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"I NEVER LIK'D THEE HALF SO WELL IN PETTICOATS": THE DISGUISE OF GENDER IN RESTORATION DRAMA

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ABSTRACT

The arrival of actresses during the Restoration greatly affected the presentation of female characters, since the body of the woman on the stage was heavily sexualised. Actresses concretised the erotics of the Restoration playhouse and theatregoers took much pleasure in seeing actresses perform in roles that were fashioned to exploit the possibilities offered by the presence of women. Dramatists often put women in trousers, in what were known as "breeches roles", as a way of displaying women's bodies. Compared to the multi-layered functions of cross-dressing in Renaissance drama, such disguise became frequently a titillating device. However, there are several plays in this period that employ the cross-dressing motif to offer a more subversive critique of conventional attitudes toward female sexuality. This article will focus on Aphra Behn's *The Widdow Ranter* (1690) and Thomas Southerne's *Sir Anthony Love* (1691), plays which feature an androgynous central figure, a woman whose male dress is not a temporary disguise, a mask, but an expression of her character. Sir Anthony Love/Lucia uses the freedom of male dress to enjoy, express and enrich herself, and lay her own snares. An androgynous figure of a different type plays a prominent part in the comic plotline of Behn's tragicomic *The Widdow Ranter*. Ranter swears, smokes a pipe, drinks punch and plans to fight a duel with her lover as a way of courting him. Such Amazon figures are often introduced in Restoration drama only to be ultimately subdued by men. As this article intends to prove, that is not the case in these two plays. However, subverting the double standard by ignoring it is possible only because of the plays' settings: fantasy France and pastoral America.

Keywords: Restoration drama; Thomas Southerne; *Sir Anthony Love*; Aphra Behn; *The Widdow Ranter*; crossdressing; disguise; gender

On his restoration, Charles II not only hurried to re-open the stage, but he also took the unprecedented step of encouraging women publicly to play female roles. The whole process of integrating actresses was rapidly accomplished from the very first appearance of a woman on stage in early December 1660.[1] As Samuel Pepys claims in his diaries,

[1] At the age of fifteen, Margaret Hughes made theatre history by becoming the first woman to perform on an English stage. Her first performance was on 8 December 1660 when she played the role of Desdemona in a production by Thomas Killigrew's new King's Company.

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replacing boy actors was a matter of a couple of months. Pepys saw Fletcher and Massinger's *The Beggar's Bush* at the end of November 1660 with an all-male cast, and again at the beginning of January 1661 with actresses. That January he also saw an actress in the title role of Beaumont and Fletcher's *The Scornful Lady* having seen it played by a man only a week previously. The entire process was finalised in 1662 by a royal warrant which decreed that women must replace the boys used for female roles on the Renaissance stage. Some roles, however, such as the witches in *Macbeth*, were performed by men until the late nineteenth century. Moreover, comic roles of old bawds, domineering wives and hags, such as the Nurse in Otway's adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet*, continued to be played by adult men dressed as women in costumes that emphasised the grotesqueness of their characters.[2] Nonetheless, the arrival of actresses greatly affected the presentation of female characters across the board, since the body of the woman on the stage was heavily sexualised. Women performers were a major innovation of the post-1660 theatre in Britain, demonstrating the most obvious change from the practices of the early modern professional theatres of the Tudor and Stuart eras.

Restoration[3] theatre staged the spectacle of women and thus intensified the visual pleasure of the playhouse. Actresses concretised and enhanced the erotics of the theatre, and many contemporary accounts testify to the pleasure that spectators took in seeing actresses perform in roles that had up to that point been played by boys. Moreover, new roles were fashioned to exploit the possibilities offered by the presence of women on the stage. Playwrights often put women in trousers, in what were known as "breeches roles", as a way of better displaying the shapes of women's bodies.

This was indeed one of the most common theatrical devices in Restoration drama, occurring in dozens of plays. Elizabeth Howe claims that out of approximately 375 plays produced in London between 1660 and 1700, eighty-nine, that is nearly a quarter, contained one or more roles for women in male clothes (Howe 1992, 56–59). Most of these roles are at least to some degree motivated by the plot; however, many use the spectacle of women in excess of the narrative. Such disguise, therefore, has the potential to simultaneously support and subvert the gender status quo. It is crucial to note that few plays use breeches roles in genuinely subversive ways, frequently presenting rather an element of sexual titillation which invites a gaze on the new shapes the cross-dressed female body could take.

Although men's Restoration fashion did not reveal much of the female body (unlike the more close-fitting men's breeches of the eighteenth-century), in their impersonation of men, women could easily satirise the gaudy fashion of the court, where men sported

[2] This tradition still survives in contemporary British pantomime. Panto is usually performed at Christmas. The leading male character (e.g. Prince Charming) is played by a young woman in male costume, but the pantomime dame (e.g. the hero's mother, or the evil stepmother in *Cinderella*) is played by a man in drag, She is typically a raucous, shrill and unrestrained parody of stereotypical femininity gone wild.

[3] Several literary critics have relatively recently discussed the relevance of the term Restoration in literary history. For example, Zwicker implies that it suggests a major break between the radical 1640s and 50s and the imaginative investments of the next generations (Zwicker 2006, 425–50). This essay will use "Restoration" as a label relevant and especially pertinent to the differences between pre- and post-1660 theatre history.

long periwigs, wore powdered make-up and enormous muffs, all bedecked with ribbons.[4] The sexual element of female attraction in this disguise is nevertheless present because the plays usually contained a revelation scene where the cross-dressed female character unpinned her hair and also frequently revealed her breasts. This is made clear, for example, in a rather crude form in William Wycherley's stage direction in his play *The Plain Dealer*. When Fidelia reveals herself to the villainous Vernish as "a very unfortunate woman", he "pulls off her Peruke, and feels her breasts" (IV.i; 949). In Dryden's *The Rival Ladies* two women, each of whom thinks the other is a man, simultaneously reveal their breasts as they unbutton their jackets ready to fight each other. It is obvious that these scenes were not much more than a sexualised objectification of the female actress.

The gender politics of the Restoration scene were very complex. Even the play which shall be analysed further in this article as one of the most subversive examples, *Sir Anthony Love* (1691) by Thomas Southerne, is concluded by an epilogue which suggests that it does not matter much if the play is dull, as long as the audience can glimpse the woman's legs:

> You'll hear with Patience a dull Scene, to see
> In a contented lazy waggery,
> The female *Montford* bare above the knee.[5]
> (Epilogue, 14–16; Southerne 257)

In itself, such cross-dressing is as likely to pander to dominant patriarchal values as to challenge them. Compared to the multi-layered functions and effects of crossdressing in Renaissance drama, such disguise during the Restoration indeed worked often to further the objectification of women. One pertinent example appears in Wycherley's *The Country Wife*: when the jealous Mr. Pinchwife wants to protect his "country wife", Margery, against the gaze of men by passing her off as a man, his plan backfires rather badly, as it actually grants Horner and his friends more liberty with her when they kiss her as a form of greeting. Margery Pinchwife in male attire in Restoration comedy thus does not gain empowerment as the cross-dressed heroines of Elizabethan drama but rather becomes an object of competition among the men, in what Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick would call a homosocial transaction (Sedgwick, 51 and passim).

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[4] The paradox of the rather effeminate male costume and the extremities of female dress as worn at the court of Charles II (copying the court of Louis XIV, ladies wore very low necklines that sometimes fully exposed their breasts) and its relation to the gender politics of the time would require a more detailed analysis. Moreover, for most of the Restoration period, courtiers wore so-called rhinegraves, referred to also as petticoat breeches, which indeed resembled a short skirt.

[5] The Montford in question is the famous Susanna Mountford (later, after the death of her first husband, Susanna Verbroggen) who was noted precisely for her ability to impersonate men in breeches roles. She was immensely popular between 1681 and 1703. It is clear from his "Dedicatory Epistle" that Southerne wrote his play with this actress in mind:

> And since I have this occasion of mentioning Mrs. Montford, I am pleased, by way of Thanks, to do her that public Justice in Print, which some of the best Judges of these Performances, have, in her Praise, already done her, in publick places; that they never saw any part more masterly play'd: *and as I made every Line for her*, she has mended every Word for me; and by a Gaiety and Air, particular to her Action, turn'd every thing [sic] into the Genius of the Character (Southerne, 171; emphasis mine).

The examples given above seem to prove a rather conservative attitude and promote Laura Mulvey's idea of the "visual pleasure" (Mulvey, 432 and passim) of women as a stage spectacle; the Restoration theatre could thus seem little different from other forms of cultural production like the fine arts, or modern photography or film. However, there are several plays of the Restoration period in which female characters are able to gain an unaccustomed freedom of action by the change of gendered costume.[6] In these plays, the cross-dressing motif is employed to offer a more radical critique of conventional attitudes towards female sexuality and towards the sanctioned inequality privileging one sex over another. While the following discussion shall not deal with issues of transgender identity enabled by change of costume, it intends to deal with relatively straightforward presentations of women's crossdressing in breeches roles on the Restoration stage. Therefore, it focuses on two prominent dramatists of the Restoration era and their plays that disrupt the conventional representations of gender by means of masks and disguise.

In Aphra Behn's *The Widdow Ranter, or, The History of Bacon in Virginia* (staged posthumously in November 1689, printed in 1690, but probably written in 1688; as such, therefore, the last play written by Behn) and Thomas Southerne's *Sir Anthony Love; or, The Rambling Lady* (produced in September or October 1690 and published in 1691), received notions of sexual identity are dramatically destabilised.[7] In both of these plays, the central character is a genuinely androgynous figure, a woman whose male dress is not just a temporary disguise, a mask, or a means to an end, but an expression of her character, with all its contradictions, enabling capacities and liberating feelings which under other circumstances would have remained hidden or suppressed.

In Southerne's play, Sir Anthony's real name is Lucia, but she is rarely referred to by that name. Even in the dramatis personae, she is listed among the men as Sir Anthony Love (Southerne 170), and she wears female clothing only in two brief scenes, and both times under yet another assumed identity. Neither her lover Valentine nor the wealthy fool Sir Gentle Golding – the "Keeper" who "bought" her from her aunt (I.i.505; Southerne 187) and kept her as his mistress, and from whom she escaped to France – recognise her in the male disguise by means of which, with complete success, she violates all the conventional rules governing women's conduct in society. Lucia/Sir Anthony is an expert swordsman and has acquired the "Reputation of a Whoremaster, as the erran'st Rake-hell of 'em all" (I.i.6–7; Southerne 175). Early in the play, in a conversation with the one man to whom she confides the secret of her identity, she is presented as combining the characteristics of both sexes and, by implication, as able to love and be loved by both men and women:

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[6] The article shall focus on plays that deal with women in breeches parts, i.e. women dressed to look like men. There are, of course, many other changes of costume that allow women liberty of action in order to fulfill their aims, such as successfully gaining the man they want. In Aphra Behn's *The Rover* (1677), Hellena dresses up during Carnival time as a gypsy to acquire Willmore, the eponymous Rover. The masquerade enables the heroine to behave provocatively while, in her case, it is all rather innocent fun (Behn 1993).

[7] Other plays also employ the crossdressing motif to offer a radical critique of conventional attitudes towards female sexuality and the double standard. At least two, Margaret Cavendish, the Duchess of Newcastle's *Bell in Campo* (1662) and Thomas Shadwell's *The Woman-Captain* (1680), invite further attention.

WAITWELL:	You're a pretty proficient indeed, and so perfectly act the Cavalier, that cou'd you put on our Sex with your Breeches, o' my Conscience you wou'd carry all the Women before you.
SIR ANTHONY:	And drive all the Men before me; I am for Universal Empire, and wou'd not be stinted to one Province; I wou'd be fear'd, as well as lov'd: As famous for my Action with the Men, as for my Passion for the Women.

(I.i.8–14; Southerne 175)

The polymorphous nature of sexual attraction as the play presents it is emphasised in scenes involving two religious hypocrites, a Pilgrim who, suspecting that Sir Anthony might be a woman, is willing to make love to her in "any Sex", and a sodomite Abbé who abandons an attempted seduction of a beautiful youth, recoiling in comic horror when "Sir Anthony" reveals that she is a woman (III.i.110–15 and V.iv.43–113; Southerne 209–210, 243–44). Even after Sir Anthony reveals her female identity to the play's male hero, Valentine, she is willing to share him with another woman for the sake of the "Jest". In this way she can continue to enjoy the satisfactions of male camaraderie, retaining the playful status of a wit and a rake only permitted her by her male costume. The more refined pleasures of "diverting […] Roguery" (V.iii.8; Southerne 241), it is suggested, give her more delight than the physical "Enjoyment" of sexual consummation:

VALENTINE:	'Tis a whimsical Undertaking methinks, To support another Woman's Intrigue at your Expence –
SIR ANTHONY:	There's no buying such a Frolick too dear.
VALENTINE:	And to part with your Lover to oblige her!
SIR ANTHONY:	So long! I can part with you; to provide with your pleasure as well as my own: Besides, 'tis a diverting piece of Roguery; and will be a Jest as long as we know one another.

(V.iii.3–9; Southerne 241)

The ending of the play, in which Sir Anthony's love of "Roguery" still predominates, is highly unconventional, since rather than yielding to marriage, Sir Anthony retains her liberty of action. Throughout the play, she is caustic at the expense of marriage and its confinements, injurious to both partners: "In all plays, one side must be the looser [sic]; / but Marriage is the only Game, where nobody can be the winner. / […] There's nothing but cheating in Love" (IV.iv.110–111, 119; Southerne 236). In the characteristic manner of the libertine, she praises the challenge of an "Intrigue" where "the danger doubles [one's] delight". Not all Sir Anthony says can be taken at face value, of course, since she is always playing a role, seeking to maintain her "Reputation" as a rake. But as wit and lover, male and female, Sir Anthony never departs from some kind of aggressive stance, expressing a Hobbesian ethos of competition:

> Reputation must be had: And we young Men generally raise ours out of the Ruines [sic] of the Womens.
> …
> And we naturally covet, what we are forbid; for very often 'tis the bare pleasure of breaking the Commandment, that makes another Man's Wife more desirable than his own.
> (IV.iv.32–33, 70–72; Southerne 234–35)

Consequently, at the end of the play, rather than marrying Valentine, the heroine arranges two prudential and loveless marriages of convenience: one between herself and the rather contemptible Sir Gentle Golding, who immediately agrees to pay "a Rent-charge of Five-hundred" pounds a year as a separation maintenance to be rid of her (V.vii.135; Southerne 253), and one between Valentine and her rival Floriante:

VALENTINE: You continue your Opinion of Marriage.
SIR ANTHONY: *Floriante*, I grant you, wou'd be a dangerous Rival in a Mistress –
VALENTINE: Nothing can Rival thee.
SIR ANTHONY: And you might linger out a long liking of her, To my uneasiness, and your own, but Matrimony, that's her security is mine: I can't apprehend her in a Wife.
(IV.ii.76–82; Southerne 226)

The play concludes with lines of breathtaking cynicism, as Sir Anthony recommends a fool as the ideal husband, and "sep'rate Maintenance", an agreed separation involving a financial settlement, as a recipe for preserving matrimony, while Sir Gentle duly acknowledges his intellectual inferiority:

SIR ANTHONY: Thus Coxcombs always the best Husbands prove
When we are faulty, and begin to rove,
A sep'rate Maintenance supplies our Love.
SIR GENTLE: When we have Mistresses above our Sense,
We must redeem our Persons with our Pence.
(V.vii.143–47; Southerne 253)

Printed at the back of the 1691 quarto edition are three lyrics unassigned to any character. Of the three, that of the greatest interest to this reading of the play is the first, titled "Pursuing Beauty". Although the quarto assigns it to Act II, this is probably an error. The song is obviously written to be sung by a woman and there is no scene in Act II that would require this. However, it seems to be a very appropriate accompaniment to the seduction scene in Act IV, scene ii. While a song is being performed in the background, Sir Anthony appears for the first time in woman's clothes. By that moment in the play, she and the rakish Valentine have become good friends. He as yet does not suspect that Sir Anthony is a woman, however. To divert Valentine's attention from Floriante, the woman who is very much in love with him, and also to amuse herself, Sir Anthony arranges for Valentine to meet a young Englishwoman, who is of course herself, in a bedchamber. When the song ends, she uncovers her face. Valentine is taken aback by the discovery that his former good friend is now his lover, though, perhaps surprisingly, their relationship continues in the easy spirit of camaraderie in much the same way as before and as the concluding scenes of the play also prove.

Parts of the song (the first, the second, and the last, fifth, stanza) were set to music by Henry Purcell. These contain a warning to women to guard their innocence and the final two lines anticipate the action of the rest of the scene about to unfold between Sir Anthony and Valentine:

Pursuing Beauty, Men descry
The distant Shore, and long to prove
(Still richer in Variety)
The Treasures of the Land of Love.

We Women, like weak *Indians*, stand
Inviting, from our Golden Coast,
The wandering Rovers to our Land:
But she, who trades with 'em, is lost.
[…]

Be wise, be wise, and do not try
How he can Court, or you be Won:
For Love is but Discovery,
When that is made, the Pleasure's done. (1–8, 17–20)

The opening stanza compares Valentine, gazing at the mysterious woman, to an ocean explorer, staring hungrily at a distant, unspoiled land. The next stanza takes Sir Anthony's point of view, featuring the conventional, gendered exotic references common at the time, but also highlighting the dangers of such amorous transactions. The teasing display of frail femininity is enhanced by the musical cadences and sighing motifs. The final stanza is then set to a more sprightly, livelier tune in which the greatest emphasis seems to be put simply the idea of pleasure.

These contrasts in the song reflect the contradictions in Sir Anthony's character. In his music Henry Purcell may have grasped the ironic role reversals of the protagonist. Rather than the more typical Restoration heroine, who is a chaste woman masquerading as a wild libertine (such as the aforementioned Hellena in Aphra Behn's play *The Rover*), she is a strong-willed, clever, and somehow even rapacious female rake. Or rather, to be more precise, not exactly a "female hero" but a self-constructed male hero – this is apparent from the very beginning of the play, when she explains how masculinity is actually constructed, citing social habits such as diet, custom, and exercise:

Why, 'tis only the Fashion of the World, that gives your Sex
a better Title then [sic] we have, to the wearing a Sword; My Constant
Exercise with my Fencing Master, And Conversation among men, who
make little of the matter, have at last not only made me adroit, but
despise the Danger of a quarrel too.
(I.i.17–21; Southerne 175)

Sir Anthony Love uses the freedom of male dress to full capacity: to enjoy, express, and, as we must never forget, enrich herself and to lay her own snares. She is pleased with herself and her life as Sir Anthony. She has no wish to marry and is totally without jealousy. Once she has enjoyed Valentine, she even helps him to marry the virgin that is traditionally his due as the comedy's male hero.[8]

[8] Although her immediate predecessor is obviously Moll Cutpurse from *The Roaring Girl*, in her pursuit of sexual pleasure she is radically unlike the sexless tomboy figure of Middleton and Decker's play (1611).

Thus, in this play that appeared in the 1690s, we can clearly see how the double standard of gender is questioned. While traditional literary history would argue for a tendency towards a familial relationship between dramatic characters by the end of the Restoration period, i.e a contrast between the 1670s and the 1690s in the idea of courtship leading towards marriage ultimately of love, no longer representing a relatively cynical and calculating contract, Southerne's play is rather refreshing in that it takes a new and surprisingly approving look at the female libertine. The sexuality of Southerne's comic heroine appears as confident and assertive just as male sexuality does in earlier Restoration comedy. The vitality of Southerne's heroine may have an aggressive component, yet in this play this is not presented as distasteful or morally abject. It can also be easily conjectured that such an approach should be linked with Southerne's admiration for the work of Aphra Behn.

Southerne used several of Behn's prose stories for his plays, the most important being the plot of *Oroonoko*.[9] Her work influenced his stage practice: the Floriante sub-plot in *Sir Anthony Love* was clearly borrowed from Behn's novel *The Lucky Mistake*. But a more important and positive influence from Behn comes out in Southerne's treatment of the promiscuous woman. Behn had written sympathetically about "courtezans" in both parts of *The Rover* and several other plays, including one that is perhaps the first British play to be localised in colonial America.

In this play, another androgynous figure, though of a very different type, plays a prominent role: it is Aphra Behn's tragicomedy *The Widdow Ranter, or, The History of Bacon in Virginia* (performed posthumously in 1690). The name Bacon refers to the historical Nathaniel Bacon, who led an unauthorised campaign against the Natives in Virginia in 1675, because he felt the local government was failing to protect the English settlers.[10] What became ultimately a rebellion is the source of the main tragic plot line. The main heroine in this part of the plot is the Native-American queen Semernia who has been forced to wed the Native king Cavernio. She, however, loves another man, and as drama would have it, it is no other than Nathaniel Bacon, the chief enemy of her nation. Bacon proceeds to kill Cavernio in battle and Semernia therefore feels it is her duty to avenge the death of her husband and kill Bacon. She puts on male disguise in order to fight but is instead killed by Bacon by mistake. While the major plotline is very intriguing, this article will focus on the eponymous Widow Ranter, the principal female figure in the comic subplot, who is contrasted throughout with the Native queen. Semernia dies for love with exquisite passivity, in elevated heroic language. Ranter, on the other hand, is a virago, a wild girl. If Semernia is a reluctant Amazon queen, Widow Ranter is one by choice.

Liberated from the usual expectations of demure womanly behaviour by the status of a widow and by virtue of her wealth – "we rich / Widdows are the best Commodity this Country affords" (I.iii.239–40) – Ranter violates all proprieties. She swears, smokes

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[9] Behn's novel *Oroonoko* was published in 1688, shortly before Behn's death. Southerne adapted it for the stage in 1695 and commented that "She had a great Command of the Stage; and I have often wonder'd that she would bury her Favourite Hero in a *Novel*, when she might have reviv'd him in the *Scene*. She thought either that no Actor could represent him; or she could not bear him represented" (Southerne, II, 102)

[10] An English settler in Virginia, Nathaniel Bacon rebelled against the government because it sold arms to the Indians rather than arming English settlers in the region. Bacon died of fever, not a heroic death in battle.

a pipe, and drinks punch. Like Sir Anthony, she prefers to wear trousers and loves a jest, and she courts the "mad Fellow […] who has my heart and soul" (IV.ii.286–87) in an aggressive way, not simply by seizing the initiative but by engaging in physical combat:

RANTER: Pox on't no, why should I sigh and whine, and make myself an Ass, and him conceited, no, instead of snivelling I'm resolved –
JENNY: What Madam?
RANTER: Gad to beat the Rascal …
JENNY: Beat him Madam? What a Woman beat a Lieutenant General.
RANTER: Hang 'em, they get a name in War, from command, not courage; how know I but I may fight, Gad I have known a Fellow kickt [sic] from one end of the Town to t'other, believing himself a Coward, at last forc'd to fight, found he could, got a Reputation and bullyed all he met with, and got a name, and got a great Commission.
JENNY: But if he should kill you Madam?
RANTER: I'll take care to make it as Comical a Duel as the best of 'em, as much in Love as I am, I do not intend to dy it's [sic] Martyr.
(IV.ii.289–301)

Just like Sir Anthony in the play by Thomas Southerne, Behn's Widow Ranter challenges the assumptions that physical courage is a masculine privilege. She fights with courage in a battle side by side with her lover, the forthright Daring. In the end, she is praised as "a fit Wife for a Souldier [sic]" (V.v.319). Theirs is a parodic scene of comic courtship, full of exchanged insults:

DARING: Gad I'd sooner marry a She Bear, unless for a Pennance for some horrid Sin,
we should be eternally challenging one another to the Field,
and ten to one she beats me there;
or if I should escape there, she would kill me with Drinking.
(IV.iii.292–95)

The scene, as comedy convention dictates, ends with an expression of mutual affection as they conclude with a proclamation of peace: "Give me thy hand Widow, I am thine – and so entirely, I will / never – be drunk out of my Company" (IV.iii.303–304). Less predictably, Daring suggests they marry while she remains dressed in trousers, suggesting that it was precisely those qualities "the Fashion of the World" considered masculine that attracted him to her in the first place:

DARING: Prithee let's in and bind the bargain.
RANTER: Nay, faith, let's see the Wars at an end first.
DARING: Nay, prithee, take me in the humour, while the Breeches are on – for I never lik'd thee half so well in Petticoats.
RANTER: Lead on General, you give me good encouragement to wear them.
(IV.iii.306–310)

The combative, courageous Amazon man-woman is a relatively common figure in Restoration drama, but usually she is introduced to rather conservative effect, presenting

fantasies of powerful women ultimately subdued by men, returning the heroine from her brave breeches to the petticoats of marriage. Even these relatively conservative plays nearly always allow at least a degree of discussion regarding gender roles and such issues as forced and arranged marriages. By contrast, in Behn's posthumous play *The Widdow Ranter*, with its compelling portrait of the drinking and smoking widow, and in Southerne's *Sir Anthony Love*, we get a confrontational cross-dresser who takes her man, literally, with her "breeches on".

Nevertheless, it is vital to sound a final point of caution: while the plays' subversion of the double standard regarding gender is effected by basically ignoring it, it is probably only made possible by the exotic settings. In the case of Thomas Southerne's play it is a fantasy Catholic France obviously inspired by the exotic locations of heroic Restoration dramas, including the plays of Aphra Behn; in the case of Behn's *The Widdow Ranter* it is a primitivist setting of a more or less pastoral North America, where characters dine, for example, on such exotic fare as buffalo steak. Nevertheless, this is not to say that the plays deal entirely with remote fairy-tale scenarios. Especially in the case of *The Widdow Ranter*, as is typical for all Behn's dramas, the play evidently also deals with contemporary political issues hotly debated in the years around the Glorious Revolution, such as the pros and cons of Parliamentary democracy and absolute monarchy. Yet, the settings and content are remote enough to accommodate, among other things, women for whom, as one might say, anything goes.

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RÉSUMÉ:
„V SUKNI SES MI ANI Z POLOVINY TOLIK NELÍBILA“:
PŘEVLÉKÁNÍ GENDERU V DRAMATU RESTAURAČNÍHO OBDOBÍ

Vzhledem k tomu, že v období Restaurace se na jevišti objevily herečky, změnilo se v té době i zpodobení ženských postav, protože ženské tělo začalo být velmi sexuálně zdůrazněno. Herečky zhmotnily erotičnost divadla restauračního období a diváci si velmi užívali pohled na herečky, jejichž role byly napsány tak, aby využily všech možností přítomnosti žen na jevišti. Autoři divadelních her oblékali své ženské postavy do kalhot v tzv. kalhotkových rolích, aby zdůraznili tvary ženského těla. Ve srovnání s mnohovrstevnatými významy převleků žen za mužské pohlaví v renesančním dramatu, zde tento kostým nabývá spíše lechtivý nádech. Nicméně z této doby pochází několik her, které tento motiv používají a přitom nabízejí víceméně podvratnou kritiku konvenčních postojů vůči ženské sexualitě. Tento článek se soustředí na analýzu dvou divadelních her, *Vdova Ranterová* (*The Widdow Ranter*, 1690) od Aphry Behn a *Sir Anthony Love* (1691), kterou napsal Thomas Southerne. V obou hrách vystupuje androgynní hlavní ženská postava, jejíž mužský převlek není jen krátkodobá maska, ale vyjádření podstaty její povahy. Sir Anthony Love/Lucia užívá volnosti mužského šatu, aby se obohatila a mohla klást vlastní nástrahy. Androgynní postavu jiného typu představuje protagonistka v komické zápletce tragikomedie Aphry Behn, *Vdova Ranterová.* Ta kleje, kouří dýmku, pije punč a chce si získat svého milence při souboji. Takové bojovné postavy se objevují v restauračních divadelních hrách jen proto, aby nakonec byly dominovány muži. Tento článek se pokusí dokázat, že v uvedených dvou hrách tomu tak není. Avšak ignorování a subverze dvojího standardu jsou v nich možné jen díky místu, kde se hry odehrávají: fantazijní Francie a pastorální Amerika.

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