

Chapter 1: “Transgender Citizenship and Settler Colonialism in Aphra Behn's *The Widow Ranter*”

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Abstract: This chapter unpacks the queer potentialities and trans capacities of Aphra Behn's 1689 play *The Widow Ranter*, while also keeping in mind that the greatest opportunities for the queer and trans characters of the play lie with the settler characters who find ways of playing with gender norms in the New World setting. Whether the play endorses that result or presents it rather as the reprehensible yet logical outcome of colonial violence, though, is ambiguous. The play posits a new kind of royal subject in the British colonies: that of the transgender citizen, who embodies masculine strength and courage with the feminine ability to reproduce once the local Powhatan Indigenous community—represented in the play as a racial double—is eliminated.