PUNJABI UNIVERSITY PATIALA

B.A. PART-II **ENGLISH LITERATURE (ELECTIVE)**

SEMESTER-III **ENGLISH LITERATURE FROM CHAUCER To The EIGHTEENTH CENTURY**

UNIT NO. II

Department of Distance Education
Punjabi University, Patiala

LESSON NOS.

Oliver Goldsmith : She Stops to Conquer

B.A. PART-II **English Literature (Elective)**

Semester-III **English Literature from Chaucer to the 18th Century and Study of Drama**

Lesson No. 2.1 **Author : AmritJit Singh**

Oliver Goldsmith: She Stoops to Conquer
An Introduction

Note: Although every effort has been made in the following pages to help you understand and enjoy the play She *Stoops to Conquer* and to study it for your examination, please do not treat these lessons as substitute for reading the original text. Page references in these lessons are to the Macmillan edition of *She Stoops to Conquer* which is easily available in bookstores and libraries.

If you have time, you should read as many of the other major literary works by Oliver Goldsmith as possible. Your reading of *The Good Natur'd Man and The Vicar of Wakefiled,* for example, should help you to enjoy and understand better She *Stoops to Conquer.*

Life of Goldsmith

Oliver Goldsmith was a curious and complex man who developed a reputation for contradictions during his own lifetime. A sensitive and brilliant man, he was easily affected by small insults and jealousies. Seeking success as a writer in cosmopolitan London, he remained acutely conscious all his life of his rural background and Irish brogue. Although not particularly noticed for his physical features or refined manners, he won attention for his writings and came to be known for his quick repartee as also for his alleged absent mindedness. Many of his contemporaries described him in anomalous terms. Horace Wolpole called him "an inspired idiot" and Tom Davies found him "an inexplicable existence in creation." Garrick echoed many others when he declared that Goldsmith "wrote like an angel" but he "talked like poor Poll."

After all, Oliver was a Goldsmith. And as Sir James Prior tells us, "The Goldsmith were always a strange family; they rarely acted like other people. Their hearts were always in the right place, but their heads seemed to be doing anything but what they ought." According to Prior, "In attention to worldly matters, a certain eccentricity of character, and inability to get forward in life,

seem to have characterised the Goldsmith race." Oliver's father. Rev. Charles Goldsmith, was a kindly and generous man who lived in hardship most of his life without any bitterness. Rev. Goldsmith is often compared with Dr. Primrose, the protagonist of *The Vicar of Wakefield, or* the complacent father of the "Man in Black' described in the twenty-seventh letter of The *Citizen of the World* or with the saintly Village Preacher in *The Deserted Village.*

Oliver Goldsmith was born at a small village in country Longford, Ireland, on November 10, 1728 where his father. Rev. Charles Goldsmith was a clergyman of the Established Church. Oliver (Nell, for short) was the fifth child in a family of five sons and three daughters. Two years later, his father moved to Lissoy, a hamlet in Westmeath, to serve as the rector for the parish of Kilkenny West. Here Nell was at first educated by a humble relative, Elizabeth Delap, and then by one Thomas Bryne the village schoolmaters, an old soldier with a still wandering spirit that seems to have affected the pupil. Oliver enjoyed his time with Bryne who relieved the drudgery of study by telling his pupils fairy tales or stories of his won adventures during the Spanish wars. It is around this time that Oliver had an attack of confluent small pox which scared him to death. Nell passed on from Bryne to a school at Elphin, onward to Athlone and Edgeworthstown where he was prepared for the university by Rev. Patrick Campbell.

Even as a child, Oliver picked up contradictory reputations. At school, he was regarded as stupid and heavy, "little better than a fool, "little better than a fool, "although his school fellows acknowledged his athletic abilities. At home, young Oliver had started trying his hand at verse with encouragement from his parents and his tutor, Thomas Bryne. Besides, he began to use his wits as a weapon to defend himself against attacks on his looks from relatives or other visitors. For example, once a relative said to him: "Why, Nell, you are become a fright; when do you mean to become handsome again?" Oliver restored: "I mean to get better. Sir, when you do, "There are m+——+.+any other stories of Goldsmith's ability at repartee or versification and some of them appear quite incredible.

Oliver's mother was very keen to send Nell to the University but his father was reluctant to take on the burden of supporting two sons at the university, since Henry, the eldest son, was about to enter the Trinity College to prepare for Holy Orders. Around this time, Oliver's sister married a well-to-do young

man and Rev. Goldsmith had to settle her with a suitable dowry. The family's financial circumstances made it necessary for Oliver to enter Trinity College, Dublin, in 1745, as a sizar rather than a pensioner. Oliver was hurt by this arrangement because his sizarship involved wearing a special uniform. The accounts of these years are often spoiled by conjectures regarding his academic and financial situation. It is known that Oliver was often beaten by his tutor. Dr. Theaker Wilder, who was a violent and vindictive man. Oliver could not bring himself to share Wilder's passion for mathematics but he could instead, he told Malone, "turn an ode of Horace into English better than any of them.

Oliver was often without money especially after 1747 when his father died. But when he was not showing off money at celebrations beyond his means, he was generally involved in riots. At one of the parties in his room, where he had invited guests of both sexes violating college rules, Wilder interrupted the proceeding by knocking down the host. Deeply hurt, Oliver sold his books and belongings and fled vaguely bound for America. But he returned to Trinity College later patched up a reconciliation with his tutor and received a bachelor's degree in 1749, appearing last on the list. His associates later recalled his habits of borrowing frequently with promises to pay back, loitering outside college gates in the study of passing humanity and writing ballads when in need of money for five shilling a piece.

The following few years were given to many half-hearted attempts at one carrer or another, besides a penniless Grand Tour of Europe. He was turned down for ordination by the Bishop of Elphin, perhaps because of his college reputation, or actual incompetence, as is remoured, because he had the bad taste of appearing before his examiner in flaming scarlet breeches. He considered studying for a law degree and tried his hand at tutoring but spent most of his time wandering from place to place- fishing, flute playing or taking the chair at the village inn on many a winter evening. He almost went to seek his fortune in America. Finally, with aid from his uncle, Contarine, he spent two years studying medicine at Edinburgh. In 1754, he persuaded his uncle to let him go to Holland to continue his medical studies at Leyden. Once in Europe, he regularly sent petitions for money to his uncles and other family members, citing the names of many famous scholars who have since then been found to be non-existent. However, Oliver get a medical degree somehow somewhere

but it was not based on enough knowledge for him to practice in England. He did, however, travel lieisurely" through the Low Countries, France, Switerzerland and Italy, living mainly on his wits. "Sir, said Boswell to Johnson at a later date, "he *disputed his* passage through Europe".

Oliver arrived in London early in 1756, with no clear idea of what he might do for a living. But he had sent home his first rough sketch of his poem to his brother in Ireland , *The Traveller,* in which he used some of his recent experiences. He worked off and on as a proof-reader at the printing shop run by Samuel Richardson, the novelist, and slowly moved towards hackwriting living in one or another of London's slum attics. He was also at this time acting as usher or substitute in Dr. Mimer's "classical academy" at Peckham. Something he said at Dr. Milner's table attracted the attention of the bookseller Griffiths who owned the *Monthly Review.* In April 1757, Glodsmith entered into a contract with Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Griffiths as book-reviewer writing steadily from nine until two every day for a salary of one hundered pounds a year in addition to his room and board above Girriths's shop on Paternoster Row. Although the arrangement did not last for more than a few months, his work for the *Monthly Review* taught him to express himself with confidence. As Wardly points out, reviewing books had become more than a stopgap before he sailed off to India where he unsuccessfully tried to go first as a physician and then as a hospital mate. He took his responsibilities as a literary critic conscientiously. "To direct our taste," he wrote "and conduct the poet up to perfection, has ever been the true critic's provience." Later, he was to inveigh against critics who, he felt, were not taking their task seriously. His first public, criticism of professional criticism appeared in An *Enquiry into the Present State of Polite learning in Europe* (1759). In this litte volume, Goldsmith attacked enough of the notable critics of his time to draw attention to its graceful and antihetical style that became even more noticeable in his mature writing.

This book also won for Goldsmith the editorship of *The Bee,* a weekly periodical which shortly failed. In 1759, Goldsmith was sought out by Smollett who wished him to write for his *Critical Review* and the brand new *British Magazine.* In 1761, he was befriended by Samuel Johnson and came to know through him, the actor David Garrick, the painter Sir Joshua Reynolds and Salesman Edmund Burke. Goldsmith's first success as a writer was signalled by the publication in 1762 in *The Public Ledger* of a series of essays. *Letters of a Citizen of the World*

which were supposedly written by a Chinese philosopher, Lein Chi Altanofi, giving his impresions of the English people and their country. His literary fame was further established when he published his philosophical poem. *The Traveller* in 1764, followed two years later by *The Vicar of Wakefield* which gained a place among classics soon after its publication.

Goldsmith's Literary reputation did not change his financial circumstances. He died on April 4, 1774 of a neglected nervous fever in debt for 2000 pounds, and was buried in the Temple Inn Churchyard, where an engraved slab still marks his grave. His stature as a man and artist is summed up most appropriately in the worlds of his friend, Samuel Johnson who said after his death: "Let not his frailities be remebered; he was a very great man."

Goldsmith: The Major Works

In order to make both ends meets. Goldsmith was forced to do a lot of hack-writing during his life. Among other things, he was commissioned to write a *Life of Richard Nash* (1762), a two-volume *Raman History* (1769), a *Life of Pamell* (1770), a *Life of Bolinngbroke* (1770), a four-volume *History of England* (1771), a two volume *The Grecian History* (1764) and an eight-volume *History of Earth and Animated Nature* (1774). For a detailed account of these miscellaneous writings, see appendix to Ricardo Quintana, *Oliver Goldsmith, pp.* 175-204. Besides *She Stoops to Conquer,* Goldsmith' major literary works include the following.

The Traveller- (1764)- The poem was conceived during Goldsmith's European wanderings and he had the first draft ready in 1755-56. Macaulay has summarized the poem thus: "A English wanderer, seated on a crag among the Alps, near the point where three great countries meet, looks down on the boundless prospect, reviews his long pilgrimage, recalls the varieties of scenery, of climate, of government, of religion, of national character, which he has observed, and comes to the conclusion, just or unjust, that our happiness depends little on political institutions, and much on the temper and regulation of our own minds." (Macaulay, *Life of Goldsmith).*

The Vicar of Wakefield (1766)- This is Goldsmith's only novel. It is the sweet and charming story of a person and his family, their trials and tribulations and the final triumph of the simple Christian values the Vicar tries to live by. The episode that narrates the misfortunes of George, Vicar's eldest son, as a traveller in Europe is largely autobiographical. In its preferenece for the life of lower ranks and its stress on the teaching of goodness, this novel antimpates

the work of Charles Dickens in the nineteenth century. The novel has been translated into many languages around the world.

The Good Natured Man (1768)- It was Goldsmith's first attempt to write a comedy in reaction to the sentimental comedy that was popular then. Unlike She Stoops to *conquer,* the play has rarely been produced on stage since its first production at Covent Garden under the direction of George Colman. The rather complicated plot, involving two pairs of lovers and .a comical father-figure unfolds the young hero's Indiscriminate generosity, his repentance and his final reformation.

The Deserted Village (1770) - Although not as popular as *The Traveller* during Goldsmith's life, the poem has remained to this day an important pastoral poem. The poet is deeply concerned about the dispossession of country people from their lands and homes. As Austin Dobson point out, the poem has maintained "its popularity by its *charming genre-pictures, its* sweet and tender passages, its simplicity, its sympathetic hold upon the enduring in human nature."

Drama in Eighteenth Century England

The eighteenth-century is regarded as a low point in the history of English drama. Although theatre flourished during the period, very little of great original drama was created. It appears that great drama was no more necessary to satisfy theatre audiences, because the actor and the stage had become the more important elements in the production of drama. These years witnessed the work of great actors such as Havard, Macklin, Kitty Clive, David Garrick, Foote, J.P. Kemble, Yates, Mrs. Abington, Sarah Siddons and others. The stage was more spacious than it had been during the previous century and the scenery became more expensive. In addition, there was machinery which could move whole scenes at single operations and dazzle the spectators with a remarkable illusion of reality. The effort to create such an illusion preoccupied artists and actors during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Thanks to these factors, plays had longer runs and people paid more to see them.

Theatre production in the eighteenth century consisted of revival and imitations of classics, sentimental comedies and tragedies of middle-class life, farces, pantomimes, mystery and horror plays. These are no more than half a dozen plays from this period that have invited attention from producers and theatre-goers in succeeding centuries. Early in the century, there were some able dramatists who wrote witty comedies of manners, but very few of them

have survived because of narrow interest of their themes and characters. Among these playwrights were George Farquhar, Richard Steele and Colley Cibber. In fact, in response to the new middle-class values, sentimental comedy had already come into existence.

In the last forty years of the century which coincide with Goldsmith's literary career, sentimental comedies and tragedies were in great favour with the audiences. While theatre failed to distract many people away from their religious preoccupations or domestic habits such as tea drinking or evening discussions on ethics it did attract the *beaumonde,* people who looked upon the theatre as a place for excitement and social display. For theatre-goers during this period, it became a social distinction to meet and be seen at these gatherings. Also, it led to the accentuation of some already growing social tendencies. The leisured classes who patronized theater also imposed their prejudices on it. It has been observed that desire to cultivate self-respect and courtesy grew in time into a meticulous observance of outward forms. Any display of natural feelings was considered ungentlcmanly and soon the nineteenth century fear of coarseness began to appear.

All this helped the sentimental comedy to make a powerful comeback on the stage in the second half of the eighteenth century. Between 1760 and 1770, Shakespeare had outmatched his rivals in popularity, and his plays, often distorted by loose adaptations appealed educated and the uneducated alike. David Garrick who directed the Drury Lane Theatre from 1747 to 1776, stimulated this enthusiasm by adapting, staging and playing in more that half of Shakespeare's plays. Sentimental comedy, however, had continued during these years of Shakespeare revival and showed its largest and most brilliant output between 1760 and 1770. Among the more successful of sentimental plays were William Whittehead's *The School for Lovers* (1762), Mrs. Frances Sheridan's *The Discovery* (1768), Isaac Bickestaffs *The Maid of the Mill* (1765), Hugh Kelley's *False Delicacy* (1768) and Mrs. Griffith's *The School for Rakes* (1769).

In addition, Richard Cumberland (1732-1811) had a long and distinguished career as a writer of many sentimental comedies. Cumberland's first success was The *Brothers* (1769) which provides a typical fare in its use of a complicated plot that includes a secret marriage, a quarrelsome married couple and is generally enveloped in gloom. In his other comedies-such as *The West Indian* (1771), *The Fashionable Lover* (1772), *The Jew* (1794), and *The widow's Only son*

(1810)- he consciously defends character-types formerly treated as ridiculous. In his Memoirs he exhibited on the object: "I introduced the characters of persons who had been usually exhibited on the stage as the butts for ridicule and abuse, and endeavoured to present them in such lights as might tend to reconcile the world to them, and them to the world." In The West *Indian,* generally considered his best comedy, these characters are the Irishman O'Flaherty and Belcour, the West Indian, a child of Nature. Similarly, *The Fashionable Lover* and *The Jew* he attempts to combat the prejudice against the Scots *and the Scots* and the Jews respectively.

But during all these years, there had been opposition to the sentimental or "weeping" comedies that Cumberland and others wrote. Garrick himself, who produced many of these comedies at the Drury Lane theatre, often joked about the need to put a steeple on the play house since it was now a temple of virtue, and referred sneeringly to "these our moral and religious days." Also, most of these comedies were not pure just sentimental effusion. Both Hugh Kelley and Cumberland made concessions to laughter, as Goldsmith's and Sheridan, generally hostile to "weekping comedies," made concessions to morality. For example, Kelley's *False Delicacy* which played in competition against Goldsmith's *The Good Natur'd Man* as a sentimental comedy uses two anti-sentimental characters to cure the false delicacy of the three female protagonists. In retrospect it would appear that nearly all plays written and produced during the later half of the eighteenth century are moral; only some preached more explicitly than others.

Goldsmith in Relation to English Drama in the Late Eighteenth Century

Goldsmith came to drama late in his career and his interest in writing drama grew out of his critical responses to the sentimental plays that dominated the stage at the time. He was unhappy, to see mirth and laughter slipping out of the stage comedy, and tears and sentential taking their place instead. As a man who remained unconverted to the artificialities or even sophistications of city life to the end of his career, he could not sympathetically view the elevation of false social values that the sentimental comedy represented.

Goldsmith expressed his views on the subject at some length in his "Essay on the Theatre"; or a Comparison between Laughing and Sentimental Comedy,"

published in *The Westminister Magazine* (January 1773). Goldsmith queries: "Whether the exhibition of human distress is likely to afford the mind more entertainment than that of human absurdity?" He contends that "the distresses of the mean" do not affect us so strongly as "the calamities of the great." Goldsmith attributes the success of the so-called sentimental comedies to their novelty in exhibiting virtues and distresses of private life instead of exposing vices and faults, or in other words, to "their flattering every man in his favourite foible." But Goldsmith finds such plays deficient in vis *comica,* and thinks audiences are assisting to banish humour from the stage by being "too fastidious." Goldsmith was not the one to depreciate the claims of emotions sympathetically shared in and felt, but he could not reconcile himself to the sentimental comedy's too easy bid for the pleasure of shedding tears. To Goldsmith, if comedy thus was to trespass upon tragedy, where would humour have the right to express itself? True comedy, insists, Goldsmith, excites ridicule, not pity; laughter, not tears.

In both of his plays, *The Good Natur'd Man* and She *Stoops to Conquer,* Goldsmith tries to reassert this view of comedy. Neither of them are wholly original in conception or form. In fact, they take up situations which were almost always present in sentimental comedies and Goldsmith's originality lies mainly in giving these situations a novel treatment. The standard situation in sentimental comedies of the day was to depict two lovers, often two pairs of lovers, confronted at the beginning with various obstacles in the way of their marriage which keep getting more complicated until we reach the suitable happy ending in the closing scene. Goldsmith's plays present a similar plot; only he treats these elements of plot and situation to achieve his distinct objective of undermining sentimentalism.

In *The Good atur'd Man,* Goldsmith employs a sophisticated form of irony to bring home to us and to the young hero the various errors and deceptions he was trapped in. Once again, we have the two pairs of lovers and their difficulties. Honeywood loves Miss Richard but so do many others and Honeywood is too generous to stand in anyone's way. Leotine and Olivia are involved in a more complicated situation. Leotine, sent to France to bring his sister back home, has instead brought Olivia with him and so until they get married, Olivia must pass as his sister. The complications that follow lead to a lot of fun in a fast-moving play. There is no doubt about the conscious intent of the play in exposing

the absurdity of kindness for one and all, but the hero makes an irresistible claim on our affection with his all-embracing sweetness. We fail to treat him and his final speech, therefore, in which he promises henceforth "to reserve my pity for real distress; my friendship for true merit" has the effect of the kind of imposed morality that characterized sentimental comedy. *In She Stoops to Conquer,* however. Goldsmith attempts a more complete break with the formal conventions of the sentimental comedy.

She Stoops to Conquer-An Anti-sentimental Comedy

If Goldsmith's main objective as a dramatist was to attack and reform the sentimental comedy that was popular in his day, She *Stoops to Conquer* represents a much greater success than *The Good Natur'd Man.* One way to measure Goldsmith's success is to consider the original treatment he gives to a set of familiar dramatic situations, ignoring almost completely the sentimental potential that another playwright might have exploited in them. He does so partly by directing the play to pure laughter thus over-coming the temptation, to which he succumbed in *The Good Natur'd Man,* of paying at least lip-service to the convention of a moral that must somehow emerge out of the play's action, In *The good Natur'd Man,* Goldsmith preached a prudent benevolism, but in She Stoops to *Conquer* if there are any deeper meanings at all, they are perhaps, as Quintena points out, "subtlizations of the obvious". May be it is a comedy of discovery, in so far as Marlow discovers his own identity between the two extremes of his own behaviour. As he recognizes hi own self; he also recognizes the true Kate, who represents health and sanity.

She Stoops to *Conquer* is an improvement upon *The Good Natur'd Man* in many other ways. Its value as pure entertainment overrides the minor flaws sometimes pointed out in its plausibility, structure and characterization. The dialogue is rarely witty as it was in Restoration Comedy of the previous century, but still it is lively and more natural, than Goldsmith's first play. In characterization. Too, the play is well ahead of *The Good Natur'd Man*- Mr. & Mrs. Hardcastle, Kate, Marlow and even Tony Lumpkin are all more consistent and convincing than the characters in the earlier play. Goldsmith triumphs in the sustained dramatic irony that gives shape to the whole plot. Goldsmith strings together a series of Ideal dramatic situations most effectively, without trying to improve the morals of his audience as he does in Honeywood's final speech in *The Good Natur'd Man.* The play seems to succeed eminently in being

what the author aimed it to be- it has been since the day of its first production one of the most entertaining English plays.

Lesson No. 2.2 **Author : AmritJit Singh**

She Stoops To Conquer

NOTES AND ANNOTATIONS

Please study the text of the play carefully with the help of notes and annotations given in this lesson, which supplement those given under notes, pp. 93-102 of the Macmillan edition. You may look up additional words and phrases in any standard dictionary. For the special sense in which a word was used in the eighteenth century, please consult Oxford *English Dictionary* (12 volumes) in an academic library nearest you.

Prologue

Page 2. 1.4 *'I've that within':* i.e., a sorrowful heart.

Page 3. 1.36 *Five Draughts:* See the note on 1.34 in the Macmillan text. Five Draughts are thus five acts of the play.

Act I

Page 5. I. 2.3. Is *there...little:* An early hint. Mrs. Hardcastle gets to move rarely out of the house; no wonder her son succeeded in his trick on her in Act V, Scene 2.

II. 11-12 *Its fopperies... basket:* Mr. Hardcastle is distressed to notice that London fashions and fripperies influence not only people of class but also the rand and file who are compared here to luggage. See note for 1.12 in the Macmillan text.

II. 15-16 *Here. Company:* This is a hint of what is to follow soon. Yung Marlow and Hasting are misled to believe Mr. Hardcastle's house as an inn.

Page 6. 1.43. *quotha:* You say.

1.45 *humour:* fun, play.

Act I

I.48. *I'd...horse pond:* once again an early hint of the trick Ton Lumpkin plays on his mother in Act V, Scene 2.

Page 7 I. 86. *Pewter plater,* metal kitchenware.

Page.8. II.109-10 and... you: Another hint of the late action, because in Act III, dressed in a housewife's gown, Kate poses as a barmaid to win Marlow's love.

Page 10 I. 155. *More than on-even wager:* a strong possibility.

II. 171-72 *But... lover:* She blames herself for counting the chickens before the eggs are hatched. After all she can't have Marlow as a husband unless she can win his love.

Page 11. 1.204. *tete-a-tetes:* private conversation between two people

Act II

Page 12. 1.10. *genus: a* perverted form of "genius".

Page 13. 1.25. *jorum:* a large drinking bowl.

1.35. *spunk:* spark, spirit, mettle. According to Samuel Johnson, "a low and contemptible expression."

Page 14. 1.49. *publicans:* tavemkeepers.

1.51 *Ecod:* used as a mild oath.

1.59 *bastard:* used here to mean "an ordinary man, a low fellow."

Page 16. 1.112. *Cross-grained:* stubborn, contrary.

1. 116. *trapesing:* slatternly

1.121. *booby:* a stupid person, dunce.

Page 17. 1.160. *bolster,* along narrow pillow or cushion.

Page 18. 1.L83. *alderman:* a member of the municipal body.

Act III

Page 20. 1.27. *yeating-*. dialect form of "eating".

1.51. *bauld:* bold.

Page 20. 1.56. *mauns:* a contracted form of "God's wounds', used as an oath or exclamation.

1.69. *I'ze:* dialect form of "I shall".

Page 22. 1.90. assurance: *self-confidence.* Marlow is extremely shy with females of his own class.

Page 23. 11.137-8 *I don't... again:* a hint of later action. Kate decides to appear as a barmaid because Marlow does not look at her face in first

interview between them.

See also page 36-37, II. 552-53; page 52, II. 262-64.

Page 24. 1.158. *Duchesses of Drury-lane:* loose women of pleasure, passing them-selves as persons of rank and position. See also the note in the Macmillan text.

1.171. *Use no ceremony:* not to stand on formality.

Page 25. 1.177. *Liberty Hall:* a place where one may do as one likes.

Page 27. 1.259. *Prince Eugene,* Francis Eugene of Savoy (1663-1736), known as Prince Eugene, was distinguished military commander, and participated in the victories of Blenheim, Oudenrade, etc. He was very popular in England.

1.268. *larder,* room or cupboard where meat and other foods are kept.

Page 30. 1.350. *assiduities:* solicitude, constant personal attentions.

Page 31. 1.382. *Laws of marriage:* Goldsmith had written against the Marriage Bill of 1753 .in the *Citizen of the World,* Letters 72 and 114. But this is generally supposed to refer to the Royal Marriage Act of 1772. See also the note for 1.381 in the Macmillan text.

1.391. *baubles:* showy ornaments, jewellery.

Page 33. 1.438. *pshaw,* pronounced shaw. Used to indicate impatience, irritation. Disapproval or disbelief.

Page 38. 1.589. *Ladies' Memorandum-book:* possibly refers to Ladies *complete Pocket Book,* published in 1761, a kind of diary with forms and tables for accounts and other notes.

1.636-37 *He's... back* to encourage Constance, Mrs. Hardcastle tells her that Tony speaks more fondly of her in her absence.

Page 40. 1.625. *for tin:* dialect form *of fortune.* Used here more to mean *fate* or freedom.

Page 41. 11.690-2 *I have... cry:* another attack on sentimental literature.

Page 42. 1.716. *mum:* dialect form of "man".

Act III

Page 44. 11.10-30. The father and daughter talk at cross-purposes for sometime

with one another about the mistakes of the night.

Page 48. 1.138. *Paste:* A composition of pounded rock-crystal melted with alkaline salts and coloured with metallic oxides; used for making spurious gems.

1.145. *sparklers:* diamonds.

Page 50. 1.86 *trumpery:* any thing of little importance, a mere trifle.

1.199. spark lover.

Pages 50-52. 11.205-245. This is perhaps the funniest section in the play. Tony had earlier suggested that Mrs. Hardcastle Parry Constance's inquiries about the jewels by claiming they have been lost, offering to act as her mother's witness. Now that Mrs. Hardcastle has discovered that mother persisted in her lie.Houmour results from the audience's knowledge that Tony knows better. Here is an example of multilayered dramatic irony.

1.254. *Pimple:* notice the humorous or satirical names given to characters or people off-stage throughout the play.

Mrs. Pedigree, Mrs. Mantap, Mrs. Blackleg, Miss Buckskin, Mrs. Oddfish, Cripplegate, Jack Slang, Tom Twist, Pimple, etc.

Page 54. 1.302. *Know:* notice Kate's pun on no.

Page 56. 1.371. *Rattle:* The name Marlow gives here was generally bestowed upon any impudent, empty-headed character.

1.377. *Do you ever work. Chid ?* The sexual innuendo intended here becomes clear n the conversation which Marlow and Hastings have in Act IV, II. 53-63 (page 60 of the Macmillan text). Such innuendoes were much more frequently employed in the English comedies written in late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

Act IV

Page 58.11-12. *I have... baggage* here is one of the many examples of dramatic irony in the play. Hastings decides to let Marlow continue in his impression that he is at an inn rather than at the Hardcastle house and hence Marlow's action. This time the

joke is on both of them. (The students should locate other examples of dramatic irony in the play).

Page 61. 11. 95-96. *may you...for me:* Hasting's sarcasm here goes unnoticed by Marlow but will have the desired effect on the audience.

Page 62 *Liberty and Fleet-street for ever:* The drunken Jeremy's exclamation is a variation on the popular cry of the day, "Wilkes and liberty."

1.139. *soused:* immersed, pickled.

Page 68. 1.324. *mum:* dialect form of "must".

Page 69. 1.351. *disguised in liquor:* written by a drunken fellow.

1.358. *cramp:* cramped; handwriting which is close, crabbed & indistinct.

Page 70. 1.387. *oaf.* a stupid person.

Page 71. 1.418. *obligation:* favour.

Act V

Page 80. 1.17. *varmint:* a corruption of *vermin,* and often applied contemptuously to troublesome people.

1.28 *By jingo:* used as a mild oath.

Page 81. 1.37 *circumbendibus:* circuit.

Page 82. 1.78. *kept here:* who used to reside at or frequent this spot.

Page 84. 1.156. *Varlefc* a term of contempt: a rascal.

Page 85 1.161. *morality moral.*

Page 86. 1.16 *improves:* looks better.

Page 87. 1.35. *engage:* bet, pledge.

Page 89. 1.105. *luws not taken down* put down, forced to lower my self-respect.

Lesson No. 2.3 **Author : AmritJit Singh**

She Stoops to Conquer

A CRITICAL STUDY OF THE TEXT

Prologue

The prologue of the play was writen by famous actor David Garrick. The main point that David Garrick makes here is that sentimental comedy appeals to tears rather than laughter. It is straining the recognized features of comedy and tragedy. *She Stoops to Conquer* by ignoring sentimentalism may prove to be a healthy antidote for recovery of comedy.

Act I

The two scenes of Act I set the tone for the play and provide numerous hints of the action to follow. In Scene i, we are given a situation that recurs in many late eighteenth century plays-a quarrelsome married couple is introduced, wife and husband representing sharp differences in style and outlook. Mrs. Hardcastle reproaches her of city life. Mr. Hardcastle enjoys the quiet country life and despises the fashions and tastes that his wife and daughter, Kate, are acquiring. Tony Lumpkin, Mrs. Hardcastle's son by her first husband, appears on the scene and goes on to the Three Pigeons Tavern against his mother's protests. Kate Hardcastle is all dressed up when her father informs her that Mr. Marlow, son of Sir Charles Marlow who is an old friend of Mr. Hardcastle, is expected in the evening and that he intends young Marlow as Kate's future husband. Kate is happy to know that Mr. Marlow is young, handsome and generous but is a bit disappointed to hear he is very shy and reserved in the company of the upper class women. Yet she begins to look forward to young Marlow's arrival with excitement.

Act I also introduces another standard element of the contemporary sentimental plays. It would appear that Goldsmith wanted to show that the typical situations of the "weeping comedies" could be handled without their usual sentimentalism. We have a second pair of lovers introduced through the presence of the Constance Neville, Kate's cousin, who already knows of young

Marlow through her lover, Mr. Hastings. Constance tells Kate that Marlow is known to be shy. Among ladies of his own class, he is puzzled but decides to face the situation as it develops. Mrs. Hardcastle would like Constance to marry her son. Tony Lumpkin, hoping in the process to keep Constance's fortunr within the family. But we are told that Tony and Constance have little interest in each other.

Act I, Scene ii, introduces pure laughter. First, we see Tony Lumpkin and his associates at the Three Pigeons Tavern drinking and singing to their fill. Goldsmith uses even this scene to satirize sentimental comedy by letting a bunch of drunkards talk about the dramatic conventions of the day (see p. 13). Later in the scene, we see Tony Lumpkin getting even with his stepfather by sending Marlow and Hastings, who have lost their way, to the Hardcastle house as it were an inn. Thin particular joke becomes the pivot around which the whole plot turns.

Act II

At the Hardcastle house, Mr. Hardcastle is busy instructing his servants regarding duties in anticipation of the two young guests, Marlow and Hastings. On hearing the sound of a coach in the yard, the servants scatter in confusion while the two guests look admiringly upon the Hardcastle house as a superior inn. As the two friends chat about Marlow's curious lack of confidence despite his extensive travel and experience, Mr. Hardcastle comes out to welcome them. The two visitors treat him as the innkeeper and a great deal of homour is created by the situation. While Mr. Hadcastle wants to do everything to make his guests comfortable, the two of them appear rude and demanding. Marlow and Hastings interrupt Mr. Hardcastle's conversation with a request to see the menu for supper. Marlow also insists on making sure that his bed has been aired. Hardcastle is shocked by impudence of his guests.

Soon Hastings discovers through Constance Neville that they are not at an inn but at the Hardcastle house but the two lovers decide not to inform Marlow for fear Marlow might leave immediately if he knows the truth. Hastings introduces Kate Hardcastle to Marlow offering a made-up explanation that the two girls have been visiting in the neighbourhoood and have decided to stop by at the inn while their horses are being changed. Encouraged by the presence of his friend, Marlow barely manages a short conversation with Kate at the end of which Kate seems resolved to win Marlow's love.

Soon Hastings strikes a conversation with Mrs. Hardcastle in which he seems to enjoy himself at her cost because of her ignorant fascination with London fashions and manners. Mrs. Hardcastle is, however, quite charmed by Hastings' manners and apparent flattery. Meanwhile, Constance keeps Mrs. Hardcastle diverted by dissembling great interest in her cousin, Tony Lumpldn. As Constance and Mrs. Hardcastle exit. Tony and Hastings come to a mutual understanding by which Tony will help Hastings elope with Constance and her fortune.

Act III

Hardcastle is convinced that Marlow's reputation for modesty is baseless and yet he is curious to find out how Kate has reacted to the young visitor. As the father and daughter talk for sometime at cross-purposes, they discover that they formed exactly opposite views of the young Marlow, Hardcastle labeling him "a bouncing, swaggering puppy" and Kate commenting on his respectful bow and stammering voice. The two decide to wait until they know more, although Hardcastle is convinced he is unlikely to make any surprising discoveries regarding Marlow's character.

With the aid of a duplicate key he possesses, Tony steals Constance's jewels from Mrs. Hardcastle's bureau and hands them over to Hastings for safekeeping. When he finds Constance pleading with Mrs. Hardcastle for the jewels, Tony mischievously, suggests to his mother that she should declare the jewels lost. Later, when Mrs. Hardcastle finds that the jewels have actually disappeared, Tony thoroughly enjoys her discomfiture.

Assured by her maid that Marlow does not recognize her, Kate decides to pretend to be a barmaid and manages to draw Marlow's attention. Marlow exhibits an aggressive lack of inhibition and is trying to seize Kate's hand when Mr. Hardcastle enters the room. As Marlow hastily withdraws, Hardcastle reaproaches her daughter for keeping him in dark about Marlow's behaviour towards her. Kate promises to show Marlow in his true character within an hour as Mr. Hardcastle angrily threatens to turn his young guest out of his house.

Act IV

On finding out about the expected arrival of sir Charles Marlow, young Marlow's father, at the Hardcastle house, Hastings expedites his plans of elopement with Constance. But things go wrong. Marlow, still thinking he is at an inn,

deposits the casket of jewels which Hasting had given him for safe keeping with Mrs. Hardcastle mistaking her for the landlady.

Mr. Hardcastle, meanwhile, loses all patience when he discovers that his guests and servants are all getting very drunk. He is further amazed to find that the servants are doing so with instructions from their master. Marlow cannot understand why an innkeeper should object since the servants are only adding to the bill by their drinking. Hardcastle, despite his promise to Kate, decides not to suffer such insolence any longer, and asks Marlow to leave immediately. When Mr. Hardcastle threatens to inform young Marlow's father of his behaviour, Marlow begins to suspect the mistake he has made. Kate, who is passing by, confirms his error and Marlow decides it is best for him to leave the house. Kate seeing that Marlow is really in love with her, decides that he shall not leave the house unless she has explained the situation to her father.

There is further complication when a letter from Hastings to Tony is intercepted by Mrs. Hardcastle which Tony gives his mother to read because Tony cannot read. With the elopement plan of Constance and Hastings already exposed, Mrs. Hardcastle decides to shift Constance to the house of Mrs. Pedigree, Constance's other aunt. In the middle of this confusion Marlow walks in, insisting on explanation for Hastings' failure to inform him that they were at the Hardcastle's house *and* not at an inn. Hastings, Marlow and Constance all blame their problems on Tony who still promises to help Constance and Hastings achieve their objective of elopement.

Act V

As the scene opens, we find Hastings questioning Diggory about Constance's departure with Mrs. Hardcastle. Sir Charles Marlow has arrived in the house and chats in good humour with Mr. Hardcastle about the joke. Tony has played on all of them. When Marlow appears to apologize for his conduct Mr. Hardcastle assumes that there are no more complications regarding the proposed matrimonial arrangement between Kate and Marlow. Therefore, he listens with disbelief and amazement when Marlow denies that anything other than a stiff formal interview has passed between him and Kate.

B.A. PART-II **English Literature (Elective)**

Semester-III **English Literature from Chaucer to the 18th Century and Study of Drama**

Lesson No. 2.4 **Author : AmritJit Singh**

She Stoops to Conquer

TOPICS AND CHARACTERS FOR DISCUSSION

History of its First Production

As in the case of *The Good Natur'd Man,* Goldsmith had a hard time persuading Coleman to produce his second play. He had almost finished the play in 1771, bringing together a number of old fashioned situations for effective drama. The main situation around which the plot turned was based on an experience of Goldsmith. Once when still at school. Goldsmith rode up to the best house in Ardagh, called for the landlord's company over a bottle of wine at supper and for a hot cake at breakfast in the morning, he found, when he asked for the bill, that the best house was Squire Featherstone's and not the inn for which he mistook it. In the play, we see Tony Lumpkin playing a joke on everyone by sending Marlow and Hastings to Mr Hardcastle says Tony played on him was played on Goldsmith by Lord Clare's daughter. The joke involves Tony's fastening Mr. Hardcastle's wig to the chair (see p. 6 of the Macmillan text). The other situations in the appeared quite frequently in contemporary plays (see 1.4 and 1.5).

In early 1773, Coleman returned the manuscript of the play to Goldsmith with some reasonable criticisms and promised to consider the play favourably for production in the spring. Goldsmith then supmitted the manuscript to Garrick who hestitated to accept it for his Drury Lane theater. Johnson, always a Goldsmith's friend, intervened and consulted both the managers. Johnson and other friends exerted pressure on George Colman, who was, as Johnson later phrased it, "prevailed at last by much solicitation, nay, a kind of force", to produce the play at Covent Garden, Garrick, who had not yet passed a judgement on the play, was happy to be rid of the responsibility to dispute its merits first with the author and then with champions of the sentimental drama.

Throughout these weeks, many friends of the dramatist remained actively

concerned about the play's production details. Johnson was especially interested. On January 22, 1773, Johnson wrote in a letter to Boswell: "Dr. Goldsmith has a comedy which is expected in the spring. No name is yet given it. The chief diversion arises from a stratagem by which a lover is made to mistake his future father-law's house for an inn. This, you see, borders on force. The dialogue is quick and gay and the incidents are so prepared as riot to seem improbable." Johnson and a number of other friends were confident that the comedy would be received well, but since Colman remained unconvinced, Goldsmith's friends were anxious to help in every way possible.

Some of them worried about the Prologue and the name of the play. "We are all in labour," wrote Johnson, "for a name to Goldy's play." What now stands as a subtitle, "The Mistakes of Night," was the original title fixed on; *The Old House, a New Inn* was suggested as an alternative; Sir Joshua Reynolds suggested The Belle's strategam. For some days before production. Goldsmith called it "The novel; or the "Mistakes of a Night", using 'novel' as a synonym for "fiction' or invention'. Goldsmith himself provided the present title, possibly form remembering Dryden's line- "But kneels to Goldsmith, he sensed a change of taste and expected the public to welcome *She Stoops to Conquer* amidst all the sentimental plays that were being produced at the time.

At Convent Garden, Colman's utter lack of enthusiasm proved contagious. Actors Smith and Woodward refused the parts of Marlow and Tony Lumpkin respectively and substitutes had to be found. When some friends advised postponement. Goldsmith responded with determination to go ahead with production plans: "I should sooner than my play were dammed by bad players than merely saved by good acting" Even the Epilogue caused trouble among the actors. Arthur Murphy had promised to write an Epilogue, but he sent instead "The outline of an Epilogue" to be sung by Mrs. Catley (who was to play Constance Neville). On hearing this, Mrs. Bulkley (Kate Hardcastle in the play) threatened to walk out. Goldsmith tried to solve the problem by writing "a quarrelling Epilogue" between Catley and Bulkley, but then Mrs. Catley refused. So Goldsmith had to work once more to prepare an acceptable Epilogue. In fact, by this time, Goldsmith was so tired that he had no great hopes for the success of the play.

Many of Goldsmith's friends, including Joshua Reynolds and his sister, dramatist Arthur Murphy, Mrs. Homeck and her two daughters, attended the rehearsals. On March 15, 1773- the day of the first performance-Goldsmith's

friends rallied around him, ready to help the play to success with the audiences. The bookseller Kearsley offered to send two or three of his employees to sit in the galleries and informed him that he was going with a group of friends into the pit. These friends perhaps included Sir Johnson Reynolds, Richard Cumberland and others. It is generally believed that these friends placed themselves at strategic points in the theatre and acted during the first performance as a claque, leading the laughter. In *his* Memoirs, Cumberland has given what is now recognized as an exaggerated account of the first evening (see p. xiv of the Macmillan text for some details).

It is probably reasonable that Goldsmith was so nervous about the outcome of the first performance that he stayed away from theatre that evening. He was found santering in the Mall but was persuaded to go the theatre where he might be needed for some last-minute changes. According to a generally accepted version of the event, Goldsmith entered the stagedoor in the middle of Act V, when there was a hiss at the improbability of Mrs. Hardcastle supposing herself forty miles off, although she was within forty yards of her own house. "What is that?" says Goldsmith. "Pshaw! Doctor" says Colman, "don't be fearful of squib, when we have been sitting almost these two hours upon a barrel of gunpowder." Colman by that time must have known better about the reaction of the audiences and was obviously enjoying himself at the cost of the nerve-strung Goldsmith.

Although Goldsmith seems to have had no hard feelings about Colman's criticism or even the jest Colman played on him, many of Goldsmith's friends and supporters took Colman to task, attributing Colman's behaviour to extreme jealousy. Prior informs us that the warfare against Colman in newspapers was carried on so persistently that Colman wrote angrily to Goldsmith about the matter before he fled to Bath to take shelter against the annoyance in London.

The play, of course, was a great success. Goldsmith wrote to Cradock shortly after the first performance: The play has met with a success much beyond your expectations or mine." There were twelve performances before the end of May including two command performances for the King and the Queen, five during the summer at Haymarket and eleven at Covent Garden- later in 1773-74. For the three "author's benefit" night, Goldsmith received well over £ 500, as compared with the £ 340 he has made, with some good luck, from *The Good Natur'd Man.* In addition. Goldsmith was able to settle an old debt with the

bookseller Frances Newberry by offering him the publishing rights. The play was published with minor revisions on March 26, 1773.

The story of the play's success spread far beyond London. Boswell, in Edinburgh, learnt of it and wrote Goldsmith an exuberant letter of congratulations. Besides, the 1773 reviews were generally favourable. *The Morning Chronicle* for March 16, 1773, set forth the difficulties faced by the play and praised it for rejecting the prevailing taste of the time in offering "a true comic picture" that provoked pure laughter as comedy properly should. As expected, Johnson's approval was unqualified: "I know of no comedy for many years that has so much exhilarated an audience, that has answered so much the great need of comedy-making an audience merry" *(Life,* April 29, 1773). The London Magazine had reversed its earlier position in supporting the laughing comedy and although it found fault with She Stoops to *Conquer* on various counts, it welcomed it as a stroke aimed at "that monster sentimental comedy." Even a hostile critic like Horace Walpole (see Macmillan text, p. 105) was forced to admit that the situation made one laugh. *The Gentleman's Magazine* for April described the play as "truly comic" and added that "the humour is irresistible, and pleases in the closet as in the theatre". Readers were as enthusiastic as theatre-goers: six thousand copies were believed to have been sold within a year of publication and newspapers recorded many tributes to Goldsmith's genius, applauding his victory over the sentimental comedy.

Plot and Structure

If the structure of the play is seen in terms of its action or plot which follows causal and sequential pattern, many readers would declare She *Stoops to Canquer* a defective play citing many instances of implausible incidents in the play. For example, one wonders about Marlow's continued mistaking of the Hardcastle mansion for an inn, or his inability to tell a barmaid from a lady of rank. Again, one notices that although Tony Lumpkin is seen displaying his Latin in Act I, he is shown practically illiterate in Act IV. Many readers today, like some members of the audience at the first production of the play on March 15, 1773, find it difficult to believe that Mrs. Hardcastle could so easily be taken in by Tony Lumpkin in Act V supposing herself forty miles away from the Hardcastle house.

It is easy to point out these anomalies, if one applies the realistic standard,

*Ford, Boris, "Oliver Goldsmith in from Diyden to Johnson. Pelican Guide to English

but the broad comic effect of the play easily subsumes these minor defects. These are easily forgiven by the theatre-goer who is willing to suspend belief and enjoy the natural and speedy action of this comedy. Even in days when to laugh loudly was to violate the neo-classic standard of decorum, the play drew the audiences to hearty laughter. The play celebrates the anti-sentimental tradition of comedy and is construed to make people laugh than to shed the unwholesome tears. The play succeeds admirably in its primary objective of making people laugh themselves out of folly

In the initial stages of the action, folly and illusion dominate the action but they are part of a contrived plot which shapes an orderly parable of disorder out of chaos. The plot is involved and comical and uses life as the source and substance to finally allow good sense and good nature to escape the domination of human folly. As Marlow begins to see things for what they are, he recognizes his true nature as also Kate's. In the subplot, the machinations of Mrs. Hardcastle are effectively defeated by the combined will of Tony Lumpkin, Neville Constance and Hastings. Yet the play is not overtly anti-sentimental, because it makes its points against sentimentalism more by ignoring the sentimental potential of the given situations than by using any polemic devices. The main themes of the plot are the following:

(1) The trick which Tony plays on Marlow and Hastings in direction them to his stepfather's house as if it were a superior inn, and Mr. Hardcastle's behaviour when they arrive. This trick shapes the rest of the plot.

(2) Marlow's courtship of Kate, and her conquest of him in the guise of a barmaid. Hence the title of the play.

(3) The elopement plan of Hastings and Constance Neville; the failure of that plan and the removal of the jewels by Tony and their subsequent restoration to Mrs. Hardcastle by Marlow, who believes her to be the 'landlady."

(4) The final trick played by Tony on his mother in driving her and Constance about the countryside in the dark and finally bringing them home again. As pointed out in the annotations (see Lessons 33), Goldsmith introduces some of these themes early in the play through some masterly strokes of dramatic art. For example, the main trick of the house being mistaken for an inn is carried of rather well because

* These books are specially recommended

Mr. Hardcastle's temperament fits excellently with his stepson's jest. We are similarly prepared for the other tricks played on Marlow and Mrs. Hardcastle. In fact, characters and situations throughout the play are coloured by sharp sense of dramatic irony and Tony's crude practical jokes over both the circumstances of the situation and the superior intelligence of other characters, making everyone laugh heartily at their folly.

Characterization

The characters in She *Stoops to Conquer* may appear, at first, like stock characters in a nonsensical farce, but as the action of the play begins to unfold and make dent on our consciousness, we realize that the characters are not at all superficial and that their lasting appeal is partly explained by careful manipulation on Goldsmith's part. First of all, compared with the insipid and sententious characters of contemporary plays, Goldsmith's characters are natural and full of life. The two heroines, Kate and Constance, are two charming women and their lovers, although constrasted in manner, are more than stage lovers. Tony is inimitable in his inventiveness at jest and play, and Mr. SB Mrs. Hardcastle, although type characters, are individual enough in the roles they have in the action of the play. The continuing popularity of She *Stoops to Conquer* lies considerably in the well-matched and inter-related use of character, situation and dialogue (see further comment under- "Dialogue").

Marlow

Marlow is a young, intelligent, handsome and generous man from a reputed family. For some unexplained reason, he is bashful and reserved with females of his own class, although free and uninhibited with women of lower ranks.

He unwittingly acts rude to Mr. Hardcastle, but is otherwise respectful to elders and generally bound by custom and tradition. He is respectful and devoted to his father. He is deeply troubled when his genuine love for Kate Hardcastle dresses as a barmaid conflicts with social norm.

Marlow is a good friend. He is ready to help Hastings in every way and expects Hastings to reciprocate that confidence. He is full of good sense and understanding in his relations with all others. He manages to reconcile the contradictions in his behaviour when Kate Hardcastle helps him to overcome his fears in her double role.

Kate Hardcastle

Kate is a lively and charming heroine, not unlike the heroines of Shakespeare's comedies. She is independent and decisive, although she shows inability in adjusting to her father's bias against modern fashions. She gets puzzled by the contradictory descriptions of Marlow but makes her own judgement of his character and act accordingly. Having fallen in love with Marlow, she is determined to help him overcome his shyness with ladies of his own class. Her plan to achieve her purpose shows her wit and intelligence.

Kate is a good friend and enjoys the confidence of Constance Neville, and like her, uses tact in her dealings with other people.

Mr. Hardcastle

Mr. Hardcastle is a pleasant, old fashioned country gentleman. Tony's trick on Marlow and Hastings in Act I is well-balanced by Mr. Hardcastle's character who believes in doing his utmost to make his guests comfortable.

Mr. Hardcastle is a genuine and kind human being. He is proud of his longstanding friendship with Charles Marlow and Kate. He is quite tolerant of his wife's whims and moods ad means well even towards Tony. He is very fond of his daughter and wants to do best to make her happy. His good sense is well brought out in his "forget and forgive" attitude to Marlow once he understands the situation created by Tony's joke.

Mrs. Hardcastle

Mrs Hardcastle is a moody, vain, empty-headed woman. In all her dealings, she suffers from an almost complete lack of commonsense. She is fond of London fashions but knows little about these fashions and even less about London. She always dreams of a visit to London and is very eager for any kind of London news.

Her attitude to Constance Neville and her jewels brings out her meanness, greed and obstinacy. The care she lavishes on her son. Tony, shows a strong possessive streak in her character which Tony resists and fights. She is a vain woman and is easily taken in by Hastings' flattery.

Tony Lumpkin

Tony is the most humorous character in the play and the centre of its hilarious plot. Having been spoiled by the lavish attentions of his mother, he is without education and other desired attributes of his class. And since always others

censure him for his habits and manners, he reacts, by inventing practical jokes to prove his superiority over them. He is the true son of his father. Squire Lumpkin, who was unmatched "for winding a straight horn or beating a thicket for a hare or wench." Tony, too, is happy with his boisterous company at the tavern, his horses and dogs and Betsy Bouncer.

Although admittedly selfish, he makes a somewhat admirable gesture in assisting Constance and Hastings to elope. Of course, in the process he becomes "his own man again." In Tony Lumpkin, Goldsmith achieves a delicate balance avoiding some prevalent stereotypes on stage. It has been note that the whole mood of the play might have been spoilt if Tony had been held up as an example of bad behaviour or finished as a reformed character.

Constance Neville

Constance has charm and vivacity, and like Kate, she has tact, wit and determination to achieve her objectives. She is in love with Hastings and they plan to elope with Tony's help. She shows her practical sense in not wanting to leave the Hardcastle house without getting her jewels back from Mrs. Hardcastle,

Mr. Hastings

Hastings is an amiable and handsome young man with talents enough to win the attentions of any woman. He is a good friend and decides not to inform Marlow about the joke played on them by Tony, fearing Marlow might leave the Hardcastle house before Kate has won him over in love.

Hastings is in sincere love with Constance and carefully plans their elopement. He is so eager to settle down with Constance that he is even ready to forego her fortune.

Dialogue in the Play

The dialogue In She *Stoops to Conquer is* drastically different from the dialogue in other plays of the period, because it ruthlessly excluded the fine sentiments and moral aphorisms that characters in these play often utter without any direct bearing on their actual behaviour. In fact, the dialogue in Goldsmith's comedy is much more natural than even the dialogue in relation to character and event. The dialogue not only catches our ear-as it does, say, in Sheridan's *The School For Sandal* but it also leads us into the verities of character. The main effort is to have character and dialogue move hand-in-hand and so there is no sign of aesthetic or wooden effects in the dialogue.

Humour in *She Stoops to Conquer*

There is a great deal of humour in She *Stoops to Conquer* and there is a wide variety of devices used to provoke laughter. There is mostly genial and kindly humour that makes one laugh at human folly, not out of malice or spleen not with a conscious aim to reform, but simply for joy and fun. Goldsmith feared that if we banished humour from the stage, we might ourselves be deprived of the art of laughing. So as he offers us broad and "low" humour in the song and noise Tony and his companions create at the Three Pigeons Tavern, he also lets us delight in the many instances of mistaken place & identity throughout the play. There is sparkling wit and repartee in the exchanges between Marlow and disguised Kate. Further, one is struck, for example, with the compounded dramatic irony of scenes such as the one in which Tony enjoys himself thoroughly by pretending ignorance when Mrs. Hardcastle is very upset about the actual loss of Constance's jewels.

Although the genial humour of the comedy allows little room for scathing satire, there are many instances of mild satire in the play. For example, "gentility" is under attack in the Tavern scene. Goldsmith is obviously parodying parallel scenes in contemporary plays in offering us the "sober, sentimental interview" between Kate and Marlow. In Mrs. Hardcastle's vain and ignorant fascination with London and its fashions, the artificialities of city life and their country-bred imitations are being shot at. There is, also in Tony Lumpkin, a complete reversal of the sentimental son that frequently appeared in stage comedies during the late eighteenth century.

Many critics have charged that She Stoops to *Conquer* is a "low comedy" or farce. While it is true that many incidents in the play are farcical and that Tony is a "low" comic creation, the natural consistency of characters and the absence of any slapstick buffoonery in the play raise the play above the level of a geniune farce. And although the humour is never as sophisticated or artificial as in the Restoration comedy, it is. natural and genial and sunny enough to justify the description of "laughing comedy" for the play.

Lesson No. 2.5 **Author : AmritJit Singh**

She Stoops to Conquer

CONCLUDING REMARKS

She stoops to Conquer: Its Appeal Today

It is true that its first appearance, She *Stoops to Conquer* was a calculated risk since it attempted to reverse the trends of dramatic taste that dominated in the eighteenth-century England. However, its appeal to readers and audience even today is perhaps explained by the same elements that accounted for its tremendous success when first produced. The agelessness of the play lies mostly in its capacity to make us laugh. The broad humour provoked by its primary plot device (Tony's trick in Act I) and the dramatic irony that consistently characterizes most of its scenes remain major sources of entertainment to this day.

She Stoops to Conquer remains one of the only two plays-the other being Sheridan's *The School for Scandal-from* the Age of Johnson to continue to engage modern audience. The Covent Garden theatre added it immediately to his repertory and it was extremely popular on stage throughout the nineteenth century in both England and the United States. In the twentieth century too, it has been produced very frequently all over the world. The play is not burdened with sententious statements and moral aphorisms that offend modem sensibility in the other plays of the period. Equally important is the fact that the play does not preach; as in Shakespeare's best comedies. There is no attempt here to drive home a lesson, no didactic intention. Further, its humour is not strongly satirical or sarcastic; it is genial and unmalicious, aimed more at laugher than at correction or reform. And yet the humour of She *Stoops to Conquer is* vigorous and extraordinary. Tony Lumpkin has been a favourite with theatre audiences since the first evening of the play's production.

One may point to the play's rural setting as an additional reason for its continuing appeal. Country life and attitudes of country been change less quickly than urban ones. For example, the scene where Mr Hardcastle lectures

his servants regarding their duties and manners has always caused roars of laughter. But more than its rural setting, the play's strong basis in ordinary human nature and commonsense remains a mojor source of its continuing appeal.

A Chronological Table of Major Events in Oliver Goldsmith's Career

1728 Novemer 10. Born at Ballymahon, Country Longford, Ireland.

1744 Enters Trinity College, Dublin as a sizar.

1747 Father dies. Takes part in a college riot and flees.

1749 Takes his B.A. degree.

1751 Rejected for only orders by the Bishop of Elphin.

1752 Starts as a law student but loses all at gambling. Goes to Edinburgh to Study medicine.

1754 Goes to Leyden, Holland for further medical studies.

1755 Leaves Leyden and travels in France, Gemany, Switzerland, Italy, etc.

1756 Returns to Dover and works in London as actor, usher, proofreader, poor physician etc.

1757 Enters into contract with Griffiths as book reviewer for *The Monthly Magazine* in April and leaves in September.

1758 Plans to go to South India first as medical doctor and then as hospital mate.

1759 *Enquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe.*

1762 *The Citizen of the World.*

1764 *The Traveller.*

1765 Essays *by Mr. Goldsmith.*

1766 *The Vicar of Wakefieid (written 1761); Poems for Young Ladies.*

1768 *The Good Natur'd Man.*

1770 The Deserted Village.

1773 She *Stoops to Conquer.*

1774 *April 4, Died.*

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Editions of 'She Stoops to *Conger.* *

Besides the Macmillian text edited by Robert Hessing which is available in both hardcover and paperback editions, the student may consult the following editions: *She *Stoops to Conquer,* ed. Arthur Friedman. Delhi: Oxford Univ. Press, 1976. Available in paperback. Includes a 19 page useful introduction.

The Vicar of Wakefieid and She Stoops to Conqur. Edited with a biographical note and Introduction by R.H.W. Dillard, New York: Harper and Row, 1965. Paperback 165 pp.

The Plays of Oliver Goldsmith together with the Vicar to Wakefieid. Ed. With notes by C.E. Double London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1909. 520 pp. Besides Glossary and Notes, it includes a-?-page note (pp. 499-502) on the first production of the play.

Other Works by Oliver Goldsmith

The Vicar of Wakefield is available in many inexpensive editions besides the one mentioned above.

For The Good *Natur'd Man,* see the Oxford edition of plays edited by Doble or Friendman's edition of Collected Works.

For Goldsmith's poem, consult Friendman's edition of *Collected Works,* or use *The Complete Poetical Works of Oliver Goldsmith,* edited with an introduction and notes by Austin Dobson, London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1906, 278pp. Many Goldsmith poems, especially, *The Deserted Village,* are available in numerous anthologies of English poetry. Critical *Works on Oliver Goldsmith and "She Stoops io Conquer'.*

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*Quintana, Ricardo, Oliver Goldsmith, London: Weindenfield and Nicolson, 1957 (Chapter VIII on She *Stoops to Conquer)*

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The more ambitious stundent may consult the Bibliographical Notes appended to Quintana's book, pp. 197-204, or the latest edition of *The Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature.*

Essay on the Theater; or A Comparison Between laughing and Sentimental Comedy

by

Oliver Goldsmith

The students should read the following discussion carefully to get acquainted with Goldsmith's ideas on comedy that lay behind his dramatic works. *The Good Natur'd-Man* and She *Stoops to Conquer.*

The theatre, like all other amusements, has its fashions and its prejudices, and when satiated with its excellence mankind begins to mistake change for improvement. For some years, tragedy was the reigning entertainment, but of late it has entirely given way to comedy, and our best efforts are now exerted in these lighter kinds of composition The pompous train, the swelling phrase, and the unnatural rant are displaced for that natural portrait of human folly and frailty, of which all are judges because all have set for the picture.

But as in describing nature, it is presented with a double face, either of mirth or sadness. Our modern writers find themselves at a loss as to what to copy from, and it is now debated whether the exhibition of human distress is likely to afford the mind more entertainment than that of human absurdity. Comedy is defined by Aristotle to be a picture of the frailties of the lower part of mankind, distinguishes it from tragedy, which is an

exhibition of the misfortunes of the great. When comedy, therefore, ascends to produce the characters of princes or generals upon the stage, it is out of its walk, since low life and middle life are entirely its object. The principal question, therefore, is whether in describing low or middle life, an exhibition of its follies be not preferable to a detail of its calamities. Or in other words, which deserves the preference, the weeping sentimental comedy so much in fashion at present or the laughing and even low comedy which seems to have been last exhibited by Vanbrugh and Cibber?

If we apply to authorities, all the great masters in the dramatic art have but one opinion. Their rule is, that as tragedy displays the calamities of the great, so comedy should excite our laughter by ridiculously exhibiting the follies of the lower part of mankind. Boileau, one of the best modem critics, asserts that comedy will not admit of tragic distress.

Le, comique, ennemi des soupirs et des pleurs. N'admet point dans ses vers de tragiques doleurs.

Nor is this rule without the strongest foundation in nature, as the distresses of the ordinary by no means affect us so strongly as the calamities of the great. When tragedy exhibits to us some great men fallen from his height and struggling with want and adversity we feel his situation in the same manner as we suppose he himself must have felt and out pity is increased in proportion to the height from whence he fell. On the contrary, we do not so strongly sympathize with one born in humorous circumstances and encountering accidental distress, so that while we melt for Belisarius we scarce give halfpence to the beggar who accosts us in the street. The one has our pity, the other our contempt. Distress, therefore, is the proper object of tragedy, since the great excite our pity their fall, but not equally so of comedy, since the actors employed in it are originally so mean that toey sink but little by their fall.

Since the first origin of the stage, tragedy and comedy have run in distinct channels and never till of late encroached upon the provinces of each other. Terence, who seems to have made the nearest approaches, yet always judiciously stops short before he comes to the downright pathetic; and yet he is even reproached by Caesar for wanting the vis comica. All the other comic writers of antiquity aim only at rendering folly or vice

ridiculous, but never exalt their characters into buskined pomp or make what Voltaire humorously calls a *Tradesman's Tragedy.*

Yet, not with standing this weight of authority and the universal practice of former ages, a new species of dramatic composition has been introduced under the name of sentimental, comedy in which the virtues of private life are exhibited rather than the vices exposed, and the distresses rather than the faults of mankind make our interest in the piece. These comedies have had of late great success, perhaps from their novelty and also from their flattering every man in his favourite foible. In these plays almost all the characters are good and exceedingly generous, they are lavish enough of their tin money on the stage, and though they want humour have abundance of sentiment and feeling. If they happen to have faults or foibles, the spectator is taught not only to pardon but to applaud them, in consideration of the goodness of their hearts, so that folly instead of being ridiculed is commended, and the comedy aims at touching our assions without the power of being truly pathetic; in this manner we are likely to lose one great source of entertainment on the stage, for while the comic poet is invading the province of the tragic muse, he leaves her lovely sister quite neglected. Of this however he is in noway solicitous, as he measures his fame by this profit.

But it will be said that the theatre is formed to amuse mankind and that it matters little, (if this end be answered,) by what means it is obtained. If spectators find delight in weeping in a comedy, it would be cruel to abridge them in that or any other innocent pleasure. If those pieces are denied the name of comedies, yet call them by any other name, and if they are delightful they are good. Their success, it will be said, is a mark of their merit, -and it is only abridging our happiness to deny us an inlet to amusement.

These objections, however, are rather specious than solid. It is true that amusement is a great object of the theatre, and it will be allowed that these sentimental pieces do often amuse us; but the question is, whether the true comedy would not amuse us more. The question is, whether a character supported throughout a piece with its ridicule still attending would not give us more delight than this species of bestard tragedy, which only is applauded because it is new.

A friend of mine, who was-sitting unmoved at one of these sentimental pieces, was asked how he could be so indifferent. "Why, truly", says he, "as the hero is but a tradesman, it is indifferent to me whether he be turned out of his counting-house on Fish-street Hill, since he will still have enough left to open shop in St. Giles's."

The other objection is as ill-grounded; for though we should give these pieces another name, it will not mend their efficacy. It will continue a kind of mulish production with all the effects of its opposite parents and marked with sterility. If we are permitted to make comedy weep, we have an equal right to make tragedy laugh, and to let down in blank verse the jests and repartees of all the attendants in a funeral procession.

But there is one argument in favour of sentimental comedy which will keep it on the stage in spite of all that can be said against it. It is, of all others, the most easily written. Those abilities that can hammer out a novel are sufficient for the production of a sentimental comedy. It is only sufficient to raise the characters a little, to deck out the hero with a ribband or give the heroine a title, then to put an insipid dialogue without character or humour into their mouths, give them. mighty good hearts, very fine clothes, furnish a new set of scenes, make a pathetic scene or two, with a sprinkling of tender melancholy conversation through the whole, and there is no doubt that all the ladies will cry and all the gentlemen applaud.

Humour, at present seems to be departing from the stage, and it will soon' happen that our comic players will have nothing left for it, but a fine coat and a song. It depends upon the audience whether they will actually drive those poor merry creature from the stage, or sit at a play as gloomy as at the Tabernacle. It is not easy to recover an art when once lost; and it would be but a just punishment that, when by our being too fastidious,- we have banished humour from the stage, we should ourselves be deprived of the art of laughing.