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COURSE NAME/TITLE: NEO-CLASSICAL (ELS 214)

COMPARE AND CONTRAST JOHN WEBSTER'S "THE DUCHESS OF MALFI" AND APHRA BEHN "THE ROVER" AS A JACOBAN REVENGE TRAGEDY AND A RESTORATION PLAY RESPECTIVELY".

The revenge tragedy or revenge play is a dramatic genre in which the protagonist seeks revenge for an imagined or actual injury while restoration plays are referred to as English comedies written and performed in the restoration period from 1660 to 1710. Comedy of manners is used as a synonym of restoration comedy.

Duchess of malfi contains elements of Jacobean tragedy as follows:

Theme of disguise: this theme is seen where the duchess tries to hide herself from others especially from Bosola with the help of Antonio. Although it's a minor example for such a theme. Their disguising is necessitated by the devil of the characters around them and always that evil has warped the world that the truly good characters are forced to disguise their love and domestic bliss to protect them.

Bosola himself wears multiple disguises, and as a spy is constantly pretending, rails against having to disguise oneself in this act. For instance, he mocks the old lady for wearing

make-up, leading him to scornfully meditate on how man delights “to hide his true form in rich tissue”.

Theme of violent death: Ferdinand kills the duchess of malfi through Bosola because she re-married Antonio instead of him (Ferdinand). He also goes as far as making Bosola to get Cariola killed too for being an accomplice. Bosola kills Antonio out of fear.

Theme of soliloquy: its seen where Bosola who acts as the spy for Ferdinand confesses. He confesses in a soliloquy that he feels repentant.

There is a machiaveli figure too in the duchess of malfi. We see this element in the cardinal who doesn't mind getting what he wants by all means which is getting to be the pope. He goes as far as paying bribes just to get to the top which supports the saying “the end justifies the means.” He also kills Julia who has an obsessive love for Bosola.

Theme of revenge and multiple death: it is seen in Act 5 scene 5, where Bosola kills the cardinal to avenge the duchess and Antonio's death and Ferdinand furthermore adds to the brutal injury already inflicted on the cardinal and Ferdinand stabs Bosola while bosola kills Ferdinand.

“The rover” contains elements of restoration plays as follows:

The theme of determination/desire/passion/enthusiasm: we see these features where florinda is interested in belvile and goes as far as going against her father's wish for her to get married to Don Vicentio because of the financial advantage he would get and still ends up with her hearthrob Belvile. Hellena is engulfed with the same desire and determination to get her hearthrob Willmore and goes against her father's wish of her being a nun.

In as much as these plays re being differentiated under their various categories, some similarities can also be seen in the both plays i.e both plays can be seen as both Jacoban tragedy and restoration play.

The restoration play “The rover” can also be seen as a Jacobean tragedy with the theme of disguise. Florida and Hellena disguise themselves according to the order of Callis to protect Hellena especially from her brother Don Pedro whom she goes against his wish of her being locked up.

The jacoban play “The duchess of malfi” can also be seen as a restorstion play with the theme of desire/determination/passion/enthusiasm. Ferdinand is engulfed with the desire and passion to get what he wants and goes for it by all means which is, getting married to the duchess because of her wealth which doesn’t work for him. Instead, it makes him end up in death and still not getting what he wants.