of Horner that Pinchwife "thrusts [Margery] in" (Wycherley 18) a room and locks her away. As readers, we can acknowledge Pinchwife's insecurity and jealousy, and also see that he worries about sexually pleasing his wife (a man who can satisfy his wife has no need to resort to violence or cruelty, as she will be faithful). However, he is written in such an unsympathetic way that all the men in the play recognize his awfulness and tease him for it — Harcourt comments, after Pinchwife leaves, that he is so "jealous" that he is going to "beat his wife" (Wycherley 15), acknowledging Pinchwife's horrible treatment of his wife — which further encourages the audience to not sympathize with him. It is notable that the reason Pinchwife is unlikeable is because of his horrific treatment of his wife and sister. This is rather gender progressive of Wycherley given that Pinchwife's evilness is directly related to how horribly he treats the women in his life.

Pinchwife shows blatant disrespect to women and does not even attempt to hide this. Pinchwife consistently patronizes Margery, and his words "you are a good girl" (Wycherley 54) position her to be smaller than him. He also demonstrates "brutality towards his wife" (Gelineau 286) and even threatens to write "whore" with a "penknife in [her] face" (Wycherley 51); worse, he threatens to "stab out [her] eyes" (Wycherley 52). Pinchwife's violence towards Margery "bespeaks the violence of Restoration libertine culture at large" (Oliver 46). Libertines are typically of the highest social class, and they hold a lot of power in society, which allows them to get away with violence towards women. However, Pinchwife does not have enough power to act this way because he is not a libertine, and yet his actions are clearly representative of the behaviour of many libertines. This is critical, as it forces the audience to recognize that they are comfortable condemning Pinchwife's awful behaviour and uncomfortable condemning similar behaviour of libertines.

The Rake Figure in Wycherley's Comedy

Where Horner, the play's libertine figure, differs from the libertine figures (and the violent non-libertines) depicted above is in his treatment of women. While cuckolding certainly places women in a position of property, in a structure of exchange, Horner does not, at all, treat women with violence, or have the same feelings of privilege and ownership over women as the men in Behn's plays. He does not attempt sexual assault, nor does he try to sleep with any woman without genuine confirmation that they return his interest. This comedy, then, "allows the audience to empathize with the rake" (Milhous and Hume 80). Horner's view on libertinism and womanizing is much more in favour of the women, and thus he is placed in a more positive light, where readers and audiences are not led to critique him in the same way that they might critique other male characters with more sinister and entitled views about women. Horner ultimately treats women better than even Wilding, the 'best' man out of the men listed above, given that he will always value protecting their secret and their reputation over anything else. While this may stem from mostly selfish reasons (given that he does not want to be found out), he still treats the women he seduces better than most libertines do. He recognizes the importance of protecting women's reputations, which he ensures will never be lost or ruined, saying to Lady Fidget that she "should not need to forfeit it for [him]," promising her "security" (Wycherley 28). At the end of the play, Margery almost gives his secret away, and Horner does not let her, wanting her reputation to remain intact. In addition, it is arguable that Horner creates some type of connection with the women. Given that he is willing to pretend Alithea has betrayed her fiancé to protect Margery, he is prioritizing a connection with Margery, and with the women he sleeps with. While it may not be love, Horner clearly feels a sort of responsibility for these women and does not want anything bad to happen to them. In this light, Horner is certainly sympathetic. This concept — of a libertine who respects women (and is mostly sympathetic) — is forward-

thinking. This could be Wycherley's attempt to introduce Restoration audiences to a new kind of libertine figure that gains power and influence from positive interactions with women, where they can establish a consensual sexual agreement that benefits both parties. In this sense, Horner is also forward-thinking in that he is a "liberator of confined sexuality" (Thompson, "Limits" 101), who allows women to act on their sexual desires (in a society that would typically condemn them for it) without consequences.

Horner has a strong sexual loyalty to the women he sleeps with, and we are encouraged to sympathize with him as a result. Horner's lifestyle is centred around denouncing the concept that violence against women and libertinism go together. He is not only not violent but even kind to the female characters. Also, it is typically the female characters who pursue him. He is gentle and patient with the women, even Margery, who is very naive. For example, when Horner pursues Margery, she does not understand how society functions and says about Pinchwife, "I don't intend to go to him again; you shall be my Husband now" (Wycherley 79) — to which Horner says, "I cannot be your Husband, Dearest, since you are married to him" (Wycherley 79). While he makes awful, offensive comments about women to make their husbands believe he can be left alone with them, this is all simply part of his disguise: "I will kiss no Man's Wife… your Wife [is]… a Woman… and consequently, a Monster… a greater Monster than a Husband" (Wycherley 6). Mrs. Squeamish refers to him as "woman-hater, this toad, this ugly, greasy, dirty sloven" (Wycherley 57), and he is also called a "rude beast," "insolent brute," and "stinking, mortified rotten French wether" by Mrs. Squeamish, Mrs. Dainty Fidget and Lady Fidget (Wycherley 26). This disguise and these statements are what allow Horner to identify which women are sexually interested in him.

However, Wycherley's depiction of libertine masculinity (through Horner) is still arguably critical. Aside from his genuine respect for women, which separates him from other

libertines, Horner is the ultimate definition of a libertine figure, in that he participates in adultery, sleeps with multiple women, and has solid male friendships (at least for the majority of the play). But he is unique in that his main goal is not performance, or appearing outwardly superior to others, but inner power. Horner's libertine lifestyle is so prominent in his life that everything ties back to cuckolding and power. Horner is, in ways, a "psychologically sick character… whose womanizing is a neurotic compulsion" (Milhous and Hume 77). He deeply enjoys exploiting the insecurities of other men, such as Pinchwife. Horner's stubborn pursuit of Pinchwife's wife begins only when it becomes known that Pinchwife is hiding her for fear of other men admiring her beauty. In a fit of panic (and rage), Pinchwife says, "you shall never lye with my wife; I know the town" and "you are like never to be nearer to her" (Wycherley 14, 15), which excites Horner and makes this game that much more fun to him. Pinchwife's insecurity makes him the most attractive target to Horner, whose sadistic nature takes pleasure in exploiting Pinchwife's vulnerability. Further, as Jeremy Webster has suggested, part of libertinism is the classist idea that lower classes are there for their use, and we see this reflected in Horner's treatment of Pinchwife.

Horner allows himself to be seen as an inferior man so that he can go about his plan. As Sedgwick has suggested, unlike other men who like to flaunt their conquests, Horner values private victories and gets more pleasure from the husbands not knowing "that [they are] in such a relationship" (Sedgwick 50). Horner spends the entirety of the play looking for ways to make cuckolds out of other men. In his obsession with cuckoldry, Horner is willing to sacrifice almost everything in his life, including his relationships, friendships, and reputation. This is a critique of the constraints of libertinism because it ultimately forces the libertine to make a choice between the libertine lifestyle and meaningful friendships and relationships.

Thus, an aspect of Horner's libertinism that separates him from other libertine figures is in his male friendships. As Webster has argued, unlike other libertine figures, Horner is painted by Wycherley as an anti-social figure, one whose dedication to libertinism results in the broken fate of homosocial bonds. As Sedgwick writes, Horner "escape[s] from the circuit of male homosocial desires… [and] is interested in women, rather than in the opinions of other men" (Sedgwick 55). He chooses mistresses over his friends and "becomes every other man's nightmare… cuckold[ing] nearly every man in the play" (Webster 68). Although Horner, Harcourt, and Dorilant (Horner's circle of male friends) appear tight-knit, Horner does not trust them fully, evidenced by his failure to let them in on his secret plan. By protecting Margery, it is clear that Horner would rather keep his mistresses than his friendships. The libertine figure Wycherley has created prioritizes the reputations of the women he sleeps with over any other relationship in his life. This is a toxic and isolating aspect of libertine masculinity, one that is not often mentioned in the glamour of the libertine lifestyle. By emphasizing Horner's extreme desire to keep these cuckolding relationships secret, Wycherley is drawing attention to this type of masculinity and critiquing it, given that Horner ends up losing his friends. It is evident that Horner does not even mind wrecking his friendships when he puts Alithea's honour at risk, pretending that she had committed infidelity, when she had not actually done so. By putting her extremely valued honour at risk, Horner puts his relationship with Margery higher than his relationship with Harcourt — who is in love with Alithea. Horner proves this himself in his final speech, when he "proclaims a continued willingness to be 'despis'd' by the men in order to be 'priz'd' by the ladies" (Thompson, "Limits" 112). By blaming Alithea, Horner is able to protect Margery's honour — proving that his highest priority is to protect himself (and his sexual conquests) and keep his cuckolding lifestyle a secret. But as David Gelineau writes, "the audience may smile at Horner besting the foolish Sir Jasper or Pinchwife, but it cannot smile at

his treatment of Harcourt and Alithea" (Gelineau 299), showing that in this light, Horner is unsympathetic. Horner's pursuit of cuckoldry "leaves him unmarried and friendless and thus disconnected from society's future and institutions" (Webster 68). Horner loses his earlier relationship with the wits and leaves himself only with the cuckolding relationships he created. As Ronald Berman has suggested, quoted in Thompson's work, Horner "uses friendship as a blind for betrayal" (Thompson, "Limits" 107). While some married men do not see Horner as a threat and befriend him, Horner counts on them to contribute to their own fate and is not actually their friend, such as with Sir Jasper, who ultimately brings his own wife to Horner. The only true connections Horner makes are with the women, but since the women are already married and cannot risk spending much time with Horner, he is often alone. He avoids creating close relationships for fear of being exposed as a non-eunuch and a wife-seducer, since he would then no longer be able to continue his devious and self-serving lifestyle. Horner "represents a world that is ultimately meaningless" (Gelineau 286).

Wycherley criticizes the way that Horner's libertinism leads him to take greater pride in his cuckoldry than he does in his reputation. Horner is unlike other men in *The Country Wife*, such as Sparkish, who deeply desires to be seen as one of the wits and fit in with the other men — "[a] cautionary exemplar of failed male bonding, naively transparent and hopelessly inept in his efforts to secure a place in the circle of masculine wits" (Houghton 668). In the eyes of other men, Horner is absolutely not a man, while the women he seduces view Horner as the perfect man. This concept indicates that libertinism is extremely limiting: either they prioritize their male friendships, or they prioritize their female friendships. This notion of libertine masculinity, and the rigid gender roles in Restoration society, makes it appear that they seem to be incapable of doing both. This is an inherent, very restraining problem of libertine masculinity. Horner gives the multiple women he seduces a sense of power and knowledge when they learn the truth about

his sexual state (though in reality, Horner ensures that he retains the actual power because these women are unable to expose him without losing their own honour). Lady Fidget views him as not only removing himself from the male homosocial circuit but sacrificing his masculinity "in favour of the pleasure of women" (Sedgwick 56). Lady Fidget asks him, "but, poor gentleman, could you be so generous, so truly a man of honor, as for the sakes of us women of honor, to cause yourself to be reported no man… and to suffer yourself the greatest shame that could fall upon a man" (Wycherley 28). The importance of cuckolding and maintaining a libertine lifestyle is so prominent that Horner, as a "satanic seducer" (Thompson, "Limits" 113), is willing to let other men believe that they are superior to him. Given that they believe Horner cannot perform sexually, and they can, they deem Horner unthreatening and allow him access to their wives. With Sir Jasper Fidget for example, Horner puts on a great performance of his hatred for women, referring to women as "monster[s]" until he finally makes Sir Jasper believe that Horner "will kiss no man's wife" (Wycherley 6). Horner is then granted access to Jasper's wife, Lady Fidget, as a companion. Despite Horner's private access to Lady Fidget, he allows Sir Jasper to believe he is superior to Horner. But the irony lies in the fact that in his mind, Horner is secretly superior, as he steals their masculine power through exchanging bodily fluids with their wives.

While Horner is portrayed as a better man and more respectful of women than other libertine figures in *The Rover* and *The City Heiress*, it is still arguable that Wycherley leads us to question and critique his character and libertine ideals. Horner is illustrated as a cold-hearted libertine who desires the highest form of power: the ability to control, manipulate, and outwit other people without them knowing. As Peggy Thompson suggests, Horner's "goal of sexual conquest is so debilitatingly narrow and compulsive that he becomes the pathetic monster he pretends to be" (Thompson, "Limits" 100). Horner's character, while entertaining for audiences, is actually a cautionary tale because in the end Horner will be left with nothing. Horner is content

with his current lifestyle; however, he has not considered how bleak his future will be, given that his looks will fade, his sexual capabilities will diminish over time, and his patterns of lies will inevitably catch up with him. By spending his life scheming for power over others, Horner will be left alone and utterly powerless, and thus Wycherley paints Horner as a libertine, but also as an extreme antisocial figure.

Chapter Two: Masculine Heroines and Female Libertines

This chapter will move away from the discussion of the male characters and focus on the female characters, further examining restrictive gender roles, but also the flexibility (and potential power) in masculine gender roles even for characters who are not men. Early modern England was an excessively patriarchal society that firmly believed in "the political and social dominance of men over women" (Eales 4). Wives were to "obey" their husbands, "show wifely submission," and remain "silent in front of their husbands and other men… [as] the talkativeness of women before men… [was considered] a fault, and a sign of self-conceitedness and indiscretion" (Eales 23, 24). But from the mid-seventeenth century, as Jacqueline Eales writes, women started to oppose the way they were bound by societal rules that restricted their freedom and argued that these restraints originated "from society's understanding or construction of what was appropriate male and female behaviour," and that "the inferiority of their sex was not innate and was perpetuated by a lack of education" (Eales 3-4, 23). In other words, they argued that these restrictions on women simply came from outdated and inaccurate societal ideals of gender, and that if women were given the same intellectual training, "women would be as rational and as capable of exercising political or intellectual judgement as men" (Eales 23).

This chapter will continue the discussion from chapter one of three Restoration comedies, William Wycherley's *The Country Wife* (1675), Aphra Behn's *The City Heiress* (1682) and *The Rover* (1677), but instead focus on the female characters. The Restoration theatre is particularly useful for exploring sexual agency, as comedies were often reflections of contemporary London society, but could also serve as propaganda or critique. In addition, theatre, with its captive audience, often challenged the audience's beliefs or encouraged them to take different subject positions. Behn's work is particularly important and worthy of study given that her plays allowed female characters to take on more powerful, typically masculine (even libertine) roles yet were

nevertheless celebrated by Restoration audiences. Critics such as Robert Markley write about Behn's attempts to undermine the ideals and values "that make female identity dependent on inviolate chastity and rigorous self-policing" (Markley, "Feminism" 142). In doing so, she critiques the "continual formulation of women as property, rape as property crime, and the denial of the female subject position and female sexuality in patriarchal culture" (Olivier 57). Behn's and Wycherley's demonstrations of female characters as trying to resist restrictions on women indicates that they are forward-thinking and envision a world where women are able to be independent and relatively free of the constraints placed on them by men. Both sections of this chapter will examine the ways in which these female characters challenge and resist societal expectations, gender norms, and the men in their lives who attempt to control them. More specifically, this chapter examines libertine sexuality in relation to the female characters, demonstrating how parts of this sexuality can be available for women and can even be used to gain agency in their own lives.

Heroines on Stage

This section will focus on Wycherley's *The Country Wife*, and Behn's *The City Heiress* and *The Rover*. *The City Heiress* features three main female characters: Lady Galliard, Diana, and Charlot, all of whom get married at the end of the play, but their choices are not driven by love. Each character's decision to marry — and choice of spouse — is motivated either by societal pressures or a desire for wealth, status, or honour: Lady Galliard is forced by legalities to marry a man she hates, and Diana tricks a wealthy man she does not love into marrying her. In a similar way, *The Rover* focuses on three female heroines (Florinda, Hellena, Angellica), and the ways that the central libertine figure (Willmore) gets in the way of each woman's desire for love and financial security; he tries to sexually assault Florinda and keep her from her love interest, while pledging his love to both Hellena and Angellica. *The Country Wife* features the characters

Lady Fidget, Mrs. Dainty Fidget, and Mrs. Squeamish, all of whom attempt to make cuckolds out of their husbands. All three plays shed light on women's lack of power in the Restoration period. Both playwrights emphasize this theme through these female characters, who are all, in some respect, controlled by the men in their lives. Despite this, the female characters clearly desire power and control over their lives. This section will examine the tension between what these female characters desire and what they ultimately get, demonstrating how their access to libertine sexuality can only go so far before it must be reined in and returned to the male characters.

While Wycherley and Behn certainly both portray women as resisting societal constraints and acting in masculine ways, their female characters have different methods of doing so. If we compare Lady Fidget (*The Country Wife*) and Lady Galliard (*The City Heiress*), for example, it is clear that Lady Galliard takes more risks (socially) than the former. Lady Fidget clearly has sexual desires, but she only agrees to have sexual relations with Horner when she is confident that it will remain a secret and thus her reputation will stay intact, saying, "you must have a great care of your conduct; for my acquaintance are so censorious (oh 'tis a wicked, censorius world, Mr. Horner!)" (Wycherley 55-6). Lady Fidget is comfortable with her sexual desires, and even condemns the society that forces her to hide them, but she still does. She says that it is a "shame for a noble person to neglect her own honour," but she decides that "a woman of honor loses no honor with a private person," and asks Horner to "promise to have a care of [her] dear honor" (Wycherley 24, 55). She only acts on her sexual desires when she is confident that it will remain a secret between herself and Horner, suggesting that women have the same sexual desires as men but must exercise far more caution than men when acting on them.

In contrast, Lady Galliard has sexual relations with Wilding even though she is not confident that this will be kept a secret, even mentioning her inability to be "discreet in Love"

(Behn, *Heiress* 7). Lady Fidget works within the confines of society, merely showing that women (like men) have sexual desires. But Lady Galliard's love and passion for Wilding is so strong that she goes outside of societal structures that demand "modesty of women" (Thompson, *Coyness* 6) and deliberately rebels against them to act on her feelings. Further, Lady Galliard does this knowing that she does not have a future with Wilding, noting that she would not marry him (Behn, *Heiress* 7). This shows how strong her feelings are for him, since she is willing to risk her reputation just to have some time with him. Both Lady Fidget and Lady Galliard have sexual desires and act on them, but only one of them faces consequences, indicating that the chauvinistic society in which they live does not often allow women free rein to explore these desires. This is even more true when we consider their statuses (Lady Fidget is married while Lady Galliard is a widow), which gives Lady Galliard much less room to explore, since she does not have the same safety net (a husband) to fall back on.

Diana in *The City Heiress* also resists social constraints and displays masculine qualities in her desire for wealth and openness with her sexuality. She serves as a symbol for "debunk[ing] romantic love" (Markley, "Feminism" 141), with her sole mission being to acquire wealth, given that her lack of wealth has relegated her to a lower social status. She is financially dependent upon Wilding, who supports her because she is his mistress. While women overall rarely had power in the Restoration period, women without financial means were especially powerless, and in most cases, unable to raise their status on their own. Diana's relationship with Wilding is established in Act Two, with her hoping for Wilding to marry a wealthy woman and share a portion of the wealth with her. While Diana's character demonstrates the extent to which women had to rely on men in the Restoration period, she also demonstrates the ways that women could use men for their own gain. Much like Lady Galliard, Diana is confrontational, sexually desirous, and strong-willed. She confronts Wilding about his unsuccessful pursuit of marriage

and says “I have been too often flatter’d with the hopes of your marrying a rich Wife, and then I was to have a Settlement” (Behn, *Heiress* 17). Diana only agrees to help Wilding win his money back when she realizes that she will also benefit financially.

The portrayal of Diana as having masculine ambitions is furthered in her trajectory: she marries only because she sees an opportunity to gain wealth. Wealth was extremely important for a woman living as a mistress in Restoration society; when a woman makes the choice to be a mistress and is open about it, it often makes it difficult for them to find an appropriate suitor for marriage. Alison Conway writes about how men viewed women in the Restoration period, “women who masquerade as something more than mere whores must be exposed, punished, and reduced to their proper place in the gutters of society” (Conway 6). Further, the job of a mistress is not necessarily a viable long-term career choice, given that their value is in their youth and beauty, which are transitory. In addition, sexually transmitted diseases (which were a realistic problem, given the sexual activity of a mistress or courtesan figure), could turn a mistress “into a disfiguring, public pronouncement of disgrace” (Conway 6). This makes it even more important for mistresses to secure their financial means early on in their lives. Knowing that the only way to improve her situation and secure financial independence is to marry a wealthy man, Diana decides to make this happen. Despite not being in love with Sir Timothy, Diana and Wilding trick him into believing she is the city heiress, dressing her “rich in Jewels” (Behn, *Heiress* 24). Their plan works, and Sir Timothy agrees he will “marry her out of hand” (Behn, *Heiress* 25). While Diana’s trickery can be viewed as morally questionable (and quite libertine-like, given that libertines questioned the plausibility of moral absolutes), she does not face any repercussions in the play. It is arguable that Behn is suggesting that women’s lack of power justifies doing what they need to do to survive or to improve their situation.

Diana challenges the "proper… feminine behaviour" (Markley, "Feminism" 141) that is expected of women in the Restoration period. While many women in Restoration comedies fret about their obligation to remain chaste, Diana challenges this norm by openly having sexual relations with Wilding, much like a libertine figure, whose sexual encounters are often not hidden from the public eye. While a mistress is not quite a courtesan, it is adjacent to sex work — there is not a strict payment schedule in the same way, but it is a similar set of activities. Unlike other women, whose acts of fornication (or premarital sex) would drastically lower their reputations and thus their options for marriage, Diana is able to secure marriage with a very wealthy man. However, by requiring Diana to trick him in order to accomplish marriage, Behn emphasizes the difficulties lower-class women had in gaining financial security.

Lady Galliard (in *The City Heiress*) also attempts to take some control over her life despite harsh societal constraints. She is referred to as a highly-desirable, "heavenly Girl" (Behn, *Heiress* 9), "fair… young… [and] witty" (Behn, *Heiress* 11) and she is a widow, which in terms of social status and property rights was "the most favourable female situation" (Crawford 153); but neither her money nor her status can buy her any power in the way that it would for a man, and thus she must be cautious about losing her honour and societal standing. With the understanding that she and Wilding, whom she loves, will never marry, she initially distances herself from him to avoid the potential consequences of being tempted. As Markley writes, through Lady Galliard, Behn depicts the struggle for Restoration women who "must try to decode and resist a rhetoric that they find attractive but that threatens them with the loss of virtue, reputation, and autonomy" (Markley, "Unstable" 149). Despite her beauty and the fortune she inherited from her late husband, Lady Galliard's choices and behaviours are informed by the social constraints of the time.

Through Lady Galliard, Behn demonstrates the limits to the access women can have to libertinism. Although Lady Galliard resists it at first, she rebels against society when she decides to follow her heart and have sexual relations with Wilding. Lady Galliard's actions are reflective of her own libertine ideologies, as libertines often prioritize their own pleasure and satisfaction despite any societal consequences. However, Lady Galliard's libertine desires clash with her understanding of the societal limits of women's agency; though she acts on these desires, she is still afraid of others finding out about their sexual relations, pleading to Wilding afterwards, "as you have honour, go and cherish mine" (Behn, *Heiress* 45). She takes power in going after what she wants (Wilding), but her unfortunate, eventual fate — of being coerced into marrying a man who tried to sexually assault her — suggests that she is ultimately condemned for these actions. This also makes Lady Galliard seem like she has a "responsibility for masculine aggression" against her (Thompson, *Coyness* 9). As Rachel Adcock writes, Lady Galliard ends the play "sadly gazing at Wilding while she gives her hand to Sir Charles" (Adcock 9). Lady Galliard's trajectory is a direct reflection of seventeenth-century society, where women are punished and shunned for their promiscuity (this, of course, has a status element to it as well — women of a higher social class are held to a different standard of expected behaviour, and are likely under scrutiny, which is why Lady Galliard's punishment for extramarital sex is harsher than Diana's). But the distinguishing factor is that men are not punished at all. In this scene, Behn clearly illustrates the double standard for men and women, as the men can have sex outside of marriage without losing their honour, whereas the women cannot. In Act Five, because Lady Galliard knows she must follow the law, she is reduced to trying to convince Sir Charles not to marry her by saying she will make married life miserable: "If thou darest marry me, I will so plague thee, be so reveng'd for all those tricks tho'st playd me" (Behn 57). Behn pushes against societal norms in her creation of radical, boundary-pushing female characters with libertine traits and

desires, and yet pulls back at the end and gives the power back to the male characters. The fact that her female characters can even slightly access libertine masculinity but cannot keep the power it gives them is Behn's argument that there is still a long way for society to go before women can safely diverge from societal pressures and indulge in libertine desires.

However, despite her outcome, Lady Galliard is still a very revolutionary character for engaging in sex without any desire for marriage. In her creation of characters like Lady Galliard, Behn identifies and plays against the stereotypes women face in Restoration society by suggesting alternative ways in which women can act. In doing so, Behn provides alternate gender dynamics than those established in Restoration comedy, giving female actors more powerful roles and allowing them to play characters that were typically viewed as masculine, such as libertine figures. While Lady Galliard feels trapped by society's expectations, she is a "sexually compromised wom[a]n [that] become[s] [a] hero" (Markley, "Feminism" 142) for having the courage to go after what she wanted — having sexual relations with Wilding — even though she knew she would face repercussions. The portrayal of Lady Galliard as a courageous female character is furthered when we consider performance elements, which brought in a lot more ambiguity and show us that we cannot solely rely on the text to understand how these plays were staged. The actresses in Restoration society occupied a unique social position; there was not a specific place where they fit into society, which often meant that the actress became a very sexualized profession and they were associated with sex workers, "perceived as prostitutes and mistresses" (Howe 129). In 1682, when this play was written, Lady Galliard was played by Elizabeth Barry (Howe 134), a beloved, well-known actress who became one of the top paid actresses of her generation. Barry was also openly a mistress, and yet she was worshipped by audiences in her roles as tragic, virtuous heroines, witty heroines, and powerful, openly lustful

women. The casting in *The City Heiress* — a beloved actress as a sexually desiring woman — is further proof of Behn's attempts to unsettle gender expectations.

Given her courageous, libertine-like actions, Lady Galliard can be compared to Harriet, in George Etherege's *The Man of Mode*. Both heroines are progressive figures in Restoration comedy in that the way they behave with male libertines is more reminiscent of male behaviour than traditional female behaviour. Much like Lady Galliard, Harriet takes control of her situation. While Harriet loves Dorimant, the play's libertine figure, she acts uninterested in him as a tactic to attract him. She matches his quick wit and is sarcastic in her responses. Harriet refuses to conform to society's expectations of how women should behave and says to Dorimant, "I am sorry my face does not please you as it is; but I shall not be complacent and change it" (Etherege 136). It is evident that Harriet wishes to establish an equal relationship between the two of them when she says, "when your love's grown strong enough to make you bear being laughed at, I'll give you leave to trouble me with it" (Etherege 136-137). Harriet's character works in the same way that Robert Markley argues Behn's characters do: to turn the "libertine heroes into self-parodying objectifications of masculine desirability" (Markley, "Feminism" 142). However, while they are a similar type of heroine, the way Behn and Etherege write these characters is different given that Behn's character is much more extreme. Harriet merely pushes against the expected behaviour of women, while Lady Galliard actually breaks these unspoken societal rules. Lady Galliard is a more radical figure given that Harriet stays within expectations in terms of sexual desire for women.

Similarly to Diana and Lady Galliard, Hellena (in *The Rover*) works to challenge the restrictions placed on her by men, despite her clear lack of power. We can see this lack of power in the way that she is commanded by her own brother to become a nun (Behn, *Rover* 161). Fortunately, Hellena is given another option when she meets Willmore and realizes she can

escape her brother's wishes if she marries him, but this only reinforces the idea that women are not only reliant on men but completely powerless without them. However, Hellena demonstrates her desires to work around this and tries out a "wide variety of discourses, including some which are characteristically masculine" (Bobker 35): she indulges in the carnival festivities against her brother's strict orders (Behn, *Rover* 164), cross-dresses to manipulate Willmore (Behn, *Rover* 215, 240), and even goes so far as to place her own restrictions on Willmore by saying he cannot sleep with anyone else (Behn, *Rover* 196). In this way, she secures a romantic relationship with Willmore "while preserving her all-important virginity" (Copeland, *Staging* 50) in her (non-sexual) seduction of Willmore and "the ways she manipulates him through her clever use of language" (Bobker 35).

One way in which Hellena "flirts with female libertinism" is through her cross-dressing escapades (Copeland, *Staging* 50). In her male disguise, she can move through society as a man would. To readers, her dress as a man certainly advances the portrayal of Hellena as a masculine character. However, it becomes complicated when we consider how this play transferred to the stage in the late seventeenth century. Breeches roles, given that the typical male dress was knee-length pants, showed off more of the female body than feminine dress did; as Thompson writes, "breeches roles regularly displayed the normally hidden contours of the actresses' bodies" (Thompson, *Coyness* 4). Therefore, cross-dressing on the stage for women ended up actually emphasizing the female body even more for stage viewers. While this appears to place Hellena in a more feminine light, it is arguable that Behn considered this in her writing of Hellena and made her cross-dress so many times for a particular reason: so that Hellena could further use her body to manipulate and attract men. In this way, Hellena demonstrates a strong understanding of sexual attraction which is arguably very masculine and libertine-like. Further, breeches roles have a gender ambiguous quality and could even possibly function to sexually confuse the male

characters. In addition, from a performance perspective, "the female body of the actress… could be used to manipulate audience reception" (Keating, "Envious" 40). Hellena is a gender ambiguous figure, given that she has a very recognizable feminine body, so she is not convincing the audience in her role in the same way that other characters are. This also means that because the audience is distracted by her feminine body, they are willing to overlook behaviour that, for women, would be considered unconventional and unacceptable in society (like her constant manipulation of Willmore). As Elin Diamond suggests, the Restoration actress was "a spectacle onto herself, a painted representation to lure the male spectator" (Thompson, *Coyness* 4), but Behn uses this, and the "highly sexualized context" (Thompson, *Coyness* 4), to push ideas of female agency onto audiences that would otherwise be met with scorn. It is also notable that in addition to playing Lady Galliard, Elizabeth Barry also acted in the role of Hellena (Howe 133). A well-known mistress of the Earl of Rochester, Barry was clearly not someone who conformed to Restoration sexual expectations. This, however, did not stop audiences from loving her, even in socially unacceptable roles. Behn uses the audience's love for Barry to make sympathetic portrayals of these roles whose deviations from the gender norms could have otherwise made them criticized by audiences.

Another way in which Hellena is given a masculine, libertine-like role is in her trajectory. At the end of the play, Hellena removes her brother's control over her life — "usurp[ing] the authority of her brother (who stands in as patriarch for her absent father)" (Bobker 35) — and he agrees to let her marry instead of being a nun. She even convinces Willmore (the libertine womanizer) to marry her, despite his hesitations. However, her "resourcefulness and her adventures in breeches" (Copeland, *Staging* 53) are what allow her to gain a sense of control; disguises as convincing as hers would likely be expensive, and Willmore mostly only agreed to marriage because of her wealth. This implies that the main reason Hellena is able to defy social

and gender boundaries is because of this wealth, and characters such as Angellica (whose only way of providing for herself is by selling her body), prove this point.

In her texts, Behn suggests that by patriarchal standards, higher-class women possess slightly more power than lower-class women, because they are worth more to the powerful men in society. In *The City Heiress*, while Sir Charles tries to force himself on Lady Galliard, his true desire is not to assault her but to marry her, which implies that he views her as more valuable, rather than a mere sexual object. But as shown through Florinda's character (*The Rover*) who is also a higher-class woman, this power was limited. Restoration society was such that a woman's mere presence is enough reason for a man to believe he can have sexual relations with her — even that "women are to blame for remaining in men's presence" (Thompson, *Coyness* 10). This also brings to light the lack of power women had even to consent. Overall, within Restoration society (an extreme patriarchal society), most women were disempowered, but women in upper classes with more financial power had a slightly greater degree of agency. In her plays, Behn draws out this idea, by portraying these small ways that women can gain more agency, given the patriarchal social structure they are in. Since Florinda (*The Rover*) is a "beautiful and wealthy upper-class virgin, [this]... make[s] her, in this hierarchical masculine order, the most highly prized of women" (Pacheco 325). When Blunt and Frederick threaten to rape Florinda, to defend herself she pulls out a diamond ring she received from Belvile, indicating that wealthy upper-class women "merit better treatment" (Behn, *Rover* 228). This phrase "reveals the contradictions and ambivalence of a woman who fights against repression that she has nonetheless internalized" (Thompson, *Coyness* 14). Florinda's comment suggests that while she feels confident enough to fight back against the threat of sexual assault, both her overall worth and her self-esteem derive entirely "from her status as a lady [such that] she is able to measure her human value only by patriarchal standards" (Pacheco 325). This idea is further proven through Blunt and Frederick's

abrupt decision to reason with her and say they will confirm with Belvile before doing anything (Behn, *Rover* 228), suggesting that only upper-class women deserve to be heard or reckoned with — a chivalric attitude to rape "exists only in relation to women whose class and sexuality make them valuable patriarchal commodities" (Pacheco 327). Still, Blunt and Frederick do not abandon their plan completely, demonstrating that their respect for upper-class women (and their value) only goes so far.

In both of Behn's plays, the female characters are so deprived of power that they jump at any chance to exert some control over their lives. Just as Diana in *The City Heiress* decides to take some control over her impoverished circumstances and lack of independence by tricking a wealthy man into marrying her, the only way Angellica (*The Rover*) is able to gain control is through men's sexual desires, by putting up her picture and raising her prices (Behn, *Rover* 176). As Anita Pacheco suggests, this is the "attempt of a woman excluded from the marital marketplace to turn her beauty into an alternative form of power" (Pacheco 323). This is made more impactful by the speculation that Angellica was played by Elizabeth Barry at some point (she changed roles in later stagings of the play). It *is* confirmed, however, that Barry played the courtesan role in the second part of *The Rover* — La Nuche (Howe 133). As Elizabeth Howe writes, "the actress's talent and popularity did cause an interesting shift in the centre of interest in some comedies away from the traditional heroine onto the suffering mistress" (Howe 130). Barry, having pioneered the role of the sympathetic prostitute (Howe 129), encourages positive audience reception in the roles of Angellica and La Nuche, despite the social attitudes in the time period.

In *The Rover*, Angellica manages to use the limited resources she has to ensure her financial independence. Once Don Antonio insists that he will pay for her price and Pedro is blocked by him, Pedro says, "and all my hopes defeated, of the possession of Angellica" (Behn,

Rover 179); here, Behn shows that Pedro views women as objects, but she also shows him failing to have Angellica, which gives her power. She is "in control of her own self-promotion" in this instant (Bobker 33). Angellica's "momentary… libertinism" (Copeland, "Once" 20) is indicated here, given that an aspect of libertinism is a desire — or a craving, as Webster suggests — for "importance and power" over others (Webster 11). This is furthered in her words to Bravo, "their wonder feeds my vanity, and he that wishes but to buy gives me more pride" (Behn, *Rover* 178), implying that she takes power in attracting men.

But the power and control Diana and Angellica derive from manipulating men is only temporary. Diana is controlled by Sir Timothy as she is now his wife and consequently, in those times, as a result of the law of coverture, considered to be his subordinate. It was not merely that women in the Restoration period were "intimately tied to the economic and social fate of [their] husband[s]" (Taetzsch 31), but as Patricia Crawford writes, once a woman marries, she "became dependent, under the coverture of her husband… [they] became one person, and that person was the husband" (Crawford 153). She writes that during marriage, "a woman's legal existence was suspended," and she was not even able to "sue in her own name" (Crawford 153). In addition, in order for Diana to secure her social status and fortune as a single woman, she is forced to disguise her true self, suggesting that while she was able to take some control over her future in terms of marital choice, she sacrifices a part of herself by marrying a man she does not love. As for Angellica, she effectively gives Willmore control of her when she falls in love with him. He even convinces her to give some of her money *to* him, so even though she is a courtesan, she ends up paying him after they sleep together.

Up to this point, Angellica has been able to dissociate sex from self-worth. This is actually revolutionary for this time period given its strong emphasis on female virtue, and women's internalized misogynistic beliefs that their own worth is decided by their sexuality and

virtue, such that the less virtuous one is, the less worth they have as a person. For Angellica, as Pacheco suggests, she has succeeded in separating that belief so that she can be sexually promiscuous and still feel valuable. Willmore convinces her that he loves her, however, and by believing this, Angellica gives him the power to disappoint her. Further, she is talked into dropping her fee for Willmore, so she gives up her only method for controlling men — sex (and setting her own price). As Pacheco suggests, romance, for Angellica, "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" (Pacheco 340). In other words, Willmore allows Angellica to fantasize about an actual romantic relationship instead of a purely physical one — one in which she can be both sexually desirous and proud of it, and even view sex "as the embrace of pleasure… [instead of] the sacrifice of pleasure to business" (Rosenthal, *Infamous* 2). As Pacheco suggests, Angellica views giving up her power to Willmore as gaining power in the form of true love. But this potential power is not realized in the play; as Anne Russell writes, "love, like a disease, weakens Angellica": once she "succumbs to Willmore's argument that love ought to be given rather than sold, she gives up her independence and becomes vulnerable both emotionally and economically" (Russell 26). Russell notes that Angellica has a place in society as a prostitute "as long as she treats herself as a commodity but [she] is marginalized if she succumbs to romantic love" (Russell 22). Moretta's words to Angellica further this portrayal of Angellica as naive: "what could you less expect from such a swaggerer?" (Behn, *Rover* 193). Angellica sees Willmore courting Hellena almost immediately after she sleeps with him, and her "fragile constructed identity collapses… leaving behind a sense of utter worthlessness" (Pacheco 340); she says later, angrily, "he talked, and I believed" (Behn, *Rover* 239). While the power Diana and Angellica gain is temporary, the fact that they can even gain this power is radical for their time. Authors such as Behn are interested

specifically in finding ways to access an agency that is more associated with masculinity during this time.

Women in the Restoration period always had to consider financial security in their marriage choices, given that there were not as many options for women to support themselves. Women were often forced, as Pat Gill writes, to sacrifice "love for financial security" (Gill 2). Lady Galliard's view on marriage (that she would not marry Wilding, given his lack of wealth) is reflective of her time. It is also a social commentary about what happens when women lack the freedom to marry whomever they choose; women in this time were therefore forced to have more masculine ambitions in regards to finance and place less importance on love. While Lady Galliard loves Wilding, she says to him: "to save my life, I wou'd not marry thee" (Behn, *Heiress* 7). Behn portrays Lady Galliard as a realist who understands that societal expectations of honour and social standing limit women's choices and their ability to marry for love.

Through her female characters, Behn gives us a glimpse into seventeenth-century England, where women struggled to find financial security. The control of money and economic independence was a very masculine trait, which is why obtaining this security was so important to characters like Angellica, Diana, Hellena, and Lady Galliard. Money was always associated with men, even for a wealthy woman like Hellena, given that when she marries, all of her money will go to her husband. John Lance Bacon addresses women's lack of power during the early modern period in England, where "the wi[ves] w[ere] both personally and legally subject to [their] husband. Any property the wife brought to the marriage became his" (Bacon 430). Lady Galliard recognizes this, and, as a result, desires privilege and status — notably similar desires to a libertine figure. Lady Galliard's libertine-like desires for financial security (and views on marriage) are yet another way that she is portrayed as a more masculine character: despite her passionate, feminine nature, she does not view marriage as an emotional expression of love.

Behn's decision to create female characters who are masculine and libertine-like suggests that she wanted to emphasize that these women understood and actively tried to work against the power imbalance at the time.

Honour, Sexual Desire, and Romantic Connection in Behn's and Wycherley's Comedies

In *The City Heiress*, while each woman's definition of honour differs, both are forced to put their idea of honour before their desires. For Lady Galliard, "love is clearly rejected in favor of respectability" (Wheatley 66). Lady Galliard follows her heart and instantly regrets it when she realizes the damage it will do to her reputation. When Sir Charles tricks her into agreeing to marry him, she defines being honourable by marrying him to save her reputation and legal status, even though she finds him repulsive. Diana, though not feeling as much pressure as Lady Galliard to hide her sexual feelings, defines her honour as maintaining her social status. She is unusual in that she willingly agrees to be Wilding's mistress, even though she knows that they will never marry; she is less worried about her sexual endeavors and primarily focused on how she appears to others in terms of her social status.

In both *The Rover* and *The City Heiress*, Behn creates a world where women are not shamed for having sexual desires. She hardly even acknowledges it, which makes it seem more normalized in their society. In the same way that Diana does not hide her sexual affair with Wilding, Angellica challenges the typical feminine ideals at the time by openly being a courtesan, and neither are painted in a negative light. It is true that Angellica is a higher-class courtesan, which raises her above others and makes her more valuable than other types of sex workers, but she is still viewed in a similar light to the other women in the play, more valued than even Florinda (given that she was almost subjected to a group rape). Nancy Copeland thus suggests that "the lack of closure in the play's treatment of [Angellica], call[s] into question the value of female chastity and challenge[s] her consignment to the status of whore" (Copeland,

"Once" 20). The portrayal of Angellica is, as Copeland suggests, ambiguous in the way that she is a courtesan, yet Behn blurs "the line[s] between her and the play's chaste women" (Copeland, *Staging* 51) in a way that does not villainize her. There is a strong similarity between Angellica's and Hellena's respective relationships with Willmore, and yet as Copeland suggests, the former's has been read as more interesting than Hellena's (Copeland, *Staging* 58).

The female characters in *The Country Wife* also are not shamed for having sexual desires, but Wycherley still demonstrates the Restoration prioritization of and obsession with constancy and proper sexuality (in a heteronormative sense). Wycherley cleverly uses china as a euphemism for sex: when Sir Jasper walks in on Lady Fidget and Horner embracing, he does not believe their excuse that she was just tickling him and asks, "is this your buying china? I thought you had been at the china house" (Wycherley 56). Sir Jasper questions her actions, while also hoping for the confirmation that she is really only buying china and is not doing anything that would compromise herself. China in this play is used as a sexually ambiguous metaphor, placing china and sexual innocence together. Lady Fidget later emerges with a piece of china in her hand stating that she had been "toiling and moiling for the prettiest piece of china" (Wycherley 59); this china is representative (for her husband) of her delicate sexual innocence, convincing him that she had not been compromised. Lady Fidget's words intrigue Mrs. Squeamish, who, according to Horner, to ease Lady Fidget's jealousy, has "an innocent, literal understanding" (Wycherley 59) of Horner and Lady Fidget's relationship. The use of the word "innocent" further paints china pieces as a symbol of innocence. For those not aware of the secret, china represents the innocence of Horner and Lady Fidget. But for those who are aware of Horner's secret, china symbolizes sex. This is furthered in the footnote, which suggests that this china is in the shape of a roll wagon (Wycherley 59) — a phallic symbol, intended for the audience's understanding. Mrs. Squeamish's words in response demonstrate an irony of meaning: "I'll have

some china too. Good Mr. Horner, don't think to give other people china, and me none; come in with me too" (Wycherley 59). Her words allow those who know Horner's secret, and the other meaning of china, to understand that she is also sleeping with him, without revealing the secret to Sir Jasper.

However, Behn's and Wycherley's approaches to their creation of female characters are vastly different: Wycherley focuses purely on lust, while Behn focuses on romantic connections. Wycherley's characters are, as Pat Gill suggests, created from "a clearly gender-determined dramatic convention" (Gill 6). The portrayal of women in *The Country Wife* is based solely on Restoration ideals about women being so sexual that they must be 'tamed' by their husbands (or another willing party). Most of the female characters will sleep with almost anyone, as long as their reputation is untarnished. As Gill writes, "[Lady Fidget] and her virtuous gang manipulate terms to their own social advantage and sexual pleasure" (Gill 6). Lady Fidget for example, believes that "adultery with a private citizen is not a crime" — explaining in the text, "Tis not an injury to a husband till it be an injury to our honours" (Gill 6). As long as her "honour" stays intact, she feels comfortable acting on her sexual desires. Lady Fidget is more fortunate than the other women in Behn's plays because she is sheltered by her marriage and by the fact that Horner will not tell anyone about their sexual endeavours. However, despite the fact that she does not love Horner, she clearly demonstrates a possessive nature when she fears that Mrs. Squeamish is also sleeping with Horner (Wycherley 59), arguing that Horner "has no more [china] left" and even pushing further, "what, d'ye think if he had had any left I would not have had it too?" (Wycherley 59).

As Gill writes, in Wycherley's play, "the sexual bravado and amorous guile of rake-heroes become sexual rapacious-ness and hypocrisy in women" (Gill 6). When Lady Fidget admits that Horner is her "false rogue" (Wycheley 77), revealing the truth to Mrs. Dainty Fidget

and Mrs. Squeamish that they have all been sleeping with Horner, they are outraged. Mrs. Squeamish says to Horner, “did you not tell me, ’twas for my sake only you reported yourself no man?” while Mrs. Dainty Fidget says to Horner, “oh, wretch! Did you not swear to me, ’twas for my love and honour you passed for that thing you do?” (Wycherley 77). Lady Fidget is the first to speak afterwards, realizing that “there’s no remedy” to their situation except to “have a care of [their] honour” (Wycherley 78). She says that their honour “shines yet to the world unsuspected, though it be counterfeit” (Wycherley 78). They all come to the conclusion that they have to keep each other’s secrets if they want to continue with their sexual behaviour.

While the women in *The Country Wife* (Lady Fidget, Mrs. Dainty Fidget, Mrs. Squeamish) are not happy that they are all sleeping with Horner, they are practical about their situation, which is why Margery is such a threat to their system. Margery does not have the same practicality and knowledge of society as the other women do, so when she sleeps with Horner, she decides that Horner will “be [her] husband now” (Wycherley 79), which threatens to expose their secret. Even when Horner says she must leave “to secure [his] love, and [her] reputation with [her] husband,” she merely responds “what care I? D’ye think to frighten me with that?” (Wycherley 79). Margery does not know the effect that her words can have on the social structures, even stating in front of a whole crowd, despite the three women and Horner’s best efforts to keep her from revealing the truth: “I do love Mr. Horner with all my soul, and nobody shall say me nay” (Wycherley 82). Lady Fidget angrily says to Horner, “this you get, and we too, by trusting your secret to a fool” (Wycherley 83). After almost revealing their secrets multiple times, Margery is escorted back to the country with her husband, while the other women are free to continue their sexual escapades with Horner.

In contrast, Behn’s plays are about characters exploring romantic connections, rather than sexual ones. It is true that her female characters also have sexual desires, but they are much more

humanized, instead of Wycherley's characters, whom he makes look like one-dimensional sex addicts. Wycherley's play reinforces Restoration beliefs about women's sexuality of the time ("push[ing] the envelope on acceptable sexual representation in witty exchanges and outrageous antics") while Behn pushes against these beliefs and adds more depth to her female characters (Rosenthal, *Ways* 13). The genders of the two authors likely play into this key difference. While Behn attempts to change social structures, Wycherley merely portrays the desires and debauchery of women in private, suggesting that this is the true identity of women, but making sure that they act this way within social structures (i.e. in private, so that they are not found out). Wycherley suggests that the ideal situation for women is to get what they want and indulge in libertine desires within these structures and keep their reputations, while Behn attempts to show the audience that women can work around these structures and should not be required to hide their true natures (or feel ashamed by them). Both playwrights indicate that libertinism for women has potential, but it is still limited, as it cannot allow them to fully escape these structures.

It is clear, after examination of these three Restoration plays, that no amount of money, beauty, or status allows the women in the Restoration period to have complete control over their own lives. While Behn and Wycherley create situations where their female characters are able to push boundaries and successfully gain some sense of control, the women ultimately fail to keep this power because 1) they cannot escape the restrictions placed on them by men and 2) the men in their lives manage to usurp this power. Thus, these playwrights are radical in their creation of female characters who actively fight against these restrictions, manipulate men, and do anything they can to improve their situations. However, Angellica ends up abandoned by the man she loves; Florinda is stuck in a social circle of men who tried to sexually assault her (even forgiving them at the end of the play); Lady Galliard and Diana end up in loveless marriages; Hellena's

marriage strips her of her wealth; and all depicted marriages, past and present — including Lady Fidget and Margery — force the women into subservient roles. Therefore, the fact that none of these women end up being truly happy, powerful, or free, is further commentary on the harsh effects Restoration values and norms have on women.

Chapter Three: Masculinity and Effeminacy in Restoration Prose

This chapter will focus on a Restoration prose work, Sébastien Brémond's *Hattige; or, The Amours of the King of Tamaran* (1676, English translation 1680). While chapter one focused on libertine masculinity, this chapter will be focused on other types of masculinity that were available to men in the Restoration period. In addition, this chapter will analyze the ways in which women can also explore this masculinity, in spite of their own femininity.

While chapter two explored the restrictions of gender, identifying female characters on the Restoration stage who attempt to gain power by challenging these restrictions (but never entirely succeed), chapter three explores the fluidity of gender even within these restrictions, noting a female character who successfully casts herself in a masculine (even libertine) role. The character Hattige in Brémond's text is given more power than the King she is a mistress to; not only is she given some sense of agency, but she is given qualities that are more masculine than feminine, and she is still seen as highly desirable.

While chapter one focused on the strict masculine categories of male typecasts in Restoration theatre (libertine, violent not-libertine, jealous husband, cuckold), this chapter will explore these labels that seem fixed but can shift depending on circumstance. As stated in my introduction, it is not just women who attempt to avoid being categorized and labelled as whores, but men also had difficulty avoiding labels. Though a man may be seen as a libertine figure or align with the values of one, he is not always safe in this role. As this chapter explores, even the men with the highest form of power can lose their high status and be seen as effeminate by society. In his text, Brémond highlights male characters in positions of power who act more feminine and have less actual power than their female counterparts. In addition, as this chapter will examine, in a relationship between a man and a woman, there is only room for one masculine role and one feminine role. However, this can shift, and these roles are not aligned

with the biological sex of the characters. This chapter will examine the effect of Hattige's ability to occupy both gender roles with the men around her. Ultimately, this chapter argues that despite the rigidity of Restoration societal beliefs, gender and masculinity can be fluctuating, not just for men, but for women assuming masculine roles. Also, libertinism and effeminacy, as opposite as they may seem, can often be interchangeable, even for the most intense libertine figures.

Hattige: Heroine or Female Villain?

This section will examine the female protagonist (or antagonist, as a compulsive manipulator) in Brémond's text *Hattige; or, The Amours of the King of Tamaran*. In this text, there is a frame narrative and an inset tale (the secret history) narrated by a character in the frame narrative. The secret history text, *Hattige,* is about the character Hattige, and her scandalous adventures of being a mistress to the King of Tamaran. Infatuated with Hattige, the King allows himself to be continuously manipulated by her, even blindly ignoring the fact that she sleeps with another man, Rajep, despite her commitment to him. Even after the King finally comes to his senses and replaces Hattige with a new mistress, she is still not punished and is even saved by another man (the Knight of Malta), who allows her to sail away onto her next adventure.

It is also important to note that *Hattige* is a secret history, which means it is grounded in historical events. Brémond's characters are based on actual people: the King of Tamaran is based on Charles II, Hattige is based on his mistress, Barbara Palmer, Duchess of Cleveland, and Roukia, the new mistress, is likely inspired by Nell Gwyn (Keating, "Paratexts" 457). Hattige, both with her masculine qualities and her status as a mistress to the King, claims for herself a lot of power that often was not available to women in the Restoration period. However, as this secret history emphasizes, this typical lack of power was not the case for all women. Mistresses to the King (Charles II) such as Nell Gwyn (and the Duchess of Cleveland upon whom Hattige is

based) changed these expectations, and in fact some critics consider "Nell Gwyn a touchstone for Restoration and eighteenth-century reflections on women's relation to authority" (Conway 3). These mistresses were able to exercise "authority within… public spaces… and, as the parliamentary system developed, they were able to exploit new systems of patronage" (Conway 11).

Hattige reflects Restoration society, where royal mistresses were also given power in the form of sexual freedom. Alison Conway references Charles Saumarez Smith's infamous question: "Should mistresses be dismissed as whores or were they simply expressing an era of greater sexual freedom?" (Conway 11). Hattige has much more sexual freedom than the women in the plays. As stated in chapter two, most women in the Restoration period had very little sexual agency: there was a strict moral code where chastity is prized above everything, but only for women. If they were to engage in sexual relations before marriage, their honour and reputation would be in jeopardy. But in *Hattige*, there is less emphasis placed on these dangers, and there is generally not much talk about whether or not women should be acting on their sexual desires, just merely that Hattige is not allowed to disrespect the King. In this way, Hattige has much more power than characters such as Lady Galliard, who does not have the same sexual freedom.

This section will analyze how the character Hattige is revolutionary: her behaviour would be condemned in Restoration society (in that her actions would have severe, ostracizing consequences), and yet she is never truly punished for her actions. While Diana, Lady Galliard, Lady Fidget, Hellena, and Angellica all push boundaries in their own ways and are very assertive, none of them manipulate the male characters and are purely evil in the same way as Hattige, as their manipulation stems solely from a desire to better their own circumstances. This is even more radical given that there are no performance aspects in *Hattige* to give it more layers

— or popular female actresses like Elizabeth Barry — to persuade the audience to overlook her unconventional, libertine-like actions. Hattige, is, however, based on Barbara Palmer, who had a very public reputation as Charles II's mistress. Mistresses were often disliked by their society for, despite their "lowly" status, being able to move past the notion of social classes and receive both power and influence by the King. Hattige's character serves as a reminder to Restoration society of women beginning to break societal barriers, which makes *Hattige* an even more radical prose text. Ultimately, this chapter will identify how Hattige engages more fully in libertinism than the female characters on stage. Arguably, in comparison to Behn's *The Rover* and *The City Heiress*, *Hattige* is a more libertine text, given that it focuses purely on lust and illicit desire, in a similar way to Wycherley's *The Country Wife*.

While the female characters on the stage act masculine in certain ways, this masculinity is limited (mostly) to their behaviour, rather than their appearances or personalities. Hattige, however, manages to have masculine qualities without losing her femininity. She is established as having masculine qualities, as she is called "ambitious" (Brémond 25), "charm[ing]" (Brémond 23), and "proud" (Brémond 41). Further, the word choice often used to describe her is not beautiful or pretty but "handsome" (Brémond 41). This particular word — which typically connotes an attractive male — is used not only by the narrator but by several characters in the story, which suggests that they all view her beauty as more of a gendered masculine energy than an overly feminine energy. While vocabulary has shifted since then, and women were called handsome more than they are today, this word still points to a particular type of beauty, which is less dainty and conventional. But in spite of these masculine qualities, she is consistently praised for her "beauty" (Brémond 20) and charm.

In a similar way to many of the female characters in the plays in the previous chapter, Hattige desires a form of power (agency) that is typically only available to men, specifically

libertine men. However, it is notable that while the characters in the plays are often punished for this, Hattige is not. In fact, Brémond allows Hattige to challenge social conventions and clearly demonstrate masculine ambitions without severe punishment. For example, Hattige leaves her previous marriage to be the King's mistress. Once she arrives, the King immediately falls in love with her, and Hattige "hath not lost the advantage of it" (Brémond 21). This quotation could suggest that Hattige not only recognizes her beauty but strategically uses it to manipulate other people, like the King. This is a very libertine-like quality, as she manipulates those she feels are below her. She is described as "false and ingrateful" (Brémond 77). Hattige, "by whom all was granted" (Brémond 21) appears to intimidate those around her, as "not a person [would dare] to contradict her in any thing" (Brémond 24). The King falls so "desperately in love with her" (Brémond 22) that he is described as taking his own "Crown from his head to put it on Hattige's" (Brémond 22).

In *Hattige*, Brémond explicitly references Charles II's powerful mistresses, namely Barbara Palmer, Duchess of Cleveland. Mistresses like Cleveland had quite a bit more power than other women did, as they were given money, position, and power. They gained this power by being publicly connected with the King, but also because of Charles II's affection for them; as Conway indicates, "Charles II introduced new elements into a long-standing conversation on the subject of sexual corruption and politics" (Conway 10). In other words, he let them be powerful, and this affection gave them room to manipulate him, as we can see in the case of *Hattige*.

Just like the woman Hattige is based on, Barbara Palmer, the character is given quite a lot of power for a woman living in the Restoration period. As a mistress to the King, both women are able to find access to (and even keep) a form of power only available to libertine men. Hattige leaves her marriage to be a mistress to the King, likely because she desires money, power, and social status. This is proven in Razy's words: "[Hattige] was married to a person of

quality, who had a competent Estate, sufficient to make her happy had not her ambition preferr'd the Title of Mistress to a King" (Brémond 19-20). But also, by leaving her husband, she avoids the strict, narrow confines married women faced in the Restoration period. Further, Hattige exercises power in court, is able to sleep with another man aside from the King and uses her beauty and charm to manipulate men and get what she wants. Hattige is described as someone who "never stinted herself in any privilege she had" (Brémond 24). Even at the end of the text, when the Knight of Malta hears her story and is displeased by Hattige's behaviour, he still decides to help her. This likely would not have been the case without her beauty and charm, which is proven right from the beginning when the Knight finds out Gourdan is hiding her; his nature did not allow him not to "pity the poor Slave, especially being handsom, and no ordinary person" (Brémond 12). The words "especially" and "no ordinary person" indicate that her beauty raises her above all other women, and that she is more worthy as a result. The term "no ordinary person" also is indicative of a high, established status in society, which is an important element of libertine sexuality: rakes often have "elite social status" (Mackie 35). Ultimately, unlike the other female characters in the plays who are contained in some way, Hattige is not, and in fact she is given an escape to sail away, presumably to her next adventure.

Hattige exploits gender fluidity in order to achieve her own ends, by shifting her behaviour depending on the relationship. With the King, Hattige exhibits more typically masculine behaviours, in the way she manipulates him, ridicules him, and makes him look worse in the eyes of other men. With Rajep, however, who is very traditionally masculine, she adopts a more feminine persona and is illustrated as "melancholy and pensive" (Brémond 27), so "love-sick" (Brémond 28) that as her "passion grew… it altered her quite" (Brémond 28), and she could "neither eat, nor sleep… but wept and sigh'd" (Brémond 28-30). As Judith Butler suggests, "gender is in no way a stable identity" (Butler, "Performative" 519); for Hattige, while

she often acts masculine with the King, on occasion, she abandons these qualities and acts feminine. Butler suggests that gender is “instituted through the stylization of the body” and is dependent on “bodily gestures [and] movements” (Butler, “Performative” 519). Butler further elaborates that to be a woman, one must conform to a “historical idea of ‘woman’” (Butler, “Performative” 522). When Hattige tries to convince the King that she is innocent and has not slept with Rajep, she begins acting more feminine, according to dominant cultural stereotypes of gender. But this is a key difference of intention — when she acts feminine with the King, she is trying to manipulate him. She uses her feminine wiles to manipulate him and make him feel more masculine and therefore more powerful. As Butler suggests, to be a woman is to “materialize oneself in obedience” (Butler, “Performative” 522), which is what Hattige does to manipulate the King.

Ultimately, Hattige embodies more of the dominant masculine stereotypes in this time period than Gourdan, Rajep, or the King: Hattige is in control of her situation with Rajep and manipulates the King. The King, who realistically should be considered the most masculine given his high status is, at times, much less masculine than his mistress, who had little to no power of her own, and yet managed to usurp power from the King. Given that Hattige successfully manipulates others, has sex with multiple people, leaves her lovers satisfied, escapes marriage and slavery, and is even freed by the Knight, she is an example of libertinism and ideal masculinity. Brémond’s writing is radical for this time and gives readers a better understanding of the impact powerful women can have on society, given that he depicts a mere mistress wielding power over everyone around her, including the King.

What Makes a [Restoration] Man?

As established in the previous section, Hattige's masculine yet feminine nature is very radical for its time, as is her ability to embody libertine power and masculinity. However, we have yet to consider how exactly (and to what extent) this ability can affect how others around her are perceived, and even how she can alter men's masculinity. This section will examine this notion in relation to the male characters in Brémond's secret history, while further exploring the portrayal of masculinity, effeminacy, and libertinism for these characters. As established in this chapter thus far, in his text, Brémond explores traditional Restoration gender roles and manipulates them in his creation of characters, even casting characters in opposite gender roles. In order to better understand how Brémond does that, it is imperative to understand how masculinity functioned in the Restoration era.

Masculinity in this time period was complex, fluctuating, difficult to define, and consistently dependent on "particular social, economic, political and cultural conditions" (Lynn 2). Thus constructions of masculinity were tied to "revised notions of sexual difference and, among the elite and aspiring elite, to codes of politeness and sociability" (Mackie 2-3). There were several forms of masculinity, though most notably, for my thesis, the libertine rake and men labelled as effeminate. Libertine figures were often seen as lustful men who lack both morality and the ability to restrain themselves sexually, while effeminate men were given this title either because they "resembled women, or… [overly] desired women" (Cohen 7). There was no clear-cut definition of what constituted effeminacy during the late seventeenth century, and given this societal uncertainty, it was context-dependent in a lot of ways.

This section explores this notion in relation to the characters in Brémond's prose text, to better understand the function and importance of masculinity in Restoration England. In comparison to the stage, where the actors can play male characters in a way that gives more stability to the gender roles, a prose text can be very abstract, which is what makes room for

more complications and leaves a lot up to interpretation for the reader (especially for the secret history genre). This section will focus on the presentation of masculinity and gender roles in the male characters in this secret history.

As stated in the introduction to this section, there is a strong overlap between masculinities, specifically libertines and effeminate men. Given this fluidity, there were tensions between the different types of masculinity. Michele Cohen writes that "In the eighteenth century, dictionaries [say] effeminacy meant 'admission of the qualities of a woman, softness, unmanly delicacy,' but also '[an] addict[ion] to women'" (Cohen 7). This last part — an addiction to women — complicates our understanding of effeminacy and libertinism. Thus effeminacy, as Cohen writes, is a "concept signifying problematic gender boundaries for men" (Cohen 7). This section will focus on the demonstrations of different modes of masculinity in *Hattige*, to emphasize the fluidity and instability of gender during this time period. As is reflected in Cohen's words, the presence of women can not only impact the behaviour of men, but also shift how they are categorized in terms of masculinity. This section will also examine the effect of Hattige's ability to impose gender roles on the men around her.

As is evidenced in Cohen's words, there is a fine line between effeminacy and libertinism. The King of Tamaran, in *Hattige*, at first glance, could be seen as a masculine, appealing libertine figure. He has money, status, and several mistresses; he is described as "one of the most gallant Princes the World ever had" (Brémond 19), and Hattige left her marriage to be his mistress. But since libertine sexuality is a type of masculinity based on exercising power and control over other people, the King does not match this. His feminine behaviour, jealousy, and infatuation with Hattige, in addition to his essentially being cuckolded by another man (though she is his mistress, not wife), are why we view him as effeminate, despite his high status. Also, since effeminate men in the Restoration period were seen as powerless, it is surprising that

Brémond portrays a king — a man of agency and power — as effeminate. This was intentional, however, as it is later narrated that “Kings in love are Men, and not Gods” (Brémond 43). Like Aphra Behn, as Robert Markley writes, who actively challenges typical constructions of gender, Brémond allows libertines and men in power to have “limited success in manipulating women” (Markley, “Feminism” 142); in fact, it is a female character (Hattige) who manipulates the King.

In William Wycherley’s play *The Country Wife*, the characters talk about how being labeled as an effeminate man was “the greatest shame that could fall upon a man” (Wycherley 28). In *Hattige*, once Hattige becomes the King’s mistress, she discovers that she is not “capable of any love for him” (Brémond 29). This is because of his unmasculine tendencies. In the Restoration period, an effeminate man was often seen as inferior to other men and, oftentimes, were seen as unappealing and sexually incompetent. Instead of being seen as a typical King (strong, powerful, and influential), he is sensitive and easily manipulated (Brémond 62). He has little control in his relationship with Hattige as a result, and she could persuade him with her tears that she could “command… thence in what quantity she pleas’d” (Brémond 42). An effeminate man, as Eve Sedgwick says, is often described as “sacrificing [their] masculinity in favour of the pleasure of women” (Sedgwick 56), and the King tries so hard to make Hattige happy that he loses his masculinity in her. Cohen writes that “effeminacy is also associated with femininity” (Cohen 5-6). When the King sees Hattige’s melancholia, tears, and sighs (which are feminine stereotypes), he matches this behaviour and is “in more pain than she” (Brémond 28), telling Osman: “her tears troubled me so, that at last I believe I should have died for grief” (Brémond 47). The King adopting feminine behaviours makes him even more effeminate.

Brémond’s presentation of effeminacy as a critique reflects Restoration views that men should be devoid of “excess[ive]... tender[ness]” (Brémond 64). We can see this in the way that the King is blinded by his extreme desire for Hattige. Hattige recognizes that the King has taken

notice of her melancholy (which stems from her burning desire to see Rajep), and, to keep her reputation, she pretends that she is upset about something else. She manipulates him, saying, "I dreamt, Sir, I saw you in Roukia's arms, the Master Gardiners wife" (Brémond 48), and the King later notes to Osman that "her grief seiz'd her more violently than ever, and she fell half dead into [his] arms" (Brémond 49). The King comforts her and gives her "oaths and kind words… [that] left her perfectly cur'd of those suspitions of falseness she had entertain'd against [him]" (Brémond 49-50). Hattige then recovers and begins acting like her happy self again; she not only manipulates him into thinking she is not doing anything suspicious, but she even puts her sadness on him and makes him feel guilty. He then says to Osman, "must I not love her more than ever, for having endur'd what she did without daring to acquaint me with it?" (Brémond 51). The King's passion and lust for Hattige is what fails him — it is described as "so great, so true, and so tender a passion" (29). The word "tender" typically connotes a kind of sensitivity, as in one is easily hurt or manipulated, which is what makes the King seem effeminate and powerless.

The King's effeminate actions also break the homosocial bond between him and Osman. When Osman, determined to both protect his master and help save his dignity, hands the King written proof of Hattige's infidelity, the King refuses to believe him (Brémond 54). Even when he agrees to go to Hattige's chamber to catch her in bed with Rajep, he stalls for a long time and closes doors loudly to give Rajep time to escape (Brémond 58). Here, it is clear that the King is more concerned with losing Hattige than protecting his own dignity, self-worth, and relationship with Osman. This is further proven when Hattige begins to cry and fall into his arms, and "he could no longer resist such Charms" (Brémond 64). Osman, outraged at the King's decision to not condemn Hattige for her actions, "almost lost his respect to his Master" (Brémond 62). Sedgwick writes that male-to-male bonding, "if successfully achieved, is not detrimental to 'masculinity' but definitive of it" (Sedgwick 50). If men do not have these male relationships, it

increases their chances of appearing effeminate. The King distances himself from Osman in his deliberate avoidance of Hattige's disloyalty, which breaks the homosocial bonds: men are supposed to be exerting their power through the bodies of women, so when women are doing this instead, it can affect these male relationships (especially for the King, who is supposed to be the most powerful). The King's increasingly effeminate state leaves Osman feeling more masculine in contrast to him, and, therefore, superior.

The King's cross-dressing and sexual capabilities (or lack thereof) further complicate his masculinity and increase his appearance as an effeminate man. The King disguises himself as a Bedouin woman in order to be allowed to enter Hattige's chamber: "his face he cover'd with a black Vail, and his body a white Blanket, and put on a pair of Linden Drawers, and black Stockings, which is all the equivalent of that sort of Women" (Brémond 72). However, he is wearing two disguises: he dresses up as Rajep, whom he knows will be dressed as a woman. This double role he takes on complicates our understanding of the King's masculinity, given that he takes on a more masculine role (Rajep) but then makes it feminine by wearing female clothes.

The King is described as "amorous" (Brémond 29), but it is implied that he cannot satisfy Hattige sexually. When he enters Hattige's chamber disguised as Rajep, she says, "how glad I am to see thee, having spent all this day with a King, whose caresses are torments to me" (Brémond 75). This is particularly notable because a large test of masculinity during the Restoration period was if a man could keep his wife sexually satisfied. As shown in *The Country Wife*, married women Lady Fidget, Mrs. Dainty Fidget, and Mrs. Squeamish all turn to Horner, the play's libertine figure, to satisfy their sexual desires as their husbands cannot. This concept is reflected in the King's words: "women are now a-days so treacherous, there is no trusting their caresses" (Brémond 52). The assumption during the time was that women were sexually desirous, and it was a husband's job to tame his wife's sexual desires so that she did not go

seeking other men: as reflected in *The Country Wife*, “the straying wife [Margery] suggests the sexual inadequacy of the husband [Pinchwife]” (Rosenthal, *Infamous* 25). If he failed, then he has essentially failed as a man. As a king, too, this is even more radical, given that he is supposed to be the most powerful libertine of all. This portrayal of a king — the actual King Charles II — as submissive, effeminate, and “at the mercy of his love for his mistress” (Keating, “Paratexts” 453) is a drastic and revolutionary shift from the all-powerful, respected man that he is supposed to be.

It is also notable that the presence of Hattige has a very strong impact on the way the King is perceived by others. When he is with Hattige, her presence makes him act more feminine than masculine, and this feminine nature renders him effeminate and powerless. This is furthered by Cohen’s explanation of effeminacy, where she argues that a large part of effeminacy is based on men’s interactions with women. She writes that “some conversation with the ladies is necessary to smooth the temper as well as the manners of men, but too much of it is apt to effeminate or debilitate both” (Cohen 4). Therefore, women do not make men more masculine, and instead, the prolonged presence of women can actually make men more feminine: when men are around women, they tend to be on better behaviour, as women “polish… men out of rude nature” (Cohen 4). Women will make men more feminine, then, if femininity is defined by good manners, delicacy, and tact. The King’s effeminacy is partially dictated by how much time he spends with Hattige. When he spends the whole day with her after being manipulated by her, she makes a comment later about how he was unable to satisfy her sexually, pointing to his effeminacy. But when the King begins spending less time with Hattige, he stops allowing himself to be manipulated, and he regains some of his appeal. Further, the King regains his power by swapping mistresses. Erin Keating writes that the King “triumph[s] against…

[Hattige's]... threat of emasculation, scoring a victory, albeit an ambiguous one, through his ability to change royal mistresses" (Keating, "Bedroom" 68).

The King's effeminacy and society's clear aversion to it is confirmed when we are introduced to the very masculine character Rajep, who is shown to be the polar opposite of the King. His passions are "violent" instead of "tender," and he is "handsome…young and vigorous" (Brémond 45, 29, 26). Secondly, unlike the King, who is unable to satisfy Hattige's sexual desires, Rajep is described as having been able to "pleas[e] other Women" (Brémond 27). Even the sport he plays — which is literally fighting "with Beasts for the pleasure of the Women" (Brémond 27) — embodies raw, powerful masculinity. Amatory secret histories are often created to expose the dominant beliefs and the scandalous events that occur at the time, drawing from "court gossip and rumours… to create entertaining stories straddling the modes of secret history, court satire, and amatory fiction" (Keating, "Paratexts" 446). Given this, Brémond furthers the dominant Restoration belief that masculine men are more attractive, in spite of their status, when Hattige becomes immediately "love-sick" (Brémond 28) with Rajep after seeing him fight beasts. In this one day, she becomes more infatuated with him than she ever was with the King. While Rajep is also very passionate about Hattige, his love does not make him appear effeminate, as it is clear that there are fundamental differences in the way he and the King view Hattige and express their love: the King's love is sweet and tender while Rajep's love is fiery and impassioned, shown in his ability to give her "a thousand transports of love" in one night (Brémond 75). Hattige finding Rajep more appealing (and sexually capable) than the King emphasizes Brémond's demonstration of what type of man Restoration society saw as the superior one.

However, it is notable that both the King and Rajep adopt female dress as a disguise. This contrasts with chapter two, where Hellena dresses up as a man in order to move through society

as a man would. Even though Rajep is there by invitation and the King is there as the suspicious, jealous lover, both men must disguise themselves as women in order to gain access to Hattige's bed chamber. Therefore, even though in general the King is portrayed as feminine and Rajep is portrayed as more masculine, in order to enter the female space that is Hattige's room, they have to put on female clothes and take on feminine roles. This raises the question of whether or not their disguises affect their respective masculinities. Notably, they both see through each other's disguises — the King notices Rajep's "stature" (indicating a manly frame) and Rajep notices the King's sword, which is a masculine symbol of power (Brémond 72-3). The King carries a sword under his dress, which arguably is him overcompensating for wearing such feminine dress. When Rajep sees his sword, he leaves. The fact that he leaves is ambiguous, but arguably, he is intimidated by the King and wants to avoid conflict. This ultimately makes the King appear more masculine as a result, not only because he is able to scare another man off, but also because Rajep sees him in a purely masculine light and believes he is not convincing enough as a woman.

This scene sets the stage for the end, where the King comes out on top, and Rajep is cast aside. The King, despite having been temporarily controlled by Hattige, takes back his power at the end of the story and regains a libertine status. As Keating suggests, texts such as *Hattige* "balance their representation of the female villains with a focus on the King as hero of the story, thus strengthening the reader's feeling of affinity with a King who is sorely beset by such an evil woman" (Keating, "Bedroom" 67). In this way, we are encouraged to sympathize with the King for having been manipulated by Hattige, rather than looking down on him for it. Further, the fact that Rajep is banished so quickly is also representative of Hattige's libertine-like actions, given that she desperately lusts after Rajep, but then once she has slept with him, her desire is removed, as is his appeal.

However, this masculine power dynamic is just between the King and Rajep and their homosocial relationship. If we revisit the previous Bedouin scene, where Rajep is first dressed as a woman to get into Hattige's room, it becomes more complicated when we consider how the two men are perceived by Hattige. When Rajep enters Hattige's room and sleeps with her, his sexual capabilities and raw, powerful masculinity end up 'restoring' his masculinity, even though he is wearing feminine clothes. In contrast, while the King manages to scare off Rajep, when he is put in the exact same position as Rajep (sleeping with Hattige in his feminine clothes), he cannot satisfy Hattige in the same way and is therefore less masculine. These two characters demonstrate the fluidity of gender in the Restoration period, but also the strong impact of gender on a man's sexual performance.

We can further understand the presentation of masculinity in *Hattige* by examining the two male characters in the frame tale: Gourdan and the Knight of Malta. Gourdan is described as jealous and unappealing and depicted as ugly (Brémond 11), "brutish" (Brémond 12), "savage," and "shallow" (Brémond 14). Gourdan forces Hattige to stay in a room on a ship, completely isolated, where "she was resolv'd to die rather than comply with his desires" (Brémond 11). In a similar way to Pinchwife in *The Country Wife*, who displays a very strong possessive sexuality over his wife, Gourdan acts this way towards Hattige, despite not even being in a relationship with her. While Gourdan does not physically assault Hattige like Pinchwife does to Margery, he is very forceful in kidnapping her and storing her away. Just as Pinchwife locks his wife Margery in a room for fear that he will be cuckolded, Gourdan keeps Hattige locked up in a room for fear other men will discover her beauty and take her away from him. Gourdan is illustrated as "so much in love with her, and so jealous, he would not permit any one to see her" (Brémond 11).

While Rajep is described as a masculine figure, the Knight of Malta ultimately surpasses him. While Hattige appears interested in Rajep, she is mainly interested in his physicality —

purely qualities that are stereotypically male. Also, he lacks power, which is proven when he is very quickly banished by the King. Overall, the descriptions of Rajep are limited to physical appearance and sexual capabilities, indicating that the type of masculinity that Rajep embodies is purely about his body and sexual performance. In contrast, the Knight is given attractive emotional qualities. Not only is the Knight "brave" (Brémond 2), "excellently fitted" (Brémond 2), "handsome" (Brémond 15), and essentially the pedestal of masculinity, "appear[ing] more than man" (Brémond 6), but he is also "modest" with a "noble and generous nature" (Brémond 8, 12). The portrayal of the Knight demonstrates a different kind of masculinity than Rajep, one where both his mind and body are powerful and impressive.

Unlike a libertine such as Willmore in *The Rover*, who is more likely to treat all women without respect (and only have a slightly greater degree of respect to the higher-class, beautiful women), the Knight is kind to every woman, regardless of her status and beauty. As Razy (a female slave) notes, the Knight is so generous that she would have done anything for him: "he treated her with more Civility and Kindness than a Woman of her condition knew how to receive… [Razy] was by this time so taken with the Knight she would not have deny'd him a far greater matter" (Brémond 17-18). While the Knight's politeness could, potentially, raise questions about his effeminacy, he seems to have this same politeness with both men and women and acts the same with everyone; for example, with Gourdan, he is always kind to him, despite his frustration. Brémond's creation of the Knight's character attempts to answer the question that Cohen asks in her book: "could men be at once polite and manly?" (Cohen 47). She writes that "politeness and conversation, though necessary to the fashioning of the gentleman, were thought to be effeminating" (Cohen 47). Arguably, the Knight proves that men *could* be polite and manly, although this could be partially because he keeps a slight distance from Hattige. Perhaps

the Knight represents a new mode of masculinity: the polite gentleman who has feminine qualities without becoming feminine or losing his masculinity.

The Knight is interested in Hattige, but it appears he keeps his distance slightly and does not put her on a pedestal, which ensures that he does not appear effeminate, as he is not overly obsessive. Seeing Hattige as a commodity — a "prize" (Brémond 10) — he is surprised Gourdan had not mentioned her to him and is "displeased with the proceeding as unjust and uncivil" (Brémond 11). His words indicate that he believes he deserves this "most considerable prize" (which is Hattige) more than Gourdan does (Brémond 18). He says that Gourdan's arrangement with Hattige is "a sort of commodity" (Brémond 15) and says, "pray do not refuse me the sight of her" (Brémond 15). However, despite clearly viewing Hattige as a prize, he does not keep this prize for himself or try to sleep with her. He saves her, but he does not save her for himself — he lets her go, which is what distinguishes him from all the other male characters and makes him a true gentleman. His actions do not stem from self-interest, but instead, his adherence to chivalric codes, and what he believes is moral.

In *Hattige*, Brémond demonstrates that in the Restoration period, masculinity was complex, difficult to define, and based on circumstance. Through an examination of these characters, it is evident that Brémond has flipped gender roles in many ways. By beginning the text with Gourdan (who is depicted as the least ideal man) and ending with the Knight, who is the epitome of not only masculinity but chivalry, Brémond is indicating the type of masculinity that should be emulated.

Conclusion

My thesis explores the Restoration work of Aphra Behn (*The Rover* and *The City Heiress*), William Wycherley (*The Country Wife*), and Sébastien Brémond (*Hattige*). All four texts do not merely reflect Restoration society but provide valuable insight into the unfortunate reality of how women were perceived and treated among the Restoration upper class. This, in turn, allows for an examination of what Restoration society could have looked like had women been given more power and sexual agency. My work focused on the concepts of masculinity, libertinism, female agency, and sexual desire, as well as the various links between sexuality and gender in the Restoration period. From this, I demonstrated how sexuality (mainly sexual performance) and gender in the Restoration period were intertwined, and even definitive of each other.

In chapter one, I examined masculinity and libertinism in Restoration comedy — specifically Aphra Behn's *The Rover* and *The City Heiress* and William Wycherley's *The Country Wife* — to understand how these playwrights suggested libertines functioned and were viewed in the Restoration period. I explored the ways in which central libertine characters (Wilding, Willmore, Horner) were demonstrated in a positive, entertaining light, but also the deeper, darker ways in which Willmore and Horner were shown as either violent, entitled sexual predators, or apathetic, antisocial serial cuckolders. I also analyzed male characters such as Blunt, Sir Charles, and Pinchwife, comparing and contrasting their violent, entitled behaviour and characteristics against the libertine characters to gain an understanding of how and why they did not earn a libertine title. I argued that, based on Behn's characters, the few characteristics separating libertines and non-libertines are natural wit, intelligence, and social class. I demonstrated how Behn used her characters and these similarities to show the darker side of libertines and to portray libertine masculinity as faulty and unglamorous. I also explored how

Behn and Wycherley used their platform as playwrights to educate audiences and help them visualize a better society for women.

In chapter two, I extended my examination of libertine masculinity to the female characters in Behn's and Wycherley's comedies, who often displayed characteristics and attitudes typical of libertines. I examined the various female characters in all three comedies (Diana, Hellena, Lady Galliard, Florinda, Angellica, Lady Fidget, Lady Squeamish, Mrs. Dainty Fidget) to depict the power imbalance between men and women in the Restoration period, noting that despite being bound by societal rules that deprived women of power, there were small ways that women could manipulate these social structures (and men) to gain agency. I explored how, despite the prevalent expectation of women in the Restoration period to be chaste, the playwrights wrote about female characters who acted on sexual desires and even behaved similarly to libertines.

In chapter three, I continued my analysis of female characters in the Restoration period but in a prose text rather than comedies. Prose texts, especially secret histories, were even more radical than plays because the former provided no opportunity for popular, beloved female actresses to reinforce the author's message. I identified the main female character (Hattige) in Brémond's *Hattige* as a more extreme masculine, libertine-like figure than any of the women in the comedies, due to her sexual desires, sexual manipulation of the King, masculine nature, and the lack of punishment for her unconventional actions. I then expanded on my arguments and insights from chapter one and extended them to the male characters in *Hattige*. I furthered my initial argument on libertinism to explore the concept of effeminacy, the links between effeminacy and libertinism, and the overall fluctuating nature of gender. I came to the conclusion that despite the rigid, restrictive nature of Restoration society, the concept of gender was very fluid. In addition, though Restoration society was typically understood as a time when women

were powerless and men were in control, it was far more complicated than that. As these texts demonstrate, men were actually quite restricted in terms of their gender expression, as, unlike women, their attractiveness and worth were dictated by their sexual performance, homosocial friendships, and perfectly gender-conforming behaviour.

The depiction of libertines in the four Restoration literary works I have studied reflect the authors' social commentary on Restoration society and its preoccupation with libertines. Although the libertines in each literary work are portrayed as the heroes and something to which men aspire, a closer examination of these characters reveals that the libertine lifestyle does not inspire admiration nor lead to genuine connections or contentment.

Works Cited

Adcock, Rachel. "'Jack Presbyter in His Proper Habit': Subverting Whig Rhetoric in Aphra Behn's *The Roundheads* (1682)." *Women's Writing,* vol. 22, no. 1, 2015, pp. 34-55, doi:10.1080/09699082.2014.941182.

Bacon, Jon Lance. "Wives, Widows, and Writings in Restoration Comedy." *Studies in English Literature*, 1500-1900, vol. 31, no. 3, 1991, pp. 427–443. *JSTOR*, doi:10.2307/450855.

Behn, Aphra. *The City Heiress*. London, 1682.

—-. *Oroonoko, The Rover*, *and Other Works*. Penguin Classics, 1992, pp. 155-246.

Behn, Aphra, et al. Plays 1682-1696. *Cambridge University Press,* 2021.

Bobker, Danielle. "Behn: Auth-WHORE or WrITer? Authorship and Identity in The Rover." *Restoration and 18th Century Theatre Research*, vol. 11, no. 1, 1996, pp. 32-. *Literature Online (LION).*

Brémond, Gabriel de [Sébastien]. *Hattige; or, The Amours of the King of Tamaran.* Amsterdam: Simon the African, 1680.

Butler, Judith. "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory." *Theatre Journal*, vol. 40, no. 4, 1988, pp. 519–31. *JSTOR*, https://doi.org/10.2307/3207893.

—-. *Undoing Gender*. 1st ed., Routledge, 2005. Taylor & Francis CRKN Books, https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203499627.

Cohen, Michele, and Tim Hitchcock. *English Masculinities 1660-1800*. Routledge, 2014. *Taylor & Francis Evidence Based Ebook Collection*, https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315840314

Conway, Alison Margaret. *The Protestant Whore : Courtesan Narrative and Religious Controversy in England, 1680-1750*. University of Toronto Press, 2010. EBSCOhost Academic eBook Collection (North America), https://doi.org/10.3138/9781442686915.

Copeland, Nancy. "'Once a Whore and Ever'? Whore and Virgin in 'The Rover' and Its Antecedents." *Restoration: Studies in English Literary Culture*, 1660-1700, vol. 16, no. 1, 1992, pp. 20–27. *JSTOR Arts and Sciences XIII.*

—-. *Staging Gender in Behn and Centlivre Women's Comedy and the Theatre*. 1st ed., Routledge, 2019. *Taylor & Francis Evidence Based Ebook Collection*, https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315242507.

Crawford, Patricia. "Women and Property: Women as Property." *Parergon*, vol. 19, no. 1, 2002, pp. 151-171. *Project Muse Premium Collection*, https://doi.org/10.1353/pgn.2002.0086.

Eales, Jacqueline. *Women In Early Modern England,* 1500-1700. *Taylor & Francis Evidence Based Ebook Collection,* 2012.

Gelineau, David. "'The Country Wife,' Dance of the Cuckolds." *Comparative Drama,* vol. 48, no. 3, 2014, pp. 277–305. *Literature Online (LION)*, https://doi.org/10.1353/cdr.2014.0024.

Gill, Pat. "Gender, Sexuality, and Marriage." *The Cambridge Companion to English Restoration Theatre*, Cambridge. Edited by Deborah Payne Fisk. Cambridge University Press, 2000. *ProQuest*, https://uml.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/books/gender-sexuality-marriage/docview/2137996684/se-2.

Houghton, Eve. "Fops Vs Tops: Character and Attention in the Country Wife." *ELH*, vol. 90, no. 3, 2023, pp. 667–91. *Project Muse Premium Collection*, https://doi.org/10.1353/elh.2023.a907205.

Howe, Elizabeth. *The First English Actresses: Women and Drama*, 1660-1700. Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Keating, Erin M. "Envious Productions: Actresses, Audiences, and Affect in the Restoration Playhouse." *Restoration: Studies in English Literary Culture, 1660-1700*, vol. 37, no. 2, 2013, pp. 37–53. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/43293897.

—-. "In the Bedroom of the King: Affective Politics in the Restoration Secret History." *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies,* vol. 15, no. 2, 2015, pp. 55-82. *JSTOR Arts and Sciences VIII,* https://doi.org/10.1353/jem.2015.0013.

—-. "Sébastien Brémond's Paratexts: Authorship, Genre, and Masculinity." *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 36, no. 3 (July 2024). McMaster University. doi: 10.3138/ecf.36.3.439.

Laqueur, Thomas Walter. *Making Sex : Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud.* Harvard University Press, 1990.

Mackie, Erin. *Rakes, Highwaymen, and Pirates: The Making of the Modern Gentleman in the Eighteenth Century.* Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009. *EBSCOhost,*search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=e000xna&AN=308861&site=ehost-live.

McKeon, Michael. "Historicizing Patriarchy: The Emergence of Gender Difference in England, 1660-1760." *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, vol. 28, no. 3, 1995, pp. 295–322. *JSTOR Arts and Sciences 1*.

Markley, Robert. "Aphra Behn's *The City Heiress*: Feminism and the Dynamics of Popular Success on the Late Seventeenth-Century Stage." *Comparative Drama*, vol. 41. no. 2, 2007, p. 141-166. *Project MUSE*,

doi:10.1353/cdr.2007.0020.

—-. "Behn and the Unstable Traditions of Social Comedy." *The Cambridge Companion to Aphra Behn*, edited by Derek Hughes and Janet Todd, Cambridge UP, 2004, pp. 98-117.

Martinez, Martin. "Male Coquettes and Fribbling Beaux: The Representation of Effeminate Fops on the Mid-Eighteenth-Century English Stage." *Restoration and 18th Century Theatre Research*, vol. 15, no. 2, 2000, pp. 73-. *Literature Online (LION)*

Milhous, Judith and Robert Hume. *Producible Interpretations: Eight English Plays 1675-1707*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1985.

Oliver, Kathleen M. "'I Will Write Whore with This Penknife in Your Face': Female Amatory Letters, the Body, and Violence in Wycherley's 'The Country Wife.'" *Restoration: Studies in English Literary Culture,* 1660-1700, vol. 38, no. 1, 2014, pp. 41–60. *JSTOR Arts & Sciences XIII,* https://doi.org/10.1353/rst.2014.0007.

Olivier, Sarah. "'Banished His Country, Despised at Home': Cavalier Politics, Banishment, and Rape in Aphra Behn's The Rover." *Restoration and 18th Century Theatre Research*, vol. 27, no. 1, 2012, pp. 55-. *Literature Online (LION)*.

Pacheco, Anita. "Rape and the Female Subject in Aphra Behn's 'The Rover.'" ELH, vol. 65, no. 2, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998, pp. 323–45. *JSTOR Arts and Sciences I*, doi:10.1353/elh.1998.0013.

Pearson, Jacqueline. "Aphra Behn's Afterlife/Women, Writing and the Theater in the Early Modern Period: The Plays of Aphra Behn and Suzanne [Sic] Centlivre. *The Seventeenth Century,* vol. 17, no. 2, 2002, pp. 286-290. *ProQuest*.

Rosenthal, Laura J. "Masculinity in Restoration Drama." *A Companion to Restoration Drama,* Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2001, pp. 92–108, https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118663400.ch6.

—-. *Infamous Commerce: Prostitution in Eighteenth-Century British Literature and Culture.* Cornell University Press, 2006. *EBSCOhost Academic eBook Collection (North America).*

—-. *Ways of the World: Theater and Cosmopolitanism in the Restoration and Beyond.* Cornell University Press, 2021. *EBSCOhost Academic eBook Collection (North America),* https://doi.org/10.1515/9781501751608.

Sedgwick, Eve K. *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire.* Vol. Columbia University Press, 2016, *EBSCOhost*, search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&=e000xna&AN=1094861&site =ehost-live.

Sofer, Andrew. "Unmasking Women: The Rover and Sexual Signification on the Restoration Stage." *Dark Matter,* University of Michigan Press, 2013, pp. 66-. *Proquest Ebook Central.*

Szilagyi, Stephen. "The Sexual Politics of Behn's 'Rover': After Patriarchy." *Studies in Philology,* vol. 95, no. 4, 1998, pp. 435–55. *Literature Online (LION)*.

Taetzsch, Lynne. "Romantic Love Replaces Kinship Exchange in Aphra Behn's Restoration Drama." *Restoration: Studies in English Literary Culture, 1660-1700*, vol. 17, no. 1, 1993, pp. 30–38. *JSTOR*.

Thompson, Peggy. *Coyness and Crime in Restoration Comedy Women's Desire, Deception, and Agency.* Bucknell University Press, 2012. *EBSCOhost Academic eBook Collection (North America).*

—-. "The Limits of Parody in 'The Country Wife.'" *Studies in Philology*, vol. 89, no. 1, 1992, pp. 100–14. *Periodicals Archive Online Collection 4.*

Todd, Janet, editor. *Aphra Behn Studies.* Cambridge UP, 1996.

Van Renen, Denys. *The Other Exchange Women, Servants, and the Urban Underclass in Early Modern English Literature.* University of Nebraska Press, 2017.

Webster, Jeremy W. *Performing Libertinism in Charles II's Court: Politics, Drama, Sexuality.* Palgrave Macmillan, 2005. *EBSCOhost,* search.ebscohost.com/login.asps?direct=true&db=nlekb&AN=188917&site=eHost-live.

Wheatley, Christopher. "Romantic Love and Social Necessities: Reconsidering Justifications for Marriage in Restoration Comedy." *Restoration: Studies in English Literary Culture, 1660-1700*, vol. 14, no. 2, 1990, pp. 58–70. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org.uml.idm.oclc.org/stable/43292542.

Williams, Andrew. "The Centre of Attention: Theatricality and the Restoration Fop." *Early Modern Literary Studies,* vol. 4, no. 3, 1999, pp. 22-. *Gale OneFile: CPI.Q.*

Wycherley, William. *The Country Wife.* Edited by Scott McMillin, W.W. Norton & Company Inc, 1997.