



### Imaginary Plots and Political Realities in the Plays of William Congreve

By Maximillian E. Novak

**Pub Date:** 30 June 2020

**Binding:** Electronic book text

**Price:** £25.00 £90.00 / \$40.00  
\$140.00

**ISBN:** 9781785273742

**BISAC CATEGORY:** LITERARY CRITICISM / Drama

LITERARY CRITICISM / European / English, Irish, Scottish,

Welsh, LITERARY CRITICISM / Modern / 18th Century,

LITERARY CRITICISM / Modern / 17th Century

**BISAC CODE:** LIT013000

**BIC CODE:** DSG

**Extent:** 144 pages

**Size:** 153 x 229 mm /

6 x 9 inches

**RIGHTS**

**Exclusive:** WORLD

### A study of the political and social milieu that informs William Congreve's writings

William Congreve was deeply involved in the events of his turbulent times. That involvement reveals itself in works which have sometimes been regarded as entirely unengaged with the realities of his society. This book attempts to read Congreve's plays and his novella, *Incognita*, against the political and social upheaval of the period initiated by the rebellion of 1688. A strong supporter of the new world ushered in by William III and Mary, Congreve fought against the reactionary politics of the Jacobite opposition.

### Contents

Acknowledgements; List of illustrations; Foreword; Chapter 1, The politics of love, marriage and scandal in Congreve's world; Chapter 2, *Incognita* and some problems in morality and epistemology; Chapter 3, The "fashionable cut of the town" and William Congreve's *The Old Batchelor*; Chapter 4, Political and moral double-dealing in Congreve's *The Double Dealer*; Chapter 5, Foresight in the stars and scandal in London: Reading the hieroglyphics in Congreve's *Love for Love*; Chapter 6, The failure of perception in Congreve's *The Mourning Bride*; Chapter 7, Politics and Congreve's *The Way of the World*; Afterword; Works Cited; Index.

### About the Author

Maximillian Novak is a research professor at the University of California Los Angeles and has published widely on the literature of the Restoration and eighteenth century.

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