

with effortless ease. Fainall's cleverness is He takes up the very words of Fainall uses and with a brilliant dexterity tosses them around to give them a different meaning. Miscabell's wit dazzles, but it does not hurt. When towards the end of Act I, Witwoud and Petulant decide to be severe with the ladies, in other words be witty at their expense, Miscabell rebukes them and tells them that putting 'another out of countenance is something to be ashamed of. Miscabell's wit is subservient to his moral sense and he is never witty merely for the sake of being witty.

☐ Miscabell, on the other hand, draws people towards himself. At the beginning of the play he and Millamant form a central unit and Mrs. Fainall, though a former mistress, is his staunch supporter in whom he can safely entrust all his plans. He has a devoted servant in Waitwell and he has won the loyalty of Foible, Waitwell's bride. Towards the end of the play, he and Sir Wilfull have become 'Sworn Brothers' and 'Fellow Travellers', Petulant and Witwoud stand as witnesses to his legal document and even Lady Wishfort, his 'evil genius', has been won over to his side.

☐ The intrinsic seriousness of Miscabell's nature is revealed in his obvious distaste for frivolous and irresponsible conversation; even Millamant is not spared and he lectures her seriously, advising her to avoid 'the conversation of fools'. Millamant may

• Mirabell as a true wit :-

=> As a Restoration comedy of manners The Way of The World deals with the manners and morals of the age. The task of the dramatist, William Congreve is to distinguish between false manners and true manners, to separate pseudo-intelligence from intelligence, to distinguish a 'witword' from a 'truewit'. Truewit possesses all the external accomplishments of wit - the polish, the sophistication, the ability to play with words. But with them they are the outward expression of an inner quality. Witworts, on the other hand, are witty for the sake of being witty. Mirabell, therefore, exemplifies the ambiguity of the aristocratic ideal of the true-wit.

☐ Wit is revealed in the perfect control of vocabulary, in the polished, epigrammatic elegance of style and the delicate antithetical balanced of the sentences. Wit, in a word, is the art of speaking pleasantly and amusingly. It is also reflected through action. The central characters of the play, Mirabell and Fainall are both very good rhetoricians; therefore it is the deeds rather than discourse that distinguish the 'true wit' that is Mirabell from Fainall, who only feigns it, however masterfully at times, using the language of a gentleman to mask his real spiteful and vicious nature.

☐ Mirabell possesses all the external characteristics of the urban gentleman. He has the wit, the polish and grace that the sophisticated society of his age demands and in his battle of wit with Fainall in Act I, his rejoinders demolish

Fainall says about his purpose: "This is in order to have something to brag of the next-time he makes court to Millamant, and swear he has abandoned the whole sex for her sake."

□ Complicated plot construction is also regarded as a quality of comedy of manners. In this play, the five acts contain sixty five scenes in total and there are very complicated relations among the characters. Such as, Mitchell, the hero is loved by Millamant, Mrs. Fainall, Mrs. Marwood and even Lady Wishfort secretly.

□ The discussion above makes it very much clear that The Way of the World presents a faithful picture of the manners of the Restoration Period and the Eighteenth century social picture. The presentation is full of comedy and satire. Thus the play is a good example of the Restoration Comedy of manners.

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[L.C. knights had said that Restoration Comedy was an inadequate picture of a limited culture.]

friends etc. On her contact with Mirabell, Millicent proves her habit of late rising, contemplation in solitude, general laziness etc. She says, "I'll be abed in a morning as long as I please." Mirabell also ridicules pregnant women's wearing tight dresses in order to maintain their figure which can actually deform their children. Moreover, intelligent women like Millicent allowed a crowd of admirers to a school of fools to gather around them in order to show their demand and worth. Millicent's vanity is revealed in causing her lover pain to have a sense of power: "One's cruelty is one's power." Above all, Lady Wishfort, a higher class fashionable lady, seeks a husband in her age of fifty five. Mirabell ridicules her saying, "The good lady would marry anything that resembled a man." And the make up and dressing up of women of the society is expressed in the speech of the footman about Lady Wishfort of the house - "I can not swear to her face in a morning, before she is dressed."

☐ The Way of the World brings before us witty Restoration ladies and gentlemen. Even their servants and fools are witty. As a result, the dialogue is thought witty which is something unrealistic. In this play, Witwoud and Petulant are presented as fops and false wits, the so-called "fine gentlemen". Their pastime is to accompany ladies and passing vulgar remarks at them. Sir Wilfull, Witwoud's brother, calls Witwoud "the fashion's a fool; and you're a fop, dear brother." Petulant hires women to come and ask for him at the Chocolate-house.