This curse, of course, comes horribly true for Rochester, but he bears his strangury with unexpected grace:

- Much purulent matter came from him with his Urine, which he passed always with some pain; But one day with unexpressible torment: Yet he bore it decently, without breaking out into Repinings or impatient Complaints. He imagined that he had a Stone in his Passage; but it being searched, none was found. (Burnet 154-55)

As virtually all commentators on "The Imperfect Enjoyment" remind us, the poem represents a ferocious and subversive reconfiguration of Amores 3.7. So Behn's panegyric may allude to a competitive kinship between her hero and the classical auctor that some contemporaries recognized but that remains relatively unexplored in recent criticism. Ovid wanders idly about the poetic heart of the "noble wond'rous" Earl, who lacked the arrogance to write "Iamque opus exegi" (Metamorphoses 15:871), content instead to say, "I'll owne, that you write better than I doe, But I have as much need to write, as you" ("An Epistolary Essay" 38-39), this constituting his exegi monumentum. In some senses, Rochester outdoes the predecessor who imitates that Horatian commonplace and affixes it to his greatest work.

For this reason, Behn's "out-done" provides an excellent word with which to examine Rochester's species of classical borrowing, a competitive medieval-Renaissance type of imitation, aemulatio. Most important discussions of Carolean classicism distinguish sharply between imitatio and the Imitation, the former infrequently discussed in criticism over the past two decades, the latter a specific form in which a poet writes a free translation of an ancient author and reconfigures the style and subject matter into those of his own time. Commentators from Dr. Johnson to Harold F. Brooks praise Rochester for inventing and developing the Imitation:

- A Jeast in Scorne, poynets out, and hits the thing, More home, than the Morosest Satyrs Sting. Shakespeare, and Johnson, did herein excell, And might in this be Immitated well; Whom refin'd Etheridge, Coppys not at all, But is himself a Sheere Originall: Nor that Slow Drudge, in swift Pindarique straines, Flatman, who Cowley imitates with pains, And rides a Jaded Muse, whipt with loose Raines. ("An Allusion to Horace" 28-36)

Rochester's satire surely fulfills the criteria for a recasting of Horace's Sermonum 1.10. Yet his writerly practice reflects a more pervasive intertextual

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"Thou idle Wanderer, about my Heart": Rochester and Ovid
by M. L. Stapleton

Had he been to the Roman Empire known,
When great Augustus fill'd the peaceful Throne;
Had he the noble wond'rous Poet seen,
And known his Genius, and survey'd his Meen,
The Royal Judge had Temples rear'd to's name,
And made him as Immortal as his Fame;
In Love and Verse his Ovid he'ad out-done,
And all his Laurels, and his Julia won.

(Behn, "On the Death of the Late Earl of
Rochester"

Rochester's "cynicism" seems a mere by-product of the persona that his work encourages its readers to invent: "There's not a thing on Earth, that I can name / Soe foolish, and soe false, as Common Fame" ("An Epistolary Essay" 88-90). Even so, some might surmise that he would have snorted at Aphra Behn's overstatement of his potential. Yet he may have appreciated her zeal to memorialize him and forgiven her attempt to make literary capital out of his demise. He may also have enjoyed her (unintentional) implication that the monarch whom poets publicly flattered as a second Augustus was privately regarded as scandalous and poor in comparison to his Roman predecessor, who filled a more peaceful throne. And surely if Rochester knew that Charles failed as Augustus, he understood that he himself did not qualify as Ovid. A banal if charming utterance such as "I'll Fart just as I write, for my owne ease" (36) does not predict a Metamorphoses, Fasti, or Remedia amoris. Nor does this speaker's angry injunction to a recalcitrant member presage an author as immortal as his fame:

May StranglY, and Stone, thy Days attend,
May'st thou ne're Pass, who didst refuse to spend,
When all my joys, did on false thee depend.
(The Imperfect Enjoyment 68-70)
This archness suggests that Renaissance concepts of imitation inform Restoration poetics. It, like the passage from the “Allusion” above, also implies that Carolean theory seeks to distinguish between metaphor, paraphrase, and imitation (this last term sometimes designated as “soendid” and “servile”) and begins to recognize the differences between borrowing and plagiarism, a dichotomy that led eventually to the Copyright Act of 1709. In the manner of most other seventeenth-century poets, Rochester worked from an implied concept of imitation that Burnet probably summarizes as well as anyone: “Sometimes other men’s thoughts mixed with his Composures, but that flowed from the Impressions they made on him when he read them, by which they came to return upon him as his own thoughts; than that he servilely抄袭ed from any” (8).

The classical tradition in Rochester has received little attention besides specific (and excellent) articles on the imitations and translations that ask the inevitable question: how much Latin or Greek did he know? The contemporary record seems just as unreliable as the ledger of gossip by which readers once attempted to elucidate his poetry. Besides, the polite conjectures of Burnet, Robert Parsons, Thomas Hearne, and Anthony à Wood concerning Rochester’s relative mastery of ancient languages cannot compete for interest with the spectacular accounts of sundial smashing, arranging to have Dryden caned, kidnapping heiresses, carrying on with Elizabeth Barry, or suffering a knockout punch at the hands of the Duchess of Cleveland. Those who discuss his classicism use it to lead into another, “more important,” subject. Many auctores underlie him, but he owes a particular debt to the Ars amatoria and Amores of Ovid, an unexamined part of Carolean Ovidianism that constitutes an intertextual discussion of relations between the sexes. Like any other theory that attempts to account for Rochester’s more remarkable features (obscenity, misogyny, lampoon, an obsession with the Bakhtinian “lower bodily stratum”), his Ovidianism cannot elucidate everything. But it can, I think, explain a feature of his poems, one that wanders, in the phrase that Rochester translates so handsomely, “in corde meo desidiose” (Amores 2.9.2).
the sword has been put aside]. Rochester leaves the ships and gladiators in antiquity and supplies a phrase more befitting to his poetics: "The Harpass Whore, who liv'd a Wrelch / Has leave to be a Bawd, and take her ease." ("To Love" 21-22). Again he reanimates the Ovidian convention into an utterance more directly sexual and, perhaps, decadent. The noble soldier in love's service whom the troubadours appropriated becomes the madam of a London brothel. This same desecrating principle helps revitalize the Amores-speaker's attempt at self-definition: "totiens merui sub amore puellae" (2.9.23); [I have served many times for a girl's love]. Rochester's persona thinks of himself as one who has

freely spent my blood
(Love) in thy service, and soe boldly stood
In Celia Trenches.
("To Love" 23-25)

Rochester reinvigorates Ovid's military metaphor by a graphic reference to the masculine broaching of biological femaleness, womb as tomb, an entity into which a man "spend[es]" his soul along with his vital fluids. The metonymy of "Celia" emphasizes that one woman cannot (and need not) be distinguished from another, as the narrator of "A Ramble in St. James Parke" implies: "mark what Creatures women are / How infinitely vile when fair" (41-42). Having realigned the Ovidian coordinates, Rochester does not content himself with describing such "Creatures" as sweet evils, "duce puella malum est" (Amores 2.9.26), but as "sweete, deare tempting Devills" ("To Love" 30) that pursue, seduce, and cannot be satisfied however often a man "serve ... up" his "Ballock full" ("A Ramble" 121-22). Physical love becomes something to be endured, not enjoyed, military ditchdigging: "Let the Porter, and the Groome, / ... Drudge in fair Aurelias Womb" ("Song [Love a Woman!] y'are an Ass" 5, 7) (Weber 99-117). And the end of "To Love" subtly revises the end of Ovid's elegy by distilling the misogyny that emanates from the classical source:

accedant regno, nimium vag a turba,
ambobus populis sic venerandus eris.
(Amores 2.9b.[53-54])

[may girls, that too fickle crown, accede to your reign; in this way you ought to be venerated by both populaces.]

From his masculinist perspective, Ovid's lines imply that "ambobus populis"—that is, both (sensible) men and (capricious) women—should fall under Cupid's spell, albeit the latter may prove somewhat harder for the former to entrance.

Rochester modifies the smooth Latin elegiacs to the rough hypnotics of iambic tetrameter:

And let th'Inconstant, Charming Sex
Whose willfull Scorne, does Lovers vex;
Submit their Hearts before thy Throne
The Vassal World, is then thy owne.
("To Love" 57-60)

The playful epithet "Inconstant, Charming Sex" predicts the arias in Cost in' tutti. Yet "willfull Scorne" reflects a consciousness that presupposes something malicious in women that requires subjection, and not with gentle sway, an unnuiness that Rochester makes his speakers (female as well as male) censure so bitterly in the later lyrics and satires. The poet's contemporaries noticed. As one of his enemies, Mary Hobart, put it so well: "a woman cannot escape him since he can enjoy her in his writings if he cannot have her in any other way" (Pinto 86).

Hobart's anxieties that concern escape, enjoyment, and writing comment on Rochester's most notoriously obscene poem, "Song [By all Loves soft yet mighty Pow'rs]," his most ill-natured jest at women's expense. He humiliates his "Fair nasty Nymph" who, frozen in the toils of the lines, cannot escape him. He has his way with her. Not incidentally, this instance of savaging the cavalier lyric also provides an intense emulation of Ovid, in this case the concept of remedia amoris (cures for love). Rochester distills the ironic gender politics of the ancient extended jeu d'esprit (men should cure themselves of the desire for women by focusing on their "Haws") into sixteen venomous lines. 19 And he fully investigates the idea in the Latin couplet above: what is, or should be, offensive?
Ovid's commentators tend to overstate his sexual frankness and underestimate his eroticism. In the manner of his medieval and Renaissance imitators, he prefers to imply (and therefore encourages his readers to infer) the existence of physical unions in his poetry. *Ars amorosa* 2.717-32 recommends to men the courtly gesture of attempting to attain mutual climax. One will hardly find a description of a nipple, let alone the graphic and transgressive physicality that characterizes the later Rochesterian corpus, rife with "pornographic monsters" (Burns, "Lady Betty" 73). His insults and descriptions of the great, few more astonishing than "Mistress Knights Advice to the Duchess of Cleavland in Distress for a Prick," seem to be the equivalent of defacing the portraits of Peter Lely. This passage from the *Remedia amoris* proves an exception to Ovid's usual tact and subtlety. His somewhat addled magister Amoris counsels "Illumine in vitis illius usque tene" (41) to the man who would fall out of love:

> die quod obscenas in aperto corpore partes viderat, in cursu qui fuit, haesit amor; 
> ille quod a Veneris rebus surgente 
> vidit in inmundo pudenda toro. (Remedia B2v)

There are further indignities. Ovid’s crowning distich reads, "quid, qui clam latuit reddente obscena puella / et vidit quae mas videre vetat" (Remedia 437-38); [As that nice youth, that did his loue with-draw, / Because his Mistresse he at Priuy saw (Remedy B2v). The culture in which Ovid wrote allowed him to assume that his readers (presumably male) would share his vision that a woman’s biological identity—"obscena" and "puenda," foreign, unruly, messy, and therefore shameful—provides an occasion for amusement. Rochester’s own culture allowed him to make the same assumptions. However, doing the *Remedia* one better, he eschews the convention of a man speaking to other men about women deliberately mystifies the female body, Rochester’s variation on another type of masculinist discourse (a man talking to a woman) appears to demystify this physical site. However, he intends his gentle yet menacing mockery for male readership, also, as Robert Wolsey’s nervous defense of him would suggest:

> But tho’ his obscene Poetry cannot be directly justified, in point of Decency, it may however be a little excus’d, and where it cannot challenge Approbation, it may deserve Pardon, if we consider not only when ‘twas writ, but also to whom ‘twas addressed... for the private Diversion of those happy Few, whom he us’d to charm with his Company and honour with his Friendship. (155)

Rochester shames the imaginary nymph for the shocking delectation of "those happy Few," the very real community of men, evidence that foretells the validity of Pope’s "What oft was thought, but ne’er so well express’d" (An Essay on Criticism 298). And, in Rochester’s pseudo-Renaissance emulation of the *Remedia*, he may express himself too well.21

III

All a Lover’s wish can reach, 
For thy Joy my Love shall teach.
And for thy Pleasure shall improve
All that Art can add to Love,
Yet still I love thee without Art,
Antient Person of my Heart.
(A Song of a Young Lady to Her Antient Lover" 21-36)

The nature of Rochester's emulation manifests itself in a word that translates easily from Latin in exactly the same number of letters. As Helen Wilcox shows, his Young Lady echoes the title of the Ars amatoria, and in so doing both critic and persona suggest a correspondence between Rochesterian "art" and Ovidian ars, a word whose connotations of "craft," "guile," and "trickery" equal and perhaps overwhelm the lexical meaning "aesthetic creativity" (13). Therefore both poets evoke the delusory nature of art and artistic production and suggest that for this reason poetic ars makes an almost perfect tool for seduction. In "I nev'r Rym'd but for my Pintles sake" ("Satyr" [Timor] 22), Rochester claims that poetry is manipulation, composed to procure sex, and also implies the opposite, that the procurement of sex helps one write poetry. Behn's noble wonderous Earl should have listened to Ovid: "carmeni laudantur sed munera magna petuntur" (Ars amatoria 2.275); [poems are praised, but expensive presents are desired]

Ovid's notorious treatise discusses love as a skill, something to be learned: "arte citae veJoque rales remoque mouentur, / arle leues currus: arte regendus Amor" (1.3-10); [by swift ships are moved with sail and oar, by art the smooth chariots: love should be ruled art]. To most twentieth-century readers, the equation of navigation and horsemanship makes men's interactions with women seem coldblooded. Yet in any epoch, the extraction of sentiment from the process is a continual struggle, one that Rochester (like Ovid) undertakes in his poetry. He praises Sir Charles Sedley for his detached and manipulative ars:

Sidley, has that prevailing gentle Art,
That can with a resistlesse Channe impart,
The loosest wishes to the Chastest Heart
("An Allusion to Horace" 64-66)

The relative efficacy of the ars poética dictates whether the art of seduction will succeed. Its resistless charms guarantee that the severest matron will forego her chastity, "cunctas / posse Rochester implies in this stanza that there are no exemptions, another revision of Ovid, who includes the disclaimer, "este procul, vittae tenues, insigne pudoris" (1.31); [keep your distance, slender fillets, emblems of modesty], to signify that he does not intend his words for the aforementioned matrons. And, in a bold extrapolation from Ovid, he describes sexual acts as ars:

This Dart of love, whose piercing point oft try'd,
With Virgin blood, Ten thousand Maid's has dy'd;
Which Nature still directed with such Art,
That it through'ev'ry Cont, reach each'ev'ry Heart.
("The Imperfect Enjoyment" 37-40)

Bravura and bluff undermine this artfully constructed boast of a man whose art and pintle have failed him, the Ovidian pattern to which Rochester adheres in his longer poems. The disappointed speaker in "A Ramble" praises Corinna (not accidentally the name of the mistress in the Amores) for her sexual adventurism, "There's something Genrous in meer lust" (98), but then hopes to see her "Loath'd, and despis'd, Kick't out of Town / Into some dirty Hole alone" (161-62) because she prefers the fruits of "Porters Backs and Footmen brawn" (120) to his own "Ballock full" (122). So Rochester symbolizes his skepticism concerning ars; poetry for the purposes of seduction, in the manner of Ovid's desulator amoris, who finds himself impotent and then supplanted by another man (Amores 3.7, 8). Rochester and Ovid reduce their speakers to vituperative fops drowning in misogyny-retarded sexuality.

The idea that art has no dominion haunts Rochester's poetry even in its phase of Latin juvenilia (composed in Ovid's erotic meter, elegiacs) and proves, like the passages on stone from "The Imperfect Enjoyment," oddly prophetic: "Ucera cùm veniunt, Ars nihil ipsa valet" ("Impia blasphemi" 4); [when the ulcers come, (medical) art has no strength]. And sometimes, ars can be used against him by those whom he intends to seduce, as they "inslave" him "with Love's resistless Art" ("Song [My dear Mistris has a heart]" 3-4). Rochester's male speakers generally reveal their anxieties concerning ars feminanlll1 so that even Corinna's frown is suspect: "the silly Art / Virtue had ill design'd" ('To Corinna: A Song" 7-8). Burnet quotes (47) a well-known tag from the Metamorphoses to suggest that one can enslave the self, as well: "video meliora proboque:

video meliora proboque:
I see the better, I approue it too:
I The worse I follow" (Metamorphosis 232).

Since 'tis Nature's Law to
Kocnesler, "A Dialogue between
Strerphon and Dophne" 31-32)

However there is nothing more dangerous than the insinuating ways by which he gets possession of your confidence. He enters into all your
Ars informs Rochester's most manifestly Ovidian characteristic, personae who deceive others and themselves in his anamorphic poetic body. His classical predecessor uses several speakers in his works: the bemused and garrulous deceitful paradigm of Ovidian polyvocality. the epic narrator (a parody, perhaps, of Virgil's) and his minions, the gods and goddesses who slither through his hexameters. Venus, Orpheus, and Medea interlace their tales with their own voices under the voice-over.

The idea of persona is essential in discussing Rochester's poetry. This concept, in fact, forms the thesis of the essay that helped inaugurate the mid-century study of Rochester as a serious poet. Anne Righter's "John Earl of Rochester" (1968). As Burnet hints, such protean voices are conducive to Rochester's nature:

He took pleasure to disguise himself as a Porter, or as a Beggar, sometimes to follow some mean Amours, which, for the variety of them, he affected. At other times, merely for diversion, he would go about in odd shapes, in which he acted his part so naturally, that even those who were on the secret, and saw him in these shapes, could perceive nothing by which he might be discovered. (33)

According to Thomas Betterton, Rochester was skilled enough to coach his mistress Elizabeth Barry "to enter into the meaning of every sentiment; he taught her not only the proper cadence or sounding of the voice, but to seize also the passions, and adapt her whole behaviour to the situations of the characters" (Fraser 434). Rochester employs a bewildering number of speakers in his work: juvenile panegyrist, shepherd (and shepherdess), cavalier, satyr, Platonic lady, misogynist, crypto-feminist, theologian, pessimistic philosopher, Young Lady, Mistress Knight, the Duchess of Cleveland, Mistress Price, disappointed rambler, disgusted haunter of spas, Timon, Artemisia (and Artemisia impersonating the Fine Lady), disabled debauchee, Gwyn, Portsmouth, his King, Mulgrave, Scroope, and Martalian epigrammashist. He changes guises and moods in the mode of Ovid, whose favorite god is, of course, Proteus:

qui sapit, innumeris moribus aptus erit,
unde leues Proteus modo se texuabit in vndas,
non leo, non arbor, non erit hiatus aper.

That Ovid always weaves his mythology into his erotic poetry prompts Rochester to do the same. Although some critics use the idea of persona to distance Rochester from his poems in hopes of exculpating him from the obscenity and misogyny that makes him what he is, he inevitably uses this device to underscore or even to foment these qualities. It contributes in no small part to the "cynical" Rochester, the bitter, bemused, somewhat nihilistic satirist—the poet we love.

Rochester manifests his Ovidian polyvocality most densely and subtly in those dramatic monologues whose speakers ventriloquize the voices of others and thereby discredit them, or, in some cases, themselves with the device known as prosopopeia (cf. ἀνθρώπων, mask). The author functions as a master transmitter who deploys his personae for multiple ironic purposes, as David Farley-Hills suggests ("Rochester's Poetry 123"). Satirists often (fondishly) allow the person satirized to speak for himself or herself, as Dryden does with Shadwell and Flecknoe. In "A Very Heroicall Epistle in Answer to Ephelia," Rochester discredits his acerbic enemy the Earl of Mulgrave by impersonating him and having him defend himself against "Ephelia," the author of Female Poems (although "Ephelia to Bajazet," the occasion for the epistle, was the work of Etheredge). Rochester's rakish personae who rail against constancy often utter lines such as "How is it then, that I inconstant am? I changes not, who allways, is the same" (5-6), but "Bajazet-Mulgrave" manifestly an egotism more spectacular than that of any pintle-waving monster that his maker usually imagines, a man who enuits a "happy Sultan" (32) in his "Serail" (34) empowered to squelch the "foolish cries" of any woman with a...
"True-Love-Knot" (52). Rochester compliments Ethercge by answering his poem, discredits "Ephelia," savages his enemy, remains anonymous and expresses his own sentiments. This performance exemplifies the protean devices of the *magister*, whose irongies were not often sharper than "all disguises, are below the great." (2), who he leaves his readers to wonder whether he is lion, tree, or boar.

Rochester’s ‘A Letter from Artemiza in the Towne to Chloe in the Country’ demonstrates a similar type of multiplex ventriloquism. This arts of female impersonation (doubtless an aid in training of Barry) resembles Ovid’s verbal transvestism. Rochester’s group of poems with women speakers resembles a miniature *Heroides*, with Artemiza the most developed, although an impec­ tus for her may be drawn from the *Fasti*. Therein the narrator asks Flora to tell her terrible tale of rape and degradation. His directive to her before she begins is something that Rochester seems to have internalized whenever he creates a female persona, especially one as masterfully drawn as Artemiza:

"ipsa doce, quae sis. hominum sententia fallax:
oprina tu proprii nominis auctor eris.

(Fasti 5.91-92)

[Tell me who you are. The opinion of men is treacherous: you will be the best surety of your own name.]

Like most other speakers in Rochester’s poetry, Artemiza is half-self-aware. She functions as a spokeswoman for Rochester and makes many of his character­istic observations about poetry, satire, culture, gender, and sex, certain that "Whore is scarce a more reproachfull name, Than Poetesse" (26-27). At the same time, she is an object of mild satire: "Our silly Sexe, who ... hate restraint, though but from Infamy" (56, 58). Chloe’s correspondent is herself a young woman from the country agog at the town machinations that her urban counterparts would have been bored with from birth—those that Roch­ester, though surprised at nothing, still wishes to hold up to ridicule. And Artemiza serves as a believable medium for the endless and self-absorbed rantings of the Fine Lady (85-91; 95-135; 143-45; 169-255); one woman can impersonate another well. Yet not everything the Fine Lady says deserves censure. The ten’ible tale of Corinna (that name again) and the booby squire like most other speakers in Rochester’s poetry, Artemiza is half-self-aware. She functions as a spokeswoman for Rochester and makes many of his character­istic observations about poetry, satire, culture, gender, and sex, certain that "Whore is scarce a more reproachfull name, Than Poetesse" (26-27). At the same time, she is an object of mild satire: "Our silly Sexe, who ... hate restraint, though but from Infamy" (56, 58). Chloe’s correspondent is herself a young woman from the country agog at the town machinations that her urban counterparts would have been bored with from birth—those that Roch­ester, though surprised at nothing, still wishes to hold up to ridicule. And Artemiza serves as a believable medium for the endless and self-absorbed rantings of the Fine Lady (85-91; 95-135; 143-45; 169-255); one woman can impersonate another well. Yet not everything the Fine Lady says deserves censure. The ten’ible tale of Corinna (that name again) and the booby squire (189-250) reticulates to any number of sentiments in Rochester’s poetry: "Foole are still wicked at their owne Expence" (225). She knows that men are treacherous and that she is the best surety of her own name; in her multi­plicity, Rochester again attempts to outdo the *magister*.

Poetic misogyny may be one inheritance from Ovid, which this letter to Barry reflects: "I thank God I can distinguish, I can see very woman in you, and from yourself am convinced I have never been in the wrong in my opinion of women." (Letters 181). Yet one ought not to view the *magister* as a culprit but as an enabler who wanders idly about Rochester’s heart. He is also an eminent predecessor with whom Rochester found himself in deliberate and conscious competition, the Scoopes and Mulgraves proving at last too puny for him, *aemulatio* a better description of his method than *imitatio*, the "neoclassical Imitation," or Dryden’s paraphrase. This may explain his occa­sional stridency and rough edges, calculated (especially in "To Love" and "The Imperfect Enjoyment") to make his personae sound more colloquial and flippan, especially when they speak in *propria persona* and extend Rochester’s ventriloquism. And, in what may be a comment on Ovid’s deli­cacy about sex and tact with regard to parodying his own contemporaries and forebears, Rochester will eschew euphemism and "cry Cunt," an interesting prog nostication of Pope’s "Still make the Whole depend upon a Part" (An Essay on Criticism 264). In the ways I have argued, Rochester lives up to Behn’s lofty praise and "out-does" Ovid in his emulation of him. Finding himself good for nothing else, it is his way of being wise.

NOTES

1 Two other Behn poems praising Rochester include one to his niece, Anne Whatton, "To Mrs. W. On her Excellent Verses (Writ in Praise of some I had made on the Earl of Rochester) Written in a Fit of Sickness" and another "To Mr. Creech (under the name of Daphnis) on his Excellent Translation of Lucretia" (Poems upon Several Occasions 50-60). There were many other tributes, such as "On the Death of the Earl of Rochester, by an Unknown Hand" (Miscellany 136) and "A Pastoral, in Imitation of the Greek of Moschus; Bewailing the Death of the Earl of Rochester," which follows Thomas Rhymer’s preface to Poems, &c. (i-xv). If A Session of the Poets is indeed Rochester’s, the remarks on Behn are mixed. It is hard for readers at the end of the twentieth century to imagine that she appreciated the comparison between poetical skill and biological femaleness:

The Poetesse Afra, next shew’d her sweete face,
And sower by her Poetry, and her black Ace;
The Lawrell, by a double right was her owne,
For the Plays she had witt, and the Conquests she won.

(73-76)

Keith Walker summarizes the authorship controversy (The Poems of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester 312; all references to Rochester’s poetry are taken from this edition). The author of A Session suggests that Apollo made Nathaniel Lee "his Ovid, in Augustus’s Court" (44). Lee’s *Gloriana, or the court of Augustus Caesar* (1676) includes Ovid as a character just as Jonson’s *Poetaster* (1602) does.
2For an example of Augustus-identification for Charles, see Dryden's *Threnodia Augustalis: A Funeral-Pindarique Poem Sacred to the Happy Memory of King Charles II* (1685). Yet the contempt in which the King's observers held him is apparent in Henry Savile's remark to Rochester in a letter dated 17 December 1677: "that known enemy to virginity & chastity the Monarke of Great Britain" (Letters 174). Pepys's distaste for both monarch and Rochester is clear in his aside (17 February 1669) on the episode of the boxing of Thomas Killigrew's ears, which gave much "offence to the people here at Court, to see how cheap the King makes himself and the more, for that the King hath not only passed by the thing and pardoned it to Rochester already, but this very morning the King did publicly walk up and down, and Rochester I saw with him, as free as ever, to the King's everlasting shame to have so idle a rogue his companion" (Diary 9: 451-52). And the scathing tone of Rochester's "A Satire on Charles II" speaks for itself: "Love, he loves, for he loves fucking much" (9); "I hate all Monarchs, and the Thrones they sit on! From the Hector of France to the Culley of Britaine" (32-33).

Rochester has a comforting degree not exactly of incompetence, but of baldness: his technique only frays at the very edges, but fray it does on occasion" (Rogers 174).

I say "relatively unexplored" because no thorough and systematic study exists. For example, Dustin Griffin categorizes "The Discovery," "The Advice," "The Submission," "Could I but make my wishes insolent," "To Love" and "The Imperfect Enjoyment" as "Ovidian" without making any direct comparison to Ovid's poetry. He underestimates these as "poems...of little interest beyond demonstrating Rochester's roots in literary conventions" (91 n 25). In my estimation, only the latter two pieces show any traces of Ovid. Two decades later, Marianne Thonnalen suggests a number of analogues between Rochester and the *Ars amatoria* but refrains from claims of direct imitation or borrowing (12, 19, 23, 32). Several articles devoted to the "imperfect enjoyment" genre in which Rochester participates (along with Behn, Boileau, Petronius, and Ovid) include Richard E. Quaintance (1963); Carole Fabricant (1974); Reba Wilcoxon (1975), and John H. O'Neill (1977, 1980), Jim McGhee (1995). Horace, "Exegi monumentum aere perennius" (Carm. 1.30.1; Q. Horatii Flacci Opera 86); [I have built a monument more lasting than bronze]. Translations from Latin are my own, with exceptions noted.

Martin L. McLaughlin traces the term to Quintilian and discusses its implications in Dante (19). Ernst Robert Curtius analyzes *aemulatio* as "outdoing" in Dante (165). George W. Pigman explains the concept thoroughly (1980). The word and concept are operative in Rochester's time, as well, particularly in terms of gender relations and poetical talent. *Triumphs of Female Wit, in Some Pindarick Odes; Or, the Emulation* (1683) encouraged a spate of answers and discussion lasting into the reign of Queen Anne. Sarah Pyge's *Poems on Several Occasions* (1703) also includes a poem titled "The Emulation" (Greer et al. 309-14).
Horace is distrustful of imitation elsewhere: "nec desllies imitator in artum, as all imitator leap down into that well from which shame or the law of the work pedem proferre pudor vetet aut operis lex" (Epistularum 1.19.19-20); [o imitators, servile herd, whose confusion has often excited me to anger and
served than in this" (I: 224). Most commentators on the issue in criticism of
Horace on Lucillus is not inelegant or unhappy. In the reign of Charles the Second
present times; and perhaps few will be found where the parallelism is better pre­
Carolean literature inevitably refer to Harold F. Brooks (1949), Leonard Moskovit
began that adaptation, which has since been very frequent, of ancient poetry to
(1968), and Howard D. Weinbrot (972). Although these three articles account
action ofTro),
transfusion, there will remaillnothing but a
is incapable of producing any thing good or noble. I am not so much enamour'd
[if the first term, see Rochester, The Imperfect Enjoyment; and "The Platonic
Lady": "I hate the Thing is call'd il1joyment, / Besydes it is a dull imployment"
--Works 13:14, 16; Hearne (3:263); Dr. Johnson (1:221); and Porter (61).
12. See the Rochester editions by Vieth (224) and Ellis (18), and the biographies
by Pinto, Graham Greene, and Lamb.
13. For example, Nick Davis co-opts Wood and Dr. Johnson's comments on
Rochester's classicism to show that he "engaged ... means-some of the more important debates of his
time, and ones that have considerable modern resonance" (114),
14. Edward Burns (73-76) analyzes the phenomenon in which Rochester, Etherege, Dryden, and the circle of A phyra Behn participate.
15. Rochester translates this phrase and the rest of the line "Thou idle Wanderer, about my Heart" ("To Love" 2). All citations from Ovid's erotic poetry are taken
from the edition by E. J. Kenney.
16. See John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, ed. Ellis (324); Love (142); and Rhymer (A3w-A4e), who prints Amorets 2.9 (as a single poem) and "To Love" on facing
pages (110-17). Kenney divides Ovid's elegy, but provides continuous as well as
separate lineation, representing both manuscript traditions (48-50).
17. For the first term, see Rochester, The Imperfect Enjoyment; and "The Platonic
Lady": "I hate the Thing is call'd Enjoyment, / Besydes it is a dull imployment" (78).
For the second, see Behn's "To Alexis in Answer to his Poem against Fruition": "Its a fatal lesion he has learn'd, / Aller fruition ne 're te be concern'd" (Works 6: 348-49).
18. Ellis (John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester 325) suggests that Rochester alludes to the Priapea: "fossas ignus in uter dominoque" (46.9; Baehrens 1: 72); [let me
dig and grind in the trenches of the groin].
Although some poststructuralist criticism demonizes M. Vieth dismisses this kind of reading as "the old persona theory, now out of date for almost twenty years" (1979). Rochester himself insists that the term corresponding to this idea in a small part of the Ovidian corpus, see Alison Sharrack (1995).

Although some poststructuralist criticism demonizes "persona" as a hopelessly essentialist term, Rochester's polymorphous poetics demand its use. David M. Vieth dismisses this kind of reading as "the old persona theory, now out of date for almost twenty years" ("Rochester Studies" 71). Yet it appears in virtually all past and present discussions of Rochester's poetry, which suggests that it is not so out-of-date; e.g., Main (1960), Knight (1970), Pasch (1979), Alsop (1988), Chernaik (1993), Wilcox (1995), Clark (1995), and Sekeln ("Rochester and Oldham" 1995).

For an intense treatment of this idea in a small part of the Ovidian corpus, see Alison Sharrack (1995).}

In some heat and jealousy Rochester wrote to Barry: "You have a character and you maintain it" (Letters 181), an ironic statement since he taught her this skill himself. In the Fasti, the divine wind Zephyrus rapes Chloris, which transforms her to Flora, goddess of Spring (1.383-378). Farley-Hills ("Rochester's Poetry 65") suggests that Rochester borrowed this tale and used it as background for the lyric "Fair Chloris in a Piggsty Lay," but mis-cites the locus as Farley-Hills somewhat inexplicably suggests that this poem is not in the Ovidian corpus, see Alison Sharrack (1995).

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Fabricant, Carole. "Rochester's World of Imperfect Enjoyment." 


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