

Holloway Jail. Jury failed to reach a verdict and Wilde was bailed and faced going into hiding. Final trial led to convictions of gross indecency and sentenced to two years hard labour.

- Release from prison- exiled from many literary circles and found it difficult to make a living
- Moved to Paris and died in 1900 of meningitis

Combining melodrama with naturalism

Melodrama:

- Originated in 18th century- influenced by mystery and morality plays of Middle Ages
- Styles and techniques influenced by European theatre, e.g. many acting styles similar to **Commedia dell'Arte**
- Combined spoken text with musical accompaniment
- 'Type' characters, .e.g. hero, villain, musical accompaniment during entrances and exits signified 'type'
- 'Stock' characters, .e.g. comic man, old woman, damsel in distress
- Plots were sensational and involved love, murder, disguises, concealments and triumph of good over evil

Can LWF be defined as melodrama?

- Elements of melodrama combined with techniques of new emerging naturalistic style- resulted in more complex plots and characters
- Characters are more realistic
- Justification for each character's less desirable actions

Theatre in Wilde's day

The St James Theatre- London

- LWF first performed here in 1892
- Built in 1835
- Approximately 1200 seating
- Intimate performance space

Whilst Victorian London was a city of growth and affluence, it was also a city of poverty. Many lived in overcrowded slums and unacceptable conditions. Many died from cholera, partly due to poor sanitation. Sewage was pumped into the River Thames and air was thick with smog.

Satire: a genre in which vices, follies and shortcomings are held up to ridicule, ideally with the intent of shaming individuals, corporations, government or society itself into improvement

Cynicism: an inclination to believe that people are motivated purely by self-interest; scepticism