



## Role-Playing, Witty Language, and Woman's Agency in Oliver Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer*

**Kawa Othman Omer Ahmed**

[kawa.ahmad@univsul.edu.iq](mailto:kawa.ahmad@univsul.edu.iq)

Department of Translation, College of Languages, University of Sulaimani, Sulaimani, Kurdistan Region, Iraq

### Abstract

Oliver Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer* has been widely considered by critics as one of the most significant comedies in England's 18<sup>th</sup> Century. Its popularity is due to the dramatist's cunning use of satire and humour as artistic means of entertainment. Noticeably, critics mostly have focused on the aesthetic values of the dramatist's use of satire and humour. However, this research provides a new reading, particularly the significance of the heroine's bodily and linguistic role-playing. Firstly, the research investigates the extent the heroine's role-playing enables the male protagonist to undergo personality change from a reserved and anti-social into a more tolerant and open-minded personality. Secondly, the research investigates the extent the heroine's witty rhetoric, together with her role-playing, exposes patriarchal misconceptions, biases, and prejudices about women and marriage by the authoritarian figures. Notably, the easiness through which the heroine changes identities and social roles, symbolically, throws into question the fixability and naturalness of social roles in the play. Symbolically, the heroine's performative acts of role-playing, whether bodily or linguistically, confirms postmodern feminist's theory, particularly Third -Wave Feminism, with regard to constructiveness and performativity of gender and identity. Methodologically, the research applies Close-reading approach; that is, New Criticism, as well as Feminist approach. Moreover, the research is significant because it investigates the co-relation between the heroine's role-playing and her quest for selfhood.

**Key Words:** Disguise, Role-Playing, Test, Generation, Agency.

## رۆلبنین، زمانی ژیرانه و خودگه‌ری ئافره‌ت له درامای "چه‌میوه‌ تا سه‌رکه‌وی" ئۆلیفه‌ر گۆلدسمیس

کاوه عثمان عمر احمد

به‌شی وه‌رگیران، کۆلیژی زمان، زانکۆی سلێمانی، هه‌رێمی کوردستان، عێراق

### پوخته

درامای "چه‌میوه‌ تا سه‌رکه‌وی" ی نوسه‌ری ئینگیزی ئۆلیفه‌ر گۆلدسمیس له لایه‌ن ره‌خنه‌گرانه‌وه به‌یه‌کێک له‌ گرنگترین شانۆی سه‌ده‌ی هه‌ژده‌یه‌م پێناسه‌ ئه‌کری. ئه‌وه‌ی جێی سه‌رنجه‌ که‌ ره‌خنه‌گران زیاتر له‌ هه‌رشتێکی تر گرنگیان داوه به‌ زمانی گالته‌ئامیزی درامه‌که‌. به‌لام ئه‌م توێژینه‌وه‌یه‌ خۆینده‌وه‌یه‌کی نوێیه‌ بۆ دراماکه‌، به‌ تایبه‌تی گرنگی رۆلبنینی پالّه‌وانه‌ ئافره‌ته‌ که‌ هه‌م له‌ لایه‌ن زمانه‌وانی و هه‌م جه‌سته‌یی. خالی یه‌که‌م، ئه‌م توێژینه‌وه‌یه‌ سه‌رنج ئه‌خاته‌ سه‌ر زمانی پالّه‌وانه‌ که‌ له‌ ئاشکراکردنی بیرو را هه‌له‌کانی سیسته‌می باوکسالاری ده‌رباره‌ی ئافره‌ت و هاوسه‌رگیری له‌و سه‌رده‌مه‌دا. لێره‌دا سه‌رنج زیاتر له‌ سه‌ر رۆلبنینی که‌ سایه‌تیه‌ جیاوازه‌کانه‌ که‌ له‌ لایه‌ن پالّه‌وانه‌ ئافره‌ته‌ که‌ وه‌ نمایش ئه‌کری که‌ به‌شیوه‌یه‌کی ته‌نزامیز هه‌موو رۆله‌ کۆمه‌لایه‌تیه‌کانی ئافره‌ت له‌و سه‌رده‌مه‌دا ئه‌خاته‌ ژێر پرسیاره‌وه‌. خالی دوهم، رۆلبنینی هه‌مه‌چه‌شنه‌و جیاواز له‌ لایه‌ن پالّه‌وانه‌ ئافره‌ته‌ که‌، ئێتر رۆلبنینی زمانه‌وانی یان جه‌سته‌یی بێت له‌ سه‌ر شانۆ، بیردۆزه‌ کانی فیمینیسیت، به‌ تایبه‌تی پۆستمۆدێرن فیمینیسیت، ده‌رباره‌ی که‌ سایه‌تی و جێنده‌ر ئه‌سه‌لمێنێ. کۆتا خالی گرنگی ئه‌م توێژینه‌وه‌یه‌ ئاشکراکردنی په‌یوه‌ندی نێوان رۆلبنینی ئافره‌ته‌ پالّه‌وانه‌ که‌، زمانه‌وانی یان جه‌سته‌یی، له‌ به‌دییه‌نانی خودی خۆی.

**کلیله‌ وشه‌کان:** خۆگۆڕین، رۆلبنین، تاقیکردنه‌وه‌، نه‌وه‌، خودگه‌ری.

### Introduction

Oliver Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer* (1771) was popular on the 18<sup>th</sup> century English stage and is still occasionally performed in modern times because of the play's witty language and important themes. The dramatist uses subtle satire and humour as effective means to ridicule and criticise society's vices, shortcomings and false manners of the age. With Richard Brinsley Sheridan, the dramatist contributed in reviving the 'Comedy of

Manners', which can be defined as a comedy which satirizes the trivial manners of the aristocratic class. In his Essay *On the Theatre*, Goldsmith called the sentimental comedy that had come to dominate the British stage "a false tragedy", unworthy of the name comedy (Dupre, 2008, 151). Oliver Goldsmith and other leading playwrights of the era opposed the sentimental style of Restoration drama for a variety of reasons. Whereas sentimental comedy "aimed at producing tears rather than laughter", comedy of manners claim to "be critical of the licentious manners of a hypocritical society (Ibid). In contrast to 'sentimental comedy', Oliver Goldsmith produced a different kind of comedy which he called "Laughing Comedy" (Ibid). Noticeably, the "Laughing Comedy" has its historical root in "plays written in a satirical tradition of Terence and Moliere" whose comedies trivialized and mocked the vices of "low" characters in comedies (Burney, 2002, 316). Goldsmith's main objection of the 'Sentimental Comedy', as some critics have indicated, was its lack of "a critical component" (Clark, 2007, 126). Noticeably, Goldsmith's comedies, are more critical in dealing with social issues than sentimental comedies. As the research explains, there is implicit criticism in Goldsmith's comedy which is delivered through the heroine's witty linguistic style and role-playing. Artistically, the dramatist blended humorous features with serious critical messages in his comedies. Comic features in his comedies, for instance, are either provoked through witty and humorous dialogues or either through multiple dramatic confusions and misunderstandings among the conflicting characters. The female protagonist, as the current research demonstrates, plays essential role in resolving major confusions and misunderstanding in the play. So, one of the core issue the research tries to investigate is the extent the heroine's witty language and role playing contribute in resolving the play's major confusions. Notably, the research employs New Criticism and Feminist approaches in its analysis. Moreover, the research investigates the extent the heroine's logical reasoning and cross dressing assist her in her quest of individuality.

### Inter-generational Clash and Conflicts

The play mainly reflects on important social issues such as inter-generational conflicts and the decline of the parental authority through contrasts among various conflicting characters. As a typical example of authoritarian figures, both Mr. Hardcastle and Mrs. Hardcastle hold unrealistic views about social conventions, customs and manners. Their first exchange of speeches reveals the extent they are deluded by false appearances. Mrs. Hardcastle in the very beginning of the play complains about her living situation. As she describes it, the mansion resembles nothing else but "an old rambling mansion, that looks

for all the world like an inn”, and they “never see company” (1. 1.11-13). In contrary, Mr. Hardcastle in a nostalgic tone expresses his affection for “everything that’s old: old friends, old times, old manners, old books, old wine, “and “old wife” (1. 1.18-19). Nonetheless, as the play proceeds, it becomes evident that both parental figures are mistaken in their opinions and judgments. They represent old-fashioned authoritarian figures who try to impose their will upon their children’s choices. Mrs. Hardcastle on her part arranges a scheme to forge a marital union between her son and Constance Neville since the latter has inherited a good deal of fortune. Though Tony rejects the arranged marriage, Mrs. Hardcastle nonetheless forces him to undergo such marriage for economical and financial reasons. Moreover, Mrs. Hardcastle’s greed to take hold of Miss Neville’s fortune also affects the Hasting’s destiny who is in fact Miss Neville’s genuine lover. Thus, fortune and wealth play a crucial role in securing successful marriages according to the authoritarian parents. For instance, when Mr. Hardcastle laments Tony’s uneducated and ill-mannered personality, Mrs. Hardcastle replies that “Tony Lumpkin has a good fortune, and that is why he “is not to live by his learning” ( 1. 1. 33-34). To release himself from the ruthless parental bondage, Tony hatches multiple cunning schemes and trickeries. The conflict between Tony and his parents, particularly Mrs. Hardcastle, represents an example of inter-generational conflict. Similarly, the conflict between Kate and Mr. Hardcastle represents another example of intergenerational conflict. A typical example of the old fashioned patriarchy, Mr. Hardcastle desperately tries to impose his will upon his daughter. He complains that “the fashion of the times have almost infected her too” (1. 1. 83-84), since she has changed her costume and attitude in the household. Through father-daughter conflict, the dramatist critically reflects on the drastic changes which affected English society during that era such as the decline of parental authority over children, as well as the new generation’s aspiration for more liberty. “Noticeably, the decline of parental authority over children has often been attributed to quick technical development” in England during the Industrial revolution” ( Ossowska, 2016, 46).

Ironically, there is a contrast between Mr. Hardcastle and Mrs. Hardcastle as to how to deal with the younger generation. Ironically, Mr. Hardcastle’s attitude towards his daughter is more humane than Mrs. Hardcastle’s attitude towards her son. Despite his reserved and conservative ideas, Mr Hardcastle has given his daughter a margin of freedom in the household. To a certain degree, he is less reserved in his opinions than that of Mr. Hardcastle. Somehow, he is more willing to accept Kate’s ideas and opinions that are quite different to his own. Mr Hardcastle’s more liberal and reconciling attitude is evident in the agreement upon which Kate has been given permission “to dress ‘in her’ own manner during the day, and in the evening”, she “puts on (her) own housewife’s dress to please (her) father” (1. 1.91-92). The agreement significantly lays the ground for mutual

understandings in the future between Kate and her father, particularly when he tells her that he has “chosen” for her “a young gentleman” from “town”. (1. 1.96-97). Mr Hardcastle’s lenient attitude is evident when he assures Kate that he “will never control” her “choice”. Even the semi-arranged marriage becomes a subject matter of humorous discussions through which Kate “and her father negotiate from a position of mutual agreement about her arranged marriage” (Swindells, 2014, 361).

Another example of inter-generational conflict is evident when Sir Charles attempts to forge a marital union between his son Marlowe and Kate. Marlowe, as an example of the new generation, implicitly expresses his discontent with the prospect of marrying upon his father’s choice. Hastings, having an independent personality, finds Marlowe’s dilemma quite amusing. When Hastings questions Marlowe ‘how can you ever expect to marry!’, Marlowe desperately, and in a sarcastic tone replies: “Never, unless, as among kings and princes, my bride were to be courted by proxy. If, indeed, like an eastern bridegroom, one were to be introduced to a wife he never saw before, it might be endured.” (Cordner, 2008. 2. 1.108-111). Marlowe’s speech displays Marlowe’s helplessness in choosing his future bride since everything has already been arranged by his authoritarian father. Moreover, the speech implies that Marlowe views marital courtship more like a social ritual than genuine emotional attachment. Symbolically, the play delivers an implicit satire against the arranged marriage at that age since courtship and marriage were parts of social rituals to be performed by young people merely to satisfy authoritarian parents. Moreover, the social ritual of the arranged marriage in the play is satirized in an exchange of speech in which Hastings questions Marlowe how he would ‘behave to the lady’ at the request of ‘his’ father’, for which he replies sarcastically, “As I behave to all other ladies. Bow very low -answer yes, or no, to all her demands; but for the rest I don't think I shall venture to look in her face till I see my father's again”. (Ibid, 2. 1.117-119). Marlowe’s speech demonstrates that he regards the marital conventions no more than a trivial ceremony. That concept is reflected in the first meeting between Marlowe and Kate in which he displays extremely reserved and shy personality. Marlowe’s a split personality becomes more evident during the next meetings. The conflict between two different generations bring the play into its tense turning point. Here, Kate plays essential’ role in causing changes in Marlowe’s personality, as well as causing a radical change in old generation’s mentality.

### **Woman’s Struggle against Patriarchy**

The first meeting between Kate and Marlowe, symbolically, reflects on class and gender issues. It also represents an example of inter-generational conflict. Most of the play’s main

plot, interestingly, centres around the conflicted opinions between Mr Hardcastle and Kate about how to judge Marlowe's personality. To Mr. Hardcastle, young Marlowe represents an idealistic suitor because, as he describes him, "young, brave" and "very generous" (Cordner, 2008, 1. 1.112-114 ). Moreover, he has "been bred a scholar", and "with great "accomplishments" (Ibid, 1. 1.108-109). What makes Marlowe more favourable to Mr. Hardcastle is his reserved personality, as he puts it, he is "one of the most bashful and reserved young fellows in all the world" (Ibid, 1. 1.119-120). . Whereas Kate finds some of Marlowe's qualities quite appealing, she nonetheless expresses real concern at other qualities, particularly his reserved and bashfulness, "a reserved lover" as she describes it, "always makes a suspicious husband" (Ibid, 1. 1.122-123). The difference of opinions between Kate and her father reflects a change of perceptions about class and manners between different generations.

The play symbolically reflects on changes in views about gentlemanly manners among aristocratic young men. Notably, Mr Hardcastle's assertion of having a timid and reserved suitor for his daughter is a symbolic projection of those stereotypical norms and manners expected to be displayed by young aristocratic gentleman of that age. During that era, qualities such as 'reserved, self-control, impudence, timidity, self-discipline and bashfulness were praised as true representations of a good-mannered young English aristocrat. In contrast, qualities such as 'sentimentality, unreserved, and 'bashfulness' regarded as socially unfavourable, and as "challenges to aristocratic masculinity" (Arab, 2011, 17). Whereas Mr Hardcastle considers the suitor's reservedness for the meaning of 'virtue' and 'modesty', Kate nonetheless interprets the word for the lack of sociability; and worse of all, arrogance and hypocrisy.

contrary to Mr Hardcastle's judgmental and hasty character, Kate wisely calculates every move and thinks reasonably before taking any decision. This is clear when she replies to Mr Hardcastle's suggestion that there might be a slight possibility the new suitor might not take her as his future bride, for which she replies: "well if he refuses, instead of breaking my heart at is indifference, I'll only break my glass for its flattery, set my cap to come newer fashion, and look out for some less difficult admirer" (Cordner, 2008, 1. 1.133-136). Moreover, Kate displays wisdom, reason and humility in judging Marlowe's personality. For instance, she shows patience and refrains herself from making hasty decision about Marlowe's character after hearing Constance's description of the suitor's double personality: " Among women of reputation and virtue, he is the modest man alive, but his acquaintance give him a very different character among creatures of another stamp" (Ibid, 1. 1.164-167). She does not reject the suitor immediately because she believes Marlowe's unfavourable characteristics are not so grave and can "be cured" (Ibid, 1. 1.143). For this purpose, she sets up a plan to test Marlowe through a direct conversation. Her reasonable

attitude is in clear contrast with Mr. Hardcastle's judgmental personality. Such contrast will be more evident during the direct meeting between Kate, as a high-class woman, and Marlowe.

### **Kate's Testing of the Male Lover**

During the first meeting with Marlowe, Kate talks and acts according to social conventions and rituals of high-class society. Upon such conventions, a young woman ought to demonstrate humility and display virtue of a modest high-class woman whenever courted by a young aristocratic gentleman. This is apparent in the first meeting in which Kate acts and talks like a high-class young lady while Marlowe acts like an aristocratic young gentleman. Ironically, the young gentleman appears confused and looks extremely bashful. Unlike Marlowe's reservedness and timidity, Kate is talkative and initiates most of the talking. Marlowe blames his own upbringing for his extreme bashfulness and timidity as he has "kept little company, and has "been but observer upon life." (Ibid, 2. 1.389-390). This is the reason, as he puts it, that he can "converse only with the more grave and sensible part of the sex" (Ibid, 2. 1.419-420); clearly, an implicit reference to high class women. The wooing scene in the first act of the play provides a subtle satire of the courtly love convention. In such convention, the female lover becomes a silent, somehow passive object, of the male lover's romantic intend. In other words, Kate in the wooing scene does not represent "the entrenched trope of the idealized, unobtainable, and silent lady of courtly love convention." (McKendry, 2019, 126). Contrary to Marlowe's silent and bashful personality, Kate talks boldly and cunningly enquires about the suitor's double personality. Marlowe cannot express himself properly and he compares his bashfulness and anxiety in the company of high class women to "disease of the mind" (Ibid, 2. 1.426). Kate sarcastically blames the "age of hypocrisy" (2. 1. 439), for as she explains: "there are few that do not condemn in public what they practice in private, and think they pay every debt to virtue whey they praise it." (Ibid, 2. 1.445-447). Marlowe bewildered by Kate's witty replies, and he can't justify his bashful manners, and "he can't help observing." (Ibid, 2. 1. 432).

Throughout the interview, Marlow struggles to explain what he means by the word "observing". He reiterates the word 'observing' on multiple occasion, and as he puts it, he can't explain "what (he) was going to observe". (2. 1.437). Kate wittingly reiterates the word 'observing' whenever Marlowe faces difficulty in expressing his feeling. It means Marlowe focuses more than anything else on observation than directly expressing his feelings. Here, Goldsmith delivers implicit criticism at prevalent social beliefs that are commonly held by high class society which gives reason and knowledge superiority over

emotion and sentimentality. To Marlowe, in other word, excessive feeling and too much sentimentality are unnecessary faculties for a man of reason like himself. Historically, the word 'observing' has been associated with reason and knowledge, and to some extent, refrainment from excessive indulgence in sentiment. Within the historical context, privileging reason over sentimentality has a historical root in western civilization. Enlightenment in Europe's 18th century, specifically, "stressed the supreme importance of science, knowledge, reason, method, objectivity, logic, impersonal observation and experiment" (Maxwell, 2017, 17). By implication, Goldsmith's play satirically reflects on many ideas that were prevalent during that age such as the superiority of reason over emotion or logic over passion. Many thinkers at that age emphasized the significance of critical thinking and logical enquiries in understanding the world, and even human relationship. Central to contemporaries' interests and work was their belief that the application of critical reason based on careful observation of the world (Ibid). This line of thinking has been criticized by feminist critics since it legitimizes and propagates the dichotomies based on "public/ private, male/ female and reason/ nature", and logic/ emotion. There is philosophical root for this line of thinking which privileges reason and logical observation over feelings and sentimentality: "Plato used the categories reason/ emotion and universal/ particular; for Hegel and Rousseau public/ private, male/ female and reason/ nature proved useful." (Maclaren, 2013, 4). Based on this categorizations, logic and reason were associated with maleness whereas excessive emotion and too much sentimentality have been associated with effeminateness.

Within England's 18th century context, the dramatist criticizes prevalent social beliefs which gives superiority of logic and reason over affection and feeling. The dramatist specifically criticizes the "Enlightened point of view that the emotions can be defined as dangerously feminine and detrimental to social progress" (Schlaeger, 1999, 100). Noticeably, feminist critics constantly criticized western dichotomous categories which privileged logic over feeling because such notion, as they argue, "operate in a way that privileges one of each pair so that, for example, reason, mind, and male are deemed superior to emotion, body and female." (Maclaren, P.4). By implication, the play reflects on a growing sense of fear and anxiety, particularly among high class society, with regard to young generation's adoption of "foreign costumes" and manners such as excessive indulgence in luxury and too much sentimentality which accordingly undermined superior class's prestigious status. Not surprisingly, effeminacy in the early eighteenth century had become associated, at least for the bourgeois, with the aristocracy, a class that adopted "foreign" customs, weakening essential Englishness (Qtd in Winkler, 2006, 180). By implication, Marlowe's assertion of 'observation' stems from a patriarchal value system which privileges logical observation over feeling, reason over sentiment, and consequently



masculinity over femininity. Such prevalent social beliefs about superiority of reason over feeling is deeply rooted in aristocratic culture. Marlowe as true representation of his class refrains himself from displaying the sentimental side of his character. Kate takes upon herself the task of curing Marlowe from his timidity and bashfulness. This will be evident when she stoops to low-class woman's status just to examine how Marlowe reacts and behaves accordingly.

### **Impersonating a Lower-Class Maid**

The first meeting reveals Marlowe's split personality. Through her wit, Kate notices Marlowe's excessive bashfulness which prevents him from revealing his true personality. Contrary to Marlowe's unawareness of his double personality, Kate consciously plays by the role she assigns for herself. To cure Marlowe's malady, Kate sets up a cunning scheme which requires her to shift roles and play different personalities. She nonetheless develops some affection for Marlowe regardless of his bashfulness. As she describes him, "he has good sense, but then so buried in his fears, that it fatigues one more than ignorance" (Ibid, 2. 1. 471-472). Marlowe in the second meeting becomes less confused when he converses with Kate as she impersonated lower class woman. During the previous meeting with Kate, he could not express himself properly due to his bashfulness. This was due to the rigid patriarchal upbringing which prevented him from establishing a healthy relationship with the opposite gender. Symbolically, there is a co-relation between class and identity. In a way, he suffers from identity crisis as he could not express himself freely or even decides upon his own choice. However, Marlowe finds it easy to converse with lower class maid since he feels liberated from the patriarchal constraints which prevented him from conversing with high-class aristocratic ladies. Marlowe's conflicting manners cause a rift between Kate and Mr. Hardcastle. Each one of them has a totally different perception about Marlowe's personality. Mr. Hardcastle observed so many unfavoured traits and characteristics by Marlowe and determined to dismiss him from his house. Kate, however, feels there is still a chance to find more about Marlow's personality before judging him. The two opposite perspectives can be outlined in the following exchange of speeches:

Kate : He met me with a respectful bow, a stammering voice, and a look fixed on the ground.

Mr. Hardcastle He met me with a loud voice, a lordly air, and a familiarity that made my blood freeze again.

Kate .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 the room with a bow, and, madam, I would not for the world detain you:

Mr. Hardcastle. He spoke to me as if he knew me all his life before. Asked twenty questions, and never waited for an answer. Interrupted my best remarks with some silly pun, .( Ibid, 3. 1.40-51).

Mr. Hardcastle, as true representative of a class which values social manners and decorum, judges Marlowe's personality upon his manners. He tells Kate that Marlowe's "first appearance has done" his "business", (3. 1.67) and proudly asserts that he is "seldom deceived in that". (1. 1.389-390). That is why he decides dismissing Marlowe as a suitor. Contrary to Mr Hardcastle's judgmental character, Kate does not judge Marlowe by his appearance. Instead, she suggests a conciliatory solution. Kate cunningly persuades her father to give her more time to prove that Marlowe has a noble personality beyond his impudent manners. Accordingly, Mr Hardcastle would accept Marlowe as a suitor should he exhibits less "impudent and more respectful" (3. 1.62-63). Notably, Kate's "art of reconciling contradiction" (3. 1.78) would provide her with an opportunity to prove Mr Hardcastle's false judgment.

After securing a deal with her father to test Marlowe's personality, Kate sets up a new scheme for the next meeting with Marlowe. She is determined to keep "Marlowe in the state of "delusion" (3. 1.26-27). Marlowe's bashfulness prevented him from seeing Kate's face, which gives her the privilege to play another personality without being recognized by Marlowe. Remarkably, Kate stoops voluntarily and "with her own free will just to reveal the other side of Marlowe's personality" (McCord, 1995, 134). Symbolically, Kate's role-playing as a lower-class woman can be viewed as an act of self-hood since it marks a playful disruption of her current social class. Kate's role-playing, moreover, offers Marlowe a sense of security to reveal the other side of his character. This is evident when Kate describes her reason for playing a different role:

In the first place I shall be seen, and that is no small advantage to a girl who brings her face to market. But my chief aim is, to take my gentleman off his guard, and, like an invisible champion of romance, examine the giant's force before I offer to combat. (Ibid, 3. 1.239-245)

By acting as lower-class maiden, Kate wittingly lures Marlowe into an open conversation, knowing that on certain occasion he displays personality traits quite opposite to his former personality. Contrary to previous meeting, Marlowe's manners and linguistic style are quite different. Instead of displaying humility and acting like honourable, modest and upright gentleman, Marlowe acts rudely and so often uses vulgar language. Wittingly, Kate uses her verbal skill to enable Marlowe to express his feelings freely. Mistaking Kate for a lower-class bar maid, he starts flirting and praising her beauty. As the dialogue between the two characters proceeds, Kate uses her cunning verbal skill to encourage Marlowe to express his feelings, for which she reminds him of his contradictory manners:

I'm sure you did not treat Miss Hardcastle that was here a while ago in this obstrepalous manner. I'll warrant me, before her you looked dashed, and kept bowing to the ground, and talked, for the world, as if you were before a justice of peace. (Ibid, 3. 1. 303-307)

Kate's witty linguistic style encourages Marlowe to confess that he was not sincere enough in his previous meeting: "I laughed, and rallied her a little, but I was unwilling to be too severe" (3. 1.310-311). Then, Kate wittingly takes advantage of Marlowe's openness and encourages him to talk more freely as he proudly boasts that he had been "a great favourite "among the ladies" (3. 1.315). Here, Marlowe's open and unreserved talking, even rude manners, carry significant implications, for it shows how high class people during that era, particularly aristocracy, so often broke conventional moral rules and acted in hypocritical way. The dramatist, through Marlowe's contradictory sides of personality, critically reflects on the hypocrisy and double standard of high class people, or as Kate names it the "hypocritical age" where "there are few that do not condemn in public what they practice in private" (2. 1.445-447).

Within the historical context, Goldsmith in the this comedy delivers an implicit criticism at aristocracy's double morality in England's 18th Century since high class people followed "their own unacceptable separate code of morality, in which adultery took pride among several other vices." (Bailey , 2003, 143). Furthermore, the dramatist in the play not only delivers a hidden criticism at high class's double standard of morality, but also implicitly criticizes the legal institution of that era:

the privileged morality of the upper class, found its way in both legal legislations and social practices. Male adultery with servants and lower- class women was therefore

seen as normal, although some women protested the double standard. (Perrot, P.80,1992).

After Kate's second interview of Marlowe, a conflict of opinions come to arise between Mr. Hardcastle and his daughter about the suitor's contradictory manners. After seeing too much rudeness and unreserved manners by young Marlowe, Mr Hardcastle has decided to dismiss Marlowe from his household. He angrily tells his daughter that he had "expected a well-bred modest man, as a visitor, but now he finds him no better than a coxcomb and a bully" (4. 1.168-169). As the speech indicates, Mr Hardcastle is more concerned with the young man's manners than his true personality. Thus, his judgement is merely based on Marlowe's appearance than his true character. Contrary to her father, Kate thinks more logically and more cautious as to whether rejecting the suitor or not. She once again uses her witty linguistic skill to convince her father not to judge Marlowe hastily but rather giving him another chance: "But if I shortly convince you of his modesty, that he has only the faults that will pass off with time, and the virtues that will improve with age, I hope you'll forgive him". (4. 1.176-178). Kate's bravery has already caused a change in the manners and attitudes of both Marlowe and Mr. Hardcastle. The young suitor through his conflicting manners in two different situations has revealed that he suffers from identity crisis. As for Mr. Hardcastle, there is a chance that Kate would bring him into a state in which he would regret his misconceptions, prejudices and false opinions about gender roles. To bring both male characters into a state of self-realization, Kate sets up a cunning deceptive scheme which not only cures Marlowe from his split personality, but it also causes Mr. Hardcastle to overcome his prejudices and misconceptions about class and marriage. More importantly, Kate's attempt to reveal Marlowe's delusion is part of her own journey into individuality.

### **Male Lover's Path to Self- Awakening**

Marlowe becomes confused and bewildered when he realizes his own folly in mistaking Mr.Harcastle's household for an inn. Not only that, he had mistaken the owner of the household for an innkeeper. Upon such discovery, young Marlowe is determined to leave Mr Hardcastle's household. Kate, however, is determined to continue her witty scheme in testing Marlowe's personality because she thinks "it is too soon quite to undeceive him" (4. 1.177-178). Hence, she decides to keep him in a state of confusion for some time. To do so, she performs a quite different role from the past interview. She cunningly pretends "to be a poor relative who acts as a servant" (Morehead, 1963, 1095). Interestingly, the second interview between Marlowe and Kate reveals Marlowe's noble and gentle side of personality. The young suitor genuinely expresses his regret because he, as he remorsefully

explains, “mistook (her) assiduity for assurance, and (her) simplicity for allurements” (4. 1.205-206). On her part, Kate is impressed by Marlowe’s gentlemanly manners and considers his polite speech as a genuine sign of civility and gallant nobility. Nonetheless, Marlowe cannot fully express his true passion for Kate. This is mostly due to false opinions, misconceptions and prejudices he holds about lower-class women which so far prevented him from confessing his true passion:

The difference of our birth. Fortune and education, make an honourable connection 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. (4. 1.217-221).

Marlowe’s speech is significant for it reveals the extent he has changed due to Kate’s witty personality. Remarkably, Marlowe’s change of perception about lower class women is in stark contrast with what he had previously told Hasting about lower class woman in Mr. Hardcastle’s house: “there is nothing in this house, I shan’t honestly pay for.” (4. 1.52-53). Moreover, Marlowe in his speech reveals those factors such as ‘fortune’, ‘wealth’, and ‘education’ that would make any “honourable connection impossible” (Ibid). In doing so, Marlowe faces insoluble dilemma between his personal aspiration for liberty and parental obligations. This internal conflict within Marlowe’s character manifests itself through double personality. The dramatist, through Marlowe’s dilemma, reflects critically of the question of marriage, class and parental obligations in England’s 18<sup>th</sup> century. During that age, there were growing concerns with regard to social changes which had undermined parental authority over their children with regard to marriage and courtship. The rising tension between old patriarchal authority and new generation’s aspiration for more liberty turned into a tense subject matter of parliamentary debate in Mid-Eighteenth century. Hardwicke’s Marriage Act (1753), for instance, “made it a requirement to gain parental consent to marry under the age of twenty-one” (Crosbie, 2029, 140). During the Eighteenth Century, there were many social and cultural changes which drastically contributed in shifting perspectives with regard to parental authority:

The autonomy and individualism that was becoming a more common aspect of life facilitated a change toward marriage being a choice, something one entered into voluntarily and with a person of one’s own choosing. Affection and love became more important as the basis for the marriage, rather than the wishes of the family. The role of parents, relatives, and townspeople became less important as autonomy and individual choice became more important. (Rutherford, P. 29, 2010).

Symbolically, characters in Goldsmith's comedy such as Kate, Constance, Hastings and even Tony "need to be seen within the context of a more general undermining of patriarchal authority that was specific to the mid-eighteenth century" (Crosbie, 2020). Marlowe has little or no authority over whom he would choose to marry. His concern is more about class than finding true love. Unlike Marlowe, Kate's concern is not about class or fortune rather than her own happiness. Here, we can establish a similarity between Kate's role and Hasting's in the sub-plot. Both possess strong willed personalities as they challenge rigid patriarchal authorities represented by both Mr. Hardcastle and Mrs Hardcastle. Whereas Hasting struggles to release Constance from Mrs. Hardcastle's patriarchal scheme to undergo unwilling marital bondage with Tony, Kate struggles to release Marlowe from almost similar patriarchal bondage. The dramatist cunningly interconnected both major-sub plots according to major dramatic developments in the play. There is a difference between Tony and Kate, particularly their level of intelligence, yet both struggle to free themselves from parental bondages. Kate's progressive ideas about marriage and romance are reflected in her speeches with Marlowe about subjects of wealth and fortune. Contrary to young Marlowe, Kate is less concerned about parental authority, and pays little attention to wealth and fortune: " But I'm sure my family is as good as Miss Hardcastle's, and though I'm poor, that's no great misfortunate to contended mind, and, until this moment, I never thought that it was bad to want fortune". (4. 1.223-226). Kate's speech displays the progressive side of her character which contradicts common social conception and norms which privileged wealth and fortune over love and compassion. She openly declares that she values true individuality than material gains: "I have no fortune but my character". (4. 1.212-213). Here, Kate's progressive and humanistic ideas contradict Mr. Hardcastle's ideas which privilege class over love, or Mrs. Hardcastle's ideas which privilege wealth over true compassion. Moreover, Kate's above speech, brings into focus the significance of wealth and fortune in marriage settlements. Here, Goldsmith cleverly touches upon significant themes of class, marriage, gender and identity. Within the historical context, Kate's progressive ideas can be seen as a symbolic reflection of a new mode of thinking, particularly among educated women, concerning marriage, class and partnership in England's 18th century. Interestingly, Marriage settlements during that era, particularly among the elite, "looked increasingly like the signing of a business contract" and there were "financial implications" of every marriage contracts among high class society. In other words, marriage and partnership had been "used by the elite to cement political or social bonds and to enhance family wealth" (Tague, 2002, 37). By implication, any marriage settlement in the play, like the ones arranged by patriarchal figures such as Mr. Hardcastle, Mrs. Hardcastle and Sir Charles, ought to have taken into consideration the financial aspect of it. Historically, any marriage settlements, particularly "among the

nobility and gentry, it was expected that both the husband and wife would contribute to the family income, and that the woman would therefore bring with her a dowry commensurate with her husband's income" (Jordan, 2002, 25). Goldsmith's play, in a critical way, reflected on difficulties faced by young lovers at that time due to class and wealth. Beside Kate and Marlowe, Constance and Hastings in the sub-plot reach another level in their struggle to overcome the rigid constraints and restrictions imposed by patriarchal conventions since they cannot marry according their free wills. Interestingly, Tony's deceptive scheme against Mrs. Hardcastle comes parallel to Kate's scheme to deceive Marlowe and Mr. Hardcastle in the major plot.

### Multiple Tricks in Major-Minor Plots

Parallel to Kate's witty schemes to test Marlowe's personality in the major plot, Tony hatches another deceitful scheme against Mrs. Hardcastle in the Sub-Plot. Constance feels powerless against Mrs. Hardcastle's cruel scheme to marry Tony. Here, wealth and fortune play essential role in securing future marriage among the young generation. That is why Hasting agrees to Tony's scheme to run away with the stolen casket from Mrs. Hardcastle. Though the scheme fails, it indicates that the young people fully understand the value and wealth in securing their future marriages. If the scheme of stealing the casket had succeeded, it would certainly have affected Tony's fortune in marrying a working-class woman by the name Bet Bouncer. This implies that Tony, similar to Kate, does not pay much attention to wealth and fortune. Instead, he is more concerned with his own happiness than wishes of his parent. Though tricky, Tony possesses a strong-willed personality. Unlike Marlowe's indecisive personality, Tony boldly challenges the patriarchal authority. Tony realizes the value of wealth and fortune in securing marriages; that is why he hatches a deceptive scheme against his mother. He promises Hasting to take away Constance's fortune from his mother and deliver it back to the young lovers, hoping that it would make her mother abandon the prospect of getting him married to Constance. Yet, the casket scheme fails due to Marlowe's negligence as he unknowingly delivers the casket back to Mrs. Hardcastle through his servant. Mrs. Hardcastle's discovery of Tony's scheme further complicates Hasting and Constance plan for elopement. Structurally, the complication in the Sub-Plot would not be resolved unless the confusion in the Major-Plot is resolved. In a certain way, Tony and Kate share similarities as they both challenge parental authority. Through clever trickeries, Tony tries to avenge himself against Mrs. Hardcastle's inhumane treatment and degrading treatment. His trickeries, ironically, reveal Mrs. Hardcastle's greedy and arrogant personality. Kate, similarly, uses tricks to influence Mr. Hardcastle's opinions with regard to marriage and courtship. However, Kate is more rational and calculative in her scheming.

Both Kate and Tony separately in the play's final Act hatch two deceptive schemes to bring about changes of opinions in Mr Hardcastle's household. Mrs. Hardcastle has already set up a plan to punish Miss Neville by sending her away to a distant aunt. Tony cunningly deceives her mother through another villainous scheme. He takes her mother and Constance into supposedly the designated destination, while deceptively moving them around the house. In the meantime, Sir Charles Marlowe has arrived at Mr. Hardcastle's house. Fortune and wealth once again become a crucial issue during their discussion. Both gentlemen agree that the expected union between the two "families will make (their) personal friendship hereditary, even though (Kate's) fortune is but small" (5. 1.22-23). Mr. Charles' reply, nonetheless, provides assurance that Marlowe "possess of more than a competence already" (5. 1.225).

Contradictory opinions about Marlowe's manners, nonetheless, startle both Mr. Hardcastle and Sir Charles. As a result, Hardcastle calls Kate to clarify the confusing situation. Sir Charles is bewildered by what he hears from both Mr. Hardcastle and Kate about Marlowe's unreserved and impudent manners. He first questions Marlowe about Mr. Hardcastle's claim, and the young man apologizes for his prior "strange conduct" in the household by confusing Mr. Hardcastle for an inn keeper. As expected, Marlowe debunks Mr. Hardcastle's claim about the prospect of having or expressing any affection to Kate: "nothing has passed between us but the most profound respect on my side, and the most reserve on (Kate)'s side (5. 1.47- 48). In Contrary, Kate proclaims that Marlowe indeed expressed his "profession and affection". And they even had "several" interviews. (5. 1.91-94).

Ironically, both Kate and Marlowe have provided two truthful accounts of their meetings. Mistaking Kate for the first modest lady he had seen on the first occasion, Marlowe gives a truthful statement that he "never gave Miss Hardcastle the slightest mark of (his attachment)". Kate also tells the truth when she describes Marlowe's reserved side of personality on a certain occasion, while on other occasions, he sincerely did "profess" his "attachment" to her (5. 1.97). Sir Charles, on his part, re-asserts Marlowe's "modest and submissive" (5. 1.110) manners, and totally rejects Kate's claim about his son's "forward canting ranting manners" (5. 1.111). Sir Charles at first denies that Marlowe might have displayed an affectionate side of character because it contradicts his perception of him as a reserved and selfdisciplined gentleman. The dramatist through such dramatic complications critically reflects on the conflicting opinions about gentlemanly manners by young aristocrats in England during that era.



Within the historical context of England's 18th century, there were a growing sense of fear and anxiety among the English high class "of an aristocratic lack of masculine self-control, of excessive self-indulgence" (Schlaeger, 1999, 101). Such fear and anxiety over male aristocrat's manners were common among both intellectual and legal elites throughout Europe. "As critic J.G.A. Pocock explained in his book, *Virtue, Commerce and History*, "there was a fear of effeminateness, which might possibly undermine the emasculate vigorous societies" (Ibid). Consequently, lack of gentlemanly manners and effeminateness among young people were mostly viewed by the public as "negative marker" since "effeminacy generally connoted self-indulgence in luxury and unmanly behaviour" (Clark, 2013; 13). By implication, patriarchal figures in Goldsmith's play viewed Marlowe's display of sentimentality as negative social manners which might undermine the young man's current social status and his masculine identity; and consequently, a challenge to the patriarchal power and authority.

The conflicting opinions about Marlowe's manners causes a rift between Mr. Hardcastle and Sir Charles. This brings the play into its climax. The turning point occurs when Kate comes up with a witty scheme. The heroine once again proves herself to be wiser and wittier when she suggests a testing scheme to be played on Marlowe; upon which, should Marlowe display an affectionate side of character toward Kate, then Sir Charles would give his approval for any future marriage. On the other hand, should Marlowe display reserved manners and indifference towards Kate, as Sir Charles expects from his son, then the marital arrangement would be cancelled altogether. Kate's trick appeals to both gentlemen Mr. Hardcastle and Sir Charles. As a result, Mr Hardcastle and Sir Charles "place themselves behind the screen," (5. 1.115) and they "shall hear Marlowe declare passion to "her" in person" (5. 1.116).

### Disclosure of Truth Through Deception

The 'Screen Scene' brings the play into its climax. That scene is significant because it brings major confusions and misunderstandings in the major plot into solution. As recommended by Kate, both Mr. Hardcastle and Sir Charles hide themselves behind a screen, watching how Marlowe would behave once courted by Kate. The aim of the scene is to test Marlowe whether or not he would display his sentimental side of character. Like the previous meeting, Kate has "to pretend to be 'common' in order to win Marlowe's affection" (Smith, 2013, 130). Mistaking Kate for a lower-class maiden, Marlowe is very open in expressing his feelings for Kate. His first lines indicate the extent his personality has changed, as well as the extent he struggles controlling his affection for Kate: "Though prepared for setting out, I come once more to take leave/...know the pain I feel in the separation" (5. 1.8-10).

Kate, wittingly, tries to find out whether or not his compassion is genuine for which he outspokenly declares his deep feeling:

My very pride begins to submit to my passion. The disparity of education and fortune, the anger of a parent, and the contempt of my equals, begin to lose their weight; and nothing can restore me to myself but this painful effort of resolution. (5. 3.17-20).

The speech exhibits Marlowe's inner-conflict between his affection for Kate, and his obligation towards his parents and class. The speech identifies those forces such as wealth, rank and education that hinder him from expressing himself. Clearly, Kate has succeeded in changing Marlowe's personality but she thinks he has not yet overcome his prejudice and misconceptions about woman and love. She wittingly refutes Marlowe's claims about the importance of wealth, education and social rank by implicitly referring to her true personality: 'though my family be as good as (Marlowe), ... and my education, I hoped, not inferior' (5. 3.22-23). Moreover, Kate dismisses the idea that her personality and her worth be valued merely by 'wealth' and 'fortune'. She in fact demands to be viewed as equal, and she accepts nothing less than that. Marlowe finds Kate's witty reply confusing, and tries to assure her that he had never given 'fortune' a serious consideration, but it was Kate's personality which impressed him more than anything else: "fortune was ever my smallest consideration. Your beauty at first caught my eyes, for who could see that without emotion" (5. 3.30-32). Clearly, Marlowe's assurance falls short of the assurance Kate seeks, for she demands to be viewed equal than to be regarded 'inferior'. The scene brings into focus the contrast between appearance and reality. Sir Charles is 'amazed' at Marlowe's display of sentimental side of character since it contradicts his expectation of him as reserved and timid gentleman. He views his son's display of sentimentality of character as sign of weakness, lack of masculine self-control, and even ungentlemanly manner. Symbolically, Marlowe's display of sentimentality is a clear challenge to the norms and convention of his class.

### **Kate's Cunning Role-Playing in Major Plot**

The outcome of the 'Screen Scene' is significant because it leads to Marlowe's change of personality. Such a change would not have been possible without Kate's witty language and role-playing. Her role playing empowers the male lover and enables him to overcome his prior misconceptions about a lower class woman. Notably, the easiness through which the heroine changes her identity from aristocratic young lady into a lower-class maiden throw into question the feasibility of social roles as it implies the performativity and

constructiveness of these social roles. This aspect reaffirms the postmodern view of gender and social roles, particularly the 'the third-wave feminism of the 1990' which argued that gender and social categories are socially constructed. Judith Butler, among the leading figures, argued that gender and identity is "far from being set of fixed and stable values and roles assigned/imposed by society", is a "performance or role enacted by individuals" (Nayar, 2010, 91). According to Butler, "gender and its meaning is constructed through repeated performances" (Ibid). Not only that, social roles and identities are also not fixed and are constructed through repeated performances. As Judith Butler puts it: "Identity is performatively constituted by the very "expression" that are said to be its results" (Sunderland 2002, 26). By implication, Kate's multiple role-playing in Mr.Harcastle's household constitutes voluntary performative acts, throwing into question the fixability of women's social roles in the household. Most importantly, the heroine's acts of role-playing are subversive, for they challenge and debunk Marlowe's conception about women, specifically lower class woman, being inferior, non-intelligent and lacking honour. Notably, Kate not only displays great skill in shifting social roles or personalities but also in shifting her linguistic style, which ultimately assist her in her quest of individuality. Language, like gender, as postmodern feminist views it, is also constructed through repeated performances :

Language and gender are deeply interconnected. Every level of language is potentially filled with gendered meanings and implications, from the sounds of spoken languages to grammatical structures to larger stylistic features of language that communicate the speaker's gender or index gendered meanings. (Lepore, P. 299, 2024).

The play implicitly alludes to the fluidity of gender categories and the construction and woman's identity through Kate's role-playing. This is in accord with recent postmodern feminist theory about the constructiveness of woman's gender and identity. Judith Butler's groundbreaking book *Gender Trouble* (1990), for instance, outlines theoretical background about woman's gender being socially constructed. Godsmith's play , though implicitly, reflects on woman's fluid nature of gender and identity. On multiple occasions, Kate demonstrates her ability to shift her linguistic style whether as a high-class woman or as a lower-class maiden. Through bodily and linguistic role-playing, the heroine defies and subverts prevailing models of social roles of women in Mr.Hardcastle. The young gentleman does not expect to meet a virtuous and highly intelligent lower-class woman because it contradicts his mental conception of low-class woman. The final part of the exchange of speech is significant because it encourages Marlowe to clearly and without any hesitation declare his true affection for Kate. To further test Marlowe, Kate wittingly challenges Marlowe that his passion is 'transient, for which he assures her that his

compassion is rather everlasting, and he would never 'feel repentance' (5. 3.49) before winning her affection. Kate's reply, however, implies that Marlowe's assurances, somehow, lack sincerity since he has not yet displayed genuine compassion and willingness to view her equal beyond her social class: "Do you think I could ever submit to a connection, where I must appear mercenary, and you imprudent? Do you think I could ever catch at the confident dresses of a secure admirer?" (5. 3. 57-59). Here, Kate wittingly proves to Marlowe her worth as independent and 'virtuous' woman. Marlowe is amazed by Kate's witty reply, and in a dramatic move stoops in front of her. This symbolic act not only signals a radical change in Marlowe's personality but it also signifies Kate's successful path towards her individuality. The subversive aspect of Kate's shifting linguistic style takes its eventual effect when Marlowe gets too sentimental in front of a seemingly lower-class woman, and paradoxically, kneeling down in front of her: 'Does this look like security? Does this look like confidence?' (5. 3. 60-61). Here, Marlowe's kneeling act, symbolically, can be viewed as a symbolic projection of the transformation he underwent due to Kate's witty language as well as her cunning role-playing. He is no longer feels shame or hesitant in expressing his feeling freely. By stooping, symbolically, Marlowe proves that he had abandons rigid social status imposed upon him unwillingly through rigid class system and patriarchal conventions. The young lover no longer suffers from inward conflict and he is more decisive in deciding his own destiny. His decisiveness defies and challenges the patriarchal moral system upon which young lovers who were taught to suppress their true sentiment and affection. Both Mr. Hardcastle and Sir Charles surprised by Marlowe's unreserved manners and sentimental side of character. Sir Charles can no longer hide himself behind the screen, and angrily demands explanation: "is this your indifference, your uninteresting conversation" (5. 3. 65). Mr Hardcastle, on his part, takes this opportunity to sarcastically criticize seemingly Marlowe's two sides of character: "That (he) can address a lady in private, and deny it in public." (5. 3.71). A shocking revelation occurs when Kate reveals her true identity. In a speech filled with puns and sarcasm, Kate pokes fun at Marlowe's double personality; one who converses with woman: "as the mild, modest, sentimental man of gravity, and the bold forward agreeable rattle of the ladies" (5. 3.78-80). Kate's implicit criticism of Marlowe's split personality can be taken as symbolic attack on the double morality of the parental authority. Ashamed and confused, Marlowe expresses regret for prior misjudgment of woman and his ill-mannered behaviour. He openly and without fear from parental constraints asks Kate to marry him. Moreover, as a result of Kate's trick, Mr Hardcastle and Sir Charles acknowledge their mistake of judging Marlowe upon his manners, and they are more open to accept Marlowe and Kate as two free individuals who could decide their own destiny freely. Thus, the 'Screen Scene' eventually provides an opportunity for a better understanding between the old and new generations in the future.

The outcome of Kate's witty trick in the major plot, that is, her witty language and role-playing, would contribute in solving complications in the sub-plot. Mr Hardcastle and Sir Charles are now more willing to accept Hasting and Constance into the new community. The young couple already have abandoned the plan to elope, and they are now seeking the consent of the authoritarian figures. Mrs. Hardcastle no longer poses a threat against the young couple, but she tries desperately to hold grip on Mrs Nevielle's fortune by any means. She still has authority on Tony since he has not reached the age to decide for himself. Mr. Hardcastle nonetheless intervenes on behalf of the young couple and declares that Tony in fact has reached the age to decide for himself. In a symbolic gesture, both Mr Hardcastle and Sir Charles offer their approval and their blessing to young couples. Mr. Hardcastle tells the young lovers that he is "proud of the connection" (5. 3. 100).

Multiple marriage ceremonies at the play's final act marks a joyfully union among the conflicting characters which symbolically implies intergenerational reconciliation. The happy outcome would not have been possible without the heroine's witty linguistic style and role-playing. She in fact enabled Marlowe to undergo a change of personality and become courageous in expressing his feeling. Most importantly, she caused a drastic change in old generation's mentality represented by Mr.Hardcastle and Sir Charles. By implication, Kate's role-playing and witty language, exposed patriarchal misconceptions, biases, and prejudices about woman and marriage. Moreover, the heroine's witty language and role-playing were crucial for the heroine's empowerment and her quest for self-hood.

## Conclusion

Overall, Oliver Goldsmith had produced a different type of drama in which comic elements such as satire and humour are used for the purpose of addressing significant social issues such as intergenerational conflicts, marriage and woman's agency. The dramatist used multiple techniques and devices to deliver its aesthetic and moral messages such as dramatic confusions, disguise, and role playing. Notably, the female protagonist played essential role in resolving major confusions and misunderstandings in the play. Through witty language and role-playing, the heroine enabled the male protagonist to overcome his malady of dual personality stemmed from his conflicting behaviour with females of different social classes. This became evident at the end of the play when the male protagonist reached a state of self-realization and acknowledged his prior misconceptions and misjudgments about lower-class women. Not only that, the female protagonist's use of logical arguments and role-playing rectified the false opinions and

misconceptions the patriarchal figures had conceived about women, marriage, and young generation's aspiration for liberty. Noticeably, the easiness through which the female protagonist shifted linguistic style and identity has thrown into question the notion of fixability of woman's social roles in the play. This is in accord with postmodern feminist assumptions, particularly third-wave feminists, with regard to constructiveness and performativity of woman's gender and identity. The research is significant because it investigates the co-relation between the heroine's role-playing and her quest for selfhood. Moreover, the research will open possibilities for further investigations about the significance of the heroine's linguistic and bodily role-playing.

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