

Topic - Restoration Comedy •

B. A. Part II (Hons)

Sub-English PAPER III

Faculty - Art (Literature)

Q - "Good satire implies an effort to understand". Discuss with citation from the Way of the World.

Ans. ~~It~~ It is assumed that the Way of the World is a good satire, it is as Congreve states, a satire upon expectations of wit, and we may take Witwoud and Petulant as examples. Witwoud, as his name implies, is crazy for showing of his wit. Petulant again as his name implies, cracks his by way of contradicting whatever is said. Witwoud and Petulant often engage in a tussle, and no spleen is generated by it. Witwoud

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brags of its wit, at least
yet believes that 'he had
the better of it in a wit
combat with Petulant, of
whom he has a very low
contempt. In his opinion,
Petulant has a pretty deal
of an odd sort of a small
wit'. Behind Petulant's back
Witwoud discusses his character
and wit. Fainall and Mirabell
listen to him and we
may well ~~im~~ imagine,
how they were laughing in
their ~~se~~ sleeves. Witwoud
characterizes Petulant as
'having no more breeding
than a "bam-bailey"', and
he certainly thinks that
it is a good stroke of
wit. It should be noted
here that Witwoud is
being made ridiculous.

miss no subtle suggestions. We have a true measure of Witwoud wit when we recall Mirabell remark as we watch Witwoud outburst here. Fainall think that Witwoud is a good natured and has something of a wit. Mirabell comment is very pertinent when Fainall comments that if Petulant has any fault, it is that he is "unsincere, it some such trifle." "A wit should be no more than sincere than a woman constant; one argues a decay of parts, as the other of beauty." Petulant, however, has no pretensions like Witwoud. The questions of morality seems to be irrelevant - and so it does when we read

Congreve plays. This is the triumph of his artistry. Yet there is a strain of realism in his plays, for he draws the man and woman he finds them in life, may be, with a little of exaggeration which is natural to an artist.

He is a master of ~~dialogue~~ dialogue and he makes his character live. Louis Cazamian rightly says that "cynicism is more notable in Congreve than in Wycherly, and that in his more sober tints is depicted a deeper vice, which sinks to the conscience and snaps the spring of moral indignation".

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