

PLAY THEME PACKAGE

**Aphra Behn's
THE ROVER**



**In Production At Brock University
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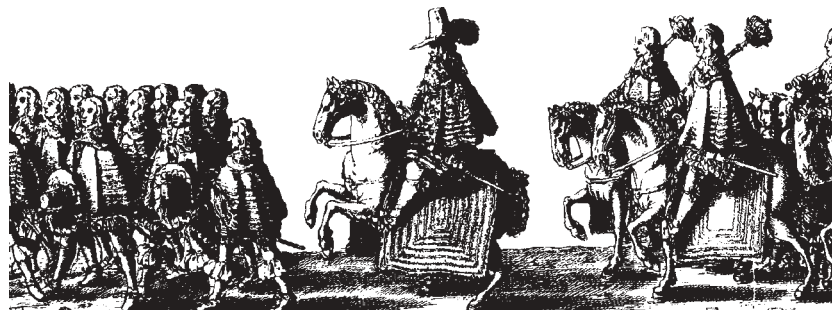
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Aphra Behn: #1 Female Playwright of the English Restoration



Born in Interesting Times

Adventuress, spy and playwright, Aphra Behn (pronounced ayfra benn) was born in about **1640** near Canterbury, England. These were interesting times, just before the outbreak of civil war in **1642** between the Royalist “Cavaliers” (supporters of the Stuart Kings) and the rebel Puritan “Roundheads” (who sought to depose the monarch). In **1649** King Charles I was beheaded by the rebels, and his son escaped to an uncertain exile abroad, living on the charity of other European monarchs. From **1649-1660**, the “Inter-Regnum” years, the “Lord Protector” Oliver Cromwell ruled in an attempted to establish an ideal Puritan state. Theatre, dancing and non-worshipful singing were banned.

Aphra’s family were Royalists, connected with powerful Catholic families and the court of the would-be king Charles II. Aphra was probably educated in a convent school on the continent during the years of exile, for she received an excellent education for a woman of her time, and became fluent in several languages. Then, after Cromwell’s death in May **1660**, Charles II was invited to return to rule England in exchange for a series of promises which limited his autocratic rights over the army, the laws of the land and his financial right to tax the people. The Royalists returned with him.

Charles II was no longer ruler by the “divine right of kings” but by invitation of the powerful and wealthy factions of Parliament from whom he received an annual income of £1.2 million. Although his reign was characterized by a constant testing of the limits of his powers against Parliament’s restrictions, he succeeded in making himself a popular king. He did this partly by pretending a disinterest for politics in favour of a sexual and social intriguing that often masked very real religious and imperial political objectives. Like many Restoration playwrights Aphra Behn follows this example in plotting her plays: beneath the sugary romance an anti Puritan Whig government message (and a pro-monarchist politic) can be detected. Living by his wits, Charles II managed to maintain a balance between the many interests who pressured him. In **1661** he included among his Council of Thirty several advisors who had committed treason against his father. On the other hand, he also rewarded many of the Royalists who had been loyal to him during his exile.

“All women together ought to let flowers fall upon the tomb of Aphra Behn...for it was she who earned them the right to speak their minds”.
Virginia Woolf, 1929

Stranded in Guiana

In 1662, the Restored King appointed Aphra’s father Lieutenant General of the colony of Guiana, and the family left for Surinam. Unfortunately, Aphra’s father died on the voyage there, and the family were marooned in Surinam for several months while waiting for a ship and money by which to return home. During this enforced stay, Aphra was appalled by the plantation owners’ treatment of their slaves, and this experience became the basis of her later novel titled **Oroonoko**. The novel came a generation before Rousseau was born, and Behn’s treatment of her main character, a noble African, is considered far ahead of its time.

An Unhappy Marriage and the Great Plague of London

Following her return to England, Aphra married a Mr. Behn, who is thought to have been a Dutch merchant. Given the vehemence with which she attacks the convention of forced marriage in her plays (most of her plays are plotted around this theme), and given that she never mentions her own marriage or ever remarried, it would seem that her marriage was not a happy experience. It was, however, shortlived—it is believed that her husband died in the Great Plague of **1665**. It was not easy for a single woman to support herself in Restoration England. She had to fall back on her wits and her connections at Court.

Spying in the Dutch Wars

In 1665 Aphra was persuaded by her friend Thomas Killigrew, owner of The King's Theatre, to act as a spy in the Dutch wars. She went to Bruges with instructions to get information about the activities of Puritan Englishmen exiled to Holland, and news of the Dutch navy. Aphra's spying was not well rewarded by the government, and she was forced to borrow money to cover her expenditures. Eventually, despite piteous petitions to Killigrew and to the King himself she was unable to pay her debts and landed in a debtor's prison. It is not known when or how she managed to get out, but after this she must have decided that it was safer, if not much more lucrative, to make her living by writing.

A Professional Woman Playwright

By 1668 Aphra had become friendly with John Dryden, the foremost playwright of the age, and she was well acquainted with the actors and actresses of the Theatre Royal. In September 1670, her first comedy **The Forc'd Marriage** was produced by the Duke's company at Lincoln's Inn Fields to great success. In the next few years she wrote seven plays. Some failed at the box office, but **Abdelazer** and **The Rover** were as successful as any penned by her male rivals. Aphra defied the many critics who accused her of being unfeminine and unseemly in venturing into the male stronghold of discourse and professionalism. Respectable women did not draw attention to themselves and certainly did not admit to sexual desire. Aphra's poem "On Desire" (1680) published when she was in her forties, was unusual for its open acknowledgment of women's sexuality. This was particularly so because she published it under her own name! In the eyes of her contemporaries this promiscuously advertized her sexuality, so placing her outside the protection of the male establishment. As a passionate supporter of the monarchy, Aphra was an object of suspicion to the leaders of the Whig Parliament. Her chosen career of playwright was hardly safer than that of an adventuress-spy, for it left her vulnerable to financial failure, to extreme criticism from her male rivals, and to political intrigue.

Arrested for Seditious

In 1682 she was arrested for seditious as the author of the prologue and epilogue to the anonymous play **Romulus and Hersilia**. The authorities thought that some of the lines made satirical comment on the failed uprising that had been led by Charles II's illegitimate son the Duke of Monmouth. Aphra and Lady Slingsby, who performed the lines, were accused of making "abusive reflections upon persons of quality". It is suspected that the King intervened and that the two accused got off with a warning.

At his Restoration the King licensed only two theatres, The Theatre Royal in Drury Lane and the Duke's Company at Lincoln's Inn Fields. When these companies merged in 1682, the market for new plays was cut in half, and Aphra turned to writing novels. She persisted in presenting new scripts for production, however, and at last in 1686 she had a smash hit premier with her romantic comedy **The Lucky Chance**. She followed this with **The Emperor of the Moon**, which proved to be one of the most successful plays of the 17th and 18th Centuries. These successes brought a financial security to the end of her life, and a literary reputation that overshadowed the bitter criticism she endured as a woman writer in an age when women were thought to have no capacity for intellect judgement or independence. Aphra Behn died, a year after King Charles II, on 16th April, 1689. She was accorded the honour of being buried with the great writers of England in Westminster Abbey. It is only in the last two decades that she has been "rediscovered" to be included in the accepted canon of great writers of the English language. A new interest in the diverse characterization of women's roles has evolved, along with a contemporary appreciation of both the cynicism and the bawdy permissiveness of Restoration culture.



*King Charles II from an Engraving
by William Faithorne*



How to Spot a Restoration Comedy

A huge, passionate performance style full of direct audience address.

Restoration writers wrote for a particular stage that was so huge in scale it required direct audience address (as is found in the Prologue, the Epilogue, and in the asides and monologues of the characters). Audiences valued actors for the power of their vocal projection, the size of their gesture, the passion of their utterances and the accuracy of their social manners. It was believed that personality was the result of a particular balance in each individual of the four humours Blood, Black Bile, Green Bile and Yellow Bile. In an age where witchcraft was popularly accepted, actors were believed to have such power over their imaginations as to materially alter the humours not only in their own bodies but in those of their audiences. Emotion was a purgative as effective as something obtained from a druggist, and the purpose of lyricism was that it enhanced the emotional impact of a speech. In fact, many Restoration Comedies include a character “disappointed in love or fortune” who was written in especially to provide the extreme passion of despair (Angelica Bianca would be the model for this in **The Rover**).

Stock Characters and Comedy of Manners: The “Mall Rats” of its time.

In the tradition of the Medieval Morality Play and the Tudor Interlude, Restoration characters’ names are often used to personify them, fixing them in one dimension. Therefore, “Wilmore” is the man who is never satisfied and “Belvile” (“Beautiful Town”) is the representative of civilized love. “Blunt” is both blunt of brain and bluntly straightforward in his manners, lacking the sophistication of a true villain. Angelica Bianca (the “White Angel”) is most definitely neither pure nor innocent, yet neither is she ironically named. Behn uses the convention of personifying characters to demand respect for her favourite character who, incidentally, has her author’s initials “AB”.

In comparison to other Restoration Comedies, few of the characters in **The Rover** bear personified names but many of them demonstrate recognizable “types” developed from the Italian travelling comedy troupes of the Commedia dell’Arte. For example, Helena is the saucy, uppity girl who provides the “britches role” in the play. Her disguise as a boy allows the male voyeurs in the audience to see her legs: a risqué proposition in the 1600’s and one that sold a lot of tickets. Florinda is the “Virginal Ingénue” character, usually a passive and swooning damsel who must be rescued. (Behn gives her a rather more backbone, however, by twice allowing her to take her fate in to her own hands, when she goes to rescue her brother from the duel, and when she decides to run away from her family to an uncertain poverty with Belvile). Frederick and Valeria are confidante characters who ease the plot along either by scheming or by allowing the main characters share their feelings. Antonio, as an Italian, is a Machiavellian villain.

Restoration audiences delighted in seeing new fashions and social mannerisms discussed on stage. When Helena describes what life will be like if she marries the disgustingly rich but disgustingly old Don Vincentio, and when Belvile is mocked for behaving like a soulful lover, these behavioural clichés would thrill their audience. This interest in the appearance of behaviour has caused Restoration Drama to be criticized for its superficiality. Perhaps, however, it can also be viewed as an aspect of the Enlightenment and Charles II’s Royal Society, with its new interest in surfaces and phenomena.

Bawdy Plots where Women Play Womens’ Roles

The Royal Patents that allowed the reopening of the London theatres gave women permission to play female parts on stage in place of the boy-impersonators of earlier times, providing no passage contained anything “offensive to piety or good manners”. The hope was that “such reformation be esteemed not only harmless delight but useful instruction”. Clearly, the favourite Restoration

Comedy themes of Sex, Love and Money did not follow the spirit of the patent, yet the King’s taste for the commercial and promiscuous behaviour of both the male rakes and the female schemers kept censorship at bay so that actresses prospered. The success of Restoration actresses did not reflect any new freedom for women of the common population, however. Economic independence became increasingly

*“Had we not for yr pleasure found new wayes
You still had rusty Arras, and threadbare playes;
Nor scenes nor Wooman had they had their Will,
But some with grizzl’d Beards had acted Woomen still”.*
Thomas Shadwell
Preface to The Tempest

rare for women as men encroached on professions (such as brewing, weaving and midwifery) formerly dominated by women. Led by the example of their philandering King, Restoration Society commodified women, a reality neatly captured by Behn in the image or “brand label” Angelica hangs outside her house. The most popular Restoration plots, such as George Etherridge’s **The Man of Mode**, showed a Rake who was redeemed by the love of a witty and virtuous woman. It is possible to view Wilmore’s alliance with Helena in this light. A second scrutiny, however, reveals that Behn’s tendency is to transcend her influences. Helena does not so much “tame” Wilmore as liberate herself. Behn’s radical awareness of the double standards of morality by which men and women are enjoined to live sounds most clearly in **The Rover** when Angelica points out that men effectively prostitute themselves in the marriage market when they marry a woman for her money and not for love. She tries to claim equal status with the men by using her sex as her power. Sadly, all her courtesan’s wealth cannot save Angelica from the bondage of “submissive passion” in which her true love for Wilmore snares her. Of the Rover women, Helena fares best because, although she is lustful, her power is based not in her sexuality but in her wit for adventure. In accord with the rigid role definitions of her time, Aphra Behn thought of her own wit as being a masculine characteristic, and one essential for survival in a competitive Hobbesian world.



“... as if..the ladies were obliged to hear indecencies only from [male playwrights’] poems and plays; such masculine strokes, in me, must not be allowed”.
Aphra Behn.
Preface to *The Lucky Chance* 1686

Plots riddled with subplots and intrigues of every kind

Faced with recreating drama after a twenty year ban, the Restoration writers looked about for inspiration and found it in the **Spanish Comedy of Intrigue** typified in the romances of Calderon. This genre places the intricacy of plot above the development of character and presents a situation where an audience is enrapt in the intertwining moves and currents of a continually changing situation. The plot of **The Rover** diversifies in to four separate strands, following the adventures of Blunt, of Florinda/Valeria, of Helena and of Angelica. Wilmore is the character who ties them all together . The use of conspiracy, intrigue, disguise and deceit by every character enables Behn to create a play that questions appearances while, at the same time, her Comedy of Manners style imitates appearances. As in contemporary action movies, depth of character is substituted with speed and spectacle, save for the most important lover characters. **The Rover** contains 115 Action Units (entrances and exits), marking it as a fast moving play. Of these, 43 are transitional in length (under 5 lines) 43 are short in length (less than 20 lines) 13 are medium in length (less than 35 lines) 10 are long (less than 45 lines) 3 are very long (over 45 lines. Two of these are between Angelica and Wilmore) and the single extra-long scene at 93 lines is between Helena, Angelica and Wilmore.

Characters drawn from A Broad Cross Section of Society

Restoration playwrights studied the big picture of social relations by representing characters from every walk of life and every social class. In **The Rover**, we have the dregs of society in Sancho and Lucetta, the cream of the continental nobility in Antonio and Pedro, the noble exiles in the soldier heroes, the country squire in Blunt, the sophisticated courtesan in Angelica, and the three genteel sisters. Social Caste matters a great deal in every way: Belville will not be allowed to marry Florinda because his idealism has caused him to forfeit his social status with his estates and he has no country to call his own. The moment she steps outside the gates of her father’s house, Florinda’s protected identity as a woman of the upper class is suspended and she is in physical danger of rape. What saves her the second time is Frederick’s sudden suspicion that her ownership of a diamond ring means she is “a Maid of Quality, when we only believe we ruffle a Whore”.

Rhyming Couplets, Court Masque, Musical and Tragi-Comedy

Genre is the product of social circumstances, and Charles II brought home from exile a craze for operas and heroic romances in rhymed couplets. Court entertainers resurrected the favourite entertainment from earlier Stuart courts, namely the court masque. This spectacle featured idealized characters, allegorical themes, theatrical spectacle and political motivation on the part of the presenter. Each masque contained an “anti-masque” of characters who threatened the idealized masque world. Masque and anti-masque were then resolved in the Revels: dances that included the audience and commingled the entertainers from both masque and anti-masque oppositions. The tragicomedy is thought to follow this “masque-anti-masque” rhythm, with each successive scene alternating between an upbeat or downbeat ending so as to create the electrical charge of suspense that story tellers recommend.

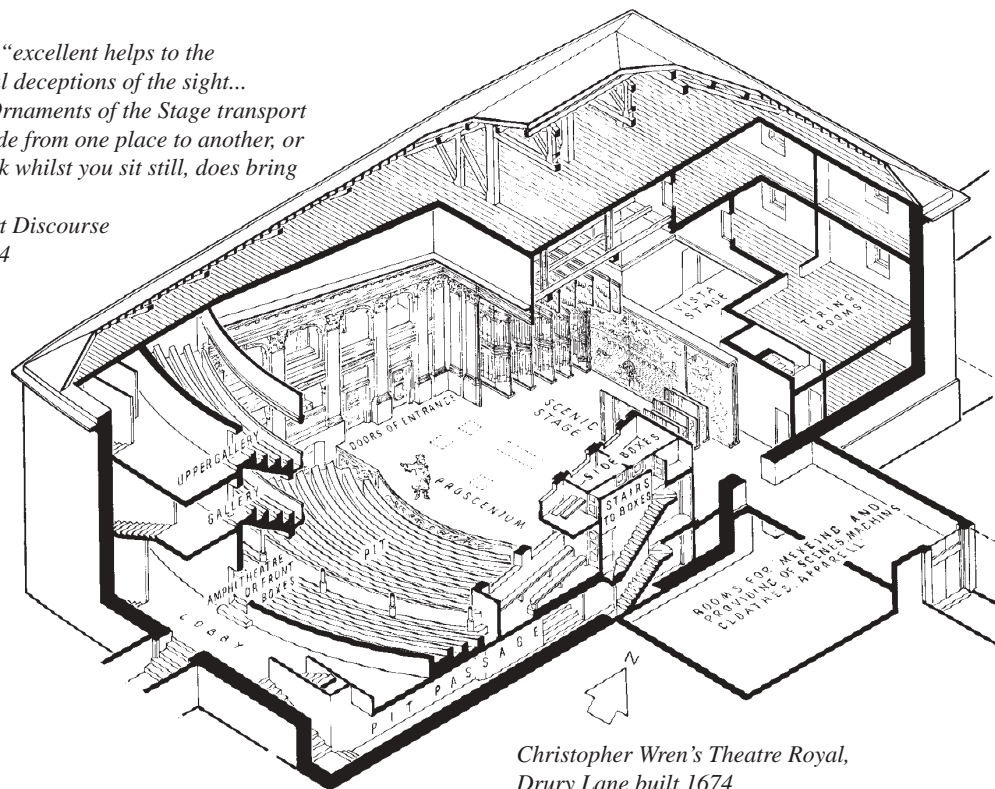


The fact that the optimism of the Restoration was founded on the execution of Charles I led to a new emphasis on tragicomedy (a drama with the ingredients of tragedy that uses plot twists and disguises to turn them to comedy). The anonymous 1660 play “Cromwell’s Conspiracy” expresses this in its subtitle: “Beginning at the Death of King Charles the First, And ending with the Happy Restoration of King Charles the Second”. **The Rover**, a product of its age, exhibits all these characteristics: heroic language with sporadic rhyming couplets, songs, masquing scenes of carnival and dancing, and the tragicomic antipathy between the ideal and the pragmatic.

Epic stories with many changes of location, music, dances and magnificent painted spectacles.

Playwrights worked their episodic plots to display the talents of the new “continental” stage machinery for which the new theatres were expressly built. In fact, Christopher Wren’s design for the Theatre Royal at Drury Lane provided subsequent architects with the model for theatre design which lasted up to the twentieth century. The theatre for which Restoration plays were written were microcosms of the social structure. The orchestra pit was closed and the area in front provided the main seating area. The plush side, stage and front circle boxes were reserved for those willing to pay the highest admission. These were curtained in case additional privacy was desired for the aristocracy to conduct affairs of business or romance. The upper galleries were the cheap seats. In this way, the theatre served as an

Scenes and machines are “excellent helps to the imagination, most grateful deceptions of the sight... Graceful and becoming Ornaments of the Stage transport you easily without lassitude from one place to another, or rather by a kind of Magick whilst you sit still, does bring the place to you”.
Richard Flecknoe, *A Short Discourse on the English Stage, 1664*



Christopher Wren's Theatre Royal,
Drury Lane built 1674

important social stage, almost a miniature public version of the court. Lights were not dimmed during the performance and so the audience was free to watch one another. Attention was as much upon the activities, alliances and intrigues among the audience as it was upon the stage. The auditorium was expanded to accommodate thousands of playgoers and the depth of the stage was increased to enable stage machinery and rigging of unprecedented complication. Sets were painted in elaborate forced perspectives using the “wing and drop” method, and locations could be changed by winding on new scenery in front of the old. The actors played in front of it all, on the stage apron. In its day **The Rover** scenes would have offered the wonderful city-scape of Naples, the gloom of Antonio’s Gothic dungeon, and the glamorous boudoir of Angelica Bianca, the most sophisticated courtesan of her day.

The Love of Carnival

The phenomenon of carnival can be traced back to the Roman Saturnalia celebrations. It has existed as a folk tradition that crosses social class boundaries throughout Medieval Europe. Anarchic popular celebrations such as the Feast of Fools inverted all the rules of society, mocking secular and religious ceremonies in comic burlesques. The religious and social tensions endemic to Charles II's reign suggest why Carnival type "masques" would have been so popular as a Court entertainment: they offered respite from the constant public performance of being on display. Masks also became a feature of daily costume. Aristocrats often went about wearing "vizards" in order to keep secret clandestine meetings of a personal, religious or political nature. It was considered trendy to wear them to the theatre so as to evade the public gaze; many Restoration gallants liked to heckle the stage from behind the protection of a mask.

The carnival in the **The Rover** starts as a simple party but ends by undermining the social hierarchy when Pedro loses control of his sisters' destinies. Bakhtin has identified carnival's "second life outside officialdom" as a necessary outlet for the revolutionary energies of a highly stratified, rigid society. By creating an atmosphere where the status quo is inverted, Carnival allows alternatives to accepted, social manners to be tried with impunity, so that new social relationships can be experienced. Richard Schechner analyzed the democratic protests at Tienmen Square to show that social protest and demonstration often follows the structure of carnival celebration. Fascist regimes in Germany, Italy and Spain all invested heavily in pomp and ceremonies while clamping down on spontaneous popular revelry. In his early years as Leader, Mussolini attempted to brand traditional Carnival days with his propaganda, swamping the holiday with money and celebration themes of Italian glory. It was reading a bitter account of the illusory freedom of Carnival under a fascist dictatorship which first catalysed the idea of setting **The Rover** in Naples after Mussolini's March on Rome.

Why Set a Restoration Play on the eve of the Second World War?



The struggle for "liberty" continues through all periods

In the 20th century the fight to preserve Spain's democratically elected government against General Franco's rebellion excited the imagination as powerfully as did the fight to restore the Stuart King to the throne in 1664. Men and women from around the world went to volunteer in Spain as part of the legendary International Brigade. The Second World War overshadowed the Spanish Idealists' struggle, and the Cold War pushed the exploits of socialists like Norman Bethune out of the lime-light, but perhaps now they can be reclaimed.

The International Brigade context "fits" the cavalier characters

Like the Monarchist forces of Charles II in the English Civil War, the more recent Spanish struggle attracted a broad cross section of idealists. Extreme anarchists of Wilmore's stamp fought beside gentlemen philosophers like Belvile. Like the cavaliers, the socialists who joined Spain were in exile. Men like Norman Bethune (who developed mobile blood transfusion units in Spain) had the popular vote but not the support of their governments. After the United

Nations Non-Intervention Committee was formed in 1937, English, Canadian and French fighters were actively opposed by their own governments, which threatened to revoke their passports, confiscate their property and to exile them. The U.N. blockade of Barcelona prevented arms and supplies from reaching the International Brigade, but a blind eye was turned when Mussolini's air force and Hitler's war machine reinforced Franco's rebellious armies. When Franco's success and Stalin's agreement with Hitler led to the demobilization of the International Brigade in 1938, the volunteers morale was at a low ebb. Many felt so betrayed by their native countries that they did not want to go home. Some travelled aimlessly round Morocco and Africa, others went to join underground movements combatting fascism in Italy.



The International Brigade context creates high stakes for the male characters

Although it is only a “back story”, their alignment to the Spanish struggle provides the soldiers with specific individual ideals to keep them distinct and recognizable “types” for a contemporary audience. The English soldiers have put in at Naples to recover from the war and to investigate first hand the realities of living in an Italian Fascist dictatorship. To a large extent they are there to reassess what to do with their lives, and with their commitment to what seems a hopeless Cause. Belville clutches at something to live for, Frederick seeks comfort in friendship and Wilmore seeks forgetfulness in hedonistic pleasure.

Pedro, on the other hand, is a Spanish noble of fighting age who has sat on the fence during his country's Civil War. Franco's victory gives him an important real-politik motive to marry his sister to an Italian fascist. Antonio in a Blackshirt uniform becomes an extremely familiar villain for our contemporary pop culture.

The 1930's context foregrounds the relevance of Behn's gender concerns

As for the female characters, the change of period affects them surprisingly little. In the 1930's as during the Restoration, neither noble nor peasant women had very much control over their lives. They could not vote or own property save through special trust funds and seldom decided where they would marry. Two male family signatures could place them in mental asylums. A woman's place in society depended on her reputation for sexual virtue; once lost, she could never return to “society”. Such rigidity of gender roles was one of the anarchists' main targets for revolutionary change during the Spanish Civil War. Their strategy to ban marriage was aimed at loosening the power the Catholic church wielded over rural society. Some scholars argue that the attempt to break so radically with tradition undermined the republican forces: Florinda's negative experience of Wilmore's drunken definition of “free love” suggests one reason that Spanish women of the 1930's might have wanted to postpone the anarchists' call to sexual freedom until such time as male attitudes towards women had caught up with the ideology. For the women in the play, politics are all domestic and Aphra Behn was centuries before her time in anticipating Simone de Beauvoivre's statements on this womanly reality. Updating the play highlights for a contemporary Canadian audience how recent are the advances in womens' self determination.

The Second World War signals the world's most extreme struggle for liberty

When the contemporary audience considers that the Rover and his friends are likely to join the millions who died in fighting fascism between 1939-1945, the discussions of exile and liberty dispersed throughout the play become poignant. The idea of ending the play with the outbreak of war is actually borrowed from Simon Trussler's 1984 adaptation of **The Rover** for the Royal Shakespeare Company. His soldiers were completely non-idealistic 18th century mercenaries. Trussler avoided the saccharin “dance off stage” ending to which Behn's culture obliged her. Instead, a bell rang after the wedding, to re-call the men to their battalion. The romantic struggles of the play are shown to be an on-going part of a life which is War, Interrupted by Comedy.



The ethics of the soldier on foreign soil

The underbelly of military culture has increasingly been an issue for public concern since exposés of the U.S. Military behaviour during the Vietnam war, and the conduct of the Canadian Airborne in Somalia. The anonymity that one gets when stationed abroad can act like a mask and give rise to a carnivalesque freedom from usual cultural restraints. This interested Behn, living as she did as an unprotected woman in the midst of rake-crazy Restoration London. She investigates how the boundary line between fun and violent excess is blurred by masculine competition, teasing and hazing rituals. This line is the area of greatest difficulty for a contemporary audience. Given Wilmore's behaviour, how can the audience forgive him and continue to like the play when he ends unrepentant and unchanged?

Contemporary Scorn of the Libertine Character

In its own time, where his character and attitudes towards love were said to be modelled on the "lion of love" King Charles himself, Wilmore's dissolute antics were not inimical to heroic character. Part of his appeal was that he presented a romantic challenge, since he can be reincorporated to society only through a lion-taming act such as Helena provides with her wit. Despite Wilmore's two attempted rapes and his forswearing of Angelica, the Restoration audience did not view him as a villain.



Interpretation of the Rover

The impact of Wilmore on the audience is perhaps the biggest challenge in a contemporary production. The equal rights movement has given us an awareness of and a resistance to double standards in sexual mores and so Wilmore's behaviour is unacceptable rather than kingly. Yet, in order for the play to succeed, the audience must enjoy Wilmore. We do not need to approve of him, in fact a critique of his licentiousness is built into the structure of the play as his chaotic sensuality almost destroys the happiness of the other characters, and does destroy Angelica. Despite this, Aphra Behn clearly loved her Rover character, to the point that she wrote a sequel for him. It occurs after Helena's death and, this time, Wilmore chooses the poor courtesan la Nuche over a wealthy and virtuous lady of quality. What did Behn find so important about the Rover character? Surely it is not just his rampant testosterone-- for other sensual characters are drawn as villains. Antonio, for example, is a scheming, dishonourable two-timer who marries for money, betrays Florinda the day before her wedding and inveigles Belvile to fight his duel for



him. By contrast, Wilmore is neither calculating nor corrupt. He is naive. He assumes that everyone is motivated by the same indomitable, sensual Will as himself. His evil is more a blind spot than active malice. Perhaps when the audience see him bearing misfortune with the same openness, humour and verbal dexterity as he bears good fortune, they will understand him for what he is: a child of the moment. Wilmore lives completely in the present tense. This frees him from the dominant motivations of greed and politics which Behn loathes in social relations. Wilmore tells Don Pedro, “A Woman’s Honour is not worth guarding when she has a Mind to part with it”. By accepting Helena at face value without her fortune and despite her warnings of intended inconstancy, Wilmore roves outside the conventional Restoration fears of cuckoldry and material poverty. It is this spontaneity and honesty of spirit that Aphra Behn loved in him and which the audience must grasp at the same time that they see his shameful, dangerous sexism is unacceptable.



A paper cut-out doll with the Falangist Uniform of Franco's forces

Production Information

The Adaptation

This adaptation was commissioned by Memorial University in 1995. It is available from Playwright's Union Canada. The adapted text has cut about 480 lines, and substituted words in common usage about 370 times. Since the Spanish Civil War provides the backdrop, I felt it should be intelligible and consistent. References to "Cavaliers" have been changed to "Comrades" and mentions of the Spanish War have been altered to reflect the Spanish Civil War. "The Cause" and King Charles' claim to the throne of England have been adapted into equivalents from International Socialism. Thee's, Thou's, Prithee's, Sirrah's and Egad's have been colloquialized to more contemporary usage. Very occasionally the sense of lines has been changed through cuts and alterations. For example, Florinda's forgiveness of Wilmore ends Aphra Behn's play and has been cut.

Production Approach

Production rehearsals will focus first on the fighting and dancing in the play. Jorge Luis Borges' statement about tango provides the inspiration that we feel is at **The Rover's** heart:

"The tango is a direct expression of something that poets have often tried to state in words: the belief that a fight may be a celebration".

The violence in the play comes from a social wound, like the word "tango" itself (a place where desperate people, slaves and whores, gather to dance). Although the music is mediterranean, not Argentinean tango, the movement and spatial relations we will explore are suggested by tango and martial arts knife fighting. The dramatic world comes first from the body language of the characters.

Communication of the adventure story will be our second priority, and we'll seek to lead the audience through both the tragic and the comic moments as if on a roller coaster. The speed at which the story unravels means that the costumes must instantly communicate character, and the actors must be extremely comfortable using them.

Behn's passion is expressed through her characters' passion, and we must fill them with oxygen, heart and blood but also honour their tenderness and vulnerability. In order to specify what social wound the violence comes from, our production must communicate a clear context for the gender and political relations. But more than this, we hope to find a way to suggest that the true tragedy of the play is not the patriarchal oppression represented by Pedro and Fascism, but that Helena and Angelica, Behn's favourite characters, are separate people with separate fates. For there to be a happy ending, they would have to be a single character. There is no happy ending, just as there is no spirit of sisterhood between them, and the joys of love are temporary for both.

Brock's Production Team

This production is directed by Gyllian Raby, the new faculty member of Brock's Dramatic Arts program. Gyllian founded Calgary's international touring company One Yellow Rabbit Theatre and has spent her career directing all over Canada, including Quebec and Newfoundland, and in the United States.

The actors are all students in the program, which offers three and four year degrees in Theatre and Dramatic Literature, including Ontario's first 4-year pass program in Theatre. At Brock, you can study all aspects of theatre, including technical theatre, acting and directing, stage management, design, theatre history and theory, scriptwriting, arts administration and of course, the great dramas of the past through to contemporary national playwrights.

The Set and Costumes were designed by Robert Doyle who works out of Stratford. Robert founded the Costume Studies Program at Dalhousie University and has authored several important books on costume design (insert). His original design drawings and maquette are on display in the lobby.

Lighting is designed by Ken Garrett of Brock's Centre for the Arts staff. Ken is our Resident Lighting Designer and teaches lighting to students in the program.

The sets were built and the costumes were executed by our Technical Theatre students with the assistance of Technical Director Adrian Palmieri and Wardrobe Co-Ordinator Margaret Molokach. Our students also manage and crew the production, applying the classroom skills they have learned in teamwork, communication, organization, decision-making, critical thinking and creative self-expression to this particular work situation.

We have been in rehearsal since January 06, 2002.

Appendix

Chronology of the Spanish Civil War and the Outbreak of World War Two

- 1923-1930** Spain under the Dictatorship of General Primo de Rivera.
- 1929** Wall Street crash marks start of great depression.
- 1931** Second Republic proclaimed April 14; King Alfonso XIII goes into exile. Manuel Azaña becomes prime minister in October.
- 1933** Depression deepens. Massive unemployment in the United States, Great Britain and Germany. Right Wing parties win national election in Spain in November.
- 1934** Adolf Hitler becomes Fuhrer of Germany in August. Worker's October uprising in Asturias crushed by Army of Africa units commanded by General Franco. Uprisings in Madrid and Barcelona fail. Severe repression follows.
- 1935** Italy invades Ethiopia in October.
- 1936** Popular Front coalition wins February 16 elections in Spain. Socialist Leon Blum becomes head of France's Popular Front government in June. Military uprisings in Spain and Spanish Morocco July 17-20. Hitler agrees to aid military rebellion in Spain. Airlift of Army of Africa forces to Spain begins July 30. International Brigades of volunteer sympathizers formed in October to aid Spanish Republic. Madrid threatened by insurgents in November; People's defense, helped by International Brigades, turns back Franco's forces. German Nazi Condor Legion goes into action in Spain. Italian Fascist troops land in Spain December 22-23 to join Franco's rebellious forces, now called "Nationalists". First Canadian and American volunteers of the International Brigade leave New York for Spain December 26.
- 1937** Battle of Jarama takes place in February. Renewed Nationalist assault on Madrid turned back. Battle of Brunete fought in July outside Madrid. Republican offensive at Belchite in August. Republican offensive at Teruel begins in December.
- 1938** Battle of Teruel ends with Nationalist victory in February. Nationalist offensive in Aragon takes place in March. Hitler annexes Austria. Barcelona bombed by Italian planes. Republican offensive in July along the river Ebro. Battle of Ebro ends in October. September 21: in an attempt to force the United Nations to compel Hitler to withdraw support for Franco, Prime Minister Juan Negrin commands that International Brigade volunteers be withdrawn from Spain. 9 days later Munich agreement between England France and Germany enables Hitler to invade Czechoslovakia. Nationalist offensive in Catalonia begins in December, crushing the Republican army.
- 1939** Britain and France recognize Franco regime February 27. Nationalists enter Madrid March 27. In August the Nazi-Soviet Pact enabled Hitler to invade Poland and Russia to annex Finland. The Second World War began.
- 1953** Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln International Brigade (VALB) declared a subversive organization by the U.S. Attorney General's Subversive Activities Control Board (SACB).
- 1965** U.S. Supreme Court decision reverses SACB action.
- 1975** Franco dies November 20
- 1977** Spain's first democratic elections since 1936 take place in June.

Events in Play

*Wilmore, Belvile and Frederick among first volunteers in Spain.
Belvile's first meeting with Florinda when he protects her at the siege of Madrid.*

Pedro & family leave Spain for Italy

International Brigade suffers worst losses at the River Ebro.

Wilmore, Belvile and Frederick find passage to Naples

*Belvile, Frederick and Wilmore marry Florinda, Valeria and Helena.
They will join the Allied forces war against Germany the next day.*



Chronology of Restoration Times and the Life of Aphra Behn

1640		Aphra Behn born.
1642	First Civil War began (ended 1646). Theaters closed by Parliament.	
1648	Second Civil War.	
1649	Execution of Charles I.	
1650	Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i> published.	
1651	First Dutch War began (ended 1654).	
1656	D' Avenant's <i>The Siege of Rhodes</i> .	
1657	Death of Oliver Cromwell.	
1660	Restoration of Charles II. Theatrical patents granted to Tom Killigrew and Sir William D' Avenant, authorizing them to form, respectively, the King's and the Duke of York's companies.	
1662	Charter granted to the Royal Society.	
1663	Dryden's <i>The Wild Gallant</i> . Tuke's <i>The Adventures of Five Hours</i> .	Family in Surinam, but her father, who had been appointed Lieutenant-General, did on the voyage.
1665	Second Dutch War began (ended 1667). Great Plague.	Marriage to Mr. Behn, a Dutch Merchant, who died in the Great Plague.
1666	Fire of London.	Acted as spy in Dutch Wars.
1667	Milton's <i>Paradise Lost</i> published.	Return to London.
1668	Dryden's <i>An Essay of Dramatic Poesy</i> published.	Imprisoned for debt-date of release uncertain.
1669	Pepys terminated his diary.	
1670	Dryden's <i>The Conquest of Granada, Pt. I</i> .	<i>The Forc'd Marriage, or the Jealous Bridegroom</i> - tragi-comedy presented by The Duke's Company at Lincoln Inn'Fields, ran for six nights. <i>The Amorous Prince</i> - tragi-comedy presented at Lincoln Inn Fields in the spring.
1671	Dorset Garden Theatre (Duke's Company) opened. Milton's <i>Paradise Regained</i> published. <i>The Rehearsal</i> by the Duke of Buckingham.	
1672	Third Dutch War began (ended 1674).	Possibly edited the collection of poetry, <i>The Covent Garden Drollery</i> .
1673		<i>The Dutch Lover</i> - Comedy of Intrigue presented at Dorset Garden in February, failure.
1674	New Drury Lane Theatre (King's Company) opened. Thomas Rymer's <i>Reflections on Aristotle's Treatise of Poesy</i> published.	
1675	Wycherley's <i>The Country Wife</i> .	<i>The Woman Turned Bully</i> - brought out anonymously.
1676	Etherege's <i>The Man of Mode</i> . Otway's <i>Don Carlos</i> . Shadwell's <i>The Virtuoso</i> . Wycherley's <i>The Plain Dealer</i> .	<i>Abdilazer, or The Moor's Revenge</i> - her only tragedy presented at Dorset Garden in July, success. <i>The Town Fop or Sir Timothy Tawdrey</i> - 'scandalous' comedy presented at Dorset Garden in September.
1677	Dryden's <i>All for Love</i> . Lee's <i>The Rival Queens</i> .	<i>The Debauchee</i> - presented anonymously at Dorset Garden in February. <i>The Rover or the Banished Cavaliers</i> - her most famous play, presented anonymously at Dorset Garden in March. <i>The Counterfeit Bridegroom</i> -presented anonymously at Dorset Garden in September.
1678	The Popish Plot. Bunyan's <i>Pilgrim's Progress Pt. I</i> . Rymer's <i>Tragedies of the Last Age Considered</i> .	<i>Sir Patient Fancy</i> - Comedy adapted from Moliere presented at Dorset Garden in January.
1679	Exclusion Bill introduced. Death of Thomas Hobbes.	<i>The Feign'd Courtesans or a night's intrigue</i> -comedy presented at Dorset Garden in the spring, dedicated to actress Nell Gwyn, the King's Mistress. <i>The Young King or The Mistake</i> - tragi-comedy presented at Dorset Garden in the Fall.

- 1680 Dryden's *The Spanish Friar*.
Lee's *Lucius Junius Brutus*.
Otway's *The Orphan*.
- 1681 Charles II dissolved Parliament at Oxford.
Dryden's *Absalom Achitophel* published.
Tate's adaptation of *King Lear*.
The Rover Pt. II- presented at Lincoln Inn Fields, April.
The False Count, or a New Way to Play an Old Game-
Farcical comedy presented at Dorset Garden in November.
The Round-Heads or The Good Old Cause- historical Comedy presented at Dorset Garden in December.
- 1682 The King's and Duke's Companies merged into the United Company.
Otway's *Venice Preserved*.
The City Heiress, or Sir Timothy Treat-All- Anti-Whig political lampoon presented at Dorset Garden in March.
Arrested for "Scandalous" prologue she contributed to anonymous *Romulus Hersilia*; let off with warning period.
- 1683 Rye House Plot.
Wrote 3 short novels and the first part of *Love Letters Between a Nobleman and His Sister*.
- 1684 Death of Thomas Killigrew.
Published *Poems on Several Occasions*.
- 1685 Death of Charles II; Accession of James II.
Revocation of the Edict of Nantes.
The Duke of Monmouth's Rebellion.
Published poetic *Miscellany*.
- 1686
The Lucky Chance or an Alderman's Bargain- Comedy presented in April at Drury Lane.
Published prose *La Montre; or the Lover's Watch*.
- 1687 Newton's *Principia* published.
The Emperor of The Moon- one of her greatest successes a comedia style farce, presented at Drury Lane, March.
- 1688 The 'Bloodless Revolution'; abdication of James II for William and Mary.
Published short novels *The Fair Jilt, Agnes De Castro, and Oroonoko*.
- 1689 The War of the league of Augsburg began (ended 1697).
Aphra Behn dies on April 16th.
Toleration Act.
The Widow Ranter- comedy presented posthumously at Dorset Garden in November, a failure.
- 1690 Battle of the Boyne.
Locke's *Two Treatises of Government and an Essay of Human Understanding*.
- 1693 Rymer's *A Short View of Tragedy*.
Congreve's *The old Bachelor and The Double Dealer*.
- 1694 Death of Queen Mary.
- 1695 Group of Actors led by Thomas Betterton leave Drury Lane and establish a new company at Lincoln's Inn Fileds.
Congreves *Love for Love*.
Southernes *Oroonoko*.
- 1696 Cibber's *Love's Last Shift*.
Van Brugh's *The Relapse*.
The Younger Brothers, or the Amorous Jilt- comedy presented posthumously at Drury Lane in February.
- 1697 Treaty of Riswick ended the War of the League of Augsburg.
Congreve's *The Mourning Bride*.
Van Brugh's *The Provoked Wife*.
- 1698 Collier controversy started with the publication of *A short View of the Immortality and Profaneness of the English Stage*.
Congreve published *Amendments of Mr. Collier's False and Imperfect Citations*.
- 1699 Farquhar's *The Constant Couple*.
- 1700 Congreve's *The Way of the World*.
Blackmore's *Satire Against Wit* published.
- 1701 Act of Settlement.
War of the Spanish Succession began (ended 1713).
Death of James II.
- 1702 Death of William III; accession of Anne.

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