PRÉCIEUSE CONVENTION AND REVOLT IN THE RESTORATION COMEDY OF MANNERS

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PREFACE

Holders of the generally accepted view that all of theater-going London society in the Restoration was debauched and cynical overlook the fact that in the drama of the time the romantic genres were numerically dominant and perenially applauded; in these genres, constancy in love was quite strongly approved, virtue was rewarded, and the virtuous woman, exalted almost to divine status, was endowed with the power to convert erring men into espousers of her own idealistic code. Embodied in three stock figures—the distressed heroine, the repentant rake, and the "whining" lover—these romantic themes, based ultimately on platonic doctrines and herein denominated précieuse, were extended throughout the Restoration into satiric comedy, to be treated there both satirically and seriously. Scholars of the twentieth century have not, for the most part, recognized any such extension. This paper is intended to set forth examples of the serious and satiric use made of the code and advocates of préciosité in the comedy of manners, one of the several Restoration species of satiric comedy. The treatment here is by no means exhaustive; but the writer thinks it is adequate to make clear that if today we would approach the comedy of manners as did the seventeenth-century audience, we must approach it with an understanding of Restoration précieuse convention and of the continuing reaction against that convention during the period.

To Dr. David S. Berkeley, of the Department of English, I wish to express my deep appreciation. Dr. Berkeley not only introduced me to the fascinating realm of Restoration comedy, but suggested the present topic and gave most liberally of his time in offering detailed advice and criticism pertaining to it. But particularly I must acknowledge his kindness in allowing me to make extensive use of his doctoral dissertation, "Origins of Sentimental Comedy" (Harvard, 1948), upon the theories of which this study is based.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

THE PRESENT POSITION OF CRITICISM

For the most part, twentieth-century critics of Restoration drama deal not at all with the subject of this study: the use in Restoration comedy of manners of the précieuse social mode, the cult of "whining" love, a use sometimes involving serious treatment of, but more often, in manners comedy, a reaction against the mode as manifested by a satiric treatment of it.

These critics may here be divided into three groups: those who neglect précieuse convention altogether in accounting for the phenomenon that is manners comedy after 1660; those who consider the mode briefly, but seem to account it only a minor influence; and those few who hold préciosité to be a major formative element in the comedy of manners.

In the first group are John Palmer, George Henry Nettleton, Bonamy Dobrée, Joseph Wood Krutch, Allardyce Nicoll, F. W. Bateson, George Sherburn, Jeanette Fleisher and Paul Mueschke, Klisabeth Mignon, and several writers of lesser studies. In the second group are Henry Ten Eyck Perry, Willard Connely, and Charles Whibley. In the third are Kathleen M. Lynch, John Harrington Smith, and Alan S. Downer.

John Palmer, in his influential[1] book The Comedy of Manners, asserts the genre of which he writes to be "an independent growth springing spontaneously from the impulse of English Restoration Society to view itself in reflection upon the stage."[2] With Etherege "the English comedy of manners began";[3] he pictured "an age for which life was . . . incuriously observed, uncritically accepted,"[4] an age in which "the monogamous instinct was in abeyance,"[5] and the act of sex "dissociated . . . from sentiments of friendship or the transports of romantic exaltation."[6] A presupposition of these assertions is that "romantic love cannot be reconciled with a comic

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[1] I consider the book "influential" at least in that it is the first of a long series in this century that has not given specific treatment to précieuse convention in the Restoration. Also, it is only since this book appeared that the term "comedy of manners" has been in general use, although Lamb had employed it probably for the first time in our present-day sense in his "On the Artificial Comedy of the Past Century" (1823). (See F. W. Bateson, "Contributions to a Dictionary of Critical Terms. I: Comedy of Manners," Essays in Criticism, I (January, 1951), 89-93.) Lastly, Palmer's grouping of the comic works of Etherege, Wycherley, Congreve, Vanbrugh, and Farquhar as the corpus of Restoration comedy of manners has been accepted by later critics, and is used in this paper. Some general characteristics of these plays are: place, London; time, the "present"; medium, prose; ethics, "immoral" in the sense that one calls, say, Etherege's Dorimant immoral. Further, the comedy of manners, as Palmer conceives it, is free of sentiment, lacks humours characters, and has little intrigue. In such remarks as "romantic love cannot be reconciled with a comic treatment of adultery" (p. 295), Palmer seems not to recognize that there has never been written a "pure" comedy of manners: elements of intrigue, humours comedy, and sentiment tend to creep in.

[2] Palmer, London, 1913, p. 66.

[3] Ibid., p. 2.

[4] Ibid., p. 91.

[5] Ibid., p. 42.

[6] Ibid., p. 268.

treatment of adultery."[7] But in fact, a serious view of romantic love is thus "reconciled"—that is, occurs in a comedy which contains comically treated adultery, but in which the idealism of romantic love is nevertheless expressed without suggestion of mockery on the poet's part—in five of the plays that Palmer considers comedies of manners: George Etherege's Love in a Tub (1664);[8] William Wycherley's Love in a Wood (1671); Wycherley's The Plain-Dealer (1676); John Vanbrugh's The Relapse (1696); and George Farquhar's Love and a Bottle (1698). In the first, Love in a Tub, the romantic treatment of love occurs in a versified sub-plot; but, says Palmer, these "idyllic loves of Aurelia and Graciana, told in smooth numbers in the intervals of Sir Frederick Frollick's escapades, are obviously out of the picture," and form an "experiment . . . not again repeated until Vanbrugh's The Relapse prepared the decline of English comedy."[9] For Palmer, then, a comic treatment of adultery is in the spirit of the age; a serious treatment of love, opposed to that spirit. To hold this position is completely to overlook the fact that the dominant—most numerous—Restoration dramatic genres were the romantic ones,[10] including tragedy, romantic

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[7] Ibid., p. 295.

[8] Unless otherwise noted, dates after titles of plays are those of first production as found in Montague Summers, A Bibliography of the Restoration Drama (London, n.d.).

[9] Palmer, p. 67. Factually this view is incorrect, for a mixture of verse in the romantic vein with realistic comedy in prose is to be found in at least six other comedies between 1664 and 1696, the year Vanbrugh's The Relapse was first produced. For a list of these six, see David S. Berkeley, "Origins of Sentimental Comedy" (unpubl. Ph.D. diss., Harvard Univ., 1948), p. 4.

[10] Allardyce Nicoll, "Hand-list of Restoration Plays" in A History of Restoration Drama (3d ed.; Cambridge, Mass., 1940, Appendix C) shows under the headings "tragedies," "tragicomedies," "masques," "operas," "dramatic opera," and "pastorals" a total of 215 plays published in the years 1660-1700, whereas in the same period only 197 plays listed under "comedies" and "farcecomedies" were published. (This tabulation is taken from Berkeley, p. 93, n. 18.) Further, one must remember that the comedy of manners was but one of three types of satiric comedy, the others being comedy of intrigue and comedy of humours.

comedy, and opera, in which one finds constancy in love applauded, virtue approved, and woman invested with something of divinity, such as the power to reform in an instant the wildest of rakes; and it must be allowed, unless one is an Elian, that these other genres reflected forces[11] in the audiences which disapproved the divorce of sex from "the transports of romantic exaltation." What specifically are the elements of romantic love in the five plays listed above will be considered in chapters dealing with the dramatists separately, as will similar elements in others of the comedies of manners. Suffice it here to reiterate that Palmer believes incorrectly of the comedy of manners that, in reflecting a new immorality, it reflected faithfully all of Restoration theater-going society.

In almost the same vein, George Henry Nettleton writes that, during an age like the Restoration,

> it was natural for drama to turn to the comedy of manners. . . .Under the Merry Monarch, drama found its most characteristic expression in comedy. Comedy mirrored not English nature, still less human nature, but the nature of the court.[12]

Here comedy is equated with comedy of manners, and comedy of manners is taken as the "characteristic" expression of the fashionable Restoration spirit. And that characteristic expression "found love synonymous with fashionable intrigue."[13] Thus Nettleton leaves room (as Palmer did not)

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[11] These "forces" became vocal in such complaints against bawdry and debauchery as that occurring in the epilogue to Congreve's The Double-Dealer (1693), Complete Works, ed. Montague Summers (Soho, 1923), II, 77:

> The Lady Criticks, who are better read,
> Inquire if Characters are nicely bred;
> If the soft things are Penn'd and spoke
> with grace . . .

Other such instances will be found in chaps. iii-vii of this study.

[12] Nettleton, English Drama of the Restoration and Eighteenth Century (London, 1914), p. 72.

[13] Ibid.

for the presence in manners comedy of such occasional ingredients as the romantic elements mentioned above (although he does not point out any such ingredients). But his view neglects the fact that love was found "synonymous with fashionable intrigue" in the comedy of manners only insofar as there was a reaction, in the Restoration, against *précieuse* theories then abroad. Human nature did various kinds of battle against the affectations of this platonic love cult, and manners comedy was produced.

Bonamy Dobrée seems to share with Palmer, though less explicitly, the misconception that the comedy of manners represents the "spirit" of fashionable Restoration society *in toto*. It is perhaps objectionable to complain of what a critic does not say; but that Dobrée was unaware of the prevalence of *précieuse* thought is further suggested by, *e.g.*, his treatment of Congreve's Lady Wishfort (*Way of the World*, 1700) and Wycherley's Fidelia (*The Plain-Dealer*, 1676). Lady Wishfort is, in my view, a false and decayed *précieuse* among the anti-*précieuse*—therefrom issues her memorable absurdity—but though Dobree quotes[14] from the two scenes in which her false affectations of apprehensions and flutterings, obtained from the platonic mode, are best shown, he does not speak of her as *précieuse*. Of Fidelia, influenced by the mode at least in that she professes the romantic ideal of constant love without being satirized by Wycherley, Dobrée notes keenly that she is the "modicum of absolute good" well-nigh overwhelmed "by the flood of absolute evil that dominates every act."[15] It was a theory of the *précieuses*, as suggested already, that the women of their group had somewhat of the divine in them, a divinity manifested in part by constancy in love and

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[14] Dobrée, *Restoration Comedy 1660-1720* (London, 1924), pp. 142-43, 148.

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 93.

unassailable virtue. Had Dobrée been familiar with the Restoration tradition of the mode, I think he would not have considered it out of place to relate her "absolute good" to its source in the milieu, both on and off the stage.

Similar remarks should be made of Joseph Wood Krutch, who contends for the absence of at least one, and for the presence of another of the mode's conventions:

> In the Restoration plays the ["comedies"] there is no hint that it [love] possesses a "seraphic part." . . . The mystical elements never appear, and in a word love is Ovidian rather than Dantesque. . . . In the plays of Wycherley or Etherege . . . people seldom sigh. Though they may, as a matter of convention, talk of flames and darts, it is merely a matter of convention.[16]

Yet the "seraphic part" appears, for example, in a eulogy, serious in intent, by Vanbrugh's Worthy on the virtuous Amanda (The Relapse, 1696) beginning "Sure, there's Divinity about her . . . ,"[17] and the "talk of flames and darts" is admittedly a matter of convention, but of what convention? It is my position that such metaphors, which are interspersed liberally throughout the comedy of manners, are part of the stylized love language of the male who courted in précieuse fashion. Further, Krutch speaks of "that strange susceptibility to conversion which began to manifest itself in rakes about the year 1700" as "a mere convention."[18] The précieuse basis here has been touched upon in the discussion of Palmer: woman being almost deified, what was there for it but that when an "immoral"—anti-précieuse—male approached the précieuse, she "with rapine

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[16] Krutch, Comedy and Conscience after the Restoration (2d printing; New York, 1949), p. 193.

[17] Act V, Complete Works, ed. Bonamy Dobrée and Geoffrey Webb (Bloomsbury, 1927), I, 93.

[18] Krutch, Comedy and Conscience, pp. 221, 249.

sweet bereaved / His fierceness of the fierce intent it brought . . . ,"[19] turning him to a penitent worshipper at her feet. There are twenty-three such repentant rakes in Restoration comedy,[20] including Vanbrugh's Worthy, spoken of above.

Allardyce Nicoll gives recognition, as Palmer did not, to the fact that

> the comedy of manners which they [Etherege, Wycherley, Congreve, Vanbrugh, Farquhar] succeeded in establishing and which marks the acme of comedy in that age, did not by any means dominate the world of the theatre; it was rivalled by many another form which proved as popular, if not more popular, with contemporary audiences.[21]

The playhouses were occupied by "a courtly and Cavalier audience," says Nicoll, and

> it is this that explains both the rise of the heroic tragedy and the elaboration of the comedy of manners. The one appealed to artificial aristocratic sentiments on the subject of honour; the other reflected the morally vicious but intellectually brilliant atmospheres of the salons and the chocolate-houses.[22]

The taste which enabled heroic tragedy, with other romantic genres, to vie with manners comedy for pupularity was the taste for "artificial aristocratic

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[19] Paradise Lost Bk. IX, ll. 461-62. These lines give the effect wrought in Satan by his first glimpse of Eve, with "her heavenly form / Angelic, but more soft, and feminine . . ." (IX, 457-58). The assumption very cautiously made in my quoting this passage is that Milton may have been casting scorn here upon conversions in Restoration drama, and thus upon préciosité; for Eve is not divine, and the "rake" Satan's conversion is impermanent. Though only two conversions occurred in satiric comedy before 1667, when PL was published, Milton might have known of the fad by hearing of its more frequent use in tragedy and romantic comedy. (On the use of conversions in romantic genres and their transfer to satiric comedy, see Berkeley, pp. 317-19.) Some other traces of what were possibly meant as the ascription of précieuse power to Eve are found in PL IX, 309-12, 373-75. But it would be absurd to insist on this interpretation without further evidence.

[20] For a list of these conversions, see Berkeley, p. 336, n. 1.

[21] Nicoll, British Drama (New York, 1925), p. 243. This view is expressed also in Nicoll, A History of Restoration Drama (2d ed.; Cambridge, 1928), p. 75.

[22] British Drama, p. 219. This view is expressed also in Nicoll, A History of Restoration Drama, pp. 75-81.

sentiments" exhibiting "idealism fossilized in the twin forces of love and honour."[23] Turning now to a frame of reference that Nicoll does not occupy himself with, one may note that in the first of the twin forces, love, the idealism is to be identified with précieuse attitudes toward love, womankind, and the role of the male as inferior to his beloved.[24] Once again it must be urged that such attitudes were not contained during the Restoration within the bounds of the tragic genres: they appeared also in comedy, including the comedy of manners, as later chapters herein will show, where they were treated sometimes seriously, sometimes satirically.

In contrast to the belief of the critics above that the comedy of manners is realistic, F. W. Bateson holds with Lamb that "Foppington and Horner, Dorimant and Foresight, are not the habitants of this earth, but of an aerial, fantastic fairyland."[25] Congreve, for instance,

> was constructing out of the world of social relationships, in the observation of which he spent his life, another world, an ideal cosmos, where the disillusionment of this life would be able to find a refuge.[26]

Such remarks are truer of Bateson, perhaps, than Bateson's remarks are true. If he means only that manners comedy is unrealistic in possessing, as Dobrée says, "the artifice necessary to that concentration of life upon the stage wherein the art of the drama partly consists,"[28] no one can

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[23] British Drama, p. 225.

[24] See Berkeley, pp. 6, 27.

[25] Bateson, English Comic Drama 1700-1750 (Oxford, 1929), p. 7.

[26] Ibid., p. 118.

[27] Ibid., pp. 140-41. Henry Seidel Canby, "Congreve as a Romanticist," PMLA, XXXI (1916), 17, agrees substantially with Bateson, for he writes that despite "its versimilitude, his [Congreve's] work has sometimes the glamour, and the imaginative appeal of romance. . . . Where gallantry was in question Congreve wrote not realism but romance."

[28] Restoration Comedy, p. 27.

disagree. But if he truly feels that this comedy has "no reference whatever to the world that is,"[29] we must dissent. Must not satire abhor a vacuum? Can wit be pointed, as it is in the comedy of manners, without anything real to point at? But (to refrain from further rhetorical questions) the writers themselves insist on the basic realism of their comedies:

> 'Tis by your Follies that we Players thrive,
> As the Physicians by Diseases live.
> . . . . . .
> among you, there starts up every day
> Some new unheard of fool for us to play.[30]

Dryden, writing of Sir Fopling Flutter that

> none Sir Fopling him, or him can call;
> He's Knight o'th'Shire, and represents ye all,[31]

implies existence for the Restoration game of guessing who it was this or that stage character figured from life.[32] Such examples can easily be multiplied.[33]

I have labored this question of realism because Bateson's argument involves the belief in Restoration fashionable society as, typically, cynical, callous, and sensual.[34] If it was, it had no important précieuse faction. If, on the other hand, manners comedy is basically realistic; if,

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[29] Charles Lamb, "On the Artificial Comedy of the Last Century," The Works of Charles and Mary Lamb, ed. Thomas Hutchinson (London, 1924), p. 651. Bateson quotes this familiar phrase approvingly (p. 7).

[30] "Prologue by Sir Car Scroope," The Man of Mode, The Dramatic Works of Sir George Etherege, ed. H. F. B. Brett-Smith (Oxford, 1927), II, 186.

[31] "Epilogue," ibid., p. 288.

[32] For a brief discussion of this "game," see Dobrée, Restoration Comedy, p. 27.

[33] E.g., compare the diversions and affectations of characters in the plays with those of fashionable society as it is spoken of in many of the prologues and epilogues to the comedies of manners.

[34] Bateson uses these adjectives as typifying the period. See English Comic Drama, pp. 3, 13.

that realism granted, the dominance of the romantic genres is recalled (see n. 10), then the mind is open to persuasion that précieuse adherents to romantic idealism actually lived in the Restoration, approving, when they referred to the comic stage, "nicely bred" characters, and berating scoffers.

The last major critic to be considered in this first group is George Sherburn, who in characterizing the Restoration heroic genres says that

> in the more serious plays produced shortly after the Restoration there is an artificial declamatory elevation which, joined with bustling action and elaborate spectacle, for some years dazzled audiences. Later this "heroic" type of play yielded to dramas of pathos and domestic sentimentality.[35]

But he like the others of this group does not suggest that any of the précieuse themes of "this 'heroic' type of play" bubbled over into comedy, to be used both seriously and satirically—and if the former, we need to add, in a manner either romantic or sentimental. To illustrate the use of themes occurring in both the heroic and comic genres: of Thomas Shadwell's The Sullen Lovers (1668), Sherburn notes that it announced that dramatist's program: "he was against . . . the love-and-honor cliches and against the use of either romantic or modishly disreputable lovers . . ."[36] In the view which I accept, but which Sherburn does not suggest, both the love-and-honor cliches and the romantic lovers are from the heroic genres, and are thus to be accounted précieuse.[37]

Speaking of Wycherley's Love in a Wood (1671), Sherburn refers to "the romantic (almost sentimental) couple, Valentine and Christina, who

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[35] Sherburn, "Restoration Drama: I. Heroic Plays and Tragedies," A Literary History of England, ed. A. C. Baugh (New York, 1948), p. 748.

[36] "Restoration Drama: II. Comedy," ibid., p. 769.

[37] Shadwell was, it may be, more openly contemptuous of the platonic cult than any other writer of Restoration comedy. For a list of twenty-three of his derogatory treatments of the mode, see Berkeley, p. 101, n. 70.

hardly come from the same realistic world as do the other persons."[38] To relate this couple to précieuse is to consider Christina definitely a sentimental character, Valentine a character with traces of the sentimental. The basis of the distinction is this: Christina is allowed to express quite fully the ideal of romantic love without the suggestion of mockery or satiric intent by Wycherley, and Valentine is allowed one or two such expressions. That is, Christina stands forth, in a satiric comedy, as a serious embodiment of the "love" phase of the love-and-honor philosophy common in the sundry forms of Restoration tragedy. But she does so in the trappings of manners comedy (such as a London setting in "present" time, ordinary Restoration dress, absence of royalty from the list of characters, prose medium) rather than in the trappings of romance (such as a foreign setting in remote time, exotic costume, characters of royal rank, verse medium).[39] Romantic themes become sentimental when they are placed, free of romantic externals, in satiric comedy. But the love-and-honor theme, whether handled in romantic fashion or sentimental, is an expression of précieuse thought.

I wish to deal now with two specialized studies. They deserve separate mention in that, whereas the works already treated consider only incidentally elements which this thesis will reinterpret as précieuse in nature, these two have their focal points in such elements. The first is by Paul Mueschke and Jeanette Fleisher, who object to critics that, viewing the expression of any hearty common sense attitude toward the more serious aspects of life as an intrusion of emotion into the divinely unemotional

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[38] "Restoration Drama: II. Comedy," A Literary History of England, p. 767.

[39] The parenthetical list is from Berkeley, p. 11. The romantic-sentimental distinction is from Berkeley, p. 11 ff.

Comedy of Manners, apply "sentimental" indiscriminately to Cibber, Steele, and Vanbrugh.[40]

Worthy's last-minute conversion by Amanda in The Relapse, for example, is not sentimental, since

> the code Worthy is enunciating, and to which Vanbrugh himself no doubt subscribed, is a common-sense and not a false idealization of a particular woman. . . . So long as there is no falsity in the characterisation of the person speaking, and the sentiment is not ridiculously ennobled beyond human approach, there can be no charge of sentimentalism.[41]

By the criteria suggested in the preceding paragraph, this conversion is, nevertheless, an example of sentimental writing in comedy. The point to be made is that for the seventeenth-century spectator, Worthy's ascription of divinity (mentioned under the discussion of Krutch above) to Amanda would almost assuredly not have been understood as part of a common-sense code, but as part of the code of those herein called précieuse. Worthy's post-conversion utterances are "ennobled beyond human approach," and must appear, unless related to the précieuse tradition, out of place in what is popularly thought to have been a debauched and materialistic upper class whose typical as well as crowning expression, the comedy of manners, was (in the view of some critics) starved to death around 1700 by an "increasingly bourgeois element in the audiences,"[42] an element which insisted upon "puritan"—strict—morality on the stage. As this theory runs, the revolutionary expression of the new morality was sentimental comedy. When one recognizes the ramifications of précieuse convention, however, it becomes apparent

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[40] Mueschke and Fleisher, "A Re-evaluation of Vanbrugh," PMLA, XLIX (1934), 851.

[41] Ibid., pp. 852-53.

[42] Bateson, English Comic Drama, p. 148. Bateson accepts this view of sentimental comedy as an expression of puritan morality.

that sentimental comedy had its beginnings in satirical comedy.[43] Sentimental comedy did not pop up in the course of a couple of years; it evolved throughout the Restoration.

The second study, by Klisabeth Mignon, treats at length the superannuated coquettes in Restoration comedy. Miss Mignon writes, for example, of Congreve's Lady Wishfort, aforementioned loser in the battle between desire for a husband and an affected "mortal Terror at the Apprehension of offending against Decorums,"[44] that she is a "non-conformist in her own group. . . . She transfers the cause [of her being a loser] from her own failings to the nature of 'the bad world.'"[45] There is a "firmly established convention under which Lady Wishfort exists," and it "clarifies her position in the comedy of manners . . ."[45] My position, however, that Milady's dilemma consists in her false, exaggerated expression of attitudes herein called précieuse, that this is the core of her "non-conformity," the convention under which her position can best be clarified, is nowhere suggested. When she lays to "a bad world" the cause of her failings, she is but speaking in accord with a satiric treatment of a précieuse theory which allowed one's misfortunes to be attributed to any cause but oneself; for how can divinity be culpable? For example, the sentimental Christina of Love in a Wood, who unlike Lady Wishfort is seriously treated, says of an unsolicited visit to one Vincent, in whose apartment she thinks to find her lover Valentine, "If my visit be troublesome, or unseasonable,

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[43] Berkeley, p. 11 ff. This concept is central in "Origins of Sentimental Comedy," the theory of which dissertation is adopted in the present study.

[44] Way of the World, Act III, Complete Works, III, 40.

[45] Mignon, Crabbed Age and Youth (New York, 1947), p. 123.

'tis your Friends [Valentine's] fault, I design'd it not to you, Sir; pray, call him out, that he may excuse it . . ."[46] Thus in her own way Christina too has a precieuse "Terror at the Apprehension of Offending against Decorums." If the parallel seems trivial, it will appear less so when supported in the chapter on Wycherley by further examples that are similar.

Among the writers of lesser studies which treat Restoration comedy but do not mention précieuse influences is Bartholow V. Crawford, the conclusion of whose "High Comedy in Terms of Restoration Practice" is that what we generally mean by the term "high comedy" is comedy possessing qualities found in it during the Restoration, particularly in the comedy of manners. Deserving of separate attention, he says, is the fact that

> there was in Restoration society as we see it in the plays [i.e., the comedies] no double standard either intellectually or morally. The period of the sentimental dramas of Steele which followed, like the Victorian period, treated Woman as an object of chivalrous care, set her morally on a pedestal . . . Woman was treated by the Restoration man as a creature like himself, his equal mentally, and his equal morally.[47]

If by "Restoration man" we mean people like Mirabell, these statements are true. Going beyond the limits of Crawford's article, one may interpret the temporary crumbling of the "double standard," in his use of the term, as the result of a reaction against the well-established précieuse mode. The elevation of woman to a pedestal in the sentimental manner of writing was a reassertion, in domestic English trappings, of the précieuse bestowal of goddess-like attributes upon her.

Thus when Willard Connely points out that the inclusion in Love and a Bottle (1698) of sentimentality exemplified by Leanthe and Loveless shows

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[46] Act IV, Complete Works of William Wycherley, ed. Montague Summers (Soho, 1924), I, 129.

[47] PQ, VIII, October, 1929, p. 343.

Farquhar to have been "responding to the currents of the time,"[48] we may add as Connely does not that a fuller comprehension of that current can be had when one recognizes its précieuse origin. Connely writes with savor of an exchange between Angelica and Wildair in A Trip to the Jubilee (1699):

> She asked him plainly whether he loved her. "Love you?" exclaimed Wildair, echoing Hamlet to Ophelia, "does fire ascend? Do hypocrites dissemble? Usurers love gold, or great men flattery? Doubt these, then question that I love." But the young woman was afraid that he was mad.[49]

Echo of Hamlet it may be called, but in its own era it would probably have been recognized as a typical bit of satire against the exaggerated speech used in précieuse love address.

We move now[50] to the second group of criticisms, those by three writers who in their studies of Restoration comedy include incidental mention of

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[48] Connely, Young George Farquhar (London, 1949), p. 79. This book is an entertainingly written biography, partly fictionalized. I have ventured to speak of it as a critical work because Connely treats in some detail sentimentalism and the Collier controversy as reflected in Farquhar's plays.

[49] Ibid., p. 96.

[50] Mention, however, may be included of the following studies whose writers are of the first group. Rose Snider, "Satire in the Comedies of Congreve" (Univ. of Maine Studies, 2d Series, No. 42; [Orono, Me.,] 1929), p. 31: Congreve, an innovator with regard to techniques in manners comedy, vigorously assailed "false love . . . , for, despising pretension in general, he protested at the defamation of what seemed to him one of life's greatest and most beautiful ideals." This view does not express the fact that "false love" as Congreve treated it is largely the manifestation of précieuse attitudes, by satirized characters, as a mask for overly abundant eagerness to pursue the opposite sex.

James H. Clancy, "Preliminaries to Restoration Comedy," Speech Monographs, XV (1948), 93: "The power of the rising middle-class denied the playwright the . . . assumption that everyone in his audience agreed with him. . . . It was this underlying knowledge of opposition . . . that produced the strength and force of the . . . comedy of manners." An extension, this, of a view (sentimental comedy the expression of puritan morality) opposed already.

Clifford Leech, "Restoration Comedy: the Earlier Phase," Essays in Criticism, I (April, 1951), 167-71: "Unity of effect was rarely achieved in Restoration comedy, but even when it was, the play was rarely a pure example of its so-called type." The inconsistency which prevented unity arose "most often from a desire to minister to a taste for sentiment, which was by no means absent in the Restoration audience." These contentions of

elements which they label précieuse, but seem to consider such elements as of but small importance.

Charles Whibley in the Cambridge History of English Literature says of Congreve's Double-Dealer (1693) that

> Lord and lady Froth, who might have been inspired by the duke and duchess of Newcastle, are masterpieces of witty invention. The scene is never dull when her ladyship, a true précieuse, counters the gallantry and bel air of Mr. Brisk . . . with her coquettish pedantry.[51]

This is the only mention of préciosité in the sections on Etherege, Wycherley, Congreve, Vanbrugh, and Farquhar. It is just such suggestions as that of the quotation which the present study will multiply and expand in the chapters devoted to these five dramatists. Henry Ten Eyck Perry follows Whibley in holding Lady Froth to be "Congreve's picture of the précieuse, done with considerable understanding and no little keenness."[52] Perry does not point out that Congreve has drawn two other clear-cut portraits of wonderfully ridiculous précieuses, one of them, Lady Plyant, in the same play with Lady Froth. The other, of course, is Lady Wishfort. Of two rather more slightly sketched précieuses, Lady Cockwood in Etherege's She Wou'd if She Cou'd (1668), and Lady Fancyfull in Vanbrugh's The Provok'd Wife (1697), Perry writes at some length,[53] yet neither mentions the fact

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[50] (Concluded) Leech agree with the interpretation of the present study. However, Leech holds that what is most clearly sentimental in the earlier Restoration comedies is what he calls "the marriage myth": the dramatists knew that marriage did not always make a man a constant husband, and "they made free with the theme of marital infidelity; but this is not hinted at in the promised weddings that conclude the generality of plays. When . . . Etherege matched Dorimant and Harriet, it was done in such a way as to constitute a concession to sentiment." This I think doubtful. Harriet and Dorimant are anti-précieuse; they are, as B. V. Crawford writes (see p. 12), equals both mentally and morally. Sentimentality cannot be said to enter until the woman is thought superior to the man, at least morally.

[51] "The Restoration Drama: II," ed. A. W. Ward and A. R. Waller (reprinted from 1912 ed.; New York, 1933), VIII, 170.

[52] Perry, The Comic Spirit in Restoration Drama (New Haven, 1925), p. 59.

[53] Ibid., pp. 15-16, 97.

that each has much in common with Lady Froth nor otherwise hints of their précieuse nature. One can only conclude that Perry did not recognize the extent to which the thought and action of this cult of whining love informed the comedy of manners.

Before we pass on to the third group of critics, a word may be said of Willard Connely's Brawny Wycherley. This biography considers in occasionally conjectural detail Wycherley's sojourn (1655-60) as a youth in the French valley of the Charente, where he became excellent friends with the Marquise de Montausier, née Julie-Lucine D'Angennes. Considered a paragon of intellect and beauty, Julie-Lucine was the eldest of seven daughters of the Marquise de Rambouillet, foundress in 1615 of the famous précieuse Hôtel de Rambouillet. It was in this salon that Henrietta Maria obtained her précieuse refinement. At Angoulême near the Charente the Marquise de Montausier, in imitation of her more renowned mother, "created a second blue salon to glorify history,"[54] and here Wycherley met her. These précieuses, the Marquise and her frequent modish visitors, "shaped his career."[55] Connely seems to feel that the clearest manifestation of précieuse influence on Wycherley is his use of brisk repartee, clever insinuation, unexpectedness in the matching of ideas[56]—that is, wit. But this more formal than substantial view of what may be called précieuse gives the word an association, a linkage it probably did not hold during

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[54] Connely, Brawny Wycherley (London, 1930), p. 19. A more concise and, presumably, more scholarly verbal portrait is Montague Summers, Introduction to Complete Works of William Wycherley, ed. Summers, I, 3-64.

[55] Ibid., p. 162.

[56] Ibid., p. 20.

the Restoration—a linkage with the complex of theories, attitudes, expressions herein termed *précieuse*.[57] The true wit, like Ranger (*Love in a Wood*, 1671) is anti-*précieuse*. However, this opinion of Connely's on Wycherley is in accord with the position taken in the more inclusive study discussed just below; I shall endeavor to make one set of objections serve as a case against both writers.

Miss Kathleen Lynch's *The Social Mode of Restoration Comedy* is a re-interpretation of the comedy of manners as *précieuse*: the "social mode" is *préciosité*. Beginning with the introduction by Henrietta Maria of the cult of "platonic love" into the court (c. 1634), Miss Lynch traces what she considers *précieuse* in the reign of Charles I on through the interregnum and Restoration to 1700. She contends, as does the present writer, that the influence of the mode was great. For example, "the influence of *préciosité* is really the supreme influence in Congreve's comedies."[58] But, developing *préciosité* along both formal and substantial strands, Miss Lynch

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[57] *OED* lists nothing that can be taken to link "wit" to what I call "*précieuse*." It should be made clear that this paper is not an exposition of denotations and connotations of that French adjective. Indeed, it seems that neither it, "precious," nor "affected" was much used by the Restoration playwrights (see Berkeley, pp. 196-97, n. 19). The terminology actually employed (e.g., "whining love," "romantick stile") will be appropriated more frequently hereinafter. "*Précieuse*" is adhibited in this chapter for its associations with *Les Précieuses Ridicules*. Yet despite the fact that Henrietta Maria had sat at the feet of the Marquise de Rambouillet, whose group Molière ridiculed, it must not therefore be assumed that the Restoration *précieuses* were consciously imitating the platonics of the court mode under Charles I; for, albeit the pre-interregnum and post-interregnum cults have much in common, so far as internal evidence shows, the latter seems to have got its inspiration from reading French heroic romances (see Berkeley, pp. 173-75; Alan S. Downer, *British Drama*, New York, 1950, pp. 191-92, 200). What is to our purposes here is that, as the present chapter makes evident, there has been no intensive investigation toward the goal of showing the use made in Restoration comedy of that which, denominated specifically by the playwrights in such words as "platonick," "romantick," "whining," "canting," is here generically termed *précieuse*.

[58] Lynch, *Social Mode* (New York, 1926), p. 193.

believes the formal influence vastly the more important in the Restoration. What "formal" here denotes must be clarified: the originality of the Hôtel de Rambouillet's practice of the *précieuse* rests in "its quaint pattern of formal argument" as manifested by "the conversation of D'Urfé's shepherds" in his *Astrée*, the code book of both the Marquise and Henrietta Maria.[59] Under such interpreters of the court mode as Suckling and Davenant, "the lover's distinction . . . is assured, finally, by his skill in argument on the numerous problems connected with the science of love."[60] Suckling has recorded "the true pattern of Platonic dialogue."[61] When the Civil War broke out,

> the romantic splendors [including substance] of Platonism were extinguished, not again to be restored. Yet Platonic formalities still survived in cavalier society, and under their moulding influence the new comedy developed. In the new comedy *précieuse* dialogue was still elaborated, although it no longer had serious arguments to phrase.[62]

Again, "those who read aright the signs of the times [after 1660] scoff at Platonic ideals . . ."[63] When we arrive at Congreve, his triumph as "the greatest artist of Restoration comedy . . . must be explained partly in terms of his renewal and perfection of a dialogue pattern already well established in the drama of Suckling."[64] The Mirabell-Millamant proviso scene in *Way of the World*, for example, "is simply a modernized version of the 'proviso' convenant between D'Urfé's Hylas and Steele recorded . . . three quarters of a century before . . ."[65] Further, "we become acquainted with Congreve's clever young lovers chiefly through similitude debates and contests in raillery of the type popularized by Suckling."[66]

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[59] *Ibid.*, pp. 45-46.
[60] *Ibid.*, p. 48.
[61] *Ibid.*, p. 69.
[62] *Ibid.*, p. 216.
[63] *Ibid.*, p. 106.
[64] *Ibid.*, p. 78.
[65] *Ibid.*, p. 201.
[66] *Ibid.*, p. 195.

The reader will see that under this interpretation all similitude contests, of either the false or true wit variety, and whether or not opposed to virtue and constant love; all rakish raillery against idealism in love; all proviso scenes based upon an intellectual position opposed to précieuse idealism—all must be accounted précieuse because they have formal prototypes in court drama of the preceding generation.

If one chooses thus to elaborate the meaning of préciosité, he cannot object to Miss Lynch's position. And it must not be thought that the present study excludes form from what is précieuse. Form is involved in Lady Wishfort's ceremonies and decorum, in the stylized speeches of the "whining" lover; "whining" itself implies a prescribed form, as does, for example, the Widow's remark to Sir Frederick (Etherege, Love in a Tub) that she has "seen e'ne as merry a man as your self . . . brought to stand with folded arms, and with a tristful look tell a mournful tale to a Lady."[67]

But one must object that, in her almost exclusive emphasis upon formal analysis, Miss Lynch overlooks the fact that adherents to the substance of the précieuse view of love and woman did exist in the Restoration. For her

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[67] Act II, Dramatic Works, I, 20. Neither, it should be added, does the present study reject the formal influence of pre-Restoration préciosité on that of the Restoration where the substance is anti-précieuse—as in the similitude contests, etc. But my intent in dealing with the plays themselves will be to treat form only as it appears in such conventions and attitudes as those mentioned by the Widow—that is, in conjunction with substance clearly précieuse or anti-précieuse on the related subjects of love and the attribution of near-divinity to woman. Thus, for example, I shall consider the proviso scenes for their anti-précieuse substance; I shall not consider at all such similitudes as Brisk's (The Double-Dealer, Act III, Complete Works, II, 48) on one Lady Toothless when she is open-mouthed: "Like an Oyster at low Ebb, Igad"; whereas Miss Lynch (Social Mode, p. 92) parallels it to a simile in Suckling's The Goblins. This limitation of my subject is necessary lest I be constrained to mention almost every line in the corpus of the comedy of manners (exceptions being such speeches as, e.g., those of the humours character Foresight in Congreve's Love for Love).

to allow the reader to assume as generally true of all Restoration fashionable society, not true only with regard to the more rakish cavaliers, that "the romantic splendors of Platonism were extinguished, not to be restored" after Charles II's ascension (except in two or three plays before 1665), is to neglect the numerical dominance in drama of the romantic genres (see n. 10). To overlook the mention of French heroic romances made by the comic playwrights themselves is to overlook a source from which came, apparently, a new injection of enthusiasm into fashionable society for the substance as well as form of précieosité. To say that

> wives imbued with the Restoration spirit, even in the decadent and vaguely questioning drama of Vanbrugh and Farquhar, believed that the reformation of husbands was a quite impossible achievement,[68]

is to neglect the relation between rakes' conversions and précieosité. To consider it "not strange that this drama [the comedy of manners] broke down in conflict with the reactionary forces of eighteenth century sentimentalism"[69] is at least to obscure the fact that sentimental comedy has its origins in satiric comedy, including the comedy of manners. To note as précieuse, which Miss Lynch does, the characters Lady Wishfort, Lady Plyant, and Lady Froth,[70] is to admit personages anomalous to her overall position.

The second critic of the third group is John Harrington Smith. The "gay couple" of his Gay Couple in Restoration Comedy arose thus:

> whereas when the platonic convention was new the initial assumption would be that both gallant and lady accepted it, the implicit agreement after 1660 is that—praise be!—they are emancipated, and most certainly do not accept it, either of them.[71]

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[68] Lynch, "Thomas D'Urfey's Contribution to Sentimental Comedy," PQ, IX (July, 1930), 250.

[69] Social Mode, p. 216.

[70] Ibid., p. 208.

[71] Smith, Gay Couple (Cambridge, Mass., 1948), p. 25.

The "characteristic comedy of the period" from about 1660 to 1675

> is that featuring a love duel between two young people who express this mood [rejection of précieuse view of love, agreement "to disown the scandal of love, and call it gallantry, mirth, and raillery"] . . . , and who may be called the "gay couple."[72]

So préciosité became unimportant until about 1697, when in Mrs. Pix's

The Innocent Mistress

> the platonic mode, crushed to earth in the first decade after the Restoration, rises again. That it had in some sort lived through to the present period is indicated by a couple of satirical references to it in plays by Shadwell. Here it is treated with complete seriousness.[73]

As we have suggested, however (n. 37), Shadwell included in his plays more than just "a couple" of such derogatory references. Smith writes of the years in which the mode was "crushed to earth" that there persisted on the comic stage "various forms of comedy which may be called 'sympathetic'"; in these "the admirable qualities were chiefly chastity and constancy . . . "[74] Two types of sympathetic comedy may be distinguished: romantic comedy, exhibiting these qualities in "a non-contemporary time and place" where the spectator finds perfect love in "some imagined pair of faithful lovers";[75] and "domestic-intrigue comedy of the contemporary scene,"[76] in the tradition of Cowley's Cutter of Coleman Street (1661) and Howard's The Committee (1662). "The ladies" so often referred to, after about 1675, in prologues and epilogues, "by natural right" were "the chief patrons of 'sympathetic' drama . . ."[77] Another threat to the gay couple was "the conscious

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[72] Ibid., p. 47.

[73] Ibid., p. 175.

[74] Ibid., p. 108.

[75] Ibid., p. 109.

[76] Ibid., p. 112.

[77] Ibid., p. 136.

opposition of the moralists led by Shadwell." The former threat was "based on feeling and the latter on ethical principle and on reason . . . Shadwell had done much to synthesize the two" threats.[78] By and large, the moralists (like Shadwell, Collier, Steele, Colley Cibber) eventually won out: "the ladies could never have imagined, much less brought into being, the man and woman of sense." And it is the man and woman of sense who dominate in "exemplary comedy"—Smith's substitute for the abused term "sentimental comedy."[79]

It is almost unnecessary to reassert that the present writer sees not a death and rebirth of the platonic mode during the Restoration but a continuation of it throughout the period. "Sympathetic" comedy falls within the précieuse tradition: its précieuse themes ("chastity and constancy") in the romantic variety link romantic comedy to the tragic genres; such themes in the "domestic-intrigue" variety occur sometimes with romantic trappings, sometimes with the usual trappings of satiric comedy—in which latter case one has an example of the sentimental method of writing comedy (see pp. 10-11). The difference between Smith's and the present view is not just one of terminology: considering the précieuse mode "crushed to earth" on the comic stage when those glittering anti-précieuse characters, the gay couple, emerged, Smith assumes the mode therefore to have been crushed in all of fashionable society also—hence his contention that "sympathetic" comedy became increasingly demanded when "the ladies," presumably all firm apostates from the mode after about 1663, but finally tiring of anti-idealism in love, again came about 1675 to wish for "true love"

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[78] Ibid., p. 131.

[79] Ibid., pp. 229-31.

onstage.[80] But as we have seen, Restoration tastes as mirrored in the themes of satiric comedy should not thus be taken as expressing the age to the disregard of tastes mirrored in those at least equally dominant and continuously appreciated forms, tragedy and other non-comic romantic genres.

The reader who has tired of the polemic tone in the foregoing pages will be happy to know that the theory behing the present study and the theory on manners comedy of Alan S. Downer, the last scholar whose critique is to be mentioned, are almost the same. Downer writes of the English court-in-exile that its

> poets, for want of matter, had taken to writing illustrations of the code of the Court of Love, and of all the artifices connected with the "Science of Friendship." Prose writers had imitated the endless fantastic adventures and the long-winded pointless debates of the French romances, especially The Grand Cyrus of Mlle. de Scudéry, and troubled themselves for pages without number over exemplary gallants . . .[81]

The court brought this code back to England; the comic dramatists made use of it; and if the verbal fencing matches, for example, of Restoration comedy

> owe something to the behavior of Benedick and Beatrice in Much Ado About Nothing and Carol and Fairfield in Hyde Park [Shirley, 1632], they are more deeply indebted to the traditions of courtly love exemplified in the French romances to which the Restoration reading public was devoted.[82]

In sum, it appears that

> Platonic, courtly love is a graceful game in literature; in life the impulses of ordinary human behavior are in immediate conflict with it. Out of this conflict between artificial code and human nature grew the works of the Restoration comic playwrights,[83]

that is, of the playwrights of manners comedy.

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[80] Ibid., pp. 135-36.

[81] Downer, British Drama: a handbook and brief chronicle (New York, 1950), p. 191.

[82] Ibid., p. 200.

[83] Ibid., p. 214.

Exception must be taken, however, to Downer's view of the origins of sentimental comedy; for, though he does not contend as do some that it sprang full-blown from the head of Colley Cibber or Steele, or was solely an expression of reasserted puritan morality, nevertheless he does not find that it has any relation to the platonic mode.[84]

Thus criticism of the twentieth century mostly overlooks or unduly minimizes Restoration préciosité; and nowhere does there appear to have been a study the end of which is to set forth the elements of précieuse and anti-précieuse subject matter in the comedy of manners.

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[84] Ibid., pp. 232-42.

CHAPTER II

AN EXPOSITION OF PRÉCIEUSE GALLANTRY

The love-and-honor theme spoken of in the preceding chapter as having been infused from the Restoration heroic genres into comedy—even the comedy of manners—finds its tragic exemplification in such characters as Almanzor of Dryden's Conquest of Granada (1670-71). One perceives in this heroic figure two distinct attitudes: that in which he is typical of similar heroes who

> singly . . . beat Armies, and huff Kings,
> Rant at the Gods, and do impossible things;[1]

and that in which, when "the Dame once chides, the milk-sop Hero swoons," suffering a change into one of those "sniveling Heroes" who "sigh, and pine, and cry."[2] If the hero was a conqueror, woman nevertheless conquered the hero. Farquhar hit off the two moods, years after the postures and blusterings of the tragic hero had grown standardized, when in Love and a Bottle (1698) he made the worldly if impecunious Lyrick say that "the Hero in Tragedy is either a whining cringing Fool that's always a stabbing him self, or a ranting hectoring Bully that's for killing every-body else . . ."[3] This improbable personage of tragedy in the heroic vein was, then, either

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[1] Thomas Shadwell, Epilogue to The Virtuoso, The Complete Works, ed. Montague Summers (London, 1927), III, 181.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Act IV, The Complete Works, ed. Charles Stonehill (Bloomsbury, 1930), I, 51.

military superman or "whining" lover. The word "improbable" is used advisedly: what were referred to in the foregoing chapter as "romantic trappings"— foreign settings in bygone eras, extraordinary costumes, characters of royal or noble rank declaiming in heroic couplets or blank verse— licensed improbable, i.e., uncommon, "senseless," wonderful characters. In improbable surroundings the characters could themselves speak improbably; the audience did not expect, in tragedy, either to see a Londoner in propria persona or to hear what a Londoner might be expected to say. On the contrary, the tragic hero, in his whining mood, could and did spout romantic idealism, often from a kneeling position before his mistress, concerning his eternal constancy to her whom fate had decreed he must love, his willingness to die for her sake, the awful power of her beauty, the spiritual rather than mundane nature of their love. The heroine, of course, took many an opportunity to wax similarly romantic.[4]

To the content, such as it was, of this sort of fustian was added yet another improbable idea: the already mentioned belief that whatever woman subscribed to such idealism in love was possessed of a "charm," as it was

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[4] Thus Almanzor and Almahide, Conquest of Granada, John Dryden, ed. George Saintsbury (New York, 1949), I:

Almah. We will in death, at least, united be:
I'll show you I can die as well as he . . . (p. 110).
Aben [amar] Nor prayers nor promises his [Almanzor's] mind will move;
'Tis inaccessible to all, but love (p. 129).
Almanz. . . . Whate'er my sufferings be . . .
I will not be outdone in constancy (p. 114).
Almanz. My love's my soul; and that from fate is free;
'Tis that unchanged and deathless part of me (p. 166).
Almanz. [to Almah.] Your new commands I on my knees attend:
I was created for no other end (p. 199).
Almanz. Your aid I for a dying wretch implore . . . (p. 201).

often called,[5] in the exercise of which she might not only reduce a conqueror from his god-huffing mood to that of the whining lover, but also instantly change a rake or villain into a virtuous character professing the same attitudes toward love as did the divine creature who had converted him. Thus Polycastro, of the anonymous tragedy The Triumphs of Virtue (1697), proclaims his conversion through the power of Bellamira:

> Oh Bellamira! thou hast intirely vanquish'd;
> My Soul, new-moulded, stampt it with thy own
> Bright Image of Divinity, chang'd all
> My sooty Love to sacred Adoration.
> And that prophane False Tongue, that now shall dare
> To wound my Name with the Reproach of Lust,
> The impious Scandal I shall count a Wrong
> More heinous, than to cure my Blood with Bastardy . . .[6]

In romantic love, no regeneration was impossible; in romantic settings, no improbability of love was unlicensed.

Argument is superfluous to show that the heroine of Restoration heroic tragedy was a character in distress: even in an exotic setting like Granada, love, however constant, had tribulations flung at it. So frequent—indeed, so basic to the structure—is the occurrence in the romantic genres of the distressed heroine and, inevitably, of her satellite, the whining lover, that they may be considered stock figures. In characterization they are

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[5] E.g., Cyrus to Panthea, John Banks' Cyrus the Great (1696), quoted in David S. Berkeley, "Origins of Sentimental Comedy" (unpubl. Ph.D. diss.; Cambridge, Mass., 1948), pp. 60-61:

> Pardon, thou Saint, a Man in Love untaught,
> I have been us'd in Battels from my Youth,
> Bred from my Birth like Lions in their Fierceness
> . . . . . .
> And never met a charming Foe like Thee,
> Yet at thy Sight I can forget my Fury,
> Moulded like Wax made soft before the Sun . . .

"Charm" appears to have been used in a sense closer to its etymological meaning of incantation than it is today.

[6] Quoted in Berkeley, p. 61.

considerably alike. Both, to judge from their speeches, were fond of extravagant love addresses to one another, the lady, however, being the more frequent recipient; in these addresses, sound was at least as important as meaning. Convinced, like Almanzor and Almahide, of their innocence of wrong-doing, they thought their misfortunes undeserved, expressed self-pity, railed at the gods, fate, and other external agents as the cause of their predicaments; yet it is just such external forces to which they appealed for aid in smoothing the course of true love. Accompanying the rather mediocre intellect betrayed by this dependence, as also by their love of word combinations with little rational content, was a tendency to extremes of emotion: from all-consuming love to inordinate hatred was a change that could be worked in a moment.

Because, as with Dryden's famed couple, love tends to be identified with the soul, "unchanged and deathless," the lovers felt themselves elevated morally to a point from which inconstancy, to say nothing of sexual license and blasphemy against love, was to be viewed with scorn. Concomitant, though not altogether logical, was a vast respect for the proprieties (witness, for example, Almahide's "modesty;" her faithfulness to her vows with Boabdelin despite the fact that her love is elsewhere; Almanzor's ever-present consciousness of the binding claims of honor). This respect they manifested by dramatic posturings, such as kneeling, prostrating themselves in supplication, and, particularly in the heroine, weeping. The same demonstrativeness obtained in their attitude toward one another: oaths of eternal constancy were often pronounced, as were offers to die ("always a stabbing him self") should fate threaten to separate them permanently.

As Polycastro's address to Bellamira would indicate, however, the hero and heroine by no means regarded themselves as equals: though both were of

an order above that of anyone in the common herd, the woman was exalted over the whining man, and when the two met it was obligatory upon the latter to regard the heroine as

> no less than his Deity. She disposes of his Reason, prescribes his Motions, and Commands his Interest. What Sovereign Respect, what Religious Address, what Idolizing Raptures are we pester'd with? Shrines and Offerings, and Adorations, are nothing upon such solemn Occasions. Thus Love and Devotion, Ceremony and Worship, are Confounded; And God, and his Creatures treated both alike![7]

Whereas Collier attacked this précieuse gallantry as a flouting of the biblical proscription of idolatry, Shadwell complained of such romantic goings-on because they were unnatural, nonsensical, unreal. But Collier and Shadwell alike saw that such a treatment of the heroine amounted to deification. Thus in the epilogue to The Virtuoso (1676), Shadwell has it said of himself that

> of those Ladies he despairs to day,
> Who love a dull Romantick whining Play;
> Where poor frail Woman's made a Deity,
> With sensless amorous Idolatry . . .[8]

A common approach to the deiform object of his worship, if the man was a hero "like Alexander, in the height of his victory," as Farquhar's Archer says, was to "Throw your self at her Feet; speak some Romantick Nonsense or other"[9]—nonsense perhaps consisting in part of an assertion such as Almanzor's that he is dying[10] (see n. 4).

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[7] Jeremy Collier, A Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage (4th ed.; London, 1699), pp. 282-83.

[8] Complete Works, ed. Summers, III, 181.

[9] Beaux Stratagem, Act V, Complete Works, ed. Stonehill, II, 183.

[10] The following passage will serve to link the posture of "dying" to "whine" and "romantick" (Mrs. Manley, Royal Mischief, 1696, quoted in Berkeley, p. 140):

> Osman. What boots it thus to drag a wretched being,
> A Lifeless lump, without one ray of hope;
> By Heav'n, I'll lay me down, and breath my Soul
> In sighs, at my too cruel Sovereigns feet;

These manifestations in the whining lover and distressed heroine of the love-and-honor theme are, then, what "those Ladies" were demanding when they called for "well bred" plays[11] at the (to them) welcome expense of losing from the stage unrepentant and unpunished rakes. In view of such demands, and in view also of the domination over satiric comedy by the romantic genres of the drama, it is only reasonable to assume that love-and-honor would have been greeted with approbation by its advocates in the Restoration no matter what the genre in which it might show its improbable face. Whether these précieuse applauders of romantic love were basically sincere or not is rather conjectural; and sincerity has many levels. Suffice it here that they openly eschewed bawdry and continued to voice favor for "Religious Address" and "Idolizing Raptures."

As already suggested, when the romantic themes associated with tragedy were introduced into satiric comedy, as indeed they were throughout the Restoration, the treatment of them might be serious or—what would seem more fitting in a kind of drama whose business it is "to paint the Vices and

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[10] (Concluded)

> There grasp with my cold hands her flying
> Beauties, till I have urg'd her glorious Eyes
> To shed some pitying Tears.
> Ismael. . . . when we whine
> At your romantick rate, we move not love
> But scorn . . .

[11] Shadwell, Epilogue to The Virtuoso, Complete Works, ed. Summers, III, 181:

> This Play is not well bred, nor yet well drest;
> Such Plays the Womens Poets can write best . . .

Tragedy was called "well drest" not only for its exotic costuming but because the poets of the tragic tradition sought additional embellishment by crowding the stage with great numbers of people and with elaborate stage properties.

Follies of Humane kind"[12]—derogatory. Serious statements on romantic love might still have about them an aura of improbability by virtue of being spoken in verse, which Restoration dramatists used, in tragedy and comedy alike, to dignify characters of their making.[13] Or romantic love might be seriously spoken of in prose by characters appearing in satiric comedy and representing contemporary Englishmen: the clothing of improbable characters in probable forms, which is the sentimental method of writing. Thus we might expect to find in comedy both the distressed heroine and whining lover, possibly without loss of the improbable traits that constitute them in tragedy. On the other hand, a thorough-going satirical treatment of the whole art of whining love would include parodies of the romantic or sentimental lovers, mockery of their postures and speech modes, disbelief in woman's divinity, and so forth. The ramifications are well-nigh endless, in practice as well as in theory.

If we turn to the comedy of manners thinking to find some of these ramifications, serious as well as satirical, we are not disappointed. Restoration comedy has some forty-six seriously treated whining lovers, at least three of them in the comedy of manners;[14] Restoration comedy has not fewer than fifty-five distressed heroines, five of them in the comedy of

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[12] William Congreve, Dedication to The Double-Dealer, Complete Works, ed. Montague Summers (Soho, 1923), II, 12: "They some of the ladies are concerned that I have represented some women vicious and affected. How can I help it? It is the business of a Comick poet to paint the Vices and Follies of Humane kind; and there are but two sexes that I know, viz., Men and Women, which have a Title to Humanity: And if I leave one half of them out, the work will be imperfect."

[13] See Berkeley, pp. 36-37.

[14] The three are Bruce in Etherege, Love in a Tub (1664); Constant in Vanbrugh, The Provok'd Wife (1697); Lovewell in Farquhar, Love and a Bottle (1698). For a complete list of whining lovers see Berkeley, p. 276, n. 6.

manners;[15] Restoration comedy has twenty-three repentant rakes, two of them in the comedy of manners.[16] But the plays grouped as "comedy of manners," as that term is understood today (see chap. i, n. 1), could not be so named did they not contain much that is anti-précieuse: parodies of the distressed heroine, such as Lady Flyant of Congreve's The Double-Dealer (1693); parodies of the whining lover, as when Etherege's Sir Frederick (Love in a Tub, 1664) courts in the romantic style (see chap. i, p. 20); satire against oaths of constancy, as in the Mirabell-Millamant proviso scene; endless pretension to non-existent honor on the part of women like Etherege's Lady Cockwood (She Wou'd if She Cou'd, 1668); continual talk in varying degrees of hypocrisy, hence of satire, concerning charms, killing eyes, darts, flames, love's wounds, divinity, all with reference to ladies' beauty and, as Farquhar's Roebuck scoffingly says, "innate Principle of Vertue";[17] not least important, satire against précieuse affectation direct from France as exhibited in such malpractitioners as Sir Fopling Flutter (Man of Mode, 1676).

Such a list is, of course, anything but exhaustive. Before we look at the plays themselves for a more detailed examination of the exemplifications préciosité found in the comedy of manners, however, we may cast further light on the mode by referring briefly to four closely interrelated topics: sources of précieuse belief in England after 1660; some further associations

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[15] The five are Aurelia in Etherege, Love in a Tub (1664); Christina in Wycherley, Love in a Wood (1671); Fidelia in Wycherley, The Plain-Dealer (1676); Amanda in Vanbrugh, The Relapse (1696); Leanthe in Farquhar, Love and a Bottle (1698). For a complete list of distressed heroines see Berkeley, pp. 277-78, nn. 8-13.

[16] The two are Worthy in Vanbrugh, The Relapse (1696); Roebuck in Farquhar, Love and a Bottle (1698). For a complete list of repentant rakes, see Berkeley, p. 336, n. 1.

[17] Love and a Bottle, Act V, Complete Works, ed. Stonehill, I, 62.

attached during the Restoration to the whining style of courtship; some characteristics, and demands upon the languishing male, of the distressed heroine as she appeared in Restoration comedy in general, not just as she was in tragedy or in the comedy of manners only; and some characteristics of the repentant rake. To know these and the foregoing matters touched upon in this chapter is, I trust, to approach the comedy of manners with a frame of reference more nearly akin to that of the seventeenth-century spectator than one might otherwise have.

In Shadwell's The Virtuoso (1676), a very textbook for the anti-précieuse, the impatient lover Bruce, getting nowhere with brisk love-making toward Clarinda, decides to alter his attack:

> I shall become the most desolate Lover, that ever yet, with arms across, sigh'd to a murmuring Grove, or to a purling Stream complain'd. Savage! I'll wander up and down the Woods, and carve my passion on the Barks of Trees, and vent my grief to winds, that as they fly shall sigh and pity me.
>
> Clar. How now! what foolish Fustian's this? you talk like an Heroick Poet.
>
> Bruce. Since the common down-right way of speaking sense wou'd not please you, I had a mind to try what the Romantick way of wining[18] Love cou'd do.
>
> Clar. No more of this, I had rather hear . . . a dull Rhiming Play, with nothing in't but lewd Heroe's huffing against the Gods.[19]

This passage taken with the quotation above (n. 11) from Mrs. Manley's Royal Mischief is enough to make it clear that "whine" connoted a number of postures, attitudes, and speech forms, all quite definite and studied. One may reasonably ask if there were not models upon which this stereotyped courtship was based. So far as the playwrights give answer, the French heroic romances seem to have the dubious honor. "What!" says the précieuse

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[18] Summers notes (III, 370): "wining. 1691 very mistakenly: winning." Apparently the [h]-glide was sometimes dropped, even as today.

[19] Act III, Complete Works, ed. Summers, III, 134.

Catchat to her importunate lover Clerimont (Thomas Wright, Female Vertuoso's, 1693),

> Would you come to a Conclusion so very quick? Fye, Clerimont, 'tis against the Rules. What had become of the rest of the Romance, had Mandana yielded to Grand Cyrus; or, Claelia fled into the Arms of Aronces at the first intimation of his love.[20]

In another such reference,[21] La Calprenede as well as Mlle. de Scudery is pointed at as having furnished what Aurelia, in Abraham Cowley's Cutter of Coleman-Street (1661), calls "Rules of Honour" by which the ladies might become "all Mandanas and Cassandras."[22] Thus it appears that Artamène, ou le Grand Cyrus (1629-53), Clélie (1656-60), Cassandre (1642-45), and other of the romances[23] in their English translations, popular in the Restoration, held something of the function that had been laid upon Astrée a generation earlier.[24]

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[20] Quoted in Berkeley, p. 142. Cf. Molière, Les Précieuses Ridicules, Scene iv, The Plays of Moliere, with tr. by A. R. Waller (Edinburgh, 1926), II, 11, Magdelon to Gorgibus: "Mon Dieu, que, si tout le monde vous ressemblait, un roman serait bientôt fini! La belle chose que ce serait, si d'abord Cyrus épousait Mandane, et qu'Aronce de plain-pied fût marié à Clélie!"

[21] David Crawfurd, Love at First Sight (1704), Act I, quoted in Berkeley, p. 143. "Let me die, Melissa," says Sir Nicholas of the girl's refusal to "come to a Conclusion" with Courtly, "you are cruel even to a fault. Read Grand Cyrus, Cleopatra, Cassandra, Pharamond, and all those fine Pieces of Wit and Gallantry. Egad, not a Lady of 'em holds out so long."

[22] Act II, Abraham Cowley: Essays, Plays and Sundry Verses, ed. A. R. Waller (Cambridge, England, 1906), p. 282.

[23] E.g., La Calprenède's Cléopâtre (1646) and Pharamond (1661-63); Scudéry's Almahide (1660). All were translated into English.

[24] There is also evidence to suggest that the Restoration playwrights "felt an affinity between some notable aspects of their characterization of whining lovers and the characterization employed by Mlle. de Scudéry and La Calprenède" (Berkeley, p. 173). Also, "three distressed heroines of Restoration comedy are described as being influenced by the heroines of Scudéry and La Calprenède" (Ibid.). Thus, ultimately, the French heroic romances seem to have influenced the characterization of the heroine of sentimental comedy. This evidence is presented in detail in Berkeley, pp. 166-75.

How directly influential was the pre-interregnum platonic cult upon Restoration *préciosité*, one can hardly determine. Certainly both the cults held similar views on woman, on love, on beauty.[25] And if the cult's practices under Henrietta Maria were similar to those of the Hôtel de Rambouillet,[26] the French mode after the prime of the *salon bleu* had similarities to the English mode in the Restoration: when Molière's Marotte excuses herself from using *précieuse* eloquence of speech, for instance, it is on grounds, as we might anticipate, that she has not yet learned the philosophy of Scudéry.[27] When in so few words one can go full circle—heroic romances and Restoration *préciosité*, then to the court of Charles I, then to the greatest *précieuse* Marquise and her coterie, satirization of its doctrines by Moliere involving mention once more of *Grand Cyrus*—it is as well, for my purposes, simply to recognize that the *précieuse* influences upon Restoration ladies and gentlemen of fashion were, to say the least, numerous, and had the sanction of a considerable tradition behind them. All

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[25] The similarity of *précieuse* doctrine as developed herein with the beliefs of the cult under Henrietta Maria may be seen from a list of the major tenets of *préciosité* found in court masques and plays of 1625–42, as abstracted by G. F. Sensabaugh, "John Ford and Platonic Love in the Court," *SP*, XXXVI (1939), 210: "(1) Fate guides all lovers. (2) Beauty and Goodness are One and the Same. (3) Beautiful Women are Saints to be Worshipped. (4) True Love is of Equal Hearts and Divine. (5) Love is All-Important and All-Powerful." See also Jefferson B. Fletcher, *The Religion of Beauty in Woman* (New York, 1911), pp. 176–205. Dramatists under Henrietta Maria did not, of course, all die when Charles I was executed: Sir William Davenant, court interpreter of the pre-interregnum mode, continued active in the theater until his death (1668).

[26] See Kathleen M. Lynch, *The Social Mode of Restoration Comedy* (New York, 1926), pp. 45–46; Fletcher, *Religion of Beauty in Woman*, pp. 172–73.

[27] *Les Précieuses Ridicules*, Scene vi, *The Plays of Molière*, with tr. by Waller, II, 16: Mar. "Voilà un laquais qui demande si vous êtes au logis, et dit que son maître vous veut venir voir." Mag. ". . . Dites: 'Voilà un nécessaire qui demande si vous êtes en commodité d'être visibles.'" Mar. "Dame! . . . je n'ai pas appris, comme vous, la filofie [sic] dans le *Grand Cyre*."

the more comprehensible, then, is it that the comedy of manners can be—indeed, ought to be—interpreted as possessing what it has of vitality largely insofar as the playwrights could make their characters reflect brilliantly acceptance of or opposition to the précieuse mode.

The affectation, found often in Restoration comedy,[28] which Mrs. Fantast, a satirical portrait of the distressed heroine in Shadwell's Bury-Fair (1689), exhibits in approving the romantic name "Dorinda" for herself, "Eugenius" for her satellite Trim,[29] is no doubt a facet of the précieuse desire to compliment one's companion of the soul fittingly. But it probably also functioned to distinguish the lovers from non-believers. The anti-précieuse cast of mind had nothing to recommend itself to the distressed heroine. Such a dislike of the "lower" mentality is manifested in Mrs. Fantast by her quoting from Horace's Odi profanum vulgus.[30] Indeed, the distressed heroine, like Cathos and Magdelon,[31] could hardly believe herself a person of low birth.[32] But in lieu of being discovered the daughter of

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[28] For a discussion of the use of romantic names in comedy see Berkeley, pp. 146-48. Such names appear frequently in the songs written into Restoration comedy. Congreve satirizes the affectation in The Double-Dealer, Acts II, III, Complete Works, ed. Summers, II, 29-30, 46-48.

[29] Act I, Complete Works, ed. Summers, IV, 302: "I, I am her humble Admirer," says Trim, "her Adorer: I call her Dorinda, and she honours me with the name of Eugenius." Mrs. Fantast, it may be noted, styles Eugenius her "Platonic Servant" (Act II, p. 314).

[30] Act II, ibid., 318. When Gertrude insists that she is not contemptuous of "the common People," since "they come near Nature, and have no Art of Affectation; and there are a thousand Fops made by Art, for one Fool by Nature," Mrs. Fantast replies, "Oh fye! Odi profanum vulgus, &c."

[31] Les Précieuses Ridicules, Scene v, The Plays of Molière, with tr. by Waller, II, 16. Says Magdelon, "J'ai peine à me persuader que je puisse être véritablement sa [Gorgibus'] fille, et je crois que quelque aventure, un jour, me viendra développer une naissance plus illustre."

[32] See Berkeley, p. 148.

nobility, she could, with quite as much pride, claim a fine soul simply because, in her opinion, she had been born with one.[33] The reader will see how well this belief of the distressed heroine of comedy in her superiority could sort with the tragic heroine's sense of innocence and respect for the proprieties. One might easily claim superiority of temperament by displaying such qualities of innocence and respect, providing one had taken the precaution of defining superiority as being constituted by those qualities.

Passion, in the distressed heroine's opinion, was to be scorned; it dealt with the body, whereas précieuse love issued from the soul. When the heroine found another's soul to be of equal fineness with her own, "sympathy" might develop between them.[34] But sympathy between male and female of equal age and social status inevitably broke down, the heroine being placed in a higher realm than her lover, who thereupon whined, offering to die[35] and giving her compliments such as one would employ to flatter a deity. And since the woman was such an apotheosis of goodness—sometimes, it is true, priding herself on her ignorance of "evil,"[36] yet able to recognize good

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[33] Ibid., p. 151.

[34] Ibid., pp. 152 and 205, n. 79.

[35] The word "die" held in the Restoration a secondary sense meaning the consummation of Physical love. Poets derisive toward précieuse love-making used many puns involving this secondary sense. E.g., see the risque song in John Dryden, Marriage A-la-Mode (1673), Act IV, Scene iii.

[36] Berkeley, p. 289, n. 76. Thus Lucia, consciously ignorant of her "marriage" to Puny in Cowley, Cutter of Coleman-Street, Act III, Abraham Cowley, ed. Waller, p. 306:

Pun. 'Twas I, my dear Philoclea, that marri'd thee e'en now in the dark room, like an amorous Cat . . .

Luc. I call Heaven to witness,
Which will protect and justifie the Innocent;
I understand not the least word he utters . . .

good and hope that it would prevail[37]—the man, at her feet, might soak up virtue in just beholding her.

Collier gave recognition to the platonism involved in all this by writing of Worthy (Vanbrugh, The Relapse, 1696) that "when the Lady proves too nimble, and slips through his Fingers," the rake exclaims

> there's Divinity about her, and she has dispens'd some Portion on't to me. His Passion is Metamorphos'd in the Turn of a hand: He is refin'd into a Platonick Admirer . . .[38]

He might at this point, whether or not the play was fast drawing to a close,[39] oblige the heroine in prose or verse by deprecating passion, scorning persons "enfoncée dans la matière,"[40] professing constancy through eternity (albeit the heroine might exercise her prerogative of not coming "to a Conclusion" until eternity had passed), and otherwise showing deference, as she was herself fond of doing, to her incredibly fine soul. The whining lover's constancy was not inexplicable: as with the male half of the androgynous being said in Plato's Symposium always to be seeking to make himself whole

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[37] See Berkeley, pp. 260–61.

[38] Collier, Short View, p. 227. An excellent rapture of the platonic sort, including use of Plato's body-soul dichotomy, occurs in Shadwell, The Virtuoso, Act V, Complete Works, III, 163: Sir Formal Trifle having asked Clarinda how much longer he must "languish in expectation of your noble favour," on getting an encouraging reply bursts forth thus: ". . . I am too suddenly blest, I am all Rapture, all Extasie, my Soul, methinks, if fled from its corporeal clog, and I am all unbodi'd, Divinest Lady. Let me kneel and adore that hand, that snowy hand, to which the Snow it self is . . . Sun-burnt."

[39] Most rakes' conversions were in the fifth act (see Berkeley, p. 306), in order, one supposes, that a single play might both placate the précieuse faction and, since bawdry had more or less reigned in the preceding acts, titillate those who scorned the art of whining love.

[40] Thus Cathos of Gorgibus, Les Précieuses Ridicules, Scene v, The Plays of Molière, with tr. by Waller, II, 16.

again,[41] so for any one précieuse lover there was but one mistress in the entire world—or so he insisted in his whining style:

> Before Your Feet, see! Your Adorers lie,
> Live, if You Smile, and if You Frown, they die!
> Ev'n I, Your true Predestinated Slave,
> Rather than meet Your Hate wou'd meet my Grave . . .[42]

The difficulties of the distressed heroine who is given serious treatment in comedy center almost invariably, it need hardly be said, about misfortunes in love.[43] Though her dependence upon eternal forces[44] necessitates that she remain relatively passive—she indulges in no very complex intrigues[45]—she does not remain silent. She talks often of her constancy,[46] of dying for love,[47] of the apparently malign gods,[48] of her honor and reputation,[49] which she cherishes jealously. She gives voice to self-pity,[50] perhaps in soliloquy, as does Wycherley's Fidelia (The Plain-Dealer, 1676). Tears and sighs are frequent and not very subtle symptoms to tell an unsympathetic world of her dolor,[51] which sometimes she glories in.[52] So

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[41] Plato, tr. by B. Jowett (New York, 1942), pp. 180–81.

[42] Robert Gould, The Play-House, A Satyr (1685), quoted in Berkeley, p. 19.

[43] See Berkeley, pp. 232–33. This, like each of the remaining notes in the chapter, refers the reader to a list of instances exemplifying the trait mentioned in the text.

[44] Ibid., pp. 301–02, n. 122.

[45] Ibid., p. 236.

[46] Ibid., p. 282, nn. 38, 39.

[47] Ibid., pp. 300–01, n. 118.

[48] Ibid., pp. 302–03, n. 124.

[49] Ibid., pp. 290–91, n. 79.

[50] Ibid., pp. 293–95, n. 97.

[51] Ibid., pp. 295–96, n. 99.

[52] Ibid., p. 297, n. 103.

modest is she as to blush at the very mention of an indelicacy.[53]

She had, then, all the characteristics of the distressed heroine of tragedy, and perhaps a few refinements of her own. Demanding précieuse worship from her whining lover, she was herself a product of préciosité; in serious and satiric treatments of her and of her worshipper, most of what we call the comedy of manners finds a centering point; most of the comedy of manners, consequently, has a précieuse basis. The premise in the second clause of the foregoing sentence remains, however, to be demonstrated.

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[53] Ibid., pp. 297-98, n. 107.

CHAPTER III

ETHEREGE

Love in a Tub, 1664.
She Wou'd if She Cou'd, 1668.
The Man of Mode, 1676.

The almost four hundred heroic couplets which go to make up the romantic sub-plot of *Love in a Tub*, and which comprise almost one-third of the play, are a perfect mélange of *précieuse* love and honor. Fate decrees, eyes conquer, beauty kills, vows are sacred, ladies grow distressed, lovers exhibit melancholy, sighs are vented, tears are shed, blood is spilled; but virtue saves, constancy finds its reward, and Woman, inevitably triumphant, emerges as she began, an object to be worshipped:

> Such Honour and such Love . . .
> Are not in the Records of Virtue known.[1]

Aurelia, the distressed heroine of the piece, loves Bruce, who loves Aurelia's sister Graciana,[2] who in turn loves and is loved by Beaufort,

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[1] *Love in a Tub*, Act V, Scene v, *Works of Sir George Etherege*, ed. H. F. B. Brett-Smith (Oxford, 1927), I, 82.

[2] Graciana like Aurelia suffers distress in love, but is not here labeled a distressed heroine on grounds that she does not go to the extremes of *précieuse* belief as does Aurelia: when Bruce is thought to be dying, for instance, Aurelia resolves "I'le not your death survive" (*Ibid.*, Act V, Scene i, p. 64), but Graciana, for loss of whom Bruce has fallen on his sword, merely resolves "Your loss I'le mourn with vow'd Virginity" (*Ibid.*, p. 65). Again, Graciana betrays something of a "corporeal clog" in preferring to have Beaufort alive though with blemished honor rather than dead with that honor untarnished (Ibid., Act III, Scene vii, p. 46).

well-versed in the art of whining. Bruce, possessed of "Heroick Virtues,"[3] is at the first of the play in prison on a false charge of murder—in truth he killed his man "fairly in the Field at Nasby"[4]—and has delegated to Aurelia the office of an etherealized John Alden. She has

> obey'd, though I cannot fulfil,
> Against my self, the dictates of your Will:
> . . . Since you enjoyn'd,
> I hourly court my Rival to be kind;[5]

But "Fate does against my breath conspire,"[6] for as Graciana observes in declining her sister's overtures in behalf of "noble Bruce, whose Virtues are his Crimes,"[7]

> We of our selves can neither love nor hate;
> Heav'n does reserve the pow'r to guide our Fate.[8]

These two instances of the précieuse habit of blaming misfortune on external powers are the first of a long line of similar accusations: such agents as the stars, fate, heaven are blamed as the cause of vicissitudes in love at least twenty times thereafter in the development of the romantic plot.[9]

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[3] Ibid., Act II, Scene ii, p. 18.

[4] Ibid., Act IV, Scene iv, p. 52.

[5] Ibid., Act I, Scene iv, p. 13.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid., p. 11.

[8] Ibid., p. 12.

[9] Ibid., Act II, Scene ii, p. 17, "unlucky Star Prognosticating ruine"; ibid., p. 19, "providence . . . kept us asunder"; ibid., "Fates which govern hearts"; ibid., p. 20, "by Custom, not by Nature led"; ibid., Act III, Scene vi, p. 40, "cruel fates"; ibid., p. 41, "Powers above be kind"; ibid., p. 42, "by unlucky stars misled"; ibid., "Fate, thou hast done thy worst"; ibid., p. 43, "There is a fate in love"; ibid., "fate . . . so unjust to make thee fall"; ibid., p. 44, "Fates . . . reveng'd thy injury"; ibid., p. 45, "do not tempt thy fate"; ibid., p. 46, "debate . . . must wait on Fate"; ibid., Act IV, Scene i, p. 47, "My fate drives me to duel with Bruce "; ibid., Scene v, "my sad fate"; ibid., "cruel is my fate"; ibid., Act V, Scene i, p. 64, "heaven has decreed"; ibid., Scene iii, p. 78, "Fortune joyns with Love to be my Friend"; ibid., Scene v, p. 81, "Heaven . . . has preserved Bruce "; ibid., "the Heavens decree."

The précieuse mortal terror of not upholding one's reputation reaches absurdity (for the present writer, though not, one must conclude, for approving seventeenth-century précieuses) in the constant deference to honor[10] which culminates in the Beaufort-Bruce duel scene: as Beaufort and his second, the anti-précieuse Sir Frederick Frollick, arrive at the appointed place, four or five dishonorable bullies who are enemies to Bruce set upon Bruce and Lovis, his second, whereat Beaufort and Sir Frederick set upon the bullies. Then fluently, when the rogues have been put to flight, from Bruce's lips comes praise for Beaufort's "gen'rous courage";[11] honor demands now that Bruce prevent the duel he provoked; honor demands that Beaufort insist for it to proceed:

> Know, Bruce, I hither come to shed thy blood.
> Bruce. Open this bosom, and let out a flood.[12]

Then, in true précieuse fashion, "the beauteous Graciana's Eyes"[13] are invoked by Beaufort to recall Bruce to his duty:

> Bruce. There are such charms in Braciana's Name,
> [Strips hastily.
> My scrup'lous Honour must obey my Flame:
> My lazy Courage I with shame condemn . . .[14]

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[10] E.G., ibid., Act I, Scene v, p. 12, Graciana must force herself to love Bruce, for on her doing so "The honour of our house now lies at stake"; ibid., Act II, Scene ii, p. 18, Lovis has been bred in the "School of Honour . . . And all her subtle Laws"; ibid., Act II, Scene ii, p. 18, Graciana's is a "Love Which honour and your duty approve"; ibid., Act III, Scene vii, p. 44, Bruce's plight in love "must move All that have sence of Honour or of Love"; ibid., Act IV, Scene v, p. 57, had Bruce avoided a duel, admits Beaufort, and thus "prov'd untrue To Honour, he had then proved false to you."

[11] Ibid., Act IV, Scene iv, p. 53.

[12] Ibid., p. 54.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Ibid.

They encounter, Beaufort disarms Bruce, honor is satisfied, Beaufort returns his adversary's sword. Sir Frederick is willing to call it a day and go back to the widow he is hilariously pursuing, but Bruce knows that the whining lover must be ready to die for love:

> No, no, Graciana's loss I'le ne'r survive;
> I pay too dear for this unsought Reprieve.
> [Falls on his Sword, and is desperately wounded.
> Beauf. Hold, gallant man! Honour her self does
> bleed . . . [Running to him, takes him in his arms.[15]

Thus does Bruce both prefigure and give the occasion for Aurelia's avowal a bit later not to survive Bruce's death (see n. 2). Love is indeed so fine a thing that metaphors on it ought to be in terms of that most subtle of the four elements, fire: "the active flame"[16] that is love, Beaufort's "purer flame"[17] for Graciana, love's "catching fire,"[18] Bruce's verses on his courtship methods:

> My hopes [of gaining Graciana] grew strong, I banish'd
> all despair:
> These glowing sparks I then left to the care
> Of this fair maid, thinking she might inspire
> My passion, and blow up the kindling fire.[19]

As a distressed heroine, Aurelia gives voice often to the woe she feels, sighing, e.g., for her maid Leticia to go from her, since she has "too great a train of misery"[20] to wish others to be subjected to viewing it. She nevertheless proceeds leisurely with further complaints, at which Leticia, who is withal rather inclined to affect not a little précieuse distress of her own, grows

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[15] Ibid., p. 55.

[16] Ibid., Act II, Scene ii, p. 17.

[17] Ibid., p. 18.

[18] Ibid., Act III, Scene vi, p. 43.

[19] Ibid.,

[20] Ibid., Act II, Scene ii, p. 20.

afflicted thus to see you take
Delight to keep your miseries awake.[21]

Together they walk into an arbor, there to

joyn our mournful voices, and repeat
The saddest tales we ever learn'd of Love.[22]

But Etherege manages a pun on the secondary sense of "die" already mentioned. (The subject of the ditty is Phillis, a hapless shepherdess.)

The heedless winds did fan her fire;
Venting her grief
Gave no relief;
But rather did encrease desire.
Then sitting with her arms across,
Her sorrows streaming from each eye;
She fix'd her thoughts upon her loss,
And in despair resolv'd to die.[23]

When Bruce lies "desperately wounded," Aurelia at last declares her love for him, but not before addressing a long aside to the ladies, presumably of her audience, since no other woman is on the stage, concerning her hope that they will not think she has forgotten the example of, perhaps, Mandana and Clelie:

Forgive me, Ladies, if excess of Love
Me beyond rules of Modesty does move,
And, against custom, makes me now reveal
Those flames my tortur'd breast did long conceal;
'Tis some excuse, that I my Love declare
When there's no med'cine left to cure despair.
[Weeps by the Chair side.[24]

Graciana similarly fears for her modesty. She should not, she insists, have admitted her love for Beaufort so readily as she did:

*Here the active flame
[*Pointing to her breast.
Shou'd yet a longer time have been conceal'd;
Too soon, too soon I fear it was reveal'd.

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[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid., p. 21.

[23] Ibid., p. 22.

[24] Ibid., Act V, Scene i, p. 63.

> Our weaker Sex glories in a Surprize,
> We boast the sudden Conquests of our Eyes;
> But men esteem a Foe that dares contend . . .[25]

It is, then, quite difficult to reconcile human nature to the regimen of the mode. The elaborate précieuse compliments due the ladies must, however, have repaid much suffering. When Graciana enters into one of her several weeping spells, for instance, Beaufort produces this bit of extravagance:

> What saucy sorrow dares approach your heart?
> Waste not these precious Tears; Oh, weep no more!
> Shou'd Heaven frown the world wou'd be too poor,
> (Rob'd of the sacred Treasure of your eyes)
> To pay for mercy one fit sacrifice.[26]

In what must be for the present-day reader, and must have been for the Restoration objector to préciosité, a relieving contrast to all this "sensless amorous Idolatry," as Shadwell was to call it a decade later, is the common sense of Sir Frederick and the shrewd Widow Rich whom he chases, intermittently, through almost five acts. "I mistrust your Mistresses Divinity," Sir Frederick says to Beaufort of Graciana; "you'l find her Attributes but Mortal: Woman, like Juglers Tricks, appear Miracles to the ignorant; but in themselves th'are meer cheats."[27] "Widow," cries he, finding Beaufort in the role of whining lover, "what wou'd you give your eyes had power to make me such another melancholly Gentleman?" Whereat the widow mockingly shows her knowledge of the stereotyped attitudes of whining love: "I have seen e'ne as merry a man as your self, Sir Frederick, brought to stand with folded arms, and with a tristful look tell a mournful tale to a Lady."[28] An act later, Sir Frederick follows this prescription to the

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[25] Ibid., Act II, Scene ii, p. 17.

[26] Ibid., p. 18.

[27] Ibid., Act I, Scene ii, p. 7.

[28] Ibid., Act II, Scene ii, p. 20.

letter, breaking from his usual prose speech to "cant" his "mournful tale" in the couplets of romance:

> [Fidlers play.
> The Widow comes to the Window in her Night-Gown.
> Wid. Whose insolence is this, that dares affront me thus?
> Sir Fred. in a Canting Tone. } If there be insolence in Love, 'tis I
> Have done you this unwilling injury.
> Wid. What pitiful rhyming fellow's that? he speaks as if he were prompted by the Fidlers.
> Sir Fred. Alas, what pains I take thus to unclose
> Those pretty eye-lids which lock'd up my Foes!
> Wid. A godly Buke would become that tone a great deal better . . .[29]

Another of his artifices to get her to admit affection for him involves a cut at the précieuse idea that the man should always have his mistress foremost in his thoughts, whatever his extremity. Having come off unscathed as Beaufort's second in the duel with Bruce, Sir Frederick nevertheless sends a "Mourner" to tell of his unhappy "death":

> Madam, you must expect a bloody consequence
> When men of such prodigious courage fight.
> . . . . . .
> I found my dearest Friend, Sir Fred'rick,
> Almost as poor in breath as blood: he took
> Me by the hand, and all the stock h'ad left
> He spent, Madam, in calling upon you.
> He first proclaim'd your Virtues, then his Love;
> And having charg'd me to convey his Corps
> Hither to wait on you, his latest breath
> Expir'd with the Command.[30]

Even after death, the whining lover must be at his lady's feet.

A more familiar place for Sir Frederick to be is the tavern, where he can listen appreciatively to Palmer's anti-précieuse song:

> If she be not as kind as fair,
> But peevish and unhandy,
> Leave her, she's only worth the care
> Of some spruce Jack-a-dandy.

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[29] Ibid., Act III, Scene ii, p. 31.

[30] Ibid., Act IV, Scene vii, pp. 60-61.

I wou'd not have thee such an Asse,
Had'st thou ne're so much leisure,
To sigh and whine for such a Lass
Whose Pride's above her Pleasure.[31]

And if the "Platonick Admirer" to whom Collier objected on quite other grounds was not thus lightly, with his mistress, to be put out of the social picture, neither was the disbelief of the Sir Fredericks to be squashed. If one may judge from the comedy of manners, the précieuse and anti-précieuse tempers waged continuous dubious battle throughout the Restoration.

Lady Cockwood, the "old Haggard"[32] to whom the title She Wou'd if She Cou'd pronominally refers, no less than Aurelia and her fellow sympathizers in all that is précieuse swears that she could not love life half so much, loved she not honor more: "Here, here, Sir," she urges Courtall, "this is the door . . . shou'd you make the least disturbance, you will destroy the life, and what is more, the Honour of an unfortunate Lady."[33] But Courtall must be hid behind this door to prevent Lady Cockwood's husband, Sir Oliver, from finding him under the table of the knight's own dining room and recognizing that his wife would cuckold him if she could; moreover, the other major young anti-précieuse gentleman of the play, Freeman, whom Lady Cockwood is more than willing to accept as a lover can she not have Courtall, is already tucked away in the closet. Her "fearful apprehensions"[34] for her reputation lead her, she insists, to "deny my self the sweetest recreations in the world, rather than yield to any thing that may bring a blemish

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[31] Ibid., Act II, Scene iii, p. 28.

[32] She Wou'd if She Cou'd, Act III, Scene i, ibid., II, 122.

[33] Ibid., Act V, Scene i, pp. 166-67.

[34] Ibid., Act IV, Scene i, p. 149.

upon my spotless Honour."[35] But her true character is limned by Courtall:

> She is the very spirit of impertinence, so foolishly fond and troublesom, that no man above sixteen is able to endure her. . . . She would by her good will give her Lover no more rest, than a young Squire that has newly set up a Coach, does his only pair of Horses.[36]

Whereas honor was seriously held important by Aurelia, Lady Cockwood uses it as a mask; where love with Aurelia was seriously something to die for in the word's primary sense, for Lady Cockwood it is something to die for in the secondary sense we have mentioned. Too old to play the anti-*précieuse* game as do Ariana and Gatty, she must pretend to *précieuse* niceties, she thinks, to prevent her lust from being obvious to all. Yet she fools no one but her husband and at times, perhaps, herself: "this is a strange infirmity she has," says her maid Sentry of her fear for her honor, "but I must bear with it; for on my conscience, custom has made it so natural, she cannot help it."[37]

Satiric portrait that she is of the distressed heroine, she blames herself not a whit for her difficulties—that is, not when she is speaking to others—but lays all to external forces. Such mere customary mouthings are these accusations that she sometimes repeats herself almost word for word: "The Fates could not have been more propitious,"[38] she exclaims when matters stand fair for an assignation with Courtall; and when that assignation suffers an interruption, "Will Fate never be more propitious?"[39] In even her final speech, when all her plans to obtain a gallant have been

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[35] *Ibid.*, Act III, Scene i, p. 122.

[36] *Ibid.*, Act I, Scene ii, p. 98.

[37] *Ibid.*, Act II, Scene ii, p. 113.

[38] *Ibid.*, p. 115.

[39] *Ibid.*, Act III, Scene i, p. 123.

crushed, she maintains the pretense: "Certainly Fortune was never before so unkind to the Ambition of a Lady."[40] Thus does she profess to be a passive object, acted upon, as is the true distressed heroine, more than acting; but in fact, through Sentry, she keeps in motion a sprawling undercurrent of intrigue, including such machinations as forged letters to test Courtall's constancy; attempts to get her competitors, Ariana and Gatty, sent back to the country, from which they have recently arrived; and, when Courtall has proven false to her, an attempt to discredit him by telling Sir Oliver she has "always treated him with great respects, out of my regard to your friendship; but he, like an impudent man as he is, to day misconstruing my Civility, in most unseemly language, made a foul attempt upon my Honour."[41]

In this bit of "virtuous" indignation is a false elegance of phrase, foreshadowing the speech of Congreve's Lady Plyant, which betrays the précieuse fondness for the sound of words—a prose extension of the versified bombast found in love-and-honor tragedy. A second example may be abduced from many such speeches by Lady Cockwood. Hoping to work up an amour with Freeman, thus she excuses the forwardness of having sent for him:

> If I have done any thing unbeseeming my Honour, I hope you will be just, Sir, and impute it to my fear; I know no man so proper to compose this unfortunate difference as your self, and if a Lady's tears and prayers have power to move you to compassion, I know you will imploy your utmost endeavour to preserve me my dear Sir Oliver.[42]

Sentry knows the uses of such eloquence. When, late in the play, she has saved her lady's honor in Sir Oliver's eyes by letting him think Courtall

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[40] Ibid., Act V, Scene i, p. 178.

[41] Ibid., Act IV, Scene i, p. 146.

[42] Ibid., Act V, Scene i, p. 162.

and Freeman have been concealed in Sir Oliver's house not to see Lady Cockwood but rather, with Sentry's aid, to gain access to Ariana and Gatty, Sentry "reconciles" herself to her mistress thus:

> Upon solemn protestations, Madam, that the Gentlemens intentions were honourable, and having reason to believe the young Ladies had no aversion to their inclinations, I was of opinion I shou'd have been ill natur'd, if I had not assisted 'em in the removing those difficulties that delay'd their happiness.[43]

Such is Etherege's parody of précieuse rhetoric.

A few more instances of Lady Cockwood's love-and-honor pretensions must suffice. When Sir Joslin Jolley kisses Sentry in return for a compliment, our antiquated and false précieuse rebukes him with "Fy, fy, Sir Joslin, this is not seemly in my presence."[44] When Courtall assures her, tongue in cheek, that he has "deny'd my self the greatest satisfaction in the world, to keep that [her honor] unblemished," she characteristically replies:

> Indeed I have often had great tryals of your Generosity, in those many misfortunes that have attended our innocent affections. . . . Repose your self a little, but a little dear Sir: these vertuous Principles make you worthy to be trusted with a Ladies Honour . . . I protest, Mr. Courtall, I love him [Sir Oliver] dearly, but cannot be altogether unsensible of your generous passion.[45]

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[43] Ibid., p. 177.

[44] Ibid., Act I, Scene ii, p. 100.

[45] Ibid., Act II, Scene ii, p. 111. Phrases such as "innocent affections," "vertuous Principles," "a Ladies Honour" issue continually from Lady Cockwood's mouth. E.g., ibid., p. 113, "my innocent intentions" toward Courtall; ibid., of Sentry's leaving her alone with Courtall, "you should have more regard to your Lady's Honour"; ibid., Ariana and Gatty should be removed from her house "for fear they should bring an unjust imputation on my Honour"; ibid., Act III, Scene i, p. 123, when her feigned reluctance to enter Courtall's coach gives occasion for disruption of their tryst by Ariana and Gatty, "My over-tenderness of my honour, has blasted all my hopes of happiness"; ibid., Act IV, Scene ii, p. 158, when she is pretending that Courtall is pursuing her against her wishes, "'tis a miracle if my Honour escapes"; ibid., Act V, Scene i, p. 162, in the same circumstances, "Heaven knows my innocence"; ibid., p. 163, to promote an affair with Freeman is "my innocent business"; ibid., p. 165, beseeching Courtall not to betray her to Sir Oliver, "Have you good Nature enough to save the Life and Reputation of a Lady"; ibid., pp. 171-72, on Sentry's supposed aid in promoting the Courtall-Gatty, Freeman-Ariana courtship, "A Lady's Honour is not safe, that keeps a Servant so subject to corruption."

She demands of "generous passion" that it be manifested in the best manner of whining love, as when Courtall, thinking with Freeman to meet Ariana and Gatty, in turning down an invitation to a private meeting with Lady Cockwood "counterfeited the greatest passion, railed at his Fate, and swore a thousand horrid Oaths."[46] The performance is rather similar to that of Bruce when he finds Graciana loves another.

To Sir Oliver, Lady Cockwood pretends she loves him alone and, like Aurelia of Bruce, would not care to outlive him; but satire enters with the punning use of "die": "If Mr. Courtall had kill'd thee [Sir Oliver], I was resolv'd not to survive thee; but before I had dy'd, I wou'd have dearly reveng'd thy Murder."[47]

When at last she is certain she has not one iota of a chance to get Courtall as her lover, she affects further précieuse high-mindedness: a willingness to suffer and a desire to find good in evil. Of his defection, "'tis as my heart wisht it";[48] to Sentry of that defection, "I have conquer'd my affection, and thou shalt find it is not Jealousie has been my Counsellor"[49] in the effort to discover if he is inconstant. And indeed, she is relieved, she protests, that she can "free my self from the trouble of an Intrigue, that gives me every day such fearful apprehensions of my honour."[50] In private only does she reveal her true feeling: "I wou'd poyson my face, so I might be reveng'd on this ingrateful Villain."[51]

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[46] Ibid., Act IV, Scene i, p. 144.

[47] Ibid., Act V, Scene i, p. 165.

[48] Ibid., Act IV, Scene i, p. 144.

[49] Ibid., pp. 144-45.

[50] Ibid., p. 149.

[51] Ibid., p. 145.

The height, perhaps, of comic deception in the play comes in a mock treatment of the précieuse theme of rakes' conversions by the power inherent in ladies' "principle of vertue." The scene is a tavern, where Lady Cockwood, who has come with Courtall, Freeman, Ariana and Gatty for a bit of diversion,[52] discovers Sir Oliver waiting in a private room with Sir Joslin for "Madam Rampant, a Girl that shines,"[53] and some other creatures whom money will buy. Indeed, the two knights mistake the ladies of Courtall's party for the women they expect, and proceed accordingly. "Wou'd I had a Dagger at my Heart, to punish it for loving that ungrateful Man," wails Lady Cockwood when Sir Oliver finally discovers her identity:

> were I every day at the Plays, the Park, and Mulberry-Garden, with a kind look secretly to indulge the unlawful passion of some young Gallant . . . my suspicious demeanour had deserv'd this; but I who out of a scrupulous tenderness to my Honour, and to comply with thy base Jealousie, have deny'd my self all those blameless Recreations, which a vertuous Lady might enjoy, to be thus inhumanely revil'd . . .[54]

Sentry also upbraids Sir Oliver, who thereupon adopts the précieuse code in offering to die for very shame: "Dear Sentry, do not stab me with thy words, but stab me with thy Bodkin rather, that I may here dye a Sacrifice at her feet, for all my disloyal actions."[55] "You do not deserve the least compassion," asserts Sentry,

> nor wou'd I speak a good word for you, but that I know for all this, 'twill be acceptable to my poor Lady. Dear Madam, do but look up a little, Sir Oliver lyes at your feet an humble Penitent.

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[52] Typical of Lady Cockwood's display of "innocence" are her sentences on entering the tavern (Ibid., Act III, Scene iii, p. 129): "Dear, how I tremble! I never was in one of these houses before." In an aside, Sentry comments, "This is a Bait for the young Ladies to swallow; she has been in most of the Eating-Houses about Town, to my knowledge."

[53] Ibid., Scene ii, p. 127.

[54] Ibid., Scene iii, pp. 139-40.

[55] Ibid., p. 139.

Aria. How bitterly he weeps! how sadly he sighs!
Gat. I dare say he counterfeited his sin, and is real in his Repentance.[56]

Thus does the art of whining love lend itself to satirical treatment.

Gatty, the more sprightly of the two young anti-précieuse girls, elsewhere in the play speaks out pointedly against the languishing lover's behavior: when Ariana asks for "a good Song," "Now art thou for a melancholy Madrigal," scoffs Gatty,

compos'd by some amorous Coxcomb, who swears in all Companies he loves his Mistress so well, that he wou'd not do her the injury, were she willing to grant him the favour, and it may be is Sot enough to believe he wou'd oblige her in keeping his Oath too.[57]

So much for the power of feminine goodness to constrain eternal service from the male whether or not "the favour" be granted. In similar vein is a greeting to Courtall by Mrs. Gazette, an exchange woman:

I vow this tedious absence of yours made me believe you intended to try an Experiment on my poor heart, to discover that hidden secret, how long a despairing Lover may languish without the sight of the party.[58]

We have touched, I think, upon the more obvious satire in She Wou'd against précieuse act and theory; that satire is at the heart of the play. But Etherege's most thorough treatment of préciosité was not to come until eight years later, in The Man of Mode. Here we find, for instance, such various degrees of revolt against précieuse attitudes and ideas as that of Dorimant, who automatically takes up certain usages of the languishing lover—e.g., extravagant compliments, sending of billet doux,[59] quotations

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[56] Ibid., p. 140

[57] Ibid., Act V, Scene i, p. 170.

[58] Ibid., Act III, Scene i, p. 119.

[59] E.g., the play opens with Dorimant's half-hearted attempt at a billet doux to Loveit (Man of Mode, Act I, Scene i, ibid., p. 189): "What a dull insipid thing is a Billet doux written in cold blood, after the heat of the business is over!"

from Waller—whenever he meets a lady he wishes to pursue; we find Lady Woodvil, who apparently would like to see *préciosité* returned to its pre-interregnum form; we find the title character, Sir Fopling, whose folly stems largely from pretension to *précieuse* gallantry as his visit to France has veneered him with it.

Loveit, with whom Dorimant has been dallying at the *précieuse* game as well as at what we call illicit love, has the misfortune of being unable to give over when Dorimant tires of her. She has, after all, physical, not *précieuse*, desires, yet all she can do in her attempt to hold him is remind him of his vows in the role, adopted when useful, of whining lover:

> Think on your Oaths, your Vows and Protestations, perjur'd Man'.
> *Dor.* I made 'em when I was in love. . . . What we swear at such a time may be a certain proof of a present passion, but to say truth, in Love there is no security to be given for the future. . . . I am not one of those troublesome Coxcombs, who because they are once well receiv'd, take the priviledge to plague a Woman with their Love ever after . . .[60]

Again:

> *Loveit.* Is this the constancy you vow'd?
> *Dor.* Constancy at my years! 'tis not a Vertue in season, you might as well expect the Fruit the Autumn ripens i'the Spring.
> *Loveit.* Monstrous Principle![61]

To no avail she cries, "Horrour and distraction seize you, Sorrow and Remorse gnaw your Soul . . ."[62] Her only claim is a series of conventional mouthings by Dorimant, and so she is defeated: "Mr. *Dorimant* has been your God

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[60] *Ibid.*, Act II, Scene ii, p. 216.

[61] *Ibid.*, pp. 215-16. It is with an allusion to the *précieuse* oath of constancy that we are introduced to Loveit by her maid, Pert (*Ibid.*, p. 210): " . . . to be two days without sending, writing, or coming near you, contrary to his Oath and Covenant! 'Twas to much purpose to make him swear; I'll lay my Life there's not an Article but he has broken, talk'd to the Vizards i'the Pit, waited upon the Ladies from the Boxes to their Coaches; gone behind the Scenes, and fawn'd upon those little insignificant Creatures, the Players . . ."

[62] *Ibid.*, p. 215.

Almighty long enough," says Harriet; "'tis time to think of another—"[63] The sensual young woman, if she means to keep a realistic young man, ought not to depend on an improbable idealistic code like précieosité.

The acid-tongued Harriet is no less realistic than Dorimant himself. Her position is designedly anti-précieuse; voicing Dorimant's own light-hearted opinions, she thereby wins him. Not précieuse reticence but a common-sense dislike of having his love without his admiration—not the same thing as worship—is the occasion of her strategy in the love-chase. When Dorimant asks, "Is the name of love so frightful that you dare not stand it?" she replies that

'Twill do little execution out of your mouth on me, I am sure.
Dor. It has been fatal—
Har. To some easy Women, but we are not all born to one destiny; I was inform'd you use to laugh at Love, and not make it.[64]

She has not, she says, "learnt those softnesses and languishings" fashionable among the ladies; her eyes "are wild and wandring like my passions, and cannot yet be ty'd to Rules of charming."[65] When with précieuse elegance Dorimant protests the sincerity of his love, Harriet exhibits her antipathy toward the distressed heroine's gullibility in acceptance of rakes' conversions by saying that

in men who have been long harden'd in Sin, we have reason to mistrust the first signs of repentance.
Dor. The prospect of such a Heav'n will make me persevere, and give you marks that are infallible. . . . I will renounce all the joys I have in friendship and in Wine, sacrifice to you all the interest I have in other Women—
Har. Hold—Though I wish you devout, I would not have you turn Fanatick . . .[66]

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[63] Ibid., Act V, Scene ii, p. 286.

[64] Ibid., Act IV, Scene i, p. 249.

[65] Ibid., p. 248.

[66] Ibid., Act V, Scene ii, pp. 278-79.

This is intelligent psychology on the girl's part. That her treading of the radically anti-*précieuse* path is done consciously is suggested by her deference to her mother's will: "I have not, nor never will to any thing against my duty—believe me! dear Mother, do."[67] But this assertion is itself premeditated, since Harriet knows that such speeches melt her parent's heart.

Dorimant's ability to fall into the whining lover strain when it serves his purpose[68] is found also in his encounters with Bellinda. In revenge for her having boasted of his affection—a thing that leads to difficulties when one has as many mistresses as Dorimant—he will, he says,

> persecute you more impertinently than ever any Loving Fop did his Mistress, hunt you i'the Park, trace you i'the Mall, Dog you in every visit you make, haunt you at the Plays, and i'the Drawing Room, hang my nose in your

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[67] *Ibid.*, p. 282. See also n. 86.

[68] Also for this function is it that Dorimant has such a large knowledge of the *précieuse* verses of Edmund Waller (1606-87). Among the eight Waller poems from which he quotes is "Of her Chamber," on what joy it is to stand "gazing on the fair":

> They taste of death that do at Heaven arrive,
> But we this Paradise approach alive.

Dorimant recites this in Act II, Scene ii to Loveit—ironically, since he has already cast her off. Another of the eight, "Of Loving at First Sight," from which Dorimant gives a couplet in Act III, Scene iii, ends with the *précieuse* idea of the power of beauty and virtue over men:

> [She] can, with a single look, inflame
> The coldest breast, the rudest tame.

(*The Poems of Edmund Waller*, ed. G. Thorn Drury, London, n.d., I, 100.) Dorimant quotes once (Act III, Scene iii) from Suckling, two lines of his Sonnet I, which like much of Suckling's poetry has ideas taken from the *précieuse* mode under Henrietta Maria:

> She every day her man does kill,
> And I as often die . . .
> Sure Beauty's empires, like to greater states,
> Have certain periods set, and hidden fates.

(Works of Sir John Suckling, ed. A. Hamilton Thompson, London, 1910, p. 15.)

neck, and talk to you whether you will or no, and ever look upon you with such dying Eyes . . .[69]

He will swear to Bellinda "a Thousand oaths"[70] not to see Loveit again in private; he is a man "who could kill himself to please you;" but "remember Five a Clock to morrow Morning,"[71] he continues in the same breath. Bellinda recognizes précieuse expressions from him as what they are—mere words—when in the scene which opens with the often disapproved stage direction "Handy tying up Linnen. Enter Dorimant in his Gown and Bellinda," he declaims in the love-and-honor strain that he'll not boast of the liaison:

> By all the Joyes I have had, and those you keep in store—
> Bell. You'll do for my sake what you never did before—[72]

Emilia no less than Bellinda or Harriet recognizes as clay the feet of the statue of romantic love: "Do not vow," she insists when Young Bellair starts to proclaim his constancy; "Our love is frail as our life, and full as little in our power; and are you sure you shall out-live this day?"[73] Thus much from one who is not "pretending like the Counterfeits of the Age."[74]

The "Counterfeits of the Age" (Medley's words) are Restoration précieuse ladies and their worshipers; but there is indication that the mode and its practitioners have, as one might expect, altered somewhat since Henrietta Maria's day: Lady Woodvil, "an antiquated Beauty," professes a mortal abhorrence for a man like Dorimant because he is not, as she is, "a great

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[69] Ibid., Act II, Scene ii, p. 215.

[70] Ibid., Act IV, Scene ii, p. 259.

[71] Ibid., Act III, Scene ii, p. 227.

[72] Ibid., Act IV, Scene ii, p. 258.

[73] Ibid., Act II, Scene i, p. 205.

[74] Ibid., Act I, Scene i, p. 202.

Admirer of the forms and Civility of the last Age."[75] When Dorimant, in order to be near her daughter, Harriet, pretends he is Courtage—a "foppish admirer of Quality, who . . . never offers love to a Woman below a Lady-Grandmother[76]—it is thus he speaks to the old précieuse:

Forms and Ceremonies, the only things that uphold Quality and greatness, are now shamefully laid aside and neglected.
L. Wood. Well! this is not the Womens Age, let 'em think what they will: Lewdness is the business now, Love was the bus'ness in my Time.[77]

And Harriet objects to Courtage as Dorimant plays him on grounds that "He's a Fopp. . . . He's a man made up of forms and common places, suckt out of the remaining Lees of the last age."[78] From this we can conclude that about 1676 some anti-précieuse persons felt the mode as it was elaborated a generation earlier to be old-fashioned. We can conclude nothing more. To argue that such passages tell of the death of préciosité about this time is to disregard the large amount of evidence to the contrary in comedy, including the comedy of manners, after 1676.

In the quotations already used from Man of Mode, "fop" and "foppish" have been associated with the practices of whining love[79] and with the use of the preceding generation's précieuse "forms and common places." And as

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[75] Ibid., p. 193.

[76] Ibid., Act III, Scene iii, p. 244.

[77] Ibid., Act IV, Scene i, p. 245.

[78] Ibid., p. 254.

[79] The same association is clearly made also in the following passage (Ibid., Act V, Scene ii, p. 277). Harriet has just suffered a momentary attack of modesty before Dorimant and in an aside says:

My love springs with my blood into my Face, I dare not look upon him yet.
Dor. What have we here, the picture of a celebrated Beauty, giving Audience in publick to a declar'd Lover?
Har. Play the dying Fop, and make the piece compleat, Sir.

Sir Fopling Flutter's name alone indicates, "fop" was associated with the affectation of contemporary French forms and commonplaces:

> Bell. He [Sir Fopling] thinks himself the Pattern of modern Gallantry.
> Dor. He is indeed the pattern of modern Foppery.[80]

Thus is foppery as represented in Man of Mode associated with a derogatory treatment of préciosité.

Sir Fopling believes himself a past master of smooth précieuse compliments. "A thousand Pardons, Madam," he says in excuse for neglecting to greet Emilia; "some Civilities due of course . . . The Eclat of so much Beauty I confess ought to have charm'd me sooner."[81] In the one example that we have of his poetic talent—"A Gentleman should never go beyond a Song or a Billet,"[82] he asserts—he manages to work in six of the clichés of whining love: use of romantic names, of "charm," love's "wounds," "killing" eyes, languishing, and sighing:

> How Charming Phillis is, how fair!
> Ah that she were as willing,
> To ease my wounded heart of Care
> And make her Eyes less killing.
> I sigh! I sigh! I languish now
> And Love will not let me rest,
> I drive about the Park, and bow
> Still as I meet my dearest.

Dorimant says what is true of most précieuse lyrics in the comedy of manners in his comment on this bit of froth: "I shall not flatter you, Sir Fopling, there is not much thought in't."[83]

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[80] Ibid., Act I, Scene i, p. 200.

[81] Ibid., Act III, Scene ii, p. 230.

[82] Ibid., Act IV, Scene i, p. 251.

[83] Ibid., Scene ii, p. 262.

A somewhat more meaningful song offered by the gentlemen of the cast gives a fair summary of how the précieuse mode was likely to effect rakishly inclined young males:

> We to Beauty all day
> Give the Soveraign sway,
> And her favourite Nymphs devoutly obey.
> At the Plays we are constantly making our Court,
> And when they are ended we follow the sport
> To the Mall and the Park,
> Where we love till 'tis dark;
> Then sparkling Champaigne
> Puts an end to their reign;
> It quickly recovers
> Poor languishing Lovers,
> Makes us frolick and gay, and drowns all our
> sorrow.
> But alas! we relapse again on the Morrow . . .[84]

What should a man do but be merry? For a Dorimant in revolt against précieuse beliefs, the question could have had only one answer. From the brilliant elaboration of that answer the central action of this play gets its vitality.

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[84] Ibid., Scene i, pp. 256-57. The only other songs in the play are of the sort Harriet calls "foolish"; but according to her maid, Busy, she grew to love them well after meeting but before capturing Dorimant. The first (Ibid., Act III, Scene i, p. 221) includes the romantic name "Amintas"; the second (Ibid., Act V, Scene ii, pp. 176-77), the names "Amoret," "Phillis," "Strephon." Both concern the dangers of passionate love to a shepherdess. Dryden in his epilogue speaks of such songs as "the Ladies dear delight" (Ibid., "Epilogue by Mr Dryden," p. 288).

CHAPTER IV

WYCHERLEY

Love in a Wood, 1671.
The Gentleman Dancing-Master, 1672.
The Country-Wife, 1675.
The Plain-Dealer, 1676.

In *Love in a Wood* we find the second distressed heroine to be treated seriously in the comedy of manners, the first who is sentimental rather than romantic: "poor injur'd"[1] Christina, whose unhappiness it is to be misrepresented to her lover Valentine. That "brave man, . . . worthy the love of a Princess,"[2] for the vindication of Christina's honor has dueled with one Clerimont, wounded him, and been constrained to flee into France, where he will be safe if Clerimont's wounds prove mortal. Since her lover has been willing to die for her, Christina has shown her readiness to suffer in turn by putting herself "into Mourning," as her maid Isabel says, living "in a dark room, where you'll see no body, nor take any rest day or night, but rave and talk to your self perpetually."[3] Further, as Valentine's friend Vincent tells him on the former's return to England to see Christina despite the danger of revenge possibly to be attempted by Clerimont's relatives, she has

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[1] *Love in a Wood*, Act V, Scene i, *Complete Works of William Wycherley*, ed. Montague Summers (Soho, 1924), I, 144.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Ibid.*, Act II, Scene ii, p. 95.

lock'd up her self in her chamber, this month for you—shut out her barking Relations for you—has not seen the Sun or face of man, since she saw you—thinks, and talks of no thing but you—sends to me daily, to hear of you—and in short (I think) is mad for you . . .[4]

Christina is always aware of her suffering: she cannot tell what time it is, for "I can only keep account with my Misfortunes."[5] She prates of her uncommon constancy: "Unhappy Valentine, cou'dst thou but see how soon thy absence, and misfortunes have disbanded all thy Friends, and turn'd thy Slaves all Renegades, thou sure wou'dst prize my only faithful heart."[6] Had Clerimont died, as he does not, she would have given all for love, taking "self and Fortune into France, to Mr. Valentine," even though he "has not a groat to return you in Exchange."[7]

But précieuse constancy is to have yet further stress applied before the two are reunited. When Christina's friend Lydia, Ranger's mistress, is followed from St. James' Park—the "Wood" of the title—by Ranger one dark night, it is to Christina's apartment that she leads him, for, having gone to the park to try if Ranger is unfaithful, and having discovered that he is indeed, and that he is not aware of her identity, she has no mind to let him know he has been pursuing an old acquaintance as a new one. On that account she asks Christina to "own your self, for her, he pursu'd out of the Park . . . your Stature [is] so much mine, it will not contradict you." Christina's précieuse code will not allow involvement in this deception: "I am sorry, Madam, I must dispute any Command of yours; I have made a resolution to see the face of no man, till an unfortunate Friend of mine, now out of the Kingdom, return." Realistic Lydia is unsympathetic:

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[4] Ibid., Scene iv, p. 101.

[5] Ibid., Scene ii, p. 95.

[6] Ibid., p. 96.

[7] Ibid.

"Dear Madam, let your charity prevail over your Superstition."[8] When Ranger decides the question himself by bursting into Christina's apartment, Lydia hurriedly withdraws and Christina is compelled to do as she was requested. When Ranger refuses to leave, it is the occasion for further protestations by the distressed heroine:

> Sir, if you will needs play the Gallant, pray leave my House before Morning, lest you should be seen go hence, to the scandal of my honour. . . . I'll call up the House and Neighbours to bear Witness, I bid you be gone.[9]

When after an elegant précieuse compliment[10] the rake finally takes his leave, Christina must ask forgiveness of her absent lover in an aside: "Pardon me dear Valentine."[11] Meanwhile Valentine is spouting a précieuse theory on love in Vincent's apartment:

> Prithee . . . tell me, if since my departure, She has given evidences of her love, to clear those doubts I went away with, for as absence is the bane of common and bastard Love; 'tis the vindication of that, which is true and generous.[12]

In so far as love involves souls, the lovers' bodies are not to be thought on. Unhappily Ranger now enters and boasts of his new conquest, as he thinks it, telling Christina's place of lodging since he does not know her name. In this kind of situation Valentine is wont to cry, as he does a bit later, "How! if he lies, I revenge her; if it be true, I revenge my self."[13] Thus

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[8] Ibid., p. 97.

[9] Ibid., p. 99.

[10] Ibid., pp. 97-98, Ranger to Christina:

> Cou'd you imagine, Madam, by the innumerable crowd of your admirers, you had left any man free in the Town, or ignorant of the power of your Beauty.
> Chri. I never saw your face before, that I remember.
> Ran. Ah Madam! you wou'd never regard your humb'lest Slave; I was till now a modest Lover.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid., Scene iv, p. 100.

[13] Ibid., Act IV, Scene iii, p. 132.

again he shows a whining lover's willingness to die for his lady.

When Christina hears of Valentine's return, she is unable to maintain the passivity she feels becomes her: she makes an unwarranted trip to Vincent's apartment. But every speech is a confession that such a visit is a breach of decorum for her: " . . . some blushes it do's cost me, to come to seek a Man"; "pray call him [Valentine] out, that he may excuse it, and take it on himself, together with my shame." She then "goes to the Dore, and discovers Valentine," who thinks it is Ranger she has come seeking.

> Chris. . . . What do you hide your self for shame?
> Val. I must confess I do.
> Chris. To see me come hither—[14]

Heroically honorable gentleman that he is, Valentine continues thus:

> I do withdraw, (as in all good breeding, anc civility, I an oblig'd) for sure your wish'd for Lover's coming. . . . My stay might give him jealousie, and so do you injury, and him the greatest in the World; Heavens forbid![15]

With a final protestation of the worshipful quality of his love for her he departs, and Christina, quite in character, weeps.

In the same scene she calls on external powers to protect them both: "he were yet more severe to me, in indangering his life, then in his censures of me; you know the power of his Enemies is great, as their malice; just Heaven preserve him from them, and me from this ill, or unlucky Man," i.e., Ranger.[16]

Finally, back in the identity-consuming blackness of the park, Christina mistakes Valentine for Ranger and upbraids him "in the name of honour" with yet another allusion to the oath of eternal constancy and to her suffering:

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[14] Ibid., p. 129.

[15] Ibid., p. 130.

[16] Ibid., p. 133.

our mutual love, confirm'd by a contract, made our hearts inseparable; till you rudely, if not maliciously, thrust in upon us, and broke the close, and happy knot: I had lost him before for a month, now for ever.

[She weeps.[17]

Then Valentine discovers himself, Christina's honor is cleared, the flood of tears subsides, and préciosité in its sentimental form has won the day.

There is some indication that Lady Flippant, "an affected Widow, in distress for a Husband, though still declaiming against marriage,"[18] wishes others to think she possesses some of Christina's précieuse breeding, which certainly she does not. Twice she greets Christina as "faithful Shepherdess";[19] to Lydia and Christina she characterizes men as "stinking fellows" whom she "never admitted . . . to my conversation, but for . . . punishment certainly";[20] she apologizes for the violation of her pretended modesty in having sung a slightly lewd song to Ranger, Dapperwit, and Sir Simon Addleplot, giving as an excuse the fact that "the Words are not distinguished";[21] and to Lydia she pretends that "no body but you cou'd have debauch'd me to the Park certainly; I wou'd not return another night, if it were to redeem my dear husband from his grave."[22] But these are only touches somewhat anomalous to her more general plan, which is to echo the gallants' aversion to marriage in hope of winning one of them: "I always rail against Marriage Which is

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[17] Ibid., Act V, Scene i, p. 114.

[18] Ibid., "The Persons," p. 72.

[19] Ibid., Act II, Scene ii, pp. 96, 99.

[20] Ibid., p. 96.

[21] Ibid., Act I, Scene ii, p. 87.

[22] Ibid., Act II, Scene i, p. 89.

the Widows way to it certainly."[23] Thus generally she affects anti-*précieuse* rather than *précieuse* beliefs.[24]

The "precise City-Bawd"[25] Mrs. Joyner, who aids the widow in the frenzied search for a husband, is herself pleased to affect some righteous indignation at the use of the *précieuse* mode by fellows like Dapperwit, who has no real belief in it. She criticizes Lucy, a prostitute, for "going into the Meeting-house of the Wicked, otherwise called the Play-House, hand in hand, with that vile Fellow *Dapperwit*";[26] and in Joyner's ostensible opinion, it is the false use of whining love as a prelude to physical love that lured Lucy from the path of virtue:

> Alas, poor young wretch, I cannot blame thee so much as thy Mother, for thou art not thy self; his [Dapperwit's] bewitching Madrigals have charm'd thee into some Heathenish Imp with a hard name.
> *Lucy*. Nymph, you mean, God-mother.[27]

A kind of lesser Brisk, Dapperwit indeed admits that his affair with Lucy has required application: "I am no living Wit, if her love has not cost me two thousand Couplets at least."[28] Typical of his extravagance to

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[23] *Ibid.*, Act I, Scene i, p. 74. Outstanding examples of her railing against marriage are *ibid.*, Scene ii, p. 85: "my aversion to marriage is such, that you nor no Man breathing, shall ever perswade me to it"—ironical, for no persuasion is needed; *ibid.*, Act III, Scene ii, p. 116: she would be as ashamed to be caught showing affection for a husband "as a brisk well bred Spark of the Town, wou'd be, to be caught on his knees at prayers, unless to his Mistress"—an incidental reflection of the prevalence of *précieuse* address.

[24] It is true that a *précieuse* who regards her type of love as love between souls or as love decreed by the gods might consider a man-made convention such as marriage to have no claim upon her; under that view the widow might be called a false *précieuse*. But she arrives at her "aversion" by a simpler route.

[25] *Love in a Wood*, p. 72.

[26] *Ibid.*, Act III, Scene i, p. 103.

[27] *Ibid.*, p. 104.

[28] *Ibid.*, p. 111.

the ladies is his comment on Lucy, "If she command my death, I cannot disobey her."[29] Again:

Lyd. . . . this is so fine a night to hear soft things in; morning I shou'd have said.
Dap. It will not be morning, dear Madam, till you pull off your Mask; that I think was brisk— [Aside.
Lyd. Indeed, dear Sir, my face would frighten back the Sun.
Dap. With glories, more radiant than his own; I keep up with her, I think.[30]

Précieuse forms and speeches from a false wit; précieuse compliments from a rake, himself what he is largely as an effect of revolt against romantic love; traces of précieuse affectation in an avidly man-hunting widow; and the précieuse ideal of romantic love expressed seriously in prose—all these, at least, in one play. Thus did the art of whining love lend itself to treatment in the comedy of manners about 1671.[31]

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[29] Ibid., p. 108. The usual double-entendre is no doubt involved.

[30] Ibid., Act II, Scene i, p. 92. Satire, I think, against précieuse extravagance in compliments, as well as against similitude debates in general, is found in the scene between Joyner and Alderman Gripe (Ibid., Act I, Scene i, p. 76) part of which follows:
Joyn. You are the Pink of courtious Aldermen.
Gripe. .You are the Muffler of Secresy.
Joyn. You are the Head-band of Justice. . . .
Gripe. You are the Cup-board of Charity.
Joyn. You are the Fob of Liberality.
Gripe. You are the Rivet of sanctify'd Love or Wedlock.
Joyn. You are the Picklock and Dark-Lanthorn of Policy; And in a word, a Conventical of Virtues.

[31] Some of the word associations made in the play should be noted: ibid., Act II, Scene i, p. 92: " . . . coyness in a Woman is as little sign of true modesty, as huffing in a Man, is of true courage," a pejorative mention of the tragic hero's superman attitude and, by comparison, of pretended précieuse reticence, since the context seems to give "coyness" the rather general meaning of any pretended aversion to the male's advances; ibid., Act IV, Scene iii, p. 127, Vincent to Ranger: "Now you talk of Christina, prethee tell me what was the meaning of thy last nights Romance of Christina." The reference is to Ranger's bursting in upon the girl uninvited; hence "Romance" apparently connoted "improbable" or at least "uncommon." From such evidence we may conclude that "whining," elsewhere associated with "Romance," was itself regarded as uncommon or improbable. See chap. ii.

But if in Love in a Wood we find a large use of précieuse attitudes and theories, in The Gentleman Dancing Master we discover less use of it than in any other comedy of manners. The nature of the characters and the relative simplicity of plot indeed preclude such a complex treatment of the mode as is to be found in the plays already considered. Gerard, whom Hippolita so dextrously manages, had rather curse the affectations of Monsieur de Parris[32] than dissemble approval of them, as Dorimant is to do four years later before Sir Fopling. The Monsieur himself has no great précieuse gallantry toward Hippolita;[33] albeit he is much concerned for his "honeur," he talks more often like Etherege's Dufoy than like Sir Fopling. Hippolita, despite her possession of all the shrewdness of fourteen years,[34] nevertheless has been largely out of circulation—"this twelve month" has "not seen a man."[35] But whether her affectation of innocence finds its origin in her own bright little head[36] or from a conscious mimicry of précieuse ladies, Wycherley seems to have intended throwing her in the face of the advocates of whining love in his audience; this, as will be seen below, his epilogue makes clear. Most of the direct references to the mode are of similarly incidental nature.

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[32] See The Gentleman Dancing-Master, Act I, Scene ii, ibid., pp. 164-67, Gerard's openly scornful comments to Monsieur de Parris.

[33] Ibid., Scene i, pp. 159-62, their only long conversation alone, shows M. de Parris too concerned with himself to trouble with gallantry toward Hippolita.

[34] Ibid., p. 157, Hippolita to her maid Prue: "To confine a Woman just in her rambling Age! . . . O unnatural Father; to shut up a poor Girl at fourteen, and hinder her budding; all things are ripen'd by the Sun . . ."

[35] Ibid., p. 162.

[36] Ibid., Act II, Scene i, p. 174, Hippolita in an aside says something on her "innocence" that leads one to suppose Wycherley thought sincere belief in précieuse ideas rare: " . . . 'tis harder playing the Hypocrite with him [Gerard], I see, than with my Aunt or Father; and if dissimulation were not very natural to a Woman, I'm sure I cou'd not use it at this time; but the mask of simplicity and innocency is as useful to an intriguing Woman, as the mask of Religion to a States-man, they say."

The Monsieur's care for his honor reaches its height in his entreaty to Flirt and Bounce, "two Common Women of the Town,"[37] not to "tell" if he agrees to go to their "Bourdel," the "Crooked-Billet":

But will you promise then to have the care of my honour, pray, good Madam, have de care of my honeur, pray have de care of my honeur. Will you have care of my honeur? pray have de care of my honeur, and do not tell, if you can help it; pray, dear Madam, do not tell.[38]

He can pretend briefly to the romantic hero's huffing mood:

If any man hurt me, he must do it basely; he shall ne'r do it when my Sword's drawn sa, sa, sa.
Hipp. Because you will ne'r draw your Sword perhaps.
Mons. Scurvily guess'd. [Aside.[39]

But as for deference to the ladies, he does not get beyond "Serviteur, Serviteur, lá Cousinè."[40] He is also the occasion of a reference to the popularity about 1672 of French affectation in dress and speech:

Hipp. But indeed, and indeed, Father, you wash the Black-a-more white, in endeavouring to make a Spaniard of a Monsieur . . .
Don. What, I warrant, you are like the rest of the young silly Baggages of England, that like nothing but what is French . . .[41]

Gerard, for all his tendency to bluntness and quick action, can rise on occasion to a compliment with précieuse technical words in it:

Hipp. . . . I have been told my Fortune, and the Woman said I shou'd be stoln away . . .
Ger. Well, Madam, since 'twas foretold you, what do you think on't? 'tis in vain, you know, to resist Fate. . . .
Ger. My Soul, my Life, 'tis you have Charms powerful as numberless, expecially those of your innocency irresistable, and do surprise the wary'st Heart; such mine was, while I cou'd call it mine, but now 'tis yours for ever.[42]

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[37] Ibid., "The Persons," p. 156.

[38] Ibid., Act I, Scene ii, p. 171.

[39] Ibid., Act V, Scene i, p. 218.

[40] E.g., ibid., Act I, Scene i, p. 159; Act III, Scene i, p. 185. See above, n. 33.

[41] Ibid., Act IV, Scene i, p. 200.

[42] Ibid., Act II, Scene i, p. 177.

But he prefers action to whining: "Why, Miss! I hope you wou'd not have me a fine senseless Whining, modest Lover; for modesty in a man is as ill as the want of it in a Woman."[43]

Once in the play itself, as well as in the epilogue, Wycherley refers to the same sort of "Lady Criticks" Congreve was to complain of in The Double-Dealer two decades later:

> Hipp. I am thinking if some little filching inquisitive Poet shou'd get my story, and represent it on the Stage; what those Ladies, who are never precise but at a Play, wou'd say of me now, that I were a confident coming piece, I warrant, and they wou'd damn the poor Poet for libelling the Sex; but sure though I give my self and fortune away frankly, without the consent of my Friends, my confidence is less than theirs, who stand off only for separate maintenance.[44]

This, then, by way of a thrust against the ladies he was to continue battling against both in The Country-Wife and, more particularly and harshly, in The Plain-Dealer. The epilogue of the present play has the following references to the "precise" faction:

> The Ladies first I am to Compliment,
> Whom(if he cou'd) the Poet wou'd content.
> But to their pleasure then they must consent.
>
> Most spoil their sport still by their modesty,
> And when they shou'd be pleas'd, cry out, O fie,
> And the least smooty jest will ne're pass by.
>
> But Citty damsel ne're had confidence,
> At Smooty Play to take the lest offence,
> But mercy shews, to shew her innocence.
>
> Yet lest the Merchants Daughters[45] shou'd to day
> Be Scandaliz'd, not at our harmless Play;
> But our Hippolita . . .
> . . . . . .
> Hippolita is not like you at all;

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[43] Ibid., Act III, Scene i, p. 195.

[44] Ibid., Act V, Scene i, p. 221.

[45] It is reasonable to assume that the "Merchants Daughters" should be fond of affecting précieuse beliefs, since to do so would give them the sense of a superiority that they could not claim by virtue of their position in the social scale.

> You, while your Lovers court you, still look grum,
> And far from wooing, when they woo, cry mum . . .[46]

Certainly the précieuses, pretending or not, must have been numerous, or at least powerful, for such an amount of protestation to be thought necessary.

"What a Divel is this honour?" asks Alithea's maid in The Country-Wife;

> 'tis sure a disease in the Head, like the Megrim, or Falling-sickness, that always hurries People away to do themselves mischief; Men lose their lives by it: Women, what's dearer to 'em, their love, the life of life.[47]

But Alithea is the only woman in the play who takes honor at all seriously; the rest agree with Lady Fidget that it and reputation are to be used

> only to deceive the world with less suspicion; our Virtue is like the State-man's Religion, the Quaker's Word, the Gamester's Oath, and the Great Man's Honour, but to cheat those that trust us.
> Squeam[ish]. And that Demureness, Coyness, and Modesty, that you see in our Faces in the Boxes at Plays, is as much a sign of a kind woman, as a Vizard-mask in the Pit.[48]

Horner himself sums up the matter: "Nay, . . . Honour, like Beauty now, only depends on the opinion of others."[49]

This hypocritical, relative view of honor and virtue, diametrically opposed to the absolutistic précieuse view as seriously taken by such characters as Christina and Valentine, gives rise to much of the satire in Country-Wife. When Horner and Dorilant with Sir Jaspar Fidget enter a room where are Lady Fidget, Mistress Dainty Fidget, and Mistress Squeamish, for instance, the ladies must break off their conversation (which has been to the conclusion that one's reputation is injured only when one's love intrigue is found out) and put up a good virtuous front. They must, in a

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[46] The Gentleman Dancing-Master, "Epilogue," p. 232.

[47] The Country-Wife, Act IV, Scene i, ibid., II, 51.

[48] Ibid., Act V, Scene iv, p. 80.

[49] Ibid., p. 81.

word, profess a distressed heroine's aversion to the mere sight of a rakish gentleman, a précieuse abhorrence at even looking on that drossy corporeal clog, the human body:

> Lad[y Fidget]. Oh, what d'ye mean to bring in these upon us?
> Dain[ty Fidget]. Foh, these are as bad as Wits.
> Squeam[ish]. Foh!
> Lad. Let us leave the Room.
> Sr. Jas. Stay, stay faith to tell you the naked truth.
> Lad. Fye, Sir Jaspar, do not use that word naked. . . .
> Hor. Ladies. [Horner, Dorilant drawing near Squeamish, and Daint.
> Dain. Stand off.
> Squeam. Do not approach us.
> Dain. You heard with the Wits, you are obscenity all over.
> Squeam. And I wou'd as soon look upon a Picture of Adam and Eve, without fig-leaves, as any of you, if I cou'd help it, therefore keep off, and do not make us sick.
> Dor. What a Divel are these?
> Hor. Why these are pretenders to honour, as criticks to wit, only by censuring others; and as every raw, peevish, out-of-humour'd, affected, dull, Tea-drinking, Arithmetical Fop sets up for a wit, by railing at Men of sense, so these for honour, by railing at the Court, and Ladies of as great honour, as quality.[50]

The same affectation can produce the exquisite bit of equivocation which follows. Lady Fidget, the speaker, has just learned from Horner that he has not, as her husband Sir Jaspar has been led by Horner to think, been made a eunuch as an effect of having had the "pox":

> Why indeed, Sir Jaspar, Master Horner is a thousand, thousand times a better Man, than I thought him: Cozen Squeamish, Sister Dainty, I can name him now, truly, not long ago you know, I thought his very name obscenity, and I wou'd as soon have lain with him, as have nam'd him.
> Sir Jas. Very likely, poor Madam.
> Dain. I believe it.
> Squeam. No doubt on't.[51]

Even up to the moment Horner follows Lady Fidget into his chamber, where he gives her his "China," she prates of honor, both of them understanding what her definition of it is:

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[50] Ibid., Act II, Scene i, pp. 30-31.

[51] Ibid., p. 34.

Well Horner, am not I a woman of Honour? . . . you must promise to have a care of my dear Honour.

Hor. If you talk a word more of your Honour, you'll make me incapable to wrong it; to talk of Honour in the mysteries of Love, is like talking of Heaven, or the Deity in an operation of Witchcraft, just when you are employing the Devil, it makes the charm impotent.

Lad. Nay, fie, let us not be smooty . . .[52]

A moment after the two have disappeared into the chamber, Squeamish enters to show further her talent in affectation by calling for Horner as "this Toad, this ugly, greasie, dirty Sloven," this "odious Beast."[53] Thus influential was the précieuse mode upon what is today the most renowned plot of the comedy.

Some three direct references to précieuse conventions in love-making are to be found in the play. Sparkish refers to the whining lover's role when he says:

I scorn writing; but Women, Women, that make Men do all foolish things, make 'em write Songs too; every body does it: 'tis ev'n as common with Lovers, as playing with fans; and you can no more help Rhyming to your Phyllis, than drinking to your Phyllis.[54]

The importance of the verse-writing convention Sparkish again alludes to when, learning his Alithea has played false to him with Harcourt, he says, "Nay, I'le to her, and call her as many Crocodiles, Syrens, Harpies, and other heathenish names, as a Poet would do a Mistress, who had refus'd to heare his suit, nay more his Verses on her."[55] And when Horner receives a rustic sort of letter[56] from Margery Pinchwife, who loves him, he refers to

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[52] Ibid., Act IV, Scene iii, p. 60.

[53] Ibid., p. 62.

[54] Ibid., Act III, Scene ii, p. 39.

[55] Ibid., Act V, Scene iii, p. 76.

[56] The heart of the letter is this delightful combination of ingenuousness and design (Ibid., Act IV, Scene ii, p. 58): " . . . I'm sure if you and I were in the Countrey at Cards together . . . I cou'd not help treading on your Toe under the Table . . . or rubbing knees with you, and staring in your face, 'till you saw me . . . and then looking down, and blushing for an hour together . . . but I must make haste before my Husband comes and now he has taught me to write Letters: You shall have longer ones . . ."

some stereotypes of précieuse love address in exclaiming, "'tis the first love Letter that ever was without Flames, Darts, Fates, Destinies, Lying and Dissembling in't."[57]

Under the misapprehension that Harcourt thinks him one of your true "Wits and Railleurs,"[58] and therefore will not wrong him, Sparkish without fear of theft introduces Harcourt, Horner's friend, to his bride-to-be, Alithea. Harcourt immediately utters extravagant compliments[59] and offers to abduct and marry her. With high regard for honor, Alithea tells her fiancé that Harcourt is making love to her, but Sparkish reasons thus: "That he makes love to you, is a sign you are handsome; and that I am not jealous, is a sign you are virtuous, that I think is for your honour."[60] When Alithea thereupon grows angry, Sparkish insists she stay while Harcourt makes "an eclaircisment of his love to you, that is what kind of love it is,"[61] and the following exchange occurs, with Harcourt employing terms from a whining lover's speech:

> Spar. . . . how do you love her?
> Har. With all my Soul.
> Alith. I thank him, methinks he speaks plain enough now.
> Spar. You are out still. [To Alithea.
> But with what kind of love, Harcourt?
> Har. With the best, and truest love in the world.
> Spar. Look you there then, that is with no matrimonial love, I'm sure. . . .
> Har. . . . Madam, e'en take him for Heaven's sake.
> Spar. Look you there, Madam.
> Har. Who shou'd in all justice be yours, he that loves you most. [Claps his hand on his breast.
> Alith. Look you there, Mr. Sparkish, who's that?
> Spar. Who shou'd it be? go on Harcourt. . . .
> Har. Who can only match your Faith, and Constancy in love.
> Spar. Ay.
> Har. Who knows, if it be possible, how to value so much beauty and virtue.
> Spar. Ay.

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[57] Ibid., Scene iii, p. 67.
[58] Ibid., Act II, Scene i, p. 25.
[59] Ibid., pp. 25-26.
[60] Ibid., Act III, Scene ii, p. 42.
[61] Ibid., p. 43.

Har. Whose love can no more be equall'd in the world, than that Heavenly form of yours.[62]

Sparkish insists on being duped, but Alithea again insists on keeping her word to him—another bit of satire on the honor theme. Harcourt finds argument with her unavailing, although again in the whining role he takes the "priviledge of a banished Lover, complaining or railing, and giving you but a farewel reason; why, if you cannot condescend to marry me, you shou'd not take that wretch my Rival."[63]

When the marriage hour approaches, Sparkish brings in "to joyn our hands" not a parson but Harcourt disguised as a chaplain. Only Sparkish is fooled. The point of interest for us here is that in Harcourt's speeches from the disguise we have an equivocation that is made possible only by the fact that terms of précieuse worship of ladies are often the same as words employed in Christian worship:

Alith. Well, most reverend Doctor, pray let us make an end of this fooling.
Har. With all my soul, Divine, Heavenly Creature, when you please.
Alith. He speaks like a Chaplain indeed.
Spar. Why, was there not, Soul, Divine, Heavenly, in what he said? . . .
Alith. I have no more patience left, let us make once an end of this troublesome Love, I say.
Har. So be it, Seraphick Lady . . .[64]

We have also the inevitable pun on "die." Says Harcourt, "Madam, let me tell you plainly, no body else shall marry you, by Heavens, I'll die first, for I'm sure I shou'd die after it."[65] This is fully meaningful on one of its two levels only when we understand that Sparkish intends to employ the

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[62] Ibid., pp. 43-44.

[63] Ibid., p. 48.

[64] Ibid., Act IV, Scene i, p. 53.

[65] Ibid., p. 54.

pseudo-parson permanently, since "when I get me a Wife, I must get her a Chaplain, according to the Custom . . ."[66]

So one finds each of the play's major intrigues is colored, more or less obviously, by the précieuse mode.

In The Plain-Dealer, Wycherley extends his offensive against Lady Fidget's type of affectation into the "Billiet doux dedicatory" to "my Lady B—," where he writes that

> This Play claims naturally your Protection, since it has lost its Reputation with the Ladies of stricter lives in the Playhouse; and (you know) when mens endeavours are discountenanc'd and refus'd, by the nice coy Woman of Honour, they come to you . . . none can charge you with that heinous, and worst of Womens Crimes, Hypocrisie . . . though most of your Sex grow Magdalens at fifty, and as a solid French Author has it,
>
> Apres le Plaisir, vient la peine,
> Apres la peine la vertu;
>
> . . . Modesty is a kind of a youthful dress, which as it makes a young Woman more amiable, makes an old one more nauseous . . . the affected Chastity of antiquated Beauties, is rather a reproach than an honour to 'em, for it shews the mens Virtue only . . . But you, in fine, Madam, are no more an Hypocrite, than I am when I praise you; therefore I doubt not will be thought (even by yours and the Play's Enemies, the nicest Ladies) to be the fittest Patroness for . . . The Plain Dealer.[67]

"Pictures too like," he says in his prologue,

> the Ladies will not please:
> They must be drawn too here, like Goddesses.[68]

It is supposedly on the theory that "Modesty . . . makes a young Woman more amiable" that he based the character of Fidelia, a distressed heroine of the romantic variety. Whether he would have thought her, had the question been raised, an extension into comedy of the heroine of heroic tragedy, one cannot tell from the play itself. Fidelia has three blank-verse soliloquies;

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[66] Ibid., p. 52.

[67] The Plain-Dealer, "To my Lady B—," ibid., pp. 97,100.

[68] Ibid., "Prologue," p. 101.

and certain it is that Wycherley knew "Rithme"[69] gave a poet license to write improbably, as in the romantic genres:[70] "Rithme, you know often makes mystical Nonsence pass with the Criticks for Wit, and a double meaning saying with the Ladies, for soft, tender, and moving Passion."[71]

However this may be, Fidelia in keeping with her name spouts love-and-honour expressions continually. As a "young Gentleman," the disguise in which she has followed him to sea and undergone the perils of a sea battle, she tells Manly she loves him "as well as you do Truth or Honour. Sir . . . Suspect me for any thing, Sir, but the want of Love, Faith, and Duty to you, the bravest, worthiest of Mankind . . ." When he accuses her of having been afraid in battle she insists that "for you I wou'd be afraid again, an hundred times afraid . . . and you'll believe me one day. [Weeps." Manly says he'll leave her behind when next he goes to sea, to which she gives the aside, "If you wou'd preserve my life, I'm sure you shou'd not." He says he has no further use for her services. "Do not turn me off to shame and misery," she cries with all possible consciousness of her hard lot; "I am helpless and friendless." He thereupon gives her money. "If you wou'd

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[69] Derogatory associations are attached to "Rithming" or equivalents, by linking that practice with whining love, in the following passages: ibid., Act I, Scene i, p. 144, Widow Blackacre: " . . . you are as troublesom to a poor Widow of Business, as a young Coxcomb Rithming Lover"; ibid., p. 111, one effect of plain-dealing, says Manly, would be that "the noble Sonneteer wou'd trouble thee no more with his Madrigals"; ibid., Act IV, Scene i, p. 163, Major Oldfox shows "an Epigram, not above 20 lines, upon a cruel Lady; who Decreed her Servant shou'd hang himself, to demonstrate his Passion."

[70] Further mention of the romantic genres of Restoration drama is made in the following passages: ibid., Act II, Scene i, p. 132, Olivia to Manly: " . . . you cannot sure think any thing cou'd take me more than that heroick Title of yours, Captain; for you know we Women love honour inordinately"; ibid., p. 133, Olivia to Manly just after he has forcibly put Novel and Plausible out of the room: "Turn hither your rage, good Captain Swaggerhuff . . ."

[71] Ibid., p. 129.

be cruelly pitiful, Sir," she sighs, "let it be with your Sword, and not Gold."[72]

These are her woes as the play opens. But as with Christina, so with Fidelia life is to become more and more difficult through the first four and one-half acts. Her blank verse soliloquies reflect the rocky course of her constant love. Manly, "weary of this side of the World here," had planned on his ill-starred voyage to turn the command of his ship to his lieutenant and "settle himself in the Indies";[73] and Fidelia, knowing this, had chosen to suffer the primitive life with him:

> he wou'd have look'd on me
> Amongst the sooty Indians; and I cou'd
> To choose there live his Wife, where Wives are forc'd
> To live no longer, when their Husbands die.[74]

When Manly insists that she either turn procuress of Olivia for him or leave him, she tells the audience what it already knows in a second blank verse passage, ending thus:

> Were ever Love or Chance, till now, severe?
> Or shifting Woman pos'd with such a task?
> Forc'd to beg that which kills her, if obtain'd;
> And give away her Lover not to lose him.[75]

In the third soliloquy, she again speaks of the uniqueness of her misery, blames Heaven, and conceives her life to be worse than death:

> O Heavens! is there not punishment enough
> In loving well, if you will have't a Crime;
> But you must add fresh Torments daily to't,
> And punish us like peevish Rivals still,
> Because we fain would find a Heaven here?
> But did there never any love like me,

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[72] Ibid., Act I, Scene i, pp. 112-13.

[73] Ibid., p. 107.

[74] Ibid., p. 117.

[75] Ibid., Act III, Scene i, p. 143.

> That, untry'd Tortures, you must find me out?
> Others, at worst, you force to kill themselves;
> But I must be Self-murd'ress of my love,
> Yet will not grant me pow'r to end my Life,
> My cruel life; for when a Lover's hopes
> Are dead, and gone, life is unmerciful. [Sits down, and weeps.][76]

And when Vernish attempts to seduce her, she cries:

> O Heavens! more fears, plagues, and Torments yet in store! . . .
> Oh! oh! rather than you shall drag me to a death so horrid, and
> so shameful, I'll die here a thousand deaths . . .[77]

Thus much on the third distressed heroine of the comedy of manners. It is unnecessary to record here her other expressions of suffering, although they are numerous; unnecessary also to quote from the final scene of the play, in which eternal constancy obtains its reward. We may note, however, that Manly speaks in *précieuse* terms when he calls himself unworthy of her because his heart, debased, he says, by his past love for Olivia, is "a Sacrifice to prophane your love."[78] Manly indeed shows approval of the whining lover's view of constancy: "a true heart admits but of one friendship, as of one love . . ."[79] He refers to Olivia with a whining lover's extravagance:

> Free[man]. But what strange Charms has she that cou'd make you love?
> Man[ly]. Strange Charms indeed! She has Beauty enough to call in question her Wit or Virtue, and her Form wou'd make a starv'd Hermit a Ravisher; yet her Virtue, and Conduct, wou'd preserve her from the subtil Lust of a pamper'd Prelate. She is so perfect a Beauty, that Art cou'd not better it, nor affectation deform it . . . She is all truth, and hates the lying, masking, daubing World, as I do . . . [She] swore to me, since her Parents wou'd not suffer her to go with me, she wou'd stay behind for no other man; but follow me, without their leave, if not to be obtain'd. . . . I can never doubt her truth and constancy.[80]

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[76] *Ibid.*, Act IV, Scene ii, p. 173.

[77] *Ibid.*, pp. 175-76.

[78] *Ibid.*, Act V, Scene iii, p. 195.

[79] *Ibid.*, Act I, Scene i, p. 109.

[80] *Ibid.*, pp. 117-18.

Also, they parted from one another "with unforc'd vows of constancy, and floods of willing tears . . ."[81] Nevertheless a plain-dealer must scorn a man who carries précieuse attitudes to a foppish extreme: "Tell not me (my good Lord Plausible) of your Decorums, supercilious Forms, and slavish Ceremonies . . ."[82] Lord Plausible it is who to any woman whatsoever is "your eternal Slave," speaks of coxcombs and scoundrels as men "of such Honour, and Vertue," "patterns of Heroick Vertue,"[83] and addresses Olivia, though he is aware of her hypocrisy, as "Noble Lady," "Divine person."[84]

In Olivia one finds a full exemplification of the "worst of Womens Crimes, Hypocrisie"; she is Lady Fidget, Mistress Dainty, and Squeamish all rolled in one, with a liberal dash of viciousness added:

> Oliv. Ah Cousin what a World 'tis we live in! I am so weary of it.
> Eliz. Truly, Cousin, I can find no fault with it . . .
> Oliv. O hideous! you cannot be in earnest sure, when you say you like the filthy World.
> Eliz. . . . what d'ye think of Dressing and fine Cloaths?
> Oliv. Dressing! Fie, fie, 'tis my aversion, Pray name it no more. . . .
> Eliz. But what d'ye think of Visits—Balls—
> Oliv. O, I detest 'em.
> Eliz. Of Playes.
> Oliv. I abominate 'em: filthy, obscene, hideous things.
> Eliz. . . . what think you of a rich young Husband?
> Oliv. O horrid! Marriage! what a Pleasure you have found out! I nauseate it of all things.
> Let [tice]. But what does your Ladyship think then of a liberal, handsom, young Lover?
> Oliv. A handsom, young Fellow, you Impudent! Be gone, out of my sight; name a handsome young Fellow to me! Foh, a hideous handsome young Fellow I abominate. [Spits.
> Eliz. . . . what d'ye think of the Court?
> Oliv. . . . my aversion, my aversion of all aversions. . . . Where sincerity is a quality as out of fashion, and as unprosperous, as Bashfulness; I cou'd not laugh at a Quibble, tho' it were a fat Privy Counsellor's. . .
> Eliz. In what sense am I to understand you! But, in fine, by the word Aversion, I'm sure you dissemble . . . a Man no more believes a Woman,

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[81] Ibid., Act II, Scene i, p. 133.

[82] Ibid., Act I, Scene i, p. 105.

[83] Ibid., Act II, Scene i, p. 125.

[84] Ibid., Act IV, Scene ii, p. 166.

when she says she has an Aversion for him, than when she says she'll cry out.

Oliv. O filthy, hideous! Peace, Cousin, or your discourse will be my Aversion; and you may believe me.[85]

Again, this time on The Country-Wife:

Eliz. Why, what is there of ill in't, say you?
Oliv. O fie, fie, fie, wou'd you put me to the blush anew? call all the blood into my face again? But to satisfie you then, first the clandestine obscenity in the very name of Horner. . . . does it not give you the rank conception, or image of a Goat, or Town-Bull, or a Satyr? nay, what is yet a filthier image than all the rest, that of an Eunuch?
Eliz. What then? I can think of a Goat, a Bull, or Satyr, without any hurt.
Oliv. I, but, Cousin, one cannot stop there.
Eliz. I can, cousin.[86]

And a last scabrous word on "China":

Oliv. Why, you will not keep any now sure! 'tis now as unfit an ornament for a Ladies Chamber, as the Pictures that come from Italy, and other hot Countries, as appears by their nudities, which I always cover, or scratch out, wheresoe're I find 'em.[87]

Another précieuse idea she perverts to her use is that of predestination in love: when Manly berates her for her secret marriage to Vernish, she excuses herself by sarcastically noting that "there's no resisting one's Destiny, or Love, you know."[88]

If Olivia's protestations, however much they show excellence on Wycherley's part, grow a bit tiresome to the reader, as they do to the present writer, it will be with a sense of relief that he turns to the less venomous comedies of Congreve.

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[85] Ibid., Act II, Scene i, pp. 119-21.

[86] Ibid., p. 128. For other of Olivia's "aversions," see the numerous omissions in the passages quoted; ibid., Act IV, Scene i, pp. 158-59; ibid., Act V, Scene i, p. 177, in which Eliza tells Olivia she is no longer deceiving anyone, whereupon Olivia says she must blame the world for condemning her: "the obscenity of their Censures makes me blush."

[87] Ibid., Act II, Scene i, p. 128.

[88] Ibid., p. 134.

CHAPTER V

CONGREVE

The Old Batchelour, 1693.
The Double-Dealer, 1693.
Love for Love, 1695.
The Way of the World, 1700.

In The Old Batchelour the four young people of fashion—Araminta and Vainlove, Belinda and Bellmour—are not only eminently eligible for marriage but also quite given to talking, man to man, woman to woman, and woman to man, of the advantages and disadvantages, pleasures and absurdities, of précieuse courtship. Heartwell, the title character, slights both women in general and whining love in particular, and consequently is disconcerted no end when he finds himself in love and in need of précieuse address to Sylvia; the four characters first mentioned are in various stages of revolt against or acceptance of the mode, but tend less to extremes than Heartwell.

Before male and female are brought together, first the men, then the ladies, are allowed their privy comments on love. One may as well start, as does Congreve, with the gentlemen. Bellmour, a bit more rakish than Vainlove,[1] greets the latter jestingly as "Contemplative Lover," the adjective

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[1] E.g., The Old Batchelour, Act III, Scene i, The Complete Works, ed. Montague Summers (Soho, 1923), I, 189:

Bell. . . . Couldst thou be content to marry Araminta?
Vain. Could you be content to go to Heaven?
Bell. Hum; not immediately, in my conscience not heartily; I'd do a little more good in my generation first . . .

apparently another synonym for "whining,"[2] and the two fall into conversation about Sylvia, who has been mistress, at different times, to each of them. Bellmour insists the girl loves only Vainlove:

'tis true by Heaven, she own'd it to my Face; and blushing like the Virgin Morn, when it disclosed the Cheat, which that trusty Band of Nature, Night, had hid, confess'd her Soul was true to you; tho' I by Treachery had stoll'n the Bliss—[3]

Here is a distinction made possible by a perversion of the précieuse body-soul dichotomy:[4] one can have as many gallants or mistresses as one likes, yet be not blamable—for only constant love involves the soul, and in such love the body is unimportant. Thus Bellmour can at the same time undergo "the slavery of honourable Love in one place, and the pleasure of enjoying half a score Mistresses of my own acquiring,"[5] yet not be condemned for the prophane love by the girl involved in the honorable affair.

But to return. A bit after Vainlove takes his leave, Heartwell enters to rail against courtship that involves "sneering fulsome Lyes and nauseous Flattery,"[6] and the two gentlemen, with Sharper, who has come on stage during the discussion, talk at length of précieuse love-making:

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[2] Ibid., Act I, Scene i, p. 169. For "Canting" with associations of "whining," see ibid., Act III, Scene i, p. 190, Lucy to Setter; "Hang thee—Beggars Curr—Thy Master is but a Mumper in Love, lies Canting at the Gate, but never dares presume to enter the House."

[3] Ibid., Act I, Scene i, p. 170.

[4] True it is that the body-soul dichotomy in Western culture is at least as old as Plato. It is basic to the précieuse tradition; and "platonic" was often used both in the time of Charles I (e.g., in Suckling's poetry, Davenant's The Platonic Lovers, 1635) and, as we have seen, in the Restoration (as by Collier, Shadwell), as equivalent to or involved in what we here call précieuse.

[5] The Old Batchelour, Act I, Scene i, p. 172.

[6] Ibid., p. 173.

Bell. . . . But George [Heartwell], you must not quarrel with little Gallantries of this nature; Women are often won by 'em: Who would refuse to kiss a Lap Dog, if it were preliminary to the Lips of his Lady?

Sharp. Or omit playing with her Fan, and cooling her if she were hot, when it might entitle him to the office of warming her when she should be cold?

Bell. What is it to read a Play in a rainy day, when it may be the means of getting into a fair Ladies Books? Though you should be now and then interrupted in a witty Scene, and she perhaps perserve her Laughter till the Jest were over? Even this may be born with, considering the Reward in prospect.

Heart. I confess you that are Woman's Asses bear greater Burdens; are forc'd to undergo Dressing, Dancing, Singing, Sighing, Whining, Rhyming, Flattering, Lying, Grinning, Cringing, and the drudgery of loving to boot.

Bell. O Brute! the drudgery of loving![7]

When we are introduced to the young ladies, their discourse is on the same topic. Belinda affects a précieuse aversion to the male sex, and Araminta reveals her anti-précieuse temper:

Belin. Ah! nay Dear—prithee good, dear sweet Cousin no more. Oh Gad, I swear you'd make one sick to hear you.

Aram. Bless me! what have I said to move you thus?

Belin. Oh you have raved, talked idly, and all in Commendation of that filthy, awkward, two-leg'd Creature, Man—you don't know what you said, your Fever has transported you.

Aram. If Love be the Fever which you mean; kind Heaven avert the Cure: Let me have Oyl to feed that Flame and never let it be extinct, till I my self am Ashes.

Belin. There was a Whine—O Gad I hate your horrid Fancy—This Love is the Devil, and sure to be in Love is to be possess'd—'Tis in the Head, the Heart, the Blood, the—All over—O Gad you are quite spoil'd—I shall loath the sight of Mankind for your sake.

Aram. Fie, this is gross Affectation—A little of Bellmour's Company would change the Scene.

Belin. Filthy Fellow! I wonder Cousin—

Aram. I wonder Cousin you should imagine, I don't perceive you love him.

Belin. O I love your hideous Fancy! Ha, ha, ha. love a Man!

Aram. Love a Man! Yes, you would not love a Beast.

Belin. Of all Beasts not an Ass—Which is so like your Vainlove—Lard I have seen an Ass look so Chagrin, Ha, ha, ha, (you must pardon me I can't help Laughing) that an absolute Lover would have concluded the poor Creature to have had Darts, and Flames, and Altars, and all that in his Breast. Araminta, come I'll talk seriously to you now; could you but see with my Eyes, the buffoonry of one Scene of Address, a Lover, set out with all his Equipage and Appurtenances; O Gad! sure you would—But you play the Game, and consequently can't see the Miscarriages obvious to every Stander by.[8]

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[7] Ibid., p. 174.

[8] Ibid., Act II, Scene ii, p. 182.

Soon after, Bellmour and Vainlove enter, and three of the four hold the mode off at arm's length to peer at it while Vainlove walks the précieuse lover's supposed road to favor:

> Bell. . . . importunity in Love, like Importunity at Court; first creates its own Interest, and then pursues it for the Favour.
> Aram. Favours that are got by Impudence and Importunity, are like Discoveries from the Rack, when the afflicted Person, for his ease, sometimes confesses Secrets his Heart knows nothing of.
> Vain. I should rather think Favours, so gain'd, to be due Rewards to indefatigable Devotion—For as Love is a Deity, he must be serv'd by Prayer.
> Belin. O Gad, would you would all pray to Love then, and let us alone.
> Vain. You are the Temples of Love, and 'tis through you, our Devotion must be convey'd.
> Aram. Rather poor silly Idols of your own making, which, upon, [sic] the least displeasure you forsake, and set up new . . .
> Vain. O, Madam—
> Aram. Nay, come, I find we are growing serious, and then we are in great danger of being dull . . .[9]

And dulness is abhorrent, for as Belinda is to say later, courtship is to marriage "as a very witty Prologue to a very dull Play."[10]

When Bellmour complains to Belinda "you wont hear me with Patience," she responds thus:

> Prithee hold thy Tongue—Lard, he has so pester'd me with Flames and Stuff—I think I shan't endure the sight of a Fire this Twelve-month.
> Bell. Yet all can't melt that cruel frozen Heart.
> Belin. O Gad, I hate your hideous Fancy—You said that once before—If you must talk impertinently, for Heav'ns sake let it be with variety: Don't come alway, like the Devil, wrapt in Flames—I'll not hear a Sentence more that begins with an, I burn—Or an, I beseech you, Madam.[11]

She would, she says, "be ador'd in Silence," and Bellmour admits that if one could "drive on a Love-bargain, in that silent manner," it would "save Man a world of lying and swearing at the Years end . . ."[12]

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[9] Ibid., pp. 184-85.

[10] Ibid., Act V, Scene i, p. 220.

[11] Ibid., Act II, Scene ii, p. 185.

[12] Ibid., p. 186.

Meanwhile a song has been introduced to give an excellent reason why a sprightly young lady might insist upon a lengthy term of service before capitulation to her dying lover:

> Would you long preserve your Lover?
> Would you still his Goddess reign?
> Never let him all discover
> Never let him much obtain.
>
> Men will admire, adore and die,
> While wishing at your Feet they lie;
> But admitting their Embraces,
> Wakes 'em from the Golden Dream:
> Nothing's new besides our Faces.
> Every Woman is the same.[13]

A few scenes later, Bellmour in his attempt to seduce Lætitia shows his ability to feign a whining lover's raptures:

> Læt. I hope you are a Gentleman—and since you are privy to a weak Woman's Failing, won't turn it to the prejudice of her Reputation—You look as if you had more Honour—
> Bell. And more Love, or my Face is a False-Witness, and deserves to be pillory'd—No, by Heaven, I swear—
> Læt. Nay, don't swear, if you'd have me believe you; but promise—
> Bell. Well, I promise—A Promise is so cold—Give me leave to swear—By those Eyes, those killing Eyes! by those healing Lips—Oh! press the soft Charm close to mine—and seal 'em for ever.
> Læt. Upon that Condition. [He kisses her.
> Bell. Eternity was in that Moment—One more, upon any Condition.[14]

In the meantime Heartwell himself has been infected with "milky Love" which "prompts me to the softness of a Child";[15] he is now one of those who "admire, adore and die," in a word, a whining lover:

> ask all the Tyrants of thy Sex, if their Fools are not known by this Party-coloured Livery—I am Melancholy when thou art absent; look like an Ass when thou art present; Wake for you, when I should Sleep, and even Dream of you, when I am Awake; Sigh much, Drink little, Eat less, court Solitude, am grown very entertaining to my self, and (as I am informed) very troublesome to everybody else. If this be not Love, it is Madness . . .[16]

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[13] Ibid.

[14] Ibid., Act IV, Scene ii, p. 202.

[15] Ibid., Act III, Scene ii, p. 195.

[16] Ibid.

Only the fact that the parson who marries him to his Sylvia is Bellmour in disguise, and his discovery that Sylvia is a whore, save him from matrimony.

Thus does the art of whining love permeate both the plot revolving about the title figure and the sparkling love duel scenes in which Congreve if often said to show his greatest skill.

In The Double-Dealer, we find the villainous Maskwell to have fallen into the worshipful strain during his hypocritical intrigue with Lady Touchwood. "Were you not," she demands after he has thrown off his mask before her, "in the nature of a Servant . . . ? Where is that humble Love, the Languishing, the Adoration, which once was paid me, and everlastingly engaged?" And Maskwell replies with images from the religion of love: " . . . there was Revenge in view; that Woman's Idol [Mellefont] had defil'd the Temple of the God, and Love was made a Mock-Worship."[17] But there is nothing to delight in Maskwell's character; it is refreshing to turn to the ladies of the play for whom the "Lady Criticks"[18] of Congreve's audience abused him because the stage characters were shown "vicious and affected." "I should be very glad of an opportunity to make my Complement to those Ladies who are offended," said Congreve in reply,

> but they can no more expect it in a Comedy than to be Tickled by a Surgeon when he's letting 'em blood. They who are Virtuous or Discreet should not be offended, for such Characters as distinguish them, and make their Beauties more shining and observ'd: And they who are of the other kind, may nevertheless pass for such, by seeming not to be displeased or touched with the Satyr of this Comedy.[19]

But the précieuses, as we shall see, continued their campaign.

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[17] The Double-Dealer, Act I, Scene i, ibid., II, 25-26.

[18] Ibid., "Epilogue," p. 77:

> The Lady Criticks, who are better read,
> Inquire if Characters are nicely bred;
> If the soft things are Penn'd and spoke with grace . . .

[19] Ibid., "To the Right Honourable Charles Montague," p. 12. Congreve's mention of the ladies' complaints occurs just above this passage in the dedication, and has been quoted in chap. ii, n. 12.

The "affected" ladies of the play, Lady Froth and Lady Plyant, carry to extremes different aspects of *précioisité*. Lady Froth, like Philaminte of *Les Femmes Savantes*, pretends to learning, wit, and excessive refinement in love, all of which pretensions she exhibits in the writing of poetry with her satellite Brisk, in comments on what is the ideal of gallantry, and, to be brief, in conversation with anyone whatsoever. Lady Plyant stresses the pretension to honor and virtue, prates of her "charm," demands whining love in her intrigues, and shows a great fondness for *précieuse* rhetoric.

So refined, so uncommon was Lady Froth's love for her lord when the two were courting that she "did not sleep one wink for three Weeks together." When Cynthia inquires if so much love "did not turn your Brain," Lady Froth confesses that it might well have done so had she not

> Writ, writ abundantly.—Do you never Write?
> Cynt. Write what?
> L. Froth. Songs, Elegies, Satires, Encomiums, Panegyricks, Lampoons, Plays, or Heroick Poems?

Lord Froth was worth all this strenuous activity, for he has

> Ah! nothing at all of the Common Air,—I think I may say he wants nothing but a Blue Ribbon and a Star to make him shine, the Phosphorus of our Hemisphere. Do you understand those Two hard Words? If you don't I'll explain 'em to you.

When Cynthia grows understandably resentful at this, Froth excuses herself on grounds that "being derived from the *Greek*, I thought you might have escap'd the Etymology."

Cynthia's Mellefont, she then complains, is lacking in

> some distinguishing Quality, as, for example, the *Belle-air* or *Brillant* of Mr. *Brisk*; the Solemnity, yet Complaisance of my Lord, or something of his own that should look a little *Jene-scay-quoysh*.

When Lord Froth enters, it is to display his "*Jene-scay-quoysh*," his "Gallantry to the last degree":

L. Froth. My Lord, I have been telling my dear Cynthia how much I have been in Love with you; I swear I have; I'm not ashamed to own it now; ah! it makes my heart leap, I vow I sigh when I think on't. My dear Lord! Ha, ha, ha, do you remember, my Lord?

[Squeezes him by the hand, looks kindly on him, sighs, and then laughs out.

Ld. Froth. . . . perfectly well, ah! that look, ay, there it is; who could resist? 'twas so my heart was made a Captive first, and ever since t' has been in Love with happy Slavery.

L. Froth. Oh, That Tongue, that dear deceitful Tongue! that Charming Softness . . . , and then your Bow! Good my Lord, bow as you did when I gave you my Picture. [Gives him a Pocket-Glass.
Pray mind, my Lord; ah! he bows Charmingly; nay, my Lord, you shan't kiss it so much; I shall grow jealous, I vow now.
[He bows profoundly low, then kisses the Glass.

Ld. Froth. I saw my self there, and kiss'd it for your sake.[20]

Lady Froth's "Essay toward an Heroick Poem" has as its subject her lord's love to her, and is titled "The Sillibub":

Brisk. Because my Lord's Title's Froth, I'gad, ha, ha, ha, Deuce take me, very a Propos and Surprizing, ha, ha, ha.

L. Froth. He, Ay, is not it?—And then I call my Lord Spumoso; and myself, what d'e think I call myself?

Brisk. Lactilla, may be,—gad, I cannot tell.

L. Froth. Biddy, that's all; just my own Name.[21]

The affectation of romantic names extends to Lady Froth's family: the only (supposedly)legitimate child given a name in the comedy of manners, I believe, is Lady Froth's "Sapho," whose age is but "Three-quarters, but I swear she has a world of Wit, and can sing a Tune already."[22] Lady Froth's own poem involves making a "Thetis" of Susan the dairymaid, and a heroic figure of Jehu the coachman, who is likened to "Heav'n's Charioteer," the sun, because both have red faces. The scene will be recalled by the reader without quotation here.

When at length Brisk discovers his passion for Lady Froth, it is the whining lover he becomes, speaking of love's sickness, appealing to the

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[20] Ibid., Act II, Scene i, pp. 27-29.

[21] Ibid., pp. 29-30.

[22] Ibid., Act III, Scene i, p. 49.

heavens, assuming conventional stances, and giving extravagant compliments to the woman:

Enter Lady Froth.

Brisk [Sings, walking about.] I'm sick with Love, ha, ha, ha, prithee, come cure me. I'm sick with, &c. Oye Powers! O my Lady Froth, my Lady Froth, my Lady Froth! Heigho! Break Heart; Gods, I thank you.

[Stands musing with his Arms a-cross

L. Froth. O Heavens, Mr. Brisk! What's the matter?

Brisk. My Lady Froth! Your Ladyship's most humble Servant.—The matter, Madam? Nothing, Madam, nothing at all, I'gad. I was fallen into the most agreeable amusement in the whole Province of Contemplation: that's all—(I'll seem to conceal my Passion, and that will look like Respect.)

[Aside. . . .

L. Froth. . . . O Heav'ns, I thought you could have no Mistress but the Nine Muses.

Brisk. No more I have, I'gad, for I adore 'em all in your Ladiship. Let me perish, I don't know whether to be splenatick, or airy upon't . . .

And the concluding embrace is accompanied by "Ah my dear charming Lady Froth!" and "Oh my adored Mr. Brisk!"[23]

Lady Plyant, she who though married three years is "so very nice"[24] as to have preserved her honor "as it were a Snow-House," and is "white and unsulli'd even by Sir Paul himself," must of course seem all indignation and virtuous wrath when Lady Touchwood and Maskwell have it bruited about that Mellefont wishes to marry Cynthia, Lady Plyant's step-daughter, in order to get access to the step-mother. "Have I," she cries to Mellefont,

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[23] Ibid., Act IV, Scene i, pp. 55-56. For still other précieuse compliments between Brisk and Lady Froth, see ibid., Act V, Scene i, pp. 74-75: e.g., " . . . you are the very Cynthia of the Skies, and Queen of Stars," to which Lady Froth replies, "That's because I have no light but what's by Reflection from you, who are the Sun." For the sole example of what havoc Brisk works among the muses, see his song, ibid., Act III, Scene i, p. 48, involving the romantic name Phillis and outdone in its incomparable banality only by Lady Froth's own creative efforts. The derogation attached to poetry by these two characters' attempts to write it is strengthened by Lady Touchwood's comment on Mellefont's emotion-filled (if anything in Congreve can be said to contain emotion) efforts to disclose Maskwell's duplicity (Ibid., Act IV, Scene ii, p. 63): "Alas, he raves! Talks very Poetry!"

[24] Ibid., Act III, Scene i, p. 45.

"preserv'd myself like a fair Sheet of Paper for you to make a Blot upon?"[25] She could, she says, "resist the strongest Temptation"; yet "'tis impossible for me to know whether I could or no; there's no certainty in the things of this life." For though "my Honour is infallible and uncomatable," nevertheless he must not importune her with pleading speeches, since "Hearing is one of the Senses, and all the Senses are fallible." In a word précieuse affectation struggles mightily with physical desire, and her own "charm" is called upon to excuse them both:

> Nay, nay, rise up; come, you shall see my good Nature. I know Love is powerful, and nobody can help his passion: 'Tis not your fault; nor, I swear, it is not mine.—How can I help it, if I have Charms? And how can you help it, if you are made a Captive? I swear it is pity it should be a fault. But my honour,—well, but your honour, too—but the sin!—well, but the necessity—O Lord, here's somebody coming, I dare not stay. Well, you must consider of your Crime; and strive as much as can be against it,—strive, be sure. But don't be melancholly; don't despair. But never think that I'll grant you anything. O Lord, no.—But be sure you lay aside all thoughts of Marriage, for tho' I know you don't Love Cynthia, only as a blind for your Passion to me, yet it will make me Jealous.—O Lord, what did I say? Jealous! no, no, I can't be Jealous, for I must not love you; therefore don't hope,—but don't despair neither.[26]

When she finds Mellefont loves not her but Cynthia after all, she would be only too happy to take Careless as a lover, but the pretension to précieuse honor again demands another course: "Pox," says Careless, who is pursuing her half-heartedly,

> I can't get an Answer from her, that does not begin with her Honour, or her Vertue, her Religion, or some such Cant. Then she has told me the whole History of Sir Paul's nine years Courtship; how he has lain for whole nights together upon the Stairs, before her Chamber-door; and that the first Favour he receiv'd from her was a piece of an old Scarlet Petticoat for a Stomacher, which since the day of his Marriage he has, out of a piece of Gallantry, converted into a Night-Cap, and wears it still with much Solemnity on his anniversary Wedding-night.[27]

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[25] Ibid., Act II, Scene i, p. 32.

[26] Ibid., pp. 33-34.

[27] Ibid., Act III, Scene i, p. 42.

Mandane herself could not have demanded more from the gentlemen. Mellefont advises that Careless "ply her close, and by and by clap a Billet doux into her hand,"[28] advice Careless follows. "Your Ladyship is so charming," he insists, "so surprizing," the "envy of her own Sex, and the admiration of ours."[29] To such addresses Lady Plyant responds with a height of ridiculous précieuse rhetoric not before seen in the comedy of manners:

> Mr. Careless, If a person that is wholly illiterate might be supposed to be capable of being qualified to make a suitable return to those Obligations, which you are pleased to confer upon one that is wholly incapable of being qualified in all those Circumstances, I'm sure I should rather attempt it than anything in the world, [Curtesies] for I'm sure there's nothing in the World that I would rather. [Curtesies]

With all due modesty she finds herself able to

> know my own Imperfections, But at the same time you must give me leave to declare in the face of the World that no body is more sensible of Favours and Things; for with the Reserve of my Honour I assure you, Mr. Careless, I don't know any thing in the world I would refuse to a person so meritorious. —You'll pardon my want of Expression.[30]

The suggested billet doux Careless ends with a profession to "languish in expectation of my Adored Charmer," and signs himself "Dying Ned Careless."[31] Reading the letter Lady Plyant swears "he writes charmingly, and he talks charmingly, and he looks charmingly, and he has charmed me, as much as I have charm'd him; and so I'll tell him in the Wardrobe when 'tis Dark . . ."[32] When Sir Paul by mischance gets the note into his hands, she goes into "the strangest Quandry and Premunire! I'm all over in a Universal Agitation; I dare swear every Circumstance of me trembles . . ."[33]

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[28] Ibid., p. 43.

[29] Ibid., p. 44.

[30] Ibid., p. 43.

[31] Ibid., Act IV, Scene i, p. 57.

[32] Ibid., p. 54. Lady Plyant has, says Careless to her (Ibid., Act V, Scene i, p. 75), "Charms to fix Inconstancy itself."

[33] Ibid., Act IV, Scene i, p. 57.

The scene in which Careless overcomes her "honour" is an extended burlesque of the whining style, and if one had any doubt that "whine" involved more in the Restoration than a low plaintive nasal sound, the stage directions here dispel it:

> L. P. . . . O Gratitude forbid, that I should ever be wanting in a respectful acknowledgment of an intire resignation of all my best Wishes for the Person and Parts of so accomplished a Person, whose Merit challenges much more, I'm sure, than my illiterate Praises can description.
> Care. [In a Whining Tone.] Ah Heavens, Madam, you ruin me with Kindness. Your Charming Tongue pursues the Victory of your Eyes, while at your Feet your poor Adorer dies.
> L. P. Ah! Very fine.
> Care. [Still Whining.] Ah, why are you so Fair, so bewitching Fair? O let me grow to the ground here, and feast upon that hand; O let me press it to my heart, my aking trembling heart: the nimble movement shall instruct your pulse, and teach it to allarm Desire. (Zoons, I'm almost at the end of my Cant, if she does not yield quickly.) [Aside.
> L. P. O that's so passionate and fine, I cannot hear it.—I am not safe if I stay, and must leave you.
> Care. And must you leave me! Rather let me Languish out a Wretched Life, and breath my Soul beneath your feet. (I must say the same thing over again, and can't help it.) [Aside.
> L. P. I swear I'm ready to Languish too!—O my Honour! Whither is it going? I protest you have given me the Palpitation of the Heart.
> Care. Can you be so cruel—
> L. P. O rise, I beseech you, say no more till you rise.—Why did you kneel so long? I swear I was so transported, I did not see it.—Well, to show you how far you have gain'd upon me, I assure you, if Sir Paul should die, of all Mankind there's none I'd sooner make my second choice.
> Care. O Heaven! I can't out-live this Night without your favour;—I feel my Spirits faint, a general dampness overspreads my face, a cold deadly dew already vents through all my Pores, and will to Morrow wash me for ever from your sight, and drown me in my tomb.
> L. P. Oh, you have Conquered, sweet melting, moving Sir, you have Conquered.—What heart of Marble can refrain to weep, and yield to such sad Sayings!
> Care. I thank Heav'n, they are the saddest that I ever said. Oh! (I shall never contain laughter.) [Aside.
> L. P. Oh, I yield myself all up to your uncontroulable Embraces.—Say, thou dear dying Man, when, where, and how.[34]

Not even in The Way of the World is satire against the précieuse mode more skilful; as burlesqued whining lover and worshiped female, only Sir Rowland

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[34] Ibid., pp. 51-52.

and Wishfort are comparable to Careless and his affected lady.[35]

In Love for Love one finds no such extended satire against préciosité as in The Double-Dealer. On the contrary, in one character—Angelica—there are touches of what we have called the sentimental method of writing. It would be interesting to know whether, in drawing the girl as he did, Congreve was attempting to conciliate the ladies somewhat. Even Scandal, the most outspoken member of the cast in exhibiting scorn for pretensions to honor and virtue, professes in the fifth act to have become a champion, if not of the mode, at least of women such as Angelica. The immediate and lasting success of the play ought partly to be accounted for by these facts.

Tattle, the fop of the piece, resembles Etherege's man of mode, like Sir Fopling thinking himself to be a wonder of précieuse gallantry. In this already quotation-packed chapter, there is no need to write at length of his pretensions.[36] Suffice it to note two points in which he is rather outstanding. As his name suggests, he surpasses all other fops of the comedy

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[35] Contrast to the affectations of the Flyants and Froths is afforded by the common sense of Cynthia and Mellefont, whose talk of love and marriage involves anything but deification of the woman and oaths of eternal constancy. Thus ibid., Act II, Scene i, p. 30, the young lovers compare marriage to a game of cards—"if either of us have a good hand," says Cynthia, "it is an Accident of Fortune"—and to a game of bowls—"Fortune indeed makes the match," says Mellefont, "and the Two nearest, and sometimes the Two farthest, are together, but the Game depends entirely upon Judgment."

[36] See Love for Love, Act I, Scene i, ibid., pp. 106-11, for the exposition of Tattle's pretensions to honor and gallantry, e.g., his "Closet of Beauties," filled with portraits of past mistresses, is "sacred to Love and Comtemplation"; ibid., Act II, Scene i, pp. 124-25, for his lesson in love to Miss Prue, where he asserts that honor is the keeping of dishonor private, and speaks for Congreve in pointing out that in matters of love "all well-bred Persons Lie—Besides, you are a Woman, you must never speak what you think: Your Words must contradict your Thoughts; but your Actions may Contradict your Words"; ibid., Act V, Scene i, p. 164, a burlesque of the précieuse dependence upon external powers in Tattle's remark that there are "great Beauty and great Fortune reserv'd alone for me, by a private intrigue of Destiny, kept secret from the piercing Eye of Perspicuity; from all Astrologers, and the Stars themselves."

of manners in telling all he knows of love intrigues, meanwhile insisting "I am no Blab, Sir."[37] Thus is the affectation of honor satirized in his characterization. Also, when occasion demands, as it does once in the play, he can rise to a précieuse elegance of speech unlike that of Lady Plyant only in that Tattle's sentences are slightly more meaningful. The occasion is Tattle's mention of Angelica's love for Valentine, which through four and one-half acts she refuses to admit. Hearing him speak of "your Ladyship's Passion," she takes offense, but he'll yet "bring all off":

It was impossible, Madam, for me to imagine, that a Person of your Ladyship's Wit and Gallantry, could have so long receiv'd the passionate Addresses of the accomplish't Valentine, and yet remain insensible; therefore you will pardon me, if from a just Weight of his Merit, with your Ladyship's good Judgment, I form'd the balance of a reciprocal Affection.

Val. O the Devil, what damn'd Costive Poet[38] has given thee this Lesson of Fustian to get by Rote.[39]

Valentine's comment suggests that a verse medium was thought in the Restoration to license improbability of expression. Prose like Tattle's, as we have suggested already in connection with Etherege's Lady Cockwood and Sentry, must have been thought similar, in its empty elegance, to the verse of heroic tragedy.

Valentine employs the body-soul dichotomy involved in préciosité for an affected compliment to Angelica following one of his "mad" scenes. She knows he is sane, but he is not sure she knows:

You see what Disguises Love makes us put on; Gods have been in counterfeited Shapes for the same Reason; and the Divine part of me, my Mind, has worn this

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[37] Ibid., Act IV, Scene i, p. 154.

[38] "Poet" is given pejorative connotations also in the following passages from the play: ibid, p. 142, Jeremy on Valentine's "madness": " . . . he that was so near turning Poet yesterday Morning, can't be much to seek in playing the Madman to Day"; ibid., p. 157, Jeremy to Angelica on the same topic: "Counterfeit, Madam! I'll maintain him to be as absolutely and substantially mad, as any Freeholder in Bethlehem; nay, he's as mad as any Projector, Fanatick, Chymist, Lover, or Poet in Europe."

[39] Ibid., Act III, Scene i, p. 127.

Mask of Madness, and this motly Livery, only as the Slave of Love, and menial Creature of your Beauty.

Ang. Mercy on me, how he talks! poor Valentine!

Val. Nay faith, now let us understand one another, Hypocrisie apart,—The Comedy draws toward an end . . .[40]

A burlesque of the modish compliment occurs in relation to Sir Sampson's abortive plan to win Angelica for his own:

Odsbud, I believe she likes me—[Aside.] —Ah, Madam, all my Affairs are scarce worthy to be laid at your Feet; and I wish, Madam, they stood in a better Posture, that I might make a more becoming Offer to a Lady of your incomparable Beauty and Merit.—If I had Peru in one Hand, and Mexico in t'other, and the Eastern Empire under my Feet, it would make me only a more glorious Victim to be offer'd at the Shrine of your Beauty.

Ang. Bless me, Sir Sampson, what's the matter?

Sir Samp. Odd, Madam, I love you . . .[41]

If it is in a sprightly anti-précieuse manner that Angelica speaks of these two effusions as ravings, she is not always so gay. When she hears Valentine has "run stark mad only for Love of her,"[42] she comes to his lodging talking sentences that remind one of Christina entering Vincent's apartment in search of her own Valentine:

Mr. Scandal, I suppose you don't think it a Novelty, to see a Woman visit a Man at his own Lodgings in a Morning?

Scan. Not upon a kind Occasion, Madam. But when a Lady comes Tyranically to insult a ruin'd Lover, and make manifest the cruel Triumphs of her Beauty, the Barbarity of it something surprizes me.

Ang. I don't like Raillery from a serious Face—pray tell me what is the matter? . . .

Jere[my]. Why faith, Madam, he's mad for want of his Wits . . .

Ang. If you speak Truth, your endeavouring at Wit is very unseasonable . . . Mr. Scandal, you can't think me guilty of so much Inhumanity, as not to be concern'd for a Man I must own my self oblig'd to—pray tell me truth.[43]

But when she discerns that he is not mad after all, she dissembles to him as did Araminta to Vainlove and Bellmour with her "Nay, come, I find we are growing serious, and then we are in great danger of being dull . . .";[44]

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[40] Ibid., Act IV, Scene i, p. 156.

[41] Ibid., Act V, Scene i, pp. 160-61.

[42] Ibid., Act IV, Scene i, p. 143.

[43] Ibid.

[44] The Old Batchelour, Act I, Scene i, ibid., I, 185.

Security is an insipid thing, and the overtaking and possessing of a Wish discovers the Folly of the Chase. Never let us know one another better; for the Pleasure of a Masquerade is done, when we come to shew Faces . . .[45]

The point, of course, is that Valentine, at one time a libertine, is rather on tenterhooks not only as to whether she loves him enough to marry him but as to whether his father will disinherit him, to prevent which was one of the two reasons he went "mad," the other being to force Angelica to reveal the state of her heart. At this juncture he wants nothing less than further uncertainty and insecurity.

After Angelica has put his love to further trials, and found him constant, she again uses the précieuse concept of love put in domestic trappings—i.e., sentiment—this time to conclude the play:

Ang. Had I the World to give you, it could not make me worthy of so generous and faithful a Passion: Here's my Hand, my Heart was always yours, and struggl'd very hard to make this utmost Tryal of your Virtue. . . .
Val. Between Pleasure and Amazement I am lost—But on my Knees I take the Blessing. . . .[46]

Angelica then deigns to chastize Sir Sampson for trying to disinherit so demonstrably excellent a son, says to Valentine that if "that Coldness which I have always worn before you, should turn to an extream Fondness, you must not suspect it," and concludes all with a speech which would do justice to Vanbrugh's Amanda, and which must have pleased the "Lady Criticks" no end:

'Tis an unreasonable Accusation, that you lay upon our Sex: You tax us with Injustice, only to cover your want of Merit. You would all have the Reward of Love, but few have the Constancy to stay till it becomes your due. Men are generally Hypocrites and Infidels, they pretend to Worship, but have neither Zeal nor Faith: How few, like Valentine, would persevere even unto Martyrdom, and sacrifice their Interest to their Constancy![47]

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[45] Love for Love, Act IV, Scene i, ibid., II, 158.

[46] Ibid., Act V, Scene i, p. 170.

[47] Ibid., p. 171.

In the earlier acts Scandal has manifested his anti-précieuse temper by such methods as showing thorough approval of a song that ends thus:

> He alone won't Betray in whom none will Confide,
> And the Nymph may be Chaste that has never been
> Try'd.[48]

Honor, he has insisted, is

> a Publick Enemy, and Conscience a Domestick Thief; and he that would secure his Pleasure, must pay a Tribute to one, and go halves with t'other. As for Honour, that you have secur'd, for you have purchas'd a perpetual Opportunity for Pleasure.
> Mrs. Fore[sight]. An Opportunity for Pleasure!
> Scan. Aye, your Husband . . .[49]

But Angelica's exemplary behavior redeems womankind:

> I was an Infidel to your Sex, and you have converted me—For now I am convinc'd that all Women are not like Fortune, blind in bestowing Favours, either to those who do not merit, or who do not want 'em.[50]

Only a kneeling posture, eternal love for Angelica by Scandal, and praises from him that are more extravagant, seem lacking to make this change a full-fledged rake's conversion. But such conversions we shall have in Vanbrugh and Farquhar. Four years after Worthy had been transported by feminine virtue, two years after Roebuck turned constant, Congreve was to write in *The Way of the World* a play which in Lady Wishfort harks back to Lady Flyant, in Millamant and Mirabell is more akin to the young couples' mood of *The Old Batchelour* than to the mood of Valentine and Angelica in *Love for Love*.

My Lady Wishfort, says Mirabell, "publishes her Detestation of Mankind; and full of the Vigour of Fifty five, declares for a Friend and Ratafia; and let Posterity shift for it self, she'll breed no more."[51] She combines

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[48] *Ibid.*, Act III, Scene i, p. 130.

[49] *Ibid.*, p. 139.

[50] *Ibid.*, Act V, Scene i, p. 171.

[51] *The Way of the World*, Act I, Scene i, *ibid.*, III, 16.

the worst of Plyant's pretensions and in addition has the misfortune to be, as Suckling would have put it, past fruition. As Mirabell implies, it is because she is old that the pretensions are necessary:

> Apres le Plaisir, vient la peine,
> Apres la peine la vertu;[52]

and hers is a précieuse affectation not outdone by any other character of the comedy of manners. Mirabell's hypocrisy in making addresses to her in order to be near Millamant has been discovered by Lady Wishfort when the play opens; consequently this creature who "wou'd marry any Thing that resembl'd a Man, though 'twere no more than what a Butler could pinch out of a napkin,"[53] falls easy prey to Mirabell's scheme of disguising his servant Waitwell as an uncle, who will court her. Waitwell is to use, of course, the art of whining love:

> Foib[le]. I told my Lady as you instructed me, Sir. That I had a prospect of seeing Sir Rowland your Uncle; and that I wou'd put her Ladyship's Picture in my Pocket to shew him; which I'll be sure to say has made him so enamour'd of her Beauty, that he burns with Impatience to lie at her Ladyship's Feet and worship the Original.[54]

And this the excellent Foible does, telling her mistress that Sir Rowland is

> a Man so enamour'd—so transported! Well, if worshipping of Pictures be a Sin—Poor Sir Rowland, I say . . . No new Sheriff's Wife expects the return of her Husband after Knighthood, with that Impatience in which Sir Rowland burns for the dear hour of kissing your Ladyships Hand after Dinner.[55]

It then behooves the lady to flutter as incontinently as if an offense against the assumed honor she denominates "Decorums" and "Forms" were the only noteworthy transgression:

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[52] The Plain-Dealer, "To my Lady B—," Works of William Wycherley, ed. Summers (Soho, 1924), II, 100.

[53] The Way of the World, Act II, Scene i, Works, ed. Summers, III, 32.

[54] Ibid., p. 36.

[55] Ibid., Act III, Scene i, p. 39.

Will he be Importunate, Foible, and push? For if he shou'd not be importunate—I shall never break Decorums—I shall die with Confusion, if I am forc'd to advance—Oh no, I can never advance—I shall swoon if he should expect Advances. . . . I won't give him despair—But a little Disdain is not amiss; a little Scorn is alluring.

Foib. A little Scorn becomes your Ladyship.

Lady. Yes, but Tenderness becomes me best—A sort of a Dyingness—You see that Picture has a sort of a—Ha Foible? A Swimminess in the Eyes . . . Is Sir Rowland handsome? . . . Don't answer me. I won't know: I'll be surpriz'd. I'll be taken by Surprize.

Foib. By Storm, Madam. Sir Rowland's a brisk Man.

Lady. Is he? O then he'll importune . . . I shall save Decorums if Sir Rowland importunes. I have a mortal Terror at the Apprehension of offending against Decorums.[56]

When all else is ready for Sir Rowland's entrance, including dancers and music "that he may be entertain'd in all Points with Correspondence to his Passion," the task of arranging herself properly must still be worked at by Wishfort:

There is a great deal in the first Impression. Shall I sit?—No, I won't sit—I'll walk—ay I'll walk from the Door upon his Entrance; and then turn full upon him—No, that will be too sudden. I'll lie—ay, I'll lie down—I'll receive him in my little Dressing-Room, there's a Couch—Yes, yes, I'll give the first Impression on a Couch—I won't lie neither, but loll and lean upon one Elbow; with one Foot a little dangling off, Jogging in a thoughtful way—Yes—and then as soon as he appears, start, ay, start and be surpriz'd, and rise to meet him in a pretty Disorder . . .[57]

When her arrangements are disturbed by the drunken Sir Wilfull, précieuse rhetoric, which Waitwell himself adopts, must be employed for apologies:

I am confounded with Confusion at the Retrospection of my own Rudeness . . . But I do hope where there is likely to be so near an Alliance—we may unbend the Severity of Decorum . . .

Wait. My Impatience, Madam, is the Effect of my Transport;—and 'till I have the Possession of your adoreable Person, I am tantaliz'd on the Rack; and do but hang, Madam, on the Tenter of Expectation.

Lady. You have Excess of Galantry, Sir Rowland . . .[58]

She tells of Mirabell's "courtship":

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[56] Ibid., p. 40.

[57] Ibid., Act IV, Scene i, p. 52.

[58] Ibid., p. 61.

O Sir Rowland, the Hours that he has died away at my Feet, the Tears that he has shed, the Oaths that he has sworn, the Palpitations that he has felt, the Trances and the Tremblings, the Ardors and the Ecstacies, the Kneelings and the Risings, the Heart-heavings and the Hand-gripings, the Pangs and the Pathetick Regards of his protecting [sic] Eyes! Oh no Memory can register.[59]

This might be a précis of Careless' behavior at the feet of Lady Plyant.

Like Plyant, Wishfort must have it understood that she shows mercy only because the lover is dying:

Sir Rowland, you must not attribute my Yielding to any Sinister Appetite, or Indigestion of Widowhood; nor impute my Complacency to any Lethargy of Continence—I hope you do not think me prone to any Iteration of Nuptials.—

Wait. Far be it from me—

Lady. If you do, I protest I must recede—or think that I have made a Prostitution of Decorums; but in the Vehemence of Compassion, and to save the Life of a Person of so much Importance—

Wait. I esteem it so—

Lady. Or else you wrong my Condescension—

Wait. I do not, I do not—

Lady. Indeed you do.

Wait. I do not, fair Shrine of Virtue.

Lady. If you think the least Scruple of Carnality was an Ingredient—

Wait. Dear Madam, no. You are all Camphire and Frankincense, all Chastity and Odour.[60]

Shortly Wishfort learns through her son-in-law, Fainall, and Mrs. Marwood that Sir Rowland is an impostor; Fainall, disclosing then that his wife, Lady Wishfort's daughter, has had an affair with Mirabell, threatens to obtain a divorce if Lady Wishfort does not make over her fortune to him. All injured virtue and beleagured innocence, she professes to want refuge from such unromantic associates:

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[59] Ibid., p. 62.

[60] Ibid., pp. 63-64. Lady Wishfort's "charming" mood is made to seem all the more ridiculous by contrast to the passages in which she displays her natural acerbity, e.g., ibid., Act III, Scene i, p. 37, her insults to Peg the servant; ibid., Act V, Scene i, pp. 65-66, her vehemence to Foible on discovering the girl's complicity with Mirabell. The absurdity is heightened also by such comments on her appearance as that of Mrs. Marwood, ibid., Act III, Scene i, p. 42: "Here comes the good Lady, panting ripe; with a Heart full of Hope, and a Head full of Care, like any Chymist upon the Day of Projection."

Well Friend [Mrs. Marwood], You are enough to reconcile me to the bad World, or else I would retire to Desarts and Solitudes; and feed harmless Sheep by Groves and Purling Streams. Dear Marwood, let us leave the World, and retire by our selves and be Shepherdesses.[61]

She finds it difficult, she says, to think Mrs. Fainall could "transgress the most minute Particle of severe Vertue,"[62] for the girl was brought up to have a précieuse abhorrence of men:

ay Friend, she would ha' shriek'd if she has but seen a Man, 'till she was in her Teens. As I'm a Person 'tis true—She was never suffer'd to play with a Male-Child, tho' but in Coats; Nay her very Babies were of the Feminine Gender,—O, she never look'd a Man in the Face but her own Father, or the Chaplain, and him we made a shift to put upon her for a Woman . . . 'till she was going in her Fifteen.[63]

And the strictest lady critics of Congreve could not take exception to what she was told of the theater; for the chaplain gave

long Lectures against . . . going to filthy Plays . . . O, she would have swoon'd at the Sight or Name of an obscene Play-Book—and can I think after all this, that my Daughter can be Naught? What, a Whore? And thought it Excommunication to set her Foot within the Door of a Play-house.[64]

After Mirabell has extracted Wishfort from the trap laid by Fainall and Mrs. Marwood, it is the address of a whining lover he employs to ask

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[61] Ibid., pp. 67-68. Cf. ibid., p. 70, where Mrs. Marwood flings Wishfort's suggestion back in her teeth by asserting that Wishfort should have no trouble meeting Fainall's condition that she not marry, since "when we retire to our Pastoral Solitude we shall bid adieu to all other Thoughts." For other examples of pastoralism, see Love in a Wood, Act II, Scene ii, Works of William Wycherley, ed. Summers, I, 96, 99, where Flippant twice calls the distressed heroine Christina "faithful Shepherdess"; also, see précieuse lyrics such as Waller's "Story of Phoebus and Daphne," from which Millamant quotes (Way of the World, Act IV, Scene i, Works, III, 53-55). The poem involves the romantic names Thyrsis and "Fair Sacharissa." See also chap. iii, n. 68.

[62] Ibid., Act V, Scene i, p. 68.

[63] Ibid., p. 69. The "Detestation of Mankind," i.e., men, in which Mrs. Fainall was schooled, has had lasting effects only in bringing her to an aversion of her husband, whom she hates "most transcendently; ay, tho' I say it, meritoriously" (Ibid., Act II, Scene i, p. 25). Part of the satire against Wishfort lies in the daughter's perversion of her mother's professed loathing for the male sex.

[64] Ibid., Act V, Scene i, p. 69.

forgiveness for past sins. It will be noted that if Mirabell were not here burlesquing précieuse obsecration, his plea could easily be recognized as sentimental:

If a deep Sense of the many Injuries I have offer'd to so good a Lady, with a sincere Remorse, and a hearty Contrition, can but obtain the least Glance of Compassion, I am too happy,—Ah Madam, there was a time—But let it be forgotten—I confess I have deservedly forfeited the high Place I once held, of sighing at your Feet; nay kill me not, by turning from me in Disdain—I come not to plead for Favour; Nay not for Pardon; I am a Suppliant only for Pity . . .[65]

And Wishfort forgives, because Mirabell still "has Witchcraft in his Eyes and tongue . . . his Appearance rakes the Embers which have so long lain smother'd in my Breast—"[66]

Millamant, unlike Wishfort, has beauty and wit enough to obtain précieuse supplications from the gentlemen if she likes. She is quite aware of this fact, and flaunts it as a weapon in Mirabell's face:

Ones Cruelty is ones Power, and when one parts with ones Cruelty, one parts with ones Power: and when one has parted with that, I fancy one's Old and Ugly.[67]

But cruelty defeats the dispenser of it, replies Mirabell, for "Beauty is the Lover's Gift . . ." Absurd, says Millimant:

Lord, what is a Lover, that it can give? Why one makes Lovers as fast as one pleases, and they live as long as one pleases, and they die[68] as soon as one pleases: And then if one pleases one makes more.[69]

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[65] Ibid., p. 72.

[66] Ibid., p. 73.

[67] Ibid., Act II, Scene i, p. 33.

[68] The only other instance of the "die" quibble that I find in the play is in an exchange between Witwoud and Fainall (Ibid., Act I, Scene i, p. 24):

Wit. . . . Between Friends, I shall never break my Heart for her [Millamant].
Fain. How!
Wit. She's handsom; but she's a sort of an uncertain Woman.
Fain. I thought you had dy'd for her.
Wit. Umh—No—

[69] Ibid., Act II, Scene i, p. 34.

"Ones Cruelty is ones Power," and one's cruelty is one's resistance to the lover's addresses; the way to win him is to repulse him, but lightly enough that he will return for more punishment:

> Mira. You are merry, Madam, but I would perswade you for a Moment to be serious.
>
> Milla. What, with that Face? No, if you keep Countenance, 'tis impossible I shou'd hold mine. Well, after all there is something very moving in a Love-sick Face. Ha, ha, ha—Well I won't laugh, don't be peevish—Heigho! Nov I'll be melancholly, as melancholly as a Watch-light. Well, Mirabell, if ever you will win me woe me now—Nay, if you are so tedious, fare you well . . .[70]

But when one's love for the man at last defeats one's resistance, something must be done to give the forthcoming match a reasonable basis. To have the man deify the woman solves the problem incorrectly, for the précieuse view of love is improbable, unrealistic. Not oaths of eternal constancy, then, but stipulations are to be made. Hence the symmetrical proviso scene of Way of the World, the first and second halves ending, respectively, "These Articles subscrib'd, if I continue to endure you a little longer, I may by degrees dwindle into a Wife";[71] and "these Proviso's admitted, in other things I may prove a tractable and complying Husband."[72]

A less reasonable sort of revolt against préciosité is exhibited in the more earthy characters Sir Wilfull and Petulant, when the two are drunk. "Pry'thee fill me the Glass," sings Sir Wilfull,

> 'Till it laugh in my Face,
> With Ale that is Potent and Mellow;
> He that whines for a Lass
> Is an ignorant Ass,
> For a Bumper has not its Fellow.[73]

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[70] Ibid., p. 35.

[71] Ibid., Act IV, Scene i, p. 56.

[72] Ibid., p. 57.

[73] Ibid., p. 60.

Petulant, no Cyrus, echoes the mood: "Look you, Mrs. Millamant—if you can love me, dear Nymph—say it—and that's the Conclusion—Pass on, or pass off,—that's all."[74] As for Witwoud, says Petulant, he may show précieuse gallantry if he will; or he may go consult one of the sources of that kind of affectation: "Carry your Mistress's Monkey a Spider—go flea Dogs, and read Romances . . ."[75]

Belinda and Araminta, Bellmour and Vainlove; Ladies Plyant and Froth, Brisk and Careless; Angelica, Valentine, and Tattle; Millamant, Mirabell, and Lady Wishfort: fourteen memorable portraits in the Congreve gallery; and without the tradition of précieuse ideas and attitudes for them to accept or reject, the oils could not have been mixed as they were, nor the product be what it is.

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[74] Ibid., p. 58.

[75] Ibid., p. 59.

CHAPTER VI

VANBRUGH

The Relapse, 1696.
The Provok'd Wife, 1697.

Loveless' profession of romantic[1] idealism in love to Amanda early in The Relapse has been too often mentioned in studies of Restoration comedy to need any but brief restatement here. In verse, the medium of the romantic genres of Restoration drama, he pours forth conventional précieuse theory, speaking of the body as dross, the soul as heavenly, and wondering that his wife can imagine inconstancy from him:

> The largest Boons that Heaven thinks fit to grant . . .
> Are in the Gift of Women form'd like you.
> Perhaps, when Time shall be no more,
> When the aspiring Soul shall take its flight,
> And drop this pond'rous Lump of Clay behind it,
> It may have Appetites we know not of . . .
> . . . . . .
> Can you then doubt my Constancy, Amanda?
> You'll find 'tis built upon a steady Basis—
> The Rock of Reason now supports my Love . . .[2]

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[1] "Romantic" is given its Restoration connotation of something uncommon or improbable in the play by Coupler when he tells Young Fashion (The Relapse, Act I, Scene ii, Complete Works, ed. Bonamy Dobrée and Geoffrey Webb, Bloomsbury, 1927, I, 31) of "the Romantick Pleasure of surprizing your Mistress."

[2] Ibid., Scene i, p. 20.

He would, he says later, "sacrifice my Life to serve her."[3] After all, woman is his deity;[4] what can he do, he muses by way of casuistry, if deity is incarnate in more than one woman? "Nay," he tells Berinthia of the fierceness of his flame of love,

since you now appear, 'tis so encreas'd, that in a moment if you do not help me, I shall, whilst you look on, consume to Ashes.

[Taking hold of her Hand.

Ber. [breaking from him.] O Lard, let me go: 'Tis the Plague, and we shall all be infected.

Lov. [catching her in his Arms, and kissing her.] Then we'll dye together, my Charming Angel.[5]

Berinthia sola elaborates the quibble:

[Sighing.] Well, I am condemn'd; but thanks to Heaven I feel myself each moment more and more prepar'd for my Execution—Nay, to that degree, I don't perceive I have the least fear of Dying. No, I find, let the—Executioner be but a Man, and there's nothing will suffer with more Resolution than a Woman.[6]

Thus the quick-witted anti-précieuse. Berinthia is, in fact, a foil for the distressed heroine, as was Lydia, in lesser degree, for Wycherley's Christina:

prithee, Berinthia, instruct me a little farther [in matters of love], for I am so great a Novice, I'm almost asham'd on't. . . . I have led so private and recluse a Life, my Ignorance is scarce conceivable.[7]

But Amanda wants it quite clear that her virtue is unconquerable: "Not (Heaven knows) that what you call Intrigues have any Charms for me: my Love

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[3] Ibid., Act III, Scene ii, p. 50.

[4] Ibid., pp. 51-52, Loveless and Berinthia:

Lov. Will you then keep my Secret? . . . Swear.
Ber. I do.
Lov. By what?
Ber. By Woman.
Lov. That's swearing by my Deity.

This is to be sure merely a conventional way of speaking; but the convention is précieuse.

[5] Ibid., p. 52.

[6] Ibid., p. 53.

[7] Ibid., Act II, Scene i, p. 43.

and Principles are too well fix'd." Again of her conscious ignorance, "'tis with a World of Innocency I wou'd enquire, Whether you think those Women we call Women of Reputation, do really 'scape all other Men, as they do those Shadows of 'em, the Beaux." For Worthy, she admits, "has been tampering." Nevertheless, to reiterate, "my Love, my Duty, and my Vertue, are such faithful Guards, I need not fear my Heart shou'd e'er betray me." Not "all the Merit of Mankind combin'd, cou'd shake that tender Love I bear my Husband: No, he sits triumphant in my Heart . . ." Even a relapse from virtue on his part is to be suffered in quiet, for "no Revenge shou'd ever be taken against a Husband . . ."[8]

Lady Wishfort four years later, in her false and extravagant manner,[9] was to find comic drama unjustifiable; Amanda, on the other hand, objects in all sincerity to debauchery on the stage:

> The Plays, I must confess, have some small Charms, and wou'd have more, wou'd they restrain that loose obscene encouragement to Vice, which shocks, if not the Virtue of some Women, at least the Modesty of all.[10]

Amanda too could find some comfort in "Groves and Purling Streams":

> That pleasing Prospect [of returning to the country] will be my chiefest Entertainment, whilst (much against my Will) I am oblig'd to stand surrounded with these empty Pleasures, which 'tis so much the fashion to be fond of.[11]

She is touched with the fondness for learning satirized in Lady Froth: "I must own I think Books the best Entertainment in the World."[12] Even as did

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[8] Ibid., p. 44.

[9] That is, supposing the satire concerning Wishfort to involve both a lack of belief by her in the ideas she professes, and extremely elaborate and continually insisted upon statements of those ideas.

[10] The Relapse, Act II, Scene i, Works, I, 32. "Doubtless," replies Loveless to this, as if he foresaw Worthy's fifth act conversion, "the Moral of a well-wrought Scene is of prevailing Force" (Ibid., p. 33).

[11] Ibid., p. 32.

[12] Ibid., p. 36.

Lady Flyant, she recognizes her own imperfections: "Alas! Berinthia, did I incline to a Gallant, (which you know I do not) do you think a Man so nice as he Worthy, cou'd have the least concern for such a plain unpolisht thing as I am? It is impossible!"[13] She is apprehensive of offending against decorums, craving pardon of Loveless from a kneeling posture for having boxed a nobleman's ears, albeit the punished man was Lord Foppington, who purchased his title and thought it gave him license to make love to her: "Now on my Knees, my Dear," she begs, "let me ask your pardon for my Indiscretion, my own I never shall obtain."[14] And she manifests intellectual mediocrity, for she takes Loveless' word that the attractive Berinthia means nothing to him:

> Aman. . . . How do you like my Couzen here? . . .
> Lov. . . . Why, I confess she's handsome. But . . . she is the last wou'd triumph in my Heart.
> Aman. I'm satisfy'd. . . . [aside.] I'm glad to find he does not like her; for I have a great mind to perswade her to come and live with me.[15]

When Worthy attempts to seduce Amanda, it is the conventional précieuse "flames" metaphor that he uses, as did Loveless to Berinthia, in his supplication:

> Behold a burning Lover at your Feet, his Feaver raging in his Veins. See how he trembles, how he pants; see how he glows, how he consumes: Extend the Arms of Mercy to his Aid; his Zeal may give him Title to your Pity, altho' his Merit cannot claim your Love.[16]

In the play-by-play commentary that accompanies the action, Amanda, as is the wont of the distressed précieuse, calls on external forces for aid—"Help, Heaven, or I am lost"; "save me, Vertue, and the Glory's thine"—while

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[13] Ibid., Act IV, Scene i, p. 66.

[14] Ibid., Act II, Scene i, p. 40.

[15] Ibid., pp. 41-42.

[16] Ibid., Act V, Scene iv, p. 91.

Worthy requests non-intervention—"Stand Neuter, Gods"—and eulogizes the object of his lust with romantic extravagance—"My Life, my Soul, my Goddess . . ."[17]

When her "charm" takes effect, he is another Polycastro at the feet of Bellamira:[18]

[kneeling and holding by her Cloaths.] O stay, and see the Magick Force of Love: Behold this raging Lion at your Feet, struck dead with Fear, and tame as Charms can make him.[19]

All that is lacking for a full repentance, apparently, is a lesson in the platonic body-soul dichotomy, basic to préciosité, and this Amanda forthwith pronounces:

The Soul, I do confess, is usually so careless of its Charge, so soft, and so indulgent to desire, it leaves the Reins in the wild Hand of Nature, who, like a Phaeton, drives the fiery Chariot, and sets the world on Flame. Yet still the Sovereignty is in the Mind, whene'er it pleases to exert its Force.[20]

And the rake repents in find sentimental fashion, having been divested of carnality and imbued with the virtue she radiates:

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[17] Ibid., p. 92. See ibid., Scene ii, p. 83, for satirization by Worthy and Berinthia of such extravagance. Berinthia has just proposed to Worthy a plan for getting Amanda alone so that he may attempt to seduce her, and Worthy thanks her for the suggestion thus:

Wor. kneeling. Thou Angel of Light, let me fall down and adore thee?
Ber. Thou Minister of Darkness, get up again, for I hate to see the Devil at his Devotions.

Berinthia refers to the art of whining love, to which high compliments are integral, by some of its technical terms when she says that to tell how much Worthy desires Amanda is to "Eccho the Sighs and Groans of a dying Lover" (Ibid., Act IV, Scene i, p. 65).

[18] The Triumphs of Virtue (1697), an anonymous tragedy, one of many, as was said in chap. ii, p. 28, where Polycastro's conversion speech is quoted, in which the romantic conversion theme is used, and from which the theme was extended into comedy, a phenomenon pleasing to the précieuses.

[19] The Relapse, Act V, Scene iv, Works, I, 92.

[20] Ibid., pp. 92-93.

Sure, there's Divinity about her; and sh'as dispens'd some portion on't to me. For what but now was the wild flame of Love, or (to dissect that specious term) the vile, the gross desires of Flesh and Blood, is in a moment turn'd to Adoration. The Coarser Appetite of Nature's gone, and 'tis, methinks the Food of Angels I require; how long this influence may last, Heaven knows. But in this moment of my purity, I cou'd on her own terms, accept her Heart. . . . Your Charms are much encreas'd, since thus adorn'd. When Truth's extorted from us, then we own the Robe of Vertue is a graceful Habit.[21]

Thus is he "refin'd into a Platonick Admirer, and goes off as like a Town-Spark as you wou'd wish."[22]

It is to be recalled that the conversion theme, common in tragedy and related genres throughout the Restoration, was by no means unheard of in satiric comedy before 1696: fifteen repentant rakes are to be found there in the years 1664-1695. Also, of course, it is the conversion of Loveless in Gibber's Love's Last Shift (1696) that Vanbrugh was pointing the finger of satire at when he wrote The Relapse. Worthy's conversion is merely the first to occur in what the twentieth century calls the comedy of manners. In causing Loveless to fall from the virtuous state, Vanbrugh was of a mind with the anti-précieuse members of his audience; in causing Worthy to repent, he was throwing a piece of sentiment—the précieuse ideal of love seriously treated in satiric comedy and in prose—to the précieuses.

In the conversations of Heartfree and Constant during the first three acts of The Provok'd Wife, one has, as the characters' names suggest, a strong anti-précieuse temper juxtaposed with that of a man who not only uses précieuse love terminology—rather moderate in degree—in speaking to and of the woman whom he courts, but apparently believes much of what he says.

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[21] Ibid., p. 93. Cf. "A Short Vindication," ibid., p. 214: "This [conversion] I thought was a Turn so little suited to Comedy," says Vanbrugh, "that I confess I was afraid the Rigor of the Moral wou'd have damn'd the Play. But it seems everybody could relish it but a Clergyman." Cf. n. 10.

[22] Jeremy Collier, A Short View (4th ed.; London, 1699), p. 227.

The woman of his heart, Lady Brute, privately thinks "Virtue's an Ass, and a Gallant's worth forty on't";[23] but "when our Nature prompts us to a thing, our Honour and Religion have forbid us; we wou'd (wer't possible) conceal even from the Soul itself, the knowledge of the Body's Weakness."[24] Constant's role in the play, then, is to petition in précieuse fashion—extravagance in compliments, mention of his "Flame," his "Sufferings"—that she be less cruel.

"I can court a Woman too," says Heartfree, "call her Nymph, Angel, Goddess, what you please; but here's the Difference 'twixt you and I: I perswade a Woman she's an Angel; she perswades you she's one."[25] Their colloquy is an elaboration on this distinction. "Cruel Mistress," Constant terms Lady Brute; "a Saint" though "Religion's out of fashion." Will not "Time and Good Example" prevail? Hardly, for

she is cold, my Friend, still cold as the Northern Star.
Heart. So are all Women by Nature, which makes 'em so willing to be warm'd.
Const. O, don't prophane the Sex! prithee think 'em all Angels for her sake, for she's virtuous, even to a Fault.[26]

But Heartfree again desanctifies woman:

If you should see your Mistress at a Coronation, dragging her Peacock's Train, with all her state and insolence about her, 'twou'd strike you with all the awful thoughts that Heav'n it self could pretend to from you; whereas I . . . suppose her strutting in the self-same stately manner, with nothing on her but her stays and her under scanty quilted Petticoat.
Const. Hold thy prophane Tongue, for I'll hear no more.
Heart. What, you'll love on then?
Const. Yes, to Eternity.
Heart. Yet you have no Hopes at all.
Const. None.[27]

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[23] The Relapse, Act I, Scene i, Works, I, 117.

[24] Ibid., p. 118.

[25] Ibid., Act II, Scene i, p. 127.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid., p. 128.

Since, then, decides Heartfree,

I can't bring you quite off of her, I'll endeavour to bring you quite on; for a whining Lover, is the damn'dst Companion upon Earth.
Const. My Dear Friend, flatter me a little more with these hopes; for whilst they prevail I have Heaven within me, and cou'd melt with joy.[28]

When Heartfree himself falls a victim of love, it is of Constant that he asks rules by which to play the game. "Why look you then," Constant replies, setting forth some conventional actions of the précieuse lover who is not actually at his mistress' feet,

I'd have you—Serenade and a-write a Song . . . Look like a Fool—be very Officious: Ogle, Write and Lead out; And who knows, but in a Year or two's time, you may be—call'd a troublesome Puppy, and sent about your Business. . . . Say no Saucy things; 'twill but augment your Crime, and if your Mistress hears on't, encrease your Punishment.[29]

Both gentlemen are aware of the ludicrousness of such behavior, but only Heartfree is too forthright to admit such practices into his plan of attack. He will, however, venture a highly laudatory compliment: Bellinda has, he tells her, a merit that atones for the absurdity of the rest of her sex.

Bell. Now has my Vanity a devilish Itch, to know in what my Merit consists.
Heart. In your Humility, Madam, that keeps you ignorant it consists at all.
Bell. One other Compliment with that serious Face, and I hate you for ever after.[30]

Meanshile Constant's siege continues. He employs sophistry to prove Lady Brute's husband deserves to be cuckolded, whereat she suggests they

leave this Dispute; for you Men have as much Witchcraft in your Arguments, as Women have in their Eyes.
Const. But whil'st you Attack me with your Charms, 'tis but reasonable I Assault you with mine.
Lady Brute. The Case is not the same. What Mischief we do, we can't help . . .[31]

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[28] Ibid., p. 131.

[29] Ibid., Act IV, Scene ii, p. 155.

[30] Ibid., Scene iv, p. 162.

[31] Ibid., p. 163.

Then Constant importunes:

If Constancy and Truth have Power to tempt you; if Love, if Adoration can affect you, give me at least some hopes, that Time may do, what you perhaps mean never to perform; 'Twill ease my Sufferings, tho' not quench my Flame.[32]

When Heartwell debates with his friend the advisability of marrying Bellinda, Constant, who has earlier termed constance "a brave, free, haughty, generous Agent, that cannot buckle to the Chains of Wedlock,"[33] admits that when heaven directs the lover to, one gathers, his predestined mate, even wedlock cannot destroy the love involved:

tho' Marriage be a Lottery in which there are a wondrous many Blanks; yet there is one inestimable Lot, in which the only Heaven on Earth is written. Wou'd your kind Fate but guide your Hand to that, tho' I were wrapt in all that Luxury itself could cloath me with, I still shou'd envy you.
Heart. And justly too: For to be capable of loving one, doubtless is better than to possess a thousand.[34]

Here again is the précieuse ideal of love expressed amid realistic trappings in a prose medium. Thus the characterization of Constant has a liberal dash of the sentimental method in it; even Heartfree is tinged with sentiment.

But if préciosité was insidious enough to reduce a gallant like Heartfree to such pompous clauses as those of his last quoted, it was nevertheless kind enough to give of itself in the same play to produce yet another figure in the delightful realm of absurdly affected précieuses: Lady Fancyfull, who shares with Ladies Plyant and Froth the distinction of being given not one line in which her affectation deserts her. "She has Vanity and Affectation enough to make her a Ridiculous Original," says Bellinda quite truthfully, "in spight of all that Art and Nature ever furnisht to any of her Sex before her." "She concludes all Men her Captives," adds Lady Brute; "and whatever Course they take, it serves to confirm her in that opinion."[35]

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[32] Ibid.

[33] Ibid., Act III, Scene i, p. 144.

[34] Ibid., Act V, Scene iv, p. 176.

[35] Ibid., Act I, Scene i, p. 119.

It is true, admits Fancyfull, that she is worshipped by all men whatsoever:

I am so everlastingly fatigu'd with the Addresses of Unfortunate Gentlemen, that were it not for the Extravagancy of the Example, I should e'en tear out these wicked Eyes[36] with my own Fingers, to make both my self and Mankind easie.[37]

Again, with the same thought and more exquisite phrasing:

'tis an unutterable pleasure to be ador'd by all the Men, and envy'd by all the Women—Yet I'll swear I'm concern'd at the Torture I give 'em. Lard, why was I form'd to make the whole Creation uneasy?[38]

When she has a cold in the head, Treble the singing master is very sorry for it, Madam: Methinks all Mankind should turn Physicians for the Cure on't.

Lady Fan. Why truly to give Mankind their due; There's few that know me, but have offer'd their Remedy.

Treb. They have reason, Madam, for I know no body Sings so near a Cherubin as your Ladyship.[39]

But (to burlesque a similar recognition in the seriously treated distressed heroine) when one has a précieuse awareness of one's own worth, one cannot admit the love of just any person:

I'm Nice, strangely Nice, Madamoiselle; I believe were the Merit of whole mankind bestow'd upon one single Person, I shou'd still think the Fellow wanted something, to make it worth my while to take notice of him: And yet I could love; nay fondly love, were it possible to have a thing made on purpose for me: For I'm not cruel, Madamoiselle; I'm only Nice.[40]

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[36] On the power of a lady's eyes and eyes as containing fire, see ibid., Act II, Scene i, p. 124, Lady Fancyfull on seeing Heartfree approach: "But sure it can't be him, he's a profess'd Womanhater. Yet who knows what my wicked Eyes may have done"; ibid., Scene ii, p. 132, from a song written by Fancyfull of herself:

> Ah Lovely Nymph, the World's on Fire;
> Veil, veil those cruel Eyes . . . ;

ibid., Act I, Scene ii, p. 121, from a song written by "some new Conquest": "Nature who form'd her Eyes of Fire . . ."; ibid., p. 120, her maid to Fancyfull: "Matam, if de Glass was Burning-Glass, I believe your Eyes set de fire in de House."

[37] Ibid., Act III, Scene i, pp. 139-40.

[38] Ibid., Act I, Scene ii, p. 122.

[39] Ibid., Act II, Scene ii, p. 133.

[40] Ibid., Act I, Scene ii, p. 121. Cf. ibid., Act II, Scene ii, p. 134, where Fancyfull exercises a goddess' prerogative and turns "severe; strangely severe" in an attempt to reform the "ill manners" of Heartfree, who has enumerated her affectations to her face.

Consequently she admires such songs as this by an anonymous idolater, in which, after being distinguished by a romantic name, she finds her nicety bewailed:

> Fly, fly, you happy Shepherds, fly,
> Avoid Philira's Charms;
> The rigour of her heart denies
> The Heaven that's in her Arms.
> Ne'er hope to gaze and then retire,
> Nor yielding, to be blest:
> Nature who form'd her Eyes of Fire,
> Of Ice Compos'd her Breast.[41]

And part of one's nicety is a regard for the proprieties, including a wish to maintain an unblemished reputation. When Heartfree, for lack of anything better to do, sends a letter asking for a meeting with her, she would condescend to accept the invitation were it not that

he may intend to Ravish me for ought I know.
Madam. Ravish?—Bagatelle. I would fain see one Impudent Rogue ravish Madamoiselle . . .
Lady Fan. O but my Reputation, Madamoiselle, my Reputation, Ah ma Chere Reputation. . . . Fe Madamoiselle, Fe: Reputation is a Jewel.[42]

For such an incarnation of chastity and virtue, whining love is a fitting tribute, as Fancyfull's maid hypocritically tells her:

Ah Matam, I wish I was fine Gentleman for your sake. I do all de ting in de World to get lettel way into your Heart. I make Song, I make Verse, I give you de Serenade, I give great many Present . . . , I no eat, I no sleep, I be lean, I be mad, I hang my self, I drown my self.[43]

Yet even whines can hardly be expected to evoke favor from the précieuse, since, realizing her superiority, "I don't know how to receive as a Favour, what I take to be so infinitely my due."[44]

Being a goddess, she can act as her own court of appeal in questions of right and wrong. Heartfree tells her frankly that she is outlandishly

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[41] Ibid., Act I, Scene ii, p. 121.

[42] Ibid., p. 123.

[43] Ibid., p. 121.

[44] Ibid., Act II, Scene ii, p. 134.

affected: "Sir," she bridles,

tho' you and all that World you talk of, should be so impertinently officious, as to think to perswade me, I don't know how to behave my self; I should still have Charity enough for my own Understanding to believe my self in the right, and all you in the wrong.[45]

In the absence of others to give her deific praise, she can write a précieuse lyric exalting herself to a deity's deity:

M [an]. Ah Lovely Nymph, the World's on Fire:
Veil, veil those cruel Eyes:
W [oman]. The World may then in Flames expire,
And boast that so it Dies.
M. But when all Mortals are destroy'd
Who then shall Sing your Praise?
W. Those who are fit to be employ'd:
The Gods shall Altars raise.[46]

One thinks of Lady Froth with her "Essay toward an Heroick Poem," which had similar merit.

The present-day reader may be inclined to smile at a rake's conversion as well as at Lady Fancyfull; one assumes that to be the response of the Restoration anti-précieuse faction. But ladies in the boxes who partook of Fancyfull's qualities could scarcely have been overjoyed to see themselves satirized, and could hardly have been other than gratified at Amanda's show of power over Worthy.

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[45] Ibid., Scene i, p. 126.

[46] Ibid., Scene ii, p. 132.

CHAPTER VII

FARQUHAR

Love and a Bottle, 1698.
The Recruiting Officer, 1706.
The Beaux Stratagem, 1707.

Leanthe of *Love and a Bottle* is the same conglomeration of modesty and honor, constancy and self-pity, that we have found in the distressed heroines treated in the preceding chapters. Like Wycherley's Fidelia, she has taken the garb of a boy in order to follow the wandering man whom alone of all men she can love. In her page's disguise, which she believes dishonors her, she bemoans her destiny, calls herself a pawn to love, and doubts that her Roebuck can ever love in return:

> Methinks this Livery suits ill my Birth: but slave to Love, I must not disobey; his service is the hardest Vassalage, forcing the Powers Diving to lay their Godships down . . . I hardly know whether this habit or my Love be blindest . . . Oh Roebuck! [Weeps.][1]

A moment later she sees him, and more tears follow: "I am afraid he's not the same; and too sure I'm not my self— [Weeps." After all, if he loved her, his

> heart would beat
> With eager heat,
> And me by Sympathy wou'd find.[2]

Nevertheless, she knows the power of a *précieuse* like herself to transform a rake into a repository of virtue: "Wild as Winds, and unconfin'd as Air.—

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[1] *Love and a Bottle*, Act III, Scene i, *Complete Works*, ed. Charles Stonehill (Bloomsbury, 1930), I, 33-34.

[2] *Ibid.*, Act III, Scene i, p. 36.

Yet I may reclaim him. . . . How charming wou'd Vertue look in him, whose behaviour can add a Grace to the unseemliness of Vice!"[3] Or, in words which show the relation of the distressed heroine and repentant hero to heroic tragedy,

> whilst by Love inspir'd, I will pursue;
> What Men by Courage, we by Love can do.[4]

But until the moment of his redemption, all is misery for the girl. External agents delude her, and virtue is scarce in an unromantic world:

> Fortune delights with Innocence to play,
> And loves to hoodwink those already blind.
> Wary deceit can many by-ways tread,
> To shun the blocks in Vertues open Road,
> Whilst heedless Innocence still falls on ruin.[5]

When it appears that Roebuck is going to marry Lucinda, fortune, not Leanthe, is to blame:

> Oh my curs'd Fortune! . . . Hold, Fortune, hold; thou hast entirely won; for I am lost. Thus long I have been rack'd on they tormenting Wheel, and now my Heart-strings break. [6]Discovering who I am, exposes me to shame. Then what on Earth can help me.

And because it is her own plotting that at last brings her to Roebuck for the moment that works his repentance, she must make sure her brother Lovewell knows she thinks her activity degrading:

> I am your Sister, Sir, as such I beg you to pardon the effects of violent passion, which has driven me into some imprudent Actions; But none such as may blot the honour of my Vertue, or Family.[7]

Lovewell, she can be certain, will understand these misgivings, for he is a whining lover. "I have courted thee [Lucinda] these three years, and

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[3] Ibid., p. 39.

[4] Ibid., Act II, Scene iv, p. 61.

[5] Ibid., Act IV, Scene iv, p. 61.

[6] Ibid., Act V, Scene i, pp. 64-65.

[7] Ibid., Scene iii, p. 70.

cou'd never obtain above a Kiss of the hand . . ."[8] Lucinda's virtue is "so sacred that 'tis a piece of Atheism to distrust its Existence."[9] In defense of that virtue he is willing to die: when Roebuck tries to make off with Lucinda, Lovewell draws his sword immediately with the cry, "Villain, unhand the Lady, and defend thy self."[10]

That Lucinda is receptive to the whining style appears not only from her having kept Lovewell at her feet so long but from a question by her woman, Pindress, when it seems that he has been inconstant: "Speak ingenuously, Madam; If Mr. Lovewell shou'd with an amorous whine and suppliant cringe tell you a formal story, contrary to what we suspect, wou'd you not believe him?"[11] One need not seek others' opinions, however, to find that she holds to the précieuse view of love. She is, she tells Roebuck,

> a Woman, whose modesty dare not doubt my Vertue; yet [I] have so much Pride to support it, that the dying Groans of the whole Sex at my feet shou'd not extort an immodest thought from me.[12]

When Roebuck enters her room one night in an attempt to seduce her, he finds her talking thus:

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[8] Ibid., Act IV, Scene iii, p. 57.

[9] Ibid., p. 56. This quotation and Lovewell's next remark, incidentally, suggest that whining lovers dissociated love from Christian doctrine: ". . . jealousie in Love, like the Devil in Religion, is still raising doubts which without a firm Faith in what we adore, will certainly damn us."

[10] Ibid., Act I, Scene i, p. 15. Lovewell further exhibits the whining lover's temperament in showing surprise that Roebuck fails to believe there is an "innate Principle of Vertue in Women" (Ibid., p. 16); and in trying to persuade Roebuck to court "a vertuous Lady . . . the surest method of reclaiming you" (Ibid., Act II, Scene i, p. 22); such a lady is a "Divine Creature" who will convince Roebuck of the "Chastity of the Sex" (Ibid., pp. 23-24).

[11] Ibid., Act IV, Scene i, p. 49.

[12] Ibid., Act V, Scene i, p. 63.

Unjust Prerogative of faithless Man,
Abusing Pow'r which partial Heaven has granted!
In former Ages, Love and Honour stood
As Props and Beauties to the Female Cause;
But now lie prostitute to scorn and sport.
Man, made our Monarch, is a Tyrant grown,
And Woman-kind must bear a second Fall.

Roeb. [Aside.] Ay, and a third too, or I'm mistaken—I must divert this plaguy Romantick humour.[13]

Roebuck while a rake shows himself a hypocritical master of the whines that issue from the "plaguy Romantick humour." One of the principles of courtship, he says, is to "use a Mistress like a Deity in publick, but like a Woman in private . . ."[14] Were he, however, to court "an Innocent," that is to say virtuous, mistress, who demands worship even in private, it would be necessary to "change my Easie natural sin of Wenching, to that constrain'd Debauchery of Lying and Swearing." The "many Lyes and Oaths that I made to thy Sister," Leanthe, one of your "Innocent" women, he tells Lovewell, "will go nearer to damn me, than if I had enjoy'd her a hundred times over"—to which blasphemy that précieuse lover replies, "Oh Roebuck! your Reason will maintain the contrary, when you're in Love."[15] The utterance is prophetic.

Before his repentance, Roebuck is to employ the "many Lyes and Oaths" volubly in trying Lucinda's virtue. He will use on her, he points out to the audience, "the whining Addresses";[16]

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[13] Ibid., p. 62. See also ibid, Act II, Scene i, p. 35, Roebuck to Leanthe disguised as a page, "Boys of your age are continually reading Romances, filling your Heads with that old bombast of Love and Honour . . . "; ibid., Act IV, Scene ii, p. 51, Lyrick's "these Tragedies make the Ladies vent all their Love and Honour at their Eyes . . ."; and "the Hero in Tragedy is either a whining cringing Fool that's always a stabbing himself, or a ranting hectoring Bully that's for killing every-body else . . ." Thus Lucinda's expressions in verse, labeled by Roebuck a "plaguy Romantick humour," were associated with the love-and-honor theme as found both in "Romances," such as those of the French heroic variety, and with the love-and honor theme as found in tragedy.

[14] Ibid., Act II, Scene i, p. 24.

[15] Ibid., pp. 22-23.

[16] For a second use of "whine" by Roebuck with associations of studied attitudes and stereotyped speeches, see ibid., Act V, Scene i, p. 62, on Leanthe: "I love her, witness, Heaven, I love her to that degree.—Pshaw, I shall whine presently."

Luc. Have you any business with me, Sir? . . .
Roeb. Yes, Madam, the bus'ness of mankind; To adore you. . . . Wonder not, Madam, at the power of your Eyes, whose painted Darts have struck on a young and tender heart which they easily pierced, and which unacustom'd to such wounds finds the smart more painful. . . .
Luc. Hey day. . . . Did you ever see me before?
Roeb. Never, by Jove.—[Aside.]—Oh, ten thousand times, Madam. Your lovely Idea is always in my view, either asleep or awake, eating or drinking, walking, sitting or standing; alone, or in Company, my fancy wholly feeds upon your dear Image, and every thought is you.—Now have I told about fifteen lies in a Breath. [Aside.][17]

Of his coming to her by night, he knows not, he says, listing the various names by which forces supposedly acting upon précieuses were called, "whether to attribute it to Chance, Fortune, my good Stars, my Fate, or my Destiny"; at any rate here he is and here will he stay, for "you are a Demi-Goddess; only one part Woman, t'other Angel; and thus divided, claim my Love and Adoration." To such addresses Lucinda replies quite truly that "the name of Love and Honour are burlesqu'd by thy professing 'em."[18]

So obstinately chaste is Lucinda that Roebuck admits "her superiour Vertue awes me into coldness."[19] But it is Leanthe who at last works the conversion. "Her Vertue," says Roebuck rhapsodically,

answers the uncorrupted state of Woman; so much above Immodesty, that it mocks Temptation. She has convinc'd me of the bright Honour of her Sex, and I stand Champion now for the fair Female Cause.[20]

Like Worthy, Roebuck is quite willing, in the final moments of the play, both to recapitulate in his new character what has happened to him and to edify by giving credit where credit is due:

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[17] Ibid., Act III, Scene i, p. 37. In connection with Lucinda's "lovely Idea" one thinks of Plato. Some uses of "Platonick" have been suggested in the foregoing chapters (see chap. v, n. 4). "Platonick" occurs in Love and a Bottle only once, and seems to be associated with beliefs that are thought old-fashioned: Roebuck says Mockmode was "suckl'd by Platonick Idea's, and you have some of your Mothers Milk in your Nose yet" (Ibid., Scene ii, p. 46).

[18] Ibid., Act V, Scene i, pp. 61-63.

[19] Ibid., p. 63.

[20] Ibid., Scene iii, p. 70.

I have expous'd all Goodness with Leanthe,
And am divorc'd from all my former Follies.

Woman's our Fate. Wild and unlawful Flames
Debauch us first and softer Love reclaims.
Thus Paradice was lost by Woman's Fall;
But Vertuous Woman thus restores it all.[21]

Thus the two love plots of Love and a Bottle are treatments of the effects of association with two sincere précieuses upon two gentlemen, one a rake, and both ending the play as whining lovers. In The Recruiting Officer, revolt against préciosité is more considerable; hence love is somewhat less improbable. Melinda, "a Lady of Fortune,"[22] affects précieuse attitudes only because she is an heiress and wishes to make sure that Worthy is what his name indicates before marrying him. Silvia, who comes into a fortune during the course of the play, has no précieuse affectations, although her lover, Plume, labors for a time under the misapprehension that she has adopted Melinda's own artifice on learning of her accession of wealth.

Plume returns to Shrewsbury—no London setting here—from Germany to discover his friend Worthy in a "melancholy Spirit" with "Arms a-cross . . ." This is "indeed the Picture of Worthy, but the Life's departed." From a

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[21] Ibid., p. 73. Roebuck must be called a romantic rather than sentimental convert, since in these final lines he is made to speak in verse. Some associations in the play of poetry—verse—with romantic themes are the following: ibid., Act III, Scene i, p. 38, where Roebuck says of his "whining Addresses" that in using them he has made "Love like a Poetical fool"; ibid., Scene ii, p. 43, where Pamphlet says of Lyrick's line "And furious Lightnings brandish'd in her Eyes" that is is "true Spirit of Poetry"; ibid., Act IV, Scene ii, p. 51, Lovewell's statement that "Beauty is the Deity of Poetry"; ibid., p. 52, Lyrick's comment that to ladies poetry "is morally beneficial; For you must know they are too nice to read Sermons; such Instructions are too gross for their refin'd apprehensions . . ."

[22] The Recruiting Officer, "Dramatis Personae," ibid., II, 44.

"once gay roving Friend" he has "dwindled into an obsequious, thoughtful, romantick,[23] constant Coxcomb." His formerly brisk love-making was repulsed when Melinda found herself suddenly rich; Worthy has perforce "alter'd my Conduct, given my Addresses the obsequious and distant turn, and court her now for a Wife." He has, in a word, been forced into the role of whining lover because no other approach will be given a hearing by this girl who is now a "Hellen indeed, not to be won under a ten Year's Siege . . ."[24] Plume then reconstructs the course this love has taken in his absence: " . . . as you grew obsequious, she grew haughty, and because you approach'd her as a Goddess, she us'd you like a Dog."[25]

And indeed Melinda professes to Silvia of Worthy that "he's my Aversion";[26] but this is a pretense, and nothing is less unexpected than that she should admit to him in the last act, when he complains of her "Cruelty," that she has been largely the cause of their

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[23] For uses of "romantic" in the play, see ibid., Act I, Scene iii, p. 53, where the word is associated with improbability in Melinda's characterization of Silvia as a "poor Romantick Quixote" for having the "Vanity to imagine that a young sprightly Officer . . . can confine his Thoughts to the little Daughter of a Country Justice"; ibid., Act V, Scene vi, pp. 108-09, where the word is associated with constancy and with the adoption of a disguise to pursue a lover:

Sil. . . . But, I hope, you'll excuse a Change that has proceeded from Constancy; I alter'd my Outside, because I was the same within . . .

Mel. Your History is a little romantick, Cousin . . .

[24] Cf. ibid., "Prologue," p. 43, where a précieuse compliment involving "Hellen" is given the women of the audience:

> If, by One Hellen's Eyes, Old Greece cou'd find
> It's Homer fir'd to write—Ev'n Homer Blind;
> The Britains sure beyond compare may write,
> That view so many Hellens every night.

[25] Ibid., Act I, Scene i, pp. 48-49.

[26] Ibid., Act V, Scene iii, p. 98.

jangling a great while—I fancy if we made up our Account, we shou'd the sooner come to an Agreement.

Wor. Sure, Madam, you won't dispute your being in my Debt—My Fears, Sighs, Vows, Promises, Assiduities, Anxieties, Jealousies, have run on for a whole Year, without any Payment.

Mel. A Year! O Mr. Worthy, what you owe to me is not to be paid under a seven Years Servitude . . .[26]

This is only a last piece of banter employing précieuse speech, of course, and the marriage is agreed on with pleasure by both.

Silvia, says Plume, is a girl who can "part with the Lover, tho' she dies for the Man . . ."[27] When he tells her that he braved death in order to have "the Pleasure of dying at your Feet," she replies, "Well, well, you shall die at my Feet, or where you will . . ."[28] Her love is a reasonable love; she does not continually or even occasionally wish to be deified by Plume, lest he grow tired of her. Nevertheless she accepts without comment his extravagant remark on their forthcoming marriage that "to your Love, Madam, I resign my Freedom, and to your Beauty, my Ambition; greater in obeying at your Feet, than Commanding at the Head of an Army"[29]—the two attitudes of the tragic hero. Since Plume is, so far as one can tell, sincere in this speech, it seems that a tinge of sentiment has been written into his character. Another such tinge, but in the romantic medium of verse, appears when he says to Worthy that for the sake of that "angelick Creature" Silvia, he will "recant my Opinion of her Sex" and recognize that women,

> secure in their all-conqu'ring Charms
> Laugh at the vain Efforts of false Alarms,
> He magnifies their Conquests who complains,
> For none wou'd struggle were they not in Chains.[30]

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[26] Ibid., Act V, Scene iii, p. 98.

[27] Ibid., Act I, Scene ii, p. 51.

[28] Ibid., Act II, Scene i, pp. 55-56.

[29] Ibid., Act V, Scene vi, p. 108.

[30] Ibid., Act IV, Scene ii, pp. 93-94.

Before this recantation, such as it is, he has been of a sufficiently anti-précieuse cast of mind to sing with Worthy a rakes' song involving satire against précieuse cruelty, the whining lover's dying posture, and woman's "Charms":

> Come, fair one, be kind
> You never shall find
> A Fellow so fit for a Lover:
> The World shall view
> My Passion for you,
> But never your Passion discover.
>
> I still will complain
> Of your Frowns and Disdain
> Tho I revel thro' all your Charms:
> The World shall declare,
> That I die with Despair,
> When I only die in your Arms. . . .[31]

Brazen has attempted the whining addresses in drawing up "all my Complements into one grand Platoon" to "fire upon" Melinda at one charge:

> Thou peerless Princess of Salopian Plains
> Envy'd by Nymphs, and worship'd by the Swains,
> Behold how humbly do's the Severn glide,
> To greet thee Princess of the Severn side.

Madam, I'm your humble Servant, and all that, Madam . . . I have had considerable Offers [of marriage], Madam . . . but I don't know how, my time was not come; Hanging and Marriage, you know, go by Destiny; Fate has reserved me for a Shropshire Lady with twenty thousand Pound . . .[32]

This burlesque Plume burlesques in turn, and improves upon, by telling that he too will

> make Love like a Platoon.
>
> Wor. A Platoon! how's that?
>
> Plume. I'll kneel, stoop and stand, Faith; most Ladies are gain'd by Platooning. . . . there's a Face [Melinda's] well known as the Sun's, that shines on all, and is by all ador'd.[33]

He then says he has "for Ages serv'd this cruel Fair" and proceeds to recite the verses used by Brazen, who suggests he ought to be paid no attention to:

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[31] Ibid., Act III, Scene i, p. 65.

[32] Ibid., Scene ii, p. 73.

[33] Ibid., pp. 74-75.

"Don't mind him, Madam, if he were not so well drest I shou'd take him for a Poet . . ."

We turn now to Farquhar's last play. Archer of The Beaux Stratagem, with his rake's view of love, finds it difficult to keep his friend Aimwell in the anti-précieuse path, for the latter is "an amorous Puppy" unable to "counterfeit the Passion without feeling it."[34] True, Aimwell can speak jocularly of the use of précieuse love-making in a country church, where he can

> single out a Beauty, rivet both my Eyes to hers, set my Nose a bleeding by the Strength of Imagination, and shew the whole Church my concern by my endeavouring to hide it; after the Sermon, the whole Town gives me to her for a Lover, and by perswading the Lady that I am a dying for her, the Tables are turn'd, and she in good earnest falls in Love with me.[35]

But he is also given to falling into the précieuse lover's strain, as when he tells Archer of having met Dorinda. Archer, with a "Well, but hark'ee, Aimwell," has just reminded him that their purpose in Litchfield, the scene of the play, is to dupe a wealthy young lady such as Dorinda into marrying

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[34] The Beaux Stratagem, Act I, Scene i, ibid., II, 130.

[35] Ibid., Act II, Scene ii, p. 138. Some other uses of "die" in the play with reference to the whining lover's dying posture and sometimes with the quibble on the secondary meaning of the word are ibid., Act III, Scene i, p. 144, Dorinda's précieuse description of Aimwell's looks as telling her "that he cou'd with Pride dye at my Feet, tho' he scorn'd Slavery any where else"; ibid., Scene iii, p. 151, Sullen's man Scrub on "that Jade, Gipsey . . . the arrantest Whore that ever wore a Petticoat; and I'm dying for love of her"; ibid., p. 157, Count Bellair as a whining lover at Mrs. Sullen's feet: " . . . de Besieger is resolv'd to die before de Place—Here will I fix; [Kneels.] With Tears, Vows, and Prayers assault your Heart, and never rise till you surrender . . ."; ibid., Act IV, Scene i, p. 162, Archer on Aimwell's "sickness," faked in order to get him into Dorinda's presence: "Lord, Madam, he's a dying . . ."; ibid., p. 169, Dorinda and Mrs. Sullen in that order on the précieuse vows made them by Aimwell and Archer: "Mine vow'd to die for me," "Mine swore to die with me"; ibid., Act V, Scene ii, p. 179, Archer and Mrs. Sullen in that order on his attempt to seduce her: "You shall kill me first," "I'll dye with you."

Aimwell that they may obtain her thousands of pounds; but Aimwell replies like a true cultist of whining love:[36]

> Aimwell! call me Oroondates, Cesario, Amadis, all that Romance can in a Lover paint, and then I'll answer. O Archer, I read her thousands in her Looks, she look'd like Ceres in her Harvest, Corn, Wine and Oil, Milk and Honey, Gardens, Groves and Purling Streams play'd on her plenteous Face.[37]

Archer replies by ridiculing the mode:

> Were my Temper as extravagant as yours, my Adventures have something more Romantick by half. . . .
>
> The Nymph that with her voice ten hundred pounds
> With brazen Engine hot, and Quoif clear starch'd
> Can fire the Guest in warming of the Bed—
>
> There's a Touch of Sublime Milton for you, and the Subject but an Innkeeper's Daughter; I can play with a Girl as an Angler do's with his Fish . . .[38]

From the nature of Archer's rejoinder to Aimwell's précieuse raptures, one assumes Aimwell is sincere, if somewhat carried away. Later he alters his mood to one of pretense in addressing Dorinda with précieuse extravagance during his "illness," feigned to get him near her; the scene is an extended satire on the romantic view of love and romantic addresses to the beloved. The malady struck, says Archer to Lady Bountiful, as

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[36] Of whining love, Aimwell says (Ibid., Act I, Scene i, p. 130), "Tho' the whining part be out of doors in Town, 'tis still in force with the Country Ladies . . ." But it could not have been long "out of doors" or the audience could not have appreciated the great use of it made in the play.

[37] Ibid., Act III, Scene ii, pp. 145-46. Oroondates: in La Calprenède's Cassandra. Cesario: in Twelfth Night. Amadis de Gaul: hero of a prose romance . . . (Stonehill). Thus does Aimwell link whining love to romantic comedy and to the heroic romance. See also ibid., Act V, Scene iii, p. 183, where Archer associates "Romantick" with "Nonsense" and with the tragic hero, in his advice to Aimwell on Dorinda: "Throw your self at her Feet; speak some Romantick Nonsense or other;—Address her like Alexander in the height of his Victory, confound her Senses, bear down her Reason, and away with her . . ."; ibid., pp. 183-84, Archer says to Mrs. Sullen that he demands her favors for having risked his life to defend her: "Look'ye, Madam, I'm none of your Romantick Fools, that fight Gyants and Monsters for nothing . . ."

[38] Ibid., Act III, Scene ii, p. 146.

something in his Eyes . . . By soft Degrees it grew and mounted to his Brain, there his Fancy caught it; there form'd it so beautiful, and dress'd it up in such gay pleasing Colours, that his transported Appetite seiz'd the fair Idea, and straight convey'd it to his Heart.[39]

When Aimwell "revives," it is to spout the kind of talk Archer calls "some Romantick Nonsense or other" (see n. 37):

> Sure I have pass'd the Gulph of silent Death,
> And now I land on the Elisian Shore—
> Behold the Goddess of those happy Plains,
> Fair Proserpine—Let me adore thy bright Divinity.
> [Kneels to Dorinda and Kisses her Hand.
> L. Boun. Delirious, poor Gentleman.[40]

Later, when Aimwell and Dorinda are about to be married, he finds upon hearing her tell of her love—she has, he says, "the Sweets of Hybla . . . upon her tongue"[41]—that he has not the will to delude her longer into believing him a viscount:

> Such Goodness who cou'd injure; I find my self unequal to the Task of Villain; she has gain'd my Soul, and made it honest like her own;—I cannot, cannot hurt her. [Aside . . .
> Madam, behold your Lover and your Proselite, and judge of my Passion by my Conversion.—I'm all a Lie, nor dare I give a Fiction to your Arms . . .[42]

Thus occurs the transformation of a rake who was hardly a rake to begin with, in the sense of the word used throughout this study, since in earlier acts he has spoken seriously précieuse views on love and woman. Vanbrugh's Worthy and Farquhar's Roebuck, by way of contrast, never spoke in the whining strain before their conversions except with unmistakable hypocrisy.

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[39] Ibid., Act IV, Scene i, p. 163. Cf. chap. vii, p. 124, Roebuck's "lovely Idea" of Lucinda.

[40] Ibid., pp. 163-64. For another satirical use of the word "Goddess" to exalt woman, see ibid., p. 174, the highway robber Gibbet's remark on his reason for not wanting as a wife the landlord's daughter Cherry, who knows of his crimes: "Cherry is the Goddess I adore, as the Song goes; but it is a Maxim that Man and Wife shou'd never have it in their Power to hang one another . . ."

[41] Ibid., Act V, Scene iv, p. 184.

[42] Ibid., p. 185.

Aimwell, it need hardly be said, is dramatized by the sentimental method of writing whenever he expresses any of the whining lover's concepts in prose.

In Archer there is none of Aimwell's fluctuation between acceptance and rejection of the mode. He is steadily anti-précieuse, using whining terms only when he seeks to persuade a lady into capitulating—or to persuade a girl who is no lady, such as Cherry, the landlord's daughter, to whom almost his first remark is that if some women had her eyes, "they wou'd kill everybody."[43] In "the Catechise" on love he teaches her, the hypothetical man and woman concerned are précieuse: the "Signs and Tokens" of love, he makes her say, are "a stealing Look, a stammering Tongue, Words improbable, Designs impossible, and Actions impracticable." The lover "to obtain his Mistress" must

> adore the Person that disdains him, . . . treat his Enemies with Respect, his Friends with Indifference, and all the World with Contempt; he must suffer much, and fear more; he must desire much, and hope little; in short, he must embrace his ruin, and throw himself away.[44]

Still disguised as the footman of Aimwell, he tells Mrs. Sullen that his life has been "mostly spent in the Service of the Ladies," whom he prefers to serve rather than men, since

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[43] Ibid., Act I, Scene i, p. 132. On the power of a lady's eyes, see also ibid., Act III, Scene iii, p. 157, Count Bellair's extravagant compliment to Mrs. Sullen that he wonders how she can have the impudence to go to church and "lift those Eyes to Heaven that are guilty of so much killing"; ibid., that the Count is both a prisoner of war—"there a Ransom may redeem me"—and a prisoner to her "more conquering Eyes"—from which "I shall never get free"; ibid., p. 158, Bellair's comment that, to hold off any possible attack by him upon her honor, her eyes will serve as a weapon more efficiently than the pistol she has just wielded: " . . . your Eyes be bettre Fire Arms than your Pistol, they nevre miss"; ibid., Act IV, Scene i, p. 162, Mrs. Sullen's comment to Dorinda that to win Aimwell she must "put on all your Charms, summon all your Fire into your Eyes, plant the whole Artillery of your Looks against his Breast, and down with him"; ibid., p. 167, Mrs. Sullen to Archer when the latter suggests she ought to have struck dead a portrait painter for attempting to copy her beauty, like "Salmoneus, that was struck dead with Lightning, for offering to imitate Jove's Thunder": "Had my Eyes the power of Thunder, they shou'd employ their Lightning better."

[44] Ibid., Act II, Scene ii, p. 141.

the Ladies pay best; the Honour of serving them is sufficient Wages; there is a Charm in their looks that delivers a Pleasure with their Commands, and gives our Duty the Wings of Inclination.[45]

Looking with her at the Sullen portrait gallery, he pretends to take for a picture of Mrs. Sullen "that Venus over the Chimney . . ."[46] During the boudoir scene in which he is alone with her, when she resists his advances as if she were a true précieuse,[47] he takes up the whining lover's dying posture: "If this be Impudence [Kneels] I leave to your partial self; no panting Pilgrim after a tedious, painful Voyage, e'er bow'd before his Saint with more Devotion."[48] One kiss from her and he prates of "Raptures and Paradice! . . . the now conscious Stars have preordain'd this Moment for my Happiness."[49]

Thus in numerous passages, the love-plot characters, which is to say, the major characters, of the three plays just discussed show that their views of woman and love are formed by the degree of rejectance or acceptance with which they greet the précieuse mode.

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45. Ibid., Act III, Scene iii, p. 153.

46 Ibid., Act IV, Scene i, p. 167.

47 Mrs. Sullen is, it may be added, without a gallant only because none has been available. Considering her "sad Brute" of a husband, and the dullness of the country, she tells Dorinda that poets and philosophers have found contentment in a country life only "because they wanted Money, Child, to find out the Pleasures of the Town" (Ibid., Act II, Scene i, pp. 134-35). She approves the visits of Count Bellair in part because he offers her addresses in the précieuse manner (Ibid., p. 136):

Mrs. Sull[en]. The French are a People that can't live without their Gallantries.

Dor[inda]. And some English that I know, Sister, are not averse to such Amusements.

48 Ibid., Act V, Scene ii, p. 178.

49 Ibid., p. 179. See also ibid., Act II, Scene i, p. 137, Mrs. Sullen to Dorinda: "Love and Death have their Fatalities, and strike home one time or another . . ."

CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In the romantic genres of Restoration drama, such as heroic tragedy, three stock characters were employed as embodiments of précieuse or "whining" love theories which were, to judge from the sustained popularity of romantic drama, in great vogue throughout the period. The three were the distressed heroine, repentant rake, and whining lover; the love-and-honor theories they bodied forth centered about the attribution of near-divinity to woman. She who held to précieuse doctrines was such an apotheosis of virtue that it was in her power, by the exercise of her "charm," to transform such non-believers as rakes into repositories of virtue themselves. The repentant male, recognizing the utter goodness of the woman, upon conversion often became one of those satellites called by the comic playwrights a "whining" or "romantic" lover, who worshiped her awful beauty and virtue, offering her, as Collier said, "Religious Address" and "Idolizing Raptures," telling his scorn of bodily passion, swearing oaths of eternal constancy, and prating of his willingness to "die" at her feet. The postures, attitudes, and speeches of whining love were stereotyped; the models for this stylized love-making were found, according to the playwrights, in the French heroic romances popular with the Restoration reading public. Also, the theories of the whining love cultists were similar to those upon which had been based the précieuse mode at the English court under Henrietta Maria; the précieuses of both generations derived their beliefs ultimately from platonic doctrines.

In the Restoration, scoffers at précieuse theories set them down as improbable, Shadwell, for example, labeling them "senseless amorous Idolatry."

Throughout the period the dramatic embodiments of the improbable romantic themes were insinuated into satiric comedy, including the comedy of manners, where they underwent treatments both satiric and serious. The précieuses of the audience, to judge from evidence not only in the plays but in many prologues, epilogues, and prefaces of satiric comedy, voiced strenuous and continuing disapproval of the satirization of their beliefs, and, conversely, approved the serious use of them.

Twentieth-century critics of Restoration comedy, many of them taking the comedy of manners to express the spirit of fashionable London society of the time, have mostly either overlooked the existence of the cult termed précieuse in this study or stated outright that no such group existed. The extension into comedy of the romantic love-and-honor themes has been overlooked also. In no published study does one find an attempt to set forth the use made of these themes in satiric comedy.

To read the comedies of manners with an understanding of the foregoing considerations is to discover that the playwrights employed widely indeed the three précieuse stock characters and the beliefs which they represented. As one should expect in a kind of drama whose business it is, in Congreve's words, "to paint the Vices and Follies of Humane kind," satirization of the précieuse mode dominates the serious treatment of it. Still, a number of characters in manners comedy are allowed to express the précieuse idea of love and woman without the intent of mockery on the writer's part. These expressions may be couched in verse, one of the trappings of heroic tragedy and related genres, in which case the speakers are being characterized by use of the romantic method of writing; or they may deliver such expressions in prose,

that is, with all the trappings of romance gone, which is the sentimental method of writing comedy. A list follows of the leading précieuse characters—romantic and sentimental—given serious treatment in the comedy of manners. The distressed heroines are Aurelia (Etherege, Love in a Tub), Christina (Wycherley, Love in a Wood), Fidelia (Wycherley, The Plain-Dealer), Amanda (Vanbrugh, The Relapse), and Leanthe (Farquhar, Love and a Bottle); the whining lovers are Bruce (Love in a Tub), Constant (Vanbrugh, The Provok'd Wife), and Lovewell (Love and a Bottle); the rakes converted by virtuous women are Worthy (The Relapse) and Roebuck (Love and a Bottle). In addition, Beaufort and Graciana (Love in a Tub) are clearly précieuse, as is Loveless (The Relapse) in his opening scene with Amanda; and, to a lesser extent, sincere belief in précieuse ideas is expressed in one place or another by Valentine (Love in a Wood), Angelica (Congreve, Love for Love), Lucinda (Love and a Bottle), Plume (Farquhar, The Recruiting Officer), and Aimwell (Farquhar, Beaux Stratagem).

Satiric treatment of préciosité in the comedy of manners produced a number of extravagantly affected précieuses, each of them carrying to a ridiculous extreme one or more of the distinguishing traits of the distressed heroine. The most fully drawn of this group are Lady Cockwood (Etherege, She Wou'd if She Cou'd), Lady Fidget (Wycherley, The Country-Wife), Lady Plyant (Congreve, The Double-Dealer), Lady Wishfort (Congreve, The Way of the World), and Lady Fancyfull (The Provok'd Wife). Olivia (The Plain-Dealer) deserves special mention for her précieuse "aversions" to debauchery and bawdry. Among the fops and half-witted fellows of manners comedy, Sir Fopling Flutter (Etherege, Man of Mode) and Dapperwit (Love in a Wood) are outstanding for the ridicule they bring to précieuse gallantry in thinking themselves masters of it. Some outstanding opponents of précieuse

attitudes are Sir Frederick Frollick (Love in a Tub), Horner (The Country-Wife), Heartwell (Congreve, The Old Batchelour), Careless (The Double-Dealer), and Archer (Beaux Stratagem). All the witty young couples of whom Mirabell and Millamant are generally thought to be the apotheosis quite expressly tell what they think of the précieuse mode and exhibit various degrees of reaction against it. Thus Mirabell makes frequent use of précieuse addresses to Millamant, who uses the mode as a weapon to help keep him fascinated by her. Similarly, Dorimant (Man of Mode) falls easily into the whining lover's strain, without believing in préciosité, when he courts Harriet and Bellinda, both of whom are in conscious revolt against précieuse ideas. Araminta and Vainlove, Belinda and Bellmour (The Old Batchelour) are particularly given to discussing the posturings and beliefs of préciosité and their relations to it. The list might be extended; in all the comedies of manners the young lovers' courtship is demonstrably in précieuse or anti-précieuse terms.

To approach the comedy of manners as the Restoration audience approached it, then, it is necessary that the reader of today realize the existence of the précieuse mode throughout the Restoration and understand the conventions of that mode. The love code of Restoration theater-going society was, at least in London, the précieuse code; the much-discussed "immorality" of the comedy of manners is a reaction against préciosité as it was elaborated during the Restoration. Between man's physical desires and the improbable idealism of précieuse beliefs, battle was joined throughout the Restoration; and the genius of five playwrights in reflecting that battle produced what we call the comedy of manners.

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