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"The Dullissimo Macaroni": Masculinities in *She Stoops to Conquer*

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IN ACT 4 OF OLIVER GOLDSMITH'S *She Stoops to Conquer* (1773), Charles Marlow suddenly discovers the deception practiced on him when he learns that Liberty Hall, Mr. Hardcastle's house, is not an inn. His immediate response includes not only personal embarrassment regarding his father's friend—"What a swaggering puppy must he take me for. What a silly puppy do I find myself"—but also the expectation of public humiliation: "O, confound my stupid head, I shall be laugh'd at over the whole town. I shall be stuck up in caricatura in all the print-shops. The Dullissimo Macaroni."¹ The personal reaction reveals Marlow as the typical *adulescens* of traditional comedy, the immature young man that illustrates Goldsmith's generalized description of the form, described in an essay in the *Westminster Magazine* to prepare audiences' reception of his so-called "laughing comedy": "that natural portrait of Human Folly and Frailty, of which all are judges, because all have sat for the picture."² As part of his agenda to restore the humor supposedly missing from the stage, Goldsmith seems to have convinced readers for two centuries to approach his play primarily in more universal terms and largely to ignore the possibility of situating Marlow and other male characters more fully in British cultural history of the 1770s. However, in the midst of "making an audience merry," as his friend Samuel Johnson described the play's effect, Goldsmith also makes serious use of a topical social phenomenon.³ Marlow's fear of caricature engages the discourse about British masculinities in which the macaroni was a distinctive and negative figure, and his anxious words indicate a satiric perspective on the macaroni craze in the early years of this decade. By making Marlow a potential macaroni, Goldsmith also represents the larger stakes involved in this discourse, which Tim Hitchcock and Michèle Cohen describe as "the diversity of ways in which men constructed and thought about themselves, and deployed those facets of self-identity in their relations with other men and women."⁴

Goldsmith wrote his comedy in the midst of widespread representation of the macaroni in print culture, as caricaturists and authors, writing in periodicals, poems, and plays, repeatedly mock characteristics of this figure, most often targeting his excesses of dress and his singular manners, such as impudence. These varied texts frequently assert, through direct statement or negative example, that the macaroni was not a suitable role for British men because of his deficient masculinity. The first section of the essay examines these issues in literary and visual works, such as *Town and Country Magazine*, *The Macaroni Jester*, and *Macaronies, Characters, Caricatures*. The satire found there tends to be formulaic, and the ridiculous macaroni is not likeable or capable of change. The second section interprets Marlow's macaroni attributes in this context. Goldsmith clearly identifies his protagonist as coming to the country with macaroni attire and behaving to most characters with the macaroni's impudence before he recognizes the absurdity of his conduct and becomes a man Kate Hardcastle is willing to marry. Unlike most contemporary satirists of the macaroni, Goldsmith places his character's conduct in opposition to that of other male figures in the play—his urban friend Hastings, his rural host Hardcastle, and the latter's stepson, Tony Lumpkin, who serves as Marlow's most significant foil in this cultural discourse—and, in so doing, offers a wider perspective on British masculinities. When Marlow finally recognizes Kate's "refin'd simplicity," his words provide a key to Goldsmith's comic thinking about this topic. Having Marlow embrace an identity between the satiric spectacle of the urban macaroni and the amiable humor of the country bumpkin, neither excessively sophisticated nor defectively rustic, Goldsmith charts a middle way much like that proposed by David Hume and a later imitator in the cultural debate.

THE MACARONI IN PRINT CULTURE

Before he averts public embarrassment, Marlow has good reason to worry, for satiric representations of macaronis were causing a good deal of cultural anxiety in the early 1770s, "the period of their greatest popularity."⁵ In the 1760s the word first designated aristocratic young men who went on the Grand Tour and returned with a new European style, who became a masculine type Horace Walpole identified as synonymous with "Beau, Fop, Coxcomb, Petit Maître."⁶ As heir to the Restoration fop and the early eighteenth-century beau, the macaroni affected foreign tastes and fashions and carried them to extravagant lengths, including, famously, big hair. Aileen Ribeiro points out that macaronis "exaggerated" the style of the "French suit with elaborate embroidery and equally highly decorated waistcoat," dress which

was "identified with an increasingly ossified court circle and the privileges of aristocracy." According to Ribeiro, "the new fashionable male silhouette of the 1770s was tall and slim, with short waistcoat and tighter-fitting breeches," and the macaroni expressed both the "frivolity" and "richness" of this style.⁷ Members of the Macaroni Club, possibly founded at Almack's or one of the other clubs on St. James's Street, in the heart of fashionable London, engaged in what Peter McNeil calls "performative burlesque," in which "macaronic behavior is more about the wearing, less about the 'worn.'" For McNeil, this burlesque foregrounds "the relationship between modernity, fashion and representation" and, in the process, relates macaroni dress to "evolving models of national and gendered identity."⁸ Many contemporaries regarded such performance as unmanly; some found it too feminine in appearance and conduct, while others judged the performers to be feminized by excessive consumption and emulation of continental fashions. As Hitchcock and Cohen comment, in describing "the multiplicity of ways in which 'effeminacy' was used and understood" in the eighteenth century, the label "effeminate . . . had nothing to do with their sexual behavior," but with perceived deviations from cultural norms for men.⁹

Representing, in Amelia Rauser's words, "an apotheosis of aristocratic values that seemed to fly in the face of calls to sober, masculine virtue," the macaroni became "a phenomenon that far outstripped the effect of the relatively few macaroni men who actually strode the streets of London."¹⁰ As Ribeiro points out, the phenomenon was enhanced by "a great increase in the early 1770s of newspapers and magazines devoted to fashionable as well as political news" and by "the beginning of the great age of the caricaturist."¹¹ McNeil agrees that "topical interest in the macaroni peaked in the first half of the 1770s, when descriptions and images of the macaronies were published in the principal periodicals such as *Town and Country Magazine*, *London Magazine*, *Universal Magazine*, and the *Lady's Magazine*."¹² In addition, several more specialized journals tried to profit from this interest, including *The Macaroni and Theatrical Magazine or Monthly Register*, which began in 1772 and continued into the next year. While including articles on the theater and essays on manners and decorum for both sexes, it began each issue with a macaroni print, which accompanied an account of an unnamed but generally known person. Similarly topical was the *Macaroni Magazine or Monthly Intelligence of the Fashions and Diversions*. Both these niche publications and other monthly periodicals often included variations of a judgment published in the *Town and Country Magazine*, about "the delicate Maccaronny things we see swarming every where, to the disgrace of our noble patient British race."¹³

In fact, the *Town and Country Magazine* seemed the most vehement

about the macaroni, frequently publishing satirical articles and letters in the year preceding *She Stoops to Conquer*. The most extensive piece was the “Character of a Macaroni,” accompanied by a woodcut, which explained the etymology and adoption of the term by young Englishmen this way:

The Italians are extremely fond of a dish they call Macaroni . . . so they figuratively call every thing they think elegant and uncommon *Macaroni*. Our young travellers, who generally catch the follies of the countries they visit, judged that the title of Macaroni was applicable to a clever fellow; and accordingly, they instituted a club under this denomination, the members of which were supposed to be the standards of taste in polite learning . . . and fashion, amongst the other constituent parts of taste, became the object of their attention. But they soon proved, they had very little claim to any distinction, except in their external appearance. (May 1772, 242–43)

Examining the spread of the “infection” from St. James’s, the author describes the stereotypical fashion and concludes that when “a Macaroni renders his sex dubious by the extravagance of his appearance, the shafts of sarcasm can not be too forcibly pointed at them” (May 1772, 243). In the next month’s issue, Billy Whiffle, self-identified as “*A professed Macaroni*,” complains about such “insolence” in ridiculing “a set of the most accomplished Beings that ever endeavoured to rectify the vulgar errors of the age” (June 1772, 320).

More satirical letters appeared in later issues of the *Town and Country Magazine* that year, most notably Jack Wagtail’s transcription of “the journal of two days” of Ned Spindle, “one of the greatest Macaronies in town and the standard of taste in the polite world.” Spindle’s Saturday entry includes his own words about his ridiculous behavior: “Consult my taylor upon a new suit—nothing elegant in England—dispatched my valet to Paris to restore my wardrobe. Purchased a Macaroni sword-knot of Madame L—, who protested it had not been imported six hours” (September 1772, 461). To begin the next year, the magazine published a letter supposedly from “A Son of Old Roast Beef,” who describes the “metamorphosis” of men in London, “or at least those who pretend to be of the male gender”; he laments that “offsprings of the heroes of Poitiers and Agincourt” had become so “fallen” and “degenerated” as the macaroni (January 1773, 15).

Such symptomatic excesses were a widespread theme. For example, according to a writer in the *Universal Magazine*, “Old England is overrun” by versions of the macaroni, about which he observed, “everything about him most extravagantly outré.”¹⁴ Some authors feared a debilitating spread of macaroni performance to the lower orders. One depicted the supposed epidemic this way: “The world’s so *macaronied* grown of late, / That common mortals now are out of date; / No single class of men this merit claim, / Or high, or low, in faith ’tis all the same.”¹⁵ Walpole even linked the macaroni

to the decline of the Roman Empire and connected his symbolic menace to the excesses of the East India Company and its top management, including Lord Clive, potent stand-ins for the ever-expanding consumerism after the Seven Years War. Walpole wrote to a friend: "Conquest, usurpation, wealth, luxury, famine—one knows how little farther the genealogy has to go! If you like it better in Scripture phrase, here it is . . . the East India Company begot Lord Clive; Lord Clive begot the Maccaronies, and they begot poverty—and all the race are still living; just as Clodius was born before the death of Julius Caesar. There is nothing more like than two ages that are very like."¹⁶ On the other hand, "An Account of the Macaroni," published with a satiric illustration in the *London Magazine*, presents the figure "in the style of a Naturalist" and concludes that, for all his absurdity, he is "harmless . . . rather foolish than vicious."¹⁷

In addition to periodicals, several other types of publication mocked the macaroni in 1773: John Cooke's compilation *The Macaroni Jester, and Pantheon of Wit*; Robert Hitchcock's *The Macaroni. A Comedy*; and a topical collection, *The Vauxhall Affray; or, the Macaronies Defeated. The Macaroni Jester* is a 100-page miscellany of "JESTS, WITTICISMS, BON-MOTS . . . with EPIGRAMS and EPITAPHS of the *laughable* Kind, and Strokes of Humour hitherto unequalled." It includes only a few texts on macaronis after the initial "Description of the Dress of a first rate Macaroni of the present Year," until the amusing "*Journal* of a MACARONI" and later the "Description of a *Savoir Vivre*, or the Ghost of a *Macaroni*." The volume ends with short poems, among which are "*The MACARONI, a New Song*," "*The MACARONI, an Epigram*," and "*To the MACARONIES of the Age*." The last refers to the Frontispiece, an engraving of "a London MACARONI" emerging from an egg as an "Object of Scorn" and advises these foolish characters to begin "dressing, and thinking, and acting like Men."¹⁸ This view is echoed in Hitchcock's comedy.

The Macaroni, first performed in York, indicates that ridicule of the macaroni spread well beyond London, where the play had one performance in September, six months after Goldsmith's premiere. Act 1 opens with the title character Epicene at his dressing table, as his French valet remarks that "you seem de finished Marqui . . . von wou'd swear dere was not von drop of de Englise blood in you." Epicene proudly agrees that his suit displays "a happy fancy, something of the true *Ton*, without the least tincture of barbarism" (1.1). These speeches neatly set forth a dichotomy, French sophistication versus English rusticity, used by all other characters in the play to ridicule the former. Even Epicene's friend Lord Promise finds this suit fit only for a masquerade and declares, "your ambition was to appear a first-rate Maca-

roni; you are returned fully qualified . . . to shew the world what a contemptible creature an Englishman dwindles into, when he adopts the follies and vices of other nations" (1.1). Epicene remains the object of ridicule because of his "degenerate exotic effeminacy," a betrayal of his descent from "a race of hardy, virtuous, conquering Britons" (5.1). Duped by women and threatened with violence by male characters, he repeatedly shows unmanly cowardice and laments his "devilish hard luck" (4.1). Lady Fanny Promise, to whom Epicene is engaged, typifies the play's derisive tone: "I have not patience every day to see such crowds of mincing, whiffling, powder'd Master Jemmys fill our public places, who only want to assume the petticoat, to render them compleat Misses" (2.1). Even she ceases her "torment" when Epicene claims, "I own I deserve it, and begin to see my folly" (5.1). His promise does not lead to a change like Marlow's refashioning.

While *The Macaroni Jester* and *The Macaroni* more typically associate this figure with deficient masculinity, *The Vauxhall Affray* collected articles and letters from newspapers supposedly documenting the aggressive manners of several men. This controversy followed an actress's report that, as she walked in Vauxhall Gardens with her husband and another male friend, she was "put out of countenance, by what she deemed the impudent looks of four or five gentlemen, who purposely placed themselves directly opposite to her."¹⁹ Treated as macaronis in the print quarrel, these men became the focus, in Miles Ogborn's analysis, of "a contest over the gaze: a struggle between different masculinities over rights to the visual, and particularly the right to look at women"; as a result, the affray illustrates "the dangers of the fluidity of identities rooted in fashion and commodification."²⁰ To resolve the conflict, the actress's friend Henry Bate was involved in a duel, which the frontispiece of a third edition titled "The Macaroni Sacrifice," with a caption indicating that Bate's victory allowed him to "revive degraded MANHOOD." The threat supposedly repulsed here is very different from that in "*The Journal of a MACARONI*," in which the writer devotes the early afternoon "to saunter in the Park, and stare at the Women, for the Reputation of having a Taste for them."²¹ Perhaps these verses from "*The MACARONIAD*," reprinted from the *Whitehall Evening Post* in *The Vauxhall Affray*, document the ambiguities of these diverse texts: "But Macaronies are a sex / Which do philosophers perplex; / Tho' all the priests of VENUS' rites / Agree they are *Hermaphrodites*."²² While Marlow never faces such a charge, his actions do demonstrate a somewhat contradictory range of masculinities.

Goldsmith's comedy entered a print culture replete with such textual representations of macaronis, but Marlow's specific concern is visual caricatures. Those, too, were abundant, as described in the *London Magazine*:

“our print-shops are filled with *Maccaronis* of a variety of kinds, representing with much drollery the absurdity of this species of character in various professions.”²³ According to Rauser, “macaroni prints, pioneered by James Bretherton and Matthew and Mary Darly in the early 1770s and immediately copied by other printmakers, were among the earliest published, personal caricatures made.” After relocating from Fleet Street to the Strand, the Darlys published, between 1771 and 1773, “six sets of satirical ‘macaroni’ prints, each set containing 24 portraits, which inspired a whole genre of contemporary social satires.” Typically, Rauser observes, these prints represent “single figures, shown full-length and often in profile . . . posed in a barely delineated setting but with minute attention paid to details of costume, physiognomy, and posture.”²⁴ As Shearer West remarks, their prints repeatedly examined “singularity” and “drew upon and fed into changing notions of eccentricity and character” in the early 1770s.²⁵ Many of their caricatures contrasted stereotypical macaroni traits with professional or status expectations identified in the title, often indicative of the spread of this upper class fashion (such as “A Law Macaroni,” “The Macaroni Auctioneer,” or “The Macaroni Mercer”). Some, like “The Surry Macaroni,” “The New-Market Macaroni,” and “The Oxford Adonis Macaroni,” indicate the spread of this style beyond the metropolis. Others, such as “The Unfortunate Macaroni,” “The Timorous Sporting Macaroni,” and “The Sleepy Macaroni Dreaming for the Good of his Country,” merely identify the character’s affectation, as does Marlow’s imagined title for his own print. The Darly sets had generic titles like *Macaronies*, *Characters*, *Caricatures* &c.

Several Darly prints of upper-class figures indicate what Marlow could have expected for his own caricature. “My Lord Tip-Toe, Just Arrived from Monkey Land” (Figure 1) emphasizes the origins of the macaroni craze by indicating the character’s recent return from France, unflatteringly identified as “Monkey Land.” Seen in profile, this aristocrat’s extravagant style includes the usual embroidery, decorated waistcoat, and big hair, as well as a sword, subordinate to the attire, and the mincing step that supposedly typified macaroni movement. The “James’s Square Macaroni” (Figure 2) represents a figure located at the London center of the type and features a tall, slim character in a more frontal view, with a rich coat, but a shorter waistcoat; in addition, he possesses a velvet cap, trimmed in fur, indicating a peer. This character’s face is much less grotesque than that of “My Lord Tip-Toe,” as is that of other caricatures like “The Knightsbridge Macaroni” (Figure 3). The latter, again a figure in profile, sports a ruffled shirt, striped breeches, a tasseled cane, and a stylish hat covering his large wig. These somewhat more realistic facial delineations show Goldsmith’s awareness of another distinctive feature of the Darly prints: some observers believed they



Figure 1: “My Lord Tip-Toe, Just Arrived from Monkey Land”



Figure 2: “The James’s Square Macaroni”²⁶



Figure 3: "The Knightsbridge Macaroni"²⁷

portrayed actual people. West identifies "a growing interest in odd individuals" as one aspect of the "fascination with singularity and eccentricity" found in the macaroni; in addition, he remarks that "Walpole recognized the specificity of many of the Darly satires and annotated his own collection of macaroni prints with the names of the real individuals seemingly represented in them." Rauser adds that "as early as 1772, the Darly's's macaronis often seemed more like visual guessing games about the individual who was portrayed, than moralizing satires on the person's dress or behavior." The depiction of a "singular" figure, while demonstrating "contemporary fascination with character," could also serve, she argues, to "elevate the status of the individual portrayed, merely by suggesting he is well-known enough to be portrayed in this way."²⁸

If he becomes the subject of a macaroni print, Marlow expects to be identified, but he does not believe that a print will help his social standing. Goldsmith keeps his emphasis on ridicule. A different kind of Darly caricature, "The Macaroni Print Shop," helps us appreciate Marlow's distress as he imagines being a subject. This print shows that the interior of the Darly's shop was not the only place the prints could be seen, for the sidewalk, where a group of seven male viewers congregate to look at about three dozen caricatures separately displayed in the windows, provides a free public space

for consumption of these social satires. If the Darlys' shop was the best known, the *London Magazine* observes that macaroni caricatures "are to be had in every shop throughout the metropolis" and directs readers "to the several repositories where they abound . . . to furnish an example for their equipment to those who have an ambition to render themselves ridiculous." Marlow is certainly aware of this fact and hopes to avoid the situation of the writer of "*The Journal of a MACARONI*," who resolves "Never to look at the Printshops."²⁹

MARLOW THE MACARONI AND BRITISH MASCULINITIES

In *She Stoops to Conquer* Goldsmith stages a more amiable version of the macaroni satire that flourished in the early 1770s, although the play's opening scenes may not suggest so. Initially he clothes Marlow and Hastings in extravagant attire and offers a visual preview even before their entrance late in act 1. Replying to Tony Lumpkin's question "Do they seem to be Londoners?" the landlord of the Three Pigeons describes the pair as looking "woundily like Frenchman" (1.1). Tony's subsequent interrogation of these "gentlemen," as he sarcastically calls them six times, leads him to initiate the mistake about his stepfather's house. His form of jesting derives from Irish popular culture and serves, according to Helen Burke, as a satirical way "to deal with those who threatened the community's life and values"; Tony is a "wag" seeking to punish their form of gentility.³⁰ But Goldsmith is not only incorporating this traditional ridicule by introducing Marlow and Hastings as exaggerated figures out of place in a rural tavern. One of the play's suppressed epilogues indicates the nature of his thinking about macaronis in writing these characters, for there he also mocks their eccentricity in the urban performance space, more in keeping with Marlow's anxiety about print shops. An actress speaks directly to a sector of the audience:

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 nose-gays, justly vain,
Who take a trip to Paris once a year
To dress, and look like awkward Frenchmen here.³¹

This epilogue identifies traits—vanity and awkwardness—that the two friends begin to demonstrate soon after their arrival at Liberty Hall.

We see this in act 2, when Marlow and Hastings confer about clothing

while Hardcastle does his best to be a good host. Marlow suggests “changing our travelling dresses in the morning” because he has “grown confoundedly ashamed of mine.” The dialogue goes on, each speech interrupted by Hardcastle’s storytelling (omitted below), which the younger characters rudely ignore.

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.

.....

MARLOW. Don’t you think the *ventre dor* waistcoat will do with the plain brown?

.....

HASTINGS. I think not: Brown and yellow mix but very poorly.

.....

MARLOW. The girls like finery. (2.1)

As Ribeiro notes, “the bright colours and silken stuffs and the lavish use of lace, all of which characterized the dress of the macaroni, were either imported or imitated.”³² Marlow’s waistcoat, which has a French cut, is yellow; Hastings plans to wear gold. Marlow’s third outfit features embroidery. Later Hastings serves as a fashion mentor for Mrs. Hardcastle, praising her hairstyle as follows: “Extremely elegant and degagée, upon my word, Madam. Your Friseur is a Frenchman, I suppose?” (2.1) Although the joke is on her, the scene continues to portray the young men as macaronis, whose language of style, like their designs, is imported.

In keeping with the ridicule found in macaroni caricatures, Constance Neville calls Marlow “a very singular character,” and Kate finds him “an odd character.” They base their assessment on reports of his eccentric behavior with women, which Constance describes: “Among women of reputation and virtue, he is the modestest man alive; but his acquaintance give him a very different character among creatures of another stamp” (1.1). Soon Hastings confirms this analysis by calling Marlow “an idiot, such a trembler” among women of their own class, but “impudent enough” with lower-class women. Marlow concurs and describes his dilemma this way: “An impudent fellow may counterfeit modesty, but I’ll be hanged if a modest man

can ever counterfeit impudence" (2.1). Like the macaronis in *The Vauxhall Affray*, Marlow exposes his impudence as a key aspect of his singularity. A poem in *The Macaroni Jester* asks how the macaroni resembles a lawyer; the answer is "*Because he is impudent.*"³³ For the most part, except for Marlow's first meeting with Kate in act 2, he exhibits this characteristic for four acts. If he is feminized by his dress, his conduct usually demonstrates this somewhat different excess.

While Marlow's impudence upsets Hardcastle, Kate draws it out to overcome his initial reserve with her. Although he is the object of Tony's practical joke and Kate's disguise, it is difficult not to blame Marlow for the lack of politeness he demonstrates at Hardcastle's house. After Marlow ignores Hardcastle's war stories, his irate host regards his guest as "the most impudent piece of brass," and he tells Kate how her suitor has "taken possession of the easy chair by the fire-side" and "took off his boots in the parlour, and desired me to see them taken care of" (3.1). In addition to misinterpreting Hardcastle's hospitality, Marlow behaves impudently to Kate. Believing her to be the bar maid at the inn, he confesses that in "the Ladies Club in town, I'm called their agreeable Rattle" (3.1). He then offers to kiss her, asks to see her embroidery by candlelight, and seizes her hand. In this action he resembles another impudent macaroni character, created several years earlier by George Coleman in *Man and Wife*. In that comedy the "puppy" Marcourt comes from London to a small town with typical concern about his clothes and hair; after telling a young woman "you're as handsome as a little angel," he offers to kiss her, but is prevented as part of her sister's trick.³⁴ Goldsmith's similar scene has a different outcome, for Mr. Hardcastle sees Marlow's attempted kiss and immediately rages, "I believe his impudence is infectious!" (3.1). While Marlow's behavior modulates toward sensibility in two subsequent meetings with Kate, revealed first as a family relation and then as Miss Hardcastle, in the final scene he still has to confess, "O, curse on my noisy head. I never attempted to be impudent yet, that I was not taken down" (5.1). Unlike the macaronis caricatured in prints, he gets the chance to move beyond the ridiculous traits that manifest his singularity. Unlike the real men satirized by the Darlys and others, he becomes aware how absurd his macaroni performance appears.

While it could be argued that Marlow's "agreeable Rattle" persona is merely that of a libertine, it is inflected by his macaroni style. In trying to seduce Kate, for example, he claims "I embroider and draw patterns myself a little. If you want a judge of your work you must apply to me" (3.1). On the other hand, Marlow shows effeminacy in his first meeting with Kate, when he cannot look at her or talk effectively with her. In this persona, which she

later calls “the mild, modest, sentimental man of gravity” (5.1), he demonstrates timidity when confronted with formal courtship. As he squints and stammers, Kate must complete his sentences and provide the confidence he lacks. “Who could ever,” she muses, “suppose this fellow impudent upon some occasions” (2.1). Similarly in Hitchcock’s *The Macaroni*, Lady Fanny Promise complains about Epicene’s deficient masculinity, and like Kate, she resolves to trick her intended. According to Philip Carter, many commentators regarded affectation “less in terms of corruption than as an unregulated attempt to cultivate a reputation for refined feeling. In such cases, the fashion for refinement pushed men towards ever more elaborate displays of delicate, polished or sensitive behaviour.”³⁵ Marlow’s awkward display of refinement, at a moment when he lacks courage to be impudent, mocks the excesses of formal politeness, as foolish as his impudence and equally deserving comic punishment.

Appearing, as he predicted, “confoundedly ridiculous” when he first meets Miss Hardcastle, Marlow finally reveals another side of his masculinity. When he responds with feeling to Kate’s apparent tears, “the first mark of tenderness I ever had from a modest woman,” she calls him “generous” and begins “to admire him” (4.1). As Carter points out, “the rise of a culture of sensibility” led writers to adjust the balance between “displays of self-control and genuine fellow feeling,” while also assuming “confidence in the harmony between inner virtue and social expression.”³⁶ After Marlow learns the truth about Liberty Hall and Kate, he moves beyond his frightened ceremonial gestures and confident impoliteness toward such harmony. Only at that point does he tell her, “What at first seem’d rustic plainness, now appears refin’d simplicity” (5.1). Yet to the end she persists in wanting to laugh him out of his foolish extremes and adheres to her father’s earlier statement about “the art of reconciling contradictions” (3.1). Christopher K. Brooks argues convincingly that Kate teaches Marlow “how to speak sincerely,” by reuniting “the public and private discourse” of a patriarchal male.³⁷ While Brooks emphasizes her role as a “pre-feminist” heroine, I stress instead her part in making Marlow confront the socially constructed performances of masculinity, such as the macaroni, and then find his new role within them. “In which of your characters, Sir, will you give us leave to address you,” Kate asks him, whether “the faltering gentleman” or “the loud confident creature,” as she compels him to construct a new gender identity (5.1).

Marlow is not the only masculine character represented in the play, nor the only potential macaroni. As indicated above, his friend Hastings shares macaroni traits, primarily his dress, but he lacks Marlow’s singularity and assurance. In *The Beaux’ Stratagem* (a play referenced by Kate in act 3 as she

plans her barmaid disguise), George Farquhar differentiates Archer from Aimwell as types of the macaroni's antecedent, just as Goldsmith contrasts Marlow and Hastings soon after their arrival. Archer and Aimwell also journey from town to country, but with plans to take turns impersonating master and servant. In Lichfield, the well-dressed Aimwell succumbs to Dorinda's charm and becomes generous and honest, while Archer, in the lower role, first tries to seduce the innkeeper's daughter, Cherry, and then the unhappily married Mrs. Sullen. In rewriting this scenario, Goldsmith has Hastings more closely resemble Aimwell; he is reported to be a model of constancy, who tells Miss Neville that "Your person is all I desire" (2.1). Willing to give up her jewels and elope, until the lady opts for prudence over passion, he seems more fully a man of sentiment than the stammering Marlow, to whom he remains in a more subordinate plot position than Farquhar's Aimwell does to his friend. In his dialogues with Kate, self-consciously dressed like Cherry in act 3, Marlow initially performs more like Archer when he believes himself at an inn; in act 4, when he thinks she is a relation of Hardcastle's, he behaves somewhat like Archer with Mrs. Sullen in a country house. However, in act 5 Marlow departs from his libertine predecessor and also begins to act more like Aimwell, expressing his own more generous intentions toward Kate and finally becoming honest. While being contrasted with Hastings in the traditional "double gallant" pattern initiated by Farquhar, Colley Cibber, and others, Marlow eventually becomes his own masculine foil.³⁸

Mr. Hardcastle represents yet another type of masculinity, the country gentleman, whose values derive from his age and rural experience. As the owner of a house aptly named to stress his traditional British ethos, he wonders "why London cannot keep its own fools at home. In my time, the follies of the town crept slowly among us, but now they travel faster than a stage-coach." Deploring his wife's desire to be fashionable, he loves "every thing that's old" (1.1). Lamenting "fopperies" and "French frippery," Hardcastle sounds much like the decade's critics of macaroni performances as he calls Marlow "a bouncing swaggering puppy" and "young Mr. Brazen"; he faults him for having "learned it all abroad" (3.1). Doing his best to demonstrate old English hospitality by preparing his comically inept servants for the "good company" of Marlow and Hastings and entertaining his guests with supper and stories, Hardcastle nevertheless indulges his daughter's two years of London experience by allowing her to dress as she chooses part of the day, even when it involves "a quantity of superfluous silk" (1.1). Nor, for all his old-fashioned qualities, is he a paternal tyrant; he will not force her to marry Marlow if she does not like him. However, in his blend of amiable

and ridiculous qualities Hardcastle hardly represents Goldsmith's "ideal values."³⁹

If Marlow's urban excesses upset Hardcastle, so too does the behavior of his stepson, Tony Lumpkin, who represents a type antithetical to the macaroni, an unrefined male deficient in the politeness expected of upper-class masculinity. To Hardcastle, Tony is "a mere composition of tricks and mischief," for whom the tavern and the stable "are the only schools he'll ever go to" (1.1). Even the doting Mrs. Hardcastle calls Tony an "unfeeling monster" and "provoking, undutiful boy" (2.1). The London gentleman Marlow and Hastings regard Tony as "a poor contemptible booby" and "an insensible cub" (4.1). We get an early glimpse of Tony in his element, the Three Pigeons, where his companions regard the future squire as "a sweet, pleasant—damn'd mischievous son of a whore" (1.1). Tony's song, mocking schoolmasters and preachers, reveals his comic spirit, as does his assertion that "when I'm of age I'll be no bastard I promise you. I have been thinking of Bett Bouncer and the miller's grey mare to begin with. But come, my boys, drink about and be merry, for you pay no reckoning" (1.1). Although his traditional "waggery" extends to his mother, as well as to Marlow, Hastings, and Hardcastle, Tony proves to be "a more good-natur'd fellow than you thought for" (4.1), as he assists Hastings in his pursuit of Miss Neville, so he can avoid marrying her, as his mother wishes.

For all his singularity as a country booby or bumpkin, as his surname may suggest, Tony has garnered defenders of his style of masculinity. Herbert F. Tucker Jr., for instance, finds him the "incarnation of a genuinely funny lowness," mainly because of an "irrepressible vitality" that rights the balance between nature and nurture.⁴⁰ Richard Bevis argues that he is "a natural man," who has "at bottom better manners and a shrewder wit than the London blades."⁴¹ While John Traugott agrees that Tony's "libidinal simplicity collapses the queasy postures of sentimental gentility," he expresses this important reservation: "he also curiously recommends to us the genteel world, for he is good for nothing outside the tavern, and wit and sentiment, which he must value as Kate is their vessel, are only possible in the genteel world."⁴² Although Tony foils the characters that appear "woundily like Frenchmen," he presents a laughable extreme as untenable as them. This future squire, who offers "my best horse and Bet Bouncer into the bargain" if he fails to keep his word (4.1), remains a picturesque, if likeable, rustic.

Goldsmith's juxtaposing the potential macaroni Marlow with the actual booby Lumpkin frames the problem of masculinities much like an anonymous author does in one issue of the *Macaroni and Theatrical Magazine*. "An Essay on Politeness" offers this contrast: "Modern politeness . . . which

is so ornamental, is very apt to run into disagreeable extremes; amongst the French it is too often disguised by affectation and insincerity; and that simplicity of manners which the English affect so much, and which is so amiable, is equally apt, under the name of honest bluntness and sincerity, to degenerate into rusticity and barbarism.”⁴³ This author plagiarized David Hume’s earlier reflections on British masculinity in “Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences,” which was originally published in *Essays Moral and Political* (Edinburgh, 1742); reprinted in two London editions of *Essays and Treatises on Several Subjects* at the time of the macaroni phenomenon (1770, 1772), this essay remained readily available for the magazine’s appropriation. In his original formulation Hume states that “modern politeness, which is naturally so ornamental, runs often into affectation and foppery, disguise and insincerity”; yet he reflects that its opposite, “ancient simplicity,” which is “naturally so amiable and affecting, often degenerates into rusticity and abuse, scurrility and obscenity.” In addition, he faults “the more zealous partisans of the ancients” who assert that politeness is merely “foppish and ridiculous . . . rather than a credit to the present age.” Hume goes even farther in another essay, “Of Refinement in the Arts,” to argue that refinement, even in the form of luxury, “when excessive, is the source of many ills, but is in general preferable to sloth and idleness.”⁴⁴ These statements, Carter argues, indicate that for Hume “modern manners would lead to new forms of manliness, combining traditional virtues such as moderation, industry and courage (themselves improved by refinement) with more innovative qualities, notably a consideration for and intimacy with female society.”⁴⁵ Marlow’s growing appreciation of a truly modest woman fits this paradigm, even if Goldsmith does not fully subscribe to the philosopher’s confidence about luxury, as expressed in the latter essay.

Juxtaposing these passages with Goldsmith’s masculine characters, I conclude that Tony Lumpkin is just as unacceptable a model of masculinity as the Marlow of the first four acts. In Hume’s terms, if Marlow tends to foppery, Tony verges on rusticity; “sloth and idleness” match well Hardcastle’s criticism of his stepson. In these essays and *She Stoops to Conquer*, the contrast between extremes suggests a middle way for masculinities between affectation and rusticity. As Marlow finds his new social identity between the reserve and impudence of urban masculinity, Kate Hardcastle provides the example and the means for Marlow’s reform. In constructing his comic plot, Goldsmith creates another parallel with Hume’s views, this time about a positive effect of “gallantry”: “What better school for manners than the company of virtuous women, where the mutual endeavour to please must insensitively polish the mind, where the example of the female softness and modesty must communicate itself to their admirers?”⁴⁶ As Kate stoops to

challenge Marlow's manners, she does so with modesty and leads him to recognize in her some of the qualities he needs for himself, most importantly "refin'd simplicity." Refinement requires knowledge of urban politeness, while simplicity necessitates a rural awareness of its possible excesses, more associated with the country setting and characters.

So I cannot agree with James Thompson's reading of the play as one in which "the decadence and luxury of the world of London" are routed by "the humble country home," in which "city strangers . . . are eventually socialized to the rural community."⁴⁷ Marlow runs the risk of being caricatured, but his change does not forecast a life devoted to rural masculinity. Kate's urban/rural compromise throughout the play strongly suggests otherwise, as she gradually brings his masculinity more in line with her definition of femininity. While she is not guilty of urban affectations like her stepmother, Kate does not want an idyllic rural future, but one that blends better attributes of town and country. Meanwhile, Goldsmith directs gentle satire at the old-fashioned masculinity of her father, with his war stories and his odd domestic arrangements, and at Tony's crudeness, as he also ridicules the rapidity with which London's "fopperies" travel to the country. But the playwright is not reinscribing the rhetoric of his elegiac poem *The Deserted Village* in this comedy. In *She Stoops to Conquer* Goldsmith imagines an alternative to extreme masculinities, a median between them. He makes his protagonist a potential macaroni, who admits to spending much time in London, where he is known "as the agreeable Rattle of the Ladies Club," but who is nevertheless refined out of his impudence by the interestingly ambivalent Kate Hardcastle, country in origin, urban in polish. Goldsmith's representation of Marlow—two extremes preceding a reconciled truer sociability—indicates his complex response to the discourses about British masculinities, as does the foiling of Marlow with Tony, which makes clear that Tony does not exhibit an acceptable model of plainness. If Marlow must repudiate the urban social space that included the likes of "Mrs. Mantrap, Lady Betty Blackleg, the Countess of Sligo, Mrs. Langhorns, old Miss Biddy Buckskin" (3.1), the presence of Kate in another social space leads him away from his macaroni excesses. Marlow's association with her changes his understanding so that he abandons the masculinity that made him the butt of Tony's country waggery and, as a result, he no longer faces the threat of town ridicule as the "Dullissimo Maccaroni."

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NOTES

- 1 *She Stoops to Conquer: or, The Mistakes of a Night, Collected Works of Oliver Goldsmith*, ed. Arthur Friedman, 5 vols. (Clarendon Press, 1966), vol. 5, 4.1.
- 2 "An Essay on the Theater; or, A Comparison between Laughing and Sentimental Comedy," *Collected Works*, 3:209–10. Robert D. Hume challenges Goldsmith's version of stage history in "Goldsmith and Sheridan and the Supposed Revolution of 'Laughing' against 'Sentimental' Comedy," *The Rakish Stage: Studies in English Drama, 1660–1800* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois U. Press, 1983), 312–55. For an argument that Goldsmith was trying to shape critical opinion about comedy, see Frank Donoghue, "'He Never Gives Us Nothing that's Low': Goldsmith's Plays and the Reviewers," *ELH* 55 (1988): 665–84.
- 3 *Boswell's Life of Johnson*, eds. George Birkbeck Hill and L. F. Powell, 5 vols. (Clarendon Press, 1971), 2:233. In *Women, Sociability and Theatre in Georgian London* (Cambridge U. Press, 2007), 202, Gillian Russell asserts that "historicization" has "mostly passed by plays such as . . . *She Stoops to Conquer*."
- 4 Tim Hitchcock and Michèle Cohen, "Introduction," *English Masculinities 1660–1800*, ed. Hitchcock and Cohen (London: Longman, 1999), 1.
- 5 Aileen Ribeiro, "The Macaronis, in the Late Eighteenth Century," *History Today* 28 (1978): 463.
- 6 William Mason, *Satirical Poems Published Anonymously by William Mason with Notes by Horace Walpole*, ed. Paget Toynbee (Clarendon Press, 1926), 69.
- 7 Aileen Ribeiro, *Dress in Eighteenth-Century Europe, 1715–1789* (Yale U. Press, 2002), 207–8, 211.
- 8 Peter McNeil, "Macaroni Masculinities," *Fashion Theory* 4 (2000): 373, 374.
- 9 Hitchcock and Cohen, "Introduction," *English Masculinities*, 5.
- 10 Amelia Rauser, "Hair, Authenticity, and the Self-Made Macaroni," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 38 (2004): 101, 102. Since the macaroni's notoriety brought together fashion and visual representation, this figure has been most fully examined by art historians, including Rauser and Shearer West, and historians of dress, like Ribeiro, McNeil, and Valerie Steele. Their work provided a valuable foundation for mine.
- 11 Ribeiro, "Macaronis," 466. See also Valerie Steele, "The Social and Political Significance of Macaroni Fashion," *Costume* 19 (1985): 94–109.
- 12 McNeil, "Macaroni Masculinities," 385. While his list includes two well established titles—*London Magazine* and *Universal Magazine*—two newer periodicals coincided with the prominence of the macaroni. *Town and Country Magazine, or Universal Repository of Knowledge, Instruction, and Entertainment* published its first number in January 1769, and *Lady's Magazine; or Entertaining Companion for the Fair Sex*, in August 1770.
- 13 *Town and Country Magazine* (May 1772): 237.

- 14 Quoted in Ribeiro, "Macaronis," 466.
- 15 Robert Hitchcock, "Epilogue," *The Macaroni. A Comedy* (York, 1773), n. p.
- 16 *Horace Walpole's Correspondence with Sir Horace Mann*, eds. W. S. Lewis et al., 11 vols. (Yale U. Press, 1967), 7:400. Not averse to colorful clothes, Walpole had a "summer visiting costume" early in this decade consisting of "a lavender suit, the waistcoat embroidered with silver or tambour-work, ruffles and jabot of lace, partridge silk stockings" (Ribeiro, *Dress*, 208).
- 17 *London Magazine* (April 1772): 193.
- 18 John Cooke, *The Macaroni Jester, and Pantheon of Wit* (London, 1773), 5–6, 51, 83, 88–90, 103.
- 19 *The Vauxhall Affray; or, the Macaronies Defeated* (London, 1773), 1.
- 20 Miles Ogborn, "Locating the Macaroni: Luxury, Sexuality and Vision in Vauxhall Gardens," *Textual Practice* 11 (1997): 447, 458.
- 21 Cooke, *Macaroni Jester*, 51.
- 22 *Vauxhall Affray*, 59.
- 23 *London Magazine* (April 1772): 193.
- 24 Rauser, "Self-Made Macaroni," 108, 109.
- 25 Shearer West, "The Dearly Macaroni Prints and the Politics of 'Private Man,'" *Eighteenth-Century Life* 25 (2001): 171.
- 26 Figure 1 is from 24 *Caricatures by Several Ladies, Gentlemen, Artists, etc.* (vol. 1, no. 22), published by Matthew Darly, 1771, and Figure 2 from *Macaronies, Characters, Caricatures &c* (vol. 4, no. 22), published by Matthew Darly, 1772 (© Trustees of the British Museum).
- 27 Figure 3 is from *Caricatures, Macaronies & Characters* (vol. 5, no. 8), published by Matthew Darly, 1772 (© Trustees of the British Museum).
- 28 Rauser, "Self-Made Macaroni," 111, 112; West, "Dearly Macaroni Prints," 175, 174.
- 29 *London Magazine* (April 1772): 195; Cooke, *Macaroni Jester*, 51.
- 30 Helen Burke, "Country Matters: Irish 'Waggery' and the Irish and British Theatrical Traditions," *Players, Playwrights, Playhouses: Investigating Performance, 1660–1800*, ed. Michael Cordner and Peter Holland (Palgrave, 2007), 218–19.
- 31 Goldsmith, "Epilogue [Intended to Be] Spoken by Mrs. Bulkley and Miss Catley [in *She Stoops to Conquer*], *Collected Works*, 4:393. Boswell records an incident in 1769, in which Goldsmith appears susceptible to aspects of the style he ridicules in the play. Reported to be "bragging of his dress, and . . . seriously vain of it," Goldsmith calls attention to "my

bloom-coloured coat." Johnson mocks "the strange colour" that would "attract crouds to gaze at it," while David Garrick sarcastically tells Goldsmith, "you will always *look* like a gentleman" (*Life of Johnson*, 2: 83). Boswell later includes a letter describing a "contagious disorder," in which the *bon ton* is "breaking out in Dr. G[oldsmith] under the form of many a waistcoat" (2:274n7).

- 32 Ribeiro, "Macaronis," 466.
- 33 Cooke, *Macaroni Jester*, 85.
- 34 George Coleman, *Man and Wife; or, the Shakespeare Jubilee* (Dublin, 1770), 3.1. This play includes the decade's conventional satire of "our travelled fine gentlemen," when a country character declares, "modern Italy is no more to be compared to Old England, than a sirloin of beef to a spoonful of macaroni" (1.1). Coleman was manager of the Covent Garden Theatre when *She Stoops to Conquer* opened, as he had been in 1768 when Goldsmith's first comedy premiered. *London Magazine* praises *Man and Wife* in "Account of the Maccaroni" in April 1772.
- 35 Philip Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society, Britain 1660–1800* (London: Longman, 2001), 128.
- 36 Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society*, 124.
- 37 Christopher K. Brooks, "Goldsmith's Feminist Drama: *She Stoops to Conquer*, Silence and Language," *Papers on Language & Literature* 28 (1992): 47. For another perspective on Kate's influence, see Lisa A. Freeman, "The Social Life of Eighteenth-Century Comedy," *The Cambridge Companion to British Theatre, 1730–1830*, ed. Jane Moody and Daniel O'Quinn (Cambridge U. Press, 2007), 81–82.
- 38 On this masculine pairing, see William W. Appleton, "The Double Gallant in Eighteenth-Century Comedy," *English Writers of the Eighteenth Century*, ed. John H. Middendorf (Columbia U. Press, 1971), 145–57.
- 39 For this assertion, see Marlies K. Danziger, *Oliver Goldsmith and Richard Brinsley Sheridan* (New York: Ungar, 1978), 54.
- 40 Herbert F. Tucker Jr., "Goldsmith's Comic Monster," *SEL* 19 (1979): 493, 494.
- 41 Richard Bevis, *The Laughing Tradition: Stage Comedy in Garrick's Day* (Athens, GA: U. of Georgia Press, 1980), 208.
- 42 John Traugott, "Heart and Mask and Genre in Sentimental Comedy," *Eighteenth-Century Life* 10 (1986): 137. See also John Harrington Smith, "Tony Lumpkin and the Country Booby Type in Antecedent English Comedy," *PMLA* 58 (1943): 1038–49.
- 43 Quoted in Rauser, "Self-Made Macaroni," 104.
- 44 David Hume, *Selected Essays*, ed. Stephen Copley and Andrew Edgar (Oxford U. Press, 1993), 72, 177. Originally titled "Of Luxury" when first published in *Political Discourses* (1752), the latter essay also appeared in the London editions of 1770 and 1772.

- 45 Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society*, 132. E. J. Clery, *The Feminization Debate in Eighteenth-Century England: Literature, Commerce and Luxury* (Palgrave, 2004), 178, asserts that Hume is "articulating a new-model masculine identity for the modern era, combining refinement and productivity."
- 46 Hume, *Selected Essays*, 74. Michèle Cohen, "Manliness, Effeminacy and the French: Gender and the Construction of National Character in Eighteenth-Century England," *English Masculinities*, 46, 47, writes that "practice of the polite arts was central to men's self-fashioning as gentlemen," but notes that this "elicited a number of tensions for men, tensions expressed in particular as anxieties about effeminacy." Arguing for the importance of eighteenth-century "social spaces," which permitted "the mixed company of the sexes," Cohen reiterates this point: "Social spaces accommodated both women's publicity and men's self-fashioning, since the presence of women was pivotal for men to achieve politeness."
- 47 James Thompson, "'Sure I have seen that face before': Representation and Value in Eighteenth-Century Drama," *Cultural Readings of Restoration and Eighteenth-Century English Theater*, ed. J. Douglas Canfield and Deborah C. Payne (Athens, GA: U. of Georgia Press, 1995), 298.

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