

①

## The way of the world (Congreve)

B.A. Part II Hons (Paper III)rd

classmate

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Page \_\_\_\_\_

Q Wit and Irony in the way of the world?

Ans) In the most common use of the word, style describes the author's use of language within the shorter rhetorical units, the sentences or at most the paragraph. It includes the choice of word and rhythmic and musical quality of sentences.

The way of the world, the title is ironic, the action is ironic, the relationship of the characters to each other are ironic. It is concerned with that kind of irony that is closely related to style and wit. Congreve, aside attempting any definitions of wit, although in the dedication, he distinguishes between true wit and false wit. Every person in a comedy may allowed to speak them. (Pleasant things)! From a witty man they are expected and even a fool may be permitted to stumble.

In practice all of Congreve's characters speak "pleasant things". There is not a speech that doesn't have its biting edge of wit, satire or irony. The characters speak, what they say can be examined. To talk of style or wit in a play is to talk of the different styles and different kinds of wit of the characters.

As Congreve used style and wit as one of his ways of characterisation. Mirabell style is not an easy one. The sentences are long flowing and syntactically intricate. His judgement

②

there is no vituperation in his speech. The objects of the disapproval are so deftly lanced in his gracious phrases that they can scarcely feel the knife. Mirabell's wit and irony are also intricate. His observations about others are shrewd, including a mixture of distaste, tolerance and amusement. There is a strong element of self-criticism that makes him a most unusual hero.

The ultimate proof of the individuality of Millamant's style in this - that to read the passage aloud is immediately to sense the manner and mannerism of the character.

She is flippant, delightful spoiled spirited. Her speech in her first appearance is abrupt she moves not so much from one subject to another as from one feeling to another with an ability to turn anything into wit. The passage "One makes lovers as fast as one pleases" is similar as is "Now I think out I'm angry. No, now I think out I'm pleased for, I believe I gave you some pain. The style and wit are the character of Millamant. There is still a teasing element, but there is less skipping from point to point Millamant is stating her conditions for marriage.

Fainall's style and wit must be differentiated from Mirabell's. His sentences are not as long or as contemplative as Mirabell's.

(3)

and his wife's wit is more direct and somewhat cheekier. The sadness of a losing gambler lessens the pleasure of the winner. I'd no more play with a man that slighted his ill fortune than I'd make love to woman than undervalued the loss of her reputation. Perhaps because of the nature of his part, he is more abrupt in accusation. And he engaged in a more direct attack, "professed a friendship! Oh, the pious friendships of the female sex!"

Since Congreve himself commented that readers and audience could not always distinguish between Witwoud and his true wits. As Witwoud has no function in the plot of the play, the purpose of his speeches is to characterize him and to provide comedy.

The term irony has a different meaning when one is discussing Lady Wishfort. It is true that she does indulge in heavy-handed sarcasm, but the unconscious irony is more important. Her speech as she repairs her face while waiting for Sir Rowland is a group of short, flustered comments that constitute her regular manner, an unconsciously ironic description of her hypocrisy. One might only add Lady Wishfort's remark when she discovers that her daughter's fortune will not be lost. A highly ambiguous compliment in the light of Mrs. Fairall's unsatisfactory love affair with Mirabell and Wishfort's misjudgement of Mrs. Marwood and Sir Rowland.