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The Social Mean: Freedom and Restraint in William Wycherley's Plays

James Ray Weidman
College of William & Mary - Arts & Sciences

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THE SOCIAL MEAN: FREEDOM AND RESTRAINT
IN WILLIAM WYCHERLEY'S PLAYS

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of English
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

by

James R. Weidman

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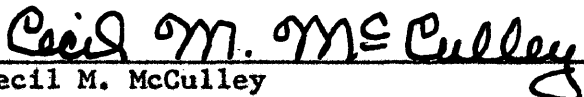
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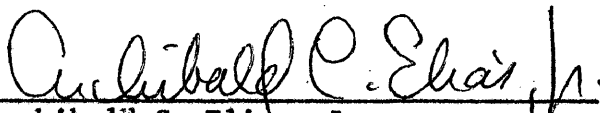
Master of Arts


James R. Weidman

Approved, December 1974


Cecil M. McCulley


Robert P. Maccubbin


Archibald C. Elias, Jr.

ABSTRACT

Wycherley believes that man must live in society if his life is to have meaning. By analyzing Wycherley's plays and poems we may understand his conception of freedom and restraint as ideals which must be adhered to moderately if one is to attain happiness in a flawed society. The degree to which Wycherley's characters reach this understanding of the nature of true freedom and restraint provides a measure by which we can determine the playwright's evaluation of his characters.

In his first two plays, Wycherley offers in his characters basic examples of the folly and danger in overly rigorous dedication to absolutes of freedom and restraint. By applying the basic principles pertaining to freedom and liberty revealed in these works to Wycherley's later, more complex plays, it is possible to determine Wycherley's opinion of the success and worth of his two most fascinating characters, Horner and Manly.

While Wycherley's vision of true freedom and restraint remains consistent in all of his plays, his perception of evil in society changes. In the early plays, society has flaws but is essentially harmless; its chaotic tendencies, dangerous to freedom, may be overcome by a marriage based on honesty, trust, and love. However, by the time he writes The Plain-Dealer, Wycherley views society as implacably dishonest and chaotic. Any social covenant, even marriage, is untrustworthy in such an environment, and man, who must live in society, must struggle alone to secure his freedom.

**THE SOCIAL MEAN: FREEDOM AND RESTRAINT
IN WILLIAM WYCHERLEY'S PLAYS**

From the Restoration era to the present, literary criticism of the body of plays classified as Restoration comedies has been largely concerned with either discovering the moral basis of these dramas or decrying their alleged amorality.¹ In "Restoration Comedy: The Reality and the Myth" (1937), Knights made the most influential modern effort to move the criticism from moral to aesthetic grounds, denouncing the plays as "trivial, gross, and dull."² While it is not within the scope of this paper, or the ability of its writer, to settle the critical controversy regarding the moral stance of Restoration dramatists, underlying what is written herein is the conviction that the works of at least one Restoration playwright, William Wycherley, are not trivial. His plays support Williams' contention that, "The literature of the Restoration is, very markedly, a literature of ideas; . . . the pressure of social, religious, and philosophical developments, all so interlocked that it cannot be said of any one that it caused the others, formed a climate of opinion which it was difficult to escape."³

This paper will investigate Wycherley's attitude toward one particular set of "ideas"--the idea of freedom and the opposing concept of restraint. In concentrating on just this one area of thought throughout his four plays, we may hopefully achieve not only a clear understanding of Wycherley's views of freedom and restraint, but also, by analyzing the characters' actions as they pertain to this issue, a clearer insight into Wycherley's evaluation of his characters.

Before proceeding with this examination, however, we must present workable definitions of freedom and restraint. It must be confessed that these definitions will be rather broad and that, indeed, the terms "freedom" and "liberty" will be used interchangeably. This lack of rigid precision in defining liberty may be justified by remembering that the author with whom we shall be dealing was a dramatist and not a strict philosopher. Wycherley uses these terms interchangeably, and acknowledgment of that fact here should preclude future confusion. Indeed, there is precedent for this particular laxness in terminology in the work of one of the most influential philosophers of Wycherley's day, Thomas Hobbes.⁴ For Wycherley freedom or liberty may be defined as that condition wherein man may move at will through society doing and saying anything he wishes so long as his actions and words neither harm others nor threaten or impair similar behavior by his fellow man.

Perhaps the most important element in this definition of freedom is the individual's responsibility to others--the fact that man in exercising his freedom must not encroach upon the rights of others. True freedom, then, is not the absolute liberty envisioned by Hobbes as the chaotic natural state of man. The individual in a state of true civil freedom uses restraint in exercising his freedom. This restraint is self-generated and necessary to prevent man from using his freedom to infringe upon others' equal right to freedom. In this sense, restraint is of positive value in the interrelations of men. Restraint imposed upon another, however, is dangerous and undesirable. This is the type of restraint imposed by Gripe over

Martha and Flippant, by Diego over Hippolita, by Pinchwife over Margery, and by the Widow Blackacre over Jerry. To distinguish between these two kinds of restraint, the positive, self-generated restraint shall in this paper be termed internal restraint, while the abrogation of one individual's freedom by the tyrannous behavior of another shall be termed external restraint.

Although Wycherley will always depict external restraint as heinous and foolish, he demonstrates that in some instances internal restraint may be equally deplorable. As freedom, when carried to the extreme instance of absolute liberty found in the Hobbesian state of nature, is to be decried, so too is an extreme instance of self restraint. When Christina and Alithea adhere to ideal concepts of conduct established by themselves (the former in vowing to avoid men until Valentine returns; the latter in adhering loyally to the fool Sparkish when the more deserving Harcourt offers himself), they needlessly limit their own freedom. True freedom, then, requires a sense of moderation, an intelligent balancing of the extremes of man's natural, beastly desire for absolute liberty and his spiritual desire to follow ideals of behavior which are out of place, indeed, dangerous to cling to in the fallen world in which man must live.

That man must live in society is implied in this definition, for the doctrine of responsibility toward and respect for others' freedom is the basic premise of the social contract. For Wycherley, at least, liberty is an essentially social concern. The problem of freedom with which Wycherley deals is one of the individual achieving and maintaining the greatest measure of freedom allowed by and

practiced within society. In Wycherley's view, man is defined by his participation within society:

If they sin, who themselves of Life deprive,
 The Sin's no less t'inter themselves alive;
 And, 'gainst the End of Providence, to quit
 The World, tho' made but for the Use of it.
 Reason perswades us to Society,
 Without which Men wou'd live most brutally.

He thinks to be a World t' himself alone:
 And of a Life, and Freedom to dispose,
 Both which he to the publick Service owes;
 Since no Man, only for himself is made,
 But for the World's sake, and his Neighbour's Aid. ⁵

Man must exist within society, and freedom is a social concept.

Wycherley's primary concern in regard to freedom, then, is to examine its role in society. In his first two plays ⁶ society is distilled to its basic component: the wedded couple. In examining the elements necessary for attaining a successful social contract--the marriage agreement--Wycherley recommends an atmosphere of honesty and mutual respect. Those couples who accomplish this (Ranger and Lydia, Valentine and Christina, Hippolita and Gerrard) seem on their way to a rewarding relationship, whereas those who fail to reach an agreement in such an atmosphere (Flippant and Sir Simon, Martha and Dapperwit, Monsier and Flirt) seem doomed to an unhappy and chaotic relationship.

As Wycherley's drama develops from the light farce of his

early plays to the intellectualized satire of his last two plays, his emphasis shifts from a narrow examination of marriage to the larger concern of the nature and possibility of freedom within a society essentially dishonest and unmindful of its responsibilities to individuals. Indicating this shift in emphasis is Wycherley's increasing discomfiture with portraying a marriage which formalizes the concept of true freedom. The marriage of Harcourt and Alithea remains convincing in itself but seems out of step with the rest of society as represented by Horner's world. The marriage fails to fulfill its symbolic function of orderly absorbing the two individuals into society. In his final play, Wycherley seems to lose faith in marriage as a viable means of affirming the order of society. Manly and Fidelia's marriage is as blatantly contrived and unconvincing as society is hopelessly chaotic. In the society of fraud and deceit pictured here, any social contract is worthless, and man (Freeman) must scramble alone as best he can to achieve a free condition.

Before we look into the complex situation of the last two plays, however, it will be useful to examine the earlier plays and extract from them Wycherley's basic premises concerning freedom and restraint. The reader should be forewarned not to expect a neat analysis of Love in a Wood in which, by examination of the interplay of forces of freedom and restraint, the drama will be brought into a coherent whole. The play seems an inherently disunified work, wherein Wycherley, the novice playwright still learning his craft, has taken two essentially unrelated sets of characters (the Ranger-Christina group and the Gripe-Dapperwit-Simon group) and thrown them into a

chaotic state of confusion occasioned by various contrivances of deceit and disguise. The only link between these two groups is their mutual use of the park, and it would appear that the main character of the play is the park itself, the physical setting radiating the all-pervasive aura of deceit reflected by the characters, functioning in much the same way as the heath in Hardy's The Return of the Native. Rather than become entangled in the morass of confusion in this play, we will simply attempt to extract those attitudes concerning freedom and restraint which emerge and use these bits of knowledge as tools with which to examine Wycherley's later, more sophisticated plays.

In Love in a Wood; or, St. James's Park (1671), ⁷ threats to the personal freedom of many characters are pervasive. In keeping with the backlash reaction of the Restoration court against the Puritans, Wycherley's Puritan figure, Alderman Gripe, surfaces as the most obvious representative of tyrannous restraint. By transference, though certainly not without justification, he perceives his own rioting carnal desires within the women of his family. To prevent his womenfolk from acting on these desires, he tries to incarcerate the luckless females of his house. While Gripe cannot lock up his sister as he does his daughter, he impedes her freedom as much as is in his power. Flippant characterizes her life under Gripe's eye as one in which ". . . my Freedom [is] sensured, and my Visitants shut out of Doors. . . ." ⁸ In such a state, the free access to social conversation, regarded in the Restoration court as an educational essential, is denied. ⁹ Similarly, Gripe bars Dappervit from his house, not only because he fears the would-be wit will woo Martha,

but also because, as Gripe protests indignantly, ". . . before a full Table of the Coffee-house Sages he had the impudence to hold an Argument against me in the defence of Vests and Protections. . . ." ¹⁰ Gripe thus opposes freedom of speech as well as freedom of movement and so emerges as a hateful figure of restraint.

The mere fact that Gripe stands as a representative of restraint does not imply, however, that those whom he restrains are valid representatives of a true concept of freedom. Though characters may profess a desire for "freedom," their conception of freedom may be flawed and merely self-serving.

For instance, Lady Flippant often decries her lack of freedom. However, her conception of the term, while high-sounding, is shallow; for by freedom she means merely the right to roam unrestrained in her quest for a husband. She and Sir Simon discuss "freedom," using the term as little more than a euphemism for sexual permissiveness. To these people, St. James's Park at night ". . . is the time and place for freedom. . . ." ¹¹ But this is a debased definition of freedom, for it depends on secrecy and disguise. People who are free in the park are free only because darkness and masks hide their true identity, and they may act in a scandalous way of which they would be ashamed were their identities known. Theirs is a debased freedom dependent on dishonesty and deception.

Such misuse of terms by Lady Flippant constitutes corruption of language--an abuse which apparently concerned Wycherley deeply, for he deals with this problem in all four plays. In his plays, the continued misuse of terms by characters eventually leads to

misunderstanding and thence to chaotic, potentially dangerous situations; and, in Love in a Wood, as always, those using the language imperfectly, indeed perversely, do so to obscure the true motivation for their sordid activities.

Thus, while Flippant espouses the cause of freedom, the apparent function of her freedom will be to control unfairly her future mate's freedom. In speaking of finding a husband, Flippant uses the images of hooking a fish¹² and netting a bird.¹³ Quite possibly she plans to impose on her husband the same reprehensible strictures Gripe has placed on her. Her husband will not be granted freedom, but will be reduced to the inhuman status of a trapped animal. Her play-opening line--"Not a Husband to be had for mony"¹⁴--reveals such a resolution. In her desperation Flippant is attempting, through Joyner's aid, to buy a man, a sophisticated version of slave trade evidencing a total disregard for others' social freedom of choice.

Rather than use her freedom to establish a relationship built on mutual love, Flippant practices deceit. Upon discovering that she is speaking in the darkness to Sir Simon, she resolves, ". . . I must not discover my self, lest I should be disappointed of my revenge, for I will marry him."¹⁵ Certainly revenge is not a strong basis for marriage; in fact, Hobbes classifies revenge, when a desire to avenge evil with evil, as a violation of the seventh law of nature.¹⁶ A real danger exists that Flippant will abuse her right of freedom by proceeding in marriage to curtail Sir Simon's freedom.

The abominable effects of denying an Englishman (or English

woman) the natural right to freedom are demonstrated in the play by Martha. Because of the close confinement imposed on her by Gripe, she becomes desperate and reaches out to the first person who offers her a chance for escape--Dapperwit. The resultant situation is described and commented upon in this exchange:

Dapperwit. . . the poor young Wench is taken with my person,
and wou'd scratch through four walls to come to me.

Vincent. 'Tis a sign she is kept up close indeed. ¹⁷

Wycherley makes the point several times in his plays that imprisonment only exaggerates the desire for freedom. He states his attitude most concisely in Maxim XXXV: ". . . Desire of Freedom naturally springs from Constraint. . . ." ¹⁸ Martha's history testifies to the truth of this maxim and offers a bleak vision of the consequences of such treatment.

Without free access to society, Martha is not exposed to its more admirable members and so, in deciding whom to marry, can choose only between Sir Simon and Dapperwit, a choice which finally amounts to picking the lesser of two evils. She explains to Dapperwit her reasons for marrying him by saying ". . . [Gripe's] hard usage of me, conspir'd with your good Meen, and Wit, and to avoid slavery under him, I stoop to your yoke." ¹⁹ Later, comparing Dapperwit to Sir Simon, she displays awareness that her husband-to-be is a fool. ²⁰ The real reason, then, that Dapperwit appeals to her is that she knows his reputation as a wit is more important to him than the fear of losing her. Because wits pride themselves on their absence of jealousy, she need not fear jealousy in Dapperwit which might lead him

to lock her up again after marriage. Her father's jealous guarding of her has driven her to what undoubtedly will be an unhappy marriage. In this arrangement, the freedom she craves is guaranteed, but with the abhorrent condition that she must go through life in the company of a fool.

What are the conditions necessary, then, for an "ideal" marriage, a union of intellectual equals respectful of each other's freedom? In Wycherley's drama, the essential ingredients are mutual trust, respect, and, above all, honesty. Opposing these values is the milieu of St. James's Park, with its darkness and masks, associated with deceit and false freedom. In the play, this conflict between values is portrayed by the confrontation between Ranger, representing the park system of freedom, and Christina, the pure maiden with constant fidelity to her departed lover, a girl associated with images of the day and the sun. Ranger bursts into her apartment after being befuddled by the darkness in the park and mistakes her for Lydia. When his romantic lies (the approved method of park romancing) fail to soften Christina's attitude toward him, he realizes that a different approach must be taken if he is to win her: "Since you take a night-visit so ill, Madam, I will never wait upon you again, but by day. . . ." ²¹ The virtuous Christina will have no part of the dishonesty and deviousness of the park system. To woo her successfully one must proceed openly and honestly in the revealing light of day.

Unfortunately, the less honorable world forces its way into Christina's hermetically sealed island of purity, starting a chain of

events which finally forces her to enter St. James's Park. When Ranger enters her drawing room, the peace of her monastic life is shattered. The ensuing chaotic misunderstandings lead her, in an attempt to end the confusion and the injustice wrought upon her, to descend into the park world. A second level of meaning, beyond the obvious, may be attached to Ranger's plea to Christina: ". . . remove that Cloud, which makes me apprehend [Goes to take off her Mask.] foul weather. . . ." ²² It is a foul time, indeed, when the figure for honesty and fidelity must affect the devices of dishonesty in order to make matters right.

Yet, in this flawed world, inhabited by naturally brutish man, untainted honesty cannot survive, nor is possession of such absolute virtue any more advisable than it is possible. Holland recognizes this view in his dramatic statement: ". . . The world is a pretty imperfect place, and quasi-heroic perfectionists like Christina and Valentine have to be dragged through its mire." ²³ Isabel, Christina's clear-sighted and practical friend, describes the folly of the paragon's life style to Valentine: ". . . [she] has not seen the Sun, or face of man, since she saw you--thinks, and talks of nothing but you . . . and in short (I think) is mad for you. . . ." ²⁴ In locking herself away from the world, Christina has acted extravagantly, for the world is not all harmful. The sun, which opposes the darkness of the park world, is the image linked with honest freedom: Christina, in voluntarily depriving herself of the innocent pleasures of the world, has acted with an excess which might well be termed madness. Indeed, Hobbes states that a man who gives up

his natural liberty without being forced to do so behaves in a manner incompatible with rationality.²⁵ By overreacting, Christina has just as surely imprisoned herself as Gripe has imprisoned Martha.

Fidelity, though a virtue, should not be adhered to absolutely, for the world is flawed and absolutes cannot meaningfully exist in it. Christina's idyllic world, her drawing room, must meet and deal with the real world or else it will remain a prison.

When a paragon of fidelity exists in a world distinguished by infidelity, a conflict must occur. In Love in a Wood, the conflict is indicated by a lack of communication. Ranger, unfaithful to his betrothed, becomes the representative of infidelity. He seeks, in the park, to make an arrangement for a secret meeting with Christina, and the following exchange takes place:

Ranger. Madam, I understand you-- [apart to Christina]

Christina. Sir, I do not understand you.²⁶

Significantly, Ranger speaks to Christina secretly, in a manner befitting one representing deceitful intrigue. Christina is unable to function in such a dishonest atmosphere and cannot comprehend Ranger's devious ways.

While Ranger's ways cannot affect the incorruptible Christina, they do have a profound effect on one more familiar with the ways of the world--Valentine. By observing Ranger's behavior with Christina, Valentine falls prey to the destructive torments of jealousy. Christina, talking to one she believes to be Ranger, describes the change in her lover: ". . . A brave man, till you made him use a woman ill, worthy the love of a Princess; till you made him censure

mine; good as Angels, till you made him unjust; why--in the name of honour, wou'd you do't?"²⁷ Jealousy has robbed their relationship of an essential ingredient, trust. Without faith in Christina's honor, the relationship between Valentine and Christina deteriorates and plunges into the muddled confusion of affairs jumbled by the darkness of St. James's Park.

Into this morass steps Vincent, a heavy drinker who becomes the voice of reconciliation in the play. He is the only character who retains a clear view of Christina's virtue throughout the play, and it is probably this clear vision which accounts for the emphasis on his drinking, an attempt to obscure his penetrating perception of a world operating by the principles of deceit and selfishness. The only person not participating in the multitude of intrigues swirling about him, Vincent is a somewhat distant observer who comes in at the last moment with sage counsel: "Open but your eyes, and the Fantastick Goblin's vanish'd, and all your idle fears, will turn to shame; for Jealousie, is the basest cowardize."²⁸ Without Vincent's intervention, the chaotic state of affairs could continue indefinitely, for deceit fosters only more misunderstanding. Ranger had reached this same conclusion earlier in a wise but quickly forgotten resolution:

. . . of Intrigues, honourable or dishonourable, and all sorts of rambling, I take my leave; when we are giddy, 'tis time to stand still: why shou'd we be so fond of the by-paths of Love? where we are still way-lay'd, with Surprizes, Trapans, Dangers, and

Murdering dis-appointments:

Just as at Blind-mans Buff, we run at all,
 Whilst those that lead us, laugh to see us fall;
 And when we think, we hold the Lady fast,
 We find it but her Scarf, or Veil, at last. 29

In a world which operates on principles of deceit and dishonesty, real values cannot be attained. One can obtain only the veils, the objects of obscurity. Escape from the giddy misunderstandings of the dark park is made possible only when Vincent reveals the true values Christina embodies.

Once Vincent clears up matters a perfect marriage is possible. Valentine renounces his jealousy and reaffirms his trust in Christina. She has been forced to leave off her absolutism and walk in the real world of St. James's Park, an act which brings her out of solitude and into society. With Valentine's jealousy abolished, her continued access to the honest freedom of the town is guaranteed. Wycherley's vision of the desirable social relationship is contained in the final exchange of the play between Lydia and Ranger:

Lydia. But if I cou'd be desperate now, and give you up my liberty; cou'd you find in your heart to quit all other engagements, and voluntarily turn your self over to one woman, and she a Wife too? cou'd you away with the insupportable bondage of Matrimony?

Ranger. You talk of Matrimony as irreverently, as my Lady Flippant; the Bondage of Matrimony, no--

The end of Marriage, now is liberty,
 And two are bound--to set each other free. 30

The paradoxical couplet, as interpreted by Katherine Rogers, reveals ". . . that the four young people, enabled to marry because cured of their wrong attitudes toward sex and love, are only now psychologically free to have a good relationship with a member of the opposite sex." 31 Her assessment is correct, though perhaps overly modern in its terminology to rest comfortably as paraphrase of Wycherley's thought. In simpler terms more apt for Wycherley's era, the improvements in the relationship--the introduction of mutual trust and honesty--guarantee that the lovers have achieved a philosophical awareness which will allow and reinforce each other's freedom of movement in society.

Yet Wycherley does not allow us the comforting thought that all lovers will reach the realization of this perfect relationship; for, although two couples do seem to reach the awareness of what constitutes a viable marriage, Martha has married a fool for convenience, and her father has married purely out of revenge. No elements of trust, respect, or honesty characterize these matches, and hence no true freedom is guaranteed. Wycherley refuses to depict a never-never land where all ends in happiness and light--a conscientious reserve found in all his later plays.

In his next play, The Gentleman-Dancing-Master (1672), 32 Wycherley displays the same concern for personal freedom. Indeed, only by interpreting the play as a struggle by Hippolita to gain and secure freedom can one fully appreciate Hippolita's character. From

other points of view, this motivated heroine has been described as inconsistent, a woman whose ". . . Sensible views and solid judgment are obscured at times by her whimsical change of mood." ³³ Weales is so confused and exasperated by her that he declares, ". . . one wants to congratulate Monsieur on escaping marriage with her." ³⁴

Hippolita's stalling and seemingly capricious changes of mind serve neither as evidence of a bubble-headed fickleness, nor as clumsy contrivances designed to extend a one-act play to five acts. Hence, the length of the play is not unwarranted. Granted, the simplicity of the plot could scarcely support a three-act play; yet by extending the length of the play to five acts, Wycherley enables Hippolita to form, shape, and refine her relationship with Gerrard until at last they have reached the mutual understanding necessary to build the perfect marriage--a marriage wherein mutual love assures true liberty for both partners. ³⁵

Wycherley manifests his concern for freedom in the opening lines of the play, where Hippolita rages at her situation: "To confine a Woman just in her rambling Age! take away her liberty at the very time she shou'd use it! O barbarous Aunt! O unnatural Father! to shut up a poor Girl at fourteen, and hinder her budding; all things are ripen'd by the Sun. . . ." ³⁶ By denying Hippolita her natural right to freedom, Don Diego, the primary representative of restraint in the play, leaves himself vulnerable to the charge of being "unnatural." Don Diego's unnaturalness is manifested physically on stage by his offensive affectation of Spanish garb. Affectation of things foreign was especially deplorable at this time because, as many

critics have noted, pointing specifically to the reference, ". . . all Gentlemen must pack to Sea," in the Epilogue, The Gentleman-Dancing-Master was produced during the Dutch Wars. As might be expected in such circumstances, this is Wycherley's most nationalistic play and consequently we find Wycherley primarily concerned with that most precise of "English" concepts--freedom.

Don Diego and Monsieur serve to characterize the brutal stupidity of the Spanish and the cowardly foppishness of the French, respectively. Yet the behavior of these two characters is as perverse as it is ridiculous, since they are, underneath their affected costumes and manners, Englishmen. When one accepts Wycherley's nationalistic premise that English ways are superior to foreign ways, Monsieur's and Diego's adoption of alien patterns of thought and behavior is deplorable as well as amusing, for both defections involve potential loss of freedom.

The philosophical differences between the nations, as Wycherley sees them, are manifested in definitions of honor. Diego demonstrates the supposedly Spanish view of honor by saying, ". . . Now in Spain he is . . . honourable enough that is jealous. . . ." ³⁷ In the "Spanish" method there is no attempt to establish mutual understanding or confidence between two people. With such an attitude, mutual respect is impossible; and, since Diego assumes a woman would use her freedom to abuse him, he reacts like Gripe by tyrannically depriving women of such freedom. He keeps Hippolita in locked confinement and explains the "Spanish" view of marriage to Caution by saying: "Besides, 'tis all one whether she

loves him [her fiancé] now or not; for as soon as she's marry'd, she'd be sure to hate him: that's the reason we wise Spaniards are jealous and only expecte, nay will be sure our Wives shall fear us, look you." ³⁸ Discounting the possibility of love within marriage, the would-be Spaniard seeks to reduce his daughter to a condition of slavish submission grounded in terror. Rather than seek an end to the natural state of warfare between man and woman, through mutual respect, Diego is content to continue the war, confident of his emergence as victorious tyrant.

While the "Spanish" view honor as a strict morality which must be imposed on another through brutality and repression, the French regard honor as a word meaning nothing more than reputation. Monsieur despises the "Spanish" jealousy not because he sees it as a potential threat to freedom, but because ". . . it is not French, it is not French at all" ³⁹ He demonstrates the opposite extreme in the matter of interpersonal relationships. Rather than assuring his freedom by bullying women to a subordinate position, he meekly puts himself under the power of women. Hence, he enters into a relationship with Flirt, pitifully pleading: "But will you promise then to have the care of my honour, pray, good Madam, have de care of my honeur, pray have de care of my honeur. Will you have care of my honeur? pray have de care of my honeur, and do not tell if you can help it; pray, dear Madam, do not tell." ⁴⁰

Monsieur's frantic repetition shows his weakness of character. He is not intrinsically honorable, for honor to him is merely a word. When he meets Flirt, then, he is entirely within her power, for by

merely telling the truth she can destroy his reputation. Such a relationship is as intolerable as that recommended by Diego; one partner still controls the other. Monsieur has voluntarily made himself a prisoner of outside restraint.

Because Diego and Monsieur have failed to grasp the true nature of what "honor" is, they are proponents of false values. Wycherley conveys this fact by the same means employed in Love in a Wood. As in the first play, where false freedom is associated with darkness, masks, scarves, and veils--all means of obscurement--so in The Gentleman-Dancing-Master are the champions of false honor distinguished by disguise. Diego and Monsieur are, after all, natural-born Englishmen who have affected the garb of other nations. Diego seeks to make Monsieur into a "Spaniard" by forcing him to adopt the Spanish habit. He instructs his slave, ". . . this will be a light French Fool, in spite of the grave Spanish Habit, look you. But, Black, do what you can, make the most of him, walk him about."⁴¹ Diego seeks to impose a new code of honor on Monsieur, but his only means of doing so is by forcing a change in dress and demeanor. Similarly, Monsieur will not fight for the love of Hippolita. His one assertion of self comes in defense of his clothes: ". . . I must live and dye for de Pantalloon against de Spanish Hose, da."⁴² The affected dress of these men symbolizes their false, foreign notions of honor. They are oblivious to the true, the English meaning of honor as defined by Hippolita and are content to operate on the level of external appearances. To be willing to live and die for a style of clothing reveals a morally bankrupt set of

values, a life devoted to fripperies rather than essences.

In opposition to these shallow French and Spanish values, Wycherley places Hippolita, champion of English philosophy and ideals. Her English soul chafes greatly under her father's imprisonment. As Caution laments to Diego, "Nay, 'tis a hard task to keep up an English Woman." ⁴³ Her nationally inbred desire for freedom leads her to seek the liberty denied her in her father's house. Diego's Spanish tyranny cannot restrain an English lass, but instead encourages her to make a desperate escape attempt. As Gerrard says to Diego, "Well, old Formality, if you had not kept up your Daughter, I am sure I had never cheated you of her." ⁴⁴ Hippolita also cites Diego's repressive policies as self-defeating, asserting that:

Our Parents who restrain our liberty,

But take the course to make us sooner free,

Though all we gain be but new slavery;

We leave our Fathers, and to Husbands fly. ⁴⁵

Although Diego's tyranny does prompt Hippolita to seek a husband, she is certainly not going to accept a husband who will seek to disenfranchise her. Such a move would be contrary to her policy of individual responsibility outlined at the beginning of the play:

Caution. I know you hate me, because I have been the Guardian of your Reputation. But your Husband may thank me one day.

Hippolita. If he be not a Fool, he would rather be oblig'd to me for my vertue than to you, since, at long run he must whether he will or no. ⁴⁶

Here Hippolita offers the true English definition of honor. Honor to

her is an internal quality which cannot be impressed upon anyone by external means, whether it be imprisonment or style of dress. In other words, virtue is a matter of internal restraint. Each individual is responsible for his actions, whether virtuous or dishonorable, and so a person may not be considered honorable until he has been allowed to operate in the world. In Hippolita's view, there can be no virtue where there is no freedom. Accordingly, she is not about to cast off her father's chains only to accept those of another. Her courtship with Gerrard is therefore prolonged in order that she may prepare him fully to accept a relationship in which she will be assured freedom.

Hippolita's quest for freedom is an awesome undertaking for a lone young woman, yet she realizes that she must make her effort now, for should she fail, her father will force her to marry the weakling Monsieur. Such a relationship would be unsupportable for her. She realizes that he is an utter fool with no sense of individual responsibility, a man who would constantly be in the power of others. Not wishing to marry a slave, she resolves to find a man of truly free character who will recognize and support her desire to live in equal partnership. To proceed in this great undertaking, Hippolita must screw up her courage: "Courage then, Hippolita, make use of the only opportunity thou canst have to enfranchise thy self: Women formerly (they say) never knew how to make use of their time till it was past; but let it not be said so of a young Woman of this Age; my damn'd Aunt will be stirring presently: well then, courage, I say, Hippolita, thou art full

fourteen years old, shift for thy self." ⁴⁷ Such strong resolution seems nearly sinister, with almost Iago-like overtones in its grimness, but Hippolita is embarked on a desperate struggle to preserve her personal freedom and so cannot afford to be faint-hearted.

In this struggle, Hippolita uses the only means available to her as a woman--deceit. She knows that this is not the ideal way to establish a free relationship, a relationship based on openness and honesty, but her circumstances permit no other course of action. As Hobbes wrote, ". . . if a man be held in prison or bonds, or is not trusted with the liberty of his body, he cannot be understood to be bound by covenant to subjection; and therefore may, if he can, make his escape by any means whatsoever." ⁴⁸ She expresses regret at having to deceive Gerrard, but reconfirms her resolution: "A pleasant man [Gerrard] ! well, tis harder playing the Hypocrite with him, I see, than with my Aunt or Father; and if dissimulation were not very natural to a Woman, I'm sure I cou'd not use it at this time; but the mask of simplicity and innocency is as useful to an intriguing Woman, as the mask of Religion to a States-man, they say." ⁴⁹ Her program for liberty proceeds with the personally distasteful but practical means of guile condoned by Hobbes.

Hippolita's courtship of Gerrard is a carefully calculated, ever-escalating series of maneuvers. She first attracts him to the house by arousing his curiosity as to the nature of this unseen woman. She then impresses him with her obvious external qualities--her beauty and large dowry. Next, by skillfully extricating him from a dangerous situation, his being discovered in the house, she affords

him the opportunity of respecting her for her wit. Significantly, wit is the trait for which Gerrard is famed in the coffee houses. ⁵⁰

Gerrard's appreciation of Hippolita's wit shows his potential for accepting her as an equal. He laments, "Poor Hippolita, I wish I had not this occasion of admiring thy Wit; I have increased my Love" ⁵¹ This remark demonstrates the different temperaments of Diego and Gerrard. While Gerrard can admire a woman for her mind, Diego feels his superiority threatened by the discovery of discernment in a woman. He refuses to allow perception in Mrs. Caution because such ability would threaten his tyrannous rule of the household. Gerrard, however, esteems Hippolita as a worthy person, not as an opponent in a power play. With this attitude, Gerrard will later be able to assent to Hippolita's demand for freedom, because he recognizes her as an equal with equal rights.

Yet, with all of his love for Hippolita, Gerrard is not aware of her desperate need to be assured of freedom. He keeps trying to rush her out of the house before an open agreement respecting each other's rights has been concluded: "Come, Dearest, this is not a time for scruples nor modesty; modesty between Lovers is as impertinant as Ceremony between Friends, and modesty is now as unseasonable as on the Wedding night: come away, my Dearest." ⁵² Though one hates to classify the actions of a chap as likable as Gerrard with so onerous a term, what he attempts here, rushing a confused girl out the window, is essentially rape. Such behavior, no matter how noble the motivating emotions behind it, cannot be countenanced, for as Wycherley comments in "Epistles to the King and Duke" (1683):

A Rape on Hearts, begets disloyalty;

. . .

Pleasure, and rule by force, but Tiresom pain will prove . . . 53

A distinct danger exists that, should Gerrard succeed in getting Hippolita through the window at this stage of their relationship, he might naturally extend his advantage over her to forceful rule rather than equality.

But Hippolita's experience under her father's control has been so terrible that she refuses to be carried away by someone without first establishing ground rules for the relationship. She makes one last deception to test the sincerity of Gerrard's love for her. When he affirms his love even after being told she has no dowry, Hippolita is assured of the legitimacy of his regard for her as a person. Her elaborate deceptions have consumed quite a great deal of time, but they have been necessary to prepare for her ultimate act: a time of plain dealing with Gerrard in which she tells him with blunt honesty what conditions he will have to accept if he marries her:

Gerrard. You h-- do not abuse me again, you h-- will fool me no more sure.

Hippolita. Yes but I will sure.

. . .

Hippolita. Plain dealing is some kind of honesty however, and few women wou'd have said so much.

Gerrard. None but those who wou'd delight in a Husbands jealousy, as the proof of his love and her honour.

Hippolita. Hold, Sir, let us have a good understanding betwixt

one another at first, that we may be long Friends; I differ from you in the point, for a Husbands jealousy, which cunning men wou'd pass upon their Wives for a Complement, is the worst can be made 'em, for indeed it is a Complement to their Beauty, but an affront to their Honour.

Gerrard. But, Madam--

Hippolita. So, that upon the whole matter I conclude, jealousy in a Gallant is humble true Love, and the height of respect, and only an undervaluing of himself to overvalue her; but in a Husband 'tis arrant sawciness, cowardise, and ill breeding, and not to be suffer'd.

Gerrard. I stand corrected gracious Miss. ⁵⁴

In an atmosphere of love and respect, Hippolita can openly solicit the arrangement she desires, a marriage built on honesty and respect for freedom.

The essential rightness of such an arrangement is established by comparison with the other two pairings--Diego and Caution, and Monsieur and Flirt. Diego continues to dictate to Caution, who laments her fate: "Nay, I must submit, or dissemble like other prudent Women, or--" ⁵⁵ Yet the tyrant is trapped by his own tyranny. Unwilling to admit he has been outdone by his daughter, since such an admission would crack his unassailable superiority, he is forced to approve the wedding and supply a dowry. Meanwhile, Monsieur finds himself made slave to Flirt. By trusting his "honor" to another, he has relinquished the ability to govern himself. He is in Flirt's power, and she dictates terms to him. While Hippolita establishes the

ground rules for her relationship with Gerrard, he accepts them freely because he sees the wisdom of her words. The atmosphere in which Flirt delivers her terms, however, is not one of honesty and freedom. Unlike Gerrard, Monsieur cannot reject his lady's terms, for they are delivered in an atmosphere of blackmail and coercion.

As in his first play, Wycherley has presented a couple working towards establishing a perfect marriage. Hippolita knows what she wants and methodically pursues a plan to attain it so that the action in The Gentleman-Dancing-Master is more direct and deliberate and less diffuse than in the previous play. The second play is more orderly than the first because of what the concept of marriage entails. Marriage is the social convention established to bring order to (in Hobbesian terms--to end warfare in) the relationship between man and woman--the two basic components of society. In marrying, a man and woman implicitly accept the society which has established the convention and so enter the family of "civilized" as opposed to "natural" mankind. They are "translating their 'natural' desires into visible, enduring social forms."⁵⁶ Because the husband-wife relationship is the basic societal relationship, the resolution of the problem of the extent of freedom in marriage constitutes a model for all society.

When this problem remains unresolved, chaos prevails; when an answer is found, misapprehension disappears and marriage cements the return of order to society. Such, at least, is the view presented in Wycherley's first two plays. However, in his final two plays, Wycherley presents a more complicated view of society and freedom.

There is no longer only a "right" arrangement (Hippolita and Gerrard; Ranger and Lydia) and a "wrong" one (Monsieur and Flirt; Martha and Dapperwit). The question of what constitutes freedom and the methods by which man might retain his right to liberty are more fully and realistically explored.

In The Country-Wife (1675)⁵⁷ Wycherley continues to portray the ideals of freedom, honesty, and honor as the crucial concerns of male-female relationships. However, he recognizes for the first time the possibility of society operating successfully on a debased definition of these terms. Accordingly, more in this play than in the preceding works, Wycherley manifests the traditional concern of the writer for preserving preciseness and purity of language. Within the corrupt city world of The Country-Wife, meanings of words have become altered from their original "ideal" forms. While this development is enjoyable in one sense because of the opportunity it affords wits to speak in entertaining double-entendres and puns, it is at the same time threatening, for where the same terms connote different values, confusion and the attendant threat to freedom are certain to occur. To compound this problem, in every Wycherley play, confusion is accompanied by the threat of physical violence. As Valentine has menaced in Love in a Wood and Don Diego in The Gentleman-Dancing-Master, so Pinchwife threatens to burst the bubble of frivolity encompassing this third play by introducing the possibility of death. If violence is to be averted, confusion must be ended.

In the first two plays, this pacification and orderliness were

easily accomplished. When Wycherley has decided enough is enough in Love in a Wood, he allows Vincent to enter and explain the mixup in identities. In the second play, once Hippolita has secured a guarantee of freedom, she marries Gerrard and reveals all that has gone on. In The Country-Wife, however, solution of the problem is not so simple; the Cloud Cuckoo-land of deceit and disguise in which the action of the play occurs is never completely dispelled. Though representatives of honesty and true freedom do exist in the persons of Harcourt and Alithea, by the end of the play they are little more than outsiders observing the pitiable machinations of the other characters, unable to rescue them from the web of deceit and illusion in which they have bound themselves.

As the central figure, Horner is responsible for much of the confusion rampant in the play. He operates in a world of corrupt language wherein words no longer connote the ideal for which they once stood. For instance, "honor" no longer entails morally correct behavior arising from internal restraint, but merely "reputation." "Freedom" undergoes the same bastardization: "Each speaker means something different; in the confluence of their implications the original sense of the idea of freedom lapses. It sinks into the same meaninglessness as that of 'honor.'" ⁵⁸ In Horner's world, then, reality is based not on actions and fact, but on words. Horner reveals this when he tells the Quack, ". . . your Women of Honour, as you call 'em, are only chary of their reputations, not their Persons, and 'tis scandal they wou'd avoid, not Men. . . ." ⁵⁹ His interjection of the qualifying phrase, "as you call 'em," implies that

Horner himself does not really regard these women as honorable, that he acknowledges a finer set of moral and linguistic values.

Yet Horner chooses to operate in the world of false words and values. He begins his machinations by having the Quack spread the false story of disability. In so doing, Horner sinks to the moral level of the women of false honor; he purposely misrepresents his true condition and operates successfully beneath the cover of unfounded reputation. In listing the uses and abuses of speech, Hobbes writes that words should be used ". . . to make known to others our wills and purposes, that we may have the mutual help of one another, . . . [and the corresponding abuse occurs when people] use words metaphorically--that is, in other senses than that they are ordained for--and thereby deceive others." ⁶⁰ Horner abuses rather than uses language, and creates a world like that of St. James's Park--one dependent on deceit and illusion--only this time the means of obfuscation is artful manipulation of language rather than the contrived dramatic devices of darkness and masks.

Horner's motive for spreading the rumor is basically that of gaining freedom for himself and for his intended lovers, which, superficially, seems quite a noble and laudable effort. Sir Jasper, appearing as the first representative of the husbands, is wholly devoted to his business activities and consequently cannot be troubled to attend his wife as one should. In seeking to consign his wife to Horner's care, he explains his reasons for doing so: "'Tis as much a Husbands prudence to provide innocent diversion for a Wife, as to hinder her unlawful pleasures; and he had better employ her, than

let her employ her self." ⁶¹ Such a statement reveals the tyrannous nature of a man who, with the scrupulous care of the businessman, wishes to put his wife on a schedule allowing her no free time and, consequently, no freedom.

Later in the play, with the introduction of Pinchwife, another type of tyrannous husband emerges. Lacking the sophisticated, more subtle approach of a Sir Jaspar, Pinchwife is a brutal, insensitive bully who utilizes the most primitive means of denying his wife freedom; he keeps her locked in her room. While this is the identical resort employed by Don Diego in The Gentleman-Dancing-Master, Pinchwife emerges as a much more dangerously threatening figure. Both men pose a physical threat to their women. Hippolita worries that ". . . in his Spanish strictness and Punctillioes of Honour he might kill me as the shame and stain of his Honour and Family, which he talks of so much. Now you know the jealous cruel Fathers in Spain serve their poor innocent Daughters often so, and he is more than a Spaniard." ⁶² Yet Pinchwife demands to be taken more seriously than Diego. When Diego does at last draw his sword, it is to fight Gerrard in a fair duel. Certainly Pinchwife's pulling a penknife and threatening to stab his defenseless wife's eyes ⁶³ is an infinitely more repugnant act. Don Diego's ill-becoming clothes serve as a constant reminder to the audience that he is, above all, a buffoonish character and, beneath his affected ideas and costume, a once-decent Englishman. These comical conciliating factors are not made available to the audience in the person of Pinchwife, since his brutality comes not from overzealous allegiance to foreign ways but from personal

perversity. His actions are all the more deplorable in that the object of his bullying is a simple-minded young country woman whose only fault lies in ignorantly following her natural inclinations. Pinchwife's hysterical overreaction is more monstrous than comic and comprises a shocking reminder that very real danger can intrude at any time and destroy Horner's merry world of illusion.⁶⁴ Pinchwife's means of curtailing his wife's freedom is the simplest of all; he relies on terrorism to keep his wife subservient.

Horner's role is somewhat heroic in that he liberates oppressed wives from their tyrannous husbands. He also laughingly assumes a moral stance, pretending ". . . that his aim is to injure women, lustful hypocrites, by exposing their hidden vices."⁶⁵ Yet his mission is not to "free" or "punish" all women; he wants only a foolproof scheme to locate and gain access to women of false honor. The woman who comes to represent true virtue in this play, Alithea, goes ignored by Horner until the end of the play, when he is trapped by his own machinations into a situation where he must attempt to defame her. When confronted by Pinchwife, in an effort to protect Margery, he claims to have had a fling with Alithea.⁶⁶ Obviously, the man who tries to besmirch the reputation of the single virtuous woman he knows cannot be regarded as a great righter of wrong. He is, indeed, a great liberator, but his definition of freedom is as debased as his women's interpretation of honor, as evidenced in the following exchange:

Sir Jaspar. . . . win or loose you shall have your liberty with her.

Lady Fidget. As he behaves himself; and for your sake I'll give him admittance and freedom.

Horner. All sorts of freedom, Madam? ⁶⁷

"Freedom" for Horner, as it is for Lady Flippant, is equivalent to "sexual fulfillment." His purpose in "liberating" the wives is not to enable them to grow as individuals but to satisfy their mutual carnal lusts.

Horner's means of attaining freedom is as debased as his values. Choosing deceit as his principal method for furthering his plans, he adopts the same means as Hippolita in the preceding play. Yet, as has been demonstrated, circumstances force Hippolita to use deceit to gain freedom, and even so her resolution to do so carries a strongly ominous overtone. A young girl, alone, she must rely on the only resource available to her: her natural womanly guile. Yet exercising of this method is quite painful for her, because she feels guilty about having to deal hypocritically with Gerrard. Horner is plagued with no such qualms, even though his hypocrisy is voluntary rather than necessitated. He chooses to lead a life of deceit, a perilous existence of illusion and hypocrisy which, appropriately enough, in view of the disability he affects, is a trait Wycherley particularly associated with women. ⁶⁸ Rather than attack the husbands' abuses in an open, honest way, be it via rational debate or whatever, Horner embarks on a different path to cure the social ills he sees. The path he takes is dishonest and self-serving. What Horner says of would-be wits can well be applied to him: "A Pox on 'em, and all that force Nature, and wou'd be still what she forbids

'em; Affectation is her greatest Monster." ⁶⁹ In affecting a disability he does not have, Horner affronts nature's law significantly. Once Horner chooses this dishonest approach to cure society of its abuses, his only confidant is a quack.

The tyrannous relationship within marriage which both Horner and the women oppose occurs, as in the earlier plays, where no honesty or trust exists between partners. Instead, an adversary relationship exists, founded on the opinion voiced by Pinchwife: ". . . if we do not cheat women, they'll cheat us. . . ." ⁷⁰ Because in this view a man will be competing with his wife for supremacy, intelligence in her is to be avoided rather than sought. Pinchwife, who has chosen an incredibly ignorant woman for a wife, defends this principle:

Pinchwife. . . . What is wit in a Wife good for, but to make a Man a Cuckold?

Horner. Yes, to keep it from his knowledge. ⁷¹

This exchange illustrates the problem with both men's attitude toward women. While Pinchwife feels threatened by a display of wit from a woman, Horner is appreciative because he views wit as a quality which can be utilized for deceitful intrigue. Both these views contrast with Gerrard's response to the discovery of Hippolita's wit. In the earlier case, Gerrard interprets her wit as indicative of intelligence, and his love is strengthened, not because he looks forward to involved intriguing, but because he realizes he has found an intellectual equal. Pinchwife views wit as a threat to his supposed superiority; Horner views it as a valuable asset in any woman he seeks to exploit sexually. Both approaches deny women the right

to be viewed as human beings outside the context of an interpersonal power play.

One result of the husbands' oppression is the apparently lifeless monotony of the wives' existence. This state is revealed in the women's diction. When speaking of sexual relationships with men, they refer to themselves as "Persons."⁷² This device serves two purposes: it discreetly renders a personal reference technically impersonal and so preserves anonymity and decorum; and, subconsciously, it serves to reassert their identity as people, not mere will-less objects bandied about in meaningless sexual liaisons. The two actions the women are noted as engaging in, drinking and adultery, and the two most basic means of escape available to them. In those two ways only can they momentarily ignore their husbands' tyranny and their monotonous existence, thus achieving an illusion of freedom.

Significantly, it is during one of the drinking bouts that Horner's false promise of freedom is exposed. Only when plied with drink can Lady Fidget find the courage to speak honestly, and she then proposes, ". . . let us speak the truth of our hearts."⁷³ At this point, Horner's treachery is revealed and his empire of illusion threatens to crumble. Should the resentment at Horner's deceit lead one of the ladies to expose his scheme, he would be lost. His fragile world remains intact only because the ladies are as debauched as Horner and wish to protect their counterfeit honor. In both instances, they believe that the illusory values offered by Horner are ". . . e'en as good, as if it were true, provided the world think so; for Honour, like Beauty now, only depends on the opinion of others."⁷⁴

The system proposed by Horner, then, is one in which there is no truth and no absolute values, only popularly accepted appearances which can be manipulated by a master of deceit.

As proponent of this set of values, or rather, nonvalues, Horner leaves himself open to being associated with the traditional proponent of chaos and falseness, Satan. Wycherley is not remiss in supplying this association. In talking of honor to Lady Fidget, Horner states: "If you talk a word more of your Honour, you'll make me incapable to wrong it; to talk of Honour in the mysteries of Love, is like talking of Heaven, or the Deity in an operation of Witchcraft, just when you are employing the Devil, it makes the charm impotent."⁷⁵ Horner's satanic bent is also indicated by his epithets, such as ". . . the Devil take me. . . ."⁷⁶ He is the only character in the play whose oaths employ consistently hellish images. Horner, like Satan, is trapped in a chaotic world of deceit. He can never break out of his self-created Hell and establish an honest and deeper relationship with a member of the opposite sex, as Hippolita eventually does. Instead, his world of fallen values is self-perpetuating and his options are limited.

To balance the presence of this satanic proponent of chaos, confusion, and deceit, Wycherley supplies Alithea. Her name itself comes from the Greek word meaning "truth,"⁷⁷ and she serves as the embodiment of absolute ideals. By strictly adhering to ideals essentially moral, Alithea acts with immoderate restraint. Thus, by acting upon absolute values unsuited to application in the debased world around her, Alithea risks losing her freedom by excessive

internal restraint. Her difference from the worldly women is immediately apparent. Upon first meeting her, Harcourt falls in love, wondering aloud, "Who knows, if it be possible, how to value so much beauty and virtue." ⁷⁸ Significantly, Harcourt uses the term "virtue" rather than "honour" to describe Alithea's moral qualities. As has been demonstrated, "honour" has become a debased term denoting reputation, whereas "virtue" retains its nonnegotiable more connotations. Though the other women in the play may be termed "women of honour," only Alithea can be said to be a woman of virtue. The only instance in which the word "virtue" appears relating to someone other than Alithea is in Lady Fidget's manifesto: ". . . our virtue is like the State-man's Religion, the Quakers Word, the Gamesters Oath, and the Great Man's Honour, but to cheat those that trust us." ⁷⁹ These ladies have no true virtue, only the semblance of virtue, which they use perversely to abuse a trust.

Alithea's strict virtue, the manifestation of immoderate internal restraint, demands that she honor an obligation, even though she certainly would be happier were she to break the agreement. She has entered into a marriage agreement with Sparkish. Although her reasons for doing so are hard to understand, reviewing her total situation makes her action more acceptable. The only reason offered by Alithea as to why she will marry Sparkish is that she finds in him a total lack of jealousy. Considering that she has lived in her brother's household, her concern over this trait is most understandable, for she has seen, firsthand, that a jealous man makes a cruel, despotic husband. Alithea wants merely to "take the innocent liberty

of the Town." ⁸⁰ As did Hippolita before her, Alithea realizes that the only way to develop as a person is through unfettered exposure to worldly experience. However, her jealous brother, a reformed rake, equates his sister's "free education . . . [and] passion for the Town" ⁸¹ with salacious lust, transferring his own previous abuses of freedom to his innocent sister. She has lived with this man who rails at her every independent action, terrorizes his wife and keeps her under lock and key, and constantly threatens to deprive both women of worldly experiences by moving to the country. Such conditions must be frightening to Alithea, and she articulates these fears to Lucy: ". . . Jealousie in a Husband, Heaven defend me from it, it begets a thousand plagues to a poor Woman, the loss of her honour, her quiet, and . . . her life sometimes; and what's as bad almost, the loss of this Town, that is, she is sent into the Country, which is the last ill usage of a Husband to a Wife, I think." ⁸² Fear of ending up with a man like her brother who would curtail her freedom has driven Alithea to pledge herself to his opposite. Sparkish is a fool, she knows, but he is also totally incapable of jealousy.

Because of Sparkish's total trust in Alithea, she cannot be tempted to abuse him; as she explains, "He only that could suspect my virtue, shou'd have cause to do it; 'tis Sparkish's confidence in my truth, that obliges me to be so faithful to him." ⁸³ This attitude stands in direct opposition to the "cheat or be cheated" philosophy of the husbands and wives in the play. Alithea remains faithful to Sparkish long after it has become evident to both the audience and

herself that Harcourt is the more desirable partner, because trust and responsibility to others are essential ingredients to an atmosphere of true freedom. Only after Sparkish has, in essence, violated the terms of their engagement by displaying jealousy does her conscience permit her to moderate her excessive internal restraint and follow the more pragmatic and promising course of marrying Harcourt. Her moral code is incredibly rigorous and seems a foolish encumbrance keeping her from the happiness offered her by Harcourt. Yet it is because of the absence of moral considerations in the world surrounding her that Alitheia feels she must be so morally precise. She explains her position to Lucy: "I was engag'd to marry, you see, another man, whom my justice will not suffer me to deceive, or injure." ⁸⁴ In a world in which deception and injury are the rule, Alitheia's behavior comes emphatically from her sense of justice. She stands for absolute honesty, fidelity, and trust in a society where these qualities are rejected as impractical. She is, indeed, "Truth," and her idealism leads her to affirm her commitment to Sparkish.

Unfortunately, like Christina before her, Alitheia cannot live in a world of absolutes but must live in the real world. In such a world, adherence to absolute values is untenable and undesirable because flawed man can neither deserve nor fully appreciate such virtue. Alitheia comes to recognize the error of maintaining an absolute ideal in a flawed world, and moralizes: ". . . if there be any over-wise woman of the Town, who like me would marry a fool, for . . . liberty, . . . may [he] send her into the Country under the

conduct of some housewifely mother-in-law. . . ." 85 Alithea's absolute commitment to maintaining her freedom has led her to bind herself to a fool, an arrangement which, while assuring her social freedom, would link her forever with a mental inferior and thus frustrate the personal growth which is the end of real freedom.

She comes to accept the golden mean between absolute values and worldly pragmatism represented by Harcourt. Her willful deceptions late in the play indicate her acceptance of less than absolute standards of conduct. When Sparkish threatens Harcourt's life for disparaging his wit, Alithea intervenes with the invention that Harcourt said this only to test her love for her fiancé. Thus Alithea foregoes her commitment to scrupulous honesty in the extreme instance where it is required to save a life. In the final scene, she again lies and even encourages Margery to lie in order to prevent the country girl's destruction. Both Horner and Alithea may practice deception; but, whereas with Horner deceit is a way of life and his goals are largely self-serving, with Alithea deceit is only a last resort to be used for the ultimate good: preserving life.

These two ways of life, as represented by Harcourt and Horner, are differentiated by their differing perceptions as to what constitutes freedom. The former's definition of freedom coincides with that of Hippolita's, a freedom based on mutual trust and respect. This view is revealed in his eager concurrence with Alithea's and Lucy's lecture:

Alithea. . . . Women and Fortune are truest still to those that trust 'em.

Lucy. And any wild thing grows but the more fierce and hungry for being kept up, and more dangerous to the Keeper.

Alitheia. There's doctrine for all Husbands Mr. Harcourt.

Harcourt. I edifie Madam so much, that I am impatient till I am one. 86

The other view of freedom, Horner's, entails only illicit sexual activity flourishing in an atmosphere of deception and secrecy.

By the end of the play, even Horner is made to admit, albeit tacitly, the superiority of the other system. While Alitheia and Harcourt remain free to live as they please, Horner and his ladies are trapped in the web of illusion they themselves have fashioned. They are condemned to a life of secrecy and insecurity, the discovery of truth an ever-present danger. At any time a new Mr. Pinchwife may enter the scene, and he might not be so luckily calmed. Horner has chosen a life in which the only freedom permitted him is sexual, and even in this arena his freedom is illusory. At the conclusion of the play his sexual activity is little more than a mechanical duty. Pleasure has, indeed, become Horner's business: "This possessor of a seraglio finds himself, like King Charles II, dominated by his wenches." 87

Alitheia, on the other hand, has found Frank (one definition of which is "free") Harcourt, and true freedom is possible for both of them as long as they observe the cardinal principles of trust, honesty, and respect. Harcourt's purpose within the play is to present an alternative to Horner's values. He is not a confidant of Horner's, as might be expected, for he is never privy to Horner's

secret. Only the Quack serves as a confidant, since his is a fitting profession to aid the false messiah of freedom--the false doctor of social ills. Harcourt's role, rather, is that of "the man of sense, the honnête homme, who has attained to his position of assured stability by a nice sense of self-control and an intelligent balancing of opposites." ⁸⁸ The opposites which Harcourt has balanced are the self-serving deviousness of Horner and the absolute scrupulousness of Alithea--the mundane and the ideal. Exposure to Alithea has elevated Harcourt's original rakish philosophy just as he has moderated her unrealistic, counterproductive absolutism. He combines aspects from both philosophies effectively in wooing Alithea when he uses disguise to deceive the fool and open expressions of sincere regard to win his lady.

Both Harcourt and Horner attempt to establish a relationship with women in which freedom is preserved. The difference between their methods is most ably delineated by Holland, who perceives what he calls the "right-way/wrong-way simile" in The Country-Wife: "Only Horner is corrupt and wise enough to use social pretences for his own purposes, to master them instead of being mastered. He, however, wins only a limited success. He is, in effect, maimed, cut off from the real and permanent happiness represented by the exuberant union of Harcourt and Alithea. . . . This is Wycherley's sense of the two ways: one accepts limited social aims; the other transcends them." ⁸⁹ With these two distinct value systems operating within the play, a conflict between them is to be expected and does, in fact, occur.

The confrontation itself takes the form of differing definitions

of terms. As Horner and Harcourt represent different value systems, different views of freedom, their terminologies cause them to talk at cross purposes. The difficulty arises over the meaning of "honour," the trait of responsible internal restraint, in the following exchange:

Harcourt. Horner I must now be concern'd for this Ladies Honour.

Horner. And I must be concern'd for a Ladies Honour too.

Harcourt. This Lady has her Honour, and I will protect it.

Horner. My Lady has not her Honour, but has given it me to keep, and I will preserve it.

Harcourt. I understand you not.

Horner. I wou'd not have you. ⁹⁰

In this exchange, Harcourt uses honor as a synonym for virtue, whereas Horner uses it to represent reputation. The ladies have delivered their "honour" to Horner as Monsieur surrendered his to Flirt. Accordingly, they have found no real freedom in a liaison with Horner, only a new master.

Horner's manipulation of false appearances has led to a situation of utter confusion in which communication is impossible. Harcourt, influenced by exposure to the absolute values of Alithea, can no longer understand Horner; the latter's values and way of life are not completely alien to Harcourt. Horner's response--"I wou'd not have you"--can be interpreted in two ways. Horner may mean merely that he would not like others to understand, because success in his mode of living requires secrecy and false appearance. Complete understanding of his operation, in other words, discovery of the

truth, would lead to exposure and ruin. A second interpretation of this line involves an awareness in Horner of the superiority of Alithea's values to his. Horner would not have Harcourt reduced to functioning solely in his precarious world of dishonesty and illusion.

Horner has accepted his ladies' definition of honor primarily because by so doing he can satisfy his fleshly desires. He is a self-proclaimed "Machiavel in love." ⁹¹ Traditionally, machiavels are clear-sighted in their moral evaluation of others but unable to save themselves from destruction by their own obsessions. If Horner's response to Harcourt were delivered in a wistful, melancholy manner, it would reveal his awareness of the difference between his and Harcourt's values and constitute an admission that he had chosen, irretrievably, alas, an inferior way. A compatible interpretation of Horner's "... I alas can't be [a husband] " is offered by Holland. ⁹² The right-way/wrong-way dichotomy of The Country-Wife dramatizes fully an observation made later by Spinoza: "... human action is causally determined by one of two factors in man's nature-- the passions or reason. When man is governed by his passions, he is in 'bondage, for a man under their control is not his own master, but is mastered by fortune, in whose power he is, so that he is often forced to follow the worse, although he sees the better before him.' When man is governed by reason he is free, for he 'does the will of no one but himself, and does those things only which he knows are of greatest importance in life. . . .'" ⁹³ Both men have been free to choose the manner in which they will conduct their lives. Harcourt has followed his reason and opted for an honest relationship with

Alithea. Horner, though conscious of the attractive qualities of Harcourt's "way," has chosen to indulge his sexual passions and so has gone the inferior way of deceitful living in which he becomes trapped, his freedom severely limited.

Significantly, the final scene of The Country-Wife is dominated by Horner and the adherents to his values. In Wycherley's previous plays, the spotlighted couples have been those who have attained the desired mutual understanding necessary for a successful, free relationship. While Harcourt and Alithea do achieve the proper relationship, they remain separate from the other couples. Theirs is the only impending marriage, the convention by which they officially join society, yet Wycherley presents no society fit for them to enter. Their values are incompatible with those of the others, as evidenced by Harcourt and Horner's nonconversation. Thus, the dance at the conclusion is not the traditional dance of marriage, but "A Dance of Cuckolds." ⁹⁴ This ironic ending leaves Harcourt and Alithea in an uncomfortable position--a couple ready to join society when no morally or philosophically compatible society is available. Their ideal partnership is essentially extrasocial. ⁹⁵ Although they have obtained a state of peace by virtue of granting each other true freedom, society at large does not share in this achievement, but muddles on in a chaotic world based on deceit. Wycherley thus points, in the conclusion of this play, toward the basic attitude revealed in his final play: that the world has become so corrupted that even the moderate values of the honnête homme are not capable of dealing effectively with the utter baseness encountered daily.

The often-criticized scholar Summers classifies The Plain-Dealer (1676) ⁹⁶ "among the most powerful and philosophical plays in our English, or in any other language." ⁹⁷ The play may be properly termed Wycherley's most philosophical because he delineates not only the corruption of society, but the institutionalized breeding ground for this corruption as well. He does so by staging the central act of the play in Westminster Hall, the English judicial center. This entire act represents something new in Wycherley's drama, which before has been limited, with the exception of the crucial St. James's Park scenes of his first play, almost entirely to drawing room sets. In his final play, Wycherley brings his central characters to the seat of justice and rather mechanically parades before Manly, for satiric commentary, a series of minor characters with ostensibly no relation to the main plot, including the Manly-Fidelia-Olivia triangle. The apparently peripheral relevance of this act, which does further the Freeman--Widow Blackacre plot, to the mainstream of action of the play has distressed several critics. Miles passes over this act, which satirizes law and lawyers, as an irrelevant trait of Wycherley's craft: ". . . a distinguishing characteristic of Wycherley's comedy as a whole was the attention paid to witty realism, no matter how little it might contribute to the story or the delineation of character." ⁹⁸ Muir declares that ". . . the Widow Blackacre plot is largely irrelevant." ⁹⁹ And Wilcox terms the Freeman-Blackacre subplot a "needless distraction." ¹⁰⁰ Yet the Freeman-Blackacre plot and the related satire of Westminster Hall proceedings are not superfluous. Rather, these segments constitute an

integral element of the plot, and it is one Westminster Hall section which gives the play its overall philosophical flavor and basis. Once again, two of Wycherley's primary concerns, as emerge from a proper understanding of the Westminster Hall passage, are freedom and restraint.

First, however, it is essential to realize that Wycherley's presentation of the hall of justice affords more than mere comedic confrontations between Manly and the hypocritical denizens of Westminster. His depiction of the judicial system is not a comic caricature but a description of the harsh reality of the situation as perceived by Sutherland: "One of the most disquieting indications of the low state of public morality in the years preceding the Revolution was the venality and corruption of the judges. During the Commonwealth they had held office dum bene gesserint, but after the Restoration their tenure of office was dependent on the approval of the Crown. Both Charles and James got rid of judges who failed to obtain verdicts satisfactory to the Crown, and promoted men who were prepared to direct the jury to bring in a verdict contrary to the weight of the evidence."¹⁰¹ Thus, incredibly widespread court corruption was a painful reality of which Wycherley was well aware. He deals with this subject in "Upon the Injustice of the Law: A Satyr," wherein he writes of "Tyrant Laws":

The Guilt of Justice are you, Reason's Shame,
Oppressions, under our Protection's Name. ¹⁰²

He discovers the subversion of the law, which "Design'd for Justice, is Oppression's Aid,"¹⁰³ and continues:

The Law, so made to lessen Diff'rences,
 Does them, like its Professors, more increase;
 Made but to help the Weak, Oppress'd, alone,
 Becomes, the worst Oppression e'er was known. 104

He returns to the same theme in Maxim CCXXXIV: "Law, that should be the Decision of Controversies, and Curb of Injustice, is frequently the Fomenter of Differences, and Aid of Oppression." 105 With banumbing repetition, Wycherley stresses his view that laws, which should preserve the individual's freedom, have been subverted into a means of oppression. Rather than establish peace, the laws foment warfare in the form of suits and countersuits. Thus, Wycherley presents an environment which poses an immense problem for anyone who would be free. How is one to proceed in a society in which the institution established to uphold the laws of order serves instead to undermine them?

In response to this problem, Wycherley again supplies two characters, Manly and Freeman, representing two different approaches. Manly's approach is extrasocial, while Freeman seeks to attain freedom by manipulations within the system. Manly fancies himself too morally pure to abide in a corrupt society, but Wycherley is quick to point out his shortcomings. In keeping with his romantic character and moral extremism, Manly views the world in terms of absolutes. In the play-opening exchanges between him and Lord Plausible, his predilection for dealing in extremes, occasioned by his natural contrariness, surfaces plainly:

Plausible. What, will you be singular then, like no Body? follow

Love, and esteem no Body?

Manly. Rather than be general, like you; follow every Body,
Court and kiss every Body. . . . 106

This bantering between the two extremes, fawning civility and self-contained independence, culminates in Manly's description of himself: "I that can do a rude thing, rather than an unjust thing." ¹⁰⁷ Manly must learn during the course of the play that there is degree in all things; that civility, for instance, is neither patently unjust nor necessarily threatening to his freedom. What Manly needs then is a refinement of thought, a moderation of internal restraint, an education which will reveal to him the endless variety in life.

He has so far observed life superficially, and what he has seen repulses him, indeed frightens him. How can one explain Manly's hysterical overreaction to the discovery of fear in Fidelia during battle other than as a consequence of Manly's own subconscious awareness of cowardliness within himself? ¹⁰⁸ Manly's response to the evil world is not the courageous one--to stay and combat it--but the rather cowardly alternative to flee from it. He had hoped to emerge from his voyage with enough money to leave civilization with Olivia: ". . . to go where honest, downright Barbarity is profest; where men devour one another like generous hungry Lyons and Tygers, not like Crocodiles; where they think the Devil white, of our complexion, and I am already so far an Indian. . . ." ¹⁰⁹ Manly desires a life free from all ceremony, for he regards social forms as restrictions on his liberty. He tells Plausible: "Tell not me . . . of your Decorums, supercilious Forms, and slavish Ceremonies; your little Tricks, which

you the Spaniels of the World, do daily over and over, for, and to one another; not out of love or duty, but your servile fear. . . . I'll have no Leading-strings, I can walk alone; I hate a Harness, and will not tug on in a Faction, kissing my Leader behind, that another Slave may do the like to me." ¹¹⁰ Yet he seeks to remove himself from the temptations of following these ceremonies rather than stay and reject them by moral strength. Essentially, he wishes to impose on himself the same imprisonment that Hippolita and Mrs. Pinchwife had imposed on them by their guardians. Manly foolishly wishes to curtail his opportunity of experience by retiring to a primitive society where man is tested only at the level of lions and tigers, that of sheer physical force. There he will not have to contend with the crocodile guile, so pervasive in complex society and institutionalized in the courts. It is this quality of deceit which Manly sees and fears in society, for it is the trait before which, as Olivia and Vernish demonstrate, he is helpless.

Manly's expressed desire for a life of barbarity wherein "men devour one another" inescapably recalls Hobbes's depiction of the natural state of man. ¹¹¹ His absolutist outlook precludes acceptance of the expedient limits on freedom established by society. He demands nothing less than absolute freedom from others, and in the play he emerges as a Hobbesian prototype of natural man--half man, half beast, a Caliban of sorts. Manly's beastliness is established by others' descriptions of him as well as his own actions. Olivia refers to his qualities as "Brutal courage . . . [and] Brutal love." ¹¹² One of his sailors' reminiscence depicts Manly as being

most "natural": "'Tis a hurry-durry Blade; dost thou remember after we had tug'd hard the old leaky Long-boat, to save his Life, when I welcom'd him ashore, he gave me a box on the ear, and call'd me fawning Water-dog?"¹¹³ Manly here violates Hobbes's fifth law of nature, gratitude. He can respond to the ultimate kindness, the saving of his life, only with a totally undeserved blow and insult. No wonder that in the colorful and honest conversation of sailors, Manly is associated with bad weather. As the storm on the heath mirrors Lear's mental anguish, so does the storm which destroys Manly's ship and fortune emerge as a physical manifestation of his brutal, potentially destructive nature. Manly's brutishness reveals itself most fully in his remorseless determination to rape Olivia. His projected action is one of blind revenge and lust, in direct contradiction of Hobbes's seventh law of nature, which states that in revenge men shall respect only the future good. In fact, Manly's behavior in the course of the play violates the first ten of Hobbes's laws of nature. Wycherley has, in effect, drawn a Hobbesian natural man, and, if we accept Manly as such, we may readily believe the sailors' contention that he seems happy only in the midst of battle. Beastly Manly glories in his destructive power, which is given full range in the natural state of warfare, and has embraced plain dealing not only out of a need for simplicity, but also because it is a devastating verbal means of destruction establishing his moral superiority.

Freeman, however, is a positive force rather than a destroyer. He knows the world well and, acknowledging its moral defects, seeks



to use his wit and knowledge to scratch out a place for himself in the world. He is a "Complyer with the Age" ¹¹⁴ in the sense that he accepts the limitations of the world, but he is not a full-fledged conspirator with the age. It has been maintained that ". . . there seems to be no dramatic reason for Freeman to have a legal background," ¹¹⁵ yet this bit of background information is essential if we are to understand fully Freeman's position. In admitting his experience as a lawyer, Freeman states: "Yes, I was one, I confess; but was fain to leave the Law, out of Conscience, and fall to making false Musters; rather chose to Cheat the King, than his Subjects; Plunder, rather than take Fees." ¹¹⁶

Freeman has perceived the utter perversity of the courts, which threatens rather than protects freedom, and refused to be a conspirator in perversity. Granted, he continues to make his living as a cheat because the corrupt world offers no other option; but he openly admits his dishonesty and is not party to the desecration of the fundamental institute of justice.

Freeman, therefore, emerges as a middleman occupying a position between the two extremes--Manly, the absolute moralist, and Widow Blackacre, the perverter of justice. His function in the play is twofold: he must try to "civilize" Manly and integrate him harmoniously into society; and he must try to prevent the Widow Blackacre from subverting justice. Freeman succeeds partially in this first purpose, but is finally disappointed of achieving this second goal.

The task of bringing Manly to accept society is difficult but

necessary, because true freedom is a socially predicated concept. As noted earlier,¹¹⁷ to Wycherley's mind a man is valueless, no matter how intrinsically worthy he is, unless he shares his qualities with society. In the attempt to bring Manly to accept a social life, Freeman acts as Manly's guide and tutor as they explore society. The teacher-pupil relationship is prepared in the first act by the simple exchange:

Freeman. Well, they understand the World.

Manly. Which I do not, I confess.¹¹⁸

Freeman's credentials as professor are immediately validated by his perception of worth in Fidelia. At this point, his advice, "Poor Youth! believe his eyes, if not his tongue: he seems to speak truth with them,"¹¹⁹ goes unheeded by Manly. Freeman's instruction succeeds when he has educated Manly to the point where he can distinguish Fidelia as the one true value from among the false values of a deceitful world.

Freeman's method of instruction takes two forms: straight lecturing and demonstration. As a lecturer, Freeman adopts a sober tone, prescribing moderation of both external and internal restraint, a quality sadly missing in the absolutist, Manly. Thus, when Manly roundly denounces all courteous conventions rather than only the overly elaborate fawning of a Plausible, Freeman supplies a more balanced view: "And no Professing, no Ceremony at all in Friendship, were as unnatural and as undecent as in Religion. . . ." ¹²⁰

Essentially, what Freeman tries to teach here is Hobbes's fifth law of nature, complaisance--"that is to say, that every man strive to

accomodate himself to the rest."¹²¹ Wycherley makes this point in Maxim XXI: "The wise Man, who lives in the World, must move and do as a Man in a Crowd, that is rather carried than goes his own Pace; for if he thinks to advance in spite of the Opposition, he will be spurned, elbowed, squeez'd, and trodden down, or else heaved from the Ground, and born up upon others Shoulders, whether he will or no."¹²² Of course, the basis of complaisance is good nature, a quality of moderation which Freeman has in abundance, but which is incompatible with an absolutist mind. In a later poem, Wycherley presents a passage well applicable to Manly's situation:

Without Good-Nature, which is Charity,
 Ev'n the Devout wou'd serve God wickedly,
 Justice its self wou'd grow most Injury;
 . . .
 Good-Nature then, best Proof is of Good Sense,
 'Twixt Man and Beast, proves best the Difference.¹²³

When Manly discovers Olivia's treachery, he again takes an absolutist stand: ". . . hence forward I'll avoid the whole damn'd Sex for ever, and Woman as a sinking Ship."¹²⁴ Freeman must cure Manly of this disposition and bring him to a condition of moderate restraint from which he can charitably judge people as individuals. Only then will he be able to evaluate others properly (an ability necessary for survival in society), and thus appreciate Fidelia's worthiness.

Freeman tries to educate Manly in the ways of the world, recognizing his naiveté and the dangers inherent in attempting to deal with a complex world by adhering to a simple philosophy. He points

out the harsh realities to Manly: "Why, don't you know, good Captain, that telling truth is a quality as prejudicial, to a man that wou'd thrive in the World, as square Play to a Cheat, or true Love to a Whore! Wou'd you have a man speak truth to his ruine? You are severer than the Law, which requires no man to swear against himself. . . ." ¹²⁵ In an age of guileful complexity, a simple, truthful man will be destroyed. Freeman utters this harsh truth and then, by example, goes about demonstrating the means of survival.

In the struggle for survival, Freeman's antagonist is the Widow Blackacre, a humorous character who reflects all corruption and guile within the world. As has been stated previously, Wycherley uses Westminster Hall to indicate the depravity of the modern world. The seat of Justice supplies only confusion and injustice; Manly describes this situation thus: "This, the Reverend of the Law wou'd have thought the Palace or Residence of Justice; but, if it be, she lives here with the State of a Turkish Emperor, rarely seen; and beseig'd, rather than defended, by her numerous black Guard here." ¹²⁶ Lawyers confound Justice rather than serve it, and conducting all their activities, like an evil Prospero, stands the Widow Blackacre. She cheers on her lawyers as they pursue unfounded suits, exhorting them to ". . . deck my Cause with flowers, that the Snake may lie hidden," ¹²⁷ and to ". . . be sure your Argument be intricate enough, to confound the Court. . . ." ¹²⁸ Her personal corruption is established by the fact that she rewards successful lawyers with sexual favors. ¹²⁹

By corrupting justice, the Widow threatens the freedom of

innocents. She tyrannizes her son, who complains, ". . . my Curmudgeonly Mother wo'nt allow me wherewithall to be a Man of my self with." ¹³⁰ Like Mr. Pinchwife, she denies her ward freedom and instead tries to make him into a lawyer, a profession for which the bubble-headed young man is emphatically not suited.

Because the Widow represents tyranny established by guile and Manly stands in part for the tyranny of brute force, there are several similarities between the two characters. Donaldson believes, ". . . Each strives in a different way (railing, litigation) to achieve independence." ¹³¹ Yet the term independence should not be taken as a synonym for freedom. While freedom for Wycherley implies activity within society, Manly's absolute freedom and self-restraint demand independence from society. Blackacre seeks to use rather than work for society, and, by subverting justice, secure her independence by threatening the rightful freedom of others. In both cases the cause of independence puts them at war with their neighbors and so negates a basic feature of freedom: respect and responsibility for others' freedom. Manly's method of attaining independence is that of brutish man--physical force. Though at times his energies are translated from overt action to destructive railing, eventually his true self emerges in the brutal rape plot. The Widow's means is not innocent litigation, but the civilized, "womanly" trait--guile. Her guileful ways are made to function in the halls of justice as physical power functions in man's natural state; it oppresses and curtails the freedom of others.

Both characters, therefore, have similar antisocial, and hence

freedom-threatening, ends, and both are grotesque. Manly possesses none of the moderate, complaisant attitude essential to maintaining social harmony. The Widow has, essentially, emasculated her son and herself undertaken an exclusively masculine profession. In his dedication, Wycherley refers to hypocrisy as "that heinous, and worst of Womens Crimes." ¹³² It is this crime which Manly most frequently commits, whether by ranting at those who judge merit by social position and then attacking his sailors for "ill-bred" familiarity, ¹³³ or by denying any residue of feeling for Olivia after her treachery is discovered. So Manly also behaves in a manner unnatural to his sex by committing "Womens Crimes." Both characters also seem to revel perversely in the joy of destruction. When Manly says of the Widow, ". . . she is contented to be poor, to make other people so," ¹³⁴ one recalls that Manly himself did much the same thing in sinking treasure to keep it from Dutch hands. ¹³⁵ Both seem happy only when they are destroying, though she uses the courts as battleground, whereas he fights literally at sea and figuratively with his vicious plain dealing. Indeed, both are at "difference with all the World." ¹³⁶

The danger in leading such a life is its accompanying, ever-present threat to life as well as liberty. The Widow certainly brings death to mind as she scurries about in her black robes seeking to bring ruin upon someone and everyone with her spurious lawsuits. Her name itself is more than a legal term, for it is richly connotative, evoking an atmosphere of death and desolation. In Manly the danger of death is more overt. He threatens Fidelia with a knife, a la Pinchwife, to force her to aid him in his plot to rape Olivia, and

eagerly accepts a duel with Vernish. Freeman's task is to keep these two from their destructive ways, which are the outgrowth of immoderation, and lead them back to a harmonious relationship with the world.

He does so in a decidedly unidealistic way, by working in and through the corrupt system. His plan for success is simple, merely ". . . make Justice Pimp for you."¹³⁷ Although his plain dealing causes him to describe his method in most repulsive terms, Freeman's plan is actually quite "Just." He lives in a corrupt world, and this inescapable reality causes him to have to use corrupt values to achieve his end. However, his end is certainly good, for not only will he gain the financial resources necessary to live freely (i.e., not at anyone's economic mercy), but he will also secure Jerry's freedom and deprive the Widow of her means to throw the courts into confusion. Certainly this is much more desirable behavior than that of Manly, who utilizes a true ideal, Fidelia's love and faith, for the achievement of a corrupt goal, the rape of false Olivia.

By the end of the play, Freeman's tutoring is remarkably successful. Manly becomes reconciled to society, and with Freeman's aid, discovers true values in Fidelia. His closing lines also indicate that he has learned moderate internal restraint and perspective and no longer judges by absolutes:

I will believe, there are now in the World
Good-natur'd Friends, who are not Prostitutes,
And Handsom Women worthy to be Friends. . . . 138

Yet, despite this progress, Manly and Fidelia remain essentially apart from the rest of society. Manly's credo of moderation is very

grudgingly stated, to say the least. Fidelia's absolute devotion to Manly remains unshaken, despite being "dragged through the mire" of the rape plot. Unlike Christina, she never learns to moderate her overly rigorous virtue, and so imperils her freedom. As Righter observes, ". . . neither Manly nor Fidelia have really come to terms with the world as it is; their agreement is extrasocial, romantic, artificial, and almost impossible to believe in." ¹³⁹ Conspicuously absent is Wycherley's usual marriage covenant scene wherein the husband promises to respect his wife's right to freedom. ¹⁴⁰ The strong possibility, therefore, still exists that Manly may slip back into his old tyrannical habits, and Fidelia, still retaining a worshipful adoration for him, would make a pitifully willing slave.

A more disturbing aspect of the play, however, is the threatening resurrection of the Widow's power. While this perverse Justice figure is momentarily bound and gagged, and Freeman does manage to gain the upper hand in his personal conflict with her, she appears at the end of the play still vigorous and ready to resume her litigious ways. To make matters worse, she joins in what constitutes a devilish partnership with the wretched Olivia, intent on launching new fiendish lawsuits. Such an arrangement is much more disconcerting than that found at the conclusion of The Country-Wife. There the only malignantly evil force, Pinchwife, is entirely subdued, and Horner's world of illusion, though not offering the "true" values of Alithea and Harcourt, provides a life style which at least offers laughter. The world existing at the end of The Plain-Dealer is still that of Westminster Hall, and the spirit of Westminster Hall, Widow Blackacre,

is a purely malevolent force. That force threatens everyone's freedom and life, for, as Wycherley believed, "The Life of free-born Man is Liberty. . . ." 141

All of Wycherley's previous plays have ended with at least one "exuberant union" wherein the marriage partners agree to respect each other's freedom. However, in the final play, the only marriage presented is so contrived as to be incredible. The logical marriage containing potential to fit the criteria of an "exuberant union" would be one between the two proponents of common sense, internal restraint, and good nature, Eliza and Freeman. The expected marriage does not come about, however. Perhaps this is because of the symbolic nature of marriage: ". . . it brings order to individual lives within an orderly society and affords, in its promise of generation, man's deep hope for a meaningful future." 142 The society of The Plain-Dealer is chaotic, not orderly, one in which all values are distorted and deceit is the way of the world. There would seem to be little place in such a society for an institution which demands trust and honesty.

Hence Freeman remains alone. Though he operates within society, he will not officially join the society, for it is in reality a state of institutionalized warfare in which the original means of destruction, force, has been replaced by guile. In this wilderness, he is, indeed, according to Hobbes's definition, " a FREEMAN . . . one that in those things which by his strength and wit he is able to do is not hindered to do what he has a will to." 143

Wycherley's vision of what constitutes freedom remains

consistent through all four of his plays. However, his perception of the possibility of man's attaining freedom within society changes as his perception of social ills deepens. In his first two plays, the world is filled with folly and deceit, but it is essentially harmless, offering amusement and diversity for the young couples who have achieved and guaranteed freedom. In The Country-Wife, Harcourt and Alithea attain the same position; however, by doing so they distance themselves from the rest of the world. Wycherley still presents a picture of an "exuberant union," but it hovers dangerously between a depiction of what may actually be attained and a romantic vision of what should be possible. The man who has used his freedom the "right" way fits in awkwardly with a society in which the "wrong" way is the norm.

In his final play, Wycherley has determined that society is as fundamentally corrupt that a relationship based on honesty is necessarily extrasocial. Man is a social animal, however, and to accomplish anything worthwhile must do so within the confines of society. Since a marriage must be honest in order that the partners' freedom be protected, a successful marriage in the society of The Plain-Dealer is impossible.¹⁴⁴ Freeman cannot risk a marriage based on the deceitful values of society, for in such an arrangement his freedom would be constantly threatened. Wycherley's lesson in The Plain-Dealer is clear. He no longer believes that man can establish an effective guarantee of freedom within a social compact. Man's lot is that of Freeman; he must live in society but must remain alone if he is to live freely.

NOTES

NOTES

¹ The first major moral criticism of Restoration Comedy came in 1698 with the publication of Jeremy Collier's A Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage. For a brief review of major critical appraisals of Restoration Comedy, though colored by the author's interpretation, see Norman N. Holland, The First Modern Comedies: The Significance of Etherege, Wycherley and Congreve (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1959), pp. 199-209.

² L. C. Knights, "Restoration Comedy: The Reality and the Myth," in Restoration Drama: Modern Essays in Criticism, ed. John Loftis (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 19.

³ Kathleen Williams, "Restoration Themes in the Major Satires of Swift," Review of English Studies, 16 (1965), 256.

⁴ For an account of Hobbes's immense influence, especially in Wycherley's circle, see Thomas H. Fujimura, The Restoration Comedy of Wit (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1952), pp. 43-46. See also Williams, pp. 259-61. In Leviathan, Hobbes employs only the term "liberty," thus by omission failing to distinguish between the two terms "liberty" and "freedom." As noted by Mortimer J. Adler and William Gorman, eds., The Great Ideas: A Syntopicon of the Great Books of the Western World (Chicago:

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Encyclopedia Britannica, 1952), I, 992, "For the most part, 'liberty' and 'freedom' are synonyms. Both words are used in English versions of the great books. Though authors or translators sometimes prefer one, sometimes the other, their preference does not seem to reflect a variation in meaning."

⁵ William Wycherley, "For the Publick Active Life, against Solitude," Posthumous Works, in The Works of William Wycherley, ed. Montague Summers (New York: Russell and Russell, 1964), IV, 186.

⁶ Dates of authorship are questionable because of the elderly Wycherley's statement to Pope that he wrote Love in a Wood when nineteen, The Gentleman-Dancing-Master when twenty-one, The Plain-Dealer when twenty-five, and The Country-Wife at thirty-one (see Summers, "Introduction," in Works, I, 16). The preponderance of criticism accepts the plays as having been written in the chronological order in which they were produced. For an example of the confusion on this issue, see John Palmer, The Comedy of Manners (New York: Russell and Russell, 1962), pp. 94-95. In the text, the dates given with the plays indicate the first performance date.

⁷ First performed in March, 1671. Revived in the 1687-1688 season. Reprinted and possibly revived in 1694. These are the only recorded performances of the play in the seventeenth century (William van Lennep, ed., The London Stage, pt. 1, vol. 1 [Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1960-1968], pp. 181, 360, 426). The only recorded revival of the play in the following century came on August 15, 1718 (Emmett L. Avery, ed., The London

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Stage, pt. 2, vol. 2, p. 502.

⁸ Love in a Wood, or, St. James's Park, in The Complete Plays of William Wycherley, ed. Gerald Weales (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1966), Act I, p. 12. Weales's edition, which is the source of all quotations from the plays, follows the original publication in not designating the scenes within the acts.

⁹ The attitude of the court that freedom of conversation was an educational necessity came about largely because of the king's education and example. In exile he had traveled throughout Europe, learning European courtliness--an experience paralleled by Wycherley's own education in France and participation in the Marquise de Montausier's salon (Willard Connely, Brawny Wycherley: First Master in English Modern Comedy [New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1930], pp. 16-27). Hence John Dryden (Essays of John Dryden, ed. W. P. Ker [Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1926], I, 176) writes that Charles's court forsook: ". . . their stiff forms of conversation . . . [with the result that] insensibly, our way of living became more free; and the fire of the English wit, which was before stifled under a constrained, melancholy way of breeding, began first to display its force, by mixing the solidity of our nation with the air and gaiety of our neighbors." James Sutherland, in English Satire (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1967), p. 15, makes the point that "A University education was so far from conferring gentility that it was generally held to breed pedants; the academic rust had to be scoured off by conversation with men of fashion." This view of education is a natural consequence of Wycherley's assumption that man is a social animal, as it implies that

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man cannot educate or develop himself fully without the stimulus of the witty conversation of society. Wycherley makes this latter point in Maxim CCLXXV (Posthumous Works, in Works, IV, 138): "Our Life, if a wise one, must be led betwext Thought and Example, Notion and Proof; Meditation makes a Man's Thoughts just, but they are not to the Purpose 'till Action puts them into Practice. He who studies the World in Solitude, without practising it in Conversation, is like him who loses his Way in a Journey but out of Pride and Laziness, because he would not seem ignorant of what another knows."

¹⁰ Love in a Wood, Act I, p. 15.

¹¹ Ibid., Act II, p. 33.

¹² Ibid., Act I, p. 11.

¹³ Ibid., Act II, p. 42.

¹⁴ Ibid., Act I, p. 10.

¹⁵ Ibid., Act II, p. 35.

¹⁶ Thomas Hobbes, in Leviathan: Parts I and II, ed. Herbert Schneider (Indianapolis: Liberal Arts Press, 1958), p. 126, writes: ". . . in revenges . . . men [must] look not at the greatness of the evil past, but the greatness of the good to follow."

¹⁷ Love in a Wood, Act I, p. 22.

¹⁸ Posthumous Works, in Works, IV, 113.

¹⁹ Love in a Wood, Act V, p. 94.

²⁰ "You shew your self Sir Simons original. . . ." (Act V, p. 94). She later discloses to her father a more pressing reason for marrying: "Indeed, I found my self six months gone with Child, and

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saw no hopes of your getting me a Husband, or else I had not married a Wit, Sir" (Act V, p. 109).

21 Love in a Wood, Act II, p. 45.

22 Ibid., Act IV, p. 87.

23 Holland, p. 44.

24 Love in a Wood, Act II, p. 48.

25 Hobbes, p. 112, writes: ". . . if a man by words or other signs seem to despoil himself of the end for which these signs were intended, he is not to be understood as if he meant it or that it was his will, but that he was ignorant of how such words and actions were to be interpreted."

26 Love in a Wood, Act IV, p. 87.

27 Ibid., Act V, p. 104.

28 Ibid., Act V, p. 101.

29 Ibid., Act IV, p. 91.

30 Ibid., Act V, pp. 111-12.

31 Katharine M. Rodgers, William Wycherley (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1974), p. 40.

32 First produced on February 6, 1672, The Gentleman-Dancing-Master was not well received, having but a six-day run. It was reprinted and possibly revived in 1693, apparently otherwise unproduced in the seventeenth century (van Lennep, pp. 192, 412).

33 Fujimura, p. 138.

34 Weales, "Introduction," in The Complete Plays of William Wycherley, p. xiv. John Harrington Smith's attitude contains the

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grain of such resentment of Hippolita. In The Gay Couple in Restoration Comedy (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1948), p. 80, n. 12, he writes: ". . . her female instinct and intellectual superiority give her an ascendancy which she extends as the play proceeds and which, in the end, is complete. Hippolita is given such an advantage as to rule out any love game."

³⁵ Ann Righter, in "William Wycherley," in Restoration Dramatists, ed. Earl Miner (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1966), p. 110, argues that extended tension between Hippolita and Gerrard is necessary to establish "an equilibrium of realism and romanticism in their relationship." Romanticism (naive idealism and adolescent impetuosity) must be tempered for the couple to establish an honest relationship. Hippolita's romanticism, as revealed by her extravagant declarations of desperation to Prue (Act I, p. 132) and her scheme which brings Gerrard to the house, would lead her, were it not overcome, to accept Gerrard's dashing romantic proposition(s) to elope through the window. Though highly appealing to her romantic nature, such an event would preclude Hippolita's obtaining the necessary safeguards for future personal freedom.

³⁶ The Gentleman-Dancing-Master, Act I, p. 130.

³⁷ Ibid., Act II, p. 152.

³⁸ Ibid., Act IV, p. 192.

³⁹ Ibid., Act I, p. 135.

⁴⁰ Ibid., Act I, p. 150.

⁴¹ Ibid., Act IV, p. 194.

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- 42 Ibid., Act III, p. 175.
- 43 Ibid., Act II, p. 151.
- 44 Ibid., Act III, p. 188.
- 45 Ibid., Act II, p. 170.
- 46 Ibid., Act I, p. 137.
- 47 Ibid., Act II, p. 155.
- 48 Hobbes, p. 179.
- 49 The Gentleman-Dancing-Master, Act II, p. 154.
- 50 Ibid., Act I, p. 133.
- 51 Ibid., Act II, p. 161.
- 52 Ibid., Act IV, p. 204.
- 53 In Works, II, 254.
- 54 The Gentleman-Dancing-Master, Act V, pp. 218-19.
- 55 Ibid., Act V, p. 222.
- 56 Holland, p. 82.
- 57 First produced January 12, 1675, The Country-Wife was

revived May 16, 1676. It was reprinted and possibly revived in 1683, 1688, and 1695 (van Lennep, pp. 227, 244, 322, 368, 440). The play also enjoyed frequent revivals in the eighteenth century although, beginning in 1715, the productions were given in "revised" (censored) form. (see Avery, pt. 2, vol. 1, pp. 16, 30, 190-91, 212, 356-57, 370, 372, 382, 395, 414, 446; and pt. 2, vol. 2, pp. 464, 480, 488, 511, 540, 549, 559, 566, 576, 592, 598, 603, 622, 633, 643, 648, 670, 679, 699, 715, 834, 840, 841, 843, 847, 851, 855, 857, 859, 863, 884, 892, 897, 909, 914, 920, 924, 926, 929, 933, 939, 949, 980, 993, 1015,

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1018, 1021, 1032, 1034, 1035).

- 58 Ronald Berman, "The Ethic of The Country-Wife," Texas Studies in Literature and Language, 9 (1967), 54.
- 59 The Country-Wife, Act I, p. 263.
- 60 Hobbes, p. 38.
- 61 The Country-Wife, Act I, pp. 261-62.
- 62 The Gentleman-Dancing-Master, Act III, p. 173.
- 63 The Country-Wife, Act IV, p. 320.
- 64 Rose A. Zimbardo, in Wycherley's Drama: A Link in the Development of English Satire (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1965), p. 158, states that as the play progresses "by gradual stages the comic tone fades, to be replaced by the satiric." She goes so far as to label Pinchwife a cruel sadist (p. 160).
- 65 Zimbardo, p. 91.
- 66 Horner says, "Now must I wrong one woman for another's sake, but that's no new thing with me; for in these cases I am still on the criminal's side, against the innocent" (Act V, p. 355).
- 67 The Country-Wife, Act II, p. 288.
- 68 See p. 57 of this paper.
- 69 The Country-Wife, Act I, p. 265.
- 70 Ibid., Act IV, p. 323.
- 71 Ibid., Act I, p. 270.
- 72 Ibid., Act II, p. 284.
- 73 Ibid., Act V, p. 349.

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- 74 Ibid., Act V, p. 353.
- 75 Ibid., Act IV, p. 324.
- 76 Ibid., Act IV, p. 325.
- 77 Virginia Ogden Birdsall, Wild Civility: The English Comic Spirit on the Restoration Stage (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1970), p. 137.
- 78 The Country-Wife, Act III, p. 303.
- 79 Ibid., Act V, p. 351.
- 80 Ibid., Act II, p. 274.
- 81 Ibid., Act V, p. 341.
- 82 Ibid., Act IV, p. 313.
- 83 Ibid., Act IV, p. 313.
- 84 Ibid., Act IV, p. 312.
- 85 Ibid., Act V, pp. 347-48.
- 86 Ibid., Act V, p. 360.
- 87 Rogers, p. 61.
- 88 James Sutherland, English Literature of the Late Seventeenth Century (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 118.
- 89 Holland, p. 83.
- 90 The Country-Wife, Act V, p. 356.
- 91 Ibid., Act IV, p. 325.
- 92 Holland, p. 83.
- 93 Adler and Gorman, I, 995. Emphasis added.
- 94 The Country-Wife, Act V, p. 361.
- 95 Wycherley does show Harcourt as still desirous of remaining

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in society, but the young lover's declaration to Alithea--". . . I will not only believe your innocence my self, but make all the world believe it" (Act V, p. 356)--is a romantic effusion with no practical prospect of success. Harcourt can no longer comprehend or deal with the deviousness of Horner's world. Righter notes, "The trouble with The Country-Wife is that, although the centre of the comedy clearly lies with Alithea and Harcourt, Wycherley cannot really bring himself to believe in them" (p. 112).

⁹⁶ First produced on December 11, 1676, The Plain-Dealer was the most popular of Wycherley's plays. It was presented again in 1680 (by the King's Company in Oxford), probably in the 1682-1683 season, and certainly in 1683, 1685 (also reprinted in 1686), and in 1698. In addition, it was reprinted and probably revived in 1678, 1681, 1691, 1694, and 1700. See van Lennep, pp. 253, 263, 290, 295, 314, 316, 324, 344, 387, 427, 497, 514. The play was frequently revived in the eighteenth century, although, like The Country-Wife, after 1715 it was performed in a "revised" version. See Avery, pt. 2, vol. 1, pp. 5, 7, 28, 48, 59, 81, 87-88, 107, 377-78, 380, 389, 399, 407, 426; and pt. 2, vol. 2, pp. 607-09, 650, 678, 689, 724, 741, 754, 803, 824, 837, 865, 917.

⁹⁷ Montague Summers, The Playhouse of Pepys (New York: Humanities Press, 1964), p. 320.

⁹⁸ Dudley Howe Miles, The Influence of Molière on Restoration Comedy (New York: Octagon Books, 1971), p. 127.

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- 99 Kenneth Muir, The Comedy of Manners (London: Hutchinson University Library, 1970), p. 82.
- 100 John Wilcox, The Relation of Molière to Restoration Comedy (New York: Columbia University Press, 1938), p. 102.
- 101 Sutherland, English Literature of the Late Seventeenth Century, p. 16.
- 102 Miscellany Poems, in Works, III, 134.
- 103 Ibid., p. 135.
- 104 Ibid., p. 136.
- 105 Posthumous Works, in Works, IV, 134.
- 106 The Plain-Dealer, Act I, p. 389.
- 107 Ibid., Act I, p. 390.
- 108 Maxim LXXV: "Men of the worst Morals, or Sense, from their own Guilt or Weakness, find or condemn most their own Crimes, or Follies, in others" (Posthumous Works, in Works, IV, 117). Also, "Most Men are the contraries to that they wou'd seem; your bully you see, is a Coward with a long Sword. . . ." (The Country-Wife, Act I, p. 266).
- 109 The Plain-Dealer, Act I, p. 408. This constitutes a major departure from Alceste's desires in The Misanthrope. Molière's hero wishes to escape mankind entirely. Manly wishes to live with men, but in a brutal, Hobbesian state of nature.
- 110 The Plain-Dealer, Act I, p. 389.
- 111 ". . . the conditions of mere nature--that is to say, of absolute liberty such as is theirs that neither are sovereigns nor

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subjects--is anarchy and the condition of war; . . . the precepts by which men are guided to avoid that condition are the laws of nature" (Hobbes, p. 277). In "Upon Friendship, preferr'd to Love," Wycherley presents the Hobbesian view: ". . . Since Man to Man, by Nature is a Foe" (Miscellany Poems, in Works, III, 43).

112 The Plain-Dealer, Act II, p. 423.

113 Ibid., Act I, p. 393.

114 Ibid., Act I, p. 387.

115 Rogers, p. 55.

116 The Plain-Dealer, Act III, p. 439.

Wycherley himself was a law student when he first came to London, where he found his genius and inclination ran to other pursuits. See Connely, pp. 33-35, 39-40, 47-59.

117 See excerpt from "For the Publick Active Life, against Solitude" on p. 5 of this paper.

118 The Plain-Dealer, Act I, p. 398.

119 Ibid., Act I, p. 399. This passage recalls clear-sighted Vincent's defense of Christina in Love in a Wood: ". . . methinks she shou'd be innocent; her tongue, and eyes, together with that floud that swells 'em, do vindicate her heart" (Act IV, p. 86).

120 The Plain-Dealer, Act I, p. 395.

121 Hobbes, p. 125.

122 Posthumous Works, in Works, IV, 111.

123 "In Vindication of Simplicity, and Good-Nature," Miscellany Poems, in Works, II, 34.

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- 124 The Plain-Dealer, Act II, p. 431.
- 125 Ibid., Act I, p. 396. Also, cf. Hobbes: "No man obliged to accuse himself" (p. 117).
- 126 The Plain-Dealer, Act III, p. 439.
- 127 Ibid., Act III, p. 444.
- 128 Ibid., Act III, p. 445.
- 129 To Mr. Quaint: ". . . I shall make thy Wife jealous of me: if you can but court the Court into a Decree for us" (Act III, p. 444). To Mr. Blunder: ". . . succeed; and I'll invite thee, ere it be long, to more souz'd Venison" (Act III, p. 445).
- 130 The Plain-Dealer, Act III, p. 450.
- 131 Ian Donaldson, The World Upside-Down: Comedy from Jonson to Fielding (Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1970), p. 114.
- 132 "Epistle Dedicatory," The Plain-Dealer, p. 383.
- 133 Manly says to Freeman, "What, thou art one of those who esteem men onely by the marks and value Fortune has set upon 'em, and never consider intrinsick worth; . . . I weigh the man, not his title" (Act I, p. 394). Yet, in the next breath he complains, ". . . a Servant's jest is more sauciness than his counsel" (Act I, p. 395).
- 134 The Plain-Dealer, Act I, p. 401.
- 135 "On my conscience then, Jack, that's the reason our Bully Tar sunk our Ship: not only that the Dutch might not have her, but that the Courtiers, who laugh at wooden Legs, might not make her Prize" (Act I, p. 392). Wycherley himself participated in the naval victory of Opdam in 1665.

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- 136 The Plain-Dealer, Act I, p. 401.
- 137 Ibid., Act II, p. 438.
- 138 Ibid., Act V, p. 515.
- 139 Righter, p. 117.
- 140 See Love in a Wood, Act V, pp. 104-05, 111-12; The Gentleman-Dancing-Master, Act V, pp. 218-19; and The Country-Wife, Act V, pp. 359-60.
- 141 "Epistles to the King and Duke," in Works, II, 261.
- 142 Earl Miner, "Introduction," in Restoration Dramatists (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1966), pp. 10-11.
- 143 Hobbes, p. 171.
- 144 It is one of the ironies of history that Wycherley later married a very jealous woman. This ill-advised marriage to the Countess Drogheda cost Wycherley court favor and position and eventually led, with the aid of an endless flurry of lawsuits, to Wycherley's imprisonment. For the complete story, see Connely, pp. 145-204.

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VITA

James Ray Weidman

Born in Cincinnati, Ohio, April 23, 1950. Graduated from Westfield High School in Westfield, New Jersey, June 1968; A.B., College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia, May 1972. Entered the program for the degree of Master of Arts in English at the College of William and Mary, September 1972.