

**SUBJECT : ENGLISH**

B.A.(HONS.) PART-II, PAPER-III

TOPIC- SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER

**BY DR.PRABHAT RANJAN KARN**

ASSOC. PROF., DEPT.OF ENGLISH

DR.L.K.V.D. COLLEGE, TAJPUR

## **WIT AND HUMOUR IN “SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER”**

Wit and humour is present everywhere in the play “She Stoops to Conquer”, rather we can say that it is more full of humour than wit. It is because the characters of the play are not generally very highly cultured or intelligent or even belonging to aristocratic city life, except for Sir Charles and his son Marlow. Most of the other characters of the play belong to low stratum of society.

Tony Lumpkin, the chief figure in the play, is also no exception. He is unable to read even a letter although his mother

certifies that one or two years of Latin would make him something. In fact, he is actually worth nothing but for his mischiefs and buffooneries which he plays upon everybody in the play, not sparing even his own mother. But Tony is the real fountain head of humour, and next to him, his step father Mr. Hardcastle who prides in his conservatism and orthodoxy in his ideas as well as in his style of living. His repetition of the two stories about Prince Eugene and of the Duke of Marlborough is another source of fun and laughter. Apart from them most of the other characters – from the master or the mistress of the house to all the domestic attendants- are comic in their behavior, gestures and utterances.

There are plenty of situations in the play which are created by characters themselves which are no less full of fun and laughter than the characters themselves. The chief of the funny situations are the disappearance and reappearance of the casket of jewels which pass through several-lands; the mistake of the

house of Mr. Hardcastle for a public inn; the playing of the role of a barmaid by Miss Hardcastle; and even the dual personality of the character of Marlow. And on the top of all, the master trick of Tony who takes his mother and Constance in the Stage –coach round and the garden and the horse pond attached to Mr.Hardcastle’s house at dead of night for three hours dipping and jolting the vehicle along with the travellers into the miry pools and ditches and rattling stones and pebbles of the most uneven path. Mrs. Hardcastle believes all the while that she is covering a distance of forty miles through the most infested areas of notorious robbers although in reality not wandering beyond a few yards from Mr.Hardcastle’s house. Tony creates a fight by telling all sorts of cock and bull stories about the robbers and the hangman, and even makes his mother believe that Mr. Hardcastle is nothing but a robber with big pistols and a black hat on his head when he comes out as usual from his house for his evening stroll after dinner.

Tony plays his mischievous tricks everywhere and upon everyone. We notice how he sends Marlow and Hastings to his own step-father's house telling them that it is a first class inn. Marlow is never undeceived about his mistake till the very end of the play and therefore, he no less than Tony provides us with food for laughter by his strange behavior particularly towards Mr. Hardcastle and his daughter. Most of the fun and laughter depend upon the mistakes which everybody in the play commits not once but several times, and it is these mistakes of one night only which cause so much of laughter. There is absolutely no touch of irony or sarcasm anywhere in the play and that is why, it has been taken by all critics as a pure comedy or a comedy of intrigue and laughter.

\*\*\*\*