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THE PHILOSOPHICAL AND DRAMATIC UNITY OF
GEORGE FARQUHAR'S EARLY COMEDIES.

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THE PHILOSOPHICAL AND DRAMATIC UNITY OF
GEORGE FARQUHAR'S EARLY COMEDIES

by

Elysee Hamlett Peavy

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ABSTRACT

THE PHILOSOPHICAL AND DRAMATIC UNITY OF
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by
Elysee Hamlett Peavy

The first four comedies of Farquhar reveal the essential unity of his dramatic canon from the standpoint of philosophical and dramatic principles. Underlying all of Farquhar's comedies is the basic critical tenet that the function of comedy is to instruct mankind by holding up to ridicule the vices and follies of man. Farquhar examines and finds lacking the artificial manners and morals of his society, such as libertinism, the love-game, affectation, and the double-standard. Against these ideas Farquhar opposes his ideal: a mutually sincere and committed correspondence between men and women, culminating in the stable relationships of marriage. Behind this ideal lies Farquhar's conviction that mankind is essentially good and that much of man's folly springs from an overabundance of pure animal spirits ultimately rectified by a spontaneous and natural good nature.

Love and a Bottle represents libertinism as a deviation from the norm in that the practice of the code is confined
to one character, Roebuck, and he ultimately rejects libertinism in favor of the stable relationship of marriage. With The Constant Couple Farquhar's attack on libertinism becomes more serious; the practitioners of libertinism are more numerous, representing a broader spectrum of humanity, and Farquhar depicts the effect of libertinism and the double-standard on the heroine, Lurewell. In Sir Harry Wildair Farquhar departs from his previous practice of examining libertinism within the context of courtship by analyzing the code within the context of marriage itself. The effect of the shift is a more pervasive denunciation of the libertine code, now seen as inimical not only to the establishment of a mature and stable relationship but also to the maintenance of such a relationship. The realistic treatment of the theme of love and marriage contained in Sir Harry Wildair also appears in The Inconstant, which depicts the moral growth of the libertine hero during the progress of the play, thereby making the hero's ultimate acceptance of marriage a logical outgrowth of both character and action. Moreover, The Inconstant also goes beyond the previous plays in depicting the effect of the libertine code not only on the individual, but on society as well.

A corollary to Farquhar's premise that the function of comedy is to instruct is the idea that comedy can
instruct only by first delighting. In his Discourses Farquhar gives the basic rules the playwright must follow in order to meet this second requirement: his play must contain varied and lively action; each part of the plot must depend on what precedes it; the characters must be realistic portrayals of recognizable human types; and the dialogue must be natural. Farquhar's first four comedies follow these rules. Moreover, a basic pattern is discernible in his early plays: all the plays contain multiple plots; to develop the dialectic of the theme of love and marriage, Farquhar has the action revolve around two love plots whose parallel actions reinforce the moral of the play, and a sub-plot dealing with the theme of affectation; the action centers around the conversion of the unstable members of society, whether rake, coquette, or fop, to an acceptance of the proper mode of behavior. Farquhar also patterns his plays around certain character types: the good natured rake, the sober gentleman, the virtuous and serious heroine, the coquette, and an important subsidiary character, the "blocking" figure who opposes one of the principal male figures and complicates the action of one or both of the love plots. In all four plays Farquhar consistently combines plot, theme, and characterization in such a manner as to be "instructive" about the vices and virtues of contemporary Englishmen.
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INTRODUCTION

It is a curious fact of Restoration theater criticism that relatively scant attention has been paid to the works of George Farquhar. Aside from Willard Connely's *Young George Farquhar* (1949), a critical biography, D. Schmid's *George Farquhar, Sein Leben und Seine Original-Dramen* (1940), Kasper Spinner's *George Farquhar als Dramatiker* (1956), and the recent study by Eric Rothstein, *George Farquhar* (1967), discussion of Farquhar has been confined to chapters in books dealing with Restoration and Eighteenth-Century drama or to a few scattered articles in scholarly journals.¹ This dearth of Farquhar criticism is surprising in view of the fact that of Farquhar's seven plays, two, *The Recruiting Officer* and *The Beaux' Stratagem*, are standard fare in anthologies of Restoration and Eighteenth-Century drama. Certainly, no examination of the period would be complete without a knowledge of Farquhar's contribution to English comic drama. Perhaps one explanation for this paucity of Farquhar criticism is the somewhat anomalous position Farquhar holds in the history of English drama. Scholars are in sharp disagreement concerning Farquhar's comedies. Some, notably John Palmer, Henry Perry, and William Archer, see Farquhar's plays as essentially manifestations of the
new school of sentimental comedy which gained impetus in
the early eighteenth-century. As one might expect, the
critic's attitude toward this genre influences his subse-
quent assessment of Farquhar. Hence Palmer's almost en-
tirely negative evaluation of Farquhar who, in Palmer's
words, "killed the comedy to which he contributed the last
brilliant examples." Perry, on the other hand takes the
positive view that Farquhar lifted "English comedy from the
Centre of Indifference in which it had been languishing
under Van Brugh's Aegis and, for good or ill, . . . . set it
down in the freer aether of eighteenth-century sentiment." A second view of Farquhar's position in English comedy, and
one directly opposed to that just mentioned, sees Farquhar's
plays as continuing the tradition of Etherege, Wycherley,
and Congreve, but with an added luster. An attempt at
reconciling these divergent views is evidenced by Bernbaum's
discussion of Farquhar. According to Bernbaum, Farquhar's
early and late plays, although containing a few sentimental
elements, are written in the tradition of the Restoration
comedy of manners. On the other hand, his middle plays,
especially The Twin Rivals, lean heavily toward the sen-
timental mode. Still another approach to Farquhar's plays
is that of Bonamy Dobree who considers Farquhar's plays
related to neither the Restoration comedy of manners nor
the sentimental school. Instead, Dobree maintains,
Farquhar goes to the Elizabethan comic playwrights for inspiration, intent upon lively action and "fun and frolic." 7

Obviously, such divergent views cannot all be correct, although each may contain certain elements applicable to the comedies of Farquhar. The main problem with the views cited above is that each attempts to fit Farquhar's plays into a prescribed pattern, a veritable bed of Procrustes, and anything not conforming to the mold is either glossed over as unimportant or ignored completely, with the inevitable result being a rather one-sided view of the plays. Actually, I question the validity of placing Farquhar's plays exclusively within the tradition of either the Restoration comedy of manners or sentimental comedy, because his plays differ significantly from both of these types. This is not to say that one can find none of the conventions of the comedy of manners in Farquhar's plays; indeed, they abound with certain elements usually found in the comedy of manners: a plot centered around a love interest, pairs of lovers, fops, beaux, rakes, double entendres, and a commitment to the double standard. Moreover, in the plays Farquhar wrote between 1698 and 1702 the characters and action are representative of the beau monde, a basic characteristic of the Restoration comedy of manners. The inclusion of such conventions as these, however, does not alone qualify a comedy as a manners type, or more
specifically, the type written by Farquhar's predecessors. More important is the overall tone of the play, and it is here that Farquhar's plays depart most radically from those of Etherege, Wycherley, and Congreve. The prevailing tone of the Restoration comedy of manners is one of cynicism, stemming to a great extent from a view which sees man as a social animal whose sole function is to play the artificial game of life and love in the best possible form. It is a world in which young women and marriage are marketable commodities, and the male pursues a libertine existence, marrying unwillingly and only when marriage is economically advantageous, and even then not allowing the bonds of wedlock to interfere with his pursuit of future amorous adventure. Such qualities are notably lacking in Farquhar's plays. Farquhar's view of humankind is not cynical and there is less attention paid to social form. Men, as Farquhar sees them, are essentially good or at least perfectible, and marriage becomes the means of reclaiming the errant but good young man from a life of dissipation. Moreover, the young men are themselves aware of the purifying aspects of matrimony, and although at first reluctant to accept the idea of marriage, by the end of the play the hero sees marriage as the best course of action from the standpoint of both his physical and mental well-being. It is true that Archer and Aimwell in *The Beaux' Stratagem* treat
marriage as a commodity, but Farquhar carefully undercuts this by having Aimwell fall in love with Dorinda and, in a burst of conscience, repent and confess all. Farquhar generally treats marriage romantically in that mutual love is seen as the essential ingredient, even, as in the case of Aimwell and Dorinda, to the exclusion of monetary considerations.

This basic difference between Farquhar's attitude toward mankind and that typical of the earlier dramatists is not, however, necessarily indicative of an innovative philosophical mind. Despite the fact that only one year had elapsed between Farquhar's taking up residence in London and the publication in 1698 of his first play, Love and a Bottle, Farquhar was doubtless influenced by ideas current in the English thought of the period. By 1697, opposition to the Hobbesian view of human nature had become well entrenched in English thought through the concerted efforts of the more moderate Anglican divines, and Farquhar's depiction of character shows the impress of this movement. That Farquhar found this somewhat optimistic assessment of mankind compatible with the natural bent of his own thought accounts, perhaps, for his accepting such a theory, for he was capable of rejecting ideas running counter to his own notions of the true and the reasonable. Such is the case with the militant movement to reform the stage,
a phenomenon that began shortly after 1688 and reached a climax in 1698 with Jeremy Collier's famous attack, *A Short View of the Immorality, and Profaneness of the English Stage*. The societies for the reformation of the stage opposed the comedy of manners for a number of reasons. The most common targets of attack were the pervasive sexual themes, the double standard, and the use of what the reformers considered gross indecency of language, but Farquhar successfully resisted the strictures against such stage fare as these and included them, in varying degrees, in all his plays.

Farquhar's view of life, departing as it does from that set forth by such dramatists as Etherege, Wycherley, and Congreve is nevertheless not the view espoused by the sentimentalists. Sentimental comedy was a reaction against the belief that man was an imperfect being and against the literary conventions found in the comedy of manners which supported such a view. Basic to sentimental thought were the ideas that man was perfectible by an appeal to his emotions, that virtuous and admirable people could exist in ordinary life, and that such people were ultimately rewarded for their virtuous conduct. Added to these is the sentimentalists' aversion toward the satiric, an attitude derived, in part, from the conviction that laughter was "a mean scornful expression of superiority to a deformed thing."
Farquhar, however much he agrees with the idea that man is basically good, looks at humanity with the satirist's eye, deliberately invoking laughter at the follies and vices of man in an attempt to laugh mankind into better manners and morals. Farquhar makes his position quite clear in his *Discourse Upon Comedy* when he states that comedy is "a well-fram'd Tale handsomely told, as an agreeable Vehicle for Counsel or Reproof." Satire, Farquhar continues, has its origins in the Fables of Aesop who tried "to improve Men by the Policy of Beasts," just as Farquhar himself endeavors "to reform Brutes with the Examples of Men."

It is primarily this satiric view that allows Farquhar to avoid the excesses of sentimentalism found in the comedies of such a writer as Steele. Farquhar's comedies are characterized by a more realistic appraisal of life than that depicted in the Restoration comedy of manners or sentimental comedy, for Farquhar can see beyond London society and can recognize elements of both good and ill in the characters peopling his plays. In order to compare Farquhar to another writer, one must go to the novelist Fielding. Both authors see man as good but fallible, both allow for the existence of evil and ill nature in a world which is, at best, imperfect, and both attempt to correct man's manners and morals through the device of satire. The purely libertine spirit of the earlier comedy is replaced in Farquhar's plays by the conviction that much of man's
folly springs from an overabundance of pure animal spirits ultimately rectified by a natural and spontaneous good nature which lies beneath superficial manners and morals. This view, encompassing as it does all aspects of man, precludes the sentimentalist's approach which draws hard and fast lines between good and ill, morality and immorality, resulting in characters who are one-sided and lifeless.

This humane and comprehensive view of man and society, leavened by a judicious inclusion of satire, characterizes all of Farquhar's plays, beginning with *Love and a Bottle* in 1698 and concluding with *The Beaux' Stratagem* in 1706. Few critics would deny the validity of such a statement with reference to *The Recruiting Officer* and *The Beaux' Stratagem*, for these two plays are considered masterpieces of comic form, exemplifying the best of two dramatic worlds, that of the Restoration comedy of manners and that of the sentimental school. The statement is, however, equally applicable to the remainder of Farquhar's comedies, and to deny this is to overlook the essential unity underlying Farquhar's dramatic canon. *The Recruiting Officer* and *The Beaux' Stratagem* are the culmination of the philosophical and dramatic principles existing in Farquhar's plays from the outset. The purpose of the following study is to show the unity underlying Farquhar's comedies through an examination of his first four plays, and at the same time to point
out the advances Farquhar made in the presentation of his philosophical view through his increasing mastery of the genre embodying his philosophical precepts.
NOTES

1Willard Connely, Young George Farquhar: The Restoration Drama at Twilight (London, 1949); D. Schmid, George Farquhar, Sein Leben and Seine Original-Dramen (Vienna, 1940); Kaspar Spinner, George als Dramatiker (Bern, 1956); Eric Rothstein, George Farquhar (New York, 1967).


3The Comedy of Manners, p. 242.

4The Comic Spirit in Restoration Drama, p. 108.

5John Loftis, Comedy and Society from Congreve to Fielding (Standford, 1959); Ashley H. Thorndike, English Comedy (New York, 1929).

6Ernest Bernbaum, The Drama of Sensibility (Gloucester, Mass., 1958), pp. 84, 87, 97, 102.


10Joseph Wood Krutch, Comedy and Conscience After the Restoration (New York, 1949), pp. 100-101; 150.

11Bernbaum, The Drama of Sensibility, p. 10.


14Works, II, 336.
CHAPTER I
FARQUHAR'S THEORY OF COMEDY

A helpful preliminary to a study of Farquhar's comedies would be to examine Farquhar's own views on the drama as set forth in A Discourse Upon Comedy, a prose essay in which Farquhar discusses the current state of the playhouse and the nature and function of comedy, and certain prologues and epilogues Farquhar wrote that deal with the art of dramaturgy. Of these works, the most important to an understanding of Farquhar's plays, and the one to be examined first, is A Discourse Upon Comedy, for this essay, written in 1700 and published the following year, represents a systematically developed critical document. Despite the modest disclaimer in the introduction that his essay contains no critical remarks but "only some present Sentiments which Hazard, not Study, brings into my Head, without any preliminary method or cogitation," 

Farquhar nonetheless deals with certain problems current in the formal criticism of the time and also establishes the principles of comic drama underlying his own plays.

Farquhar introduces his subject by making a plea for the validity of poetry in general, and the drama in particular, representing as it does, Nature, which can be
taken here to refer to the permanent and universal qualities in human nature.\textsuperscript{2} The drama, Farquhar says, "was one of Nature's eldest Offsprings, whence by her Birthright and plain Simplicity she pleads a genuine Likeness to her Mother."\textsuperscript{3} This point established, Farquhar goes on to remark on the heterogeneity of the English audience, a real problem confronting the playwright whose success or failure depends upon pleasing such a variety:

\begin{quote}
The Scholar calls upon us for Decorums and Oeconomy; the Courtier cries out for Wit and Purity of Stile; the Citizen for Humour and Ridicule; the Divines threaten us for Immodesty; and the Ladies will have an Intreague. Now here are a multitude of Criticks, whereof the twentieth Person only has read \textit{Quae Genus}, and yet every one is a Critick after his own way; that is, Such a Play is best because I like it.\textsuperscript{4}
\end{quote}

In such a situation, the author can endeavor only to please the most "judicious and impartial," and although Farquhar does not state which part of the audience is to have this distinction, he unequivocally denies the privilege to the critic. Farquhar's argument with the critics stems from what he considered their slavish adherence to the rules of
Aristotle, and certainly, the formal critics of the period did consider adherence to the "rules" the ultimate test of dramatic merit. Farquhar wastes little time, however, attacking the critics, themselves; instead, he goes straight to what he considered the source of the problem, Aristotle's *Art of Poetry*, and points out the inadequacy of that work as a touchstone for the drama of his age.

As a prelude to his dissection of Aristotle's critical acumen, Farquhar places himself firmly on the side of the Moderns in that perennial battle that Swift had tried to finish once and for all in *The Battle of the Books*. Farquhar maintains that the veneration for antiquity qua antiquity, based on the presumed decay, illiteracy, and dotage of the modern world, is mere superstition and that, in fact "the World was never more active or youthful, and true downright Sense was never more Universal than at this very Day." Thus, it is unreasonable to assign infallibility to Aristotle solely on the basis of his antiquity of two thousand years. This foundation of Aristotle's authority challenged, Farquhar proceeds to question the validity of *The Art of Poetry* as a critical document. Some of the points Farquhar makes are that Aristotle had never written poetry himself, and therefore could not reasonably set himself up for a dictator in poetry; that *The Art of Poetry* consists only of observations drawn from works of the
Greek dramatists and what Aristotle set down as essential principles might have been mere accidents; and that Aristotle did not search into the nature of poetry but only complimented the great writers of his age. Farquhar's most significant argument against the Art of Poetry, however, concerns the unities of time, place, and action, for these ideas on the drama were precisely what the formal critics had exalted to such a position of eminence. In his attack against the "rules," Farquhar develops his own theory of comedy; for this reason one must first consider Farquhar's views on the Nature and function of comedy before examining his specific arguments against the unities of time, place, and action.

Farquhar's first critical tenet, and the one governing his entire theory of comedy, is that "comedy is a well-fram'd Tale handsomely told, as an agreeable Vehicle for Counsel or Reproof. This is all we can say for the Credit of its Institution; and is the Stress of its Charter for Liberty and Toleration." This insistence on the moral basis of comedy is not original in English dramatic criticism. Sidney had made essentially the same statement in the Apology for Poetry, and the idea was tacitly accepted, if not always practised, by most English comic dramatists. What is innovative, however, is Farquhar's second basic tenet that "Whatever means are most proper and expedient for compassing this End and Intention Utile Dulci, they must be the Just Rules of
Comedy, and the true Art of the Stage. Of prime importance in determining the "means," i.e., plot, of a play is the audience, and Farquhar's attitude toward the English audience is an integral part of his comic theory and accounts for his disagreement with the idea of the single plot. People differ, Farquhar contends, according to the age in which they live, the country in which they reside, and the unique constitutional or temperamental disposition forming each individual. Therefore, an English playwright must design his play for an English audience, which differs from the rest of the world by reason of its geographic situation, political situation, and temperament. These dissimilarities, Farquhar maintains, are further compounded by the fact that the English are a mixture of many nations and consequently have the largest variety of humours of any people in the world. These disparate humours produce many follies, some not formerly in existence, and must have new remedies, which are simply new counsels and instructions:

Then what sort of a Dulce . . . must a man make use of to engage the attention of so many different Humours and Inclinations: Will a single Plot satisfie everybody? . . . To make the Moral In-structive, you must make the Story diverting;
the Spleenatick Wit, the Beau Courtier, the Heavy Citizen, the fine Lady, and her fine Footman, come all to be instructed, and therefore must all be diverted; and he that can do this best, and with most Applause, writes the best Comedy, let him do it by what Rules he pleases, so they be not offensive to Religion and good Manners.\textsuperscript{14}

Thus, Farquhar attacks the idea of unity of plot on two counts: it lacks sufficient diversity either to interest an English audience or, more significantly, to deal with the myriad, and often original, follies which need to be presented if the audience is to receive the proper instruction. In making this case against the single plot, Farquhar invokes his own authority, the English playwrights Shakespeare, Johnson, and Fletcher, all of whom dispensed with the single plot.\textsuperscript{15} It is somewhat surprising that Farquhar does not also call upon certain of his contemporaries to support his view, particularly when no less a figure than Dryden had taken the same stand against the idea of the single plot, as had Sir Robert Howard and Samuel Butler; although, to be sure, none had gone so far as Farquhar to damn the single plot out of hand.\textsuperscript{16}

Farquhar's statements on the necessity of multiple
plots are the most significant part of the Discourse Upon Comedy from the standpoint of Farquhar's theory of comedy; nevertheless, his arguments against the unities of time and place are also important. In arguing against the unities of time and place, Farquhar anticipates Coleridge's later theory of the suspension of disbelief essential in any audience. It is interesting to note that Coleridge had read Farquhar's Discourse and pays due tribute to his predecessor in his own critical remarks: "Farquhar, the most ably . . . first exposed the ludicrous absurdities involved in the supposition, and demolished as with the single sweep of a careless hand the whole edifice of French criticism respecting the so-called unities of time and place." 17

Farquhar's position on the decorums of time and place are, stated simply, that the stage can exist only by the "strength of supposition and force of fancy in the audience." 18 When a man views a play he must of necessity overcome the fact that the actors are not the people they represent and the location is the stage of an English playhouse, if he is to be affected by the intended moral of the piece. In the same manner, if an audience can accept the action on the stage to cover the twelve hours allowed by the most rigid critics, when in actuality the action takes only three hours, the audience can as reasonably be expected to grant
the playwright as many years as he wills. Given the above argument, Farquhar maintains, it follows that once the extent of time is allowed, change of place must be allowed also, since one follows the other. Not content to stop here, Farquhar adds the point that the initial "Fancy" (or imagination) within the spectator's mind allowing him to imagine an English playhouse any one other location should also allow him to imagine it as many locations necessary to develop the plot.¹⁹

Farquhar's plea for a drama free from the fetters of the "unities" is by no means an attempt "to make the condition of the English stage a state of anarchy."²⁰ There are, Farquhar says, rules and decorums to be observed; each part of the plot must depend upon what precedes it; the characters must be realistic portrayals of recognizable human types; and the dialogue must be the "natural air of free conversation."²¹ These general "rules" are subsumed by what Farquhar considered the most important function of comedy: to laugh mankind into better manners and morals. Farquhar's final statement on the true test of a dramatist's merit indicates his own view better than any paraphrase:

If they have left Vice unpunish'd, Vertue unrewarded, Folly unexpos'd, or Prudence unsuccessful, the Contrary of which is the Utile of
Comedy, let them be lash'd to some purpose; if any part of their Plots have been independant of the rest; or any of their Characters forc'd or unnatural; which destroys the Dulce of Plays, let them be hiss'd off the Stage: But if by a true Decorum in these material Points, they have writ successfully, and answer'd the end of Dramatick Poetry in every Respect, let them rest in Peace, and their Memories enjoy the Encomiums due to their Merit without any Reflection for waving those niceties, which are neither instructive to the World, nor diverting to Mankind; but are like all the rest of Critical Learning, fit only to set People together by the Ears in ridiculous Controversies, that are not one Jot material to the Good of the Publick, whether they be true or false. 22

Although Farquhar's most sustained statement on the art of comedy is contained in A Discourse Upon Comedy, he also dealt with the subject in certain of his prologues and epilogues. Unfortunately, Farquhar wrote only four of the prologues to his plays, and of these four, only three are concerned with critical problems; however, Farquhar also wrote prologues and epilogues to plays by other playwrights, two of which, the Epilogue to Oldmixon's The Grove
and the Prologue to Susanna Centlivre's *The Platonic Lady*, further illuminate Farquhar's own theory and practice of the comic art. Moreover, although the Prologue to *The Beaux' Stratagem* (1706) and the Prologue to *The Platonic Lady* (1707) indicate a departure from Farquhar's earlier view of the serious satiric function of comedy, these prologues and epilogues are, for the most part, an extension of the basic critical tenets developed in the *Discourse Upon Comedy*. Because of the necessary brevity of the prologue, Farquhar obviously could not deal exhaustively with the critical problems that concerned him. Instead, in each "critical" prologue, he concentrates on one specific problem, developing it as fully as possible within the limitations of a standard piece designed to whet the appetite of the audience in the hope of insuring a good reception of the play that followed.

Of the four prologues written by Farquhar for his plays, the first, A New Prologue to *The Constant Couple* (1700), is not concerned with critical problems but is simply a reply to John Oldmixon, who had attacked Farquhar in a Prologue because of Oldmixon's bitterness over the poor reception accorded his own play *The Grove, or Love's Paradise*. Actually, Stonehill's suggestion that Oldmixon's attack was due merely to rancor over the failure of his play is questionable in light of the Epilogue to *The Grove,*
which Farquhar had written at Oldmixon's request. This Epilogue seems a not so subtle attack on The Grove and on Oldmixon's worth as a dramatist, a slur which Oldmixon must have recognized. Farquhar's unfavorable comments on the art of playwriting in his own time are interesting, however, not as a possible explanation of Oldmixon's subsequent attack, but as they reveal by indirection Farquhar's view of what constitutes good drama; in this Epilogue, the emphasis is on the proper delineation of character. In A Discourse Upon Comedy, Farquhar held one of the rules of the stage to be that the characters represent realistic portrayals of recognizable human types, and he says of a badly written play that "the Characters were so incoherent in themselves, and compos'd of such Variety of Absurdities, that in his [the spectator's] Knowledge of Nature he cou'd find no Original for such a Copy; and being therefore un-acquainted with any Folly they reprov'd, or any Vertue that they recommended; their Business was as flat and tiresome to him, as if the Actors had talk'd Arabick."²⁴ It is precisely this unrealistic portrayal of characters that is the subject of the Epilogue to The Grove, as is evident from the following lines:

Time was when Poets rul'd without disputes,
Turn'd Men to Gods, transform'd their Gods to Brutes.
Our Poets change the Scene, with mighty odds
Make Men the Brutes, make nothing of their Gods
'Tis strange to see by what surprising skill,
Things are transform'd by Brothers of the Quill.
No more than this - high - Presto - pass,
Great Jupiter's a Bull - Great Beaux's an Ass.
Where'er they please to give their thoughts a loose,
Jove's made a Swan, your Alderman's a Goose.
Things of most differing forms too we may find,
By spells of Poetry in one combin'd.
The blustering Face, which Red-Coats bear about,
Is the false Flag which Cowards still hand out,
.
They make the Villain look precise and grave,
And the poor harmless Cit, a thriving Knave.
.
Poets of Old chang'd Io to a Cow,
But what strange Monsters Women are made now?
Females with us, without the Poet's fraud,
Change often to the worst of Beasts, a Bawd.  

This attack on false characterization also reveals Farquhar's bias toward the middle-class ("They make . . . / . . . the poor harmless Cit a thriving Knave."), and his tendency, revealed more explicitly in his plays and in later prologues,
to view women sympathetically ("But what strange Monsters
Women are made now?"); although, to be sure, this Epilogue
also reveals Farquhar's awareness that not all women are
virtuous ("Females with us . . . / Change often to . . .
a Bawd."). To cap this indictment of the present decline
in comedy, Farquhar closes his Epilogue with the couplet:
"Like paint on Glass that's valu'd as such cost;/ Poets
ne're fade, altho' the Art be lost."26 Thus, the modern
poet is simply a poetaster, and in this Epilogue at any
rate, the cause is the poet's inability to realize charac-
ters that are true to nature. As such, the characters
are invalid as a means of delighting and hence, instruc-
ting.

Farquhar implicitly expresses his views in the Epilogue
to The Grove, and the conclusion that he considers realistic
characterization of prime importance is arrived at by in-
direction: nowhere in the Epilogue does he restate the
position maintained in A Discourse Upon Comedy. More ex-
plicit is the Prologue with which Farquhar introduces his
third play, Sir Harry Wildair (1701). This Prologue has
for its subject the author's aim of pleasing his audience,
a ubiquitous topic in prologues to Restoration and Eighteenth-
century comedy, yet one which escapes the stigma of banality
by virtue of Farquhar's original treatment of his subject.
Farquhar begins his Prologue by disavowing the rules for
comedy as set forth by the formal critics in compliance with the comedies of ancient Greece:

Our Authors, have in most their late Essays, Prologu'd their own, by damming other Plays; Made great Harrangues to teach you what was fit To pass for Humour, and go down for Wit. Athenian Rules must form an English Piece. And Drury-Lane comply with ancient Greece. Exactness only, such as Terence writ, Must please our masqu'd Lucretias in the Pit. Our youthful Author swears he cares not a-Pin For Vossius, Scaliger, Hedelin, or Rapin: He leaves to learn'd Pens such labour'd Lays.\(^27\)

These first eleven lines serve to introduce the actual subject of the Prologue, Farquhar's relationship to his audience. To image this relationship Farquhar uses the metaphor of his audience as the school from which he, the scholar, gleans his "rules":

You are the Rules by which he writes his Plays. From musty Books let others take their View, He hates dull reading, but he studies You. (ll. 12-14)

Following this introductory image, Farquhar proceeds to classify his audience by type, corresponding to pit, box,
and gallery, and points out precisely the aspects of his plays derived from each segment of the audience (ll. 15-22). From the beaux Farquhar learns "lessons in formality," that is, modes of acceptable social behavior, while from the Footmen he learns "most nice morality," a phrase better understood, perhaps, if one views the Footman as belonging to the lower stratum of the emerging middle-class. Thus, the "nice morality" can be equated with the middle-class penchant for seeing virtue rewarded, vice punished, and marriage depicted as a salutary state, three indispensable ingredients of Farquhar's comedies. Not one to ignore the ladies, Farquhar also pays due attention to the front boxes where the fashionable ladies sit. From this segment of the audience Farquhar derives his style; more specifically, he learns how to present his action through dialogue that is sufficiently decorous, in order to render in an acceptable manner even the more bawdy elements of his play, or as Farquhar expresses it, "a waggish Action - but a modest Air" (l. 22). Having dealt with manners, morals, and language, Farquhar turns briefly to the more formal aspects of his play: time, place, and action. From all of the "Covent-Garden critics" (beaux, footmen, and ladies), Farquhar learns the "modern forms of action, time, and place," (l. 26) that is, whatever is necessary to please and hence instruct.
Farquhar closes his Prologue with a restatement of the author-scholar, audience-school metaphor: "Thus then the Pit and Boxes are his Schools,/ Your Air, your Humour, his Dramatick Rules." This image is a significant index of Farquhar's aim as a playwright. Moreover, the image is a complex one which can be taken as working two ways. Farquhar does indeed study his audience, learning their manners and morals in order to mirror them in his play as a means of delighting. Ultimately, however, if Farquhar has been a good "student," he, or rather his plays, will become the means of instruction and the audience will become the students schooled in the proper mode of behavior. Such a view of the relationship between playwright and audience is the same that is developed in the Discourse Upon Comedy, which has as its basic tenet the principle that the function of comedy is to instruct and that comedy can accomplish this end only by first delighting.

The Prologue to The Recruiting Officer (1706) seems at first glance to contain nothing of interest to the person attempting to assess Farquhar's theory of comic drama. In fact, a cursory reading would lead one to the conclusion that this Prologue is little more than a compliment to the ladies, and a rather fulsome compliment at that. This initial impression is strengthened by the fact that Farquhar seems to be trying to do two things at once.
On the one hand, he is writing a prologue appropriate to the subject of recruiting that serves as the basic plot device of his play, while on the other hand he is attempting to enlist the sympathies of the women in the audience. Actually, Farquhar is indeed attempting to accomplish both of these tasks, but he merges the two intentions into an integral whole with the subject of recruiting subsumed by Farquhar's main considerations, which are to enlist the sympathy of his female viewers and to present his view of women. That these latter points are Farquhar's main intention is supported by the means he uses to introduce the subject of recruiting, the Trojan War, fought over Helen. Farquhar begins his Prologue by bringing Helen into the foreground:

In Antient Times when Hellen's fatal Charms
Rous'd the contending Universe to Arms,
The Graecian Council happily deputes
The Sly Ulysses forth - to raise Recruits.\(^{29}\)

This initial emphasis on Helen is significant and looks forward to the last ten lines, which bear the weight of the Prologue. Yet this real significance of Helen is not immediately apparent since Farquhar ostensibly is using her merely to introduce the subject of war and its corollary, recruitment. It is this latter topic that Farquhar deals
with in lines five through seventeen, where he relates Ulysses' recruitment of Achilles, a description that is capped by the lines, "Thus by Recruiting was bold Hector slain:/ Recruiting thus Fair Hellen did regain."

Having dealt with the subject of recruiting, Farquhar, in line eighteen, turns to his primary concern, the ladies in the audience, linking his two subjects by the figure of Helen:

If for One Hellen such prodigious things
Were acted, that they ev'n listed Kings:
If for one Hellen's artful vicious Charms
Half the transported World was found in Arms;
What for so Many Hellens may We dare,
Whose Minds, as well as Faces, are so Fair?
If, by One Hellen's Eyes, Old Greece cou'd find
It's Homer fir'd to write - Ev'n Homer Blind;
The Britains sure beyond compare may write
That view so many Hellens every Night.

Thus, the Helen of Troy is metamorphosed into the Helens of New Troy, but with the important difference that these myriad Helens are virtuous as well as beautiful and as such, serve to inspire the playwright. One might well ask at this point just what such hyperbolic praise of English womanhood has to do with Farquhar's theory of comedy. The
significance is twofold: first, Farquhar obviously aims to please the ladies; and second, Farquhar holds women in high esteem, two closely related factors that are important to an understanding of Farquhar as a dramatist. In the Discourse Upon Comedy Farquhar singles out the ladies as a segment of the audience the writer must please if his plays are to be successful. In the Prologue to Sir Harry Wildair, Farquhar again mentions the ladies, attributing to them the style of his plays. It is clear that Farquhar considered the ladies important from the standpoint of the success of the playwright's work, yet, despite Farquhar's interest in monetary success, one should not view this desire to please the ladies as mere literary pandering. Farquhar is no hack writer; his goal of delighting the ladies stems as much from his high opinion of them as from purely practical considerations. Farquhar's admiration for the ladies, an admiration most explicitly manifested in the Prologue to The Recruiting Officer, pervades all of his comedies. In fact, the peculiarly sympathetic treatment Farquhar accords the women peopling his plays is a quality that marks his comedies immediately as his own and as departing from the comedies of the Restoration. That his heroines are treated in this approving manner is to be expected since this figure is generally an idealized version of her kind, but the approbation with which Farquhar
laves his heroines does not constitute his only sympathetic
treatment of women. Indeed, Farquhar has a penchant for
including in his plays and portraying sympathetically
women of dubious status by Restoration and eighteenth-cen-
tury standards. As early as Love and a Bottle, Farquhar
depicts Trudge, Roebuck's cast-off mistress and the mother
of his child, with a degree of understanding that is
startling in a play of the period where such women were
usually the objects of ridicule or scorn. Moreover, the
play has as one of its themes the innate principle of vir-
tue in women, an idea duly upheld by the characters of the
two heroines, Lucinda and Leanthe. Again, in The Constant
Couple another castoff mistress, Lurewell, is rendered in
a compassionate manner and, what is more significant, the
lady, whose honor is ultimately vindicated, is one of the
heroines of the play. The motif of the seduced and aban-
donated woman also appears in The Twin Rivals in the figure
of Celia, and once more the woman's situation is presented
with considerable compassion. In The Beaux' Stratagem,
Farquhar turns from the woman usually regarded as a social
outcast to the woman trapped in a loveless marriage, and
here again Farquhar treats the woman's plight with unusual
sympathy. Farquhar's solution, divorce, is sane and well-
reasoned and seems to stem from an awareness of the diffi-
culties facing the eighteenth-century woman caught up in
such a situation. That Mrs. Sullen, in gaining her freedom, is also allowed to regain her marriage articles further attests Farquhar's ability, unique before Richardson, to view with understanding and, in this case, shrewdness, the problem attendant upon women in a society which places them in a subordinate position.

In addition to these specific examples of Farquhar's sympathetic treatment of women, Farquhar's plays manifest a general attitude concerning marriage, the nature of women, and the male-female relationship that indicates that Farquhar viewed women as equal to men from the standpoint of intelligence and the capacity for happiness, and superior to men from the standpoint of sensibility and honorable behavior. There are only three instances in Farquhar's plays where women appear as reprehensible. The first instance, involving the character of Lurewell in Sir Harry Wildair, is questionable in that Farquhar in this play is simply trying to capitalize on the success of The Constant Couple by writing a sequel that incorporates the same characters. The Lurewell who appears in Sir Harry Wildair is a caricature of her former self, and one can easily see why the play was singularly unsuccessful. One might say that the character of Lurewell in Sir Harry Wildair is an unfortunate illustration of the poet's fraudulent depiction of women as monsters that Farquhar condemns in the Epilogue.
to The Grove. Another instance of an uncomplimentary presentation of womankind is found in the prostitute Lamorce in The Inconstant. Lamorce, however, is a minor personage used to point up the pitfalls of a rakish existence. The third female unflatteringly presented by Farquhar's plays is Mandrake in The Twin Rivals, a bawd who functions as a means of complicating the plot, and by no means reflects a general condemnation of women on Farquhar's part. Aside from these three examples, Farquhar's women are all treated with sympathy and respect. There are occasions when Farquhar's attitude tends to become almost slavishly reverential, resulting in one dimensional figures who seem designed for sentimental drama instead of for the realistic comedy that is Farquhar's forte. Usually, however, Farquhar depicts recognizable feminine types whose foibles serve to set off their good points.

The problem of the relationship between Farquhar's depiction of women in his plays and his self-avowed desire to appeal to the women in the audience can be best understood, perhaps, from the standpoint of Farquhar's attitude toward women, that is, the respect and esteem accorded them, as expressed in the Prologue to The Recruiting Officer. To maintain that Farquhar is merely trying to win over the ladies does no justice to his integrity as a playwright and cannot explain the sympathetic attitude toward women
pervading all of his plays. A more equitable judgment would be that Farquhar did indeed want the approbation of the ladies, and to this end deliberately employs a style designed to appeal to them; at the same time, the sympathy enveloping the feminine characters in Farquhar's plays is sincere and stems from an understanding attitude that one seeks in vain in the patronizing essays of Addison and Steele. This dual aspect of his treatment of women is nowhere better exhibited than in the Epilogue to The Twin Rivals in which Farquhar directly appeals to the women in the audience to endorse his play because he has vindicated their honor, which heretofore had been cast in doubt. Farquhar opens his Epilogue with a brief account of those aspects of his play that should insure its good reception, such as plot and characterization. Realizing, however, that a well constructed plot and excellent characterization will be powerless to save the play if the audience has decided to damn it, the author is prepared to bow to his fate when he is reminded of the power of the ladies to save a play:

To that he answer's in Submissive Strain,
He Pay'd all Homage to this Female Reign,
And therefore turn'd his Satyr, 'gainst the Men.
From your great Queen, this Soveraign right ye draw,
To keep the Wits, as She the World in awe;
To her bright Scepter, your bright Eyes they bow,
Such awful Splendour sits on every Brow,
All Scandal on the Sex were Treason now.
The Play can tell with what Poetick care,
He labour'd to redress the injur'd Fair,
And if you wont protect, the Men will Damn him there.
Then save the Muse, that flys to ye for Aid
Perhaps my poor Request, may some perswade,
Because it is the first I ever made.31

Thus, Farquhar appeals to the ladies not only because they
can help assure a successful play, but also because he
genuinely regards them as admirable members of society. It
is this latter conviction that permeates Farquhar's come-
dies, and even without such a manifesto as the Prologue to
The Recruiting Officer, the reader of Farquhar could not
long doubt the esteem and affection with which he holds
women.

The Beaux' Stratagem (1707), the last play Farquhar
wrote before his death, is preceded by a prologue of par-
ticular interest to the student of Farquhar. This is a
disquieting piece because in it Farquhar departs from his
basic critical tenet that the end of comedy is to instruct
mankind, and substitutes for this end a new one in which
comedy functions simply to delight. Such a radical shift in Farquhar's dramatic theory is significant and must be examined in the light of Farquhar's critical theory and his dramatic practice. To this end, one must first study the Prologue itself in order to see the context in which Farquhar develops this new idea.

As with many of his critical prologues, Farquhar does not immediately state his thesis, but instead, leads up to it by means of a comparison. The Prologue to The Beaux' Stratagem falls into two main sections. In the first twelve lines, Farquhar compares his own age, the age of Queen Anne, with the Restoration period. This section of the Prologue is further divided into two sub-sections; in the first, Farquhar describes the Restoration period, explaining why satire was then the proper function of the stage:

When Strife disturbs or Sloth Corrupts an Age,
Keen Satyr is the Business of the Stage.
When the Plain-Dealer writ, he lash'd those Crimes
Which then infested most - the Modish Times.32

During the Restoration, a corrupt age characterized by sloth and strife, the duty of the playwright, exemplified by Wycherley, was to attack the ills of society in hopes of reforming it. Now, however, in the reign of Queen Anne, England has entered a near Edenic era; faction and sloth
no longcr exist, the youth of the country are brought up to lead active lives, as opposed to the decadent existence of the preceding generation, and the nation is guided by a benevolent and just Queen whose exemplary conduct strengthens her precepts:

But now, when Faction sleeps and Sloth is fled,  
And all our Youth in Active Fields are bred;  
When thro' Great Britain's fair extensive Round,  
The Trumps of Fame the Notes of Union sound;  
When Anna's Scepter points the Laws their Course,  
And Her Example gives her Precepts Force:

In an age such as this, satire has no place: "There scarce is room for Satyr, all our Lays/ Must be, or Songs of Triumph, or of Praise." Laying aside the question of the justness of this attitude, Farquhar's exalted view of Britain in 1707 poses a problem for the dramatist who had maintained in A Discourse Upon Comedy that the true end of comedy was to improve man's manners and morals. If the populace (and it is they, after all, who comprise the audience) have reached a state of moral perfection, what is the function of the stage? Farquhar solves this problem in the second major division of the Prologue in which he points out that even in such a Utopia as that depicted in the preceding lines, all is not perfect, for there remains the omnipresent
fool, and it is this figure who will serve as Farquhar's target:

But as in Grounds best cultivated, Tares
And Poppies rise among the Golden Ears;
Our Products so, fit for the Field or School,
Must mix with Nature's Favourite Plant--A Fool:

Simpling our Author goes from Field to Field,
And culls such Fools, as may Diversion yield;
And, Thanks to Nature, there's no want of those,
For Rain, or Shine, the thriving Coxcomb grows.

Moreover, no one can object to such an object of ridicule, for, as Farquhar points out in the concluding line, "Fools are made for Jests to Men of Sense."

In this second section of his Prologue, Farquhar resolves the problem confronting the dramatist by replacing the old satiric objects, vice and corruption, with a new one, the fool. Yet this solution, however satisfactory for Farquhar, raises a more serious problem for the student of Farquhar in that Farquhar here renounces his earlier avowal that the aim of comedy is to instruct. Obviously, Farquhar's new view disregards this goal entirely since the ridicule aimed at the fools will be done not to make this type aware of his follies, but simply to evoke laughter
from the people of good sense in the audience who are already cognizant of the absurdity of the fool. The problem lies in the intent, not in the object of ridicule, for the fool is a recurring character type in all of Farquhar's plays, whether this figure be a fop, a country bumpkin aping the manners of gentlemen, a gauche lover, or a boorish country squire. Furthermore, in addition to these blatant examples of characters unamenable to right reason, there are also in Farquhar's plays characters who exhibit a lapse in good sense in their erroneous attitudes toward such things as marriage, women, and faithfulness in love. Farquhar's basic satiric goal in his earlier plays is pointed up by the fact that his fools and the characters who, although not fools in the strict sense of the term, have strayed from right reason, are brought to a realization of their follies and renounce them. In the case of the few characters whose aberrations from the norm are of a more serious nature (for example, Vizard in The Constant Couple and the Elder Wou'dbee in The Twin Rivals), poetic justice, and the satirist's ire, are vindicated by having these figures rejected by the society depicted in the play. This recognition and rectification of past follies on the part of his characters reveal Farquhar in his role of satirist, holding up to ridicule the follies and vices of men in order to reform his audience. The harmony that
prevails at the close of his plays is an affirmation of the proper relationship that can exist among men if they heed the lesson presented to them and abide by the rules of honor, good taste, and sense.

In the Prologue to *The Beaux' Stratagem*, Farquhar explicitly rejects this former goal, yet when one turns to *The Beaux' Stratagem*, one is immediately struck by the fact that the play itself differs little in kind from Farquhar's preceding works. More important, in this play Farquhar argues for the necessity for compatibility in marriage and for more reasonable divorce laws when such a relationship proves impossible. Both these subjects are important to Farquhar, and beneath the veneer of lighthearted comedy, are treated with the seriousness they deserve.

Taking these factors into consideration, how is one to reconcile Farquhar's statements in the Prologue with his actual practice in *The Beaux' Stratagem*? One hesitates to say that Farquhar was not serious in this Prologue; this position would be presumptuous and would fly in the face of the careful development of thought evinced in Farquhar's other prologues and epilogues. Nor can one read the Prologue as a piece of sustained irony, a literary device Farquhar does not use elsewhere in his works. Perhaps the problem cannot be resolved except to say that despite the new direction in comedy stated in the Prologue, the idea
of using the stage as a means of instructing was so deeply ingrained in Farquhar's artistry as to render impossible its removal from the fabric of his plays.
NOTES TO CHAPTER I

1. A Discourse Upon Comedy, Works, II, 326.


7. See, for example, Thomas Rymer's Tragedies of the Last Age, Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century, ed. J. E. Spingarn, 3 vols. (Bloomington, 1957), II, 183.


10. Krutch, Comedy and Conscience After the Restoration, pp. 73-77.


12. In his Discourse Farquhar defines dulce as the "Pleasantry of the Tale; or the Plot of the Play." Works, II, 338.


15. Ibid.


18Discourse, Works, II, 343.

19Discourse, Works, II, 341-42.

20Discourse, Works, II, 339.


22Discourse, Works, II, 343.

23Charles Stonehill, "Introduction," The Complete Works of George Farquhar, I, XIX.


25Works, II, 353.

26Ibid.

27Works, I, 163. All subsequent references to this Prologue will be taken from this edition.


29Works, II, 43. All references to the Prologue to The Recruiting Officer will be taken from this edition.

30Works, II, 328; 338.

31Works, I, 351.

32Works, II, 123. All subsequent references to this Prologue will be taken from this edition.

33In the Prologue to Susanna Centlivre's The Platonic Lady, Farquhar reiterates both the idea of having the fool as the butt of ridicule in plays, and the idea that good sense so prevails in England that one must search diligently to find this type: the playwright "Content with London Provender, he flyes,/ To make each Coxcomb he can find, a Prize;/ And after trudging long, perhaps he may/ Pick up a Set of Fools, to furnish out a Play." Works, II, 356.
CHAPTER II

LOVE AND A BOTTLE

Farquhar's first play, Love and a Bottle, was produced in December 1698 and published the same month.\(^1\) Love and a Bottle is especially pertinent to a study of Farquhar's works because it establishes the structural principles, the themes, and the major character types that appear in all of Farquhar's plays. An awareness of the basic similarity between this first endeavor and Farquhar's later plays is important in view of the fact that some critics consider Love and a Bottle the product of Farquhar's youthful fancy, and far removed from such later works as The Recruiting Officer and The Beaux' Stratagem.\(^2\) William Archer, for example, damns Love and a Bottle with the phrase that it is the "sin" of Farquhar's youth.\(^3\) It is certainly true that Farquhar's later plays evince a higher degree of artistry than Love and a Bottle in the handling of plot, character, and theme, but they represent an advance rather than a shift in Farquhar's dramatic development. Throughout his dramatic career, Farquhar worked within certain self-imposed limits; all of his plays represent variations and refinements on the material initially presented in Love and a
Bottle. In this early play one sees Farquhar's penchant for multiple plots that reinforce or help to develop one another. Moreover, these multiple plots also follow a standard pattern, consisting of two love plots, with the major love plot revolving around the protagonist, and the secondary love plot serving to reinforce, complicate, or develop the major plot. In addition to these two love plots, Farquhar's plays invariably contain a farce plot, which revolves around subsidiary characters and functions as a means of complicating the two love plots. Such a mixture of serious action and farce is, no doubt, the result of Farquhar's desire to appeal to the various types making up his audience. The use of complication and intrigue through such stage devices as disguise and mistaken identity are also important structural principles in Farquhar's plays and give rise to one of the most striking characteristics of his plots. In all of Farquhar's plays, the action builds rapidly from one complication to another with the climax occurring late in the fifth act, followed by a rapid denouement.

These basic structural principles of Farquhar's plots are attended by certain character types that are standard in Farquhar's works. Of prime importance is the hero, inevitably a good natured rake whose apparent cynicism hides a basically benevolent nature. In his delineation of
character, Farquhar relies heavily on the principle of contrast by which characters act as foils to one another. Helping to serve this function is the second important male figure found in Farquhar's plays. This character, usually the hero's friend, has a sober disposition, in marked contrast to the libertinism of the protagonist, and, more often than not, is committed to the goal of dissuading the hero from a life of dissipation. These two principal male characters are complimented by two female figures who are also foils to one another. Generally speaking, Farquhar treats all of his feminine characters sympathetically, but he tends to favor one especially, usually the love object of the hero, or the woman in love with the hero. This character is constant and virtuous and contrasts with the second major female figure who, although equally virtuous, is frequently a coquette and often complicates the action and the course of true love because of her erratic behavior. These pairs of lovers making up the two love plots of the plays are joined by a fifth character, usually a male, who is best described as a blocking figure. This character, whether dunce, fop, or, more seriously, villain, sets himself up against one or more of the main characters and in so doing, complicates the action. In addition to these five types of characters, Farquhar's plays also contain numerous minor figures consisting of a variety of standard types.
(the fop, the would-be wit, the country bumpkin, the London Cit, and bawdy servants) who serve as a means of developing the farce plot or of adding farcical incidents or complications to one or both of the love plots.

Just as one can discern certain structural principles and character-types as standard in Farquhar's plays, so can one also recognize various ideas that preoccupied the dramatist throughout his career. The themes of love and marriage and their concomitants, courtship and jealousy, and the theme of affectation, are regular thematic fare in Farquhar's comedies. These themes are, of course, equally prevalent in most of the comedies of the period, although Farquhar's romantic treatment of love and marriage is a departure from the treatment accorded these two states by his contemporaries. Appearing in the plays, however, are other ideas which mark the plays as Farquhar's own. The theme of man as erring but essentially good, the theme of the double standard (treated by Farquhar from the feminine viewpoint) and the theme of woman's innate virtue, are concepts underlying all of the other thematic motifs and serve to differentiate Farquhar's plays from the other comedies of the period.

These structural-principle, character-types, and thematic motifs typifying all of Farquhar's comedies are found in his first play, Love and a Bottle, and an awareness.
of this fact is important in recognizing the essential unity underlying Farquhar's dramatic works. This is not to say, however, that Love and a Bottle is important only as a means of tracing Farquhar's development as a dramatist, for the play has interest as a self-contained entity. In short, Love and a Bottle is a lively, well constructed play which upholds Farquhar's basic critical premise that the function of comedy is to delight in order to instruct.

The plot of Love and a Bottle revolves around the fortunes of two pairs of lovers, Roebuck and Leanche, and Lovewell and Lucinda, with Roebuck getting the majority of the action as the main character of the play. Roebuck, an impoverished Irish rake, has fled his homeland to avoid marrying the woman who has borne his child. In London, Roebuck meets his old friend Lovewell, who comes to his aid, hoping to lead Roebuck from his reckless pursuit of pleasure. As a means to this end, Lovewell intends to convince Roebuck that women are innately virtuous, and the woman who is to prove this theory is none other than Lucinda, the woman Lovewell hopes to marry. Actually, Lovewell's motives are not entirely altruistic because in addition to reclaiming Roebuck, the experiment is also intended as a means of determining Lucinda's inclinations toward Lovewell. In order to set the plan in motion, Lovewell has Roebuck assume the identity of Mockmode, a would-be
wit who also hopes to marry Lucinda. Roebuck, believing all women false and honor a mere synonym for reputation, agrees to court the young lady, convinced that he will prove his point and enjoy himself in the bargain. Before the plan can be put into effect, however, Roebuck's Irish mistress Trudge arrives in London, babe in arms, looking for her errant lover. Lovewell moves quickly, sends Roebuck to his own lodgings, and intercepts the weeping Trudge, only to be seen by Lucinda, who erroneously concludes that Lovewell has been playing a double game and that Trudge is Lovewell's mistress. Lovewell, unaware that he has been seen by Lucinda, sends Trudge to the house of Mrs. Bullfinch where the real Mockmode is lodging. Lovewell passes Trudge off as Lucinda in the hope that Mockmode will court her, thereby eliminating a rival and taking care of Roebuck's problem as well. More complications develop when Roebuck arrives at Lucinda's home, for there we meet Lovewell's sister Leanthe disguised as Lucinda's page. Leanthe loves Roebuck and has followed him to London in order to win him for herself. Naturally, in the guise of Lucinda's page, Leanthe does everything in her power to keep Roebuck from courting Lucinda. From this point, the action of the play revolves around the unfounded jealousy of Lovewell and Lucinda toward each other and the attempts of Lovewell and Leanthe to reclaim Roebuck from his dissipation and lead
him into matrimony. The climax of the play occurs in the last scene of Act V at the home of Lucinda where all of the characters converge as the result of a letter supposedly sent by Lucinda to Roebuck, but actually written by Leanthe (a fact of which the audience is at first unaware). This letter, which invites Roebuck to meet Lucinda in her garden, results in a bewildering series of complications and intrigue. The letter is intercepted by Lovewell who determines to impersonate his friend in order to reveal fully Lucinda's duplicity. Roebuck, however, also learns of the letter and its contents from the messenger, and he, too, makes haste to keep the appointment. To complicate the situation even further, Mockmode discovers the letter, dropped by Lovewell, and, disguising himself as Lovewell to whom he believes the letter is addressed, Mockmode also hurries off to meet Lucinda. At the end of the play, the marriage between Leanthe and Roebuck has taken place, and the nuptials of Lucinda and Lovewell is in the offing. Mockmode has learned the pitfalls of trying to be what he is not, and Trudge, although she does not get the man she sought, does get money enabling her to lead an honest life.

In addition to the Roebuck-Leanthe, Lovewell-Lucinda plots, there is a third plot which revolves around the people lodging in the house of Mrs. Bullfinch, where Lovewell sends Trudge. The two principal figures in the
boarding house plot are Mockmode and Lyrick, a would-be poet. This sub-plot functions in a number of ways. For one thing, it allows Farquhar to include farce scenes that would have been out of place in the two love plots. The three most striking examples of farce in the play are in the argument between Mockmode's dancing and fencing masters (II,ii); in the arrest by two bailiffs of a bookseller tricked by the insolvent Lyrick into impersonating him (III,ii); and in the nonsensical argument between Lyrick and Mockmode over Mockmode's proper title (III,ii). Yet, the boarding house plot does not function merely as a vehicle for the low comedy Farquhar considered essential if a play was to appeal to the galleries; the sub-plot also serves two purposes which make it an integral part of the play. Of primary importance is the fact that the sub-plot enables Farquhar to develop more fully the character of Mockmode who is Lovewell's rival for Lucinda, in which role Mockmode serves to complicate the Lovewell-Lucinda plot. In the scene involving Mockmode and his dancing and fencing masters (II,ii), Mockmode's affectation is strikingly depicted. He is a country squire trying desperately to ape what he mistakenly takes to be the manners of a man about town. Mockmode's boorishness, ineptitude, and vanity make him fair game for the gulling he receives at the end of the play when he is "married" to Trudge, disguised as Lucinda.
The character of Lyrick, the second important figure in the boarding house plot, is also made to serve the two love plots, for it is Lyrick who helps bring about the happy resolution of the Lovewell-Lucinda, Roebuck-Leanthe plots. Angered by the beating Mockmode administered to Lyrick when he addressed the would-be gentleman as "Squire" (III, ii), Lyrick seizes the first opportunity to avenge himself. Learning that Mockmode intends to impersonate Lovewell in order to marry Lucinda, Lyrick persuades Trudge to impersonate Lucinda, and Mrs. Bullfinch to play the parson in performing a mock marriage, thereby removing Mockmode as an obstacle in Lovewell's pursuit of Lucinda. In so completely gulling Mockmode, Lyrick also functions as a comic scourge. It is not enough that such a witling as Mockmode should lose Lucinda, who was, in fact, always beyond his reach. He must also be "hoisted by his own engine," so to speak, and publicly humiliated as an object lesson for those who might see themselves mirrored in such a character.

This brief sketch cannot do justice to the well integrated plot, but should serve at least as a starting point for discussing the play. *Love and a Bottle* opens on a rather somber note. Roebuck, newly arrived in London without a farthing to his name, is accosted by a crippled beggar. In the verbal exchange between the two, Farquhar touches, in general, upon the hardships of military life and the
miserliness of the clergy in ministering to the needs of the poor, and, specifically, upon the sorry state of the soldiers disbanded after the Peace of Ryswick on 20 September 1697. Such satiric objects are generally not Farquhar's forte, and in this instance the satire functions less as an indictment of society in the manner of Wycherley than as a means of establishing Roebuck's character as essentially generous and good and of absolving him from the onus attached to his desperate plan to turn thief. When Roebuck is solicited by the disbanded soldier, the following conversation occurs:

Roe. Begging from a generous Soul that has not to bestow, is more tormenting than Robbery to a Miser in his abundance. Prethee, friend, be thou charitable for once; I beg only . . . a little advice. I am as poor as thou art, and am designing to turn Soldier.

Crip. No, no, Sir . . . My rags are scarecrows sufficient to frighten any one from the Field; rather turn bird of prey at home.

Roe. Grammercy, old Devil . . . 'Tis a hard Case, that a Man must never expect to go nearer Heav'n than some steps of a Ladder. But 'tis
unavoidable; I have my wants to lead, and the 
Devil to drive; and if I can't meet my friend 
Lovewell, . . . Fortune thou has done thy worst; 
I proclaim open War against thee.

I'll stab thy next rich Darling that I see; 
And killing him, be thus reveng'd on thee
(I, i, 12).

Thus, Roebuck is initially presented as good and gen-
erous, so much so, in fact, that his inability to help is 
painful for him. Also, Roebuck's intention to steal in 
order to gain money is seen as the only course left open 
in a society which makes no provisions for the indigent 
young man of good family. The military is the only possible 
career for such a person, and when this fails, Farquhar 
implies, there is no recourse but to turn thief or beggar. 7

The emphasis placed on the efficacy of money in this open-
ing section is an oblique comment on the materialistic 
values of society and recurs both in this play and in Far-
quhar's other plays. Roebuck is outside of society because 
he lacks money, just as the beggar is, in a sense, a social 
outcast because he no longer has a means of livelihood. 
Shortly after his encounter with the beggar, however, Roe-
buck himself gives voice to a rather heartless materialism 
when, in reply to Lovewell's question concerning whether
concerning Roebuck, the central figure around whom the other characters revolve. Roebuck is a typical Farquhar hero, the rake with a heart of gold. It is the business of the play to transform Roebuck from a rake to a stable member of society, and Farquhar's device for imaging such stability is marriage. Farquhar prepares the reader for Roebuck's ultimate metamorphosis throughout the play, beginning with the opening scene of Roebuck's encounter with the crippled beggar. Later in Act I, Lovewell explicitly refers to the essential goodness of Roebuck, "I'm still a friend to thy Virtues, and esteem thy Follies as Foils only to set them off" (Act I,1,17) as does Leanthe in her remarks about Roebuck:

Wild as Winds, and unconfin'd as Air.--Yet
I may reclaim him. His follies are weakly founded, upon the Principles of Honour, where the very Foundation helps to undermine the Structure. How charming wou'd Vertue look in him, whose behaviour can add a Grace to the unseemliness of Vice. (III,1,39)

Roebuck himself reveals his better nature on occasion, and not always to his own advantage. One example of such revelation occurs in Roebuck's soliloquy preceding his attempted seduction of Lucinda: "This Lady is a reputed Vertue, of
Good Fortune and Quality; I am a Rakehelly Rascal not worth a Groat; and without any further Ceremony am going to Debauch her.—But hold.—She does not know that I'm this Rakehelly Rascal, and I know that she's a Woman, one of eighteen too; Beautiful, Witty.—O' my conscience upon second thoughts I am not so very Impudent neither" (III,1, 36-37). And in Act V Roe buck, still speaking of Lucinda, can say, "Her Superior Vertue awes me into coldness" (V,1,63), after which statement, Roe buck's changed attitude toward women seems quite natural. Indeed, Farquhar endeavors from the outset to establish the underlying goodness of Roe buck. For this reason it is surprising that Henry Ten Eyck Perry finds the character of Roe buck inconsistent, saying that he is a different person at the beginning and end of the play.\(^8\) Fundamentally, Roe buck is the same person; what has changed is his attitude toward women and marriage. The proper attitude toward women and marriage is of prime importance in Farquhar's plays, all of which present women as honorable and virtuous and marriage as a salutary state. As long as an individual maintains a libertine view, he remains outside of society. Farquhar's roguish heroes are depicted as aimless youth intent upon mere sensual pleasure. It is the business of Farquhar's plays to resolve the tension between the life of dissipation and the stable existence of marriage, and the
resolution is inevitably a commitment to matrimony. In Love and a Bottle, society, represented by Lovewell, Lucinda, and Leanthe, is founded upon the ideas of honor of woman's innate virtue, and of the efficacy of marriage in bringing about a mature attitude toward life. It is only when Roebuck accepts these ideas that he becomes a member of this society.

Roebuck's cynical attitude toward women, and Lovewell's desire to change this attitude, are the springboard for everything that follows in the play, and they connect the Roebuck-Leanthe and Lovewell-Lucinda plots. The first step in the interweaving of the two plots comes in Act I when Lucinda sees Lovewell with Trudge and concludes that they are lovers. Her subsequent spurning of Lovewell's advances causes him to suspect a rival, an attitude helped but little by the advice of Lovewell's servant, who insists that Lucinda's sudden change is simply her way of testing Lovewell's docility before marriage in order to cuckold him after marriage all the more easily. Such considerations determine Lovewell to test Lucinda's virtue, and this plan falls in quite well with his desire to redeem Roebuck; Roebuck will court Lucinda who will assuredly prove that women possess an innate principle of virtue. In addition to complicating the Lovewell-Lucinda plot, Roebuck's courting of Lucinda serves a number of other
purposes, both structural and thematic: it reunites him with Leantie; it is instrumental in bringing about Roebuck's changed attitude toward women; and it allows Farquhar to examine the idea of the double standard from the women's point of view. Farquhar's ability to empathize with women concerning this subject is remarkable in light of the fact that the idea of the double standard was firmly entrenched in the Restoration comedy of manners, and Farquhar seemingly accepts the same view; for example, his gentlemen are usually quite experienced in sexual matters while at the same time, the heroine must always remain chaste until marriage. The typical attitude is summed up in lines spoken by Roebuck: "Ay, the constant effects of debauching a woman are, that she infallibly loves the Man for doing the business, and he certainly hates her" (II,1,21). Lucinda, however, totally rejects the concept of the double standard. When she thinks Lovewell false, she renounces him completely: "he's a Villain, and of all Villains that I hate most, an hypocritical one. . . . Now methinks such a piece of Debauchery sits so Awkwardly on a person of his Character, that it adds an unseemliness to the natural vileness of the vice; and he that dares be a Hypocrite in Religion, will certainly be one in Love" (IV,1,50). Lucinda expects men to maintain the same high standard of conduct as women, certainly a novel idea in a
comedy written at the end of the seventeenth-century, and only two years before Congreve's *The Way of the World*. In Congreve's plays, as in the comedies of Etheredge, Wycherley, Van Brugh, and Cibber, the typical feminine attitude is a worldly, if sometimes weary, acceptance of the sexual vagaries of men. Such is the view of Leanthe, the virtuous woman aware of Roebuck's weakness in moral matters, but not allowing the fact to interfere with her love for him. Leanthe's broad minded attitude extends even to Roebuck's cast-off mistress and child, both of whom Leanthe befriended before leaving Ireland (I,1,16). In her attitude toward the double standard, Leanthe serves as a foil to Lucinda; indeed, throughout the play the two women are contrasted. Leanthe is an anomalous mixture of passivity (her gentleness and her willingness to accept Roebuck despite his past) and aggression (her disguising herself as a page and actively attempting to win Roebuck), while Lucinda is the high-spirited heroine so typical of the comedy of manners, with the important difference that she does not accept the double standard. Lucinda has a streak of the shrew in her makeup, as evidenced by her wit combats with Roebuck and her denunciation of the hapless Lovewell.

The use of contrast is also seen in the characters of Roebuck and Lovewell, but the device is here used with more complexity. Roebuck is the libertine who needs only
two things to achieve happiness, love and a bottle. Lovewell, on the other hand, openly seeks marriage and feels that any attempt to seduce a virtuous woman is dishonorable. So convinced is Lovewell that marriage is the desired end of courtship and that drinking and wenching are evils to be abhorred, that he feels it his duty to bring Roebuck to this way of thinking. Yet, Lovewell had at one time been just like Roebuck, as we learn from a conversation between the two men:

Lov. Mrs. Trudge! My old acquaintance!
Roeb. Ay, ay, the very same; Your old acquaintance; and for ought I know, you might have clabb'd about getting the Brats (I,i,18).

Lovewell represents at the beginning of the play the type of gentleman Roebuck will ultimately become, and, as Roebuck is to do, Lovewell has metamorphosed from rake to champion of women. Before the play ends, however, the roles played by Lovewell and Roebuck are reversed as a result of the jealousy motif which serves as the basis of the Lovewell-Lucinda plot. At the beginning of the play, Lovewell is convinced that there is an innate principle of virtue in women, a view arising primarily from his acquaintance with Lucinda, but as the Lovewell-Lucinda plot develops, and Lovewell begins to question Lucinda's
faithfulness, his exalted view of women undergoes a change. Lovewell's suspicions, initially aroused by Lucinda's treatment of him after his meeting with Trudge, are aggravated by the remarks of his servant and the knowledge that Mockmode is a rival for Lucinda's hand. Once unleashed, Lovewell's jealousy becomes obsessive and he begins to suspect Lucinda of catering to any man admitted to her drawing room. Since Lovewell had himself arranged for Roebuck to court Lucinda, he soon convinces himself that Roebuck and Lucinda are playing a double game. In IV,ii, Lovewell intercepts a letter written by Leanthe to Roebuck, but signed with Lucinda's name, arranging a rendezvous in Lucinda's garden. Previously, Lovewell has been fluctuating between jealousy and trust, but this letter puts an end to his wavering belief in Lucinda's faithfulness:

Oh Heavens! certainly it can't be! L,U,C,I,N,D,A; that spells Woman. 'Twas never written so plain before. Roebuck, thou'rt as true an Oracle, as she's a false one. Oh, thou damn'd Sybil! (IV,ii,57)

This attack on Lucinda in particular, and all women in general, reaches a climax in Act V when Lovewell thinks Lucinda has married Roebuck. Lovewell's immediate reaction to fight for the lady is quickly followed by a condemnation of her:
Lov. No, I've thought better; my Reason clears: She is not worth my Sword; a Bully only shou'd draw in her defence, for she's false, a Prostitute. (V,iii,69)

Roebuck's reply recalls the Lovewell of the early scenes of the play:

Roeb. A Prostitute! By Heaven thou ly'st. (Draws.)--Thou hast blasph'm'd. Her Vertue answers the uncorrupted state of Woman; so much above Immodesty, that it mocks Temptation. She has convinc'd me of the bright Honour of her Sex, and I stand Champion now for the fair Female Cause. (V,iii,70)

All's well that ends well, however, and when Leanthe discovers herself to be Roebuck's bride, and Lucinda and Lovewell are reunited, Lovewell reaffirms his former faith in womankind, seconded now by the reformed Roebuck.

The jealousy motif in Love and a Bottle, although important structurally, does not constitute a serious examination of this human foible. Granted that the two victims of jealousy, Lovewell and Lucinda, make numerous errors in judgment because of their folly, there is nonetheless no doubt in the reader's mind that all will be happily
resolved. Lovewell's jealousy never reaches the extremes of Wycherley's Pinchwife, for example, nor does Lucinda's elicit the anguish experienced by Etheridge's Loveit. Because of this, the message of the Lovewell-Lucinda plot articulated by Lovewell has a hollow ring: "jealousie in Love, like the Devil in Religion, is still raising doubts which without a firm Faith in what we adore, will certainly damn us" (IV,ii,56). Lovewell's and Lucinda's suspicions of each other are totally unfounded and Farquhar makes this quite clear to the reader. Moreover, because Leanthe manipulates much of the action in her role of Lucinda's page, the reader is always aware that everything will turn out right in the end.

The third plot of Love and a Bottle, that revolving around Mockmode, complicates the action of the two major plots and enables Farquhar to satirize affectation. Farquhar's treatment of the fop is interesting, especially when one compares it with the treatment given the same subject in comedies of manners in the Restoration. In the Restoration comedy of manners, the fop is always set off by a character whose polished manner, wit, and attention to clothing represent the epitome of good taste which the fop somehow never achieves. To realize the strength of this tradition, one need glance at only a few of the comedies of the period: Etheridge's The Man of Mode, with Dorimant
as foil to Sir Foppling Flutter; Wycherley's *The Country Wife*, and *The Plain Dealer*, with Harcourt opposed to Sparkish in the former play, and Freeman opposed to Novell in the latter; Congreve's *Love for Love*, with Valentine as foil to Tattle; and the same author's *The Way of the World*, with Mirabell opposed to two fops, Witwoud and Petulant. In *Love and a Bottle*, however, there is no "fine gentleman" of this type with whom one can compare Mockmode. Mockmode's search for gentility is depicted as futile from the beginning because it is based on externals alone. Farquhar seems to question the validity of the concept of the gentleman-wit in that such a character is notably lacking in his plays. There is simply little emphasis in Farquhar's plays on such things as clothing, wit, and manners; one looks in vain for characters such as Dorimant and Mirabell. Farquhar's plays abound in rakes (most of whom are reformed by the final curtain), but they are characterized by gaiety and good humor, not by polished sophistication. With the character of Mockmode, Farquhar calls into question an integral facet of the society depicted so glowingly by his predecessors. An inordinate interest in manners and dress, exhibited in *Love and a Bottle* only by Mockmode and the sycophants who surround him, is depicted as fruitless and ridiculous.

Insofar as the Lovewell-Lucinda plot is concerned, Mockmode functions as a blocking character as Lovewell's
selfstyled rival for Lucinda. Yet Farquhar does not treat Mockmode merely as a complicating element in the love plot; Mockmode is also the main figure in the third plot of the play, the boarding house plot, which has as its theme, affectation. Mockmode is first brought to the reader's attention in I, i: when Lucinda relates a dream she has had of her future beau:

Luc. I had the oddest Dream last night of my Courtier that is to be, Squire Mockmode. He appear'd crowded about with a Dancing-Master, Pushing-Master, Musick-Master, and all the throng of Beau-makers; and methought he mimick'd Foppery so awkwardly, that his imita-
tion was down-right burlesquing it. (I, i, l2)

Lucinda's dream is strangely prophetic, for when Mockmode is actually introduced in II, ii, he is in the company of Rigadoon, a dancing master, and Nimblewrist, a fencing in-
structor. The ensuing farce incident in the fight between Rigadoon and Nimblewrist concerning whose instruction is more necessary for a gentleman is, no doubt, one reason for Farquhar's inclusion of this entire scene. More important, however, is the revelation of Mockmode as a fop and the introduction of the theme of affectation. Mockmode's ambition is to be a great beau, and he eagerly grasps at
any suggestion which seems to further this aim. Mockmode is willing to deny his heritage as a country squire since, as Rigadoon tells him, "Squire and Fool are the same thing" in London (II, i, 25). He accepts unquestioningly Rigadoon's dictates concerning the language of the beau monde, for example, to call all women, "from a Countess to a Kitchen-Wench," Madam, to pronounce "Zoons" as "Zauns," the Beaux pronunciation, and to substitute "dem me" for "bless me" (II, i, 25-26). And Mockmode eagerly follows Rigadoon's instructions concerning the proper deportment in society: "You must take Snush, Grin, and make . . . a humble Cringe" (II, i, 26). From the outset, Mockmode is stamped indelibly as a fool, and this initial impression is strengthened by his subsequent actions. Upon hearing that his rival Lovewell has brought an acquaintance to Bullfinch's boarding house, Mockmode immediately concludes that the woman must be Lucinda, thereby precipitating his courtship of Trudge. Mockmode, a victim of vanity, sets himself up against the true gentleman Lovewell, and as must be the case, is defeated by his own inept machinations. At the end of the play, Mockmode pays for his vanity in both a literal and a figurative sense. Having paid Lyrick to marry him to the woman he thought was Lucinda, Mockmode is ultimately forced to pay even more money to be "unmarried," i.e., to learn that the marriage was a sham. Humiliated, Mockmode is at
last reduced to accepting the title Squire, and by none other than Lyrick, the person who has exposed him (V,iii,72).

With Love and a Bottle, Farquhar sets the course which he is to follow throughout his dramatic career, for this play establishes the structural principles (closely connected multiple plots, extended complication followed by a rapid denouement, contrast), the themes (love and marriage, jealousy, affectation), and the major character types (the good-hearted rake, the sober gentleman, the fool, the "emancipated" woman, the virtuous, stable woman) that reoccur in all of Farquhar's comedies. In some cases, such as his penchant for the device of disguise and mistaken identity, his use of contrasting characters, and his inclusion of the themes of jealousy and affectation, Farquhar is reworking standard fare of English comedy and might well be merely utilizing tested methods of complicating the plot and setting off his characters as strikingly as possible. In other instances, Farquhar's originality manifests itself. Certainly, the good but erring hero who is reformed in the end is a departure from standard theatrical fare of the period 1660 to 1700. Also new is Farquhar's sympathetic treatment of woman, as seen in his handling of the double standard and, to some extent, in his depiction of the plight of Trudge, Roebuck's cast off mistress. Still another innovation is Farquhar's romantic treatment of marriage
whereby the essential ingredient is love, and monetary considerations are ignored completely. Thus, in *Love and a Bottle*, Leanthe marries the penniless Roebuck with no thought of such a practical matter as a marriage settlement. Underlying all of these new elements is Farquhar's view of Man as essentially good natured and in *Love and a Bottle*, which contains no bad hearted characters, we have Farquhar's early treatment of this idea. In the later plays, Farquhar's spectrum of humanity broadens to include both good and evil, but in this first play nothing detracts from the optimistic idea that humanity is basically good.
NOTES

1 Stonehill, I, 5.


3 George Farquhar, p. 17.

4 All references to Love and a Bottle are to The Complete Works of George Farquhar, ed. Charles Stonehill, 2 vols. (London, 1930), I.

5 I disagree with Eugene Nelson James who maintains that the boarding house plot is not well integrated with the two love plots. "The Burlesque of Restoration Comedy in Love and a Bottle," SEL, V (1965), 485.

6 Stonehill, I, 381.

7 Farquhar's placing the blame on society for Roebuck's plight at the beginning of the play is pointed out by Eric Rothstein, George Farquhar (New York, 1967), pp. 30-31.


CHAPTER III

THE CONSTANT COUPLE

Although *Love and a Bottle* was reasonably successful, it was only with his second play, *The Constant Couple* (1699), that Farquhar's reputation as a dramatist was firmly established in London. It is easy to understand the popularity of *The Constant Couple*, containing as it does well integrated and lively action, memorable characters, and a treatment of love, marriage, and human nature in keeping with the changing taste of London at the turn of the century. Yet there is little in *The Constant Couple* that is a radical departure from the tendencies manifested in *Love and a Bottle*, as a recapitulation of the plot makes clear. What is new, however, is Farquhar's increased mastery over his materials.

*The Constant Couple* revolves around two love plots, the Sir Harry Wildair-Angelica plot, and the Standard-Lurewell plot. The action begins with Wildair's arrival in London where he meets Vizard, a hypocrite, Vizard's uncle, Smuggler, a sanctimonious roue, and Standard, a blunt but honest gentleman. In the ensuing conversation, Wildair reveals that he has come to London to visit Lurewell, also sought after by Vizard, Standard, and Smuggler, although
these men have kept their love secret. Vizard immediately plots to eliminate Sir Harry by diverting his attention to other game. Having been spurned by Angelica, a virtuous young woman who recognizes Vizard's true nature despite his pious exterior, Vizard represents Angelica to Wildair as a prostitute, and her mother as a bawd, while representing Wildair to them as a bona fide suitor.

Standard, meanwhile, goes to Lurewell's lodgings. Lurewell, seduced and abandoned when a young girl, has become a self-styled scourge of men, whom she entices only to gull. Her list of victims is long, and includes Vizard, Wildair, Standard, Smuggler, and a would-be gentleman, Clincher, Sr. Encouraged by Lurewell's protestations of love, Standard laughingly discloses Wildair's description of his relationship with her, a revelation which Lurewell immediately turns to her advantage. She gives Standard the letters Wildair wrote to her, ostensibly to prove her disinterest, but actually to inform Wildair of her whereabouts in hopes of re-establishing the relationship.

Wildair, the object of Standard's misplaced scorn, has been availing himself of the opportunity to enjoy the charms of Angelica. The scene between the two is a veritable comedy of errors, with Wildair delicately propositioning Angelica, while the bewildered young lady is at a loss to understand this strange method of courtship. Angelica finally
concludes that Wildair is a madman; Wildair, on his part, believes Angelica to be holding off for a higher fee, and he leaves to get more money. Before Wildair can return to this amorous adventure, he meets Standard, who performs Lurewell's commission and openly ridicules Wildair's pretensions to the lady. Having discovered Lurewell's explanatory note among the letters, Wildair cannot resist imparting Standard's gullibility to Vizard, who is now confronted by two rivals instead of one. Again, Vizard is equal to the situation. He determines to set Wildair and Standard against one another in a duel: "him and the Knight will I set a tilting, where one cuts t'others Throat, and the Survivor's hang'd: So there will be two Rivals pretty decently dispos'd of" (II,iii,11).2

While Vizard is plotting to rid himself of his rivals, the object of this three-fold affection is herself manipulating events to her own vindictive ends. Lurewell is entertaining Smuggler, who has control of her money and uses this fact to further his lecherous designs. Interrupted in their tete a tete by the appearance of Wildair, Lurewell sends Smuggler to the next room and promptly ferments strife between the two men by informing Wildair that Smuggler has accused him of dishonesty. Wildair, anxious to acquit himself of this slander, promptly administers a sound beating to the old hypocrite. In the course of
the beating, Smuggler drops his pocketbook, which Lurewell picks up and keeps, an act instrumental in the downfall of Smuggler at the end of the play. Fresh from this one-sided encounter, Wildair finds himself confronted by Standard, determined to fight Wildair in a duel after learning of his fool's errand from Vizard. Too prudent to fight a soldier ("Now you're a Soldier, Colonel, and Fighting's your Trade; And I think it downright Madness to contend with any Man in his Profession"), and unwilling under any circumstances to fight for a woman ("Nay, if your Honour be concern'd with a Woman, get it out of her Hands as soon as you can"), Wildair offers instead to prove Lurewell's duplicity. Standard, insisting on "ocular proof," gives Wildair a ring; if Lurewell accepts the ring, Standard will believe Wildair's accusation that "she imposes on us all" (IV, i, 131). Wildair goes to Lurewell's home and presents her with the ring, but before he can proceed in his lovemaking, Lurewell informs him that she has two lovers in the house and cannot stay to entertain him. The two lovers are Smuggler and Vizard, whom Lurewell plans to gull once and for all, and in such a manner that her revenge against them will be complete. To this end she had Smuggler disguise himself as a woman ("to secure both our Honours, you must be disguis'd, Mr. Alderman"). After Lurewell's maid unobtrusively hides on his person some
spoons, Smuggler awaits Lurewell in a closet. He is joined shortly by Vizard who, thinking his companion is Lurewell, completely reveals his true nature, including his loathing for his uncle. Seeing a light, and fearing discovery, Vizard leaves ("Pardon me, dear Madam, I wou'd not be seen for the World. I wou'd sooner forfeit my Life, nay my Pleasure, than my Reputation"). The light heralds the arrival of Lurewell's butler in search of the missing spoons, which are found in Smuggler's pockets. Amid voluble protestations of innocence, Smuggler is unceremoniously carted off to jail. Having disposed of Vizard and Smuggler, Lurewell needs only trick Standard and Wildair to complete her revenge on mankind. Wildair, however, is out of Lurewell's reach. Having once more propositioned Angelica, this time in such a way that even Lady Darling cannot miss his true meaning, Wildair is given Vizard's letter of introduction, and the situation is made clear. Faced with the alternative of fighting a duel with Vizard, or of marrying Angelica, Wildair determines to marry (to his credit, he had already been unaccountably attracted by Angelica's beauty and manner). No sooner are the nuptians completed than Lurewell arrives like an avenging fury. The ring Wildair had given her as a means of furnishing Standard "ocular proof" is the same ring she had given to the man who had seduced and abandoned her in her youth. Wildair
is her former lover and has proved man's falsehood by this latest villainy: "Grant me some wild Expressions, Heav'ns, or I shall Burst - Woman's Weakness, Man's Falsehood, my own Shame, and Love's Disdain, at once swell up my brest" (V,iii,149). But the ring is Standard's; thus, Standard is Lurewell's long lost lover, separated from her originally only through a series of misfortunes beyond his control, and when he was able to return, Lurewell had left her home and changed her name. The two lovers reunited, all that remains to complete the general felicity is the repossession of Lurewell's writings from Smuggler. This is accomplished through blackmail, justified in this case by Smuggler's own dishonesty. The purse Smuggler dropped when Wildair beat him contains proof of his smuggling activities. Smuggler must either relinquish Lurewell's writings or go to jail again, this time to remain there. The play ends with a chastened Smuggler accepting the following moral lesson from Angelica: "Come, Mr. Alderman, for once let a Woman advise; Wou'd you be thought an Honest Man, banish Covetousness . . . Wou'd you be thought a Reformer of the Times, be less severe in your Censures, less rigid in your Precepts, and more strict in your Example" (V,iii,151).

As in Love and a Bottle, The Constant Couple also contains a sub-plot, here concerned with the fortunes of
Clincher Sr., "a pert London Prentice turn'd Beau, and affecting Travel." The Clincher plot functions primarily as a vehicle for the theme of affectation. Clincher Sr., like Mockmode, is a would-be gentleman whose newly acquired inheritance has given him the means of acquiring the outward display of gentility and whose sole aim is to acquire his notion of savoir faire by going to the Jubilee in Rome:

Vizard. Why he's in mourning for his Father, the kind old man in Hertfordshire 'tother day broke his neck a Fox-hunting; the Son upon the news has broke his Indentures, whip'd from behind the Counter into the side Box, forswears Merchandise, . . . and usurps Gentility, where he may die by Raking. He keeps his Coach, and Liveries, brace of Geldings, Leash of Mistresses, talks of nothing but Wines, Intreagues, Plays, Fashions, and going to the Jubilee. (I,i,100)

Clincher is a walking vanity and presumes to court Lurewell, a risky business for anyone, but especially for a fool. The high point in the Clincher plot comes in III, iv, when Clincher exchanges clothes with Wildair's servant Tom in order to deceive Standard, who has witnessed a courting scene between Lurewell and Clincher. Clincher's
reaction to Lurewell's statement that her "husband" is coming, depicts him as a coward as well as a fool: "Your husband! Oh, I shall be murder'd: What shall I do? Where shall I run? I'll creep into an Oven; I'll climb up the Chimney; I'll fly; I'll swim; - I wish to the Lord I were at the Jubilee now" (III,iv,122). Flying and swimming are unnecessary, however, since Tom arrives at this crucial moment and the two exchange clothing. Unfortunately, this rescue proves Clincher's undoing. Unable to find Tom, who has no intention of giving up his newly acquired wardrobe, Clincher is seen by Tom's wife. She assumes Clincher has murdered her husband and sets up a hue and cry, the result being that Clincher is taken to Newgate. By the time Clincher is released, his brother has usurped his estate, having seen Tom in Clincher's clothing and concluded that Clincher is dead. The last glimpse of Clincher is of his defending his corporeality to his brother, who has taken on Clincher's foolishness as well as his money: "In short, Sir, were you Ghost, or Brother, or Devil, I will go to the Jubilee, by Jupiter Ammon" (V,iii,148).

In many ways The Constant Couple is similar to Love and a Bottle. Both plays revolve around two love plots with two pairs of contrasting lovers, both plays have a sub-plot dealing with affectation, both plays have numerous farce scenes, and both plays deal with the themes of
marriage, the double standard, libertinism, and woman's innate virtue. Yet, The Constant Couple represents an advance over Love and a Bottle in structure, in characterization, and in the development of theme; Farquhar is mining the same field, but he is going deeper. As Eric Rothstein so aptly states, The Constant Couple "marks Farquhar's dramatic coming-of-age."

The increased sophistication of Farquhar's dramaturgy is immediately apparent when one considers the first two scenes of Act I which are handled with an economy lacking in Love and a Bottle. In these two scenes Farquhar introduces, either directly or by report, all the major characters of the play, he establishes the basic plot situations from which the subsequent action springs, and he sets forth the predominant themes of the play. When the play opens, Vizard is talking to his servant, who is relaying a message from Angelica: "She said, Sir, that imagining your Morals sincere, she gave you access to her Conversation; but that your late Behaviour in her Company has convinc'd her, that your Love and Religion are both Hypocrisy, and she believes your Letter like your self, fair on the outside, foul within; so sent it back unopen'd" (I,i,93). These brief lines do two things: they establish Angelica as a woman of virtue and good sense (she can, after all, recognize Vizard's true nature), and they immediately characterize Vizard as a
evince a shift in attitude toward old age from the attitude of his predecessors and contemporaries. In the earlier English comedy there is a dichotomy between age and youth, with age depicted as ridiculous or as an object of scorn merely because of its condition. Such is not the case in Farquhar's plays. To be sure, Farquhar does have old characters who are satirized (Smuggler, for example), but they are objects of satire not because of their age but, instead, because of some character flaw such as lechery or miserliness. Indeed, Farquhar's plays contain many amiable old people, of which Lady Darling is an example. Thus, Wizard's cynical attitude toward old age is simply another way in which Farquhar reveals Wizard's reprehensible nature. The only other character in the play who holds this view of age is Clincher Sr., and again, the attitude serves to throw an uncomplimentary light on the person harboring such sentiments.

Wizard's final remark to his servant, "Run to the Lady Lurewell's, and know of her Maid whether her Ladyship will be at home this Evening, her Beauty is sufficient Cure for Angelica's Scorn" (I,1,93), introduces Lurewell, the main female figure in the play. Eric Rothstein's comment that this statement sets up the contrast between Angelica and Lurewell is not completely satisfactory. The two women do represent two contrasting types. Angelica is a young
girl of sixteen, totally virtuous, while Lurewell is older and well versed in the ways of the world; but Lurewell is also virtuous, despite the fact that she had been seduced as a young girl. Farquhar goes to great lengths to make this point, and in doing so he seems to question the typical view that, once fallen, a woman could make no pretense to virtue. Moreover, Farquhar does not develop Lurewell and Angelica as foils to one another, as he does with Lucinda and Leanthe in Love and a Bottle. Lurewell and Angelica are not brought together until the final scene of the play, and even then there is no interaction between them. Vizard's statement does not, then, juxtapose the two women, but it does serve to introduce Lurewell into the action in which she will later figure so prominently.

Following this encounter between Vizard and his servant, Vizard is joined by the other principal male characters, Smuggler, Standard, Wildair, and Clincher Sr. Smuggler, the first to arrive, interrupts Vizard's perusal of a book. Significantly, the book is one of Hobbes', still another damning bit of evidence against Vizard, for Hobbes, with his view of human nature as essentially depraved and as motivated by self-interest, would have been anathema to Farquhar's more humane view, exemplified by the heroes of all his plays, that mankind is basically good and generous. Hobbes' cynicism is, however, manifested by Vizard, who is
presented as a living example of Hobbesian tenets. Smuggler's character is presented by indirection in this opening scene; there is, for example, no clear indication of his lechery, although his referential name does suggest his dishonest trading practices. There is a hint that Smuggler is not as he seems on the surface in the vehemence with which he attacks what he considers the rampant iniquity of the age. Smuggler, however, is not so depraved as Vizard, and has the curious ability (in view of his own nature) to appreciate, indeed, desire, goodness in others, especially Vizard, whom he takes to be the model of rectitude. Coming upon Vizard as he reads the aforementioned book, Smuggler concludes that his nephew is pouring over a book of "pious Ejaculations," and commends Vizard for his presumed devotions: "I have seen a Miracle this Morning. . . . A Man at his Devotion so near the Court--I'm very glad Boy, that you keep your Sanctity untainted in this infectious place; the very Air of this Park is heathenish, and every Man's Breath I meet scents of Atheism" (I,i,94). Smuggler's appearance in this polluted part of town is, as he explains, the result of a lawsuit. He has been accused of smuggling French wines in Spanish Casks, a matter that is no sooner mentioned than it is dropped, only to be re-introduced at the conclusion of the play when Smuggler's illegal activities are revealed as the means of
his final undoing. With the appearance of Standard, Farquhar discloses still another facet of Smuggler's character. His gleeful reaction to the news that the soldiers have been disbanded, and consequently will no longer have to be supported (I,i,94), reveals Smuggler's miserliness and one result of this vice, his unpatriotic attitude toward king and country, two traits which further present Smuggler in an unsympathetic light. Miserliness is a universal butt of ridicule or scorn in comedy, but a lack of patriotism as an index of the individual's spiritual bankruptcy is peculiar to Farquhar. Whatever their faults, Farquhar's heroes always exhibit a love of country beyond any selfish concern, and the fact that Smuggler cannot transcend self-interest even in this regard brands him as reprehensible before his true nature is revealed.

Having established the unsavory natures of Vizard and Smuggler, Farquhar introduces the two heroes of the play, Standard and Wildair. Farquhar sketches Standard's character with a few bold strokes; he is a newly disbanded soldier, gruff and honest, patriotic and proud (he precludes any offer of money: "I don't come to borrow money of you.") and in love with a woman whose presence in London is the sole reason he remains in England. Before Standard can disclose the name of the woman, however, the stage is enlivened by the appearance of Wildair. The most important
aspect of Wildair's introduction at this point is that his revelation that Lurewell is his mistress is the catalyst for the first complications of the two love plots, i.e., the fact that all three men are rivals for the same woman, and Vizard's plan to have Wildair proposition Angelica. Yet, Wildair's appearance here does more than initiate the plot complications; it also allows the playwright to delineate his character in a manner that predisposes the reader to sympathize with him. Through his conversation and his actions in this opening scene, Wildair brands himself as a complete libertine. He has just arrived in London from his amorous peregrinations on the continent, a progress he describes in detail, and far from being sated with lovemaking, he accepts with alacrity Vizard's offer of a girl of sixteen, Angelica. There is, however, another side to Wildair, brought out in a conversation between Standard and Vizard. Wildair had previously been an officer and had acquitted himself well on the battlefield, a fact which becomes important later in assessing Wildair's character, in view of his adamant refusal to engage in a duel regardless of the circumstances. Vizard's final remarks establish Wildair as a typical Farquhar hero, a man whose rakish exterior hides sterling qualities: "Do'st think Bravery and Gaiety are inconsistent? He's a Gentleman of most happy Circumstances. . . . His florid Constitution
presents Lurewell (previously introduced only by report) and establishes the motivation of her subsequent actions; it reveals more fully the characters of the male figures through Lurewell's comments about them; and it sets in motion the plot revolving around Lurewell and her numerous suitors. This scene can be divided into two parts; the first part presents Lurewell's character and motivation, while the second initiates the action of the Lurewell plot with the entrance of Standard. As the scene opens, Lurewell, speaking to her maid, reveals her attitude toward men:

I hate all that don't love me, and slight all that do: would his whole deluding Sex admir'd me thus wou'd I slight them all; my Virgin and unwary Innocence was wrong'd by faithless Man, but now glance Eyes, plot Brain, dissemble Face, lye Tongue, and be a second Eve to tempt, seduce, and damn the treacherous kind--Let me survey my Captives--The Colonel leads the Van, next Mr. Vizard, he courts me out of the Practice of Piety, therefore is a Hypocrite: Then Clincher, he adores me with Orangery, and is consequently a Fool; then my old Merchant, Alderman Smuggler, he's a Compound of both. . . . (I,ii,100)
In addition to revealing Lurewell's attitude toward men and the motivation behind this attitude, the speech also serves other functions. It characterizes further the males previously introduced in I,i. Thus, Vizard's hypocrisy is re-established, as is Clincher's foppishness, and the reader learns that the married Smuggler also is a would-be lover, thereby making his earlier protestations unquestionably sham. Moreover, the speech also brings out the theme of revenge, the motivating force behind the Lurewell plot as well as the Wildair-Angelica plot, although in Lurewell's case the revenge is somewhat justified, for in a society that holds to the double standard, the "fallen" woman is an outcast, a fact of which Lurewell herself is aware.

Following Lurewell's outpourings to her maid, there is a brief exchange between the two women concerning Wildair. Here again the comments reinforce the characterization in the preceding scene. In this case, the reader learns that Lurewell had left Wildair in Paris involved in a duel on her account, a piece of information that reaffirms Wildair's bravery and precludes cowardice as the reason for his refusal to fight Standard or Vizard later in the play. In treating the matter of Wildair's bravery in this way, Farquhar avoids the inclusion of an actual duel, which would have darkened both Wildair's character and the tone of the comedy.13
The second section of I,ii, is taken up with the meeting between Lurewell and Standard. Standard announces Wildair's residence in London, and this sets in motion the love plot revolving around Lurewell, Standard, and Wildair. Thus, in the two scenes making up Act I, Farquhar establishes his characters, introduces his themes, initiates the action of the two love plots, and prepares for the sub-plot revolving around Clincher Sr. In the remaining four acts, Farquhar weaves these various strands into the unified and harmonious vision with which the play ends.

Of the two love plots, the more important is that revolving around Lurewell, including as it does, three of the major characters in the play (Lurewell, Standard, and Wildair) and most of the subsidiary characters (Vizard, Smuggler, and Clincher Sr.). Moreover, the Lurewell plot also gives rise to the Wildair-Angelica plot since it is partly to rid himself of a rival for Lurewell that Vizard instigates his plot concerning Wildair and Angelica. The Lurewell plot proceeds from the tension of three opposing forces: revenge (Lurewell's); libertinism (Wildair's); and true love (Standard's). Only after Lurewell's revenge and Wildair's libertinism have been subsumed by the force of true love (Standard's and Angelica's), can the play achieve a harmonious resolution. Yet, if true love is ultimately seen as the force that reconciles all, it is a different
kind of love that makes the plot itself move forward, in this case, Lurewell's unrequited love, Vizard's jealous love, and Wildair's libertine love.

The Lurewell plot revolves around two sets of interacting characters: Lurewell-Wildair-Standard, and Lurewell-Vizard-Smuggler-Clincher Sr. Revenge is the motivating force behind Lurewell's dealings with both groups, but to contrary ends: with Wildair and Standard, Lurewell's machinations fail, while with Vizard, Smuggler, and Clincher Sr., her intriguing is highly successful, resulting in the downfall of all three men. These different results of Lurewell's scheming can be explained by the nature of the two groups. Wildair and Standard are both good natured men and both deal with Lurewell openly and honestly. Standard, the more admirable of the two, offers her sincere love, and Wildair, too great a rake in the early part of the play to offer any woman sincere love, does at least make his position clear from the outset, thereby placing the burden of choice squarely with Lurewell. As a consequence of the abiding good nature of the two heroes, Lurewell's machinations serve only to bring about (momentarily, at least) her own undoing, in keeping with Farquhar's moral view that the good will ultimately emerge, not only unscathed, but triumphant. Such is not the fate of Vizard, Smuggler, and Clincher Sr., who run the gamut of affectation
from senseless vanity to villainous hypocrisy. Clincher's foppishness, Smuggler's lechery and miserliness, and Vizard's hypocrisy, make the fate of each a just tribute to the humane and well ordered view of society that lies behind Farquhar's view of life. This view precludes the manipulation of others for one's own ends, a concept which gives rise to a second motif the two actions involving Lurewell share, the motif of the guller-gulled. Lurewell's plan to gull Wildair and Standard results in her own gulling when Wildair and Standard unmask her, while Vizard, Smuggler, and Clincher Sr., all of whom attempt to use people for their own selfish purposes, unwittingly bring about their own downfalls.

The action of the Lurewell-Wildair-Standard plot is initiated in I,ii, when Lurewell begins to work her revenge by employing the unwitting Standard as liaison in furthering her designs on Wildair in order to include him in the vortex of her revenge. This intrigue is accomplished in II,iii, with the added complication of Vizard's discovery that Standard is also his rival, and Vizard's subsequent plot to set Wildair and Standard against one another in a duel. The action moves in a steady progress from Lurewell's plan to gull Wildair and Standard by playing each man off against the other, to the scene in V,iii, when she is confronted by a reformed (and married) Wildair and an altered Standard,
now cognizant of her dissembling. Farquhar carefully de-
velops this turn in fortune as a logical consequence of
Lurewell's own dissimulation. First, Lurewell's use of
Standard as go-between with Wildair results in Vizard's
plot to ferment trouble between Wildair and Standard. This
plot, in turn, makes Standard question the sincerity of
Lurewell's love (III,1), a doubt that is reinforced when
Standard sees Lurewell coquetting with Clincher Sr. on her
balcony: "I've heard her Falshood with such pressing Proofs,
that I no longer should distrust it. Yet still My Love
would baffle Demonstration, and make Impossibilities seem
probable. [Looks up:] Ha! that Fool too! what! stoop so
low as that Animal.--'Tis true, Women, once fall'n, like
Cowards in despair, will stick at nothing, there's no Medium
in their Actions. They must be bright as Angels, or black
as Fiends" (III,iii,122). The next step in the unmasking
of Lurewell occurs in IV,1, during the meeting between
Wildair and Standard where Wildair undertakes to prove that
Lurewell "imposes on us all." At this point, Wildair and
Standard, so recently at odds over Lurewell, join forces,
and the eventual discovery of her duplicity becomes inevi-
table. The means by which this is accomplished is the ring
Lurewell accepts from Wildair, indubitable proof that Wild-
air's assessment of her is correct. That Lurewell takes
up the bait at the moment she is gulling both Vizard and
Smuggler puts a double edge on the motif of the guller-gulled. Lurewell overreaches herself at this point. Her desire for revenge has mastered her completely, causing her to become, momentarily, less a character than a force, blind to the intriguing of others and, consequently, susceptible to exposure. The climax occurs in V,iii, when Lurewell arrives at Angelica's house. Lurewell is here unmasked; even Standard turns against her in public condemnation. Yet the dramatist has still another, subtle twist to the motif of unmasking, for although Lurewell's duplicity is exposed, the revelation of her true nature has still to be accomplished. She is indeed an intriguer, bent upon ruining men, but beneath this callous exterior is a woman suffering a very real wrong. Thus, far from being shamed by her exposure, Lurewell revels in the ability to proclaim publicly the perfidy of men by revealing her own mistreatment by that sex. Only then is Lurewell's "unmasking" complete, and since she is not, in fact, vicious, the total revelation of her character serves the felicitous end of reuniting her with her long lost lover, Standard.

If Lurewell fails as a self styled scourge of men in the action involving Wildair and Standard, she is nonetheless eminently successful in the action involving Vizard, Smuggler, and Clincher Sr. In fact, one might say that
she functions in this action as the playwright's scourge of vice and vanity. All three men are masquerading as something they are not, all attempt to manipulate people for their own ends, and all bring about their own downfalls. With the exception of Clincher Sr., whose character and fate are treated fully enough to constitute a sub-plot (which I will discuss later in this paper), Farquhar develops their characters within the framework of the main love plot, in which they function as subordinate figures. Of the two, Vizard is the more important since he initiates the Wildair-Angelica plot and acts as an agent of intrigue in the Lurewell-Wildair-Standard plot, while Smuggler serves only to swell the number of Lurewell's victims and to depict the wages of a foolish hypocrisy. The action revolving around Vizard and Smuggler closely parallels in two respects the action of the main love plot. Both actions involve the unmasking of characters who have disguised their true natures and motives, and both turn on the motif of the guller-gulled. In presenting the unmasking of Vizard and Smuggler, Farquhar has the action proceed in clear-cut stages. Each man prepares for his own undoing through an initial act (or acts, in the case of Vizard) of wickedness; each undergoes a partial downfall resulting from Lurewell's desire to avenge herself on men; and finally, each precipitates his own complete downfall.
through an act of overreaching.

Within this general pattern, Farquhar allows for diversity. Vizard's unmasking, for example, is treated with more complexity than that of Smuggler since Vizard figures in both love plots. In the time sequence of the play, Vizard's dual exposure occurs simultaneously and results from his attempts to manipulate others. Vizard's underhanded tactics establish him early in the play as an apt Machiavel who successfully manipulates people to his own ends by assuming different masks (hence, his name). He is an exemplar of piety to his uncle, a pander to the libertine Wildair, an ingenuous friend to Standard and Lady Darling, and a suitor to Lurewell. Such an intricate web of intrigue, founded as it is on deception, must disintegrate, as in fact it does when the various people Vizard has gulled come together. Vizard's downfall is accomplished in IV,ii, and V,i. First, Vizard is gulled by Lurewell, whose revenge on mankind includes exposing Vizard's true nature to Smuggler. Lurewell's trick of closeting Smuggler and Vizard together is intended to expose only Vizard's hypocritical stance toward women, a vice he shares with Smuggler. Lurewell successfully gulls Vizard, but his gulling is not yet complete for his true nature has still to be revealed in its entirety. Vizard's deeper villainy is revealed, ironically enough, by himself when he brings
about his total downfall by glorying in his villainy, including his utter loathing of the uncle he had so completely fooled. With this act, Vizard destroys the fruits of his villainy; not only have his machinations proved fruitless as far as his designs on Lurewell are concerned, but his plans to inherit his uncle's wealth have also turned to ashes, as Smuggler's words make clear: "Well! thou art the most accomplish'd Hyppocrite that ever made a grave plodding Face over a Dish of Coffee, and a Pipe of Tobacco; he owes me for seven Years maintenance, and shall pay me by seven Years Imprisonment; and when I die, I'll leave him the Fee-Simple of a Rope and a Shilling" (V,111,137).

Although Vizard's exposure is complete as far as Smuggler is concerned, in terms of the play, Vizard's exposure is incomplete, for Wildair and Angelica have yet to discover his plot concerning them. This is accomplished in the immediately following scene (V,1) with Lady Darling's disclosure of Vizard's letter of introduction for Wildair. As in his manipulation of Smuggler, Vizard's intriguing is successful only so long as the objects of his plotting do not come together. In the case of Wildair and Angelica, although the two are physically together they act on the basis of two different assumptions: Wildair believes Angelica is a whore, while Angelica accepts him as an honorable suitor. When Lady Darling produces the letter and the
truth is finally revealed, Vizard's exposure is complete. With such a villain as Vizard, however, exposure alone is insufficient; he must also be expelled from the society in which he figures as such an agent of discord. Thus, with this final revelation of his character, Vizard ceases to figure in the play, the only fate fitting for him, as Wildair's remark at the end of the play makes clear: "he dares not show his Face among such Honourable Company . . . (V,iii,151).

Smuggler's unmasking, like Vizard's, proceeds in stages and is precipitated and ultimately culminated by his attempt to manipulate others. The first stage in Smuggler's downfall occurs in II,iv, when Smuggler tries to extort passion from Lurewell by threatening to withhold her money, which he controls. His only satisfaction, however, is the beating he receives from Wildair. The second stage occurs in IV,ii, when Smuggler is taken to jail after being discovered in Lurewell's closet with the missing spoons. The third and final stage in Smuggler's downfall occurs in V,iii. Previously, Smuggler has been gulled by Lurewell in her role of scourge of men; in this final scene, Smuggler gulls himself. Coming upon the newly married Angelica and Wildair, and the reunited Lurewell and Standard, Smuggler vows to get revenge for the "wrongs" Lurewell has done him: "O, Madam, I shall be even with you before I
part with your Writings and Money, that I have in my Hands" (V,iii,151). Smuggler overreaches himself here, for this final attempt to manipulate others undoes him. As a result of this last trick, Smuggler's illegal trading activities are exposed and he is threatened with jail unless he reforms. In the successive stages leading to his unmasking, and in the fact that his own culpability results in his final exposure, Smuggler's fate is analagous to Vizard's, with the important difference that Smuggler is not expelled from the harmonious society that triumphs at the end of the play. That Smuggler is allowed to remain in this society can be explained by the respective natures of the two men. Both are villains, but Smuggler's villainy is more circumscribed and stems from his miserliness and lechery, two vices that Farquhar believes can be reformed, as Angelica's final remarks to Smuggler indicate: "Come, Mr. Alderman, for once let a Woman advise; Wou'd you be thought an Honest Man, banish Covetousness, that worst Gout of Age; Avarice is a poor pilfering quality of the Soul, and will as certainly Cheat, as a Thief wou'd Steal--Wou'd you be thought a Reformer of the Times, be less severe in your Censures, less rigid in your Precepts, and more strict in your Example" (V,iii,151). Vizard, on the other hand, manifests a depravity so ingrained as to be ineradicable. Thus, Smuggler is exhorted to reform, while Vizard is expelled as
being unamenable to any moral lesson.

Within the general design of unmasking, one can discern another pattern. Each successive step leading to the final exposure of Vizard and Smuggler encompasses an increasingly large number of people enlightened as to the true natures of these two characters. Vizard's villainy is first revealed to Smuggler alone, then to Angelica, Wildair, and Lady Darling, and finally, to everyone in the play. Smuggler's character revelation occurs first with Wildair, then with Lurewell's servants, the Constable, and Clincher Sr. (whom Smuggler meets in jail), and at last with all of the assembled characters, who together witness Smuggler's final unmasking. By including this subsidiary pattern, Farquhar develops the unmasking of Smuggler and Vizard in an orderly progression; their exposures proceed from their immediate circles to the entire society of the play, which can then comment upon and learn from the lesson derived from such a spectacle.

In marked contrast to the Lurewell plot is the second love plot revolving around Wildair and Angelica. Where the Lurewell plot deals with revenge and intrigue, and includes characters of varying degrees of wickedness, the Wildair-Angelica plot is from first to last light-hearted in tone, and deals only with characters who are wholly good, or, in the case of Wildair, at least basically good. Vizard,
the agent of intrigue in this plot, never participates
directly in the action, but remains, instead, behind the
scenes. With considerable dramatic economy, Farquhar
deals with the Wildair-Angelica plot in only four scenes,
including the final scene of the play in which he resolves
the various actions. The Wildair-Angelica plot is prepared
for in I,1, by Vizard's plan to eliminate Wildair as a
rival for Lurewell, with the subsequent action turning on
Wildair's mistaken notion concerning Angelica's character.
Because the interaction of Wildair and Angelica stems en-
tirely from this error, the action tends to be repetitious,
with Wildair's advances and Angelica's repulses increasing
in intensity until the climax is reached with the disclosure
of Vizard's letter. Thus, the action moves from ignorance
to knowledge, but the knowledge Wildair achieves is not
confined merely to Angelica's true character; it also includes
a new and correct view of women and of the proper relation-
ship between men and women, with marriage seen as the ideal
culmination of such a relationship.

On the most obvious level, the tension in the Wildair-
Angelica plot arises from Wildair's mistaken notion of
Angelica's character, and it is from this tension that the
plot derives much of its comic effect. Beneath this, how-
ever, is the more serious tension arising from two conflict-
ing views of love: Angelica's view of love as an honorable
emotion which leads to marriage, and Wildair's libertine view of love as a game that pits men and women against one another as adversaries. Complicating the conflict of these opposing views is the society's artificial code of courtship, in which even honorable love becomes a game played according to certain rules, the most important of which is that the woman must maintain a disinterested composure regardless of her true feelings. It is against such an unnatural code that Angelica speaks in her soliloquy at the beginning of III,ii:

Unhappy State of Woman! whose chief Virtue is but Ceremony, and our much boasted Modesty but a slavish Restraint. The strict confinement on our Words makes our Thoughts ramble more; and what preserves our outward Fame, destroys our inward Quiet. —'Tis hard that Love shou'd be deny'd the privilege of Hatred; that Scandal and Detraction shou'd be so much indulg'd, yet sacred Love and Truth debarr'd our Conversation (p. 119).

Later, in the same scene, Angelica breaks the cardinal rule of the game by asking Wildair pointblank, in the midst of his "wooing," whether or not he loves her. Wildair's reply, "Love You! Does Fire ascend? Do Hypocrites Dissemble?
Usurers love Gold, or Great Men Flattery?" (III,ii,120), indicates his proficiency in the rhetoric of courtship, but not his sincerity, as Angelica tells him herself: "This shows your Gallantry, Sir, but not your Love" (III, ii,120). Although Wildair's treatment of Angelica and his inability to recognize her sincerity stems from his erroneous assumption that she is a whore, his persistence, in the face of her pointed remarks concerning her honor, her modesty, and her feelings toward him, stems from his cynical view of women. His attitude is established in I,i, in the catalogue of his victories on the field of love, and is further revealed in later scenes in his more general remarks concerning women's honor: "Generality of Women! . . . They're all alike, Sir: I never heard of any one that was particular, but one . . . Penelope, I think she's call'd; and that's a Poetical Story too. When will you find a Poet in . . r Age make a Woman so chaste?" (IV,i,131). Wildair's cynicism reaches a climax in his final drunken assault on Angelica (IV,i) when their conflicting attitudes clash head-on. Wildair has bribed Angelica's servants to leave him alone with her, and Angelica uses her innocence and defenselessness, and his own sense of honor, as weapons against his assault:

What Madness, Sir Harry, what wild Dream of loose Desire could prompt you to attempt this Baseness?
View me well.--The Brightness of my Mind, methinks, should lighten outwards, and let you see your Mistake in my Behaviour. I think it shines with so much Innocence in my Face, that it shou'd dazzle all your vicious Thoughts: Think not I am defenceless 'cause alone. Your very self is Guard against your self: I'm sure there's something generous in your Soul; My Words shall search it out, and Eyes shall fire it for my own Defence." (pp. 140-41)

Although serving to check Wildair's intention to take Angelica by force, this speech fails to elicit any positive goodness in Wildair, who merely changes his tactics and attempts to seduce Angelica through an argument based on the premise that virtue is a commodity to be sold to the highest bidder:

look ye Madam, as to that slender particular of your Virtue, we shan't quarrel about it, you may be as vertuous as any Woman in England if you please; you may say your Prayers all the time--but pray, Madam, be pleas'd to consider what is this same Vertue that you make such a mighty Noise about--Can your Vertue bespeak you a Front Row in the Boxes? No: for the Players can't live
upon Vertue. Can your Vertue keep you a
Coatch and Six? no, no: your Vertuous Women
walk a foot--Can your Vertue hire you a pue in
a Church? Why the very Sexton will tell you,
no. Can your Vertue stake for you at Picquet?
no. Then what business has a Woman with Ver-
tue?--Come, come, Madam, I offer'd you fifty
Guinea's--there's a hundred--the Devil! Ver-
tuous still! Why 'tis a hundred five score,
a hundred Guinea's. (IV,1,141)

By equating virtue with outward show, Wildair here sub-
scribes to the same philosophy held by Vizard and Smuggler,
a philosophy that is incompatible with the ideal society
underlying the play. In this ideal society, virtue is real,
not feigned, and springs from an innate quality that is
proof against the most sophisticated arguments. Before
Wildair can be reclaimed and made a part of this society,
he must abandon his hedonism and cynicism and accept the
ideas of woman as virtuous, of love as honorable, and of
marriage as the ideal culmination of the male-female rela-
tionship. The first step in his metamorphosis from a rake
to a man of honor comes with his knowledge of Angelica's
true nature, that is, as a woman of virtue. Yet, Wildair's
capitulation to matrimony as a lesser evil than a duel is
hardly an indication of any significant change of attitude on his part. This is accomplished in the final scene of the play when Wildair becomes the staunch advocate of woman's innate virtue and of marriage as an ideal state. In answer to the question of the source of his happiness, Wildair rhapsodizes: "whence flows all Earthly Joy? What is the Life of Man, and Soul of Pleasure?--Woman--What fires the Heart with Transport and the Soul with Rapture? Lovely Woman--What is the Master stroak and Smile of the Creation, but Charming Vertuous Woman?--When Nature in the general Composition first brought Woman forth, like a flush'd Poet, ravish'd with his Fancy, with Extasie: The blest, the fair Production . . ." (V,iii,146). The analogy in this speech between nature and the poet recalls Wildair's earlier cynical reference to Penelope, and serves to heighten his changed attitude. Thus, the Wildair-Angelica plot ends with the rejection of libertinism and with the triumph of honorable love and marriage. By rejecting his former libertinism, Wildair becomes not only a member of Farquhar's ideal society, but also its spokesman, as his lines concluding the play make clear:

In vain are musty Morals taught in Schools,
By rigid Teachers, and as rigid Rules;
Where Virtue with a frowning Aspect stands,
And frights the Pupil from its rough Commands.
But Woman--
Charming Woman can true Converts make,
We love the Precepts for the Teachers sake.
Virtue in them appears so bright, so gay,
We hear with Transport, and with Pride obey.

Where the two love plots parallel one another in their
treatment of the themes of love and marriage, and woman's
innate virtue, the sub-plot revolving around Clincher Sr.
parallels the Smuggler-Vizard action in its treatment of
the theme of affectation. Farquhar devotes considerable
space to the Clincher sub-plot, which takes up, wholly or
in part, ten scenes. One possible explanation for Far-
quhar's emphasis on the Clincher action over the Smuggler-
Vizard action is that Clincher's character flaw, vanity,
is more in keeping with the essentially light-hearted tone
of the play. The relative innocuousness of Clincher's
failing does not, however, absolve him from poetic justice;
like his more reprehensible counterparts, Smuggler and
Vizard, Clincher must suffer a reversal of fortune and he
must, moreover, bring about his own downfall. The sub-plot
contains only two characters of significance, Clincher Sr.
and his brother, Clincher Jr., who serves a number of pur-
poses. Initially presented as a foil to his brother's un-
naturalness, Clincher Jr. later becomes a mirror image,
exhibiting the same artificiality and foolishness so assiduously cultivated by Clincher Sr. In this latter role, Clincher Jr. functions as the playwright's agent of poetic justice, for he has been schooled in foppishness by Clincher Sr., whom he ultimately displaces. In so doing, Clincher Jr. may also represent the ubiquity of such vain fools as Clincher Sr., who seem to rise, Phoenix-like, from their own ashes.

Farquhar's treatment of the theme of vanity in this sub-plot, although giving rise to broad comic effects, is nonetheless serious, for Farquhar considers vanity, like hypocrisy, a threat to a natural and sincere relationship among people. Such is the prevailing idea of II, i, which depicts the reunion of the two brothers. The scene opens with Clincher Jr. reading an ironically prophetic letter from his brother, who will soon regret Clincher Jr.'s initiation into his kind of fashionable life: "I Will see you presently, I have sent this Lad to wait on you, he can instruct you in the Fashions of the Town" (II,i,104). When Clincher Sr. arrives, his artificiality is set off by the naturalness of his brother, who rebukes him for not wearing mourning for their father, only to be rebuked in turn by Clincher Sr., who accuses him of jealousy and not true grief. His lack of filial devotion manifested, Clincher Sr. also denigrates fraternal affection by renouncing the
very title of brother: "Brother! Prithee, Robin, don't call me Brother; Sir will do every jot as well . . . People will imagine that you have a spight at me" (II,1,105). Farquhar's depiction of Clincher Sr.'s vanity continues in succeeding scenes, most notably in III,1, where Clincher Sr.'s pretensions to being an accomplished rake prepare for his wooing of Lurewell, the act which begins his downfall. In depicting Clincher Sr.'s reversal, Farquhar departs from the pattern used with Smuggler and Vizard, whose reversals were intentionally precipitated by Lurewell. This is not the case with Clincher Sr. His wooing of Lurewell does initiate his downfall, but Lurewell has only an indirect hand in what happens to him. In suggesting that Clincher Sr. and Tom exchange clothes, Lurewell is attempting to avert Standard's suspicions from herself, although one might say that in suggesting the exchange, Lurewell functions as the playwright's agent of justice, since this act does, in fact, result in Clincher Sr.'s downfall. Ultimately, however, Clincher Sr. must be seen as the agent of his own doom. The immediate results of his presumptuous courting of Lurewell are a beating, administered by Standard who mistakes him for Tom, and a brief jail sentence, neither of which cause more than discomfort and embarrassment. The final result, Clincher Jr.'s usurpation of his inheritance, has more far-reaching
consequences. By denying his true identity, by rejecting the role of brother and by instructing Clincher Jr. in the ways of fashionable life, Clincher Sr. seals his own fate, which is to have no identity at all.

In addition to treating the theme of affectation, the sub-plot also functions as a means of including farcical incidents in the play, although in The Constant Couple, Farquhar by no means confines himself to the sub-plot for farce scenes. Clincher Sr.'s foppishness is depicted in such an exaggerated manner that his every appearance represents farce to some extent, but more specific low comedy scenes involving Clincher Sr. are his being beaten by Standard (III,iv), his being taken to jail surrounded by a howling mob (IV,i), his meeting with Smuggler in Newgate, which results in an exchange of insults and finally blows (V,ii), and his argument with his brother concerning his very existence (V,iii). Still a third use Farquhar makes of the sub-plot is to complicate the action of the two love plots. The Clinchers are Angelica's cousins who, as such, have free access to the Darling home. The appearance of at least one of the two brothers, frequently accompanied by male friends, occurs each time Wildair is there, and of course reinforces his idea that the house is a brothel. The sub-plot complicates the Lurewell plot in the scene where Standard sees Clincher Sr. courting Lurewell, but
since Standard's awareness of Lurewell's double-dealing is transitory (she convinces him that Clincher is Tom), the scene serves primarily to reveal Clincher as a fool and to prepare for his downfall.

In many ways, The Constant Couple can be seen as the progeny of Love and a Bottle. Both plays deal with similar themes (love and marriage, woman's innate virtue, libertinism, the double standard, and affectation), both contain similar characters (the sober gentleman, the good-hearted rake, the virtuous, amiable woman, the sophisticated female, and the fop), and both include numerous farce scenes along with the serious love action. Yet, despite these obvious similarities, The Constant Couple represents an advance over Love and a Bottle. For one thing, Farquhar's thematic development is much more complex in the later play, a change especially apparent in his treatment of the double-standard. In Love and a Bottle, Farquhar presents this theme implicitly in the figure of Trudge, and explicitly through Lucinda's denunciation of the code, but he does not deal with it in as sustained a manner as he does in The Constant Couple. In this play, Farquhar depicts one of his heroines, Lurewell, as the victim of the code, and through her speeches and actions, he can examine, and ultimately reject, the validity of a code which equates honor with virginity alone. Such is the spirit of Lurewell's ironic advice to her maid
Parly: "tho' a Woman swear, forswear, lie, dissemble, back-bite, be proud, vain, malitious, anything, if she secures the main Chance, she's still virtuous, That's a Maxim" (I,ii,101). Farquhar's increased sophistication is also apparent in the development of the theme of affectation. In Love and a Bottle, affectation is confined to Mockmode's vanity, while in The Constant Couple it is more inclusive, embracing humanity's vices (hypocrisy, lechery, miserliness) as well as its foibles.

Another manifestation of Farquhar's greater artistry is in the characters peopling his play. Not only does The Constant Couple present a broader spectrum of humanity than Love and a Bottle, including as it does villains, as well as good people and fools, but more important, the characters are more skillfully drawn. Wildair, for example, is an improvement over Roebuck, who lacks the urbanity to make him an accomplished rake. Moreover, Roebuck is not delineated with the same care as Wildair, who is a more fully developed and hence a more realistic figure. Farquhar's masterpiece of characterization in The Constant Couple, however, is Lurewell, the most complex figure in the play. In his psychological probing of Lurewell's mind, her justified scorn of men and her despair over the knowledge that she herself can only be an object of scorn in the eyes of society, Farquhar encroaches upon the
material of tragedy and produces a figure unique in his plays. The only other Farquhar character who approximates Lurewell's complexity is Mrs. Sullen in The Beaux' Strategem, and here, too, Farquhar portrays the intricate workings of the feminine mind.

From the standpoint of structure, as well as thematic development and characterization, The Constant Couple represents an advance over Love and a Bottle. In addition to the two love plots and sub-plot found in Love and a Bottle, The Constant Couple includes the action revolving around Smuggler and Vizard. Furthermore, the integration of the various actions is more skillful. The Mockmode sub-plot coheres only with the Lucinda-Lovewell plot; in The Constant Couple, the sub-plot functions as a complicating factor in both love plots, and is further related to the Lurewell plot by paralleling the subsidiary action involving Smuggler and Vizard that depicts the theme of affectation. Finally, Farquhar evinces a more masterful dramaturgy in the economy with which he presents his materials. Everything pertinent to the play is set forth in the first two scenes, with the subsequent action a logical development of themes, characters, and motives established at the beginning.

Philosophically, The Constant Couple is of a piece with Love and a Bottle; both plays are pervaded by the conviction
that humanity is basically good, and both are based on the premise that an ideal, harmonious society can be achieved if man will but heed his inner promptings toward honorable actions. Artistically, however, *The Constant Couple* looks forward, not backward. In structure, in characterization, and in thematic development, *The Constant Couple* points toward Farquhar's greatest achievements, *The Recruiting Officer* and *The Beaux' Stratagem*. 
NOTES


2 All references to The Constant Couple are to The Complete Works of George Farquhar, ed. Charles Stonehill.

3 IV, i, 129.
4 IV, i, 129.
5 II, iv, 112.
6 IV, ii, 137.
7 George Farquhar (New York, 1967), p. 49.
8 Elizabeth Mignon, Crabbed Age and Youth: The Old Men and Women in the Restoration Comedy of Manners (Durham, North Carolina, 1947), pp. 3-7.
9 For a discussion of this aspect of Farquhar's plays, see Mignon's Crabbed Age and Youth, pp. 160-174.
10 George Farquhar, 40, 42.

11 Such is the underlying spirit of Lurewell's statement to her maid: "observe this, that tho' a Woman swear, forswear, lie, dissemble, backbite, be proud, vain, malitious, any thing, if she secure the main Chance, she's still virtuous, That's a Maxim" (I,ii,101), and of the later, detailed history of her past in Act III, iv, 126-27.

12 I, i, 99.

13 I am indebted here to Eric Rothstein's discussion of Farquhar's omission of a duel in The Constant Couple. George Farquhar, p. 44.

14 "If your Words be real, 'tis in your Power to raise an equal Flame in me" (III,ii,120).
CHAPTER IV

SIR HARRY WILDAIR

In an attempt to capitalize on the immense popularity of The Constant Couple, Farquhar wrote a sequel, Sir Harry Wildair (1701). Like most sequels, Sir Harry Wildair suffers by comparison with its predecessor. Amidst the conflicting critical views of Farquhar's dramatic works, Sir Harry Wildair represents a rallying point; all the critics agree that this is a bad play, mere literary hackwork designed to make money for its author by presenting popular characters "to a public presumably slavering for a new sight of their favorites."¹ Chief among the complaints leveled at the play are its thinness of plot and its poor characterization, charges that are unfortunately justified when one examines the play. Sir Harry Wildair concerns the now married Lurewell and Standard, and Wildair and Angelica. Standard remains essentially the same character he was in the earlier play, sensible and honest, and as such, a perfect foil for Wildair who, notwithstanding his marital status, has reverted to his former libertine way of life. Wildair's female counterpart is Lurewell, who has metamorphosed into a stereotyped fine lady caught up in London society and engaged in various amours. Completing
which turns solely on Standard's and Angelica's successful endeavors to regain their spouses.

Farquhar's resurrection of popular characters from *The Constant Couple* and his manipulation of these characters to serve his ends further weakens the play. The Lurewell of *The Constant Couple* had depth of character, revealed through Farquhar's subtle probing of her psychological motivation. In *Sir Harry Wildair* she is simply a shrew, and a singularly unsympathetic one at that. The extent to which Farquhar downgrades her character is nowhere better illustrated than in his use of Lurewell as the butt of the major farce scene in the play where, in a frenzy of jealousy, she shouts Angelica's supposed sexual transgressions to Wildair who, with his usual insouciance, claps his hands over his ears and refuses to listen.² Equally unsatisfactory is the character of Wildair, who reverts to his former libertine existence. Now, however, Wildair's commitment to the code lacks plausibility, particularly in light of his conversion in *The Constant Couple*. This treatment of Wildair tends to undermine the import of the previous play which obtrudes, willingly or not, into the reader's mind.³ Still a third character who does not make a satisfactory transition from the early play is Clincher Sr. In *The Constant Couple*, Clincher is a fully developed character who complicates the two love plots and
constitutes the major figure of the sub-plot dealing with the theme of affectation. In *Sir Harry Wildair*, however, Clincher is a mere appendage, one of Lurewell's suitors whose new foible is an inordinate interest in politics, a frailty that gives rise to a few comic scenes but does not cohere with the overall thematic motif of the play, which is marriage.

Of the five major characters Farquhar uses from *The Constant Couple*, only two are presented as logical outgrowths of their former selves. Both Angelica and Standard remain essentially as they were presented in *The Constant Couple*, or at least in a way that does not contradict their previous natures. Of the two, Standard fares better for he is an active participator in the action, to which he brings a degree of dignity singularly lacking in any of the other male figures. As the husband struggling to preserve his own honor and that of his wife, despite the dictates of fashionable society, Standard's sympathetic characterization manifests Farquhar's departure from previous drama which depicted the cuckold, whether real or imagined, as a comic butt. Unlike Standard, Angelica is but a shadow of her former self. In *The Constant Couple* Angelica represents the virtuous young woman, reasonably lively (given her contracted role in the play), and able to comprehend wickedness and deal with it accordingly. In *Sir Harry*
Although the characters of Fireball and the Marquis are admirably sketched, neither functions as a self-contained entity but is instead subordinated almost wholly to the development of plot and theme. That Farquhar was satisfied with at least one of his new creations is apparent when he incorporates the Marquis, rechristened Count Bellair, into his masterpiece The Beaux' Stratagem.

Two original characters, however well drawn, do not make a good play, and consequently Sir Harry Wildair must be awarded the dubious distinction of being the worst play Farquhar wrote. This fact being accepted, the play is nevertheless worthy of study by students of Farquhar. For one thing, the play reveals Farquhar's increasing mastery of structural principles; the plot might be thin, but it is well developed nonetheless. Following the pattern of The Constant Couple, Farquhar again establishes his characters and prepares for the subsequent action in the first two scenes of the play. The first scene imparts information that lies outside the action of the play but that is important to an understanding of what will occur. Thus, the reader is informed of Standard's marriage to Lurewell, of Angelica's death, and of Wildair's return to London to re-establish his relationship with Lurewell. In addition to revealing the status quo ante, this first scene also introduces Standard and Fireball and communicates the current
status of the Standard-Lurewell menage. As Standard learns from his friend, rumor has it that "your Wife's the greatest Coquet about the Court, and your Worship the greatest Cuckold about the City" (I,1,166). Standard's reaction to the news presents him in a sympathetic light and establishes his moral code as opposite that of fashionable London society in which honor is synonymous with reputation alone: "if they touch my Wife's Reputation with nothing but their Teeth, her Honour will be safe enough" (I,1,167). Still, although Standard is unwilling to sacrifice his loyalty and trust on the altar of scandal, he is shrewd enough to take precautions by enlisting the aid of Lurewell's maid, Parley, who is to keep Standard informed of Lurewell's conduct. As he tells Parley, "serve your Lady faithfully, but tell all to me. By which means she will be kept Chaste; you will grow Rich, and I shall preserve my Honour" (I,1,170). Having brought out these two initial complicating factors (Wildair's arrival and Standard's vigilance), the first act ends, consisting only of this one rather extensive scene. The second scene of the play introduces the object of these intrigues, Lurewell, and does so in such a way that the audience is immediately disaffected with her. Lurewell's rude and heartless behaviour to servants, merchants, and husband results from her commitment to the fashionable, i.e., artificial mores of
society, whose values are both presented and found lacking through Lurewell's antics. The juxtaposition in scenes one and two of two such divergent attitudes toward life (Standard's rational and humane view and Lurewell's affected and hedonistic view) establishes the dialectic of the play whose business will be to demolish one view and vindicate the other through the progress of the major characters.

From this point until the final resolution, Farquhar develops a series of complications with masterful complexity. There are two actions occurring in the play, one involving Lurewell, Wildair, the Marquis, and at the end, Angelica, and the other involving Lurewell, Standard, and Clincher. The first two scenes initiate the Lurewell-Standard action, and the third scene, the Lurewell-Wildair-Marquis action, which is set in motion as the result of the monetary loss suffered by Lurewell and the Marquis to Wildair in a game of cards. First, Wildair intends to buy Lurewell's favors by repaying her the lost money, an endeavor that serves to link the two love plots by setting Wildair up as one of the obstacles Standard must overcome before he can regain Lurewell's affection. The second result of the gambling scene, the Marquis' plan to recover his money, advances the Wildair-Angelica plot. The Marquis has a picture of Angelica, a copy of one executed in France, bought in order to lend credence to the Marquis' reputation
as a lover: "I was acquaint wid de Paintre dat draw your Lady's Picture, an' I give him ten Pistole for de Copy. --And so me have de Picture of all de Beauty in London; and by dis Politique me have de Reputation to be wid dem all" (V,vi,209). The Marquis tells Lurewell of his plan, later successfully carried out (IV,ii), which is to tell Wildair that the picture was given by the dying Angelica as surety for money lent her by the Marquis. Not content with this bit of intrigue, the Marquis includes a gratuitous lie to the effect that he had been Angelica's lover, news that delights Lurewell who hates "to have any Woman more Vertuous than my self" (III,i,184). While these intrigues are progressing (II,ii-III,ii), Standard initiates a plan to resolve his marital difficulties. Aided and encouraged by the loyal Fireball, Standard determines to bring Lurewell to a realization of her folly. To this end he decides to get one of her suitors (Clincher) drunk, have him brought to Lurewell's apartment, and then confront her with this proof of her duplicity, hoping thereby to shame her into honorable conduct.

The Lurewell-Wildair-Marquis intrigue and the Standard-Lurewell-Clincher intrigue converge in IV,ii, in which all of the characters come together. In this scene, Lurewell learns from the Marquis of his successful gulling of Wildair. When the latter arrives, Lurewell hides the Marquis
in a closet so as to inform Wildair in private of Angelica's perfidy. The ensuing farce scene in which Lurewell screams her accusations to Wildair, who refuses to listen, is climaxed by Lurewell's shrieking exit when Wildair tricks her into believing a mouse has run under her petticoat. The function of this scene, aside from its obvious low comedy potential, is to inform Wildair of the Marquis' plot, for Wildair, although ostensibly deaf to Lurewell's shouts, does in fact hear all and vows to avenge himself on the Marquis. Before he can begin to do so, however, the entrance of a totally besotted Clincher sends him scurrying for a hiding place, which he finds in the same closet that holds the Marquis. At this point Standard, according to plan, comes upon the drunk Clincher and Lurewell. Standard's dignified reaction and his depiction of Clincher as an emblem of Lurewell's impending depravity, achieves the desired end, a repentant and weeping Lurewell. Wildair's intervention to clear Lurewell's "honor" (thereby further obligating her to him) momentarily halts the dialectical progress of the scene. In the brief encounter between Wildair and Standard, Wildair is aligned with the hypocrisy of London society that Standard opposes. Wildair's attempt to explain Clincher's presence to the very person responsible for it is of course doomed. Moreover, not only does Wildair fail to carry off his trick, but he also
inadvertently reveals the entire situation, i.e., the Marquis' presence, as well as his own. Confronted unexpectedly by these two rivals, Standard still retains the dignity that characterizes him throughout. In fact, Standard turns this new knowledge to his own advantage. Previously Standard had been shadow-boxing, since he had no proof of Lurewell's faithlessness. Now, however, Standard can deal with the problem forthrightly, and by the force of his own honorable behaviour can rout his adversaries. The scene ends with Standard's warning to the two would-be lovers: "Look ye, Gentlemen, I have too great a confidence in the Vertue of my Wife, to think it in the power of you, or you, Sir, to wrong my Honour: But I am bound to guard her Reputation so that no attempts be made that may provoke a Scandal; Therefore, Gentlemen, let me tell you 'tis time to desist" (IV,ii,200-201).

With the conclusion of Act IV, the Lurewell-Standard action has reached its climax and needs only one more brief scene to accomplish its satisfactory resolution. In IV,ii, Lurewell has renounced her senseless pursuit of frivolity but she has not completely accepted the validity of the virtuous life as a viable ideal, as represented by her envious desire to besmirch Angelica's character. If Lurewell's conversion is incomplete at this point, Wildair's has yet to begin; he has merely given up his designs on
Lurewell but has not adopted the correct attitude toward life, i.e., that a stable union between men and women is the ideal and that whatever tends to destroy such a relationship (artificiality, libertinism) must be abjured. Farquhar completes the conversions of Lurewell and Wildair in the final act. His handling of Lurewell's capitulation is brief. Still envious of Angelica's virtue, Lurewell decides to write Wildair: "Sir Harry shall know what a Wife he had, I'm resolv'd. Tho' he wou'd not hear me speak, he'll read my Letter" (V,iii,202-203). Her letter writing is interrupted by the ghost of Angelica exhorting her in sepulchral tones to cease maligning "the Grave of Innocence" and "to forbear to wrong thy injur'd Husband's Bed" (V,ii,203). From the standpoint of structure, Farquhar prolongs Lurewell's conversion as a means of bringing Angelica into the action, for the appearance of Angelica is essential to the resolution of the Wildair plot. By having Lurewell persist in her defamation of Angelica's character, Farquhar can logically introduce the Ghost, whose appearance brings the characters together again and allows for the double reconciliation of the conclusion. Farquhar does not, however, sacrifice all to plot development, for the Ghost's appearance also serves as the means by which Lurewell's character reversal is completed. After this Lurewell does indeed abandon her former waywardness and is reunited with her husband.
The immediate effect the Ghost's warning has on Lurewell has been prepared for by her previous shame and remorse when confronted by the wronged Standard (IV,11,198-199). With Wildair, however, such a precipitate reversal would be untenable, for he is still committed to the libertine existence and to the society that sustains such a code. Before Wildair can renounce the code he must learn the true nature of the society that fosters it (represented by the Marquis) and of the ideal wife (represented by Angelica). Preparing for this almost simultaneous revelation is the proposed duel between Wildair and the Marquis over the return of the money Wildair has given him (V,v). Wildair first regains the money at gunpoint, after which he picks up a sword to fight a fair duel over Angelica's honor. The Marquis reveals his cowardice and his lack of true honor by refusing to fight for a principle alone:
"Come on! For wat? Wen de Money is gone! De France-man fight where dere is no profit! Pardonnez moi, pardie" (V,v,206). At this point, Wildair is hardly a model of honor himself, however, for he is fighting not to requite any real wrong, but simply because he thinks the Marquis is lying. Moreover, unlike Standard, Wildair's disbelief of the Marquis' boast concerning Angelica does not stem from trust or loyalty, but merely from his arrogant assurance that the Marquis is an inadequate rival: "if I thought
you had merit enough to gain a Lady's Heart from me, I wou'd shake hands immediately, and be Friends: But as I believe you to be a vain scandalous Lyar, I'll cut your Throat" (V,v,206). The duel is interrupted by the appearance of Fireball and Standard who inform Wildair of the ghostly apparition, after which the four men leave to view this strange phenomenon. In the last scene of Act V, as in the last scene of Act IV, all of the characters are brought together, this time for the purpose of resolving the Wildair action. The first step toward this resolution occurs when Wildair is reunited with Angelica who throws off her ghostly disguise and explains the purpose behind her mock death and subsequent disguises as Banter and the Ghost, all of which were intended to reform Wildair. But Wildair's reunion with Angelica is at this point merely physical, for Wildair still lacks the proper attitude toward women and marriage. His spiritual reunion with Angelica comes about only after the Marquis' duplicity with the picture is revealed, along with his shallow view of life: "An' begar, for dat matre, de natre of Women, a Pit-Masque is as good as de best. De Pleasure is noting, de Glory is All, Alamode de France" (V,vi,209). That Farquhar intends this incident to signal Wildair's conversion is undeniable in light of Wildair's reply to the Marquis: "Go thy ways for a true Pattern of the Vanity,
Impertinence, Subtlety, and Ostentation of thy Country.
... once I was a Friend to France; but henceforth I promise to sacrifice my Fashions, Coaches, Wigs, and Vanity, to Horses, Arms and Equipage, and serve my King in propria persona, to promote a vigorous War, if there be occasion" (V,vi,209). With this speech Wildair severs his temperamental ties with the Marquis by renouncing the basis of the libertine code, the artificial manners and the immorality of fashionable society derived from and epitomized by France, and reaffirms his commitment to marriage and a stable social order by calling for music to celebrate the "new wedding" with a dance. The play ends with Wildair's conveying to the assembled group his description of a good wife, based on the character of Angelica:

The Wit of her Conversation never outstrips the Conduct of her Behaviour: She's affable to all Men, free with no Man, and only kind to me: Often cheerful, sometimes gay, and always pleas'd, but when I am angry; then sorry, not sullen: The Park, Play-house, and Cards, she frequents in compliance with Custom; but her Diversions of Inclination are at home: She's more cautious of a remarkable Woman, than of a noted Wit, well knowing that the Infection of her own Sex is more catching than the
Temptation of ours: To all this, she is beautiful to a Wonder, scorns all Devices that engage a Gallant, and uses all Arts to please her Husband. (V, vi, 210)

Structurally Sir Harry Wildair exhibits Farquhar's proficiency in developing and satisfactorily resolving the action of his plays. He establishes the basic plot situations in the first two scenes and then complicates his action by the use of multiple intrigues (Standard's use of Clincher, Wildair's seduction of Lurewell, the Marquis' trick with Wildair, and Angelica's manipulation of events in her disguises as Beau Banter and the Ghost). With one exception, everything that occurs serves to advance or complicate the action, culminating in the reunions of the two couples. Interspersed throughout the action are extensive speeches by the various characters on the subject of marriage, for example, what constitutes a good marriage and good husbands and wives, and conversely what causes marriages to fail. This emphasis placed on marriage is important to an understanding of the play and is the major reason for the play's value to students of Farquhar. Sir Harry Wildair is a play about marriage; the action revolving around Lurewell and Standard, and Wildair and Angelica is simply a vehicle for Farquhar's examination of this institution, and
the fact that the action is subordinated to the theme of marriage accounts in part for the thinness of the plot. As a play about marriage Sir Harry Wildair departs from the traditional subject matter of Farquhar's plays, which deal with courtship, with marriage depicted as the ideal culmination of the male-female relationship. The Beaux' Stratagem does deal with the state of matrimony as such, but Farquhar's treatment of the subject in this play differs significantly from his treatment of marriage in Sir Harry Wildair. First, the Sullens' marital problems are not the main concern of the play but are instead subordinated to the developing romance between Aimwell and Dorinda. Moreover, in The Beaux' Stratagem Farquhar deals with internal factors (incompatibility) that cause the dissolution of marriage, while in Sir Harry Wildair he deals with external factors (libertinism and artificiality). Generally, Farquhar is content to hold marriage up as an ideal, an end toward which right conduct and attitudes tend or, where his rakes are concerned, an end that automatically confers proper conduct and attitudes on the initiate. Yet, as Sir Harry Wildair makes clear, behind this assumption that marriage is a universal panacea lies Farquhar's awareness that the forces that tend to destroy relationships before marriage continue to exist after marriage and can exert a disintegrating influence. In Sir Harry Wildair, Farquhar
deals with these forces and shows their effect on marital relationships.

In developing the dialectic of his play, Farquhar opposes the institution of marriage against the highly artificial code of London society that is inimical to any sincere relationship among men and women. Behind this code lies another, more invidious force or influence, French manners and morals. Thus, Farquhar opposes marriage against frivolity, fashion, and immorality as epitomized in the context of the play first by London society, and then by French society which influences it. On a superficial level, the action of the play moves toward a reconciliation of the two couples involved, but beneath this is the movement toward a renunciation of the artificial code of conduct that would make a sustained reconciliation impossible.

The first hint of the opposing forces at work in the play occurs in I,i, when Standard asks Fireball to congratulate his success in marrying a "fine Lady." Fireball's reply establishes the dichotomy between the type and the ideal wife:

Shall I tell you the Character I have heard of a fine Lady? A fine Lady can laugh at the Death of her Husband, and cry for the loss of
a Lap Dog. A fine Lady is angry without a Cause, and pleas'd without a Reason. A fine Lady has the Vapours all the Morning, and the Chollick all the Afternoon. The Pride of a fine Lady is above the merit of an understanding Head; yet her Vanity will stoop to the Adoration of a Peruke. And in fine, A fine Lady goes to Church for fashion's sake, and to the Basset-Table with Devotion, and her passion for Gaming exceeds her vanity of being thought Vertuous, or the desire of acting the contrary.

(I,1,165-166)

This account of a fine lady is an apt description of Lurewell, as we learn from our first introduction to her in II,i. Later in the play she again proves the justness of Fireball's description when she says, "I'll tell you in three words, That rather than forego my Cards, I'll forswear my Visits, Fashions, my Monkey, Friends, and Relations" (II,ii,182). The fine lady is, however, merely the product of a more pervasive ill besetting society, the hypocritical and shallow mores of fashionable life. Farquhar broadens his condemnation to include this more serious threat in Standard's speech to Fireball concerning the rumor that Lurewell is a coquette and that he is a cuckold:
Were Scandal and Detraction to be thorowly reveng'd, we must murder all the Beaux, and poison half the Ladies: Those that have nothing else to say, must tell Stories; Fools over Burgundy, and Ladies over Tea, must have something that's sharp to relish their Liquor; Malice is the piquant Sauce of such Conversation; and without it, their Entertainment would prove mighty insipid. There's no such thing as Villany at Court. Indeed, if the practice of Courts were found in a single Person, he might be stil'd Villain with a vengeance; but Number and Power authorizes everything, and turns the Villain upon their accusers. In short, Sir, every Man's Morals, like his Religion now-adays, pleads liberty of Conscience; every man's Conscience is his convenience, and we know no Convenience but Preferment. (I,i,166)

The movement from the specific (the fine lady) to the general (London society) is further expanded in this first scene with the appearance of Parley:

Par. Sir, I was running to Madamoiselle Furbelo, the French Milliner, for a new Burgundy for my Lady's Head.
Stand. No, Child, you're exploy'd about an old fashion'd Garniture for your Master's Head, if I mistake not your Errand.

Par. Oh, Sir! there's the prettiest fashion lately come over! so airy, so French, and all that! --The Pinners are double ruffled with twelve pleats of a side, and open all from the Face; the Hair is frizel'd all up round the Head, and stands as stiff as a bodkin. Then the Favourites hang loose upon the temples, with a languishing lock in the middle. Then the Caul is extremely wide, and over all is a Cor'nel rais'd very high, and all the Lappets behind--I must fetch it presently. (I,1,168)

The function of this passage, as Eric Rothstein notes, is to link adultery with French fashions, a connection Farquhar later exploits through the character of the Marquis and through Wildair's libertine obeisance to the French moral code. Throughout the first four acts, Farquhar repeatedly stresses Wildair's connection with things French; it is significant that when Wildair left Angelica, he went first to France, taking "his fine French Servants to wait on him, leaving Dicky, "the poor English Puppy," to remain with Angelica (I,1,172).
The connection between French and English society is again brought out in II, i, which introduces Lurewell, surrounded by her English chambermaids and her tailor. As a typical woman of fashion, Lurewell's conduct is an indirect condemnation of the artificiality of the code. Her unreasonableness is manifested in her imperious treatment of her servants, who cannot please their mistress: "these English Animals are so unpolish'd! I wish the Persecution wou'd rage a little harder, that we might have more of these French Refugees among us" (II, i, 174). Her unnaturalness is pointed up in her interview with her tailor, who is berated for making clothes for Lurewell that fit her figure:

Fit me! fit my Monkey. --What, d'ye think I wear Cloaths to please my self? Fit me? Fit the Fashion, pray: no matter for me--I thought something was the matter, I wanted of Quality-Air. --Pray, Mr. Remnant, let me have a bulk of quality, a spreading contour. I do remem-ber now, the Ladies in the Apartments, the Birth-night were most of 'em two yards about--Indeed, Sir, if you continue my Things any more with your scanty Chambermaids Air, you shall work no more for me. (II, i, 175)

These two instances, which portray Lurewell's character in
broad strokes, prepare for her unreasonableness and un-naturalness with Standard later in the scene, an attitude that is also hinted at when she says to her servants, "How! the Coll use my Things! How dare the Coll use anything of mine" (II,i,175). When Standard does appear, Lurewell receives him uncivilly, insulting him and his friends, whom she refuses to meet. Standard's excuse to Fireball that Lurewell is ill is undermined when Fireball learns that she has "gone abroad to take the Air" (II,i,177). Fireball's reaction is immediate and to the point: "What the Devil! Dangerous sick, and gone out! So sick, that she'll see no body within, yet gone abroad to see all the World! --Ay, you have made your Fortunes with a Vengeance" (II,i,177). In using Fireball to comment on the vagaries of London society, Farquhar lends strength to the attitude of Standard who is the norm of the play. Too un-polished to represent the ideal gentleman, Fireball is nonetheless a sincere man who has no difficulty in seeing the reality behind the veneer of fashionable conduct. Standard, the ideal in the play, is a blend of the best of both worlds; he is a gentleman, but more important, he is also sincere. Standard's character is free from any taint of French influence, which is depicted in the play as allied with deceit. Wildair, on the other hand, is seen as a product of French society, which is responsible for his
attitude toward life. Farquhar explicitly reveals Wildair's indebtedness to France when Wildair extols the merits of gambling, that obsession of the "fine lady" according to Fireball:

Wild. Ay, Madam, these are Charms indeed--then the pleasure of picking your Husbands Pocket over Night to play at Basset next Day! Then the advantage a fine Gentleman may make of a Lady's necessity, by gaining a Favour for fifty Pistold, which a Hundred Years Courtship cou'd never have produc'd.


Wild. Nay, nay, Madam, 'tis nothing but the Game, and I have play'd it so in France a Hundred times. (II,ii,182)

Later Wildair takes advantage of Lurewell's "necessity" by conveying money to her in a French book "with some Remarks of my own upon the new Way of making Love," the new way being a bank bill for a hundred pound (II,ii,182). The extent to which both Lurewell and Wildair have rejected natural emotions in favor of the artificial is illustrated in the scene in which the two rail against love during Wildair's seduction of an all too willing Lurewell. Again, the
artificial is equated with France and with London society:

    Lur. Ay, Sir Harry, I begin to hate that old
      thing call'd Love; they say 'tis clear out in
      France.

    Wild. Clear out, clear out, no Body wears it!
      And here too, Honesty went out with the slash'd
      Doublets, and Love with the close-body'd Gowns.
      Love! 'tis so obsolete, so mean, and out of fash-
      ion, that I can compare it to nothing but the
      miserable Picture of Patient Grizell at the Head
      of an old Ballad----Faugh!

    Lur. Ha, ha, ha.----The best Emblem in the
      World.----Come, Sir Harry, faith we'll run it
      down.----Love!----Ay, methinks I see the mourn-
      ful Melomene with her Handkerchief at her Eye,
      her Heart full of Fire, her Eyes full of Water,
      her Head full of Madness, and her Mouth full of
      Nonsense----Oh! hang it.

    Wild. Ay, Madam. Then the doleful Ditties,
      piteous Plaints, the Daggers, the Poysons!----

    Lur. Oh the Vapours!

    Wild. Then a Man must kneel, and a Man must
swear.——There is a Repose, I see, in the next Room.

Lur. Unnatural Stuff!

Wild. Oh, Madam, the most unnatural thing in the World; as fulsome as a Sack-Posset, [Pulling her towards the Door] ungenteel as a Wedding-Ring, and as impudent as the naked Statue was in the Park. [Pulls her again.]

Lur. Ay, Sir Harry; I hate Love that's impudent. These Poets dress it up so in their Tragedies, that no modest Woman can bear it. Your way is much the more tolerable, I must confess.

Wild. Ay, ay, Madam; I hate your rude Whining and Sighing; it puts a Lady out of countenance. [Pulling her.]

Lur. Truly so it does.——Hang their Impudence.——But where are we going?

Wild. Only to rail at Love, Madam. [Pulls her in.] (III, ii, 189)

Both Lurewell and Wildair have become so caught up in the artificial code of conduct that for them the most
natural state, love and marriage, and its practitioners (Griselda and, ultimately, all that marry) become unnatural. When Wildair tells Lurewell they are going into the next room "only to rail at Love," he unwittingly speaks the truth, for sex devoid of love constitutes an attack on what should be an act of love. Throughout Acts I-III, Farquhar presents a negative view of love and marriage as reflected by the practitioners of the artificial code of manners and morals upheld by the members of French and London society. It is a code that equates lust with love, reputation with honor, and scorns or ridicules true emotion. Lurewell, Wildair, and the Marquis are the major promulgators of the code, although its pervasiveness is demonstrated by the recurring condemnation of French and London society by Fireball and Standard, by the gambling scene of II,ii, which includes other fine ladies in addition to Lurewell, and by the figure of Lord Bellamy.

Beginning with Act IV,ii, there is a shift in the presentation of marriage from the jaded viewpoint of the devotees of artificiality to the natural and humane viewpoint of honorable men and women who consider marriage a desired and felicitous end in itself. The two spokesmen for this latter view are Standard and Angelica, but curiously enough, Wildair himself, the arch libertine, prepares for this shift toward a positive attitude. In an
interview between Wildair and Lurewell, she asks his opinion of matrimony. Wildair's effusive reply surprises Lurewell no more than it does the reader, given Wildair's previous action in the play:

She was Young and Beautiful, I was Rich and Vigorous; my Estate gave a Lustre to my Love, and a Swing to our Enjoyment; round, like the Ring that made us one, our golden Pleasures circl'd without end. . . . I powder'd to please her, she dress'd to engage me; we toy'd away the Morning in amorous Nonsense, loll'd away the Evening in the Park or the Play-house, and all the Night---- Hem! . . . Then, Madam, there was never such a Pattern of Unity.----Her Wants were still prevented by my Supplies; my own Heart whisper'd me her Desires, 'cause she her self was there; no Contention ever rose, but the dear Strife of who shou'd most oblige; no Noise about Authority; for neither wou'd stoop to Command, 'cause both thought it Glory to Obey. . . . Then, Madam, we never felt the Yoak of Matrimony, because our Inclinations made us One; a Power superiour to the Forms of Wedlock. The Marriage-Torch had lost its weaker Light in the bright Flame of
mutual Love that join'd our Hearts before; . . . I'll tell you what she was.----So much an Angel in her Conduct, that tho' I saw another in her Arms, I shou'd have thought the Devil had rais'd the Phantom, and my more conscious Reason had given my Eyes the Lye. (IV,ii,196)

Wildair's cataloguing of his former connubial bliss is not an inconsistency in his characterization. Indeed, his emphasis on the sexual aspects of marriage provides a linking device between his former married state and his present libertine pursuit of pleasure. It also prepares for his ultimate conversion at the end of the play. In this scene, Lurewell's motivation is envy of Angelica, a fact of which Wildair is aware, as one of his asides attests: "Ready to burst with Envy; but I will torment thee a little" (IV,ii,196). Wildair catalogues his felicity in marriage to torment Lurewell, but what he says is, for the most part, true. He was happy in his marriage until Angelica became jealous. It was only after Angelica exhibited this failing that Wildair embarked on his travels (V,v,206). In Wildair's description of his marriage, Farquhar accomplishes a number of things. He prepares for Wildair's conversion at the end when he is united with Angelica, now purged of her jealousy; he establishes a positive view of marriage in
opposition to the negative view previously presented; and, most important, he sets forth a description of what constitutes a good marriage relationship (love, sexual compatibility, and trust), which is what the play is all about.

In addition to this description of an ideal marriage, there are other scenes in Acts IV and V that are important in developing the theme of marriage. One is the scene between Lurewell and Standard after he has successfully carried out his plan involving Clincher. Standard is here presented as the ideal husband, as opposed to the "Top-Gallants" that make up Lurewell's numerous suitors. Standard first appeals to Lurewell on the basis of his honorable behavior in both the private and the public spheres (he had, as he reminds her, "nobly served my King and Country"). He then contrasts his sincere and honorable love to the passion that the others offer, and finally he describes his own conduct during their union: "Add to all this, I love you next to Heav'n; and by that Heav'n I swear, the constant study of my Days and Nights have been to please my dearest Wife. Your Pleasure never met controul from me, nor your Desires a frown.----I never mention'd my distrust before, nor will I now wrong your discretion so as e're to think you made him an appointment" (IV,ii,199).

Throughout this scene Standard epitomizes the ideal husband
just as Angelica will later epitomize the ideal wife through Wildair's description of her at the end of the play, a description that concludes the theme of marriage on a positive note. Giving rise to Wildair's catalogue of a good wife is the joint description by Lurewell and Angelica concerning a good husband: he is one who never quarrels over trifles ("'tis better to let a Woman play the Fool, than provoke her to play the Devil"), and never exhibits jealousy ("once a Woman has born the shame of a Whore, she'll dispatch you the Sin in a moment"), a description that presupposes the existence of a stable union.

Before the theme of marriage can culminate fittingly with the reestablishment of the two marriages, the forces inimical to sincere, mature relationships must be recognized and renounced. This occurs with Lurewell when Standard convinces her of the depravity of the artificial code (IV,ii), and with Wildair when he rejects the Marquis and the way of life he represents (V,vi). There is, however, a scene preceding Wildair's rejection of the Marquis that is important to the theme of marriage. The scene in question makes up all of V,iv, and consists of a conversation between Wildair and Lord Bellamy concerning the subject of honor:
Wild. Honour! Ha, ha, ha.----'Tis very strange! that some Men, tho' their Education be never so Gallant, will ne'er learn Breeding!-----Look ye, my Lord, when you and I were under the Tuition of our Governors, and convers'd only with old Cicero, Livy, Virgil, Plutarch, and the like; why then such a Man was a Villain, and such a one was a Man of Honour: But now, that I have known the Court, a little of what they call the Beau monde, and the Belle-esprit, I find that Honour looks as ridiculous as Roman Buskins upon your Lordship, or my full Peruke upon Scipio Africanus.

Lo. Why shou'd you think so, Sir?

Wild. Because the World's improv'd, my Lord, and we find that this Honour is a very troublesom and impertinent Thing.----Can't we live together like good Neighbours and Christians, as they do in France? I lend you my Coach, I borrow yours; you Dine with me, I sup with you; I lie with your Wife, and you lie with mine.----Honour! That's such an Impertinence!----Pray, my Lord, hear me. What does your Honour think of murdering your Friend's Reputation? making a Jest of his Misfortunes? cheating him at Cards, debauching his Bed, or the like?
Lo. Why, rank Villany.

Wild. Pish! pish! Nothing but good Manners, excess of good Manners. Why, you han't been at Court lately. There 'tis the only practice to shew our Wit and Breeding.---- As for Instance; your Friend reflects upon you when absent, because 'tis good Manners; raillies you when present, because 'tis witty; cheats you at Picquet, to shew he has been in France; and lies with your Wife, to shew he's a Man of Quality. (V,iv,204-205)

This conversation contributes nothing to the action; in fact, it suspends the action. Nevertheless, the scene is of major significance to the theme of the play since it allows Farquhar again to comment upon and show the connection between the code of French and English society and the hypocritical nature of the code. It is precisely this code and its ramifications, catalogued in the preceding speeches by Wildair, that pose a threat to stable relationships, and, accordingly, the code must be rejected before the play can end on a harmonious note.

In its general attitude toward marriage, Sir Harry Wildair does not differ from Farquhar's other plays. What is different, however, is the emphasis placed on marriage
itself, which serves as the main subject of the play. In his previous plays, Farquhar uses marriage as the ideal end of the male-female relationship. In *Sir Harry Wildair*, Farquhar goes one step further and examines the institution itself, attempting to come to terms with the problems besetting it. In Farquhar's view, the basis of a good marriage is a natural and sincere relationship between two people, without which love, compatibility, and honor go by the boards. Thus, the biggest threat to marriage is any artificial code that pits people against each other, and Farquhar is unrelenting in his opposition to such a force. In *Sir Harry Wildair* the artificial code is seen as residing in French and English upper-class society, specifically, the Court. Not content merely to satirize these societies through such characters as the Marquis, and Lurewell and Wildair before their conversions, Farquhar denounces the code outright. Farquhar's explicit presentation of his moral view in this play justifies William Archer's statement that in Farquhar one can perceive the steady growth "not only of moral feeling, but of sober criticism of life."\(^{10}\)
NOTES


2IV, ii, 193. All references to Sir Harry Wildair are from The Works of George Farquhar, ed. Charles Stonehill, I.

3Eric Rothstein, George Farquhar, p. 50.

4In taking this position I disagree with Stonehill who finds the play poorly constructed (The Works of George Farquhar, I, xxiii), and with Rothstein who maintains that Farquhar pays too little attention to the formal development of his play, although Rothstein does concede that the ending "shows Farquhar working with considerable skill (George Farquhar, pp. 49, 53).

5On the thematic level the scene also contributes to Farquhar's ridicule of artificiality. As Eric Rothstein points out, Lurewell's vain screams to slander the dead Angelica "logically come to rest in the fashionable cowardice of shrieking at a mouse." George Farquhar, p. 53.

6This exception occurs in V, iv, in the scene between Wildair and Lord Bellamy. The scene is, however, important to the theme of marriage, and will be discussed later in this study.

7George Farquhar, p. 51.

8IV, ii, 198-199.


CHAPTER V

THE INCONSTANT

Unlike his earlier plays, Farquhar's fourth play, The Inconstant (1702), is not an original work, a fact Farquhar acknowledges in a rather understated manner in the "Preface": "To give you the History of this Play, wou'd but cause the Reader and the Writer a trouble to no purpose; I shall only say, that I took the hint from Fletcher's Wild Goose Chase."¹ Various reasons have been suggested for Farquhar's adaptation of Fletcher's play, among them discouragement over the poor reception given Sir Harry Wildair, a lack of time and inspiration to compose another original work, and a desire to capitalize on Fletcher's popularity on the English stage, thereby assuring himself some financial success.² Whatever the reason for assuming the role of adaptor, Farquhar was shrewd enough to fix upon a play by the popular Fletcher that had not been performed since 1668, and therefore would strike the spectators of Drury Lane as a novelty, especially after Farquhar had reworked it. Moreover, in The Wild Goose Chase Farquhar found a play whose basic plot situation was not only congenial to his own dramatic practice but was also capable of being easily transformed from Fletcher's airy and amoral
lightheartedness to Farquhar's own particular blend of morality and mirth.

The basic plot situation of *The Wild Goose Chase* turns on the pursuit and eventual capture of an unwilling young man, Mirabell (the wild goose of the title), by Oriana, a young woman bent on matrimony. When the play opens, Mirabell has just returned from Italy where he has acquired a taste for variety in love and is now unwilling to confine himself to one woman, despite a previous contract with Oriana. Equally determined, although to a different end, is Oriana, who decides to win Mirabell by trickery since reason and the force of the previous contract are insufficient to win him over. The subsequent action revolves around Oriana's various attempts to win Mirabell. Fletcher establishes the antagonism between Mirabell and Oriana in Acts I and II and deals with Oriana's stratagems in the remaining three acts of the play. First, Oriana pretends that she is betrothed to a Savoy Lord, impersonated by her brother who aids her in her designs on Mirabell. The plan almost succeeds, for Mirabell does regret the idea of losing Oriana, but before Mirabell capitulates a servant reveals the trick and the skittish lover takes to his heels (III,1). Undaunted, Oriana immediately formulates a second plot; she feigns insanity, supposedly brought on by Mirabell's spurning her.
This plan too is on the verge of succeeding only to be frustrated at the crucial moment, this time by Oriana herself, who reveals the trick too soon (IV,iii). Again Mirabell escapes, and now fully aware of the threat to his freedom, he decides to resume his travels. On the eve of his departure Oriana sets her final plan in motion (V,ii). She impersonates an Italian heiress, the sister of a man Mirabell had once saved. Mirabell falls in love with this personage, whose beauty captivates him, and this time when Oriana reveals the trick, Mirabell, admitting he has been outwitted, agrees to marry her (V,iii-vi).

Paralleling the main action between Mirabell and Oriana are two subsidiary actions concerning Belleur and Pinac (Mirabell's friends) and Rosalura and Lillia-Bianca (Oriana's friends). These two sub-plots are mirror images of each other and contrast with the Oriana-Mirabell action in that here the men are the pursuers and the women the pursued, although as the action progresses the two groups become simultaneously the hunter and hunted since the women allow themselves to be pursued only in order to capture the men. The actions of the sub-plots are prepared for in Act I when Belleur and Pinac are smitten respectively with Rosalura and Lillia-Bianca, despite Mirabell's warning that the two women are unsuitable because one is too gay and the other too grave. Yet although the two men do not
take Mirabell's initial advice, they do follow his proposals for conquering the two women, and it is upon these proposals that the sub-plots turn. The initial encounters between the two pairs of lovers parallel the first meeting between Oriana and Mirabell after his return from Italy. In all three cases the pursuers (Oriana, Pinac, and Belleur) are acting on the basis of preconceived notions, all of which prove to be erroneous. In Oriana's case, she assumes Mirabell is still contracted to her, only to learn that he is contracted to a libertine existence. When Pinac is first introduced to Lillia-Bianca, she appears grave and philosophical; thus when he first courts her, he appeals to what he thinks is her sober disposition but is confronted instead by a Lillia-Bianca mad for dancing and frivolity (II,ii). Conversely the gay and playful Rosalura, as she first presents herself to Belleur, becomes on their second meeting highly philosophical, thereby overturning Belleur's planned method of courtship (II,iii). Having been routed in these first encounters, the lovers, like Oriana, decide to trick the women into submission. Advised by Mirabell, Pinac pretends that he is betrothed to a fine lady, impersonated by an English whore (III,i; IV,i), and Belleur pretends he has become insane as a result of the humiliation Rosalura's antics have caused him (III,i; IV,ii). As in Oriana's
first two attempts to trick Mirabell, the stratagems are nearly successful but are overturned when the "victims" learn of the deceits and once again make the suitors butts of their own intrigues (IV,1; IV,ii). Rosalura and Lillia-Bianca do, however, love their suitors, and upon learning that Belleur and Pinac intend to leave for Italy with Mirabell, the coquettes reveal their true feelings. After a wit combat in which Belleur and Pinac agree to submit to marriage, and Rosalura and Lillia-Bianca agree to submit to their future husbands, the lovers, along with Mirabell and Oriana, are united (V,vi).

That Fletcher is primarily concerned with the formal development of his action in The Wild Goose Chase is revealed by the parallels that exist between the Oriana-Mirabell plot and the two sub-plots, which in turn parallel one another. All three actions contain the basic situation of the pursuer-pursued, with the sex of the pursuer and the pursued reversed in the sub-plots for variety. The use of stratagems to trick the pursued into submission is another similarity the three actions share, as is the lack of success attendant upon all but Oriana's final ruse. In his handling of these stratagems Fletcher reveals most notably his emphasis on formal balance in the development of his play, for not only do the three plots revolve around the tricks initiated by the pursuers, but as Eric Rothstein
points out, Oriana's first two stratagems are counterparts of the tricks attempted by Pinac and Belleur. Oriana's pretended betrothal to a Savoy Lord (III,1) parallels Pinac's pretended marriage to a fine English Lady (IV,1), and her feigned insanity (IV,iii) parallels Belleur's mock-madness (IV,ii). The result of such formal balance is a well integrated play, enlivened by Fletcher's sprightly verse dialogue with the witty antagonists participating in the love-game action on which the play revolves.

On the basis of even such a brief plot summary as that given above, one can see that Fletcher's play easily lent itself to adaptation by Farquhar who found in The Wild Goose Chase material that had formerly served him well: pairs of lovers, the love-game culminating in marriage, multiple intrigue, and incidents that could be presented as farce. Farquhar's handling of this material differs significantly from Fletcher's, however, the result being that The Inconstant is a far more original work than many critics allow it to be. Farquhar may have erred when he admitted to taking a mere "hint" from The Wild Goose Chase for his own play, but in view of Farquhar's transformation of the original, one can excuse the understatement.

In tailoring the play to suit himself, Farquhar reduced the number of characters and streamlined the action.
Fletcher's play contains twelve characters, excluding such miscellaneous figures as priests, servants, and other such types. Of these twelve, Farquhar retains only three outright: Dugard (Fletcher's De Gard), Oriana's brother, Oriana, and Mirabel. In three other instances Farquhar combines two of Fletcher's characters into one. Farquhar's Old Mirabel is an amalgam of Fletcher's La Castre (Mirebell's father) and Nantolet (the father of Rosalura and Lillia-Bianca), the single figure of Bisarre, Oriana's friend, combines the characters of Rosalura and Lillia-Bianca; and Duretete, Mirabel's friend and suitor to Bisarre, replaces the double figures of Pinac and Belleur. Farquhar omits Lugier (tutor to Rosalura and Lillia-Bianca) and Marianne (the English whore) and adds the character of Lamorce, a woman of pleasure, and Petit, a servant whose expanded role served primarily as a vehicle for the comedic talents of the popular actor Dicky Norris. In addition to tightening the play, Farquhar's reduction of Fletcher's twelve characters to eight also allows for greater character delineation. For the most part, Fletcher's characters are not especially memorable; they are either vaguely realized (La Castre, Nantolet, Lugier, and De Gard) or are stereotypes who could be interchanged without doing great damage to the progress of the play or the integrity of the characters. Fletcher's use of interchangeable
stereotypes is manifested by his treatment of the major figures of *The Wild Goose Chase*. Rosalura and Lillia-Bianca differ in name only and both share with Oriana a quick wit and a determination to achieve their ends. The sole difference between Oriana and the two sisters is the fact that Oriana is the pursuer while they are, ostensibly at least, the pursued; but aside from this difference in situation they all represent the same type, the witty and virtuous young woman determined to marry. Fletcher continues this parallelism, although to a less marked degree, with the three important male figures. Like Rosalura and Lillia-Bianca, Belleur and Pinac are identical in speech and manner and both share certain qualities with Mirabell. All three are libertines and all are the witty gentlemen typical of Fletcherian comedy. There is, however, some differentiation between Pinac and Belleur and Mirabell beyond their differing situations of pursuer-pursued. Mirabell is presented as being cleverer than they (he masterminds the tricks by which Pinac and Belleur hope to capture the ladies), as having more savoir faire, and as being a more accomplished rake (attested to by the written inventory of his amorous conquests). Still, these are differences of degree and not of kind, with Mirabell as the epitome of the type equally represented by his two friends.
Characterization in *The Inconstant* differs markedly from that in *The Wild Goose Chase*. Farquhar completely does away with the interchangeable characters of his source, replacing Fletcher's parallel characters with contrasting ones, in keeping with the practice in Farquhar's earlier plays. Bisarre and Oriana share little but their common sex and virtue; in all else they are the antithesis of one another. Bisarre is high-spirited, whimsical, witty and frivolous (although she does on one occasion reveal a rather philosophical turn of mind), and delights in playing at love as a means of diversion: "Well, I must confess, I do love a little Coquetting with all my heart; my business shou'd be to break Gold with my Lover one hour, and crack my Promise the next; he shou'd find me one day with a Prayer-Book in my hand, and with a Play-Book another. He shou'd have my consent to buy the Wedding Ring, and the next moment wou'd I Laugh in his face" (II, 1,232-233). With such qualities the mercurial Bisarre is the perfect foil for Oriana whose pursuit of her beau is as singleminded and serious as she is herself. Complementing these two contrasting female figures are Mirabel and Duretete, and again one can see Farquhar employing the principle of contrast. Mirabel is the typical Farquhar hero, the good natured rake. Like his predecessors Roebuck and Sir Harry, Mirabel is cynical about women and marriage,
justly proud of his ability in the boudoir, and dedicated to the libertine code. Mirabel's opposite is Duretete, a sincere, rather gauche individual who is incapable of conducting himself with any aplomb where women are concerned.

More important than the use of contrast is Farquhar's delineation of characters in *The Inconstant*. With the exception of Oriana, whom Farquhar transposes almost intact from *The Wild Goose Chase*, Farquhar's characters are more fully developed than their counterparts in Fletcher's play. Mirabel, for example, although as dedicated a rake as his forebear, has more than this one side to his character. His genuine fondness for his father (manifested throughout the play but especially in IV,ii) and his love for Oriana (explicitly revealed in III,i, with the discovery of his love poems to her) are emotions contrary to the insouciance of the true libertine. Mirabel's commitment to the libertine code stems, in part, from his dissatisfaction with the artificial mores of fashionable society, as his speech to Oriana indicates: "the thing call'd Honour is a Circumstance absolutely unnecessary in a natural Correspondence between Male and Female, and he's a Madman that lays it out, considering its scarcity, upon any such trivial occasions. . . . there is not the least occasion for Morals in any business between you and I - don't you know that
of all Commerce in the World there is no such Couzenage and Deceit as in the Traffick between Man and Woman" (II, 1,236). Mirabel recognizes the failings of his code but instead of rejecting these values, he accepts them as just, given the way of the world, and patterns his own actions on this cynical view of the male-female relationship. Mirabel's incipient discontent with the code he subscribes to, along with his basic goodness (as imaged by his fondness for Old Mirabel and his love for Oriana), results in a more complex figure whose conversion at the end of the play has been prepared for and is consequently more acceptable to the reader than the abrupt capitulation of the hero in Fletcher's play.

The added complexity of character noticeable in Farquhar's depiction of Mirabel is even more apparent when one compares Bizarre with the corresponding figures in Fletcher's play. Arthur Colby Sprague's statement that Bizarre should not even be spoken of in the same breath as Rosalura and Lillia-Bianca stems from his awareness of the essential seriousness underlying Bizarre's coquet-tish facade, a seriousness that Sprague rightly considers inimical to the spirit of Fletcher's comedy. Farquhar is not, however, writing Fletcherian comedy, and he imbues his adaptation with his own world view, which is essentially a very moral one. Fletcher's airy sisters are too
unsubstantial to be at home in *The Inconstant*, whose major female figures help to establish, either directly or indirectly, the moral basis of the play. A full appreciation of Farquhar's handling of the character of Bisarre must be preceded by an awareness of Farquhar's concept of the love game. The two sub-plots of *The Wild Goose Chase* revolve around the love game, the prescribed method of courtship defined by John Harrington Smith as a relationship between the sexes beginning in antagonism rather than collaboration and developing into mutual admiration in the course of a lively courtship game during which both parties affect not to take the situation seriously. Fundamental rules of the game were that the woman remain chaste and that she maintain an appearance of disinterest in any romantic involvement (regardless of her true feelings) until she had established her intellectual equality by outwitting her adversary either by verbal repartee or by stratagems. Marriage was of course the woman's goal in this ceremony, while the man's goal was to win the lady without tying the matrimonial knot. Only by maintaining her chastity and her intellectual equality could the woman bring her suitor to the desired end, a bona fide offer of marriage. The progress of the two sub-plots of *The Wild Goose Chase* is sustained by Fletcher's commitment to the love game which gives rise to much of the play's wit in the verbal
exchanges between the two sets of lovers. Farquhar, however, does not accept the validity of the love game which he considers as artificial and hence as precluding any sincere, mature relationship. In his plays, Farquhar reduces the code to a meaningless and fruitless antagonism between men and women by doing away with its very basis: the ultimate goal of marriage.

In The Inconstant Biscarre is the new breed of coquette who plays the game for the diversion it offers her: "Well, I must confess, I do love a little Coquetting with all my heart" (II,1,233). In subscribing to such a view Biscarre contrasts with Oriana, who is aware of the love game but rejects it for the natural inclination of her heart: "O, my Dear, were there no greater Tye upon my Heart... I wou'd soon throw the Contract out a doors; but the mischief on 't is, I am so fond of being ty'd, that I'm forc'd to be just, and the strength of my Passion keeps down the Inclination of my Sex" (II,1,233). Biscarre's participation in the love game is analogous to Mirabel's, for both question the validity of marriage, Mirabel because it will circumscribe his sexual freedom and Biscarre because it means a loss of personal identity: "before that any young, lying, swearing, flattering Rakelly Fellow shou'd play such Tricks with me, I wou'd wear my Teeth to the stumps with Lime and Chalk--O, the Devil take all your Cassandra's and Cleopatra's for me--
Prithee mind your Ayres, Modes, and Fashions; Your Stayes, Gowns and Four-beleau's. Harkee, my Dear, have you got home your Fourbeleau'd Smocks yet?" (II,1,232). But the analogy between Mirabel and Bizarre will work only to a certain point. Bizarre is no female libertine, although she does use the code to her own advantage in that it supplies her with an endless procession of beaux. For all her apparent superficiality, Bizarre can recognize the dichotomy between appearance and reality, especially where honor and reputation are concerned, as evinced by her denunciation of Duretete's inept attempt to play the rake during their first encounter: "Your visit, Sir, was intended as a Prologue to a very scurvy Play, of which Mr. Mirabel and you so handsomely laid the Plot. . . . go to your fellow Rake now, rail at my Sex . . . but I must have you know Sir, that my Reputation is above the Scandal of a Libel, my Vertue is sufficiently approv'd to those whose opinion is my interest; and for the rest let them talk what they will, for when I please I'll be what I please, in spight of you and all mankind" (II,11,240). In Bizarre's subsequent revelation of her concept of virtue, Farquhar again presents her as having a sane, well-reasoned attitude toward life and a somewhat sophisticated understanding of her own sex. The incident that gives rise to Bizarre's articulation of her philosophy is Oriana's ruse of assuming a nun's habit
in order to trick Mirabel into marriage. When Oriana asks if there is any harm in jesting with the religious habit, Bisarre replies: "To me, the greatest jest in the Habit, is taking it in earnest: I don't understand this Imprisoning People with the Keys of Paradise, nor the merit of that Virtue which comes by constraint.---Besides, we may own to one another, that we are in the worst Company when among our selves; for our Private Thoughts run us into those desires, which our Pride resists from the Attacks of the World; and you may remember, the first Woman then met the Devil when she retir'd from her Man" (IV,11,253). For Bisarre, virtue is an active not a passive principle which must be tested before it can have any validity. Moreover, the way of the world, for all its shortcomings, does have a positive aspect in that it exercises a restraining influence that is often necessary. Within the context of the setting (a monastery) and the situation (Oriana's becoming a nun), Bisarre's discussion of morals broadens to include religion, which supplies her with a neat parallel. Just as there is no victory in a cloistered virtue, so there is no religiosity in going to Church only as an escape from reality. True religion consists in charity with all mankind and this by its very nature precludes a withdrawal from the world. The interaction with one's fellows necessary for a manifestation of charity is also necessary for
who is the antithesis of his counterparts in the earlier play. Where Pinac and Belleur are witty, elegant rakes, Duretete is a pedantic bumbler as incapable of turning a phrase as he is of turning in time to music. Yet Duretete is no stereotype; in fact, one is hard pressed to categorize him in terms of stock figures in the comedy of the period (unlike Bisarre, who calls to mind Etherege's Harriet and Congreve's Millamant). For all his ineptitude and dullness in social ceremony (which is itself treated ambivalently by Farquhar), Duretete redeems himself by his sincerity as a friend and by his intuitive awareness of the true nature of Lamorce, who images in the play the evils attendant upon a commitment to the libertine code. Also lifting Duretete out of the stereotyped mold of dullness is his recognition of his own shortcomings:

Ay Mirabel, you will do well enough, but what will become of your friend; you know I am so plaguey bashful, so naturally an Ass upon these occasions. . . . what did my Father mean by sticking me up in a University, or to think that I shou'd gain any thing by my Head, in a Nation whose genius lyes all in their Heels. . . . Let me see now, how I look. A Side-Box face say you?--egad I don't like it Mirabel.
I cou'd not wear such a face for the best
Countess in Christendom. (I,ii,229-230)

In an age subscribing to the dictum "know thyself," Duretete's self-knowledge casts him in a sympathetic light which is further strengthened by the fact that his failings are purely social ones. He is reminiscent of Fireball in Sir Harry Wildair, another military man who is equally incapable of fathoming the intricacies of fashionable society. Another similarity between the two men lies in their opposition to the libertine code. In Fireball's case this opposition is more apparent since as Standard's friend he denounces the code outright throughout the play. Farquhar's use of Duretete is more subtle; Duretete does not explicitly condemn the code but instead undermines it by drawing attention to its basic insincerity ("But you have own'd to me, that abating Oriana's pretensions to Marriage, you lov'd her passionately, then how can you wander at this rate?") and the inability of its practitioners to distinguish between appearance and reality (Duretete recognizes the true nature of Lamorce while Mirabel does not).

There yet remains Farquhar's masterpiece of characterization, Old Mirabel without whom no discussion of The Inconstant would be complete. Old Mirabel is a true original who has no counterpart in previous comedy. In
his delineation of this figure Farquhar breaks completely with the tradition of old age versus youth that so dominated the comedy of the Restoration. In this tradition old age (a term applied to anyone past thirty) was irrevocably opposed to youth either by a self-deluded refusal to accept the fact of age or by attempting to impose old values on the young. There are few dignified or sympathetic old people in comedies written between 1660 and 1702. Instead they are self-deluded or inflexible and as such are inevitably overcome by the young heroes and heroines whom they oppose. Self-delusion and inflexibility are failings absent in Old Mirabel. He accepts his age gracefully ("Silver hairs! then they are quicksilver hairs, Sir. Whilst I have Golden Pockets, let my Hairs be Silver. I can dance, and sing, and drink, and--no, I can't wench"), and also accepts the high spirits of youth. Oriana's description of her life and Bizarre's under Old Mirabel's guardianship best illustrates his compatibility with the young: "we live merrily together without Scandal or Reproach; we make much of the old Gentleman between us, and he takes care of us; we eat what we like, go to Bed when we please, rise when we will, all the week we dance and sing, and upon Sundays go first to Church and then to the Play" (I,1,227). Like the old person of Restoration comedy, Old Mirabel does oppose his son but
his reasons are unselfish. Old Mirabel plays the matchmaker because he is genuinely fond of Oriana who he thinks will make a good wife for Mirabel and, more important, because he knows that Mirabel loves Oriana and hopes that marriage will reclaim Mirabel from a life of dissipation. This love for his son gives rise to Old Mirabel's most endearing trait, his paternal loyalty. Although cognizant of Mirabel's faults and occasionally rebuking him for them, Old Mirabel will allow no one else to disparage his son: "Lookeee, Mr. Dugard, I will do your Sister Justice, but it must be after my own rate, no body must abuse my Son but my self. For altho Robin be a sad Dog, yet he's no body's Puppy but my own" (III,1,243).

The character of Old Mirabel far surpasses his counterparts in Fletcher's play, LaCastre and Nantolet, who are in fact barely realized. Moreover, Farquhar makes Old Mirabel a more integral part of the play. In addition to aligning himself with those opposing Mirabel's libertine existence (a function performed by LaCastre and Nantolet), Old Mirabel also takes part in Oriana's first trick by impersonating the man she is to marry, and he is the means by which her nunnery trick is revealed (here he again reveals his paternal loyalty, for when forced to choose between Oriana's happiness and his son's, Oriana's goes by the boards). Yet despite Old Mirabel's function in the
development of the action, his most important role is simply to be himself. Farquhar's expansion of the role is done less with an eye to plot development than to presenting a portrait of amiable old age. We have a glimpse of Farquhar's treatment of the type with Lady Darling in The Constant Couple, but it is only with Old Mirabel that Farquhar allows free rein to his sympathetic view of old people. Farquhar continues this tradition with Justice Balance in The Recruiting Officer and Lady Bountiful in The Beaux' Stratagem but these, although more dignified than Old Mirabel, lack his overwhelming zest for life and his overriding humanity.

The techniques used in transforming Fletcher's dramatis personae into characters serving Farquhar's own dramatic ends (the reduction of Fletcher's twelve characters to eight with the attendant depth in characterization that follows, and the use of contrast as an underlying principle of characterization) parallels Farquhar's technique in handling the action of Fletcher's play. The Inconstant, like The Wild Goose Chase, revolves around the endeavors of Oriana to win Mirabel, but where the earlier play alternates the love game between Oriana and Mirabel with that of Pinac and Lillia-Bianca and that of Belleur and Rosalura, Farquhar totally subordinates the Bisarre-Duretete action to the main love plot, using the subsidiary action
by indirection as the correct attitude toward love and the male-female relationship. The Bizarre-Duretete action parallels the main plot in only one respect which is that the love game as Bizarre plays it represents a chaste version of Mirabel's libertinism. Here again, however, the effect is to denigrate the love-game, for whether confined to verbal or sexual combat, it is always represented by Farquhar as springing from an insincerity and artificiality that make a stable and mature relationship impossible. As if to underscore the relative unimportance of the sub-plot, Farquhar fails to resolve it in a positive manner. At the end of the play, Bizarre and Duretete are as unreconciled as they were at the beginning, more so, perhaps, since in their case familiarity has bred contempt.

Farquhar's treatment of the Bizarre-Duretete action is curious since it is a departure from his usual practice. In the plays by Farquhar studied thus far, the two love actions are closely related, they are treated more or less equally and they are resolved almost simultaneously. The use of contrast is confined primarily to characterization; each plot contains one stable member and one unstable member, with the sex of the two roles reversed for contrast. Thus in *Love and a Bottle* the character of Leanthe's role parallels that of Lovewell while Lucinda's is roughly analogous to that of Roebuck, and in *The Constant Couple* and *Sir Harry Wildair* Angelica and Standard function as
the stable members of their respective actions, with Lurewell and Wildair as the unstable members. Despite the contrast in characterization, both plots advance the same action: the reclamation of the unstable member from a selfish pursuit of pleasure to a mutually sincere and permanent relationship, imaged in the plays by the state of matrimony. The sub-plots of the earlier plays, although carefully integrated into the overall progress of the two main actions, concern not love, but affectation as manifested by vanity or hypocrisy, or both. In The Inconstant Farquhar breaks with his customary procedure not only by relegating the Bisarre-Duretete action to a strictly subordinate role but also by the way in which he uses the principle of contrast. The heretofore typical scheme of parallel characters offsetting their counterparts simply will not work in The Inconstant. As a coquette, Bisarre is analogous to the libertine Mirabel, and as such, is a foil to Oriana, but Bisarre is more than a mere empty-headed flirt and can on occasion (the nunnery scene, IV, ii) bring her idealistic friend down to earth by a judicious dose of sound reason. With Oriana and Duretete, Farquhar's standard technique of parallelism and contrast breaks down further. Duretete's disapproval of the libertine code opposes him to Mirabel and aligns him with Oriana but unlike the latter, Duretete is not committed
to the idea of marriage, which he is equally against because of his distrust of all women. More important than this shift in characterization, however, is Farquhar's development of the two actions of his play. Where the love plots of the earlier comedies proceed in parallel fashion, the two actions of *The Inconstant* progress along divergent lines: Oriana and Mirabel undergo a series of partial reconciliations that lead up to their ultimate alliance, while Bisarre and Duretete are driven further apart with each meeting, culminating in their complete disunion at the end of the play.

One cannot help questioning the reason for Farquhar's radical departure from his previous practice in the Bisarre-Duretete action. One possible explanation lies in Farquhar's increasingly serious treatment of the themes of marriage and the male-female relationship. As I have pointed out, in his plays Farquhar is committed to the view that marriage is the ideal end of the male-female relationship, which must therefore be based upon mutual sincerity, respect, and love. This moralistic concept naturally opposes any code, such as libertinism or the love-game, that tends to undermine what is for Farquhar the natural, and hence correct, progress of a correspondence between the sexes. Thus, the love-game and libertinism become perversions of love, the former because it substitutes artificial word play for
natural emotions, and the latter because it equates love with sensual self-gratification alone. In the earlier plays Farquhar presents the love-game and libertinism as inimical to a stable and permanent relationship but stops short of depicting the logical outcome of a commitment to either of these codes by converting their practitioners to the correct attitude toward love before the play ends. Farquhar goes a step further in *The Inconstant*. By negatively resolving the Bisarre-Duretete action he clearly reveals the barrenness of the artificial game of love, and as we shall see, by injecting a melodramatic element into the main action in Mirabel's brush with death at the hands of Lamorce, he goes beyond the previous condemnation of libertinism and strikingly images the self-destructiveness of a hedonistic pursuit of pleasure.

Farquhar's compression and subordination of the Bisarre-Duretete action enables him to expand the main plot, which carries the dialectical burden of the play, and it is in his development of the Oriana-Mirabel action that Farquhar's divergence from his source is most evident. Not only does he rearrange the sequence of events but more important, he also omits certain episodes and adds new material not found in Fletcher's play. Generally speaking, Farquhar remains close to the original in the first three acts of *The Inconstant*. In Acts I-II Farquhar establishes
the basic opposition between Oriana and Mirabel and reveals
their previous commitment to one another, and in III, i-III, ii (corresponding to Fletcher's III, i), he introduces and
carries out Oriana's mock-marriage to a Spanish Count.
Although following the basic outline of Fletcher's play
in this episode, Farquhar makes a number of changes: Oriana
is betrothed to a Spanish, not a French, nobleman who is
impersonated by Old Mirabel instead of by her brother, as
in the earlier play, and the disclosure of the trick results
from Mirabel's actions and not from a gratuitous (and some-
what contrived) revelation by a servant. In his handling
of this first trick and Mirabel's reaction to it, Farquhar
changes the character of the hero from that of his prede-
cessor. In The Wild Goose Chase Mirabell is presented as
having a streak of cowardice; although regretting the idea
of losing Oriana to another, he will not confront his rival
for fear of bodily harm. The opposite is true of Farquhar's
hero who challenges his rival immediately, thereby precipi-
tating the exposure of the trick. No match for his son
(as Oriana's brother would have been), Old Mirabel quickly
reveals his true identity to avoid a worse beating than
he has already received. One effect of Farquhar's changes
is to shift the interest from the stratagem as an end in
itself to its effects on the characters, especially on
Mirabel who is presented in an admirable light by virtue
of his love for Oriana and his bravery, an indispensable attribute of all Farquhar's heroes. Farquhar does more than advance character in his handling of this episode, however. He also tightens the structure of his play by making the disclosure of the trick a logical outgrowth of character and action, and in the beating administered to Old Mirabel by his son, Farquhar introduces a farcical note to the entire proceedings notably absent in Fletcher's play, which was written for the Court and not for the early eighteenth-century pit, box, and gallery.

The transformation of Fletcher's play apparent in Farquhar's treatment of this first episode is intensified in the subsequent development of the action. Beginning with Act IV, Farquhar deals very freely with his source. His first major change is to add a new trick by which Oriana hopes to win Mirabel. Having been frustrated in her first attempt, Oriana pretends to enter a nunnery. Her plan is at first successful, for faced with losing Oriana, Mirabel again regrets his previous treatment of her. Unable to gain admittance into the convent, Mirabel disguises himself as a friar, in which guise he comes upon Oriana, renounces his libertine existence, and offers to marry her if she will give up the cloistered life. Unfortunately for Oriana, Mirabel has taken no one into his confidence. When Duretete learns that Mirabel has entered a monastery,
he conveys the news to Old Mirabel who reveals Oriana's trick to Mirabel, thereby overturning Oriana's chance for success once again. For a number of reasons the nunnery episode is an important addition to the play: it allows Farquhar to expand the Oriana-Mirabel action, it further delineates character, and it develops the theme. In Old Mirabel's horrified reaction to the news that Mirabel has turned friar and the dispatch with which he reveals Oriana's trick, Farquhar does more than merely delay Mirabel's ultimate union with Oriana; he also further presents Old Mirabel as an amiable and sympathetic old person by virtue of his paternal loyalty. Mirabel's character is also advanced in the nunnery episode. Earlier in the play Mirabel's love for Oriana is made known first by the servant Petit's disclosure of Mirabel's secret love poetry to Oriana (III,1, 244), and later by Mirabel's reaction to the news that Oriana is to wed the Spanish Count. In the nunnery scene, Mirabel's love for Oriana is explicitly revealed through his speeches which present Mirabel as a generous and sensitive individual capable of deep emotion:

My fair Angel, but let me Repent; here on his knees behold the Criminal, that vows Repentance his.... I am now return'd to my self, I want but Pardon to deserve your Favour, and here I'll fix till you Relent, and give it.... I come
not here to justify my Fault but my Submission, for tho' there be a meanness in this humble Posture, 'tis nobler still to bend when Justice calls, than to resist Conviction. . . . In my own Cause I plead no more, but give me leave to intercede for you against the hard Injunctions of that Habit, which for my Fault you wear. . . . Since all my Prayers are vain, I'll use the nobler Argument of Man, and force you to the Justice you refuse; you're mine by Pre-contract: And where's the Vow so sacred to disannul another? I'll urge my Love, your Oath, and plead my Cause 'gainst all Monastick Shifts upon the Earth.

(IV,11,255-256)

The tenor of Mirabel's speeches in this scene verge on the high-flown rhetoric of heroic drama, and although Farquhar does on occasion use such rhetoric for comic effect, he here uses it to indicate the depth of Mirabel's love for Oriana. Mirabel's overt declaration of love, in addition to presenting him as essentially good and worthy of being reclaimed, also prepares for the happy resolution of the Oriana-Mirabel plot at the end of the play. Mirabel is not, however, alone in using the lofty dialogue usually associated with heroic drama; Oriana also employs exalted
language, but where Mirabel's utterances are the spontaneous outburst of passion, Oriana's are the calculated word games of the artificial code of love and as such, have important thematic implications. Mirabel's arrival at the convent interrupts an interview between Oriana and Biscarre, who recognizes the disguised Mirabel and advises Oriana to conduct herself in accordance with Biscarre's artificial philosophy of love: "now's your time; this disguise has he certainly taken for a Pasport, to get in and try your Resolutions; stick to your Habit; treat him with Disdain, rather than Anger; for Pride becomes us more than Passion: Remember what I say, if you wou'd yield to advantage, and hold out the Attack; to draw him on, keep him off to be sure" (IV,11,254). Oriana more than follows Biscarre's directions in her subsequent treatment of Mirabel. She assumes the role of victimized woman and counters Mirabel's every outburst of passion with an equally heroic reply that sets up a tension between his sincerity and her artificiality, an artificiality inherent in her situation and further brought out in her aside strategically placed by Farquhar at the beginning of her diatribe against Mirabel:

    Grovelling, sordid Man; why wou'd you Act a thing to make you kneel, Monarch in Pleasure to be Slave to your Faults? Are all the Conquests
of your wandering Sway, your Wit, your Humour, Fortune, all reduc'd to the base Cringing of a bended Knee? Servil and Poor! I--Love it [aside] . . . thy oft repeated violated Words reproach my weak Belief, 'tis the severest Calumny to hear thee speak; that humble Posture which once cou'd raise, now mortifies my Pride; How can'st thou hope for Pardon from one that you Affront by asking it? . . . My Resolutions, Sir, are fix'd, but as our Hearts were united with the Ceremony of our Eyes, so I shall spare some Tears to the Separation [weeps] . . . Unhand me Ravisher! Would you profane these holy Walls with Violence? Revenge for all my past Disgrace now offers, thy Life should answer this, wou'd I provoke the Law; Urge me no farther, but be gone. (IV,II,255-256)

In treating love as a game, Oriana is untrue to her earlier rejection of the code (II,1,233) and must accept the responsibility for the failure of her trick. It is precisely her artificial attenuation of the interview that enables Old Mirabel to discover the plot to Mirabel, who repays Oriana's deception in kind by reverting to his former libertinism and retracting his previous vows.
With the third development in the Oriana-Mirabel plot Farquhar returns to his source but again he adds elements of his own devising which transform the episode and make it an integral part of the thematic progress of the play. Following fast upon the disappointment of her nunnery trick, Oriana plays her last card; she feigns madness in the hope that such unmerited misery will move Mirabel to compassion and reformation (IV,iii). In terms of situation and dialogue, the entire scene corresponds almost exactly to the same incident in The Wild Goose Chase (which also occurs in IV,iii), with the important difference that Farquhar does not indicate that Oriana's madness is feigned until she reveals the fact herself to Mirabel. In Fletcher's play the audience is aware of the trick from the outset through the tutor Lugier's remarks to his students Rosalura and Lillia-Bianca, whose love affairs he is also involved in. This prior knowledge keeps the action of the scene light, as Fletcher intends it to be. Oriana's madness is simply another maneuver to outwit Mirabell, and Oriana's incoherent babbling is as amusing as her gullible lover's remorse, shortlived though it is. This lightness of tone is absent in Farquhar's handling of the same scene because the audience, as well as Mirabel, is taken in by the ruse. In fact, Farquhar deliberately prepares for the audience's acceptance of Oriana's madness.
as real by her final remark after the nunnery fiasco:
"Shame, and Confusion, Love, Anger, and Disappointment,
will work my Brain to Madness" (IV,11,257). Moreover,
unlike her earlier practice Oriana here takes none of the
other characters into her confidence; thus they, along
with Mirabel, think she is distracted in earnest and their
comments reinforce the concern of the reader. By involving
the audience in the action occurring on the stage, i.e.,
by momentarily removing the audience from its usual omniscient
position, Farquhar introduces an element of pathos which
tends to darken the tone of the comedy, and this mood is only
partially dispelled when Oriana confesses the trick to
Mirabel, who again retracts his protestations of love. The
seriousness underlying this scene is in keeping with Far-
quhar's treatment of the theme of marriage and the male-
female relationship which lies at the heart of the action.
The opposition between Mirabel and Oriana has been from the
outset the opposition between two incompatible views of
life and love: the view that love is a serious matter cul-
minating ideally in marriage, and the view that love is a
game involving a superficial and artificial interaction
between people motivated by self-interest. The impossi-
blity of a meaningful relationship between people caught up
in the libertine code is imaged by the total lack of com-
munication between Mirabel and the "mad" Oriana.
As in the case of Oriana's nunnery trick, Mirabel is sensibly affected by the seeming unhappiness caused by his rakish pursuit of pleasure. His awareness of his former folly is brought out not only by his compassion for Oriana's supposed plight but also explicitly by his remarks to Duretete, who comes upon the scene after another ill-fated encounter with Bisarre. To Duretete's statement that all women are mad, Mirabel replies: "Away with this Impertinence; I have murder'd my Honour, destroy'd a Lady, and my desire of Reparation is come at length too late. Away, thou wild Bufoon; how poor and mean this Humour now appears. His Follies and my own I here disclaim; this Ladies Frenzy has restor'd my Senses, and she perfect now, As once she was, (before you all I speak 't) she shou'd be mine; and as she is, my Tears and Prayers shall wed her (IV,iii,261-262). Mirabel's senses are restored in that he is once again the Mirabel capable of establishing a meaningful relationship, the pre-libertine Mirabel who had contracted himself to Oriana. The irony of Mirabel's regaining his senses only after Oriana presumably loses hers is redoubled when Mirabel reverts to his life of unreason when Oriana reveals that she is sane after all. Within the moral framework of the play and because of the seriousness underlying this entire episode, Mirabel's reversal at this point seems gratuitous and calls into
question the delineation of his character as essentially generous and good. An understanding of Farquhar’s intentions here and in the previous scenes in which Oriana has tried to trick Mirabel, necessitates a re-examination of the action of the play. As I have pointed out, basic to Farquhar’s view of the male-female relationship is the idea that love is a serious business involving mutual sincerity and commitment and culminating in marriage, which images in little the harmony and stability of society in general. The sincerity and commitment prerequisite for an acceptance of this ideal state must come from within the individual who in exhibiting these qualities, manifests at the same time a mature attitude toward love and life. As the individual who has the correct view of the male-female relationship and of marriage, Oriana emerges as the norm of the play, and before the action can be satisfactorily resolved, Mirabel must accept her view as valid. Yet although Oriana’s ends, unlike Mirabel’s, are sanctioned by the moral framework of the play, the means by which she attempts to achieve them are not. Implicit in her stratagems is the erroneous assumption that love is a game, albeit a serious one, and considered as such the relationship between man and woman remains antagonistic and artificial, elements inimical to Farquhar’s conception of marriage. Thus Oriana must lose even though her loss
is Mirabel's as well, since he is allowed to maintain his libertine stance.

There is still another more important reason for the failure of Oriana's tricks. In *The Inconstant* an acceptance of the correct view of marriage and a commitment to virtuous conduct represent a mature attitude toward life and love which must emanate from within the individual. By attempting to trick Mirabel into matrimony, Oriana would force him into a condition he is not prepared to accept, committed as he is to the libertine code. Oriana herself seems to recognize her error, for her feigned madness is the last trick she plays. Henceforth she takes on the more passive role of a page in Mirabel's employ, in which disguise she plans to follow him on his travels (V,1). Before Mirabel can be brought into the matrimonial fold he must recognize the validity of marriage and renounce his former existence; in other words, Mirabel must convert, not capitulate.

Farquhar pulls these various ideas together and resolves them in the final act of the play, which represents a complete departure from *The Wild Goose Chase*. That Farquhar ceases to follow his source here is not surprising in view of the differing intentions of the two dramatists. The last act of *The Wild Goose Chase* concerns Oriana's third and final trick of impersonating an Italian heiress
and Mirabell's capitulation when he realizes he has been outwitted. Such a conclusion works perfectly for the action of Fletcher's play, which is based on an acceptance of the love game, but this same ending would seriously undermine the progress of Farquhar's action, the conversion of the hero. Before Farquhar could satisfactorily conclude the Oriana-Mirabel action he had to resolve a number of interrelated problems basic to the conversion of the hero. The first problem concerns Mirabel's condemnation and rejection of his libertine existence, which had to precede any viable conversion. Of course, the mere rejection of the code is a negative reaction unless it is followed by an acceptance of the correct view of life. We have such a negative attitude with Duretete who can simultaneously reject both the libertine view and the view that marriage is the ideal culmination of the male-female relationship, the result being that Duretete is incapable of establishing any relationship at all with a woman. Nevertheless, although the rejection of libertinism is insufficient in itself to effect a meaningful change within the individual, it is a necessary first step without which no such change can occur. Thus, Mirabel's renunciation of his former existence is a prelude to his acceptance of Oriana's concept of love and marriage, an acceptance that results less from Mirabel's awareness of the true nature of
libertinism than from his recognition that within the context of a sincere and committed relationship, the individual can act selflessly, as Oriana proves when she throws off her disguise at the end of the play. By assuming the role of Mirabel's page, Oriana exhibits a selfless devotion that redeems her in Mirabel's eyes from all her former stratagems, and she images for him the positive aspects of the way of life she represents. That this is the effect Oriana's disguise has on Mirabel is brought out by his reply to the charge that he is caught:

Caught! I scorn the thought of Imposition, the tricks and artful Cunning of the Sex I have despis'd and broke thro', all Contrivance. Caught! No, 'tis my Voluntary Act, this was no Humane Stratagem, But by my providental Stars designed to show the Dangers, wandring Youth Incurs by the persuit of an unlawful Love, to plunge me headlong in the snares of Vice and then to free me by the hands of Virtue, here on my knees I humbly beg my fair preservers pardon, my thanks are needless, for my self I owe. 

(V,iv,275)

The moralistic overtones of this speech climaxing Mirabel's conversion would be totally out of place in the conclusion
of Fletcher's play where any didacticism would be untrue
to the spirit of the comedy. On the other hand, the con-
clusion of Fletcher's play would be equally out of keeping
with Farquhar's moral aim as developed in the first four
acts. Realizing this, Farquhar completely re-wrote the
last act of *The Inconstant*, which represents Farquhar's
own contribution, although as he states in his "Preface"
the action is based upon a true adventure of the Chevalier
de Chastillon in Paris. 14

At the end of Act IV Mirabel determines to resume his
travels as the only certain way of retaining his freedom:
"There's no living here with security; this House is so
full of Stratagem and Design, that I must be abroad again"
(IV,iii,263). Before Mirabel departs, however, he attends
a play where he meets the beautiful Lamorce, who invites
him to her home that same evening, asking only that he
dismiss his retinue in order that they will not attract
undue attention damaging to her reputation. Mirabel com-
plies, keeping with him only one page (the disguised
Oriana) but before Mirabel even begins his advances, he
is surrounded by four braves who proceed to strip him of
his finery (his ring, his wig, his watch) and plan for his
murder. Aware of his certain death, Mirabel plays the
fool and pretends to enjoy their company to such an extent
that he offers to share with them some fine burgundy he
has at home if they will allow his page to go after it. The cut-throats fall for the ruse, underestimating Mirabel and the page ("Your Servant is a foolish Country Boy, Sir, he understands nothing but Innocence," V.1,269). Oriana, however, senses that something is amiss, an intuition reinforced by the fact that Mirabel is going under an assumed name, and goes to get not wine but aid, which arrives just as the bravoes are preparing to murder Mirabel. With the would-be murderers captured, Oriana reveals herself and is united with Mirabel who now renounces his libertinism and willingly offers himself to Oriana.

The foregoing summary makes the action of Act V seem contrived, whereas nothing could be further from the truth. Everything that occurs in the final act is a logical consequence of both character and action, which work together in a manner that allows Farquhar to conclude on a just and harmonious note of affirmation in keeping with the moral basis of his play. When Act V opens Mirabel is the same as he has been in the preceding four acts, i.e., his orientation remains that of the libertine. Farquhar clearly establishes this fact in Mirabel's speech in praise of his hedonistic pursuit of pleasure: "The Play-house is the Element of Poetry, because the Region of Beauty, the Ladies, methinks have a more inspiring triumphant Air in the Boxes than anywhere else. . . . There's such a hurry of Pleasure
to transport us, the Bustle, Noise, Gallentry, Equipage, Garters, Feathers, Wigs, Bows, Smiles, Oggles, Love, Musick and Applause. I cou'd wish that my whole Life long were the first night of a New Play" (V,1,264). In view of such sentiments, Mirabel's assignation with Lamorce, which follows quickly upon his meeting her, is consistent with his character as it has been presented thus far. Moreover, by placing his hero-rake on home ground, the theater, a notorious place of assignation, Farquhar can show through the progress of the action the shortcomings and pitfalls of the libertine existence. The explicit revelation of Mirabel's erroneous way of life that occurs when he is confronted by the duplicity of Lamorce is prepared for by a brief exchange between Mirabel and Duretete early in the first scene of Act V. To Mirabel's effusive description of the pleasures of the playhouse, pleasures revolving solely around the women in the audience, Duretete remarks: "The Fellow has quite forgot this Journey, have you bespoke Post-Horses?" (V,1,264), a comment which points out the inability of the libertine to conduct his life in an organized fashion or to honor a commitment, in this case Mirabel's commitment to travel with Duretete. Attracted by the beauty of Lamorce, Mirabel can think of but one thing, satisfying his immediate sensual pleasure. In calculating the length of time it will take to achieve his
ends, Mirabel gives voice to the cynicism characteristic of the libertine: "Grant me but three days, one to discover the Lady, one to unfold my self, and one to make me happy" (V, i, 264). Mirabel's shallowness is brought out more forcibly in the exchange between the two men that follows Mirabel's self-assured assessment of his future relationship with Lamorce. Confronted by Mirabel's determination to pursue Lamorce, Duretete asks a question central to Farquhar's examination of the libertine code: "But you have own'd to me, that abating Oriana's pretensions to Marriage, you lov'd her passionately, then how can you Wander at this rate?" (V, i, 264). The cynicism of Mirabel's reply establishes him as an individual as incapable of maintaining constancy to a woman as to a friend: "I long'd for a Patridge t'other day off the King's Plate, but d'e think because I cou'd not have it I must eat nothing?" (V, i, 264). The point, of course, is that Mirabel can have Oriana, but only on her own terms, marriage, which Mirabel at this point is unable to accept. Having failed in his appeal to Mirabel on the basis of friendship and love, Duretete at last appeals to him on the basis of reason by setting forth the dangers of the situation: "Prethee Mirabel, be quiet. You may remember what narrow scapes you have had abroad by following Strangers, you forget your leap out of the Curtesan's Window at Bologna
to save your find Ring there" (V,1,265). The importance of this statement, which climaxes Duretete's interview with Mirabel, should not be overlooked. First, the speech looks forward to what will later occur in Act V, for in pursuing Lamorce, a stranger, Mirabel will indeed have a narrow escape. In addition to foreshadowing future events, the speech or more specifically Mirabel's total disregard of it, places the responsibility for Mirabel's narrow escape where it rightfully belongs, on Mirabel's myopic pursuit of pleasure which blinds him to the dangers of his situation. In making Mirabel responsible for the consequences of his actions the speech reveals a basic flaw in the libertine, the inability to be led by reason and to learn from past experience. The ring becomes especially significant in this regard as does Mirabel's scoffing, "My Ring's a trifle, there's nothing we possess comparable to what we desire" (V,1,265), when this same ring is the first possession taken from Mirabel by Lamorce.

The note of irony introduced in Mirabel's scoffing reaction to Duretete's warning is sustained throughout Act V and serves to heighten the tension and to emphasize Farquhar's condemnation of the libertine code. In the earlier acts Duretete has played the fool, manipulated by the clever Mirabel for his own amusement. In Act V, however, their roles are reversed. Mirabel becomes the dupe
and Duretete momentarily gains the ascendancy by his realization of Mirabel's shallowness and his intuitive awareness of Lamorce's wickedness: "Ah! the Devil's in his impudence, now he whedles, she smiles, he flatters, she simpers, he swears, she believes he's a Rogue and she's a Wh-- in a moment. . . . Now wou'd I sooner take a Card in Company of the Hangman, than a Coach with that Woman" (V,1,266). Later, Mirabel himself becomes aware of the irony of his situation and of his own wrongheadedness. Before Lamorce reveals her true nature, Mirabel denigrates the marital state: "Ay, this night shou'd I have had a Bride in my Arms, and that I shou'd like well enough, but what shou'd I have to morrow night? the same. And what next night, the same, and what next night, the very same, Soop for breakfast, Soop for dinner, Soop for supper, and Soop for breakfast again-- but here's variety" (V,11,268). When he is later stalling for time to save his life, Mirabel refers to this very speech in the aside, "the marriage Soop I cou'd dispense with now" (V,11,270). The greatest irony of all, as Mirabel comes to realize, is that in using Lamorce, Mirabel is in fact being used himself and that Oriana, the woman Mirabel has considered so dangerous to his well-being, is in the end the preserver of his very life. Mirabel's awareness of his self-delusion and of the self-destructiveness of libertinism must precede
his recognition of Oriana's true worth and his acceptance of the way of life she represents. The function of the Lamorce episode is to serve as the catalyst for Mirabel's ultimate conversion which can thus be depicted as occurring in well-defined stages.

The first stage in Mirabel's conversion proceeds from his realization of Lamorce's true nature. No longer the rich Beauty in the front box, whose brilliance out-sparkles the finest jewels, Lamorce appears as she really is, a "bitch," a "strumpet." Mirabel's ironic aside, "the Marriage Soop I cou'd dispense with now," prepares for the next stage in his metamorphosis from rake to stable member of society. Overhearing the bravoes' plan to murder him, Mirabel reveals in a soliloquy an awareness of his former self-delusion in pursuing shadows: "Bloody Hellhounds I overheard you,—was not I two hours ago the happy, gay, rejoicing—Mirabel? how did I plume my hopes in a fair coming prospect of a long scene of years? life courted me with all the Charms of Vigour, Youth, and Fortune; And to be torn away from all my promised Joys, is more than Death. The manner too, by Villains—O my Oriana, this very moment might have Blest me in thy Arms" (V,iv, 272). The explicit reference to Oriana and the happiness marriage would have conferred makes inevitable Mirabel's union with Oriana at the end of the play, a union which
comes only after Mirabel's moral growth is completed. Mirabel has learned his lesson well and now views his former life as but a testing ground designed to teach him the correct view of life: "this was no Humane Stratagem, but by my providental Stars designed to show the Dangers wanding Youth Incurs by the persuit of an unlawful Love" (V, iv, 275). That Mirabel now has the correct view and can distinguish between appearance and reality is revealed in his final speech, which depicts Oriana as the epitome of virtuous womanhood and Lamorce as the debasement: "vertue in this so advantageous light has her own sparkling Charms more tempting far than glittering Gold of Glory. Behold the Foil [pointing to Lamorce] that sets this brightness off [to Oriana] Here view the pride [to Oriana] and scandal of the Sex to[La'm] there [to La'M] the false Meteor whose Deluding light leads Mankind to destruction here [to Oriana] the bright shining Star that guides to a Security of Happiness, a Garden and a single She [to Oriana] was our first fathers bliss, the Tempter [to La'm] and to wander was his Curse" (V, iv, 275).

Farquhar's development of the themes of marriage and the male-female relationship in The Inconstant go beyond the treatment previously accorded these ideas in his plays, which do not deal with the subjects in as searching or serious a manner. This is not to say, however, that
The Inconstant is an atypical Farquhar play. Its appearance in Farquhar's dramatic canon is in fact inevitable as the logical consequence of Farquhar's increasingly serious concern with an important aspect of life. Beginning with Love and a Bottle, Farquhar's comedies revolve around the themes of marriage and libertinism, with each succeeding play representing a closer examination of the subjects and a more universal application of the moral. From the single libertine Roebuck in Love and a Bottle, Farquhar deals with the more pervasive influence of the libertine code in The Constant Couple, where the figure of Lurewell, surrounded by such reprehensible types as Vizard and Smuggler, as well as Wildair and Standard, dramatically images at once the effects of this cynical view of life and love and the condemnation of the code that could wreak such havoc. In these two plays the libertine abandons his former life and embraces the stability of marriage without undergoing a true conversion. Both Roebuck and Wildair are trapped into marriage, so to speak; in Roebuck's case, he is married to the disguised Leanthe thinking she is the rich heiress Lucinda, and only after the fact does he speak of the joys of the virtuous life. The situation is much the same with Wildair in The Constant Couple; he chooses to marry Angelica rather than fight a duel with Vizard. Here again, once married, but not before,
Wildair can extol the felicity of the wedded state. The validity of these post-facto conversions is questionable, a fact Farquhar seems tacitly to admit in his third play, *Sir Harry Wildair*, where Wildair reverts to his former libertinism and converts only at the conclusion of the play when he finally recognizes the true worth of a virtuous wife. In *The Inconstant* Farquhar avoids these former weaknesses by depicting the conversion of his rake-hero during the progression of the action. The condemnation of libertinism in *The Inconstant* is the same that has appeared in the earlier plays, but it is more convincingly articulated in *The Inconstant*. Moreover, in this play Farquhar depicts the effect of the libertine code not only on the individual but on society as well. Types such as Lamorce and her four bravoes can exist only within the context of libertinism and its hedonistic pursuit of pleasure, and they represent the general disorder and evil such a code fosters. If, as Eric Rothstein states, *The Constant Couple* represents Farquhar's dramatic coming of age insofar as techniques of structure and characterization are concerned, *The Inconstant* certainly must represent Farquhar's philosophical coming of age.
NOTES

1 The Complete Works of George Farquhar, ed. Charles Stonehill, 2 vols. (Bloomsbury, 1930), I, 221. Subsequent references to The Inconstant are to this edition.


3 Gerald Langbaine, writing in 1691, does not include The Wild Goose Chase in his list of plays by Beaumont and Fletcher that he has seen performed on the stage, and John Harold Wilson calls it a "forgotten play," The Influence of Beaumont and Fletcher on Restoration Drama (Columbus, 1928), pp. 10, 49, 143.

4 All references to The Wild Goose Chase are to The Works of Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, ed. A. R. Waller, 10 vols. (Cambridge, 1906), IV.

5 George Farquhar, p. 81.


7 Rothstein, p. 83.

8 Beaumont and Fletcher on the Restoration Stage, p. 255.


10 IV, i, 254.

11 V, i, 264.

12 I, i, 225.

13 Examples of Farquhar's use of heroic diction for comic effect can be found in The Constant Couple in the meeting between Angelica and Wildair (V, i, 140-41), and in The Inconstant itself in the scene between Bizarre and Mirabel.
(III, i, 245-46) and in Oriana's artificial use of heightened language in the same scene in which Mirabel so eloquently and naturally reveals his true feelings (IV, ii, 255-56).

14 The Inconstant, p. 222.

15 George Farquhar, p. 49.
CHAPTER VI
CONCLUSION

The preceding examination of Farquhar's first four comedies, Love and a Bottle, The Constant Couple, Sir Harry Wildair, and The Inconstant demonstrates the essential unity of Farquhar's dramatic canon from the standpoint of philosophical and dramatic principles, and reveals the advances Farquhar made in the presentation of his philosophical view concerning the innate goodness of man and the efficacy of marriage through his increasing mastery of such elements of dramaturgy as structure, characterization, and thematic development. Underlying all of Farquhar's comedies is the basic critical tenet that the function of comedy is to instruct mankind by holding up to ridicule the vices and follies of man in order to make man aware of his short-comings in the hope that with awareness will come improvement. The satiric view necessitates a dual vision on the part of the satirist; he must depict society and life as it really is while simultaneously opposing the status quo with an ideal state which not only should exist, but can exist if man will but heed the lesson of the satirist as presented through his art. As a satirist,
Farquhar has such a dual vision with regard to the society depicted by his plays. He examines and finds lacking the artificial manners and morals of his society, especially that society's commitment to libertinism and the love-game, along with the concomitants of these two codes, affectation and the double-standard. Against these ideas Farquhar opposes his ideal, a mutually sincere and committed correspondence between men and women culminating in the stable relationship of marriage. Behind this ideal, indeed, giving rise to it, lies Farquhar's conviction that mankind is essentially good or at least perfectible, and that much of man's folly springs from an overabundance of pure animal spirits ultimately rectified by a spontaneous and natural good nature which lies beneath superficial manners and morals. In Farquhar's comedies there is a tension between what is and what should be, and the business of his plays is to point out the shortcomings of the artificial code, whether libertinism or mere coquetry, by revealing the effect of such a code on the individual and on society. Moreover, Farquhar's treatment of the theme of love and marriage evinces an increasingly serious attitude on the part of the dramatist concerning the pitfalls of subscribing to the artificial code.

In Farquhar's first play, Love and a Bottle, libertinism represents a deviation from the norm in that the
of marriage itself. The effect of this shift is a more pervasive denunciation of the libertine code since it is now seen as inimical not only to the establishment of a mature and stable relationship but also to the maintenance of such a relationship once it has been established. From the standpoint of Farquhar's treatment of the theme of love and marriage the importance of Sir Harry Wildair cannot be overemphasized, for this play goes beyond both Love and a Bottle and The Constant Couple by recognizing and coming to terms with the fact that the forces tending to destroy a sincere relationship between men and women before marriage can exist after marriage, and when this occurs the marital state is jeopardized. This being the case, marriage itself ceases to be viewed as a universal panacea, for marriage if it is to be a viable state, must be preceded by the individual's rejection of libertinism and his acceptance of the proper attitude toward life and love. The realistic treatment of the theme of love and marriage contained in Sir Harry Wildair also appears in Farquhar's fourth play, The Inconstant, which reveals Farquhar's increased sophistication in presenting his philosophical views. Abandoning the practice in his first two plays of the post-marital conversion of the rake-hero, Farquhar in The Inconstant depicts the moral growth of the libertine hero during the progress of the play, thereby
making the hero's ultimate acceptance of marriage a logical outgrowth of both character and action. Moreover, The Inconstant also goes beyond the previous plays in depicting the effect of the libertine code not only on the individual, but on society as well. The increasing seriousness and sophistication of Farquhar's treatment of the themes of love and marriage, and libertinism and affectation in these first four plays look forward to the dramatist's treatment of these ideas in his later plays, The Twin Rivals, The Recruiting Officer, and The Beaux' Stranger. The Twin Rivals in particular is the logical successor of The Inconstant, for The Twin Rivals also deals with the pernicious influence of libertinism and affectation on a society in which these two vices have, momentarily at least, become the accepted mode of behaviour and must, therefore, be dealt with more seriously by the satirist.

In his attack on the artificial manners and morals of society, and in his presentation of the proper mode of behavior, Farquhar fulfills his first critical tenet that the function of comedy is to instruct. There is, however, a corollary to this first premise, for as Farquhar states in A Discourse Upon Comedy, comedy can instruct only by first delighting. Moreover, in order to delight, the playwright must appeal to as large a segment of the audience as possible. In his Discourse Farquhar gives the
basic "rules" the playwright must follow if he is to meet this second requirement of delighting the audience: his play must contain varied and lively action; each part of the plot must depend on what precedes it; the characters must be realistic portrayals of recognizable human types; and the dialogue must approximate natural conversation. In his first four comedies Farquhar follows these four rules set forth in his essay. His plays contain at least two plots and frequently three; they always include a number of low comedy scenes; the characters, with the possible exception of Lurewell in Sir Harry Wildair, are two dimensional and represent the various types making up the society of Farquhar's day; and the dialogue has such a natural air of conversation that the more fastidious Pope was moved to write, "what pert low Dialogue Farqu'ar writ."

A recognition of Farquhar's adherence to such general rules as those states in the Discourse is a necessary first step toward a realization of the artistry of his plays; even more important, however, is a recognition of the basic pattern discernible in Farquhar's early comedies through which the dramatist embodied his philosophical precepts. The basic outlines of the pattern are established in Farquhar's first play, Love and a Bottle, and reappear with refinements and variations in his subsequent comedies. In accordance with Farquhar's rule that the play must have
varied and lively action, all the plays contain multiple plots. More specifically, to develop the dialectic of the theme of love and marriage that lies at the heart of all his plays, Farquhar has the action revolve around two love plots whose actions parallel one another as a means of reinforcing the moral of the play. To these two parallel love actions, Farquhar usually adds a sub-plot that deals with the theme of affectation and includes numerous farce scenes designed to appeal to the galleries. Within the framework of these multiple plots, the action of the plays follows a clearly defined pattern centered around the conversion of the unstable members of society, whether rake, coquette, or fop, to an acceptance of the proper mode of behavior; in the case of the rake and coquette, this proper mode of behavior is an acceptance of the stable existence of marriage, while for the fop it is a recognition and rejection of his former folly. With an eye to keeping the pace of the play rapid, Farquhar plunges immediately into the action, which ascends rapidly, complicated by the use of multiple intrigue, with the climax occurring late in the fifth act, followed by a rapid denouement.

In addition to following these basic structural principles, Farquhar also patterns his plays around certain character types; for variety and to reinforce his theme,
he follows a principle of contrast in the delination of his major characters. The most important character is the hero, inevitably a good-natured rake whose cynicism hides a basically benevolent nature. Contrasting with the hero is a second male character, usually a friend of the hero, whose sober disposition contrasts with the hero's libertinism and whose main concern is to convert the hero to a life of reason. Complementing these two principal male figures are two female characters who also exhibit the principle of contrast. The main female figure is virtuous and serious, and is usually in love with the hero whom she successfully reforms during the course of the action. Her opposite, the second important female figure, although equally virtuous, is a coquette and is analogous to the hero whose conversion she shares. In addition to these four principal characters there is also an important subsidiary character who represents a blocking figure. Whether fop, dunce, or villain, this character sets himself up against one of the two principal male figures and serves to complicate the action of one or both of the love plots. These five character types are attended by a host of minor characters usually found in the comedy of the period, the most notable of these being the London "cit," the country bumpkin, and the bawdy servant. These minor characters help to enliven and complicate the action and also serve
as representative social types in Farquhar's human comedy.

Although one can discern in Farquhar's comedies such basic structural patterns and character types as those cited above, Farquhar by no means slavishly follows any set formula. Sir Harry Wildair, for example, contains no subplot since Farquhar did not want to detract from his serious treatment of marriage by including anything that did not bear directly on the action of the two marriage plots. In The Inconstant, Farquhar again departs from his usual practice and once more the reason stems from his preoccupation with developing the dialectic of his play, in this case, the opposition between two incompatible views of life, the view that love is a serious matter involving mutual sincerity and commitment, culminating ideally in marriage, and the view that love is a game involving a superficial and artificial interaction between people motivated by self-interest. The Inconstant differs significantly from Farquhar's previous plays. Not only does this play, like Sir Harry Wildair, contain no subplot, but it also lacks two other standard ingredients of Farquhar's comedies. In The Inconstant Farquhar does not, strictly speaking, adhere to the principle of contrast in the delineation of his four principal characters and, more important, he subordinates and negatively resolves the action involving Bissarre and Duretete, thereby doing
away with the parallelism of the two love actions. Farquhar's motivation in making these changes on the basic pattern of his comedies was to impress upon the audience in as forceful a manner as possible the negative implications of the love game, imaged in the play by the fruitlessness of Bizarre and Duretete's "courtship." Thùmaus, Farquhar's first four comedies, from the lighthearted Love and a Bottle to the serious The Inconstant, exhibit a felicitous union of content and form that enables the dramatist both to delight and instruct.
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