

The City-Heiress

edited by Rachel Adcock

The City-Heiress was Behn's topical response to the controversial issue of Exclusion, dramatising conflicts over inheritance when there is no straightforward patrilineal line of descent. Charles II had no legitimate children, which meant that his Catholic brother James, Duke of York, was heir to the throne. However, in the wake of the Popish Plot (1678–81; a conspiracy to convince Charles of a Catholic plot to murder him and install his brother), the debate continued to rage over whether James should succeed Charles or be excluded from the succession. This debate, now known as the Exclusion Crisis, divided the political landscape into loyal Tories, who generally upheld the lawful succession, and exclusionist Whigs, a wealthy, staunchly anti-Catholic mercantile class, heavily entrenched in the City of London, who petitioned for a constitutional monarchy that would uphold rights of the people and their governing structures. Many felt that those divisions were only too reminiscent of the earlier civil wars (1642–51); indeed, many young Tories, represented in *The City-Heiress* by Wilding, were sons of wealthy landowners who lost their estates fighting for the Royalist cause during the 1640s. *The City-Heiress's* representation of a disinherited Tory rake who eventually humiliates and reclaims his estates from his rigid Whig uncle, Sir Timothy Treat-all, reimagines such conflicts by dramatising a Tory victory over a representative of the Whig-dominated City of London. The play also explores the Tory treatment of women possessing Whig fortunes (a City heiress and a widow), another example of fortunes being recouped to the 'Loyal' cause; however, by way of contrast, this behaviour raises more ambiguous questions about such politically contentious issues as arbitrary rule, force, and consent.

The Play's Cultural Context

The City-Heiress's first performance was probably on either 13 or 15 May 1682 at the Duke's Theatre, Dorset Garden. It contributed to Tory celebrations welcoming the return in March 1682 of the heir to the throne, James, Duke of York, from exile in Scotland, where he had been since October 1679. Charles II had sent his brother to Scotland in the role of high commissioner in an attempt to quell political unrest in London over the prospect of a Catholic successor. These anxieties were fed by accounts of a Popish plot, supposedly fomented by the Pope's emissaries, to assassinate the king and install the Catholic James. Such events, it was feared, would

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lead to an arbitrary rule, endangering the ‘lives, liberties, and properties’ of English subjects (Harris, *London Crowds*, p. 97). Seizing on the testimonies of Titus Oates, the foremost but later discredited witness to these plots (Prologue, ll. 15–34), Whig politicians soon began to demand that James be excluded from the succession, some even trying to implicate him in the Popish Plot. From 1679 to 1681, Oates’s testimonies in the courts were taken seriously enough to convict and execute several prominent Catholics for their alleged involvement. Among the five Catholic peers tried and executed after they were accused by Oates was William Howard, Viscount Stafford, uncle of Behn’s dedicatee, Henry Howard, Lord Arundel.

While James had been safer in Scotland, his invitation to return was an indication that Charles was ready ‘to test the political waters’ (De Krey, *London*, p. 250). Back on the offensive, the king had launched *quo warranto* (‘by what authority’) proceedings to question the legitimacy of the London Corporation’s Charter, a powerful symbol of Whig opposition (De Krey, *London*, p. 237). *The City-Heiress* was, therefore, part of a new wave of loyalist Tory propaganda that supported Charles’s new-found resolution and sought to present the practices of the Whigs, including their strategic ‘treating’ or feasting, as seditious (De Krey, *London*, pp. 221–22; Harth, *Pen*, p. 162). The play’s setting, ‘*Within the Walls of London*’, purposefully targets the ‘single locality in which disaffection to church and state had proved most damaging, namely the Corporation of London’ (De Krey, *London*, p. 221). It dramatises a Tory takeover of the Whig City and its rich heiresses in order to restore the ‘rightful’ succession of property. Even the staunch Whig, Sir Timothy Treat-all (the character most guilty of preventing property succession), is forced to toast the triumphal return of the Duke at his own feast (III.1.266).

The Duke of York’s Return, Public Celebration, and Feasting

James’s landing at Yarmouth and return to the capital was celebrated in some publications as the parallel to Charles II’s return from exile in 1660 (e.g. Anon., *Loyal Protestant*, 16 March 1682). *The City-Heiress* continues these celebrations by dramatising the restoration of order (Wilding’s inheritance) and by staging various convivial celebrations of the kind encouraged by the Tory press. Published songs celebrating ‘Royal *Jemmy*’s return’ emphasised ‘Rout[ing]’ and ‘Flout[ing]’ those who ‘Rail[ed] at the Succession’, and urged communal health drinking that avowed loyalty and devotion (Anon., *Well-Wishers*, p. 1; McShane Jones, ‘Roaring Royalists’, pp. 75–77). Sir Timothy’s feast in III.1 features loyal healths drunk to the ‘Royal Duke of Albany’, to the host’s dismay; the play also ends urging unity in good fellowship, that ‘all honest [i.e. Tory] hearts as one agree | To bless the King, and Royal *Albanie*’ (V.5.248–49). Behn here follows contemporary songs in their adoption of James’s second title,

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‘Duke of Albany’, derived from the ancient name for Scotland. This title celebrated the Stuarts’ Scottish origins, but also foregrounded James’s recent success in restoring order to this northern kingdom on his brother’s behalf, where he established a Succession Act that ‘condemned any attempts to alter the succession by written or spoken word as treasonous’ (De Krey, *Restoration*, p. 186). The contemporary song, ‘Great Jemmy’, also urged the drinking of toasts to ‘*Jemmy the Valiant*’, ‘the *HERO* who *Scotland* subdu’d’ who ‘brought to Allegiance the factious Crowd’ (Taubman, *Heroick Poem*, p. 16). Nathaniel Lee’s flattering panegyric, *To the Duke on his Return*, even went so far as to justify a prince’s right to take up arms against such rebels (p. 2). To an extent, Behn’s play also justifies the rough treatment of ‘disloyal’ Whig characters by the boisterous, and ultimately irresistible Tories, Wilding and Sir Charles Meriwill. However, in a move characteristic of Behn’s drama, such behaviour is scrutinised when it results in the forceful treatment of women.

James’s return, combined with the court’s recent assault on the London Corporation’s charter, further convinced the Whig faction that the Tories intended to curb the people’s liberty. In response, they sought support for their cause through association and conviviality, organising feasts where principal citizens and ordinary ward voters were lavishly treated to food and drink provided by opposition lords such as the Duke of Monmouth and the Earls of Shaftesbury and Essex, as well as by members of Parliament, sheriffs, and aldermen (De Krey, *London*, pp. 250–54; Key, “‘High Feeding’”, pp. 161–73). The play targets such partisan feasting through its mockery of Sir Timothy, the alderman who ‘treats all’ the knights, ladies, and country justices he can find. Many of these characters’ real-life counterparts had travelled to London to ‘show their support ... for a Protestant succession’ (De Krey, *London*, p. 251). By mid April, such feasting practices had become more controversial. When the returning Duke of York was invited on 20 April 1682 to attend the annual banquet of the Honourable Artillery Company (of which he was captain general), opposition aldermen organised a counter-feast for the next day in Haberdashers’ and Goldsmiths’ Halls. Tickets were sold for a guinea and stated that the feast was ‘*in testimony of Thankfulness*’ for saving the nation from the Popish Plot, and for ‘*preserving and improving mutual Love and Charity among such which are sensible thereof*’ (Anon., *Loyal Protestant*, 20 April 1682). Even the venue invited a comparison with the actions of the previous generation’s parliamentarians, whose Sequestration Committee had used Goldsmiths’ Hall as a base from which to order the confiscation of royalist estates during the 1640s and 1650s (Anon., *Charge Given* (1682), p. 4; L’Estrange, *Observer*, 27 April 1682). The direct affront to his heir, and widespread suspicion that the real reason for the event was ‘to Rail and Plot against the Crown’, led Charles to prohibit this rival feast (Anon., *Loyal Feast* (1682); De Krey, *London*, pp. 252–53). The Tory press made much of the embarrassment the

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king's order had caused the organisers (Anon., *Whigg-Feast* (1682); J. D. E., *O Ye, Yes* (1682); 'The Whigs' Disappointment', in Thompson, *Choice Collection* (1684), pp. 222–25). Otway's prologue to *The City-Heiress* takes pleasure in the humiliation of feast organisers and would-be attendees, the latter of whom – in a humorous overturning – had been cheated of 'zealous Guinny' by those at 'Sequestrators Hall' (ll. 36, 44).

The City-Heiress presents a humiliated opposition party whose enthusiasm for feasting was diminishing. Sir Timothy bewails the lack of lords attending his feast (III.1.13–16); however, in real life such treats continued in preparation for the London Corporation elections in June (Key, "High Feeding", p. 170). Behn's play was therefore a necessary part of Tory propaganda efforts, dramatising an open-house Whig feast, but one which is eventually commandeered for Tory purposes. The feast in III.1 includes ritual entertainments that also featured at the loyal Artillery Company feast, including frequent healths drunk to the Duke of York and a loyal Scottish song ('Ah, Jenny, gen') which recalls Thomas D'Urfey's 'A Scotch S[o]ng: Sung at the Artillery Feast' (*New Collection* (1683), pp. 74–78). The play also humorously puts into practice the advice preached in the sermon before the Artillery Company feast, where Thomas Sprat advised the company assembled to correct rebellious 'Domestic Separations' with 'pious use of the Sword' (*Sermon* (1682), p. 9; Key, "High Feeding", p. 167). Because of his exclusionist views, therefore, Sir Timothy is forced to take part in loyal health drinking and robbed in V.1. His declarations of 'Tyranny' (III.1.268) and 'Arbitrary power' (V.1.124) echo Whig accusations about restrictions to the people's liberty under a popish successor, but are ultimately trivialised. In its representation of Sir Timothy's case, the play accords with other Tory justifications of force where the 'rightful' succession of property is concerned.

London and the Corporation

The City-Heiress is set 'Within the Walls of London' in order to dramatisise the contest for dominion over the City and its charter, by which it had traditionally resisted subjection to the monarch's rule. The Tories' 'recovery of loyalist hegemony' in the capital's governing structures – the Corporation and the justice system over which it presided – were essential to regaining control of the kingdom at this crucial juncture (De Krey, *London*, p. 221). The City's charter allowed the London Corporation the authority to elect its own mayor, magistrates, and sheriffs, which had led to Whig candidates dominating the London judiciary with widespread support (De Krey, 'Revolution', p. 204). Sir Timothy observes that the 'hectoring' Tories (I.1.38), the gentlemen libertines who had ignored propriety and attacked officers of the law during the 1660s and 1670s, are no longer able to assert their influence (Turner,

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Libertines, p. 156). Sympathetic juries impanelled by Whig sheriffs from 1681 to the autumn of 1682 prevented the convictions of several exclusionists, famously returning ‘*Ignoramus*’ (‘we do not know’) verdicts (Harth, *Pen*, pp. 34–35). The best-known instance was the treason trial of Anthony Ashley Cooper, the first Earl of Shaftesbury, in whose closet a draft Protestant Association, a document swearing to resist James’s future rule, and other treasonous documents were allegedly found. Sir Timothy, one of the twenty-five elected aldermen-magistrates who governed the Corporation under the mayor, also boasts that he can debauch the law for his own ends, threatening to turn his ‘Tory Rascal’ nephew over to the mercy of the Whig-dominated courts to ‘hang’ for stealing an heiress (III.1.201–02). When Diana (disguised as the heiress Charlot Gettall) suggests that Sir Timothy might be considered equally guilty of this crime, if he secretly marries her, he replies: ‘Madam, we never accuse one another; ... Let ’em accuse me if they please, alas, I come off hand-smooth with *Ignoramus*’ (III.1.200–02). When Sir Timothy is confronted with the discovery of treasonous papers in his closet (recalling Shaftesbury’s Association), he responds confidently: ‘a man may speak Treason within the Walls of *London*, thanks be to God, and honest conscientious Jury-men’ (V.1.144–46). Every such ‘assault’ by Tory propagandists like Behn ‘was intended as a reminder of “*Ignoramus* justice” and of the London charter under which it flourished’ (Harth, *Pen*, p. 155; De Krey, *London*, p. 223).

The Whig reaction to the Charter’s possible revocation was to declare this an assault on ancient customs, rights, and liberties, and themselves the party ‘best suited to defend the constitution and fundamental law of England’ (Weil, *Political Passions*, p. 38). However, Tory propagandists sought to present the Whigs’ use of the Charter as a cloak for treasonous activities (Northleigh, *Parallel* (1682), p. 2), and their contestation over the succession as a mask for their true intentions, to make the monarchy elective (‘where every man may hope to take his turn’ (III.1.285–86)). Whig support for an elective monarchy led to the false rumour that Shaftesbury had sought election to the Polish crown in 1674 prior to Jan III’s election, a rumour much exploited in satires of 1681–82, especially in D’Urfey’s *Scandalum Magnatum* (1682) and Dryden’s *Medall* (1682). When Wilding appears disguised as an emissary from the Polish diet (the national assembly of Poland), and measures Sir Timothy’s head for the crown (III.1.307–08), his actions recall an earlier anonymous satire, *A Modest Vindication* (1681), in which ‘*Polish Deputies*’ are ‘sent Post *incognito*’ to the Earl, ‘with the Imperial Crown and Scepter in a Cloak-bag’ (p. 2). Sir Timothy approves the emissary’s sentiment, ‘hate Monarchy!’ (III.1.282), except when he might have a chance to rule himself. This was a charge also levied by the Tories against the earlier commonwealth men and ‘the very arbitrary style of government that had emerged as a result in the 1640s and 1650s’ (Harris, *London Crowds*, p. 131).

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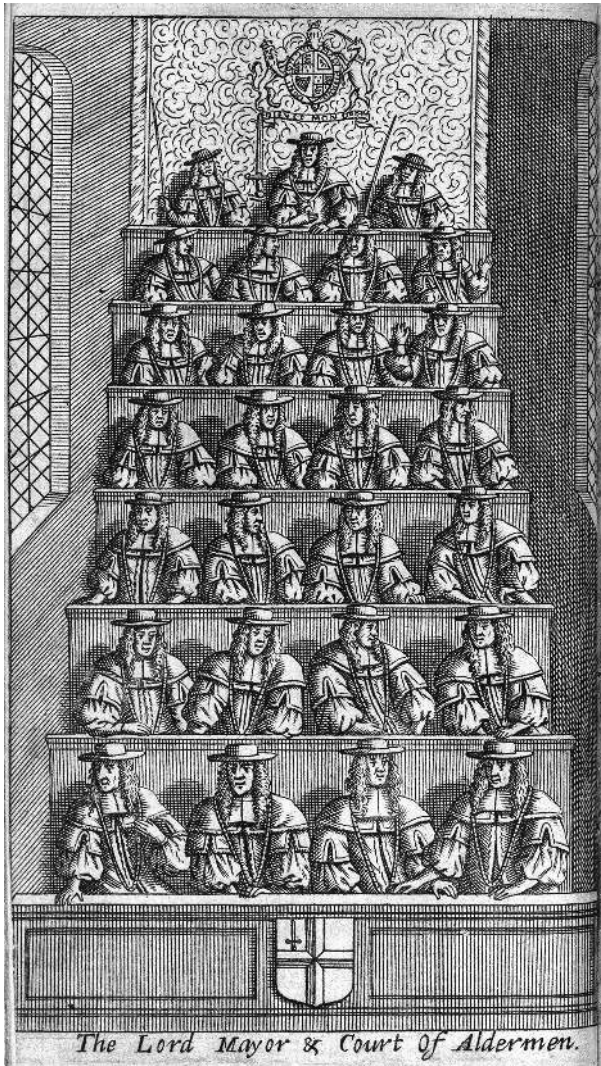


FIGURE 1 The Lord Mayor and Court of Aldermen; taken from Thomas De Laune, *The Present State of London* (1681). Reproduced by kind permission of the University of Illinois (Urbana-Champaign).

Early in the play, Sir Timothy insists that his ‘Integrity has been known ever since Forty One’ (I.1.100–01), and that his wealth derives from confiscated bishops’ lands (I.1.101–02); he openly declares that a man ‘deserves not the name of a Patriot, who

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does not for the Publick Good defie all Laws and Religion' (III.1.344–46). Through these links, Tory propagandists 'sought to invert the [W]hig exploitation of fears of arbitrary government' (Harris, *London Crowds*, p. 135), a tactic Behn adopts. While Sir Timothy advises Diana/Charlot not to 'suffer the force or perswasion of any Arbitrary [i.e. Tory] Lover whatsoever' (III.1.214–15) while she is under his care, he proceeds to take advantage of her precarious situation himself. Threatening his absent nephew with corrupt Whig justice for stealing her, Sir Timothy aims to persuade Diana/Charlot to marry him instead. In another example of Whig hypocrisy, Sir Timothy restricts the very rights and privileges that Whigs professed to protect, proving himself an unworthy custodian of Charlot/the City's charter.

The City-Heiress, therefore, joins contemporary Tory texts in mocking civic Whigs for their hypocrisy and dishonesty, and their incessant treating and gluttony. Readings of the play have differed, however, over the interpretation of Sir Timothy as a caricature of a particular Whig politician or as a generic stereotype. Two persuasive candidates are Shaftesbury and the Chamberlain of the London Corporation, Sir Thomas Player, who had been appointed to the common council to prepare the defence of the London Charter. Sir Timothy's age (Shaftesbury would be sixty-one in July 1682), his involvement in the commonwealth government (I.1.100–01), his welcome of the Polish ambassador (III.1.286), and the 'Bag of Knavery' (V.1.136) discovered in his closet, link him closely to Shaftesbury, while his position as an alderman and his Guildhall speech-making (V.5.206) align him more closely with Player. Both men were targeted for their supposed lewd behaviour by the Tory press, Shaftesbury for 'open lewdness' (Dryden, *Medall* (1682), l. 37) and Player for his regular visits to Madam Cresswell's brothel, which also attracted other prominent Whigs (Summers, *Behn*, 1, 274–76; Thompson, *Unfit*, p. 44). Otway's *Venice Preserv'd* (Duke's, February 1682), also includes two similar caricatures of Whig politicians: Antonio, the 61-year-old speech-making senator, who enjoys being flogged by his mistress; and the lecherous, elderly plotter Renault (prologue, ll. 23–33; Haley, *Shaftesbury*, pp. 213–14). Elderly sexuality – old age began at 60 – was often represented in Restoration comedies, in the tradition of classical drama, as 'inappropriate, ... posing a potential threat to social order' (Toulalan, 'Old Age', p. 338), and Behn, like Otway, firmly associates this with the machinations of Whig politicians.

Heiresses and Widows

The City-Heiress also dramatises wider political conflict between Sir Timothy and the Tory gallants, Wilding and Sir Charles Meriwill, through competition for two rich heiresses. This contest, a kind frequent in Restoration comedies during the

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Exclusion Crisis, enacts ‘the inherent superiority and right to power of the Stuart dynasty and its ruling elite’ (Pacheco, ‘Reading Toryism’, p. 690). Through their respective marriages, the gallants commandeer Whig City fortunes. Wilding ends the play about to marry Charlot Gettall, the ‘City heiress’ of the play’s title and daughter of a recently deceased Whig alderman, Sir Nicholas, worth an impressive £3,000 a year (II.1.219). Meanwhile, the landed, but initially unattractive Sir Charles prevails with Lady Galliard, a rich City widow who is ‘at her own dispose’ (I.1.155), though reportedly influenced by a Puritan Whig mother and the mercenary interests of her family (I.1.156–57, II.1.156–59). Both women begin the play attempting to reject the choices of their relatives. Charlot has scandalously disobeyed her guardians and eloped with Wilding, believing that he is heir to Sir Timothy’s £6,000 a year fortune, and Lady Galliard succumbs to Wilding’s advances despite her family’s City interests. However, by the play’s end, Lady Galliard’s attempt to resist a patrilineal system that predetermines her marital choice is disappointed – she is forced to consent to marrying Sir Charles on threat of rape in an acutely uncomfortable moment – while Charlot’s faith in Wilding puts her reputation at serious risk. Probably syphilitic, Wilding spends most of the play pursuing these two women alongside his mistress, Diana. *The City-Heiress*, therefore, not only inspects the ideological power of representing the victorious Tory possession of the City and its fortunes, but also provides a more nuanced exploration of the politics of consent that had ramifications for the political moment as well as for gender relations. As in Behn’s previous works, aggressive and self-interested Tory masculinity, and the way it exploits women, comes under significant scrutiny.

Assertive and aggressive courtship is repeatedly urged and practised during the play. When advising his nephew, the boisterous Sir Anthony Meriwill asserts that a ‘willing Rape is all the fashion’ (IV.1.319), referring to the vogue for abducting and marrying a rich heiress before her relations could prevent the match. After marriage, a woman’s goods, leases, and lands came under the control of her husband (Erickson, *Women*, p. 24). Stealing an heiress without her consent – which might also involve non-consensual sexual activity – was a felony under 3 Hen. 7 c. 2, a penalty which served to protect family property and inheritance, and made such activities risky. Even a ‘willing’ abductee might later be persuaded by her family to deny that she had consented (Staves, ‘Behn’, pp. 16, 28 n. 7; Alleman, *Matrimonial Law*, pp. 53–59). Wilding’s secrecy about Charlot’s whereabouts is therefore imperative to avoid scandal, but also to ensure that he is not tried and convicted, which is highly likely under Whig judicial control. Sir Timothy later explains to Diana/Charlot that if she had married his nephew, he would have ‘hang’d him for a Rape’ (III.1.195). The kind of riotous libertine behaviour that encouraged abductions and rapes was ideologically significant (Turner, *Libertines*, pp. 161–62; McShane Jones,

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‘Roaring Royalists’, pp. 77–78). When instructing his nephew in successful manly (Tory) behaviour, Sir Anthony encourages him to be ‘impudent, be sawcy, forward, bold, towzing, and lewd’ (II.3.105). This ideology supposes that ‘loyal’ women will be receptive to the superior sexual potency of the Tory gallants. Behn’s play, however, questions the idea of a ‘willing rape’ through its representation of Sir Charles’s treatment of Lady Galliard. She is placed in an impossible situation where she can either be raped (where there are no witnesses to prove her non-consent), or ‘willingly’ espouse herself to Sir Charles (Walker, ‘Rereading Rape’, p. 3; Turner, *Libertines*, pp. 159–60). After she ‘chooses’ the second option, Sir Anthony reveals himself as a witness to the spousal, forcing Lady Galliard to uphold her promise.

The stereotype of the salacious and worldly widow is cited throughout the play as justification for the men’s aggressive wooing of Lady Galliard: Wilding explains that she is ‘made of no such sanctified Materials’ as would require his pretending to be virtuous, because ‘she is a Widow’ (I.1.152–53). Popular medical guides provided the basis for these ideas, claiming that lack of the regular sexual activity to which they had become accustomed made widows ill because they were ‘mad for lust, and infinite men’ (Culpeper, *Directory* (1662), p. 115). Proverbially, widows were said to require and appreciate rough and speedy wooing: ‘he that woos a maid must feign, lie, and flatter; but he that woos a widow must down with his breeches and at her’ (Ray, *Collection* (1670), p. 49; Tilley, M18). Sir Charles eventually puts such advice into practice, the stage directions specifying that he ‘fumbl[es] to undo his Breeches’ while later declaring that ‘In spite of all her fickleness and art; | There’s one sure way to fix a Widows heart’ (IV.1.542, 573). Unlike, for instance, the widow Mrs Crostill in *The Debauchee* (1677), who endorses rough wooing – appreciating a lover who swears he ‘must and will have you’ (IV.1; see Volume 11 of the Cambridge Edition) – Lady Galliard ends the play sadly gazing at Wilding while she gives her hand to Sir Charles, sighing that the latter’s ‘unwearied Love at last has vanquish me’ (V.5.237). As is so often the case, Behn expresses the dividedness of female psychology: here, Lady Galliard at once desires the freedom to continue to pursue her lover, and yet accepts Sir Charles’s view that Wilding would bring her to ‘Infamy, to Scandal’ (V.5.51).

The competition over heiresses, which often led to protracted marriage negotiations, and sometimes to multiple abduction attempts, encouraged the popular perception of heiresses as ‘jilt[s]’ (II.2.126–27). In the play’s epilogue, Charlotte Butler, who played Charlot, slyly observes that her character might provoke incredulity because she is ‘true’ to ‘her first Love’ (l. 2). Two recent *causes célèbres* involving heiresses enhanced this popular view, which the play complicates through its presentation of Charlot, who is fiercely loyal, and Lady Galliard, who is forced to abandon Wilding. The most recent such controversy was the abduction of Bridget

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Hyde (1662–1734), stepdaughter of the alderman Sir Robert Vyner, goldsmith and chief banker to Charles II, by the rake Peregrine Osborne, Viscount Dunblane, son of Thomas Osborne, Earl of Danby. In the play, the recently deceased alderman Sir Nicholas Gettall, worth £3,000 a year, may recall Vyner, a former mayor of London. Hyde and Dunblane were secretly married at St Marylebone Church on 25 April 1682, despite a jury ruling in 1680 that Bridget – supposedly worth £100,000 – was already married to her cousin, John Emerton (Allen, ‘Bridget Hyde’, p. 21). The abduction itself was scandalous, but the charge of bigamy made it even more so, and Danby was forced to buy off the Emertons to prevent further prosecution. A similarly scandalous case involved the 15-year-old heiress to the vast Percy estates, Lady Elizabeth Ogle née Percy (1667–1722), who had already been married twice by 1682 (*ODNB*, ‘Seymour [née Percy], Elizabeth’). In 1681 she fled abroad from her second husband, the rich libertine Thomas Thynne, who was later murdered by one of her previous suitors on 12 February 1682 (an event referenced in the epilogue). By mid March she had returned to England, one observer sending intelligence that she was overwhelmed by new suitors (Savile, *Life and Letters*, I, 354). Ogle was widely criticised in manuscript and print: ‘Satire in its Own Colors, 1682’ proclaimed ‘Ere she was fifteen | Her bald tail-piece had seen, | And taught her a trick to miscarry’ (Wilson, *Court Satires*, p. 274; Anon., *Directions to Fame* (1682)).

Behn’s play complicates such presumptions about heiresses’ conduct, exploring the consequences of extreme wooing methods (abduction, threatened rape) that were conventionally justified by popular beliefs about female nature: in Sir Anthony’s words, ‘women love importunity’ (I.1.461). As valuable heiresses, both Hyde and Ogle had been subjected to abduction attempts ‘between’ marriages. Hyde was abducted by Cornet Wroth at pistol point in July 1678 (*CSPD*, 21 July), and earlier attempts were also planned (*CSPD*, 10 February 1677; Allen, ‘Bridget Hyde’, p. 21). Depending on the perpetrator, these schemes might be viewed as condonable Tory ‘frolics’. However, while it is possible to view the play as a light-hearted work of Tory triumph over Sir Timothy, *The City-Heiress* invites more complicated responses to the female characters who are similarly rifled and tyrannised, and where consent is enforced or (at best) coerced. After Sir Charles has forced Lady Galliard to consent to marriage and consummate the match, his tyranny continues when he removes Lady Galliard’s authority over her servants and prevents her appeal to the City Mayor for justice. In a supposedly humorous jibe at corrupt Whig *Ignoramus* juries, Sir Charles threatens to influence his own jury of Lady Galliard’s female neighbours so that they will not pass judgement that he is a rapist (IV.1.524–26). The play, then, encourages a nuanced response to the politics of consent: while it is ideologically Tory, through not so subtle parallels with Whig practices it scrutinises as well as satirises the riotous behaviour Toryism condoned and encouraged.