

FRENCH INFLUENCES ON ENGLISH RESTORATION THEATRE

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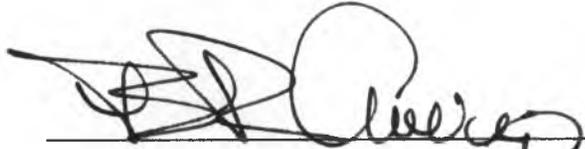
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FRENCH INFLUENCES ON RESTORATION THEATRE

Anne Melissa Potter  
San Francisco, California  
2016

This project will examine a small group of Restoration plays based on French sources. It will examine how and why the English plays differ from their French sources. This project will pay special attention to the role that women played in the development of the Restoration theatre both as playwrights and actresses. It will also examine to what extent French influences were instrumental in how women develop English drama.

I certify that the abstract is a correct representation of the content of this thesis

  
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## PREFACE

In this thesis all of the translations are my own and are located in the footnote preceding the reference. I have cited plays in the way that is most helpful as regards each play. In plays for which I have act, scene and line numbers I have cited them, using that information. For example: I.ii.241-244. For *Arlequin Empereur dans la lune*, I have only cited the page number since the scenes are not numbered. For *The Gamester* and *Le Joueur*, I have cited the page number first, then the act and the scene, since line numbers are not available. For example: 182, V.ix.

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## Introduction

In 1660 when Charles II returned from France, his restoration to the throne of England not only reopened the theatres closed by the puritan regime, but also brought many changes and innovations to the English stage. It will be the work of this thesis to examine some of the French influences at work on theatre of the English Restoration. This goal will be accomplished primarily by examining three English plays and their respective source materials. I will also examine a number of actresses, specifically those in the plays I am examining, to better understand how the roles would have been played and to understand the shift that professional women performers brought to the Restoration stage.

The sharing of culture in this period was of course not the beginning of the relationship between France and England, but it was intensified. There was a greater connection and greater participation “of the people outside the limited circle of courtiers and diplomats.”<sup>1</sup> Gesa Stedman’s book *Cultural Exchange in Seventeenth Century France and England* expands Urs Bitterli’s theories on encounters between westerners and native cultures to apply them to France and England during this period. Of course, France and England were on a much more equal footing than westerners and American natives, but exploring some of these phases of encounters can be helpful. For example,

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<sup>1</sup> Gesa Stedman, *Cultural Exchange in Seventeenth-century France and England*, (Farnham, Surrey, England: Ashgate, 2013), 15.

Stedman points out that cultural collision (one of the three phases identified by Bitterli) “was a constant threat and indeed the relationship was transformed into one of collision quite frequently in the late seventeenth and throughout the eighteenth century.”<sup>2</sup> This describes the period that this study covers exactly and it will be interesting to see in what ways these plays point to the cultural collision as England struggled with loss of cultural identity in the period following the Restoration.<sup>3</sup>

The Restoration is credited in theatre history for the introduction of women onto the English stage. In France, women had been appearing onstage as early as the fifteenth century.<sup>4</sup> There were few French women who tried to be actors early on, especially since it would incur the anger of the Church, but we do know that at least by 1545 there was an actress called Marie Ferré in France.<sup>5</sup> Even though women in England were not members of professional theatre troops before the Restoration English women of various walks of life still performed in many ways. Gentlewomen recited in masques, non-elite women participated in parish drama and poorer women were sometimes itinerant performers.<sup>6</sup> It is clear, however that there is a marked change in the understanding of women onstage as professional actors with the coming of the Restoration. The appearance of women onstage in England revolutionized English drama and, as Jean I. Marsden claims, created

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<sup>2</sup> Stedman, *Cultural Exchange in Seventeenth-century France and England*, 15.

<sup>3</sup> Stedman, *Cultural Exchange in Seventeenth-century France and England*, 15.

<sup>4</sup> Felicity Nussbaum, *Rival Queens: Actresses, Performance, and the Eighteenth-century British Theater*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2010) 7.

<sup>5</sup> Virginia Scott, *Women on the Stage in Early Modern France: 1540-1750*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) 59.

<sup>6</sup> Pamela Allen Brown, and Peter Parolin, *Women Players in England, 1500-1660: Beyond the All-male Stage*, (Hampshire: Ashgate Limited, 2005) 1.

“a new climate for sexual display.”<sup>7</sup> This period is particularly fascinating because this revolution on stage is not simply a literary one, it is, at its core, a truly theatrical revolution, since it was the actual bodies of women onstage that changed many aspects of the theatre. Women began appearing on the stage in roles as men or in breeches roles where their characters dressed up as men. Whether or not these breeches roles served to reinforce gender roles or were a welcome and exciting space of ambiguity is a source of some debate.<sup>8</sup> This debate serves to illustrate some of the many issues that were raised by the actual physical presence of women onstage. While women appearing onstage is one of the aspects of French theatre that influenced English theatre at the time, it is simply one of many and hopefully one that we can keep in mind as we look more closely at the texts of a collection of plays.

With this in mind I plan to examine some of the influences of French theatre on the English theatre of the time by examining plays written by both men and women in England based on French sources. If we look at William Wycherley’s *The Country Wife* (1675) as a jumping off point for framing the influence of French theatre on the English theatre we see something striking. In *The Country Wife*, Mr. Horner has returned from France with a pretend disease that makes him impotent. The disease, of course, is a fiction, but a fiction he uses to his benefit in his attempt to gain increased access to more

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<sup>7</sup> Jean I. Marsden, “Rape, Voyeurism and the Restoration Stage,” *Broken Boundaries: Women and Feminism in Restoration Drama*, Ed. Katherine Quinsey, (Lexington: University of Kentucky, 1996) 185.

<sup>8</sup> Kristina Straub, *Sexual Suspects Eighteenth-century Players and Sexual Ideology*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 128 and Ingrid H. Tague, *Women of Quality: Accepting and Contesting Ideals of Femininity in England, 1690-1760*, (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2002) 31.

women through feigning impotency. This could serve as a metaphor for a bigger picture of what has come from France. There is something sensual that has worked its way from France, and it is indeed both women on the stage and perhaps something else having to do with sexuality that is less overt. The plot of *The Country Wife* itself was borrowed from Molière's *L'Ecole des maris* (1661) and *L'Ecole des femmes* (1662) and will be explored in this study.

I plan to examine Aphra Behn's farce *The Emperor of the Moon* (1687), which, in terms of the story, she had "a very barren and thin hint of the plot... from the Italian, and which, even as it was, was acted in France eight-odd times without intermission."<sup>9</sup> The French scenes that she makes reference to were interspersed with what were probably improvised Commedia scenes. The French scenes were written by Nolant de Fatouville and they were entitled *Arlequin Empereur dans la lune* (1684). Jane Spencer points out that it is unclear how exactly Aphra Behn would have become familiar with these scenes since a known version of the script of *Arlequin Empereur dans la lune* was not published until the 1690s.<sup>10</sup> However, it is possible there was an earlier printing of which there is now no record.

*The Country Wife* and *The Emperor of the Moon* share an actress, Katherine Corey. She played Lucy in *The Country Wife* and Mopsophil in *The Emperor of the Moon*. Both of these are servant characters. She indeed plays the only female servant in

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<sup>9</sup> Aphra Behn, *The Rover and Other Plays*, Ed. Jane Spencer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 92.

<sup>10</sup> Spencer, *The Rover and Other Plays*, xviii.

either play. Neither are the leads of the play but, as Michael Sheldon Porte claims, Lucy was “the most important female servant character of the period.”<sup>11</sup> Corey had been imprisoned by “my Lord Chamberlain” for her portrayal of Sempronia in *Catiline* in 1668. Her portrayal had ridiculed Lady Harvey and according to Samuel Pepys (famous diarist of the period) Lady Harvey pushed the Lord Chamberlain to imprison Katherine Corey. Another Lady had her freed but Lady Harvey had people hiss and throw oranges at Corey.<sup>12</sup> It seems then that this episode, something that happened before either *The Country Wife* or *The Emperor of the Moon* were produced, would paint Mrs. Corey as a humorous actress unafraid to mock the aristocracy. Perhaps this colored the audience view of her in both the plays that will be examined here, and it is the hope that this thesis will examine not only the plays and French influences discussed but also what we can glean from these actresses themselves and their positions in the theatre.

I will also examine Susanna Centlivre’s *The Gamester* (1705), a play that she based on Jean-François Regnard’s *Le Joueur* (1696). Centlivre acknowledges her indebtedness to the French source in her dedication to the Earl of Huntingdon. She explains that she owes part of the story to the French but that unlike in the French version where the gamester is totally ruined she has “in complaisance to the many fine gentleman that play in England [has] reclaimed him, after [she has] discovered the ill consequence

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<sup>11</sup> Michael Sheldon Porte, *The Servant in Restoration Comedy*, (Diss. Northwestern University, 1960) 164.

<sup>12</sup> Emmett L. Avery, and Arthur H. Scouten, “Critical Introduction,” *The London Stage 1660 – 1800: Part I 1660-1700*, Ed. William Van Lennep, (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1965) clxxii.

of gaming, that very often happen to those, who are too passionately fond of it.”<sup>13</sup> Here, Centlivre herself has pointed us to some of the differences between the two versions already and it will be the work of this paper to examine these differences and try to understand why they exist.

While there is some debate about how Restoration plays are categorized in terms of periodization, there is precedent for including Centlivre’s 1705 play in my examination. Some scholars suggest the period of Restoration theatre should end in 1688, with the actual end of the political restoration. However, as Deborah Fisk has pointed out, even though as the years proceed “one can make a case for a shift toward “softer” or more “humane” comedy by the first decade of the eighteenth century, arguably the transformation to sentimental comedy does not stabilize until well after Queen Anne’s reign.”<sup>14</sup> Therefore keeping *The Gamester* in this grouping of plays is a valid option. In his essay on comedy during the Restoration Brian Corman points out that some scholars simply classify Centlivre, among others, as playwrights from the second period. These are playwrights who were born after the Restoration.<sup>15</sup> There was a time when Jeremy Collier’s *A Short View of the Immorality, and Profaneness of the English Stage* (published in 1698) was considered the “cause” of the sentimental comedy, but it has been shown notably by Joseph Wood Krutch as long ago as 1924 that this “tidy

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<sup>13</sup> Tanya Caldwell, ed. *Popular Plays by Women in the Restoration and the Eighteenth Century*, (Peterborough: Broadview), 2011, 107.

<sup>14</sup> Deborah Payne Fisk, Preface, *The Cambridge Companion to English Restoration Theatre*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) xvii.

<sup>15</sup> Brian Corman, “Comedy,” *The Cambridge Companion to English Restoration Theatre*, Ed. Deborah Payne Fisk, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) 57.

explanation” is not complete.<sup>16</sup> I have decided to include these three plays so that I have a variety of French sources to examine, not just a plethora of adaptations of Molière’s plays.

Previous work on this topic has been more about examining specific individual plays or individual playwrights, not placing together a number of playwrights from either side of the Channel. For example, Harold C. Knutson’s book *The Triumph of Wit: Molière and Restoration Comedy*, is concerned with only Molière’s influence on Restoration theatre. He lays out the long debate (starting in the Restoration itself) and describes the debate up until John Wilcox’s study in 1938, when he says interest in the importance of Molière in influencing Restoration theatre waned. Early arguments were more about plagiarism and “the obvious borrowings by Restoration playwrights were often magnified into such wholesale plundering that their comedies were seen as little more than rickety pseudo-Gallic structures built of stolen materials, or dismissed as inconsequential touches added to a thoroughly English edifice.”<sup>17</sup> Eventually a more moderate position that suggested a more “diffuse French influence” on Restoration theatre, also one though based primarily on Molière, became part of the debate.<sup>18</sup> Knutson is more interested in interpreting “Molière’s theater in light of criteria

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<sup>16</sup> Robert D. Hume, “Jeremy Collier and the Future of the London Theater in 1698.” *Studies in Philology* 96.4 (1999): 480.

<sup>17</sup> Harold C. Knutson, *The Triumph of Wit: Molière and Restoration Comedy*, (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1988) 1.

<sup>18</sup> Knutson, *The Triumph of Wit*, 1.

traditionally associated with Restoration manners comedy.”<sup>19</sup> While perhaps Molière’s specter dominated the Restoration plays, which of course is not the case in this study as only *The Country Wife* is based on Molière’s works, it does seem that this interpretation certainly does not address the early eighteenth-century where we see a variety of different sources for English plays.

I want it to be very clear, however, that this study is in no way inclusive of all English plays at this time taken from French sources. Indeed, in his 1938 study John Wilcox lists fifteen playwrights who were thought to have borrowed from Molière during their own age. These playwrights not only included Aphra Behn and William Wycherley, but also John Dryden, John Lacy and Mathew Medbourne. I have chosen not to focus all of the attention on Molière in part because I hope to include a greater variance of French sources.

John Wilcox’s 1938 *The Relation of Molière to Restoration Comedy* does address some of the issues at work with Wycherley’s *The Country Wife*. He also mentions Aphra Behn, but as more of a borrower and not with regards to *The Emperor of the Moon*, rather two of her other plays. Wilcox claims that Wycherley (with *The Country Wife*) “begins with Molière’s play and ends with a brilliant reflection of the fashionably corrupt society of his own country.”<sup>20</sup> As was stated previously Wilcox briefly mentions Aphra Behn, but is very flippant with regard to her use of Molière. He notes that her *Sir Patient Fancy*

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<sup>19</sup> Knutson, *The Triumph of Wit*, 127.

<sup>20</sup> John Wilcox, *The Relation of Molière to Restoration Comedy*, (1964; reis., New York: B. Blom, 1938) 93.

is based on *Le Malade imaginaire* and that her *The False Count, or a New Way to Play an Old Game* takes some material from *Les Précieuses ridicules*. While this study does not plan to address either of these plays, it also appears that Wilcox's view of Aphra Behn's work that has no distinction "on its own account, and none [of her work] contributed anything to the development of the Restoration comedy of manners" seems to be an outdated view of Aphra Behn.<sup>21</sup>

As for *The Gamester*, Ruth E. Hunt wrote a master's thesis about the influence of *Le Joueur* on *The Gamester* in 1911. Her comparison ends with a conclusion that *Le Joueur* is more carefully done, partially because it is in verse unlike Centlivre's prose version. She claims that *Le Joueur* makes more literary sense and that Centlivre's play appears to end happily to please the audience.<sup>22</sup> This will be an interesting argument to examine with a twenty-first century perspective.

Violetta Trofimova examines Aphra Behn's translated works in her article "French Influence on English Culture in the Second Part of the Seventeenth-Century. Aphra Behn as a Creative Translator and a Mediator Between the Two Cultures." While this article does not specifically mention *The Emperor of the Moon*, it will be interesting to examine how *The Emperor of the Moon* can be analyzed with this emphasis on both

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<sup>21</sup> Wilcox, *The Relation of Molière to Restoration Comedy*, 150.

<sup>22</sup> Ruth E. Hunt, *A Comparison of 'Le Joueur' by Regnard, and 'The Gamester,' by Mrs. Centlivre*. (Master's Thesis. University of Kansas, 1911) 87.

cultural translations, as horizontal exchange and how she translates around gender, a more vertical exchange.<sup>23</sup>

Stedman points out that there were a number of works of the “sources and influences” variety from the early twentieth-century about French influences on seventeenth century work in general. This seems to be consistent with the previous scholarship I have been able to identify, such as Ruth E. Hunt’s work on *The Gamester*. However, there is also clearly work being done on the exchange and mediation between the cultures. While this thesis will primarily be interested in the one way influence of the French on the English, and not following English work as it then influences the French, I hope that this thesis will also be able to examine some of the early twentieth century works and find ways that a twenty-first century perspective will be able to enlighten their position with regards to “influence.” As Stedman also points out, “this period allows a focus on networks of cultural mediators comprising both male and female protagonists, thus making possible a gender-sensitive approach to cultural mediation, cultural transfer, and cultural transformation.”<sup>24</sup> It is, therefore, the very presence of women in the public sphere during this period that makes it possible to examine culture in this more “gender-sensitive” way. This gender-sensitive approach will be prominent in this thesis.

It will be the work of this thesis to place a number of these debates into conversation with each other, to hopefully ascertain a clearer picture of French influence

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<sup>23</sup> Violetta Trofimova, “French Influence on English Culture in the Second Part of the Seventeenth-Century. Aphra Behn as a Creative Translator and a Mediator Between the Two Cultures.” *Culture, Language and Representation* 4 (2007): 246.

<sup>24</sup> Stedman, *Cultural Exchange in Seventeenth-century France and England*, 16.

on Restoration theatre. This paper will examine why the English were borrowing from French theatre, and to what extent they were writing plays based on French sources. This paper will investigate how these plays depart from their sources and possibly suggest a reason for this departure. I wanted to include a sampling of plays written by both men and women, so that the approach could be at least somewhat gender-sensitive. I did, however, conclude by including more women playwrights than men. This gender-sensitive approach could range from examination of how the women are presented in the plays, to focus shifts from the French sources. We will also be able to see if there is any difference in how the men and the women translate from a group of French playwrights who are indeed all men.

I also hope that I can examine the political aspects of France's influence on the English stage during this period. There was, of course, great interest in the French at this time and indeed this was an era of European history in which the French led the world culturally. Louis XIV was king during the whole of the period being examined here, while a number of different British monarchs were on the throne.

In a period where cults of celebrity had begun it would be a disservice to not also include an examination of the roles that the actresses had in these plays.<sup>25</sup> This thesis will endeavor to not only examine these plays as literature but to take into consideration the actresses who played some of the roles even more minor roles like Katherine Corey. There are a number of important actresses represented in my sampling of plays including

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<sup>25</sup> Nussbaum, *Rival Queens*, 6.

Elizabeth Barry and Anne Bracegirdle in Centlivre's *The Gamester*, playing their apparently common relationship as older more experienced woman and younger maiden respectively.<sup>26</sup> Elizabeth Barry was known for playing tragic characters so it must have been meaningful to have her play this primarily comedic and ridiculous role in *The Gamester* toward the end of her career.<sup>27</sup> This consideration of actresses will help explain the ways that characters from these plays would have been perceived and acted. Paying attention to these aspects of the plays will also make sure to keep the plays as plays, not simply literary texts to be examined. I will endeavor to address the theatricality and the actual performance of the plays I am examining whenever possible.

Through examining these three plays, their source materials, and the lives of the actresses in these plays, I hope to come to a greater understanding of French influences on restoration theatre.

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<sup>26</sup> James Peck, "Albion's 'Chaste Lucrece': Chastity, Resistance, and the Glorious Revolution in the Career of Anne Bracegirdle," *Theatre Survey* 45.01 (2004): 106.

<sup>27</sup> Kate C. Hamilton, "The 'Famous Mrs. Barry': Elizabeth Barry and Restoration Celebrity," *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 42 (2013): 292.

*The Country Wife* (1675), *L'Ecole des maris* (1661), and *L'Ecole des femmes* (1662)

While it is said that *The Country Wife* is based on *L'École des maris* and *L'Ecole des femmes*, it is indeed its own creation as well. Almost fifteen years passed between the writing of Molière's plays, *L'Ecole des maris* (1661) and *L'Ecole des femmes* (1662), and Wycherley's *The Country Wife* (1675). For Molière it seems that *L'Ecole des maris* is something of a practice round for *L'Ecole des femmes*. Both *L'Ecole des maris* and *L'Ecole des femmes* are primarily about the dangers of being a controlling husband, which is clearly what we see in the aptly named Mr. Pinchwife in *The Country Wife*. This chapter will examine the varying morals of these plays, the role of women and marriage in France and England respectively, and the ways that the plays address a fear of "feminization" to better understand the relationship between these three plays.

The titles of both of Molière's plays are important with regards to what they tell us about the morals of the plays. *L'Ecole des maris*, a three act play which is much shorter and feels a little less developed than *L'Ecole des femmes* ends with the line (spoken by the clever servant Lisette), "Vous, si vous connaissez des maris loup-garous,/Envoyez-les au moins à l'école chez nous."<sup>28</sup> This implies that the play serves as real warning to husbands (or, as in the case in both of Molière's plays, potential husbands). The school for husbands shows husbands a way *not* to behave, a sort of

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<sup>28</sup> "You, if you know werewolf husbands,/ Send them at least to our school."  
Molière, *L'École des maris*, ed. Jean Serroy, (Paris: Gallimard, 1985), III.ix.1113-1114.

cautionary tale. This differs from *l'Ecole des femmes* which one would think might serve as a warning to wives based on its title, but it seems to be more about Arnolphe's plot and schooling for his potential wife, which we see was both ineffective and in the end completely pointless as the young girl with no position he brought up to be his wife was not the nobody he had thought she was. This Deus Ex Machina where her birth is abruptly brought to light and solves the problems of the young lovers shows that, as a lady of known birth, she has suddenly attained much more position, and that any plot on Arnolphe's part would only be successful if she indeed had no known family.

The title of *The Country Wife* also shows the change in focus for that play. It is largely about someone who is actually a wife, something we do not see in the French plays, but it is also named after a specific character, Mrs. Margery Pinchwife, and in that way leaves the story squarely at her feet, there is no indication in the title of a moralizing play or a "school." Both of Molière's plays essentially show that rigidity and extremes are anathema to the foundation of a good marriage. However, we do not get to see any of the couples in Molière's plays actually married. This is clearly not the case in *The Country Wife* where adultery actually plays a large part. Both Arnolphe and Sganarelle, the older men trying to marry young brides they have had the intention of marrying for a long time, are merely afraid of potential cuckoldry. It is discussed a great deal, but it does not really have the same weight as the actual cuckoldry going on in *The Country Wife*. This seems at least in part due to the presence of Mr. Horner, a kind of character

completely missing from Molière's world in both of his plays. It seems that the rake is an English addition to these stories.

It is clear that Mr. Pinchwife married "a country wife" so that he would not be cuckolded, presumably this has much of the same logic to it as Arnolphe's instructions for Agnes' education in the convent that she be simple and modest. The predetermined education appears to be equivalent to growing up in the country in the English play. It appears that the use of the "cuckolded husband" as the go between in *The Country Wife* is one of the plot similarities that is supposed to have been taken from *L'Ecole des maris*.<sup>29</sup> It seems in part, as is sometimes the case with neoclassical plays, that in Molière's plays the discussion has to be about potential cuckolding. This is probably due to the French adherence to the neoclassical unities of time, place, and action, which requires that the play take place all in a twenty-four hour time period. The freedom of the English stage to allow time to pass, even though it does not seem that a great amount of time passes in *The Country Wife* allows for these hypotheticals discussed in Molière's plays to be actually acted out, such as the attentions paid to Margery Pinchwife by Horner when they are at the theatre.

In *L'Ecole des maris* Ariste's liberality with his ward Léonor is well rewarded since she decides she indeed wants to marry her older guardian, even though she is free not to, which differs from the rigid arrangement Sganarelle and Isabelle have in the play.

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<sup>29</sup> Tiffany Stern, ed., *The Country Wife*, ed. James Ogden, (London: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama) 2014, xxiv.

In fact Léonor makes it very clear that his allowing her to walk about and go to balls has endeared him to her, and when Sganarelle claims that Léonor will cuckold Ariste in Léonor's presence she exclaims that "Du sort dont vous parlez, je le garantis, moi,/S'il faut que par l'hymen il reçoive ma foi : Il s'y peut assurer ; mais sachez que mon âme/ Ne répondrait de rien, si j'étais votre femme."<sup>30</sup> Of course, Léonor ends up wanting to marry her older guardian at the end and indeed Isabelle abandons her more controlling guardian for a younger man.

We do not get to see an example of this kind of liberality in opposition to the controlling rigid husband in *l'Ecole des femmes* but when we see these husbands who are unconcerned with controlling their wives in *The Country Wife* they are both treated as fools and their more liberal views on marriage do indeed make them cuckolds. We see this in the case of Sparkish and Alithea with regards to Harcourt's intentions toward Alithea. Sparkish asks Harcourt to find out if his future wife has any wit so they are able to speak without anyone hearing. Alithea is scandalized that her future husband would behave this way, as is the ever afraid of cuckoldry Mr. Pinchwife (Alithea's brother). When Alithea tells on Harcourt to Sparkish that Harcourt "spoke so scurrilously of you, I had no patience to hear him; besides, he has been making love to me" Sparkish simply replies, "Pshaw! To show his parts – we wits rail and make love often to show our parts;

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<sup>30</sup> The fate of which you speak, I guarantee it,/ If by hymen he receives my faith,/ He can be assured; but know that my soul/ Would respond to nothing if I was your wife."  
Molière, *L'Ecole des maris*, I.ii.241-244.

as we have no affections, so we have no malice...”<sup>31</sup> It is Sparkish’s pretence to wit however, that makes him a fool, since that is how he justifies his friend’s interest in his future wife. He is of course, outwitted and is not rewarded for his liberality with his future wife the way Ariste is in *l’Ecole des maris*. Perhaps this is at least in part because Alithea seems offended and uninterested in these attentions, unlike Léonor who we do not actually see interact with any possible rivals. Sir Fidget also falls into this fool category. He lets his sister and wife be alone with Horner because he believes Horner to be impotent. It is the Sir Fidget plot where we really see Horner making use of his supposed impotence. Pinchwife is never calm in Horner’s presence and has not heard about his supposed impotence at the beginning of the play. However, in *The Country Wife* both being overly protective of your wife and being overly liberal with your wife leads to cuckoldry. Maybe what we really learn in *The Country Wife* is that cuckoldry is in some ways inevitable. Even though Molière often calls for moderation in all things in his plays we do not get to see the extreme in the other direction in *L’Ecole des femmes*.

One of the major shifts from the two French plays to the English play is the presence of the rake character, Mr. Horner. He begins the story and even though the play is called *The Country Wife* it seems that Horner is the character that drives most of the play. In Laura J. Rosenthal’s article “‘All Injury’s Forgot:’ Restoration Sex Comedy and National Amnesia” she argues that there is a political need for these libertine plots in

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<sup>31</sup> William Wycherley, *The Country Wife*, ed. James Ogden, (London: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama) 2014, II.i.242-243; 245-247.

Restoration theatre. She argues that “the triumph of the cuckold celebrates – albeit in overtly cynical ways – a nation recovering from a leveling rebellion that it must, with the help of repeated performances of *The Country Wife*, *Marriage à la Mode*, and other sex comedies, remember to forget.”<sup>32</sup> She claims that there is a need to forget that is attached to both the monarchy of Charles II and also Restoration comedies. The Act of Oblivion was “the monarch’s agreement to forget about much republican rebellion.”<sup>33</sup> She argues that *The Country Wife* shows this sexual amnesia perhaps the most precisely because we see at the end of the play that Pinchwife chooses to believe in Horner’s impotence, even though he knows it not to be true, because Sir Jasper accepts it which pardons all of the ladies involved.<sup>34</sup> Pinchwife states that “For my own sake fain I would all believe;/ Cuckolds, like lovers, should themselves deceive.”<sup>35</sup> Pinchwife very clearly acknowledges that he must believe in this falsehood. Through this discussion it seems we can posit that perhaps the need for the “libertine plot” to actually cuckold the husbands does not happen in Molière’s plays because it is unique in its political importance to England. It seems that the need to forget the fate of Charles I for Charles II to be secure on the throne is perhaps reflected in the needed amnesia in these sex comedies, specifically *The Country Wife*. This would account for some of the plot changes from the French plays to the English play.

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<sup>32</sup> Laura J. Rosenthal, “‘All Injury’s Forgot’: Restoration Sex Comedy and National Amnesia,” *Comparative Drama* 42.1 (2008): 26.

<sup>33</sup> Rosenthal, “‘All Injury’s Forgot’: Restoration Sex Comedy and National Amnesia,” 17.

<sup>34</sup> Rosenthal, “‘All Injury’s Forgot’: Restoration Sex Comedy and National Amnesia,” 24.

<sup>35</sup> Wycherley, *The Country Wife*, V.iv.367-368.

It seems more important to Molière to tell a moralizing story, which is not truly something we see in *The Country Wife*. Perhaps this is because of Molière's inherent tie to the state of Louis XIV. France's position at the time of the writing of these plays is different politically than England's position. What seems to be the most important for much of Molière's writing is the glorifying and reassertion of the proper place of the monarch. This is what Maryann Tebben argues in her article, "Speaking of women: Molière and Conversation at the Court of Louis XIV." She points out that as Louis XIV attempted to "feminize" his court he encouraged "leisure activities" such as female conversation, which previously had been considered leisurely and unmasculine, making it unesteemed.<sup>36</sup> She continues to point out that Molière frequently ridiculed female conversation and that by doing this "Molière derided learned women and eradicated women's call for education through salons."<sup>37</sup> She also suggests that it is possible Molière targeted the *salonnières* not because they were women but because of "their associations with the Fronde and/or the Jansenist movement, both of which challenged the power of the monarch."<sup>38</sup> The issue of literary women and the Fronde will be addressed later in this paper. In the end Tebben concludes that, in the plays of Molière she takes into account (*Les femmes savantes*, *les Précieuses ridicules* and *La Critique*) that "each of his plays affirmed the power of female conversation in the seventeenth

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<sup>36</sup> Maryann Tebben, "Speaking of Women: Molière and Conversation at the Court of Louis XIV," *Modern Language Studies* 29.2 (1999): 190.

<sup>37</sup> Tebben, "Speaking of Women," 190.

<sup>38</sup> Tebben, "Speaking of Women," 190.

century in that each one addressed the products of conversation as urgent social problems to be remedied with Molière's special skill at ridicule."<sup>39</sup>

Tebben does not discuss *L'Ecole des femmes* in her article, only the critique play. In fact *L'Ecole des femmes* lacks the ridicule of female conversation that is at the center of many of Molière's other plays (*Les femmes savantes* and *Les Précieuses ridicules* to be more specific). This is in part because the controlling husband is the object of ridicule in *L'Ecole des femmes* but also because there is only one other female character and she, unlike the clever servant Lisette in *L'Ecole des maris*, is foolish and clearly not a conversation partner for Agnès. In fact we know that Arnolphe chose these particular servants to be "tout aussi simples qu'elle."<sup>40</sup> As the play progresses we see that these servants do live up to his expectations to comic affect. Essentially, Agnès does not have a female conversation partner, and perhaps this is part of why we are allowed to be sympathetic toward her. The actions of Arnolphe are clearly depicted as unreasonable, but perhaps Agnès' role as an essentially solitary woman is what makes her not the object of ridicule. In some ways she is the perfect wife, just not for Arnolphe who thought he could arrange everything so perfectly. Molière's plays are generally seen to be conservative in the things that they mock, and while he does not mock women openly in *L'Ecole des femmes* the way he does in *Les femmes savantes*, it seems that the view of women is no less conservative.

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<sup>39</sup> Tebben, "Speaking of Women," 205.

<sup>40</sup> "All as simple as her." Molière, *L'Ecole des femmes*, ed. Jean Serroy, (Paris: Gallimard, 1985), I.i.148.

I want to suggest that perhaps part of the reason that the rake is an important English addition to the plot taken from the French has to do with differing concerns about political situations in the two countries. *The Country Wife* is much more focused on actual adultery happening to men than the potential adultery that is entirely imagined in Molière's plays. It seems that this perhaps reflects some difference in how either adultery specifically or how the place of women in marriage had different concerns and anxieties in 1660s France and 1670s England. It is also possibly a shift that happened because of the neoclassical rules that governed seventeenth-century French theatre but that will be a point examined later in this chapter. We will examine next some of the political concerns surrounding women in France when Molière's plays were written, and also the political concerns surrounding women in England at the time Wycherley's play was written.

The concerns in France seem to have been both about recent French history and about reasserting traditional gender roles of women. Patricia Hannon writes that in early modern France women "became the focus of a body of literature that never lost sight of their procreative function at a time when all Europe envisioned the family as an essential ideological building block for consolidating state power."<sup>41</sup> Even though this could probably be applied to other places in Europe, there seems to be an especially French stress on conformity. Hannon notes that Linda Timmermans emphasizes that "the period following the Fronde and the defeat of heroic values was marked by increasing

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<sup>41</sup> Patricia Hannon, *Fabulous Idenitites: Women's Fairy Tales in Seventeenth-Century France*, (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1998) 20.

conformity which stressed the traditional roles attributed to the sexes”<sup>42</sup> This highlights the ways that conformity of traditional roles became an important part of the situation of women in France in the 1660s.

The Fronde has always been the moment that is used to describe why Louis XIV became the absolutist monarch that he did, and it seems that these wars may have had a controlling effect on women as well. While centralizing and strengthening the state made women more subordinate there is a clearer connection to be examined between the more restrictive role of women in the mid seventeenth century and the Fronde. The Fronde was a series of civil wars, which were initially led by the *parlements* but soon (as early as 1649) involved nobles as well. Indeed, a number of these nobles were warrior women known as Amazons.<sup>43</sup> These women included Duchesse de Montpensier, Duchesse de Chevreuse and the Duchesse de Longueville. This period in France was one of the “most sustained and the most public examples of female militarism in its history.”<sup>44</sup> The warrior women planned battles from a distance, as did military men at the time. There was even an episode where Louis XIV had trapped the rebels inside Paris and the Duchesse de Montpensier “ordered the cannons of the Bastille, which were normally directed inward toward the city, to be turned outward and fired against the royal army and her first cousin,

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<sup>42</sup> Hannon, *Fabulous Idenitites*, 21.

<sup>43</sup> Joan DeJean, “Violent Women and Violence against Women: Representing the ‘Strong’ Woman in Early Modern France,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 29.1 (2003): 131.

<sup>44</sup> DeJean, “Violent Women and Violence against Women,” 131.

Louis XIV.<sup>45</sup> Louis XIV made punishing the former rebels a priority as he took stronger control and many of the “Amazon princesses” were treated especially harshly. Many spent long periods in exile.<sup>46</sup> The connection between this period and the literary salons was that as military activity for women was no longer an option, “french women, some of them former Amazons, began to enter the literary marketplace in remarkable numbers.”<sup>47</sup> While this reveals the way that Molière was helping the control of the state with plays like *Les Précieuse ridicules*, it also shows some of the great anxiety and fear toward women at the time. This situation colors not only the plays that obviously are commenting on the situation like *Les Précieuse ridicules* and *Les Femmes savantes*, but can also inform the ways that women are expected to be controlled and kept “simple” in *L'Ecole des femmes* and *L'Ecole des maris*.

In addition to the anxieties about women in power brought to light by the Fronde, France had also recently had a series of women who had been the regent. France did not allow women to rule as queen as the English did but women could be essentially queen as the regents to their young sons. The sixteenth century and seventeenth century had seen a number of these queens. They were Catherine de Médicis (the mother of Charles IX), Marie de Médicis (the mother of Louis XIII), and Anne of Austria (the mother of Louis

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<sup>45</sup> DeJean, “Violent Women and Violence against Women,” 132.

<sup>46</sup> DeJean, “Violent Women and Violence against Women,” 132.

<sup>47</sup> DeJean, “Violent Women and Violence against Women,” 132.

XIV).<sup>48</sup> All of these queens maintained their own household, and Marie de Médicis “made her household into a seedbed of rebellion, using her clients and creatures to challenge her beleaguered son, Louis XIII.”<sup>49</sup> This activity is at least in part why Louis XIV ended the autonomy of the household of the queen. Louis XIV “kept a keen eye on the households of all his female kin, hiring and firing as he pleased the queen’s or the dauphine’s ladies-in-waiting.”<sup>50</sup> While this shift primarily affected only noble women it also would have been a shift in the perceived power and influence of women in general. It seems that in some ways seventeenth-century France, or perhaps just Louis XIV, was concerned in reigning in the power of women in the public sphere to a more private and household existence. This makes it clear that women in seventeenth century France were being regulated to the familial sphere (even with the presence of those in salons, clearly which were being mocked for the good of the state by Molière) perhaps in a more conservative way than we see in the more recently extreme puritan state in England under Cromwell. This will be examined in the next section of the paper as we look at the recent political anxieties surrounding women in England.

Now that we have examined some of the concerns about the power and public role of women in France, let us turn to England and see how Wycherley’s England may have had different concerns that would have effected his telling of a story about the

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<sup>48</sup> Domna C. Stanton, *The Dynamics of Gender in Early Modern France: Women Writ, Women Writing*, (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2014), 7.

<sup>49</sup> Kathryn Norberg, “Incorporating Women/Gender into French History Courses, 1429-1789: Did Women of the Old Regime Have a Political History?” *French Historical Studies* 27.2 (2004): 251-2.

<sup>50</sup> Norberg, “Incorporating Women/Gender into French History Courses,” 251-2.

futility of having a simple wife in order to not be a cuckolded dupe and a subject of ridicule. Conceptions of gender were changing in mid seventeenth century England. As Fletcher says in *Gender, Sex & Subordination in England 1500-1800*, “..if there are turning points at all in history, 1660 was the most important in seventeenth-century England.”<sup>51</sup> The Civil War was not only a political crisis it “shook the confidence of Englishmen in their control of the social and gender order to the roots.”<sup>52</sup> Over the course of the seventeenth century, analogies about “familial and political order began to break down.”<sup>53</sup> It seems one of the major changes after the Civil War was the undermining of the role of the Church. Ideas of family and gender after the Civil War seem to have secularized in a way that could not be undone. Fletcher cites the work of a number of enlightenment philosophers and their work on gender, and concludes that, “an ideology of ancient scriptural patriarchy is being gradually displaced, between 1660 and 1800, by one of modern secular patriarchy.”<sup>54</sup> While women are apparently trading one patriarchy for another there do appear to be shifts in the ways these different patriarchies function. There seems to have been some uncertainty about the control of women in this period, as David Turner argues, “It is difficult to avoid the notion that the preponderance of jokes about faithless wives and men’s inability to control them in the seventeenth century

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<sup>51</sup> Anthony Fletcher, *Gender, Sex, and Subordination in England, 1500-1800*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995) 283.

<sup>52</sup> Fletcher, *Gender, Sex, and Subordination in England, 1500-1800*, 283.

<sup>53</sup> David M. Turner, *Fashioning Adultery: Gender, Sex and Civility in England, 1660–1740*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 7.

<sup>54</sup> Fletcher, *Gender, Sex, and Subordination in England, 1500-1800*, 295.

spoke to deep cultural concerns about the limits of patriarchal authority.”<sup>55</sup> This seems to support Fletcher’s point that “in modern patriarchy women have at least been offered a deal that they can accept or reject, whereas previously their subordination was based upon misogynistic assumptions about them that were entirely negative.”<sup>56</sup> This addresses some of the ways that adultery was viewed in England.

At the risk of making broad sweeping generalizations about two periods of history it seems that in France with the political disruption of the Fronde there is a move toward limiting the role that women play in society. In England the political disruption of the English Civil War, while not necessarily loosening restrictions on women, did more to change their relationship to the law and the state, as the church was less likely to become involved with issues of morality. There is a privatization of the domestic sphere in England in the later part of the seventeenth century.<sup>57</sup> Perhaps it is the uncertainty about the new patriarchy offered to women in England in this period that makes the concerns of *The Country Wife* different than the concerns of *L'Ecole des maris* and *L'Ecole des femmes*. Perhaps this is part of the reason that the rake is present in *The Country Wife*. He exists to represent the very real ways that a wife may be difficult to control, as opposed to the more theoretical examples we see at work in the Molière’s plays.

Following this line of inquiry it is interesting to note the large number of women present in *The Country Wife* in comparison to the much smaller cast of women in *L'Ecole*

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<sup>55</sup> Turner, *Fashioning Adultery*, 114.

<sup>56</sup> Fletcher, *Gender, Sex, and Subordination in England, 1500-1800*, 296.

<sup>57</sup> Turner, *Fashioning Adultery*, 6.

*des femmes*. *The Country Wife* includes seven named women which is equal to the number of named men if one counts the Quack as a named character. *L'Ecole des maris* has four named men and only three named women, whereas *L'Ecole des femmes*, as was discussed earlier, includes two named women (one of whom is the unhelpful maid Georgette, hardly in the same tradition as Lisette from *L'Ecole des maris* or Lucy from *The Country Wife*) and six named men. It is enlightening to examine what might be the reason for this plethora of women onstage in *The Country Wife*. It seems to be at least in part because a number of women are needed to support the libertine plot. There must be a retinue of women around Sir Jaspar Fidget in addition to those needed to tell the Pinchwife story. Horner would not be much of a rake if there were only a few women to seduce onstage. It also seems possible that the many women onstage might have been present because of the still novel concept of the actress. We know that women performed on Molière's stage, and in some plays he has more of them, but perhaps it was this interest in women's bodies onstage that dictated the large numbers of women in the cast of the English play. We know that the presence of actual women's bodies onstage was used to erotic purpose on the English stage, especially in rape scenes, which became newly emphasized in the Restoration theatre.<sup>58</sup> In fact, perhaps it is a part of Molière's derision of women's conversation that seemed to be necessary to keep the monarch in a position of absolute power in France, thus showing that perhaps at the time England and France had entirely different political concerns about the place of women in their states.

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<sup>58</sup> Marsden, "Rape, Voyeurism and the Restoration Stage," 187.

It is fairly clear as well that Wycherley's *The Country Wife* is a conservative play. As Pat Gill points out, Restoration comedy was socially conservative even with the libertine creed of some of the characters running through the story.<sup>59</sup> Also these are all plays that "begin, develop, and end in concerns about gender, sexuality and marriage."<sup>60</sup> There seems to be some debate about the socially conservative nature of *The Country Wife*, however. Tiffany Stern claims that it is a "subversive drama."<sup>61</sup> It is often times the morals and the endings of the plays that can help us determine the subversiveness of a play. While the moral of *The Country Wife* is not laid out as nicely as the clear moral in *L'Ecole des maris* or even the not explicitly stated moral in *L'Ecole des femmes*, there is nonetheless this political message. The last line of the epilogue, spoken by Mrs. Knep who played Lady Fidget focuses on the fact that gallants can deceive other men "But then we women – there's no coz'ning us."<sup>62</sup> However as Tiffany Stern points out in her introduction of the play, this last line is complicated by the fact that it is clearly contradictory.<sup>63</sup> While Mrs. Pinchwife never falls for the story that Horner is impotent, she does appear to have been deceived by the nature of their relationship. Her country simplicity that was supposed to keep her from cuckolding her husband actually only made her think that she could marry Horner. When Horner tells her that she cannot marry

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<sup>59</sup> Pat Gill, "Gender, Sexuality, and Marriage," *The Cambridge Companion to English Restoration Theatre*, ed. Deborah Payne Fisk, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 191.

<sup>60</sup> Gill, "Gender, Sexuality, and Marriage," 191.

<sup>61</sup> Stern, *The Country Wife*, vii.

<sup>62</sup> Wycherley, *The Country Wife*, Epilogue.33.

<sup>63</sup> Tiffany Stern, *The Country Wife*, xxi.

him because she is already married she responds “Oh would you make me believe that? Don’t I see every day at London here, women leave their first husbands, and go and live with other men as their wives? Pish pshaw! You’d make me angry, but that I love you so mainly.”<sup>64</sup> So it seems that Mrs. Pinchwife was indeed cozened, and is not very happy about it by the end of the play. This complication of any moral (and the fact that it is indeed contradictory) may be an indication of the subversive nature of the drama. *The Country Wife* appears to be unique among Restoration comedies in that the rake does not end up married by the end of the play.<sup>65</sup> However, it does seem that life continues the way that it was at the end of the play. Horner is not revealed in any way and Mr. and Mrs. Pinchwife stay together at the end. Unless the continued secrecy and success of the rake is subversive, it seems that Rosenthal’s point about the act of choosing to forget what one knows about the rake is indeed a political act, and a political act that was reaffirming the current political state.<sup>66</sup>

There seems to have been a certain amount of anxiety in England at the time of the Restoration about fops and the potential feminized or “frenchified” position of men. As was discussed in the introduction to this thesis, there are a number of reasons that there were strong French cultural influences on England at the time. Besides the obvious return of Charles II from France, and other royalists exiled during the interregnum, there was also a plethora of courtesy literature being written in France in this period, which

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<sup>64</sup> Wycherley, *The Country Wife*, V.iv.193-196.

<sup>65</sup> Stern, *The Country Wife*, xx-xxi

<sup>66</sup> Rosenthal, “‘All Injury’s Forgot’: Restoration Sex Comedy and National Amnesia,” 26.

was being translated into English. Additionally, France had become a popular destination on the grand tour of young gentlemen.<sup>67</sup> There was some concern about the effect of French language and culture on English masculinity. Even though the language was admired for its sophistication, “it was also feared that the infiltration of ‘Frenchified’ words would emasculate and enervate the English tongue.”<sup>68</sup> This opens up some interesting questions on the feminized male characters in *The Country Wife* and how they compare to the foolish men that we see in *L’Ecole des maris*, and leads us try to understand the apparent feminizing that is coming from France.

If we look first at *The Country Wife* there are two important feminized characters to examine. They are the fop character, Sparkish, and the apparently impotent Horner. Sparkish can certainly be considered a fop in the play. He is possibly the most foolish of the men we meet and before he enters Harcourt has stated that “most men are the contraries to that they would seem.”<sup>69</sup> Horner agrees and states that “your arrantest cheat is your trustee or executor;... and your noisy, pert rogue of a wit, the greatest fop, dullest ass, and worst company; as you shall see, for here he comes.”<sup>70</sup> When Sparkish enters with his first line he, like Sir Jaspar before him in the play, cannot seem to stop laughing. He, like Sir Jaspar, is laughing about Horner’s supposed impotence. He clearly is not the witty equal of his friends and when he tells them he left an Earl to dine with them

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<sup>67</sup> Turner, *Fashioning Adultery*, 37.

<sup>68</sup> Turner, *Fashioning Adultery*, 37. Michelle Cohen’s *Fashioning Masculinity*.

<sup>69</sup> Wycherley, *The Country Wife*, I.i.237.

<sup>70</sup> Wycherley, *The Country Wife*, I.i.243; 245-6.

Dorilant remarks, “Why, I thought thou hadst loved a man with a title better than a suit with a French trimming to’t.”<sup>71</sup> Not only do we see that Sparkish is a sycophant in all likelihood but, this draws the connection between his foppish nature and the French fashion, highlighting the popular anti-French sentiment of the 1670s.<sup>72</sup> Gill notes that in Restoration comedy, “fops serve as another unacceptable masculine alternative that must be defeated by the superior intelligence and clever rhetoric of rake-heroes by the time the play is over.”<sup>73</sup> While it is not the rake-hero who must win the day in *The Country Wife*, but indeed the friend of the rake-hero, this addresses the way that Sparkish is treated as undeserving of his potential bride, because, unlike his counterpart Pinchwife, he is not jealous at all. When he does eventually become jealous, it further alienates him from his already alienated fiancée. It is the men who find his lack of jealousy to be a problem that makes him undeserving. Alithea finds that part of him appealing and does not like him when he becomes jealous.<sup>74</sup>

In contrast we also have the feminized Horner. As was stated in the introduction to this thesis, Horner has come from France with a disease. In a sense, to outsiders that is, he has become feminized in France, exactly the apparent fear the English had in the 1670s. In the infamous china scene, Old Lady Squeamish’s interchange with Sir Jaspar

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<sup>71</sup> Wycherley, *The Country Wife*, I.i.282-283.

<sup>72</sup> Turner, *Fashioning Adultery*, 37.

<sup>73</sup> Gill, “Gender, Sexuality, and Marriage,” 203.

<sup>74</sup> Wycherley, *The Country Wife*, V.iii.56.

about the location of her granddaughter shows the way that Horner is marked as “feminized:”

Old Lady Squeamish: ... Say, if it be not a woman’s lodging, what makes she here? But are you sure no woman lodges here?  
Sir Jaspar: No, nor no man neither, this is Master Horner’s lodging.<sup>75</sup>

We can see here that indeed, as other scholars have pointed out, once Horner is considered impotent he is feminized.<sup>76</sup> This creates an interesting parallel between Horner and Sparkish, two characters who otherwise appear to have little in common in the play. However, Horner’s perceived “frenchified” self is clearly a different situation than Sparkish’s apparently real “frenchified” self.

These feminized men are missing from the two Molière plays examined here, however they are in no way missing from Molière’s plays in general. We do know that Louis XIV had made an effort to feminize his court, which we already discussed in this paper as it related to women’s conversation at court and the plays of Molière.<sup>77</sup> The men in *L’Ecole des femmes* and *L’Ecole des maris* are indeed foolish, but they are foolish for being so removed from fashion and style. Sganarelle berates the fashions of the day, saying, “M’obliger à porter de ces petits chapeaux/ Qui laissent éventer leurs débiles cerveaux,/ Et de ces blonds cheveux, de qui la vaste enflure/ Des visages humains

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<sup>75</sup> Wycherley, *The Country Wife*, IV.iii.153-156.

<sup>76</sup> Stern, *The Country Wife*, xix.

<sup>77</sup> Tebben, “Speaking of Women,” 190.

offusque la figure?”<sup>78</sup> Sganarelle dislikes these muguets, or young elegant men perfumed with the essence of muguets (lily of the valley), and the styles they sport. The young men (and the styles) he describes are something much closer to the feminized fops we see in Molière’s other plays. He mocks the smaller hats worn nowadays (in comparison to the larger hats worn in the days of Louis XIII).<sup>79</sup> The large blonde hair that he mocks were the popular wigs worn at the time. It seems then that Sganarelle, has made an active choice to not be feminized, or frenchified, as the English plays say. However, Ariste makes it clear that this is extreme behavior. We are meant to find these views ridiculous. Sganarelle even mocks his older brother who “cache ses cheveux blancs d’une perruque noire.”<sup>80</sup> We know that in the play Ariste is less ridiculous in his behavior than Sganarelle, so this seems to lend some sympathy to the more fashion conscious life style. However, we know that in other plays Molière mocks fops, so this seems another example of how Molière’s plays advocate for moderation in all things, or as Ariste responds to his brother, “L’un et l’autre excès choque.”<sup>81</sup> This is clearly a highlighted section of the play though, as it is their opening debate at the start of the play. It is compelling to examine the ways that these characters are potentially “frenchified” and

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<sup>78</sup> “Am I obliged to wear these little hats/ that leave uncovered their moronic brains,/ And this blond hair, of which the vast swelling/ of human countenances offends the face?”  
Molière, *L'Ecole des maris*, I.i.25-28.

<sup>79</sup> Jean Serroy, ed., *L'Ecole des maris ; L'Ecole des femmes ; La Critique De L'Ecole des femmes ; L'Impromptu de Versailles*, 316.

<sup>80</sup> “hides his white hair under a black wig.”  
Molière, *L'Ecole des maris*, I.i.56.

<sup>81</sup> “The one and the other excess shock.”  
Molière, *L'Ecole des maris*, I.i.43.

what that says about attitudes of the time, but indeed the characters that we see in the French plays examined here are not “frenchified” but seem to be as concerned about appearing to be masculine men as most of the characters in *The Country Wife*.

It is helpful to examine the actresses at this time as well. Actresses are undoubtedly one of the aspects of English theatre at this time that were “influenced” by French practices. So much so that Charles II “decreed that all female parts were to be played by females in 1661.” Charles II’s focus on this aspect of the theatre meant that women were on stage in numbers that were close to those of men on the stage.<sup>82</sup> It seems that especially in times such as the Restoration where the cults of celebrity were centered around actresses, it can color our examination to look at these actresses. Looking at some of the actresses in *The Country Wife* can help us understand how these characters would have been perceived.

Margery Pinchwife was played by Elizabeth Boutell. She was known for playing romantic ingénue characters.<sup>83</sup> She often was paired with Mrs. Marshall who played more evil characters.<sup>84</sup> They were paired much the same way that Mrs. Barry and Anne Bracegirdle would be paired together later as their successors.<sup>85</sup> Mrs. Barry and Anne Bracegirdle were both in Susanna Centlivre’s *The Gamester* and will be discussed further

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<sup>82</sup> Kirsten Pullen, *Actresses and Whores: On Stage and in Society*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 24.

<sup>83</sup> John Harold Wilson, *All the King’s Ladies: Actresses of the Restoration*, (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1958), 97.

<sup>84</sup> Wilson, *All the King’s Ladies*, 97.

<sup>85</sup> Wilson, *All the King’s Ladies*, 97.

when we examine that play later in this thesis. Boutell was known as being promiscuous. Kirsten Pullen argues in her book *Actresses and Whores* that “Boutell was repeatedly named a whore in popular satires and play epilogues of the period, and current histories have preserved this convention.”<sup>86</sup> She played at least twelve breeches roles and was thought to have very nice legs which would be the subject of at least one epilogue in Corye’s *The Generous Enemies* as John Wilson addresses in his older work on the subject, *All the King’s Ladies*. Pullen criticizes Wilson’s study and states that he “proposes that the virginal actress was easily seduced by unscrupulous aristocrats.”<sup>87</sup> She suggests that “his account has been repeated and expanded in subsequent histories, and prevents historians from narrativizing the first generation as autonomous subjects.”<sup>88</sup> She argues that these accusations of whorishness limited the possibility for female agency.<sup>89</sup> While Wilson’s account of actresses is helpful it does seem to not focus on all of the possible avenues it could. The epilogue from the 1671 play mentioned by John Wilson, was read by Elizabeth Boutell and states,

As Woman let me with the Men prevail,  
 And with the Ladies as I look like Male.  
 'Tis worth your Money that such Legs appear;  
 These are not to be seen so cheap elsewhere:  
 In short commend this Play, or by this light,  
 We will not sup with one of you to night.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Pullen, *Actresses and Whores*, 22.

<sup>87</sup> Pullen, *Actresses and Whores*, 23.

<sup>88</sup> Pullen, *Actresses and Whores*, 23.

<sup>89</sup> Pullen, *Actresses and Whores*, 24.

<sup>90</sup> John Corye, *The Generous Enemies, or, The Ridiculous Lovers*, Play, (London: Printed by H. Lloyd for James Magnus in Rusel-Street, near the Piazza, 1672, From Newberry Library),

John Wilson uses this to point out the apparent attractiveness and focus on Boutell's legs, but this also highlights the apparent whorishness of Boutell, as Pullen describes. This epilogue suggests that her legs are cheaper to see on stage than they would be elsewhere, suggesting that perhaps there is a high price to see her legs *not* on stage. It also threatens that the audience will not be allowed to sup with her if they are not kind about the play. Both of these comments show contemporaries portrayed Boutell on stage as a whore as well. In fact, sexual exploits of actresses were often brought up in court satires. *The Session of Ladies* from 1688 (after *The Country Wife*) describes Boutell this way: "There was chestnut-maned Boutell, whom all the Town fucks."<sup>91</sup> This further shows her sexual reputation. It is interesting to imagine her as both an ingénue and the apparently promiscuous women presented at the time.

It seems that this perception of her would have colored the role of Margery in *The Country Wife*. In some ways Margery is actually the perfect combination of both the young romantic ingénue and the sexually promiscuous woman. The epilogue addressing Boutell's legs was performed before *The Country Wife*, so we can imagine that this assumption of promiscuity was already part of her image. Mrs. Pinchwife is both young and innocent as she is meant to be a wife brought up in the country, but she also is extremely interested in sex.

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[http://gateway.proquest.com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:image:62763](http://gateway.proquest.com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:62763) (Accessed 4 May 2016), Epilogue.

<sup>91</sup> Elizabeth Howe, *The First English Actresses: Women and Drama, 1660-1700*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 35.

We also know that Katherine Corey played the clever maid Lucy. Lucy is a remarkably important maid in the play and she is the one who has to save the day at the end. Katherine Corey often played maids. She played the maid in *The Emperor of the Moon*, which we will examine next. As was stated early in this paper she would have been well known and had been arrested for her mockery on stage of Lady Harvey.<sup>92</sup> Wilson states that she played “old women” roles, but that even she had been on stage in a breeches part in *The Roman Empress* (1670).<sup>93</sup> Elizabeth Howe tells us that Katherine Corey was “large and plain and later specialised in ugly, comic parts.”<sup>94</sup>

Clearly the neoclassical rules of the French stage followed by Molière are at least a part of where the plays differ. This was something that was thought through at the time as well, and Dryden wrote an essay about why English theatre was superior to French theatre because it did not need to follow the constraints of neoclassicism. This was obviously a point of comparison that was in the minds of the English at the time because Dryden discusses it at some length in his *Essay of Dramatic Poesy*. Dryden’s essay is structured as a number of characters speaking to each other about drama and poetry in England as compared to the “ancients” and also France. The unities are all discussed at some length and one of the characters suggests that there is not as much plot in French

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<sup>92</sup> Avery, and Scouten, “Critical Introduction,” *The London Stage 1660 – 1800: Part I 1660-1700*, clxxii.

<sup>93</sup> Wilson, *All the King’s Ladies*, 73.

<sup>94</sup> Howe, *The First English Actresses*, 24.

plays because of their need to follow the unity of action.<sup>95</sup> They also discuss the idea that some things should not be presented on stage, one of the Neoclassical rules that the French still followed.

That is, those actions which by reason of their cruelty will cause aversion in us, or by reason of their impossibility unbelief, ought either wholly to be avoided by a Poet, or onely delivered by narration. To which, we may have leave to add such as to avoid tumult, (as was before hinted) or to reduce the Plot into a more reasonable compass of time, or for defect of Beauty in them, are rather to be related then presented to the eye.<sup>96</sup>

It was the standard and accepted rules in both classical Greek plays, and then consequently neoclassical French plays that “obscene” acts happened offstage, such as the blinding of Oedipus, or the death of Hippolytus in Racine’s *Phèdre*. Of course, the English had no attachment to these rules, as is clear in Shakespeare’s plays with the blinding of the Gloucester onstage in *King Lear*. The adherence to the unities of time, place and action of Molière’s plays make for some obvious differences with Wycherley’s play, and make it so the cuckolding happens only in the future in the minds of the potential husbands we see. *L’Ecole des femmes* all takes place in one location, which is of course different than *The Country Wife*. However, it also seems possible that some of the more lascivious behavior in *The Country Wife* would have been seen as behavior less appropriate on the stage in France.

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<sup>95</sup> John Dryden, “An Essay of Dramatic Poesy,” 1668. Ed. Edmund D. Jones. *English Critical Essays: Sixteenth, Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century*, Vol. 1. (London: Oxford University Press, 1947), 156.

<sup>96</sup> Dryden, “An Essay of Dramatic Poesy,” 160.

*The Country Wife*, while clearly based upon *L'Ecole des femmes* and *L'Ecole des maris* is a play that deals with somewhat different concerns. As we have addressed in this chapter, there are differences for a number of possible reasons. There were different political concerns in England and France at the times the plays were written respectively. There were also different situations with regard to women and the way the patriarchy was structured in their respective countries. There are also clear differences due to the French concerns with neoclassicism and the lack of concern for these rules in England. It does seem that all the plays are primarily conservative in their reassertion of the status quo, even though there seems to be some debate about this point in regards to *The Country Wife*.

*The Emperor of the Moon* (1687) and *Arlequin Empereur dans la lune* (1684)

*The Emperor of the Moon* was first performed in 1687. Charles II has died by this time and his brother James II has become king. James was openly Catholic and would only remain king for three years before he was deposed, and replaced by William III and Mary II. Borrowing from French sources, while it continued at this time was less in vogue. David Roberts claims “borrowing from French and Spanish playwrights was necessary for as long as France, with the Stuarts in its pocket, was regarded as the superior cultural and military power.”<sup>97</sup> He suggests that after the 1660s and 70s with the campaigns of William III “new models of Englishness could assert themselves.”<sup>98</sup> While of course we have not yet reached the reign of William III, Charles II has died and it seems that the relationship with French sources may have altered at this time.

*Emperor of the Moon* is Aphra Behn’s most popular play after *The Rover*.<sup>99</sup> Of course, *The Rover* has enjoyed a resurgence in popularity in recent years, and the same cannot be said about *The Emperor of the Moon*. It did however enjoy a revival in the early eighteenth century and for fifty years after this revival it was performed often.<sup>100</sup> The political situation at the time is an important factor in *The Emperor of the Moon*. For Al Coppola, it is the most important factor about the play. He claims that the play “makes

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<sup>97</sup> David Roberts, *Restoration Plays and Players: An Introduction*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 75.

<sup>98</sup> Roberts, *Restoration Plays and Players*, 74.

<sup>99</sup> Al Coppola “Retraining the Virtuoso’s Gaze: Behn’s *Emperor of the Moon*, The Royal Society, and the Spectacles of Science and Politics,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 41.4 (2008): 481.

<sup>100</sup> Antoni Zalewski Sadlak, “Harlequin Comes to England: The Early Evidence of the *Commedia dell’arte* in England and the Formulation of English Harlequinades and Pantomimes,” (Diss. Tufts U, 1999), 29.

the most sense when it is read as a studied response to its double political context: its composition during the Tory Reaction and its performance toward the end of the brief and unsettled reign of James II.”<sup>101</sup> Coppola argues that the play while being “resolutely” Tory, is also clearly critical of Toryism, or party politics.<sup>102</sup>

It is perhaps an oversimplification of the role of *commedia* in general to not note that there are also ways that the influence of plays like *Arlequin Empereur dans la lune*, could also highlight Italian influence on French theatre. Even though the scenarios were most likely based on the work of Italian actors, since the playwright credited with the actual writing of the plays was French, this play still belongs in this thesis. There were many French plays based on Italian sources, including in the works of Molière, and we would never consider those Italian. This is, of course, a different situation, but the added and more direct influence of Italian influences on English Restoration theatre does not diminish the importance of the French influences from this source. The Comédie Italienne was a French institution and in many sources it seems to be agreed upon that by the end of the seventeenth century, Italian comedy was perfectly acclimatized to French Theatre.<sup>103</sup>

Nolan de Fatouville is credited with having written the French scenes on which Behn’s play is based. It was presented by the *Comédiens Italiens* at the hôtel de

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<sup>101</sup> Coppola “Retraining the Virtuoso’s Gaze,” 482.

<sup>102</sup> Coppola “Retraining the Virtuoso’s Gaze,” 498.

<sup>103</sup> Christian Biet, Romain Jobez, Tiphaine Karsenti, Gaël Le Chevalier, and Christophe Triau. *Le théâtre français du XVIIe siècle: histoire, textes choisis, mises en scène*, (Paris: Éd. L'avant-scène Théâtre, 2009), 23.

Bourgogne on the fifth of March 1684. The scenes however were simply scenarios that were published and do not really represent the whole performance. In some ways it will be difficult to examine the changes between the two pieces of theatre. Unlike in the case of *The Country Wife* where established plays served as source material, the improvisatory nature of *commedia* makes it more difficult to draw direct parallels. The Italian actors had been invited to France by Catherine de Medici. *Commedia*, more so than other Italian theatre forms, even though Italian culture was common at court at the time, adapted to the French manner.<sup>104</sup> Eileen Leslie Moyles' points out that a definition of *commedia dell'arte* is elusive but there are two points that always occur "the use of type characters, and improvisation."<sup>105</sup> In the early years of *commedia* in France the comedy would have been done in Italian, and audiences would have been able to follow the word play, but by the late seventeenth century Italian was less commonly spoken in France, which led to the kind of scripted French scenes that will be examined in this chapter.<sup>106</sup> There were other aspects of the Italian theatre in Paris that were more and more influenced by being in France. For example, their plots included more parody and satire in addition to the traditional love stories that were usual in the *commedia* scenarios.<sup>107</sup> The Italian company

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<sup>104</sup> Biet, *Le théâtre français du XVIIe siècle*, 21.

<sup>105</sup> Eileen Leslie Moyles, *The Commedia dell'arte: Art, Culture and Power in Early Modern Paris*, (Diss. Stanford University, 2004), 5.

<sup>106</sup> Moyles, *The Commedia dell'arte*, 10.

<sup>107</sup> W. D. Howarth, *French Theatre in the Neo-classical Era, 1550-1789*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 4.

was eventually disbanded in 1697 for performing a play that authorities thought to be a satire about Madame Maintenon, the lover and later wife of Louis XIV.<sup>108</sup>

Spencer suggests that Behn must have gone to Paris to see these scenes performed. Only these French scenes, being examined here, were ever published. The *commedia* sections remain unknown.<sup>109</sup> Indeed though, the French scenes were not published until after Behn wrote *The Emperor of the Moon*. It is also possible that there was a published version earlier and it has been lost. There appears to be no consensus in the scholarship regarding how exactly Behn would have had access to the *Arlequin* scenario. It is very clear, however, that the timeline between the two plays (1684 and 1687) is a much closer turn around than Wycherley's use of the Molière plays with almost a fifteen year gap in between the two for those plays to have gained recognition. In addition to the slightly unclear ways that Behn would have consumed this play, whether written, performed or both, it is also important to keep in mind that the scenarios discussed in the published French scenes do not make up all of the play. As Moyles states, "any given *commedia* play must be understood as one instance of many potential instantiations connected by shifting relations of similarity and difference with one another and with any given performance."<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Howarth, *French Theatre in the Neo-classical Era*, 4.

<sup>109</sup> Spencer, *The Rover and Other Plays*, xviii.

<sup>110</sup> Moyles, *The Commedia dell'arte*, 16.

Aphra Behn has captured the imagination and as Jane Spencer points out, her “colorful and mysterious life has swallowed up attention at the expense of her writing.”<sup>111</sup> She spent time in Surinam as a child and she may have invented her husband (from whom she took the last name Behn).<sup>112</sup> She spied for the British during the Dutch war, and was also thrown in debtors prison.<sup>113</sup> Her life may have been shrouded in mystery, but Jane Spencer notes that her plays are anti-Whig and anti-Puritan, and that her commitment to the Stuarts and Toryism was life long.<sup>114</sup> Behn was considered a second rate playwright of the Restoration era by scholars for many years. It was not until after the 1970s that interest in Behn as a playwright surged.<sup>115</sup> This interest became so prevalent that that when the writer of this thesis was introduced to Restoration theatre as an undergraduate, the only play required from the period was *The Rover*.

Aphra Behn says in her dedication of *The Emperor of the Moon* there was not a lot of plot to begin with in the scenes she used. Indeed, she states that the play is “now much altered, and adapted to our English theatre and genius, who cannot find an entertainment at so cheap a rate as the French will, who are content with almost any incoherences, howsoever shuffled together under the name of farce.”<sup>116</sup> Having examined the scenes that Aphra Behn was probably referring to, it does seem that the French scenes

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<sup>111</sup> Spencer, *The Rover and Other Plays*, vii.

<sup>112</sup> Spencer, *The Rover and Other Plays*, vii.

<sup>113</sup> Cynthia Lowenthal, “Two Female Playwrights of the Restoration: Aphra Behn and Susanna Centlivre.” *A Companion to Restoration Drama*, Ed. Susan J. Owen, (Oxford, U.K.: Blackwell, 2001), 397.

<sup>114</sup> Spencer, *The Rover and Other Plays*, ix.

<sup>115</sup> Lowenthal, “Two Female Playwrights of the Restoration,” 396.

<sup>116</sup> Spencer, *The Rover and Other Plays*, 274.

are really just that, a series of scenes without much coherent plot. Indeed, the fact that Aphra Behn calls them a “farce” is either too generous or perhaps suggests a desire to make them seem like a poor version of something they were never meant to be. The scenes would have been interspersed with *commedia* scenes, which perhaps would have made it appear more like a farce, but there seems little that is farce like about it. Since this thesis is addressing the French influences on English plays, we will first examine some of the differences between the two to try to understand what Behn was doing with the piece, besides just making it into a much more linear and conventional story to follow. Florence March claims in her article “*Farce, satire et science dans The Emperor*” that “une lecture comparative de *The Emperor of the Moon* et des scènes françaises d’*Arlequin Empereur dans la lune* nous a permis, dans un premier temps, de déterminer la nature de l’apport personnel de Behn.”<sup>117</sup> While this is absolutely true, I hope that our comparative reading of the two plays will do more than determine the personal input of Behn, but will also aid us in understanding prevailing attitudes of the time.

Interestingly, the main character in both of these pieces, Harlequin, was not really the staple *commedia* character that Pantalone was, until the seventeenth century. Harlequin, “captured the public imagination and achieved preeminence both on the Continent and in England during the course of the seventeenth century.”<sup>118</sup> *The Emperor*

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<sup>117</sup> “A comparative reading of *The Emperor of the Moon* and the French scenes of *Arlequin Empereur dans la lune* allowed us, in the first place, to determine the nature of the personal contribution of Behn.” Florence March, “Farce, satire et science dans *The Emperor of the Moon* (1687) d’Aphra Behn,” *Études Épistémè* 10 (2006): 101.

<sup>118</sup> Sadlak, “Harlequin Comes to England,” 102.

*of the Moon* was sometimes called a “pantomimic farce.” Leo Hughes suggests that, “the chief influence of the *commedia dell'arte* on the English theatre is to be found in pantomimes much more than in plays.”<sup>119</sup> Marc Martinez points out that “dans ce contexte scénographique et dramatique Aphra Behn opte donc pour un genre d’essence italienne mais d’importation française.”<sup>120</sup> Of course, the *commedia* theatre would have had at least a fraught relationship with France, because, at least this piece of theatre, does not adhere to neoclassical rules. Martinez also claims “cette forme théâtrale, frappée d'un préjugé xénophobe, contrevient, de surcroît, aux principes de l'esthétique néoclassique par son recours aux artifices mécaniques et son irrégularité formelle.”<sup>121</sup> It seems that this formal irregularity would have been much more acceptable to the English than it would have been to French audiences at the time, but perhaps the foreignness of the *commedia* scenes made them seem more like distant characters, and perhaps more like street theatre, and therefore not as concerned with neoclassical unities of space, time, and action. It is less likely that we can attribute anything in the difference between Behn’s play and Fatouville’s text to the disparity in interest in neoclassicism. *Arlequin* does not seem to follow any sort of rules set down by the unities, and it is clear that Behn does not either. We know that in the preface to *The Dutch Lover* Behn referred to the classical rules as

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<sup>119</sup> Leo Hughes, *A Century of English Farce*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1956), 95.

<sup>120</sup> “In this context scenographic and dramatic Aphra Behn opts for a genre of Italian essence but of French importation.”

Marc Martinez, “*The Emperor of the Moon* (1687) d’Aphra Behn ou la Farce Baroque,” *XVII-XVIII. Bulletin de la société d’études anglo-américaines des XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles* 54.1 (2002): 49.

<sup>121</sup> “this theatrical form, struck a xenophobic prejudice, breaks, what is more, aesthetic neoclassical principles by its recourse of mechanical artifice and its formal irregularity.”  
Martinez, “*The Emperor of the Moon* (1687) d’Aphra Behn ou la Farce Baroque,” 50.

“musty rules of Unity” so we can imagine that Behn was not particularly fond of these rules, but neither it seems are the players and writers of the *Comédie-Italienne*.<sup>122</sup>

One of the differences that is striking is how the plays begin. *The Emperor of the Moon* begins with a prologue given by Mr. Jevon, a comic actor who played Harlequin in the play. However, after this, he is absent from the first scene. Scaramouch enters eventually but the scene begins with just Elaria, the doctor’s daughter, and Mopsophil, her servant. It seems that this immediately places the play in the female realm. Even though it places us in this realm, it is a song about the inconstancy of women. The scene opens with “*A curse upon that faithless maid...*”<sup>123</sup> This is different than *Arlequin* where the play opens with Pierrot and the doctor, and some of the doctor’s pretentious Italian. It also opens with the large telescope already set onstage. Then the doctor says in broken Italian, “E’ possible, Pierrot, che tu non voglia chetarti.”<sup>124</sup> He then essentially repeats himself in French, and tells Pierrot to be quiet. This establishes the scene right away as being about science, as signified by the telescope, and a certain amount of pretension, as signified by the broken Italian. This is a very different set up than the much more romantic beginning of Behn’s play. From the beginning we know that hers will have a love story which drives the play forward. The love story in *Arlequin* is primarily between

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<sup>122</sup> Martinez, “*The Emperor of the Moon* (1687) d’Aphra Behn ou la Farce Baroque,” 52.

<sup>123</sup> Behn, *The Rover and Other Plays*, I.i.1.

<sup>124</sup> Nolant de Fatouville, “Arlequin empereur dans la lune,” *Le théâtre italien: ou le recueil général de toutes les comédies et scènes françaises jouées par les comédiens italiens du roi*, Ed. Evaristo Gherardi, (Genève: Slatkine Reprints, 1969), 122.

Arlequin and Colombine, and it is mostly from Arlequin's side that we see any of the love story at all.

The doctor in *Arlequin* is therefore established as being obsessed with the moon, as is expressed by his servant Pierrot. We also learn that the doctor wants to marry off his servant Colombine, his niece, and his daughter. Both of these aspects of the doctor are exactly how the doctor is meant to be. The stock character is a "faux philosophe et mauvais juriste, ou parfois médecin, et lui aussi un vieil homme trompé par ses enfants..."<sup>125</sup> so we know that an audience would already understand that his moon obsession was ridiculous after first meeting him.<sup>125</sup> However, we only see his niece in the French scenes at the very end of the play. She does not have any of the apparently spoken French dialogue. The niece is very present in *The Emperor of the Moon* and the play is concerned with her love story as well as the daughter's love story. The absurdity of Doctor Belardio's obsession with the moon and pseudo science in Behn's play is introduced without him being present. We hear about it first from his daughter, the maid, and Scaramouch. In some ways this seems even more like a French farce than the way it is presented in the French scenes. Many of Molière's plays begin with discussion of the ridiculous character, but we do not meet the character until later in the play. This is different however than the set up in *Arlequin* where the doctor not only begins on stage

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<sup>125</sup> "... false philosopher and bad jurist, or sometimes doctor, and he is also an old man who is tricked by his children."  
Biet, *Le théâtre français du XVIIe siècle*, 22.

but also begins with the opening lines of the play, again barring any possible improvised *commedia* scene that may have surrounded this opening.

*Arlequin* has the sad clown Pierrot rather than Scaramouch. Scaramouch does appear but not until the *scène dernière*, still this change seems arbitrary. March suggests, based on her reading of Leo Hughes' *A Century of English Farce* that Scaramouch had become very popular in England in the years leading up to Behn's writing of *The Emperor of the Moon*. Tiberio Fiorilli had come to England and played Scaramouch to great success.<sup>126</sup> Perhaps his popular appeal in England is the reason behind Scaramouch's increased role in Behn's play.

The play can be viewed through multiple political lenses. Sadlak claims that audiences did not applaud it when it first opened "perhaps disapproving it because of political reasons as war with France was brewing."<sup>127</sup> This was on the eve of the nine years' war during which England and a European wide coalition fought Louis XIV's France. It had seemed, though, before William III's arrival in England that perhaps England would join the nine years war on the side of the French, due to James II's strong ties to Catholic France.<sup>128</sup> In the end, England, under William III's leadership, fought against the French. This war began in 1688 however, and while there was surely already tension, which is why the Prince of Orange planned to remove James II from the throne

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<sup>126</sup> March, "Farce, satire et science dans *The Emperor of the Moon* (1687) d'Aphra Behn," 102.

<sup>127</sup> Sadlak, "Harlequin Comes to England," 29.

<sup>128</sup> John Childs, *The Nine Years' War and the British Army: The Operations in the Low Countries*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), 20.

of England, it is a year after *The Emperor of the Moon* first performed. This creates a second political layering in addition to Coppola's claim that the play was anti-Whig but also critical of Toryism. For a play that is quite silly, it is interesting the great political undertones it apparently had.

March argues that it is "ainsi, la question de la perception visuelle, qui découle directement de la mise en scène spectaculaire, traverse toute l'œuvre. Autre point de convergence entre farce et science expérimentale, elle fournit une nouvelle passerelle à la satire."<sup>129</sup> The play definitely is obsessed with seeing, which is similar to the interests in *Arlequin* as well. Similar tricks are played, as Arlequin pretends to be a farmer, a lady's maid, an apothecary, and various other characters. However, the reliance on visual tricks in Behn's play is much more pervasive. The visual jokes in *Arlequin* are primarily in the scenes where *Arlequin* plays a number of characters. We have a scene like this in *The Emperor of the Moon*, but also a large number of other visual tricks, such as the scene where our heroes pretend to be part of a tapestry. March claims that, "L'obscurité qui règne dans la maison du docteur symbolise à la fois l'imposture qui règne de sa science et son ignorance de ce qui trame contre lui."<sup>130</sup> The doctor does not reign in his house, obscurity does. Science concerns him in a way that running his household does not. For

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<sup>129</sup> "Thus, the question of visual perception, that stems directly from the spectacular mise en scène, spans the entire work. Another point of convergence between farce and experimental science, it supplies a new link to satire."

March, "Farce, satire et science dans *The Emperor of the Moon* (1687) d'Aphra Behn," 106.

<sup>130</sup> "The obscurity that reigns in the house of the doctor symbolizes at once the deception of his science that reigns and his ignorance of the plot against him."

March, "Farce, satire et science dans *The Emperor of the Moon* (1687) d'Aphra Behn," 108.

this reason, it seems in the Restoration period, he deserves to be duped into marrying his daughters to Cinthio and Charmante. This seems to be a continuation of a point brought up with concern to *The Country Wife*. While the doctor is not a fop exactly, his interests lie elsewhere than maintaining his household and family. Pat Gill addresses this issue with regards to the way that Horner is frustrated with Sir Fidget's cooperation when he is trying to seduce the women around him. Gill points out that, "Horner's feigned indignation conveys a real warning. Men whose primary concerns lie elsewhere than the tending of their most valuable possessions will earn the consequences of this misapplied regard, either by marrying or creating wives who dissemble and betray."<sup>131</sup> While there is no indication in *The Emperor of the Moon* Elaria and Bellemante will dissemble and betray their husbands, they have betrayed their father and uncle in aiding with the spectacle put on by the men. While of course the doctor is not the husband of any of the women in the play, he stands in a similar location in the patriarchy as their father or uncle. The ridicule the doctor is faced with for not keeping his house in order is perhaps one of the things that makes the play seem to be doing the work of a conservative regime that maintains the status quo, and ultimately makes the point that fathers should do their duties and not dwell in foolish areas of science.

Many of the *Commedia* aspects of *Arlequin* seem to have been toned down. In the section where Harlequin considers suicide, his debate about his mode of death has been much cut down in *The Emperor of the Moon*. In *Arlequin*, he spends a great deal more

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<sup>131</sup> Pat Gill, "Gender, Sexuality, and Marriage," 203.

time both acting out and discussing various modes of death. One can assume that this was probably a hilarious piece of physical comedy. In *The Emperor of the Moon* he states “It is resolved, I’ll hang myself. No: when did I ever hear of a hero that hanged himself? No ‘tis a death of rogues.”<sup>132</sup> After this brief moment he has immediately moved on to possibly drowning himself. In *Arlequin* he goes into much more detail. He says, “Je m’en irai dans ma chambre : j’attacherai une corde au plancher : je monterai sur une chaise je me mettrai la corde au cou, je donnerai un coup de pied à la chaise, et me voilà pendu.” This is followed by a stage direction that says “*Il fait la posture d’un pendu.*”<sup>133</sup> He then talks himself down from hanging himself, but it takes him a while. He also discusses possibly butchering his nose and his mouth, and then eventually gets to dying laughing, but there is much more physical comedy described in the stage directions. While of course there was possibly more physical comedy in this scene in Behn’s play than is depicted in the modern stage directions, it is so much shorter that it could not possibly have had the same weight. Indeed the end of the scene in *Le Théâtre Italien de Gherardi* notes that “Ceux qui ont vû cette scène, conviendront que c’est une des plus plaisantes qu’on ait jamais joué sur le théâtre Italien.”<sup>134</sup> One can only imagine, with such a note, the only one of its kind in the text of this play, that this scene must have been hilarious to

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<sup>132</sup> Behn, *The Rover and Other Plays*, I.ii.166-7.

<sup>133</sup> “I will go to my room : I will attach a rope to the floor board : I will climb on a chair and I will put the rope around my neck, I will give a kick to the chair, and voilà I’m hanged.”  
“He makes the posture of a hanged person”

de Fatouville, “Arlequin empereur dans la lune,” 129.

<sup>134</sup> “Those who saw this scene, they will admit that it is one of the most pleasant that has ever played at the théâtre Italien”  
de Fatouville, “Arlequin empereur dans la lune,” 131.

behold, and indeed if Behn had seen the play staged, it seems surprising that she would have so curtailed it into the shorter scene that we see performed in *The Emperor of the Moon*.

March claims that there is a tension between farce and satire in *Emperor of the Moon*. She then claims that “cette tension est absente de la comédie de Fatouville où la satire, qui apparait de manière ponctuelle, n’informe pas le texte, et se trouve de fait subordonnée au but essentiel de la farce divertir.”<sup>135</sup> While this seems to be mostly true, and there is obviously satire at work in *The Emperor of the Moon*, it seems that this is not a complete picture of some of the work done in *Arlequin*. There is a scene in which Pierrot plays the wife of the doctor and Arlequin plays a maid. In this scene, they discuss women’s fashion. It is unclear to me how this scene would have played exactly by looking at the text. In the section in which they suggest “pommade pour le visage” Arlequin describes an eighty year old countess “she” served who “Je lui ai usé plus de deux cens pots de pommades sur son corps.”<sup>136</sup> This appears to be at least in part a satirical comment about the noble ladies of the time in France and how much they powdered not just their faces but their bodies. While perhaps the play does not have as many formal elements that make it as satirical as *The Emperor of the Moon* there are definitely hints of satire at work.

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<sup>135</sup> “This tension is absent from the comedy of Fatouville where the satire, that appears in an exact manner, does not inform the text, and in fact is subordinate to the essential point of the farce to divert.” March, “Farce, satire et science dans *The Emperor of the Moon* (1687) d’Aphra Behn,” 113.

<sup>136</sup> “I used more than two hundred pots of ointment on her body.” de Fatouville, “Arlequin empereur dans la lune,” 135.

Unlike Arlequin's suicide scene which Behn seems to have curtailed, there are also a number of scenes that Behn appears to flesh out more. In *Arlequin Isabelle*, the doctor's daughter, and her maid, Colombine discuss the strange happening where somehow her tablet is being written on by an unseen devil. She says,

Je les mets sur ma table : et dans le temps que je dispose mon imagination à quelque bouts-rimés, un diable, oui, Colombine, un diable invisible écrit sur mes tablettes des vers sur les mêmes rimes. En ce moment Cinthio entre dans ma chambre, surprend mes tablettes, et veut absolument que ces vers m'ayent été donnés par un rival : plus je tâche à le désabuser, plus il s'obstine à le croire.<sup>137</sup>

Here she describes a humorous scene that is played out in *The Emperor of the Moon*. It is possible that this scene was acted out in the Italian *commedia* moments, perhaps further research into this scene would make that clear. However, it does seem unlikely that Isabelle would spend the time to describe this sequence in such detail if indeed it actually had happened in the play. In *The Emperor of the Moon* this scene is played out between Bellemante, the niece, not the daughter, and Harlequin. The scene begins in the "dark" with Saramouch and Harlequin both thinking they have tricked the other as they wait for Mopsophil. The obscurity and inability to see is played out in this scene before the entrance of Bellemante. Once she tries to write poetry she steps away from her tablet to think of a rhyme for "resign" and when she returns to the tablet Harlequin, from under the table has changed "can you resign?" to "my Bellemante" and then adds "Will you be

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<sup>137</sup> "I put them on my table : and in the time that I incline my imagination to some end rhymes, a devil, yes Colombine, an invisible devil writes on my tablets some verses with the same rhymes. In this moment Cinthio entered my room, discovered my tablets, and insists that these verses have been given to me by a rival : the more that I try to disabuse it, the more persistent he is to believe it." de Fatouville, "Arlequin empereur dans la lune," 138.

kind to your Charmante?” So the couplet ends up being “Tell me, said he, my Bellemante,/ Will you be kind to your Charmante?”<sup>138</sup> Then of course Charmante enters and accuses her of using his name simply as a holder for some other man’s name because he is suspicious of the handwriting that is not hers. It seems that Harlequin interferes in this situation to potentially be of use to Charmante, but of course this plan utterly backfires and it seems more like he is simply making trouble, which is more consistent with the Arlequin we see in *Arlequin*. Essentially it seems that Behn has expanded this idea into a humorous scene, but perhaps in *Arlequin* the scene was acted out and we simply have no record of this.

In *Arlequin* everything is done by Pierrot and Arlequin, whereas the noble men are much more involved in *The Emperor of the Moon*. The clever servants act on their own, as opposed to the help and guidance they receive and the support they give the noble men in Behn’s play. It is possible that this is simply because the love plot is more important in *Emperor of the Moon* than it is in the *Arlequin* scenario. Much of the tricking in Behn’s play is done by Cinthio and Charmante, which possibly makes Harlequin and Scaramouch slightly more marginal. The first trickery in the play is performed by Charmante and Harlequin together, but Harlequin hides behind a bush for the entire scene, while Charmante pretends to be a great man from “the great cabala – of Eutopia.”<sup>139</sup> This cabala is probably referring to Rosicrucian ideas, while Eutopia is a

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<sup>138</sup> Behn, *The Rover and Other Plays*, I.iii.32-33.

<sup>139</sup> Spencer and Behn, *The Rover and other plays*, 382 and I.ii.25.

reference to Thomas Moore's Utopia. Since Utopia does not exist this is a joke with the audience.<sup>140</sup> While the difference may just be that of a fleshed out script versus a scenario, it does seem curious that the lovers get to take part in being cunning the way that really only Arlequin and Pierrot do in the *Arlequin* scenes. It seems possible that this has to do with wanting the noble men to have more agency, but this could be a very far fetched claim. Perhaps Behn was writing for an audience that wanted the noblemen to be more appreciated. Scaramouch does say in the first scene that it is indeed the plan of Don Cinthio and Charmante. He says that "I went, as you know, to Don Cinthio's lodgings, where I found him with his dear friend Charmante, laying their heads together for a farce."<sup>141</sup> This implies that the plan was indeed concocted by them. In addition in the last scene of *Arlequin Empereur dans la lune*, Arlequin, plays the Emperor of the Moon. Whereas in *The Emperor of the Moon*, even though it is only in pantomime, the Emperor of the Moon is played by Cinthio. This is partially so that Harlequin and Scaramouch can both also be present to compete for Mopsophil's hand, but still there seems to be a distinct class shift in how this is performed in France and England.

At the end of the play, the Doctor says "Burn all my books, and let my study blaze," once he realizes that he has been duped into believing our heroes are inhabitants of the moon.<sup>142</sup> He then ends with a couplet that is supposedly attributed to Socrates, "He

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<sup>140</sup> Spencer, *The Rover and other plays*, 382.

<sup>141</sup> de Fatouville, "Arlequin empereur dans la lune," 103-5.

<sup>142</sup> Behn, *The Rover and Other Plays*, III.iii.222.

that knew all that ever learning writ,/ Knew only this: that he knew nothing yet.”<sup>143</sup> The Epilogue, spoken by Mrs. Cooke who played Elaria, is primarily about making sure playwrights are paid, and does not seem to have much to do with the plot at all. The doctor is never undecieved in *Arlequin*. Arlequin is challenged by three knights of the sun (their characters are not explained, but perhaps they are meant to be Cinthio etc.) and the scenario ends with Arlequin declaring that the doctor and Scaramouch (who has conveniently arrived for this scene) will fight with him since he is but one and the Knights are three. There seems to be much more concern with wrapping Behn’s play up with a moral, but that may be because it was not an improvised play, but a play that ended with a succinct ending the way most Restoration plays do.

While *The Emperor of the Moon* does not really have the plethora of women’s roles that we see in *The Country Wife*, the women are still much more prominent in Behn’s play than they are in the Fatouville scenes. Trofimova argues that Behn was certainly concerned with the position of women in England in the late seventeenth century. She cites Behn’s translation of the very text most related to this play, *Entretiens sur la pluralité des Mondes* to point out this concern of Behn’s. She notes that in her translation Behn uses the phrase “men and women” to replace “des hommes” and claims that Behn poses herself as a predecessor of feminism.<sup>144</sup> While it is beyond the scope of this paper, and perhaps futile to discuss whether indeed Behn was a predecessor to

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<sup>143</sup> Behn, *The Rover and Other Plays*, III.iii.233-4.

<sup>144</sup> Trofimova, “French Influence on English Culture in the Second Part of the Seventeenth-Century,” 246.

feminism, it is still of interest to examine the different ways that the *commedia* scenes and *The Emperor of the Moon* address the women in both plays.

In *Arlequin*, there are really only three scenes that involve the women. There is the scene *d'Isabelle et Colombine* which has been discussed a small amount previously in this chapter since it is the scene in which Isabelle recounts the rhyme game to Colombine. They also discuss the fact that Isabelle is in love with poetry and wants to marry a poet but Colombine thinks that this is ridiculous. Colombine appears briefly in the *Scène de L'Apothicaire*, in which Arlequin pretends to be the Apothecary. Then in the last scene, Colombine, Isabelle and the doctor trade off saying "C'est tout comme ici" whenever Arlequin, as the Emperor of the Moon, describes something about the moon world.<sup>145</sup> These appear to be some of the most satirical moments in the French scenes. For example, Arlequin asks "croiriez-vous que dans mes états il n'y a point des bourreaux?" When Colombine responds and asks if they then do not punish the guilty he says "Mapeste, fort severement. Mais au lieu de les faire expedier en un quart-d'heure dans une place publique, je les baille à tuer au medecins, qui les font mourir aussi cruellement que leurs malades." Colombine responds with, "Quoi, seigneur, là-haut les medecins tuent aussi le monde. Monsieur, c'est tout comme ici."<sup>146</sup> We can imagine that

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<sup>145</sup> "It's all the same as here"

de Fatouville, "Arlequin empereur dans la lune," 176.

<sup>146</sup> "Do you believe that in my state there are no executioners?"

"A plague, very severely. But instead of dispatching them in a quarter of an hour in a public place, I yawn as they are killed by doctors, who kill them as cruelly as their patients."

"What, seignior, up there the doctors also kill the whole world? Monsieur, It's all like it is here." de Fatouville, "Arlequin empereur dans la lune," 177.

interactions like this, provide much of the humor to Colombine, since she ends up with the punchline. This scene is also supposed to include the niece, Eularia, but she does not speak.

Elaria, is actually the daughter in *The Emperor of the Moon*. The lovers in *The Emperor of the Moon* spend more time doing some visual dissembling of their own. Most of the trickery in *Arlequin* is done by Arlequin himself and a little by Pierrot. Here we see Elaria and Bellemante take part in not only the tapestry, but also in a scene where they pretend to be asleep dreaming of their potential moon people lovers. After she is awakened Elaria says to the doctor, her father, “Methought I entertained a demi-god, one of the gay inhabitants of the moon.”<sup>147</sup> Elaria, Bellemante and Mopsophil are as skilled at pretending something is true that is not as all the men. They do not spend time dressing up as other characters the way that Harlequin and Cinthio and Charmante do, but they still have this capability. Perhaps this is one of the concerns about women that Behn suggests. Elaria and Bellemante, however, spend most of their time discussing their lovers and have little other conversation in the play for the most part. It is possible that the examples of Isabelle and Colombine playing along with the “c’est tout comme ici” scene in *Arlequin* was also a scene where the women were all deceiving the doctor as well, but interestingly they seem more focused on making pointed jokes about the ways that the moon world is similar to their world than they are about actually lying to the doctor.

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<sup>147</sup> Behn, *The Rover and Other Plays*, II.iv.26-27.

In terms of the actresses in these plays, Katherine Corey plays Mopsophil, and so continues along the trajectory of playing servants. Mopsophil is a romantic comic female character, since both Scaramouch and Harlequin are in love with her. Sarah Cooke played Elaria. Cooke died in 1688, so this play would have been toward the end of her career.<sup>148</sup> Cooke was “highly regarded as a player, especially for romantic or tragic roles.”<sup>149</sup> Wilson also states that she probably died of a venereal disease. The fact that she was known for romantic or tragic roles probably made her role in *The Emperor of the Moon* a clearly romantic one even though the play was a slightly different brand of comedy than was often seen in the Restoration period. Perhaps Cooke at the time of this production lent an aura of more seriousness to this out of character farce.

When examining Sarah Cooke we find she falls into a certain “stratum” of women who could be actresses. Howe points out that it was hard to recruit actresses for companies because most women who wanted to be respectable would not consider being actresses, and “yet the profession demanded more than women of the brothel class.”<sup>150</sup> She points out that women had to be able to read, memorize lines quickly and also “emulate a lady’s behavior.”<sup>151</sup> Sarah Cooke was the right sort of person because she was the daughter of a tradesman.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> Wilson, *All the King’s Ladies*, 131.

<sup>149</sup> Wilson, *All the King’s Ladies*, 131.

<sup>150</sup> Howe, *The First English Actresses*, 8.

<sup>151</sup> Howe, *The First English Actresses*, 8.

<sup>152</sup> Howe, *The First English Actresses*, 8.

Mrs. Mountfort, also known as Susanna Verbruggen, but initially Susanna Percival (she was married multiple times) played Bellemante. She was, interestingly, well known for breeches roles, which this of course is not. Apparently she was referred to as a miracle and the other women well known for comic breeches roles, including Betty Boutel and Anne Bracegirdle, “were all her inferiors.”<sup>153</sup> Southerne wrote a part for her in his *Sir Anthony Love* (1690) that was a girl in petticoats who swaggered, fought and made love to “her sisters in petticoats.”<sup>154</sup> She was a comedic actress and “testimonies to her excellence as a comedienne are numerous.”<sup>155</sup> It seems that perhaps breeches roles became common for her later in her career. Howe lists Percival as one of the most influential comediennes from the 1690s.<sup>156</sup> Howe also points out that Percival “stands out among her fellow comediennes for her ability to play not only charming heroines but also ugly, foolish and low-life characters.”<sup>157</sup> She appears to have died in childbirth in 1703, when she was probably thirty-six.<sup>158</sup>

It seems as though 1687 was early in Percival’s career so her reputation for breeches roles and low-life characters may have been less prominent than it was later in life. However, she seems to have been very comedic, maybe in somewhat the same vein as Katherine Corey, except that she is obviously playing a charming upper class character

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<sup>153</sup> Wilson, *All the King's Ladies*, 80.

<sup>154</sup> Wilson, *All the King's Ladies*, 79

<sup>155</sup> Wilson, *All the King's Ladies*, 180

<sup>156</sup> Howe, *The First English Actresses*, 82

<sup>157</sup> Howe, *The First English Actresses*, 84

<sup>158</sup> Wilson, *All the King's Ladies*, 180.

in *The Emperor of the Moon*. Perhaps this shows that Bellemante is the funnier of the two young women. Just before the last scene, the doctor tells them to come with him to know their fates and Elaria says, “Bless me! My father, in all the rest of his discourse, shows so much sense and reason, I cannot think him mad, but feigns all this to try us.”<sup>159</sup>

Bellemante replies to this with,

Not mad! Marry, heaven forbid, thou art always creating fears to startle one; why, if he be not mad, his want of sleep this eight-and-forty hours, the noise of strange unheard-of instruments, with the fantastic splendour of the unusual sight, will so turn his brain and dazzle him, that in grace of goodness, he may be mad. If he be not – come, let’s after him to the gallery, for I long to see in what showing equipage our princely lovers will address to us.<sup>160</sup>

Bellemante is clearly, based on this exchange, the cleverer of the two, and the one less likely to excuse their foolish father/uncle. This speech shows her to be critical and also extremely descriptive with her wit.

To conclude, let us examine some of the ways that the influence of French plays in both of the situations addressed so far can be put into conversation with each other. In conversation with *The Country Wife* we see that *The Emperor of the Moon* is a slightly different situation for a number of reasons. The source material was not only more established for *The Country Wife*, they were also much more tangible plays, so the influences can be more clearly seen than in the case of *The Emperor of the Moon*. It would also seem that *The Country Wife* uses Molière’s plays as bases for plot, but in reality is not nearly as close as Behn’s play is to her French source. None of the character

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<sup>159</sup> Behn, *The Rover and Other Plays*, III.ii.404-406.

<sup>160</sup> Behn, *The Rover and Other Plays*, III.ii.407-414.

leading place in the literary canon; *Centlivre* does not.”<sup>167</sup> She suggests that this is in part due to *Centlivre*’s “conformity to Whig mercantile values”<sup>168</sup> *Centlivre* supported the War of Spanish Succession, in part because it was initially popular with both Whigs and Tories but after 1708 the war became less popular and the Whigs continued to support the war while the Tories called for peace.<sup>169</sup> *Centlivre* remains relatively obscure in the literary canon, and she appears to often be charged with a lack of literary value.<sup>170</sup>

*Centlivre*’s *The Gamester* was largely based on Jean-François Regnard’s *Le Joueur*. *Le Joueur* (1696) was written while Louis XIV was still King of France. Regnard himself came from a long line of well off merchants and his mother was able to leave him in a comfortable situation.<sup>171</sup> Regnard wrote during the decline of Louis XIV, and while the “prestige and grandeur of the court are undergoing rapid change.”<sup>172</sup> Gifford Orwen also describes this as time during which religious persecution continues while the enlightenment shows the first signs of beginning. At the time of his writing of *Le Joueur*, gambling had become such a problem that at the end of the seventeenth century edicts of Parlement were put into place that prohibited all games of chance under severe penalties.<sup>173</sup> This situates *Le Joueur* as being extremely timely and about very real concerns with its theme of the detrimental effects of gambling. Regnard’s comedies owed

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<sup>167</sup> Bratton, “Reading the Intertheatrical,” 8.

<sup>168</sup> Bratton, “Reading the Intertheatrical,” 8.

<sup>169</sup> F. P. Lock, *Susanna Centlivre*, (Boston: Twayne, 1979), 22.

<sup>170</sup> Bratton, “Reading the Intertheatrical,” 9.

<sup>171</sup> Gifford Phillips Orwen, *Jean-François Regnard*, (Boston: Twayne, 1982), 16.

<sup>172</sup> Orwen, *Jean-François Regnard*, 15.

<sup>173</sup> Orwen, *Jean-François Regnard*, 72.

a great deal to Molière who by this time was dead.<sup>174</sup> Regnard wrote for the Théâtre Italien for some time and Alexandre Calame suggests that in *Le Joueur* one can see not only the influences of Molière on his work but also influences of Italian theatre, and that Hector, the gamester's valet, even engages in some games onstage that look like the lazzis of *commedia d'elle arte*.<sup>175</sup>

*The Gamester* and *Le Joueur* have a slightly different relationship than the plays we have examined so far. Even more so than *The Emperor of the Moon*, there are large parts of *The Gamester* that appear to be an adaptation or even a translation of Regnard's play. There are lines, especially in the first three acts, that appear to be taken directly from the French. The English play adds a prologue, which is not in the French play. After this the play opens with Valère's Valet, Hector (named so in both plays) speaking about how late his master is still out. In Regnard's play he says, "Il est, parbleu, grand jour; déjà de leur ramage/les coqs ont éveillé tout notre voisinage./ Que servir un joueur est un maudit métier!"<sup>176</sup> Very similarly, Hector, in *The Gamester* says "Bless me! 'Tis broad daylight! Who the devil would serve a gamester? 'Tis a cursed life, this that I lead."<sup>177</sup> Looking at these two lines we can see that *The Gamester*, in many ways, keeps very close to *Le Joueur*. The major difference is of course that *Le Joueur* is in verse. As has been

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<sup>174</sup> Orwen, *Jean-François Regnard*, 74.

<sup>175</sup> Alexandre Calame, *Regnard, sa vie et son oeuvre*, (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1960), 289.

<sup>176</sup> "It is, good lord, full day. Already the warbling of the roosters has woken all the neighborhood. To serve a gamester is a cursed trade." Jean-François Regnard, *Le Joueur. Théâtres Français. Oeuvres De Regnard*. (Paris: Martial Ardant Frères, 1841), Facsimile, 71, l.i.

<sup>177</sup> Susanna Centlivre, *The Gamester, Popular Plays by Women in the Restoration and Eighteenth Century*, Ed. Tanya Caldwell, (Peterborough: Broadview, 2011), 109, l.i.

stated before in this thesis, the French were much more concerned with making their plays follow the neoclassical rules of theatre. Centlivre seems to have a typical English disregard for any of these rules and her play often looks more like a direct translation than it could if it had to follow a verse structure similar to Regnard's.

In addition to being closer to a translation of *Le Joueur*, there is an interesting piece of scholarship done on the similarities between the two plays that also puts this set of plays in a different position in this thesis than the other sets of plays. Ruth E. Hunt wrote a master's thesis on this very topic in 1911. This master's thesis has a number of concerns that are different from mine. Hunt is very interested in which play is better, and as I stated in the introduction to this thesis, comes to the conclusion that *Le Joueur* is the better play partially because, Centlivre "lowered the original in her adaptation of it."<sup>178</sup> Hunt claims that the French neoclassical theatre is simply better than its English counterpart. While Hunt extols the virtues of Regnard's play, it does not appear to be anything particularly more remarkable than Molière's plays. At least Hunt does concede that, "The prose of Mrs. Centlivre is quite as lively as the verse of Regnard. While not altogether above reproach it is excellent for a woman whose opportunities had been so limited as hers."<sup>179</sup> Hunt makes much of the relative ease and privilege of Regnard's life and the more arduous lifestyle that Centlivre had to pursue to support herself. Hunt suggests that prose used by Centlivre, and other Restoration playwrights doing something

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<sup>178</sup> Hunt, *A Comparison of 'Le Joueur' by Regnard, and 'The Gamester,'* 88.

<sup>179</sup> Hunt, *A Comparison of 'Le Joueur' by Regnard, and 'The Gamester,'* 23.

more akin to translation, was used primarily for speed.<sup>180</sup> This seems like a good reason for using prose, however as we've noticed in the other plays we've examined, verse does not seem to be a primary concern of English playwrights or audiences during this period, at least in regards to comedy. It seems that plots were much more important.

The plays do diverge in a number of plot points, most prominently the end of the play. Centlivre has added two characters who do not appear at all in the French play. They are Lovewell, the constant lover of Lady Wealthy (la comtesse in Regnard's play) and Betty, a serving woman to Lady Wealthy. Lady Wealthy's character seems somewhat expanded on the whole, in fact. It seems likely, although this is not mentioned by Hunt, that this was done to make Lady Wealthy and Angelica into a pair of women who would be played by the prominent actresses of the time. They were indeed played by Elizabeth Barry and Anne Bracegirdle respectively. We will come back to this later in this thesis but it seems important to mention that this change may have been to make the character of la comtesse larger for this reason. Lady Wealthy is even given a speech early on that in Regnard's play belongs to Nérine, Angélique's maid who has turned into Favourite in *The Gamester*. Nérine acts out what Valère will do when Angélique breaks off their relationship. She drops to her knees and pleads with Angélique, we can only imagine to extremely comic effect.<sup>181</sup> This is given to Lady Wealthy in *The Gamester*, and we must imagine that it was both to flesh out the part but also possibly to provide a meatier role to

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<sup>180</sup> Hunt, *A Comparison of 'Le Joueur' by Regnard, and 'The Gamester,'* 22.

<sup>181</sup> Regnard, *Le Joueur*, p. 96, II.i.

one of the stars of Restoration theatre. Favourite does seem to be more like a maid in *The Gamester*, whereas Nérine appears more like a confidant and Hunt also goes so far as to say that Favourite is coarser than Nérine.<sup>182</sup>

Lovewell is a character described by Hunt as “too self-sacrificing to be natural.”<sup>183</sup> He seems to be present to give Lady Wealthy a route to a happy ending, since la comtesse in *Le Joueur* does fade out of the play after the Marquis is discovered not to be a Marquis at all. It seems that perhaps Betty is present just to have another woman onstage, or perhaps to make Lady Wealthy look more important. Lovewell, being such a constant and apparently non gambling man, makes Valere look better as well. When Lovewell thinks that Valere is a rival for Lady Wealthy’s affections he says “the company thou keeps has taught thee to be a villain.”<sup>184</sup> This seems to suggest that maybe at some point Valère was less of a villain, which lays a clearer path to his redemption at the end of the play. Indeed, even the friendship of so steadfast a person as Lovewell makes Valere look less like a villain.

The biggest and most pronounced change in content between the two plays is the ending of the plays. At the end of *Le Joueur*, Angélique asks Valère for the portrait she gave him, which he had given away much earlier in the play than he does in *The Gamester*, simply as collateral. When he cannot produce it Madam la Ressource does produce it and he is exposed. Angélique chooses to marry Dorante, Valère’s uncle,

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<sup>182</sup> Hunt, *A Comparison of ‘Le Joueur’ by Regnard, and ‘The Gamester,’* 67.

<sup>183</sup> Hunt, *A Comparison of ‘Le Joueur’ by Regnard, and ‘The Gamester,’* 69.

<sup>184</sup> Centlivre, “The Gamester,” 143, IV.ii.

instead of Valère and Valère goes about his dissolute life. *The Gamester* ends with Valère similarly unable to present the portrait, which he has just lost in a previous scene to Angelica herself in disguise. When his father cuts him off Angelica decides to forgive him and they plan to marry. Then there is a dance and epilogue. These endings are incredibly different. Regnard's seems to be more concerned with examining the path a gambler's life can take, whereas Centlivre appears more interested in the play having a "happy" ending.

In *The Gamester*, leading up to the ending of the play there is a scene where Angelica dresses herself as a man to gamble with her lover. This scene and the subsequent reveal that she indeed had the portrait the whole time seems reminiscent of Portia asking Bassanio for her ring in *The Merchant of Venice* while she is disguised as a man. Except of course, in that case, Bassanio was doing the noble thing by respecting the man who saved his friend's life by giving him the ring he asked for, and Valère has no such nobility here. This is a scene that feels unique to the English theatre of the time for multiple reasons. It of course does not happen in the French play because the whole of the French play happens in the same hotel where all of our main characters are lodging, thus satisfying the neoclassical requirement of the unity of place. Centlivre has no regard for the unity of place, so we are able to move the action to a gambling hall for this scene. Additionally, it appears to come out of the desire to see women in breeches roles, which was so prevalent during this period of English theatre. Hunt claims that these two heroines are different for this reason. She argues, "Angélique is feminine in a more

ladylike way. The English heroine's adventure into the gambling hall would have been impossible for her."<sup>185</sup> This interpretation of this section of the play seems to come from a greater focus on Regnard's play, and a lack of knowledge about this tradition in English theatre of the time. It does not seem so much that Angelica is less feminine or less ladylike than Angélique, simply that they are characters in different cultural settings. Angelica does not seem to have much trouble pretending to be a man. Her only asides seem to be about Valere parting with the picture, and she only becomes concerned about being dressed as a man when Valere wants to duel with her. She seems to be at ease gambling with the men and she gambles well.

We also know that there was a great deal of gender conformity at work when women played breeches roles. As was stated in the introduction to this paper, there is some debate around the subversiveness of breeches roles. There is debate about whether they let women occupy transgressive roles or if they essentially reasserted the gender roles of the time by letting women briefly step out of them only to solidify the clarity of gender roles. Helen E. M. Brooks claims in her book that there was a major difference between travesty roles, roles where women played male characters, and breeches roles, roles where women played women who dressed up as men within the plot of the play. She claims that "whilst travesty's gender play served to queer heteronormative boundaries of sex and gender, in breeches roles these boundaries were both demarcated

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<sup>185</sup> Hunt, *A Comparison of 'Le Joueur' by Regnard, and 'The Gamester,'* 66.

and reinforced.”<sup>186</sup> While this is very likely true in general in Restoration plays, and certainly clear in *The Country Wife* where Margery’s disguise is completely ineffective and only serves to sexualize her more, there does not seem to be a great deal of sexualization surrounding Angelica in this scene. In fact, while she returns to the long suffering and betrayed woman that we know she is after this scene, this scene effectively allows her to take control of the narrative of the rest of the play. She has finally acted and done something in regards to her lover, and, while she does eventually relent and agree to marry him anyway, it allows her to control the outcome. While Angélique in *Le Joueur*, seems to be more or less passive in her role as long suffering fiancé, she does make the decision by the end of the play to marry Dorante instead. However, it does seem that choosing a husband is the choice most entrenched in gender roles that Angélique could make in that situation. So perhaps the French play gives her some agency but not until the very end of the play.

*The Gamester* is sometimes called a “Sentimental Comedy” which Victoria Warren takes issue with in her article, “Gender and Genre in Susanna Centlivre’s *The Gamester* and *The Basset Table*.” Warren argues that even though there are many “sentimental comedies” by men, “To call these plays ‘sentimental’ is to cast them into an inferior position – a position that in the twentieth century was too often reserved

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<sup>186</sup> Helen Brooks, *Actresses, Gender, and the Eighteenth-century: Playing Women*, (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2015), 82.

primarily for the work of women writers.”<sup>187</sup> This seems to be a reasonable position, and indeed is in line with Bratton’s arguments about the disappearance of Centlivre. Warren suggests that the reforms of the characters in *The Gamester* are not as moral as has long been suggested. She points out that Valere really only has any interest in reforming himself after he has been disinherited and there are no other options, and that Lady Wealthy seems ambivalent about her “reform” at the end of the play.<sup>188</sup> While Centlivre’s play could easily be considered more concerned with morality than Regnard’s play, perhaps the fact that Valère does not reform at the end of *Le Joueur*, but instead loses everything, is even a stronger morality tale, as there is not an option of reform for him. Both the plays seem to show the pitfalls of gambling and some of the problems with it as a vice, but it is interesting that both end so differently and yet have a similar moral at the end of the play.

Early in 1704 Queen Anne had issued two proclamations about the theatre. One ordered that “no play, new or old, no song, prologue or epilogue be presented on the stage without being first licensed by the Master of the Revels.”<sup>189</sup> The second one ordered that the Master of Revels be careful in his licensing of plays.<sup>190</sup> This play is the first one in this thesis to be examined written after Collier’s pamphlet calling for more morality in the theatre and, while in the introduction to this thesis it was examined and

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<sup>187</sup> Warren, “Gender and Genre in Susanna Centlivre’s *The Gamester* and *The Basset Table*,” 606.

<sup>188</sup> Warren, “Gender and Genre in Susanna Centlivre’s *The Gamester* and *The Basset Table*,” 614 and 616.

<sup>189</sup> Lock, *Susanna Centlivre*, 46.

<sup>190</sup> Lock, *Susanna Centlivre*, 46.

found that many scholars find that this pamphlet is not a sufficient reason for the emergence of the “sentimental comedy,” it had still been written before this time and in conjunction with Queen Anne’s orders about the theatre must have had an effect on those writing plays at this time. Indeed, Centlivre states in her dedication of the play that “the design of this piece were to divert without that vicious strain which usually attends the comic muse; and, according to the first intent of plays, recommend morality, and I hope have, in some measure, performed it.”<sup>191</sup> This appears to be exactly what Centlivre does in this play. Richard Steele had attempted to do this with *The Lying Lover*, another play based on a French source, but was not very successful. Both Centlivre’s *The Gamester* and Cibber’s *The Careless Husband* were seen as successful moral plays at the time.<sup>192</sup>

It is hard to conceive that *The Gamester*, even with its “happy” ending could be considered a play that is lacking in moral certainty, even though Warren claims that it perhaps is. *The Gamester*, rather than showing the ill and deserved fate of an unrepentant gambler, instead shows characters who teach virtue through example. Lock suggests this as a helpful way of examining *The Gamester* as a moral play.<sup>193</sup> He points out that Lady Wealthy is reformed by the generosity of Lovewell. After Lovewell tells her that he has “been with Valere, sworn to him the letter was a plot of mine, the hand and bill all counterfeits, to satisfy my jealous scruple if there were affairs between ye; he believed it, and your honor’s free from all ill tongues – and the wretch doomed to be hated still.”

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<sup>191</sup> Centlivre, *The Gamester*, 107.

<sup>192</sup> Lock, *Susanna Centlivre*, 46.

<sup>193</sup> Lock, *Susanna Centlivre*, 49.

Lady Wealthy says in aside that “this generosity shocks” her.<sup>194</sup> He has protected her honor by making himself look jealous, which in actuality he was so this generosity is perhaps a little misplaced, and he still wants to marry her. Perhaps this is some of the moral uncertainty Warren describes. Lock notes that we see this also in the end of the play, when Angelica finds that Valere’s father disinheriting him moves her. She says, “Valere, come back. Should I forgive you all, would my generosity oblige you to a sober life?”<sup>195</sup> Once again we see the emphasis on generosity. As Lock claims Centlivre shows the moral of the play by “force of example” and that it “is supposed to operate on the characters in the play just as the play itself is supposed to act on its audience.”<sup>196</sup> This interpretation of the way that example is both effective onstage and offstage is a compelling one. The aspect Lock does not mention, however, is that in both of these circumstances it is not the bad example of gambling that is shown to change characters, but indeed generosity that is the example to be followed. This seems an interesting focus for the play. It is not as though generosity is in any way the opposite of willful gambling. It almost seems that Centlivre’s play is moral in a different way because the moral focus is not the vice of gambling, but generosity of spirit.

The epilogue of *The Gamester* is spoken by Verbuggen who played the role of Valere. He speaks to the dangers of gambling and ends the prologue suggesting that they have ventured to keep the audience here, that “in vain we labor to divert your care,/ Nor

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<sup>194</sup> Centlivre, *The Gamester*, 155, V.ii and Lock, *Susanna Centlivre*, 49.

<sup>195</sup> Centlivre, *The Gamester*, 160, V.ii.

<sup>196</sup> Lock, *Susanna Centlivre*, 49.

song, nor dance can bribe your presence here./ You fly this place like an infectious air;/ To yonder happy quarter of the town...”<sup>197</sup> Here we see the completion of the play teaching morals by example, as Lock discussed in his work on *Centlivre*. The play gave the audience the example of a play to watch, rather than just allowing them to go gambling. However, it seems that *Centlivre* considered it a serious enough problem that she assumes in her epilogue that the audience has perhaps learned nothing from her lesson and will soon be gambling again. Indeed she seems to be setting up for her next play, *The Basset Table*, which concerns a woman who needs to give up gambling, when Verbuggen says in the epilogue, “And more than Cupid, drawn the ladies in/ A thousand guineas for basset prevails...”<sup>198</sup> It is interesting that in these last few moments she brings up the issue of women who gamble, since that is not something we see in this play. Except, of course, that we do see Angelica gambling disguised as a man but it hardly serves as the sort of vice for her it does for Valere.

The ending of the French play is much harsher as has already been mentioned. Valère and Hector are alone onstage, after having been left as many of the other characters leave the stage with departing words to the two of them. Valère says, “Où vas-tu donc?” to which Hector replies, “Je vais à la bibliothèque/ Prendre un livre, et vous lire un traité de Sénèque.” Valère then responds with “Va, va, consolons-nous, Hector; et

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<sup>197</sup> *Centlivre, The Gamester*, 165.

<sup>198</sup> *Centlivre, The Gamester*, 164.

quelque jour/ Le jeu m'acquittera des pertes de l'amour."<sup>199</sup> Valère's apparent lack of concern about his future with his nonchalant question to Hector shows that Valère in this play did not really deserve to be reformed and given more chances. It also must have been a humorous ending to recall the scene in which Hector reads Seneca out loud to Valère. In that scene Hector makes humorous comparisons to what Seneca says and their situation. So this ending, even though it is not a particularly "happy" ending must have read as very funny. In examining the ending of this play it is interesting how Calame compares it to other endings of plays. He claims that, "Le dénouement lui-même, n'a nul besoin d'un de ces coups de théâtre comme on en trouve souvent, même chez Molière."<sup>200</sup> Indeed, it does seem like the ending is more realistic than some of the Deus Ex Machina endings we see in Molière's plays or other classical French theatre. Valère's character has not changed, or as Orwen says about *Le Joueur* in general, "If viewed as a comedy of character, it must be conceded that Valère is essentially a static creation, more a "portrait" in the seventeenth-century sense than a full-blown character."<sup>201</sup> Even though it is the portrait of Angélique he is so willing to part with, and that changes hands so readily, it is the "portrait" of Valère that is the real centerpiece of this play.

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<sup>199</sup> "Valère: So then, where are you going?"

Hector: I am going to the library to take out a book, and you are going to read treatise by Seneca.

Valère: Go, go. Let us console ourselves, Hector, and someday the game will acquit me of these losses in love."

Regnard, *Le Joueur*, 183-4, V.xii.

<sup>200</sup> "The denouement itself has no need of these theatrical devices that we find often, even in Molière's plays."

Calame, *Regnard, sa vie et son oeuvre*, 289.

<sup>201</sup> Orwen, *Jean-François Regnard*, 77.

Another point of discussion is that of Madam la Ressource in Regnard's play, as opposed to Mrs. Security in Centlivre's play. In Regnard's play she loans Valère money and is clearly Jewish. She also ends up with the portrait of Angélique in the second act, much earlier than Valere gives it away to Angelica in *The Gamester*. At the end of her first scene in *Le Joueur*, Hector says as she leaves, "Adieu, Juif, le plus Juif qui soit dans tout Paris."<sup>202</sup> This marking of this particular character as Jewish is not clear in *The Gamester*. Valere calls her a "mercenary wretch" and Hector curses her that "may some town sharper persuade that sanctified face into matrimony, and in one night empty all thy bags at Hazard."<sup>203</sup> While these are not kind words, there is no reference in this section to her being a Jew. In *The Gamester* she also ends up loaning Valere nothing even though he asks for money, so her presence is not the clear plot driver that her presence is in *Le Joueur*.

To further understand this change it may be helpful to understand the different ways that Jews were being treated at this time in both England and France. Jews had been officially expelled from England in 1290, but there was a shift in attitudes in the early seventeenth century. The interest in Puritanism created an interest in the Old Testament, and subsequently Jews and their scholarship.<sup>204</sup> As the seventeenth century continued there was even more interest in potentially being more tolerant toward Jews as Oliver Cromwell decided that it may be economically beneficial to have Jews in England. While

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<sup>202</sup> "Goodbye Jew, the most Jewish in all of Paris." Regnard, *Le Joueur*, 117, II.xiv.

<sup>203</sup> Centlivre, *The Gamester*, 118-119, I.i.

<sup>204</sup> Cecil Roth, *A History of the Jews in England*, (Chippenham: Oxford University Press, 1964), 149.

there was concern that after the fall of Cromwell there would be backlash against the Jewish community that had begun to establish itself in England, it turned out to be unwarranted. As Cecil Roth points out, "Charles II was essentially tolerant in a manner in which Cromwell was not, simply because religion was to him a matter of minor consequence."<sup>205</sup> There were some difficulties under James II, but as the eighteenth century began, Roth claims that restrictions placed on Jews were very similar to those placed on other non-Anglican religious groups in England (such as Catholics and non-conforming Protestants) and that these restriction were fairly trivial.<sup>206</sup> Essentially, while obviously not an ideal situation it seems that England began treating the Jews of the country the same way it treated its Catholics, which was with suspicious and somewhat bigoted tolerance.

This is not the case in France in the years leading up to the writing of this play. Perhaps this has to do with the way that tolerance was being treated differently in these countries at this time. As we have observed before in regards to the role of women and the family in France, Louis XIV was extremely concerned with centralizing. His desire for centralization, or religious unity, prompted him to revoke the Edict of Nantes in October of 1685, eleven years before this play was written. The Edict of Nantes was signed by Henri IV in 1589 and gave protestant's rights. Louis XIV planned to expel non-

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<sup>205</sup> Roth, *A History of the Jews in England*, 169.

<sup>206</sup> Roth, *A History of the Jews in England*, 172.

Catholics, but never ended up actually expelling the Jews.<sup>207</sup> However, a year before this ninety-three poor Jewish families had been required to leave the country in a month's time.<sup>208</sup> There was widespread popular hatred of Jews in France in the late seventeenth century.<sup>209</sup> The Jewish moneylender must have somehow still been common in France, as Jay Berkovitz points out that until the end of the *ancien régime* (1789) Jews in "Alsace and Lorraine were limited to those economic pursuits that had been permitted them by imperial decrees of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, that is, trade in old clothes, cattle, and moneylending."<sup>210</sup> It seems that France and England both had somewhat different relationships with their Jewish populations, or at least the state had very different relationships with their Jewish populations at these respective times.

Interestingly, even though the old moneylender is a Jewish woman in Regnard's comedy, she is given a great deal more stage time, since she is the one who has the portrait of Angélique. However, after announcing that the Marquis is a fake, even after it has been discovered that Valère foolishly gave Madame la Ressource the portrait of Angélique, Madame la Ressource continues to pester Dorante to give her back the portrait of Angélique. After Angélique's final words to Valère, "Si vous êtes heureux au jeu comme en maîtresse,/ Et si vous conservez aussi mal ses presents,/ Vous ne ferez, je

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<sup>207</sup> Arthur Hertzberg, *The French Enlightenment and the Jews*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), 13-4.

<sup>208</sup> Esther Benbassa, *The Jews of France: A History from Antiquity to the Present*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 50.

<sup>209</sup> Jay R. Berkovitz, *Rites and Passages: The Beginnings of Modern Jewish Culture in France, 1650-1860*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 17.

<sup>210</sup> Berkovitz, *Rites and Passages*, 17.

crois, fortune de long-temps.”<sup>211</sup> Madame la Ressource then immediately says to Dorante “Et mon portrait, monsieur, vous plait-il me le rendre?”<sup>212</sup> It seems that even though this character has more stage time in *Le Joueur*, she also perhaps behaves in this money hungry way to what may have been comic effect in 1696. Indeed, while Hunt does not discuss the differences in how Mrs. Security and Madame la Ressource are depicted in regards to their Judaism, she does mention that the Parfaict brothers in their work *Histoire générale du Théâtre français depuis son origine jusqu’à présent* written in 1748 claimed that “this character is one of the best in the play.”<sup>213</sup> Hunt claims that “the part of Mme. La Ressource must have been taken by a very clever actress” for this reason, and while this is entirely possible, it does not exclude the fact that perhaps her character, as a portrayal of a Jew in the late seventeenth century, would have been extremely comic to an audience where anti-Semitism was still prevalent. Perhaps Centlivre makes the character so much smaller because this humor would have been lost on an English audience, the same way it seems to have been lost on Ruth Hunt in 1911.

While it has been touched on somewhat earlier in this chapter, we will now focus in more sharply on the actresses of this piece and their roles in it. The stars of this play were Anne Bracegirdle as Angelica and Elizabeth Barry as Lady Wealthy. Elizabeth Barry was extremely famous. She had a long career and by the time this play was

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<sup>211</sup> “If you are happy with gaming as your mistress and if you conserve its presents badly you will not, I believe, have fortune for very long.” Regnard, *Le Joueur*, 182, V.ix.

<sup>212</sup> “And my portrait, monsieur, please return it to me?” Regnard, *Le Joueur*, 182, V.ix.

<sup>213</sup> Hunt, *A Comparison of ‘Le Joueur’ by Regnard, and ‘The Gamester,’* 76.

produced was an aging but still incredibly famous actress. Barry was probably the daughter of a barrister, but was brought into polite society by Lady Davenant.<sup>214</sup> As a young woman she had some difficulties initially with acting but under the tutelage of the Earl of Rochester, a court libertine, who in perhaps an apocryphal story wagered he could turn her into the finest player on the stage, she did indeed become a successful actress.<sup>215</sup> She also became Rochester's mistress and this seems to be the beginning of a long reputation of licentiousness on her part. By 1677 she was a probably a protégée of Nell Gwyn, a famous actress and mistress of Charles II, and by 1682 she was known as the "Famous Mrs. Barry."<sup>216</sup> In the 1680s and 90s Barry was well known for tragic roles.<sup>217</sup> By 1695 she started to relinquish her younger roles to Anne Bracegirdle in favor of more mature roles.<sup>218</sup> She retired in 1708 so *The Gamester* is definitely in the later portion of her career. Perhaps she began to play comedic roles as she became an older woman.

Wilson discusses the fact that in Restoration adaptations of Shakespeare and other earlier playwrights that there were "female roles heightened or enlarged to fit the needs and tastes of the new actresses."<sup>219</sup> This is clearly the case in the examples he gives from productions of *King Lear*, but also seems to have been the case in the adaptations from French playwrights as well. We see this in this particular situation especially clearly

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<sup>214</sup> Wilson, *All the King's Ladies*, 50.

<sup>215</sup> Wilson, *All the King's Ladies*, 51 and Hamilton, "The 'Famous Mrs. Barry,'" 292.

<sup>216</sup> Wilson, *All the King's Ladies*, 111-112.

<sup>217</sup> Hamilton, "The 'Famous Mrs. Barry,'" 292.

<sup>218</sup> Wilson, *All the King's Ladies*, 113.

<sup>219</sup> Wilson, *All the King's Ladies*, 104.

because *The Gamester* is so comparatively close to its original source. As was mentioned earlier, Lady Wealthy is a much bigger and more sympathetic character than la comtesse in *Le Joueur*. It must be supposed that this is because Elizabeth Barry was such a presence. Barry and Bracegirdle were often paired together and in these situations Barry would play the “older, sexually experienced woman” and Bracegirdle would play the “trademark imperiled maiden.”<sup>220</sup>

Anne Bracegirdle was younger than Barry. She played young ingénue roles and in 1690 inherited Betty Boutell’s roles.<sup>221</sup> She was known for playing “good” women and apparently had the distinction of being given more prologues and epilogues to speak than any other actress, however she did not have either in *The Gamester*.<sup>222</sup> Bracegirdle, in contrast to Barry, was known for her great virtue or as the “romantick virgin.”<sup>223</sup> It also seems that perhaps playing breeches roles was not common for Bracegirdle the way that it was for Susanna Verbuggen who was discussed as having been in an uncharacteristically non-breeches role in *The Emperor of the Moon*. Howe says of Bracegirdle,

It was, on the other hand, comparatively unusual for Bracegirdle to disguise herself as a man; her characters have wealth and they are usually pursued rather than pursuing. The typical Bracegirdle heroine is passive; her task is to protect her reputation and discern if her lover is worthy of her, not to initiate action.<sup>224</sup>

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<sup>220</sup> Peck, “Albion’s ‘Chaste Lucrece,’” 106.

<sup>221</sup> Wilson, *All the King’s Ladies*, 123.

<sup>222</sup> Wilson, *All the King’s Ladies*, 126 and 89.

<sup>223</sup> Wilson, *All the King’s Ladies*, 90.

<sup>224</sup> Howe, *The First English Actresses*, 88.

This is an interesting interpretation of her roles especially when examined with regards to *The Gamester*. Her role is, for the most part passive. It seems clear here in Howe's analysis that the passive woman in Restoration drama remains dressed as a woman, and that to do any pursuing, or become active, one has to dress as a man. Her character is of course, pursued, but eventually decides that being pursued is insufficient. It is interesting that Angelica's task "is to protect her reputation and discern if her lover is worthy of her." She does take a more active role and does initiate action in this play, but perhaps the fact that her goal remains the same, primarily to discern if her lover is worthy of her in this play, makes the breeches role more passive than it would have been in another plot. It is also possible that this was just an unusual role for Bracegirdle, and perhaps it was a surprise for the audience to see her taking an active role and to see her in breeches.

However, as was mentioned earlier, she does not have too many asides in her scene and while she is at ease dressed as a man, she is also not particularly aggressive or full of any kind of swagger it seems would have been common in other women playing breeches roles. Perhaps the presence of Bracegirdle in this breeches role made it even less of a subversion, as Brooks discusses, because of her persona of the virtuous "good" woman.

It was briefly touched on that Barry and Bracegirdle had very different offstage reputations and this will be examined further. It seems that Barry, as playing the more sexually experienced character to Bracegirdle's more "imperiled maiden" is reflected both in the characters that they play in this play, but also in their lives. Barry seems to

have had some obscene things said about her including, that “should you lie with her all night she would not know you next morning, unless you had another five pounds at her service.”<sup>225</sup> While these obscene things were said about Barry, according to Kate Hamilton, “Barry deliberately conflated public and private throughout her career to great success”<sup>226</sup> In contrast, Bracegirdle was “thought to be chaste, many writers focused attention on her sexual virtue.”<sup>227</sup> Peck claims that, “playhouses were frankly sexualized spaces, and the sex lives of actresses a common topic of town gossip. In this context, Bracegirdle’s moral vigilance was exceptional.”<sup>228</sup> While Barry and Bracegirdle appear to have very different on and off stage personas, it seems that, as Lowenthal points out, their star status “generated for them both power and hazards.”<sup>229</sup> She describes that since they participated in an act that displayed their bodies onstage and that this “visual availability” was so vital to their presentation of roles that this turned into “discourse filled with speculations about the offstage activities of their bodies.”<sup>230</sup> With such discourse about their offstage bodies it clearly would have informed their onstage bodies, especially in a play like *The Gamester* by which time they were both established actresses. Even though the virgin/whore dichotomy is clearly at work in the play, one can only imagine that this reading of the play would have been extremely clear to an audience

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<sup>225</sup> Tom Brown (III, 39) quoted in Wilson, *All the King's Ladies*, 115.

<sup>226</sup> Hamilton, “The ‘Famous Mrs. Barry,’” 294.

<sup>227</sup> Peck, “Albion’s ‘Chaste Lucrece,’” 89.

<sup>228</sup> Peck, “Albion’s ‘Chaste Lucrece,’” 90.

<sup>229</sup> Lowenthal, “Sticks and Rags, Bodies and Brocade,” 221.

<sup>230</sup> Lowenthal, “Sticks and Rags, Bodies and Brocade,” 220.

seeing these actresses who they presumed to know so much about off stage. In fact, it seems possible that authors could write roles that were sparser and let the presence of the celebrity actresses fill in any blanks for the audience.

This chapter has examined a number of the ways that *Le Joueur* was adapted by Susanna Centlivre into *The Gamester*. The expansion of Lady Wealthy's character to accommodate Mrs. Barry in England, the donning of breeches by Angelica, the examination of morality in the plays and the role of the Jewish moneylender are all aspects of the play where the English changes can be seen. This play, more so than either *The Country Wife* or *The Emperor of the Moon*, makes the sorts of changes that happened when plays were adapted from French much clearer than the other two plays. The closeness of the texts makes the examination especially intriguing. The role of the actresses as well, seems especially rich in this particular circumstance since in many ways, perhaps more so than the earlier plays we examined, these two women's roles are very close to the type of woman often played by these actresses. While I will not make a sweeping statement as Hunt did at the end of her thesis in 1911 that "Regnard's *le Joueur* is obviously much the more valuable of the two plays" I hope that I have been able to give Centlivre's work some of the attention it deserves, and also compare it to Regnard's play in a slightly more favorable light, as they both seem to say so much about their respective societies at the time they were written.<sup>231</sup>

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<sup>231</sup> Hunt, *A Comparison of 'Le Joueur' by Regnard, and 'The Gamester,'* 88.

## Conclusion

In this thesis we have examined three plays from the Restoration which had clearly stated French source material. None of the French plays were significantly older than the English adaptations which means they were primarily contemporary plays. These plays were not chosen for this thesis because they had contemporary sources, simply these three plays were chosen to cover a large section of the Restoration. Even though these plays are fairly contemporary to their French sources, the English playwrights all made significant changes to the plays that make them fit into the English political and societal system.

These three plays all demonstrate slightly different ways that adaptations can be done. *The Country Wife* has borrowed plot from Molière's plays, but seems to have borrowed little else. The play is so expanded and shifted in its focus that we can clearly see the different formal and story concerns of the English play in relation to the French play. *The Emperor of the Moon* is much closer to its source, but its source is so much more nebulous that it is hard to know exactly how close it is. It has also been reworked to include a clearer plot structure. This shift seems to have something to do with more English concerns but also with a translation in the theatrical form. *The Gamester* is by far the closest of these plays to its original source, and this closeness allows us to really examine what kind of concerns were very different and which ones were the same.

It does seem notable that there is an expansion of women's roles in all three of these plays. This is not a statement that can be made about English theatre of the time in general, especially since this study purposefully includes a large proportion of English plays by women. However, it is true even in *The Country Wife*, the only English play examined written by a man, that the women's roles which existed in the French play appear to be expanded, and there are also more women. Of course, this is in part due to the apparent desire to include a greater variety of characters and plot as Dryden suggests in his essay of dramatic poesy. He claims that,

'Tis evident that the more the persons are, the greater will be the variety, of the plot. If then the parts are managed so regularly that the beauty of the whole be kept entire, and that the variety become not a perplexed and confused mass of accidents, you will find it infinitely pleasing to be led in a labyrinth of design, where you see some of your way before you, yet discern not the end till you arrive at it.<sup>232</sup>

This shift therefore could have to do with a concern which Dryden was aware of at the time; a desire for plots that were not bound by the rules of neoclassical French theatre.

It also may have to do with the incredibly important presence of women onstage in this period, which is something I have endeavored to discuss in this thesis, both by highlighting the important roles of the actresses and their popularity, but also in my focus on both Aphra Behn and Susanna Centlivre, two women who wrote very popular plays in the period, when the profession of playwriting was still dominated by men. As Katherine Quinsey claims about Restoration drama,

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<sup>232</sup> Dryden, "An Essay of Dramatic Poesy," 169.

Encouraged by the physical presence of women onstage as actresses, the increased and varied representation of women in the audience, and the entry of women into the public sphere as writers, and driven by the larger and deeper ideological shifts underlying these phenomena, this drama enacts a deeply ambivalent engagement with questions of female subjectivity, greatly expanding speaking roles for women and playing almost obsessively on the presence of women in the theater.<sup>233</sup>

Quinsey then goes on to discuss the ways that Restoration authors altered classic English plays to expand the speaking roles of women, which seems, at least in the plays examined in this thesis, to extend to the plays adapted from French sources. This thesis examined a number of the aspects of women in the theatre that Quinsey brings up here, however it did not discuss women in the audiences of Restoration plays, and this would be an aspect of this thesis that could be expanded upon at another time.

This thesis in no way covers or tries to include all of the ways that French sources influenced and shaped English theatre at this time, and does not address all of the issues it could surrounding these plays. The future of theatre and how it changes after the “Restoration” is not something discussed in this thesis, but we will do a brief examination of the futures of these Restoration plays. Many Restoration plays remained popular through the first half of the eighteenth century, but fell out of favor in the second half. This in part is due to the “moral disapproval” of the latter half of the century.<sup>234</sup> It seems unlikely that “moral disapproval” can be the major complaint of both *The Emperor of the Moon* and *The Gamester*, but it absolutely makes sense in regards to *The Country Wife*.

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<sup>233</sup> Katherine M. Quinsey, ed. *Broken Boundaries: Women & Feminism in Restoration Drama*, (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1996), 2.

<sup>234</sup> Deborah Kaplan, “Representing the Nation: Restoration Comedies on the Early Twentieth-Century London Stage,” *Theatre Survey* 36.02 (1995): 37.

With the “moral disapproval” of the later eighteenth-century, David Garrick’s cleaned up version of the *The Country Wife*, *The Country Girl* was performed after it was written in 1766 through at least 1924.<sup>235</sup> Deborah Kaplan cites that a critic in 1924 on the subject of a revival of *The Country Wife* claimed,

We doubt if the most ardent of admiration of the Restoration drama could seriously maintain that Wycherley’s masterpiece is possible on the modern stage, or has been for the last hundred years. It is exceedingly clever and amusing, and the wit is delightfully fresh and spontaneous... but so much of it is almost brutally offensive.<sup>236</sup>

We can assume that this “brutally offensive” aspect of the play is due to the lascivious behavior of the characters. By the 1930s, it was more acceptable and premiered in New York in 1931.<sup>237</sup> In the 1950s it became a common play for famous performers, especially in England.<sup>238</sup> Stern notes that it is performed in the US primarily at Universities, provincial theatres, and Off (and Off-Off) Broadway, but in the UK remains popular professionally.<sup>239</sup>

*The Emperor of the Moon* enjoyed frequent productions periodically through 1748. It had over 130 performances.<sup>240</sup> *The Emperor of the Moon* is not as raunchy as *The Country Wife*. An abridged version of *The Emperor of the Moon* enjoyed a renewed run as a puppet play at the Patagonian Theatre in 1777 and 1778.<sup>241</sup> It also began to see some revivals in the later twentieth century, in a 1975 student production and later productions in the 1990s.<sup>242</sup> It appears that *The Emperor of the Moon* continues to be performed by universities.

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<sup>235</sup> Stern, *The Country Wife*, xxiii.

<sup>236</sup> Kaplan, “Representing the Nation,” 47.

<sup>237</sup> Stern, *The Country Wife*, xxiii.

<sup>238</sup> Stern, *The Country Wife*, xxiii.

<sup>239</sup> Stern, *The Country Wife*, xxiv.

<sup>240</sup> Caldwell, *Popular Plays by Women in the Restoration and the Eighteenth Century*, 22.

<sup>241</sup> Spencer, *The Rover and Other Plays*, xxi.

<sup>242</sup> Spencer, *The Rover and Other Plays*, xxi.

Shakespeare & Company in Massachusetts has announced that they will be producing *The Emperor of the Moon* as part of their summer season in 2016.<sup>243</sup>

As was stated in the thesis *The Gamester* remained in repertoires in both England and America through the nineteenth century, possibly unlike *The Country Wife* because the moral space of *The Gamester* is less murky and indeed it does not really need to be cleaned up the way that *The Country Wife* would need to be.<sup>244</sup> Contemporary theatres seem to sometimes do *The Basset Table* (also 1705), notably produced in 2012 by the Folger Theatre in Washington D.C. under the title *The Gaming Table*. It seems that Bratton's claim that Centlivre has been mostly forgotten by modern audiences remains true, with some exceptions for a few of her plays.<sup>245</sup>

I have also endeavored in this thesis not to suggest that these English plays have stolen, plagiarized or copied these French plays within a negative context, since in this particular context French voices were in no way being oppressed or silenced by these English versions of so many French works. France was the cultural center of Europe through most of Louis XIV's reign and these changes were not really appropriative the way they would have been in a more uneven cultural exchange. Indeed, in an age in which Shakespeare's many sources are widely discussed and seen to be taken from classical sources suggesting that there was something morally wrong with using the

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<sup>243</sup> American Theatre Editors, "Shakespeare & Company Announces 2016 Summer Season," *American Theatre* Jan. 21, 2016, Accessed 5/3/2016, <http://www.americantheatre.org/2016/01/21/shakespeare-company-announces-2016-summer-season/>

<sup>244</sup> Caldwell, *Popular Plays by Women in the Restoration and the Eighteenth Century*, 25.

<sup>245</sup> Bratton, "Reading the Intertheatrical," 7.

French plays seems antiquated. Hunt claims in her thesis that the English plays are much more vulgar and that, “scarcely a character has been left unsullied in the effort to render the plays interesting to an English audience.”<sup>246</sup> I have tried to avoid this sort of negative approach and have explored the issue more as one of adaptation for a different audience and society and I hope that I have done this successfully.

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<sup>246</sup> Hunt, *A Comparison of 'Le Joueur' by Regnard, and 'The Gamester,'* 15.

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