

DISCOURSE AND POWER IN *THE WAY OF THE WORLD*

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I. SENTIMENTALISM, PROBABILISM, LIBERTINISM

Congreve's *The Way of the World* has been regarded as a proto-sentimental comedy, written partly in response to Collier's attack on its author.¹ Such an assumption receives support from the popularity of the play on the late eighteenth-century stage, despite a disappointing opening in 1700.² But I think that we can only accurately call the play sentimental if by that vague term we intend a more essentialist view of character than we find in Wycherley or Etherege.³ In the portrayal of Dorimant in *The Man of Mode*, the unresolved and morally honest ambivalences of Etherege's ending depend in part on our ignorance of Dorimant's true character or motives; and given his actions through the play, we cannot reasonably prognosticate a satisfactory country retirement. By contrasting Mirabell with Dorimant or Horner, we might feel reasonably safe in predicting how Mirabell will behave in future, because he does not present us with the same conundrum as his older cousins.

Nevertheless, as in *Love for Love*, Congreve is scrupulously unsentimental about the hermeneutical problems of discovering and judging character and motive, and Maximillian E. Novak has recently argued that the figure of the hieroglyph in the earlier play portends such difficulties.⁴ Moreover, Congreve unhesitatingly confronts the implied political reality that, in the process of sifting through and among the modes of discourse that constitute our social and natural lives, we can never escape from the relations of power in which we are inevitably entangled.⁵ Memory and language are the necessary conditions of our social and historical being. Only at the cost of denying our historical condition and finitude can we create fictions of autonomy that appear to free us from social and natural anxiety, that is, the fear of others and the fear of death. It follows, too, that we must obliterate memory and discourse (an impossibility) if we are to escape mortality and purge ourselves of social, legal, and matrimonial obligations. Part of

Congreve's intention, indeed, is to force home the impossibility or stupidity of suppressing memory or language in the hope of attaining such autonomy. Only if we cultivate and maintain a studied consciousness can we achieve a kind of relative freedom, while the inescapable nature of memory (both individual and social) and the necessity of discourse always threaten to invade that contingent and hard-won liberty, because they remind us of our mortality and our irrevocably social condition.⁶ Our mortality dissipates our fictions of unsullied youth (fictions of "natural" freedom), and our social condition constrains our fictions of social autonomy and political freedom (fictions of "artificial" freedom).

Since Descartes's *Les Passions de l'Âme* (1649), a consciousness of our natural powers was commonly parsed in terms of a discourse of the passions;⁷ and, since a knowledge of our social powers requires the apt manipulation of ordinary language, and legal and political discourse, *The Way of the World* is as much a play about reading as anything else.⁸ The intelligence of the characters, their studied freedom, can be judged, it is true, according to the rather vague formulas of "wit," but this must entail more than setting off the truewits and witwouds in some tabulated scheme.⁹ The characters' manipulation of language—as in all neoclassical discourse—represents their ability to perceive proper distinctions between and among objects and ideas: "wit" thus appears not only as a feature of discourse but as a judgment of discourse that signals apt judgments about the world and entails a proper view of language in relation to persons, things, events, and ideas.¹⁰ Moreover, the reader or spectator must engage in this world of judgment or discrimination because "character" is itself constituted as a feature of discourse. Character thus defines its will, its freedom as against other characters by virtue of manipulating language in distinctive fashion and of being understood—or read—in terms of that manipulation.¹¹ The ability to understand and wield language, to discriminate among levels of discourse thus becomes an essential tool by which character can win the contingent freedom Congreve offers at the end of the play.

"Reading" assumed a peculiar urgency in the epistemological climate of the Restoration for writers who understood the complex of relations among history, memory, and language, disturbed and heightened by scepticism. Locke typified his age by admitting the sceptical crisis and yet proposing a contingent response in the form of probabilism. "Probability" became the criterion of judging

signs, a means of containing the incipient anarchy of unmitigated scepticism. As Locke has it:

Upon these grounds depends the *Probability* of any Proposition: And as the conformity of our Knowledge, as the certainty of Observations, as the frequency and constancy of Experience, and the number and credibility of Testimonies, do more or less agree, or disagree with it, so is any Proposition in itself, more or less probable.¹²

To recognize the probabilist milieu in which Congreve worked is to defuse a pertinent debate between two noted Congreve scholars. Aubrey Williams is right to remind our secular age of the deeply-held or deeply-forged Christian assumptions which pervaded the seventeenth century;¹³ but Williams's argument suffers from a number of historical and methodological weaknesses. First, he fails adequately to distinguish those theologies that were more anxious to read the workings of Providence into daily events than others. If McAdoo's and Shapiro's accounts of Anglicanism and broad church sentiment are to be trusted, the majority of orthodox Christians did not seem to suffer from the kind of anxiety that Williams must postulate for most, if not all, of Congreve's audience, particularly if, as he says, Dryden and Pope are "representative."¹⁴ Moreover, Williams tends to conflate aesthetic forms and providential ideas. M. H. Abrams and Frank Kermode have argued for metaphorical relationships between Christian tropes of history and literary form. While the Aristotelian sense of plot may always serve for the Christian reading of history, the Aristotelian *telos* does not necessarily argue for an explicit *eschaton*, as Williams desires.¹⁵

Second, Williams's dualistic method posits a simple opposition between Epicureanism and Christianity.¹⁶ Not only, however, had Erasmus, Gassendi, Charleton, and others proposed and effected a marriage between Epicurean ethics and Christian dogma, but, more importantly, the methods that the neo-Epicurean canon made available to scientists are the very methods that theologians used to combat complete scepticism about the reliability of the Biblical text.¹⁷ Unwittingly, Williams himself provides examples of those common criteria of judgment, for the search for signs of God's Providence employs the same methods and criteria that men used in other fields of empirical enquiry. Williams cites, for example, Isaac Barrow's *Sermons Preached on Several Occasions*,

in which Barrow lists seven “characteristic marks of God’s hand.”¹⁸ Barrow participates fully in the probabilist method, as these sermons suggest: we must induce God’s invisible workings by constructing probable inferences from visible signs.¹⁹ Nor should we forget that Barrow was closely associated with Isaac Newton’s early career at Cambridge.²⁰ So there is good reason to support that, if Congreve were a perfectly orthodox Christian and had read Barrow, he might have been as much interested in the hermeneutical problems of discovering God’s workings in the world as in the assertion that God does indeed effect history. Such an interest would make Congreve no less orthodox.

Novak, in his turn, has simplified matters in resisting Williams’s thesis. For the notion that Congreve was a libertine only undercuts Williams’s emphasis on Christianity if we presume that Congreve was an ethical libertine in the tradition of Théophile de Viau, a tradition which, according to Antoine Adam, lost most of its force in 1623, when Viau was arrested.²¹ Although in his book Novak allows considerable distance between Viau’s libertinism and libertine attitudes of the late seventeenth century, Adam distinguishes more clearly between three different kinds of seventeenth-century libertinism: “le libertinage scandaleux,” epitomized by Theophile de Viau; “le libertinage érudit,” epitomized in the circle whose mentor was Gassendi; and a vaguer “libertinage subtil et secret” which also characterized a small portion of late seventeenth-century libertine thought.²² I have argued elsewhere that the kinds of philosophic and reconstructive scepticism we find in Restoration England owe a great deal to Gassendi, who presided over the group which met at the Dupuys.²³ Popkin, writing of these *libertins érudits*, quotes a delightful letter describing one of the group’s “débauches”:

M. Naudé, librarian of Cardinal Mazarin, intimate friend of M. Gassendy, as he is of mine, has arranged for all three of us to go and sup and sleep in his home at Gentilly next Sunday, provided that it will be only the three of us, and that we will have a débauche; but God knows what a débauche! M. Naudé regularly drinks only water, and he has never tasted wine. M. Gassendy is so delicate that he would not dare drink it, and believes that his body would burn, if he drank it. This is why I can say of one and the other this verse of Ovid “He avoids wine, the teetotaller praises water without wine.” As for me I can only throw powder on the writings of these great men. I drink very little, and nevertheless it will be a débauche, but a

philosophical one, and perhaps something more. For all three of us, being cured of superstition and freed from the evils of scruples, which is the tyrant of consciences, we will perhaps go almost to the holy place. A year ago, I made this voyage to Gentilly with M. Naudé, I alone with him. There were no other witnesses, and there should not have been any. We spoke most freely about everything without scandalizing a soul.²⁴

We can not easily reach the conclusion that the circle was determinedly antireligious: of Naudé and Patin, Popkin writes, "it is impossible to determine" what their views were; "they may have been true libertins, or they may have been mild fideists, who stayed on the Catholic side out of fear of Protestant dogmatism."²⁵ Although La Mothe Le Vayer was a total sceptic in regard to secular matters, he was a fideist in matters of faith, such that to doubt the word of God would be to deny God's grace.²⁶ And Gassendi, we know, though a sceptic, contributed to the mitigated scepticism of the new scientific climate and was never impugned as irreligious. In fact, Isaac Barrow could well have read and understood Gassendi's method and integrated it into his scientific and theological procedures. In short, the contribution of *le libertinage érudit* to the texture of English thought and method after 1650, not least by its contributions to neo-Epicureanism, was probably immense (although difficult to establish by simple historical proofs). Thus, by a curious irony, both Novak's and Williams's positions in their debate seem to depend on a modern—and thus anachronistic—divorce between matters spiritual and secular, a divorce which Isaac Barrow's career, for one, resists.²⁷

II. READING AND POWER

To effect a rapprochement between Williams and Novak is to reemphasize that Congreve is indeed perfectly typical of his milieu. Both his last plays are about reading in the sense we have been considering. And in both, Congreve permits us to ground the mass of linguistic and semiological uncertainties in a privileged moment of natural action, a gesture, although more obviously and crudely in *Love for Love*. In that play, the world of uncertainties is resolved—at least temporarily—by the crucial moment in which Valentine's and Angelica's uncertainties about each other are dissolved by pure gesture: Valentine attempts to sign the deed relinquishing his claims in order to secure Angelica's happiness (as he believes); and Angelica seizes and "tears the paper," as Congreve's

directions have it (*Love for Love*, 5.480–91).²⁸ Although Williams may be right to propose an eschatological reading of this “judgment” scene, we must also admit a perfectly ordinary forensic concern with evidences.²⁹ Pure action finally becomes the only trustworthy evidence of individual intentions, all the more so since we have already been prepared for these crucial gestures in act 5 by earlier ones in act 4. After hearing of Valentine’s “madness,” Angelica arrives to visit him: Scandal carefully scrutinizes her manner and recognizes (despite her assertions) that she is concerned, but she sees him “wink and smile” to Jeremy, and this alerts her to the ruse to entrap her (*Love for Love*, 4.36–47).

In *The Way of the World*, the distinctions among the relative levels of discourse with which we are confronted are not as simply resolved as in the earlier play, and much of its achievement derives from the greater complexity that results. The difficulty of discriminating among levels of discourse, and of discovering and interpreting natural and social signs is as much our problem as the characters’, and the consequence is to involve us in the play’s world of reading and force home the difficulty of creating a fiction of freedom lying outside, beyond, or above discourse itself. We ourselves must develop the kind of perspicacity that, in the appropriate characters, appears as wit. And, as I have intimated earlier, the constitution of character by his or her language (in that character, in a very real sense, is discourse) also shows us each character’s consciousness of the prisonhouse of language and the necessity of using words intelligently. Such a view of representation assumes that knowledge of character is essentially external: we can only infer inner qualities from observing outer qualities; we know character by judging wit, but the externalism of the process also admits other kinds of external signs—in others and in the world—that may prove more reliable in some senses than the way characters speak. Unless guaranteed by an unusual weight of social agreement, words can never be fully trusted.

Congreve’s scepticism about the efficacy of ordinary language manifests itself in a kind of linguistic saturation or redundancy. Millamant’s magnificent entry is orchestrated by Witwoud’s unconsidered and intrusive similes, witty enough perhaps, but disturbingly without regard for appropriateness or genuine discovery or invention.³⁰ Millamant complains against him and then proceeds to bewail the barrage of letters she must endure: “I am persecuted with letters,” she cries, “I hate letters. Nobody knows

how to write letters; and yet one has 'em, one does not know why. They serve to pin up one's hair" (2.324–27). Part of her purpose is to deflect the sense of her vulnerability to others' (especially men's) designs, but nevertheless these designs operate in a world in which a superfluity of speech allows Millamant to pin up her hair with verse.³¹

The answer, of course, is not to dispense with language altogether, but rather to propose a social economy (Lady Wishfort speaks of her "economy of face") that can describe and enclose the natural and artificial realms of discourse. To submit entirely to one or the other is either to be trapped in the natural world of human passion and desire or to find oneself caught in an endless web of words. Congreve's social imperative requires a balance: we are indeed animated by common human impulses, while our conscious control of discourse allows us to distance ourselves from the immediacy of our appetites, thus permitting us to engage productively in social rituals, artificial though they may be. This imperative does not assume—or allow—a simple divorce between appearance and nature (as Norman Holland implies), but holds that we can codify and understand systems of signification that provide at some level a genuine insight into the natural realm.³² We are back again with Sextus Empiricus's indicative signs, the most persistent example of which is that blushing is a sign of shame.³³ Since Sextus's model becomes part of a larger Restoration myth for language as a whole, it is striking to find in Congreve's play a peculiar fascination with the act of blushing, given that words can obscure as much as they reveal.

It follows that, almost as much as in *The Plain Dealer*, we begin on the wrong foot if we approach *The Way of the World* primarily as an analysis of individual character psychology. Just as neoclassical forms of knowledge and judgment involve an intelligent, rational appraisal of relations among ideas, so a proper reading of Congreve's masterpiece requires us to conceive character as a method of dramatizing and exploring the various positions that men (more especially women in this play) may adopt—wittingly or unwittingly—in the face of the overwhelming and general facts about human experience Congreve confronts us with. Our judgments of the relative virtues of those positions become increasingly clear as we compare the relationships among the characters, relationships which prevent any single character in the play from failing to contribute to Congreve's overall argument. Thus, to cite

a recent article, Jonathan Dietz is completely mistaken to treat Witwoud, Petulant, and Sir Wilfull Witwoud as “intrusions” in the “major themes of the play.”³⁴

The Way of the World, then, presents us with a dense epistemological and semiological challenge. The well-recognized similarities between Fainall and Mirabell in the opening scene immediately thrust the challenge at the audience, a challenge made all the greater in this case by our coming upon the action *in medias res*.³⁵ The characters are already situated in a social landscape that we must reconstruct after the fact, while they continue to move through it. The difficulty is further compounded by the notorious prolixity of relationships among the characters, most of whom are relatives, and by the equally notorious and complex sense of plot. One common assumption that follows from an insufficient scrutiny of the play’s denouement leads readers to believe that Mirabell is the direct and effective agent in securing Millamant and her fortune intact.³⁶ This is not true. By a sleight of hand, Congreve allows us to imagine it. But the fact is that Millamant’s dowry remains undivided at the end solely because Lady Wishfort is grateful to Mirabell. He has indeed shown genuine legal wisdom, but in order to secure Mrs. Fainall against her husband: the effect on Millamant is indirect and purely fortuitous.

Moreover, we become peculiarly conscious of our own role in reconstructing events by inference, when, at the beginning of act 5, we find that we have to infer for ourselves events that have evidently transpired *between* acts 4 and 5: Fainall has managed to have Waitwell arrested, and Lady Wishfort knows of the whole Sir Rowland scheme. The innocence of the scene tag (“Scene continues”) is particularly misleading because it implies a seamless connection between the acts (which we have experienced between acts 3 and 4); and this creates potential confusion even, one imagines, in the process of staging, unless one provides an interact mime of some kind.

The audience’s role in such matters is only one part of a broad spectrum of juridical and forensic issues in the play, that Mirabell’s legal acumen serves to focus. Williams’s point that the black box has no talismanic properties is well taken, but the very ordinariness of the object points up the recurring concern with law, proofs, and witnesses.³⁷ The resolution of the plot, requiring Mirabell to capture Millamant with all her money, underscores the

legal position of women in 1700 in regard to their inheritances.³⁸ And the successful denouement depends heavily on two sets of witnesses: Foible and Mincing prove reliable observers of Marwood's and Fainall's liaison, and they also prove perspicacious about the status of an oath sworn on a book of verses (5.84–94; 441–53); Petulant and Witwoud have inadvertently assisted Mirabell's scheme by witnessing Mrs. Fainall's deed in trust (5.481–89). (There is a real distinction between these two kinds of witnessing, whose significance I will consider later). Mirabell's success in understanding and manipulating the law is echoed ironically by Fainall's parallel failure; and the irony becomes all the greater because we discover that Witwoud was an attorney's clerk (something Petulant discovers for the first time, [3.490]), and that Sir Wilfull Witwoud is a Justice of the Peace (5.363–64). Witwoud's real failure and Sir Willful's mitigated failure to make adequate judgments of character and events are thus marked by their relative abilities at law. Witwoud was clearly a failure as a clerk—remembering “nothing” about Mrs. Fainall's deed (5.487)—while Sir Wilfull responds sympathetically to Mirabell's plea to Lady Wishfort as if it occurred in the magistrate's court, an act that may demonstrate his rude benevolence, but does not entirely redeem him as an arbiter of character.

The moment the play opens, we recognize a world in which characters scrutinize each other unremittingly, because judgment and knowledge betoken power. The first action we encounter, Fainall's and Mirabell's card game, establishes this world very economically. Moreover, the verbal universe of the play is replete with matters of knowledge, proof, and certainty: Mirabell wants absolute assurance that Waitwell and Foible are indeed married (1.110); Petulant declares of himself that “I know nothing” (1.383); Marwood admits to Mrs. Fainall that “what I have said has been to try you” (2.37); Fainall declares his marriage to Mrs. Fainall should be undeniable proof of his attachment to Marwood, and concludes “Will you yet be reconciled to truth and me?”, to which Marwood replies, with some justification, “Truth and you are inconsistent” (2.192–94); and Witwoud and Petulant enter in act 3 and proceed to argue about kinds of proofs:

<i>Petulant:</i>	If I have a humor to prove it, it must be granted.
<i>Witwoud:</i>	Not necessarily must, but it may, it may.
<i>Petulant:</i>	Yes, it positively must, upon proof positive.

Witwoud: Aye, upon proof positive, it must; but upon proof presumptive it only may.
That's a logical distinction now.

(3.361–66)

Sir Wilfull enters for the first time asking not only whether Lady Wishfort's servant knows him, but also whether the servant knows his mistress, raising the question of how we can know people. The servant replies that "I cannot safely swear to her face in a morning, before she's dressed. 'Tis like I may give a shrewd guess at her by this time" (3.407–9). Sir Wilfull's response to the exchange ("this fellow knows less than a starling; I don't think a' knows his own name" [3.418–19]) introduces a peculiar hiatus in which Sir Wilfull and Witwoud fail to recognize each other—the one accidentally, it seems, the other purposefully, and the whole burden of conversation falls on Marwood (3.420ff.). Here Congreve illuminates problems of knowledge in a number of ways at once, not least by exploiting the distinction between the two senses of knowing (as in "*savoir*" and "*connaitre*").

Fainall has a distinctive concern with jealousy (beginning at 1.135) that is inevitably a concern with ways of knowing, one he expounds at some length at the end of act 3 (629–41). Marwood witnesses Foible's and Mrs. Fainall's conversation and discovers the Sir Rowland plot, and her letter attempting to wreck it in mid-course becomes a magnificent dramatization of the relationships among reading, misreading, evidence, and power. After Waitwell and Foible have successfully negotiated that threat, Waitwell goes off to obtain proofs that he is indeed Sir Rowland as he claims (4.506–80).

Just as act 5 ends with a restoration of Mrs. Fainall's deed in trust "before these witnesses" (5.566)—not with the dance—so each previous act has ended by focussing on matters of knowledge and evidence. Act 1 ends with a debate about the meaning of blushing (Petulant declares "I always take blushing either for a sign of guilt or ill-breeding," and Mirabell concludes the scene by calling Petulant's judgment into question [1.482–86]). Act 2 ends with Waitwell meditating on the nature of the self: is it constituted by title or by some essence, and what does naming do? (2.499–507); act 3, as we have seen, concludes with Fainall's ruminations on the relationship between jealousy, belief, and doubt; and act 4, with Waitwell leaving to obtain proofs of his assumed identity.

Act 1 also establishes another relevant feature of the play's pro-

cedure. Millamant is conspicuously present by her absence. The male world of this act is fascinated by her. Millamant surfaces several times as a topic of conversation, and the extent to which she is thus constituted by report alerts us to the way in which we inhabit a world of phenomena from which we must make inferences about character and value. Significantly, Witwoud effectively refuses to do this by describing Millamant as “a sort of uncertain woman” (1.422), a judgment that is accidentally appropriate because she is such a consuming and elusive object of Mirabell’s desire. Congreve’s habit of constituting character by report begins to develop its own momentum and to assume wider symbolic value: by juxtaposing judgment (language, report), with fact (action, stage entry), Congreve disturbs and problematizes the question of how language describes what we observe. Just as there is considerable play with the relationship between Lady Wishfort and her picture, Mirabell and Fainall discuss Witwoud for a while before the “original” enters (1.196–209). The same thing occurs with Petulant (1.308–39), and with Mirabell and Fainall (2.45–71). The implicit argument thus gathers a force sufficient to allow ironic variations upon it and to amplify Millamant’s wonderful entry in act 2, surely one of the most dramatic on the English stage. She follows directly on an exchange about Lady Wishfort which has broadened sufficiently to become a discussion about women aging, and this not only frames Millamant’s entry but situates one of her and the play’s major concerns. Millamant knows she will grow old too.

The occasion for discussing Millamant in act 1 is Lady Wishfort’s cabal, which encapsulates the intricate nexus of relationships among reading, signs, judgment, and power. The cabal provides an arena in which members judge not only outsiders but each other: appropriately enough, Fainall compares it to a “coroner’s inquest” (1.48). Not only does gossip condemn reputations, but Fainall in particular is conscious of how far Lady Wishfort’s position in the cabal betokens her power over Millamant, a power Mirabell overlooks here, and never directly succeeds in breaking (1.39–42). Moreover, Mirabell’s anxiety to read and understand Millamant is neatly established, as is her ability to sidestep the kind of control over her he implicitly demands. He is merely left in possession of a cryptic sign: she blushes (1.35).

In seventy lines, Congreve has sketched out the essential symbolic dynamics of his play. We see, for example, how Mirabell is capable of controlled and witty discourse at the level of ordinary

language, but is unable to fully control or interpret the realm of the passions (natural discourse): he has failed to interpret Millamant's blush (and thus to break not only her emotional independence, but her control of her own body), and has insufficiently dissembled in his ruse against Lady Wishfort (1.63). In short, he cannot entirely hide his passions and intentions in matters of love, nor can he sufficiently interpret signs of such possible intentions in others. In this light, it is revealing that Mirabell's most characteristic verbal habit in act 1 is the phrase "I confess" (1.16). Moreover, Fainall's evident relish at "the state of nature" (1.63), characterizing Mirabell's designs on Lady Wishfort, helps to remind us that matters of interpretation, openness, secrecy, and so forth have fundamentally to do with power: Hobbes, that great analyst of language and power, beckons briefly from behind the text. In fact, Mirabell tries to exercise his will in order to break Millamant's natural power (her hidden knowledge about her attitude to Mirabell) and to abrogate Lady Wishfort's power over Millamant.

III. LEGAL, SOCIAL, AND NATURAL DISCOURSE

Already we see emerging the three main realms of discourse and interpretation that the characters in *The Way of the World* must seek to understand and control.³⁹ The purely natural realm includes the hidden drive for love, money, or power, which we cannot hope to purge but must at all events socialize. Although the Restoration required it to provide an ultimate basis for ordinary language, the natural realm constitutes a type of discourse itself because it manifests itself in gesture—notably the act of blushing—pure action, or a significant hiatus in ordinary language characterized by loss of linguistic control. Congreve attacks those who cannot go beyond natural discourse because they have become enslaved to it and cannot—or will not—contribute productively to social intercourse. The realm assumes particular importance in a dramatic world sceptical about ordinary language because it becomes a potential gauge of whether what a character says is true or not.

The level of discourse plagued by the least uncertainties is the purely legal or contractual realm, in which, if parties agree to underwrite the truth of an assertion, it is arbitrarily secured, a position Hobbes desires in the *Leviathan*. Discourse is true merely because there is a general social agreement that particular words and phrases should be accorded a designated force: thus Mrs.

Fainall is secured of her inheritance by a purely legal act, "witnessed" in a purely legal sense by Witwoud and Petulant; and her status cannot change in this regard, whatever other social or natural changes occur. We could say that the chief purpose of act 5 is to establish and vindicate the play's action at this level of discourse.⁴⁰

Of course, ordinary language represents the broadest realm of social and human activity, whose uncertainties can only be resolved by fiat or by negotiation with the natural realm. And because methods of analogy ultimately gauge the individual's grasp of the surrounding world, the extent to which a character is capable of negotiating the demands made on ordinary language by the natural and legal worlds appears as wit. Moreover, we can never dispose of this level of discourse because it accompanies and determines all ordinary social activities, such as friendships. We must discover, rather, how to avoid merely being trapped at the natural level (as the Witwouds, Petulant, Marwood, and Fainall ultimately are) or at the legal level (as Mrs. Fainall is). The contrast between the two pairs of friends or lovers in act 2 (Marwood and Fainall/Mirabell and Mrs. Fainall) rather neatly makes the point. The confrontation between Marwood and Fainall is fraught with epistemological difficulties in which neither party is fully in control of the other nor the audience fully apprised of the nature of the relationship until the scene almost collapses in pure physical action and Fainall's sporadic, desperate speech: Fainall seizes Marwood, Marwood begins to cry, and Fainall tries to subdue her with words not only devoid of wit, but quite out of control (2.93–244). These two are ultimately driven by passion that blinds them and fragments language, whereas Mirabell's comparative insight and ease of social control is manifest in the ensuing scene with Mrs. Fainall, in which serious and potentially tragic matters (Mrs. Fainall's marriage, Mirabell's plot, Lady Wishfort's age) are eloquently conveyed (2.225–89). Without denying the immediacy and power of the natural realm (for Mrs. Fainall reminds him of the fate of all women), Mirabell can still discuss it with a series of finely-chosen similes describing an "old woman's appetite" (2.286–89).

Congreve seems to contend that, despite everything, a satisfactory social level of discourse can be achieved. In act 1, a servant tells Mirabell that his plot is under way because Waitwell and Foible are now married. The brief scene establishes two important facts. Mirabell is evidently legally astute because he demands doc-

umented proof of the union (1.112). But, more significantly, by referring to the act of union as “coupling” (1.103), Congreve prefigures the union of all levels of discourse in the great proviso scene in act 4: in one word, Congreve fuses the natural realm of desire and copulation with the social, religious, and legal institution of marriage. That this formulation appears so early in the play, and seems so innocent, is owing to Waitwell’s and Foible’s status as servants: they are not required to scale the hurdles confronting the gentlefolk. The marriage of desire and law is only easy for a servant who does not, like Millamant, have to husband her reputation. Later, in act 5, Congreve symbolically fragments the relationship between passionate action and legal reality by squaring Fainall and Sir Wilfull Witwoud off against each other around the pun on “instrument.” Fainall produces the legal instrument that Lady Wishfort must sign to save her daughter’s reputation (5.382–83); Sir Wilfull wants to cut it to shreds with his sword:

‘Sheart, an you talk of an instrument, sir, I have an old fox by my thigh shall hack your instrument of ram vellum to shreds, sir! It shall not be sufficient for a mittimus or a tailor’s measure. Therefore, withdraw your instrument, sir, or by’r Lady, I shall draw mine.

(5.392–97)

The urgency with which Sir Wilfull’s language and logic operate by a kind of furious naturalized metonymy (“old fox,” “ram vellum”) suggests the inappropriateness of his response to this purely legal threat. Fainall consigns Sir Wilfull to the natural realm by mocking his “bear-garden flourish” (5.408), but, when he himself, disappointed at the failure of his legal trick, “offers to run at Mrs. Fainall” (5.513–15), Sir Wilfull in turn welcomes him to that society. Neither Fainall nor Sir Wilfull ever succeed in harmonizing all the realms of discourse.

If, as I have suggested, the action of the plot must give way conceptually to the notion of dramatized positions set up in relationship to a controlling or primary hypothesis about the world and manifested as different forms of discourse, one result of this theoretical orientation is to place Millamant at the center of Congreve’s masterpiece.⁴¹ For whatever fascination Mirabell may hold as motivator of plots, as manipulator of others, as wit, Millamant stands unique among the women of Restoration comedy. She must con-

front the painful and potentially tragic twin recognitions that, in a man's world, a woman must inevitably grow old and lose her natural power over men, and that the price of even partial social and political freedom is the ability to negotiate according to the contracts that maintain the fabric of society. Such negotiation necessarily entails a *quid pro quo*, a benefit yielded for a benefit received, and thus, arguably, the loss of at least two possible fictions of social autonomy.⁴² Millamant's intense and delicate intelligence equips her with a peculiar ability to engage with her own passion and the legal realities of marriage while at the same time distancing them. As Alan Roper has remarked, her language is defensive inasmuch as it tends to create fictions to keep others at bay—or she may simply laugh aggravatingly (“significant gesture,” Marwood calls it [3.213])—without ultimately isolating her from that social relation (courtship and marriage) which has its grounding in natural desire.⁴³ Thus she can balk so delightfully at the word “breed” without denying the inevitability of her carnal—and thus mortal and confined—existence.

Act 1 shows us the extent to which Millamant is the focus of many masculine desires, and we must believe, given Mirabell's penchant for control, that he presents a powerful threat to her. Act 2 establishes the equality of their relationship at the level of ordinary social discourse—as wits, they are well matched. But Millamant's control of the world of natural discourse results in her obtaining the power of knowledge over Mirabell: he cannot hide the signs of his love for her, a fact that Millamant taunts him with:

<i>Millamant:</i>	Ha! ha! ha! what would you give that you could help loving me?
<i>Mirabell:</i>	I would give something that you did not know I could not help it.
<i>Millamant:</i>	Come, don't look grave then. Well, what do you say to me?
<i>Mirabell:</i>	I say that a man may as soon make a friend by his wit, or a fortune by his honesty, as win a woman with plain dealing and sincerity.
<i>Millamant:</i>	Sententious Mirabell! Prithee, don't look with that violent and inflexible wise face, like Solomon at the dividing of the child in the old tapestry hanging.

(2.412–22)

Oddly, Mirabell's language here suffers the same fault as Lady

Wishfort's: the simile fails to adequately distinguish its various constitutive features from one another. Matters of honesty, fortune, wit, and friendship are not only relevant to, but *part of* the matter at hand; they press immediately on the moment without spatializing, and thus distancing and examining, his problem by carefully measuring it with similar problems outside his situation. The point arises dramatically when Millamant holds Mirabell's seriousness at bay by creating a crystalline divorce between the two terms of her comparison. By an effort of intelligence, she remains free from the febrile immediacy of the argument in a way Mirabell is not. Mirabell's anxiety, his urgency, tends to fuse his terms of comparison, while Millamant's anxiety, her consciousness of her female frailty, urges her to keep those terms discrete. Nevertheless, although Millamant's language thus succeeds in referring to, rather than enacting, her anxiety, its reality looms in the disturbing imbalance between the figure of violence and division (the child cloven asunder as a figure of male power, of rape, literally seizure and apportionment) and its strangely unsuccessful containment (on the one hand, by the Biblical narrative, and, on the other, by its reification as a work of art). We can read Millamant's control of figure as itself a figure for the political ambitions of Congreve's play.

Mirabell's solemn face clinches the issue and delivers him into Millamant's power at this point because she interprets him correctly. (Mirabell also discovers that she knows his plan, which discomforts him [2.434–35]). The import of such gestures has already been established in act 2, and hinted at by Millamant's blushing at the cabal. Marwood's and Mrs. Fainall's opening encounter raises a central issue in the play, and develops a world in which the ability to read others signifies power over them (2.1–71). Marwood confesses to the universal female fear of growing old and determines not to lose out in the pursuit of love. Her speech (2.9–16) renders us sympathetic to her personal tragedy and explains her predatory nature: it must have been the perfect moment for Mrs. Barry, the great tragic actress. Marwood's fears are real, we know, because Millamant also confesses to them, and they echo Lady Wishfort's desperate and pathetic attempts to recuperate her youth, and thus satisfy her desires. And Mrs. Fainall, standing on stage with her, depicts the same dilemma: her status as a married woman prohibits her from satisfying herself as if she were free and still involved with Mirabell. Marwood's desperation

is her downfall, and her subjugation to the natural world of desire and passion, her inability to escape or socialize it, is suggested when she changes color on the mention of Mirabell. The atmosphere of intense scrutiny and distrust between the two women causes Mrs. Fainall to notice this sign immediately, and Marwood's explanation does not entirely satisfy her, though Marwood is spared from defending herself further because Mrs. Fainall turns pale. Marwood pounces, but Mrs. Fainall protests that she has just spied her husband (2.55–71). We are thus instructed that blushing and growing pale are sure signs of passion; although we cannot know precisely what they signify, we suspect Marwood of more than she professes.⁴⁴ We also recognize that an accurate interpretation of such gestures would lend the interpreter considerable social power, just as Fainall, inferring from Marwood's "warm confession reddening on your cheeks" her partiality for Mirabell, finds himself in control of at least part of their argument (2.122–24).

This argument scene, where purely verbal and socialized combat converts to physical force and the collapse of language, illustrates Marwood's and Fainall's subjection to passion. Millamant is in some sense no less passionate, but her passion is distanced and harmonized with legal discourse and ordinary language; Congreve merely reports, rather than presenting, Millamant's passionate gestures. We hear that she blushed at the cabal, and Mrs. Marwood notices her "color" in act 3, after she breaks her fan in frustration at Petulant (3.254ff.). Even though Petulant is a purely ridiculous object of her anger, Millamant's temper flares in the wings. Typically, Millamant has developed a posture towards her own natural powers by declaring, on the first witty exchange with Mirabell, "One's cruelty is one's power, and when one parts with one's cruelty, one parts with one's power; and when one has parted with that, I fancy one's old and ugly" (2.349–51).

Lady Wishfort stands a living testament to this inescapable reality, wanting to recapture her youth by painting her face to imitate youthful passion in its "complexion" (3.1–24). Unlike younger women, whose natural blushes can inadvertently place them in others' power, Lady Wishfort's nostalgia is registered by her constant references to her own facial gestures. On mention of Mirabell, she cries, "You call the blood into my face with mentioning that traitor" (3.44–45); and she studies her attitudes to capture Sir Rowland, for languishing on the couch and rising in confusion

“shows the foot to advantage, and furnishes with blushes, and re-composing airs beyond comparison” (4.26–28). Narcissus-like, perhaps as an ironic reversal of Milton’s Eve, for she will tempt no one, she conceives Mirabell in her own image, as constituted by affective gestures (4.455–61; 5.389–81). The conclusion of the play teaches us that Marwood and Fainall are captive to passion, which Lady Wishfort has the good sense to see no longer befits her.

Lady Wishfort discovers what power she has is legal, rather than natural (indeed, “she is the antidote to desire,” [4.499]). She controls half of Millamant’s fortune. But the extent to which a woman’s legal power is circumscribed is illustrated by her inability to overcome Fainall’s legal obstacles, and by the fact that she turns to Mirabell (the other real man in the play) to defeat Fainall. At a less serious level, Lady Wishfort signals her dependence upon men when she tells Sir Rowland “you are no novice in the labyrinth of love; you have the clue” (4.469–70), which, by its allusion to the Minotaur legend—to the story of a man who usurps a woman’s power and then abandons her—invokes the unmentioned reality of male violence that Millamant remembers. The male is also invested with Ariadne’s epistemological function, to which Lady Wishfort submits. Mirabell shows his legal foresight not only by arranging Waitwell’s and Foible’s marriage, but, most significantly, by providing for Mrs. Fainall, whose sole security at the end of the play is legal: she is precluded by her situation from exercising her passion, and the likelihood of her developing satisfactory liaisons appears slim.

When Marwood admits that “Love will resume his empire in our breasts; and every heart, or soon or late, received him as its lawful tyrant” (2.23–25), she describes passion’s predatory force. We lose proper control of the various levels of discourse, and descend into purely natural acts, incoherence, or silence. Witness Marwood’s and Fainall’s significant linguistic lapses, the failure of Marwood’s schemes because she is out of control (“she has a month’s mind” [3.196]), and Marwood’s and Fainall’s legal bungles: Marwood extracts a meaningless oath made on a book of verses, not the Bible (5.91–94), and Fainall’s documents prove empty. Act 5 sees Marwood descend into silence (after 448), and Fainall’s attack on his wife (513). Their natural drives have blinded them to the role of multiple discourses in a healthy social economy.

Congreve sustains Marwood and Fainall within the broad social realm of discourse for most of the play (though ultimately to exile them) in order to pose a meaningful threat to Mirabell and Millamant; they clearly are not social incompetents. But they finally find themselves in company with Witwoud, Petulant, and Sir Wilfull Witwoud. Congreve invokes *The Tempest* to depict Sir Wilfull as *lusus naturae*: a Caliban, who, with his Stephano and Trinculo, makes confused attempts upon Millamant. They represent a danger that is greater in other quarters, but they deepen our consciousness of Millamant's imperilled and besieged situation. As Millamant implies, though Witwoud has a stock of similes, he is incapable of drawing upon them in order provocatively to illuminate the present (2.304ff.). Because he cannot see what lies before him, his language is not empirically grounded, and plays in its own nominalistic, freewheeling universe. Witwoud and Petulant prove two of a kind (Mirabell implies that they are half-men [1.52–54]), and they condemn each other in act 4:

Witwoud: Thou hast uttered volumes, folios, in less than *decimo sexto*, my dear Lacedemonian. Sirrah
Petulant: Thou art an epitomizer of words.
Petulant: Witwoud, you are an annihilator of sense.
Witwoud: Thou art a retailer of phrases and dost deal in remnants, like a maker of pincushions; thou art in truth (metaphorically speaking) a speaker of shorthand.
Petulant: Thou art (without a figure) just one half of an ass, and Baldwin yonder, thy half-brother, is the rest. A gemini of asses split would make just four of you.

(4.307–16)

As inhabitants of the “natural” realm, Witwoud and Petulant emasculate, truncate and fragment ordinary language: Witwoud annihilates sense, and Petulant speaks shorthand, a cryptic, hieroglyphic mode, which recalls Millamant's reference to the Sybil (3.324–25), and reminds us of the density and obscurity of the codes proliferating in the play. Witwoud is as much if not more a “retailer” of phrases than Petulant, which suggests a wider economic, social and linguistic redundancy: their words are bankrupt, perennially debased.⁴⁵ The context of their debate amplifies the social meaninglessness of the verbal atmosphere they import be-

cause it occurs immediately after Sir Wilfull's and Petulant's groundless, incoherent, and virtually mute argument. Witwoud reports that "there was no dispute. They could neither of 'em speak for rage, and so fell aspluttering at one another like two roasting apples" (4.298–300). Petulant's fishlike gaping recalls Caliban (4.302).

Though it may be mistaken as merely the result of drunkenness, the speechlessness of this triumvirate primarily indicates a mind sans memory, one of the essential preconditions of Lockean identity. We have already seen how Sir Wilfull and Witwoud forget one another on their first encounter in act 3 (388ff.), and Witwoud reenacts Ben's amnesia in *Love for Love* (Ben forgets his brother is dead) when he admits that "I've almost forgot" Sir Wilfull (3.390). Mirabell has remarked earlier that Witwoud's wit only fails him "as often as his memory fails him, and his commonplace of comparisons" (1.199–200); and Witwoud inadvertently appears to agree by pronouncing, "my memory is such a memory" after forgetting what he is about to say (1.247). Witwoud also discovers Petulant's "natural parts" both by want of learning, and by "want of words" (1.294–98).

Moreover, although Witwoud's and Petulant's contretemps about the ass in act 4 seems to evince a self-consciousness about the difference between "literal" and "metaphorical" applications of words, it succeeds instead by obscuring and collapsing those distinctions, not in the direction of the endlessly figurative nature of language (even the "literal" is subject to *différence/différance* and thus a feature of figuration), but in the arbitrary designation that to be "just one half of an ass" is to be an ass "without a figure," that is, "literally." Congreve finds in the fiction of the "literal" precisely that, a fiction of bad faith: Sir Wilfull's comic courtship of Millamant in the same act is governed by his intentions "to break [his] mind" to Millamant (4.68; 118), in an evident belief that a direct representation of the mind's intentions is possible in ordinary language. He cannot see—or will not—that to ask a woman to go for a walk when he is in the posture of courting her means more than it says: "A walk! What then?" exclaims Millamant, to which Sir Wilfull replies, "Nay, nothing. Only for the walk's sake, that's all" (4.103–4). His frustration with the labyrinth of the language whose inheritance he denies provokes the outburst, "Well, well, I shall understand your lingo one of these days, cousin; in the meanwhile,

I must answer in plain English" (4.96–97). The yearning for a plain speech accompanies the failure of social responsibility.

Ironically, Sir Wilfull tends to adopt subjunctive rather than indicative terms, so that his intentions are obscure even to himself. Like his courting, his words are already impotent, being merely suspended, potential, chronically hypothetical. He cannot countenance Millamant's contrariness because he cannot see that to make something of contradiction is to invent an illocutionary semantic. To Millamant's protestation that she loathes the country and hates the town, Sir Wilfull replies:

Ha! that you should hate 'em both! Ha! 'tis like you may; there are some can't relish the town, and others can't away with the country. 'Tis like you may be one of those cousin.

(4.111–14)

Millamant echoes his subjunctive ("Ha! ha! ha! 'tis like I may") before asking whether he has more to add, which precipitates another suspended set of assertions:

Not at present, cousin. 'Tis like when I have an opportunity to be more private, I may break my mind in some measure. I conjecture you partly guess.

(4.116–18)

The unwillingness to commit to the indicative mood—and thus to action—prefigures Petulant's and Witwoud's final comments in the play. Both resign the responsibility of response to the outcome: Petulant declares, "For my part, I say little; I think things are best off or on" (5.541), and Witwoud admits, "I gad, I understand nothing of the matter; I'm in a maze yet, like a dog in a dancing school" (5.542–43).

Like his comparison of Sir Wilfull and Petulant to "two roasting apples," Witwoud's final simile is untypically apt; but that is because he has naturalized discourse and rendered it amenable to his limited and "natural" understanding (just as Sir Wilfull compares Lady Wishfort's servant to a "starling"). The Witwouds and Petulant (like Ben and Prue in *Love for Love*) belong to a world also inhabited by dogs, starlings, and roasting apples, resisting integration into the realm of social and artificial discourse signalled by the maze and dancing school.

We can forgive Sir Wilfull his incapacities, however, because,

unlike Witwoud and Petulant, a pure action demonstrates that he is good-hearted in a rough and ready way. He is willing to help Millamant outwit Lady Wishfort by appearing to marry her, and he is all too eager to dispatch Fainall's instrument. But these acts of benevolence alone cannot fully integrate Sir Wilfull into society, for we remain uncomfortably aware that for him London is a mere stage on his projected tour of the continent. The prospect of the tour remains as improbable at the end as at the beginning, although Sir Wilfull makes a faint recognition by declaring that "I have thoughts to tarry a small matter in town, to learn somewhat of your lingo first, before I cross the sea" (3.516–18).⁴⁶ The project is as empty as Prue's effort (in *Love for Love*) to learn the language of society from Tattle: for her, to respect the discretions of socialized speech is merely to lie. So, because we cannot imagine Sir Wilfull transcending his own natural lingo, we approve of Mirabell serving as interpreter in foreign parts, like Pylades with Orestes (5.324–25). Where we cannot credit Witwoud's claim to interpret for Petulant ("his want of words gives me the pleasure of very often to explain his meaning" [1.297–98]), we can credit Mirabell's responsibility for Sir Wilfull.

If Sir Wilfull's fantasies of escape from social contingencies obey a kind of natural impulse or trope, Lady Wishfort's similar desires are projected onto the most artificial figure conceivable, escape into pastoral solitude, a fantasy Marwood encourages. She tells Marwood, "Well, friend, you are enough to reconcile me to the bad world, or else I would retire to deserts and solitudes, and feed harmless sheep by groves and purling streams. Dear Marwood, let us leave the world, and retire by ourselves and be shepherdesses" (5.121–25). Marwood echoes the sentiment, ironically, in even more fraught circumstances: Fainall is laying down his "savage" conditions to Lady Wishfort (5.243–45).

IV. CONGREVE'S VISION OF SOCIETY: THE ROLE OF COMPACTS

In contrast to her aunt and cousin, Millamant recognizes that our social, historical, and natural condition prohibits us from denying death and escaping the relations of power that comprise society.⁴⁷ We can no more elude the necessity of power than we can the family alliances and the love-chase which supply *The Way of the World* with two of its most basic premises.⁴⁸ Where Lady Wishfort desperately seeks to rejuvenate herself, Millamant, in her first witty exchange with Mirabell, recognizes the inevitability

of aging; and where Lady Wishfort cultivates fictions of pastoral flight, Millamant, knowing the transience of her first victory over Mirabell, will bargain for a contingent but real social liberty.⁴⁹ The central significance of the proviso scene is that she stages a studied and carefully orchestrated withdrawal from her earlier monopoly of knowledge; she now permits herself to be read and obtained. For all Mirabell's insight, the scene begins with Millamant enjoying the superior advantage, because, while Mirabell remains unsure of her, she knows he loves her. By an act of grace on her part, she permits him to enter (4.50–54); and although Mirabell proves his wit by completing the Waller couplet for her as he enters (4.133–34), he treats the locked door as a deliberate ruse, whereas in fact Mrs. Fainall has rather casually locked it on Sir Wilfull (4.77–78; 135–36). Mirabell asks an interpretive question: “is this pretty artifice contrived, to signify that here the chase must end and that my pursuit be crowned, for you can fly no further?” (4.136–38).

The scene amalgamates or plays among all the levels of discourse Congreve deems essential to any satisfactory polity. We miss the full significance of what occurs if we treat it primarily as witty exchange or the creation of a binding legal contract. Of course, it plays with the Restoration convention of proviso scenes, and it makes gestures towards legal force because Mrs. Fainall later arrives as a witness to the agreement (4.256–57). Oral contracts, however, hold an uncertain status in common law, especially if not directly witnessed by a third party, and Mrs. Fainall is only deemed a witness to an event that occurs *in camera*.⁵⁰ Rather, the scene symbolizes a social agreement with only potential legal force, one only realized in act 5. In his *Second Treatise of Government* (1689), Locke writes:

Conjugal Society is made by a voluntary Compact between Man and Woman: and tho' it consist chiefly in such a Communion and Right in one anothers Bodies, as is necessary to its chief End, Procreation; yet it draws with it mutual Support, and Assistance, and a Communion of Interest too, as necessary to their common Off-spring, who have a Right to be nourished and maintained by them, till they are able to provide for themselves.⁵¹

What we witness on the stage is the establishment of a “voluntary compact,” which, as Peter Laslett points out, is not exactly contractual in nature:

It is "compact" or often mere "agreement" which creates a society, a community . . . of political power . . . even law. Now compact and agreement are more general than contract: they are further removed from the language of the law. Vague as Locke is, we seem to have here a deliberate attempt to avoid being specific and to leave legal models on one side. It may imply that the transmutation into the social and political condition must not be looked on in a legal way; it is a variable thing and a pretty loose one too.

(126–27)

Although it partly anticipates the strictly legal resolutions of act 5, the proviso scene invokes "compact," to symbolize the broadly social function of language, not merely its legal applications. It also establishes a traffic between ordinary language and the natural realm, because Millamant and Mirabell agree to banish foolish endearments that (as the Fainalls demonstrate in act 2) can rapidly lose their anchoring in natural affection (4.175ff.), and Mirabell bans Millamant from using cosmetics or wearing corsets during pregnancy (4.221–23; 235–37).

Locke points out that "compact" stands for the forging of all social ties, not only the granting of personal gratification.⁵² The proviso scene thus becomes an argument for a patriotic society that surfaces elsewhere in the play.⁵³ It is infused throughout with the vocabulary of liberty and restraint: Millamant knows she is bargaining away a portion of her "dear liberty," her "darling contemplation" (4.163–65). She will, however, remain "sole empress" of her tea table (199), to which Mirabell agrees in clearly political terms:

to the dominion of the tea table I submit, but with proviso, that you exceed not your province, but restrain yourself to native and simple tea-table drinks, as tea, chocolate and coffee.

(4.238–41)

True liberty, the argument goes, depends upon a certain constraint which respects the autonomy of the individual. Locke argues that liberty is not unconstrained individual freedom, for that would return us to a state of nature (111). His view of the balance of power in marriage holds that:

Husband and Wife, though they have but one common Concern, yet having different understandings, will unavoidably sometimes have different wills too; it therefore being necessary, that the last Determination, *i.e.* the Rule, should be

placed somewhere, it naturally falls to the Man's share, as the abler and stronger. But this reaching but to the things of their common Interest and Property, leaves the Wife in the full and free possession of what by Contract is her peculiar Right, and gives the Husband no more power over her Life, than she has over his.

(364)

Congreve implies that this true political economy can only be enjoyed by Englishmen because part of the economy of Millamant's dominion over her tea table requires her to use only "native" drinks. This argument is anticipated by sir Wilfull, that most natural Englishman, who wants to "have a spice of your French, as they say, whereby to hold discourse in foreign countries" (3.518–19), which amuses his hearers, while implying that foreign speech is somehow more artificial and constraining than English.

The argument is further elaborated by Mirabell's proviso against "straight-lacing, squeezing for a shape, till you mold my boy's head like a sugar-loaf, and instead of a man-child, make me a father to a crooked billet" (4.235–37). The child in the womb (the "native") enjoys his own natural balance between liberty and restraint: confined within the womb, he is free in his own sphere, which Mirabell is concerned to respect (although he does impose gender on the child, prefiguring its entry into the symbolic order, with which the proviso scene is attempting to negotiate). Mirabell also wants to prevent Millamant from encroaching on the "men's prerogative" and enlisting "foreign forces, all auxiliaries" to the tea table (4.246ff.).

A true balance among all the various levels or applications of discourse would produce a society that affords all members a contingent liberty, entailing the regulation of an individualistic state of nature (125). Failure to negotiate the complexities of discourse produces various tyrannies. Marwood protests in vain against her subjection to the "natural" realm: "Love will resume his empire in our breasts," she complains, "and every heart, or soon or late, receive and admit his as its lawful tyrant" (2.23–25). Although "in Locke's system it is the power which men have over others, not the power which they have over themselves, which gives rise to political authority," Locke would never admit the "lawfulness" of a "tyrant" whose power was not held in trust (124; 126). The unnaturalness—or oppression—of Marwood's oxymoron matches Fainall's description of her as an Amazon, commenting on her ex-

press desire to free herself from men and forget them altogether, a kind of freedom that social reality cannot, and does not, permit (2.39–41). While the proviso scene explicates a theory of mutual benefits (4.148–51), Marwood cites her “obligations to my lady” as the reason for exposing Mirabell’s false intentions to Lady Wishfort (2.142). These obligations are neither apparent, nor mutual, and we already suspect Marwood’s action flows more from her jealousy of Mirabell than anything else. Lady Wishfort’s inability to overcome the legal traps set for her causes her to cry out, “I’ll consent to anything to come, to be delivered from this tyranny” (5.422).

Mirabell, of course, helps to set her free. In act 5, he also delivers Waitwell from prison, the most concrete image of confinement. Like Mirabell, who prohibits a corset during pregnancy, Witwoud, commenting on Sir Wilfull’s and Petulant’s drunken quarrel, also uses a sartorial image: “If I had stayed any longer I should have burst; I must have been let out and pierced in the sides like an insized camlet” (4.292–94).

We can also judge the success of the proviso scene in figuring a social and political compact, because Mirabell can obey Millamant without compromising his autonomy. Obedience is the fruit of a mutual exchange of rights, of relinquishing power over oneself: Mrs. Fainall reminds Mirabell that “there’s a necessity for your obedience” (4.270), and Mirabell, on leaving, declares, “I am all obedience” (4.279). His obedience to Millamant in act 5 (“I have laid my commands on Mirabell” [305]) reestablishes Millamant’s obedience to Lady Wishfort (“I am somewhat revived at this testimony of your obedience” [311–12]), and helps set the scene for the denouement, whose success depends on Lady Wishfort’s obligations to Mirabell for delivering her from Fainall’s “tyranny.”

The play ends, not with the dance, but with Mirabell restoring Mrs. Fainall’s deed in trust “before these witnesses” and with a moral warning against “marriage frauds” (5.566–72). The final lines rehearse the major issues of the play: the appeal for witnesses recalls its epistemological and forensic concerns, and the imperative to scrutinize and control discourse accordingly; Mirabell’s gesture returning the deed guarantees his intention to relinquish his power in trust, and so true speech is at once socialized and naturalized. The language of trust and marriage frauds comprehends both narrow legal agreements and the flexible social and political implications of ordinary language. Laslett writes that Locke

tends to use the language of trust whenever he talks of the power of one man over another, even for fathers and children . . . "Some trust one another" is an assumption of all who join to make up society . . . This must be so if the tendency of men is to be responsible, if governors and governed are interchangeable; we can and must trust one another if natural political virtue is a reality. But there is an easily discovered limit to the trust which can be accorded or assumed, and this limit is implied in the concept of trust itself. Trust is both corollary and the safeguard of natural political virtue.

(126)

But Congreve, unlike Locke, does not dogmatically or unthinkingly believe that every person will obey his or her conscience or sense of duty (134). We experience real discomfort at Mrs. Fainall's purely legal settlement; *Love for Love* so clearly shows that relations of power within marriage can too easily go wrong, while a purely legal guarantee of rights is inadequate compensation. To enjoy any meaningful human liberty, we must fully engage with all language, all discourses which comprise social and historical being, and sustain their complexities. That the fates of Mrs. Fainall and Marwood are what they are, that they prove sacrificial victims to the plot, symbolizes the precarious position of any woman in a man's world. After Millamant, that vibrant and complicated creature, has bartered her liberty, she exclaims, "If Mirabell should not make a good husband, I am a lost thing—for I find I love him violently" (4.285–86). She understands the way of the world all too well.

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NOTES

¹ See Thomas H. Fujimura, *The Restoration Comedy of Wit* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1952), 185; Maximillian E. Novak, *William Congreve* (New York: Twayne, 1971), 25; Arthur H. Scouten and Robert D. Hume, "'Restoration Comedy' and Its Audiences, 1660–1776," *Yearbook of English Studies* 10 (1980): 55. In "Capital Relations and *The Way of the World*" (*ELH* 52 [1985]: 133–58), Richard Braverman presents, I think, the most interesting variant on the argument, finding in *Mirabell* a representative of the new political order, as against Fainall, standing for the older patriarchal Restoration rake. My paper can be taken partly as a refinement of Braverman's view.

² For the question of the play's popularity after 1718, and for the view that audience composition did not change dramatically after the turn of the century, see Scouten and Hume, 62, 65, 66, 69; and Peter Holland, *The Ornament of Action: Text and Performance in Restoration Comedy* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1979), esp. chapter 1.

³ By essentialist, I mean the psychologistic illusion that we are privy to the inner life of a character. Such knowledge of "essential" character neither Dorimant nor Horner allow, since they exist on stage by a performative mode of self-presentation: we can

only infer who they are by examining their behavior. Both Valentine and Mirabell become almost mawkishly confessional at points, something Angelica does not appreciate in Valentine. Laura Brown seems to be making this point when she treats *The Way of the World* as "transitional comedy," which "abandons the simple and single judgmental mechanism of its former predecessor. Well before the turn of the century, the social assessment typical of dramatic satire begins to give way to an entirely evaluative criterion: that of inner moral worth." See Laura Brown, *English Dramatic Form: An Essay in Generic History* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1981), 102.

⁴ Maximilian E. Novak, "Foresight in the Stars and Scandal in London: Reading the Hieroglyphs in Congreve's *Love for Love*," in *From Renaissance to Restoration: Metamorphoses of the Drama*, ed. Lauree Finke and Robert Markley (Cleveland: Bellflower Press, 1984), 181–206.

⁵ The relation between the inevitably historical circumscription of human culture and desire, and the language that both conditions and represents it has been the focus of much modern philosophy, especially of the hermeneutical tradition after Heidegger. For example, Hans-Georg Gadamer illuminates the way that the characters in *The Way of the World* must finely and continuously calibrate their responses to the formal pressures of the society in which they must perforce move. He argues that "language is not only an object in our hands, it is the reservoir of tradition and the medium in and through which we exist and perceive our world." Because "understanding is language-bound," the experiencing "I" discovers that "there is always a world already interpreted, already organized in its basic relations, into which experience steps as something new, upsetting what has led our expectations and undergoing reorganization itself in the upheaval." (Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, trans. David E. Linge [Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1977], 15, 29.) While some have suspected Gadamer's focus on the force of "tradition" in the codes we inherit as the grounds of an incipient reactionary politics, I would argue that Congreve's recognition of Millamant's hermeneutical task is put to distinctly libertarian, even feminist, purposes.

⁶ I disagree with Martin Price's view that "the triumph of the play is in the emergence of the lovers who, through a balance of intense affection and cool self-knowledge, achieve an equilibrium that frees them from a world's power. They can use the world and reject its demands." The emphasis on balance is perhaps apt, but the notion that the lovers are free from the entanglements of power is nostalgic. See Martin Price, *To the Palace of Wisdom: Studies in Order and Energy from Dryden to Blake* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1964), 245. I agree with Braverman that "the play is . . . profoundly political" (Braverman, 133). However, I depart from Braverman in stressing the imbrication of its existential, linguistic and epistemological dilemmas, on the one hand, with its political ambitions, on the other. In part because he treats Mirabell's and Fainall's representative political functions, Braverman allegorizes the play too greatly in terms of male experience: I argue, rather, that the play must be seen from Millamant's point of view, much as *Pride and Prejudice* must be seen from Elizabeth's. True, neither can avoid the consequences of accession to patriarchal forms of power, but they do so as the most intelligent agents in their respective dramas, and largely in terms that they themselves dictate.

⁷ See Alan T. McKenzie, "The Countenance You Show Me: Reading the Passions in the Eighteenth Century," *Georgia Review* 32 (1978): 758–73. The fascination with the expressive functions of the face can also be found in the writings of John Bulwer, publishing in the 1640s, and in John Wallis's interest in developing sign languages for the deaf and mute.

⁸ Millamant expresses her situation at one point by exclaiming, "Ah! To marry an ignorant who can hardly read or write!" *The Way of the World*, ed. Kathleen M. Lynch (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1965), 3.380. All subsequent references are to this edition, and will appear parenthetically in the text.

⁹ See, for example, Thomas H. Fujimura's readings of Restoration comedy. For a

more considered approach, see Charles H. Hinnant, "Wit, Propriety, and Style in *The Way of the World*," *Studies in English Literature* 17 (1977): 373–86; and Alan Roper, "Language and Action in *The Way of the World*, *Love's Last Shift*, and *The Relapse*," *ELH* 40 (1973): 44–69. Roper urges moving from "an analysis of the way words are used to consideration of the congruence between the saying and doings of characters, in order to determine degrees of psychological probability, moral perception, and aesthetic wholeness" (44).

¹⁰ R. A. Foakes writes that "wit" is a name not only for one possessing certain qualities, but a name for "qualities of mind issuing in thought and speech." He also argues that Congreve's aims "do not relate to mirroring his age but to fulfilling artistic ideals," but in fact, for Congreve both are terms for one another, as I will argue. R. A. Foakes, "Wit and Convention in Congreve's Comedies," in *William Congreve*, ed. Brian Morris (London: Benn, 1972), 57, 62.

¹¹ For example, Congreve wants us to catch the significance of Sir Wilfull Witwoud's comment, "I am Sir Wilfull Witwoud, so I write myself" (3.449). The productive ambiguity of the reflexive verb shows how characters are constituted as signs in a larger system of signification: for a moment, Sir Wilfull appears as a self-constructed sign, which signals at once his naive belief in a capacity to inscribe oneself without contingencies, and the irony of "write" as an activity returning him at once to that very contingency.

¹² John Locke, *An Essay concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Peter H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 4.16.6. For the importance of probability and probabilist modes of knowledge and representation, see Ian Hacking, *The Emergence of Probability: A Philosophical Study of Early Ideas about Probability, Induction and Statistical Inference* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1975); Douglas Lane Patey, *Probability and Literary Form: Philosophic Theory and Literary Practice in the Augustan Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1984); Barbara Shapiro, *Probability and Certainty in Seventeenth-Century England: A Study of the Relationships Between Natural Science, Religion, History, Law, and Literature* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1983). Shapiro takes it as given that Locke is representative of thought in the second half of the century. Both Mirabell and Fainall assess probabilities (1.157; 3.590). In his five plays, Congreve uses the word "know" and its cognates some 514 times. See *A Concordance to the Plays of William Congreve*, ed. David Mann (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1973). Congreve's library included Arnauld's *Art de Penser*, Bernier's *Abregé de la Philosophie de Gassendi*, and Abraham de Moivre's *The Doctrine of Chances, or A Method of Calculating the Probability of Events in Play*. He also owned four copies of Lucretius's *De Rerum Natura*. See John C. Hodges, ed. *The Library of William Congreve* (New York: New York Public Library, 1955). Hacking discusses both Arnauld and de Moivre at some length. For gaming as a metaphor, see Sue L. Kimball, "Games People Play in Congreve's *Way of the World*," in *Essays on Fielding and Others in Honor of Miriam Austin Locke*, ed. Donald Kay (University, Ala.: Univ. of Alabama Press, 1977), 191–207.

¹³ Aubrey L. Williams, *An Approach to Congreve* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1979). Williams seeks to show that "the playwright's imaginative vision is consistent with a Christian normative order" (x).

¹⁴ Williams writes, "whatever the shadings and distinctions among Anglican, Roman, and dissenting congregations, and whatever the familiarity with Hobbes or Epicurus displayed in the age, there yet remains the simple and surpassing reality of each individual's similar indoctrination in the Christian view of man's present and future states and of his utter dependency on the will of God" (Williams, 1). Scouten and Hume take issue with Williams, but make a false move in arguing that comedy would not be inclined to be taken as a "serious moral vehicle," which seems to me to derogate not only Congreve but the genre (Scouten and Hume, 50). On Dryden and Pope's "representativeness," see Williams, 16. On Anglican sentiment, see Henry R. McAdoo, *The Spirit of Anglicanism: A Survey of Anglican Theological Method in the*

Seventeenth Century (New York: Scribner's, 1965); Gerard Reedy, S. J., *The Bible and Reason: Anglicans and Scripture in Late Seventeenth-Century England* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1985); Barbara Shapiro, *John Wilkins, 1614–1672: An Intellectual Biography* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1969) esp. chapters 2 and 3.

¹⁵ M. H. Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature* (New York: Norton, 1971); Frank Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1968). Williams writes: "The distributive justice enforced by the majority of Restoration plays, their punishment of vice and their reward of the relatively good either in this life or the next, in no way bespeaks a world governed by chance or fortune or one suffering from Epicurean divine neglect" (18).

¹⁶ Williams, 18–19. Malcolm Kelsall also indulges this dichotomy, though to opposite effect: "Being Epicurean, [Congreve's] plays lack the religious dimension." (Malcolm Kelsall, "Those Dying Generations," in Morris, 128). John Barnard comments more acutely that "the fusion of scepticism, experience, worldly wisdom, and public Christian orthodoxy found in a figure like Halifax is much closer to Congreve than Providential justice" (John Barnard, "'Poetical Justice,' and Dramatic Law in *The Double Dealer* and *The Way of the World*," in Morris, 109).

¹⁷ Neo-Epicureanism provided the methodological grounds for virtuosi (many, like Boyle, persons of deep religious conviction), to develop criteria for scientific explanation by inference and analogy. See Robert G. Frank, *Harvey and the Oxford Physiologists* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1980); R. H. Kargon, *Atomism in England from Harriot to Newton* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966).

¹⁸ Williams, 27–29.

¹⁹ Barrow exemplifies the sceptical language of faith. Barrow writes,

The special Providence of God in events here effected or ordered by him, is indeed commonly not discernable without good judgment and great care; it is not commonly impressed upon events in characters so big and clear, as to be legible to every eye, or to any eye not endued with a sharp perspicacity, not implying an industrious heedfulness: the tracts thereof are too fine and subtil to be decried by a dimme sight, with a transient glance, or upon a gross view: it is seldom so very conspicuous, that persons incredulous, or anywise indisposed to admit it, can easily be convinced thereof, or constrained to acknowledg it: it is often (upon many accounts, from many causes) very obscure, and not easily discernable to the most sagacious, most watchful, most willing observers . . . The manner of Divine efficacy is so very soft and gentle, that we cannot easily trace its footsteps. God designeth not commonly to exert his hand in a notorious way, but often purposely doth conceal it.

(Isaac Barrow, *Sermons Preached upon Several Occasions*, 2nd ed. [London: 1679], 412–13). Not only is the trope of God's obscure text appropriate to my reading of "reading" in Congreve, but the vocabulary of sight in Barrow's text uses the same terminology as corpuscularianism: the terms "fine and subtil" and "gross" precisely distinguish between atomistic and visible bodies in physics.

²⁰ See *The Dictionary of National Biography*. In his important biography of Newton, however, Richard Westfall puts paid to the old notion that Barrow was Newton's tutor at Trinity. Newton gave a great part of his life to calculating the probability that the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation might be fulfilled, an obsession that was surprisingly typical of the age. See James E. Force, *William Whiston: Honest Newtonian* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1985); Richard S. Westfall, *Never at Rest: A Biography of Isaac Newton* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1980), 99, and chapter 9.

²¹ Antoine Adam, *Les Libertins au XVII^e Siècle* (Paris: Buchet/Chastel, 1964), 8.

Also Novak, *Congreve*, 43ff. Although recognizing the difference between early and late seventeenth-century libertinism, he does not treat the possibility of religious libertinism. In an article, Novak relies on the argument that Congreve was later perceived by the eighteenth century as a libertine, which proves little (see Maximillian E. Novak, "Congreve as the Eighteenth Century's Archetypical Libertine," *Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Theatre Research* 15 [1976]: 35–39, 60). Even this view distorts Congreve's eighteenth-century reputation. The "Life of Congreve," in *The Works of Mr. William Congreve* (Birmingham, 1761) states:

No Man of his Parts and Learning ever passed through Life with more Ease, or less Envy; and as in the Dawn of his Reputation, he was very dear to the greatest Wits of his Time; so during his whole Life, he preserved the utmost Respect and received continual Marks of Esteem from Men of Genius and Letters without being involved in any of their Quarrels (xx–xxi).

²² Adam, 7.

²³ Richard W. F. Kroll, "The Question of Locke's Relation to Gassendi," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 45 (1984): 339–59.

²⁴ Gui Patin, *Lettres de Gui Patin*, ed. Paul Triare (Paris, 1907), 616–17, quoted in Richard H. Popkin, *The History of Scepticism from Erasmus to Spinoza* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1979), 88.

²⁵ Popkin, 90.

²⁶ Popkin, 91.

²⁷ Virginia Birdsall also inscribes the same fallacy when she writes that "'scientific' explanations were replacing religious ones" (*Wild Civility: The English Comic Spirit in the Restoration Age* [Bloomington and London: Indiana Univ. Press, 1970], 34).

²⁸ William Congreve, *Love for Love*, ed. Emmett L. Avery (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1966). I refer to this edition in the text.

²⁹ Williams, chapter 8, esp. 173–75.

³⁰ See Hinnant, 374–75; and Roper, 45–56. Both discuss the epistemological and moral inadequacy of Witwoud's similes. Roper writes: "Witwoud's similes are usually either unoriginal, superficial, or far-fetched" (45).

³¹ Roper writes: "Millamant's 'fancy' that her hair would not curl if pinned up with prose is very much to the point. For the most striking characteristic of her wit is that it is fanciful and whimsical. . . . The way she uses language is itself a liberation; not a liberation from sense . . . but a liberation from seriousness" (48).

³² Norman Holland, *The First Modern Comedies: The Significance of Etherege, Wycherley and Congreve* (1959; reprint, Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1967), 4ff.

³³ Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Logicians*, trans. R. G. Bury (London: Heinemann, 1935): "an apparent thing may really be indicative of a non-apparent, as blushing of shame" (Sext. Emp. *Adv. Math.* 8.173).

³⁴ Jonathan E. Dietz, "Congreve's Way to Run the World," *Papers on Language and Literature* 11 (1975): 379.

³⁵ On the difficulty of reading the plot and language of the play, especially the opening scene, see Harriet Hawkins, *Likenesses of Truth in Elizabethan and Restoration Drama* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 116ff.; Peter Holland, 238; Paul and Miriam Mueschke, *A New View of Congreve's Way of the World* (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1958), 32; Novak, *Congreve*, 142. Peter Holland writes that we find "a world that almost is the real one, where fragments of information give rise to premature judgments, where most of what we want to know is hidden but suggested" (235).

³⁶ This seems to be, for example, Braverman's assumption (Braverman, 134–35).

³⁷ Williams, xii. John Barnard argues that Congreve follows neoclassical critical prescriptions like l'Abbé d'Aubignac's and so "drops 'hints' which point toward the unravelling of the plot without actually revealing its nature" (109).

³⁸ Roper writes, "The action of *The Way of the World* is to bring Mirabell and Millamant together with all of Millamant's dowry, not half of it" (65). On legal matters, see Gilbert Spencer Alleman, *Matrimonial Law and the Materials of Restoration Comedy* (Wallingford, Pa.: n. p., 1942); also Braverman, 138ff.

³⁹ Even Witwoud appears partly conscious of differing modes of discourse when he compares Sir Wilfull's letter announcing his arrival to various kinds of prefatory material in literature: "He has brought me a letter from the fool my brother, as heavy as a panegyric in a funeral sermon, or a copy of commendatory verses from one poet to another. And what's worse, 'tis as sure a forerunner of the author as an epistle dedicatory" (2.222–23).

At no point in my argument am I assuming that different modes of discourse separate any mode at a philosophical level from language or discourse as a whole. Language is the given, from which we cannot escape, but the modes—in which I include for the sake of comparison, ordinary language, as opposed to the language of gesture and legal language—represent different *applications* of linguistic possibilities. Thus "ordinary," "legal," and "natural" languages are, for the play, fictions about the use and abuse of language as a whole, though I do argue that the Restoration did believe in the potential grounding of language in some natural sphere. I think that Congreve treats Angelica's crucial stage action as at one and the same time a fiction about the urge to *ground universals* in some final punctuating action, and a *fiction* about that very myth.

⁴⁰ Novak, *Congreve*, 154.

⁴¹ It is here that I particularly differ from the shape of Braverman's allegorization of the play.

⁴² On seventeenth-century notions of benefits, see John M. Wallace, "John Dryden's Plays and the Conception of a Heroic Society," in *Culture and Politics from Puritanism to the Enlightenment*, ed. Perez Zagorin (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1980), 113–34.

⁴³ See Roper on Millamant's fiction-making habit (48–49).

⁴⁴ Although Descartes, in *Les Passions de l'Âme*, believes that "those whom anger causes to flush are less to be feared than those whom it causes to grow pale." See John Cottingham et. al., trans., *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1985), 1:399.

⁴⁵ Braverman points out that Mirabell "speaks the language of property and credit" (143). The asocial nature of Petulant's and Sir Wilfull's speech comes across elsewhere: Petulant, talking of people, calls them "what d'ye call 'ems" (1.353); and Sir Wilfull refers to Millamant as his "cousin with a hard name" (5.379–80). Further, he can remember his crest, but not his motto.

⁴⁶ See for example Mirabell's and Fainall's comments at 1.178ff.

⁴⁷ Malcolm Kelsall writes that Millamant "must exercise power over others to convince herself that she still possesses it. Eventually she will lose it. Millamant knows that even she will come to be old and ugly" (115).

⁴⁸ As Millamant notes, "one has not the liberty of choosing one's acquaintances as one does one's clothes" (3.265).

⁴⁹ Marwood bitchily reminds her of this eventuality (3.294–97).

⁵⁰ See Alleman, 5–14. Alleman states, "If there is no document, witnesses to a contract may be important" (13). It seems that Mirabell's and Millamant's agreement is a spousal "*de futuro*," which may be revoked unilaterally.

⁵¹ John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, ed. Peter Laslett (1960; reprint, New York: Mentor, 1965), 362. All subsequent references to Lockean theory are to this edition.

⁵² Novak's interpretation at this point is, I think, too narrow (*Congreve*, 150). Novak does mention Congreve's Whig leanings (24).

⁵³ I am arguing, more specifically than Braverman, that the "compact," is the scene in which the notions of "trust" that he discusses can operate (see Braverman, 149ff.).