

LANGUAGE IN INDIA

Strength for Today and Bright Hope for Tomorrow

Volume 12 : 5 May 2012

ISSN 1930-2940

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Aphra Behn's "Rampant Lion of the Forest"

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Aphra Behn 1640-1689

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This article intends to analyze the character of Willmore, Behn's controversial character. Willmore is the hero, the rake and the rover of Behn's play, *The Rover*. *The Rover* or *The Banished Cavaliers* (1677) is a popular Restoration comedy. The rover in the play is Willmore, and Willmore refers to Charles II, the King. The subtitle "Banished Cavaliers" is a clear reference to Charles II's exile to France. Beach affirms, "This playful historical revision of the exile must have appealed directly to Charles II for a number of reasons, including the fact that he was well known as a lover of both boats and sailing" (12). Also, the last part of Belvile's statement that Willmore is "a rover of fortune, yet a prince aboard his little wooden World" (5.1.492-3) is a reference to the exile of Charles II. In the play, Willmore is presented as if he is spending his time running after women. Behn intelligently presents him in this image which is considered a metaphor for Charles II who is lecherous. Furthermore, *The Rover* part I ends in an ambiguous resolution; we do not know whether Willmore will succeed in his marriage or not! Yet, *The Rover* part II opens in a way where he recollects his wife Hellena who died in a voyage. This means that Willmore will not get children, so he returns to his old habit of searching for prostitutes. This is an innuendo implicitly linking it to the real story of Charles II who has no heir, and because of that the future of the kingdom will be as ambiguous as the marriage of Willmore. Furthermore, Behn intends to tell the audience that Willmore is a rake and a careless character; and yet he could not be questioned in his loyalty to his friends in particular, and his country in general. In addition, he is kind, loyal, and brave as Charles the King.

Willmore in the eyes of his friends

Scholars are wondering why Behn has nominated Willmore to be the rover in spite of his controversial personality. In addition to his reckless behavior, his family, work and residence are not known. What is known is only that he "come[s] from sea" (1.2.145), and he works with the prince. However, no one knows who the prince is! These questions are still not clearly answered. All the answers of the scholars are just predictions. Nevertheless, when Willmore appears for the first time, Belvile welcomes him, "Welcome ashore, my dear rover!" (1.2.56), and Frederick asks him, "why camest thou ashore? And where's the Prince?" (1.2.61-62). Willmore's answer is "He's well, and reigns still lord of the watery element. I must aboard again within a day or two,

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and my business ashore was only to enjoy myself a little this carnival” (1.2.63-65). To consider Willmore’s answer that the prince is “well,” it means that he is not the prince, the prince is someone else, so the rover (Willmore) is not a reference to Charles II but to another man; it is maybe to John Wilmot as Sullivan suggests:

Willmore was meant to recall Wilmot-John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, the dashing poet / rake who at that time was having an affair with the woman who was playing Hellena, Elizabeth Barry. At the end of *The Rover* Part II, she notes, Willmore persuades La Nuche to go away with him without benefit of marriage, just as Rochester did Barry. (335)

What concerns us here is that Willmore is the rover of the play. It is Belville who starts calling him a “rover,” also Blunt calls him at the end of the play, “my little rover” (5.1.536). Shyamala A. Narayan defines the rover as follows: “The word “rover” had multiple connotation in Aphra Behn’s time; it had not only the modern meaning of someone who wandered around the world, but also a sea-robber (pirate) and someone with a roving eye, an inconstant lover or male flirt” (131).

Willmore’s duty in the play is how to enjoy himself as he declares, “I must only to enjoy myself a little this carnival” (1.2.65). He also tells his friends, “I’m glad to meet you again in a warm climate, where the kind sun has its god – like power still over the wine and women-love and mirth are my business in Naples” (1.2.70-73). Moreover, he describes himself as “a rampant lion of the forest” (1.2.101). Therefore, he is regarded by audiences and critics as a rake and a man who seems most interested in finding how to satisfy his physical desires. Owens observes, “...Willmore is a rake, and to that extent he is a stock figure in Restoration comedy” (161).

Noticeably, Behn has followed the same pattern of the Restoration period of including rakes in her plays. A rake in Restoration comedy is a “libertine hero; he is witty, extravagant, irresistibly attractive to women, and promiscuous” (Goreau 226). Behn has her own rakes. Her rakes are also sexy, humorous, self-interested, self-conscious, libertine, snobbish and cavalier. They have got distinctive roles, and they are mostly the heroes of the plays. They are attractive and loved by all women including the dramatist.

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Willmore's behaviour with women disgusts and provokes even his friends; it is because of his sexual appetite. He has a different history with each one of the main female characters of the play: Florinda, Angellica and Hellena. However, when he informs his friends that he is not married, and he prefers to have only sex with the pretty women, Blunt calls him "thou 'rt a fortunate rogue!" (3.1.111). Belvile, his close friend, also rebukes him in many ways. He tells him, "The devil's in thee for *a mad fellow*; thou art always one at an unlucky adventure" (2.1.243-44), he again calls him "*mad fellow*" (3.4.68), and "*mad fellow* for a wench" (4.3.38). When Belvile hears the fight between Willmore and Antonio, he rumbles, "Ha! The *mad rogue*'s engaged in some unlucky adventure again" (3.5.53). Noticeably, when Belvile is angry with Willmore, he calls him "mad rogue" otherwise; he calls him "mad fellow."

Frederick says as soon as he sees Willmore, "the old complement, infinitely the better to see my dear *mad* Willmore again" (1.2.60-61). Moretta, a prostitute and Angellica's servant, calls him "a shameron," "a very beggar," "a pirate-beggar," "tatterdemalion," "English picaroon," "rogue" (2.2.151-59), and "swaggerer" (3.1.156). When Angellica makes sure that he prefers Hellena to her despite his vows, she grumbles, "*Perjured man!* How I believe thee now" (3.1.181), she adds, "And broke his word last night – *false perjured man!*" (4.2.137), also she affirms, "Thou, *perjured man*" (5.1.241).

Hellena, his future wife, knows well his personality from the first meeting. Therefore, she sarcastically tells him, "there be men too, as fine, *wild, inconstant fellows* as your-self..." (3.1.241). Hellena does not only call him "wild" and "inconstant," but she also calls him "mad," she tells Florinda, "would I had never seen my *mad* monsieur" (3.1.13), and she adds, "I cannot choose but be angry and afraid when I think that *mad fellow* should be in love with any body but me" (3.1.22-24). This word "mad" is mostly used to describe Willmore. Remarkably, Florinda in her turn calls him, "filthy beast" (3.5.32) when he tries to rape her, and he assures, "I am so" (3.5.33). In her introduction to *The Rover, The Feigned Courtesans, The Lucky Chance, The Emperor of the Moon*, Jane Spencer considers him "a bemused bungler than a clever plotter" (xiii).

Moreover, Willmore is perfidious because he once attacks Antonio, and Belvile has been held responsible. Belvile denies the charge of being the attacker and insists that he is not the man who stabs someone by surprise (4.1.11-17). Belvile's reply implicitly conveys the conclusion that Willmore is a coward because he stabs Antonio by surprise. All these epithets match Willmore, so he is really a "rampant lion of the forest" as he describes himself.

Willmore's sexual attack on Florinda

Florinda is the sister of Hellena and Pedro. She is in love with Belvile, but her father wants her to marry the elderly Don Vincentio, and her brother wants her to marry Don Antonio, his friend. Therefore, Belvile decides to rescue her at night with the help of Willmore and Frederick. Willmore precedes them to find Florinda waiting in the garden wearing a nightdress. Because he is drunk, he mistakes her for a prostitute.

Before seeing Florinda in the garden, he sees the gate of the garden open. So, he decides to sleep there. He assures, "what have we here, a garden! A very convenient place to sleep in ..." (3.5.14-15). This is a proof of his unstable life, the life of the "forest." It is unexpected to see the representative of the King walking drunk at night, hallucinating about finding a prostitute and ready to sleep in a garden. Indeed, he spends his time in vain; he frankly reveals that when he says, "Love does all day the soul's great empire keep / But wine at night lulls the soft god asleep" (3.1.284-85). So, Willmore's life has been spent in a useless manner. He spends the days in searching for women and nights in drinking.

It is also amazing to see him considering even the normal makeup of a woman, her dress and her perfume as signals of her desire to have sex. Worse than that, he regards them as signs of a whore. In his argument with Florinda in the garden, he states, "'t's a delicate shining wench – by this hand she's perfumed, and smells like any nosegay" (3.5.24-26). Because he feels that, he is "a good Christian!" (1.2.51-52), he attempts to persuade her to sleep with him. He assumes that there is no sin in doing so, since she bring a Christian cannot deny him (a Christian) anything. He states:

I am so, and thou ought'st the sooner to lie with me for that reason – for look you child, there will be no sin in't, because 'twas neither designed nor premeditated Thou art therefore (as thou art a good Christian) obliged in conscience to deny me nothing. (3.5.33-40)-

Strangely, he interprets the sitting of Florinda in the garden as a direct invitation to him to have sex. She threatens him saying she would cry “rape,” but he indifferently replies:

A rape! Come, come, you baggage, you lie. What, I'll warrant you would fain have the world believe now that you are not so forward as I. no. not you. Why, at this time of night, was your cobweb door set open, *dear spider – but to catch flies?* (3.5.52-55)

When she resists, he attempts to rape her. However, he is stopped by Belvile and Frederick. Florinda runs off, and Willmore and Belvile fight, but Frederick stops them. Boebel writes about the male motivation for rape in Behn's plays:

Behn's rapists are not aroused by the beauty of their victim; drunken, in the dark, they may not even see her very clearly. Rape, far from being an expression of uncontrollable sexual desire, may be an act of violence to punish, for the crime of being female. (65)

Willmore tries to rape Florinda twice, once in the garden, and then when he meets her in the street. In the second time, Florinda is masked like other women, but when she sees her brother, she tries to leave the place lest he recognize her. Because she is afraid to be exposed, she looks behind her. Willmore interprets her quick glance as a matter of courting. He states, “There she sails; she looks back as she were willing to be boarded” (4.3.64-65).

Willmore enjoys Angellica's charms for free

Angellica is the prostitute of the play. As soon as Willmore hears about her, he rushes into an affair with her. Yet, he cannot pay the money. So, he feels that the main hindrance in front of him getting Angellica is poverty. He remarks about the bitter fact that if he is rich, he can win her. He grumbles: “... a plague of this poverty – of which I ne'er complain but when it

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hinders my approach to beauty which virtue ne'er could purchase" (2.1.102-05), he adds, "...how sweetly they chime! Pox of poverty, it makes a man a slave, makes wit and honour sneak, my soul grew lean and rusty for want of credit" (3.1.112-14). Due to the reason that he cannot win Angellica for the lack of money, he tries to steal her picture.

Despite he has not enough money, he is able to seduce Angellica by his charming words. He praises her ability to develop wealth, then he renders himself as a poor gallant who has nothing except true love: "Yes, I am poor - but I am a gentleman" (2.2.48). Actually, he talks to her in a seductive way that she is being astonished to hear such sweet words. She remarks, "His words go through me to the very soul" (2.2.70). He affirms Angellica's statement that she is being affected by his words nearly at the end of the play. He reminds her: "...nothing makes a woman so vain as being flattered" (5.1.259).

However, when she shows him some love, he starts mocking her in many ways. She tells him that she loves him, but he murmurs to himself in a way that indicates that he does not think of love: "Ha - death, I'm going to believe her" (2.2.99-100). He values love in the form of sex that is why he asks her: "Throw off this pride, this enemy to bliss, / and show the pow'r of love; 'tis with those arms / I can be only vanquished, made a slave." (2.2.121-23). She is ready to sleep with him, but she asks him to swear to love her forever; however, he murmurs to himself, "Death, how she throws her fire about me soul!" (2.2.133). Nonetheless, he promises her in order to have sex, despite the fact he has already promised Hellena that he will not look for another woman. After his promise, Angellica agrees to let him sleep with her.

Willmore is able to gain her heart not because he has money, but because he numbs her by his sweet words. The affectionate and tender talk has affects sometimes more than money and sword. Surely, he can get her body if he has money, but he cannot obtain her heart. On the other hand, Willmore cannot get Angellica if he uses force as he uses it with Florinda because Angellica is powerful and she has her supporters. He simply uses his false tongue and sweet words. Thus, Willmore is a lamb with Angellica but a "rampant lion" with Florinda.

To prove that Angellica is powerful, consider Belvile's speech when he warns Willmore of the consequence of entering Angellica's house: "Dost know the danger of entering the house

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of an incensed courtesan?” (2.1.257-58). Frederick also warns Willmore: “...death, man, she’ll murder thee” (2.1.264). Angellica’s power is reinforced by her when she discusses with Willmore the matter of taking her picture. He starts rendering some excuses, but she interrupts him, “I send for you to ask my pardon sir, not to aggravate your crime – I thought I should have seen you at my feet imploring it” (2.2.8-9). Later, when Belvile, Frederick and Blunt come again to Angellica’s house to retrieve Willmore after spending two hours with her, Belvile murmurs, “I rather think she has cut his throat and is fled” (3.1.75).

At any rate, Angellica honestly loves him; therefore, she sacrifices all what she has possessed, her heart, her body and her money. This indicates her sincere devotion and kindness. Also, she is ready to alter her entire life in order to please him. She frankly tells him she despises her work as a prostitute, but she is obliged to do so to be able to live. Unfortunately, he perjures the vow he has made to her as soon as he meets Hellena in the street. Hellena asks him about his meeting with Angellica, but he denies it although Hellena hears him bragging of having sex for two hours. In fact, his love for women is not to marry one but to have sex with a largest possible number of women. When he has got sex with Angellica, he desires to have the same with Hellena. Angellica seems to have expired and Hellena is new. He affirms, “For though to worse we change, yet still we find / New joys, new charms, in a new miss that’s kind” (4.2.390-91). In the hope of getting sex with Hellena, he again promises her and swears to remain loyal forever.

Angellica who is in disguise hears him promising Hellena of the same promise he had made to her. She realizes that he betrayed her, and he only exploited her love to have sex with her. Later, she tries to convince him of her true love, also she gives him five hundred crowns. Strangely, Willmore is seeking money to be able to sleep with her, but after sleeping with her for free, he receives money instead of giving her. By this act, Behn indirectly displays Willmore as a prostitute and not Angellica. Angellica knows well that the man may sell himself for a wife who can pay the most. She tells him:

Pray tell me, sir, are not you guilty of the same mercenary crime? When a lady is *proposed to you for a wife, you never ask how fair, discreet, or virtuous she is, but what’s her fortune – which if but small, you cry, “She will not do my business”*

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and basely leave her, though she languish for you – say, is not this as poor?
(2.2.85-89)

Narayan avers this point. She states, “Typically, the comedies portray the life of hedonistic young men who fill their leisure with drinking, whoring, theatre-going, and wit. They need money, but have no resources for earning it except through marriage to an heiress” (126). Angellica is not an heiress, but she earns money through prostitution. Therefore, she regards his pretense of love as a way to get her money and to get honour. She remarks, “I know what arguments you’ll bring up against me – fortune, and honour” (4.2.362-63).

Notwithstanding, he accuses women of not keeping their honour simply because they have the minds of women. He says, “I am of a nation that are of opinion a woman’s honour is not worth guarding when she has a mind to part with it” (5.1.513-14). He directs his speech to Hellena, but his speech can be taken as a general attitude towards women.

Thus, it is unacceptable to dishonour Angellica especially after he has been sexually satisfied. It is really unjust because it is he who always gives her a holy promise to keep his love; unfortunately, he goes back on it after winning her heart, taking her money, and satisfying his sexual appetite; it is indeed the behaviour of the “rampant lion of the forest.”

Willmore and Hellena’s “marriage bed”

The young Hellena is designed for a nun. To entertain themselves, she and her sister Florinda go to Carnival. She meets Willmore there. Willmore is the one who starts courting Angellica, but Hellena is the one who starts attracting his attention. Willmore is humorous and he is able to say what usually makes women happy by cunningly describing their beauty, gorgeousness, dress and speech. When he feels that woman is under the influence of his sweet words, he shows his desire for her body. He tries to do the same with Hellena, but Hellena is of course not Angellica. When they come back, Hellena tells Florinda that she feels she loves Willmore for his “disobedience” and “mischief”: “Now hang me if I don’t love thee for that dear disobedience. I love Mischief strangely, as most of our sex do, who are come to love nothing else...”(1.1.22-24).

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Behn has a negative view towards rustic men that is why she prefers in her plays the cavalier. Behn wants to say that the man who tries to seduce women sexually is better than the one who is rustic and a stick-in-the-mud. In *The Rover*, for example, there are many good characters, but they are not libidinous and humorous like Willmore.

Once when Hellena reveals her disappointment of becoming a nun, Willmore replies to her complaint in an unexpected manner: “There’s no sinner like a young saint” (1.2.167). From his speech, one can infer that Willmore does not differentiate between a nun and a prostitute. According to the audience, he should, at least, show Hellena some sympathy towards her cause, yet he is resolved to have an affair with her. He reassures her: “...’tis more meritorious to leave the world when thou hast tasted and proved the pleasure on’t. Then, ’twill be a virtue in thee, which now will be pure ignorance” (1.2.175-77). When he is talking to her, his desire for sex has been changed to become an obsession: “... oh, I’m impatient – thy lodging, sweetheart, thy lodging, or I’m a dead man!” (1.2.186-87), and his sexual obsession continues throughout the play. Quite simply, his talks from the beginning to the end of the play are about only sex. It is noticed that in all occasions, he does not talk about the day-to-day issues, and when there is such a talk about daily life, he changes it into a kind of sexual attitude.

However, Willmore has slept with Angellica despite his solemnly sworn faith for Hellena. Then he assures Hellena for the second time that he will be loyal, and he again promises her of not going to sleep with any other women. Meanwhile, he tries his best to coax her into sharing his bed:

My time’s as precious to me, as thine can be; therefore, dear creature, since we are so well agreed, let’s retire to my chamber, and if ever thou wert treated with such savoury love! Come- my bed’s prepared for such a guest, all clean and sweet as thy fair self. (5.1.418-21)

Strangely enough, his speech “my bed’s prepared for such a guest, all clean and sweet as thy fair self” indicates to his libido because his bed is prepared well to receive any lady and at any time. Dramatically, his mind has been crammed with the obsession of sex that he always makes his bed ready for the new victim. This reminds us of his first reaction towards women when he hears

Blunt talking about “Roses¹ for every month” (1.2.80), he inquires immediately: “where do these *roses* grow? I would fain plant some of ’em in a bed of mine” (1.2.83-84). Paradoxically, roses do not grow on the bed, yet he uses the term ‘roses’ in its figurative sense in which it really reflects his libido. Therefore, he imagines that:

I’ll be baked with thee between a pair of sheets, and that’s thy proper still; so I might but strew such *roses* over me, and under me - fair one ... I would go near to make some body smell of it all the year after. (1.2.86-90)

At the time when he sees a woman throwing herself into man’s hands, he murmurs: “Death! Just as I was going to be damnably in love, to have her led off! I could pluck that *rose* out of his hand, and even kiss the bed the bush grew in” (1.2.95-97). As it is clear, he interprets every beautiful thing or action he sees on the side of women to be some kind of sexual symbol.

Hellena is able to win him because she does not only show him love but she also uses her intelligence, wit and spiel. She does not allow him to sleep with her; meanwhile, she pursues him and tries in many ways to attract him. So, she finally succeeds in winning him. Kreis-Schinck remarks that Hellena’s “victory over the rover requires the temporary freedom to follow him, to rove like him, even to meet with her rival” (160). One of her witty tasks is her disguise as a boy to disrupt the special meeting between Willmore and Angellica, and she competently succeeds in her effort. In recognition of her skill, Willmore praises her, “... I cannot get her out of my Head she proves damnably ugly, that I may fortify myself against her tongue” (2.1.7-9). In particular, Willmore is known of his sexual desire that he looks to women from this point. Thus, he praises Hellena with such sexual words, but he never forgets her wit. He describes her: “such black eye! Such a face! Such a mouth! Such teeth! And too much wit” (3.1.268-69).

Willmore is known as a rake and a man of sexual mania, and in his rush to sex, he seems to be equal to Hellena. Hellena also thinks too much of having sex but in legitimate ways. She observes Willmore’s conduct as hers; therefore, she openly tells him: “O’ my conscience, that will be our destiny, because we are both of one humour; I am inconstant as you ...” (3.1.169-70).

¹ Roses mean courtesans as Belvile, Willmore’s friend, defines them. He says, “They’re courtesans, who here in Naples, are to be hired by the month” (1.2.81-82).

Then she confidently assures him: “well, I see our business as well as humours are alike...” (3.1.182). Anannya Dasgupta states the correlation between Willmore and Hellena:

Willmore can put the blame of his unruly sexual appetite on nature and carry on considering ever woman a whore till of course he meets his match in Hellena whose equal claims to sexual liberty and inconstancy effect. (147)

Indeed, they seem to be the exact image of each other. Her desire to get Willmore even if he does not love her is exposed by her when she stresses: “I don’t intend every he that likes me shall have me, but he that I like” (3.1.37). Dasgupta remarks about their relationship: “What Willmore does to Angellica, Hellena does to Willmore. She arouses and frustrates his desire, leads him on with the promise of one thing and lands him in a situation quite beyond his bargain” (148). However, Hellena’s pursuit surpasses Angellica’s conduct towards Willmore. Willmore is being hotly pursued by Hellena while Angellica does not impose herself on him. It is he who visits her and pleads with her to sleep with him. Indeed, Hellena attends every occasion he goes to, and she has nothing to do except attracting his attention. Annette Kreis-Schinck <http://www.google.co.in/search?hl=en&tbo=1&biw=1280&bih=619&tbm=bks&tbm=bks&q=in+author:%22Annette+Kreis-Schinck%22&sa=X&ei=vRVvTpqOCOTnrAfHt7yWBw&ved=0CCwQ9Ag> confirms that Hellena “breaks the rules of the amorous chase by envisioning herself in the position of a hunter” (158).

Meanwhile, she is intelligent enough to refuse to give her body. Surely, if she submits to his desire, he will be sexually satisfied, and then he will not marry her as it happens with Angellica. Anand Prakash discusses the contradiction between Hellena and Angellica. Prakash States:

But there is also a notable discordance between Hellena and Angellica, that of sex as a commodity practised by the latter alone. Hellena may be amoral and sensual but she doesn’t represent, as Angellica does, the crass nature of acceptance or sex as a commodity that demeans the woman in every female. (185)

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Willmore is not a man of love, but he is a slave for his sexual desire that he obeys the orders coming from the desired woman. Hellena requests him to “kneel – and swear” (3.1.251), and he is really an obedient man. Then she orders him to “kiss the book” (3.1.255) as a sign of holy religious oath. Hellena is able to entrap him in her web. When he feels that there is no way of getting sex except through marriage, he frankly tells her that he is “perilously afraid of being in love” (5.1.399). Love leads to marriage which is something he does not like. This is clear in his reply to Hellena when she once asked him, “And would you fall to, before a priest says grace? (3.1.151). He rejects the idea of marriage and tells her, “Oh, fie, fie, what an old, out of fashioned thing hast thou named? (3.1.152). Prakash beautifully explains Willmore’s love:

Willmore, the rover, is initially far from being a lover – he has also no capability of, or inclination for it. As his name suggests, he (Will-more) is to wish for more and more of gaiety and enjoyment. (177)

Sullivan also remarks to the significance of the name, “It might be recalled, for instance, that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the word “will” was synonymous with sexual desire” (335). Frederick, at the beginning of the play, clarifies the reality of Willmore’s love. When Willmore tries to explain his love towards women, Frederick interrupts and reminds him that his love is just like “a long voyage at sea” (1.2.98). Frederick’s statement proves that Willmore does not want to distract himself in love and marriage because love is fruitless; it is sex which is really lucrative; therefore, he comes ashore to have entertainment for “a day or two.” However, Willmore and Hellena do not love each other in the way that should be, but they love to have sexual activity, so their marriage is based on a kind of misunderstanding. This hypothesis is proved in their conversation at the end of the play. In reality, they know each other’s names only before the celebration of their marriage. It is really unimaginable to decide to celebrate their marriage while they do not even know the names.

WIL. But harkee - the bargain is now made; but is it not fit we should know each other’s names, that when we have reason to curse one another hereafter (and

people ask me who 'tis I give to the devil) I may at least be able to tell what family you came of.

HEL. Good reason, captain; and where I have cause (as I doubt not but I shall have plentiful) that I may know at whom to throw my- blessings- I beseech ye your name.

WIL. I am called Robert the Constant.

HEL. A very fine name; pray was it your falconer or butler that christened you? Do they not use to whistle when then call you?

WIL. I hope you have a better, that a Man may name without crossing himself, you are so merry with mine.

HEL. I am called Hellena the Inconstant. (5.1.458-70)

Furthermore, Willmore ends the play with three lines that reveal his desire for sex but not for marriage. In these lines, he thanks Hellena for her courage in insisting upon marrying him in spite of the many difficulties she has faced. He thanks her not because she will be his wife but because he will get “marriage bed.” He concludes, “Egad thou’rt a brave girl, and I admire thy love and courage. / Lead on, no other dangers they can dread, / Who venture in the storms o’th’ *marriage bed*” (5.1.551-53).

According to this, one has the right to argue that he simply marries Hellena because he cannot find a whore; and this notion has been confirmed in *The Rover II*. In *The Rover II*, Hellena does not appear. She has died in a voyage only a few months after her marriage. So, Willmore has returned to his old habit of searching for whores.

In short, Willmore’s excessive desire for sex and his praise for everything that centers around it present him as really the “rampant lion of the forest.”

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12 : 5 May 2012

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