College of DuPage Theatre Department
Presents
The Dining Room

By A. R. Gurney
Directed by Connie Canaday Howard

The College Theatre Department sincerely thanks the Library for research support for classes studying the script and production, as well as for the cast, director and production team, working on the project.

CHARACTERS AND SCENES

Act One

THE DEAL
Client
Agent
THE NEGOTIATION
Arthur
Sally
THE SEEDS
Annie
Father
Boy
Girl
Mother
TERM PAPER
Ellie
Howard
ST. JOAN
Carolyn

Grace
THE CLARIFICATION
Michael
Aggie
THE SESSION
Architect
Psychiatrist
WINKIE'S BIRTHDAY
Peggy
Ted
Brewster
Winkie
Billy
Sandra
ST. WHOOZIE'S
Grandfather
Nick
Dora
THE CARPENTER
Margery
Paul
THANKSGIVING
Stuart
Nancy
Old Lady
Fred
Ben
Beth

There will be one 10-minute intermission.

Act Two

AFTER SCHOOL
Sarah
Helen
THE SURPRISE
Kate
Gordon
Chris
THE PROJECT
Aunt Harriet
Tony
COMING HOME
Jim
Meg
THE CLUB
Emily
Standish
David
Claire
Bertha
THE WILL
Harvey
Dick
THE DINNER PARTY
Annie
Ruth
Host

TIME AND PLACE:

Multiple dining rooms between the years 1930 and early 1980s

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

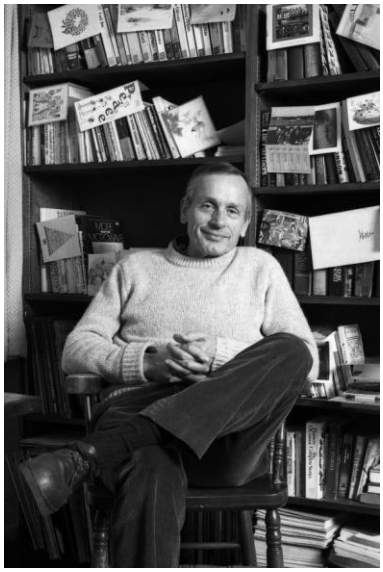
A.R. Gurney is one of our country's most prolific playwrights, with work spanning four decades. *The Dining Room* remains one of his most produced pieces. What strikes me most about this play today, is that this WASP culture that Gurney was alternately skewering, mocking or mourning in its decline is really, for the most part, gone now. Fingerbowls, for those who own them (and I have a few, inherited from my family), are anomalies. Though we may all sit down to dinner, it's often hurriedly, at home over a casserole or something from the crockpot or instant pot, or in a restaurant, as opposed to the courses served by maids; sometimes, that's necessary, or it's just not possible to eat as a family.

This seems to be a necessary component of our evolving culture, at least part of the time: the pull of tradition and family versus demands of contemporary life. And we, as a society and as individuals, morph with life. But rather than feeling dated, the script allows us to contrast its scenes with today — there seems to be a universality and commonality in the struggle to flex.

By and large, Gurney's characters are not just types (though some scenes are larger than life, and verging on farce), but are struggling to be good people, regardless of their biases or indiscretions, and that's a universal with which we can identify. As Gurney has stated, somewhat nostalgically, about the bygone era(s), "There was a closeness of family, a commitment to duty, a stoic responsibility … which weren't entirely bad." There is a reason why this script continues to be produced, and that's the heart of people trying to find their way in life.

The comedy in the piece seems to be about people pushed to their limits. And this comedy contrasts with the quieter, more reflective moments that drive his points home. Thank you for supporting College Theater. It has been my great joy to work with students at College of DuPage for nearly as long as Gurney spent writing. We hope you enjoy this performance, and that you return again and again, to support the next generation of theatre artists. I will enjoy doing so, in the future ~ CCH

A.R Gurney



The American playwright and author A.R. Gurney at home in New York in the 1980s.Credit...Oliver Morris/Getty Images

A.R. Gurney, Playwright Who Explored Upper-Crust Anxieties, Dies
By Robert Berkvist, *The New York Times*, June 14, 2017
https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/14/theater/playwright-a-r-gurney-dead.html

A. R. Gurney, a prolific playwright who dissected the fading folkways of the Northeast's traditional white Anglo-Saxon Protestant society, of which he himself was a member, in plays like "The Middle Ages," "The Dining Room" and "The Cocktail Hour," died on Tuesday at his home in Manhattan. He was 86.

His agent, Jonathan Lomma, confirmed the death but did not give a cause.

With its focus on the quirks and barely concealed anxieties of the privileged class, Mr. Gurney's work was often likened to that of the novelist John Cheever and the playwright Philip Barry. His settings were often the stately homes of the well-to-do. His characters included self-satisfied corporate executives, crusty academics, imperious dowagers and bewildered teenagers on the cusp of adulthood.

In his hands, the conventions of the drawing-room comedy became the framework for social analysis. His astute observations were leavened with tart humor, and he was adept at using misunderstandings, either accidental or willful, as fuel for drama.

In “The Cocktail Hour” (1988), one of his best-known plays, Mr. Gurney’s protagonist is a young playwright who returns to his family’s home in upstate New York to announce that he has written a play about them and to ask for their approval to have it produced. His parents are appalled. The playwright is dismayed.

“Oh, God, why did I come here?” he says. “Why did I bother? Most playwrights dish out the most brutal diatribes against their parents, who sit proudly in the front row and applaud every insult that comes along. Me? Finally — after 25 years of beating around the bush — I come up with something which is — all right, maybe a little on the nose, maybe a little frank, maybe a little satiric at times — but still clearly infused with warmth, respect and an abiding affection, and what happens? I’m being censored, banned, bribed not to produce.”

Mr. Gurney knew of what his fictional playwright speaks.

“I certainly couldn’t have written ‘The Cocktail Hour’ until my father had died,” he told The Hartford Courant on the eve of a revival of the play at the Long Wharf Theater in New Haven in 2007. “It would have killed him. He didn’t like at all what I wrote. He felt I was betraying, revealing things I shouldn’t reveal, embarrassing the family and using language which he thought was vulgar and unattractive.”

Mr. Gurney tried to bridge this generational gulf in many of his plays as “a true and graceful chronicler,” in the words of the director Andre Bishop.

Mr. Gurney had been writing plays for some 20 years before he scored his first major success with “The Dining Room” in 1982. Members of the cast, which included William H. Macy and Pippa Pearthree, played a variety of roles in a series of vignettes about family gatherings that, taken together, portrayed a society in reluctant transition. In his review in The New York Times, Frank Rich wrote that despite its flaws, “The Dining Room” was “often funny and rueful and, by the end, very moving.”

Barely a month later, another Gurney play, the comedy “The Middle Ages,” made a moderately successful if belated New York debut, opening Off Broadway five years after it was written. The play is a multifaceted portrait of a man who has spent a lifetime rebelling against his privileged upbringing only to find that its grip, felt even in a frustrating romance, is unshakable.

It had taken a while for Mr. Gurney to find his dramatic footing. One of his earliest works, “The David Show” (1968), a misconceived updating of the story of David and Goliath, was a one-performance Off Broadway flop. But by 1971, with “Scenes From American Life,” he had taken a major step forward.

Produced by the Repertory Theater of Lincoln Center, the play followed the evolution of American society from the Depression into a chilling authoritarian future. In what became one of Mr. Gurney's signature dramatic devices, the play's many scenes required the cast, which included Martha Henry, James Broderick and Christopher Walken, to play a variety of roles.

Renée Fleming and Alec Baldwin flanking Mr. Gurney in 2011 after a performance of his play "Love Letters" at Carnegie Hall.Credit...Neilson Barnard/Getty Images

Two more Gurney plays opened Off Broadway in 1976, and both owed their inspiration to the works of other writers. In "Who Killed Richard Cory?" Mr. Gurney used the well-known poem by Edward Arlington Robinson as a framework within which to sketch the decline and fall of a man who seemingly has everything. "Children," a portrait of a rich and restrictive upper-crust household, was based on "Goodbye, My Brother," a story by John Cheever.

Albert Ramsdell Gurney was born on Nov. 1, 1930, in Buffalo. His father was a successful business executive who ran a tight ship at home. He graduated from Williams College in Massachusetts, served for several years as an officer in the Navy, and then enrolled in the playwriting program at the Yale School of Drama.

After graduation he taught English at a private school and then joined the faculty at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he taught American literature and the humanities for many years. Mr. Gurney, who acquired the nickname Pete because his mother liked the sound of it, married Molly Goodyear in 1957.

She survives him, as do their two sons, George and Benjamin; their two daughters, Amy Gurney Nicholas and Evelyn Gurney; an older sister, Evelyn

Gurney Miller; a younger brother, Steven, and eight grandchildren. Mr. Gurney also had a home in Roxbury, Conn.

By the mid-1980s, he had left M.I.T. and moved his household from Boston to New York, where he soon reached what he described in an article in The Times in 1986 as "some sort of a creative high." It resulted in an outpouring of new plays, sometimes two in a single year.

"My mountainous labors may well have produced a series of mice," he wrote, "but no one can deny that I've been writing up a storm and having a good time doing it."

From left, Melanie Boland, George Ashiotis, Nick Viselli and Pamela Sabaugh in "The Cocktail Hour" at the Kirk Theater in 2008.Credit...Carol Rosegg

The results were uneven. "The Perfect Party" (1986) was a biting comedy about a middle-aged professor who plays host to a multicultural gathering that he hopes will be the party to end all parties. He even invites a newspaper critic to evaluate the soiree, which inevitably spins out of his control. In his Times review, Mr. Rich called it "Mr. Gurney's funniest, meanest and most theatrical play yet."

A professor is also at the center of "Another Antigone" (1988). Here a university classroom becomes an ethnic battleground over anti-Semitism between the teacher, of the old school, and a Jewish student who insists that he accept her updated version of Sophocles as her term paper for the course.

Over the next decade, Mr. Gurney seldom strayed far from the milieu that had inspired so much of his early work. He continued to examine that class-

dominated world in “The Cocktail Hour,” “Love Letters” (1989), “The Old Boy” (1991), “Later Life” (1993), “Labor Day” (1998) and other plays.

He branched out, however in “Far East” (1999), which is set in Japan at the end of the Korean War and centers on the cultural conflicts stemming from a young naval lieutenant’s love affair with a Japanese woman.

Another departure was “Sylvia,” a comedy about a man — middle-aged, middle-class, Upper West Side — who loves a dog, a stray he found in Central Park, a little too much. First produced Off Broadway in 1995, it had a Broadway revival in 2015 starring Matthew Broderick.

Mr. Gurney turned to politics with “The Fourth Wall” (2002), an indictment of the mediocrity that he felt was engulfing American society. In “O Jerusalem” (2003), he looked at the turbulent Middle East through the eyes of an American oil company executive who is frustrated by the region’s many problems.

Domestic politics came to center stage again in “Mrs. Farnsworth” (2004), in which a well-to-do woman barges into a creative writing class with her true-or-false story about a long-ago affair with a very prominent politician; in “Screen Play” (2005), set some years in the future, when liberal Americans have begun fleeing to Canada; and in “Post Mortem” (2006), another lament for a society that has become politically and artistically bankrupt.

Mr. Gurney was also the author of three novels: “The Gospel According to Joe,” “Entertaining Strangers” and “The Snow Ball.”

Almost from the start, he was keenly aware of the driving force behind his work.

“What seems to obsess me,” he once said, “is the contrast between the world and the values I was immersed in when I was young, and the nature of the contemporary world.”

His childhood in Buffalo, which he described as “the city time forgot,” remained his primary source of inspiration. It was all about “continuity that went back three or four generations,” he told The New York Times Magazine in 1989.

Early on, he said, “I sensed the comforts of civilization — but also its discontents, what you give up. The emotions are carefully trained, ultimately honed, and tamped down.”

He devoted his life to bringing those feelings to the surface.

BACKGROUND ON *THE DINING ROOM*

The Dining Room was first produced at the Studio Theatre at Playwrights Horizons in New York City in 1981, and was published in 1982. The description from Dramatists Play Service, the publisher, is as follows: "The play is set in the dining room of a typical well-to-do household, the place where the family assembled daily for breakfast and dinner and for any and all special occasions. The action is a mosaic of interrelated scenes—some funny, some touching, some rueful—which, taken together, create an in-depth portrait of a vanishing species: the upper-middle-class WASP. The actors change roles, personalities and ages with virtuoso skill as they portray a wide variety of characters, from little boys to stern grandfathers, and from giggling teenage girls to Irish housemaids. Each vignette introduces a new set of people and events; a father lectures his son on grammar and politics; a boy returns from boarding school to discover his mother's infidelity; a senile grandmother doesn't recognize her own sons at Christmas dinner; a daughter, her marriage a shambles, pleads futilely to return home, etc. Dovetailing swiftly and smoothly, the varied scenes coalesce, ultimately, into a theatrical experience of exceptional range, compassionate humor and abundant humanity."

Since that first production, *The Dining Room* continues to be widely produced both professionally and in amateur productions. And, in 2022, it seems to say a lot about an evolving country and culture. CCH

WRITINGS BY THE AUTHOR:

PLAY PRODUCTIONS

- *Three People,* New Haven, Yale School of Drama, March 1956.
- *Turn of the Century,* New Haven, Yale School of Drama, March 1957.
- *Love in Buffalo,* New Haven, Yale School of Drama, 1958.
- *The Bridal Dinner,* Cambridge, Mass., Massachusetts Institute of Technology Community Players, 1962.
- *The Rape of Bunny Stuntz,* New York, Cherry Lane Theatre, December 1962.
- *The Comeback,* Cambridge, Mass., Image Theater Workshop, May 1964.
- *The Open Meeting,* Boston, Atma Coffee House Theatre, January 1965.
- *The David Show,* Tanglewood, Mass., Boston University Playwrights Workshop, 1966; New York, Players Theatre, 31 October 1968; revised one-act version produced with *The Golden Fleece* as *Tonight in Living Color,* New York, Actors Playhouse, 10 June 1969.
- *The Golden Fleece,* New York, Van Dam Theatre, 1967; Los Angeles, Mark Taper Forum, 1968.
- *The Love Course,* Boston, Theatre Company of Boston, 1970; London, King's Head Theatre, July 1974.

- *Scenes from American Life*, Tanglewood, Mass., Boston University Summer Workshop, 1970; Buffalo, N.Y., Studio Arena Theatre, fall 1970; New York, The Forum [Lincoln Center Theater], 26 March 1971.
- *The Problem*, London, King's Head Theatre, 1970; New York, Soho Repertory Theatre, 19 January 1973.
- *The Old One-Two*, Waltham, Mass., Brandeis University, 1972; London, King's Head Theatre, 1975.
- *Children*, adapted from John Cheever's short story "Goodbye, My Brother," London, Mermaid Theatre, 8 April 1974; New York, Manhattan Theatre Club, 20 October 1976.
- *Who Killed Richard Cory?* New York, Circle Repertory Company, 10 March 1976; revised as *Richard Cory*, Williamstown, Mass., Williamstown Theatre Festival, 2 July 1984.
- *The Wayside Motor Inn*, New York, Manhattan Theatre Club, 3 November 1977.
- *The Middle Ages*, Los Angeles, Mark Taper Forum Lab, 1977; Stamford, Conn., Hartman Theatre, 8 January 1978; New York, Ark Theater, March 1982; transferred to Theater at St. Peter's Church, 23 March 1983.
- *The Golden Age*, London, Greenwich Theatre, spring 1980; revised, Washington, D.C., Kennedy Center, fall 1983; New York, Jack Lawrence Theatre, 12 April 1984.
- *The Dining Room*, New York, Playwrights Horizons, 24 February 1982.
- *What I Did Last Summer*, Dennis, Mass., Cape Playhouse, 9 August 1982; New York, Circle Repertory Company, 6 February 1983.
- *The Perfect Party*, New York, Playwrights Horizons, 2 April 1986; transferred to Astor Place Theatre, 24 June 1986.
- *Sweet Sue*, Williamstown, Mass., Williamstown Theatre Festival, July 1986; New York, Music Box, 8 January 1987.
- *Another Antigone*, San Diego, Old Globe Theatre, March 1987; New York, Playwrights Horizons, 11 January 1988.
- *White Walls*, in *Urban Blight*, music by David Shire, lyrics by Richard Maltby Jr., New York, Manhattan Theatre Club, 18 May 1988.
- *The Cocktail Hour*, San Diego, Old Globe Theatre, 2 June 1988; New York, Promenade Theatre, 20 October 1988.
- *Love Letters*, New Haven, Long Wharf Theater, 3 November 1988; New York, Promenade Theatre, 13 February 1989; transferred to Edison Theatre, 31 October 1989.
- *The Snow Ball*, Hartford, Conn., Hartford Stage Company, 9 February 1991; San Diego, Old Globe Theatre, 4 May 1991.
- *The Old Boy*, New York, Playwrights Horizons, 6 May 1991; revised, San Diego, Old Globe Theatre, 18 January 1992.
- *The Fourth Wall*, Westport, Conn., Westport Country Playhouse, 3 August 1992.
- *Later Life*, New York, Playwrights Horizons, 23 May 1993; transferred to Westside Theatre / Upstairs, August 1993.
- *A Cheever Evening*, New York, Playwrights Horizons, 6 October 1994.
- *Sylvia*, New York, Manhattan Theatre Club, 23 May 1995; transferred to John Housman Theater, 29 September 1995.

- *Overtime,* San Diego, Old Globe Theatre, 15 July 1995; New York, Manhattan Theatre Club, 5 March 1996.
- *Let's Do It!* music by Cole Porter, New Haven, Conn., Long Wharf Theatre, March 1996.
- *Labor Day,* San Diego, Old Globe Theatre, 12 February 1998; New York, Manhattan Theatre Club, 1 June 1998.
- *Far East,* Williamstown, Mass., Williamstown Theatre Festival, 26 July 1998; New York, Mitzi E. Newhouse Theater, 11 January 1999.
- *Darlene* and *The Guest Lecturer,* New Brunswick, N.J., George Street Playhouse, 18 October 1998.
- *Strawberry Fields,* music by Michael Torke, Cooperstown, N.Y., Glimmerglass Opera, Alice Busch Opera Theatre, 27 July 1999; New York, New York City Opera at Lincoln Center, fall 1999.
- *Ancestral Voices,* New York, Mitzi E. Newhouse Theater, 18 October 1999.
- *Human Events,* New Brunswick, N.J., George Street Playhouse, 2 February 2001.
- *Buffalo Gal,* Williamstown, Mass., Williamstown Theatre Festival, July 2001; Buffalo, N.Y., Studio Arena Theatre, March 2002.

BOOKS

- *Around the World in Eighty Days,* adapted from Jules Verne's novel, by Gurney [as Peter Gurney] and Gilbert Leibinger (Chicago: Dramatic Publishing, 1962).
- *The Rape of Bunny Stuntz* (New York: S. French, 1964).
- *The Comeback* (New York: Dramatists Play Service, 1965).
- *The Golden Fleece* (New York: S. French, 1967).
- *The David Show* (New York: S. French, 1968).
- *The Problem* (New York: S. French, 1968).
- *The Open Meeting* (New York: S. French, 1968).
- *The Love Course* (New York: S. French, 1969).
- *Scenes from American Life* (New York: S. French, 1970).
- *The Old One-Two* (New York: S. French, 1971).
- *The Gospel According to Joe* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974).
- *Children* (London: S. French, 1975; New York: Dramatists Play Service, 1977).
- *Who Killed Richard Cory?* (New York: Dramatists Play Service, 1976).
- *Entertaining Strangers* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1977; London: Allen Lane, 1979).
- *The Middle Ages* (New York: Dramatists Play Service, 1978).
- *The Wayside Motor Inn* (New York: Dramatists Play Service, 1978).
- *The Dining Room* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1982; London: S. French, 1982).
- *What I Did Last Summer* (New York: Dramatists Play Service, 1983).
- *The Snow Ball* [novel] (New York: Arbor House, 1984).
- *The Golden Age* (New York: Dramatists Play Service, 1984).
- *Richard Cory* (New York: Dramatists Play Service, 1985).
- *The Perfect Party* (New York: Dramatists Play Service, 1986).

- *Sweet Sue* (New York: Dramatists Play Service, 1987).
- *Another Antigone* (New York: Dramatists Play Service, 1988).
- *The Cocktail Hour* (New York: Dramatists Play Service, 1989).
- *Love Letters* (New York: Dramatists Play Service, 1989).
- *The Old Boy* (Garden City, N.Y.: Fireside Theatre, 1992).
- *The Snow Ball* (New York: Dramatists Play Service, 1992).
- *A Cheever Evening* (Garden City, N.Y.: Fireside Theatre, 1994).
- *Later Life* (New York: Dramatists Play Service, 1994).
- *Sylvia* (Garden City, N.Y.: Fireside Theatre, 1995).
- *Overtime* (New York: Dramatists Play Service, 1996).
- *The Fourth Wall* (New York: Dramatists Play Service, 1996).
- *Darlene and The Guest Lecturer* (New York: Broadway Play Publishing, 1999).
- *Far East* (New York: Broadway Play Publishing, 1999).
- *Labor Day* (New York: Dramatists Play Service, 1999).
- *Ancestral Voices* (New York: Broadway Play Publishing, 2000).
- *Human Events* (New York: Broadway Play Publishing, 2001).
- *Buffalo Gal* (New York: Broadway Play Publishing, 2002).

Editions and Collections

- *Four Plays* (New York: Avon, 1985)--comprises *Scenes from American Life, Children, The Middle Ages,* and *The Dining Room.*
- *The Cocktail Hour and Two Other Plays: Another Antigone and The Perfect Party* (New York: Plume, 1989).
- *Love Letters and Two Other Plays: The Golden Age and What I Did Last Summer* (New York: Plume, 1990).
- *Public Affairs* (New York: S. French, 1992)--comprises *The Love Course* and *The Open Meeting.*
- *Later Life and Two Other Plays: The Snow Ball and The Old Boy* (New York: Plume, 1994).
- *Collected Plays,* 5 volumes (Lyme, N.H.: Smith & Kraus, 1995-2001)--comprises volume 1, *Nine Early Plays 1961-1973* [*The Comeback, The Rape of Bunny Stuntz, The Golden Fleece, The David Show, The Problem, The Love Course, The Open Meeting, The Old One-Two,* and *Scenes from American Life*]; volume 2, *1974-1983* [*Children, Richard Cory, The Middle Ages, The Wayside Motor Inn, The Dining Room,* and *What I Did Last Summer*]; volume 3, *1984-1991* [*The Cocktail Hour, The Golden Age, The Perfect Party, Another Antigone, Love Letters, The Old Boy,* and *Sweet Sue*]; volume 4, *1992-1999* [*Sylvia, Labor Day, Darlene, The Guest Lecturer, Far East,* and *Ancestral Voices*]; and volume 5, *1991-1995* [*The Snow Ball, The Fourth Wall, Later Life, A Cheever Evening,* and *Overtime*].

PRODUCED SCRIPTS

- "3 by Cheever: O Youth and Beauty," adapted from John Cheever's short story, television, *Great Performances,* PBS, 31 October 1979.
- "The Hit List," television, *Trying Times,* PBS, 1989.
- *Love Letters,* television, ABC, 12 April 1999.
- *Far East,* television, PBS, 20 May 2001.

OTHER

- *Three People,* in *The Best Short Plays of 1955-56,* edited by Margaret Mayorga (Boston: Beacon, 1956), pp. 231-243.
- *Turn of the Century,* in *The Best Short Plays of 1957-58,* edited by Mayorga (Boston: Beacon, 1958), pp. 1-21.
- Eugene O'Neill, *Four Plays by Eugene O'Neill,* introduction by Gurney (New York: Signet, 1998).
- Thornton Wilder, *The Collected Short Plays of Thornton Wilder,* volume 2, edited by A. Tappan Wilder and Donald Gallup, introduction by Gurney (New York: Theatre Communication Group, 1998).

SELECTED PERIODICAL PUBLICATIONS--UNCOLLECTED

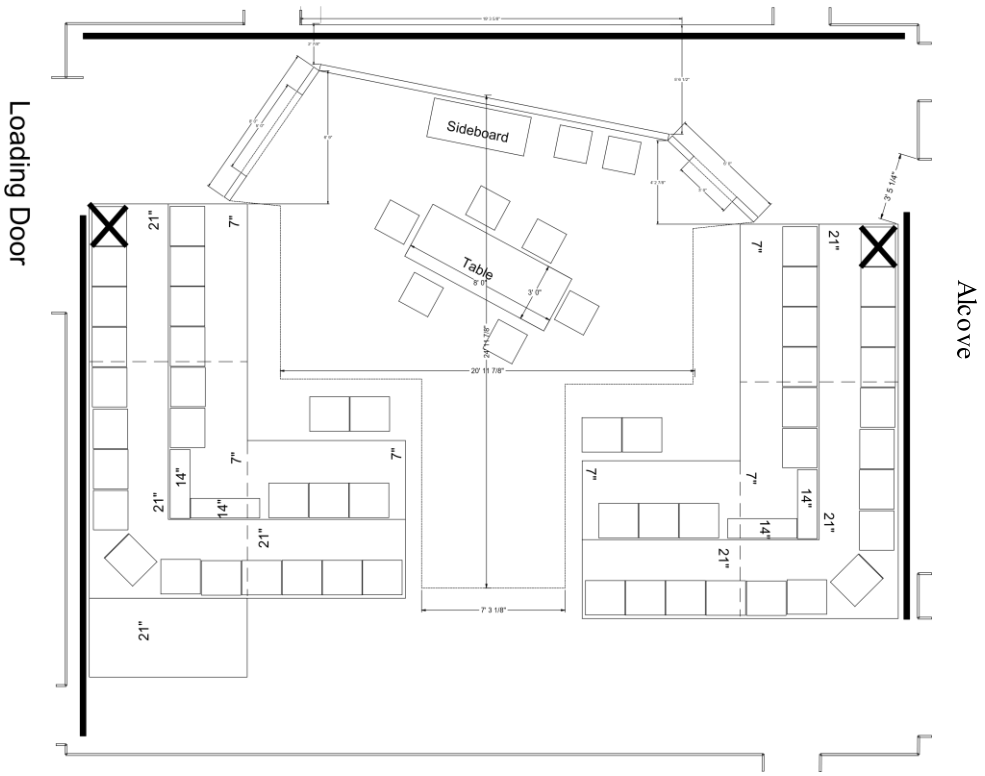
- *The Bridal Dinner: A Play in Three Acts, First Stage: A Quarterly of New Drama,* 4, no. 1 (1965): 33-56.
- "Pushing the Walls of Dramatic Form," *New York Times,* 27 July 1986, II: 1, 6.
- "A Guide to Australia's Good Women," *New York Times,* 6 September 1987, VII: 5.
- "The Dinner Party," *American Heritage,* 39 (1988): 69-71.
- "Where the Final Act is Only the Beginning," *New York Times,* 27 October 1991, II: 5.

Some Scenes of the Costume Design for this production, Kimberly G. Morris:


The Dining Room
Scene 16
Alyson M- Bertha
Monica R- Emily
Nick I- David
Olivia R- Claire
Nick W- Standish


The Dining Room
Scene 18
Nick W
Chris T
Alyson
Meka
Lilly
Nick I
Luke
Olivia
Monica

Groundplan of the Scenic Design for this production, Sabrina Zeidler:



Things to think about prior to performance:

- Gurney chose to set this script in the dining room, as a metaphor for the gathering place of the family. Does your family have a room in which it congregates or celebrates major events? Do you have specific memories in that setting?

- In life, as well as in art, a recurrent question is how family affects an individual. Why do you believe that happens?

- Another popular cultural question is how a person's individual independence affects relationships. What personal observations do you have regarding this?

Things to watch for in performance:

- How do the costumes and stage properties help to define the era of the characters?

- How does the dialogue define the time period? And, thematically, what does the unchanging quality of the setting ultimately say?

- We see, in eighteen scenes, different characters dealing with a variety of issues. What is the effect of moving, quickly, from one era to another?

Things to think about after the performance:

- Gurney overlaps several scenes. Why do you think he chooses those particular characters and situations to play simultaneously? Do they inform, or perhaps comment, on each other? If so, in what ways?

- There are some scenes that play in their entirety, without another scene overlapping. Why do you feel Gurney writes the scenes to play individually that he does?

- Most scenes in the script have only two characters in them, and depict, most often, very intimate interactions. However, there are several scenes that include multiple characters. What does Gurney highlight in these group scenes? Are there recurrent ideas/themes?

Other Analysis "Tools":

- What happens at the end of *The Dining Room*? What are the last words that are spoken and actions that we see?
- And what is the significance of the title? Why did Gurney decide that this was the most quintessential title for this work**?**

There will be a <u>pre-show discussion</u> with the director and the designers of *The Dining Room* at 6:45 pm on February 24th, in MAC 140, followed by a performance at 8:00 pm.

There will also be a <u>post-show discussion</u> with the cast, crew and the director of *The Dining Room* following the 8P performance on February 25th in the Playhouse.

We warmly welcome you and your classes to attend these informative and spirited dialogues with our actors and resident theatre artists.

Proof of COVID-19 Vaccination OR Negative Test Required for Entry and Masking Required for all.