

SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER:
THE MAKING OF A POPULAR SUCCESS

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SYNOPSIS

This thesis is an attempt to answer the question, 'What makes She Stoops to Conquer a successful play?' It is concerned rather with the play's essential comic qualities and content than with the technicalities of construction, since these are what engage and absorb the attention of an audience. The first chapter is a survey of the sources which have been suggested for the play and its characters since its first appearance. The purpose of this is to examine elements traditionally popular in drama which Goldsmith successfully incorporated into She Stoops to Conquer. The second chapter is a study of the eighteenth century theatre. It pays particular attention to contemporary moral attitudes to the theatre and to the relations between the various members of society who made use of the theatre, either as actors, authors, managers or as audience. The third chapter traces the history of the first production of She Stoops to Conquer from its inception to the first performance and through the critical reaction which followed. This is discussed against the background described in the second chapter. The final chapter contains some critical discussion of the play and characters and is an attempt to assess the factors contributing to the play's success and, ultimately, to suggest reasons for its continued popularity. It is followed by three Appendices. The first is a brief history of the play in performance and in print from the first performance to the present. The second is a discussion of a text of the play which came to light during research. In the third are reproduced the five epilogues written for the play and of which only one was used.

75,000 words

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TEXTUAL NOTE

The following abbreviations have been used throughout:

Hill: Powell	Boswell's <u>Life of Johnson</u> ed. G.B. Hill revised and enlarged L.F. Powell 6 Vols (Oxford 1934)
Forster	<u>The Life and Adventures of Oliver Goldsmith</u> , (London, 1848)
Friedman	<u>Collected Works of Oliver Goldsmith</u> 5 Vols (Oxford, 1966)
Prior	<u>The Life of Oliver Goldsmith M. B.</u> (London, 1837)
Balderstón	<u>The Collected Letters of Oliver Goldsmith</u> (Cambridge, 1928)
Sells	<u>Les Sources Françaises de Goldsmith</u> (Paris, 1924)
Nicoll	<u>A History of English Drama 1660 - 1900</u> (Cambridge, 1952)
Percy Papers	Papers of Thomas Percy, Bishop of Dromore, relating to Goldsmith, B.M. Add Mss. 42,515-7
<u>CL</u>	Comparative Literature
<u>JEGP</u>	Journal of English and Germanic Philology
<u>MLN</u>	Modern Language Notes
<u>MP</u>	Philological Quarterly
<u>PMLA</u>	Publications of the Modern Language Association of America
<u>TLS</u>	Times Literary Supplement

britanniques'. (p. VI) Sells cites, in particular, Marivaux, Montesquieu, Voltaire, D'Argens and Buffon as writers to whom Goldsmith was indebted, not only for their literary influence, but also for extracts from their writings, which he borrowed and incorporated into his own. Of these, Marivaux was the most important from the point of Goldsmith's drama. Sells attributes to Molière and Voltaire strong influence on Goldsmith's feelings towards the theatre and dramatic tradition. However, as specific sources for Goldsmith's two plays, The Good-natured Man and She Stoops to Conquer, he cites Marivaux's Le Legs (1736) and Le Jeu de L'amour et du Hasard (1730) respectively. The Good-natured Man was first performed in 1768 and has a plot relationship with Le Legs, which Sells demonstrates with many textual examples. However, a study of The Good-natured Man involves problems of its own and we are not concerned with it here, except insofar as it relates to She Stoops to Conquer.³

Although attributing to the play a French source, Sells is quick to appreciate the English character of She Stoops to Conquer. He sees this as incarnated in Tony Lumpkin: "C'est un type purement Anglais, mélange de garçon espiègle et de jeune hobereau assez grossier, mais bon enfant et plus sensé qu'il n'a l'air de l'être. Il ne serait guère possible chez Molière, inconcevable chez Marivaux". (p. 155) Sells continues by summarizing the similarities of plot between She Stoops to Conquer and Le Jeu de l'amour et du Hasard and he illustrates these by quoting several parallel extracts from the texts to show how closely Goldsmith adhered to his original. (p. 157) For example, Mr Hardcastle and M. Orgon announced the imminent arrival of the proposed husband to their daughters in a similar manner: "Ton prétendu arrive aujourd'hui; son père me l'apprend par cette lettre-ci... Dorante vient pour t'épouser. Dans le dernier voyage que je fis en province, j'arrêtai ce mariage-la avec son père, qui est mon intime et mon ancien ami; mais ce fut

à condition que vous vous plairiez à tous deux et que vous auriez entière liberté de vous expliquer là-dessus. Je te défends toute complaisance à mon égard ..." (Act. 1, sc. 2.) "Then, to be plain with you, Kate, I expect the young gentleman I have chosen to be your husband from town this very day. I have his father's letter, in which he informs me his son is set out ... I'll never controul your choice; but Mr Marlow, whom I have pitched upon, is the son of my old friend, Sir Charles Marlow, of whom you have heard me talk so often". (Act. 1. p. 111 ll. 17-19, p. 112 ll. 2-4)

As an example of the similarity later in the plays, Sells cites the final avowal of love extracted by the two supposed maids from their respective lovers: (pp. 160-161)

'Dorante: Je ne partirai point ... Mon père me pardonnera, dès qu'il vous aura vue; ma fortune nous suffit à tous deux, et le mérite vaut bien la naissance. Ne disputons point, car je ne changerai jamais.

Silvia: Ayez la générosité de me cacher votre amour. Moi qui vous parle, je me ferais un scrupule de vous dire que je vous aime dans les dispositions où vous êtes; L'aveu de mes sentiments pourrait exposer votre raison; et vous voyez bien aussi que je vous les cache.

Dorante: Ah, ma chère Lisette, que viens-je d'entendre? Tes paroles ont un feu qui me pénètre ... Il n'est ni rang, ni naissance, ni fortune, qui ne disparaisse devant une âme comme la tienne; j'aurais honte que mon orgueil tînt encore contre toi, et mon cœur et ma main t'appartiennent ... Non, Lisette ... vous avez le cœur vrai; vous êtes sensible à ma tendresse ... Ne consentez-vous pas d'être à moi?' (Act III sc. VIII)

'Marlow: By heavens, Madam, fortune was ever my smallest consideration ... I am now determined to stay, Madam, and I have too good an opinion of my father's discernment, when he sees you, to doubt his approbation.'

Miss Hardcastle: "No, Mr Marlow, I will not, cannot detain you. Do you think I could suffer a connexion, in which there is the smallest room for repentance? Do you think I would take the mean advantage of a transient passion, to load you with confusion? Do you think I could ever relish that happiness, which was acquired by lessening yours?" Marlow: "... I can have no happiness but what's in your power to grant me. Nor shall I ever feel repentance,

but in not having seen your merits before. I will stay, even contrary to your wishes; and tho' you should persist to shun me, I will make my respectful assiduities atone for the levity of my past conduct... (kneeling)... does this look like confidence. No, Madam, every moment that shows me your merit, only serves to encrease my diffidence and confusion. Here let me continue ---" (Act V p.211 1116-31, p.212 11,1-2)⁴

Having established these similarities between the two plays, Sells makes it clear that he is not claiming for Marivaux's play any of the qualities which distinguish She Stoops to Conquer, "l'esprit, l'humeur, la vérité de la peinture, les qualités dramatiques - sont bien de lui. Il n'est redevable à Marivaux que d'une partie de l'intrigue". (p.162)

On first reading Le Jeu de l'Amour et du Hasard one is inclined to feel that Sells has, perhaps, underestimated his case. The plot of the play is certainly similar to She Stoops to Conquer. Silvia is told by her father, Orgon, to expect her intended husband, Dorante, whom neither of them has previously met. She decides to change places with her maid in order to assess Dorante's eligibility before he realises it. Orgon receives a letter from Dorante's father, his old friend, saying that Dorante will arrive disguised as his valet, Arlequin, in order to examine Silvia without her knowing it. When Dorante arrives, he and Silvia fall in love and are both distressed that they have feelings which so disgrace their social position and the hopes of their parents. Conversely, the two servants, Lisette and Arlequin, also fall in love and each is secretly delighted, contemplating a match so far above their expectations. Dorante reveals his identity, unable to bear the strain any longer and Lisette and Arlequin also reveal who they are. From this point, the plot continues very similarly to She Stoops to Conquer. Silvia forces a confession of love and a renunciation of all that is due to his position in society from Dorante and the play ends with general rejoicing at the ultimate dénouement.

However, if the plot bears a resemblance to She Stoops to Conquer, the characters are very different. The story is both simplified and complicated by the involvement of Silvia's brother, Mario, who bears, however, no other resemblance to Tony Lumpkin, just as Dorante bears little to the alternately modest and impudent Marlow. Orgon, unlike Hardcastle, is in full control of the situation throughout, being acquainted with the stratagems of both parties. Constance Neville and Hastings have no possible prototypes in Le Jeu de L'Amour et du Hasard. Sells does, however, suggest a link between them and Hortense and Le Marquis in Le Legs but the relationship is tenuous, being only that both ladies stand to gain or lose a fortune according to their choice of husband.

In 1930, a play hitherto thought of only as a possible source for Le Jeu de l'Amour et du Hasard was suggested as a source for She Stoops to Conquer. Maurice Baudin in a short article in PMLA, suggests that Le Galant Coureur, a one act comedy by Marc Antoine Le Grand, first performed in 1722, is, in several respects, analagous to She Stoops to Conquer.⁵ Baudin summarises the play as follows: "Une comtesse attend un marquis que ses parents veulent lui faire épouser, se déguise en servante pour examiner le caractère du prétendant, s'éprend du jeune homme, garde son travesti jusqu'à ce qu'elle soit assurée d'être sincèrement aimée". He then discusses a number of other parallels between the two plays, from which it appears that Le Galant Coureur and She Stoops to Conquer share certain similarities which Le Jeu de l'Amour et du Hasard does not. There is a figure comparable to Hastings in Le Chevalier, who plays upon Le Marquis' mistake, in order to further his own affair with Lucinde. Dorimène, like Kate and unlike Silvia, is excited at the prospect of marriage, whereas Le Marquis, like Marlow, is rather sceptical. Also like Marlow, Le Marquis is preceded by his reputation "de courir de

belles en belles sans s'attacher à aucune", (sc. i) which has little appeal to their respective ladies. The Marquis is disguised as a 'coureur', a messenger, but the work also has the double meaning of a libertine. Unlike in She Stoops to Conquer, the imminent marriages in the play, have not only been arranged but are insisted upon by the parents and guardians of the four protagonists, who are dependant on their good will. The plot is complicated by the frequently changing demands of these elder relations and the involvement of a further intrigue between the real servants in the play. The denouement is, however, similar to those of She Stoops to Conquer and Le Jeu de l'Amour et du Hasard, in the ultimate revelations and the relief they occasion. There is a decided resemblance to Marlow and his expression of his predicament in Le Marquis' speech in scene xviii:

Eh bien! Marquis, te voilà pris comme un sot. Tu as refusé jusqu'ici les partis les plus considérables; tu foyois le mariage; tu croyois toujours badiner avec l'amour, et dans un moment il t'a réduit à choisir, ou d'épouser un soubrette, ou de mourir de chagrin: car enfin je sens bien que je ne puis vivre sans Finette. Mais que diront mes amis? que dira mon oncle? S'il voulois me déshériter pour n'avoir pas voulu épouser la comtesse Dorimène, que ne fera-t-il point quand il saura que je lui désobéis un seconde fois pour épouser une personne d'un rang si bas?⁶

The principal claimant other than Le Jeu de l'Amour et du Hasard to being regarded as the source for She Stoops to Conquer is Farquhar's The Beaux' Stratagem (1707). Numerous similarities in plot, characters and individual scenes have been frequently pointed out, in addition to which, an essay by August Leichsering, which appeared in 1909, convincingly linked the two plays.⁷ Leichsering's thesis rests on a number of textual similarities together with a basic parallel between the young men in each play. Both plays are about two young men from London, one of whom pursues

a (in Marlow's case, supposed) servant-girl. Aimwell and Archer are, like Marlow and Hastings, friends and as such are in league to help each other's affairs. Squire Sullen bears a certain resemblance to Tony Lumpkin. They share a preference for drinking, cards, 'cocking and racing' to genteel, conjugal happiness. Just as Tony enjoys the company of 'Dick Muggins, the Exciseman, Jack Slang the horse-doctor, little Aminadab that grinds the music-box, and Tom Twist that spins the pewter platter' (Act I sc. i p.110 ll.2-4), Sullen's friends are 'the Constable, Mr Gage the Exciseman, the Hunchback'd-barber, and two or three other Gentlemen⁸. (Act V sc. i. p.87 ll.11-13). Both young Squires meet their friends at the local inn. Sullen is as opposite in character to his wife as Tony Lumpkin is to Constance Neville and, as Leichsering says: 'Die Mutter - Lady Bountiful - hat auf den Säufer Sullen, der schon am Sonntag morgen starkes Ale trinken muss, den nicht irgendwelche höhere Interessen der mütterliche Einfluss auf Tony Lumpkin gleich Null ist'. (p. 65) However, whereas Sullen 'wirkt als brutaler Säufer, Tony Lumpkin's Rolle ist durchaus humoristisch' (p.65) and, of greater importance to the plot, Sullen is already married.

The plots of the two plays differ greatly and the most striking parallels occur in incidents on the stage. Leichsering points out the similarity between the way Archer treats Cherry to Marlow's treatment of the supposed bar-maid. Both men lavish the endearment 'child' on their respective maids and Cherry rebels: 'Child! manners! - If you kept a little more distance, friend, it would become you much better'. (Act I sc.i p.34 ll.322-3). Kate responds similarly to Marlow: 'Pray, Sir, keep your distance. One would think you wanted to know one's age, as they do horses, by mark of mouth'. (Act III p.171 ll.27-28). The two mens' approach to the girls is very similar. Archer says to Cherry: 'Let me look you full in the Face, and I'll tell you whether you can affront me or no, --

S'death, Child, you have a pair of delicate eyes, and you don't know what to do with 'em.' (Act I sc. i p. 34 ll. 329-331), and Marlow, noticing Kate for the first time, says: 'No, no, I tell you. (Looks full in her face) Yes, child, I think I did call. I wanted --- I wanted --- I vow, child, you are vastly handsome Never saw a more sprightly malicious eye'. (Act III p. 170 ll. 20-26) Both Archer and Marlow give false names and in the same context, as Leichsering points out: 'nachdem er [Archer] erklärt hat, er habe allerdings Frauen den Hof gemacht, aber nur innerhalb seiner Sphäre'. (p. 37)

Archer's attempts on Mrs Sullen also bear close comparison with Marlow's on Kate. Just as Marlow tries to get closer to Kate, pretending that he can't tell at that distance how old she is, Archer, seeing Mrs Sullen's bed in the next room, says: 'I think that the Quilt is the richest that I ever saw. --- I can't at this distance distinguish the figures of the Embroidery; will you give me leave, Madam ---' (Act IV sc. i p. 78 ll. 318-320). Goldsmith later develops a series of double-entendres from Marlow's demand to Kate: 'Odso, then you must show me your embroidery'. (Act III p. 174 l. 2). Leichsering points out that Mrs Sullen and Kate, both trying to defer the advances of their lovers, are met with the ardent reply, 'And why not now, my angel?'. (S.S. Act III p. 174 l. 9. B.S. Act V sc. ii p. 92 ll. 69).

Leichsering stresses similarities between the friendships of Marlow and Hastings, and Mrs Sullen and Dorinda. Mrs Sullen, like Marlow, envies her friend's congenial situation and character with respect to possible lovers.

Happy, happy sister! Your angel has been watchful for your happiness, whilst mine has slept regardless of his charge ... I own myself a woman, full of my sex, a gentle, generous soul, easy and yielding to soft desires ... And must the fair apartment of my

breast be made a stable for a brute to lie in?
(Act II p. 131 ll.10-12)

There are many other parallels between the two plays. The one most frequently noted is the similarity between the scenes where the young men arrive at their respective inns⁹. There is obviously a relationship here:

Bonniface: "What will your Worship please to have for supper?"

Aimwell: "What have you got?"

Bonniface: "Sir, we have a delicate piece of Beef in the pot, and a Pig at the Fire."

Aimwell: "Good Supper-meat, I must confess, - I can't eat Beef, Landlord.

Archer: "And I hate Pig..." (Act I sc.i. pp.31-32 ll.239-298, 41-3).

Marlow (reading): "For the first course at the top, a pig, and pruin sauce."

Hastings: "Damn your pig, I say."

Marlow: "And damn your pruin sauce, say I."

Hardcastle: "And yet, gentlemen, to men that are hungry, pig, with pruin sauce, is very good eating."

Marlow: "At the bottom, a calve's tongue and brains."

Hastings: "Let your brains be knock'd out, my good Sir; I don't like them."

Marlow: "Or you may clap them on a plate by themselves. I do." (Act II p. 138 ll. 3-17)

Archer, like Marlow, is confronted with the possibility of marriage to a girl who has every attraction but her birth; "...then, an Inn-keeper's daughter; ay that's the Devil - there my Pride brings me off". (Act III sc. i p. 47 ll. 233-237).

There are several more parallels between the plays. Both take place, at least partly, in an inn. In both plays a box of valuables and its whereabouts play an important part. Both plays contain much anti-French comment and in both plays there is a "deux ex machina" figure called Sir Charles who arrives near the end to help disentangle the denouement. Nevertheless, in spite of all the similarities, it must be admitted that the actual plot and

spirit of the plays differ greatly.

Sources suggested for individual incidents and scenes

The mainspring of the plot of She Stoops to Conquer is Marlow's mistaking the house of his future father-in-law, for an inn. On this error do the entire five acts depend, with all the subsequent misunderstandings, misconstructions and intrigue. Predictably, this single incident in the play has been the subject of much discussion and a number of possible origins for the idea of such a mistake have been suggested. The suggestion given widest currency has its source in the narrative of Goldsmith's life, given by his sister, Mrs Hodson, to Thomas Percy for inclusion in his memoir of the poet, which was prefixed to the first edition of his collected works. Mrs Hodson, describing some of the exploits of the young Goldsmith in Ireland, wrote:

... the D was sent to the Rev^d Pat: Hughes Clergyman of Edgworth Town in the County of Longford here he was fitted for the College, and from his last journey from his fathers to this pleace he has I beleive taken the plot of his Play of the mistakes of a night, for in his journy to this Town some freind gave him a Guinea the Town was twenty Miles from his fathers and he diverted the day vewing the Gentlemens seats on the road and night fell at a Village Call^d Ardagh, upon his coming to the Village he enquired for the best house in Town which he was shew^d upon his riding to the door he call^d for the Hostler who appear^d he desired his horse might rubd waterd and beated and very great care taken of him and rushd in himself to a handsom Parlour where as he thought sat the Landlord before a good fire after the usual salutes he beleived a bottle of wine c^d not be bad that cold night and let him also know he had been fasting all day and to get some thing comfortably good in a hurry for that he was very hungry the man flew to obey his orders and immedietly a waiter with bottle and

Glases appear^d and he and his host sat to their bottle while it was drinking the Man was inquisitive about his father his pleace of Abode his name and famally upon his information the man seem^d to be acquainted with them and to treat him with great complisance an elegant Supper was immedietly served the Company was the Host his wife and two Daughters who were all pressing on Master Goldsmith to sup he called affter two bottles more and insisted on the Ladys telling their Choice for while the Guinea lasted the Docter knew not how to spare he was shew^d a very good Chamber where he slept but before he parted desired Breakfast might be Early ready and the best in the house and bespoke a hot cake, which was all prepared before left his room, after breakfast he went to the Stable and had his horse dressd and oated and then went to the Land Lord and call^d for his Bill but how much was he confounded when the Gentleman told him he never kept an Inn a Mr Fahn F.. and he was proud to have it in his power to enter ain Mr Goldsmith son his dear Old Freind and neighbour¹⁰

This story is highly circumstantial but also very unlikely. Evidence in its favour will be discussed later in this chapter, however, if this story is true it would be hard to dispute its claim to have been the seed which grew to fruition in the plot of She Stoops to Conquer. Nevertheless, other possibilities exist. In 1929, Gertrude van Arsdale Ingalls wrote an article suggesting sources for incidents in She Stoops to Conquer, one of which incidents was Marlow's mistake¹¹. Ingalls quoted the following story told by Addison in the Spectator No. 289, which the author claimed to have read in the 'Travels of Sir John Chardin':¹²

A Dervise, travelling through Tartary, being arrived at the town of Balk, went into the King's palace by a Mistake, as thinking it to be a publick Inn and Caravansary. Having looked about him for some Time, he entered into a long Gallery, where he laid down his Wallet, and spread his Carpet, in order to repose himself upon it, after the Manner of the Eastern Nations. He had not been long in

this Posture before he was discovered by some of the Guards, who asked what was his Business in that Place? The Dervise told the, he intended to take up his Night's Lodging, in that Caravansary. The Guards let him know, in a very angry Manner that the House he was in, was not a Caravansary, but the King's Palace. It happened that the King himself passed through the Gallery during the Debate and smiling at the Mistake of the Dervise, asked him how he could possibly be so dull, as not to distinguish a Palace from a Caravansary? Sir, says the Dervise, give me leave to ask Your Majesty a Question or two. Who were the Persons who lodged in this House when it was first built? The King replied, His Ancestors. And who, says the Dervise, was the last person that lodged here? The King replied, His Father. And who is it, says the Dervise, that lodges here at present? The King told him that it was he himself. And who, says the Dervise will be here after you? The King answered the young Prince, his Son. 'Ah, Sir,' said the Dervise, a house that changes its Inhabitants so often, and receives such a perpetual succession of Guests, is not a Palace but a Caravansary.

Ingalls fails to note that Goldsmith was closely acquainted with The Spectator, especially during the time that he was probably re-vising She Stoops to Conquer. He wrote to Percy sometime in 1772-3, requesting assistance with the edition of The Spectator he was preparing for the Irish publisher William Wilson. The letter indicates an intimate knowledge of the Spectator's articles¹³. However, although the Caravansary story may have lingered in Goldsmith's mind, its influence, if any, on the plot of She Stoops to Conquer can only, I feel, have been very slight. Apart from the fact that it concerns the mistaking of a great house for a lowly one, there is no similarity. The situation, protagonists and the result of the Caravansary mistake are completely different from Marlow's. We know Goldsmith was reading the Spectator at about the time when She Stoops to Conquer was in preparation but there is no other external evidence linking the two plots.

Mark Schorer, in an article published by MLN in 1933, suggests as a possible source for Marlow's mistake, a play by Mrs Centlivre called The Man's Bewitched or The Devil to Do About Her (1709)¹⁴. Schorer claims a similarity in 'tone' between the two plays but there is no substantial analogy except in a part of one scene. The situation is that Faithful pretends to mistake the house in which Laura, his mistress, is incarcerated by her crotchety and designing guardian, Sir David Watchum, for an inn, in order to gain access to her. Like Marlow, he calls for servants and, unlike Marlow, who does so in earnest, pretends to mistake his mistress for the Hostess of the inn. The dialogue between Faithful and Sir David recalls Marlow's with Hardcastle:

Faithful: "Ay, Scoundrels, where are you?
Ye Dogs, what is the Reason we can have no
Attendance? (Strikes one of them.) Fetch us
a Bottle of Claret, Sirrah, and bring us Word
what we can have to eat ---"

Sir David: "Bring a Bottle of Claret! bring a
Halter --- What do you strike my Servants for?
ha, Sir "

Faithful: "Your Servants, Sir! They are my
Servants, as long as I pay for what I call
for ---" (Act III sc. ii)

Hardcastle: " ...now that my passions are roused,
I say this house is mine, Sir; this house is mine,
and I command you to leave it directly."

Marlow: ".This, your house, fellow! It's my house.
This is my house. Mine, while I chuse to stay.
What right have you to bid me leave this house,
Sir? I never met with such impudence, curse
me, never in my whole life before." ¹⁵ (Act IV
p. 182 ll. 11-19)

There is no internal evidence to suggest a link between The Man's Bewitched and She Stoops to Conquer. Mrs Centlivre's plays were popular throughout the eighteenth century and it is possible that Goldsmith could have read this one, although it was not performed during his years in London. Neither was it among his books sold after his death, although this is not a reliable method of deducing what he had read.

I have found only one other possible source for Marlow's mistake. It is, perhaps, merely coincidental that John Quick, the first Tony Lumpkin, who published a collection of jests and comic tales about twenty years after Goldsmith's death, should have included the following anecdote:¹⁶

A sailor, half-groggy, passing along the street of a certain sea-port town, discovered over an admiral's door an escutcheon, and very naturally took it for an ale-house - the gentleman (a ruddy looking portly man) standing at the door, he clapped him on the shoulder, Damn it, landlord, you look like an honest fellow, give us a cup of the best. - The gentleman, to carry on the joke, ordered his servant to bring him some beer, which being done, the jolly tar drank towards the landlord's good health, and enquired what was to pay, which the officer told him he might settle the next time he came that way.

There are similarities, nevertheless, and as Goldsmith had had associations with Quick since 1768, it is possible that he had heard the tale before he set to work on She Stoops to Conquer.

Although Marlow's original mistake is the most thoroughly researched, other incidents in the play have also been investigated for possible sources. Goldsmith's friendship with Lord Clare is well-documented and Forster, in his Life of Goldsmith, attributes to Lord Clare's daughter the inspiration for Tony Lumpkin's trick on his step-father. We are told that Tony Lumpkin tied the tail of Hardcastle's wig to the back of the chair and that Hardcastle, on waking, 'popt his bald head in Mrs Frizzle's face.' (Act I sc.i p. 108 ll. 14-15). According to Forster, this was 'but the counterpart of a trick played on himself during his last visit at Gosfield by the daughter of Lord Clare, which she often related to her son, Lord Nugent'¹⁷.

A source has also been suggested for Tony's trick on his mother. George Birkbeck Hill, in a note in his edition of Boswell's

Life of Johnson, writes:

It is possible that Mrs Hardcastle's drive in She Stoops to Conquer was suggested by the Rambler No. 34. In it a young gentleman describes a lady's terror on a coach journey. "Our whole conversation passed in dangers, and cares, and fears, and consolations, and stories of ladies dragged in the mire, forced to spend all the night on a heath, drowned in rivers, or burnt with lightening . . . We had now a new scene of terror, every man we saw was a robber, and we were ordered sometimes to drive hard, lest a traveller whom we saw behind should overtake us; and sometimes to stop, lest we should come up to him who was passing before us. She alarmed many an honest man by begging him to spare her life as he passed by the coach.¹⁸"

This is merely an anecdote of a lady undergoing a, for her, terrifying coach journey. This must have been a fairly commonplace experience in Goldsmith's day. Goldsmith may indeed have read Johnson's tale but since the motivation of the characters in it is wholly dissimilar to that of those in She Stoops to Conquer, we may, I think, regard this as rather too insubstantial to be considered a possible source.

One of the most comic scenes in the play is Act III sc. i pp. 166-167, where Tony's repetition of 'I can bear witness to that' drives his mother into a rage. A number of sources have been suggested for this scene. Sells suggests a play, adapted from an old farce by de Brueys and Palaprat, called L'Avocat Pâtelin (1706). Pâtelin, the lawyer, tells Agnelet the sheep-stealer whom he is defending, to answer all his questions with a bleat like those made by his sheep. Agnelet obediently bleats 'Bée' in court as a reply to all questions and is acquitted by the tribunal. Later, however, when Pâtelin asks him for his fee. Agnelet continues to say nothing but 'Bée' and thus manages to elude Pâtelin as well. There is a similarity between this scene and the one in She Stoops to Conquer

but it is only slight. The circumstances and characters are quite dissimilar and I think it likely that the similarity is no more than a coincidence.

A stronger analogy exists between this scene and an anecdote found by Arthur Friedman in a 17th century Jest Book:¹⁹

It is a neighbourly fashion in some places, when anyone kills a Hogge, to invite divers that dwell near him to eate part thereof: this was observed till it went round. But one more penurious than the rest ... was unwilling to invite them_ Wherefore advising with his friend, ... his friend wished him to give out that his Hog was stolne, and be sure to act his part well: the good man was well pleased with his conceit, and intended to put it in practise. But so it hapned, that the very night before his guests should be invited, his hogge was stolne indeed. Which he in the morning missing, presently repquired to his friend to acquaint him with the newes, saying with a loud clamour that his hogge was stolne. His friend, smiling, replied, tis well done Gossip, now I perceive you follow my Counsell. I but saith the other, wringing his hands, my Hog is stolne indeed: true, answered he, did I not bid you say so? None living could have better counterfeited it. And when the old Chuffe persevered with oaths and clamours, that it was a certain truth: he still answered better and better; doe but continue this passion, and no doubt, all your neighbours will easily beleeve you.

In this story the penurious neighbour has, like Mrs Hardcastle, withheld something, which in honour, he owes to others, and devises a stratagem to keep it by saying it has been stolen. When it disappears in reality, he cannot get his accomplice to believe him. The analogy is obvious but although Jests and collections of comic tales were still common in Goldsmith's time, it is again impossible to say if this is any more than a coincidence.

There are intriguing links between She Stoops to Conquer and a play called Albumazar. A Victorian edition of the play which includes a foreword where we are told that 'the plot is taken from Albumazar²⁰', Similar claims are made elsewhere, the earliest being in Baker's Biographia Dramatica, published in 1782, which says, 'One of the most ludicrous circumstances it contains (that of the robbery) is borrowed from Albumazar²¹'. This is closer to the truth than the Victorian claim. Albumazar was a play first performed in 1614, adapted by a University wit called Thomas Tomkis from an Italian play called Lo Astrologo. The plot of Albumazar is quite dissimilar to that of She Stoops to Conquer but it contains, nevertheless, one comparable scene. Pandolfo, in order to extricate himself from having to pay a heavy debt to Albumazar, the astrologer, is advised by Cricca, his servant, to pretend that he has been robbed and that Albumazar is the principal suspect. Pandolfo, finding to his horror that he has indeed been the victim of a robbery rushes in to tell Cricca:

Pandolfo: "Helpe, helpe, theeves, theeves,
neighbours, I am rob'd, theeves,
theeves!"

Cricca: "What a noise make you, sir?"

Pan.: "Have I not reason
That thus am rob'd. Theeves,
theeves, call Constable, the Watch,
and Sergants. Friends and Con-
stables, Neighbours I am undone."

Cricca: "This well begunne
So hee hold out still with a higher
straine.

What ailes you sir?"

Pan.: "Cricca, my chamber's spoild
Of all my hangings, cloathes, and
silver plate.

Cricca: "Why this is bravely fain'd: continue sir.

Pan.: "Lay all the gold-smithes, Keepers,
Marshals, Baylives.

Cricca: "Fye Sir, your passion fall's, cry
louder, roare
That all the Streete may heare."

Pan.: "Theeves, theeves, theeves!
All that I had is gone, and more
than all."

Cricca: "Ha, ha, ha; hold out, hold out;
lay out a Lyons throate,
A little lowder."

Pan.: "I can cry no longer,
My throate's sore, I am rob'd, I
am rob'd, al's gone.
Both my owne treasure, and the
things I borrow'd.
Make thou an out-cry, I have lost
my voice:
Cry fire, and then they'l hear thee."

Cricca: "Good, good, theeves
What ha you lost?"

Pan.: "Wine, Jewels, Table-cloathes,
A cup-boord of rich plate."

Cricca: "Fye, you'le spoile all.
Now you out-do it. Say but a bowle
or two."

Pan.: "Villaine, I say al's gone; the room's
as cleane as a wip't looking-glasse:
oj me oj me."

Cricca: "What, in good earnest?"

Pan.: "Fool in accursed earnest".
(Act III sc. ii)²²

There is a definite resemblance between this scene and the one in She Stoops to Conquer. Cricca's praise of Pandolfo's acting of the part corresponds closely to Tony's praise of his mother and the exasperated rage and despair of Pandolfo is very similar to Mrs Hardcastle's. Whether or not Goldsmith knew Albumazar is a difficult question to answer. The play's degree of popularity varied considerably between its first performance before King James I at Cambridge and the first performance of She Stoops to Conquer. It appeared in 1704 as a 'new' play called The Metamorphosis by John Corey but this was a word for word reproduction or, in parts, a paraphrase of the earlier play. In 1744 it was adapted again, this time by James Ralph, as The Astrologer, a venture which enjoyed little success. The original play was revived by Garrick in 1747 and ran for six nights but it did not appear again until October 1773

when Garrick, hoping to capitalise on the success of the old style of humour, revived it yet again with a new prologue, which included a reference to the success of She Stoops to Conquer²³. It ran for five nights but after 19th of October 1773 was never again performed. It would, therefore, be very difficult to make any assumption about Goldsmith's knowledge of the play, especially as he neither referred to it nor quoted nor 'borrowed' from it in any of his works.

Sources suggested for individual characters

Although, as we have seen, originality was not a prerequisite for the success of a dramatic production, 18th century audiences were very conscious of the 'newness' of the main characters in their pieces and were quick to comment on the lack of it. 'The characters are, for the most part, entirely original', wrote the reviewer of She Stoops to Conquer in the Morning Chronicle for March 16. 'None of the Characters are absolutely new, yet hardly any of them are destitute of something original', argued the more cautious critic of The St. James's Chronicle in the edition for 13 - 17 March. The problem of identifying antecedents for Marlow and Tony Lumpkin, in particular, has given rise to much debate and speculation.

The characteristic which distinguishes Marlow from other young men in 18th century drama, is his vacillations between modesty and impudence and it is this trait which has intrigued the critics. The edition for 18 - 20 March of the St. James's Chronicle contains a long letter from a disgruntled reader under the pseudonym 'BOSSU', who, having voiced various criticisms of the play, proceeded to discuss its lack of originality:

... the character of the latter [Marlow] is extremely similar to that of Young Philpot, in the Farce of the Citizen; I mean only in regard to his Bashfulness in the Company of modest Women. The first Scene between Marlow and Miss Hardcastle

is almost a Transcript of a Scene of the same Nature between young Philpot and Maria ...

The Citizen (1761) was a play by Arthur Murphy, one of the most popular dramatists of the time and a friend of Goldsmith's. The scene referred to concerns Maria, who is to marry young Philpot, who is a rake and adventurer at night and a 'sedate book-keeper' during the day. Young Philpot, like Marlow, is unused to the society of modest women. Maria, who is a clever, lively girl, unimpressed by her unwilling suitor, plays the part of a fool so that young Philpot will refuse to marry her. Their interview certainly recalls the first meeting of Marlow and Kate in Act II pp. 145-8:

Young Philpot: "I think I had rather not speak to her now; I hate speaking to these modest women ..."

Maria: "Heigho!"

Young Philpot: "Ma'am!"

Maria: "Sir!"

Young Philpot: "I thought - I - I - I - did not you say something, Ma'am?"

Maria: "No Sir; nothing."

Young Philpot: "I beg your pardon, Ma'am".
(Act I sc. ii)²⁴

The context of this scene in The Citizen is very different to the corresponding scene in She Stoops to Conquer and although Goldsmith is virtually certain to have seen this play, there is no evidence to indicate that it influenced him.

In his Life of David Garrick, Thomas Davies writes of the success of She Stoops to Conquer and its characters:

Marlow has a slight resemblance of Charles in the Fop's Fortune, and something more of Lord Hardy in Steele's Funeral; and yet, with a few shades of these parts, he is discriminated from both.²⁵

The play Love Makes a Man; or the Fop's Fortune (1700) by Colley Cibber is a long improbable story with no analogy of plot to She Stoops to Conquer. Don Antonio wants to marry either one of his

sons, Carlos, the elder or Clodio, the younger, to the daughter of Don Charino. The chosen son shall also be his heir and the choice is left to Angelina, the bride. We are introduced to the character of Carlos in a similar way to the way we are introduced to Marlow in She Stoops to Conquer (Act I p. 112 ll. 4-7).

Don Charino: "Carlos, the elder, you say, is a great scholar, spends his whole life in the university, and loves his study?"

Antonio: "Nothing more, sir". (Act I sc i)²⁶

Clodio is chosen as Carlos seems too diffident and bookish. He, however, falls in love with Angelina but finds himself unable to speak to her:

Don Lewis: "Flesh and fire! Do but speak to her, man."

Carlos: "I cannot, sir, her look requires something of that distant awe, words of that soft respect, and yet such force and meaning too, that I should stand confounded to approach her, and yet I long to wish her joy. Oh! were I born to give it too!" (Act II sc. iii)

Here, although the result is the same - an inability to converse with the young lady - the cause is very different. This is true, likewise, of Lord Hardy in Steele's play The Funeral (1701). He is in love with Lady Sharlot but this incapacitates him:

But Faith Tom I shall not behave myself with half the Resolution you have under mine [his command, they are soldiers] for to confess my Weakness, tho' I know she loves me, tho' I know she is as Stedfastly mine, as her Heart can make her - I know not how I have no sublime an Idea of her high Value, and such a melting Tenderness dissolves my whole Frame, when I am near her, that my Tongue Faulters, my Nerves Shake, and my Heart so alternately Sinks and Rises that my premeditated Resolves vanish into Confusion, Down-cast Eyes, and Broken utterance --- (Act II sc. i)²⁷

Later, when he encounters Lady Sharlot, we have an example of his disability:

Lady S. (Aside): "Now is the tender Moment now approaching. There he is." (They approach and salute each other Trembling.) "Your Lordship will please to sit;" (After a very long pause, storn Glances, and irresolute Gesture.) "Your Lordship I think has travelled those parts of Italy where the Armies are --- "

Lord H.: "Yes Madam ---"

Lady S.: "I think I have Letters from you dated Mantua."

Lord H.: "I hope you have, Madam, and that their purpose ---"

Lady S.: "My Lord? -- " (Looking serious and confus'd)

Lord H.: "Was not your Ladyship going to say something?"

Lady S.: "I only attended to what your Lordship was going to say"

(Act II sc. iii)

In both these plays, the conversations scene bears a certain resemblance to Act II scene i in She Stoops to Conquer but the analogy must stop there as Marlow is not incapacitated by love like Carlos or by delicacy of feeling like Lord Hardy, but by the bashfulness he feels in the presence of a 'modest woman'. There is one other aspect, though, which does have some significance. Carlos is introduced as a scholar, having had no contact with society and none, consequently, with ladies. Marlow in Act II sc. i confides to Hastings: "My life has been chiefly spent in a college, or an inn, in seclusion from that lovely part of the creation that chiefly teach men confidence." (p. 129 ll. 5-7).

Another parallel may be cited here. Marlow seems very different from the young scholar Hardcastle expected: "What could my old friend Sir Charles mean by recommending his son to me as the modestest man in town?" (Act III p.157 ll. 13-14). In

The Stolen Heiress or The Salamanca Doctor Outwitted (1702)

by Mrs Centlivre, Sancho has been sent by his father a suitor to Lavinia, the daughter of Larich. He is, in reality, a scholar, but is misled by Lavinia's true lover, into acting the part of a fop. Larich is amazed by his impudent behaviour:

Larich: "Your father writ me word, that his Son that was to marry my daughter, was a Scholar, wholly given up to Books."

Sancho: "My Father was an errant Ass for his Pains. I ne'er read a Book in my Life but I was beat to, and those I forgot as soon as I left School. A Scholar! He lies in his Throat that told you so."

(Act II sc. ii)²⁸

Though likenesses exist between Carlos, Lord Hardy, and Sancho and Goldsmith's Marlow, there is no evidence that any of them had any direct influence on him. Whereas Love makes a Man and The Funeral were fairly frequently performed during Goldsmith's years in London, The Stolen Heiress was not once revived.

The most recent critic to claim to have identified a source for Marlow, is Arthur Lytton Sells in his biography of Goldsmith²⁹. The play he suggests is Le Glorieux (1732), by the French playwright Néricault-Déstouches. Marlow's timidity "is almost certainly suggested by the scene between Isabelle and the tongue-tied Philinte ... while his earlier anxiety that Hastings and Miss Neville should not leave them en tête-à-tête recalls Philinte's desire for Lisette to remain in the room to help out the conversation". (p.348). There is, in fact, a number of similarities between Le Glorieux and She Stoops to Conquer. Both plays concern a young girl, Lisette in Le Glorieux, who assumes the part of a soubrette and succeeds in winning the love of a young nobleman in spite of her disguise. Valere, in his dilemma, has something of Marlow's growing appreciation of Kate's qualities above her station:

Lisette: "Me trouvez-vous l'air de condition
Que donne la naissance et l'éducation?
Et croyez-vous mes traits, mes facons,
mon langage,
Propres à soutenir un noble personnage?"

Valère: "Un amant sur ce point est un juge suspect:
Mais vous m'avez d'abord inspiré le respect,
La vénération. Qui les a pu produire?
Votre rang? votre bien? Plût au ciel. Je
soupire
Lorsque je vois l'état ou vous réduit le sort:
Mais pour vous abaisser il fait un vain effort,
Et, de quelques parens que vous soyez issue
Chacun remarque en vous à la première vue
Certain air de grandeur qui frappe, qui saisit:
Et ce que je vous dis tout le monde le dit".
(Act II sc. ii)³⁰

Philinte's courtship of Isabelle is not of sufficient importance in Le Glorieux to be considered as a source for Marlow. Philinte is very timid and in love. His is merely the inability of a shy man to express his love and he is completely disregarded by Isabelle. She wants to marry her other suitor, Le Comte de Tufière (the 'Glorieux' of the title) in spite of his insufferable arrogance and pride, as Kate wants to marry Marlow. The closest connection between the two plays seems to me to occur in the final scenes where the Count, like Marlow, is humiliated and humbled in front of both his father and the father of the girl he loves. The tone, spirit, characters and subject matter of Le Glorieux are quite different to those of She Stoops to Conquer and its claims to be a source are correspondingly slight. This, I feel, outweighs the contrasting evidence, which is that a copy of the plays of Déstouches was among those in Goldsmith's library.

Only one possible antecedent has been suggested for Mrs Hardcastle and this was by Gertrude van Arsdale Ingalls in the article mentioned above³¹. Ingalls quotes an extract from Steele's Spectator No. 427, which is an anecdote about a certain Lady Bluemantle:

She is so exquisitely restless and peevish, that she quarrels with all about her, and sometimes in a Freak will instantly change her Habitation. To indulge this Humour, she is led about the grounds belonging to the same House she is in and the Persons to whom she is to remove, being in the Plot, are ready to receive her at her own Chamber again. At stated Times, the gentlewoman at whose House she supposes to be at the Time, is sent for to quarrel with, according to her common Custom: When they have a Mind to drive the Jest, she is immediately urged to that Degree, that she will board in a Family with which she has never yet been; and away she will go this instant, and tell them all that the rest have been saying of them. By this means she has been an Inhabitant of every House in the Place, without stirring from the same Habitation; and the many Stories which every Body furnishes her with to favour that Deceit, make her the general Intelligencer of the Town.

Ingalls continues by asserting:

Here is an astonishing concurrence not only of action, but of character, - for it is evident that both Mrs Hardcastle and Lady Bluemantle have the same 'humour' - and there is even a similarity in the formation of the two names. It will hardly be doubted, therefore, that Steele's story furnished Goldsmith with a direct suggestion for the corresponding incident in his comedy.

Although we have seen that Goldsmith was well acquainted with The Spectator at the time he was writing She Stoops to Conquer, this is scarcely sufficient evidence to induce us to accept this analogy as an indisputable source. It need hardly be pointed out that, unlike Lady Bluemantle, Mrs Hardcastle is no willing party to the events of the coach trip and she decides to make the journey for greater reasons than 'a Freak' in her nature. We have no indication in the play that Mrs Hardcastle is an inveterate gossip, though Goldsmith's portrayal of her character would not make this wholly inconsistent.

The only characteristic these two ladies do have in common, it seems to me, is that they both 'quarrel with all about [them]' but this cannot be considered a sufficiently uncommon trait for there to be so direct a connection between them as Ingalls claims.

A number of dramatic antecedents have been suggested for the character of Tony Lumpkin and these present us with certain problems, as, taken individually, they all seem remarkably plausible. Until about fifty years ago, the view generally held was that Tony Lumpkin was derived from Steele's Humphrey Gubbin in The Tender Husband (1705), John Forster having, perhaps, been the first to notice this³². However, in 1912, an article appeared called "Shadwell's Contributions to She Stoops to Conquer and to The Tender Husband" in which the author, R.S. Forsythe, claimed that Tony Lumpkin was drawn, not from Humphrey Gubbin, but from Young Hartford in Shadwell's The Lancashire Witches (1681)³³. Forsythe allowed, however, that Goldsmith probably knew both plays.

Humphrey Gubbin, in The Tender Husband, has, instead of a domineering and capricious mother, like Tony Lumpkin, a father whom he describes as, 'A Weazel-fac'd cross old Gentleman with Spindle Shanks' (Act I sc. ii)³⁴. Like Mrs Hardcastle, Humphrey's father praises his son's qualities before others and scolds him indiscriminately, in and out of company. Like Tony, Humphrey has been 'kept back' by his father. Like Tony, he will inherit £1500 on his coming of age. Again like Tony, he is already of age but does not realise it. He muses on this puzzle to Clerimont, the lover of Biddy Tipkin, who is Humphrey's cousin and the girl he is supposed to marry:

Why, as sure as you are there, they have kept me back. I have been told by some of the Neighbourhood, that I was born the very year the Pigeon-house was built, and every Body knows the Pigeon-house is three-and-twenty --- Why? I find there have

been tricks play'd me, I have obey'd
him all along, as if I had been oblig'd
to it. (Act I sc. i)

Clerimont's and Bidly's situation bears a certain resemblance to that of Hastings and Constance Neville. Bidly and Humphrey are utterly opposed until they find that they share a disinclination to marry the other and Humphrey becomes instrumental, though not intentionally like Tony Lumpkin, in bringing the couple together.

Whereas Humphrey's pastimes remain unmentioned in The Tender Husband, Young Hartford's in The Lancashire Witches bear, as Forsythe points out, a distinct resemblance to Tony Lumpkin's. He delights, says his father, Sir Edward Hartford, 'In Dogs and Horses, Peasants, Ale and Sloth.' (Act I.)³⁵ There are similarities between the plots of the Lancashire Witches and She Stoops to Conquer. Bellfort and Doubty, two London gentlemen, come down into the country intending to win Isabella Hartford and her cousin Theodosia Shacklehead. The two ladies are threatened with marriages to their cousins, Sir Timothy Shacklehead, a foolish son of a doting mother, and Young Hartford, described in the dramatis personae as 'a clownish, sordid, Country Fool, that loves nothing but drinking Ale, and Country Sports.' Like Marlow and Hastings, the two gentlemen lose their way at nightfall and ask a country fellow for help. His directions also clearly recall Tony's to Marlow and Hastings as does his revelation of the present company in the great house:

Doubty:"... prethee how far is it to Whalley?"

Clod:" Why, yeow are quite besaid th'road mon, yeow shoulden a gone down th'honk by Thomas o Georges, and then een at yate, and tur'd dawn th'lone, and left the Steepo o'th reaght hont."

Bellfort:"Prithee don't tell us what we should have done, but how far it is to Whalley?"

Clod:"Why marry four mail and a bit."

Doubty:"Wee'l give thee an Angel and shew the way thither."

Clod: "Marry that's whaint, I conno see my hont, how con Ay show yeo to Whalley to neeght."

Belfort: "Canst thou shew us to any house where we may have Shelter and Lodging to night? we are Gentlemen and strangers, and will pay you well for't."

Clod: "Ay, by'r Lady con I, th'best ludging and diet too in aw Loncashire. Yonder at th'hough, where yeow seen th'leeghts there."

Doubty: "Whose house is that?"

Clod: "Why what a pox where han yeow lived? why yeow are Strongers indeed! why 'tis Sir Yedward Harfourts, he keeps oppen hawse to all Gentry, yeou'st be welcome to him by day and by neeght, he's Lord of aw here abauts."

Belfort: "My Mistresses Father. Luck if it be thy will, have at my Isabella; Canst thou guide us thither?"

Clod: "Ay, Ay, there's a paver of Company there naw, Sir Jeffery Shacklehead and the Knight his Son and Daughter.

Doubty: "Lucky above my wishes, O my dear Theodosia, how my Heart leaps at her! prethee guide us thither, wee'l pay thee well." (Act I)

Having reached the house and found their mistresses, after various intrigues, the two gentlemen win the hands of the girls. Sir Edward Hartfort is a near relation of Goldsmith's Mr Hardcastle. They share a mistrust of all things French and a reverence for old things:

Doubty: "You speak like one descended from those Noble Ancestors that made France tremble, and all the rest of Europe Honour 'em."

Sir Edward: "I reverence the Memory of 'em: But our new-fashion'd Gentry love the French too well to fight against 'em; they are bred abroad without knowing any thing of our Constitution and come home tainted with Foppery, slavish Principles, and Popish religion." (Act III)

Young Hartford and Sir Timothy Shackhead seem both to possess characteristics later found in Tony Lumpkin. Sir Timothy is blindly doted upon by his foolish mother. Young Hartford feels no enthusiasm for his proposed marriage to Theodosia and much prefers his 'Sports' but, unlike Tony, he sees no way to avoid it:

Theodosia: "I am very indifferent about this Matrimony, and for ought I see, you are so too."

Young Hartford: "I must confess you are as fine a Gentlewoman as ever I saw, and I am not worthy of you; but my Father says he will disinherit me, if I will not marry you to Morrow; therefore I desire you would please to think on't."

Theo.: "I will think on't."

Young Hartford: "You shall command all my Estate, and do what you will; for my part I resolve all my life, to give up my self wholly to my Sports, and my Horses, and my Dogs, and to drink now and then a Cup of Ale with my Neighbors, I hate Wine."

Theo.: "You will do very well."

Young Hartford: "We must be married to Morrow at Ten, I can be going a Hawking at Powts in the height of the Season ..."
(Act III)

From this it seems as though Forsythe has a point. However, whereas Steele's play was frequently performed throughout the eighteenth century, the last performance of The Lancashire Witches was in 1736. In 1760 The Tender Husband was performed at Covent Garden with Shuter, Goldsmith's first Mr Hardcastle as Humphrey Gubbins. A full discussion of the whole question by John Harrington Smith called 'Tony Lumpkin and the Country Booby Type in Antecedent English Comedy' attempted to place Young Hartford and Humphrey Gubbins in a long tradition of English boobies³⁶. Smith believes Humphrey Gubbins contribution to the creation of Tony Lumpkin, to have been much greater than Young Hartford's but claims that "two and possibly three other boobies not previously adduced would seem to be involved". (p. 1039). Smith regards The Lancashire

Witches to have furnished the framework for She Stoops to Conquer. He stresses Humphrey's liveliness and humour and the similarities in his role in the plot to Tony Lumpkin's in She Stoops to Conquer. However, in one of Tony's traits Smith sees a number of antecedents. He recalls Tony's difficulty in reading Hastings' letter:

Tony: "... A damn'd cramp piece of penmanship, as ever I saw in my life. I can read your print-hand very well. But here there such handles, and shanks, and dashes, that one can scarce tell the head from the tail. To Anthony Lumpkin, Esquire. It's very odd, I can read the outside of my letters, where my own name is, well enough. But when I come to open it, it's all - - buzz. That's hard, very hard; for the inside of the letter is always the cream of a correspondence ... A damn'd up and down hand, as if it was disguised in liquor. (Reading). Dear Sir. Ay, that's that. Then there's an M, and a T and an S, but whether the next be an izzard or an R, confound me, I cannot tell." (Act IV pp. 189-190)

Humphrey Gubbin at one point in The Tender Husband, says, "I am very glad that I can hardly read". Smith also cites, however, The Wild Gallant (1663) by Dryden:

Loveby, with the country knight Sir Timorous looking over his shoulder as he writes, is first irked at this infringement upon his privacy, then mollified as soon as he recognises the person; "Have you no more manners than to overlook a man when he's a Writing? - Oh, I'st you Sir Timorous? You may stand still; now I think on't you cannot read Written hand." Later in the same scene this foible is touched again when Isabelle, for her own purposes in her intrigue to capture the knight, gives him a letter to read. Sir Timorous painfully spells out the salutation, then gives up: "Tim. D, e, a, r, e, dear, r, o, g, u, e, ro-gue. Pray Madam read it: this written hand is such a damn'd pedantique thing I could never away with it." (pp. 1042-1043)³⁷

Characters in The Mock Duellists (1673) by Peter Belon and Molière's Georges Dandin (1668) are also cited by Smith to illustrate further the prevalence of illiteracy among country boobies in seventeenth and eighteenth century drama.

Smith points out that, as we have already noticed, whereas Tony Lumpkin has an oppressive mother, Humphrey Gubbin's burden is a father. There are few antecedents for such a mother/son relationship but John Harrington Smith notes one, that of the Widow Blackacre and her son Jerry in The Plain Dealer (1676) by Wycherley. However, Smith dismisses this analogy immediately, saying that it seems "to have made no impression on She Stoops to Conquer." (p. 1043) This is, surely, a rash judgment, as the relationship between the widow and her son seems to me to be closer to Mrs Hardcastle's relationship with Tony than any other in antecedent drama. Depending on Jerry's conduct he is either his mother's pet or her 'heathen rogue' (Act III sc. i)³⁸. She, like Humphrey Gubbin's father, and Mrs Hardcastle, has kept from her son that he is of age and entitled to his inheritance:

Freeman: "Do you want money, squire? I am sorry a man of your estate should want money."

Jerry: "Nay, my mother will ne'er let me be of age; until then, she says, -"

Freeman: "At age? Why you are at age already to have spent an estate man. There are younger than you have lost many thousand pound at play."

Jerry: "Ay, they are happy sparks! Nay, I know some of my school-fellows who, when we were at school were two years younger than me; but now, I know not how, are grown men before me, and go where they will and look to themselves. But my curmudgeonly mother won't allow me wherewithal to be a man of myself with." (Act III sc. i)

The Plain Dealer was very frequently performed throughout the eighteenth century. John Harrington Smith is more inclined to credit Woman's Wit; or, the Lady in Fashion (1696) by Cibber with

having had a direct influence on She Stoops to Conquer and also sees a likeness in the mother/son relationship in the anonymous comedy in The Lottery (1728). However, Smith succeeds in drawing links between these two plays and The Tender Husband rather than She Stoops to Conquer. There are possible parallels between Woman's Wit, The Lottery and She Stoops to Conquer in the shape of the mother/son relationship but my reaction to these, as indeed to most of John Harrington Smith's analogies, is best expressed by Arthur Friedman in his comments on this paper³⁹. Friedman says, in essence, that John Harrington Smith takes for sources plays which are only parallels and which could be coincidences. John Harrington Smith himself admits that he has no external evidence to submit and I feel that his "antecedents" must be regarded, not as definite sources for Tony Lumpkin, but as part of a tradition of the sort that will be discussed later in this chapter.

There is one more claim to be considered, if only from the uncompromising nature of its wording. Percy Fitzgerald, in his biography of Samuel Foote, makes the following assertion which I quote in full:

From him [Foote] Goldsmith certainly took the idea of Tony, the loutish son of a foolish mother. In Foote's case it was a foolish father. In both cases the parents had settled a suitable match for their offspring, but their designs were frustrated by their son's marrying a buxom country girl - Mally Pengrouse in Foote's play. In both pieces - 'The Knights' and 'She Stoops to Conquer' - each heroine is courted by a young spark from town, and each young lady has been selected for two uncouth sons. The young Timothy extols his Mally Pengrouse, just as Tony does his Bet. Goldsmith's piece begins with Mrs Hardcastle's complaints of the stupidity of a country life - "Here we live in an old rambling castle, seeing nobody," etc. Her husband makes growling sarcastic comments on his wife's complaints. Mrs Aircastle grumbles in the same way: "Folks that travelled barefoot to London roll down in

their coaches, but still we stick." When the mother who dotes on her Tony, says, "He coughs sometimes," old Hardcastle growls out, "Yes, when his liquor goes the wrong way." Mrs Aircastle says to Timothy, "Shoulders back!" on which Aircastle, "His breastbone sticks out like a turkey's" and adds, "Grace! he has neither grace nor grease!"

That Tony Lumpkin was suggested to 'Goldy' by Foote's 'Knights' will be clear to anyone who reads this passage between Timothy and Hartop. It is exactly Hastings patronising Tony:

Hart.: "But have you left in Cornwall nothing that you regret the loss of more than hunting and wrestling?"

Tim.: "Nan? what?"

Har.: "No favourite she?"

Tim.: "Arra, I coupled Favourite and Jowler together, and sure they tugged it all the way up. Part with Favourite! No, I thank you for nothing: you must know I nursed Favourite myself; uncle's huntsman was going to the mill-pond to drown all Music's puppies; so I saved she: but, fath, I'll tell you a comical story: at Lanston they both broke loose and eat a whole loin-o'-veal and a leg of beef: Christ! how landlord swore! fath, the poor fellow was almost mazed; it made me die wi' laughing: but how came you to know about our Favourite?"

Hart.: "A circumstance so material to his son could not escape the knowledge of Sir Gregory Gazette's friends. But here you mistook me a little, Squire Tim; I meant whether your affections were not settled upon some pretty girl; has not some Cornish lass caught your heart?"

Tim.: "Why, God, the old man will hear; jog a tiny bit this way; -- won't a'tell father?"

Hart.: "Upon my honour!"

Tim.: "Why, then I'll tell you the whole story, more or less. Do you know Mally Pengrouse?"

Hart.: "I am not so happy."

Tim.: "She's uncle's milkmaid; she's as handsome, Lord! Her face all red and white like the inside of a shoulder of mutton; so I made love to our Mally; and just, fath, as I

had got her goodwill ro run away to Exeter and be married, uncle found it out and sent word to father, and father sent for me home; but I don't love her a bit the worser for that; but, 'icod, if you tell father, he'll knock my brains out, for he says I'll disparage the family, and mother's as mad as a March hare about it; so father and mother ha' brought me to be married to some young body in these parts. "

Hart.: "What, is my lady here?"

Tim.: "No, sure; Dame Winifred, as father calls her, could not come along --"

Then there is an interview between Timothy and the lady, neither wishing for the marriage. She tells him: "Suppose I won't be married to you?" Tim answers her: "Nay, miss, such I can't help it, faith and soul! But father and mother bid me come a-courtin, and if you won't ha' me I'll tell father so." Tony and Miss Neville have the same sort of confidences in 'Goldy's' comedy. It turns out that Timothy has gone and married Mally Pengrouse. Hartop then listens to Timothy and encourages him on the score of this Mally Pengrouse, he himself wishing to secure the young lady who was intended for Timothy, just as Hastings does.⁴⁰

Fitzgerald, with admirable single-mindedness, then continues by claiming that The Good-natured Man also derived largely from Foote. In reading the extract from The Knights (1749) that he quotes, we are aware of resemblances to She Stoops to Conquer. The relationship between Timothy and his mother seems to fit easily into the parent/child tradition we have already found and certainly is similar to, though not so pronounced in the play, as Tony's relationship with his mother. The Aircastles bear a resemblance to the Hardcastles, and not only in name. Timothy's style of speech as well as his feelings for Mally Pengrouse recall Tony Lumpkin and his Bet Bouncer. Foote was a highly successful playwright and friend of Goldsmith's, who did much to maintain the cause of true comedy in the theatre. It is likely that Goldsmith knew his play. But there is no other evidence that it influenced him in She Stoops to Conquer. It is also, perhaps, significant, that I have

found no contemporary allusion to the similarity between the plays, a curious fact in view of the fierce theatrical jealousies and quarrels which were very prevalent at the time. Such provocation as this would have been, would not have passed unnoticed.

In the General Evening Post's edition of Tuesday March 16th - Thursday March 18th, there is a long letter to the Editor from 'Catcall', which is highly critical of *She Stoops to Conquer*. The writer questions the originality of the play's theme and continues by pointing out:

Indeed there is an oath which he frequently puts into Hardcastle's mouth, with which it is impossible not to be charmed; this is "By the hand of my body", and yet if we recollect the constant "may I never do an ill turn", in the character of Sir William Meadows, perhaps the reader may think he is indebted to the author of "*Love in a Village*" for that beauty, as well as for the winding up of his double catastrophe.

Love in a Village (1762) was an opera by the recently disgraced Isaac Bickerstaffe, which had enjoyed great success. 'Catcall's' objection to Mr Hardcastle stems more from his dislike of his coarse expressions than because of his similarity to Sir William Meadows, who is a fairly commonplace version of the estimable father. His part in the plot bears more resemblance to that of Sir Charles Marlow in *She Stoops to Conquer* than to Mr Hardcastle's. However, 'Catcall's' other claim, that the denouement of *She Stoops to Conquer* was derived from *Love in a Village* deserves more attention. This play concerns Rosetta who has run away from her parents "to avoid an odious marriage" to a man who preferred "his dear studies at Oxford" to marriage with her. (Act I sc.i)⁴¹ (Perhaps another in the tradition we have already noted of the reluctant scholar-lover.) She is staying, disguised as a maid, with her old schoolfellow Lucinda and the latter's "preposterous gouty father, and a superannuated maiden aunt." (Act sc.i.) Rosetta is being pursued by Lucinda's father

and indeed, she says that she has been subjected to the attentions of "so many admirers since I commenced Abigail, that I am quite charmed with my situation." (Act I sc.i.) Both girls have secret lovers. Lucinda's lover Eustace is, like Constance Neville's, debarred the house by her suspicious aunt. Rosetta finds, to her dismay, that she is in love with Thomas the gardener, who is really Young Meadows, who has run away to avoid marrying, according to his father's commands, a girl he never saw. Young Meadows, in love with Rosetta but despising her situation as chambermaid, suffers the same pangs as Marlow:

I feel my passion grow for her every day more
and more violent. Well; would I marry her?
would I make a mistress of her, if I could?
Two things, called prudence and honour, forbid
either. (Act I sc.i)

Eustace secretly gains entrance to the house. Like Hastings, he has a post-chaise ready for their elopement. (Act II) When Lucinda's father and aunt come in, at loggerheads as always, Eustace passes for a new music master. Rosetta and Young Meadows confess their love but not their identities. Sir William, Young Meadows' father, arrives and discovers that Rosetta was the girl his son was supposed to marry. He tells her the truth. The 'double-catastrophe' which then follows is similar to that in She Stoops to Conquer. Young Meadows, waiting for Rosetta, is found by Rosetta who brings in Rosetta and reveals all, with much less dexterity than Goldsmith in his play. Eustace turns out to be a friend of Young Meadows, who discovers him to Lucinda's father, old Woodcock. Eustace, like Hastings, throws himself and his plans to elope with Lucinda on Woodcock's mercy. Woodcock is implacable until his sister, with whom he always disagrees on principle, abuses the young couple, from which moment he is in favour of the match. This final scene seems, though similar in structure to the one in She Stoops to Conquer far more mechanical, though it has comic features of its own. Goldsmith is virtually certain to have known the opera and it is certainly

possible that it influenced him in She Stoops to Conquer.

Sources Suggested for Lines in the Play

We have seen close parallels drawn between speeches in a number of plays and She Stoops to Conquer, which reveal a near relationship in the choice of words but I know of only one case of such a parallel, which comes from a work with no other connections with the play. In Notes and Queries, Martin Itkowitz cites a parallel with Marlow's observation in Act II:⁴² 'Travellers, George, must pay in all places. The only difference is, that in good inns, you pay dearly for luxuries; in bad inns you are fleeced and starved.' (p. 128 ll.23-25) Itkowitz quotes a passage from Fielding's A Voyage to Lisbon: '... indeed the difference between the best house and the worst is, that at the former you pay for luxury, at the latter for nothing.' He then supports his case by arguing that:

As a reader and critic of travel literature, Goldsmith almost certainly would have known Fielding's 'Journal'. More concretely, the 1766 edition of Fielding's works which included the 'Journal', was in Goldsmith's possession at the time of his death ... In any case, the similarity of the statements seems too great to have been merely accidental.

There is certainly a strong resemblance between the two remarks and Goldsmith's possession of Fielding's book would support the claim, nevertheless, we cannot say for certain that Fielding's comment inspired Marlow's. It is a reasonable enough statement that any experienced traveller could make and we know that Marlow, like Goldsmith and Fielding, is said to have seen much of the world. This qualification is not meant to discount the possibility of a direct link.⁴³

What seems to emerge from this survey of supposed 'sources' is that, although some of them may have made direct contributions

to She Stoops to Conquer it is more likely that they were antecedents in several minor but tenacious theatrical traditions, of which Goldsmith's play was a much enriched descendant. It would be unduly rash to discard the contributions of Le Jeu de l'Amour et du Hasard, Le Galant Coureur, Albumazar and, in particular, The Beaux' Stratagem as well as those made by the possible 'real life' stories such as the Featherstone incident as merely part of a tradition.

Sells, admittedly, goes too far in his attempts to attribute Goldsmith's writings to French sources. He claims that Goldsmith meant Kate, Hastings and Mrs Hardcastle to know French, merely on the strength of the fact that Kate speaks of Marlow's 'mauvaise honte', Hastings desires a 'tête à tête' with Constance, Kate says 'allons', Mrs Hardcastle 'tête'. (p. 164) These phrases were part of polite conversation and quite assimilated into the language. However, among the books in Goldsmith's library was a considerable number of French books, including plays. One of the more tantalising entries in the catalogue is 'French Plays by Avis. Ditto by Grange. Ditto by Champ-mèle. Théâtre de la Foire, Ditto by Favart and five more.' This could explain the absence in the catalogue, of plays by Marivaux, Brueys and Palaprat, among others. The probability that Goldsmith was familiar with L'Avocat Pâtelin, is heightened by the fact that, in gratitude to Quick, the first Tony Lumpkin, he adapted for his benefit night, another play by Brueys and Palaprat, called Le Grandeur (1693)⁴⁴. Goldsmith greatly admired French theatre and French acting, his admiration arising, presumably, out of performances he had seen⁴⁵. Although touring visits by French and other foreign players had been common, by the middle of the eighteenth century, they were less popular and even occasioned hostility and violence⁴⁶. However, a very large number of French successes were adapted for the English stage, with or without acknowledgment. Dryden, Vanbrugh, Wycherley, Fielding and Cibber were among those who translated and adapted

plays, by Molière alone. As Allardyce Nicoll puts it:

Contact with the continent, moreover, was becoming with every decade more close, and as a consequence the prevalence of adaptation and of translation increased. If Paris had a successful comedy, it was sure to be brought out on the London stage, so that for a large part of our period we seem to see nothing but a tissue of scenes hastily appropriated from French dramas and as hastily welded together⁴⁷.

However, there is no record of any performances in England of Le Jeu de l'Amour et du Hazard after 1734 nor of any of the other French plays proposed as sources, nor of any adaptations of them. We are, therefore, led to examine the records of the French companies in Paris to see whether Goldsmith could have seen the plays when he was there. Such an investigation is immediately hampered by the fact that we do not know exactly when Goldsmith was there, on his first trip, at least.

A survey of the frequency of performance of the major French plays demonstrates that, while Molière was easily the most popular throughout the eighteenth century, Marivaux, Le Grand, Destouches, Brueys and Palaprat were also among the most frequently performed authors. In his study of the Comédie Française, Joannidès lists plays given more than five hundred times during this period⁴⁸. L'Avocat Pâtelin is very high up with eight hundred and eighty-five performances; Le Jeu de l'Amour et du Hazard has seven hundred and seventy-eight. At the time when Goldsmith would have first been in Paris, Le Jeu de l'Amour et du Hazard was being performed only at le Théâtre Italien and we know that it was performed five times in 1755 and nine times in 1756, being particularly popular at that time. We know also that Goldsmith was in Paris in 1770 and during that year L'Avocat Pâtelin, Le Grondeur, Le Glorieux, Le Galant Coureur and Le Legs all received a number of performances at the Comédie Française. During 1755 and 1756 all these plays, except Le Galant Coureur were performed. We are, therefore, fairly

safe in the assumption that Goldsmith, with his love of French theatre, may very well have seen at least some of these plays in Paris, as they were performed during all the time he was there. Internal evidence also links She Stoops to Conquer closely with Le Jeu de l'Amour et du Hasard, in particular and this play has certainly a very strong claim to being considered as a source. The claim of the other main contender, The Beaux' Stratagem, as put by Leichsering, was dismissed by Sells as follows:

Si Farquhar est pour quelque chose dans 'Elle s'abaisse pour vaincre', c'est dans le dialogue et la technique. Dans le 'Stratagème', Aimwell et Archer descendent à une auberge à Lichfield; Cherry, la fille de l'aubergiste, est l'un des personnages secondaires de la comédie. Plus tard, les petits-maitres paraissent dans le chateau voisin où ils rencontrent les deux dames (Mrs Sullen et Dorinda) qu'ils épouseront. - Ce sont là des ressemblances qu'on ne remarque guère: les deux pièces diffèrent beaucoup dans le fond aussi bien que dans le ton. (p. 156 note 4)

Sells is quite fair to The Beaux' Stratagem here. The plots are very different and Cherry's part in the play is hardly comparable to Kate's role of heroine in She Stoops to Conquer. Nevertheless, The Beaux' Stratagem is the only play of all those suggested that we can be certain Goldsmith knew. Quite apart from the many basic similarities in the setting and the fact that The Beaux' Stratagem was one of the most popular plays of the eighteenth century, Kate, in Act III, having been told that Marlow has mistaken her for the bar-maid of the supposed inn, asks her maid, 'Tell me Pimple, how do you like my present dress. Don't you think I look something like Cherry in the Beaux Stratagem?' (p. 168 ll.11-12) In addition to this, we may infer that Goldsmith's friends saw certain similarities between the two plays from Sir Joshua Reynolds' suggestion that the play be called 'The Belle's Stratagem'. Goldsmith had a

fervent admiration for Farquhar. He always numbered the dramatist among the great British playwrights⁴⁹.

Of the Featherstone incident, there has been one significant confirmation. Mark Schorer, in his article quoted above, refers to a speech by the Reverend Mr John Graham which was delivered in 1820 at Ballymahon, where Goldsmith spent much of his childhood⁵⁰. Graham said that the story was 'confirmed to me by the late Sir Thomas Featherston, Bart. a short time before his death'.

Whether or not this story is authentic and whether or not Goldsmith drew directly from any of the above-mentioned works, what we have demonstrated does point to the probability of the existence of a number of concurrent traditions of plot, theme and character in English drama of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, from which She Stoops to Conquer was a substantial beneficiary. The rest of this chapter will attempt to describe some of these traditions and to pin-point their influence on She Stoops to Conquer.

Traditions

An excellent full-length study of the traditions which coalesced in She Stoops to Conquer and The Good-natured Man is Not Merely Sentimental by Elmar Lehmann⁵¹. Lehmann examines the stock elements in She Stoops to Conquer; for example, the conventional plot using two pairs of lovers who, in order to marry, must contend with and ultimately defeat obstacles such as parental opposition, materialism and class differences. In so doing, Lehmann traces the development of drama from the advent of sentimental comedy in Cibber's Love's Last Shift (1696), the plays of Goldsmith, with which he hoped to eclipse the sentimental aberration. Lehmann demonstrates how Goldsmith, in his portrayal of Marlow and his predicament, has drawn on and added to a number of traditions in English drama. In the remainder of this chapter, I shall expand the traditions which have already emerged and suggest other possible

ones from which Goldsmith appears to have profited⁵²

As well as antecedents for Marlow in the scholar/lovers of Shadwell, Centlivre and Bickerstaffe, we have also already found earlier versions of the parent/son relationship of Tony Lumpkin and his mother in the plays of Wycherley, Steele and others. As John Harrington Smith has shown, the country booby had had a long history before She Stoops to Conquer. The booby as lover or husband had also previous manifestations. In The Relapse (1696) by Vanbrugh, Berinthia complains of her husband in her way which recalls Mrs Sullen's objections to her own spouse and which would certainly be applicable to Tony Lumpkin, were his marriage to Constance Neville allowed to take place:

He loved the country, I the town. He
hawks and hounds, I coaches and equipage.
He eating and drinking, I carding and play-
ing. He the sound of a horn, I the squeak
of a fiddle. (Act II sc.i)⁵³

G. H. Nettleton, writing of Miss Prue in Congreve's Love for Love (1695), remarks on a scene 'with her sailor suitor Ben, whose awkward advances lead to a mutual disagreement which anticipates the scene of Tony Lumpkin and Miss Neville'.⁵⁴ In this scene in particular, it seems to me that the character of Ben is more reminiscent of Young Hartfort in the Lancashire Witches, who reluctantly resigns himself to marriage with Theodosia, so long as it does not interfere with his day's hunting:

Young Hartfort: "My father says he will
disinherit me, if I will not marry you to
Morrow; therefore I desire you would
please to think on't." (Act III)

Ben: "Look you forsooth, I am as it were
bound for the land of matrimony. 'Tis
a voyage d'ye see that was none of my
seeking. I was commanded by father, and
if you like of it, mayhap I may steer into
your harbour. How say you, mistress?"
(Act III sc.i)⁵⁵

Ben's use of nautical phraseology in this speech is reminiscent of Tony Lumpkin's use of the language most familiar to him when talking to Hastings of Constance:

Hastings: "... there is a meek modesty about her that charms me."

Tony: "Yes, but curb her never so little she kicks up, and you're flung in a ditch." (Act II p. 156 ll. 1-5)

Another trait of the booby may be a willingness to help his proposed bride to marry her true lover and thereby rid himself of her. Humphrey Gubbin and Theodosia Shacklehead get on only when they find they do not want to marry each other. This situation is not limited to boobies alone. Harriet and Young Bellair in Etherege's Man of Mode (1676) deceive their parents by pretending to court each other, only in order to marry their true lovers. This theme or tradition recurs in Le Legs and The Good-natured Man and in Tony Lumpkin's reluctant wooing of Constance Neville and his eagerness to assist her elopement with Hastings.

One of the most important features of She Stoops to Conquer in the light of traditions in drama and literature generally in the eighteenth century, is its country setting. The opposition of country to town is a theme deriving from classical literature, has had perennial and universal relevance and exercise. After the Restoration, it seemed to find renewed vitality and scope in the plays of Congreve and Wycherley, who depicted the contrasting values of town and country and the lasting influence of the one on the other. Love and country life, were often seen as quite incompatible. As Nettleton points out, Dorimant, in Etherege's Man of Mode (1676) asserts to Harriet as the highest proof of his affection that to be with her he could live in the country "and not send one thought to London". (p. 75)

The situation of Marlow and Hastings as two London gentlemen who come down into the country and find love there, has a great

many precedents and may, in itself, be said to constitute a tradition. In The Country Lasses (1753) by Charles Johnson, two London gentlemen, Heartwell and Modely, come down into the country and encounter two country girls who live with Old Freehold, their father and uncle respectively. 'He is an erstwhile rake who has turned violently against London and its corrupt pursuits. The gentlemen fall for the girls who reject their improper advances. Their reaction typifies the theme:

Heartwell: " My Heart burns within me---
She sinks into my Mind---I must have her,
tho' at the Price of Liberty ---I'll marry
her, but what will the World say---I'll
Renounce it; I'll abjure it; ... "
(Act I.)⁵⁶

There is a surprising number of heroines in plays who invoke this reaction from the hero, using much the same tactics as Kate in She Stoops to Conquer. We have already observed that The Beaux' Stratagem, Le Jeu de l'Amour et du Hasard, and Love in a Village all involve girls who, from a menial position capture the heart of a noble lover⁵⁷. Another play with this theme is William Pople's The Double Deceit (1736). Sir William Courtlove designs his son Young Courtlove and his nephew Gaylife for two rich ladies. When the young men are reluctant, he threatens them with disinheritance. They decide to examine the ladies disguised as their own servants Frank and Jerry. Harriet and Fanny Richly, hearing of their prospective lovers' disguise, disguise themselves as their own maids, in turn. When the two couples meet and fall in love, the two young men reveal their elevated birth and offer to maintain the ladies as their mistresses. The girls are outraged at this proposal:

Harriet: "If you can have any Thought of
marrying us, we are ready to help you."
Gaylife: "Unconscionable Jades! I see the
Reason of their Refusal now; they would have
All or None."
Young Courtlove: "That would be impossible,
Child. My Father would disinherit me;
But, I'll tell you what we'll do, we'll
marry your Mistresses, to have an Oppor-
tunity with you."
Gaylife: "Agreed. " (Act IV)⁵⁸

The girls are horrified and get the gentlemen to agree to marry them should Sir William have no objection. Young Courtlove and Gaylife, in turn, force the girls to agree to become their mistresses should Sir William refuse to allow the marriage. Fanny and Harriet reveal their identity to Sir William who has arrived and he agrees to further the plot by commanding the young men to marry the girls for the sake of their innocence. Young Courtlove's reply is indicative of the importance of class distinction in the eighteenth century:

I never disobey'd you before, and was in Hopes I never should have had any Occasion to do it: But if you can so far forget the Honour of your Family, as to marry your Son to a Chamber-maid, for you seem to be angry at my not thinking you in Earnest, you must excuse me, Sir, if I choose rather to incur your displeasure, than disgrace myself and you, by a Match so much beneath Me. (Act V)

When all is revealed, the couples commend each other for not having yielded to love at a level which would have been so far beneath their positions in society.

In all these plays, in which young gentlemen make advances to girls whom they take to be socially inferior to them, the men, initially at least, treat the girls with far less respect than they would accord to one of their own class. This dichotomy is exemplified in Marlow and his dilemma. This dilemma is the problem of how to treat a girl with all the semblance of virtue and breeding but whom he knows to a bar-maid. This may have been suggested by similar situations in earlier plays. In Cumberland's sentimental The West Indian (1771) the hero, Belcour, is introduced to Louisa Dudley by Mrs Fulmer, the landlady, who tells him that Louisa is the mistress of her lodger, whereas she is, in reality, his sister Belcour, to her distress, addresses Louisa in the bold and impertinent manner to which he imagines she is accustomed and he is, eventually, embroiled in a duel with her brother. In Farquhar's play, The Constant Couple (1699) there is a very similar situation.

The hero, Sir Harry Wildair, described in the dramatis personae as 'An airy Gentleman affecting humorous Gaiety and Freedom in his Behaviour'⁵⁹ reacts similarly to Marlow, when confronted with the modest Miss Hardcastle, when he is introduced to Angelica under the impression that she is a whore and that the house she lives in is a brothel. When he sees her he is struck dumb and stupid by her beauty and her innocent appearance:

Sir Harry: "How innocent she looks! How would that modesty adorn virtue, when it makes even vice look so charming! By heaven, there's such a commanding innocence in her looks, that I dare not ask the question."

Angelica: (Aside) "Now all the charms of real love and feigned indifference, assist me to engage his heart, for mine is lost already."

Sir Harry : (Aside) "Madam - I, I - Oh! hypocrisy, hypocrisy, what a charming sin art thou."

Angelica: (Aside) "He is caught; now to secure my conquest. I thought, Sir, you had some business to communicate."

Sir Harry: "Business to communicate! How nicely she words it. Yes, Madam, I have a little business to communicate. Don't you love little singing-birds, madam? ..." (Act II sc.i.)

Sir Harry Wildair is an example of the last theme or tradition that I want to mention here, that of the reformed libertine. Marlow, among women of no virtue, is 'impudent enough of all conscience' (Act II p.129 l.12). It is not his father, nor the rules of society but only a woman herself who can reform him. Sir Harry Wildair explains this:

In vain are musty morals taught in schools,
By rigid teachers, and as rigid rules;
Where virtue, with a frowning aspect stands,
And frights the pupil from its rough commands.

But woman ---

Charming women can true converts make.

We love the precepts for the teacher's sake;
Virtue in them appears so bright and gay.
We hear with transport, and with pride
obey. (Act V)

The first, and, in some ways, best example of this favourite theme of sentimental comedy is found in Cibber's Love's Last Shift (1696), the play of which Vanbrugh's The Relapse is the sequel. Amanda has been deserted for eight years by her rakish husband, Loveless. He returns, thinking her dead. She wins him back after tricking him into bed with her in disguise. They are reunited and he is full of amazement at her virtue and becomes determined to reform. The same theme may be found in Edward Moore's The Foundling (1747). Fidelia, an orphan, reforms her protector, Belmont, who wants to possess her without marrying her. Her virtue triumphs and Belmont submits:

And now Fidelia, What you have made
me, take me --- a Convert to Honour!
I have at last learnt, that Custom can
be no Authority for Vice; and however the
mistaken World may judge, He who sollicit
Pleasure, at the Expense of Innocence, is
the Vilest of Betrayers. (Act V sc. ii)⁶⁰

Lehmann, among others, draws attention to a number of other incidents or character traits in She Stoops to Conquer which can be found in earlier drama and which all reinforce our sense of the tradition in which Goldsmith was writing⁶¹.

It is appropriate here to point a number of non-literary and non-dramatic traditions out, which might have some bearing on She Stoops to Conquer. The name of Tony Lumpkin has occasioned some speculation and critics have seemed reluctant to ascribe its creation to Goldsmith's imagination. Forster, in his account of Goldsmith's early years in Ireland, mentions a 'Tony Lumpkins of the district' as one of Goldsmith's particular friends but I have seen no supporting evidence for this elsewhere (Book I ch. III p.24). There have been two notes in Notes and Queries on the subject. One referred to the existence of an Anthonie Lumpkin who was, in 1637,

tenant of 50 acres of fen land near Boston, Lincs⁶², and the other refers to parish records which include one of the baptism and burial of Anthony Lumpkin of Leverington, Isle of Ely, in 1698 and 1743 respectively. The local parish register records many Anthony Lumpkins and there was, according to the contributor, a local tradition of a connection with Goldsmith⁶³. However, apart from the fact that Goldsmith's friend Bennet Langton lived in Lincolnshire, and invited Goldsmith to visit him, there is no evidence of his having had any connection with that part of the country.

More interestingly, the name 'Tony' had, until the end of the eighteenth century, connotations which have since died out. 'Tony' is defined in NED as 'A foolish person; a simpleton' and the derivation suggested is from Middleton's and Rowley's The Changeling (1623), in which a man pretends to be a fool in a madhouse in order to see the girl he loves. In English Surnames, 'Tony' is defined again as a 'simpleton' and the derivation suggested is from St. Anthony, who lived many years in woodlands⁶⁴. A dictionary of Canting Crew published in 1700, gives a 'silly fellow, or a Ninny'. Examples from literature are to be found, for instance, in Mrs Piozzi's Anecdotes (1786) in which she quotes Johnson's observation that 'Teaching such tonies is like setting a lady's diamonds in lead.' In Wycherley's The Plain Dealer, Freeman advises Jerry not to persist in his present slavishness to his mother and 'be pnted at for a Tony'. (Act III sc.i)

If then, we may draw conclusions from so much evidence, which cannot be said to conflict so much as to confuse, they are that Goldsmith was a dramatist alert to the traditions in which he was writing and receptive to them, either in the form of individual plays, which might have influenced him directly, or though a cumulation of reading and theatre-going, from which traits and themes fused and reformed in his mind to create his own versions in She Stoops to Conquer.

CHAPTER ONE: NOTES

Note no. :

1. See Collected Works of Oliver Goldsmith, edited by Arthur Friedman (Oxford 1966), (hereafter referred to as Friedman) Vol. V Index pp. 413-414 for a list of sources and analogues in Goldsmith's works.
2. Arthur Lytton Sells, Les Sources Françaises de Goldsmith, (Paris 1924), hereafter referred to as Sells. Further references to this work are given after quotations in the text.
3. It has been discussed in Sells pp. 150-155 and in Byron Gassman, 'French Sources of Goldsmith's The Good-natured Man' PQ xxxix (January 1960),^{pp. 56-65.} The relationship between Croker and Johnson's Suspensus is mentioned in Boswell's Life of Johnson, edited by George Birkbeck Hill and revised by L.F. Powell, (Oxford 1934) Vol I, p. 213, referred to hereafter as Hill:Powell
4. Sells prints this quotation, as all the others from She Stoops to Conquer in his own French translation. I have, in each case, substituted the Friedman text,
5. Maurice Baudin, 'Une Source de She Stoops to Conquer' PMIA Comments and Criticism ^{IV}, (1930), p. 614.
6. Marc Antoine Le Grand, Le Galant Coureur, edited by Petitot, Repertoire du Theatre Francais, tome 18, (1803)
7. August Leichsering, Über das Verhältnis von Goldsmith's She Stoops to Conquer zu Farquhar's The Beaux' Stratagem, (Cuxhaven, 1909), hereafter referred to as Leichsering.
8. George Farquhar, The Beaux' Stratagem, edited by A. Norman Jeffares, The Fountainwell Drama Texts, (Edinburgh 1972)
9. In contemporary newspapers especially General Evening Post 16-18 (March 1773) no. 6152. Leichsering mentions this a number of times.
10. The original spelling is retained in this extract, which is reproduced from The Collected Letters of Oliver Goldsmith, edited by K.C. Balderston, (Cambridge, 1928), which prints the complete narrative, hereafter referred to as Balderston. Later

researchers ascribed the name of Featherstone to the host of this story and this has never been contradicted. ^{See} Appendix III, pp. 162-177

11. Gertrude van Arsdale Ingalls, 'Some Sources of Goldsmith's She Stoops to Conquer' ^{xxii} (1929) ~~iii~~, pp. 565-568
12. It can have no bearing on Goldsmith's knowledge of the story but it is interesting to note that Addison must have read this story elsewhere, as it does not appear anywhere in Chardin's Travels. Coincidentally, Sir John Chardin's Travels was among the books in Goldsmith's library.
13. This letter is reprinted in full in Balderston's edition with additional background information. Letter XL, p. 115
14. Mark Schorer, 'She Stoops to Conquer: a Parallel' MLN, ~~XLVIII~~ (1933) pp. 91-94
15. The Dramatic Works of the Celebrated Mrs Centlivre 3 Vols. III, (London, 1872) ~~Vol. III~~.
16. John Quick, Quick's Whim; or, the Merry Medley (London, 1795?).
17. John Forster, The Life and Times of Oliver Goldsmith, fourth edition, (London, 1863) p. 411.
18. Hill:Powell, ~~Vol. I~~, pp. 213-214, note 5 on the derivation of Croker from Johnson's Suspirius, a debt Goldsmith acknowledged.
19. Arthur Friedman, 'Goldsmith and the Jest Books', MP ~~Vol. I~~, ~~no. I~~, (August 1955). In a search for the origin of the 'Ould Grouse in the Gun-room' story, Friedman came across this analogue in Archie Armstrong's Banquet of Jests (Edinburgh, 1872) pp. 342-344.
20. This was found in the Enthoven theatre collection at the Victoria and Albert Museum and which I have subsequently been unable to identify.
21. David Erskine Baker, Biographia Dramatica, (London, 1782)
22. Thomas Tomkis, Albumazar, (1615), ^{XIII} reprinted in University of California Publications in English, (edited by Hugh G. Dick,) ~~Vol. III~~, (1944.)

23. 'Since your old taste for laughing has come back,
And you have dropped the melancholy pack
Of tragi-comic-sentimental matter,
Resolving to laugh more, and be the fatter,
We bring a piece drawn from our ancient store,
Which made old English sides with laughing sore,
Some smiles from Tony Lumpkin if you spare,
Let Trincalo of Totnam have his share'. p. 59.
Printed in the Introduction to the edition cited in previous note.
24. Arthur Murphy, The Citizen (1761) in The British Drama Illustrated
~~Vol. VII~~, Vol. VII, edited by John Dicks, (1866?).
25. Thomas Davies, Memoirs of the Life of David Garrick, ^{II}/_X (London, 1780)
~~Vol. II~~, p. 154.
26. Colley Cibber, Love Makes a Man; or, the Fop's Fortune, (1700),
in The British Drama Illustrated, ~~Vol. XII~~, Vol. XII, edited by John Dicks,
(1866?)
27. The Plays of Richard Steele, edited by Shirley Strum Kenny, (Oxford,
1971)
28. See note 15, Vol. I.
29. Arthur Lytton Sells, Oliver Goldsmith - His Life and Works,
(London, 1974) p. 348.
30. Néricault-Destouches, Le Glorieux, (1732) edited by Petitot in
Repertoire du Theatre Francais, tome II, (1803)
31. See note 11.
32. See his review of Macaulay's Life and Writings of Addison, in
Quarterly Review ~~XCVI~~ (1854-1855), 502. See also George A. Aitken,
Life of Steele ^I (1889) ~~Vol. I~~, p. 109; Aitken's Steele's Plays, Mermaid
edition; Felix Schelling, English Drama, (London, 1914), p. 286;
G.H. Nettleton, English Drama of the Restoration and Eighteenth
Century, (London, 1914), p. 162; F.W. Bateson, English Comic Drama
1700-1750, (Oxford, 1929), p. 51.
33. R.S. Forsythe, JEGP II, (1912) pp. 104-111.
34. See note 27.



35. The Complete Plays of Thomas Shadwell, edited by Montague Summers, ~~IV~~^{IV} (New York, 1927 and 1968). ~~VII. 18.~~
36. PMLA ~~33~~^{xviii}, (1943), pp. 1038-1049.
37. Smith quotes from Dryden's Dramatic Works, edited by Summers, I, 92. In note 17a p. 1043, he adds that '... one must admit that Tony's literacy handicap would have been common enough in Goldsmith's day ...'
38. The Plain Dealer reprinted in Plays from Molière by English Dramatists with an introduction by Henry Morley, (London, 1883), p. 139.
39. PQ ~~xxiii~~^{xxiii}, (11 April, 1944) in Current Bibliography for 1660-1800, pp. 166-167
40. Percy Fitzgerald M.A., Samuel Foote: A Biography, (London, 1910) Chapter xviii pp. 275-277.
41. Isaac Bickerstaffe, Love in a Village, (1762), The British Drama Illustrated, ~~VIII. 18.~~, edited by John Dicks, I, (1866?).
42. January 1973, p. 22.
43. There is only one other person whose lines Goldsmith echoes this closely and this is himself. Kate's lines in Act III, p. 169, 'Pipes and tobacco for the Angel. -- The Lamb has been outrageous this half hour', ll. 12-13, when she is trying out her bar-maid cant, is clearly reminiscent of the Landlady in The Good-natur'd Man Act V, p. 69, 'Pipes and tobacco for the Lamb there. ... The Angel has been outrageous this half hour.' ll. 23-25. Similarly, Hardcastle's admonition to Kate in Act I, p. 111, 'What a quantity of superfluous silk hast 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'. ll. 3-5, is a direct quotation from The Vicar of Wakefield, 'I don't know whether such flouncing and shredding is becoming even in the rich, if we consider, upon a moderate calculation, that the nakedness of the indigent world may be cloathed from the trimmings of the vain'. Vol. IV, Chapter iv p. 34 ll. 31-34. There are other lines in the play which bear close comparison with lines from a number of Goldsmith's other works,

- although the resemblance is not so strong. See Friedman, ~~III~~ V p. 116 l.10, p. 130 ll. 7-11, p. 163 l.21.
44. This play had previously, been translated by Sir Charles Sedley in 1719, Goldsmith's version was much shorter than the original.
 45. See, in particular, The Bee, no. I 'Remarks on Our Theatres', I (Saturday, 6 October 1759,) ~~Vol. 1~~ pp. 359-361; and The Bee, no. 2, 'On Our Theatres', I (Saturday, 13 October 1759,) ~~Vol. 1~~ pp. 389-390.
 46. In 1749, Jean Louis Monnet brought over a company of French actors. They rented the Little Haymarket Theatre and were greeted by rioting crowds hurling stones and abuse. Lord Trentham who was instrumental in arranging the visit, was publically accused of having French sympathies. This was by no means the only incident of this kind during the middle years of the century. For details see The London Stage 1660-1800 Part IV (1747-1776) edited by George Winchester Stone Junior, Carbondale, Southern Illinois University Press, VI (1962), ~~Vol. 1~~, especially pp. lx and 152.
 47. Allardyce Nicoll, A History of English Drama 1660-1900, III (Cambridge 1952), ~~Vol. 1~~ p. 41
 48. A. Joannidès, La Comédie Française de 1680 à 1920 (Paris, 1921)
 49. See Leichsering pp. 78-80 for a list of examples of Goldsmith's admiration for Farquhar as expressed in his works.
 50. The speech was reported in the Gentleman's Magazine ~~Vol. 1~~ pt. ii, (1820), p. 620.
 51. Written in German, (Munich, 1974), hereafter referred to as Lehmann.
 52. For a really full discussion of these traditions, Lehmann should be consulted. However, he stops short at describing these, possibly rather peripheral, influences on Goldsmith and makes no attempt to isolate more direct ones in an effort to find sources, as I have done above.
 53. Sir John Vanbrugh, The Relapse (1696) Readex microprint card, Three Centuries of Drama: English, 1642-1700, Library of Congress, (New York, 1960)
 54. G.H. Nettleton, English Drama of the Restoration and the Eighteenth Century 1642-1780, (London, 1923) p. 126.

55. William Congreve, Love for Love, (1695) Penguin edition, edited by Gamini Salgado, (1968) p. 313.
56. Charles Johnson, The Country Lasses (1753), Readex microprint card, Three Centuries of Drama: English, 1701-1750, Library of Congress, (New York, 1967).
57. John Harrington Smith, in the article quoted above, (see note 36), draws attention to two comedies by William Taverner, The Maid's the Mistress, (1708), and Tis Well if It Takes, (1719), in which the heroines dress as maids. Both these plays precede Le Jeu de l'Amour et du Hasard.
58. William Popple, The Double Deceit, (1736), Readex microprint card, Three Centuries of Drama: English, 1701-1750, Library of Congress, (New York, 1967).
59. George Farquhar, The Constant Couple; or A Trip to the Jubilee, (1699), The British Drama Illustrated, edited by John Dicks, ~~Vol.~~ II, (1866?).
60. Lehmann gives a selected list of other plays which treat of this theme, p. 130.
61. One such device was pointed out by G.H. Nettleton who wrote of Vanbrugh's The Confederacy (1705) '... the way in which the plot is made to turn on the possession of a necklace recalls somewhat Goldsmith's later handling of Miss Neville's jewels in She Stoops to Conquer,' (see note 54 above for details) p. 135. I include this only in view of the fact that we have already linked the use of the strong-box in The Beaux' Stratagem with She Stoops to Conquer in much the same way.
62. Notes and Queries, Series 4, Vol. 2, (1868), p. 274.
63. Notes and Queries, Series 8, Vol. 4, (1893), pp 515-516.
64. Charles Wareing Bardsley, English Surnames, (1968).

CHAPTER TWO:

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY STAGE: SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER IN CONTEXT

Introduction

This chapter is an attempt at a brief, but comprehensive, survey of the aspects of eighteenth century theatre which concern She Stoops to Conquer. It would not be sufficient to study the play against the background of mid-century sentimentalism alone, since sentimentalism had its roots in philosophies of great influence and duration and of which Goldsmith and his contemporaries were still very much aware. Nor would it be possible to paint an accurate picture of the play's first appearance without giving an idea of the physical conditions of the theatres, the people both on and in front of the stage and the critical climate in which the plays were produced. The first part of this chapter, therefore, depicts the theatrical world Goldsmith knew and attempts, by discussing various aspects and then giving Goldsmith's opinions on them, to build up an impression of his attitudes to and ideas on the theatre, all of which led to the composition of She Stoops to Conquer. This chapter describes a general situation, illustrated by various specific examples. In Chapter Three, the relevance of the various aspects to She Stoops to Conquer and to the circumstances surrounding the first appearance, will become obvious.

The eighteenth century could not be said in any way to stand out as a great era for British theatre. The majority of readers today would find it difficult to think of any notable dramatist between the death of Farquhar and the advent of naturalistic drama in the mid-nineteenth century, except Goldsmith and Sheridan. The fame of these two writers, in terms of the stage, rests principally on one play, in the case of the former, and on two, or, at most, three, in the case of the latter. Nevertheless, the theatre was a flourishing concern and a popular resort of all classes throughout

the eighteenth century and, although the period produced few dramatists of lasting worth, it was a time of much earnest debate about the moral and didactic value of the theatre, of significant developments in both the physical structure of the playhouses and in public and professional attitudes to the theatre and of a vast output of new plays by a great number of writers.

The Theatres

The Buildings¹

The number of theatres in London declined during the course of the century and by the time Goldsmith was writing there were only two, Drury Lane and Covent Garden, which put on nightly dramatic productions. The others, principally the Haymarket, restricted themselves, in the main, to performances by visiting foreign companies or to operas and concerts. The Drury Lane theatre that Goldsmith knew was built in 1674. It had a succession of famous managers including Cibber, until Garrick, with John Lacy, took over in 1747 and remained until his retirement in 1776. The first theatre in Covent Garden, the one in which She Stoops to Conquer was first performed, was built by the very popular John Rich in 1732. George Colman, the elder, took over the managership from Rich's son-in-law, John Beard, in 1767 and retained it until 1774, when he was succeeded by his son. Covent Garden theatre remained more or less unaltered until 1782, so for the first performance of She Stoops to Conquer in 1773, it was still a théâtre intime, seating about two thousand and with much of the audience sitting very close to the stage.

The construction of eighteenth century theatres divided the audience into four parts. The pit held most of the best seats and was patronised by the more fashionable and critical members of society. The first gallery held the middle classes, tradesmen and the families of professional men, while the mob, the poorest section of society was confined to the heights of the second gallery - a dominant position in every sense. There was also a number of boxes

from which the nobility watched the play. In spite of aristocratic and even on occasions, royal patronage, theatres were very uncomfortable for the audiences. There were backless benches throughout the three levels and gross overcrowding was an accepted fact of theatre-going. Covent Garden was particularly notorious for the way in which the manager tightly packed in its patrons. M. Dorothy George, in an essay on eighteenth century London life, quotes the German traveller Archenholtz on the subject of London theatres:

What is called in other countries 'un spectacle rempli' is in England 'une salle vide'. The expression 'a full house' is used only when the spectators are heaped up one against the other and some hundreds have not found places, which happens at almost every performance of good plays.²

She continues by quoting a correspondent of The London Museum in 1770 whose letter indicates the enormous popularity of the theatre: 'The houses indeed are filled, let the play be never so bad, but thousands for want of room are sent away'³. Facts which could only make matters worse were that no seats were bookable before the performance and that queuing was a procedure as yet quite unknown to the English. Covent Garden theatre was part of the market square buildings and fronted on to Great Hart Street. It was situated behind the facades of the houses but could be reached through a courtyard off the square or under an archway and down a passage from Bow Street. The hopeful audience had to wait in the courtyard before it could be admitted. Ladies would send their footmen early to keep seats for them and, consequently, when the theatre doors opened, an hour or an hour and a half before the performance, there was invariably a furious, undignified and, occasionally, violent dash for seats. This will be discussed at greater length below in the section on audiences.



THE ENTRANCE TO OLD COVENT GARDEN THEATRE. MAKE.

Rare print of the theatre as it was in Goldsmith's time showing the audience waiting under the arches. Print reproduced by kind permission of the Archivist, Royal Opera House, Covent Garden.

The stage which faced the mid-eighteenth century audience had undergone a series of developments since the decline of the Restoration platform. The apron stage was gradually being superseded by the advent of the proscenium arch, which had the effect of distancing the audience from the stage and players. In about 1750, managers began to adopt the practice of dropping the curtain between the acts to enable them to use more elaborate stage scenery and to effect complete changes in the sets. Scenery and props became more detailed and realistic and the box-set, with its three walls and doors, took the place of simple flats and wings. The really great changes in set design took place just after Goldsmith's death when De Louthembourg came to London and completely revolutionised theatre scenery with his elaborately detailed and extravagant sets. In 1774, Garrick at Drury Lane is said to have spent £1500 on sets for The Maid of the Oaks by De Louthembourg. The set-painter at Covent Garden from 1760 to 1777 was a Dane called Nicholas Thomas Dall but little is known about his designs or about those of his colleague, Cipriani. The only practical innovation made in the years immediately preceding the first production of She Stoops to Conquer was by Garrick. In 1765, having profited from his observations made on trips to foreign theatres, he removed the circular chandeliers, which stood over the stage and which were visible to the entire audience. These were cumbersome and very unsubtle, casting patches of light on certain areas and leaving the rest in obscurity. They were also very hot and almost blinding for the actors. For these Garrick substituted lengths of perpendicular candle battens, which he placed behind the proscenium and in the wings, thus removing the glare from the stage and producing a more realistic effect⁴. Although this was far from ideal, it was an improvement and one may assume that, theatre rivalries being as fierce as they were, Covent Garden was quick to adopt the new practice.

A play like She Stoops to Conquer would have occasioned few costuming problems but there was much controversy throughout the century as to whether the costumes for plays should be contemporary with the setting of the play, with the time of its composition, or just with the present day. She Stoops to Conquer would have been produced in contemporary dress, against a 'realistic' box-set with adequate, but not profuse, contemporary furniture. She Stoops to Conquer in particular, was modestly produced due to Colman's reluctance to lay out any money for new scenery.

Audiences

Even for performances of no particular merit or public appeal the audiences were, as we have seen, subjected to very poor conditions due to overcrowding. Covent Garden was particularly at fault in this respect, especially as its audiences and the footmen of the rich patrons had to wait in the courtyard of the square before they were even allowed in to dash for the seats. The practice employed by the rich to avoid the crush by sending their servants to reserve seats for them was resented by many. An indignant article appeared in the London Magazine for 1768 which rails against the people who, having sent their footmen to reserve seats in the pit, arrive late and draw all the attention upon themselves:

I say there is no bearing the apathy with which an animal of this kind breaks in upon the pleasure of numbers; and yet how many such animals do we not meet with every evening, who, so far from seeming uneasy at obliging others to rise, or endeavouring to hurry to their seats, march with a slow solemnity to their servants, and as if they were fearful of not disturbing us sufficiently, give loud directions to the fellows as they retire about bringing the chariot at ten, or some other business of equal significance⁵.

On occasions of a popular performance of the appearance of a favourite actor the chaos amongst the would-be spectators could

be far worse, even before they got inside. The Morning Chronicle of Tuesday, April 20th, 1773, carries the following report:

Last night an incredible number of persons attended very early at the doors of Covent Garden Theatre, to see Mrs Yates play, the character of Margaret of Anjou, in the tragedy of the Earl of Warwick for Mr Smith's benefit. When the hour of admission was come, the crowd was so pressing that much mischief was done, and many things lost by the eagerness to push in, which everyone expressed. Those who were wise enough to draw back and stand aloof, were not a little diverted at the humour of the scene. The thick-tailed Macaronies had their clubs untied, and their flowing locks and crimson faces made them resemble a parcel of furies; on the other hand, the women's caps, cloaks, and handkerchiefs were torn off, their hair dishevelled, and the quantity of wool which fell from their heads was sufficient to have stuffed chair seats enough for a capital mansion; some screamed, some laughed, and some cried. Many were drawn out of the Piazza passage over the wall into the adjoining gardens by their hair, and some by their legs; in short, the confusion was equally general and ridiculous; nor was the bustle confined to the good folks who were candidates for places in the pit and galleries, the genteeler sort who came to the boxes also mobbed it very strenuously; many dressed in diamonds and the finest laces strove with amazonian perseverance to get admission...

Once seated, the audience found that according to their position in the theatre, they were treated either with deference and respect or with humour and goodfellowship. The actors and authors knew the importance of their audience at all levels. 'King, Lords, and Commons, o'er the nation sit; / Pit, Box, and Gallery, rule the realms of wit', wrote Colman in his epilogue to Kelly's Clementina (1771)⁷. To the various sections of the theatre were attributed different criteria for their critical judgement and taste. 'You relish satire; (to the pit). you ragouts of wit; (boxes). / Your taste

is humour, and high season'd joke. (1st gallery)./ You call for hornpipes, and for Hearts of Oak! (2nd Gallery).' wrote Garrick in his epilogue to Arthur Murphy's All in the Wrong (1761)⁸.

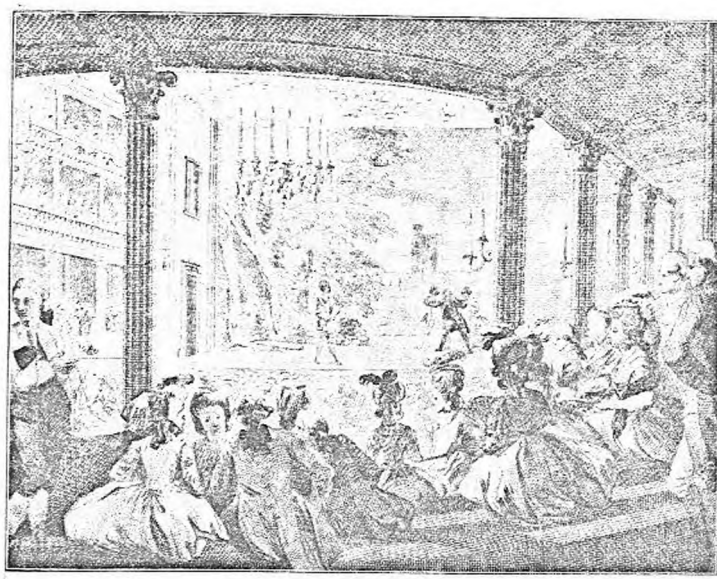
However hard authors, managers and actors tried to please their audiences, they usually felt themselves lucky to succeed. After the Licensing Act of 1737 and the agitation which followed, audiences felt that the power to make or destroy a play was in their hands and, consequently, on many occasions, judged arbitrarily, noisily and even violently. Such had been the freedom accorded to the patrons of the theatre that until Garrick finally refused to continue the practice in 1763, young gentlemen had been permitted, for a fee, to stand on the stage with the actors during the performance. The author of The Actor complained in 1755:

One thing more there is that hurts the truth of the representation more than all, the suffering a part of the audience to be behind the scenes. The keeping up the illusion of an appearance of reality is the great merit of theatrical representation, but that is impossible under this disadvantage. Let the decorations of the house, the dress and deportment and recitation of the players be ever so proper, this destroys all. The head of some cropped beau among a set of full-bottomed conspirators destroys all the look of reality⁹.

The audacity of the managers in putting an end to this practice was greatly resented by those who had previously enjoyed the privilege. The theatre was, very much, a place for the fashionable to meet and be seen. Seldom was much attention paid to what was going on on the stage. This was, of course, an aggravation to the authors. In his epilogue to The School for Wives (1773), Kelly wrote:

Some to yawn, some round about to look,
Some to be seen, few come to mind their
book;
Some with high wit and humour hither run,
To sweat their masters - and they call it fun.
Some modish sparks, true Stoicks, and high bred,
Come, but ne'er know what's done or sung or
said;

PLATE 2



View from front Boxes at Covent Garden

Reproduced from The Annals of Covent
Garden Theatre by Henry Saxe Wyndham.

Should the whole herd of criticks round
them soar,
And with one voice cry out, encore! encore!
Or louder yet, off, off, no more! no more!
Should Pit, Box, Gall'ry with convulsions shake,
Still they are half asleep, nor t'other half
awake:¹⁰

This kind of behaviour was, however, not the worst suffered by the authors and actors. Audiences reacted loudly to anything which displeased them. Catcalls, shouts of 'low' and hissing were common. If an author was suspected of unpopular political allegiances, his play was hardly given a hearing. The shouting and the thumping of the critics' sticks drowned the eloquence of the actors. Nicoll quotes from the autobiography of Frederick Reynolds an anecdote about the first night of Sheridan's The Rivals in 1775:

During the violent opposition in the fifth act, an apple hitting Lee, who performed Sir Lucius O'Trigger, he stepped forward and with a genuine rich brogue, angrily cried out, 'By the pow'rs, is it personal? - is it me, or the matter?'¹¹

Such behaviour, though of transitory importance to the audience, was of great importance to the authors, whose careers were made or broken upon the whims of an audience. The bitterness felt by such authors was satirically expressed in the speech by Grinly in Charles Boadens' The Modish Couple (1732):

I will wager you now five hundred Pounds that half a score of us shall quite demolish the best Piece that can come on any Stage ... Very well, Sir; but now comes out time, for the third Act being begun; the first Piece of Wit that is utter'd, Hiss cry two or three of us - In a little time after, a stroke of Humour comes out, Hoh, hoh, hoh, cry others. Then perhaps a serious Scene comes in Play, Yaw, say the rest, and so on, till the Play is pretty well over. And for the last two or three scenes, where the silly Rogue thinks he has shewn his Judgement the most, and on which the whole Business of the Piece depends,

we strike up such a Chorus of Cat-calls, Whistles, Hisses, Hoops and Horselaughs, that not one of the Audience can hear a Syllable, and therefore charitably conclude it to be very sad stuff. - The Epilogue's spoke, The Curtain falls, and so the poor Rascal is sent to the Devil¹².

Goldsmith deplored the behaviour of the audiences. In The Citizen of the World, written before either of his plays and therefore, from the point of view of a wondering member of the audience, in the person of Lien Chi Altangi, he observes:

The rich in general were placed in the lowest seats, and the poor rose above them in degrees proportioned to their poverty. The order of precedence seemed here inverted; those who were undermost all the day now enjoyed a temporary eminence, and became masters of the ceremonies. It was they who called for the music, indulging every noisy freedom, and testifying all the insolence of beggary in exultation.

They who held the middle region seemed not so riotous as those above them, nor yet so tame as those below; to judge by their looks, many of them seem'd stranger there as well as myself. They were chiefly employed during this period of expectation in eating oranges, reading the story of the play, or making assignations.

Those who sat in the lowest rows, which are called the pit, seemed to consider themselves as judges of the merit of the poet and the performers; they were assembled partly to be amused, and partly to shew their taste; appearing to labour under that restraint which an affectation of superior discernment generally produces. My companion, however, informed me, that not one in an hundred of them knew even the first principles of criticism; that they assumed the right of being censors because there was none to contradict their pretensions; and that every man who now called himself a connoisseur, became such to all intents and purposes.

Those who sat in the boxes appeared in the most unhappy situation of all. The rest of the audience came nearly for their own amusement; these rather to furnish out a part of the

entertainment themselves. I could not avoid considering them as acting parts in a dumb show, not a curtesy, or nod, that was not the result of art; not a look, nor a smile that was not designed for murder¹³.

Actors

In the eighteenth century, the acting profession underwent many changes. Firstly, the social position of the actors themselves altered considerably. Instead of being regarded as social outcasts, without any pretensions to respectability, they became the adored and sought after protégés of the best society. Secondly, acting technique evolved from the stiff, declamatory style, to a more natural, realistic style, closer to what we know today.

Unlike today, the actors of the eighteenth century played a far more limited range of roles. A manager would have in his company an actor of bombastic villains, another of heroic young lovers, another of Harlequin, another of crusty old gentlemen and so on. Seldom did an actor, known for his performance in one range of roles, attempt a part in another and, if he did, he was frequently unacceptable to the audience. Individual actors became personally known to the public, especially when only two theatres and their companies existed in London. Each faction had their favourites. Authors would take advantage of a certain actor's popularity or proficiency, and the practice of writing parts specifically for certain actors began at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Cibber wrote many parts at this time for the celebrated Mrs Oldfield and Farquhar created the character of Sir Harry Wildair in A Trip to the Jubilee especially for Wilks. Actors were regarded as public property and many of the critics and writers of the stage took them to task about their faults or mistakes on a very personal level.

Acting technique, as I have said, changed and developed fundamentally and irretrievably during the eighteenth century. Thomas Betterton and Barton Booth, the great actors of the beginning of the century, relied on powerful declamatory and rhetorical powers together

with expressive posing and gesture. The tradition was carried onto the middle of the century by Macklin and, in particular, by Quin but it gave way when Garrick arrived in London with his new, realistic technique. There was, of course, much controversy over this and the relative merits of both styles were aired at length and frequently in the press. Garrick lacked the declamatory skills of his predecessors. His strength lay in the representation of character and passion in a life-like way, recognisable to all members of the audience.

In spite of Garrick's influence, a number of the artificialities of the stage perpetuated into the latter half of the century. M. Dorothy George describes one of these in her essay. 'Many of the actors were in the habit of dropping their characters when they ceased speaking, looking idly about the house, and only coming again into the picture on hearing their cues'¹⁴. M. Dorothy George quotes from Tom Davies' biography of Garrick, a description of the great actor's relationship with Kitty Clive, one of his most famous and difficult stage partners:

Mr Garrick complained that she disconcerted him by not looking at him in the time of action, and neglected to watch the motion of his eye; a practice he was sure to observe in others. I am afraid this accusation was partly true, for Mrs Clive would suffer her eyes sometimes to wander from the stage into the boxes in search of her great acquaintance, and now and then, give them a comedy nod or curtsy¹⁵.

Thomas Wilkes in 1759 wrote:

It is very common for young performers, the Ladies in particular, in scenes which require the greatest exertion of the natural powers, and in the very warmth and pathos of a sentiment, to bestow frequent side-glances on the audience, demanding their applause, more for their beauty of person or elegance of dress than for their just acting¹⁶.

Goldsmith too, deplored this practice. In Number II of The Bee, he wrote an article 'On Our Theatres', which extolled the virtues of Mademoiselle Clairon, a French actress of great beauty and talent. Goldsmith praises her for her appearance but mostly for her discreet acting:

... she never comes in staring round upon the company, as if she intended to count the benefits of the house, or at least to see, as well as be seen. Her eyes are always, at first, intently fixed upon the persons of the drama, and she lifts them by degrees, with enchanting diffidence, upon the spectators ... she never flourishes her hands while the upper part of her arm is motionless, nor has she the ridiculous appearance, as if her elbows were pinned to her hips ... I can never pardon a lady on the stage who, when she draws the admiration of the whole audience, turns about to make them a low courtesy for their applause. Such a figure no longer continues Belvidera but at once drops into Mrs Cibber¹⁷.

The other criticism made in this piece, that of awkwardness of posture, was one frequently made of actors in the second half of the eighteenth century. Goldsmith, in the first number of The Bee compared the skill of the French actors with the stiffness and lack of imagination of those on the English stage. He compares the French and English actors playing the same parts in Molière's play and in Fielding's adaptation of it, The Mock Doctor:

The French player sits in a chair with an high back, and then begins to shew away by talking nonsense, which he would have thought Latin by those whom he knows do not understand a syllable of the matter. At last he grows enthusiastic, enjoys the admiration of the company, tosses his legs and arms about, and in the midst of his raptures and vociferation, he and the chair fall back together. All this appears dull enough in the recital, but the gravity of Cato could not stand it in the representation. In short, there is hardly a character in comedy to which a player of

any real humour, might not add strokes of vivacity that could not fail of applause. But instead of this, we too often see our fine gentlemen do nothing through a whole part, but strut, and open their snuff-box; our pretty fellows sit indecently with their legs across, and our clowns pull up their breeches. These, if once, or even twice repeated, might do well enough, but to see them served up in every scene, argues the actor almost as barren as the character he would expose¹⁸.

Although actors were, no doubt at fault in many respects, they would have had, in order to satisfy every critic, to be more than human. In The Actor, which is largely a eulogy of Garrick, Hill lays down many rules for the good actor, based on his observation of this master. Actors must suit their acting to the part. "The violence and fury may be proper in Tom Thumb, which would be contemptible even in Bajazet; and the address of Captain Plume to the 'Peerless princess of Salopian plains', cannot possibly be too much loaded with graces¹⁹." An actor must both 'comprehend perfectly what the author means' and also 'feel the passion strongly, which he is to assist the author in exciting'²⁰. He must possess 'fire' and act truthfully to nature. This, however, explains Hill, is only effective in conjunction with great skill and practice. 'That playing which appears natural, because it is divested of all pomp and ceremony, is the greatest that is possible; but natural as this appears, it is the result of perfect art'²¹. Hill concludes by excluding some actors from the stage on account of a matter over which they have no control, their personal appearance. 'An elegance of person is absolutely necessary to him who represents the first characters, whether in comedy or tragedy...'²². With this distinction Goldsmith agreed. He wrote in Number 1 of The Bee :

Beauty, methinks, seems a requisite qualification in an actress. This seems scrupulously observed elsewhere, and for my part I could wish to see it observed at home. I can never conceive an hero

dying for the love of a lady totally destitute of beauty. I must think the part unnatural, for I cannot bear to hear him call that face angelic, when even paint cannot hide its wrinkles ... For the future then, I could wish that the parts of the young or beautiful were given to performers of suitable figures; for I must own, I could rather see the stage filled with agreeable objects, though they might sometimes bungle a little, than see it crowded with withered or misshapen figures, be their emphasis, as I think it is called, ever so proper²³.

In 1772 appeared the second edition of a work by Paul Hiffernan first published in 1770, Dramatic Genius. This deals with all aspects of the acting profession and lays down strict rules for the actor. On the question of personal appearance and bearing on the stage, Hiffernan is brutally explicit and detailed:

When a tongue is too large for the mouth, there being no chirurgical operation instituted as yet for paring down such an excrecential error, to a proper size, it is to be looked upon as an absolute disqualification for becoming an actor ... the entire body is to bear firmly on the floor, and not to shift its place, or change its attitude every moment, which would incur the charges of an unbalasted restlessness ... (Bk. III p. 128)

Of the head he writes:

It should never be kept, too stiffly erect (when not in character) which denotes an air of insolence; nor let to supinely incline towards the breast, nor awkwardly lean towards either shoulder, which would exhibit a languid remissness.

The head of a performer, even when not speaking, is neither to be immovable, like that of a statue, nor veering about to every blast like a weather-cock; no, it is to enjoy an easy uprightness between motion and rest without particularly marking either ... The duty of the eye-brows is to be neither too sluggishly quiescent, nor too wantonly active,

but to observe a free, easy, and well-timed obsequiousness to the sentimental expression of the eyes which may poetically be called the soul of the countenance. (pp. 130-133)

Hiffernan considers that actors with the misfortune to have 'wens, large ugly moles, frightful scars, scrophulous tumours & c ...' are unfit for the stage. He offers assistance to remedy certain defects: 'Those actors who in speaking are apt to raise one shoulder higher than another may be cured of this fault, by having a person near them in their private training to prick with a pin or needle the transgressive insurgent'. (p. 138)

Apart from the merriment which such recommendations occasion in us today, this book gives some idea of the severity of the criticism the actors of the time had to endure and by what minute criteria they were judged.

Goldsmith was always quick to praise skill in an actor, though his criteria were different to Hiffernan's. Goldsmith would have disagreed strongly with Hill who wrote in The Actor:

Authors owe more of their success to good actors than they imagine; the mischiefs they receive from bad ones are not nearly so great. An actor of this latter stamp, and too many are too near it, shall damn a good piece, but it will recover its credit in the reading; on the other hand, when an author is so happy, that a piece with but little merit falls into the hands of a manager who will give all the parts great as well little [sic] to performers who have understanding, the play shall acquire new graces in the performance: beauties the author never thought of, but which the actor of this kind throws in from his own store, and they shall continue with it, they shall be remembered in the reading, and placed to the account of the author²⁴.

The change that had come about in attitudes towards actors is exemplified by a comparison of this piece with the beginning of Dennis' criticism of Steele's The Conscious Lovers. Dennis begins by quoting Steele and then asking: 'Is it not a pleasant Humility in a Dramatick

Writer, to affirm that he is indebted for his whole success to the Actors?' (p. 257)

Goldsmith's views were closer to Steele's than to Hill's. When his principal actors abandoned their parts shortly before the first performance of She Stoops to Conquer and he was urged to postpone the opening night, he is reported to have said: 'No. I'd rather my play were damned by bad players than merely saved by good acting'²⁵. In the chapter of The Enquiry called 'Of the Stage', Goldsmith discusses the relative esteem in which authors and actors were held. Authors were, he felt, subservient to everyone. They must flatter, wait, starve and see their talents neglected, whilst actors are valued and cherished members of society:

In the times of Addison and Steele, players were held in greater contempt than, perhaps, they deserved. Honest Eastcourt, Verbruggen and Underhill, were extremely poor, and assumed no airs of insolence. They were contented with being merry at a city feast, with promoting the mirth of a set of cheerful companions, and gave their jest for their reckoning. At that time, it was kind to say something in defence of the poor, good-natured creatures, if it were only to keep them in good humour; but at present, such encouragements are unnecessary. Our actors assume all that state off the stage which they do on it; and to use an expression borrow'd from the Green Room, every one is up in his part. I am sorry to say it, they seem to forget their real characters; more provoking still, the public seems to forget them too.²⁶

In Letter LXXXV of The Citizen of the World on 'the trifling squabbles of stage players', Goldsmith, through the persona of Lien Chi Altangi, satirically expresses his opinion of the true station of players:

I know the proper share of respect due to every rank in society. Stage players, fire eaters, singing women, dancing dogs, wild beasts, and wire walkers, as their efforts are exerted for our amusement, ought not entirely to be despised. The laws of every country should allow them to play their tricks at least with impunity. They should not be branded with

the ignominious appellation of vagabonds; at least they deserve a rank in society equal to the mystery of barbers, or undertakers, and could my influence extend so far, they should be allowed to earn even forty or fifty pounds a year, if eminent in their profession... how will your surprise encrease, when told, that though the law holds them as vagabonds, many of them earn more than a thousand a year ...²⁷

Not only did these successful actors have parts written for them, but they were also much written about. A number of books and pamphlets listing the merits and failings of innumerable actors appeared during the eighteenth century. Two of the best of these were The Rosciad by Charles Churchill (1761) and The Theatres: A Poetical Dissection published under the pseudonym of Sir Nicholas Nipclose in 1772²⁸. The Rosciad was very controversial and stimulated a large amount of imitations and refutations in the same heroic style²⁹. Churchill discusses all the leading theatrical figures, authors and actors, of the day from a satirical bias. Few members of the profession emerge unscathed. Only Garrick, and impecunious, good-hearted Shuter, Goldsmith's first Hardcastle, of the actors, are highly praised. Nipclose's work, having been written only a year before She Stoops to Conquer was first performed, is of more interest to us in relation to Goldsmith than Churchill's and it will be discussed more fully in the account of the original actors of the play in Chapter Three.

Theatre Rivalries

After the Licensing Act of 1737 had left London with only two licensed theatres, rivalries between the two became very keen. Such rivalries had always existed in the theatre. Nicoll reminds us of the complaints Shakespeare makes in Hamlet of the new company of child actors³⁰. The managers of the eighteenth century continuously tried to outdo each other. As soon as one theatre had had a success or developed a special feature, the other would immediately adopt it and try to improve upon it. This led to the same piece

being played at both houses in the same season and even on the same day. Nicoll quotes the example of Howard's The Committee, which was played at both Drury Lane and the Haymarket on October 10th, 1707, thirty years before the Act³¹. Later the rivalry grew fiercer. In 1766 Garrick and Mrs Bellamy played Romeo and Juliet against Barry's and Mrs Cibber's version at Covent Garden. The evident absurdity of this was reflected in public exasperation. Nicoll quotes a verse from the Gentleman's Magazine of October 1750:

Well - what's to-night? says angry Ned,
As up from bed he rouses:
Romeo again! ... and shakes his head,
Ah! pox on both your houses! ³²

It was not however, only the managers who pitted themselves against each other. Churchill in The Rosciad describes the wrangling among the authors in his imaginary contest to decide the judge who will settle all the theatre rivalries and squabbles:

For Johnson some; but Johnson it was fear'd
Would be too grave; and Sterne too gay
appear'd;
Others for Franklin voted: but 'twas known,
He sicken'd at all triumphs but his own;
For Colman many, but the peevish tongue
Of prudent Age found out that he was young:
For Murphy some few pilfering wits declared,
But Folly clapp'd her hands, and Wisdom
star'd (ll. 61-68)

There was considerable quarrelling and rivalry among the actors and actresses. The established actors lived in fear of new, young players. Garrick, in particular, was frequently accused of using his power to dispose of possible rivals to his throne, that is, as Nipclose phrased it, those who 'stood too near the crown'. (p. 9) Actresses, in particular those worshipped for their charm and beauty, resented their own approaching age, and feared the rise in the favour of the public of any new, younger beauty. Garrick in his A Peep behind the Curtain (1767) made Patent complain:

Actresses quarrelling about parts; there's not
one of 'em but thinks herself young enough

for any part; and not a young one but thinks herself capable of any part + but their betters quarrel about what they are not fit for, So our Ladies have at least great precedents for their folly (Act I sc. iii)³³

Goldsmith's views on these rivalries were expressed through Lien Chi Altangi in Letters LXXIX and LXXXV of The Citizen of the World. He describes the theatres and their companies in terms of armies preparing for 'War, open War!' The occasion in 1760 was the rival production of The Beggars Opera and the competition of the two actresses Miss Brent and Mrs Vincent, for the greater share of public acclaim as Polly:

Both houses have already commenced hostilities. War, open War! and no quarter given! Two singing women, like heralds, have begun the contest; the whole town is divided on this solemn occasion, one has the finest pipe, and the other the finest manner; one curtesies to the ground, the other salutes the audience with a smile; one comes on with modesty which asks, the other with boldness which extorts applause; one wears powder, the other has none; one has the longest waist, but the other appears most easy; all, all is important and serious; the town as yet perseveres in its neutrality, a cause of such moment demands the most mature deliberation, they continue to exhibit, and it is very possible this contest may continue to please to the end of the season.

But the Generals of either army, have, as I am told, several reinforcements to lend occasional assistance. If they produce a pair of diamond buckles at one house, we have a pair of fine eye-brows that can match them at t'other. If we outdo them in our attitude, they can overcome us by a shrugg; if we can bring more children on the stage, they can bring more guards in red cloaths, who strut and shoulder their swords to the amazement of every spectator³⁴.

Authors and Managers

Actors, managers and audiences alike all had legitimate grievances in the eighteenth century, which they voiced as loud and as

often as possible but there can be little doubt that the worst treated member of the theatrical profession was, at this time, the author. One of the most outspoken defenders of the author was James Ralph, who wrote, in 1762, a pamphlet called The Case of Authors by Profession. His principal thesis was that money and wit were always at war and that men could, by the rules of society, do almost anything for money, except write. If he writes, on whatever subject, for gain, then his taste is imputed. Ralph admits to esteeming wealth and he feels, therefore, that authors should be valued in proportion to the amount of money they could raise from their work. Ralph defends authors who write for a party. He quotes Fielding:

why ... is an Author (in a Country where there is no Public Provision for Men of Genius) obliged to be a more disinterested Patriot than any other? And why is he, whose Livelihood is in his Pen, a greater Monster in using it to serve himself, than he who uses his Tongue for the same Purpose? (p. 11)

Ralph then takes up the cause of the slighted playwright and directs his attack at one manager in particular:

I am as much an Admirer of Mr Garrick, and his Excellencies, as I ought to be; and I envy him no Part of his good Fortune - But then, though I am free to acknowledge he was made for the Stage, I cannot be brought to think, the Stage was made only for him; or that the Fate of every dramatical Writer ought either to be at his Mercy, or that of any other Manager whatsoever: And the single Consideration, that there is no Alternative but to fly from him, in case of any Contempt or Neglect, to Mr Rich, is enough to deter any Man in his Sense, from imbar-king a second Time on such a hopeless Voyage. (p. 27)

This was the cry of the authors throughout the eighteenth century. Long before 1770, when Whitehead dedicated his farce A Trip to Scotland to 'Nobody' because 'Nobody respects an Author',³⁵ playwrights were complaining of the many obstacles even to getting their plays performed let alone to seeing them succeed. In 1726, Dower complained that he waited on the proprietor of a theatre 'every Day,

or every other Day' from October 23rd to December 23rd 1726 and had his comedy The Salopian Esquire rejected in the end³⁶. Fielding in the notorious Pasquin of 1736 has his Fustian say:

These little things, Mr Sneerwell, will sometimes happen. Indeed a Poet undergoes a great deal before he comes to his third Night; first with the Muses, who are humorous Ladies, and must be attended; for it they take it into their Head at any time to go abroad and leave you, you will pump your Brain in vain: Then, Sir, with the Master of a Play-house to get it acted, whom you generally follow a quarter of a Year before you know whether he will receive it or no; and then perhaps he tells you it won't do, and returns it to you again, reserving the Subject, and perhaps the Name, which he brings out in his next Pantomine; but if he should receive the Play, then you must attend again to get it writ out in Parts, and Rehears'd. Well, Sir, at last the Rehearsals begin; then, Sir, begins another Scene of Trouble with the Actors, some of whom don't like their Parts, and all are continually plaguing you with Alterations: At length, after having waded through all these Difficulties, his Play appears on the Stage, where one Man hisses out of Resentment to the Author; a Second out of dislike to the House; a Third out of Dislike to the Actor; A Fourth out of Dislike to the Play; a Fifth for the Joke's sake; a Sixth to keep all the rest in Company. Enemies abuse him, Friends give him up, the Play is damn'd, and the Author goes to the Devil, so ends the Farce. (Act IV, sc.1)³⁷

The power of the managers increased during the century and Goldsmith, though not yet a playwright, resented it. In the Enquiry he took the part of the author:

The managers, and all who espouse their side, are for decoration and ornaments; the critic, and all who have studied French decorum, are for regularity and declamation. Thus it is almost impossible to please both

parties, and the poet, by attempting it, finds himself often incapable of pleasing either³⁸.

Goldsmith discussed this tribulation at greater length in an essay On the Present State of our Theatres of 1760:

There was a time when the town, and not the managers of our theatres were constituted judges of literary merits: I remember about thirty years ago that scarce a season passed without half a dozen new plays; at these the town presided as judges; some were approved and others condemned upon a fair hearing; it is now quite otherwise, our managers think they deal generously by us if they give us one new play during the whole season: this, therefore, as the audience have not an opportunity of chusing, is sure to be approved ...³⁹

Managers, indeed, were reluctant to put on new plays. Their reception was always unsure, whereas a popular old play was always certain to satisfy the audience. In addition to this, new plays required greater expense in new costumes and scenery whereas for an established play the old equipment would be brought out again.

Other obstacles hindered authors. As Fielding points out in the piece quoted above, actors and actresses were often very capricious and made unreasonable demands. Few were content to play a supporting role; if one had the heroine's part then the other must have a special prologue written for her. They were far from conscientious about rehearsing and frequently arrived on the night of the first performance very unsure of the words. Shuter confessed to having been drunk for the three days preceed-
int the first production of Mrs Griffith's A Wife in the Right (1772) and the play failed due to his ebriety⁴⁰. In such cases, authors did not always have recourse to the manager for justice. Colman, in particular, was accused of putting his favourites and his mistresses on stage, rather than players better suited to the parts. The

managers had strong, sometimes proprietary links with newspapers, which were paid to puff their plays, disparage the production of the other house and to cast doubt on the merits and the morals of their authors.

Not everything was against the author, however. Actors complained, often, undoubtedly with justice, that they were continually pestered with the poor plays of would-be playwrights. Authors often hired 'clapper-men' who would cheer during a play and thus inject a more receptive, cheerful mood into the audience than they might otherwise have felt. If a play did succeed, its author invariably found himself the darling of the town. It was possible to make a considerable amount of money from a successful play, especially if it enjoyed a long run, that was perhaps, twelve or fifteen performances, on its first appearance. Then the playwright would sell his play to a bookseller, which transaction could yield more money than all his 'third nights' put together. In addition to this, and far more important to most writers, every house in London would be eager to receive him as a guest and from this would flow invitations, offers, commissions and, finally the possibility of a royal pension. However, very few authors achieved anything like this kind of success, even fewer were successful with any degree of permanence. The majority, of which Goldsmith was one, at least until his last years, conform more to Ralph's bleak summary of the circumstances attending the authors' profession:

As the Case stands, he is laugh'd at if poor; if, to avoid that Curse, he endeavours to turn his Wit to Profit, he is branded as a Mercenary. If again he should have the good Luck to find a lucrative Market for his Works, Pirates supplant him: His Property may be worth taking, though not worth defending: Magazines, Chronicles etc. may retale him. - Coffee-Houses subscribe for him, - Circulating Libraries subsist by lending him. - So that he may be read everywhere, rewarded no where ...⁴¹

With more relevance to playwrights, Nicoll quotes from Sancho at Court (1742):

Ayres: As Things are now circumstanced viz. the Approbation of the Players, the Licensing-Office and the ill-natur'd Critic, not to say anything of the Publick, an author has but a small chance of succeeding⁴².

Controversies

Morality and Didacticism on the Stage

The eighteenth century saw the transition from the amoral, coarse and cynical comedies of the post-Restoration dramatists to the polite, genteel, sentimental dramas of Goldsmith's contemporaries. Both varieties occasioned much abuse and were the cause of much public debate on the desirability of the theatre's having moral and didactic purposes. Such discussion was not, of course, limited only to dramatic literature but the controversy was more acute due to the fact that the theatres had long been considered places of dubious respectability to say the least. The puritans felt that actually to see scenes of debauchery performed before one was even more likely to corrupt than merely reading them in private. In addition to this, there was, in the early decades of the century, a loss of faith in the worth of contemporary drama. Writers felt themselves to be part of a natural decline, the dramatic form having reached its peak in the previous century. Julian L. Ross in an article published in 1933, quotes Theophilus Cibber's Prologue to The Lover (1730) to illustrate this sense of decline: 'the Stage, as all things Nature's Law obey, /When once Perfection comes, must feel decay'⁴³.

One of the most influential and controversial essays to be published on the subject of morality in the theatre was Jeremy Collier's A Short View of the Immorality, and Profaneness of the English Stage. (1698) Collier's contention is that his contemporary writers for the stage have set out on purpose to corrupt. He is convinced that: 'the Business of Plays is to recommend Vertue

and discountenance Vice ... 'Tis to expose the Singularities of Pride and Fancy, to make Folly and Falsehood contemptible, and to every Thing that is Ill under Infamy, and Neglect'⁴⁴. This is, in fact, the argument at the core of the debate. Collier attacks as profane and immoral, swearing on stage, mockery of the clergy, the depiction of vice rewarded, together with lack of adherence to the Unities. His target is a general one of vice in the theatre but throughout he makes very explicit and detailed attacks on specific plays, in particular on Vanbrugh's The Relapse: 'Young Fashion' is Vanbrugh's hero:

He confesses himself a Rake, Swears, and Blasphemes, Curses, and Challenges his Elder Brother, cheats him of his Mistress, and gets him laid by the Heels in a Dog-Kennel ... This Young Fashion after all, is the Poet's Man of Merit. He provides a Plot and a Fortune, on purpose for him. To speak freely, A Lewd Character seldom wants good Luck in Comedy⁴⁵.

Vanbrugh, in his A Short Vindication of the 'Relapse' and the 'Provok'd Wife' from Immorality and Prophaneness stated part, at least of the opposite point of view: 'the Business of Comedy is to show People what they shou'd do, by representing them upon the Stage, doing what they shou'd not'⁴⁶. Farquhar in his Discourse upon Comedy writes: 'To make the moral instructive, you must make the story diverting' (p. 634-5). These comments although excusing the methods the two dramatists employed, indicates that their avowed intentions were identical with Collier's, that is to instruct by theatrical representation as a moral example. That the stage was a place of instruction was by no means an undisputed theory. Collier criticised Dryden for questioning 'whether Instruction has any thing to do in Comedy ... for the Business of the Poet is to make you laugh' and he argues that 'To laugh without reason is the Pleasure of Fools, and against it, of something Worse. The exposing of Knavery, and making Lewdness ridiculous is a much better occasion for Laughter ...'⁴⁷.

Further on he claims that the English have confused 'Delight' with 'Debauchery' in seeking a purpose for their plays. In this he is supported by Steele, himself a frequent target for abuse on account of the lurid nature of his dialogue and who, in the Spectator of October 29th 1711, censured the town for its poverty of dramatic taste. In the number for March 16th 1711, he had observed that 'A sly expression which alludes to bawdry, puts a whole row into a pleasing smirk; when a good sentence that describes an inward sentiment of the soul is received with the greatest coldness and indifference'. On another occasion, Steele, defending this line in The Funeral from charges of immorality: 'Oh that Harriot! to fold these Arms about the Waste of that Beauteous, struggling and at last yielding Fair!', wrote in the Spectator No. 216:

... there is a great deal to be said in Behalf of an Author; if the Audience would but consider the Difficulty of keeping up a sprightly Dialogue for five Acts together, they would allow a Writer, when he wants Wit, and can't please any otherwise, to help it out with a little Smuttiness.

Steele obviously saw the uses of a little risqué dialogue but would not have advocated its indiscriminate use. Steele's contrasting of the different receptions given to expressions of good-heartedness and of wit was a frequent cry of eighteenth century dramatists.

The rise of sentimental comedy, with its middle-class principles of selfless good nature and generosity as opposed to the Restoration obsession with rakish wit, provided matter for more public debate. Addison in Spectator No. 169 of 13th September 1711, pronounced that 'Good-nature is more agreeable in Conversation than Wit ...' and he had written in No. 167 that:

It has grown almost into a Maxim, that Good-natured Men are not always Men of the most Wit - the Good-natured Man may sometimes bring his Wit in Question because he is apt to be moved with Compassion for those Misfortunes or Infirmities

which another would turn into Ridicule,
and by that means gain a Reputation of
a Wit.

Mrs Centlivre's Prologue to the Wonder (1714) expresses the author's fear of the current opinion:

She trembles at those Censors in the Pit,
Who think good-Nature shews a Want of
Wit.

Nevertheless 'immoral' plays persisted and if no new ones appeared there was always a popular demand for revivals of Wycherley, Congreve and Farquhar, even if in an expurgated form. There was also a rise in the number of satirical plays, mostly farces, which appeared. When these were aimed, increasingly accurately, at the Government, there were public demands for tighter control on the theatres and their managers. The second decade of the century saw the establishment of several new theatres and also the refurbishing of several of the old ones. This caused much anxiety to those who attributed to the theatre much of the decline in public morals. Considerable discontent among actors had arisen after the passing of an Act in 1713 'for the more effectual punishing such rogues, vagabonds, sturdy beggars and vagrants, and sending them whither they ought to be sent.' Under the Act 'Common Players of Interludes' were deemed 'rogues and vagabonds'. A Bill 'for restraining the Number of Houses for the playing of Interludes and for the better regulating common Players of Interludes' produced much heated discussion on its proposal in 1735⁴⁸. James Erskine, a member of Parliament, asserted that the British 'were now so extravagantly addicted to lewd and idle Diversions, that the Number of Play-Houses in London was double to that of Paris'. Such worthless preoccupations were, he declared, as unsuited to the 'Mien and Manners of an Englishman or a Scot, as they were agreeable to the Air and Levity of a Monsieur'⁴⁹.

Petitions poured into Parliament from advocates of both sides of the argument. Drury Lane and Covent Garden sent in a joint petition. Supporters of the Act claimed that stage entertainment was immoral and had a corruptive effect on the workers who wasted time and money on play-going. This was denied in the petition from the New Theatre in Goodman's Fields which pointed out that 'the Diversions thereof not beginning till the Labour of the Day is done' they could hardly interfere with the workers' efficiency⁵⁰. The morality of the players and managers themselves was also impugned and produced vehement assertions of unimpeachable morals throughout the theatre world. Walpole decided to drop the Bill but he increased the powers of the Lord Chamberlain to veto as he saw fit. This was a very unpopular move. Fielding, whose scurrilous plays had been largely responsible for the public indignation, produced in the Little Theatre, Haymarket, a series of allegorical satires on Walpole and his ministry. Pasquin in 1736, a burlesque of contemporary politicians, had an enormous success and outraged the Government. A restrictive Bill was quickly introduced into Parliament and passed with little opposition. For the first time the powers of the Lord Chamberlain received statutory recognition and his dual function in the theatre was clearly defined. Under the Act, any person acting 'for hire, gain or reward' in any place where they have not a settlement or 'without licence from the Lord Chamberlain of His Majesty's Household for the time being, shall be deemed a rogue and a vagabond' and was therefore liable to imprisonment. A further provision decreed that 'no new plays or additions to old plays might be acted unless and until a copy of such play or additions had obtained the approval of the Lord Chamberlain'⁵¹. The Act put paid to the activities of most provincial theatres and led to the closure of London's three unlicensed theatres, the Haymarket, Goodman's Fields and Lincoln's Inn Fields. This left two theatres and one opera house, a situation of virtual monopoly which gave great power to the managers. Controversy continued

after the Act. The campaigners on behalf of public morals were satisfied but their opposers claimed that the Act was an attack on the freedom of the press. Illegal and unlicensed performances continued but this meant that actors were at the mercy of informers. Some companies charged an entry fee for a concert and put on a play in the interval, free. Others just risked prosecution. As the century progressed, attitudes relaxed and after 1750, the Lord Chamberlain was known to veto only very few plays and then usually only on the grounds of a personal attack on a prominent figure. Indeed, throughout the century, the only true arbiter was the public. They had the power to damn a play on whatever grounds they chose. In 1738, there was a riot in the Haymarket over the visit of a company of French actors. In the subsequent trial the judge ruled 'that the public had a legal right to manifest their dislike to any play or actor; and that the judicature of the pit had been acquiesced in, time immemorial'⁵². This led to a public feeling of complete freedom to wreck any performance or performer they pleased and occasioned many riots during the middle of the century. Such was the situation when Goldsmith first came to London.

Goldsmith was a keen theatre-goer. His contributions to various periodicals include a number of play reviews. Boswell records a conversation between him and Johnson, during the course of which Goldsmith remarked to Johnson, 'I think, Mr Johnson, you don't go near the theatres now. You give yourself no more concern about a new play, than if you had never had anything to do with the stage'⁵³. Goldsmith was highly critical of the theatre he found in London and attacked both individual plays and general trends, which seemed to him absurd or vicious. That the issue of moral instruction was still alive is indicated by the number of references Goldsmith makes to it.

In his long essay An Enquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe⁵⁴ published in 1759, Goldsmith makes this point:

PLATE 3



RIOT AT COVENT GARDEN THEATRE DURING THE PLAYING OF "ARTAXERXES," 1763.

From The Annals of Covent Garden Theatre by Henry Saxe Wyndham

Every age produces new follies and new vices, and one absurdity is often displaced in order to make room for another. The dramatic poet, however, who should, and has often been, a firm champion in the cause of virtue, detects all the new machinations of vice, levels his satire at the rising structures of folly, or drives her from behind the retrenchments of fashion. Thus far then, the poet is useful ...

In his Essay on the Present State of Our Theatres,⁵⁵ published a year later, he deplores the poor theatrical entertainment currently available in London and concludes:

Sorry I am to think that the stage which might be turned into a fine school for instruction, should thus be made a scene for absurdity, that men who come to be rationally amused, should, upon recollection, blush to think of the futility of their passing the evening.

In his Life of Voltaire,⁵⁶ Goldsmith, depicting the philosopher's early years, writes of his affair with a mercenary actress who 'frequently assured him, that it was polite to deceive the old man, [his father] that comedy every day afforded instances of this laudable disobedience, and often intimated that money must be supplied, or love discontinued'.

Goldsmith shared, not only the contemporary mistrust of the moral values expressed on the stage but also of the moral values held by individual players. In The Actor (1755) Aaron Hill criticized the audiences for their lack of discrimination in their choice of favourites:

The theatres are in a great measure supported by the young men of fashion, and they go to see the actress rather than the character. It is enough to them that the name of some handsome actress is in the bills, they do not enquire what is her character⁵⁷.

The actor, 'that dear favorite of the public'⁵⁸ is a frequent target for Goldsmith, on account of what he saw as his overweening

self-importance and arrogance. Goldsmith had a very uneven friendship with Garrick, which many attributed to the struggling author's jealousy of the supremely successful interpreter. In the Enquiry he discusses this at some length. Goldsmith evidently felt that the respective celebrity accorded to author and actor was totally disproportionate. He was also aware that the actor's personal moral character was capable of giving a distorted impression of the author's work:

The actor then is useful, by introducing the works of the poet to the public with becoming splendour; but when these have once become popular, I must confess myself so much a sceptic, as to think it would be more for the interests of virtue, if such performances were read, not acted; made rather our companions in the closet, than on the theatre. While we are readers, every moral sentiment strikes us in all its beauty, but the love scenes are frigid, tawdry, and disgusting. When we are spectators, all the persuasives to vice receive an additional lustre. The love scene is aggravated, the obscenity heightened, the best actors figure in the most debauched characters, while the parts of dull morality, as they are called, are thrown to some mouthing machine, who puts even virtue out of countenance, by his wretched imitation. The principal performers find their interest in chusing such parts as tend to promote, not the benefit of society, but their own reputations; and in using arts which inspire emotions very different from those of morality. How many young men go to the playhouse speculatively in love with the rule of right, but return home actually enamour'd of an actress? ... But it is needless to mention the incentives to vice which are found at the theatre, or the immorality of some of the performers ... I would also infer that to the poet is to be ascribed all the good that attends seeing plays, and to the actor all the harm⁵⁹.

The question of morality and laughter-provoking humour was central to the whole phenomenon of sentimental comedy and this will be discussed in detail later in this chapter.

Moderns versus Ancients: The Unities

Another controversy perennial among British playwrights is that of the necessity of adherence to the three Unities of drama, which were laid down by Aristotle. French classical drama adhered to them rigidly, and the British neglect was a shock to foreign visitors. Néricault-Déstouches wrote: 'Car il est presque impossible d'exprimer les énormes libertés que les auteurs comiques se donnent en Angleterre. Ils ignorent, ou plutôt ils méprisent les trois unités et se moquent de nous, qui les observons si soigneusement'⁶⁰. Shakespeare's departure from the rules was a matter of much embarrassment to many eighteenth century classicists and most of the bombastic history plays and tragedies of the period adhered, at least, to the spirit, if not to the letter of the laws. However, opposition was outspoken. Farquhar, in his Discourse Upon Comedy (1702) did not scruple to question the validity of the three Unities, nor did he limit himself to these relics of ancient times, but attacked all the manifestations of rule by the past, wherever they appeared. The Discourse is partially directed at Rich, whose preference for producing old plays rather than new ones, is deplored by Farquhar with his dislike of the ever-popular custom of denigrating one's own age in favour of the superiority of the past: '... the world was never more active or youthful, and true downright sense was never more universal than at this very day ...'⁶¹. Why, he asks, should Aristotle's two thousand year old laws still bind us today? For all we know, he argues, Aristotle never wrote a line of verse in his life:

Is it reasonable that any person who has never writ a distich of verses in his life shou'd set up for a dictator in poetry; and without the least practice in his own performance must give laws and rules to that of others?⁶²

Farquhar addresses Rich who has, apparently, objected to the improbabilities which arose in contemporary drama. After all, he argues, if we see Alexander on the stage:

... the whole audience ... knows that this is Mr Betterton who is strutting about on the stage and tearing his lungs for a livelihood. And that the same person should be Mr Betterton and Alexander the Great at the same time is somewhat like an impossibility in my mind. Yet you must grant this impossibility in spite of your teeth, if you han't the power to raise the old heroe from the grave to act his own part⁶³.

These are the real impossibilities, how can the audience, he asks Rich, be in Cairo when they know they are in the playhouse?

Farquhar was supported in his attack on the absurdities of the Unities by many contemporaries. Charles Johnson, in his Prologue, to The Female Fortune-Teller, openly boasted he had neglected them all⁶⁴. Carey prefixed his Hanging and Marriage (1722) with the following: 'The Time. Exactly even with the Action. The Place. A little Country Village. The Action. As follows⁶⁵. However, the general feeling in the eighteenth century was that the ancient laws were, as Mrs Centlivre put it in her Preface to Love's Contrivance (1703) 'the greatest Beauties of a Dramatick Poem'⁶⁶. Although many plays were said to adhere to the Unities, by contemporary French standards they would have been greatly wanting, as a considerable degree of latitude was implied in their use in England. Goldsmith's views were characteristic of his emphasis on what seemed 'natural' on the stage:

A mechanically exact adherence to all the rules of the Drama, is more the business of industry than of genius. Theatrical lawgivers rather teach the ignorant where to censure, than the Poet how to write. If sublimity, sentiment, and passion, give warmth and life, and expression to the whole, we can the more easily dispense with the rules of the Stagyrice; but if languor, affectation, and the false sublime are substituted for these, an observance of all the precepts of the Antients, will prove but a poor compensation⁶⁷.

Farquhar did feel that contemporary dramatists had something to learn from the classical writers, in style at least:

Comedy is no more at present than a well-fram'd tale handsomely told as an agreeable vehicle for counsel or reproof ... Then where shou'd we seek for a foundation but in Aesop's symbolical way of moralising upon tales and fable? with this difference: that his stories were shorter than ours. He had his tyrant Lyon, his statesmen Fox, his Beau Magpy, his coward Hare, his bravo Ass, and his buffoon Ape, with all the characters that crowd our stages every day; with this distinction, nevertheless, that Aesop made his beasts speak good Greek, and our heroes sometimes can't talk English⁶⁸.

Admiration for the Elizabethan dramatists was fervent in the eighteenth century and encouraged the increasing disregard of the merits of the classical authors. Churchill in The Rosciad (1761) extols the greatest of them:

... and Shakespeare's muse aspires
Beyond the reach of Greece; with native fires,
Mounting aloft he wings his daring flight,
While Sophocles below stands trembling at
his height. (ll. 217-220)

Farquhar, in justifying his own principles, called upon the great English tradition of popular plays to reinforce his argument. To please an English audience and find a tale that diverts while it instructs, there is no point, he says, in approaching:

Menander or Plautus, but must consult
Shakespear, Johnson, Fletcher, and others,
who, by methods much different from the
ancients, have supported the English stage
and made themselves famous to posterity.
We shall find that these gentlemen have
fairly dispenc'd with the greatest part of
critical formalities; the decorums of time
and place, so much cry'd up of late, had
no force of decorum with them; the economy
of their plays was ad libitum, and the extent
of their plots only limited by the convenience

of the action. I wou'd willingly understand the regularities of Hamlet, Mackbeth, Harry the Fourth, and of Fletcher's plays: and yet these have long been the darlings of the English audience, and are like to continue with the same applause, in defiance of all the criticisms that were every publish'd in Greek and Latin⁶⁹.

Goldsmith's views on the rules of drama are difficult to ascertain. Farquhar was his model in many respects; he certainly greatly admired his plays. Yet it is impossible not to read into Goldsmith's Life of Voltaire, especially in the instalment for April 1761, where he discusses Voltaire's strong support for the Unities, a commitment to the classical rules.

Public Taste and Sentimental Comedy

Alternatives to Sentimental Comedy

Although sentimental drama was the most startling innovation of the eighteenth century stage and although its life extended through the entire century, several other forms of theatrical entertainment were available and popular. At the beginning of the century the coarse, ribald humour of Vanbrugh was still very popular. Shakespeare had drifted out of public favour and few of his plays were still performed. '... no Man can allow any of Shakespeare's comedies, except the Merry Wives of Windsor', wrote Gildon in 1710⁷⁰. Only towards the middle of the century were Shakespeare's comedies revived. In the 1738-9 season at Covent Garden, only six Shakespeare performances were given, (two of Henry IV pt. il, one of Henry IV pt. ii., one of the Jew of Venice, one of The Merry Wives of Windsor and one of Much Ado About Nothing.), whereas in the 1748-9 season, twelve performances were given of Henry IV, seven of Merry Wives, three of Measure for Measure and one of As You Like It. In 1769, Garrick organised a highly successful jubilee at Stratford, during which plays by Shakespeare, Beaumont and Fletcher, and Jonson were performed. This promoted a revival of interest in plays by other dramatists of the past and adaptations of Shakespeare, Dryden, Crowne, Shadwell,

Vanbrugh, Congreve, Wycherley, Farquhar, Centlivre and Fielding were made, these being thought more suitable to the decent and genteel taste of the time. A vast amount of the plays produced during the second half of this century were adaptations, not always acknowledged, of these and other early authors.

It was not, however, only to their English predecessors that the eighteenth century dramatists went for their models. A strange ambivalence existed in their attitude to French and Italian influence. Molière, Dancourt, Pierre Corneille, Déstouches, Beaumarchais and many others together with the Italian Commedia del'Arte were drawn upon for innumerable 'new' plays. A successful comedy in Paris was sure to appear on the London stage within the season. However, this practice, though almost universal, was not without its critics. In her prologue to A Bold Stroke for a Wife (1718), Mrs Centlivre announced:

To-night we come upon a Bold Design,
To try to please without one borrow'd line;
Our Plot is new, and regularly clear,
And not one single Tittle from Moliere⁷¹.

Although French and Italian plays and operas were very popular, the actual performers were not, especially with English authors. It seemed that English opera could not hope to rival the Italian and that French satire far excelled the English variety. As early as 1708, Taverner, in the prologue to The Maid The Mistress, complained that an author could not hope to please 'Without Song or Dance, / Without Italian Airs, Or Steps from France'⁷². The foreign performers were despised. The following conversation in Tunbridge-Walks by Thomas Baker (1703), illustrates this contempt: 'And pray', asks a newcomer, 'what are your Town diversions? To hear a Parcel of Italian Eunuchs, like so many Cats, squawll out somewhat you don't understand' (Act I sc, ii)⁷³ is the reply. In John Corey's The Metamorphosis (1704) Nickum asks 'What hear you now?' And Sir Credulous replies, 'A Squawl somewhat like Singing. That's an Italian Singer, mightily in Vogue at an Consort in York-Buildings'

(Act I sc.i.)⁷⁴. The English xenophobia, together with the general mistrust of stage performers, enabled this contempt to prevail throughout the century. Hence Dr Johnson's distress and disgust at Mrs Thrale's second marriage to Piozzi, an Italian singer and also Sheridan's satire on the voluble Italian singers in The Critic of 1779.

The only branch of English theatre under foreign influence which did succeed was the opera. Serious English opera invariably failed in competition with the Italian lyricism, influenced by Metastasio whom Goldsmith so admired. But ballad opera, which grew out of the popular drama which was interspersed with song, and which was a purely English phenomenon, enjoyed considerable success. Of these, the Beggar's Opera (1728) was the greatest and the most influential. It is interesting that Goldsmith still incorporated songs into She Stoops to Conquer although only one of them was ever sung on stage.

The influence of the Italian Commedia del' Arte was felt mostly in the pantomimes which were very popular at the beginning of the century. The popularity of these decreased throughout the century and was replaced by the practice of appending an 'afterpiece' to every but a new play or an opera, and sometimes, even to these. An afterpiece was, generally a short burlesque, sometimes satirical, or a farce, or, very popular throughout the century, a Harlequinade. A Burlesque was, as Nicoll says, a sort of 'hold all'. He quotes as illustration this Preface to a Burlesque by George Alexander Stevens:

Distress upon Distress; or Tragedy in True Taste. A Heroi-Comi-Parodi-Tragedi-Farcical Burlesque ... With all the Similes, Rants, Groans, Sighs etc., entirely new. With Annotations, Dissertations, Explanations, Observations, Emendations, Quotations, Restorations, etc. By Sir Henry Humm. And Notes, Critical, Classical, and Historical, by Paulus Purgantius Pedasculus. Who has carefully Revised, Corrected and Amended it; Expurged the several Errors and Interpolations; Reconciled the various Readings, and Restored the Author to Himself⁷⁵. (1752)

The greatest of all such Burlesques was Fielding's The Tragedy of Tragedies, or Tom Thumb (1730), which fitted most of the above classifications.

Full-length English comedy thrived in the eighteenth century in many guises and moods. The legacy of the seventeenth century was of comedy in the 'manners' style of Vanbrugh and Farquhar and which was maintained by Burnaby and Fielding. Charles Shadwell, Charles Johnson and Baker were writing in the 'Humours' style of Jonson and the comedy of Intrigue was well supported by Mrs Centlivre. Farce was perennially popular, especially when Fielding took to contributing and sentimental comedy, as begun by Steele, was taken up and extended by Kelly and Cumberland. These genres were not, of course, rigid and their respective moods permeated others.

Eighteenth century tragedy deserved a brief word in this context. Tragedies were written mostly on historical or classical themes, dealing with kings and queens and elevated nobility. The style was highly rhetorical and bombastic, the story-line generally weak, the characters travelling through all the emotions and passions and ending in heroic death. The popularity of such plays was in the decline during the century but had short-lived revivals with plays such as John Home's Douglas (1757), a pseudo-romantic drama, which enjoyed great success. In the 1750's, a new form of tragedy arose, propagated by Lillo and Moore. This was a sort of domestic tragedy and lacked the appeal of the elevated variety, due to the middle-class background of its characters, and the lack of spectacle, melodrama and grandeur to which the eighteenth century tragedy-goers were accustomed. It had much in common with the sentimental drama, being concerned with the extraordinary trials of ordinary people. Both varieties had many objections levelled at them on account of this preoccupation. 'A friend of mine', wrote Goldsmith;

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".⁷⁶

The Rise of Sentimental Comedy

The successful counterpart to the domestic tragedy was the sentimental comedy. The characters in a comedy did not, traditionally, have to belong to the higher strata of society and although the sentimental heroes and heroines frequently underwent trials of the most gruelling and agonizing nature, their good-nature, generosity, and selflessness was always sure to triumph in the end.

The course of the eighteenth century saw the rise of what we today call the middle classes, that is, tradesmen, professional men and landed gentlemen of less than noble forbears. The rise and popularity of sentimental comedy has often been identified with growth of this section of society and there is no doubt that sentimental comedy, both in its themes and in its audience, had 'middle-class' inclinations. There was, throughout the century, a growing tendency to criticize the aristocracy. The evils of town life, as we have seen in Chapter One, were equated with the vices of the nobility and the old trust in country purity, and the wholesomeness of nature was seized on by the middle classes. We have already seen, in Chapter One, examples of this in the fears and prejudices of Old Freehold in The Country Lasses. Almost every eighteenth century play and novel contains some sort of conflict between town and country and their respective values and such a conflict is explicit in She Stoops to Conquer.

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Pamela (1740) by Samuel Richardson was in this, as in other respects, the novel of the century. The story of the poor young servant girl who resists seduction by her powerful master and whose virtue finally induces him to repent, reform and marry her, was the model for innumerable later novels and plays. James Dance

dramatised it in 1741; in 1765 an opera called The Maid of the Mill by Bickerstaff appeared, which was a clear derivation and Thomas Hull adapted it in 1782 as The Fatal Interview. These were only a few of the adaptations and many analogues as well as many plays depicting the attempted seduction of virtuous country maidens, appeared, some of which we have already discussed⁷⁷.

Many of these plays contain comments on the inequality of the classes. Some of these comments relate directly to the plot device of the would-be seducer and the girl he is pursuing. In Le Jeu de l'Amour et du Hasard Silvia, in her role of maid, points out the double standard accepted by the eighteenth century class differentiations:

La distance qu'il y a de vous à moi, mille objets que vous allez trouver sur votre chemin, l'envie qu'on aura de vous rendre sensible, les amusements d'un homme de votre condition; tout va vous ôter cet amour dont vous m'entretenez impitoyablement. Vous en rirez peut-être au sortir d'ici, et vous aurez raison. Mais moi, Monsieur, je m'en ressouviens comme j'en ai peur, s'il m'a frappée, quel secours aurai je contre l'impression qu'il m'aura faite? Qui est-ce qui me dédommagera de votre perte? Que voulez-vous que mon coeur mette à votre place? Savez-vous bien que, si je vous aimois, tout ce qu'il y a de plus grand dans le monde ne me toucheroit pas? Jugez donc de l'état où je resterois. Ayez la générosité de me cacher votre amour. Moi qui vous parle, je me serois un scrupule de vous dire que je vous aime dans les dispositions où vous êtes. L'aveu de mes sentiments pourront exposer votre raison; et vous voyez bien aussi que je vous les cache. (Act III sc. viii)

Attraction between persons from different social classes was acknowledged a possibility in the plays of the time but its indulgence was unthinkable. Hence the conversation between Lucinde and Dormimene in Le Galant Coureur:

Lucinde: Il faut lui pardonner; il te croit suivante, et ces sortes de gens-là ont la coeur tendre comme d'autres.

Dorimène: C'est dommage qu'un joli homme soit né dans un rang si bas. (sc. vii)

Just as the indulgence of such an attraction was unthinkable, so was a genuine attraction between classes. This is where Pamela was so revolutionary. Hitherto, whenever a nobleman in a novel or a play, was attracted to a poor girl, the girl was ultimately revealed to be of genteel, if not noble birth and, not infrequently, a substantial legacy was found to be owing to her. Kate Hardcastle belongs to this tradition, whereas Pamela was genuinely poor and of humble birth. Both these themes are found in sentimental comedy. There are girls of humble birth whose virtue gains them a noble husband and we find also a reliance on the sturdy middle-class convictions of regularity and suitability in all things, in particular, marriage.

Other comments on the inequality of the social classes have different contexts and are explicit criticisms on the vices of the upper classes. This, although not an important trait in the eighteenth century theatre, is, however, an indication of the growing power and freedoms taken by the middle classes and the drive towards democracy. In The Double Dealer by William Popple (1736) Jerry and Frank, the servants of Young Courtlove and Gaylife discuss the qualifications necessary to 'the modern fine gentleman':

Let me see - that is, court every Woman I see, without caring for any; despise every Man that has more Merit than myself; be profoundly ignorant, and ridicule those that are not so; be in Ecstacies at an Opera though I've neither Ear nor Language; and at a Play, where I have both, fall asleep, or run from Box to Box, and talk to every Creature that I know, till I disturb the Audience, and have drawn the Eyes of every Body upon me.
(Act I)

The solid, reliable qualities of the honest artisan were seen as preferable to the inherited privileges of the nobleman:

If a great many Gentlemen had not marry'd
Tradesmen's Daughters, they must have been
glad to have turn'd Tradesmen themselves
for a Living - provided they had Capacity
enough, I mean.

(The Coffee House Rev. James Miller 1738)

Molière's Georges Dandin, which is the tragi-comic story of the plight of an artisan who marries above his station, gives voice to this middle-class tenet and has been regarded as an influence on Goldsmith.

These then, were the people who made up the audience, which so faithfully maintained the sentimental school upon the stage for so many years. It is difficult to explain exactly what sentimental plays were and how they came about. The comédie larmoyante of Déstouches and La Chaussée is presumed to have influenced the English variety. Cibber's Love's Last Shift (1696) is generally accredited with being the first sentimental comedy on the English stage, although other earlier plays have also been suggested. The sentimental school of thought had its most important initiator and influence in the Earl of Shaftesbury whose writings on virtue were founded on the conviction that no man can be called virtuous unless his life is founded upon a wholly disinterested affection for all his fellow creatures. The individual, thought Shaftesbury, should devote himself to what he knows to be right for the world at large and he believed that what is right for society must be right for the individual. It was this spirit which governed sentimental comedy. Why it was called sentimental was a question which has never been satisfactorily explained, although a number of studies have been made⁷⁸. It is certain, however, that plays which were later called sentimental, were written and performed many years before the term became current. Apart from this overall spirit which is common to all the sentimental plays, they share one other feature and that is the frequent profession of sentiments. Sentimental plays abound with characters who make elevated moral pronouncements.

These treated of a multitude of topics but were usually concerned with virtue of one sort or another. Nicoll quotes the following selection from Taverner's The Artful Wife (1717):

How unnecessary is Thought! What Confusion
has it occasion'd! What animosities has it
rais'd in the World! Act I sc. i

How delightful is the Matrimonial State when
two Minds have but one Desire! ... Methinks
there should be but few bad Women, Virtue
is so delightful! Act I sc. ii

A Title may be bought, but Honour must be in
Nature, and born with a man⁷⁹.

Sentimental drama, though retaining its overall purpose during the century, which was as Forster puts it 'To reform the morals instead of imitating the manners of the age'⁸⁰, underwent certain developments. As exemplified by Steele and Cibber, the plot was strong, the characters usually fairly clearly defined and the action was dramatic. Love's Last Shift (1696) is an excellent example. The virtuous Amanda whose philandering husband deserted her years before the action of the play begins, lets him believe she is dead, seduces him back into her bed and ultimately reforms him. The play is enlivened by witty dialogue and Restoration rakes (one should remember that the best plays of Farquhar, Wycherley and Congreve were still to be written), and deepened by Amanda's moral dilemma, which she expresses in terms characteristic of sentimental comedy:

Why, if I court him as a mistress, am I
not accessory to his violating the bonds of
marriage? For though I am his wife, yet
while he loves me not as such, I encourage
an unlawful passion; and though he act be
safe, yet his intent is criminal: how can I
answer this? (Act III sc i)

The reclamation of a rake is, as we have seen in Chapter I, a subject frequently explored by the sentimental dramatists and which made a considerable impression on much of Goldsmith's work including She Stoops to Conquer. A

As the century wore on and an increasing number of dramatists tried their skill at the sentimental mood, the genre became more rarefied and stilted. Interest in plot and character gave way to minute investigation of delicate dilemmas experienced by ladies and gentlemen of genteel birth and refined moral sensibility. The middle years of the century saw the ascendancy of Hugh Kelly and Richard Cumberland of the sentimental school, who were politely opposed by Colman, Mrs Frances Sheridan and Mrs Hannah Cowley and others whose plays, though of a sentimental nature, had more of the vivacious spirit of the comedy of manners and less sententious dialogue than their competitors'. It would be wrong to give the impression that Goldsmith alone withstood the pervasive influence of sentimental comedy and alone rebelled against it. Samuel Foote and Arthur Murphy both wrote plays in the 'manners' style with little sentiment in them and Garrick and Colman produced some very successful comic plays. Nevertheless, the plays of Cumberland and Kelly were both fashionable and popular and exemplified the comedy which Goldsmith found so unnatural and humourless.

Sir Nicholas Nipclose wrote of Cumberland: 'Let him go on amidst the public praise, /And proudly gild his never-blooming bays;/Let him proceed with most relentless heart, /Till nature and the stage for ever part' (p. 28). Kelly, 'Too grave for laughter and too light for tears' (p. 29) was Goldsmith's friend, at least until the appearance of his play False Delicacy, (1768) which was the incarnation of all Goldsmith disliked in sentimental comedy. Lady Betty agrees to forward Lord Winworth's proposal to Miss Marchmont although she loves him herself and knows that he loves her. Miss Marchmont agrees to accept Lord Winworth so as not to hurt and disappoint Lady Betty. Such is the basic situation. The characters are all noble, utterly disinterested. They refuse proposals from men they love out of delicacy and accept those from men they don't love from a sense of duty. The play abounds in sentiments: 'When Virtue is unhappily plung'd into difficulties, 'tis entitled to an additional share of veneration' (Act II). The characters

express the excellence of their natures in stilted, artificial language. Mr Rivers, distressed at his daughter's deception of him and of her planned elopement, addresses her in these affecting terms:

One thing more, Theodora, - and then farewell for ever. Though you come here to throw off the affection of a child, I will not quit this place before I discharge the duty of a parent, even to a romantic extravagance, and provide for your welfare while you plunge me into the most poignant of all distress. In the dotting hours of paternal blandishment, I have often promised you a fortune of twenty thousand pounds, whenever you changed your situation. This promise was, indeed, made when I thought you incapable of either ingratitude or dissimulation, and when I fancied your person would be given where there was some reasonable prospect of happiness. But still it was a promise and shall be faithfully discharged. Here then in this pocket-book are notes for that sum. (Miss Rivers shows an unwillingness to receive the pocket-book) Take it, - but never see me more. Banish my name eternally from your remembrance; and when a little time shall remove me from a world which your conduct has rendered insupportable, boast an additional title, my dear, to your husband's regard, by having shortened the life of your miserable father. (Act IV)

Kelly, in spite of this arch-sentimentalism, seems always to have been aware of the absurdities of his art, as Mark Schorer points out in his article on the dramatist⁸¹. The title False Delicacy has immediate critical implications and there are a number of comments on sentimentalism in Kelly's plays which indicate, at least, a detachment from the prevailing mood. In A Word to the Wise (1770), Miss Montagu discovers that, although she is sentimentally inclined herself: 'tis this good-nature and sensibility that makes the men so intolerably vain and renders us so frequently contemptible'. (Act II) Mrs Harley, in False Delicacy, observing the moral contortions into which Lady Betty's sentiments lead her, cries 'Well, thank Heav'n, my sentiments are not sufficiently refin'd to make me unhappy,' (Act II) and later observes: 'Well, the devil take this

delicacy; I don't know anything it does besides making people miserable' (Act II). In Act IV, Mrs Harley, thoroughly exasperated with Lady Betty and Miss Marchmont, cries: 'Did ever two fools plague one another so heartily with their delicacy and sentiment?' Kelly even mocks his own elevated style. Miss Dormer, in A Word to the Wise, says after a particularly gorgeous phrase: 'Upon my Word Harriot, a very florid winding up of a period, and very proper for a [sic] elevated thought in a sentimental comedy'.

It seems likely that, as Schorer suggests, Kelly's real attitude to sentimentalism was expressed in Mrs Harley's words in Act II of False Delicacy: '... this delicacy ... foolish as it is, one can't help liking it'. If we regard Kelly's plays as showing sentimentalism to be an amiable quality, which could be a strength or a weakness of character depending on the circumstances, then his relationship with Goldsmith becomes easier to understand. They belonged to the same club, worked with the same publisher and had been close friends. When, in 1768, Colman decided reluctantly to stage Goldsmith's play The Good-Natured Man, Garrick hurriedly announced the forthcoming production of False Delicacy which had its first performance six nights before Goldsmith's play. Whether Garrick's action was determined purely by theatre rivalry or by a particular grudge against Goldsmith, it is impossible now to be certain. Nevertheless False Delicacy was a resounding success and The Good-Natured Man a minor one. The plays were continuously contrasted in the press and Goldsmith generally suffered by the comparison. The Good-Natured Man though intended as an attack on sentimental comedy, has many of its qualities. Young Honeywood's vice is not rakishness but an excess of good nature and Goldsmith's attitude to sentimentalism comes over in this play as little different to Kelly's, as it was expressed above. Goldsmith was bitterly disappointed at the reception of his play, which was, in fact, not as bad as he imagined and he made a number of private attacks on Kelly which greatly

offended the successful dramatist. They met one night in, as Forster reports, a Covent Garden green-room and when Goldsmith broke through the mutual embarrassment to congratulate Kelly on his success, Kelly replied 'I cannot thank you, because I cannot believe you'⁸². Kelly retired from the Wednesday Club and although he was reported to have wept at Goldsmith's funeral, they are not known to have met again.

Contemporary Attitudes to Sentimental Comedy

One of the charges frequently brought against sentimental comedy in the eighteenth century was that it was not comic at all. The old arguments were once more applied. The inculcation of moral values is not, it was argued, the province of comedy, which should be, principally, to induce the audience to laughter. John Dennis, in his Remarks upon a Play called 'The Conscious Lovers' (1723) took issue with Steele's avowedly didactic purpose in a very sentimental play:⁸³

When Sir Richard says, that any thing that has its Foundation in Happiness and Success must by the Subject of Comedy, he confounds Comedy with that Species of Tragedy which has a happy Catastrophe. When he says that 'tis an Improvement of Comedy to introduce a Joy too exquisite for Laughter, he takes all the Care that he can to shew, that he knows nothing of the Nature of Comedy ... In Molière's Opinion, 'tis the Business of a Comick Poet to enter into the Ridicule of Men, and to expose the blind Sides of all sorts of People agreeably ... When Sir Richard talks of a Joy too exquisite for Laughter, he seems not to know that Joy, generally taken, is common like Anger, Indignation, Love, to all sorts of Poetry, to the Epick, the Dramatick, the Lyrick; but that that Kind of Joy which is attended with Laughter, is the Characteristick of Comedy; ... When Sir Richard says, That weeping upon the Sight of a deplorable Object is not a Subject for Laughter, but that 'tis agreeable to good Sense and to Humanity, he says nothing but what all that sensible

Part of the World have always deny'd, that
a deplorable Object is fit to be shewn in
Comedy ...

The opposite view was taken in 1763 in a review of Mrs Sheridan's
The Discovery in the Critical Review of February:

This comedy which in spite of its uncommon merit, has been generally applauded, has at the same time been censured by many as too grave, the latter part of it especially, approaching in the opinion of the laughter-lovers too nearly to what the French call the Comédie Larmoyante. For our own parts, we think the use and excellence, of the moral resulting from it makes us ample amends for its gravity; and if critics still insist on it that serious cannot be called comic scenes, we will, if they please, say that this is no comedy, but something better (p. 112)

These arguments are further contributions to the perennial morality versus pleasure in plays controversy but they also contain the essence of another, related, controversy of the eighteenth century. This was a debate which seems very strange to us today, concerned with the moral worth of laughter. Today, we regard laughter as the natural and spontaneous expression of amusement and we append no connotations of morality to it whatsoever. In the eighteenth century, a far more ambivalent attitude towards laughter obtained. Churchill, in the Rosciad, (1761) criticised the 'melancholy mad' age 'When 'tis not deemed so great a crime by half/To violate a vestal as to laugh' (ll. 463-4) and this reflects a feeling which had existed since Collier had written in 1698 'he who is ridden by his Jests, and minds nothing but the business of Laughing, is himself Ridiculous' (p. 160).

The actual reasons for and causes of laughter were closely argued. Steele, in the epilogue to The Lying Lover (1703), wrote '... laughter's a distorted passion born/Of sudden self-esteem, and sudden scorn' and Addison in the Spectator No. 47 of 24th April 1711 quotes Hobbes to emphasize this point:

'The Passion of Laughter is nothing else but sudden Glory arising from sudden Conception of some Eminency in our selves, by Comparison with the Infirmary of others, or with our own formerly ...' according to this Author, therefore, when we hear a Man laugh excessively, instead of saying he is very Merry, we ought to tell him he is very Proud.

A less extreme view was taken in 1772 by Paul Hiffernan: 'We laugh at comic characters, for having that species of faults, or human failings, neither cognisable to, nor reprehensible by penal laws; but which nevertheless, sinks them to an inferiority respectively to us'⁸⁴. Laughter in the eighteenth century was also seen as unbecoming to the face and inconsistent with a genteel manner. Johnson wrote of Swift that he 'stubbornly resisted any tendency to laughter'⁸⁵ and 'By no merriment, either of others or of his own, was Pope ever seen excited to laughter'⁸⁶. Congreve in The Double Dealer, expresses the opinion that: 'There is nothing more unbecoming a man of quality than to laugh, it is such a vulgar expression of the passion. Everybody can laugh.' (Act I sc.i) The most thorough condemnation of laughter in this context is surely Lord Chesterfield's in his Letter to his Son dated March 9th O.S. 1748:

Having mentioned laughing, I must particularly warn you against it; and I could heartily wish that you may often be seen to smile, but never heard to laugh while you live. Frequent and loud laughter is the characteristic of folly and ill manner: it is the manner in which the mob express their silly joy at silly things; and they call it being merry. In my mind there is nothing so illiberal, and so ill-bred, as audible laughter. True wit, or sense, never yet made anyone laugh; they are above it: they please the mind and give a cheerfulness to the countenance. But it is low buffoonery, or silly accidents, that always excite laughter; and that is what people of sense and Breeding should show themselves above. A man's going to sit down, in the supposition that

he had a chair behind him, and falling down upon his breech for want of one, sets a whole company a laughing, when all the wit in the world would not do it; a plain proof in my mind, how low and unbecoming a thing laughter is. Not to mention the disagreeable noise that it makes, and the shocking distortion of the face that is occasioned. Laughter is easily restrained by a very little reflection; but, as it is generally connected with the idea of gaiety, people do not enough attend to its absurdity. I am neither of a melancholy, nor a cynical disposition; and I am as willing and as apt, to be pleased as any body; but I am as sure that, since I have had the full use of my reason, nobody has ever heard me laugh. ⁸⁷

Goldsmith seems to have had a more complex attitude to the value of laughter. Although he despised the humourless sentimental comedies and believed that comedy should deliver its moral message through the laughter of its audience at a ridiculous object, he, nevertheless, deplored 'the loud laugh that spoke the vacant mind' ⁸⁸.

Goldsmith was not, as I have said, the only dramatist of the second half of the eighteenth century who believed in 'laughing' comedies, as he called them. Garrick and Colman wrote plays in the comedy of intrigue tradition, which provided the stage with much staple material. The Jealous Wife (1761), and The Clandestine Marriage (1766) were among their successes. Arthur Murphy, a friend of Goldsmith, wrote witty plays in the style of the comedy of manners, as well as a number of farces. He, however, was a less discreet borrower and adapter of the works of more illustrious dramatists and was frequently criticised for this fault. Nipclose called him 'the literary smuggler of this isle' (p. 16). Samuel Foote, 'the English Aristophanes', was the most outspoken of all the dramatists in his condemnation of sentimental comedy. His plays were satirical and attacked indiscriminately Frenchified Englishmen, doctors, bawds and particular individuals. His bitter wit and often libellous lampoons were deeply feared. His plays did not survive, more because of their contemporary relevance than

due to any lack of humour or spirit. Foote's greatest importance, in terms of his relationship to Goldsmith and to the reaction against sentimental comedy lies in his play The Handsome Housemaid: or Piety in Pattens, which appeared at the Puppet Theatre on 15th February 1773, exactly one month before the first performance of She Stoops to Conquer. In his preface to the play, Foote attacked the view of laughter which prevailed at the time among his 'brother writers' who 'had all agreed that it was highly improper and beneath the dignity of a mixed assembly, to show any signs of joyful satisfaction, and that creating a laugh was forcing the higher order of an audience to a vulgar and mean use of their muscles'. The play is a burlesque, both of the artificiality of the sentiments expressed in sentimental comedy and of the Pamela type tale of the pure servant-girl elevated to the aristocracy. The Squire proposes to make Polly Pattens his mistress. She, in her innocence, does not realise his intentions and accepts. When 'poor Thomas', her fellow-servant reveals to her the Squire's evil plans, she rejects her master who is so enchanted with her virtue that he offers to marry her. She replies that she owes her good fortune to Thomas and if he gives her leave to marry the Squire she will. Thomas generously disclaims all his rights to Polly, at which the Squire, deeply touched swears he cannot part two such virtuous people and, promising them a farm worth ten pounds a year, tells them to marry. At which point Polly intervenes:

Polly: There is one part still to be acted by me. let Polly Pattens shew the World how truly delicate a House-Maid can be. as your Passion, Sir, and Thomas's are equal, I cannot prefer one without afflicting the other. Justice and Gratitude therefore demand ...* as I must not have both to take -

Squire: Him?

Thomas: Him?

Polly: Neither.

All: Oh! Oh! Oh!

This play caused a considerable sensation in the play-going world of 1773, which was only to be superseded by the uproar which greeted She Stoops to Conquer on its appearance one month later.

* indistinct in ms.

Goldsmith and Sentimental Comedy

One of the most effective and frequently used weapons of the sentimentalists was the word 'low'. The word 'low', shouted at a line in a play or written in criticism of a paragraph in a book was sufficient to damn the work in its entirety. Its meaning extended to anything not wholly in agreement with the refined, genteel and sentimental manners of the time and many authors suffered from its widespread use. Fielding, in Tom Jones, asked:

... hath anyone living attempted to explain what the modern judges of our theatres mean by that word low; by which they have happily succeeded in banishing all humour from the stage, and have made the theatre as dull as a drawing-room?⁸⁹

Goldsmith, in the Enquiry, made the same point, but in the context of the moral value of the theatre:

... by the power of one single monosyllable, our critics have almost got the victory over humour amongst us. Does the poet paint the absurdities of the vulgar - then he is low: does he exaggerate the features of folly, to render it more thoroughly ridiculous, then he is very low⁹⁰.

In 1768, Goldsmith himself suffered the very treatment he here condemns. The 'bailiff' scene in the Good-natur'd Man was greeted with hisses and shouts of 'low!', so that it was omitted for the remaining performances. It was, however, included in the printed edition.

Goldsmith, then, belonged to those who believed in making an audience laugh in order to make palatable the instruction he gave them. His own preferences in drama lay with those playwrights who had shared this view. His critical work abounds in praise for Congreve, Dryden, Prior, Addison, Pope and Shakespeare and, in particular, Farquhar, to whom he was, as we have already seen, greatly indebted. '... the works of Congreve and Farquhar have too much wit in them for the present taste,' Wilkinson says in The Vicar of Wakefield⁹¹.

In an earlier essay he remarked that 'the audiences now sit uneasy at the sprightly sallies of Vanbrugh, or Congreve'⁹². In his Preface to The Good-natur'd Man, he wrote:

When I undertook to write a comedy, I confess I was strongly prepossessed in favour of the poets of the last age, and strove to imitate them. The term, genteel comedy, was then unknown amongst us, and little more was desired by an audience, than nature and humour, in whatever walks of life they were most conspicuous⁹³.

From this, it is apparent that Goldsmith valued the qualities of the late Restoration drama, in particular, its wit and truth to nature and these were the qualities he sought to imitate. Truth to nature was not, however, sufficient, he believed, for a comedy, if liveliness was sacrificed to it. In a review of a farce called High Life below Stairs, he wrote:

From a conformity to critic rules, which, perhaps on the whole, have done more harm than good, our author has sacrificed all the vivacity of the dialogue to nature; and though he makes his characters talk like servants, they are seldom absurd enough, or lively enough, to make us merry. Though he is always natural, he happens seldom to be humourous.⁹⁴.

Goldsmith, evidently, laid great stress on humour, nature, liveliness and wit in the theatre and the artificial excesses of sentimental comedy were consequently abhorrent to him. The Good-natur'd Man was, essentially, a failure because it was neither one thing nor another. Goldsmith, in his eagerness for critical acclaim, had not freed himself of the cloying influence of the sentimental mood and, in spite of his intentions, his ambivalence is reflected in the play. By the time he came to write She Stoops to Conquer, his ideas were more certain and his attack more determined. In this challenging mood, he wrote, two months before the first performance of She Stoops to Conquer, an

article entitled An Essay on The Theatre; or, a Comparison between Laughing and Sentimental Comedy⁹⁵. This essay forcefully reproduced the old arguments on the nature of the totally different provinces of tragedy and comedy:

If we apply to the 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. (p. 210 ll. 20-25)

Goldsmith continues by sketching the history of sentimental comedy and suggests some possible reasons for its appearance:

Yet notwithstanding 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 of 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 Passions 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 noway solicitous, as he measures his fame by his profits. (p. 211 l. 26, p. 212 ll. 1-19)

Goldsmith next deals with the current popularity of sentimental comedy by asking 'Whether the True Comedy would not amuse us more?' (p. 212 l. 31). He claims that sentimental comedy requires no great intelligence either to write or to appreciate it. He concludes with an appeal to the audiences upon whose approbation the success of any play depends. The future of the English stage is in their hands and he believes that a great deal is at risk:

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. (p. 213 ll. 28-31)

In the process of getting She Stoops to Conquer performed, Goldsmith was faced with many problems. The taste of the times was in opposition to his own, his only other play had not been a memorable success, actors and managers were capricious and difficult and success or failure could depend on the whim of a particular audience. The following chapter describes this process and general reaction to the production.

CHAPTER TWO: NOTES

Note no:

1. For much of the information in this chapter I am indebted to Allardyce Nicoll's A History of English Drama 1660-1900,^{4th ed. (1952)} Volumes II and III. The debt is such that only direct quotations will be annotated and the work will be referred to as Nicoll.
2. 'London and the Life of the Town', essay in Johnson's England, edited by A.S. Turberville (Oxford 1933) p. 187. The quotation is from Tableau de l'Angleterre, two volumes, 1788.
3. Ibid.
4. See Nicoll, ~~VII~~. III, pp. 38-39 for an account.
5. London Magazine, p. 483, (1768)
6. 'Macaroni' was the contemporary term for those over-dressed, self-conscious young men, who had hitherto been called beaux and fops and who were later known as dandies.
7. Nicoll, ~~VII~~. III, p. 13
8. Ibid., p. 14
9. The Actor, Aaron Hill, (London 1755)
10. Nicoll, ~~VII~~. III, p. 11
11. Ibid., p. 6
12. Nicoll, ~~VII~~. II, p. 14
13. Citizen of the World, Letter XXI, published in the Public Ledger, Friday, 21st March 1760. Friedman; ~~VII~~. II, p. 89 ll. 17-32, p. 90 ll. 1-12.
14. 'London and the Life of the Town' p. 181
15. Ibid.
16. A General View of the Stage, Thomas Wilkes (London 1759,) p. 54 Quoted in Goldsmith's Development as a Comic Dramatist, William Jacob Shang, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, (University of Michigan, 1971). Dissertations Abstracts ~~XXII~~^{XXVII} (1972) 6942A.
17. The Bee, no. II (Saturday, October 13th 1759), Friedman, ~~VII~~. I, pp. 389-390

18. The Bee, no. II, (Saturday, October 6th 1759,) 'Remarks on Our Theatres' Friedman, ~~Vol.~~ I, pp. 360-361
19. The Actor, ~~Chapter~~ II, p. 30
20. Ibid., ~~Chapter~~ II, p. 49
21. Ibid., ~~Chapter~~ XXVI p. 259
22. Ibid., ~~Chapter~~ VIII p. 138
23. The Bee no. I 'Remarks on Our Theatres' Friedman ~~Vol.~~ I, pp. 362-363.
24. Chapter II p. 40
25. Forster, The Life and Adventures of Oliver Goldsmith (London 1848), p. 624
26. An Enquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe, published in 1759. Friedman ~~Vol.~~ I, p. 329
27. Citizen of the World, Letter LXXXV, Public Ledger (Tuesday, 21st October 1760,) Friedman, ~~Vol.~~ II, pp. 348-349. See also James Ralph, The Case of Authors by Profession (1762). Ralph deplors the vast fees extorted by such as 'Tooth-Drawers' and 'Corn-Cutters'. He says: 'And I don't despair of seeing the time when French Friseurs, French Hawkers and other strollers will do the same'. (p. 41)
28. I have found it impossible to trace the author's identity. According to the Dictionary of Anonymous and Pseudonymous English Literature edited by Halkett and Laing and revised by Kennedy, Smith and Johnson, nine vols. (1932) the work has been 'wrongly attributed to Garrick', VI, 22.
29. Goldsmith in the Citizen of the World Letter CXIII (Friedman Vol. II) Public Ledger, (Tuesday, 14th April 1761,) refers to the disputes which arose, pp. 436-440.
30. Nicoll, ~~Vol.~~ II, p. 46
31. Ibid., p. 47
32. Nicoll, ~~Vol.~~ III, p. 45 Gentleman's Magazine ^{XX} (October 1750) ~~Vol.~~ p. 471.
33. Quoted in Nicoll, Vol. III p. 41
34. Citizen of the World Letter LXXIX, Public Ledger (Tuesday 30th September 1760,) Friedman, ~~Vol.~~ II, pp. 323-324.

35. Nicoll, ~~Vol.~~ III, p. 187
36. Nicoll, ~~Vol.~~ II, p. 44
37. Ibid., pp. 45-46
38. Enquiry, Chapter XII 'Of the Stage' Friedman, ~~Vol.~~ I, p. 323, ll. 4-8
39. Weekly Magazine no. III (12th January 1760) Friedman, ~~Vol.~~ III p. 54
40. Nicoll, ~~Vol.~~ III p. 41
41. p. 41
42. Nicoll, ~~Vol.~~ II, p. 44
43. 'Dramatist versus Audience in the Early Eighteenth Century', Julian L. Ross, PQ^{XII} (1933) ~~pp.~~ pp. 73-81
44. Quoted in Lehmann p. 50
45. Ibid., p. 50
46. Ibid., p. 52
47. Collier p. 156
48. Information from the Oxford Companion to the Theatre, third edition, edited by Phyllis Hartnoll (Oxford 1972)^{p. 248} under 'Dramatic Censorship' p. ~~248~~
49. From the History and Proceedings of the House of Commons ~~as~~ as quoted by P.J. Crean in 'The Stage Licensing Act of 1737' MP ~~3~~,^{XXVI} (1937-1938) pp. 239-255, which should be consulted for a full account.
50. The History and Proceedings of the House of Commons, as above p. 453
51. See note 48
52. Quote from The History of the Theatres of London and Dublin 1761-1771, Benjamin Victor, ~~Vol. I~~ pp. 55-56
53. February 1766, ~~Vol. II p. 14~~ ~~Doswell's Life of Johnson~~ edited by ~~George Birkbeck Hill~~ ^{Hill: Powell, II, p. 14.} ~~revised L.F. Powell (Oxford 1934)~~
54. ¹(April 1759) ~~Vol.~~ § p. 324.
55. Weekly Magazine no. III, (12th January 1760), Friedman ~~Vol.~~ III, pp. 55-56 Friedman is not convinced of the authorship of this essay, although it is probably by Goldsmith.
56. Memoirs of M. De Voltaire, (1761); Friedman ~~Vol.~~ III, p. 231.
57. p. 141

58. I, p. 324
59. Enquiry, pp. 324-325
60. Quoted in 'Destouches in England', Ira O. Wade, ^{XXIX,} MP (1931-1932),
~~VII.~~ ~~27~~ pp. 27-47
61. A Discourse Upon Comedy (1702) p. 10 ll. 215-217
62. Ibid., p. 12, ll. 277-280
63. ll. 810-817
64. Nicoll, ~~VII.~~ II, p. 51
65. Ibid., p. 52
66. Ibid.
67. Review of Douglas in the Monthly Review (^{XVI,} May 1757) ~~426~~ 426-429;
Friedman, ~~VII.~~ I, p. 10
68. A Discourse Upon Comedy ll. 528-540 p. 20 .
69. ll. 657-667.
70. In The Life of Mr Thomas Betterton, (1710), p. 173, Nicoll, ~~VII.~~ II,
p. 125.
71. Nicoll, ~~VII.~~ II, p. 144
72. Ibid., p. 232
73. Ibid., 231
74. Ibid.
75. Nicoll, ~~VII.~~ III, p. 309
76. 'An Essay on the Theatre' Westminster Magazine (1st January 1773);
Friedman, ~~VII.~~ III, pp. 212-213.
77. See Chapter One for discussions of Love in a Village, The Country Lasses, The Double Deceit, Le Jeu de l'Amour et du Hasard etc.
78. The most exhaustive is by Erik Erametsa in Annales Academiae Scientiarum Fennicae ser. B. Vol. ^{LXXV} ~~VII.~~ i, 'A Study of the Word 'sentimental' and of other linguistic characteristics of Eighteenth Century Sentimentalism in England'.
79. Nicoll, ~~VII.~~ II, p. 197 .
80. p. 454
81. 'Hugh Kelly: His Place in the Sentimental School' PQ ^{XII,} (1933),
~~31~~ pp. 389-401 .

82. Forster, pp. 469-470 and Cooke, 'Memoir of Dr Goldsmith' European Magazine (1793)
83. It is, perhaps, worth noting that The Conscious Lovers was, in the opinion of Fielding's Parson Adams in Joseph Andrews (1742), with Addison's Cato the only play 'fit for a Christian to see'. (second edition, ^{III}(1762) ~~III~~, xi, p. 442).
84. Dramatic Genius, Book II p. 74
85. Life of Swift.
86. Life of Pope.
87. March 9, O.S. Everyman, (1929) p. 49
88. The Deserted Village, Friedman, ~~VII~~, LV, p. 292 l. 122. 'Vacant' is ambiguous here but it certainly does not imply a very serious turn of mind.
89. Tom Jones, Penguin edition, Chapter I Book ^V~~IV~~, p. 199.
90. Enquiry 'Upon Criticism' Friedman ~~VII~~. I p. 320, ll. 8-12.
91. Friedman, ~~VII~~. IV, Chapter ^{XVIII}~~XVII~~, p. 96.
92. 'On the Present State of Our Theatres' Weekly Magazine (12th January 1760,) Friedman ~~VII~~. III, p. 54 ll. 6-7.
93. Vol. V. p. 13 ll. 1-6
94. The Bee, no. V (Saturday, November 3 1759), Friedman, ~~VII~~. I, pp. 450-451 ll. 32-33 and 1-4
95. Westminster Magazine, (1st January 1773,) Friedman, ~~VII~~. III, pp. 209-213
96. Goldsmith had made a similar observation in his Preface to the Good-natur'd Man (Friedman ~~VII~~, V, p. 14.). He hoped 'that too much refinement will not banish humour and character from ours, as it has already done from the French theatre. Indeed the French comedy is now become so very elevated and sentimental, that it has not only banished humour and Moliere from the stage, but it has banished all spectators too.'

CHAPTER THREE: PERFORMANCE AND RECEPTION

Introduction

The story of She Stoops to Conquer and Goldsmith is a kind of sad fairy-tale. Goldsmith, by no means unused to opposition, suffered his greatest struggle with this play. Neither manager would undertake to produce it, until Colman 'was prevailed on at last by much solicitation, nay, a kind of force'¹ to take it on. On stage, the play was an enormous popular success and Goldsmith found himself elevated from the status of a moderately successful, if eccentric poet, whose poems were applauded by a kind public, to that of a great and brilliant genius, whose presence at a dinner-table in high society was esteemed an important social eclat. Nevertheless Goldsmith, though relieved that the play did not fail, as predicted, was depressed and diffident in the ensuing months. Doubting his abilities in a way he never did when success was still a goal for which to strive and infuriated by newspaper lampoons and libels, he lost his former confidence, and a year later, never having fully regained his spirits, was dead.

Before the Performance

Writing

That Goldsmith yearned for public acclaim is certain. Although the stories of his unremitting jealousy of the success of other authors are, no doubt, exaggerated, he did resent his comparatively mean fame and the sudden huge successes of others. No work of art was so likely to win great acclaim, in the latter half of the eighteenth century, than a successful play. In 1768 Goldsmith's The Good-Natured Man had been produced by Colman at Covent Garden. It had only moderate success, was hissed for being 'low', had to be altered for the next performances and never, after Goldsmith's death, reappeared on the London stage. Colman had been unwilling to put it on. It was

intended as an attack on the sentimental school, only as Goldsmith was, at that time, as yet very uncertain about his own feelings on the subject, the purport of the play is unclear and it ultimately seems more of a defence than an attack. The actors had created even more difficulties than the managers. Powell objected to his part of Honeywood in every instance and the performance of the actors playing the bailiffs can hardly have been very good since they occasioned the hisses. Woodward was a good Lofty, (the character to which Garrick so objected) and Shuter's Croker was a considerable popular success. Goldsmith, at the end of the first performance, under the impression that the play had been accorded a far worse reception than, in reality it had, could only thank Shuter for having saved it from total disaster². In the years between this and his composition of She Stoops to Conquer, Goldsmith's status and reputation as a writer became more firmly established. He was no longer subsisting on weekly hack work for magazine editors. He was engaged on his long Histories and in 1770 The Deserted Village was an instant and decisive success. Goldsmith was the friend of Johnson, had been painted by his closer friend Sir Joshua Reynolds and the future of his reputation, if not of his finances, was bright.

Goldsmith spent the summer of 1771 in a cottage near the Edgware Road in Hendon which he had rented once before, in 1768³. This was partly to get away from the none too appreciative response to his newly-published History of England and also to indulge a new idea. He returned to London in September and wrote a letter to his friend Bennet Langton who had invited him and Reynolds to his estate in Lincolnshire:

My dear Sir, Since I had the pleasure of seeing you last, I have been almost wholly in the country at a farmer's house, quite alone, trying to write a comedy. It is now finished, but when or how it will be acted, or whether it will be acted at all, are questions I cannot resolve. I am therefore

so much employed upon, that I am under the necessity of putting off my intended visit to Lincolnshire for this season ... Every soul is a visiting about and merry but myself. And that is hard too, as I have been trying these three months to do something to make people laugh. There have I been strolling about the hedges, studying jests with a most tragical countenance ...⁴

This letter was dated 7th September 1771, She Stoops to Conquer was not performed until 15th March 1773.

Opposition

Opposition to the play came from various quarters. Goldsmith, had hitherto only achieved real success with his two poems, The Traveller and The Deserted Village. The public was sceptical of his abilities in other fields. Nipclose, in his Dissection has rare praise for Goldsmith but it is qualified:

Goldsmith, who teems with sentiments refin'd,
Speaks in his works a pregnant, lib'ral mind;
And shew'd tho' we condemn his gen'ral plan,
Strong tints of life in his Good-Natur'd Man;
Yet don't we wish to meet him on the stage,
'Twill spoil the foremost poet of our age;
Nor would we view him in historic path,
His politics may rouse up patriot wrath;
No writer can in many points excell;
We prize not writing much but writing well;
Then, Doctor, stick to what we call thy own,
And sport in fields of poesy alone⁵.

A similar attitude was expressed in the London Magazine's edition for February 1773, under the heading of 'A Short Character of Dr Goldsmith'. There is much praise for his past achievements, which is followed by a discussion of the Doctor's ability as a dramatist. The writer of this article is very unlikely to have had access to a text of She Stoops to Conquer at this time:

Were a profound theologian to write lectures upon political commerce, or the professed merchant to give the world a new system of metaphysics, we should probably regard them in the same point of view, in which we see Dr Goldsmith writing a Comedy. Their dispositions would be the same, and probably their success would not be very different.

We are not doing an injury to the poets of our time, when we assert that Dr Goldsmith's verses are at least as pleasing as the best of theirs; we are not treating Dr Goldsmith with injustice when we believe his drama to be very indifferent.

Those writings of Dr Goldsmith which have been most successful have been evidently the produce of a speculative study; but the path of a comic writer lies in the opposite extreme. The doctor's genius is happiest when in the closet; now, a comic writer ought to be in his closet but seldom. Dr G. ought therefore to have avoided Comedy.

Dr Goldsmith's poems are full of delicate thinking, elegant painting and harmony; his comedy is destitute of character, of spirit, of business. His Poems open our hearts: his Comedy shuts our eyes. (pp. 57-8)

This was printed when the forthcoming production had already been announced. However, the business of getting it accepted, caused Goldsmith and his friends as much trouble and anxiety as if he had been an unknown and ungifted hack-writer. Colman had been in possession of the play during most of 1772 and had continually deferred his decision. Goldsmith, who was in debt and impatient, was inclined to send the manuscript to Garrick, the manager of Drury Lane but he was bound by a previous promise to Colman. His relations with Garrick had not always been as cordial as they were at this time⁶. Garrick had taken offence at certain passages in the Enquiry of 1759, which criticised the arbitrary judgement of managers. He had subsequently been careful to minimise the success

of The Good-Natured Man, by putting on Kelly's False Delicacy at the same time. He resented Goldsmith's low opinion of actors and was aware of the author's views concerning the exaggerated attention paid to them, which has been expressed for example, in the passages from the Enquiry quoted in Chapter 1. Forster reports that Goldsmith, in retaliation for Garrick's refusal to support his application for the Secretaryship of the Society of Arts, objected to Garrick's proposed membership of 'the Club', although Colman had been accepted. The Good-Natured Man had been first offered to Garrick who treated it with condescension and objected to it on many counts, particularly to the character of Lofty. This Goldsmith, of course, resented and went to Colman with his play. When, five years later, Colman prevaricated for months over She Stoops to Conquer, Goldsmith, in exasperation, wrote to him:

Dear Sir, I entreat you'll relieve me from that state of suspense in which I have been kept for a long time. Whatever objections you have or shall make to my play, I will endeavour to remove and not argue about them. To bring in any new judges either of its merit or faults I can never submit to. Upon a former occasion, when my other play was before Mr Garrick, he offered to bring me before Mr Whitehead's tribunal, but I refused the proposal with indignation: I hope I shall not experience as hard treatment from you as from him. I have, as you know, a large sum of money to make up shortly; by accepting my play I can readily satisfy my Creditor that way, at any rate I must look about to some certainty to be prepared. For God's sake take the play and let us make the best of it, and let me have the same measure at least which you have given as bad plays as mine ⁷.

Colman returned the manuscript but with so many criticisms and alterations marked in that Goldsmith had recourse to Garrick with whom he was now on fairly friendly terms and sent him the play. However, on the advice of Johnson, who had been to see Colman and who had

exerted his formidable influence on behalf of his friend, Goldsmith sent a letter to Garrick on 6th February recalling his manuscript:

Dear Sir, I ask you many pardons for the trouble I gave you of yesterday. Upon more deliberation, and the advice of a sensible friend, I began to think it indelicate in me to throw upon you the odium of confirming Mr Colman's sentence. I therefore request you will send my play by my servant back; for having been assured of having it acted at the other house, though I confess yours in every respect more to my wish, yet it would be folly in me to forgo an advantage which lies in my power of appealing from Mr Colman's opinion to the judgement of the town. I entreat if not too late, you will keep this affair a secret for some time..⁸

Garrick was, no doubt, relieved at not having to make the decision and he subsequently wrote Goldsmith the prologue for the play. Colman had obviously been persuaded by Johnson to accept the play, however, it was against his better judgement and he refused to make any expenditure on such a risk. The date fixed for the first night was 15th March. This was at the end of the season when few new plays were brought out because the best actors and the best audiences were seldom in town in the spring. After the play's ultimate success there was much controversy as to whether Colman had actively hindered its chances of popularity. Whether he did so or not, there is no doubt that he had no hopes for its success. At the beginning of March, Johnson wrote to an American friend, White: 'Doctor Goldsmith has a new comedy in rehearsal at Covent-garden, to which the manager predicts ill success. I hope he will be mistaken. I think it deserves a very kind reception'⁹.

Having at last persuaded Colman to perform the play, Goldsmith's next problems were with the actors. Shuter, his old friend, was to play Mr Hardcastle and Colman allocated the other parts to various principal actors with the company. However, 'Gentleman' Smith declined Marlow, saying that he had not enough time to learn the lines. Controversy raged over this refusal, again after the play's success

and again, the blame fell squarely on Colman. In a letter from 'H.R.' in the Morning Chronicle for 19th March, the correspondent objects to a report printed in the previous edition, which stated that Smith 'has thrown up his part'. He justifies Smith's action by explaining that Smith genuinely did not have sufficient time to study this part as he was engaged in another at the same time. He had, apparently, tried to put off the other part but Colman had refused to let him change anything. Smith, according to the letter, declined Marlow with regret, saying, 'that he had not had a part in comedy (this he said in the hearing of many of the performers) for many years equal to Marlow'. This defection must have been a great blow to Goldsmith as Smith was one of the foremost actors of handsome young men on the stage at the time. However, more difficulties were to follow. Woodward, the actor who had been allocated Tony Lumpkin, also withdrew. It was reported that this was due to Colman's telling him that the play 'dwindled and dwindled, and at last went out like the snuff of a candle'¹⁰ and the St James Chronicle for 20-23rd March published as part of the storm against Colman, which followed the success of the play, a report that 'Mr W--dw--d declared to several of his friends, that the Reason why he declined to appear in it, was because he had been misled by the Opinion of the Manager, who thought it would never be permitted to make a second Appearance on the stage'. This was another blow. Woodward was a very popular comedian and had a considerable following. He did, however, agree to speak Garrick's Prologue. Worst of all, however, was the refusal of Kate by Mrs Abington. At this, Goldsmith's friends urged him to postpone the play, perhaps until the next season, when he could be sure of the right actors and good audiences. However, Goldsmith, having got this close to seeing his play on the stage, decided that since nothing was expected of it anyway, it might just as well be given a try with whatever actors could be persuaded to accept parts. Mrs Bulkeley, who had played Miss Richland in the Good-natur'd Man accepted the part of Kate. Shuter came to Goldsmith's assistance in the re-allocation of the other

parts. He suggested John Quick, who had played the Post-boy in the Good-natur'd Man for the part of Tony Lumpkin and who had yet to play any more important parts. For Marlow, he suggested an actor called Lee Lewes, who had become a popular player of Harlequinades and After-pieces but had yet to play any major parts. William Cooke, in his 'Memoir of Dr Goldsmith', gives the full account of this arrangement:

Lee Lewes, previous to the bringing out of this Comedy, was principally employed as an Harlequin, and only occasionally performed little speaking parts of no consequence. Shuter, who with great comic talents possessed no inconsiderable share of dramatic knowledge and effect, often spurred Lee Lewes, and in their convivial moments, to leave the mask for the sock -- or, to use his own cant phrase, 'Why don't you patter*, boy? D--n me, you can use the gob-box as quick and as smart as any of them: you have a good comic look and a marking eye, and why don't you patter on the stage?

The repetition of these friendly hints, and Shuter telling him that there was a part in a new Comedy that he thought would suit him, he agreed to perform in it. This was the part of young Marlow, which Dr Goldsmith at first agreed to with some reluctance, but after one or two rehearsals so altered his opinion, that he declared it was the second best performance in the piece, and this opinion was afterwards confirmed by the general sense of the audience¹¹.

Apart from Shuter, then, there were no actors of established repute appearing in the play. Nevertheless, the interest in actors at the time was such that we can find contemporary comments even on these, more obscure players. Shuter was then at the end of his career. He was about the same age as Goldsmith and had had a very successful career in comedy. He had played a great number of comic parts and was a favourite of the town. He had a reputation for both wit and insobriety. In his later years, 'Comical Ned' Shuter was, not infrequently, found drunk when he was expected at the theatre. Nipclose,
* a cant phrase for speaking [Cooke's note]

PLATE 4

Shuter, Green and Quick in She Stoops to Conquer

Painting by Thomas Parkinson $30\frac{1}{2} \times 41\frac{1}{2}$ ". In a private collection, Toronto. From photograph in Witt Library, Courtauld Institute of Art.



in his discussion of the actors of the time, is rather more severe to Shuter than many of his admirers and sounds an uncharacteristically serious note:

For approbation, why does Shuter soar?
Is all his aim to hear the gall'ries roar?
'Tis pitiful ambition--worthless same--
Tho' all St Giles's echoes with his fame:
Nor males, nor females, can be always chaste;
Yet ev'ry sphere of life should take for guide,
A decent quantum of becoming pride,
Good-natur'd Ned, with public favour drunk,
Ne'er frowns upon a gambler or a punk;
In public, and private, speaks his jokes;
Laughs at the fun, and thinks them witty strokes:
Let friendship lay this truth before his eyes,
He that's so merry, is but seldom wise;
And tell him of a swift-approaching age,
When lost to action, he must quit the stage:
What pain to think, that mirth and pleasure past,
Life should convert to tragedy at last;
Avert the storm in time; lay by some pence;
They'll yield thee comfort, and proclaim thy
sense; (pp. 71-72)

Shuter's gifts were described by other contemporaries in more detail.

In The Actor of 1755, Hill wrote:

Mr Shuter is, of all the comic players of this time, the person who has most of these finesses; they are almost innumerable, and they always are thrown in naturally; for no person ever, was master of more natural humour, and to his praise, none ever showed so few attempts of forcing it.
(ch. xxvii, p. 270)

In the Thespian Dictionary (1802), the author writes:

This favourite of Thalia was so thoroughly acquainted with the vis comica, that he seldom called in those common auxiliaries, grimace and buffoonery, but rested entirely upon genuine humour. His chief excellence lay in old men. He had strong features, and was happy in a peculiar turn of face, which without any natural deformity, he threw into many ridiculous shapes by

various alterations of the muscles of the cheeks, or rather of the mouth and nose. Nature did a great deal for this actor -- education very little ...

It was for these very expressive features that Shuter was best known. There are many anecdotes told of him, which illustrate his popularity, wit, drunkenness and imprudence. One of the most characteristic is told by Genest:

Shuter, the comedian, was so great a favourite with the audience, that he could say anything to them. One night there was a great and continued noise in the gallery, and a general cry of 'Throw him over, throw him over, turn him out etc.' and which interrupted the action of the play for some time; Shuter walked forward with great gravity, signifying by gesture that he wished to speak -- the cry of Throw him over was instantly changed to 'Hear him! hear him!' A profound silence being obtained, he addressed the gallery as follows:

'My good friends, how do you mean to end this pother? Does he come this way, or does he go t'other? You must determine, let him go or stay, Or we must give you nightcaps, not the play'¹².

Lee Lewes was thirty-three when he played Marlow. Until then he had been the regular Harlequin at Covent Garden, his popularity in this role being second only to that of Woodward. Young Marlow was his first important part and established his career as a comedian on the first night. He, subsequently, had a chequered career but he was an accomplished actor. There is little contemporary comment on his abilities and his own volume of memoirs throws no light at all on the rehearsals of She Stoops to Conquer¹³.

John Quick was twenty-five when he first played Tony Lumpkin. He had, hitherto played only small parts such as the Post-boy in The Good-Natured Man but Shuter helped him a great deal and he had already received a limited amount of public attention. Nipclose,

PLATE 5



Mr Quick as Tony Lumpkin.



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"She Stoops to Conquer"

in 1772, wrote of him:

Quick rises, with advantage to our view,
Better than most, ev'n now surpass'd by few:
Some cultivation, through some seasons more,
His talents will command the jocund roar;
Unless his worth the manager should trace,
And for his merit doom him to disgrace." (p. 73)

His performance of Tony Lumpkin placed him among the foremost comic actors where he remained throughout his long career at Covent Garden. Although he always retained an illusion that he could play tragedy, his efforts in this area were always greeted with laughter and derision. After the first performance of She Stoops to Conquer a review of Covent Garden performers in The Macaroni for October said of him:

Though I may be called to an account for introducing this promising actor amongst the capital performers, yet, his unequal merit in several parts of low comedy, intitle him to a place here. There is a variety in his performance, with a peculiar turn of wit in his manner, though a little bordering on grimace; as he is too apt, like a before-mentioned performer [Shuter] to screw the muscles of his face up into very many ridiculous forms, which appear to be by way of imitating the former - however, there is little doubt but Mr Quick in a little time will be a very considerable actor in his walk. (p. 21)

Mrs Bulkeley, who, as Miss Wilford, had played Miss Richland in The Good-Natured Man, was a pretty and popular actress when she played Kate. However, it was for her prettiness rather than her proficiency that she was known. Nipclose makes this clear in his delineation of the actresses at Covent Garden when he couples her with one of her colleagues:

Bulkeley and Baker, pretty women both,
To speak against them gallantry is loth;
But howsoe'er good-nature may condole,
To praise their beauty is to praise the whole.
(p. 76)

PLATE 6



Mr Quick as Tony Lumpkin

From engraving in Bell's British Theatre, 1791.

The reviewer in The Macaroni disagreed with this estimation, admittedly after Mrs Bulkeley's performance as Kate. He wrote:

This lady's first onset was at Covent-Garden Theatre, as a dancer, that being a science she is prodigiously fond of, which she pursued more for pleasure than [sic] profit; from this she proceeded gradually, into the walks of tragedy and comedy, in which she conducted herself with sensibility and judgement, but I think her superior in the latter: there is an agreeableness in her address that seems best adapted to comedy; which from a pleasing person with a tolerable good share of judgement, stamp her a very agreeable and useful actress.

Mrs Green had had a long and successful career before she played Mrs Hardcastle. In her youth she had played pert chambermaids and Abigails, and later, specialised in crotchety old ladies. After playing Mrs Hardcastle she was the first Mrs Malaprop. Nipclose remarks on her, coupling her with Miss Pitt:

Next come a pair, with constant pleasure seen,
Though plain of persons, Pitt we shew, and
Green;
They move, they speak, they mark the author's
thought,
And prove their merit is from nature caught,
By much the best, as far as they engage,
Of any females now on either stage. (p. 76)

The Macaroni reviewer wrote of her:

Mrs Green may be considered as a second edition of Mrs Clive, but much less than that lady in bulk, merit, and contents, though not without many spirited strokes of the original: her chief abilities lie in chambermaids, with an agreeable pertness in her manner, an affectation of voice; though she is apt to carry this last-mentioned too far; however, it is very necessary in a [sic] many parts she performs - which on the whole, rate her as a very judicious and capital actress in her walk.

PLATE 7



Mrs Bulkeley as Kate

From copy in Enthoven Collection, Victoria and Albert Museum

Hastings was first played by Mr Dubellamy. He was really a singer and had played few purely speaking parts. Nipclose reflects the feeling that was general when a good singer was given a part outside his range and appeared, therefore, to be a bad actor:

In dialogue a dismal, wretched thing,
Du-Bellamy should never speak, but sing;
The notes of music bear him through with ease,
In these alone he may expect to please.
(p. 73)

The first Sir Charles Marlow was played by Mr Gardner. He was a man very much overshadowed by his far more successful wife, who was a very accomplished and successful actress and dramatist. He was an insignificant member of the Covent Garden company, seldom given important parts. Nipclose says of him:

Gardner may safely walk the middle way,
A greater compliment we cannot pay,
Stiff in his figure, bounded in his voice,
Seconds or firsts should never be his choice.
(p. 74)

The part of Miss Neville was originally assigned to Mrs Catley and she attended rehearsals until shortly before the first performance. Problems then arose for Goldsmith with his choice of epilogue. He had been promised an epilogue by Arthur Murphy but he had excused himself pleading pressure of work¹⁴. After the first performance, Goldsmith explained the troubles to his friend Cradock who had sent him the sketch of an epilogue:

My dear Sir, the play has met with a success much beyond your expectations or mine. I thank you sincerely for your Epilogue, which, however, could not be used, but with your permission shall be printed. The story in short is this; Murphy sent me rather the outline of an Epilogue than an Epilogue, which was to be sung by Mrs Catley and which she approved. Mrs Bulkeley hearing this, insisted on throwing up her part, unless according to the custom of the theatre, she were permitted to speak the Epilogue. In this embarrassment

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Song by Dr. Goldsmith
intended for Miss Harcourt
in his Comedy *She Stoops to Conquer*.
He gave me it in Lond on Spring 1773.
It is in his own hand-writing.

Oh me when shall I marry me
Lovers are plenty but fail to believe me
The fond youth that would carry me
Offers to love but seems to deceive me

2

But I will rally and combat the winds
Not a look not a smile shall my passion discover
She that gives all to the false one profiting her
Makes but a penitent lover a lover.

A SONG BY GOLDSMITH,
originally intended for inclusion in *She Stoops to Conquer*; with heading
written by James Boswell. From the original in the Yale University Library

Song intended for She Stoops to Conquer

Goldsmith had intended this song for Kate but it was dropped as Mrs Bulkeley could not sing. Goldsmith gave a copy of the song in his own writing (above) to Boswell. From a photograph in Boswell for the Defence, ed. William K. Wimsatt and Frederick A. Pottle.

I thought of making a quarrelling Epilogue between Catley and her, debating who should speak the Epilogue, but then Mrs Catley refused, after I had taken the trouble of drawing it out. I was then at a loss indeed, an Epilogue was to be made, and for none but Mrs Bulkeley. I made one, and Colman thought it too bad to be spoken; I was therefore obliged to try a fourth time, and I made a very mawkish thing, as you'll shortly see... 15

All this happened only a few days before the first performance and the ultimate consequence was that Mrs Catley withdrew from the cast. Her part was given to Miss Kniveton, of whom Nipclose had written:

Kniveton, a bauble, fit for childish view,
Who scarce to Gipsy could afford her due,
Kniveton, as bad as possible to think,
Irkesome to hear, as dead small beer to drink.
(p. 77)

The minor characters were taken by members of the Covent Garden company who usually played servants, peasants and soldiers and such like and of whom little is known.

Another last minute problem for Goldsmith was the task of choosing a name for the play. On 24th February 1773, Johnson wrote to Boswell, 'Dr Goldsmith has a new comedy, which is expected in the spring. No name is yet given it'. Goldsmith had originally called it The Novel with the meaning of 'The fiction', referring to Tony Lumpkin's lie to Marlow and Hastings, which is the impetus for the story of the play. Many friends helped him in the decision. Johnson said 'We are all in labour for a name to Goldy's play'¹⁶. The Old House and New Inn was suggested but dismissed¹⁷. Goldsmith suggested the title The Mistakes of a Night but it was felt that this had a farcical ring to it. However, the playbills of 14 March, the day before the first night, advertised the play under this title¹⁸. Sir Joshua Reynolds threatened to help damn the play if The Belle's Stratagem was not chosen as the title¹⁹. Eventually, the title She Stoops to Conquer was settled on. Its origins have been frequently debated but it is usually regarded as an adaptation of a line by Dryden,

The NINTH NIGHT.
FOR THE AUTHOR.

At the Theatre-Royal, Covent-Garden,

This present SATURDAY, MARCH 13, 1773,

A L Z U M A.

The PRINCIPAL PARTS by

Mr. S M I T H,
Mr. B E N S L E Y,
Mr. H U L L,
Mr. GARDNER, Mr. PERRY,
Miss M I L L E R,
And Mrs. H A R T L E Y.

In Act II. A PROCESSION
Of the VIRGINS of the SUN.

The PRINCIPAL VOCAL PARTS by

Miss WEWITZER, and Miss BROWN.

The Music by Dr. ARNE.

With a PROLOGUE and EPILOGUE.

To which will be added

The UPHOLSTERER.

Razor by Mr. WOODWARD,
Quidnunc by Mr. DUNSTALL,
Pamphlet by Mr. SHUTER,
Harriet by Miss VALOIS,
Termagant by Mrs. GREEN,

On Monday, (NEVER PERFORMED) a NEW COMEDY call'd

The MISTAKES of a NIGHT.

SE. 624.

from Act III of Amphytrion:

Th' offending lover when he lowest lies
Submits to conquer; and but kneels to rise.

However, in the Epilogue rejected by Colman there is a line, '... the creature/Still stoops among the low to copy Nature'. We can only assume in the absence of any evidence, that the eventual title was a conflation of both lines. The title was fixed on only the day before the first performance, that is on Sunday 14th March. This, and the late decision on the Epilogue problem is indicated not only by the playbills, which did not print the eventual title until 15th March but also from a letter to Goldsmith dated 'Sunday Evening' from one of the assistants at Covent Garden Theatre:

Mr Younger's Compts to Dr Goldsmith, he received his note and has ordered the Bills to be alter'd as he desires - Mrs Bulkeley has got a fair copy of the Epilogue and he will take care in the Morning that the Licenser shall have another, and also the additional Title to the play and most sincerely wishes the Doctor success²⁰.

On the morning of the first performance Goldsmith received a note from the actress playing Kate:

Mrs Bulkeley presents Comp.^s to Dr Goldsmith shall esteem it a favor, if he will take the trouble of calling on her this Morn.^g, as soon as convenient, she being perfect in the Epilogue, and very desirous of the Doctor's hearing it²¹.

The First Performance

Although the accounts of the first performance differ, there is no doubt that a number of Goldsmith's friends attended it and gave it all the support they felt able. Goldsmith, however, perhaps pessimistically anticipating failure, was not in the theatre. He was found in Pall Mall by a friend, sometime after the beginning of the

PLATE 10

Playbill for the first night of She Stoops to Conquer

From the original in the Theatre Collection of the Huntington
Library, San Marino, California.

NEVER PERFORMED.

THEATRE-ROYAL
In COVENT-GARDEN,

This present MONDAY, MARCH 15, 1773.
Will be presented a NEW COMEDY, call'd

She Stoops to Conquer;
Or, The MISTAKES of a NIGHT.

The PRINCIPAL PARTS

Mr. SHUTTER,

Mr. QUICK,

Mr. LEWES,

Mr. DUBELLAMY,

Mr. GARDNER,

Mr. SAUNDERS, Mr. THOMPSON, Mr. DAVIS,

Mr. HOLTOM, Mr. STOPPELAER, Mr. BATES,

Mrs. GREEN,

Mrs. KNIVETON,

Mrs. BULKLEY,

To which will be added

THOMAS and SALLY.

The Squire by Mr. MATTOCKS,

Sailor by Mr. DUBELLAMY,

Dorcas by Mrs. GREEN,

Sally by Mrs. MATTOCKS.

With a Hornpipe by Miss BESFORD.

The Doors to be opened at FIVE o'Clock.

To begin at SIX o'Clock.

Vivant Rex & Regina.

first act, and, as Cooke relates, 'it was on the remonstrance of a friend, who told him, "how useful his presence might be in making some sudden alterations, which might be found necessary in the piece" that he was prevailed upon to go to the theatre'²².

When Goldsmith arrived, at the beginning of the fifth act, his ears were assailed by a hiss from the audience. Alarmed, he asked what it was and Colman replied, 'Psha! Doctor, don't be afraid of a squib, when we have been sitting these two hours on a barrel of gunpowder'²³. Colman's retort must have been born of his remaining scruples about the play's success, since all other accounts, including the press reviews, indicate that the play was a great popular success from the opening of the first act.

The audience who were present at this first performance had paid the standard prices, which were five shillings for a Box, three shillings for a seat in the Pit, two shillings for a seat in the first gallery and one shilling for a seat in the second gallery²⁴. One of the most spectacular events of the evening came at Hasting's line in the second act, when he says to Constance Neville: "we shall soon be landed in France, where even among slaves the laws of marriage are respected". (Act II, p. 141 ll. 6-7) This was taken as an attack on the Royal Marriage Act of 1772, which George III had forced upon Parliament in retaliation for the marriages, of which he disapproved, of two of his brothers, the Dukes of Cumberland and of Gloucester, to commoners. The Duke of Gloucester and his wife were in a box at Covent Garden at the first performance and the audience cheered them loudly at Hasting's line. Whether or not Goldsmith had meant the line to carry the implication found by the audience is an unresolved question. Boswell evidently doubted this. He reports that General Paoli, a few weeks later at Mrs Thrale's, talking of rebellions, turned to Goldsmith and said of him, "Il a fait un compliment très gracieux à une certaine grande dame" ... I expressed a doubt,' writes Boswell,

'whether Goldsmith intended it, in order that I might hear the truth from himself. It, perhaps, was not quite fair to endeavour to bring him to a confession, as he might not wish to avow positively his taking part against the Court. The General at once relieved him, by this beautiful image: "Monsieur Goldsmith est comme la mer, qui jette des perles et beaucoup d'autres belle choses, sans s'en appercevoir". GOLDSMITH. "Très bien dit, et très elegamment" '25.

Apart from the Duke and the Duchess of Gloucester, many other notable figures were in the theatre on the first night of She Stoops to Conquer. The only lengthy description of the proceedings which survives is Richard Cumberland's. Cumberland, a sentimental dramatist, wrote his account thirty years after the play was performed and much doubt has been cast on the reliability both of his memory and of his intentions. He describes how Goldsmith's friends banded together to help 'the ingenious poet' against the overwhelming odds of Colman's disapproval and an 'eccentric' play:

We were not over-sanguine of success, but perfectly determined to struggle hard for our author. we accordingly assembled our strength at the Shakespear Tavern in a considerable body for an early dinner, where Samuel Johnson was the life and soul of the corps: the Burkes, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Fitzherbert, Caleb Whitefoord and a phalanx of North British pre-determined applauders, under the banner of Major Mills, all good men and true. Our illustrious president was in inimitable glee, and poor Goldsmith that day took all his raillery as patiently and complacently as my friend Boswell would have done any day, or every day of his life. In the meantime we did not forget our duty, and though we had a better comedy going in which Johnson was chief actor, we betook ourselves in good time to our separate and allotted posts, and awaited the awful drawing up of the curtain. As our stations were pre-concerted, so were our signals for plaudits arranged and determined upon in a manner, that gave every one his cue where to look for them, and how to follow them up.

We had amongst us a very worthy and efficient member, long since lost to his friends and the world at large, Adam Drummond, of amiable memory, who was gifted by nature with the most sonorous, and at the same time the most contagious laugh, that ever echoed from the human lungs. The neighing of the horse of the son of Hystaspes was a whisper to it; the whole thunder of the theatre could not drown it. This kind and ingenuous friend fairly forewarned us that he knew no more when to give his fire than the cannon did, that was planted on a battery. He desired therefore to have a flapper at his elbow, and I had the honour to be deputed to that office. I planted him in an upper box, pretty nearly over the stage, in full view of the pit and galleries, and perfectly well situated to give the echo all its play through the hollows and recesses of the theatre. The success of our manoeuvres was complete. All eyes were upon Johnson who sate in a front row of a side box and when he laughed every body thought themselves warranted to roar. In the mean time my friend followed signals with a rattle so irresistably comic, that, when he had repeated it several times, the attention of the spectators was so engrossed by his person and performances, that the progress of the play seemed likely to become a secondary object, and I found it prudent to insinuate to him that he might halt his music without any prejudice to the author; but alas, it was now too late to rein him in. He had laughed upon my signal where he found no joke, and now unluckily he fancied that he found a joke in almost every thing that was said; so that nothing in nature could be more mal-a-propos than some of his dangerous moments, for the pit began to take umbrage; but we carried our play through and triumphed not only over Colman's judgement but our own²⁶.

It is difficult to believe that this account is not only malicious but untruthful. That several of Goldsmith's friends dined together at a tavern before the performance, is substantiated by a number of other participants²⁷ but that such an organised and concerted claue was the cause of the audience's merriment and of the play's success is impossible

to believe. Not one of the many press reviews suggests such a thing. The most any of them says is that, 'Dr Johnson, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Mr Edmund Burke, Dr Franklin, Mr Cumberland, Mr Kelly and other literary men were in the boxes'. (Middlesex Journal or Universal Evening Post No. 618, 13th to 16th March). In its review of the play in the edition for 18th March, the Public Advertiser says:

Another correspondent observes, that the Applause given to a new Piece of the first Evening of its Representation is sometimes supposed to be the Tribute of partial Friendship. The Approbation shewn on the second Exhibition of Dr Goldsmith's new Comedy exceeded that with which its first Appearance was attended. Uninterrupted Laughter or clamorous Plaudits accomplished his Muse to the last line of the play; and when it was given out for the Author's Benefit the Theatre was filled with the loudest Acclamations that ever rung within its walls.

It is possible that Cumberland's memory of the first night was soured by the innumerable verses which followed it and which celebrated Goldsmith's brand of comedy at the expense of his own:

At Dr Goldsmith's merry play
All the spectators laugh, you say,
Th'assertion, Sir, I must deny,
For Cumberland and Kelly cry. (Morning Chronicle 18th March)

Boswell tells us something of Johnson's appearance on the first night:

It has been supposed that Dr Johnson, so far as fashion was concerned, was careless of his appearance in public. But this is not altogether true, as the following slight instance may show. Goldsmith's last Comedy was to [be] represented during some Court-mourning²⁸, and Mr S. appointed to call on Dr Johnson and carry him to the tavern where he was to dine with other of the Poet's friends. The Doctor was ready dressed, but in coloured cloaths; yet being told that he would find everyone else in black, received the intelligence with a profusion of thanks,

hastened to change his attire, all the while repeating his gratitude for the information that had saved him from an appearance so improper in the front row of a front box. 'I would not', added he, 'for ten pounds have seemed so retrograde to any general observance'²⁹.

The audience at the first night of She Stoops to Conquer must in one way at least, have been an incongruous sight, as they sat, many of them dressed in black, and, by all accounts other than Cumberland's roaring with laughter at the play.

After the Performance

Individual Reactions

The success on stage of She Stoops to Conquer was consolidated by its appearance in print. The popularity of the first edition may be assessed from an article in the Morning Chronicle for 26th March, which reported that:

Dr Goldsmith's new Comedy was performed last night, for the fourth time and received with greater applause than even on the first night of its representation. It is very remarkable that almost every one present had the play in their hands, insomuch that the Orange-women acknowledged they never sold so many of any new piece during its whole run, as they disposed of yesterday evening in less than half an hour.

Goldsmith's friends rejoiced at his success, more vociferously than one might expect, perhaps because Goldsmith himself showed little pleasure. James Northcote, the biographer of Sir Joshua Reynolds, wrote to his brother on March 24th:

Last Monday I went to see Goldsmith's new play, and quite the reverse to every body's expectation, it was received with the utmost applause; and Garrick has writ a very excellent prologue to it in ridicule of the late sentimental

comedies. Goldsmith was so kind as to offer me half a dozen tickets for the play on his night, and I intend to accept of two or three. He is going to dedicate his play to old Johnson³⁰.

The dedication was a debt of honour and of friendship. Johnson had been, in some measure, responsible for the play's final staging. He had supported Goldsmith for a number of years, had written a rather lugubrious prologue to The Good-Natured Man and, with the occasional rupture, had been a good friend. Nevertheless, a dedication to a friend was uncommon. Dedications were usually made to noblemen, patrons, or men of influence. The only notable departures from this practice hitherto, had been made by Johnson himself although Goldsmith had dedicated The Traveller to his own brother, Henry. Goldsmith's dedication reflects the gratitude and humility he felt before Johnson:

By inscribing this slight performance to you, I do not mean so much to compliment you as myself. It may do me some honour to inform the public, that I have lived many years in intimacy with you. It may serve the interest of mankind also to inform them, that the greatest wit may be found in a character, without impairing the most unaffected piety.

I have, particularly, reason to thank you for your partiality to this performance. The undertaking a comedy, not merely sentimental was very dangerous; and Mr Colman, who saw the piece in its various stages, always thought it so. However, I venture to trust it to the public; and though it was necessarily delayed till late in the season, I have every reason to be grateful.

I am, Dear Sir,
Your most sincere friend,
And admirer,
OLIVER GOLDSMITH³¹

Johnson himself said of She Stoops to Conquer that he knew not of any 'comedy for many years, that has answered so much the great

end of comedy - making an audience merry'³². James Northcote wrote:

I recollect that Dr Goldsmith gave me an order . . . with which I went to see his comedy; and the next time I saw him, he enquired of me what my opinion was of it. I told him that I would not presume to be a judge of its merits; he asked, 'Did it make you laugh?' I answered, 'Exceedingly'. 'Then', said the Doctor, 'that is all I require'³³.

James Boswell was less reticent. He wrote in his Journal for 12th April:

At night I went to Covent Garden and saw She Stoops to Conquer, the author's second night. I laughed most heartily and was highly pleased at once with the excellent comedy and with the fame and profit which my friend Goldsmith was receiving. It was really a rich evening to me. I would not stay to see the farce³⁴. I would not put the taste of Goldsmith's fruit out of my mouth.³⁵

Before seeing the play, however, he had written Goldsmith a letter which, in some measure, explains the reasons for its great success. His is typical of the sort of letter Goldsmith was receiving at this time, being replete with plays on the words 'She Stoops to Conquer' and puns on the effects the play was having:

Dear Sir, I sincerely wish you joy on the great success of your new comedy, She Stoops to Conquer, or The Mistakes of a Night; the English nation was just falling into a Lethargy. Their blood was thickened and their minds creamed and mantled like a standing pool; and no wonder; - when their comedies, which should enliven them like sparkling champagne, were become mere syrup of poppies, gentle, soporifick draughts. Had there been no interruption to this, our audiences must have gone to the theatres with their nightcaps. In the opera-houses abroad, the boxes are filled up for tea-drinking. Those at Drury Lane and Covent Garden must have been furnished with

settles, and commodiously adjusted for repose. I am happy to hear that you have waked the spirit of mirth which has so long lain dormant, and revived natural humour and hearty laughter. It gives me pleasure that our old friend Garrick has written the prologue for you. It is at least lending you a postilion since you have not his coach; and I think it is a very good one, admirably adapted both to the subject and to the author of the comedy.

You must know my wife was safely delivered of a daughter the very evening that She Stoops to Conquer first appeared. I am fond of the coincidence. My little daughter is a fine, healthy, lively child, blest with the cheerfulness of your Comick Muse. She has nothing of that wretched whining and crying which we have seen children so often have; nothing of the comédie larmoyante ... While you are in the full glow of theatrical splendour, while all the great and gay in the British metropolis are literally hanging upon your smiles, let me see that you can stoop to write to me.

I ever am, with great regard,
Dear Sir,

Your affectionate humble
servant
James Boswell.

My address is James's Court, Edinburgh. 36
Pray write directly. Write as if in repartee .

Not all the reactions were as enthusiastic as Boswell's. Fanny Burney wrote in her diary for 3rd May:

Dr Goldsmith has just brought on the stage a new comedy called She Stoops to Conquer. We went to it with Mr and Mrs Young; it is very laughable and comic; but I know not how it is, almost all diversions are insipid at present to me, except the opera...³⁷

Horace Walpole, never an admirer of Goldsmith, was far more scathing. He wrote on 27th March to the Countess of Ossory:

What play makes you laugh very much, and yet is a very wretched comedy? Dr Goldsmith's She Stoops to Conquer, Stoops indeed! - so she does, that is the Muse; she is dragged up to the knees, and has truded, I believe, from Southwark fair. The whole view of the piece is low humour, and no humour is in it. All the merit is in the situations, which are comic; the heroine has no more modesty than Lady Bridget³⁸, and the author's wit is as much manqué as the Lady's; but some of the characters are well-acted, and Woodward speaks a poor prologue, written by Garrick, admirably³⁹.

On 27th May⁴⁰ he wrote to the Rev. William Mason. This letter contains criticism which would have amazed Goldsmith and his admirers, since it complains of the want of 'nature' in the play:

Dr Goldsmith has written a Comedy - no, it is the lowest of all farces. It is not the subject I condemn, though very vulgar, but the execution. The drift tends to no moral, no edification of any kind. The situations, however, are well imagined, and make one laugh, in spite of the grossness of the dialogue, the forced witticisms and the total impossibility of the whole plan and conduct. But what disgusts me most is, that though the characters are very low, and aim at low humour, not one of them says a sentence that is natural or marks any character at all. It is set up in opposition to sentimental comedy but it is as bad as the worst of them. Garrick would not act it, but bought himself off by a poor prologue⁴¹.

In spite of Walpole's disapproval, other equally elevated members of society were only too anxious to see the play and to become acquainted with its author. A letter from Goldsmith to the Duke of Northumberland survives, which is a reply to a request for seats on his first benefit night: 'Dr Goldsmith presents his most humble respects to His Grace with his sincere thanks for his kind countenance and protection upon the present occasion. He will take care for his Grace's reception'⁴².

Another letter, undated, from G.A. Stevens survives and its tone of especial politeness indicates the esteem in which a successful dramatist was held:

G. Alexander Stevens presents his Respects to Dr Goldsmith and will esteem it a great favour if he will condescent to grant to get Stevens two nieces an order to see the new Comedy to night⁴³.

A further letter, from Lord Charlemont, subsequently that year to become a member of The Club, demonstrates how completely Goldsmith was accepted by the best society of his day:

Lord Charlemont presents his compliments to Doctor Goldsmith and begs his pardon for not delivering a message which he received for him last night from Mrs Vesey⁴⁴ but forgot to give him, it was to let him know that she had sent several times to know whether he could let her have a box the sixth night that She Stoops to Conquer is to be acted but that she had not got any answer and begg'd that Doctor Goldsmith wou'd let her know this Day whether she can have any places, and if she can, what part of the house they are in --⁴⁵

Some of the letters Goldsmith received were less laudatory and some purely critical. One of the more constructive of these is extant and it is likely that several of the points were noted by Goldsmith and acted upon:⁴⁶

If D. Goldsmith will listen to two or three criticisms of several of his friends, present at his play last night, they make no doubt but he may acknowledge them just and make a few trifling alterations accordingly, Mr Quick rather overacts his part, The Drunken Servant that is called in by Marlow is an unpleasing and surely an unnecessary character. Tony says, I had rather leave a Hare in her form etc. etc. Would not one of the similes be quite sufficient?

Tony makes too many remarks on the illegibility of Hasting's letter; it tires. Hardcastle taking his night's walk should be wrapt up in a cloak with the hood up. It is but natural; and will better account for Mrs H.'s mistaking him for a robber. The Audience should be made clearly to understand that the chaise is only stuck fast in the Horse pond and not overturn'd. When Hardcastle directs his Servants how to behave; his calling for a glass of wine and their saying it is none of their places to fetch is foolish and has a bad effect. After Mrs Hardcastle has discovered the contents of Hastings's letter; that Gentleman enters almost instantly and reproaches Tony with it; when no one on earth can possibly guess how he (Hastings) should know that his letter has been seen by any one but Tony. Above all let the Dullissimo Maccaroni be left out. That is much too low...

Another letter, also critical, but less specifically so, was sent by William Chambers, the architect, a friend of Goldsmith's:

... we had taken a box for your benefit some time ago so thank you for your offer of tickets but cannot accept of them we were all exceedingly delighted with your play which is indeed remarkably entertaining from the number of Incidents and the Vein of humour which runs through the whole piece but certainly they might have afforded you better performers I think in particular the part of the young Squire suffers considerably by bad acting and that more might be made of the bashful gentleman in better hands but in spite of all that your performance is generally liked which is the strongest proof of its intrinsich [sic] merit ...⁴⁷

Press Reaction

The most prodigious source of information about the reception Goldsmith's play had on its first performance, is of course, the newspapers. About two dozen newspapers and magazines carried reviews of the play and, later, correspondence on the various controversies stimulated by it. The longer reviews began with a lengthy summary of the plot and action of the play and carried a

cast list. One peculiarity of these cast lists is that the two young ladies in the cast are, almost invariably, printed as 'Miss Nevil' and 'Miss Constantia' Hardcastle'. It is impossible to say where this mistake originated. Several reviews also carried the prologue and epilogue to the play. There then followed a critical discussion of the merits of the author's aims in writing this anti-sentimental play and of the execution of those aims. The reviews usually end with a short critique on the performance itself. The review in the Morning Chronicle for 16th March is typical, though lengthier than most. It also contains criticism of Colman of the sort which other publications also carried, but some days later, when the full effect of the play and the circumstances of its appearance, had been felt. The review, reproduced here without the cast list and the summary of the plot, under the title Theatrical Intelligence, is rather more appreciative than some of the others:

This Comedy is written by the ingenious Doctor Goldsmith, it 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 first to the last scene of the piece. It abounds with genuine wit and humour; without the aid of Irish bulls, forced witticisms or absurd conceits, the audience are kept in a continual roar; occasionally a sentiment is delivered, but then it arises naturally from the fable and character, is well expressed, and has its full weight with those who hear it. Considered generally, this piece has more real merit than any performance which has borne the name of comedy since the appearance of the Clandestine Marriage. The dialogue is nervous and spirited; no attempt is made by the author to avail himself of the vitiated taste of the times; he has offered the public a true comic picture and although it differed most essentially in manner, style, and finishing from what have of late years been

received, and encouraged almost to adoration; its own excellence prevailed, laughter sat on every face, mirth and exstatic joy, the proper effects of comedy, universally prevailed and the most impartial and repeated plaudits were showered down on the author... this character [Marlow] is, as far as we can recollect, an original one. The success with which it was received is a proof that is by no means an unnatural one. - The Squire is a compound of whim and good-natured mischief; the engine of the plot and the source of infinite mirth and a variety of very laughable mistakes, which arise in a simple, artless manner, and which the author has taken an admirable effect from, without exceeding the line of probability... There are parts of the comedy which would bear pruning. The opening scene of the second act between Hardcastle and his boorish servants might be curtailed; the satire is just but rather overcharged; and the performers execute the author's design in a very bungling manner. In the last act, Hardcastle and Sir Charles Marlow should not enter so much in view, nor talk so loudly; and the scene in Heavy-tree Wood between the mother and her hopeful son is rather too long and replete with sameness... The title of this comedy appears an odd one, but it is well enough made out from the conduct and incidents of the piece. The success it met with is a proof, that matters of genius and merit, will ever find a warm patron in the public, notwithstanding the united efforts of managers and their actors, to damn them and stifle them in their birth. As far as can be judged from appearances, attempts somewhat similar have been made on this excellent comedy. It is brought out at the fag end of the season, when it is barely possible for the author to have his three nights. The chief actor of the house has thrown up his part, his example is followed by a very contemptible performer but who was nevertheless wanted in the piece; a singer is given somewhat more than a third-rate character; and a young actress, who in her walk, is by no means deficient in merit, is put into a consequential part, which she is not in any degree equal to, and which Mrs Mattocks should undoubtedly have filled.

To crown all, a report is industriously circulated that the piece is exceedingly low, the humour fit only for St. Giles, and that the comedy will certainly be damned. Shame on such illiberal treatment, the offspring of envy and narrowmindedness! By mere chance, the piece is in part bettered in the performance through these uncandid manoeuvres. Mr Lewes gave most perfect satisfaction to the audience in Mr Marlow. He played the part with ease, with spirit and with characteristic humour. There was not a man in the theatre who did not join in opinion that the actor who holds his head highest, or the largest salary man of that house would have fallen infinitely short of Mr Lewes's merit. He is a very promising performer, he deserves public encouragement, and he may think the circumstance a very fortunate one, which gave him an opportunity of shewing his abilities so conspicuously: let him endeavour to get rid of two or three valet attitudes, and an occasional footman's smirk, and he'll be nearer perfection. Mrs Bulkeley deserved no small share of applause. The Author could hardly have wished for a better representative of Miss Hardcastle. Mr Shuter was tolerably perfect, perfectly sober and extremely pleasing. It is a pity so good an actor should ever deprive himself of the power of exerting the great comic abilities nature has given him. He last night was universally well received. Mrs Green was lively and characteristic. Mr Quick exceedingly well but had rather too much grimace. By seeing Mr Saunders, Mr Holtom, Mr Thompson, and Mr Bates, appear in two or three dresses, we should have imagined the Covent Garden company was thin, were we not certain of the contrary.

This, essentially favourable, review makes several points with which other reviews were at odds. The Monthly Review for March, in its criticism on the play, includes a general discussion on the nature of comedy, in relation to She Stoops to Conquer and differs with the reviewer for the Morning Chronicle who particularly pointed out the naturalness and probability of the incidents in the play, by saying that: 'The fable of She Stoops to Conquer is a series of blunders, which the Author calls The Mistakes of a Night; but

they are such mistakes as never were made, and, we believe, never could have been committed'. The reviewer continues by summarising the play and making rather general comments but this criticism was expressed in greater length by the reviewer for the London Magazine in its issue for March. Like the other magazines, it gives a cast list and a lengthy summary of the plot. It continues:

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 (a fault too peculiar to the hasty productions of the modern Comic Muse) 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 the humour. But perhaps we ought to sign a general pardon to the author, for taking the field against that monster called Sentimental Comedy, to oppose which his comedy was avowedly written. Indeed, the attempt was bold, considering the strength of the enemy; and we are glad to observe that our author still keeps the field with flying colours. - But, (metaphor apart) it appears that the Doctor was too ardent. Well considering that the public were long accustomed to cry, he resolved to make them laugh at any rate. In arriving at this point, he seems to have stepped too far; and in lieu of comedy he has sometimes presented us with farce.

These redundancies are certainly the chief blots in his play. A stricter consistency in the plot, and a better attention to the unity of time in particular, would have exalted the comedy to a good and just reputation.

The reviewer for St James's Chronicle for 13th - 16th March had a more ambivalent attitude to She Stoops to Conquer. He claimed, like the previous reviewer, that the play was 'clogged with some Incidents which are improbable, and which are forced in on purpose to create a laugh' but concluded by admitting that:

though this Piece is in so many Places reprehensible, it is the only new Comedy that has appeared on our Theatre for some

Years; A strange Assertion, but a true one!
It affords much laughter, and ought to be
welcome as a rara Avis ...

Whereas the alleged improbabilities of the plot furnish the play's critics with ammunition, the successful stand taken by Goldsmith against the 'monster called Sentimental Comedy' in his play, was the strength on which his supporters based their case. A huge controversy broke out with many periodicals and many correspondents taking sides and vigorously defending their positions. 'It was supposed,' wrote the reviewer in The Critical Review for March:

by the lovers of the old comedy, that she was extinct among us. The present play is an attempt to revive the dying art; and the author's well-deserved and unprecedented success, has shewn how ready mankind are to welcome back a favourite mistress, even after she had been guilty of a long elopement.

Many people writing on this theme, took up Garrick's hint in the Prologue which depicts Goldsmith as the Doctor administering to a sick, Comic Muse. The Middlesex Journal for 16th - 18th March and the Morning Chronicle for 18th March carry a review which says:

It is with great Pleasure we can inform the public that the ingenious and engaging [omission in British Museum copy] a very declining, and was thought to be dying of a sentimental consumption! She is now under the care of Dr. Goldsmith, who has already prescribed twice for her. The medicines fate [sic] extremely easy upon her stomach, and she appears to be in fine spirits. The Dr. is to pay her a third visit this evening, and it is expected he will receive a very handsome fee from the lady's friends and admirers.

The Public Advertiser for 22nd March, under the headline 'Intelligence Extraordinary', carried the following announcement:

On Monday, between the Hours of Six and Nine in the Evening, Miss SENTENTIA HORNBOOK, a young Lady particularly known at the Theatres, was suddenly taken ill, and we hear that her life is despaired of. Her Friends, who, during the Course of her short Existence, have been perpetually crying about her, will probably say on this occasion, like Laertes,

'Too much of Water hast thou had
Ophelia,

And therefore I forbid my tears'.

This sudden calamity is said to have been brought on by the Prescription of one Dr Goldsmith, a Name which we do not recollect to have met with in the List of those who destroy either with or without a Licence. Mr C----d, Mr K----y, Mrs G----hs, Mrs L----x and Mr O----n⁴⁸ are sending every Hour to enquire after her; because when she dies, as the Proverb observes, they may quake for fear.

Sentimental comedy was not without its defenders and the natural wit and humour of She Stoops to Conquer was not sufficient to convert every theatre-goer. The General Evening Post of 16th - 18th March includes a long letter from 'Catcall' who found little to laugh at in She Stoops to Conquer:

A Whimsical spirit of opposition to what is called sentimental comedy, has all of a sudden possessed some of our wou'd-be critics and in public repugnance to the universal applause which the town has for some time bestowed on this species of writing; we are now informed that nothing can be comedy, unless (like Dr. Goldsmith's new play) it keeps us in a roar of laughing from the rising of the curtain to the termination of the fifth act. For my own part, Mr. Editor, I thought that the Comic Muse, besides being a very sprightly lady, was a very prudent one; I imagined that it was her peculiar province to blend a little of the utile with the dulce, and to mix instruction with risibility; the

foolish admirers, however, of She Stoops to Conquer are quite of a different opinion. So they laugh, no matter what violations are committed upon common sense, or nature: 'tis probability with them for a well-bred young fellow to mistake a gentleman's house for an inn, and an exquisite joke for a son to drive his mother a round of thirty miles through execrable roads till at last he fairly souses her in a horse-pond. If this is comedy, Mr. Editor, and if whatever makes us laugh most upon the stage is of course to be the best comic production, Mr. Messink the machinist at Drury Lane House, is the foremost comic poet of the age; for his pantomines would force a grin from a puritan and are an inexhaustible mine of the comic to the spectators.

The writer continues by criticising at length the want of wit and originality in the play and concludes by attributing the whole success of the play to a freak in the taste of the audiences:

The Doctor is undoubtedly a man of genius, but he is one of the worst dramatic writers existing. His present performance has succeeded wholly by accident. The play-house seemed his enemy, and the town resolved to support him against the opinion of the manager; this circumstance, joined with the esteem which his poems have justly acquired him, made every body his friend, and determined the audience to bestow an indiscriminate plaudit upon merits and imperfections. Upon the whole, the new comedy is a lusus naturae in literature, and I am much mistaken, if, after its nine nights, it ever rears its monstrous head in a theatre.

The two 'improbabilities' alluded to here are the original mistake made by Marlow in thinking Hardcastle's house an inn and Tony Lumpkin's trick on his mother. Many others were pointed out and objected to by other correspondents to the papers. A long letter to the Editor of the St James's Chronicle in the number for 18th -

20th March from 'BOSSU,' draws attention to a number of these inconsistencies, to which the writer takes great exception.

Marlow's mistake is obviously absurd, he claims: 'Marlow, on his Arrival, calls for a Bill of Fare! Is it then usual to call for a Bill of Fare in a Gentleman's Family? Is it possible that Hardcastle should not put this very Question to his impudent Guest?' Kate's agreement with her father about her change of dress is, he feels highly improbable:

Allowing the Motives of the Change of Dress to be as they are stated, allowing that the Lady visited in the Morning, and pleased her Father in the Evening - is it probable that she would assume a mean Dress this Evening when she was formally to meet a Lover, and when the House had Strangers in it, and another was still expected?

'BOSSU' claims that the play was inconsistent in the performance as well as in the reading:

Hardcastle, in order no Doubt to heighten the extravagance of Marlow's Behaviour, informs us, that he had not only taken Possession of his great Chair, but taken off his Boots in the Parlour. Now this sounds very well to the Ear; but when we appeal to the Eye, and find that Marlow had no boots on him to be taken off, how can we excuse the old Man for telling Lyes?

The reviewer in the Covent-Garden Magazine also objects to certain inconsistencies in the play but is so pleased with its overall effect, that he excuses them, saying, 'these blemishes, however, if they are such, may be considered as spots in the sun, or a foil that sets off a valuable gem to greater advantage.'

The Attack on Colman

This last review was the closest to a reflection of popular opinion on the play and Goldsmith was cast, by the press and correspondants, as the hero to Colman's villain, in what they saw as the

drama of the circumstances surrounding the play's first appearance on stage. The newspapers were inundated with letters and verses which lauded Goldsmith in proportion to the extent that they mocked and ridiculed Colman. New stories of the manager and his incompetence in this and other matters, continually appeared and further revelations of his hard usage of Goldsmith and his arrogance to gifted playwrights were constantly published. Colman was specifically criticised for refusing to spend any money on new sets or costumes for the play and was also, more insidiously, accused of deliberately sabotaging its chances. The Morning Chronicle published a number of these criticisms. The issue for 22nd March included the following comment:

The Manager for Covent-Garden Theatre, has not been censured without reason, and therefore all his puny attempts to defend his measures, will only terminate in bringing him to greater confusion. Mr Colman had been bullied by K----⁴⁹ into the reception of a vamp'd up play from Beaumont and Fletcher, which some months ago was withdrawn, lest the late obnoxious behaviour of the author (for which he cried peccavi in the newspapers) should have brought on its instantaneous damnation. This opening had left room for an earlier representation of Dr Goldsmith's piece; but the envy of the little manager would not permit it to enjoy that advantage which chance had thrown in its way. Was Mr Colman's excuse admitted to be valid on one occasion, could it tend to exculpate him for his prejudication, which he circulated every where by means of his abject dependents? Would it apologize for his bringing the play on the stage without the recommendation of his very best actors, tolerable scenes, or new dresses? The manager, who is himself an author, will hardly ever do justice to the merits of his competitors for dramatic-fame, unless he happens to have a clearer head, and a more ingenious mind than Mr Colman is allowed to possess.

Not one of the alterations proposed by Mr Colman, was made in Dr Goldsmith's comedy, nor one of the circumstances to which he objected, is removed. The value of the Manager's judgement may therefore be fully ascertained by the public.

Among the articles on the subject in the number of the Morning Chronicle for 24th March, was one reporting that:

It is said that Mr C ---- would receive no new pieces for the future, for fear of the Mistakes of another Night, but that he has one of his own, which otherwise must expire in obscurity. If he chuses to prophesy the condemnation of this piece, when it makes its appearance, perhaps, for once in his life, he may not be mistaken.

The number for 25th March included, again amongst a number of articles on the same subject, these verses on Colman, which in their malice and mockery, are typical of the vast number which were appearing every day in almost every publication:

After months of attendance, intriguing and plotting,
Until G-----th in prison was very near rotting
King Coley at length, by friends work'd to an oil,
Submits that the bear should be led to the toil;
And now that all hands join in giving applause,
What lay we to you, who would fain hurt the cause?
You judg'd that the play would not e'en make a farce!
Your judgement, dear Coley, is now all mine a---!
Tickle Pitcher

The St James's Chronicle was another of those papers which published many of these attacks. In a reply to the letter from 'BOSSU', in the number for 20th - 23rd March, a correspondant who signs himself 'No Fawner upon Managers' defends Goldsmith's play from the accusation of improbability in the matter of Marlow's boots, saying that it was probably the fault of Colman, who wanted to 'create a seeming Mistake on the side of the Poet'. The Critical Review for March published these verses:

Come, Coley, doff those mourning weeds,
Nor thus with jokes be flamm'd;
Though Goldsmith's present play succeeds,
His next may still be damn'd.

As this has 'scaped without a fall,
To sink his next prepare;
New actors hire from Wapping Wall,
And dresses from Rag Fair.

For scenes let tatter'd blankets fly,
The prologue Kelly write;
Then swear again the piece must die,
Before the author's night.

Should these tricks fail, the lucky elf,
To bring to lasting shame,
E'en write the best you can yourself
And print it in his name.

Although the letters and verses criticizing Colman far outnumbered those defending him, there were a few who went to the aid of the manager, who was being publicly pilloried. The Morning Chronicle of 18th March includes this letter, which, unless it is another attack in heavy sarcasm, is a weak attempt at defence:

Your yesterday's correspondent, One of the Pit, and your Theatrical Intelligencer are both mistaken, they abuse poor Colman when he ought to receive applause. He never could have conceived a bad opinion of Dr Goldsmith's comedy, as it is evident he thought it had sufficient merit to establish itself without the advantage of good performers, good scenes, good clothes, or a good time of season.

Yours,

A lover of refined friendship.

That the debate continued earnestly for several weeks is obvious from the daily discussions in the papers and from this letter in the St James Chronicle of 10th - 13th April, from 'Pamphilius', which begins by reproving Colman but which then concedes:

But grant that the manager has erred; is he to be treated like a common Enemy? to be hunted down like a Beast of Prey? A very learned, judicious,

and grave man, assured me, that no less than thirty Writers of Eminence had entered into a Conspiracy to demolish the little Tyrant of Covent-Garden...

A letter in the Morning Chronicle for 12th April, indicates that some readers were wearying of the surfeit of debate on the subject:

As for Dr Goldsmith, I own he is no thief⁵⁰, his comedy is truly an original; for I do not believe that any but a bachelor of physic, and he too born in a bog in Ireland, could write such d--ned stuff. Yet all the Hibernians in town, as if their tails were not yet cut off, raise a barbarous howl about him, as if he were superior to Wycherley and Congreve.

Mr Woodfall, a truce with your literary correspondents. Mean as our present politics are, they are much more readable stuff than your criticisms, and stupid nonsense concerning play, poems and new publications.

SCOURGE.

Colman, pursued by letters both public and private, which condemned, conjured, advised, warned or threatened him finally, having retreated to Bath, he wrote on 23rd March, this letter to Goldsmith, who had hitherto refrained from making any comment on the manager or his treatment of him. Colman's state of mind may be judged from the tone of the letter:

Tuesday Night,
Just going to bed.

Dear Goldsmith, Let me beseech you to put me out of my pain one way or other - either take me off the rack of the newspapers, or give me the Coup de Grace - in a word, and without a figure I beg if you think I was vile enough to wish ill to your play (whatever I thought of it) e'en say so in y^r preface to it - but if you acquit me of this in your own mind, absolve me in the face of the World - in the latter case, you owe me this justice, for you had occasioned me to be loaded with abuse, insomuch that had I been y^r most inveterate enemy, or had you been so to me, I c^d not have been treated otherwise. All this has been owing to a frankness and candour which I c^d never have excised in so great a degree but to a friend - But enough of this, for I shall only repeat what I havè

said before, and what I have urged to you personally -

I forgot to tell you this morning, that it is unusual to publish a play till at least the author's second Benefit is over - and keeping it out of print certainly keeps Curiosity where it tends to serve the houses - I think therefore that practice is best, but do as you think best, indeed I sh^d not venture to advise ...⁵¹

The play was published at 4 p.m. on 25th March with a preface which refers to Colman's doubts on its merits, (quoted above). This was the most Goldsmith could do for the manager. Nevertheless the debate was still enthusiastically supported. This verse in the St James's Chronicle for 20th - 22nd April cheerfully summarises Goldsmith's situation as it must have seemed to the public:

Goldsmith, ne'er mind what Criticks do,
Let Anti-Zoilus and Bossu
Defend your Play or mock it;
Do which they will, 'tis just the same,
Both join to advertise its Name,
Both join to fill your Pocket. B.G.

Aftermath of the Success

Goldsmith himself was, in spite of this unprecedented success, beset with problems and far from jubilant. He was under attack for his reference in the play to 'old Biddy Buckskin' of the Ladies Club to which Marlow belonged. This was resented by a Miss Rachel Lloyd, subsequently not quite positively identified as the Deputy President of the Paphian Society, who took the reference as a personal insult. This was probably because the original version of the play named her as 'Miss Rachael Buckskin'⁵². Horace Walpole reported to Lady Ossory in a letter dated 27th March, on what followed:

Miss Loyd is in the new play by the name of Raechel Buckskin though he [Goldsmith] has altered it in the printed copies. Somebody wrote for her a very sensible reproof to him only it ended in an indecent 'grossièreté'. However, the fool took it seriously and wrote a most dull and scurrilous answer; but, luckily for him, Mr Beauclerk and Mr Garrick intercepted it⁵³.

The letter sent to Goldsmith ran as follows:

Spence House

Sir, It is the Business, the Duty of every Author, to endeavour to correct the manners of the Age, but he ought to do it by lashing vice and immorality at large, not pointing at particular Persons. attacking single people, shews a malignant disposition, as well as a narrow genius, and he who employs his time for this purpose, must meet from every well disposed person, that contempt, which I now feel within my Breast for you. I am not surprised that you who don't live in y^e World, and are scarcely known personally [damaged and illegible in letter] one but Booksellers, shou'd conceive an odd opinion of y^e Club of which I have y^e Honour to be a member, as some Newspaper scriblers, at y^e head of whom I now look upon you to be, have thought proper to stigmatise it: but your singling me out of y^e whole Club, and ridiculing me publickly, shows you to be as illiberal, as I think you absurd, and I am determin'd, to consult some eminent Council to know whether I can prosecute you for a libel. You have hung me out to Publick view, have fix'd me upon a Pedestal, to be laugh'd at by every one, and I cou'd not be put in a more ridiculous light if I was placed astride behind y^e King at Charing Cross, [word illegible] dress'd in Leather Breeches. Sir, Women of my rank and fashion, are not to be thus treated, and I warn you of y^e consequences, as I am determin'd, what ever Liberties I suffer to be taken with me in private, no man, no Irish man, shall take any with me in Publick.

I am Sir yours - Ra: Lloyd ⁵⁴.

The other problem troubling Goldsmith at this time was a quarrel among the actors in She Stoops to Conquer. The details are uncertain. Each theatre had its own rules fixing the priority and precedence of the actors and this was enforced when at the end of the season each actor was entitled to a benefit night. Mrs Green, the first Mrs Hardcastle, evidently felt aggrieved because Lewes was given precedence over her in the choice of play for their respective benefits. She wrote a long, very respectful letter to Goldsmith begging for his help in righting this injustice:

Sir

Before I was favoured with yours, I received a letter from Mr Lewes, the purport of which induced me to suspect some latent seeds of a dispute in order to deprive me of a Priority of Choice, or why should he urge a claim to which he has no Pretension. He knows by the Rules of the Theatre he had no right to make any Application to you; nor would your Promises to him avail, if the Play was before fixed on, and I have no reason to think that Dr Goldsmith could have any intention to preclude my right of choosing: but Mr Lewes is so conscious of the Truth of this, that in his letter to me, he gives it up. I solemnly declare that I never heard that Mr Lewes had any design of taking the Comedy in question, I fixed in my proper turn, and must stand or fall by the determination.

I am extremely obliged to you for your friendly advice, but humbly conceive you are led into another mistake by supposing Mr Lewes can take it immediately after me, which is also contrary to the established Regulations of Benefits, and would be as ungenerous as it is unprecedented.

It is now too late for me to recede having been at the Expence of printing and Advertising, not to mention that in this Week of Vacation, most of the Performers are out of Town, which renders a Change impracticable, and during the Lapse of Time, others are fixing on what might be most to my advantage.

Many alterations should be thought necessary, they will be as acceptable to me as to the Town, and I hope that Dr Goldsmith will for his own reputation act in that respect as he think proper.

Be assured, Sir, I shall always esteem your friendship as a particular Happiness, and the Patronage of your Friends, the motive of my present Choice, as a peculiar Honour, I am, Sir, with great respect

Your most obedient humble servant,
Jane Green

King Street Covent Garden
April 6th 1773⁵⁵

This dispute, although it was, presumably, amicably settled, can only have contributed to Goldsmith's worries at this time.

The most troublesome and annoying incident of these days, which should have been so triumphant, was an attack in the London Packet for 24th March, only nine days after the first night. The attack was in the form of an open letter to Goldsmith and began: 'Vous vous noyez par vanité'. It continued:

Sir, The happy knack which you have learned of puffing your own compositions provokes me to come forth. You have not been the editor of newspapers and magazines, not to discover the trick of literary humbug. But the gauze is so thin, that the very foolish part of the world see through it, and discover the Doctor's monkey face and cloven foot. Your poetic vanity, is as unpardonable as your personal; would man believe it, and will woman bear it, to be told, that for hours, the great Goldsmith will stand surveying his grotesque orang-outang figure in a pier glass. Was but the lovely H---k as much enamoured, you would not sigh my gentle swain, in vain. But your vanity is preposterous. How will this same bard of Bedlam ring the changes in praise of Goldy: But what has he to be either proud of or vain of? The Traveller is a flimsy poem, built upon false principles; principles diametrically opposite to liberty. What is the Good-Natured Man, but a poor, water-gruel, dramatic dose? What is the Deserted Village, but a pretty poem, of easy numbers, without fancy, dignity, genius or fire? And pray what may be the last speaking pantomime so praised by the Doctor himself, but an incoherent piece of stuff, the figure of a Woman, with a fish's tail, without plot, incident or intrigue. We are made to laugh at stale, dull jokes, wherein we mistake pleasantry for wit, and grimace for humour; wherein every scene is unnatural, and inconsistent with the rules, the laws of nature, and of the drama; viz. Two gentlemen come to a man of fortune's house, eat, drink, sleep etc. and take it for an inn. The one is intended as a lover to the daughter; he talks with her for some hours, and when he sees her again in a different dress, he treats her as a bargirl, and swears she squinted. He abuses the master of the house and threatens to kick him out of his own doors. The squire whom we are told is to be a fool, proves the most sensible being of the piece; and he makes out the whole act, by bidding his mother lie close behind a bush, persuading her that his father, her own husband, is a highwayman, and that he is come

to cut their throats; and to give his cousin an opportunity to go off he drives his mother over hedges, ditches, and through ponds. There is not, sweet sucking Johnson, a natural stroke in the whole play, but the young fellow's giving the stolen jewels to the mother supposing her to be the landlady. That Mr Colman did no justice to this piece, I honestly allow; and that he told all his friends it would be damned, I positively aver; and from such ungenerous insinuations, without a dramatic merit, it rose to public notice and it is now the ton to go and see it; though I never saw a person that either liked it or approved it, any more than the absurd plot of the Hume's tragedy of Alonzo. Mr Goldsmith, correct your arrogance! Reduce your vanity; and endeavour to believe as a man, you are of the plainest sort; and as an author, but a mortal piece of mediocrity.

Brise le miroir infidel
Qui vous cache la vérité

'Tom Tickle'⁵⁶

Such criticism of the play as there is in this piece, Goldsmith could and did take without demur but the hint of amorous designs on the daughter of his friends Horneck was a scandalous affront. He was very fond of the family and had made his second visit to Paris in the company of Mrs Horneck and her two daughters Catherine and Mary. The inclusion of what was taken as an allusion to Mary Horneck was an affront to both his and her honour and Goldsmith took it upon himself to visit Evans, the printer of the London Packet and to give him a beating. The affair became a public scandal and Goldsmith's feelings on the subject may be judged from his reply to Boswell's congratulatory letter and from Boswell's account of their subsequent meeting. The letter betrays Goldsmith's depressed state of mind rather more than the account and it is evident that he was disheartened not only because of the recent affair with Evans but for more general and pervasive reasons:

4th April 1773

My Dear Sir, I thank you for your kind remembrance of me, for your most agreeable letter, and for your congratulation. I believe I always told you that success upon the stage was great cry and little wool. It has

kept me in hot water these three months and in about five weeks hence I suppose I shall get my three benefits. I promise you, my dear Sir, that the stage earning is the dirtiest money that ever a poor poet put in his pocket, and if my mind does not very much alter, I have done with the stage ... I am still left the only poet militant here, and in truth I am very likely to be militant till I die, nor have I even the prospect of a hospital to retire to.

I have been three days ago most horribly abused in a newspaper, so like a fool as I was I went and thrashed the editor. I could not help it. He is going to take the law of me. However, the press is now so scandalously abusive, that I believe he will scarcely get damages. I don't care how it is, come up to town, and we shall laugh it off whether it goes for or against me ...⁵⁷

In his Journal for 17th April, Boswell tells of his return to London and his reunion with all his friends:

I had called on Dr. Goldsmith at his chambers in Brick Court in the Temple as I passed along in the morning. He was not up, and I was shown into his dining room and library. When he heard that it was I, he roared from his bed, 'Boswell!' I ran to him. We had a cordial embrace. I sat upon the side of his bed and we talked of the success of his new comedy, which he saw that I sincerely enjoyed, and of his beating Evans the publisher, he said there was no other method; and he was determined to follow it. He showed me in some newspaper two paragraphs of scandal about Mr Johnson and Mrs Thrale. How an eminent brewer was very jealous of a certain author in folio, and perceived a strong resemblance to him in his eldest son. 'Now', said he, 'is not this horrid?' 'Why', said I, 'no doubt though to us who know the characters it is the most ludicrous nonsense, yet it may gain credit with those who do not ...'⁵⁸

There are many indications of a falling in Goldsmith's spirits after She Stoops to Conquer. He was worried about his financial security. She Stoops to Conquer had brought him about five hundred pounds⁵⁹ but his open-handed generosity, careless spending and the fine of fifty pounds imposed on him after the Evans affair succeeded

in diminishing that very quickly. Boswell on 7th April, reports a conversation told to him by Beauclerk between Goldsmith and Johnson, which reflects Goldsmith's anxiety. Beauclerk said that:

Goldsmith was talking of their being a playhouse for the representation of new plays solely as a scheme to relieve authors from the tyranny of managers. That Mr Johnson opposed the scheme. Upon which Goldsmith said, 'Ay, it may do very well for you to talk so, who have sheltered yourself behind the corner of a pension;' and that Mr Johnson bore this and said nothing severe to Goldsmith that evening⁶⁰.

We are indebted to 'Conversation Cooke'⁶¹ for an anecdote of Goldsmith which again is evidence of his depressed state. It should be pointed out that although Cooke himself seems reliable, this anecdote was told him by someone else whose credibility cannot be assessed. In addition to this, it is impossible to tell from the piece whether the incident recorded occurred before or after the play's appearance on stage:

Every body who knew Dr Goldsmith intimately must have known that he was no less distinguished as a poet, than for the eccentricities and varieties of his character; being by turns vain and humble, coarse and refined, judicious and credulous. In one of his humiliating moments, he accidentally met with an old acquaintance at a chop-house, soon after he had finished his comedy of She Stoops to Conquer and, talking to him upon the subject, requested of him as a friend, and as a critic whose judgement he relied on, that he would give him an opinion on it.

The Doctor then began to tell the particulars of his plot, in his strange, uncouth, deranged manner; which the other could only make out to be 'that the principal part of the business turned upon one gentleman mistaking the house of another for an inn:' - at which he shook his head, observing at the same time that he was afraid the audience, under their then sentimental impressions would think it too broad and farcical for comedy.

Goldsmith looked very serious at this, and paused for some time. At last, taking him by the hand, he piteously exclaimed: 'I am much obliged to you, my

dear friend, for the candour of your opinion: but it is all I can do; for, alas! I find that my genius (if ever I had any) has of late totally deserted me!⁶².

Two new theatrical ventures also served to illustrate his state of mind. Whereas, when the Good-Natured Man was first under consideration by the managers, Goldsmith had resolutely refused to alter any of it, least of all the character of Lofty, now, when as a successful dramatist, his views would have carried far more weight, when Garrick suggested a revival of the play, he wrote back:

Your saying you would play my Good-Natured Man makes me wish it ... I will give you a new character in my comedy and knock out Lofty which does not do, and will make such alterations as you direct...⁶³

Later, Goldsmith evidently retracted his resolve not to work any more for the stage. Cooke wrote that Goldsmith, 'told one or two of his friends, "that he would try the dramatic taste of the town once more, but that he would still hunt after nature and humour in whatever walks of life they were most conspicuous ..."⁶⁴ He wrote to Garrick, with whom he had discussed the idea of a new play:

My Dear Friend, I thank you! I wish I could do something to serve you. I shall have a comedy for you in a season or two at furthest that I believe will be worth your acceptance, for I fancy I will make it a fine thing. You shall have the refusal...⁶⁵

Much of this gratitude was due to Garrick's helping him over his pecuniary difficulties at that time. This new projected play never transpired. Goldsmith's health weakened and Retaliation, a poem written in the shadow of death, was the only important work between She Stoops to Conquer and his death on 4th April 1774.

In spite of the overwhelming success of She Stoops to Conquer, sentimental comedy continued to attract the audiences. The success of Kelly's The School for Wives shortly after She Stoops to Conquer, 'nearly killed Goldsmith with envy', according to Topham Beauclerk⁶⁶.

The play was a reply to She Stoops to Conquer and to the doctrine of laughter for laughter's sake which it professed. The play ends with these remarks:

- Belville: I shan't therefore part with one of you, till we have had a hearty laugh at our general adventures.
- Miss Walsingham: They have been very whimsical indeed; yet, if represented on the stage, I hope they would be found not only entertaining, but instructive.
- Lady Rachel: Instructive! why the modern critics say that the only business of comedy is to make people laugh.
- Belville: That is degrading the dignity of letters exceedingly, as well as lessening the utility of the stage. - A good comedy is a capital effort of genius and should therefore be directed to the noblest purposes.
- Miss Walsingham: Very true; and unless we learn something while we chuckle, the carpenter who nails a pantomime together will be entitled to more applause than the best comic poet in the kingdom. (Act V)

Sentimental drama did not, however, continue much longer, at least, not in its eighteenth century form. It was succeeded by the serious, domestic, humanitarian drama of the nineteenth century and, ultimately, by the Victorian melodrama of exalted passions. In its eighteenth century form, it could hardly withstand for long the witty, humorous onslaught of first Goldsmith and then Sheridan whose The Rivals was first produced in 1775.

With the exception of Retaliation which followed, She Stoops to Conquer was the last and best achievement of Goldsmith's life. His contemporaries and he himself would have found it impossible to believe that She Stoops to Conquer, among all the popular plays of the middle years of the eighteenth century, would be the only one to survive so triumphantly to the present day.

CHAPTER THREE: NOTES

Note no:

1. According to Boswell in Hill:Powell for Saturday, 25th April 1778, ~~III~~. III p. 321.
2. For an account of the first performance of the Good-natur'd Man see Forster, pp. 451-460
3. It is now impossible positively to identify this house. Local records pin-point its location, which was where Derwent Road now joins Kingsbury Road. It is often referred to as Hyde House but there are no records of this house, which was only finally destroyed in 1932, ever having belonged to a man named Selby - the name of Goldsmith's host. However, a Robert Selby owned land very near the probable spot in 1820 and he may well have been the Selby encountered by Prior: 'The owner of the house and adjoining land does not occupy it himself, but resides in the vicinity, a very honest farmer, Mr Robert Selby, who holds the property from All Souls' College, Oxford; and with whose father Goldsmith resided'. (~~III~~. II p. 332). I think it most probable that Selby, the father, was a tenant of John Nicoll who owned the land and Hyde House at the time Goldsmith was there and that he took Goldsmith into his own cottage, which was not large or important enough to be put on any maps. A later map does show a cottage on the exact spot but gives no information about it.
4. In the Percy Papers, B.M. Add. Mss. 42,515. (Vol I); Balderston, Letter no. XXXII, pp. 102-106.
5. The Theatres: A Poetical Dissection Sir Nicholas Nipclose (1772) p. 34.
6. See Forster for accounts of their changing relationship throughout Goldsmith's life.
7. Letter no. LXI in Balderston's Collected Letters of Oliver Goldsmith, pp. 116-117.

8. Balderston, Letter no. XLII, pp. 117-118.
9. The Letters of Samuel Johnson, edited by R.W. Chapman, 3 Vols. I (Oxford, 1952), ~~Vol. I~~ Letter no. 298, pp. 306-307.
10. Oliver Goldsmith, Ralph M. Wardle, (London, 1957), p. 235.
11. 'Memoir of Dr. Goldsmith' William Cooke, European Magazine (1793: September) p. 173.
12. Some Account of the English Stage, 1660-1830, John Genest, IV (Bath, 1832) ~~Vol. IV~~ p. 192.
13. Memoirs of Charles Lee Lewes (London, 1805) Incidentally, Lewes's far more famous grand~~son~~ was G.H. Lewes, the philosopher and life-long companion of George Eliot.
14. Arthur Murphy's letter and epilogue are reproduced in Appendix Three.
15. All the epilogues are reproduced in Appendix Three.
16. Note in The Tour to the Hebrides, Hill: Powell, 14th October 1773, ~~Vol. V~~, V, p. 308.
17. Forster, p. 627.
18. See plate no. 9.
19. Forster, p. 627.
20. In the Percy Papers, B.M. Add. Mss. 52,515 (Vol I) Printed in Balderston Introduction Section 5, pp. xlvj - xlvij.
21. See previous note.
22. 'Memoir of Dr. Goldsmith,' (for details see note 11) p. 173
23. Cooke claims to have heard from Goldsmith himself that this remark was made, not at the last rehearsal as some, for example Percy in the Life prefixed to the first collected edition of Goldsmith's works, said, but at the first performance. Forster credits this amendment and includes it in his account.
24. Information from The London Stage 1747-1776, Part 4, II edited by George Winchester Stone Junior, (Southern Illinois, 1962) p. xviii.

25. Hill: Powell, ~~Vol.~~ II, p. 224, 15th April 1773. The King cannot have taken the remark as an affront as two performances were given by Royal Command in 1773, on 5th May and 10th November.
26. Memoirs of Richard Cumberland, Written by Himself, 2 Vols, (London, 1807) pp. 365-369.
27. For example, Hill: Powell, ~~Vol.~~ IV, p. 325, 1st June 1784.
28. For the King of Sardinia.
29. See note 27 for reference.
30. Prior, ~~Vol.~~ II, p. 385.
31. Friedman, ~~Vol.~~ V, p. 101.
32. Hill: Powell ~~Vol.~~ II, p. 233, Thursday, 29th April 1773.
33. The Life of Sir Joshua Reynolds, James Northcote (London, 1819), p. 286.
34. Arthur Murphy's The Apprentice, (1756)
35. Boswell's Journal for 12th April in Boswell for the Defence 1769-1774, edited by William K. Wimsatt and Frederick A. Pottle (London, 1960) p. 188
36. Letter dated 29th March 1773. Letters of James Boswell, Collected and edited by C.B. Tinker, ^{2 Vols, 1} (Oxford, 1924) ~~2 Vols~~, pp. 192-193.
37. Entry for Sunday, 3rd May. The Early Diary of Fanny Burney, edited by Annie Raine Ellis, (London, 1889) 2 Vols., ~~Vol.~~ I, p. 297.
38. Lady Bridget Henley, daughter of the Earl of Northington, according to Toynbee, (for details see note 40, below)
39. Horace Walpole's Letters, edited by Peter Cunningham, (Edinburgh, 1906), (8 Vols, ~~Vol.~~ V, 8) p. 453
40. Toynbee in the Letters of Horace Walpole, edited by Mrs Paget Toynbee. (Oxford, 1904) (16 Vols,) dates this as March 27th, Letter 1456, Vol VIII pp. 257-261.

41. Horace Walpole's Letters, edited by Cunningham, ^Vp. 467.
42. Letter no XLIV in Balderston, dated March 18, ^{pp. 20-21} Percy Papers, B.M. Add. Mss. 42,515 (Vol I).
43. Percy Papers.
44. Elizabeth Vesey (1715? - 1791) was one of the coterie of blue-stocking ladies in London. She married, for a second time, an Irish politician, later elected to The Club. Famous for her pursuit of great names in the literary, political, artistic and high society worlds, she was very popular, even with Horace Walpole who called her parties 'Babels'. (Information from the Dictionary of National Biography.)
45. Percy Papers.
46. Percy Papers and in the Introduction to Balderston, Section 5. Balderston discusses the likelihood of Goldsmith's having taken notice of these criticisms, x l - x lli.
47. Letter dated March 19th 1773. Percy Papers.
48. Cumberland, Kelly, Griffith, Lennox, O'Brien - all sentimental dramatists.
49. William Kenrick, a playwright and critic, one of the most vicious and unpopular public figures of his time. He was frequently at odds with Goldsmith.
50. The implication is - as opposed to Murphy - who was frequently accused of 'borrowing' his lines.
51. Percy Papers. Printed in Balderston's Introduction Section 5.
52. Preserved in the Larpent ^{MS.} ~~ms.~~. She has been identified as Rachel Lloyd by both Sells, Biography, p. 351 and Friedman, ~~Vol~~ V, p. 172, note 1, and p. 173, note 1.
53. Quoted by Sells in Biography, p. 167.
54. Percy Papers.

55. Percy Papers. During the months of April, May and June, almost every night was the benefit night for one or other of the actors and actresses. All the principal players in She Stoops to Conquer had benefits during this period in 1773 but Mrs Green evidently won her case against Lewes as hers was the first after Mrs Bulkeley's. The reason for Mrs Green's application to Goldsmith becomes obvious when we realize that the play she had chosen was his Good-natur'd Man. This was performed for her benefit on Monday, 3rd May, with Mrs Green herself playing Garnet and Lewes playing Lofty for the first time. She must, subsequently, have regretted her choice, as her total profits amounted to only £50 7/6d - far less than the usual takings. Lewes's own benefit, four nights later, of Lady Jane Grey and Harlequin Sorcerer, for which Goldsmith wrote him a new epilogue, fetched £153 18/-. (Information from The London Stage 1747-1776 Part 4).
56. Prior, ~~VII~~. II, ch. xxiii pp. 408-409
57. Boswell for the Defence, pp. 160-161
58. *Ibid.*, pp. 174-175
59. The first of his three benefit nights brought Goldsmith £183 10/-; the second, £171 17/-; and the third, £147 11/6d - a total of £502 18/6d. (See Covent Garden Accounts Ledger, B.M. Egerton^{MS}2277)
60. Hill:Powell entry for May 1781, from Boswell's Papers of 7th April 1773 note † p. 113, IV.
61. William Cooke wrote a poem in three parts called Conversation (1796) extolling the virtues and pleasures of the pastime. The name became familiarly attached to his own.
62. Memoirs of Samuel Foote, William Cooke, (London, 1805) Book ~~I~~^{III} pp. 77-78

63. Forster, pp. 672-673 and Balderston, Letter L, pp. 125-126.
64. Cooke's 'Memoir,' p. 173
65. Forster, p. 675 and Balderston, Letter LI, pp. 127-128.
66. Oliver Goldsmith, Wardle, p. 9., quoted from Manuscripts and Correspondence of James, First Earl of Charlemont, Historical Mss. Commission^I (London, 1891-1894) ~~¶~~ 317.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE REASONS FOR SUCCESS

Persistently Popular Themes

She Stoops to Conquer is one of the handful of eighteenth century plays to have remained popular to the present day. We have already seen how it incorporated many popular characteristics and themes from earlier plays and it is possible to see how a knowledge of these may have added to its appeal when it first appeared. However, in order to discover the reasons for its continuing popularity, it is necessary to decide what universal and timeless qualities it contains.

The success of She Stoops to Conquer on its first appearance is comparatively easy to understand. It provided a sharp contrast to and relief from the heavy bombastic tragedies with their august and illustrious characters, who discoursed in rarefied rhetoric on their exquisite sufferings. It provided relief too, from the sentimental dramas, the virtuous protagonists of which, although set in more recognisable surroundings, were just as remote from normal, fallible human experience. The characters in She Stoops to Conquer were instantly recognisable to anyone, the more so for being slightly caricatured. Moreover, this aspect of caricature was not nearly so pronounced in Goldsmith's characters than in the characters in many of the plays to which the eighteenth century audiences were used. Goldsmith's characters are not 'types'. They may not be fully developed, but they do have an existence independent of their several appearances and speeches on the stage. It is significant that they are not characterised by their names. It has been traditional, since the earliest moral fables, to name characters after their salient features. This practice was still popular in the eighteenth century and the dramas of the time included people with names such as Loveless, Sneerwell, Outwit, Fopling Flutter, Fidelia and so on. Goldsmith himself in the Good-natur'd Man named his

characters Lofty, Croaker and Miss Richland. These characters are not personifications of single human qualities to the extent that their medieval forebears were, nevertheless they are, usually, two-dimensional characters, in a way that Goldsmith's characters are not. If we were to try to append names to Goldsmith's characters, we would immediately be confronted with problems. The very nature of Marlow, for instance, is his inability to conform to any settled mode of behaviour and it would be less than fair to Hardcastle to call him 'old-Fashion', or some such name, since his enlightened views on his daughter's marriage are quite at variance with the attitudes suggested by such a name. The only characters in She Stoops to Conquer who are given names which imply traits of characters are those mentioned by others to illustrate a point but who never appear. 'Mrs. Mantrap' and 'Lady Kill day light' are names which precisely fulfill Goldsmith's intentions and need no further illustration¹. Goldsmith's characters have solid, old English names, Charles, George, Dick, Dorothy, Kate and so on, and this must have contributed to the immediacy and sense of familiarity which was part of the play's appeal on its first appearance.

Just as the play's characters will fit into no typical moulds, neither will the play itself. The eighteenth century critics still liked their entertainments to be well-defined. They liked to be told if they were going to see a farce, a tragedy, a burlesque, a serious drama, or a comedy. They would happily accept scenes in a farce which would have been intolerable to them in a comedy. In fact, one of the criticisms levelled at Goldsmith was that there were elements in She Stoops to Conquer which would have been better suited to a farce². She Stoops to Conquer does not fit comfortably into any of the types of comedy to which the playgoer was accustomed. It has qualities of the comedies of manners, of intrigue, of humours, and of sensibility and, as such, there is an inimitable, natural variety to every scene.

In the indefinable nature of both the characters and the style, lies, I feel, one of the secrets of the play's popularity. She Stoops to Conquer is far more open to interpretation than many of its contemporaries, as the very unfinished nature of its characters makes them ambiguous and far more susceptible to having ascribed to them whatever motives a particular audience cares to invent.

These characters are, then, recognisable not as types but as fallible human beings. In addition to this, the situations in which they find themselves, the values which preoccupy them, are of a universal and perpetual interest. Whether consciously or not, Goldsmith abstracted from the traditions in the earlier plays examined in Chapter I, themes of abiding human concern and universal relevance. There is, for example, more than a hint of the 'Cinderella' theme in She Stoops to Conquer. Long before Pamela (1740) a tale told of a poor girl who captures the heart of a noble lover, was always sure of a rapt audience. The fact that in She Stoops to Conquer the girl is not poor after all, does not detract from her achievement. It did, in fact, make it more palatable to a middle-class eighteenth century audience. Such an audience had a sense of justice which approved this match in much the same way as it later approved the equality of Elizabeth Bennett's marriage to Fitzwilliam Darcy or, much later, in a rugged Romantic context, the revelation of Jane Eyre's well-endowed relations and substantial legacy which made her a far more suitable match for Mr Rochester than she had been before. The theme is carried nearer our own times in Shaw's Arms and the Man (1898) which involves a cynical and socialist reworking of the 'Cinderella' theme. The servant-girl Louka, who aspires to a genteel marriage, declares to the chameleon-like Sergius, that she would marry the man she loved, even if she were Empress of Russia. The 'Cinderella' nature of Pygmalion (1912) hardly needs stressing. The triumph of individ-

uality over class is a theme which preoccupies us to a considerable degree today and which accounts for the continuing appeal of this element in She Stoops to Conquer.

The tradition in She Stoops to Conquer which had most antecedents in earlier plays is that of a lover's disguising himself or herself as a servant in order to examine the prospective spouse unawares. In all the plays suggested as possible sources for this stratagem in She Stoops to Conquer, the disguise is two-fold, that is that both the hero and the heroine pretend to be servants. In She Stoops to Conquer only Kate does this, but Marlow is also disguised, after a fashion. He disguises his moral nature, largely because of his own ambivalent feelings about it. Kate's task is, therefore, the same as her predecessors' in the other plays. She must remove her lover's disguise having won his heart while still disguised herself. In this, She Stoops to Conquer is far more subtle than its antecedents, since a genuine development and maturation of character is involved. This is far more intriguing and dramatic than just a discarding of disguise as in Le Jeu de l'Amour et du Hasard and other plays.

Assuming a different identity in order to gain access to an otherwise prohibited person is a common feature in drama of all time. A comparatively recent use of the same stratagem, although in a totally different style, was made by Oscar Wilde in The Importance of Being Earnest (1895), another perennially popular play, when Algernon Moncrieff pretends to be the notorious Earnest Worthing in order to gain admittance to Jack's house and to see and woo Cecily Cardew. Further parallels may be drawn; in particular that of the similar and much used situation of the two young men coming down from London and wooing two girls in the country. The town versus country conversation of Gwendolen and Cecily is an example of the conflict between urban

and rustic values which continues unabated today.

Tony Lumpkin, the character for whom most antecedents have been suggested, was the most popular character in the piece, when it first appeared. Poems, songs and plays were subsequently written about him and there was an honest and humorous earthiness about him which the eighteenth century audiences took to their hearts³. Although he was the most successful in a long line of boobies who were not so dull as they seemed, he was by no means the last. The audience's reaction to his wit is expressed in the idea that 'out of the mouths of babes and sucklings' come words of wisdom they hardly understand themselves. This amused and indulgent respect was an essential part of an audience's appreciation of Tony Lumpkin. A more recent parallel may be drawn with Cis Farringdon in Pinero's The Magistrate (1885). He is, like Tony Lumpkin, made to believe that he is younger than he really is and that all his ideas and pleasures are very precocious. There is an element too of Mrs Hardcastle's attempts to conceal her age for her own ends in Mrs Posket's deception over hers which leads to her lies over the age of her son. These similarities with, and echoes in more modern plays could be expanded until it reaches the dimensions of the list of echoes in contemporary and earlier plays given in Chapter One. What both these lists indicate is, surely, that She Stoops to Conquer combines with its intimacy and immediacy a certain archetypal quality.

Another equally important idea, as yet not expressed, is an essential cornerstone to the sympathy and pleasure the play has always occasioned. The aggressive invasion of a man's house and home by careless, uncongenial and presumptuous strangers is an idea which Goldsmith could be sure, was certain to absorb the attention and arouse the concern of all who witnessed it. By lighting on this situation, where no-one is ultimately at fault and where good-will eventually prevails on all sides, Goldsmith found a theme of permanent and profound appeal.

It is evident then, that Goldsmith employed well-trying characters and subject matter together with ideas that he could be sure would appeal to his audiences. Nevertheless, it is too simple to ascribe not only the popularity but also the lasting literary worth of his play to such a formula, which could, presumably, have been adopted by any skilful writer. A fuller discussion of the play and its complexities is desirable.

Sentimentalism in *She Stoops to Conquer*

She Stoops to Conquer was a far more successful attack on sentimental comedy than *The Good-Natured Man*. This was not so much because of specific satirical barbs aimed at sentimentalism but more due to the comparative lack of sentimentalism in the play. Few sentiments of the sort found in the current plays, are uttered, the characters are not subject to the tyranny of their own delicate selflessness and at no point does the audience require the comfort of their pocket handkerchiefs.

The specific attacks are few and are designed to provoke laughter at the expense of the sentimental frame of mind. When Tony enrages his mother to the extent that she dissolves into tears, he tells Hastings not to worry about her since he knew that crying was a source of considerable pleasure to her:

Don't mind her. Let her cry. It's the comfort of her heart. I have seen her and sister cry over a book for an hour together, and they said they liked the book the better the more it made them cry. (Act II, p. 155 ll. 4-7)

Here Goldsmith is pointing out what he saw as the current confusion in people's minds between the truly sad and the absurdly sentimental. Kate, having concluded her first meeting with Marlow, exclaims: 'Was there ever such a sober, sentimental interview?' (Act II, p. 148 ll. 13-14). She uses the word in the now obsolete sense of 'replete

with sentiments'. This aspect of her scene with Marlow would be lost on modern audience. That the conversation is awkward needs no great perspicacity to realise but that everything that does get uttered is an attempt at the then popular sentimental dialogue, is a satirical attack a contemporary audience would have felt far more keenly:

Miss Hardcastle: "An observer, like you, upon life, were, I fear, disagreeably employed, since you must have had much more to censure than to approve."

Marlow: "Pardon me, Madam. I was always willing to be amused. The folly of most people is rather an object of mirth than uneasiness."
(Act II pp. 144-5, ll. 24-7 and 1-3)

Miss Hardcastle: "... there is nothing I like so much as grave conversation myself; I could hear it for ever. Indeed I have often been surprised how a man of sentiment could ever admire those light airy pleasures, where nothing reaches the heart."

Marlow: "It's- a disease - of the mind, madam. In the variety of tastes there must be some who wanting a relish - for - um - a - um."

Miss Hardcastle: "I understand you, Sir. There must be some who wanting a relish for refined pleasures, pretend to despise what they are incapable of tasting."

Marlow: "My meaning, madam, but infinitely better expressed. And I can't help observing -- a --- ... I was observing, madam --- I protest, madam, I forget what I was going to observe".

(Act II, p. 146, ll. 6-25)

This makes a mockery of the strings of sententious pronouncements prevalent in the current drama and reaches a climax, again difficult for an audience today fully to appreciate, when Marlow attempts to utter sentiments on what the audience can see is his own situation and is powerless to complete them without Kate's assistance. Kate's description of Marlow's conversation technique could hardly be more charitable:

Miss Hardcastle: "... there's something so agreeable and spirited in your manner, such life and force --- pray, Sir, go on".

Marlow: "Yes, madam. I was saying --- that there are some occasions -- when a total want of courage, madam, destroys all the --- and puts us --- upon a -- a -- a ---"

Miss Hardcastle: "I agree with you entirely, a want of courage upon some occasion assumes the appearance of ignorance, and betrays us when we most want to excel".

(Act II p. 147 ll. 16-25)

Goldsmith's confidence in his material and in the justice of his attack is nowhere more in evidence than in the scene in the 'Three Jolly Pigeons' where Tony's companions discourse on the moral tone of Tony's song. The conversation is in total earnest, they make pronouncements which would have graced any sentimental comedy. What makes the whole conversation a mockery of sentimental dialogue is their station in life. Here we have a 'low paltry set of fellows' voicing their disdain of anything 'low' and who value their gentility just as the delicate and refined ladies and gentlemen of polite drawing-rooms do theirs. The language in which this disdain is expressed in such a self-important way only adds to the absurdity:

Second Fellow: "I loves to hear him sing, bekeays he never gives us nothing that's low".

Third Fellow: "O damn any thing that's low, I cannot bear it".

Fourth Fellow: "A genteel thing is the genteel thing at any time. If so be that a gentleman bees in a concatenation ackoardingly.

Third Fellow: "I like the maxum of it, Master Muggins. What, tho I am obliged to dance a bear, a man may be a gentleman for all that. May this be my poison if my bear ever dances but to the very genteelest of tunes. Water Parted, or the minuet in Ariadne".

(Act I pp. 117-118 ll. 23-33 and 1-2)

The final allusion to sentimentalism Goldsmith makes is at the end of the play. This is the bravest and most confident of them all. Miss Neville and Hastings return to beg for justice

from Mr Hardcastle. They express themselves in terms not untypical of sentimental comedy:

Hastings: (To Hardcastle) "For my late attempt to fly off with your niece, let my present confusion be my punishment. We are now come back, to appeal from your justice to your humanity. By her father's consent, I first paid her my addresses, and our passions were first founded in duty."

Miss Neville: "Since his death, I have been obliged to stoop to dissimulation to avoid oppression. In an hour of levity, I was ready even to give up my fortune to secure my choice. But I'm now recovered from the delusion, and hope from your tenderness what is denied me from a nearer connexion".

(Act V, pp.214-5 ll. 17-26 and 1-2)

In case the audience has been too deeply stirred by this touching plea, Goldsmith immediately sets everything back in perspective with a comment from the exasperated and infuriated Mrs Hardcastle, whose tenderly nursed plans for a union between Constance Neville and Tony have been frustrated at every turn: 'Pshaw, pshaw, this is all but the whining end of a modern novel'. (Act. V p. 215 l.4)

These are the specific attacks on sentimentalism made in the play. Nevertheless, sentimental drama had not ruled the stage for so long without leaving some indelible impression even on Goldsmith's work and its influence is implicit in parts of the play. Hastings and Constance Neville are more than just badly-drawn or unfinished characters. They, especially Hastings, express themselves in the stiff, artificial manner of the sentimental lovers. Hastings's remarks to Mrs Hardcastle on London fashions are more of an excuse for Goldsmith to voice his views and caustically to ridicule the pretensions of Mrs Hardcastle than to demonstrate a particular turn of wit in Hastings. The predicament of Hastings and Constance form a sub-plot. The characters of Kate and Marlow and the development of their intrigue are what is really important to Goldsmith and this is why

Hastings' and Constance's affair is a settled thing even before the play has begun. All that is necessary for them is that somehow they are physically and legally brought together and their principal function in the play is thus to provide a role for the scheming of Tony Lumpkin. After his initial deception, Tony has nothing to do with Marlow, his energies are wholly devoted to the cause of ridding himself of Constance Neville by packing her off with Hastings. It was a fear of detracting too much from the principal affair of Marlow and Kate and from the pranks of Tony Lumpkin that made Goldsmith refrain from fully characterising Hastings and Constance, and which made him draw them as characters of the type to which the audience was accustomed.

The affair of Constance Neville and Hastings is, then, not so much a romance but more of a campaign. Winning of love is of no importance to them but the winning of the freedom in which to show their love is what matters. They are preoccupied with stratagems, schemes and plots and not with furthering a romance. Throughout the play, in fact, Goldsmith seems to have little time for the indulgence of romantic or sentimental feelings. Love and marriage are regarded by all as a series of battles to be fought and won. The most obvious example is the conversation between Marlow and Hastings in Act II, when they discuss the clothes they have brought to wear for the campaign, in very military terms:

Hastings: "I fancy, Charles, you're right: the first blow is half the battle. I intend opening the campaign with the white and gold . . ."

Marlow: "Yet, George, if we open the campaign too fiercely at first, we may want ammunition before it is over. I think to reserve the embroidery to secure a retreat."

(Act II, p. 132 ll. 4-13)

Kate's view of her prospective marriage is hardly romantic or sentimental. She is flustered by the thought when it is suggested to her, discusses the idea in a light-hearted and frivolous manner, accepts or rejects the suitor on whims before she even sees him

and although her respect for him increases, she never declares actual love. She concludes her campaign by teasing him into submission and she seems not to take him seriously in any of his guises. She reports their first meeting to her father:

He treated me with diffidence and respect; censured the manners of the age; admired the prudence of girls that never laughed; tired me with apologies for being tiresome then left me with a bow and, madam, I would not for the world detain you. (Act III p. 159 ll. 19-22)

Later, when he loves her sincerely, she uses the same tone to describe his behaviour to both their fathers:

Sir Charles: "And how did he behave, madam? "
Miss Hardcastle: "As most profest admirers do, Said some civil things of my face, talked much of his want of merit, and the greatness of mine; mentioned his heart and gave a short tragedy speech, and ended with pretended rapture".
(Act V, p. 201, ll. 10-15)

There would be few speeches better calculated to deflate lyrical declarations of passionate devotion than this.

Later, when Marlow confesses his sincere love for Kate, he expresses himself in a frank, simple and unsentimental way. He makes no sententious pronouncements and uses few metaphors. At this stage he is, for the first time, speaking to her without a mask. She, on the other hand, deliberately assumes the self-denying, noble attitude of a sentimental heroine. She does this to make Marlow appear to be begging for her favour and to leave no doubt in the mind of Sir Charles as to who has done the pursuing. Kate's adoption of this posture, in mockery of the sentimental comedies, only places Marlow's sincerity in sharper relief.

Both the affairs in the play have another side, wholly opposed to the selfless, sentimental spirit and this is the financial aspect. Hastings and Constance Neville intrigue throughout the play and

finally return from their elopement, for the sake of her fortune. Even though Hastings cries, 'Perish the baubles! Your person is all I desire', (Act II p. 141 l.18), (a line any actor would have nightmares about) when he is first reunited with Constance, there is a distinct note of regret when, later on, their plans fall through: 'So now all hopes of fortune are at an end and we must set off without it'. (Act IV, p.179 ll.28-9).

The match planned between Marlow and Kate is not mercenary. Kate has, as her father admits, no fortune, but Marlow 'is possessed of more than a competence already'. (Act V, p. 197, ll. 10-11). But to the affair between Marlow and the supposed bar-maid, money, is all important, at least in so far as it represents status in society. When Kate has convinced Marlow that she is of equal birth and education to the lady he came to woo, she sees only one obstacle, albeit an insuperable one, to their union:

Tho' my family be as good as hers you came down to visit, and my education, I hope, not inferior, what are these advantages without equal affluence? I must remain contented with the slight approbation of imputed merit; I must have only the mockery of your addresses, while all your serious aims are fix'd on fortune.

Although Marlow disputes this, 'by heaven, Madam, fortune was ever my smallest consideration', (Act V, p. 210 ll. 14-27), there is no doubt that such a match would have been, in the eyes of the audience, had Kate been really a 'poor relation', a very imprudent one. Such, too, was Goldsmith's view. His principles were as strictly founded on class differences as any of his time. In the Westminster Magazine for February 17, 1773, a month before the first performance of She Stoops to Conquer, he wrote an essay called 'A Register of Scotch Marriages'⁴. This was in the form of a letter purporting to be from a landlady who kept an inn on the road to Scotland. The lady was concerned about the number

of eloping young couples, who stopped at her inn on the way to getting married in Scotland and who returned, married, but in a rather different frame of mind:

Having been for a fortnight together, they are then mighty good company, to be sure. It is then that the young lady's indiscretion stares her in the face and the young gentleman himself finds that much is to be done before the money comes in. (p. 218, ll. 21-4)

The landlady then tells the doleful tales of a number of unfortunate ladies who embarked on such marriages and who regretted them very soon after. To most of the eventual partings she ascribes mercenary motives on the part of the husbands:

In this manner, we see that all those marriages, in which there is interest on one side and disobedience on the other, are not likely to promise a long harvest of delights. If our fortune-hunting gentlemen would but speak out, the young lady, instead of a lover, would often find a sneaking rogue, that only wanted the lady's purse, and not her heart. For my part, I never saw any thing but design and falsehood in every one of them; and my blood has boiled in my veins when I saw a young fellow of twenty kneeling at the feet of a twenty thousand pounder, professing his passion, while he was taking aim at her money. I do not deny but there may be love in a Scotch marriage, but it is generally all on one side.
(p. 220 ll. 9-19)⁵

Goldsmith expresses few romantic views on love and marriage. The few happy marriages in his works are based rather on prudence, goodness of heart and equality of birth if not of fortune, than on passionate love. This, of course, is an attitude common in the eighteenth century, when enthusiasm of any kind, let alone over so serious a transaction as marriage, was regarded with suspicion. Thus, the passion and desperation felt by Constance Neville and

Hastings is tempered by prudence; their return is dictated by good sense and is ultimately rewarded. In other ways, too, She Stoops to Conquer is a warning against immoderation. William Jacob Shang⁶, in his thesis, discerns a pattern in the encounters between Marlow and Kate, the first, which is very polite and the second which is just the opposite:

In these first two confrontations, Goldsmith tests both extremes. Manners without feeling and feeling without manners, and finds them wanting.. Having sized up her man from both angles, Kate can now confidently tell her father, "But if I shortly convince you..." the audience learn that in this comic world the path to good sense lies between extremes. (p. 149)

This philosophy, of course, precludes the existence of so immoderate a form as sentimental comedy.

In his third chapter, Shang points out another sentimental aspect of She Stoops to Conquer, which it shares with the Good-Natured Man. In identifying this, Shang has pinpointed the characteristic which would have made it impossible for the play to have been written at any other time. Marlow is tried, but like all sentimental heroes, is saved by his innate worth and the impossibility that he should genuinely disgrace his class. Of Honeywood's predicament, Shang writes: "For reassurance, Sir William will be standing in the wings to prevent any real calamity". (p. 91) Honeywood is placed in a position where his faults have led to their natural conclusion, he is arrested for debt. However, this is only an arranged situation in order to show him where his follies will lead. He is, however, in deadly earnest until all is made well. The same, exactly, is true of Marlow. He is placed in a position where his faults, that is his pursuit of women in a class below him, have led to their natural conclusion, he falls genuinely in love. However, like Honeywood's his situation is a manufactured one. Only when Kate is revealed as the girl he was sent down to woo, is all made

well again. In this respect, he is the archetypal sentimental hero, led by a quality, not really a fault, into bad pursuits and ultimately reformed by the love of a virtuous girl.

The characters are discussed in greater detail below and, in most respects, they do not conform to the sentimental norm. To all but the most critical eye, She Stoops to Conquer would seem to have escaped the sentimental blight and certainly, Goldsmith's philosophy of the beneficial and innocent pleasure of laughter has convinced his audiences ever since the first performance. It may be exemplified in a line from Act V, when Hardcastle recommends to Marlow a course which he feels would erase the memory of all the embarrassing mistakes of that night: 'An hour or two's laughter with my daughter will set all to rights again'. (Act V p. 197 ll. 27-8)

She Stoops to Conquer whether attacking or employing sentimentalism, was undoubtedly influenced by it and it was written with the purpose of showing up the absurdities of the current taste. Knowing this, it is natural to wonder how a modern audience can still enjoy a play written for a purpose with so little relevance to ideas or tastes current today. The answer, though almost beyond analysis, has two definite points. The first and most important is that, as I have said in greater detail above, She Stoops to Conquer was written to amuse in a way wholly different to sentimental comedy and as it drew on universal themes and preoccupations, its humour is still, in the main, understandable and enjoyable today. The second is that, where it does make specific references to sentimentalism, the bastardised version of the word and its implications which have come down to us today, is sufficient for us to cope with most of the references. For example, crying over a book is as much a Romantic and post-Romantic idea as a sentimental one and the self-importance of the fellows in the inn may have lost its satiric edge but is still comic. Only the reference to the 'sober sentimental interview' could be misinterpreted today but since the audience was

present at the interview, this would not cause any confusion. Where sentimentalism is satirised in a more general way, for example in Kate and Marlow's attitudes to love and marriage, a modern audience would ascribe this to the particular characters concerned and to the overall mood of the play. This, however, must be kept in mind in our discussion of the characters.

Goldsmith and the Characters

'No man', wrote that authoritative but autocratic biographer, John Forster, 'ever put so much of himself into his books as Goldsmith, from the beginning to the very end of his career.' To many authors, this saying is only partly applicable; but it is entirely applicable to the author of The Vicar of Wakefield. His life and works are intimately connected. They accompany and interpret each other, in such a way as to make them practically inseparable; and it is, therefore, appropriate, as well as convenient, to treat them, so to speak, in the piece, rather than to attempt any distribution of the subject into divisions and sub-divisions of history and criticism⁷.

Thus wrote Henry Austin Dobson in the Cambridge History of English Literature's chapter on Oliver Goldsmith and, although, as a general rule, so close an identification of a writer's personality with his work is not necessarily helpful, in the case of Goldsmith and She Stoops to Conquer, it is an essential aid to our understanding of, at least two of the characters in the play. This will become evident later in this section.

We have discussed in sufficient detail above the rounded naturalness of the characters but as we consider them here more closely, one other point should be appreciated for a full understanding of these realistic qualities. This is that, in contrast with most of the other playwrights of his time, Goldsmith does not present his characters in isolation. He shows them in their every-

day relationships with the other characters. We find out much, for example, about Kate by observing her relationship with her father and, an aspect of Tony Lumpkin's character, which would otherwise be hidden from us, is made quite convincing when he talks of his Bet Bouncer even though she never actually appears. If a dramatist wants an audience to believe in the existence of his characters, it is his own ability completely to realise and visualise them which will produce the desired effect on the stage. Goldsmith in every sense 'sees' his characters. A good example of this is at the beginning of Act II when without any stage directions, he brings the characters and their attitudes completely to life.

Hardcastle: "But you are not to stand so, with your hands in your pockets. Take your hands from your pockets, Roger; and from your head, you blockhead, you. See how Diggory carries his hands. They are a little too stiff, indeed, but that's no great matter."
(Act II, p. 125, ll. 23-7)

This is the kind of spontaneous vision which makes She Stoops to Conquer seem so fresh and natural still today.

Hastings, Constance Neville and Sir Charles Marlow

I have discussed above the reasons for the lack of weight given to the characters of the two other lovers in the play, Hastings and Constance Neville. Nevertheless, even these more functional characters are differentiated from others who play similar roles in other plays. Hastings is our principal source of information about Marlow, since it is their conversation in Acts I and II which prepares us for Marlow's first inauspicious meeting with Kate. He, the estimable young gentleman, with all the qualities Marlow lacks, is a foil and a spur to him throughout. He has a similar function with Mrs Hardcastle. Mrs Hardcastle and Marlow never meet on stage until the final scene and it is in her conversation with Hastings that her pretentious, vain and

capricious nature is thoroughly and entertainingly exposed. Hastings is given some humorous lines, especially in his shameless flattering of his hostess's vanity, when, playing on her ignorance, he declares: 'From your air and manner, I concluded you had been bred all your life either at Ranelagh, St. James, or Tower Wharf.' (Act II, p. 149, ll. 11-13) Hastings's conversation with Tony too, fulfills a similar function. It is only to Hastings that Tony talked of his feelings for his mother, Constance and his Bet Bouncer. Hastings adapts his tone to that of the person with whom he is talking. Indeed, it is only when talking of his love for Constance Neville that his language lapses into the stilted style of the sentimental lover.

Constance, too, is given a certain life and spirit of her own. She is, at first, little more than a foil to Kate and to Mrs Hardcastle, but, in Act IV, in the scene with Hastings's letter to Tony Lumpkin, the audience is made keenly aware of her panic, frustration, feverish invention and her attempts to smother them all. Her existence is, in many respects, functional. Were it not for her, there would have been no excuse for Tony's hilarious pitching of his mother round the countryside in the mock journey to the dreaded Aunt Pedigree. A small point about Constance Neville is the rough way she is treated. Most beautiful young heroines of the period were regarded as delicate, fragile creatures never to be subjected to any hardship but the lightest breeze and who certainly never appeared on stage in anything but immaculate dress. Constance, however, is butted by Tony's hard skull: 'O lud! he has almost cracked my head' (Act III, p. 153, l. 14) and she later suffers the same sousing, batterings and general fatigues as her less delicate old aunt on the coachtrip. Even Kate who is 'hawl ed about like a milkmaid' (Act III, p. 174, ll. 24-5) retains more decorum than her cousin.

About Sir Charles Marlow little can be said. He is Mr Hardcastle's old friend, well-endowed and, so far as we are allowed

to see, good-natured. He is Marlow's father on whose instructions young Marlow came into the country and whose displeasure he is reluctant to incur. His importance lies more in expectation of his arrival, which is imminent throughout the play, than in any particular trait of his character or in any action he takes when he arrives. His presence makes the denouement more dramatic. He is reluctant to believe Kate's description of his modest son's conduct, yet he wants her as a daughter-in-law. Marlow's denial before his father, of any attachment to Kate, throws Hardcastle's bewilderment and confusion into sharper relief. Sir Charles also resolves any doubts that may linger in the mind of the audience about the reliability of Hastings as a husband for Constance Neville, by exclaiming: 'Who, my honest George Hastings. As worthy a fellow as lives, and the girl could not have made a more prudent choice.' (Act V, p. 213, ll. 25-6) Even Sir Charles's role as a deus ex machina figure is of no great importance to the plot. Kate, unlike Miss Richard in the Good-natured Man, achieves her resolve unaided, Sir Charles, unlike Sir William Honeywood, is not needed to set all to rights.

Mr and Mrs Hardcastle

Hardcastle and his wife are a splendidly realized portrayal of a middle-aged couple, sometimes at variance, rarely in harmony. The first scene is sufficient to draw a couple that every member of the audience will instantly recognize. However, they each have an independent existence as well as one as a couple.

Allan Rodway in his article Goldsmith and Sheridan: Satirists of sentiment,⁸ writes, 'Hardcastle - like Honeywood and Croaker, like Marlow - is a character one might hear of from raconteurs but would never meet'. (p. 69) Such a comment is certainly possible as regards Marlow since the inconsistency of his behaviour leads him into predicaments which would delight any raconteur but

in respect of Hardcastle, seems less than fair. Rodway offers no justification for his comment and I feel he is confusing Hardcastle's situation in the play with his character. The circumstances which befall him in the play, the flouting of his penates, the invasion of his privacy and his consequent outrage and mystification are, of course, hilarious. The play depends on these circumstances for its comic setting, and such a tale could easily be humorously told by a skilled raconteur. But Hardcastle himself is a character independent of these events. He is more, too, than a stock eighteenth century father. He is drawn not only as a bluff and hearty country squire but Goldsmith also gives him further dimensions which add much to his credibility. He is very affectionate to Kate and respects her judgement in a way uncommon to most autocratic parents of eighteenth century literature. He, like his wife, has pretensions and wishes to impress, hence his eager drilling of his boorish servants in anticipation of Marlow's arrival. He is, himself, something of a raconteur and one is reminded of Goldsmith's 'A Reverie at the Boar's-head-tavern in Eastcheap'⁹ in which the background to the entire dream is the landlord's incessant conversation. Goldsmith writes of this landlord that he 'continued to doze and sot, and tell a tedious story, as most other landlords usually do; and then he said nothing, yet was never silent ...' (p. 99) This was, no doubt, how Goldsmith intended Hardcastle to appear to Marlow and Hastings. Hardcastle is cheerful and tolerant. Once he realises Marlow's mistake, he is all understanding and willing even to go along with what he sees as Marlow's excessive modesty, in the face of glaring evidence to the contrary when he denies any attachment to Kate, 'Come, boy, I am an old fellow and know what's what, as well as you that are younger. I know what has past between you; but mum', (Act V, p. 198, ll. 10-11) he says, demonstrating his easy-going nature. His good nature is contrasted to that of his single-minded, scheming wife. He is

genuinely shocked by her dishonesty and meanness of character at the end when she says of Hastings:

Well, if he has taken away the lady, he has not taken her fortune, that remains in this family to console us for her loss.

Hardcastle: 'Sure, Dorothy, you would not be so mercenary.'

(Act V, p. 214, ll. 1-5)

Goldsmith has created in Hardcastle a character recognisable to all the members of the audience, not as a stock figure, or a caricature but because of the genuine human qualities and weaknesses incorporated into the portrait.

Mrs Hardcastle is more of a stock figure than her husband but with her, too, Goldsmith has taken the trouble to add dimensions to make her credible. She, during the course of the play, as Shang points out (p. 164) is the badgering wife, the doting wife, the infuriated mother, the pretentious woman of fashion, a miser, a schemer, a terrified mother pleading with an imagined highwayman for her own life and the life of her child and a foolish woman whose pretensions are exposed and whose pride is humbled. Her initial carping at her husband on the relative merits of town and country life sets the balance for this theme in the play. She is the source of much of the humour of the play, being the butt of her 'undutiful offspring' (Act V, p. 216, l.8) and of Hastings, in particular. Her relationship in the play with Hastings is particularly comic. His flattery is the source of much comedy, he is the only character who panders to her vanity and it is therefore much funnier and very ironic, later, when, unsuspecting, she is made to read aloud his description of her as 'the hag' (Act IV p. 191, l.10). Her changing attitude to Tony, is of course, also very comic. He changes each moment from being her 'pretty innocence' who 'would charm the bird from the tree', (Act IV p. 188 ll. 14-20) to a 'great ill-fashioned oaf, with scarce sense enough to keep his mouth shut'. (Act IV, p. 191 ll. 20-2). She

does, however, have a moment of redemption. She is genuinely terrified when she thinks Tony is parleying with a highwayman and her plea for his life, though very funny owing to its incongruity, is at least unselfish and spontaneous: 'O lud, he'll murder my poor boy, my darling. Here, good gentleman, whet your rage upon me. Take my money, my life but spare that young gentleman, spare my child, if you have any mercy'. (Act V, p. 207, ll. 10-13) Mrs Hardcastle's principal function is to add to the comedy. She has nothing to do with the main plot as she meets neither Marlow nor Kate on the stage until the final scene, although we are told indirectly of such encounters, (Act III, p. 169, l. 21) Her other important function is her plotting the marriage between Constance and Tony and this is vital to the plot as it forms the obstacle to an open courtship between Constance and Hastings.

Kate

Kate is to the main plot what Tony is to the sub-plot. She is absolutely in control throughout. This is true in two ways. She is in control of herself, her emotions, hopes and anxieties and she is also in complete control of her situation. She is, in every way, untypical of a heroine of sentimental comedy being remarkably detached throughout. Marlow appeals to her sense rather than to her senses and she makes a mental rather than an instinctive or an emotional decision to have him. She is lively, spirited and witty, she is modest but not self-effacing. She takes the idea of a husband in a very light-hearted way, it is more of a game to her, to be won or lost as the case may be and she seems to pay little more attention to it, when it is first mooted, than she would to a new game. Nevertheless, she is, despite this apparent coolness, very natural. The idea of this strange-sounding young man coming to court her excites her imagination in a very human and appealing way:

Lud, this news of Papà's puts me all in a flutter.
Young, handsome; these he put last; but I put
them foremost. Sensible, good-natured; I like
all that. But then reserved, and sheepish,
that's much against him. Yet can't he be
cured of his timidity, by being taught to be
proud of his wife? Yes, and can't I --- But
I vow I'm disposing of the husband, before
I have secured the lover.

(Act I, p. 113, ll. 23-8)

Kate, like Marlow and Hastings, views the courtship in terms of a campaign. What she in fact does under the guise of the barmaid is, in romantic terms, to make sure Marlow loves her for herself alone. Although her disguise is of great service to her in her campaign, it springs, not from her own design but from Marlow's mistake. We are to assume that had it not been for Marlow's original mistake being reported to her, their relationship would have remained for ever at the stage where it began. Her disguise enabled her to woo Marlow under the cover of ingenuous simplicity and innocence in a way which would have been impossible in their natural roles:

Miss Hardcastle: "... until this moment, I
never thought that it was bad to want fortune."

Marlow: "And why now, my pretty simplicity."

Miss Hardcastle: "Because it puts me at a
distant from one that if I had a thousand pound
I would give it all to."

Marlow (aside) : "This simplicity bewitches
me ..."

(Act IV p. 186, ll. 4-12)

Kate plays with Marlow until the end. Even when his real character and feelings are revealed to her, it is not so much that her sympathies are aroused but that her demands are satisfied:

Marlow: "... I can never harbour a thought of
seducing simplicity that trusted in my honour,
or bringing ruin upon one whose only fault
was being too lovely."

Miss Hardcastle (aside): "Generous man. I
now begin to admire him." (Act IV, pp. 185-6
ll 26-8 and 1-2)

At the end, when Marlow's folly is exposed to the scrutiny of all around him and the audience, though laughing at him, can sympathise at his cry 'Zounds, there's no bearing this; it's worth than death', (Act V, p. 212 l. 27), Kate tortures him yet further by making him remember all his past boasts and mannerisms:

In which of your characters, Sir, will you give us leave to address you. As the faltering gentleman, with looks on the ground, that speaks just to be heard, and hates hypocrisy; or the loud confident creature, that keeps it up with Mrs Mantrap, and old Miss Biddy Buckskin, till three in the morning; ha, ha, ha ... (They retire, she tormenting him to the back scene)
(Act V, p. 213, ll. 1-15)

Nevertheless, he is by now, genuinely in love with her and she, we must assume, with him. Though a very determined character, Kate is also the most flexible and adaptable person in the play. She suits her dress to her father's whim and her conduct and moral attitudes to those of her lover. When Marlow is distant and polite, she is too. When he treats her like a bar-maid, she keeps up the pretence, when he begins to realise his mistake, she modified her disguise from that of a pert bar-maid to that of a pretty, but vituous, 'poor relation'. She does not set her heart on having Marlow. If they do not get on, she will set her 'cap to some newer fashion and look out for some less difficult admirer'. (Act I, p. 113 ll. 15-16)

It is easy for a performer to portray the scheming side of Kate rather too effectively and to underplay the other side of her desire to win Marlow. Goldsmith obviously intended her to be, not only appealing, engaging and clever but he also wanted her affection for Marlow and desire to marry him to be convincing. It is, of course, difficult to do this without giving Kate speeches declaring passionate love, which Goldsmith could never have included in a play such as She Stoops to Conquer, to which one

of the central ideas is moderation. Nevertheless, Kate's sincerity is implicit in the play and it is really up to the individual actress to bring it out.

Kate is, of course, the she referred to in the title of the play, although it could also refer to Constance Neville stooping 'to dissimulation', to secure Hastings against her aunt's will. Kate stoops in two ways. She stoops to deception in order to show up Marlow's deception and she also stoops to the level Marlow ascribes to her, that is, to the social level of a bar-maid, so that she can meet him on equal terms.

As with the other characters, Goldsmith adds several touches to Kate which make her more rounded and convincing. Her relationship with her father is, as we have seen above, of particular importance, especially as it indicates a warmth and affection in her character which may be felt lacking elsewhere. This function is also fulfilled by Tony's remark, quoted above, on Kate's habit of sitting with her mother and weeping over a sentimental story. She is a natural actress and acts the part of bar-maid in her second meeting with Marlow with total conviction. She is also given some of the wittiest lines in the play:

Marlow: "Have you got any of your - a - what d'ye call it in the house?"

Miss Hardcastle: "No, Sir, we have been out of that these ten days." (Act III, p. 170-1 ll. 27-8 and 1-2)

She adds a distinctly theatrical flavour to the whole proceeding. Her quotation of 'would it were bed time and all were well', (Act I, p. 116, ll. 1-2), her acting of another part, even in costume and her accurate setting of the stage for the scene she knows will follow, 'if you and my papa, in about half an hour, will place yourselves behind that screen, you shall hear him declare his passion to me in person', all contribute to the suspense essential to the best theatrical production.

Young Marlow and Tony Lumpkin

Marlow and Tony Lumpkin are opposite sides of the same coin. They are born into the same social class, the main difference between them being that Marlow is town bred and Tony Lumpkin is a country squire. Marlow is educated, whereas Tony is, to all intents and purposes, illiterate. But there are significant parallels in their situations. Of these, the most important is that they both feel at ease only when with women of a lower social class than their own. The reasons for this differ. Tony Lumpkin has broad, honest, basic physical tastes with no time for the niceties of the modern, sentimental, refined young ladies. Marlow, on the other hand, is a genuinely bashful man and can only discard his 'fears' as Kate calls them, when in the company of one he knows to be his inferior. If we agree that they share their inability to make love in the social class to which they belong, it is necessary to discover why, by the end of the play, Tony's inclination is vindicated whereas Marlow's is conquered; Tony is free to court Bet Bouncer whereas Marlow is now firmly fixed in his rightful social position with the girl he was, in any case, duty-bound to marry. The reason is, I think, two-fold. The first is one of honesty. Tony is honestly drawn solely to the Three Jolly Pigeons and its inmates and to Bet Bouncer. His honesty makes it impossible to pretend to court Constance Neville except for the very shortest stretches of time, under the most pressing necessity. Marlow, on the other hand, is plainly dissatisfied and distressed by his divergence from the normal, social behaviour. He is being dishonest to his own nature, when he talks to Miss Hardcastle in his 'sober, sentimental' manner, because he inwardly rebels against the necessity of so forced and stilted an interview. On the other hand, he feels he is dishonestly betraying his social position and the duty he owes to his father, when he woos Kate, the bar-maid, in the manner in which he is

more at ease. Therefore, from this point of view, it is right that Tony should be allowed to remain happily with his chosen companions and that Marlow's bashfulness and fear should be overcome. The second reason is more implicit in the play. An important tenet of eighteenth century philosophy was that of conforming to type, regularity in all things. Sir Charles Marlow is, we know, a respectable and respected gentleman, not given to any discreditable pursuits. It is therefore right that his son should conform to his hereditary normality, marry into his own class and lead an estimable existence. Tony Lumpkin's father on the other hand, old Squire Lumpkin, 'kept the best horses, dogs and girls in the whole country'. (Act I, p. 18 ll. 14-15) Tony does not deviate from his inherited type. The point is made by Tony himself and his companions in the ale-house:

Second fellow: "What a pitty it is the 'Squire is not come to his own. It would be well for all the publicans within ten miles round of him."

Tony: "Ecod and so it would Master Slang. I'd then shew what it was to keep choice of company."

Second fellow: "He takes after his own father for that. To be sure, old 'Squire Lumpkin was the finest gentleman I ever set my eyes on. For winding the streight horn, or beating a thicket for a hare or a wench he never had his fellow ..."
(Act I, p. 118, ll. 3-14)

Therefore it is, in Goldsmith's eyes, right and natural that Tony should be allowed to continue what is, after all, his ancient and instinctive occupations and if that means a happy, healthy, honest union with Bet Bouncer then it would be wrong to prevent it.

Tony and Marlow meet three times on stage but there is never any real contact between them. They meet for the first time in 'The Three Jolly Pigeons' where most of the conversation is conducted through Hastings. They next meet at the end of

Act IV where everyone turns on Tony for having let them down. Marlow ignores Tony, dismissing him instantly as 'a mere boy, an idiot, whose ignorance and age are a protection'. (Act IV, p. 192, ll. 25-7) They meet, for the last time, in the final scene but this is more a case of their being on the stage at the same time rather than any true meeting of characters. Their confrontations, therefore, are kept to the minimum and this is important as it sheds a considerable degree of light on their characters. They never converse as Tony and Hastings do. This is because Hastings is projected as everything Marlow should be in his confidence, his elegant manner and artificial language. No service would be done by putting Tony and Marlow in a position of having to converse. Tony, throughout the play, is engaged in a struggle to be true to his own nature and to reject the woman who is in his own social sphere but whom he does not want. Marlow learns from the events of the play to be like Tony, to love the woman he loves without regard to her social position. Goldsmith probably felt that to juxtapose Tony's honesty and Marlow's hypocrisy would have contrasted too much to the detriment of his bashful hero. As it is, Tony's humour makes Marlow look ridiculous several times in the ale-house scene. He plays on the London gentlemen's ignorance of the country. He realises that they consider him an ignorant yokel and his line on the four roads meeting, 'Ay; but you must be sure to take only one of them' (Act I p. 122 l.7) enforces their opinion. The audience laugh at the line but Marlow's humourlessness makes him absurd. Tony plays on their fears in his talk of Quagmire Marsh and Crackskull Common, their apprehension makes them look foolish. Also, Tony by dint of simple and ingenuous questions gets Marlow to confess what he has been told about him. This gives an impression of Marlow's gullibility and lack of perception later to be used again, and of Tony's native intelligence. There is also a simple question of plot construction. If they had met before Marlow became aware of his

mistake, Marlow would have realised something earlier - why should the young fellow from 'The Three Jolly Pigeons' suddenly turn up at 'The Bucks Head'? They could hardly have met after Marlow's realisation, as a scene of recrimination would have been essential to the sense, though unhelpful to the furthering of the plot. When they do meet, it is right that Marlow should merely dismiss Tony as an 'ideot'. B. Eugene McCarthy¹⁰ draws an interesting parallel with Tony's apparent stupidity:

Like a Roman clever servant whom everyone expects to know nothing, he is in control of his situation at every point, and, for the reward of his freedom at twentyone years, keeps several important plots moving in the way. (p. 2)

This is, I think, a very valid point and an interesting analogy, however, McCarthy goes on to make a point which is, I think, quite mistaken. He discusses the various 'masks' worn by the characters and asserts that one of Tony's masks is 'used in various circumstances, of ignorance and illiteracy, though he is actively scheming all the time' (p. 3). This is a debateable point and it highlights a fault in the play. Tony is portrayed as having composed a highly literate, metrical, mythical and classically allusive song, and at the same time, being unable to read written hand. This may not be a wholly impossible paradox but it is, nevertheless, unlikely. It is, presumably, this which led to McCarthy's idea of a 'mask', quoted above, but I am certain that Tony's illiteracy is meant to be quite genuine. He is scheming all the time but only because, one scheme after another misfires and he is under a necessity of quickly thinking up new ones to further his plan of ridding himself of Constance Neville.

Even Constance, who suffers much from Tony's mischievous behaviour, admits that he is 'a good natured creature at bottom' (Act I, p. 115 l. 25) and it is this knowledge, together with the

sympathy we feel for him when viewing his mother's treatment of him, that makes us forgive even his most annoying moments. His good nature is a guiding principle of the play. It is manifest, in particular, in his efforts to retrieve Constance Neville's fortune. From his point of view, all that matters is that she goes but his goodness of heart and sense of justice makes him steal the jewels, 'my mother shan't cheat the poor souls out of their fortune neither'. (Act III, p. 161, ll. 17-8).

In The Bee No. 1,¹¹ Goldsmith wrote, 'There is not, perhaps, a more whimsical figure in nature, than a man of real modesty who assumes an air of impudence; who, while his heart beats with anxiety, studies ease, and affects good humour.' (Vol. 1, p. 353) This character, then, though difficult for others to find credible, was evidently very real to Goldsmith. It is an anticipation of the character of Marlow, created more than ten years later and it summarises precisely the problem faced by any actor or critic in interpreting Marlow's character. Marlow is humorous, whether or not we can believe in him. Yet it is a bold dramatist, even today, who can create a handsome young hero, devote five acts to making him appear foolish and laughable and yet retain his credibility as the hero, worthy of the spirited, clever heroine, to the end. It is up to the reader of the play to decide what makes Marlow funny and yet, at the same time, a convincing hero. Partly, it is, I think, Marlow's ingenuous gullibility. Although he is, in many respects, the seasoned man about town, he is taken in time and time again by Tony and then by Kate who has absolute control over the timing of his ultimate exposure. From the moment they meet and from the title itself, the audience knows that, somehow, Kate will conquer her man and the interest centres solely on how she will go about it. The right approach is obvious from the moment Marlow catches sight of her in her country dress and is instantly attracted to her. If he is attracted to her, the marriage, when it

eventually comes, can only be a happy event for both, as she has set her sights, if not, perhaps, her heart, on him and he wants her.

Our laughter at Marlow's situation is, throughout, modified by sympathy. He is led into his mistakes by a fault in his nature but it is a fault of which he is very aware. He is allowed to continue in his blunders by his friend whose interests are served by Marlow's ignorance of his true situation. This, again, arouses sympathy as, although we cannot regard Hastings as treacherous, his treatment of Marlow is far from that required by friendship. Again, we cannot despise Marlow, in spite of his arrogant behaviour to Hardcastle and Kate, because, his pride is, after all, natural to his station. Were he really in an inn waiten on by bar-maid and innkeeper there would be nothing, at least by the standards of Fielding or Sterne, reprehensible in his behaviour. In addition to this, Marlow's mistake leads him to make love to a girl he believes to be socially inferior to him. Had he been making advances to a social superior, believing her to be of his own class, this would have made him seem ridiculous and absurd. As it is, his mistake reflects well on his character and is rather endearing.

The most important fact of all which keeps our opinion of Marlow nicely balanced between mocking laughter and sympathetic indulgence is that we know, throughout, that he is leading up to his own and Kate's happiness. We know his worthiness will become increasingly apparent throughout, as indeed it does, and that what we have witnessed is not so much a Rake's Progress, as Hardcastle would have it, but more a process of growing up, a progress through the wildness, folly and blunders of youth to a mature, balanced adulthood.

The key to Goldsmith's relationship to his two characters, Tony Lumpkin and Young Marlow, lies in his preoccupation with social class. Goldsmith was from a poor family in Ireland. His father

was a rural clergyman, a sort of combination of the simple, kindly 'village preacher' of The Deserted Village and of the impecunious Dr Primrose of The Vicar of Wakefield. Goldsmith saw little or no 'society' until his early middle age and until then, seldom mixed freely with any but the indigent and ignorant. His biographers tell tales of his flute-playing at merry gatherings and of his penchant for singing songs, either old ones or his own, at the slightest provocation¹². This trait was certainly passed on to Tony Lumpkin as was a related predicament Goldsmith experienced when, in the early 1760's, he began to become acquainted with a more elevated stratum of society. He is said to have regretted the vast sacrifices he had felt he had to make for the sake of good company, 'for here am I shut out of several places where I used to play fool very agreeably'¹³. Tony Lumpkin, it may be felt, is a portrait of the man that Goldsmith, in many ways, would have been very happy to remain.

Virginia Woolf wrote, 'Nobody can read Goldsmith in the mass without noticing how frequently, yet how indirectly, certain themes recur --- dress, ugliness, awkwardness, poverty and a fear of ridicule'¹⁴. Goldsmith's biographers are almost unanimous in condemning his habit of chattering incessantly when he had nothing to say. Boswell quotes Johnson a number of times on the subject¹⁵ and many others tell of his inaptitude in conversation¹⁶. The general feeling is summed up in Garrick's celebrated extempore lines, 'Here lies Nolly Goldsmith, for shortness called Noll, /Who wrote like an angel but talked like poor Poll'. Goldsmith is also frequently described as over-dressed and extravagant in his clothes¹⁷. All of these traits are discussed in the most sympathetic and generous portrait of Goldsmith to have survived, that by Sir Joshua Reynolds.¹⁸ He explains:

A great part of Dr Goldsmith's folly and absurdity proceeded from principle, and

partly from a want of early acquaintance with that life to which is reputation afterwards introduced him... [Goldsmith had] a strong desire ... to be liked ... To this end, however, for it was a system, he abandoned his respectable character as a writer or a man of observation to that of a character which nobody was afraid of being humiliated in his presence. This was his general principle, but at times, observing the attention paid to the conversation of others who spoke with more premeditation and the neglect of himself though greedy and impatient to speak, he then resolved to be more formal and to carry his character about with him. But as he found he could not unite both, he naturally relaxed into his old manner, and which manner, it must be acknowledged, met with all success for the purposes he intended it.

The Doctor came late into the great world, he had lived a great part of his life with mean people. All his old habits were against him. It was too late to learn new ones, or at least for the new to fit easy on him. For one week he took one for a model and for another week [another]. This disadvantage, joined to an anxious desire and impatience to distinguish himself, brought him often into ridiculous situations ... He considered him as a friend indeed who would ask him to tell a story or sing a song, either of which requests he was always ready to comply with, and very often without being asked, and without any preparation, to the great amazement of the company. His favourite songs were Johnny Armstrong, Barbara Allen and Death and the Lady ...

(pp. 46-50)

There is a relevance here to Goldsmith's creations, Marlow and Tony Lumpkin. Marlow's concern over the clothes he should wear for 'the campaign' is a nervous attempt to obliterate the real purpose of the campaign, the awesome wooing of a modest woman. Marlow finds conversation either impossible, or rather too easy,

depending on the company he is in, just as Goldsmith did. Goldsmith, like Marlow and Tony Lumpkin, could not reconcile the class into which he was born with the class to which he felt he belonged; hence the awkwardness reported of Goldsmith and evident in Marlow. In Marlow's reformation and redemption by Kate, Goldsmith depicted the ideal solution to the dilemma but his own relations with women were not so fortunate. What we know of Goldsmith and women is largely apocryphal and what is factual, is seldom flattering to the author. He was the ugliest man Mrs Cholmondeley, Peg Woffington's sister, knew¹⁹. Fanny Burney found him absurd²⁰ and Mary Horneck's supposed affection for him is based on scant evidence²¹. Boswell quotes Johnson's comment on Goldsmith which, although again unprepossessing, throws more light on his portrayal of Marlow: 'Goldsmith would get drunk and boast of it, if it had been with a little whore or so, who had allowed him to go in a coach with her'²². This is reminiscent of Marlow's boasts of the Ladies' Club revels. Reynolds wrote:

When in company with ladies he was always endeavouring after humour, and as continually failed; but his ill success was equally diverting to the company as if he had succeeded. If they laughed, he was happy and did not seem to care whether it was with him or at him (p. 54)

This again is revealing, when we consider Goldsmith's attitude to Marlow. So long as the audience laughs, Goldsmith, we feel, has achieved his end and the laughter never seems to detract from our sympathy.

It would be foolish to labour the relationship. Marlow and Tony Lumpkin are, after all, independent creations, totally convincing to an audience which knows nothing of Goldsmith and his characters. It would be intriguing to know whether William Hazlitt, had he known more about Goldsmith's personality, would have been

more convinced by his characters than he was when he wrote his preface to an edition of She Stoops to Conquer:²³

The incidents and characters are many of them exceedingly amusing; but they are so, a little at the expense of probability and bienséance. Tony Lumpkin is a very essential and unquestionably comic personage; but certainly his absurdities or his humours fail of none of their effect for want of being carried far enough ... but still nothing can quite overcome our incredulity as to the existence of such a character [Marlow] in the present day, and in the rank of life and with the education which Marlow is supposed to have had. It is a highly amusing caricature, a ridiculous fancy, but no more.

Class

We have seen above that Goldsmith was more than just aware of the strains imposed by distinctions in social class. He suffered, not from discrimination but from a feeling of being exiled from one class and not really belonging to another. This feeling was very important to Goldsmith as he had a great respect for the distinctions imposed by birth and breeding. In his Life of Nash²⁴ for example, Goldsmith lays to the old beau's charge that he was, in later life, forgetful of 'the deference due to birth and quality, and mistook the manner of settling rank and precedence upon many occasions'. (Vol. III p. 358) The eighteenth century public, though neglecting many less fortunate authors, had great respect for its successful ones. Respected writers were admitted on equal terms to every house, Johnson was even interviewed by the king. Goldsmith was very conscious of the deference due to himself as a literary man and fiercely resented any slight to his reputation. Boswell relates how:

Goldsmith, in his diverting simplicity, complained one day, in a mixed company of Lord Camden. "I met him", said he, "at Lord Clare's house in the country, and he took no more notice of me than if I had been an ordinary man". The company,

having laughed heartily, Johnson stood forth in defence of his friend. "Nay, gentlemen," said he, "Dr Goldsmith is in the right. A nobleman ought to have made up to such a man as Goldsmith; and I think it is much against Lord Camden that he neglected him."²⁵

Class then, was important to Goldsmith, but he was, in no sense, of a radical or a reforming turn of mind. He had lived at both extremes, in poverty and obscurity and then in the blaze of fame and success. Just as he resented any attempt to diminish his celebrity, he also resented the success of other writers which he felt was at the expense of his own²⁶. With these values, Goldsmith could hardly write a play on the evils of class discrimination. In She Stoops to Conquer, Goldsmith is concerned with the false distinctions imposed by class differences on individuals. He shows the precedence of human nature over social class. Thus Tony Lumpkin's nature, inherited not only from his father but from many generations of simple country men, is shown to be of greater importance than his mother's petty, pretentious and mercenary aspirations and Marlow is taught by the play that it is not his manner of addressing women that counts but what it is he has to say. Throughout the play we watch Marlow's approach to simple sincerity. He is stripped of one mask and then the other, unwillingly at first, but as his confidence increases and he is sure of Kate's affection, he speaks to her with increasing honesty and frankness.

There are no class criticisms in the play, no gibes at the aristocracy, only at affectation (Act I, p. 119 ll. 1.2), none at the 'insolence of office', but at its incompetence (Act II, p. 134 ll. 23-6). Goldsmith would never question the rights or wrongs of class distinction. It was a fact of everyday life to him, and was accepted without a thought. She Stoops to Conquer makes no

comments or recommendations about class distinction. If there are any comments, they are about affection, hypocrisy and honesty.

Conclusion

Let me recommend you, as a brother-reader, of high distinction, two comedies, both Goldsmith's - She Stoops to Conquer, and the Good-Natured Man. Both are so admirable and so delightfully written that they read wonderfully. A friend of mine, Forster, who wrote The Life of Goldsmith, was very ill a year or so ago, and begged me to read to him one night as he lay in bed, "something of Goldsmith's". I fell upon She Stoops to Conquer and we enjoyed it with that wonderful intensity, that I believe he began to get better in the first scene, and was all right again in the fifth act.²⁷

So Charles Dickens wrote to M. de Cerjat on 3rd January 1855 and although we may doubt the gravity of Forster's illness, anyone who knows She Stoops to Conquer will understand the 'wonderful intensity' of which his friend speaks. There is in She Stoops to Conquer a unique quality of delightful exuberance and pure, gentle humour. There are no malign characters in the play (Mrs Hardcastle is far too ineffectual, absurd, capricious and laughable to be considered such). The atmosphere is unrelieved humour and yet it is varied, some moments merely covering the progress of the plot and others being high, spirited comedy. This is due to the skilful control of the pace of the play. At some points Goldsmith lingers over conversations in which he makes comic capital out of characters, for example in the scene where Hastings flatters Mrs Hardcastle (Act II pp. 149-152) At other times, one event quickly follows another and the play's momentum speeds up to an exhilarating and gripping pace, for example at the end of Act IV, when Hastings's letter to Tony Lumpkin is read by his mother, Hastings discovers the blunder, Marlow arrives full of

bitter recriminations on his own hard usage, and the servant is all the time chivvying Constance Neville to prepare for the dreadful journey to Aunt Pedigree's.

The characters are real and convincing and yet they have enough of the traditional and typical about them to appeal to the most broad and basic elements in the sense of humour, the elements which revel in pantomime and farce. The dialogue is witty without being difficult or dependent on a knowledge of contemporary affairs or jokes, popular at the time. Goldsmith's play does not comfortably fit any description. It is farcical without being a farce, satirical without being a satire, comedy of manners without being mannered, and touching without being sentimental. It is necessary to study the play in the context in which it was first produced if only to realise the ultimate irrelevance of any external conditions to its undiminished and persistent appeal.

There is a quality of life and natural warmth in the play which remains indefinable and which, perhaps fortunately, is impossible to isolate. The only thing of which we can be certain is that Goldsmith's avowed object has been realised for all time. His play arouses universal and unmixed laughter. These feelings were best described by Virginia Woolf:²⁸

Nothing could be more amusing than She Stoops to Conquer - one might even go so far as to say that amusement of so pure a quality will never come our way again. It demands too rare a combination of conditions. Nothing is too far fetched or fantastical to dry up the life blood in the characters themselves; we taste the double pleasure of a comic situation in which living people are the actors. It may be true that the amusement is not of the highest order. We have not gained a deeper understanding of human oddity and frailty when we have laughed to tears over the predicament of a good lady who has been driven round her house for two hours in the darkness. To mistake a private house for an inn

is not a disaster that reveals the hidden depths or the highest dignity of human nature. But these are questions that fade out in the enjoyment of reading - an enjoyment which is far more composite than the simple word amusement can cover. When a thing is perfect of its kind we cannot stop, under that spell, to pick our flower to pieces. There is a unity about it which forbids us to dismember it.

Note no:

1. There is a textual problem with the second-named lady. The first edition has 'lady, Kill day light,' which has a different bearing on the sense
2. Even Johnson remarked on this aspect of She Stoops to Conquer. He wrote to Boswell on 24th February: 'The chief diversion arises from a stratagem by which a lover is made to mistake his future father-in-law's house for an inn. This, you see, borders upon farce.' The Letters of Samuel Johnson, edited by R.W. Chapman, (Oxford, 1952) in 3 Vols; ~~Vol. I.~~ p. 295
3. See Appendix II for details
4. 'A Register of Scotch Marriages'. Westminster Magazine no. for February 1773. Friedman, ~~Vol.~~ III pp. 218-220
5. Similarly, the landlady at the beginning of Act V of the Good-natur'd Man, rails against disastrous Scotch marriages. (Act V, pp. 69-70)
6. William Jacob Shang, Goldsmith's Development as a Comic Dramatist, (University of Michigan, Ph.D., 1971) Diss. Absts. Int. 32 (1972) 6942A.
7. Cambridge History of English Literature, edited by A.W. Ward and A.R. Waller, in 15 Vols, (Cambridge, 1913) ~~Vol. 2~~ p. 193
8. Allan Rodway 'Goldsmith and Sheridan: Satirists of Sentiment', in Renaissance and Modern Essays, edited by G.R. Hibbard (London, 1966)
9. 'A Reverie at the Boar's-head-tavern in Eastcheap'. British Magazine, no. for February, March and April 1760. Friedman, ~~Vol.~~ III, pp. 97-112

10. B. Eugene McCarthy, 'The Theme of Liberty in She Stoops to Conquer,' University of Windsor Review, ^{VI} (1971) ~~VII~~, ~~VIII~~ pp. 1-8
11. The Bee, no I ~~for~~ (Saturday, October 6, 1759) Introduction; Friedman, ~~VII~~. I, pp. 353-373
12. See, for example, Forster Book I, p. 46 and Book IV, p. 640
13. Forster, Book III, p. 342
14. Virginia Woolf, 'Oliver Goldsmith', TLS (1st March 1934,) reprinted in her Captains Death bed (1950)
15. See, for example, Hill:Powell I, pp. 412-413, II, p. 236, III p. 252, IV p. 11, V p. 277 and ~~VII~~. VI (Index) for further references
16. For example, Sir John Hawkins, the original 'unclubbable man', gives a biased account in his Life of Samuel Johnson LL.D. (1787), edited and abridged by Bertram H. Davis, (London, 1962), pp. 179 - 183.
17. See, for example, Forster, Book III, p. 342
18. Portraits by Sir Joshua Reynolds, edited by Frederick W. Hilles, (New York, 1952)
19. Johnsonian Miscellanies, edited by George Birkbeck Hill, in 2 Vols ^{II} (London, 1891, reprinted 1966), ~~VIII~~. 2 p. 268.
20. See Diary and Letters of Madame D'Arblay, ⁽¹⁸⁴³⁾ edited by Charlotte Barrett in 4 Vols, Vol. I p. 434,
21. Although Goldsmith was certainly friendly with the family - he went to France with Mrs Horneck and her daughters and there are letters and poems surviving addressed to them - the only report attaching him specifically to Mary Horneck is one which claims that she requested his coffin to be opened at his funeral so that she could have a lock of his hair. Forster, Book IV pp. 689-690.

22. Quoted in Ralph M. Wardle, Oliver Goldsmith, (London, 1957) p. 186
23. Complete Works of William Hazlitt, edited by P.P. Howe, 21 Vols, (London, 1932), Prefatory Remarks to Oxbery's New English Drama, 1818, Vol. ~~IX~~^X pp. 75-76 .
24. The Life of Richard Nash, (Bath, 1762), Friedman, Vol. III pp. 290-392
25. Hill: Powell, Vol. III p. 311
26. The ascendancy of James Beattie particularly irritated Goldsmith who took every opportunity to abuse him, see Forster Book IV pp. 666-667
27. The Letters of Charles Dickens, edited by Mamie Dickens and Georgina Hogarth, (London, 1893) p. 353
28. See note 14

APPENDIX I: SUBSEQUENT HISTORY

In Print

She Stoops to Conquer has appeared in print in a number of different forms. It has been published in many 'Collected Works' or 'Selected Works' of Goldsmith, in volumes of his Plays or Plays and Poems, singly, in acting editions and in editions intended for the use of schools. It has been included in many collections of plays, frequently as representative of the best in eighteenth century comedy. The texts vary considerably and are embellished by whatever cuts, additions and emendations seemed appropriate to the individual editors. Many editions have been published in the United States of America. The National Union Catalogue lists two hundred and ninety-two editions of the play, of which a number are American. The British Museum Catalogue lists thirty-five 'Collected' or 'Miscellaneous' Works which include She Stoops to Conquer, forty volumes of 'Poems and Plays' and sixty-two single editions. Editions have appeared regularly and frequently during the last two hundred years which is an indication of the sustained interest in the play in all areas.

On Stage

After the first twelve performances in 1773 She Stoops to Conquer was put on by Foote at the Haymarket for six nights during the summer. Colman brought it back early in the new season in the autumn and it was acted a further seven times in Covent Garden by the end of the year. Since then it has been one of the most consistent favourites of the theatres. It has been produced fifty-nine times in London's West End since 1773 - an average of one production every three and a quarter years - the longest gap between productions being from Drury Lane's in 1833 to that at Sadler's Wells in 1849. The longest run the play has had in the West End was the one which began on the 16th October 1869 and which ran for 159 performances.

(Information in this section from Who's Who in the Theatre, 13th edition (1961) and 14th edition (1967), The Oxford Companion to The Theatre, 3rd edition, edited by Phyllis Hartnoll, (1972), contemporary newspapers and records in the Enthoven Theatre Collection, Victoria and Albert Museum.)

Abroad

She Stoops to Conquer has had considerable success abroad. The Morning Chronicle which closely followed its progress in 1773 printed three reports which indicate its popularity outside this country. The number for 24th April reports, 'We learn, with pleasure, from Paris, that our new drama, She Stoops to Conquer &c. is not only the subject of general conversation, but hath also spread the happy contagion there of raising the laughing standard'. The number for 3rd June reports that the play 'has already been performed with success at Dublin, and many capital towns in the country parts of England'. The number for 8th September carries an even more enthusiastic article:

There is hardly a town in England which boasts a play-house, or a village which has a theatrical barn in it, where Tony Lumpkin's drolleries have not been ha-ha'd! at this summer. In our American plantations also, has this mirth exciting comedy been performed. The New York papers, brought by Monday's mail, inform, that 'She Stoops to Conquer' was performed at the theatre in John-street, New York, by the American company, on the 2nd of August last.

In 1773, editions of the play were published in Belfast, Dublin and Philadelphia as well as in London. She Stoops to Conquer has been consistently popular in Ireland, partly owing, perhaps, to Goldsmith's origins. In 1773, it was performed in Cork, Limerick and Belfast and performances were given in these and other Irish towns in 1776, 1777, 1778, 1779, 1780, 1784, 1785, 1786, 1789, 1791, 1793, 1794, 1797 and so on. (For full details see William Smith Clark, The Irish Stage in the County Towns, 1720-1800 (Oxford, 1965).

Since their inauspicious debut, the main parts have been played by many celebrated actors and actresses. Mrs Mattocks played Kate in 1788 and 1793. John Philip Kemble played Marlow at Drury Lane in 1790 to John Bannister's Tony Lumpkin. Joseph Munden played Tony Lumpkin at the Haymarket in 1797. Mrs Jordan, the mistress of the Duke of Clarence, later William IV, played Kate at Drury Lane in 1800. Tony Lumpkin was played by the very popular exponent of one-man entertainment, Charles Mathews, at the Haymarket in 1814. Charles Kemble played Marlow to Liston's Tony Lumpkin at Covent Garden in 1817 and nine years later, Mme Vestris played Kate in the Haymarket. Henry Howe played Marlow at the same theatre in 1855. At the Queen's Theatre in March 1869, Irving played Marlow, one of his first parts in London, to Lionel Brough's Tony Lumpkin, one of this actor's most celebrated characterisations. J.B.Buckstone, the dramatist and comedian, played Tony Lumpkin at the Standard Theatre two months later, with Madge Robertson, many years later to be created a D.B.E. for her services to the stage as Kate. William Kendal played Marlow in 1871 at the Haymarket to the Kate of his wife, Madge Robertson. Tony Lumpkin was played by Buckstone again, who was then the manager of the theatre. In 1874, Brough played Tony Lumpkin once again, this time accompanied by Sir Charles Wyndham as Marlow and Ellen Terry as Kate. In 1881, Lillie Langtry made her debut on the stage as Kate and caused a considerable sensation more on account of her beauty and her social position than by her acting, which, nevertheless, received no mean critical acclaim. Kyrle Bellew played Marlow for the first time in this production and again in 1883 at the Gaiety Theatre, supported by Lionel Brough, playing Tony Lumpkin for the fifth time. In 1884 Edward Compton and his wife, Virginia Bateman played Tony Lumpkin and Kate at the Strand Theatre. Maurice Barrymore played Marlow in 1886 at the Haymarket and in the same year at the Gaiety Kate Vaughan played Kate to H.B.Conway's Marlow and Lionel Brough's Tony Lumpkin. Forbes-Robertson played Marlow in a notable production at the Opera Comique in 1887 with Kate Vaughan as Kate and Lionel Brough playing Tony Lumpkin for the last time, now aged fifty-one. In 1890, Winifred Emery played Kate for the first time at the Vaudeville Theatre, to be rivalled, one month later, by Mary Moore playing Kate opposite her

husband Charles Wyndham as Marlow, at the Criterion. Winifred Emery played Kate again ten years later in 1900 and again in 1906, where, at the Waldorf Theatre, Tony Lumpkin was played by Lionel Brough's son, Sydney. In 1909, at the Haymarket, Robert Loraine played Marlow with George Giddens playing Tony Lumpkin for the third time. In 1926, Edith Evans played Kate to Baliol Holloway's Tony Lumpkin at the Old Vic. At the Lyric, Hammersmith, in 1928, Brian Aherne played Marlow to the Tony Lumpkin of Nigel Playfair who was knighted later in the same year. Sir Nigel played the part again two years later to Eric Portman's Marlow and Lydia Sherwood's Kate. In 1933, at the Old Vic, Roger Livesey played Tony Lumpkin and Peggy Ashcroft, Kate. Donald Wolfitt played Marlow in 1935 at the Westminster Theatre with Andrew Leigh playing Tony Lumpkin for the third time. In 1939, at the Old Vic, John Mills played Marlow, George Benson, Tony Lumpkin, and Ursula Jeans, Kate. In 1949, Michael Redgrave played Marlow, Nigel Stock, Tony Lumpkin and Diana Churchill played Kate, at the Old Vic. In 1960, Judi Dench played Kate to the Tony Lumpkin of Tommy Steele and Peggy Mount's Mrs Hardcastle. This production had an unusual feature in that it brought a Bet Bouncer on stage, in the person of Barbara Leigh-Hunt. The most recent West End production was at the Garrick Theatre in 1969, when Marlow was played by Tom Courtenay, Kate by Juliet Mills and Tony Lumpkin by Trevor Peacock.

The play's persistent popularity may be judged from the number of productions at provincial theatres. In the past ten years She Stoops to Conquer has been performed at the Ashcroft Theatre (1966 and 1974), Brighton, Theatre Royal (1966), Nottingham Playhouse (1966 and 1975), Oxford Playhouse (1966), Cardiff New (1967), Yvonne Arnaud (1967), Dundee Repertory (1967), Octagon, Bolton (1969), Marlowe (1969), R:A.D.A. (Vanbrugh) (1971), Young Vic (1972 and 1974), Bury St Edmunds Theatre Royal (1973), Stratford Ontario (1973), Newcastle People's Theatre (1973), Harlow Playhouse (1974), Southampton Nuffield (1974), Bristol Little (1974), Questors (1974), Watford Palace (1974), Glasgow Citizens (1974), Temperance Hall, Longford, (1974).

The popularity of She Stoops to Conquer is reflected by the number of translations it has occasioned. French versions include La Fausse Auberge, an 'imitation', performed at the Théâtre Italiens in 1789. This is not a translation or even a close adaptation since it has only two acts and completely omits Tony Lumpkin. Le Voyage à Dièppe is a farce based on Tony Lumpkin's tramping his mother round the house. It was written in 1821 by Wafflard et Fulgence, the pen-name of F.-J.-D. de Bury. In 1822 came a popular translation by A. Pichot called Les Méprises d'Une Nuit; ou, elle s'abaisse pour vaincre. In 1876, Henry Crisafulli wrote an imitation of She Stoops to Conquer and Marivaux combined called L'Hôtel Godelot. In 1907, A. Barbeau translated the play as Elle s'abaisse pour vaincre; ou, la soirée des méprises.

A popular German translation was published in Austria under the title Irrthum auf allen Ecken in 1784. The British Museum Catalogue includes a translation in Irish called Ísliú chun Buadha... Piaras Béaslaí do chuir Gaedhilg air. In 1915, a prestigious academic prize was won by Reuben Cohen who had translated the second act of She Stoops to Conquer into Greek Comic Iambics. Another notable translation is, Ši kliniĝas por venki, a translation into Esperanto made by A. Motteau in 1912. (Information from Friedman, Vol. V, British Museum Catalogue and Oliver Goldsmith: his Life and Works, Arthur Lytton Sells, (London 1974) Appendix II pp. 397-405.

Miscellaneous

She Stoops to Conquer has inspired many other literary productions during the two hundred years since its first performance. In 1773, the newspapers frequently printed verses sent in under the pseudonym of 'Tony Lumpkin'. The Irish comedian and playwright, John O'Keefe made considerable use of Goldsmith's material. On 17th September 1773, he gave the first performance in Cork, of Tony Lumpkin's Ramble thro' Cork. It was followed by another farce in 1778 called Tony Lumpkin in Town. In 1780, Tony Lumpkin's Frolics thro' Cork appeared which boasted amongst its attractions, 'public edifices, streets, a tavern dinner, a dyke-house breakfast... a masquerade, a fashion drum... Tony and Bet Bouncer at the Play..' The last in this series

by the indefatigable O'Keefe was Tony Lumpkin's Ramble to London, which was acted at Covent Garden on 10th April 1792.

O'Keefe was himself a famous Tony Lumpkin. He has left this anecdote which tells of one impromptu performance of the play in Dublin:

Some such adventure as the following might have befallen me at Covent-garden and Drury-lane Theatres.-- At Crow-street, Digges was playing Hamlet; in the first scene he broke a blood vessel; the play was immediately obliged to be changed; the comic performers of 'She Stoops to Conquer' happened to be in the house, they instantly dressed, and the apology and reason of change was expressed to the audience, who being satisfied, the company went on. A country gentleman, I think from Connaught, having come to see Digges in Hamlet, was in the pit, but went out to buy some oranges in a shop, at a cheaper rate, he thought, than of the women in the house, having left Hamlet and the Ghost in their conversation: on his return to the pit he sat down, heard laughing, looked up, and to his astonishment, saw Tony Lumpkin, Tim Tickle the bear-leader, and Minadab who 'grinds the music-box' revelling over their jorum at the three jolly pigeons; he was confounded, and took it into his head that instead of returning to Crow-street, he had got into Smock-alley House.

(from Recollections of John O'Keefe, (London, 1826), Vol II p. 90

More recently, She Stoops to Conquer has inspired other writers to literary productions of their own. F. Frankfort Moore, a biographer of Goldsmith, wrote The Jessamy Bride (London, 1897) as an attempt to recapture the world of Goldsmith and his intimates. In another book, The Impudent Comedian (London, 1897), Frankfort Moore includes a romance called The Way to Keep Him which is about an intrigue purporting to have taken place between Lee Lewes and Mrs Abington against the back-ground of the rehearsals for She Stoops to Conquer.

Many adaptations have been made of She Stoops to Conquer. In 1939, a radio version was made for the National Broadcasting Company in America. A writer named Edward Fitzball (1792-1873) had previously turned it into an opera with music by the enormously popular G.A. MacFarren and this had its first performance at Covent Garden on 11th February 1864. The most recent of these adaptations appeared in 1965 under the title of O Marry Me, a musical by Lola Pergament.

These are, of course, only a selection of the material inspired by She Stoops to Conquer but they serve to illustrate the enormous range of tastes reached and influenced by the play.

(Information from Nicoll Vol III, British Museum Catalogue and National Union Catalogue.)

APPENDIX 2: TEXTUAL

It has been standard practice for modern editors of She Stoops to Conquer to use the printed first edition of the play and the Licenser's copy, known as the Larpent manuscript. Friedman, in 1966, used both texts and noted the variants wherever they occur. However, it seems that a significant source of original textual variants has been neglected. In surveying the early texts of the play, I came across Mrs Inchbald's edition of She Stoops to Conquer in the series of eighteenth century plays she published at the beginning of the last century. The British Museum Catalogue dates her edition of the play at 1806. The title page claims that her text was 'printed under the authority of the managers from the prompt book'. In general such a claim does not suggest an authoritative text or imply the existence of any variants from the established texts, but a comparison of the Inchbald text with the first edition and with the Larpent manuscript would seem to suggest the existence of an independent theatrical tradition -- in text, at least.

Mrs Inchbald could not have seen the Licenser's copy, yet her text agrees with Larpent in substantial readings against the printed tradition. As the Licenser's manuscript pre-dates the first edition by a number of days, and, as Friedman says, 'it shows the state of the play before Goldsmith made his final revisions' (Vol V p.96) it would seem that the text of which Mrs Inchbald's is a copy also pre-dates the first edition. The places where the printed edition and Inchbald agree against Larpent can be explained by contamination between Inchbald or her sources and the printed tradition.

The problem is principally then, one of textual authority. If Inchbald is part of an authentic acting tradition dating from productions in Goldsmith's lifetime, is it possible that Goldsmith

could have sanctioned a theatrical representation of his play using a script with so many textual variants from the printed edition? A number of variants could be explained by printer's or copyist's errors and the large amount of omissions in Inchbald are, very possibly, manager's or actor's cuts. It is worth mentioning that a substantial number of the variants in Inchbald against Larpent and the printed tradition occur in the edition of She Stoops to Conquer in Bell's British Theatre, printed in 1791, also claiming derivation from the prompt book. This would seem to substantiate the Inchbald text's claim to stem from an authentic theatrical tradition. A fuller investigation into all the early printed texts is evidently needed and will be made in the near future.

In the following list of variants I have omitted most of the stage directions, which are few, and which mostly consist of (to him) in 1st ed. and L. where I. has (to Mar.) or (to Hard.).

- p. 106.1 ACT 1] ACT THE FIRST I. : Act 1st. L.
- 107.10 And I love it. I love] And I love I. : And I love it. I love L.
- 108.12 frightening the maids, and worrying the kittens] frightening the maids, worrying the kittens I. :
frighting the maids, and worrying the kittens L.
- 108.22 A cat and fiddle] a cat and a fiddle I. : a Cat and fiddle L.
- 108.26 Any body that looks] Any body who looks I. : Any body that looks L.
- 110.19 HARDCASTLE. Solus] I. om. : L. om.
- 113.21 Miss HARDCASTLE, Sola] I. om. : L. om.
- 114.2 I'm glad you're come, Neville, my dear] I'm glad you're come, my dear I. : I'm glad you're come,
Neville, my dear L.
- 114.11 No; nothing of all this] No; nothing of all this I. : No, nothing of all this L. *
- 116.6-25
- 117.1-18 OMNES. Hurrea, hurrea ... toroll] I. om. : L. om. ll.14-15 and entire song.
- 117.32 maxum] maxim I. : maxum L.
- 118.15 whole county] whole country I. : whole County L.
- 118.24 upo' the] up o' the I. : upon the L.
- 118.28
- 119.1-2 Do they seem to be Londoners? LANDLORD. I believe they may. They look woundily like
Frenchmen] I. om. : Do they seem to be Londoners. LANDLORD. I believe they may.
They look woundily like Frenchmen L.

* Friedman gives No; nothing of this]

119.8 TONY Solus] I. om. : L. om.

120.16 We wanted no ghost to tell us that] We wanted no information of that, sir I. : We did not want any body to tell us that L.

121.20-21 you understand me] you know I. : you know L.

123.6-9 HASTINGS. I hate sleeping by the fire-side. MARLOW. And I detest your three chairs and a bolster] HASTINGS. Damn your fireside. MARLOW. And your three chairs and a bolster, say I I. : HASTINGS. I hate sleeping by the fire-side. MARLOW. And I detest your three chairs and a bolster L.

123.13 whole county] whole country I. : whole county L.

124.16 whole country] whole country I. : whole County L.

125.4 END OF THE FIRST ACT] I. om. : End of the first Act L.

125.5 ACT II] ACT THE SECOND I. : Act 2.^d L.

125.6 SCENE, An old-fashioned HOUSE] A Room in HARDCASTLE'S House I. : Scene, an old fashioned Hall L.

125.12 without ever stirring from home] without stirring from home I. : without ever stirring from home L.

125.13 OMNES] All I. : Omnes L.

126.2 this way] this way I. : this aways L.

127.23 reception] welcome I. : reception L.

127.24 Exit Hardcastle] I. om. : Exit L.

127.25-28

128.1-5 DIGGORY. By the elevens, my pleace is gone quite out of my head. ROGER. I know that my pleace is to be everywhere. FIRST SERVANT. Where the devil is mine? SECOND SERVANT.

p. 127.25-28

- 128.1-5 My pleace is to be no where at all; and so Ize go about my business] I. om. : DIGGORY. By the elevens, my pleace is gone quite out of my head. ROGER. I know that my pleace is to be every where. FIRST SERVANT. Where the devil is mine? SECOND SERVANT. My pleace is to be no where at all; and so I'll go about my business L.
- 128.6 Exeunt Servants, running about as if frightened, different ways] Exeunt-SERVANTS running about different ways I. : Exeunt Servants, several ways running L.
- 128.21 a reckoning] the bill I. : a reckoning L.
- 130.11 broad staring question] broad star-question I. : broad staring question L.
- 132.4 I fancy, George] I fancy, George I. : I fancy, Charles L.
- 132.8 constraint] restraint I. : constraint L.
- 132.16 when we went] when he went I. : when he went L.
- 132.19-20 Don't you think the ventre dor waistcoat will do with the plain brown?] Aye, and we'll summons your garrison, old boy I. : Don't you think the ventre dor waistcoat will do with the plain brown? L.
- 132.25 I think not : Brown and yellow mix but very poorly] What a strange fellow this is I. : I think not: Brown and yellow match but very poorly L.
- 133.5 The girls like finery] Well, but suppose-I. : The girls like finery L.
- 133.14 if you gave us] if you give us I. : if you gave us L.
- 133.17-18 Punch, Sir! (aside) This is the most unaccountable kind of modesty I ever met with] Punch, sir! I. : Punch, Sir! (aside) This is the most unaccountable kind of modesty I ever met with L.

- p133.23 Here's Cup, Sir] Here's a cup, sir I. : There's a cup, Sir L.*
- 134.17-19 Since our betters have hit upon the expedient of electing each other, there's no business for us that sell ale] I. om. : [Since our betters have hit upon the expedient of electing each other, there's no business for us that sell a]le L., where the brackets enclose lines that are marked through with two large Xs as though for deletion.
- 134.23-26 Not in the least. There was a time, indeed, I fretted myself about the mistakes of government, like other people; but finding myself every day grow more angry, and the government growing no better, I left it to mend itself] I. om. : Not in the least. There was a time, indeed, I fretted myself about the mistakes of government, like other people; but finding myself every day growing more angry, and the government growing no better, I left it to mind itself L.
- 135.4-5 receiving your friends within, and amusing them without] receiving your friends within and amusing them without I. : receiving your friends without and amusing them within L.
- 135.8 a great deal] a good deal I. : a good deal L.
- 136.6 I believe] I think I. : I believe L.
- 137.10 your list] the list I. : your list L.
- 137.18-19 Colonel Wallop] Colonel Gunthorp I. : Colonel Wallop L.
- 137.21 1st ed. om.] Enter ROGER I. : Enter Roger, who gives a Bill of Fare L.
- 137.30 to eat up such a supper] I. om. : to eat up such supper L.
- 138.4 a pig, and pruin sauce] a pig's face and prune sauce I. : a Pig's face and Pruin sauce L.
- 138.8 And damn your] Damn your I. : And damn your L.

* Friedman gives Here's cup, Sir]

p. 138.13-19 MARLOW. At the bottom, a calve's tongue and brains. HASTINGS. Let your brains be knocked out, my good Sir; I don't like them. MARLOW. Or you may clap them on a plate by themselves. I do. HARDCASTLE. (Aside) Their impudence confounds me. (to them)] I. om. : MARLOW. At the bottom, a calve's tongue and brains. HASTINGS. Let your brains be knock'd out, Sir, I don't like them. MARLOW. Or you may clap them on a plate by themselves. I do. HARDCASTLE. (Aside) Their impudence confounds me. L.

138.19 Gentlemen] But gentlemen I. : Gentlemen L.

138.22-25

139.1-7 MARLOW. Item. A pork pie, a boiled rabbit and sausages, a florentine, a shaking pudding, and a dish of tiff-taff-taffety cream! HASTINGS. Confound your made dishes, I shall be as much at a loss in this house as at a green and yellow dinner at the French ambassador's table. I'm for plain eating. HARDCASTLE. I'm sorry, gentlemen, that I have nothing you like, but if there be any thing you have a particular fancy to-] I. om. : MARLOW. Item. A pork pie, a boiled rabbit and sausages, a florentine, a shaking pudding, and a dish of tiff-Tuff-taffety cream! HASTINGS. Confound your made dishes, I shall be as much at a loss in this house as at a green and yellow dinner at the French ambassador's table. I'm for plain eating. HARDCASTLE. I'm sorry, gentlemen, that I have nothing you like, but if there be any thing you have a particular fancy to- L.

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139.27 HASTINGS solus] I. om. : L. om.

140.7 My dear Hastings!] Hastings I. : Mr. Hastings L.

140.10 Rather let me] Let me I. : Rather let me L.

141.2 Thou dear dissembler!] I. om. : Thou dear dissembler L.

- p. 141.7-8 soon be landed in France, where even among slaves the laws of marriage are respected] soon be out of their power I. : soon be landed in France, where even among slaves the laws of marriage are respected L.
- 142.6-7 what if we still continue to deceive him? --This, this way-- (They confer.)]what if we persuade him she is come to this house as to an inn? This way I. : what if-- L.
- 143.14 Yet, hang it! I'll take courage. Hem!] I. om. : L. om.
- 143.27-28 with a demure face, and quite in his own manner] I. om. : with a demure face, and quite in his own manner L.
- 144.6 (To him)] I. om. ; (To him) L.
- 144.16-17 Miss NEVILLE. But that, I am told is the way to enjoy it at last] I. om. : Miss NEVILLE. But that, I am told, is the way to enjoy it at last L.
- 145.16-17 Ist ed. om.] Mar. What the devil shall I do? will you please to be seated; madam? I say, ma'am-- MissHard. Sir! Mar. I am afraid, ma'am. I am not so happy to make myself agreeable to the ladies-- I. : Exeunt Hastings and Miss Neville L.
- 145.18-19 But you have not been wholly an observer, I presume, Sir] I. om. : But you have not been wholly an observer, I should presume, Sir L.
- 146.21 fellow] gentleman I. : Gentleman L.
- 147.19-27 that there are some occasions-- when a total want of courage, madam, destroys all the-- and puts us-- upon a--a--a--a-- Miss HARDCASTLE. I agree with you entirely, a want of courage upon some occasions assumes the appearance of ignorance, and betrays us when we most want to excel. I beg you'll proceed. MARLOW. Yes madam. Morally speaking, madam--] I. om. : that there are some occasions-- when a total want of courage, madam, destroys all the-- and

p. 147.19-27 puts us-- upon a--a--a--a-- Miss HARDCASTLE. I agree with you entirely, a want of courage upon some occasions assumes the appearance of ignorance, and betrays us when we most want to excel. I beg you'll proceed. MARLOW. Yes madam, Morally speaking, madam-- L.

148.3-5 Pray go on. MARLOW. Yes, madam. I was--] I. om. : Pray go on. MARLOW. Yes, madam. I was L.

148.9-11 MARLOW. aside. This pretty smooth dialogue has done for me, Miss HARDCASTLE sola] I. om. : MARLOW aside. This pretty smooth dialogue has done for me. L.

148.21-22 followed by Mrs HARDCASTLE and HASTINGS] I. om. : followed by Mrs HARDCASTLE and HASTINGS L.

149.(5-6) Ist. ed. om.] Enter MRS HARDCASTLE and HASTINGS.I. :L. om.

151.12 will never argue] will not argue I. : will argue L.

151.15 my Lord Pately] Captain Pately I. : my Lord Pately L.

152.14 And yet Mrs. Niece] And yet my niece I. : And yet my niece L.

152.21 They fall in and out] They quarrel and make it up again I. : They fall in and out L.

153.6-1 Mrs. HARDCASTLE. Ah! he's a sly one. Don't you think they're like each other about the mouth, Mr Hastings? The Blenkinsop mouth to a T. They're of a size too. Back to back, my pretties, that Mr Hastings may see you. Come Tony. TONY. You had as good not make me, I'll tell you. (measuring) Miss NEVILLE. O lud! he has almost cracked my head. Mrs. Hardcastle. O the monster!] I. om. : Mrs HARDCASTLE. Ah! he's a sly one. Don't you think they're like each other about the mouth, Mr Hastings? The Blenkinsop mouth to a T. They're of a size too. Back to back, my pretties, that Mr Hastings may see you. Come Tony. TONY. You had as good not make me, I'll tell you. Miss NEVILLE. O lud! he has almost cracked my head. Mrs HARDCASTLE. O the monster! L.

- p. 153.22-23 I that have rock'd you in your cradle, and fed that pretty mouth with a spoon] I. om. : I that have rock'd you in your cradle, and fed that pretty mouth with a spoon L.
- 153.23-25 Did I not work that waistcoat to make you genteel? Did I not prescribe for you every day, and weep while the receipt was operating?] Did I not work that waistcoat and those ruffles to make you look like a gentleman? I. : L. om.
- 153.26-27
- 154.1-2 Ecod! you had reason to weep, for you have been dosing me ever since I was born. I have gone through every receipt in the complete huswife ten times over; and you have thoughts of coursing me through Quincy next spring. But] I. om. : L. om. :
- 155.2-4: TONY, singing. There was a young man riding by, and fain would have his will, Rang do didlo dee.]
I. om. : Tony L.
- 156.1-5 HASTINGS. But there is a meek modesty about her that charms me. TONY. Yes, but curb her never so little, she kicks up, and you're flung in a ditch] I. om. : HASTINGS. But there is a meek modesty about her that charms me. TONY. Yes, but curb her never so little, she kicks up, and you're flung in a ditch L.
- 157.7-8 (singing.) We are the boys that fears no noise where the thundering cannons roar] I. om. : We are the boys that fear no noise when the thundering cannons roar L.
- 157.9 END OF SECOND ACT] I. om. : End of the second Act L.
- 157.10 ACT 111] ACT THE THIRD I. : Act 3.^d
- 157.11 Enter HARDCASTLE solus] Enter HARDCASTLE. I. om. : Enter Hardcastle L.
- 159.17 made my blood freeze again] froze me to death I. : froze me to death L.

p. 159.26 and when I was in my best story of the Duke of Marlborough and Prince Eugene] and when I was talking of the Duke of Marlborough and my friend Bruce I. : and when I was talking of my Friend Bruce, ask'd me L.

160.5-9 HARDCASTLE. If he be what he has shewn himself, I'm determined he shall never have my consent. Miss HARDCASTLE. And if he be the sullen thing I take him, he shall never have mine] I. om. : HARDCASTLE. If he be what he has shewn himself, I'm determined he shall never have my consent. Miss HARDCASTLE. And if he be the sullen thing I take him, he shall never have mine L.

160.11 then] however I. : then L.

160.15 fellow] man I. : fellow L.

160.16-17 Certainly we don't meet many such at a horse race in the country] Certainly he has a very passable complexion I. : Certainly he has a very passable complexion L.

160.21-27

161.1-6 Miss HARDCASTLE. And yet there may be many good qualities under that first appearance. HARDCASTLE. Ay, when a girl finds a fellow's outside to her taste, she then sets about guessing the rest of his furniture. With her, a smooth face stands for good sense, and a genteel figure for every virtue. Miss HARDCASTLE. I hope, Sir, a conversation begun with a compliment to my good sense won't end with a sneer at my understanding? HARDCASTLE. Pardon me, Kate. But if young Mr Brazen can find the art of reconciling contradictions, he may please us both, perhaps] I. om. : Miss HARDCASTLE. And yet there may be many good qualities under that first appearance. HARDCASTLE. Ay, when a girl finds a fellow's outside to her taste, she then sets about guessing the rest of his qualifications. With her, a smooth face stands for good

- p. 161.1-6 sense, and a genteel figure is a receipt for every virtue. Miss HARDCASTLE. I hope, Sir, a conversation begun with a compliment to my good sense won't end with a sneer at my understanding? HARDCASTLE. Pardon me, Kate. But if the young Brazen can find the art of reconciling contradictions he may please us both, perhaps L.
- 161.8 And as] Then as I. : And as L.
- 161.23-24 Our horses will be refreshed in a short time, and we shall soon be ready to set off] we shall be ready to set off in a short time I. : Our horses will be refreshed in a short time, and we shall soon be ready to set off L.
- 161.26-27 (giving the casket)] (Giving a Casket) I. : (gives the casket) L.
- 165.9 well they look] well they looked I. : well they look L.
- 165.13-14 her trumpery] trumpery I. : her own trumpery L.
- 167.8 on one hand] on the one hand I. : on one hand L.
- 167.21-22 TONY. I can bear witness to that] Mrs Hard. Here, thieves, thieves, thieves, thieves! I. : I can bear witness to that L.
- 168.11 Pimple] Dolly I. : Pimple L.
- 168.23-24 Indeed, if he had, my bonnet would have kept him from seeing me] I. om. : Indeed, if he had, my bonnet would keep him from seeing me L.
- 169.6 invisible] invincible I. : invisible L.
- 170.15-18 MARLOW. I tell you, no. Miss HARDCASTLE. I should be glad to know, Sir. We have such a parcel of servants] I. om. : MARLOW. I tell you, no. Miss HARDCASTLE. I should be glad to know, Sir. We have such a parcel of servants L.
- 171.6 disappointed in] Disappointed in I. : disappointed of L.

- p. 172.7 that was here a while ago] I. om. : that was here a while ago L.
- 172.21 Solomons] Jenkins I. : Solomons L.
- 173.3 Sligo] Cog I. : Sligo L.
- 173.3. Langhorns] Longhorns I. : Longhorns L.
- 173.3 Old Miss Biddy Buckskin] old Miss Biddy Buckskin I. : old Miss Rachael Buckskin L.
- 174.9-10 Such beauty fires beyond the power of resistance] I. om. : Such beauty fires beyond the power of resistance L.
- 174.10 father] landlord I. : father L.
- 174.10-11 I never nick'd seven that I did not throw ames ace three times following] I. om. : I never threw three sixes that I did not fling duce-ace three times following L.
- 175.2 The girl would actually make one run mad] I. om. : The girl would actually make one run mad L.
- 175.5-6 You may like his impudence, and call it modesty. But my son-in-law, madam, must have very different qualifications] I. om. : You may like his impudence, and call it modesty. But my son-in-law, madam, must have very different qualifications L.
- 175.21 END OF THIRD ACT] I. om. : End of the third Act L.
- 175.22 ACT IV] ACT THE FOURTH I. : Act 4.th L.
- 176.14-15 I have had the Squire's promise of a fresh pair of horses; and, if I should not see him again will write him further directions] I. om. : I have had the Squire's promise of a fresh pair of horses; and, if I should not see him again, will write him further directions L.
- 176.16 Exit] I. om. : Exit L.
- 176.18-19 Well! success attend you. In the meantime, I'll go amuse my aunt with the old pretence of a violent passion for my cousin. Exit] Well! success attend you! Exeunt. I. : Well! success attend you. In the meantime, I'll go amuse my aunt with the old pretence of a violent passion for my cousin. Exit. L.

- p. 177.13-14 Bless me! I quite forgot to tell her that I intended to prepare at the bottom of the garden] I. om.; Bless me! I quite forgot to tell her that I intended to prepare at the bottom of the garden L.
- 178.3 improve] approve I. : improve L.
- 179.24 He! he! he!] Ha! ha! ha! I. : Ha! ha! ha! L.
- 180.1 he! he! he!] Ha! ha! ha! I. : L. om.
- 180.1-4 may you be as successful for yourself as you have been for me. Exit MARLOW. Thank ye, George! I ask no more. Ha! ha! ha!] if you are as successful for yourself as you have been for me-- Mar. What then? Hast. Why then, I wish you joy with all my heart. Exit I. : MARLOW. Thank ye, George! I ask no more. Ha! ha! ha! L.
- 180.21 insufferable] insufferable I. : insufferable L.*
- 182.15 Ha! ha! ha! A puddle in a storm] I. om. : Ha! ha! ha! A puddle in a storm L.
- 182.27-31 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 words about it] I. om. : 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 words about it L.
- 183.29-30 (Aside) (I believe he begins to find out his mistake, but its too soon quite to undeceive him)] I. om. : (Aside) (I believe he begins to find out his mistake, but its too soon quite to undeceive him) L.
- 185.23-29 Excuse me, my lovely girl, you are the only part of the family I leave with reluctance. But to be plain with you, the difference of our birth, fortune and education, make an honourable connexion impossible; and I can never harbour a thought of seducing simplicity that trusted in

* Friedman gives unsufferable]

- p. 185.23-29 my honour, or bringing ruin upon one, whose only fault was being too lovely] I. om. :
Excuse me, my lovely girl, you are the only part of the family I leave with reluctance.
But to be plain with you, the difference of our birth, fortune and education, make an hon-
ourable connexion impossible; and I can never harbour a thought of seducing simplicity that
trusted in my honour, or bringing ruin upon one, whose only fault was being too lovely L.
- 186.2 (Aside) Generous man! I now begin to admire him] I. om. : (Aside) Generous man! I now
begin to admire him L.
- 186.15-17 But I owe too much to the opinion of the world, too much to the authority of a father, so
that-- I can hardly speak it-- it affects me. Farewell. Exit] But to be plain with you, the
difference of our birth, fortune and education, make an honourable connexion impossible; and
I can never harbour a thought of seducing simplicity that trusted in my honour; or bringing
ruin upon one whose only fault was being too lovely. Miss Hard. Generous man! I. : But
I owe too much to the opinion of the world, too much to the authority of a father, so that-- I
can hardly speak it-- it affects me. Farewell. Exit L.
- 187.9 a bit or two more] a little more I. : a stroke or two more L.
- 190.21 of goose-green] of the goose-green I. : of Goose-Green L.
- 191.8 the journey] their journey I. : the journey L.
- 192.26 a mere boy] a mere booby I. : a mere boy L.
- 193.23 SERVANT] DIGGORY I. : Enter a Servant L.
- 193.24 SERVANT] DIGGORY I. : Serv.^t

p. 194.3-21 MARLOW. (To Hastings.) Was it well done, Sir, to assist in rendering me ridiculous. To hang me out for the scorn of all my acquaintance. Depend upon it, Sir, I shall expect an explanation. HASTINGS. Was it well done, Sir, if you're upon that subject, to deliver what I entrusted to yourself, to the care of another, Sir. Miss NEVILLE. Mr Hastings. Mr Marlow. Why will you increase my distress by this groundless dispute. I implore, I intreat you-- Enter SERVANT. SERVANT. Your cloak, Madam. My mistress is impatient. Miss NEVILLE. I come. Pray be pacified. If I leave you thus, I shall die with apprehension. Enter SERVANT. SERVANT. Your fan, muff, and gloves, Madam. The horses are waiting. Miss NEVILLE] I. om. : MARLOW. Was it well done, Sir, to assist in rendering me ridiculous. To hang me out for the scorn of all my acquaintance. Depend on it, Sir, I shall expect an explanation. HASTINGS. Was it well done, Sir, if you're upon that subject, to deliver what I entrusted to yourself, to the care of another, Sir. Miss NEVILLE. Mr Hastings, Mr Marlow. Why will you increase my distress by this groundless dispute. I implore, I intreat you-- Enter a Servant. Serv.^t Your cloak, Madam. My mistress is impatient. Miss NEVILLE, I come. Pray be pacified. If I leave you thus, I shall die with apprehension. SERVANT. Your fan, muff, and gloves, Madam. The horses are waiting. Miss NEVILLE L.

195.12-14 HASTINGS. My heart! How can I support this. To be so near happiness, and such happiness] I. om. : HASTINGS. My heart. How can I support this. To be so near happiness, and such happiness L.

195.25 Come along. My boots, ho] I. om. : Come along. My boots, ho. L.

195.26 END OF THE FOURTH ACT] I. om. : End of the fourth Act L.

196.1 ACT V] ACT THE FIFTH I. : Act 5th. L.

p. 196.2 SCENE Continues] A Room in HARDCASTLE'S House I. : SCENE Continues L.

196.3-17 Enter HASTINGS and SERVANT. HASTINGS. You saw the Old Lady and Miss Neville drive off, you say, SERVANT. Yes, your honour. They went off in a post coach, and the young 'Squire went on horseback. They're thirty miles off by this time. HASTINGS. Then all my hopes are over. SERVANT. Yes, Sir. Old Sir Charles is arrived, He and the Old Gentleman of the house have been laughing at Mr Marlow's mistake this half hour. They are coming this way. HASTINGS. Then I must not be seen. So now to my fruitless appointment at the bottom of the garden. This is about the time. Exit] I. om. : Enter HASTINGS and SERVANT. HASTINGS. You saw the Old Lady and Miss Neville drive off, you say. SERVANT. Yes, your honour. They went off in a post coach, and the young 'Squire went on horseback. They're thirty miles off by this time. HASTINGS. Then all my hopes are over. SERVANT. Yes, Sir. Old Sir Charles is arrived. He and the Old Gentleman of the house have been laughing at Mr Marlow's mistake this half hour. They are coming this way. HASTINGS. Then I must not be seen. So now to my fruitless appointment at the bottom of the garden. This is about the time. Exeunt L.

196.18 SIR CHARLES] SIR CHARLES MARLOW I. : SIR CHARLES L.

198.19 a little] I. om. : a little L.

198.21-26 MARLOW. I never gave her the slightest cause. HARDCASTLE. Well, well, I like modesty in its place well enough. But this is over-acting, young gentleman. You may be open. Your father and I will like you the better for it] I. om. : MARLOW. I never gave her the slightest cause. HARDCASTLE. Well, well, I like modesty in its place well enough. But this is over-acting, young gentleman. You may be open. Your father and I will like you the better for it L.

p. 199.1-10 MARLOW. Dear Sir-- I protest, Sir--HARDCASTLE. I see no reason why you should not be joined as fast as the parson can tie you. MARLOW. But hear me, Sir--HARDCASTLE. Your father approves the match, I admire it, every moments delay will be doing mischief, so--] I. om. : MARLOW. Dear Sir-- I protest, Sir -- HARDCASTLE. I see no reason why you should not be joined as fast as the parson can tie you. MARLOW. But hear me, Sir-- HARDCASTLE. Your father approves the match, I admire it, every moments delay will be doing mischief, so-- L.

201.23-24 will place yourselves behind that screen] will follow my directions I. : will place yourselves behind that screen L.

202.16-22 HASTINGS. But how? Where did you leave your fellow travellers? Are they in safety? Are they housed? TONY. Five and twenty miles in two hours and a half is no such bad driving. The poor beasts have smoaked for it: Rabbet me, but I'd rather ride forty miles after a fox, than ten with such varment] I. om. HASTINGS. But how. Where did you leave your fellow travellers. Are they in safety. Are they housed? TONY. Five and twenty miles in two hours and a half is no such bad driving. The poor beasts have smoaked for it: Rabbet me, but I'd rather ride forty miles after a fox, than ten with such varment L.

203.18 Heavy-tree Heath] Crackskull Common I. : Heavy-tree Heath L.

204.14 that laid us against the quick-set hedge] I. om. : that laid us against the quick-set hedge L.

204.25 Crackskull Common] Heavy-tree Heath I. : Crackskull Common L.

206.21 four hours] three hours I. : four hours L.

207.1-8 Mrs HARDCASTLE. (From behind.) Oh! he's-coming to find me out. Oh! TONY. What need you go, Sir, if I tell you. Hem. I'll lay down my life for the truth--hem--I'll tell you all, Sir. (detaining him) HARDCASTLE. I tell you, I will not be detained. I insist on seeing. It's in

p. 207.1-8 vain to expect I'll believe you] I. om. : Mrs HARDCASTLE. Oh! he's coming to find me out. Oh! TONY. What need you go, Sir, if I tell you. Hem. I'll lay down my life for the truth-- hem-- I'll tell you all, Sir. (detaining him.) HARDCASTLE. I tell you, I will not be detained. I insist on seeing. It's in vain to expect I'll believe you L.

208.13 There's morality, however, in his reply] I. om. : There's morality, however, in his reply L.

209.18 place yourselves as I directed] will conceal yourselves behind that screen L. : place yourselves as directed L.*

210.9-11 The disparity of education and fortune, the anger of a parent, and the contempt of my equals, begin to lose their weight] I. om. : The disparity of education and fortune, the anger of a parent, and the contempt of my equals, begin to lose their weight L.

210.21-25 Sir CHARLES. Here, behind this screen. HARDCASTLE. Ay, Ay, make no noise. I'll engage my Kate covers him with confusion at last] I. om. : Sir CHARLES. Here, behind this screen. HARDCASTLE. Ay, Ay, make no noise. I'll engage my Kate covers him with confusion at last L.

211.1-4 Sir CHARLES. What can it mean! He amazes me! HARDCASTLE, I told you how it would be. Hush!] I. om. : Sir CHARLES. What can it mean. He amazes me. HARDCASTLE. I told you how it would be. Hush L.

211.16-27 MARLOW. By all that's good, I can have no happiness but what's in your power to grant me. Nor shall I ever feel repentance, but in not having seen your merits before. I will stay, even contrary to your wishes; and tho' you should persist to shun me, I will make my respectful assiduities atone for the levity of my past conduct. Miss HARDCASTLE. Sir, I must entreat you'll desist. As our acquaintance began, so let it end, in indifference. I might have given an hour or two to levity; but seriously, Mr Marlow, do you think I could ever submit to a connexion

* Friedman gives will place yourself as I directed]

p. 211.16-27 where I must appear mercenary, and you imprudent?] I. om. : MARLOW. By all that's good I can have no happiness but what's in your power to grant me. Nor shall I ever feel repentance, but in not having seen your merits before. I will stay, even contrary to your wishes; and tho' you should persist to shun me, I will make my respectful assiduities atone for the levity of my past conduct. S.^r Cha.^s I was never so confounded. Hard. I told you how it would be. Just now he'll deny every syllable of this to our faces. Miss HARDCASTLE. Sir, I must entreat you'll desist. As our acquaintance began, so let it end, in indifference. I might have given an hour or two to levity; but seriously, Mr Marlow, do you think I can ever submit to a connexion, where I must appear mercenary, and you imprudent? L.

213.5 old Miss] old Mrs I. : old Miss L.

213.27-28

214.1-13 HARDCASTLE. Then, by the hand of my body, I'm proud of the connexion. Mrs HARDCASTLE. Well, if he has taken away the lady, he has not taken her fortune, that remains in this family to console us for her loss. HARDCASTLE. Sure Dorothy you would not be so mercenary? Mrs HARDCASTLE. Ay, that's my affair, not your's. But you know if your son, when of age, refuses to marry his cousin, her whole fortune is then at her own disposal. Ay, but he's not of age, and she has not thought proper to wait for his refusal] I. om. : HARDCASTLE. Then, by the hand of my body, I'm proud of the connexion. Mrs HARDCASTLE. Well, if he has taken away the lady, he has not taken her fortune, that remains in this family to console us for her loss. HARDCASTLE. Sure Dorothy you could not be so mercenary? Mrs HARDCASTLE. Yes, I'm resolv'd. HARDCASTLE. But you know if your son, when of age, refuses to marry his cousin, her whole fortune is then at her own disposal. Mrs HARDCASTLE. Ay, but he's not of age, and she has not thought proper to wait for his refusal L.

p. 214.23-26

215.1-6 Miss NEVILLE. Since his death, I have been obliged to stoop to dissimulation to avoid oppression. In an hour of levity, I was ready even to give up my fortune to secure my choice. But I'm now recovered from the delusion and hope from your tenderness what is denied me from a nearer connexion. Mrs HARDCASTLE. Pshaw, pshaw, this is all but the whining end of a modern novel. HARDCASTLE. Be it what it will] I. om. : Miss NEVILLE. Since his death, I have been obliged to stoop to dissimulation to avoid oppression. In an hour of levity, I was ready even to give up my fortune to secure my choice. But I'm now recovered from the delusion and hope from your tenderness what is denied me from a nearer connexion. Mrs HARDCASTLE. Pshaw, pshaw, this is all but the whining end of a modern novel. HARDCASTLE. Be it what it will L.

215.25 Constance] Constantia I. : Constantia L.

216.20-22 So now to supper, tomorrow we shall gather all the poor of the parish about us, and the Mistakes of the Night shall be crowned with a merry morning] I. om. So now to supper, tomorrow we shall gather all the poor of the parish about us, and the Mistakes of to night shall be crowned with a merry morning L.

216.(24-25) 1st. ed. om.] Exeunt I. : L. om.

216.25 FINIS] THE END I. : Finis L.

It is now in order to attempt to account for these variants which may have a number of different sources.

It is too simple to ascribe to cutting by the managers all the omissions. There is no obvious reason why some of these, for example 141.2 and 175.2, should be left out. The possibility that cuts may have been made due to 'lowness' of sentiment or language in the opinion of the editor, seems unlikely as, in some cases, e.g. 123.6-9 and 132.19-20, the language and sentiment in Inchbald are of a 'lower' quality than the parallels in the first edition and in Larpent. The omission of lines 141.7-8 alone may possibly be ascribed to the political situation in 1806, when praise of the French in any context, would hardly have been approved of. It is significant that these lines are included in Bell's edition of 1791. The lengthier omissions of dialogue e.g. 194.3-21 and 196.3-17, are more likely to be managerial cuts as these lines are not essential to the furthering of the plot but there is no overall reason, immediately obvious, for the cuts.

It is too simple, likewise, to ascribe the very numerous small changes in the words or their spelling to copyist's or printer's errors. Few of these variants are not semantically possible, if not, as in many cases, equally acceptable as the printed textual tradition. In 132.16, 136.6, and 137.10 both the 1st ed. and the Inchbald versions are plausible in the context; furthermore the first of these is also given in Larpent and Bell and the other two are given in Bell. The Inchbald variants 133.14 and 192.26 also occur in Bell. To the printers we may, perhaps, ascribe the variants in the Act boundary definitions and the addition of such directions as 'solus', however, many of the variants that we may be inclined to ascribe to printer's or copyist's errors due to their seeming lack of coherence, e.g. 190.21 and 130.11 also occur in Bell. Nevertheless, 161.8 and 178.3, for example, are variants with, as yet, no precedents in earlier texts and, though making sense,

may be provisionally regarded as copyist's errors.

There is a substantial body of variants which can in no way be explained by the interference of managers, printers or copyists. If we take, firstly, the possibility that ~~the~~ play may have been 'improved' by Mrs Inchbald or others after Goldsmith's death, we encounter certain problems. We have already seen that expurgation for reasons of taste was not an important criterion to the editor of the Inchbald text of She Stoops to Conquer. Parts of this text differ so completely from the printed tradition and from Larpent, that the possibility of rewriting must be considered. The most striking of the many occurrences of such variants are at lines 132.19 to 133.5, where, instead of a continued dialogue between Marlow and Hastings on the subject of suitable dress for their campaign to win the ladies, which occurs in 1st ed./Larpent, we have, in Inchbald, a series of totally different, unconnected comments from Marlow and Hastings on the strange landlord. Bell reproduces the 1st ed./Larpent text and so, if the lines are Goldsmith's, we must assume the existence of more than one original prompt book, from which these editions are taken. There are a number of other places where Bell agrees with the 1st ed. or Larpent and is against Inchbald. However, at present, it is impossible to say where these lines are Goldsmith's or where, if at all, rewritten by another hand. One can only submit that since the established text is here, and, for example, at 120.16 and 160.16-17 aesthetically better than ~~the~~ Inchbald version, that the latter is a copy of an early version even pre-dating the Larpent manuscript, and which Goldsmith rewrote for the Licenser's copy and for the printers. Where there are different versions in each of the 1st ed., Larpent and Inchbald, e.g. at 120.16, 142.6-7, 159.26, 180.1-4, 187.9 and 209.18 or where Inchbald includes lines omitted in the other texts, e.g. at 145.16-17, this would seem to

substantiate this possibility. It is also significant that none of the Inchbald variants at these places occur in the Bell edition. Another possible and, perhaps, more likely reason for the Bell/Inchbald disagreement is that the text would have been debased during successive productions.

Several of the other places where Inchbald agrees with no other known text are in the names mentioned in the text, e.g. 137.18-19, 168.11, 172.21, and 173.3. One can make no assumptions based on the literary merits of these names but it seems unlikely that anyone hoping to 'improve' the play would have made any such changes. Once again, a more plausible explanation is that they belonged to an earlier version of the play. It is worth mentioning here that the variant which occurs at 132.4, where Inchbald agrees with the 1st ed. against Larpent, must be a strange case of contamination as, from the point of sense, it is plainly wrong.

Although most of the above is strongly in favour of the existence of an authentic textual tradition, it must be admitted that an editor, whether Mrs Inchbald or another, did not scruple to alter the text where they felt it to be wrong. The established text at 174.10 is, presumably, an original authorial error, but the Inchbald text corrects it so that it makes sense within the play, whereas Bell and subsequent editors, including Friedman, leave the error in the text. As we have seen, this contrasts strangely with the supposed contamination at 132.4. Many more variants in these texts deserve consideration but must be reserved for a fuller treatment at a later date. The above serves only to indicate the desirability of further investigation into the texts of She Stoops to Conquer.

It should be remembered that Goldsmith wrote the first version of the play in the summer of 1771 and, therefore, had almost two years to revise the text before its first performance. We know that he sent a copy to Joseph Cradock who sent it back with many proposed emendations and general criticism, much of which Goldsmith took to heart, and it seems quite possible that other friends may also have had copies at various different stages of the play's composition and have had similar influence on the text.

APPENDIX 3: EPILOGUES

Goldsmith's problems over finding a suitable epilogue for She Stoops to Conquer are outlined in Chapter Three. Reproduced here are the five epilogues which resulted from the confusion.

1) This is the letter from Arthur Murphy in which he sketched out an idea for an epilogue and excuses himself from submitting one fully worked out. It is reproduced from an article in PQ, XVII, 1st January, 1938 by J.P. Emery called 'An unpublished letter from Arthur Murphy to Oliver Goldsmith concerning She Stoops to Conquer'. The notes below are Emery's.

Dear Goldsmith,

I am now in the hurry of the Assizes at Aylesbury: the Sheriff's Javelin Men Line the Streets; Prisoners are clanking their Chains; the Judges Trumpet sounds in my Ears, and the Attorneys are pressing to Know what I think of their Clients Case.

I nunc, et venus tecum meditare Canoros. Is this a place to write an Epilogue in? I do assure you, I should be glad that my Little Bark should partake your Gale: but I am so circumstanced, that I really cannot perform my Promise. Shall I tell you what my Idea was, if I had time to Execute it? Perhaps the hint may be of use, and you will be able in a single morning to finish it - I would introduce Miss Catley - to tell the Audience in a Recitative

I am come to speak an Epilogue Then introduce something about Love in order to Slide into the Humour and Variety which she is so capable of Entertaining the Town with:- Having mentioned Love, She may then say, it is an Universal passion, but puts on Different shapes in different Nations:-

Then an air for an Italian in Love:

She may mimic Italian Singer, and She Does it admirably. Then in Recitative two Lines to Introduce a frenchman:

An Air for the frenchman.

Then Recitative to introduce an Englishman

Air to the Tune of Roast Beef -*

* The Roast Beef of Old England, the famous song by Richard Leveridge. (1670? - 1758)

or any Known English Tune
Then Recitative for an Irishman
Then any IRISH AIR:
Then Recitative for a Scotchman (if She can mimic'ch him)
A Scotch air
Then two Lines in Recitative to tell the Audience That She
hopes they will Like the Epilogue and the Play.
This, My Dear Goldsmith, is the Plan I should have
tried, but my hands are tied behind my back: You see I
do all I can, and if the Idea strikes you, you will be
able to furnish this appendage to your Play with Great
Ease to yourself, and in my opinion, with Great Satis-
faction to your Audience. I most heartily wish you all
the Success you can Desire, and am
Very sincerely yours
Aylesbury Arthur Murphy
2d March 1773

P.S. - If you consult GARRICK about this, He will tell
you not to do it, that He may hereafter make USE of the
Hint himself - If you adopt the Scheme, Do it with Secrecy
[sic]. A Line, directed to me on the Norfolk Circuit, will
come safe to hand, ---
your Neighbour M^r Tomkyns** Desires his Complim^{ts} to
you, and his Serv^t will hand this Letter to you.

2) This is the quarrelling epilogue to which Mrs Catley objected.
It is reproduced from Friedman Vol. IV. We can see that it owes
something to Murphy's letter.

Enter Mrs Bulkley, who curtsies very low as beginning to
speak. Then enter Miss Catley, who stands full before
her, and curtsies to the Audience.

Mrs Bulkley: 'Hold, Ma'am, your pardon. What's your
business here?'

Miss Catley: 'The Epilogue.'

Mrs Bulkley: 'The Epilogue?'

Miss Catley: 'Yes, the Epilogue, my dear.'

Mrs Bulkley: 'Sure you mistake, Ma'am. The Epilogue I
bring it.'

Miss Catley: 'Excuse me, Ma'am. The Author bid me
sing it.'

Recitative: 'Ye beaux and belles, that form this splendid
ring,
Suspend your conversation while I sing.'

** Possibly Thomas Tomkins (1743-1816), the calligrapher.

- Mrs Bulkley: 'Why sure the Girl's beside herself: an
Epilogue of singing,
A hopeful end indeed to such a blest beginning.
Besides, a singer in a comic set!
Excuse me, Ma'am I know the etiquette.
- Miss Catley: 'What if we leave it to the House?'
- Mrs Bulkley: 'The House! -- Agreed.
- Miss Catley: 'Agreed.'
- Mrs Bulkley: 'And she, who's party's largest, shall proceed,
And first I hope you'll readily agree
I've all the critics and the wits for me.
They, I am sure, will answer my commands,
Ye candid judging few, hold up your hands;
What, no return? I find too late, I fear,
That modern judges seldom enter here.'
- Miss Catley: 'I'm for a different set. -- Old men, whose
trade is
Still to gallant and dangle with the ladies.
- Recitative: 'Who mump their passion, and who, grimly
smiling
Still thus address the fair with voice beguiling.'
- Air-Cotillon: 'Turn, my fairest, turn, if ever
Strephon caught thy ravish'd eye
Pity take on your swain so clever,
Who without your aid must die.
Yes, I shall die, hu, hu, hu, hu,
Yes, I must die, ho, ho, ho, ho.'
- Da Capo.
- Mrs Bulkley: 'Let all the old pay homage to your merit:
Give me the young, the gay, the men of spirit.
Ye travelled tribe, ye macaroni train
Of French friseurs, and nosegays, justly vain,
Who take a trip to Paris once a year
To dress, and look like awkward Frenchmen
here.
Lend me your hands. -- O fatal news to tell,
Their hands are only lent to the Heinelle.'
- Miss Catley: 'Ay, take your travellers, travellers indeed!
Give me my bonny Scots that travel from the
Tweed.
Where are the Cheels? Ah! Ah, I well discern
The smiling looks of each bewitching bairne.'
- Air--
'A Bonny Young lad is My Jockey,
I'll sing to amuse you by night and by day,
And be unco merry when you are but gay;
When you with your bagpipes are ready to play,
My voice shall be ready to carol away
With Sandy and Sawney, and Jockey,
With Sawney, and Jamie, and Jockey.'

Mrs Bulkley: 'Ye Gamesters, who so eager in pursuit,
Make but of all your fortune one va Toute:
Ye Jockey tribe whose stock of words are few,
"I hold the odds. --Done, done, with you,
with you."
Ye Barristers, so fluent with grimace,
"My Lord, -- your Lordship misconceives.
the case."
Doctors, who cough and answer every impor-
tuner,
I wish I'd been called in a little sooner,
Assist my cause with hands and voices hearty,
Come end the contest here, and aid my party.'

Air. --Baleinamony.

Miss Catley: 'Ye brave Irish lads, hark away to the crack,
Assist me, I pray, in this woful attack;
For sure I don't wrong you, you seldom are
slack,
When the ladies are calling, to blush, and
hang back.
For you're always polite and attentive,
Still to amuse us inventive,
And death is your only preventive.

Your hands and your voices for me.'

Mrs Bulkley: 'Well, Madam, what if, after all this sparring,
We both agree, like friends, to end our
jarring?'

Miss Catley: 'And that our friendship may remain unbroken,
What if we leave the Epilogue unspoken?'

Mrs Bulkley: 'Agreed.'

Miss Catley: 'Agreed.'

Mrs Bulkley: 'And now with late repentance,
Un-epilogued the Poet waits his sentence.
Condemn the stubborn fool who can't submit
To thrive by flattery, though he starves by wit.'

3) This is the epilogue Colman though 'too bad to be spoken'. It is here reproduced from Balderston's Introduction. I have followed her practice of italicizing the lines which Percy excluded from the Collected Works (1801). The notes are Balderston's.

EPILOGUE - Mrs Bulkley

There is a place, - so Ariosto sings,
A Treasury for lost and missing things.
Lost human Wits have Places there Assign'd them,
And they who lose their Sense, there may find them,
But where's this place, this Storehouse of the Age?
The Moon, says he: but I affirm the Stage.

At least in many things I think I see
This lunar and our Mimic World agree
Both shine at night For but at Foote's alone
We scarce exhibit till the Sun goes down.
Both prone to change, no settled limits fix,
Tis said the folks of both are lunaticks.
But in this parallel my best pretence is
That mortals visit both to find their Senses.
To this strange spot Rakes, Macaronis, Cits,
Come thronging to collect their scattered Wits.
The gay Coquet, who ogles all the day,
Comes here by night, and goes a prude away.
The Gamester too, who eager in pursuit
Makes but of all his fortunes one va toute*
Whose Mind is barren, and whose words are few;
"I take the odds" - "Done, done, with you, and you,"
Comes here to saunter, having made his betts,
Finds his lost senses out, and pays his Debts.
The Mohawk too - with angry phrases stor'd
As "damme Sir" and "Sir I wear a Sword:"
Here lesoned for awhile, and hence retreating,
Goes out, affronts his man, and takes a beating.
Here come the Sons of Scandal and of News
But find no Sense - for they had none to lose.
The poet too-comes hither to be wiser,
And so for once I'll be the Man's Adviser.
What could he hope in this lord loving Age,
Without a brace of lords upon the Stage,
In robes and stars, unless the bard adorn us,
You grow familiar, lose respect, and scorn us.
Then not one passion, fury, sentiment,
Sure his poetick fire is wholly spent!
Oh how I love to hear applauses shower
On my fix'd attitude of half an hour (Stands in an Attitude)
And then with whining, staring, struggling, slapping,
To force their feelings and provoke their clapping.
Hither, the affected City Dame advancing
Who sighs for Opera's, and doats on dancing,
Who hums a favourite Air and spreading wide,
Swings round the room the Heinele of Cheapside,**
Taught by our Art her Ridicule to pause on
Quits the Che faro *** and calls for Nancy Dawson.

*Percy changed to read: The gamester, Too, whose wit's all high or low,
Oft risks his fortune on one desperate throw.

** C.f. the lines in the accepted epilogue:

Doats upon dancing and in all her pride
Swims round the room, the Heinel of Cheapside.

*** Changed by Percy to "ballet" probably because of the line's close
resemblance to the line in the accepted epilogue:

And quits her Nancy Dawson for Che Faro.

Of all the tribe here wanting an Adviser
Our Author's the least likely to grow wiser,
Has he not seen how you your favours place
On Sentimental Queens, and Lords in lace;
Without a Star, a coronet or Garter,
How can the piece expect, or hope for Quarter.
No high-life scenes, no sentiment, the creature
Still stoops among the low to copy Nature.
Yes, he's far gone. And yet some pity mix
The English Laws forbid to punish Lunaticks.

4) This is the epilogue by Joseph Cradock which 'came too late to be spoken'. It is included in most printed texts of the play. It is here reproduced from Cradock's Memoirs, this being the only unabridged version. It includes a number of references to characters who do not appear in the play and this has been taken as evidence that Cradock saw the play in its original, unpruned state, (See Balderston's Introduction for full discussion).

ADDRESS,
IN THE CHARACTER OF TONY LUMPKIN.

Well, the Play ended, and my comrades gone,
Pray what becomes of mother's n'only son;
A hopeful blade! in town I'll fix my station,
And cut a dashing figure through the nation;
Turn Author, Actor, Statesman, Wit, or Beau,
And stalk the Hero of the "Puppet Show."*
Could I but gain some present firm support,
I'd quickly barter Country Ale for Port
No "Piety in Pattens," I renounce her;
Off in a crack, and carry big Bet Bouncer;
Bill Bullet now can drive a roaring trade
And picks up Countesses in Masquerade,
Walks round the new Great-room** with Dukes and Peers;
And swears he'll never balk his country jeers;
Nay, more, they much admires his lounging gait,
And talks to him as to the Lords of State.-
And there's my Comrade too that lived o'th'hill,
Odzooks! he quite forgets his father's mill;
Says he was born to figure high in life,
And gets in keeping by a Nabob's wife.

* Alluding to Foote's [Cradock's note]

** Pantheon [Cradock's note]

Why should not I then in the world appear?
I soon shall have a thousand pounds a year;
What signifies below what men inherit?
In London, there they've some regard for merit.

Mother still talks "of larning, " "modes refin'd;"
They're all for making mince-meat of my mind.
I'll no such stuff; for after all their strife
'Tis best, what haps, in lottery and in life.

I'm off - the horses scamper through the streets,
And big Bet Bouncer bobs to all she meets;
To every Race- to Pastimes every night,
Not to the Plays, (they say) it been't polite;
To Sadler's Wells, perhaps, or Operas go;
And once perchance to th'Roratorio.

Then Bet herself, shall sit at top o'th table;
She manages the house, and I the stable;
The rest o'th'time we'll scamper up and down,
And set the fashions too, to half the town;
Frequent all auctions, money ne'er regard;
Buy pictures like the Great, ten pounds a year;
Idzooks! we'll make these London gentry say,
We know what's high genteel as well as they.

5) This is the epilogue, described by Goldsmith as 'mawkish', which was used in the performances. Goldsmith wrote it himself as a last attempt to please both the actresses as the manager. It is here reproduced from the Friedman edition.

Well, having stoop'd to conquer with success,
And gain'd a husband without aid from dress,
Still as a Bar-maid, I could wish it too,
As I have conquer'd him to conquer you:
And let me say, for all your resolution.
That pretty Bar-maids have done execution.
Our life is all a play, compos'd to please,
'We have our exits and our entrances'.
The first act shews the simple country maid,
Harmless and young, of ev'ry thing afraid;
Blushes when hir'd and with unmeaning action,
I hopes as how to give you satisfaction.
Her second act displays a livelier scene, -
Th'unblushing Bar-maid of a country inn,
Who whisks about the house, at market caters,
Talks loud, coquets the guests, and scolds the waiters.

Next the scene shifts to town, and there she soars,
The chop-house toast of ogling connoisseurs.
On 'Squires and Cits she there displays her arts,
And on the gridiron broils her lover's hearts -
And as she smiles, her triumphs to compleat,
Even Common Councilmen forget to eat.
The fourth act shews her wedded to the 'Squire,
And Madam now begins to hold it higher;
Pretends to taste, at Operas cries caro,
And quits her Nancy Dawson, for Che Faro.
Doats upon dancing, and in all her pride,
Swims round the room, the Heinel of Cheapside:
Ogles and leers with artificial skill,
Till having lost in age the power to kill,
She sits all night at cards, and ogles at spadille.
Such, thro' our lives, the eventful history --
The fifth and last act still remains for me,
The Bar-maid now for your protection prays,
Turns Female Barrister, and pleads for Bayes.

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