

THOMAS SHADWELL'S *The Libertine* (1675): A FORGOTTEN RESTORATION DON JUAN PLAY

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While the London theatres remained closed during the Commonwealth, the companies of actors in Paris were vying with one another for the rights to stage their own French versions of Tirso de Molina's Don Juan play. The Paris audiences, to be precise, had been introduced to the legendary figure of Don Juan by the Italian actors. In 1658 the Italians performed, for the entertainment of the Parisians, *Il Convitato di pietra*, an adaptation made by Giacinto Andrea Cicognini from Tirso de Molina's *El Burlador de Sevilla y convidado de piedra*. There are a number of reasons why this Spanish play caught on with the Paris audiences in those days. One was the peace negotiations conducted between France and Spain, in 1659, and sumptuously celebrated, in 1660, by the marriage contract between Louis XIV and Maria Teresa, daughter of Philip IV. The Spanish Infanta brought along with her a company of Spanish actors which was to stay on in Paris until 1672. It is reasonable to assume that the Spanish actors seized the opportunity to capitalize on the interest of the court and town audiences awakened by the Italian and French adaptations of the *Burlador de Sevilla*.

In 1658, the actor Dorimond, inspired by the success of the Italian company, came out with a French version of his own, with *Le Festin de pierre ou le fils criminel*; the following year, Claude Deschamps, Sieur de Villiers, a member of a rival company, pieced together his own rifacimento, which he presented under the same title; and in 1665, Molière, still chafing at the strong disapproval of *Tartuffe*, hastened to bring out his *Dom Juan ou le festin de pierre*. Then in 1669, Claude La Rose, Sieur de Rosimond, put on *Le nouveau festin de pierre ou l'athée foudroyé*. It was Rosimond's rendering that caught Thomas Shadwell's attention, prompting him to write *The Libertine*. Save Molière's play, all the Don Juan adaptations just mentioned

have fallen into oblivion, Shadwell's included. It is the object of this paper to rehabilitate Shadwell as the author of an unjustly neglected and undervalued Restoration play based on the Don Juan legend.

Critical assessment of Shadwell's literary achievement has been controversial ever since, in 1668, Shadwell staged his first play, *The Sullen Lovers or the Impertinents*. In the preface to this comedy of humours, Shadwell initiated a professional debate over current modes of comedy, that is, over the comedy of manners, then championed by Dryden, and the comedy of humours, championed by Shadwell. An avowed disciple of the Jonsonian comedy of humours, young Shadwell took Dryden to task for having written, in his essay *Of Dramatic Poesy* (1668), that Ben Jonson's best plays lack wit. To make things worse, he was courting danger by ridiculing two of Dryden's brothers-in-law who happened to be dabbling with heroic drama, a genre he strongly disliked. Sir Positive, the omniscient braggart and purveyor of dramatic absurdities, in *The Sullen Lovers*, is a parody of Sir Robert Howard, one of the brothers-in-law, and the conceited poet Ninny a parody of Edward Howard, the other in-law. Shadwell and Dryden pursued their debate over the nature of comedy and the heroic play in the prefaces to their plays. The debate gradually escalated into a political quarrel, which reached its climax in 1682 with the publication of Dryden's *MacFlecknoe or A Satyr upon the True-Blew-Protestant Poet, T.S.* Dryden wrote this mordant lampoon in order to deal Shadwell a death-blow. The Satire celebrates Shadwell's mock coronation as the new poet laureate of boredom, the ceremony being conducted by Richard Flecknoe, the old laureate. Thus MacFlecknoe proclaims that

Sh- alone my perfect image bears,
Mature in dullness from his tender years.
Sh- alone, of all my Sons is he
Who stands confirmed in full stupidity.

These heroic couplets have come to represent for many students of Restoration literature the real Shadwell as well as the real Flecknoe. The damage done by this venomous invective to Shadwell's reputation has remained unparalleled in English literature.

Critical evaluation of Shadwell's dramatic output has not only been hampered by Dryden's animosity; it has also been impaired by moral objections which Victorian scholars and critics raised to Restoration drama

as a whole. Moreover, critical discussion of *The Libertine* has also been bedevilled by the generic issue. It is best defined as a satirical tragedy even if satire, as a rule, is held to be incompatible with tragedy. Shadwell himself called the play a tragedy and in the preface apologized for its "Irregularities" caused by "the Extravagance of the Subject". Allardice Nicoll, the distinguished historian of English drama, has chosen to call it a comedy; other critics, baffled by the "Irregularities", have preferred to ignore it.

The play was written, as Shadwell boasted, in something like three weeks and was produced in Dorset Garden in June 1675, possibly on the 15th, when the King was present. We have it on the authority of John Downes, the prompter and author of *Roscius Anglicanus* (1708), that "The Libertine, and Virtuoso ... were both very well acted, and got the Company great Reputation; the Libertine perform'd by Mr. Betterton crown'd the play". It remained a favourite in the repertoire until about the thirties of the 18th century. Thomas Betterton, the great actor and manager in the leading part of Don John, impressed the London audiences as the brutal leader of a trio of iconoclasts for whom all social, natural and religious laws are irrelevant. To believe Jacomo, the cowardly and self-pitying servant, Don John, together with his two disciples Don Lopez and Don Antonio, have committed "Some thirty Murders, Rapes innumerable, frequent Sacrilege, Parricide; in short, not one in all the Catalogue of Sins have scap'd" them. Don Lopez has killed his elder brother; Don Antonio has seduced and impregnated his own sisters; and Don John has killed Don Pedro, the Governor of Seville, and has also plotted the murder of his own father.

When the curtain rises, Don John's destructive life unfolds itself in a rapid series of fatal episodes. In a nocturnal scene, Don John murders Don Octavio, the lover of Maria. Then, using his victim's cloak as a disguise, he seduces Maria, the lady-in-waiting to his mistress Leonora, and slays Leonora's brother who has come to defend his sister's honour. Pursued by the vengeful Maria and her maid Flora, he first kills Flora and next Maria. On his flight from Seville, he kills the hospitable Don Francisco, whose two daughters Clara and Flavia he attempts to seduce and whose bridegrooms he wounds on the eve of their wedding. Next he poisons the faithful Leonora, who has come to help him escape. He beats off a group of shepherds and shepherdesses, rapes one of the shepherdesses, hies to the convent in which Clara and Flavia have taken shelter and tries to get hold of the two by setting the convent on fire. Finally he blasphemes Don Pedro's statue bid him

repent, he refuses. Not even the descent of his two companions into hell can move him. True to his ideal, without a hint of remorse, impervious to the thunderbolts from heaven, he sinks into hell, clouded by fire and accompanied by devils.

In the light of Restoration tragedy, the blood-curdling atrocities, perpetrated by Don John and his two henchmen, were quite common. Horror tragedy flourished in the mid-1670s; and to audiences, accustomed to seeing horror plays, the atrocities committed by Don John were quite in keeping with this mode. Shadwell's play must have reminded them of the uninhibited display of brutality, of overbearing lawlessness in such plays as Nathaniel Lee's *Nero* (1674) or Thomas Otway's *Alcibiades* (1675) or *Don Carlos* (1676).

The great success of *The Libertine* must also be accounted for by the fact that the play shares most of the conventions of the so-called Spanish cloak and sword plays, as they came into vogue in the first decade of the Restoration. The two London companies that came into being between 1660 and 1661 were short new plays. Therefore their managers were obliged either to stage old plays or to put on old plays accommodated to the new demands. Among the new drama that emerged within a few years, the type that prevailed was the Spanish cloak and sword play. The breakthrough was achieved in 1663 by Samuel Tuke's *The Adventures of Five Hours*. It is partly a translation, partly an adaptation, made at the instance of King Charles II, from Antonio Coello's *Los empeños de seis años*. Many more dramatists followed in the wake of Tuke such as Dryden with *The Rival Ladies* (1664) and *An Evening's Love or The Mock Astrologer* (1668). Shadwell's *The Libertine* conforms to most conventions of the Spanish cloak and sword plays, to wit: the Spanish setting and names, the mistaken identities and nocturnal rendezvous, the duels, the young woman disguised as a man and pursuing her faithless lover, the loquacious and cowardly servant participating reluctantly in his master's dangerous intrigues.

Despite the Spanish origin of the Don Juan legend and the popularity of the English variety of the cloak and sword plays, it would be misleading to consider *The Libertine* as the direct outcome of Anglo-Spanish literary relations. Spanish drama never exercised a formative influence on Shadwell. It is the French drama to which he owed a heavy debt. Molière's plays were his quarry, which he ransacked with consummate skill. Thus, he took the

plot of *The Sullen Lovers* from Molière's *Les Fâcheux* ; he tailored *Tartuffe* to meet the requirements of Restoration drama, dubbing his unpublished version *The Hypocrite* (1669); and in 1672, he transmogrified *L'Avare* into *The Miser*. We therefore feel free to speculate about the likelihood that if Molière's *Dom Juan* had been published in the 1660s, Shadwell would have fashioned *The Libertine* out of Molière's play. As things turned out, he laid his hands on Rosimond's *Le nouveau festin de pierre ou l'athée foudroyé*.

Rosimond, outstanding though he was as an actor who after Molière's death took over several of his roles, was a minor playwright. But his Don Juan version is the most provocative of the French adaptations. His protagonist is an unabashed libertine, an outspoken atheist, and an insensitive parricide. Tirso de Molina's Don Juan, let us emphasize the difference, is a young nobleman. He is arrogant, but dignified in his demeanour. He experiences the passage of time at a breath-taking speed. He does kill, but only in self-defence and in order to save his honour. He gives himself out to be a trickster addicted to playing pranks on women as well as on men. He is not an aesthetic seducer, a Casanova, who makes an art out of seduction. On the contrary, he is an impetuous madcap, deceiving his prey under the cover of darkness. "*Sevilla*," he boasts, "*a veces me llama el Burlador, y el mayor gusto que en mí puede haber, es burlar una mujer y dejarla sin honor.*" His identity as a trickster, as a scorner of social laws, as a manipulator of the world he lives in together with his love of disguise and need for freedom are characteristics he shares with the rake of the Restoration comedy.

The Don Juan figure, on its migration from Spain to Italy and thence to France, underwent a metamorphosis. The amorous games, played by the original wag, gradually degenerated into perverseness and brutality. Under the pen of Dorimond and Villiers, Don John became a savage rebel, enslaved to the dictates of his senses and deprived of all human dignity. Rosimond perfected the portrait of depravity by propping it up with libertinism. The following passage taken from Rosimond illustrates the attempt made by his Don Juan to cut a philosophical figure. It will be compared in due course with the equivalent passage in Shadwell's play. Don Juan is expounding his philosophy to his servant Carrille (I. ii):

D. JUAN. Quoy! tousjours parler et sans vouloir m'entendre?
 Sans craindre mon courroux oses-tu me reprendre?
 Hé! que t'importe-t-il si je fais bien ou mal?

L'un ou l'autre pour toy n'est-il pas égal?
 Laisse-moy suivre en tout cette ardeur qui m'anime.
 J'obéis à mes sens, il est vray; mais quel crime?
 La nature m'en fait une nécessité,
 Et nostre corps n'agit que par sa volonté;
 C'est par les appétits qu'inspirent ses caprices,
 Qu'on court différemment aux vertus comme aux vices.
 Pour moy, qui de l'amour fais mes plus chers plaisirs,
 J'ose tout ce qui peut contenter mes désirs;
 Je n'examine point si j'ay droit de le faire:
 Tout est juste pour moy quand l'objet me peut plaire,
 Et ne prenant des lois que de ma passion,
 J'attache tous mes soins à la possession.

CARRILLE. Et sur le fondement de ces oires maximes,
 Vous n'avez point d'horreur de commettre des crimes?

D. JUAN. Apprens qu'il n'en est point pour un cœur généreux;
 La lascheté de l'homme en fait le nom affreux:
 Si tous les cœurs étoient et grands et magnanimes,
 Ces crimes qu'on nous peint ne seroient pas des crimes;
 Mais ce n'est qu'un effet d'un courage abattu,
 Dont la timidité veut passer pour vertu.
 Il n'est rien qu'un grand cœur ne se doive permettre,
 Et le crime est vertu pour qui l'ose commettre.

It would be wrong of us to conclude from this quotation that the French libertine as portrayed by Rosimond was quite new to Shadwell. He was not, and this for several reasons. Firstly, libertinism and its controversy about free will and unrestrained freedom of religious and moral conduct was a European phenomenon fostered, in France, by the rationalism of René Descartes and, in England, by the materialism of Thomas Hobbes. Secondly, the emergence of the libertine or rake was one of the most remarkable social and cultural phenomena of the Restoration. The English rake was bred in the hothouse of the Carolean court. The King himself set an example which was emulated by the Court Wits. Their prophet of libertinism was Hobbes whose theory of human nature appealed to them and seemed to free them from all inhibitions. Hobbes develops his theory by beginning with the senses. He considers them as basic to knowledge and as governing the will. The sense perceptions are the means whereby the brain receives the impressions, hence ideas and understanding. Upon these passions depend, and all the nature of

man is subject to them. From this theory the court rakes derived the one-sided view that the gratification of the senses was the only purpose of life.

The most outstanding among the aristocratic rakes to embrace Hobbism was John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester (1647-80). He was, in the words of the antiquary Anthony Wood, "*an absolute Hobbist.*" He plunged into the experiment of living the complete life of pleasure. The experiment ended in revulsion. Rochester openly denounced Hobbes's utilitarian ethics in his *Satyre against Mankind* (1679). This poem is a recantation of his former beliefs, a death-bed disavowal of Hobbes's mechanical universe. Rochester and some other upper-class pseudo Hobbists known to Shadwell must have inspired his venture of portraying a rake-hero who exceeded all bounds.

The rake as a stock-figure of the Restoration comedy of manners is now sorted into several categories. There is the polite rake, the debauched rake, the extravagant rake, the bisexual rake, the refined rake, the philosophical rake, and there is the Hobbesian rake or libertine. Whether debauched or philosophical, the stage rake invariably assumes the stance of an anti-matrimonialist, for love is the ultimate challenge to his pride and individualism. However, almost all of the rakes are reformable and almost all of them are forced by their self-assertive female partners to renounce their libertine beliefs, to give up the selfish pursuit of pleasure, and to accept the yoke of matrimony. The provision scenes of the comedy of manners provide a form of stylized agreement upon the pattern of a mutually satisfying marriage. Thus, Dorimant, in Etherege's *The Man of Mode* (1676), who was said to be modelled on the Earl of Rochester, is saved from degenerating into a wicked figure by his final submission to love. He is tamed by Harriet Woodvil.

In terms of Restoration drama, Shadwell's Don John must be defined as a Hobbesian stage rake, but unlike Dorimant he remains untamed and unreclaimed. He is a callous anti-matrimonialist who pits his entire being against all Christian ideas of love, law and order. What is quite unconventional about him is the fact that Shadwell has grafted a figure taken from the comedy of manners onto the framework of a tragedy. The shift in nature from comic to tragic hero can be justified in the light of English dramatic tradition. The native ancestor of the rake-hero is the Vice-Figure of the medieval and Tudor drama, who is both rogue and villain. Dohn John has

retained the double nature of the Vice-Figure. On the one hand, he is a persistent challenger and roguish adventurer, unswervingly shaping his course of life; on the other, he is a youthful villain or rather an artist of destruction, heading for disaster before having "*supped full with*" sinful pleasure.

The change of the comic into the tragic rake was obviously prompted by the French source at Shadwell's disposal. The atrocities committed by Dorimond's Dom Juan provided him with the vehicle for a satire on the Restoration stage libertine as well as on the excesses of popularized Hobbism. Shadwell's unconventional play is, as already mentioned, a satire cast in the form of a tragedy. The author pursued his experiment in generic crosscutting with Shakespeare's *Timon of Athens* (1677). He turned Shakespeare's tragedy into a satire with a view to laughing fashionable Hobbism to scorn.

The opening lines of Shadwell's play, which are inspired by the text of Rosimond just quoted, delineate the base assumptions of Don John's code. He and his boon companions Don Lopez and Don Antonio come together to discuss the crimes they have committed. They reaffirm their credo that conscience is merely cowardice. What others call sin, they call pleasure. Their arguments constitute one of the most elaborate statements of Hobbism on the Restoration stage:

*Enter Don John, Don Lopez, Don Antonio,
Jacom, Don John's Valet.*

Don John. Thus far without a bound we have enjoy'd
Our prosp'rous pleasures, which dull Fools call Sins;
Laugh'd at old feeble Judges and weak Laws,
And at the fond fantastick thing, call'd Conscience,
Which serves for nothing but to make men Cowards;
An idle fear of future misery;
And is yet worse than all that we can fear.

D. Lop. Conscience made up of Dark and horried thoughts,
Rais'd from the fumes of a distemper'd Spleen.

D. Anto. A senseless fear would make us contradict
The only certain Guide, Infallible Nature;
And at the call of Melancholy Fools,
(Who stile all actions which they like not, Sins)

To silence all our Natural appetites.

D. John. Yet those conscientious Fools that would perswade us
To I know not what, which they call Piety,
Have in reserve private delicious Sins,
Great as the happy Libertine enjoys,
With which, in corners, wantonly they roul.

D. Lop. Don John, thou art our Oracle; thou hast
Dispell'd the Fumes which once clouded our Brains.

D. Anto. By thee, we have got loose from Education,
And the dull slavery of Pupillage,
Recover'd all the liberty of Nature,
Our own srong Reason now can go alone
Without the feeble props of splenatick Fools,
Who contradict our common Mother, Nature.

D. John. Nature gave us our Senses, which we please:
Nor does our Reason war against our Sense.
By Natures order, Sense should guide our Reason,
Since to the mind all objects Sense conveys.
But Fools for shaddows lose substantial pleasures,
For idle tales abandon true delight
And solid joys of day, for empty dreams at night.
Away, thou foolish thing, thou chollick of the mind,
Thou Worm by ill-digesting stomachs bred:
In spight of thee, we'll surfeit in delights,
And never think ought can be ill that's pleasant.

Jacom. A most excellent sermon, and no doubt, Gentlemen, you
have edifi't much by it.

D. John. Away! thou formal phlegmatick Coxcomb, thou
Hast neither courage nor yet wit enough
To sin thus. Thou art my dull conscientious Pimp.
And when I am wanton with my Whore within,
Thou, with thy Beads and Pray'r-Book keep'st the door.

Jacom. Sir, I find your Worship is no more afraid to be damn'd
than other fashionable Gentlemen of the Age: but, me-thinks,
Halters and Axes should terrifie you. With reverence to your
Worships, I've seen civiller men hand'g, and men of as pretty

parts too. There's scarce a City in *Spain* but is too hot for you, you have committed such outrages wheresoe'r you come.

Most of Don John's victims are marriageable women. Unlike the witty heroines of the Restoration comedy of manners who triumph over their freedom-loving rakes, they are no match for him. They are deceived and defeated just as are Clara and Flavia, the two daughters of Don Francisco, who rebel against their enforced marriage. In a desperate last-minute effort to escape parental authority, they decide to embark on a marriage of their own choice. Ironically or rather tragically, they set their sights upon Don John, the least likely of the rakes to succumb to wedlock. On the eve of their arranged marriages, each of them, without the knowledge of the other, gives in to Don John's advances and empty promises. The revolt against their impending marriages is worth quoting from act III:

Clar. Oh, *Flavia*, this will be our last happy night, to morrow is our Execution day; we must marry.

Flav. Ay, *Clara*, we are concern'd without reprieve. 'Tis better to live as we have done, kept from all men, than for each to be confin'd to one, whom yet we never saw and a thousand to one shall never like.

Clar. Out on't, a *Spanish Wife* has a worse life than a coop'd Chicken.

Flav. None live pleasantly here, but those who should be miserables: Strumpets. They can choose their Mates, but we must be like Slaves condemn'd to the Gallies; we have not liberty to sell our Selves, or venture one throw for our freedom.

Clar. O that we were in *England!* there, they say a Lady may chuse a Footman and run away with him, if she likes him, and no dishonour to the Family.

Flav. That's because the Families are so very Honourable that nothing can touch them: their Wives run and ramble whither and with whom they please and defie all censure.

Clar. Ay, and a jealous Husband is a more monstrous Creature there than a Wittal here, and wou'd be more pointed at: They

say, if a Man be jealous there, the Women will all joyn and pull him to pieces.

Flav. Oh happy Countrey! we ne'r touch Money, there the Wives can spend their Husband's Estate for 'em. Oh Bless'd Countrey!

Clar. Ay, there they say the Husbands are the prettiest civil easie good natur'd indifferent persons in the whole world; they ne'r mind what their Wives do, not they.

Flav. Nay, they say they love those men best that are kindest to their Wives. Good men! poor hearts. And here, if an honest Gentleman offers a Wife a civility by the By, our bloody butcherly Husbands are cutting of Thoats presently _____

Clar. Oh that we had these frank civil *Englishmen*, instead of our grave dull surly *Spanish* Blockheads, whose greatest Honour lies in preserving their Beards and Foreheads inviolable.

Flav. In *England*, if a Husband and Wife like not one another, they draw two several ways, and make no bones on't; while the Husband treats his Mistriss openly in his Glass-Coach, the Wife, for Decency's sake, puts on her Vizar and whips away in a Hackney with a Gallant, and no harm done.

Clar. Though of late 'tis as unfashionable for a Husband to love his Wife there, as 'tis here, yet 'tis fashionable for her to love some body else, and that's something.

Flav. Nay, they say, Gentlemen will keep company with a Cuckold there, as soon as another man, and ne'r wonder at him.

Clar. Oh happy Countrey! there a Woman may chuse for her self, and none will into the Trap of Matrimony unless she likes the Bait; but here we are tumbled headlong and blindfold into it.

Clara and Flavia, as you will have noticed, argue about marriage in terms of English stage brides who rebel against the English custom of enforced marriage. It was, indeed, customary for most Englishwomen to be overruled by parental and family interests. Those women who rebelled against the inequality of the sexes were either the female partners of the

stage rakes or, as Flavia intimates to Clara, the prostitutes. The first propagated marriage no longer as a sanctified union but as a social institution liable to redefinition by the individual. This view of marriage was grounded on The Civil Marriage Act of 1653, which, for the first time in English social history, transferred the jurisdiction over marriage from the ecclesiastical to the secular authorities. The second, together with the female brokers such as Mary Frith, alias Moll Cutpurse, and the notorious bawds such as Elizabeth Holland and Damrose Page, were among the few women to achieve economic independence and to enjoy some social power.

Clara, moreover, gives vent to her despair in a protest song in which she claims rights (3.4):

Woman who is by Nature wild,
Dull bearded men incloses;
Of Nature's freedom we're beguil'd
By laws which man imposes:
Who still himself continues free,
Yet we poor Slaves must fetter'd be.

Chor. A shame on the Curse.

Of, For better for worse;
'Tis a vile imposition on Nature:
For Women should shange
And have freedom to range
Like to every other wild Creature.

So gay a thing was n'er design'd
To be restrain'd from roving.
Heav'n meant so changeable a mind
Should have its change in loving.
By cunning we could make men smart,
But they strength o'ecome our Art.

Chor. A shame on the Curse

Of, For, & c.

How happy is the Village Maid
Whom onely Love can fetter;
By foolish Honour ne'r betra'd,
She serves a Pow'r much greater:
That lawful Prince the wisest rules,

Th' Usurper's Honour rules but Fools.

Chor. A shame on the Curse,
Of, For, & c.

Let us resume our antient right,
Make man at distance wonder;
Though he victorious be in fight,
In love we'll keep him under.
War and Ambition hence be hurl'd,
Let Love and Beauty rule the World.

Chor. A shame on the Curse
Of, For better, & c.

There is no denying that Shadwell's verse comes off badly when compared to the poetry of his contemporaries. But the lyrics of his plays, particularly those of *The Libertine*, deserve special attention. The incidental music of the songs was composed by William Turner (1651-1740), and the music for a special performance in 1692 was composed by Henry Purcell. Let me add on behalf of the melomaniacs among you that in 1817 Henry Rowley Bishop arranged the music of Mozart's *Don Giovanni* for his two-act opera *Don John or The Libertine*. The libretto by Isaac Pocock, a dramatist and painter, is based on Shadwell's play.

The lyrics of *The Libertine* are not additions or concessions made simply to satisfy the contemporary craze for operatic entertainment, which had been initiated by Sir William Davenant. Shadwell had pandered to this new vogue in writing an operatic version of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (1674) and in appropriating the French ballet *Psyché* in 1675 from Molière, Corneille and Quinault. His Don Juan lyrics are an integral part of the play, serving to emphasize the implications of the action and theme. In act I, Shadwell has devised what may be called a song competition between Don John and Don Actavio. Its dramatic aim is to bring out the characters of the two suitors and their different attitudes towards sexuality. Don John, as already mentioned, has made up his mind to conquer Maria, the lady-in-waiting to his mistress Leonora, because Don Octavio is in love with her and "besides, she is another Woman." A group of fiddlers, playing under her window, assist the nocturnal serenader in winning Maria with a song which acknowledges the reality of sexual lust:

Gustav Ungerer

Thou joy of all hearts and delight of all eyes,
 Nature's chief Treasure and Beauty's chief Prize,
 Look down, you'l discover
 Here's a faithful young vigorous Lover
 With a Heart full as true
 As e'r languish'd for you;
 Here's a faithful young vigorous Lover.
 The Heart that was once a Monarch in's Breast,
 Is now your poor Captive and can have no rest;
 'Twill never give over,
 But about your sweet bosom will hover.
 Dear Miss, let it in,
 By Heav'n 'tis no sin;
 Here's a faithful young vigorous vigorous Lover.

No sooner has the song cast a spell over Maria and deceived her into believing that Don John is her suitor Don Octavio than Don Octavio himself unexpectedly turns up, accompanied by another group of street fiddlers. Don John, not recognizing him in the dark, takes him for "*Some Serenading Coxcomb*" who is going to sing "*some damn'd Song or other, a Cloris, or a Phillis at least.*" The song Don Octavio sings is not a pastoral; it is rather a parody of the Platonic love lyric. It conforms to the artificial précieux love convention as it had been practised at the court of Queen Henrietta Maria and as it lingered on in the Restoration heroic drama. It is composed in the style that provoked Shadwell to write *The Sullen Lovers* and to deride Sir Positive and the poet Ninny as writers of heroic poems and plays:

When you dispense your Influence,
 Your dazling Beams are quick and clear,
 You so surprize and wound the Sense,
 So bright a Miracle y'appear.
 Admiring Mortals you astonish so,
 No other Deity they know,
 But think that all Divinity's below _____
 One charming Look from your illustrious Face
 Were able to subdue Mankind,
 So sweet, so powerful a Grace
 Makes all men Lovers but the blind:
 Nor can they freedom by resistance gain,
 For each embraces the soft Chain
 And never struggles with the pleasant pain.

If we analyze Don Octavio's song from the eavesdropper's point of view, that is from Don John's, his praise of Maria as a goddess is just balderdash, a jumble of unintelligible words. It smacks of the stale rhetoric of a lover wallowing in the sweet pleasures of the wound inflicted by the deified woman. It sounds artificial to a stage Hobbist who refuses to believe in miracles and who holds that if the senses are wounded, no perception, hence no understanding, hence no passion are possible. Don Octavio's song epitomizes for Don John the false spiritualization of the female human animal and the false sublimation of the male sexual drive. Don John's lyric, on the other hand, puts the animal vitality into the male-female relationship, precluding any form of pastoral escapism or of male submission to female tyranny. The winner of this fortuitous song competition is Don John. He kills Don Octavio under Maria's window and, wearing the cloak of his dead rival, is admitted into Maria's house, while his companions beat off the watch in a second nocturnal street fight.

A female invasion in act II prompts Don John to save his skin with a nuptial song. A "*whole Battalion of courageous Women*", to believe Jacomo, have seized Don John's mansion and claim to be married to the owner of the house. The rake, experienced in parrying female skirmishes, survives the assault in playing the six women off against each other. He makes each of them believe that he is hers. The blundering Jacomo spoils the game when offering them the opportunity of exclaiming all' unisono that Don John is their husband. Now Don John, caught in his own net, resorts to confessing that he is actually married to each of them and has "*above four-score more.*" The moment he is about to lose control of the situation, his musicians strike up his Epithalamium. His nuptial song is a profession of insatiable lust, a declaration of male superiority:

Since Liberty, Nature for all has design'd,
A pox on the Fool who to one is confin'd.
All Creatures besides,
When they please, change their Brides.
All Females they get when they can,
Whilst they nothing but Nature obey,
How happy, how happy are they?
But the silly fond Animal, Man,
Makes Laws 'gainst himself, which his Appetites sway;
Poor Fools, how unhappy are they?
Chor. Since Liberty, Nature for all has design'd,
A pox on the Fool who to one is confin'd.

Gustav Ungerer

At the first going down, a Woman is good,
 But when e'er she comes up, I'll ne'r chew the Cud,
 But out she shall go.
 And I'll serve 'em all so.
 When with One my Stomack is cloy'd,
 Another shall soon be enjoy'd.
 Then how happy, how happy are we?
 Let the Coxcomb, when weary, drudge on,
 And foolishly stay when he wou'd fain be gone.
 Poor Fool! How unhappy is he?
Chor. At the first going down, & c.

Let the Rabble obey, I'll live like a Man
 Who, by Nature, is free to enjoy all he can:
 Wise nature does Teach
 More truth than Fools Preach;
 They bind us, but she gives us ease.
 I'll revel and love where I please.
 She, she's my infallible Guide.
 But were the Bless'd freedom deni'd
 Of variety in the things we love best,
 Dull Man were the slavishest Beast.
Chor. Let the Rabble obey, & c.

There is no need for Don John to identify the gulled wives. As victims the six are a negligible quantity. Yet each of them is crushed by the impact of the nuptial song and becomes a martyr to the illusion of faithfulness which Don John has created in her. And to crown it all, he leaves his duped wives to the mercy of his wanton companions. The fourth wife prefers committing suicide to being raped by Don Lopez. What began as a prank, played on the women in much the same spirit as the Burlador de Sevilla, has taken a tragic turn. The humiliation and suffering of the women is revenged in act V when Don John, true to his iconoclasm, descends into hell, to the sound of the Devil's Song, in the presence of the statue of the Governor of Seville and of the ghost of his father, of Leonora, Maria, Flora, Maria's brother, Don Francisco and other victims. He dies unrepentant whereas the Burlador de Sevilla repents.

Shadwell's play *The Libertine* is a striking "collage" made out of the Don Juan legend, the comedy of humours, the horror tragedy, and the Spanish cloak and sword plays. What lends coherence to the heterogeneous

material is the satiric portrait of Don John as a Hobbesian rake in anarchic pursuit of pleasure. Compared to Etherege's solution presented a year later in *The Man of Mode*, Shadwell's satire is less satisfactory. Etherege's Dorimant and Harriet create a life-style in which the passions are adjusted to the demands of the conjugal partnership. Their libertinism is not synonymous with the gratification of the senses and the satisfaction of carnal appetite. However, despite the "*Irregularities*" of Shadwell's satirical tragedy, the Restoration theatregoers were fascinated by the dramatic potential of the individual scenes and by the dynamic figure of Don John as acted by Thomas Betterton.

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