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The Way of the World

by William Congreve

an NAC English Theatre / Soulpepper Theatre (Toronto) coproduction

Study Guide

THE NATIONAL ARTS CENTRE ENGLISH THEATRE
PROGRAMMES FOR STUDENT AUDIENCES
2007-2008 SEASON

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Artistic Director, English Theatre

This Study Guide was written and researched by **Jane Moore** for the National Arts Centre, English Theatre, April 2008. It may be used solely for educational purposes.

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INTRODUCTION

"William Congreve's *The Way of the World* is the best-written, the most dazzling, the most intellectually accomplished of all English comedies, perhaps of all the comedies of the world."
(Edmund Gosse, 1888)

The Way of the World was first performed in 1700. Director Peter Hinton says it is one of the four best comedies ever written in English. As with any good art, its truths are universal. The comedy makes its points in a way that makes us laugh, but they hit home. The society of Restoration England, similar in many ways to our own, has, as its main social concerns, men and women's desire for each other, and the pursuit of each other, complicated by money issues; the nature of marriage; the preoccupation with fashion and appearances; hypocrisy; greed and morality. The play shows gossips and fools, and that both women and men can be silly, evil, or strong, decent. It shows that love makes fools of everyone.

Compare those subjects in the plays of 1700, to our own concerns: our preoccupations with celebrity and morality; our extremes in fashion, the pursuit of money, our interest in sex and the sexes. Think of *Entertainment Tonight, The Apprentice*, salaries in sports and entertainment, tabloids at checkouts in grocery stores, the popularity of political satire in shows like *The Colbert Report,* the gossip in *Entertainment Tonight* and reality shows*, Dr. Phil,* the popularity of *Desperate Housewives*, *Extreme Makeover*…the list goes on.

This Study Guide has two main sections: notes on the background, containing history and various aspects of the Restoration, to help you understand the play; and notes on the play itself, and this production. You will choose whether to look at the history or the play first. There is a lot of choice. There are also many classroom activities that you may find useful.

PRODUCTION CREDITS

The Creative Team

Playwright:	William CONGREVE
Director:	Peter HINTON
Set and Costume Designer:	Carolyn M. SMITH
Lighting Designer:	Leigh Ann VARDY
Sound Designer:	Troy SLOCUM
Assistant Director:	Jennifer BREWIN
Stage Manager:	Laurie CHAMPAGNE
Assistant Stage Manager:	Elsa PIHL

The Cast

Mr. Witwoud:	Damien ATKINS
Mrs. Millamant:	Caroline CAVE
Mrs. Fainall:	Diana DONNELLY
Betty, Peg, Mincing:	Randi HELMERS
Lady Wishfort:	Tanja JACOBS
Sir Wilfull Witwoud:	John JARVIS
Mr. Fainall:	C. David JOHNSON
Mrs. Marwood:	Nancy PALK
Mr. Mirabell:	Mike SHARA
Mr. Waitwell:	Michael SIMPSON
Mrs. Foible:	Maria VACRATSIS
Mr. Petulant:	William WEBSTER

RESTORATION ENGLAND

The play is a comedy, a satire about life in the Restoration. It is about love and the ways of the world **– this world:** the world of the wealthy in London, 1700. The play presents a picture of high society in Restoration England. London is the heart of this world. Its colourful characters, its extreme fashions, its new chocolate houses and its parks, where all can meet, (and, most importantly) be seen, are part of the play, as much as the tireless intrigues around love and marriage, and money. Samuel Pepys, a real person, who recorded daily life in his diary from 1660 to 1669, is our best source for careful detail of the times.

The Restoration refers to both a specific date in English History, 1660, and to a period of time. It is named after the restoration of the Monarchy. The English execute their king, Charles I, in 1649, after civil war. He is "tried" as a traitor, after he loses a battle with the "Roundheads," the Puritans.

England under Charles II

After Charles' death, his son, the heir to the English throne, Charles II, aged 19, escapes to France. England is led by the Puritans, under Oliver Cromwell, for the next 11 years. (The Protectorate). During this time Charles II is living in France and Spain and the Netherlands, absorbing European culture. Back home, the English become unhappy with the increasingly strict rule of the Puritans, Cromwell dies of illness, and the Protectorate is dissolved. General Monck asks Charles II to return as monarch. Charles signs an agreement with conditions under which he will return, giving more power to Parliament, and returns on his 30th birthday, full of new European customs, to rule England. The city of London is filled with joy: "There were 20,000 soldiers... shouting with joy; the streets covered with flowers, the bells ringing, fountains running with wine." John Evelyn

When Charles II is restored to the throne in 1660, some of his supporters have Cromwell's body dug up and hanged from a gallows as a traitor.

English society has changed greatly, from believing in the Divine Right of Kings to beheading one. Parliament is powerful. Ordinary people have a voice in their affairs. In civilian life the middle class is rising, becoming wealthy, and England is becoming a "nation of shop keepers".

Charles proves to be quite tolerant. His new court is anti-Puritan. This court and this monarch, with their European sensibilities, are quite different from previous monarchies. And Charles is very interested in fashion, theatre, entertainment, and women. Two theatres are opened, and the married Charles eventually has 13 mistresses, one of whom is Nell Gwyn, the actress. In this time of excess the fashions grow extreme, as the men wear towering wigs, high-heeled shoes, cravats, cut away coats, and swords. The women wear low cut gowns, wigs, high heels, and crinolines. The style of everything is extravagant.

Samuel Pepys

Samuel Pepys, a member of Parliament and an official with the Admiralty, writes a detailed diary for ten years; John Evelyn, writer, gardener, a founder of the Royal society in 1660, also writes a diary. The two surviving diaries give us vivid pictures of the times.

The Theatre

The court goes to the theatre, and much of the playwriting is done by authors who are courtiers or who have jobs with the government. Plays begin in the afternoon and last all evening sometimes.

Restoration comedy is full of artifice, wit, or clever word play, stock characters, and women on stage. Charles himself signs the law requiring women to play women's parts. Marriage is seen as a problem in the plays. Men lose their freedom, women are treated as chattel. Many satires are written, showing infidelity as common.

Marriage, and Morality

Monarchs have not been promiscuous since Henry VIII. Mary, Elizabeth, James, Charles I – these monarchs had not slighted marriage. However, Charles II did. There are many interesting stories of the conflicts between Charles' mistresses, even between his mistresses and his wife, the queen, Catherine of Braganza, whom he married in 1662.

> "King Charles II… was corrupted by France… he was continually cheating his people… he was lazy… he enjoyed the pleasures of wit and laughter, with the most worthless, vicious men of his age." Gilbert Burnet, 1723, professor, University of Glasgow

Moral and stylistic restraints are loosened, and are embodied in such figures as the Earl of Rochester, who becomes the model for the new "rake". Restoration comedy reveals both the influence of French farce and of Jacobean comedy. It generously feeds the public's appetite for broad satire, high style, and a licentiousness that justified the worst Puritan imaginings.

The sophistication of the city is upheld over the naiveté and backwardness of the country, and country folk. As values and mores become more and more artificial, satire is the dominant tone for art which lampoons the extravagance and self-indulgence of society. Hogarth's drawings reveal the suffering of everyday life. Pope and Swift denounce the outrageous conduct of society. Poets like Dryden, Swift, Butler, Johnson, and Pope write satiric poetry and prose in defense of order and good government. Wycherley, Etheridge, Dryden, and Congreve write superbly polished high comedies for the stage.

After Charles II

After Charles II dies, with no heir, although he has many illegitimate children, his brother James II becomes king, and then James' daughter Mary, with the last of the Stuart blood, is asked to become queen. She is married to William of Orange, of the Netherlands. William and Mary arrive, win a battle on the shores of England and take the throne in 1689. The tone of the court changes. And as always, reflecting society, the art changes too.

Gin Lane, William Hogarth (1751)

London, The Mall, St. James' Park, Chocolate Houses

London

Charles II enters London on 29 May, 1660.

- Soon after the Restoration, two major disasters occur: in 1665 the Great Plague kills over 80,000, about one-sixth of London's inhabitants; and in 1666 the Fire of London burns for three days, destroying four-fifths of the City.
- Extensive reconstruction in the aftermath of the fire includes the rebuilding of St Paul's Cathedral, 51 churches, and other buildings by architect Christopher Wren.

London's economic prosperity soon recovers.

- In 1670, Hudson's Bay Company is formed, and establishes a worldwide fur trade, centred on London; in 1694 the Bank of England is founded.
- In the late 17th century a great wave of French Protestant Huguenots arrive fleeing Louis XIV's religious persecution. They establish a centre of silk production. Other immigrants come from the Low Countries, bringing tapestry-making, brewing, and the production of glass, pottery, scientific instruments, and maps.
- Lloyd's of London Insurance takes its name from Edwin Lloyd's coffee house, a regular haunt of London underwriters specializing in marine insurance, from about 1688.

By 1700 London is the largest city in Western Europe, with a population of around 575,000.

LONDON

The early morning sounds of London are of chimney sweeps, milk women, wagons, markets opening, church bells, beggars, musicians.

The London fog, the general smoke and dirt of the city is a problem. Before 1736, the lighting of the city was up to the citizens. Each homeowner whose house fronted on the street had to hang out a candle, usually enclosed in a horn lantern, from six o'clock till 11 at night, on moonless nights. After 11 p.m. the city was in complete darkness, only broken here and there by the gleam of a torch. This gloom encouraged crime, and the Mayor and Corporation at last agreed to levy a rate on householders, and light the city with five thousand oil lamps.

Travelers note the large number of pickpockets and cut-throats, bawds and bullies, the mud and filth, the stench and the black fog.

London (continued)

John Macky, in *A Journey Through England*, describes a day in London:
"We rise by nine, and those that frequent great men's levees, find entertainment at them till eleven, or we go to tea tables. About twelve the beau monde assembles in several chocolate and coffee houses, the best of which are the Cocoa Tree and White's Chocolate House, Mrs. Rochford's and the British Coffee House. We are carried to these places in chairs (or sedans) which are here very cheap, a guinea a week or a shilling per hour, and your chairmen serve you for porters and run your errands. If it be fine weather we take a turn in the park till two, when we go to dinner, and if it be dirty you are entertained at piquet or basset at White's or you may talk politics at the Smyrna or the St. James'… at two we generally go to dinner. The general way here is to make up a party at the Coffee House to go dine at a tavern where we sit till six when we go to the play except you are invited to the table of some great man, where strangers are always courted and nobly entertained…, or, if you like rather the company of ladies, there are assemblies at most of the people of qualities' houses."

The sedan chairs are a feature of English town life. They can be hired by the week or picked up at a stand in the street like a hackney coach. The passenger is set down at the door of the house he wishes to visit; on wet and foggy nights, he can be carried inside and put down in the hall. If the bearers keep in step the motion is pleasant, far better than that of a hackney coach jolting over the uneven stones of the London streets. De la Rochefoucauld, a visitor from France, thinks "that the conduct of an Englishman's day in London leaves little time for work". He was speaking of the life of the upper classes. He tells us how the Englishman "gets up at ten or eleven and has breakfast (always with tea). He then makes a tour of the town for about four hours until five o'clock, which is the dinner hour, at nine he meets in a tavern or a club and there the night is passed in play or drink; that is precisely how the day is spent".

A thousand workmen are employed daily, re-building St. Paul's Cathedral after the great fire sweeps through London. You can read a personal account of the fire in the diary of Samuel Pepys. Visitors flock to the Tower, which houses wild animals, and to the other menageries in London. Another visitor tells us that near Westminster Bridge he found "a quantity of outlandish animals such as a large, white-haired water animal which we took to be a sea bear from Greenland, a camel and a quantity of monkeys, eagles, civet cats, etc."
The main source of this material is: Rosamond Bayne-Powell,
http://www.ourcivilisation.com/smartboard/shop/bynpwllr/amuse6.htm

The Mall and St. James' park

St James' Park, the oldest Royal park in London, 58 acres in size, is directly behind Whitehall Palace, and is bounded by The Mall on the north. The park is a fashionable meeting place for high society in the Restoration. There are haystacks near St. James' square; the north side of the road is completely open. One hundred and fifty elms are planted, making the street a shady walk for periwigged gentlemen and fashionable ladies in bright taffetas.

Inside the park are a small lake and two islands. Charles II fills the park with a formal pattern of ornamental water and avenues, and a canal, for which the Doge of Venice sends two gondolas. In summer, it is fashionable to drink warm milk, freshly drawn

The Mall and St. James' park (continued)

from herds of cows grazing in the London parks. The milk sellers would advertise their wares by calling: "A can of milk, ladies, a can of red cow's milk, sir!"

Charles II used to take a daily walk through St. James' Park accompanied by his courtiers and a number of dogs. With the king's long legs and fast pace, Charles and the dogs invariably left the others far behind. Petitioners used to gather in the park, hoping to accost the king on his walk, but he moved so swiftly it was rare that anyone could catch up with him.

Charles II opened the park to the public, and used it to entertain guests and mistresses, such as Nell Gwyn. The park was notorious at the time as a meeting place for acts of degeneracy, which John Wilmot, the Earl of Rochester wrote about in his poem "A Ramble in St. James' Park". Edward Kynaston, the last boy actor playing women's roles was badly beaten in this park, and one night Charles' daughter, Anne, and one of his mistresses snuck out, and into the park in their nightgowns to practise fencing.

"This place," says de Saussure, speaking of the Mall, in the 1700s, "is no longer used for the game (pall-mall) but is a promenade and every spring it is bestrewn with tiny sea shells which are then crushed by means of a heavy roller. Deer and roe-deer are so tame that they eat out of your hand, and there is little danger of being attacked in the neighbourhood of the palace, for should the offender be taken up in any of these privileged parts, the laws would condemn him to lose his hand."

Chocolate Houses

Christopher Columbus first brought chocolate to England, where, according to the diaries of Samuel Pepys, the first chocolate shop was opened in Bishopsgate, London, in 1657, supposedly on the instructions of Charles II. The first coffee house had been opened in 1652. Chocolate houses, where you could sit and sip chocolate, or buy it to prepare at home, proliferated. Pepys' entry in his diary for November 24, 1664, says: "To a coffee house to drink jocolatte, very good". The beau monde favored White's Chocolate House. When Charles II tried to shut down the coffee/chocolate houses there were 3000 in London.

The high cost of chocolate, ten shillings or 15 shillings per pound, meant that Ozinda's Chocolate House was full of aristocratic consumers. Ozinda's was a popular Tory rendezvous in the early years of the 18th century.

Drinking chocolate, betting, and reading the newspapers were the main attractions. Jonathan Swift, Congreve's friend, records that one of the meetings of his dining club was held at Ozinda's, and that the meal was brought in from the Palace: "dinner was dressed in the Queen's kitchen and was mighty fine. We ate it at Ozinda's Chocolate-house, just by St. James'. We were never merrier, nor better company, and did not part till after eleven."

Source: 'Pall Mall, South Side, Past Buildings: Ozinda's Chocolate House', Survey of London: volumes 29 and 30: St James Westminster, Part 1 (1960), pp. 384. URL: http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=40606. Date accessed: 31 March 2008.

Drinking chocolate was considered elegant and fashionable, and chocolate was highly regarded in the reigns of Queen Anne and George I, by courtiers, fine ladies and gentlemen, and also by learned physicians who praised it for its medicinal virtues. King Charles II patronized chocolate houses, often with a selection of his mistresses. Private men's clubs developed as a new feature of English life from these coffee and chocolate houses.

A Man of London, Samuel Pepys

His account of the coronation of Charles II:
About 4 in the morning I rose. And got to the abby, where with a great deal of patience I sat from past 4 till 11 before the King came in. And a pleasure it was to see the Abbey raised in the middle, all covered with red and throne (that is a chaire) and footstoole on the top of it. And all the officers of all kinds, so much as the very fidlers, in red vests.

At last comes in the Deane and prebends of Westminster with the Bishops (many of them in cloth-of-glod Copes); and after them the nobility all in their parliament-robes, which was a most magnificent sight. Then the Duke and the King with a scepter (carried by my Lord of Sandwich) and Sword and mond before him, and the crowne too.

The King in his robes, bare headed, which was very fine. And after all had placed themselfs – there was a sermon and the service. And then in the Quire at the high altar he passed all the ceremonies of the Coronacion – which, to my very great grief, I and most of the Abbey could not see. The crowne being put upon his head, a great shout begun. And he came forth to the Throne and there passed more ceremonies: as, taking the oath and having things read to him by the Bishopp, and his lords (who put on their capps as soon as the King put on his Crowne) and Bishopps came and kneeled before him.

And three times the King-at-armes went to the three open places on the scaffold and proclaimed that if any one could show any reason why Ch.Steward should not be King of England, that now he should come and speak. And a Generall pardon also was read by the Lord Chancellor; and meddalls flung up and down by my Lord Cornwallis – of silver; but I could not come by any.

But so great a noise, that I could make but little of the Musique; and endeed, it was lost to everybody. But I had so great a list to pisse, that I went out a little while before the King had done all his ceremonies and went round the abby to Westminster-hall, all the way within rayles, and 10000 people, with the ground coverd with blue cloth – and Scaffolds all the way. Into the hall I got – where it was very fine with hangings and scaffolds, one upon another, full of brave ladies. And my wife in one little one on the right hand.

And the King came in with his Crowne on and his sceptre in his hand – under a Canopy borne up by six silver staves, carried by Barons of the Cinqueports – and little bells at every end.

And after a long time he got up to the farther end, and all set themselfs down at their several tables – and that also was a rare sight. And the King's first Course carried up by the Knights of the bath. And many fine ceremonies there was of the Heralds leading up people before him and bowing; and my Lord of Albimarles going to the Kitchin and eat a bit of the first dish that was to go to the King's table.

But above all was these three Lords, Nothumberland and Suffolke and the Duke of Ormond, coming before the Courses on horseback and staying so all dinner-time; and at last, to bring up

A Man of London, Samuel Pepys (continued)

(Dymock) the King's Champion, all in armor on horseback, with his Speare and targett carried before him. And a herald proclaim that if any dare deny Ch. Steward to be lawful King of England, here was a Champion that would fight with him; and with those words the Champion flings down his gantlet; and all this he doth three times in his going up toward the King's table. At last when he is come, the King drinkes to him and then sends him the Cup, which is of gold; and he drinks it off and then rides back again with the cup in his hand.

I went from table to table to see the Bishops and all others at their dinner, and was infinite pleased with it. And at the Lords' table I met with Wll. Howe and he spoke to my Lord for me and he did give me four rabbits and a pullet; and so I got it, and Mr. Creed and I got Mr. Michell to give us some bread and so we at a Stall eat it, as everybody else did what they could get.

I took a great deal of pleasure to go up and down and look upon the ladies – and to hear the Musique of all sorts; but above all, the 24 viollins.

About 6 at night they had dined; and I went up to my wife and there met with a pretty lady (Mrs Frankelyn, a Doctor's wife, a friend of Mr Bowyers) and kissed them both – and by and by took them down to Mr. Bowyers. And strange it is, to think that these two days have held up fair till now that all is done and the King gone out of the hall; and then it fell a-raining and thundering and lightening as I have not seen it do some years – which people did take great notice of God's blessing of the work of these two days – which is foolery, to take too much notice of these things.

Some were convinced it was a good augury, others that it was evil. Richard Baxter was reminded of the earthquake that occurred during Charles I coronation… Here we stayed upon the leads and below till it was late, expecting to see the Fireworkes; but they were not performd tonight. Only, the City had light like a glory round about it, with bonefyres.

…there was three great bonefyres and a great many great gallants, men and women; and the lay hold of us and would have us drink the King's health upon our knee, kneeling upon a fagott; which we all did, they drinking to us one after another – which we thought a strange Frolique. But these gallants continued thus a great while, and I wondered to see how the ladies did tiple.

At last I sent my wife and her bedfellow to bed, and Mr Hunt and I went in with Mr Thornbury (who did give the company all their wines, he being yeoman of the wine cellar to the King) to his house; and there, with his wife and two of his sisters and soe gallant sparks that were there, we drank the King's health and nothing else, till one of the gentlemen fell down stark drunk and there lay speweing. And I went to my Lord's pretty well. But no sooner a-bed with Mr Sheply but my head begun to turne and I to vomitt, and if ever I was foxed it was now – which I cannot say yet, because I fell aleep and sleep till morning – only, when I waked I found myself wet with my spewing. Thus did the day end, wih joy everywhere; and blessed be God, I have not heard of any mischance to anybody through it all, but only to Serjeant Glynne, whose Horse fell upon him yesterday and is like to kill him; which people do please themselfs with, to see how just God is to punish that rogue at such a time as this – he being now one of the King's Serjeants and rode in the Cavalcade with Maynard, to whom people wished the same fortune. There was also this night, in Kingstreet [a woman] had her eye put out by a boy's flinging of a firebrand into the coach. Now after all this, I can say that besides the pleasure of the sight of these glorious things, I may now shut my eyes against any other objects, or for the future trouble myself to see things of state and shewe, as being sure never to see the like again in this world.
http://www.pepys.info/coronation.html

The Decade, 1700-1710

Events
- England and Scotland joined as United Kingdom
- British and Austrians vs. French and Bavarians in War of Austrian Succession to gain control of India
- Chinese take Taiwan
- Peter the Great founds St. Petersburg
- England and Scotland population reaches 7.5 million

Who's In
- King William III of England and Queen Mary
- Queen Anne of England (from 1702)
- Czar Peter the Great of Russia
- Holy Roman Emperor Leopold I Holy Roman Emperor Joseph I
- Isaac Newton

Who died
- 200,000 in Tokyo earthquake
- Serfdom in Denmark
- King William III Prince of Orange
- George Farquhar, 29
- John Dryden
- Emperor Leopold I
- Pirate Captain William Kidd, 56
- Samuel Pepys, 70
- 8,000 in Great Storm of London

What's In
- Yale University, Connecticut
- Buckingham Palace
- Billiards in Berlin
- Dom Perignon's sparkling champagne in Hauvillers, France
- Horseracing in England encouraged by Queen Anne
- "Enlightenment" - French intellectual movement
- Jethro Tull's mechanical seed drill
- The commode
- Copyright laws in England - the first anywhere
- Mardi Gras celebrations
- Grenades in war and the new soldier – grenadier

Entertainment
- Her Majesty's Theatre, London
- William Congreve's *The Way of the World*
- George Farquhar's plays
- Kubuki Theatre in Japan
- First pantomimes at Drury Lane, London

Music
- Development of the mandolin, clarinet, slide trumpet, and the first piano, the pianoforte
- Vivaldi is 'in' in Italy, Couperin in France
- Johann Sebastian Bach's first cantata
- Handel's "St. John Passion" and his opera "Almira"
- "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow" popular song in France (Malbrouk's)

Literature
- "The Selling of Joseph," anti-slavery book by Samuel Sewall
- Jonathan Swift's "The Tale of a Tub"
- Joseph Addison's "The Campaign," "The Tatler"
- Alexander Pope's "Pastorals"

Art
- Beginning of the late baroque period

Fashion
Men:
- Suspenders to hold up pants
- Full-cut pants
- Cambric/muslin shirts
- Braiding and ruffles
- Three-Corner hats
- Wigs

Women:
- Rings, especially large gaudy jeweled ones
- Elaborate petticoats
- Large earrings

Media
- First daily newspaper in London (and probably the world): "The Daily Courant"
- Regular advertising first appears in weekly "Boston News-Letter"
- "Moscow Gazette" first published
- Daniel Defoe's weekly newspaper "The Review" published from his prison cell
- First evening paper "The Evening Post" in London

Religion
- Act of Settlement insures no Catholic can become ruler of England
- First Presbyterian Church in America
- Beginning of Baptist movement in U.S.
- Rise of the Sikhs in India
- Catholic priests forbidden to reside in Massachusetts for more than three months
- Mennonite church built in Philadelphia

Science
- Edmund Halley predicts comet of 1682 will return in 76 years, proving periodic comet orbiting of sun
- Sir Isaac Newton proves light is made up of colors
- Symbol pi (*185*) introduced to mean ratio of circle's circumference to diameter
- First lithotomy (stone removal from bladder) performed in America
- Ammonium chloride discovered, Royal Observatory, Berlin

New slang
- First use of "ain't" in England
- Bless my stars!
- To bamboozle someone
- To buy something for a song
- To play second fiddle to someone
- By word of mouth
- To ram something down someone's throat
- From the cradle to the grave
- Much ado about nothing
- To see with one's own eyes
- Up in arms
- Raining cats and dogs
- Someone is a snake-in-the-grass.

Fashion

The Restoration was a time of extravagant fashion, in hairstyles and clothing particularly. Furniture, gardens, sayings, hot chocolate, playwrights, sedan chairs, swords - everything had to be in fashion. It seems that Kings set the fashion.

From Pepys' diary

8 October 1666: The King hath yesterday in council declared his resolution of setting a fashion for clothes, which he will never alter. It will be a vest, I know not well how. But it is to teach the nobility thrift, and will do good.
15 October 1666: This day the King begins to put on his vest, and I did see several persons of the House of Lords, and Commons too, great courtiers, who are in it – being a long cassocke close to the body, of black cloth and pinked with white silk under it, and a coat over it, and the left ruffled with black riband like a pigeon's leg – and upon the whole, I wish the King may keep it, for it is a very fine and handsome garment.
17 October 1666: ...The Court is all full of vests.
22 November 1666: ...the King of France hath, in defiance to the King of England, caused all his footmen to be put into vests, and that the noblemen of France will do the like; which... is the greatest indignity ever done by one prince to another, and would incite a stone to be revenged.

Men

It was "A strange effeminate age when men strive to imitate women in their apparell, viz. long periwigs, patches in their faces, painting, short wide breeches like petticoats, muffs, and their clothes highly scented, bedecked with ribbons of all colours. And this apparell was not only used by gentlemen and others of inferior quality, but by souldiers of the King's Foot-guard."
From Life and Times of Anthony Wood, antiquary, of Oxford, 1632 - 1695, described by Himself

"The Restoration gentleman needed a swaggering, elegant movement in order to carry off the full weight of the layers of fabric and ribbons. He dominated his costume with assurance and delight, from the tip of his square-toed high-heeled shoes to the great plumes of his broad-brimmed hat. A man of fashion had to manipulate a number of accessories such as a walking stick, muff, snuff box, and handkerchief."
http://www.kipar.org/historical-resources/history_england_etiquette.html

Fashion (continued)

Fops

"It was a fine silken fop which I spied walking th'other day through Westminster-Hall, that had as much Ribbon about him as would have plundered six shops, and set up twenty Country Pedlers: All his body was dres't like a May-pole, or a Tom-a-Bedlam's cap. A Fregat newly rigg'd kept not half such a clatter in a storme, as this Puppets Streamers did when the Wind was in his Shroud's; the Motion was Wonderful to behold, and the Colours were Red, Orange, and Blew, of well gum'd Sattin, which argu'd a happy fancy: But so was our Gallant over charg'd,... whether he did weare this Garment, or (as a Porter) bear it only, was not asily to be resolv'd."
From *Tyrannus or The Mode*, 1661, by John Evelyn

Women

The Restoration woman wore an enormous skirt with underskirts and panniers to increase its mass, yet wore a bodice with an extremely low, wide neckline; the woman today might wear a mini skirt, heels, and blouse emphasizing her legs. A Restoration woman would never show her legs, while few contemporary women would wear a Restoration neckline.

"On the other side, women would strive to be like men, viz., when they rode on horseback or in coaches weare plush caps like monteros, whether full of ribbons or feathers, long periwigs which men use to wear, and riding coat of a red colour, all bedaubed with lace which they call vests, and this habit was chiefly used by the ladies and maids of honour belonging to the Queen, brought in fashion about anno 1662."
From *Life and Times of Anthony Wood*, antiquary, of Oxford, 1632 - 1695, described by Himself

The lady's movement also had a graceful, sensuous vitality and an attractive bounce that epitomized the spirit of the times. From Pepys' diary, other commentators, and artists of the period, we see that ladies preened and pranced, fluttered their eyelashes, and manipulated their skirts and their charms with a complete knowledge and assurance about the effects they were creating.

The fan was also the most important accessory for the Restoration lady, and was used as a weapon that often seemed to have a life of its own in the game of love.

French Fashion

Everything new, from sedan chairs to dainty silver brushes for cleaning teeth was French. Even drinking coffee and tea were customs imported from the French. Perfumed gloves, tiny looking-glasses, elegant boxes, apricot paste, essences and other small items of love arrived every week from Paris.

Activities

Restoration History (Pre or post performance, grades 9 and up)
1. This is a class activity. **Create a tabloid newspaper**. Read through the section on Restoration England (pp. 3-12). Give each a student a different topic. Look at a tabloid paper to see how its articles are made up of both sensational material and grains of truth. Each student should write a short article about an aspect or a person of Restoration London. Share them in class. Compile them into a newspaper.
2. Write an interview with Charles II for a 17th century version of "People" magazine.

London and the Decade of 1700-17:10 (Post performance, grades 9 and up)
1. Read the sections on London (pp. 8-9) and The Decade of 1700-1710 (p. 10). **Create** a perky television host. **Conduct hurried interviews** with celebrities and ordinary people behind the scenes in Restoration London, to give us a sense of the times and attitudes**.**
2. Chocolate houses (**Improv) (Writing)**
  a) Have a commentator **narrate** a card game and activities at a chocolate house.
  b) Play a card game as **characters** in the play. Try to **use their language**.
3. The Mall
The outdoor setting of Act 2 provides many opportunities to meet new characters and learn of relationships and intrigues. Choose your own public outdoor **setting**, such as a park, Parliament Hill, the Canal during the Tulip Festival, Canada Day, or any other festival. Have pairs of characters **improvise** a scene straight-faced through interruptions by joggers, tourists, dog walkers, people selling ice cream or playing Frisbee, etc.. For each scene the **dramatic purpose is to maintain focus** through the interruptions, and make the audience aware of an unexpected relationship or intrigue.

Fashion (Pre or post performance, grades 9 and up)
1. Read the section on Fashion (pp. 11-12), then make a list of what's fashionable today. Include cars, language, food, music, personal appearance, attitudes. Compare the two lists.

Samuel Pepys (Pre or post performance, grades 9 and up)
1. Read Pepys' description of the coronation of Charles II (pp. 8-9). What do you learn of Pepys himself, as a person? **Keep your own diary** for two days. **Analyze** your choice of vocabulary and detail. Can you see your personality reflected in your choices?

WOMEN and The RESTORATION

Many of the social preoccupations of Restoration England centre on women: their wooing, their dowries, the way they are used. Women, from queens to actresses, have little legal power. Some progress is made, slowly, in this time. Real change will take another century.

The Status of Women in 17th and 18th Century England

- Marriage among the upper classes was viewed as a financial negotiation between two families. A price was set for the value of a daughter (her dowry), which would be given to her husband to control.
- In return, the future husband would be expected to provide a jointure, which would guarantee that his widow would receive a set amount of money annually if he should die.
- The woman's virginity was considered the property of her father up until her marriage day, at which time it was bequeathed to her husband as his by right of purchase. A woman who was not possessed of her virginity was not considered a saleable commodity.
- Very little consideration, if any, was given to love or even companionship in these unions. The act of marriage was almost entirely a business arrangement.
- Marriages were considered to be life-long, as the only means by which a divorce could be secured was through an appeal to Parliament, and then only because of adultery. Divorces were rare since the resulting scandal was not worth the price of freedom for either party.
- The social stigma attached to either the adulterer or the cuckold was often threat enough to cause both parties to maintain their silence about the affair.
- Also, with marriage, the woman lost all claim to any property that she may have owned before she became attached to her husband.
- As property herself, she could not own anything in her own name. If a married woman chose to work, her wages belonged not to her, but to her husband.
- If a husband wished to keep his children away from their mother, this was his right.
- Legally, it was often the case that if a woman sought to bring charges of assault against her husband, she would not be allowed to testify on her own behalf. At times, a disagreement between a husband and wife which resulted in legal intervention would end with the woman being accused of a crime tantamount to rebellion against the king.
- It has been noted that, in an age when a woman could become queen, there is a sense of bitter irony to the fact that, in spite of this potential for power, she was still viewed as an inferior being who could neither serve as a member of a jury nor hold public office.

A Queen's Rights: Catherine, wife of Charles III

Catherine of Braganza, a princess of Portugal, is a useful tool to that country, whose king wants to contract an alliance with England. Business: The marriage contract is signed. England receives two million Portuguese crowns (about £300,000), while Portugal obtains military and naval support against Spain. Real life for Catherine: Catherine has been brought up in a convent and is not a wife the lusty, fun-loving, unfaithful Charles would choose. She can't wean Charles away from his mistresses, and in a few weeks after her arrival she becomes aware of her painful and humiliating position as the wife of a selfish and licentious king. When Charles first presents his "official" mistress, Lady Castlemaine, to Catherine, insisting that his wife make his mistress a lady of her bedchamber, Catherine faints. She withdraws from the king's society, and declares she will return to Portugal rather than allow Barbara Castlemaine to be her personal attendant. To overcome her resistance, Charles isolates her by sending home almost all of her friends and servants. She is helpless, and the violence of her grief and anger soon changes to an acceptance. In the midst of Charles' debauched court, she lives neglected, lonely, and retired, often deprived of her due allowance, with no ambitions, taking no part in English politics.

Women on the Stage

By the time of the Restoration, certain elements of English society have seen women acting in musicals and in drawing rooms, and have not found it offensive. Moreover, the new king himself is a lover of theatre, and during his years of foreign exile he has seen many theatrical performances which include women players. He is determined to open the door for women players in England; the problem is how to do it without upsetting his still largely Puritan subjects. He decides to grant a charter to the Drury Lane Company, making it the King's Own Company. To prevent the moral outrage to his subjects caused by boys dressing up as females, the charter requires that all female parts be played by women. So there it is, in a document which exists to this today, the door to the acting profession is opened to women by the hand of the king himself.

Famous Actresses

Mrs. (Elizabeth) Barry:
Brought up by Sir William Davenant, she becomes mistress of the infamous libertine, the Earl of Rochester. To win a bet, Rochester undertakes her training for the stage and promotes her in fashionable society, in return for which she becomes his mistress from 1675 to 1677. According to contemporary opinion, "She was not handsome; her mouth opening most on the right side, which she strove to draw t'other way; and at times composing her face, as if sitting for her picture: she was middle-sized; had darkish hair, light eyes, and was indifferently plump. In tragedy, she was solemn and august; in comedy, alert, easy, and genteel; pleasant in her face and action; filling the stage with variety of gesture. She could neither sing nor dance." Elizabeth Barry goes on to have a long and brilliant career, establishing a reputation as England's leading actress in Otway's *The Orphan*. Mrs. Barry has a child by Lord Rochester and a second by Sir George Etheredge, both of whom are provided for by their fathers. In 1709 she retires from the stage and dies on the 7th of November 1713, aged 55.

Mrs. (Anne) Bracegirdle, (c. 1671-1748), is brought up by the the famous actor, Mr. Betterton and his wife. She begins acting at the age of six. The audience loves her youth and freshness on stage, and she plays the comedienne to Barry's tragedienne in many productions. In 1692, the conflict over her between Captain Richard Hill and the actor William Mountfort causes a tragedy. The jealous Hill and a gang of toughs, led by the infamous sword-fighting Lord Mohun, attempt to abduct Anne and murder Mountfort, who is trying to protect her, in the street. She plays the lead in all Congreve's plays, including *The Way of the World* in which he has tailored the character of Millamant to Anne's talents and stage presence. In contrast to Betterton and Barry, Bracegirdle leaves the stage early, in 1706. She is discreet in her private life, but her name is coupled with that of Congreve, who leaves her a legacy when he dies in 1729.

Famous Actresses (continued)

Nell Gwyn: orange seller, actress, mistress of a king

Eleanor "Nell" Gwyn, (1650-1652 - 1687), is one of the earliest English actresses to receive prominent recognition, and is a long-time mistress of King Charles II. Samuel Pepys calls her "pretty, witty Nell". She has been called a living embodiment of the spirit of Restoration England and is considered a folk heroine, with a story echoing the rags-to-royalty tale of Cinderella. Elizabeth Howe, in *The First English Actresses*, says she was "the most famous Restoration actress of all time, possessed of an extraordinary comic talent". Nell has two sons by Charles II, Charles Beauclerk (1670-1726) and James Beauclerk (1671-1680). Charles becomes the first Earl of Burford, later Duke of St. Albans

"Orange Moll" is granted the licence to "vend, utter and sell oranges, lemons, fruit, sweetmeats and all manner of fruiterers and confectioners wares" within the new Drury Lane theatre. Orange Moll hires Nell and her older sister, Rose, as "orange-girls", selling small, sweet oranges to the audience inside the theatre for sixpence each.

The work exposes Nell to many aspects of theatre life and to London's higher society: this is, after all the "King's playhouse", and Charles frequently attends the performances.

The new theatres are the first in England to feature actresses; Gwyn joins the rank of actresses at Bridges Street when she is 14. In the new kind of play, restoration comedy, Nell Gwyn will become a star.

She soon becomes one of the King's "women comedians" and wins the heart of Samuel Pepys: "But so great performance of a comical part was never, I believe, in the world before as Nell do this, both as a mad girl, then most and best of all when she comes in like a young gallant; and hath the notions and carriage of a spark the most that ever I saw any man have. It makes me, I confess, admire her."

Romance between the King and Gwyn begins in April of 1668. Nell Gwyn attends a performance at the theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields. The flirtatious king is in the next box. Charles invites Nell and her date to supper, along with his brother, James, the Duke of York. The king, after supper, discovers that he has no money on him; nor did his brother. Gwyn has to pay the bill. "Od's fish!" she exclaims, in an imitation of the king, "but this is the poorest company I ever was in!". Her naturalness and genuine affection was irresistible to Charles, who was used to sophisticated, greedier women.

She continues to act at the King's House, drawing larger crowds. 1671 was almost certainly her last season. Her theatrical career spans seven years and ends at the age of 21. In February 1671, Nell moves into a brick townhouse at 79 Pall Mall. The property is owned by the crown, and will be her main residence for the rest of her life. Charles' deathbed wish is "Let not poor Nelly starve", and James II eventually pays off most of her debts and gives her a pension of 1500 pounds a year.

In March of 1687, Gwyn suffers a stroke that leaves her paralyzed on one side. In May, a second stroke confines to the bed in her Pall Mall house; she makes out her will on July 9. Nell Gwyn dies on November 14,1687, at ten in the evening, less than three years after the King's death. She is 37 years old. She is buried in the Church of St Martin-in-the-Fields, at the corner of Trafalgar Square, London.

Source: Wikipedia.

Women in the Theatre

Aphra Behn, Playwrights, and Managers

"All women together ought to let flowers fall upon the tomb of Aphra Behn, which is, most scandalously but rather appropriately, in Westminster Abbey, for it was she who earned them the right to speak their minds." Virginia Woolf

Soon after the Restoration of Charles II, women begin to appear as dramatists. Mrs. Aphra Behn, (1640-1689), is one of the first and busiest of English women playwrights. She is credited with writing the first real English novel. After the death of her husband, Mrs. Behn is for a time employed by Charles II as a spy in Antwerp. When he refuses to pay her, she is forced to borrow to return home, and ends up in debtor's prison. Once released, she vows to make her own money from then on, and she does so. She is the author of 18 plays, most of them highly successful. Behn creates strong, independent female characters who make their own choices. She writes on controversial and hidden subjects, is a friend of Nell Gwyn, and refuses to re-marry.

Mrs. Manly and Mrs. Susannah Centlivre, who wrote 19 plays, also achieve success as playwrights.

In addition to actresses and playwrights, there are several women during this period who manage theatres. Charlotte Charke follows Henry Fielding as the manager of the Little Theatre in Haymarket. Lady Henrietta Maria Davenant succeeds her husband, Sir William Davenant, as manager of the Duke's Company, and with the assistance of the Bettertons leads the company until it merges with the King's Company. Under her management, the Dorset Garden Theatre, where Aphra Behn produced her plays, is the most successful theatrical company in London.

Activities

Status of Women
(Pre or post performance, grades 11 and up)
1. Compare rights of women in Canada now to those in the Restoration. **Research** those in Bountiful, B.C. Compare those in other countries too, such as Saudi Arabia, France, Zimbabwe, if you can.
(Post performance, grades 9 and up)
2. You are Catherine of Braganza, Queen of England. **Write a letter** home, or to your husband, Charles II.

Famous Actresses
(Post performance, grades 10 and up)
1. Create **(write or improvise)** an audition where Charles II makes the decision to allow actresses on stage. He is auditioning both a boy and a girl for the same role. Show why he decides to give the role to the girl (be creative; avoid the obvious.)
(Post performance, grades 9 and up)
2. Create and perform a monologue for one of the three actresses described herein (pp. 15-16), in which she tells of a dramatic incident in her life.

Women in the theatre (Pre or post performance, grades 10 and up)
1. Research the roles women are taking in film and theatre today. **Compare** now to then.

RESTORATION ERA THEATRES

Stages and Production Aspects

When the theatres are re-opened they have new construction, new techniques and new plays. Sets are now very important, and there are long intermissions for changes of scenery. Machines are used. Women are on stage. The rising middle class starts to attend the theatre.

Physical Changes

The Restoration brings a strong Italian influence to English stage practices. With new construction, the proscenium arch, perspective painting, and /or backdrop scenery become indispensable elements of the English stage. Proscenium arch, doors and balconies, and a much extended apron, are significant vestiges of the Elizabethan stage.

Companies

- Acting companies in London establish the contract system; and theatrical entrepreneurs emerge
- Theatre is under control of business men
- Actors serve as managers of theatrical troupes
- Actors are employees
- Social status higher (though moral character still in question)
- Actors possess parts
- Repertory system
- Playwright: fixed salaries, no royalties
- Women allowed on stage for the first time in England

Audiences

- Audiences upper class mainly
- After William and Mary are crowned in 1689, the merchant class begins to attend the theatre
- A strong Puritan influence is established
- Jeremy Collier's "a short view of immorality and profanes of the English Stage"
- The middle class calls for more clear-cut morals
- Comedy of Manners did not please the Puritan elements of English society

Kinds of Plays

- Heroic tragedy: extraordinary characters / deeds / contrived plays with themes of love
- Restoration tragedy: adherence to neoclassical rules / Shakespeare works converted
- Comedies of Intrigue: daring exploits of Romance
- Aphra Behn
- Comedies of Manners:-
    - ◊ Most famous of all Restoration plays
    - ◊ High Comedy. Verbal wit. Influenced by Molière
    - ◊ Fashions and Manners of upper class
    - ◊ Themes of gossip, adultery, sexual escapades
    - ◊ Upper class preoccupation with reputation
    - ◊ Screen Scenes and Pants Parts (Breeches Parts)
    - ◊ Stock Type Characters: name sums up the role (Fop = Character)

Going to the Theatre

The Audience, William Hogarth

Theatres: The only two licensed theatres in London, besides the Opera House in the Haymarket, were Drury Lane (Davenant) and Covent Garden (Garrick). Other plays, unlicensed by the Lord Chamberlain, were performed in taverns, in Assembly Rooms or even in private houses. Plays in these places would be called "rehearsals" and you could buy the tickets at some neighbouring shop or inn.
Seating: The pit containing the gentlemen on benches, and on the first stage of boxes are the ladies of quality, in the second the citizens' wives and daughters and in the third the common people and footmen. Seats in this upper gallery cost a shilling.
Audience rowdiness: uproar was permitted in the shilling seats. When an Englishman had paid that sum he considered himself the equal, if not the superior, of the pit and boxes. He would even throw glasses of water on the heads of the gentlemen beneath him. The audience would not wait, even for the King, and insisted upon the performance beginning.

Royal behaviour: When King William arrived the gallery booed and hissed, and shouted, "lower, lower" as they did not consider his bow sufficiently pronounced. The Queen Dowager made one of the young princes bow lower by forcibly pushing his head forward. The King looked at his watch and shook his head, and then the gallery broke out into cheers. Rude and boorish though such conduct was, it typified the English sense of independence and equality, the "Jack's as good as his master" tradition.
Violence: Sometimes the gallery proceeded to violence if anything happened to displease it. The audience wrecked Drury Lane because a play had been substituted for the one advertised. On another occasion, when this had occurred, Garrick, actor and stage manager, appeared before the curtain to apologize. "A voice from the pit shouted 'on your knees'. A thousand voices took up the cry 'on your knees'. He was obliged to kneel and ask forgiveness. Then came a thunder of applause and everything was over."
Prices: When Zetzner, a traveler, went to the theatre in 1700, he was horrified at the price of seats. As much as 12 shillings was asked for a side box, and 10s. for one facing the stage, the pit was 2s.6d. [sixpence] and the gallery 1s. It is interesting to notice that these prices for pit and gallery were the same in the earlier years of this century.
Intermission: There were long intervals between the acts. It took longer to shift scenery in those days, and the audience filled in the time by taking refreshment. Women walked about the house selling apples and oranges, and beer and strong waters were passed round. It was possible, too, to obtain more substantial provisions.
Shakespeare: A visitor complains that Shakespeare had been so altered and cut about that "not one of his pieces is represented on the stage as he wrote it. There are some so disguised as not to be discoverable for his writing". This was indeed the truth. An age which had accepted the plays of William Wycherley now drew the line at the grossness of Shakespeare.
Actors: Enthusiasm for great actors and actresses was widespread. There was, of course, the Puritan element, which regarded the theatre as the abode of iniquity and the performers as rogues and vagabonds. In the early days of the century plays were often so gross that reputable women, if they went to the theatre at all, went there masked.

Activity

Theatres and Audiences
(Pre or post performance, grades 9 and up)
Read the section on Restoration Era Theatres (pp. 19-20) and the interview with director Peter Hinton (pp.39-41).
Imagine you are attending a play during the Restoration. **Interact** with other people at the theatre if you like. React to the theatre, the audience and the play in a **scene you write or improvise.**

WILLIAM CONGREVE, PLAYWRIGHT

William Congreve is 30 when his play, *The Way of the World,* opens. This sparkling comedy is his last play. Why? Do we blame Jeremy Collier, who publicly reviled the theatre, and whom Congreve answered with this play? Or is an evolving society the cause? Or is Congreve's health to blame?

'Heaven has no rage, like love to hatred turned,
Nor hell a fury, like a woman scorned'
'Music hath charms to soothe a savage breast'
The Mourning Bride

William Congreve is born in 1670 in the village of Bardsey, in Yorkshire. When his father is commissioned to command a garrison four years later, the family moves to Ireland, and Congreve goes to school at Kilkenny College, and then, at the age of 16, to Trinity College, Dublin. Congreve is lucky enough to have Jonathan Swift (*Gulliver's Travels*) as a schoolmate.

The family returns to England in 1688, and in 1691 Congreve begins to study law at Middle Temple in London, although he spends much of his time writing. While writing poetry and working on translations of Latin poetry, he becomes known to other writers in London. He publishes an essay, *Incognita* under the pseudonym "Cleophil" in 1692. He writes *The Old Bachelour*, his first play, during an illness. It is performed in 1693. Although the play is derivative, with no original characters or plots, it is witty, the dialogue is clever, the actors, Mr. Betterton and Anna Bracegirdle, are the best in London – and the audience loves the play. Dryden, the venerable playwright and poet, says it is the best first play he has ever seen, and Congreve becomes a celebrity overnight.

We can see with this first play the seeds of Congreve's later work: *The Cambridge History of English and American Literature* writes, "Congreve is playing supremely well the tune of the time."

Congreve writes four more plays between 1693 and 1700:

- the comedy, *The Double Dealer*, which earns the approval of the queen. Influential 17th century man of letters John Dryden compares Congreve to Shakespeare;
- the comedy, *Love for Love*, which triumphantly opens Betterton's new theatre, only the third in London, in Lincoln's Inn Field in 1695;
- the poetic tragedy, *The Mourning Bride*, which is a historical curiosity to us but in 1697 is hailed as a masterpiece and holds the stage for many years;
- and the comedy, *The Way of the World*, which appears in 1700, and is considered his masterpiece, although it is a critical failure at the time.

The poor reception given to *The Way of the World* may be the reason that Congreve stops writing plays. He maintains his connections with the stage, managing Lincoln's Inn Fields, and collaborating in writing *Squire Trelooby* in 1704. He studies music, and wins a prize for the libretto he writes for *The Judgment of Paris.* He writes the opera *Semele*, about a woman in love with Jupiter.

WILLIAM CONGREVE, PLAYWRIGHT (continued)

As a man of letters, he also is given government posts. He is given a post at Customs at Poole, is made Commissioner for wine licences, and Undersearcher of the London port. In 1714, he is made Secretary of Jamaica. He earns a decent living.

Congreve belongs to the Kit Cat Club whose members are amongst the most illustrious men of the age. They include eight Dukes, Earls, famous soldiers like Marlborough, and fellow writers, Sir John Vanbrugh and Richard Steele.

In many ways he is like the protagonists of his plays. Congreve never marries, but he is fond of the actress, Anna Bracegirdle, who plays the leading roles in all of his plays, including the part of Mrs. Millamant in *The Way of the World*. Reportedly, Congreve is involved with Anna Bracegirdle since his first play. He lives on the same street as she does, and leaves her 200 pounds in his will. He is later the lover of the second Duchess of Marlborough. He is the father of her younger daughter, Lady Mary (1723–1764), who becomes the Duchess of Leeds, and for whom he provides in his will.

Congreve has poor eyesight for most of his life, and becomes blind. He also suffers from gout, which incapacitates him more and more frequently. In an irony of the sort he might have written about, Congreve, whose first government appointment in 1695 was as a commissioner for licensing hackney coaches, is in an accident when his coach overturns on the way to Bath, in 1728. Shortly afterwards, suffering internal injuries, he dies, on January 19, 1729. He leaves most of his estate to the Duchess of Marlborough. She has a wax effigy made of him, and reportedly speaks to it as if Congreve is still alive.

William Congreve is interred in the Poet's Corner of Westminster Abbey, near the grave of Aphra Behn (the famous Restoration woman writer). Here there is a moving epitaph to him by the Duchess of Marlborough:
"To whose most valuable memory this monument is set up by Henrietta, duchess of Marlborough as a mark how clearly she remembers the happiness and honour she enjoyed in the sincere friendship of so worth and honest a man. Whose virtue candour and wit gained him the love and esteem of the present age and whose writings will be the admiration of the future."

Activities

William Congreve
(Post performance, grades 9 and up)
Read the section on his life (pp. 21-22). Consider carefully what sort of person he was.
Imagine him in today's society, at a hockey game, or a restaurant, or a movie. What would he criticize?
Write his thoughts, as he mulls over the writing of a new play based on this experience.

COMEDY

Definitions

What kind of play is *The Way of the World*?
It's a Comedy of Manners. This comedy is a satire. Like much of the entertainment of our own age, it is funny and clever, and it recognizes and lampoons its own excesses and its fools.

- **Comedy**: A light and humorous drama with a happy ending.

- **The Comedy of Manners** satirizes the manners and affectations of a social class, often represented by stock characters. The plot of the comedy, often concerned with an illicit love affair or some other scandal, is generally less important than its witty and often bawdy dialogue. The ever-popular novels of Jane Austen are comedies of manners.

- **Restoration Comedy** is a kind of English comedy, usually in the form of the comedy of manners, that flourished during the Restoration period in England (i.e. from 1660 to about 1700), when actresses were first employed on the London stage. Appealing to a fairly narrow audience of aristocrats in the recently reopened theatres, Restoration comedy relied upon sophisticated repartee and knowledge of the exclusive code of manners in high society. Plots were based on the complex intrigues of the marriage market. The frequently cynical approach to marriage and sexual infidelity in Restoration comedy invited accusations of immorality. Significant examples are George Etheredge's *The Man of Mode* (1676), William Wycherley's *The Country Wife* (1675), and William Congreve's *The Way of the World* (1700).

- **Satire:** Writing which makes fun of human or individual vices, follies, abuses, or shortcomings by means of ridicule, derision, burlesque, irony, or other methods, ideally with intent to bring about improvement. Although satire is usually meant to be funny, the purpose of satire is not primarily humor in itself, so much as an attack on something of which the author strongly disapproves, using the weapon of wit.

  A very common, almost defining feature of **satire** is its strong vein of **irony** or sarcasm, but parody, burlesque, exaggeration, juxtaposition, comparison, analogy, and double entendre are all frequently used in satirical speech and writing. The essential point, however, is that "in satire, irony is militant". This "militant irony" (or sarcasm) often professes to approve the very things the satirist actually wishes to attack.

  - **Horatian satire** is gentle, and usually generalized. Named after the Roman poet, Horace.
  - **Juvenalian** satire is harsh and pointed, lampooning specific practices and individuals. Named after the Roman poet, Juvenal. A famous example is Swift's *A Modest Proposal*, in which the Irish Swift is protesting oppression of the Irish under British rule.

  Many of today's popular television shows are satirical. Examples are *The Colbert Report, The Daily Show, This Hour has 22 Minutes…*

- **Irony** expresses a duality. Irony is a literary or rhetorical device, in which there is an incongruity between what a speaker or a writer says and what he or she means, or is generally understood to mean. All the different senses of irony revolve around the perceived notion of an incongruity between what is said and what is meant (**verbal irony**) or between an understanding of reality, or an expectation of a reality, and what actually happens (**situational irony**). Irony can be funny, but it does not have to be.

Excerpt from *A Modest Proposal* by Jonathan Swift

This essay (c. 1729) by Swift is an example of satire - Juvenalian satire. It uses lots of irony.
Its full title reads:
A Modest Proposal for preventing the children of poor people of Ireland from being aburden to their parents or country, and for making them beneficial to the public.

It is a melancholy object to those who walk through this great town or travel in the country, when they see the streets, the roads, and cabin doors, crowded with beggars of the female sex, followed by three, four, or six children, all in rags and importuning every passenger for an alms. These mothers, instead of being able to work for their honest livelihood, are forced to employ all their time in strolling to beg sustenance for their helpless infants…

It is exactly at one year old that I propose to provide for them in such a manner as instead of being a charge upon their parents or the parish, or wanting food and raiment for the rest of their lives, they shall on the contrary contribute to the feeding, and partly to the clothing, of many thousands…

I am assured by our merchants, that a boy or a girl before twelve years old is no salable commodity; and even when they come to this age they will not yield above three pounds, or three pounds and half-a-crown at most on the exchange; which cannot turn to account either to the parents or kingdom, the charge of nutriment and rags having been at least four times that value.

I shall now therefore humbly propose my own thoughts, which I hope will not be liable to the least objection.

I have been assured by a very knowing American of my acquaintance in London, that a young healthy child well nursed is at a year old a most delicious, nourishing, and wholesome food, whether stewed, roasted, baked, or boiled; and I make no doubt that it will equally serve in a fricassee or a ragout.

A child will make two dishes at an entertainment for friends; and when the family dines alone, the fore or hind quarter will make a reasonable dish, and seasoned with a little pepper or salt will be very good boiled on the fourth day, especially in winter.

You can read the complete essay online at: http://www.online-literature.com/swift/947/

Activities

Comedy
(Pre or post peformance)
1. (grades 10 and up) **Read** the Definitions (p. 23), and the excerpt from Jonathan Swift's essay (p. 24).
Consider a social issue of today which makes you angry, and:
a) **Write down** your feelings and the reasons behind them;
b) **Write a satirical scene**, in prose or dialogue.
Share both pieces with a partner or the class. **Discuss** which is more effective as an agent of change.
2. (grades 9 and up) **Research** artist William Hogarth. Look carefully at some of his depictions of life in the Restoration found on the site http://www.maximiliangenealogy.co.uk/hogarth/hogarthgallery.html. (His engraving *Gin Lane* appears on p. 4 of this Study Guide, and *The Audience* on p. 20.)
Read the description under the paintings. Look carefully at *The Marriage Contract*. **Discuss** the criticisms Hogarth is making.
3. (grades 10 and up) Look at some newspaper cartoons. Look at the Youtube videos satirizing George Bush Jr. Watch *The Colbert Report* on television. **What would be worthy of satire in today's society? Discuss.**
4. (grades 9 and up) **Write a satire** about some aspect of your school, or your friends.
5. (grades 9 and up) **Write or improvise an interview** with a celebrity today, in order to skewer that celebrity.
6. (grades 9 and up) **Read** the Theatre Etiquette section (p. 45). **Create your own rules** of etiquette for a family dinner at your home, or a friend's home.

NOTES ON THE PLAY

Vocabulary

Prologue

Parnassus: mountain in Greek mythology – home of the Muses

Act 1, Scene 1

Gamester: gambler
Gay: happy
Stoic: unaffected by pleasure or pain
Cabal: clique seeking power, usually through intrigue
Ratafia: sweet liqueur, flavoured with almond or fruit kernels
Lampoon: crude written attack on someone's person or character
Dropsy: an old term for the swelling of soft tissues due to the accumulation of excess water. Edema
Affected: unnatural speaking, or behaving in an artificial way to make an impression

1-2

St. Pancras: former London borough that was merged into the London borough of Camden
Medlar: small brown bitter fruit – like an apple
Exceptious: disposed or apt to take exceptions, or to object; captious. [Obs.] [1913 Webster]
Raillery: good-natured teasing or ridicule; banter; repartee

1-6

Panegyric: elaborate praise – public eulogy
Bum-bailey: bound bailiff

1-8

Trulls: prostitutes

Act 2, Scene 1

Penthesilea: Queen of the amazons in Greek mythology
Amazons: a tribe of large strong women warriors in Greek mythology
Cuckold: a man whose wife commits adultery

2-5

beau monde: high society; the fashionable elite

2-6

Sententious: given to pedantic moralizing; pithy; using aphorisms

Act 3, Scene 4

Quarles: Royalist supporter and writer whose poems were enjoyed by Puritans!
Prynne: 17th century English author, Puritan and political figure

3-5

Drawer: person who draws the wine
Superannuated: too old for use or work
Frippery: pretentious elegance; trivial; of no importance
Incontinently: unrestrained
Long Lane: street in London
Gibbet-thief: person hanged for stealing
Ludgate: prison in London
Blackfriars: theatre
Farthing: smallest coin – ¼ of a penny
Decorum: quiet dignified proper behaviour
A month's mind: strong desire
Passe-partout: skeleton key or master key that opens any lock
Olio: A collection of various artistic or literary works or musical pieces; a miscellany; hodgepodge
Becravated: wearing a cravat
Beperiwigged: wearing a wig
Lingo: characteristic language of a particular group (as among thieves); "they don't speak our **lingo**"
Relations: relatives

3-18

Errant: straying from the proper course or standards
Cuckold: a man whose wife commits adultery
Satyr: woodland creature depicted as having the pointed ears, legs, and short horns of a goat and a fondness for unrestrained revelry. A licentious man; a lecher.

Act 4, Scene 1

Imprimis: Latin, "in the first place"
Proviso: clause in a document making a qualification, condition, or restriction
Dormitives: medicines to promote sleep; a soporific; an opiate
Lubber: a clumsy person, a lout
Camlet: fine dress fabric

4-8

Nolle prosequi: Latin legal phrase: unwilling to pursue

4-10

Rantipole: rude romping boy or girl; also a gadabout dissipated woman
Borachio: a drunkard
In vino veritas: Latin phrase suggesting that people are more likely to say what they really feel under the influence of alcohol. "There is truth in wine."

4-11

Tallow-chandler: one whose occupation is to make, or to sell, tallow candles
Tumbril: two –wheeled cart
Bastinadoed: subjected to repeated blows
Shakebag: comic villain, hired killer
Salopian: geographical name, border of western England

Act 5, Scene 1

Gorget: ornamental collar
Brideswell: prison
Duke's-Place: area of London known as a place where thieves could dispose of their ill-gotten gains
Iniquity: gross immorality or injustice; wickedness; a sin
Odium: intense hatred or dislike, esp. toward a person or thing regarded as contemptible, despicable, or repugnant
Cantharides: a medication that causes blisters

5-6

Importunity: begging
Pastoral: (from pastor, Latin for "shepherd") refers to a literary work dealing with shepherds and rustic life
Moiety: half
Non compos: Latin, not in control

5-8

Pylades and Orestes: as a child Orestes was sent to Phocis, where he was raised with Pylades, and so considered him to be like a brother

5-11

Messalina: wife of Roman Emperor Claudius. She supposedly had an insatiable sexual appetite

5-13

Perfidious: disloyal, treacherous

Epilogue

Scurrilous: expressed in vulgar, coarse, and abusive language
Coquettes and beaux: girls and boys, flirts and dandies

Plot Summary

The plot of *The Way of the World* is complex, "but it lifts off the page like a dream."

director Peter Hinton

The Prologue

The prologue tells the audience that writers are fools, who gamble that their audiences will like their offerings, and Congreve throws himself on the mercy of his audience. He tells them not to expect a satire, since they are already perfect.

Act 1

The first act is set in a chocolate house, a men's club where men go to talk, read the paper, drink, catch up on business, gossip and gamble. It introduces the male characters in person, and rouses our suspense about the women, as we are introduced to them through the men's discussion.

- Mirabell is losing at cards to his friend, Fainall. Mirabell tells Fainall that Mrs. Millamant rebuffed him in public the night before. (As a courtesy, women were addressed as "Mrs.", whether or not they were married.)
- We learn that Millamant is heir to a fortune, but half of it depends on whether her aunt Lady Wishfort approves of her marriage. Mirabell had pretended to love Lady Wishfort, in order to get closer to Millamant, and Mrs. Marwood, Millamant's friend, revealed Mirabell's deception to her. Lady Wishfort, naturally humiliated, now hates Mirabell, and will obviously not approve of his marrying her niece. The major conflict of the play is clear.
- Soon we hear that a new character, Waitwell, is married "and bedded". Mirabell says he is working on "a Matter of some sort of Mirth", not yet ready to be told. Mirabell, who clearly seems to be obsessed with Millamant, now tells Fainall that she puts up with fools around her, (Witwoud and Petulant, two coxcombs, conceited fools) and then confesses that he likes her with all her faults, even because of them.
- A letter arrives from Sir Wilfull Witwoud, to his half-brother, who is playing cards at the club. (There are no phones or email in 1700 London, no cars even!) Sir Willful has come to prepare to travel abroad for the first time, looking for adventure at his advanced age of 40.
- Witwoud enters and lives up to his name, describing his friend, Petulant's faults as virtues, and understanding as jokes the insults that are sent his way by Fainall and Mirabell.
- The plot advances as Mirabell learns that Lady Wishfort has a plan to marry her niece, Millamant, to Mirabell's uncle, who is coming to London hoping to disinherit Mirabell. Money is important in this society.
- The men decide to go walk in the Mall where they know they will meet the ladies, and Mirabell asks the two fops to go on their own, as he is embarrassed by Petulant's rude catcalls to women in the park.
- The act ends with a rhyming couplet by Mirabell, stating that behaviour like Petulant's is not wit but ignorance.

Act 2

This act is set in St James' Park, a favourite walk of the beau monde. We finally meet the women!

- Mrs. Fainall, Fainall's wife, and Mrs. Marwood discuss the nastiness of men, but show us, however, that each is attracted to Mirabell. Fainall and Mirabell meet the ladies, and they all split up. In the next scene we learn that Fainall and Marwood are lovers, and that Mirabell and Mrs. Fainall once had an affair. Mrs. Marwood and Fainall quarrel, and she covers her tears with a mask as Mirabell and Mrs. Fainall enter.
- Mrs. Fainall tells Mirabell that she despises her husband, and once loved Mirabell "without Bounds". She married Fainall only for her reputation. Mirabell tells her the details of the intrigue he has under way:
- Mirabell's servant, Waitwell, has married Foible, maid to Lady Wishfort. Waitwell will pretend to be Mirabell's uncle, Sir Rowland, and woo Lady Wishfort. When she discovers his true identity she will be so embarrassed she will allow Millamant to rescue her and to marry Mirabell, to save her reputation.

Plot Summary (continued)

Act 2 (continued)

- Millamant arrives, in full sail, and we finally see the would-be lovers together. Witwoud, as always, follows Millamant. Millamant jokes that she and her maid, Mincing, use the letters she receives to pin up her hair.
- Mirabell demands to know why Millamant snubbed him. The scene shows us the conventions of the time – pretense, cruelty, secrets, jokes. When they are alone he asks her why she spends time with fools, and she says he is tiresome and walks away, saying she knows of his plot. Mirabell wonders about the "whirlwind" of love.
- At the end of this act we meet the newly-married servants, Foible and Waitwell. Foible, a happy participant in Mirabell's plot tells him that she has pretended to show Sir Rowland Lady Wishfort's picture to inflame his desire for her, and is planning to report his impatience to Lady Wishfort. As Mirabell gives her some money, Foible panics as she sees Mrs. Marwood go by, masked, afraid she will tell her mistress that she saw Foible with Mirabell. She runs home, and Mirabell tells Waitwell to transform into Sir Rowland. The act closes with a rhyming couplet by Waitwell.

Act 3

This act takes place in Lady Wishfort's home.

- At last we see Lady Wishfort, anxiously bidding Peg, a servant, to make up her face. Mrs. Marwood arrives and tells Lady Wishfort that she saw Foible with Mirabell. Lady Wishfort asks her to hide in the closet while she questions Foible.
- Foible does a masterful job of lying. She says that Mirabell insulted Lady Wishfort again, by calling her old ("superannuated"), and says that Sir Rowland will be there soon. Lady Wishfort is flustered, in need of her makeup, anxious that she not have to make the advances towards Sir Rowland and "break decorums". She is desperate for a husband, but unwilling to make the first move. Her fears are calmed when Foible tells her that the lusty Sir Rowland will take her by storm, and leaves.
- Mrs. Fainall enters and tells Foible she knows of the plot against Lady Wishfort. Foible tells Mrs. Fainall that she is worried about Mrs. Marwood who watches her and that Mrs. Marwood likes Mirabell, who can't "abide her". They are unaware that Mrs. Marwood in the closet is overhearing everything. When they leave Mrs. Marwood resolves to ruin everything for Mirabell. She suggests to Lady Wishfort that she marry Millamant to Wilfull Witwoud. Lady Wishfort likes the idea, and Lady Wishfort and Foible leave to change for dinner.
- The next to enter is Millamant, with her maid, Mincing. Marwood cruelly tells Millamant that her love is known and there is no need for pretense. They accuse each other, and then both say they hate Mirabell. Marwood warns Millamant that her happiness may be changed sooner than she thinks; Millamant calls for a song (a convention of this theatre), that says only ambitious love is worthwhile, and Petulant and Witwoud arrive to join in the fun.
- When Millamant and Mincing exit, Sir Willful enters to meet his half-brother Witwoud. In this scene Witwoud affects to not know his country brother and Petulant and Witwoud make fun of Sir Willful for his country manners. He is no weakling though. "You're a fop, dear brother," he says, and tells off Witwoud for leaving his attorney's job to be a dandy. He says he will stay in London for a while to learn "your lingo."
- After everyone else leaves for dinner, Marwood tells Fainall of Mirabell's plot. Fainall is outraged and upset that his wife was involved with Mirabell before, and that she has outwitted him now. Mrs. Marwood wants to prevent any chance of Mirabell getting Millamant's fortune and suggests a plot of her own: if they tell Lady Wishfort of her daughter's behaviour with Mirabell, she will be so enraged she will do anything to save Mrs. Fainall's reputation. Mrs. Marwood worries that the idea she proposed to Lady Wishfort of having Millamant marry Sir Willful may be bad, because Millamant will claim her fortune, but Fainall promises to make Sir Wilfull so drunk he will not able to win Millamant. Mrs. Marwood plans to write a letter to Lady Wishfort, revealing all, and Fainall says that at least he has most of his wife's money because he "wheadl'd a deed of Settlement out of her".
- The act ends with a couplet by the nefarious Fainall, telling husbands they must endure and not be too wise or too foolish or they will suffer.

Plot Summary (continued)

Act 4

- In a very funny scene, Lady Wishfort works out the best pose for the moment Sir Rowland sees her. Foible tells Lady Wishfort that Wilfull is getting drunk, and Lady Wishfort sends her to bring Millamant so she won't be left long alone with Sir Rowland.
- Mirabell agrees that she will see Millamant who is waiting for her. A very intoxicated, and reluctant Wilfull enters, intercepted by Mrs. Fainall, who urges him to pursue Millamant, and locks him in the room. He is unable to match wits with Millamant who sends him away as Mirabell enters.
- The next scene is the famous Proviso scene, in which Millamant and Mirabell set conditions for their marriage in the first pre-nuptial contract ever staged. Each is anxious to preserve their independence. Millamant fears that she will "by degrees dwindle into a wife", and Mirabell wants to make sure that Millamant will not be a slave to silly fashion or be involved in scandals, before he is "enlarg'd into a Husband". The two eventually agree on their contract. Mrs. Fainall is happy for them, but hurries Mirabell out as Lady Wishfort is coming in. Millamant say that she loves Mirabell.
- Rowdiness comes next, as we learn that Lady Wishfort broke up a fight between Petulant and Wilfull, an intoxicated Petulant enters, and rudely proposes to Millamant, he and Witwoud insult each other, Petulant who has defended Millamant's beauty tells her to "fight for your Face the next time yourself" and leaves to go home to his maid. Witwoud explains that all the fuss is due to Fainall's plan to get rid of Sir Wilfull by getting him drunk.
- Next Lady Wishfort and Sir Wilfull enter. He is amenable, loud and drunk, agreeing to marry Millamant, singing and discussing travel plans. He smells so terrible that Millamant and Fainall leave. Witwoud takes him away, at Lady Wishfort's behest. Then Waitwell enters as Sir Rowland. He pretends to be madly in love with Lady Wishfort and she quickly agrees to marry him, after making sure that he does not believe any sexual appetite of hers, with a concomitant loss of honour, is involved in her desire to marry!
- Foible tells her a letter has come for her and she goes to get it.
- When she returns, Waitwell reads the letter with her, and the plot is uncovered, to Lady Wishfort's horror. Waitwell, thinking fast, says it is another trick of Mirabell's, and he promises to prove his veracity by bringing her the black box which contains all the dealings of his estate. Lady Wishfort agrees, and the scene ends with a couplet by Waitwell, finished by Foible.

Act 5

Still in Lady Wishfort's house, the denouement unfolds.

- As the act begins, Lady Wishfort is raging at Foible, threatening her with jail, where her husband is. She leaves and Mrs. Fainall tells Foible that Mirabell has freed Waitwell. Foible tells Mrs. Fainall that Marwood and Fainall have been having an affair. She and Mincing were forced to swear to secrecy after catching them. Mrs. Fainall is surprised, but sees an opportunity to use the information to her advantage. Mincing enters, to tell Foible to hide in the closet until Lady Wishfort has calmed down. Fainall has demanded her fortune, threatening divorce. Millamant is ready to marry Sir Wilfull to save her fortune. They leave.
- Lady Wishfort and Marwood enter next, and Lady Wishfort thanks Marwood for uncovering the plots. Then she attacks her daughter for her bad behaviour, finding it all the worse since she herself has always been a model of virtue. Mrs. Fainall says they were both wronged, and says she will prove Marwood's illicit relationship with Fainall. Over Marwood's denials she warns her mother that Marwood is a "leach" who will "drop off when she is full of her [mother's] blood".
- As Lady Wishfort rails that she brought up her daughter to hate all men, she realizes that Fainall must be wrong in his accusations and agrees he must prove his assertions against his wife. However Marwood horrifies her with a description of the possible court scene and its social ramifications and she changes her mind.
- Fainall now enters, as the absolute villain that he has shown himself to be, and tells Lady Wishfort what she must do: she may not marry without his approval; Mrs. Fainall must settle her whole fortune on him; and Millamant must give him her 6000 pounds which she has "forfeited by her disobedience". He leaves after giving Lady Wishfort time to draw up the necessary papers, and Lady Wishfort turns for comfort to Marwood, calling Fainall a "barbarian", compared to her daughter's first husband, Languish.

Plot Summary (continued)

Act 5 (continued)

- Millamant and Wilfull enter, saying they will marry. Mirabell waits outside. Lady Wishfort is happy to hear the news of Millamant's marriage, and finally agrees to see Mirabell, after Millamant says he is going to travel with Wilfull and never bother her again. Wilfull agrees that this is true, and Marwood leaves, sensing trouble. When Mirabell enters, Lady Wishfort agrees to give up her anger if Mirabell gives up his contract with Millamant. Mirabell says he has already done so. Lady Wishfort in an aside tells us that she is still attracted to him.
- The evil duo, Marwood and Fainall enter, Fainall flourishing papers for Lady Wishfort to sign, and disbelieving the sham of Millamant marrying Wilfull. He warns that he will set Mrs. Fainall adrift "like a leaky hulk, to sink or swim". Distraught, Lady Wishfort accepts Mirabell's help. He asks for Millamant "in compensation", but says he will help Lady Wishfort anyway, and Lady Wishfort agrees that he can have her if he saves them all from Fainall. Mrs. Fainall, Foible and Mincing enter and tell of the affair between Marwood and Fainall. In a supreme example of double standards, Fainall still threatens to expose his wife's shame in having loved Mirabell, and says he will still "ruin" her!
- Waitwell arrives with the promised black box. Inside is Mrs. Fainall's settlement, signed in trust to Mirabell before she married Fainall, to avoid the kind of treachery that is now occurring. Fainall realizes the settlement he has made his wife sign is false. Astonishingly, he tries to run at his wife with his sword, but is stopped by Sir Wilfull. He leaves, like Malvolio, vowing revenge. Mrs. Fainall confronts Marwood, who also promises revenge, and leaves. The lovers come together, and Mirabell tells Lady Wishfort not to worry about Fainall, as he needs his wife's marriage in order to survive. He says he will be the mediator of peace. He gives back the deed of trust to Mrs. Fainall suggesting she can use it to "live Easily together' – ie have some power, finally, in her marriage.
- The act ends with a quatrain against the evils of adultery.

Epilogue

The closing lines speak to the drama critics in the audience, making sure that they all know no single person is the butt of the play, but that it is *the times* that have been satirized.

Activities

Plot (Post performance, grades 9 and up) **1**. In groups**, reduce the play** to two sentences per act. **2.** Either alone or as part of a group, write the story as a melodrama.

The Characters

The Way of the World is crammed with huge, sparkling, exuberant and witty characters. They are Restoration "stock characters," but some have an unusual depth.

Stock Characters

Rakes are opportunistic young men, attractive to women, and looking for women, intelligent but selfish; hard-edged and witty, users of people, initiators of the action.
Fops are fools, would-be rakes, with a particular penchant for fashion and aping their social betters, lacking the self-awareness to understand their own silliness, the source of most of the humour.
Country bumpkins are also fools, representing the backwardness of the countryside, (anywhere outside London), although they have solid hearts and decent values. They are the butt of many jokes.
Servants are faithful and clever, aware of personalities and events beneath the surface, helpful to their masters, and adept at moving the plot and providing humour, and often a whole other layer to the plot.
Widows are figures of fun, usually wealthy, silly in their desperation to appear young, and participate in the marriage game, aware of their own social status and power, but, like the fops, oblivious to their own silliness.
The young women are usually the object of the games being played – beautiful, intelligent but naïve, powerless in society, and striving for happiness with a man. Usually a fortune accompanies the hand of the young woman.

The Rakes

Mirabell, the protagonist, is a clever, handsome, young, and fundamentally decent gentleman, who is very much in love with Millamant. He is a proud, artful, and generous man of the world, and a desperate lover too. He is arrogant in his exploitation of people. <u>Relationships</u>: He is the former lover of Mrs. Fainall. Mrs. Marwood likes him too. Lady Wishfor detests him, for pretending to love her in order to get close to her niece, Millamant. He schemes to marry Millamant, and is successful in winning both her love and her dowry. No one, except Fainall and Marwood, whom he exposes at the end as dishonest traitors, minds being manipulated. Nearly everyone benefits from his schemes.
Fainall, the antagonist, foil to Mirabell, is a faithless husband who depends on his wife's inheritance for his living. His "Wit and outward fair Behaviour" have allowed him to enjoy a good reputation "with the Town", but his true nature is greedy, false, and profligate. He is ruthless about winning, but only likes to win if it will hurt others to lose. At the end he is despicably vindictive, selfish, and cruel, and violent too, as he attempts to rush at his wife with his sword drawn. Relationships: While he is carrying on an affair with Mrs. Marwood, his wife's friend, he is plotting to take full control of both his wife's and his mother-in-law's estates. He heartily dislikes his wife, although no one realizes it.

The Young Women

Mrs. Millamant, a protagonist, is an intelligent, young, vivacious, fashionable, well-educated lady. As Lady Wishfort's niece, she is heir to a fortune if she marries with Lady Wishfort's approval. She behaves coyly, affecting a fashionable disdain for the opposite sex. She is willful, witty and confident; she enjoys Witwoud and Petulance who make her laugh, and share the fashions of the moment with her. She is happy in her independence, and anxious to preserve it. <u>Relationships</u>: Millamant is attracted to Mirabell, friends with Mrs. Fainall, and niece to Lady Wishfort. She also socializes with Witwoud and Petulant. She realizes through the course of the play that she loves Mirabell.

The Characters (continued)

The Young Women (continued)

Mrs. Fainall is the unhappy wife to Mr. Fainall, daughter to Lady Wishfort, and heir to her fortune. Her mother raised her to hate men. Mrs. Fainall is clever and cautious, and generous. Relationships: She was married to Languish. After she was widowed, she remarried to keep her then love affair with Mirabell safe. She can hardly bear her husband, and still loves Mirabell. She is a loyal and generous friend to her cousin, Mrs. Millamant. She is an intimate friend of Mrs. Marwood until she learns that Mrs. Marwood is her husband's lover.

Mrs. Marwood, an antagonist, is secretly the mistress of Fainall, her best friend's husband. She is greedy and hypocritical. Because she deliberately sets out to destroy the happiness of others, and because she is duplicitous in her friendships, she is finally seen as an adulteress and a traitor. Relationships: She is a false friend to Mrs. Fainall. Although she pretends she hates him, Marwood likes Mirabell and is jealous of his attentions to Millamant. Even the trusting Lady Wishfort, who believes Marwood's loyal friendship has saved her from the disgrace and villainy of others' plots against her comes to see her as a "wicked accomplice".

The Widow

Lady Wishfort is a grande dame of 55, a funny, but endearing figure, quite blind to her own inconsistencies. She is desperate to get a husband, and quite unaware of the plans afoot to rob her of her fortune and her good name. She holds the key to the money and the marriages. She is the source of the greatest humour and liveliness in the play. She is the dupe of nearly everyone close to her, including her own daughter, and while she is in danger of losing her fortune, she is more worried about damaging her reputation. Her makeup is thick, and of great concern to her, but she fancies herself attractive to men. While she has raised her daughter to hate men, she is not reconciled to life without them. She is at great pains to keep up appearances, and she suffers humiliation, but she recovers with good grace and forgives all. Relationships: She is Mrs. Fainall's mother, and Mrs. Millamant's aunt, and despises Mirabell who insincerely courted her.

The Fools

Witwoud is a fop, a slave to fashion, both in appearance and behaviour. He prides himself on his wit, and charm, and is a favorite of the ladies. His chief usefulness is entertaining with his droll wit, and he is taken into the confidence of the ladies' thrice weekly "cabals" as they gossip and pronounce their fashionable opinions on marriage, men, and morals. By his good-natured affectation and unself-conscious methods, he allows the other characters to disguise their true emotions; his superficial and careless remedy of jokes, similes, and puns relieves tension and unwittingly exposes the foolishness of contemporary fashion and manners. While he is foolish, he is also harmless, and he gives us some very funny and insightful moments. Relationships: Friend of Petulant, admirer of Millamant, cousin to Sir Wilfull Witwoud.

Petulant, an affected dandy and follower of Mrs. Millamant he is often rude and ill humored, peevish and capricious. He is illiterate and proud, boorish and vain. He lacks finesse, and thinks it wit to loudly insult ladies in the park. To give the impression that he is popular, he pays ladies of questionable virtue to call on him in public places, and he also disguises himself in order to call upon himself in public. He likes Mrs. Millamant, but his maid will do. Witwoud is alone in finding him brilliantly funny. Relationships: Friend to Witwoud, hanger-on and admirer of Millamant.

The Characters (continued)
The Fools (continued)

Sir Wilfull Witwoud is half brother by marriage to Witwoud. He has come to London to look around before setting out on his travels and he finds he doesn't understand the "lingo" of the fashionable world, and sneers at the fashions he finds there. He is a country bumpkin with a good nature and a will to please. He serves as a foil to the “well-bred”. In contrast to their studied rudeness and affectation, he is simple and matter-of-fact. He gladly agrees to marry Millamant, as a last resort to save her fortune. He is another actor in Mirabell's clever plan to catch Fainall and Mrs. Marwood in their deception and to lure Lady Wishfort into his trap. Relationships: Cousin to Witwoud.

The Servants

Foible is Lady Wishfort’s quick-witted, dissembling, good-hearted waiting woman. She nonetheless helps dupe the lady, as a willing participant in Mirabell’s plot. Since her betrayal is in the cause of love, and since no one is injured, she is forgiven in the end. Lady Wishfort uses her as an emissary to procure a husband for herself, and Foible ends up with her own husband (Mirabell's servant, Waitwell) as well as one for Millamant. As a servant, Foible is aware of much that other characters would like to hide. Through Foible's assistance, Fainall and Marwood's adulterous affair and their designs to steal her lady's fortune are found out and justly brought to closure. Relationships: Servant to Lady Wishfort, friend of Mincing, she helps Mirabell by marrying Waitwell.

Mincing is a loyal waiting woman to Millamant. With her friend, Foible, Mincing witnesses and corroborates Fainall's and Marwood's adulterous affair, and so helps expose that deception. Their testimony leads to Lady Wishfort's blessing of the marriage between Mirabell and Millamant. Mincing’s affectations are another source of humour in the play, as she lisps so that she won’t move her lips and crack her makeup. Relationships: Friend to Foible, servant to Millamant.

Waitwell is loyal and quick-witted. He is instrumental in Mirabell’s marriage plot. Eager to please, he agrees, first, to marry Foible, in order to better secure Mirabell’s plan, and secondly, to impersonate Mirabell's uncle, in order to woo Lady Wishfort. As Mirabell's invented uncle, Sir Rowland, Waitwell gives a wonderful performance that convinces the lady of his desire for her. It is his gallant love act that places Lady Wishfort in the embarrassing position of being fooled once again by a suitor. By helping to place her at the mercy of her enemies, Waitwell clears the way for Mirabell to extricate her, gain her gratitude and marry Millamant. Relationships: Loyal servant to Mirabell.

Activities

Characters
(Post performance, grades 9 and up)
1. Analyze the characters of Mirabell, Millamant, Lady Wishfort and Fainall in a discussion.
2. Improvise
a) Mirabell attempting to woo Lady Wishfort;
b) various characters in the play determining the best way to pose before meeting another character for the first time;
c) Lady Wishfort teaching her daughter to hate men;
d) Mincing telling her story to a friend;
e) Waitwell and Foible on a honeymoon trip.

Structure and Style

- The play is written in the traditional five-act structure, with introduction, rising action climax, falling action, and denouement.
- Each act has many short scenes. A new scene begins each time a character enters or leaves the scene.
- Congreve more or less follows the "unities" as laid down by Aristotle:
  - **Unity of Time** requires the play's action take place in 24 hours or less;
  - **Unity Of Place** requires the play's action take place in a single locale;
  - **Unity Of Action** requires the play to dramatize only one central story or action, and have no action not relevant to the plot.

Restoration comic traditions

- In keeping with Restoration custom, and French and Italian influences, the play has musical interludes, with songs and dance. The lyrics of the songs reinforce the action of the play.
- The characters are named after their own personalities or roles: Petulant is peevish, Witwoud, certainly believes he is a wit, wanting to be one; Millamant is loved, if not by thousands, by many; Waitwell a butler, Lady Wishfort certainly wishes very hard "for it" (ie. attractiveness, a man, social status.)

Irony and satire

- The play is very funny. It is of course a satire, a comedy of manners. Its ironic tone is very important, key to its meaning. Although it deals with subterfuge and immorality, it is really a very moral play. Satire seeks to improve us by having us recognize our faults and laugh at ourselves. So we laugh at the artifice of this world, its extravagances, the blindness of its characters to their own hypocrisies.

Language

- The language of the play is **ornate**.
- Speech is **particular** to each character.
- Petulant and Witwoud in particular use language full of **similes**, to show their "wit," and au courant phrases.
- Sentences can be long, with one subordinate clause inside another.
- There are few **metaphors** in the play, although gambling is a **sustained metaphor**. The play opens with Mirabell and Fainall gambling; all the main characters are hiding their true selves and gambling on the outcome of their behaviour. The stakes are high – marriages, large inheritances, ruin. And Congreve himself uses terms of gambling such as "bubble" and "hazard" in his prologue, as he gambles that his audience will appreciate the play it took him two years to craft.
- **Puns, asides,** and **monologues** are common.

Dramatic Devices

- There are many dramatic devices used – **intrigues**, **foreshadowing**, **suspense**, **plot twists**, **disguises**, **surprises**, **impersonations**, **hyperbole**, **physical humour**.
- There are **sub-plots** with Fainall and Marwood attempting to foil Millamant and Lady Wishfort; Mirabell attempting to woo Mirabell through his own scheme using Waitwell; Lady Wishfort attempting to marry and attempting to disinherit Mirabell through marrying off her niece to his uncle.

Activity

Structure
(Pre or post performance, grades 9 and up)
1. Turn a news story or a fairy tale into a five-act drama or comedy. **Write ONE sentence per act**. Follow the rules of the five-act structure. Make up what you have to.

An Excerpt: the "Proviso Scene", Act IV Scene V

MRS. MILLAMANT, MIRABELL.
MIRA. Do you lock yourself up from me, to make my search more curious? Or is this pretty artifice contrived, to signify that here the chase must end, and my pursuit be crowned, for you can fly no further?

MILLA. Vanity! No--I'll fly and be followed to the last moment; though I am upon the very verge of matrimony, I expect you should solicit me as much as if I were wavering at the grate of a monastery, with one foot over the threshold . Oh, I hate a lover that can dare to think he draws a moment's air independent on the bounty of his mistress. Ah, I'll never marry, unless I am first made sure of my will and pleasure.

MIRA. Would you have 'em both before marriage? Or will you be contented with the first now, and stay for the other till after grace?

MILLA. Ah, don't be impertinent. My dear liberty, shall I leave thee? My faithful solitude, my darling contemplation, must I bid you then adieu? Ay-h, adieu. My morning thoughts, agreeable wakings, indolent slumbers, all ye DOUCEURS, ye SOMMEILS DU MATIN, adieu. I can't do't, 'tis more than impossible--positively, Mirabell, I'll lie a-bed in a morning as long as I please.

MIRA. Then I'll get up in a morning as early as I please.

MILLA. Ah! Idle creature, get up when you will. And d'ye hear, I won't be called names after I'm married; positively I won't be called names.

MIRA. Names?

MILLA. Ay, as wife, spouse, my dear, joy, jewel, love, sweet-heart, and the rest of that nauseous cant, in which men and their wives are so fulsomely familiar- I shall never bear that. Good Mirabell, don't let us be familiar or fond, nor kiss before folks, like my Lady Fadler and Sir Francis; nor go to Hyde Park together the first Sunday in a new chariot, to provoke eyes and whispers, and then never be seen there together again, as if we were proud of one another the first week, and ashamed of one another ever after. Let us never visit together, nor go to a play together, but let us be very strange and well-bred. Let us be as strange as if we had been married a great while, and as well-bred as if we were not married at all.

MIRA. Have you any more conditions to offer? Hitherto your demands are pretty reasonable.

MILLA. Trifles; as liberty to pay and receive visits to and from whom I please; to write and receive letters, without interrogatories or wry faces on your part; to wear what I please, and choose conversation with regard only to my own taste; to have no obligation upon me to converse with wits that I don't like, because they are your acquaintance, or to be intimate with fools, because they may be your relations. Come to dinner when I please, dine in my dressing-room when I'm out of humour, without giving a reason. To have my closet inviolate; to be sole empress of my tea-table, which you must never presume to approach without first asking leave. And lastly, wherever I am, you shall always knock at the door before you come in. These articles subscribed, if I continue to endure you a little longer, I may by degrees dwindle into a wife.

An Excerpt: the "Proviso Scene", Act IV Scene V (continued)

MIRA. Your bill of fare is something advanced in this latter account. Well, have I liberty to offer conditions: that when you are dwindled into a wife, I may not be beyond measure enlarged into a husband?

MILLA. You have free leave: propose your utmost, speak and spare not.

MIRA. I thank you. IMPRIMIS, then, I covenant that your acquaintance be general; that you admit no sworn confidant or intimate of your own sex; no she friend to screen her affairs under your countenance, and tempt you to make trial of a mutual secrecy. No decoy-duck to wheedle you a FOP-SCRAMBLING to the play in a mask, then bring you home in a pretended fright, when you think you shall be found out, and rail at me for missing the play, and disappointing the frolic which you had to pick me up and prove my constancy.

MILLA. Detestable IMPRIMIS! I go to the play in a mask!

MIRA. ITEM, I article, that you continue to like your own face as long as I shall, and while it passes current with me, that you endeavour not to new coin it. To which end, together with all vizards for the day, I prohibit all masks for the night, made of oiled skins and I know not what--hog's bones, hare's gall, pig water, and the marrow of a roasted cat. In short, I forbid all commerce with the gentlewomen in what-d'ye-call-it court. ITEM, I shut my doors against all bawds with baskets, and pennyworths of muslin, china, fans, atlases, etc. ITEM, when you shall be breeding-

MILLA. Ah, name it not!

MIRA. Which may be presumed, with a blessing on our endeavours -

MILLA. Odious endeavours!

MIRA. I denounce against all strait lacing, squeezing for a shape,till you mould my boy's head like a sugar-loaf, and instead of a man-child, make me father to a crooked billet. Lastly, to thedominion of the tea-table I submit; but with proviso, that you exceed not in your province, but restrain yourself to native and simple tea-table drinks, as tea, chocolate, and coffee. As likewise to genuine and authorized tea-table talk, such as mending of fashions, spoiling reputations, railing at absent friends, and so forth. But that on no account you encroach upon the men's prerogative, and presume to drink healths, or toast fellows; for prevention of which, I banish all foreign forces, all auxiliaries to the tea-table, as orange-brandy, all aniseed, cinnamon, citron, and Barbadoes waters, together with ratafia and the most noble spirit of clary. But for cowslip-wine, poppy-water, and all dormitives, those I allow. These provisos admitted, in other things I may prove a tractable and complying husband.

MILLA. Oh, horrid provisos! Filthy strong waters! I toast fellows, odious men! I hate your odious provisos.

MIRA. Then we're agreed. Shall I kiss your hand upon the contract? And here comes one to be a witness to the sealing of the deed.

Activities

Character, Style and Structure
(Post performance (or perhaps pre), grades 9 and up)
1.
a) **Read** what director Peter Hinton says in his interview about this scene (pp. 39-41);
b) **Discuss** the language and meaning, the character development, and the scene's structure;
c) **Update** the language.
2. In groups of three, with one person directing, **explore** the scene as written. Show that although Mirabell and Millamant are in conflict they care for each other. Be honest. Try being tender, resigned, fearful, worried, flirtatious – other approaches. The audience should sympathize with both characters. **Perform** part of the scene for the class. **Watch** the production carefully to see how it is played. **Discuss** in class.

INTERVIEW with DIRECTOR PETER HINTON

Why do you love the play?

In 1975, or '76, I saw it with Maggie Smith at Stratford, and I remember being struck by the incredible beauty of it. It's a play I've always wanted to do.

The Way of the* World** has been described as being one of the four great English comedies, alongside ***The Importance of Being Earnest [Oscar Wilde], ***Private Lives*** by Noel Coward and **As You Like It** by William Shakespeare.

On the surface it is very, very funny - with some of the most memorable characters in the history of English -language theatre, but on another level it is also wise. It is a play about people at the end of their single life, and looking very squarely and soberly at an adult life and marriage. And with marriage comes compromise, but with it comes also a real acknowledgment of love and security in a world that is constantly changing and capricious. Like all those great comedies it has a dazzling surface, it has true wit, it has memorable characters – it's laugh out loud funny – but it also has wisdom and insight into the world, and the way we love in the world.

It speaks to everyone?

It's focused on the two main characters. Mirabell and Millamant are lovers who have been the height of fashion in the town. He is known for his rakish cad-like behaviour. Millamant sets the tone of fashion and single-mindedness and liberty for the women. He's been playing the field all his life, and he comes to an awakening where he feels he has to propose to Millamant. She holds out as long as humanly possible. Her great fear is, as Congreve says, that she will "dwindle into a thing of a wife". She's terrified of losing all the freedoms that her single life and liberty afford. Anyone who has been in love and anyone who has suffered in love will see themselves in some respect in the play.

How will you stage the play?

This is some of the finest English language that we have – and so we get a lot of debates about how it should be done- should it all be about the artifice? Should it all be about the exterior? Or should it all be about the interior? You can't do *The Way of the World* like Naturalism – it's not. People in the play are just too damned clever.

There is an enormous number of references to hair and clothes and boots and makeup and appearances – but, look at our own age. We live in the age of *Extreme Makeover* – we are so terrified of aging and death – and comedy, from the ancient Greek roots, is the assertion of life against tragedy. Against death. You must pay attention to the appearances, and the glittering surface in a play like *The Way of the World,* but you also have to let the heart out or it could just be arch or mannered. It's a very delicate balancing act. That's what I think is the particular genius of Congreve – finding that balance between the outside and the inside.

Describe the design.

Our production is going to be set in the late 50s. Music will be culled from the late 50s, early 60s. We are looking at a post-War kind of world, pre sexual-revolution of the 60s – that sort of last heyday of western culture, where you've got similar appreciations of style (with big hair, wonderful dresses), but it's closer to our own frame of reference. Today we still carry on the tradition of Restoration comedy. One of the features of the style is that characters were named for their behavioural traits - Britcoms are full of this. The television show *Absolutely Fabulous*, shows really wealthy people behaving really badly. The programme is at once both a satire and a parody of the values of excess and celebrity and fashion, but the characters are incredibly endearing, and we love them as much when they behave poorly. We laugh at their foibles and plights. So I am very excited about that –finding ways to translate the play from 1700 to a more recent time.

We're using a thrust stage- there are elements of the proscenium arch. And the production is very attentive to character, to costume. Carolyn M. Smith, who also designed *Macbeth*, is designing this. We've been looking at Dior and the couture gowns of the 50s, so the audience will see some spectacular gowns on stage. For the men, you've got that

INTERVIEW with DIRECTOR PETER HINTON (CONTINUED)

incredible tuxedo kind of look – you think about Cary Grant and those Hitchcock films – it's a great period for the men too. For the dandies we'll have those wonderful day jackets and bowler hats – and the audience will see day-wear and evening clothes. The play is quite generous in that regard.

I don't know whether I should give this away - we're setting the first act in a Playboy Club. We're going to have a billiards table and Betty is going to be in the bunny outfit.

What are some of your inspirations?

When I was preparing for this play it reminded me of those Rock Hudson / Doris Day movies. They're really about marriage, they're about sex, they're about business, they're about women's liberation – Doris Day is always playing an executive – those movies are really *fresh* – about a *fun* kind of world of the wealthy and bon vivant in New York. So that's been a real inspiration to us.

Robin Phillips – one of the masters of Restoration Theatre said to me, "what you have to remember is that the plays are very, very funny, but equally very, very sad". And I think that's such an astute observation, because at the core of comedy is often tragedy, and these characters are often very lonely and they are vulnerable.

As much as it's a love story, how are you going to deal with the money issues?

Well, it's a satire as much as it is a romance, and money is a big part of weddings. Reality shows that chronicle a wedding – like *Rich Bride, Poor Bride* - show people putting up $80,000 for a wedding, and they're not rich people. Still – as progressive as we like to think we are - as high as divorce rates are – as liberated as we might like to believe we are, from the values of a place like the Restoration - we still uphold marriage as a social ritual of acceptability. And it has to do with class. And money. Bridal shops and the like are by no means a lost business. Part of the play is observing the necessity of marriage, and asking, do we actually fall in love with people for true love? Or do we love only within our own social standing? Or to climb our way up a social ladder? So the play exposes those who have that intent. You know the way of the world is: people exploring love in a very commercially-driven world, which is not unlike our own. These are capitalists. This is the environment in which Congreve examines the machinations of a heart. It's part of the comedy too – to say "I love you, I love you because you're so honorable and pure – and you have a dowry and this much money and your parents are so and so!"

What scenes in the play do you enjoy the most?

The first scene with Lady Wishfort and her maids is really astounding – we see a woman addicted to every kind of youth-preserving medication and makeup available. On one level she's foolish, but on another she's endearing, and there's a scene in which her maid, Foible, is asked to freshen up her makeup, and so Foible takes a small, painted portrait of her, and says, "alas madam – you once sat for your portrait and now your portrait sits for you". She must work from the portrait when Lady Wishfort was 25 to get the makeup right! I think that's utterly charming. Also I think one of the greatest scenes in English theatre is the "proviso scene" between Millamant and Mirabell. It's the scene where Millamant can flee Mirabell's wooing no longer. And they create what I think is the first pre-nuptial agreement onstage. And they state in legal terms – like two lawyers – all the terms of the contract, how they will be husband and wife together. It's delicious. They're very funny, but very real. And it's all about ensuring their own independence and liberty, even when they're wed. I also think it has one of the most delicious assortments of maids and servants that you're ever going to see. Foible has to marry Waitwell, Mirabell's butler, to ensure that when he poses as a wealthy man to woo Lady Wishfort no indelicacies take place. It's wonderful to watch those servants at work. Mincing – who is Mrs. Millamant's maid, speaks with a lisp because she wears so much makeup she doesn't want to crack her lips so when she talks about curls, one hair being very "crips" - she never moves her lips.

INTERVIEW with DIRECTOR PETER HINTON (CONTINUED)

What are you looking forward to in the rehearsal process?

Watching that text and those characters come to life. There's a thing we say in the theatre, "Bad news for the character, good news for the actor". The play is full of people with a lot of bad news – after directing a play like ***Macbeth*** which is so… heavy and concentrated and precise – it's like putting on your pyjamas… it's so excessive and free and anarchic at times, so crazy, that I'm really looking forward to laughing a lot.

Will the language be difficult to handle?

It must be really quick. It's always about knowing what you're saying, but it' s really about knowing what you're doing - how are you using words to have an effect on the people you're speaking to, and in this play the audience too, because there are a lot of asides and direct address to the audience. It requires real quick–wittedness and real precision in terms of the thoughts – these characters love to talk, and they use language as part of their seduction, as part of their disguise, as part of their way of understanding the world they're in – so it's in prose, not verse, so I think will be very concrete too. Very real as well – but they're witty – so that's always the great challenge you know, that comedy – the hardest thing to do – the actors' challenge is they have to be as smart as the characters they are playing. I have no doubt with these actors.

I was really interested in working on this with Soulpepper. It's such a play for actors. It's got 12 fantastic character parts. We are so proud and lucky to have members of our own company and the Soulpepper ensemble back at the NAC in a play that is so character-driven.

Any words for young people?

The play is such a marker of our humanness- as sophisticated and intellectual and logical as we think we are, we become fools when we fall in love. You see social pressures in the play, and some people feel those pressures today too, about being in a couple, being successful, honouring their parents – all of that is something they can look out for in the play, both how things are different and how things remain the same.

W*hat do you hope the audience leaves with?*

I hope they leave with a great sense of joy. I hope they laughed a lot. Comedy has a great ability to take us out of our lives – I hope it entertains people. I hope people have their own Restoration - a renewal of faith in the very doubtful time that we live in. It's been such an interesting season because last season we were looking at all contemporary work, and this season we look to the classics, and to end the season with a comedy that really asks us who we are as people: what is the society that we've created? To hold it up to the light of ridicule, but also to discover that there are tender beating hearts that live in that world, it's a lovely way to end the season.

Activities

A Director's vision

(Pre or post performance, grades 9 and up)

1. Read the interview with director Peter Hinton (pp. 39-41). What might he do to set the play in 2008? In the 1960s?

2. **Write a critical review** of the play, focusing on one of: the director's vision, the performances, the design, or the writing.

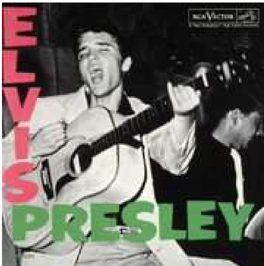
THE MID-1950s THROUGH EARLY 1960s

The 1950s, often described as "innocent", are gentle years, coming between the privations and rationing of WWII, and the social conflicts of the 60s. In the 50s, people, generally, submit to authority. In the 50s materials are plentiful, and skirts are full. The approach to fashion appreciates grace and celebrates the differences between the sexes.

Being a Teen in Ottawa

If you are young and at school in Ottawa in the mid-50s/early 60s, you are part of an explosion. Ridgemont, Rideau and Laurentian high schools are just being built. They will join Nepean, Glebe, Lisgar and Ottawa Tech. You are in an academic or technical or a commercial programme. There are no semesters and no credits, and if you fail any subject you must repeat it. You can "drag" it the next year, but if you fail two subjects you fail the year, and must repeat everything. You have eight 40-minute classes a day, the same classes in the same order all year long. You are taking English, Math, Science, History, French and Phys. Ed, and two options. You sit alphabetically in class, and you stand to answer questions. You can watch or play intramural games of basketball or volleyball every day in the gym at noon hour. Everyone takes gym every year. Every year your whole class moves forward together. If your homework isn't done you have a detention. A teacher may humiliate you, even slap someone, or throw chalk. You do what you are told. Very few students have a job. You know almost no-one who works on weekdays. There are hours of homework to be done each night. Your friends mean everything to you.

On Football Fridays in the fall, you finish classes early, and go excitedly to the games, listen to, or play in, your school band, wear long ribbons in your school colours, yell for your team with the cheerleaders. You learned the cheers and the school song in assembly or gym class. Sometimes you may sneak off on these days, not attend the game, because you are free. Bus tickets are four for a quarter in the mid-50s. After school you may go to a friend's house for a while, to listen to 78s on a small gramophone, and jive to the latest hits by Elvis or Buddy Holly. You have pin-up pictures of Elvis and James Dean and Ricky Nelson, maybe Elizabeth Taylor, all over your bedroom walls.



You are wearing a skirt and a blouse and cardigan, perhaps a twin set, if you are a girl; your skirt is straight and you wear a slip with it, or it is very full and you are wearing a crinoline underneath; in either case you are also wearing a wide tight belt around your waist. You are wearing white bucks, or black patent leather shoes or saddle shoes; you often wear nylons (there are no pantyhose); you are perhaps wearing a pin, or your boyfriend's ring, to show that you are going steady. Your hair is soft, short and curled, or long and wavy.

If you are a guy, you are wearing pants and a shirt, tucked in, and your hair is short. You are quite possibly wearing a cardigan, and white bucks, or boots or leather shoes. Your hair is short, probably in a crew cut, although you may have sideburns and greased hair in a ducktail; you may wear jeans, a leather jacket, with studs and an upturned collar.

To dress up you wear high heels, and a beautiful dress with spaghetti straps and a full skirt; or slacks and a dress shirt, usually with cuff links, a sports jacket and a tie. On a date you go to the movie theatre, or a restaurant (which will have a juke box on the table or in the corner), or to the drive-in movies, for two features and a cartoon. Cars are huge, comfortable, beautiful boats. You go to drive-in movies or drive-in

Being a Teen in Ottawa (continued)

hamburger joints, like the Royal Burger on Bank Street, and you listen to the car radio. You cruise. If you sneak into a club (are you 21?), you dance to a live dance band. Or you go to see live action, like Rockin' Ronnie Hawkins, at one of the clubs in Hull, such as the Glenlea, where bouncers have wide, fearsome reputations, and fights are common.

You love the movies – frightening movies by Hitchcock with Cary Grant, blockbusters like *Ben Hur*, dramas like *From Here to Eternity*, the romantic comedies of Doris Day and Rock Hudson, musicals like *Gigi,* comedies like *The Seven Year Itch*, and *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* with Marilyn Monroe and Jane Russell.

A Cherry Coke is ten cents, hamburgers 25 or 35 cents, chips and gravy 15 cents. At the store, a six-ounce bottled soft drink is seven cents, a ten-ounce one nine cents. A Cherry Blossom or Caramilk chocolate bar is ten cents. Wrigley's gum costs six cents. Comic books are ten cents. If you babysit, you earn between 35 cents and 50 cents an hour, and you may often look after four or five children. Families are large. Bread is 17 cents a loaf. Houses cost under $20,000. A month's rent is under $100. If you are smoking, and many people are, you are paying about 35 cents for a pack of cigarettes. You prefer filters if you are a girl. As far as you know, everyone is a virgin. You suspect some of those guys in leather though.

At home, your parents are in charge, and your dad is the boss. You probably know no one who is divorced.

Your mum probably "stays home" all day, and cleans and cooks. She wears a housedress. You eat dinner together every day but Saturday. You do your homework and your chores, watch television, talk to your friends as long as possible on the one family phone, only go out on the weekend. You come home on time, or risk trouble. You read for pleasure. You love television, and listen to the hit parade on the radio every night. There are comedies and westerns, family sitcoms and quiz shows on television. Until CTV takes to the air in March 1961, there is only one English channel and one French channel, CBC. *The Flintstones* is the first animated cartoon intended for adults. Everyone watches *The Ed Sullivan* show on Sunday nights, and *I Love Lucy, The Honeymooners, The Wonderful World of Disney, Bonanza, Have Gun Will Travel, Hockey Night in Canada, Father Knows Best, Leave it To Beaver* and *American Bandstand*.

John F. Kennedy is elected in 1961. Soon the world will change.

Right now it belongs to Elvis. And to Rock and Roll. And to you.

SOURCES TO EXPLORE

Movies and television

- *Restoration* is a film set in the 1660s in England, starring Meg Ryan, Robert Downey Jr, and Hugh Grant. (The costumes are excellent.)
- *The Draughtsmans' Contract*, directed by Peter Greenaway, is a lovely 1982 British film, set in a 17th century estate in England, and available on DVD.
- *Stage Beauty* is a beautiful period film about Ned Kynaston and the end of the boy actor's time on London stages. It also contains scenes portraying Nell Gwyn.
- The 2003 BBC drama *Charles II: The Power and The Passion*, includes Nell Gwyn's first meeting with the king and her posing nude for a portrait.
- There is a wealth of movies of course made in the 1950s and early 60s, where you can see the age as it was. *Pillow Talk, Lover Come Back* and *Send Me No Flowers* are the movies made together by Doris Day and Rock Hudson, mentioned by director Peter Hinton as influences in this production. Alfred Hitchcock's films are classics. *West Side Story* shows tensions that will spill over soon. More modern, retro movies include *Grease* and the recently released *Hairspray*, with John Travolta.

Websites

- For the text of *The Way of the World:* http://www.gutenberg.org/dirs/etext98/wwrld10.txt
- For the text of Swift's short essay, *A Modest Proposal* : http://www.online-literature.com/swift/947/
- For Samuel Pepys' diary: an excellent site, easy to navigate, http://www.pepys.info/1661/1661jan.html
- For Restoration Theatres: To read details about the new stages and the theatre spaces of the time there is excellent description and pictures here: http://www.standrews.ac.uk/~www_se/murray/Restoration/Theatres/Area_Stage.html#scenic
- There is an excellent map of Theatre London in 1762, from the endpapers of *Boswell's London Journal*, ed. F.A. Pottle. You can see it, and descriptions of places in London, at: http://www.nwe.ufl.edu/~pcraddoc/places.html#Cocoa%20Tree
- For the history of Britain: http://www.great-britain.co.uk/history/history.htm
- For Charles II in English history: a good, easily readable site is http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/STUcharles2.htm
- The 1950s: A good site for a slide show of the times -images with many details: http://heavens-gates.com/50s/lostinthefifties/
- Excellent descriptions of life in Restoration England are at http://www.ourcivilisation.com/smartboard/shop/bynpwllr/amuse6.htm
- William Hogarth's drawings paintings and engravings are online on many sites. They are wonderful depictions of Restoration England. Here is one site: http://www.maximiliangenealogy.co.uk/hogarth/hogarth25.html

Books:

- *Invitation to a Funeral*, by Molly Brown is a crime novel set in the Restoration, with real-life Aphra Behn as the main character. It's an entertaining way to learn!
- *The Signet Classic Book of Restoration Drama*, edited by Ronald Berman, 1980 contains six Restoration plays, and useful introductions to the times and plays.
- *The First Modern Comedies* by Norman Holland, 1959 is a thoughtful literary criticism of all Congreve's comedies and other major comedies, full of useful detail and information.
- *Restoration Drama, Modern Essays in Criticism,* edited by John Loftis, 1966, covers the dramatic spectrum of the age, and has two chapters on Congreve.
- *William Congreve* by Maximillian Novak, 1971, describes Congreve's literary achievements, and explains his works in the context of his times.

THEATRE ETIQUETTE

Please take a moment to prepare the students for their visit to the National Arts Centre to explain what good **Theatre Etiquette** is and why it will enhance the enjoyment of the play by all audience members:

1. *The Way of the World* will be performed in the Theatre of the NAC. Matinées at the NAC are for students and the general public. It is important for everyone to be quiet (no talking or rustling of materials) during the performance so others do not lose their immersion in the "world of the play". Unlike movies, the actors in live theatre can hear disturbances in the audience and will give their best performances when they feel the positive involvement of the audience members. The appropriate way of showing approval for the actors' performances is through laughter and applause. For the enjoyment of all, people who disturb others during the show may be asked to leave the Theatre.

2. Do not prop your feet on the back of the seat in front of you. If someone needs to pass you in the row, it is courteous to stand so as to better allow that person by. Do not climb over seats. Do not wear scented products such as perfume, cologne or aftershave, as many people are sensitive or even allergic to these.

3. If you plan to make notes on the play for the purposes of writing a review, please do not try to write them during the performance, as this can be distracting for the actors. Wait until intermission or after the performance is finished to write your reflections, please.

4. It is important that there be no electronic devices used in the Theatre so that the atmosphere of the play is not interrupted and others are not disturbed. **Cell phones, pagers and anything that beeps must be turned off.** Cameras and all other recording devices are not permitted in the Theatre.

5. Tickets with assigned seats will be distributed by your teacher and to avoid confusion it is important to sit in the designated seat. In the Theatre all even numbered seats are on the left side and all odd numbered seats are on the right. This means that seats 10 and 12, for example, are actually side by side.

6. Programs may or may not be distributed at this student matinée. Information on the artists who put this play together, however, can be found in this Study Guide for those who wish to use it in writing a review. Some programs can be made available to teachers if desired as a teaching aid to show how a program is put together.

7. The running time of the play is currently estimated at three hours, including one intermission. It is advisable to make a trip to the washroom before the performance starts, as anyone leaving while the play is in progress runs the risk of not being allowed back into the Theatre.

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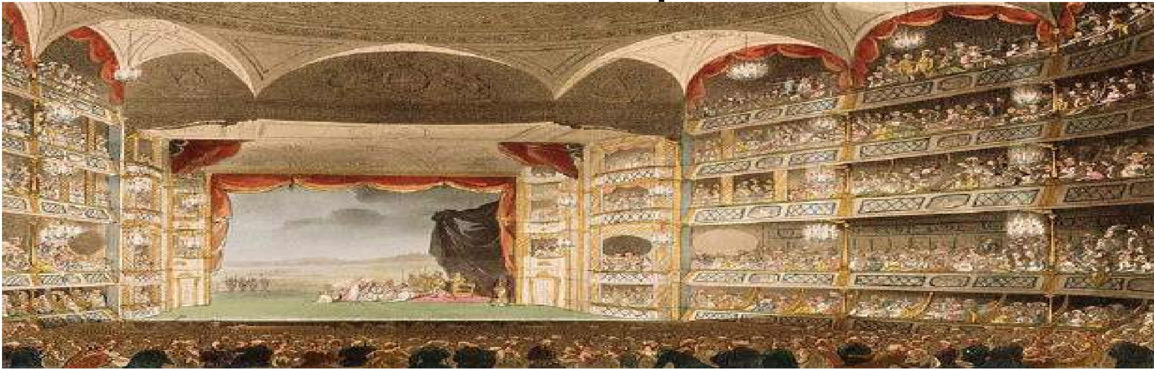
IMAGES:
the Restoration period



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IMAGES:
the mid-1950s through early 1960s