

A STUDY OF THE FOP IN RESTORATION DRAMA

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A STUDY OF THE FOP IN RESTORATION DRAMA

By

KATHERINE MORONEY

Bachelor of Science

Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College.

Stillwater, Oklahoma

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APPROVED:

Nat Lawrence (by Geo. H White)
In Charge of Thesis

Alice B. Traver
Chairman of the English Department

D. C. M. Intosh
Dean of the Graduate School

108568

To
the Memory
of
Nat P. Lawrence
Teacher, Scholar, Friend

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INTRODUCTION: ORIGIN OF THE FOP

English Ancestors of the Fop

To say that the fop was produced by mutation in seventeenth century literature would claim undue encomiums for the Restoration dramatists. The fop is the clown, the fool, the buffoon, the coxcomb of the Restoration stage. He is the man in whom the essence of most of the satire in the play is found in one comical character. However, in earlier comedies can be found characters showing evidence that they must have influenced his creation enough to be called literary prototypes.

"Comedy," wrote Aristotle over two thousand years ago, "is an imitation of characters of a lower type. It consists in some defect or ugliness which is not painful or destructive."¹ For many centuries the comic character was a social interpretation of this quotation. Comedy dealt with the "baser sort of men," men low on the social scale. Shakespeare, particularly in his earliest comedies, took his truly comic characters from the lowest classes: Speed and Launce, servants; Shallow, a county justice, and his cousin Slender; Elbow, the constable, and Pompey, the clown; Dogberry, a constable; Holofernes, the school-

¹ Aristotle, Poetics, in The Great Critics, edited by Smith and Parks, p. 8.

master; Dull, a constable; and Costard, a clown; the comic group of A Midsummer Night's Dream of Bottom, Quince, Snout, Flute. All these have been drawn from the lowest classes, either servants or people of insignificant positions. Shakespeare's main attempt in his comedies was to portray life with a central theme of love and with a happy ending. He used little personal satire or harsh laughter.

If satire is present, it is only on rare occasions a satire of manners, it deals rather with something universal, a satire of the fatuity of self-lovers, of the power which the human heart has of self-deception, or it is a genial mockery of the ineptitude of brainless self-importance, or the little languid lover's amorous endeavours, or the lumbering pace of heavy-witted ignorance which cannot catch a common meaning even by the tail.²

There is little doubt that in the early comedies of Shakespeare are the spires which will later produce the fop. In Love's Labour's Lost there is an attack on affectation, but this attack is not vitalized in one person. Celibacy is attacked in the entire play. Euphuism is ridiculed by the comic muse through Don Armado. Pedantry is made comic by Holofernes. Holofernes shows egotism and a poverty of intellect that is later highly developed in his foppish grandson of the Restoration stage.

When Holofernes and Sir Nathaniel come together, they are at great pains to exhibit their learning, and like the later fops they resort to a foreign language.

² Edward Dowden, "Shakespeare as a Comic Dramatist," in Representative English Comedies, edited by C. M. Gayley, p.643.

Holofernes: He draweth out the thread of his verbosity finer than the staple of his argument. I abhor such fanatical phantasms, such insociable and point-devise companions; - - - This is abominable, which he would call 'abominable:' it insinuateth me of insanie. Ne intelligis, domine? to make frantic, lunatic.
 Nathaniel: Laus Deo, bone intelligo.
 Hol.: 'Bone?' - 'bone' for 'bene.' Priscian a little scratch'd; 'twill serve.

Later Moth, the page, remarks of their half-Latin jargon.

They have been at a great feast of languages and stol'n the scraps.³

In Twelfth Night Sir Toby Belch and Sir Andrew Aguecheek are comic figures of the lesser nobility. Shakespeare was one of the earliest dramatists to find the comic in portraying defects, or ugliness, or affectations of society in a person from the upper bracket of society. Sir Andrew is lacking in real intellect and in appropriate manners, yet he is sincere and unconscious of himself. He strives only for his own entertainment, and fails to realize he is intellectually the baser sort of man.

Sir Toby: Approach, Sir Andrew. Not to be abed after midnight is to be up betimes; and 'dilu- culo surgere,' thou know'st--

Sir Andrew: Nay, by my troth, I know not; but I know to be up late is to be up late.

Sir Toby: A false conclusion! I hate it as an unfill'd can. To be up after midnight and to go to bed then is to go to bed betimes. Does not our life consist of four elements?

Sir Andrew: Faith, so they say; but I think it rather consists of eating and drinking.

³ Shakespeare, Love's Labour's Lost, in The Complete Works of Shakespeare, edited by George Kittredge, p. 215.

Sir Toby: Th'art a scholar! Let us therefore eat
and drink. Marian I say! a stoup of wine!⁴

These then are comic characters, but they are now drawn from the upper class. They are discovered in the lineage of the fop family, yet they are not true fops because of their manner of treatment. Everything about them is seen in a joyous mood; they are laughed at as is the fop, but they are liked. There is no pain in their absurdity; there is no truly harsh laughter or satire. Sir Toby says,

Dost thou think, because thou art virtuous, there shall be no more cakes and ale?⁵

They will get their cakes and ale and enjoy them. Sir Andrew is of the merry upper class, unintellectual grandfather of the vain, unintellectual Restoration fop. Sir Andrew does not try to disguise what he is, nor pretend to be what he is not as do his grandsons. However, the same sort of personality with the same high class position found in a highly artificial age gives Wycherley, Shadwell, Congreve, and others material for their satire.

Although Shakespeare has drawn his truly comic characters from the country bumpkin, the servant, the clown, and the lower class man, the baser sort of men socially, in some instances he finds comedy in the intellectual lack of the

⁴ Shakespeare, Twelfth Night, in George Kittredge, op. cit., p. 409.

⁵ Shakespeare, Twelfth Night, in George Kittredge, op. cit., p. 410.

upper class man. However, he does not satirize him but rather allows the audience to enjoy with him the "cakes and ale." It is in Shakespeare that one finds evidences of a change in the interpretation of Aristotle's phrase. One finds in Shakespearean comedy foppish characters, distinct yet not having undergone the metamorphosis that makes the Restoration character.

In Elizabethan London another familiar character with obvious foppish traits was the gallant. Proud, ostentatious, fashionable, he strutted his hour in Elizabethan society. Shakespeare refers to these characters with scorn. In Othello Brabantio speaks of his daughter and her suitors,

So opposite to marriage that she shunn'd
The wealthy curled darlings of our nation.⁶

Another Elizabethan writer in a mock-serious book of manners presents this gallant and pretends to show him in a typical London day. He is probably an ancestor of the Restoration fop.

-----let our gallant presently advance himself up to the throne of the stage,----- First a conspicuous eminence is gotten; by which means the best and most essential parts of a gallant (good clothes, a proportionable leg, white hand, the Persian lock, and a tolerable beard) are perfectly revealed.

By sitting on the stage, you have signed patent to engross the whole commodity of censure;-----yet no man shall once offer to hinder you from obtaining the title of an insolent, overweening coxcomb.

-----for if you should bestow your person upon the vulgar when the belly of the house is but half

⁶ Shakespeare, Othello, in George Kittredge, op.cit., p.1246.

full, your apparel is quite eaten up, the fashion lost,----- It shall crown you with rich commendation to laugh aloud in the midst of the most serious and saddest scene of the terriblest tragedy;-----

To conclude, hoard up the finest play-scrap you can get, upon which your lean wit may most savourly feed, for want of other stuff,-----⁷

In the Jonsonian comedy of humours there are characters who can be more clearly seen as the ancestors of the highly developed character of the Restoration drama. Jonson in these comedies is critical and satirical of the follies and affectations of man, and this attitude is requisite for the creation of a fop. Heretofore, comedy had been filled with incident and language, more or less comic.

There was the rough native humour of the professional clown, with his variant, the Vice of the Moralities; the humour of practical jokes and horseplay. There was the more refined humour of the professional jester, becoming normal in the persistently pointed dialogue of Lyly. There was the humour of accident, confusion of identity through disguises or natural likenesses-----. There was lastly the humour of mere absurdity and ignorance, that of the clown by nature, not by profession-----.⁸

In Love's Labour's Lost there was comedy based on the affectation of society; Jonson saw personal affectations to be comic. Jonson's comedy was primarily an interpretation of life; hence he revealed the comic in interpreting the

⁷ Thomas Dekker, The Gull's Hornbook, in The Literature of England, edited by Woods, Watt, and Anderson, pp.380-383.

⁸ Brinsley Nicholson and C. H. Herford in Introduction to Jonson's Plays, p. xvi.

the humours of man. He thought that comedies should not deal with princes and great noblemen but that the characters should be drawn exclusively from the middle and lower classes.

In accordance with these principles, Jonson set his comedies in contemporary London, he modeled his characters on typical middle and lower class people whom he saw about him, and he attempted so to display these characters that the audience would laugh at their vanity and their greed and in so doing would laugh themselves out of their own addiction to these same vices.⁹

Jonson, thus, upheld the Aristotelian interpretation of the baser sort of men in comedy, men low on the social scale, but Jonson found comedy in character by holding up to ridicule the foibles of one person. Jonson created characters much the same as characters in Restoration drama though his were not as distinctly drawn to represent the satire; he interpreted all actions in the terms of humours as phlegmatic, sanguinary, choleric, or melancholic, but, of most importance, Jonson gave to the Restoration comedy the method of seeing and creating satirical characters.¹⁰ Jonson was critical and imitative of the manners of the time as well as of the man as a whole; hence, in Jonson's characters were combined the imitation of follies of the time and imitation of personal follies. At one time Jonson says in the person of Asper in the introduction of Every Man Out of His Humour:

⁹ F. B. Millet and S. S. Bentley, op. cit., p. 80.

¹⁰ Allardyce Nicoll, Restoration Drama (1600-1700), pp. 167-170.

But, with an armed and resolved hand,
 I'll strip the ragged follies of the time,
 Naked, as at their birth-----11

And later he adds:

-----So in every human body
 The choler, melancholy, phlegm, and blood,
 By reason that they flow continually
 In some one part, and are not continent,
 Receive the name of Humours. Now thus far
 It may, by metaphor, apply itself
 Unto the general disposition:
 As when some one peculiar quality
 Doth so possess a man, that it doth draw
 All his affects, his spirits, and his powers,
 In their confluents, all to run one way,
 But that a rook, by wearing a pied feather,
 The cable hat band, or the three-piled ruff,
 A yard of Shoe-tie, or the Switzer's knot
 Or his French garters, should affect a "humour!"
 O, it is more than most ridiculous.¹²

In the same character of Asper, Jonson suggests, as do Congreve and Etherege, that the play is but a mirror "where they shall see Time's deformity," but Jonson has a deliberate element of reform that the later writers ignore and by ignoring achieve more spontaneity.

-----my strut hand
 Was made to sieze on vice, and with a gripe
 Squeeze out the humour of such spongy nature
 As lick up every idle vanity.¹³

By this method he creates characters who are definitely immediate ancestors of the Restoration fop.

In Every Man Out of His Humour, Jonson comes very close

¹¹ Ben Jonson, Plays, p. 117.

¹² Ibid., p. 118.

¹³ Ibid., p. 121.

to producing the true fop which flourishes later. Foremost in this type of character is Fastidious Brisk who has all the artificial attention to manner and fashion and the lack of intelligence of the fop. In Jonson's description of the characters he presents Brisk as

A neat Spruce affecting courtier, one that, wears clothes well, and in fashion; practiseth by his glass, how to salute; speaks good remnants -----14

Of Clove and Orange he says:

An inseparable case of coxcombs, city born; the Gemini, or twins of foppery; that like a pair of wooden foils, are fit for nothing but to be practiced upon. -----Their glory is to invite players, and make suppers, and in company of better rank to avoid the suspect of insufficiency, will inforce their ignorance most desperately, to set upon the understanding of anything.¹⁵

Sogliardo, since he has money, desires to be a gentleman. He asks Carlo Buffone how to proceed and Carlo's suggestions, which he gives with the intent to "make admirable use of my medicine upon this lump of copper" (Sogliardo), include many of the same attributes the Restoration fop had to acquire. Carlo suggests that Sogliardo turn four or five hundred acres of his "best land into two or three trunks of apparel," study the carriage and behaviour of gentlemen, and learn two or three peculiar oaths to swear, and, above all, protest and affirm in play, "Upon your credit" and "As you are a true gentleman." Carlo also ad-

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 114.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 115.

vises Sogliardo when he comes to plays to be humorous and "laugh at nothing but your own jests, or else as the noble-men laugh," and "pretend alliance with courtiers and great persons."

Fastidious Brisk is very close to the true fop. He seems to have most of the elements of the Restoration fellow. He is vain of his amours, but not successful in them. At one time he enters the stage bragging that a countess gave him her hand to kiss.¹⁶ His interest in clothes has been carried to such an extent that Fungoso, who also has an intense interest in fashion, brings his tailor to copy Brisk's clothes.

Fungoso: O, he is here --- look you, Sir, that's the gentlemen.

Tailor: What, he i' the blush-coloured satin?

Fungoso: Ay, he, sir; though his suit blushes, he blushes not; look you, that's the suit, sir; I would have mine such a suit, without difference, such stiff, such a wing, such a sleeve, such a skirt, belly, and all; therefore, pray you observe it.¹⁷

These slight sketches of some of the Jonsonian characters serve only to show that before the period of Restoration drama there were plays from which the later dramatists obtained material in drawing their satirical creations who well portrayed their own age. These earlier characters served as models or inspirations to the methods of the Restoration dramatist.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 168.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 181.

His French Cousins

The influence of Molière, who was the greatest writer of comedy in France at the time of the English Restoration, cannot be ignored. Molière definitely had a far different theory of comedy from Shakespeare's. Molière had critical, corrective, thoughtful laughter, to use Meredith's phrase, while Shakespeare had a tolerant, sympathetic laugh. Jonson's method was to use an abstract quality in the appearance of an individual man and present it critically. In Molière's comedies, there was criticism not only of a humour, or of manners, or of the age, but of the vices and follies of all ages.¹⁸ Molière dealt with broad general vices, affectations, and passions like selfishness, greed, hypocrisy, and corruptions in taste and sentiment.

Doubtless, the French influence should not be restricted wholly to Molière, for all the French court and upper society had had direct personal contact with Charles II and his courtiers before his return to the throne in 1660.¹⁹

Without doubt the people with whom the Restoration courtiers found themselves most in sympathy were the French---gay, fearless, godless as themselves, with a royalist regime, and a comedy brimming over with the veriest cream of wit. Audacious, beautiful, with a classical perfection in the rapier thrust of their humour, they would have charmed the Ethereges and the Congreves of the age even if so many of the royalist supporters had not been forced to live among

¹⁸ Robert M. Smith, Types of Social Comedy, p. 7.

¹⁹ Allardyce Nicoll, op. cit., p. 176.

them for many long years of exile, learning their manners, their morals, and their mien.²⁰

The list of the translations and adaptations of Molière during the forty years after the Restoration is imposing.²¹ It was the wit and dialogue of the great Frenchman that men like Wycherley, Congreve, Vanbrugh, and Etherege copied. That Molière's works were read, translated, and sometimes copied is true, but Molière and the French comedy were not presented in England. Comedy was definitely English after it came from the pens of the Restoration dramatists. The characters of these plays were English gentlemen of the period in England. However, even in the plays of Molière can be seen individuals with foppish characteristics. The characters show much of the same social and intellectual satire; they have a distinct lack of the ability to evaluate what is refinement, wit, intellect, and what is not.

In Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme can be seen many of the same qualities of the Restoration fop. Poor Mr. Jordan, who is the bourgeois gentilhomme striving to be in the socially élite, does not know whether he should wear his gown when listening to the music or not.²² Later, his tailor is fitting him and the following conversation occurs:

Mr. Jordan: What a deuce have we here? You have put the flowers downwards.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 171.

²¹ Allardyce Nicoll, op. cit., p. 172.

²² Molière, The Cit Turned Gentleman, in World Drama, edited by Barrett H. Clark, p. 225.

Master-Tailor: Why, you did not tell me you would have 'em upwards.

Mr. Jordan: Was there any need to tell you that?

Master-Tailor: Yes certainly. All the people of quality wear 'em in that way.

Mr. Jordan: Do people of quality wear the flowers downwards?

Master-Tailor: Yes, sir.

Mr. Jordan: Oh 'tis very well then.

Master-Tailor: If you please I'll put 'em upwards.

Mr. Jordan: No, No.²³

Here is the interest in fashion, the striving to be upper class or quality. Like his foppish English cousin Mr. Jordan lacked intellect. At one time after careful instruction by his Philosophy-Master on prose, he says,

How? When I say, Nicola, bring me my slippers, and give me my night cap, is that prose?

Philosophy-Master: Yes, sir.

Mr. Jordan: On my conscience, I have spoken prose above these forty years, without knowing anything of the matter-----²⁴

It must be remembered, however, that Mr. Jordan is definitely lower class trying to be upper class, while the English fop is a native member of the upper class with what was thought to be lower class lack of wit. Nevertheless, the characteristics found in this character are much the same as those found in the fop. Mr. Jordan is duped for his money as easily as his English counterpart is duped.

In Les Précieuses Ridicules, Molière presents what could almost be called female fops. He deals with malformed affectations in this play. There is one character,

²³ Molière, op. cit., p. 233.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 232

Mascarille, a beau of the précieuses, who has many foppish characteristics, foremost of which is his interest in fashion. The following discourse of Mascarille with Cathos and Madelon concerning Mascarille's clothes is not a far cry from conversations of Etherege's character, Sir Fopling Flutter, whose obvious attempts to draw attention to each article of his apparel are seen in The Man of Mode.

Masc.: What do you think of my top-knot, sword-knot and rosettes? Do you find them harmonize with my coat?

Cath.: Perfectly.

Masc.: Do you think the ribbon well chosen?

Mad.: Furiously well. It is real Pedrigeon.

Masc.: What do you think of my rolls?

Mad.: They look very fashionable.

Masc.: I may at least boast that they are a quarter of a yard wider than any that have been made.

Mad.: I must own I never saw the elegance of dress carried farther.

Masc.: Please to fasten the reflection of your smelling faculty upon these gloves.

Mad.: They smell awfully fine.

Cath.: I never inhaled a more delicious perfume.

Masc.: And this? (He gives them his powdered wig to smell.)

Mad.: It has the true quality odor----

Masc.: You say nothing of my feathers. How do you like them?

Cath.: They are frightfully beautiful. ²⁵

From such scenes in Molière's plays Restoration comedy adapted much of its spirit of satire, the criticism of foibles and vices of the age. His wit and dialogue were copied. He also had characters who portray many of the same characteristics found in the Restoration fop.

²⁵ Moliere, Les Précieuses Ridicules, in The Drama, Vol. VII, pp. 152-3.

By 1660, when Charles II ascended the throne and ended the Puritan commonwealth, comedy differed from Shakespeare's. Shakespeare was a romanticist, creative and spontaneous in his comedy. His was a story-telling drama. He was national in his representation of life. His comic characters were usually found in the lower social class. But, by the time of the Restoration, he was not the model for playwrights. Milton in L'Allegro said of him,

Or sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child,
Warble his native woodnotes wild.

Jonson and Molière gave to the Restoration ideas of character presentation. They were both neo-classical. Critical of the foibles and vices of the age, they used satire in their comedies. Jonson was critical and imitative of the man and his time. He gave to the Restoration a method of seeing and creating character. Dealing with phases of vice, affectation, emotion of man in that age, Molière was critical and corrective.

In the Restoration, comedy was no longer story-telling, no longer romantic; it became a comedy of incident and situation. Restoration comedy became local, representative of Whitehall. It was artificial, imitative, critical, satirical of the fashions, follies, vices, and frivolities of the new age.

The new comedy became indeed not merely a follower of English or French models but very distinctly the reflection of the manners of the

new age.²⁶

In this comedy flourished the fop, an embodiment of social and intellectual satire. Not only was the stage set for him but also the age. It was a highly critical, satirical, artificial age to which he came, and he lent himself well as a means of satire against the excesses of the fashionable beau monde of this period. Because this character in his highest development seems to be found only in the literature of the Restoration, the problem of this paper is to study the fop as a product of his age.

²⁶ A. H. Thorndike, English Comedy, p. 274.

THE RESTORATION FOP

A Character of the Fop

The fop is a race apart. He is a biped, human but plumed. Much is intimated by his plumage because his fashions influence his manners, his speech, and often his intellect. There is affectation in everything about him. He is the false virtuoso. He is used by the Restoration dramatist as a means of satire of social and intellectual affectation. He is conscious only of his clothes, and over-conscious of them. His conversation, sprinkled with French, with affectations, and enforced wit and similitudes, is voluminous but means nothing. Those who know him say he "ravishes our conversation."¹ His manners are overdone, with gentility of manners entirely missed. His attire, his walk, and his conversation say, "Feast your eyes on me!" He strives so hard for sociability that others hang the placard of boredom over his presence and catalog him with these names, "sophisticated dulness,"² "cock-fool of all fools,"³ "admirable piece of emptiness,"⁴ "a man of great

¹ William Wycherley, The Country Wife, in William Wycherley, edited by W. C. Ward, p. 257.

² George Etherege, The Man of Mode, in Representative English Dramas, edited by Frederick Tupper and James W. Tupper, p. 147.

³ Ibid., p. 141.

⁴ Ibid., p. 128.

acquired follies,"⁵ "one of those nauseous offerers at wit."⁶

I rise, madam, about ten o'clock. I don't rise sooner, because 'tis the worst thing in the world for the complexion; not that I pretend to be a beau; but a man must endeavor to look wholesome, lest he make so nauseous a figure in the side-box, the ladies should be compelled to turn their eyes upon the play.⁷

Much time is always spent with the taylor and hair-dresser upon arising. He "buckles on his clothes one by one."⁸ This procedure is quite a ritual with the taylor, shoemaker, hairdresser, and assistants. After much argument with his helpers about his pockets being too high or too low, his shoes too tight, his stockings too thick or too thin, his periwig too full or too thin, he is dressed, or rather costumed.

Now, if I find 'tis a good day, I resolve to take a turn in the Park, and see the fine women;--- If it be nasty weather, I take a turn in the chocolate house; where, as you walk, madam, you have the prettiest prospect in the world; you have looking-glasses all round you.---⁹

However, he may stroll through St. James Park or Mulberry Gardens, or he may go to the shop of Mrs. Trunket in the Exchange, where gallants "scent their eyebrows and peri-

⁵ Ibid., p. 128.

⁶ Wycherley, The Country Wife, in W. C. Ward, op. cit., p. 256.

⁷ Sir John Vanbrugh, The Relapse, in Tupper and Tupper, op. cit., p. 263.

⁸ Ibid., p. 264.

⁹ Ibid., p. 264.

wigs with a little essence of orange or jessamine."¹⁰

He lolls the day away in this manner till evening when after another dressing orgy the fop flutters into the drawing-room with an affectation of manners trying to get the attention of everyone. He orders his page around, kisses the hands of the ladies, and then calls them a belles assemblées.¹¹ He continues to compare everything to French customs, French people, or to describe everything in French words.

He forces himself upon the men condescendingly and for the dinner hour either tries to join their circle or brags about the engagement he has with one of distinction. After dinner he joins the drawing-room circle, where he dances and admires himself in the mirror.¹²

He spends much time in his book gallery.

I have a private gallery with nothing but books and looking glasses. Madam, I have gilded 'em, and ranged 'em so prettily, before Gad, it is the most entertaining thing in the world to walk and look on 'em."¹³

Very often he will go to the theatre to sit where he can draw all the eyes upon himself, especially the ladies'. He loves to sit in the wit's row (Sparkish). Sometimes he attends two plays during an evening and always sits with his

¹⁰ Cambridge History of English Literature, Vol. VIII, p. 156.

¹¹ George Etherege, The Man of Mode, in Tupper and Tupper, op. cit., p. 145.

¹² Ibid., p. 156.

¹³ Colley Cibber, Love's Last Shift, in Tupper and Tupper, op. cit., p. 224.

back to the stage to draw the attention of the public, which he is at "more pains to preserve than ever any lady after the smallpox to recover her complexion."¹⁴

He sometimes will sing to entertain and draw attention to himself.¹⁵ In fact, the famous Lord Foppington says,

My life, madam, is a perpetual stream of pleasure, that glides through such a variety of entertainments, I believe the wisest of our ancestors never had the least conception of any of 'em.¹⁶

His Social Character

The fop was drawn directly from the audience before whom he acted.

Restoration drama was written for a limited audience. Never over two theatres and sometimes only one supplied the drama to the audience, which was a socially select group from the upper strata of society, usually from only the court circle. The demands and desires of these people set the standards and chose the material for the drama. Although Charles was on the throne, Puritan tenets were still held among the middle and lower class people. They would not

¹⁴ Sir John Vanbrugh, The Relapse, in Tupper and Tupper, op. cit., p. 263.

¹⁵ George Etherege, The Man of Mode, in Tupper and Tupper, op. cit., p. 156.

¹⁶ Sir John Vanbrugh, The Relapse, in Tupper and Tupper, op. cit., p. 263.

attend the theatre, for the attitude of the drama, which was the attitude of the court, was in direct discord with Puritan sentiment.

Had the courtiers been less debauched, had Charles been less the slave to his passions, had the playwrights maintained a more sedate attitude towards life, the citizens might, too, have flocked to the playhouses as in Elizabethan times.-----During the Dutch wars when a certain number of the gallants and beaux were gone to sea, an appeal might be made from the stage to the citizens "of Lombard-street," but in the main those who were engaged in business, unless they were younger sons of the nobility, were ridiculed in plays, undesired among the spectators. The Courtiers made of the theatre a meeting place of their own, with licence of all kinds,-----The spectators, then, for whom the poets wrote and the actors played were the courtiers and their satellites. The noblemen in the pit and boxes, the fops and beaux and wits or would-be-wits who hung on to their society, the women of the court, depraved and licentious as the men, the courtesans with whom these women of quality moved and conversed as on equal terms, made up at least four-fifths of the entire audience. Add a sprinkling of footmen in the upper gallery, a stray country cousin or two scattered throughout the theatre, and the picture of the audience is complete. All of these took their cue from the king.¹⁷

This audience brought with itself to the theatre all its inherent desires, foibles, vanities, imitations, and affaires, and these peculiarities, in turn, served the dramatist as material for comedy.

With the reestablishment of the monarchy there broke out an insurrection of instincts long held in check. A desire for self-expression denied under the austerity of the Puritans led to a feeling of independence and licentious-

¹⁷ Allardyce Nicoll, op. cit., pp. 7-8.

ness.¹⁸ Comedy then catered to a leisure class who loved wine, women, and song, and, in turn, took its subjects from its audience. The affaires de coeur of the stage took their cue from the audience. One needs only to consider Charles as the example of society with Nell Gwyn and Lady Castlemaine. It was this social background which Wycherley, Etherege, and others used for imitation and for criticism. It was to this audience that they held up the mirror.

'Tis by your follies that we players thrive,
 As the physicians by diseases live;
 And as each year some new distemper reigns,
 Whose friendly poison helps t'increase their gains,
 So among you there starts up every day
 Some new, unheard-of fool for us to play.
 Then, for your own sakes be not too severe,
 Nor what you all admire at home, damn here;
 Since each is fond of his own ugly face,
 Why should you, when we hold it, break the glass?¹⁹

With the restoration of the house of Stuart, Fashion also regained the throne, from which she had been driven by the stern and puritanical republicans, and like the "merry monarch" with whom she returned, many were the pranks she played in the delirium of her joy; many the excesses she committed. Taste and elegance were abandoned for extravagance and folly;----²⁰ One critic of the clothes of that period remarked on the magnificence of dress, the "periwigs,

¹⁸ Legouis and Cazamain, History of English Literature, Vol. II, p. 32.

¹⁹ Etherege, The Man of Mode, from Prologue, in Tupper and Tupper, op. cit., p. 131.

²⁰ J. R. Planché, History of British Costume, pp. 323-4.

monstrous, bushy," the "petticoat breeches ruffled like a pigeon," "frills of deep lace," and "bushes of ribbon."²¹ Pepys wrote that he would wear his three pound periwig.²² Even Pepys was addicted to fashion; he said:

This morning came home my fine caulet cloak, with gold buttons, and a silk suit, which cost me much money, and I pray God to make me able to pay for it.²³

Fashion had attained this important place in the life of the time, partly because it had languished for so long under the Puritan severity of the commonwealth. With the return of Charles to England the courtiers burst out in exaggerated splendour in compensation for the dark days of the Puritan ascendant.

The Sir Foplings and Sir Courtlys, who had disappeared in the east wind of the ascetic days of James, began to sun themselves in the Mall again, the same delicious creatures, with their long fair wigs, and the creve-coeur locks curling on the napes of their soft necks, with their scarlet heels, and clouded canes, and laced handkerchiefs breathing the Montpellier essence of perfume of millefleur water, their gold boxes of pastillios in their hands, their elderly faces painted young with Spanish red and white ceruse, and the frangipan exhaling from the chicken-skin gloves upon their plump white hands. These were the Beaux, the pink of French affectation, the great heroic figures of the comedy of their age.²⁴

Having lately returned from the court of Louis XIV,

²¹ Dion C. Collings, English Costume, p. 366.

²² Ibid., p. 373.

²³ Samuel Pepys, Diary, Vol. I, p. 118.

²⁴ Edmund Gosse, Life of William Congreve, p. 13.

Charles and his courtiers brought many of these fashions and manners directly from France. French words, French valets, French clothes, French manners, and French dancing and singing masters were in vogue in the court circle.

In the Memoirs of the Count of Grammont, when he was describing the Earl of Ossory, he failed not to mention that he has a "very handsome face" and "a good head of hair."²⁵ There were two prime requisites for the man of fashion then. Not only did Grammont show the court as having much interest in ordinary dress, but as also using even fancy dress and masquerade. At one masquerade he had to go in his ordinary court clothes because his fancy dress had not arrived from Paris.

The thing was preposterous on such an occasion, and very extraordinary with respect to him: in vain had he the finest point-lace with the largest and best powdered peruke imaginable: his dress, magnificent enough for any other purpose, was not at all proper for this entertainment.²⁶

Again the Count mentioned the splendour of the court.

The court, as we have mentioned before, was an entire scene of gallantry and amusements, with all the politeness and magnificence which the inclinations of a prince naturally addicted to tenderness and pleasure could suggest;---- all studied to set themselves off to the best advantage: ----- others distinguished themselves by show and magnificence.²⁷

²⁵ The Memoirs of the Count of Grammont, p. 118.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 152.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 198.

From this description of the social background of the period we can see that in the plays the fops were not fictional, for the Restoration dramatists were quite realistic. Let us turn to the plays to find the adoration of fashion and over-nicety of attire satirized.

One of the earliest in the long line of the fop family was Sir Fopling Flutter in The Man of Mode. Although he was one of the first fops, he was not less skilled in the traditions of his family's abilities. On the contrary, he became one of the most memorable figures of his line. When Sir Fopling sweeps onto the stage in the midst of his equipage, he has been thoroughly described by Dorimant and Medley and has been heralded as a "tawdry French riband, a formal cravat."

Dorimant: He is the pattern of modern foppery.

Medley: He was yesterday at the play with a pair of gloves up to his elbows, and a periwig more exactly curled than a lady's head newly dressed for a ball.²⁸

After Sir Fopling enters, no one remarks about his clothes, but not to be daunted he draws attention to each article of his apparel.

Sir Fopling: The tassels are new and pretty.

Medley: I never saw a coat better cut.

Sir Fop.: It makes me show long-waisted and, I think, slender.

Dorimant: That's the shape our ladies dote on.

²⁸ George Etherege, The Man of Mode, in Tupper and Tupper, op. cit., p. 135.

Lady Townley: His gloves are well-fringed, large, and graceful.

Sir Fop.: I was always eminent for being bien ganté.

Emilia: He wears nothing but what are originals of the famous hands in Paris.

Sir Fop.: You are in the right, madam.

Lady Town.: The suit?

Sir Fop.: Barroy.

Emilia: The garniture?

Sir Fop.: Le Gras.

Medley: The shoes?

Sir Fop.: Piccar.

Dorimant: The periwig?

Sir Fop.: Chedreux.

Emilia: The Gloves?

Sir Fop.: Orangerie.²⁹

The interest in fashion of Sir Fopling extends even to others, for he suggests to Dorimant that he be allowed to send his own man to dress Dorimant.³⁰

Another of the same species who pays such high tribute to dress and fashion that his name is derived from this attention is Sir Novelty Fashion in Love's Last Shift. He, too, has been so individual in his attention to fashion that the audience has been thoroughly prepared for him.

Worthy: I can't say he's a slave to every new fashion, for he pretends to be the master of it, and is ever reviving some old or advancing some new piece of foppery, and though it don't take, is still as well pleased because it then obliges the town to take the more notice of him. He's so fond of a public reputation that he is more extravagant in his attempt to gain it than the fool that fired Diana's temple to immortalize his name.³¹

²⁹ George Etherege, The Man of Mode, in Tupper and Tupper, op. cit., p. 146.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 157.

³¹ Colley Cibber, Love's Last Shift, in Tupper and Tupper, op. cit., p. 217.

Sir Novelty is so clothes-conscious that he even angles for compliments by depreciating himself:

But pray tell me, madam, for I really love a severe critic, I am sure you must believe he has a more happy genius in dress. For my part I am but a sloven.³²

Sir William Wisewoud aptly shows how Sir Novelty is dependent on clothes for his personality.

You seem to be the offspring of more than one man's labor, for certainly no less than a dancing, singing, and fencing master, with a tailor, milliner, perfumer, peruke-maker, and French valet de chambre could be at the begetting of you.³³

In the same category of clothes-conscious fops we find Selfish in A True Widow. Before he sets foot on the stage we know his failing.

Footman: Mr. Selfish is combing his peruke below stairs and will be here instantly.

Bellamour: Retire, while I have him.

(Enter Selfish, sets his peruke, and bows to the glass.)

* * * * *

Selfish: Sure I am not so lean; I was told I looked plump today. Ha! my damned rogue has put me into the most bustling stuff. Bellamour, I like thy breeches well.

Bellamour: Why, you don't see 'em.

Selfish: Yes, I see 'em in the glass; your tailor shall make mine. A pax on my valet de chambre! How he has tied my cravat up today! A man cannot get a good valet de chambre, French or English.³⁴

The next fop who proves himself a real member of the

³² Ibid., p. 221.

³³ Ibid., p. 227.

³⁴ Thomas Shadwell, A True Widow, in The Best Plays of Thomas Shadwell, edited by George Saintsbury, p. 132.

house of Fashion is Lord Foppington in The Relapse. He calls all his attendants to dress him, his shoemaker, his tailor, his hosier, his seamstress, his barber. His stockings being too thick must be lessened by the thickness of a "crawn-piece."³⁵ Mr. Foretop presents him with the new periwig "so long and full that it will serve for a cloak and a hat in all weathers."³⁶ But Lord Foppington objects,

Gad's curse, Mr. Foretop! You don't intend to put this upon me for a full periwig?

Foretop: Not a full one, my lord!--- I have crammed twenty ounces of hair into it.

Lord Fop.: What it may be by weight, sir, I shall not dispute, but by tale there are not nine hairs of a side.

Fore.: O lord! O lord! O lord! Why as Gad shall judge me, your honor's side-face is reduced to the top your nose!³⁷

Thus the argument continues till my Lord Foppington is beribboned, perfumed, and periwigged. He is the true picture of idle elegance of his kind even with a page to carry his pocket handkerchief.³⁸

Fashion was so widely worshipped that character was based on clothes; therefore, to make the satire of Lord Foppington even more pronounced, Vanbrugh put the final touch in his epilogue. He wanted to be sure we saw the fop as the

³⁵ Sir John Vanbrugh, The Relapse, in Tupper and Tupper, op. cit., p. 259.

³⁶ Colley Cibber, Love's Last Shift, in Tupper and Tupper, op. cit., p. 209.

³⁷ Sir John Vanbrugh, The Relapse, in Tupper and Tupper, op. cit., p. 259.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 258.

gentleman in all but essentials, and yet honored by the age as a true gentleman.

I hold not one its friend, I must confess
 Who would discountenance your men of dress.
 For, give me leave t'observe, good clothes are things
 Have ever been of great support to kings;
 All treasons come from slovens, it is not
 Within the gentle reach of beaux to plot;

* * * * *

Through all record, no prince was ever slain
 By one who had a feather in his brain.
 They're men of too refined an education
 To squabble with a court--for a vile dirty nation.

* * * * *

Your men of mischief--still are in foul linen.
 Did ever one yet dance the Tyburn jig,
 With a free air, or a well-powdered wig?³⁹

Thus is one of the follies of the Restoration Age, worshipping at the alter of Fashion, highly satirized in this character by the dramatists of the period.

Another of the follies which does not escape these writers is the close attention to manners. There is a correctness and over-nicety of manners, an extreme which is seen in the fop. Manner here is taken to apply to actions, behavior, or deportment. Conversation I have included under a later part.

All the fops strive for that careless, easy sociability seen in those of the court circle. Rochester was known for his disposition of gaiety and mirth.⁴⁰ Rochester and

³⁹ Sir John Vanbrugh, The Relapse, in Tupper and Tupper, op. cit., p. 294.

⁴⁰ Cambridge History of English Literature, Vol. VIII, p. 237.

Buckingham won the admiration of all by their presence and address and by their way of entering a ballroom. The aspiration of men and women of fashion was not for virtue or valour, but for style.⁴¹

But the society of the reign of Charles II in spite of its baseness was concerned about standards and manners, and it imposed these on its drama. It was convinced that there was a genteel way of doing everything, entering a room or writing a prologue, carrying on a debauch or writing a sonnet.⁴²

Perfection in writing, so sought after in this period, can be found in the finished polish of the plays. Five acts in the plays were considered good form and in accord with classical unities of time, place, and action.

The correspondence of Etherege is full of the life and gossip of the wits of his time, "all of it expressed with the gaiety, candour, and foppish wit of which in his plays he is the acknowledged master."⁴³ For the time, English men and women in good society had lapsed into an excess of gallantry, enjoying their orgy with incorrigible frankness and abandon, and avowing their enjoyment with incorrigible flippancy and shamelessness."⁴⁴ It is the over-indulgence in gallantry and nicety that is captured and satirized in the fop.

⁴¹ A. H. Thorndike, English Comedy, p. 275.

⁴² Ibid., p. 275.

⁴³ Cambridge History of English Literature, Vol. VIII, p.155.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 157.

One of the earliest of the fops is Sparkish in The Country Wife. He enters in great good humor. He talks elaborately, and, thinking he is a wit, proceeds to tell things he thinks are witty. He addresses his friends as sparks. This pretence to sociability is certainly part of the fop's manners.

Lord Froth of The Double Dealer, and much of the superficiality of manner can be seen in his name, carries extravagance of action to the extreme.

Lady Froth to Lord Froth: O that tongue! that dear deceitful tongue! that charming softness in your mien and your expression! and then your bow! Good, my lord, bow as you did when I gave you my picture. Here, suppose this my picture --(Gives him a pocket-glass.) Pray mind, my lord, you shan't kiss it so much. I shall grow jealous, I vow now. (He bows profoundly low, then kisses the glass.)

Lord Froth: I saw myself there, and kissed it for your sake.

Lady Froth: Ah, gallantry to the last degree!⁴⁵

Lady Froth's last remark clarifies the action. The stage directions become quite important in showing the actions of this type of character. Sir Fopling Flutter's gallant manner relies greatly on the show he can acquire with a sweeping debut. Mr. Brisk, with his gallantry and bel air in the same play, should not be forgotten.

Enter Sir Fopling Flutter with his page after him.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ William Congreve, The Double Dealer, in Masterpieces of English Drama, edited by F. E. Schelling, p. 68.

⁴⁶ George Etherege, The Man of Mode, in Tupper and Tupper, op. cit., p. 135.

Then follows his inimitable command of some sort to his servants, "Page, wait without."⁴⁷ He usually walks about with six French footmen and page in attendance. It is the fashion for the gentleman to be always the cheeriest and wittiest of the party and Sir Fopling, when all else fails, dances for the company's amusement or leads them in song.⁴⁸

The most interesting diversion for Sir Fopling is to study himself and entertain himself. When he dances at Dorimant's, he regrets that there is no mirror in which to study his movements.⁴⁹

Sir Fopling is a delightful and amusing character striving to be the "complete gentleman, who ought to dress well, dance well, fence well, to have a genius for love letters, and an agreeable voice for a chamber, to be very amorous, sometimes indiscreet, but not over constant."⁵⁰

In the epilogue Etherege draws the similarity between the behavior of Sir Fopling and that of his audience.

Something of man must be exposed to view
That, gallants, they may more resemble you.
Sir Fopling is a fool so nicely writ,
The ladies would mistake him for a wit;
And when he sings, talks loud, and cocks, would cry,
"I vow, methinks he's pretty company!"
So brisk, so gay, so travelled, so refined
As he took pains to graft upon his kind.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 145.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 155.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 157.

⁵⁰ George Etherege, The Man of Mode, Tupper and Tupper, op. cit., p. 154.

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True fops help nature's work and go to school,
To fill and finish God A'mighty's fool.
Yet none Sir Fopling him, or him, can call;
He's knight o' th' shire, and represents ye all.
From each he meets, he culls whate'er he can;
Legion's his name, a people in a man.⁵¹

Here Etherege points out that the manner of his fop has been culled from all he (Etherege) has observed. In The Man of Mode Etherege satirized persons well known in London. Sir Fopling was a portrait of Beau Hewit, the reigning exquisite; Dorimant was Sir Charles Sedley, and Medley was Etherege himself.⁵² Other critics have seen Sir Fopling as Beau Hewit, Dorimant as Lord Rochester, Medley as Sedley.⁵³

Congreve finds a new note to satirize in the social side of the fop in Tattle in Love for Love. Tattle's most clearly delineated characteristic is his desire to keep secrets and to protect his friends' characters, while at the same time, he is aching to tell all he hears. His over-nicety of manners becomes quite sickening when he proves himself to be the hypocrite. At one time, when talking to Valentine, he gives this over-scrupulous speech.

To be free with you, I have; I don't care if I own
that;---nay more (I'm going to say a bold word now),
I never could meddle with a woman that had to do

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 166.

⁵² Alfred Bates, British Drama, Vol. XIV, p. 103.

⁵³ V. De Sola Pinto, Sir Charles Sedley. See note page 70.

with anybody else.⁵⁴

In nearly all the fops studied there is a notable effeminacy in their social qualities; however, this quality is carried to its best in Witwoud of The Way of the World. Our introduction to Witwoud is to discover that he has been given membership in a women's society, known as their cabal nights, organized to "meet by turns at one another's apartments, where they come together like the coroner's inquest, to sit upon the murdered reputations of the week."⁵⁵

Congreve painted what he saw. We may acknowledge that his characters "have got out of--what shall I call it?-- of cuckoldery--the Utopia of gallantry, whose pleasure is duty and manners perfect freedom." It is in the interpretation of this gallantry that Congreve excelled.⁵⁶

Sir Novelty is also quite anxious about his manners.

I was the first person in England that was complimented with the name of "Beau" which is a title I prefer before "Right Honorable," for that may be inherited, but this I extorted from the whole nation by my surprising mien and unexampled gallantry.⁵⁷

Like the memorable Sir Fopling, Lord Foppington is incapable of coming on the stage without a command for his

⁵⁴ William Congreve, Love For Love, in Twelve Famous Plays of Restoration and Eighteenth Century, edited by Cerf and Klopfer, p. 271.

⁵⁵ William Congreve, The Way of the World, in Cerf and Klopfer, op. cit., p. 302.

⁵⁶ Cambridge History of English Literature, Vol.VIII, p.178.

⁵⁷ Colley Cibber, Love's Last Shift, in Tupper and Tupper, op. cit., p. 224.

page or pages. His manner, too, is to draw attention to himself. On his first entrance he shows his pride by calling on the page to say "your lordship" to delight his own ears. The manner is so closely resulting from stupidity that these actions can be more clearly understood after the intelligence of the fop has been examined. It is enough to point out that the fop in his pompous, ostentatious manner is a true satire of the social foibles of his age. The manners are based on the code of the gentleman of the day who in turn based this on fashionable morality of the day--the result of Hobbism--easy, careless, superficial, ostentatious, pleasure-loving in all actions.

In the category of social elements that were satirized in these characters comes the imitation of the French not only in clothes, as I have pointed out, but also in manner of speaking. The French influence came in when Charles II came to the throne from France. The court of Louis XIV of France was famous for its brilliancy, and the exiled English courtiers retained this French influence in England. This French inheritance was so strong in the English court that one critic found it spreading through the kingdom.

The French influence spread from the Court and the fashionable circles of capital to the most cultured class in the provinces; it left its mark upon fashions and manners, the superficial side of life; it even penetrated to modes of feeling and thinking and through the language, as well as through the authority of precepts and aesthetic example, it fashioned or rather taught and en-

couraged certain habits and preferences of taste.⁵⁸

The court was filled with gay noblemen, beribboned, bewigged, perfumed in the best French style, imitating French wit and making a great flourish of their honor. Those who carried this enslavement to French ideals to the ridiculousness of excess were crystallized in caricature form by these dramatists as a satire against this habit. In the Prologue to The Man of Mode, Etherege points the finger of satire towards French ideas.

But I'm afraid that while to France we go,
To bring you home fine dresses, dance and show,
The stage, like you, will but more foppish grow.
* * * * *

'Tis by your follies that we players thrive,
As the physicians by diseases live.⁵⁹

One of the earliest of the Restoration plays to include a satire of imitation of the French was The Gentleman Dancing Master. While Mr. Paris, or Monsieur de Paris, who is "a vain coxcomb, and rich city heir, newly returned from France, and mightily affected with the French language and customs," is a strong satire, he is not a true fop. He brags that he knows all the beau monde and always refers to English gentlemen with French names, as Monsieur Tailleur and Monsieur Esmit for Mr. Taylor and Mr. Smith.⁶⁰ The

⁵⁸ Emile Legouis, History of English Literature, p. 5.

⁵⁹ George Etherege, The Man of Mode, in Tupper and Tupper, op. cit., p. 130.

⁶⁰ William Wycherley, The Gentleman Dancing Master, op. cit., p. 134.

English born Frenchman by self-adoption also condemns another man because his "tailor lives in Ludgate--his valet de chambre is no Frenchman--and he has been seen at noon-day to go into an English eating-house. He can't dance a step, nor sing a French song, nor swear a French oath, nor use the polite conversation."⁶¹ Monsieur de Paris touches the tendency of the Restoration towards imitation of the French.

For you must know, 'tis as ill breeding now to speak good Englis as to write good Englis, good sense, or a good hand.⁶²

In Buckingham's play The Rehearsal one character crystallizes the English attitude towards French aristocracy. Bayes, the playwright, in telling of his characters says: "Mark that I makes 'em both speak French to show their breeding!"⁶³

Not only does Sir Fopling wear the latest clothes from Paris, but he also adopts the code of the French gentleman. He hires a French valet de chambre, dances a courant, a bouree or minuet, or sings a ruelle, to which Dorimant remarks that "a ruelle is a pretty cage for a singing fop."⁶⁴

⁶¹ William Wycherley, The Gentleman Dancing Master, op. cit., p. 134.

⁶² Ibid., p. 145.

⁶³ Rochester, The Rehearsal, in Plays of Restoration and Eighteenth Century, edited by Dougald Macmillan and Howard Mumford Jones, p. 60.

⁶⁴ George Etherege, The Man of Mode, in Tupper and Tupper, op. cit., pp. 154-157.

In one scene Sir Fopling in great good humor acts more French than English. He talks of making love to faux-prudè and the demi-prudè and the coquetté. He tells of his bonne fortune and advises the company to leave their "damned manner of dancing and put on the French air." He suggests champagne and serenades with flambeaux. He tells Medley that it is more en cavalier to appear now and then in dessabillée.⁶⁵ In fact, he keeps up this half-French, half-English jargon till old Bellair asks, "What mumming spark is that?" Dorimant characterizes him,

He has no more excellence in his heels than in his head. He went to Paris a plain, bashful English blockhead, and is returned a fine undertaking French fop.⁶⁶

The French influence became lighter after the accession of James II, and one critic feels that Etherege anticipated the change in this play. In contrast with Sir Fopling, the exquisite infatuated with French fashions, Dorimant represents a more subdued and more national replica of the same type, for already the reaction against excess of foreign influence is here perceptible.⁶⁷ Late in the century this French element is touched lightly in Witwoud in The Way of the World, who refers to everything as le drole and continues to use French words and phrases showing his near re-

⁶⁵ Ibid., pp. 151-157.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 154.

⁶⁷ Émile Legouis, History of English Literature, p. 43.

lationship to Sir Fopling.

No doubt the affaires de coeur of the fop should not escape notice. Although the fop is usually unsuccessful in his amours, he is again satirizing the court affairs so prevalent in Charles' court. The immediate result of the Restoration was for the king and his friends to be "flagrantly industrious in the pursuit of pleasure."⁶⁸ This ideal resulted not only from the desire to rejoice for the Restoration of the monarchy, but also from the desire to kick-back both consciously and unconsciously at the former severity of the commonwealth. Famous personages who pursued this ideal were Charles II with Nell Gwyn, Lybelle Stuart, Lady Castlemaine, Congreve with Mrs. Bracegirdle, and even Pepys with Mrs. Clip. When the court came over from France, the courtiers brought the customs of the ceremonies and worship of love. The Count de Grammont describes the French pursuit of love when he and his friend enlist themselves in the services of two beauties.⁶⁹ These kinds of affairs grow until the mistresses of the seventeenth century French and English courts are famous. The fops satirize that same system except that the comic is introduced by the failure of the fop in his affairs.

In Love in a Wood Sir Simon Addleplot is always in pur-

⁶⁸ Cambridge History of English Literature, Vol. VIII, p.225.

⁶⁹ Memoirs of the Count of Grammont, p. 61.

suit of women of great fortunes but with no success. In Wycherley's The Plain Dealer the three near-fops, Novel, Major Old Fox, and Lord Plausible, fail in their loves. One of the most famous examples of Wycherley's fops who loses all is Sparkish in The Country Wife. Sparkish is engaged to marry Alithea, but after he introduces her to Harcourt, he loses her. He does not understand Harcourt's and Alithea's actions till she has married Harcourt.

Sir Fopling, of course, succumbs to this weakness of all true fops. In fact, Sir Fopling is the victim of a plot. He fails in his love suit to Mrs. Loveit because it was planned by Mrs. Loveit to use him as a foil.

Medley: Pray, how goes your business with Mrs. Loveit?
 Sir Fop.: You might have answered yourself in the hall last night. Dorimant, did you not see the advances she made me? I have been endeavoring a new song.⁷⁰

Sir Fopling continues to wait upon his supposed mistress, not knowing of the plot till the very end when Mrs. Loveit has to dismiss him roughly, and he attains the same fate as all the other fops. He is doomed to go unloved.

Sir Fop.: Shall I wait upon you, Madam?
 Mrs. Loveit: Legion of fools, as many devils take thee!⁷¹

Witwoud in The Way of the World waits on Millamant but to no avail for himself.

⁷⁰ George Etherege, The Man of Mode, in Tupper and Tupper, op. cit., p. 157.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 166.

Sir Novelty Fashion is duped as was Sir Fopling. Sir Novelty, seeing Narcissa beautiful and rich, pledges his services to her.

Sir Novelty: --- But this is an irresistible occasion. Madam, your most devoted slave. Sir, your most humble servant. Madam, I kiss your hands.⁷²

When Mrs. Flareit disguises herself as Narcissa, Sir Novelty swears his love to her and swears he'll never see Flareit again.⁷³ Naturally, he loses both Narcissa and his mistress, Mrs. Flareit.

Lord Foppington also falls victim to this unflinching fate of all fops. Lord Foppington loses his inamorata to his brother, young Fashion. But at the denouement, he philosophizes.

Now, for my part, I think the wisest a man can do with an aching heart is to put on a serene countenance ; for a philosophical air is the most becoming thing in the world to the face of a person of quality. I will therefore bear my disgrace like a great man, and let the people see I am above an affront.⁷⁴

The Fop's Intellect

The fop was socially peculiar to his age because of the artificiality of the time. Only in a period of strong

⁷² Colley Cibber, Love's Last Shift, in Tupper and Tupper, op. cit., p. 225.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 233.

⁷⁴ Sir John Vanbrugh, The Relapse, in Tupper and Tupper, op. cit., p. 294.

critical acumen, moreover, would it be possible for such a character to develop. In this "society comedy" it was necessary for the dramatist to evaluate critically his own audience, locate its weaknesses, embody these in comic form, and present them in comedy to those he imitated. It was this astute critical ability of the dramatist which allowed him to see fine shades of differences in his audience. The fop is a result of this sharp critical analysis. He is the nit-wit in a group of wits. His character is an appeal to the truly enlightened group; it is entertainment to the less enlightened. The character is neo-classical in its satire and refined cynicism.

The audience with its attention to correctness, nicety of manners, frivolity, and its adoration of wit, fashions, and gentlemanly qualities seems to have lent itself easily to satire on those who came just short of a sane interpretation of these terms.

Wit, indeed, was the final word in style and manners. The courtiers lay awake nights trying to form happy epigrams and repartees that they could use the next day. They were fond of comedy partly because its likely dialogue gave an exhibition of the game of wit at which they were all practising. And the drama could scarcely fail to be witty under the patronage of the king who "never said a foolish thing nor did a wise one." It was not only on the stage but in society that every action was capped by a pungent comment, an indelicacy by an innuendo and a follow by a witticism.⁷⁵

It was this society which, when it allowed itself ex-

⁷⁵ A. H. Thorndike, English Comedy, p. 276.

cesses, over-emphasizing sophistication and the trappings of gentility, formed the basis of the intellectual satire. The fop over-emphasized wit without having an understanding of it. He strained after wit, the fashionable mode of the time, and not being a man of wit showed his lack still more. This false virtuoso who aped the real virtuoso and failed because of a lack of intelligence shows the idea of comedy in vogue at that period when the only recognized sin was dullness, and he also demonstrated the critical ability of the dramatist.

It was clear that the centre of the new kind of comedy must be the Man of Wit and Fashion as he was conceived by the courtiers of Charles II, the ideal personage who had been to some extent embodied in the persons of such men as Rochester, Etherege, Sedley, and Buckhurst. The first and obvious method of making such a person an effective stage character was to contrast him with the false "pretenders to wit," the Chesterfields, Beau Hewitts, and other foolish moths who circled giddily round the lights of Whitehall.⁷⁷

As a means of comedy the fop was even used by the dramatists as a contrast with the true virtuoso.

In this comedy the "baser sort of men" have become those low on the intellectual scale. No longer is comedy a picture of the socially menial person, the country bumpkin, the obvious clown. Comedy has become urbane, aristocratic; she has "squeezed herself into the drawing-room." Reason and intellect are the essentials in this age, and intellectual inferiority in the gentleman class wears the

⁷⁷ V. De Sola Pinto, Sir Charles Sedley, p. 259.

dunce cap. The fop is a gentleman in all but the essentials; he imitates the manners, wit, and dress of the Restoration gallant without understanding his wit or his philosophy of living. The fop, missing a true understanding of the Restoration society, strains himself to fit in the fast, aristocratic society and overdoes the social but underdoes the intellectual. Because the Restoration dramatist could see the distinction between the real and the false, the fop became peculiarly a product of the critical attitude of his period. As Congreve said in his Dedication, he has the intention to depict not the gross fools "which are meant to be ridiculed in most of our comedies" but "some characters which would appear ridiculous, not so much through a natural folly (which is incorrigible and therefore not proper for the stage) as through an affected wit; a wit, which at the same time that it is affected, is also false." Then he added, because some critics failed to see the subtleties, "this play (The Way of the World) had been acted two or three days, before some of these hasty judges could find the leisure to distinguish betwixt the character of a Witwoud and a Truewit."⁷⁸

The lack of intellect in the fop and his egotism, which blind him and keep him from seeing that he is not a wit, result in clever satires on him and on the age which allowed

⁷⁸ Congreve's Dedication, quoted in G. H. Nettleton, English Dramas of Restoration and Eighteenth Century, p. 129.

him to develop. Etherege assails this false virtuoso in his Epilogue to The Man of Mode.

Most modern wits such monstrous fools have shown,
 They seem'd not of heav'n's making, but their own.
 Those nauseous harlequins in farce may pass,
 But there goes more to a substantial ass.
 Something of man must be exposed to view
 That, gallants, they may more resemble you.
 Sir Fopling is a fool so nicely writ,
 The ladies would mistake him for a wit;
 And when he sings, talks loud, and cocks would cry,
 "I vow, methinks he's pretty company!"
 As he, took pains to graft upon his kind
 True fops help nature's work and go to school,
 To file and finish God A'mighty' fool.
 Yet none Sir Fopling him, or him can call;
 He's knight o'th'shire, and represents ye all.⁷⁹

As an intellectual satire the fop is not less interesting. His lack of intellect is found in every representative of his race.

One of the early fops in Restoration drama to portray this intellectual inferiority was Mr. Dapperwit. Much can be noted in his name. One noteworthy sign of this lack of intelligence can be seen in the utter imperviousness to insults. When Sir Simon says he'll take no wine but asks everyone to spare Mr. Dapperwit's company, Vincent answers, "You do us a double favour, to take him and leave the wine."⁸⁰ Mr. Dapperwit misses the point completely.

Another noteworthy example of the stupidity of fops

⁷⁹ George Etherege, The Man of Mode, in Tupper and Tupper, op. cit., p. 166.

⁸⁰ William Wycherley, Love in a Wood, in W. C. Ward, op. cit., p. 25.

can be found in Novel in The Plain Dealer. In a conversation with Olivia, Novel succeeds in showing his lack of intelligence.

Novel: I say, the rogue, that he may be the only wit in company, will let nobody else talk, and--

Olivia: Ay, those fops who love to talk all themselves are of all things my aversion.

Novel: Then you'll let me speak, madam, sure.
The rogue, I say, will force his jest upon you; and I hate a jest that's forced upon a man, as much as a glass.⁸¹

In this category Sparkish should be placed close to the top. His lack of intelligence caused him to lose Alithea. This stupidity has already been pointed out. Horner remarks of Sparkish,

One that, by being in the company of men of sense would pass for one.⁸²

Harcourt also remarks that Sparkish "ravishes our conversation" and tells nothing. Dorilant says that he is "snubbed, checked, and abused, and still hangs on."

After Sparkish introduces Harcourt and Alithea, Harcourt says to Alithea that he was an enemy of marriage till now. Sparkish thinks that Harcourt hates to lose his friendship through marriage. Sparkish is utterly dull; he fails to realize that Harcourt says this as a compliment to Alithea because he loves her himself. When Alithea tells Sparkish that Harcourt speaks disparagingly of him, he says

⁸¹ William Wycherley, The Plain Dealer, in Tupper and Tupper, op. cit., p. 403.

⁸² William Wycherley, The Country Wife, in W. C. Ward, op. cit., p. 87.

that "'tis but in jest." Sparkish is over-talkative and likes to control the conversation with what he thinks is wit. He thinks by his display of verbosity that he is aping the wits and is one of them. Meanwhile, they make fun of him. His anxiety to please, to be one of the wits, to be humorous, and to bow to the manners of the period causes him to ignore the possibilities of jealousy and, hence, to be gullible.

Sir Fopling, who is popularly known as an "admirable piece of emptiness" or a person of "great acquired follies," rates low on the intellectual scale of the fops. Medley says that he is "like many others, beholding to his education for making him so eminent a coxcomb."⁸³ Sir Fopling seems to be able to see and desire everything lacking in the real values. His idea of the complete gentleman as one who ought to "dress well, dance well, fence well, have a genius for love letters, an agreeable voice for a chamber, be very amorous, something discreet, but not overconstant"⁸⁴ shows his entire thought to be focused on social success. Mrs. Loveit is able to use Sir Fopling as her tool; because he is easily deceived, he shows that he has given the situation very little thought.

The intellectual immaturity with the accompanying

⁸³ George Etherege, The Man of Mode, in Tupper and Tupper, op. cit., p. 135.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 135.

emphasis on gentlemanly accomplishments, the overdoing of the social and the underdoing of the intellectual are vividly noted in Buckingham's play The Rehearsal. Two characters discuss the approval of a new play.

Johnson: Aye, so do some of our city wits, too; but they are of the new kind of wits.

Smith: New kind! what kind is that?

Johnson: Why your virtuosi, your civil persons, your drolls--fellows that scorn to imitate nature but are given altogether to elevate and surprise.

Smith: Elevate and surprise? Prithee make me understand the meaning of that.

Johnson: Nay, by my troth, that's a hard matter; ----'Tis a phrase they have got among them to express their no meaning by. I'll tell you as well as I can what it is. Let me see; 'tis fighting, loving, sleeping, rhyming, dying, dancing, singing, crying, and everything but thinking and sense.⁸⁵

Because he strives so hard after nothing as do all the others, young Maggot in A True Widow can also wear the dunce cap. One conversation about him and his character is seen.

Bellamour: Amongst the rest of fops there is young Maggot, one whom his uncle, whose heir he is, bred at the Inns-of-Court and intended for the law. But he has left that and is run wit-mad; thinks of nothing, endeavours at nothing but to be a wit and a lover, and both in spite of nature.

Stanmore: And though he has made love and wit his whole business, he has gotten no farther yet than to be thought a wit by the fools, and an ass by the witty men.⁸⁶

The famous Tattle in Love for Love successfully shows

⁸⁵ Duke of Buckingham, The Rehearsal, in Macmillan and Jones, op. cit., p. 53.

⁸⁶ Thomas Shadwell, A True Widow, in George Saintsbury, op. cit., p. 131.

his lack of intelligence in being tricked into telling his secrets. He is also not discerning enough to recognize Valentine's feigned madness. Jeremy is able to trick him into marrying Mrs. Frail. When he realizes he is married, he bewails,

But this is the most cruel thing, to marry one does not know how, nor why nor wherefore. --- The devil take me if ever I was so much concerned at anything in my life.⁸⁷

Witwoud is another fop who can be written down as an intellectual loss. He has the characteristic in common with Sparkish of being utterly unable to grasp an insinuation. Witwoud enters the play calling upon all to pity him in a manner of surplus affectation and announces that his fool half-brother is coming. Mirabell suggests that as he is his half-brother "'tis possible he may be but half a fool."⁸⁸ Witwoud calls this le drole! At the end of the play when the plot is finally untangled, Witwoud fails entirely to get the score.

I' gad, I understand nothing of the matter; I'm in a maze yet, like a dog in a dancing-school.⁸⁹

Sir Novelty is extremely humorous in his failure to understand the core of the action and the speech. He takes his place beside Sparkish, Sir Fopling, and Witwoud in ac-

⁸⁷ William Congreve, Love for Love, in Cerf and Klopfer, op. cit., p. 336.

⁸⁸ William Congreve, The Way of the World, in Tupper and Tupper, op. cit., p. 304.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 332.

cepting insults as compliments. Worthy says to him,

Oh, Sir, there are some that take so much notice of you that the town takes notice of them for it. Sir Nov.: How of them, Tom, upon my account? Oh, gad, I would not be the ruin of any lady's reputation for the world.⁹⁰

Lord Foppington's attitude toward thinking shows his intelligence. He strives for wit without realizing it is the result of thought. He is unable to abide a quiet country life.

For 'tis impossible to be quiet, without thinking; now thinking is to me the greatest fatigue in the world.⁹¹

Lord Foppington feels that to read a book is "to entertain one's self with the forced product of another man's brain."⁹² Lord Foppington displays the same amount of intelligence that his ancestors have shown. Like the others he thinks the lady, Amanda, loves him and does not realize that he is acting quite like a fool. When Amanda boxes his ears, he is quite surprised. When Loveless stabs him, the doctor is easily able to make him think he is dying. His pretense to wit does not save him from becoming the easy prey of his brother. He is gullible when his brother and Lory, the servant, pry from him the knowledge of his intended marriage. Having all his attention riveted on himself, he is incapable

⁹⁰ Colley Cibber, Love's Last Shift, in Tupper and Tupper, op. cit., p. 222.

⁹¹ Sir John Vanbrugh, The Relapse, in Tupper and Tupper, op. cit., p. 263.

⁹² Ibid., p. 263.

of seeing and understanding life about him.

The poverty of intellect in the fop is paraded by him in a variety of ways. His imperviousness to insults, his inability to get the point in any conversation or situation exhibit this characteristic. There are yet other means by which he is at great pains to show his dullness. His language is imitative and stereotyped. Instead of fitting his expression to the sense of the situation he has a language pattern that he uses. Incapable of real witticisms and innuendos, he develops a set of expressions with which he tires his listeners. He mimics men of sense, and memorising the phrases and fads of the day, carries these to excess.

"A Pox" or "A pox on it" are the favorite by-words of Mr. Dapperwit, Sir Fopling, Tattle, young Maggot, and Sparkish. These are some of the common expressions of the stage, but these fops use them at all times, fittingly or unfittingly. Other stereotyped expressions are Mr. Dapperwit's "Let me perish," Sir Novelty's "Stop my vitals" and "Strike me dumb," and later Lord Foppington's "Stap my vitals" and other "a" for "o" substitutions and with his usual liaisons as "What dost thou think on't?"⁹³ and "'Twere hard."⁹⁴ These phrases or affectations are re-

⁹³ Sir John Vanbrugh, The Relapse, in Tupper and Tupper, op. cit., p. 259.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 259.

peated and repeated probably because the fop, being a nit-wit striving to be a wit, needs as many stock phrases to use as possible in order that he may strain his faculties for real witticisms. These practices could almost be said to have been the result of a hint in Jonson's play Every Man Out of His Humour in which Carlo Buffone instructs Sogliardo on the ways of being a gentleman.

Another affectation in the speech of these vain, strutting, half-witted fellows is the forced use of tiresome similitudes. Witwoud's desire to flaunt his intellectual powers or to be a real wit causes him to adopt this form of speech. Mrs. Milamant finally asks him to "truce with your similitudes."

Mrs. Milamant: O, I have denied myself airs today.

I have walked as fast through the crowd---

Witwoud: As a favorite just disgraced; and with as few followers.

Mrs. Milamant: Dear Mr. Witwoud, truce with your similitudes; for I'm as sick of 'em----

Witwoud: As a physician of good air---

Mr. Dapperwit is another fop badly affected by this manner of speech. After many such speeches as "I hidemy mistress with as much care as a spark of the town does his money from his dun," or "that were as hard to bar a young person in the pulpit, the fifth of November, railing at the Church of Rome----" Poor Ronger, his listener, has to plead,

Nay, I bar more similitudes.⁹⁵

⁹⁵ William Wycherley, Love In A Wood, in Ward, op.cit., p.59.

On entering a company, the fop is effusive with affection and his welcomes are usually repetitions. Sir Fopling is particularly addicted to the over-affectionate greeting.

Sir Fopling: Page, wait without. Madam, I kiss your hand.⁹⁶

Later.

Sir Fopling: Dear Bellair!
* * * * *

Sir Fopling: Dorimant, let me kiss thee.⁹⁷

Sir Novelty is not less effusive.

Sir Novelty: Ladies, your humble servant. Dear Loveless, let me embrace thee. I am overjoyed at thy good fortune, stop my vitals.⁹⁸

Such mannerisms as these, consciously developed by the fops for pretentious parades into the center of conversation and company, are indications in themselves of his true intellect.

Since the fop is a product of a keenly critical age, an age that examined everything with a cold, unemotional reason, any inability of the fop to analyze critically and to see true values would satirize the same lack in the period. Because the Restoration stage mirrored the Restoration society, any weakness in one who was a gentleman in all but the essentials would be a direct reflection on society.

⁹⁶ George Etherege, The Man of Mode, in Tupper and Tupper, op. cit., p. 145.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 153.

⁹⁸ Colley Cibber, Love's Last Shift, in Tupper and Tupper, op. cit., p. 243.

The fop did lack any sense of value, especially in his attitude toward women. A true test of the critical acumen of the dramatist lay in this satire. The Restoration dramatists writing about the first ten years' debauch of Charles' court saw a chance for corrective satire in this character. The fop was always given the lady who was loose in her morals. The gentleman in all but the essentials was matched with the lady in all but the essentials. The striving of the fop to have this lady who, he thought, was above reproach exhibits his intellectual insufficiency. The satire is even more efficacious when it is remembered that the dramatist of the period wrote the play with the heroine, who was to be played by his beloved, as a completely moral lady. One case of this stupidity is Sparkish and his beloved, Alithea, who sees much of Mr. Horner and marries Mr. Harcourt before Sparkish, still believing she is above reproach, realizes she is not marrying him.⁹⁹ Sir Fopling and Mrs. Loveit are also examples. She uses him as a foil, and he follows her with the superlatives of praise not realizing her character.¹⁰⁰ Young Maggot runs mad after wit and love in the form of Gertrude, the far from respectable daughter of Lady Cheatly.¹⁰¹ Sir Novelty and his

⁹⁹ William Wycherley, The Country Wife.

¹⁰⁰ George Etherege, The Man of Mode.

¹⁰¹ Thomas Shadwell, A True Widow, in George Saintsbury, op. cit., p. 214.

mistress, Flareit, carry on the tradition of the fops.¹⁰² Lord Foppington pursues Hoyden, who is already married to his brother. She accepts Lord Foppington, and he, ignorant of the true state of affairs, remains happy. When Hoyden leaves him for his brother, and he discovers he has been duped, he still sees not the disgraceful implication and says,

Now, for my part, I think the wisest thing a man can do with an aching heart is to put on a serene countenance, for a philosophical air is the most becoming thing in the world to the face of a person of quality.¹⁰³

The last characteristic is the one which is the root of all foppery--egotism. It is pride and egotism which has made the fop develop an over-nicety of manners to ape the French customs. Because the French court was the most famous court in the world at that time, these fops thought they could develop some fame by imitating the French. Many of the affaires de coeur which the fop entered into left him the jilted one because he entered these only to cater to his own egotism. Because all this attention was focused entirely on himself, he failed completely to use his wit and judgment in any direction. This egotism and excessive pride all fops had in common. It is the cause of their

¹⁰² Colley Cibber, Love's Last Shift.

¹⁰³ Sir John Vanbrugh, The Relapse, in Tupper and Tupper, op. cit., p. 294.

fopism.

One of the earliest of the long line of fops, Mr. Dapperwit, is characterized as a "brisk, conceited, half-witted fellow of the town."¹⁰⁴ An example of his extreme egotism is his conversation with Lydia in which he tells her of the different kinds of wit, ending with the judge wit.

Dapperwit: Your judge-wit, or critic, is all these together, and yet has the wit to be more of them: he can think, speak, write, as well as the rest but scorns (himself a judge) to be judged by posterity: he rails at all the other classes of wits, and his wit lies in damning all but himself:-- he is your true wit.

Lydia: Then, I suspect you are of his form.

Dapperwit: I cannot deny it, madam.¹⁰⁵

Novel is extremely at pains to mention his good reputation and brag about his individual character. Novel is always bragging about being entertained with such kindness. When he meets Olivia he is anxious to acquaint her with his social successes.

Novel: Well, madam, d'ye know whence I come now?
* * * * *

Novel: From a place where they have treated me with so much civility and kindness, a pox on them! that I could hardly get away to you, dear madam.¹⁰⁶

Sparkish has more than his share of egotism. He tries to act important and says to his friends that he has left an

¹⁰⁴ William Wycherley, Love In a Wood, in W. C. Ward, op. cit., p. 10.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 41.

¹⁰⁶ William Wycherley, The Plain Dealer, ibid., p. 400.

earl to dine with them. They hastily thrust him out of the room and tell him not to disappoint the earl and laugh happily to be rid of him. The highest degree of egotism is displayed by Sparkish. At one time he says, "I love to be envied." At another time he makes this statement while pondering over Alithea's marriage to Harcourt:

But who could have thought a woman could have been false to me? By the world, I could not have thought it.¹⁰⁷

Sir Fopling is extremely proud of his French clothes, bearing, and accent and takes pains to flaunt them before all. He asks if anyone has noticed his calèche; then he observes that there are so few delicate enough to observe the bel air of his calèche and that England is far too grossier.¹⁰⁸ He always draws attention to his clothes and never tires of enumerating the French makers of each article.

Sir Fopling considers himself to be quite the beau to all the ladies. When he and Mrs. Loveit walk in the park, he condemns others for any lack in dress and says that only the beau monde should be allowed to walk there, meaning himself.¹⁰⁹ When he discovers that Mrs. Loveit has never cared for him, he dismisses her with that flippancy characteristic of the egotist. Then he loudly decides not to have

¹⁰⁷ William Wycherley, The Country Wife, in W. C. Ward, op. cit., p. 343.

¹⁰⁸ George Etherege, The Man of Mode, in Tupper and Tupper, op. cit., p. 146.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 149.

an affair with Mrs. Loveit because an intrigue would "throw away that vigour on which I mean I shall shortly court to the whole sex in a ballet."¹¹⁰

Maggot is characterized as "a coxcomb conceited of his beauty, wit, and breeding, thinking all women in love with him; always admiring and talking of himself."¹¹¹ Bellamour aptly pictures him in one speech.

Bellamour: But there is another coxcomb of that extreme vanity, that Nature, amongst all her variety of fools, has not produced the like; he draws all lines of discourse to the centre of his own person, and never was known to speak, but "I did," or "I said," was at the beginning or end of it.¹¹²

Congreve's fops also have this egotism found in the other dramas of the period. Tattle in Love for Love brags that he is the famous Turk-Tattle,¹¹³ who was quite the lady-killer. He is over-anxious to be known as a famous lover and beau.

Sir Novelty has so much of self-worship that he even angles for compliments from others by depreciating himself. Sir Novelty is one of the best braggarts on the stage. Of course he often brags about inconsequential qualities, but he is delighted to have these characteristics. At one time

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p. 165.

¹¹¹ Thomas Shadwell, A True Widow, in George Saintsbury, op. cit., p. 126.

¹¹² Ibid., p. 273.

¹¹³ William Congreve, Love for Love, in Cerf and Klopfer, op. cit., p. 273.

he says that he was "the first person in England to be complimented with the name of 'Beau'" and that he exhorted this title from the whole nation by his "surprising mien and unexampled gallantry." He also brags that he always makes two plays during an evening and always sits with his back to the stage to draw the attention of the public.¹¹⁴ He loves to show off with his outlandish clothes, his coach and equipage, and his odd performances.

When Sir Novelty is raised to the peerage, his pride receives an added expansion. He calls on his page to say "your lordship" to delight his ears. Then with an overflow of joy from his own pride he says,

'Tis an unspeakable pleasure to be a man of quality,
strike me dumb!---- My Lord!---- Your Lordship! My
Lord Foppington!¹¹⁵

Lord Foppington is so completely self-interested that he is incapable of any affection for anyone else. He would not even read a book because it is the forced product of another man's brain. He cares not for Hoyden or for his brother. In fact, he values himself so highly that he thinks everyone else does, too. At one time when young Fashion asks for some money, Lord Foppington says,

Nature has made some difference 'twixt you and I.
Fash.: Yes, she has made you older---

¹¹⁴ Colley Cibber, Love's Last Shift, in Tupper and Tupper, op. cit., p. 224.

¹¹⁵ Sir John Vanbrugh, The Relapse, in Tupper and Tupper, op. cit., p. 258.

Lord Fop.: That is not all Tam.

Fash.: Why, what is there else?

Lord Fop.: (Looking first upon himself, than upon his brother) Ask the ladies.¹¹⁶

However, Lord Foppington's pride carries him one step too far, for when his brother remarks, "Thou art the prince of coxcombs," Lord Foppington unconsciously with a burst of pride replies, "Sir--I am praud of being at the head of so prevailing a party."¹¹⁷

When The Way of the World failed on the English stage, the fop was dead. Two years before, in 1698, both the play and the character had been dealt death blows by Jeremy Collier in his attack on the English stage. Both the satire in the character and the sermon of the clergyman were aimed at the vices of society, and who can say which was the more effective?

Writing for a limited audience, and coldly satirizing the weaknesses of that audience, the Restoration dramatists found comedy in "holding up the glass." Jonson and Moliere had taught them how to hold it. It was in this very audience that the fops mingled, displaying their social yet très gauche graces and their intellectual and social disgraces. So select was the audience that, when one theatre had a

116 Ibid., p. 269.

117 Ibid., p. 269.

successful play, the other was closed. Made up of the court society, the audience was limited, educated, quick for wit, and profligate enough to be the basis of the satire in the plays it was witnessing. It was in this narrow little playhouse where one class ruled and a king's laugh was the cue for applause¹¹⁸ that this character lived, strutted his hour, died with the people in whom he had his raison d'être.

By this character the dramatist satirized many of the conditions he saw in Restoration society. Fashion was worshipped in that age, and the fop adored at the Altar of Fashion. Society moved with a strict code of manners that required gentility in all actions, and the fop was perfection in carrying this out, even though the standard of doing was applied to doing nothing at all. Charles and his courtiers, having once been at the court of France, retained many of the French customs and clothes; and the fop had more French words, French valets, and French manners than anyone, until it was said of one fop that he was born a plain, bashful English blockhead and returned from Paris a fine undertaking French fop.¹¹⁹

Even with his French training, however, the fop could not conceal that he was a blockhead. It was through this characteristic that the Restoration dramatist was able to

¹¹⁸ Allardyce Nicoll, op. cit., p. 73.

¹¹⁹ George Etherege, The Man of Mode, in Tupper and Tupper, op. cit., p. 154.

use him as a powerful satire on those who, like him, were perfection in all but the essentials. In this satire the fop showed how well he was a product of the acute, critical attitude of the period.

The fop never realized that he was usually the one on whom all the jokes were played. He chose always the woman of doubtful quality and never realized the folly of his choice. He always could be depended upon to miss the real point, usually because, being an extreme egotist, he had his attention focused on himself. His intellectual inferiority was unpardonable in this age when the only sin was Dullness.

After the turn of the century and after Collier had given his attack on the stage, the spirit of the comedy changed. The mirror no longer reflected the court of Charles because he and most of his courtiers were dead, and the reigning couple lacked the same elements. Most of the Restoration dramatists were dead. Congreve had put away his pen after the failure of The Way of the World, and Wycherley was very old. The audience too had changed. The bourgeois class had crept in the back door, bringing with it a love for strictly moral plays, sentimentality, and slower wit. The dramatist had to please his audience. Gradually he became moral, he became less witty, he became sentimental. The dramatist still mirrored his audience, but the audience had changed, and with this change to a middle class, a commercial class, the fop disappeared.

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