Eruptive Baroque Hysteria in English Neoclassical Literature

A Thesis Presented for the

Master of Arts

Degree

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

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August 2014

dedication

Always supportive, always caring, always loving,

this thesis is dedicated to my wife, Katherine.

acknowledgements

I would like to especially thank Dr. Misty G. Anderson, the director of my thesis project. An amazing mentor, she first showed me that the theatre simply must be a part of my life. Beyond her incessant support and assistance on this project directly, she is also a dear friend.

I would also like to thank Dr. Nancy Henry, who taught me that beyond asking "the big questions," a good academic is conscious of his professional self. I also greatly appreciate the time and energy that Dr. Katy Chiles has done as a teacher and reader of this project; as my first instructor in literary theory, she opened up a whole new world for me.

The encouragement of my family has also been immensely crucial during this process. Again to my wife Katherine, and to my mother, father, and sister a whole-hearted thanks for your love and support.

abstract

"Eruptive Baroque Hysteria in English Neoclassical Literature" explores the persistence and intrusion of early-seventeenth-century baroque aesthetics in otherwise bourgeois, neoclassical works of the English Restoration. These "baroque eruptive" moments, I argue, can be read as particular instances that articulate historically-specific anxieties felt by aristocrats, including the restructuring of the family unit and the dual appeal and abhorrence of continental Catholicism. The introduction discusses the poetry of John Wilmot, earl of Rochester; chapter 1 discusses William Wycherley's *The Country Wife*; chapter 2 discusses Thomas Otway's *Venice Preserv'd*; and the conclusion chapter probes into several early eighteenth-century works.

preface

Insofar as Restoration literature is neoclassical—ordered, restrained, rooted in classicism—it is also baroque—surprising, grotesque, excrescent, eruptive. Critics have been using the borrowed term "baroque" from the history of art to describe Restoration literature for some time such that today the concept of a baroque John Dryden or a baroque Aphra Behn is not particularly innovative. In modern criticism, however, "the baroque" is perhaps applied too hastily to too wide a range of aesthetic objects and experiences.[1] The terms "baroque" and "neoclassical" were not used by Restoration and eighteenth-century writers and artists to describe the arts they were creating. As concepts, the "baroque" and the "neoclassical" would not gain currency until the Victorian period, and they remain elusive as critical terms. According to Hugh Honour in *Neoclassicism* (1968), the advent of the neoclassical was thought of as "simply the 'true style' and referred to it as a 'revival of the arts'" (14). Similarly, Margaret Anne Doody in her influential study, *The Daring Muse: Augustan Poetry Reconsidered* (1985), further clarifies that the poets of the period "thought of themselves as new poets of new movements always do – as dashing and experimental" (11).[2] Her assessment speaks to "the relationship of the trope" of

[1] It is still with some hesitancy that we apply terms from art history to literature. The two disciplines have historically categorized according to different modes of thought with art history

[2] For a thorough etymology of the term as well as a history of its usage in literary criticism through the 1960s, cf. René Wellek's "The Concept of Baroque in Literary Scholarship" in *Concepts of Criticism* (1963). Moreover, Blanford Parker, in *The Triumph of Augustan Poetics: English Literary Culture from Butler to Johnson* (1998), discusses a crucial moment in the history of literary criticism for the baroque, namely, T. S. Eliot and others' "reclaim[ing] for the larger English canon the poems of the metaphysical school" (9). Considering Eliot's staunch Anglicanism, Parker suggests that Eliot and his contemporaries' "spiritual notions and their extreme reactions to positivist thinking may have driven them back to the seventeenth century for solace" (9). However, in the decades succeeding, F. R. Leavis, Cleanth Brooks, and especially William Empson's theory of ambiguity located "the same virtues of figural compression and even conceit in Pope and Gray that Eliot had discovered in Donne" (9). As such, it is now in vogue for critics to blur the lines between an understood baroque Donne and an understood neoclassical Pope.

order and "to what now seems a wilder and more complex age" that J. Douglas Canfield and J. Paul Hunter discuss in *Rhetorics of Order/Ordering Rhetorics in English Neoclassical Literature* (1989). Thus, today, not much has improved regarding the "semantic jungle which threatens to smother Neo-classicism – through the variety of terms and myriad shades of interpretation, not to mention the bewildering variety of visual expressions associated with them" that Honour described in 1968.

To be straightforward, descriptions and understandings of the baroque are positively *baroque* in the plethoric reach and variety found even with simply maintaining a coherent definition. J. M. Cohen's *The Baroque Lyric* (1963) begins with the statement "The term Baroque does not yield to exact definition" (11) before diving into an etymology of the word beginning with its Portuguese origins as *baroco.* Peter N. Skrine's *The Baroque* (1978) begins even more elusively with an incredibly broad question: "Can any cultural movement be explained?" (vii). Timothy Hampton's 1991 introduction to "Baroques" in *Yale French Studies* begins by stating that "[t]he Baroque provides us with the rarest of phenomena these days—a body of texts with no theory" (1-2). In all likelihood, this "rarest of phenomena" that we now face with the concept of the baroque and more specifically its late Restoration realization has come about in part because of a hesitancy on the critics' part to theorize the baroque in a way that might deviate from the baroque's spirit, its tendency to burst, to aberrate the orderly, and to culminate in a grotesquerie of too-muchness that at the same time instigates new formal patterns and provides some of the western canon's best examples of artifice. Perhaps more to the point, much of the 1960s and 1970s scholarship by Cohen, Skrine, Frank J. Warnke, René Wellek, and Louis L. Martz, following on the heels of T. S. Eliot and William Empson's enthusiasm for John Donne and the Metaphysical poets, theorized and formalized baroque literature, and may have been

considered doctrine for recent critics interested in the baroque more for its usage as a tool for historicism than as a legitimate locus for serious aesthetic inquiry.

In this thesis I use the concept of the baroque to interpret so-called neoclassical literature and drama, but I do not in any way seek to confine the spirit of the baroque as reflected in the profusion of definitions and approaches that critics have taken to it over the years. Rather, I see the over-bearing, excrescent, plethoric spirit of the baroque as fertile ground for literary and cultural analysis. In the same breath, however, I am indebted to certain critics' theorization of baroque aesthetics, in particular Louis L. Martz's view that the baroque depends on a fixed, orderly frame of (in his instance) a high Renaissance aesthetic from which the baroque may burst (194), and Walter Benjamin's view that "the baroque transposes original temporal data into spatial simultaneity" (qtd. in Harol 460). I argue that the baroque houses a liberalizing impetus, one that works against *established* class structures as in the Augustans' conscious aesthetic distancing from the Metaphysical poets, as well as against *shifting* class structures, as the baroque bursts from the rising bourgeoisie's aesthetic, neoclassicism. The Restoration baroque is thus a feature of Restoration neoclassicism, which concomitantly troubles both categories. As Doody reminds us, even the most baroque of the Restoration poets would not have wanted to admit that their aesthetic values derived from a half century earlier. Rather, it is this anxiety about their inheritance that provides the impetus for the baroque to burst from neoclassical works. In the specific works of literature that I discuss in this thesis, this anxiety situates itself in particular moments of tension, which I point out, tend to manifest in depictions of old, aristocratic men in Restoration and eighteenth-century literature and theatre. I use Martz and Benjamin's theories of baroque aestheticization to examine literary works that reveal historically

specific anxieties felt by old, aristocratic men, and, more interestingly, the cultural actors who identified with them.

Since the 1990s and early 2000s, there has been critical consensus that the neoclassical succeeds the baroque (the "rococo" has rarely been used for literary criticism even though it is often applied in the history of art and architecture), but that certain crucial aspects of the baroque persist into the neoclassical period. In his study on the baroque's appearance in neoclassical literature, J. Douglas Canfield explains that "[b]efore that full neoclassical triumph, however, there is something bold, exciting, delicious in the persistence of the baroque. It surprises. It puzzles. It pops up where we least expect it. It disrupts, often causing rereading, reinterpretation" (*Baroque* 17). This is similar to Doody's interest in Augustan poetry; she writes, "My emphasis will be on the excitement of the works, and on their strangeness. That is not because strangeness is all that could be found in the poetry, but because precisely these qualities have received little attention, and are least associated with the poetic work of the age" (3). As "baroque" as Pope and Swift may be at times, however, I find this application of the term baroque somewhat limited by its own formalism, especially in light of the fact that neoclassical "Augustanism" was a conscious project arising in tandem with the bourgeoisie and all of its social, economic, political, and religious implications. Thus, I hope to re-complicate the idea of a persistent neoclassical baroque with a more historicized account of it specifically in dramatic texts of the Restoration.

The critical narrative of the baroque's persistence in Restoration and early eighteenth century literature finds its clearest expression in Canfield and Hunter's *Rhetorics of Order/Ordering Rhetorics in English Neoclassical Literature* and crystalizes as a conversation with Canfield's *The Baroque in English Neoclassical Literature* (2003). Many articles have been published in the wake of Canfield's book: the spring 2012 issue of *The Journal for Early Modern*

Cultural Studies, for instance, features an introduction entitled "Libertine Bodies or the Politics of Baroque Corporeality," and articles by Jeremy W. Webster and Kirk Combe, which deal with "baroque aestheticism" and "baroque theatricality," respectively.[3] Consequently a "Restoration baroque" is established in the criticism. In order to theorize my concept of "baroque eruption" within this conversation, I will attempt first to derive a coherent definition or rhetoric of the baroque that nevertheless maintains its exuberant, excrescent spirit as found in both the baroque arts and criticism. Stimulating my understanding of a baroque rhetoric is Peter Stallybrass and Allon White's use of the Freudian term "hysteria" in *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (1986). In this influential study, Stallybrass and White import this term into their Marxist and Bakhtinian schema of the carnivalesque, which is related to the baroque in its boundary breaking and rupture. Similar to the historicist methodology that Stallybrass and White employ, I attempt to go beyond merely defining and recognizing instances of the baroque as it exists amongst neoclassical works and attempt to sift through the excrescent residue that remains at the sight of a baroque eruption in dramatic texts. These instances, I argue, articulate historically specific anxieties centered on the threat of changing power dynamics in tandem with the rise of the bourgeoisie in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

The theme of old age, which abounds in Restoration and early eighteenth-century literature and theatre arts, surfaces in baroque texts as a marker of anxious historical change. Elisabeth Mignon, in her 1947 study *Crabbed Age and Youth: The Old Men and Women in the Restoration Comedy of Manners* explains, "I would not, then, suggest for a moment that the theme of despicable old age is peculiar to the comedies staged during the Restoration period" (9),

[3] cf. Combe's "Making Monkeys of Important Men: Performance Satire and Rochester's *Alexander Bendo's Brochure*" (54-76) and Webster's "In and Out of the Bed-chamber: Staging Libertine Desire in Restoration Comedy" (77-96).

rather, "[i]t is the concentration upon this theme after 1660 which is remarkable" (10). For Marianne Thormählen in a more recent study, *Rochester: The Poems in Context* (1993), old age acts as a "protective device" that Restoration poets such as John Wilmot, earl of Rochester use to "probe under" a more sensitive subject (95). In the examples following, including readings of misers in Rochester's poetry, Mr. Pinchwife in William Wycherley's *The Country Wife* (1675), and Antonio, the senator in Thomas Otway's *Venice Preserv'd; or, A Plot Discovered* (1682), these men stand in for the old ways—old culture, old values, old economic systems, etc.—in stark contrast to the quickly adapting world of Restoration England. The social structures and ideologies of the aristocracy find themselves threatened and in flux and as such become articulated via personification through the character type of the *senex iratus*, the old, disgruntled miser whose anxieties erupt in historically situated, baroque ways.

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introduction

In a telling moment during John Dryden's *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy* (1668), Crites, Dryden's character for Sir Robert Howard, identifies two contemporary poets towards whom he has "a mortal apprehension" (102).[4] Crites expresses frustration that he and his company might never be able to separate themselves from such poets, and Lisideius, the character for Sir Charles Sedley, declares that he knows the two poets to whom Crites refers and asks, "without naming them,"

> if one of them does not perpetually pay us with clenches upon words, and a certain clownish kind of raillery? if now and then he does not offer at a catachresis? or Clevelandism wresting and torturing a word into another meaning: in fine, if he be not one of those whom the French would call *un mauvais buffon*... (102)

In so saying, Lisideius has distinguished between the poetry he and the "Augustans" are writing from what the "Metaphysicals" are writing. It is interesting, though, that this difference focuses on the rhetorical technique the Metaphysicals are known for—here named after John Cleveland––and that this technique is frowned upon because it arrogates meaning from words that their literal denotations do not entail. Lisideius's language is specific and evocative. A search in *Early English Books Online* for the term "clench" and its variations reveals close associations with "nails." Related to Lisideius's references to "wresting and torturing," this term thus suggests a proximity of confinement opposite to the baroque's spirit of aspiration. In other words, Lisideius claims that Cleveland and the other Metaphysical poets who we commonly refer to as baroque, are quite the opposite, and moreover, that even if there is a sort of liberality that these poets can

[4] Quotations from Dryden's *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy* are taken from Joseph Black, et al.'s *Broadview Anthology of British Literature*. Vol. 3. Numbering refers to page numbers of that anthology.

produce it is a mistaken one. Liberalism and words' "true" meanings are here reserved for Lisideius and the other "Augustans." The designation between two groups here (which is not to mention Crites's other poet, the "Jonsonian" after Ben Jonson) splits itself along a linguistic fault line with theologically-based metaphorical language on the one hand and literal-based language on the other; as Blanford Parker puts it: "[t]he Augustan culture could not abide the hubris of an analogical age – its claim to mediated knowledge of the transcendent by means of metaphor" (2). The Augustan poets thus actively sought to separate themselves from their Metaphysical brethren.

The "debate" over "Clevelandism" during the Restoration period was not one sided. Tensions between these opposing aesthetics play themselves out in Aphra Behn's *The Rover* (1677), where neoclassicism is critiqued. Critics have recently been divided in their aesthetic readings of the character Blunt. Although Behn does not explicitly mention the concept of the baroque, Elin Diamond, in her Brechtian reading of *The Rover*, "*Gestus* and signature in Aphra Behn's *The Rover*" (1989), makes note of specific instances where Behn criticizes neoclassical aesthetics such as her reading of Blunt as "the stock country fool" who "is confused by the fact that signs of bourgeois and even noble status—velvet beds, fine plate, handsome attendance, and coaches—are flaunted by courtesans" (529). Thus, in Diamond's reckoning, "Blunt is raising an epistemological issue that Behn and her colleagues often treat satirically—the neoclassical assumption regarding mimesis that imitated can be separated from imitator, nature from representation, truth from falsehood, virgin from gypsy" (529). Even Blunt's name seems to speak to his tendency to "misread" according to a neoclassical epistemology. Interesting, however, is the scene in act 3 in which Blunt is lured by Lucetta's sexual promise. Ann Marie Stewart explains that "[w]hen Lucetta finishes with him, Blunt is left naked and ridiculous to crawl back home where he will be ridiculed by his friends for his gullibility" (qtd. in Webster 87).

Jeremy W. Webster in "In and Out of the Bed-chamber: Staging Libertine Desire in Restoration Comedy" (2012) takes this image a bit further by drawing on an association with the baroque: "Covered in refuse, Blunt's dirty appearance onstage evokes baroque grotesqueness" (87). Webster further points out the baroqueness of Blunt's vow of revenge, a revenge that, taking things too far, is "not just against Lucetta but also against all women" (87). Diamond's reading of Blunt as a character associated with the neoclassical and Webster's association of him with the baroque need not be viewed as contradictory, however. On the one hand, Diamond and Webster's views highlight the complicated way in which aesthetic principles can interact: the neoclassical and the baroque need not be mutually exclusive. On the other hand, Webster's demonstration of baroque associations surrounding Blunt in this scene actually serves to highlight the issues that Behn seems to be disputing with neoclassicism. While Webster is not wrong in saying that Behn is a "critic of misogynistic excess" even as she "associates the libertine with the excesses of baroque aesthetics" (87), Behn's oeuvre has often been described as aesthetically baroque. Her poetic imitations of Sappho, "To the Fair Clarinda, Who Made Love to Me, Imagined More than Woman," and John Wilmot, earl of Rochester, "The Disappointment," clearly demonstrate this association, and it is therefore less surprising that she would employ similar baroque aesthetics in her punishment of Blunt.

As such, critics generally agree that the literature of the Restoration features both the persistence and the intrusion of the early seventeenth baroque during the transition to a self-aware "Augustan" aesthetic. The transition from a late Renaissance, aristocratic baroque to an Augustan bourgeois neoclassicism goes deep into the period, though we might say it tapered off

after Samuel Johnson's time.[5] J. Douglas Canfield, in *The Baroque in English Neoclassical Literature* (2003), explains that although typically considered an early seventeenth-century phenomenon, the baroque aesthetic still persists "not in some weak residue but in some of the later, neoclassical literature's most arresting moments" (15). Canfield's study locates the baroque in literature from John Milton to Henry Fielding, but, other than a brief analysis of George Etherege's *Man of Mode*, it tends to focus on Restoration and eighteenth-century poetry.[6] In his introduction to the *Broadview Anthology of Restoration and Early Eighteenth-Century Drama*, Canfield affirms the importance of drama to the Augustan's neoclassical project.

These differences in aesthetic opinions and associations, moreover, are linked to changing class dynamics. As such, Canfield further explains that the general repertoire of plays performed in the Restoration period "affirmed aristocratic, monarchist ideology" (*Broadview* xiii), and that, comedies tended to discipline "Puritans and Cits, opponents of the Court" (xiii). Recent historians have demonstrated that even in the wake of tumultuous political events such as the Act of Settlement and its included Bill of Rights, the power of the aristocracy largely persisted (Canfield, *Broadview* xiv). Still, a shift from an aristocratic to a bourgeois ethos was occurring as trade and the shift away from landed to commercial interests came to define the economy. Neoclassical aesthetics were not associated exclusively with the rising bourgeoisie, however. Many of the English plays of the 1660s and 1670s were indebted to neoclassical aesthetic influences coming from French drama as William Wycherley's indebtedness to

[5] Or earlier according to Parker's view that "the great age of syncretic Classicism in Europe was over by the time of *Gulliver's Travels*, and that, whatever advances were made thereafter in textual or historical scholarship, there was a great and singular decline in the imaginative use of classical materials" (7).

[6] Regarding *Man of Mode*, Canfield writes, "In performance, after Dorimant's rendezvous in his apartment with his new mistress, Bellinda, the very early morning-after scene in that apartment opens with Dorimant's servant, Handy, as the stage direction directs him, 'tying up linen' [...] It is a baroque moment indeed" (46).

Molière's *School for Husbands* (1661) and *School for Wives* (1662) demonstrates. In particular, the indebtedness to neoclassical aesthetic influences can be seen in dramatic theory of the period, which, influenced by French interpretations of Aristotle's theory of tragedy, read and interpreted drama from a neoclassical perspective (Canfield, *Broadview* xv). One example of this occurs in Dryden's *An Essay on Dramatic Poesy* where Neander believes that Ben Jonson, because of his observation of *des trois unitez*, was "the more correct poet," although "Shakespeare was the greater wit" (108). However, as can be seen in the uniquely "mixed" aesthetics of English Restoration drama, even as the bourgeois neoclassical aesthetic demanded purity, order, and cleanliness, Canfield explains that "[t]here lurk[ed] in [these] aristocratic theor[ies] an acceptance of a surplus of exuberance that allow[ed] explicitly for genre—and implicitly for class–mixing: tragicomedies and comedies [were] invaded by successful, applauded disrupters from below" (*Broadview* xvi). It is this exuberance, this tendency toward disorder and disunity that bursts from an otherwise clean, bourgeois neoclassicism, which I am terming baroque eruption. My project identifies the complex, performative aesthetic and historical gesture of the baroque on stage as a public site of social anxiety for aristocratic Restoration authors. Moreover, beyond merely describing and analyzing the baroque as a formalist characteristic of neoclassicism, I argue that instances of the baroque can also be utilized to historicize literary texts.

Central to these debates and the tension between neoclassical and baroque aesthetic values is the stock character of the *senex iratus,* or the miser, around whom tensions between the baroque and neoclassicism come to a head.[7] While focusing on the dynamic relationships

[7] The *senex iratus* is a common subject in Restoration literature. Ultimately derived from Aesop's fable of the miser who obsessively visited his own buried treasure every day until a thief caught on, dug it up and stole it. The character of the miser appears in Plautus's *Aulularia* (*The Pot of*

fostered between the rake, the fop, and the witty woman in Restoration and early-eighteenth-century comedies remains a useful approach to the drama of the period, John A. Vance is right in his discussion of *The Country Wife* to express surprise at the lack of focus allotted to the miser in the play, Mr. Pinchwife (89). During a period of economic shift, or at least the threat of such a shift, the character type of the miser, set in his ways and unable to adapt to the times, would naturally have become of interest. Mignon explains that the "traditional hostility" which she sees as typical of the western canon of comedy in its willingness to poke fun at the elderly "reaches [...] the point of violence" (4) in Restoration comedies, making the miserly old man a figure of tremendous historical interest. She reads this "unflagging abuse of human antiquity" as "a corollary of revolt, a post-war reaction against a constricting morality and a social standard which no longer carried force" (4). Thus, Marianne Thormählen, in her study of Rochester's poetry, rightly explains that "[w]hen Rochester referred to Charles II at the age of forty-three as being in his 'declining yeares,' he expressed an uncontroversial view" (49-50). My thesis analyzes the miser in Restoration literature and drama as a site where baroque and neoclassical tensions play themselves out.

I thus do not seek to dismiss Canfield's formalist argument of Restoration and eighteenth-century neoclassical texts as containing persistent baroque stylistic elements. Rather, I seek to re-articulate and historicize moments of dramatic tension that surround the character type of the *senex* in Restoration and eighteenth-century literature and theatre. Close attention to baroque eruptions in these plays reveals distinct anxieties connected to the older generation, anxieties which were made even more complex through associations with women, Catholics, the

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Gold) (early 4th century BCE), itself partly derived from Menander's *Epitrepontes* (*The Arbitration*) (late 4th century BCE). *Aulularia* was most likely Molière's source for his own *L'Avare* (*The Miser*) (1668), which in turn influenced English playwrights, specifically Thomas Shadwell in his *Epsom Wells* (1672).

Continent, and religious difference. Beyond these theatrical examples, the stock character type of *senex iratus* spills out of the theatre into the performative realm of the period's poetry. Thus, as I discuss later in this introduction, in both "The Disabled Debauchee" and "The Imperfect Enjoyment," Rochester explores old age and all of the physical hindrances that hold one back from a libertine life.[8] In both instances, the subject and form are neoclassical, but in both instances the baroque persists, intrudes, and finally bursts forth. In Rochester as elsewhere, aging men trope anxieties about order and power as baroque aesthetics in an age of tremendous historical change. The aesthetic burst of the baroque within an otherwise neoclassical project is thus a symptom of generational anxieties as well as anxieties about the future of masculinity harbored in the political unconscious.

II

Canfield describes the baroque as "art which stresses disorder, excrescence, exuberance, the irrational, the grotesque, the cryptic" (*Baroque* 15). Timothy Hampton in his introduction, "Baroques" (1991) for the *Yale French Studies* series, explains that the baroque is "a phenomenon defying conventional categories of periodization and description" (1), and that there is "[a] major problem faced by any attempt to reconsider the Baroque [given] the ubiquity and meaninglessness of the term itself" (2).[9] In my thesis, I will historicize this term so as to ground

[8] Dating Rochester's poetry has proved difficult for editors and critics. David M. Vieth, whose edition I am using in this thesis places "The Imperfect Enjoyment" amongst Rochester's "Early Maturity (1672-1673)," while he places "The Disabled Debauchee" amongst "Tragic Maturity (1674-1675)."

[9] Hampton points out that "[t]he Baroque provides us with that rarest of phenomena these days––a body of texts with no theory" (1-2). Discussing seventeenth-century France, he also points out that "[t]he problem, of course, is to link the notion of the Baroque as historical label (with its concern for such problems as the genesis of absolutism, the institution of the Counter Reformation, the rise of salon culture, the birth of the capital, and so on) to a model of the

this ubiquity and potential meaninglessness in the Restoration's appropriation of the baroque aesthetic. I begin with Louis L. Martz's study of both Renaissance literature and the visual arts, *From Renaissance to Baroque: Essays on Literature and Art* (1991), which draws from J. M. Cohen's *The Baroque Lyric* (1963) and focuses on what the baroque *does*—a rhetoric of the baroque. I believe Martz comes closer than other critics to a stable way of discussing the baroque's *modus operandi*. Martz explains that the baroque is almost always dependent upon another aesthetic out of which it can burst. For Martz this frame is the aesthetic of the high Renaissance, described by Cohen as "regular and symmetrical, with each feature balanced and its parts exactly proportioned to one another and to the whole" in order to describe "its Baroque counterpart" which "will be irregular and asymmetrical, and its parts [...] not so readily isolated" (11). Martz's understanding of the baroque is one that is wholly dependent upon this high Renaissance "ideal of harmony" which "controls and holds in place the violent aspirations of the baroque spirit" (194). Martz discusses Gian Lorenzo Bernini's *Baldacchino* (1624-1633) in St. Peter's Basilica, Vatican City as an example; he explains, "Viewed in and by itself, close up, it may seem an awkward, unstable, and bewildering construction. Yet to see it thus is to mistake its function and effect, *for it is not designed to be viewed in and by itself*" (emphasis mine 194). If the baroque does in fact stress "disorder, excrescence, exuberance, the irrational, the grotesque, the cryptic," then it is an aesthetic that exists not only in *opposition to* and *in spite of* a contrary aesthetic (the high Renaissance or, as I will be arguing, the neoclassic), but one which is actually *dependent on* said aesthetic. Similar to Hegel's classic description of the master-slave relationship in the *Phenomenology*, the baroque needs its orderly, spatiotemporally-located counterpart in order to dis-order and dis-locate. Returning to the *Baldacchino*, Martz explains,

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Baroque as a particular set of stylistic traits or tropological combinations that transcend the moment of their production and immediate reception" (3).

"[T]he baroque *Baldacchino* of Bernini must be considered within its total setting, for it acts within that setting as a symbol of human aspiration, spiraling upward toward the domed and vaulted harmonies of a perfect mathematical form" (194).

The Restoration baroque operates similarly, except that, instead of bursting from a high Renaissance aesthetic frame, it bursts from the frame of neoclassicism. While the operative of the burst is similar in the Renaissance baroque and Restoration baroque, there is a strong difference in epistemological assumptions about the meanings of words between high Renaissance and baroque aesthetics and neoclassical aesthetics. For Blanford Parker in *The Triumph of Augustan Poetics* (1998), this difference is manifested in neoclassicism's invention of the *literal* (9). Parker argues that "[w]ith the late seventeenth century a new mimetic possibility enters the scene" (10). Parker explains that this had much to do with a change in theological sensibility for post-Civil Wars poetry. He explains that "the Neoclassical dogmas of the late seventeenth century are qualified by an empirical poetic foreign to the Aristotelian-Platonic theories which dominated late-Medieval and Baroque culture, and that the classical was a kind of screen which the Augustans could place between themselves and the conceitful writing culture of the Civil War era" (7). This focus on the empirical eventually led to what Parker calls the most important discovery of the Augustans, "the *literal*," which he explains,

> For the Baroque culture figurative reality was made possible by an underlying analogy of being. For Donne and Brown (as for Aquinas), God or his preeminent creation, being, was the ground of, or solution to, every metaphor. Though metaphor could be used as mere decoration (as in classical grammars), it could also point to the relations and proportions between things, or between God and his creatures. (20)

Epistemological assumptions about words' potential for analogy and metaphorical meaning began to break down, which opened a new space for the literal.

The transcendental aspirations of the Cavalier poets would become, in the poetry of Nicholas Boileau-Despréaux, Rochester, Dryden, and Jonathan Swift material for mockery (2). Lacking the option of the transcendental, the Restoration baroque thus has a tendency to fail purposively at its rhetorical purpose. Faced with the Petrarchan problem of being distant from his lover, John Donne's speaker in "A Valediction: forbidding Mourning" (1633) uses a fresh, new conceit every other stanza before finally elaborating on his famous lovers-as-arms-of-a-compass conceit. Thus, by means of albeit tenuous and fragile comparisons, he is able to outthink and transcend his problem. When Rochester attempts a similar baroque rhetorical move in the framework of the neoclassical Ovidian Imperfect Enjoyment tradition he, rather than overcoming the problem of *ejaculatio praecox*, probes deeper and deeper into self-effacement with each passing conceit only to finally curse his own penis, which in itself is a bitter acknowledgement of defeat.

Rochester's self-curse is furthermore fraught with considerable irony as the spokesperson of the libertines encounters the limitations of body and will.[10] Unlike the late Renaissance baroque, the Restoration baroque, bursting from a neoclassical frame, must face the literal. The difference in epistemological and theological assumptions between the late Renaissance and the Restoration causes the baroque to operate similarly yet result differently. Both baroques operate similarly in terms of their structure in the sense of Martz's notion of bursting from an ordered aesthetic frame as well as Benjamin's notion of the baroque as an aesthetic that transforms the temporal into a spatial concept of simultaneity. Parker explains:

[10] For more on the problem of embodiment and agency see Jonathan Brody Kramnick's *Actions and Objects from Hobbes to Richardson* (2010).

> With the late seventeenth century a new mimetic possibility enters the scene. This novel art is no longer circumscribed by the old binarisms of spiritual analogy against iconoclasm, or fideist against visionary poetics, but issues from a thorough critique of all pre-existing modes of Baroque art. In this sense Augustanism can be viewed as a challenge to the possibility of Christian and even classical 'essentialist' theories of poetry. That this challenge was often unconscious, and often the work of poets ostensibly pious, makes the case even more complex. (11)

Thus the presence of the baroque, an aesthetic that in the Renaissance allowed for a poetics of transcendence, aspiration, and barrier breaking, tends to end with the same poetic problem that it began with in Restoration literature and its new linguistic epistemology of the literal. Certainly the Donne-speaker is not physically any closer to his distant lover at the conclusion of "Valediction," but Donne's baroque is able to move past this problem on account of epistemological and theological assumptions. Rochester's baroque if anything moves in an opposite direction. Beginning in the Arcadia of pastoral, "The Imperfect Enjoyment"'s progression toward an invective against the speaker's penis results in a bleak encounter with Cartesian literalism. The problem of *ejaculatio praecox* has been enlarged and associated with the speaker's view of his masculinity.

III

The Hegelian master-slave relationship that characterizes neoclassicism's dependence on the Restoration baroque is reflected in the way that the Augustans' aesthetic project was indebted to the Metaphysicals. It has been pointed out by scholars such as Doody, however, that "[i]n their interest in discovering (not to say forcefully grabbing) and containing new images and ideas, the

Augustans owed a great debt to the Metaphysicals" (22). The Augustans' deep indebtedness to the Metaphysical idiom can be seen as unconscious, and a historicist analysis of Augustan poetics in light of this fact is able to reveal aspects of what Fredric Jameson terms the political unconscious, a "foreground[ing of] the interpretive categories and codes through which we read and receive the text in question" (9). These codes are woven into and splinter out of the Restoration's appropriation of the baroque. The baroque of Donne and George Herbert, once the Restoration occurred, had distinct cultural associations with the Renaissance. For one, the baroque was continental. During Cromwell's Puritan regime, many young aristocrats found themselves exiled to France and Italy and therefore exposed to the continental brand of baroque poetry. These poets, already used to a patronage system of literature, found themselves forming ever-tighter circles. Logan, et al. in the sixteenth and early seventeenth-century volume of *The Norton Anthology of English Literature* explain how "[d]uring the 1640s and 1650s, as they faced defeat, the Cavaliers wrote movingly of the relationship between love and honor, of fidelity under duress, of like-minded friends sustaining one another in a hostile environment" (1255). Upon returning to England these authors found that their version of poetics ran against the grain of poetic projects such as Samuel Butler's *Hudibras* (part 1 1663), which Parker argues "helped to invent the satiric and popular path of the Augustan, which Dryden, Swift, Pope, Gay, and Sterne found irresistible" (11). To take one example, where Catholicism for Donne in "Good Friday, 1613. Riding Westward" held the potential for revealed Truth in the tradition of Dante, Butler associated "the culture of analogy with Catholic superstition and the culture of faith with personal madness" (Parker 17); ideals which would "[lay] out the path for later Augustan ideology" (17). The baroque, as a historically located aesthetic that thrives on breaking structures, delights in sociopolitical tension. The baroque's rhetorical operative of exuberance that exists in

ecstatic crisis with itself needs cultural tension as an initial start point in order to do its cultural work. As such, it therefore makes sense that peak moments of cultural crises, for instance, events centered around Catholic fear, including the Popish Plot (1678) and the Exclusion Crisis (1679), reveal themselves in neoclassical literature of the Restoration in a particularly baroque way.

A coherent definition of the Augustans thereby requires the poets of the early seventeenth century as referents. As othering so often works, much of what the Augustans were actively trying not to mimic, in practice can actually be seen running throughout their aesthetic project. Parker explains that "Boileau, Butler, Rochester, Dryden, Swift, and their contemporaries would mock the 'acrostic land' of the logist; the maddened, inward 'aeolist' imagination of the logist; the self-lacerating obsessions of the mystic; and most of all the empty conceits of the analogists" (2), with one example being the span of Rochester's poetic career of both pastoral and philosophical lyric: "So Rochester mocks on the one hand the analogical hyperbole of courtly love in 'Fair Chloris in a pigsty lay,' and on the other Baroque metaphysics in 'Upon Nothing'" (70). Rochester's mocking, however, can be read as baroque. Thormählen has pointed out that "Fair Chloris in a pigsty lay" draws upon two established genres: dream vision and pastoral, both of which have ancient and Renaissance precedents (51-52). Beyond this though, Thormählen suggests that the poem "constitutes a break with the conventions of both [of these genres]" (52). To Thormählen this "break" manifests itself through bending conventions—female masturbation and by "parod[ying] pastoral paraphernalia in a manner both brutal and delicious" wherein Chloris is made into "a suitable stage prop" with "marvelously comic details" (52). Thormählen also discusses the switch in narrative technique given that this poem, like *Signor Dildo*, is written in third-person, which contributes to its light-hearted feel (52). Thormählen asserts that "[t]he frivolous tone [of the poem] never wavers, and it is emphasized by the humorously bland

concluding line, 'She's Innocent and pleas'd'" (52). More than this though, Thormählen's point that this concluding line is "bland," indicates that the operative of Rochester's mocking and parodying is that he contrasts these Renaissance formal conventions with *bland*, literal concerns.

The poem begins and ends with a literal description of Chloris's sleeping being inspired by the pigs' grunts.[11] This is contrasted to the dream-vision section in between, which, because it is a dream, operates closer to an analogy/metaphorical mode of epistemology. The stanza just before the concluding stanza is the most ambiguous. Although it is clarified in the final stanza—"Frighted she wakes" (36)—neither Chloris nor the reader are sure whether or Chloris is still asleep. Ambiguity pervades the language of this stanza: "Now piercèd is her virgin zone" (31), which raises the tension of the poem to the rhyming "moan" and subsequent bodily description of the "panting lover's fainting moan" (34), all of which can be said to lead the poem into the baroque eruption of the realization that the poem's subject is indeed female masturbation—"And her own thumb between her legs, / She's innocent and pleased" (39-40). The ambiguity at play between the Renaissance generic conventions and Rochester's "mock" conventions, paralleled with the ambiguity between pastoral dream state and realism cause the poem's forms to exist in ecstatic relationship with each other, a relationship that is baroque even as it is neoclassical. Where pastoral allusions are traditionally metaphors for erotic pleasure, here, the allusion leads to genital pleasure. The poem's subject coupled with the poem's misogynist attitude toward sexuality, which, linked with Rochester's other Chloris poem, "As Chloris full of harmless thought" are summarized by Thormählen as "Cloris in a pigsty dreams of being raped by a deceitful swain; Chloris beneath the willows represents the idea that women say no but mean

[11] Harold Love explains that "the sense of the majority version of the passage, obscured in some sources by the absence of punctuation, is that, while [Chloris] slept, the pigs' grunts inspired her slumbers (first sense), not that she was sleeping among the pigs (second sense)" (363).

yes" (52), demonstrates an anxiety about female agency coded in the libertine political unconscious.

IV

The performative nature of Rochester's poetry, especially considering the prevalence of the *senex iratus* in his oeuvre, forms an important interconnection amidst the debates between the Metaphysicals and Augustans, the baroque and the neoclassical, and poetry and theatre.[12] An analysis of Rochester's poetry will hopefully serve as a telling example of how the eruptive baroque works before I begin my discussions of Wycherley's *The Country Wife* and Thomas Otway's *Venice Preserv'd* in chapters 1 and 2, respectively.

"The Disabled Debauchee" is written in the heroic stanza form, which David M. Vieth explains "was widely used in the seventeenth century for works of an epic character such as Davenant's *Gondibert* and Dryden's *Annus Mirabilis*" (116). Similar to Horace, Persius, and Juvenal's use of Homer and Virgil's meter, dactylic hexameter, it is also a move that is satirical in the tradition of Roman verse satire, and thus in form, the poem is decidedly neoclassical. Harold Love has moreover noted that the poem's conceit is derived from Lucretius's *De rerum natura*, where "It is pleasant [...] To watch another's great labor from afar" (2.1-2).[13] Imitations of Lucretius in both form and content are in vogue in the Restoration. Given Lucretius' status among libertines as a highly regarded Epicurean poet-philosopher, Rochester's imitation was "immediately recognizable" (Vieth 85), but so was his subject. Thormählen points out that

[12] For a study on the performative Rochester and his connection to John Donne and George Puttenham see Lauren Holt Matthews. *Poetic Performances: Tracing Castiglione's Theory of Courtliness in the Poetry of John Donne and John Wilmot, the Earl of Rochester.* Thesis. The University of Tennessee, 2005. Print.

[13] This, and all Latin translations mine unless otherwise indicated.

Rochester's "old admiral" is probably a reference to George Monck, Duke of Albemarle, who was referred to in Dryden's *Annus Mirabilis* (14). According to Thormählen, this very admiral had sustained a wound to the buttock during the Three Days Battle (14). Whether the poem can be read as a *roman à clef* or not, the subject of the poem, the title's Disabled Debauchee, has much in common with the character type of the Plautine *senex.* Although the speaker is not a *senex* yet, the poem serves as a meditation on a future date when the Debauchee ("Drunkard" in the *Gyldenstolpe* miscellany) has been transformed into a *senex.* The poem's concluding line, "And being good for nothing else, be wise," presents an (in)action opposite to the libertine's credo of action: "My reason is my friend, yours is a cheat; / Hunger calls out, my reason bids me eat" ("A Satyr against Reason and Mankind" 106-107). Placed at a distance from a libertine mode of masculinity, I argue that the Disabled Debauchee, the personified stand-in for old age, becomes a site of both pity and ridicule that is associated with the baroque.

The first three stanzas of the poem set up its conceit of "some brave admiral, in former war / deprived of force" (1-2) who "absent" from the events of battle, nonetheless "enjoys the bloody day" (12). The poem proceeds at an even pace, with the libertine twist to Lucretius's theme occurring in the fourth stanza—"So, when my days of impotence approach" (13). The following stanza pushes both sides of the conceit together. The Lucretian and libertine motifs rub up against each other in a line reminiscent of Donne's metaphysical conceits: "When fleets of glasses sail about the board / From whose broadsides volleys of wit shall rain" (19-20). After this line, however, the similarity ends as the metaphysical becomes simply physical. Rochester here enters into his famous self-deprecatory mode. Mentioning his weathered and scarred body, the Rochester-speaker shifts the focus of the poem from the metaphorical to the literal. It is thus within this new focused framework that he attempts an argument in his favor: "Past joys have

more than paid what I endure" (24). However, in the very next stanza he indicates that he in fact still desires to have "the ghost of my departed vice" (27) pleased. This contradiction of interest—on the one hand saying he is fulfilled, but on the other hand saying that he desires further pleasure—is a contradiction that may have been more effective in the metaphorical-based beginning of the poem, where conceits operate more like Donne's, as brief flashes of insight, instead of the importance of coherence that the neoclassical aesthetic value that the literal places on poetic form. Placed after the switch in focus to the literal, however, it only serves to raise tensions to a level of fraught anxiety. Two stanzas later, these tensions culminate in the poem's baroque eruption which centers on the image of a pederastic sex act.

Critics have taken a variety of approaches to what has been called the poem's "frankest stanza" by Ian Donaldson, who explains that it "has been from time to time suppressed or euphemistically varied," which he explains is "one of the ironies of its textual history that a poem known through an alternative title as 'The Maim'd Debauchee' should itself have undergone in its time such mutilation" (30). In this stanza, the Rochester-speaker addresses a pastoral stock name, Chloris, recalling a "tale" when he and she used "the best kiss" as the "deciding lot" as to "Whether the boy fucked you, or I the boy" (39-40). Fraught with contradictions in subject and form, it is a demonstration of the eruptive baroque in all its arresting, depraved glory. The pastoral mode that the first line of the stanza begins with—"Nor shall our love-fits, Chloris, be forgot" (37)—is sharply contrasted by the stanza's concluding line, which features the poem's only "curse" word—"Whether the boy fucked you, or I the boy" (40). Juxtaposed with a pastoral line, the effect of the curse word, "fucked," is arresting to say the least.[14] Rochester's "fucked"

[14] Harold Love reads this poem as Horatian in form. He says that "[t]he boy's role as *'arbiter pugnae*' between a competing male and female admirer is clarified in Horace, [*Carminas*] III. xx. 9-16" (n. 38 p. 370). Further evidence is needed to confirm Love's belief, but if he is correct then

undercuts all elevated associations of the youth. But his profanity also situates the youth as currency between rivaling factions, objectifying his masculinity as vulnerable and alienable.

V

Rochester's particular predilection for profanity is baroque. Faced with the problem of the literal where Herbert and Donne's figurative techniques could no longer be effectively used, profanity, even in spite of the invention of the literal maintains a sense of power. The verb "to fuck," of course, has multifarious usages, which tend to spill out of a single instance in a baroque way. Thus in one sense "to have intercourse" can be substituted for "fucked" here, but to substitute a wider range of sex acts and power relations would be equally accurate and appropriate. Profanity in Rochester's oeuvre (and otherwise) operates in light of J. L. Austin's theorization of what he called "a *performative sentence* or a performative utterance" (97). Austin's examples of saying "I do [...] as uttered in the course of the marriage ceremony" and "I name this ship the *Queen Elizabeth* – as uttered when smashing the bottle against the stem" do not "*describe* my doing of what I should be said in so uttering to be doing or to state that I am doing it: it is to do it" (96). Thus, "fucked" in this context performs a speech-act that reorders power dynamics and places the youth below (so to speak) the Rochester-speaker. Profanity, for Rochester, thus has the effect of

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we might consider the sting of "fucked" which is heightened when one considers the liberty that Rochester might have taken from his Horatian source. Horace's poem portrays the youth, Nearchus, as indifferent: "arbiter pugnae posuisse nudo / sub pede palmam" ("The judge of the contest has placed his palm at his naked foot") (3.20.12), which is contrasted to the violent desire—"haec dentis acuit timendos" ("she has readied her fearful fangs") (10)—that his potential lovers are portrayed with. Moreover, Horace's Nearchus, is compared to other attractive youths from myth: he is described as either like Nireus, the second most handsome Greek after Achilles, or to Ganymede, Jupiter's famous boy lover, as the phrase "aquosa / raptus ab Ida" (15-16) refers to.

re-harnessing some of the performative energy of words still bearing their late Renaissance figurative agency, but doing so through visceral and physical images.

That the Rochester-speaker is in the guise of a *senex* harkens to an older, more traditional, more aristocratic, and more oppressive age when power was "rightly" distributed amongst named men. This incessant return to a past order, placed into the mouth of a *senex*, articulates specific anxieties about shifting power relations felt by aristocratic men at this time. He navigates a cultural shift marked by the rise of the bourgeoisie, that colors his nostalgia politically. The Rochester-speaker is, in this sense, royalist in his fantasy-remembering of a pre-Restoration sense of order where authority was derived according to a feudal hierarchy. Yet, the fact that the poem was written during the Restoration, and the fact that Rochester was one of Charles II's Court Wits places the Rochester-speaker in a decidedly antagonistic position to any simple royalist or loyalist ideology.

The figure of the *senex* is also the subject of "A Song of a Young Lady to Her Ancient Lover," which Thormählen points out "has elicited a very wide range of reactions from critics throughout the ages" with "[m]ost academic commentators [...] finding the situation 'rather repulsive'" (David Farley-Hills qtd. 49). Written in the form of a song focused around the repetition of the line "Ancient person of my heart," this poem's tropological situation featuring an anonymous "young lady" that has an "ancient lover" has historically divided critics in their approaches. While Thormählen describes the situation as "utterly bizarre" insisting that "[i]t is hard to think of a historical period that has insisted so vehemently as the Restoration did on love being the exclusive business of young people – 'young' corresponding to the teens and early twenties, fifteen being a highly suitable age for the female" (49), Helen Wilcox in "Gender and Artfulness in Rochester's 'Song of a Young Lady to Her Ancient Lover'" writes, "Relationships

between these two extremes, a young woman and an old man, were common in seventeenth-century England, when so many women died in childbirth, leaving widowers who sought a new partnership and security of inheritance with a second, and sometimes even a third, young wife" (9). Probably both Thormählen and Wilcox are right: Thormählen is discussing poetic norms, while Wilcox is discussing historical norms. Nonetheless, the various contrasts that this poem sets up—between young and old; male and female; loving and insulting language; and nature and art—make for an intriguing study of irony that, even amongst its marked "delicate lyric grace" (Wilcox 6), illuminates ways in which the dichotomous aesthetic realities of Restoration poetics could also be gendered.

Wilcox asks us if "the continuing stress on the lover's physical state suggest[s] that he is, in fact, being treated as an object?" (10). She moreover explains that "[t]his is, once more, an intriguing reversal of the obsessive itemising attention to the female body found in so much Renaissance and seventeenth-century English love poetry" (10). This reversal of Petrarchan blazon is also one of the few poems in Rochester's oeuvre to feature a female speaker.[15] This is made explicit in the poem's title, as well as in the couplet which reads, "Thy nobler part, which but to name / In our sex would be counted shame" (15-16). Wilcox points out that "[t]he self-conscious reference to 'our Sex' is a reminder of the connection between the feminine and

[15] What constitutes Rochester's oeuvre is problematic, as much of the Rochester scholarship through the 1990s demonstrates. The scribally published miscellanies that Rochester's poetry appeared in before the first printed edition upon his death in 1680 often did contain accurate attributions to poems that were actually written by poets other than Rochester. Thus, the experience of reading a "Rochester" miscellany inevitably would have featured poems by other Court Wits such as Dorset and George Etherege, but also by Aphra Behn, whose own Imperfect Enjoyment poem, "The Disappointment" is featured in several of the Rochester-miscellanies. Thus in actuality the issue of female speakers in Rochester's oeuvre is complicated. Cf. Harold Love. *The Culture and Commerce of Texts: Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century England.* Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998. Print. and David M. Vieth. *Attributions in Restoration Poetry: A Study of Rochester's Poems of 1680.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963. Print.

restraint, in language and action" (11). She further validates this claim by referencing Margaret Cavendish's differentiation between her own writing and that of her husband's—"while he 'wrote' with 'wit,' she 'scribbled' with mere 'words'" (15)—as well as a quotation by Dorothy Osborne who described the writing of a gentleman that she knew by claiming that it is "an admirable thing to see how some People will labour to find out term's that may obscure a plain sence, like a gentleman I knew, whoe would never say the weather grew cold, but that Winter began to salute us" (qtd. in Wilcox 15).

In Rochester's poem, neoclassical values of restraint are feminized while the use of obscenity and baroque aesthetics in other examples of Rochester's poems that feature a male speaker are masculinized. The contrasting imagery of ice and fire, and the specific term "age's frozen grasp" calls Rochester's "The Imperfect Enjoyment" to mind. In "The Imperfect Enjoyment" the language is phallic—"my dead cinder"—and, combined with the fact that the Imperfect Enjoyment is a well-known Ovidian poetic trope, the Rochester-speaker's subject is easy for the reader to detect. Following the speaker's regard for "shame" in the "Song," Wilcox explains that it is "[t]he context of the final stanza [that] eventually clarifies what the 'Nobler part' refers to" (12). Beyond this, in the "Song" the penis is ironized considering that the "nobler part" refers to the "'withered,' 'barren,' and 'frozen' state of her ancient lover" (Wilcox 12). Still, the contrast between these two poems is startling especially in light of the male's sexual success in "A Song of a Young Lady to Her Ancient Lover" and failure in "The Imperfect Enjoyment." This differentiation marks the ambivalence that characterizes neoclassical and baroque aesthetics in the poetry of Rochester. On the one hand, we might view Rochester's association of neoclassical aesthetics with the feminine as a rejection of that mode of aesthetic values in favor of the baroque. However, even in light of Rochester's favoring of baroque aesthetics over the

neoclassical, it is also revealing that Rochester's most baroque moments occur during times of pointed anxiety. Here an aspect of the political unconscious is revealed; anxiety about the stability of patriarchal values and structures in a time of historical change are born on the male body and manifested in the Restoration baroque.

One of the best examples of Rochester's baroque aesthetics occurs in the latter portion of "The Imperfect Enjoyment." Formalist analyses of the poem by John O'Neill who noted that the poem is divided into a "narrative" and a "commentary on the events of the narrative" section (60), and by Thormählen who, following O'Neill's division of the poem in halves, details the structure of the poem at length, which I will be basically following during my own discussion of the poem:

> The two halves of *The Imperfect Enjoyment* – the narrative and the expostulation – are not only neatly proportioned subdivisions in this poem. Eighteen lines on joint erotic arousal and one-sided orgasm are followed by another eighteen describing the consequences of the latter. Nine lines on the previous record of the speaker's penis as related to its present state ensue, and the poems [sic] ends with a twenty-seven-line burst of invective directed at "Thou treacherous, base, deserter of my flame." (84-85)

Thormählen's use of the word "burst" is fitting in light of the way that the "invective on the penis" section of the poem is structurally baroque. Compared with the short, orderly, and neoclassical earlier sections, the "invective on the penis" is fraught with a too-muchness as this section continues to grow in self-deprecation until its final couplet which is arguably the poem's most baroque instance: "And may ten thousand abler pricks agree / To do the wronged Corinna

right for thee" (71-72). Here, like Rochester's "Fucked," the literal and metaphorical cohabitate a common space of ecstasis that can only manifest in a baroque eruption.

While I argue that Rochester's poetic technique in this poem is a baroque one, strictly speaking he does not use metaphysical conceits. "The Imperfect Enjoyment" does feature comparisons such as the speaker's impotence being compared to a "frozen age"—"Ev'n her fair hand, which might bid heat return / To frozen age, and make cold hermits burn" (31-32), and quick metaphors such as "Her nimble tongue, Love's lesser lightning, played" (7). But the connections, humorous as they may be, are far too discernible to function as genuine conceits. As Helen Gardner puts it in her introduction to *The Metaphysical Poets*, "a comparison becomes a conceit when we are made to concede likeness while being strongly conscious of unlikeness" (xxiii). While "A Valediction" is 36 lines long with an alternating rhyme scheme of iambic tetrameter, "The Imperfect Enjoyment" is double this length, and consists of heroic couplets. Length alone mitigates against the compact logic of the conceit. Still, similar to earlier Metaphysical poems such as Donne's "A Valediction forbidding mourning," "The Imperfect Enjoyment" focuses on a central problem—*ejaculatio praecox*—that it will attempt to use language to solve. Both poems also take a central conceit and elaborate upon it for much more space than other conceits in the poem to a put point that can be established as a too-muchness, which I read as a distinctly baroque rhetorical technique in light of Martz's thinking about the baroque's motion of bursting out of another, more orderly frame.

The first eighteen lines that Thormählen describes as "joint erotic arousal and one-sided orgasm" I would also point out are distinctly pastoral, another way in which Rochester capitalizes on a baroque cultural tension that has a temporality to it. The opening lines, "Naked she lay, clasped in my longing arms, / I filled with love, and she all over charms; / Both equally

inspired with eager fire, / Melting through kindness, flaming in desire," could easily come out of Anacreon or Ibycus, and of course there is a direct link to Ovid's *Amores* 3.7. For Rochester's poetry, the pastoral provides a particularly interesting space in which, in direct contrast to his directly misogynistic poems like "Song: Love a woman? You're an ass!" men and women are equal on account of both demonstrating sexual desire. Thus, the happiness of this effective "Arcadia" is at stake when the speaker describes an *ejaculatio praecox.* As Thormählen explains, the lines following this event reflect upon it. The first six lines provide us with the woman's perspective (which Aphra Behn elaborates on in her "The Disappointment"), while the next eleven lines return to the perspective of the speaker. In light of the associations with gender that "A Song of a Young Lady to her Ancient Lover" has demonstrated, it is reasonable that the woman's perspective would be a short, restrained six lines, while the male speaker, given almost double the woman's amount, would be given an uneven, exuberant eleven. The poem's form, thus permits a masculine, baroque exuberance from the Rochester-speaker.

It is in these lines detailing the speaker's perspective of the *ejaculatio praecox* that we see a gradual transformation in terms of how the speaker conceives of himself. In the first line of this section, the speaker exclaims, "But *I*, the most forlorn, lost *man* alive" (emphasis mine 25), which is then followed by nine lines that apply metaphors to re-evaluate and re-conceive of the situation. When the speaker arrives at the last couplet of this section, however, something has changed. The speaker is no longer a *man*, he is now equated with his sexual organ, his penis: "Trembling, confused, despairing, limber, dry, / A wishing, weak, unmoving lump I lie" (35-36). This is a departure from Ovid's lines which ponder whether he is a body or a ghost: "truncus iners iacui, species et inutile pondus, / et non exactum, corpus an umbra forem" ("An incompetent lopped thing I laid, a sham, a useless weight / and not sure whether body or ghost")

(*Amores* 3.7.13-16). The next nine lines provide a further meditation on the penis's failures, before finally reaching "Thou treacherous, base deserter of my flame" (46), which in turn begins the twenty-seven line invective described by Thormählen. Each successive line further elaborates on the shame that the scape-goat penis has caused for the libertine speaker. After accusing his phallus of being "Like a rude, roaring hector in the streets / Who scuffles, cuffs, and justles all he meets" he says, "But if his King or country claim his aid, / The rakehell villain shrinks and hides his head" (54-57). The speaker thus accuses himself of having a bark worse than his bite, complete with very physical descriptions. Canfield further points out that "[t]he deification here of 'Love' also vectors past the mere Ovidian toward the chivalric" (73).

Just as in the concluding stanzas of Donne's "A Valediction," Rochester's speaker's invective increases its tension; that is, it grows increasingly more and more baroque as it becomes more and more literal. Thus, the couplet pointed out by Canfield—"How ironic for a libertine to call his phallus his 'Worst part' (62), to curse it with venereal disease!" (73)—is combined with the most unbridled image of grotesquerie in the whole of the poem: "Through all the town a common fucking post" (63). Rochester's rage is cultural as well as personal insofar as it registers the impotence of libertine masculinity up against what Kramnick has called "the hard problem of consciousness," its inexplicable materiality which betrays the will. But of course, with typical baroque excrescence, the speaker does not stop there. Each line becomes progressively more grotesque—"On whom each whore relieves her tingling cunt / As hogs on gates do rub themselves and grunt" (64-65)—until he exhaustingly admits that it would be best for "ten thousand abler pricks agree / To do the wronged Corinna right for thee" (71-72). Thinking through this attention to bodily details in terms of baroque and neoclassical aesthetics is paradoxical in that, on the one hand, the Rochester-speaker is dealing with the literal—the

Imperfect Enjoyment tradition centers around the facts of *ejaculatio praecox* and masculine failure. On the other hand, because of its explicit references to sexual body parts, these details are baroque in the sense of the baroque's rhetoric of unremitting grotesquerie. In this, Rochester's poetry exemplifies the intrusive baroque eruption as it manifests itself in his otherwise neoclassical poetic project.

chapter one

"Write as I bid you":

Domestic Anxiety and Catholic Fear in *The Country Wife*

Lisa A. Freeman, in *Character's Theatre: Genre and Identity on the Eighteenth-Century Stage* (2002), calls comedy "the genre most intimately associated with the representation of social relations" (145). Contrasted to tragedy, which "works toward the articulation of public virtue through the suppression of the private," comedy "works to investigate and expose the private social relations that made public life possible" (145). The sheer variety of domestic settings in Restoration comedy support this notion, and comedy going back to Menander and Plautus has always been interested in private and domestic issues and the dialectic relationship that the private has with the public for comic characters. While the notion of an eruptive baroque Rochester may not come as much of a surprise, my suggestion that similar notions occur in Restoration comedy may seem more arresting. The repercussions of staging private, domestic scenes are often to paradoxically direct attention back outward to the public that structures the stage. These scenes baroquely reveal important sociopolitical notions and anxieties about the dialectic of public and private life.

The epistemological shift that occurred in the seventeenth century moving from an assumption of analogy and metaphor to an assumption of the literal that occurred in language was mirrored in the shift that occurred in semiotic assumptions about performance and acting. Joseph Roach's influential studies of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century performance in *The Player's Passion: Studies in the Science of Acting* (1985) point out the way that "scientific models [permeate] acting theory" (13). He moreover explains David Garrick's eighteenth-century acting technique as revolutionary in light of newfound scientific discoveries and with them

newfound metaphors for the actor to understand her/his body in space. Roach thus demonstrates a shift in thinking from the actor as the manipulator of *pneuma* and *aether* to the actor that understands the metaphor *l'homme machine.*[16] Roach explains that "Descartes sneered at *Les caracteres des passions*, but did agree that each passion, as a cause, may be identified by its effects, a set of bodily postures and physiognomical manifestations" (64). The Restoration period naturally saw the manifestations of this shift in acting technique. Parallel to this was a shift in audience phenomenology such that for the semiotics of acting "[t]here is no passion that is not evidenced by some particular action of the eyes" (Roach 64). Much like the semiotics of language, the semiotics of acting are also influenced by the epistemological concept of the *literal.* As such, "totus mundus histrionem agit," the Latin epigraph that is said to have influenced the naming of the Globe playhouse takes on a completely different set of epistemological assumptions about mimesis when Jacques exclaims, "All the world's a stage" in *As You Like It* in 1599 than when Joseph Addison expressed a similar sentiment in *The Spectator* in 1712: "if we look all round us and behold the different Employments of Mankind, you hardly see who is not, as the Player is, in an assumed Character" (qtd. in Freeman 11). For Jacques, the phrase is metaphorical and even allegorical, in the sense of a definition of performance that embraces all aspects of personhood and personality. For Addison, although it is rare to see, it is still possible to be "*not*, as the Player is, in an assumed Character" (emphasis mine). For Addison *most* of the world's a stage, and that is a shame.

[16] Roach explains that "[u]nderlying the powers characteristic of the Protean actor there existed a theoretical substructure of considerable interest: a parapsychological explanation of communication founded on the ancient concept of pneuma. It was widely believed that the spirits, agitated by the passions of the imaginer, generate a wave of physical force, rolling through the aether, powerful enough to influence the spirits of others at a distance" (45).

On the one hand, these shifting notions of the performative are celebrated as is seen in Rhodophil's comment about the masquerade in Dryden's *Marriage À La Mode* (1671): "I am sure 'tis extremely pleasant, for to go / unknown is the next degree to going invisible" (4.1.141-142).[17] We see this especially with Restoration women because of the potential possibilities that costuming allows in, for example, the plots of Hellena and Florinda in Behn's *The Rover* (1677). On the other hand, though, George Etherege's *Man of Mode* (1676) takes a more skeptical stance toward the performative. Etherege's play features memorable scenes about acting, such as when Harriet and Lady Woodville attempt to teach Young Bellair how to act the rake rather than the fop: "Now for a look and gestures that may persuade 'em / I am saying all the passionate things imaginable" (3.1.151-152). But, a scene between Sir Fopling, Young Bellair, and Dorimant later in the next act demonstrates a different sentiment regarding the counterfeit. In a discussion over whether or not a room should have a glass in it, Sir Fopling says that "In a glass a man / may entertain himself" (4.2.91-92), to which Dorimant replies, "The shadow of himself, indeed" (93). Dorimant's use of the word "shadow" provides a connotation that is at odds with Rhodophil's sentiment. In a period where "the influence of Aristotle had given way to that of Plato" (Skrine 3), we see a range of responses to the realities of the performative. Tensions between these two views of the shift in acting technique come to a head in the recurring appearance of the stock character *senex iratus*, whose age and relationship to money associate him with the old landed aristocracy. Placed amongst plots in drama and subjects in poetry that focus on the fraught realities of the rising bourgeoisie, we see the *senex*'s anxieties performatively represented in a baroque way in Restoration literature, specifically in *The Country Wife.*

[17] Quotations from *Marriage À La Mode* and *Man of Mode* are from *The Broadview Anthology of Restoration and Early Eighteenth-Century Drama.*

In act 4 of *The Country Wife* Mr. Pinchwife threatens his wife, Margery, with an ultimatum: "Write as I bid you, or I will write whore with this penknife in your face" (4.2.103-104).[18] After Pinchwife threatens to also "stab out those eyes that cause [...] mischief" (121-122), Margery responds with temporary compliance, only to disobey him as soon as he exits the scene. In this exchange, Pinchwife has forced his wife to do the very thing that he most fears: to lie. This scene is almost always discussed in criticism of *The Country Wife*.[19] It is an important one because of its focus on violence and libertine anxieties including bodily mutilation and cuckolding—aspects crucial to J. Douglas Canfield's categorization of the play as a "subversive comedy," a genre of drama that "reveals fissures under the smooth surface of official ideology" (*Broadview* 945). This anxiety is also central to John A. Vance's analysis of fear in *William Wycherley and the Comedy of Fear* (2000). He maintains that "[f]or Wycherley's characters, the truths about human debility are too frightening and unbearable to be openly recognized and articulated" and that "[a]s a result, truth is avoided and spurned, forcefully and at times frantically by the women and men [in his plays]" (12). While in agreement with Vance's claim, I would also like to suggest that for Pinchwife in *The Country Wife,* this avoidance boils up and issues forth in an eruptive baroque moment. Eruptive baroque moments persisted in "some of the later, neoclassical literature's most arresting moments" (Canfield, *Baroque* 15) and these authors used specific language that articulate specific fears felt by aristocratic, libertine men during the Restoration period concerning their changing place in the social landscape.

[18] This and all successive quotations from *The Country Wife* are taken from *The Restoration and Eighteenth Century* volume of *The Broadview Anthology of British Literature* edited by Joseph Black, et al. (2006).
[19] Cf. Thompson 85-7, Vance 110, Jeremy W. Webster's *Performing Libertinism in Charles II's Court* 94, Sedgwick 54.

While *The Country Wife* has long been read as an example of a play with mixed aesthetics (both baroque and neoclassical), most criticism of the play has focused on character studies. As such, Vance is right to point out the significance of Pinchwife to the play's plot. Vance reads Pinchwife as "an important extension of Wycherley's interest in the instinctive fears and reactions of males, of those who incarcerate out of fear" (89). As a *senex iratus*, Pinchwife represents the landed aristocracy. He is situated in tension between the extremes of Horner as an embodiment of aristocratic libertine fantasies on the one hand and Sir Jasper Fidget, the Cit, and Mr. Sparkish, the pretend wit, who both represent the rising class of the bourgeoisie on the other. Pinchwife is a character fraught with tensions. His interest in living in the country, as far as we know, has something to do with his failure as a libertine. After all it is with bitter sarcasm that Horner says, "But I did not expect marriage from such a whoremaster as you: one that knew the Town so much and women so well" (1.1.412-414). Yet, as demonstrated by the ironic fear that Pinchwife feels about Horner and his buddies finding out about his recent marriage, Pinchwife is also weary of valuing business over gentlemanly pursuits, a fact Wycherley brings out through his contrast with Sir Jasper, whose business has become his pleasure.[20] His middle-way of reform and retirement to the country might actually be successful if he were able to remove himself from the homosocial economy of women and stop insisting that he "knows the Town." His very name suggests a lack of control. Vance explains that "he certainly 'pinches' his young Margery—a gesture signifying pain as well as suppression—binding her to him, hoping to nip her vitality and sexual desire" (89). Still, pinching cannot be thought of as an extreme violent action. Perhaps the fact that Pinchwife is *only* really capable of pinching is a joke on his own

[20] Vance points out that this fear is ironic because "late seventeenth-century law, custom, and practice provided the husband with seemingly boundless power over a wife" and moreover that "Wycherley and his characters appreciate that natural human inclinations do not change nor are instinctive fears allayed because of custom and law" (89).

perception of domestic omnipotence. He has created a sense of order and rules, a neoclassical poetics if you will, but his project is undermined by his own lack of self-assurance.

Horner is at once both a symbol for a specifically libertine idealized fantasy and the most overtly baroque figure in *The Country Wife.* Vance explains, "Horner in essence uses the unchanging realities of human behavior and motivation, while others—particularly Pinchwife—struggle mightily against them" (82). These "unchanging realities of human behavior" are precisely what make up the uniquely libertine Golden World fantasy as articulated in Rochester's "The Fall." In this fantasy world both sexes' desires are realized and their sexual lusts are pleased: "Each member did their wills obey, / Nor could a wish set pleasure higher" (7-8). In this libertine prelapsarian fantasy, even the Rochester-speaker's dichotomous reference to the desires of the heart and the "frailer part" (14, 16) fall short causing Marianne Thormählen in *Rochester: The Poems in Context* (1993) to argue that "In *The Fall*, Rochester reduces the vast corpus of Christian debate and dogma on Heaven and Hell, knowledge and the Fall to one metaphor: erotic pleasure" (80). In *The Country Wife*, instances such as the China Scene indicate the mutual fulfillment of desire that Horner and his lovers enjoy, which are thus in accordance with Rochester's libertine Golden Age fantasy. Vance demonstrates the way in which Horner's words "reveal an uneasiness at the persistence of those *insatiable* women he has been unable to control and may not have been able to satisfy" (82) and therefore, "though highly sensitive to the hidden motivations of males, and clever enough to subvert and use them for his own purposes, Horner is not free from the same impulses and fears that plague everyone else" (84). Yet, especially to oblivious Pinchwife, he remains an embodied symbol of aristocratic libertine fantasies. Juxtaposed with Pinchwife's attempt at control and order, he represents the baroque bursting forth.

Pinchwife's threat to his wife involves an action of repurposing that plays itself out in several different ways. The first printed version of the play includes a stage direction for Pinchwife: "Holds up the penknife" (61) after he has threatened to "stab out those eyes that cause my mischief." The denotative use of a penknife is, as the *Oxford English Dictionary* explains "for making and mending quill pens." Pinchwife's use of the penknife, however, invokes a host of contrasts. The penknife's use in "making" quills is interesting in light of the fact that the letter to Horner that Pinchwife is attempting to get Margery to write is expressing *his* sentiment, not Margery's. Thus, with Margery as writing apparatus, Pinchwife's insistence that she "Write!" figuratively *makes* her into a quill. Yet, as he threatens to "stab out those eyes" he is simultaneously repurposing the penknife as an object of violence, which is at odds with the penknife's other use to "mend" quills. Here, figurative and literal understandings of a penknife collide through an event that showcases Pinchwife's anxiety over his loss of power as *pater familias.*

It takes Sparkish however, in act 4 scene 4, to lay bare Pinchwife's whole position. It is Sparkish, after all, who halts Pinchwife from doing violence to his wife. Wycherley uses Sparkish, the pretend wit who values business more than love, to frame his ultimate put down: "What, drawn upon your wife? You should / never do that but at night in the dark when you can't / hurt her" (4.4.49-51). Sparkish thus makes public the phallic subtext of the penknife. He is accusing Pinchwife of impotence, but at the same time he is also pointing out, as Eve Sedgwick in *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (1985) explains, that "Pinchwife [...] is forced to psychotic extremes of concealment in his unsuccessful attempt to withdraw his wife from [homosocial] circulation, to fix her value in herself and keep it for his own private use" (53). Thus, Sparkish explains that

> [W]e men of wit have amongst us a
> saying that cuckolding, like the small pox, comes with
> a fear, and you may keep your wife as much as you will
> out of danger of infection, but if her constitution incline
> her to't, she'll have it sooner or later, by the world, say
> they. (4.4.75-80)

Like the Shakespearean Fool who is paradoxically wise, Sparkish effectively explains that Pinchwife's fear causes the tension that leads to his baroque eruption.

Given the tensions that surround Pinchwife's character, it is of little surprise that his language is the most violent of anyone's in the play. Thus, as James Thompson in *Language in Wycherley's Plays: Seventeenth Century Language Theory and Drama* (1984) explains, "Violent, cursing Pinchwife is the character most conscious of the efficacy of the word" in that "he brings about his own cuckolding by calling his wife a whore just before delivering her to Horner [...] he has educated Margery to prostitution by treating her like a whore [...] and finally calling her one" (86). This can be read as a result of dual pressures from, one the one hand, libertine ideals that, as in Rochester's "A Satyr against Reason and Mankind," situate themselves against rationality and empiricism, and on the other hand, pressure to remain fonder of gentlemanliness than business. Pinchwife faces a mounting of tension in Margery's style of speech that eventually trounces out of his own careful speech. No longer cautious, Pinchwife's speech is peppered with irony as he enacts his greatest fear (being cuckolded) upon himself by calling his wife a whore, thus bursting with baroque exuberance out of the neoclassical framework that he had tried so strenuously to construct.

The progression of act 4 scene 2 gradually reveals the Augustan invention-of-the-literal project as Pinchwife finds himself unable to transcend the problem of controlling his wife. There is a swiftness in the pacing of the scene as they exchange short, stichomythic lines. As Pinchwife becomes increasingly more angered, tension between his mode of speech and Margery's mode of speech gradually rises and the conversation becomes more grotesque and more disordered; gradually we move away from the neoclassical stichomythic in order to make way for the baroque. Margery, speaking of her encounter with Horner while she is cross dressed at her husband's insistence, only responds to Pinchwife's language literally—"He kissed me an hundred times and told me / he fancied he kissed my fine sister" (20-21). Moreover, Pinchwife's response to Margery's description of being "muzzled" by Horner is to exclaim, "An eternal canker seize it, for a dog!" (42). His use of the word *canker* is startling compared to the more restrained, albeit sarcastic mode of speech in Margery's description: "for to say truth, he has the sweetest breath I ever / knew" (43-4). Yet, Margery's reference to being "forced" raises the tension of the scene. Gradually the baroque begins to peak its head, and as it does so, the problem of the literal begins to show itself, like a canker sore. When Margery goes to get pen, ink, and paper, Pinchwife turns overt misogynist: "It can only be because they have more / desires, more soliciting passions, more lust, and more of / the Devil" (67-9). But Margery attempts to out-talk Pinchwife's imperatives by asking silly questions: "Shan't I say, 'Dear Sir?'" (101). This only escalates the tension between them, however, resulting in Pinchwife's first distinctly baroque eruption.

The language he uses is specific rather than general, and these specificities can be further examined to articulate particular historically-based fears of Restoration aristocratic men. With a single swift statement, Pinchwife removes himself from the game of stichomythia and asserts his patriarchal dominance: "Write as I bid you, or I will write whore / with this penknife in your

face" (103-4). His persistent "Write!" after each of Margery's lines then finally leads up to the baroque climax where Margery finally begins writing; Pinchwife raising the penknife once again says, "Once more, write as / I'd have you and question it not, or I will spoil thy /writing with this. I will stab out those eyes that cause my / mischief" (119-22). Pinchwife, unable to transcend his problem, becomes caught in the literal. His rhetorical purpose fails, and he ends up producing his wife as a whore in that he has literally called her one. The wording of the threat, moreover, serves to articulate a specific fear that Pinchwife as an aristocratic man during the Restoration period would have likely felt in the wake of social change to the power structure of the family unit. Thus we see that anxiety is the condition for the baroque eruption. Pinchwife's use of language is not metaphorical; it is literalized as it focuses on act, penknife, and face. Pinchwife's eruption thus demonstrates how the Restoration project of moving away from metaphor in order to imagine the literal is expressed in a culture now uniquely focused on "materiality," cash, and commerce.

It is unsurprising that the movement away from a late Renaissance aesthetic, which privileged the transcendent powers of metaphor, toward a Restoration aesthetic, which invented the epistemological concept of the literal, would coincide with major religious and political upheaval. Thus, it makes sense that the specifics of Pinchwife's language actually draw on biblical rhetoric. He explicitly uses archaisms such as "thy," which, in the wake of James I's Authorized Version Bible project of 1611 might have suggested biblical rhetoric. Moreover, his reference to "stab[bing] out those eyes that cause my mischief" seems very similar to Jesus' warnings on male sexual discipline in Matthew—"Wherefore if thy right eye cause thee to offend, plucke it out, and cast it from thee: for better it is for thee, that one of thy members perish, then that thy whole bodie shulde be cast into hel" (5.29)—and in Mark—"And if thine eye cause

thee to offende, plucke it out: it is better for thee to go into the kingdome of God with one eye, then hauing two eyes, to be cast into hel [sic] fyre" (9.47).[21] In *The Country Wife*, however, Pinchwife has altered the object of violence in his outburst. Where Jesus would have his disciples pluck out their own eye as the organ that caused them as individuals to give into lust, Pinchwife in this context instead threatens violence to the object lusted after, Margery. His specific phrasing in fact places responsibility for his "mischief" on Margery rather than himself––"those eyes that cause *my* mischief" (emphasis mine). By doing this, Pinchwife displaces the biblical injunction onto Margery as an extension of his own body, under the legal principle of *feme covert*. However, his eruption is also evidence that he does not have control over her as he would like. It signifies a chink in the ideology of gender and privilege of birth that Pinchwife wants to shore up.

Pinchwife's outburst to Margery just a few lines earlier also uses very specific language––"Write as I bid you, Or I will write whore / with this penknife in your face" (103-104)—which mirrors the "whore of Babylon" in whose "forhead was a name written, A Mysterie, great Babylon, the mother of whoredomes" seen in Revelation to John 17.5. This is a passage that traditional Protestantism explicitly links to the Roman Catholic Church.[22] Two things can be said about Pinchwife's Catholic reference. Many of the Cavalier poets, including Richard Crashaw and Andrew Marvell, as well as John Donne, self-identified as Roman Catholic or at least flirted with the religion. Thus, the divide that the self-affirmed neoclassical Augustan poets drew between the "neoclassical" Ben Jonson and the catachresis-ridden "baroque" poetry of John

[21] I am using the Geneva Translation (1560) for reasons which I will explain at length later in this chapter.
[22] Martin Luther's exegesis of this passage as an explicit biblical reference to the Roman Catholic Church appears in *Von dem babylonischen Gefängnis der Kirche* (*On the Babylonian Captivity of the Church*) (1520), the same treatise that first identified the pope as the Antichrist.

Cleveland necessarily included denominational associations where the neoclassic was Protestant and the baroque Catholic. The Catholic association that Pinchwife's baroque eruption features, therefore exists in the wake of this distinction. On the other hand, though, the specificity of Pinchwife's statement likens Pinchwife's opposition to his wife to Puritans' opposition to Catholicism, which demonstrates the inter-related nature of anxieties connected to politics and domestic life in the Restoration. Thus, as W. B. Worthen suggests, theatrical performances "can be understood to cite—or, perhaps subversively, to resignify—social and behavioral practices that operate outside the theater and that constitute contemporary social life" (1098), Wycherley's character Pinchwife stands between religious worlds (the Puritan and the Roman Catholic) at a moment when both represent points of anxiety or extremism that could destabilize the carefully engineered but provisional Restoration. As a baroque moment, Pinchwife's outburst takes its meaning from the oppositional frame that these religious positions provide in order to demonstrate anxiety.

The biblical connection becomes both more interesting and more fraught on further inspection. Frances E. Dolan's description of violent spectacle done to Catholic women in *Whores of Babylon: Catholicism, Gender, and Seventeenth-Century Print Culture* (1999) closely matches up with the violence threatened upon Margery by Pinchwife. *The Country Wife* was first produced at the Theatre Royal on 12 January 1675. Just five years earlier, in an attempt to borrow money to fund the Dutch Wars, Charles II had signed Louis XIV's scandalous Treaty of Dover, which promised to return England as a nation to Roman Catholicism. Moreover, the crisis of the Popish Plot was just three years away, a scam that was given life because of anxieties about a Protestant succession rising through the 1670s since Charles II failed to produce a legitimate heir. According to Dolan, "Regarding the Popish Plot, [...] it is impossible to

distinguish between the events and their narrative representations because those narratives–circulated as rumors, offered in court as testimony, published–were the event" (158). The Plot depended almost entirely on the allegations of Titus Oates and the explosion of his claims in print culture; thus, it was rumors and stories that created an air of anti-Catholicism (157). It is not difficult to imagine these same fears running latent amongst the English people in 1675 as they awaited a Titus Oates to ignite them. When Pinchwife places Margery as the objective other of his threat he embodies a parallel position of Puritans who placed Catholics as the objective other.

Dolan explains that Catholics were long used as a way of imagining danger and difference in early modern culture (1) and that they "were persistently linked to women: similar yet different, familiar yet threatening, a subordinated group who yet dominated the culture's imagination" (8). The locating of fear in a Roman Catholic other can be seen in Pinchwife's threat to Margery. The language he uses—"Write as I bid you, or I will write whore / with this penknife in your face"—bears a distinct similarity to a line in the Geneva translation of the Book of Revelation: "And in her forhead was a name written, A Mysterie, great Babylon, the mother of whoredomes, and abominations of the earth" (17.5). The use of the phrase "mother of *whoredomes*" is distinct from other translations at the time such as the Authorized Version (King James Version, 1611), which uses the phrase "mother of *harlots.*" That Pinchwife would reference the Geneva translation is not in itself remarkable since the Geneva translation remained one of the most popular translations in England largely because of its cheaper price (Carroll and Prickett xxv). Yet, the Geneva Bible does have a decidedly Puritan bias, and in contrast to the distinctly Stuart Bible that James I's Authorized Version is, the Geneva Bible was the Bible of the general population.

With this in mind, one of the striking features of the Geneva Bible is that it is filled with printed marginalia. This was seen by many as an over-abundance. Indeed, this was one of the chief differences that James I desired for his Bible. In a proviso to the translators of the Authorized Version he writes, "[I]t is fit that no marginal notes be added thereunto" (qtd. in Carroll and Prickett xxvi). If, as Canfield puts it, the baroque is marked with "excrescence [and] exuberance," then we might interpret the action of annotation itself as something of a baroque action. It can represent a moment of anxiety in which the author wants to make sure that the *right* or *correct* interpretation is getting across to the reader. This urge is not unlike Pinchwife's, which situates him in a chaotic space between his own past and present. Before Pinchwife reformed, he was—as a libertine rake like Rochester in his "Satyr"—able to be a critic of society. However, now that he is a member of bourgeois society, he can no longer be the critic, even though he still longs to be. Pinchwife, thus, wants Margery to write, but he wants to be able to annotate that writing with a suitable (for him) interpretation. Pinchwife's over-the-top desire to annotate is itself a form of baroque exuberance.

The printed marginalia of the Geneva Bible was written by Puritans including John Knox and therefore often had a distinctly Puritan edge (Carroll and Prickett xxv). This printing strategy would be taken up by John Bunyan in *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678) as well as by other Puritan writers following his example.[23] If Pinchwife's threat is indeed referring to the Geneva Bible, then it would also be referring to the marginal notation to Revelation 17.5. Just after the line "And in her forhead was a name written" there is a footnote that reads: "[w]hich none can knowe to auoide but the elect." The annotation indicates to the reader a distinctly Puritan reading of this

[23] For example at the beginning of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, Pliable speaking to Christian asks, "May I get out again with my life, you shall possess the brave country alone for me" (*Broadview Anthology* 38). This is footnoted by Bunyan's explanation "It is not enough to be pliable" (n.1).

famous line placing Protestant Puritans (in this instance, "the elect") at distinct odds against the Whore of Babylon, which, in line with traditional Reformation thinking is equivalent to the Roman Catholic Church.

Linking Pinchwife to the Puritans may seem counterintuitive, yet there is a distinct way that Pinchwife, as a reformed rake, and the Puritans having just been defeated in the English Civil Wars, are both effectively on the wrong side of history. Old Puritan ways, which had been the norm under Cromwell, were thrown aside. Pinchwife's decision to marry goes against the grain of the now-in-vogue libertinism even as it finds itself in a state of tension with the rising bourgeois class and can be likened to Puritan morality placed in a Restoration setting. Hence his aside at the beginning of the play: "Death, does he know I'm married, / too? I thought to have concealed it from him at / least" (1.1.396-8). His decision to marry a country wife is decidedly against the urban boom of the Restoration, and so he hopes to conceal this fact that makes him seem older, less fashionable, and less virile. His shame, however, explodes in the baroque moment of threatened violence, which is overloaded with sexual and cultural hysteria.

This chapter has attempted to trace a persistent and intrusive baroque aesthetic into the otherwise neoclassical project of Wycherley's *The Country Wife* in order to understand its function as a formal feature with a particular historical function and resonance for Restoration drama. Specifically, I have focused on the character Pinchwife as he exists in unique tension between aristocratic libertine fantasies embodied in Horner and the rising bourgeois class represented in the Cit, Sir Jasper and Sparkish. This tension, I have argued, is what leads to the baroque eruption of violent speech and physical threat that Pinchwife issues at his wife, Margery. Beyond merely observing this instance as a baroque moment, I have argued that his language is specific and, through its peculiar diction as it wrestles with the Augustan notion of the literal,

articulates particular historically-based fears. In this chapter I hope to have demonstrated that the persistence and intrusion of the baroque aesthetic into the neoclassical period is more than just an interesting phenomenon that marks moments of flourishing rhetoric in Restoration and eighteenth-century texts. Rather, following theorizations of the baroque's rhetorical project by Renaissance scholars Martz and Cohen, I suggest that it can actually be used to parse out and articulate the "fissures under the smooth surface of official ideology" (*Broadview* xvii) that Canfield explains as definitive of the genre of "subversive comedy" in the Restoration and early eighteenth century, but specifically in *The Country Wife.*

chapter two

"Spit in my face a little":

Meta-narration, Trauma, and Menippean Satire in *Venice Preserv'd*

Jessica Munns, in her introduction to her edition of Thomas Otway's *Venice Preserv'd; or, A Plot Discovered* (1682) explains that "the famous 'Nicky Nacky' scenes between Aquilina and Antonio" are unique creations of Otway's not found in his source novella (381). Calling the scenes "famous" seems not quite to do them justice, especially since Robert D. Hume has rather *famously* said of them, "not many critics have had the stomach to relish [them]" (381). Striving far beyond the sexual recalcitrance of Wycherley's "China Scene," the Nicky-Nacky scenes' perversity rivals some of the most sexually forward plays of the seventeenth century including the incestuous plot of John Ford's *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* (1633). Arresting to say the least, these instances of proto-sadomasochism on the English stage have often been ignored or simplified by critics eager to move on to discussions of the conspiracy plot and its connections to contemporary politics.

As such, critics dealing with the character of Antonio and his near-obvious associations with Anthony Ashley Cooper, first earl of Shaftesbury, typically highlight the play's stance as a Tory propaganda piece.[24] Focusing mainly on the conspirators and the conspiracy plot, critics such as Jean I. Marsden, in *Fatal Desire: Women, Sexuality, and the English Stage, 1660-1720* (2006), separate the play from the genre of she-tragedies and refer to it, along with Nahum Tate's *King Lear*, as simply a Tory play (75). David Bywaters, who attempts to demonstrate the complexities of the play's politics by arguing that it would have been "unlikely that

[24] Critics have also argued that Renault, the conspirator is a portrait of Shaftesbury. See Harry M. Solomon's "The Rhetoric of 'Redressing Grievances': Court Propaganda as the Hermeneutical Key to *Venice Preserv'd*," Thomas Moore's "Contemporary Satire in Otway's *Venice Preserv'd*," and Kerstin P. Warner. *Thomas Otway.* Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1982. Print.

contemporary audiences would have identified the conspiracy against such a state as a Whig plot" (259) eventually concludes that the conspiracy is a Tory version of a Whig version of a Tory conspiracy and that ultimately "the Venetian plot is a parody not of the Popish Plot itself but of the Whig fears from which it arose and in which alone it had existence" (263). Still, Munns, who compares the conspirators in *Venice Preserv'd* to the conspirators in Nathaniel Lee's *Lucius Junius Brutus* and argues that "[d]espite topical and specific references and satiric portraits, the play cannot be reduced to a mere piece of Tory Whig-bashing" (56) is hesitant to discuss the Nicky-Nacky scenes outright. In her discussion of the Nicky-Nacky scenes in *Restoration Theatre and Crisis* (1996), Susan J. Owen says, "I shall content myself with stating that I do think that Antonio's behavior reflects adversely upon the republican senate, of which he is a member" (231), a statement that complements Danielle Perdue's reading of masochist figures in "The Male Masochist in Restoration Drama" (1996) as a method for playwrights "to reinforce the paradigm of homosocial society controlled by young, virile, and witty males" thereby othering and feminizing those men who remain outside of the empowered elite (10). This chapter attempts to do something different than these other critical approaches. Rather than beginning with the historical and political situation surrounding the Exclusion Crisis, I ask questions about the form of the play and read it as an example of my theorization of the eruptive baroque in order to historicize its particular brand of aristocratic anxieties.

I take J. Douglas Canfield's categorization of the play in the *Broadview Anthology of Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Drama* as Menippean satire seriously. I read Menippean satire as an aesthetic technique that allows us to read the play in light of the Restoration eruptive baroque. *Venice Preserv'd* was first produced in 1682, a moment in the history of theatre that Marsden has argued saw the birth of the dramatic genre of she-tragedy in Otway's other, more

popular play, *The Orphan* (1680) and John Banks's *Vertue Betray'd* (1682) (79). I argue that in *Venice Preserv'd*, Otway locates the pathetic emotion of distress onto Antonio, an old, aristocratic *senex*, thus constituting an instance of the baroque eruption which traumatizes the exclusive focus on young, virginal girls where Restoration theatergoers typically locate their voyeuristic desire. The result is firstly a critique of the burgeoning genre of she-tragedy as well as an instance that reveals aristocratic anxieties about Whig constructions of viable political narratives that "plots" such as the Exclusion Crisis threaten to upend. In the spirit of Menippean satire and the baroque more broadly, such thinking is ultimately self-reflective, and it is this self-reflection of Tory political techniques of narrative formation that leads to trauma and revealed anxiety via the eruptive baroque.

The character Antonio, like Rochester's Disabled Debauchee and Wycherley's Mr. Pinchwife, is yet another portrayal of the Plautine *senex.* Even as early as 1928, John Robert Moore in "Contemporary Satire in Otway's *Venice Preserv'd*" felt the need to say that "[t]he character of Antonio is usually thought of as an odious picture of the depravity of old age" (176). Moore's article is still immensely useful for analyses of Otway because it is so meticulously researched. While Moore's main point about Antonio is to suggest that Otway's portrayal "goes much farther than that" (176) and that "the picture of Antonio ceases to be merely repulsive and nasty, and becomes a piece of intensely personal satire" (177), he still highlights the important point that Shaftesbury was often satirized as an old dotard—indeed, Moore points out that "as early as 1677 [Shaftesbury] had referred to himself as 'an old infirm man'" (178). Moreover, like Plautus's own Euclio from *Aulularia*, Antonio is rich and dangles gold in front of Aquilina: "My cruel fair one, (*Takes out a purse of gold, and at every pause shakes it.*)" (3.1.61-62). As such, I would like to argue that Canfield's formal, generic categorization of *Venice Preserv'd* as

Menippean satire can be read as an articulation of the baroque, which, surrounding Antonio and the Nicky-Nacky scenes constitutes an instance of baroque eruption in which Antonio derives pleasure from misinterpreting Aquilina's language. This is a rhetorical move which is satirical on Otway's part, but also, through the audience's own multifaceted modes of interpretation paradoxically threatens to turn the tables of theatrical voyeuristic pleasure thereby appropriating Antonio, a sexually perverted *senex*, at the sight of the audience's pathos, a locus normally held by the Lucrece-figure in contemporary she-tragedy.

In *The Broadview Anthology of Restoration and Early-Eighteenth Century Drama*, Canfield categorizes *Venice Preserv'd* along with John Tatham's *The Rump*, Thomas Durfey's *A Fond Husband*, John Dryden's *Amphitryon*, and Henry Fielding's *The Author's Farce* as "Menippean satire." According to Canfield, "Menippean satire presents a jumble of competing voices, with no clear standard by which to judge behavior aberrant" (xviii). Petronius's *Satyricon*, itself a mixture of high and low culture, is mentioned by Canfield as one of the "classic exemplars" (xviii) of the form for its mix of verse and prose forms used to mock Trimalchio's dinner party.[25] In his book *Menippean Satire Reconsidered: From Antiquity to the 18th Century* (2005), Howard D. Weinbrot provides a definition of the form that "uses at least two different languages, genres, tones, or cultural or historical periods to combat a false and threatening orthodoxy. It does so in either harsher and severe or a softer and muted way" (xi). To Weinbrot, Menippean satire has a rhetorical purpose whether "to awake a somnolent nation, define the native in contrast to the foreign, protest the victory of darkness, or correct a careless reader" (xi). In this light, I argue that *Venice Preserv'd*'s Nicky-Nacky scenes constitute grossly contrary aesthetic assumptions from the conspiracy plot sections, and are not merely thematic departures

[25] In later antiquity, Martanus Minneus Felix Capella and Boethius in his *De Consolatione Philosophiae* are examples of the form.

or political satire. Instead, these scenes operate aesthetically to articulate aristocratic anxieties about the Exclusion Crisis.

Compared to Pierre and Jaffeir's conspiracy plot, which harkens to the contemporary genre of she-tragedy, the Nicky-Nacky scenes are written in a drastically different tone. Featuring many instances of rhyme, alliteration, and other examples of word-play that have been described as "silly" by Bywaters and others, these scenes with their experiments in proto-sadomasochism—stage direction: "*She whips him*" (3.1.124)—and bestiality—"Then I'll be a dog" (99) were often played with high comic potential for largely Tory audiences. In her classic study of *Venice Preserv'd* and *The Orphan*, *Next to Shakespeare: Otway's* Venice Preserv'd *and* The Orphan *and their History on the London Stage* (1950), Aline Mackenzie Taylor notes that Aphra Behn's poem, "The Cabal at Nickey Nackeys" attests to the scenes' contemporary popularity (53). Taylor further notes that "Aquilina and her Nicky-Nacky scenes were omitted before 1718—possibly before 1690" but that "Antonio remained in the play until 1724 at Drury Lane, and until 1742 at Covent Garden" (276). Thus, while the complete cutting of Antonio undoubtedly caused some problems for the plot as a whole, especially in the fifth act, as Taylor points out (cf. 276), cutting the Nicky-Nacky scenes seems to have been an easy abridgment with no significant loss to the audience's sense of the plot. Even Samuel Johnson's dismissal of the play on moral grounds notes the comic intention of these scenes. He explains that "*Venice preserved*, a tragedy, which still continues to be one of the favourites of the publick, notwithstanding the want of morality in the original design, and the despicable scenes of vile comedy with which he has diversified his tragick action" (340). Interesting here is the way in which Johnson describes how the Nicky-Nacky scenes have "diversified [Otway's] tragick action." Clearly Johnson saw this as a mixing of contrary aesthetics such that from a certain

perspective, the Nicky-Nacky scenes can be seen to not belong with the surrounding conspiracy plot.

Blending various aesthetics is one of the defining features of classical satire, as the etymology of the English word "satire" demonstrates. Derived from the Latin *satura* meaning "full," the word "was transferred to literary miscellanies from *lanx satura*, a dish crammed with first fruits, or from *satura*, a mixed stuffing or sausage" (*Oxford Classical Dictionary* 1358). In his first satire, Juvenal famously explains that "votum, timor, ira, voluptas, / gaudia, discursus, nostri farrago libelli est" ("vows, fear, anger, pleasure, and joy running about constitutes our hodge-podge satirical verse") (85-86). Thus, to adopt Canfield's descriptor of the play as Menippean satire on account of the vastly different stylistics of the conspiracy plot and the Nicky-Nacky scenes is to simultaneously demonstrate the play's indebtedness and distance from the bourgeois aesthetic of neoclassicism. Connected to Petronius's *Satyricon* in the Roman genre of Menippean satire, the play seems by literal definition to adhere to neoclassicism, yet, if traditional definitions of neoclassicism include the descriptors "order, restraint, the rational, the lucid" (Canfield, *Baroque* 15), the play seems to be doing something quite different.

Louis L. Martz's understanding of the baroque's operative as one that bursts from another, more rigid aesthetic frame is useful in thinking through the way that the Nicky-Nacky scenes burst from the austere aesthetic of the conspiracy plot, itself suggestive of the genre of she-tragedy. She-tragedy is a genre that Marsden has described as "reiterat[ing] gender as a stable series of binary oppositions: male/female, subject/object, and actor/acted upon, oppositions that supported rather than threatened existing social structures" (75). The Nicky-Nacky scenes, which Otway invented, thus burst from the conspiracy plot which is derived from César Vischard, l'abbé de Saint Réal's novella, *La Conjuration des Espagnols contre la République de Vénise*

(1675). The burst of the first Nicky-Nacky scene is padded, however, by being bookended by sexually perverse scenes, scenes that allow for the baroque burst of the Nicky-Nacky scenes to occur.

The concluding exchange between Pierre and Jaffeir at the end of act 2 features a particularly potent example of homosociality. In their discussion of Belvidera, Jaffeir says to Pierre,

> Oh Pierre, wert thou but she,
> How I could pull thee down into my heart,
> Gaze on thee till my eye-strings cracked with love,
> Till all my sinews with its fire extended
> Fixed me upon the rack of ardent longing;
> Then swelling, sighing, raging to be blest,
> Come like a panting turtle to thy breast,
> On thy, soft bosom, hovering, bill and play,
> Confess the cause why I last flew away,
> Own 'twas a fault, but swear to give it o'er,
> And never follow false ambition more. (2.3.257-267)

Jaffeir's substitution of Pierre for Belvidera goes beyond the homosocial to the homoerotic. Jaffeir's discussion of his "eye-strings crack[ing] with love" and his "sinews with fire extend[ing]" are descriptions of classic romantic love tropes for bodily reactions to being in love—"blind with love" and "on fire with love." Yet, the specific mentioning of the body in terms of its biological anatomy—"eye-strings" and "sinews"—is arresting in its translation of poetic tropes into the language of the literal. In the lines following, Jaffeir begins to speak in

rhyming iambic pentameter couplets, which on the one hand signifies the mixed formal aesthetic of Menippean satire, but on the other hand begins to transform the literalized love tropes back into the language of the metaphorical and poetic. Jaffeir uses a simile to describe Pierre: "like a panting turtle." The juxtaposition of literal and metaphorical language and homosocial and homoerotic language cause one to question Jaffeir's meaning in "false ambition." While this is certainly not the first or only instance of the homosocial blending with the homoerotic between Pierre and Jaffeir, the potency of Jaffeir's speech arrests the audience's understanding of the play's characters' relationships, an effect that mounts tension in preparation for the baroque burst that the first Nicky-Nacky scene constitutes.

The scene directly after the first Nicky-Nacky scene operates similarly as a buffer for shifting aesthetic tension back into the conspiracy plot. After Aquilina and the Maid's exeunt at the end of the first Nicky-Nacky scene we learn of Renault's attempted rape of Belvidera. Belvidera herself compares the situation to the myth of the rape of Lucrece as she describes how Renault "came / (like Tarquin) ghastly with infernal lust. / Oh thou Roman Lucrece!" (3.2.6-8). In her recent book, *The Politics of Rape: Sexual Atrocity, Propaganda Wars, and the Restoration Stage* (2012), Jennifer L. Airey notes the fact that in this instance "[t]he conspirators and not the senators play the role of Tarquin" (162). Here, somewhat like Jaffeir's flipping and substituting of metaphorical and literal language in the scene prior, the traditional roles of the Lucrece myth are altered. To Airey this suggests that "rebellion and not obedience leads to true misery" (162). This deviation from the Roman myth is further evidence of the play's satirical project of baroque eruption. The outburst from Belvidera is a demonstration of the pathetic passion of distress, the passion most directly associated with she-tragedy. Its proximity to the first Nicky-Nacky scene is a comment on Antonio's distress, a distress that only the scene of Belvidera's madness rivals in

potency. Like the scene of homosociality burgeoning into the homoerotic that ended act 2, Belvidera's outburst similarly arrests the audience's sexual sympathies. Placed directly after Aquilina and her Maid exit the first Nicky-Nacky scene, Belvidera's outburst, in a single instance, returns sex and sexuality to the tropes of she-tragedy. With Jaffeir's entrance, we return again to the conspiracy plot.

The challenging of binary oppositions and commitment to disorder that constitute the genre of Menippean satire often result in an aesthetic project that, through its playfulness and aesthetic of excess wrestle with the notion of a stable ontology. As Garry Sherbert in *Menippean Satire and the Poetics of Wit: Ideologies of Self-Consciousness in Dunton, D'Urfey, and Sterne* (1996) explains, Menippean satire operates at "the limits of language and its capacity to make meaning" (xiii). As a "self-conscious style," Sherbert alleges that "Menippean satire risks revealing the emptiness of signification, but not before the satirists display the full intensity of their intellectual and verbal exuberance" (xiii). In drama, Canfield argues that Menippean satire "pulls the rug out from under any set of values" and

> present[s] us with endings that not only make no sense but that make nonsense of previous positioning. Post-Revolution menippean satire forces us to confront a world grown secular and materialist, where God himself may be nothing but another tyrannical force of sheer will-to-power. The ludic is all that is left. (xviii)

The critical tradition surrounding *Venice Preserv'd* suggests that these aspects of Menippean satirical drama are also true of pre-Revolution Menippean satirical drama, and critics such as Paulina Kewes reduce the value of the play as a representation of political unrest to its portrayal of ambiguity: "plays such as *Venice Preserv'd* endorse the effectiveness of ambiguity as a mode of conveying political outlook" (376). Still, if "[t]he ludic is all that is left," then, in light of the

shift in perceptions of performance from a Shakespearean "All the world's a stage" to an Addisonian one where *most* of the world's a stage, the ludic represents a mode of crisis bringing about the play's metatheatricality, a condition in which the play exists "in an ecstatic relation with [itself]" (Sherbert xiv). The Nicky-Nacky scenes, in their trauma of the performative are thereby self-reflective for the characters in their multiple modes of reality and, more importantly, for the audience of voyeuristic spectators.

In her performative theorization of sadomasochism, Lynda Hart in her 1998 book, *Between the Body and the Flesh: Performing Sadomasochism*, takes a unique approach to the subject. While "[m]ost writing by academics on the subject of s/m has tended to focus primarily on identity formation" (3), Hart focuses instead on "what is means to engage in some of these practices—to *perform* them" (emphasis mine, 3). Hart thus conceives of desire as performative. She explains, "If desire is always in some sense 'theatrical,' it is so, as I understand it, in much the same way that the 'play' always takes place in the space between the spectators and the performers" (9); she elaborates,

> we can understand the "theatrical" as intrinsically "traumatic," for the ontology of performance takes place neither on the stage nor in the stalls. No matter how one arranges the architecture of the theater, there is always space in between—a gap, a space of fantasy that cannot be filled with content, where the play *must* take place. To enter fully into the performance, one must be willing to risk leaving the security of one's "self" behind and step into this void, trusting that others will be found there as well. Desire, like theater, takes place in the fantasy one constructs

with others, and like any communal experience, requires a relinquishing of control. We love, and we play, in order to learn how to survive letting go. (9-10)[26]

The Nicky-Nacky scenes are certainly traumatic insofar as they break open characters' identities and challenge the audience's sense of where the political and sexual begin and end. What Hart describes as "leaving the security of one's 'self'" reveals the multiple ontologies of the ludic taking place in the play-within-a-play ludic space that manifests the proto-sadomasochistic Nicky-Nacky scenes. We know that Aquilina has a sense of the performative because she tells her Maid to "[t]urn [Antonio] out again" (3.1.9) before she gives in and "plays along" with Antonio. In these scenes, Antonio's misunderstanding of Aquilina's speech expresses a literal epistemology different from the metaphorical epistemology expressed by Aquilina. Thus the ludic space of the Nicky-Nacky scenes operates differently for Aquilina and Antonio: to Aquilina they are an unfortunate fantasy; to Antonio they are a pleasurable reality.

Moments before Antonio's entrance, Aquilina tells her Maid that "I had rather meet a toad in my dish than that old hideous animal in my chamber tonight" (3.1.11-13). Moments later, Antonio will attempt to play-act a bull: "I broo, I say I broo, I broo, I broo. You won't sit down will you?—I broo— (*Bellows like a Bull, and drives her about*)" (87-89), only to then switch to the guise of a toad—"Ah toad, toad, toad, toad! Spit in my face a little, Nacky" (94-96). This misinterpretation of the metaphorical and literal meaning of words is what gives the scene its comic validity. While Harry M. Solomon has previously argued that "*Venice Preserv'd* should be

[26] Hart's book focuses on nineteenth and twentieth century literature. However, placed in a seventeenth-century discussion, Hart's concept of "self" proves inaccurate. As Charles Taylor argues in *Sources of the Self* that while "[o]ur modern notion of the self is related to, one might say constituted by, a certain sense (or perhaps a family of senses) of inwardness" that as "strong as this partitioning of the world appears to us, as solid as this localization may seem, and anchored in the very nature of the human agent, it is in large part a feature of our world, the world of modern, Western people" (111). In the seventeenth century, one might conceive of the self from the outside-in, rather than the vice versa.

interpreted as court propaganda designed to discredit inflammatory Whig rhetoric and to win moderate Whigs to the Tory cause" (289), he does not explicitly focus on Antonio's rhetoric in the Nicky-Nacky scenes. Regardless of Aquilina's intended purpose, she is ineffective again and again because Antonio has predetermined that everything she says is a flirtatious comment meant to increase his sexual pleasure. While Aquilina explains that what she does not like about Antonio is that he is "old, silly, impertinent, impotent" and that he is a "solicitous coxcomb, crazy in [his] head and lazy in [his] body" (37-39), Antonio attempts to play up his sexual attractiveness with the same descriptors: "[i]n the first place, madam, I am old, and consequently very wise, very wise, Madonna, d'ye mark that? In the second place, take notice, if you please, that I am a senator and, when I think fit, can make speeches, Madonna" (55).[27] Blanford Parker has explained that "the newly discovered 'literal'" (9) was central to neoclassical aesthetics. As such, Antonio's literalizations are similar to the way that Blunt's "blunt" misinterpretations of words in terms of neoclassical epistemological assumptions in Behn's *The Rover.* Antonio literalizes Aquilina's speech but perverts it toward his own sense of pleasure. Antonio, as a *senex* that is a member of the senate and in a position of power, represents the trope of aristocratic dotard. As such five years after *The Rover* was produced, we see that the *senex* still cannot quite get a handle on the epistemologies of the bourgeoisie's neoclassicism.

The Nicky-Nacky scenes have been referred to as such at least since Behn wrote her poem, "The Cabal at Nickey Nackeys." Indeed, "Nacky" is the first word that we hear Antonio utter: "Nacky, Nacky, Nacky—how dost do Nacky?" (14). His punning on the word "Nacky" and Aquilina's name directly associates her with the term: "Nacky did I say? Aye, Nacky, Aquilina,

[27] Moore explains that this reference to speech-making is a reference to the oratorical debates between Shaftesbury and Halifax. His source, Richard Lodge's *The History of England from the Restoration to the Death of William III* (1912) explains that "it was the almost unanimous verdict of listeners that Halifax was the victor" (qtd. 176-177).

lina, lina, quilina, quilina, Aqulina, Naquilina, Naquilina, Acky, Acky, Nacky, Nacky, Queen Nacky" (17-20). Here Antonio affectively breaks down Aquilina's identity by deconstructing her name from "Aquilina" to "Queen Nacky." Eric Partridge, author of *The Routledge Dictionary of Historical Slang* defines "nick-nack" as "[t]he female pudend" (3563). Thus, Antonio's opening speech is one which uses the rhetorical technique of synecdoche to represent Aquilina merely by her genitalia. This action of representation is an interesting one in light of the epistemological shift in language. As Kenneth Burke explains in *A Grammar of Motives* (1945), "it is through a variety of perspectives that we establish a character's reality" (504). Synecdoche is one of Burke's "Four Master Tropes"; he associates synecdoche with "representation" and points out that "reduction is representation" (507) and that "[a]ll such relationships" of part for whole "imply an integral relationship, a relationship of convertibility between the two terms" (508). Thus, Antonio's mode of representation for Aquilina is in terms of her genitalia. Similar to Rochester's "fucked" in "The Disabled Debauchee," Antonio's synecdocial representation of Aquilina as "Queen Nacky" operates as a speech act that re-orders power dynamics in the sense of Antonio as a human man using Queen Nacky who is here just an object. This works satirically since Antonio believes his Cartesian appropriation to be clever, when in reality he underestimates Aquilina's agency as the mistress of Pierre, the leader of the conspiracy.

The aesthetic shift from the aristocratic baroque to the bourgeois neoclassical that took place across the Restoration period also took form in shifting theoretical approaches to tragedy. Describing Renaissance and early seventeenth-century tragic theory, Eric Rothstein in *Restoration Tragedy: Form and the Process of Change* (1967) describes two main theories: "[o]ne is an aesthetic theory, attributing the spectator's delight to the poet's skill" (7) while the

other is one advanced by Thomas Rymer affirming that "the triumph of virtue and the workings of Providence provide tragic delight" (7). After the Restoration, Rothstein explains that

> a new pair of theories supplanted the old in popularity. One, proceeding from Descartes' physiology, held that the excitation of the passions was itself a sort of inner sensuality; the other, proceeding from Hobbes's psychology, that the feeling of personal satisfaction at their own relative safety shielded the witnesses of theatrical distress from the otherwise unmixed pain of their bared emotions. (8)

These changes in dramatic theory and spectacle reflect the shifting epistemological assumptions about language from the aristocracy's theological rendering to the bourgeoisie's invention of the literal. These theoretical shifts along with Restoration tragedy's peculiar focus on emotionalism had a further affect on the formal manifestations of tragedy wherein, as Rothstein explains, the new theories "work from the emotional situation rather than from the total order of the play: they call for drama with more passion, more distress; in short, for drama concentrated in a succession of moments, a series of effective incidents rather than a ramified totality" (8). In the developing genre of she-tragedy, which would not truly culminate until the 1690s, Marsden explains how *The Orphan* and *Vertue Betray'd* "established a pattern of mingled titillation and suffering, dependent on displaying the afflictions and ultimate death of a central female figure" (79). Marsden alleges that "it was *The Orphan* that became the prototype for she-tragedy as well as the play by which the pathos or 'distress' of other plays was calibrated" (79). Otway's *Venice Preserv'd* with its attempted but not realized scene of rape is not usually listed amongst the early forms of she-tragedies of the 1680s, but it is clearly associated with the genre's inception; it pushes and challenges its early conventions in important ways.

With the re-opening of the theaters and the placement of female bodies as new staged objects on the stage, traditional tragic modes spectacle became fraught with tension. Marsden explains how in this moment "[f]emale sexuality also becomes the focus of nascent class conflict as members of the growing merchant class voice their resentment at upper-class cultural hegemony in terms of the image of women they see on the stage" (6). As such, concerns between "the role of the spectator and the function of the female image" (7) became newly invigorated. Applying the concepts of "the spectator, the object, and the nature of scopic pleasure" (8) from film studies to the Restoration stage Marsden asks "to what degree could the audience's experience be said to be voyeuristic?" (10). Since Restoration theaters were so abuzz with activity and distraction, Marsden explains that "[a]lthough characters on the stage might—and did—play the voyeur, their counterparts in the audience would have had more difficulty [than a person viewing a film] participating in this 'voyeuristic phantasy'" (10). One method that playwrights used to supersede this difficulty is, as Marsden explains, theatrical spectacle. This theatrical spectacle most commonly manifested itself in the sexualized and objectified female image. In her third chapter, "Falling Women: She-Tragedy and Sexual Spectacle," Marsden "examines the mechanics of sight and gender as articulated by writers of the time and as embodied in she-tragedy" (15). In she-tragedies, "women are presented to the audience's gaze, established as desirable, and then driven into prolonged and often fatal suffering" (60). In Marsden's theorization of early modern scopophilia, she explains that "notions of spectatorship are strictly gendered, and we can see the construction of this sexual system both within the plays and within the theaters where they were performed" (68). As such, the dichotomous genders are asked to approach the experience of drama differently: "[w]here men are naturally expected to

feel 'passion' on watching a she-tragedy, women are asked to identify with the female victim, expressing their fellow suffering with ideologically correct tears" (68).

Venice Preserv'd's conspiracy plot recalls contemporary she-tragedy. The play, of course, features the attempted rather than the actual rape of Belvidera, but Marsden explains that "attempted rapes often demonstrate the moral degeneracy of those who seek to usurp power" (75). Moreover, Airey explains that "Otway invokes the language of rape to describe intrafamilial conflict and condemn a father who declines to protect his child" (159), which makes good sense considering that "[a]s the Exclusion Crisis itself represented a conflict within a single family, the language of paternalism transformed all civil unrest into acts of intrafamilial violence" (143). However, even if rape is only attempted in *Venice Preserv'd*, Belvidera's explicit references to the Roman myth of the rape of Lucrece: "Oh thou Roman Lucrece! / Thou couldst find friend to vindicate thy wrong" (3.2.8-9), connects the plot to contemporary she-tragedies largely associated with Lucrece-narratives. In *Venice Preserv'd*, Otway challenges the neat binaries of she-tragedy and subverts them. In this play the vessel of violent spectacle is an old senator, Antonio, a switch in expectations that arrests and supplants in baroque fashion.

I would like to suggest that what is uniquely occurring in the Nicky-Nacky scenes is an instance of passive male distress. In an era before the modern identities of homosexual, heterosexual, bisexual, etc. were fully articulated, the distinction between active and passive roles during the sex act was an important one for defining notions of masculinity.[28] Marsden explains that in Restoration tragedy "male characters do not suffer in the same manner as do women: their misery might be said to be active rather than passive, and they do not demonstrate

[28] Scholars trace the origins of such thinking to the ancient Greeks' words *erastes* (male lover) and *pais* (boy beloved). See also, George Haggerty. *Men in Love: Masculinity and Sexuality in the Eighteenth Century*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999. Print.

the pathos that their female counterparts do" (65-66).[29] As Marsden explains, this "distress" manifests itself in ways "[u]nlike the horror plays of the previous decade" (60); instead, "the spectacle in [she-tragedy] arises not from grisly scenes of blood or torture, but from displays of emotional and sometimes physical suffering inflicted on blameless victims who are almost inevitably female" (61). In the Nicky-Nacky scenes, however, it is Antonio who suffers blatant physical violence from Aquilina as the stage directions "*fetches a whip and bell*" and "*she whips him*" (3.1.121, 124) clearly demonstrate. To Perdue, this is an instance in which Otway "reinforce[s] the paradigm of homosocial control" (10). The masochization of Antonio makes him "Othered/feminized" (10). More than just "ego-gratification to the essential male spectator" (14), however, the spectacle of Antonio's masochism poses a challenge to the established trope of the female Lucrece figure.

In the second Nicky-Nacky scene, Aquilina threatens Antonio with a dagger. Moore explains that Antonio's fright at the dagger is "a hit at the reported attempts to assassinate Shaftesbury, as well as at his reputed cowardice" (177), and Perdue highlights the stage directions of the scene that leave Antonio "[lying] prostrate on the floor," a position that she describes as "coney[ing] total impotence" (15). Perdue suggests that "[t]he physical posture illustrates Antonio's ultimate destruction. Otway leaves the spectator with this last image of the flaccid Antonio who does not appear again" (15). More interesting, I think is the way in which Aquilina's threat flips the famous image of Jaffeir holding a dagger in a threatening stance over

[29] Airey's book interestingly challenges the idea that the voyeuristic theatrical spectacle of rape always focused on just a female image. Her last chapter traces the trope of male rape in the years following the Glorious Revolution in propaganda, Elkanah Settle's *The Female Prelate* (1680) and *Distress'd Innocence* (1690), and in Colley Cibber's *Xerxes: A Tragedy* (1699).

Belvidera on its head.[30] In an instance of Bakhtinian carnival, an old dotard, the *senex* Antonio, becomes the object of pathetic spectacle. The editors of the *Broadview* text, Munns and Canfield, felt the need to gloss Antonio's concluding exclamation, "Nay then I die, I die—I am dead already. (*Stretches himself out*)" (5.2.105-106) as a reference to "suffer[ing] *la petite mort* of sexual orgasm" (1028). *La petite mort* is usually associated with female orgasm, and moreover, it is perhaps not too much of a stretch to read the dagger of this scene as representative of a phallus. This is not the first time in the play that a dagger is indicative of phallic characteristics. For instance when Jaffeir enters in act 2 scene 3 "*with a dagger*" (135), Bedamore states that "His presence bears the show of manly virtue" (136). Thus, Antonio's fear of Aquilina holding a dagger can be read as a fear of phallic displacement, where the power of the phallus has been removed from the site of Antonio's penis into Aquilina's hand. Her response to Antonio's plea to hide the dagger—"Yes, in your heart I'll hide it" (63)—is a complicated image because of the reversal of gender roles that it entails. Being stabbed, "hid[ing] a dagger" in one's heart is a classical Roman trope for female deaths. Queen Dido killed herself with a Trojan sword, Virginia was killed by her father, Lucius Verginius, with a dagger, and Lucrece killed herself with a dagger. Here, the old *senex*, Antonio has been placed in the position of the classical character of Lucrece. Placed in the image of Lucrece, the Tory portrait of Shaftesbury pulls added weight. In carnivalesque fashion, the reversal demonstrates an instance of aristocratic baroque aesthetics.

Since "playwrights repeatedly [sought] the approval of 'the fair' in their prologues" (69), Marsden argues that "what we do know is that the *real* women in the audiences liked she-

[30] Probably the most famous depiction of this scene is James McArdell's print, "Mr. Garrick and Mrs. Cibber in the characters of Jaffier and Belvidera, Act 4., sc. 2," itself taken from a painting by Johann Zoffany, which was published in March of 1764.

tragedy" (69). Marsden interestingly points out, though, that "if these female spectators are to 'copy out the dame,' this identification has its masochistic elements as the women they witness spend much of their time onstage in anguish" (69). Thus, the Nicky-Nacky scenes turn all of these critical assumptions on their head. Where women are traditionally asked to identify with the suffering victim in a way that suggests masochistic elements, with Antonio, an old man placed in the role of distress, it follows that the men ought to identify with him in typically female masochistic fashion. More than just othering and feminizing Antonio in terms of homosocial power relations, the Nicky-Nacky scenes challenge the traditional trope of the Lucrece narrative. In true Menippean satiric form, in true baroque form, *Venice Preserv'd* displaces the traditional operative of voyeurism and re-appropriates it. In this, Otway is able to offer a challenge to the constraints of Restoration dramatic formalism. Certainly, *Venice Preserv'd* is a "Tory play," yet, it is also a play which comments critically on the genre of she-tragedy by turning the tables, especially since she-tragedy was generally ignored by Collier and his followers (Marsden 63). While Airey has succinctly explained and demonstrated the way in which "authors on either side of each political conflict drew on a single pool of atrocity imagery" (8), in *Venice Preserv'd*, Otway draws specifically on the Restoration version of Lucrece narratives and questions the audiences' range of *pathos* and by association the legitimacy of writing drama, tragedy especially, that hinges on didacticism and moral questions.

It is interesting that *Venice Preserv'd*, one of the seventeenth century's most perverse tragedies, would be produced during one of the most tightly censored period of Charles II's reign. Moore he notes that "[d]uring a period of four and a half years, the King, on account of the excitement of the Popish Plot, attended the theatre much less than usual" (169). Also interesting is that "[o]f the twelve plays that he is known to have seen, six were by Otway" (169). Moore

notes that during these four and a half years "[i]t was no easy task for the playwright to suit the exacting political requirements of the Court" and that "[t]he two royalist poets who seem to have given most satisfaction at this time were Dryden and Otway, both of whom, according to tradition, followed hints from Charles himself for the attacks directed at Shaftesbury" (169). That Otway would use the technique of Menippean satire, an aesthetic technique closely associated with the spirit of the baroque, therefore makes good sense for a royalist production of 1682 with such close proximity with the events of the Exclusion Crisis. Threats against the aristocracy came to a head with this political event, and the aristocracy responded with aesthetic techniques harkening to the Jacobean era, the birth of the Stuart reign.

Owen points out that the February 1682 prologue to *Venice Preserv'd* "questions the existence of the Popish Plot" (229). The Popish Plot was a frangible "plot"; Dolan explains that "narratives—circulated as rumors, offered in court as testimony, published—were the event" (158). As such, Tories would have been increasingly aware of the power of narrative in the hands of the Whigs as the new "unrelated, yet related" (Owen 1) event, the Exclusion Crisis, took shape. Still, Tories' attention to Whig propaganda narratives would have undoubtedly led self-reflectively to thinking through Tory narratives, initiating meta-narration, trauma, and ultimately anxiety as articulated in the eruptive baroque manifested as Menippean satire.

conclusion

The ending of John Vanbrugh's *The Relapse* (1696) is famously ambiguous. James E. Gill explains that *The Relapse* "having travelled back and forth from country to city and from fall to recuperation, ends with a satiric paean to ficklness [sic] in love and a dance featuring not the right couples of social comedy but the wrong couples of satire" (*Broadview* 476). Gill's notion of the satiric dance in which the wrong couples end up together recalls *The Country Wife*'s "dance of cuckolds" in which Horner explains, "But he who aims by women to be prized, / First by the men, you see, must be despised" (5.4.462-463). Thus, in this respect, *The Relapse*, as one of the crowning achievements of English drama in the 1690s, concludes with ecstatic disorder, a disorder that threatens to overwhelm in the vein of baroque exuberance rather than to relieve in mold of neoclassical catharsis. Yet, the play's status as a genuine "Restoration comedy" feels somewhat inappropriate.[31] In just four years William Congreve's triumphant production, *The Way of the World* (1700), which critics including Richard Kroll explain "is often thought of as one of the last true Restoration comedies" (541), would debut, a moment where the mode of aesthetics that I have called the Restoration baroque gave way to the neoclassical aesthetics of the Augustans.

Just as the concepts of modernity and empire began to take a firmer, more coherent hold on England and how the English thought themselves, so too did the bourgeoisie continue to rise along with its economic sense of self and aesthetic values. Thus, as Kristina Straub has pointed

[31] From a purely historical standpoint, 1696 had already seen the events of the Glorious Revolution play themselves out, Queen Mary II passed away in 1694, and William III now ruled England alone. Thus, the Restoration, as the event of Charles II's Restoration of the Stuart line was a period of the past. Still, the very recognizable rake, Loveless and fop, the newly deemed Lord Foppington, places the play in a genealogy with *The Country Wife*, George Etherge's *Man of Mode* (1676), and Aphra Behn's *The Rover* (1677), those plays of the 1670s which define the genre.

out in *Sexual Suspects: Eighteenth-Century Players and Sexual Ideology* (1992), in the late seventeenth century "a change was taking place in the way that the English public saw the actor: instead of the anonymous individual whose name seldom if ever appeared on a playbill, the actor was emerging as a personality, an object of public curiosity and inquiry" (24). Simon Callow has said that the odd spellings of words in *The Relapse*—"stap my vitals!"—were written by Vanbrugh as a reflection of the peculiar way that Colley Cibber pronounced Sir Novelty Fashion's words when he played him in *Love's Last Shift* (1696) (*Acting in Restoration Comedy*). Moreover, the wig that Cibber wore as Foppington was as much a celebration of Foppington as it was of Cibber. This shift had strong repercussions for the "triumph" of neoclassical, bourgeois aesthetics over baroque, aristocratic aesthetics. As a bourgeois understanding of self necessitates the notion of the individual as opposed to the family, certain agency is granted to characters in plays that had heretofore simply been othered. One such example is the different sense of agency that Amanda in *The Relapse* has over her domestic situation—indeed she almost takes up Worthy's offer—over the way that Horner's kissing of Margery disguised as "Margery's brother" functions as an exchange between men: Horner cuckolding Pinchwife.

With the debut of *The Way of the World*, Kroll is right to point out the "close affinities in theme and style to some of the greatest comedies of the 1670s" (541). Even with the experiment of seeing a rake in love that George Etherege stages in *The Man of Mode* (1677), Dorimant still remains largely driven by appetite; he desires to traffic women and have sex. The entire plot of *The Way of the World*, by contrast is centered not just on Mirabell wooing Millamant, but also making sure that he gains the entirety of her £12,000 dowry. Thus, the play features a rake who is interested in business rather than appetite. The famous Proviso Scene is further evidence of this switch; the entire exchange is conducted in business language such as Mirabell's rebuttal to a

Millamant: "Your bill of fare is something advanced in this latter account. Well, have I liberty to offer conditions, that when you are dwindled into a wife, I may not be beyond measure enlarged into a husband?" (4.230-233).[32]

While the end of neoclassicism is debated, the so-called "rise of the novel" that sprung from Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko* (1688) and Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), focusing on individual psychology and experience rather than the formal conventions of prosody and drama, ushered in a new aesthetic that, being similar epistemologically to neoclassicism's invention of the literal, was associated with the bourgeoisie. Thus, the fragmentation and discontinuity that so characterizes Laurence Sterne's *Tristam Shandy* (1760), while somewhat like the baroque's burst from neoclassicism, is a self-conscious "burst" that calls the developing conventions of the novel into being even as it breaks with them. The novel's realist project came to be reflected on the stage as the success of George Lillo's "bourgeois tragedy," *The London Merchant* (1730) demonstrates. In this play we see a demonstration of a larger shift in the aesthetics of tragedy from the overwhelming public spectacle of Restoration she-tragedy to the notion that private tragedy can teach moral lessons to the public. Compared to the prevalence of Lucrece-narratives in late Restoration she-tragedies, the success of *The London Merchant*, further demonstrates the shift in aesthetics from overwhelming public spectacle to the notion that private tragedy can teach moral lessons to the public.

Still, if literature can be thought of as being "resolv[ed]" in "two fundamental views of literature, the Aristotlean and the Longinian responses to literature, catharsis and ecstasis, through exuberance" (Sherbert xiv) as Northrop Frye has argued, then one might term neoclassicism and realism cathartic, with the baroque and the Gothic as ecstatic. In this, while it

[32] This quotation is from the *Broadview Anthology of Restoration and Early Eighteenth-Century Drama.*

is true that the baroque persisted in neoclassicism, a similar concomitant relationship between realism and the Gothic in Jane Austen's realist experiment with the social novel and Radcliffian, "female" Gothic in *Northanger Abbey* (1818) demonstrates what might be gained from an understanding of the baroque that is both appropriately structuralist and historicist. Thus, while this thesis has focused on the narrow historical scope of the English Restoration, I hope that it has also articulated interesting realizations about how aesthetics more generally operate and adapt to moments of cultural, social, economic, and epistemological shifts.

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vita

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