

Empowered Gossipmonger, Disempowered Woman: Navigating the Duplicity of Discursive Power in Alice Gerstenberg's 'He Said, She Said'

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Abstract : This paper investigates the dual functionality of gossip in shaping the action of the comic character, Mrs. Cyrus Packard, in the play "He Said, She Said" by the Chicago playwright Alice Gerstenberg. During the American Little Theater Movement in the early 20th century, when small experimental centers of drama were established, Alice Gerstenberg challenged gender inequality through the use of social satire in her play. Incorporating textual evidence from the play, this study demonstrates that Mrs. Packard is both empowered and disempowered by her gossiping habit in terms of her self-perception and her social relationships within the play. It argues for the dramatic and satirical representation of female identity through the pragmatics of discourse analysis. These perspectives are evident in combining linguistics and literature.

Keywords : discursive power, female identity, feminism in little theater movement, gossip

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