

CONTENTS

Chapter One: Introduction	1
Chapter Two: Late Medieval	37
a) <i>The Second Shepherds' Play</i>	37
b) Chaucer, <i>The Canterbury Tales</i>	42
c) Medwall, <i>Fulgens and Lucrece</i>	52
Chapter Three: The Renaissance	61
a) Shakespeare, <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	61
b) Falstaff	75
c) Donne, <i>The Flea</i>	90
d) Marvell, <i>The Garden</i>	97
Chapter Four: The Restoration and Eighteenth Century	107
a) Restoration Comedy	109
b) Pope, <i>The Rape of the Lock</i>	121
c) The Vogue of Sentiment	128
d) Sterne, <i>Tristram Shandy</i>	140
Chapter Five: The Nineteenth Century	155
a) Austen, <i>Emma</i>	155
b) Dickens, <i>The Pickwick Papers</i>	166
c) Poking Fun at the Establishment	176
d) Wilde, <i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i>	188
e) Jerome K. Jerome, <i>Three Men in a Boat</i>	197
Chapter Six: The Twentieth Century	205
a) George Bernard Shaw	205
b) Stella Gibbons, <i>Cold Comfort Farm</i>	217
c) Beckett, <i>Waiting for Godot</i>	222
d) Kingsley Amis, <i>Lucky Jim</i>	226
e) Malcolm Bradbury, <i>The History Man</i>	233
f) Helen Fielding, <i>Bridget Jones's Diary</i>	245

CONTENTS

Notes	253
Works Cited – on the Comic	267
Works Cited – General	271
Index	275