Moliere's Influence on Congreve

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I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Mildred Atkins Stern entitled "Moliere's Influence on Congreve." I have examined the final electronic copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in English.

John C. Hodges, Major Professor

We have read this thesis and recommend its acceptance:

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Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

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I submit herewith a thesis by Mildred Atkins Stern, "Molière's Influence on Congreve", and recommend that it be accepted for nine quarter hours credit in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in English.

John C. Hodges
Major Professor

At the request of the Committee on Graduate Study, I have read this thesis, and recommend its acceptance.

Accepted by the Committee

P.M. Næsser
Chairman
MOLIÈRE'S INFLUENCE

ON

CONGREVE

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A THESIS

Submitted to the Graduate Committee
of
The University of Tennessee
in
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the degree of
Master of Arts.

by

Mildred Atkins Stern

August 1933
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A. ON RESTORATION COMEDY IN GENERAL

The Restoration was the beginning of a new era both socially and politically. In an effort to forget the past, the new era tried to cast aside all the old and to build a new life in the direction that its own inclinations pointed. These inclinations were a result of past suppression and the recent sojourn at the French court. The reactionary tendency of the Restoration turned people's minds from the stern Puritanical ideas and beliefs of the preceding period and gave rise to the enjoyment of the more frivolous things of life. Among the upper classes, at least, all standards of morality were abolished, ideals were lowered or completely abandoned, and London society drank deeply of life and its pleasures. "Amid the galaxy of wit and fashion all was at sixes and sevens, in politics, religion, and social convention."

But even an age as revolutionary as the Restoration period could not depend entirely upon itself. Hence, this age looked elsewhere for its inspiration, and France beckoned with an enticing hand. Because of the political upheavals and disturbances in England before 1660, many members of the English court and of London society had spent the years of exile at the French court. Here they

had lived a life of idleness and had acquired involuntarily many customs and habits of the life about them. It was only natural then, at the time of the Restoration, that much of French life should be brought back and flourish at the Court of Charles II. Indeed, it has been said that "The life of the Court of King Charles II was, at best, a coarse replica of that of Versailles". Consequently the court and London gallants were interested in all things French, and the age as a whole reflected French ideas.

The French at this time were especially interested in comedy, for this was the age of Molière. The exiled English had undoubtedly enjoyed Molière's comedies; and upon their return to England, interest in drama was centered on French comedy, for comedy was the form of drama best suited to this life of gaiety and irresponsibility.

The Comic Muse, to whom Congreve owes his reputation as one of the greatest comic writers of the Restoration period, has been spoken of as a "disreputable, daring, laughing, painted French baggage, that Comic Muse. She came over from the Continent with Charles . . . at the Restoration . . . a wild, dishevelled Lais, with eyes

2. Cambridge History of English Literature, VIII, 150.
bright with wit and wine". Whether the Comic Muse accompanied Charles II on his return, whether she was brought over by other members of the Court, or whether she had merely been aroused from her enforced slumbers during the period of exile, she was now, at all events, living in England. Here she had to live as best she could by constantly adjusting and readjusting herself to the totally different English atmosphere. In spite of a French veneer, the English temperament and disposition were essentially different from the French; consequently, in English hands the Comic Muse suffered many changes, for the spirit of French and English comedy is never the same. Perhaps it was the chilly waters of the channel, or the foggy atmosphere of London, that dampened her spirits, or probably the enforced gaiety of King Charles' court did not suit her more airy spirit; but, for whatever reason, much of her blithesomeness and lightness were lost by her removal from the Continent.

The most popular writer of French Comedy, Molière, seems to have accompanied his mistress, the Comic Muse, to London. As Molière's earlier works appeared during the last years of the exile (1658, 1659), many of the English probably saw his plays acted in Paris. Later, as Molière's reputation increased, more and more

attention was centered on his works. English writers, noting the popularity of Molière, began to make use of his works in translations, adaptations, and suggestions. In fact, "No one foreign author has been so plundered by English playwrights as Molière". Such writers as "D'Avenant, Dryden, Sedley, Wycherley, Vanbrugh, Crowne and Shadwell all owe debts of plot, character, design and dialogue to French comedy; and, even where the debt may not be specifically ascertainable, the tone of the play, the method of its conduct, and the conception of its personages declare the dominant influence of France".

A great many English critics agree that Molière was a dominant factor in Restoration Comedy. Ward holds the opinion that Restoration Comedy owes a debt to Molière, that his works were imitated and even copied more unreservedly than those of any other foreign writer. The real Molière, however, was missing; that is, his spirit and manner were lost or very imperfectly understood by his would-be imitators. The debt of English comedy to Molière was strength and vivacity; but in other respects English comedy was more truly English, for the English

5. Ibid., p. 152.
gave a more realistic and less refined air to what they used.

Miles, in his treatise on Molière's Influence on Restoration Comedy, says that "The leading dramatists caught something of the spirit of Molière's comedy of manners, but the minor playwrights saw in him only the clever manipulator of a comedy of intrigue". It is interesting, as Miles observes, that no one seemed disposed to acknowledge his indebtedness to Molière. Not even the leading dramatists, who were doubtless influenced by the Frenchman, admitted their borrowings. For example, "Congreve nowhere avowed his study of Molière", but he was "a close student of all sides of Molière's art". The minor playwrights pilfered Molière most ruthlessly and seemed to regard him as a "public storehouse" of plots, incidents, and characters. Caryll sums up the attitude in his epilogue to Sir Salomon, a play adopted from L'École des Femmes:

"Faith, be good natur'd to this hungry Crew, Who, what they filch abroad, bring home to you".

A few years later one writer, realizing how frequently Molière had been borrowed from, said:

8. Ibid., p. 98.
9. Ibid., p. 119.
10. Ibid., p. 81.
"Molière is quite rifled, then how shall I write?"\(^{11}\) These minor writers, as one would expect, failed to recognize Molière as one of the great comic geniuses of the world, although they used him as a storehouse from which to draw. \(^{12}\)

Netleton and Nicoll agree that Molière gave to English playwrights of the new era a model they could admire and even imitate, but these borrowers reproduced only the outward semblance, not the real spirit, of the French genius. "In their hands Gallic gaiety was coarsened into gross brutality, satire became cynically harsh, and human comedy lost its humanity. In comedy, as in tragedy, the spirit of French drama evaded the grasp of English copyists." But because the Restoration writers did find in Molière the classical requirements they felt must be observed, they used him as a panacea for all the ills a playwright can fall heir to. They borrowed from Molière for plot and characters, but never failed to change what they borrowed to suit the English taste. \(^{13}\)

According to Perry, "Ben Jonson and the Elizabethans had not had the benefit of Molière's influence and example, but their successors in the Restoration period came after the great Frenchman and profited by that fact."... \(^{15}\)

11. Miles, op. cit., p. 81.
12. Ibid., pp. 79 ff.
"Although the roots of Restoration Comedy are to be found in native drama, foreign influences, both social and artistic, are in some degree responsible for it; from Etherege to Farquhar, the authors... tried to refine upon the common sense of Molière and ended by creating a brightly colored bubble of thin substance and temporary duration."

According to a fanciful remark of Charles II the dramatists may have assumed the attitude, "We can pillage that fellow, Molière — he won't mind — but we will have nothing to do with anything written in this country before the wicked Oliver murdered the late king. And so to work!" As a result the comedy of the period was "evolved from the existing drama, affected by many contemporary and foreign influences... (among which was) the French comedy of reason as practiced by Molière..." Molière exercised a great influence on Restoration Comedy, but the English gave much more variety to their plays. They took as the nucleus of a comedy some plot of Molière's and from this branched out as their fancy led until there were several plots in one play. The

18. Ibid.
minute but perfect plots of Molière's comedies were not inclusive enough for the English, and consequently numerous subplots were added.

The imported drama was not, according to Meredith, the real French drama, for "the corrupted importation from France was noxious; a noble entertainment spoilt to suit the wretched taste of a villainous age." In short, English audiences wanted idle laughter, not the thought provoking laughter of Molière. Meredith also feels that Molière was copied so much that oftentimes the later imitations became tiresome because the same situations recurred so much.

Although a number of critics hold that Restoration Drama was, to some extent, a product of French influence, there are others who minimize the French element. Among those who wish to deny French influence, Bonamy Dobrée is, perhaps, the most ardent believer in the English descent of Restoration Drama. He says that "to take a plot, to borrow a subject, does not constitute influence", and that, when borrowed, Molière was always improved for the English stage. Moreover, "English plays, therefore, never

21. Ibid., pp. 26 f. One of the Scenes mentioned is Le Misanthrope II, v. which is repeated by Wycherley, Congreve and Sheridan.
22. Dobrée, op cit., p. 50.
23. Ibid., p. 50.
aimed at producing the same cool atmosphere as the French. ..
What they took from the French they spoiled; what they had
in naturalness was, one may readily suppose, but the natural
reflection of a life that was free, a result of a realism they could not avoid." He contends that French influence
was French life rather than French literary form, for the
influence of French life was reflected in English comedies through the medium of the court.

Taylor, one of the most recent biographers of Congreve,
declares that the "influence of France upon English comedy
during this era is less dominant than has often been stated.
It is evident more in the refinement of manners and lightness
of touch than in direct borrowings of plots and characters." 26

The critics seem to agree that Restoration Comedy,
although it owes something to French influences, was a
product of the times and for the times. As one writer
says, "Its genesis was the social life of the day, influenced
by the literary tradition of Ben Johnson in England and
Molière in France." Even the critics who would discount
French influence do admit that the sojourn in France colored
London life and thus indirectly affected Restoration Comedy.

25. Ibid., p. 54.
Press, 1931, p. 5.
27. Perry, op. cit., p. 140.
By his own writings, Congreve has given ample proof that he was a student of Molière. The play, *Squire Trelooby*, of which Congreve was co-author, is not an important play; but it does reveal Congreve's acquaintance with Molière, for it is practically a translation of Molière's *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac*. On the title page of the play we find that it was "done into English from a comedy of Molière's"; and in the preface, this statement, "Every man having an equal Right (at this time particularly) to take all he can from the French", leaves little doubt of the intention to use Molière in writing the play. In his letter of May 20, 1704, to Joseph Keally, Congreve gives his opinion of the play. "The translation you speak of is not altogether mine; for Vanbrugh and Walsh had a part in it. Each did an act of a French farce. Mine, and I believe theirs, was done in two mornings; so there can be no great matter in it." In this study then, *Squire Trelooby* is

29. Ibid., p. 115.
important to us, not as a work of literature, but as an
evidence that Congreve knew Molière's works.

If Congreve knew Molière and used one of Molière's
plays as the basis for his play, it is possible that he
had used suggestions from Molière in his earlier plays:
The Old Batchelor, The Double Dealer, Love for Love, and
The Way of the World. Let us now proceed to an examination
of what others have said on this subject.

Gosse says of Congreve's place among the comic
writers: "Etherege led the van with his French inspiration,
directly drawn from Molière, his delicate observation, his
lightness of touch, his thin elegance. Wycherley followed
with his superior strength, his massive dialogue, his
pungent wit, his vigour, his invention. . . Congreve
came forward with his erudite and brilliant comedies,
combining the quality of Etherege with that of Wycherley,
adding much from Molière, owing much to his own trained
and active fancy, and placing English comedy of manners
for the first time on a really classic basis." Although
Congreve surpasses his countrymen, "in comparison with
Molière, the English comedian takes a second rank in all but
wit." Congreve failed to reach Molière because of his
adherence to the rules of composition, but, "in his own narrow

32. Ibid., p. 182.
kind, (Congreve is) unsurpassed even by such broader and
more genial masters as Terence and Molière." 33 Gosse, 34
however, cites very few instances of direct influence.

The Cambridge History of English Literature, in
speaking of Congreve, says: "He took for his material the
life about him, a life which still reflected the gaiety
of King Charles' Court." The Court of King Charles,
as we have said before, was greatly influenced by the
French Court of Louis XIV, and life around the Court of
Charles II was in great measure a reflection of French
Life. The Cambridge History continues: "As a stern
castigator of prose, he (Congreve) goes far beyond
the example of his master, Molière." In like vein,
Swinburne says, "No English writer, on the whole, has
so nearly approached the skirts of Molière."

Miles says of Congreve, that he was "destined to
carry the English imitation of Molière's comedy of
manners to its highest point," but he did not bodily
take over any of Molière's plots: "he had in mind models
for his different plays, but he followed them at a great
distance." Miles feels certain that even Congreve's

34. See references to specific likenesses under separate
    plays.
35. Cambridge History of English Literature, VIII, 177.
36. Vide supra, p. 2.
37. Cambridge History of English Literature, VIII, 178 f.
38. A. C. Swinburne, Miscellanies, London, Chatto and
    Windus, 1886, p. 54.
40. Ibid., p. 121.
earliest play, The Old Batchelor, showed traces of Molière's influence in its constructions, and perhaps, "Inspired by the success of this first play and by the desire to excell in the art which had brought him the warm friendship of the literary dictator of his age, Dryden, the young author devoted himself to a more serious study of the Great Frenchman who had started Wycherley and Etherege on their successful careers." In fact Miles asserts that all of Congreve's plays reveal "a considerable influence from the great French genius upon the general dramatic method of Congreve."

Congreve, for the most part, managed the course of action in the same way as Molière, showed almost an equal care in motivation, gave an earnestness to the main thread of each plot, and, in his last three comedies, constructed plots of the same kind as those of Molière's masterpieces---plots in which action is invented to serve the purpose of the play, to satirize the follies and vices of society. Miles gives more specific borrowings than any other critic. Miles concludes that "though Congreve could provide all the material for his plays by his own keen observation of

41. Miles, op cit., p. 195.
42. Ibid., pp. 199 f.
43. Ibid., p. 200.
44. See references to specific likeness under separate plays.
the life in which he moved, he studied Molière for suggestions, absorbed the Frenchman's manner, and adopted his dramatic method." The surprising thing to Miles is not that Congreve, "adopted so much from Molière, but that he showed such striking originality in the creation of his young manhood. For in following a model he was but repeating the practice of Molière himself."

Summers, who for the most part denies French influence, does admit certain borrowings, but contends that most of Congreve's borrowings can be traced to Wycherley and Wycherley's borrowings to Molière. Although Congreve may have borrowed, his "genius is so great that he has been able to invest all his borrowings from Jonson, from Molière, from other sources with complete originality."

Summers is not alone in linking Wycherley's name with that of Congreve as he talks of Molière's influence. Perry says, "Congreve and Wycherley, to a less degree, have best captured the elusiveness and grace; the gaiety and detachment of the comic Spirit." Matthews also says, "In its form, if not in its spirit,

the comedy of Wycherley and Congreve is taken from the comedy of Molière." Perromat admits much influence of Molière on Wycherley, and later says that Wycherley's influence on Congreve was very great. He goes so far, in fact, as to say that Wycherley was the principal and almost the only writer to whom Congreve was under obligation, and that all of Congreve's originality belongs to his excellent aptitude for assimilating the thought of Wycherley. Thus it may be that Molière's influence on Congreve was indirect, coming through Wycherley.

Charles Morse sees in Congreve's comedies "the very age and body of the time" but adds that the "genius of the new drama is not native to England. It is a scion from the French comedy whose founder was Molière." Morse too finds that Molière's influence may be traced through Wycherley, and continues, "So if it be true that the light in Congreve's drama is a transmitted one it is equally true that by a sort of dichroism, the foreign color disclosing itself here and there is less

51. Ibid., pp. 414 ff.
52. Mr. Morse wrote his Article, Plays of Wm. Congreve, during the tri-centennial celebration of Molière's birth. To Mr. Morse this tri-centennial seemed an appropriate time to write of Congreve, a follower of Molière. As Who's Who for 1929 tells us, Charles Morse is a Canadian lawyer and has been Registrar of the Exchequer Court of Canada since 1912.
54. Ibid., p. 474.
intense than the local color suffusing it throughout.

Protopopesco believes that Congreve owes much to his English predecessors and that it was, perhaps, from them he secured his idea for using suggestions from Molière. It was probably from Shadwell's *Bury Fair*, with scenes drawn from *Les Précieuses Ridicules*, more than from the scene of Olivia from Wycherley that Congreve received the idea of using the famous motif of *Le Misanthrope*.

In spite of the great amount of English influence, Protopopesco says: "Mais le vrai mouvement comique des pièces de Congreve provient sans doute de ce maître à tous, Molière. La plupart de ces épisodes ont été inspiré par lui, la scène Lady Plyant--- Vainlove, la scène des portraits, du madrigal, la scène de Trapland et nombre de déguisements; tandis que Lady Touchwood, Heartwell, Maskwell, n'ont pu avoir pour modèles --- s'il en ont eu --- que des personnages molièresques." En résumé Congreve a eu beaucoup de Maîtres, mais pas un modèle précis, pas une source directe. Il n'a pas pillé; différent en cela de ses devanciers: (Shadwell, Etherege, Wycherley) il est

57. Ibid., p. 353.
l'auteur de ses propres pièces, l'inventeur de ses propres actions dramatiques. Ce qu'il a tout au plus adopté, furent quelques épisodes, quelques traits. Encore les a-t-il tellement transfigurés et perfectionnés qu'il a dépassé quelquefois l'original."

The critics that have just been quoted seem to be of the opinion that Molière did exert an influence over Congreve, but they do not agree as to the amount or kind of influence. Some think that the influence was direct, others that it was indirect, coming through Wycherley. Again there is another group of critics which holds an opposing opinion; that is, that Congreve was not influenced by Molière. There are fewer but not less noted exponents of this theory.

Ward says that Congreve is of a later period than most of the Restoration writers, and his brilliant style cannot be said to be founded on Molière's. In his construction of plot "although he possessed a very thorough familiarity with Molière and other French comic Dramatists, (Congreve) displayed an independence of workmanship which contrasts with the rude appropriation practiced by many of his contemporaries, and even with the assimilating processes of Wycherley." The

prototypes and analogies of such characters as Congreve's Heartwell, Captain Bluffe, and Mrs. Fondlewife could be found in Molière or elsewhere.

Among the more recent critics, there is an anti-Molière group. This group is represented by Henley, Dobrée, and Taylor. Henley declares that Congreve's "style is that of a pupil not of Molière but of the full, the rich, the excessive, the pedantic Jonson;...to compare him to Molière is to misapprehend the differences between pure literature and literature that is also drama." Dobrée says that although Congreve "had a poetic fastidiousness and a depth of feeling that made him more than any Englishman akin to Molière," yet he lacked the deep insight of Molière for he never saw beyond the present. Taylor feels that Congreve, a "brilliant exception (others destroyed in transplanting), demonstrated his superior dramatic judgement by taking only such details as he could assimilate and make his own."

Thus the consensus of opinion concerning Molière's influence on Congreve is that Molière did influence

60. Ward, op. cit., p. 472.
63. Ibid., p. 149.
64. Taylor, op. cit., p. 6. Taylor gives only one reference to direct borrowing. He states that no direct borrowing in The Double Dealer can be traced but that Congreve was undoubtedly influenced by Le Tartuffe as he wrote The Double Dealer. Hazlitt, Macaulay, and Lamb, other critics of this period, do not discuss Molière's influence on Congreve.
Congreve, but that the influence does not appear as direct or as obvious as many would believe. Even the most zealous believers in Molière's influence acknowledge that Congreve changed what he took from Molière and made it his own. Likewise, those who minimize Molière's influence agree that Congreve owed something to Molière.

The influence of one author upon another is often an elusive and indeterminate quality. Nevertheless, I shall devote the following chapters of this discussion to pointing out the specific similarities between Congreve's and Molière's comedies. These resemblances which I shall note are based upon a study of Congreve's comedies, Molière's comedies, and the references listed by several critics. I shall endeavor, however, to discuss more fully the likenesses already pointed out and to add some new parallels not hitherto observed.
THE OLD BATCHelor

Throughout Congreve's comedies there is evidence of French influence. This influence, however, seems to develop in almost reverse order to the growth of Congreve's own powers as a dramatist. In Congreve's earlier comedies, there is much more evidence of following a model — and that model Molière — than in the great masterpieces.

Critics do not agree concerning the extent of Congreve's acquaintance with the great French master as revealed by The Old Batchelor. Gosse states that "in The Old Batchelor there is no positive evidence of the study of Molière, whom Congreve, who read so much, must nevertheless have known familiarly, but the direct influence of Wycherley is strongly marked." Perhaps, in turn, Wycherley's dramas may be traced back to Molière's. Miles says of Congreve that "on his arrival from the country he had with him a play, The Old Batchelor, which revealed his acquaintance with Molière but which was constructed as a comedy of intrigue with five threads of action." He cites five specific borrowings from

Molière. Summers, who for the most part denies French influence, says: "When ... we examine the fable and conduct of Congreve's first play, we are bound to acknowledge that neither is fresh or original. Before writing his scenes he had read Molière, and he had read Wycherley even more lately." Summers notes one direct borrowing. Morse assumes Molière's influence as a well established and generally accepted fact and states that Congreve's first play gives evidence of adaptation from the French comedy of manners. Other critics, in so far as I have been able to examine them, do not make mention of The Old Batchelor in connection with French influence on the plot.

The plot of The Old Batchelor, suggestive as it is of Molière, cannot be traced to any one of the Frenchman's,

3. Miles, op. cit., pp. 234f. The specific borrowings are as follows: "Act ii. is freely adapted from Les Fourberies de Scapin, ii, 7 with a suggestion from Monsieur de Pourcaugnac, i2. Act ii. was suggested by Les Femmes Savantes, i, i. Act iii, 2 is a reminiscence of George Dandin, ii, i. Act iv, 6 is freely adapted from George Dandin, ii, 8, with a suggestion from L'Ecole des Maris, ii, 9." As Miles gives references from The Complete Plays of William Congreve, edited by Alexander Charles Ewald, his specific references do not always agree with the ones given in this paper.


5. Ibid., p. 157. "The incident of Laetitia's hanging upon Fondewife's neck and embracing him, whilst behind his back Bellmour is kissing her hand is taken from L'Ecole des Maris, ii, xiv, where Isabelle 'fait semblant d'embrasser Sganarel et donne sa main à baiser à Valère.'" In the edition of Molière's works used in this paper the above reference is ii, ix.

for it has five distinct plot interests. Within these plots, however, there are incidents which recall Molière. The scene of Sharper and Sir Joseph in *The Old Batchelor* resembles that of Molière's Scapin and Géronte in *Les Fourberies de Scapin*. In both scenes the rogues, Sharper and Scapin, are hunting for someone, finally discover him, and succeed in getting their hands upon the coveted money in spite of the fact that both Sir Joseph and Géronte hold fast to their precious gold. Both money seekers succeed by cleverly pretending that the money is a mere trifle and that there is no doubt that the rich lords will give it. Sharper hunts for the money which he did not lose:

**Sharper.** 'Tis but trying, and being where I am at worst, now luck! -- curs'd Fortune! this must be the Place, this damn'd unlucky Place---

**Sir Jo.** Agad and so 'tis---why here has been more Mischief done I perceive.

**Sharper.** No, 'tis gone, 'tis lost---ten thousand Devils on that Chance which drew me hither; ay here, just here, this Spot to me is Hell; nothing to be found, but the Despair of what I've lost.

Likewise Scapin pretends to hunt for his master, who is not lost:

**Scapin.** N'y a-t-il personne qui puisse me dire où est le Seigneur Géronte?

**Géronte.** Qu'y a-t-il, Scapin?

**Scapin.** Où pourrai-je le rencontrer, pour lui dire cette infortune?

**Géronte.** Qu'est-ce que c'est donc?

**Scapin.** En vain je cours de tous côtés pour le pouvoir trouver.

Geronte. Me voici.

Scapin. Il faut qu'il soit caché en quelque endroit qu'on ne puisse point deviner.

Geronte. Holà! es-tu aveugle, que tu ne me vois pas?

Scapin. Ah! Monsieur, il n'y a pas moyen de vous rencontrer.

After careful preparation Sharp and Scapin broach the subject of the money:

Sharp. Sir your humble Servant—I don't question but you are; that you have so cheap an Opportunity of expressing your Gratitude and Generosity. Since the paying so trivial a Sum, will wholly acquit you and Doubly engage me.

Sir Jo. What a dickens does he mean by a trivial Sum? (aside) But han't you found it, Sir!

Sharp. No otherwise I vow to Gad but in my Hopes in you, Sir.

Sir Jo. Humph.

Sharp. But that's sufficient----'Twere Injustice to doubt the Honour of Sir Joseph Wittoll.

Sir Jo. O Lord, Sir.

Sharp. You are above (I'm sure) a Thought so low, to suffer me to lose what was ventur'd in your Service; Nay 'twas in a manner—paid down for your deliverance; 'twas so much lent you---And you scorn, I'll say that for you---

Sir Jo. Nay I'll say that for my self (with your leave, Sir,) I do scorn a dirty thing. But agad I'm a little out of Pocket at present.

Sharp. Pshaw you can't want a hundred Pound. Your Word is sufficient any where; 'Tis but borrowing so much Dirt, you have large Acres and can soon repay it---Money is but Dirt Sir Joseph—Meer Dirt.

Sir Jo. But I profess, 'tis a Dirt I have washed my Hands of at present;

But Sir I have a Letter of Credit to Alderman Fondlewife, as far as two hundred Pound, and this Afternoon you shall see I am a Person, such a one as you would wish to have met with---

Sharp. That you are I'll be sworn (Aside) Why that's great and like your self.


9. The Old Batchelor, II, i.
Just as Sharper has worked upon Sir Joseph's feelings, so did Scapin work upon Géronte's feelings, although Scapin appealed to Géronte's fatherly love for his son, whereas, Sharper played upon Sir Joseph's vanity.

Scapin  Attendez, Monsieur, nous y voici. Pendant que nous mangions, il a fait mettre la galère en mer, et, se voyant éloigné du port, il m'a fait mettre dans un esquif, et m'envoie vous dire que si vous ne lui envoyez par moi tout à l'heure cinq cents écus, il va vous emmener votre fils en Alger.

Géronte  Comment, diantre! cinq cents écus?

Scapin  Oui, Monsieur; et de plus, il ne m'a donné pour cela que deux heures.

Géronte  Tiens, Scapin, je ne me souvenois pas que je viens justement de recevoir cette somme en or, et je ne croyois pas qu'elle dût m'être si tôt ravie. Tiens. Va-t'en racheter mon fils.  

In this same scene Congreve is somewhat reminiscent of Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, I, iv. Sharper pretends to know Sir Joseph and is astonished that Sir Joseph does not recognize him, as Eraste pretended to know Monsieur de Pourceaugnac. Both Sharper and Eraste desired the acquaintances for their own good, not because of any interest in the gentleman. Sharper assures Sir Joseph that he is an acquaintance:

Sharper  Know you; why can you be so ungrateful, to forget me!

Sir Jo.  O Lord forget him! No, no Sir, I don't forget you---because I never saw your Face before, agad. Ha, ha, ha.

Sharper.  How!

Sir Jo.  Stay, stay Sir, let me recollect---He's a damn'd angry Fellow---I believe I had better remember him, 'till I can get out of his sight; but out o'sight out o'mind agad.

11. The Old Batchelor, II, i.
Eraste had pretended acquaintance with Monsieur de Pourceaugnac in much the same way:

Eraste. Ah! qu'est-ce ci? que vois-je? Quelle heureuse rencontre! Monsieur de Pourceaugnac! Que je suis ravi de vous voir! Comment? il semble que vous ayez peine à me reconnaître!

M. de P. Monsieur, je suis votre serviteur.

Eraste. Est-il possible que cinq ou six années m'ayent ôté de votre mémoire? et que vous ne reconnaissiez pas le meilleur ami de toute la famille des Pourceaugnacs?

M. de P. Pardonnez-moi. Ma foi! je ne sais qui il est.

Eraste. Il n'y a pas un Pourceaugnac à Limoges que je ne connaisse, depuis le plus grand jusques au plus petit; je ne fréquentois qu'eux dans le temps que j'y étois, et j'avois l'honneur de vous voir presque tous les jours.

M. de P. Vigilâ une connaissance où je ne m'attendois point.

Another scene that, perhaps, owes something to Molière is the scene between Araminta and Belinda, as they discuss their views of men and marriage. Here, Congreve seems to have made use of the opening scene of Les Femmes Savantes in which Armande and Henriette give their opinions on a similar subject. Armande, with her radical and contemptuous view of men, seems to be the source for Belinda, while Henriette, with her opposing ideas, could have suggested Araminta.

Belinda, who is weary of Araminta's raving, bursts into words of scorn:

Oh you have raved, talked idly, and all in Commendation of that filthy, awkward, two-leg'd Creature, Man---you don't know what you've said, your Fever has transported you.13

13. The Old Batchelor II, iii.
So does Armande rail at poor Henriette:

Quoi? le beau nom de fille est un titre, ma soeur,
Dont vous voulez quitter la charmante douceur,
Et de vous marier vous osez faire fête?
Ce vulgaire dessein vous peut monter en tête? 14

Belinda pretends to hate men and to scorn their attentions, but she really loves Bellmour. Aramande likewise affects to scorn men and to be interested in philosophy and other learned subjects.

The plot of The Old Batchelor recalls still another of Molière's plays, George Dandin. George Dandin seems to have given hints for some of the scenes in which Heartwell appears. Heartwell's disgust with himself for loving Silvia and being constantly drawn to her, although it is against his will, reminds one of George Dandin's belittling of himself:

Why whither in the Devil's Name am I a going now? Hum——let me think——Is not this Silvia's House, the Cave of that Enchantress, and which consequently I ought to shun as I would Infection? To enter here, is to put on the envenom'd Shirt, to run into the Embraces of a Fever, and in some raving Fit, be led to plunge my self into that more consuming Fire, a Woman's Arms. Hail well recollected, I will recover my Reason, and be gone.

Well, why do you not move? Feet do your Office—not one Inch; no, foregad I'm caught—There stands my North, and thither my Needle points—Now could I curse my self, yet cannot repent. O thou delicious, damn'd, dear, destructive Woman! S'death how the young Fellows will hoot me! I shall be the Jest of the Town; Nay in two Days, I expect to be Chronicled in Ditty, and sung in woeful Ballad, to the Tune of the superannuated Maidens Comfort, or the Batchelors Fall; and upon the third, I shall be hang'd in Effigie, pasted up for the exemplary

14. Les Femmes Savantes, I, i.
Ornament of necessary Houses, and Coblers Stalls
— Death, I can't think on't — I'll run into the
Danger to lose the Apprehension. 15

In almost this fashion, George Dandin had scorned himself
for his weakness for Angélique:

George
Dandin, George Dandin, vous avez fait une sottise
la plus grande du monde. Ma maison m'est effroyable
maintenant, et je n'y rentre point sans y trouver
quelque chagrin.

Je ne dis mot, car je ne gagerois rien à parler,
et jamais il ne s'est rien vu d'égal a ma disgrace.
Oui, j'admire mon malheur, et la subtile adresse
de ma carogne de femme pour se donner toujours
raison, et me faire avoir tort. Est-il possible
que toujours j'aurai du dessous avec elle, que
les apparences toujours tourneront contre moi,
et que je ne parviendrai point à convaincre mon
effrontée? 0 Ciel, seconde mes desseins, et m'accorde
la grâce de faire voir aux gens que l'on me déshonore.16

Similar to this same passage of George Dandin is
Fondlewife's soliloquy:

And in the mean time, I will reason with myself —
Tell me Isaac, why art thee jealous? Why art thee
distrustful of the Wife of thy Bosom? — Because
she is young and vigorous, and I am old and impotent—
Then why didst thee marry, Isaac? — Because she was
beautiful and tempting, and because I was obstinate
and doating; so that my Inclination was (and is still)
greater than my Power — And will not that which tempted
thee, also tempt others, who will tempt her, Isaac?—
I fear it much — But does not thy Wife love thee,
nay doat upon thee? — Yes — Why then! — Ay, but to say
truth, she's fonder of me, than she has reason to be;
and in the way of Trade, we still suspect the smoothest
Dealers of the deepest Designs — And that she has some
Designs deeper than thou canst reach, th'hast experi-
mented, Isaac — But Mum. 17

15. The Old Batchelor, III, ii.
17. The Old Batchelor, IV, iii.
Not only does Fondlewife's argument resemble that of George Dandin with himself, but the entire Fondlewife-Lastitia plot is probably based upon the George Dandin-Angélique plot. Both husbands are cleverly outwitted by their young and popular wives, who succeed in making their husbands appear in the wrong.

Not content with fashioning the affairs of the master and mistress upon Molière's plots, Congreve has also based the actions of his servants upon those of Claudine and Lubin. Lucy and Setter, in their small way, mimic the doings of their master and mistress, just as Claudine and Lubin do. Setter and Lucy, while looking after the affairs of their master and mistress, take time to argue about their own affairs:

Lucy. Remember to Days Behaviour—Let me see you with a penitent Face.
Setter. What no Token of Amity Lucy? you and I don't use to part with dry Lips.
Lucy. No, no avaut—I'll not be slabber'd and kiss'd now—I'm not i'th' humour.
Setter. I'll not quit you so—I'll follow and put you into the Humour.

In George Dandin a similar argument took place between Claudine and Lubin:

Claudine. Que veux-tu?
Lubin. Viens, te dis-je.
Claudine. Ah! doucement; je n'aime pas les patineurs.
Lubin. Eh! un petit brin d'amitié.
Claudine. Laisse-moi là, te dis-je; je n'entends pas raillerie.

18. The Old Batchelor, III, vi.
Lubin. Claudine.
Claudine. Ah! que tu es rude à pauvres gens. Fil que cela est malhonnête de refuser les personnes!
N'as-tu point de honte d'être belle, et de ne vouloir pas qu'on te caresse? Eh là!
Claudine. Je te donnerai sur le nez.
Lubin. Oh! la farouche, la sauvage. Fi, pauv'la vilaine, qui est cruelle.
Claudine. Tu t'emancipes trop.
Lubin. Qu'est-ce que cela te coûterait de me laisser un peu faire?
Claudine. Il faut que tu te donnes patience.
Lubin. Un petit baiser seulement, en rabattant sur notre mariage.

Setter, as he arranges the meeting of Bellmour and Laetitia, also reminds one of Lubin.

Bell. Trusty Setter what Tidings? How goes the Project?
Setter. As all lewd Projects do, Sir, where the Devil prevents our Endeavours with Success.
Bell. A good hearing, Setter.
Vain. Well, I'll leave you with your Engineer.
Bell. And hast thou provided Necessaries?
Setter. All, all, Sir; . . . .20

Clitandre. La nuit est avancée, et j'ai peur qu'il ne soit trop tard. Je ne vois point à me conduire.
Lubin!
Lubin. Monsieur?
Clitandre. Est-ce par ici?
Lubin. Je pense que oui, Morgué! voilà une sotte nuit, d'être si noire que cela.
Clitandre. Elle a tort assurément; mais si d'un côté elle nous empêche de voir, elle empêche de l'autre que nous ne soyons vus. 21

The scene of Fondlewife and his errant wife has a touch of the scene of Sganarelle and Isabelle in L'École des Maris. Circumstantial evidence seems strong enough to prove that Laetitia is guilty of having accepted

20. The Old Batchelor, III, iv.
Bellmour as her lover during Fondlewife's absence, but the fond and doting husband is so susceptible to Laetitia's charms that a little dissembling on her part readily convinces him of his wife's innocence. Fondlewife is so well deceived that Laetitia, following Bellmour's advice:

Go to him, Madam, fling your Snowy Arms about his stubborn Neck; bathe his relentless Face in your salt trickling Tears.  

hangs upon Fondlewife's neck and kisses him, while permitting Bellmour to kiss her hand. Sganarelle has been almost as easily imposed upon by his ward, Isabelle. Isabelle loves Valère but is threatened by an undesirable marriage with Sganarelle, who as her guardian has authority to select her husband. Her cleverness, however, so well conceals her real feelings that by her equivocal statements she satisfies Sganarelle and reveals to Valère her true emotions. She goes so far as to embrace Sganarelle while extending her hand to Valère to kiss.

To add to the effectiveness of his plots, Congreve, even in this early play, made use of a dramatic practice which shows a possible familiarity with Molière. The delay of the women's appearance upon the stage until the second act may be a reflection of Molière's method in Le Misanthrope. Molière himself used this device very rarely, and, indeed,

22. The Old Batchelor, IV, xxii.
it is a doubtful method to follow, for it can so easily tire the audience in place of increasing its interest and expectation. In The Old Batchelor, Congreve seems to have successfully deferred the women’s appearance. Morse thinks that "the author showed much technical skill in delaying the appearance of the women in the piece until the second act, and so keeping his audience on the tip-toe of expectancy."

Apparently Molière's plays were no less useful to Congreve for suggestions for characters than for plot. According to Miles, Heartwell owes something to Sganarelle of Le Mariage Forcé, and Araminta and Belinda show reminiscences of Molière's précieuses. Protopopescoc finds more but perhaps fainter traces of Molière in the characters of The Old Batchelor. He holds that Fondlewife is reminiscent of George Dandin, Heartwell of Alceste in Le Misanthrope and of Sganarelle in Le

Mariage Forcé, Vainlove of Don Juan, Bellmour of Sbrignac in Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, Belinda of a précieuse, and Lucy and Setter of Molière's servants.

Morse seems certain that Congreve used Wycherley's characters as paradigms in The Old Batchelor, for "Heartwell, the central figure of The Old Batchelor, is largely 'Manly' of The Plain Dealer with a cleaner and

24. Morse, loc. cit., p. 476.
26. Protopopescoc, op cit., p. 58. He refers these suggestions to Schmid and Bennewitz.
27. Ibid.
wittier tongue; while 'Fondlewife' is cousin-german
both to 'Gripe' in *Love in a Wood* and to 'Pinchwife'
in *The Country Wife*. But Wycherley in his turn had
framed 'Manly' upon the character of 'Alceste' in Molière's
*Misanthrope*, so that Congreve even in his first play levies
tribute from Molière, although at second hand.  

None of the characters seems to be modeled directly
on any one of Molière's characters, but Congreve appears
to have incorporated in his own plan for his characters
hints from one or more of Molière's characters. Heart-
well may have been evolved in this way, for he seems to
be a composite of two of Molière's characters: George
Dandin and Sganarelle of *Le Mariage Forcé*. Like George
Dandin, he despises himself for liking women and desiring
Silvia, but he cannot resist them. Like Sganarelle, he
is an old lover, albeit an old lover who desires to be
thought young and spry. Heartwell vigorously denies
that he possesses the infirmities of old age:

> Good Mr. Young-Fellow, you're mistaken; as able
as your self, and as nimble too, tho' I mayn't
have so much Mercury in my Limbs;[29]

Sganarelle, likewise, desired to be thought a young man:

> Ne parlons point de l'Âge que je puis avoir;
mais regardons seulement les choses. Y a-t-il
homme de trente ans qui paraisse plus frais et
plus vigoureux que vous me voyez? N'ai-je pas

28, Morse, loc. cit., p. 475.
tous les mouvements de mon corps aussi bons que jamais, et voit-on que j'ale besoin de carrosse ou de chaise pour cheminier? N'ai-je pas encore toutes mes dents, les meilleures du monde? Ne fais-je pas vigoureusement mes quatre repas par jour, et peut-on voir un estomac qui ait plus de force que le mien? Hem, hem, hem; eh! 30

Like Sganarelle, he contemplates a marriage, but escapes the marriage he has planned; whereas Sganarelle is forced into the marriage he has determined to avoid. Heartwell, however, does not possess the strength or depth of character of Sganarelle.

Fondlewife seems to have been cut from the pattern of George Dandin, for there are points of similarity between the two jealous husbands. Both have married out of their spheres: Fondlewife, a young wife; and George Dandin, a young wife of a higher social class. Both husbands are jealous and suspicious of their wives and fear to be made cuckolds. In fact, both are cuckoldéd, but Fondlewife will not believe that he has been, and George Dandin cannot prove the fact as regards himself. Both are deceived and hoodwinked by their wives, Laetitia and Angélique, who resemble each other in their desires to be thought virtuous while rendering their husbands ridiculous by their intrigues. Fondlewife is a weak and jealous husband who is deceived

30. Le Mariage Forcé, I, i.
while he thinks that he is master. He is more forcible and impulsive than George Dandin, but not less narrow-minded or ridiculous.

Fondlewife, it seems to me, also owes something to Chrysale of Les Femmes Savantes. Chrysale is a weak and easily deceived husband who thinks he is leading when in reality he is only led. In like manner, Fondlewife thinks that he is master when, if he only knew the truth, he is merely his wife's tool.

Araminta and Belinda resemble les précieuses because of their affected ways, their pretenses, their ideas of marriage, and their assumed scorn of men. Bellmour says that Belinda is excessively foppish and affected, and in this respect she, perhaps, has a semblance of Molière's précieuses. Araminta has a slight trace of Célimène's womanly delicacy, for she is the more sincere character; and, although she is a coquette, no one can find a blemish on her character, for in all her actions she has retained the favorable thought of mankind.

Bellmour gives a slight reminiscence of Sbrigani of Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, for both are constantly plotting. Indeed plotting seems to be as characteristic of Restoration plays as of Molière's. There are other plotters

31. The Old Batchelor, I, iii.
32. Ibid., IV, xii.
who, I think, may have suggested to Congreve some of his plotting. Sganarelle of *Le Médecin Volant* is full of deceit and plots for his master, and Mascarille of *L'Étourdi* is a master plotter, who, as soon as one plot is frustrated, immediately thinks up another and better one. Bellmour seems to me to have a touch of these schemers in his makeup.

The capricious Vainlove, because of his many loves and his easy tiring of them, vaguely recalls Don Juan, the bold, bad lover. Vainlove, in my opinion, is a follower of Scapin of *Les Fourberies de Scapin*; Scapin does not scorn ease and quietness in a love affair any less than does Vainlove, who desires difficulties and cannot esteem a victory that is too easily won.

33. *Les Fourberies de Scapin*, III, i.  
*The Old Bachelor*, III, iii.
It is in The Double Dealer that Molière's influence on Congreve seems to have reached its height and to have culminated in the adaptation of one of Molière's plots. The plot of Le Tartuffe, which seems to me to be the inspiration for The Double Dealer, is not used in its entirety, nor does Congreve confine himself to the one plot. The Double Dealer — like Congreve's other plays and, indeed, like Restoration plays in general — is composed of several threads of action loosely bound together. Our search for the principal source leads to Le Tartuffe, despite the fact that Congreve himself says, "I design'd the Moral first, and to that Moral I invented the Fable, and do not know that I have borrow'd one hint of it any where." A number of critics think that The Double Dealer was influenced by Molière's plays. Gosse, Miles, and Taylor agree that Le Tartuffe was used by Congreve as a source of suggestions for The Double Dealer. Other critics, notably Summers, see no evidence of any French influence.

Gosse thinks that the general design of the play, with its triumph of a social impostor, is an analogy to

1. The Epistle Dedicatory of The Double Dealer.
2. Gosse, op. cit., pp. 52 ff.
Le Tartuffe. The possible similarities, according to Gosse, are not confined to the general theme of the play, for there are more specific likenesses: incidents of plot and dramatic structure. The scene between Lady Froth and Brisk, with its criticism of her ladyship's remarkable lyric, is based upon Molière's scene between Oronte and Philinte with Alceste growling in the background. Another instance of Congreve's indebtedness to Molière is the scene of Lady Plyant's attentions to Mellefont, a scene which compares favorably with the advances of Bélise to Clitandre. Congreve, moreover, did not confine his use of hints to the incidents of his plot, but also made use of soliloquies, a device which Gosse thinks takes him back directly to a study of Molière.

Miles, who is also a believer in French influence, thinks that when Congreve wrote The Double Dealer, he had learned Molière's method; for the likenesses between it and Le Tartuffe reveal Congreve's knowledge of Molière's plays. Each of the two plays, according to Miles, presents a hypocrite and the evil effects of his hypocrisy on the family that has befriended him, but the chief interest of the two plays is different. Besides the general resemblance of theme, Miles points out similarities of structure. Each play holds attention to the end by

allowing the hypocrite to succeed in every scheme until
he brings ruin upon himself by his own excess of confidence.
Each play has the first two acts devoted to exposition and
thus does not have briskness of movement. Each play has
its serious scenes interspersed with comic ones. Although
there are similarities of theme and method, the two plays
have almost entirely different incidents; for Congreve was
an independent artist who merely profited by a study of
Molière's practices.

Taylor too feels that The Double Dealer was influenced
by Le Tartuffe, for its principal character is a hypocrite
who works out his evil design upon the family that has
befriended him; but he does not find the more specific
borrowings mentioned by Gosse and Miles. And Morse

lists the following specific likenesses: "(1) The plot
was suggested by Le Tartuffe. . . . Act v. 1 is freely
adapted from Le Tartuffe, iii. 7. (2) Act ii. 1 is
adapted from Les Femmes Savantes, 1. 4; act iii. 3 (the
heroic poem) was suggested by Les Femmes Savantes, iii.
2 (the epigram), with free adaptation from Le Misanthrope,
ii. 4. Maskwell - Tartuffe; Careless- Cleante; Lord
Touchwood- Orgon; Lady Froth- Philaminte (Les Femmes
Savantes) as a learned lady; Sir Paul and Lady Plyant- Chrysale
and Philaminte as man and wife. The conception of Lady
Plyant also owes a good deal to Bélise." Miles gives
references to an edition of Congreve's plays different
from the one used in this paper. Vide supra, p. 21.
8. Taylor, op. cit., p. 52.
believes that *Le Misanthrope* and *Les Femmes Savantes* furnished material for some of Congreve's scenes.

On the contrary, Summers sees no analogy, however vague, to *Le Tartuffe*. Neither does he think that Lady Froth and Lady Plyant are in any way reminiscent of *Les Précieuses Ridicules* or *Les Femmes Savantes*, or that the advances of Lady Plyant to Mellefont are seriously borrowed from *Les Femmes Savantes*.

Perhaps by a comparison, some of the possible likenesses will be clearer.

The *Double Dealer* consists of the various plots of Maskwell to harm Lord Touchwood, who has befriended him, by supplanting his nephew and seducing his wife.

9. Morse, loc. cit., pp. 477f. "There is much of the spirit of *Le Misanthrope* in the second act of *The Double Dealer*; both dramatists hold up the affections of the amateur poet to ridicule. And yet, while Congreve undoubtedly seems to have taken his cue from the first act of *Le Misanthrope* — where Oronte reads his banal poem *L'Espoir* to Philante and Alceste — for the ridiculous passages in *The Double Dealer* between Lady Froth and Brisk concerning the metrical effusions of the former, yet there is no servile imitation." . . . "It is also fairly obvious that *Les Femmes Savantes* is laid under contribution in the repellant scene between Lady Plyant and Mellefont in the second act."

10. Summers, op. cit., II, 3 f. "Not is it easy to see, as has elsewhere been supposed, that Congreve's plot has any analogy, however vague, with *Le Tartuffe*." . . . "It would be merely exaggeration to pretend that Lady Froth and Lady Plyant are in any way reminiscent of *Les Précieuses Ridicules* or *Les Femmes Savantes*." . . . "Nor is it to be conceded that when Lady Plyant makes her advances to the astonished Mellefont there is any serious borrowing from the first act of *Les Femmes Savantes*."
Mellefont, the fiancé of Cynthia, is visited in his room by Lady Touchwood, who tries to entice him into becoming her lover. Mellefont, however, is invulnerable to all her attacks and, in revenge, the scorned lady plots with Maskwell to undo Mellefont by breaking off the match with Cynthia. The plot concerning the wedding of Mellefont and Cynthia begins to be put into effect when Lady Plyant accuses Mellefont of trying to make her prove unfaithful to her husband. Naturally, Sir Paul Plyant refuses to allow his daughter to marry Mellefont. Mellefont thinks that the evil is all Lady Touchwood's doing and appeals for aid to Maskwell, who promises it. Lady Touchwood, meanwhile, incenses Lord Touchwood by telling him of his nephew's advances to her. The plot thickens as Lady Touchwood and Maskwell continue their plotting at the same time that Maskwell is plotting with Mellefont. Maskwell succeeds in having Mellefont come to Lady Touchwood's apartment and himself leaves just as Mellefont is about to secure Lady Touchwood's consent to his marriage with Cynthia. Lord Touchwood enters, suspects Mellefont, and, consequently, promises Cynthia to Maskwell and makes him his heir. Meanwhile, Careless and Lady Plyant are fooling Sir Paul in order to carry on their own affair without interference. As the
Careless-Lady Plyant plot progresses, Maskwell suggests to Mellefont how his love affair with Cynthia may reach the desired end; but this last plot is discovered by Lord Touchwood and Cynthia; almost at the same time his duplicity is discovered by Lady Touchwood. Immediately the tables are turned, and Maskwell receives his just punishment.

_Le Tartuffe_ opens by revealing Tartuffe's real self as seen by most of his associates and his pretended self as seen by Orgon and Madame Pernelle. The two latter regard Tartuffe as a pious and perfect person, who thinks ever of others and never of self. While Orgon is planning to marry his daughter Mariane to Tartuffe, Tartuffe is attempting to seduce Orgon's wife, Elmire. She scorns his advances, but to secure the marriage of Valère and Mariane, agrees to be silent. Damis, the son and heir of Orgon, will not be silent: he reveals the affair to his father and for his trouble is disinherited and driven from home, while Tartuffe for his roguery is made heir and given control of Orgon's affairs. Tartuffe does not wish to marry Mariane but persists in his advances to Elmire. In desperation, Elmire convinces Orgon, by having him see and hear for himself, that Tartuffe is an impostor who is trying to seduce her. Orgon, thoroughly convinced, orders him to leave, but Tartuffe answers by replying that Orgon is no longer master there.
Tartuffe, in accordance with his nature, has Orgon ordered from the house and even goes so far as to have him arrested for a confidence he has once given. Just as Tartuffe seems certain to succeed, the King intervenes and Tartuffe is arrested.

From these brief summaries of the two plays, certain similarities of plot are evident. The most noticeable is the thread of thought that runs throughout both plays—the evil effects of a befriended hypocrite on the families that have befriended him. Maskwell tried to seduce the wife of his benefactor just as Tartuffe has done, but Lady Touchwood does not rebuff Maskwell as Elmire had rebuffed Tartuffe. Lord Touchwood plans to marry Cynthia to Maskwell instead of his nephew, Mellefont, as Orgon had planned to marry his daughter to Tartuffe. In both plays the marriage is as distasteful to the girls as to the hypocrites, whose ambitions are for bigger things. Not satisfied with the proposed marriage of Maskwell and Cynthia, Lord Touchwood changes his will in favor of Maskwell:

"... My Nephew is the along remaining Branch of all our ancient Family; Him I thus blow away, and constitute thee in his room to be my Heir... Let me command this time; for 'tis the last, in which I will assume Authority—hereafter, you shall rule where I have Power."

11. The Double Dealer, I, vi; IV. xviii; V, xviii.
12. The Double Dealer, V, iii.
13. The Double Dealer, V, iii.
Orgon had likewise disinherited his lawful heir and bestowed his property upon Tartuffe:

Ce n'est pas tout encor: pour les mieux braver tous,
Je ne veux point avoir d'autre héritier que vous,
Et je vais de ce pas, en fort bonne manière,
Vous faire de mon bien donation entière.14

In the end, discovery of Maskwell's treachery is made by Lord Touchwood's overhearing a conversation between Maskwell and Lady Touchwood. This conversation clearly reveals to Lord Touchwood that his wife is Maskwell's mistress and that all Maskwell's plans have been to advance his own interests. It was also by means of a conversation overheard by Orgon that Tartuffe's real self was discovered. Orgon's discovery of Tartuffe's roguery was due to Elmire's desire to prove to her husband that Tartuffe was a rascal; but in The Double Dealer, Lady Touchwood has no part in the discovery of Maskwell's treachery, for she delights in his attentions. After his duplicity is revealed, Maskwell is dethroned and punished. On the contrary, Tartuffe, although discovered, still works ill upon the family of his benefactor and just misses complete triumph over Orgon.

15. The Double Dealer, V, xviii.
Le Tartuffe, IV, v, IV, vii.
16. The Double Dealer, V, xviii.
Le Tartuffe, IV, iv; IV, viii.
17. The Double Dealer, V, Scene the Last.
Le Tartuffe, V, iv; V, Scene Derrière.
Congreve was more versatile than Molière in the construction of his plots and employed more threads of action. Moreover, Congreve was writing for Restoration audiences, who demanded variety and constant change on the stage. To supply this need, Congreve seems to have used other plays than *Le Tartuffe* as suggestions for plot. *Les Femmes Savantes* is one of the minor sources, for from it Congreve seems to have derived the suggestions of the scene between Lady Plyant and Mellefont. In this scene Lady Plyant assumes that Mellefont's attentions are to her and that he wishes to marry Cynthia only to be near her, just as Bélique assumes that Clitandre is speaking of her when he wishes to declare his love for Henriette. Both ladies are secretly delighted and flattered although they pretend to be angry, and refuse to believe that the young men's thoughts are for the younger ladies. To Lady Plyant and Bélique, the pretenses of Mellefont and Clitandre for others are a very clever means of paying court to them. The two men try to explain their actions but are rebuffed and feel themselves unable to explain successfully the true state of their affections.

*The Double Dealer*, III, x, is probably based upon two plays of Molière: *Les Femmes Savantes*, III, ii, and *Le

Misanthrope, II, iv. The first half of the scene is the criticism of Lady Froth's heroic poem about her coachman and perhaps had as its model the discussion of l'epigramme of Trissotin. Gosse cited this same passage in connection with Le Misanthrope, I, ii; but the analogy here seems very slight. The only likeness is Philinte's unstinted praise of Oronte's poem. The latter part of the scene, with its gossipy tone and its satirical comments about Mr. Sneer and Lady Toothless, recalls the scene in which Célimène mockingly characterizes and rejects each of the lovers suggested by Alceste.

In The Double Dealer, Congreve again turned to Molière as a boundless source of suggestions for his characters. 

19 Miles finds that Congreve got suggestions for his characters from Le Tartuffe and Les Femmes Savantes: Maskwell from Tartuffe, Careless from Cléante, Lord Touchwood from Orgon, Lady Froth from Philinte, Sir Paul and Lady Plyant from Bélise. Protopopesco also sees analogies between the characters of The Double Dealer and those of Molière: Maskwell and Tartuffe, Sir Paul and Chrysale and Argan, Lady Plyant and Bélise, Careless and Cleante, and Mellefont and Molière's lovers.

Maskwell is the most masterly character of The Double Dealer, and he is in great measure a replica of Tartuffe,

but a Tartuffe with a distinct flavor of the Restoration about him. Like Tartuffe, Maskwell is a schemer, a hypocrite and a seducer, but in each of these rôles he is more thoroughgoing than his prototype; and his intrigue has a more subtle quality. Maskwell is not only a villain, but he is also a relentless and a many-sided strategist; and under his truth telling he is a well masked hypocrite. Although Tartuffe could have been the model for Maskwell, Maskwell's character is in no way limited by the French predecessor, for he possesses qualities that Tartuffe did not have. One of Maskwell's most conspicuous qualities and one that is lacking in Tartuffe is truth-telling. This trait of Maskwell would seem to be original, but it appears to me that his truthfulness may be detected in Scapin of Les Fourberies de Scapin, for Scapin, despite his rogueries and impudence, has a regard for truth and several times urges the fact that he is telling the truth. In addition Scapin may have been one of the many plotters in Molière's comedies who aided Congreve in his construction of plots and plotters.

Careless, who does not seem to have any direct model, does, however, recall Cléante and possesses his courage if not his great devotion. Careless sees the

22. Vide supra, p. 35.
23. The Double Dealer, I, iii.
evil of Maskwell and tries to warn his friend, Mellefont, but in vain, for Mellefont will believe only good of Maskwell. Careless's failure to convince Mellefont is probably due to the fact that he himself can give no adequate reason for his mistrust. Cléante, likewise, did not trust Tartuffe and unsuccessfully tried to warn Orgon and save him from the treachery of Tartuffe.

Lord Touchwood is an unsuspecting husband who trusts Lady Touchwood and is so completely deceived by Maskwell that he will believe no evil of him. He is even willing to intrust his honor and his wealth to him. In these respects Lord Touchwood seems to be patterned after Orgon, who is just as completely deceived by Tartuffe.

Lady Froth and Lady Plyant are reminiscent of Molière's précieuses. Both are affected ladies of fashion. Lady Froth appears to be one of the learned ladies interested in the arts of poetry and astronomy, but she is merely pretending in order to conceal her real self and her amours. Even Summers admits that Lady Froth, with her pretense to poetry, wit, and learning, may be from Molière. As for Lady Plyant, she has more of the manner of Bélise, who desires to think that her charms are irresistible and who prides herself upon her many lovers. This attitude of Bélise is especially noticeable in the scene with

25. The Double Dealer, V, iii.
Mellefont. As a wife, Lady Plyant somewhat resembles Philaminte, for she rules Sir Paul in almost the same way that Philaminte rules Chrysale. The husbands are much alike in yielding to their wives' orders, but Sir Paul lacks the energy and strength of character to break away from his wife's domination. Sir Paul and Lady Plyant may also take something from Argan and Béline of Le Malade Imaginaire. The young wives live their own lives in their own way, while the doting old husbands dream of an heir to inherit their wealth.

Mellefont does not directly recall any one of Molière's characters. He does, however, remind one of Molière's lovers in general, for he possesses some of their gentle chivalry and tender nature. Such lovers as Cléante of Le Malade Imaginaire, the chivalrous lover of Angélique, Lycaste of Le Mariage Forcé, the lover of Dorimène, and Valère of Le Tartuffe, the lover of Mariane, probably inspired the character of Mellefont.

As The Double Dealer shows so many resemblances to Molière's plays, we may surmise that some features of his style have crept in; and, indeed, we find several.

The Double Dealer opens with a conversation between the

27. The Double Dealer, II, v.
Les Femmes Savantes, I, iv.
Les Femmes Savantes, I, iv.
29. The Double Dealer, III, viii.
hero and his confidant as does **Le Misanthrope**. Maskwell is made known to us before he appears upon the stage as was Tartuffe. In this play Congreve uses soliloquy, a device which Restoration writers had been careful to avoid. Perhaps it was Molière's successful use of soliloquy which caused Congreve to revive this device which had once been popular in English Plays.

Thus before Congreve attained the height of his own genius as a playwright, his use of a model, and especially a French model, has reached its highest point in **The Double Dealer**. In each of the two later and greater comedies, we shall find that his debt to Molière is only the inspiration for a few particular passages, not the central idea for the plot.

30. See Miles, *op. cit.*, p. 202: "The soliloquies of his second or of his last piece, when compared with those of *L'Ecole des Maris* or *L'Ecole des Femmes*, reveal another phase of the influence." Gosse (*op. cit.*, pp. 52 ff.) had previously made a similar observation: "It is curious to find Congreve making use of this artifice (soliloquy), because it seems to take him back directly to the study of Molière". . . "On the other hand in several of Molière's comedies, the central personage explains his purpose to the audience in an aside, exactly in Congreve's way. George Dandin is an example, and in *L'Amour Médicin*, Sganarelle. In *L'Etourdi* and still more in *Le Dépit Amoureux* soliloquies of Mascarille may almost be said to tie the loose members of these plays together." Morse (*loc. cit.*, p. 476) says of The Double Dealer: "It is the first of English comedies in which the artifice of soliloquy is used." The use of soliloquy aroused much antagonism among the critics and many condemned it. Congreve answered them, but "he might have strengthened his argument for the 'soliloquy' if he had cited the generous use of it by Molière in several of his dramas."
LOVE FOR LOVE

Love for Love is often called Congreve's masterpiece, and, as an acting drama, it is perhaps the best play. It shows an advance in the technique of play writing. It is less complicated than The Double Dealer and more closely knit than The Old Batchelor. The plot and intrigue are more original than those of the two previous comedies, and the play as a whole seems to be more truly Congreve's own. The young dramatist was becoming more and more an independent artist who wove the hints that he received from other sources into a play that was essentially his own. He seems to have known and profited from a study of Molière's plays and to have used suggestions from them as a framework on which to build his earlier plays.

In Love for Love, however, Congreve was more truly himself; and with the exception of a few passages Love for Love owes little to Molière.

Some critics see no evidence of any traces of Molière's influence, whereas others think that several scenes and characters are reminiscent of the Frenchman. Miles finds more suggestions from Molière than any other critic. He

1. Miles, op. cit., pp. 197 f. On page 232 we find the following direct references: "(1) The outline for the plot was suggested by L'Avaré . . . Act i, 1 is adapted from Don Juan iv. 3; act ii, 2 was suggested by Le Misanthrope, iii. 4; act iv. 3 was suggested probably by L'Étatourdi, iii. 4. Sir Sampson was suggested by Harpagon."
think that _L'Avare_ is the principal source, furnishing the outline for the plot, while other suggestions are given by _Don Juan_, _Le Misanthrope_, and _L'Étourdi_. Protopopesco and Summers, on the contrary, find few traces of Molière's influence on _Love for Love_. To them, the only part directly inspired by Molière's plays is the scene of Valentine and his creditor, a scene which owes much to _Don Juan_. Several other critics who discuss the general influence of Molière upon Congreve's plays do not mention any direct influence upon _Love for Love_.

When _Love for Love_ opens, Valentine Legend, the philosophical son of Sir Sampson Legend, is in love with Angelica, an heiress, who treats him with indifference. Valentine, in his life as a man of fashion, has accumulated many debts, and his creditors have become annoying and even embarrassing. His father has grown tired of paying large sums of money because of Valentine's prodigal ways and now lays down a very severe condition for the payment of these debts: if Valentine will sign a deed of conveyance of all his rights to his father's estate in favor of his brother Ben, who is to return home after several years spent at sea, Sir Sampson will give him four thousand pounds to

pay his debts and start life anew. Valentine agrees to this condition in order to save himself.

Sir Sampson and Foresight have planned to marry Ben and Miss Prue, Foresight's daughter, but have forgotten to consider Foresight's second wife, who schemes with her sister, Mrs. Frail, to prevent this marriage so that Mrs. Frail may secure Ben and his fortune. When Ben, with his brackish manners, arrives, he and Miss Prue cannot agree. Mrs. Frail, by means of her clever management, secures Ben, and Miss Prue attempts to win Tattle, a beau who pretends to be a man of wit, fashion, and many amours.

Meanwhile, Valentine has pretended madness in order to prove Angelica's love for him and to avoid signing the papers that give up his inheritance. Angelica suspects a trick and refuses to see Valentine. Sir Sampson comes with his lawyer, but Valentine cannot sign the papers as he is non compos mentis. Ben has a quarrel with his father over his right to marry whom he pleases, and Mrs. Frail assumes that Ben will not receive the fortune and refuses to marry him. Valentine and his friend Scandal plan a masked marriage for Tattle and Mrs. Frail.

Angelica, to prove Valentine's love and constancy, leads Sir Sampson to propose to her and pretends that she is going to accept him. Valentine, thinking that Angelica is lost to him, prepares to sign away his inheritance, but
Angelica forbids this sacrifice and rewards his constancy with her love. Sir Sampson's plan is stopped; Ben returns to the sea; and Miss Prue is left without a husband.

_L'Avare_ deals principally with Harpagon, a miser, who is so concerned with his love for money that he can think of nothing else. Greed has so possessed his mind that he no longer thinks of his children as individuals but as a means of increasing his wealth. In accordance with these views, he plans to marry his daughter to a wealthy but elderly man who will ask no dowry, and his son to a widow of fortune. He himself is planning to marry a young and beautiful girl. Unknown to either Harpagon or his son, Cléante loves and desires to marry the girl whom his father has chosen for his own wife.

Harpagon's niggardly ways have driven Cléante into a rebellious attitude and many debts, which he plans to pay by borrowing from a money lender. The money lender, in turn, is borrowing from Harpagon. When Harpagon is ready to lend the money, he discovers that it is his own son who is borrowing it.

Harpagon has Mariane, whom he plans to marry, come to visit in his home. It is then he discovers that his own son is his rival in love; but Cléante refuses to give up his love to satisfy his father.

Meanwhile Élise has refused to marry Anselme, her father's choice for her, and has become engaged to Valère.
In the midst of this confusion, Valère discovers that he is the long lost son of Anselme and the brother of Mariane. The play ends with the double wedding of Valère and Élise and Cléante and Mariane. Harpagon loses in everything except his greed for gold, for Anselme is to pay all the wedding expenses and even agrees to buy Harpagon a new suit.

_L'Avare_ could have suggested the outline for the plot of _Love for Love_; but _L'Avare_ holds up to ridicule only one vice, while _Love for Love_ is a general satire on the society of the day. The part of the plot suggested by _L'Avare_ is the heartless father who has driven his son into a rebellious attitude. This rebellion has caused the son to incur large debts and with them the displeasure of his father, who will no longer pay his debts. The father, likewise, becomes the rival of his son for the hand of a young and beautiful girl, only to lose. Congreve has built upon this bare framework a play with several threads of action and with many and varied incidents. _Love for Love_ is written in as sharp and incisive a style as _L'Avare_. The scene between Sir Sampson and Valentine, in which Valentine attempts to secure his inheritance from his father, has much the same tone as the scenes between Harpagon and Cléante.

_Sir Samp._ Body o' me, so do I. — Hark ye, Valentine, if there be too much, refund the Superfluity; Do' st hear Boy?
Val. Superfluity, Sir, it will scarce pay my Debts,—I hope you will have more Indulgence, than to oblige me to those hard Conditions, which my Necessity sign'd to.

Sir Samp. Sir, how, I beseech you, what were you pleas'd to intimate, concerning Indulgence?

Val. Why, Sir, that you wou'd not go to the extremity of the Conditions, but release me at least from some Part.—

Sir Samp. Oh Sir, I understand you,—that's all, ha?

Val. Yes, Sir, all that I presume to ask.—But what you, out of Fatherly Fondness, will be pleas'd to add, shall be doubly welcome.

Sir Samp. No doubt of it, sweet Sir, but your filial Piety, and my fatherly Fondness wou'd fit like two Tallies....

Val. Sir, is this Usage for your Son?—for that old Weather-headed Fool, I know how to laugh at him; but you, Sir—

Sir Samp. You, Sir; and you, Sir:—Why, who are you, Sir?

Val. Your Son, Sir.

Sir Samp. That's more than I know, Sir, and I believe not.

Val. Faith, I hope not.

Sir Samp. What, .... 4

Har. Comment, pendard? c'est toi qui t'abandonnes à ces coupables extrémites?

Cle. Comment, mon père? c'est vous qui vous portez à ces honteuses actions?

Har. C'est toi qui te veux ruiner par des emprunts si condamnables?

Cle. C'est vous qui cherchez à vous enrichir par des usures si criminelles?

Har. Oses-tu bien, après cela, paroître devant moi?

Cle. Osez-vous bien, après cela, vous présenter aux yeux du monde?

Har. N'as-tu point de honte, dis-moi, d'en venir à ces débauches-la? de te précipiter dans des dépenses effroyables? et de faire une honteuse dissipation du bien que tes parents t'ont amassé avec tant de suers?

Cle. Ne rougissez-vous point de déshonorer votre condition par les commerces que vous faites?

de sacrifier gloire et réputation au désir insatiable d'entasser écu sur écu, et de renchérir, en fait d'intérêts, sur les plus infâmes subtilités qu'auraient jamais inventées les plus célèbres usuriers?

Har. Ôte-toi de mes yeux, coquin! Ôte-toi de mes yeux.

Cle. Qui est plus criminel, à votre avis, ou celui achète un argent dont il a besoin, ou bien celui qui vole un argent dont il n'a que faire?

Har. Retire-toi, te dis-je, et ne m'échauffe pas les oreilles. Je ne suis pas fâché de cette aventure; et ce m'est un avis de tenir l'oeil, plus que jamais, sur toutes ses actions. 5

The opening scene of *Love for Love* recalls a practice of Molière — the opening of a play with a conversation between the hero and his servant in *Le Dépit Amoureux*. Valentine talks to his servant, Jeremy, and begins to give some advice, but, instead of listening to his master's advice, Jeremy lectures Valentine on how he should conduct himself in all his affairs.

Jere. Sir, you're a Gentleman, and probably understand this fine feeding: But if you please, I had rather be at Board-Wages. Does your Epictetus, or your Seneca here, or any of these poor rich Rogues, teach you how to pay your Debts without Mony?

... Val. Why, Sirrah, I have no Mony, you know it; and therefore resolve to rail at all that have: And in that I but follow the examples of the wisest and wittest Men in all Ages; these Poets and Philosophers whom you naturally hate, for just such another Reason; because they abound in Sense, and you are a Fool.

Jere. Ay, Sir, I am a Fool, I know it: And yet, Heav'n help me, I'm poor enough to be a Wit— But I was

always a Fool, when I told you what your Expenses would bring you to; your Coaches and your Liveries; your Treats and your Balls; your being in Love with a Lady, that did not care a Farthing for you in your Prosperity; and keeping Company with Wits, that car'd for nothing but your Prosperity; and now when you are poor, hate you as much as they do one another. 6

Just so had Gros-René attempted to advise Eraste how to conduct his affairs:

Eras. Veux-tu que je te die? une atteinte secrète
Ne laisse point mon âme en une bonne assiette:
Où, quoi qu' à mon amour tu puisses repartir,
Il craint d'être la dupe, à ne te point mentir;
Qu'en faveur d'un rival ta foi ne se corrompe,
Où du moins qu'avec moi toi-même on ne te trompe.

G-R. Pour moi, me soupçonner de quelque mauvais tour,
Je dirai, n'en déplaise a Monsieur votre amour,
Que c'est injustement blesser ma prud'homie
Et se connaître mal en physionomie.

Je ne vois point encore, ou je suis une bête,
Sur quoi vous avez pu prendre martel en tête.
Lucile, à mon avis, vous montre assez d'amour:
Elle vous voit, vous parle à toute heure du jour;
Et Valère, après tout, qui cause votre crainte,
Semble n'être à présent souffert que par contrainte.

Jeremy in his remarks to Valentine seems to me to have been affected by Silvestre of Les Fourberies de Scapin. Silvestre opens the play by a conversation with his master, Octave. His comments quickly reveal his air of superiority and his condescending attitude toward Octave:

Oct. O Ciel! par ou sortir de l'embarras où je ne trouve?
Sil. C'est à quoi vous deviez songer, avant que de vous y jeter.
Oct. Oh! tu me fais mourir pas tes leçons hors de saison.

7. Le Dépit Amoureux, I, i.
Sil. Vous me faîtes bien plus mourir par vos actions étourdies.
Oct. Que dois-je faire? Quelle résolution prendre? A quel remède recourir?

Jeremy from his lofty pedestal likewise designs to address Valentine and utter his words of wisdom.

There is also a slight similarity between Love for Love IV, xix, and the beginning of L'Étourdi III, iv. Jeremy refuses to take the hint from Valère and declares him mad, in spite of Valentine's repeated efforts to declare that he is sane now.

Ang. Oh here's a reasonable Creature — sure he will not have the Impudence to persevere — Come Jeremy, acknowledge your Trick, and confess your Master's Madness counterfeit.
Jere. Counterfeit, Madam! I'll maintain him to be as absolutely and substantially mad, as any Free-holder in Bethlehem; Nay, he's as mad as any Projector, Fanatick, Chymist, Lover, or Poet in Europe.
Val. Sirrah, you life; I am not mad.
Ang. Ha, ha, ha, you see he denies it.
Jere. O Lord, Madam, did you ever know any Madman mad enough to own it?
Val. Sot, can't you apprehend?
Ang. Why he talk'd very sensibly just now.
Jere. Yes, Madam; he has Intervals: But you see he begins to look wild again now.
Val. Why you thick-skull'd Rascal, I tell you the Farce is done, and I will be mad no longer.

In L'Étourdi it is not the master but the servant who is misunderstood. Lélie will not believe that Mascarille is working for him and has invented the story to aid him.

Le. Ah! bon, bon, le voilà: venez ça, chien maudit.
Mas. Quoi?
Le. Langue de serpent fertile en impostures,
Vous osez sur Célie attacher vos morsures,
Et lui calomnier la plus rare vertu
Qui puisse faire éclat sous un sort abattu?
Mas. Doucement, ce discours est de mon industrie.
Le. Non, non, point de clin d'œil et point de raillerie:
Je suis aveugle à tout, sourd à quoi que ce soit;
Fût-ce mon propre frère, il me la payerait;
Et sur ce que j'adore oser porter le blâme,
C'est me faire une plaie au plus tendre de l'âme.

Tous ces signes sont vains: quels discours as-tu faits?

The interview of Valentine and Trapland, the Scrivener, recalls Don Juan IV, iii. Valentine uses the same ruses to avoid paying his debt as Don Juan had used, and indeed, the atmosphere of the scene is almost that of Don Juan. Valentine receives Trapland with much show of welcome, has him sit down and drink sack, and then inquires about his daughter.

Val. O Mr. Trapland! my old Friend! Welcome. Jeremy, a Chair quickly: A Bottle of Sack and a Toast — fly — a Chair first.
Trap. A good Morning to you Mr. Valentine, and to you Mr. Scandal.
Scan. The Morning's a very good Morning, if you don't spoil it.
Val. Come sit you down, you know his way.
Trap. SITS.) There is a Debt, Mr. Valentine, of 1500 l. of pretty long standing —
Val. I cannot talk about Business with a thirsty Palate.
— Sirrah, the Sack.
Trap. And I desire to know what Course you have taken for the Payment?
Val. Faith and Troth, I am heartily glad to see you,— my Service to you, — fill, fill, to honest Mr. Trapland, fuller.
Trap. Hold, Sweet-heart. — This is not to our Business: — my Service to you Mr. Scandal — (Drinks.) — I have forborne as long —

Val. T'other Glass, and then we'll talk. Fill, Jeremy.

Trap. No more, in truth. — I have forborn, I say —

Val. Sirrah, fill when I bid you. — And how does your handsome Daughter? — Come, a good Husband to her.

Trap. Thank you — I have been out of this Mony —

Val. Drink first. Scandal, why do you not drink?

Likewise Don Juan welcomes Mr. Dimanche, offers him a chair, and inquires about his family.

Don J. Ah! Monsieur Dimanche, approchez. Que je suis ravi de vous voir, et que je veux de mal à mes gens de ne vous pas faire entrer d'abord! J'avois donné ordre qu'on ne me fît parler personne; mais cet ordre n'est pas pour vous, et vous êtes en droit de ne trouver jamais de porte fermée chez moi.

M. Di. Monsieur, je vous suis fort obligé.

Don J. Parbleu; coquins, je vous apprendrai a laisser a M. Dimanche dans une antichambre, et je ferai connoître les gens.

M. Di. Monsieur, cela n'est rien.

Don J. Comment? vous dire que je n'y suis pas, à M. Dimanche, au meilleur de mes amis?

M. Di. Monsieur, je suis votre serviteur, J'étois venu...

Don J. Allons vite, un siège pour M. Dimanche.

M. Di. Monsieur, je suis bien comme cela.

Don J. Point, point, je veux que vous soyez assis contre moi.

M. Di. Cela n'est point nécessaire.

Don J. Otez ce pliant, et apportez un fauteuil.

M. Di. Monsieur, vous vous moquez, et...

Don J. Non, non, je sais ce que je vous dois, et je ne veux point qu'on mette de différence entre nous deux.

M. Di. Monsieur...

Don J. Allons, asseyez-vous.

M. Di. Il n'est pas besoin, Monsieur, et je n'ai qu'un mot à vous dire. J'étois...

Don J. Mettez-vous là, vous dis-je.

M. Di. Non, Monsieur, je suis bien. Je viens pour...

Don J. Non, je ne vous écoute point si vous n'êtes assis.

Le Misanthrope also seems to have furnished a scene

13. Don Juan, IV, iii.
for this play. The interview of Mrs. Foresight and Mrs. Frail, with Mrs. Foresight's attempted lecture to Mrs. Frail about her scandalous conduct, closely resembles that of Arsinöé and Célimène in which Arsinöé attempts to lecture Célimène.

_Mrs. Frail._ What have you to do to watch me? 'S'life I'll do what I please.

_Mrs. Fore._ You will?

_Mrs. Frail._ Yes marry will I — A great Piece of Business to go to Covent Garden Square in a Hackney-Coach, and take a turn with one's Friend.

_Mrs. Fore._ May, two or three Turns, I'll take my Oath.

_Mrs. Frail._ Well, what if I took twenty — I warrant if you had been there, it had been only innocent Recreation, — Lord, where's the Comfort of this Life, if we can't have the Happiness of conversing where we like?

_Mrs. Fore._ But can't you converse at home? — I own it, I think there's no Happiness like conversing with an agreeable Man; I don't quarrel at that, nor I don't think but your Conversation was very innocent; but the Place is publick, and to be seen with a Man in a Hackney-Coach is scandalous: What if any Body else shou'd have seen you alite, as I did? — How can any Body be happy, while they're in perpetual Fear of being seen and censur'd? — Besides it wou'd not only reflect upon you, Sister, but me.

_Mrs. Frail._ Pooh, here's a Clutter — Why shou'd it reflect upon you? — I don't doubt but you have thought your self happy in a Hackney-Coach before now. — If I had gone to Knight's-Bridge, or to Chelsey, or to Spring-Garden, or Barn-Elms with a Man alone — something might have been said. 14

_Cél._ Ah! quel heureux sort en ce lieu vous amène? Madame, sans mentir, j'étois de vous en peine.

_Ars._ Je viens pour quelque avis que j'ai cru vous devoir.

Céli. Ah, mon Dieu! que je suis contente de vous voir!
Ars. Leur départ ne pouvait plus à propos se faire.
Céli. Voulons-nous nous asseoir?
Ars. Il n'est pas nécessaire,
Madame. L'amitié doit surtout éclater
Aux choses qui le plus nous peuvent importer;
Et comme il n'en est point de plus grande importance
Que celles de l'honneur et de la bienséance,
Je viens, par un avis qui touche votre honneur,
Témoigner l'amitié que pour vous à mon coeur.
Hier j'étais chez des gens de vertu singulièrê,
Où sur vous du discours on tourna la matière;
Et là, votre conduite, avec ses grands éclats,
Madame, eut le malheur qu'on ne la loua pas.
Cette foule de gens dont vous souffrez visite,
Votre galanterie, et les bruits qu'elle excite
Trouvèrent des censeurs plus qu'il n'auroit fallu,
Et bien plus rigoureux que je n'eusse voulu.
Vous pouvez bien penser quel parti je sus prendre:
Je fis ce que je pus pour vous pouvoir défendre,
Je vous excusai fort sur votre intention,
Et voulu de votre âme être la caution.
Mais vous savez qu'il est des choses dans la vie
Qu'on ne peut excuser, quoi qu'on en ait envie;
Et je me vis contrainte à demeurer d'accord
Que l'air dont vous viviez vous faisoit un peu tort,
Qu'il prenoit dans le monde une méchante face,
Qu'il n'est conte facheux que partout on n'en fasse,
Et que, si vous vouliez, tous vos déportements
Pourroient moins donner prise aux mauvais jugements.
Non que j'y croie, au fond, l'honnêteté blessée:
Me préserve le Ciel d'en avoir la pensée! 15

Both Mrs. Frail and Célène adroitly give back to Mrs. Foresight and Arsinoé respectively the same precepts that they had given them, for Mrs. Foresight and Arsinoé are not blameless themselves.

Mrs. Fore. Very well, that will appear who has most,
you never were at the World's-End?

15. Le Misanthrope, III, iv.
Mrs. Frail. No.
Mrs. Fore. You deny it positively to my Face.
Mrs. Frail. Your Face, what's your Face?
Mrs. Fore. No matter for that, it's as good a Face as yours.
Mrs. Frail. Not by a Dozen Years wearing. — But I do deny it positively to your Face then.
Mrs. Fore. I'll allow you now to find fault with my Face; — for I'll swear your Impudence has put me out of Countenance; — But look you here now, — where did you lose this Gold Bodkin? — O Sister, Sister!
Mrs. Frail. My Bodkin!
Mrs. Fore. Nay, 'tis yours, look at it.
Mrs. Frail. Well, if you go to that, where did you find this Bodkin? — Oh Sister, Sister! — Sister every way.

Cél. Madame, j'ai beaucoup de grâces à vous rendre:  
Un tel avis m'oblige, et loin de le mal prendre,  
J'en prétends reconnoître, à l'instant, la faveur,  
Par un avis aussi qui touche votre honneur;  
Et comme je vous vois vous montrer mon amie  
En m'apprenant les bruits que de moi l'on publie,  
Je veux suivre, à mon tour, un exemple si doux,  
En vous avertissant de ce qu'on dit de vous.  
En un lieu, l'autre jour, où je faisois visite,  
Je trouvoi quelques gens d'un très-rare mérite,  
Qui, parlant des vrais soins d'une âme qui vit bien,  
Firent tomber sur vous, Madame, l'entretien.  
Là, votre pruderie et vos éclats de zèle  
Ne furent pas cités comme un fort bon modèle:  
Cette affectation d'un grave extérieur,  
Vos discours éternels de sagesse et d'honneur,  
Vos mines et vos cris aux ombres d'indécence  
Que d'un mot ambigu peut avoir l'innocence,  
Cette hauteur d'estime où vous êtes de vous,  
Et ces yeux de pitié que vous jetez sur tous,  
Vos fréquentes leçons, et vos aigres censures  
Sur des choses qui sont innocentes et pures,  
Tout cela, si je puis vous parler franchement,  
Madame, fut blâmé d'un commun sentiment.  

17. Le Misanthrope, III, iv.
The likeness between the two scenes ends here; the conclusions are different. Mrs. Foresight and Mrs. Frail become partners in crime, but Arsinoé and Célimène separate with strained feelings.

The characters of *Love for Love* are of many and varied types—such a group of characters as was needed to meet the demand of Restoration audiences. The list of characters includes all the recognized types used in Restoration comedy and also some more original types. Such characters as Valentine, Scandal, Tattle, and Foresight are found in some guise in almost every comedy of manners, but Miss Prue, the country girl, and Ben, the sailor, are not the stock type of character. Most of the characters of *Love for Love* are English and owe their being either to English predecessors or to Congreve's own invention, although some few of the characters are reminiscent of Molière.

Sir Sampson Legend, according to Archer and Miles, is from Molière. He is the "heavy father" type descended from classic comedy and familiar in Molière. Sir Sampson has as his French prototype Harpagon. Like Harpagon, Sir Sampson is a heartless father, who drives his son into a rebellious attitude and who becomes the rival of his son; and like Harpagon he loses in both instances, for he is

forced to reinstate his son and to give up the girl he intends to marry. Sir Sampson, as is true of other characters suggested by Molière's plays, does not confine himself to the qualities of his French prototype but is a character of more variety. Although Sir Sampson seems to have few predecessors in English plays, he is the ancestor of a long line.

Miss Prue is another character who recalls Molière. Miss Prue, as both Archer and Protopopesco say, is one of the horribly debased descendants of Molière's Agnes of L'École des Femmes. This kinship rests upon Miss Prue's rearing. Both girls have been reared in the country in simplicity and in ignorance of the town, but when given an opportunity they rapidly learn the ways of the world. Miss Prue, however, seems to outstrip Agnes in her quickness of learning, and with very little teaching plays her part as well as if she had been born and bred in London. Miss Prue is of a coarser nature, and although descended from Agnes, shows by comparison how far removed she is from her refined and gentle ancestor.

Jeremy is the other character who implies outside suggestions. The source of these suggestions is first of all Molière. Two of Molière's servants seem to have

22. Protopopesco, op. cit., p. 129.
contributed hints that Congreve made use of in forming Jeremy. Sganarelle of Don Juan suggested Jeremy's spirit of liberty and contradiction, without regard for his master's feelings. Although Jeremy berates his master, he cannot prevent his deeds and ends by aiding him. Jeremy's individualism even becomes irony. He reproaches Valentine, the wits, literature, and in fact, everything that Valentine does, but regardless of his protests, Jeremy aids Valentine in his plans and invents schemes to promote his master's interests. In these respects, Jeremy recalls Mascarille of L'Étourdi, who lectures his master while he is inventing schemes to aid him. Jeremy is Congreve's highest type of modern valet, started by Corneille in 1643 and immortalized by Molière in his imitable Mascarille and Sganarelle.

There is no direct evidence that Ben, "Sir Sampson's younger Son, — half home bred, and half Sea bred," has any French predecessors; but I consider Ben a reflection of the many lost sons and daughters whom Molière conjured into being to aid the denouements of his plays. Les Fourberies de Scapin, as well as L'Avare and L'Étourdi, is an excellent example of long lost children being restored to their parents. The parents have arranged

marriages for their sons and daughters, but even Scapin's plots are not enough to make all end well without the real identity of the daughters being revealed. In just such an extremity, Congreve introduces Ben. Sir Sampson's oldest son has died; his second son, Valentine, because of his extravagance and liking for worldly things, has incurred Sir Sampson's anger; and the only hope is to bring back the almost forgotten Ben. Although Ben is himself an old English Salt with nothing French in his make-up, his introduction in the play appears to be the result of Molière's practice.

*Love for Love* more nearly approaches Molière's lightness and delicateness of style. The scenes between Sir Sampson and Valentine approach the spirit of the scenes in *L'Avare* between Harpagon and Cléante, and the Valentine-Trapland scene has the tone of the Don Juan-Dimanche episode. Congreve, however, has so well assimilated the suggestions taken from Molière that we need hardly think of them as borrowings. The suggestions and reminiscences of Molière prove the prolificness of Congreve's artistic creations, for they are transmitted in such an excellent manner, sometimes even superior to the original, that they place the author on an equality with the great Master 25 of Comedy.

"The one play in our language which may fairly claim a place beside or just beneath the mightiest work of Molière is The Way of the World.\(^1\) As we look for Molière's influence on The Way of the World, however, we find but few and exceedingly faint traces. In this play as in Love for Love Congreve relied upon his own eminent genius and consequently used very little from the great Frenchman who had offered inspiration for his earlier comedies.

The Way of the World contains a few passages which seem to point to Molière as the source. Paramount among the possible French borrowings is the disguise of Waitwell as Sir Rowland, the uncle of Mirabel. Concerning the disguise as almost all other points, there is a disagreement among the critics. Miles says, "Waitwell's disguise was suggested by the plot of Les Précieuses Ridicules.\(^2\)" but Summers denies this; for "It can hardly be urged that Waitwell's disguise as Sir Rowland owes anything to Mascarille and Jodelet of Les Précieuses Ridicules.\(^3\)

Disguise is by no means original with either Molière or Congreve. It is a literary device that has been used from early times. Some form of disguise is used

1. Swinburne, op. cit., p. 52.
extensively in Molière's plays; and Congreve, as well as Restoration playwrights in general, frequently resorted to this device. But even admitting that disguise has an ancient history, that critics differ concerning its use, and that Congreve could have secured this device from Molière or elsewhere, we find from a comparison of the passages in question that the disguise of Waitwell has unusual similarities with the disguises of Mascarille and Jodelet of Les Précieuses Ridicules.

The plan, purpose, and results of the disguises are similar. In each case the servants become lords to further the causes of their masters. The purpose of each disguise is to humiliate the ladies. The erstwhile servants become such daring and rakish lords and play their parts so well that the too credulous ladies are easily misled and only the timely discovering of the deception saves them from the direful consequences of their credulity but not from embarrassment and complete humiliation.

There is another scene which I believe was suggested by Molière. This is the scene of the marriage contract of Millamant and Mirabel, in which each gives his conditions for accepting the other. Millamant, after enumerating her

4. The Way of the World, I, ii; II, iii; IV, xii; Les Précieuses Ridicules I.
5. The Way of the World II, iii; Les Précieuses Ridicules IX and XI.
6. The Way of the World, IV, xv; V, i. Les Précieuses Ridicules XIII and XVI.
demands, says:

These Articles subscrib'd, if I continue to endure you a little longer, I may by degrees dwindle into a Wife.

Whereupon Mirabel proposed to make his conditions to Millamant so

That when you are dwindled into a Wife, I may not be beyond measure enlarg'd into a Husband. 8

After the requisites for becoming husband and wife have been given and accepted, Millamant decides that she has a mind to him:

I think I have — and the horrid Man looks as if he thought so too — Well, you ridiculous thing you, I'll have you — I won't be kiss'd, nor I won't be thank'd — Here kiss my Hand tho' — So, hold your Tongue now, don't say a Word. 9

This scene seems to be developed from the marriage contract of Gros-René and Marinette in Le Dépit Amoureux. Gros-René, amid the mocking comments of Mascarille, declares that when he has degenerated into a peaceful husband, he will be deaf to all the ladies and will desire a severe wife.

Mar. Un mari, passe encor; tel qu'il est, on le prend:
On n'y va pas chercher tant de cérémonie.
Mais il faut qu'un galant soit fait à faire envie.
G-R. Ecoute; quand l'hymen aura joint nos deux peaux,
Je prêts qu'on soit sourde à tous les damoiseaux.
Mas. Tu crois te marier pour toi tout seul, compère?
G-R. Bien entendu; je veux une femme sévère,
Où je ferai beau bruit.
Mas. Eh! mon Dieu! tu feras
Comme les autres font, et tu t'adouciras.
Ces gens avant l'hymen, si fâcheux et critiques,
Dégenerent souvent en maris pacifiques. 10

8. Ibid.
9. Ibid., IV, vi.
10. Le Dépit Amoureux, V, viii.
Marinette reassures him by saying that he need fear nothing for she will be faithful and tell him everything:

Va, va, petit mari, ne crains rien de ma foi:
Les douceurs ne feront que blanchir contre moi,
Et je te dirai tout. 11

A few of the characters of The Way of the World recall Molière's. Protopopesco holds the opinion that Sir Wilful has "quelque chose de la gaucherie . . . de M. de Posségnac . . ." M. de Posségnac, with his uncultured, awkward, and countrified ways, his great amount of egotism, and his susceptibility to flattery, comes to town to marry a young lady but is rendered ridiculous by Sbrigani, Ergaste, and Nervine, who pretend to be his friends. Perhaps in some respects Sir Wilful is a copy of M. de Posségnac.

Sir Wilful is a rude country fellow unlearned in the ways of the town and has come up to town with the intention of seeing the world by sailing "upon the salt seas". 13 He is encouraged to marry Millamant, but drinking, combined with his churlish ways, soon ruins his chances.

Lady Wishfort, according to Swinburne and Protopopesco has a touch of the tragic that places her in the category of Arnolphe of L'École des Femmes. Although a great many of her

11. Le Dépit Amoureux, V, viii.
14. Swinburne, op. cit., p. 55. "Only perhaps in a single part has Congreve half consciously touched a note of almost tragic depth and suggestion; there is something wellnigh akin to the grotesque and piteous figure of Arnolphe himself in the unvenerable old age of Lady Wishfort."
ridiculous actions and pretenses are disgusting, we see the tragedy of her "unvenerable old age" and wish for her the peace and content of a normal old age.

That "Mrs. Fainall is a variation of the motif of L'Ecole des Maris" is the opinion of Miles. The motif mentioned seems to be the result upon the child of too strict upbringing. Sganarelle of Les École des Maris has reared his ward, Isabelle, in a very strict and narrow fashion. She has been virtually kept a prisoner and refused all pleasures. As a result she becomes desperate, takes matters into her own hands, and defies all the rules and precepts of her guardian. Mrs. Fainall likewise had been reared under very strict supervision, but now has forsaken her early training and become a typical member of Restoration society.

Foible, Lady Wishfort's maid, seems to have acquired some of her liberties with her mistress and her giving of advice from Lisette of Les École de Maris, who as the waiting woman of Leonor, assumes liberties and expresses her own opinions most freely.

Molière may have been the source of the incidents and characters I have just mentioned, but Molière's greatest influence on The Way of the World was not in suggestions

for plot or characters. By the time Congreve wrote his last comedy he had so thoroughly assimilated what he had taken from Molière that it had become an integral part of himself and as such conditioned the working of his own thoughts. Thus it is not so much in specific likeness but in general methods that we find traces of Molière's influence.

A brief comparison will perhaps show how Molière's methods had become Congreve's. The Way of the World and Le Misanthrope have several comparable points. The purpose of the two plays is much the same — to depict the high life of the capital. The plots are managed in almost the same way: a great deal of exposition (especially in the first two acts) results in few incidents. The first of each play opens with a conversation between the hero and his confidant, and the entrance of the women is delayed until the second act. Congreve had used both of these devices before; the former in The Double Dealer and the latter in The Old Batchelor. In The Way of the World and Le Misanthrope suspense is maintained until the end and unexpected denouements close the play. Soliloquy, which Molière employed in several plays and which had caused so much criticism of Congreve when he used it in The Double Dealer,

18. Vide supra, p. 49.
proves very effective in *The Way of the World*. French technique seems evident from a comparison of *The Way of the World* and the plays of Molière, but it is a French technique buried under the powerful literary genius of Congreve.
CONCLUSION

It was almost inevitable that Congreve, living at the time that he did, should have been influenced by Molière. The effects of the sojourn of the upper classes at the French court had not yet faded, and the interest aroused by Molière's plays still gave to English playgoers the criterion used in judging the comedy of manners which dominated the English stage. Naturally, the playwrights, who knew the public's taste for French fare, were not slow in making use of this knowledge. Both Etheredge and Wycherley made use of Molière in writing their plays, and Congreve, who came after them, benefited by their practices and went to Molière for suggestions.

The use of French material varies with the different phases of Congreve's own development as a dramatist. His first play, produced when he was a young man of twenty-three, would of necessity show the imprint of many models. One of the most discernible of these models was Molière. After The Old Batchelor (1693) proved a success, it was only natural for the youthful playwright to profit by this first success and make still more use of Molière in his second play. The Double Dealer (1694) is, to a greater extent than any other of Congreve's comedies, a reflection of Molière's plays. By the time Congreve was ready to write his third play, Love for Love (1695), his
own dramatic powers had developed to such a degree that, for the most part, he relied upon his own powers and used suggestions from Molière only as the successful construction of his play demanded. When Congreve wrote his last and greatest comedy, The Way of the World (1700), he had arrived at the height of his own genius and had so completely mastered Molière that French influence had become a part of his own technique.

There are three principal ways in which Congreve's plays show the imprint of Molière: influences on plot; on characters; and on style.

Although Congreve probably could have found an abundance of material for his plots from an analysis of the existing society and contemporary writers, he was not satisfied to do this and turned to the every ready and inexhaustible source of material common to Restoration writers. Thus reminiscences of Molière can be found in all his plays. The complex plot of The Old Batchelor seems to contain bits of Molière as part of its many threads of action. Apparently a great many plays are put under obligation: namely, Les Fourberies de Scapin, Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, Les Femmes Savantes, George Dandin, and L'École des Maris. There is no one play to which we can point as the source of The Old Batchelor, for it is a composite of Molière's ideas cleverly woven
into one plot. The Double Dealer, on the contrary, is more of a unity; for its primary source is Le Tartuffe, which furnishes the theme and many of the incidents. As is usual in a Restoration play, one plot is not enough; so various subplots are added and scenes for these are taken from Les Femmes Savantes and Le Misanthrope. Love for Love likewise has a plot suggested by one play, L'Avare, but only a small part of the plot is developed from this play. Le Dépit Amoureux, L'Étourdi, Les Fourberies de Scapin, Don Juan, and Le Misanthrope furnish material for incidental scenes. The Way of the World owes almost none of its plot to French influence and has only two scenes reminiscent of Molière—one of Les Précieuses Ridicules and one of Le Dépit Amoureux. Thus Molière's influence on Congreve's construction of plot started with Congreve's first play, The Old Batchelor, which shows numerous borrowings of ideas for incidents; increased with the adoption of one play as the principal source for The Double Dealer; flourished throughout Love for Love as denoted by the use of suggestions for a great many occurrences; and declined sharply in The Way of the World, which has only two minor incidents that show French influence.

Few of Congreve's characters are directly borrowed from Molière; and none of them is entirely French, for even the ones who most nearly approach their French models show the effects of the Restoration in their composition. Congreve's
characters that show French influence may be divided into three groups: those that have a distinct French prototype, those that have some traits of character inspired by French originals, and those whose origin is linked with a specific group of Molière's characters.

The one character who is perhaps the nearest to having a direct model is Maskwell of The Double Dealer. He is an imitation of Tartuffe, the hypocrite. Sir Sampson, Miss Prue, and Jeremy of Love for Love, all seem to have French prototypes. Sir Sampson is the heavy father type descended from Harpagon, the heartless and miserly father in L'Avare; Miss Prue is the innocent country girl who upon her arrival in town quickly learns "the way of the world" as did Agnes of L'École des Femmes; Jeremy is the type of servant who assumes liberties and contradicts and reproaches his master while inventing schemes to aid him as did Sganarelle of Don Juan and Mascrille of L'Étourdi.

The list of persons who have traits imitative of Molière's characters is much more inclusive and has representatives from three of Congreve's comedies. In The Old Batchelor such persons as Heartwell, Fondlewife, Laetitia, Araminta, Belinda, and Vanlove have French characteristics. Heartwell shares with Sganarelle of Le Mariage Forcé the fact that he is an old and foolish lover and with George Dandin his self-scorn because of his weakness for women. Fondle-
wife likewise resembles two of Molière's personages: George Dandin in his jealousy, suspicion, and fears concerning his young wife; and Chrysale of Les Femmes Savantes in his weakness and ease of being led by his wife. Angélique, George Dandin's wife, has passed on to Laetitia Fondlewife her ability to carry on intrigues and deceive her husband but at the same time be thought virtuous. Araminta and Belinda are précieuses in their affected ways, pretenses, and ideas of marriage, but Araminta has added a trace of Célimène's (Le Misanthrope) womanly delicacy. Vainlove, in his philosophy of love, resembles Scapin of Les Fourberies de Scapin, but his dissatisfaction with love affairs recalls Don Juan. In the composition of characters, as in the construction of plot, The Double Dealer owes a great deal to Molière. Numerous characters possess traits of one and oftentimes of several of Molière's characters. Careless is as true a friend as Cléante of Le Tartuffe, for he has his courage and faithfulness. Lord Touchwood is similar to the unsuspecting husband, Orgon. Lady Froth and Lady Plyant are précieuses, but Lady Plyant possesses many other qualities: in fact, she is one of Congreve's most versatile creations. She has the egotism of Bélise of Les Femmes Savantes, the shrewishness of Pilaminte of Les Femmes Savantes, and the deceit of Béline of Le Malade Imaginaire. Lord Plyant, as we expect, resembles
the husbands of Filaminte and Bélina: Chrysale gives him a feeling of mastery although he is completely under his wife's domination, and Argon inspires in him the doting old husband's desire for an heir. In The Way of the World, only Sir Wilful and Mrs. Fainall possess French characteristics. Sir Wilful has the countrified way of Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, and Mrs. Fainall portrays the results of a too strict upbringing just as effectively as Isabelle of L'École des Maris.

There are four characters that are built against the background of an entire group of persons. Bellmour of The Old Bachelor may well be dependent upon Molière's plotters for one side of his nature. He is constantly plotting, as are several of Molière's memorable characters: namely, Sbrigani of Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, Sganarelle of Le Médecin Volant, and Mascarille of L'Étourdi. Mellefont of The Double Dealer reflects Molière's lovers, for he shows their gentleness, tenderness, and chivalry. Ben of Love for Love is the far-off and greatly Anglicized descendant of Molière's lost children. Foible of The Way of the World is typical of Molière's female servants who feel privileged to take liberties and express their own opinions. Congreve's characters show an unexpected originality, but they do not entirely escape the French influence.
Molière's influence upon Congreve's style is very intangible. There are a number of devices which point to Molière as the inspiration. The opening of three of Congreve's comedies follows Molière's practice. The Double Dealer and The Way of the World open with a conversation between the hero and his confidant as does Le Misanthrope, and Love for Love opens with the hero and his servant talking as in Le Dépôt Amoureux. Throughout the first acts of The Old Batchelor and The Way of the World no woman appears upon the stage, as in Le Misanthrope. Soliloquies form a part of The Double Dealer and The Way of the World, thus reviving under Molière's guidance an old English practice. These two plays also have a dearth of incidents and consequently the same great amount of exposition and lack of action of Le Misanthrope. Besides these devices, there is a charm and brilliance about Congreve's plays that seems to be the result of the assimilation of Molière's technique. This elusive and indeterminate quality cannot be traced to any one of Molière's comedies, but Congreve's familiarity with Molière seems to have directed the English writer unconsciously in the footsteps of the French master, as evidenced by his brilliant dialogue, his understanding of human nature, his attitude toward his age, and earnestness of purpose.
Congreve owes a debt to Molière — a debt which varies with the different plays but which can be traced in all four comedies. Plots, characters, and dramatic style recall Molière. Many of the similarities between Congreve and Molière may be accidental and allowances must be made for these. But after all allowances are made, the great indebtedness of Congreve to Molière is evident. We may conclude with Swinburne that "a limb of Molière would have sufficed to make a Congreve" and yet, "no English writer, on the whole, has so nearly touched the skirts of Molière."

1. Swinburne, op. cit., p. 54.
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APPENDIX
## CONGREVE'S PROBABLE BORROWINGS FROM MOLIÈRE

### THE OLD BACHELOR

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### Note:
The names listed under observer denote authors who have pointed out specific similarities between Congreve and Molière. The blanks are used for additional parallels noted by the present writer. For the convenience of the reader references are given to pages of the thesis where the similarities are discussed.
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