IDENTITY AND DISGUISE IN *SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER*

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Introduction

The study of drama as belles lettres too often leads the world of literary criticism to overlook a deceptively simple fact: plays are meant to be performed. Although such a remark may seem puerile, we nevertheless forget occasionally that an audience experiences a play in a manner quite different from a reader. The presence on stage of settings and costumes does much to create an illusion of time and place for the audience; the reader must rely upon stage directions and dialogue to recreate the illusion within his own mind. Since settings and costumes enhance a play by lending it an air of dramatic credibility, critics of literature must be sensitive to anything within the text of a play that suggests what goes into its production upon the stage. This is especially true when the critic assesses plot, for a plot that seems improbable to a reader may in fact become probable when it is embellished with appropriate settings and costumes. Goldsmith's She Stoops to Conquer is a case in point. It is interesting to see the differences in a review of the play based on a critic's actual viewing of its performance and the criticism of it based on its published form. Here is part of a review published in the Morning Chronicle of 16 March 1773, written by a critic who attended the debut of She Stoops to Conquer at Covent Garden: She Stoops to Conquer "is founded on a plot exceedingly probable and fertile; each act contains a great deal of natural business and incident; the characters

are, for the most part, entirely original; they are well drawn, highly finished, and admirably supported from the Ist to the last scene of the piece."[1] When She Stoops to Conquer was published, however, another critic offered the following remarks in the London Magazine for March of 1773: "This comedy is not ill calculated to give pleasure in the representation; but when we regard it with a critical eye, we find it to abound with numerous inaccuracies. The fable . . . is twisted into incidents not naturally arising from the subject, in order to make things meet; and consistency is repeatedly violated for the sake of humour."[2] The disparity of opinion about the probability of plot, the idea that Marlow's confusion about the nature of things could be so long sustained, invites the obvious question: why did the play in performance seem to the critic for the Morning Chronicle to possess likeliness of plot whereas the critic for the London Magazine, who judged the play from its text, found the plot "twisted"?

The answer lies, I believe, in Goldsmith's management of settings and costumes. Although he came to write plays very late in his career, Goldsmith shows evidence of his strong interest in drama and stage techniques as early as An Enquiry into the Present state of Polite Learning in Europe, first published in 1759. In Chapter VII of An Enquiry, Goldsmith argues that every country and generation should have its own standards of criticism rather than rely on universal standards, and he argues this in part on the basis of drama, rather as Dryden does in An Essay of Dramatick Poesy. Characters on the French stage cannot be compared to those on the English stage, says Goldsmith, because "The French pictures . . . of life and manners are immediately allowed to be just, because foreigners are acquainted with the models from whence they are

copied. The Marquis of Moliere strikes all Europe. Sir John Falstaff, with all the merry men of Eastcheap, are entirely of England, and please the English alone" (I, 293-294). The implication is that Goldsmith is emphasizing naturalness and realism in drama: English dramatic characters are based on English models and thus seem real to an English audience, but to foreigners they seem artificial since foreign theatre-goers are unfamiliar with English ways of life. It follows, then, that the role of actors, settings, and costumes is to make a dramatist's work more natural and realistic to its audience. In Chapter XII of An Enquiry, Goldsmith questions "whether we are to be entertained with the actor or the poet, with fine sentiments, or painted canvas, or whether the dancer, or the carpenter, be constituted master of the ceremonies" (I, 323-24). The answer, for Goldsmith, is the dramatist; the stage effects should merely enhance the realism of the poet's work. "As the poet's merit is often not sufficient to introduce his performance among the public with proper dignity, he is often obliged to call in the assistance of decoration and dress to contribute to this effect," says Goldsmith. "By this means a performance, which pleases on the stage, often instructs in the closet, and for one who has seen it acted, hundreds will be readers" (I, 324). Yet Goldsmith was conscious of the difference between the effect of a play on an audience and its effect on a reader, as An Enquiry shows. "While we are readers," Goldsmith maintains, "every moral sentiment [of drama] strikes us in all its beauty, but the love scenes are frigid, tawdry, and disgusting" (I, 324). When not presented on the stage, the love scenes become tepid and, being devoid of the vitality, do not incite the reader to vice.

The first issue of The Bee, also published in 1759, contains "Remarks on our Theatres." As in An Enquiry, Goldsmith stresses naturalness and realism as the important things in dramatic productions. "The magnificence of our theatres," Goldsmith says, "is far superior to any others in Europe where plays only are acted," and he appreciates "The great care our performers take in painting for a part, their exactness in all the minutiae of dress and other little scenical properties. . ." (I, 361). However, there remain some theatrical practices that tend to break the dramatic illusion: "As, for instance, spreading a carpet punctually at the beginning of the death scene, in order to prevent our actors from spoiling their cloaths; this immediately apprizes us of the tragedy to follow; for laying the cloth is not a more sure indication of dinner than laying the carpet of bloody work at Drury-Lane. Our little pages also with unmeaning faces, that bear up the train of a weeping princess, and our aukward lords in waiting, take off much from her distress. . ." (I, 362).

Because Goldsmith appreciated the vital role of good acting and appropriate settings and costumes in making a play come alive for the audience, it is probable that he relied upon these stage effects to help make the action of She Stoops to Conquer appear natural and believable. Surely the presence of settings and costumes helps make plausible the idea that Marlow could be deceived about the nature of things for so long, for they help the audience, especially one of the eighteenth-century, to understand how two citified travelers from London could be set adrift in the unfamiliar world of the Country and so mistake a Country gentleman for an innkeeper. Although Tony sets the plot in motion by telling Marlow and Hastings that the Hardcastle mansion is an inn,

Hardcastle, who does not observe the proprieties of fashion dictated by London, clearly does not fit in with what Marlow and Hastings, and the audience as well, conceive a gentleman to be. "One of Goldsmith's central themes, in fact," notes Ricardo Quintana, "derives from the idea of the traveler. The journey from home into the world of unfamiliar sights and experiences exposes the traveler to repeated shocks. Accustomed judgments and values, assumed to be universal, are brought into question."[3] Richard Helgerson notes in a recent article that Goldsmith's earlier works are largely concerned with the conflict between the world of the City and the world of the Country; the world of the City is characterized by its dynamic changes whereas the world of the Country remains static.[4] This holds true for _She Stoops to Conquer_, and the conflict between these two worlds provides the reason for Marlow's confusion. Country ways of life change slowly, and the old-fashioned appearance of Hardcastle's mansion and household causes Marlow to sustain his belief that he is at an inn and that the Hardcastles are innkeepers. Hastings is undeceived only after he is told of Tony's deception. Marlow, of course, continues to accept appearances as the badges that mark the man. Unfortunately for Marlow, what marks the gentleman in London--a fashionable house and the latest styles in clothing--does not mark the gentleman of the Country. Like an innkeeper, a Country gentleman may be hopelessly out of London's style in matters of housing and dress.

Thus the antiquated mansion and old-fashioned clothes of the Hardcastles are, in effect rather than intention, disguises that arise from Marlow's own ignorance of the ways of the Country and from his naive idea that appearances reflect the true nature of things. (The term _disguise_, as I use it, refers not only to the deliberate falsification of

true identity, but also to those appearances that inadvertently lend themselves to false assessments.) Although these disguises function coincidentally--the Hardcastles obviously do not live in an old house and wear old-fashioned clothes in order to deceive anyone--Kate exploits the situation by cultivating Marlow's belief that she is a barmaid so as to bring him to a better understanding of himself and of others, as well as to gain herself a husband. She accomplishes this because she wears two very different sets of clothes, as her conversation with Hardcastle illustrates:

> Hardcastle.
>
> . . . Drest out as usual my Kate. Goodness! What a quantity of superfluous silk thou got about thee, girl! I could never teach the fools of this age, that the indigent world could be cloathed out of the trimmings of the vain.
>
> Miss Hardcastle.
>
> You know our agreement, Sir. You allow me the morning to receive and pay visits, and to dress in my own manner; and in the evening, I put on my housewife's dress to please you.
>
> (I. i. p. 111)

Kate, therefore, is able to manipulate her identity and so force Marlow to realize that appearances deceive. The disguises in <u>She Stoops to Conquer</u> certainly lend much probability to Marlow's remaining so long confused about the true identity of the Hardcastles, and an audience is more conscious of this than is a reader, who suffers a disadvantage by not actually seeing the outdated furnishings of the mansion and the old-fashioned clothes that reinforce Marlow's confusion. It becomes easy to

see why the critic for the Morning Chronicle, who judged She Stoops to Conquer according to its performance, could praise its probability of action whereas the critic for the London Magazine, who judged the play according to its text, found the action improbable: the presence on stage of disguises reminds the audience of just why Marlow goes on being deceived. Unless a reader pays close attention to the stage directions as implied by the dialogue, he is likely to miss the very reason for Marlow's confusion, and the action of the play will seem altogether unbelievable.

Indeed, so much of the action in She Stoops to Conquer depends upon disguise that Ricardo Quintana believes the play "might very well be called a comedy of deception and identity."[5] To date, however, Goldsmith criticism has not bothered to elucidate the nature of disguise as it appears in the play. Perhaps one reason for this is that scholarly interest in Goldsmith's works remains largely confined to The Vicar of Wakefield.[6] Other reasons might be that such a study may at least border on laboring the obvious, and that the play offers only a few indications of what appears on the stage to deceive Marlow and Hastings. Although Quintana believes that Goldsmith "proved to be a born dramatist, finding late in his career the medium better suited than any other to his gift for comic and satiric writing,"[7] an assessment with which I agree, we cannot properly judge Goldsmith's accomplishments as a dramatist without some attention to the stage. Certainly, disguise and mistaken identity are, as Quintana points out, conventions of Georgian drama,[8] and the conflict between City and Country that provides the disguises in She Stoops to Conquer is firmly in the tradition of the man-and-manners theme that runs throughout literature of the Restoration and eighteenth-century.

Yet Goldsmith's manipulation of disguise elsewhere is extremely subtle, as Curtis Dahl's fine study of disguise in The Vicar of Wakefield shows.[9] Especially is this true of She Stoops to Conquer, for Goldsmith was working in a new medium whose nature provided him with possibilities for visual effects he could not achieve in his non-dramatic works. The visual effects go far toward explaining why the critic for the Morning Chronicle found the plot of She Stoops to Conquer quite probable, for the presence of disguises enhances probability.

It will prove helpful, therefore, to study the clues Goldsmith provides regarding the nature of disguises in She Stoops to Conquer and how these clues affect its performance on the stage. Although Colman provided no new scenes or costumes for the play,[10] the storerooms of Covent Garden Theatre undoubtedly were well stocked enough to have accommodated an effective production.[11] Close attention to the dialogue of She Stoops to Conquer shows that the old-fashioned mansion and clothing of the Hardcastles are, in effect, disguises that account for Marlow's long-standing confusion. Although precise descriptions of these disguises are sparse, the dialogue suggests that Goldsmith relied on his audience's sensitivity to fashionable homes and clothing to convey, from the stage, the plausibility of Marlow's error. Thus Goldsmith's handling of settings and costumes, as directed by the text of She Stoops to Conquer, helps us to understand how one who views the play might find its plot quite believable whereas a reader might find the plot contrived.

I

The appearance of the Hardcastle mansion contributes much toward making an audience accept the possibility that Marlow and Hastings

actually could mistake a country house for an inn. At the beginning of Act I the Hardcastles discuss the differences between London and the country:

Mrs. Hardcastle.

I vow, Mr. Hardcastle, you're very particular. Is there a creature in the whole country, but our selves, that does not take a trip to town now and then, to rub off the rust a little? There's the two Miss Hoggs, and our neighbour, Mrs. Grigsby, to take a month's polishing every winter.

Hardcastle.

Ay, and bring back vanity and affectation to last them the whole year. I wonder why London cannot keep its own fools at home. In my time, the follies of the town crept slowly among us, but now they travel faster than a stage-coach. Its fopperies come down, not only as inside passengers, but in the very basket.

Mrs. Hardcastle.

Ay, <u>your</u> times were fine times, indeed; you have been telling us of <u>them</u> for many a long year. Here we live in an old rumbling mansion, that looks for all the world like an inn, but that we never see company. Our best visitors are old Mrs. Oddfish, the curate's wife, and little Cripplegate, the lame dancing-master: and all our entertainment your old stories of your old stories of Prince Eugene and the Duke of Marlborough. I hate such old-fashioned trumpery.

(I. i. pp. 106-07)

We gather from the Hardcastles' conversation that the Country in general and the Hardcastles in particular are characterized by old-fashionedness, a result of the Country's being isolated from London. Conversely, of course, London is isolated from the Country, and when Marlow and Hastings encounter the antiquated mansion of the Hardcastles, they have no reason to question whether it is the inn Tony mischievously referred to. Tony has described the place as "the old Buck's Head on the hill, one of the best inns in the whole country" (I. ii. p. 123); it is, he says, "a large old-fashioned house by the roadside" that has "a pair of large horns over the door" (I. ii. p. 124). Although the exterior of the mansion never appears on stage, the fact that it is repeatedly described as old-fashioned undoubtedly held significance for an eighteenth-century audience. Continuing a tradition already centuries old, Country gentlemen of the eighteenth century "lived on manorial estates which had been in the families for generations. . . ."[12] Some houses on these estates probably remained standing, and the Country gentleman might well have been content to live in a house passed on to him by his forebears. The age of such houses would have been made conspicuous by the more fashionable country homes built during the eighteenth century by wealthy people from London to serve as retreats from the chaos of City life. These homes were "The great architectural achievement of the age . . . a seat in the country was the ultimate ambition of every [eighteenth-century] City businessman."[13] In <u>The Deserted Village</u> Goldsmith disapprovingly notes how the country homes of wealthy Londoners dwarfed the simplicity of the country peasants' cottages: "His seat, where solitary sports are seen, / Indignant spurns the cottage from the green. . ." (IV, 298, ll. 281-82). The age and quite possibly "gothick" appearance of Hardcastle's

mansion, then, probably brought to mind the contrasting neo-classic appearances of houses newly built by London politicians, businessmen, and nobility, and the houses used by the native gentry which might have been quite old indeed. Hardcastle's mansion could, therefore, easily be thought of by Marlow and Hastings as a house that has been converted into an inn. It is not at all like the fashionable homes Marlow and Hastings believe a gentleman would inhabit.

The interior of the Hardcastle mansion, where most of the play's action occurs, conveys to Marlow and Hastings, and probably to an eighteenth-century audience as well, the outdated furnishings that conventionally provide an inn's accommodations for travelers. Once inside the house, Hastings observes that it is "a very well-looking house, antique, but creditable," and Marlow assumes that it has suffered "The usual fate of a large mansion. Having first ruined the master by good housekeeping, it at last comes to levy contributions as an inn" (I. i. p. 128). Hastings explains away the elaborate, though old-fashioned, furnishings as items having been paid for with exorbitant fees imposed by innkeepers upon their unfortunate guests: "As you say," he tells Marlow, "we passengers are to be taxed to pay all these fineries. I have often seen a good sideboard, or a marble chimney piece, enflame a reckoning confoundedly" (II. i. p. 128). The scene between Hardcastle and Marlow in the fourth act reveals the effectiveness of the setting in contributing to Marlow's sustained error:

Hardcastle.

> . . . Pray, Sir, (<u>bantering</u>.) as you take the house, what think you of taking the rest of the furniture? There's a pair of silver candlesticks, and there's a fire-screen, and here's

a pair of brazen nosed bellows, perhaps you may take a fancy to them?

Marlow.

Bring me your bill, Sir, bring me your bill, and let's make no more about it.

Hardcastle.

There are a set of prints, too. What think you of the rake's progress for your own apartment?

Marlow.

Bring me your bill, I say; and I'll leave you and your infernal house directly.

Hardcastle.

Then there's a mahogany table, that you may see your own face in.

Marlow.

My bill, I say.

Hardcastle.

I had forgot the great chair for your own particular slumbers, after a hearty meal.

Then, after Hardcastle storms out, Marlow looks about and says, "How's this! Sure I have not mistaken the house! Every thing looks like an inn" (IV. i. p. 183). The appearance of the Hardcastle mansion is, then, one of the apparent disguises that reinforce Tony's deception, and it

helps us see why Marlow remains confused throughout most of the play. Unfortunately, Goldsmith provides no really concrete suggestions as to what appears on the stage to make the mansion appear old-fashioned. The furnishings mentioned by Hardcastle in his berating of Marlow conveys an air of richness rather than old-fashionedness. But with the costumes, Goldsmith is more explicit.

II

The costumes of the Hardcastles are the most important manifestation of disguise for, as he does not with the mansion, Goldsmith offers particular clues in the text of She Stoops to Conquer that show just what it is about their clothes that makes the Hardcastles appear old-fashioned. His management of the costumes proves extremely subtle and, perhaps, elusive to the reader because Goldsmith depends heavily on the audience's capacity for actually seeing the differences between earlier and later trends in eighteenth-century dress that help explain why Marlow clings to his misguided belief that the Hardcastles are innkeepers. Indeed, the nature of the costuming in She Stoops to Conquer and its importance to the plot undoubtedly derive from Goldsmith's own sensitivity to the fashions of the age. A. Lytton Sells observes that Goldsmith "was very conscious of the role dress plays and its importance to one's appearance. In later life this became an obsession with him."[14] Given his concern with fashion, it is not surprising that dress and appearance occupy a prominent position in Goldsmith's literary works. Almost without exception, fashionable clothing surfaces in Goldsmith's works as a kind of disguise, either deliberately or inadvertently worn, that hides the wearer's true identity. The narrator of the essay "On Dress" from The

Bee (1759), for example, relates the story of an elderly friend who "followed a lady who, as he thought by her dress, was a girl of fifteen. It was airy, elegant, and youthful . . . but what was his mortification to find that the imaginary goddess was no other than his cousin Hannah, some years older than himself" (I, p. 375). In The Citizen of the World (1760), Lien Chi suggests that English clothes distort nature: in England "a fine gentleman, or a fine lady, here dressed up to the fashion, seems scarcely to have a single limb that does not suffer some distortions from art" (II, p. 23). In The Life of Richard Nash (1762), Goldsmith shows that Nash's fine clothes effectively disguise his poverty because "dress has a mechanical influence upon the mind, and we naturally are awed into respect and esteem at the elegance of those, whom our reason would teach us to condemn" (III, p. 249). The rustic Primroses in The Vicar of Wakefield (1766) cannot see that the "women of very great distinctions and fashion from town" really are two women of the streets because "Their finery . . . threw a veil over any grossness in their conversation" (IV, p. 54).

She Stoops to Conquer is the culmination of Goldsmith's use of the idea that outward appearances, particularly as manifest by fine clothes, are not reliable grounds for judging someone's true nature. Marlow is a young and relatively inexperienced man thoroughly caught up in the ways of London, where gentlemen conventionally distinguish themselves from members of the meaner classes by wearing the latest and most elaborate styles in clothing. So outlandishly do London gentlemen dress that, as the landlord of The Three Pigeons observes, they frequently "look woundily like Frenchmen" (I. ii. p. 119). Thus when Marlow is launched into the world of the Country he carries with him the naive belief, fostered

by his own lack of wide-ranging experiences, that the gentleman of London is the prototype for the gentleman of the Country: he expects the gentleman of the Country to be as richly and fashionably dressed as his London counterpart. Marlow does not understand that the gentleman of the Country may not conform to the rigid standards of dress that so clearly distinguish the London gentlemen. The old-fashioned dress of the Hardcastles become, in effect, disguises that confirm for Marlow Tony's deception about the nature of things at the Hardcastle mansion. It is obvious that Hardcastle looks more like an innkeeper than what Marlow has come to believe a gentleman looks like. Marlow does not see that Hardcastle is a rustic man whose simple taste recoils at "superfluous silk" and who laments that he "could never teach the fools of this age, that the indigent world could be clothed out of the trimmings of the vain" (I. i. p. 111). Hardcastle wears old-fashioned clothes as a kind of symbolic rebellion against what he thinks are absurdly pretentious developments in recent fashions. His clothes are so out of keeping with the popular styles of the late eighteenth century that even his wife, whose notions about fashionable clothing are at best crude, complains of them. "Yet," she says, "what signifies <u>my</u> dressing when I have such a piece of antiquity by my side as Mr. Hardcastle: all I can say will never argue down a single button from his clothes. I have often wanted him to throw off his great flaxen wig, and where he was bald, to plaister it over like my Lord Pately, with powder" (II. ii. p. 151). Although she attempts to be more fashionable in her dress, Mrs. Hardcastle fares no better than her husband: to Marlow she is nothing more than the "old-fashioned wife" of an innkeeper (II. i. p. 142). Mrs. Hardcastle wears a wig which she styled herself according to "a print in the Ladies Memorandum-book for

the last year" (II. i. pp. 150-51), and she thinks that garnets are "the most becoming things in the world to set off a clear complexion" (III. i. p. 165). Obviously, Mrs. Hardcastle is far from dressing in the lavish styles that to Marlow would be the infallible mark of a gentleman's wife; her home-styled wig and plain garnets only serve to further Tony's deception.

Just how effective these costumes are in making Marlow believe he is at an inn may be seen in a contemporary artist's depiction of Edward Shuter as Hardcastle.[15] Shuter portrays Hardcastle dressed in a full-bottomed wig, a cravat, and stockings fitted over his breeches. These items were thoroughly out of style in the 1770s: the full-bottomed wig was abandoned, except by certain professional men such as lawyers, around 1730 in favor of the neater tie-wig.[16] After the first quarter of the eighteenth century, cravats were abandoned for daily wear (except by the rustics) in favor of the jabot, a ruffled frill that was attached to the front of the shirt.[17] Until about 1760, men wore their stockings fitted over their breeches; after that time, it became fashionable to wear the breeches over the stockings.[18] With these embellishments it becomes easy to see when an audience, particularly one of the eighteenth century, would be more likely than a reader to believe that Marlow could remain so long deceived. The audience is repeatedly confronted by characters dressed in very old-fashioned clothes that are not at all of the kind a gentleman would be expected to wear. The reader, of course, easily misses this because he is limited to a printed page, and the visual clues that help the audience see the reason for Marlow's error are missing.

III

Of course, the folly of Marlow's belief that outward appearances reflect true identity comes across most clearly in his different reactions to Kate. In the mornings Kate wears the fashionable and elaborate clothes popular among young London women of means but, at Hardcastle's request, she wears the plainer clothes of the Country during the evenings. Thus to Marlow she seems to be two very different people. The clothes Kate wears in the morning are for Marlow a sign that she is a woman of his own social class, chaste and marriageable, and possessed of highly sophisticated manners and sentiments. Such women frighten him. He believes that "a modest woman, drest out in all her finery, is the most tremendous object of the whole creation" (II. i. p. 130), and he has in fact never looked into the face of a woman like this because the mere sight of her clothing tells him she is skilled in all the social graces that he believes he lacks. "My life," he tells Hastings, "has been chiefly spent in college, or an inn, in seclusion from that lovely part of creation that chiefly teach men confidence" (II. i. p. 129), and so when he is confronted by a well-dressed lady, Marlow fixes his eyes on the ground and stutters out an attempt at conversation. Before he meets Kate, Marlow tells Hastings that in her presence he will "Bow very low. Answer yes, or no, to all her demands--But for the rest, I don't think I shall venture to look in her face, till I see my father's again" (II. i. p. 130), and he is as good as his word. Kate later tells Hardcastle, "He met me with a respectful bow, a stammering voice, <u>and a look fixed on the ground</u>" (III. i. p. 159).

Later, however, when he sees Kate wearing the simpler Country clothes, Marlow assumes that she is the barmaid of the inn. Her Country

dress makes her blend in with the other members of the household, and Marlow's approach to her changes drastically. Whereas Marlow virtually deifies well-dressed ladies who, as he thinks, are chaste, marriageable, and "grave," he feels free to approach in the most rakish fashion a woman who appears by her dress to be a barmaid. A barmaid lacks the fine clothes and hence, Marlow believes, the chastity and good breeding of women who are members of his own social class. He need not be afraid of barmaids because he knows they are easily impressed with obviously false tales of his adventures and popularity in London. Kate, of course, recognizes this in Marlow and so deliberately cultivates her identity as a barmaid in order to force Marlow to come to terms with his inconsistent personality. Kate's dual role as both fashionable woman and barmaid permits her to understand that Marlow sees two kinds of women: well-dressed ladies, whose fashionable clothes are for him a testimony that they possess chastity, are well-bred and capable of fine sentiments; and women of poorer dress, whose unassuming clothes testify to their lower social class, naivete, and, perhaps, lasciviousness. The latter type of women are easy targets for the rake, as Marlow tells Hastings: "Pshaw! Pshaw! we all know the honour of the bar-maid of an inn. I don't intend to <u>rob</u> her, take my word for it, there's nothing in this house, I shan't honestly <u>pay</u> for" (IV. i. p. 178). To Marlow, then, the differences in their dress are infallible signs of the differences in their personalities. He does not realize, as Kate does, that a woman of the kind he longs for--chaste, well-bred, of his own social class, and capable of fine sentiments--need not proclaim herslef to be such by wearing fine clothes. Kate forces Marlow to realize this by her cultivating the identity of a barmaid and then letting the fine qualities of her personality reveal

themselves. She drops the colloquial style of speech she uses to enhance her role as barmaid and offers Marlow a testimony of her affection for him in the kind of speech Marlow thought could only come from women who wore fine clothes. Marlow finds, to his amazement, that "This girl every moment improves upon me" (V. i. p. 210). Kate's disguise at last serves its purpose, and Marlow comes to realize that mere costume alone is not a reliable guide to the nature of the wearer.

IV

Goldsmith's management of settings and costumes in She Stoops to Conquer is not merely an embellishment but a substantiation of the play's action. The antiquated mansion and old-fashioned clothes of the Hardcastles help to confirm what Tony has led Marlow to believe: the mansion is an inn, and the Hardcastles are innkeepers. Thus Goldsmith uses the setting and costumes as disguises that hide from Marlow the true nature of things. More important, the disguises are indispensable to the Marlow-Kate Hardcastle plot, which is the very nucleus of the play. Disguise is the key element in She Stoops to Conquer, for Kate's manipulation of her identity is the thing that brings Marlow to distinguish reality from appearances and, finally, it brings Marlow to a better understanding of himself. Unfortunately, the importance of the settings and costumes may not strike the reader easily, for Goldsmith depended on an audience's capacity for actually seeing the differences between old and new ways of life that are responsible for Marlow's being so long deceived. But when the disguises of She Stoops to Conquer are carefully examined, Goldsmith certainly emerges as a master dramatist who fully appreciated and exploited the stage.

NOTES

[1] Quoted from the introduction to She Stoops to Conquer in The Collected Works of Oliver Goldsmith, ed. Arthur Friedman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966), V, 91. All citations of Goldsmith's works are from this edition and, with the exception of She Stoops to Conquer, the volume and page numbers are included parenthetically in the text of this study. Because all citations of She Stoops to Conquer are from volume V, only the act, scene, and page numbers are included parenthetically.

[2] Collected Works, V, 93.

[3] "Oliver Goldsmith: Ironist to the Georgians" in Eighteenth-Century Studies in Honor of Donald F. Hyde, ed. W. F. Bond (New York: The Grolier Club, 1970), p. 304.

[4] "The Two Worlds of Oliver Goldsmith," SEL, 13 (1973), 516-34.

[5] "Goldsmith's Achievement as Dramatist," UTQ, 34 (1965), 164.

[6] Samuel H. Woods, Jr., "The Vicar of Wakefield and Recent Goldsmith Scholarship," ECS, 9 (1973), 429-43.

[7] Oliver Goldsmith: A Georgian Study (New York: Macmillan, 1967), p. 139.

[8] Oliver Goldsmith: A Georgian Study, p. 157, and "Goldsmith's Achievement as Dramatist," 164.

[9] "Patterns of Disguise in The Vicar of Wakefield," ELH, 25 (1958), 90-104.

[10] Collected Works, V, 89 n.

[11] For a fairly accurate idea as to what Covent Garden kept in stock see the transcription of Rich's inventory of properties by P. H. Highfill, Jr. in RECTR 5 (1966), i. 7-17; ii. 17-26; 6 (1967), i. 28-35.

[12] Donald Greene, The Age of Exuberance (New York: Random House, 1970), p. 36.

[13] Greene, p. 147.

[14] Oliver Goldsmith: His Life and Works (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1974), p. 30. Sells reports that "Between 1761 and 1762 [Goldsmith's] tailor's bills tell a story of astounding extravagance" and that Goldsmith spent for clothes "some 52 in 1767; at least 32 in 1768; and 33 13s 5d in 1769" (p. 129). Trivial though such amounts seem to us, they were worth in the eighteenth century slightly more than ten times their value in 1972.

[15] The painting is reproduced in Oscar G. Brockett, History of the Theatre, 3rd ed. (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1977), p. 282.

[16] Lucy Barton, Historic Costume for the Stage, rev. ed. (Boston: Walter H. Baker Co., 1963), p. 302.

[17] Barton, p. 335.

[18] Barton, p. 336.

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