

SATIRE IN THE WORKS OF APHRA BEHN

A Thesis

Presented to

the Graduate Faculty of the Department of English

University of Houston

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Patricia Lynn Garrett

December, 1975

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With few exceptions, both contemporary and later critics have viewed the work of Aphra Behn (1640-1689) as that of a woman interesting because of the accident of her sex. She was a figure of intrigue, actively involved in the political and religious turmoil of her times. This study relates her political and religious convictions to her artistry, demonstrating elements of satire in her work which are the expression of those convictions. Understanding Mrs. Behn's political and religious beliefs and fitting them into the cultural milieu in which she moved delineates the bias which finds expression in her dramatic characterizations in particular. The general political and religious undercurrent through the body of her work, both dramatic and fictional, culminates in her use of drama in the service of the crown during the foment around the Popish Plot incident. Examination of four plays (The Rover I, 1677, The Rover II, 1681, The Roundheads, 1681, and The City Heiress, 1682) will show how her particular prejudices affected her artistry.

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I. INTRODUCTION

With few exceptions, both contemporary and later critics have viewed the work of Aphra Behn (1640-1689) as that of a woman, interesting because of the accident of her sex, rather than as that of an artist, valuable because of her dramatic expertise. With almost voyeuristic zeal, critics have accepted unsupported biographical details and caricatures from lampoons to define her, and have portrayed Mrs. Behn as a hedonistic purveyor of bawdy. At best she is seen as a minor figure in the Restoration period.

Alexander Pope's couplet

The stage how loosely does Astrea tread
Who fairly puts all characters to bed

typifies much of the critical response Mrs. Behn's work has received. In a long introduction to the published version of The Dutch Lover she attacks her critics; she felt they had objected to her work only because of her sex. In his book Aphra Behn (1968) Frederick Link notes ". . . the Grub Street hacks apparently resented a woman's presence in their world, and never ceased criticizing her works and her morals Thus she had to defend her plays against the charge of indecency, not because they were any more indecent than other comedies of the period, but because women were not supposed to write bawdy on equal terms with men."¹ The attitude of a contemporary Whig critic, Sir

¹ Frederick Link, Aphra Behn (New York: Twayne, 1968), p. 22.

Richard Steele, demonstrates this negative response. In the "Spectator"² (No. 51, April 28, 1711) he observes that Mrs. Behn was "best skilled in the luscious way." Since Mrs. Behn represented the court party point of view, antithetical to Steele, his remarks may reflect additional prejudice, but later critics indicted her for the same failures. Montague Summers quotes a Miss Julia Kavanaugh, writing in the mid-victorian period (English Women of Letters, 1863), who felt that Mrs. Behn's mind was ". . . tainted to the very core. Grossness was congenial to her. . . . Mrs. Behn's indelicacy was . . . the superfluous addition of a corrupt mind and vitiated taste."³ Another Victorian critic of somewhat greater stature and judgement than Miss Kavanaugh, Macaulay, commented that the best of Defoe was "in no respect . . . beyond the reach of Aphra Behn" (quoted by Montague Summers in Works, I, p. lx. I have been unable to locate the original quotation in Macaulay's work). A twentieth-century critic and editor who is decidedly Victorian in attitude, Earnest A. Baker, wrote an introduction to a 1905 edition of her novels. He admitted that her prose fiction was less important than

² The Spectator, ed. and intro. Donald F. Bond, Vol. I of V (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), p. 216.

³ Montague Summers, "Memoir of Mrs. Behn," in The Works of Aphra Behn, 6 vols. (London: John Pearson, 1871), I, p. lx. All subsequent references to the "Memoirs" will be cited parenthetically in the text as "Memoirs," followed by the page number. References to Behn's plays will be to this edition and will be cited parenthetically as Works with volume and page numbers. However, some volumes of the Summers edition were not available in this area, so I used the following edition: The Plays, Histories and Novels of the Ingenious Mrs. Aphra Behn with Life and Memoirs in Six Volumes. London: John Pearson, 1871. References to this text will be cited parenthetically as PHN followed by volume and page numbers for the following plays: The City Heiress, The Forced Marriage, Sir Patient Fancy, The Feigned Courtesans and The Young King.

her comedies, but justified his neglect of the drama on the grounds that ". . . it would be difficult indeed to compile even a book of elegant extracts that would give the modern reader any adequate idea of their merits, without either emasculating them altogether or nauseating him with their coarseness."⁴ And so distinguished a critic as Joseph Wood Krutch echoes the sentiments of Steele two hundred years later when he states in Comedy and Conscience After the Restoration that "in her exuberant and lighthearted way, Mrs. Behn is guilty . . . chiefly of lengthy and elaborate lushness."⁵

Montague Summers' remarks typify the more recent critical approach to Mrs. Behn. He concludes that "her comedies represent her best work and she is worthy to be ranked with the greatest dramatists of her day, with Vanbrugh and Etherege; not so strong as Wycherley, less polished than Congreve" (Works, I, "Memoir of Mrs. Behn," p. lxi). A more subdued but realistic view is held by Allardyce Nicoll, who writes that

Mrs. Behn, we may say, holds, in relation to the development of the comedy of intrigue, much the same position that Shadwell holds in relation to the development of the comedy of humours. Of all the minor dramatists of the period, Mrs. Behn is probably the best known, but not always in the best way. Although her works have been made readily available in reprint, it is to be questioned whether they are widely read, and the general concept of the authoress' comedies is perhaps one largely determined by Puritanic structures on her immorality. The fact is that she is no worse, and is often a great deal better, than the average playwright of her age.

Nicoll admires the "purity of her dialogue" and says that she "on

⁴ Ernest Baker, "Introduction," in The Novels of Aphra Behn (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1969), p. xxvii.

⁵ Joseph Wood Krutch, Comedy and Conscience After the Restoration (New York: Columbia University Press, 1924), p. 200.

many occasions introduced thoughts and ideas which not only display her unconventional and modern attitude towards life's relations, but also formed the basis for not a few moralizations in the sentimental eighteenth century to come."⁶

Mrs. Behn was a figure of intrigue, actively involved in the political and religious turmoil of her era; she served for a time as a spy for the British against the Dutch, for example. From July of 1666 to January of 1667 she lived in Antwerp and relayed back to England information passed to her from Colonel William Scott, son of a regicide and a political refugee who wanted to secure his English pardon. The correspondence from this period represents the first authentic biographical information known of Mrs. Behn, and appropriately places her in the service of the crown. Her letters further reveal that she received little, if any, compensation for her services, and in fact fell into debt, for which she was later imprisoned. Her continued loyalty to the Stuarts, demonstrated by her writings and her circle of friends in London, shows that her political convictions superseded any personal affront she may have felt. She was a loyal and vociferous supporter of Charles.

The purpose of this study is to relate Behn's political and religious convictions to her artistry, demonstrating elements of satire in her work which are the expression of those convictions. Her interest in the crown party and her satirical attacks on its enemies at times

⁶ Allardyce Nicoll, A History of English Drama 1660-1900 Vol. I, fourth edition (Cambridge: University Press, 1952), pp. 220-221.

shape the nature of her dramatic productions. Mrs. Behn uses comic satire consistently in keeping with the practices of her age. Her long friendship with Dryden, the leading Tory satirist and finest literary artist of the period, must have affected her critical position on the purposes and effects of comic satire. Dryden himself changed his ideas through the years as to what techniques best achieved success on the stage, recording most of his ideas in occasional prefaces and marginalia. The precepts actually stated by Mrs. Behn and her dramatic practices generally agree with Dryden's criteria as he finally accumulated them.

Dryden speculated about the nature and function of drama and its relationship to satire throughout his long career. In Of Dramatic Poesy: An Essay (1668), he allows Lisideius (who represents Dryden's own point of view) to "give the definition of a play": "A just and lively image of human nature, representing its passions and humours, and the changes of fortune to which it is subject, for the delight and instruction of mankind."⁷ Mrs. Behn would have been familiar with this work as well as his Preface to An Evening's Love (1671), which constitutes Dryden's most extensive treatment of comedy. Her use of comedy as a satirical weapon in the service of the crown is consistent with the outline of comedy and farce Dryden develops here.

Comedy consists, though of low persons, yet of natural actions and characters; I mean such humours, adventures, and designs as are to be found and met with in the world. Farce, on the other

⁷ John Dryden, Literary Criticism of John Dryden, ed. Arthur C. Kirsch, Regents Critics Series (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966), p. 11.

side, consists of forced humours and unnatural events. Comedy presents us with the imperfections of human nature. Farce entertains us with what is monstrous and chimerical: the one causes laughter in those who can judge of men and manners, by the lively representation of their folly or corruption; the other produces the same effect in those who can judge of neither, and that only by its extravagances.⁸

Late in his career Dryden focused on satire in a preface to his The Satires of Juvenalis, Translated (1693) entitled "A Discourse Concerning the Original and Progress of Satire." Although his primary concern was with verse satire, he refers to practices in use during Mrs. Behn's lifetime, such as the pillory of Shaftesbury in Absalom and Achitophel. In attempting to define satire, Dryden begins with a quotation from Heinsius, a seventeenth-century Dutch scholar:

Satire is a kind of poetry, without a series of action, invented for the purging of our minds; in which human vices, ignorance, and errors, and all things besides, which are produced from them in every man, are severely reprehended; partly dramatically, partly simply, and sometimes in both kinds of speaking; but, for the most part, figuratively, and occultly; consisting in a low familiar way, chiefly in a sharp and pungent manner of speech; but partly, also, in a facetious and civil way of jesting; by which either hatred or laughter, or indignation, is moved.⁹

This definition Dryden does not find entirely satisfactory, however; he calls it "obscure and perplexed" and proceeds to amplify it in the following manner. Of a "perfect satire" he observes:

that it ought only to treat of one subject; to be confined to one particular theme; or at least, to one principally. If other vices occur in the management of the chief, they should only be transiently lashed, and not be insisted on, so as to make the

⁸ Dryden, Literary Criticism of John Dryden, p. 92.

⁹ John Dryden, Of Dramatic Poesy and Other Critical Essays, ed. George Watson (London: J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1962), II, p. 143.

design double. As in a play of the English fashion, which we call a tragi-comedy, there is to be but one main design; and though there be an underplot, or second walk of comical characters and adventures, yet they are subservient to the chief fable, carried along under it, and helping to it; so that the drama may not seem a monster with two heads.¹⁰

A further amplification of Dryden's definition of comedy is found in "A Defence of an Essay of Dramatic Poesy," which includes his statement that the author of a play should be "satisfied if it cause delight; for delight is the chief, if not the only end of poesy; instruction can be admitted but in the second place, for poesy only instructs as it delights."¹¹

These remarks are closely allied to the only critical statements made by Mrs. Behn. In 1673 she prefaced the printed version of The Dutch Lover with an "Epistle to the Reader" in which she discussed the value of drama as a tool for reformation or instruction. She takes a via media stance concerning the importance of her work, and has little patience for those who "discourse as formallie about the rules of it, as if 'twere the grand affair of humane life." She concludes that she has "studied only to make this as entertaining as I could" (Works, I, 222-3). Both Mrs. Behn and Dryden were realistic practitioners of theater art; their use of satire reflected their knowledge of what would succeed on the stage. And what would succeed on the stage reflected the topical issues of the day.

Many of Mrs. Behn's comedies comment on contemporary social issues,

¹⁰ Dryden, Of Dramatic Poesy and other Critical Essays, II, 145.

¹¹ Dryden, Of Dramatic Poesy and other Critical Essays, I, 113-114.

and as such may be classified as dramatic satire. Such figures as the credulous pedant Baliardo in Emperour of the Moon, the socially-ambitious Isabella in The False Count, the puritanical hypochondriac Sir Patient Fancy and his relative Lady Knowell, a pretender to wide learning who speaks in Latin whenever possible, and others from every level of society present Mrs. Behn's shrewd observations of her fellows. This satirical impulse becomes most fully expressed, however, in the plays connected with the Popish Plot incident: The Rover (part I, 1677, and part II, 1681), The Roundheads (1681), and The City Heiress (1682). Her practices demonstrate satirical techniques which usually are close to those of Dryden. An examination of her dramatic satires, and in particular those plays dealing with the Popish Plot, will show her court party, high church conservatism affecting her artistry, sometimes to produce high comic satires as in The Rover and The City Heiress and sometimes to create a propaganda piece such as The Roundheads. This study, then, will present Mrs. Behn's literary career in light of her satirical impulse as it is integrated into her expression through the characters and situations she portrays.

II. BIOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND AND POLITICAL DRAMATIC CAREER

Biographical information regarding Aphra Behn before her professional debut is sketchy. Facts about her birth and childhood have historically been put forward only to be discredited by some later researcher. The earliest account of her birth and parentage appears in the introduction to the first edition of her collected Histories and Novels, and bears the title "Memoirs on the Life of Mrs. Behn by a Gentlewoman of her Acquaintance." Despite the attribution on the title page, the author is generally accepted as having been Charles Gildon, who drew heavily from fictional sources in his portrait of Mrs. Behn. Gildon states, however, that "she was a gentlewoman by birth, of a good family in the city of Canterbury in Kent; her father's name was Johnson, whose relation to Lord Willoughby drew him, for the advantageous post of Lieutenant of many Isles, besides the Continent of Surinam, from his quiet Retreat at Canterbury, to run the hazardous Voyage of the West-Indies" (PHN, V, 2). This information was accepted until 1884 when Edmund Gosse made public his discovery of a bit of marginalia on a manuscript of some poems of the Countess of Wilchilsea (cited by Montague Summers, "Memoir of Mrs. Behn," Works, I, p. xvii). The poetry included a reference to Wye as the place of birth of Mrs. Behn, and the note added: "Mrs. Behn was a Daughter to a Barber, who liv'd formerly in Wye, a little Market Town (now much decay'd) in Kent.

Though the account of her life before her Works pretends otherwise; some Persons now alive Do testify upon their Knowledge that to be her Original" (Summers, "Memoir," p. xviii). The tone of this note sounds a bit malicious, and the countess may have been indulging in unfounded gossip. The note was enough, however, to sponsor another questionable version of Mrs. Behn's birthplace and ancestry. Gosse inquired of the vicar at Wye and received confirmation from the vicar's reading of the parish register, and so had the information that she was the daughter of a barber named Johnson recorded in the Dictionary of National Biography. When Montague Summers prepared his edition of Mrs. Behn's works in 1915 he checked the parish register himself, finding to his amazement that the entry thought to be for Aphra's birth read not Johnson but "Ayfara, or Aphara Amis or Amies, the daughter of John and Amy Amis or Amies" (Summers, "Memoir, p. xvi). This would seem to have settled the matter, except for the inquiry of an Englishman named A. Purvis, who also checked the burial register for that parish, which Summers had failed to do. In it he found recorded in 1640 the burial of "Afara ye daughter of John Amis."¹ Subsequent research has failed to disclose any new information, so that after all no one knows when or where she was born or who her parents were.

Although the information in the "Memoirs" has been shown to be, in some instances, in error, it does provide the only outline of Mrs. Behn's life from which a general picture of her activities may be

¹ Link, p. 18.

drawn. Even though the "Memoirs" are purported to have been written by a "female of intimate acquaintance," the collection of Histories and Novels which it prefaces was compiled by Charles Gildon, a writer who knew Mrs. Behn for three years before her death. His authorship of the "Memoirs" seems likely because representing himself as a female who had enjoyed Mrs. Behn's confidences for many years (rather than as a male friend whose information could only have been gleaned from conversations late in life and subject to the vagaries of memory) would lend an air of authenticity to his account. Further, since he was a friend of Mrs. Behn at the time of her death, he possibly had access to her manuscripts--enough so that he was able to publish some of them in 1696--and admired her enough to publish her works, replete with Tory bias, in a London dominated by the Whigs.

The next controversial event in the life of Mrs. Behn concerns her purported stay in Surinam: did she or did she not know Surinam firsthand, as she states, was or was not her father/guardian an official in the colony? Some scholars have gone to great lengths to alternately prove and disprove the account of her visit both in the "Memoirs" and the remarks included in Oroonoko, which Mrs. Behn states to be an "eye-witness" account. No really substantial evidence that she did not go to Surinam exists, and many arguments support her testimony. The story was never disputed by her contemporaries in a period when any falsehood of pretentiousness would have been attacked and lampooned. Also, as Woodcock notes,² she actually included two circumstantial details which

² George Woodcock, The Incomparable Aphra (London: T. V. Boardman and Company, Ltd., 1948), p. 19.

could easily have been proven untrue and denied at the time. She mentions in the collection of the King's Antiquary "some rare Flies, of amazing Forms and Colours, presented to 'em by myself; some as big as my Fist, some less" ³ Again, she describes the feather costumes of the Indians and claims "I had a set of these presented to me, and I gave 'em to the King's Theatre, and it was the Dress of the Indian Queen" ⁴ The Indian Queen was produced in 1643, and Dryden, co-author of the play and a friend of Mrs. Behn's, was still alive when Oroonoko was published. He, as well as others, could have disputed this statement had it been false.

Accepting Mrs. Behn's statements and the traditional version of her life, scholars have fixed the date of her probable arrival in Surinam as near the end of 1663, and her leaving as the spring of 1664. ⁵ She went to Surinam because her father (or guardian) had been appointed as an administrator to the English colony there; when he died on the sea voyage en route, the family returned soon after. "My stay was to be short in that country; because my father died at sea, and never arrived to possess the honour designed him" ⁶

Some time after her return to England she met and married Mr. Behn, who was apparently a Dutch merchant. One can only conjecture what a

³ Aphra Behn, The Novels of Aphra Behn, p. 2.

⁴ Aphra Behn, The Novels of Aphra Behn, p. 2.

⁵ Link, p. 20.

⁶ Behn, The Novels of Aphra Behn, p. 50.

Dutchman, especially a merchant, would have been doing in England during the period of trade wars between England and Holland. Perhaps he himself was a spy, or even a counterspy for the English. At any rate, by July of 1666 Mrs. Behn was actively engaged as a British spy against the Dutch in Antwerp; the fact that Mr. Behn must have died in the interim is suggested by the complete omission of any mention of him in her correspondence for the period. This event constitutes the first service of Aphra Behn to Charles II, and it is one which is not disputed by any scholars, even those who cavil about how or why she engaged in the service. Her letters (from 27 July to 26 December 1666) survive as part of the official State Papers of England and constitute the first unquestionable facts concerning her life. During this time she was paid little, if anything, for her efforts, and consequently fell into debt and was imprisoned; an unknown benefactor secured her release.⁷ Even this terrible experience did not turn her against Charles, however; she continued in his service.

Alternate versions of Mrs. Behn's life, centering on her visit to Surinam, have been postulated by Ernest Bernbaum⁸ and Harrison Platt.⁹ These two scholars assume highly imaginative, if diametrically opposing, views of what actually happened to Mrs. Behn during the years immediately preceding her Antwerp intrigue.

⁷ Link, p. 21.

⁸ Ernest Bernbaum, "Mrs. Behn's Biography a Fiction," PMLA, XXVIII (1913), 432-453.

⁹ Harrison Platt, "Astrea and Celadon," PMLA, XLIX (1934), 544-559.

Bernbaum accepts the information concerning her birth (subsequently proven false) but postulates that she never visited Surinam at all, deriving her description from George Warren's Impartial Description of Surinam, and concludes that Mrs. Behn "deliberately and circumstantially lied."¹⁰ He bases his argument on the fact that information concerning this trip comes from two unreliable sources, the autobiographical statements in Oroonoko and The Fair Jilt (1688) and the equally fictitious Life and Memoirs of Mrs. Behn (1696). Bernbaum finds similarities in Warren and Behn, and this evidence leads him to discount the entire voyage. He states that the only facts of which one can be absolutely sure are those contained in the British state papers, which reveal that Mrs. Behn sailed to Antwerp in August of 1666. Bernbaum points out that no definite evidence of Mrs. Behn's father's appointment as governor of the colony exists, and that if her father did not go, she had no reason to go to Surinam. So he thinks she married Behn, became a widow, and went to Antwerp directly from England without ever visiting Surinam at all. She was apparently sent to spy on English expatriates who were plotting against the government of Charles II. At Rotterdam a Colonel Bamfield, an Englishman, commanded an English regiment in Dutch service. One of the officers of this regiment was William Scott, the son of a regicide executed at the Restoration. Scott had expressed a willingness to trade information on Dutch military activities for a pardon from the English, permission to return to the country, and a

¹⁰ Bernbaum, p. 435.

sum of money. Scott was to be Aphra's contact, relaying information from his base in Rotterdam to her location in Antwerp, which she in turn forwarded to London. She appealed to Lord Killigrew, her friend and a favorite of the King, to obtain Scott's pardon, which was delayed many times. While attempting to manage this delicate affair, Mrs. Behn encountered difficulties both with a fellow agent and with getting money from Charles. She was forced to spend all her own money, pawn her valuables, and finally borrow the money needed for her passage back to England, a debt for which she was later imprisoned. After her return to England, her life is documented by her publications and comments from contemporaries, so Bernbaum no longer need tax his imagination. (The preceding material is a summary of the PMLA article.)

Even more bizarre and further from traditional accounts of her life is the hypothesis proposed by Harrison Platt. He discounts Bernbaum's version as flawed by his lack of faith in Mrs. Behn--why would she imagine such a voyage? Her vivid characterizations could only be based on an eyewitness account, albeit colored by the passage of time and a faulty memory. He thinks that Mrs. Behn may well have relied on Warren's descriptions, since she was primarily interested in people, not in their environment. He cites as support for this statement the almost total lack of background details in her plays; properties are introduced only when necessary for the advancement of the plot(s). Although he agrees with tradition that Mrs. Behn did in fact go to Surinam, he concurs with Bernbaum's contention that she would not have had time enough to leave Surinam in 1664, return to England, meet and

marry a Dutch merchant, be presented in court and gain the attention of Charles, become a widow, and be sent to Antwerp in the service of the crown by 1666. Platt ingeniously accounts for this period by having Aphra travel from England to Surinam as the mistress of William Scott. Since Scott was traditionally involved in various unsavory political escapades, and since Platt can find no concrete evidence that Scott was in England during the years in question (he finds an equal lack of evidence placing Scott in Surinam, interestingly enough), if Scott had been in Surinam he would probably have been involved in the political unrest occurring in the colony at this time. One of the administrators of the colony, Byam, appears in Oroonoko, and since he was a loyal Tory one would expect his treatment by Mrs. Behn to be sympathetic. She does not, however, present him favorably, but as a rather barbarous and inhumane contrast to the noble savage Oroonoko. If Mrs. Behn had been writing wholly from secondary sources and not from personal experience, says Platt, she would not have drawn such a character; but if Scott and Mrs. Behn (according to Platt really Miss Amis) lived in the colony at this time and were involved in the radical reaction against Byam and the governor, Lord Willoby, she would have had reason for her harsh portrait. After describing Scott as "a political radical and at best a dubious fellow,"¹¹ Platt concludes, "so, surrounded by disaffected colonists, Aphra lived at St. John's Hill until early 1663 or 1664" During this period, Scott contracted many

¹¹ Platt, p. 547.

debts, Platt continues, forcing the pair to flee the colony, after which they "turned up again in Holland, still partners, still intriguing."¹²

Platt feels that his most important pieces of evidence, aside from the circumstantial details presented above, hinge on two occurrences: the ease with which Mrs. Behn established contact with Scott (indicating prior collusion, to his way of thinking), and the fact that a piece of official correspondence by Major Byam in March of 1663 or 1664 from the colony at Surinam during the period of their supposed residence refers to the flight of an "Astrea," who is pursued by "Celadon" to her destination, since they have been lovers. Platt's proposal that the pair left Surinam and sailed directly to Holland would account for the paucity of time allowed for the traditionally accepted sequence of events in her life to occur, and for her need to assume a married identity. The names "Celadon" and "Astrea," used by Scott and Mrs. Behn in their cryptic correspondence, do not in themselves constitute proof that these were in fact the same persons to whom the Surinam correspondence by Byam referred, but they are an intriguing coincidence. Platt relies on these circumstantial details to conclude that "we are justified in assuming that Mrs. Behn made her journey to Surinam not as the governor's daughter but as the mistress of William Scott."¹³

These two conflicting conjectural accounts of Mrs. Behn's life

¹² Platt, p. 548.

¹³ Platt, p. 556.

during the period prior to any real documentation indicate the diversity of opinion concerning her biography; since no facts emerge until she writes from Antwerp to London, each scholar feels free to select and reject various details of the collection of information surviving, apparently in a rather arbitrary manner. Both sources cited above, however, would admit her employment by Charles II, which is the important point to be documented.

At any rate, by September of 1670 her first play, The Forced Marriage; or, The Jealous Bridegroom, was produced at Lincoln's Inn Fields.¹⁴ The Duke's Company performed the play; the roles of Alcippus and Erminia were acted by Thomas Betterton and his wife. The prompter, John Downes, notes in Rosicus Anglicanus that it was "a good Play and lasted six Days . . . Mr. Otway the Poet having an Inclination to turn Actor; Mrs. Behn [sic] gave him the King in the Play, for a Probation Part, but he being not us'd to the Stage; the full House put him to such a Sweat and Tremendous Agony, being dash't, spoilt him for an Actor."¹⁵ Apparently Mrs. Behn's efforts to aid the young Otway to enter an acting career were unsuccessful, but they did continue as friends until his death in 1685. This information serves to place her in a circle which included, besides Otway, Dryden, Nathaniel Lee, Nahum Tate, George Granville, Thomas Creech, Charles Cotton, and many

¹⁴ The London Stage, 1660-1800, Part I: 1660-1700. Ed. William Van Lennep. (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press) I, p. 175. Hereafter cited parenthetically in text as The London Stage with page number.

¹⁵ John Downes, Rosicus Anglicanus (1708; rpt. New York: Garland, 1974), p. 34.

of the other Restoration writers whose politics, like hers, made them members of the crown party.

The title of Mrs. Behn's first play, The Forced Marriage, raises some interesting questions. Since it was written so soon after her becoming a widow, and since her treatment of marriage itself in much of her work is quite hostile, perhaps her own marriage was either enforced or an arrangement of financial necessity. The existence of her marriage itself has been questioned by scholars (e.g. Bernbaum, Platt, and others) but apparently was not questioned by her own peers. She is referred to in a satire as "the lewd Widow"¹⁶ and is buried in Westminster Abbey under the name of Behn; surely this would indicate acceptance of her married state. She never refers to her marriage in any of her correspondence or prose work; through both the plays and the novels she outspokenly criticizes the practice of forcing women to marry for reasons other than their own inclinations. The Forced Marriage, Sir Timothy Tawdrey, Sir Patient Fancy, The Rover, The Dutch Lover, Oroonoko, and The Younger Brother all contain either a forced marriage or a young girl who is being threatened with one. The skill with which she characterizes old foolish lovers, such as Sir Patient Fancy, also lends credence to the idea that she may have been drawing from the prejudice of unhappy personal experience. Had she married for financial security, she would have had further reason for resentment, since she had written in the summer of 1666 when she went to Antwerp

¹⁶ Woodcock, p. 28.

that her entire fortune consisted of forty pounds and some personal jewelry which she later had to sell.

Her decision to earn her living as a playwright was unprecedented; a few women had previously considered themselves as serious artists, but none had attempted to survive as professional writers. Everything known of her personal life, however, points to her extreme independence. The years between her return from Surinam and her first production at Lincoln's Inn Fields, although not documented, must have been spent growing familiar with the circle of friends associated with literature and drama, since the young Otway probably came to her to gain an entree to the stage as an actor. Montague Summers suggests that Mrs. Behn "accepted the protection of some admirer" (Works, "Memoir," I, xxviii) during this period, but her continued financial struggle and the vigor with which she pursued her career as a dramatist make this seem unlikely. Further, she does not draw sympathetic portraits of kept women, so one would assume they do not entertain her sympathies. Betty Flauntit, for instance, a cast mistress in The Town Fop, is a scheming manipulator. From contemporary and even posthumous accounts of her beauty by those who knew her, she possessed the natural ability to find a wealthy patron; however, why would she have needed money so desperately had she done so? She competed successfully with male playwrights in an age when advantages of birth, income, and education--all of which she lacked--almost determined one's ability to afford the luxury of writing.

Her entry into the dramatic profession must have been made easier by the introduction of female actresses onto the stage only a few years

earlier. Initially, at least, the novelty of her position as a female playwright might have worked to her benefit, as Frederick Link suggests.¹⁷

The prologue to The Forced Marriage mentions that the author is female in a way designed to trade on the fact:

Women, those charming Victors, in whose Eyes
Lie all their Arts, and their Artilleries,
Not being contented with the Wounds they made,
Would be new Stratagems our Lives invade.
Beauthy alone goes now at too cheap rates;
And therefore they, like Wise and Politick States,
Court a new Power that may the old supply,
To keep as well as gain the Victory.
They'll joint the force of Wit to Beauty now,
And so maintain the Right they have in you.
.....
To day one of their Party ventures out,
Not with design to conquer, but to scout.
Discourage but this first attempt, and then,
They'll hardly dare to sally out again (Works, III, 285).

She undoubtedly did exploit the novelty accruing to her position as a female playwright, and even if she did not accept the protection of a wealthy man, she did not seem to have limited herself to observance of the moral conventions upheld in that day. Portraits of her by contemporaries suggest that she was involved many times in affairs of the heart. The incidents related in Gildon's "Memoirs" seem entirely fictional, as Summers characterized them, "sweepings of her desk" (Works, I, xxii), probably material intended to have been used by her in a novel. But Summers relates "there are some eight ungenerous lines with a side reference to the 'Conquests she had won' in Buckingham's A Trial of the Poets for the Bays, and a page or two of insipid

¹⁷ Link, p. 22.

spiritless rhymes, The Female Laureat, find a place in State Poems" (Works, I, liv). One typical critic gibes at her sexuality and her originality at once, attempting to relate the two and thereby besmirch both. In A Satyr on the Modern Translators, the anonymous author begins by attacking Dryden and then moves to Mrs. Behn:

That he [Dryden] may know what Roman Authors mean,
 No more than does our blind Translatress Behn,
 The Female Wit, who next convicted stands,
 Not for abusing Ovid's verse but Sand's:
 She might have learn'd from the ill-borrowed Grace,
 (Which little helps the Ruin of her Face)
 That Wit, like Beauty, triumphs o'er the Heart
 When more of Nature's seen, and less of Art:
 Nor strive in Ovid's Letters to have shown
 As much of Skill, as Lewdness in her own.
 Then let her from the next inconstant Lover,
 Take a new Copy for a second Rover.
 Describe the Cunning of a jilting Whore,
 From the ill Arts herself has us'd before;
 Thus let her write, but Paraphrase no more.¹⁸

Although she was later to accuse critics of attacking her on invalid grounds (moralistic or antifeministic rather than literary), this first play, The Forced Marriage, received a favorable notice and ran for six nights, an extremely good initial showing. Downes notes that it exited "to give room for a greater. The Tempest."¹⁹ The play is a romantic tragicomedy, important not for its artistry in particular, but for the themes Mrs. Behn introduces. Aside from the previously mentioned attack

¹⁸ Dryden had written a preface to some poems of Ovid "translated" by Mrs. Behn in which he praised her commonsense rendering of the meaning of the originals, even though she did not know Latin. She had used a translation by Sands for her work, and "paraphrase" is probably a more accurate description of it than "translation" (Works, I, lv).

¹⁹ Downes, p. 34.

on arranged marriages, she introduces an element of moral criticism. Instead of having the characters deceive their parents (a la Etherege in his treatment of Dorimant and Harriet in The Man of Mode, for example), her characters adhere to their principles of love and honor. This unfortunately results in a somewhat artificial manipulation of the plot to provide a happy resolution, however. The play is written in verse which is both rhymed and unrhymed, and contains some of the songs for which she is justly famous. Aminta sings a song in Act II, scene ii, which expresses some of Mrs. Behn's feelings conjectured above:

Hang Love, for I will never pine
 For any Man alive;
 Nor shall this jolly Heart of mine
 The thoughts of it receive;
 I will not purchase Slavery
 At such a dangerous rate;
 But glory in my Liberty,
 And laugh at Love and Fate (Works, III, 309).

The Restoration theater into which Aphra Behn moved with her first production was a theater recovering from the break during the Commonwealth. The old tradition of humours comedy and the drama of the Elizabethan period competed with the newly emerging comedies in distinctly Restoration style. Mrs. Behn's own predilection for intrigue, as evidenced by her Holland episode, finds expression in her many comedies of intrigue, most of which exhibit her Tory bias. Her sympathetic portrayal of the cavalier characters in The Rover (1677), her dedication of the Second Part of the Rover (1681) to James II, and her prologue to The Young King (1683), in which she asks heaven to "bless the King that

keeps the Land in Peace" (PHN, II, 89), culminate in outright attack on the Whigs in the plays The Roundheads (1682) and The City Heiress (1682). Her loyalty probably began in her childhood. If one accepts 1640 as being, within a few years the date of her birth, she would have reached adulthood during the years of the Puritan ascendancy of the 1640's to 1650's. Although this time does not appear to have been characterized by large-scale bloodshed, the misery and irritation, the oppression of the Anglican clergy who were evicted from their livings, and of the citizens through social restrictions such as "blue laws," closing of the theaters, strict observance of the Sabbath, and fear of retribution for admitting loyalties observed for generations must have had prejudicial effect on any person growing to maturity. Donald Greene observes in The Age of Exuberance that "the average Englishman probably thought much as Macaulay did: 'The Puritan hated bearbaiting, not because it gave pain to the bear, but because it gave pleasure to the spectators.'"²⁰ The only real dictatorship ever to exist in England, the Protectorate, was the culmination of the inability of the Stuart kings to deal tactfully with the political dangers managed successfully by their Tudor predecessors. James I's treatment of parliament initiated the problems, and his son Charles I's blatant disregard for the traditional bounds of the monarchy, combined with the extremist nature of the Cromwell faction, resulted in his execution. The restoration of Charles II came as an enormous relief to a large portion of England,

²⁰ Donald Greene, The Age of Exuberance: Backgrounds to Eighteenth Century English Literature (New York: Random House, 1970), p. 24.

and Mrs. Behn's return after this fact would have made her appreciate the peace and stability Charles provided during his reign. Greene states that Charles was the only Stuart king who "threaded his way with great skill through the complex and dangerous political mazes of his quarter-century on the throne."²¹ He used his wisdom to carry the nation through the exclusionist crisis of 1678-82, when civil war again threatened the nation. Remembering the strife and destruction of the previous civil war, Mrs. Behn would have been particularly appreciative of his efforts. So she naturally identified herself with the group of writers who were loyal to the crown and who attacked through satire the Whig policies and their promulgators.

In January of 1671 The Forc'd Marriage again was produced by The Duke's Company, in competition with Dryden's The Conquest of Granada, which was being performed by The King's Company. Her next new play, The Amorous Prince; or, The Curious Husband, probably premiered on February 24, 1671 (The London Stage, 180-81). The Amorous Prince is a partly serious, partly comic romance containing intrigues which result in the triumph of true love. In her prologue, Mrs. Behn anticipates criticism on the grounds that she violates the classical unities:

First then for you grave Dons, who love no Play
But what is regular, Great Johnson's way;
Who hate the Monsieur with the Farce and Droll,
But are for things well said with Spirit and Soul;
'Tis you I mean, whose Judgments will admit
No Interludes of fooling with your Wit;
You're here defeated, and anon will cry,
"Sdeath! wou'd 'Twere Treason to write Comedy.

²¹ Greene, p. 14.

So! there's a Party lost; now for the rest,
 Who swear they'd rather hear a smutty Jest
 Spoken by Nokes or Angel, than a Scene
 Of the admir'd and well penn'd Cataline'
 Who love the comick Hat, the Jig and Dance,
 Things that are fitted to their Ignorance:
 You too are quite undone, for here's no Farce
 Damn me; you'll cry, this Play will be mine A____.
 Not serious, nor yet comick, what is't then?
 Th' imperfect issue of a lukewarm Brain:
 'Twas born before its time, and such a Whelp;
 As all the after-lickings could not help.
 Bait it then as you please, we'll not defend it,
 But he that disapproves it, let him mend it.²²

The play has a double plot, loosely united by the interaction of one character, Lorenzo, who figures in both elements. Although Mrs. Behn includes fewer explicitly sexual scenes in this than in some later plays, the action begins with the seduction of Cloris, includes a scene in which Lorenzo makes homosexual overtures to Cloris (she is disguised as a boy), and another in which respectable ladies masquerade as prostitutes (Mrs. Behn uses this device more fully in The Feign'd Courtizans in 1679). The idea that rustic individuals are more innocent and lead simpler and more honest lives, developed more fully in Oroonoko (1688) and The Widow Ranter (1689), comes through in this play from the sentiments expressed by Cloris, a country girl:

Yet I could wish you were a humble Shepherd,
 And knew no other palace than this Cottage;
 Where I would weave you Crown, of Pinks and Daisies,
 And you should be a monarch every May (Works, IV, 261).

The cast for this performance is not known, but it was again produced by the Duke's Company. Other offerings of the theater season of 1670-71

²² Works, IV, 255-56. The "Johnson" in the second line is Ben Jonson.

included Dryden's Conquest of Granada, which dominated the season with seven different performances, and several comedies including Wycherley's Love in a Wood, Betterton's The Amorous Widow, Shadwell's The Humorists, and Howard's The Six Days' Adventure (The London Stage, 175-183).

In 1672 many of Mrs. Behn's early songs appeared in a miscellany called Covent Garden Drollery, which she may have compiled herself. In this collection appears a song "I led my Silvia to a Grove," which is in her next play, The Dutch Lover, under the title "Amyntas led me to a Grove." The song was reprinted in The Muses Mercury in 1707 as "A Song to Mr. J. H." with a note that "they were made upon her Self and her very good Friend Mr. Hoyle."²³ Mrs. Behn's unhappy relationship with John Hoyle can be documented late in her life; this song indicates that the affair began early. The song is a good example of her considerable lyric talent:

Amytas led me to a Grove,
 Where all the Trees did shade us;
 The Sun it self, though it had Strove,
 It could not have betray'd us:
 The Place secur'd from human Eyes,
 No other fear allows,
 But when the Winds that gently rise,
 Do Kiss the yielding Boughs.

Down there we sat upon the Moss,
 And did begin to play
 A thousand Amorous Tricks, to pass
 The heat of all the day.
 A many Kisses he did give:
 And I return'd the same
 Which made me willing to receive
 That which I dare not name.

²³ Woodcock, p. 66.

His Charming Eyes no Aid requir'd
 To tell their softning Tale:
 On her that was already fir'd,
 'Twas Easy to prevail.
 He did but Kiss and Clasp me round,
 Whilst those his thoughts Exprest:
 And lay'd me gently on the Ground;
 Ah who can guess the rest? (Works, I, 255)

The play in which this song appeared, The Dutch Lover, first appeared on February 6, 1673, at the Duke's Company's new theater in Dorset Garden (The London Stage, 203). The names of the cast are not given; the preface to the printed edition implies that Angel enacted the role of Haunce. A romantic element still appears in this play, but the introduction of intrigue and Mrs. Behn's own personal experiences combine to make this a much better effort than her previous two plays. The Dutch Lover was not a success, however; the preface indicates Mrs. Behn's feelings concerning its fate. She objects to the ad hominem attack of the antifeministic critics, the poor quality of the acting, and the failure of the epilogue, written not by the person who had agreed to do so, but deputed to a lesser talent. With vigor and logic she defended herself:

Good, Sweet, Honey, Sugar-candied Reader, . . . Indeed that day 'twas Acted first, there comes into the Pit a long, lithier, plegmatic, white, ill-favor'd, wretched Fop, and Officer in Masquerade newly transported with a Scarfe and Feather out of France, a sorry Animal that has nought else to shield it from the uttermost contempt of all mankind, but that respect which we afford to Rats and Toads . . . This thing, I tell ye, opening that which serves it for a mouth, out issued such a noise as this to those that sate about it, that they were to expect a woful Play, God damn him, for it was a womans. . . . Reader, I have a complaint or two to make to you, and I have done; Know then that this Play was hugely injur'd in the Acting, for 'twas done so imperfectly as never any was before, which did more harm to this than it could have done to any of another sort; the Plot being busie (though I think not

intricate) and so requiring a continual attention, which being interrupted needs much spoil the beauty on't. My Dutch Lover spoke but little of what I intended for him, but supplied it with a great deal of idle stuff, which I was wholly unacquainted with until I heard it first from him . . . (Works, I, 221-25).

She further asserts that she is not interested in dramatic theory, but that she writes to give pleasure to her audiences. The success or failure of her work comes from their reactions; she is willing to accept their verdict if her play has received a fair presentation. In this case, she felt that it had not.

The Dutch Lover was followed by the Duke's Company production of D'Avenant's Macbeth; a note from Downes provides an interesting followup to Mrs. Behn's 1670 opening night experience:

Mr. Nat Lee, had the same Fate [as Otway in undertaking the King in Behn's The Jealous Bridegroom] in Acting Duncan in Macbeth, ruin'd him for an Actor too.²⁴

The plot of The Dutch Lover is extremely intricate, Mrs. Behn's own comments notwithstanding, but is typical of a seventeenth-century drama of intrigue. The various plots are more skillfully intertwined than in her previous plays; several characters interact in each of several plots. The theme of incest carries the serious plot, and Mrs. Behn handles the passion and guilt of Silvio well. The resolution of this problem comes with the disclosure to the youth of his true parentage, allowing him to consummate his love for Cleonte, who is not, after all, his sister. The subplots are complicated, including the debauchment of Hippolita and her brother's efforts to at once

²⁴ Downes, p. 34.

secure revenge for her honor and ruin that of another maiden, Clarinda. A third intrigue involves Alonzo, promised to Hippolita but in love with Euphemia, and the comic wooing of Euphemia, first by Alonzo in disguise as the Dutch lover to whom she is promised, and then by Haunce van Etzel himself.

Haunce and his man Gload provide comic relief from the tension-filled scenes of passion, but they also represent Mrs. Behn's first incorporation of personal experience into her writing. The farcical characterization of Haunce would suit the English audience (England and Holland engaged in two trade wars, in 1667 and 1672), but Woodcock feels that Haunce "is clearly derived from fairly accurate observation of a certain type of seventeenth-century Dutchman."²⁵ Haunce is, in fact, carefully described by his Gload, and provides a stark contrast to the wit of Alonzo, a prototype which she refined in Willmore, the Rover--the cavalier: inconstant lover, constant intriguer.

Mrs. Behn did not again produce a play, after the failure of The Dutch Lover, until July of 1676 when her one tragedy, Abdelazer, was staged. The cast included Harris as Ferdinand, Smith as Philip, Betterton as Abdelazer, Medburne as Mendoza, Crosbie as Alonzo, Norris as Roderigo, John Lee as Sebastian, Percivall as Osmin, Richards as Zarrack, Mrs. Lee as Isabella, Mrs. Barrer as Leonora, Mrs. Betterton as Florella, Mrs. Osborne as Elvira, and the prologue was probably spoken by Anne Bracegirdle (The London Stage, 245). Abdelazer; or, The Moor's Revenge must have been an attempt by Mrs. Behn to capitalize

²⁵ Woodcock, p. 69.

on the apparent popularity of romantic tragedy. Other theater offerings of the season included Dryden's Tryannic Love and Aureng-Zebe, Shadwell's The Virtuoso, Philaster by Beaumont and Fletcher, and Otway's Don Carlos, Prince of Spain. Mrs. Behn's play is an adaptation of the sixteenth-century anonymous Lust's Dominion (Works, III, 343). The plot of revolves around the efforts of Abdelazer, son of a Moorish king killed by the king of Spain, to gain revenge against the Spanish. He becomes the lover of the Queen, Isabella, and together they kill the king. The new king, Ferdinand, loves Abdelazer's wife Florella; his pursuit of her results in both their deaths. Following many more intrigues, murders, attempted rapes, and similar exciting stage business, Philip, son of the original Spanish king at the beginning of the play, becomes king, and Florella's brother Alonzo marries the princess Leonora.

The character Abdelazer seems adequately motivated, but his capacity for evil is not always well sustained--sometimes he degenerates into an unconvincing rhetorician. Queen Isabella appears much as the character Lyndaraxa in the Conquest of Granada in her opportunistic manipulating and her lustful nature, but she lacks the vividness of Dryden's dark woman.

In September of 1676 The Town Fop; or, Sir Timothy Tawdry was produced at Dorset Garden by the Duke's Company (The London Stage, 249). The play is set in London and is a comedy of intrigue and manners, involving several plots. Lord Plotwell has four wards: Bellmour, Diana, Charles, and Phillis. Bellmour, who is secretly engaged to Celinda, is promised by Lord Plotwell to Diana, the beloved of Celinda's brother

Friendlove. Celinda herself is promised to the fop, Sir Timothy Tawdrey. Bellmour marries Diana in order to preserve his inheritance, and Celinda pretends to poison herself, then disguises herself as a boy. Bellmour refuses to consummate the marriage, and Diana looks for revenge, finding Friendlove (who is in disguise) and agreeing to kill Bellmour. Bellmour, who thinks Celinda is dead, wounds his own brother Charles, and angers Lord Plotwell so that he agrees to help Diana secure a divorce. Phillis, another of Lord Plotwell's wards, is now being pursued by Sir Timothy, who is not satisfied with his mistress, Betty Flauntit. The many strands of the plot are finally all resolved with the proper pairs of lovers being united: Diana and Friendlove, Celinda and Bellmour, and Sir Timothy and Phillis.

This play is an improvement over the earlier ones in terms of characterization and dialogue. The source for it is The Miseries of Enforced Marriage (1607) by George Wilkins, but Montague Summers notes "It cannot be denied that Mrs. Behn has greatly improved Wilkins' scenes" (Works, III, 4). The character of Betty Flauntit Mrs. Behn creates herself, and she and her companions are funny and they are fully drawn. The customs and fashions of the aristocrats are aped in the world of the whores. In the "baudy house" scene, Betty is speaking to some "friends" (also prostitutes) and their drawing-room conversation reflects the values of their upper-class counterparts:

. . . you know of all things in the World,
I hate Whores, they are the pratingst leudest poor
creatures in Nature; and I wou'd not, for any thing,
Sir Timothy shou'd know that I keep Company, 'twere
enough to lose him.

.

. . . Lord, they think there are such Joys in Keeping,
when I vow, Driver, after a while, a Miss has as painful
a Life as a Wife; our Men drink, stay out late, and whore,
like any Husbands (Works, III, 62-3).

The true lovers contrast with the fops and whores. Celinda responds to the statement that she should not marry Bellmour because he would then lose his estate with the impassioned reply:

Not Marrying him! Oh, canst thou think so poorly
of me? Yes, I would marry him, though our scanty Fortune
Cou'd only purchase us a lonely Cottage, in some silent
Place, . . . And mean and humble Clothing (Works, III, 14).

When Betty is asked which of the young men she will choose, she replies:

No matter for his Handsomness, let me have him that has most
money (Works, III, 63).

Mrs. Behn's theatrical acumen appears again in the multiple stage businesses: music, a wedding dance attended in masquerade, serenades, sword fights, songs, and mistaken identities. The theatrical elements are well integrated into the play, however, and do not detract from the realistic comment on London society provided by the comic picture.

In March of 1677 Mrs. Behn staged her third play within the two-year period 1676-77, The Rover; or, The Banished Cavaliers. The performance at the Duke's House Theater in Dorset Gardens featured Betterton in the role of Belville, Smith as Willmore, Underhill as Blunt, Mrs. Betterton as Florinda, and Anne Quin as Angellica (The London Stage, 293). An adaptation of Killegrew's Thomaso, the play is a comedy of manners and intrigue, and is Mrs. Behn's most famous play, performances being recorded as late as 1790 (Works, I, 6). In the character of Willmore, the Rover, she develops the cavalier hero which expresses her loyalty

to the Stuart monarchs. The play is set during the exile of Charles II, and Willmore, a gallant, also is in exile. Through his interaction with others in the play and through his expressed sentiments Mrs. Behn affirms the concept of monarchy in general and the reign of Charles in particular, and indicts as fools and cowards those who do not agree. After the Popish Plot incident she made her feelings more explicit by dedicating the second part of the Rover to James and commenting directly in the body of the play on citizens who do not support their king.

Also in The Rover enforced marriage is again attacked by Mrs. Behn; as in the previous play The Town Fop she shows that no good can come of such an institution. The idea of marriage itself is examined here in the exchanges between Hellena and Willmore, who reach a marital agreement which is, if unconventional, one in which they feel they can live successfully.

Set in Naples during Carnival, the play relates the adventures of supporters of Charles II who are in exile and have lost their estates. Willmore, the Rover, leads the group; he combines the charm of a cavalier gallant with the slightly rough, barely unpolished manners reminiscent of the sea-captains of the Elizabethan era, when England was queen of the oceans. This chauvinistic evocation cannot but have been pleasant and soothing to a nation whose entire navy had been towed down the Thames by the Dutch only a few years earlier.

Willmore's friends and fellow cavaliers are Belvile and Frederick; Ned Blunt is also expatriate but not in exile and not impoverished as are the others. Belvile loves Florinda, whom he saved along with her

brother Pedro, at the siege of Pamplona, but Florinda has been promised by her father to a rich old man and by her brother to a rich young one. Naturally she wants neither of their choices, but loves Belvile. Her sister Hellena, intended by the family for the convent, falls in love with Willmore, and their cousin Valeria loves Frederick. Complications arise with the introduction of a famous courtesan, Angellica Bianca, whose keeper has died and who is "for sale" at a very large price. While Pedro and Antonio fight for the right to purchase her, Angellica bestows her favors gratis on the charming Willmore, who unfortunately wins her heart as well. After many duels, foiled assignations, mistaken identities, masquerades, and an assassination attempt on Willmore by Angellica, the plot is finally resolved happily for all but Ned Blunt, who is bilked by a prostitute and ejected through a trap door naked into the sewers of Naples.

In this play Mrs. Behn's ability to create witty characters, sparkling dialogue, and comic images that are true to the robust life which she knew well emerge in their fullest potential. If she is not as polished as Congreve, she offers an earthiness and vivid authenticity uniquely her own. She contrasts the motives of the characters: although Willmore like the country fool, Blunt, follows his appetite, his intelligence and vitality enable him to succeed when Blunt fails. Blunt is cheated because he is self-deceived; love for him is carnal.

In January 1678, Mrs. Behn produced Sir Patient Fancy, an adaptation of Moliere (The London Stage, 266). The prologue was spoken by Betterton, who played Willmore, Anthony Leigh was Sir Patient Fancy,

Crosby was Leander Fancy, Crosby was Leander Fancy, Smith played Knowell, Nokes, Sir Credulous Easy, and Richards was Curry. Lady Fancy was played by Mrs. Currer, Lady Knowell by Mrs. Quin, Lucretia by Mrs. Price, Isabella by Mrs. Betterton, and Maundy by Mrs. Gibbs. Mrs. Behn adapts her incidents from Moliere, but not her methods, a form of mild plagiarism practiced commonly at this time. The variety of incidents and complications of this intrigue comedy, nevertheless, make it English rather than French in execution. Other adaptations offered during this season included The Tempest by Shadwell and All for Love by Dryden, both adaptations of Shakespeare.

Sir Patient Fancy, a hypochondriac, is uncle to Leander, father to Fanny and Isabella, and husband to the young Lucia Fancy, who intrigues with Wittmore, a "wild young fellow of small fortune." Isabella and her friend Lucretia declare early in the play their determination only to wed the gentlemen of their choice, Lodwick and Leander. Lady Fancy pretends to share the old man's religious zeal, and humors his hypochondria, and he trusts her. When she is discovered with Wittmore, she introduces him as Fainlove and says he is Isabella's suitor. Lodwick's mother, the bluestocking Lady Knowell, pursues Leander, ostensibly to test his devotion to Lucretia, her daughter. Sir Credulous Easy is a foolish Devonshire knight contracted by Sir Patient to marry Isabella. After many comic incidents based on Sir Patient's religious and physical affectations, Lady Knowell's pedantry, and Sir Credulous' gullibility, true love triumphs, but not entirely in the manner of convention.

The epilogue contains evidence that Mrs. Behn's battle with her critics still raged:

I Here and there o'erheard a Coxcomb cry,
 Ah, Rot it--'tis a Woman's Comedy,
 One, who because she lately chanc'd to please us
 With her damned stuff, will never cease to teeze us.
 What has poor Woman done, that she must be
 Debar'd from Sense, and sacred poetry?

 Quickest in finding all the subtlest ways
 To make your Joys, why not to make you Plays?
 We best can find your Foibles, know our own,
 And Jilts and Cuckolds now best please the Town;
 Your way of Writing's out of fashion grown.
 Method, and Rule-----you only understand;
 Pursue that way of Fooling, and be damn'd.
 Your learned Cant of Action, Time and Place,
 Must all give way to the unlabour'd Farce.
 To all the Men of Wit we will subscribe:
 But for your half Wits, ye unthinking Tribe,
 We'll let you see, whate'er besides we do,
 How artfully we copy some of you:
 And if you're drawn to th' Life, pray tell me then,
 Why Women should not write as well as Men (PHN, IV, 105).

The Popish Plot incident in the fall of 1678 involved Titus Oates' attempt to associate the Tories with regicide and treason and focused national attention on party and religious differences. As a Tory who felt personal loyalty to the Stuarts, Mrs. Behn joined with other Tory writers, led by Dryden, in a number of attacks on prominent Whigs, especially Buckingham, Monmouth, and Shaftesbury. Judicial proceedings arising out of the case encompassed several years, and Shaftesbury was not brought to trial until 1681. During this time Mrs. Behn progresses from good-natured caricatures and occasional overt references to her sympathies to the outright attack found in The Roundheads in 1681. In the prologue to her next play The Feigned Courtesans; or, a Night's

Intrigue she complains that Oates and his plotting have taken attention away from the theater and her plotting:

The devil take this cursed plotting age,
 'T has ruined all our plots upon the stage.
 Suspicions, new elections, jealousies,
 Fresh informations, new discoveries,
 Do so employ the busy fearful town,
 Our honest calling here is useless grown . . . (PHN, II, 264).

Produced in Dorset Garden in March of 1679, the play may have been staged as Midnight's Intrigue in 1676 (The London Stage, 276). The cast included Norris as Morisini, Corsby as Julio, Gilloe as Octavio, Leigh as Petro, Smith as Sir Harry Fillamour, Betterton as Galliard, Nokes as Sir Signal Buffoon, Underhill as Tickletext, Mrs. Lee as Laura Lucretia, Mrs. Currer as Marcella, Mrs. Barry as Cornelia, Mrs. Norris as Phillipa, and Mrs. Seymour as Sabina. The epilogue, spoken by Smith, suggests that audiences were small and that Drury Lane had been closed:

So hard the time are, and so Thin the Town,
 Tho but one Playhouse, that must too lie down . . . (PHN, II, 359).

Since the prologue and epilogue contain the only topical references, the argument for the play's having been written and produced earlier becomes stronger.

The play itself is another intrigue comedy, heavily infused with farce. Marcella and Cornelia disguise themselves as expensive prostitutes in order to go to Rome and escape the fates their families have planned: Marcella to marry Octavio and Cornelia to enter a convent. Marcella loves Sir Harry Fillamour and Cornelia loves Galliard. The girls' brother, Julio, has been away, and during his absence been

engaged to Laura Lucretia. When he comes to Rome, he joins Galliard in pursuit of La Silvianetta who is actually his sister Cornelia. The low comedy plot shows Sir Signal Buffoon and his tutor, the Reverend Timothy Tickletext, in pursuit of the supposed courtesans. The intrigue becomes confusing and complicated: each of the comic characters is assisted by Petro, a character who assumes four different disguises; the disguised girls disguise themselves further as boys, and the men blunder through mistaken identity crises in one dark scene after another.

Link suggests that the farce was emphasized to insure the play's success,²⁶ and in light of the epilogue this may be true. The farcical scenes are not structurally related to the rest of the play, nor do they seem to serve any thematic function comparable to those of Ned Blunt in The Rover. The popular cast would have helped draw audiences, as would the disguises, duels, and songs.

Critics have disagreed as to whether The Young King; or The Mistake was staged before or after The Feigned Courtizans. Since the epilogue contains a reference to the exile of James, Link feels that the play was staged in the fall of 1679 rather than the spring. The London Stage records that it may have been acted in either March or September of 1679 (The London Stage, 276). The play is a romantic tragicomedy and is not in the style of the intrigue plays she had been producing, suggesting that it may have been written earlier. The most memorable and worthwhile portions of the play are the prologue and the epilogue;

²⁶ Link, p. 58.

the pastoral romance plot and the comic plot are neither interesting nor integrated.

In the prologue Mrs. Behn asks that "Heaven bless the King that keeps the Land in Peace" (PHN, II, 89). The epilogue contains a warning to the plotters and earnest sympathy for the problems of the King:

No public Mischiefs can disturb his reign,
And Malice wou'd be busy here in vain.
Fathers and Sons just Love and Duty pay;
This knows to be indulgent, and that t'obey.
Here's no Sedition hatcht, no other Plots
But to entrap the Wolf that steals our Flocks.
Who then wou'd be a King, gay Crowns to wear,
Restless his Nights, thoughtful his Days with Care;
Whose Greatness, or whose Goodness can't secure
From Outrages which Knaves and Fools procure? (PHN, II, 168)

By January of 1681 the foment over the Popish Plots neared climax; Mrs. Behn's overt entry into the fray begins with her dedication of the second part of The Rover to James, Duke of York, and the sentiments of the play itself. The fact that James was unpopular even among many of the Tories for his uncompromising Catholicism shows that Mrs. Behn's dedication indicates her strong loyalty to the monarchy and not merely to the personable Charles.²⁷

The second part of The Rover was never as successful as the first, despite an illustrious cast which included Mrs. Barry, Betty Curren, Smith again as Willmore, and Underhill and Nokes as Blunt and Fetherfool (The London Stage, 293). The play continues the attack begun in part I

²⁷ The theme of the divinity of kings can be seen in The Forced Marriage and The Amorous Prince.

on forced marriages and Charles' enemies. Willmore, the popular figure from the first play, appears again, this time in Madrid in pursuit of a beautiful courtesan, La Nuche, his Hellena having died at sea. With him are his fellow officers, Shift and Hunt, and the comic Ned Blunt, who is joined in part II by still another country fool, Nicholas Featherfoot. Beaumont and old Don Carlo are Willmore's rivals for La Nuche, but Beaumont is engaged to Ariadne, who spends much of the play following Willmore around, sometimes as herself and sometimes disguised as a boy. After the usual number of intrigues, Ariadne becomes content after all with marrying Beaumont, and La Nuche agrees to accept Willmore on his own terms--without marriage. The comic plot of the play, not well integrated as in part I, revolves around the efforts of Blunt and Featherfoot to marry a giantess and a dwarf for their money. Through the assistance of Willmore, they are secured for Shift and Hunt instead. The farcical nature of these scenes (with the fools and monsters) removes them too much from the manners-intrigue nature of the remainder of the play and Mrs. Behn is never able to successfully unite them.

The prologue to The False Count continues Mrs. Behn's attack on the Whigs; she at first pretends to have been converted by their recent court victory, then slams a double entendre reference to the Ignoramus verdict recently returned by the Whig-packed jury. The play itself, however, is a light comedy with a fairly simply plot--a nice change of pace from intrigue. She has adapted material from Moliere and Montfleury (Works, III, 97), in what she terms in the epilogue "a slight Farce, five Days brought forth with ease, / So very foolish

that it needs must please." Smith, Nokes, Underhill and Lee appeared in the original in November or December of 1681 (The London Stage, 293). Don Carlos, the governor of Cadiz, loves Julia, who has been forced to marry an old merchant Francisco. Julia and her husband, his daughter Isabella (from a former marriage) and Julia's sister Clara all come to Cadiz to get Isabella married to Antonio and Clara married to Don Carlos. Antonio loves Clara, so he and Don Carlos scheme with Guiliom, a former chimney sweep, to achieve their ends. While Francisco's party is aboard a boat in the harbor, they are kidnapped and carried off to Antonio's villa, which Francisco and Isabella believe to be the harem of a Turkish sultan. At the villa the "Sultan" forces Francisco to resign his wife to Don Carlos. Isabella believes Guzman to be a count, and so releases Antonio to Clara. When the fathers of Julia and Antonio arrive, the plot is discovered, but it is too late to effect changes, and in any case Francisco bears his loss almost cheerfully.

Later the same year (1681) came Mrs. Behn's biggest contribution to the political situation arising from the Oates plot, The Roundheads; or, The Good Old Cause. The play is based on John Tatham's The Rump (Works, I, 335) and is more farce than comedy. Lambert, Fleetwood, Lord Wariston, and Duckenfield are taken from the incidents of 1659-60 and made comic analogues to the Whig politicians of 1681. The men scheme and doublecross each other for power; the council meets only to vote itself benefits. The politicians are presented as drunkards and fools. In opposition to the farcical satire Mrs. Behn includes a love intrigue, typical of her style but in this particular play not very workable.

Freeman and Loveless, two cavaliers, are in love with Lady Desbro and Lady Lambert. Lady Desbro married an old member of Cromwell's party in order to recover her lover's estate, and Lady Lambert has visions of herself as Queen. She is presented as a comic figure in scene after scene, so accepting her as a serious heroine in a love intrigue is difficult. Several scenes are included solely for satirical purposes and have no structural purpose in development of the plot, making them by definition farcical.

The City Heiress; or Sir Timothy Treat-all continued Mrs. Behn's attack in the spring of the next year (April or May of 1682, The London Stage, 308) but offers both better satire and better artistry. Sir Timothy is a caricature of Shaftesbury but also of any greedy Whig merchant, and so the comedy is valid without reliance on knowledge of the political situation. He begins the action of the play by disinheriting his nephew Tom Wilding for being a spendthrift and a Tory (one is not sure which is the more heinous offense). Tom, the cavalier gallant, pursues at once Lady Galliard, a rich widow, and Charlot Get-all, a young heiress. He introduces Diana, his mistress, to his uncle as Charlot, and the old man foolishly pursues her because of her fortune. Tom's friend, Sir Charles Meriwill, also has an uncle, Sir Anthony, who admires Tom's style and urges Charles to emulate it and be more aggressive. Tom and Charles can be seen as counterparts to Willmore and Belvile, and Charlot and Lady Galliard complete the contrast of couples of wit and sensibility.

Shaftesbury's sycophancy, political intriguing, and greed

graphically emerge from this play; Mrs. Behn refers specifically to his support of the exclusion bill and his ambitions to become king of Poland. Any further contributions to Charles' support, however, were curtailed in August of 1682 when she contributed a prologue and epilogue to an anonymous play, Romulus and Hersilia, which attacked Monmouth directly (Works, I, xlii). This criticism of Charles' favorite son, even if justifiable, aroused his displeasure, and accordingly a warrant was issued for her arrest:

Whereas the Lady Slingsby Comoedian and Mrs. Aphaw Behen have by acting and writeing at his Royall Highnesses Theatre committed severall Misdemeanors and made abusive reflections upon persons of Quality, and have written and spoken scandalous speeches without any License or Approbation of those that ought to peruse and authorize the same, These are therefore to require you to take into yor Custody the said Lady Slingsby and Mrs. Aphaw Behen and bring them before mee to ansvere the said offence, And for soe doeing this shal be yor sufficien Warrt. Given undr my hand and seale this 12th day of August, 1682 (Works, I, xliii).

The actress apparently escaped unscathed; she appeared in a production of The Duke of Guise soon after the incident,²⁸ but it marked the end of Mrs. Behn's political dramatic career. After this her sentiments must be traced in novels and poems, and she is less outspoken, but she remained loyal to the values expressed earlier in her life. (She strongly believed in the right and necessity of a monarch, ordained by God, to lead the kingdom, and viewed with alarm attempts to disrupt this political order.)

After the production of The City Heiress in 1682 four years elapse

²⁸ Link, p. 27.

before Mrs. Behn again has a play on the boards. These four years constitute the largest break in her dramatic career, and they also encompass the death of Charles II in February of 1685. She remained loyal to James II, true to her Tory convictions, but she must have been apprehensive about his chances of success in Protestant England. She published a collection of poetry in 1684, and after this her work became miscellaneous in character and references in her correspondence to poverty and illness occurred frequently. In a letter to Waller's daughter-in-law, appended to her "Elegiac Ode to his Memory," she wrote:

. . . I can only say I am very ill & have been dying this twelve-month, that they want those Graces & that spiritt wch possible I might have dres em in had my health & dulling vapors permitted me. . . . I humbly beg pardon for my yll writing Madam for tis with a Lame hand scarce able to hold a pen (Works, I, li).

She managed to recover and stage The Lucky Chance; or, An Alderman's Bargain in April of 1686 (The London Stage, 348). The united company cast included Leigh, Nokes, Betterton, Keneston, Jevon, Harris, Bowman, Mrs. Barry, Mrs. Cook, Mrs. Mountford, and Mrs. Powell. Another intrigue comedy, this play includes the usual complement of two sets of lovers, with the addition of two old knights as well. Bellmour, having been in exile for killing a man in a duel, returns to London to find that his fiance Leticia believes him dead and is about to marry Sir Feeble Fainwould. His friend, Gayman, loves Julia, who is married to Sir Cautious Fulbank, but has spent all his money and lives in Alsatia, a ghetto of London. Bellmour, disguised as Sir Feeble's nephew, discovers that the old man has his official pardon and prevents the consummation

of his marriage to Leticia. He accomplishes this by sending Sir Feeble to Cautious to prevent a "plot." Julia discovers Gayman's plight from Bredwell, Sir Cautious' "prentice," and sends him to Gayman with a bag of gold stolen from her husband and an invitation to an assignation. The disguises and intrigues in this play have the air of the supernatural; characters appear as devils and ghosts.

The fantastic and supernatural also figure prominently in The Emperour of the Moon, the last of Mrs. Behn's plays to be produced before her death. In March of 1687 the United Company presented Underhill as Dr. Baliardo, Lee as Scaramouch, Young Mr. Powell as Don Cinthio, Mumford as Don Charmante, Jevern as Harlequin, Mrs. Cooke as Elaira, Mrs. Mumford as Bellemante, and Mrs. Cory as Mopsophil (The London Stage, 356). The play was very successful; it was repeated 130 times between 1687 and 1749.²⁹ Mrs. Behn combines elements of satire, intrigue, and opera into an organically-sound spectacular. The intrigue plot, much simpler than usual for Mrs. Behn, concerns the efforts of Ellaria and Bellemante to marry their lovers, Don Cinthio and Don Charmante. Dr. Baliardo, father to Ellaria and uncle to Bellemante, wants to save them for marriage to the moon people, an advanced civilization which he believes exists on the moon. In an inversion of the Prospero story, Baliardo is dazzled by an elaborate masque which both unites the lovers and reveals to him the folly of his "learning." The comedy works through and with the splendid theatrical effects Mrs. Behn designs.

²⁹ Link, p. 80.

After the successful run of The Emperour of the Moon Mrs. Behn staged no more plays before her death in 1689. In 1688 and 1689 she published several panegyrics, assorted prose fiction (The Fair Jilt, Oronooko, The History of the Nun, The Lucky Mistake) and some translations. She was bothered with poverty and illness during her last year especially; even though she continued to write and publish, she apparently was unable to make enough money to sustain herself. Her death on 16 April of 1689 coincides with the passing of the Stuart era, with which she so closely identified herself. The author of the "Memoirs" attributes her death to "an unskilful physician" (Works, p. 74). Her characterization by that author gives a description which would seem to fit the other information known about her life and personality:

She was of a generous and open temper, something passionate very serviceable to her friends in all that was in her power, and could sooner forgive an injury than do one. She had wit, honor, good humor, and judgment. She was mistress of all the pleasing arts of conversation, but used 'em not to any but those who loved not plain dealing. She was a woman of sense, and by consequence a lover of pleasure, as indeed all . . . are; but only some would be thought to be above the conditions of humanity, and place their chief pleasure in a proud, vain hypocrisy. For my part, I knew her intimately, and never saw aught unbecoming the just modesty of our sex, tho' more gay and free than the folly of the precise will allow. She was, I'm satisfied, a greater honor to our sex than all the canting tribe of dissemblers that die with the false reputation of saints (PHN, V, 72-73).

Her death provided a well-timed exit from the Restoration stage. The Whigs had assumed control of the government, the monarchy having been limited by the Act of Rights to which William and Mary assented when they accepted parliament's invitation to rule. James had fled the

country; England had established colonial supremacy. The burgeoning middle class created audiences whose tastes differed radically from those of the gallant Restoration theater patron. The values of piety, sobriety, and propriety assumed importance as the middle class became affluent enough to attend the theater, moving it away from royal patronage and sparkling wit to popular sufficiency and exemplary comedy (much more exemplary than comic, unfortunately). The frivolity of the Restoration lost currency; French was no longer spoken at court. In "A Paraphrase on the Eventh Ode Out of the First Book of Horace," Mrs. Behn expresses the sentiments current in her time:

Give me but love and wine, I'll ne'er
Complain my destiny's severe.
Since life bears so uncertain date,
With pleasure we'll attend our fate,
And cheerfully go to meet it at the gate.
The brave and witty know no fear or sorrow.
Let us enjoy today, we'll die tomorrow.³⁰

In his Introduction to Selected Writings of the Ingenious Mrs. Aphra Behn, Robert Phelps quotes a couplet which must have reflected the bewilderment and dismay accompanying her realization of the change occurring around her:

Though I the wondrous change deplore
That makes me useless and forlorn³¹

In true Cavalier fashion she observed the pageant of life, enjoyed as much of it as she could and gracefully did not outlive her era.

³⁰ Behn, Selected Writings of the Ingenious Mrs. Aphra Behn, ed. Robert Phelps (New York: Grove Press, 1950), p. 241.

³¹ Behn, Selected Writings of the Ingenious Mrs. Aphra Behn, p. 3.

III. DRAMATIC SATIRE IN APHRA BEHN

The failure of The Dutch Lover in 1673 prompted Mrs. Behn to preface the printed version with an "Epistle to the Reader," which is significant in that it raises some questions about the value of drama as a tool for reformation or instruction. She first compares plays to sermons, sarcastically noting that she has not pretended to reveal matters concerning "the Immortality of the Soul, of the Mystery of Godliness, or of Ecclesiastical Policie . . ." (Works, I, 221), so that "having inscribed Comedy on the beginning of . . . [her] Book," she has enabled the reader to "guess pretty near what penny-worths" he is likely to find inside. She notes further: ". . . the most of that which bears the name of Learning . . . are much more absolutely nothing than the errantest Play that e'er was writ." She does not "undervalue Poetry" but neither is she convinced that there is "no wisdom in the world beyond it." She agrees with Dryden's idea that pleasure is the main end of drama.

. . . none of all our English Poets, and least the Dramatique (so I think you call them) can be justly charg'd with too great reformation of men's minds or manners, and for that I may appeal to general experiment, if those who are the most assiduous Disciples of the Stage, do not make the fondest and the lewdest Crew about this town . . . I will have leave to say that in my judgement the increasing number of our latter Plays have not done much more towards the amending of men's Morals, or their Wit, than hath the frequent Preaching, which this last age hath been pester'd with, (indeed without all Controversie they have done less harm) nor can I once imagine what temptation anyone

can have to expect it from them; for sure I am no Play was ever writ with that design. If you consider Tragedy, you'll find their best of Characters unlikely patterns for a wise man to pursue. . . . And as for Comedie, the finest folks you meet with there are still unfitter for your imitation . . . since as I take it Comedie was never meant, either for a converting or a conforming Ordinance: In short, I think a Play the best divertisement that wise men have: but I do also think them nothing so who do discourse as formallie about the rules of it, as if 'twere the grand affair of humane life. This being my opinion of Plays, I studied only to make this as entertaining as I could . . . (Works, I, 222-3).

Even though she disavows the power of comedy to reform, the continual pattern of criticism through satirical treatment of characters and issues belies her claim to have aimed only at entertainment. Dryden himself had said that the primary purpose of comedy was to entertain, but then wrote such highly satirical plays as Marriage a la Mode, The Kind Keeper, and The Spanish Friar. Mrs. Behn's attacks on enforced marriage, hypocritical and canting Christians, pedants, social pretenders, and political allegiance show her concern for these issues, even though she prefers not to "discourse as formallie about the rules of it." She, like Dryden, was aware of her audience.

Aphra Behn's satirical comments on inconsistencies in her society are both explicit and implicit. However, she almost always has such a comment to make--even the seemingly frivolous romance prose works point out the hypocrisy of conventional marriage and religious customs. In her first play, The Forced Marriage (1670), observance of physical fidelity causes characters to be untrue to their personal integrity. Philander and Erminia are secretly betrothed; Philander asks his father, the king, to reward the valor of Alcippus, who promptly asks for and is granted the hand of Erminia, much to the dismay not only of Erminia

and Philander but also of the Princess Galatea, who secretly loves Alcippus. Erminia denies Alcippus his conjugal rights in order to remain faithful to her love for Philander; Alcippus becomes enraged and strangles his beloved wife, leaving her for dead. Erminia must choose between the obedience and respect she traditionally owes her legal husband and the love she feels for Philander; Philander must respect his father as a symbol of authority, subjugating his own personal desires to the concept of honoring one's parents and one's king.

This outspoken criticism of the practice of forcing women to marry for reasons other than their own inclinations carries through much of Mrs. Behn's work (c.f. Oronooko, The Rover, The Dutch Lover, The Town Fop). The question of arranged marriages--are the parties in such a situation bound by conventional morality, or are they bound by what they ascertain to be their responsibilities to themselves as people in love?--draws from Mrs. Behn a response that certainly is moral, if unconventional. She consistently presents as admirable characters who act from honest motives, giving themselves for love rather than profit. This portrayal of characters on the stage probably reflects her own conduct, which has been portrayed in some detail by contemporaries.¹ Her attack on this custom is steady; her position

¹ The Memoirs prefacing the first edition of her collected works, caricatures such as lines in "The Poetess, a Satyr," by Gould, Buckingham's "A Trial of the Poets for the Bays," Tom Brown's "The Late Converts Exposed; or, the Reason of Mr. Bay's Changing His Religion," the last three cited by Montague Summers in his "Memoir of Mrs. Behn" which prefaces the complete edition of works, pp. xlix, liv, lvi.

is similar to that of Richardson in Clarissa. Like him, she implies that a forced marriage inevitably leads to disaster; however, she usually allows for a happier resolution in her comedies than did he in that novel.

This theme recurs in the novel written late in her career, Oronooko (1688). The enforcement of an unwanted marriage upon the heroine Imoinda, beloved of Prince Oronooko of Coramantien, "a country of blacks" which the slavers "found the most advantageous for trading," directly initiates the chain of events culminating in the torture, dismemberment, and burning of the Prince. Imoinda and Oronooko have exchanged vows of love; they are each presented as the epitome of beauty and honor, and so are a fitting match in Restoration terms. She is the "fair Queen of Night, whose face and person were so exceeding all he had ever beheld . . ."; he "knew no vice, his flame aimed at nothing but honour"² The king of Coramantien, Oronooko's grandfather, also had noticed the charms of the fair Imoinda, and desired her for himself. He knew that "it was past doubt whether she loved Oronooko entirely." This knowledge caused the king a few pangs of conscience, but "he salved it with this, that the obedience the people pay their King, was not at all inferior to what they paid their gods; and what love would not oblige Imoinda to do, duty would compel her to."³ Imoinda, faced with the decision of Erminia, reacts in a similar manner:

² Behn, The Novels of Aphra Behn, p. 11.

³ Behn, The Novels of Aphra Behn, p. 12.

"trembling and almost fainting, she was obliged to suffer herself to be . . . led away."⁴ This dilemma, presented in the earliest and latest of Mrs. Behn's works, shows her scorn for the idea of marriage without love. She even flirts with repudiation of convention when illegitimacy is the issue. In "The Adventure of the Black Lady" the heroine, "great with child," explains why she will not marry her lover or even solicit his help by explaining her plight to him. "I doubt not that he would marry me . . . [but] I am certain, he can never love me after."⁵

Both in Oronooko and in The Forced Marriage the duty of loyalty to one's king takes precedence over individual desires. Mrs. Behn, loyal to her king, never suggests that any other course of action would be suitable. She does, however, intimate that right action on the part of the kings would prevent such problems. Loyalty to one's parents, although to be desired, clearly is less important. Much of the humor of The Dutch Lover results from the endeavors of Euphemia and Alonzo to trick Euphemia's father, Don Carlo, into thinking Alonzo is the Dutchman Haunce von Enzel, with whom Don Carlo has already concluded a marriage agreement. Even Euphemia's brother, Lovis, joins in the plot, and greets Alonzo with laughter before leading him in Act III, scene I to Don Carlo to be introduced as Haunce, remarking:

Very Haunce all over, the Taylor has play'd his part, play
but yours as well, and I'll warrant you the Wench.

⁴ Behn, The Novels of Aphra Behn, p. 13.

⁵ Behn, Selected Writings of the Ingenious Mrs. Aphra Behn, p. 24.

Alonzo, dressed as a Dutch fop (however that may be, but surely ridiculous), replies:

Lord, lord, how shall I look thus damnably set out, and thus in love!

After a long conversation with Don Carlo, during which Alonzo/Haunce asks to see Euphemia every time he speaks, and behaves quite rudely in order to substantiate the reports of Haunce's behavior carried earlier by Lovis, the father finally agrees to bring in his daughter for inspection, noting in an aside:

I must not urge him to speak much before Euphemia,
lest she discover he wants Wit by his much Tongue . . .

Neither Euphemia nor her brother Lovis feels at all recalcitrant about the deception of their father; the idea of a future with the "Flandrian Boor" for a girl who has wit, beauty, and a fortune plainly is untenable. After all, even Don Carlo realizes that Euphemia will not want a man with no wit.

In the serious plot of the same play, Mrs. Behn shows her attitude towards women who offer their "love" for sale at a price in an ironic comment made to Hippolyta by Antonio, who has seduced and abandoned her:

Stand off, false Woman, I despise thy Love,
Of which to every Man I know thou deal'st
An equal share (Works, I, 275).

Women who are for sale in Mrs. Behn's plays are generally treated unsympathetically. Betty Flauntit and her would-be keeper Sir Timothy Tawdry provide a typical example. In Sir Timothy Tawdry (1676) the actions of these two characters, basely motivated, are contrasted with those of Diana and Friendlove and Bellmour and Celinda. In a revealing

conversation between Sir Timothy and Friendlove, the contrast is delineated:

Friendlove: . . . I, that have not attain'd to that most excellent faculty of Keeping yet, as you, Sir Timothy, have done; much to your Glory, I assure you.

Sir Tim.: Who, I, Sir? You do me much Honour: I must confess I do not find the softer Sex cruel; I am received as well as another Man of my Parts.

Friendlove: Of your Money you mean, Sir.

Sir Tim.: Why, 'faith, Ned, thou art i'th' right; I love to buy my Pleasure: for, by Fortune, there's as much pleasure in Vanity and Variety, as any Sins I know; What think'st thou, Ned?

Friendlove: I am not of your Mind, I love to love upon the square; and that I may be sure not to be cheated with false Ware, I present 'em nothing but my Heart (Works, III, 10).

This theme again appears in The Rover, part II, in the characters of Blunt and Featherfoot and Don Carlo, who seek either to buy love or to marry for money. Willmore wins the object of his affections even though he is penniless. In a scene (Act V, scene ii) in which La Nuche is confronted by both Beaumont and Willmore, and must choose between them, Beaumont points out that he has money, which Willmore lacks.

Willmore responds:

Leave her to Love, My Dear; one hour of right-down love,
Is worth an Age of living dully on:
What is't to be adorn'd and shine with Gold,
Drest like a God, but never know the Pleasure?
--No, no, I have much finer things in store for thee.

La Nuche deliberates:

What shall I do?
Here's powerful Interest prostrate at my Feet,
Glory, and all that Vanity can boast;
--But there--Love unadorn'd, no covering but his Wings,
No Wealth, but a full Quiver to do mischiefs,
Laughs at those meaner Trifles--

La Nuche (and her counterpart in the first part of The Rover, Angelica), a courtesan, gains the sympathy of Mrs. Behn and the audience because she is willing to sacrifice financial security for love, even with the specter of her future, embodied in her companion Petronella, looming visibly in front of her. She knows what will happen if she takes up with Willmore:

But when I've worn out all my Youth and Beauty, and suffer'd every ill of Poverty, I shall be compell'd to begin the World again without a Stock to set up with. No faith, I'm for a substantial Merchant in Love, who can repay the loss of Time and Beauty; with whom to make one thriving Voyage sets me up for ever, and I need never put to Sea again.

Willmore sings his argument:

No, no, I will not hire your Bed,
Nor Tenant to your Favours be;
I will not farm your White and Red,
You shall not let your Love to me:
I court a Mistress--not a Landlady.

They are united in the next scene (V, iii) in "a bargain made without the formal Foppery of Marriage" (Works, III, 208) and one is inclined to agree with Petronella's assessment of the situation: "not all the Race of Men cou'd have produc'd so bountiful and credulous a Fool" (Works, III, 195).

Another play which satirizes the idea of buying love, in this case in the form of a rich old hypocrite who takes a young wife, is Sir Patient Fancy. The topic of mercenary and enforced marriages is introduced in the opening scene in a conversation between Lucretia and Isabella, the two young heroines.

Lucretia: Yet these are the precious things our grave Parents still chuse out to make us happy with, and all for a filthy Jointure, the undeniable argument for our Slavery to Fools.

Isabella: Custom is unkind to our Sex, not to allow us free Choice; but we above all Cretures must be forced to endure the formal Recommendations of a Parent, and the more insupportable Addresses of an odious Fop; whilst the obedient Daughter stands--thus--with her Hands pinn'd before her, a set look, few Words and a Mein that cries--Come marry me: out upon't.⁶

Isabella, later in the same scene, reveals the situation of her father,

Sir Patient:

They call us [women] easy and fond, and charge us with all weakness; but look into their Actions of Love, State or War, their roughest business, and you shall find 'em swayed by some who have the luck to find their Foibles; witness my Father, a Man reasonable enough, till drawn away by doting Love and Religion: what a Monster my young Mother makes of him! flatter'd him first into Matrimony, and now into what sort of Fool or Beast she pleases to make of him (PHN, IV, 8).

Sir Patient's character unfolds as that of a ridiculous, canting, pious old fool--a Whig merchant seen from the high church Tory point of view. He is cuckolded by Charles Wittmore, a penniless gallant who has lost his fortune during the Protectorate. The satire here is double edged--Sir Patient is foolish both because he is old and seeks to buy a young wife and because he is a Puritan and a Whig and loses face to a supporter of Charles. This play does, in fact, include satire not only on forced and mercenary marriages, but also on such topics as Puritanism and pedantry.

Sir Credulous Easy, the fop, is presented as the fool who is intended by Sir Patient for his daughter but who is, of course, unworthy of her. He greets Lodwick and responds to the suggestion that his

⁶ PHN, IV, 6. In this and subsequent dialogue transcriptions, I have regularized the dialogue tags by giving the full name rather than the often misleading abbreviations included in the text.

arrival is joyful:

Not so joyful neither, Sir, when you shall know poor Gillian's dead, my little grey Mare; thou knew'st her mun: Zoz, 't has made mee as melancholy as the Drone of a Lancashire Bag-pipe. But let that pass; and now we talk of my Mare, Zoz I long to see this sister of thine.

When Lodwick says that he will see her soon, Sir Credulous reveals the depths of his devotion:

But hark ye, Zoz, I have been so often fob'd off in these matters, that between you and I, Lodwick, if I thought I shou'd not have her, Zoz, I'd ne'er lose precious time about her (PHN, IV, 13).

A lover of this degree of wit and constancy is clearly doomed to fail, and he does.

Sir Patient himself provides satire on hypochondriacs and Puritans, as well as on old foolish husbands. Before he himself makes a stage appearance, Lady Fancy describes him to her lover Wittmore in a way that hits at several targets:

Lady Fancy: . . . for tho I am yet unsuspected by my Husband, I am eternally plagu'd with his Company; he's so fond of me, he scarce gives me time to write to thee, he waits on me from room to room, hands me in the Garden; shoulders me in the Balcony, nay does the office of my Women, dresses and undresses me, and does so smirk at his handywork: in fine, dear Wittmore, I am impatient till I can have less of his Company, and more of thine.

Wittmore: Does he never go out of Town?

Lady Fancy: Never without me.

Wittmore: Nor to Church?

Lady Fancy: To a Meeting-house you mean, and then too carries me, and is as vainly proud of me as of his rebellious Opinion, for his Religion means nothing but that, and Contradiction; which I seem to like too, since 'tis the best Cloke I can put on to cheat him with.

Wittmore: Right, my fair Hypocrite.

Lady Fancy: But dear Wittmore, there's nothing so comical as to hear me cant, and even cheat those Knaves, the Preachers themselves, that delude the ignorant Rabble.

Wittmore: What Miracles cannot your Eyes and Tongue perform!

Lady Fancy: Judge what a fine Life I lead the while, to be set up with an old formal doting sick Husband, and a Herd of snivelling grinning Hypocrites, that call themselves the teaching Saints; who under pretence of securing me to the number of their Flock, do so sneer upon me, pat my Breasts, and cry fie, fie upon this fashion of tempting Nakedness (PHN, IV, 20-21).

The memory of the government of Cromwell, as well as his religion, is under attack in this play. Sir Patient has been enriched at the expense of the impoverished Wittmore, whose estate was taken away by the Protectorate. When Sir Patient surprises his wife and Wittmore together, they introduce Wittmore as Fainlove, a suitor for Isabella. Sir Patient is delighted:

What, not Mr. Fainlove's Son of Yorkshire, who was knighted in the good days of the late Lord Protector?

He continues:

He was a Man of admirable parts, believe me, a notable Head piece, a public-spirited person, and a good Commonwealths-man, that he was, on my word.--Your Estate, Sir, I pray?

Wittmore responds, and the ensuing conversation plays his wit against

Sir Patient's cupidity:

Wittmore: I have not impair'd it Sir, and I presume you know its value:--(aside) For I am a Dog if I do.

Sir Pat.: O' my Word 'tis then considerable, Sir; for he left but one Son, and fourteen hundred Pounds per Annum, as I take it: which Son, I hear, is lately come from Geneva, whither he was sent for virtuous Education. I am glad of your Arrival, Sir,--Your Religion, I Pray?

Wittmore: You cannot doubt my Principles, Sir, since educated at Geneva.

Sir Pat.: Your Father was a discreet Man: ah Mr. Fainlove, he and I have seen better days, and wish'd we cou'd have foreseen these that are arriv'd.

Wittmore: That he might have turn'd honest in time, he means, before he had purchas'd Bishops Lands.

Sir Pat.: Sir, you have no place, Office Dependance or Attendance at Court, I hope?

Wittmore: None Sir,--(aside) Wou'd I had--so you were hang'd (PHN, IV, 23).

Lady Fancy expresses Mrs. Behn's sentiments concerning the old and foolish Whig, Sir Fancy:

At Games of Love Husbands to cheat is fair,
'Tis the Gallant we play with on the square (PHN, IV, 36).

Further digs at the Puritans and at the Protectcrate abound. Lady Fancy complains of a headache to Sir Patient, wanting an excuse to miss the religious service for the evening. When he offers to omit the psalm-singing part of the service, she protests:

Oh by no means, Sir, 'twill scandalize the Brethren; for you know a Psalm is not sung so much out of Devotion, as 'tis to give notice of our Zeal and pious Intentions: 'tis a kind of Proclamation to the Neighbourhood, and cannot be omitted. . . (PHN, IV, 70).

In a scene in Lady Fancy's bedroom, surprising her with a man, Sir Patient hears noises:

Sir Pat.: . . . my Chamber's possest with twenty thousand Evil Spirits.

Lady Fancy: Possest! What sickly fancy's this?

Sir Pat.: Ah the House is beset, surrounded and confounded with profane tinkling, with Popish Horn-Pipes, and Jesuitical Cymbals, more antichristian and abominable than Organs, or Anthems.

Nurse: Yea verily, and surely it is the spawn of Cathedral Instruments plaid on by Babylonish Minstrels, only to disturb the Brethern.

Sir Pat.: Ay, 'tis so, call up my Servants, and let them be first chastiz'd and then hang'd; accuse 'em for French Papishes, that had a design to fire the City, or any thing:--oh, I shall die--lead me gently to this Bed (PHN, IV, 47).

After Sir Patient loses his illusions concerning his wife and his honor, he changes for the better, and in his newfound wisdom discards this false religion and government:

Methinks I find an Inclination to swear,--to curse my self and thee, that I cou'd no better discern thee; nay, I'm so chang'd from what I was, that I think I cou'd even approve of Monarchy and Church-Discipline, I'm so truly convinc'd I have been a Beast and an Ass all my Life (PHN, IV, 101).

He resolves to "turn Spark . . . keep some City Mistress, go to Court, and hate all Conventicles" (PHN, IV, 103).

Another comment on English manners, in this case on their nationalistic pride and feelings of superiority towards other cultures, occurs in the play The Feigned Curtezans (1679). Sir Signal Buffon and his "governour," Mr. Tickletext, are on a visit to Rome. They discuss the merits of the country with Sir Harry Fillamour, a fellow countryman.

Sir Signal: Ay, Sir, for good Gloves you know are very scarce Commodities in this Country.

.....

Fillamour: Very right, Sir,--and now he talks of Rome,--Pray, Sir, give me your opinion of the Place--Are there not noble Buildings here, rare Statues, and admirable Fountains?

Tickletext: Your Buildings are pretty Buildings, but not comparable to our University Building; your Fountains, I confess, are, pretty Springs,--and your Statues reasonably well carv'd--but, Sir, they are so antient they are of no value: then your Churches are the worst that ever I saw.

Galliard: How, Sir, the Churches, why I thought Rome had been famous thro-out all Europe for fine Churches.

Fillamour: What think you of St. Peter's Church, Sir? Is it not a glorious structure?

Tickletext: St. Peter's Church, Sir, you may as well call it St. Peter's Hall, Sir: it has neither Pew, Pulpit, Desk, Steeple, nor Ring of Bells; and call you this a Church, Sir? No, Sir, I'll say that for little England, and a fig for't, for Churches, easy Pulpits, [Sir Sig. speaks, And sleeping Pews,] they are as well ordered as any Churches in Christendom: and finer Rings of Bells, Sir, I am sure were never heard.

.
Fillamour: But then, Sir your rich Altars, and excellent Pictures of the greatest Masters of the World, your delicate Musick and Voices, make some amends for the other wants.

Tickletext: How, Sir! tell me of your rich Altars, your Guegaws [sic] and Trinkets, and Popish Fopperies; with a deal of Sing-song--when I say, give me, Sir, five hundred close Changes rung by a set of good Ringers, and I'll not exchange 'em for all the Anthems in Europe: and for the Pictures, Sir, they are Superstition, idolatrous, and flat Popery (PHN, II, 281).

Another target of Mrs. Behn's pen in Sir Patient Fancy, pedantry, develops through the portrayal of Lady Knowell, called by Sir Patient "Madam Romance, that walking library of profane books" (PHN, IV, 25). A few of her utterances will serve to show how vividly Mrs. Behn draws her:

[speaking to Sir Patient]

How! a Fool of my Race, my Generation! I know thou meanest my Son, thou contumelious Knight, who, let me tell thee, shall marry thy Daughter invito te, that is, (to inform thy obtuse Understanding) in spite of thee; yes, shall marry her, tho she inherits nothing but thy dull Enthusiasm, which had she been legitimate she had been possest with (PHN, IV, 32).

[speaking to Lady Fancy] A Slave, a very Houshold Drudge.--oh faugh, come never grieve;--for, Madam, his Disease is nothing but Imagination, a Melancholy which arises from the Liver, Spleen, and Membrane call'd Mesenterium; the Arabians name the Distemper Myrathial, and we here in England, Hypochondriacal Melancholy; I cou'd prescribe a most potent Remedy, but that I am loth to stir the Envy of the College (PHN, IV, 38).

[speaking to Leander and revealing that she has tested him and found him worthy of her daughter]

Be not amaz'd at this turn, Rotat omne facum. --But no more, --keep still that mask of Love we first put on, till you have

gain'd the Writings; for I have no Joy behond cheating that filthy Uncle of thine.--Lucretia, wipe your Eyes, and prepare for Hymen, the Hour draws near. Thalessio, Thalessio, as the Romans cry'd (PHN, IV, 89).

Although Lady Fancy is a pedant, she gets sympathetic treatment from Mrs. Behn and becomes a fully developed and likeable character in spite of her defect. Another character who is similarly affected with learning, in his case false, is the Neapolitan philosopher Dr. Baliardo in The Emperor of the Moon (1687). His practice is to study the moon, and he becomes so engrossed in its mysteries as to believe in a lunar world, peopled, ruled and regulated as on earth. The good doctor is deceived by his household in a sort of reverse Prospero routine which enables his female wards to marry their Cavalier gallants. Charmante, one of the gallants, appears in disguise to the doctor as "the great Caballa of Eutopia" (Works, III, 403). The ensuing conversation between the two men shows how easily Baliardo can be deceived--he needs to be deceived, in fact, because he refuses to accept reality:

[speaking of the races inhabiting the moon]

Charmante: I hope you do not doubt that Doctrine, Sir, which holds that the Four Elements are peopled with Persons of a Form and Species more divine than vulgar Mortals--those of the fiery Regions we call the Salamanders, they beget Kings and Heroes, with Spirits like their Deietical Sires; the lovely Inhabitants of the Water, we call Nymphs; those of the Earth are Gnomes or Fairies; those of the Air are Sylphs. These, Sir, when in Conjunction with Mortals, beget immortal Races; such as the first-born Man, which had continu'd so, had the first Man ne'er doated on a Woman.

Doctor: I am of that opinion, Sir; Man was not made for Woman.

Charmante: Most certain, Sir, Man was to have been immortaliz'd by the Love and Conversation of these charming Sylphs and Nymphs, and Women by the Gnomes and Salamanders, and to have stock'd the World with Demi-Gods, such as at this Day inhabit the Empire of the Moon.

Doctor: Most admirable Philosophy and Reason!--But do these Sylphs and Nymphs appear in Shapes?

Charmante: The most beautiful of all the Sons and Daughters of the Universe: Fancy, Imagination is not half so charming: And then so soft, so kind! But none but the Caballa and their Families are blest with their divine Addresses. Were you but once admitted to that Society--

Doctor: Ay, Sir, what Virtues or what Merits can accomplish me for that great Honour?

Charmante: An absolute abstinence from carnal thought, devout and pure of Spirit; free from Sin.

Any thinking man would shrink from such an audacious requirement; modesty would dictate withdrawal. Baliardo, however, feels he is worthy of a try, and looks through a telescope (which has a picture affixed to its end), at Charmante's instructions making "a short Prayer to Alikin, the Spirit of the East" and shaking "off all earthly Thoughts" (Works, III, 403-404). Baliardo's deception complete, he further reveals the carnal nature of his thoughts which are "free from Sin":

[after seeing what he thinks is a beautiful moon maiden]
But do you imagine, Sir, they will fall in love with an old Mortal?

Charmante reassures him in the terms he wishes to hear:

They love not like the Vulgar, 'tis the immortal Part they doat upon (Works, III, 406).

If Baliardo seems a ridiculous and unbelievable character, it is because he is drawn from a stock character in Italian impromptu comedy, which Montague Summers describes as follows:

The Doctor was one of the leading masks, stock characters . . . Doctor Braziano, or Baloardo Grazian, is a pedant, a philosopher, grammarian, rhetorician, astronomer, cabalist, a savant of the first water, boasting of his degree from Bologna, trailing the gown of that august university. Pompous in phrase and person, his speech is crammed with lawyer's jargon and quibbles, with distorted Latin and ridiculous metaphors. . . (Works, III, 495).

Another consideration in his portrayal, as compared to that of Lady Knowell, is that in The Emperor of the Moon his pedantry is the focus of the satirical thrust, whereas in Sir Patient Fancy Lady Knowell's affectation is a minor flaw echoing the major affectations of Sir Patient. Mrs. Behn contrasts Lady Knowell and Sir Patient as two people with flaws, one who can see truth and function in society and one who cannot. Dr. Baliardo, on the other hand, must be exaggerated, as is Sir Patient, or the audience will see him as a real person rather than as the object of criticism.

A character who appears similarly unbelievable in the excess of her affectations is Isabella in The False Count (1682). She has been contracted by her father to Antonio, a young, rich merchant, but she is less than pleased:

Merchant! a pretty Character! A Woman of my Beauty, and five Thousand Pound, marry a Merchant--a little, petty, dirty-heel'd Merchant; faugh, I'd rather live a Maid all the days of my life, or be sent to a Nunnery, and that's plague enough I'm sure (Works, III, 115).

She informs Francisco, her father, that she expects "A Cavalier at least, if not a Nobleman," and he reminds her of her origins:

A Nobleman, marry come up, your Father, Huswife, meaning my self, was a Leather-seller at first, till, growing rich, I set up for a Merchant, and left that mechanick Trade; and since turned Gentleman; and Heav'n blest my Endeavour so as I have an Estate for a Spanish Grandee; and, are you so proud, forsooth, that a Merchant won't down with you, but you must be gaping after a Cap and Feather, a Silver Sword with a more dreadful Ribbon at the hilt?--Come, come, I fear me, Huswife, you are one that puffs her up with Pride thus;--but lay thy hand upon thy Conscience now-- (Works, III, 115).

Isabella is not only proud, she is, like Mrs. Behn's other affected

characters, easily deceived, because she wishes to believe in dreams and foolishness. When Antonio and Don Carlos hire Guiliom, a chimney sweeper, to impersonate a count (Don Guilielmo Roderigo de Chimney-sweeperio) she is completely taken in and so deserves her fate: a marriage to neither title nor fortune. Her gullibility and lack of values are developed in several scenes, such as in Act IV, scene I, when Guiliom criticizes her manners:

O, your Viscountess never drinks under your Beer-glass, your Citizens Wives sipper and sip, and will be drunk without doing Credit to the Treater; but in their Closets, they swinge it away, whole Slashes, i'faith, and egad, when a Woman drinks by her self, Glasses come thick about: your Gentlewoman, or your little Lady, drinks halfway, and thinks in point of good manners, she must leave some at the bottom; but your true bred Woman of Honour drinks all, Supernaculum, by Jove.

Isabella's response:

What a misfortune it was, that I should not know this before, but shou'd discover my want of so necessary a piece of Grandeur (Works, III, 140).

Later in the same act (scene II), after the "Turks" have seized the boat on which Francisco's party travels, the wily Guiliom plants the idea of her marrying even higher, a thought which allows Isabella to reveal her constancy--she has none.

Guiliom: But should the Grand Seigneur behold thy Beauty, thou wou'dst despise thine own dear hony Viscount to be a Sultana.

Isabella: A Sultana, what's that?

Guiliom: Why, 'tis the great Turk, a Queen of Turkey.

Isabella: These dear expressions go to my Heart. [Weeps] And yet a Sultana is a tempting thing--[Aside smiling.]--And you shall find your Isabella true,--though the Grand Seigneur wou'd lay his Crown at my feet,--wou'd he wou'd try me though--Heavens! to be Queen of Turkey.

Guiliom: May I believe thee,--but when thou seest the difference, alas, I am but a Chimney--hum, nothing to a great Turk.

Isabella: Is he so rare a thing?--Oh, that I were a she great Turk. [Aside.]

Guzman: Come, come, we can't attend your amorous Parleys.

Julia: Alas, what shall we poor Women do? [Exit men.]

Isabella: We must e'en have patience, Madam, and be ravisht.

Clara: Ravisht! Heavens forbid.

Jacinta: An please the Lord, I'll let my nails grow against that direful day.

Isabella: And so will I, for I'm resolv'd none should ravish me but the great Turk (Works, III, 150).

Isabella's social pretensions, her father's jealousy, and his securing a young wife in an enforced marriage as objects of satire in this particular play reinforce their being Whigs and of the merchant class. In the ironic prologue Mrs. Behn pretends to be a convert to the Whig cause.

Know all ye Whigs and Tories of the Pit,
 (Ye furious Guelphs and Gibelins of Wit,
 Who for the Cause, and Crimes of Forty One
 So furiously maintain the Quarrel on)
 Our Author, as you'll find it writ in Story,
 Has hitherto been a most wicked Tory;
 But now, to th' joy o'th' Brethren be it spoken,
 Our Sister's vain mistaken Eyes are open;
 And wisely valuing her dear Interest now;
 All-powerful Whigs, converted is to you.

She catalogues her former Tory efforts:

'Twas long she did maintain the Royal Cause,
 Argu'd, disputed, rail'd with great Applause;
 Writ Madrigals and Doggerel on the Times,
 And charg'd you all with your Fore-fathers Crimes;
 Nay, confidently swore no Plot was true,
 But that so slyly carried on by you:
 Rais'd horrid Scandals on you, hellish Stories,
 In Conventicles how you eat young Tories (Works, III, 99).

She continues her tongue-in-cheek praise of the Whigs for their powers of transformation (i.e. rogues to honest men, and vice versa), their lack of wit and sense, and their prurient piety. The ironic turn is reinforced in the final lines, which contain a jibe at the Popish plot jury:

By Yea and Nay, she'll throw her self on you,
The grand Inquest of Whigs, to whom she's true.
Then let 'em rail and hiss, and damn their fill,
Your Verdict will be Ignoramus still (Works, III, 100).

Mrs. Behn's satirical characterization of Isabella and her father as members of the Whig merchant class in the year 1682, coupled with the sentiments expressed in the prologue, ties The False Count into the pattern of satire developing from her strong reaction to the Popish plot incident. Critics who attack her characterizations as weak and her incidents as improbable or farcical miss the fact that her purpose in writing these plays was to support the court party cause by heaping ridicule on the opponents in any way she could. Satirical characterization is by definition not well-rounded, but as Dryden pointed out, focuses on a particular theme, or defect, to the exclusion of other possible developments. Mrs. Behn was attempting to make the Whigs look foolish, and she obviously was successful in her efforts, because her plays held the boards for years.

As a Tory, loyal to the crown and to the church of England, Mrs. Behn had definite ideas about the duties of citizens to their king and his, in turn, to them. These convictions are revealed in comments made both in her plays (and in prologues to them) and in her prose works.

In The Forc'd Marriage (1670) the king gives his son's fiancée

to another man, and so the two young lovers are thrown into a quandary over where their duties lie--with themselves, or to their king and their parents. Sentiments expressed in the play make plain that the first duty of a good citizen is to his king, but Mrs. Behn also intimates that a wise king will avoid placing his subjects in such a position.

In the opening scene Alcippus, the man to whom the king grants Erminia, speaks of the duty of a king's subject:

The Duty which we pay your Majesty,
Ought to be such, as what we pay the Gods;
Which always bears its Recompence about it (Works, III, 289).

And further:

That I was capable to do you service,
Was the most grateful Bounty Heaven allow'd me,
And I no juster way could own that Blessing.
Than to imploy the Gift for your repose (Works, III, 289).

Erminia, the subject of dispute, has some ideas of her own about loyalty and duty to one's king and one's father:

Ungrateful Duty, whose uncivil Pride
By Reason is not to be satisfy'd;
Who even Love's Almighty Power o'erthrows,
Or does on it too rigorous Laws impose;
Who bindest up our Virtue too too strait,
And on our Honour lays too great a weight.
Coward, whom nothing but thy power makes strong;
Whom Age and Malice bred t' affright the young;
Here thou dost tryannize to that degree,
That nothing but my Death will set me free (Works, III, 303).

Philander, the king's son and in love with Erminia, offers still another opinion on duty:

Will you, Erminia, suffer such a Rape?
What though the King have said it shall be so,
'Tis not his pleasure can become thy Law,
No, nor it shall not.

And though he were my God as well as King,
 I would instruct thee how to disobey him;
 Thou shalt, Erminia, bravely say, I will not;
 He cannot force thee to't against thy will.
 --Oh Gods, shall duty to a King and Father
 Make thee commit a Murder on thy self . . . (Works, III, 304).

The king himself rebukes Alcippus for his lack of devotion and claims his due as a monarch:

My Love, Alcippus, is despis'd I see,
 And you in lieu of that return you owe me,
 Endeavour to destroy me.
 --Is this an Object for your Rage to work on?
 Behold him well, Alcippus, 'tis your Prince.
 --Who dares gaze on him with irreverend Eyes?
 The good he does you ought to adore him for,
 But all his evils 'tis the Gods must punish,
 Who made no Laws for Princes (Works, III, 375).

In Abdelazer the vengeance-seeking moor makes an ironic statement about the nature of the king's person, but his words are true reflections of Mrs. Behn's attitude, as evidenced in other sections of the play:

What, Kill a King!--forbid it Heaven:
 Angels stand like his Guards about his Person.
 The King! (PHN, II, 25).

When Alonzo thinks that his sister has been ruined by the King, he bemoans:

Where shall I kneel for Justice?
 Since he that soul'd afford it me,
 Has made her Criminal--
 Pardon me, Madam, 'tis the King I mean. . . .
 Then I'm disarm'd,
 For Heaven can only punish him (PHN, II, 41).

The idea that kings can be punished only by God recurs throughout her works; any subjects who attempt to harm the king, even though they may feel their motives are just, are shown to be in error.

If the subjects owe their king absolute allegiance, what does

the king owe to the subjects? Apparently his chief task is to keep the peace, a logical goal for one who grew up during the strife of a civil war. In the prologue to The Young King (1683) Mrs. Behn implores: "Heaven bless the King that keeps the Land in Peace" (PHN, II, 89). In the epilogue to the same play, she is describing an ideal situation in which the ruling monarch would have no problems because:

No emulation breaks his soft repose,
Nor do his Wreaths or Vitues gain him Foes:
No publick Mischiefs can disturb his Reign,
And Malice ouw'd be busy here in vain.
Fathers and Sons just Love and Duty pay;
This knows to be indulgent, that t'ohey,
Here's no sedition hatcht, no other Plots. . . (PHN, II, 168).

Similar sentiments may be found in the epilogue to The Emperor of the Moon, where Mrs. Behn unites a plea for the welfare of writers with her idea of the king's bringing peace and prosperity to England.

May Ceasar live, and while his mighty Hand
Is scattering Plenty over all the Land;
With God-like bounty recompensing all,
Some fruitful drops may on the Muses fall;
Since honest pens do his just cause afford
Equal Advantage with the useful Sword (Works, III, 463).

The somewhat plaintive note inherent in these lines can be traced to Mrs. Behn's poor state of health and finances, this play being written late in her career (1687). No doubt she felt that her efforts on behalf of the crown had afforded "equal advantage with the useful sword," and that her recompense had not been commensurate.

Situations created by Mrs. Behn imply that the king has a duty to his subjects to make wise and just decisions, since they have no

higher court of appeals to which they may turn. In Oroonoko the old king who takes Imoinda into his harem, knowing that she loves and is loved by his own grandson, the Prince, is characterized as foolish and inconsiderate, under the influence of "court flatterers" and his own lust. Imoinda and Oroonoko are bound, however, by their "awful duty," and can only do as they have been commanded. When they attempt to run away, they are clearly outside the law and disaster befalls them. All this could have been averted by wisdom and justice on the part of the King. As she had said in the epilogue to The Young King, duty from the subjects should be repaid in kind by love from the king.

The mistake made by the king in The Forced Marriage springs from his failure to know well his own son. His giving of his son's fiancée to another man causes a conflict, discussed earlier, between the character's duty toward him and their own desires and duties to themselves. Although his error is not malevolent or lustful in origin, it causes much pain and strife for the characters involved. Clearly, the monarch has a duty to be informed before he makes decisions.

Mrs. Behn's work in general measured against Dryden's criteria shows that she usually succeeds in presenting a theme which overshadows other considerations, in presenting characters fairly realistically, and in delighting and instructing the viewers, if delight is taken to mean satisfaction. For example, the overall theme of the inhumanity of the practice of slavery in Oroonoko is supplemented by the variation on that theme of the issue of forced marriages, as surely a form of slavery as the more obvious method of selling blacks to plantation

owners. Of the actual practice of slavery itself, she comments "such ill morals are only practised in Christian countries, where they prefer the bare name of religion" ⁷ But apparently the practice of enslaving people in enforced marriages prevailed even in the country of the "noble savage." In The Forced Marriage, the forcible joining of Erminia and Alcippus causes the principal problems developed and solved through the play, and the other plots and characters develop as counterparts and contrasts to this main plot. In The Dutch Lover, however, the satirical element does not clearly emerge as overshadowing any "underplots" since the play contains both serious and comic plots. In the serious plot the supposedly incestuous love of Silvio for Cleonte does not illuminate the problem of enforced marriage in the comic plot; the seduction and abandonment of Hippolita by Antonio similarly is unrelated. The play is mainly an intrigue drama, however, and as such should present many situations without focusing on one and relating all others to that problem in some way.

Mrs. Behn's efforts at realistic portrayal of characters in many cases is superseded by her satirical purposes. A comic character, designed to call attention to a particular vice, will of necessity be exaggerated and dimensionless in order that the audience will focus on his foible, disliking both him and his weakness. When such a character is portrayed as having redeeming characters, as is the pedant Lady Knowell in Sir Patient Fancy, the criticism is softened and the

⁷ Behn, The Novels of Aphra Behn, p. 11.

satirical thrust lessened. So if the characters are at times too exaggerated to be realistic, they do at least portray very real human vices in a way designed to make the greatest impact on the viewing audiences or readers.

Whether or not she instructed her audience, she must have delighted it; some of her plays continued being performed almost one hundred years after her death. And since she "studied only to make this as entertaining" as she could, she achieved her purpose. Her friendship with Dryden over the years benefited her artistry; her dramatic aims coincide, for the most part, with those he defined in critical writings published after her death. Many of her plays are imitative of Dryden; for example, the doubling of a serious and comic plot line, one in verse and one in prose, as in Marriage a la Mode can be seen in The Dutch Lover, and the serious and heroic nature of the theme in Abdelazer is reminiscent of The Conquest of Granada. Of course, both may only have been borrowing from the same source, but a more likely explanation is that Dryden, as the successful and acclaimed literary figure, would have served as a model for Mrs. Behn. He wrote a note about some paraphrases of Ovid she had done (published in a volume of translations including some of his own) in which he praised her for her ability to rend the sense of the original, if not the literal meaning. And for Dryden, this was the most important point in translating. He concluded: "I was desired to say that the author, who is one of the fair sex, understood not Latin. But if she does not, I am afraid she has given

us occasion to be ashamed who do."⁸ He also wrote the prologue and epilogue to The Widow Ranter, produced after Mrs. Behn's death. Their friendship apparently continued throughout her life. The only note to the contrary is a poem attributed to Mrs. Behn attacking Dryden for his change of religion. Whether she wrote the poem has not been established beyond a doubt; she probably would not attack a friend for making what appears to be a sincerely motivated change of heart, and she apparently did not object violently to Catholicism per se since she remained loyal to James II. The poem is as follows:

ON MR. DRYDEN, RENEGADE

Scorning religion all thy lifetime past,
 And now embracing popery at last,
 Is like thyself; & what thou'st done before
 Defying wife and marrying a whore.
 Alas! how leering heretics will laugh
 To see a gray old hedge bird caught with chaff.
 A poet too from great heroic themes
 And inspiration, fallen to dreaming dreams.
 But this the priests will get by thee at least
 That if they mend thee, miracles are not ceast.
 For 'tis not more to cure the lame & blind,
 Than heal an impious, ulcerated mind.
 This if they do, and give thee but a grain
 Of common honesty, or common shame,
 'Twill be more credit to their cause I grant,
 Than 'twould to make another man a saint.
 But thou no party ever shalt adorn,
 To thy own shame & Nature's scandal born:
 All shun alike thy ugly outward part,
 Whilst none have right or title to thy heart.
 Resolved to stand & constant to the time,
 Fixed in thy lewdness, settled in thy crime.
 Whilst Moses with the Israelites abode,
 Thou seem'dst content to worship Moses' God
 But since he went & since thy master fell,
 Thou foundst a golden calf would do as well.

⁸ Woodcock, p. 87.

And when another Moses shall arise
 Once more I know thou'lt rub and clear thy eyes.
 And turn to be an Israelite again,
 For when the play is done & finisht clean,
 What sould the poet do but shift the scene.⁹

Her authorship of this poem seems unlikely for several reasons besides the ones already listed. For one, it was not published until many years after her death, and if she had in fact written it, she could easily have published a poem scourging Dryden in the Whig-dominated atmosphere at the time he embraced the Catholic church. Then, also, the fact that Dryden wrote the prologue and epilogue to The Widow Ranter argues that their friendship remained intact to her death.

Assuming that they did remain friends, then, they must have discussed dramatic techniques and goals in conversations, and for this reason echoes of Dryden's techniques and his criticism occur in Mrs. Behn's work. They were both successful practitioners, practical and innovative. They both realized that what worked for the French or for the Italians might not work for the English unless it were adapted and reorganized to a certain extent. The point made in her preface to The Dutch Lover, in which she defends her failure to observe the "musty rules of Unity" and calls Dryden "our most unimitable Laureat" (Works, I, 224) sounds much like the proposals he expresses in his Essay on Dramatic Poesy.

Throughout Mrs. Behn's theatrical career she was involved with social criticism, presented satirically and in the way she felt would

⁹ Behn, Selected Writings of the Ingenious Mrs. Aphra Behn, pp. 229-230.

be most successful, but her primary use of satire arose from the Popish Plot incident. Here she acknowledged her loyalty to her king by defending him against the attacks of his enemies, the Whigs. Her position, firmly entrenched in the court party, led her to satirize the Whigs in general and Shaftesbury in particular in the plays which concerned Titus Oates' perjury and Shaftesbury's subsequent acquittal.

IV. POLITICAL SATIRE

The most intense efforts of Aphra Behn toward dramatic satire in the service of the crown produced the three plays dating about the time of the Popish Plot incident: The Rover part I (1677) and II (1681),¹ The Roundheads (1681), and The City Heiress (1682). The "discovery" made by Titus Oates in 1678 prompted her first explicit response in Rover II, an extension of the cavalier sentiments of Rover I combined with a dedication of this play to James himself. In the Epistle Dedicatory she characterizes James as "the Royal Son of a Glorious Father" who was "sacrific'd to the insatiate and cruel Villany of a seeming sanctifi'd Faction, who cou'd never hope to expiate for the unparallell'd sin, but by an intire submission to the Gracious Off-spring of this Royal Martyr." She praises James for his "voluntary Exile" and accuses the Whigs of betraying the public good with "Cant which so few years since so miserably reduc'd all the Noble, Brave and Honest, to the Obedience of the ill-gotten Power" which resulted in the enslavement of England to the "Pageant Kings" (Works, I, 113).

The character Willmore, the Rover, is clearly meant to be a member of the group of cavaliers who accompanied Charles into exile. Mrs. Behn figuratively places Willmore at James' feet, noting that "he is

¹ Hereafter these plays will be referred to as Rover I and Rover II.

a wanderer too, distress; belov'd, the unfortunate, and ever constant to Loyalty" (Works, I, 11). In both parts of The Rover, Willmore and his friends, the cavaliers, gallant and witty although penniless, contrast with characters who have money but no wit. Ned Blunt, a country fool, observes with ironic insight:

. . . you have been kept so poor with parliaments and protectors that the little stock you have is not worth preserving. But I thank my stars I had more grace than to forfeit my estate by cavaliering (Works, I, 143).

By extension, the fool is the person who does not remain loyal to the king, no matter what the cost.

Indeed, one might pay the price unintentionally, so rabid were the Cromwellians. Squire Featherfoot, who joins Blunt in Rover II for comic effect, is described by Willmore as:

. . . a tame Justice of Peace, who liv'd as innocently as Ale and Food could keep him, till for a mistaken Kindness to one of the Royal Party, he lost his Commission, and got the Reputation of a Sufferer. . . (Works, I, 22).

The price of this voluntary exile becomes clearer when La Nuche describes Willmore as looking for money in his pockets in the morning even though he knows he "put 'em off at Night as empty" as his gloves, and further observes: "No Servants, no Money, no Meat, always on foot, and yet undaunted still." In a joke aimed at his poverty, she recounts hearing that "if the King's Followers could be brought to pray as well as fast, there would be more Saints among 'em than the Church has ever canoniz'd." Willmore's response to her quips shows that she has not insulted him, and that he endures his hardships with equanimity: "All this with Pride I own, since 'tis a royal Cause I

suffer for. . . (Works, I, 133).

In Rover I Willmore shares the spotlight with Belvile, but in Rover II Belvile does not appear and Willmore emerges clearly as the central figure. Already identified with Charles and his cavalier followers, he appears in the play as a man who can see reality and is not afraid to face it, in contrast to the characters who are not loyal to the king and who incidentally are easily duped because they wish to believe in illusions. Willmore acts as a warm and honest man, motivated by frankly admitted desires and bringing harm to no one who interacts honestly with him. In Act II, scene i, he symbolically mounts a bench, posing as a mountebank, and dispenses magical potions to the other characters.

Behold this little Viol[sic], which contains in its narrow Bounds what the whole Universe cannot purchase, if sold to its true Value; this admirable, this miraculous Elixir . . . Oh stupid and insensible Man, when Honour and secure Renown invites you, to treat it with Neglect, even when you need but passive Valour, to become the Heroes of the Age; receive a thousand wounds, each of which wou'd let out fleeting life. . . (Works, I, 142).

If Willmore is to be seen as a Tory, or at least a court party member, then the other characters, by logical extension, become Whigs, since they are in opposition to both him and the king. So the Cromwellians, and their natural political heirs, the Whigs, become "stupid and insensible" seekers of illusion, believers in the cant expounded to the tune of "the delicious sounds of Liberty and Public Good" (Works, I, "Epistle Dedicatory," p.113). Willmore continues his seduction of the gullibles:

Come, buy this coward's comfort, quickly buy. What fop would be abused, mimicked, and scorned, for fear of wounds can be so easily cured? Who is't would bear the insolence and pride of domineering great men, proud officers, or magistrates? Or who would cringe to statesmen out of fear? What cully would be cuckolded? What foolish heir undone by cheating gamesters? What lord would be lampooned? What poet fear the malice of his satirical brother, or atheist fear to fight for fear of death. Come, buy my coward's comfort, quickly buy (Works, I, 142).

Willmore's speech and masking integrate the themes of the two plays; the condemnation of the court's enemies in particular and society in general is here succinctly summarized. The structure, which might otherwise seem loosely knit, thus achieves coherence by satirical intent. Some of the scenes in the plays, however, particularly in the second, border on farce. Even Montague Summers, Mrs. Behn's staunch supporter, notes that "it may be possibly objected that some of the episodes with the two Monsters and the pranks of Harlequin are apt to trench a little too nearly on the realm of farce" (Works, p. 112).

This tendency towards farce reaches greatest proportions in The Roundheads, staged in 1681 after the Ignoramus verdict returned in the Shaftesbury trial. The play recounts the events of 1659-60, when Richard Cromwell's Protectorate expired and Fleetwood and some other governmental officials called a rump parliament which expelled Lambert. Fleetwood, Lambert, The Committee of Safety, Cromwell's widow, and other characters which can be taken both as Oliverians and as analogues to contemporary Whig politicians appear in this first full effort of Mrs. Behn on behalf of the crown. The source for the play was John Tatham's The Rump; or, the Mirror of the Late Times,

first produced in 1660 "apparently followed closely upon the return of Charles II" (The London Stage, 11). The Roundheads appeared first in December of 1681 at Dorset Gardens (The London Stage, 303). Also being staged during the same month by the rival King's Company was Thomas D'Urfey's Sir Barnaby Whigg and Nahum Tate's The Ingratitude of a Commonwealth, which had another run in January of 1682. The Duke's Company offered, besides The Roundheads, D'Urfey's The Royalist in January, followed in February by Otway's Venice Preserved. The political nature of theatrical offerings for the season continued into the spring; in February Southerne's The Loyal Brother eulogized James II, and another performance of Venice Preserved on Friday, April 21, and later in the month Mrs. Behn's The City Heiress (The London Stage, 306-9). The London Stage includes a comment that in July of 1682 Dryden and Lee's The Duke of Guise was banned; a quotation from a "Newsletter" dated 29 July 1682 provides information which should have warned Mrs. Behn from her ill-fated prologue to Romulus and Hersillia.

. . . the Duke of Monmouth was vilified and great interest being made for the acting thereof, but coming to His Majesty's knowledge is forbid, for though His Majesty be displeased with the Duke yet he will not suffer others to abuse him (The London Stage, 310).

The political nature of the plays just listed shows that both Whig and Tory authors responded to the controversy; the preponderance of court support on the stage echoes Mrs. Behn's remark in the Epistle Dedicatory to The Roundheads that "a Noble Peer lately said, 'Tho the tories have got the better of us at the Play, we carried it in the

City by many Voices . . .'" (Works, I, 337). The Whigs did indeed have control of Parliament, and apparently of juries also.

The play is dedicated to the Duke of Grafton, another of Charles' illegitimate sons, and she calls it a "small Mirror, of the late wretched times" (Works, I, 338). At the close of the Epistle Dedicatory Mrs. Behn exclaims "Ah Royal lovely Youth: Beware of false Ambition . . . , " a warning probably aimed more at Monmouth than at Grafton.

A reference to the Ignoramus verdict occurs in the Prologue, spoken by the ghost of "him who was a true Son / Of the late Good Old Cause, ycleped Hewson," who ascends from Hell to speak because he has been roused by the noise of scandal and plots. He notes that the "sly Jesuit robs us of our Fame" but that all his friends in Hell agree that no one can "Act Mischief equal to Presbytery." He cautions the present-day plotters to:

Pay well your Witnesses, they may not run
To the right Side, and tell who set 'em on.
Pay 'em so well, that they may ne'er recant,
And so turn honest merely out of want.
Pay Juries, that no formal Laws may harm us,
Let Treason be secur'd by Ignoramus.

He concludes with the thought:

But subtiler Oliver did not disdain
His mightier Politicks with ours to join.
I for all uses in a State was able,
Cou'd Mutiny, cou'd fight, hold forth, and cobble.
Your lazy Statesman may sometimes direct,
But your small busy Knaves the Treason act (Works, I, 341-2).

Mrs. Behn attacks her enemies in The Roundheads with a notable lack of subtlety; rather than have the characters prove their merit solely by their actions, she has other characters comment explicitly

in scathing terms, as though she were unsure of the audience's ability to tell the "Heroicks" from the villains. In her portrayal of the Cromwellians--and by extension, the present-day Whigs--she never mitigates her constant criticism: none of the Roundheads can act from a motive other than self-interest. This unwillingness to concede anything to her enemies affects her artistry: several scenes in the play dwindle to outright farce, having no real value in advancement of the plot, and the character Lady Lambert, designed at once as one of the hypocritical enemy and as a romantic heroine for the cavalier Loveless, is unsuccessful. In one scene she prances around, giving herself airs, boasting of the day when she will become queen, and in the next the audience is asked to believe she willingly gives herself and her fortune to a penniless cavalier. A woman so consumed with ambition would not risk her primary goal for a dalliance with the enemy. And even if she would, why would a witty, brave, loyal cavalier like Loveless choose such a self-serving and affected woman to love? In terms of Restoration comedy, or of simple logic, this device to unite the two plots does not succeed.

The plot itself is much simpler than her usual network of complicated intrigues. The action takes place in the last days of the Good Old Cause, with Lambert and Fleetwood scheming to outdo each other and seize control of the government through the Rump Parliament. A few loyal soldiers and officers, assisted by a general uprising of the citizenry, join General Monk's forces and overthrow the rebels, establishing a new government which will bring the king

back to the country. The subplot involves the affairs of Lady Desbro and Lady Lambert, who intrigue with Loveless and Freeman, two "errant Heroicks." Lady Desbro, before her marriage, loved and was engaged to Freeman; when his estate was confiscated and he was exiled she married the man to whom it was granted in order to preserve it for Freeman. Through her relationship with Freeman, Lady Lambert and Loveless become acquainted. After the rebel government fails, the ladies accept the protection of their cavalier gallants.

Mrs. Behn's attack on the Cromwellians ranges from denying their ability as men and lovers to showing them as perjurers, hypocrites, pretentious canting thieves who trust and deserve trust from no one. They are, in every case, victims of themselves. In contrast, the cavaliers are witty and romantic, inspiring love even in the hearts of the wives of their enemies. They seek justice and honor at all times, regardless of whether their path leads to their personal advantage. They remain brave and loyal in the face of adversity, not fearing to be exiled from their native country or to return when a powerful enemy controls the government. They inspire confidence from people with whom they interact, creating converts to the royalist cause wherever they go. They possess the ability to see the truth, and because of this, they believe in the divine right of the monarch.

The play opens characteristically with the remark of Corporal Right, "A Cavalier in his Heart," who comments sadly on the state of events in London. He is joined by two citizens, a felt-maker and a joiner, who discuss the merits of Lambert and Fleetwood. Their conversation

reveals them as self-serving rebels, and the joiner explains that ". . . we do not act by Reason" (Works, I, 345). The men describe the leaders of their party. They label Lieutenant General Fleetwood, Cromwell's son-in-law, a coward and a blockhead. Sir Harry Vane, a member of the Committee of Safety, foolishly dreams of the Fifth Monarchy, a "sect of wild enthusiasts who declared themselves 'subjects only of King Jesus,' and held that a fifth universal monarchy (like those of Assyria, Persia, Greece, and Rome) would be established by Christ in person, until which time no single person must presume to rule or be king" (Works, I, "Notes," p. 453). Besides being disloyal to their superiors, the men also distrust each other. When one soldier says that he likes Lambert because he is a gentleman, another accuses him of being a royalist: "Come come, Brother Soldier, let me tell you, I fear you have a Stewart in your Belly" (Works, I, 346). Introducing the play with ordinary citizens behaving in such fashion sets the stage for the real culprits, who outdo their followers in both degree and variety of villainy. Before the entry of the Oliverians, however, the two cavaliers appear briefly to comment on the opposition: "to carry on the good Cause, that is, Roguery, Rebellion, and Treason, profaning the sacred Majesty of Heaven, and our glorious Sovereign" (Works, I, 348).

The Oliverians suffer at the hands of their own wives, who lack respect for their proficiency at the art of love. Lady Desbro tells Lady Lambert that "I never heard any one o't' other Party [Cromwellians] ever gain'd a Heart; and indeed, Madam, 'tis a just Revenge, our

Husbands make Slaves of them, and they kill all their Wives" (Works, I, 351). Later in the play, Lady Lambert notes that ". . . all the great ones of our Age have the most slovenly, ungrateful, dull Behaviour; no Air, No Wit, no Love, nor any thing to please a Lady with" (Works, I, 363). In a scene near the close of the play, Lady Desbro piously observes: "That is the fault of all the new Saints, which is the reason their Wives take a pious care, as much as in them lies, to send 'em to Heaven, by making 'em Cuckolds" (Works, I, 414). If the "new Saints" fare poorly in love, their rivals do not. "Oh, these Heroicks, Madam, have the most charming Tongues" (Works, I, 351), Lady Desbro tells Lady Lambert. The cavaliers have cozened from the "powers above" all the "Wit, Softness, and Gallantry" (Works, I, 363); their rivals not only have not the assistance of Heaven, but the aid of the Devil in their affectation of "the Vizor of Sanctity, which is the gadly Sneer, the drawing of the Face to a prodigious length, the formal Language, with a certain Twang through the Nose," rendering them "fitter to scare Children than beget love in Ladies" (Works, I, 363).

As do their underlings in the initial scene, the Roundheads give their loyalty only when they can serve themselves by doing so. Lambert remarks that he hates the memory of "that Tyrant Oliver," to which Whitlock replies:

So do I, now he's dead, and serves my Ends no more. I lov'd the Father of the great Heroick, whilst he had Power to do me good: he failing, Reason directed me to the Party then prevailing, the Fag-end of the Parliament: 'tis true, I took the

Oath of Allegiance, as Oliver, your Lordship, Tony, and the rest did, without which we could not have sat in that Parliament; but that Oath was not for our Advantage, and so better broke than kept.

Lambert completes the formula:

Nay, 'tis most certain, he that will live in this World, must be endu'd with the three rare Qualities of Dissimulation, Equivocation, and mental Reservation (Works, I, 354).

Lady Lambert knows her husband's rules; she urges him to receive Fleetwood and "put on your fawning Looks, flatter him, and profess much Friendship to him, you may betray him with the more facility" (Works, I, 355).

Since these men sell their loyalty, they must constantly be out-bidding each other. In the scene in which the Committee of Safety sits, Fleetwood and Lambert keep raising the amount of income the government will offer Lord Wariston, the Chairman, so they can assure themselves of his personal loyalty to them:

Fleetwood: Verily, order him two thousand Pound--

Wariston: Two thousand pound? Bread a gued, and I's gif my Voice for Fleetwood.

Lambert: Two thousand; nay, my Lords, let it be three.

Wariston: Wons, I lee'd, I lee'd; I's keep my Voice for Lambert-- Guds Benizon light on yar Sol, my gued Lord Lambert (Works, I, 382).

The Roundheads hypocritically pretend to serve the good of the common people, but when distributing incomes to each other they do not mind imposing a harsh tax burden in order to further their own ends:

Lambert: We'll tax the Nation high, the City higher,
They are our Friends, our most obsequious Slaves,
Our dogs to fetch and carry, our very Asses--(Works, I, 382).

False swearing, an acceptable trait, enables them to achieve their ends.

Whitlock asks Lambert ". . . how cou'd I now advise you to be King, if I had started at Oaths, or preferr'd Honesty or Divinity before Interest and the Good Old Cause?" (Works, I, 354). And in the Safety Committee scene, an income of "two thousand nine hundred ninety nine pounds for Intelligence and Information, and piously betraying the King's Leige People" (Works, I, 379). In fact, Freeman's estate was confiscated when "Your Villains, your Witnesses in Pension swore him a Colonel for our glorious Master, of ever blessed Memory, at eight Years old; a Plague upon their Miracles" (Works, I, 383).

In the play Mrs. Behn shows that if the English could endure the hypocrisy of the Roundheads, they would still be unable to bear their false piety and canting. They continually call on the assistance of God and insist that they work only for his glory. Fleetwood and Gogle particularly offend:

Fleetwood: . . . I hope things are now in the Lard's handling, and will go on well for his Glory and my Interest, and that all my good People of England will do things that become good Christians (Works, I, 355).

Fleetwood: Ingeniously, my Lords, the Weight of three Kingdoms is a heavy Burden for so weak Parts as mine: therefore I will, before I appear at Council, go seek the Lard in this great Affair; and if I receive a Revelation for it, I shall with all Humility espouse the Yoke, for the Good of his People and mine; and so Gad with us, the Commonwealth of England (Works, I, 358).

Ananias Gogle: Ah, the Children of the Elect have no Business but the great Work of Reformation: Yea verily, I say, all other Business is profane, and diabolical, and devilish; Yea, I say, these Dressings, Curls, and Shining Habilliments--which take so up your time, your precious time; I say, they are an Abomination, yea, an Abomination in the sight of the Righteous, and serve but as an Ignis fatuus, to lead vain Man astray--I say again-- (Works, I, 385).

Gogle: . . . my righteous Spirit is raised too--I say, I will excommunicate him for one of the Wicked, yea, for a profane Heroick, a Malignant, a Tory,--a--I say, we will surround him, and confound him with a mighty Host; yea, and fight the Lard's Battel with him: yea, we will-- (Works, I, 392).

Gogle: Nay, I say nay, I will die in my Calling--yea, I will fall a Sacrifice to the Good Old Cause; abomination ye with a mighty Hand, and will destroy, demolish and confound your Idols, those heathenish Malignants whom you follow, even with Thunder and Lightning, even as a Field of Corn blasted by a strong blast (Works, I, 409).

Lady Desbro and Freeman admirably imitate the style of the canters in a scene early in the play. She begins by saying that she is free only when her husband is busy with the government or at his prayers, and that he prays three hours each day "extemporary," in a manner she can reproduce:

. . . 'tis to confound the Interest of the King, that the Lard would deliver him, his Friends, Adherers and Allies, wheresoever scatter'd about the Face of the whole Earth, into the Clutches of the Righteous: Press 'em, good Lard, even as the Vintager doth the Grape in the Wine-press, till the Waters and gliding Channels are made red with the Blood of the Wicked [in a Tone] (Works, I, 370).

Freeman takes up the refrain:

And grant the Faithful to be mighty, and to be strong in Persecution; and more especially, ah! I beseech thee confound that malignant Tory Freeman--that he may never rise up in judgement against thy Servant, who has taken from him his Estate, his Sustenance and Bread; give him Grace of thy infinite Mercy, to hang himself, if thy People can find no zealous Witnesses to swear him to the Gallows legally. Ah, we have done very much for thee, Lard, thou shoud'st consider us thy Flock, and we shou'd be as good to thee in another thing (Works, I, 370-71).

Lady Desbro applauds his efforts, saying: "Thou hit'st the zealous twang right; sure thou hast been acquainted with some of 'em" (Works, I, 371).

Hand in hand with this false piety goes a lustful, lascivious nature, even in the clergy. Or perhaps, if Ananias Gogle can be considered typical, especially in the clergy. The good minister comes to call on Lady Desbro in Act III ostensibly to catechize her concerning her faith, but cannot restrain his lewd nature. He looks at her, calls her clothes an "Abomination," and proceeds to paw and proposition her immediately.

Ananias: I say again, that even I, upright I, one of the new Saints, find a sort of a--a--I know not what--a kind of a Motion as it were--a stirring up--as a Man may say, to wickedness--Yea, verily it corrupteth the outward Man within me.

Lady Desbro: Is this your Business, Sir, to rail against our Clothes, as if you intended to preach me into my Primitive Nakedness again?

.....

Ananias: . . . but--who in the sight of so much Beau- -ty--can think of any Bus'ness but the Bus'ness--Ah! Hide those tempting Breasts,--Alack, how smooth and warm they are--[Feeling 'em, and sneering.]

Lady Desbro: How now, have you forgot your Function?

Ananias: Nay, but I am mortal Man also, and may fall seven times a day--Yea verily, I may fall seven times a day--Your ladyship's Husband is old,--and where there is a good excuse for falling,--ah, there the fall--ing--is excusable.--And might I but fall with your Ladyship,--might I, I say.--

Lady Desbro: How, this from you, the Head o'th' Church Militant, the very Pope of Presbytery?

Ananias: Verily, the Sin lieth in the Scandal; therefore most of the discreet pious Ladies of the Age chuse up, upright Men, who make a Conscience of a Secret, the Laity being more regardless of their Fame.--In sober sadness, the Place--inviteth, the Creature tempting, and the Spirit very violent within me. [Takes and ruffles her.] (Works, I, 386-86).

Lady Desbro reveals her opinion of Ananias and his sort in scathing

terms; Mrs. Behn again is not content to allow Ananias' actions alone to indict him, but must comment explicitly:

Lady Desbro: I'll set you out in your Colours: Your impudent and bloody Principles, your Cheats, your Rogueries on honest Men, thro their kind, deluded Wives, whom you cant and goggle into a Belief, 'tis a great work of Grace to steal, and beggar their whole Families, to contribute to your Gormandizing, Lust, and Laziness; Ye Locusts of the Land, preach Nonsense, Blasphemy, and Treason, till you sweat again, that the sanctify'd Sisters may rub you down, to comfort and console the Creature (Works, I, 387).

Because the Oliverians constantly deceive and cheat and distrust each other, they fall victims to honesty. When Desbro learns that General Monk has marched from Scotland to London to recapture it for Charles, he remarks: "O that ever we should be such blind Fools to trust an honest General!" (Works, I, 391). Mrs. Behn explicitly details their lack of honesty by having them admit it to each other, rather than just presenting them in situations in which they act dishonestly. Ananias tells Desbro "Ho, Sir, notdissemble--ah, then you have lost a great Virtue indeed, a very great Virtue . . ." (IV, i, 393) and Lord Wariston remarks to Fleetwood ". . . I's larne to profess and lee [lie] as weel as best on ya" (Works, I, 378).

Because the Roundheads have no respect for the king and his authority, they do not respect any legal boundaries, thinking themselves above the law. Lady Lambert, ever ambitious, asks her husband if he will be elected king by Parliament, which he has secured by "Bribes to some, Hypocrisy and Pretence of Religion to others, and promis'd Preferments to the rest." He replies:

You think that's so fine a thing--but let me tell you, my Love, a King's a Slave to a Protector, a King's ty'd up to a thousand

Rules of musty Law, which we can break at pleasure; we can rule without Parliaments, at least chuse whom we please, make 'em agree to our Proposals, or set a Guard upon 'em, and starve 'em till they do.

Lady Lambert continues her argument:

But their Votes are the strangest things--that they must pass for Laws; you were never voted King.

Lambert's response shows the blatant disregard his party holds for the legal rights of others:

No, nor care to be: The sharpest Sword's my Vote, my Law, my Title. They voted Dick should reign [Richard Cromwell], where is he now? They voted the great Heroicks from the Succession; but had they Arms of Men, as I have, you shou'd soon see what wou'd become of their Votes--No, my Love! 'tis this--must make me King. [His sword.]

Let Fleetwood and the Rump go seek the Lard,
My Empire and my Trust is in my Sword (Works, I, 358-59).

The Heroicks, in contrast, seek justice, exude virtue, and constantly suffer wrongs at the hands of their less honorable foes. When Loveless urges Freeman to flatter the women whose husbands are government officials so that he may possibly regain some of his estate, he angrily replies:

Let 'em take it [his estate], and the Devil do 'em Good with it; I scorn it should be said I have a Foot of Land in this ungrateful and accursed Island; I'd rather beg where Laws are obey'd, and Justice performe'd, than be powerful where Rogues and base-born Rascals rule the roost (Works, I, 349).

Loveless himself, on being introduced to Lady Lambert, is asked "What art thou?--" and his reply reflects Mrs. Behn's royalist sympathies:

A Gentleman--
That could have boasted Birth and Fortune too,
Till these accursed Times, which Heaven confound,
Razing out all Nobility, all Virtue,
Has render'd me the rubbish of the World;
Whilst new rais'd Rascals, Canters, Robbers, Rebels,
Do lord it o'er the Free-born, Brave and Noble (Works, I, 361).

After Lady Desbro reveals to Freeman that her only purpose in marrying was to regain his property and "advance our Love," he justifies their intriguing:

And 'tis but Justice, Maria, he sequester'd me of my whole Estate, because, he said, I took up Arms in Ireland, on Noble Ormond's Side; nay, hir'd Rogues, perjur'd Villains--Witnesses with a Pox, to swear it too; when at that time I was but Eight Years Old; but I escap'd as well as all the Gentry and Nobility of England. To add to this, he takes my Mistress too (Works, I, 369-70).

However, even though these two lovers assure each other of their devotion, they do not consummate their union until Lady Desbro's husband dies, because she honors her marriage vows and Freeman respects her virtue. When he tempts her to yield immediately to his caresses, she explains:

This will not do, it never shall be said I've been so much debauch'd by Conventicling to turn a sainted Sinner; No, I'm true to my Allegiance still, true to my King and Honour. Suspect my Loyalty when I lose my Virtue: a little time, I'm sure, will give me honestly into thy Arms; if thou hast Bravery, shew it in thy Love (Works, I, 389-90).

The cavaliers appear trustworthy and brave to the ordinary citizen of London. In speaking of the "Heroicks," a lady observes "And some of 'em Men that will stand to their Principles" (V, ii, 414). Gilliflower, Lady Lambert's woman, assures Loveless that she will not betray him in his amorous meetings with her mistress: "you need not fear betraying, Sir, for I'll assure you I'm an Heroick in my Heart: my Husband was a Captain for his Majesty of ever-blessed Memory, and kill'd at Naseby, God be thanked, Sir" (Works, I, 394). A young page, after receiving money from Freeman, resolves to spend none of it on himself, but to buy a sword and "fight for the Heroicks as long as I have a Limb, if they be all such fine Men as this within" (Works, I, 399).

Finally, a group of people gather in the street near the close of the play, led by the Captain of the "Prentices," armed and angry. They meet Loveless and Freeman, and after discussion declare themselves to favor ". . . an honest Free Parliament, not one pick'd and chosen by Faction; but such an one as shall do our Bus'ness, Lads, and bring in the Great Heroick" (Works, I, 407).

The cavalier characters express Mrs. Behn's feeling that the monarchy receives power and authority from God, and that to usurp the king is to usurp divine right. Loveless tries to make Lady Lambert see her error by explaining what the king and his crown mean to a loyal citizen in a scene in which she displays the crown and scepter, tempting him to seize power for himself. She reveals the symbols of authority to him, and he responds:

Hah--a Crown--and Scepter!
 Have I been all this while
 So near the sacred Relicks of my King;
 And found no awful Motion in my Blood,
 Nothing that mov'd sacred Devotion in me? [Kneels.]
 --Hail sacred Emblem of great Majesty,
 Thou that has circled more Divinity
 Than the great Zodiack that surrounds the World. . .

When Lady Lambert remarks that the crown is a "lovely thing," he rebukes her:

--'Tis Sacrilege to dally where it is;
 A rude, a saucy Treason to approach it
 With an unbended Knee: for Heav'ns sake, Madam,
 Let us not be profane in our Delights,
 Either withdraw, or hide the glorious Object.

She persists in her design, offering to place the crown on his head, to which he pleads ". . . do not play with holy things: Let us retire, and love as Mortals shou'd, Not imitate the Gods, and spoil our Joys"

(Works, I, 400). In a final effort to persuade her, Loveless continues:

How truly brave would your great Husband be,
If, whilst he may, he paid this mighty Debt
To the right Owner!
If, whilst he has the Army in his Power,
He made a true and lawful use of it,
To settle our great Master in his Throne;
And by an Act so glorious raise his Name
Even above the Title of a King (Works, I, 401).

This earnest attempt to convert Lady Lambert occurs during a bedroom seduction scene, and immediately follows and precedes farcical scenes in which the members of the Good Old Cause drink heavily, dance, and make complete fools of themselves. Having the serious material sandwiched between bawdy and farce weakens its effect; the scenes which come before and after have no real bearing on the plot, and detract from the unity of the play. These two scenes in particular, coupled with the scene in which the Safety committee meets and the scene at Lady Lambert's with Freeman disguised as a woman, most seriously weaken the play. Mrs. Behn shows the men completely devoid of any redeeming values; their motives, actions, and conversations demonstrate a total lack of taste and decorum. A sample from Wariston's speeches should serve to make the point:

By my sol, mon, and there war a poor Woman the other Day, begg'd o'th' Carle the Speaker, but he'd give her nought unless she'd let a Feart; wons at last a Feart she lat. At marry, quoth the Woman, noo my Rump has a Speaker te (Works, I, 377).

Another important weakness in this play is the attempt by Mrs. Behn to present Lady Lambert both as a member of the opposition, who are by definition fools and cheats, and as a romantic heroine and the

object of the affections of a gallant cavalier. Lady Lambert can possibly function as one or the other, but not as both. A woman who bartered her virtue for political advantage for herself and her husband loses the respect of the Restoration audience, who would applaud her giving but not selling herself. Mrs. Behn in no other play asks her audience to admire as a romantic heroine such an ambitious and self-serving woman, and for good reason: they cannot do so.

The historical Lady Lambert was Frances Lister, daughter of Sir William Lister, and Summers notes that "contemporaries attribute Lambert's ambition to the influence of his wife, whose pride is frequently alluded to" (Works, I, "Notes," 452). To this historically-based ambition Mrs. Behn adds the additional slur of her having been Cromwell's mistress with her husband's consent and knowledge. In the scene during which Lady Lambert and Loveless are surprised in her boudoir by her husband, she replies to his accusations that she has cuckolded him with sentiments showing her lack of respect:

Cuckold! Why, is that Name so great Stranger to ye,
or has your rising Fame made ye forget
How long that Cloud has hung upon your Brow?
--'Twas once the height of your Ambition, Sir;
When you were a poor--sneaking Slave to Cromwell,
Then you cou'd cringe, and sneer, and hold the Door,
And give him every Opportunity,
Had not my Piety defeated your Endeavours.

His response reveals his matching lack of principle: "That was for Glory, Who wou'd not be a Cuckold to be great?" (Works, I, 403).

The first time Loveless sees her he notes that she is of the 'damn'd Party,' and then a bit later observes that she is "stark mad,

by this good Day" (Works, I, 362). This implication that Lady Lambert is insane continues through the play; her extreme ambition causes her to act at times in manners which can only be termed foolish, if not insane. Her woman, Gilliflower, explains the problem to Loveless:

It appears so to you, who are not us'd to the Vanity of the Party, but they are all so mad in their Degree, and in the Fit they talk of nothing else, Sir. . . (Works, I, 394).

At times Lady Lambert seems to be able to see through the deception practiced by her husband and his followers. She listens to Fleetwood claiming that his advancement is "the great Work of the Lard" and reminds him:

The Lard! Sir, I'll assure you the Lard has the least Hand in your good Fortune; I think you ought to ascribe it to the Cunning and Conduct of my Lord here, who so timely abandon'd the Interest of Richard (Works, I, 356).

In the same scene she rebukes Whitlock for canting, which he justifies as "the Cant we must delude the Rabble with." She replies that he should ". . . use it there, my Lord, not amongst us, who so well understand one another" (Works, I, 356).

But this honesty of perception fades when her gaze turns inward; she cannot see herself as deluded, but only as the future queen of England. She tells Loveless in their initial encounter: "I thought I'd been so elevated above the common Crowd, it had been visible to all Eyes who I was" (Works, I, 352). In the next scene she instructs all her servants to address her as "her Highness," and asks Gilliflower's reassurance:

I think 'twill sute better with my Person and Beauty than with the other Woman--what d'ye call her? Mrs. Cromwell--my Shape--

and Gate--my Humour, and my Youth have something more of Grandeur, have they not? (Works, I, 359-60).

A woman so consumed by a lust for power would not risk her success for an intrigue with a "begging Tory"; she herself remarks that "I would not have a Cavalier seen with me for all the World" (Works, I, 464). Loveless calls her a mistress in the art of jilting, and she replies that "the first lesson women learn in Conventicles" is how to jilt, and that "Religion teaches those Maxims to our Sex: by this Kings are depos'd, and commonwealths are rul'd . . ." (Works, I, 405).

Lady Lambert, together Lady Desbro, join the two plots of the play by working in each of them. Lady Desbro is a believable character; Lady Lambert is not. Mrs. Behn allowed her ardent Tory sentiments to overwhelm her in the writing of this play; she sacrificed good theater to propagandizing. Too many parts of the play fail to achieve any real purpose or fail in communicating a believable sentiment to the audience, and it collapses under the weight of the bitterness of her feelings towards the parties both of Cromwell and of Shaftesbury. Although one of the worst plays Mrs. Behn wrote, Montague Summers states that "the piece seems to have been very successful, and to have kept the stage at intervals from some twenty years" (Works, I, 336). The London Stage, however, only records one performance, that of the premiere in December of 1681 (p. 303).

Mrs. Behn is more successful at integrating her bent for satire and her theatrical abilities in her next effort on behalf of the court party, The City Heiress. The play contains a character, Sir Timothy

Treat-all, who graphically illustrates the greed, political intriguing, and sycophancy of Shaftesbury, and generally hits at Whig city merchants, but it never degenerates into farce. And although a knowledge of the contemporary events enhances appreciation of the satire, the play stands securely on its own as a fine comedy.

As in many of her comedies, she uses two lovers, one of wit (Tom) and one of sensibility (Charles). The lovers are matched with Charlot, the rich and witty heiress, and Lady Galliard, the romantic widow. The balancing of characters extends to the old, with Tom's uncle Sir Timothy contrasted to Charles' uncle Sir Anthony, the former a foolish Whig, the latter a wise and youthful-in-spirit Tory.

In the prologue Mrs. Behn announces the objects of her satire; as she did in the preface to The Dutch Lover, she compares the efforts of playwrights and parsons, and concludes that neither has any real influence: "You care as little what the Poets teach, / As you regard at Church what Parsons preach" (PHN, II, 169). She also remarks that the City "fills the Heads of Fools with Politicks" (PHN, II, 170). The play opens with Sir Timothy Treat-all responding as one "deaf and obdurate" to the pleas of his nephew Tom Wilding for money. Sir Timothy dislikes Tom because he spends money with abandon and because he is young and gay, but principally because he is of the court party and does not pretend to the religion of his uncle. Sir Timothy explains to Sir Charles Meriwell, Tom's friend:

Before he fell to Toryism, he was a sober, civil Youth, and had some Religion in him, wou'd read ye Prayers Night and Morning with a laudable Voice, and cry Amen to 'em; 'twould have done

one's Heart good to have heard him--wore decent Clothes, was drunk but on Sundays and Holidays; and then I had hopes of him (PHN, II, 174).

Sir Timothy is Shaftesbury. He describes himself as "most religiously" cruel, and his nephew Tom adds to the portrait:

. . . amongst the numerous lusty stomach Whigs that daily nose your publick Dinners, some may be found, that either for money, Charity, or Gratitude, may requite your Treats. You keep open House to all the Party, not for Mirth, Generosity or good Nature, but for Roguery. You cram the Brethren, the pious City-Gluttons, with good Cheer, good Wine, and Rebellion in abundance, gormandizing all Comers and Goers, of all Sexes, Sorts, Opinions and Religions, young half-witted Fops, hot-headed Fools, and Malecontents: You guttle and fawn on all, and all in hopes of debauching the King's Liegepeople into Commonwealthsmen; and rather than lose a Convert, you'll pimp for him. . . (PHN, II, 175).

Wilding again refers to his uncle as a pimp in a conversation with Lady Galliard: "That Uncle of mine pimps for all the Sparks of his party; there they all meet and bargain without Scandal: Fops of all sorts and sizes you may chuse, Whig-land offers not such another Market" (PHN, II, 204).

Shaftesbury's sycophancy appears in several situations. In Act III Sir Timothy inquires of his butler the evening's guests, wanting to know how many Lords are in the house. Jervice replies that none are present, and Sir Timothy's response reveals his motivations:

None! What ne'er a Lord! some mishap will befall me, some dire mischance! Ne'er a Lord! ominous, ominous! our Party dwindles daily. What nor Earl, nor Marquess, nor Duke, nor ne'er a Lord! Hum, my Wine will lie most villanously upon my Hands to Night. . . (PHN, II, 205-06).

Sir Timothy does not hesitate to betray his nephew's confidence if he thinks he can profit by doing so; when Tom places "Charlot" in his

protection, he promptly begins to think of her as a wife for himself, not because she is beautiful, but because she is rich. He maligns Tom's character to the young woman, then offers himself as a suitable substitute for matrimony. When she protests that she has given her promise to Wilding, he responds faithfully: "We stand upon neither Faith nor Troth in the City, Lady. . . . So it stands with our Interest: 'tis Law by Magna Charta." When she asks if he will encounter legal difficulties, he explains:

No, no, Madam, we never accuse one another; 'tis the poor Rogues, the Tory Rascals we always hang. Let 'em accuse me if they please; alas, I come off hand-smooth with Ignoramus (PHN, II, 211).

This reference to the ignoramus verdict returned by the jury in the trial resulting from the Popish plot incident fixes Sir Timothy as Shaftesbury; if any further doubts exist, the references to him as the King of Poland should serve to complete the caricature. Tom has brought his cast mistress, Diana, to his uncle's house pretending that she is Charlot Get-All, the rich heiress, and that she has run away and needs protection. Then Tom himself leaves and returns disguised as the ambassador to Poland, in which identity he insinuates to his uncle that the Polish people want Sir Timothy for their king. After a conversation in which Sir Timothy declares himself morally opposed to monarchy, Tom drops the bait:

Wilding: . . . The Polanders by me salute you, Sir, and have in the next new Election, prick'd ye down for their succeeding King.

Sir Timothy: How, my Lord, prick'd me down for King! Why this is wonderful! Prick'd me, unworthy me down for a King! How cou'd I merit this amazing Glory!

Wilding: They know, he that can be so great a Patriot to his Native Country, where but a private Person, what must he be when Power is on his side?

Sir Timothy: Ay, my Lord, my Country, my bleeding Country! there's the stop to all my rising Greatness. Shall I be so ungrateful to disappoint this big expecting Nation? defeat the sober Party, and my Neighbours, for any Polish Crown? But yet, my Lord, I will consider on't: Mean time my house is yours (PHN, II, 214-15).

The offer of a crown suffices to enable Sir Timothy to overcome his antipathy to monarchies and his obligation to his "bleeding Country" in record time; by the end of the meal he resolves to accept the crown of Poland.

Sir Timothy further develops as a paranoid, lewd old man, given to bluster and treason, and easily turned from his "principles" whenever opportunity presents itself. He knows "how many Plots have been laid against my self, both by Men, Women and Children, the diabolical Emissaries of the Pope" (PHN, II, 243). When he is surprised in his chamber by Wilding and company, pretending to be robbers, a servant woman bolts from his bed, wrapped in his coat, which she mistook for her gown, and carrying a copy of "A Sermon preacht by Richard Baxter, Divine" in her bosom. (Sir Timothy's efforts to improve the citizenry would seem unceasing.) Dresswell, a friend of Wilding, catches her and finds the sermon, remarking that she is "a hopeful Member of the true Protestant Cause," as evidenced by her situation and her reading material. When urging the robbers to release him, Sir Timothy explains that his actions have benefited the Tories, because

. . . I have been, d'ye see, in a small Tryal I had, the cause and occasion of invalidating the Evidence to that degree, that I suppose no jury in Christendom will ever have the Impudence

to believe 'em hereafter, shou'd they swear against his Holiness and all the Conclave of Cardinals.

When Wilding replies that he continues to "plot on still, cabal, treat, and keep open Debauch, for all the Renegade-Tories and old Commonwealthsmen to carry on the good Cause," he makes light of his past actions, saying:

Alas what signifies that! You know Gentlemen, that I have such a strange and natural Agility in turning--I shall whip about yet, and leave 'em all in the Lurch (PHN, II, 243).

The papers removed from his room prove treasonous, "a whole bag of Knavery, damn'd Sedition, Libels, Treason, Successions, Rights and Privileges, with a new fashion'd Oath of Adjuration, call'd the Association" (PHN, II, 245), so his silence is assured by Wilding's ownership of the papers. Sir Timothy/Shaftesbury suffers the worst possible fate for a character in Restoration comedy: he has married a penniless whore, the cast mistress of his nephew, and he may not object because his actions have made him a victim of blackmail.

Wilding notes his final circumstances:

No, Sir, nor you no King Elect, but must e'en remain as you were ever, Sir, a most seditious pestilent old Knave; one that deludes the Rabble with your Politicks, then leaves 'em to be hang'd, as they deserve, for silly mutinous Rebels (PHN, II, 259).

The Whigs in general do not fare much better in Mrs. Behn's hands than does Sir Timothy; they appear hypocritical, biased, gluttonous, and deceiving. Oliver Cromwell's law prohibiting boasting apparently sprang from a desire that "a Man might whore his Heart out, and no body the wiser" (PHN, II, 174). Mrs. Clacket, a true Protestant woman, worries about violence occurring in her home, not because she

objects to violence per se, but "should there be Murder done, what a Scandal wou'd that be in the House of a true Protestant!" (PHN, II, 187). A good Protestant mother "dreads nothing so much as her Daughter's marrying a villanous Tory" (PHN, II, 176-77). A Whig woman has a certain air about her; when Wilding coaches Diana in the role, he advises that she "look as prew as at a Conventicle; and take heed you drink not off your Glass at Table, nor rant, nor swear: one Oath confounds our Plot, and betrays thee. . ." (PHN, II, 197). A good Protestant eats heartily: "your true Protestant Appetite in a Lay-Elder does a Man's Table Credit" (PHN, II, 206). The true life of a city Whig is "godly Life and Conversation . . . frequent Conventicles, and [be] drunk no where but at your true Protestant Consults and Clubs, and the like" (PHN, II, 208). The typical demeanor of a "dissembling Whig" is a "Sneer and Grin" (PHN, II, 244). And because of the Whig influence, "Witnesses are out of fashion now . . . thanks to your Ignoramus juries" (PHN, II, 260).

The Tories or court party figures in the play present images of citizens obedient to their king, orthodox in their religion, generous, and often poor because of the political chicanery of the opposition. Mrs. Behn's convictions emerge graphically here. Obviously not all Whigs were Protestant, nor were all members of the court party Church of England, but because these are her preferences, the heroes exhibit both and the fools neither. A Tory, for the purposes of this play, loves "good wholesom Doctrine, that teaches Obedience to the King and Superiors, without railing at the Government, and quoting Scripture

for Sedition, Mutiny, and Rebellion" (PHN, II, 178). Sir Anthony shows the typical generosity of the group in his attitude towards the expenses of his nephew Charles, as contrasted with the pennypinching of Sir Timothy to Tom.

. . . what Expences? He wears good Clothes, why Trades-men get the more by him: he keeps his Coach, 'tis for his Ease; a Mistress, 'tis for his Pleasure; he games, 'tis for his Diversion: And where's the harm of this? is there ought else you can accuse him with? (PHN, II, 179).

Partly because of their generosity and free spending, and partly because of the political machinations of the Oliverian government, no one can be so poor "as a Tory Poet" (PHN, II, 210), a thrust not only at the Whigs by Mrs. Behn, but also at the lack of financial support for artists who sympathized with the crown. And a true lover of the king never hesitates to declare his allegiance, even in the presence of enemies, as witnessed in several scenes, such as when Charles proposes a toast to "his Majesty's health, and confusion to his Enemies" (PHN, II, 213) while having dinner at Sir Timothy's, a Whig stronghold.

In this play Mrs. Behn manages to make her political opponents look foolish and devious and her allies look wise and virtuous in a believable manner because the comedy itself succeeds. Politics and religion aside, Sir Timothy emerges as a very funny old man, canting and boasting about his lack of cant and vanity. Tom, the Rover of the play, intrigues successfully with two women and keeps a mistress, which he unloads on his uncle because of the old man's own lack of candor and honor. Tom succeeds because he is the Restoration gallant,

he knows the language and the code of action needed to achieve his ends. Charles, by contrast, begins slowly and lacks the right words. His uncle tells him that he courts like a Parson, and only when he loses his inhibitions and speaks the bold language of the cavalier can he win the hand of Lady Galliard. Sir Anthony's efforts to assist Charles in his courtship, his sympathy with youth and love, and his lack of greed as a motive for personal relationships make him a likeable character; his wit and humour assist the movement of the plot through his prodding of the recalcitrant Charles. The dinner table scene, with Diana dressed as Charlot, Charlot dressed as a Scottish girl, Wilding dressed as the Polish ambassador, Sir Timothy ignorant and sycophantic, and all the characters spying on each other to see how faithful they remain, makes excellent comic theater. The plot, less complicated than some of Mrs. Behn's comedies, moves steadily forward in all the scenes; none are farce. The humor sustains itself without the loss of taste characteristic of The Roundheads. All the characters act in a manner consistent with their position and nature; the audience is not asked to see a foolish figure in a noble or romantic role. For all these reasons the play is far better art than The Roundheads; because it is better art, it is better satire.

Mrs. Behn's social and political convictions find expression in most of her works, but nowhere with such force as in these plays during the time of the Popish plot. Her praise of the noble martyr and his sons abounds; she even remains loyal to the Catholic James. The contrast provided by her portrayal of Whigs shows her beliefs to

be firmly entrenched; her antipathy to the rebels of Cromwell and to their religion never wavers. In her plays the court party characters emerge as romantic, fun-loving cavaliers, the Whigs as greedy, deceitful, old, ridiculous lovers. For Mrs. Behn the moral right always transcends the legal; the moral citizen during the protectorate continued his loyalty to the exiled true king; the moral citizen during her time was loyal to the present king, no matter what his personality or religion, no matter how tempting the promises of the occupation. This insistence on moral rather than legal responsibility explains the position on marriage examined in other plays. Her attack on the hypocrisy of marriage without love consistently provides the situations in much of her work. She examines what a relationship between a man and a woman could be, and indicts whatever falls short. Lovers like Willmore and Hellena, Don Carlos and Julia, Oronooko and Imoinda, Wittmore and Lady Fancy, Beaumont and Ariadne show valid relationships, contracted with knowledge and consent by both parties for mutual benefit. Critics who accuse her of immorality--some of her lovers are married, such as Lady Fancy and Imoinda--fail to acknowledge that she abides by a code which transcends legality.

A look at Mrs. Behn's work generally and particularly that of the years 1681-2 shows her satiric impulse finding expression to a greater and greater degree. As previously noted, her interest in satire, coupled with her dislike of Shaftesbury and his followers, affects her dramatic techniques. In light of Dryden's opinion that "delight is the chief, if not the only end . . ." for the writer, her work

succeeds when she is able to balance satirical purpose with artistic accomplishment, when her characterization and incidents carry the weight of the indictment with their humor, as in The City Heiress. She fails when her anxiety to denounce outweighs her artistry.

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