LIBERTINES REAL AND FICTIONAL IN THE WORKS OF ROCHESTER, SHADWELL, WYCHERLEY, AND BOSWELL

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This dissertation examines the Restoration and eighteenth-century libertine figure as it appears in John Wilmot, Second Earl of Rochester's *Satyr against Mankind*, "The Maim'd Debauchee," and "Upon His Drinking a Bowl," Thomas Shadwell's *The Libertine*, William Wycherley's *The Country Wife*, and James Boswell's *London Journal, 1762-1763*. I argue that the limitations and self-contradictions of standard definitions of libertinism and the ways in which libertine protagonists and libertinism in general function as critiques of libertinism. Moreover, libertine protagonists and poetic personae reinterpret libertinism to accommodate their personal agendas and in doing so, satirize the idea of libertinism itself and identify the problematization of "libertinism" as a category of gender and social identity. That is, these libertines misinterpret—often deliberately—Hobbes to justify their opposition and refusal to obey social institutions—e.g., eventually marrying and engaging in a monogamous relationship with one's wife—as well as their endorsement of obedience to nature or sense, which can include embracing a libertine lifestyle in which one engages in sexual encounters with multiple partners, refuses marriage, and questions the existence of God or at least distrusts any sort of organized religion.

Since any attempts to define the word "libertinism"—or at least any attempts to provide a standard definition of the word—are tenuous at best, it is equally tenuous to suggest that any libertines conform to conventional or standard libertinism. In fact, the literary and "real life" libertines in this study not only fail to conform to such definitions of libertinism, but also reinterpret libertinism. While all these libertines do possess similar characteristics—namely affluence, insatiable sexual appetites, and a rebellion against institutional authorities (the Church,

reason, government, family, and marriage)—they often misinterpret libertinism, reason, and Hobbesian philosophy. Furthermore, they all choose different, unique ways to oppose patriarchal, social authorities. These aberrant ways of rebelling against social institutions and their redefinitions of libertinism, I argue, make them self-satirists and self-conscious critics of libertinism as a concept.

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CHAPTER 1

LIBERTINES REAL AND FICTIONAL IN ROCHESTER, SHADWELL, WYCHERLEY, AND BOSWELL: AN INTRODUCTION

The word "libertinism," writes Samuel Mintz, "was used in England as early as 1563" (134). Mintz summarizes the history of libertinism as follows:

> At first it referred to free-thinking of antinomian opinion. Within a few decades it acquired a second meaning—the disregard of moral restraint, especially in relations between the sexes… Hobbes was a 'libertine' because he denied religion; the courtiers and wits were 'libertines' because they led dissolute, immoral lives. What Hobbes's critics tried to show was the second type of libertinism resulted from the first, that the immoral conduct of the courtiers was inspired by the free-thinking opinions of Hobbes. (134)

"Antinomian" refers to those who "over-throw the Law Morall, they hold that Christ came to abolish it, that a believer hath nothing to do with keeping the Commandments, that the Gospel takes away all obedience to the Commandments" (Byfield 29). Antinomians are also "against all urging of doing duty of Humiliations, of Repentance for sins after justification, of praying for pardon of sin by a believer," and "hold that the Law ought not to be Preached to believers, with a great deal more of the like pernicious Leaven: all which favoureth of ignorance, pride, and conceitedness, and of affectation of licentiousness, and lawless liberty: the spirit of Libertinism inspireth these men" (Byfield 29). Libertines qualify as antinomians in that they rebelled against social institutions—e.g., the Church, marriage, family, and the government—and the restrictions these institutional authorities placed upon them. For these reasons, many have often thought of libertines as socially subversive.

Etymologically, the word "libertinism" evolved from a strictly religious, connotative definition in the Protestant Reformation to sexual, political, and anti-religious implications during the Restoration and Eighteenth century. James Grantham Turner writes, "The religious meanings of 'libertinism,' grouped under a single heading by the *Oxford English Dictionary*,

actually refer to two quite distinct phenomena, the mocking denial of the truth and relevance of Scripture, and the intensification of spirituality among radical Protestants" (78). In fact, John Calvin criticizes Libertinism and focuses primarily on French-speaking followers of Libertinism located in Holland, Belgium, and Lower Germany (Farley 163). According to Calvin, this "aberrant movement within Protestantism" was founded by Quintin of Hainaut, Bernard of Moulins, and Claude Perceval in 1534 (Farley 163 and Calvin 200-201). These Protestant Libertines viewed the "'devil,' 'world,' and 'sin' as imagining something to be real that is nonexistent…They understand all of these things under a single word, i.e. "imagination" or "cuider," which can also mean "belief," "supposition," and "thought" (234). Sixteenth-century Libertines applied this idea of "cuider" to Jesus Christ and created him "out of the Spirit of God which is in us all" (259). This creation of Christ germinated from what the libertines called "suppositions" or the "world" or "cuider" (259).

In the 1500s, Libertines additionally advanced an idea that "we are all Christs, and what was done in Him He has performed in us;" they make Jesus Christ "an image or model who represents those things required for our salvation, yet they imagine that what was done in Him has also been done in us" (260). Libertines agreed with basic Christian theology in terms of the following: 1. since Christ was crucified and is part of us all, then all of humankind experienced this same crucifixion and 2. Christ and his followers died for the sins of humanity. The Libertines diverged from other Christian sects in that they believed that since Christ abolished sin and all humans possess the "Spirit of God," then humans are not susceptible to hardships, maladies, and other trials put upon them (260). Calvin accused Libertines of viewing Jesus Christ as "nothing but an idol…which they carry about to the end that they might pretend that they are free of God and of the world and are absolved from doing any good" (260). Libertines,

according to Calvin, glorified and justified sex outside of traditional marriage and engaged in what they called "spiritual marriages" (Turner 78 and Calvin 279). Calvin dismisses these marriages as sinful and accuses the libertines of allowing their libidos to guide them, "while claiming to experience an ecstatic return to the paradisal state, where good and evil vanish and *le sens naturel* takes over" (Turner 78 and Calvin 279-280).

During the Restoration in 1660, libertinism evolved into a more secular, social, and political idea. When Charles II ascended the throne and restored the Stuart monarchy to England, the definition of libertinism changed from an aberrant, deplorable, blasphemous sect of Protestantism, to an anti-religious philosophy the king himself embraced. As a result, libertinism in many ways became the cultural norm rather than a philosophical rebellion against the cultural norm. Politically, England metamorphosed from a conservative republic ruled by a Lord Protectorate that, among other things, banned the theater, to a more carefree monarchy ruled by a king who qualified as a libertine. After his exile in France, Charles II, of course, brought a French influence to libertinism and England in general. This influence resulted in a more hedonistic, secular, and sexual form of libertinism and a royal court whose members included many libertines. Libertinism, then, transformed from a term denoting a religious movement within Protestantism to a secular philosophy that spurned social institutions, including religion, and promoted sexual profligacy.

While self-defined Restoration and eighteenth-century libertines arguably let their libidos dictate their lives, this modern libertine figure is not as clearly defined as the Protestant Movement that preceded it in the 1500s. In fact, as Dale Underwood argues, "libertine" is not "readily susceptible to precise definition" because "ideas of libertinism have commonly the blurred and eclectic character of popular thought" (12). Turner writes that Restoration and

eighteenth-century Libertinism "refers not to a single entity with different facets, but to three distinct movements of thought or clusters of attitudes: religious ('spiritual') libertinism, philosophical libertinism (the combination of antireligious skepticism and scientific materialism studied by Rene Pintard), and sexual libertinism" (79). Though a standard definition of Restoration and Eighteenth Century libertinism does not exist—at least not a precise one—a commonality in definitions of libertinism in this period includes a rejection of the rigidity perpetuated by religious and social institutions. Libertines not only "mock[ed] Scripture and the liturgy," but also "rebelled against the rules of upper-class civility even though it is precisely those rules that give them the license to be uncivil" (Webster 80-81). As Underwood writes, "The libertine considered human laws and institutions as mere customs varying with the variations of societies and characteristically at odds with Nature as, of course, with 'right reason'" (Underwood 14). These institutions and laws against which they revolted to various degrees include marriage, the Church, family, and traditional views and standards regarding courtship and love—libertines considered heterosexual love as "physical appetite" (14).

Despite their disdain for social institutions, some of the most famous Restoration libertines were members of the royal court and not only subjects of, but intimately acquainted with King Charles II. In fact, Charles II often joined libertines such as John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, Charles Sedley, William Wycherley, and George Villiers, Second Duke of Buckingham at brothels, imbibed with them at private houses, and "protect[ed] them from some of the consequences of their behavior" (Webster 11). Libertines, the above five included, often questioned "social, political, and moral values" and were particularly notorious for their public drunkenness, promiscuity, sodomy, subversion, assault, and irreverence (2). The libertines' insatiable need for various kinds of pleasure and instant gratification of these pleasures often

placed them “at odds with England’s many figures of traditional authority: London’s constables; women’s husbands, fathers, and employers; and England’s king and his ministers” (2). Eventually, however, the group of libertines consisting of Rochester, Sedley, Buckingham, and Wycherley disbanded by the 1680s due to political and artistic differences arising between the members (12).

In addition to their membership at court and their positions in the king’s favor, libertines were typically young, upper-class men who not only adopted their own “philosophy,” but also rebelled against the philosophy of their fathers. They rejected virtues such as discretion, monogamy, and responsibility, and regarded them as “suitable to those whose senses have been dulled by age or natural incapacity” (Chernaik 25). This rebellion against such virtues is exemplified in their endorsement and often reinterpretation of Hobbesian philosophy and the principles outlined in Thomas Hobbes’s *Leviathan*. Hobbes promotes following sense and nature, but not without similarly obeying reason. According to Hobbes, humans should pay attention to and follow nature and what Hobbes calls “right reason”—a version of reason that combines nature or sense with reason. Hobbes writes, “For all men by nature reason alike, and well, when they have good principles” (Hobbes 21). Humans, then, not only reason similarly to one another, but also live according to a facet of reason that allows nature to influence it and vice/versa. Throughout *Leviathan*, Hobbes implicitly opposes solely endorsing reason or nature and supports following a school of thought that advocates a healthy balance or integration of the two ideas.

Restoration and eighteenth-century libertines, however, often misinterpreted Hobbes and portrayed his philosophical tenets as a support for radical ethical and moral relativism. Chernaik writes:

> Libertines like Rochester, a professed disciple, reinterpreted Hobbes, choosing to emphasize certain aspects of his philosophical system and ignore others as it suited them, and in the process—quoting or paraphrasing Hobbes out of context as unscrupulously as his opponents did—transformed arguments intended to prove beyond doubt the absolute necessity for submission to authority into a manifesto of 'the natural liberty of Man.'" (24)

The libertines, in fact, promoted a world Hobbes opposed—the state of nature, which is a state in which humans solely obey instincts and refuse to follow the strictures imposed upon them by social institutions such as marriage, family, the Church, and government. Hobbes viewed nature as an "intolerable condition from which man, by the iron laws of self-preservation, must seek at all costs to escape" (24). Instead of challenging *tyrannical* institutional authority, libertines rebelled against all authority except natural law because according to them, natural law allows them freely and without institutional intervention or infliction of punishment to pursue their own whims without consideration of others.

Literary examples of Restoration libertines include the poetic personae in John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester's "Love and Life, A Song," John Vaughn, Earl of Carberry's "Song," and Sir Charles Sedley's "Out of French." Each of these libertine narrators defies reason and endorses their views of Hobbesian philosophy which dictates that one follow instincts and sense, while rejecting the Church, marriage, family, and government. For instance, the narrator of Carberry's "Song" denies the existence of good and evil, calls religion a "politic cheat," a wife an "Orthodox Whore," a priest a "pimp" to a couple, and proclaims the following: "There's no God, Heav'n, Hell, or a Devill; / 'Tis all one to debauch, or to be Civill" ("Song" l. 7, 12, 13, and 3-4). And Rochester, a paradigmatic real life eighteenth-century libertine, kidnapped his future wife and spent his life in London enjoying its pleasures, which included keeping numerous mistresses and making statements such as, "And if you have a grateful heart (which is a miracle amongst you statesmen), show it by directing the bearer to the best wine in town, and pray let not this

highest point of sacred friendship be performed slightly, but go about it...as priests to sacrifice, or as discreet thieves to the wary performance of burglary and shoplifting" (Treglown 92). Underwood writes, Buckingham, Rochester, Etherege, Wycherley, and Sedley, "through their public acts and theatrical works, were also the most responsible for creating the libertine's reputation as a debauchee, wit, and scoundrel" (12). As philanderers and scoundrels, then, libertines are "parasitic" in that they "interrupt a system of social exchange" (Braverman 74). Libertines disrupt this "system" by both focusing on instantly gratifying their own desires without considering the repercussions of doing so and by rejecting all forms of authority rather than tyrannical, unjust authority.

Since any attempts to define the word "libertinism"—or at least any attempts to provide a standard definition of the word—are tenuous at best, it is equally tenuous to suggest that any libertines conform to conventional or standard libertinism. In fact, the literary and "real life" libertines in this study not only fail to conform to such definitions of libertinism, but also reinterpret libertinism. While all these libertines do possess similar characteristics—namely affluence, insatiable sexual appetites, and a rebellion against institutional authorities (the Church, reason, government, family, and marriage)—they often misinterpret libertinism, reason, and Hobbesian philosophy. Furthermore, they all choose different, unique ways to oppose patriarchal, social authorities. These aberrant ways of rebelling against social institutions and their redefinitions of libertinism, I argue, make them self-satirists and self-conscious critics of libertinism as a concept.

"Libertines Real and Fictional in the works of Rochester, Shadwell, Wycherley, and Boswell" discusses the Restoration and eighteenth-century libertine figure as it appears in John Wilmot, Second Earl of Rochester's *Satyr against Mankind*, "The Maim'd Debauchee," and

"Upon His Drinking a Bowl," Thomas Shadwell's *The Libertine*, William Wycherley's *The Country Wife*, and James Boswell's *London Journal, 1762-1763*. I argue that the limitations and self-contradictions of standard definitions of libertinism and the ways in which libertine protagonists and libertinism in general function as critiques of libertinism. Moreover, libertine protagonists and poetic personae reinterpret libertinism to accommodate their personal agendas and in doing so, satirize the idea of libertinism itself and identify the problematization of "libertinism" as a category of gender and social identity. That is, these libertines misinterpret—often deliberately—Hobbes to justify their opposition and refusal to obey social institutions—e.g., eventually marrying and engaging in a monogamous relationship with one's wife—as well as their endorsement of obedience to nature or sense, which can include embracing a libertine lifestyle in which one engages in sexual encounters with multiple partners, refuses marriage, and questions the existence of God or at least distrusts any sort of organized religion.

In chapter 2, I discuss Thomas Hobbes's *Leviathan or The Matter, Forme, and Power of a Common-wealth Ecclesiastical and Civil* (1651) and the ways in which Restoration libertines often misinterpreted the theories Hobbes articulated in *Leviathan.* Libertines often read Hobbes's *Leviathan* as an endorsement of living according to instincts and self-interest and a disdaining of social institutions. However, Hobbes promotes the commonwealth form of government for enforcing laws and controls upon the citizens living within it. Chapter 2 summarizes *Leviathan* and defines several terms Hobbes uses in the work, including the "natural condition of man" or the state of nature, commonwealth, sovereign, sovereign power, subject, "law of nature," "right of nature," and contract (Hobbes 60, 62, 64, 81, 88). I also discuss contradictions within Hobbes's theories about the use of preemptive violence and his first law of nature or "Fundamental Law of Nature" (64). Chapter 2 goes on to examine the specific ways in

which libertines misinterpret Hobbes, including the libertine preference to live in the state of nature instead of a commonwealth, and cites fictional libertines such as Shadwell's Don John of *The Libertine* (1674) and Wycherley's Harcourt, Sparkish, and Alithea of *The Country Wife (1675)* as well as real life libertine John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester.

Chapter 3 analyzes Rochester's libertine poetic personae in his poems *A Satyr Against Mankind*, "The Maim'd Debauchee," and "Upon His Drinking a Bowl" and the ways in which each persona approaches libertinism and misinterprets Hobbes. Distinctively, these three libertine narrators demonstrate that libertinism and reason, rather than being mutually exclusive ideas, are simultaneous opposites one can easily reconcile through obedience of what Rochester calls "right reason." I will examine how Rochester's libertine narrators justify their devotion to libertinism and, in turn, establish themselves as libertines whose rejection of all authority and obedience primarily to instincts and nature originate from their own version of Hobbesian philosophy and libertinism as well as reason. As stated previously, libertinism typically excludes older and middle-aged men in that it advocates, among other things, greed, prodigality, self-indulgence, sexual promiscuity, irresponsibility, and selfishness. Middle-aged and elderly men, like Rochester's narrator of "The Maim'd Debauchee," are former libertines who must relegate themselves to substituting libertinism for "discretion, prudence, responsibility, and the patient accumulation of wisdom or of worldly goods" (Chernaik 25). The three poems function as self-criticisms and self-contradictions of libertinism. As a result, all three poetic personae cannot live up to any sort of libertine ideal because this ideal constantly changes to accommodate the similarly shifting needs and desires of each libertine.

My fourth chapter discusses Shadwell's comedy *The Libertine*, focusing primarily on its protagonist, Don John, and how his anarchic need to overthrow social institutions (rather than

subverting them within the parameters set by them) makes him a satirical libertine who advocates rebellion against the followers of all schools of thought that prevent him from fulfilling his goals. In addition, Shadwell's Don John serves as a negative portrayal of cavaliers. Initially, Cavaliers were poet royalists who followed Charles I (1625-1649), and the opposers to the crown were called Roundheads (Harmon 83). They composed "light-hearted poems" and included poets such as "Thomas Carew, Richard Lovelace, and Sir John Suckling" (83). They were primarily soldiers and courtiers and "authors of lyrics only incidentally" (83). These often occasional poems "breathed the careless braggadocio of the military swashbuckler, at times the aristocratic ease of the peaceable courtier" (83). In the reign of Charles I, the Interregnum, and through the Restoration, Cavalier poetry describes "an England at peace (or hopefully at peace), dedicated to ancient rights of king and subject, liberal to friends and dependents, given to love, drink, song, angling and hunting, certain of the value of learning, and espoused (with certain infidelities) to the Anglican *via media*" (Miner 84). Also, I will argue that Shadwell's negative representation of the Cavaliers (men who engage in homosocial, Platonic friendship and place more importance upon these friendships than on casual liaisons and romantic relationships with women), together with Don John's automatic loyalty to instincts and nature ultimately serve as critiques of libertinism itself and libertines.

Don John's misinterpretation of conventional libertinism and Hobbesian philosophy leads him and his libertine counterparts to endorse an unusual kind of libertinism. H. James Jensen writes, **"***The Libertine* is essentially a story of Hobbesian assumptions run amok, with no real check on the gratification of antisocial individual appetites and passions of powerful, amoral aristocrats" (363). Shadwell, through Don John and his cohorts, satirizes libertinism, Hobbes's philosophical tenets, and tragedy as a genre. Similarly, Shadwell, a Whig, uses the theater,

patronized and reopened by Charles II upon his return, to criticize libertines and libertinism. In doing so, Shadwell is using an outlet in which his external audience represents those he criticizes and satirizes in *The Libertine*. Therefore, the external audience sees their misinterpretations of Hobbes and their constant revisions of libertinism exposed.

In chapter 5, I examine *The Country Wife* and how it functions as a satire or a farce and discuss how Wycherley and the play complicate the ideals of libertine friendship. The male protagonist, Horner, supports and upholds these ideals more in theory than in practice and, in turn, falls short of Cavalier expectations. Horner's heterosocial friendships challenge and critique definitions of libertinism, including the importance of Cavalier friendship. Horner functions as a satirical libertine in that he chooses seemingly self-contradictory ways of following libertinism, specifically assuming an identity as a eunuch and ultimately siding with the wives of his fellow libertines. He uses his identity as a eunuch to gain the trust of the wives and in addition to consummating sexual relationships with them, he befriends them and often supports their views and endeavors. Instead of choosing to follow generic comic conventions that require a marriage at the conclusion of a play, Wycherley chooses to make Horner go unpunished for his deception and does not end the play with his reformation or marriage. Wycherley additionally satirizes the libertine and comedy in that he allows Horner to continue following libertinism after the play has ended.

In the sixth chapter, I investigate how Boswell's *London Journal, 1762-1763* functions as a picaresque novel featuring a libertine protagonist. This novelistic alter-ego and libertine struggles with his divided loyalties between libertinism and virtue. I will argue that the Boswell character's frequent fluctuations between libertinism and virtue represent a critique of a pseudo-Hobbesian school of thought that entails sole obedience of nature or sense. Boswell the writer

demonstrates this wavering loyalty by vacillating between novelistic (moral, bourgeois) and dramatic (libertine, upper-class) forms throughout his journal. Boswell struggles with succumbing to the temptation to engage in libertine behavior (e.g. sexual promiscuity, unwavering self-indulgence) and his desire to exercise temperance or live according to virtue. He cannot find a balance between his libertinism and need to obey reason so he must redefine libertinism to accommodate his needs. These constant revisions of the definitions of libertinism justify Boswell's fluctuating allegiances to virtue and libertinism—that is, they allow him to identify as a libertine who simultaneously embodies virtue or at least wants to live a virtuous life.

The conclusion focuses on libertinism and its ramifications after the Restoration and eighteenth century, and speculates about the future of libertinism. The conclusion includes entries from the diaries of Samuel Johnson and Samuel Pepys, who serve as examples of real life self-critical libertines of the eighteenth century and Restoration. Like Boswell, both real life libertines record their own struggles between libertinism and "un-libertine" ideas such as devout faith in God and temperance. Johnson and Pepys also serve as influences for nineteenth-century French, English, and American decadents. Libertinism continues to hold a profound influence over society and constantly changes to adapt to the political climates, ethics, and morals of each era. In the Restoration and eighteenth century and beyond, the numerous revisions of libertinism make any attempts at creating a precise definition of libertinism impossible at worst and tenuous at best.

CHAPTER 2

LIBERTINISM AND HOBBES'S *LEVIATHAN*

In *Leviathan or The Matter, Forme, and Power of a Common-wealth Ecclesiastical and Civil* (1651), Thomas Hobbes defines and discusses civil government and the need for institutional governments, namely commonwealths, to control and enforce rules upon its citizens. He promotes the formation of commonwealths ruled by sovereigns as the optimal solution to governing citizens and preventing them from reverting back to living in what Hobbes calls the "state of nature," which is an anarchic state in which institutional government is absent and citizens are motivated and governed solely by self-interest (Hobbes 62). Hobbes describes the "state of nature" as "nasty, brutish, and short" due to the constant war and tumult that results from the absence of government (62). Gregory Kavka writes, "Hence, the real conclusion that Hobbes draws (and needs) is that the state of nature is a state of war of all against all, punctuated by frequent violence, in which the participants correctly perceive themselves to be in constant danger" (2). In the state of nature, individuals constantly fight for survival and are motivated by paranoia in that they believe every person who lives in the state of nature wants to defeat them, abscond with their goods, and possibly even exert power over them.

During the Restoration in England (1660-1700), many libertines quoted Hobbes, namely *Leviathan*, to support their renouncement of institutional authority and their endorsement of living according to their own self-interest and preferring to follow their instincts over adhering to reason. Libertines often misinterpreted Hobbes's promotion of a commonwealth as the most effective form of government for implementing controls upon the citizens living within it as an argument for the exact opposite, a society free from institutional authority or at least an

endorsement of following one's instincts over the rules implemented by existing social institutions.

Summary of *Leviathan* and Hobbes's Terminology

Hobbes begins "Book I: Of Man" of *Leviathan* with definitions and discussions of the following terms and phrases: sense, imagination, "consequence or train of imaginations," speech, reason and science, "interiour Beginnings of Voluntary Motions, commonly called the Passions, And the Speeches by which they are expressed," "the Ends or Resolutions of Discourse," the "Vertues, commonly called Intellectuall and their contrary Defects," "the Severall Subjects of Knowledge," "Power, Worth, Dignity, Honour, and Worthinesse," the difference of manners, religion, "Naturall Condition of Mankind, as concerning their Felicity and Misery," "the first and Second Naturall Lawes, and of Contract," "other Lawes of Nature," and he ends the book discussing "Persons, Authors, and things Personated" (Hobbes *Leviathan* "Table of Contents").

As noted in the Introduction to *Leviathan*, Hobbes articulates his objective as "describe[ing] the "Nature of this Artificall Man" or "that great Leviathan, Common-wealth, or State" (1 and 2). He outlines the subjects he will discuss in the four books and reveals that he will first consider "the Matter thereof, and the Artificer; both which is man," and second, he will describe how and by what covenants are made, identify the "Rights and just Power or Authority of a Sovereign and what it is that preserveth and dissolveth it" (2).

In Book II: "Of Common-wealth," Hobbes describes and elaborates on the components of a Christian Commonwealth and how well the ideals of Christianity match with those of the commonwealth Hobbes presents in Book III: "Of a Christian Common-wealth," and in Book IV: "Kingdome of Darkness," he repudiates religions he believes to be false and devotes the second

half of *Leviathan* to "a demolition of the Church's claim to have any significant role to play, as God's representative on earth, in the discourse of political sovereignty" (Hobbes 2, Sim 19).

Before continuing with a discussion of how particular Hobbesian theories applies to specific Restoration and eighteenth-century libertines, it is necessary to define several general terms appearing in Hobbes's *Leviathan* and demonstrate how they apply to Restoration and eighteenth-century libertines in general. Hobbes describes the state of nature or the "natural condition of man." He writes:

> Hereby it is manifest, that during the time men live without a common Power to keep them in all awe, they are in that condition which is called Warre; and such a warre, as is of every man, against every man. For Warre, consisteth not in Battell onely, or the act of fighting; but in a tract of time, wherein the Will to contend by Battell is sufficiently known: and therefore the notion of Time, is to be considered in the nature of Warre; as it is in the nature of Weather. For as the nature of Foule weather, lyeth not in a showre or two of rain; but in an inclination thereto in of many dayes together: So the nature of War, consisteth not in actuall fighting; but in the known disposition thereto, during all the time there is no assurance to the contrary. All the other time is Peace.
>
> Whatsoever therefore is consequent to a time of Warre, where every man is Enemy to every man; the same is consequent to the time, wherein men live without other security, than what their own strength, and their own invention shall furnish them withall. In such condition, there is no place for Industry; because the fruit thereof is uncertain: and consequently no Culture of the Earth; no Navigation, nor use of the commodities that may be imported by Sea; no commodious Building; no Instruments of moving, and removing such things as require much force; no Knowledge of the Face of the earth; no account of Time; no Arts; no Letters; no Society; and which is worst of all, continuall feare, and danger of violent death; And the life of man, solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short. (Hobbes 60, 62)

Restoration and eighteenth-century libertines, fictional real-life libertines, often misinterpreted *Leviathan*. Instead of inferring that Hobbes opposed the chaotic life resulting from a state of nature in which no controls existed, they implicitly embraced the state of nature Hobbes denounced. Libertines typically advocated embracing and following instincts and ignoring—and in some cases, as we shall see in the section following, attempting to destroy social institutions

altogether—the rules and laws enacted by social institutions such as the Church, government, marriage, and family.

While the libertines' propensity to follow instincts and defy social institutions seemingly appeared to stem from Hobbesian theory, Hobbes actually advocated the formation of social institutions, specifically commonwealths. Hobbes spends Books II, III, and IV arguing for and promoting them. He identifies commonwealth, sovereign, sovereign power, and subject in the following passage:

> One person, of whose Acts a great Multitude, by mutuall Covenants one with another, have made themselves every one the Author, to the end he may use the strength and means of them all, as he shall think expedient, for their Peace and Common Defence. And he that carryeth this Person, is called Soveraigne, and said to have Soveraigne Power; and every one besides; his Subject. (Hobbes 88)

In the state of nature, where no government exists, much less one that the people have chosen or elected for themselves, Hobbes argues that the best way to escape from this anarchic state is for the people to select a common power to govern them. David Johnston paraphrases the section of *Leviathan* in which Hobbes discusses the role and rights of the sovereign. Johnston writes:

> According to this revised account, then, the sovereign has new rights that he did not have before he was made a sovereign by the authorization of his subjects. It is true that the right of nature was already unlimited in scope before he was authorized to be a sovereign and that he continues to enjoy this unlimited natural right afterward. But it is the right of one person only. After his authorization a sovereign adds all of the rights his subjects have transferred to him to that natural right he has already possessed. He acts upon the authority, and with the combined rights, of all his subjects. (81)

The sovereign not only makes decisions according to the authority of himself, but of all his subjects. In order for him to act on the behalf of his subjects, he must enforce laws and consider both his individual natural rights afforded by living in the state of nature and the natural rights of his subjects that are bestowed upon them by the state of nature. Citizens, in choosing the

sovereign, have entrusted these rights to him and expect him to act according to both his individual needs and their needs as a commonwealth.

According to Hobbes, "only the absolute sovereign is a genuine common power" (Kavka 5). One can infer, then, that libertines who live in commonwealths generally recognize only themselves as the common power absolute sovereigns and subjects of their own commonwealths and refuse to follow the laws the sovereigns of social institutions dictate to their subjects. They refuse to see anyone other than themselves individually as absolute sovereigns worthy of obedience. Further, libertines will not fulfill the duties of their role as subjects to various social institutional authorities. Whether the sovereign is a monarch, God, or institutions such as family and marriage, libertines will defy any sovereign they do not choose for themselves, and since they prefer to let their instincts guide them then naturally, the only sovereign they will choose to obey is themselves.

Since libertines arguably would prefer to live in the state of nature than a commonwealth, then logically it makes sense for them to follow what Hobbes calls the first and second laws of nature. Before explaining these two laws, however, Hobbes first defines "law of nature" and "right of nature" (Hobbes 64). Hobbes writes: "A law of nature, (*Lex Naturalis*) is a Precept, or generall Rule, found out by Reason, by which a man is forbidden to do, that, which is destructive of his life, or taketh away the means of preserving the same; and to omit, that, by which he thinketh it may be best preserved" (64). Therefore, in the state of nature, men must let their self-interest guide them and use it as a means to protect them from potential harm and the "right of nature" guarantees them this right. Hobbes defines the "right of nature" in the following:

> The Right of Nature, which Writers commonly call *Jus Naturale*, is the Liberty each man hath, to use his own power, as he will himselfe, for the preservation of his own Nature; that is to say, of his own Life; and consequently, of doing any thing, which in his own Judgement, and Reason, hee shall conceive to be the aprest means thereunto. (64)

Hobbes, of course, later qualifies this statement about the right of nature and advocates the formation of commonwealths in which men act in accordance with the laws of the sovereign. This sovereign is one, as noted above, who men have chosen "by mutuall Covenant of one another" to rule (88). The right of nature, then, applies but must be checked within the commonwealth to ensure that the rights of all its inhabitants are preserved instead of those of just one member. Hobbes writes, "The mutuall transferring of Right, is that which men call *Contract*" (Hobbes 66). Engaging in contracts allows citizens collectively to choose who preserves the rights of all citizens in a commonwealth rather than each citizen promoting their own rights individually in anarchy. Maintaining and ensuring the rights of one member can lead to the detriment of the rights of others and result in living in the chaotic state of nature where self-interest rules and the preservation of rights of any citizen does not exist.

In Hobbes's first law of nature or what he calls the "Fundamentall Law of Nature," he writes:

> And consequently it is a precept, or generall rule of Reason, *That every man, ought to endeavour Peace, as farre as he has hope of obtaining it; and when he cannot obtain it, that he may seek, and use, all helps, and advantages of Warre.* The first branch of which Rule, containeth the first, and Fundamentall Law of Nature; which is, *to seek Peace, and follow it.* The second, the summe of the Right of Nature; which is, *By all means we can, to defend our selves.* (64)

Hobbes promotes finding peace, and deems war as a last resort used only when men cannot obtain and maintain peace within societies. According to Hobbes, war is only necessary when all other methods of finding and keeping peace fail. Similarly, people have the right to defend themselves when necessary and use force, "helps, [and] advantages of war" to that end (Hobbes 64). Since war by definition violates the Golden Rule, it is counter to Hobbes's advocacy of peace and his opposition to war except as a last resort.

Interestingly, however, Hobbes supports preemptive violence and attacks on potential enemies. Hobbes writes:

> And therefore if any two men desire the same thing, which nevertheless they cannot both enjoy, they become enemies; and in the way to their End, (which is principally their own conservation, and sometimes their delectation only,) endeavor to destroy, or subdue one another. And from hence it comes to passé, that where an Invader hath no more to feare, than another mans single power; if one plant, sow, build, or possesse a convenient Seat, others may probably be expected to come prepared with forces united, to dispossesse, and deprive him, not only of the fruit of his labour, but also of his life, or liberty. And the Invader again is in the like danger of another.
>
> And from this diffidence of one another, there is no way for any man to secure himselfe, so reasonable, as Anticipation; that is, by force, or wiles, to master the persons of all men he can, so long, till he see no other power great enough to endanger him: And this is no more than his own conservation requireth, and is generally allowed. Also because there be some, that taking pleasure in contemplating their own power in the acts of conquest, which they pursue farther than their security requires; if others, that otherwise would be glad to be at ease within modest bounds, should not by invasion increase their power, they would not be able, long time, by standing only on their defence, to subsist. And by consequence, such augmentation of dominion over men, being necessary to a mans conservation, it ought to be allowed him. (61)

If participants in a commonwealth, including the sovereign, are bound by the Golden Rule and the success of the commonwealth depends upon obeying it, it is contradictory to Hobbes's theories regarding civil governments and societies. Hobbes's support of pre-emptive violence or "Anticipation" seems to fit in more adequately with the individualized state of nature (61). In the state of nature, which is anarchic and contains participants who are motivated by and obey their self-interest, it makes sense that citizens would find themselves susceptible to paranoia, especially in terms of protecting themselves and their property. Therefore, individuals residing in the state of nature or other forms of government in which a sovereign or other ruler does not exist are implicitly more prone to use pre-emptive violence to prevent any future theft of their possessions or violence to their persons. In a commonwealth, when an individual has a sovereign in whom to entrust their safety, pre-emptive violence seems contradictory to the

Golden Rule unless, of course, one resorts to physical violence because one wants others to use force upon them.

Hobbes continues his discussion about the laws of nature, along with providing instructions for inhabitants in commonwealths about when to engage in war and his views about attempting to maintain peace. He defines the "Second Law of Nature" in the following:

> From this Fundamentall Law of Nature, by which men are commanded to endeavour Peace, is derived this second Law; *That a man be willing, when others are so too, as farre-forth, as for Peace, and defence of himselfe he shall think it necessary, to lay down this right to all things; and be contented with so much liberty against other men, as he would allow other men against himself.* For as long as every man holdeth this Right, of doing any thing he liketh; so long are all men in the condition of Warre. But if other men will not lay down their Right, as well as he; then there is no Reason for any one, to devest himselfe of his: For that were to expose himselfe to Prey, (which no man is bound to) rather than to dispose himselfe to Peace. This is that Law of the Gospell; *Whatsoever you require that others should do to you, that do ye to them.* (65)

Implicitly, Hobbes suggests that implementing a commonwealth form of government not only works best in ensuring that all citizens possess rights, but also that a Christian commonwealth adheres to the Golden Rule written in the Gospel of the *Bible*. In establishing these rules, Hobbes also implies that the state of nature is chaotic, anarchic, *and* fundamentally unchristian because in the state of nature, individual self-interest rules men rather than a common guide or social institution, such as the Golden Rule, the Church, and God.

As noted previously, libertines would arguably prefer to live in the state of nature, a place in which no government, sovereign, or social institutions exist, or at least a place in which they can rebel against such authorities and the parameters established by them. Goldsmith paraphrases Hobbes as writing the following in *Leviathan*: "if there is no sovereign then we are not in a civil state, but in the state of nature" (32). Though chaotic, the state of nature and its natural laws afford libertines the ability to follow their instincts, defy social institutions erected in commonwealths and other forms of government, and engage in anticipatory violence and war

in ways similar to those of Don John of Shadwell's *The Libertine* (1674). For example, Don John murders men and rapes women who are the romantic interests of his friends or acquaintances simply because he wants to do so and because he wants to establish power of these men and women. This type of violence that Don John engages in is a form of pre-emptive violence in that Don John participates in it to ensure his role as authority figure before others may attempt to overthrow him or simply view themselves as the person in power.

Where real and fictional libertines, including Shadwell's Don John, tend to misinterpret Hobbes or quote him out of context is in their support of the state of nature. Hobbes considers the state of nature full of flaws and imperfections, as well as an unappealing place in which to live at best, and at worst, a dangerous condition in which often fatal consequences such as never-ending violence and infinite war exist. Libertines, however, disagree with Hobbes and promote living in the state of nature. They are even less likely to advocate living in a Christian commonwealth because it requires obedience to two social institutions instead of just one—God *and* civil government, two of several social authorities against which libertines typically rebel.

Libertines and Hobbes

In Book I, chapter X of *Leviathan*, Hobbes discusses his interpretations of ideas about what constitutes—and sometimes what does not qualify—as power, worth, dignity, honor, and worthiness. He defines each of these terms and provides reasons as to why the examples he includes for each term qualifies. For example, in the section in which he describes various types of power, he describes what he calls the "Greatest of humane Powers" (41). He writes:

> The Greatest of humane Powers, is that which is compounded of the Powers of most men, united by consent, in one person, Naturall, or Civill, that has the use of all their Powers depending on his will; such as is the Power of a Common-wealth: Or depending on the wills of each particular; such as is the Power of a Faction, or of divers factions

> leagued. Therefore to have servants, is Power; To have friends, is Power: for they are strengths united. (41)

Notably, the types of power Hobbes attributes to those existing in the state of nature hold a negative connotation, "Factions" and "divers factions leagued" while the power he identifies for commonwealths takes on a more positive meaning and exists outside the state of nature and in civil society (41). The power of commonwealths consists of Powers of most men "united in one person…that has the use of all their Powers depending on his will" (41). According to Hobbes, citizens choose this person who holds the power to represent them and use "that which is compounded of the Powers of most men" for the good of the commonwealth (41).

Based on Hobbes's definition of the "Greatest of humane Powers," libertines qualify as factions ("the Power of a Faction") or "divers factions leagued" (41). They do not unite their power for the good of a citizenry or any other such group, but instead come together to wreak havoc and bring about mayhem and mischief upon the sovereign and those who obey and recognize him as the sovereign. Libertines often abuse their power and use it to dupe an enemy, such as Harcourt does to Sparkish in William Wycherley's *The Country Wife* (1675). Harcourt, a libertine, disguises himself as a parson and marries his foppish rival, Sparkish, to his love interest, Alithea. The marriage, of course, is a sham and by the end of the play, the deception is revealed and Alithea and Harcourt are engaged to be married (*The Country Wife* IV). However, the consequences of this kind of trickery do not always result in marriage or other comic, more positive outcomes. For example, in Thomas Shadwell's *The Libertine,* Don John and his libertine cohorts trick a woman with whom Don John wants to copulate into believing he is her lover, Don Octavio. Don John rapes Maria simply because Don Octavio likes her and because he wants to add her to his list of sexual conquests, not because he has any sort of emotional

investment in her (*The Libertine* 30-31). Don John murders Don Octavio because he serves as a barricade to accessing Maria and satisfying his desire for sexual gratification and power.

Libertines, especially such radical ones as Shadwell's Don John (radical in that he wants to destroy social institutions altogether rather than just defy them like Horner, the protagonist of *The Country Wife*) live within a commonwealth rule, but prefer to follow instincts within the chaotic state of nature than obey laws enacted to govern and temper instincts. Libertines, including but not limited to Don John and Horner, do not qualify as authentic Hobbesians, especially in their refusal to acknowledge reason as a viable authority worthy of obedience or as a way of moderating their adherence to instincts. In fact, many libertines, especially Don John, refuse to use reason to moderate their blind obedience to instincts. This refusal is anti-Hobbesian because Hobbes actually recognizes the importance of reason in *Leviathan*.

Hobbes defines reason as the following:

> when we reckon it amongst the Faculties of the mind…nothing but Reckoning (that is, Adding and Subtracting) of the Consequences of generall names agreed upon, for the marking and signifying of our thoughts; I say marking them, when we reckon by our selves; and signifying, when we demonstrate, or approve our reckonings to other men. (18)

Essentially, without reason, whether we consider it in terms of individuals or collectives obeying it, a citizenry is doomed to live in the state of nature where either no one's rights are protected or only one person's rights are preserved. When only one person in a government has rights and freedom, presumably the leader, the rest of the citizens ultimately lose their rights altogether or find themselves with undue limitations placed upon them and the rights they had become accustomed to enjoying while living in the state of nature and before their implementation of a commonwealth and the election of a sovereign.

For Hobbes, liberty and reason are not mutually exclusive terms and implicitly, neither are instincts and reason. This is especially evident in his definition of liberty. Hobbes writes:

> By Liberty, is understood, according to the proper signification of the word; the absence of externall Impediments: *which Impediments, may oft take away part of a mans power to do what hee would; but cannot hinder him from using the power left him, according to his judgement, and reason shall dictate to him.* (Hobbes 64, my emphasis)

While Hobbes admits that "externall Impediments" such as commonwealths and other forms of government potentially take away one's freedom to follow their instincts and self-interest, he also recognizes that listening to and following reason also allow men to possess and use the power allotted to them (64). Indirectly, Hobbes suggests that when one obeys reason instead of automatically obeying instincts, this obedience will ultimately enable them to know how best to use the power they possess. Reason enables individuals to best determine when to curb their obedience to instincts and also affords citizens the ability to use their power to choose a leader wisely—a leader who will see to the needs and rights of all citizens, not just himself.

In addition, using reason allows citizens to use their power to dictate not only their own actions, but also the actions of the sovereign. Choosing a sovereign gives both the sovereign and the people themselves more power than they presumably would have in the state of nature—both the power of choosing the sovereign and the power of making decisions individually. Matthew Kramer writes:

> Moreover, and here we come to the gravely dubious strand of Hobbes's outlooks, people who are utterly self-concerned will best achieve their goals if they brace the sturdiness of society by never flouting the Laws of Nature. In other words, since all people stand to benefit greatly from the vibrantness of their social framework, their self-solicitude inclines them or should incline them to heed the natural mandates and thus to reinforce the institutions from which great benefits flow. (62)

However, according to Hobbes, living in commonwealths allows individuals not only to make decisions about their personal lives but also affords them additional power in the form of

allowing them to choose their own sovereigns. Commonwealths, then, benefit citizens in that they allow citizens freedom in a controlled environment or freedom within the parameters set by social institutions and the sovereign. This is considerably more freedom than the state of nature allows in that the people's rights are protected not only by individuals themselves, but also by social institutions represented by a commonwealth.

Naturally, once citizens name a sovereign, they are beholden to him and the laws he passes—civil laws. These laws are based on the Golden Rule written in the Gospel and the Golden Rule is used to differentiate between what constitutes a crime and what is deemed obedience to a law. In a commonwealth, "Civil law is," Hobbes writes, "to every subject, those Rules, which the Commonwealth, hath Commanded him, by Word, Writing, or other Sufficient Sign of the Will, to make use of, for the Distinction of Right, and Wrong; that is to say, of what is contrary, and what is not contrary to the [Golden] Rule" (Hobbes 137). Naturally, the sovereign, then, possesses considerably more power than the citizens over whom he rules because he must distinguish between actions that are in complete alignment with the Golden rule—obedient to civil law—and those that qualify as blatant opposition to it—disobedience to civil law.

Since the Golden Rule is the basis for civil law and is applied to actions to determine whether or not they qualify as crimes, it makes sense that Hobbes constantly refers to it in *Leviathan.* In fact, he returns to it in his discussion about crime and commonwealths. Hobbes paraphrases and reiterates the Golden Rule and elaborates about what qualifies as a crime in a civil government, specifically a commonwealth. He writes,

> Ignorance of the Law of Nature Excuseth no man; because every man that hath attained to the use of Reason, is supposed to know, he ought not to do to another, what he would not have done to himselfe. Therefore into that place soever a man shall come, if he do

> any thing contrary to that Law, it is a Crime. Therefore into what place soever a man shall come, if he do any thing contrary to that Law, it is a crime. (Hobbes 152)

Since libertines let self-interest and instincts guide them, it makes sense that they would not follow the Golden Rule much less obey civil laws. Their defiance of social institutions such as the Church, marriage, family, and government similarly keeps them from following the Golden Rule and obeying civil laws set forth by the sovereign. Libertines, naturally, do not care about the rights of the commonwealth collectively or the rights of other individuals and only care about maintaining their own individual rights.

Not only do Libertines defy and harbor contempt for social institutions such as the government, but they openly express disdain for members of the low and middle classes. As affluent young men, libertines often possess elitist views regarding members of the lower and middle classes and view themselves as above and not beholden to secular (civil law) or religious law (Golden Rule). Hobbes makes a seemingly elitist statement about the fact that the less affluent members of society make up the majority of the population that lives in commonwealths. He writes, "But they say again, that though the Principles be right, yet Common people are not of capacity enough to be made to understand them" (Hobbes 176). Though this statement initially appears to be an elitist statement about commoners or those belonging to the middle and lower classes, he is actually making this distinction based on *social* inequality rather than political equality.

In fact, Hobbes writes the following about the differences between political equality and social inequality earlier in the text. Hobbes writes:

> For in the Soveraignty is the fountain of Honour. The dignities of Lord, Earle, Duke, and Prince are his Creatures. As in the presence of the Master, the Servants are equall, and without any honour at all; So are the Subjects, in the presence of the Soveraign. And though they shine some more, some lesse, when they are out of his sight; yet in his presence, they shine no more than the Starres in presence of the Sun. (Hobbes 128).

In a "civil association," all people are equal regardless of social status. Gabriella Slomp writes, "In *Leviathan* Hobbes uses the image of stars and sun to explain the difference between political equality and social inequality" (28). Those who belong to the lower classes—servants, for example—deserve equal rights as much as members of the upper classes at least in terms of political equality (28). Servants must obey the authority of their masters—members of the upper class and the wealthy—but in terms of civil governments such as commonwealths, both slaves and masters are equal in the eyes of the sovereign. The reason "Common people" are not capable of understanding the "principles" and rules set forth by sovereigns is not because the sovereigns necessarily see them as innately inferior to members of the higher classes and cannot acquire the ability to understand these rules but because they are born into lower social classes and thus, do not have similar access to education as members of the upper class (Hobbes 176).

In terms of the audience to whom Hobbes is addressing in *Leviathan*, he is writing to an audience he believes to consist of not only those who belong to the upper class but also, and perhaps especially members of the lower classes who also happen to be the ones needing a sovereign to govern them the most. The scope of *Leviathan* is broad and "the net [Hobbes] casts is meant to extend beyond 'noblemen, and such as may come to have the managing of great and weighty actions'; it is intended, too, to capture more than intellectuals familiar with Latin, and to bring in many more fish than are contained in the halls of the universities" (Johnston 89). Hobbes, then, wants to appeal to an audience of diverse social status and intellect rather than an audience limited to noblemen. Since politically all people are equal in a commonwealth, it makes sense that Hobbes would want to appeal to and address a broader audience that includes the majority of the sovereign's subjects rather than those solely in the upper echelons.

John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, a libertine poet in England during the Restoration period (1660-1700), often wrote about the quandary between obeying reason and instincts. Moreover, he took an elitist approach to this struggle in which he referred to the citizens making up the vast majority in a commonwealth (or other form of civil government) as the "rabble." In fact, many libertines, Rochester included, understood the necessity of social institutions for controlling the lower socioeconomic classes, but did not see these laws perpetuated by the institutions as applicable to themselves because of their status as upper class and affluent young men. Disobeying these laws allowed libertines to gratify their own desires and solely obey their instincts—and arguably live as if in the state of nature. However, these same laws did not afford the "rabble" or members of the middle and lower classes the same luxury and rights to follow their instincts and ignore the authority of social institutions. This less democratic view Rochester embraces makes him anti-reason and anti-Enlightenment as well, while Hobbes's seemingly elitist sentiments are actually more democratic than Rochester's views and acknowledge that political equality exists for all individuals.

Though individuals are equal politically, Hobbes does not deem all individuals as capable of fulfilling the role of sovereign in a civil government or successfully ruling themselves individually in the state of nature. One reason Hobbes promotes commonwealths governed by sovereigns and opposes the anarchic state of nature is that individuals rule themselves in the state of nature. They cannot and should not self-govern themselves because they are not the best qualified, unbiased judges of their own capabilities to do so because they cannot be as impartial as a sovereign or other outside party. Despite how adept citizens believe themselves to be at determining what both benefits them most and is in their best interests, individuals are ill-equipped to determine whether or not they possess the qualities needed to govern, which is why

Hobbes advocates letting the people elect a sovereign instead of one person appointing themselves as ruler or sovereign. Piotr Hoffman writes:

> the Hobbesian individual—every Hobbesian individual—understands himself as good enough (and certainly better than anyone else) to exercise rule over himself. This, however, is not the decisive argument, since the individual's self-confidence concerning his ability and right to rule himself might still be based on an illusory, false appraisal of his powers. (8)

In other words, a person might base their abilities on a biased and false sense of confidence regarding those abilities and as a result, might not rule in a way that best suits them. A sovereign, then, is an integral and necessary part of the commonwealth because he is the best-equipped person to make decisions on behalf of the citizens, not the citizens themselves. According to Hobbes, a commonwealth in which the people elect a sovereign benefits everyone in the commonwealth because each member chooses this person to assume the role of sovereign. In the state of nature, each individual deludes themselves into thinking they know how adequately to fulfill their own needs and will implement the proper methods to govern themselves independently and look after their own best interests regardless of how appealing or unappealing these methods are to others who co-exist with them. They do not want or need a sovereign to rule them and establish order because it potentially threatens their well-being.

Though Hobbes promotes a commonwealth as a mode of government that will see to the best interests of all its citizens, Hobbes often expresses a pessimistic view about individuals themselves and their capabilities in terms of acting selflessly. He writes:

> The examples of Princes, to those that see them, are, and ever have been, more potent to govern their actions, than the Lawes themselves. And though it be our duty to do, not what they do, but what they say; yet will that duty never be performed, till it please God to give men an extraordinary, and supernaturall grace to follow that Precept (159).

According to Hobbes, people, when not presented with an established order or government, will instinctively make choices based on their personal, individual desires and their insatiable need

for satisfying those desires, oftentimes impatient to receive instant gratification rather than patiently waiting for their needs and desires to be fulfilled. Implicitly, then, Hobbes promotes choosing a sovereign to maintain order in a commonwealth because without a commonwealth or a civil government, participants in the state of nature will always be prone to yielding to the temptation to make decisions based on what fulfills their individual needs and wants rather than acting selflessly and choosing what best accommodates the necessities of the majority of citizens. The state of nature, therefore, is less democratic and more focused on the individual than what commonwealths in which all people are politically equal and deserve consideration of their wants and needs individually and collectively. Gordon summarizes the struggle individuals face between choosing to follow the state of nature and deciding to live in a commonwealth that involves electing and obeying a sovereign. He writes:

> Confronted with ideologies that require individuals to reject selfish and choose disinterested behaviors, Hobbes insists that 'till it please God to give men an extraordinary, and supernaturall grace', we will always choose what we imagine will benefit ourselves. Each individual, Hobbes contends, is little more than a 'Tennis-Ball,' controlled rather than controlling, ceaselessly batted about by desires and interests. (54)

Libertines, of course, choose self-indulgent behaviors—those that presumably resemble acts committed in the state of nature—over behaving selflessly and taking their fellow citizens and their interests into consideration—those that more closely mimic acts of those participating in a commonwealth. As mentioned previously, in Shadwell's *The Libertine*, Don John revels in committing crimes, especially rape, and his actions are motivated by selfishness and blind obedience to instincts—similar to those who live in the anarchic state of nature.

Don John's shamelessness and self-centeredness manifest themselves in a rape he commits in front of his libertine counterparts. In fact, Don John even admits he has no qualms about raping an elderly woman on the street simply because he is able to do so and knows that

committing this act enables him to establish power over his fellow libertines. Before the rape, Don John's friends decide to "ravish" and Don John expresses his desire to join them in doing so. He says:

> *D. John.* Now, Gentlemen, you shall see I'll be civil to you, you shall not ravish alone: indeed I am loathe to meddle with mine old acquaintance, but if my Man can meet with a Woman I have not lain withall, I'll keep you company; let her be old or young, ugly or handsome, no matter. (*Libertine* 46)

A servant proceeds to bring in "an ugly old Woman who cries out" (46) and Don John sexually assaults her in front of Don Antonio just so he can exert his authority over him; this public rape provides Don Antonio with a visual example of the power and authority Don John holds over him as his and the other libertines' "oracle" (25). Don John assaults women not only because it affords him instant sexual gratification, but also because doing so not only gives him control over women, but also empowers him in front of his libertine counterparts and, as Don John presumably believes, men in general.

In terms of the political tenets Hobbes articulates in *Leviathan,* Don John hardly qualifies as a Hobbesian because unlike Hobbes, he prefers obeying his instincts and living in the anarchy that exists in the state of nature to pledging allegiance to an elected ruler or sovereign as those who live in civil societies or commonwealths do. Allowing anyone else—a sovereign or a fellow libertine—would imply an admission on Don John's part to a relinquishing of control and authority to another man. Obviously, Don John sees himself as an authority and because of this, will not heed the commands of any existing sovereign within the commonwealth in which he lives much less accede authority to a fellow libertine or anyone else. He wants to make his own decisions rather than allow a sovereign to act and make decisions for him on his behalf. Don John, rather than adhering to Hobbesian philosophy—namely what Hobbes advocates in

Leviathan—actually acts as an anti-Hobbesian in that he promotes the ideas Hobbes opposes and argues against in *Leviathan*.

Conclusion

Hobbesian philosophy, as we have seen, does not promote the type of authority Don John and other real and fictional libertines advocate—solely following instincts and living in anarchy—but instead promotes the opposite—living in a commonwealth where citizens curb their instincts and obey a sovereign who legislates on behalf of himself and the citizens he rules.

In the Restoration, many real and fictional libertines invoked Hobbes's *Leviathan* as evidence supporting their defiance of social institutions and their advocacy of obedience to their own self-interest; this preference of obeying instincts over institutions resembles the chaotic state of nature. For example, in *A Satyr against Mankind,* Rochester writes: "And, with the rabble world, *their* laws obey" (*Satyr l. 199,* my emphasis). The laws enacted by social institutions do not apply to him, but instead, apply to the "rabble," or members of the lower classes. Similarly, Shadwell, through Don John, satirizes libertine misinterpretations of Hobbes. Shadwell's Don John instructs his fellow libertines: "Let's on, and live the noble life of Sense./ To all the powers of Love and mighty Lust" (*Libertine* 28), endorsing living in the Hobbesian state of "sense" and nature. Libertines often misinterpreted Hobbes's promotion of commonwealths as an argument for the exact opposite, a society free from institutional authority or at least one that promotes following one's instincts within the boundaries and rules implemented by existing social institutions.

In *Leviathan,* Thomas Hobbes discusses at length the reasons a commonwealth or a civil society in which a sovereign elected by the people governs better suits individuals than the

anarchic chaos that one finds in the state of nature. In a commonwealth, individuals have more power than they do in the state of nature because they not only control their own personal decisions, but also choose a sovereign to rule according to the interests of themselves and the collective interests of the citizens. Individuals possess significantly more power in commonwealths because in electing a sovereign, they are driven by self interest and indirectly, by the welfare and interests of the people as a whole. In choosing a sovereign, they are implicitly controlling the ways in which the rulers choose to exert his authority over them individually and the ways the he rules the citizens as a whole.

CHAPTER 3

LIBERTINISM AND "RIGHT REASON" IN ROCHESTER'S *A SATYR AGAINST MANKIND*, "THE MAIM'D DEBAUCHEE," AND "UPON HIS DRINKING A BOWL"

Restoration and eighteenth-century libertinism often entails obeying instincts and rebelling against social institutions. Warren Chernaik observes that "the libertines assumed *all* authority was illegitimate: the state, the church, the family were institutions equally parasitic on man's fear of freedom" (25). Chernaik's assessment is correct, especially when one considers libertines' constant reinterpretation and misinterpretation of Hobbes's *Leviathan*. However, as we shall see presently, the fictional libertine personae discussed in this chapter do not modify Hobbesian philosophy to accommodate their own agendas—as libertines are typically prone to do—but advocate Hobbes's actual tenets and redefine libertinism. The narrators of Rochester's *A Satyr against Mankind*, "The Maim'd Debauchee," and "Upon His Drinking a Bowl" serve to demonstrate that the two ideas, libertinism and reason, are not mutually exclusive, but are simultaneous opposites one can adequately reconcile—that is, libertines can equally advocate both ideas—to their lifestyles. More specifically, I will examine the ideas of libertinism and reason in the three poems and the ramifications of ignoring one school of thought and embracing the other—as we see in *A Satyr against Mankind*—and how the poetic personae of *A Satyr Against Mankind*, "The Maim'd Debauchee," and "Upon His Drinking a Bowl," through their applications of Hobbes's theories, justify their loyalties to both libertinism and reason. The three poetic personae cannot live up to any sort of libertine ideal because this ideal constantly changes to accommodate the similarly shifting needs and desires of the libertines.

Libertine Indecision in *A Satyr Against Mankind*[1]

The poetic persona of *A Satyr against Mankind* prefers following his instincts and rejecting any illegitimate or non-self-imposed authority to aligning himself solely with the dictates of reason. Instead, he reconciles libertinism and reason by obeying what Rochester refers to as "right" reason or reason that does not exclude instinct or libertinism, but allows man to moderate his instincts, including his libertine behavior. "Right reason" also includes obedience to institutional authority—e.g., state, church, family, and marriage—but not to the detriment of one's natural, instinctual impulses. In fact, the poetic persona does not endorse an anarchic, unruly society in which one follows reason exclusively nor does he support a similarly chaotic world in which one exclusively obeys every whim and instinct without consulting reason. James Grantham Turner writes, "Libertines are not anarchists, since they believe in laws to govern 'the rabble'; for themselves, however, they claim a special privilege or grace which allows them, or even compels them, to break those laws" (80). Essentially, libertines like Rochester takes a classist viewpoint in their poetry and drama in that they believe social institutions are necessary for controlling the lower socioeconomic classes ("the rabble") but disobey these same laws and controls implemented by social institutions so that they can gratify their needs to follow instinct or nature. In addition, Rochester's classist approach to libertinism

[1] While I focus on the concept of libertinism and the problems of attempts to provide a standard definition of libertinism, most criticism of Rochester's *A Satyr Against Mankind* often focus on the composition of the poem itself. Many critics of Rochester's *A Satyr Against Mankind* focused on the originality (or lack thereof) and the literary sources that possibly influenced Rochester when he wrote the poem. For example, John Sitter argues that Rochester is beholden to Boileau and his *Satire VIII*, while Vivian de Sola Pinto argues that the "poem entitled in the most reliable editions as *A Satyr Against Mankind*, is suggested by the Eighth Satire of Boileau, reinforced by many suggestions from the essays of Montaigne and particularly from the *Apologie de Raimond Sebond* and from the *Maximes* of La Rochefoucald" (Sitter 285 and Pinto, 148). In contrast, John Moore claims that Rochester was conceivably influenced by Boileau but not indebted to him. He cites numerous instances in *A Satyr Against Mankind* during which Rochester directly contradicts Boileau and also observes many portions in the poem in which "Boileau's influence is offset by echoes in Rochester's lines of earlier writers" (Moore 400). Similarly, Moore concludes, it is difficult to name Montaigne's *Essaies* as a direct source for Rochester because they are "essentially a collection of ideas culled from earlier writers," which makes it "difficult to attach much significance to parallels between Montaigne and any later writer until the possibility of common earlier sources has been ruled out" (393).

and reason makes him intrinsically anti-reason and anti-Enlightenment, especially when we consider his approach to Hobbesian philosophy. Like Hobbes, Rochester recognizes the necessity of social institutions to govern and control the lower classes. However, his views diverge from Hobbes in terms of his less democratic, more classist opinions. While Rochester sees these institutions as necessary and important for placing controls upon the "rabble," he, unlike Hobbes, does not believe the rules and controls employed by the same institutions apply equally to the upper class. Libertines, then, as members of the upper class, do not have to obey the same rules and laws governing the lower classes. Despite these differences, however, Rochester shares Hobbes's opinions regarding finding a balance between obedience to libertinism and reason—"right reason."

Mankind's mistake, according to the poetic persona, lies in sacrificing instinct and solely obeying reason. The narrator opens the poem with his response to a hypothetical scenario in which he could decide his identity at birth. He answers with the following:

> Were I (who to my cost already am
> One of those strange prodigious Creatures Man.)
> A spirit free, to choose for my own share,
> What Case of Flesh, and Blood, I pleas'd to weare,
> I'd be a Dog, a Monkey, or a Bear. (*Satyr* l. 1-5)

The narrator wants to be a "Spirit Free to choose for [his] own share" instead of "One of those strange prodigious Creatures Man" (*Satyr* l. 2, 3). However, a conflict resonates within the opening lines of the poem when he states that he would prefer to identify himself as "Dog, a Monkey, or a Bear"—identities considered by most men to be inferior to humankind, but what the narrator considers superior to his current human identity (l. 5). John Sitter writes, "In Rochester's lexicon man becomes the aberration, the strange, prodigious creature deprived not only, as he had been by Boileau and Oldham, of his anthropocentric splendor, but of his very

place in nature" (Sitter 288). Man, because of his devotion to reason and his refusal to let his instinct guide and instruct him, relinquishes his position in nature as an animal, and becomes an inferior being—this makes the narrator's alignment with libertinism questionable. If the narrator implies affiliation with the libertine way of life and does not adhere to any sort of institutional authority, including God or an alternate type of Supreme Being, then his statement is contradictory, at least in terms of the ways libertines typically misinterpret Hobbes to conform to their own desires.

In defining his identity as one assigned to him rather than chosen by him, the narrator admits that he has no significant control over forming his identity; the poetic persona, then, by admitting that a Supreme Being—a representative of institutional authority—assigned an identity to him demonstrates that he doubts and does not feel confident in self-imposed authority. According to Dustin Griffin, "Man is an animal, but distinguishable from other animals because of his vanity; he is not *animal rationale*, but an animal *proud* of being rational" (Griffin 206). Griffin is right in the distinction he makes between a rational animal and an animal that prides himself upon acting rational. Man must find a more suitable, healthy approach to life and modify his behavior accordingly; for Rochester's narrator, that means men must modify their uses of reason and libertinism in their lives.

The ways in which the poetic persona's mutually supporting views in terms of advocating and opposing libertinism as a preferred model of behavior and reason as a less palatable mode of behavior continue in his discussion of the fate of older individuals. Though the narrator characterizes reason as leading those who follow it through "Pathless and dang'rous ways" (l. 14), he sees the role of right reason as a school of thought necessary for one to obey when one reaches old age. In fact, Thomas Fujimura asserts the following about the narrator's argument

regarding reason: “This is not an attack on human reason in its totality, nor is it an attempt to base life on a voluntaristic or instinctual basis: Rochester is himself too rationalistic to deny reason completely” (578)—hence, the narrator’s defiance of what one typically regards as reason and his acceptance of right reason. In lines 25-30 of the poem, the poetic persona assumes a tone of reluctance and disappointment at the idea of following reason. He says:

> Then Old Age, and experience, hand in hand,
> Lead him to death, and make him understand,
> After a search so painful, and so long,
> That all his Life he has been in the wrong;
> Huddled in dirt, the reas’ning Engine lyes,
> Who was so proud, so witty, so wise. (*Satyr* l. 25-30)

Since “Old Age and experience” come “hand in hand,” the older men must submit themselves to “the reas’ning Engine” and can no longer live as libertines following their natural instincts (l. 25, 29). However, according to the narrator, the fate of older men is not as simple as switching one’s allegiance from libertinism to reason.

At old age these libertines, or “young debauchees,” must renounce their former libertine behavior and replace it with behavior that models reason and implicitly obeys institutional authority. Once these young men reach old age, the narrator argues, they realize their libertine approach “all [their] Life has been in the wrong” (l. 28). Instead of directly stating that living according to the dictates of reason offers one nothing but monotony and dependence on authority figures, the poetic persona expresses opposition to following instincts. The life of freedom from authority and rules established by virtually all forms of authority does not guarantee or bring about happiness, but destroys happiness (l. 33). By following their own “wisdom” instead of the wisdom set forth by reason, older individuals realize their “pride,” “wit,” “wisdom” and “equat[ing] [of] instinctual gratification with happiness” led to their relegating status of “Wretch” (*Satyr* l. 30-32, Chernaik 67). That is, adhering to the libertine lifestyle results in

regret for following instincts and defying authority. According to Chernaik, "such works as the *Satyr Against Mankind* contrast sense or instinct with the faculty of discursive reason, presented as unreliable, unduly restrictive and destructive in its effects" (Chernaik 26). Right reason, then, is not an enemy to libertines or to mankind in general, but the *abuse* of reason—or what Chernaik identifies as "discursive reason"—destroys mankind and causes them to deny their natural impulses (26).

The narrator, however, does not limit his obedience and loyalty solely to following instinct and libertinism, but succeeds at simultaneously following right reason. When he makes these attacks against reason, he targets a specific type of reason. He argues the following:

> Our sphere of action is life's happiness
> And he who thinks beyond, thinks like an ass
> Thus, whilst against *false* reas'ning I inveigh,
> I own right reason, which I would obey:
> *That reason which distinguishes by sense*
> And gives us rules of good and ill from thence,
> That bounds desires with a reforming will
> To keep 'em more in vigor, not to kill. (l. 96-103, my emphasis)

It is notable that Rochester makes a differentiation between reason "which distinguishes by sense" and "false reas'ning" because it establishes the narrator as an authentic Hobbesian libertine who lives according to libertinism and right reason (*Satyr* l. 98, 100). According to Hobbes, any society in which men are motivated solely by self-interest inevitably leads to a state of war "where every man is enemy to every man, the same consequent to the time wherein men live without other security than what their own strength and their own invention shall furnish them withal" (Hobbes 62). This "state of war" inevitably results in a life that is "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short" (62). Carole Fabricant characterizes the reason advocated by Rochester's narrator as "specifically the ally of the senses, renewing appetites rather than destroying them and intensifying instead of denying worldly pleasures" (19). Fabricant's

assertion is correct, especially when one considers the "false reas'ning" the narrator mentions. The poetic persona does not endorse excluding reason from one's life. Instead, he tries to persuade his audience that obedience to right reason does not imply that one must eliminate or ignore instinctual, typically libertine behavior. Moreover, "false reasoning," according to the poetic persona, is a restrictive version of reason that, when applied, makes one prone to applying inflexible, stringent rules to one's life.

The narrator opposes obedience to reason when it results in a person sacrificing their basic human needs for survival. He explains to the internal audience the distinction between the right reason to which he submits and the type of reason they obey. He contrasts the two definitions of reason in the following lines:

> Your Reason hinders, mine helps t'enjoy.
> Renewing Appetites, yours would destroy.
> My Reason is my Friend, yours is a Cheat,
> Hunger calls out, my Reason bids me eat;
> Perversely yours, your Appetite does mock,
> This asks for Food, that answers what's a Clock? (*Satyr* l. 104-109)

As evidenced by the above lines, the narrator's application of reason allows him to sustain his libertine activities while simultaneously obeying the "right reason" that he endorses. Hobbes, in fact, endorses a similar point of view in his proposal of social contracts. Entering these social contracts enables humans to escape the solitary life brought about by states of war and affords them security of a man's "person, in his life, and in the means of so preserving life as not to be weary of it" (Hobbes 66). In *A Satyr Against Mankind*, "man's ability to reason is not denied, but his misuse of reason makes him, if not below the animals, certainly the stupidest" (Wilcoxon 83). Wilcoxon's assertion makes sense in terms of the contrasts the poetic persona makes between reason and right reason. The narrator does not dismiss reason altogether, but instead, criticizes mankind's interpretation and use of reason. Rather than cautioning man against

wanting to pursue pleasure, he sees pleasure as "no less delusory as the hope of attaining serenity" (Fabricant 18). This "misuse" of reason excludes any consideration of instincts and the narrator, in chastising mankind for denying instinct and using reason incorrectly, advocates and reconciles both libertinism and right reason.

Ultimately, the narrator simultaneously endorses libertinism and a logical application of reason, or right reason, rather than discursive reason. This discursive reason involves ignoring one's instincts and obeying a routine, strict lifestyle that does not accommodate one's instinct or nature unless doing so adheres to the stringent routine or even schedule to which much of mankind submits. Though Wilcoxon identifies Rochester the poet as "an ethical hedonist," we can certainly apply her definition to the poetic persona's outlook regarding following instincts and reason (Wilcoxon 197). While hedonistic in terms of obeying his instincts, Rochester's narrator does not limit himself to following libertinism and instinct, but instead, advocates using right reason to moderate his libertinism. Once he balances his libertine behavior and his obedience to right reason, he can more effectively achieve his goal of obtaining and maintaining an optimal existence. More specifically, the narrator's obedience to right reason and his moderation of instinctual, libertine behavior that results from modifying his life renders him a libertine follower of Hobbes's actual theory. However, he chooses parts of *Leviathan* that fit his needs in terms of his classicism. That is, his view that institutional rules do not apply to him due to his status as an upper-class libertine makes his interpretations of Hobbes willful misreadings.

Right Reason and Libertinism in "The Maim'd Debauchee"

Rochester reconfigures the libertine and his attitude towards libertinism and reason in "The Maim'd Debauchee" and proposes ways for the young and the old to embrace libertinism

and reason. Like the poetic persona in *A Satyr Against Mankind*, the narrator or the debauchee in this poem, through his reflections of his past and projections about his future, not only reconciles the two ideas, but his advocacy of right reason coupled with his interpretation of Hobbes also establishes him as a Hobbesian libertine. The fact that he does not change his interpretation of Hobbes to conform to his fluctuating desires functions as a self-critique and self-satire of libertinism. Rochester's decision not to change his reading of Hobbes in order to coincide with his shifting lifestyle implicitly criticizes libertines who must frequently change the definitions of libertinism so that they can still qualify as libertines. However, Rochester's status as a libertine does not depend upon making the changes in his agenda conforming to his interpretation of Hobbes.

In his recollection of his youth, the narrator identifies himself as a libertine. The poem opens with the narrator as an impotent older man reminiscing about his libertine past. He tells his internal audience, younger men, the following:

> As some brave Admiral, in former War,
> Depriv'd of force, but prest with courage still;
> Two Rival-Fleets, appearing from a far,
> Crawles to the top of an adjacent Hill.
>
> From whence (with thoughts full of concern) he views
> The wise, and daring Conduct of the fight,
> And each bold Action, to his Mind renews,
> His *present glory*, and his *past delight*. ("Maim'd" l.1-8, my emphasis)

The narrator relates this story to young libertines to show them, through his own testimonial about his past adventures and current, comparatively more reserved life, that they should divide their loyalties between libertinism and reason. Not only does the narrator entreat young men to embrace their libertinism while they are still physically able to do so, but he also expresses optimism—or at least expresses acceptance—about the impotence that accompanies old age.

When he compares himself to "some brave Admiral, in former War" watching a battle from afar instead of from the midst of the fray as he did in his youth, he ends the comparison speaking positively about both his youth and his old age ("Maim'd" l. 1). Though Kathleen Blair asserts that in the poem, "the libertine life is shown to be worthy of condemnation, yet there is no sense of remorse," the narrator does not condemn libertinism and reason or youth and old age (Blair 129). Since the debauchee initially has no remorse about his past, it is impossible for him to regret or condemn the crimes he committed and the debauchery in which he engaged during his youth. In other words, the debauchee cannot harbor any feelings of remorse about a past that he reflects upon with such affective nostalgia. Most notably, the narrator considers his libertine youth as a soldier and the accomplishments accompanying it as his "past delight" and his old age as his "present glory"—hardly phrases that describe past or current eras the debauchee wishes to forget or refuses to acknowledge ("Maim'd" l.1, 8). These phrases foreshadow his concluding commentary about impotence in which he accepts his impotence and old age. The poetic persona, then, begins and ends the poem with celebratory encomiums about living according to libertinism and obeying the edicts of reason.

As an older man, and thus presumably "impotent" and a follower of reason, the debauchee expresses no guilt about his actions as a young libertine, nor does he completely transform from a libertine to a follower of reason in his old age. He reminisces about specific events in his past and tells his young libertine audience the following:

> I'll tell of Whores Attacqu'd, their Lords at home,
> Bawds Quarters beaten up, and Fortress won,
> Windows demolisht, Watches overcome,
> And handsome ills, by my contrivance done.
>
> Nor shall our Love-fits Cloris be forgot,
> When each the well-look'd Link-Boy, strove t' enjoy

And the best Kiss, was the deciding Lot,
Whether the Boy us'd you, or I the Boy. ("Maim'd" l. 33-40)

The poetic persona revels in the "handsome ills by [his] contrivance done" that include attacking women, demolishing fortresses, burning churches, and engaging in sexual liaisons with "Link-Boys" ("Maim'd" l. 33, 34, 36, 38). In fact, he encourages younger men who appear hesitant to identify as libertines to embrace libertinism before their "Days of impotence approach" (l. 13). Ian Donaldson argues that the narrator tries to persuade the "younger and seemingly less daring fellow rakes" by "cheerfully…*looking back* at the debaucheries of his youth" instead of regretting his past deeds (Donaldson 33). The poetic persona admits he hopes his reflections of his experiences "will such heat inspire/As to mischief shall incline" (l. 41-42). He does not try to dissuade the young men from following their instincts, but he wants to convince them to engage in base acts—that entails identifying as a libertine. Moreover, the debauchee wants the younger men to listen to the stories he tells them about his libertine past. The debauchee hopes that these stories will enable the libertines to conquer their fears of emulating instinctual, libertine behavior and take pride in themselves for engaging in it.

However, as elsewhere in Rochester, in his identifying as a libertine, the poetic persona does not denounce living according to reason. Instead, he reconciles libertinism and reason by embracing both ideas. When the debauchee finishes listing the types of stories he will tell, he announces the following:

With Tales like these, I will such heat inspire,
As to important mischief shall incline.
I'll make them long some Antient Church to fire,
And fear no lewdness the're called to by Wine.

Thus States-man-like, I'll sawcily impose,
And safe from danger Valiantly advise,
Shelter'd in impotence, urge you to blows,
And being good for nothing else, be wise. ("Maim'd" l. 41-48, my emphasis)

As an older man reminiscing about his libertine youth, the debauchee foresees the future with optimism—not in spite of his impotence, but *because* of it. According to Dustin Griffin, "age in Rochester brings, not an escape from passion, but enslavement to it" (Griffin 60). Arguably the word "enslavement" has negative connotations of forced submission to authority or rules, but Griffin's assessment of age as a celebrated, or at least not a dreaded part of life, is correct in that the narrator's emotional and intellectual need to satisfy his sexual appetite still exists in spite of the dissolution of the physical manifestation of it—sexual potency. The poetic persona can still enjoy his unabated "passion" via recounting his experiences to others and reminiscence about the sexual conquests during which he fulfilled his passion. These reminiscences enable the debauchee to feel as if he is still engaging in the libertine behavior of his youth, while his simultaneous acceptance of his old age and its accompanying impotence implicitly allows him to obey a type of reason that entails an embracing of libertinism and reason—right reason.

Though one could argue that the term "impotence" connotes hindrance from or even prevention of enjoying life, the narrator offers a more positive view of the impotence accompanying his age. The narrator sees himself as "*shelter'd* in impotence" ("Maim'd" l. 47, my emphasis) instead of hindered by it. The word "shelter" implies that impotence protects the narrator and offers him security in his old age. According to Griffin, "the worst plight" is usually not "the death of desire nor even the failure of the body to perform. Rather, it is the persistence of desire, the continued eagerness to perform, when the power of attracting is gone" (Griffin 59). However, the debauchee chooses not to consider his disabled physical condition as a plight. He feels "sheltered" from impotence, but he also sees this new physical condition that accompanies age as a new era or even a rite of passage about which he can be enthusiastic. Impotence offers the poetic persona a chance to "be wise" and enjoy his old age as both a

libertine and a follower of right reason (l. 48). Donaldson interprets impotence as "[having] its 'pains,' but also bring[ing] its pleasures and excitements" (Donaldson 32). The debauchee, instead of resigning himself to living without enjoyment—conceivably in solitude due to his physical impotence—and forsaking libertinism in the process, he looks forward to recounting his adventures with young libertines he befriends in the future and using his newly acquired wisdom. Rather than allowing impotence to hinder him from enjoying life, he sees it as a "source of strength" and looks forward to living through reflections about his past and vicariously through the libertine adventures the young men will eventually recount to him (Silverman 210).

Friendship and Libertinism in "Upon His Drinking A Bowl"

Rochester, in addition to writing about libertine sexuality and impotence, writes about libertines and their views regarding male friendship. The libertines in his poetry engage in homosocial activities with fellow libertines, which theoretically makes them model libertines—young, affluent men who rebel against social institutions and value male friendship more than romantic relationships with women. In "Upon His Drinking a Bowl," the narrator exhibits characteristics of the ideal libertine friendship in his preferring participation in homosocial activities over participation in heterosocial and heterosexual activities. However, his return to reason and institutional authority transforms his portrayal of himself from a typical libertine to a self-contradictory libertine. Moreover, the poem as a whole, including the seemingly contradictory concluding line, exemplifies the idea of libertine self-contradiction, especially in terms of constantly changing the definition of "libertine" to accommodate personal agendas.

The ideals of friendship that the poetic persona upholds include making homosocial friendships with men take precedence over romantic relationships and casual liaisons with

women; Cavalier lyricists promoted these ideals of male friendship. These ideals that the Cavaliers who supported the reign of Charles I (1625-1649, through the Interregnum, and Restoration) upheld—loyalty to the monarchy and to homosocial male friendship, for example—similarly apply to libertine friendship during the Restoration, especially in terms of the socio-sexual aspect of male friendship where men deem their relationships with Cavaliers as more reliable and less "transient [and] subject to change" than relations with women (Miner 252). Libertine friendship, then, in "Upon His Drinking a Bowl" takes precedence over heterosexual romantic relationships and friendships.

The narrator opens the poem invoking Vulcan, the "god of fire and metal working" to design him a cup. He wants a large cup "As Nestor us'd of old" and asks Vulcan to "Shew all thy skill to trim it up/Damask it round with Gold" ("Drinking" l. 1, 2-3). Essentially, the narrator wants a large goblet adorned with gold that resembles a cup Nestor might have used during the Classical era. However, the narrator soon shifts his focus from instructions to Vulcan regarding the details about the physical materials and dimensions of the cup to a depiction of Cavalier—and Libertine—friendship when he describes the images he wants Vulcan to engrave upon the cup.

In listing his specifications for the designs adorned on his drinking glass, the poetic persona expresses a preference for associating with fellow libertines in more leisurely settings. He prefaces his descriptions of the images he wants depicted on the cup with equally specific instructions to Vulcan about the scenes he does not want portrayed on it:

> Engrave not Battail on his Cheek,
> With War I've nought to do;
> I'm none of those that took Mastrich,
> Nor Yarmouth Leager knew.

Let it no name of Planets tell,
Fixt Stars, or Constellations;
For I am no Sir Sydrophell,
Nor none of his Relations. (l. 9-16)

He wants "nought to do" with war, nor does he want his cup to display images of "planets," "fixt stars, or Constellations" ("Drinking" l. 10, 13, 14-15). The narrator does not want to associate himself with "Sir Sydrofel/ [Or any] of his Relations" (l. 15, 16). Stanzas three and four contain engravings "by which others might idealize war or the stars," Blair contends (Blair 128)—hence the references to Mastrich, Yarmouth Leager, and Sir Sydrophell, an astrologer satirized in Samuel Butler's *Hudibras* (Tillotson n. 11, 12, and 15). The narrator, however, requests that his cup contain designs that portray what *he* idealizes. He desires a more romantic—in terms of love and in terms of nature—homosocial and homosexual interaction with men, and this preference manifests itself in the images displayed on the glass. Instead of settings of men engaging in intellectual activities like studying the positions of the stars or fighting in wars, he wants the cup to depict a more idyllic setting in which two men "their limbs in Amorous folds intwine" ("Drinking" l. 19). In other words, the poetic persona wants this customized cup to represent libertine friendships rather than sexual liaisons between men and women.

However, the narrator does not leave the reader with a mere celebration of male homosexual interaction; he expresses a bias towards interacting with libertine boys and men over interacting with women. The poetic persona spends the majority of the poem describing in specific detail the adornments of the drinking cup, allowing only cursory attention to women in the concluding line of the poem. Though John Patterson argues that the "homosexuality that is emphasized… is the physical rather than the emotional experience of homosexuality," he does not consider the complete fifth stanza in his interpretation of the picture depicted on the cup (Patterson 11). The poetic persona instructs Vulcan to carve the following onto the cup:

> But carve thereon a spreading Vine,
> Then add Two lovely Boys;
> Their Limbs in Amorous folds intwine,
> The Type of *future* joys. (“Drinking” l. 17-20, my emphasis)

The narrator wants to see two men in a loving embrace (what Patterson calls the physical component of homosexuality) but he does not stop there. He ends the stanza with the line “the type of *future* joys” (“Drinking” l. 20, my emphasis). Blair makes an argument similar to Patterson and asserts that the final line of this stanza differs from the rest of the stanza because it demonstrates that the narrator is “motivated by unadorned animal drives” (Blair 128). However, the word “future” implies a more permanent relationship that includes a physical one (“animal drives”), but simultaneously includes an emotional relationship (128). When coupled with the idyllic, romantic setting the narrator insists that the design portray, the image of two men “their limbs in amorous fold intwine” resonates as more than just an instinctual, physical—and arguably libertine—drive for sexual intercourse (“Drinking” l. 23). Though Patterson is right in his contention that the descriptions on the cup are “unashamedly sensual” and cites examples such as the following: “the boys are seductively ‘lovely’; ‘limbs’ implies the activity of all members of the body; ‘amorous folds’ has sexual connotations; ‘entwine’ is more sensual than say, ‘embrace.’…this is the example of ‘future joys,’” the phrase “future joys” resonates as more than mere sensual descriptions of the men depicted in the stanza (Patterson 11, “Drinking” l. 24). In other words, the romantic settings displayed on this cup that include men embracing one another as lovers reflects both a more permanent physical and emotional relationship than the one libertines typically prefer. This seemingly aberrant type of relationship that contains both a sexual and emotional component demonstrates the instability of libertinism as a concept and the frequent need to change the definition so that it suits the agendas of respective libertines.

The poem ends with a cursory mention of a sexual liaison with a woman that implies the poetic persona, in contrast to his desire for a permanent relationship with a man, perfunctorily returns to heterosexual love out of an obligation to a (presumably) committed or permanent relationship. The narrator sets up his monologue as a statement about male friendship with homosexual implications, but shifts his argument in the concluding line of the poem. He writes:

> Cupid and Bacchus, my Saints are,
> May drink, and Love, still reign,
> With Wine, I wash away my cares,
> *And then to Cunt again.* ("Drinking" l. 21-24, my emphasis)

Not only does the narrator's argument shift, but the tone of the poem shifts in the final line. We see the poem transform from an idyllic treatment of homosexual romantic love—that includes both the physical and emotional components—to a reluctant return to heterosexual love—a relationship in which the emotional, romantic attachment typical in a relationship is absent—or what Harold Weber calls "a brutalization and debasement of the erotic" (Weber 102-103). This attitude towards heterosexual relations adheres to the traits of libertines in that the narrator deems relationships with men as superior to relationships with women. The narrator's statement, "And then to cunt again" (*Drinking* l. 24) implies a physical relationship, albeit a long-term, committed relationship that is possibly a marriage, for sexual release instead of a relationship that is both emotional and physical. Unlike the picture of the two male lovers on the drinking cup ("Then add Two lovely Boys; /Their Limbs in Amorous folds intwine" ["Drinking" l. 23-24), the poetic persona relegates the sexual interaction with the woman to a physical act. He does not afford the almost absent woman of the poem agency, identity, or emotion, but speaks of her as a mere reproductive organ. Instead of looking forward to "future joys" with this woman, the poetic persona reluctantly goes to her "again" with a "mechanical attitude" towards copulating with her (l. 20, 24, Patterson 11). If the narrator is an authentic libertine and thus engaging in anonymous

sex with both multiple sexual partners, both male and female then by definition, he is required to copulate with women regardless of whether or not he would rather engage in libertine activities that may or may not involve sexual relations with men. The poetic persona feels forced to comply to adhere to a definition of libertinism that does not apply to his actual desires.

As a libertine, the narrator returns to the woman because he feels obligated, not because he equates their relationship with the exalted romances he engages in with fellow libertine boys and men. That is not to say he feels no physical attraction to women, just that he views homosocial friendships with men as preferable to sexual relations with women. The poetic persona similarly challenges any attempts at precise definitions of libertinism in that he returns to sexual and heterosocial relationships with women—relationships supported by social institutions.

The poetic persona's methodical approach to heterosexual sex emphasizes the transience Miner mentions and the inferiority of heterosexual relationships to homosocial and homosexual relationships. This return, regardless of his reluctance to do so, however, renders him a libertine who can only succeed temporarily at embodying the traits put forth in any standard definitions of libertinism. His implicit devotion to a social institution—heterosexual relationships—will constantly require him to change his definition of libertinism simply because true libertinism involves a rebellion against all social institutions. Blair asserts that the poetic persona "remains unaware of the incongruity of the last line" (Blair 128). However, it is questionable whether the narrator does or does not realize the contradiction between the last line and the remainder of the poem. Regardless of the narrator's awareness (or lack thereof) about the disjunction between the concluding line and the poem as a whole, this change in the tone of the poem is characteristic of libertine habitual revision of the definition of "libertinism." The concluding line of the poem, then, when viewed through the perspective of a constantly redefining idea, does not contradict

the five preceding stanzas. Instead, this line and the rest of the poem signify the libertine need for accommodating his personal agenda regardless of its affect on others and the many fluctuations and contradictions inherent in each change to the definition of libertinism.

Conclusion

Rochester's libertines run the gamut in terms of the ways in which they approach libertinism and reason. The poetic personae of *A Satyr Against Mankind* and "The Maim'd Debauchee" successfully integrate reason and libertinism via an obedience to libertinism and "right reason." Their loyalty to both ideas implicitly makes both narrators successful interpreters of Hobbesian philosophy.

The poetic persona of "Upon His Drinking a Bowl," similar to the personae mentioned above, falls short of embodying the traits of the conventional libertine. However, this persona differs from his two counterparts in the manifestation of his divided loyalties between libertinism and reason. The narrator's seemingly sole devotion to his fellow libertines makes him a more conventional libertine. However, his return to reason and institutional authority transforms his portrayal of himself from a typical libertine to a self-contradictory libertine. All three poetic personae cannot live up to any sort of libertine ideal because qualifying as a libertine entails frequent revisions in their interpretations of libertinism that their constantly shifting desires and agendas require them to make.

Rochester, then, recognizes the tenuousness in creating a precise definition of libertinism. While his libertine narrators seemingly possess traits deemed stereotypically libertine, they challenge, satirize, and criticize libertinism as a concept with a stable definition. Through their applications and deliberate misinterpretations of Hobbes, they create their own versions of

libertinism that challenge a “standard” definition of libertinism and function as self-criticism and self-satire of the concept.

CHAPTER 4

DON JOHN, HIS FELLOW LIBERTINES, AND THEIR MISINTERPRETATIONS OF LIBERTINISM AND HOBBESIAN PHILOSOPHY IN THOMAS SHADWELL'S *THE LIBERTINE*

"Pleasure and power," writes Michel Foucault, "do not cancel or turn back against one another; they seek out, overlap, and reinforce one another. They are linked together by complex mechanisms and devices of excitation and incitement" (48). In *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction* (1978), Foucault argues that basic power structures—that is, social institutions—cannot function successfully without their subjects or those whom they seek to control.[1] Similarly, the subjects cannot subvert social institutions or completely eradicate them. Foucault's argument states that the relationship between power and sexuality (the pursuit of pleasure) is symbiotic and the two are not mutually exclusive entities. Institutions cannot exist without the presence and obedience of their opposition.

Foucault's theories about sexuality, social institutions, and power apply to Restoration and eighteenth-century libertinism, more specifically to the libertine (and Cavalier) characters in Thomas Shadwell's *The Libertine*.[2] Shadwell satirizes cavalier friendship and libertinism, especially in terms of the lengths to which cavaliers and libertines will go to compete with each other for power—a power they cannot enjoy without the authority imposed upon them by social institutions. His protagonist, Don John, has an anarchic need to overthrow social institutions (rather than subverting them within the parameters set by them) and become the leader. This makes Shadwell's portrayal of Don John a satire on libertinism in that Don John advocates rebellion against the followers of all schools of thought that prevent him from fulfilling his goals.

[1] See Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*. Trans. Robert Hurley. New York: Pantheon, 1978.

[2] I will use the terms "libertine" and "Cavalier" interchangeably except when a distinction is deemed necessary.

Through the struggle to obtain and keep power, especially apparent in Don John, *The Libertine* provides a negative representation of the Cavaliers. Don John's automatic (rather than perfunctory and pleasurable) devotion to instincts, senses, and nature, as well as his need to destroy rather than just challenge social institutions ultimately serve as critiques of libertinism itself and libertines. Additionally, the misinterpretation of Hobbesian philosophy articulated in *Leviathan* leads Shadwell's Don John and his libertine contemporaries to modify the definition of libertinism so that it will conform to their own agendas.[3] H. James Jensen writes, **"***The Libertine* is essentially a story of Hobbesian assumptions run amok, with no real check on the gratification of antisocial individual appetites and passions of powerful, amoral aristocrats" (363). Shadwell, through Don John and his cohorts, satirizes libertinism, Hobbes's philosophical tenets, and tragedy as a genre.

Similarly, Shadwell, a Whig, uses the theater, patronized and reopened by Charles II upon his return, to criticize libertines and libertinism. In doing so, Shadwell is using an outlet in which his external audience, many of who are libertines themselves, represents those he criticizes and satirizes in *The Libertine*. Therefore, the external audience sees their misinterpretations of Hobbes and their constant revisions of libertinism exposed.

[3] Before examining libertinism and its manifestations in *The Libertine*, it is worth briefly noting some of the existing criticism about the play. A significant amount of the criticism about *The Libertine* focuses on the influence of the Don Juan legend in the play, the variants existing between the renditions of the story—dramatic and poetic—written about the legendary Don Juan character, and the ways Shadwell conforms to and subverts the Don Juan legend. Claude La Rose, Sieur de Rosimond's *Le Nouveau Festin de Pierre, ou L'Athee Foudroye*, which is a blank verse adaptation of Moliere's play *Le Festin de Pierre*, is a primary source for Shadwell's version of the Don Juan legend (Alssid 107). Shadwell, though he preserves little of the original Don Juan legend itself, presents his own rendering of the Don Juan figure in his own character, Don John. In fact, Michael Alssid argues that Shadwell "intensified [Don Juan's] brutality, making him barbarous leader of a trio of iconoclasts for whom all social, natural, and religious laws (as civilization has preserved them) are irrelevant" (107). In *The Libertine*, the Don Juan character becomes Don John, an imperfectly radical libertine who gives orders to his fellow libertines and serves as the model upon which they base their own lives. I will focus on the ramifications of endorsing libertine ideas and engaging in Cavalier friendship within *The Libertine* and the ways in which Don John and his libertine counterparts imperfectly subvert the dominant authority—social institutions.

The Unrepentant Libertine

Shadwell's libertines both conform to and stray from standard libertine philosophy. Samuel Mintz defines "libertinism" in the following: "the disregard of moral restraint, especially in relations between the sexes" (Mintz 134). Mintz adds, "Hobbes was a 'libertine' because he denied religion; the courtiers and wits were 'libertines' because they led dissolute, immoral lives" and that "Hobbes's critics tried to show that the immoral conduct of the courtiers was inspired by the free-thinking opinions of Hobbes" (134). Shadwell's characters, Don John, Don Octavio, and Don Lopez, are upper class young gentlemen who lead "dissolute, immoral lives" and reject social institutions, especially marriage, family, the Church, and government (134). In terms of love, libertines adopted a "naturalistic concept of love between the sexes as only physical appetite, the revolt against the custom of marriage as well as against the traditional conventions and attitudes of courtly love" (Underwood 14). Similarly, libertines are "antirationalist, denying the power of man through reason to conceive reality…the libertine considered human laws and institutions as mere customs varying with the variations of societies and characteristically at odds with Nature as, of course, with 'right reason'" (13-14).

While Restoration and eighteenth-century libertines may choose to defy institutions, they do not attempt to overthrow them. Instead, they simply protest these authorities. Shadwell's Don John and his libertine contemporaries, however, change the definition of libertinism so that it includes an endorsement of destroying social institutions. This form of libertinism conforms to the figure Andrew Williams identifies as the "unrepentant libertine" (95). According to Williams, the "unrepentant libertine" possesses "a voracious sexual appetite, a permanent state of skepticism, and a code of personal conduct… in which the pursuit of pleasure and power remained paramount to the establishment and maintenance of his masculine identity" (Williams

95). The unrepentant libertine, Williams continues, "refused to accept a 'reformed' version of his social identity that defined manhood within a relatively rigid sphere of characteristics and social deportment"—characteristics standard libertines also personify within the framework of society, but to which Shadwell's libertines refuse to conform inside the confines of institutional authority (95).

Don John embodies characteristics similar to conventional libertinism and the "unrepentant libertine" Williams identifies, especially in terms of his interactions with his libertine friends. As a libertine obsessed with power and toppling social institutions, Don John competes with his friends for the sole purpose of establishing power over them. He cares solely about self-gratification and refuses to adapt to the boundaries set by institutional authority. What distinguishes Shadwell's Don John from conventional libertines, however, is his extreme opposition bordering anarchism that he harbors towards social authority—a defiance that is implicitly opposite of Foucauldian philosophy in that Foucault argues that rebellion cannot exist without an authority against which to rebel. Foucault writes:

> Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power. Should it be said that one is always 'inside' power, there is no 'escaping' it, there is no absolute outside where it is concerned, because one is subject to the law in any case? Or that, history being the ruse of reason, power is the ruse of history, always emerging the winner? This would be to misunderstand the strictly relational character or power relationships. Their existence depends on a multiplicity of points of resistance: these play the role of adversary, target, support, or handle in power relations. These points of resistance are present everywhere in the power network. Hence there is no single locus of great Refusal, no soul of revolt, source of all rebellions, or pure law of the revolutionary. Instead there is a plurality of resistances, each of them a special case: resistances that are possible, necessary, improbable; others that are spontaneous, savage, solitary, concerted, rampant, or violent; still others that are quick to compromise, interested, or sacrificial; by definition, they can only exist in the field of power relations. (95-96).

Don John wants not only to challenge institutional authority, but to destroy it. This competition he engages in with his fellow Cavaliers—a competition that includes, but is not limited to

wooing women merely for sexual satisfaction—transcends friendly rivalry and instead functions as a way in which he can protect his identities as an alpha male and as an alternative authority to social institutions rather than a rebellious challenger of them.

Don John's desire and need to establish power—over both his friends and institutional authority—not only exemplifies his constantly shifting agenda and similarly changing definition of libertinism, but simultaneously supersedes the Cavalier views of friendship. Cavaliers were followers of Charles I as opposed to the Roundheads, or supporters of Parliament. These members of the royal court were lyricists who composed "lighthearted poems" and included Thomas Carew, Richard Lovelace, and Sir John Suckling (83). These lyrics were also "graceful, melodious, and polished in manner; artfully showing Latin classical influences; sometimes licentious and cynical or epigrammatic and witty" (83). Many of these poems were occasional and emphasized themes of "love, war, chivalry, and loyalty to the king" (83).

One important component of the libertine need and desire to submit to patriarchal social institutions is their endorsement of Cavalier ideals of friendship. The socio-sexual aspect of the Cavalier strain dictates that men must place more importance on homosocial, Platonic friendships than romantic relationships and casual liaisons with women. In his essay "On Friendship" (1580), Michel de Montaigne describes women and their capabilities in terms of Platonic friendships. He writes, "Besides, to tell the truth, the ordinary capacity of women is inadequate for the communion and fellowship which is the nurse of this sacred bond; nor does their soul seem firm enough to endure the strain of so tight and durable a knot" (Montainge 60). Since women, according to Montaigne, are unable to cultivate and maintain Platonic friendships as skillfully as men, Cavaliers must rely on homosocial bonding with men for optimal friendships. Cavaliers consider their relationships with fellow Cavaliers as more reliable and less

"transient" than those with females because male friends remain loyal and dependable until death. According to Earl Miner, this view of homosocial male friendships as superior to heterosexual relationships allows men a more effective way "to absorb… [the] emotional force of love" (Miner 252). In short, men are more capable of engaging in long-lasting friendships than women, hence the priority of masculinist bonding over heterosexual friendships and romantic relationships. Cavaliers, like libertines, are wealthy gentlemen who engage in a friendly rivalry with their fellow cavaliers. The power Shadwell's Don John wishes to exude over the Dons contrasts from the friendly rivalry in which cavaliers typically engage. Ironically, this power resembles the power that social institutions enforce on libertines—the power Don John and his friends wish to overthrow.

Instead of respecting his friends and seeing them as equals and fellow Cavaliers, Don John views his friends—who, incidentally, willingly obey Don John—as his subjects who must submit to his authority, which includes aiding him in toppling institutional rule. Don Lopez even goes so far as to say, "Don John, thou art our Oracle; thou hast/ Dispell'd the Fumes which once clowded our Brains"—the fumes refer to education and both conventional reason and "right reason" (*The Libertine* 25). Don John feels the need not only to make them aware of his power but to exert it and makes sure they do not forget that he is their leader. According to Don Antonio, Don John releases them from the shackles of institutional authority represented by formal education. Don Antonio says:

> By thee, we have got loose from Education,
> And the dull savagery of Pupillage,
> Recover'd all the liberty of Nature,
> Our own *strong Reason* now can go alone,
> Without the feeble props of splenatick Fools,
> Who contradict our common Mother, Nature. (*The Libertine* 25, my emphasis)[4]

[4] All quotes from *The Libertine* are taken from *The Complete Works of Thomas Shadwell*, ed. Montague Summers, v. 3. (London 1927). Due to a lack of scene and line numbers, this play will be cited by play and page number.

Shadwell's libertines, including Don John, have chosen to submit to the new master of "Infallible Nature" (25). Interestingly, Don John and his fellow libertines cannot successfully subvert or defy social institutions because they must act within the framework of these institutions they reject. What Don Jon fails to comprehend, however, is that power "is not something that is acquired, seized, or shared, something that one holds onto or allows to slip away; power is exercised from innumerable points, in the interplay of nonegalitarian and mobile relations" (Foucault 94). In fact, Don Antonio even admits that they all will follow "[their] own strong Reason" (*The Libertine* 25). This willingness to submit to any authority—a social one or one created and imposed upon them by Don John—demonstrates a self-critique of libertinism. In choosing to allow anyone or anything to guide them, Don John and his friends ultimately become inadequate rebels and faulty interpreters of Hobbesian philosophy. Aaron Jaffe argues, "Don John twists Hobbes' rejection of private conscience into a rejection of universal standards of morality and law, producing instead a kind of amoral relativism" (Jaffe 59). This "amoral relativism" enables Don John not only to justify his behavior but also to persuade the Dons to join him in defacing—literally and figuratively—social institutions. Shadwell's Don John and his fellow libertines, in their insatiable need to destroy all forms of institutional authority, implicitly endorse an extreme form of Hobbesianism.

Unlike Rochester's libertine poetic persona in *A Satyr against Mankind*, Don John's interpretation of Hobbes's theory does not give credence to conventional reason or "right reason." Instead, Don John advocates a philosophy in which men live according to sense and instinct and serve only nature and themselves. Anthony Kaufman argues that Shadwell's libertines "parrot" sentiments about endorsing "right reason." (Kaufman 247). Don John is mocking "right reason" and satirizing it. He instructs his followers and libertine counterparts:

> Let's on, and live the noble life of Sense.
> To all the powers of Love and mighty Lust,
> In spight of formal Fops I will be just.
> What ways soe're conduce to my delight,
> My Sense instructs me, I must think 'em right.
> On, on my Soul, and make no stop in pleasure,
> They're dull insipid Fools that live by measure. (*The Libertine* 28)

This opening scene establishes Don John as the character who gave the men a false sense of liberty and individual independence by persuading them to use sense as their guide instead of reason and virtue. In pledging their allegiance and expressing gratitude to Don John, the men do not develop their own identities, but are actually bound by and submitting to a new authority in Don John and his misinterpreted Hobbesianism.

However, the Dons do not misapply all tenets of libertinism or of Hobbes's philosophy; instead, they contradict themselves in that they adamantly refuse to obey any form of authority, yet allow themselves to submit to Don John and to nature. Though they do interpret Hobbes as an advocate for a virtually anarchic form of libertinism that operates outside the parameters of social authority, they simultaneously contradict themselves in that they interpret Hobbes's basic premise that one should live according to Nature and implicitly, "right" reason. Moreover, Don John unwaveringly exerts power over the other Dons and essentially becomes the social authority to which, or in this case to whom, he expects them to submit.

Don John as Aristotelian Friend

As noted earlier, Don John assumes the role of authority figure to his libertine friends. As an advocate of an extreme version of libertinism, he cannot and will not befriend men out of any genuine, selfless feelings; to him, his friends are a means to an end or barriers for him to break so that he can seek and obtain instant gratification. Instead of prioritizing his Cavalier

friendships, Don John fails to uphold Cavalier ideals because he does not place homosocial friendships in higher regard than romantic relationships and casual liaisons with women. Additionally, he cannot commit himself to another philosophy, in this case, Cavalier friendship, because to do so would prevent him from maintaining control over others.

Don John's inequitable friendships with his fellow libertines and Cavaliers qualify as Aristotle's two categories of friendship—the "friendship of utility" and the "friendship of young people" (Aristotle 216). In the "friendship of utility," men "use each other for their own interests [because] they always want to get the better of the bargain" (216). Don John's friendships, like his relationships with women, are based on Aristotle's friendship of "young people" and of "utility" articulated in *Nicomachean Ethics* (196). Aristotle describes the friendship of young people in the following paragraph:

> …the friendship of young people seems to aim at pleasure; for they live under the guidance of emotion, and pursue above all what is pleasant to themselves and what is immediately before them; but with increasing age their pleasures become different. This is why they quickly become friends and quickly cease to be so; their friendship changes with the object that is found pleasant, and such pleasure alters quickly. (196)

Instead of remaining constant and loyal in his male friendships, Don John's role in male friendships is transient and adheres to the youthful friendships that Aristotle labels as those that primarily "aims at pleasure" (196). Don John subscribes to this Aristotelian view in that he "live[s] under the guidance of emotion" and "pursue[s] above all what is pleasant to [himself] and what is immediately before [him]" (196). Once Don John's pursuit for pleasure changes, he will discard his friends and replace them with new ones so that he can retain control and continue fulfilling his desires. As an authority, Don John determines the types of friendships in which he wants to engage and exercises his right to change the nature of the friendship at his own will and

without consulting his fellow libertines. Don John uses his friends as accomplices and lackeys who will unquestioningly obey his orders to help him obtain the pleasure he seeks.

Don John's influence on the Cavaliers, especially Don Antonio, extends to his insatiable desire to obtain and retain power over others outside of the boundaries of the basic power structure. Don Antonio yields to Don John's power in that he lacks morals and refuses to submit to social taboos regarding morality. His actions mirror Don John's in that he will assume certain behaviors for the sole purpose of exerting power over others. Don Antonio even goes so far as to "get both [his] Sisters with child" simply because they are "lusty young handsome wenches" who "pleased [his] appetite" (*Libertine* 26-27). The fact that he is engaging in incest does not occur to him or matter to him because Don Antonio's objective, like Don John's, is to establish power outside of the boundaries of social institutions, and incest qualifies as a socially unacceptable act in which to engage. If Don Antonio had not impregnated his sisters, his power would vanish and someone else would dishonor his family (27). He wants to leave the dishonoring to himself, and by not allowing others access to his sisters, he can establish and retain his power without losing power over his family to someone else. The only authority to whom Don Antonio will submit is Don John, and in establishing power through incest, Don Antonio proves his allegiance to Don John's authority and his choice to live through the guidance of sense instead of reason. Implicitly, then, Don John's influence over Don Antonio will prepare him to replace Don John as the alternative authority to the dominant power structure.

However, Don John's need to exert authority over others does not limit itself to fellow Cavaliers but extends to women and to the defiance and rejection of institutional authority. He is not bound by any social institutions such as God and religion, nor is he bound by moral

constraints such as familial duty. Don John "prefers a rape, with a bit of murder and sacrilege thrown in for spice," writes Warren Chernaik, because he does not have a moral code to which he subscribes; with the exception of any codes he might choose to follow temporarily and on impulse for purposes of fulfilling his desire for pleasure (26). Chernaik argues that Shadwell's "exaggerated portraits" of these libertine characters "call attention to the problems implicit in a philosophy of life which denies all restraint and sees men as ruled entirely by the tyranny of their own desires" (Chernaik 27). Don John does not practice self-restraint because it contradicts his insatiable addiction to power and pleasure.

Shadwell's Don John and his fellow libertines commit murder, rape women, and vandalize churches (social institutions) simply because they can, not because they wish to prove a point or make a statement—political, social, or otherwise. Their only motivation, especially in the case of Don John, is to exert authority and power over others. For example, Don John proudly admits to murdering his older brother because he "kept a good estate from [Don John]" (*Libertine* 26). His motives in killing his brothers are particularly selfish in that he needed the estate because he "could not Whore and Revel sufficiently without it" (26). Don John possesses no sense of duty to anyone but himself and defends his actions with his need to follow the ways of nature and sense and prevent social authority from imposing itself upon him. He simply wants to follow his base instincts without remaining constant to anything but inconstancy.

Don John lives and acts as what Richard Braverman would call a "parasite" to various hosts. He chooses to extract pleasure from others, the hosts, with no regard to their feelings, desires, and needs. Braverman defines the parasitic libertine as someone who "interrupts a system of social exchange" (Braverman 74). The libertine disrupts this system by focusing on instantly gratifying his desires, which motivates him constantly to change the definition of

libertinism. This construction of the libertine applies to Don John especially when we consider his relationships with women. Don John, similar to his refusal to accept familial duty, refuses to accept responsibility and to follow through on his promises and commitments to women. In fact, the only authority to which he submits is the one he imposes upon himself and his libertine counterparts—his own anarchic, chaotic libertinism. Instead of committing to one woman, Don John takes marriage vows with numerous women and will not stop doing so until he has "as many Wives and Concubines as the Grand Signior" (*Libertine* 43). He uses these women for his own sexual pleasure without giving a thought to their love for him or the fact that he has taken a vow of marriage. Once he extracts all the pleasure from them, and perhaps money and other material objects from them, he quits the parasitic relationship with one host and merely switches to another host and continues the cycle. Examples of this parasite/host relationship include Don John's relationship with Leonora and his treatment of the six women who claim him as their husband.

Don John's obsession with maintaining power affects his sexual encounters with and treatment of women. Michael Alssid writes, "[Don John] shares with the heroes of Restoration heroic tragedy a superhuman dynamism and lawlessness, but he differs from them in that he *cannot* subject ultimately his ego to the dictates of an ideal lady or power" (Alssid 107, my emphasis). However, Don John spends the entirety of the play defying authority, so even if he were able to accept another as an authority figure and obey them, it is doubtful he would do so willingly. In fact, Don John bases all of his decisions and actions—his whole life, in fact—on his need to dominate others, including his sexual conquests. He and his fellow Cavaliers engage in and enjoy sex more for the feelings of dominance and establishing control over others than the act itself. Don John will even go so far as to "ravish" a woman "old or young, ugly or

handsome, no matter" just to prove his authority (*Libertine* 46). The physical appearances of the women do not matter, nor do the sexual pleasure or consent of the women. All that concerns Don John is sexual gratification and, more importantly, his power over the women. Instead of wanting a fulfilling sexual relationship in which both parties experience sexual gratification, he prefers rape and considers it "noble and heroick" because in committing rape, he can maintain a power and dominance that he would otherwise relinquish in a romantic relationship (32). His bragging about his numerous sexual exploits and his challenge to the men to find a woman with whom he has not "lain withal" grants him authority over his friends and emphasizes his role as their "Oracle" and leader (25, 46).

Don John's friendships fit Aristotle's "friendship of utility," especially in terms of the ways in which he treats men and women, friends, and strangers—as we saw earlier with Don Octavio and as we will see later with Maria, for example (216). Since Don John is far from virtuous, it is impossible for him to uphold the ideals of friendship endorsed by the Cavaliers, much less to embody the Aristotelian ideals of "perfect friendship"—friendship of "men who are good, and alike in virtue"—the optimal type of friendship (196). His philosophy of allowing sense to "guide [his] reason" does not coincide with the Cavalier strain of friendship or with Aristotle's category of "perfect friendship"; his philosophy only coincides with his versions of libertinism (Aristotle 196, *Libertine* 26). In order for Don John to uphold the ideals of either school of thought and become a true Cavalier or a perfect friend he must allow reason and morality to guide him and embrace conscience and take it seriously instead of rejecting it and regarding it as a "fond fantastick thing" that "serves for nothing but to make men Cowards" (*Libertine* 25).

Don John's failure as a Cavalier and his hunger for power manifest themselves in his treatment of his friends, especially Don Octavio. Don John will go so far as to trick and dishonor his fellow Cavaliers in his efforts to satisfy his own base appetites and desire to maintain power. In Don Octavio's case, Don John does not want to trick or conquer him because he dislikes him or feels more worthy than Don Octavio of having a relationship or a casual affair with Maria. Don John merely wants to "enjoy [Maria]" because "[Octavio] likes her" and because "she's another Woman" (31). For Don John, women are mere receptacles for him to use for his own pleasure and men are the obstacles he must overcome to get to the women—as well as additional individuals he must control so he can continue following the guidance of sense.

Though one could argue that Don John fulfills the Cavalier ideals of friendship in his meeting the expectations of one of the Aristotelian views of friendship, he falls short of the requirements of the types of homosocial friendship and schools of thought Aristotle and the Cavalier strain claim to advocate. Aristotle does not advocate the category of friendship motivated by attaining pleasure because this form of friendship is based on goals and desires that are subject to "changing often within a single day" (Aristotle 196). Like Don John, Don Antonio and Don Lopez even admit to following their own fluctuating, impulsive whims:

> *D. Ant.* Change our natures; Go bid a Blackamore be white, we follow
> Our Constitutions, which we did not give our selves.
> *D. Lop.* What we are, We are by Nature, our reason tells us we must
> Follow that. (*The Libertine* 56)

Though they claim not to submit to any authority but their own, self-imposed authority, the libertines obey Don John as an authority. Instead of following their own impulses and spontaneous, constantly vacillating desires, they are obeying the desires and whims of a figurative social institution, Don John. As conventional libertines, then, they fail**,** and as Hobbesians they fail in that they recognize nature alone as a viable authority to guide them.

The Satiric *Libertine*

The Libertine satirizes libertines whose blatant misinterpretations of Hobbesian philosophy result in their endorsement of their own versions of libertinism. Moreover, the play satirizes the extreme, anti-Hobbesian libertinism Don John endorses. In other words, the "exaggerated portraits" of libertinism Chernaik identifies applies to Don John's (mis)interpretation of libertinism and not necessarily to conventional libertinism itself (Chernaik 27).

Generically, critics categorize *The Libertine* as a tragedy; however, the play clearly qualifies as a satiric tragicomedy that calls extreme, anarchic libertinism into question. Additionally, the supernatural elements—i.e., the animation of the statue of Don Pedro (Don John's father) and his appearance at the libertines' supper and the Devils that open the ground that swallows Don John and his friends in the final scene—exemplify a burlesque quality that lampoons conventional tragedy. During the banquet scene or the scene in which the ghost appears to the libertines at supper, the libertines, unlike similar scenes in which ghosts appear to the living and humans obey the ghosts' warnings, do not heed the warnings of the ghost and do not take the paranormal or supernatural seriously. They ridicule the Ghost and refuse to listen to his warnings because doing so would imply that they are powerless to change their fates. That is, the Dons would have to admit to a lack of control over a situation and to powerlessness. In fact, Esther Menasce refers to Don John as "a symbolic embodiment of evil, a paradigmatic figure acting in a surrealistic nowhere" (Menasce 11). Though her identification of Don John as personified evil is arguably an exaggerated assessment of him, Menasce makes a valid point about him.

As not only the epitome of self-indulgence, selfishness, and "evil," but as a libertine

obsessed with his role as an authority figure, Don John feels threatened when he must confront the demons and Don Pedro's ghost about his sins. Since domination over others is important to Don John and he cannot handle competition with others for power, he chooses to ignore the warnings of the Ghost. Therefore, he cannot allow any sort of authority to rule him, much less a supernatural authority. Don John chastises the Ghost of Don Pedro for keeping a mistress during his lifetime, "not forgetting [his] sweet Sister" (*Libertine* 81). Essentially, Don John holds his father accountable for committing similar crimes during his lifetime. Therefore, he cannot and will not see him as a proper authority because, according to Don John, Don Pedro is a hypocrite and even less worthy of obedience than social institutions.

Similarly, the treatment of the supernatural in the final scene of the play functions as a satire of libertinism. When the devils appear to the Dons singing of their plans to take Don John and his friends to hell, the ridiculousness of it renders the play a satire about misinterpreting libertinism. Don John defies the devils even after the ground opens and swallows Don Antonio and Don Lopez. Unphased, Don John says, "Think not to fright me, foolish Ghost; I'll break your Marble body in pieces, and pull down your Horse" (*Libertine* 91). Kaufman writes:

> ...the ending seems to jar with the rest of the play. Don John, portrayed throughout as puppetlike, a burlesque figure, suddenly becomes heroic! Faced with the traditional confrontation with the forces of divine retribution, Shadwell makes Don John entirely courageous. He faces his destruction with bravery, without compromising his horrible principles. The emphasis on heroism goes beyond the more ambiguous endings of Tirso and Moliere, where we may or may not find Don Juan a heroic figure (Kaufman 249).

However, when read as a satire, the ending does flow with the rest of the play. Throughout the play, Don John and his libertine counterparts have taken an outrageous approach to libertinism and have made similarly outrageous justifications for committing crimes. Don John does not appear heroic or courageous, but instead appears ridiculous. Instead of relinquishing his control and admitting he exhibited poor judgment and behavior in his life—arguably a more heroic

feat—he attempts to dominate supernatural forces. Not only does Don John's ridiculousness function as a feature of satire rather than as an archetypal hero, but also, libertinism and Hobbesian philosophy do not mention much less advocate trying to overpower or dominate nature and the supernatural. Conventional libertinism and Hobbesian philosophy implicitly endorse obeying sense and nature within the boundaries of social institutions, not outside of them. In other words, Don John's need for domination extends itself so far that he will risk his life and choose death over submitting to any authority, social or supernatural.

Conclusion

Shadwell, through Don John and his cohorts, satirizes libertinism, Hobbesian philosophy, and tragedy as a genre. As a libertine living under the rule of social institutions, Don John refuses to compromise his own instincts, desires, and needs within the parameters set by institutional authority. Moreover, this unwillingness to recognize society as an authority demonstrates blindness on the part of Don John to the ideas advocated in Foucauldian and Hobbesian philosophy, as well as conventional libertinism. More importantly, Don John and his friends misinterpret Hobbes via the extreme, anarchic libertinism he advocates for himself and his fellow libertines to follow. Don John's miscomprehension of Hobbes's "state of nature"—"a state of chaos in which all human conduct is dominated by self-interest"—not only causes him to obey his instincts and desires for instant gratification, sexual or otherwise, without adhering to the legislation enacted by society, but also makes him an anti-Hobbesian (Mintz 32). His obedience solely to his self-interest without the permission of government or other institutions does not give him license to act without considering the consequences or the potential effects on him or the people he uses to meet his needs.

CHAPTER 5

LIBERTINE SELF-CRITICISM AND SELF-SATIRE IN WYCHERLEY'S *THE COUNTRY WIFE*

Many critics of *The Country Wife* identify its male protagonist, Horner, as a conventional libertine guided by Hobbesian self-interest and instant gratification, a libertine who disobeys social institutions in favor of following the self-interest which motivates him. For example, Thomas Fujimura writes, "In Horner he [Wycherley] has also created his most striking Truewit—a plain-dealing, yet ironic Wit, mordant and blunt in his speech, libertine in his principles, skeptical in temper, and rationalistic" (144). Susan Owen adds, "Horner's name has a threefold significance, suggesting a cuckold-maker (the traditional symbol of the cuckold being horns), a wild beast with animalistic sexuality, and the horned devil"— with the exception of the "horned devil" label, these are all characteristically libertine ideals (132). Lawrence Stone writes that Horner is an "insatiable adulterer" and "a prisoner of sex" (Stone 250). "He derived," continues Stone, "no sensual pleasure from his conquests, only sadistic satisfaction at the seduction and then betrayal of his victims: his gratification came from their private humiliation and public ruin" (Stone 250). Charles Hallet adds a Hobbesian component to the discussion about Horner. He writes that Horner "is acting solely out of that emotion Hobbes saw as the foundation of human society—self-interest. Further, it is Horner's primary intention to exploit the self-interest of others so as to escape the limitations of the social contract himself" (Hallett 387).

While I agree that self-interest and sexual gratification guide and motivate Wycherley's Horner, I disagree with the one-dimensional caricatures of libertinism in such assessments. Like the other libertines in this study, Wycherley's Horner is a far more complicated, self-contradictory libertine who, in addition to possessing the qualities outlined in more standard

definitions of libertinism, reinterprets and misinterprets Hobbes**.** His Hobbessian self-interest and his Cavalier ideals are at odds with each other. In Horner's case, his interpretations of Hobbes are particularly apparent in the ways in which he approaches male friendship and the institution of marriage. In *The Country Wife*, Wycherley complicates the ideals of libertine friendship. The conflict resonates in this work in that Wycherley's Horner simultaneously wants to engage in friendships with his fellow Cavaliers and questions Cavalier views of friendship. Wycherley's Horner supports and upholds the ideals of friendship more in theory than in practice, and his siding with the wives of his fellow Cavaliers causes him to fall short of Cavalier expectations.

Moreover, Horner's version of libertinism manifests itself in that he deceives his friends and risks losing his homosocial male friendships to achieve his self-indulgent goals. Like Don John in Shadwell's *Libertine*, Wycherley's Horner does not treat his fellow Cavaliers as equals. Though he does not treat them as subjects who must recognize him as their leader the way Don John treats his friends, he resorts to deception in order to fulfill his sexual desires. That is, Horner's need for following his self-interestedness takes precedence over his friendships to the extent that he is willing to deceive his fellow Cavaliers to the detriment of these friendships. Horner's failure at Cavalier friendship and his siding with the female characters throughout the play satirizes libertinism by showing Hobbesian self-interest and the Cavalier ideal at odds with one another.

Horner as Anti-Cavalier

However, Wycherley complicates standard definitions of libertinism through Horner by having him fail as a Cavalier. Wycherley's Horner, like Shadwell's Don John, makes promoting

his own selfish agenda his primary priority over facilitating his homosocial friendships with his fellow Cavaliers and libertines. Assuming the guise of a eunuch will help him to engage in extramarital affairs with his friends' wives and enable him to participate with a relatively insincere motivation, at least in terms of his willingness to deceive his friends and risk losing these friendships, in masculinist bonding with his fellow Cavaliers.

In feigning impotence and risking receiving the label of eunuch and the social stigma that accompanies it, Wycherley's Horner can "abuse the husbands" and "soon disabuse the wives" (*The Country Wife* I. i. 181-82). Though he does not need to resort to extreme actions such as rape, murder, and other criminal activities that physically affect others the way Don John does, he willingly resorts to ruining his reputation about his virility so he can trick his friends into allowing him to take liberties—i.e. sexual intercourse and social interaction—with their wives. According to Robert Markley, "Plain dealing for [Horner] is an affectation, yet his affectation paradoxically verges on plain dealing" (Markley 163). He engages in "plain dealing" with the wives in that he reveals the falsity of the eunuch rumor to them, but not to their husbands (163). Wycherley's Horner ultimately sides with the women, which simultaneously feminizes Horner and reinforces his reputation as a rake with unstoppable sexual prowess even if only to the knowledge of the wives and not the husbands he cuckolds. Horner, then, fails to meet the expectations of the Cavaliers and Aristotelian views of friendship because he is willing to deceive his friends into believing he can no longer pose a threat to them when he really poses a greater threat to them under the guise of a eunuch.

The fact that Wycherley's Horner—a supposed fellow Cavalier and fictional libertine—poses a threat to the men renders him an unfit Cavalier; moreover, his desire to engage in unreciprocated competition—that is, competition without all the competitors' knowledge of their

participation in said competition. While libertines do engage in games and competitions with one another, the only players in Horner's game who know and make the rules is Horner. The others do not realize they are competing with Horner and therefore, cannot reciprocate with him. Like Don John of Thomas Shadwell's *The Libertine*, Wycherley's Horner cannot completely fit the construction of friendship proposed by Aristotle and that influenced many of his successors—e.g., Michel de Montaigne in his "On Friendship" where he articulates his esteem for male, homosocial friendships and his belief that women are incapable of "so tight and durable a knot" (60)—especially the type he labels "perfect friendship" —the optimal type of friendship (Aristotle 196). Aristotle writes:

> Perfect friendship is the friendship of men who are good, and alike in virtue; for those wish well alike to each other *qua* good, and they are good in themselves. Now those who wish well to their friends for their sake are most truly friends; for they do this by reason of their own nature and not incidentally; therefore their friendship lasts as long as they are good—and goodness is an enduring thing. (Aristotle 196)

This idea of "perfect friendship" can only develop between *good* men who are "alike in virtue" and Horner, while not as void of morality and as evil as men like Don John, is hardly a paragon of virtue (196). According to the Aristotelian strain, a "perfect friendship" is impossible for Horner since *both* parties must embody virtue. Aristotle continues his definition of perfect friendship and identifies it as rare and "infrequent" because it requires constant attention, work, and commitment (197).

While Wycherley's Horner is committed to maintaining friendships with men and endorses both Cavalier and Aristotelian ideals of friendship, his willingness to devote time and energy primarily to fulfilling his base needs and desires with women contradicts his claim to uphold the friendship theories he endorses. As a supposed eunuch, Horner persuades his fellow Cavaliers that he embodies the "perfect friend," implicitly a Cavalier friend, who has unwavering

devotion to them and cannot and will not attempt to engage in extramarital affairs with their wives. Instead of fulfilling the qualifications of Aristotle's "perfect friendship," Horner, in his willingness to follow his self-interest to the detriment of his male friendships, marks him as what Aristotle dismisses as "friend of utility" (Aristotle 216). A "friendship of utility" involves men who "use each other for their own interests [because] they always want to get the better of the bargain," while the "friendship of young people" primarily "aim[s] at pleasure" (216). According to Aristotle, friends of utility "live under the guidance of emotion, and pursue above all what is pleasant to themselves and what is immediately before them" (216). Similarly, Wycherley's Horner seeks masculinist bonding and competition and devises the eunuch façade to accommodate his needs for friendship. He needs these homosocial male friendships not only so he can access the wives (sexually and socially) during his stint as a eunuch, but also because he wants sexual competitors to whom he can brag about his sexual conquests. Horner sees donning this disguise as an opportunity to gratify both his desires to engage with men in friendship and his sexual desires with his friends' wives.

Horner's Treatment of Women and Performative Homosociality

Not only does Wycherley's Horner subvert conventional libertinism in his treatment of men but in his treatment of women as well. In fact, Horner initially befriends the women with disingenuous intentions—that is, he uses their friendship as a way to attain sexual access to them and to enjoy competition with the husbands who no longer see Horner as a threat to their marriages—but ultimately forges genuine friendships with them. Horner's treatment of women differs from that of his fictional libertine counterpart in Restoration drama, Shadwell's Don John, in that he does not rape and "ruin" women. In fact, the wives often initiate sexual encounters

with Horner and they always come to him willingly. John Wood writes, "And though Horner was a seducer, and his stratagem for seductions is the plot of the play, he forced himself on no woman who did not want him, he gossiped about no woman who had granted him her favors" (Wood 41). Wycherley's Horner, though a "seducer," never bragged to his friends about his sexual conquests and he never harmed women. In fact, the husbands gossip about and castigate their wives more often than Horner complains about women. Horner engages in extensive conversations with women about virtue and a woman's need to maintain an appearance of virtue. He does not limit his interactions with them to flowery rhetoric for purposes of seducing them and persuading them to commit adultery with him. For example, throughout the famous china scene (*The Country Wife* IV. iii), Horner and the women engage in sexual banter and joking at the expense of the men—a significant contrast to Cavalier friendship. Horner participates in and advances conversations with women rather than offering minimal, cursory participation merely for the sole purpose of persuading the women to fulfill his sexual needs.

Horner's atypical treatment of women does not limit itself to when he spends time with women exclusively, however. In fact, during one of Pinchwife's rants about women and why men should not marry witty or beautiful women, Horner rebuts him with the following: "But methinks/wit is more necessary than beauty, and I think no young Woman ugly that has it, and no/handsome Woman agreeable without it" (*The Country Wife* 513-516). Libertines and Cavaliers typically concern themselves with a woman's beauty and often view women's intelligence or wit as unimportant. In fact, Cavalier lyricists employed the blazon, a motif in which they listed and primarily focused on a woman's physical attributes; these comments focusing on a woman's physical beauty tended to take precedence over a woman's more abstract qualities, such as a woman's wit or feelings—qualities Wycherley's Cavalier husbands do not

seem to value (Miner 159). Similarly, Cavaliers often disregard women's feelings and refuse to acknowledge women's sexual needs and desires. Wycherley's Horner, though motivated by self-interest, does not completely disregard the feelings of others. Though he uses the women for sexual gratification (and their husbands for access to them), he does acknowledge their feelings. That is not to say that Horner is a radical feminist. In fact, he joins his fellow Cavaliers in making sexist comments about women and "insists that they are animalistic and incapable of love" (Kaufman 240). However, Horner's motive in expressing sexist sentiments about women is to appease the men and in doing so, maintain his access to their wives. Wycherley's Horner is cognizant of women's feelings and needs; and the fact that he has some investment in the women's feelings, regardless of how superficial and self-serving his initial motivation for his investment may be, renders him a self-contradictory libertine who constantly creates his own version of libertinism.

As a self-interested Hobbesian who misinterprets Hobbes's theories and in doing so, follows instincts or lives in what Hobbes called a "state of nature"—a world in which humans let their self-interest guide them and what Hobbes viewed as fatal to the existence of commonwealths and humans in general. This world Hobbes describes in *Leviathan* results in a "state of Warre" (Hobbes 62). Hobbes writes:

> Hereby it is manifest, that during the time men live without a common Power to keep them all in awe, they are in that condition which is called Warre; and such a warre, as if of every man, against every man. For Warre, consisteth not in Battel only, or the act of fighting; but in a tract of time, wherein the Will to contend by Battel is sufficiently known: and therefore the notion of *Time*, is to be considered in the nature of Warre; as it is in the nature of Weather. For as the nature of Foule weather, lyeth not in a showre or two of rain; but in an inclination thereto of many days together: So the nature of Warre, consisteth not in actuall fighting; but in the known disposition thereto, during all the time there is no assurance to the contrary. All other time is Peace.
>
> Whatsoever therefore is consequent to a time of Warre, where every man is Enemy to every man; wherein men live without other security, that what their own strength, and

> their own invention shall furnish them withal. In such condition, there is no place for Industry; because the fruit thereof is uncertain: and consequently no Culture of the Earth; no Navigation, nor use of the commodities that may be imported by Sea; no Commodious Building; no Instruments of moving, and removing such things as require much force no Knowledge of the face of the Earth; no account of Time; no Arts; no Letters; no Society; and which is worst of all, continuall feare, and danger of violent death; And the life of man, solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short. (Hobbes 62)

Horner, though motivated by self-interest, does not try to demolish the institution of marriage or other social institutions like Don John, but chooses to operate and satisfy his desires by defying it and infiltrating it in terms of engaging in sexual and emotional relationships with the wives. Unbeknownst to his fellow Cavaliers and libertines, Horner is an imperfect Cavalier. According to Richard Braverman, Horner is a "libertine-parasite" who "interrupts marital exchange because the institution itself implies a legal limit to the power and potency of the heroic will" (Braverman 77). Marriage intrudes into homosocial male friendships, and because of the limitations (to borrow Braverman's term) it places upon masculinist bonding, Horner deems adopting an alternate identity a solution to the restrictions marriage places upon friendship. This participation places Horner in a position of power or control in that it offers Horner both a way to manipulate marriages and friendships with men and women and a way successfully to gratify his sexual desires. Wycherley criticizes libertinism in that his Horner engages in homosocial competition, but does not reveal the rules of the game to his competitors, much less does he tell them they are engaged in a competition with him. This one-sided competition exemplifies the conflict between Horner's self-interest and his Cavalier ideals.

Horner's eunuch identity allows him to take a more performative approach to his attempt at masculinist bonding with the husbands than he does with the friendships he initiates with the wives. When Horner sees Margery Pinchwife at the theater dressed in men's clothing, he treats her as one would treat a fellow Cavalier. Horner's kissing her while under the impression that

she is actually the brother of Margery Pinchwife seems romantic and homoerotic, and in doing so, he seemingly endorses the Cavalier views of friendship. Wycherley's Horner has no qualms about kissing someone he believes to be a man and even admits that had he known that the person he presumed was a young man was actually Margery Pinchwife, he would not have acted as freely with her "before her husbands face" (*The Country Wife* IV. iii. 405-406). If Mr. Pinchwife had alerted Horner that the young man was Margery dressed as a man for the sole purpose of assuaging Pinchwife's jealousy, Horner admits that he would not have kissed and flirted with her. He blames Mr. Pinchwife for his open flirting:

> Oh—I understand something now—
> Was that thy Wife? why would'st thou not tell
> me 'twas she? faith my freedome with her was
> your fault, not mine. (IV. iii. 400-404)

Since he was consorting with someone he originally thought was Margery's brother, Horner's advances would be seen as ways of cuckolding Mr. Pinchwife.

In fact, Horner's actions in kissing Margery while she donned men's clothing mimic the type of language he uses previously, speaking to Pinchwife in scene three:

> So there 'tis—a man can't shew his friend-
> ship to a married man, but presently he talks of
> his wife to you, prythee let thy Wife alone, and
> *let thee and I be all one,* as we were wont…
> (IV. iii. 326-29, my emphasis)

Not only does Horner's romanticized language in the line italicized above verbalize a Cavalier treatment of friendship, but it also feminizes Horner—as does the eunuch disguise he assumes. In choosing the words "let thee and I be all one," Horner implies a marriage relationship with Pinchwife where the latter gives up his wife and lives as a man developing an equitable relationship with another man superior to any relationship with a woman, especially a romantic one (l. 329). This relationship could be seen as the Aristotelian ideal or "perfect" friendship

between two men except for the fact that neither man is particularly a paragon of virtue and goodness. Moreover, Horner's implicit marriage proposal functions more as a way to distract Pinchwife's attention from Horner's infidelity with Margery Pinchwife. In short, it is an attempt on Horner's part to distract the attentions of the husbands from any suspicions they might harbor about Horner's adultery with their wives and his status as a eunuch; it also helps Horner prove to them his supposed commitment to the Cavalier and Aristotelian ideals of friendship and his support of the views of friendship each strain advocates.

Horner, Women, Marriage, and the Conclusion of *The Country Wife*

Generically, the conclusion of *The Country Wife* differs from a typical comic ending in which one or more marriages occur. Instead, the play ends with an unmarried male protagonist, Horner, and a promise of a future marriage between Alithea and Harcourt. Novak writes:

> Horner remains unmarried at the conclusion of the play, but to a Libertine that must be regarded as a blessing. He remains in the city where he thrives, and while there may be some suggestion of the alienation produced by the city in Horner's weak defense of eating in ordinaries, his life is neither tragic nor villainous" (Novak 18).

Horner gets away with his deception because it benefits all the characters affected by it whereas other fictional libertines like Don John, for example, commit deceptions that result in general mayhem and death.

One of the motivations for Horner's deception includes his defiance of marriage, specifically in his affairs with married women. Libertinism is dependant upon marriage as an institution because it provides Wycherley's Horner and other fictional and real life libertines with an authority against which to rebel, but more importantly, for Horner, it provides him access to his fellow libertines' wives with whom he can gratify his sexual desires and establish genuine

friendships. As noted previously, he does not want to eradicate marriage from society—that is evident in his support of Harcourt's future marriage to Alithea—but he does want to intrude upon the marriages of his less worthy friends because their marriages enable men to keep the wives in a more subservient status. Since Horner genuinely cares about the wives, it is logical he would not support them embarking in an institution that only serves to enslave them. In fact, Horner needs the wives not just for sexual gratification and satisfaction, but because he has developed genuine friendships with them. Horner's only true investment in his friendships with the husbands is the access they provide him to their wives. Once he ingratiates the wives with his charm and divulges to them that his eunuch disguise is indeed false, they keep his secret and confide in him their need to retain the appearance of virtue. In Act II, scene i, the ladies discuss their need to assume the identity as a "woman of honor." Lady Fidget and Mistress Dainty Fidget point out the following to Horner:

> *Squeam.* 'Tis true, no body takes notice of a private
> Man, and therefore with him, 'tis more secret,
> and the crime's the less, when 'tis not known.
>
> *Lad.* You say true; y faith I think you are in the
> right on't: 'tis not an injury to a Husband, till it
> be an injury to our honours; so that a Woman
> of honour looses no honour with a private
> Person; and to say truth— (*The Country Wife* II. i. 480-85)

Rose Zimbardo observes the following about Horner: "Once he has distinguished the ladies who 'love the sport,' however, he is as anxious as they that the illusion of their virtue be preserved, for it provides another screen for his operations" (Zimbardo 94). Horner respects—or at least chooses not to disclose the wives' disguise to their husbands—their needs for discretion and maintaining a façade of virtue and the women, in return, keep his eunuch disguise a secret from their husbands. Horner depends on the secrecy of the women for his position of control and

power within this group of marriages and needs the women's confidences for his scheme as much or possibly even moreso than the women need him to keep their false honor a secret.

Horner's support for Harcourt and Alithea's future marriage makes him a libertine who modifies the definition of libertinism. As a libertine, Horner should vehemently oppose marriage in all circumstances. Instead, Horner realizes the magnitude of Harcourt's feelings for Alithea and supports their impending marriage. Horner wants to see Harcourt and Alithea marry because their union presumably would be a companionate marriage rather than a wedding based solely on financial mobility for one or both parties—a significant, plausible reason for the unhappiness of the wives and husbands in the marriages in which his friends entered. Horner supports Harcourt's marriage because, unlike Pinchwife and other married men and presumably the marriage in which Alithea would have found herself had she married Sparkish, Harcourt's choice to propose to Alithea is motivated by love and an authentic desire to marry rather than a necessity—financial or otherwise—to which Harcourt agrees with reluctance.

Conclusion of The Country Wife

In *The Country Wife*, Wycherley satirizes the libertine and libertinism, as well as the generic conventions of Restoration comedy. Instead of ending the play with an actual marriage(s), Wycherley ends with the engagement of Alithea and Harcourt and Horner "succeeds, escapes retribution, and goes off triumphant" (Turner 102). Horner's constant revision of libertinism lampoons libertinism in that it brings to the surface the problematization of securing a finite definition of libertinism and demonstrates the subjectivity involved in attempts at determining such a definition. As mentioned earlier, it is notable that none of the characters in this play openly admit the falsity of Horner's eunuch disguise, much less hold him

responsible for it. Similarly, they do not hold themselves responsible for continuing in these marriages without changing the nature of their respective marriages. Like Horner, they, especially the wives, continue to don disguises—e.g. the virtuous identity the wives wear—within their marriages because these disguises enable them to obtain what they want—sexual gratification and genuine friendship from Horner, which are things their husbands cannot or will not give them.

Conclusion

Wycherley's satire manifests itself in Horner's failure at practicing Cavalier friendship. Though Horner seemingly wants homosocial friendships with men, he only engages in these friendships with them so that he can obtain access to their wives. Wycherley's Horner is "determined to live within society and to derive all the benefits from it, yet not to be restricted by any of its regulations" (Hallett 386). His eunuch disguise enables him to operate within society and enjoy freedom with the wives of his friends—sexual and emotional freedom in which he can engage in sexual intercourse and in friendship with them—without having to agree to marry. Therefore, Wycherley suggests, libertinism is dependant upon marriage because without it, libertines would not have it as a social institution against which to rebel or friends' wives with whom to befriend or to copulate.

As a supposed follower of Hobbes, Horner's frequent reinterpretations of Hobbes's tenets match his self-interest and defiance of marriage. His Cavalier ideals are frequently at odds with his self-interest, making him a self-contradictory libertine, who sides with the women and misapplies Hobbesian philosophy.

CHAPTER 6

TORN BETWEEN LIBERTINISM AND VIRTUE: JAMES BOSWELL'S *LONDON JOURNAL, 1762-1763*

In his *London Journal, 1762-1763*, James Boswell presents mutually supportive views regarding libertinism and virtue. Although Boswell's journal is different from other works in this study, he is also similar to the fictional libertines discussed. Boswell, while a real life libertine, portrays himself both as a real person and as a novelistic alter ego throughout his journal. *London Journal* functions as a picaresque novel featuring a libertine protagonist. This novelistic alter-ego and libertine, presumably like the actual James Boswell, narrates his own journal where he articulates his attempts at living as both a libertine and as a virtuous individual. These attempts demonstrate Boswell's simultaneous advocacy of and opposition to both libertinism and virtue during his stay in London and after his departure. Boswell's frequent vacillation between libertinism and virtue makes him a libertine who constantly redefines libertinism to fit his own agenda. Boswell demonstrates this vacillation between ideas in his fluctuation between novelist and playwright within the composition of his journal. These frequent fluctuations between libertinism and virtue represent a critique of a pseudo-Hobbesian school of thought that entails sole obedience of nature or sense. In exhibiting these libertine behaviors and a desire to assimilate, Boswell not only demonstrates his constant changes to the definition of libertinism, but also shows his constant fluctuations between depictions of himself as a fictional character and a human being.

Before analyzing libertinism and virtue as they manifest themselves in Boswell's *London Journal, 1762-1763*, it is important to understand the structure of the journal and the generic conventions Boswell incorporates into it. Boswell recorded the events he recollects in his *London Journal, 1762-1763* approximately two weeks after they occurred. Robert Bell asserts

that the fact that Boswell does not record events immediately after they occur accounts for the aesthetic and uniqueness of his narrative (Bell 137).

Boswell depicts himself as embarking on a "voyage of self-discovery," which lends a picaresque element to his journal and gives the narrative a cohesive flow (137). Boswell does not limit himself to writing his journal in prose. Instead, he structures some of the events about which he writes as if they were theatrical performances. Since Boswell is a libertine who wants to compete with other libertines, he uses his journal as an outlet through which he can record his dalliances and boast about them. During his journal of "self-discovery," however, he finds himself torn between libertinism and virtue and articulates these divided loyalties throughout the journal (137).

Boswell's Self-Awareness

Virtue, as it manifests itself in Boswell's *London Journal* 1762-1763, entails submission to institutional authority and societal norms. Boswell's novelistic alter-ego articulates his own struggle with following both virtue and libertinism early in his journal: "I have a warm heart and a vivacious fancy; I am therefore given to love; and also to piety or gratitude to God, and to the most brilliant and showy method of public worship" (Boswell 54). Here Boswell establishes his propensity to debauchery ("given to love"), his penchant for self-congratulation ("most brilliant and showy method of public worship"), and his recurrent intervals during which he vows to live as a virtuous human being ("piety and gratitude to God"). In fact, Boswell admits to his reflection upon irreverent topics during his attendance at a church service. He writes, "In the midst of divine service I was laying plans for having women, and yet I had the most sincere feelings of religion" (54). Boswell not only aligns sexual and religious ecstasy in thinking about

his sexual conquests, but in doing so, creates his own definition of libertinism that conforms to both his "feelings of religion" and his sexual conquests (54). This juxtaposition of religious and sexual inclinations signifies a similar need in Boswell to vacillate between portraying himself as a fictional character or a novelistic alter ego and a human being. This insatiable need to adhere to both virtue and libertinism results in Boswell's fluctuations between following his religious and sexual leanings and causes him to harbor feelings of guilt about breaking his vows—via regressing back to his libertine behavior—to practice temperance and virtue.

Boswell's self-awareness not only allows him to understand his wavering devotions to libertinism and virtue, but also enables him to understand the source of it. Though Robert Bell argues that Boswell "struggle[s] with a variety of fears and conflicts without always illuminating the source or nature of the issues," Boswell does, in a journal entry dated November 28, 1762, describe his indecision about obedience to libertinism and virtue (138). Boswell notes, "What a curious, inconsistent thing is the mind of man!" (Boswell 54). Boswell's "inconsistency" allows him to behave as a libertine and also equips him with the desire to transform from a libertine to a virtuous individual, or depict himself as a human being or a fictional character. His mere presence in the church, along with his vows to live according to virtue, demonstrates Boswell's needs for frequently changing the definition of libertinism to suit both his desires to attend church and live virtuously, as well as his need to gratify his sexual desires. Since libertines reject social institutions, one of which is the Church, Boswell must modify libertinism so that its definition includes such "virtuous" activities as church attendance and libertine behaviors such as engaging in sexual promiscuity. Libertinism, then, as a concept, has an unstable stable definition because those who want to qualify as a libertine and a follower of virtue, including Boswell,

must frequently change its definition so that it applies to them regardless of any changes libertines make to their specific agendas.

The Gould Episode

Contrary to Rochester's poetic persona, Boswell's indecision about whether he should obey libertinism or virtue is evident in his lecture to Gould about temperance. Boswell records in his journal:

> The Colonel had been debauching the night before and was in bed, but Mrs. Gould insisted that I should eat a family dinner with her and the children, which I did very happily. Miss Fanny [age seven] and I are now very good friends. "I am sure," said she, "Sir, if I like any man, I like you." She sat on the same chair with me after dinner and sung and read very prettily. About six, Mr. Gould came down to us. I gave him a genteel lecture on the advantage of temperance, and made him to acknowledge that the pain of rioting much exceeded the pleasure. He was heavy, but I was lightsome and entertaining, and relieved him. I drank tea and sat the evening, gay and happy, just in the way I could wish.

Though Boswell drinks excessively and engages in promiscuity, he reprimands Gould for "debauching the night before" and staying in bed instead of joining his wife and children at dinner (83). In this scene Bell describes Boswell as "substitute father at a 'family dinner'" (Bell 139). However, Boswell entertains the family in the role of a close friend who received an impromptu invitation to an informal family dinner. Boswell gives Gould a "genteel lecture on the advantage of temperance" in which he related to him that the "pain of rioting much exceeded the pleasure" not because he wants to serve as a paternal figure to Gould's children or a possible substitute husband to Mrs. Gould (Boswell 83). Instead, Boswell admonishes Gould for failing to exercise temperance and virtue because he often falls short of exercising these traits himself.

In fact, Boswell seems to be the appropriate person from whom to learn the positives and negatives of debauchery, drunkenness, and living to excess—all components of libertinism. He

devotes a sizable amount of his journal to recording sexual liaisons with Louisa Lewis and a plethora of other women, yet he follows these recollections of his sexual conquests—often in the same journal entry or even the next consecutive sentence (similar to the juxtaposition of his plans to seduce women with the religious ecstasy he feels in the church scene discussed previously)—with vows to renounce his libertine lifestyle and replace it with a virtuous one in which he practices temperance and refrains from sexual promiscuity.

Interestingly, despite the fact that both Boswell and Gould are libertines who struggle with maintaining temperance, Boswell's friendship with Gould does not fit the fictional model homosocial libertine friendships between men (e.g. Shadwell's Don John and Wycherley's Horner), especially in terms of competition among libertines. More specifically, Boswell's revision of libertinism manifests itself in the way he competes with Gould. Boswell qualifies as an anomaly because he stopped using sex as a way for "providing the means to distinguish between men and women in polite society, [dominating] those women with whom he had intercourse…or a way of asserting superiority over other men'" (Carter 128). Though Boswell does participate in homosocial competition with Gould, he does not participate in it just so he can compete with Gould for sexual conquests with the same women—the way libertines typically compete with one another. Alternately, Boswell does not brag about or use his sexual exploits to establish power over Gould, nor does he praise Gould's promiscuity or try to impress him by recounting his own sexual experiences. Instead, Boswell chooses to assert his superiority over Gould by chastising him for his lasciviousness. That is, Boswell uses virtue and temperance as a means through which he can engage in homosocial competition with Gould. Once he establishes himself as the superior of the two men, he can then end his lecture to Gould about the advantages of virtue and still emerge from the conversation as the victor over vice.

The Louisa Episode

Boswell grapples with balancing libertinism and virtue differently in his relationship with Louisa Lewis, an actress with whom he had a brief affair and from whom he contracted gonorrhea; in particular, he denounces his libertinism and only attempts to follow virtue when left with no other alternative. Boswell records feelings of frustration and impatience in his journal about delaying consummation with Louisa, and when they do consummate the relationship, Boswell seems elated and even reflects upon it with fondness later in the journal. He writes, "This conquest [was] completed to my highest satisfaction…with a manliness and prudence that pleased me very much" (Boswell 140). On the day following his "conquest," Boswell does not even consider his own virtue or Louisa's virtue and continues engaging in his libertine behavior. Boswell's "macho triumphalism"—certainly an essential trait for a libertine—does not weaken and his mood reflects this during his tea with Louisa when he makes a disparaging observation about their table companion (Carter 128). Boswell asserts his inherent superiority over the man at the table when he describes him as "one of the least men I ever saw" (Boswell 142). Boswell's physical appearance and gait reflect his hypermasculine triumph at a subsequent reception he attends. Boswell records in his journal that he was "[strutting] up and down, considering myself as a valiant man who could satisfy a lady's loving desires five times a night" (142). His cheerful attitude and his smugness about consummating his romance with Louisa make him appear to be a stereotypical, one-dimensional, fictional libertine without regret or ambivalence.

Boswell does not consider Louisa's virtue or his own virtue important until he contracts gonorrhea and reluctantly admits to himself that he caught it from her. His investment in his meetings with Louisa is solely sexual prior to contracting the disease. Prior to his illness, he

refers to her as “the adorable Louisa” and describes their copulation in solely sexual terms. For example, he writes of the night on which they consummated their relationship, “The bells of St. Bride’s church rung their merry chimes hard by. I said that the bells in Cupid’s court would be this night set a-ringing for joy at our union” (Boswell 116, 138). Before the consummation of his relationship with Louisa, Boswell manages to remain celibate and does not attempt to or even want to woo any other women. He praises himself for his celibacy and reports, “Sobriety had preserved me from effeminacy and weakness, and my bounding blood beat quick and high alarms” (139). Boswell praises himself and justifies ending his celibacy with the fact that it not only improved his health and his expertise as a lover, but heightened his enjoyment of sex with Louisa as well.

However, the motivations behind Boswell’s celibacy are questionable in that he abstains from sex temporarily—only until Louisa quits refusing his advances and agrees to have sex with him. Boswell’s decision makes him appear to behave like a conventional libertine—that is, the choice and the motivations behind it seemingly make him a typical libertine. However, the choice itself is indicative of Boswell creating yet another version of libertinism; in other words, unlike Boswell, a more stereotypical libertine would fabricate events and make excuses and arguments persuading a woman to consummate an affair, but he would not go so far as to abstain from sex or practice monogamy.

Once Boswell finds himself ill and confined to bed, however, he thinks about virtue and exhibits resentment towards Louisa’s (alleged lack of) virtue. It is only until he confirms that Louisa infected him with gonorrhea that he describes her as “a most consummate dissembling whore” (Boswell 160). Unlike Rochester’s narrator, he decides to live according to virtue--and to meet a “virtuous woman”--only when his libertinism results in sickness, inconvenience, or

other negative outcomes. Though he is sincere in his plans to live according to virtue, he only refers to virtue and determines to apply it to his life when it is convenient for him—such as when a sexual relationship ends and he must nurse the residual (physical and emotional) effects of it.

In the journal entry dated January 20, 1763, Boswell shifts from novelist to playwright and describes his confrontation with Louisa about infecting him with gonorrhea. Generically, this change mimics scenes typified by libertines featured in Restoration drama and emphasizes the performative traits of libertines. In fact, Boswell uses theatrical terms to portray himself and Louisa. Boswell's portrayal of his and Louisa's conversation includes his inner dialogue, dramatic asides, and theatrical language reminiscent of Restoration plays. When Louisa tells the Boswell character that she is "distressed with a thousand things," the playwright Boswell records the following aside: "Cunning jade, her circumstances!" (Boswell 159). This aside hearkens to William Wycherley's *The Country Wife* (1675) in which his character Harcourt criticizes his future fiancée, Alithea, for choosing not to break her engagement with Sparkish. Harcourt says in an aside, "Damned, senseless, impudent, virtuous jade!" (Wycherley II. i. l. 289). Boswell's decision to retell this conversation as a drama emphasizes the performative quality shared by conventional libertines. The emphasis on performance continues in the prose entries of the journal. For example, in the same journal entry and immediately following this scene, he describes Louisa's visceral reaction to his accusations and his decision to end their affair as "pale as ashes and trembled and faltered" (Boswell160). These descriptions make Boswell's alter-ego similar to his fictional Restoration libertine counterparts and libertine characters appearing in eighteenth-century drama.

However, Boswell actually does want to give up his libertinism and commit to living virtuously. In fact, shortly after his affair with Louisa, Boswell decides to give up his attempts at

procuring a place in the Guard, continuing his writing projects, and engaging in debauchery while embarking on excursions to various places in Europe. Robert Bell asserts that Boswell does not learn from experience and presents, instead, a "series of self-consciously literary flourishes without coherent assessment or perspective" (Bell 134). On the contrary, Boswell does learn from his experiences and chooses to obey Lord Auchinleck, his father, and return to Edinburgh to pursue a civil career. Boswell decides to "go immediately down to Edinburgh and…be an advocate in the Parliament House, and so lead a comfortable life" (Boswell 165). Though Boswell's commitment to virtue often wavers—he changes his mind and decides to stay in London and pursue a position in the Guard—his perspective changes and his intentions to change are honorable.

Boswell's Libertinism and Performance

Boswell's frequent decisions to switch loyalty from libertinism to virtue (and vice versa) lend a performative aspect to the journal. He not only obeys libertinism or virtue, but he does so exaggeratingly and with enthusiasm and gusto. In fact, Boswell actually harbors resentment and feels irritated towards a few of his friends and acquaintances who visit him because his friends and his new virtuous lifestyle conflict; that is, he will not allow others to interfere in his endeavor to live according to virtue. He notes, "To tell the plain truth, I was vexed at their coming…I was now upon a plan of studying polite reserved behavior, which is the only way to keep up dignity of character" (Boswell 61). He continues his rant of sorts by mentioning that he has a "good share of pride, which I think is very proper and even noble, I am hurt with the taunts of ridicule and am unsatisfied if I do not feel myself something of a superior animal" (61). Boswell portrays himself as a libertine attempting to reform, or at least appears to do so, and cannot waste

his time with people such as Lady Betty Macfarlane, Lady Anne Erskine, Captain Erskine, and Miss Dempster who would possibly distract Boswell from his attempts at reform and tempt him into continuing his libertine lifestyle. As a libertine, Boswell succeeds in terms of acquiring and maintaining a smug, self-assured, superior disposition.

However, the fact that he chooses to study "polite reserved character"—he wants to learn it without any clear indication that he plans to use his knowledge for his own advancement and without questionable motives—renders him a libertine who needs to change the definition of libertinism to accommodate his current agenda. Granted, Boswell's confidence is emblematic of an archetypal libertine, but his need to learn virtuous traits, such as politeness and a reserved personality, makes him a self-critical libertine who wants to assimilate with other members of the upper class. Boswell vacillates between portraying his novelistic alter-ego as a one-dimensional fictional character and a two-dimensional human being. In exhibiting these libertine behaviors and a desire to assimilate, Boswell not only demonstrates his constant changes to the definition of libertinism, but also shows his constant fluctuations between depictions of himself as a fictional character and a human being.

Boswell, in his need to present himself as externally flawless, demonstrates his obsession with his physical appearance and ensuring that others leave with favorable initial impressions of him; his obsession with material objects enables him to compete with other libertines and assert his superiority over them. He even decides to sacrifice living in more posh apartments so that he can afford a fancier, more stylish wardrobe. He writes, "Sometimes I considered that a fine lodging denoted a man of great fashion, but then I thought that few people would see it and therefore the expense would be hid, whereas my business was to make as much *show* as I could with my small allowance" (Boswell 58, my emphasis). Boswell's need to perform or "make as

much show as [he] could" not only indicates his ostentation, but establishes him as a libertine who thrives on attention. He succeeds as a libertine in terms of his desire to own an expensive wardrobe and his desire to take expensive lodgings—manifestations of his need as well as the libertine need to impress others. Obtaining such material possessions aids Boswell in asserting his superiority over others, which in turn, allows him to compete successfully with other libertines.

What differentiates Boswell from fictional libertines such as Don John and Horner is that he does not resort to extreme lengths just so he can encompass every aspect of libertinism. Of course, he does not squander his income (like his contemporary self-identified libertine Samuel Pepys) or commit crimes such as theft just so he can maintain the expensive lifestyle to which he is accustomed and continue successfully wooing women. Instead, he simply develops a budget to which he can adhere and saves his income so he can purchase the appropriate wardrobe and continue living in his apartments—behaviors rendered acceptable in the constantly fluctuating definition of libertinism.

Boswell's Attempts at Conventional Libertinism

Boswell's expressions of bitterness and anger with those who wronged him and his vows to exact revenge upon them—for example, the Louisa debacle—typify the selfish libertine figure we see in Don John and Horner. Moreover, Boswell exhibits this behavior when he demands that Louisa repay the two guineas that he loaned to her. In the journal entry in which he includes the letter demanding repayment of Louisa's debt, Boswell refers to Louisa as "treacherous" and decides that she must "suffer for her depravity" (Boswell 174-75). In the correspondence with her, he instructs her to send the money without a letter or note, thus emphasizing his lack of

regard for her feelings. Though Boswell does consider that mentioning the money to her "was not so genteel," he justifies it with the fact—at least a fact according to Boswell—that "to such a creature as her a pecuniary punishment will give most pain" (175). In Boswell's point of view, Louisa intentionally infects him with gonorrhea and because of that deserves discourteous, harsh treatment.

Though Boswell chooses to write this entry about Louisa in prose, he maintains a dramatic tone in this letter he composes to Louisa and reproduces in the journal; this tone resembles both libertines in Restoration drama, as well as those appearing in the eighteenth-century novel, for example, Don John of Thomas Shadwell's *The Libertine* (1676) and the protagonist of Henry Fielding's *Jonathan Wild* (1743), especially the performative—and in this case, passive-aggressive—tone Boswell adopts in this entry. For example, instead of succinctly requesting repayment of the loan from Louisa, he assassinates her character by reminding her of his motivations of loaning her the money: "You cannot have forgot upon what footing I let you have it. I neither *paid* it for prostitution nor *gave* it in charity. It was fairly borrowed, and you promised to return it" (Boswell 175). Arguably, Boswell wrote this letter as a knee-jerk reaction to contracting gonorrhea from Louisa and used harsh, cruel language merely to make his point. However, he continues the letter with a passive-aggressive admonition of Louisa. Boswell says, "I should think the consideration of your deceit and baseness, your corruption both of body and mind, would be a very severe punishment" (175). As established earlier, the Boswell character thrives on performance and melodrama as do his libertine predecessors such as Don John, Horner, and the title character and protagonist in Henry Fielding's *Jonathan Wild*. Fielding uses exaggerated, performative language reminiscent of drama when he describes a scene in which

Jonathan Wild upbraids Molly Straddle, a woman who pilfered a bank note that Jonathan Wild had stolen from someone else. The narrator reports:

> Wild, having shut the Door, approached her with great Ferocity in his Looks, and began to expatiate on the complicated Baseness of the Crime she had been guilty of; but though he uttered many good Lessons of Morality, as we doubt whether from a particular Reason they may work any very good Effect on our Reader, we shall omit his Speech, and only mention his Conclusion, which was by asking her, what Mercy she could now expect from him? (Fielding 99-100)

Though the narrator omits Wild's speech, he presumably exaggerates Wild's physiognomy and describes his speech as full of "many good Lessons of Morality" (99). Like Boswell, Wild accuses Straddle of committing a crime against him, theft, yet refuses to hold himself accountable for a theft he had committed. As we previously saw with Boswell's refusal to accept any responsibility for contracting gonorrhea and instead, placed all the blame on Louisa for giving him the disease, Wild similarly reprimands Straddle.

Fielding's narrator includes these anecdotes about Jonathan Wild's history to highlight certain aspects of Jonathan Wild's character, and Boswell includes the letters he wrote to Louisa because he wants to emphasize certain characteristics of his protagonist namesake. In this case, Boswell the novelist wants to depict himself as a picaresque hero who, after a series of misadventures, emerges as a hero. Moreover, composing this part of the journal as a novel enables Boswell to present his protagonist whose attempts at conventional libertinism result in his constant modifications of the definition of libertinism.

Boswell's Libertine ConfessionS

The journal entries in which Boswell records his confessions about his numerous indiscretions establish him as a libertine who makes libertinism conform to his needs and desires. As noted previously, Boswell constantly records feelings of guilt about his debauchery and his

inconstancy to libertinism and embracing virtue—the only constant element in his life. Though Bell posits the following question: "And what is the source of his obsessive confessions of myriad transgressions to nearly any authoritative figure who would listen?" (138) and implies that Boswell does not reveal the answer to the reader, Boswell does reveal why he finds it necessary to disclose his sins in his journal. His confessions function as a form of purgation after he breaks his vows to virtue and the subsequent relapses into libertinism. He admits to attending church harboring impious thoughts instead of reflecting on his spiritual condition. Boswell writes, "I went to St. John's Chapel and heard a tolerable sermon on humility. I was not so devout as I could have wished" (Boswell 95). In this scene, Boswell reveals that he wants to be a devout and humble Christian and takes seriously his inability to integrate these qualities into his personality. Boswell does not appear to attend church with ulterior motives, but attends to gain spiritual peace and worship God. Naturally, the fact that thoughts about sexual conquests enter his mind during a church sermon bothers him—hence, his frequent pledges to devote himself to virtue and piety. A fictional libertine does not concern himself with the sins he commits or their repercussions, much less harbors guilt for committing them. Unlike Boswell in this situation at church, a more stereotypical libertine revels in his own debauchery and impious acts and even brags to his fellow libertines about them.

The moments in the journal during which Boswell simultaneously confesses and boasts of his sins exemplifies his constant need to revise libertinism and make it fit his life. He devotes equal, sizable portions of his journal entries to relieving a guilty conscience regarding his sins and boasting about these same sins he commits. Susan Manning argues, "If Boswell was addicted (to convert to the theological language in which so much of this experience is structured) to Sin, he was no less addicted to Repentance" (Manning 25). Manning's argument

applies to Boswell's divided loyalties to libertinism and virtue. Boswell does have an addictive personality in that he cannot permanently commit to one mode of thought. His frequent confessions to sin and breaking his vows to virtue equally demonstrate his addiction. Boswell wants to commit to virtue, but finds that he is unable to resist the temptations libertinism (and sin) presents to him. The episode during which Boswell escorts an officer's daughter home and has sex with her exemplifies these torn loyalties. He writes, "I could not resist indulging myself with the enjoyment of her. Surely, in such a situation, when the woman is already abandoned, the crime must be alleviated, though in strict morality, illicit love is always wrong" (Boswell 333). In this episode, Boswell rationalizes his behavior to assuage his guilt about his inability to commit permanently to exercising virtue and temperance. Since he wants—though perhaps unwittingly—to find a way to integrate libertinism and virtue, he must justify his numerous departures from virtue. One way he can successfully qualify his behavior is to end this reminiscence (and others) with a disclaimer in the form of moralization.

Boswell's Version of Libertinism

Boswell's magnanimity and willingness to put the needs of others ahead of his own separate him from other libertines. Though Boswell is far from flawless, he manages to consider others before himself even during his stints in which he embraces libertinism. Boswell notes, "But I cannot help thinking it amusing, and valuing it as a specimen of my own tenderness of disposition and willingness to relieve my fellow-creatures" (Boswell 100). Though Boswell seems self-congratulatory and immodest in this statement, he simultaneously exhibits concern for others. Instead of emulating fictional libertine predecessors and endorsing the typical libertine selfishness, Boswell establishes himself as considerate of his fellow human beings.

Unlike Don John and his cohorts, Boswell does not want to bring about mayhem for his own selfish purposes. He wants to help others and maintain a tender disposition. He reports in his journal, "I went to St. Paul's Church and in that magnificent temple fervently adored the God of goodness and mercy, and heard a sermon by the Bishop of Oxford on the publishing of glad tidings of great joy" (Boswell 104). Boswell strives to live as a devout Christian who practices temperance and embodies virtue, but often aligns virtue with sexual proclivity—religious and sexual ecstasy. He admires various cathedrals throughout the journal and despite his failed attempts at virtue, he genuinely wants to embody it and identify as a full-fledged, pious Christian.

Boswell's libertinism manifests itself in the situation with the prostitute at St. James's Park; more specifically, we see him apply his morals—those he embraces when he lives according to virtue—to this situation. He writes:

> The first whore I met, whom I without many words copulated with free from danger, being safely sheathed. She was ugly and lean and her breath smelt of spirits. I never asked her name. When it was done, she slunk off. I had a low opinion of this gross practice and resolved to do it no more.

Though Boswell arguably regrets having sex with the "whore" because she is an underclass woman, it is important to note that he also resolves to quit "this gross practice" because he deems it immoral and as a breach in his vows to virtuous behavior (231). In fact, during the eighteenth century, the use of condoms was considered immoral. Doctors considered condoms to be dangerous because they prevented disease and therefore "permitted the promiscuous to indulge their passions without fear of punishment" (McLaren 83). Though condoms were often associated with the wealthy and upper class (which of course, includes libertines) because of the expense required for producing them, respectable people often refused to admit the condom's effectiveness because it was associated with men who used it when "consorting with a prostitute"

(McLaren 85). This scene with the prostitute is one of only three places in the journal in which Boswell mentions using condoms because he does not deem it necessary to use one when engaging in sexual intercourse with seemingly more virtuous members of the upper class such as Louisa. Fictional libertines, however, like Don John and Boswell's novelistic alter ego, do not care about the moral ramifications of their behavior; much less do they feel guilty for their crimes. The fictional Boswell concerns himself with the effects of the condom on his sexual performance and says he sometimes "found but a dull satisfaction in sex with a condom" (Boswell 287). Naturally, however, the real life Boswell not only feels the need to prevent himself from contracting a sexually transmitted disease, but also understands the moral implications of condom use—i.e., its association with engaging in sexual intercourse with prostitutes and sexual promiscuity in general—rather than simply considering the effects wearing condoms has on his sexual performance.

Boswell regularly repents after his admissions to engaging in libertine activities and to enjoying his participation in them; moreover, his resolution to follow virtue changes again towards the end of the journal. In fact, he mentions his failure and refusal to keep this promise to follow virtue in a journal entry dated only two days after he copulated with the woman in the park. He expresses a desire to inquire about his friend, Temple and writes, "When we were together, we were both very studious and scrupulously moral. Now I am pretty idly disposed. I have not the same high opinion of learning that I had when at college. I am also much more of a libertine" (Boswell 231-232). Boswell has suddenly decided to identify as a libertine and indulge his need to engage in lascivious behavior. It is significant that he reflects about his friendship with Temple and the morality they embraced during it and subsequently announces this decision to contact him shortly after his encounter with the woman at St. James's Park

because it implies that he not only wavers in his devotion to virtue, but also in his ability and desire to obey patriarchal authority. Boswell prefers to converse with others and actively seek amusement (pleasure) over attending a university and furthering his studies and in doing so, implicitly rejects an institutional authority—the university. He appears not to regret his conversion from a fledgling paragon of virtue to an expert libertine because libertinism offers him independence and freedom to satisfy his potent sexual appetite.

Boswell and Impotence

Boswell's views regarding impotence appear contradictory. In an entry dated June 5, 1763, Boswell reflects about the previous night's activities and their results the following morning. He reports:

> …my last night's rioting and this morning's indulgence, joined with my being really in love with her, had quite enervated me, and I had no tender inclinations. I made an apology easily; and she was very good, and said it happened commonly after drinking. However, I was much vexed. (Boswell 273)

It seems that Boswell finds exercising temperance and virtue easier to accomplish when physically impotent because he can no longer successfully debauch or behave as a libertine—this makes Boswell different from the former libertine narrator of Rochester's "The Maim'd Debauchee." In Rochester's poem, the narrator reflects upon his youth as a libertine and encourages young libertines to embrace their libertinism while they are still sexually potent. However, though Rochester's narrator endorses libertinism, he does not simultaneously denounce virtue or reason. He embraces both ideas and foresees the future with optimism. Though one could argue that the term "impotence" connotes hindrance from or even prevention of enjoying life, the narrator offers a more positive view of the impotence accompanying his age. The narrator sees himself "*shelter'd* in impotence" (Rochester l. 47, my emphasis) instead of

hindered by it. The word "shelter" implies that impotence protects the narrator and offers him security in his old age. Impotence offers the poetic persona a chance to "be wise" and enjoy his old age as both a libertine and a follower of reason (l. 48).

Unlike Rochester's libertine, Boswell obviously does not feel "sheltered by impotence," but feels threatened by it ("The Maim'd Debauchee" l. 47). While the older man in "The Maim'd Debauchee" sees impotence as a sort of rite of passage awaiting him and one that he eagerly anticipates, Boswell views impotence as an inevitable part of life he dreads and a disease that will prove detrimental to his ego and vanity—parts of his personality that he values above many others. Impotence, however, would cause him to question his virility and as a result, would affect his vanity. Boswell's success as a libertine often perpetuates his vanity. And it is Boswell's vanity that perpetuates his libertinism and enables him to perform libertine activities.

In one of his many vows to shun libertinism for virtue, Boswell comes up with an idea to ensure his success as a person of virtue and temperance. Boswell tells his friends, "I said I wanted to get rid of folly and to acquire sensible habits. They laughed" (Boswell 281-282). Boswell makes this statement during the end of his stay at London and shortly before his return to Scotland. He expects to become a more sensible person free of folly when he leaves London, and this becomes one of the main goals he sets for his travels abroad. Boswell seems to think that living in a rural area, as opposed to living in the cosmopolitan London, will make his transition from libertine to person of virtue smoother. Boswell's view, though implicitly rather than directly stated, resembles Mr. Pinchwife's view in Wycherley's *The Country Wife*. In *The Country Wife,* Wycherley portrays rural life as a considerably more upstanding, moral place and the city, London, as a bastion of immoral, ungodly, liberal temptations such as the theater.

Boswell does not seem to be threatened or overwhelmed by the temptations the city

offers. However, he does harbor guilt about indulging such temptations and it is this guilt in part that motivates him to move to Scotland. In fact, similar to the way impotence functions as an easier way to resist engaging in libertine activities, residing in the country makes it easier for one to be a moral citizen because one does not have access to the tempting amenities the city offers. That is, impotence enables Boswell to curb his libertine activities, while living in a rural area makes practicing moral, virtuous behavior and following the dictates of virtue easier to accomplish. Boswell's ability to modify libertinism to conform to all aspects of his life will enable him to live successfully as a libertine or as a virtuous individual whether he chooses to reside in rural Scotland or urban London.

Once Boswell meets Samuel Johnson and spends significant time conversing with him, he begins to realize that he needs to quit his libertine activities and concentrate on obeying the principles of virtue. On a day following one of his encounters with Johnson, Boswell reminisces about their friendship and reflects upon what he has learned from Johnson. He writes:

> Since my being honoured with the friendship of Mr. Johnson, I have more seriously considered the duties of morality and religion and the dignity of human nature. I have considered that promiscuous concubinage is certainly wrong. It is contributing one's share towards bringing confusion and misery into society; and it is a transgression of the laws of the Almighty Creator, who has ordained marriage for the mutual comfort of the sexes and the procreation and right educating of children. (Boswell 304)

Boswell continues to mention the fate of Britain if "all the men and women [in Britain] were merely to consult animal gratification" (304). He admits that even though he makes these observations in his current daily journal entry, he "stooped to mean profligacy even yesterday;" however, he does resolve to "guard against it" (304). Michael Friedman argues, "Fresh from his conversations with Johnson, Boswell denounces 'promiscuous concubinage' and embraces the institution of marriage in the abstract, but at the same time he is entirely unable and unwilling to put these theories into practice" (Friedman 105). While Friedman is right about Boswell's

inability to put the theories into practice, his assertion that Boswell is unwilling to do so is questionable (105). As we have seen throughout this chapter, Boswell does not appear unwilling to reform. He sincerely wants to change his behavior and actively pursue a more conservative, virtuous lifestyle, but he is *unable*, not unwilling to renounce his libertinism. Boswell, though unreliable and often fluctuating in his allegiances to libertinism and virtue, has noble intentions and seriously wants to commit himself to living according to virtue; constantly redefining libertinism aids him in this endeavor and his portrayals of himself as fictional libertine and human being reflect that.

Boswell's constant wavering between libertinism and virtue, however, does not end once he leaves the urban London and its temptations. In fact, he manages to relapse into his libertinism after he leaves London and after he marries. When he does eventually marry, he continues to keep a number of mistresses throughout the marriage, thus merging libertinism (keeping mistresses) and virtue (marriage). Boswell never actually acquires 'government of [him]self' and never "has the capacity to rule and thus deny his 'ecstasy of feeling'" (Weed 224). Bell contends:

> Boswell desperately wants us to like and admire him, and to accept his final resolution to follow 'a more rational and lasting plan,' but he is much too shallow a critic. Even at the end there are radical disparities between his ideals and his actions…And there have always been chasms between his public ebullience and private regrets" (Bell 141, Boswell 304 and 62).

Boswell is not a shallow critic, though, because despite these disparities, he does want to be a more devout Christian, marry, and devote himself to virtue. His numerous confessions to others about his frequent lapses into libertinism and the fact that he records them in his journal, a journal which he regularly sent to his friend Johnston for his perusal, makes his regrets more public and less private. Boswell consciously wrote the journal for Johnston to read and he sent

the journal to him in “weekly parcels, each accompanied by a letter” (Pottle 15, 40 n.4). Therefore, his libertine behavior and activities as well as his endeavors to engage in virtuous behavior are equally recorded and made public.

Conclusion

Boswell’s real struggle between libertinism and virtue sets him apart from fictional Restoration libertine figures and establishes him as a different kind of self-critical libertine. Boswell demonstrates this fluctuation between these two philosophies via his generic vacillation between novelist and playwright within the composition of his journal. Once his protagonist can balance these two diametric opposites, he can effectively practice temperance, yet still maintain his identity as a libertine.

Boswell’s conflicting self-fashionings in the journal—on the one hand, his identity as a one-dimensional novelistic or dramatic libertine character and on the other hand, as a three-dimensional human being full of self-doubt and remorse—unwittingly destabilizing the concept of the fictional libertine itself.

CHAPTER 7

LIBERTINES REAL AND FICTIONAL: A CONCLUSION

All the libertines in this study frequently revise the definition of libertinism to make it fit their constantly changing agendas. In their efforts to create their own fluctuating definitions of libertinism, these libertines often similarly reinterpret and misinterpret Hobbesian philosophy to justify their behavior. Rochester, Wycherley, Shadwell, and Boswell all present characters who cannot follow conventional libertinism because there is no stable definition of libertinism.

Samuel Johnson struggles between yielding to the carnal temptations, among others, libertinism presents to him and obeying the more virtuous life promoted by Christianity. In his diaries, he often uses his New Year's Day entries as places where he prays to God and reflects upon his libertinism, sins, and his life in general. In an entry dated January 1, 1745, Johnson writes the following:

> Almighty and everlasting God, in whose hands are life and death, by whose will all things were created, and by whose providence they are sustained, I return thee thanks that Thou hast given me life, and *that thou hast continued it to this time, that thou hast hitherto forborn to snatch me away in the midst of Sin and Folly, and hast permitted me still to enjoy the means of Grace, and vouchsafed to call me yet again to Repentance. Grant, O merciful Lord, that thy Call may not be in vain, that my Life may not be continued to encrease my Guilt, and that thy gracious Forbearance may not harden my heart in wickedness.* Let me remember, O my God that as Days and Years pass over me, I approach nearer to the Grave where there is no repentance, and grant that by the assistance of thy Holy Spirit, I may so pass through this Life, that I may obtain Life Everlasting for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. (Johnson 40-41, my emphasis)

Though Johnson does not make any direct mention of libertinism, he does implicitly implore God to forgive him and keep him from "sin and folly." This sin and folly includes libertine behaviors such as greed, licentiousness, and self-indulgence—sins with which he and his friend James Boswell struggled. As a friend of Boswell, he served in the capacity of mentor to help him resist temptations of libertinism.

In fact, in the final issue of his *Rambler*, Johnson reminisces about the periodical and comments upon libertinism and the eighteenth century. He writes:

> The essays professedly serious, if I have been able to execute my own intentions, will befound exactly conformable to the precepts of Christianity, without any accommodation to *the licentiousness and levity of the present age.* I therefore look back on this part of my work with pleasure, which no blame or praise of man shall diminish or augment. (November 1767, my emphasis)

Johnson, then, criticized the "licentiousness and levity" practiced by eighteenth century libertines and instead, wrote a serious body of essays that do not praise libertinism. He even writes a prayer in a diary entry called, "Prayer on the *Rambler*" (presumably composed before March 20 when the first issue of *Rambler* appeared) in which he asks God that "thy Holy Spirit may not be withheld from me, but that I may promote thy glory, and the Salvation of both myself and others." Johnson used *Rambler* as a way of repenting his sins, which included yielding to temptations to engage in the recklessness and levity he often criticizes. These struggles and his constant prayers to God to forgive him and help him resist engaging in behaviors promoted by libertines not only indicate he is a fallible human being, but also demonstrate that he is a real life, self-critical libertine.

Despite his criticism of the licentiousness and levity associated with libertinism, he finds himself unable to resist participation in libertine activities and, similar to Boswell, struggles with his religious faith and his libertinism. In his efforts to resist the temptations libertinism presents to him, he goes so far as to devote himself to creating a periodical, *Rambler*, that excludes discussion about libertinism and all associated topics with it. Not only does he omit all libertine subjects, but as mentioned previously, he condemns the libertinism of the eighteenth century.

During the "licentious" Restoration, Samuel Pepys, noted diarist and also a self-critical libertine, often attempts to redefine libertinism to accommodate his needs and desires. Like

Johnson, Pepys repents for his libertinism, more specifically, his extra-marital sexual affairs and his love of the theater, which often provided opportunities for him to engage in adulterous behavior. In a journal entry dated October 31, 1662:

> I thank God I have no crosses, but only much business to trouble my mind with. In all other things as happy a man as any in the world, for the whole world seems to smile upon me, and if my house were done that I could diligently follow my business, I would not doubt to do God, and the King, and myself good service. And all I do impute almost wholly to my late temperance, since my making of my vowes against wine and plays, which keeps me most happily and contentfully to my business; which God continue! (Pepys 81)

In the above entry, Pepys vows to practice temperance in terms of alcohol consumption and the theater and seems sincere in his goals and desire to do so. However, Pepys breaks his vow as soon as December 27, 1662 where he mentions seeing a play. He does not seem to harbor any remorse about it and just mentions it casually in his diary. He writes:

> So to the office, and there Mr. Coventry and I sat till noon, and then I stept to the Exchange, and so home to dinner, and after dinner with my wife to the Duke's Theatre, and saw the second part of "Rhodes," done with the new Roxalana; which do it rather better in all respects for person, voice, and judgment, then the first Roxalana. (Pepys 82)

Though Pepys vowed earlier not to return to the theater, he attends a play. Throughout his diary, he vows to give up seeing plays and drinking wine and then returns to his former habits soon after making these vows. Like Johnson and Boswell, he does feel guilty about breaking his vows, but continues this cycle of reverting to intemperance.

Johnson and Pepys's struggles with libertinism foreshadow the future of libertinism as a concept for which no stable definition exists. The Restoration and eighteenth-century libertines, in turn, serve as predecessors and even inspiration and influences for the French, English, and American decadents of the nineteenth century—including French writers such as Baudelaire and Villiers de l'Isle Adam, British writers Oscar Wilde and Ernest Dowson, and American author

Edgar Saltus—who similarly challenged the moral and social codes and standards put forth by social institutions and society in general. Libertinism as a concept and identity continues to change not only in fiction, but its definition also frequently metamorphoses to adapt to the political and social climates of each era and fluctuates within the eras themselves to accommodate to rapidly and constantly changing morals, values, and ethics of society.

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