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Author(s): Elin Diamond

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GESTUS AND SIGNATURE IN APHRA BEHN'S THE ROVER

BY ELIN DIAMOND

Where the dream is at its most exalted, the commodity is
closest to hand.

—Theodor Adorno, *In Search of Wagner*

Near the end of act 2 of *The Rover*, after the wealthy virgins and hungry gallants have been introduced, and the reader-spectator is made aware that comic symmetry is pressing toward chase and final reward, mention is made of a beautiful courtesan whom the gallants, including the affianced ones, are trying to impress. Angellica Bianca would seem to be a supplement to the intrigue plot—a supplement since one need not intrigue to visit a whore. Yet before the virgins are rewarded with the husbands they desire, they will traverse this whore's marketplace. In "scenes" and "discoveries," they will market themselves as she does, compete for the same male affection, suffer similar abuse. The courtesan herself enters the play not in the way the audience might expect, behind an exotic vizard, or "discovered" in her bedchamber after the parting of the scenes, but as a portrait, as *three* portraits, a large one hung from the balcony and two smaller ones posted on either side of the proscenium door designating her lodging. Willmore, the play's titular rover, arrives at her door, and in the absence of the courtesan he cannot afford, he appropriates her in representation—he reaches up and steals a portrait.

Willmore's gesture, I will suggest, contains information beyond the local revelation of one character's behavior. We might read Willmore's gesture as a Brechtian *Gestus* or "gest," a moment in performance that makes visible the contradictory interactions of text, theater apparatus, and contemporary social struggle.¹ In the unraveling of its intrigue plot, Aphra Behn's *The Rover* not only thematizes the marketing of women in marriage and prostitution, it "demonstrates," in its gestic moments, the ideological contradictions of the apparatus Behn inherited and the society for which she wrote. Brecht's account of the *Gestus* is useful for alerting us to the vectors of historical change written into dramatic texts, but he

makes no provision for gender—an unavoidable issue in Aphra Behn’s own history. Educated but constantly in need of money, with court connections but no supporting family, Aphra Behn wrote plays when female authorship was a monstrous violation of the “woman’s sphere.” Since the reopening of the theaters in 1660, Frances Boothby and the Duchess of Newcastle each had had a play produced, but no woman had challenged the Restoration theater with Behn’s success and consistency.² Indeed, that she could earn a living writing for the theater was precisely what condemned her. The muckraking satirist Robert Gould wrote typical slander in a short piece addressed to Behn that concluded with this couplet: “For Punk and Poetess agree so Pat, / You cannot be This and not be That.”³

In her suggestive “Arachnologies: The Woman, The Text, and the Critic,” Nancy Miller implicitly proposes a feminist version of the *Gestus*; texts by women writers, says Miller, encode the signs or “emblems of a female signature” by which the “culture of gender [and] the inscriptions of its political structures” might be read.⁴ In a woman-authored text, then, the gestic moment would mark both a convergence of social actions and attitudes, and the gendered history of that convergence. Robert Gould’s verse, with its violent, unequivocal equation of “poetess” and “punk,” provides some evidence of the culture of gender in Restoration London. Like her male colleagues, Behn hawked her intrigue comedies and political satires in the literary and theatrical marketplace, and like them, she suffered the attacks of “fop-corner” and the sometimes paltry remuneration of third-day receipts. In her case, however, the status of professional writer indicated immodesty: the author, like her texts, became a commodity.

Deciphering Behn’s authorial “signature” obliges us to read the theatrical, social, and sexual discourses that complicate and obscure its inscription. I am aiming here to open the text to what Brecht calls its “fields of force” (30)—those contradictory relations and ideas that signify in Behn’s culture and are, as this reading will indicate, symptomatic of our own. Like Brecht, in his discussion of Shakespeare’s *Coriolanus* (252–65), I am interested less in interpretative truth than in exploring a complex textual system in which author, apparatus, history, and reader-spectator each plays a signifying role. The following section will consider Behn’s authorial contexts, the Restoration theater apparatus, with its proto-fetishist positioning of “scenes” and actresses; the next two sections focus

on multivalent signs of gender in *The Rover*; and the final section, returning to the theater apparatus by way of Behn's unique obsessions, poses the question of the woman dramatist's signature: How does Aphra Behn encode the conditions of her literary and theatrical production? How does she stage the relationship between female creativity and public calumny—between what Robert Gould, in darkly humorous euphemisms, refers to as “this” and “that”?

I. THE APPARATUS

The term “apparatus” draws together several related aspects in theater production: the hierarchy of economic control, the material features of machinery and properties, and, more elusively, the social and psychological interplay between stage and audience. When Aphra Behn wrote her seventeen plays (1670–1689), the theatrical hierarchy, like all cultural institutions, was patriarchal in control and participation. Charles II invested power in the first patentees, Thomas Killigrew and William D'Avenant; aristocratic or upper-class males generally wrote the plays, purchased the tickets, and formed the coteries of critics and “witlings” whose disruptive presence is remarked on in countless play prologues and epilogues. In its machinery and properties, the Restoration stage was not unlike Wagner's theater in Adorno's critique: dreamlike, seductive, and commodity-intensive. Though the technology was well established in Italian and French courts, and in English court masques before the Interregnum, the two new Restoration theaters gave Londoners their first view of movable painted “scenes” and mechanical devices or “machines,” installed behind the forestage and the proscenium arch. Actors posed before elaborately painted “wings” (stationary pieces set in receding rows) and “shutters” (flat painted scenes that moved in grooves and joined in the center). When the scenes parted, their characters were “discovered” against other painted scenes that, parting, produced further discoveries.⁵ Built in 1671, The Duke's Theater, Dorset Garden, the site of most of Behn's plays, was particularly known for its “gawdy Scenes.”⁶

The movement of painted flats, the discoveries of previously unseen interiors, introduced a new scopic epistemology. Seated and unruly in semicircular areas of pit, boxes, first, middle, and upper galleries, Restoration spectators, unlike their Elizabethan counterparts, were no longer compelled to imagine the features of bed-chambers, parks, or battlefields. Like Richard Flecknoe, they could rely on scenes and machines as “excellent helps of imagination,

most grateful deceptions of the sight. . . . Graceful and becoming Ornaments of the Stage [transport] you easily without lassitude from one place to another, or rather by a kinde of delightful Magick, whilst you sit still, does bring the place to you.”⁷ Assuming that Flecknoe’s reaction is typical, and there is evidence that it is, Restoration stagecraft seems to have created a spectator-fetishist, one who takes pleasure in ornaments that deceive the sight, whose disavowal of material reality produces a desire for the “delightful Magick” of exotic and enticing representations.⁸

I am deliberately conflating two uses of “fetishism” in this account of Restoration reception: one, Freud’s description of the male impulse to eroticize objects or female body parts, which derives from a disavowal of a material lack (of the penis on the mother’s body); and two, Marx’s account of the fetishization of the commodity: at the moment of exchange, the commodity appears to be separate from the workers who produce it; the “specific social character of private labors” is disavowed.⁹ Nowhere are these meanings of fetishism more relevant than in discourse generated by that other ornament of the stage, the Restoration actress. In his preface to *The Tempest*, Thomas Shadwell links the new phenomenon of female performers with painted theatrical scenes, both innovative commodities for audience consumption:

Had we not for yr pleasure found new wayes
You still had rusty Arras had, and thredbare playes;
Nor Scenes nor Woomen had they had their will,
But some with grizl’d Beards had acted Woomen still.

That female fictions were to be embodied by beardless women would, Thomas Killigrew promised, be “useful and instructive.”¹⁰ What the signifying body of the actress actually meant in the culture’s sexual economy is perhaps more accurately suggested by metatheatrical references in play prologues and epilogues. The actress playing Flirt in Wycherley’s *The Gentleman Dancing Master* satirically invites the “good men o’ th’ Exchange” from the pit into the backstage tiring-room: “You we would rather see between our Scenes”; and Dryden, in the Prologue to *Marriage A-la-Mode*, has the actor Hart refer to passionate tiring-room assignments.¹¹

The private writings of Samuel Pepys are even more suggestive of the sinful pleasures afforded by actresses. On October 5, 1667, he visited the Theatre Royal in Bridges Street:

and there, going in, met with Knipp [Mrs. Knep], and she took us up into the Tiring-rooms and to the women’s Shift, where Nell

[Gwyn] was dressing herself and was all unready; and is very pretty, prettier than I thought; and so walked all up and down the House above, and then below into the Scene-room. . . . But Lord, to see how they were both painted would make a man mad—and did make me loath them—and what base company of men comes among them, and how lewdly they talk—and how poor the men are in clothes, and yet what a show they make on the stage by candlelight, is very observable. (834)

Candlelight has the ideological function of suturing contradictions between “lewd” actors and an alluring “show,” and even a habitual playgoer like Pepys is disturbed when the seams show. That actresses were pretty women was not surprising, but the transformation of women into painted representations beautifully exhibited by candlelight was both fascinating and disturbing. Pepys went behind the painted scenes, but the paint was still there. He hoped to separate the pretty woman from the painted actress, but it was the actress he admired—and fetishized—from his spectator’s seat.¹²

For Pepys and other Restoration commentators, the actress’s sexuality tended to disavow her labor. Rather than produce a performance, she is a spectacle unto herself, a painted representation to lure the male spectator. In her professional duplicity, in her desirability, in her often public status of kept mistress, she is frequently equated with prostitutes or “vizard-masks” who worked the pit and galleries of Restoration theaters during and after performances. In Wycherley’s *The Plain Dealer*, Mrs. Hoyden is disparaged for being “As familiar a duck . . . As an Actress in the tiring-room” (407).

The epistemological link between the theater apparatus and illicit female signs is not of course new to the Restoration. Jonas Barish, documenting the antitheatrical prejudice, notes that Patristic condemnation of the theater, typified in tracts from the third-century Tertullian’s to those of Renaissance Puritans Phillip Stubbes and William Prynne, builds on the Platonic condemnation of mimesis as the making of counterfeit copies of true originals. Actors in paint and costume contaminate their true God-given identities: “Whatever is *born*,” writes Tertullian, “is the work of God. Whatever . . . is *plastered on* is the devil’s work.”¹³ To the Puritan mind the presence of women on stage was an affront to feminine modesty, but more damning was the fact that the means of illusionism—use of costume, paint, masking—involved specifically female vices. The nature of theatrical representation, like the “nature” of woman, was to ensnare, deceive, and seduce.

Given this cultural legacy, and the metonymic connection between painted female performer and painted scenes, it is not surprising that the first woman to earn money circulating her own representations had a combative relationship with the theater apparatus. As we will see, Aphra Behn, more than any other Restoration playwright, exploits the fetish/commodity status of the female performer, even as her plays seek to problematize that status. She utilizes the conventional objects of Restoration satire—the marriage market, sexual intrigue, masquerade, libertine flamboyance—even as she signals, in “gestic” moments, their contradictory meanings for female fictions and historical women.

II. VIRGIN COMMODITIES

The Rover (1677) and *The Second Part of The Rover* (1681), both drawn from Killigrew's *Thomaso, or The Wanderer* (1663), are Behn's only plays to label a character a courtesan; in her wholly original *The Feigned Curtezans* (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.¹⁴ If courtesans figure by name in only three plays, however, the commodification of women in the marriage market is Aphra Behn's first and most persistent theme. Beginning appropriately enough with *The Forced Marriage; or The Jealous Bridegroom* (1670), all of Behn's seventeen 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, marriage by choice, became almost unthinkable.¹⁵ Women through marriage had evident exchange value; that is, the virgin became 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,” signs whose histories and qualitative differences can no longer be read (161), women in the seventeenth-century marriage market took on

the phantasmagoric destiny of fetishized commodities; they seemed no more than objects or things. As Margaret Cavendish observed, sons bear the family name but “Daughters are to be accounted but as Movable Goods or Furnitures that wear out.”¹⁶

Restoration comedy, from the earliest Etherege and Sedley through Wycherley, Dryden, Vanbrugh, D’Urfey, and Congreve, mocked the marketplace values of marriage, promoting the libertine’s aesthetic of “natural” love, verbal seduction, and superiority over jealous husbands and fops. But Aphra Behn concentrated on exposing the exploitation of women in the exchange economy, adding vividly to contemporary discourse on the oppressions of marriage. “Wife and servant are the same / But differ only in the name,” wrote Lady Mary Chudleigh.¹⁷ “Who would marry,” asks Behn’s Ariadne (*The Second Part of the Rover*), “who wou’d be chaffer’d thus, and sold to Slavery?”¹⁸ The issue arises repeatedly in plays and verse of the period: not only are marriages loveless, but once married, women lose both independent identity and control of their fortunes. Ariadne again:

You have a Mistress, Sir, that has your Heart, and all your softer Hours: I know’t, 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 far: Possess she all the day thy Hours of Mirth, good Humour and Expence, thy Smiles, thy Kisses, and thy Charms of Wit. (1:152)

The feminist philosopher Mary Astell would have had no sympathy for the sensuous appetites of Behn’s females, but Ariadne’s sentiments receive astute articulation in Astell’s *Some Reflections Upon Marriage*. The money motive for marriage produces in the man contempt and “Indifferency” which “proceeds to an aversion, and perhaps even the Kindness and Complaisance of the poor abused’d Wife, shall only serve to increase it.” Ultimately, the powerless wife ends up “mak[ing] court to [her husband] for a little sorry Alimony out of her own Estate.”¹⁹ Two centuries later Engels merely restates these comments in his observation that forced marriages “turn into the crassest prostitution—sometimes of both partners, but far more commonly of the woman, who only differs from the ordinary courtesan in that she does not [hire] out her body on piecework as a wage worker, but sells it once and for all into slavery.”²⁰

Yet in order to launch *The Rover*’s marriage plot and to provoke sympathy for her high-spirited aristocrats, Behn dissimulates the

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 do 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 questions about women’s material destiny in life as well as 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.²¹

Hellena dons masquerade because she desires not a particular lover but a wider knowledge. Given the conventions of Restoration comedy, this wish to know “more than” she already understands is troped as a wish for sexual adventure. But if we hear this dialogue dialogically—in its social register—other meanings are accessible.²² Women’s lack of access to institutions of knowledge spurred protest from writers as diverse as Margaret Cavendish, Bathsua Makin, Mary Astell, and Judith Drake. Aphra Behn mocks a university fool in *The City Heiress* and a learned lady in *Sir Patient Fancy*; she criticizes neoclassical aesthetics in “Epistle to the Reader,” appended to *The Dutch Lover* (1:221–25), for having nothing to do with why people write or attend plays.²³ When she translates Bernard de Fontenelle’s *A Discovery of New Worlds*, however, she reveals as passionate a hunger for esoteric knowledge as these early English feminists. Unfortunately, the controlling conceit of Fontenelle’s work—a mere woman is informally taught the complexities of Copernican theory—produces an untenable and revealing contradiction for Behn: “He [Fontenelle] makes her [the Marchionness] say a great many silly things, tho’ sometimes she makes observations so learned, that the greatest Philosophers in Europe could make no better.”²⁴ Insightful yet silly, wise yet a *tabula rasa*, Fontenelle’s Marchionness oscillates between intellectual independence and slavish imitation. She is perhaps less a contradictory character than a projection of a male intellectual’s ambivalence about female education.

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 defer the romantic closure of the marriage plot. To have a lover, *Hellena* conjectures, means to "sigh, 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 costume, 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 underlying all wishing, to desire that will not, like a brother's spousal contract, find its "completion."

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 a masquerade, a play of false representations that covers over and simultaneously expresses the lack the woman exhibits—lack of the male organ and, concomitantly, lack of access to phallic privileges—to material and institutional power. Unlike the theatrical mask, which conceals a truth, the masquerade of female sexuality subverts the "Law-of-the-Father" that stands "behind" any representation.²⁵ Underneath the gypsy veils and drapes of Behn's virgins, there is nothing, in a phallic sense, to see; thus no coherent female identity that can be coopted into a repressive romantic narrative. Willmore, titillated by *Hellena*'s witty chatter, asks to see her face. *Hellena* 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 spectator (Willmore) there will be no validating stake.

Yet, as Behn well knew, there is means of validation, one that guarantees patriarchy's stake in portion, jointure, and the woman's body: the hymen. In Restoration comedy no witty unmarried woman was really witty unless she had property *and* a maidenhead. Behn's virgins may re-"design" their cast of characters but they

cannot change their plot. Ultimately their masquerade is dissimulation in the classic representational sense, a veil that hides a truth. Hellena's mask merely replicates the membrane behind which lies the "true nature" of woman: the equipment to make the requisite patrilineal heir. Thus Willmore's masterful response to Hellena's "lying look" is a mock-blazon of her facial features, ending in a fetishistic flourish: "Those soft round melting cherry lips and small even white teeth! Not to be expressed, but silently adored!" (56). The play in Hellena's discourse between knowing and desiring, which extends through the masquerade, completes itself in the marriage game. She exercises her will only by pursuing and winning Willmore, for as it turns out he has the "more" she "would fain know."

Willmore acts not only as the rover but as signifier for the play's phallic logic. His name metaphorizes the trajectory of desire as he roves from bed to bed "willing more," making all satisfactions temporary and unsatisfying. Desire's subject, Willmore never disguises himself (he comes on stage *holding* his mask); until enriched by the courtesan Angellica Bianca, he remains in "buff" or leather military coat. In another sense, though, Willmore is already in disguise, or rather the entity "Willmore" covers a range of linguistic and social signifiers. Behn's model for Willmore (like Etherege's for Dorimont) was reputedly the womanizing courtier, the Earl of Rochester, whose name, John Wilmot, contains, like the rover's, the word ("mot") "will." Rochester was also the lover and mentor of Elizabeth Barry, the actress who first played Behn's Hellena. In Tory mythology Charles II, on the verge of fleeing England, disguised himself in buff—a leather doublet.²⁶ Indeed, Willmore's first lines refer to the offstage Prince who, in exile during the Commonwealth, was also a rover. Doubled mimetically and semiotically with both Rochester and the Merry Monarch (who attended at least one performance of *The Rover* before the play was restaged at Whitehall), Willmore needs no mask to effect his ends: his libertine desire is guaranteed and upheld by patriarchal law. Hellena's playful rovings, on the other hand, and her numerous disguises, signal both ingenuity and vulnerability.²⁷ Ironically, the virgins' first costume, the gypsy masquerade, represents their actual standing in the marriage market—exotic retailers of fortunes (or portions). Their masquerade defers but does not alter the structure of patriarchal exchange.

III. PAINTING(S), PERSON, BODY

In contrast to the virgins' "ramble" are the stasis and thralldom that attend the courtesan Angellica Bianca. While the virgins are learning artful strategies of concealment, Angellica's entrance is a complicated process of theatrical unveiling. She arrives first through words, then through painted representation, then through the body of an actress who appears on a balcony behind a silk curtain. She is also the site of a different politics, one that explores desire and gender not only in the text but in the apparatus itself.

The first references to Angellica situate her beyond the market in which we expect her to function. According to Behn's gallants, she is the "adord beauty of all the youth in Naples, who put on all their charms to appear lovely in her sight; their coaches, liveries and themselves all gay as on a monarch's birthday" (28). Equated thus with sacred and secular authority, Angellica gazes on her suitors and "has the pleasure to behold all languish for her that see her" (28). This text in which desire flows from and is reflected back to a female subject is immediately followed by the grouping of the English gallants beneath the courtesan's balcony. They wait with the impatience of theater spectators for Angellica to appear—not in person but in representation, as "the shadow of the fair substance" (29).

At this point the problematic connection between shadow and substance preoccupies them. Blunt, the stock country fool, is confused by the fact that signs of bourgeois and even noble status—velvet beds, fine plate, handsome attendance, and coaches—are flaunted by courtesans. Blunt is raising an epistemological issue that Behn and her colleagues often treat satirically—the neoclassical assumption regarding mimesis that imitated can be separated from imitator, nature from representation, truth from falsehood, virgin from gypsy. By suggesting that whores are indistinguishable from moral women, Behn revives the problematic of the masquerade, casting doubt on the connection/separation of sign and referent. Significantly, when Hobbes constructed his theory of sovereign authority, he employed theater metaphors to distinguish between "natural" and "feigned or artificial" persons. But he noted that "person" was itself a slippery referent:

The word Person [persona] is Latin . . . [and] signifies the *disguise*, or *outward appearance* of a man, counterfeited on the

stage; and sometimes more particularly that part of it, which disguiseth the face, as a mask or vizard: and from the stage, hath been translated to any representer of speech and action, as well in tribunals, as theatres. So that a *person* is the same that an *actor* is, both on stage and in common conversation.²⁸

Since, as Christopher Pye notes, everyone is already a “self-impersonator, a mediated representation of himself,” the difference between “natural” and “feigned” rests on highly unstable assumptions about identity which, both “on stage” and “in common conversation” are capable of shifting.²⁹ Blunt’s confusion about the true status of apparently noble women may also be read as an extratextual reference to the Restoration actress and her female spectators. As kept mistresses, actresses often displayed the fine clothing and jewels of aristocrats like the notorious Duchess of Cleveland, who regularly watched the play in vizard-mask from the king’s box. Yet the respectable Mrs. Pepys also owned a vizard-mask, and on her frequent visits to the theater occasionally sat in the pit near the “real” vizards.³⁰

Given the theatricality of everyday Restoration life, and the ambiguity of signs representing the status and character of women, Angellica’s three portraits allow Aphra Behn to comment on the pleasures and politics of theatrical signification. Though I have ignored the specifics of Behn’s adaptation of her source play, it is helpful here to compare her handling of the paintings with that of Killigrew in his ten-act semiautobiographical closet drama, *Thomaso, or The Wanderer*. In both plays, one portrait is prominent and raised, and two smaller versions are posted below, one of which is snatched by the rake—Thomaso in the source play, Willmore in Behn’s. But there is an important difference in the disposition of the paintings vis-à-vis the woman they represent. In *Thomaso*, 2.1, anonymous parties of men pass in front of the paintings, react scornfully to the courtesan’s high price, and wander on. But in 2.2, with the arrival of Killigrew’s main characters, Angellica Bianca is sitting on the balcony in full view of her prospective buyers. Her bawd challenges the men to “compare them [the paintings and the woman] together.”³¹ With neoclassical correctness, the men agree that the woman exceeds her representation: “That smile, there’s a grace and sweetness in it Titian could never have catch’d” (333). By the time the English Thomaso and his friends arrive, the viewing of the paintings and the viewing of Angellica are almost simultaneous:

Harrigo: That wonder is it I told you of; tis the picture of the famous Italian, the Angellica; See, shee's now at her Window.
Thomaso: I see her, 'tis a lovely Woman.

(Killigrew, 334)

Aphra Behn's *Angellica Bianca* never invites such explicit comparison. In fact, Behn prolongs the dialogue between titillated suitors and suggestive portraits: *Angellica's* simulacra, not *Angellica*, preoccupy her male audience. When the English cavaliers first view the paintings, Belvile, the play's fatuous moral figure, reads them as "the fair sign[s] to the inn where a man may lodge that's fool enough to give her price" (33). That is, the iconicity of the paintings, their likeness to *Angellica*, which so impresses Killigrew's cavaliers, is in Behn's text suppressed. Gazing on the portraits, the gallants rewrite the courtesan's monarchial description, now figuring her as a thing, a receptacle for depositing one's body. To underscore the point, Behn has Blunt ask the ontological question to which there is a ready answer in commodity discourse: "Gentlemen, what's this?" Belvile: "A famous courtesan, that's to be sold" (33). The infinitive phrase is curious. To be sold by whom? Released by her earlier keeper's death, *Angellica* and her bawd seem to be in business for themselves. At this point, however, Blunt reminds us again of the object status of the woman, as of her painted signs: "Let's be gone; I'm sure we're no chapmen for this commodity" (33).

Willmore, however, monarchy's representative, succumbs to the lure of the signs, believing not only in their iconicity but in their value as pleasurable objects—for the original one must pay one thousand crowns, but on the portraits one can gaze for nothing. Penury, however, is not the real issue. Willmore seems to understand that the appeal of the paintings is precisely that they are not the original but an effective stand-in. After the two Italian aristocrats draw swords in competition for *Angellica*, Willmore reaches up and steals one of the small paintings, in effect cuts away a piece of the representation for his own titillation. His intentions, like his actions, are explicitly fetishistic:

This posture's loose and negligent;
The sight on't would beget a warm desire

In souls whom impotence and age had chilled.
This must along with me.

(38)

This speech and the act of appropriation occur *before* Willmore sees Angellica. Only in Behn's text do the paintings function as fetishes, as substitute objects for the female body. When challenged why he has the right to the small portrait, Willmore claims the right "of possession, which I will maintain" (38).

At the outset of this paper I described Willmore's acquisitive gesture as a Brechtian "gest"—that moment in theatrical performance in which contradictory social attitudes in both text and society are made heuristically visible to spectators. What does this gest show? Willmore removes Angellica's portrait the way a theater manager might lift off a piece of the set—because without buying her, he already owns her. Her paintings are materially and metonymically linked to the painted scenes, which were of course owned, through the theatrical hierarchy, by patentee and king—who, in Behn's fiction, validates and empowers Willmore. This "homosocial" circuit, to use Eve Sedgwick's term, extends into the social realm.³² As innumerable accounts make clear, Restoration theater participated in the phallic economy that commodified women, not in the marriage market, but in the mistress market: the king and his circle came to the theater to look, covet, and buy. Nell Gwyn is the celebrated example, but Behn's biographer Angeline Goreau cites other cases. An actress in the King's Company, Elizabeth Farley, joined the royal entourage for several months, then became mistress to a Gray's Inn lawyer, then drifted into prostitution and poverty.³³ The answer to the question, "Who is selling Angellica?" is, then, the theater itself, which, like Willmore, operates with the king's patent and authorization. When Angellica sings behind her balcony curtain for her Italian admirers, and draws the curtain to reveal a bit of beautiful flesh, then closes it while monetary arrangements are discussed, she performs the titillating masquerade required by her purchasers *and* by her spectators. This is mastery's masquerade, not to demonstrate freedom, but to flaunt the charms that guarantee and uphold male power.

If Angellica's paintings stand for the theater apparatus and its ideological complicity with a phallic economy, what happens when Angellica appears? Is illusionism betrayed? Interestingly, Aphra Behn chooses this moment to emphasize presence, not only of char-

acter but of body; Angellica 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 wooing/bargaining scene it becomes clear that Angellica wants to step out of the exchange economy symbolized by the paintings: "Canst thou believe [these yielding joys] 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 pay I mean is but thy love for mine. / Can you give that?" (47). And Willmore responds "entirely."³⁴

A commodity, Marx writes, appears as a commodity only when it "possess[es] a double form, i.e. natural form and value form" (138). 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-form, Angellica attempts to return her body to a state of nature, to take herself out of circulation. While the virgins of the marriage plot are talking "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.³⁵ 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 (offstage) "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 (with Willmore) labors for love.

Though the paintings disappear in act 3, however, the signs of commodification are still in place, or are metonymically displaced through properties and scenes to other characters 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 a portrait as a calling card, and at night in the garden, "*in undress*," carrying a little box of jewels—a 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.

Florinda's nocturnal effort at entrepreneurship takes place in the upstage scenes, where Aphra Behn, like her fellow Restoration dra-

matists, situated lovers' trysts and discoveries. The thematic link between commodified "Scenes" and females is particularly crucial, however, in *The Rover*. In 4.4, a disguised Florinda flees from Willmore by running in and out of the scenes until she arrives in Blunt's chamber, where another near-rape occurs. Blunt has just been cozened by a prostitute and dumped naked into the city sewer; he emerges vowing to "beat" and "kiss" and "bang" the next woman he sees, who happens to be Florinda, but now all women appear to be whores. In fact Willmore, Frederick, and even Belville arrive soon after to break open the door and "partake" of Florinda. If Angellica Bianca makes a spectacle of herself through balcony curtains and paintings, Florinda's "undress" and her proximity to the painted scenes signify a similar reduction to commodity status.

IV. "I . . . HANG OUT THE SIGN OF ANGELLICA"

Angellica's paintings, I have argued, are the bright links in a metonymic chain joining the text of *The Rover* to the apparatus of representation. Angellica's portraits represent the courtesan in the most radical sense. They produce an image of her and at the same time reduce her to that image. Notwithstanding her passionate address, Angellica cannot exceed her simulacra. In effect she is doubly commodified—first because she puts her body into exchange, and second because this body is equated with, indeed interchangeable with, the art object. When Willmore performs the "gest" of appropriating the painted image of Angellica, he makes visible, on the one hand, the patriarchal and homosocial economy that controls the apparatus and, on the other hand, the commodity status of paintings, of their model, and, by metonymic extension, of the painted actress and the painted scenes.

Flecknoe and Pepys, we noted earlier, testify to the intensity of visual pleasure in Restoration theater. It is a fascinating contradiction of all feminist expectation to discover that Aphra Behn, more than any of her Restoration colleagues, contributed to that visual pleasure by choosing, in play after play, to exploit the fetish/commodity status of the female performer. The stage offered two playing spaces, the forestage used especially for comedy, where actor and audience were in intimate proximity, and the upstage or scenic stage, where wing-and-shutter settings, as much as fifty feet from the first row of spectators, produced the exotic illusionistic

discoveries needed for heroic tragedy. Writing mostly comedies, Aphra Behn might be expected to follow comic convention and use the forestage area, but as Peter Holland notes, she was “positively obsessive” about discovery scenes (41). Holland counts thirty-one discoveries in ten comedies (consider that Sedley’s *The Mulberry Garden*, 1668, uses one; Etherege’s *The Man of Mode*, 1676, uses two), most of which are bedroom scenes featuring a female character “in undress.” Holland reasons that such scenes are placed upstage so that familiar Restoration actresses would not be distractingly exposed to the audience (41–42). We might interpret Behn’s “obsession” differently: the exposed woman’s (castrated) body must be obscured in order to activate scopophilic pleasure. Displayed in “undress” or loosely draped gowns, the actress becomes a fetish object, affording the male spectator the pleasure of being seduced by and, simultaneously, of being protected from the effects of sexual difference.

Is it also possible that this deliberate use of fetishistic display dramatizes and displaces the particular assault Behn herself endured as “Poetess/Punk” in the theater apparatus? The contradictions in her authorial status are clear from the preface to *The Lucky Chance* (1686). Behn argues that “the Woman damns the Poet” (3:186), that accusations of bawdy and plagiarism are levied at her because she is a woman. On the other hand, the literary fame she desires derives from a creativity that in her mind, or rather in the social ideology she has absorbed, is also gendered: “my Masculine Part the Poet in me” (3:187).³⁶ In literary history, the pen, as Gilbert and Gubar have argued, is a metaphorical penis, and the strong woman writer adopts strategies of revision and disguise in order to tell her own story.³⁷ In Behn’s texts, the painful bisexuality of authorship, the conflict between (as she puts it) her “defenceless” woman’s body and her “masculine part,” is *staged* in her insistence, in play after play, on the equation between female body and fetish, fetish and commodity—the body in the “scenes.” Like the actress, the woman dramatist is sexualized, circulated, denied a subject position in the theater hierarchy.

This unstable, contradictory image of authority emerges as early as Behn’s first play prologue (to *The Forced Marriage, or The Jealous Bridegroom*, 1670). A male actor cautions the wits that the vizard-masks sitting near them will naturally support a woman’s play and attempt to divert them from criticism. He is then interrupted by an actress who, pointing “to the Ladies” praises both

them and, it would seem, the woman author: “Can any see that glorious sight and say / A woman shall not prove Victor today?”

(3:286) The “glorious sight” is, once again, the fetishized, commodified representation of the female, standing on the forestage, sitting in the pit, and soon to be inscribed as author of a printed play. If this fascinating moment—in which a woman speaking a woman’s lines summons the regard of other women—seems to put a *female gaze* into operation, it also reinforces the misogynist circuitry of the theater apparatus: that which chains actress to vizard-mask to author.

At the outset of this essay we asked how Aphra Behn encodes the literary and theatrical conditions of her production. Behn’s “Postscript” to the published text of *The Rover* provides a possible answer. She complains that she has been accused of plagiarizing Killigrew simply because the play was successful and she a woman. Yet while claiming to be “vainly proud of [her] judgment” in adapting *Thomaso*, she “hang[s] out the sign of Angellica (the only stolen object) to give notice where a great part of the wit dwelt” (130). This compliment to Killigrew may also indicate what compelled Behn to embark on this adaptation. The “sign[s] of Angellica” both constitute and represent the theater apparatus, serving as metacritical commentary on its patriarchal economy, its habits of fetishistic consumption. They may also constitute Behn’s authorial signature, what Miller calls the “material . . . brutal traces of the culture of gender” (275). As a woman writer in need of money, Behn was vulnerable to accusations of immodesty; to write meant to expose herself, to put herself into circulation; like Angellica, to sell her wares. Is it merely a coincidence that Angellica Bianca shares Aphra Behn’s initials, that hers is the only name from *Thomaso* that Behn leaves unchanged?

The “signs of Angellica” not only help us specify the place of this important woman dramatist in Restoration cultural practice, they invite us to historicize the critique of fetishization that has informed so much feminist criticism in the last decade.³⁸ Certainly the conditions of women writers have changed since the Restoration, but the fetishistic features of the commercial theater have remained 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 no 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 pays to consume.

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 spectator adds another viewpoint. Angellica Bianca's paintings appear to us now as both authorial "signature" and "social hieroglyphic," signs of a buried life whose careful decoding opens up new possibilities for critique and contestation.

Rutgers University

NOTES

¹ John Willett's translation of *Gestus* as "gest" (with the adjective "gestic") has become standard English usage (see *Brecht on Theatre; The Development of an Aesthetic* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1964, 42). Further references will appear in the text. Like many concepts in Brecht's epic theater theory, *Gestus* is terrifically suggestive and difficult to pin down. Words, gestures, actions, tableaux all qualify as gests if they enable the spectator to draw conclusions about the "social circumstances" (105) shaping a character's attitudes. The gest should be understandable, but also dialectical, incomplete: "[the] expressions of a gest are usually highly complicated and contradictory . . ." (198). In an excellent essay the semiotician Patrice Pavis describes *Gestus* as "the key to the relationship between the play being performed and the public, [as well as] the author's attitude [toward] the public." See *Languages of the Stage* (New York: Performing Arts Journal Publications, 1982), 42.

² Margaret Cavendish's play was produced under her husband's name. See Maureen Duffy, *The Passionate Shepherdess: Aphra Behn 1640–1689* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1977), 95–104, and Angeline Goreau, *Reconstructing Aphra: A Social Biography of Aphra Behn* (New York: Dial, 1980), 115 ff.

³ Robert Gould, cited in George Woodcock, *The Incomparable Aphra* (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1977), 103.

⁴ The full citation from Nancy K. Miller is as follows: "When we tear the web of women's texts, we may discover in the representations of writing itself the marks of the grossly material, the sometimes brutal traces of the culture of gender; the inscriptions of its political structures." See "Archnologies: The Woman, The Text, and the Critic" in *The Poetics of Gender*, ed. Nancy K. Miller (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1986), 275. Further references appear in the text.

⁵ I am indebted to the detailed discussion of Restoration theater practice in Peter Holland's *The Ornament of Action: Text and Performance in Restoration Comedy*

(Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1979), particularly the first three chapters. Further references will appear in the text.

⁶ See Dryden's Prologue to *Marriage A-la-Mode* in *Four Comedies*, ed. L. A. Beaurline and F. Bowers (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1967), 284.

⁷ Richard Flecknoe, "A Short Discourse of the English Stage" in *Critical Essay of the Seventeenth Century*, vol. 2, ed. J. E. Spingarn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1908), 96.

⁸ The Prologue to *Tunbridge-Wells*, produced at Dorset Garden, February-March, 1678, chastises the audience:

And that each act may rise to your desire
Devils and Witches must each Scene inspire,
Wit rowls in Waves, and showers down in Fire. . . .
Your souls (we know) are seated in your Eies. . . .

Cited in Montague Summers, *The Restoration Theatre* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1934), 42. Pepys remarks frequently on Scenes and costumes. On March 8, 1664, he saw *Heraclius* at Lincoln's Inn Fields (the home of the Duke's Company before Dorset Garden was built): "But at the beginning, at the drawing up of the Curtaine, there was the finest Scene of the Emperor and his people about him, standing in their fixed and different postures in their Roman habits, above all that ever I yet saw at any of the Theatres" (*The Shorter Pepys*, ed. Robert Latham [Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1985], 362). Further references will appear in the text. See also Hugh Hunt, "Restoration Acting," in *Restoration Theatre*, ed. John Russell Brown and Bernard Harris (London: E. Arnold, 1965), 178-92, on competition between theater companies over spectacular displays. Hunt makes the point, too, that as comedies often closed after one day, or ran no more than eight or ten performances, scenery was restricted to what was available (187). I comment on Behn's use of scenes and discoveries in the final section of this essay.

⁹ Karl Marx, *Capital*, trans. Ben Fowkes (New York: Vintage, 1977), 167. Further references will appear in the text.

¹⁰ Shadwell and Killigrew are cited in Arthur H. Avery and Arthur H. Scouten, "The Audience," in *Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Comedy*, ed. Scott McMillin (New York: W. W. Norton, 1973), 445, 442.

¹¹ William Wycherley, *The Gentleman Dancing Master*, in *The Complete Plays of William Wycherley*, ed. W. C. Ward (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1902), 242. Further references to *The Complete Plays* will appear in the text. John Dryden, *Marriage A-la-Mode*, 283. More damning are Dryden's lines to the playhouse "gallants" (probably a mixture of country squires, London aristocrats, and young professionals) in the epilogue "To The King And Queen, At The Opening Of Their Theatre Upon The Union Of The Two Companies In 1682" (Summers [note 8], 56):

We beg you, last, our Scene-room to forbear
And leave our Goods and Chattels to our Care.
Alas, our Women are but washy Toys,
And wholly taken up in Stage Employes:
Poor willing Tits they are: but yet I doubt
This double duty soon will wear them out.

¹² On March 2, 1667, Pepys admired Nell Gwyn as Florimell, a "breeches part" in Dryden's *Secret Love, or The Maiden Queen*, which allowed her to show her legs. He was so impressed he saw the play two more times. Breeches grant Behn's heroines the independence to fulfill their romantic destiny and simultaneously encourage the processes of fetishism. As Hugh Hunt (note 8) so quaintly puts it: "to the

Restoration gallants the public display of a woman's calf and ankle was little less than a 'bombshell'" (183).

¹³ Jonas Barish, *The Anti-Theatrical Prejudice* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1981), 158.

¹⁴ *The Town Fop* (1676) and *The City Heiress* (1682) contain two practicing bawds, and Behn creates several adulterous wives; the latter, however, all claim a prior love attachment that was cut off by a forced marriage. *The Lucky Chance* (1686) is most concerned with what Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick calls the homosocial bonds between husbands and lovers. See *Between Men: English Literature and Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1982).

¹⁵ See Angeline Goreau, *Reconstructing Aphra*, 77–78. See also Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex, and Marriage in England, 1500–1800* (New York: Harper and Row, 1979), 77–78.

¹⁶ Margaret Cavendish, cited in Hilda Smith, *Reason's Disciples: Seventeenth-Century English Feminists* (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1982), 79.

¹⁷ Lady Mary Chudleigh, "To the Ladies," from *Poems on Several Occasions*, in *First Feminists: British Women Writers 1578–1799*, ed. Moira Ferguson (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1985), 237.

¹⁸ Aphra Behn, *The Second Part of the Rover*, in *The Works of Aphra Behn*, ed. Montague Summers, 6 vols. (London: Heinemann, 1915), 1:152. With the exception of *The Rover*, all references to Behn's plays are cited from this edition.

¹⁹ Mary Astell, cited in Smith (note 16), 133, 135.

²⁰ Frederick Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (New York: International Publishers, 1985), 134.

²¹ Aphra Behn, *The Rover*, ed. Frederick Link (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1967), 7. All subsequent references are to page numbers in this edition.

²² "Dialogism," associated with the writings of M. M. Bakhtin and V. N. Vološinov (a cover name for Bakhtin), implies that utterance is always social; any single utterance interacts with meanings in the larger discursive field. As Vološinov puts it: "A word is a bridge thrown between myself and another. . . . A word is a territory shared by both addresser and addressee, by the speaker and his interlocutor." (See *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, trans. L. Matejka and I. R. Titunik [Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1986], 86.) Though Bakhtin has little to say about theater texts, the notion of shared verbal territory has obvious relevance for speaker-audience interaction. How to describe and analyze the relationship between text and cultural context has long been the preoccupation of cultural materialists. See especially Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1977), Jonathan Dollimore, *Radical Tragedy: Religion, Ideology and Power in the Drama of Shakespeare and His Contemporaries* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1984), Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1986), and essays in *Rewriting the Renaissance: The Discourses of Sexual Difference in Early Modern Europe*, ed. M. W. Ferguson, M. Quilligan, N. J. Vickers (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1986), particularly feminist readings of women writers, for example Ann Rosalind Jones's "City Women and Their Audiences: Louise Labe and Veronica Franco," 299–316.

²³ Until act 5 of *Sir Patient Fancy*, the prevailing view of the learned Lady Knowall seems to be best expressed by the real Sir Patient: "that Lady of eternal Noise and hard Words . . . she's a Fop; and has Vanity and Tongue enough to debauch any Nation under civil Government" (4:32); indeed, like a female version of the old senex, Lady Knowall pursues her daughter's lover. Act 5, however, reveals her "design": she has been testing the lovers and scheming to wrest from Sir Patient a fabulous jointure for them. The signs of Lady Knowall's learning (such as abstruse vocabulary) remain in place to the end but are rendered benign through her assumption of her proper gender role.

²⁴ Cited in Smith, 63.

²⁵ According to Lacanian psychoanalyst Michele Montrelay, masquerade has always been considered “evil” because, in flaunting the absent-penis, it sidesteps castration anxiety and repression, thus threatening the Father’s law (incest taboo) and all systems of representation. See Montrelay, “Inquiry Into Femininity,” *m/f* 1 (1978): 83–101.

²⁶ See Susan Staves, *Players’ Scepters: Fictions of Authority in the Restoration* (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1979), 2.

²⁷ My view that Hellena is fully recuperated into the economy she rebels against contrasts with, among others, Frederick M. Link’s interpretation in his Introduction to *The Rover* (note 21) and, more recently, to DeRitter Jones’s in “The Gypsy, *The Rover*, and the Wanderer: Aphra Behn’s Revision of Thomas Killigrew,” *Restoration* 10 (Fall 1986): 82–92. Both Link and Jones argue that Hellena represents a positive alternative to both the ingenuous Florinda and the rejected Angellica; her contract with Willmore is “no marriage for ‘portion and jointure,’ no marriage arranged to perpetuate a family’s name or increase its wealth, but a contract between two free and like-minded people” (Link, xiv). Even from a humanist perspective, this view is dubious: Hellena’s freedom is inconceivable outside the market economy; from a historical or gestic perspective, Hellena’s “identity” is at the very least divided and ambivalent.

²⁸ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Michael Oakshott (New York: Collier, 1962), 125.

²⁹ Christopher Pye, “The Sovereign, the Theater, and the Kingdome of Darknesse: Hobbes and the Spectacle of Power,” *Representations*, 8 (Fall 1984): 91.

³⁰ Cited in Summers (note 8), 85–86. The self-theatricalizing nature of the audience produced enormous chaos, as indicated in this satirical speech from Betterton’s *The Amorous Widow; or The Wanton Wife*: “to see a Play at the Duke’s House, where we shall have such Sport. . . . ’Tis the pleasant’st Thing in the whole World to see a Flock of wild Gallants fluttering about two or three Ladies in Vizard Masks, and then they talk to ’em so wantonly, and so loud, that they put the very Players out of countenance—’Tis better Entertainment than any Part of the Play can be” (Summers, 68). See also the often-cited passage in Pepys in which he complains that dialogue between Sir Charles Sedley and two vizarded women both entertained—one was “exceeding witty as ever I heard woman”—and distracted him from viewing the play (Pepys [note 8], 728).

³¹ Thomas Killigrew, *Thomaso, or the Wanderer*, parts 1 and 2, in *Comedies and Tragedies* (London: Henry Herringman, 1663), 333. All references in the text are to this edition.

³² See Sedgwick’s *Between Men* (note 14), particularly her analysis of Wycherley’s *The Country Wife* (49–66). Interestingly, when cuckoldry drives the plots of a Behn play, as in *The False Count*, the wife’s passion, trammelled by her forced marriage, is given as much weight as homosocial competitiveness.

³³ See Goreau (note 15), 174.

³⁴ What Angellica desires is the fantasy described by Luce Irigaray in “Commodities among Themselves” (*This Sex Which is Not One*, trans. Catherine Porter with Carolyn Burke [Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1985], 192–97): “Exchanges without identifiable terms, without accounts, without end.” But such nonmaterialist exchange is possible, Irigaray implies, only in a lesbian sexual economy, while Behn’s Angellica remains (and fails) within the heterosexual economy of the intrigue plot. Compare these representations to Margaret Cavendish’s utopia for aristocratic women in *The Convent of Pleasure* (pub. 1668). Cavendish bans husbands but offers her women unlimited access to commodities—“Beds of velvet, lined with Sattin . . . Turkie Carpets, and a Cup-board of Gilt Plate” (see Ferguson, *First Feminists* [note 17], 91).

³⁵ Behn intensifies the motif of the honest whore in *The Second Part of The Rover*. In the sequel, Hellena has died and Willmore is once again a free rover. Angellica's counterpart, La Nuche, is pursued by Willmore precisely because to deal with a prostitute is plain dealing, yet he also berates her: "Damn it, I hate a Whore that asks me Mony" [sic] (1:123). Nevertheless, in this play the "women of quality" envy the courtesan; Willmore and La Nuche reject marriage but swear undying love, while the virgin and gallant accept the less interesting but pragmatic fate of marriage.

³⁶ The Prologue to *The Rover*, "Written by a Person of Quality," dramatizes that ambivalence; the lines indirectly addressed to Behn use the pronoun "him": "As for the author of this coming play, I asked him what he thought fit I should say" (4). This is unusual. In Behn's prologues the masculine pronoun is used only as a general referent for poets/wits, as in the last line to the prologue to *Sir Patient Fancy*: "He that writes Wit is the much greater Fool" (4:9).

³⁷ See Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1979), 3–92.

³⁸ Feminist film theorists have taken the lead, with Laura Mulvey's path-breaking article on the fetishist position produced by Hollywood narrative cinema ("Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," *Screen* 16, no. 3 [1975]: 6–19. For a full elaboration of this and other psychoanalytic concepts in film, see Mary Ann Doane's *The Desire to Desire: The Woman's Film of the 1940s* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1987). In literary study, see Naomi Schor's "Female Fetishism: The Case of George Sand" (in *The Female Body in Western Culture: Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Susan R. Suleiman [Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1986], 363–72). For fetishism in theater as well as in film and fiction, Roland Barthes's work is particularly useful; see "Diderot, Brecht, Eisenstein" in *Image, Music, Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang), 69–78.