

THE RIVALS~ Richard Sheridan

Cultural Context

The 18th Century was described as a great age of theatre, and two of the most notable theatres from this era were The Georgian Theatre Royal and Drury Lane.

Due to the Romantic Movement, horrors and romantic story lines became more popular.

Pleasure Gardens were extremely popular.

The intellectual cultural movement led to less superstition, which is reflected in the literature.

This is the Neoclassical age of architecture.

Theatre

Blake, Burns, Coleridge, Alexander Pope and John Dryden were important writers of the time.

Audiences- poor people stood at the front, and 'persons of quality' sat around the side of the stage, and the very richest would sit on stage with the production.

The audience are very close, which allows for intimacy between the actors and audience, and thus complete engagement with the performance. However, the audiences had a tendency, generally speaking, to heckle. Because of these factors, the actors would have been conscious of being subject to intense scrutiny.

Drury Lane Theatre:

Seated 2500 to 3000 people and featured many colourful costumes.

Acting companies were often sponsored by the rich.

The Industrial Revolution

The Industrial Revolution was essentially the forming of the Middle Class from the Working Class.

The Middle Class took small areas of land from the peasants, and made fields from this; this is called enclosure. Some of the Working Class were urbanised and moved to the cities, and some profited from this move greatly, buying factories- a means of production. The factories generated 'new money'.

The Middle Class and Aristocracy had an extremely antagonistic relationship. The Aristocracy were the land owners, which is referred to as 'old money'

Genres

Satire

Comedy

Classical and Biblical mythology was adapted for modern theatre.

rubbish he is, and they both storm off.

Useful Quotes

Captain Absolute: 'When her love-eye was fixed on me, t'other, her eye of duty, was finely obliqued.' Very Roman idea that love is an emotion, and women, in particular, are often controlled by their emotions.

Faulkland: 'Women should never sue for reconciliation: *that* should *always* come from us. They should retain their coldness till *wooed* to kindness, and their *pardon*, like their *love*, should 'not unsought be won'.' (last bit is a quote from Milton's 'Paradise Lost'.

Act 5 Scene 1

Focus

Love

Fear for loved ones

Scene Summary

Julia is really sad, then Faulkland walks in, tells her he is going to flee 'the kingdom' or die, and refuses to stay with her because it will make him a 'rude, unpleasing companion'.

Then says that he lied, she gets really grumpy, leaves him, he regrets everything.

Lydia and Julia's maid enter. Lydia is looking for consolation and finds Julia in tears.

Julia confesses that she knew about the Beverly-Absolute thing.

Lydia moans and reminisces about Jack, while Julia half listens.

Mrs Malplot, Fag and David enter.

They tell Julia and Lydia about the fights.

Useful Quotes

Faulkland: 'we will fly together' birds? Or is it the Greek mythological tale of Icarus and Daedalus? Can Daedalus (A.k.a Julia) change his fate?

Julia: 'I will never be yours.' (the part in the film where the music stops playing and the word stops moving for a while).

Act 5 Scene 2

Focus

Deception

Scene Summary

- A difficult character to understand because his mannerisms alter throughout the play depending on the company that he keeps.
 - > For example when with Lydia and Mrs Malaprop (Women) he is charming, calm and light-hearted. He flatters Mrs Malaprop, "I must confess that you are a truly moderate arguer, for almost every third word you say is on my side of the question." [Act I Scene II]
 - > Compare this to when he is with Men he becomes more proud, strict, businesslike and demanding., "Why what difference does that make? Od's life, sir! If you have the estate, you must take it with the livestock on it," [Act II Scene I]. Much of his dialogue with Jack and other men includes much from the lexical field of business, money, finance and licence.
 - > For this reason, Sir Antony's nature conflicts with his own name "Absolute" as he changes from scene to scene and is not absolute at all.
 - > Another fun fact about the name: 'absolutes' suggests inflexible and strong minded- therefore good matches for the strong minded Mrs Malaprop.
- Themes
 - > Money,
 - > Business
 - > License
 - > Old and young. Fun Fact: "It is a feature of the back-to-front world of *The Rivals* that Sir Anthony should have been played by Edward Shuter, a man of about 45, While his handsome son Jack was played by Henry Woodward, a man of sixty one." [12] green and blue version of *Rivals*.
 - > Marriage

Captain Jack Absolute (resist writing captain jack sparrow ahhh)

- Officer in the King's Royal Army.
- The other characters generally consider him a gentleman.
- Seems to have a love for mischief throughout the play. Took the name of "Ensign Beverly", an enlisted poor soldier, in order to win over the affection of Lydia Languish by creating a sentimental storybook love affair.
- Like Sir Antony, Jack shares a dualistic nature (his attitude and personality varies as he addresses different characters) therefore contradicting his own name "Absolute".
 - > Another fun fact about the name: 'absolutes' suggests inflexible and strong minded- therefore good matches for the strong minded Mrs Malaprop.
- He is also complicated in the way he addresses characters and in the way he addresses the audience when he is alone, "Now for a paternal reason, I hope he had heard nothing of the business that has brought me here. I wish the gout had held him in Devonshire, with all my soul!" [Act II Scene I].
 - > Sometimes he is the noble gentlemen- he shows this side mostly to characters such as his father, Bob Acres, Fag, and Mrs Malaprop, 'Permit me to say, madam, that as i never yet have had the pleasure of seeing Miss Languish, my principle inducement in this affair at present is the honour of being allied to Mrs Malaprop, of whose intellectual accomplishments, elegant manners, and unaffected learning, no tongue is silent. [Act III Scene III]
 - > Sometimes he is a jester, charmer and a romantic flirt. This is usually when he is with alone with Lydia but he also likes to wind up Faulkland because he's such a cry baby, 'Ah my soul, what a life will we then live? Love shall be our idol and support! We will worship him with a monastic strictness'... 'we will enjoy the wreck of wealth, while the surrounding gloom of adversity shall make the flame of our pure love show doubly bright. Bu heavens! I would fling all goods of fortune from me with prodigal hand to enjoy the scene where I might clasp my Lydia to my bosom...' [Act III Scene III]
 - > Another fun fact about the name: 'absolutes' suggests inflexible and strong minded- therefore good matches for the strong minded Mrs Malaprop.
- Generally likes to fool with the other characters:
 - > Could have married Lydia a long time ago but he wants to secure her fortune first so he keeps her hanging on.
 - > Purposely upsets Faulkland when Acres arrives... ensuring Acres says enough about Julia to upset him.
 - > Pressures Acres into challenging 'Beverly'.
- Themes
 - > Deception