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Subversion of Patriarchal Codes in Aphra Behn's *The Rover*

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Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled “Subversion of Patriarchal Codes in Aphra Behn's *The Rover*” submitted to the Central Department of English, T. U. Kirtipur, by Devendra Timsina, has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee:

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Abstract

This research work focuses on against capitalistic social codes and conventions in Aphra Behn's play *The Rover*. Behn subverts the masculinist as well as capitalistic discourse created by male dominated European society in mid-seventeenth century through her strong female characters. Behn defies capitalistic society by creating witty, independent, attractive, strong, active, and assertive female characters. She vehemently criticizes and blurs the stereotyped view of economic roles in *The Rover*. Behn with her brilliant stagecraft and carnival setting subverts the gender based ideologies of her contemporary seventeenth century society. Behn's own version of carnival which departs from traditional and religious carnival provides opportunity for female character to get liberation from patriarchal domination and exploitation. They could spontaneously transgress the civility of normal behavior and ideologies of existing social convention and express their social desire freely. Utilizing all the features of Restoration Comedy, Behn's heroines S subvert the male-created narratives of marriage, love, courtship and prostitution.

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I. Subversion of Patriarchal Codes in Aphra Behn's *The Rover*

This research not only assumes that the central female characters Hellena and Florinda are victimized by patriarchal ideology but also presumes that these female characters are commodified and objectified by the hand of masculine capitalistic ideology. Women have been treated as mere objects to be consumed in the market in order to fulfill physical and spiritual satisfaction. Likewise, the agents of male oriented capitalistic society, captain Willmore and Don Antonio, who have gained incredible power and authority through market economy, must reconcile their governing power and their humanity.

A critical lens of Marxist Feminism places the spotlight on the important ways in which the female characters Hellena, Florinda and Angellica are suppressed, oppressed, dominated and consumed in the restoration society. The play expresses its author's objection to vulnerability of a woman in restoration society, perhaps ironically. It also appeals to the prurient interest of audience by putting women in morally compromising situation. To highlight the socio-economic status of mid-seventeenth century society women in England, Behn foregrounds the issue of women such as love, sex, marriage, romance, prostitution and commodification of women under the strict patriarchal restriction. Patriarchy, the system of male domination excludes women from rights of inheritance, education and equal pay in the case of labor and enjoying of equal rights. It leaves women out of structure of power and equality in the society with demeaning women with male domination. Almost all the female characters in the play are dominated suppressed and victimized by male characters. In the Restoration era, the qualifications for marriage were wealth, property and money. The knowledgeable man for girl, matters than a fashionable rake with having wealth. Another matter is liberty. There was not any liberty given to women rather they are suppressed by patriarchy ideology. In the Restoration society, harmony

was seen on the structural or surface level but in the deeper level there was hollowness.

Likewise, women are regarded as the objects only giving pleasure to males. Much of the interest comes from the intense but distance relationship between central male and female characters, this thesis wants to study this relationship as the theme of play. This research argues and brings the critique of patriarchal ideology in focus exposing the nexus between capitalism and subordination of women.

This research uses a close analytical style which draws on the women's marketization and complexities along with the capitalistic scenario and vocabularies. The focus of the research is Marxist feminist criticism which establishes the passion and immaturities in social structure as the undersides of capitalism. This study gives an insight into the dystopian nature of capitalistic ideology. In this way, This study exposes the female issues like marriage and prostitution as the commodification of a women through the characters of the play.

As this study dramatizes the logic of commodification in *The Rover* in terms of a Marxist discourse. It follows Valerie Bryson who digs out the side effects of capitalism, and elaborates that commerce sinks the courage of mankind and tends to involve in rape, violence, marriage, prostitution and so on. Building on his framework in interlocution with Marxist feminist literary criticism, this study offers a remedy to the rampant reductive representation of women in his article *The Origin of Family, Private Property and the State*, Fridrich Engels, suggests that a woman's subordination is not a result of her biological disposition but a social relations, and that men's efforts to achieve their demands for control of women's labor and sexual facilities have gradually solidified and become institutionalized in the nuclear family (58). Through a Marxist historical perspective Engels analyzes the widespread social phenomena associated with female sexual morality, such as fixation on virginity and sexual purity, incrimination and violent

punishment of women who commit adultery, and demands that women be summative to their husband. These critics insist on the negative effect of capitalism and rebellion against women's commodification of forced marriage in even oppressive conditions. The study makes a case for recognizing: a capitalist Marxist and sexist overtone in *The Rover*, a resistance of the power dynamics underpinning the overtone through a foregrounding of women's commodification, and a lurking feminist undertone which is critical of the masculine capitalistic agenda.

Aphra Behn is one of the most successful comic writers in the great age of English comedy when her life history and literary career is revealed. She produces many literary works including eighteen plays in her life. *The Forced Marriage* (1670), *The Dutch Lover* (1673), *The Lucky Chance* (1686) and *The Rover* (1677) are some famous plays. Many of her dramas are based on the forms of prostitution, love, marriage, and some of her novels and poems contain eroticism that shocked audiences. Behn suffered from the biases of her time against the women writers in general and women dramatist in particular. She was assumed by many of the contemporaries to be a prostitute; because of her connection to the theater and because at the time, women who sold their writing were seen as selling themselves. Behn sometimes comments on her unique status as a women writer and asks to be taken seriously as a writer, with equal right to freedom in what she wrote. Behn's plays were very high in number in terms of her male counterparts of her time and most of the plays were successful and held the stage for centuries. Being one of the earliest female playwrights, she was seen as someone who, like an actress, displayed herself to the public. Since actresses were viewed as prostitutes, it was assumed by many people that Behn was a prostitute too. She was suffered throughout her life because the writing topic she chose.

Behn was an extraordinary woman who was not confined by the boundaries normally accepted by seventeenth century women whose spheres of influence were not domestic and private. She spends her life with full of independence. Many critics have commented about her life and her literary work because she was first professional writer involved in creative art and writing in England even though she was not the first woman to publish her writing. She defended the charges and criticism made by literary and theatrical society of London of her time where she had strong relationship with other reputed authors like John Dryden and Thomas Otway. So for nineteen years she made her living successfully involving with the genres such as drama, poetry and prose writing.

Aphra Behn is famous for her fiction *Oroonoko* which is published in 1688 which is the first treatment of black slavery in English literature. Behn combines the Enlightenment ideas on the noble savage and exotic local colour of colony which is controlled by Europeans in the apex of English imperialism with realistic details and fusion of heroic drama. The central intent of this novel is the examination of racial catastrophe in the life of tragic hero, *Oroonoko*. The story unfolds the life of noble African prince who is betrayed into worse capacity in the British colony of Surinam, destroyed by the attempts to gain liberty. The young native prince is untouched by colonization who is born into a royal family Surinam is enslaved by British colonizers during colonization. He struggles to gain liberty. His life becomes horrible when he kills his own wife Imoinara to save her from the evils of slavery.

Behn wrote and staged five plays before producing *The Rover* on the March 1677. Her reputation as a woman of letters was established enough for her to be included in a published list of playwrights called *Theatrum Poetarum*, compiled by her contemporary Edward Phillips. Despite her reputation, Behn published *The Rover* anonymously, perhaps because her play was

an adaptation of another contemporary playwright, Thomas Killgrew. Behn had translated his ten act drama and turned it into a comedy, but as a woman writer, she was especially vulnerable to charges of plagiarism. It was not until the third issue of the printed play that she dared to include her name as its author. She did however, to her next anonymously published comedy *The Author of The Rover*. Behn was rescued by nascent feminist into the early twentieth century. In 1927 Vita Sackvillewest published in the famous Behn's biography called Aphra Behn's: *The Incomparable Astrea*. Sackvillewest's good friend Virginia Woolf mentions Behn in her book *A Room of One's Own*, noting with pleasure that after Aphra Behn's, Shady and amorous as she was, a woman could "earn five hundred a year by her wits (52). In 1970s critics consider Behn an early feminist, and Behn merited inclusion in the *Norton Anthology of Literature by Women*, edited by feminists Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar. Feminists generally have not admired Willmore, seeing him as a sinister villain who flourishes in what Jane Spencer describes in *Aphra Behn's Afterlife* as a 'rape culture' in which men are defined by their power over women and other men, women are unable to escape being defined by men's views of their sexuality. At the same time, they viewed Hellena as a heroine; Heidi Hunter praises Behn for rescuing Hellena and making her strong and bold female character who rebels against the patriarchal system. Feminist critique continues to debate whether Behn can be termed an early Feminist or not.

The play *The Rover* contains many characters of restoration drama as Behn is successful for her presentation of engaging protagonist, clear assuming, interesting or scintillating dialogue with intrigue and use of farce. Due to these features this drama becomes the widely read of Behn's large bodies of literary works was the significant part of the repertory of the restoration period and early eighteenth century theatre. *The Rover* was profound in London virtually every year from 1703 to 1750. She is equally successful for using the slapstick comedy to create fun

and laughter for the theater goers of her time. To quicken the pace for her plays and to create visually stunning performance, Behn took full advantage of moveable scenery, which was a recent innovation in the late seventeenth century.

Though the central female characters in *The Rover* are the victims of capitalism, they are vitally important as they illustrate the contradictory representation of a complex social structure. Valerie Bryson highlights this contradiction in her book, *Feminist Political Theory* stating:

As with the domestic labour debate, the arguments can seem very abstract. They do however have practical implications, for if patriarchy exists independently, rather than as an integral part of capitalism, it may be possible and necessary to challenge it separately, and for women to organise autonomously in defence of their own interests. If, however, what we have is a unified system of capitalist patriarchy, then gender issues can only be tackled as part of a general movement against capitalism, while anti-capitalist struggles cannot ignore or sideline the oppression of women. (209)

Marxist feminism is a sub type of feminist theory which focuses on the dismantling of capitalism as a way to liberate women. Marxist feminism states that private property, which gives rise to economic inequality, dependence, political confusion and ultimately unhealthy social relation between man and women, is a root of women's oppression.

According to Marxist theory, in capitalistic societies the individual is shaped by class relation; that is, peoples capacities, needs and interest are seen to be determined by the mode of production that characterizes the society they inhabit. Marxist feminists see gender inequality as determined ultimately by the capitalist mode of production. Gender oppression is class oppression and women's subordination is seen as a form of class oppression which is maintained

as racism because it serves the interest of capital and the ruling class. Marxist feminists have extended traditional Marxist analysis by looking at domestic labour as well as wage work in order to support their position.

Marxist feminism focuses on investigating and explaining the ways in which women are oppressed through systems of capitalism and private property. According to the Marxist feminists, women's liberation can only be achieved through a radical restructuring of the current capitalistic economy in which much of women's labour is uncompensated.

Regarding the use of female characters in the play against the object of market economy, Christophar D. Johnson writes:

. . . Behn avoids her contemporaries' practice of reducing women either to virginal commodities or to corrupt whores, the female characters in *The Rover* are complex, intelligent women whose values is not compromised by sexual desires, they share with male characters. Behn's satire is not directed towards women but rather towards hypothetical social conventions that reduce romance to competition and women to possession. (3)

Behn presents the assertive and vibrant female characters with their own vibrant feminine aspect and she gives liberation to the females in the male domination for the equality to the female race suppressed from time immemorial. On the other hand, the critic, Helene Cixous argues that binary opposition in language "Activity/Passivity, Sun/Moon, Culture/Nature, Father/Mother, Head/Heart" (115) creates the supremacy to create order through fixed and unchanging language which embodies cultural codes. The hierarchal fixed structure is the characteristic of capitalism according to her. In regard to the distinction between

prostitute and respectable women, Anne Elizabeth Russel comments the text relating with Behn's liberating strategy with the use of mask:

In *The Rover*, masks are both subversive and liberating for the women characters on the other hand; they also place some of the women in dangerous situation because of the association of the mask with the prostitute. (95)

The Russian critic Mikhail Bakhtin gives the definition of carnival and its liberating effect in his work *Rabelais and His World*. Bakhtin argues that carnival is a literary or linguistic mode in which inversion of normal hierarchies; celebration of the body is used as a way of criticizing the status quo. The carnival subverts social hierarchies and power structure oriented around position of "high" and "low" (11). It destabilizes and to make comic that which is taken seriously within social order through the form of parody. Carnival reveals or celebrations are adapted to the church and religious calendar in Middle Ages and in the Renaissance period but it has a very early history. Bakhtin investigates the history of carnival celebration which has the root in early stages of "preclass and pre-political social order" (7). It is an egalitarian order where official hierarchies constructed by society are broken. In carnival normal identities are inverted and activities could be celebrated and played with were normality and official boundaries imposed by patriarchal order become nonexistent. It encompasses the disguise, noise, sexual and bodily excess. It is the form of popular counter-culture. Bakhtin states further that during the time of Middle Ages and Renaissance "a boundless world of humour forms and manifestations opposed the official and serious tone of medieval ecclesiastical and feudal culture" (4).

Behn's criticism on loveless and forced marriage is distinctively feminist perspective even though she lived in the era where female were denied their rights and freedom. Her deconstruction of patriarchy by her art is further commented by leading critic Dagny Boebel:

First Behn privileges women's speech, in her opening scene, she gives her female characters both the power to construct masculinity according to their desires and the power to signify themselves. In doing this she reveals how arbitrary, how moored in any metaphysical reality, are the definitions, classifications, and used man have created for the feminine. (27)

The carnival setting plays the significant role as a metaphor for deconstruction of patriarchal capitalistic privilege in the play. Dagny Boebel in her essay, "In the carnival world of Adam's Garden: Roving and Rape in Behn's *The Rover*" criticizes the play highlighting the carnival setting:

Behn dissolves binary structure discourse, effecting such chaos through liberative disguise in the form of carnivalesque circumstance and subverted political phallicism. In the carnival world of *The Rover* signifiers break free from their former moorings in phallic discourse, as Behn liberates the female characters to signify solely themselves. (8)

Women in the Victorian society want to reclaim equal social status as men but they are compelled to accept the society. Their independence success is in contradiction with their family. Assimilating these facts Brecht proclaims:

Attention to the dialectical and contradictory forces within social relation, principally the agon of class conflict in its changing historical forms; commitment to 'alienation' techniques and deliberate discontinuity in theatrical signification;

lateralization' of the theatre space to produce a spectator/ reader who is not interpellated into ideology but is passionately and pleasurably engaged in observation and analysis.qtd.in Bryson. (44)

In the English society women were always commodified, objectified and they were not given any freedom rather they were restricted in the society. Women were always suppressed in the society due to the patriarchal ideologies. Victorian era was more dominant with patriarchy; therefore women were always in the stake. As a result, the severe restrictions of the patriarchal society they had become the revolutionist against patriarchal regime and were trying to break norms and values of patriarchy.

Several critics have analyzed Aphra Behn's *The Rover* from various perspective, some of them have analyzed from the feminist perspective and some other critics have investigated it from the perspective of carnival aspect but critics have missed to analyze the consequences of so called capitalistic project as the commodification of women.

This present research work has been tentatively divided into three chapters. The first chapter fundamentally deals with introductory outline of *The Rover*, as a critique of capitalistic rationality. The second part is the textual analysis of the text basing on Marxist Feminist theory on the victimization of the women under market economy. The logical conclusion is summarized as the proof that the play has forwarded the radical ideas of resistance to the patriarchal codes by focusing the conclusion of the whole research.

II. Marriage and Prostitution as the means of Revolution Against Patriarchy in Behn's *The Rover*

This research work defenses against capitalistic social codes and convention in Aphra Behn's play *The Rover* (1677). Behn subverts the masculinist as well as capitalistic discourse created by male dominated European society in mid- seventeen century through her strong female character. She not only criticizes and blurs the stereo-typed views on gender roles in *The Rover* but also presents women's objectification in the present capitalistic market economy. Behn with her stagecraft and carnival setting represents the economy based ideologies of her contemporary seventeenth century society. Behn, on the version of carnival which departs from traditional and religious carnival provides the opportunity for female characters to get liberation from patriarchal domination and exploitation in one hand and the other hand it depicts the bitter reality of women who are obliged to be commodities consumed in the male oriented capitalistic society for their physical and spiritual satisfaction.

Aphra Behn's *The Rover*, a restoration comedy of male chauvinism in Europe, navigates the issue of love, marriage, prostitution and courtship in male dominated European society in mid seventeenth century. In particular it explores the marketing of women in marriage and prostitution through the interplay of its central male and the female characters. The play revolves round the central virgin women Hellena and Florinda at their marriageable age. Hellena and Willmore are attracted to each other's love of pleasure and wit when they encounter carnival in Naples but for Willmore marriage suppresses the sexual desire by incorporating into the economic system utilizing all the features of restoration comedy, Behn's heroines and whore subvert the male created narratives of marriage, love, courtship, prostitution and commodification.

Marxist feminism makes a direct casual connection between capitalism and the subordination of women. This perspective believes that women are in exploited class in the capitalistic mode of production, both by their husbands within families and by employers in the paid labor market. The strongest criticism of this thinking is the fact that the patriarchy predates capitalism by several thousand years and therefore cannot be understood as a product of capitalism. This perspective also ignores the fact that male dominance continues in non capitalist countries such as China.

Marxist feminism's foundation is laid by Fredrick Engels in his analysis of gender oppression in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* (1884), he argues that a woman's subordination is not a result of her biological disposition but of social relations, and that men's efforts to achieve their demands for control of women's labor and sexual facilities have gradually solidified and become institutionalized in the nuclear family. Through a Marxist historical perspective, Engels analyzes the widespread social phenomena associated with female sexual morality such as fixation on virginity and sexual purity, incrimination and violent punishment of women who commit adultery and demands women to be submissive to their husbands. Finally Engels traces these phenomena to the recent development of exclusive control of private property by the patriarchs of the rising slave-owner class in the ancient mode of production and the attendant desire to ensure that their inheritance is passed only to their own offspring chastity and fidelity are rewarded.

The term 'feminist' first came into use in English during the 1880s, indicating support for women's equal legal and political rights with men. Its meaning has since evolved and is still hotly debated. Most feminist political theory sees women and their situation as central to political analysis; it asks why it is that in virtually all known societies men appear to have more

power and privilege than women. Some feminists have demanded to be included in 'male stream' ideologies, many have also long argued that women are in important respects both different from and superior to men, and that the problem they face is not discrimination or capitalism but male power. From the late 1960s, these ideas were developed into what came to be known as 'radical feminism'. This claimed to be based in women's own experiences and needs, and it used the concept of *patriarchy* to argue that men's power is not confined to the public worlds of economic and political activity, but that it characterises all relationships between the sexes, including the most intimate, and that it is sustained by the whole of our culture. From this perspective, the family is a key site of patriarchal power, which is also maintained through the control of women's sexuality. The insistence that 'the personal is political' involved a major challenge to the assumptions of political theory and has contributed to a general reassessment within feminist thought of the nature of power and politics.

In this regard, commodification of women in the marriage market is Aphra Behn's first and most persistent theme. Women, through marriage had exchange value; that is, the virgin become a commodity not only for use values as a legal but which through exchange, generates capital. Marx writes, exchange converts commodities into fetishes or "social hieroglyphics" (36). In the libertine's aesthetic of natural love, verbal seduction and superiority over jealous husband. Behn concentrated on exposing the exploitation of women in the exchange economy. She says "wife and servant are same" but differently only in the name, "in the name of marriage" women lose their dependent and identify and control of their fortune. Ariadne says:

You have a mistress, sir that has your heart and all your softer hours: I know it, and if I were so wretched as to marry thee, must see my fortune lavisht out on her; her coaches. Dress and equipage exceed mine by for: possess she all the day thy

hours of mirth, good humor and expanse, thy smiles, thy kisses and thy charms of wit.qtd.in Pacheco. (345)

On the other hand, patriarchy is based primarily upon male violence and control of women's sexuality. Here it should be noted simply that, for some feminists, high levels of violence and the sexual abuse of both women and children within the home meant that the family was seen as the cutting edge of patriarchal oppression where many women faced male power in its crudest and most aggressive form. Marriage perpetuates a form of domination disguised by love. 'Love, perhaps even more than child bearing, is the pivot of women's oppression today' (178). Love in a patriarchal society cannot be based upon equality, but reflects women's economic and social dependency and ensures that they will not challenge their subordinate position.

Marxist feminism is a sub-typed of feminist theory focused on investigating and explaining the ways in which women are oppressed through systems of capitalism and private property. According to Marxist feminism women's liberation can only be achieved through a radical restructuring of the current capitalist economic in which much of the women's labour is uncompensated. Christine Delphy offers a feminist critique of a patriarchy based on Marxist principles. Delphy, who coined the phrase materialist feminism in the early 1970s, focuses her analysis on the family as economic unit. Just as the lower classes are oppressed by the upper classes in society as a whole, she explains, women are the subordinates within families. Women constitute a separate oppressed class based on their oppressions as women, regardless of the socio-economic class to which they belong. For Delphy, marriage is a labour contract that ties women to unpaid domestic labour. It is not considered important enough to be seriously analyzed

as a topic, or a problem, in its own right. An understanding of the implications of the situations is central. She notes to an understanding of women's oppressions. Delphy points out:

Contemporary "developed" societies... depend on the unpaid labour of women for domestic services and child rearing. These services are furnished within the framework of a particular relationship to an individual (the husband). They are excluded from the realm of exchange i.e, these services are not treated like the jobs people do for money outside their own home and consequently have no value. They are unpaid whatever women receive in return is independent of the work which they perform because it is not handed out in exchange for that work (i.e, as a wage to which their work entitles them), but rather as a gift. The husbands only obligation, which is obviously in his own interest, is to provide for his wife's basic needs, in other words he maintains her labour power. qtd. in Tyson. (60)

In the play, Behn is able to dramatize the contemporary social and political issues. She draws our attention through the class, gender and politics of restoration period. In the carnival the libertine Wilmore, Belvile and Blunt talk about Angelica Bianca reveals that they are guided by patriarchal system which commodifies human body:

WILLMORE: see there the fair sign to the inn where a man may lodge that's fool enough to give her picture.

BLUENT: [...] I am sure we're no chapmen for this commodity.

FREDRICK: thou art none, I'm sure, unless that could not have her in the bed at a piece of coach in the street.

WILLMORE: [...] A plague of this poverty, of which I he're complain

but it hinders my approach to beauty which virtue never could be purchase. (186)

The above extract shows men's attitude to women. For them women are objects that are purchased and marketable commodities. Such masculine attitude to women reduces them to economic currency and devaluation of their identity. Behn satirizes such exploitative thought of masculinity which defines women as a matter of economic exchange in the capital market. Carnival provides an opportunity to free man from their normal behavior and to express sexual desire but it does not give justice to rights of female. It actually reduces women to sexual object. But in Behn's approach of carnival female characters are sexually active and show their intelligence than the men.

On the other hand, Mill's *The Subjection of Women* was simply an extension to women of the Enlightenment belief that an institution can be defended only if it is in accordance with reason. He argued that women's subordination is a barbarous relic of an earlier historical period; far from being the inevitable outcome of natural attributes, it originated in force and was now sanctified by custom so as to appear 'natural'. He agreed that women appeared to be in many ways inferior to men, but argued that this was a consequence of social pressure and faulty education, "the result of forced repression in some directions, unnatural stimulation in others" (38). Women, therefore, must be given the same opportunities as men, only then we will know their true abilities, and only the society will reap the full benefit from the talents of all its members. This meant that legal discrimination against women was wrong in principle. In particular, women's legal servitude in marriage must be abolished, women must be allowed free access to education and employment and they should be allowed both to vote and to hold political office. qtd. in Bryson. (47)

At this movement, Behn herself as a female writer tries to show the disputation and contradiction in the English society. There was not harmony rather there was a male domination, suppression and contradiction over the female. Thus, Behn tries to show male domination over the female in the name of love by using these dialogues:

BLUNT: I have got into my possession, a female, who had better have fallen under any curse, than the ruin? I design her. Adshearhkins, she assaulted me here in my own lodgings and had doubtless committed a rape upon me, had not the sword defended me.

FREDERICK: I know not, that but a my conscience, thou hadst ravished her, had she not redeemed herself with a ring; let's see it, Blunt.

BELVILE: Ha, the ring, I gave Florinda, when we exchanged our vows.

WILLMORE: come, come, where's the wench? We will see her; let her be what she will; we'll see her. (62)

Blunt's action unveils of Belviles and Florinda's intention to elope. It might also trigger a potential gang rape. Showing of the ring and competition for the longest shoes, are all single florinda's absent fragility in the face of masculine views of ownership, competition and sexual rights. Belvile recognizes Florinda's ring but with Pedro presents, he cannot say this increasing tension for them. Here, Florinda, as a victim of circumstances and irrational male violence, and to question the masculine equation between women on the street and a sexual availability. Conflict is central discovery scene positioning against the domination action in English society.

A central starting point, however, is that women's assumed dependency on a male breadwinner depresses their wages relative to men's, for employers need not pay them directly either for the entire cost of reproducing their own labour power or for reproducing the next

generation; this low pay in turn reinforces both their economic dependency within marriage and the economic necessity of finding a husband. This assumed dependency also means that women can more easily than men be made unemployed at a time of recession, and here writers have used the concept of the *reserve army of labour*, which Marx saw as essential to the workings of the capitalist economy, to analyse women's economic situation (207-08).

In the play, Angellica Bianca is known as famous courtesan. She is accustomed to a life of luxury for Angelica, being a courtesan is a matter of survival, to fall in love would ruin her; unfortunately, she falls helplessly in love with captain Willmore, who wants only physical passion and not a love relationship. Here, Angellica herself is commercializing her throughout the whole drama, she tries to maintain her own disguise while achieving her goal. Every character has their own agenda and it takes their connection with each other to achieve their ultimate desire. Whether, Behn mirrors the social and political structure of English society in this drama. She asserts:

WILLMORE: Gaze on the picture

BLUNT: Adsheartlikins, gentleman, what's this?

BELVILE: A famous courtesan, that's to be sold.

BLUNT: How, to be sold! Nay than, I have nothing to say to her. Sold!

What order and decency whoring's established her by virtue of the inquisition? Come let's be gone, I'm sure we're no chapmen for this commodity.

FREDRICK: Thou art none, I'm sure, unless thou couldest have her in thy bed at a price of a coach in the street.

WILLMORE: How wondrous fair she is. A thousand crowns a month? By heaven, as many kingdoms were too little. A plague of this poverty of which I ne'er could purchase. (186-87)

This dialogue depicts the contradiction between masculinity and femininity. Spectators express their sexual desire towards the famous courtesan Angellica's picture. There are pictures hanging against the balcony. Visually, it places Angellica on high, an object of adoration for man, who literally looks up to her. So, this acts as a visual contradiction in sexual politics.

In this regard, Engel's failure to acknowledge that the proletarian family might also be a source of oppression and sexual exploitation rather than equality. He had remarkably little to say on the problem of domestic violence which received widespread publicity in the nineteenth century and which, as we saw, was a central concern of many feminists in both Britain and America; his only comment on the issue is a half-sentence that refers to "a leftover piece of the brutality towards women that has become deep-rooted since the introduction of monogamy" (59). In general he held a much romanticized view of proletarian marriage which he saw as the freely chosen result of love and sexual attraction; here male brutality could not last long as it no longer had an economic foundation, and the wife was free to leave. This rosy view ignored the reality of many women's lives and the fact that they were often not free to leave a violent marriage; quite apart from the fear of violent revenge, many women were unwilling to abandon their children, and few could earn enough to support themselves, let alone their children too; as we have seen, Engels ignored the causes and implications of women's low pay, and he also ignored the benefits that a husband might gain from his wife's sexual and domestic services, irrespective of whether his marriage continued to be based on love (63).

Here, Aphra Behn dramatizes the patriarchal social and political structure which commodifies the identity of women. In the carnival Belvile, Blunt, Fredrick and Don Perdo reduce the subjectivity of a woman to economic exchange:

BELVILE: see there the fair sign to the inn where a man may lodge that's
fool enough to give her price.

BLUENT: How to be sold! Nays, then, I have nothing to say her. Sold!

WILMORE: ... a plague of this poverty, of which I ne'er complain but
when it hinders my approach to beauty which venture ne'er would
purchase.

PEDRO: fetch me a thousand crowns I never wished to buy this beauty at
an easier rate. (217)

It illustrates the commodification of a female body in patriarchal society. Patriarchy reduces the women's value to an economic currency. The language of trade and a market place is common to all five men's expressed attitude in the above extract. Masculine attitude towards female is evident as for their whores and aristocratic women as marketable commodities. For them females are objects that could be brought in the market as they consider women as "price", "commodity", "purchase" and "portion". It shows inferior position of female who are exploited as objects consumed in patriarchal society. Such society defines the women's values and considers their body as objects to be consumed perpetually.

Marxist feminism is the system under which we all live, which is falling so miserably to meet the needs of the vast majority of the world's population. Under Marxist feminism, small minorities of people are in control of the money and resources. Labour

power cannot be separated from their humanity, it seems that females are literally bought and sold in the market place. The usefulness of an item is always subordinate to its price, has come to dominate the society.

Delphy's works are mostly about feminism and class- struggle issues. She creates material feminism which is not just socialist feminism but applies a materialist approach to gender relations. For Karl Marx, class is position in the mode of production, for Delphy gender is also a position in the mode of production. So, the main enemy of women is not capitalism but patriarchy. According to her, the sex comes after the gender and is used to legitimate the domination. Christine Delphy had a big influence on Judith Butler. But Butler de-emphasizes materialist analysis, for her women are principally a cultural construction. Delphy focuses that cultural term has dismissed the very real oppressions of women.

Capitalism suppresses most of our qualities by forcing us to compete for necessities. The thing about human beings is that we have choices. We can choose how to run the things. Capitalism creates a minority who are free to suppress the freedom of choice of everyone else. Likewise, capitalistic patriarchy as a descriptive of the mutually reinforcing dialectical relationship between capitalist class structure and hierarchical sexual activities. Structuring not only that, the recognition of a woman as a sexual class lays the subversive quality of feminism for liberalism because liberalism is premised upon women's exclusion from public life on this very class basis.

This claim that women's problems lie not only in the denial of political and legal rights, but also in an oppressive sexual morality goes well beyond traditional liberal concerns, and it was already present at Seneca Falls, where delegates demanded a rejection

of the dual standard of morality "by which delinquencies which exclude women from society, are not only tolerated, but deemed of little account in man" (147). For

virtually all the 'mainstream' feminists of the nineteenth century did not mean that, women should be freed from repressive sexual morality but that men should submit to it too; unlike the early socialists, the goal for most feminists was chastity for both sexes. This was in line with the ideas of both the evangelical movement, with its stress on self-discipline and traditional virtues, and the liberal suspicion of the body which tended to equate sexual enjoyment with animal self-indulgence.

Although Stanton herself did not deny that sex could be pleasurable to both men and women, and in the late 1860s she worked briefly with Victoria Woodhull, a notorious exponent of free love, she accepted the dominant view that sex was an inferior form of human behavior and that women were more able than men to control their sexual desires. She also argues that the unrestrained exercise of male sexuality caused great misery and degradation to women. Because a married woman has no legal right to deny her husband's sexual advances, she was at risk from both venereal disease and unwanted pregnancy, and Stanton argued that it was therefore male lust that drove many women to seek abortion which she opposed on health grounds while refusing to blame the women who has recourse to it. Prostitution was a clear consequence of both male sexuality and the unjust economic system that drove some women to such desperate measures; all women, moreover, were united by a fear of rape. Indeed, like some recent radical feminists, Stanton went so far as to see rape as synonymous with the condition of her sex: Society, as organised today under the man power, is one grand rape of womanhood, on the highways,

in our jails, prisons, asylums, in our homes, alike in the world of fashion and of work (35-36).

In the play, *The Rover* presents the dramatic world dominated by the two principal patriarchal definitions of women, but in which the boundary separating one category from the other has become blurred. In the case of both Florinda, the play says "maid of quality", and the prostitute Angellica Bianca, the role reversals arise out of contrasting bids to move from subjection into subjectivity. It is Florinda's rebellion against the commodification of forced marriage that destabilizes her position within patriarchy, while Angellica Bianca's self construction as patriarch mistress charts the attempt of a woman excluded from the material marketplace to turn her beauty into an alternative form of power.

In this regard, Anita Pacheco suggest that the presence of rape in the experience of these two characters works to interrogate and problematize different modes of female subjectivity by situating them within a patriarchal dramatic world in which the psychology of rape is endemic (323-45).

Not only that, Florinda's tale of attempted rape reveals that the relationship for which she defies patriarchal dictates reinforces dominant ideologies of gender and class on virtually every level, it sublimates eros into a narrative of aristocratic virtue which mystifies the figure of the upper class virgin as the passive, vulnerable, and incomparably precious possession of man. This, paradoxically, is the relationship which Florinda claims the right to choose for her, and she claims that right because she is an upper class virgin. Yet that role, as she conceives of it, has little if any space for the deserting subject. Florinda's view about sexuality conforms that to act as the agent of her sexual destiny is, by the patriarchal standards she almost entirely endorses, to forfeit all claim to status and value. The two contradictory meanings attached to

the figure of the maid of quality in the play, autonomies subject and object of exchange, dictate that for Florinda to assert her value on one level guarantees that she will lose it on the other.

The play's first scene of attempt rape makes it clear what it means to be a female sexual subject in the world. Florinda enters the scene determined to give herself to Belvile, and she accordingly surrounded by the signifiers of the sexuality she is so keen that erase from their relationship, she is out alone at night, "in an undress" (201), carrying a box of jewels symbolic of dowry and she desires to impart to the man of her choice. But the first man to appear is not Belvile but the drunken Willmore, who immediately sees sexual availability written all over this woman. This is a view of Florinda that no amount of resistance on her part is able to dislodge. Instead, Willmore reads her resistance in the way compatible with her appearance and conduct; in the first instance as the concern to preserve her good reputation, "I will be very secret. I'll not boast who 'twas obliged me, not I, for hang me if I know thy name"(202). And indeed, it is not long before Florinda accuses Willmore of sexual aggression with the cry, "wicked man, unhand me"(202). Far from backing off, however, Willmore simply denies the charge by throwing it back in Florinda's face. As he exclaims:

Wicked! Egad child, a judge where he young
 And vigorous, and saw those eyes of thine,
 Would know 'twas they gave the first blow,
 The first provocation, come, prithee, let's
 Lose no time, I say, this is a fine convenient place. (202)

In one hand, this is the pretty compliment, where the power of women's beauty that Willmore has already used with a success on Angellica Bianca. Willmore apparently does not

interpret her behavior as a refusal of consent, for he continues to read her as open, stapes up his efforts with a more seductive strategy, but patrician lovers are not normally in the habit of judicial judgment in support of their view of the beloved. Not only that in the case of sexual encounter, the battle of wills between courtly lover and tantalizing mistress become a rape trail where blame is laid squarely on the shoulders of the sexually provocative women.

On the other hand, Florinda's resistance in this scene works to consolidate the ideologies of gender that have subjected her to sexual assault, the attempted gang rape that follows, while revealing that status of the patriarchal view of rape, also restages her story in as usual. The link between male sexuality and male honor is again accentuated as Willmore, put out that Pedro should have won the privilege of being the first to have sex with Florinda, initiates a contest in sex appeal that turns into a grotesque courtly situation:

Willmore : but sir, perhaps the lady will Not be impose upon, she'll choose her man

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

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

Florinda articulates her defence of male authority by claiming that male decisions are "ill customs" which makes a woman the "slave" of her male relations. Her assertive feminine desire and wish configures the conflict between a patriarchal ordering of the world and the natural needs and desires of individual women. Aphra Behn's female characters in the play boldly make defence against patriarchal imperatives. They wittily deconstruct the patriarchy. Elin Diamond writes about the revolutionary character of Hellena:

Aphra Behn's *Hellena* ... rejects not only her brother's decision to place her in nunnery but also the cultural narrative of portion, jointure, and legal dependency in which she is written not as a subject but as object of exchange. (68)

Florinda is rebellious against the force marriage imposed by parental authority. The one-sided absolute concept of marriage defined and imposed by male authority without understanding women's feelings make the women as the object of exchange rather than women's autonomous right to choose her life partner. So, Florinda demonstrates rebellion against patriarchal system which considers women's as a commodity, objects to exchange with economic value in capitalistic society.

Like Florinda, *Hellena* is characterized through fast moving dialogue. Here, we see their brother has instructed them for a marriage and left them. Here, their intention are just opposite to each other. *Hellena* is more interested men than the God. She wants experiences of a love and marriage, whether her brother doesn't like. Thus, her brother Don Perdo wants sent to convent so there is totally contradiction to each other. Behn says:

Hellena: But hark you, *Callis*, you will not be so cruel to lock me up indeed, will you?

Callis: I most obey the commands I have; besides, do you consider what a life you are going to lead?

Hellena: Yes, *Callis*, that of a nun: and till then I will indebted a world of prayers to you, if you'll let me now see, what I never did the divertissements of a carnival.

Callis: What, go in masquerade? 'T' will be a fine farewell to the world, " take it, pray, what would you do there?

Hellena: That which all the world does, as I am told: be as mad as the rest, and take all innocent freedoms. Sister you will go too. Will you not? Come, prethee be not sad. We will outwit twenty brother's, if you will be ruled by me. (36)

Protagonist, Hellena wants to exploit her independence despite she has born in the restricted English society. In the English Victorian society there is a patriarchal domination. Women are not regarded as men. They are unequal to the male. Females are always suppressed and dominated by the male ideology.

In the play *The Rover*, through Willmore's seduction of Angellica, Behn shows that romance turns male sexual aggression into love by reinterpreting it as angry resistance to the power of the women's charms. When Willmore's immediate betrayal explodes the dream of self unity, Angellica's fragile constructed identity collapses with it, leaving behind a sense of utter worthlessness. She exclaims, "My richest treasure being lost, my honor, all the remaining spoil could not be worth The conqueror's care or value". (237)

In this way, the masculine supremacy that has consistently punctured her patrician fiction reappears here in its most brutal guise, in a metaphor of conquest that reveals a view of heterosexual relations as intrinsically violent, as inherently akin to rape. For this deflowered women, so absolute is the power man wield in the realm of sex and marriage that it likens them to conquerors exercising their domination on women's bodies, which are in turn reduced to the status of plunder, to be cherished or discarded depending on their possession of that patrilineal prize, the intact hymen. Male dominance and female submission do indeed define the world for Angellica Bianca as she confronts the truth that the loss of her virginity outside marriage is the essential and inescapable meaning of her life.

This play has political environment of the 1670s, as Beach asserts that, Behn inserts Hellena, that wonderful model for generosity towards cavalier shortcomings who attempt to rally the disruptive, carnivalesque audience into a vocal celebration of Willmore and an expression of Royalist good will:

HELLENA: I have considere'd the matter brother, and friend, the Three hundred thousand Crowns my Uncle left me (and you cannot keep from me) will be better laid out in Love than in Religion, and turn to as good an account, let most voices carry it, for Heaven or the Captain? (98)

The spontaneous enthusiasm of the response, "ALL cry, A Captain! A Captain! (157), projects a unanimous political community."ALL cry" conjures up a vision of Hellena gesturing to the audience, asking to them to roar their approval, along with the actors on the stage, in a celebration of the Cavalier court. This movement represents another way that Behn attempts to channel the unruliness of the carnivalesque crowd into support for that most carnivalesque of kings. If the restoration spectators were always talking during the performance, here they are given a chance to participate vocally and productively in the creation of Royalist and nationalist meanings.

In addition to their own conflicts, both sisters oppose Pedro. He first pretends to advocate the marriage between Florinda and the old, rich Vincentio that the father has arranged. But Florinda is already in love with Belvile, rejects the proposal. Here Hellena strenuously supports her sister because she is also advising about her own interests. Indeed, Hellena's rebuke of Pedro becomes so offensive that he angrily summons the governess to "take her hence, and lock her up all this carnival, and at let she shall begin her everlasting penance in a monastery (66)." Hellena replies definitely, "I care not, I had rather be a Nun, than be oblig'd to marry as you wou'd have

me, if I were desig'd for't" (67). He does not realize, of course, that she desires a man, but even if he did, he certainly would seek to stop her. He threatens "do not fear the blessing of that choice, you shall be a Nun" (82). Returning his attention to Floirinda, Pedro now reveals his true intent:

As for you Florinda, I've only try't you all this while and urg'd my Father's will;
but mine is, that you would love Antonio, he is brave and young, and all that can
compleat the happiness of a gallant Maid, this absence of my father will give us
opportunity, to free you from Vincentio. (40)

Likewise, in the play, *The Rover*, Blunt is so impressed and imagines to marry her. Only Angellica, however, actually, if paradoxically, embodies both whore and virgin. As she silences Moretta, who has complained about the five hundred crowns given by Willmore, Angellica pathetically confides the extent of Willmore's violation.

Oh, name not such mean trifles; had I given him all
My Youth has earn'd from sin,
I had not lost a thought, nor sign upon't
But I have given him my Etermal rest,
My whole repose, my future joys,my Heart!
My virgin heart Moretta;oh 'tis gone! (34)

Angellica emerges, therefore, a comprehensive character, incorporating the play's same generation women within the trope of prostitution. This compressiveness, however, enlarges to include men who would be husbands. Indeed, as Angellica explains to Willmore, who concurs, prostitution is not just a female profession, for men actually sell themselves to the wife who can play the most. In this way, Stephen remarks that, *The Rover* ends auspiciously with a set of same

generation marriages, but trouble stands in the wings, both the absence of a trustworthy patriarch and the disaffection of Angellica, as the body politic menace. Behn, therefore, leaves pressing question about authority and the notion raised but unanswered as the regime of the brother holds the stage.

According to Susan Carlson, Florinda becomes a woman belittled by a preoccupation with her looks; her real fears are trivialized. In other words, Behn's development of Florinda as a resultantly rebellious woman is replaced, in Barton, with signs of her frivolity (517-39).

Barton's impulse to generalize about women's behavior is more systematically present in those scenes where he turns Behn's three gentle women, Hellena, Florinda and Valeria, into a trio of women equally giddy with their blatantly expressed sexual desire. Behn's Hellena and Florinda are sisters of very different ilk who join with a kinswoman, Valeria, in their carnival capers. While there is some parallelism implied in their ventures, they are clearly differentiated in their motivations, language and actions. Barton instead stresses their similarities, raising Valeria to the status of a sister to Hellena and Florinda, and significantly increasing her speeches in the play. It does not seem to matter that his transfer to Valeria of many of Hellena's strongest lines significantly increases Valeria's presence at the same time it decreases Hellena's agency. The newly uniform responses of the women are most obvious at those moments when Barton invents for his three sisters a choral response to events, a response usually focused on their quest for sexual satisfaction. While this occurs demonstrably in at least four scenes (Barton's scenes II, III, VIII and XVI), it is most blatant in scene II. As Barton's three sisters prepare, for the first time, to join the carnival, they and governess Callis banter in sexually explicit terms. He has highlighted the phrases which seem the most intrusive addition for Barton. As he says:

Hellena: Now have I rare itch to dance and lure fellows.

Florinda: who will like thee well enough to have thee, that sees what a mad
wench thou art?

Hellena: Like me? I don't intend every he that likes me shall have me, but he that
I like. I should have stayed in the nunnery still if I had liked my lady
abbess as well as she liked me. No, I came thence not, as my wise
brother imagines, to take an eternal farewell of the world, but to love and
to be beloved; and I will be beloved, or I'll get one of you men, so I will.

Valeria: Am I put into the number of lovers?

Hellena: you? Why, sister, I know thou'rt as hot within as any lady in the indies.

Valeria: Than let's vie with one another who shall first win her man?

Florinda: I'll write a note ere we go, and if I chance to see Belvile, although he
will not know me, I'll give it him to let him know Florinda Favours
him. Yea, and I will give him to all the letters I have writ but dared not
send for fear of my brother.

Valeria: Haste, Haste.

Callis: Hark how gay it sounds. (225)

In this way, *The Rover* (1677) and *The Second Part of The Rover* (1681), both drawn from Killigrew's *Thamasso*, or *The Wanderer* (1663), are Behn's only plays to label a character a courtesan. In her wholly original *The Feigned Courtezans* (1679), witty virgins impersonate famous Roman courtesans and near debauches occur. But, as befits the romantic intrigue, marriages settle the confusion of plots and the financial stink of prostitution is hastily cleared away. If courtesans figure by name in only three plays, however, the commodification of women in the marriage market is Aphra Behn's first and the most persistence theme. Beginning

appropriately enough with *The Forced Marriage*; or *The Jealous Bridegroom* (1670), all of Behn's seventeenth known plays deal to some extent with women backed by dowries or portions who are forced by their fathers into marriage in exchange for jointure, an agreed upon income to be settled on the wife should she be widowed.

There was a lived context for this perspective. The dowry system among propertied classes had been in place since the sixteenth century, but at the end of the seventeenth century there were thirteen women to every ten men, and cash portions had to grow to attract worthy suitors. As the value of women fell by almost fifty percent, marriage for love and marriage by choice, become almost unthinkable. Women through marriage had evident exchange value; that is, the virgin become a commodity not only for her use value as breeder of the legal heir but for her portion, which through exchange, generated capital. If, as Marx writes, exchange converts commodities into fetishes or "social hieroglyphics" (36). Women in the seventeenth century marriage market took on the excellent destiny of fetishized commodities; they seemed no more than object or things.

Yet in order to launch *The Rover's* marriage plot and to provoke sympathy for her high spirited aristocrats. In this regard Ellen Diamond asserts that connection between virgin and prostitute. When Florinda, Hellena, and Valeria don gypsy costumes, assume the guise of marginal and exotic females, to join the carnival masquerade, they so explicitly to evade the patriarchal arrangement of law and jointure laid down by their father and legislated by their brother Pedro, Florinda shall marry a rich ancient count and Hellena shall go into a convent, thus saving their father a second dowry and simultaneously enriching Florinda. The opening dialogue of *The Rover* is also implicitly "gestic", raising question about women's material destiny in life as well in comic representation:

Florinda: What an impertinent thing is a young girl bred in a nunnery!

How full of questions! Prithee no more, hellena;

I have told thee more than thou understand'st already.

Hellena: The more's my grief. I would fain know as much as you, which makes me so inquisitive. (195)

In this way, Aphra Behn's Hellena seeks Knowledge "more than" or beyond the gender script provided for her. She rejects not only her brother's decision to place her in a nunnery, but also the cultural narrative of portion, jointure, and legal dependency in which she is written not as subject but as object of exchange. Yet Hellena, too, oscillates, both departing from and reinforcing her social script. Her lines following those cited above seem, at first, to complicate and differ the romantic closure of the marriage plot. To have a lover, Hellena conjectures, means to "sign and sing, and blush, and wish, and dream, and wish, and long, and wish to see the man" (7). This thrice reiterated wishing will result in three changes of custom, three suitors, and three marriages. As with the repetitions of "interest," "credit," and "value," Commodity signifiers that circulate through the play and slip like the vizard from face to hand to face, this repetition invokes the processes underling all wishing, to desire that will not, like a brother's spousal contract.

If we incorporate insights from feminist psychoanalytic theory, the virgins' masquerade takes on added significance, or rather this discourse helps us decode what is already implied, namely, that in an economy in which women are dependent on male keepers and traders, female desire is always already is masquerade, a play of false representation that covers over and simultaneously expresses the lack of the woman's exhibits, lack of male organ and concomitantly, lack of access to phallic privileges, to material and institutional power. Unlike

the theoretical mask, which conceals a truth, the masquerade of female sexuality subverts the "Law of the father" that stands "behind" any representation. Underneath the gypsy veils and drapes of the Behn's virgins, there is nothing, in a phallic sense, to see; thus no coherent female identity that can be cooped into a repressive romantic narrative. Willmore, titillated by Hellena's witty chatter, asks to see her face. Helena responds that underneath the vizard is a "desperate... lying look" (56) that is, she, like her vizard, may prevaricate; represented may mingle with representer, for the Willmore there will be no validating stake.

In the play, regarding Angellica painting's she emerges in the flesh and offers herself, gratis to Willmore, finding his scornful admiration ample reason for, for the first time, falling in love. In their bargaining scene it becomes clear that Angellica wants to step out of the exchange economy symbolized by paintings: "canst thou believe, will be entirely thine, without considering they were mercenary?" (45). The key word here is "entirely"; Angellica dreams of full reciprocal exchange without commerce. "The play I mean is but they love for mine/ can you give that?" (47). And Willmore responds "entirely."

Materialist feminism examines the patriarchal traditions and institutions that control the material and economic conditions by which society oppresses women. Here, Angellica's name contains "angel", a word whose meaning is undecidable since it refers simultaneously to the celestial figure and to the old English coin stamped with the device of Michael the archangel, minted for the last time by Charles I but still in common circulation during the restoration. By eliminating her value from, Angellica attempts to return her body to state the nature, to take herself out of circulation. While the virgin of the marriage plot are taking "business" and learning the powers of deferral and unveiling, Angellica is trying to demystify and authenticate herself. She wants to step out of the paintings, to be known not by her surface but by her depth. As she

"yields" to Willmore upstairs, the portraits on the balcony are removed. A sign that the courtesan is working. In this case, not only does the "natural" body supplant its painted representation, but the courtesan, who has been in excess of, now makes up a deficiency in, the marriage plot, Angellica labors for love.

Through the paintings disappear in act III, however, the signs of commodification are still in place, or are displaced through properties and scenes to other character in the marriage plot. We learn that Hellena's portion derives from her uncle, the old man who kept Angellica Bianca, thus the gold Willmore receives from the courtesan has the same source as that which he will earn by marrying the virgin. Like Angellica, too, the virgin Florinda uses the portrait as a calling card and at night in the garden, "in undress," carrying a little box of jewels, double metonym for dowry and genitals, she plans to offer herself to Belvile (65). Unfortunately Willmore, not Belvile, enters the garden and nearly rapes her.

In this way, the "signs of Angellica" not only helps us specify the place of this important women dramatist in restoration cultural practice, they invite us to historicize the critic of sex that has informed so much feminist criticism in the last decade. Certainly the condition of women writers have changed since the restoration, but the sexist features of the commercial theater have remained remarkably similar. Now as then the theaters have reminded remarkably similar. Now as then the theater apparatus is geared to profit and pleasure, and overwhelmingly controlled by males. Now as then the arrangement of audience to stage produces what Brecht calls a "culinary" or ideologically conservative spectator, intellectually passive but scopically hungry, eager for the next turn of the plot, the next scenic effect. Now as then the actor suffers the reduction of Angellica Bianca, having in existence except in the simulations produced by the

exchange economy. The practice of illusionism, as Adorno points out above, converts historical performers into commodities which the spectator plays to consume. As he writes:

If Restoration Theater marks the historical beginning of commodity, intensive, dreamlike effects in English staging, Aphra Behn's contribution to contemporary theory may lie in her demonstration that, from the outset, dreamlike effects have depended on the fetish, commodification of the female body. When Willmore, standing in for king and court, steals Angellica's painting, Behn not only reifies the female, she genders the spectatorial economy as specifically, a male consumption of the female image. Reading that confident gesture of appropriation as a Gestus, the contemporary spectators add another viewpoint. Angellica Bianca's painting appears to us now as both authorial "signature" and "social hieroglyphic," sign of critique and contestation. (237)

Whereas, the limitations real women suffered are illustrated on the stage as well; Pat Gill's "gender, sexuality, and Marriage" describes the themes of restoration drama explores regarding gender, sexuality, and marriage in comedies. The chapter describes how:

In comic fashion, the play broach and endeavor to resolve serious cultural concerns, such as the definition of gender roles, the regularities of sexual behavior, the characteristic of class, and the compatibility of marriage partners. Despite the profligate activities of their heroes, a number of who espouse a nonchalantly libertine creed, these comedies are socially conservative" (191).

What Gill implies is that male playwrights continued to write women in such a way that good women are rewarded with marriages to desirable man while bad women are punished. In her own book, *Interpreting Ladies*, Gill argues that Aphra Behn's plays represent a unique

approach to gender relations during the restoration because her plays distinctly avoid many of the themes her male counterparts pursued in favor of "feminine desire, Knowledge, moral concerns" (140). She argues that Behn did not actually write comedies of manners because she does not represent a "nice" world in her plays, Behn's world is much more realistic and makes a deliberate move away from male centered sexual and social discourse towards a more equal discourse that represent potential realities.

Gill's remark that male authored plays are divergent from reality in significant ways is supported by Weber who says that "In many restoration comedies young women possesses far greater economic security than the rakes who support them. Many witty virgins owe their popularity not simply to their intellectual and physical charms, but to their attractive fortunes... when money is consideration of the love game, usually a women has it"(Weber 145). Female character having fortunes at their disposal is wonderful to read about or see in a play, but fictional heroines having money and using the money as a tool to gain independence enough to construct their own identities does not help real women, who may or may not have money, much less control over it . In *The Rover*, one of the restorations most popular plays written by the late seventeenth century playwright, poet, and novelist Aphra Behn who is noted for being the first female playwright to make a living by her pen. *The Rover* was originally published anonymously in 1677 but it was not until after it was successful that Behn added her name to it. *The Rover* is a disguise comedy, which is a common genre in Restoration drama and represents a unique site of identity construction and exploration. In *The Rover*, Behn provides several different examples of how women from several backgrounds can successfully construct their own identities in a variety of ways.

III. Victory of the Protagonists Against Patriarchy in *The Rover*

This research depicts the position of the females in the Victorian society, where they have been subordinated and victimized by the hands of patriarchal mindset. Females in the Victorian society cannot share freedom and justice with their male counterparts. They have been made dependent by the males on them in all spheres of life. The family property is owned by the males and females do not have any property rights. They have been compelled to serve man for their survival. They have been forced to do marriage, convent and prostitutes. They follow their duties set by patriarchal society without any question and they never try to challenge it. The story is very comical throughout as the characters all try to maintain their own disguise while trying to achieve their goals the disguises lead to mix-up, tests of loyalty, and intrigue throughout the play. Every character has their own secret agendas and it takes their connections with each to achieve, their ultimate desire.

The Rover opens with Hellena, a young woman who is supposed to take orders as a nun in a few days but who does not want to live her life in a convent so she decides to don a disguise and explores carnival, which just happens to be going on. Assuming various disguises is a way for Hellena to express herself in ways that are normally forbidden to her, either because her brother or father has expressly prohibited it because of larger social restriction on women, especially women of higher classes. She does not want to be the obedient daughter who faithfully takes her vows because that is what is expected for her; if she decides to take the vows she wants to do so because it was her own decision. It is the process of exploring and creating her own identity and future that is important for Hellena, not necessarily what she decides to do. Thus, Hellena sets out to explore the world and construct her own identity and plan her own life. She

wants to determine who she will be and what life she will lead and not simply accept what her family has laid out for her. Hellena takes on a variety of traits represented by her disguises to construct her own identity that, by the end of the play, gives her what she wants.

Throughout the play she observes the kinds of lives available to women and decides that she wants a traditional marriage. This is a conventional, conservative choice, but she chooses it herself and it is a very different life than that of a nun. Marriage is the life that she wants and it is the process of self fashioning and choosing that is important. What she ultimately decides to do with herself is secondary having the chance to make that decision at all. By wearing disguise and assuming the traits they represent, Hellena has enough freedom from her family to learn what her life could be and to make decisions about her life without her family interjecting and making decision on her behalf.

In the final scene Hellena, now dressed as a man, demands that Willmore, her love interest, marry and be faithful her, "such usage you must still look for, to find you all your haunts, to rail at you to all that you love, till I have made you love only me in your on defense " (241). Hellena will chase away all his admirers and find out all his secrets so that he cannot be anything other than an honest man. Willmore recognizes her firm stance "I see we are both upon our guards, and I see there's no way to conquer good nature, but they yielding"(242). So he gives into Hellena's demands for marriage. Even though he agrees to marry her, his libertine past taints Hellena's apparent happy ending. Instead of rejoicing in herself constructed identity and marriage to a man she has chosen, there is doubt about how happy she will actually be since Willmore still seems to be focused on immediate pleasure rather than permanent affection.

On the other hand, Hellena rejects Willmore's offer of love without demands or restrictions, instead insisting that he marries her. Before dismissing the ending as a cheap

resolution for a comedy, it is worth considering that the ending is actually a skillfully maneuvered and successful ending for Hellena, she is not just demanding marriage because that is what a woman of her status should do, but instead is a deliberate choice on her part. She has spent the play learning what her options are and deciding what life she actually wants, instead of just blindly accepting what is given to her. Marriage to Willmore is also a very difficult kind of life than what her family had planned for her; in fact, married life and life as a nun are mutually exclusive and antithetical. Hellena and Willmore go on to detail the contract of their relationship before they divulge their names and social status. Arguably, not knowing the other person's complete identity is a sign of their strong connection since they do make plans to marry, and Hellena and Willmore's relationship appears to be everything one could want, a love match between equals but it seems unlikely that Willmore is reformed in just a few lines as completely as Hellena would like.

Likewise, before Hellena's marriage Willmore was merely trying to have sex with her and now he argues against marriage before he grudgingly relents. There could be many reasons for his hesitation, he might not want to marry a gypsy, he might not want to marry a person of unknown birth, status, and fortune, or he might just want the freedom to sleep around without legal complications. Ultimately through, Willmore does agree to marry Hellena and he also agrees because Hellena now appears as a man, has shed what Willmore considers to be her irritating female traits. It is impossible to predict if he will treat Hellena badly, as he has other women, or if he will be loyal to her, as he is to his male friends. Perhaps Hellena will be able to navigate a homosocial sort of relation with him so he will remain loyal to her, Hellena must be woman enough to keep him in her bed and man enough to keep him as a friend and husband.

Finally, Hellena's mixing of class and gender traits to explore and create her own identity and sexuality allows her to attain a life she wants. Each disguise she assumes adds to or revises her own construction of herself and in each scene her disguise is paired with a mask that hides her identity from her family and acquaintances. The mask is important because it prevents her from being identified as Hellena and so she cannot be held accountable for her actions. In her final disguise she is dressed as a man and it is in this male guise that he and Willmore make vows to each other and learn each other's names. By shedding the identity, her family and the convent had constructed for her, she is able to build a new identity that is free and explicit in her desires, speech, and actions. By the end of the play, she actively pursues her sexual desires, she speaks candidly about what she wants out of her relationship with Willmore, and she does all of this while dressed as a man she successfully passes as a man but is able to wear the cloths and be recognized, not as a women, but as herself Hellena.

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