

She stoops to conquer essay sample

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She Stoops to Conquer does indeed satisfy the definition of satire given, “the use of instruments such as sarcasm, irony, wit, and humor in literary compositions that hold up follies and vices for criticism, ridicule, and scorn.” Within the play, Goldsmith uses the different characters and their relationships with one another to “hold up” the issue of the differences of the various classes that existed during the era in which She Stoops to Conquer was written.

The most notable use of satire within She Stoops to Conquer comes from the relationship that develops between the young Charles Marlow and Kate Hardcastle in which the main plot of the story revolves around. Sir Marlow, being timid when it comes to women of his own class, but not with women of lower classes, is not only unable to court Miss Hardcastle, whom was the reason for his seeking out the Hardcastle estate, but was also unable to even look upon her face.

“Ha! ha! ha! Was there ever such a sober sentimental interview? I’m certain he scare looked in my face the whole time. Yet the fellow, but for his unaccountable bashfulness, is pretty well, too. He has good sense, but then so buried in his fears, that it fatigues one more than ignorance. If I could teach him a little confidence, it would be doing somebody that I know of a piece of service...” – Kate Hardcastle (pg 22)

Due to Marlow’s extreme timidity during their conversation with each other, Kate becomes determined to look deeper into Marlow’s character. Through talking to a maid, Kate finds out that Marlow would be unable to recognize her if she was not dressed as one of a higher class. Kate then hatches a plan

where she pretends to be a mere servant in order to see who Marlow truly is. Kate's plan is ultimately successful, for upon seeing Marlow again, he speaks words that are intended to charm her, and shows himself to be "presuming" – a trait which Kate desires in a mate but did not see in Marlow after their first conversation.

What is really seen through the relationship of Kate Hardcastle and Charles Marlow, is the fact that a young woman of a high class is willing to lower herself, even if for a short period of time and only in the eyes of a single person, to a class of a servant which would normally be something unthinkable of doing by higher classes. Goldsmith uses Kate's temporary lowering of her class to bring to light the class distinctions that existed at the time. With the humorous events that followed Kate's lowering of her status (while only in the eyes of Marlow), Goldsmith uses that to springboard the differences to a position where it would be held up for criticism, ridicule, and scorn by the audiences of his play.

Following the definition of satire which was given, being, "the use of instruments such as sarcasm, irony, wit, and humor in literary compositions that hold up follies and vices for criticism, ridicule, and scorn", *She Stoops to Conquer* does indeed contain, and in itself satisfy the conditions given in order to be considered satire.