



# RAPE AND FEMALE BODY

## 13 Best Dialogues From Movie Pink



# "Rape" and Female Body:

- In Aphra Behn's *The Rover*, ladies act like whores and whores like ladies!
- Florinda plays the role of quintessential "maid of quality," and the "prostitute" Angellica Bianca reversals the so called "move" from subjection into subjectivity.
- It is Florinda's rebellion against the commodification of forced marriage that destabilizes her position within patriarchy, while Angellica Bianca's self-construction as Petrarchan mistress charts the attempt of a woman excluded from the marital marketplace to turn her beauty into an alternative form of power.
- Florinda faces three attempted rapes that are called not rape, but seduction, retaliation, or "ruffling a harlot."



# To be continued...

- To make her own sexual choices, she enters a world where the word "rape" has no meaning.
- Angellica Bianca's subject position is shown to involve a complex complicity in the same cultural legitimation of male sexual aggression.
- Florinda articulates her defiance of paternal authority-her condemnation of the "ill customs" which makes a woman the "slave" of her male relations.
- In the opening scene of *The Rover*, Behn exhibits the contradictory female identity which this uncertainty generated, as Florinda seeks to define her independence in the very patriarchal terms that invalidate it: "I shall let him see, I understand better what's due to my beauty, birth and fortune, and more to my soul, than to obey those unjust commands" (159)





During the “rape” scene, sex is going to take place no matter what the woman says or does.

Willmore does not perceive this as rape because, identified by the sexual signifiers that surround her, Florinda's resistance is invalidated and the male libido given *carte blanche*: Willmore will not take "No" for an answer.

Willmore, predictably, takes this step, invalidating Florinda's resistance yet again by interpreting it as the prostitute's mercenariness:

Florinda: Sir, can you think

Willmore: That you would do't for nothing.

Oh, oh I find what you would be at. (202)

When Florinda threatens to cry "Murder! Rape! or anything! if you do not instantly let me go" (202), Willmore, acting rather like his own defense counsel, seeks to consolidate his version of events by reading her conduct as evidence of the intention to provoke desire:

I'll warrant you would fain have the world believe now that you are not so forward as I. No, not you-why at this time of night was your cobweb door set open, dear spider but to catch flies? (202)



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The link between male sexuality and male honor is again accentuated as Willmore, put out that Pedro should have won the privilege of being the first to have sex with Florinda, initiates a contest in sex appeal that turns into a grotesque courtly charade: Willmore: But sir-perhaps the lady will not be imposed upon, she'll choose her man. Pedro: I am better bred than not to leave her choice free. (232)





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Florinda refuses to have sex with Willmore, he pulls out a coin and says, “[l]ook here, here’s a pistol for you”... When she declines his offer he angrily states, “I never give White 12 more” (3.5.65-66). Willmore’s belief in free sex is conveniently forgotten and he reveals his hypocrisy regarding to his own libertine values.



## Peter Holland, *The Ornament of Action*

- ‘Willmore is forced to marry Hellena, but his bargain with La Nuche is achieved without marriage – a reflection of the degradation of the heroine into a prostitute (no rake marries a whore and remains hero) and of the increasingly extra-social position of the rake in the comedies of the 1680s’



# Willmore's Endings

To Beaumont:

'You have a ~~hankering after marriage still~~, but I am for Love and Gallantry.' V.i.610

'So though by several ways we gain our End,  
Love still, like death, does to one centre tend.'



# Women and Marriage

- \*Marriage was used to raise one's status or honor in society.
- \*Love was said to be unimportant in marriage.
- \*Generally woman had little or not say in who they married.

A Married Woman

Women During the Restoration

What it was like to be married during the Restoration  
And Their Struggle for an Identity in Society

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\* "That which the husband has is his own" and "that which the wife has is the husband's".



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Thank You!

