

## MIC ENGLISH, SEM-VI

### William Wycherley: *The Country Wife*

#### Character analysis of Mrs Dainty Fidget

Mrs. Dainty Fidget is the sister of Sir Jasper Fidget and the companion of Lady Fidget and Mrs. Squeamish—known together, ironically, as the “virtuous gang.” Mrs. Dainty Fidget has a reputation as a “virtuous” woman who scorns “lewd” and promiscuous men and is disgusted by anything sexual. Like her sisters in the “gang,” Mrs. Dainty is extremely preoccupied with protecting her reputation and refuses to be seen in the company of men who are not her brother, Sir Jasper (Mrs. Dainty is unmarried and under her brother’s care). Mrs. Dainty, like the other “virtuous” ladies, makes an exception for Horner because he is widely known to be impotent. Even though this report is false, and Horner is really her lover, (as he is the lover of all the ladies in the “gang”), Mrs. Dainty feels secure spending time with Horner, as people will not believe that he is capable of seduction and this protects her public image from scandal. Mrs. Dainty Fidget, like the other ladies, believes that it is more pleasurable to have sex with dishonorable men to whom one is not married than to have sex with one’s husband. This reflects popular opinion that marriage was a chore and an obligation rather than an act of love, and that pleasure really came from things which were forbidden rather than behaviors that were socially approved. Like the other “virtuous” ladies, Mrs. Dainty Fidget is a “false rogue” who does everything in her power to deceive her brother (and society in general) so that she may fulfil her desires. Her name is ironic, as “dainty” suggests that she is delicate and innocent; while Mrs. Dainty may pretend to be this way in public, she is the opposite in private.