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"Nothing but Gold shall charm my Heart":
Sexual Economics and the Courtesans of Aphra Behn and Daniel Defoe


Anthony L. Ellis

M.A., English
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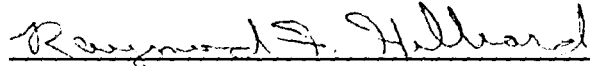
Thesis Director: Dr. Anthony Russell

Aphra Behn and Daniel Defoe both manifest a strong interest in the courtesan, a female figure whose unusual success wins her autonomy from sexual and economic subjugation. In order to remain self-governing, Angellica Bianca and La Nuche of Behn's Rover plays and Defoe's Roxana must pay singular heed to their economic self-interest while forsaking the prospect of genuine romantic love. However, whereas Behn's courtesans undergo sexual "reformations"--figured as the acceptance of love (and marriage) and the resulting loss of independence--to their economic detriment, Roxana maintains the emotional reticence that allows her to continue capitalizing fully on her sexual allure. By discarding the romanticism present in Behn's plays, Defoe offers less compromised social criticism, a more realistic depiction of the sexual and legal injustices that make Roxana's vice a defensible alternative to either scarce, drudging employment or the captivity of marriage.

I certify that I have read this thesis and find that, in scope and quality, it satisfies the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.



Dr. Anthony Russell, Thesis Advisor



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"NOTHING BUT GOLD SHALL CHARM MY HEART":

SEXUAL ECONOMICS AND THE COURTESANS

OF APHRA BEHN AND DANIEL DEFOE

By

ANTHONY L. ELLIS

M.A., University of Richmond, 1995

A Thesis

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For the Restoration or early eighteenth-century writer concerned with the conflict between the pressures of economic self-interest and the expression of genuine romantic love, the prostitute was a logical figure on whom to focus. After all, the familiar transactional marriages among the period's well-to-do, those sexual pairings arranged with the preservation or enlargement of family estates squarely in mind, resembled nothing so much as the more popularly discredited business of the English streetwalker. In truth, it was hard to ignore the legal disadvantages women of all classes faced that gave them the incentive to prostitute themselves. To women especially, prostitution--either form, traditional or matrimonial--offered a chance for social and economic advancement. Its rewards, however, were both elusive and conditional: certain London streets teemed with impoverished whores, while even women who succeeded in securing affluent husbands found themselves stripped of their own economic rights, and thus dependent on the integrity of their spouses. To find the best example of female economic independence gained via the successful marketing of her sex, we must turn to the rare figure of the courtesan. Affluent, socially refined, carefully selective of their clientele, women like the courtesans in Aphra Behn's Rover comedies and the protagonist of Daniel Defoe's Roxana manage to evade both the abjection of the common prostitute and the subjection of the legally disadvantaged English wife. But as both authors locate the source of the courtesan's power in her cool-headed manipulation of sexual economics, they also show how sexual seduction by men threatens her fragile autonomy. To retain economic power

in a man's world, the courtesan is shown to require an emotional self-mastery; her denial of love staves off entrapment in the economically disabling institution of marriage.

The women in these texts wield their power uneasily, aware that future destitution threatens the courtesan who follows her heart, not her economic good sense. The social forces at work in England certainly lend credence to such fears. Starting in Behn's time and continuing in Defoe's, urban demographic imbalance resulted in a large population of single women, while employment discrimination harmed this group economically and almost certainly contributed to the growth of prostitution. One source estimates a 13:10 female-to-male ratio in London at the end of the seventeenth century.¹ Such a disparity seemed to give some men little motivation to marry, insofar as they perceived that the demand for eligible bachelors far exceeded the supply. The imbalance perhaps encouraged men to be promiscuous and aloof, confident that plenty of marriageable women would be there when they were ready for commitment. Suggestive of men's advantage in courtship, a contemporary London marriage-broker provided his "catalogue of women wanting marriage, some young, some not, all tame as a city-cuckold chid by his wife."²

Meanwhile, by the end of the 1600s, the rise of industrialization and concurrent decline in domestic industry had already cost women many of the household jobs that had supported them in the past.³ Compounding this problem, patriarchal attitudes limited the types of work they could find outside the home. For

example, Mary Prior has analyzed the prejudice dominating the powerful Oxford craft guilds, which refused to recognize the legal position of women in trade. Although common law enforced no legal constraints on single women, borough custom hindered them from becoming freemen--and independent craftspeople could be (and were) prosecuted.⁴ The few jobs women *were* allowed often entailed harsh conditions and low pay: servant, seamstress, or worse, salt-spreader, or manure-gatherer.⁵ Evincing the overall bleakness of the job market, historian Thomas Macauley calculates that in 1685 about one-fourth of the English population received some type of poor relief.⁶ One can easily imagine how many women were included in this group.

In addition to the high incidence of poverty, it is likely that a greater general tolerance of sexual promiscuity facilitated the growth of prostitution. For example, Lawrence Stone finds testimony for the new permissiveness in Samuel Pepys' diaries, where "the spread of the sexual habits of Charles II's court by rumour, observation and example downward throughout the social scale is very clearly evidenced."⁷ In any event, another historian estimates that 50,000 prostitutes were plying their trade in Restoration London, not counting the innumerable kept mistresses of upper-class men.⁸ Despite the many risks of the profession--physical abuse, disease, unwanted pregnancy--many streetwalkers retained dreams of upward social mobility. Such a miraculous ascendancy had been most infamously achieved in the case of Nell Gwynn, the one-time theater orange-seller who became the pampered sexual partner of Charles II.⁹ So while ordinary prostitutes were suffering horrible degradation, they

might at least take heart that, unlike other professions, this one provided a genuine rags-to-riches precedent.

Both Behn and Defoe manifested a strong interest in the courtesan precisely because she was the only female figure with an avenue for real autonomy from sexual and economic subjugation. As such, she contrasts with the common prostitute, who is poor, *and* the wife, who risks disfranchisement in marriage. Their fictional creations, Angellica Bianca and La Nuche of the Rover plays and Roxana, created some four decades later, exploit the sexual appetites of their suitors in order to amass fortunes unknown to most women. However, the texts convey that the courtesan must not succumb to her own potential weakness--her love for a client --because such an emotional surrender could lead ultimately to marriage. Ironically, although patriarchal society figured the prostitute's "retirement" into marriage as a reformation of her character, both authors recognized that the contractual basis of so many upper-class marriages marked them as simply a socially approved form of prostitution. While polite society legitimized its own mercenary practices, it scapegoated the prostitute, who openly accepted money for sex and had little use for the hypocrisy surrounding the assignations of the "honorable" upper class.

Of course, most women could regard marriage, whatever its venal underside, as their best recourse in a society that all but disregarded their need to work. But for the courtesan a marriage proposal brought with it decided risks, as after the wedding all her possessions became legally her husband's property, regardless of his aptitude

at managing them. This basic reality informs the courtesans' behavior in all three texts. All feel compelled to forsake deep emotional attachments with men in order to remain both sexually and economically self-governing. They only differ in their ultimate commitment to their convictions. Behn's courtesans, who experience sexual "reformations" that undermine their positions of strength, choose love over independence to their own detriment. As Angellica and La Nuche accept the Rover on patriarchal terms that threaten their economic ruin--marriage, or in the latter's case, an arrangement akin to it--the comic endings of these plays merely pay lip service to the supposed victory of romantic love over venality. Behn observes the romance convention of a promised wedding, but neither courtesan, finally seduced and weakened, can be said to participate legitimately in the "happy ending."

It is not until the 1720's, with the publication of Roxana, that the courtesan of literature becomes strong enough to resist fully the imposition of her society's skewed values. Of course, Roxana's insistence on meeting the world on her terms does not result in unqualified happiness for her either. Where her predecessors gave up independence for love, she pays a dear price for making the reverse choice, sacrificing love for material prosperity. But the economically driven Roxana's emotional reticence affords her a strength that ultimately fails Behn's seduced heroines. Defoe's creation is significant in the context of Behn's courtesans in that he takes the step, finally, of portraying a heroine who makes a career of vice without hypocrisy, apology or any movement towards a self-defeating "reformation." Even

when she does retire from prostitution and marry, the union is presented as another fiscal conquest, love being a subordinate and barely articulated consideration.

Whereas both authors define the courtesan's central conflict as a struggle between economic necessity and emotional satisfaction, Defoe lends greater urgency to his text by refusing to allow Roxana back into the patriarchal fold as part of a pretended "happy ending." Critics interested in assessing the spiritual development of Defoean protagonists, such as G. A. Starr, have speculated on Roxana's "distinct prospect of damnation."¹⁰ But despite her displays of avarice and vanity that do qualify a sympathetic reading of Roxana to some extent, Defoe convincingly locates the genesis of her morally reprehensible qualities and her impenitence within her early experience of economic hardship. In short, even if "Defoe means to consign Roxana to the devil,"¹¹ he also shows the difficulty of reconciling traditional Christian virtues (modesty, generosity, honesty) with the economic realities of a hardened, sexist, secular society.

* * * * *

Surveying Restoration comedies for prostitutes, one is struck by the relative paucity of their numbers. When they do appear, they tend to fall in one of two groups. The first group, in which there are a handful, consists of abject "common" whores, either poorly kept mistresses or depraved streetwalkers. These normally assume minor roles, yet add to the comic mix their stereotypical lust, greed, and gift for machination. Examples of this type are Behn's Betty Flauntit in The Town-Fop

(1676), Dryden's termagant Mrs. Tricksey in The Kind Keeper (1678) and Cibber's Miss Flareit in Love's Last Shift (1696). The other variety are the courtesans. Angellica Bianca and La Nuche stand out as the most fully developed examples of this even rarer type. Not surprisingly, Behn, the lone female professional playwright of her time, renders two of the drama's most dignified, sympathetic prostitutes, and their behavior suggests the nature of Behn's own feminist ideas--ideas that turn out, however, to be troublesomely compromised.

The Royalist heroes of the Rover plays (1677, 1681), exiled upon the execution of Charles I, take up their rakish adventures in Naples and Madrid. Willmore the Rover and his cronies are thus political figures, but Behn's Tory politicizing is always ancillary to her main concern with how power works in sexual relationships. The Rover; or, the Banish'd Cavaliers, Part I begins with a conversation between two chaste sisters, Florinda and Hellena. We learn that Florinda has been designated, against her will, as the future bride of either Antonio (the friend of her brother Pedro) or the ancient Vincentio. Hellena, equally dissatisfied, is marked for the nunnery. They visit the carnival in Naples, where they meet Willmore and his friends Belvile, Frederick and Ned Blunt. A strong mutual--and forbidden--attraction exists between Belvile and Florinda. Hellena falls immediately for Willmore, and the two sisters set in motion a series of intrigues to further their romantic interests. The opportunity for disguise at the carnival allows them to evade their restrictive father, brother, and governess while providing the basis

for the drama's many cases of mistaken identity, on which much of its humor rests.

What concerns this study is the status of Angellica as courtesan and rival to Hellena for Willmore's attention. Willmore first hears of Angellica when his troop encounters a sign advertising her wares: "A Thousand Crowns a Month!" Blunt reads, while the destitute Willmore laments that Beauty is something "Virtue ne'er could purchase" (2.1, 30).¹² The second remark is witty because Willmore, the unprincipled seducer of women, is hardly a virtuous man. He has just arranged an imminent meeting with Hellena but promptly forgets her when the renowned courtesan is in his sights. Initially, Angellica rejects his advances, for he possesses almost no money. Her bawd Moretta claims that Angellica is expert at resisting the onset of love, "that general Disease of our Sex." Indeed, the courtesan views each client as a "Slave" who contributes to "the Triumph of the Conqueror." Angellica believes it is in her self-interest to distrust men: "inconstancy's the Sin of all Mankind, therefore I'm resolv'd that nothing but Gold shall charm my Heart" (2.1, 31-2).

Willmore finally seduces Angellica when he changes course and affects disdain for her mercenary ways, claiming that he now recognizes the baseness of his desires. This subtly employed "feign'd Contempt" (2.2, 40) kindles Angellica's own passion: Willmore has turned the tables and now *he* is playing hard to get:

Yes, you shall hear how infamous you are--
For which I do not hate thee:
But that secures my Heart, and all the Flames it feels

Are but so many Lusts,
 I know it by their sudden bold intrusion.
 The Fire's impatient and betrays, 'tis false--
 For had it been the purer Flame of Love,
 I should have pin'd and languish'd at your Feet,
 E'er found the Impudence to have discover'd it.
 I now dare stand your Scorn, and your Denial. (2.2, 39)

The implication here, which Angellica will voice explicitly later, is that a man may satisfy his lust with a prostitute but will only feel "the purer Flame of Love" for (and thus, marry) a virtuous woman. Contrary to her former resolution, she decides to accept Willmore as a lover, hoping he will not hold her past against her:

Thou art a brave Fellow! put up thy Gold, and know,
 That were thy Fortune large, as is thy Soul,
 Thou shouldst not buy my Love,
 Couldst thou forget those mean Effects of Vanity,
 Which set me out to sale; and as a Lover, prize
 My yielding Joys.
 Canst thou believe they'l be entirely thine,
 Without considering they were mercenary? (2.2, 40)

Under the Rover's spell, she attempts to negotiate new terms: "The Pay I mean [for sex] is but thy Love for mine.--Can you give me that?" Willmore responds, "Intirely," and they withdraw (2.2, 41). Indeed, in a complete reversal of the courtesan/client transaction, it turns out that after sex she pays him in gold. Naturally, all his promises of future constancy prove false. At play's end, after Hellena and Angellica have confronted one another and the latter has held Willmore at pistol point, the Rover predictably chooses the more socially acceptable woman as wife. Angellica is then reminded of "the Reproach that Honour lays on those/ That

dare pretend a sober passion" (i.e., prostitutes) (4.2, 78). The courtesan's reformation, presented as an embracing of love and a rejection of her mercenary nature, costs her the fracturing of an identity she has spent a lifetime constructing. Ultimately, with the loss of her "Virgin Heart" she forfeits her "whole Repose" and her "future Joys" (4.2, 70).

That a woman who sacrifices her lucrative promiscuity to the dictates of love--and who brings real harm to no one in the course of the play--could suffer total exclusion from Behn's comic ending complicates the interpretation of Angellica's role. Adding to the complication is our inability to equate marriage to a rake with a life of bliss. Hellena, after all, really winds up in no better position than the courtesan, a point that will be underscored in Part II.

The improbable pairings in The Rover, Part I accomplish what Nancy Copeland calls the "narrowing of distance between virgin and whore,"¹³ the demonstration that mercenary motives may apply equally up and down the social scale. For example, the powerful in society may arbitrarily legitimize marital dowries and jointures while at least publicly condemning the courtesan's asking price. Such scapegoating of prostitutes for more widespread moral degeneracy occurs repeatedly in the pamphlets of the era, which characterize harlots as a malevolent and deceptive force men must struggle against. For example, in The Ape-gentle-woman, or the Character of an Exchange-wench (1675), anonymously written, the typical bawd is described as follows: "her habitation and her apparel are like two friendly Sea-marks,

forewarn us of our Shipwrecks if we fail in that Channel."¹⁴ Here the author blames the practice of illicit, corruptive sex ("Shipwrecks") on the deceptive allure of the prostitute (her "friendly Sea-marks"), not her customer's lack of discipline. The Night-walker, or, Evening rambles after lewd women (1696), by John Dunton, seeks to reform prostitutes who have always been the "stain" of great men, like Caesar and Mark Antony. To Dunton, common whores were weakening England in its battle against the greater "Whore of Rome," Catholicism.¹⁵

One particular serial pamphlet epitomizes the type of hypocrisy that Behn attributes to her male characters and that victimizes Angellica. John Garfield's The Wandering Whore (1661), published in London sixteen years before The Rover, advises against the evils of prostitution and affirms the necessity of curtailing its practice in London. Along with moralizing anecdotes of his regular patrols, Garfield includes lists of known "Crafty Bawds," supposedly to expose their vice. However, as E. J. Burford determines in The Horrible Sin, the publication actually existed to advertise the prostitutes it seems to condemn. The Wandering Whore circulated within two sordid establishments, a brothel called "The Half-Crown Chuck Office" ("chuck" being a vernacular term for the vagina) and a male club known as "The Prick Office." Its publishers knowingly mediated between the two organizations.¹⁶ The Wandering Whore, in other words, promised unwavering vigilance against lewd behavior while subtly filling a profitable niche in the underworld of sexual commerce.

In similarly contradictory fashion, Willmore disavows sex for money--"a barbarous Custom, which I will scorn to defend in our Sex, and do despise in yours" (2.2, 40)--yet continually describes women as property to be acquired. He once refers to Angellica as "Cargo" (2.2, 38) and later calls a rival "a Picaroon going to board my Frigate" (3.4, 61). In another recourse to nautical metaphor, he states that Florinda "sails" and is "Willing to be boarded" as a "Prize" (4.3, 80). Hypocrisy extends to most of the other male characters. Later, in Part II, the Rover's friend Beaumont refers to La Nuche as property that he would govern imperialistically, when he asks Willmore: "Is it with thee I must tug for Empire? For I lay claim to all this World of Beauty" (5.1, 191). Belvile delivers a sanctimonious harangue on the deceptive allure of finely-attired courtesans "richly furnisht" whose venal motives diminish them for him to "Whores and errant ones" (2.1, 29). But an equivalent greed infects the men as well, and they never attempt to reform. To state just a few examples, Willmore takes gold from Angellica after sex (4.2, 69) and Hellena's "Three hundred thousand Crowns" upon marriage (5.1, 103), and Blunt attributes "Virtue" to a valuable ring that is said to possess "more persuasive Rhetorick in't, than all her Sex [Florinda's] can utter" (4.3, 85).

Men could easily transfer the blame for their crass materialism and moral repugnance onto a set of sexually enterprising women. But, as stated above, in a society providing few educational and employment opportunities for women, few "virtuous" women could support themselves comfortably while remaining single.

This fact informs Angellica's seizure of economic power via her sexuality. However, she can manipulate the sexual marketplace only as long as she can objectify men as unemotionally as Willmore does women in the above examples. Constant emotional self-denial is the price she pays for an independence that few women of the time enjoy and that contributes to her social distinction. Yet Behn lets Angellica lose her emotional mastery long enough to succumb to the temptation of love. Angellica's emotional awakening, at the expense of her economic self-interest, unmistakably subjugates her:

--Love, that has robb'd it [her heart] of its Unconcern,
Of all that Pride that taught me how to value it,
And in its room a mean submissive Passion was convey'd,
That made me humbly bow, which I ne'er did
To any thing but Heaven.
...And then, I was a Slave--
Yet still had been content to've worn my Chains,
Worn 'em with Vanity and Joy for ever,
Hadst thou not broke those Vows that put them on. (5.1, 94-5)

Angellica has earlier referred to her former, mercenary sexual behavior as the practice of a "sober passion" (4.2, 78). The "mean"-ness of her new passion suggests both that Love has treated her cruelly and also that her choice has made her "mean," or common, lacking the dignity that came with financial prosperity and "Unconcern." She has turned "submissive," "a Slave," in that her falling in love invites a domestication of herself and her sexual activity. This contrasts with her pre-Willmore "innocent security" which if better guarded would have allowed her to continue "[wearing] [her] Pow'r like Lightning in [her] Eyes" (5.1, 95). Now she would

prefer "Chains" to her former "Pow'r" if only Willmore requited her love. Instead, she recognizes that the irrecoverable loss of her "Honour" renders "the remaining Spoil" beneath "The Conqueror's Care or Value" in the marriage market (96). It is interesting that she adopts the Rover-like language of woman-as-property now that she has relinquished the control of herself as commodity. The extent of her powerlessness is evident in her inability to shoot Willmore when she has a chance (98). That Angellica still controls Antonio, who promises adoration and "Obedience to [her] Will," indicates a possibly brighter future for her, perhaps even a restoration of her social prominence. It is clear, however, that her newly gained self-knowledge can never again be effectively excluded from her consciousness. To wit, and in her own words: "when Love held the Mirror, the undeceiving Glass/ Reflected all the Weakness of my Soul" (her unmet emotional needs) and showed her the true nature of her "fancy'd Power" (96). Her power is "fancy'd" inasmuch as she has underestimated its limitations; it can be wielded only within rituals of prostitution, not in those bona fide affairs of the heart Angellica has long avoided.

The plot of The Rover, Part II is quite similar to its predecessor but incorporates many new characters. Although the sequel does not have a carnival setting, Behn again relies on disguise and mistaken identities to keep the action going. Willmore of course returns, but we discover that Hellena has died in the interim. When his friend Beaumont (the Rover's straight man and analogue to Belvile) mentions her passing, Willmore responds, according to the stage directions, "With a

sham Sadness" and reveals he has prodigally spent all her money, a spree that "has eas'd [him] of that Grief" (1.1, 122). Behn's direction to the actor playing Willmore to mourn insincerely suggests how unsatisfactorily the romance convention of marriage has served Hellena. Although it may seem at the end of Part I that Willmore's decision to marry implies that a woman has tamed him, in reality he has succeeded in gaining legal control of Hellena and her resources.¹⁷ Thus Hellena's virtuous reputation, to which Angellica attributes her rival's "victory," is exposed as no advantage at all. She, like the courtesan, is undone by her loss of emotional control.

In the sequel, Willmore, Beaumont (a wealthy nephew of the English ambassador) and the grandee Don Carlo compete alternately for the courtesan La Nuche and this play's version of the respectable woman, Ariadne. Meanwhile their Cavalier friends Blunt, Fetherfool, Shift, and Hunt plot against each other to marry a giantess and a dwarf, a pair grotesque yet well-heeled. Occasionally, Willmore disguises himself as a world-famous mountebank. This pose allows him to profit in various ways. As oracle, he convinces La Nuche that she is in his power; as magic healer, he peddles an allegedly youth-bestowing potion to an old hag, Petronella, and a transformative meant to beautify the two "Monsters." In the end, Beaumont marries Ariadne and Willmore chooses La Nuche, reversing the previous outcome where Angellica's vice-ridden past disqualified her from "winning" the Rover. Shift and Hunt marry the giantess and dwarf, while Blunt and Fetherfool must settle for

being the butts of jokes having to do with their mistaken assessment of the disguised Petronella as an attractive woman.

The Cavaliers' shameless pursuit of the "Monsters'" dowries, like the courtesan's dispassionate sale of sex, reflects the economic basis of sexual power relations. Again, Behn's major criticism seems to be the hypocrisy that unfairly stigmatizes the courtesan, not the economic self-interest of any one party. Beaumont, who himself trades on his aristocratic standing, acknowledges this hypocrisy while weighing the merits of La Nuche and Ariadne. Ariadne, he realizes, only *seems* to "give her love"; actually, she is playing the game of her social class, disguising her mercenary intentions behind a facade of "honour." Beaumont appreciates how the courtesan demystifies the economics of sex that, while often going unrecognized or unadmitted, has become all but inextricable from the spiritual component of sexual love:

What difference then between a money-taking Mistress [La Nuche] and her that gives her Love [Ariadne]? only perhaps this sins the closer by't, and talks of Honour more: What Fool would be a Slave to empty Name, or value Woman for dissembling well? I'll to La Nuche--the honester of the two.
(4.1, 179)

Here Beaumont echoes La Nuche less than fifty lines earlier, where she answers Ariadne's charge that she has "no Honour to lose." The courtesan then asks rhetorically: "why should I double the Sin [of venality] by Hypocrisy?" (4.1, 177).

If anything, the sequel emphasizes even more than Part I the need for women to attend shrewdly to economic matters. In particular, the frequent references to age

remind us of how the courtesan can exploit her sexual power only temporarily. Petronella, La Nuche's bawd and advisor, embodies the potentially tragic fate of the over-the-hill courtesan more poignantly than her analogue in Part I, Moretta. In her very first speech, La Nuche names the "sad Memento" of Petronella, "a decay'd poor old forsaken Whore" as the reason why she will not "bate a Ducat" of her price (1.1, 127). Money is necessary when physical beauty has faded, and Behn impresses us with the imminence of that time. Beaumont's page sings about "Joys which decay when Beauty's past" and the haste necessary in a world where "Years will be Minutes, Ages Hours" (4.1, 188). Petronella, warning La Nuche, equates the giving of one's heart in love to the passing of "Beauty, or Youth," the "Tool[s]...for [her] Trade" that can also vanish in an instant; this notion justifies her subsequent antithesis: "A Curtezan and love!" (4.1, 185). And Petronella later demonstrates how extreme can be the aged's debasement, as she steals her the jewels of her protégée to pay the mountebank's fees.

Despite La Nuche's early awareness of the primacy of materialistic values--and the play's articulation of such a policy's economic justification--she, too, experiences an emotional loss of control that, like Angellica's, leads to sexual and economic enslavement. La Nuche declares that "Tyrant Love reigns absolute," that her bawd has withheld from her "the knowledge of the Right" which "plain Nature" has finally revealed (4.1, 184). Petronella immediately describes the likely result of her following a poor, inconstant man, the type that will "love [her] whilst [she] can buy

him Breeches, and then leave" (184). La Nuche then waffles, deciding she really should choose Beaumont and thus "submit to Interest" (185). Finally, however, she finds she cannot resist Willmore's magnetism, and she vows to "live and starve by turns" with him "as Fortune pleases." Willmore notes, "Thou art reform'd, and I enjoy the Change" (5.3, 208).

The Rover's radical stipulation for their union, that it remain officially unconsecrated--"a Bargain made without the formal Foppery of Marriage" (5.3, 208)--has raised some critical debate and, I believe, some significant misinterpretations. It is true that Part II departs somewhat from what Anne Haselkorn recognizes as the traditional "solutions" for prostitutes in comedy, namely, penitence and/or matrimony.¹⁸ La Nuche does apparently repent for her practice of Petronella's "false Tenents" (4.1, 184), but instead of marriage, there is an arrangement Jacqueline Pearson calls "a free union which allows autonomy to both." Pearson contends that Willmore is being uncharacteristically generous at the end.¹⁹ In the same vein, Heidi Hunter argues that Willmore and La Nuche come together as equals in a "more positive alternative to the legal marriage" that offers the woman an independence Angellica and Hellena both lack.²⁰

I believe these critics exaggerate the distinction between the two plays' denouements, both of which relegate the courtesan to a subservient, compromised role. More perceptive, perhaps, is Susan Carlson, who in speculating on the power female characters gain temporarily via comedy's "role reversals and inversions,"

suggests that the genre is nonetheless intrinsically sexist. She cites as evidence that the ending typically manages to restore a recognizable and valued social order.²¹ Elsewhere, examining the Behn comedies, Carlson detects that the playwright begins to violate that order, but in the end does not, torn as Behn is "between a male dramatic aesthetic and a female sexuality."²² This critical appraisal, echoed by others,²³ captures well the conflictedness of Behn's feminism, her refusal (or inability) to provide satisfactory endings for two initially strong-willed female characters. In truth, La Nuche can expect the same fate that Hellena received. Although Willmore professes love for his dead wife, whom he remembers as "a Saint to be adored on Holy-days" (1.1, 120) and one "too good for Mortals" (1.1, 122), he still barely misses her and has squandered all her money. Even in the last few lines of the play, Willmore lets us know that his appetite for "Gallantry" has not slackened, opposing his own roving inclinations to Beaumont's constancy; he states: "You have a hankering after Marriage still, but I am for Love and Gallantry" (5.3, 211). This suggests that the thrill of the chase will remain acute for Willmore, a point Katharine Rogers makes when she asserts that La Nuche "must realize he will use and discard her."²⁴ The courtesan will be left to shoulder the "Infamy" that accompanies "doat[ing] on...a poor disbanded Captain" (3.1, 170), a sure disadvantage if she returns to the arena of prostitution where--as discussed above--image, above all, determines one's desirability.

It has been widely assumed that Behn identified deeply with courtesans.²⁵ Like

them, she was self-employed and subject to public criticism for the perceived lewdness of her occupation.²⁶ She had to remain unmarried to protect her rights to her marketable goods (her writing) the way courtesans stayed single to keep control of theirs (their bodies).²⁷ Meanwhile her provider of income, the theaters themselves, by including for the first time actresses who often prostituted themselves to supplement their low wages, in many minds became akin to brothels.²⁸ Considering these similarities, and Behn's sensitivity to the economic plight of women, why might it be that she effects the seduction of her courtesans that become at once "reformed" and overpowered?

The acts of female submission that close the Rover plays probably reflect Behn's long struggle to support herself within a masculine theatrical establishment. This is to say, she may have felt economic pressure to compromise her product. It took a long time for the London theater world to accept Behn. For example, her early notoriety is given as the reason why she decided to produce Part I anonymously.²⁹ Her anxiety over the dramatic concessions she had to make to gain acceptance--including, I believe, her failure to present consistently strong women--seems to come across in the epilogue to The Rover, Part II:

Poets are Kings of Wit, and you appear
 A Parliament, by Play-Bill, summon'd here;
 When e'er in want, to you for aid they fly,
 And a new Play's the Speech that begs supply:
 But now--
 The scanted Tribute is so slowly paid,
 Our Poets must find out another Trade:

They've tried all ways th'insatiate Clan to please,
 Have parted with their old Prerogatives,
 Their Birth-right Satiring, and their just pretence
 Of judging even their own Wit and Sense;
And write against their consciences, to show
 How dull they can be to comply with you. (212; my italics)

Perhaps Willmore triumphs and the courtesan reforms because Behn "complies." An avowed Tory, Behn takes pains to conjoin the patriarchal ideology informing her play with the parliamentary Whig party. She may appear in control, as "King of Wit," but in fact must pander to the coarser tastes of her audience/Parliament, "th'insatiate Clan." The cost of "Tribute" is dear, no less than the suspension of her conscience as she defers to the social standards of the day.

This artistic self-justification based on economic reality appears elsewhere in the Behn plays, where she again comes close to apologizing for her text. Most notably, in the introductory epistle to Sir Patient Fancy (1678), Behn contends that any faults in the play originate from "the Authours unhappiness, who is forced to write for Bread." She goes on to denigrate her method as "a way too cheap for men of wit to pursue who write for Glory, and a way which even I despise as much below me" (IV, 7). Necessity brings about the repression of artistic truth. Thus, an important parallel exists between Behn's literary marketplace and the sexual one of her courtesans. Both demand a self-denial, respectively textual and emotional, if the seller is to stave off the threat of poverty. As a result, Behn can place the blame for her diminished product on her audience and take an anti-didactic stance.

When dramatists surrender their "Wit and Sense," the drama cannot be said to instruct meaningfully, but only to entertain. This is what the audience pays for, and so the dramatist who "sells out" is off the hook. If we recognize that the fates of Angellica and La Nuche are determined by "sick Palates" (212), that knowledge clarifies not only the justificatory tone of this epilogue but Behn's minimal claims for drama elsewhere. Addressing poetics in the epistle to The Dutch Lover (1673), she depreciates the achievements of herself and her peers:

[A]s I would not undervalue Poetry, so neither am I altogether of their judgement who believe no wisdom in the world beyond it...However true this is, I am myself well able to affirm that none of our English Poets, and least the Dramatique (so I think you call them) can be justly charg'd with too great
 This passage is not helpful but reads as an apology for 221-207467ing
 playwrights

defending compelled to write against her private beliefs, yet her decision to do so by
 disclaiming art's instructive potential. She misses the luxury of "writing for Glory," so she compensates by denying the difference in influence between high art and her (alleged) low art. If neither possesses socially redeeming power, success can be measured simply as the visceral evocation of delight--that is to say, the size of the audience--and Behn's departures from conscience seem innocuous enough.

* * * * *

Behn's dramatic decision to impair female power indicates how difficult it was for women to confront exploitation and achieve some level of dignified autonomy. Indeed, if in her plays the social order is ultimately left unbreached, this may have as

much to do with Behn's fidelity to social reality as with her desire to prosper within that order. By the 1720s, however, Daniel Defoe perceived that the preservation of the status quo in sexual relations not only denied women their rights but threatened England with social dissolution. Paula Backscheider relates the common eighteenth-century view of marriage as a microcosm of the state; ideally, both spouses gained "positions and responsibilities as governors" that enabled them to benefit society as well as themselves.³⁰ Espousing this view, Defoe published tracts on the value of married life and the dangers accompanying a growing population of unmarried, unemployable women.

One particular text, Some Considerations upon Street-walkers (1726), a pair of letters directed "to a Member of Parliament," presents Defoe's argument for combatting the spread of prostitution. In this text, Defoe's motivation to curtail English prostitution stems from his association of sexual immorality with widespread economic ills. Another Defoe text describes the effect of "Loose Thoughts" turned to action this way:

So sensual Flames, when raging in the Soul,
First vitiate all the Parts, then fire the Whole;
Burn up the Bright, the Beauteous, the Sublime,
And turn our lawful Pleasures into Crime.³¹

An example of such "Crime" discussed in Street-walkers is the fact that pregnancies out of wedlock were leading to a high murder rate of unwanted, illegitimate children, who if nurtured could have grown to be productive English citizens ("The great Use

of Women in a Community is to supply it with Members that may be serviceable, and keep up a Succession").³² In addition, Defoe recognized that women who sold their bodies often robbed as well in order to support themselves.³³ The aging Moll Flanders exemplifies this tendency, as she eventually turns from whoring to thievery. To Defoe, who refused to believe that the number of English women far exceeded that of men,³⁴ it was his society's sexual permissiveness that exacerbated a lamentable trend: that women "[were] forced to become the Instruments of satisfying those Desires in Men which were given for a better Use, and which are the greatest Temptations to Matrimony."³⁵

Street-walkers voices two principal concerns: the restoration of order to "the oldest profession" and, what would promote this, a diminution of its numbers by legislative measures favorable to marriage. He wrote these letters after prostitutes had accosted him on his way from Charing-Cross to Ludgate. Their boldness and visibility on the street he finds most distasteful; at one level, he seems to regret only that they are not tucked in a bawdy house somewhere, performing their services where upstanding citizens do not have to notice them. He even grants them the virtue of preventing men's pursuit of others' wives.³⁶ More emphatically, however, he states that the whore is "not a useful Subject" (her kind's "Lives and Services are irrecoverably lost to their Country") and that English law should be amended for the purpose of "giving more Encouragement to Matrimony."³⁷ His recommended incentives include tax exemptions and community privileges for married men. As

long as there existed "mutual Affection before Matrimony,"³⁸ such economic inducements to marriage actually made perfect sense to Defoe. As Ian Watt explains, "[Defoe] was not ashamed to make economic self-interest his major premise about human life; he did not think such a premise conflicted either with social or religious values."³⁹ But where self-interest jeopardized the greater interests of society--as in the case of rampant prostitution--social institutions were necessary to curb it. Defoe found marriage, his "metaphor for the state of human existence,"⁴⁰ one such institution that needed propping up. In fact, he is more explicit than Behn on this point: that there is nothing wrong with marriages that are economically appealing. Unlike prostitution, which does not promote the growth of families and encourages a variety of sins, economically based marriages are valuable because they promote a reproductive, law-abiding citizenry. If, however, Defoe champions marriage in this way, we may then ask why the protagonist of Roxana (1724), describes it consistently as a trap to be avoided? One explanation is that the novel's portrayal of prostitution--whose magnitude he deplors in Street-walkers--as the protagonist's justifiable escape route from unfair spousal property laws, suggests that effective marriage reform must incorporate women's economic interests as well.

Misleadingly, this implicit dimension of Roxana (that her life illustrates the need for marriage reform that is sensitive to women's disfranchisement) contradicts the claims of the author's preface. Perhaps to deflect criticism of his controversial work, Defoe begins by stating that the novel consists of historical truth "adapted to

the Instruction and Improvement of the Reader" (35).⁴¹ The suggestion is that it should not be regarded as titillating material. Depravity such as Roxana's is entirely reprehensible and should never be imitated. Upon finishing the book, however, the reader discerns that not Roxana, but English society, is at fault for neglecting the deficiencies of the marriage institution that make vice an inevitable alternative to matrimony. The preface claims what the narrative belies, that Roxana:

does not insist upon her Justification...much less does she recommend her Conduct, or indeed, any one Part of it, except her Repentance to our Imitation: On the contrary, she makes frequent Excursions, in a just censuring and condemning her own Practice: How often does she reproach herself in the most passionate Manner; and guide us to just Reflections in the like Cases?
(36)

In fact, as we shall see, Roxana never manages to repent sincerely in a manner that convinces us that she deems her actions unwarranted. Instead, we discover her somewhat schizophrenic commentary oscillating between self-reproach and much more well-reasoned (and convincing) discourse on the dictates of poverty.

Behn and Defoe communicate the attitudes they take toward their respective narratives in the ways they censure their audiences. On the one hand, Behn states that public expectations distort her creative impulses; she writes within the highly structured convention of romantic comedy, serving up "Fantastick Wit" for "Sick Palates" (212). Whereas Behn presents the argument that art is meant foremost to entertain, Defoe takes the opposite tack; Roxana can "be read *both* with Profit and Delight" (my italics). Nonetheless, we are to believe that its "Low-priz'd Colours"

(36) should not detract from its primary purpose: moral instruction. Competing, however, with the preface's stark, self-defensive moral condemnation of Roxana is a subtler social criticism that ascribes the growth of prostitution to the predominant callousness of society. Defoe, like Behn, depicts a courtesan whose own personal callousness is a strategic response to the hardened conditions around her. But, freed from the constraints of the romance convention, he refuses to fabricate a comic "reforming" ending that would render Roxana conventionally respectable, for such a move would entail a return to a corrupt social order Defoe wishes to see rectified.

* * * * *

Before closely examining Roxana, I want to explain the exclusion of Moll Flanders (1722), Defoe's other novelistic treatment of a female rebel, from this thesis. Simply put, only Roxana, much more successful and autonomous than her predecessor, fits the definition of courtesan. Shirlene Mason points out correctly that Moll is more properly termed a mistress than a prostitute.⁴² She does accept money for sex but never manages to amass a fortune like Roxana's and thus does not have the choices open to her that a courtesan does. Moll, it should also be noted, submits to marriage five times and repents sincerely for her sexual and criminal misdeeds. John Rietz describes the full circle Moll makes, from renunciation to reaffirmation of male authority by novel's end.⁴³ Her equivocation causes Sudesh Vaid to state that "Moll is a partial, Roxana a full-length, study of a prostitute."⁴⁴ Perhaps we can assume that Moll Flanders broke some ground for Roxana, Defoe's last fictional work

in which finally he experiments with affording a "fallen" protagonist unremitting independence and a dedication to vice that consistently proves necessary for her survival.

The plot of Roxana proceeds as follows. The protagonist, whose real name we never learn, grows up in England under parents prosperous enough to provide her a good home and education. Doing as expected of her, she marries young to a ne'er-do-well brewer who soon ruins his family financially and abandons Roxana and their five children. She has no choice but to leave the children with her aunt and uncle and move to a rented house with her companion, Amy. There, the landlord takes a liking to Roxana. He waives the rent several months, which leads Roxana (and Amy) to sleep with him. The landlord, who also deals in jewels, turns out to be quite good-hearted and devotes himself to Roxana. The three move to France, where the landlord is murdered one night while he is transporting jewels. She next takes up with a Prince, who pays her large sums of money at regular intervals. This affair ends when his wife dies and the Prince is moved to begin "a Life regulated most strictly by the Rules of Virtue, and Piety" (147). Her next love is a Dutch merchant she meets in Paris. They move to Holland together, where Roxana rejects his marriage proposals, wary that a wife becomes "a meer Woman ever after...a Slave" (187).

After the disappointed Dutch merchant leaves her, Roxana returns to London and embarks on the most profligate phase of her sexual career. It is in this period

that she entertains the most men and attains celebrity status. Her crowning achievements are two masquerade balls held at her home, where she dances seductively in a beautiful Turkish dress, drawing the attention of royalty present (perhaps, it is suggested, even the disguised king, Charles II). However, as Roxana ages, she begins to decline physically. She notices a corresponding slow fading of her social eminence. Also, fearful that her surviving children will discover her, she decides to join the Quakers in the country. Concurrently, she designs to track down the Prince, in the hope of marrying him and being elevated to a Princess. (This is the only type of wedlock that appeals to her, the kind that can grant her renewed power and social standing.) Amy travels to Europe to find him. The Prince rejects her, but the Dutch merchant reappears and the couple become reunited.

Soon Roxana discovers that a former servant of hers is actually her daughter Susan. Susan insinuates that she knows Roxana is her mother, but Roxana refuses to acknowledge that she is the infamous courtesan. Amy, overly protective of her mistress, loses her position as Roxana's second when she advises killing the daughter. When Susan disappears suddenly, it seems Amy has in fact murdered her (although Roxana as narrator never says so explicitly). Roxana and the merchant move back to Holland, but the probable death of Susan dampens Roxana's enjoyment of domestic life. In the novel's final paragraph, an unspecified "dreadful Course of Calamities" undoes all her achievements, so that she "was brought so low again, that my Repentance seem'd to be only the Consequence of my Misery, as my Misery was of

my Crime" (379).

This concluding sentence, like Roxana's other musings on penitence, almost conforms to the didactic message of the preface: that vice is reprehensible and will ultimately be punished. Probing into the narrator's syntax, however, we perceive that the reformation is hardly heartfelt. Her crime leads to misery; her misery leads to what she dubs repentance. But to stress that her "repentance" only arises out of her lowered condition is to admit that she is sorry about the punishment for her criminal acts, not about those acts themselves. It is the false penitence of the criminal contrite only because she has been caught. Elsewhere, she mentions this same "lower kind of Repentance" that originates not "from a Sence of Heaven's Goodness" but from "Fears of Vengeance" (306).

Although Roxana's ultimate, vaguely described misery may appear to illustrate the inevitability of her damnation, her insincere repentance preserves Defoe's deepest implication: that for Roxana, the practice of vice is necessary for survival, or as Amy puts it, "Honesty is out of the Question, when Starving is the Case" (62). Roxana's justifications for her prostitution are always more convincing and more firmly grounded in reality than her moments of remorse. She shares with Angellica and La Nuche the awareness that beauty, her only marketable commodity ("the Great Article that supported my Interest"), is fleeting so she must exploit it wisely, with an eye to the future: "I might expect the Fire wou'd abate...therefore, it was my Business to take Care that I shou'd fall as softly as I cou'd" (143). Her first failed marriage

informs her shrewd perception that "a Wife is look'd upon, as but an Upper-Servant, a Mistress is a Sovereign." The former "is treated with Indifference," the latter "with a strong Passion" (170). While she stays single, she informs the Dutch merchant, she remains "a Masculine in her politick Capacity" (188). Marriage, Roxana understands, diminishes a woman's power both legally and sexually. As Jacqueline Pearson asserts in an essay on Behn: "Women exercise power over men only in courtship or in other extra-marital relationships."⁴⁵ Although even this power is necessarily limited--witness the ultimate seduction of the Behn heroines and Roxana's eventual need for concealment--the courtesan is able to maximize it by constantly replenishing her supply of suitors.

An exception to Pearson's axiom about power relations is the marriage that eventually occurs between Roxana and the merchant. It closely follows the time when Roxana, having passed her physical prime, retires from the courtesan's life ("I did not come Abroad again with the same Lustre" [223]; "I seem'd like an old Piece of Plate...tarnish'd and discolour'd" [224]). We must remember two things here. First, no prospect of love "reforms" Roxana. It cannot be said she loves the merchant, though she is grateful to him. (She is ready to discard him when her bid for the Prince shows promise [279].) Second, she has become habituated by this time to acquiring wealth and power. She describes the marriage as a business transaction, a merger of two sizable fortunes. Roxana can possess their consolidated power because she has wed an exceptional figure, the man principled enough not to exploit his wife.

Significantly, the merchant's enlightened conception of marital economics is described as very un-English. (He tells her, "[Y]ou shall take it all upon yourself, as the Wives do in Holland" [288]). *Her* economic exploitation of *him* occurs largely because love blinds him to her mercenary nature. For example, while the merchant kisses her ecstatically after their wedding, Roxana reflects, "I should not have been half so rich [if she had remained single]; but that I said to myself, for there was no letting him into the Reason of it" (288). The exploitation she engineers culminates in his purchase for her of the title of Countess, "a kind of Magnificence that [she] had not been acquainted with" (307).

Written from the courtesan's perspective, Roxana emphasizes the interplay between economics and sex, often going so far as to conflate the two. Defoe devotes several-page stretches to descriptions of Roxana's financial manipulations, which provide for her a greater erotic charge than the sex act itself. E. Anthony James studies how for Roxana wealth is "as flesh to the sensualist." The ways she describes her passion for money and status--using images of "heat, blushes, fire, caresses, mental distraction"--are typical literary indications of romantic love.⁴⁶ In addition, the consummation of Roxana and the merchant's marriage is extensively described as a rhapsodic cataloguing of their joint assets (301-4). In more difficult times, financial pursuits repress Roxana's feelings of personal loss, as when the Dutch merchant leaves her:

so I sat and cry'd intollerably, for some Days, nay, I may say, for some

Weeks; but I say, it wore off gradually; and as I had a pretty deal of Business for managing my Effects, the Hurry of that particular Part, serv'd to divert my Thoughts, and in part to wear out the Impressions which had been made upon my Mind. (202)

Later, after she has thrown herself into the life of a courtesan, "the Subject of Love" dwindles to "a Point so ridiculous to me, without the main thing, I mean the Money" (225).

Roxana's refusal to reform, far from being evidence of an inherent evil, highlights the just cause of her sexual license. Worth examining is her soul-searching moment at the pinnacle of her English career, when she is wealthy enough to quit prostituting herself for good. She attests that she has begun "to be sick of the Vice" and wishes to "fix [her] Delight upon nobler Objects" (242). Her "Reflections," dissociated "from any-thing of Repentance, or any-thing that was a-kin to it" (242-3), lead her to pose the same question four times in as many pages: "What was I a Whore for now?" (242-5). She reasons that "the Devil of Poverty" (243) led her into prostitution, and "Avarice" and "Vanity" caused its continuation (244). But "that was all over now; Avarice cou'd have no Pretence" (245): she believes her investments guarantee a luxuriant future. Despite being "seldom out of [her] Thoughts," this question still "made no Impressions upon [her]...which might be expected from a Reflection of so important a Nature" (245). Self-questioning, Roxana is not adequately self-knowing. But to answer her question--why doesn't she reform?--we must first pose a related one: what is at stake in the act of repentance? Certainly

reform without repentance is hypocrisy. Reform with genuine repentance depends on the conviction that, placed in the same situation again, the individual would choose a different, more virtuous course of action. The lack of viable alternatives to her past behavior makes her unable to reject that behavior intellectually in the present.

The circumstances of the novel's one sincere reformation--the Prince renouncing Roxana upon the death of his wife--suggest the economic basis for Roxana's choices. His loss "made such deep Impressions on him" that he adopts a "new Regulation of Life" (147), swearing off the courtesan after a compensatory cash payment. Roxana acknowledges the prudence of his decision "if he intended to be either a Christian, or an honest Man" (148). Years later, however, when a sleuthing Amy discovers the Prince and reports back a second rejection, Roxana bemoans his "out-o'-Season Repentance" (282). The prince's new moral code obscures that illicit sex for him was always a form of recreation, whereas for Roxana it at least began out of necessity. This difference problematizes reformation for Roxana because the terms of sexual reform's masculine formulation (the taking control of one's lust) do not apply to her own economic motives.

This primarily economic attitude towards a fictional prostitute, unique among writers of the period,⁴⁷ demonstrates Defoe's dispassionate approach to social criticism. There is no trace left of the romanticism Behn inherited from the Renaissance and infused in her comedies. A musing of Harold Weber encapsulates the nature of the progress from Behn to Defoe. He writes: "The sexual demons of

Renaissance England have become economic demons for eighteenth-century England, their presence conjured not by sexual but by economic anxieties."⁴⁸ Although Behn is certainly aware of how economics influences sexual relations, only Defoe, an ardent student of economics, is willing and able to let the rationality of trade fully displace the emotion of sex in the courtesan's consciousness.

Despite the fact that Roxana's choices are usually defensible (and never criminal), her final ruination must occur to underscore Defoe's belief that society cannot suffer a preponderance of Roxanas. J. Paul Hunter has described the Christian pattern Defoean heroes tend to experience; focusing his attention on Robinson Crusoe, he characterizes the pattern as a movement from disobedience, to punishment, to repentance, and finally to deliverance.⁴⁹ Roxana fails to complete the sequence, which may mean she is damned in Defoe's Christian vision. Whether she is or not, however, the end of the narrative leaves us pondering the extent to which her earthly survival and spiritual salvation may be mutually exclusive.

Significantly, the Turkish dress that once glorified her contributes to the novel's tragic ending. At the masquerades, the courtesan had worn the garish costume as part of the "most notable phase of her sexual career."⁵⁰ The dress incarnates the twin appetites for sex and money that pervade the novel: revealing, it contains the promise of sex; extravagant, it suggests the material condition contingent on that promise, and Roxana's opulence that grows with each successive resale of her self. However, the dress that shows her off at her most physically magnificent also

hides the seeds of her daughter's destruction. Years later, when Susan sees the "Quaker" Roxana wearing the dress, her suspicions about her mother's identity are confirmed. As Backscheider puts it, at this point "[h]er Turkish costume becomes the sum of her character and an identity so firm that Susan can use it to stalk her."⁵¹

Amy murders the daughter soon after. Based on this association, many critics view the dress as a central symbol of the novel combining public immorality with its destined result: the ruin of individual lives.⁵² I see it also as allegorizing something more specific: the destruction of English children's lives that was resulting from indiscriminate extramarital sex, including prostitution. Again, Defoe does not place the blame for this on Roxana. After all, her choice to prostitute herself is presented as really no choice at all, in Amy's formulation of "*Comply and live; deny and starve*" (148). From that perspective, she only behaves in accordance with the identity she has been forced to fabricate.

It is certain that Defoe was familiar with Aphra Behn's work, as he listed her among his "Giants" of "Wit and Sense" in his poem, "The Pacificator" (1700).⁵³ What cannot be ascertained is how directly any character in Restoration drama might have influenced his work. Nevertheless, Roxana may be thought of as a more realistically developed, economically savvy form of her courtesan precursors, intentional or no. The final surrender of Angellica and La Nuche to the charms of a male suitor--their submission to patriarchy--loses them their hard-won autonomy. Behn, the playwright who defines herself as prostitute, can only flirt with convention,

affording us some feminist content and a fleeting view of female strength. It is Defoe who breaks with convention, bestowing on Roxana the radically un-feminine trait of emotional self-mastery. The costs for her are great: the intimations of guilt described as "a secret Hell within" (305); the prolonged disavowal of love and the denial of sexual pleasure; the death of her daughter. She is, however, strong enough to bear these as the price of economic self-determination. Defoe persuades us that the early eighteenth-century woman is often wise to privilege material considerations over emotional satisfaction. Roxana's behavior, then, given the society she inhabits, has a certain validity.

NOTES

¹ Lawrence Stone, The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800 (New York: Harper & Row, 1977) 380-81.

² Stone 381.

³ Mary Prior, Women in English Society (London and New York: Methuen, 1985) 94-95. Barbara B. Schnorrenberg and Jean E. Hunter, "The Eighteenth-Century Englishwoman," The Women of England from Anglo-Saxon Times to the Present: Interpretive Bibliographic Essays, ed. Barbara Kanner (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1979) 198-99.

⁴ Prior 96-111.

⁵ The first two occupations are named in Stone 617, the second two in Antonia Fraser, The Weaker Vessel (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984) 410.

⁶ Quoted in Jim Springer Borck, "One Woman's Prospects: Defoe's Moll Flanders and the Ironies in Restoration Self-Image," Forum 17 (1979): 13.

⁷ Stone 616-19. For more on the seeming trend toward a more sexually permissive English society in the Restoration, see Willystine Goodsell, A History of Marriage and the Family (New York: MacMillan, 1934) 319-20. Also, E. J. Burford, The Horrible Sin: A Look at London Lechery from Roman to Cromwellian Times (London: Calder & Boyars, 1973) 226. Burford notes that when Charles II took the throne, "[t]he harsh laws against fornication, prostitution and brothels were repealed almost immediately."

⁸ Goodsell 323, quoting Archenholz.

⁹ Fraser 411.

¹⁰ G. A. Starr, Defoe and Spiritual Autobiography (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1965) 164.

¹¹ Starr 165.

¹² All quotations from Behn's plays are taken from: Aphra Behn, The Works of Aphra Behn, ed. Montague Summers, 6 vols. (New York: Phaeton Press, 1967). I include act, scene and page numbers in parentheses. If a Roman numeral appears, it indicates volume number. If it does not, the quotation appears in Volume I, which

contains both Rover plays.

¹³ Nancy Copeland, "'Once a whore and ever?' Whore and Virgin in The Rover and Its Antecedents," Restoration 16 (1992): 21.

¹⁴ Ape-gentle-woman, or, The Character of an Exchange-wench, 1675 (Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms International, 1980) 2.

¹⁵ John Dunton, The Night-Walker: or, Evening Rambles in Search of Lewd Women, 1696 (Garland, 1985), Epistle Dedicatory.

¹⁶ Burford, Orrible Sin 234-36.

¹⁷ As Lorrie Jean Snook puts it, in "The Performance of Sexual and Economic Politics in the Plays of Aphra Behn," diss., University of Arizona, 1992: "Even when Willmore appears to be socialized into marriage he profits" (107). In the same vein, J. Douglas Canfield, "Female Rebels and Patriarchal Paradigms in Some Neoclassical Works," Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture 18 (1988): 153-66 calls Part I "a rhetorical reaffirmation of hegemonic ideology" (160).

¹⁸ Anne M. Haselkorn, Prostitution in Elizabethan and Jacobean Comedy (Troy, NY: Whitston Publishing Co., 1983) 26.

¹⁹ Jacqueline Pearson, The Prostituted Muse: Images of Women and Women Dramatists, 1642-1737 (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986) 165.

²⁰ Heidi Hunter, "Revisioning the Female Body: Aphra Behn's The Rover, Parts I and II," Rereading Aphra Behn: History, Theory, and Criticism, ed. Heidi Hunter (Charlottesville, VA: UP of Virginia, 1993) goes on to admit that "[i]t is difficult to accept Behn's utopian vision as a valid political strategy for female emancipation if we believe that the desire for the golden age and a sociality free from sexual expression is, as Foucault argues in his History of Sexuality, also a fiction" (117).

²¹ Susan L. Carlson, "Women in Comedy: Problem, Promise, Paradox," Themes in Drama 7 (1985): 160-71.

²² Susan L. Carlson, Women and Comedy: Rewriting the British Theatrical Tradition (Ann Arbor: UP of Michigan, 1991) 133.

²³ Katharine M. Rogers, Feminism in Eighteenth-Century England (Urbana:

UP of Illinois, 1982) discusses how masculine tastes may have affected Behn's work (97-100). Snook writes that Behn "manipulates, but doesn't radically change the structure of the theater" (11). Although Willmore and La Nuche attempt "to write themselves out of the economy," this objective "can only be gestured to" (108-9). Jane Spencer, "'Deceit, Dissembling, all that's Woman': Comic Plot and Female Action in The Feign'd Curtezans," Rereading Aphra Behn: History, Theory and Criticism, ed. Heidi Hunter (Charlottesville, VA: UP of Virginia, 1993) reaches a similar conclusion in her reading of another play that Behn wrote between the two Rovers, in 1679: "Behn is unable to escape the constraints of Restoration comedy...but we get glimpses of female power" (100).

²⁴ Katharine M. Rogers, "Aphra Behn," Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Dramatists: First Series, Dictionary of Literary Biography 80 (Detroit: Brucoli Clark Layman, 1989) 22.

²⁵ For discussions of how Behn may have considered herself a prostitute of sorts, see: Jessica Munns, "'Good, Sweet, Honey, Sugar-Candied Reader': Aphra Behn's Foreplay in Forewords," Rereading Aphra Behn: History, Theory, and Criticism, ed. Heidi Hunter (Charlottesville, VA: UP of Virginia, 1993) 44-62; Catherine Gallagher, "Who Was That Masked Woman? The Prostitute and the Playwright in the Comedies of Aphra Behn," Rereading Aphra Behn 65-85; and Elin Diamond, "Gestus and Signature in Aphra Behn's The Rover," ELH 56 (1989): 519-41. Gallagher writes: Conscious of her historical role, she introduced to the world of English letters the professional woman playwright as a newfangled whore" (66). To Diamond, Angellica Bianca "at once represents the unmediated sale of women's bodies and the author's acknowledgement of her own work's participation in the market, her own sale" (536).

²⁶ Maureen Duffy, The Passionate Shepherdess: Aphra Behn 1640-89 (London: Methuen, 1989) relates how male critics found fault with her bawdiness that could reasonably be considered no more offensive than that of her male contemporaries (111, 166-67). Behn's most vehement response to these unfair charges appears in the preface to Sir Patient Fancy (1678).

²⁷ Gallagher 69-70. This point is made in a more general context by Susan Moller Okin, "Patriarchy and Married Women's Property in England: Questions About Some Current Views," Eighteenth-Century Studies 2 (1983-84): 121-138.

²⁸ Burford, Orrible Sin 227; Schnorrenberg and Hunter 197.

²⁹ Duffy 152.

³⁰ Paula R. Backscheider, Daniel Defoe: His Life (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1989) 424-25.

³¹ Daniel Defoe, Conjugal Lewdness: or, Matrimonial Whoredom, 1727 (London: A. More, 1969) 1.

³² Daniel Defoe, Some Considerations upon Street-walkers. With a Proposal for Lessening the Present Number of Them, 1726 (London: A. More, 1969) 6. According to Maximillian E. Novak, Economics and the Fiction of Daniel Defoe (Berkeley: UP of California, 1962), one contemporary survey reveals that nearly one hundred percent of parish babies died while in the hands of their new caretakers (100). Note that Roxana fears her children would be "Starv'd at Nurse" should she relinquish them to the local parish (Roxana 52).

³³ On Defoe's belief in the correlation between prostitution and robbery, see Backscheider, Daniel Defoe: His Life 481-82.

³⁴ Backscheider, Daniel Defoe: His Life 481.

³⁵ Defoe, Street-walkers 6.

³⁶ Defoe, Street-walkers 13.

³⁷ Defoe, Street-walkers 6-7.

³⁸ Defoe, Conjugal Lewdness 95.

³⁹ Ian Watt, The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding (Berkeley: UP of California, 1967) 127.

⁴⁰ Borck 14. I also draw from Borck the idea of Defoe's accord with Hobbesian philosophy.

⁴¹ All quotations from Roxana will be cited parenthetically in the text. They are taken from: Daniel Defoe, Roxana, the Fortunate Mistress, 1724, ed. David Blewett (London: Penguin Books, 1987).

⁴² Mason 98-99.

⁴³ James H. Maddox, "On Defoe's Roxana," ELH 51 (1984): 682, 670.

⁴⁴ Sudesh Vaid, The Divided Mind: Studies in Defoe and Richardson (New Delhi: Associated Publishing House, 1979) 93.

⁴⁵ Pearson 150.

⁴⁶ E. Anthony James, Daniel Defoe's Many Voices: A Rhetorical Study of Prose Style and Literary Method (Amsterdam, Rodopi NV, 1972) 233, 235.

⁴⁷ Vaid 141.

⁴⁸ Harold Weber, The Restoration Rake-Hero: Transformations in Sexual Understanding in Seventeenth-Century England (Madison, WI: UP of Wisconsin, 1986) 203.

⁴⁹ J. Paul Hunter, The Reluctant Pilgrim: Defoe's Emblematic Method and Quest for Form in Daniel Defoe (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1966) passim.

⁵⁰ Terry Castle, "Eros and Liberty at the English Masquerade, 1710-90," Eighteenth-Century Studies 17 (1983-84): 157.

⁵¹ Paula R. Backscheider, Daniel Defoe: Ambition and Innovation (Lexington: UP of Kentucky, 1986) 197.

⁵² David Blewett, Defoe's Art of Fiction--Robinson Crusoe, Moll Flanders, Colonel Jack & Roxana (Toronto: UP of Toronto, 1979) 143; Maximillian E. Novak, Realism, Myth, and History in Defoe's Fiction (Lincoln: UP of Nebraska, 1983) 117.

⁵³ Backscheider, Daniel Defoe: His Life 73.

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