

☐ The Way of the World also exposes the worldliness and greed of the young men of the time. Mercenary motives led them to seek rich heiresses in marriage. Mr. Fainall marries Mrs. Fainall, a widow for her property. Mirabell does not want to marry Millamant without her property.

☐ This mercenary tendency led them to intrigue which was the order of the day in social and domestic life. Mirabell, in order to obtain Millamant with her whole legacy, pretends to woo Lady Wishfort. He marries his servant to Wishfort's maid and sends his servant as Sir Rowland to Lady Wishfort so that the servant can make a marriage contract with the lady. By this intrigue, Mirabell makes Lady Wishfort agree -

"Upon condition that she consents to [his] marriage with her niece, And surrender[s] the moiety of her fortune in her possession."

Even Sir Witball, an exception to other characters of the play, joins the web of intrigues in the play.

☐ In The Way of the World, we are acquainted with the vanities, affectations and fashions of the time. Mirabell satirically remarks in the proviso scene on women's fondness of wearing masks, going to the theatre with or without their husband's knowledge, idle gossip, slandering the absent

Most of the male and female characters of the play are cultured, talented, formal, artificial, fashionable, departed, cold and 'courtly'. Their qualities are actually a part of Restoration Age culture.

The Restoration period was an age of loose morals and, was devoid of moral values. The Way of The World contains this content through the illicit love and adulterous relations - e.g. relation between Fainall and Mrs. Marwood, between Mirabell, the hero and Mrs. Fainall. Mirabell married Mrs. Fainall off to Fainall, being afraid of her being pregnant. Fainall's illicit relationship with Mrs. Marwood having been exposed, Fainall faces the situation fearlessly and shamelessly:

"If it must all come out, why let them know it; it's but the way of the world."

Even Mrs. Marwood and Lady Wishfort secretly loved Mirabell.

Unhappy conjugal life can be treated as another characteristic of the time which is expressed through the relation between Mr. and Mrs. Fainall. One of them feels uneasy in the presence of another. Mrs. Fainall expresses her uneasiness in St. James's park in the presence of her husband -

"He turned sort upon me unaware, and had almost overcome me."

By highlighting these things, The Way of the World exposes the issues of money, love, sex, marriage and in short the behavior of the people of the time in the language of prose.

By highlighting these things, the themes of The Way of the World are love, marriage, adultery, relationships, money and legacy conflicts; and the characters generally include would be actors, jealous friends, ~~convinced~~ ^{marking plans} rivals and ~~foppish~~ ^{very proud of appearance} dandies. It "relies for comic effect in large part on the wit and sparkle of the dialogue system in the form of separate, a witty conversational give-and-take which constitutes a kind of verbal fencing match." Now let us evaluate Congreve's The Way of the World as a Restoration Comedy.

The society depicted in the Way of the World is the upper class fashionable society of London. The action of the play takes place in three places. The first is the chocolate house which was used for socializing and entertainment during the Restoration. The second is St. James's park in London where the upper class people walked before dinner. Witwoud says, "We'll all walk in the park; the ladies talked of being there." The third is the house of Lady Wishfort, an aristocratic woman.

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✓ The Way of The World as a Restoration Comedy.
 ⇒ The Way of The World (1700) is William Congreve's
 last play and masterpiece and the finest flower
 of Restoration Comedy. The Restoration comedy
 came to be described as 'Artificial comedy'.
 People had forgotten to be natural and the only
 norm they followed was that of 'Manners' or the
 observance of social proprieties. So, the Restoration
 comedy was not itself 'Artificial comedy'; but it
 exposes the artificial manners and morals of
 that ~~age~~ ^{age}. The Way of The World may, therefore,
 take its place among the world's great comedies.

□ The Restoration, as a period, takes
 its name from the Restoration of the monarchy,
 with Charles II assuming the throne in 1660. The
 Restoration of the monarchy meant the end of the
 Puritan Parliament's, but it also meant the return
 of the theatre. Restoration as a historical period
 was a time when England was an established
 colonial power in England. It was a time of
 materialism and commerce and the people of
 the period emphasized money, pleasure and sex.
 Love and marriage were judged in terms of money.
 Artificiality and immorality were the defining
 features of the age. It dealt with the exposure
 of pretence, insincerity and hypocrisy. E. C. and
~~knights had said that these are not failings that~~
 pertain only to the small fashionable society of
 seventeenth century England. (Dobree had regretted
 that the plays do not give us a new insight into
 man.)