

UNIT III

SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER OLIVER GOLDSMITH

Summary

Oliver Goldsmith's play *She Stoops to Conquer* is a five-act play with a prologue and an epilogue. The play was first performed in 1773 in London.

Prologue

David Garrick a famous actor wrote the prologue intended to create something that different from other comedies. Goldsmith published an essay before authoring the play. He lamented that comedies had become too sentimental and moralistic and not concerned with making people laugh.

Act I

This act begins at the Hardcastle's home. Mrs. Hardcastle expresses her wish of going to the city. She tells her husband as a complaint that they never leave their home. Mr and Mrs Hardcastle wait for the arrival of Marlow, son of Charles Marlow one of Mr Hardcastle's friends. Marlow, a suitor to Mr Hardcastle's daughter Kate.

Kate dresses according to the wishes of her father in the evenings and in the mornings she dresses for her friends. Constance is in the care of Mrs. Hardcastle, the old woman. She has a plan of getting married of her son Tony Lumpkin to Constance but both Tony Lumpkin and Constance do not have a liking of each other. Constance has a beloved and he is also expected to come along with Marlow. Tony is introduced as a man of low living. This is proved when Marlow and Hastings arrive at the pub, lost on the way to Hardcastle's. Tony plays with them by telling that there is no room at the pub and they can find lodging at the old inn down the road meant to say that they can reach Hardcastle's home.

Act II

In this act Marlow and Hastings arrive at Hardcastle's home assuming that to be an inn as instructed by Tony Lumpkin (a trick played by Tony). Marlow and Hastings were rude to Hardcastle. Hardcastle expected Marlow to be young, polite man but shocked to see his behaviour. Constance meets Hastings and tells him that Tony must have played a trick. Both Constance and Hastings decide not to tell the truth because it would upset Marlow and ruin the trip. They decide to get the jewels from Mrs Hardcastle and elope together. Marlow speaks with exaggerated timidity to 'modest' women and speaks lively to a low class. During his first meeting with Kate he was unable to speak with her because she was dressed well and hence he did not speak well. Moreover Kate did not have any attraction towards him. She tried to bring out his true character. Tony and Hastings plan together to steal the jewels for Hastings and Constance so that he can get rid of his mother's persuasion of marrying Constance whom he doesn't love.

Act III

This act begins with Hardcastle and Kate confused on seeing Marlow's behaviour. Kate asks her father for a chance to prove him that Marlow is more than both believe. Tony has stolen the jewels but Constance unaware of this requests her aunt for the jewels. Tony persuades Mrs. Hardcastle to pretend as if they were stolen to dissuade Constance. Meanwhile Kate is mistaken as a bar maid by Marlow as she was in a plain dress and he shows attraction towards her. She decides to play the part and when both of them were speaking Mr. Hardcastle noticed that the odd behaviour of Marlow. Kate convinces her father for a night to prove that Marlow is an innocent respectful and lively.

Act IV

In this act Charles Marlow is on the way. If he arrives Hastings identity will be revealed to Hardcastle. He is the beloved of Constance and there arises the question of whether Kate and Marlow would marry or not. Hastings has sent the jewels to Marlow to keep it safe but Marlow without safeguarding it, he handed over it Mrs. Hardcastle for he still believes that Mrs. Hardcastle is the landlady of the inn. When Hastings came to know about this, he planned to elope with Constance. Marlow's behaviour made Hardcastle irritated and later on Marlow understood about everyone particularly about Kate and Mr Hardcastle.

Marlow started to love Kate but he was not able to continue because he thought that Kate belonged to a poor family and his father Marlow would not accept. Hastings and Constance decided not to elope because Mrs Hardcastle came to know about the plan. Marlow, Hastings and Tony blamed each other and argued for their failure of plan. Then Tony promised to help and solve the problem for Hastings.

Act V

In this act Marlow, Kate, Hardcastle, Hastings came to know the truth and all were happy. Sir Charles arrived and he along with Hastings laughed together over the confusion. Marlow realised his position and apologized for what has happened. But Mr Hardcastle enquired about Marlow's behaviour with Kate. Marlow tried to embrace her without knowing that it was Kate as he assumed that she was a barmaid. Kate and Marlow then proved themselves to everyone and they all agreed that Marlow and Kate could be a good match. Hastings and Constance decided not to elope and sought permission to marry. Tony decided not to marry Constance. Hastings and Constance were given permission to marry. All were happy except Mrs Hardcastle.

Epilogue

The performer playing Kate Hardcastle speaks the rhymed couplets in Epilogue I. The first line alludes to the play's title and refers to Jaques monologue in William Shakespeare's play As You Like It.

In Epilogue II the speaker uses couplets in the persona of Tony Lumpkin.

Essay

Oliver Goldsmith's play *She Stoops to Conquer* as an anti sentimental comedy set in the 18th century. The plot of the play tells about the conflict between parents who wish to arrange their children's marriages and children who have ideas of their own. The story is perhaps based on the personal experience of Goldsmith. He like young Marlow wandered into a private home mistook it for an inn, and began to order the owner about as if he was the proprietor of some hostelry. The play was originally entitled *Mistakes of a Night*, and it observes the classical unity of time with the story occupying less than a day. The scene in the *Three Pigeons* briefly violates the unity of place, while the Hastings, Constance sub plot violates the unity of action.

About the playwright

Oliver Goldsmith was born on November 10, 1730 and died on April 14 1734. He was an Anglo Irish essayist, poet, novelist, dramatist, and eccentric, made famous by such works as the series of essays 'The Citizen of the World or Letters from a Chinese philosopher' 1762, the poem *The Deserted Village* 1770, the novel *The Vicar of Wakefield* 1766 and the play *She Stoops to Conquer* 1773. The play *She Stoops to Conquer* has outlived almost all other English language comedies from the early 18th to the late 19th century by virtue of its broadly farcical horse play and vivid humorous characteristics. During his last decade Goldsmith's conversational encounters with

Johnson and other, his foolishness and his wit were preserved in Boswell's Life of Johnson.

Short Questions

1. What is the structure of the play She Stoops to the Conquer?
2. Whom do you call the hero of the play?
3. What are the different views on fashion of Mr and Mrs Hardcastle?
4. How does Kate dress in the morning and evening.
5. Comment on the Subtitle of the play.

UNIT IV (Detailed)

PYGMALION

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

Summary

The play Pygmalion opens with people standing at the portico of Saint Paul's Church in London at night. As it is raining people have taken shelter there. Among them is the lady; a mother Mrs.Hill and a daughter named Clara. Mrs Hill's son Freddy. had gone to fetch a cab but he couldn't get. He is asked again to search for a cab.As he rushes out he accidentally hits a flower girl Eliza, who is approaching towards the portico, and her flowers are thrown in the mud. She shouts loudly in her Cockney dialect.Mrs.Hill gives her six pence.

Colonel Pickering a military gentleman now walks in . Eliza requests him to purchase a flower. He gives her three pence. A passerby advises her to give him a flower because a police detective has been noting down whatever she was saying.She gets scared .The people all sympathize with her and the person who is taking notes is questioned why he was troubling her. That man is actually Mr Higgins a Professor of Phonetics. He had noted down the sounds of her cockney dialect in phonetic script, and he now tells her where she lives. He is capable enough to tell them where exactly they lived.He tells that the military gentleman studied at Cambridge University and then had gone to India.Higgins enquired the gentleman whether he knew Colonel Pickering who had specialised in Sanskrit dialects. He replied that he was Colonel Pickering. Higgins introduces himself. Colonel Pickering had come to England to meet Higgins.They become friends. Higgins claims that with the help of his methods of training he can make a flower girl speak and behave in an elegant manner.She would also appear to be a duchess at an Ambassador's Party.

The next morning Eliza comes to the house of Higgins. She expresses her wish to take lessons from him in correct speech, so that she can become a lady in a fashionable flower shop . Colonel Pickering is also present there. There is a bet between the two men that Higgins could train her to speak like a duchess in six months. Pickering says that if Higgins can do this miracle he will pay for her education .she is thoroughly cleaned and given new clothes to wear. She is given a bedroom and she starts staying in that house.

Eliza's father Alfred Doolittle an immoral man comes to Higgin's house to blackmail him as Eliza is at his house. He says that he is one of the undeserving poor.Higgins gives five pounds to Alfred Doolittle. Higgins housekeeper Pearce bathes Eliza and gives her new clothes. Then the training starts. Higgins is an expert in teaching correct accent and pronunciation. At first it is very difficult for Eliza. Whenever she makes a mistake Higgins gets angry and shouts at her.But Colonel Pickering is a gentleman and he teaches her how to behave in the upper class society.

Eliza makes good progress within three months. She can differentiate all the sounds. She can imitate the way of speaking of other people. She now looks after all the work of Higgins.

Higgins now takes Eliza to his mother's place for a sort of test. Mrs. Hill, her daughter and her son Freddy are also there. Freddy is attracted towards Eliza. He is madly in love with her. Mrs Higgins tells her son that Eliza is not yet perfect but she is successful of his art. Mrs.Higgins tells him that he should pay the poor girl because he was making her a fine lady without giving her a fine lady's income.

After six months Eliza is taken to an Ambassador's Party for a final test. From the way of speaking and manners everyone there thinks that she is a Princess . Higgins has won his bet.

During the training period Eliza had become emotionally attached to Higgins . But Higgins is not attracted towards young girls . He had treated her as all others. After the party Colonel Pickering congratulates Higgins for his success. They both regarded it as an experiment. Higgins thanked God.

Eliza is shocked to hear this. She expected that they would praise and admire her. But she finds that he had no feelings at all. He shouts at her and she tells him that he is a brute. She throws his slippers at him, returns jewellery and leaves the house. Freddy, madly in love with Eliza. talks with her in the night and she goes with him in the taxi and comes in the morning, takes her things and goes to the house of Higgin's mother.

In the morning, Higgins and Colonel Pickering find that Eliza was not in the house. They are upset and rush to the house of Mrs.Higgins. Pickering calls the police. Eliz's's father comes to see Mrs.Higgins.It is because of Higgins letter a millionaire left Alfred Doolittle 3000 pounds a year. So he has become a rich man now.He tells Colonel Pickering that he had never been married before and Eliza was his illegitimate daughter.

Mrs.Higgins asks Alfred to stand outside and she calls Eliza. Eliza is very formal with Higgins but she is very affectionate towards the Colonel. She says that she had learnt her speech from Higgins but she had learnt her manners and other noble qualities from Pickering.He was like a father to her.

Higgins asks Eliza the reason for being angry with him .She replies that he had made her unfit for life. she could not go back to her old life.Higgins suggest that she can marry Pickering. On hearing this Eliza got angry. She tells him that she regarded him as a father. She also added that she would not marry Higgins either.

Higgins and Eliza argued with each other and they came to a conclusion. Higgins invites Eliza to stay with them and she also agrees .Mrs.Higgins thinks both Higgins and Eliza were getting attached to each other but Higgins corrects his mother. He tells her that Eliza is going to marry Freddy and with that the play ends.

The rest of the story is told by Shaw in a post script. Eliza did not marry Higgins because she felt that Higgins could never love his wife. Higgins idealized his mother and Phonetics was his first love. So she married Freddy who was uneducated ,weak and poor but loved her immensely.He has not been trained for any profession and could not earn money. Colonel Pickering gave Eliza a wedding present of 500 pounds. Then she started a flower shop. First it was not a success. They did not know how to write and maintain accounts .So they attended special classes in the evenings. Eliza requested Mr Higgins to teach how to write .So she learnt how to write and she had a good handwriting. It was Colonel Pickering made up the deficits of the shop every month. Then the shop started running at a profit. Pickering regarded Eliza as his favourite daughter. Both Higgins and Eliza every now and then tried to bully each other.Thus Eliza lived there happily looking after her own family and the two old bachelors Higgins and Pickering.

About the playwright

George Bernard Shaw was born on 26 July, 1856 in Dublin and died on 2 November, 1950. He was an Irish playwright and received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1925. Shaw wrote more than sixty plays during his lifetime. His play Pygmalion was made into a film twice and the screenplay he wrote for the first version won an Oscar.

Shaw's first plays were published in volumes titled 'Plays Unpleasant' (Widowers' Houses, The Philanderer and Mrs Warren's Profession) and 'Plays Pleasant' (Arms and The Man, Candida, The Man of Destiny and You Never Can Tell) His other works are Man and Superman 1903, Major Barbara 1905, Doctor's Dilemma 1906, Pygmalion 1912, Androcles and the Lion 1912 and Saint Joan 1923.

Short questions

- 1 What did Eliza learn?
- 2 What was the bet between Higgins and Colonel Pickering?
- 3 Who is Alfred Doolittle?
- 4 Who won the bet?
- 5 Whom did Eliza marry at the end?

UNIT V

WAITING FOR GODOT SAMUEL BECKETT

Summary

Waiting for Godot is a tragicomedy in two acts by Irish writer Samuel Beckett, published in 1952. The play was a true innovation in drama and The Theatre of the Absurd's first theatrical success.

The play consists of conversations between Vladimir and Estragon who are waiting for the arrival of the mysterious Godot, who continually sends word that he will appear but who never does. They encounter Lucky and Pozzo, they discuss their miseries and their lots in life. They consider hanging themselves and they wait. Vladimir and Estragon are a pair of human beings who do not know why they were put on earth; they make the assumption that there must be some point to their existence and look to Godot for enlightenment. Because they hold out for meaning and direction, they acquire a kind of nobility that enables them to rise above their futile existence.

When the play opens two men Vladimir and Estragon are under the tree. From the conversations on various topics it is revealed that they are waiting to see a person named Godot. They waited on the previous day also, but Godot did not come. So they are not sure whether he will come on that day also but still they keep on waiting. Being frustrated the two men decide to hang themselves but as they are not sure of the strength of the tree they leave the idea of hanging themselves. Meanwhile, two men Pozzo and Lucky meet them. Pozzo wants to sell his slave Lucky in the fair and so they are on the way. Lucky entertains them with dance and gives a long speech. After that Pozzo and Lucky take a leave.

A young boy enters and introduces himself as the messenger of the Gods. He tells them that Godot will come tomorrow. Vladimir and Estragon decide to leave but they do not leave the place. They continue to wait for Godot on the next day also. Pozzo and Lucky re-enter the place but this time Lucky has been dumb and Pozzo has become blind. Pozzo could not remember anything which happened on the previous day and again leave the place. The same messenger boy comes with the news that Godot is not coming that day but the next day. The boy says that he has not talked to Vladimir the previous day. He leaves the place. After the departure of the boy Vladimir and Estragon decide to leave the tree but they do not move.

Essay

Samuel Beckett's play 'Waiting for Godot' is a play of nothingness, for two men waiting for something or someone to arrive. There is no meaning in it. The two characters share a companionship carrying deeply for one another in many ways in order to survive the hostile place in which they are living in.

Act I

As the play opens Estragon is seen sitting alone upon a rock trying to remove his boot and repeatedly failing to do so. Vladimir is present and struggles shoe slipsoff with effortlessness as if he cannot remove it without the company of Vladimir.

The pair seem to mirror the society of modern day and it is important to remember their loneliness their continuous waiting for Godot. Though the two men fight with each other, they share the strongest want for each other's companionship.

Act II

This act portrays the journey of their relationship throughout the play. They question each others actions on the boredom in which they are isolated. They mock at each other and of their own friendship .Vladimir and Estragon have known each other for ‘Fifty years perhaps’ and as Act II begins Vladimir starts to sing and this could parallel the fact that he is aware that is Estragon is still around. The expression Vladimir’s face turns from that of confusion to delight as he realises the pair of boots greeting him as he enters the scene are in fact Estragon’s.

Vladimir and Estragon have been together for so long that they no longer see themselves as individuals.In the play Waiting for Godot, the personalities of the characters complement each other, one being absent minded and forgetful with Estragon asking very often throughout the play Why are we here? and Vladimir replies with ‘we are waiting for Godot’. This shows the interdependence within their relationship.

Vladimir and Estragon are forced to live in a hostile world with no material values, just the company of one another to pass the time. The play explores the human relationships and seems to reflect the friendships in society today. Vladimir’s character shows as he places his coat over the shoulders of a sleeping Estragon, and at the same time they have created a companionship that has meant that these two characters are really to be thought of as pieces of one personality, they fit together as one.

About the Playwright

Samuel Beckett was an Irish novelist, playwright, short story writer, theatre director poet and literary translator. He was born on 13 April 1906 in Ireland and died on 22 December 1989 in France. He wrote in both French and English and was awarded Nobel Prize for Literature in 1969.

Short Questions

- 1 Why are Vladimir and Estragon waiting for Godot?
- 2 How does Lucky entertain Estragon and Vladimir?
- 3 What are the nicknames of Estragon and Vladimir?
- 4 Who planned to commit suicide by jumping off the Eiffel tower?
- 5 How did the two tramps pass their time of waiting in Act II?