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Author(s): James Fitzmaurice

Source: *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*, 1995, Vol. 96, No. 3 (1995), pp. 283-293

Published by: Modern Language Society

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43346105>

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THE LANGUAGE OF GENDER AND A TEXTUAL PROBLEM
IN APHRA BEHN'S *THE ROVER*

When Willmore asks Hellena to marry him in Act V of *The Rover* (1677), his tone is teasing and his approach a little comic. He does not even phrase his proposal as a question but rather makes it a unilateral declaration.

Nay if we part so, let me dye like a bird upon a bough, at the Sheriff's charge, by Heaven both the *Indies*, shall not buy thee from me. I adore thy Humour and will marry thee, and we are so of one Humour, it must be a bargain – give me thy hand. –

[*Kisses her Hand.*]

And now let the blind ones (Love and Fortune) do their worst.¹

He sounds like a man who has taken charge, but he is actually admitting defeat. He would have much preferred to have bedded Hellena without recourse to what she, teasing and serious at the same time, calls “old Gaffer *Himen*” and a “Priest.” (80) Her insistence on marriage would seem to be the usual feminine point of view: A woman needs the protection offered by matrimony. Hellena, however, has nothing to gain financially from the union with Willmore and has reason to believe that he will not remain faithful to her after their nuptials. Marriage, itself, is not much of a *desideratum*, and it is not the goal we see her pursue in the play. Rather, her main concern is the marriage proposal. Hellena's interaction with Willmore is a contest of resolve, and if he proposes she wins. If he does not, she loses. As the play comes to an end, Hellena is the winner though still unmarried, and she gives Willmore notice that she will not become pliable after the marriage has taken place. If she chooses, she can be “Hellena the Inconstant.”

Willmore says that he and Hellena are “of one Humour,” but that is not quite true. He is a male who lives by traditional masculine values. That is, he believes in bold and decisive action, he frankly acknowledges his physical desires, and he is slow to relinquish his freedom. At one time or another Hellena invokes each of these values but does so from a womanly perspective. Womanly as her view is, not all of the women in the play are so adventurous. Florinda, for instance, is not the sort of person to insist on her own freedom to the point of suggesting that she might be inconstant. By the same token, daring as Hellena is, she does not begin to approach Willmore's libertinism. Freedom gives Willmore license to womanize. Freedom for Hellena allows the throwing off of unwanted restrictions on her behavior and helps her to challenge male prerogatives. She wants to be able to move around unescorted out of doors, and she is not afraid to claim equal rights to extramarital involvement. It is quite clear, of course, that she has little interest in cuckolding Willmore as long as he is faithful to her.

Hellena's victory over Willmore, then, is not just a matter of her stronger resolve and his weakening. It is also a victory for anyone who is unwilling to be bound by strict distinctions of sex and gender. Elin Diamond writes that “Hellena seeks knowledge ‘more than’ or

beyond the gender script provided for her," but Hellena is not simply a disinterested investigator. (527) Hellena is an active and successful competitor.² Likewise, Angellica's failure with Willmore derives from her being too circumscribed by narrowly feminine hopes for elevated love and noble passion. She thinks, talks, and acts too much like a princess from a French romance.³ Janet Todd quite rightly finds the literal sign outside of the house of Angellica to be an indicator of the "professionalism" of Behn. Nevertheless, Angellica, herself, is anything but cold and businesslike in the way she talks to Willmore. (1) Hellena's use of language, on the other hand, supports important forays into the world of masculine values, and the wording of her reponse to Willmore's marriage proposal is telling, if one sticks closely to the text of early printings of the play. She says, "Whe God-a-mercy Capain!" (80)

The sentence functions as a statement of her acceptance of the marriage, proposal, but it also has important implications where gender is concerned. Willmore calls Hellena and every other woman he finds attractive, "child." This is a term that stresses his knowledge of the world in all its bold, devious masculine forms. Hellena responds time and again by sarcastically calling him "Captain," thereby ridiculing his claims to special manly knowledge and rendering silly the image of daring sea dog that he is trying to create for himself. "Whe" is a more difficult word to explain than "Captain," but it is, indeed, a word and one that is used twenty-nine times during the course of the play.

"Whe" is clearly some sort of exclamation, and it is uniformly found in the first four editions of *The Rover*. Beginning in the 1720s, however, it was emended to "why." Recent editors have not given their reasons for this emendation and have not even noted it in textual apparatuses, but their thinking may well be as follows.⁴ "Whe" does not occur under that spelling in the *OED*. "Whe" could be a variant of "whoa" or some other interjection, but "why" makes good sense and was the choice of editors working within fifty years of the death of the author. These early editors also have not given their reasons for emendation, but they have left a few clues. Some felt freer than modern editors to change words and even drop speeches, and some may have believed that "whe," while a word, was a little too coarse to be spoken by a lady. "Why," they may have thought, was more genteel.

There is one main argument that "whe" is an independent word in *The Rover* and two sources of strong support for that argument. The main point is that many characters in *The Rover* use "whe" in ways that show its linguistic separation from "why." The sources of support are as follows. First, "whe" also appears in two other early printed editions of plays by Behn: *The Second Part of the Rover* (thirty-three times) and *The Feigned Courtesans* (thirty-seven times). Characters in these two plays are connected with the word in much the same way as they are in *The Rover*.

Second, "whe" fits with what we know about the printing of the plays in question. The word cannot be simply a matter of house style nor can it be a typesetting error. John Amery printed *The Rover* (1677), an edition that includes both "whe" and "why." He also printed Behn's *The False Count* (1682), in which only "why" appears.⁵ If "whe" were a matter of

house style, then it should be found in all books produced by a particular printer and such is not the case. Since it is to be seen nearly a hundred times in the three plays, it does not make sense as a proofreading error either, especially given the fact the three texts are otherwise quite clean. Also Behn paid particular attention to the printing of *The Rover*. If “whe” were a typesetting error, she scarcely could have missed it.⁶ Finally, the word shows no signs of being an indicator of dialect.

What sort of word is “whe,” then? It is very definitely a man’s word, even though it is sometimes used by women. Willmore and Blunt each employ it eleven times, while Florinda and Angellica do not use it at all. Angellica does use “why” once as an interjection but never “whe.” Other characters use “whe” in varying degrees, and sometimes on significant occasions. It appears in several specific contexts. While discussing male sexual appetite, Belvile observes of Blunt, “That’s thy joy, a cheap Whore.” (7) Blunt, who respects honesty in erotic matters, responds, “Whe I ‘Seartlikins I love a Franck Soul.” (7) The word “Seartlikins” points to another “manly” association for the word, cursing, though “Sheartlikins” is a silly curse and one for which Blunt is unlikely to burn in hell. It recalls curses like “slid,” heavily used by buffoons in Jonsonian comedy. Hellena’s “Whe God-a-mercy Captain” involves an even milder, perhaps feminine curse, but the association with cursing remains.⁷ Blunt combines “whe” and “Sheartlikins” on six occasions, while Willmore and Fredrick engage in a comic exchange based on “whe” and “the devil.”

Fred. Whe how the Devil came you so drunk?
Will. Whe how the Devil came you so sober? (44)

The 1757 edition of *The Rover* not only emends “whe” to “why” but also drops “Sheartlikins” in Blunt’s response to Belvile quoted above. The emendation of “whe” and the dropping of “Sheartlikins” seem to have been part of a campaign to weed out “objectional” language from the play.

“Whe” has other associations with male sexuality and some of these can be quite disturbing. Blunt, ever the fool, uses the word repeatedly as he anticipates his hopes for intrigue with Lucetta. It is if he is drooling as he pronounces it.

Blunt. ‘Shartlikins this I like well, it looks like my lucky Bargain! Oh how long I for the approach of my Squire, that is to conduct me to [Lucetta’s] House again whe – here’s two provided for. (32)

“Whe” is disturbing in two scenes. In the first, Florinda is crudely pressured to agree to have sex with Willmore and in the second threatened with rape by Blunt. Willmore, thinking she is an easy target and probably a loose woman says, “Whe thou may’st be free with me, I’ll be very secret. I’ll not boast who ‘twas oblig’d me.” (42) Willmore uses the word with Florinda three more times before he is forced to break off his pawing of her by the arrival of Belvile and Fredrick. In this scene, Willmore is quite drunk and the comedy that goes along

with an ineffective, amorous drunk can attenuate the seriousness of his behavior. “Whe,” however, comes off as a word of coarseness in sexual matters, comedy or no comedy.

Blunt is completely sober when he uses the term in his threats of rape directed against Florinda. Particularly telling is Blunt’s statement that he will punish the abuse he has received from one woman with sexual violence perpetrated on another. Florinda comes close to being raped because Lucetta has made a fool of him. Ironically, Florinda has fled to Blunt’s lodgings hoping for protection, and he completely misunderstands what is happening. He says he wants to punish one woman for what has been done by another, but before long he confuses the two as if they were a single person.

Blunt. A harmless Virgin with a pox, as much one as ‘tother, adsheartlikins. Whe what the Devil can I not be safe in my House for you, not in my Chamber, nay, even being naked too cannot secure me: this is an Impudence greater than has invaded me yet – Come, no resistance.
[Pulls her rudely.] (64–65)

Florinda is Lucetta come to humiliate him again. The seriousness of the situation can be reduced or lost in performance, since Blunt lends himself to being broadly played as a ranting and ineffective fool. He certainly looks comic as he makes his threats, for he is dressed only in his underwear and he has just emerged from a sewer. If Blunt is finally a harmless character, “whe” is, nevertheless, a word from the language of sexual violence.

Blunt’s willingness to punish one woman for the acts of another is probably akin to his quickness in equating a woman with the valuables for which her body can be exchanged. While trying to evade Blunt’s embraces, Florinda offers him a diamond ring in place of her person. He is stopped cold for a few minutes and seems to agree that she has bought freedom for herself. When he receives the jewel, he says “whe ’tis a wonderful Virtue now that les in this Ring,” and the language of sexual desire is used to express equivalent financial satisfaction. (67) Earlier his reaction to the richly appointed house of Lucetta is also “whe,” though in this first case sex and expensive living are not equivalent but simply go together. (38)

Unfortunately for Florinda, it is the confusion with Lucetta rather than the exchange that she has just completed that wins out in Blunt’s mind.

Blunt. Whe, my Saint [Lucetta] prattled as parlously as this does, she gave me a Bracelet too, a Devil on her, but I sent my Man to sell it today for Necessaries, and it pro’d as counterfeit as her Vows of Love. (67)

If Lucetta’s bracelet was a sham, then Florinda’s diamond is only one more ruse. With no cash value accepted for the ring, Florinda is back where she started with Blunt.

The use of “whe” by Belvile provides an interesting test, for Belvile is a man but not a womanizer. He is faithful to Florinda, and, when tempted, does no more than accept a ring from a masked lady, who is, of course, that same Florinda. He is “modest,” indeed too modest to the thinking of Fredrick. Belvile, who is not without a sense of humor, uses “whe” to

parody his friends. When Blunt is hiding clothed only in underwear, Belvile pounds on the door to be let in and yells out the word. “Whe,” hollers Belvile, “he’s dead Sir, without dispute dead.” (68) It may be that Belvile really fears for Blunt’s life, but it is more likely that he has gotten word of the embarrassment of the poor “Essex calf” and wants to have some fun. He also teases Fredrick, who he knows hopes to marry Valeria. He accuses Fredrick in front of Valeria of being rake hell and Fredrick responds:

Fred. Oh I do not use to boast of my intrigues.

Belv. Boast, whe thou dost nothing but boast. And I dare swear, wer’t thou as Innocent from the sin of the Grape, as thou art from the Apple, thou might’st yeat claim that right in *Eden* which our first Parents lost by too much Loving. (72)

The language of sexual violence renders nothing but good fun where Belvile is concerned.

Fredrick’s way of dealing with women lies somewhere between Willmore’s open womanizing and Belvile’s sterling faithfulness, but his sole use of “whe” comes in the exchange on the subject of Willmore’s drunken attack on Florinda, a situation where he seems to be genuinely angry. His use of an offensive word with sexual meaning as an expression of contempt and outrage is probably no different from what we find today with similar words. His female counterpart and future wife, Valeria, is likewise a character occupying a middle ground. She is not so bold with men as is Hellena and not such a perennial victim of them as is Florinda. She shows some daring in disposing of Callis in summary fashion, but her popping of this poor old woman into a “great Chest” is pure comedy and in no way an act of cruelty. When Valeria and Florinda have made the irrevocable decision to flee from Pedro and when the two are exposed to the male world in the street, the following exchange takes place:

Flor. We’re happily Escap’t, and yet I tremble still.

Val. A Lover and fear! whe, I am but half an one and yet I have Courage for any attempt. (61)

Valeria uses “whe” only this once, but the situation certainly calls for it. The two women are out alone and prey to the dangers of the city. Strong language helps with “Courage for” the “attempt.”

Hellena uses “whe” a total of four times, three in conversation with Willmore and once as she deals with her brother’s objections to her marriage. In her first meeting with Willmore when she scarcely has talked with him more than a few minutes, she says the word in response to his offer of love. He has an excess of love and would like her to take some off his hands. “Whe -” she replies, “I cou’d be inclin’d that way – but for a Foolish Vow I am going to make – to dye a Maid.” (11) “Whe” in this context alone does not count for very much. Given its use by men elsewhere, it adds spice to her teasing tone and puts him on notice that she will operate on an equal footing with him.

She desists from the word again, however, until just before he asks her to marry him. In this second use, “whe” is clearly linked to frank admission of sexual desire. That admission,

of course, has its rhetorical advantages, for it whets Willmore's appetite and primes him for the marriage proposal.

Hell. ... whe, 'twill be the greater Charity to take me for thy Mistress. I am a lone⁸ Child, a kind of Orphan Lover, and why I shou'd dye a Maid, and in a Captains hands too, I do not understand. (79)

She offers herself as the child he has called her. He responds, "Egad, I was never claw'd away with Broad-sides from any Female before ... I hate a Coy demure Mistress." (79) Women do not usually express their desires for sex so directly and he is delighted. Just as he is ready to pounce on the defenseless orphan, she reminds him of the little matter of "old Gaffer *Himen*" and the "Priest." (80)

Hellena's final use of "whe" comes just before she calls for a vote of those on stage either to support or reject her match with Willmore in the face of her brother's opposition. Her statement is bold and direct.

Hell. Whe – I have consider'd the matter Brother, and find the Three hundred thousand Crowns my Uncle left me (and you cannot keep from me) will be better laid out in Love than in Religion. (82)

As with her first use of the word, this occurrence taken out of context would not mean much. Given its associations with male callousness, it works here to let her brother know that she is not going to defer to his authority.

The response of the other characters on stage to Hellena's subsequent call for a vote involves yet another twist generated by close attention to reading the early texts. In the 1677 and 1697 quartos, but not thereafter the exchange reads as follows:

Hell. Let most voyces carry it, for Heaven or the Captain?
All cry, a Captain? a Captain? (82)

Starting with the 1702 *Plays*, the question marks are removed and replaced with some combination of periods, commas, and exclamation points. Since question marks often appear in the 1677 quarto in places where one would expect exclamation points, emendation may not seem to be such a bad idea. Nevertheless, there could be some disbelief among various characters on stage. They might wonder if Hellena is really going to marry a man like Willmore. The line of thinking followed here may seem more twentieth-century and feminist in nature than it should be. Restoration comedies often end with rakes and their brides, however unconvincingly, transformed into something like ordinary married couples. Nevertheless, Behn's views on marriage are not those of ordinary Restoration dramatists. Rather, her understanding is more like what we find in Susannah Centlivre and Catharine Trotter – that is, marriage is not always a good thing for a woman nor should she necessarily want to get married.⁹ The question marks might well remain as they are in the first two quartos.

Behn's use of "whe" in *The Second Part of the Rover* (1681) and in *The Feigned Courtesans* (1679) changes somewhat from *The Rover*, but the term continues to be one favored by male characters. In *The Second Part of the Rover*, as might be expected, it is associated with Willmore and Blunt, who are retained from the first portion of the play. Blunt uses the word seven times and Willmore eight, but the person who employs it most is a new character, Featherfoot. Featherfoot, who is even less savvy than Blunt, says "whe" on eleven occasions. He is also a little unsavory, for he plans to make his fortune by marrying one of two wealthy "Monsters arriv'd from Mexico." (7) These three men and their associates do not use the word in situations where sexual violence might take place but early on connect it with puerile speculations about the opposite sex, speculations that include a striking crude remark. In the following passage, Willmore asks his friends if they know who three women were and Featherfoot responds.

Feth. Were! whe Ladies of Quality going to their Devotion, Who should they be?
Blunt. Whe faith and so I thought too.
Will. Whe that very one Woman I spoke too, is ten Whores in *Surrey*.
Feth. Prithee speak softly Man, 'Slife we shall be Poinarded for keeping thee Company. (11)

Willmore, of course, is right, and neither Blunt nor Featherfoot can tell a "woman of quality" from a courtesan.

"Whe" in *The Second Part of the Rover* is not always used by men in their idle speculations about women. It is twice employed by Featherfoot as he tries to deal with his fear. When confronted with a giantess (who is the "Monster" he had planned to marry), Featherfoot becomes frightened and tries to escape:

Blu. 'Dshartlikins whither art going? [Pulls him back.]
Feth. – Whe only – to – say my Prayers a little – I'll be with thee presently. [Offers to go, he pulls him.]
Blu. What a Pox art thou afraid of a Woman – (33)

Featherfoot, once again terrified, used the word when a man disguised as a giant and purporting to be a rival appears two pages further on. Like Valeria in the first part of the play, Featherfoot hopes a "manly" word will give him courage.

La Nuche, the courtesan who ends up with Willmore in the second part of the play, speaks the word twice. He has threatened to marry the Giantess himself, partly because he is short of money but mostly because he is in a merry mood. La Nuche is thoroughly irritated and cannot refrain from using an offensive term from the world of men.

La Nu. ... What – you are resolv'd then upon this notable exploit.
Will. What exploit, good Madam?
La Nu. Whe marrying of a Monster, and an ugly Monster.
Will. Yes faith, Child, here stands the bold Knight that singly, and unarm'd, designs to enter the List with *Thogogandiga* the Giant; a good Sword will defend a worse cause than an ugly Wife.
(42)

Clearly he is teasing but she is not amused. She speaks the word a second time two pages later when she remarks,

Whe, yes faith, such a Wedding would give the Town diversion: we should have a lamentable Ditty made on it, Entitled, The Captains Wedding. (44)

The interaction between La Nuche and Willmore has some marked similarities, then, to what takes place with Hellena and “the Captain.” As Peter Holland has noted, “significantly, Willmore’s destined match in both parts is played by Mrs. Barry.” Holland goes on to say that each couple is “central” to its respective play. (67) La Nuche is not victorious in the way that Hellena is, since she does not secure a marriage proposal. On the other hand, she does succeed in establishing a solid, if informal, association with the man himself, minus “the formal foppery of Marriage.” (81) Each woman is a winner in her own way.

An interesting twist in the use of “whe” in both parts of the play is that it is never employed by any of the rivals or antagonists of Willmore. As men, these characters might be expected to employ the term, and they certainly have substantial sexual appetites. It may be that Behn wanted to provide Willmore and his companions with a word of their own, a word that might be borrowed by selected women characters on occasion but not by other males.

In *The Feigned Courtesans*, “whe” is again a word favored by men, but it is not restricted in its use by them to close friends of the protagonist. The reason for this situation probably derives from the fact that some of the same character types to be found in the other two plays are here seen in changed roles. In *The Feigned Courtesans*, Sir Signal Buffoon is much the same sort of person as Featherfoot, but Sir Signal is a rival rather than a friend of the play’s male lead, Galliard. Featherfoot is a thoroughly silly rival but a rival, nonetheless. On the other hand, Galliard’s good friend, Sir Harry Fillamour, is virtually a carbon copy of Belvile from *The Rover*, and the roles of Belvile and Fillamour are almost identical. Fillamour is a faithful if overly “modest” person and only uses “whe” in exasperation. He says the word as he tries to get the disguised Marcella to give up what he thinks is her practice of prostitution. (41) The impish Marcella teases Fillamour to the point where he finds himself using coarse language. Galliard, as protagonist, is a somewhat more genteel version of Willmore, but is less admirable than the *honnête homme* with frailties suggested by Rose Zimbardo. (*Mirror* 110)

“Whe” comes up early in *The Feigned Courtesans* and, as might be expected, when men are discussing women. Tickletext, a hypocritical Puritan minister, is taken with the erotic possibilities of Rome. Petro, who is disguised as a barber and who passes himself off as a pimp, gets Tickletext into a state of considerable excitement by suggesting that a woman Tickletext believes to be a courtesan finds the clergyman attractive.

Pet. A doated on you Signor, doated on you.
Tick. Whe, and that’s strange now, in the Autumn of my
 Age too, when Nature began to be impertinent, as a man

may say, that a young Lady shou'd fall in love with me

_____ [Aside. _____]

Whe *Barberacho*, I do not conceive any great matter of
Sin only in visiting a Lady that loves a man, hah.

Pet. Sin Sir, 'tis a frequent thing now adays in Persons of your Complexion.

Tick. Especially here at *Rome* too, where 'tis no Scandal.

Pet. Ay Signior, where the Ladys are *Privileg'd, and Fornication Licenc't.* (6)

Petro, as might be expected, plans only to lighten the purses of Tickletext and his companion, Sir Signal. He does not seriously arrange any amorous trysts.

Tickletext and Sir Signal say “whe” a total of twenty-one times and account for about two thirds of its use in the play, so it is really their word. That is, the term mostly belongs to those who want to be rakes rather than to those who really are. Nevertheless, the genuine rake Galliard employs the word several times and in two main ways. He weaves it into conversation with women he expects to bed and he makes it a spur to Fillamour’s flagging libido. Both Cornelia (18) and Laura Lucretia (27) hear it from his lips, and Fillamour is admonished by him regarding Marcella, “Whe thou shalt ly with her man!” (20)

Cornelia, who is most of the time a person like Hellena from *The Rover*, says “whe” twice. On the first occasion, Galliard is about to enter her room, so she needs to get rid of his rival Sir Signal. Sir Signal, himself, would like to make a quick exit but is at a loss for a way out. In complete desperation, Cornelia says, “Whe ... can you leap a high window?” (46) Cornelia, in invoking male language in a time of danger, sounds a little like Valeria from *The Rover*. She is more like herself and Hellena when, dressed as a boy, she teases Galliard in the play’s closing minutes.

Whe how now Cavalier! how like a discarded favorite do you look now, who whilst your Authority lasted laid about ye; domineerd huft and blustered, as if there had been no end on't. (69)

Galliard sees through the disguise and the two decide to marry. Cornelia promises to be “the most Mistress like wife,” which – as it turns out – means that she will be “expensive, Insolent, vain Extravagant, and Inconstant, as if [Galliard] had only the keeping part, and another the Amorous Assignations.” (70) Although Cornelia is very clearly teasing, she comes up with the same point made by Hellena about inconstancy.

Behn was broadly interested in the language of gender beyond the three plays in which “whe” appears. Many of her male characters are memorable for the words they repeatedly use, words that define their masculinity in terms of its silliness. Sir Feeble Fainwoud in *The Lucky Chance* loves swearing by “Ods bobs,” and Timerous Coronet in *The Widow Ranter* often can be heard to exclaim “Gads zoors.”¹⁰ Men can be quite comic when they are trying to be manly. Hellena, on the other hand, makes a serious point about women who challenge gender distinctions. When she dresses like a young boy it is not just to provide a Restoration audience with a “breeches part.”¹¹ Rather, her dress reflects her forays into what is otherwise an exclusively male world. Mistress Pinchwife in *The Country Wife* also dresses like a young

man but never gets beyond being a wonderfully stereotypical, foolish young woman. More telling than her male clothing, however, is Hellena's understanding and use of the language of men.

Northern Arizona University

JAMES FITZMAURICE

NOTES

¹ Pages 80 and 81. The text used is the 1677 quarto, Huntington Library 106785. Spelling and punctuation are unaltered. Stage directions are unchanged in location on the page except for "All cry," which the typesetter failed to indent on page 82. The text for *The Second Part of the Rover* (1681) also carries the Huntington Library call number 106785. The text of *The Feigned Courtesans* is the 1679 quarto, Huntington Library 112086.

² Maureen Duffy identifies Angellica with Behn and Willmore with John Hoyle, suggesting along the way that Angellica is Behn as victim. Hellena, on the other hand, is Willmore's match (147). Angeline Goreau recognizes that Willmore and Hellena are engaged in a "battle of the sexes," but goes on to say that Hellena wins Willmore because he is attracted to her "honor," a quality lacking in Angellica. (227–228) Ben Ross Schneider, too, uses "battle" as a metaphor for the interaction between Willmore and Hellena. (181) See also Lynne Taetzsch, "Romantic Love Replaces Kinship Exchange in Aphra Behn's Restoration Drama."

³ Rose Zimbaro goes so far as to say that Angellica is not a character "in our modern sense" but passion as an abstraction. She includes La Nuche from *The Second Part of the Rover* and Laura Lucretia from *The Feigned Courtesans* in this category. ("Aphra" 380)

⁴ Link and Summers both emend "whe" to "why" and neither notes this change. "Whe" is found in the quartos of 1677, 1697, and 1709. It is also found in the 1702 *Plays*. It is corrected to "why" once each in different places in the 1697 and 1709 editions, a fact that suggests that the 1709 edition was set from the quarto of 1677. "Whe" does not appear in the main source for *The Rover*, Thomas Killigrew's *Thomaso* (1664).

⁵ The cases of *The Second Part of the Rover* and *The Feigned Courtesans* are less clear. The title pages of these two plays list no printer but both were published by Jacob Tonson. He also published *Sir Patient Fancy* (1678), where only "why" is to be found.

⁶ Behn's proofreading practices are discussed by Mary Ann O'Donnell in *Aphra Behn: An Annotated Bibliography*.

⁷ There is a word in the *OED* which could be a precursor to "whe." That word is the late medieval "we," an interjection of considerable force and with a specific connection to *The Rover*. In medieval drama as with both parts of *The Rover*, "we" is often combined in sentences with "the devil." A few examples from the concordance to the Wakefield Master should illustrate this point.

We! com downe in twenty dwill way!

We! fie! fy on the dewill!

We! outt! for teyn I brast! / We! fy! / Fy on the dewill.

we! ryn on, in de dwills nayme.

(Michael J Preston and Jean De Pfliederer, *A KWICK Concordance to the Plays of the Wakefield Master*, [New York], 1982. See also Gerald Byron Kinneavy, *A Concordance to the Towneley Plays* [New York], 1990. "We" as an interjection is not listed at all in Weight's *English Dialect Dictionary* nor in Nares' *Glossary*.)

⁸ In the 1677 quarto, "a lone" appears on the page with no space: "alone."

⁹ In Centlivre's *The Wonder: A Woman Keeps a Secret*, Isabella insists on her right to privacy in marriage. The husband to be, Don Felix, tells us in the last lines of the play "man has no advantage but

the name." (Morgan 387) In Trotter's *Lover at a Loss: Or the Most Votes Have It*, Lesbia trivializes marriage by putting her choice of husband to a vote of the characters on stage. (Kendall 111) Hellena in *The Rover* is not "at a loss" concerning whom to marry. Rather she asks for a vote knowing that she will win.

¹⁰ "Bread a gued" is used as by Wariston in *The Roundheads*.

¹¹ Frances M. Kavenik suggests that "breeches parts" in some of Behn's plays involve 'a blurring of male/female role distinctions.' (182)

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