

*Liverpool:*

Significant rebuilding followed the war including massive housing estates. However, the city has been suffering since the 1950's with the loss of numerous employers. By 1985 the population had fallen to 460,000. (Birmingham is now over 1mill). Declines in manufacturing and dock activity struck the city particularly hard.

In the 1960's Liverpool became a centre for youth culture. The city produced the distinctive Merseybeat sound and the Beatles.

From the 1970's onwards Liverpool's dock and traditional manufacturing industries went into sharp decline.

In the early 1980's unemployment rates in Liverpool were amongst the highest in the UK. In 1981 the infamous Toxteth riots took place, during which for the first time outside of Northern Ireland, tear gas was used by the police against civilians.

*The play:*

Written by Willy Russell in 1983.

The play is a contemporary nature versus nurture tale based upon two fraternal twins, separated at birth. The twins different backgrounds take them to the opposite ends of the social spectrum

*Themes:*

Superstition (ceremony and ritual). A belief that events are influenced by specific behaviours, without have a causal effect/ relationship.  
"Superstition is the religion of feeble minds."

Class. This refers to the hierarchical distinction between individuals or groups in societies or cultures. Social classes with more power usually subordinate classes with less power, while attempting to cement their own positions of power in society. One's class is largely determined by occupation, education, income and wealth. Those who obtain power adopt distinct lifestyles to emphasize their prestige.

Nature versus Nurture. The debate concerns the relative importance of an individual's innate qualities versus personal experiences in determining or causing individual differences in physical and behavioural traits. The view that humans acquire all or almost all of their behavioural traits from 'nurture' is known as 'tabula rasa' (blank slate). Personality is a frequently cited example of a heritable trait that has been studied. Identical twins reared apart are far more similar in personality than randomly selected pairs of people!