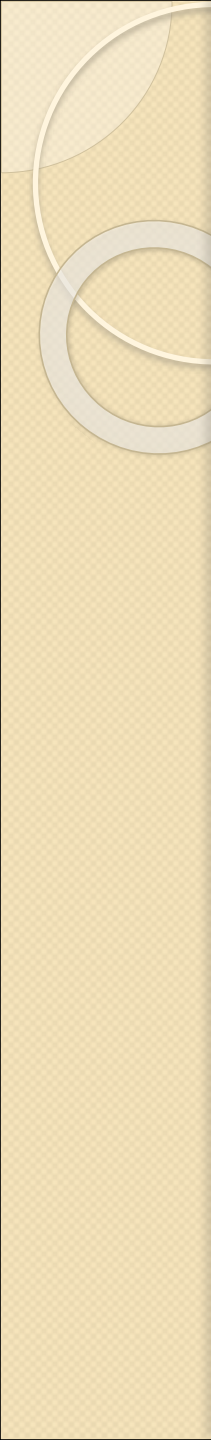


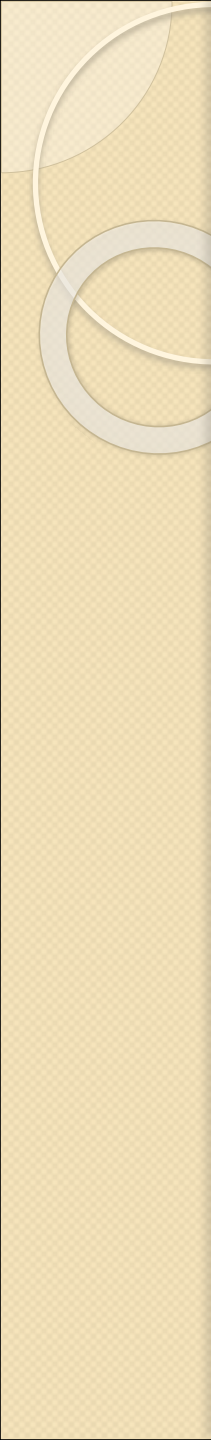


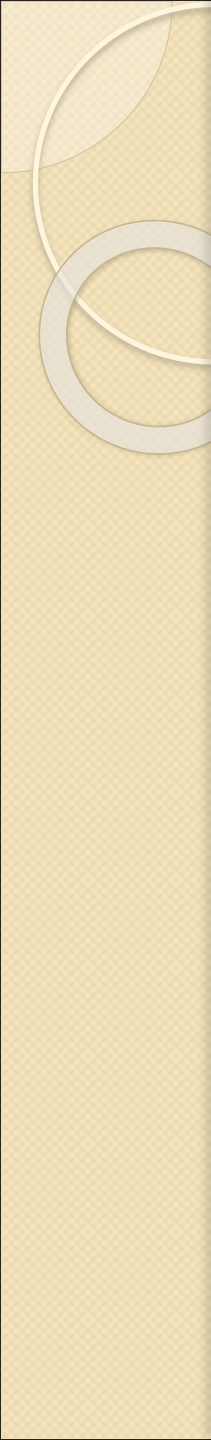
• The Restoration Stage  
Women writers  
Print culture  
Literary marketplace

# The Stage

- Theater reopens - royal order - women's roles to be played by women instead of boys.
- Charles II – flirted with the actresses.
- The actress Nell Gwynn was his mistress.

- 
- Hiatus of 20 years during Cromwell's reign
  - Restoration style begun from scratch:
    - Highly artificial
    - Actors often seen breaking from their characters to address asides at the audience
    - Occasionally some from among the audience would walk across the stage to enter the dressing rooms of the actresses; others simply went up and sat onstage to be closer to the action.

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- The theater divided into two:
    - the pit with its prostitutes, fops, sparks and average Joes
    - the tiers with their three galleries for the nobility.
  - Fruit vendors carried on their trade during the play, as did the courtesans.
  - Gossip continued even through the play's most tender moments.
  - If a play failed to hold interest, audience often expressed displeasure by hurling abuses and other things like rotten fruits

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- Rise of professional theater, profit-driven, more lasciviousness, spectacle on stage
  - Theater - just another stop on the pleasure circuit along with the parks, the brothels and the gaming houses.
  - More and more writers (Aphra Behn too) shift allegiance to the novel, which now pays well.
  - Gifted playwrights - Etherege, Wycherley, Congreve, and, Aphra

# Aphra Behn

## First professional 'woman' writer

- Had been writing for the King's Company; a friend of Dryden; member of Grub Street
- As a playwright she dared to challenge patriarchal prejudices
- Her women weren't passive, brainless creatures. She made them into free characters
- "The Forced Marriage" (tragi-comedy); "The Rover" (1677, it had sequels, starred Gwynn)

# "A woman after the Restoration was like,"

- property. You were either a wife, a widow or a prostitute.
- Outside of marriage you are considered immodest and 'available'.
- Once married, under Common Law, you became a person without legal rights, without an identity beyond your husband's, who could own no property, make no contracts, could have no right even to your own children.
- The men followed the fashions set by court and popularized in the theater - Cavaliers, libertines, debauchees, piling up mistresses, sating their lust at will assured that their wives patiently await them at home.

# The Restoration style of theater

- Wit, sexual innuendo, clever plots, vagabond men
- Women in Aphra's plays are clever enough to negotiate the terms of their own sexual surrender."
- Adultery expected of men, especially those in the fashionable circles that went to the theater. The rake was in, love was obsolete.
- Women were expected to know the rules. Aphra's women manipulate the rules and look for real love.



# London coffeehouses

- A Public Sphere which Excluded women
- Coffeehouses – gossip, entertainment, sharing of news, information on politics, business, trading, marine news
- Charles tries to have them shut down but fails



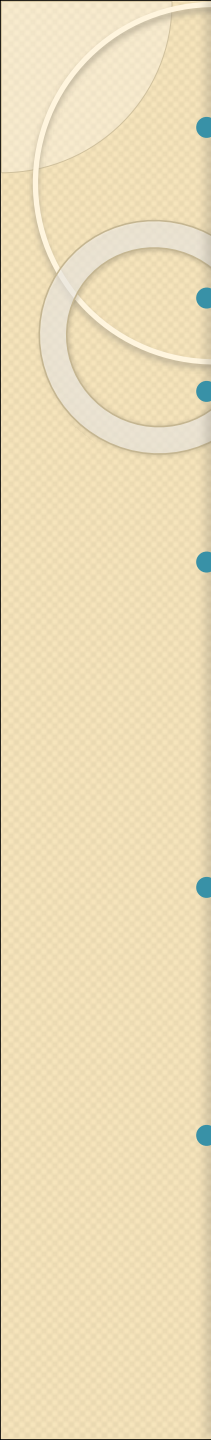
# Assimilation of print culture

## The Literary Market Place

- Increasing number of printers
- 1710 Statute of Anne – copyright law not tied to Govt. approval of a book's contents
- Copyright held by booksellers
- Rise of women writers, writers from all social classes
- Development of the novel form – target woman readers – the novel of sensibility (sentimental novels), the picaresque, the Gothic forms
- Circulating libraries
- Less moneyed writers could benefit from patronage and the subscription system; "Grub Street" hacks employed on a piecework basis.

# What did the Interregnum ban do?

- Dramatists looked to the print market
- Live audiences of one time become readers
- Demand and production of printed versions of older plays; folio eds. of Shakespeare and Jonson saw multiple reprints
- The printed books effectively tracked down the drama tradition
- New theory of English drama came into being

- 
- William Davenant – produced *The Siege of Rhodes* (1656) and described it as opera.
  - Distributed copies of the script in advance of its production
  - In it was a preface with Davenant depicting the play as a didactic portrayal of English virtue
  - Asks readers to attend his production not for anything but for enabling better portrayals of English virtue in the future. Readers become agents in the English dramatic tradition – modern day “crowd sourcing”
  - Then on, plays started to have statement made by the playwrights about the work and almost every play existed in print form; plays began to be sold
  - Commercial transactions become one of the major contents of Restoration plays