

WAKING CHLORIS:  
EARLY MODERN CHLORIS TEXTS, 1660 - 1720

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## **Abstract**

Originally tied to the tale of a nymph-turned-goddess in Ovid's *Fasti*, the name Chloris appears in dozens of early modern texts, from anonymously penned broadside ballads to poetry composed by a courtier to *The Amorous Prince: Or, the Curious Husband*, one of the first female-authored plays to grace the English stage. Although these works often invoke the pastoral, they depict no singular Chloris: she is an ideal against whom other women are judged; an object of lust that scorns and effeminizes men; an unhappily married woman; a virgin who dreams of masculine identities; and a woman driven to cross-dress after being tricked out of her virtue. Placing a selection of ephemeral texts and canonical works in dialogue with each other, *Waking Chloris* considers representations of gender roles, female desire, and sexuality across class structures and social positions, illustrating the possibilities of intertextual readings that span both high and low culture.

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CURRICULUM VITAE	

## Introduction

In early modern literature, a handful of names — Chloris, Corydon, Phillis, and Strephon among them — appeared with such regularity that their overuse became a subject of contemporary jest. Indeed, one anonymous late-seventeenth century writer felt compelled to complain that “the poor Town has been troubled too long / With Phillis and Cloris in every song” (*Methinks*, 25).<sup>1</sup> Similar complaints can be found in plays by prolific seventeenth-century authors Thomas D’Urfey and Thomas Shadwell. A sea captain in D’Urfey’s 1681 *Sir Barnaby Whigg, or, No Wit like a Womans* complains that “we can get nothing now-a-days but Phillis and Chloris, and Celia” upon being offered a song (5) while a character in Shadwell’s 1691 play *The Scowrers* requests a drinking song and then voices his approval at the choice of those around him, saying, “Hah this is right. I Gad there’s some mettall in this, a Pox of Phillis and Cloris, this is my Frolick.” (27). Shadwell may also have been mocking frequent use of the names when he included “whores” named Cloris, Phillis, and Celia as characters in the 1680 play *The Woman-Captain* (sig. B1v). While the claim that a Cloris and Phillis appeared in every song was certainly hyperbolic, its inclusion in collections in 1673 and 1719 — along with similar complaints in plays during the intervening years — indicates that the line resonated over a period of decades, suggesting that Chloris, Phillis, and their like held a particularly strong draw for writers and audiences in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

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<sup>1</sup> While a version of this song appears in the 1673 collection *Methinks the Poor Town has Been Troubled too Long, or, A Collection [...] without attribution* (25), it appears in the 1676 collection *Choice Ayres, Songs, & Dialogues [...] attributed to John Playford* (41).

While D'Ufrey, Shadwell, and the anonymous poet who complained of the town being troubled all direct their scorn at songs — the jab is likely at least partially intended for broadside ballads that enjoyed a wide audience — these names can also be found in forms of literature that tend to be viewed as more highbrow, including court masques, plays penned for the public stage, and collections of poetry. While such names are occasionally used as aliases for real individuals,<sup>2</sup> more often than not, they are invoked to conjure a sense of the pastoral, hinting at frolicking nymphs, lovesick swains, and simpler times. As Jessica Munns argues, “the pastoral lyric offered an urbane and often wittily erotic representation of country life” (“Pastoral” 204) and “an imagined past” (205). It could also, however, be used to present a critique of contemporary society (205). Thus, invocations of pastoral names could be earnest or subversive, depending on the text in question, allowing “Cloris” and “Phillis” to function in ways that “Betty,” “Nan,” and other names that appear in ballads with some regularity do not.

With some exceptions, the characters these names are bestowed upon vary. They are given different backgrounds and different attributes, and they are placed in different situations. It is perhaps useful to think of them not as single entities but as multiverses of possibilities. Originating in science fiction, the concept of the multiverse reflects the idea that events at a quantum level generate parallel universes with parallel versions of events (“multiverse, n, b.”). Such an idea is useful when considering works that feature differing depictions of specific characters. Rather than looking solely at intertextual influence, using the concept of a multiverse as an analytical tool encourages one to study differences — both small and large — between versions of characters that exist in

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<sup>2</sup> For example, Jessica Munns argues that Aphra Behn would sometimes address “male friends with such Arcadian names as Strephon, Celadon, Daphnis, or Lycidas” (“Pastoral” 206).

parallel settings and to consider what those differences might imply for both the character and the world they inhabit. Recently, Glen Weldon has applied a similar technique to twentieth-century popular culture with studies of how particular comic book characters are portrayed over time and across different mediums, relating different iterations of characters to the social climates of the decades in which they arise. Writing of Batman, Weldon argues:

No single image defines Batman, because any single image is too small to contain the various layered and at times contradictory meanings we've instilled in him. Since his first appearance, we have projected onto the character our own fears, our preoccupations, our moral imperatives, and have seen in him what we wish to [...] To most people, there is no one Batman, but an endless blurry parade of Batmen. (1-2)

Turning to Chloris, she is a country girl lying upon a bed of hay; a maid bound by blurred lines of conquest and consent; an object of lust that scorns and effeminizes men; a married woman, desperate for affection; a wandering virgin who dreams of masculine identities; and a woman driven to cross-dress after being tricked out of her virtue. She is loved, and she is resented. She is worthy of pity, and without pity. She can be found on the crudely printed broadside, in manuscript pages penned by courtiers, and on the stage. She is not a singular character confined to a single genre or format — even her name is unstable, switching from “Chloris” to “Cloris,” sometimes within the same text — she is a multiverse of possibilities, all of which speak to discourses surrounding women in the early modern period.

Indeed, it is through these inconsistencies and instabilities that Chloris becomes a figure onto which ideals of chastity and femininity are projected, a site upon which

anxieties about masculinity and femininity meet, and a testing ground for transgressive identities and new opportunities. Valerie Traub argues that it is possible to view characters and their searches for sexual knowledge as “heuristic[s] for accessing strategies of knowledge production” (112). The present study takes a similar view, examining depictions of Chloris as a means of considering the production and dissemination of discourses surrounding female sexuality, desire, and gender roles in the early modern period. While individual research into sex in the early modern period has tended to focus on one specific social class or genre (Traub 155-56), Chloris’s appearance in wide range of material allows for discourses to be studied across genre and social class. Likewise, while scholars such as Tessa Watts and Maragret Spufford have shed invaluable light on early modern print culture, their work does not consider the movement of specific texts as part of the distribution of discourse. The present study aims to provide insight not just into how Chloris functions within key individual texts but into how these Chloris texts function as products of late-seventeenth-and early-eighteenth-century English print culture to generate and disseminate discourses about femininity, masculinity, and sexuality.

### **Finding C(h)loris**

Although the name Chloris is bestowed upon a wide range of female characters in early modern English literature, the moniker likely originates with Ovid’s *Fasti*.<sup>3</sup> A poetic almanac based on the Roman calendar, *Fasti* chronicles a variety of deities and festivals. In book five of the text, Ovid depicts himself engaging with Flora, the goddess of flowers, who explains both her origins and the rites celebrated in her honour. Flora

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<sup>3</sup> While the spelling of each source has been maintained in the analysis of individual texts, discussions of the body of texts as a whole utilize “Chloris,” the spelling as it appears in *Fasti*.

notes that she was once the nymph Chloris who was pursued and then raped by Zephyrus, god of the west wind (Ovid, *Ovids Festivalls* 107). After the assault, Zephyrus marries Chloris and elevates her to the status of a deity, at which point she assumes the name Flora (107). Although most ballad authors were anonymous, Joy Wiltenburg argues that many were “educated enough” to show at least “a passing familiarity with some characters and conventions drawn from classical and courtly literary conditions” (32). Given that Chloris’s name and story can be found both in seventeenth-century editions of *Fasti* and in various dictionaries and reference books, it is likely that at least some writers were aware of her tie to Ovid. John Wilmot, the second Earl of Rochester, whose work is examined in the first chapter, was university educated and would likely have been aware of the name’s origin. Aphra Behn, the spy turned playwright whose work is discussed in chapter three, would likely have been similarly aware, for although her education had not included Latin (Todd, *Secret Life* 262), she was interested in classical texts and characters. Others, however, may simply have seized upon the name after seeing it in other texts. As Wiltenburg has observed, a number of ballads were “modelled according to the conventions of artificial pastoral love scenes, with ‘Phyllis,’ ‘Amintas,’ ‘Corinda,’ and their ilk tumbling into each others arms or lamenting their unhappy love” (32). Certainly, Chloris often appears in such fare, rendered as a human woman rather than the nymph-turned goddess depicted by Ovid. Chloris, then, originates in classical mythology, enters early modern culture through *Fasti*, and drifts over time as her presence is diffused across various texts.

Many of these texts omit the silent “h” from the name; this does not, however, indicate an alternative origin. In fact, evidence suggests that the names were treated interchangeably. For example, editions of the late-sixteenth-and-early-seventeenth

century broadside *Strephon and Cloris: Or, the Coy Shepherd and Kind Shepherdess* typically utilize the spelling “Cloris.”<sup>4</sup> However, the ballad also appeared in the popular collection of songs and poems *Wit and Mirth: or, Pills to Purge Melancholy* in 1707. While *Wit and Mirth* retains the spelling “Cloris” in the title, the name appears as “Chloris” within the ballad’s stanzas (T52600, 61-64). Likewise, although the broadside *Corydon and Cloris, Or, the Wanton Shepherdess* uses “Cloris” throughout, several of its stanzas appear in other volumes that utilize “Chloris” as the spelling for the name.<sup>5</sup> Based on editions of specific works using both spellings and an overall lack of distinction between how the names are treated in terms of content across texts, this study considers “Cloris” and “Chloris” to be interchangeable for the purposes of locating and analyzing early modern works with the name.

Although many early modern writers may have had at least a passing familiarity with the name and its classical origins, I first encountered Chloris, or rather Cloris, in Aphra Behn’s “The Disappointment,” the only known female-penned “imperfect enjoyment,” or impotence, poem of the Restoration (Zeitz and Thoms 501). Invoking the pastoral with the setting of “a lone Thicket made for Love” (Behn, *Poems* 70), the work features a sexual encounter gone awry that ends with Cloris fleeing in disappointment and confusion as her lover curses:

[...] his Birth, his Fate, his Stars;  
But more the *Shepherdess's* Charms,  
Whose soft bewitching Influence  
Had Damn'd him to the *Hell* of Impotence.

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<sup>4</sup> See, for example, R218098 and R184731.

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, “SONG CXXIX” in *The Wits Academy, Or, the Muses Delight*, pp. 115.

(Behn, *Poems* 76-77; italics in original)

Although Behn's pastoral setting suggests the idyllic, little seems ideal about how gender roles come to bear on the poem, with Cloris experiencing both "Love and Shame" (71) as she navigates desire and social expectations of chastity. I next encountered the name Cloris while reading poetry by John Wilmot, the second Earl of Rochester. Here, I found Cloris in several guises: as a maid accosted by a swain, as a girl masturbating in a pigsty, and as the third party in a potential ménage-à-trois among the speaker, Cloris, and a link-boy.<sup>6</sup> What initially intrigued me was not just that these separate uses of the name existed, but that they had all been published in a single volume in 1680 following Rochester's death, Behn's "The Disappointment" having been misattributed to the Earl. As I considered the poems and their placement, I wondered: Did the poems work together? Against each other? Could Behn's "The Disappointment," coming, as it did, later in the volume and showing a degree of reverence to the female form, somehow subvert Rochester's placement of Cloris in a pigsty, masturbating while surrounded by grunting swine? Had other poets used Chloris and, if so, could something be learned by placing these works in dialogue with each other?

As I searched for other Chloris texts, I realized that the figure was not restricted to canonical poetry. Instead, she had a strong presence in ballad culture and in formats such as the drollery, aptly described by V. De Sola Pinto as "that series of sprightly, if not very delicate, anthologies which represent better perhaps than any other publication of the period [the Restoration] the spirit of those Town Gallants [...]" (469). Through

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<sup>6</sup> From the *Oxford English Dictionary*, a link-boy is "A boy employed to carry a link to light passengers along the streets" ("link-boy, *n*).

searches of databases such as *Early English Books Online* (EEBO), *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (ECCO), and the *English Broadside Ballad Archive* (EBBA), I was able to identify an initial set of some three-dozen works from the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries featuring references to Cloris or Chloris. Such a search would have been difficult, if not impossible, until relatively recently. Indeed, the EBBA itself began transcribing ballads in just 2003 (“History”). As noted by Patricia Fumerton, director of the project at the University of California at Santa Barbara, many rare texts were previously accessible only through “difficult-to-retrieve” microfilm or through travel to archives, creating considerable barriers to access (13).<sup>7</sup> Even if one were able to travel to archives, the process of combing through thousands of broadsides, poetry collections, plays, and reference books in search of a single keyword would take decades with little assurance that such a search would yield significant results. Despite the increased access provided by current databases, searches of specific keywords are moving targets, with not all texts available in easily searchable formats and new texts being regularly added. Still, the identification of three-dozen Chloris texts illustrates that databases have opened new modes of considering texts from the early modern period based on shared characters, names, or turns of phrase, and while my research into Chloris has also included printed collections of seventeenth and eighteenth-century broadsides such as *The Bagford Ballads* and *The Euing Collection of English Broadside Ballads*, this project would not exist without the EEBO, ECCO, and the EBBA.

Indeed, the Chloris texts identified through these databases reveal a complex and tantalizing picture. While select key texts will be explored in detail in the chapters that

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<sup>7</sup> As Fumerton correctly observes, however, databases such as EEBO require costly fees to access (13), creating barriers to those who do not have access through an institution.

follow, it is helpful, here, to consider what can be broadly gleaned from the body of texts as a whole before turning to some of the challenges of studying female sexuality, desire, and gender roles in the early modern period and to the challenges — and benefits — of considering ephemeral texts alongside now-canonical works. When one examines the Chloris texts as a body of work, one finds:

- While a number of writers were likely aware of the name’s classic origins, most use the name without referencing Ovid’s *Fasti*. While a handful of Chloris texts do allude to “nymphs,” these references typically reflect the poetic use of the word to denote “a beautiful young woman; a maiden, a damsel,” although some writers may also have been amused by the less genteel use of the word to suggest a “prostitute” or “a woman regarded as a means of sexual gratification” (“nymph, n.”).
- In most cases, writers use Chloris to meditate on the subject of femininity, often positioning women as a source of desire or anxiety but occasionally hinting at more complex conceptions of gender and gender roles. While there are outliers,<sup>8</sup> many texts broadly fit into three categories:
  - Works in which Chloris is depicted as a feminine ideal or an object of desire;
  - Works in which Chloris is coy and cruel, rejecting and effeminizing suitors, sometimes to their downfall;

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<sup>8</sup> As noted, however, such texts are a moving target with the open possibility of new texts being discovered and added to collections and databases. Likewise, a key challenge of studying ephemeral texts, discussed further below, is the reality that untold numbers of such texts did not survive the periods in which they were produced.

- Works in which Chloris transgresses early modern conventions of gender in some way, either through behaviour as a character or through the authorship of texts.
- The name Chloris/Cloris appears in almost all types of printed material in the late seventeenth century, including in broadside ballads, drolleries, collections of songs, poetry collections, plays, reference books, and religious pamphlets.
- Some Chloris texts cross from one genre to another, moving from inexpensive broadsides that could be purchased and enjoyed by lower socio-economic classes to collections of songs that may have been more likely to have been purchased by the growing middling classes. In some cases, Chloris texts crossed from poetry written by the elite and circulated in manuscript form to broadsides or to printed collections of verse.
- Most texts underwent some form of change when crossing genres, with the most common change being the loss of woodcut illustrations when works moved from broadside to printed collection.

These findings illustrate the value in using Chloris as a lens through which to study, compare, and contrast a variety of early modern texts. Because writers did not bind themselves to a single, collective version of Chloris, the Chloris texts allow for the critical analysis of multiple constructions of femininity, masculinity, and sexuality. At the same time, however, the fact that most texts appear to fall within one of three categories allows for the selection of texts which are representative, keeping the number of works discussed manageable while not adversely impacting the quality and value of

the analysis. Finally, because Chloris appears across multiple genres and formats, and because select incarnations of Chloris cross from one genre or format to another, the Chloris texts allow for the study of both canonical and ephemeral works and for the examination of how discourses were conveyed through seemingly disparate genres and formats as part of early modern print culture.

### **Sex, Desire, and Gender Roles**

While many of the Chloris texts can be read as meditations on femininity, sexuality, and desire, no one clear picture emerges through their study. This, however, reflects the complexity of how these subjects were viewed in the period. While it may be tempting to imagine historical attitudes toward femininity, chastity, and sexual activity as simple and monolithic, social norms were not necessarily stable across class nor did they always align with the views of lawmakers in secular or religious arenas in the early modern period (Gowing, *Domestic Dangers* 11). Likewise, the zeal with which polemicists attacked certain activities, such as women adopting masculine attire, did not necessarily correspond to the degree to which such activities were practiced amongst the general public (Breitenberg 150). As Valerie Traub notes, the plethora of present-day “self-help books, magazine stories, and online advice columns” covering sex indicates that such subjects are still “mysterious domain[s]” in our current moment in time (30), and this was no less true in the early modern period.

Although these mysterious domains were not less complicated in terms of social norms and lived experience in the early modern period, their study by modern academics is vastly complicated by the passage of time and the limitations of archival materials. Indeed, to study sexuality and gender of the early modern period is, to an extent, to

reconcile oneself to studying fragments of certain sides of certain stories. While literacy rates amongst women may have been underestimated by historians (Hubbard, “Reading” 556-60), literacy rates were likely still considerably higher amongst men (Molekamp 61; Rousseau and Porter 12). While some women did venture openly into print, the archive of surviving texts from the era is dominated by the voices of men and those of higher socioeconomic classes, leaving the views and experiences of women and those of lower classes underrepresented (Traub 139). While female-authored Chloris texts such as Aphra Behn’s “The Disappointment” and “On A Juniper Tree, cut down to make Busks,” do deal with lust and sexual encounters, they do so in ways that, at initial glance, may seem to align with similar male-authored works — so much so that both texts were attributed to the male Rochester upon first appearing in print. While such works do offer a subtle, female-perspective on longing, they do not necessarily reflect what the women of the early modern period were doing in their beds or away from the eyes of audiences. Although men of the period were certainly better positioned to spin tales of sexual conquest in poetry and bawdy ballads without facing social stigma, they, too, largely shirked from recording their own sexual exploits and experiences, with only a handful of male-authored accounts of personal sexual behaviour known to exist (Rousseau and Porter 6-7). As Traub observes, we have “ample literary evidence” of “erotic desire” in the early modern period but we know very little about individual erotic acts (138). While literary texts — both the ephemeral and those considered more canonical — present sites through which to examine early modern discourses surrounding sex, it is difficult, if not impossible, to determine how closely such works reflect typical lived experience. As Kevin Murphy and Sally O’Driscoll note in their introduction to *Studies in Ephemera: Text and Image in Eighteenth-Century Print*,

“Every time a modern scholar pores over a particularly significant example [of ephemera], the question of whether it is representative or anomalous looms, and is necessarily relegated to the realm of the unanswerable” (1-2). The same is true of sex. As Traub argues, “sex is an experience of the body (and hence fleeting) and [...] individual sexual acts are likewise local and ephemeral” (4). These ephemeral acts may be alluded to in texts, but the acts themselves remain hidden with no easy way to definitively gauge whether what is on the page is representative or anomalous, socially condoned or stigmatized. More bluntly, Tim Hitchcock notes that one can scour court cases and diaries, but the theories one arrives at through such methods cannot be empirically tested (80). Any conclusions one draws about sexual behavior in the early modern period from the study of surviving texts are, therefore, matters of interpretation and any interpretations must consider the imbalances of gender and status inherent in the production of texts from the period and what may be gained — or lost — through certain depictions of women.

Here, I wish to pause to further consider gender and the production of texts. A key component of the present study is the inclusion of broadside ballads, the vast majority of which were anonymously penned. While it is true that the few authors who openly applied their names to broadside ballads are men, cases in which the identity of a broadside ballad author are known very much represent the exception to what was essentially an anonymous practice (Dugaw 24). Despite the fact that most ballad authors were anonymous, a general assumption persists within ballad scholarship that the genre was exclusively the work of men (Clark 104; Holloway ix). This assumption may, in part, have been driven by the fact that women had lower literacy rates and fewer educational opportunities than men in the early modern period (Molekamp 61; Rousseau

and Porter 12). As discussed by Eleanor Hubbard, historians studying early modern literacy typically base literacy estimates on how many people were capable of signing their name (“Reading” 553); Hubbard notes, however, that reading was typically taught to children before writing and argues that the ability to initial one’s name, while overlooked by some historians, corresponded with an intermediate degree of literacy in some social classes (555). Indeed, Hubbard argues that “more than a third of women born in London, as well as nearly a quarter of immigrants from elsewhere, had begun to learn to read” in the early seventeenth century (576). There is no logical reason to assume that some of those women could not have turned to authoring ballads, either on their own or in collaboration. Indeed, despite being unable to read Latin, Aphra Behn contributed poems to translated volumes of Ovid’s *Heroides* (Todd, *Secret Life* 262-63) and Abraham Cowley’s *Of Plants* (424), illustrating that a determined woman could find a way around shortfalls in education. Indeed, in her epistle to the reader in the printed edition of the play *The Dutch Lover*, Behn argues that “Plays have no great room for that which is mens great advantage over women, that is Learning” and argues that any rules of drama that are worth knowing can be learned by attending the theatre and “are enough intelligible, and as practible by a woman” (sig. A5r). One can certainly extend such logic to the construction of broadside ballads. Furthermore, given that Behn was one of the most prolific playwrights of the 1670s and 1680s and that printed editions of her work continued to do a robust trade in the decade following her death, it makes little sense that printers would balk at the idea of women penning broadsides, particularly when such works were generally published anonymously.

Behn’s career is instructive concerning assumptions of gender and authorship in at least one other regard. While many of Behn’s plays were staged under her own name,

some were initially staged anonymously (Todd, *Secret Life* 215, 217), a decision that Susan Staves speculates may have been driven by sexist backlash (*Literary History* 61). Certainly, Behn chronicled misogynistic backlash to her work. For example, a preface to the printed edition of her 1687 play *The Luckey Chance, or, An Alderman's Bargain* was purportedly composed and added in a few hours between the text of the play being printed and assembled (sig. A5v) in response to criticism from the “witty Sparks and Poets of the town” that the play was “not fit for the Ladys” (sig. A4.v). After noting of her fellow poets that “nothing makes them so through-sticht an enemy as a full Third Day” (sig. A4.v),<sup>9</sup> Behn argues that bawdy content in the plays of her male contemporaries goes unremarked upon while her work is subject to scrutiny simply because the words are “from a Woman” (sig. A4.v). Despite this backlash, Behn’s plays were immensely popular, and it is possible that her decision to present certain works anonymously may have been driven, instead, by the fact that some were adaptations that had likely been commissioned (Todd, *Secret Life* 216). Regardless of Behn’s motivations for putting some plays forward anonymously, Staves astutely argues that, in an era in which most public playwrights and poets were male, the “normative assumption” about an anonymous work would be to assume that it had been male authored (*Literary History* 61). Thus, a portion of the audience attending these plays would likely have assumed they were witnessing the work of a man. Likewise, readers encountering Behn’s poems “The Disappointment” and “On a Giniper [Juniper] Tree now cut down to make Busks” in 1680’s *Poems on Several Occasions: By the Right*

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<sup>9</sup> Although some playwrights, such as John Dryden, had their own arrangements with the theatres, most were only entitled to the revenue from the third night’s performance (Todd, *Secret Life* 129).

*Honourable the E. of R---* would have had little reason not to believe the texts were the work of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester. Conversely, in another act of literary cross-dressing, one of Rochester's Cloris texts from *Poems on Several Occasions: By the Right Honourable the E. of R---* would appear two years later in a second edition of *Female Poems on Several Occasion*, a collection attributed to the female pseudonym Ephelia.<sup>10</sup>

What I suggest is not that Restoration audiences did not care about the gender of authors or that the presumed gender of an author did not shape how specific texts were received; rather, I argue that a culture in which works were often published anonymously, and in which the poems and songs of one writer might be scooped up and passed off as the work of another to pad out collections and new editions, created a level of ambiguity in which gender could never be certain. In considering an era which ushered in an expansion of female literacy — an era which saw a woman become one of the most prolific playwrights of the public stage and multiple texts mistakenly attributed across gender lines — the likelihood that essentially all broadside ballads were penned by men seems less a certainty and more an uncritically adopted perspective informed by gender bias. While many of the ephemeral texts covered in this thesis do suggest a masculine point of view, few of the texts can be tied to identifiable authors.

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<sup>10</sup> To this day, the identify of Ephelia has not been confirmed. While most critics assume that Ephelia was, in fact, a woman, Marilyn Williamson points to the possibility that Ephelia may have been a man (35).

## Literary Forms

Although it is understandable that many early modern scholars focus on a specific social class or genre (Traub 155-56), the presence of Chloris texts in multiple genres and formats requires any consideration of the texts as a whole to look beyond single genres. Indeed, while Kevin Murphy and Sally O’Driscoll argue that “broadside ballads and other forms of cheap ephemeral print constitute a reservoir of shared cultural material” (5), the Chloris texts illustrate that this reservoir was accessed not just by the authors of broadside ballads but by poets whose work circulated largely in manuscript form and by playwrights. Take, for example, the opening lines of the broadside ballad *The Love-sick Shepherd, or The Dying Lovers Reprieve* which set the work in “...a Mirtle Grove, where Shepherds play, / And pining Lovers languish with delay” and compare it to Aphra Behn’s famed “The Disappointment” which opens in “a lone Thicket made for Love” (Behn, *Poems* 70) or her play *The Amorous Prince, Or, The Curious Husband* in which characters appear both in pastoral and urban settings. All three works invoke the pastoral and use Chloris as a character. *The Love-sick Shepherd*, however, circulated as a piece of ephemera, surviving only through the efforts of a handful of contemporary broadside collectors who saw something worth preserving in a format that was largely considered disposable. In contrast, Behn’s *The Amorous Prince* was performed on the public stage by the Duke’s Company while “The Disappointment” likely circulated in manuscript form before first making its way into printed collections of poetry in the 1680s.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Aphra Behn did not publish “The Disappointment” under her own name in print until 1684’s *Poems upon several Occasions with, A Voyage to the Island of Love*. Its inclusion in *Poems on Several Occasions: By the Right Honourable the E. of R---* in 1680 and misattribution to Rochester suggests that it had circulated in manuscript format prior to 1680.

While early modern poetry and plays have received a significant amount of attention from literary scholars, ephemeral texts are less likely to be included in literary anthologies or on course syllabi. As such, it is worth devoting some time, here, to both the importance of broadsides to early modern culture and to the challenges their study presents. Broadsides were an immensely popular format, functioning in a manner akin to today's bestseller (Würzbach 20). Although this study is primarily concerned with broadside ballads, other types of content were produced in broadside format including religious writing, sensational news, and poetry chronicling major events. Indeed, Chloris is mentioned in a religious broadside, excerpted from a longer work by Quaker founder George Fox, warning people against using the names of heathen gods or indulging in heathen customs.<sup>12</sup> Turning specifically to ballads, as many as 10,000 ballad sheets have been preserved thanks, largely, to the efforts of a handful of contemporary collectors (McShane 343).<sup>13</sup> However, these sheets represent only a fraction of the total number of broadsides produced with hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of ballad sheets thought to have circulated in the second half of the sixteenth-century (Watts 11). These sheets were produced quickly, with one contemporary estimate suggesting that two men working a single press could produce 250 impressions per hour (Raven 39). Indeed,

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<sup>12</sup> Fox is largely concerned about the pagan ties to the names of certain days of the week and months. Of Chloris, he writes, "And *Maja* [Maia] a Heathen Goddess, called *Flora* and *Chloris*, were called the Goddesses of Flowers, unto *Maja* [Maia], the Heathen Idolaters used a Sacrifice, from thence was the third Month called May [...]" (italics in original).

<sup>13</sup> This is not to suggest that 10,000 distinct ballads survived. Indeed, several collections likely included overlapping ballads. While compiling the 1876-80, two-volume collection *The Bagford Ballads*, editor Joseph Woodfall Ebsworth noted that they were "hampered [...] by the necessity of omitting such ballads as are duplicates of those in the Roxburghe Collection" (iii). Angela McShane, argues that most surviving broadside ballad sheets were produced after 1660. Noting that most collectors were anonymous, McShane draws specific attention to John Bagford, Humphrey Dyson, Narcissus Luttrell, Samuel Pepys, John Selden, George Thomason, and Anthony Wood (343). Anna Bayman, meanwhile, draws attention to the seventeenth-century female collector Frances Wolfreton whose collection included "popular, unbound literature" (77). In contrast to McShane's estimate, Christopher Marsh suggests that as many as 11,000 English broadside ballad sheets survived from the seventeenth-century (248).

cheap print was so plentiful that accounts exist of it being used to light pipes and line pie plates, and, in the case of one member of the gentry, being kept in his privy to be read and then used (Spufford, *Small Books* 48-50). A late-seventeenth-century appeal from London printers to the House of Commons captures the situation best, saying, “Paper, after it is Printed, is of no intrinsick Value at all, but depends merely upon the Humour and Opinion of People; and [...] there are few Printers in this Town, who have not *many Thousand Copies* by them, which they *daily* sell for waste Paper” (*The Printers Case [...]*; emphasis added). A broadside ballad that wasn’t loved, that hadn’t captured the “Humour and Opinion of People” would therefore quickly find a secondary use and be lost to history. This obviously presents a challenge to study and is why Kevin Murphy and Sally O’Driscoll note the difficulty in determining whether certain texts are “representative or anomalous” (1-2). Further complications to the study of broadside ballads exist in the facts that most authors remained anonymous, most broadsides were undated, and titles were not always registered with the Stationer’s Register as required (McShane 343). Indeed, given that some ballads were registered only after attaining a certain level of popularity and proving profitable over time (Dugaw 35), registration in and of itself does not always provide an accurate picture of when titles were produced.<sup>14</sup>

Far from curbing the potential of the broadside ballad as a discursive medium, the very aspects of the format that make it such a challenging subject of study also made it a valuable site on which to explore issues with which society grappled. As a handwritten note by seventeenth-century ballad collector John Selden argues “more

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<sup>14</sup> Diane Dugaw notes the example of Mary Ambree ballads which were first registered almost three decades after references to them appear in other literature. Dugaw argues that printers did not see value in registering titles that might only be popular, as many ballads were, for only a short period of time (35).

solid things do not show the complexion of the times so well as ballads and libels” (Fumerton and Geurrini 1). The very aspects of the broadside ballad that set it apart from the type of texts that would become part of the canon of English literature — the speed with which it was produced, its anonymity, the ease with which it was discarded — encouraged engagement with difficult ideas and social shifts.

Considering ephemeral texts alongside more canonical works therefore allows for greater insight into how print culture reflected, engaged, and helped shape the social norms of early modern England. Indeed, as Behn claims in the dedication of her play *The Lucky Chance*, “publick Pleasures and Divertisements” are “secret Instructions to the People, in things that ‘tis impossible to insinuate into them any other Way” (sig. A2r). While Behn is ostensibly speaking of plays, her words could just as easily be applied to broadside ballads.<sup>15</sup> Both were integral parts of early modern society, both are worthy of serious academic study, and both are required to gain a full understanding of how Chloris references could have been plentiful enough to trouble the whole of the town from high to low.

### **Waking Chloris**

This thesis takes inspiration for its title from the popular seventeenth-century tune “Cloris awake.” Although the lack of reliable dates attached to broadside ballads makes establishing a definitive timeframe difficult, most of the material featured in my

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<sup>15</sup> This statement contradicts earlier ones made by Behn in which she downplays the power of drama (see Todd, *Secret Life* 374). It is possible that her earlier statements were a rhetorical move against those who claimed women should not write for the stage or that this particular statement was an effort to secure future patronage. It is also entirely possible that her view on the matter changed over time. As is unsurprising given her history of espionage, Behn was often flexible in how she portrayed herself.

thesis falls between 1660 and 1720 when the reference to Chloris and Phillis troubling the town is last known to have appeared in print. As noted, most Chloris texts fall into three categories: works in which Chloris is depicted as a feminine ideal or an object of desire; works in which Chloris is coy and cruel; and works in which Chloris transgresses early modern conventions of gender in some way. These categories form the structure of my thesis, with each chapter devoted to a particular type of depiction of Chloris.

The goals of each chapter are twofold: to examine depictions of Chloris as they relate to female sexuality, desire, and gender roles and to explore aspects of print culture and the production and circulation of texts — and, by extension the discourses they contain — in the early modern period. Chapter one focusses on the idealized construction of Chloris in the broadside ballad *The Beggars Delight* and on the depiction of Chloris as an object of desire in the broadside ballad *Corydon and Chloris: or The Wanton Shepherdess* and a corresponding work, “Song,” by John Wilmot. These texts provide compelling reflections of the complexities of female desire and behaviour across various social classes in the late seventeenth century while also illustrating how certain texts moved between genres and formats. Chapter two focuses both on how select Chloris texts responded to shifts in power dynamics during courtship and on the answer ballad, a format in which one broadside ballad engages directly with another, used in *The Lamentation of Chloris for the Unkindness of her Shepherd* to present an unexpectedly sympathetic portrayal of a woman who plans to cuckold her husband. While chapter one highlights how certain texts might move across genres and formats, chapter two provides insight into the production and movement of texts both within London and across rural England. Chapter three explicitly engages with works in which traditional early modern conventions of gender are transgressed. The first portion of the

chapter explores a transgender reading of the broadside ballad *The Wandering Virgin; or the Coy Lass Well Fitted*, a ballad sung to the tune of “Cloris awake.” The second portion of the chapter focusses on *The Amorous Prince, Or, The Curious Husband*, a play by Aphra Behn in which Cloris cross-dresses in pursuit of a wayward prince. In considering *The Wandering Virgin* alongside seventeenth-century medical texts and *The Amorous Prince* alongside Behn’s status as one of the most prolific writers of the Restoration and the play’s original format as a work performed by the Duke’s Company, chapter three provides insight into how Chloris texts can be placed into dialogue with other forms of printed material and how Chloris could be presented on stage. If the works in chapter one can be said to reflect the complexities of social norms, then the works in chapter two can be said to push back against changing social norms and existing conventions — sometimes to the detriment of women, at other times to their benefit — within more or less established limits. The works in chapter three, however, transgress limits, providing new opportunities for representation, exploration, and expression. Considered together, these three chapters illustrate that Chloris is more than an arbitrary name: she is a figure constantly in flux, a lens through which one can begin to understand competing ideals and anxieties about female roles, desires, and sexuality, and a means of exploring the movement of texts and ideas across format and class in the early modern period.

## **A Note on Texts**

Unless included in a collection, broadside ballads typically do not have line numbers. As per MLA guidelines, I have not provided manually calculated line numbers for texts.

Although some of the ballads discussed have been included in nineteenth-and-twentieth-century printed collections, I have referenced editions from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and retained original spellings. Likewise, although much of the works of Aphra Behn and John Wilmot are now widely available in modern editions, I have largely referenced seventeenth-century editions. Where possible, I quote *Fasti* from John Gower's 1640 translation *Ovids Festivalls, or, Romane Calendar*. This thesis is not just about the content of these texts but how these texts were produced and distributed; referring to original editions reinforces this. The one exception is Behn's *The Amorous Prince*. Given the length of this work and the number of direct quotations referenced, *The Works of Aphra Behn, Volume V*, edited by Janet Todd and published by Ohio State University Press, was used in my analysis of that text.

## Chapter One:

### Reflections of Sexuality, Femininity, and Consent in Chloris Texts

A complex and contradictory picture of femininity and feminine desire emerges when studying the Chloris texts. This is true of the texts as a body of work but also often true of individual texts in which Chloris is configured as an ideal. As *The Beggars Delight*, *Corydon and Cloris or The Wanton Shepardsess*, and John Wilmot's "Song" all illustrate, even women who embodied ideals of femininity had to navigate a minefield of social expectations regarding desire, courtship, and consent in the early modern period. These works cross genre and format, appearing as ephemeral broadsides and in material consumed by the middling and upper classes and the elite. That these works appear in multiple genres and formats demonstrates both that the "reservoir of shared cultural material" argued for by Kevin Murphy and Sally O'Driscoll (5) spans beyond ephemeral texts to include other forms of print enjoyed by people from a wide range of social classes and that ideals of femininity were neither straightforward nor consistent no matter what the audience.

Inconsistencies in literary depictions of ideal femininity and feminine behaviour in the late seventeenth century broadly reflect inconsistencies in how women were constituted within medical and physiological discourses. For much of the seventeenth century, women, like men, were conceptualized within the humoral system in terms of the "heat" they possessed. Considered an essential element in human physiology and strength, heat was believed to be unequally distributed between the sexes with women thought to naturally possess less of this "immortal substance of life" than their male counterparts (Fletcher xvi). This aligned with the belief that women were "the weaker

vessel,” a phrase that had been introduced by William Tyndale in his 1526 English translation of *The New Testament* and that had entered common usage by the early part of the following century (Fletcher 60). Perhaps owing to the fact that women were considered weaker and possessing of less heat, men were broadly positioned as the initiators of both courtship (Shoemaker 94) and intercourse (Gowing, *Common Bodies* 85), with much of the language surrounding seduction in literature blurring lines between conquest and consent. However, although men were portrayed as dominant sexual initiators, women were seen as inherently possessing a potentially destructive sexual appetite that became awakened after the onset of their first menstrual cycles (Fletcher 5). Seventeenth-century women, therefore, were viewed as being both too passive to make sexual advances and, conversely, as susceptible to madness or death if denied sexual contact after menarche.

A similarly complex picture emerges when considering what types of premarital contact might be condoned and desired. The reputations of women in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries revolved, as they did in later periods, around chastity; however, broadside ballads such as *The Beggars Delight* suggest that expectations surrounding sexual contact could vary considerably by class while works such *Corydon and Cloris* and John Wilmot’s “Song” highlight the challenges in identifying consent in texts which equate seduction with conquest. These complexities — class and consent — speak both to challenges faced by women in the early modern period and to the depiction of Chloris in Ovid’s *Fasti*. While not all early modern uses of the name Chloris can be tied to the figure’s classical origins, all three texts do echo elements of the Roman poet’s work. In providing two distinct sets of sexual expectations for women, one for the rural Chloris and another for the elite women of London, *The Beggars Delight* echoes the goddess

Flora's appeal to nonelite audiences while suggesting elements of class-based nuance in prescribed gender roles in the late seventeenth-century. In depicting an encounter that has been read by modern critics as both consensual and as rape, meanwhile, John Wilmot's "Song" echoes elements of rape in *Fasti* while reflecting the dangers of a society in which seduction is depicted as conquest; the corresponding — and longer — broadside ballad *Corydon and Cloris* also suggests further links to *Fasti* in Cloris's subsequent marriage and description of married life. Taken together, these works illustrate that even Chloris texts that do not include overt references to their predecessors may contain uncanny echoes to related texts and that figures with a shared origin may converge and diverge along a number of distinct points, sometimes challenging, and at other times reinforcing, gender-based expectations and social structures.

### **The Beggars Delight**

The seventeenth-century ballad *The Beggars Delight*<sup>16</sup> begins with a simple appeal: "Courtiers, Courtiers, think it no harm, / that silly poor swains in love should be" (R176306).<sup>17</sup> According to surviving broadside editions of the piece which note that it was "sung at the Theatre-Royal," these words rang out across one of the most famous playhouses in English history. Ballads were commonly integrated into performances at many theatres in the seventeenth century (B. Smith 168-169), and broadsides like *The*

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<sup>16</sup> At least one edition, ESTC Citation No. R234884, uses "Beggars" rather than "Beggars" in the title.

<sup>17</sup> Unless otherwise noted, direct quotations are from R176306. The surviving broadside of this edition was trimmed, leading to the loss of the printer's name. This was not an uncommon occurrence. Early ballad collectors would often trim broadsides so that they could be bound together in personal collections (Fumerton 27-28). The English Short Title Catalogue listing for R176306, however, notes similarities to another edition of the text printed for P[hilip]. Brooksby. Given that Brooksby produced multiple editions of this ballad in broadside format, it is probable that he produced R176306.

*Beggars Delight* highlighted recital on stage as a way to appeal to audiences. Certainly, the Theatre Royal would have been well known to London crowds. Having opened in 1663, the theatre was praised for its decorations and staging (Mullin 22, 29), and in its first year of operation was said to have been visited by King Charles II twice a week or more (Roberts 75). Although the Theatre Royal appealed to the courtiers ostensibly addressed in the first line of *The Beggars Delight*, its popularity also extended beyond them, forming “a link between the life of the court and the life of the capital” (G. Smith 148). The ballad’s appearance in broadside format created yet more links to various echelons of the city, allowing it to circulate far more widely than to just the elite or to those who had money to spend on a seat in the gallery or pit. Indeed, although *The Beggars Delight* begins with an appeal to courtiers, much of the work’s humor comes at the expense of the elite. Over the course of the ballad’s eleven stanzas, an anonymous swain extols the virtues of his “pretty brown Cloris,” contrasting her with the upper-class women of town in matters of courtship, character, and sexual activities. In presenting an idealized rural figure against whom upper-class women are measured, *The Beggars Delight* provides commentary — tongue-in-cheek commentary, but commentary nonetheless — on female chastity, courtship, and marriage in two distinct social spheres while echoing, perhaps unintentionally, elements of Ovid’s *Fasti*.

Rather than a single set of ideological rules for women, *The Beggars Delight* suggests very different sets of social expectations based on class and location. In *Gender, Sex, and Subordination in England, 1500-1800*, Anthony Fletcher argues that an “acutely felt anxiety” about the control of women permeated English society during the Tudor and early Stuart periods, and he speculates that this anxiety may have been more strongly felt in London than in rural areas. Fletcher attributes this to London’s

rapid development, as well as to the wide variety of fashionable entertainments the city had to offer and a growing sense of interest amongst women in the “delights of the metropolitan scene” (27-28). Much of the anxiety around the control of women centred on chastity. In her pioneering studies of gender in the early modern period, Laura Gowing argues that “the female body was a public affair, the target of official regulation, [and] informal surveillance [...]” (*Common Bodies* 16). She notes, too, that women themselves often acted as regulating forces against others of their sex, “hunt[ing] out whores and call[ing] for their punishment” (*Domestic Dangers* 101). While the Cloris of *The Beggars Delight* is not used to hunt out other women, she is used to regulate them. Curiously, however, Cloris does appear to be allowed a degree of sexual freedom within the ballad. Observing that there was an awareness in the early modern period of the unreliability of the hymen as evidence of chastity, Gowing contends that the mere perception of impropriety could be as damaging as impropriety itself (*Domestic Dangers* 32-33), and yet despite this danger, *The Beggars Delight* introduces Cloris in a seemingly sexual position, situating her “upon the Hay” with the claim that her charms are as alluring as any woman of the upper classes. While the outdoors was seen as a veritable “theatre of plebian courtship” in early modern popular culture, haymaking, in particular, was viewed as a site of youthful “amorous activities” (Mendelson and Crawford 111-112). Cloris, then, is introduced in a position that could be considered compromising with nothing, at least at this point in the ballad, to indicate that her behaviour is shielded by marriage. It is not, however, Cloris’s chastity that is called into question by the text but that of upper-class women as the stanza that follows cautions a lord against purchasing a maidenhead, presumably through marriage, that “perhaps hath been lost some years before.” These two stanzas suggest a double standard, not just for

women, but between women with the rural Cloris being allowed some leeway for intimate encounters, at least to an unspecified point, without social repercussions or damage to her marital prospects. Indeed, Cloris's potential impropriety is not just tolerated but celebrated. For elite women, however, their virtue is a key part of their commodification with the loss of chastity adversely impacting their perceived worth. Indeed, the elite woman herself is not mentioned in these lines. She has, quite literally, been reduced to her primary asset: her maidenhead.

The possibility that a woman such as this rural Cloris might enjoy leeway unavailable to an elite counterpart is not without historical support. Early modern women of the labouring classes tended to marry around age twenty-five or twenty-six (Mendelson and Crawford 108; Shoemaker 92-93), although this may have varied by region based on employment opportunities (Shoemaker 96).<sup>18</sup> Women who did leave the family home in pursuit of employment tended to do so in their mid-teens, resulting in courtship periods that might last ten years or more, involving multiple suitors and a certain degree of autonomy (Mendelson and Crawford 111). Elite women, in contrast, married considerably earlier (Mendelson and Crawford 108; Shoemaker 92-93). While financial considerations such as earning potential and savings did factor into marriages amongst the working classes, matches amongst the elite were more firmly tied to considerations of property and fortune (Shoemaker 93). As such, elite women tended to have a less active voice when it came to potential matches with courtships that were relatively short and closely overseen by parents or other kin (Mendelson and Crawford 108).

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<sup>18</sup> Mendelson and Crawford suggest twenty-five or twenty-six (108); Shoemaker suggests an average age of 26.6 (92-93).

While the increased freedom afforded to labouring women presented dangers in the forms of unwanted advances and threats to reputation (Mendelson and Crawford 118), it did allow them considerably greater scope in determining the suitability of a potential match for themselves (116). Although cultural historian and literary scholar Ian Frederick Moulton argues that acceptable sexual activity in the period was confined to marriage with young people having no socially condoned sexual outlet (143), Tim Hitchcock suggests that a spectrum of pre-marital intimate activities may have been tolerated in the early eighteenth-century — at least amongst some classes. Hitchcock rightly points out that demographic data accounts only for sexual activities that result in conception, allowing for a host of activities to occur without being reflected in official records (80). He draws attention to the memoir of John Cannon, a farm labourer in the early eighteenth century to illustrate this point. Cannon’s memoir includes accounts of “mutual masturbation, long-drawn-out sessions of kissing and fondling, and sincere promises of future marriage.”<sup>19</sup> While Hitchcock notes the unusualness of such accounts being set to paper in the early modern period, he argues that there is nothing in Cannon’s telling of events to suggest that such activities were uncommon (73). Indeed, Cannon’s recounting of “fondling sessions” is suggestive of the practice of bundling, an activity in which courting couples could spend a night together in bed, clothed and stopping short of full intercourse. While some argue that bundling was predominantly practiced among the poor in Scotland and Wales and sparingly practiced — if practiced at all — in England (Calvert 256-257), others allege that the practice was more widespread (Mendelson and Crawford 118). Thus, while it is possible that sexual interactions during

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<sup>19</sup> Valerie Traub argues that not all of the encounters chronicled by Cannon were consensual (297).

courtship may not have been officially condoned, it is also plausible that some sexual activities were unofficially tolerated amongst certain classes. *The Beggars Delight* certainly seems to reflect this possibility with the swain enjoying “eager embraces in Cool-shades” with his Cloris while their upper-class counterparts are relegated to “dull” embraces in “downy Beds.” While the mention of cool shades conjures images of the pastoral, other editions of the ballad place the embraces in “coal sheds” (R234884). Both settings reflect the scarcity of privacy in the early modern period, particularly for labouring classes who often worked and slept in shared spaces (Gowing, *Common Bodies* 33). As Valerie Traub notes, sex in the early modern period often occurred in places that straddled the public and the private, including closets, stables, alleyways, theatres, and taverns (150). While *The Beggars Delight* depicts socially acceptable sexual intimacies of the upper classes as something that should be delayed until marriage and restricted to the marriage bed, Cloris and her swain take advantage of fleeting moments of privacy, potentially engaging in a degree of premarital sexual encounters while courting.

These encounters — the dull embraces of the elite and the eager embraces of Cloris and her swain — are reflected in woodcut illustrations adorning some seventeenth-century broadside editions of *The Beggars Delight*. Two such editions were likely printed for Philip Brooksby. One features a woodcut showing a couple in a finely appointed bed (R176306). The other shows a man lying atop a woman in a field as a cupid-like figure looks on (R234884). Although both figures in the latter illustration are clothed, their position is clearly sexual with the man’s hat laying abandoned on the ground nearby. An empty banderole, or speech bubble, appears above the couple. As Kevin D. Murphy and Sally O’Driscoll note, banderoles presented opportunities for

printers to customize illustrations but were sometimes left blank, as is the case with known copies of *The Beggars Delight* (11). Murphy and O’Driscoll have noted, however, that samples of other broadsides have been found in which someone, perhaps a ballad hawker or a consumer, has handwritten content into banderoles, adding a collaborative element to the broadside as a textual object (18-19).<sup>20</sup> As for the image itself, woodcuts were often reused on unconnected broadsides (Fumerton 25-26), and a version of this woodcut can be found on *The Mourning Conquest: Or, The Womans Sad Complaint [...]* (R180777).<sup>21</sup> Joseph Woodfall Ebsworth, editor of *The Bagford Ballads*, a nineteenth-century collection of earlier broadside ballads, takes a rather harsh view of *The Mourning Conquest*, prefacing it with a note stating that he was “extremely unwilling to retain this obnoxious ballad” but felt that he must present the collection in full (447). While Ebsworth reconciled himself to including the text of *The Mourning Conquest*, he apparently could not bring himself to include the woodcut, omitting it and noting only that it features “two figures grappling together” (447). While Ebsworth clearly felt the woodcut illustration would offend nineteenth-century readers, its presence on multiple broadsides suggests that it was seen in a more humorous light in the late seventeenth century — at least by segments of the broadside-buying public — and its use in connection with *The Beggars Delight* indicates an expectation that

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<sup>20</sup> For samples of this illustration from other broadside ballads in which text appears in the banderole, see Murphy and O’Driscoll (15-17).

<sup>21</sup> The only discernable difference between the two illustrations is the addition of the text “Alas poor thing” to the banderole appearing on *The Mourning Conquest [...]* (R180777). It is possible, however, that one woodcut is a copy of the other. For example, Christopher Marsh has closely analysed a woodcut that, at first glance, seems to have made 104 appearances on ballads in the Pepys, Roxburghe, and Euing collections. Marsh has found, however, that there are at least thirteen different versions of the woodcut, most of which differ only in the number of blades of grass or the exact shape of a hat (248).

audiences would take some delight, themselves, in the sight of the swain grappling with Cloris.

That audiences did, in fact, delight in various forms of the ballad is evidenced by the circulation of multiple broadside editions of *The Beggars Delight* in the late seventeenth century as well as by the inclusion of the text in *Wit and Mirth: Or Pills to Purge Melancholy*, a popular, multi-volume collection of songs and verse, published 1719-1720 (IV, 142-44). Less clear is whether contemporary audiences found those same types of embraces as acceptable in daily life. Certainly, the intensity of Cloris's encounters progresses over the course of *The Beggars Delight*. While Cloris's initial position "upon the Hay" in the second stanza is sexually suggestive, it is not until the fourth stanza that embraces are mentioned, and it is not until the eighth stanza that these embraces are depicted as taking place "all the night long." If bundling was indeed practiced in England in the late seventeenth century, it is possible that these nocturnal embraces could be representative of that practice. While there is general agreement that bundling would not have included penile-vaginal penetration, it may have involved petting or other forms of sexual contact (Calvert 256-257). At the very least, the ninth stanza suggests that Cloris manually stimulates her lover as the "touch of her hand encreases his flame" and "he vows for her sake he freely would dye." Given that "die" was used as a euphemism for "orgasm" in the early modern period (Fletcher 11), it is reasonable to assume that the swain reaches orgasm during these encounters. This could merely be akin to the type of premarital mutual masturbation Cannon recounts in his memoirs. However, given that the tenth stanza notes that the couple is blessed with a child every twelve months, it is more likely that Cloris and her swain have wed and that the activity in the tenth stanza, at least, occurs within the confines of marriage. Although

it has been argued that the number of pregnant brides in the late seventeenth century indicates a level of tolerance for intercourse between betrothal and marriage (Shoemaker 97-98; Gowing, *Common Bodies* 32), it seems unlikely, given the ideological emphasis placed on the household as a structural unit of early modern society (Gowing, *Domestic Dangers* 22), that early modern audiences would not equate repeated pregnancies with marriage. Curiously, a broadside edition printed for J. Dean in 1684 ends on the fifth stanza, omitting both the more overtly sexual content and any references to children (R35745).<sup>22</sup> However, most surviving editions of the ballad, including the version included in *Wit and Mirth: Or Pills to Purge Melancholy*, retain the latter stanzas. Thus, regardless of Cloris's marital status or the state of her maidenhead at the beginning of *The Beggars Delight*, her sexual energy is enclosed within the boundaries of marriage and safely channelled into procreation by the end of the ballad.

Although there is historical support for the possibility that a woman of Cloris's social class would have had more leeway for intimate encounters during courtship than her elite counterparts, the question of how closely *The Beggars Delight* reflects the typical experiences of labouring women in the late seventeenth century is difficult to answer. As noted in the introduction, few personal records of sexual encounters from the early modern period have been identified and those that are known to exist are male authored (Rousseau and Porter 6-7). Likewise, while one may dispute the claim that almost all broadside ballads were male authored based on a lack of evidence, it is likely there were more male ballad authors than female given male advantages in literacy and education. Certainly, it is important to remember that the narrator of the ballad is the

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<sup>22</sup> Although most broadsides were undated, there were exceptions and R35745 includes a year in the imprint.

anonymous male swain and not the female Cloris. As such, the ballad may reflect an element of male fantasy. There is also no way to know the social class of the ballad's author. It is therefore important to acknowledge the possibility that the ballad reflects elements of elite fantasies about lower classes. Although there was a societal fear of vagrants in the early modern period (Netzloff 170), Joseph Woodfall Ebsworth argues in *The Bagford Ballads* that "there was something in the freedom of [...] a beggar's life which recommended it to the minds of men who lived under the Stuart rule" (190). Women of the elite and middling classes, meanwhile, may have envied the greater freedom experienced by women of the labouring classes during courtship while being unaware that such freedom could lead to complicated and compromising situations (Mendelson and Crawford 110). The intimate activities of Cloris and her swain, therefore, may reflect an elite fantasy of the amorous freedom a working-class life was thought to provide.

While *The Beggars Delight* may include elements of male fantasies of women and elite fantasies of rustic life fuelled by the pastoral, the broadside's numerous editions suggest a wide circulation that would, in all likelihood, have resulted in the ballad having an audience amongst the labouring class it purports to depict. In *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1*, Michel Foucault argues that the "truth of sex" is something which is produced and that its discourse is "a series of discontinuous segments whose tactical function is neither uniform nor stable" (100). The mere existence of a text in which a woman of the labouring class engages in forms of premarital sexual contact without being subjected to judgement produces a truth that such activities could be common and acceptable. As Traub argues, eroticism is "learned" (119) and early modern ballads are one site in which sexual knowledge is conveyed

(297). As such, any elements of fantasy in *The Beggars Delight* have the potential to create corresponding moments of real erotic potential.

Conversely, the ballad also works to produce a much more restrictive “truth of sex” for the elite women with whom Cloris is repeatedly contrasted. Indeed, when it comes to elite women, the ballad’s anonymous author seems determined to strip away illusion, portraying them as unchaste, dull, and artificial. As discussed above, the ballad’s third stanza acknowledges both the contractual nature of elite matches and the possibility for women to be duplicitous about the existence of their maidenheads. The duplicity of elite women, however, is not restricted to courtship in *The Beggars Delight*. The fourth stanza sets up a contrast between Cloris’s natural charm and the artifice employed by women of town:

Our *Cloris* is free from patches and paint,  
Complection and features sweetly agree,  
Perfections which Ladies often do want,  
Is always intail’d on her pedigree:  
Sweet *Cloris* in her own careless hair,  
is always more taking, taking, taking,  
Then Ladies that Towers and Pendants do wear.

(italics in original)

The fifth stanza, meanwhile, underscores questions of honesty and chastity with the claim that “A Dutches may fail created for sport, / by using of art, and changing of things.” In a study of face-painting in early modern England, Frances E. Dolan argues that moralists viewed face-painting not just as “vain” or “wasteful” but as an acutely deceptive attempt by women to “challenge the cosmic and social order by redefining

their own value” (229). Some moralists linked cosmetic use with prostitutes and women of the labouring classes, ignoring the popularity of face-painting amongst the highest strata of society (231) who are specifically targeted as practitioners of face-painting in *The Beggars Delight*. Other moralist went further, linking cosmetics with unchaste behaviour and warning husbands to question the chastity of wives who were too concerned with attractiveness (230). In contrasting the idealized Cloris with a duchess “created for sport,” *The Beggars Delight* gestures toward arguments that female face painting is an inherently disturbing and deceitful act; unlike moralists who relocate female face painting away from the highest classes who likely first popularized the practice (Dolan 231), *The Beggars Delight* situates the activity squarely back on the elite (231).

Another contrast between Cloris and the elite is rooted in depictions of skin as the ballad’s fifth stanza closes with the claim that Cloris is “free from the Plague and the Pox of the Town.” By situating Cloris as free from plague and pox, the ballad implicitly suggests that the same cannot be said of the women of the town. While references to the plague did not have a sexual connotation, references to the “pox” are more ambiguous. Does the use of the word “pox” in *The Beggars Delight* refer to smallpox or syphilis? Smallpox was rampant in urban centres in the latter half of the seventeenth century (Pelling 126-27) and was a “common fate of the unacclimatised immigrant” (126). At the same time, however, “pox” was also used to describe syphilis (“pox” n, b) which had been “a major social phenomenon of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries” (Pelling 28). Gowing argues that while “pox” was associated with “dirt and disease,” pox marks were also seen as a potential effect of unchastity on the female body (Gowing, *Common Bodies* 30-31). While it is unclear to which version of the pox the

ballad refers, it is notable that, either way, disease works against the bodies of the women of the town while Cloris's healthy body goes on to bear children on a twelve-month cycle, positioning Cloris as a symbol of renewal and new life.

While most texts featuring Chloris or Cloris as a name do not overtly align with elements of Ovid's *Fasti*, both the positioning of childbirth as a cyclic event and the praise of women from the lower classes in *The Beggars Delight* echo the Roman poet's depiction of Flora. In the introduction to their 2011 translation of *Fasti*, Anne and Peter Wiseman note that the work is centred on gods that were less prominently featured in texts such as the *Aeneid* but that were widely celebrated amongst the general public (Ovid, *Times*, xxix). This includes Flora, the Roman goddess who was once the nymph Chloris (Ovid, *Ovids Festivalls*, 107). Indeed, although exact wording varies by translation, translators of *Fasti* into English are in agreement that Flora's festival was not for the elite. John Gower's 1640 translation employs the phrase "vulgar people" (Ovid, *Ovids Festivalls*, 111) to describe Flora's desired audience while James George Frazer's 1931 translation, the standard used for much of the twentieth century, utilizes the term "common herd" (Ovid, *Fasti* v.352). Indeed, while Frazer's translation reads that Flora is not "to be / counted among your buskined goddesses" (v.347-48), Gower's seventeenth-century translation states that Flora is "none of those same grave and stately dames" (Ovid, *Ovids Festivalls*, 111). Gower's seventeenth-century depiction of Flora, then, would be drawn to Cloris and her swain rather than to the elite of London. As for the goddess's domain, she is quick to claim that it stretches beyond "soft garlands" to "corn-sown fields" (108) and the plants that provide the sustenance that allows bees to produce honey (109), and she links the gathering and making of nectar — the flitting from plant to plant, as it were — to activities enjoyed in youth "[w]hen strength is

sound, blouds fresh, and bodies young” (109). The goddess of flowers, then, is celebrated not by lords and ladies but by beggars, swains, and pretty country girls lying upon beds of hay.

Although *The Beggars Delight* certainly seems to channel elements that align with Ovid’s text, Wiseman and Wiseman argue that *Fasti* was largely unknown to English readers in the early modern period. To support this argument, they draw attention to a mid-eighteenth-century claim by schoolmaster William Massey that the text had largely been neglected by English translators (Ovid, *Times*, xxxi). Certainly, it is true that the work was not widely tackled by translators. Only two early modern English translations — Gower’s 1640 translation and a 1757 translation by Massey — are known to have been produced, and the Wisemans contend that neither of these works made “any impact” (Ovid, *Times*, xxxii). This, however, may be an oversimplification. In an epistolary poem prefacing Gower’s text, Isaac Tinkler claims that Gower has granted Ovid “his wish, that he may be / In English read upon a Ladies knee” (Ovid, *Ovids Festivalls*, sig. A4r).<sup>23</sup> These easily overlooked lines reflect the disparities in education between men and women in the seventeenth century. Even highly literate and accomplished women such as Aphra Behn were often unable to read Latin. Gower’s English translation, therefore, would have significantly extended the work’s reach amongst women, a significant impact. To conclude that a lack of English translations correlates with a lack of familiarity on the part of English audiences would likewise also be an oversimplification. The Wisemans’ argument does not account for the fact that Latin editions of Ovid’s *Fasti* were produced in London even after the appearance of

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<sup>23</sup> The inclusion of such dedicatory epistles was common practice at various points during the seventeenth century (Finke 23).

Gower's 1640 translation. Indeed, *Fasti* appeared in Latin under the title *Fastorum Libri VI* in both 1677 (R214555) and 1699 (R214556), indicating an anticipated audience over a sustained period. The 4 February 1712 edition of the popular daily periodical *The Spectator*, meanwhile, quotes two lines from the second book of *Fasti* in Latin without providing a translation or attribution, suggesting an assumption that at least some of its audience would be familiar with the text ("No. 292," 42). References to Ovid's *Fasti* also appear in multiple seventeenth-century English language volumes. For example, Chloris was the subject of *Chloridia Rites to Chloris and Her Nymphs*, a masque penned by Ben Jonson and performed at the court of Charles I in 1630. As was the case with other masques, a print version of *Chloridia* was produced for the public. The print version uses the names Chloris and Flora interchangeably, calling Chloris "Goddesse of the flowers, according to that of Ouid, in the *Fasti*" (sig. A2r). The masque was again printed in 1641 in the second volume of *The Workes of Benjamin Jonson*. References to *Fasti* also appear in English language reference works such as Edward Phillips' 1675 text *Theatrum Poetarum* and in English translations of French texts such as Fran Pomey's 1698 *The Pantheon Representing the Fabulous Histories of the Heathen Gods [...]* <sup>24</sup> and Pierre Danet's *A Complete Dictionary of the Greek and Roman Antiquities [...]*  from 1700. Given that references to *Fasti* appear in several English language works, it is likely that at least some ballad authors would have been familiar with the classical origins of Chloris — particularly if, as Joy Wiltenburg contends, many ballad authors

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<sup>24</sup> Pomey's text alleges that the goddess Flora is a fiction meant to cover the fact that "a famous Miss, who by her nasty Trade heaped up a great deal of Money" bequeathed a sum to Rome, the interest on which was used for an annual celebration on her birthday. Pomey accuses Ovid of "follow[ing] the same Fiction in his *Fasti*" (247-248).

would have had “passing familiarity” with some characters from classical traditions (32).

Regardless of whether or not the anonymous author of *The Beggars Delight* was familiar with *Fasti*, the sexual activities of Cloris and her swain — and the resulting cycles of conception and birth — in *The Beggars Delight* are a fitting tribute for the nymph-turned-goddess for whom Cloris is named. More than that, however, the ballad’s deceptively simple dichotomy compellingly illustrates elements of class-based nuance in how chastity is conceptualized in the early modern period. As a figure against whom elite women are measured and found wanting, Cloris functions as a means of regulation in *The Beggars Delight*. At the same time, however, the ballad also serves as a potential site of erotic learning, producing a “truth of sex” in which women of the labouring classes can partake of some forms of sexual activity without judgement or reprisal. This truth is reinscribed each time the ballad is reproduced, whether in broadside format or through migration to collected volumes such as *Wit and Mirth: Or Pills to Purge Melancholy*. Although *The Beggars Delight* underwent relatively few significant changes during its migration, this was not always the case, as illustrated by the next work this chapter will consider: *Corydon and Cloris: or The Wanton Shepherdess / “Song”* (Cloris Full of Harmless Thought).

### **Corydon and Cloris / “Song” (Cloris Full of Harmless Thought)**

The broadside ballad *Corydon and Cloris: or The Wanton Shepherdess* begins simply enough with the words “AS Cloris full of harmless Thought, / Beneath the Willows lay”

(R216107), suggesting a tranquil, pastoral setting.<sup>25</sup> What follows, however, is decidedly more complicated. The broadside consists of two distinct parts, each accompanied by its own woodcuts and each summarized in a single preface that covers the content of the broadside as a whole. In the first part of the ballad, a passing swain seduces Cloris, who is depicted as outwardly resistant but internally desirous of the encounter. While the encounter itself is relayed by a third-person narrator over the course of the ballad's first three stanzas, a fourth stanza, written from the first-person perspective of Cloris, concludes the ballad's first part as she speaks of the "sweets of Love" that she has found. The second part of the ballad, also told from the perspective of Cloris, largely justifies the pre-marital encounter before relaying her satisfaction with married life. *Corydon and Cloris* is not, however, the only — or the most popular — version of this text to have circulated in the seventeenth century. Indeed, while *The Beggars Delight* followed a fairly linear voyage from stage to broadside to eventual inclusion in *Wit and Mirth*, the text from *Corydon and Cloris: or The Wanton Shepherdess*, charted a considerably more twisted path with implications both for how the text has been incorporated into literary canon and interpreted by critics.

Only two broadside editions of *Corydon and Cloris* are known to have existed, and academics typically date the first publication of the work to 1676 or 1677.<sup>26</sup> While

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<sup>25</sup> All quotations are from ESTC Citation No. R216107.

<sup>26</sup> The English Short Title Catalogue includes two editions for *Corydon and Cloris* and these are distinguishable by their imprints. The imprint for R216107 reads "London, Printed for W. Thackeray, T. Passinger, and W. Whitwood" while the imprint for R235563 reads "London, Printed for W. Thackeray, T. Passenger, and W. VVhitwood." David Vieth tentatively suggests a date of 1676 for *Corydon and Cloris* in *The Complete Poems of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester* (181-82). Keith Walker, likewise, suggests an approximate date of 1676 for *Corydon and Cloris* in *The Poems of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester* (161-62). However, both Vieth and Walker acknowledge that this date is somewhat uncertain, and as neither lists an imprint, there is ambiguity as to which edition of the broadside they reference. William B. Todd, meanwhile, suggests an approximate date of 1677 for R216107 (53).

*Corydon and Cloris* may have appeared as a broadside only twice, the first three stanzas appear as a complete poem under the unassuming title “Song” in several late-seventeenth-century collections of songs and poetry. David Vieth identifies the first two of these as *The Wits Academy: Or, the Muses Delight* and *The Last and Best Editions of New Songs*,<sup>27</sup> both licensed in 1676 with publication dates of 1677, and argues that the *Corydon and Cloris* broadside is the first circulation of the text in print (Vieth, *Complete Poems* 181-82). As is the case with the broadside, the work lacks attribution in *The Wits Academy* and *The Last and Best Editions of New Songs*; however, its appearance in the 1680 volume *Poems on Several Occasions: By the Right Honourable the E. of R---* associates it with one of the Restoration’s most notorious libertines: John Wilmot, the Second Earl of Rochester. While the shorter poem tends to be dispatched fairly quickly in comparison to critical analysis of Rochester’s more notorious works, the division between critics on whether or not “Song” reflects a sexual assault is a compelling illustration of the difficulties that arise when studying early modern depictions of seduction; the swiftness with which Rochester scholars have dismissed the content of the longer *Corydon and Cloris* broadside, meanwhile, has left key elements of the work’s construction and circulation in ephemeral format — including elements that bring the work more closely inline with Ovid’s *Fasti* — relatively unexamined.

It is difficult to know whether Rochester’s wild reputation as a libertine wit or his close connection to King Charles II (Wintle 143) was most responsible for the intense public interest in the publication of *Poems on Several Occasions*.<sup>28</sup> Published

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<sup>27</sup> *The Last and Best Editions of New Songs* uses the name “Cloe” in place of “Cloris.” William B. Todd argues that this is a better rhyme with “brought” in the second line (53).

<sup>28</sup> Unless otherwise noted, quotations and page numbers are from R504575.

just weeks after Rochester's death, the 152-page octavo bore no printer's name and was steeped in mystery. As Vieth notes in his exhaustively researched *Attribution in Restoration Poetry: A Study of Rochester's Poems of 1680*, the only hint to the publication's origin are the words "Printed at Antwerp," a claim that Vieth argues was a fabrication (3-4).<sup>29</sup> As Londoners clamoured for the racy poetry the volume contained — only some of which was actually penned by Rochester — an advertisement offering a reward for information on the publisher appeared in the *London Gazette*, perhaps placed at the direction of executors of the late earl's estate (60-61). To this day, the publisher of *Poems on Several Occasions* has not been identified — a remarkable feat considering that as many as twelve or thirteen so-called first editions were produced in 1680 (4). Demand, it seems, made the collection as notorious as the rake to whom it was attributed.

Certainly, several poems in the volume are shocking in their frank talk of sexuality. Of the various works featuring Cloris as a character, the twenty-four line "Song" that becomes part of *Corydon and Cloris* is considerably less scandalous than other pieces (Rochester, *Poems* 58). "The Maim'd Debauchee," for example, features a libertine who recounts tales of whores and conquests as he prepares for impotence driven by pox and wine (32-34) while "Song to Cloris" features a Cloris who masturbates in her sleep while having an erotic dream in a pigsty (61-62). Nevertheless, "Song," illustrates the challenges inherent in interpreting depictions of seduction even in seemingly simple texts. As demonstrated by *The Beggars Delight*, socially accepted gender roles of the early modern period contained not inconsiderable room for nuance.

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<sup>29</sup> Some editions bear the name "Antwerpen" on the title page rather than "Antwerp."

In introducing Cloris “upon the Hay,” however, *The Beggars Delight* presents readers with a young woman who has presumably acquiesced to courtship before the ballad opens (R176306). “Song,” in contrast, features a young woman at the moment of seduction and follows her as she initially protests and then, seemingly, yields. Throughout the poem, Cloris is positioned as outwardly resistant but inwardly desirous of the encounter, feeling waves of passion and a “Pulse in ev’ry part.” Even after asking the swain to release her — noting in her appeal that she has “no Pow’r to rise” unless he allows it — Cloris is depicted as secretly wishing him to ignore her plea in the poem’s fifth stanza:

She fainting spoke, and trembling lay,  
For fear he shou’d comply ; [with her request that he let her go]  
Her lovely *Eyes* , her *Heart* betray,  
And gives her *Tongue* the lye.  
(Rochester, *Poems* 58; italics in original)

Such lines form the basis of critic Marianne Thormählen’s argument that the poem contains no sexual violence and should be considered within its original seventeenth-century context (53). Indeed, Thormählen seems fundamentally puzzled as to how critic David Farley-Hills could interpret the poem as a depiction of rape (Thormählen 54). Farley-Hills, for his part, appears to believe that sexual assault is the only possible interpretation of the events depicted in the work, stating that the “bliss” arrived at in the text is “the result of violent rape” without elaboration (Farley-Hills 41). While Thormählen is correct in asserting that readers should consider the early modern context under which “Song” was written, it is when one reads the poem within the context of seventeenth-century social norms and power dynamics surrounding seduction

and sexual conquest that the question of whether or not the poem could reflect a rape becomes decidedly less clear cut. As argued by Lynn A. Higgins and Brenda R. Silver, literature is capable of both sharing “the well-documented bias of rape law” (2) and of acting as a “framing” institution for how rape is perceived across society at large (7). To that end, a depiction of seduction by a powerful libertine man can, and should, be read with careful consideration as to how it depicts the dynamics of power and consent.

Intercourse was frequently couched in terms of conquest and force in the seventeenth century. Laura Gowing argues that male desire was conflated with “coercion and violence” (*Common Bodies* 99), and this can be seen in contemporary ballads and poetry. The broadside ballad *The Trappand Virgin*, for example, warns maidens that male suitors will seize any inch of yielding until “they have won the Field.” Likewise, Rochester’s aforementioned “The Maim’d Debauchee” positions sex as a “Fortress won” with “*Windows* demolist, [and] *Watches* overcome” (Rochester, *Poems* 34; italics in original). Seduction, then, was framed in the language of wars and battles, of victors and losers with men launching the first — if not every — offence. Such depictions may have held particular appeal for elite libertine men who may have felt their own power dwindling in the face of rapid commercial and political change (Williamson 25). Even if their power in other arenas waned, such men could still hold power over women. Women, meanwhile, were largely depicted as submitting to male advances in the language commonly used to describe sexual intercourse (G. Walker 6) despite a popular belief that they had potentially destructive sexual appetites of their own (Fletcher 5). Indeed, another Cloris in the broadside *Loves Wound, And Loves Cure* bemoans the active role assigned to men in courtship, noting her fear of articulating her own wants and desires before lamenting that “Men they may speak but Maidens

Modesty, / Forbids the same.” Discouraged from articulating their sexual desires — at least during the courtship stage — women are relegated to the socially acceptable role of passively yielding to the impulses of others.

Viewed within this context, it is plausible that Cloris does wish to yield and that her protestations are part of an established social script built on a pretense of resistance. This is the stance Thormählen takes in arguing that the line “Virgins Eyes their hearts betray, / And give their Tongues the lie” would have been “accepted wisdom” to seventeenth-century readers (52).<sup>30</sup> Such wholesale ascription of audience reception, however, both unfairly depicts readers as monolithic and contributes to a culture in which depictions of dubious consent are uncritically accepted. As Gowing argues, consent did hold meaning for women of the era but this meaning was not reflected in contemporary legal discourses (*Common Bodies* 101). For example, *The Trappand Virgin* has particularly strong words for men who lie in order to get women to yield to their advances, warning them that “...what you gain by Treachery /is next kinn to a Rape” despite the fact that, legally, obtaining sexual consent through false pretenses was not a prosecutable offense. Returning to “Song” and Thormählen’s argument, Thormählen notes that Aphra Behn uses a similar sequence of events in her poem “On A Juniper Tree, cut down to make Busks” (54), another work containing a Cloris character.<sup>31</sup> Certainly, “On a Juniper Tree [...]” contains language that is problematic from a consent standpoint with lines that read “Impatient he waits no consent, / But what

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<sup>30</sup> All excerpts in Thormählen’s *Rochester: The Poems in Context* are taken from *The Poems of John Wilmot Earl of Rochester*, edited by Keith Walker.

<sup>31</sup> Both “On a Giniper [Juniper] Tree now cut down to make Busks” and “The Disappointment” were included in *Poems on Several Occasions: By the Right Honourable the E. of R---* and mistakenly attributed to Rochester (Rochester, *Poems* 92-101).

she gave by Languishment” (Behn, *Poems* 22). Judith Kegan Gardiner notes a similar dynamic in Behn’s “The Disappointment,” and argues that the depiction of a woman who does not necessarily say what she means in that poem “may alienate Behn from today’s women” (278). Indeed, Thormählen’s invocation of Behn ignores the possibility that a woman may internalize and participate in the perpetuation of elements of what has broadly been referred to as rape culture. Given seventeenth-century views on chastity, however, it is worth considering, as Gardiner argues, that a woman may be better able to “correctly read” a situation in which another woman’s desires are constricted by “conventional standards of female propriety” (278-79).

Curiously, Thormählen does not invoke the longer *Corydon and Cloris* broadside in her argument that the encounter in “Song” is not assault even though the longer broadside does contain stanzas from Cloris’s perspective indicating that she desired the encounter or is at least satisfied with its outcome. Read in isolation without the context of these additional stanzas, Rochester’s “Song” stands as an account of a male-initiated sexual encounter crafted by a male author from the perspective of an ungendered, but likely male, narrator. As such, it is not unreasonable to consider the possibility that Cloris’s desire may be something that has mistakenly been ascribed to her. As Higgins and Silver argue, “representations of rape after the event are almost always framed by a masculine perspective premised on men’s fantasies about female sexuality” (2). Furthermore, early modern accounts of rape, sparing though they are, typically feature women depicting themselves as acted upon rather than actively resisting because even to admit to physical resistance was to render oneself less feminine or perhaps even unchaste (G. Walker 9). One would not fight back unless one knew what was happening and, as Valerie Traub notes, one could not admit such knowledge without calling their

own chastity into question (23). In a culture in which intercourse was framed in language of force and women were limited in the ways and degree to which they could resist without social repercussions, it is plausible that true resistance might be mistaken for pretense.

As detailed above, the question of whether or not Cloris consents is complicated not just by the common conflation of seduction with force in early modern literature but also by the fact that Rochester's "Song" contains far less material than the broadsides with which it overlaps. Cloris's desire and consent, however, are not the only important questions raised when one examines differences between incarnations of the text. Indeed, when one examines *Corydon and Cloris* alongside various versions of "Song," Cloris's chastity and very future become suspect. That the Cloris of *Corydon and Cloris* begins the ballad as a young woman with her maidenhead intact is clearly established with the lines "But Virgins Eyes their hearts betray, / and give their Tongues the Lye," lines that appear nearly verbatim with only minute differences in spelling and formatting in 1677's *The Wits Academy* (115) and *The Last and Best Editions of New Songs* (sig. ?7r).<sup>32</sup> The maidenhead of Cloris, therefore, is maintained in both the more-accessible broadside and in the first two recorded appearances of "Song" in longer volumes. As "Song" contains no stanzas from the perspective of Cloris, however, her maidenhead in these first few appearances is established and maintained by an unidentified narrator. As Kathryn Schwarz contends, "the idea that reputation, as a ratified form of social

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<sup>32</sup> Short of the discovery of a definitive manuscript edition of the poem in Rochester's hand, it is impossible to know whether this change reflects the original wording or if it is a change made by a printer or other party. Signatures in the surviving copy of *The Last and Best Editions of New Songs* on *ProQuest Early English Books Online* appear haphazardly and out of order. While the work appears on what should be the seventh signature, there is no way of knowing if this was what was intended.

knowledge, can be anchored by persons who are not agents bears within it an awareness that the anchor may not hold” (60), and Cloris’s chastity, anchored by an unknown narrator, proves unstable. Slippage occurs in 1680 as “Song” is printed again in *Poems on Several Occasions* with the line becoming “Her lovely *Eyes*, her *Heart* betray, / And gives her *Tongue* the lye” in at least some editions (Rochester, *Poems* 58; italics in original). While Cloris’s virginity could still be assumed by some readers, it is no longer definitively established within the text of versions published in *Poems*. That Rochester would be attracted to a potentially unchaste Cloris is not surprising. Although libertines stereotypically saw chaste women as objects to pursue and then cast aside (Finke 27), Rochester’s poem “The Fall” features a Cloris who loves the speaker best for his “frailer part” (71) while his impotence poem “The Imperfect Enjoyment” features a woman with sexual appetites as strong as any libertine (28-30). While some scholars have argued that Rochester’s work displays an anti-female bias (Farley-Hills 69; Wintle 133), Tracy Wendt Lemaster argues that Rochester undermines the traditional image of male prowess in “The Imperfect Enjoyment” and “embraces female sexuality as unfairly understated” (128). The notion of an unchaste Cloris may, therefore, have appealed to Rochester in ways that a Cloris with her maidenhead intact might not.

Once an unchaste Cloris is introduced, however, she can easily linger in the minds of readers or be carried into subsequent printings of the poem that may or may not be associated with Rochester. Indeed, the inclusion of “Song” in *Female Poems on Several Occasions* illustrates this. First published in 1679 under the female pseudonym “Ephelia,” *Female Poems on Several Occasions* was rereleased in a second edition in 1682. Several additional poems — many of them the work of other writers such as

Rochester and Behn — were added to this edition, including “Song” (154-155).<sup>33</sup> As with *Poems on Several Occasions*, *Female Poems on Several Occasions* omits any overt reference to Cloris being a virgin. This illustrates both how easily instabilities can be introduced across editions of texts and how readily those instabilities may be transmitted. Returning to the idea of Chloris texts existing as part of a multiverse, the instability of texts in the early modern period and the lack of authorial control over editions creates the possibility for unchaste versions of Chloris not just from text to text but from edition to edition.

Although the variations between the above-mentioned lines may seem trivial, there were distinct dangers in being labelled unchaste in the early modern period. As Gowing argues, “unchastity made a woman’s body free to one man but the property of none, and left it unguarded” (*Common Bodies* 16). If Cloris enters “Song” with her maidenhead intact and consents to the encounter, her chastity is lost. If Cloris enters “Song” unchaste, then her actions reinforce her unchaste state. The question of what might happen to a woman whose chastity had become questionable was not something with which Rochester’s fellow libertines would likely have concerned themselves. Accordingly, “Song” does not consider what might happen to a woman in Cloris’s position after her seduction. Rather, “Song” ends at the moment in which Cloris yields, depicting a conquest without consideration of consequences.

The moment of conquest is not, however, the end of Cloris’s story in the broadside *Corydon and Cloris*. While Vieth completely ignores the second part of

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<sup>33</sup> Although various critics have presented theories about the identity of Ephelia, no conclusive identity has ever been tied to the poet. Janet Todd has argued that the addition of several poems by other authors to the second edition of *Female Poems on Several Occasions* indicates that Ephelia likely died sometime between the first edition and the second (*Secret Life* 304).

*Corydon and Cloris*, he does briefly address the ten-line preface and the eight lines concluding the broadside's first part, arguing that "since they are transparently an attempt to provide the poem with a moralistic conclusion, they can be dismissed as probably spurious" (*Complete Poems* 181-82). Certainly, these eighteen lines do render the encounter between Corydon and Cloris more socially acceptable by establishing that Corydon "pleas'd her well, [and] she after was his wife." Assuming Vieth is correct in identifying these lines as spurious — and the abrupt shift to a female speaker who praises wedded bliss at length does seem unlikely to be the work of the libertine Rochester — then it is worth considering what is gained by the additional lines. Undoubtedly, the three-stanza "Song" would have appeared sparse next to competing broadsides. Likewise, the ten-line preface appearing at the top of *Corydon and Cloris* is similar to those used on other broadsides, functioning as what Natascha Würzbach dubs a "street-ballad trailer" used by sellers to entice audiences (80-81). It is possible, then, that additional lines present in *Corydon and Cloris* but not "Song" were simply added to make the broadside more marketable. However, while Lemaster argues that the goal of male pleasure superseded moral convention "from commoners to crown" during the Restoration, Ian Frederick Moulton contends that the degree of sexual pleasures enjoyed by the libertines did not extend to English society at large (137), and this could explain why *Corydon and Cloris* extends its story beyond the moment of sexual conquest. Given that broadsides circulated more widely amongst the labouring classes than the types of printed collections in which "Song" appears, it is worth considering the possibility that there may have been an assumption that non-elite audiences would respond more favourably to a version in which Cloris meets a decidedly safer end with marriage providing a shield against social stigma and the dangers of being labelled unchaste.

While Vieth is quick to dismiss the content of the additional lines of *Corydon and Cloris* because his interest lays in Rochester's authorship, the representation of Cloris is changed by their presence in the broadside. Readers familiar with Ovid's *Fasti* may have found Cloris's position beneath the willows to be both suggestive of the pastoral and reminiscent of Ovid's description of the attempted rape of Lotis, a nymph who is accosted while slumbering under a maple tree (Ovid, *Ovids Festivalls*, 13). Cloris's marriage in the extended content found in *Corydon and Cloris*, however, also closely aligns with *Fasti*. In Ovid's text, Flora recounts how she was pursued and raped by the god Zephyrus. Flora adds, however, that "Yet for his rape, by making me his wife, / He made amends. I cannot blame my life" (Ovid, *Ovids Festivalls*, 107). She then goes on to extoll the virtues she enjoys as a goddess who has been given dominion over flowers (107). An echo of this can be found in the second part of *Corydon and Cloris* as Cloris praises the joys she has found in married life, often using references to flowers and nature that align with Flora's domain. In *Mythical and Legendary Narrative in Ovid's 'Fasti,'* Paul Murgatroyd argues that Flora "seem[s] to be concerned about her rank and what people think of her" and that her lack of complaint about the rape and the vagueness with which she describes the assault may be an attempt to "maintain her dignity" (50). If Farley-Hills is correct in his interpretation of "Song" as sexual assault, then Murgatroyd's argument that Flora downplays the trauma of rape to maintain a sense of dignity can perhaps be extended to *Corydon and Cloris* with that Cloris's exuberant praise of married life existing as a technique to distance her present circumstances from an assault. This line of interpretation is, of course, only available if one considers *Corydon and Cloris* in its entirety as a work worthy of serious examination.

Although Vieth's view that the additional lines in the broadside *Corydon and Cloris* were unlikely to have been written by Rochester is the dominant stance amongst scholars, to dismiss the lines outright is to miss both an opportunity to consider how overt libertine sensibilities in texts may have been mediated to appeal to broader, less elite audiences and the ways in which ephemeral texts might echo classical works. While scholars have been quick to dismiss the extended content of *Corydon and Cloris* so, too, have they been quick to form fixed opinions on the question of whether or not "Song" depicts assault. Farelly-Hill's assertion that the work obviously depicts a rape without elaboration or consideration for the challenges women faced in navigating social restrictions on chastity in the latter part of the seventeenth-century is the other side of Thormählen's steadfast insistence that no one could consider the work to reflect sexual assault as long as they read it within the context of its production and her refusal to consider the role of literature in creating a culture in which seduction is synonymous with force and consent is largely illegible. *In Thinking Sex with the Early Moderns*, Valerie Traub argues that that "moments of impasse" in research, those roadblocks that are viewed as private stumbling blocks or issues to be strategized around, are worthy of their own academic consideration, that such moments of impasse might shed light on the "production and dissemination of knowledge about sex" (3). The question of whether Cloris truly consents in Rochester's "Song" is not straightforward. To treat it as such is to miss important opportunities to consider both the complications of reading consent and the role of literature in creating a culture in which consent is obscured.

As analysis of *The Beggars Delight* and *Corydon and Cloris* illustrate, the late seventeenth to early eighteenth century was a time when the border between what might be considered high and low art was permeable. Works might begin on stage, circulate multiple times in broadside format, and be collected into more durable forms of literary production such as collections of songs. They might appear in manuscript pages crafted by the elite only to be expanded as they transitioned into works for a wide, general audience. As such works circulated, they provided contemporary illustrations of courtship, femininity, desire, and class — illustrations that can be used to gain a more nuanced understanding of early modern life. As the next chapter will show, however, early modern texts extended beyond reflecting contemporary life to become sites in which complex anxieties and ideas were explored, interrogated, and even subverted.

## **Chapter Two: Pushing Against and for Change through Depictions of Chloris**

Chapter one focussed on idealized constructions of Chloris that reflected the complexity of femininity and feminine desire in the early modern period. While the texts discussed were surprising and sometimes contradictory, they largely reflected the intricacies of social norms without overtly pushing against them. The Chloris texts in this second chapter are reactive rather than reflective. Some embody masculine anxiety, presenting more sinister versions of Chloris as they push against gains in female autonomy during courtship. Others engage directly with each other, creating an ongoing discourse carried across more than one work. All of the texts in this chapter deal with the patriarchal structure as it existed in early modern England in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, exposing its inherent weaknesses and suggesting limits to its power.

The early modern period was steeped in the ideals of patriarchal rule with households controlled by married men considered a foundational structural unit of the era (Gowing, *Domestic Dangers* 22; Shepard 3). The patriarchal system was not, however, viewed with unwavering faith. Mark Breitenberg argues that masculinity “is inherently anxious” and that masculine anxiety both “reveals fissures and contradictions of patriarchal systems” and, simultaneously, “drives patriarchy’s reproduction and continuation of itself” (3). Likewise, Alexandra Shepard points to attempts to secure concepts of manhood in contemporary prescriptive literature and argues that a “contest over meanings of manhood” within these works reveals a degree of instability while depictions of men who deviate from normative ideals are “illustrative of fissures in concepts of manhood and of limits to the authority of patriarchal norms” (10-11). Such fissures were glimpsed not only in prescriptive literature. Joy Wiltenburg makes a

similar point about portrayals of disorderly women in street literature, arguing that the “cultural perception of women’s power as disorder, and of their disorderliness as power, reflects male anxieties about the success of patriarchal rule” (7). Rather than isolated expressions of anxiety, concerns about male deviations from normative ideals and apprehensions around/about female expressions of power were often intertwined. Indeed, young men who fail to follow prescribed ideals of manhood are depicted in several broadside ballads as being unhealthily under the sway of women during courtship, linking deviant men to empowered women. Such dangers could extend beyond courtship, as illustrated by broadsides and other forms of literature in which married men fail to embody ideals of control and, as a result, become symbols of the ultimate loss of male power: the cuckold. While one could assume that the cure for such deviance and disorder lay in more closely adhering to prescriptive literature and prescribed gender roles, some broadside ballads show newly married men and women struggling — and failing — to do just that, suggesting that adhering too rigidly to prescribed social norms could, itself, create fissures and undermine the patriarchal system.

Using Chloris texts as a lens, this second chapter examines the potential of the broadside ballad to respond to anxieties surrounding masculinity and the success of the patriarchy. Breitenberg argues that “[masculine] anxiety is largely a discourse articulated and played out between men” (12). Certainly, this can be said of the broadsides covered in the first section of this chapter: *The Love-sick Shepherd, Loves Torments Eased by Death*, and *The Jealous Lover’s Complaint*. The first two of these depict Chloris as coy, cruel, and a danger to the health and life of unwary men while the third calls into question an inherent weakness in men due to their excess heat. While the works in this

section are not technically connected, all reflect similar anxieties. The second part of the chapter, however, examines two broadside ballads that *are* explicitly connected: *Strephon and Cloris; or the Coy Shepherd and Kind Shepherdess* and *The Lamentation of Cloris for the Unkindness of her Shepherd*. The latter of these works is a direct response to the former, illustrating not just that broadside ballads reflected social shifts and moods but that new ballads sometimes engaged directly with those already in circulation, resulting in ongoing, contested discourse. While the ballads in the first section could be said to align with Breitenberg's argument that masculine anxiety is a discourse largely engaged in by men, the ballads in the second section of the chapter illustrate the potential for female narrators in the discourses surrounding one of the most prevalent masculine anxieties of the seventeenth century: the fear of cuckolding.

### **Cloris Coy and Cruel**

The early modern period saw a shift in how marriage was approached by the labouring classes with women typically delaying unions until their mid-to-late twenties, in part so that both parties could bring enough to a match for a couple to be independent (Mendelson and Crawford 108; Shoemaker 92-93). This resulted in lengthy periods of courtship that might involve multiple suitors and a certain degree of female autonomy (Mendelson and Crawford 111). For labouring women, these years could present something of a reprieve during which they were no longer under the direct rule of a father but had not yet entered into marriage. Certainly, marriage would represent a distinct shift for these women who, upon becoming wives, would lose control of any accumulated earnings or possessions and would be expected to be both dependent on and subservient to their new husbands (Shoemaker 91). Indeed, with labouring women

having considerable scope in determining the suitability of a potential match for themselves (Mendelson and Crawford 116), courtship could be said to be the one stage in the lives of women and men where the espoused patriarchal norms of submission and control were reversed (110).<sup>34</sup> This is reflected in several broadside ballads of the period in which women are depicted as having something of an upper hand — at least temporarily — over potential suitors. However, as evidenced by the Chloris ballads *The Love-sick Shepherd*, *Loves Torments Eased by Death*, and *The Jealous Lover's Complaint*, the possibility of women gaining the upper hand during courtship and expressing a level of agency and autonomy in determining their future, even temporarily, incited a degree of anxiety in men who depended on marriage in order to access full patriarchal privileges.

*The Love-sick Shepherd, or The Dying Lovers Reprieve* certainly seems to serve as a cautionary tale for the misuse of female power during courtship. The ballad begins in an ideal pastoral setting of “a Mirtle Grove, where Shepherds play.” However, not all is idyllic as the grove is revealed as a location where “pining Lovers languish.” Here, an unnamed narrator hears a “Swain thus on a Nymph complaining, / Accusing her of hate and deep disdain.” The swain in question is Amyntas, another frequently used pastoral character, and one who, in this particular incarnation, suffers under the “displeasure” of Chloris as the narrator asks “To what sad fate was poor *Amyntas* born, / Thus by fair *Cloris* to be held in scorn” (italics in original). The use of the word “scorn” likely extends beyond an individual feeling of contempt to reflect the cultural practice of

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<sup>34</sup> Although labouring women tended to have more autonomy during courtship, there are accounts of daughters of the middling ranks and even the elite resisting parental pressure to agree to matches or engaging in clandestine courtship. See Mendelson and Crawford (112-114) and Hubbard (*Room* 297-313).

“scorning” in which women would “scorn, jeer, and generally discourage” the advances of suitors as tests of fidelity. Although scorning is thought to have been practiced at all levels of society, it is believed to have been particularly popular with labouring women. Regardless of class, the activity involved striking a delicate balance as women attempted to discern and drive off unworthy suitors without pushing desirable suitors to the point of breaking off courtships (Mendelson and Crawford 116-117). This delicate act is reflected in *The Love-sick Shepherd* as Amyntas argues that he would rather “dye a thousand deaths all over, / Then to be counted an unconstant lover,” complains that his love has left him “[s]lighted” and “[s]pited,” and finally ponders how he will be thought of once “to Elizium,” or the land of the dead, he has gone. Upon hearing Amyntas’s words, Cloris hastens to his side. There, she chastises herself so that other lovers might be wiser “[a]nd learn to know a Lover true and Constant, / From fickle ones who waver every instant.” The ballad leaves no doubt that Cloris’s scorn had been part of a test, for although she acknowledges that her heart had been “tormented for [Amyntas] alone,” she admits to “contented[ly]” causing him to suffer in order to “try [his] love.”

Although the *The Love-sick Shepherd* ultimately ends with the two lovers reconciled and “liv[ing] in love and unity for ever,” the spectre of potential doom hangs over the work through its use of woodcuts, three of which depict women being taken by the arm by Death — a nod, perhaps, to the potentially deadly consequences to female power presented in the ballad. Indeed, a similar situation leads to far more disastrous ends in the broadside ballad *Loves Torments Eased by Death: Or, Lovers Delay’d Grow Desperate*. In this Cloris text, an unnamed suitor bemoans the fact that he “strongly did besiege” Cloris but was unable to make a conquest. Here we see the language of force conflated not with seduction but with securing the interest of a woman. While women in

works such as Rochester's "Song" are left to passively yield, Cloris in *Loves Torments Eased by Death* gives no quarter. "[L]ike frosty weather," she believes the unnamed suitor "untrue." In response to her rejection, the suitor ingests poison, leaving behind a letter for the "Fair Tyranness" he could not win over. As with *The Love-sick Shepherd*, the Cloris of *Loves Torments Eased by Death* chastises herself for her inability to have discerned a suitor with "constancy so true," indicating that the unkindness she displayed may have been part of a scorning ritual gone awry. Here, though, there can be no happy ending. Instead, Cloris is left to wander groves, seemingly in perpetuity, as she blames "her own hard heart" for her suitor's undoing. The unnamed suitor may have taken his own life, but he has done so in a way that ensures Cloris will suffer emotional torment for having scorned his advances.

The behaviour associated with scorning — particularly its use of disdain as a test of fidelity — is reflected in multiple seventeenth-century texts. While the degree to which the well-being of men is depicted as being under significant threat by the practice varies, the body of scorning texts as a whole reflects a discourse that spreads awareness of the practice and discourages its use. This discourse is fundamentally anxious, reflecting Breitenberg's contention that anxiety is "both cause and effect: it is the effect of dangers the subject may not be aware of, but it also anticipates those dangers in advance, whether they are real or not" (5). How widely scorning was actually practiced, however, is difficult to discern. In his study of discourses surrounding female cross-dressing in the early modern period, Breitenberg argues that the reaction to the practice from polemicists and from the pulpit appeared "well in excess of the actual threat those few women who may have cross-dressed might have posed" (150). The same could certainly be true of behaviours such as scorning, with the anxiety that such activities

could have ramifications for male power far outweighing actual practice. What can be said with certainty, however, is that several broadside ballads in the seventeenth century make references to “scornful” lasses, maids, and maidens in their titles or in their content<sup>35</sup>. The broadside *The Virgin’s A,B,C, Or, An ALPHABET of Vertuous Admonitions for a Chast, Modest, and Well-govern’d Maid*, for example, cautions women to be “not too coy,” and to concern themselves with first proving their own constancy rather than that of potential suitors. In depicting a potentially disastrous side to scorning, however, the Chloris texts *The Love-sick Shepherd* and *Loves Torments Eased by Death* suggest a degree of social anxiety toward the practice. Anthony Fletcher argues that men of the early modern period saw women as having an “emotional nature” that left them prone to manipulation and deviousness (73), and while men were not above conducting their own tests of women during courtship,<sup>36</sup> scorning could certainly be seen as an attempt to manipulate the emotions of a suitor. The depictions of Chloris in both ballads as having unintentionally pushed suitors past their breaking points position female power as a threat to men’s well-being, anticipating a danger to female empowerment that, while likely not reflecting the reality, encouraged men to avoid surrendering the upper hand in courtship. However, neither work interrogates how or why a male suitor might become so enthralled as to become relatively powerless when faced with rejection by a beautiful woman. As such, both works locate the source of masculine anxiety firmly outside of the male body. This does not mean, however, that

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<sup>35</sup> See, for example, *A Quip for a Scornfull Lasse Or Three Slips for a Tester, The Scornful Maid and the Constant Young-Man* by T[homas] Robins, and *The True Lovers Conquest, Or The Scornful Maiden Overcome by Love and Loyalty*.

<sup>36</sup> See, for example, male tests of female chastity and self-control in Mendelson and Crawford (120).

there was not anxiety surrounding the effects of courtship on men on a physiological level. Indeed, the ballad *The Jealous Lover's Complaint: OR, His Torment for Love of Fair Cloris* features a suitor who attributes the emotional effect Cloris has over him not to any action or malice on her part but to the existence of other suitors and to his own inclinations, weaknesses, and physiology.

Told from the perspective of a suitor who is infatuated by a Cloris who is not yet — and may never be — his, *The Jealous Lover's Complaint* is a short work consisting of just two stanzas and a large woodcut depicting a finely dressed young man. In the ballad's first stanza, the suitor chronicles his fear of being misled by Cloris's smiles and his jealousy of romantic rivals who are favoured with the "wandering looks" she bestows. While the jealous lover is distressed at the attention Cloris pays to other men, it was common for women of certain classes to have multiple suitors over the courtship stage of their lives, and there is nothing in the ballad to suggest that there is anything overly duplicitous or unkind about Cloris's actions. Despite this, the jealous lover notes that he would extricate himself from the situation if he could, claiming, "Fain I would desire to leave her, / but can sooner cease to live." Here, it is worth considering why other suitors are a source of anxiety in *The Jealous Lover's Complaint* and whether the loss of Cloris to a romantic rival could have implications that extend beyond disappointment or even beyond Cloris herself. In *Gender, Sex, and Subordination in England, 1500-1800*, Anthony Fletcher argues that sexual failure was a deep source of male anxiety in the early modern period and that manhood "consisted in exhibiting the sexual and physical strength which was necessary to keep a wife out of circulation" (18-19). This anxiety can be extended to courtship. As marriage was viewed as a gateway to full manhood and patriarchal privilege (Shepard 9), a woman's ability to reject a suitor

— however conditional — gave her a degree of control over his future. If part of maintaining one’s manhood involved possessing the sexual prowess and control necessary to keep a wife from straying, then attaining full manhood involved possessing the strength and qualities needed to entice a woman away from other suitors and out of circulation. Indeed, this is the challenge faced by the narrator of *The Jealous Lover’s Complaint* each time he notes Cloris’s gaze straying to a rival.

Romantic rivals are not, however, the only challenge faced in *The Jealous Lover’s Complaint* as the narrator notes that “Happy is he whose inclination warms *but with a gentle heat*” (emphasis added). Although heat was connected to greater strength in full manhood, young men were seen as having excessive amounts of heat which left them with less control over their minds and bodies (Shepard 24-26). Lust was particularly dangerous in this respect with the mere sight of a woman thought to be enough to “completely upset the body’s equilibrium” (67) and the very act of courtship seen as a potential danger to a man’s ability to reason (Foyster 55). A strong attraction to a woman during courtship, therefore, was believed to fan a young man’s heat, impacting him mentally as well as physically. The jealous lover’s envy of those with gentler heat suggests that his own excess heat is part of what gives Cloris such power over him. To be so enthralled by a woman was not a trifling matter. Surrendering to one’s passions was considered unmanly (Shepard 79), and men who gave themselves over to a woman’s influence were considered effeminate (Foyster 104; Fletcher 96). In extreme cases, excessive passion for a woman could lead to love-sickness, insanity, and even admittance to Bedlam, the notorious institution whose nickname became synonymous with madness (Foyster 56). While the jealous lover keeps a more or less level head despite his self-acknowledged excess heat, the male suitors of *The Love-sick Shepherd*

and *Loves Torments Eased by Death* could be said to embody some of the worst early modern fears about young men and passion.

How far the anxieties articulated in *The Love-sick Shepheard*, *Loves Torments Eased by Death*, and *The Jealous Lover's Complaint* were disseminated is difficult to determine; however, examination of the production of each of these Cloris texts, beginning with *The Love-sick Shepheard, or The Dying Lovers Reprieve*, sheds light on how discourses spread through broadside ballads in the latter part of the seventeenth century. A line at the bottom of *The Love-sick Shepheard* notes that it was “printed for Richard Burton at the Horshoo in West-Smithfield.” While most broadside ballads were anonymously penned, this single line of text suggests a possible connection to a man who occupied a potentially unique position in late-seventeenth-century print culture. As Robert Mayer notes, Richard Burton — often noted as just R.B. — was a frequent pseudonym of bookseller Nathaniel Crouch, a man who joined the Stationer's Company in 1663 after serving seven years as an apprentice printer (391).<sup>37</sup> Seven years was the standard term for a printer's apprentice in the second half of the seventeenth century, and in 1666, approximately 140 active “workman printers” in and around London had served such terms (*Case and Proposals* [...]).<sup>38</sup> After setting up shop as a bookseller,

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<sup>37</sup> The broadside ballads *The Yong [sic] Mans Vindication* [...] and *The Haughty Frenchmens Pride Abased* [...] both include variations of the line “Printed for Rich. Burton at the Horshooe in Smithfield.” The title page of *Wonderful Prodigies of Judgment and Mercy*, meanwhile, states that it is written by “R. B. Author of the History of the Wars of England” (italics in original) and printed “for Nath. Crouch” (sig. A1r). An advertisement at the back of this volume lists “Rich. Burton” as the author of *History of the Wars of England* (235). This establishes that Crouch sometimes used “Rich. Burton” in place of R.B. as a pseudonym. In light of this, it is likely that both the “Rich. Burton” and the “Richard Burton” for whom broadsides were printed at the Horshoo in West-Smithfield are, in fact, cases of Crouch using a pseudonym.

<sup>38</sup> Carolyn Archer notes that this number follows the 1666 Great Fire of London and states that “Only 140 fully indentured printers had survived the fire” (58).

Crouch ventured into the authorship of texts despite a lack of formal education (Mayer 391-393).

Crouch sold a variety of works, including works he penned under his pseudonyms. While he was known for “prolific plagiarising, reprinting and remarketing” of other texts (Lamb 37), he also produced works for the stated goal of furnishing those who wished to be informed but who did not have the means to purchase more expensive texts (Mayer 397). As such, Mayer argues that Crouch’s career represents a “highly significant meeting ground for high and low culture in England at the end of the seventeenth century” (393). So too can Crouch’s bookselling and forays into authorship be said to represent a mingling point for ideas. Items sold by Crouch range from sermons to histories to works on the natural sciences while several of the books he published under pseudonyms continued to be printed and sold by others into the eighteenth century. Included in this milieu of ideas are seemingly contradictory conceptions of womanhood. Louisiane Ferlier and Bénédicte Miyamoto argue that those engaged in the book trade in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries were well aware that the “audience for print was increasingly self-aware and diverse” and, as a result, produced works that “accommodated for audiences that responded to different sociolects according to profession, social standing or gender” (8). For example, writing as R.B., Crouch includes a section on “whoredom” in *The Apprentices Companion* that begins with the warning that young men should “Quench soon the flames of Lust, and have a care /of wanton Women, they will prove a snare” (88), suggesting a fairly typical late-seventeenth-century view of feminine wiles. In contrast, in his address to the reader at the beginning of *Female Excellency, or, The Ladies Glory Illustrated [...]*, another work composed as R.B., Crouch frankly acknowledges the advantages men are given in

“Education, Learning, and Arts” and speculates that “if Women had the same helps, [...] they would make as good returns...” (sig. A3.v), suggesting awareness that the roles offered to women in early modern England were at least partially socially constructed rather than wholly natural. An awareness that the roles offered women may have been socially constructed did not, however, stop Crouch from producing *The Love-sick Shepherd*. Assuming that the imprint listed at the bottom of the broadside indicates that Crouch authored, as well as sold, the text, then he would have been an active participant not just in the spread of discourses concerned with female empowerment during courtship but in their generation.

In contrast, both *Loves Torments Eased by Death* and *The Jealous Lover’s Complaint* were produced without any hint as to their authorship. At the same time, however, the imprints listed at the bottom of each broadside are worthy of consideration. *Loves Torments Eased by Death* was printed for Philip Brooksby, a man who advertised his West-Smithfield shop as a place where “any English or Irish Chapmen may be furnished with all sorts of Histories, small books or Ballads at reasonable Rates” (*Renowned History* [...], sig. J3v). *The Jealous Lover’s Complaint*, meanwhile, was printed for Josiah Blare. After completing a seven-year apprenticeship (Blagden 180), Blare established himself as a bookseller, opening a shop in 1683 on London Bridge (Spufford, *Small Books* 85). Like Brooksby, Blare advertised his shop as a place where “Country Chapman are Furnished with all sorts of BOOKS, Bound or Stitch’d, small BOOKS and BALLADS” (*Famous and Renowned History* [...] 24). Margaret Spufford argues that “specialist publishers” such as Blare and Brooksby tended to cluster in two areas of London: London Bridge, which Spufford argues was seen as “popular and rather low,” and the area near the market in West-Smithfield, which Spufford describes

as was “the very rough part of town,” with both areas being easily accessible by petty chapman (*Small Books* 111). As Spufford has observed, petty chapmen are “elusive” in the historical record (*Great Reclathing* 6). Nevertheless, they served a vital function, carrying goods, including ballads and small printed books, to those dwelling outside of urban centres. Spufford argues that the publishers of ballads and chapbooks were dependent on chapman for distribution and that the business relationship likely worked on a “sale or return basis,” with chapmen initially taking inventory on credit (*Great Reclathing* 80). A work such as *Loves Torments Eased by Death* or *The Jealous Lover’s Complaint* may have left the London shops of Brooksby and Blare and travelled to rural areas in a peddler’s pack. Anyone who purchased one of these broadsides, be it on the streets of London or from a peddler on his or her rural route, would find themselves receiving the same cautionary tales.<sup>39</sup> If, as Fletcher argues, anxiety about the control of women was more strongly felt in London than in rural areas (27-28), then the movement of ballads from shops along London Bridge and in West-Smithfield to rural areas via chapmen could be viewed as the transmission not just of pleasant diversions but also of social anxieties about the strength of the patriarchy.

### **Talking Back:**

As our next set of ballads illustrates, merely securing a wife did not necessarily end a man’s anxiety. Indeed, as the broadside ballads *Strephon and Cloris; or the Coy Shepherd and Kind Shepherdess* and *The Lamentation of Cloris for the Unkindness of her Shepherd* demonstrate, marriage opened men to apprehensions over new

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<sup>39</sup> Although most chapmen were male, there were exceptions. See, for example, Margaret Spufford’s accounts in *The Great Reclathing* of Joan Dant (46-49) and Goody Wild (86).

responsibilities and to one particularly strong source of masculine anxiety in the early modern period: the possibility of being made a cuckold. Given the strength of this anxiety, the degree to which the cuckold appeared on stage, in broadside ballads, and in other forms of literature — often as the butt of jokes — may seem strange.<sup>40</sup> After all, invocations of the figure draw attention to a key weakness in the early modern conceptualization of the patriarchal household as a unit of social structure: that is, any man who married linked his honour and social standing to the chastity of his wife (Foyster 66, 72; Boehrer 172).

So strong was the link between a wife's virtue and a husband's social standing that some of the most common sexual insults levelled against men in the period concerned not their own character or actions but the chastity of their spouse (Gowing, *Domestic Dangers* 62-63). A woman's adultery, meanwhile, was not viewed solely as shortcoming on her own part but was seen as a fundamental sign of a man's inability to control his household (Foyster 66; Panek 70; Gowing, *Domestic Dangers* 94). If discovered, such lapses in control were not left unchecked. A cuckolded husband could be made the subject of mocking rhymes and ballads (Foyster 70, 108) or find a set of horns — a common symbol of cuckolding — adorning his door (107). He might even become the focus of a charivari, a shaming spectacle targeting those who had violated community norms (Foyster 109; Fletcher 270-71). Although Foyster argues that the responsibility for being cuckolded ultimately rested with the male head of household, she notes that women who committed adultery could be carted through the streets and whipped (112). Gowing, meanwhile, argues that a woman's adultery "lead to a

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<sup>40</sup> Although cuckolding was a popular subject throughout much of the seventeenth century, Marilyn Williamson argues that its prominence faded in the 1690s (137).

permanent state of whoredom” (*Domestic Dangers* 94), a state that could make her a target for community exclusion (99). Laughter generated at the expense of the cuckold, therefore, was part of broader corrective action targeted at deviation from social ideals of patriarchal control.

Despite problems the existence of the cuckold presents to ideals of patriarchal control, there are variations in how the figure is portrayed in literature. Jennifer Panek argues that the wittol, or husband complacent in his wife’s adultery, in early modern literature exists not as a singular “static figure” but as a “dynamic continuum” (67). Similar dynamic continuums can be viewed in works that invoke other aspects of cuckoldry. Turning to broadside ballads, one finds a surprising range of both cuckolded husbands and adulterous wives. In some cases, a specific act of cuckolding might even be made the focus of more than one broadside, allowing for an evolving discourse on the subject. Such works fall under a category dubbed “answer ballads” by Natascha Würzbach (95). They were intended to capitalize on the popularity of already circulating pieces by functioning as responses or imitators (95), and their existence suggests an audience appetite for multiple viewpoints on a given situation while underscoring the versatility of the broadside ballad as a medium. If, as Mark Breitenberg argues, “cuckoldry anxiety rehearses a play that may never be performed” (5), then answer ballads with their multiple viewpoints can be said to be part of such rehearsals. Indeed, when one considers *Strephon and Cloris; or the Coy Shepherd and Kind Shepherdess* alongside its corresponding answer ballad *The Lamentation of Cloris for the Unkindness of her Shepherd*, one gains a far more nuanced picture of male responsibility and female constancy than can be gleaned from either work alone. Taken together these two works allow audiences to consider different outcomes to the same situation, essentially

rehearsing the choices that could destabilize the household and lead to acts of cuckolding; what's more, the response of *The Lamentation of Cloris to Strephon and Cloris* illustrates how the broadside ballad could introduce female perspectives via the depiction of sympathetic female narrators — regardless of the gender of the author which typically remains unknowable due to the largely anonymous nature of the genre — into what was a traditionally male-dominated discourse.

*Strephon and Cloris; or the Coy Shepherd and Kind Shepherdess* was popular enough to have been produced several times with editions printed for J. Clarke and J. Deacon in the latter decades of the seventeenth century and editions printed for J. White and T. Norris in the early decades of the eighteenth. Since most broadside ballads were undated, it is difficult to know if these editions were circulating simultaneously. However, as Cyprian Blagden chronicles in his pioneering work on the ballad market in the latter half of the seventeenth century, at least some printers formed alliances and shared ballad stock, and both Clarke and Deacon were known to have formed such agreements with other printers (161). It is conceivable, then, that an agreement existed between Deacon and Clarke that both would publish editions of the ballad.

Although surviving editions of *Strephon and Cloris* vary in terms of woodcuts and layout, the text of the ballad remains largely fixed. After a short summary of the story to come — Natascha Würzbach's "street-ballad trailer" (80-81) — the ballad itself opens with the shepherd Strephon entreating Cloris to wake and warning her that their flocks will stray if she sleeps any longer (R218098).<sup>41</sup> For her part, Cloris has more on her mind than peaceful slumber. Over the ensuing stanzas, she embarks on a campaign

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<sup>41</sup> Unless otherwise noted, direct quotations are from R218098.

of tears and pleading to convince Strephon to “taste / of a true Lovers bliss” as Strephon tries, but ultimately fails, to resist her charms. In these stanzas, the audience is presented with a shepherd who seems truly torn between love and duty. Here, Strephon is “coy” not for lack of desire or out of obliviousness but from genuine concern for what might happen if he privileges desire for his wife over his duties outside the home. Over and over, he counters Cloris’s pleas, fearful that their flocks will stray, warning her that “the care of [the] Flocks / doth abate [his] desire” and that “The Lambs are new Yeaned, / and tender for Prey.” While the ages of Strephon and Cloris are not stated, their struggle suggests a couple in a transitional stage of early marriage in which they are still adjusting to new responsibilities, new freedoms, and new social expectations. For her part, Cloris may have experienced her first tastes of socially acceptable sexual intercourse and may now possess the potentially destructive appetites that were so feared of women. Cloris’s entreaties, then, could suggest that her unruly passions have usurped Strephon’s role as sexual initiator, emasculating him.

This potential for emasculation could be heightened or downplayed, depending on performance. As Sandra Clark argues in an exploration of the broadside ballad and the female voice, the performative nature of the ballad as a genre allows texts to be delivered faithfully or in ways that are subversive (107), and it is worth considering how this observation might apply to *Strephon and Cloris*. While contemporary recitals of the ballad are lost to time, humorous performances in which Strephon was depicted as being as helpless as his newly weaned lambs may have held some appeal for audiences. Indeed, one can picture how the physicality of a performance might heighten Strephon’s attempts to break free as “loving Charms doth him so fetter.” Bruce Boehrer has argued that portrayals of cuckolds worked to neutralize anxieties by providing effeminized

figures against which successful men could define themselves (178), and while Strephon has not been cuckolded, performances of his struggle could have provided men in the audience with a figure that would bolster their own sense of masculinity.

Although such humour would have been at Strephon's expense, his concern over placing Cloris above his flocks does speak to a real contemporary anxiety with which newly married men may have grappled: that the threat women represented to a man's "ability to reason" during courtship (Foyster 55) might extend into marriage. Indeed, in her study of contemporary conduct books, Shepard finds warnings to men of the dangers of yielding to their wives and of "preferring [a] wife over the world" (79). As Shepard notes, the "social practice of manhood was enormously diverse, contingent, and contradictory" (1), leaving considerable room for interpretation and confusion; indeed, as Shepard shows, the same prescriptive text might communicate one message in sections aimed at husbands and another message in sections aimed at wives.<sup>42</sup> Strephon's conflict and subsequent emasculation could therefore reflect a concern surrounding the impact of newly married men receiving contradictory guidance on how to manage their desires and their households.

While Strephon has not been cuckolded, his household has nevertheless become destabilized through his attempts to adhere to certain prescribed ideals of manhood, patriarchy, and control. Stabilization is ultimately gained through a cherished early modern virtue: balance, an ideal emphasized in many didactic texts of the seventeenth century as a requirement to attain true manhood (Shepard 30). While Cloris tempts her

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<sup>42</sup> Shepard notes, for example, that the same text might urge wives to cede all authority to husbands while warning husbands against "the over-zealous exaction of submission" (72-73).

husband with the promise of “Lovers Enjoyment/ From morning till night,” Strephon places a limit on their lovemaking, saying:

Ah *Cloris* ! thy words  
Are so powerful with me,  
That I could be willing  
To tarry with thee :  
Therefore to content thee,  
One hour I will stay,  
But I vow by God *Cupid*  
I will then go away.<sup>43</sup>

For her part, Cloris accepts this compromise. Her unruly passions are thus satiated while Strephon demonstrates his manhood by keeping his own passions relatively in check. The ballad ends with balance achieved between lust and duty, between internal and external demands, and between the household and the outside world. A stable household, therefore, requires not just adhering to ideals of manhood but in knowing how to adhere and when; this suggests that patriarchal control is not necessarily easy to maintain but, instead, requires ongoing calibration and negotiation.

Indeed, one need only look to *The Lamentation of Cloris for the Unkindness of her Shepherd*, the direct response to Strephon and Cloris, to see how patriarchal control may be threatened by a lack of calibration and negotiation. Only one printing of this ballad is known to have existed with the broadside reading “Printed for F. Coles, T.

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<sup>43</sup> R218098 uses predominately black letter type with names appearing in roman. When quoting from the broadside, I have used italics to indicate the use of roman type.

Vere, I. Wright, I. Clarke, W. Thackeray, & T. Passinger.”<sup>44</sup> The six men were part of what Blagden identifies as a shifting and “formidable group of ballad proprietors” in the second half of the seventeenth century (161-62). Notably, both Coles and Wright were followed in business by their wives. Widows of members of the Stationers’ Company were allowed continued membership provided the death of their husbands had left them in financial hardship (H. Smith 166), and both Mary Coles and Mary Wright appear to have taken over, at least briefly, the respective businesses of their late husbands (Blagden 168, 171) with Mary Wright remaining involved in the trade long enough to take on an apprentice (Spufford, *Small Books* 85). Tracing changes in the partnership’s imprint across dozens of works, Blagden has suggested a date range for each configuration of the group (161-162). If his suggestions are correct, the imprint as it appears on *The Lamentation of Cloris* would signal a production date between 1678-1680. By utilizing the same stock characters as *Strephon and Cloris* and placing them in the same situation, *The Lamentation of Cloris* functions as an “answer ballad.” Indeed, the broadside includes a notation that it is to be sung to the tune of “O Cloris awake,” a tune to which other, unrelated ballads are set but that is likely titled for the first line of *Strephon and Cloris* (“Oh! Cloris awake”). Given *The Lamentation of Cloris*’s function as an answer ballad, at least one version of *Strephon and Cloris* must have circulated between 1678 and 1680, attaining sufficient popularity for Coles, Vere, Wright, Clarke, Thackeray, and Passinger to want to capitalize on its success. Here, *The Lamentation of*

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<sup>44</sup> I. Wright and I. Clarke are likely typographical substitutions for J. Wright and J. Clarke. Indeed, similar I/J substitutions can be spotted on other broadside ballads printed for the group such as *A Looking-glass for a Christian Family* (R227246) and *Even in the Twinkling of an Eye*. A subsequent printing of *A Looking-glass for a Christian Family* produced after Coles and Vere were no longer in the partnership does use “J. Wright” and “J. Clarke” (see ESTC Citation No. R228336).

*Cloris*'s anonymous author does so by taking Strephon and Cloris, placing them in the same scenario, and telling the tale from a female perspective. As in *Strephon and Cloris*, it is Strephon's inability to find balance in *The Lamentation of Cloris* that destabilizes his household; here, however, the situation continues, unchecked, allowing the work to function as a sort of "what if?" to its predecessor in a way that closely aligns with depictions of the multiverse concept most familiar to modern audiences.<sup>45</sup>

Like its predecessor, *The Lamentation of Cloris* features a young wife who desires sexual attention. In this case, however, Strephon cannot be enticed by Cloris's charms, leaving each morning before she wakes and returning too weary to fulfill his husbandly duties; in doing so, he undermines both the stability of his household and Cloris's own duties and role as a married woman. While the Strephon of *Strephon and Cloris* faces the tears of his Cloris, the Strephon of *The Lamentation of Cloris* is oblivious to the distress of his wife, tending to his flock while she is reduced to a "sorrowful wretch" who weeps in secret. As Strephon's neglect continues, Cloris laments "I have no hopes / that I e're shall enjoy / As the fruits of my labour, / A Girl or a Boy," indicating that motherhood is a fundamental aspect of marital labour. Tormented by the desire for a child and the fulfilment of the role that has been socially prescribed her, Cloris speculates that the only way out of her predicament is to seize any opportunity to graft the cuckold's horns onto her unsuspecting husband in order to become pregnant. As Gowing has argued "adultery involved a certain assertion of

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<sup>45</sup> The words "what if" are often invoked in works exploring the idea of the multiverse. For example, the 1995 science fiction television show *Sliders* opened with the phrase "What if [...]" ("Pilot") while Marvel Studios has devoted an entire show devoted to exploring the multiverse and alternate versions of familiar characters titled *What If...?*

female autonomy” (*Domestic Dangers* 195) and *The Lamentation of Cloris* presents a young wife who is prepared to exercise this autonomy in pursuit of pregnancy.

The possibility that a wife might covertly bear a child belonging to a man other than her husband lay behind much of the anxiety surrounding adultery in the early modern period (Thomas 209; Gowing, *Domestic Dangers* 193). Yet, in *The Lamentation of Chloris*, not all husbands appear to be capable of fathering children. Gowing draws attention to the case of Margaret Marr, a woman who committed adultery, became pregnant, and blamed her husband for her previous inability to conceive (*Domestic Dangers* 194), and *The Lamentation of Chloris* similarly presents a woman who has not conceived through no fault of her own. As a result, Cloris is subjected to both anxiety within the household and to the potential of community judgement. As she ponders cuckolding her husband, she muses:

And for my so doing,  
Can any me blame,  
If they do but consider,  
What a scurrilous Name,  
Poor women receive  
That no Children do bear,  
Though the fault be their husbands  
Such dry souls they are.

With this stanza Cloris both acknowledges the social stigma against cuckoldry while inviting those who would judge her to consider what will happen to her social standing if she is unable to adhere to her prescribed gender role as the bearer of children. It is here that *The Lamentation of Cloris* most compellingly illustrates Natasha Würzbach’s

suggestion that the answer-ballad had the capability of functioning as something akin to a “discussion forum” (97). In inviting those who would judge her decisions to actively consider the labels placed upon women who do not bear children, *The Lamentation of Cloris* suggests that the pressure to adhere to normative ideals may actually act as a destabilizing force on marriage, implicitly inviting the audience to consider both their own roles in community judgement and what they might do in Cloris’s position, urging greater sympathy toward women than one might otherwise expect in a cuckoldry ballad.

Indeed, although most cuckoldry ballads seem to have been written from male perspectives (Clark 112), aligning with Breitenberg’s argument that masculine anxiety is a discourse largely engaged in by men, *The Lamentation of Cloris* is one of a handful of surviving broadsides that present sympathetic female narrators.<sup>46</sup> For example, *The Scolding Wives Vindication: Or an Answer to the Cuckold’s Complaint*, a response to an earlier cuckoldry ballad, features a young woman who is driven to adultery by sexual neglect after her maidenhead is left intact by her husband after two full years of marriage. Such neglect would not have been seen as being without risk as may have been alluded to in *The Lamentation of Cloris* with the lines “I’m sure flesh and Blood, / long cannot endure, / The pain that I feel, / without looking for a cure.” The reference to a cure invokes the disease of greensickness, thought to affect virgins. According to the broadside ballad *A Remedy for the Green Sickness*, greensickness could send a young woman to madness or death. A 1694 medical pamphlet on the use of “Bermuda berries” to cure greensickness, likewise, describes several purported cases of the condition,

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<sup>46</sup> While Clark’s argument that the genre was dominated by male perspectives is likely accurate based on surviving samples, it is worth bearing in mind that many broadside ballads did not survive the period. It is possible, therefore, that more cuckoldry ballads featuring sympathetic portrayals of women existed than have been identified.

including one in which a gentlewoman was “brought to the brink of the Grave; her Flesh was wasted, her Legs swelled, her Stomack lost, and her Legs so weak, not able to support her body” (*Some Observations* 6).<sup>47</sup> In leaving his wife’s maidenhead intact, the cuckolded husband of *The Scolding Wives Vindication* could be viewed as a very real threat to her health. While *The Lamentation of Cloris* does not establish Cloris’s maidenhead one way or the other, it is certainly possible that Strephon’s sexual neglect may have been perceived by audiences as a similar threat to his wife’s health since she, like the virgins in ballads and medical discourses surrounding greensickness, is not just unsatisfied sexually but completely sexually neglected. While *The Lamentation of Cloris* and *The Scolding Wives Vindication* both portray women as having stereotypically voracious sexual appetites — Cloris herself notes that she is young and that her “Nature requires/ A lusty young Ladd, / for to please [her] desires” — they nevertheless are notable for featuring women who turn to adultery only upon finding themselves in untenable situations that, arguably, put their health and community standing at risk.

Taken together, *Strephon and Cloris* and *The Lamentation of Cloris* demonstrate the potential of the broadside ballad to be a site of evolving discourse, one that pushes, at least tentatively, against convention. The difficulty Strephon faces in *Strephon and Cloris* in balancing husbandly duties and desire with commitments outside the household suggests that the roles and responsibilities offered to men and women in the early modern period were both more complicated and more fragile than indicated by the patriarchal household’s dominant role as a supposedly fundamental and natural unit of

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<sup>47</sup> The original pamphlet bears not author’s name but does include the claim that it was “[w]ritten by a Doctor of Physick in the Countrey” (*Some Observations* sig. A1r). The pamphlet has been attributed to various authors, including Thomas Trapham who is listed as the author by *Early English Books Online*.

social order in the early modern period. *The Lamentation of Cloris*, meanwhile illustrates that adultery on the part of women could be driven not just by desire but by more complex factors such as contemporary understandings of sexual health, social pressure to bear children, and the stigma attached to being childless. In providing examples of cuckoldry — or examples of situations that could lead to cuckoldry if not remedied — that do not overtly invoke the effeminized figures noted by Boehrer, these works present more complex ideas of masculinity and duty against which other men can judge their actions. In functioning as an answer-ballad, meanwhile, *The Lamentation of Cloris* allows for the rehearsal of various scenarios, presenting a road map for what will happen if the Strephon of *Stephon and Cloris* does not find balance. In doing so through a female narrator, however, *The Lamentation of Cloris* works against the anxious perspective that typically dominates the cuckoldry ballad genre, proving the potential of the broadside ballad to insert critical perspectives highlighting the impact of inattention and sexual neglect on women's health, happiness, fulfillment, and social standing into dominant discourses of masculine anxiety.

As *The Lovesick Shepherd, Loves Torments Eased by Death*, and *The Jealous Lover's Complaint* illustrate, broadside ballads had the capacity to function as sites that not only reflected the anxieties and complexities of the times in which they were produced but that also pushed back against social changes that were seen as a threat to dominant power structures. However, they also held the power to do more than act in support of existing social structures and systems. As *Stephon and Cloris* and *The Lamentation of Cloris* show, broadside ballads sometimes engaged directly with each other, allowing for multiple viewpoints, evolving discourses, and the insertion of

nuanced perspectives that brought more balanced consideration to subjects such as adultery. As such, these texts actively expanded discourse in ways that sometimes pushed against dominant narratives that often privileged masculine anxiety and masculine attempts at control. Studying the imprints of individual broadside sheets, meanwhile, provides important insight into how ideas and discourses were transmitted inside London and to rural areas through chapmen and other peddlers while also revealing the active engagement of women in the seventeenth-century book trade, both in production and in distribution.

### Chapter Three: Chloris Crossing Boundaries

Chapter one explored how depictions of Chloris in literature illustrate the complexities of female desire and behaviour in the early modern period. Chapter two, meanwhile, focussed on Chloris texts that demonstrate the flexibility of the broadside ballad to respond both to social shifts and to other ephemeral works, creating complex and evolving discourses that were distributed across London and along rural routes travelled by chapmen. This last chapter features Chloris texts which explicitly cross traditional lines of gender, both in terms of content and authorship. The first, *The Wandering Virgin; or the Coy Lass Well Fitted*, is an anonymously penned broadside ballad. While the first-person narrator is not named in either of the two known editions of the work, one edition includes the instruction that it is to be sung “To the Tune of, Cloris awake, or the loving Chambermaid” (R227458). As noted in chapter two, the tune “Cloris awake” appears on multiple broadside ballads and likely takes its name from the first line of *Strephon and Cloris; or the Coy Shepherd and Kind Shepherdess*. Christopher Marsh has argued that contemporary audiences formed unconscious links between individual ballads based on the use of repeated elements such as woodcuts and that “[e]ach publication was a little web of possibilities in itself, but it also took its part in a far more extensive web that incorporated the ballad genre as a whole” (246). Along a similar vein, Sarah F. Williams has analyzed broadsides set to the tune of “The Ladies Fall,” arguing that seventeenth-century works set to that tune can generally be placed into a few thematic categories representing “cautionary tales for and about women” (41). Extending their arguments, one may consider the instruction that *The Wandering Virgin* be sung to “Cloris awake” as a thread connecting this broadside to other Chloris texts. Indeed, given that the narrator of *The Wandering Virgin* remains unnamed throughout,

audiences may have instinctively seized on Chloris as a familiar moniker and possible narrator. Owing to this possibility, it is worth considering *The Wandering Virgin* alongside other Chloris texts, particularly as it is one of at least two works to connect the name to cross-dressing in the early modern period. The second text, Aphra Behn's *The Amorous Prince, Or, The Curious Husband*, is one of the earliest female-authored plays to be publicly staged in London. Both texts feature cross-dressing heroines — one who cross-dresses in a rich fantasy, the other who cross-dresses for practical purposes — and both feature moments that suggest early modern transgender identities or expressions and longings for physical forms beyond those inhabited at birth. As such, the works considered in this chapter transverse limits, providing new opportunities for representation, exploration, and expression.

### **Cross-dressing Women and Transgender Lives in Early Modern England**

In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth-centuries, England's polemicists were swept up by the concern that women had taken to dressing in masculine attire. So strong was the unease that in January of 1620 James I asked that the clergy address the issue from the pulpit (Lucas 74; Howard 420). That same year, two notorious tracts, *Hic Mulier* and *Haec-Vir*, were produced. The first, *Hic Mulier*, attacks the practice of female cross-dressing (Howard 430), claiming that “since the daies of Adam women were never so Masculine” (sig. A3r). The second seems to defend the practice of women dressing in male attire, even going so far as to suggest that both gendered attire and gender hierarchies are socially constructed, before reversing course to end on a note that supports its predecessor (Howard 428).

Despite this avowed unease, it is difficult to gauge how many women actually adopted masculine garb. While accounts of women cross-dressing in the early modern period certainly exist, the number of recorded cases is relatively small, suggesting either that only a few took part in the practice or that the majority of people who cross-dressed did so without raising suspicion or ire. Noting that “the controversy appears well in excess of the actual threat,” Mark Breitenberg argues that the attacks on cross-dressing may have stemmed not from cross-dressing women, themselves, but “as catalytic signs of a set of prior fears and anxieties” (150). Similarly, Jean E. Howard argues that “crossdressing, as fact and as idea, threatened a normative social order based upon strict principles of hierarchy and subordination” (418). Such views position the response to cross-dressing as symptoms of an awareness and concern over the limitations of patriarchal systems and control.

In terms of known cases, Judith M. Bennett and Shannon McSheffrey note approximately twenty documented cases of potential female cross-dressing in the sixteenth century (22-24) but caution that “knowledge of female cross-dressers is partly an artifact of source survival” (3). Likewise, although Howard notes cases where women were punished for the practice in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the cases she references only reflect instances where cross-dressing was noted and punished, often in connection with some other offence such as suspected prostitution (420-421). If, as the data referenced by Howard suggests, cross-dressing was more likely to be recorded in connection with concerns such as prostitution, then archival sources are more likely to reflect only those cases in which cross-dressing accompanied criminalized activity, leaving other cases of individuals who cross-dressed or were transgender unrecorded in many archival sources. And yet, evidence does exist of both women who

cross-dressed and of individuals who might today be considered transgender.<sup>48</sup> Indeed, in an examination of the 1601 French case of Marin le Marcis, raised as a woman but realizing later that he was a man, Katherine Perry Long finds much that would resonate with modern transgender individuals, including the agency le Marcis exhibits in wishing to be recognized as a man, the difficulties he faces in attempting this, and the support of his future wife and her family (71).<sup>49</sup>

This is not to say, of course, that all cross-dressing women in London exhibited signs of leading transgender lives. Currently, cross-dressing is viewed as “the practice of wearing gender atypical clothing” for any of a variety of meanings and motivations (Stryker 17-18), and this appears to have been equally true of the practice in the early modern period. Indeed, Howard argues that some level of cross-dressing could be found amongst women of all social classes in the early seventeenth century, although the meanings ascribed to cross-dressing varied considerably across class (421). For citizen wives, adopting pieces of masculine garb may have been viewed as fashion statements; for lower class women, however, cross-dressing may have been intended as a form of protection as well as being construed as a sign of prostitution or promiscuity (421).

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<sup>48</sup> As Jack Halberstam has noted, a benefit of the term “transgender” is that it can accommodate a variety of lived experiences, including the experiences of those who do not undergo surgery or undertake hormone regimes (8). Susan Stryker, likewise, sees value in the flexibility of the term, arguing that transgender, as a concept, represents “the movement away from an unchosen starting place [...] rather than any particular destination or mode of transition” (1). Although the term dates only to the 1970s and became popular only over the past two decades (“transgender, adj. and n.”), Stryker argues for use of “transgender” as “a shorthand way of talking about a wide range of gender variance and gender atypicality in periods before the word was coined” (24). Furthermore, there is ample evidence of individuals who would today be considered transgender in both literature and historical records that predate the official coinage of the term. See, for example, LaFleur et al. (4) and Prosser (10).

<sup>49</sup> In considering the case of Marin le Marcis, Long relies on Jacques Duval’s contemporary chronicling of the case in his text *Des hermaphrodits, accouchemens des femmes et traitement qui est requis pour les relever en santé et bien élever leurs enfans* (*On Hermaphrodites, Women’s Labor in Childbirth, and the Treatment That is Required to Lift Them Up Again in Good Health and Raise Their Children Well*) (69). Long discusses at length how Duval’s seventeenth-century characterization differs from Michel Foucault’s positioning of the case in his twentieth-century lectures (85-88).

Some women, meanwhile, undoubtedly chose to live as men, either temporarily or on a more permanent basis. Johanna Goodman, for example, attempted to pass as a male servant in order to accompany her husband to war in 1569, for which she was whipped and sentenced to time at Bridewell (421). Both Mary Read and Anne Bonny, female pirates who were captured — along with their male captain and male shipmates — in 1720 and tried in either late 1720 or early 1721 (Rediker, *Liberty* 5; 2) are said to have passed as boys as children.<sup>50</sup> Mary Read’s mother allegedly passed the illegitimately born Read off as a legitimately born son who had died in infancy in order to collect support from her deceased husband’s family (3-5). Bonny, also illegitimately born, is said to have been passed off as the male child of a relation by her father (32). Both women would eventually take up seafaring, dressing as men as necessary. In this, they were not alone. There are more than one hundred accounts of Dutch women dressing as men to serve in the military in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, some of whom took female lovers or wives (Cressy 459-60). It seems probable that other individuals quietly assumed gender identities that did not correspond with their assigned sex at birth for much less adventurous purposes, quietly leading lives that went largely unrecorded.

Such a feat would likely be quite possible. In their landmark twentieth-century studies on gender, Suzanne Kessler and Wendy McKenna found that once an individual has made a gender attribution about someone else “almost anything can be filtered through it [the original attribution] and made sense of” (167-68). Furthermore, Kessler

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<sup>50</sup> Most of what has been said of Mary Read and Anne Bonny appears in *A General History of the Pyrates* by Captain Charles Johnson, published in two volumes in 1724 and 1728 (Rediker, *Villains* 104-05). While these publications fall outside of the scope of this thesis, the childhood cross-dressing of Read and Bonny would likely have occurred several years prior to their capture in 1720. Scholars have speculated that “Captain Charles Johnson” was, in fact, a pseudonym (See Eastman 194).

and McKenna found that individuals do not weigh “‘male’ cues” and “‘female’ cues” equally, with the “presence of a ‘male’ cue” potentially being enough to signify “maleness” but the “presence of a ‘female’ cue, by itself” not necessarily signifying “femaleness” (171). This may help explain why so few cases of female cross-dressing have been documented. In a city expanding as rapidly as London, a tendency in people to overlook gender cues in favour of an initial gender attribution may have allowed a number of early modern cross-dressers and transgender individuals to go unnoticed. Any “female” cues may have simply been cancelled out by items associated with “maleness.”

While cross-dressing and transgender identities are distinct, the adoption of clothing that did not correspond with one’s assigned sex at birth may be one way of identifying potential transgender individuals in history. As Greta LaFluer et al. note in their introduction to *Trans Historical: Gender Plurality Before the Modern*, “archival silences, gaps, and erasures bear a uniquely structuring influence on the landscape of the field” of transgender studies (2). This makes locating potential trans narratives in the early modern period challenging, particularly as much of the evidence that does exist has been mediated (3) with information being transmitted over time “via the interventions of the authors, scribes, and amanuenses who told the stories; by people who recorded and passed down the stories; and by those who either permitted or did not permit the written texts of such stories to survive” (4). Texts that do survive, meanwhile, may be subject to cisgender bias in their interpretation. Simone Chess et al. argue that a cross-discipline, cross-aisle tendency to view the existence of trans identities as a recent phenomenon is still very much present (1). Noting that “cisgender readings of texts and histories have been dominant for so long that they are treated as neutral” (95), M.W. Bychowski argues that “[c]omparable to how trans people are typically assumed to be cisgender at birth

and raised to be cisgender by parents, so too do scholars of history compulsively assign cisgender assumptions to people and texts of the past without stopping to seriously consider trans potential” (96). Thus, trans histories are mediated in the way they are generated and recorded, through the agency of those who facilitate or inhibit their survival, and through the interpretations of scholars who make determinations as to whether texts have trans potential. This chapter, accordingly, will explore trans possibilities in the Chloris texts *The Wandering Virgin* and in *The Amorous Prince*.

### **The Wandering Virgin**

In contrast to texts such as *Hic Mulier*, a wave of broadside ballads and plays in which female characters donned breeches lasted throughout the seventeenth century, suggesting an audience appetite for women stepping into manly garb and out of typical gender roles — at least temporarily and within certain limits. Included in this wave is *The Wandering Virgin; or the Coy Lass Well Fitted*, an anonymously penned broadside ballad that, at first glance, appears to align with a number of seventeenth-century ballads in which women don masculine garb to follow a lover from whom they have been separated. When one considers the rhetorical strategies used within the text, however, *The Wandering Virgin* can be read as an early transgender narrative, one that masks a desire for physical transformation from woman to man within the framework and expectations of a popular format.

Told in the first-person perspective of a young woman who has been abandoned by a suitor, the broadside opens with a brief preface cautioning “Virgins whose coyness & disdain does prove / The fatal ruine of cemented Love” to learn from the tale before

moving through a series of thirteen stanzas.<sup>51</sup> Each stanza begins with six lines that either recount the wandering virgin's failed courtship or detail her fantasies about donning male garb and traversing the globe. Each stanza ends with two lines in which the wandering virgin professes, or perhaps threatens, to locate her wayward love. The twelfth stanza, typical of the ballad's structure, depicts the moment in which the virgin's fantasies reach their height:

I'le search over *England*,  
to see if't contain;  
If not, i'le turn Sailor,  
and search on the Main  
The Ocean, so boundless,  
i'le travell about,  
*I'le range the wide world,*  
*but i'le find my Love out.*<sup>52</sup>

At this point, the narrator turns her attention back to the virgins addressed in the ballad's preface. After explicitly claiming that her maidenhead "still is [her] own," she insists that she would have given it to her love had he only asked. The ballad ends with her imparting a final word of caution to "have a care; / lest like me you cry out, / *I'le find him, or wander / the world all about.*"

At first glance, such characteristics align with what Dianne Dugaw identifies as the figure of the "Anglo-American Warrior Woman" in her book-length study *Warrior*

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<sup>51</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all quotations are from R227458.

<sup>52</sup> R227458 uses predominately black letter type with some words and lines appearing in roman. When quoting from the broadside, I have used italics to indicate the use of roman type.

*Women and Popular Balladry, 1650-1850* (1). Indeed, Dugaw cites *The Wandering Virgin* as an example of the “warrior woman” figure and its corresponding genre (150-51), a genre that Dugaw argues first rose to popularity around 1600 in London with the ballad character Mary Ambree (1) and became especially popular after the restoration of Charles II to the English throne (47). Preceded by folk heroes such as Long Meg of Westminster who disguised herself as a man in pursuit of “justice, pranks and patriotism” (Lucas 76) and appearing more or less parallel to the real-life Mary Frith who seems to have adopted a blend of masculine and feminine garb largely to please herself and who was the inspiration for works such as Thomas Middleton and Thomas Dekker’s *The Roaring Girl*, the warrior woman figure identified by Dugaw is almost always motivated by love to don breeches and embark on adventures (36). Certainly, love appears to be a key motivation for the wandering virgin. A closer look at both Dugaw’s analysis of the warrior woman and the contents of the ballad, however, complicates classification of *The Wandering Virgin* as typical of the genre.

Dugaw argues that the warrior woman genre relies on a set of five “elements unfold[ing] in ordered and predictable ways”:

(1) a courtship and the threatened or actual separation of the heroine and her beloved; (2) discourse (usually a debate) during which the woman proposes that she disguise herself in soldier or sailor garb and accompany her man to war; (3) various trials the masquerading woman undergoes to prove both her love and her valor; (4) various tests of love imposed on the heroine’s lover (and in many ballads on her parents as well); and (5) (usually) happy resolutions of these events. (92-93)

Although some ballads include all five elements, Dugaw notes that most incorporate just three or four (93). Almost all, however, include a happy resolution, typically marriage (41), which reaffirms the warrior woman's female identity and re-establishes "male-dominated social order" that the ballads seem to challenge by virtue of their heroine's adventures (4). In the case of *The Wandering Virgin*, however, these elements are fundamentally complicated through matters of timing. Although courtship and separation are recounted by the virgin, both events occur an undisclosed amount of time before the opening of the ballad. Likewise, although the virgin imagines travelling the world — what would be, in Dugaw's system, the trial stage the heroine must pass through in order to demonstrate love and valor — she does not actually embark on a journey. Each element, from cutting her hair to taking up a sword to the regions she will explore, is restricted by the use of "i'le." For example, when speaking of cutting her hair, the wandering virgin says, "And my long yellow Locks / much shorter i'le take." Likewise, when speaking of arming herself, she declares, "I'le get me a switch / and a sword by my side." Dugaw notes these lines, stating, "In *The Wandering Virgin*, the woman refers to transforming acts..." (150), but does not address the implications of such acts being positioned as an imagined future rather than undertaken.

Because the virgin only imagines her exploits, the ballad occupies a curiously liminal space, one in which the narrator is locked into the discourse stage identified by Dugaw.<sup>53</sup> Indeed, the publication history of *The Wandering Virgin* positions it explicitly

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<sup>53</sup> Dugaw notes that the late-seventeenth-century broadside ballad *The Seaman's Doleful Farewell* and an eighteenth-century retelling, "Billy and Nancy's Kind Parting," are also restricted to the discourse stage with a woman threatening to dress as a sailor in order to follow her lover to sea. In both cases, however, the lover quickly talks the woman out of the prospect, keeping the ballads from moving into the warrior women genre (104-105).

as a response to another work. While one edition bears the title of *The Wandering Virgin: or, The Coy Lass Well Fitted* (R227458), the other bears the longer title of *The Wandering Virgin; or, The Coy Lass Well Fitted; or, the Answer to the Wand'ring Maiden* (R228648), and it is the last section of this longer title that is significant. As explored in chapter two, some broadside ballads were positioned as responses, or “answers,” to works already in circulation (Würzbach 95), functioning almost as a type of discussion forum (97). In this case, one edition of *The Wandering Virgin*, likely the first edition produced, notes that it should be considered an answer to the broadside ballad *The Wandring Maiden; or, True Love at length United*. At its most basic level, therefore, *The Wandering Virgin* can be thought of as one half of a discourse created with *The Wandering Maiden*, a work in which a young woman, believing herself abandoned by her male lover, searches “Over Hills, and high Mountains” and “Through brushes and bryars” until he hears of her distress and appears at her side.

Although the heroine of *The Wandering Maiden* searches far and wide, she does so in ways that align with early modern expectations of femininity: she does not disguise her appearance; she is weighed down by grief; she cries tears of lamentation; and she ultimately wishes for death if she cannot be reunited with her love — as if her only reason for living is patriarchal marriage. In response to this tale, *The Wandering Virgin* presents a narrator who imagines a search filled with disguises and possibility. The wandering virgin does not picture herself following in the wandering maiden’s footsteps. Nor does she fantasize about a scenario in which her lover, like that of the wandering maiden, returns of his own accord. Instead, the wandering virgin imagines leaving her female identity behind without picturing any sort of reunion or resolution. By failing to extend her fantasy to a reunion, the wandering virgin keeps that fantasy focussed on

masculine garb and adventure without imaging a return to a female identity and the patriarchal order.

It is here that I wish to propose a reading of *The Wandering Virgin* that considers the possibility that the character is less interested in locating a suitor than in the transgressive possibilities they envision could be involved in the search for him. In such a reading, the proposed pursuit of a socially acceptable lover is used to justify, and perhaps shield, the desire for a masculine identity. Indeed, because of the ballad's construction, each time the virgin expresses a desire to cross gender lines — be it for breeches, a sword, or freedom of movement across land and sea — some variation of “*but i'le find my Love out*” follows, cloaking the preceding lines in an assurance that the virgin is motivated by the desire for a man even as, textually, the desire to cross gender lines is given considerably more space. Jack Halberstam has argued that “[h]aving language for certain modes of desire had an enormous impact on how people lived, loved, and hid or exposed themselves” (6). What I propose is that the wandering virgin uses the form of the warrior woman ballad, identified by Dugaw, as a means of exploring a masculine identity that conflicts with the gender presentation they have been assigned.

A logical starting point from which to consider *The Wandering Virgin* through a transgender lens is the work's title. Here, though, is a complication. Although the shift from “maiden” in *The Wandering Maiden* to “virgin” suggests a move to greater gender neutrality, “virgin” may simply have been selected to distinguish *The Wandering Virgin* from its predecessor, particularly given that each work was produced by a different printer. Furthermore, the term “virgin” could be applied to either sex in the seventeenth century but was more commonly applied to women (“virgin, n. and adj.”); indeed, a

plethora of broadside ballads from the period reference female virgins in their titles. However, *The Wandering Virgin* is not the work's full title. Although the title differs between editions, both broadsides feature the text "The coy lass well fitted" which anchors the virgin's gender with "lass." Yet even this does not settle the question. Because the first part of the title references the virgin's imagined wanderings, "well fitted" can be taken as a reference to the clothes and accessories the virgin envisions adopting for their quest. The adjective has two definitions, both of which were in circulation in the seventeenth century:

1. a. Perfectly suitable or appropriate; very fitting. Also: perfectly suited; well-adapted. b. Of a garment, shoes, etc.: exactly adjusted or shaped to fit one's body; that is the right size or shape; close fitting.

2. Fully equipped or furnished. ("well-fitted, adj.")

The notion that masculine attire could be "perfectly suitable" for a "lass" is a far cry from the claim in *Hic Mulier* that God gifted clothes to humankind and made "not one coat, but a coat for the man, and a coat for the woman" (sig. B3v), yet the inclusion of "well fitted" in the title suggests that masculine apparel is the right shape for the virgin's body, that the virgin is, in some way, not fully equipped until they have shorn their hair, changed into breeches, and strapped a sword to their side. One might even go so far as to argue that the title implies that the wandering virgin must cross-dress in order to achieve a sense of rightness or readiness, suggesting that the virgin is not necessarily a woman after all.

This possibility is reinforced through the ways in which the virgin first articulates a change in their appearance. Rather than simply imagining trading a gown for breeches, the wandering virgin proclaims, "Then straight my green gown / into

breeches i'le make.” This line is both puzzling and intriguing. The term “green gown” appears with some regularity in seventeenth-century ballads and is typically portrayed as given from a man to a woman. For example, the broadside ballad *The May-day Country Mirth: or, The Young Lads and Lasses Innocent Recreation* contains the lines “Yonder comes Dolly over the Down, / And Roger he gives her [a] fair green Gown” (italics in original) while *The Winchester Wedding: Or Ralph of Reading and Black Bess of the Green* includes the lines “Kit gave a green gown to Betty, / and lent her his hand to rise.”<sup>54</sup> Indeed, the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines a “green gown” as “[a] dress stained green from rolling in the grass” but defines “to give a woman a green gown” as “to engage in amorous play with a woman; (*euphemistic*) to deflower, deprive a woman of her virginity” (“green gown, n”). What might it imply, then, that the wandering virgin is in possession of a green gown and what would it mean for a woman to fashion her own green gown into breeches?

While it is possible that “green gown” is intended in the slightly more innocent context of the term, indicating that “amorous play” has taken place but stopped short of sexual intercourse, reading the phrase as its more euphemistic definition of deflowering highlights the potential for *The Wandering Virgin* to be read as an early modern trans tale. In *Second Skins: The Body Narratives of Transsexuality*, Jay Prosser poses the question: “[I]f the body were but a costume, consider: why the life quest to alter its contours?” (67). A “green gown” is not merely a costume in early modern literature. At the very least, the phrase references sexual experience. Often, it symbolizes a loss in virginity. It is possible, therefore, to read the lines “Then straight my green gown / into

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<sup>54</sup> “Roger” was sometimes used as slang for “penis” in the seventeenth-century (“roger, n. 4”), adding an additional layer of sexual content to the line.

breeches i'le make” as a sign that the wandering virgin associates the donning of breeches with bodily transformation. Without a suitor, their maidenhead is completely their own — at least for the time being. Rather than wait and offer it to another, they imagine refashioning it in service of their transformation. In an era in which clothing was given such weight that the king of England asked the clergy to discourage women from adopting masculine garb, it is plausible that, absent the medical advances that would become associated with trans identities for many in the twentieth century, certain items of clothing would take on significance similar to body modification and that the wandering virgin cannot conceive of donning breeches without there being some corresponding change to their physical body. Indeed, it is only after the virgin imagines turning their “green gown” into breeches that they envision the phallic accessories of switch and sword.

Early modern science and medical writings did allow for the possibility that a woman could change sex. As Joseph Gamble has established, the term “transfeminate” was first coined by Sir Thomas Browne in the 1646 omnibus *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* in discussing a theory that hares might be capable of changing sexes (26-27).<sup>55</sup> In refuting this theory, Browne draws on physicians who, considering cases in which women were reported to have spontaneously changed into men, reached a general conclusion that, as paraphrased by Gamble, such men “had always been men — that they were born that way — and that their bodily transformations merely affirmed the person they had always

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<sup>55</sup> Gamble provides a thorough and thought-provoking analysis of the journey and evolution of “transfeminate,” beginning with Browne’s coinage of the term in 1646, Thomas Blount’s definition of it as “to turn from woman to man, or from one sex to another” in his 1656 *Glossographia* (26), and as it appears — and sometimes changes — through its inclusion in various dictionaries in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries (29-32).

been” (28). Such cases were discussed with relative frequency in the sixteenth century with anecdotes of seemingly spontaneous changes in sex appearing across a number of medical and scientific texts, many in Latin, some in vernacular.<sup>56</sup> One such work was French surgeon Ambroise Paré’s 1573 text *On Monsters and Marvels* (*Des monstres et prodiges*) in which he shares four such anecdotes in a section titled “Memorable Stories about Women Who Have Degenerated into Men” (Beecher 999-1000). These anecdotes are followed by an explanation that women have the same matter as men, but due to their lesser heat, this matter remains hidden within the body’s interior except in rare cases where sufficient heat or movement forces the matter out. Paré further claims that a woman might become a man but the reverse could not occur as Nature moves toward the perfect, masculine, form (Parker 338-339). This theory is not unique to Paré. As Thomas Laqueur has chronicled, Galen theorized that “women were essentially men in whom a lack of vital heat—of perfection—had resulted in the retention, inside, of structures that in the male are visible without” in the second century CE (4). This “one-sex model” circulated until end of the seventeenth century (25), although, as Donald Beecher notes, other theories about why a woman might seem to change into a man also existed (999). While Beecher argues that Paré’s text was “virtually the last to interpret the collected anecdotes according to the one-sex model” (999), Paré’s work circulated widely in English translation throughout the seventeenth century.<sup>57</sup> A text titled *The Workes of that Famous Chirurgion Ambrose Parey* was produced multiple times during the sixteenth-century with editions appearing in 1634, 1649, 1665, 1678, and 1691.<sup>58</sup> Both the 1665

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<sup>56</sup> For a list of authors who addressed the topic in Latin texts, see Beecher (994).

<sup>57</sup> Paré’s work also circulated widely in French, with his collected works being published six times in France between 1575 and 1607 and at least five times between 1607 and 1652 (Long 74).

<sup>58</sup> Some of these editions varied in terms of content, title, and front piece,

and 1678 editions were produced by women. Ellen Cotes, widow of printer Richard Cotes, produced the 1665 edition, listing her name as E.C. on the title page while Mary Clark, widow of Andrew Clark, produced the 1678 edition. The two were amongst at least twenty female publishers to produce medical texts in late Stuart London, and it is possible that Cotes, having no heir, handed the title off to Clark (Furdell 108). All five editions include the four anecdotes of women becoming men found in Paré's *On Monsters and Marvels* and all five editions include Paré's attribution of the change to the "one-sex model."

Paré's brief accounts of bodies undergoing shocking transformations resonate with the interpretation of the wandering virgin's fantasy of making breeches from a green gown as a signification for physical transformation, particularly Paré's recounting of the case of Germane Garnierus, or Germane Marie. Raised as a girl until the age of fifteen, Germane "leaped violently over a ditch, whereby it came to pass that the stayes and foldings being broken, his hidden members suddenly broke forth" (Pare, R216891, 650-651). One could equate the "foldings" mentioned by Paré with the folds of a gown or consider whether the rushing forth of hitherto hidden members would destroy one's maidenhead as effectively as if the green gown had been given by a suitor. Indeed, in discussing Paré's accounts of such cases, Thomas Laqueur notes that a variety of activities "might just be enough to break the *interior-exterior barrier* and produce on a 'woman' the marks of a 'man'" (127; emphasis added). Whether intentional or not, it is difficult to read Laqueur's use of the phrase "interior-exterior barrier" and not envision the rupturing of a hymen or the loss of maidenhead.

As noted by Patricia Parker, the anecdote of Germane Garnierus also appears in both a 1580 entry in Michel de Montaigne's travel journals, a work which did not appear

in print until the mid-seventeenth century, and in Montaigne's *Essais* (337-41). It is the inclusion and positioning of the anecdote in *Essais* that primarily interests Parker, what Parker refers to as the "altered and altering context" arising from the relocation of the story (341), and it is this "altered and altering context" that has special bearing when placing the story of Germane Garnierus in dialogue with *The Wandering Virgin*. The essay in which the anecdote appears is titled "De la force de l'imagination." It opens with the claim that imagination can shape events and influence the individual (Parker 341) before moving through examples of imagination supposedly bringing forth events that impact the body (342). While a 1580 version of the essay ended with a story from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, a 1588 version ends with the story of Germane Garnierus. Although Parker notes that the *Essais* are famous for their "almost epigrammatically extractable misogyny" (356), the implications of the inclusion of the story of a body that seems to transform from female to male in an essay revolving around the power of imagination are worth considering, particularly as a translation of this version of the essay circulated in English in 1613 in the volume *Essays Written in French by Michael Lord of Montaigne [...]*. If the transition of Germane Garnierus can, in some way, be linked to the power imagination has over the body — and, indeed, Montaigne includes personal anecdotes of his imagination impacting his health — then it is worth considering whether or not the wandering virgin's imagination could have generative, transformative potential in a ballad that sets the transformation in an imagined future. Indeed, one might compare the following lines from *The Wandering Virgin* with lines by Montaigne. From the ballad:

My breath it grows short  
and my face pale and wan

Which makes me admire  
the power of the man:  
My heart it doth tremble,  
which makes me to doubt  
*I shall want of my wits  
if I find him not out.*

The 1613 English translation of Montaigne's essay, meanwhile, includes the line "Wee sweate, we shake, we grow pale, and we blush at the motions of our imaginations; and wallowing in our beds we feele our bodies agitated and turmoiled [...]" (40). Although the wandering virgin ostensibly grows short of breath, pale, and wan at the thought of not finding their suitor, if one views the last two lines of each stanza as an attempt to cloak the virgin's desires in a more socially acceptable framework, then the lines could also reference the virgin's fear of not finding their true, masculine form or identity. The virgin's fantasies may be located in the mind, but early modern culture allows for the possibility that such fantasies could exert material force on the body.

*The Wandering Virgin* is an intriguing piece of ephemera, one which uses rhetorical strategies and connotative terms that open the work to multiple interpretations and potential trans readings. In a period in which women lived and dressed in ways that did not align with their biological sex, when transformation from woman to man was considered medically possible, and imagination was thought to impact the body, to consider the text solely from a cisgender perspective would be to ignore the complexities of the time during which it was produced. It would be, to borrow M.W. Bychowski's conceptualization of the "cisgender turn," to engage in the "compulsory cisgender assignments wherein a historical [or, in this case, textual] figure is assumed to be

cisgender unless proven otherwise” (97-98). *The Wandering Virgin* demonstrates the transgressive potential in works that feature cross-dressing, potential which is also illustrated through the final Chloris text examined at length in this thesis: Aphra Behn’s *The Amorous Prince, Or, The Curious Husband*.

### ***The Amorous Prince***

As *The Amorous Prince, Or, The Curious Husband* illustrates, Chloris was not confined to printed texts, and in 1671, she could be found on the English stage, brought to life by both a female playwright and a female actress. The idea of a female playwright was not uncontroversial, as Aphra Behn acknowledged when her first play, *The Forced Marriage, or The Jealous Bridegroom*, was performed by the Duke’s Company. As Paul Salzman notes, the prologue for *The Forced Marriage* boldly “announces that a significant gender division has been crossed” (109). Indeed, the play’s prologue, delivered by a male actor, warns that women “Would by new Stratagems our Light invade” before cautioning men that “Discourage but this first attempt, and then / They’le hardly dare to sally out again” (sig A2r).<sup>59</sup> Although Behn might be forgiven for her claim of being the first woman to have a play grace the stage, it was something of an exaggeration. The King’s Company had produced Frances Boothby’s *Marcellia, or The Treacherous Friend* in 1669, and Katherine Philip’s translation of *La Mort de Pompeé* had been performed in Dublin in 1663 (Hayden 7). The date of Elizabeth Polwhele’s *The Faithful Virgins*, also produced by The Duke’s Company, is somewhat disputed, but it

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<sup>59</sup> The word “light” may have been a printing error. Janet Todd notes that there are numerous issues with the 1671 printing of the play, including sections placed out of order and variations in character names (*Secret Life* 147). In a 1688 edition printed for James Knapton, the line reads “Would by new Stratagems our *lives* invade” (sig. A2r; emphasis added).

was likely performed in 1669 or 1670 (Milhous and Hume 7-8). These, of course, reflect only publicly staged works. An untold number of women, including Margaret Cavendish, had written closet dramas and plays that remained in the private sphere. Still, while Behn was not the first English woman to pen a play or have her work grace the public stage, she is widely regarded as the first woman to make a living as a professional writer, rivalling, if not outright surpassing her male contemporaries.<sup>60</sup> While some critics claim that only John Dryden was more prolific (Finke 18; Hutner 2), Derek Hughes argues that Behn likely had eighteen plays debut between 1670 and her death, at least twenty-five percent more than Dryden or any other competitor during the same period (*Restoration Theatre*, 30). If anyone was scandalized at the thought that a woman had usurped a role traditionally taken by men in presenting a play, they would soon be treated to other incursions in Behn's second staged work, *The Amorous Prince, Or, The Curious Husband*, a play in which the female gaze is turned to the complications of libertine values and a heroine's decision to cross-dress prompts considerations of gender fluidity and sexual double standards; and if Behn's first outing was indeed a stratagem to invade, then more such invasions would soon be launched.

*The Amorous Prince* opens with a man's initial foray into a woman's bedroom. Act one, scene one begins with the following stage direction: "The Camber of Cloris. Enter Cloris drest in her night Attire, with Frederick Dressing Himself," employing iconography that Hughes describes as suggestive of "invasion and domination" (*Theatre*

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<sup>60</sup> Exact tallies of Behn's plays are complicated by the fact that some were staged and/or published anonymously. However, while not all playwrights of the era made it into print, Janet Todd notes that almost all of Behn's plays were published (*Secret Life* 147). In contrast to Hughes tally of eighteen plays, Todd argues for the existence of seventeen acknowledged plays, contending that if an edition of a play was published at some point during Behn's lifetime with her name on the titlepage, the play was "acknowledged" by Behn as her work (*Works*, V xi).

40). Given the Restoration's fondness for rakes and tales of sexual conquest, such an opening may not seem remarkable. As Hughes explains, however, the opening was "shockingly unprecedented, for in-play sex had hitherto been reserved for a few low farces" (40). Two things are rapidly conveyed in the dialogue that follows: Cloris is concerned that Frederick may not honour the vows he has made her and Frederick does not wish to be caught by those of the household in which Cloris dwells, arguing that discovery would "prove unhappy" for each of them (1.1.8). Both concerns reinforce the daring of the scene and convey a sense of the stakes faced by Cloris in allowing a male incursion of her chambers and her person.

Indeed, while Janet Todd and Derek Hughes contend that *The Amorous Prince* is "an oddly sexy play for a woman author to own" (87), it is a play in which sex is always depicted as unequal, with men free to test, control, and undermine female chastity and women, including Cloris, left to maneuver around the whims of men as best they can. This may reflect conflicting feelings on the part of Behn toward libertarianism. While Behn was undoubtedly attracted to "the libertine critique of religion and morality" (Staves, *Behn* 21), travelled in libertine circles (Todd, *Works, I*, xxii), and admired noted libertines such as John Wilmot and Jack Hoyle (Todd, *Secret Life* 298), she could hardly fail to notice that a value system that celebrated sexual freedom without obligation was a riskier proposition for women. Indeed, although libertinism ostensibly "authorized women's free enjoyment of sexual pleasure" (Staves, *Behn* 21), the idea that women could safely "yield to their own desire" is "largely, though not exclusively, a male fantasy in an era before reliable birth control" (Williamson 136). Furthermore, as Laurie Finke notes, "the rake's cultivation of profligacy runs counter to the stake he has as a royalist or an aristocrat in a patrilineal ideology that keeps aristocratic estates intact and

heirs legitimate by controlling sexuality — women’s sexuality” (28). Men who claimed complete sexual freedom for themselves were therefore likely to fear that their wives might do the same. This inequality is displayed repeatedly over the course of *The Amorous Prince*’s two plotlines. In the secondary plotline, nobleman Antonio, believing that “Women naturally are more inclin’d / To Avrice than Men” (Behn, *Amorous Prince* 1.4.33-32), fears that his wife Clarina may someday be tempted by gifts and prove unchaste. In order to test her virtue, he asks a friend, Alberto, to make repeated attempts at seduction. This plotline is generally taken to be a significantly altered adaptation of a Cervantes’ story contained in *Don Quixote* (Todd and Hughes 87; Hayden 92). Although *Don Quixote* had not yet appeared in English and Behn is not known to have spoken Spanish, a friend may have relayed the plot (Hughes 205). However Behn may have accessed Cervantes’ plot, she significantly altered what she found, shying away from Cervantes’ tragic ending by having Clarina learn of her husband’s scheme and substitute her unmarried sister-in-law in encounters with Alberto. As Judy A. Hayden notes, this change “minimiz[es] the impropriety of the plot while maximizing the humour and the confusion that follow” (92). Still, although Behn reorients the scenario toward the comedic, it is a plotline in which women must scheme around the paranoia of anxious men in order to avoid ruin. As Mark Breitenberg argues in *Anxious Masculinity in Early Modern England*, “[i]f female chastity functions as the basis of masculine honor, both terms accrue value only within a public exchange system — they must be published,” resulting a system in which “the chastity of one’s wife must be paradoxically (and indeed, impossibly) confirmed by other men *and* represented by as intrinsically valued” (101; emphasis in original). In both Cervantes’ original plot and Behn’s retelling, Antonio is driven to have another man test his wife’s chastity, believing in her virtue

only if it can be confirmed by another man. That Behn skews her version toward a happy ending does not negate the risks posed to Clarina by a suspicious and controlling husband, nor does it change that fact that Antonio, through his anxiety, creates a situation that could lead to ruin for all

Potential ruin is likewise faced by Cloris in *The Amorous Prince's* primary plotline, which may be uniquely Behn's (Hayden 90; Todd, *Works*, V 85). In it, Frederick, the titular amorous prince, abandons Cloris after misleading her with vows of marriage. Cloris, having been abandoned without explanation, subsequently disguises herself as a boy in order to journey from country to court. While few details of the production of *The Amorous Prince* or the play's reception survive, the plotline involving Cloris and Frederick was roundly mocked in *The Rehearsal*, a "burlesque play" that buffoons several of Behn's contemporaries, including Dryden (Todd, *Secret Life* 151-52). The metatheatrical *The Rehearsal*, in which playwrights are accused of presenting "Weeds instead of Flowers" (sig. A2r), revolves around preparations for an upcoming play, one so badly written that one of the players, upon finding notes for a fifth act clearly based on the Cloris/Fredrick plotline, declares, "Pox on't, this will never do: 'tis just like the rest" (51).<sup>61</sup> In the lampoon, Cloris, having been deserted by "Prince *Pretty-man*" on the way to the altar, drowns herself in a river in despair. While such a jab may have received audience laughs, it is a fundamental misreading of the play, one that, unfortunately, has been perpetuated. Indeed, in one discussion of *The Amorous Prince*,

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<sup>61</sup> Although Janet Todd argues that Behn likely would have viewed exclusion from *The Rehearsal* as a fate worse than being lampooned, she speculates that the criticism may have been enough to make the new playwright reevaluate which of her works should next be produced, delaying the staging of *The Young King* (*Secret Life* 152). Although Derek Hughes notes that this suggestion has been made, he argues that this should not be taken as a sign that *The Rehearsal* had a broad effect on what plays were produced in the decade, and that, contrary to previous thinking, *The Rehearsal* did not help usher out heroic plays (Hughes, *Theatre* 205).

Janet Todd contends that “Behn had the despairing Cloris leap into the river and be taken for dead” (*Secret Life* 152). Cloris does not, however, leap into a river upon her abandonment in *The Amorous Prince*. Rather, her servant, a bumbling man who knows that Cloris is disguised as a page at court, concocts the ridiculous story while being interrogated over her whereabouts (5.2.120-150). Rather than earnestly portraying despairing maidens leaping into bodies of water, Behn instead takes aim at men who expect such reactions from women upon abandonment. Indeed, although Cloris’s brother, Curtius, weeps at the news of her death, he also claims that the loss of her virtue “...left her nothing but a desperate sense of shame, / Which only serv’d to do her self that justice, / Which I had executed, had she not prevented me” (5.3.127-28). Men, therefore, despair at female ruin while actively creating a culture that positions female death as a suitable recourse to unchastity.

Although *The Rehearsal* mischaracterises Cloris’s reaction to abandonment, its portrayal of Frederick as a “pretty-man” prince who is so inconstant that he switches affections from one woman to another on the road to the altar is, if anything, an overly generous characterization. Indeed, Behn’s prince is willing to lie, force, and purchase his way to sexual gratification, at one point attempting to rape the sister of a courtier and, at another, trying to decide amongst supposed prostitutes. That Behn, a staunch supporter of the monarchy whose career included espionage for the crown and writing royal propaganda (Todd, *Secret Life* xi), would create such a prince may be surprising. However, by the time *The Amorous Prince* graced the stage, multiple critics had begun voicing concerns that “the King’s licentious behaviour” would negatively impact England in “unprecedented and adverse” ways (Hayden 100). Not all such critics were political opponents. For example, Thomas Killigrew, manager of The King’s Company

and a royal favourite, is said to have publicly confronted Charles II over placing his sexual desires over attending to the needs of his kingdom (Hayden 94). Hayden argues, however, that “[i]f Behn’s Prince Frederick is indeed a reflection of Charles II, then, like her colleagues, she blames his illicit sexual exploits on temptations provided him by his licentious court” (94). In *The Amorous Prince*, this temptation is represented through the contrasting of two characters: the honorable Curtius, brother to Cloris, and the pimp-like, sexually insatiable Lorenzo, a man who is happy to offer up his own sister for Frederick’s enjoyment. So long as Frederick is at odds with Curtius and engages in behaviour that would be expected of Lorenzo, then the kingdom is at risk of instability, as illustrated in a scene in which Galliard, a servant, reflects on the prince’s treatment of Cloris:

GALLIARD: So poor Lass, ‘tis a hundred to one if she be not  
Lay’d by now, and Laura must succeed her:  
Well, even Frederick, I see, is but a man (2.1.78-83).

As Hayden notes, these lines demonstrates that Frederick’s actions toward women have broad consequences, undermining his “monarchial mystique” and stripping him of the divinity associated with royalty (102). Indeed, Frederick treats his monarchial mystique not as something to be cultivated but as a form of false currency to be traded away in pursuit of sexual conquest. In the opening, post-coital scene, the prince assures Cloris that he will marry her and advises her to prepare for the day of their wedding when she “shalt be a little Deity on Earth” (1.1.29). As Fredrick later makes clear to Curtius, however, such promises are never genuine. Rather, they are deployed only as a means of overcoming female resistance:

FREDERICK. Faith time and importunity refuse no body.

CURTIUS. Is that the way? had you no other aids?

Made you no promise to her, Sir, of Marriage?

FREDERICK. Oh, yes in abundance, that's your only bait,

And though they cannot hope we will perform it,

Yet it secures their Honour and my Pleasure:

CURTIUS. Then, Sir, you have enjoy'd her?

FREDERICK Oh yes, and gather'd sweets

(1.2.36-43)

As long as Frederick views his link to the divine as a bartering tool, as long as he fails to place his promise to make Cloris “a little Deity on Earth” above his lust for all women, then his own divinity will remain in doubt, rendering him as little better than an ordinary man in the eyes of the people.<sup>62</sup>

For her part, it is only when in the guise of a man that Cloris is able to gauge Frederick’s rakish behaviour. After the prince fails to meet her as planned, and after receiving a letter from her brother warning that the vows men make to women cannot be trusted (Behn, *Amorous Prince* 3.3.4-6), Cloris dresses as a boy and assumes the name Phillibert in order to journey to court where she intends to remain, disguised, in order to determine whether the prince is inconstant or if his abandonment is a test of her own constancy. In doing so, she becomes one of, if not the, first female-penned and female-acted characters to don breeches on the English public stage. Female characters appearing in male clothing, were, of course, not new. *Twelfth Night* is, perhaps, the most

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<sup>62</sup> As Todd notes in *The Works of Aphra Behn, Volume V*, Frederick’s vow to marry Cloris in the presence of a witness would be legally binding for most men (528). As prince, however, any marriage would require state approval (529). Frederick references this in act one, scene two, lines fifty-five to seventy-one.

popular and enduring entry in the genre. However, the seven decades which separate *Twelfth Night* and *The Amorous Prince* significantly alter the act of cross-dressing on stage. As Jean E. Howard argues, “As part of a stage action [...] the ideological import of crossdressing was mediated by all the conventions of dramatic narrative and [...] dramatic production” (418). Prior to female actors taking the English stage in 1660, female parts were played by male youths in public performances.<sup>63</sup> As such, anyone who took on a part such as Viola on the public stage would, in fact, be a male youth pretending to be a woman pretending to be a man. Although antitheatrical texts had attacked the practice of young men playing the parts of women during the Elizabethan era (Howard 420), the notion of male cross-dressing on stage may have been viewed as less threatening by some than the prospect of female actors (Shapiro 40). A female character who dons breeches inherently represents less of a threat to conventional gender roles when played by a male actor. After all, a male actor may, generally speaking, access the shift in power that accompanies male presentation off stage without social stigma. For a woman to cross-dress, in contrast, signifies an appropriation of the power and freedom socially accorded to men (Breitenberg 164). Once women began acting in public productions in 1660, the taboo of a woman donning breeches was no longer mediated by the use of a male actor. Laura Morrow, with assistance from Arthur H. Scouten, identifies eighty-one plays with breeches parts between 1665 and 1707, twenty-nine of which were produced during the decade in which *The Amorous Prince* debuted

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<sup>63</sup> Excluding court masques and private performances, youths would play female parts on the public stage. As Michael Shapiro notes, these youths, sometimes referred to as “play-boys,” would typically be assigned female and juvenile roles until about the age of nineteen, at which point they would be assigned roles of adult men (41). Arguing that England was slower than other countries in Europe in utilizing female actors, Shapiro attributes the appearance of women on English stages in 1660 to the fact that male youths who had been trained for female parts had aged out of the roles while English theatres were closed between 1642 and 1660 (45).

(Munns, "I" 207). Any and all of these parts may have been played by female actors. Indeed, although no cast list for *The Amorous Prince* survives (Todd, *Works*, V 84), Cloris was almost certainly played by a woman given the timing of the play and the degree to which Behn took the skills of different female actors into account while writing (Hughes, *Restoration Theatre* 36-37). Although Cloris considers her masculine disguise a "shameful" necessity she must adopt in order to safely navigate court, not all women may have felt the same way; indeed, some may have been intrigued by the freedom Cloris enjoys.

As Derek Hughes notes, the freedom of movement available to Cloris as Phillibert is a stark contrast to that of the other women in the play. Of all the female characters in *The Amorous Prince*, only Cloris, he argues, ventures outside and then only when she is in the guise of a young man (*Theatre* 44). He notes that there are four street scenes in the play in which women appear in doorways or on balconies (43-44) but that "they cannot step through the frame: there is an invisible barrier between them and the outside world" (*Restoration Theatre* 38). Such staging emphasizes the play's focus on chastity, suggesting male control of female movement while allowing women to still be placed on display, facilitating the publishing of chastity that Breitenberg argues becomes necessary when female chastity is linked to masculine honor. Cloris, herself, is subject to such control prior to the play's opening; as Curtius notes, his sister was raised "in obscurity," without experiencing the world of court, lest its temptations corrupt her (Behn, *Amorous Prince* 1.2.111-113). Indeed, so determined was Curtius to keep his sister chaste that he had Cloris raised without knowledge of her parents or family name, "Thinking an humble life / Might have secur'd [her] Vertue" (1.2.116-117). The humble life in which Chloris was raised has distinct echoes of the pastoral. Indeed, Hayden

argues that in seducing Chloris, “Frederick invades the pastoral realm to indulge his sexual desire by preying on country innocents” (90). As is illustrated through works such as Rochester’s “Song” and “Corydon and Cloris,” however, pastoral settings are not inherently safe places for women or their chastity. Jessica Munns has noted that Behn’s work displays “her awareness that the pastoral fantasy is one thing for men and another for women” (“Pastoral” 111), and this is certainly true of *The Amorous Prince*. After all, it is only when Cloris forgoes her female identity and the pastoral setting in which she has been raised that she can transcend the cage constructed by Curtius and the barriers restricting the women of the play.

Curiously, Janet Todd downplays the agency attached to Cloris’s decision to cross-dress, alleging that she is “persuaded” into the behaviour (*Secret Life* 149). However, there is nothing in the text to suggest that Cloris, herself, did not concoct her plan to cross-dress and find her wayward prince. Certainly, Frederick’s abandonment acts as a catalyst and provides Cloris with a goal, and undoubtedly rumours of court being a threat to young women may have informed her decision to go in disguise, but this is not her first encounter with cross-dressing. Indeed, when Guillam, the male servant who accompanies her, expresses a desire to be transformed into a maid, he entreats Cloris to recall another act of gender transgression in which she had some part:

GUILLAM: Why forsooth, what do you intend to pass for,

A Maid or a Boy?

CLORIS. Why, what I seem to be, will it not do?

GUILLAM. Yes, yes, it may do, but I know not what;

I wo’d Love would Transmogrify me to a Maid now;

—We should be the prettiest couple;

Don't you remember when *you* drest me up the last  
Carnival, was not I the woundiest handsom lass  
A body could see on a Summers day?  
There was Claud, the Shepherd as fre[a]kish after me  
I'le warrant you, and simpe're and tript it like any thing.  
CLORIS. Ay, but they say 'tis dangerous for young  
Maids to live at Court. (3.3.18-30; emphasis added)

In the above lines, Guillam implicates Cloris not just in witnessing a previous foray into cross-dressing but in playing an active part in outfitting him for the occasion. That a woman might help a household servant cross-dress is not unprecedented as illustrated by a 1633 case in Oxfordshire in which Thomas Salmon, a servant, was dressed in female attire by the daughter-in-law of his master so that he might infiltrate a female celebration and partake of “merriment” (Cressy 449).<sup>64</sup> Indeed, Cloris shows no surprise at Guillam's desire, dissuading him only on the grounds that he may be facing the greater risk that women face at court. In these seven lines, Behn establishes that Cloris has participated, at least tangentially, in cross-dressing during carnival, that she has selected a companion who has previously taken enjoyment in the act of cross-dressing, and that she appreciates the safety one might gain — or lose — through specific gender presentations, all of which suggests experience, perception, and planning that belie the notion that cross-dressing is something to which she must be persuaded.

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<sup>64</sup> Salmon's case may have been brought before the courts as it involved the infiltration of a post-birth celebration in an age in which the birthing room was considered a “privileged female domain” (Cressy 447).

The possibility that Carnival could be instructive is curiously overlooked by Todd who also argues that Cloris's "education in the fluidity of gender" begins with her realization that "she arouses interest in men when dressed as a boy" (*Secret Life* 149). Certainly, the disguised Cloris is an object of attraction for Lorenzo who displays equal interest in women and young men and who says, in an aside upon seeing Cloris as Phillibert, "Would I could meet him some where o'th dark, / I'd have a fling at him, and try whether I / Were right *Florentine*" (Behn, *Amorous Prince* 4.3.86-88; italics in original).<sup>65</sup> Guillam is clear, however, that Cloris has witnessed a situation in which he aroused interest from a man when dressed in female garb. While Cloris does seem taken aback by Lorenzo, the mere act of choosing to present oneself as male or female demonstrates some awareness of the performative nature and fluidity of gender regardless of whether or not others are sexually attracted to the presentation. It may, therefore, be more accurate to state that Cloris gains further education in same-sex, or perceived same-sex, attraction in addition to the education in the fluidity of gender she had already begun to amass.

While carnival may have provided some form of education for Cloris, its instructive potential is more clearly suggested by Guillam's desire to be changed into a maid. Although anxiety regarding cross-dressing was exhibited by preachers, pamphleteers, and moralists in the early modern period (Ramet 6), acts of cross-dressing regularly took place "as festive and ritual practice during seasons when ordinary rules of behavior were suspended" (Schleiner 92). Historically, there has been a general agreement amongst anthropologists that reversals during such times may "provide an

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<sup>65</sup> Todd argues that Behn would, based on *Othello*, associate Florence with homosexuality (*Works*, V 531-532). Although the play is set in Florence, Lorenzo is the only character who uses the term.

expression of and a safety valve for conflicts within the system” and “are ultimately sources of order and stability in a hierarchal society” (Davis 153). That such events may function as safety valves releasing pressure within existing hierarchies could explain why festivals of the period most often involved men taking on the dress or personas of women (Davis 164).<sup>66</sup> Within a patriarchal society, such an act would be transgressive but would not be as potentially destructive to the gender hierarchy as that of a woman dressing as man. The safety valve theory is not, however, without critics. Roger D. Abrahams and Richard Bauman, for example, argue that early twentieth-century anthropologists may have relied too heavily on the concept and that such a “perspective is simplistic and distorted” (207). In their research on carnival in St. Vincent, West Indies and mumming on the La Have Islands in Nova Scotia in the 1970s, they found that those who engaged in symbolic reversals during festivals were often members of the community, such as young, unmarried men, who were likely to engage in disorderly behaviour throughout the rest of the year (204). Abrahams and Bauman argue that “the symbolic inversions of identity and dress may not be present at other times, but the licensed contravention of ideal norms certainly is” (195). Assuming their work has implications for earlier festivals and that it can be extended to other groups who contravene specific social norms, it is possible that Guillam was drawn to cross-dressing during carnival as an extension of desires and traits demonstrated at other times during the year. Natalie Zemon Davis likewise highlights limits to the safety valve theory, contending that “the topsy turvy play” of events such as carnival “had much spillover into everyday ‘serious’ life.” Davis notes, for example, “that the donning of female

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<sup>66</sup> Natalie Zemon Davis notes that this imbalance may not have been present in earlier centuries (163-64).

clothes by men and the adopting of female titles for riots were surprisingly frequent in the early modern period” (179). As evidence, Davis draws attention to a number of such events where cross-dressing was likely used to mask identities and avoid punishment, including a 1629 grain riot in which Alice Clark, a woman, “headed a crowd of women and male weavers dressed as women” as they rose up in Essex and an early-eighteenth-century riot in which male laborers donned female garb in Surry (179). Cross-dressing during events that were intended to release pressure and keep a hierarchy functioning, therefore, may have instructed men on how disguise could be used to trouble, or even threaten, power at other times. It is, therefore, understandable that Guillam’s carnival experiences would readily spill into his journey with Cloris.

Guillam’s desires, however, exceed the wish to cross-dress, as indicated by his use of the word “transmogrify.” *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines “transmogrify” as “To alter or change in form or appearance; to transform, metamorphose (utterly, grotesquely, or strangely)” and notes that the word is typically considered “vulgar or humorous” (“transmogrify, v”). Given that Guillam has established an ability to pass as a woman when dressed in feminine attire, it stands to reason that his use of “transmogrify” reflects a desire not merely to alter appearance but actually to change form. Such a concept may have been somewhat foreign in a culture in which women were considered the weaker vessel and in which the “one-sex” model may still have been circulating. Although female-to-male transitions were described in texts such as *The Workes of that Famous Chirurgion Ambrose Parey*, there may have been no readily available equivalent concept for Guillam — or Behn in her crafting of Guillam — to seize upon. As Joseph Gamble notes, both “transexion” and “transfeminate” were included in Thomas Blount’s 1656 volume *Glossographia or a Dictionary with*

definitions that suggest the terms could be used for transitions by either biological sex to either biological sex (29); however, while the full entry for “transfeminate” suggests a degree of fluidity, it is mediated by the fact that the first part of the definition reads “to turn from woman to man” with the second part of the definition, “or from one sex to another,” positioned as subordinate (sig. Rr5v). Behn, therefore, may have seized on the little-used “transmogriphy” as a substitute.<sup>67</sup> Although Guillam may not have had a readily available term to convey his desire, he does, as Hayden notes, still relay that desire within something of a heterosexual framework by noting that such a transformation would make he and the disguised Cloris “the prettiest couple” (3.3.23). Hayden argues that “His [Guillam’s] wish demonstrates his awareness of social expectations regarding heterosexual relationships” even as “his appeal to be literally the female other challenges that expectation and evokes suggestions of transvestism and homosexuality” (107). It is worth considering, however, whether Guillam’s wish stems, as Hayden seems to suggest, from a desire to conform to social expectations of heterosexual relationships or whether the situation presents an opportunity for Guillam to voice a desire to explore other identities and forms. If the latter, Guillam may simply be aware that the form he wishes to adopt would, to outside viewers, suggest a heterosexual couple.

Although Guillam expresses a wish for true bodily transformation, Cloris has no such desire. As such, her donning of masculine garb aligns more closely with traditional literary depictions in which, Winifred Schleiner argues, women are typically spurred to

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<sup>67</sup> *Glossographia, or a Dictionary* does not include an entry for the term and the OED lists only a few examples of its use in the seventeenth century. Likewise, only a few examples appear in searchable text on the database English Early Books online prior to Behn’s usage.

cross-dress by motives that range from the “practical” to “what may loosely be called feminist,” such as the desire to “explore a world of power” typically reserved for men or “to escape weakness” imposed upon women through the social structures in which they are enmeshed (99). Schleiner further argues that, regardless of motivation, scenes in which gender disguises are adopted can be said to “constitute moments of high gender consciousness” (99). Indeed, Cloris is a compelling example of how the practical motives of a character may enable moments of gender consciousness that might loosely be termed “feminist.” Cloris’s goal is relatively straightforward: she wishes to enter court to determine whether her own constancy is being tested or whether Frederick himself is inconstant. While doing so, she will require money with which to support herself and a way to avoid the dangers the court poses to women. Disguising herself as a young man is a practical solution that will make her less vulnerable and more able to obtain work. However, it is through situations that arise because Cloris presents herself as a boy that double standards imposed upon women are most called into question. One such moment occurs when Cloris relays to Frederick the pain he has caused her. As Finke notes, the usual “Restoration rake desired the chaste beauty as the object of his pursuit and enjoyment. But once she gave herself sexually, she ceased to be desirable, cast off in an endless search for variety and change” (27). Such is the case, as discussed in chapter one, with Rochester’s “Song” and its lack of interest in one Cloris beyond the moment of conquest, and such is the case in *The Amorous Prince* with the ease with which Frederick discards another Cloris. As Phillibert, however, Cloris can approach Frederick — perhaps not on equal social footing but as one man to another. As noted in chapter one, the broadside ballad *Loves Wound, and Loves Cure* features a version of Cloris who laments that fact that “Men they may speak but Maidens Modesty, / Forbids

the same.” In *The Amorous Prince*, however, the gender presentation that Cloris has adopted allows her to sidestep convention and speak as openly as though she were a man. Parroting the flattery and promises Frederick had used to overcome her own resistance, Cloris-as-Phillibert reflects Frederick's actions back to him, telling him a tale of giving all to a lover only to be abandoned. In response, Frederick assures the youth that (s)he will “will out-grow-this childish inclination / And shall see beauties here, whose every glance / Kindle new fires, and quite expel the old” (4.3.52-54). Frederick's attempt to comfort Phillibert suggests a moment of unwitting sympathy for Cloris's plight, but the libertine solution he offers is one that will place more women in Cloris's position. Thus, Cloris's disguise enables a moment in which the adoption of sexual libertinism without regard for women is seen as a destructive force, perpetually creating and consuming female victims as it renders masculine rule and the patriarchy unstable.

Perhaps the clearest critique of the dominant gender ideology, however, comes when Cloris, still disguised as Phillibert, visits Laura, the sister of Lorenzo. As Hughes and Todd note, a key aspect of *The Amorous Prince* is its commentary on “the absurdity of cloistering women from the world and then expecting from them morals higher than those in men” (Todd and Hughes 87), and this absurdity is best captured, and commented upon, when Lorenzo becomes suspicious of a locked closet in Laura's room. As for other women in the play, Laura's chastity is an overwhelming concern to her family with her movements and social contacts tightly controlled. Although she is aware that Phillibert is Cloris in disguise, Laura cannot afford to have the page found in her room and so hides Phillibert in a closet. Despite the degree of control placed upon his sister, the mere presence of a locked closet is enough to raise the suspicions of Lorenzo who, in the following lines, considers the standards to which men and women are held:

LORENZO. And why the devil should I expect my Sister should  
Have more virtue than my self;  
She's the same flesh and blood; or why, because  
She's the weaker Vessel;  
Should all the unreasonable burthen of the honour  
Of our house, as they call it,  
Be laid on her shoulders, whilst we may commit  
A thousand villanies, but 'tis so —  
(5.1.86-93)

The fact that Laura has hidden Cloris-as-Phillibert in the closet is, in a way, irrelevant. It is the closet door itself, the uncertainty as to whether or not someone may be behind it, that enables Lorenzo, and by extension the audience, to see women positioned as a sacrifice demanded by men who commit so many villainous acts that they are, effectively, beyond measure. Lorenzo's casual "but 'tis so," meanwhile mocks and underscores the ease with which men quickly shrug off such moments of awareness of the violence of the patriarchy, leaving them free to pursue further pleasures.

While such moments and the play's gestures toward gender fluidity are transgressive, it is important to weigh these elements against the text as a whole. Although Behn positions *The Amorous Prince* as a comedy, Todd and Hughes argue that it is closer to a tragicomedy in some respects, such as in the supposed death of Cloris (97). Indeed, Cloris's rumored death is the plot point around which the ending revolves. In the play's final act, Curtius ambushes the prince and tells him of Cloris's demise. Assuming responsibility for Cloris's death, Frederick weeps and offers his own life in penance. Taking the tears of Frederick as a sign that the prince should be forgiven,

Curtius offers up his own life so that he might be reunited with his sister. Cloris then reveals herself whereupon Frederick asks her for forgiveness and obtains permission from his father for the two of them officially to wed. While the promise of a wedding might typically meet the requirements of comedy for a happy ending, it is difficult to see marriage as a joyous prospect given what has come to pass in the previous acts of the play. As Antonio's treatment of Clarina indicates, marriage does not necessarily protect women from male obsession over chastity. Furthermore, it is difficult to feel a sense of true relief in Cloris wedding a would-be rapist — even a repentant one. Certainly, Frederick's actions against Laura stop short of rape only because the act is interrupted by Curtius. Indeed, after Frederick calls Curtius a traitor for drawing his sword upon his prince, the two engage in the following exchange:

Curtius: Your Pardon, Sir, I meant it on a Ravisher.

A foul misguided Villain.

One that scarce merits the brave name of Man.

One that betrays his friend, forsakes his Wife;

And would commit a Rape upon my Mistress

Frederick: Her presence is thy safety, be gone and leave me.

Curtius: By no means Sir; the Villain may return [...]

(3.1.75-81)

Clearly, Curtius believes that Frederick will complete his assault on Laura if given a chance. Frederick's actions, therefore, are hardly what one wishes to see in an ordinary man, let alone a prospective husband or brother-in-law. Likewise, Frederick's treatment of Cloris, while not prosecutable as rape, does violate at least some early modern understandings of the importance of consent. For example, as discussed in chapter one,

the broadside ballad *The Trappand Virgin* warns men about the moral implications of lying to women in order to get them to yield to advances, saying, "...what you gain by Treachery / is next kinn to a Rape." True consent cannot be gained through treachery. Yet, having lost her status as a maid, marriage may be the best a woman from Cloris's background could hope for; Curtius's reactions throughout the play certainly suggests that he sees no life for his sister after her chastity is compromised. Furthermore, Cloris's marriage to Frederick echoes the post-rape marriage of Chloris in *Fasti*, particularly given Frederick's earlier promise to make Cloris "a little Deity on Earth." Despite his eventual intention to honour this promise, Frederick's actions throughout the play are hardly befitting a king; however, if Behn did intend the play as commentary on Charles II, either directly or as a warning about the temptations he was being provided at court, then Frederick must be redeemed. Anything else would be a political and social risk. Furthermore, it would fly in the face of Behn's lifelong position as a supporter of the monarchy and would hamper both her ability to secure patronage and make money as a royal propagandist. Any feminist moments in the play, therefore, are tempered by Behn's need to ultimately position Frederick as a viable husband and ruler. Likewise, Lorenzo's sexual appetites and Guillam's desire to be transformed into a maid are tempered by both men being ordered to marry women at the end of the play. Any transgressive behaviors the two have shown over the course of *The Amorous Prince* are therefore folded, at least publicly, back into a traditional framework where each assumes patriarchal responsibility as a male head of household and each is expected to channel their sexual attention toward women. In folding moments of transgression into an ending that reaffirms the patriarchy and conventional gender hierarchies, *The Amorous Prince* could be said to fulfill a similar safety-valve feature to that theorized by anthropologists

in connection to events such as carnival. At the same time, however, Hughes has argued that Behn's writing displays "relentless realism" when it comes to portraying "women's prospects" (*Theatre* 2). Perhaps the ending is not meant so much to uphold existing hierarchies — although, as a monarchist, Behn clearly supports the upholding of some hierarchies — but to bring a sense of informed realism to what might otherwise be considered a happy resolution.

There is no one central figure at the nexus of the Chloris multiverse, although the Chloris of Aphra Behn's *The Amorous Prince* certainly illustrates how one Chloris text might resonate with others. After all, in having her Chloris raised in a pastoral setting, Behn invokes the type of idyllic locations she visits in many of her poems, including "The Disappointment" and "On A Juniper Tree, cut down to make Busks." Echoes of the threats to chastity that can lurk in such settings, meanwhile, can be found in Rochester's "Song," in the broadside ballad "Corydon and Chloris," and even in *Fasti*, itself. And in cross-dressing, the Chloris of *The Amorous Prince* echoes not just *The Wandering Virgin* but also Chloris texts that appear under the cover of first one gender and then another as works are misattributed and wander from volume to volume. There is, however, no singular Chloris. She is a goddess and she is a country girl lying upon a bed of hay. She is idealized and she is resented. She longs to conform to the social roles assigned to her and she imagines slipping free of her body to inhabit other forms and identities. She is on broadside ballads bought on the streets of London and sold from a chapman's pack on rural roads. She is meant to stride across the stage and she slips from printed collection to printed collection, attributed to first this author and then that. She is unstable and complicated but no more so than the period in which she came to inhabit so

many texts, both high and low. Ultimately, it is through these instabilities and complications that she becomes an ideal figure through which to study gender roles, female desire, and sexuality across class and forms of cultural and print production in the early modern period.

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### Academic Awards:

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Lieutenant Governor of New Brunswick Silver Medal, 2021

Norman S. Fraser Prize in Arts, 2021

Harry Velensky Prize, 2020

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Dean D. Kermode Parr Prize in English, 2020

English Departmental Essay Prize IV, 2019

Muriel Miller Award in Creative Writing, 2019

### Publications:

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### Academic Conferences:

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