

Gender, Sexuality, and the Frailty of the Pastoral in Aphra Behn’s “The Disappointment”

Cheyenne Riley

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institutions, and political authority has greatly shaped the basis by which
we judge socially acceptable behavior and attitudes. The power of
Christianity, particularly the strict philosophies of Puritanism, have greatly
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of much of Western culture. Throughout history, both in times of devout
conservatism and eras of liberalized sexuality, perhaps no one has felt the
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of their own sexual identity through religious abstinence, societal shame,
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in the admission or expression of their romantic desires. During the
seventeenth century, however, English society experienced a departure from
past principles of prudence and self-restraint, leading many to gravitate
towards more open and indulgent perspectives on sex and attraction. At the
center of this revolution were the Libertines, a group of rebellious writers
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through their own ideas about sexuality, desire, and pleasure. Aphra Behn,
a Libertine poet and playwright, explored these new freedoms in her own
life, yet remained frustrated by the enduring misogyny of the age. In her
poem “The Disappointment,” Behn satirizes the hyper-masculine attitudes

of the time, poking fun at the overwhelming machismo of her fellow male writers and illuminating the need for women to not only be seen as human beings with sexual drives of their own, but also to have those

the failings of traditional masculinity to live up to its own expectations

the sexual, emotional, and romantic needs of their female partner. In the style of traditional pastoral poetry, Behn creates a stark contrast between idealized romantic love and the often unsatisfying realities of carnal physical desire and lust. The work ultimately subverts gender roles, while

time. Through the use of pastoral language and the entertaining of what the poet clearly sees as an archaic and destructive ideology, Behn destroys conventional perceptions of romantic courtly love, particularly its emphasis on purity and the repression of female sexuality, emphasizing the duality between the idyllic pastoral and the harsh realities of physical lust and desire.

In the beginning of the poem, Behn establishes her lovers in typical

Lisander is described as a brave, Herculean shepherd while his love, the fair maid, Cloris, is portrayed as a demure and innocent beauty. Perhaps the most obvious target of scrutiny is the young shepherd, who pursues the maiden relentlessly and, from the very beginning, serves as an exaggerated and comical representation of masculinity. Although his actions are presented under the guise of traditional courtship and gallantry, it becomes

woman as one not only of physical desire, but as an expression of his own masculine pride and glory.

Through this belief, Lisander views the consummation of their

from Cloris, but also as a means of elevating himself in masculine power and personal prestige. For this reason, sex is viewed, at least in his eyes, as a physical and societal prize, one that must be won in the same sense that a

belief in himself. The poet states:

The gilded Planet of the Day,
In his gay Chariot, drawn by Fire,
Was now descending to the Sea,
And left no Light to guide the World,

In these lines, the poet characterizes, and later satirizes, Lisander as a powerful as the heroes in traditional mythology, captivated entirely by his desire for Cloris.

female passion and desire within the poem. While Lisander is pictured at

In this moment, Cloris takes assertive action, seizing control and attempting to guide the sexual encounter, although it is of little use as she is met with the frightening and revolting image of a snake in pursuing this temptation. This phallic symbol highlights the humorous tone of the work at large, yet also alludes to larger ideas of biblical sin and lust. The disgust and apprehension she experiences brings her to a moment of epiphany, in which her desire is extinguished for the time being, replaced with

In *Three Guineas*

Rose is supposed to be the symbol of a better world. This could also make

Martin is an argument against what Rose symbolizes. First, he is looking to buy the house of the woman that he loved at the beginning of the chapter. This again connects Martin to the image of home instead of a soldier, like Rose. Even though he is unable to get the house, the fact that he

shown, "He stood for a moment gazing at the black windows now grimed with dust. It was a house of character; built sometime in the eighteenth century. Eugenie had been proud of it. And I used to like going there, he thought!" (*The Years* so dear, is decaying in her absence. Martin is watching as the home he cares for is fading away, and it is hard for him to realize that he was unable to hold

when someone, like Martin, is not ready for everything that they once knew has on the house just like no one can change what the new era is changing about the world around them.

Martin seems to be stuck between the two eras. He looks back at the old as a comfort like with the house. However, there are other moments that show even though he does not wish to move on, he is still being pulled into the modern world like everyone else. Eleanor shows this when she thinks about what Martin has been up to, "Yes- it became perfectly obvious to her,

The Years 155)? Eleanor realizes that Martin has been sleeping with multiple women. Martin may have loved Eugenie, but he was not celibate as he pined for

are prudish. Yet, Martin is not behaving in the way that is often considered bachelor lifestyle of a modern man. Through these two scenes that are both

He is looking back at an era that is already gone. Though he may wish for a

visit Sarah and Maggie. When Rose arrives she begins to make a connection

with Maggie. Maggie is afraid of what Rose thinks of her because Sarah and Maggie do not have much money. She is trying to hide how poor the sisters are, "The house demarcates the division of public from private, it provides the physical geography of gender and class inequalities and hence

of town because it is showing the inequality that woman face in the form of a tangible location. When Rose arrives, she even says that she used to live down the street with a friend of hers, placing her in the same poor location as Sarah and Maggie. While Martin was thinking about buying a house

the book, the girls are having to live in a small apartment. Even though the house that Martin looked at was once the one that they lived in, it is likely

of town if they want to live on their own while Martin can even buy a house if it had been available. The divide in economic standing of women versus men emphasizes the gap in the genders and the inequality that exists.

When Rose has settled in to casual small talk with her cousins, she begins

the incident. Next thing you know Sarah is walking back in asking what they were talking about and Rose responds, "'We were talking about the Waterloo Road", she said. But What had she been talking about? Not simply about the Waterloo Road. Perhaps she had been talking nonsense. She had

The Years 171). Waterloo

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unintentionally refuses to let Rose tell her the rest of her story. Even with

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she is his cousin, he takes her out to lunch. It is likely that Martin did not

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to be careful to not let corrupt them. However, Rose later says to Martin,

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upon. Scottie could be a representation of Hitchcock in the fact he is using Judy to project his own fantasy of another woman.

! ! ! ! ! ! ! ! *Vertigo!* ! ! ! ! !

the *Hitchcock Reader* ! ! ! ! ! ! ! ! ! ! !

leap from the bell tower is both her declaration that she refuses the violations

We see her character submit completely to the power of Scottie as he picks what clothes she wears, the way she will style her hair, and the way she acts.

Women are not objects or to be used as a tool in the development of man. Women are their own complex, multi-dimensional selves.

identities in another light: that when a woman submits herself to a man symbolize that when Judy falls her to death after she has gone through her his fantasy, only for her to perish. Hitchcock could be saying here that once

Critics have said that *Vertigo* in particular has close similarities to

of his treatment of actresses. He was obsessed with her from the moment he saw her. He and his wife, Alma groomed her into the actress she would become. So already he had begun to obtain his control over her by molding her into the type of actress he wanted. Other things Hitchcock would do is have her stalked, poor treatment on set, keep her in a contract when she wanted out, and even accused Hitchcock of sexual assault. This would all

The Birds (1963) to *Marnie (1964)* until

ruining her career.

For *Marnie*

Hitchcock in his book *Hitchcock/Truffaut*, Alfred talks about what drew him to

Vertigo

Scanned with CamScanner

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you have sex, your chances of being killed escalates.
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almost sadistic fetishization of the

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vampires.
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male and female reactions to him, a noticeable divide in the gender binary.

desires that “God give him into my hand just for long enough to destroy that earthly life of him which we are aiming at. If beyond it I could send his soul for ever and ever to burning hell I would do it!” (Stoker 329). This correlates

the oppressor of new ideology, Harker rather damning Count Dracula to hell than abiding with the spread of vampirism, or new ideology (Redpath

division of the gender binary. As Jonathan seeks damnation on the vampire, to him too, though it may not hold your hands from his destruction” (Stoker 328). This sentiment forms a direct contrast from her earlier one when

pity toward the vampire emerges after her encounter with Count Dracula, words. Only after Count Dracula has acknowledged her intellectual prowess a reserved approbation of his progressive ideology.

Although he exhibits progressive tendencies, Count Dracula ultimately inability to adhere to a singular ideology. While his actions liberate women from their expected societal spheres, Count Dracula enables this liberation reduce all life to an extension of himself and his will” (Spear 181) and male sexual fantasy. He exhibits full control over his brides, telling them to go “Back, back to your own place! Your time is not yet come. Wait. Have patience” (Stoker 58) when they wish to consume Jonathan Harker. His parting remark to the men in London of “Your girls that you all love are actions free within societies other than his own. This indecisive ideology

“the sinking sun” (400) and believes it to signal his triumph, the “light of the setting sun” (401) signals his end, the man and his ideology caught in

describes, the end of the nineteenth century was the end of the New Woman portrayed as matrimonially and maternally liberated, activists discovering the image “alienated more woman than it attracted” and instead the “New Man” falter in an age where neither society nor themselves can fully embrace their principles. While Count Dracula seeks to reevaluate the to his personal and symbolic end.

as the most progressive male within *Dracula* after inverting the traditional actions, Lucy Westenra escapes the repressive roles of the domestic sphere, Harker gains full acknowledgement of both her intellectual prowess and to a singular ideology causes his demise, the “New Man” silenced for his binary elevates Count Dracula as the *most* progressive male, his failure concerning his moral binary serves as a warning of personal defects

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as real life characters are somehow imbedded in facial features, and with
to the character Dracula, she describes that, “the villain, though he may try
to hide it, is eventually shown to have the face of evil; his moral deformity
eventually has an outward, physical display” (3). She argues that the hideous
skull and face of Dracula accentuates his hideous soul, that his villainous
vile external qualities, thereby revealing his repulsive internal qualities as
as having a “high bridge of the thin nose and peculiarly arched nostrils;
with lofty domed forehead” and “peculiarly sharp white teeth” (Stoker
24.) As the novel unfolds, these surface level observations coalesce into an
within it. Even with his “aquiline” jaw and “protuberant teeth” (Stoker 24),
if it knew where it was bound for” (Stoker 119), Dracula is consistently
a powerful advantage over men and a wicked perversion of humanity;
however, not having a resolute physical form represents the impurity and
natural hesitancy that accompanies the pursuit of evil. Furthermore, the
soul. His last moments are spent defenseless against his attackers, all because
of the conditions that his body must obey. The power he wields over men
ultimately wields power over him. Dracula does not have full control of his
physical nature, just as he does not have full control of the darkness within
him. Upon having his plan foiled and his corpse destroyed, Dracula parts
face a look of peace” (Stoker, 401). Forced by his physical condition to spend
his entire life in darkness, Dracula and his soul greet Death at dusk, an
equilibrium between the light of day and the dark of night. The rays of the
evil to his last breath, a shred of redemption lies with his corpse.

Similar to Dracula, Dorian Gray displays an irregular appearance that
demonstrates his full devolution into an indulgent, cruel narcissist. The
riveting young man is initially of a pure, elegant appearance, as described
by Lord Henry: “Yes, he was certainly wonderfully handsome, with his

wonder Basil Hallward worshipped him” (Wilde 17). But once aware of
man to monster. His appearance allures and captivates those around him,
and Dorian lavishes in its ability to manipulate. The character of Basil
Hallward, as a physical representation of morality and virtue, is hopelessly
ignored by Dorian as he continues along his dark journey. Sheldon W.
Liebman supports this assessment of Basil, citing, “Basil believes that the
universe is a moral order in which God punishes evil and rewards good; that
guided by a moral code in which sympathy and compassion are primary
deeper than the physical appeal of Dorian and dissects his character. Just as

of time. David Punter describes this aspect of the novel when he writes,

the contrast between Dracula and the world he lives in, continuing, “this

and unmoved by the wave of technological innovation blowing past him.

society may progress and evolve, but it will soon realize that the past still

he boasts, “My revenge is just begun! I spread it over centuries, and time is on my side. Your girls that you all love are mine already; and through them you and others shall yet be mine - my creatures, to do my bidding and to

his enemies as commodities to collect and control, not obstacles to respect and overcome. From his perspective, why should he fear these mere mortals when he has already conquered time? Time catalyzes the false reassurance of his physi

appearance, the face that once represented his true self begins to assume the role of a mask. His face is unable to display the maturity and wisdom that new experiences and relationships provide. Dorian is a middle-aged man with the appearance of a youthful bachelor; he is not only a prisoner of time, but also a prisoner within his own body. As time passes,

his own beauty, Dorian Gray shatters the mirror, stabs the picture, and dies

the entire novel, time plays on his psyche and disillusioned him from his vanity. Dorian manipulated time to cherish his physical appearance, but

Lefkovitz is correct in her assessment of Dorian loathing his own beauty, she is incorrect in her mention of a "heroic" death. Over time, Dorian is exposed to two mutually exclusive forms of the human experience (Basil and Henry). After governing his life through both interpretations, he realizes that

a conscious decision to murder himself. The confusion from his perpetual internal battle prompts a decision to destroy his portrait and, by extension, his own soul. Dorian spends a lifetime acting as a narcissistic villain, yet

over time masks his subjugation to it, just as his intact, redeemed soul stands over his decrepit, deceased body.

Dracula and *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, contain repulsive, vile titular characters who have nonetheless attracted and captivated generations of moral, righteous men and women.

concerning their relationships with time and physical attributes. Just as

curiosity to read and analyze vice in literature. It is the monster that conceals the men beneath, their control of Time that conceals their vulnerability to it, and the speck of light that punctuates the dark within their soul.

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The Living Imago of Dorian Gray

Rachel Sizemore

The Mirror Stage context of psychoanalysis and development of the psyche. Integral to understanding the essay is the phrase in which Lacan explains that the mirror stage, and the physical act of seeing oneself in a mirror, “symbolizes the *I*”

the mirror stage as well as the process of which the psyche acknowledges it. The *imago*, or the *I* as Lacan refers to it here, is a “destination” to which the real self, the physical being, can never reach, though it will always *permanently* remain an objective within the psyche. The dichotomous relationship

extremely important to the development of humans and the philosophy of thought, and which Lacanian theorists base their analyses on.

The Picture of Dorian Gray, written by Oscar Wilde and published in 1890. In a brief summary of the plot, *Dorian Gray* follows a young man who receives a painting of himself from a close friend; the painting, taking on a principle role in the narrative,

the paranoia of someone discovering his secret becomes overwhelming and Dorian Gray is killed trying to destroy the painting. Lacanian analysis is useful in consideration of this text for many reasons, the most pressing being that this is a literal manifestation of the imago and the self, if reversed so

himself remains a pristine and perfect *imago*. It is the vast alienation between Dorian and the painting that is eventually the downfall of the man: he snaps and tries to destroy the painting in order to free himself of the distress he feels at its evil visage and ends up killing himself instead and leaving the painting to remain, a permanent reminder of his folly.

The further the narrative proceeds, the more alienated Dorian becomes from his mirror-self, and so on. As a quick aside, this can be pushed further portrait of himself; this is synonymous with the idea in Lacanian theory that

In the end, once Dorian dies, the images switch places, reinstating the as it portrays not only the theory in its base state but also the interaction of the two, which Lacan fervently believed could never happen. So why is this important, if it delineates from the theory? One could postulate that this is portraying the permanence of the imago: once Dorian dies, it switches vessels in order to live on in his painting, or, the imago that inhabited the

his reputation in society. Another more unlikely theory is that this relationship between Dorian and his attenuating imago is representative of the toxicity of removing oneself from reality. As Dorian believes himself to be perfect and untouched by his sins, he can no longer see his true imago and instead is haunted by how others might see him, though they perceive his imago instead of his and from their own nature is something that will, in turn, tear them apart.

In conclusion, the relationship between the imago and the self is an extremely important part of *Dorian Gray*, though it is improbable that Oscar Wilde would be aware of this connection to critical theory. However, the *Mirror Stage* and the process between the imago and the physical self.

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Power and Identity in Frank X Walker's *When Winter Come*

Maeve Dunn

Although the connection may not be obvious to some, power and identity go hand-in-hand. Throughout history, identity in terms of gender, sexuality, race, and income, among other things, has determined how much power and control one has in their life and in their community. In Frank X

When Winter Come: The Ascension of York, there

Lewis and Clark, who led the expedition through North America; York, an enslaved man of African descent who accompanies them and guides them

called Nez Perce, and one from his life as a slave. Social class and race in directly pertain to power, which is a major, overarching theme in all of the

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social duties accountable for themselves, emphasizing the fact that women
and children also rely on men to provide for them and keep them safe.
Walker also mentions children in these lines as sources of comfort for men
in old age; this proves that children were seen as dutiful to men as well as
women. The above quotation also suggests the role of women as mothers,
although paternal responsibilities are not mentioned at all. Many of the
other poems in *When Winter Come*, such as “Unwelcome Guest” and “Like a
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personal pleasure and regarded as their property.
In general, white men historically have had the most privilege and power,

**The Powers that Be: Social Assignment,
Resistance, and Dependence in
*When Winter Come & The House
on Mango Street***

Maria Wheatley

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Maria Wheatley

herself. She says in “A House of My Own”, fully demonstrating her resolve to break away from the powers holding her down, “One day I will say goodbye to Mango. I am too strong for her to keep me here forever” (110).

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others. One example of this can be found in “The Monkey Garden”, when
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garden where Sally needed to be saved. I took three big sticks and a brick

